

Porsche customer teams approach Petit Le Mans finale as title contenders

02/10/2022 WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, GTD Pro: Round 10, GTD: Round 12; Michelin Pilot Challenge, GS: Round 10

The race

For Pfaff Motorsports, the wait was over immediately after the ten-hour race began: With the successful start of the 2022 Petit Le Mans, the team had already notched up enough points to hand all three titles in the new GTD-Pro class to Porsche, the Canadian squad and the two works drivers Matt Campbell and Mathieu Jaminet. This was the second title in a row for the team with the distinctive and extremely popular Porsche 911 GT3 R decked out in the lumberjack livery. In 2021, Pfaff Motorsports won the GTD category.

The successful Porsche works driver duo Campbell and Jaminet, who are known in the North American sports cars scene as “CamJam”, received reinforcement from Felipe Nasr for the endurance race at Road Atlanta. The Brazilian drove strong stints in the first two and a half hours and handed the 911 off to his Australian teammate running in sixth place. Campbell, however, was hit by bad luck: After contact with another GT vehicle, he had to slowly and carefully navigate his Porsche 911 GT3 R back to the pits with a puncture. Consequently, the team lost two laps to the leading vehicles. However, with a clever strategy and some conveniently-timed yellow phases, Pfaff managed to close the gap to the leaders within just one hour. Campbell and Jaminet continued their charge, at times even taking the lead. After the final full course yellow with around 35 minutes left on the clock, a gripping fight for class victory unfolded. After an action-packed race, Pfaff Motorsports’ No. 9 car took the flag in fourth place but ultimately inherited third place after a rival was handed a penalty.

“Congratulations to Pfaff Motorsports, our victorious works drivers and the entire team from Weissach, who made the other title victories with the Porsche 911 GT3 R possible. Last year's triumph in the GTD category, now the championship title in the new GTD-Pro class – we’re delighted with the Pfaff squad,” said Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport. “We’re just as proud of our partners in the GTD class. Wright Motorsports were in close contention for the title right up to the final race. That's an honourable achievement. We've given the current generation GT3 R a fitting farewell in North America. We’re now looking forward to the brand new 911 GT3 R in the GT categories and the 2023 season with the Porsche 963 in the new GTP class.”

“We didn’t have the fastest car on the track today, but the experienced Pfaff and Wright customer teams managed to get the best out of it,” concludes Sebastian Golz, Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R. “It's a great story that Pfaff Motorsports secured the 2021 title in the GTD class and did it again the following year in the new GTD-Pro category. Five wins this season is tremendous – no one has ever achieved that many wins in one season before in the GT classes of the IMSA championship. Our Porsche 911 GT3 R was able to showcase its potential over and over again this year. Now we’re excited about its successor, which will make its debut at Daytona in 2023.”

The Wright Motorsports customer team headed into the 2022 Petit Le Mans with an outside chance of winning the title. The squad from the US state of Ohio drove a flawless race with its drivers Ryan Hardwick (USA), Zacharie Robichon (Canada) and Jan Heylen (Belgium), but failed to score enough points to outstrip the two top teams. The No. 16 Porsche 911 GT3 R crossed the finish line fourth in the GTD class. Nevertheless, the crew did not go home empty-handed: Ryan Hardwick was presented with the “Bob Akin Award” as the best amateur. This accolade guarantees the American business man a grid spot at the 2023 Le Mans 24 Hours.

For the Hardpoint team, the final race of the 2022 season ended after seven hours. The American Rob Ferriol hit the barriers at turn five with the No. 99 Porsche. The amateur drive was unhurt. Ferriol shared the cockpit with his fellow countryman Nick Boulle and Katherine Legge from the UK.

The 2022 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season is now over. Spectators were given a preview of the coming year with the presentation of four racing cars in the new GTP class, which will

race for victory at Daytona, Sebring and other races. This quartet also included the new Porsche 963, which was displayed to the public for the first time in the USA at Road Atlanta. The new hybrid prototype will take part in official tests at Daytona on 6-7 December before tackling the opening round of the 2023 season at the same venue on the last weekend in January.

