Seventh place for the KCMG Porsche at the 24 Hours of Spa

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31/07/2022 After a sensational charge through the field, Porsche works driver Laurens Vanthoor and his KCMG teammates Dennis Olsen and Nick Tandy finished seventh at Spa-Francorchamps.

Race

The Porsche customer team KCMG concluded this year's 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps in seventh place. With Nick Tandy from the UK and Norway's Dennis Olsen, works driver Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium turned heads with a sensational charge through the field: after experiencing problems in qualifying, the trio had to start the Belgian endurance classic from the 65th and last spot on the grid. At around 7 o'clock on Sunday morning, the three even snatched the lead with the 911 GT3 R after about 14 hours of racing. Ten hours later, Vanthoor, Tandy and Olsen crossed the finish line 1:13.409 minutes

behind the winning Mercedes-AMG of Akkodis ASP.

As the second-best Porsche, the 911 GT3 R fielded by EMA Motorsport took the flag in P22. Works drivers Matt Campbell from Australia, Mathieu Jaminet from France and Felipe Nasr from Brazil were initially relegated down the field by a puncture a good six hours into the race. At around 2am, the three profited from a full course yellow and thanks to a flawless drive, rejoined the leading group. However, they had to bury their hopes when they were shunted by a rival after three-quarters of the race. The repairs that were needed cost them six laps to the leaders.

Position 25 went to the No. 56 Porsche 911 from Dinamic Motorsport, driven by Italy's Giorgio Roda, Mauro Calamia from Switzerland, Norway's Marius Nakken and Mikkel Pedersen from Denmark. Dominik Fischli (Switzerland), Patrik Matthiesen (Denmark) and the two Germans Joel Sturm and Vincent Andronaco crossed the finish line with the No. 22 Porsche campaigned by Allied Racing in P29. With Christophe Hamon from France and the two Thai drivers Piti Bhirombhakdi and Tanart Sathienthirakul, the New Zealander Earl Bamber concluded the race in 30th place. This result earned them third place in the Pro-Am classification. In this class, professional drivers share the cockpit with gentleman drivers. In 2015 and 2017, Bamber won the 24 Hours of Le Mans at the wheel of the 919 Hybrid as a Porsche works driver.

Comments after the race

Sebastian Golz (Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R): "We came to Spa with big expectations and started the race with a large contingent of cars. We fought for top positions and overall victory with many cars in many classes. Ultimately, however, we didn't achieve our goal. Now we have to look ahead. On the occasion of this great event, we presented our new racer for customer sport: the 992-generation 911 GT3 R. This GT3 vehicle will be raced in the coming year. We're determined to bring the trophy back to Weissach that we won here in 2019 and 2020."

Nick Tandy (Porsche 911 GT3 R #47): "To be disappointed with a top-ten result underscores the ambitions of this team. It's a bittersweet result: Yesterday started off extremely badly for us with our last grid position. Today, however, things looked promising. But in the end, our car lacked speed when the air temperature rose. We can be proud of our performance over the whole race weekend: the Porsche 911 GT3 R ran without problems and the team's pit stops worked perfectly. We drivers did everything we could without making any major mistakes. All in all, I'm very happy with our performance."

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 911 GT3 R #74): "Our race was disappointing. We tackled the event with high expectations and things just didn't go our way. We had problems with the vehicle setup and couldn't find the right balance over the whole distance. That's why we couldn't maintain the pace of the other Porsche. Still, we fought hard and did the best we could. Even we were a little surprised when we made it into the top five a good six hours before the flag – at that point, things still looked promising for a good result. Unfortunately, a rival made a braking error before the last chicane and hit our car. We lost

six laps due to repairs. That essentially put an end to our race."

Result

1. Marciello/Juncadella/Gounon (CH/E/F), Mercedes-AMG GT3 #88, 536 laps
2. Götz/Schothorst/Stolz (D/NL/D), Mercedes-AMG GT3 #2, 536 laps
3. Rigon/Serra/Fuoco (I/BR/I), Ferrari 488 GT3 #71, 536 laps
7. Tandy/Vanthoor/Olsen (UK/B/N), Porsche 911 GT3 R #47, 536 laps
22. Campbell/Jaminet/Nasr (AUS/F/BR), Porsche 911 GT3 R #74, 529 laps
25. Roda/Calamia/Nakken/Pedersen (I/CH/N/DK), Porsche 911 GT3 R #56, 527 laps
29. Fischli/Sturm/Matthiesen/Andronaco (CH/D/DK/D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #22, 526 laps
30. Bhirombhakdi/Hamon/Sathienthirakul/Bamber (T/F/T/NZ), Porsche 911 GT3 R #39, 526 laps

