

Porsche tackles Daytona 24 Hours from third on the grid

21/01/2024 The best Porsche 963 of the Porsche Penske Motorsport factory squad heads into the 24 Hours of Daytona from the second grid row. In qualifying for the opening round of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, Felipe Nasr from Brazil set the third-quickest lap time at the wheel of the No. 7 car. In the No. 6 sister car, his Porsche colleague Nick Tandy from Britain wrapped up the qualifying session in the US state of Florida on P7. In the GT classes, the Porsche 911 GT3 R put in a strong drive to score pole position and second place.

Qualifying

Under cloudy skies and in cool temperatures, the conditions at the Daytona International Speedway were ideal for a nail-biting qualifying day. The 15-minute qualifying session for the top GTP class concluded without incident. As tyre temperatures rose, the LMDh cars picked up the pace and broke the previous Daytona lap record for prototypes. During his eight laps out on the track, works driver Felipe Nasr continued to improve. Clocking 1:32.876 minutes in the No. 7 Porsche 963, the Brazilian secured

the third grid spot. Le Mans winner Nick Tandy was unable to improve in the decisive final lap and had to settle for seventh place at the wheel of the No. 6 car.

“We would’ve loved to have secured pole position, but unfortunately that didn’t quite work out. Congratulations to Cadillac. Their crew simply did it better,” comments Urs Kuratle, Director of Factory Racing LMDh. “We didn’t make any mistakes. All teams were very close together. I think we have a decent grid position for the race. After all, the event runs over 24 hours, so anything is possible. The forecast for the race weekend is for warmer temperatures. We’re ready for this and so we’re feeling optimistic for the season opener.”

“The drivers in our two Porsche 963 did a great job, and so did the entire crew. Felipe turned the third quickest time,” summarises Jonathan Diuguid. The Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport adds: “Even though the sister car is only seventh on the grid, I’m confident that we managed to achieve a good starting position. The drivers are very happy with the car’s handling in race trim. So I’m feeling positive about the 24-hour event.”

Proton Competition and JDC-Miller MotorSports achieve a solid result

Heading into the new IMSA season, luck eluded the Porsche 963 customer teams on Sunday. Dutchman Tijmen van der Helm concluded the qualifying session in ninth place at the wheel of the JDC-Miller MotorSports car. The identical Proton Competition car remained in the garage during the session: Swiss driver Neel Jani was involved in an accident during a brief test session before qualifying. The repairs needed prevented him from taking part in the qualifying session.

GT classes: Pole position and P2 for the Porsche 911 GT3 R

In the two GT categories, the 911 GT3 R put in impressive qualifying performances. UK driver Sebastian Priaulx set the fastest lap time in the GTD Pro class with a time of 1:44.382 minutes. AO Racing’s 911, dubbed “Rexy” due to its bright green dinosaur livery, tackles the 24-hour race from pole position. In the GTD category, Klaus Bachler lines up on the grid in second place in the Porsche fielded by the customer team MDK Motorsports. The Austrian was just 0.043 seconds off pole position. The identical 911 GT3 R fielded by Andretti Motorsports and Wright Motorsports wrapped up the qualifying session in twelfth and 19th respectively. American David Brule had an accident at the wheel of Kellymoss with Riley's No. 92 car on the warm-up lap. As a result, the American team has to start the race from the back of the field.

Four more practice sessions before the endurance classic kicks off

Next Thursday and Friday (25/26 January), four more practice sessions are scheduled for the teams

and their 59 cars. The 62nd running of the 24 Hours of Daytona starts on Saturday (27 January) at 1:40 pm local time (7:40 pm CET). The opening round of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship is part of the IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup, which also includes the endurance races at Sebring, Watkins Glen, Indianapolis and the "Petit Le Mans" at Road Atlanta.

Drivers' comments after the qualifying

Nick Tandy (Porsche 963 #6): "Cadillac was incredibly strong, which surprised me a little. Still, we want to win the race – not the qualifying. In Daytona, it's all about being the fastest in the final and decisive phase next Sunday. We're contesting an endurance race here, and the focus is always on reaching the finish. Our cars are running flawlessly. We've worked hard over the winter and we're seeing the results. I'm heading into the upcoming race week feeling good."