Drivers' comments on the race

Matt Campbell (Porsche 911 GT3 R #9):"It feels totally surreal. We've won every title in this tremendous year and we're back on the podium again at the final race. It's amazing what we have achieved as a team. There was only one race where we didn't end up on the podium. That's phenomenal. On one hand, it's a pity that our journey with the Pfaff Motorsports squad ends here. On the other hand, I'm really excited about racing the Porsche 963 next year with Porsche Penske Motorsport."

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 911 GT3 R #9): "Once again, the final phase in the dark was crazy – Petit Le Mans is famous for that. We didn't have the fastest car today, but I still thought I had good chances in the thrilling finale. It was a four-way fight with an open-ended outcome. There was a lot of swapping of paint and positions. We love such situations. It wasn't enough to win today but that's okay. Thanks so much to the team for all the great work and strategy. Every single member of the team has become a lifelong friend!"

Ryan Hardwick (Porsche 911 GT3 R #16): "We tried out very best but we couldn't do more today. I'm extremely proud of the team and my teammates Jan and Zach. Everyone did their utmost but in the end, we were just a few points short of winning the title. Two years ago with Patrick Long, I missed out on winning the big trophy by just two points. Something like that always hurts. On the other hand, it's a huge success to be in the fight for the title all the way to the finale. Now I'm looking forward to the coming year. I accept the invitation to Le Mans and I'll drive the 911 RSR there. And I'm very excited about the new 911 GT3 R in the IMSA series!"

Race results

GTD-Pro class:
1. Hawksworth/Barnicoat/Kirkwood (UK/UK/USA), Lexus RC F GT3 #14, 386 laps
2. De Phillippi/Edwards/Krohn (USA/USA/FIN), BMW M4 GT3 #25, 386 laps
3. Campbell/Jaminet/Nasr (AUS/F/BR), Porsche 911 GT3 R #9, 386 laps

GTD class:
1. Farnbacher/Bechtolsheimer/Simpson (D/UK/USA), Acura NSX GT3 #66, 387 laps
2. Iribe/Pepper/Priaulx (USA/RSA/UK), McLaren 720S GT3 #70, 387 laps
3. Foley/Auberlen/Dinan (USA/USA/USA), BMW M4 GT3 #96, 386 laps
4. Hardwick/Heylen/Robichon (USA/B/CDN), Porsche 911 GT3 R #16, 386 laps
12. Ferriol/Legge/Boulle (USA/UK/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R #99, 264 laps

Qualifying

The 911 GT3 R fielded by the Porsche customer team Pfaff Motorsports heads into the final race of the 2022 IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season from position seven in the GTD-Pro class. Works driver Felipe Nasr avoided taking any risks at Road Atlanta in order to preserve the car. The goal: to win all titles in the ten-hour race on Saturday.

The Porsche customer team Pfaff Motorsports has avoided taking any risks at the final qualifying session of this year's IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship. The Brazilian works driver turned just seven cautious laps on the 4.088-kilometre Road Atlanta track at the wheel of his Porsche 911 GT3 R decked out in the popular lumberjack livery. The reason: Pfaff Motorsports only has to cross the starting line at the race on Saturday to score enough points to take home the driver, team and manufacturer titles in the GTD-Pro class. At the so-called "Petit Le Mans" contested over ten hours, Nasr shares driving duties in the No. 9 car with his works driver teammates and Pfaff Motorsports' regular drivers Matt Campbell (Australia) and Mathieu Jaminet (France).

In the GTD class, the Wright Motorsport squad secured a commendable position on the grid. In this category, amateur drivers share the cars with professionals. Zacharie Robichon planted the No. 16 Porsche 911 GT3 R on the ninth grid spot. With his teammates Jan Heylen (Belgium) and Ryan Hardwick (USA), the Canadian still has a chance to claim the title. The identical car fielded by Hardpoint tackles the last race of the 2022 season from P13. The two Americans Rob Ferriol and Nick Boulle share the No. 99 vehicle with Katherine Legge from England.