Interim report 2

Dennis Olsen, Nick Tandy and works driver Laurens Vanthoor are in the running for a top result with six hours to go at Spa-Francorchamps. The Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by KCMG had to fight its way through the field from the last spot on the grid. After three-quarters of the distance, the Porsche customer team KCMG has a good chance to clinch a top result at the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps. After 18 hours of racing, the 911 GT3 R with the starting number 47 had good prospects for third place. The long-distance classic in Belgium's Ardennes region is considered the world's largest and most important races for GT3 vehicles. Porsche is eager to claim its third victory after 2019 and 2020 – the ninth overall. The chequered flag falls at 4.45 pm CEST.

KCMG's 911 has written history at this year's 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps: Porsche works driver Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium, Englishman Nick Tandy and Norway's Dennis Olsen had to start the race from the very back of the grid after a problem in qualifying. Thanks to their steady pace and flawless drive combined with a clever strategy, they systematically worked their way up the order. After making it through the long night, the trio finally took the lead for the first time at 7 am. Heading into the final quarter of the race, they are among the favourites for a top result.

The 911 GT3 R fielded by EMA Motorsport also put in a strong recovery drive: After six hours of racing, the car shared by Matt Campbell from Australia, the Frenchman Mathieu Jaminet and Felipe Nasr from Brazil was thrown down the field to P26 by a puncture. However, the three factory drivers managed to remain in the same lap as the frontrunners and worked their way back up through the field. A well-timed fuel stop early in an FCY at around 2 am catapulted the EMA car into the top 3. After being rear-ended by a rival a good six hours before the flag, the No. 74 car had to pit for repairs. This cost them six laps and robbed them of a chance for a top result.

Misfortune also struck the three 911 GT3 R campaigned by Herberth Motorsport. The No. 9 and 911 cars had to retire early due to damages caused by accidents. The third car driven by Nico Menzel

(Germany), Alessio Picariello (Belgium), Niki Leutwiler (Switzerland) and Stefan Aust (Germany) led the Pro-Am class for a long stretch. A trip into the gravel shortly before the 18-hour mark and a problem during a pit stop threw the 911 out of the classification. At around 2 am, the No. 16 Porsche of Earl Bamber Motorsport crashed at the Blanchimont corner, causing the race to be interrupted for a good hour. Driver Matthew Payne from Australia escaped relatively unscathed.

During the subsequent safety car phase, Richard Lietz had to park the tenth-placed GPX Racing's entry with an engine problem. The Austrian had fought for the lead with his works driver teammates Kévin Estre from France and Michael Christensen from Denmark. Dinamic Racing's No. 54 car was also running among the leading pack for a long time. The consequences of a collision threw them out of the race shortly after midnight.

Live streaming of the event

The 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps counts towards the GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup and the Intercontinental GT Challenge (IGTC). Drivers and vehicles receive points towards the GT World Challenge after six, twelve and 24 hours. The race is streamed live on the website www.intercontinentalgtchallenge.com.

Comments after 18 hours

Sebastian Golz (Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R): "We headed into the night in good spirits – many of our Porsche were in the top 10, but then we gradually lost vehicles. First, the GPX Racing car had an engine failure. We're still investigating the cause. Then Herberth Motorsport lost a car in an accident. At the restart, the 911 GT3 R from EMA was shunted while running in the top 3. The lengthy repair cost the car all chances of victory. The number 24 car was also sent into a spin in a restart situation. At that point, it had comfortably led the Pro-Am class for several hours. After a brief pit stop and check, it lost a wheel and the car had to retire. Still, we're looking ahead: we still have an iron in the fire with KCMG. After the car started from the last spot on the grid, we want to turn the race into something positive and fight for a podium result."

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 911 GT3 R #47): "We and the Ferrari are implementing different strategies compared to the Mercedes and the BMW, who we're fighting against. Ultimately, we'll see which strategy brings more advantages. But it'll be tough because our rivals are also very fast."

