

Nick Tandy enters motorsport history as “Mr. 24 Hours”

10/03/2025 Porsche factory driver Nick Tandy is the unofficial king of endurance racing since January 26 of this year: The Briton clinched victory at the Rolex 24 At Daytona behind the wheel of a Porsche 963, completing the coveted “Grand Slam” of endurance racing. Over the course of his impressive career, Tandy has taken overall victories at the 24 Hours of Le Mans, the Nürburgring 24 Hours, the GT3 endurance classic at Spa-Francorchamps, and now at the iconic IMSA season opener in Florida – a feat no other racing driver had achieved before. He reflected on his milestone accomplishment before taking on another endurance classic this weekend: the Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring at Sebring International Raceway.

Atlanta. Nick Tandy was visibly emotional in his initial reaction after securing the season-opening win in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship: “To be the first human being ever to achieve something like this in the world – it's absolutely incredible, almost incomprehensible.” Together with his fellow works drivers Felipe Nasr from Brazil and Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium, the Brit celebrated his first overall victory at Daytona with unrestrained joy and initial disbelief. Reflecting on the triumph weeks later, Tandy says: “I was overwhelmed by emotions. I needed some time to process it all.”

“On one hand, there was the sheer joy of winning the race: For two months, the entire team focuses solely on preparing for Daytona. When you see your car cross the finish line first, that’s pure euphoria – that’s what we all work so hard for. On the other hand, I also felt an enormous sense of relief,” emphasizes the 40-year-oldworks driver. Tandy had already claimed victory at Le Mans in 2015, driving the Porsche 919 Hybrid, followed by his Nürburgring and Spa-Francorchamps triumphs in 2018 and 2020, respectively, in the Porsche 911 GT3 R.

“When Porsche Penske Motorsport set up the new 963 program, I immediately raised my hand and said: ‘I want to race in North America!’ My primary motivation was to chase an overall victory at the Rolex 24 At Daytona,” Tandy explains. “In the previous two years, we hadn’t achieved the results we wanted there. I started wondering how many more attempts I’d need – or if it would ever happen at all. Now, we’ve got the answer, and it feels fantastic.”

The desire to complete the “Grand Slam” in endurance racing has been driving Tandy since 2020. “When I won Spa that year, someone told me that I was now within reach of the ‘Grand Slam’ – I hadn’t even thought about it until then, but after that, it was always in the back of my mind.” Although he never spoke publicly about this ambition, Tandy remained laser-focused on achieving it.

Ironically, his toughest rival for the endurance crown was Earl Bamber – the very same New Zealander who shared the cockpit with Tandy and Formula 1 driver Nico Hülkenberg during their 2015 Le Mans win, and who also stood alongside him on the top step at Spa in 2020. “When Earl won on the Nürburgring Nordschleife in 2023, we both only needed Daytona to complete the set. It was a recurring topic between us. Since we’re both fiercely competitive, it developed into a friendly rivalry.”

Le Mans 2015: Tandy/Bamber/Hülkenberg perservere with the Porsche 919 Hybrid

Porsche returned to the LMP1 top class of the FIA World Endurance Championship in 2014. After a challenging debut year, the works team launched a full-fledged assault with the Porsche 919 Hybrid in 2015, targeting the brand’s 17th overall victory at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. With Audi having won the classic 13 times and Toyota arriving as reigning world champions, the expectations on Porsche were sky-high. To maximize their chances, Porsche entered an additional works car. Behind the wheel: Nick Tandy, Earl Bamber, and Formula 1 star Nico Hülkenberg. “In the third car, we weren’t under the same pressure as the full-season entries. We were the new guys in the program,” recalls the man fans now call “Mr. 24” after his Daytona triumph.

But the trio delivered a flawless performance, shocking the endurance racing world by clinching the overall victory on June 14, 2015. “The feeling of winning Le Mans for the first time was indescribable,” Tandy says. “Le Mans is the Holy Grail of endurance racing. In my view, there’s nothing bigger in motorsport.”

Nürburgring 2018: Overcoming major hurdles to claim the Eifel crown with Manthey Racing

“The Nürburgring 24 Hours is the toughest to win of all the great endurance races,” Tandy says with deep respect for the Green Hell. “In Le Mans and Daytona, maybe six cars have the pace and reliability as well as a strong team behind to fight for victory. On the Nordschleife, 20 to 30 cars have a realistic shot. Even with a strong package, you have a 50 percent chance of picking up damage in traffic – there can be up to 180 other cars on track.”

“Our Manthey Porsche was quick, we knew that beforehand,” Tandy recalls. Sharing the 911 GT3 R with fellow works drivers Richard Lietz from Austria and Frenchmen Patrick Pilet and Frédéric Makowiecki, they faced challenges early on. “On the second lap, we had a puncture – luckily still on the Grand Prix loop, so we could dive straight into the pits. But we lost six and a half minutes and dropped to the back. If it had happened at the start of the Nordschleife, we’d have limped for 20 kilometers – our race would’ve been over.”

Tandy spun in the rain avoiding slower traffic, and at one point, another car slammed into their door leaving the pit lane. “Luckily, the Porsche took the hit. Typical Nordschleife – something always happens there.”

Spa-Francorchamps 2020: When the 911 GT3 R turned into a Porsche tractor

“Physically, Spa is the toughest race for us – pure hard work in the cockpit,” Tandy says of the 2020 Spa 24 Hours win. “The track is relentless – no rest like at Le Mans or Daytona with their long straights.” Eighteen full-course yellows and 14 safety car periods added to the chaos. Tandy, Earl Bamber, and Laurens Vanthoor had to fight hard to stay in contention due to an unfavorable Balance of Performance. “We drove flawlessly, nailed our pit stops, but we were never fast enough. Strategy and all those yellows kept us on the lead lap.”

Rain mixed up the final hours. Bamber took the wheel on wet tarmac, leveraging the Porsche 911 GT3 R superior traction to climb to second. A clever strategy call at the final stop – skipping a tire change – put the No. 98 Porsche in the lead. “We were leading, defending a solid gap. I just had to bring it home. Then, five minutes before the flag, the gearbox blew,” Tandy still struggles to believe it.

“It happened exiting Bruxelles in the penultimate lap. There was a loud bang. I coasted into the next corner before daring to get back on the throttle – it sounded horrible! I thought we’d lost just one gear, but every gear sounded like a chainsaw.” Their lead grew, however, thanks to an unintentional oil slick from the wounded gearbox. “Our pursuer – the Audi – was sliding all over. It was insane! I cried crossing the line. The tension just broke me. It’s the only time I’ve ever shed tears in the car.”

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