

Porsche Penske Motorsport works team wins the WEC race in Fuji

15/09/2024 Porsche Penske Motorsport has claimed its second victory in this season's FIA World Endurance Championship (WEC) with the Porsche 963. Thanks to this triumph, the works team has retaken the lead in the manufacturers' classification.

Race

At the Fuji Speedway in Japan, Laurens Vanthoor, André Lotterer and Kévin Estre took the flag in first place after a flawless 6-hour race. The trio travels to the final in Bahrain leading the standings, which puts them in an excellent position to take home the WEC championship title. With fifth place, the Hertz Team Jota customer team has clinched an early FIA World Cup title for private Hypercar teams. Manthey PureRxcing has also been crowned early LMGT3 world champions with drivers Alex Malykhin, Joel Sturm and Klaus Bachler.

The 6-hour race on the 4.563-kilometre Fuji Speedway was held in hot summer air temperatures of 30

degrees Celsius and 40-degree asphalt temperatures. More than 65,000 spectators were treated to many spirited duels for positions. Laurens Vanthoor tackled the penultimate race of the season with the No. 6 Porsche from fifth on the grid. In the early stages, the Belgian quickly advanced to third position. After just over an hour of racing and the first round of pit stops, the 963, which Vanthoor shared with Germany's André Lotterer and Kévin Estre from France, appeared at the top of the timesheets for the first time.

The race began with a nasty surprise for the No. 5 Porsche 963: At the beginning of the second lap, the hybrid prototype driven by starting driver Frédéric Makowiecki was shunted into another car. As a result, the Frenchman had to pull in for an unscheduled pit stop to have the front hood, engine cover and rear wing replaced. This incident as well as an additional stop for refuelling happened during a safety car phase, thus Makowiecki remained in the same lap as the leaders. However, shortly before the start of the last hour of racing, the vehicle became entangled in a collision caused by a rival and sustained damage to the wheel suspension – heralding an early retirement.

“This tremendous result has inched us closer to our goal of winning the World Endurance Championship,” states Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President of Porsche Motorsport. “I have the utmost respect for the entire team! At the same time, my congratulations go to Hertz Team Jota and Manthey PureRxcing: They have already won the first championship titles with and for Porsche. I'm deeply grateful for that!”

“That was definitely one of the best races we've contested so far with the Porsche 963 – our strategy was perfect and the pit stops were sensational,” asserts Urs Kuratle, Director Factory Motorsport LMDh. “Now we're well and truly back in the race for the world championship title because we extended our points lead in the drivers' standings and returned to the top spot in the manufacturers' rankings. What a pity for our number 5 sister car: it was shunted twice and we had to retire it early.”

“I couldn't be prouder of the entire Porsche Penske Motorsport crew – we had an amazing day here in Fuji. It's brilliant that our number 6 Porsche managed to win. We're back on top in both areas of the championship and looking strong going to Bahrain. The number 5 crew executed a perfect race until it had another contact with a competitor. But for the number 6 crew to bring home the victory in Japan was an amazing effort.”

This marks the third victory for the Porsche 963 in this year's World Endurance Championship. Including the successes in the North American IMSA series, the hybrid prototype has so far finished first in ten races. Thanks to these achievements, the Porsche Penske Motorsport works team has maintained its lead in the drivers' and manufacturers' standings in both championships.

Hypercar team title for Porsche's customer team Hertz Team Jota

The race at the Fuji Speedway also proved hugely successful for Hertz Team Jota: fifth place in the overall standings was enough for the No. 12 Porsche shared by Norman Nato (France), Callum Ilott and

Will Stevens (both Great Britain) to clinch an early FIA World Cup crown for Hypercar private teams as the best customer squad. The trio started from 16th on the grid. The sister car driven by the British Formula 1 world champion Jenson Button, his fellow countryman Phil Hanson and Oliver Rasmussen (Denmark) crossed the finish line in sixth place.

Sam Hignett, founder of Hertz Team Jota: "Given where we were after qualifying, that was a fantastic result – the strategy from the engineers and the dedication of the drivers got us this result. We're delighted to become the FIA Hypercar Team World Cup Champions for the second consecutive season."

After a strong start, Proton Competition concluded the 6 Hours of Fuji in eleventh place with another Porsche 963.

Manthey PureRxcing takes titles in both LMGT3 championships

After an inspired charge from 14th on the grid, Englishman Alex Malykhin, Joel Sturm from Germany and Austrian Klaus Bachler finished second in the LMGT3 class in Fuji. Their Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by Manthey PureRxcing was loaded with 40 kilograms of success ballast. The result was enough for the trio to secure early titles in the FIA Endurance Trophy for GT3 teams and drivers. The Manthey EMA sister car achieved 14th place. Yasser Shahin (Australia), Morris Schuring (Netherlands) and Richard Lietz (Austria) were hampered by a puncture, among other issues.