Interim report 1

The Porsche customer teams got off to a good start at the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps. After four hours of racing, four 911 GT3 R were running in the top twelve in the overall standings. Ranking second, the 911 fielded by GPX Racing was within striking distance of the lead. Works drivers Kévin Estre from

France, Dane Michael Christensen and Richard Lietz from Austria share driving duties in this car. P8 is occupied by Dinamic Motorsport's No. 54 Porsche with drivers Côme Ledogar (France), works driver and DTM-winner Thomas Preining plus his Austrian compatriot Klaus Bachler. The trio had taken up the race from the first grid row. The 911 GT3 R campaigned by Toksport WRT driven by Frenchman Julien Andlauer and the two Germans Sven Müller and Marvin Dienst were running in ninth place. After a spirited charge through the field, the Porsche from KCMG advanced to P12: Nick Tandy from England, Dennis Olsen from Norway and works driver Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) had to start from the very back of the grid in P66.

In sunny and dry track conditions, the world's largest GT3 race started without incident at 4.45 pm. Despite the high volume of traffic, the race ran for almost two hours without interruption. At the start, Bachler immediately snatched the lead and handed Dinamic Motorsport's Porsche off to Ledogar in first place. The Frenchman soon dropped back to third place, before letting Estre overtake him. In fourth place, Ledogar successfully fended off attacks from a Ferrari. After the first of several Full Course Yellows with the safety car, Preining took the wheel of the No. 54 entry. Given that the Austrian now had the faster car at this point, he swapped positions with his compatriot Lietz in the GPX Porsche, whose team used the next yellow phase for an early pit stop. This clever move catapulted the No. 221 Porsche 911 GT3 R into second place during the third safety car phase after 3.5 hours of racing.

Tandy, Vanthoor and Olsen put in an outstanding performance in the Porsche of the customer team KCMG. Taking up the race from the last grid spot, they made up 54 places in the first four hours and battled their way back into the top 12. In the Pro-Am category, the professional drivers Nico Menzel from Germany and Alessio Picariello (Belgium) with the gentleman drivers Niki Leutwiler (Switzerland) and Stefan Aust (Germany) held the lead for a long stretch. After four of 24 hours, they occupied second in their class with the 911 GT3 R of Herberth Motorsport. The No. 91 Porsche fielded by Allied Racing is out of contention. Florian Latorre (France), Alex Malykhin (United Kingdom), Julien Apothéloz (Switzerland) and the former Porsche Junior Ayhancan Güven from Turkey had to park their car after becoming entangled in another competitor's accident.

Live streaming of the event

The 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps counts towards the GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup and the Intercontinental GT Challenge (IGTC). Drivers and vehicles receive points towards the GT World Challenge after six, twelve and 24 hours. The race takes off on Saturday at 4.45 pm and will be live streamed on the website www.intercontinentalgtchallenge.com.

Comments after the first four hours of the race

Sebastian Golz (Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R): "Our 911 GT3 R racers could match the pace of the frontrunners right from the start. So our preparations paid off. KCMG's Porsche has done a tremendous job: The number 47 car ploughed its way through to the top 12 from the very last grid spot.

Our cars in the Pro-class are within striking distance of the leader. Even though the positions are constantly changing due to different pit stop strategies, things are looking very positive. Now we're heading into the night. We have to make sure we get through this phase unscathed."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 GT3 R #221): "After an hour, I took the wheel of our car in fourth place and managed to close the gap to the front a bit. We've now settled in among the frontrunners and are well positioned. Many punctures have left a lot of dirt and debris on the track – you have to be very careful where you drive. And track limits are a big issue. When you lap the slower cars it's difficult to stay within the track boundaries. If you make a mistake doing this, you're penalised immediately."

Klaus Bachler (Porsche 911 GT3 R #54): "Our start was fantastic – to be honest, I didn't expect to take the lead at the very start. I got the jump off the line and passed the polesitter. But it wasn't easy defending the lead spot because I was under intense pressure from behind. We're pleased we have a good car. The balance and the performance are perfect."

Nick Tandy (Porsche 911 GT3 R #47): "We had an interesting early phase – surprisingly, the race went without any major interruptions with caution phases or other incidents. We wanted to work our way up the order carefully and close the gap to the leader before the first safety car phase. That worked perfectly. We're sticking to the same strategy as the frontrunners. Instead of 65 places, we're now only eleven places behind. For us, it's as if the race has only just begun."

Alessio Picariello (Porsche 911 GT3 R #47): "I really enjoyed my double stint at the start of the race. After the beginning, we managed to immediately snatch a few positions and take the lead in the Pro-Am class on the first lap. I then tried to eke out as much of an advantage at the front as possible. We started the race from 49th place and have now reached the top 20. I'm very happy with that."