"The qualifying result doesn't match our expectations," explains Sebastian Golz, Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R. "But we know that we'll be strong towards the end of the race, especially in the dark and when the temperatures drop. With this in mind, we're looking ahead and focusing on our race performance."

Drivers' comments on the qualifying

Felipe Nasr (Porsche 911 GT3 R #9): "During the hunt for top times, it was all about getting the tyres up to the optimum temperature. I wasn't able to do that on the front and rear axles at the same time. Still, we've got a long race ahead of us on Saturday and I have no reservations whatsoever that our Porsche 911 GT3 R will be very competitive on the track. I'm firmly convinced that today's qualifying result doesn't even begin to reflect what will be possible with our car in the race."

Zacharie Robichon (Porsche 911 GT3 R #16):"I tried everything and I was perhaps too aggressive at times. I made mistakes in some laps. However, I don't think I could have suddenly driven even a second faster. That was simply not within the realm of possibility. We'll be faster in the race – it was the exact same situation last year with the car from Pfaff. At the time, we certainly weren't among the fastest, but we still finished in second place. It just goes to show that with a good car, anything is still possible

here."

Nick Boulle (Porsche 911 GT3 R #99): "For me, the whole weekend so far has been a learning curve. We modified the car again today. Now I feel really comfortable behind the wheel. In the context of a ten-hour race, that's far more important than sheer speed in qualifying. Maybe a little rain will help us out on race day. For now, it's important to get through the first few hours unscathed."

Qualifying result

GTD-Pro class:
1. Hawksworth/Barnicoat/Kirkwood (UK/UK/USA), Lexus RC F GT3 #14, 1:18.835 minutes
2. Gunn/Riberas/Gamble (UK/E/UK), Aston Martin Vantage GT3 #23, 1:19.043 minutes
3. Serra/Rigon/Calado (BR/I/UK), Ferrari 488 GT3 #62, 1:19.266 minutes
7. Campbell/Jaminet/Nasr (AUS/F/BR), Porsche 911 GT3 R #9, 1:19.942 minutes

GTD class:
1. Sellers/Snow/Johansson (USA/USA/S), BMW M4 GT3 #1, 1:19.118 minutes
2. Megennis/Lewis/Westphal (USA/USA/USA), Lamborghini Huracan GT3 #39, 1:19.506 minutes
3. Conwright/Holzer/Yount (USA/D/USA), Lamborghini Huracan GT3 #42, 1:19.522 minutes
9. Hardwick/Heylen/Robichon (USA/B/CDN), Porsche 911 GT3 R #16, 1:20.025 minutes
13. Ferriol/Legge/Boulle (USA/UK/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R #99, 1:21.470 minutes

Preview

Entering the 25th Anniversary Motul Petit Le Mans, Porsche customer programs are not only contenders for victory at the silver anniversary of the 10-hour classic American endurance race but also for championships in every major GT category. Three Porsche 911 GT3 R race cars are entered for the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season finale at Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta on October 1. The No. 9 Pfaff Motorsports Porsche will represent the German sports car manufacturer in the GTD Pro class with Wright Motorsports and Hardpoint carry the banner in the GTD class. Pfaff and Wright are each targeting back-to-back WeatherTech crowns with the 510 hp Porsche 911 GT3 R race cars.

Pfaff Motorsports has earned five wins on the season in the GTD Pro class while Wright Motorsports enters the finale with two in GTD. Both are within grasp of their respective class championships. Coming into the final race of the season, Porsche leads the GTD Pro Manufacturer standings 3173 to 2922 points, 251 markers ahead of Lexus. The German marque enters the finale in fifth-place in GTD Manufacturer standings but is only 270 points out of the lead. A victory pays 350 points, a pole position 35.

The debut season for the Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS Clubsport will close with eight race cars on the

pre-event entry list for the two-hour Fox Factory 120, round ten of the Michelin Pilot Challenge on Friday, September 30.

