

No perfect start to the season for Porsche Penske Motorsport in Qatar

01/03/2025 Porsche Penske Motorsport finished the season opener of the FIA World Endurance Championship in tenth and eleventh place. The Proton Competition customer ended the 10-hour race on the Lusail International Circuit in Qatar with an identical Porsche 963 as 15th. In LMGT3 category, the two Manthey Porsche 911 GT3 R entered by Manthey 1st Phorm and Iron Dames finished twelfth and 13th respectively.

The start on the 5.419-kilometre Grand Prix circuit in the north of the country's capital Doha took place in sunny weather at 2:00 pm local time. The air reached 21 degrees Celsius at this time and the tarmac had heated up to 34 degrees. After just four hours, darkness set in and the track temperature dropped to just 18 degrees. This posed particular challenges for drivers and teams.

In the eventful opening phase, the two 508 kW (691 PS) hybrid prototypes from Porsche Penske Motorsport had to cope with setbacks. A damaged tyre forced Julien Andlauer to pit unscheduled after barely 30 minutes. This dropped the Frenchman, who shared the number 5 Porsche 963 with his compatriot Mathieu Jaminet and the Dane Michael Christensen, to 18th and last position in the

Hypercar class. The trio was able to benefit from an early refuelling stop during a safety car phase. As a result, this Porsche 963 temporarily moved up to fifth place again. However, another tyre defect and a damper element on the rear axle, which had to be fixed at the halfway point of the race, cost them time again. With a strong final attack, the number 5 car worked its way up to tenth position and scored two championship points.

For Laurens Vanthoor in the sister car, things also did not go according to plan: an opponent slid into the rear of the Belgian in the turmoil at the start. As a result, the rear wing had to be replaced at the first stop. Reigning FIA WEC drivers' world champions Vanthoor and Kévin Estre from France together with Australian Matt Campbell finished the opening race, dubbed ⊠Qatar 1812km", in eleventh place.

⊠We knew from the start that we were in for a difficult race," explains Urs Kuratle, Head of Factory Motorsport LMDh. ⊠Last year, we finished with three Porsche 963 on the podium here in Doha, but the situation has changed. We were not completely faultless today, but the team and the drivers did a good job. Nevertheless, the result is disappointing."

⊠We only scored two points today – but I feel like we deserved more," said Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport. ⊠Our two Porsche had a long day. The number 6 car was caught up by the Virtual Safety Car through no fault of their own. From then on, it was one lap down but running with good pace and no real mistakes. Number 5 suffered two punctures and a technical problem. Despite this, they were able to stay on the lead lap until shortly before the end. For the second round of the season in Imola, we will improve a few things and work on our performance."

The Porsche customer team Proton Competition crossed the finish line in 15th place at the end of a difficult race. Neel Jani from Switzerland – overall winner of the 24 Hours of Le Mans with Porsche in 2016 – as well as Nicolas Varrone from Argentina and Nicolas Pino from Chile suffered from a brake problem at times, which put the trio a lap down and let them lose contact with the front runners.

LMGT3 class: challenging race for Porsche customer teams

The two 911 GT3 R from Manthey with up to 416 kW (565 PS) lacked performance and top speed on the Qatari Formula 1 circuit. The 911 driven by Porsche works driver Richard Lietz from Austria, Ryan Hardwick from the USA and Riccardo Pera from Italy under the Manthey 1st Phorm banner finished the endurance race in twelfth place. The Iron Dames ended up 13th with the female driver trio of Michelle Gatting (Denmark), Rahel Frey (Switzerland) and Célia Martin (France).

Drivers' comments after the race

Michael Christensen (Porsche 963 #5):⊠A very exhausting, sometimes really difficult race for me. It was pretty tough on the track with so many competitors – rarely did I have had contact with so many other cars in such a short space of time before. I did not want that at all, but sometimes that is the way

it is. Our Porsche felt very good at times, but in the end I had to fight with tyre and brake wear as well as the energy level. I was aiming for ninth place, but then we fell out of the performance window and no longer had a chance. We crossed the finish line and have two championship points, which counts because they could become important."

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 963 #6): A disappointing result. Last year we won here in Doha, now we are eleventh. To be honest, the Porsche drove quite well, but we could not go any faster. There is not much more to say, really."

