

Reigning champions Porsche Penske Motorsport kick off new IMSA season

20/01/2025 Porsche is looking to further expand its impressive record at the 24 Hours of Daytona. Following last year's 19th overall victory, the goal for the 2025 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season opener is clear: another triumph. Factory team Porsche Penske Motorsport enters the race as defending champions with a revised driver lineup for its two Porsche 963 entries. Customer teams JDC-Miller MotorSports and Proton Competition will also field identical hybrid prototypes in the premier GTP class. Additionally, four Porsche 911 GT3 R cars will compete in the GTD-Pro and GTD categories, including the Iron Dames team.

Atlanta. The 24 Hours of Daytona, a prestigious season opener for the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, will celebrate its 63rd season January 25-26 at the Daytona International Speedway in Daytona Beach, Florida. The GTP class will feature four Porsche 963s: two from Porsche Penske Motorsport, one from Proton Competition, and another from JDC-Miller MotorSports. Formula E World Champion Pascal Wehrlein from Germany will make his Daytona debut in the latter.

Teams took advantage of the “Roar Before the 24” test session last weekend, January 17-19, for intense race preparations. Across three days of official testing, the four Porsche 963s in the GTP class completed 636 laps (2,264 miles), while the four Porsche 911 GT3 R cars in the GT categories logged a combined distance of more than 2,400 miles. The results of these final tests have left Porsche Motorsport and its partners optimistic for the race weekend.

“Daytona was the springboard for many successes last year. The competition will be even tougher in 2025, but our ambitions remain undiminished,” said Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport. In 2024, the No. 7 Porsche 963 from Porsche Penske Motorsport triumphed at the iconic Florida race. “We’re aiming for another overall victory and are well-prepared for the fierce competition in the GTP top class and both GTD categories. Our race cars represent the Porsche brand on tracks worldwide as ambassadors, and we want to see the Porsche 963 and 911 GT3 R leading the pack!”

Porsche Penske Motorsport has refined numerous details after securing the 2024 championship. One significant update for the new season is the revised driver lineup. The No. 6 car will feature the season-long duo of Frenchman Mathieu Jaminet and Australia’s Matt Campbell, with additional support from Frenchman Kévin Estre at Daytona. The No. 7 sister car, driven full-time by reigning driver champion and 2024 Daytona winner Felipe Nasr from Brazil and Nick Tandy from the UK, will have Belgian Laurens Vanthoor join for the 24-hour race.

“We made consistent progress during the Roar in Daytona and are now fully prepared for the season’s first race week,” explains Urs Kuratle, Director Factory Motorsport LMDh. “Since its debut two years ago, the Porsche 963 has established itself as the most successful vehicle in its class. We are the reigning champions in both the IMSA Championship and FIA WEC. Moreover, our 2024 victory proved that our team can excel under the unique conditions of the 24 Hours of Daytona.”

"The past twelve months have flown by. A lot has happened since our victory a year ago," summarizes Jonathan Diuguid. The Managing Director of Porsche Penske Motorsport adds: "We are entering this year’s race exceptionally well prepared. Our sessions during the test in November 2024 and the Roar last weekend were positive. There were a few minor technical issues here and there, but that’s exactly what test sessions are for: resolving those kinds of things. I’m optimistic as we head into the upcoming race."

Focus on customer teams

Alongside the factory entries, the two customer Porsche 963 from JDC-Miller MotorSports and Proton Competition will also draw attention. The German-run Proton team’s No. 5 car will include factory driver Julien Andlauer from France and Swiss driver Neel Jani, a Le Mans overall winner in 2016 with the Porsche 919 Hybrid. His fellow Frenchman Tristan Vautier and American Nico Pino will complete the four-driver team for the race. In the No. 85 JDC-Miller MotorSports car, Porsche factory driver Pascal Wehrlein will share the cockpit with seasoned Italian driver Gianmaria Bruni and full-season IMSA drivers Bryce Aron and Tijmen van der Helm, with defending Formula E champion Wherlein making his

Daytona debut.

GT classes: “Rexy” targets title defense, Iron Dames set sights on success

In the GTD Pro category, AO Racing's Porsche 911 GT3 R aims to defend its IMSA title. The “Rexy” car, wrapped in its signature green dinosaur livery, will be driven by former Porsche Juniors Laurin Heinrich (Germany) and Klaus Bachler (Austria), along with Belgian driver Alessio Picariello. Proton Competition's identical race car will feature Austrian factory drivers Thomas Preining and Richard Lietz, with Italians Matteo Cressoni and Claudio Schiavoni sharing driving duties.

In the GTD class, the Iron Dames will debut their Porsche 911 GT3 R in the IMSA series. This new partnership between Porsche and the initiative supporting women in motorsport was launched late last year. In the No. 83 car, Michelle Gatting (Denmark), Sarah Bovy (Belgium), former DTM driver Rahel Frey and fellow Swiss Karen Gaillard will share driving duties. Wright Motorsports' 911 GT3 R will feature former Porsche junior Ayhancan Güven from Turkey among its lineup. Güven is joined by Austrailian Tom Sargent and American full-season entries Elliott Skeer and Adam Adelson. Adelson is already victorious this season at Daytona, having swept the VP Racing SportsCar Challenge sprint races in a Porsche 911 GT3 R during Roar weekend.

The Race

Opened in 1959, the Daytona International Speedway in Florida is renowned for its steeply banked turns, with angles of up to 31 degrees in the oval sections of the 3.56-mile course. This unique layout requires a special vehicle setup. With 19 overall victories as a constructor and four as an engine partner, Porsche remains the most successful manufacturer in Daytona's history. An additional 80 class wins round out this impressive record. The classic endurance race, which combines an oval with an infield road course, has been held since 1966.