Super Pole

Klaus Bachler achieved the third quickest time in the Super Pole session with the Porsche 911 GT3 R fielded by the customer team Dinamic Motorsport. His brand colleagues Kévin Estre and Sven Müller concluded the top-20 individual time trials in positions six and 14. The 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps gets underway on Saturday at 4:45 pm (CEST).

The three best-placed Porsche customer teams will take up tomorrow's 24-hour race on the Spa-Franchorchamps Grand Prix circuit from positions three, six and 14. In the Super Pole session on Friday evening, the former Porsche Junior Klaus Bachler set a lap time of 2:16.446 minutes. At the first of his two attempts, the Austrian planted the 911 GT3 R from Dinamic Motorsport on the second grid row. He was just 0.22 seconds shy of the pole position on the 7.004-kilometre racetrack. Bachler shares the GT3 racing car with his fellow countryman Thomas Preining and Frenchman Côme Ledogar.

The second-best result for Porsche was achieved by works driver Kévin Estre: The Frenchman lapped the Circuit de Spa in GPX Racing's 911 as the sixth fastest with a time of 2:16.702 minutes. With his

teammates Michael Christensen (Denmark) and Richard Lietz (Austria), Estre won the 24-hour classic in Belgium for GPX in 2019. Germany's Sven Müller, another former Porsche Junior, concluded the shootout of the 20 fastest qualifiers in 14th. He shares driving duties in the 911 GT3 R campaigned by Toksport WRT with Marvin Dienst from Germany and Julien Andlauer from France.

n the four-part qualifying on Thursday evening, the factory squad trio Matt Campbell from Australia, Mathieu Jaminet (France) and Felipe Nasr from Brazil missed out on a spot in the top-20 by just 0.25 seconds in EMA Motorsport's racer. The fifth Porsche in the Pro category is helmed by Dennis Olsen from Norway, Nick Tandy from England and works driver Laurens Vanthoor from Belgium. They had to abandon their qualifying attempt with the 911 GT3 R from KCMG due to a brake problem and now take up the race from the 64th grid spot. Nico Menzel and Stefan Aust (both Germany), Belgium's Alessio Picariello and Niki Leutwiler from Switzerland secured the second starting position in the Pro-Am class with the No. 24 car entered by Herberth Motorsport. Florian Latorre (France), Alex Malykhin (UK), Julien Apothéloz (CH) and the ex-Porsche Junior Ayhancan Güven from Turkey tackle the Gold Cup class for Allied Racing from P4.

The 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps is one of the world's most important events for GT3 racing vehicles. At this year's race, Porsche is represented more strongly than ever before: Nine customer teams field a total of 13 911 GT3 R racing cars. The sports car manufacturer has set its sights on winning the endurance classic for the third time since 2019. The year after Estre, Christensen and Lietz won, Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium), New Zealander Earl Bamber and Nick Tandy from the UK crossed the finish line in first place with the 911 GT3 R run by Rowe Racing. To date, Porsche has won the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps eight times. The motor racing classic on the famous "Ardennes rollercoaster" has been held since 1924.

Live streaming of the event

The 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps counts towards the GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup and the Intercontinental GT Challenge (IGTC). Drivers and vehicles receive points towards the GT World Challenge after six, twelve and 24 hours. The race takes off on Saturday at 4:45 pm and will be live streamed on the website www.intercontinentalgtchallenge.com.

Comments on the Super Pole

Sebastian Golz (Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R): "That was a very successful performance from our customer teams in the Super Pole session – particularly from Dinamic Motorsport: Klaus Bachler turned two flying laps with a difference of just a few hundredths of a second – it couldn't be more perfect. Kévin Estre put in a strong drive, too. All in all, our three cars are very well positioned. We can be satisfied with this result. We're all feeling very confident for the race – now let's get going!"

Klaus Bachler (Porsche 911 GT3 R #54): "I felt privileged to be given the chance to the drive Super

Pole session. Third is a great result. We've scored a commendable grid spot for the race and we're very excited to begin. But in the race, we have to be strong over the whole distance. The balance has to be right. Plus, we have to drive flawlessly and avoid penalties and incidents. If everything goes smoothly, we could be at the front at the flag."

Sven Müller (Porsche 911 GT3 R #100): "The Super Pole was great fun. It was an honour to drive this session for my team. Unfortunately, our stars didn't quite align. I'd hoped for more. Still, P14 is a good place to start from. Our team is very strong and our car ran extremely well in the long run during yesterday's night practice. We're looking forward to a long and exciting race."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 GT3 R #221): "It wasn't a perfect lap but it was definitely pretty good – I could've found the odd hundredths of a second here and there but to be honest, we didn't have what it takes to be on pole today. So, I'm pretty happy: We didn't try anything special for the Super Pole session. We just wanted to do our best, and that worked. We're now facing a long race and we have to stay out of trouble. In light of this, it's good to start from the top 10."