Neel Jani (Porsche 963 #99): That was literally a difficult week. We made a step forward in qualifying. We also managed to do the same in the race and came close to the factory cars in the first two or three stints – we see light at the end of the tunnel, even if there is still room for improvement. In the race, a brake problem cost us a lap. When a safety car was added to the mix, our race was practically over. Otherwise, a much better result would have been within reach. If we bring everything together, we will get the reward we want in the future."

Michelle Gatting (Porsche 911 GT3 R #85): To be honest, I really enjoyed my last two stints with the Porsche, it was such a pleasure to drive the car. Every single lap was great fun. When the call came for the driver change, I was downright sad. I really thanked the engineers afterwards for the car! I have absolute faith in them and the team. From that point of view, I am happy, even with my own performance. In terms of performance, we are not quite where we want to be yet. But that will develop. We will take the positive aspects with us."

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 GT3 R #92): For our first race weekend of the new WEC season, each of us certainly had different expectations. We found a good balance for our 911 and were able to push well, but we still need to get a bit faster. Everything also went well with my driver colleagues. Now we will analyze everything and try to get more performance out of it before the next race."

Race results

Hypercar class:
1. Fuoco/Molina/Nielsen (ITA/ESP/DNK), Ferrari #50, 318 laps
2. Kubica/Ye/Hanson (POL/CHN/GBR), Ferrari #83, -2.348 seconds
3. Giovinazzi/Calado/Pier Guidi (ITA/GBR/ITA), Ferrari #51, -2.677 seconds
10. Andlauer/Christensen/Jaminet (FRA/DNK/FRA), Porsche 963 #5, -1 lap
11. Estre/Vanthoor/Campbell (FRA/BEL/AUS), Porsche 963 #6, -1 lap
15. Jani/Pino/Varrone (SUI/CHI/ARG), Porsche 963 #99, -4 laps

LMGT3 class:
1. Keating/Edgar/Juncadella (USA/GBR/ESP), Corvette #33, 287 laps
2. Cottingham/Baud/Saucy (GBR/FRA/SUI), McLaren #59, -0.493 seconds
3. Shahin/Boguslavskiy/Farfus (AUS/AND/BRA), BMW #31, -32.656 seconds

12. Hardwick/Pera/Lietz (USA/ITA/AUT), Porsche 911 GT3 R #92, -3 laps
13.Martin/Frey/Gatting (FRA/SUI/DNK), Porsche 911 GT3 R #85, -5 laps

All results: fiawec.alkamelsystems.com.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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Video

https://newstv.porsche.com/porschevideos/newstv.porsche.com_ 309137_en.mp4

Image Sublines

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Title: Urs Kuratle (Director Factory Motorsport LMDh)
Subline: Urs Kuratle, Head of Factory Motorsport LMDh

Path: No perfect start to the season for Porsche Penske Motorsport in Qatar/Images/img_5.jpg
Title: Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport, Qatar 1812km, FIA WEC, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport

Path: No perfect start to the season for Porsche Penske Motorsport in Qatar/Images/img_8.jpg
Title: Michael Christensen (DNK), Porsche Penske Motorsport (#5), Qatar 1812km, FIA WEC, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Michael Christensen

Path: No perfect start to the season for Porsche Penske Motorsport in Qatar/Images/img_9.jpg
Title: Laurens Vanthoor (BEL), Porsche Penske Motorsport (#5), Qatar 1812km, FIA WEC, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Laurens Vanthoor

Path: No perfect start to the season for Porsche Penske Motorsport in Qatar/Images/img_10.jpg
Title: Neel Jani (SUI), Proton Competition (#99), Qatar 1812km, FIA WEC, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Neel Jani

Path: No perfect start to the season for Porsche Penske Motorsport in Qatar/Images/img_11.jpg
Title: Michelle Gatting (DNK), Iron Dames (#85), Qatar 1812km, FIA WEC, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Michelle Gatting

Path: No perfect start to the season for Porsche Penske Motorsport in Qatar/Images/img_12.jpg
Title: Richard Lietz (AUT), Manthey 1st Phorm (#92), Qatar 1812km, FIA WEC, 2025, Porsche AG
Subline: Richard Lietz

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