Roxy vs. Grello: a thrilling battle

03/09/2026 In the IMSA GTD Pro class, fans have been following a thrilling battle between two Porsche customer teams since the start of this season: AO Racing, the up-and-coming newcomer and a fan favorite in the series, versus Manthey, the established expert in GT racing. Both teams have exceptional race cars on the start line. Both are doing everything they can to win. But each one is going about it in their own unique way.

Roxy bares her teeth, but Grello is not impressed. It's dark in Sebring. The 12-hour race at the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship on the historic banked track in Florida is a difficult test for both driver and machine. And the second round of a duel that has fans captivated: AO Racing versus Manthey. This season, the two Porsche customer teams will face off for the first time on the track in the GTD Pro class. And between them, they have quite possibly the two most famous Porsche 911 GT3 R cars in the world – the pink Roxy standing in for the dinosaur-green Rexy from AO Racing versus the yellow-and-green Grello from Manthey. The same race car model, but two Porsche customer teams based on very different approaches. They have met on the track before, including at the 24 Hours of Le Mans, but not yet with all-pro driver lineups like here at the IMSA. Fans have come to the race expecting to see a top-class battle.

AO Racing – a success story born out of imagination

With its race cars Rexy and Roxy, AO Racing is where German challenger Manthey wants to be in North America: in pole position with the fans. The car's unconventional dinosaur design and the team have taken the spectators' hearts by storm. Even the numerous factory teams can only watch on in amazement – no other team has as many fans coming to their IMSA paddock, and nowhere else are there such long lines at merchandise stands and autograph sessions. People of all ages join the motorsport parties with the inflatable dinosaur figures.

The hugely successful idea actually came about by chance. AO Racing, founded by Phillip Jeffrey (P. J.) Hyett and Gunnar Jeannette, has quite a short history. IT entrepreneur Hyett from just outside Chicago and racing driver Jeannette from Florida first met in 2022 at a Porsche Track Days event. "P. J. would come flying through each corner, drifting around, in his 911 R," Jeannette laughs. "It was clear he didn't have much experience with race cars, but he showed great control over the car and had a lot of natural talent." Shortly after, Hyett asked Jeannette for some travel tips before taking a family trip to the 24 Hours of Le Mans. "I asked him whether he'd prefer to just watch or if he'd like to take part in a race." His answer was emphatic, and his performances in the Porsche Sprint Challenge were impressive. In his very first race, P. J. made the top 10 of his group, which was made up of 40 cars.

This experience ignited his passion. Hyett then stepped up to a 911 RSR, and competing together with Jeannette at the FIA World Endurance Championship season finale in Bahrain, the pair made the podium. "P. J. then had the idea of setting up his own racing team – something I initially tried to talk him out of," Jeannette recalls, laughing. "Fortunately, I didn't succeed." The two Americans founded AO Racing at the end of 2022. Ahead of the first race in Daytona, Hyett asked his children, then aged three and five, what type of design he should put on his helmet. His son suggested a dinosaur, and his daughter a unicorn. Both wishes came true. "After Daytona, we sat down and discussed the car design for Sebring. Then P. J. turned and said: 'Why don't we just turn the car into a dinosaur?' I loved the idea!"

It worked out perfectly. At the next race in Sebring, spectators got their first glimpse of Rexy's distinctive front design with its white fangs bared. The race car, which looked like something straight out of a Marvel comic, received a great response. AO has since fully adopted this design. The theme is also followed in the drivers' suits and helmets, the mechanics' overalls, and the team's tent furnishings. The car has now taken on a character of its own, something that Hyett and Jeannette continue to build on with obvious pleasure. Following a rear-impact collision, Rexy was fitted with braces for its next race. After claiming the title victory in IMSA 2024, a gold tooth was added to the green 911. And in the season finale at Road Atlanta, held close to Halloween, the entire team and the car itself were kitted out in special black-and-white skeleton guise. In 2025, Gunnar Jeannette even added some dinosaur elements to his personal 911 GT3 RS (992.1) through the Porsche Sonderwunsch program.