Super Pole result

1. Pepper/Caldarelli/Mapelli (RSA/MC/CH), Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo #6, 2:16.221 Minuten
2. Marciello/Juncadella/Gounon (CH/E/F), Mercedes-AMG GT3 #88, 2:16.375 Minuten
3. Bachler/Ledogar/Preining (A/F/A), Porsche 911 GT3 R #54, 2:16,446 Minuten
6. Estre/Christensen/Lietz (F/DK/A), Porsche 911 GT3 R #221, 2:16,702 Minuten
14. Andlauer/Dienst/Müller (F/D/D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #100, 2:17,030 Minuten

Other qualifying results

22. Campbell/Jaminet/Nasr (AUS/F/BR), Porsche 911 GT3 R #74, 2:18.090 minutes
38. Malykhin/Apothéloz/Latorre/Güven (UK/CH/F/TR), Porsche 911 GT3 R #91, 2:18.806 minutes
46. Roda/Calamia/Nakken/Pedersen (I/CH/N/DK), Porsche 911 GT3 R #56, 2:19.177 minutes
49. Leutwiler/Aust/Picariello/Menzel (CH/D/B/D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #24, 2:19.312 minutes
53. Au/Tse/Pereira/Evans (HK/MAC/L/NZ), Porsche 911 GT3 R #9, 2:19.996 minutes
54. Bhirombhakdi/Hamon/Sathienthirakul/Bamber (T/F/T/NZ), Porsche 911 GT3 R #39, 2:20.077 minutes
55. Fischli/Sturm/Matthiesen/Andronaco (CH/D/DK/D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #22, 2:20.356 minutes
60. Da Silva/B. Grove/S. Grove/Payne (MAL/AUS/AUS/NZ), Porsche 911 GT3 R #16, 2:21.908 minutes
64. Tandy/Vanthoor/Olsen (UK/B/N), Porsche 911 GT3 R #47
NC Bohn / A. Renauer / R. Renauer (D/D/D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #911

Qualifying

Three Porsche 911 GT3 R get the chance to fight for pole position at the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps after finishing in the top 20 in today's qualifying runs. The endurance classic gets underway on Saturday at 4:45 pm (CEST). The Porsche customer teams have qualified three 911 GT3 R for the Super Pole session for the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps. Austrians Thomas Preining and Klaus Bachler as well as Frenchman Côme Ledogar planted the fastest 911 on position eleven. In the four 15-minute heats, they posted an average time of 2:17.594 minutes for the Dinamic Motorsport squad. Works driver Preining set the fastest individual lap in 2:16.899 minutes. The Toksport WRT trio Sven Müller, Marvin Dienst (both Germany) and Julien Andlauer (France) as well as the GPX Racing drivers Kévin Estre from France, Michael Christensen from Denmark and Richard Lietz from Austria are also eligible to take part in the Super Pole session. This final hunt for the top 20 grid spots will be held on Friday evening between 7:30 pm and 8:00 pm (CEST). The 24-hour race on the Belgian Grand Prix circuit gets underway on Saturday at 4:45 pm local time.

As dusk fell, the second and third qualifying segments were interrupted by incidents on the "Ardennes rollercoaster" – due to this and in view of the 66 GT3 racing cars out on the racetrack, the drivers of the 13 Porsche were particularly on edge when overtaking slower traffic. While the No. 54 car fielded by Dinamic Motorsport and the 911 GT3 R of Toksport WRT made it into the top 20 with relative ease, GPX Racing's bid for the Super Pole was successful mainly thanks to Kévin Estre's strong performance: In the fourth and final segment, the Frenchman lapped the circuit in 2:16.943 minutes and thus gained entry into the Super Pole.

At the wheel of Herberth Motorsport's No. 24 Porsche, Germany's Nico Menzel and Stefan Aust, Belgium's Alessio Picariello and Niki Leutwiler from Switzerland scored the second grid spot in the Pro-Am class. The No. 91 vehicle campaigned by Allied Racing with Florian Latorre (France), Alex Malykhin (UK), Julien Apothéloz (CH) and the former Porsche Junior Ayhancan Güven from Turkey achieved fourth in the Gold Cup category. In the Silver Cup, the sister car qualified on P16.