Felipe Nasr (Porsche 963 #7): "Third place is okay. I got everything I could out of our car today. The crew did a great job. I'm totally convinced that we're contesting the race with a strong package. We'll continue to focus on working on consistency over long distances in the upcoming practice sessions starting on Thursday. We need to be perfectly prepared to be in the fight for victory next weekend."

Tijmen van der Helm (Porsche 963 #85): "We're closer to the other teams compared to last year, so we've made progress, even though we still have a long way to go. Today was the qualifying for an endurance race. We're facing a 24-hour event, so the grid spot doesn't really matter. The main thing is that we keep up with the others. That's what makes an exciting and good competition. If we reach the flag without any incidents, we should be able to achieve something good."

Sebastian Priaulx (Porsche 911 GT3 R #77): "Well, that was unexpected! I gave everything I had and ended up on pole. Today was my day! Everything ran perfectly. Now we have a long race ahead of us. We shouldn't let the grid position distract us from the big challenge next weekend. Still, it's always nice when you can go into an important race week with a good feeling and on the wave of success. I'm thrilled."

Klaus Bachler (Porsche 911 GT3 R #86): "That was a great qualifying. Many thanks to the team – this is my first time working with them. Now we can continue to prepare systematically for the race. Although we still need to tick off a few things on our list, second place in qualifying shows that our Porsche is already fast – at least in cool temperatures. Now we have to make sure that this continues in the hotter temperatures next weekend. It'll be a long race with many challenges and a lot of strategy. We aim to be in the fight for the class win."

Qualifying result

GTP class:

1. Derani/Aitken/Blomqvist (BR/UK/UK), Cadillac #31, 1:32.656 minutes

2. Van der Zande/Bourdais/Dixon/Palou (NL/F/NZ/E), Cadillac #01, 1:32.727 minutes
3. Cameron/Nasr/Campbell/Newgarden (USA/BR/AUS/USA), Porsche 963 #7, 1:32.876 minutes
7. Tandy/Jaminet/Estre/Vanthoor (UK/F/F/B), Porsche 963 #6, 1:33.381 minutes
9. Van der Helm/Westbrook/Hanson/Keating (NL/UK/UK/USA), Porsche 963 #85, 1:33.506 minutes
10. Bruni/Jani/Picariello/Dumas (I/CH/B/F), Porsche 963 #5, no lap time

GTD-Pro class:
1. Heinrich/Priaulx/Christensen (D/UK/DK), Porsche 911 GT3 R #77, 1:44.382 minutes
2. Hawksworth/Barnicoat/Kirkwood/Conway (UK/UK/USA/UK), Lexus #14, 1:44.462 minutes
3. Garcia/Sims/Juncadella (E/UK/E), Corvette #3, 1:44.786 minutes

GTD class:
1. Montecalvo/Thompson/Telitz/Miyata (USA/CDN/USA/J), Lexus #12, 1:44.494 minutes
2. Li/Fjordbach/Ten Voorde/Bachler (CHN/DK/NL/A), Porsche 911 GT3 R #86, 1:44.537 minutes
3. Monk/Legge/Calderon/McAleer (USA/UK/COL/UK), Acura #66, 1:44.640 minutes
12. Andretti/Chavez/Hargrove/Preining (USA/USA/CDN/A), Porsche 911 GT3 R #43, 1:45.115 minutes
19. Adelson/Skeer/Heylen/Makowiecki (USA/USA/B/F), Porsche 911 GT3 R #120, 1:45.983 minutes
23. Brule/Udell/Hindman/Andlauer (USA/USA/USA/F), Porsche 911 GT3 R #92, no lap time

Full results at https://imsa.alkamelsystems.com.

Preview

Porsche will field the 963 for the second time at the 24 Hours of Daytona. The Porsche Penske Motorsport factory squad has turned the insights gained from the race car's debut year into further improvements and now travels with confidence to the season opener of the 2024 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship on 27/28 January. At the endurance classic in Florida, four works drivers each helm the two hybrid racers. The goal is clear: As the Daytona record-holder, Porsche is determined to bring home its 19th outright victory.

