



Race debut for the new Porsche 963 in Daytona

18/01/2023 After almost twelve months of preparation with the new hybrid 963 prototype, things are about to get serious for Porsche Penske Motorsport: On 20 January, the 2023 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season kicks off with the so-called "ROAR Before the 24".

Preview

This three-day test at the Daytona International Speedway in the US state of Florida is used to set up the cars and to qualify for the 24-hour race. The endurance classic will be held from 28 to 29 January at the same venue. The new Porsche 911 GT3 R will also be showcased on an international stage at this event. Seven of the GT3 vehicles, based on the 992 generation of the 911, will tackle the American endurance classic.

After more than 30,000 test kilometres, the two Porsche 963 tackle their first race in the new GTP class of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship on the last weekend in January. As stated in

the regulations, the new hybrid prototypes will fight for overall victory at the long-distance classic in Florida. At the World Center of Racing, the ca. 500 kW (680 PS) Porsche 963 will go up against rival vehicles from BMW, Cadillac and Acura. The newly developed Porsche 911 GT3 R also celebrates its race premiere. Five customer teams field a total of seven up to 416 kW (565 PS) GT3 racers in the GTD Pro and GTD categories.

"We're very much looking forward to the Daytona season opener," exclaims Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport. "With the new Porsche 963, we're finally back fighting for overall victories in the world's biggest endurance events. Our Porsche Penske Motorsport squad and our drivers and specialists from the Weissach Development Centre have done absolutely everything to develop the 963 into a fast and reliable prototype. We're curious to see how the competition will perform at Daytona, not only in the new top GTP class but also in the GTD categories with the new Porsche 911 GT3 R."

The new Porsche 963 turned its first laps in January 2022 on Porsche's test area in Weissach. The prototype then covered more than 30,000 kilometres on racetracks in Europe and North America. "We learned a lot from these tests and we experienced ups and downs in the process," recalls Urs Kuratle. The Director Factory Motorsport LMDh adds: "We set ourselves the goal of reaching the 30,000-kilometre mark in the tests and we achieved this. We'll use the 'Roar' at Daytona to continue tweaking the car as perfectly as possible for the race. We've worked hard towards putting ourselves in the best possible position for the start of the IMSA season."

"Porsche Motorsport, the Penske team, Multimatic, Michelin and other partners have spent almost two years in a development phase," says Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport. "We've all pulled together to get the Porsche 963 as optimally prepared as possible for the upcoming challenge. We'll go up against our rivals for the first time at the 24 Hours of Daytona. Before the lights turn green on race day Saturday, it's difficult to predict how the scenario will unfold. We've done all we can to get the season off to a promising start. We'll receive support at Daytona from our Porsche colleagues in the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC as well as our digital links to the Porsche Development Centre in Weissach and our European base in Mannheim."

Seven new Porsche 911 GT3 R contest the GTD Pro and GTD classes

The new Porsche 911 GT3 R has completed around 24,000 test kilometres and three trial runs. As part of the test programme, in autumn 2022, the systematically modified GT3 vehicle from Weissach took part in three rounds of the Nürburgring Endurance Series (NLS), where it underlined its potential. "We're facing a huge challenge. Our new GT3 racer contests its first official race on the big international stage at Daytona," outlines Sebastian Golz, Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R, ahead of the opening round of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship. "An average speed of more than 190 km/h in the race as well as the unique track characteristics with its steeply banked turns put huge stresses on the cars at the very first race of the year. We're very much looking forward to tackling this challenge with seven Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by five strong partner teams."

The race

The Daytona International Speedway in Florida, which opened in 1959, distinguishes itself from other tracks most notably by its steeply banked turns. The slope incline reaches up to 31 degrees in the oval passages of the 5.73-kilometre racetrack. This requires a special vehicle setup. Porsche is by far the most successful manufacturer at Daytona. The Stuttgart automobile manufacturer has achieved 18 overall wins as a constructor and four as an engine partner, with a further 80 class wins rounding off this success record. The classic event has been contested on the combination of the tri-oval and the infield road course since 1966. For the 2023 season, the North American racing series features a changed class structure: The Porsche 963 contests the new top GTP category, with the 911 GT3 R competing in the GTD Pro and GTD classes. In addition, vehicles will also tackle the LMP2 and LMP3 categories.

The 24 Hours of Daytona also marks the start of the IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup. This long-distance classification awards points for the best-placed vehicles after six, twelve and 18 hours as well as when crossing the finish line. In addition to the season-opening round in Florida, the championship includes the 12 Hours of Sebring, the 6-hour race at Watkins Glen and the so-called "Petit Le Mans". The IMSA season wraps up in mid-October with this ten-hour race on the Road Atlanta circuit.