The 24 Hours of Daytona also serves as the season opener for the IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup, a championship that awards points at six, 12, and 18 hours into the race, as well as at the finish. Other rounds in this endurance series include the 12 Hours of Sebring, the 6 Hours of Watkins Glen, a six-hour race in Indianapolis, and the 10-hour “Petit Le Mans” finale at Road Atlanta in October.

Driver quotes ahead of the 24 Hours of Daytona

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 963 #6): “After our success in 2024, we enter the new season with great confidence and high ambitions. Last year, our sister car won Daytona, and now we aim to lead the No. 6 car to the top. Matt and I are back as a duo this season, and Kévin will support us for the opener. We're set to be strong! Staying out of trouble early on and attacking at the end is always key at Daytona.”

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 963 #7):"This is one of my favorite races. I love the USA and always enjoy being in Florida. I've come close to success in Daytona multiple times, but something always got in the way. It's time to change that. The 24 Hours of Daytona is, along with Le Mans, a race I'm determined to win. This year, I'm in the defending champion car, the No. 7. It doesn't get better than that."

Julien Andlauer (Porsche 963 #5): "I'm delighted to be driving for Proton Competition again. This opportunity came together very quickly, with the call arriving just days before the Roar. We have a great foundation with our Porsche 963, and we'll focus on further optimization during practice sessions. The forecast suggests variable conditions for race weekend, which might add even more excitement. I hope we can keep it clean and end up with one of the fastest cars on track for maximum success."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 963 #85): "I'm thrilled about the 24 Hours of Daytona. This year, I'll compete in the Porsche 963 with JDC-Miller MotorSports. Sharing the car with my talented teammates Pascal, Tijmen, and Bryce is a great feeling. We have plenty of work ahead, and we're tackling preparations for the first race and the entire season with full focus."

Matteo Cressoni (Porsche 911 GT3 R #20): "Our driver lineup is newly assembled, but we all bring extensive experience with the Porsche 911 GT3 R. The team is working incredibly well together – they're simply fantastic! Things are shaping up even better than expected. We're preparing meticulously and staying fully focused for this big race."

Klaus Bachler (Porsche 911 GT3 R #77): "Porsche hasn't won a GT class in Daytona for the past two years. Now, at the start of the new IMSA season, we're aiming to change that. I'm confident that our AO Racing team is perfectly prepared. The squad is incredibly strong, and 'Rexy' is hungry for success after the winter break. My teammates Laurin and Alessio, along with myself, form a solid unit. I'm really looking forward to it because the 24 Hours of Daytona is always an absolute highlight to kick off the racing year."

Michelle Gatting (Porsche 911 GT3 R #83): "I'm very excited about my third start at the 24 Hours of Daytona. This time, we're competing in a Porsche – and for the first time, I'm part of the official Porsche driver roster. I'm extremely proud of this, as well as of the entire Iron Dames team. We're giving everything for a top result and aiming to make an early mark in our new partnership with Porsche."

Elliott Skeer (Porsche 911 GT3 R #120): "It feels like returning after summer vacation – back in the paddock and thrilled to see everyone again. However, some things have changed during the break. Our driver lineup is different, and there are slight adjustments to the car due to new torque sensors. This leaves a few open questions before the race, which actually reduces the pressure a bit since expectations aren't firmly set. Let's see where this journey takes us. We'll take it as it comes."

Porsche Race Cars and Drivers at the 24 Hours of Daytona

GTP Class (Porsche 963):

Porsche Penske Motorsport #6: Matt Campbell (AUS), Mathieu Jaminet (FRA), Kévin Estre (FRA)
Porsche Penske Motorsport #7: Felipe Nasr (BRA), Nick Tandy (GBR), Laurens Vanthoor (BEL)
Proton Competition #5: Julien Andlauer (FRA), Neel Jani (SUI), Tristan Vautier (FRA), Nico Pino (CHL)
JDC-Miller MotorSports #85: Pascal Wehrlein (GER), Gianmaria Bruni (ITA), Bryce Aron (USA), Tijmen van der Helm (NLD)

LMP2 Class (Oreca 07 Gibson):
Inter Europol Competition #43: António Félix da Costa (PRT), Tom Dillmann (FRA), Bijoy Garg (USA), Jon Field (USA)

GTD Pro Class (Porsche 911 GT3 R):
Proton Competition #20: Thomas Preining (AUT), Richard Lietz (AUT), Claudio Schiavoni (ITA), Matteo Cressoni (ITA)
AO Racing #77: Klaus Bachler (AUT), Laurin Heinrich (GER), Alessio Picariello (BEL)

GTD Class:
Iron Dames #83: Michelle Gatting (DNK), Rahel Frey (SUI), Sarah Bovy (BEL), Karen Gaillard (SUI)
Wright Motorsports #120: Ayhancan Güven (TUR), Adam Adelson (USA), Elliott Skeer (USA), Tom Sargent (AUS)
AWA #13: Lars Kern (GER), Matt Bell (GBR), Marvin Kirchhöfer (GER), Orey Fidani (CAN)

Schedule (all times EST): Thursday, January 23
10:05 – 11:35 AM: Free Practice
2:10 – 2:25 PM: GTD Qualifying
2:35 – 2:50 PM: GTD-Pro Qualifying
3:25 – 3:40 PM: GTP Qualifying
6:30 – 8:00 PM: Free Practice

Friday, January 24
11:20 AM – 12:20 PM: Free Practice

Saturday, January 25
1:40 PM: Start of the 63rd 24 Hours of Daytona

Sunday, January 26
1:40 PM: Finish of the 63rd 24 Hours of Daytona

All-Time Overall Porsche Victories at 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)
2024 – Nasr/Cameron/Campbell/Newgarden (Porsche 963)

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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Video

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