“Based on our findings from last year’s outings in the IMSA series, the FIA WEC, and our test sessions, we’ve further optimised both the car and the team’s processes for the new season,” explains Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport. “We’re confident that we’ll be considerably better prepared for the classic at Daytona this year. In 2023, we narrowly missed out on the title in North America. That shouldn’t happen this year. Our bid for the championship crown will hopefully begin with a strong race at Daytona.”

“The endurance races were our Achilles heel last year,” reflects Urs Kuratle. The Director Factory Motorsport LMDh adds: “We took a very close look at the issue of reliability and implemented appropriate measures. I’m confident that we have everything ironed out for the upcoming season. Our most recent test drives were almost entirely focussed on endurance runs. We covered many kilometres

with excellent results. We've also made further progress with some of the team's processes. I'm looking forward to the season opener in Daytona feeling very confident."

"Stepping into a new season as a team always brings a mix of anticipation and trepidation. The clean scoreboard puts all manufacturers on the starting line together and the upcoming season rests in our hands," comments Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport. "On the flip side however, we're all aware that the off-season is when championships are really won. Until the green flag falls at the start of the race, we don't really know how we stack up against our competitors. I am confident and proud of the efforts our team has made over the off-season to ensure we are prepared for the challenge that the Daytona 24 Hours presents. In 2023, we scored three victories, two pole positions and four further podium results – but there were certainly some areas of improvement. We've made some operational changes and worked on improving the car, and we saw the benefits of these adjustments at our recent test sessions. The reality is that we go to the 24 Hours of Daytona to win and, to do so, we need to be near-perfect. In season two there are no excuses for being anything less."

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. With 18 overall wins as a constructor and four as an engine partner, Porsche is by far the most successful manufacturer at Daytona. A further 80 class wins round off this impressive scorecard. The classic event has been contested on the combination of the tri-oval and the infield road course since 1966.

Traditionally, the event on the East Coast of America starts with the so-called "Roar Before the 24". As part of the three-day tests before the new IMSA season gets underway, participants will qualify for the 24-hour race. 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 for crossing the finish line. In addition to the season-opening round in Florida, the championship includes the 12 Hours of Sebring, the 6-hour races at Watkins Glen and Indianapolis as well as the so-called "Petit Le Mans". The IMSA season wraps up in October with this ten-hour race on the Road Atlanta circuit.

The works cars

Four factory drivers will crew each of Porsche Penske Motorsport's two Porsche 963. UK driver Nick Tandy and Mathieu Jaminet from France share the No. 6 cockpit with Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium and the Frenchman Kévin Estre. In the No. 7 sister car, Felipe Nasr from Brazil and Dane Cameron (USA) receive support from the American IndyCar star Josef Newgarden and Matt Campbell. Cameron and Campbell are swapping series for the 2024 season: The American is fully committed to the IMSA series, with the Australian contesting the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC.

The customer teams

The customer squads JDC-Miller MotorSports and Proton Competition each campaign one Porsche 963 in the top GTP class. The German team's No. 5 car is shared by the Porsche works drivers Gianmaria Bruni from Italy and Romain Dumas from France with Belgium's Alessio Picariello and Neel Jani from Switzerland. Tijmen van der Helm from the Netherlands and the seasoned UK race driver Richard Westbrook make up the regular crew in JDC-Miller MotorSports' No. 85 car. For the endurance race, they receive support from Englishman Phil Hanson, with successful amateur driver Ben Keating (USA) joining them as the fourth driver in Daytona.

The Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by AO Racing will tackle the GTD Pro category. Former Porsche Junior Laurin Heinrich from Germany and Sebastian Priaulx from the UK are the regular drivers in the No. 77 car. At Daytona, they will be supported by Michael Christensen. The Dane is part of Porsche's works driver squad, as is the experienced Frenchman Frédéric Makowiecki, who will drive the No. 120 Porsche 911 GT3 R for Wright Motorsports at the 2024 season opener. The same applies to Austrian Thomas Preining. The defending DTM champion will share Andretti Motorsports' No. 43 car with Jarett Andretti (USA), Colombian Gabby Chaves and Scott Hargrove from Canada. Julien Andlauer, Preining, Campbell, Jaminet, Christensen and Klaus Bachler have also come up through the ranks of the Porsche Junior programme.

