

Triple triumph for the Porsche 963, Manthey PureRxcing wins GT3 class

02/03/2024 Porsche Penske Motorsport stormed to a maiden victory with the Porsche 963 in the FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC). At the season opener in Qatar, factory drivers Kévin Estre (France), André Lotterer (Germany) and Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) crossed the finish line first at the wheel of the No. 6 car. The No. 5 sister car wrapped up the 1.13-mile (1.812-kilometer) event in third place. The customer team Hertz Team Jota rounded off Porsche's triumph with second place overall. In the new LMGT3 class, the Porsche 911 GT3 R from Manthey PureRxcing clinched first place.

Race

Atlanta. The Porsche 963 proved to be the car to beat early in the ten-hour race. Although Denmark's Michael Christensen lost the lead from pole position on the first lap in the No. 5 hybrid prototype, Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) quickly worked his way into the lead in the early stages at the wheel of the sister car. After approximately 90 minutes, the 678 HP race car from Weissach, Germany took first place and only relinquished it briefly over the next eight hours, exclusively due to different pit stop

rhythms. At the end of a nail-biting race on the Lusail International Circuit, Estre/Lotterer/Vanthoor scored the first world championship victory for the Porsche Penske Motorsport works team with a lead of over 30 seconds.

In sunny and warm conditions during the day and significantly cooler temperatures in the final hours, the No. 5 Porsche 963 consistently matched the pace with the leading vehicle. However, misfortune plagued Campbell/Christensen/Makowiecki, with the car having to unexpectedly pit twice due to tire damage. In a final all-out effort, 24 Hours At Daytona winner Matt Campbell made an impressive comeback, propelling the team to the final podium spot. Admittedly, the team also benefited from Peugeot's bad luck. The rival car had been running in second place for a long stretch only to be hampered in the final laps by a technical defect.

"We worked extremely hard and were rewarded in the best possible way. This success is difficult to put into words," explains Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport. "Everyone involved did an immaculate job. The team and the drivers gave a commanding performance. Congratulations as well to the entire team at home in Weissach. Nobody could have expected a triple success for Porsche. But my respect also goes to Peugeot. It's bitter to be thwarted so close to the finish line. They deserved to be on the podium with us. Manthey PureRxcing's Porsche 911 GT3 R won in the new LMGT3 class. The start of the season couldn't have gone better."

"Today we achieved another milestone with our Porsche Penske Motorsport team," reflected Roger Penske, team founder and chairman of Penske Corporation. "This is a long-term project, which started a long time ago. Experiencing our first overall victory in the FIA WEC at the start of the 2024 season is an exceptionally nice feeling. It's the result of the tireless efforts of everyone in the team."

"Our Porsche Penske Motorsport team has now enjoyed the perfect start to the new season on both sides of the Atlantic," comments Jonathan Diuguid. The Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport added: "After our victory in Daytona, we were extremely fast with both cars in Qatar today and were rewarded with a victory and a podium finish. This success was the result of hard work. We gave everything we had over the entire distance. It was tough until the last lap. Now we're all looking forward to the rest of the season."

The Hertz Team Jota customer crew showcased the might of the Porsche 963 in Qatar. The two UK racers Callum Ilott and Will Stevens as well as the Frenchman Norman Nato delivered a flawless drive at the wheel of the No. 12 car and crossed the finish line in second place. The sister car driven by ex-Formula 1 world champion Jenson Button from Great Britain, his fellow countryman Phil Hanson and Oliver Rasmussen from Denmark maintained a spot in the top 8 over long stretches but retired with about 30 minutes left on the clock. The identical Hypercar fielded by Proton Competition with Julien Andlauer from France, Neel Jani from Switzerland and Harry Tincknell from Great Britain finished the season opener in eleventh position.

In the new LMGT3 category, Manthey PureRxcing set the benchmark. The Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by the seasoned customer team was at the front of the 18-strong LMGT3 field over almost the entire

distance. After clinching the title in the Asian Le Mans Series, the drivers Klaus Bachler from Austria, Joel Sturm from Germany and Alex Malykhin from Great Britain now followed up with a season opening victory in the FIA WEC in Qatar. Manthey EMA's 911 took the flag in 15th place.

"This weekend we won the first world championship race based on FIA GT3 vehicles. This is a new chapter of racing history," said Sebastian Golz, Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R. "From the development efforts of the entire project team to the test and race preparation by the Manthey team and their drivers – this teamwork has paid off and it makes me particularly proud. We'll take some insights and homework with us from Qatar because it's just the beginning of a challenging season."