"I'm extremely proud of the team! We once again turned a race to our advantage with an extremely good strategy and zero mistakes, because we weren't the fastest on the track," said a delighted Nikolas Raeder, Manthey's managing director, after clinching both trophies. "The three drivers in the number 92 car also did a perfect job. The season finale in Bahrain will be exciting for us because we can still win the vice-championship with the number 91 car. That would of course round things off beautifully for us!"

Bahrain hosts the eighth and final round of this year's FIA WEC from 31 October to 2 November. For the eight-hour race on the 5.412-kilometre Bahrain International Circuit (BIC), 1.5-times the points will be awarded, with the winner receiving 38 points instead of 25.

Drivers' comments after the race

André Lotterer (Porsche 963 #6):"I'm over the moon about the win! This is tremendous for the championship and very emotional for me: I really wanted to win in Fuji – after so many years living in Japan, this feels like a home race. Today it finally worked out!"

Matt Campbell (Porsche 963 #5):"We'd fought our way back up the order after the early setback only to be caught off guard by a virtual safety car phase. Then contact with a Toyota threw us out of the race completely. Still, it was a stellar day for the team with victory for the sister car and the reclaimed lead in the manufacturers' championship. Now we are looking ahead to Bahrain."

Neel Jani (Porsche 963 #99):"We succeeded in advancing to seventh place after the start but then our misery began. We missed the right tyre pressure window at one point, then we were surprised by a yellow phase at the worst possible moment when we had to stop. As a result, we lost a lap and were out of the running. We could have finished in seventh or eighth place, but we lacked the performance for a podium result. Such a shame. So many competitors made mistakes today, we should've been up there."

Norman Nato (Porsche 963 #12):"After starting from P16, things turned a bit chaotic in the first lap and then we worked our way up to fifth place – not bad for a weekend where we weren't that strong, especially over a single lap. After not being so strong in the last two races, this has earned us decent points towards the championship."

Jenson Button (Porsche 963 #38):"We should be happy with fifth and sixth place in terms of how we executed the race. In this regard, Fuji was probably our best race as a team this year. No one made mistakes and this time we were lucky. But in general, we don't have the overall pace. Now we'll try to improve for the last event in Bahrain."

Klaus Bachler (Porsche 911 GT3 R #92): "I'm overjoyed – thanks to everyone in the team for making it happen today. A great strategic decision catapulted us right to the front at the beginning of the race. Ultimately, we were right on the pace with our Porsche, even though the car wasn't the fastest due to the 40 kgs of extra weight. Thanks to a zero-error performance, we won the world championship with second place before the season finale. For me personally, a dream has come true. I'm going to enjoy it now and celebrate."

Race result

Hypercar class:
1. Estre/Lotterer/Vanthoor (F/D/B), Porsche 963 #6, 213 laps
2. Vanthoor/Marciello/Wittmann (B/CH/D), BMW #15, + 16.601 seconds
3. Lapierre/Schumacher/Vaxiviere (F/D/F), Alpine #35, + 42.321 seconds
5. Stevens/Ilott/Nato (UK/UK/F), Porsche 963 #12, + 49.689 seconds
6. Button/Hanson/Rasmussen (UK/UK/DK), Porsche 963 #38, + 51.916 seconds
11. Tincknell/Jani/Andlauer (UK/CH/F), Porsche 963 #99, + 1 lap
DNF Campbell/Christensen/Makowiecki (AUS/DK/F), Porsche 963 #5

LMGT3 class:
1. Flohr/Castellaci/Rigon (CH/I/I), Ferrari #54, 194 laps
2. Malykhin/Sturm/Bachler (UK/D/A), Porsche 911 GT3 R #92, + 3.775 seconds
3. Al Harthy/Rossi/Martin (OM/I/B), BMW #46, + 7.061 seconds
14. Shahin/Schuring/Lietz (AUS/NL/A), Porsche 911 GT3 R #91, + 1 lap

Full results and championship standings at fiawec.alkamelsystems.com.

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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Subline: Urs Kuratle (Director Factory Motorsport LMDh) and Laurens Vanthoor (B) from Porsche Penske Motorsport (#6)

Path: Porsche Penske Motorsport works team wins the WEC race in Fuji/Images/img_3.jpg
Title: Norman Nato (F), Will Stevens (UK), Callum Ilott (UK), Hertz Team Jota (#12), FIA WEC, Fuji, Race, 2024, Porsche AG
Subline: Norman Nato (F), Will Stevens (UK) and Callum Ilott (UK) from Hertz Team Jota (#12)

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