Drivers' comments before the race

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 963 #6): "The new season is starting and finally it's time to get going again! After last year's experiences, we have a score to settle. I very much hope that we'll have a little more luck on our side in the major endurance classics in 2024. Our entire team has been working hard to make further progress. With that in mind, I believe we'll be competitive in Daytona. In 2023, the battle between the GTP manufacturers was always very close. It'll be no different this season. We have to do everything perfectly. If we can do that, we have a chance of winning."

Felipe Nasr (Porsche 963 #7): "Here we go again – I'm ready. It was nice to spend some time in my home country of Brazil during the break and prepare for the upcoming season. 2023 was a steep learning curve for our Porsche Penske Motorsport team. We were able to make significant progress in many areas. It's a shame that it ultimately wasn't enough to win the title. The season opener at Daytona is always a big highlight. Everyone really wants to win this race. With a year's experience, I think we're in a much better position, especially in terms of reliability. Our driver crew is strong. I expect we'll be in with a chance for victory."

Gianmaria Bruni (Porsche 963 #5): "I'm thrilled to be competing in the top class at Daytona and be in the fight for overall victory. Unfortunately, we're lacking test kilometres. Other competitors are certainly much better prepared. I'll be contesting the entire IMSA season and I'm looking forward to seeing how we perform as a team over the year."

Tijmen van der Helm (Porsche 963 #85): "We performed very well in our test drives – that gives me confidence for the upcoming challenges. I'm really looking forward to the start of the season and an exciting Daytona 24-hour race. Even though Florida is the so-called 'Sunshine State' of the USA, we always have to be prepared for capricious weather, especially in January. It can get very cold and sometimes there's torrential rain. That throws a spanner in the works, but it also opens up opportunities."

Laurin Heinrich (Porsche 911 GT3 R #77): "It was a childhood dream of mine to represent Porsche at the 24-hour race in Daytona. This is now coming true for me in AO Racing's 911 GT3 R. I'm heading into the season feeling highly motivated and with hopes of contributing some of my experience, for example, from the DTM. We've already completed the first tests. They gave me a lot of confidence. It's a huge adventure for me to compete in the GTD Pro class throughout the year. I've worked hard on it and have made guest appearances in North America from time to time to prepare myself for something like this. At the age of just 22, I now have the opportunity to drive in this incredible series – it's just fantastic!"

Thomas Preining (Porsche 911 GT3 R #43): "My very first race in the North American IMSA series is coming up, which will definitely be cool. Our driver line-up is strong. I'm assuming we can make something really good happen in Daytona. That being said, 24-hour races are notorious for surprises. Sometimes you think you're perfectly set up, but then suddenly nothing works. Other times, it's the other way around. Let's see what it looks like when it counts. I don't know the series, the track or the team so it's completely new territory for me. Fortunately, we have the 'Roar' in advance, so we can get used to each other and the team processes during the test."

Klaus Bachler (Porsche 911 GT3 R #86): "I always do everything I can to be on the grid at Daytona – it's simply perfect that it's happening again this year. The race there is always action-packed with plenty of suspense and it's usually wide open until the very end. This will be my ninth start at Daytona. Often, I've narrowly missed out on victory. I definitely want to change that! We're all working hard and systematically as a team to turn the dream of standing on the top step of the podium after 24 hours into reality."

Julien Andlauer (Porsche 911 GT3 R #92): "I'm a massive fan of the 24-hour race in Daytona. That's why I was so thrilled when I got the call in mid-December informing me that I'll be racing with Kellymoss with Riley. I competed for the team several times in the 2023 season – it's almost my IMSA home. My teammates David Brule and Alec Udell are also back – perfect! Together, our sights are set on a top result."

Adam Adelson (Porsche 911 GT3 R #120): "I'm very grateful and excited to be competing in the IMSA with Wright Motorsports in the 2024 season. It's a great step to be already racing in the top class in my second year of competition in the GT3 category. I'll be sharing the Porsche in the IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup races with my teammate from last year, Elliott Skeer, and Jan Heylen. Jan has an incredible amount of experience. I hope to learn a lot from him."

