

Triple Threat. Three Porsche Customers Bring 911 GT3 Racers to IMSA Mid-Ohio.

11/05/2021 Porsche Motorsport Weekly Notes

As the winningest manufacturer on the venerable Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course, Porsche has a formidable history to live up to at the midwestern track. The German sports car manufacturer will be represented by a true triple-threat of privateer entries when the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship travels to the Lexington, Ohio-area race circuit on Sunday, May 16. Current GTD championship point standing leader Wright Motorsports brings the No. 16 Porsche 911 GT3 R race car to its local track while Pfaff Motorsports has entered the No. 9 Porsche – each team led by a former winner of the race. Team Hardpoint EBM will focus on a single Porsche 911 GT3 R in Ohio, the No. 88, in the 14-car class of the 26-car field.

Since 2000, the German marque has earned 24 IMSA class wins on the 2.258-mile, 13-turn road course. Porsche has captured 18 overall wins since the track's first race in 1972. In fact, 15 of the first 20 professional sports car races held at Mid-Ohio from its founding through 1988 were won by a Porsche. In 1989, with Italian Teo Fabi behind the wheel of a Porsche-powered March open wheel race car, it was the site of the only Indy car win for the company based in Stuttgart, Germany.

Leading the way for the Porsche teams in the first sprint race of the year is the No. 16 of GTD class points leader, Wright Motorsports. The local favorite, from nearby Batavia, Ohio, welcomes back Ryan Hardwick (Atlanta, Georgia) to the cockpit joining with North America's only Porsche factory driver Patrick Long (Manhattan Beach, California).

The longtime Porsche entrant – who has involvement across the Porsche Motorsport Pyramid in North America including the Porsche Carrera Cup North America Presented by the Cayman Islands, Michelin Pilot Challenge, SRO GT America and SRO GT World Challenge America – is leading the GTD point standings following a second-place finish to Pfaff Motorsports at the most recent round, the Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring in March.

For Hardwick, it is the first time back in the GT3-spec Porsche in full competition since an accident in preparation for the season-opening IMSA Michelin Pilot Challenge event at the Daytona International Speedway in January. That was Hardwick's second accident in as many days, the first shortly after winning his first career GTD pole position in the No. 16. The resulting concussion protocol forced him to step out of the car for the Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring. He and Long recently tested at Mid-Ohio in preparation of this week's event. Long won the GTD class, then known as GT2, in 2009 and has two class pole positions at the track. Hardwick/Long finished in third-place together at Mid-Ohio last year.

Pfaff Motorsports travels from Canada with Porsche factory driver Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) and 2019 Sprint Championship winner Zacharie Robichon (Canada). The team scored its first major endurance victory in March at Sebring. However, this first "sprint" race of the year will put a premium on the pairing of Vanthoor and Robichon in the "Plaid Porsche."

After entering two cars at Sebring, Team Hardpoint EBM returns to a single entry for Mid-Ohio. The duo of Katherine Legge (United Kingdom) and team principal Rob Ferriol (Fayetteville, North Carolina) will race the No. 88 Porsche 911 GT3 R. The two shared the cockpit along with Earl Bamber (New Zealand) and Christina Nielsen (Denmark) to open the year at Daytona.

First on-track laps for the 510 hp-rear-engine Porsche 911 GT3 R race car will come on Friday, May 14 with qualifying on Saturday. The two-hour, 40-minute race – the first non-endurance event of the season – will take the green flag on Sunday at 2:40 p.m. EDT with live television on NBCSN starting at 2:30 p.m.

Comments before the race

Patrick Long, Driver, No. 16 Wright Motorsports Porsche 911 GT3 R.

"I love the Mid-Ohio culture and old school traditional road course layout. It's a home race for the WM crew and having Ryan back in the car brings double anticipation and excitement to this coming week."

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

"It was an unplanned break that's for sure. But it felt really good to get back into the car. You know, it's a tough injury, a head injury. I felt like I was ready to go for Sebring. I was really wanting to get back into the car at Sebring again. You break your leg or your arm, or you have an injury like that, it's really simple. You know when you're physically healed or not. But with a head injury, man, it's tough to pinpoint. And I'm very thankful. I had a really great group of neurologists here in Atlanta at the Shepherd Center that I worked with as soon as I got back home from Daytona after my injury. They knew I wasn't quite ready. I was going through a gauntlet of physical therapy, cognitive therapy work, vision therapy, reaction time stuff. About four days a week, I was there working with these guys and they knew I wasn't where I needed to be. And hindsight, 20-20, looking back now I just finished my last round of tests and through their whole system just last week, right before I went to go get in the car at Mid-Ohio, and my scores on all these assessments last week compared to that week, leading up to Sebring are drastically different. I mean, I can look back and see now they were correct. Turns out these neurologists, know what they're talking about. And so it felt good to finally get back into the car. And I was really proud of the test and the results that I obtained over a couple of days there. By the second day that I got to drive, I was really outperforming what I was doing there last year. I'm sure our competition will be better, but I personally felt good not only with the injury, but just being out of the car for so long."

Katherine Legge, Driver, No. 88 Team Hardpoint EBM Porsche 911 GT3 R.

"I'm very much looking forward to going back to Mid-Ohio, it is a track that brings a smile to your face

when you are driving it. I have fond memories of my NASCAR debut and an IMSA podium there, but I actually haven't raced there very much at all. It is tricky to be fast there, so Rob and I will be looking to build on Sebring results and find a setup we both like. We raced the same car in Daytona, so teaming up isn't entirely new, and I'm looking forward to working with Rob. Hopefully we can get a good result for the team, and for Richard Mille, and build on that moving forward."

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



Tom Moore

IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship
Darkhorse Autosport
(for US media only)
+1 615 509 5000
tom@darkhorseautosport.com



Frank Wiesmann

Manager, Product Communications, Motorsport and Brand Heritage
Porsche Cars North America
404-539-5031
frank.wiesmann@porsche.us

Link Collection

Link to this article

https://newsroom.porsche.com/en_US/2021/motorsport/porsche-imsa-mid-ohio-911-gt3-customer-teams-24481.html

Media Package

<https://pmdb.porsche.de/newsroomzips/37ad45be-9f3e-4b1e-ad3a-1d1f7d213d7c.zip>