Porsche 911 GT3 R farewell

The Porsche 911 GT3 R race car, which will be replaced in 2023 with the newest iteration based on the type 992 platform, has proven an impressive racing machine since its 2019 Rolex 24 At Daytona debut. In that time, Porsche customer teams have compiled 14 victories and nine championships in the IMSA GTD and GTD Pro classes. Entering Petit Le Mans, seven of those wins have occurred in 2022. Five of the victories have come from Pfaff Motorsports (Rolex 24 At Daytona, WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca, Canadian Tire Motorsport Park, Lime Rock Park, VIRginia International Raceway) and two from Wright Motorsports (Rolex 24 At Daytona and WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca).

Three teams – Pfaff, Wright and Hardpoint – have accumulated the championships. Pfaff helped earn three GTD titles in 2021 (Driver, Team and Manufacturer) while Wright took three WeatherTech Endurance Championships (Driver, Team and Manufacturer) last year as well. Rob Ferriol raced the Hardpoint machine to the Bob Akin Award in the final moments of the 2021 season for a seventh 2021 IMSA WeatherTech title for Porsche. Zach Robichon (Canada) added to the grand total earning the Driver and helping Porsche take the Manufacturer WeatherTech Sprint Cup titles in 2019.

History

Porsche has participated in every Petit Le Mans held on the 2.54-mile, 12-turn Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta and, as a manufacturer, has won the race 27 times. Included is a nearly unprecedented overall victory in 2015 by the No. 911 Porsche North America Porsche 911 RSR. Porsche has won at least one class at Petit Le Mans 19 times in the event's history. In the inaugural year, 1998, Porsche won four classes with variants of the 911. Porsche has won a class at "Petit" three of the last four years including a one-two finish by WeatherTech Racing last year when "works" drivers Matt Campbell (Australia) and Mathieu Jaminet (France) teamed with Cooper MacNeil to win the now retired GTLM class in the final North American race of the Porsche 911 RSR-19.

WeatherTech, GTD Pro Class

Pfaff Motorsports enters the 2022 GTD Pro finale in an enviable position. By virtue of five victories – including three of the last four races – the Canadian operation has a nearly unassailable lead on the GTD Pro Driver and Team championships. Assuming Pfaff rolls off the starting grid, it will clinch the championship as soon as the first car crosses the starting line after the completion of the scheduled formation lap(s) regardless of whether or not the starter displays the green flag. If they have to start from pit lane, they will receive points – and the championships – after the race officially begins. This is also true for drivers Matt Campbell (Australia) and Mathieu Jaminet (France). It will be the first IMSA

WeatherTech SportsCar class championship for either driver. The pairing will be joined by fellow Porsche factory driver Felipe Nasr (Brazil) in the No. 9 Pfaff Porsche 911 GT3 R race car. The same trio opened the 2022 season with a class victory at the Rolex 24 At Daytona.

Jaminet/Campbell teamed in a Porsche 911 RSR-19 to win GTLM class last year. Campbell is chasing his third consecutive Petit win, he won in GTLM class in 2020 and 2021 driving a Porsche 911 RSR-19. Jaminet is looking to add to his 2021 class win with a second on October 1. Nasr includes an overall Petit victory on his resume having won the 2019 edition in a Daytona Prototype.

Pfaff Motorsports debuted in the GTD class of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship in 2019. Since that first season the team has utilized the same Porsche 911 GT3 R to compete. Over the four seasons the car has been eligible to race in the GTD and now GTD Pro class, the “Plaid Porsche” has compiled 11 career wins and five pole positions entering the car's final race before retirement.

2022 Pfaff Motorsports' race victories include: the Rolex 24 At Daytona, WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca, Canadian Tire Motorsport Park and overall victories at both Lime Rock Park and the most recent round at VIRginia International Raceway. The Steve Bortolotti-managed program has two other podium finishes including third place at the Six Hours of the Glen and a second-place at Road America.