The Porsche drivers and teams

Six works drivers share the cockpits of the two Porsche 963 fielded by the new Porsche Penske Motorsport team in the GTP class. Nick Tandy from England and Mathieu Jaminet from France are the regular drivers in the No. 6 car. The two seasoned professionals receive reinforcement at the endurance event in Daytona from the American Dane Cameron. Sharing driving duties in the No. 7 car for the 2023 season are Australia's Matt Campbell and Felipe Nasr from Brazil. Michael Christensen from Denmark supports the duo at the 24-hour race.

In the GTD Pro class, the defending champions from Pfaff Motorsports put their trust in an experienced line-up from the extended Porsche driver squad. Austria's Klaus Bachler contests the whole season as a regular driver with Frenchman Patrick Pilet. At Daytona, works driver Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium joins the crew in the No. 9 Porsche 911 GT3 R. In the GTD category, last year's winners from Wright Motorsports (No. 16) rely on Ryan Hardwick from the USA, Jan Heylen from Belgium, Zacharie Robichon from Canada and the Norwegian Porsche contract driver Dennis Olsen.

The French works driver Kévin Estre, among others, helms the second 911 (No. 77) fielded by the customer team from the US state of Ohio. The squad from Kelly-Moss with Riley celebrates its debut in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship with two more Porsche 911 GT3 R. The successful team from the Porsche Carrera Cup North America has signed on Julien Andlauer from France, New Zealander Jaxon Evans, the experienced Dutch racer Jeroen Bleekemolen and his young compatriot Kay van Berlo. MDK Motorsports has a particularly prominent line-up for its GT3 racing car: Formula 1 driver

Kevin Magnussen from Denmark shares the No. 53 cockpit with his father Jan and the Americans Mark Kvamme and Trenton Estep. AO Racing's entry is manned by British drivers Harry Tincknell and Sebastian Priaulx, among others.

An overview of the drivers and teams

GTP Class (Porsche 963):

#6 Porsche Penske Motorsport – Dane Cameron (USA) / Mathieu Jaminet (F) / Nick Tandy (UK)

#7 Porsche Penske Motorsport – Matt Campbell (AUS) / Michael Christensen (DK) / Felipe Nasr (BR)

GTD Pro Class (Porsche 911 GT3 R):

#9 Pfaff Motorsports – Klaus Bachler (A) / Patrick Pilet (F) / Laurens Vanthoor (B)

GTD Class (Porsche 911 GT3 R):

#16 Wright Motorsports – Ryan Hardwick (USA) / Jan Heylen (B) / Dennis Olsen (N) / Zacharie Robichon (CDN)

#53 MDK Motorsports – Trenton Estep (USA) / Mark Kvamme (USA) / Jan Magnussen (DK) / Kevin Magnussen (DK)

#77 Wright Motorsports – Alan Brynjolfsson (USA) / Kévin Estre (F) / Trent Hindman (USA) / Max Root (USA)

#80 AO Racing – PJ Hyett (USA) / Gunnar Jeannette (USA) / Sebastian Priaulx (UK) / Harry Tincknell (UK)

#91 Kelly Moss with Riley – Julien Andlauer (F) / Kay van Berlo (NL) / Jaxon Evans (NZ) / Alan Metni (USA)

#92 Kelly Moss with Riley – Jeroen Bleekemolen (NL) / David Brule (USA) / Andrew Davis (USA) / Alec Udel (USA)

The schedule (local time, CET -6 hours)

Friday, 20 January

11:00 am to 12:30 pm: Test session 1

4:15 pm to 6:00 pm: Test session 2

Saturday, 21 January

11:15 am to 12:45 pm: Test session 3

3:10 pm to 4:10 pm: Test session 4

6:30 pm to 8:30 pm: Test session 5

Sunday, 22 January

1:25 pm to 1:40 pm: Qualifying GTD-Pro/GTD

2:40 pm to 3:00 pm: Qualifying GTP

Thursday, 26 January

11:05 am to 12:35 pm: Free practice 1

3:20 pm to 5:05 pm: Free practice 2

7:15 pm to 9:00 pm: Free practice 3

Friday, 27 January

11:20 am to 12:20 pm: Free practice 4

6:25 pm to 6:45 pm: Free practice 5 (only GTP class)

