

Lining-Up. Porsche Carrera Cup North America Teams Start Announcing Plans.

23/02/2021 Teams Receive New 911 GT3 Cup Car.

Two significant players in Porsche customer racing are among the first to announce their plans for the inaugural season of the Porsche Carrera Cup North America. One, Molitor Racing Systems (MRS), is a longtime entrant in international Porsche one-make racing but new to the North American market. The second, 311RS Motorsport, is a United States-based relative newcomer to the sport which already has multiple wins with the brand. The two teams join Team Hardpoint EBM – who announced the first Porsche Carrera Cup North America entry on October 16, 2020, just weeks following the formation of the series – to make a formal announcement of participation.

In a February 15 release, Molitor announced the purchase of two new Porsche 911 GT3 Cup race cars to compete in the debut season of the top one-make racing category on the continent: Porsche Carrera Cup North America. The driver lineup for the program is yet to be finalized.

Founded in 1993 and with 18 years of competition experience in Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup and Carrera Cup, MRS GT-Racing is based in Lonsee-Luizhausen, Germany. Managed by founder and team principal Karsten Molitor, MRS GT-Racing has won multiple Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup races as well as the Porsche Carrera Cup since 2003. In addition to Porsche Carrera Cup North America, the team is also exploring participation in the Porsche Sprint Challenge North America as well as other Porsche-related North American efforts.

A few days after the MRS declaration, the second team announcement of the week came from 311RS Motorsport. The Minneapolis, Minnesota-based operation will take the step from a single-car entry in the SRO GT America GT2 championship into a two-car Porsche Carrera Cup North America program led by 2009 GRAND-AM Rolex GT Sports Car Champion Leh Keen (Dublin, Georgia) and 2020 SRO GT America GT2 champ Ryan Gates (Minneapolis, Minnesota). Keen is a popular veteran of the sport making his return to the competitive cockpit of a Porsche in 2021 while Gates earned an impressive sweep of victories in the SRO GT2 category last year. Keen has become closely tied to the Porsche brand over the years. Working with Porsche Cars North America, he entered the Guinness World Records by driving a Porsche Taycan Turbo S to the fastest top-speed (102.65 mph) ever recorded indoors. The Georgian has 13 IMSA series victories including GRAND-AM and GTC class championship driving Porsche privateer race cars.

Teams will have their first on-track taste of the new Porsche 911 GT3 Cup race car on March 8 – 9 at Sebring International Raceway for an open test managed by Porsche Motorsport North America

(PMNA). The first season launches on March 18 – 19 at Sebring.

Leh Keen, Driver, No. 12 311 RS Motorsport Porsche 911 GT3 Cup.

"I am so happy Porsche has decided to bring Carrera Cup to the States. It's a great opportunity for my career to come back to professional racing with my friends at 311RS Motorsport and in the Porsche GT3 Cup platform. There are a lot of familiar pieces to this program for me so I expect to hit the ground running. 311RS Motorsport has a nice history with the 911 GT3 platform and it's awesome to see them step up to another level fresh off their success in SRO last year."

For more quotes, see this week's Motorsport Weekly Event Notes.

On-Time Delivery. Porsche Carrera Cup North America Teams Receive New 911 GT3 Cup Car.

North American customers have taken delivery of the first 23 Porsche 911 GT3 Cup race cars. The nearly two-dozen machines are the first cars based on the latest generation of the iconic sports car produced by the German marque. Teams began taking delivery of the cars, all of which will compete in the inaugural season of the Porsche Carrera Cup North America, on Friday, February 19. Deliveries were scheduled to be completed on Monday, February 22. Teams received the cars, once they had cleared United States Customs, at a facility near the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport in Georgia.

The first round of teams to take delivery of the new 510-hp one-make machine include Porsche stalwarts Kelly-Moss Road & Race, Wright Motorsports, JDJ Racing, BGB, Black Swan Racing, ACI Motorsports, Moorespeed, EBM-Team Hardpoint, Goldcrest Motorsports, MRS, Topp Racing, 311RS Motorsports and TPC Racing. Teams will have two full weeks to prepare the naturally aspirated, flat-six engined cars for a Porsche Motorsport North America (PMNA) organized "open test" at Sebring International Raceway, March 8 – 9. The first weekend of competition will accompany the Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring, March 17 – 19 at the 3.74-mile, 17-turn facility in central Florida.

Porsche Carrera Cup North America takes its place as the pinnacle of one-make cup championships on the Porsche Motorsport Pyramid in North America. The 2021 season is scheduled to host 16-rounds at eight venues. Each 45-minute race will count toward a season long driver and team championship in each of three classes: Pro, Pro-Am and Pro-Am 991. All drivers can contend for Pro class victories but must utilize the newest Porsche 911 GT3 Cup race car to do so. The Pro-Am class is eligible for "Gentlemen" drivers – a driver who does not make a primary profession of automobile racing. With the production run of the seventh-generation 911 GT3 Cup racer limited and all available cars allocated on a first come-first serve basis, the Pro-Am 991 class will grandfather in the previous generation "Cup car" – the type 991.2 – for one season to help Porsche meet demand by teams to participate in the series.

All drivers age 23 and under enjoy the additional benefit of inclusion in the Porsche Carrera Cup North

America Junior program. As a Junior, drivers receive valuable training tools for those wishing to make a career of professional motorsport. A driver will be selected from the Porsche Carrera Cup North America Junior program to represent the region in the annual Porsche Junior Shootout in Germany at the end of the year.

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