The 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps is considered the largest single GT3 event in the world and counts towards the GT World Challenge Europe (GTWC) and the In-tercontinental GT Challenge (IGTC). Drivers and vehicles receive points towards the GT World Challenge after six, twelve and 24 hours. The race will be streamed live on the website www.intercontinentalgtchallenge.com.

Qualifying quotes

Sebastian Golz (Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R): "It was extremely difficult to gauge the right time to send our cars out and not encounter too much traffic. Regardless of this, we fell short of our expectations. Only three of our 911 GT3 R qualified for Friday's Super Pole – we wanted more cars to make it into the top 20. Still, we have a chance to fight for pole position tomorrow. I think we've found a good setup and we're tackling the race feeling confident. However, we're now going to focus on the

Super Pole and we'll keep our fingers crossed that the three teams finish well up the order."

Thomas Preining (Porsche 911 GT3R #54): "All of the drivers did a great job. None of us was penalised for exceeding the track limits and we managed to stay out of trouble. They usually say that this is particularly critical during the race, but with almost 70 starters, it is also more important in qualifying than most people think. The fact that we qualified for the Super Pole was crucial. For me personally, I'm very happy: The day before yesterday I was sitting at home thinking about my vacation. Then I was called up at short notice to replace Matteo Cairoli and now I'm the fastest Porsche driver in my group. That's fantastic."

Julien Andlauer (Porsche 911 GT3R #100): "We weren't able to prepare for the qualifying as well as we'd hoped but in the end, the car ran really well. The red flags and high volume of traffic on the track made the qualifying extremely tricky. My session went okay: I got a clean run with relatively little traffic to overtake and managed to pull it all together almost perfectly. It would have been great to go a little faster but ultimately it was enough. We achieved our goal: to get into the Super Pole. Now we're fighting for pole position."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 GT3 R #221): "With our average times, we achieved P19 and only just made it into the Super Pole. The qualifying session was totally chaotic. It was almost impossible to get a clear run. Richard and Michael weren't very lucky with slower traffic. Fortunately I was okay because my team sent me out at the right time and I got a clean lap, which obviously makes me happy. For the Super Pole, we may have to tweak a few things. But all in all, we're well positioned and the balance of our car is good."

Nico Menzel (Porsche 911 GT3 R #24): "Second in the Pro-Am category is a decent result and we're happy with that. Our two gentleman drivers felt at home in the car. Our Porsche should perform well in the qualifying and the race. Our lap times underline that we have the potential. If we can get through the first few hours of racing and the night without making any mistakes or receiving penalties, then let's see where we end up..."

Results Qualifying

1. Rigon/Serra/Fuoco (I/BR/I), Ferrari 488 GT3 #71, 2:16.920 Minuten
2. Molina/Nielsen/Calado (E/DK/UK), Ferrari 488 GT3 #51, 2:17.098 Minuten
3. Pepper/Caldarelli/Mapelli (RSA/MC/CH), Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo #6, 2:17.237 Minuten
11. Bachler/Ledogar/Preining (A/F/A), Porsche 911 GT3 R #54, 2:17.594 Minuten
14. Andlauer/Dienst/Müller (F/D/D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #100, 2:17.636 Minuten
19. Estre/Christensen/Lietz (F/DK/A), Porsche 911 GT3 R #221, 2:17.824 Minuten
22. Campbell/Jaminet/Nasr (AUS/F/BR), Porsche 911 GT3 R #74, 2:18.090 Minuten
38. Malykhin/Apothéloz/Latorre/Güven (UK/CH/F/TR), Porsche 911 GT3 R #91, 2:18.806 Minuten
46. Roda/Calamia/Nakken/Pedersen (I/CH/N/DK), Porsche 911 GT3 R #56, 2:19.177 Minuten
49. Leutwiler/Aust/Picariello/Menzel (CH/D/B/D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #24, 2:19.312 Minuten

53. Au/Tse/Pereira/Evans (HK/MAC/L/NZ), Porsche 911 GT3 R #9, 2:19.996 Minuten
54. Bhirombhakdi/Hamon/Sathienthirakul/Bamber (T/F/T/NZ), Porsche 911 GT3 R #39, 2:20.077 Minuten
55. Fischli/Sturm/Matthiesen/Andronaco (CH/D/DK/D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #22, 2:20.356 Minuten
60. Da Silva/B. Grove/S. Grove/Payne (MAL/AUS/AUS/NZ), Porsche 911 GT3 R #16, 2:21.908 Minuten
64. Tandy/Vanthoor/Olsen (UK/B/N), Porsche 911 GT3 R #47
NC Bohn / A. Renauer / R. Renauer (D/D/D), Porsche 911 GT3 R #911

Preview

A total of 13 Porsche 911 GT3 R are entered for this year's 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps on 30/31 July. Five of the 911 contest the pro-category and have excellent chances to score overall victory at the world's largest GT3 endurance classic. On the occasion of the event, Porsche Motorsport unveils the latest generation of a GT3 race car for customer racing.