Saturday, 28 January

1:40 pm: Start 24-hour race

Sunday, 29 January

1:40 pm: Chequered flag 24-hour race

Porsche's overall wins at the 24 Hours of Daytona

1968 – Elford/Neerpasch/Stommelen/Herrmann/Siffert – Porsche 907 LH

1970 – Rodríguez/Kinnunen/Redman – Porsche 917 K

1971 – Rodríguez/Oliver – Porsche 917 K

1973 – Gregg/Haywood – Porsche Carrera RSR

1975 – Gregg/Haywood – Porsche Carrera RSR

1977 – Graves/Haywood/Helmick – Porsche Carrera RSR

1978 – Gregg/Hezemans/Stommelen – Porsche 935

1979 – Field/Haywood/Ongais – Porsche 935

1980 – Merl/Joest/Stommelen – Porsche 935

1981 – Rahal/Garretson/Redman – Porsche 935

1982 – Paul Sr./Paul Jr./Stommelen – Porsche 935

1983 – Foyt/Ballot-Léna/Wollek/Henn – Porsche 935

1985 – Foyt/Unser/Wollek/Boutsen – Porsche 962

1986 – Holbert/Bell/Unser – Porsche 962

1987 – Holbert/Bell/Unser/Robinson – Porsche 962

1989 – Andretti/Bell/Wollek – Porsche 962

1991 – Jelinski/Haywood/Wollek/Pescarolo/Krages – Porsche 962

2003 – Buckler/Schrom/Bernhard/Bergmeister – Porsche 911 GT3 RS

Driver comments before the race

Nick Tandy (Porsche 963 #6): "After months of anticipation, we can finally get going now with the GTP class and the Porsche 963. We'll encounter an enormous grid line-up with all kinds of vehicles, so I expect there'll be huge international interest in this event. We're well prepared. In the search for

performance and stability, our crew considered and worked on everything down to the tiniest detail. It's my first time fighting for overall victory at Daytona. I'm ready!"

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 963 #6): "Like us drivers, our entire squad and the development team have invested countless hours in developing the new Porsche 963. We're heading to the first race full of anticipation and respect. We don't yet know exactly what's in store for us. We'd like to reach the finish line with as few incidents as possible. If we manage this, we'll be ahead of the game, earn a lot of points and maybe big trophies."

Matt Campbell (Porsche 963 #7): "We've put so much work and effort into developing the Porsche 963 over the past months to get it ready to race. The new era in endurance racing has finally arrived. For me, the step into hybrid prototypes also marks the start of a new chapter. I can hardly wait to climb into the car and fight for overall victories."

Felipe Nasr (Porsche 963 #7): "We're racing at last! I can't think of a better event to launch the new era of endurance racing than the 24 Hours of Daytona. This is the first time the new prototypes will fight for overall victory in the GTP class in what will hopefully be a close and fiercely-fought competition. Personally, it'll be a truly thrilling moment when I turn the first race laps in our car. Matt, Michael and I will do everything within our power to quickly turn the Porsche 963 into a winner."

Klaus Bachler (Porsche 911 GT3 R #9): "The new season in North America kicks off with a classic. This race is a very special highlight for me: it's my first full season in the IMSA series and it'll be the first big race outing for our new Porsche 911 GT3 R. I'm delighted that after many successful tests, we're now going racing. We're well prepared for the big task ahead."

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 911 GT3 R #9): "I love racing in the USA and Daytona is one of my favourite racetracks. The classic event there is the only major 24-hour race in GT sport that I haven't yet won. Last year I fought for class victory at Daytona against the Pfaff car and was narrowly beaten in the final minutes. This year I want to win with Pfaff at the wheel its new Porsche 911 GT3 R."

Dennis Olsen (Porsche 911 GT3 R #16): "Last year's event was a gripping battle to the very last lap. That duel for class victory between the two Porsche 911 GT3 R is still a hit on social media today – simply epic! I'm competing for Wright Motorsports with Ryan, Zacharie and Jan this season. We have a strong team but we're up against many strong rivals. Wright Motorsports won its class in 2022. We want to repeat that."

Kevin Magnussen (Porsche 911 GT3 R #53): "I watched my father race at Daytona for many years and now we're tackling the race in a team together – that means a lot to me. I've contested the event for the last two years so I know it well. Now I have this wonderful opportunity in the Porsche of MDK Motorsports. After contesting Le Mans as a father-son team, this is now our second major 24-hour race together. It's going to be awesome!"

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 GT3 R #77): "I don't know the Wright Motorsports team and my teammates

that well at this stage so we'll have some work to do at the 'Roar' pre-event test. I haven't yet spent much time in the new 911 GT3 R but I firmly believe that my teammates and the engineers in Weissach have put a great car on the track. We want to reach the flag without making any mistakes and finish at the front of the GTD class."

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