WeatherTech, GTD Class

Two Porsche 911 GT3 R race cars are in the 16-car GTD field. The class is identical to the GTD Pro class but with a Pro-Am style driver line-up rather than three professional drivers. Full-season Porsche privateer Wright Motorsports brings the No. 16 for drivers Ryan Hardwick (Atlanta, Georgia) and Jan Heylen (Belgium now living in Florida) with 2021 WeatherTech GTD Drivers Champion Zacharie Robichon (Canada) returning in his endurance race role. The trio opened the year with a victory in the Rolex 24 At Daytona while Hardwick/Heylen added a second win at WeatherTech Raceway Laguna Seca. By adding a victory bookend to Wright Motorsports' season, the John Wright-led program could jump from third place to a second consecutive IMSA GTD championship. In 2021, Hardwick and Heylen, then joined by Patrick Long (Westlake Village, California) in his final professional race, earned the WeatherTech Endurance Championship in the closing moments of the 10-hour enduro.

Hardpoint driver/team principal Rob Ferriol (Fayetteville, North Carolina) and Katherine Legge (Great Britain) lead the driver lineup of the No. 99 Porsche 911 GT3 R. Nick Boulle (Dallas, Texas) returns to the team for the first time since the season-opening Rolex 24 At Daytona.

Hardwick/Heylen enter the finale in third place of the GTD Drivers' championship; - 57 to Roman De Angelis in the lead and - 12 points to Stevan McAleer in second place. Wright Motorsports, also in third place in GTD Team points, is -57 points to Heart of Racing and - 12 to Team Korthoff Motorsports. Porsche is in fifth place of the GTD Manufacturer's battle with a 226 deficit to the leader.

Michelin Pilot Challenge, GS Class

The Fox Factory 120 at Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta closes the 2022 Michelin Pilot Challenge season and will also mark the conclusion of the inaugural season for the Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS Clubsport. Eight of the Porsche race cars are entered for the finale. The new GT4-spec Porsche opened the year with a victory at Daytona International Speedway in January. While the mid-engine Porsche has not won since the season-opener, Porsche enters the final weekend third in the GS Manufacturer standings. Privateer teams have accumulated 2660 points, only 60 behind leader Aston Martin and 50 behind second-place (Mercedes-AMG). The two-hour race will take the green flag at 1:10 p.m. ET/10:10 a.m. PT on Friday, September 30.

The No. 8 of McCann Racing will be piloted by local Andrew Davis (Athens, Georgia) and Michael McCann (Canton, Ohio). McCann will again do double-duty with the team's entry in the Porsche Carrera Cup North America Presented by the Cayman Islands. Hardpoint will again have entries in both Saturday's feature Petit Le Mans as well as Friday's support race as they conclude their first full season in the series with No. 22 Racing to End Alzheimer's Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS Clubsport with Sean McAlister (Beverly Hills, California) and Nick Galante (Greenfield, Massachusetts). Team TGM, with its shop based here on the grounds of Road Atlanta, enters both the No. 46 – with brothers Hugh Plumb (Unionville, Pennsylvania) and Matt Plumb (Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania) – and team principal Ted Giovanis (Highland, Maryland) and Owen Trinkler (Nashville, Tennessee) in the No. 64. Matt Tavis (The Woodlands, Texas) and Jason Hart (Flower Mound, Texas) continue in pursuit of the first win of the year for Nolasport's No. 47 while Kelly Moss has the No. 66 Cayman entered with David Brule (Channing, Michigan) and Alec Udell (The Woodlands, Texas). Local ace Spencer Pumpelly (Atlanta, Georgia) and Canada's Thomas Collingwood arrive in Braselton chasing the first win for BGB Motorsports' No. 83 Porsche. Nolasport, Kelly Moss and BGB all have entries in the Porsche Carrera Cup North America as well. CarBahn with Peregrine Racing closes the year with Tom Dyer (Jordan, Utah) and Tyler McQuarrie (Danville, California) in the No. 93.