With 13 Porsche 911 GT3 R, the Porsche customer teams are well represented at this year's 24-hour race at Spa-Francorchamps. The long-distance classic in the Ardennes is considered the largest GT3 event in the world. In the long and illustrious history of the event, which was held for the first time in 1924, Porsche racing cars have clinched eight victories to date. On the last weekend in July, the experienced customer squads are determined to add to this track record.

“The organiser SRO headed by Stéphane Ratel celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. We're expecting a particularly tough and spectacular grid line-up with a total of 65 cars,” explains Sebastian Golz, Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R. “Our customer teams have entered 13 of our GT3 cars. This makes Porsche the most strongly represented manufacturer in the race. We're well positioned in terms of both quantity and quality. I'm confident that our five pro-class vehicles manned by world-class drivers will be serious contenders for victory. The key to success lies in the best use of the tyres. During tests, we noticed that the latest renovations and modernisations at Spa-Francorchamps have left some rough ridges and edges in the asphalt and kerbs. What's more, the new gravel traps pose a risk to the tyres, so it's important to cover the distance with as little damage as possible. We won with the current generation of the 911 GT3R in 2019 and 2020. We're now aiming for win number three before our new GT3 car enters the competition in 2023.”

The first 24-hour race was contested in Belgium's Ardennes in 1924 – making this classic just one year “younger” than the legendary 24 Hours of Le Mans. Until 1949, the track measured about 15 kilometres in length and ran between the towns of Francorchamps, Malmedy and Stavelot. In 1970, the track was shortened to 7.004 kilometres and has remained virtually unchanged until today. Last winter and spring, the storied racetrack underwent an extensive upgrade. As part of this modernisation, new gravel traps, among other features, was added to the famous Eau Rouge/Raidillon passage. The basic layout, however, remained the same. Due to its location in the Ardennes, teams and drivers must expect unpredictable weather conditions at any time.

The 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps is considered the largest single GT3 event in the world. The endurance race is contested as round two of the Intercontinental GT Challenge (IGTC) and is the third race of this year's GT World Challenge Europe (GTWC).

The customer teams and drivers

In the Pro class, elite professional drivers compete for overall victory. With its customer teams, Porsche is well positioned in this category: works drivers Kévin Estre (France), Michael Christensen (Denmark) and Richard Lietz (Austria) share the cockpit of GPX Racing's No. 221 entry. This trio won the endurance classic in 2019. The 2020 winners tackle this year's race in separate cars: Local hero Laurens Vanthoor and Nick Tandy from England share the No. 47 car fielded by KCMG with the Norwegian DTM driver Dennis Olsen. New Zealander Earl Bamber contests the Pro-Am Cup for the Singha Racing team.

The other contenders for overall victory sit in cars campaigned by the customer squads Dinamic Motorsport (#54), EMA Motorsport (#74) and Toksport WRT (#100). EMA from Australia makes its debut at the largest GT3 event in Belgium. Sharing the wheel of the No. 74 EMA Porsche 911 GT3 R are the works drivers Matt Campbell from Australia, Mathieu Jaminet from France and Felipe Nasr from Brazil. Last January, this trio won the GTD-Pro class at the 24 Hours of Daytona. Dinamic's No. 54 car is driven by Austria's Klaus Bachler, Frenchman Côme Ledogar and Thomas Preining from Austria. Julien Andlauer from France and the two Germans Marvin Dienst and Sven Müller compete for Toksport.

Herberth Motorsport fields three 911 in the Gold Cup and Pro-Am classes, with Earl Bamber Motorsport (EBM), Allied Racing and Dinamic Motorsport also aiming for victory in the amateur categories. Experienced Porsche drivers such as Alessio Picariello (Belgium), Jaxon Evans (New Zealand) and the former Porsche Junior Ayhancan Güven (Turkey) will tackle the event at the wheel of the 911 GT3 R.