Thanks to its successes in the top Hypercar class, Porsche and the Porsche Penske Motorsport works team now lead all categories in the championship standings. Hertz Team Jota ranks first for private teams in the FIA WEC, Manthey PureRxcing tops the leaderboard in the LMGT3 class. Round two of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC is the six-hour race at Italy's Imola circuit on April 21. This marks a WEC debut on the Formula 1 track there, after previous races in Monza, Italy.

Drivers' comments after the race

Kévin Estre, Driver, No. 6 Porsche Penske Motorsport Porsche 963.
"I'm incredibly proud that we all achieved this together. Our car was extremely strong today and the team worked flawlessly. Still, it wasn't nearly as easy as it might have looked from the outside – definitely not! We encountered many tricky situations, and we also had some contact with other cars. Two hours before the flag, a collision caused significant damage. But even with a less-than-ideal car, we did it. Thanks to everyone in the team and my teammates."

André Lotterer, Driver, No. 6 Porsche Penske Motorsport Porsche 963.
"I've waited a long time for this. Finally, my first victory for Porsche! Today we had three No. 6 drivers on top of the podium. This triumph is thanks to every single person in the team. Everyone worked incredibly hard and improved so many things for the new season. It works perfectly. We also experienced some nail-biting moments in the race, but we kept out cool and brought home the win. We'd be happy to continue like this."

Laurens Vanthoor, Driver, No. 6 Porsche Penske Motorsport Porsche 963.
"I'm absolutely delighted. I've dreamed of this day for a long time! It's simply incredible to see how much we've progressed compared to the start of the last season. We've improved significantly in all areas. It's great to be a part of it. I'm proud of what we've achieved, and I will remember this moment for many years to come."

Frédéric Makowiecki, Driver, No. 5 Porsche Penske Motorsport Porsche 963.
"What a tremendous start to the new WEC year with a victory for the sister car and third place for our Porsche 963. After a few setbacks, we pulled out all the stops to get back to the top. Okay, it wasn't entirely successful but at least we were all on the podium together. Now we'll celebrate today's victory

as a team. It's fantastic to kick of the year like this after the difficult 2023 season."

Norman Nato, Driver, No. 12 Hertz Team Jota Porsche 963.
"Before the start of the race weekend, it was difficult to judge how we'd stack up against the others in the Hypercar class. Did we expect to finish on the podium? Probably not – but we did it. How great is that! I can't wait for the next race."

Harry Tincknell, Driver No. 99 Proton Competition Porsche 963. "
It was a kind of learning week for us. The last time I drove the car was in Bahrain in 2023. A lot of things were new and unfamiliar. It's great to have Julien on board. The teamwork runs smoothly. Our race pace was great at times, but we need to maintain this even more consistently. I'm thrilled that a Porsche won."

Klaus Bachler, Driver, No. 99 Manthey PureRxcing Porsche 911 GT3 R.
"What a crazy result. It was my first race in a FIA world championship so winning off the bat is simply a dream. Massive thanks to my team and fellow drivers. We put so much energy into this project and prepared everything meticulously. The first victory is in the bag. Seven more races to go – including the 24 Hours of Le Mans. There's still a lot ahead of us."

Race result

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Hypercar class:
1. Estre/Lotterer/Vanthoor (F/D/B), Porsche 963 No. 6, 335 laps
2. Stevens/Ilott/Nato (UK/UK/F), Porsche 963 No. 12, 335 laps
3. Campbell/Christensen/Makowiecki (AUS/DK/F), Porsche 963 No. 5, 335 laps
11. Andlauer/Jani/Tincknell (F/CH/UK), Porsche 963 No. 99, 333 laps
18. Button/Hanson/Rasmussen (UK/UK/DK), Porsche 963 No. 38, 309 laps

LMGT3 class:
1. Malykhin/Sturm/Bachler (UK/D/A), Porsche 911 GT3 R No. 92, 299 laps
2. James/Mancinelli/Riberas (US/I/E), Aston Martin No. 27, 299 laps
3. Mateu/Bastard/Sorensen (F/F/DK), Aston Martin No. 777, 298 laps
15. Shahin/Schuring/Lietz (AUS/NL/A), Porsche 911 GT3 R No. 91, 284 laps

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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