An overview of the drivers and teams

GTP class (Porsche 963):
Proton Competition #5: Gianmaria Bruni (I) / Romain Dumas (F) / Alessio Picariello (B) / Neel Jani (CH)
Porsche Penske Motorsport #6: Mathieu Jaminet (F) / Nick Tandy (UK) / Laurens Vanthoor (B) / Kévin Estre (F)
Porsche Penske Motorsport #7: Dane Cameron (USA) / Felipe Nasr (BR) / Josef Newgarden (USA) / Matt Campbell (AUS)
JDC-Miller MotorSports #85: Tijmen van der Helm (NL) / Richard Westbrook (UK) / Ben Keating (USA) / Phil Hanson (UK)

GTD-Pro class (Porsche 911 GT3 R):
AO Racing #77: Laurin Heinrich (D) / Sebastian Priaulx (UK) / Michael Christensen (DK)

GTD class (Porsche 911 GT3 R):
Andretti Motorsports #43: Jarett Andretti (USA) / Gabby Chaves (COL) / Scott Hargrove (CDN) / Thomas Preining (A)
MDK Motorsports #86: Anders Fjordbach (DK) / Kerong Li (CHN) / Klaus Bachler (A) / Larry ten Voorde (NL)
Kellymoss with Riley #92: David Brule (USA) / Alec Udell (USA) / Trent Hindman (USA) / Julien Andlauer (F)
Wright Motorsports #120: Adam Adelson (USA) / Elliott Skeer (USA) / Jan Heylen (B) / Frédéric Makowiecki (F)

The schedule (local time, CET -6 hours)

Friday, 19 January
11:00 am to 12:30 pm: Test session 1
4:15 pm to 6:00 pm: Test session 2

Saturday, 20 January
11:15 am – 12:45 pm: Test session 3
3:10 pm – 4:10 pm: Test session 4
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm: Test session 5

Sunday, 21 January
1:25 pm – 1:50 pm: Test session 6 (only GTP class)
1:55 pm – 2:10 pm: Qualifying GTD Pro/GTD
2:45 pm – 3:00 pm: Qualifying GTP

Thursday, 25 January

10:05 am – 11:35 am: Free practice 1
2:10 pm – 3:55 pm: Free practice 2
6:35 pm – 8:05 pm: Free practice 3

Friday, 26 January
11:20 am – 12:20 pm: Free practice 4

Saturday, 27 January
1:40 pm: Start of the 24 Hours of Daytona

Sunday, 28 January
1:40 pm: Finish of the 24 Hours of Daytona

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)

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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Image Sublines

Path: Porsche tackles Daytona 24 Hours from third on the grid/Images/img_2.jpg
Title: Porsche 963, JDC-Miller MotorSports (#85), Tijmen van der Helm (NL), Richard Westbrook (UK), Phil Hanson (UK), Ben Keating (USA), IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, Race 1, Qualifying, Daytona, 2024, Porsche AG
Subline: JDC-Miller MotorSports

Path: Porsche tackles Daytona 24 Hours from third on the grid/Images/img_3.jpg
Title: Porsche 911 GT3 R, MDK Motorsports (#86), Anders Fjordbach (DK), Kerong Li (CHN), Klaus Bachler (A), Larry ten Voorde (NL), IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, Race 1, Qualifying, Daytona, 2024, Porsche AG
Subline: MDK Motorsports

Path: Porsche tackles Daytona 24 Hours from third on the grid/Images/img_4.jpg
Title: Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President of Porsche Motorsport, 2024, Porsche AG
Subline: Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President of Porsche Motorsport

Path: Porsche tackles Daytona 24 Hours from third on the grid/Images/img_5.jpg
Title: Urs Kuratle, Director Factory Motorsport LMDh, 2024, Porsche AG
Subline: Urs Kuratle, Director Factory Motorsport LMDh

Path: Porsche tackles Daytona 24 Hours from third on the grid/Images/img_6.jpg
Title: Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport, 2024, Porsche AG
Subline: Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport

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