Based on the road-going Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS, the mid-engine Clubsport shares its engine with the Porsche 911 GT3 Cup race car and makes the same approximate 500 hp. Entering round nine, Porsche is third in GS Manufacturer standings 130-points off the Aston-Martin and 110 behind AMG-Mercedes.

Comments before the race

Steve Bortolotti, Team Manager, No. 9 Pfaff Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R. GTD Pro.

“It's been an incredible year, and I couldn't be more proud of every member of the Pfaff Motorsports team. We've achieved incredible success over the past two seasons, but it's not every year you're fortunate enough to have the opportunity to chase records with minimal risk. At Motul Petit Le Mans, we're looking to become the first team to win six races in a 10-race season - something that has never

been done before. Our focus is on achieving that, and sending the 991.2 GT3 R off with another win!"

Ryan Hardwick, Driver, No. 16 Wright Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

"Well, it all comes down to this! As a competitor these are the situations that you dream about. Our team has a chance to win one of the most prestigious championships in the sports car racing world, at the final race of the season, which is also my hometown race, the Petit Le Mans. Our team was in a similar situation last year in the Michelin Pilot Challenge championship where it all came down to the final race, and Jan and I were able to come out on top. We are squarely focused on achieving that same result this season and will give it everything we have to fight for the championship down to the very last lap."

Jan Heylen, Driver, No. 16 Wright Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

"You start every season hoping you are in a position to go for the championship when you get to the last race. We are right there. I am thrilled we can go to Petit knowing there is a chance for us to win the championship. It is one of my favorite events of the year. To go there with a shot at winning is awesome. The whole team is really excited, and it is going to be a tough and thrilling race. I can't wait to get started."

Rob Ferriol, Driver/Team Principal, No. 99 Hardpoint Porsche 911 GT3 R.

"This is the last race of a challenging season, but the one thing that's apparent is the effort our crew has put into this program. We've taken another step forward with a productive test session at Road Atlanta, so we plan to send the season and this model of the GT3 R out on a high note. Nick got back to speed at the test after being away from this car since Daytona, and we're happy to have him back in our paddock space and a part of the team. Petit Le Mans is always a challenge because it's busy, it's long, and there's historically been a lot of attrition. If we can take care of our business and continue to improve the car throughout the week, we'll give Katherine an opportunity to bring home a finish for us at the end and launch that momentum into what is shaping up to be a busy 2023 season."

Timing (all times in ET)

IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship

Thursday, September 29 – Practice 1 – 9:50 a.m. – 11:20 a.m.

Thursday, September 29 – Practice 2 – 2:55 p.m. – 4:40 p.m.

Thursday, September 29 – Practice 3 (Night Practice) – 7:30 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

Friday, September 30 – Qualifying – GTD/GTD Pro – 3:40 p.m. – 3:55 p.m.

Saturday, October 1 – Warm-Up – 9:15 a.m. – 9:35 a.m.

Saturday, October 1 – 25th Annual Motul Petit Le Mans – 12:10 p.m. – 10:10 p.m.

Michelin Pilot Challenge

Wednesday, September 28 – Practice 1 – 2:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Thursday, September 29 – Practice 2 – 12:15 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.

Thursday, September 29 – Qualifying – GS – 6:20 p.m. – 6:35 p.m.

Friday, September 30 – Fox Factory 120 – 1:10 p.m. – 3:10 p.m.

Viewing

The ten-hour Motul Petit Le Mans will air live in its entirety on the Peacock streaming app, Saturday, October 1 with the broadcast beginning at 12:00 p.m., Noon ET/9:00 a.m. PT., just before the green flag. NBC will be live from Noon to 3:00 p.m. ET for those watching over the air. USA will have cable coverage for the vital final hours of the 2022 season beginning at 7:00 p.m. ET/4:00 p.m. PT until the checkered flag. Additionally, IMSA Radio will have live play-by-play on SiriusXM (XM 207, Internet/App 992) and IMSA.TV.

The Fox Factory 120 will be aired live, flag-to-flag on the Peacock Streaming App beginning at 1:10 p.m. ET/10:10 a.m. PT., Friday, September 30.

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