Rexy has become a global brand. The merchandising program includes everything from T-shirts and model cars to soft toys. It's even on the shelves in the form of a LEGO® Technic set. The team principal is delighted, though he does add: "Competition is still our number-one priority." And the team has been

very successful in competition. In 2024, two years after the team was founded, AO Racing won the IMSA Championship in the GTD Pro team standings. Former Porsche Junior and current factory driver Laurin Heinrich won the driver's title for AO, taking the crown home to Germany.

Rexy now has a sister: Roxy, the pink model. "We wanted to create a second character, so we came up with the idea of a girl dinosaur for P. J.'s daughter's birthday," Gunnar Jeannette reveals. "We're going to use her in two races per season." She made her endurance debut in Sebring in the hands of Nick Tandy, Harry King, and Alessio Picariello. "We're also sending her to Long Beach. Roxy's going to Hollywood!"

Manthey – a business model based on perfection

While Rexy and Roxy have made their name in North America, Grello – with its yellow-and-green neon design – has built up a cult following on the Nordschleife, throughout Germany, and beyond. It embodies the philosophy of the Manthey Porsche customer team like no other race car: high speeds and competing at the very highest level. "We've set a very high bar for ourselves," says managing director and team principal Nicolas Raeder, who runs Manthey together with his brother Martin. "Wherever Grello goes, he must be in the mix to win."

The racing team from Germany's Eifel region, originally founded by motorsports legend Olaf Manthey, celebrates its thirtieth anniversary this year. Since it was taken over by the Raeder brothers and Porsche acquired a stake in 2013, the team has grown into a company with four different divisions: Racing, Road Cars, Race Cars, and Experience. The company has gone from employing 40 people to over 350. From the outset, Manthey has been associated with the Nordschleife, the Nürburgring Langstrecken-Serie (NLS), and the Nürburgring 24 Hours race. "We were working at a very professional level right from the beginning," says Raeder.

Alongside various Porsche factory race entries, including in the FIA World Endurance Championship, Grello was created in 2016. Once the design was created, the name quickly followed – a combination of the words "green" and "yellow". "I used to have a bike that color back in the nineties," Nicolas Raeder explains. Today, there are onesies available in the Grello design; fans want to adopt the same style for their own cars; and children are sending hand-drawn pictures to Grello's home in Meuspath, close to Nürburgring. Ever since joining the DTM as a customer sports team and winning titles in 2023 and 2025, Grello has also become a household name beyond the Eifel region.

Today, customers from all over the world line up to sit behind the wheel with Manthey in the FIA World Endurance Championship. In 2024 and 2025, the German team won the LMGT3 class at Le Mans, where professionals and amateurs share the cars, and also secured both the team and drivers' titles at the end of the season. "We now receive so many enquiries we're simply not able to respond to them all," says Nicolas Raeder. The market has continued to evolve, as customers want to experience this level of professionalism and race with Manthey. This season, the team entered the Asian Le Mans Series, the DTM, the IMSA Championship, the NLS, the FIA WEC, and the Intercontinental GT Challenge (IGTC) – together with the other business units, a total of over 150 events throughout the year.

How does this work? The answer is always the same: It's the people who make the team what it is. Whether it's the company founder Olaf Manthey, who continues to provide valuable insights as an observer, or the team on the track. "We give everybody on our team the chance to keep reinventing themselves," explains Martin Raeder. "Our engineers sit down and come up with new ideas all the time. They have a lot of freedom and great passion for what they do." One innovation being developed is the "Tool chain" software. This enables a wide range of vehicle data to be read and compared, helping to create an ideal damper setup, for example. Over the years, the team has also developed its own tire heating tents and a wheel measurement system that fits into a transport case, for example, and adapted these to its own needs. This led to the creation of the "Equipment for Rennsport" business unit.

Entering the IMSA Championship makes sense for multiple reasons. On the one hand, it represents a new sporting challenge, while on the other hand, the North American market also offers great potential for the kits developed by Manthey for Porsche road sports cars.

