

Porsche scores its first WEC victory of the season in Austin

07/09/2025 At the end of an action-packed and dramatic 6-hour race, the works team Porsche Penske Motorsport celebrated its first victory of the FIA WEC season at the Circuit of The Americas.

Defending World Endurance Champions Kévin Estre from France and Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium as well as Australian Matt Campbell delivered a flawless performance despite treacherous conditions. At the flag, the Porsche 963 crew held an advantage of 8.625 seconds. The sister car, carrying number 5, finished the ☒Lone Star Le Mans" in Austin, Texas in tenth place. The customer-entered Porsche 963 of Proton Competition crossed the line in P13. In the LMGT3 category, Manthey 1st Phorm successfully defended its lead in the championship.

The race

Sunshine on Friday, high temperatures and drizzle on Saturday, heavy rain on Sunday: the more than 66,000 fans in Austin witnessed a weekend full of drama. On race day, rain showers began in the

morning with just 24 degrees Celsius. By the scheduled 1:00 pm local start, the Circuit of The Americas was so wet that race control ordered a start behind the Safety Car. For around an hour the Hypercars and GT3 machines circulated behind the pace car before a red flag stoppage was called.

100 minutes after the official start of the sixth round did the Porsche 963 and the rest of the field get green-flag racing – but not for long. The slippery track surface caused repeated incidents. Numerous spins and minor accidents brought the Safety Car out several times. The two factory-run Porsche Penske Motorsport hybrid prototypes managed to keep it clean despite the challenging conditions. After four and a half hours, Kévin Estre in the #6 Porsche took the lead and held it to the finish. The #5 car was running in podium contention at times but fell back late in the race and crossed the line tenth.

"An incredible feeling," said Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport. "The entire team, and especially our drivers, delivered a superb performance under very tough conditions. The first five hours were extremely wet, with plenty of offs. Our guys stayed out of trouble and really rose above themselves. The Porsche 963 was spot-on in these conditions. This win is absolutely deserved. It feels fantastic to celebrate our first victory of the year. Huge credit to everyone involved!"

"I'm so proud of the drivers, the pit crew, the engineers, and our strategists," added Urs Kuratle, Director Factory Motorsport LMDh. "We were at the top of our game in the most difficult circumstances. When conditions are like today, where perfect teamwork and extraordinary driving skills are decisive, that's when we truly shine. I couldn't be happier for the whole crew. Perfect in every way!"

"In races like this, raw pace on paper means very little," explained Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport. "Laurens Vanthoor and Julien Andlauer did a fantastic job keeping both cars in the leading pack early on. The #5 car had some misfortune, while everything clicked with the winning car. Matt Campbell and Kévin Estre executed flawlessly, and the team was outstanding. This victory is incredibly sweet. Now we're looking forward to Fuji."

In the manufacturers' championship, Porsche sits second with two rounds remaining. Estre/Vanthoor are currently placed fifth in the drivers' standings, while teammates Andlauer/Christensen clame eighth position.

The customer-entered Porsche 963 of Proton Competition also showed strong pace for much of the race. Starting driver Nico Varrone, who had qualified the #99 car in P6 the previous day, ran as high as fifth in the fiercely competitive Hypercar category. However, a spin late in his long double stint dropped the team back. Chilean Nico Pino and Swiss driver Neel Jani ultimately brought the car home in P13.

LMGT3 class: Manthey 1st Phorm extends championship lead

In LMGT3, Manthey 1st Phorm took another step toward the title. After strong stints from American local hero Ryan Hardwick and Italian Riccardo Pera, factory driver Richard Lietz was fighting for class victory late in the race. But on worn tires, the Austrian could not hold off multiple challengers and

brought the Porsche 911 GT3 R home in P8. The identical Porsche 911 GT3 R of the Iron Dames ran in the top group for much of the race but retired two laps from the finish due to a technical failure.

The seventh round of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC will take place on September 28 at Fuji, Japan. On the former Formula 1 circuit, the Porsche 963 of reigning World Champions Kévin Estre, Laurens Vanthoor, and André Lotterer claimed victory in 2024.

Driver quotes after the race

Kévin Estre (Porsche 963 #6): Winning the 'Lone Star Le Mans' in Austin feels absolutely amazing. We were positively surprised, because on a dry track during practice we were never among the frontrunners. In qualifying we set a good foundation in tricky conditions. From third on the grid, we were able to deliver a spotless performance in the race. I'm proud to be part of this great team."

Matt Campbell (Porsche 963 #6): We really didn't expect a result like this going into race day. I'm over the moon. The track conditions were extremely tricky at times. Still, we stayed clean over the distance. The whole team did a mega job. It's simply fantastic to celebrate our first WEC win of the year."

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 963 #6): This win came unexpectedly – which makes it feel even sweeter. The wet track conditions challenged us, but exactly under these circumstances we could play to our strengths as Porsche Penske Motorsport."

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 963 #5): That was a thrilling race. As soon as the WEC comes to the U.S., you get Hollywood-style drama. It was a lot of fun. I'm really happy for our teammates in the sister car. After the difficult times in recent months, this feels very good. Our #5 Porsche was in podium contention at times, but then things went wrong – including having to replace the rear bodywork at a pit stop. We started P10, fought to the front, and in the end finished back in tenth. At least we put on a good show."

Rahel Frey (Porsche 911 GT3 R #85): Our Porsche was strong all weekend. Unfortunately, after a disappointing qualifying we had to start from far back. Under those circumstances, only bold decisions can get you forward, so we gambled on tire choice and pressures. Sadly, that didn't work out. In the end we had to retire due to overheating caused by dirt blocking the cooling intakes – a real pity. Now we want to turn our clear potential into a good result at Fuji."

Richard Lietz (Porsche 911 GT3 R #92): It was a good race until very late – unfortunately it ended badly. In the final laps, we had no grip left from the tires."

Race results

Hypercar class:

1. Estre/Vanthoor/Campbell (FRA/BEL/AUS), Porsche 963 #6, 120 laps
2. Fuoco/Molina/Nielsen (ITA/ESP/DEN), Ferrari #50, + 8.625 seconds
3. Duval/Jakobsen/Vandoorne (FRA/DEN/BEL), Peugeot #94, + 9.541 seconds
10. Andlauer/Christensen/Jaminet (FRA/DNK/FRA), Porsche 963 #5, + 1.16,117 minutes
13. Jani/Pino/Varrone (CHE/CHL/ARG), Porsche 963 #99, - 2 laps

LMGT3 class:
1. Leung/Gelael/Sato (GBR/INA/JPN), McLaren #95, 115 laps
2. Al Harthy/Rossi/van der Linde (OMA/ITA/RSA), BMW #46, + 0.256 seconds
3. Flohr/Castellacci/Rigon (CHE/ITA/ITA), Ferrari #54, + 2.705 seconds
8. Hardwick/Pera/Lietz (USA/ITA/AUT), Porsche 911 GT3 R #92, + 21.758 seconds
DNF Martin/Frey/Gatting (FRA/CHE/DNK), Porsche 911 GT3 R #85

Full results and championship standings: fiawec.alkamelsystems.com

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