



AO Racing Porsche leaves VIR holding GTD Pro point lead

26/08/2024 AO Racing leaves round eight of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship weekend at VIRginia International Raceway (VIR) maintaining its points lead in the hotly contested GTD Pro class. The pink No. 77 Porsche 911 GT3 R, known as "Roxy" and driven by Laurin Heinrich (Germany) and Klaus Bachler (Austria), finished seventh in the class. The result was enough to retain the team's championship lead entering the final two events of the 2024 race season. Wright Motorsports was the top finishing Porsche in the GTD class with drivers Adam Adelson (Los Angeles, California) and Elliott Skeer (San Diego, California) driving the No. 120 to ninth place finish in the Michelin GT Challenge at VIR. On Saturday, August 24, BGB Motorsports led RS1 across the finish line for a Porsche one-two finish in the Michelin Pilot Challenge race. It was the first win of the season with the Porsche 718 GT4 RS Clubsport for the veteran team.

Alton, Virginia. Porsche customer team AO Racing fought the ups and downs of both the historic VIRginia International Raceway (VIR) circuit and the intense competition of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship to hold the top spot in the GTD Pro class. The pink No. 77 Porsche 911 GT3 R race car known as "Roxy" and shared by drivers Laurin Heinrich (Germany) and Klaus Bachler (Austria),

did not get the overall finish they battled for in the all-GT car field but did secure a top 10 finish. Its seventh-place class result was good enough to maintain a 17-point lead in the category entering the final two races of the 2024 race season. Wright Motorsports led the Porsche privateer entrants in the GTD class in the two-hour and 40-minute feature on Sunday, August 25 with a ninth-place finish in the No. 120 Porsche 911 GT3 R.

One day earlier, BGB Motorsports broke a two-race win streak by its fellow Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport competitor RS1 with a victory in the two-hour IMSA Michelin Pilot Challenge race at VIR. The two mid-engine Porsche race cars charged across the finish line one-two. It was the first win of the year for the BGB entry of Thomas Collingwood (Canada) and Spencer Pumpelly (Atlanta, Georgia).

The Race

AO Racing came to the 3.27-mile, 17-turn road course in Alton, Virginia with high expectations and an opportunity for an overall victory. However, the Illinois-based race team's primary goal was to leave the final sprint race of the IMSA season maintaining the GTD Pro class points lead. An early race black flag for a tire pressure violation forced the team to stop to serve the penalty and get four new Michelin racing slicks. The team also took the opportunity to refuel and change drivers with Bachler stepping out and Heinrich slotting behind the wheel of the dinosaur inspired liveried Porsche 911 GT3 R. Despite its best efforts, the resulting strategy change ultimately did not allow the popular Porsche to work its way back to the front. Heinrich, who holds the GTD Pro drivers' points lead, finished the race chasing the leaders to a seventh-place result.

The PJ Hyett-owned and Gunnar Jeanette-managed operation holds the lead in the category for GT3-style race cars by virtue of two race wins (WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca and Detroit) and multiple podium finishes in the all-professional drivers class.

AO Racing defends GTD Pro points lead at all GT car weekend

In the GTD class – using cars identical to those of the GTD Pro category but with pro-am style driver lineups – a pair of Porsche privateers challenged for class success: High Class Racing/MDK Motorsports and Wright Motorsports. Wright showed early speed in their return to the IMSA series leading the second practice session outright. However, the Ohio-based operation qualified only eighth overall – third in class – to set Sunday's grid. Past Porsche one-make champion Elliott Skeer (San Diego, California) started the race and contended near the front of the field before going wide and off track ten-minutes into the race. He would fall from second to fourth place before returning to the track. He and Adam Adelson (Los Angeles, California) continued to fight in the green and yellow No. 120 Porsche, eventually settling for ninth place at the checkered flag. The No. 86 High Class Racing Porsche finished 11th in class with drivers Andrea Fjordbach (Denmark) and Kerong Li (China) in their VIR debut.