Both teams on the podium

The two customer teams show that there is more than one road to success. Each team has written its own history. On the one side, there is Manthey, a team steeped in tradition, built upon decades of experience and insights. On the other is AO Racing, a fearless newcomer that has quickly made a name for itself and has already claimed the IMSA title.

In Sebring, the prestigious endurance race is now drawing to a close, with only fractions of a second separating Manthey and AO Racing. All of a sudden, headlights flash out of the slipstream as Grello pulls past Roxy, securing victory in the GTD Pro class – a tremendous result for the German team, their first win in their second IMSA race. "That was a typical Manthey win," says Klaus Bachler, part of the trio of drivers piloting Grello alongside Thomas Preining and Ricardo Feller. "We made no mistakes. We had a perfect strategy and a reliable car."

The fans have plenty to look forward to, as Rexy and Roxy will be hungry for revenge. The rivalry between the world's most famous Porsche 911 GT3 R cars is only just beginning.

Info

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Consumption data

911 GT3 (WLTP)*: Fuel consumption combined: 13.8 – 13.7 l/100 km; CO_2 emissions combined: 312 – 310 g/km; CO_2 class: G

*Further information on the official fuel consumption and the official specific CO_2 emissions of new passenger cars can be found in the "Leitfaden über den Kraftstoffverbrauch, die CO_2-Emissionen und den Stromverbrauch neuer Personenkraftwagen" (Fuel Consumption, CO_2Emissions and Electricity Consumption Guide for New Passenger Cars), which is available free of charge at all sales outlets and from DAT (Deutsche Automobil Treuhand GmbH, Helmuth-Hirth-Str. 1, 73760 Ostfildern-Scharnhausen, www.dat.de).

Image Sublines

Path: Roxy vs. Grello: a thrilling battle/Images/img_1.jpg
Title: Dinosaur mascot, 2026, Porsche AG
Subline: Creative design: AO Racing has created hype around its race car with its dinosaur mascot.

Path: Roxy vs. Grello: a thrilling battle/Images/img_2.jpg
Title: Gunnar Jeannette, team chef AO Racing, 2026, Porsche AG
Subline: Team principals: In 2022, Gunnar Jeannette (above) founded the AO Racing team with Phillip Jeffrey Hyett.

Path: Roxy vs. Grello: a thrilling battle/Images/img_3.jpg
Title: LEGO® Technic set of Rexy, 2026, Porsche AG
Subline: Racing driver Alessio Picariello signs a LEGO® Technic set of Rexy.

Path: Roxy vs. Grello: a thrilling battle/Images/img_4.jpg
Title: Porsche 911 GT3 R "Roxy", 2026, Porsche AG
Subline: Premiere: In Sebring ging erstmals Roxy an den Start – das Schwestermodell vom grünen Rexy.

Path: Roxy vs. Grello: a thrilling battle/Images/img_5.jpg
Title: Porsche 911 GT3 R "Grello", 2026, Porsche AG
Subline: Siegerfahrzeug: Beim zweiten IMSA-Einsatz holte sich der Grello vom Team Manthey den ersten Sieg.

Path: Roxy vs. Grello: a thrilling battle/Images/img_6.jpg
Title: Nicolas and Martin Raeder, Team principals Manthey racing, 2026, Porsche AG
Subline: Team principals: Brothers Nicolas and Martin Raeder took over the Manthey racing team in 2013.

Path: Roxy vs. Grello: a thrilling battle/Images/img_9.jpg
Title: Nick Tandy, Harry King, Alessio Picariello (AO Racing); Thomas Preining, Ricardo Feller, Klaus Bachler (victorious Manthey team), 2026, Porsche AG
Subline: On the podium: Nick Tandy, Harry King, and Alessio Picariello from second-placed AO Racing and Thomas Preining, Ricardo Feller, and Klaus Bachler from the victorious Manthey team (from left to right).

Link Collection

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