An overview of the cockpit crews

Pro class:
KCMG (#47) – Nick Tandy (UK) / Laurens Vanthoor (B) / Dennis Olsen (N)
Dinamic (#54) – Klaus Bachler (A) / Côme Ledogar (F) / Thomas Preining (A)
EMA (#74) – Matt Campbell (AUS) / Mathieu Jaminet (F) / Felipe Nasr (BR)
Toksport (#100) – Julien Andlauer (F) / Marvin Dienst (D) / Sven Müller (D)
GPX (#221) – Kévin Estre (F) / Michael Christensen (DK) / Richard Lietz (A)

Pro-Am Cup:
Herberth (#9) – Antares Au (HK) / Kevin Tse (MAC) / Dylan Pereira (L) / Jaxon Evans (NZ)
EBM (#16) – Adrian da Silva (MAL) / Brenton Grove (AUS) / Stephen Grove (AUS) / Matt Payne (NZ)

Herberth (#24) – Nicolas Leutwiler (CH) / Stefan Aust (D) / Alessio Picariello (B) / Nico Menzel (D)
Singha (#39) – Piti Bhirombhakdi (T) / Christophe Hamon (F) / Tanart Sathienthirakul (T) / Earl Bamber (NZ)

Gold Cup:
Allied (#91) – Alex Malykhin (UK) / Julien Apothéloz (CH) / Florian Latorre (F) / Ayhancan Güven (TR)
Herberth (#911) – Ralf Bohn (D) / Alfred Renauer (D) / Robert Renauer (D)

Silver Cup:
Allied (#22) – Dominik Fischli (CH) / Joel Sturm (D) / Patrick Matthiesen (DK) / Vincent Andronaco (D)
Dinamic (#56) – Giorgio Roda (I) / Mauro Calamia (CH) / Marius Nakken (N) / Mikkel Pedersen (DK)

The new GT3 customer racer in the limelight

The 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps sets the stage for a very special debut: In the paddock, Porsche presents the new customer sport racing car for worldwide GT3 series to the public for the first time. The successor to the winning current model will be on display from Saturday, 30 July.

Drivers' comments before the race

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 911 GT3 R #47):"For me as a Belgian, the race is of course a major highlight, especially since I live almost around the corner from the track. I've been quite unlucky at Daytona, Le Mans and the Nürburgring this season. This makes the race in Spa my last chance to win another 24-hour classic this year. That's our clear objective. I've already stood at the top of the podium twice at Spa. On the test day, our 911 GT3 R from KCMG ran extremely well. Nevertheless, we still don't have a concrete idea of how our performance will compare to the huge competition."

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 911 GT3 R #74): "I'm confident that we have an excellent overall package for the race. The Porsche 911 GT3 R is tried and tested, my teammates Matt and Felipe are extremely strong and the EMA team is super consistent and goal-oriented. My teammates and I won at Daytona in January. We know each other well and tackle the task at hand with a healthy dose of self-confidence. However, we're certainly not taking the strong competition for granted. Plus, it's our first time at Spa as a team. Despite this, we have one very clear goal: victory."

Sven Müller (Porsche 911 GT3 R #100):"The official tests in preparation for this year's race went very well. We managed to test different set-up options and so we feel well prepared for the race. The Toksport WRT team really exceeded my expectations. I'm really looking forward to tackling the race with my super-fast teammates. Our chances look very good."

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 GT3 R #221):"It's great to have our winning team from 2019 – Michael, Richie and myself – back together with GPX Racing. We joined forces as a trio for the first time three

years ago and promptly left the competition in our dust. In light of the packed and powerful grid lineup, it'll be anything but easy to repeat such a result this year. Unfortunately, we weren't able to check off our entire list during the test drives, but we'll definitely be sorted in time for the race."

The schedule (all times CEST)

Thursday, 28 July
10:50 am – 12:20 pm: Free practice 1
4:15 pm – 5:15 pm: Pre-Qualifying
8:40 pm – 10:01 pm: Qualifying in four segments (Q1, Q2, Q3, Q4)
10:20 pm – 11:50 pm: Free Training 2

Friday, 29 July
6:20 pm – 6:50 pm: Warm-up
7:00 pm – 7:30 pm: Superpole

Saturday, 30 July
4:45 pm: Start of the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps

Sunday, 31 July
4:45 pm: Finish of the 24 Hours of Spa-Francorchamps

Video

https://newstv.porsche.com/porschevideos/219335_en_6000000.mp4
https://newstv.porsche.com/porschevideos/219134_en_6000000.mp4

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