AO Racing now holds a 17-point margin over Ross Gunn in the No. 23 Aston Martin Vantage GT3 Evo

with two endurance races remaining on the schedule: the six-hour Battle on the Bricks at Indianapolis Motor Speedway and the 10-hour Petit Le Mans at Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta.

Porsche privateers challenged for class success in the GTD class

Michelin Pilot Challenge

For the third consecutive race, the Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS Clubsport took top honors in IMSA Michelin Pilot Challenge. However, unlike the two most recent rounds for the series (Canadian Tire Motorsport Park and Road America), it was the No. 38 BGB Motorsports Porsche and not the No. 28 RS1 Cayman that won the GT4-spec race at VIR on Saturday. The first race win of the 2024 season for the longtime Porsche entry of Thomas Collingwood (Canada) and Spencer Pumpelly (Atlanta, Georgia) came after two hours of racing in the "Virginia Is For Racing Lovers Grand Prix". The BGB machine finished just 0.373 seconds ahead of the RS1 car of Trent Hindman (Ocean Township, New Jersey) and Stevan McAleer (Scotland) in second place. The No. 91 Kellymoss with Riley Porsche of Riley Dickinson (New Braunfels, Texas) and Michael McCarthy (Clearwater, Florida) finished in fourth place, less than 1.5 seconds out of victory lane.

The Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS Clubsport, closely based on the road-going Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS, now has four GS class race wins in eight rounds of the 2024 season. Included are the two victories by RS1, this weekend's VIR win by BGB and the season-opening four-hour race at Daytona International Speedway by the No. 91 Kellymoss with Riley car. Hindman/McAleer hold second place in the Drivers' standing only 50-points behind Matt Plumb. RS1 sits the same amount out of the Team championship lead while Porsche a mere 30 markers from the lead in Manufacturer standings. A race win pays 350 points.

The Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS Clubsport took top honors in IMSA Michelin Pilot Challenge

The IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, as well as the IMSA Michelin Pilot Challenge and Porsche Carrera Cup North America, will next race at the "Racing Capital of the World", the Indianapolis Motor Speedway. The weekend, headlined by the six-hour Battle on the Bricks WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, will see the return of endurance racing and the top class, GTP, to the track. The world-famous track in Indianapolis, Indiana will play host to all three of the IMSA championships September 20 – 22.

GTD-Pro class:

1. Sellers/Snow (USA/USA), BMW No. 1, 86 laps
2. Tincknell/Rockenfeller (UK/Germany), Ford Mustang GT3 No. 64, +3.368 seconds
3. Riberas/Gunn (Spain/UK), Aston Martin Vantage GT3 Evo No. 23, +4.199 seconds

4. Mueller/Hand (Germany/USA), Ford Mustang GT3 No. 65, +11.668 seconds
5. Jarvis/Kirchhöfer (UK/Switzerland), McLaren 720S GT3 EVO No. 9, +16.404 seconds
7. Heinrich/Bachler (Germany/Austria), Porsche 911 GT3 R No. 77, +`9.754 seconds

GTD class:

1. Koch/Grenier (USA/Canada), Mercedes-AMG GT3 No. 32, 86 laps
2. Robichon/De Angelis (Canada/Canada), Aston Martin Vantage GT3 Evo, +0.897
3. Goikhberg/Spinelli (Canada/Italy), Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO2, +2.983 seconds
4. Ward/Ellis (USA/UK), Mercedes-AMG No. 57, +3.914 seconds
5. Gallagher / Foley (USA/USA), BMW M4 GT3 No. 96, +4.208 seconds
9. Adelson/Skeer (USA/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R, No. 120, +12.117
10. Li/Fjordbach (China/Denmark), Porsche 911 GT3 R No. 86, - 1 lap

Full unofficial results and championship standings can be found at: https://imsa.results.alkamelcloud.com/?season=24_2024&event=15_VIRginia+International+Raceway

**MEDIA
ENQUIRIES****Luke Vandezande**

Product Spokesperson 911 and 718 Boxster/Cayman, Motorsport and Brand Heritage
470-363-5001
luke.vandezande@porsche.us

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