

# Return: Charlotte. Porsche GT Team and IMSA Back to North Carolina ROVAL.

05/10/2020 Porsche Motorsport Weekly Event Notes

## Porsche Profile. Event Story Lines.

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Twenty years ago IMSA held its only race to-date at the Charlotte Motor Speedway (CMS) with Porsche holding nearly half the starting spots. Since that time much has changed in the sport and at the Concord, North Carolina track. It will all come back together on Saturday October 10 when three Porsche-built race cars will challenge the Charlotte "ROVAL" for 100-minutes in the Motul 100% Synthetic Grand Prix. In keeping with Charlotte's stock car tradition, the race will feature only the GTLM and GTD classes of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship. The event – a make-up to replace the Lime Rock Park race which was canceled due to COVID-19 concerns – will feature not only the series' return to Charlotte but also the Porsche GT Team's return to the series. The factory program's two car effort of Frédéric Makowiecki (France)/Nick Tandy (Great Britain) in the No. 911 and the No. 912 of Earl Bamber (New Zealand)/Laurens Vanthoor (Belgium) chose to opt out of the most recent race of the season out of an abundance of caution two weeks ago. Porsche privateer Wright Motorsports comes to Charlotte on a high having two consecutive podium finishes in the GTD class. North America's only Porsche factory driver, Patrick Long (Manhattan Beach, California) joins Ryan Hardwick (Atlanta, Georgia) behind the wheel of Wright's No. 16 Porsche 911 GT3 R having scored third-place finishes at Michelin Raceway Road Atlanta and then, most recently, at the Mid-Ohio Sports Car Course.

The Porsche factory effort was forced to miss the most recent round of the championship as a result of three positive Covid-19 tests that were confirmed during the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

While missing the race in the highly competitive class essentially removes Porsche from contention for defending its 2019 GTLM Driver (Bamber/Vanthoor), Team (No. 912) and Manufacturer titles, the desire to close-out the final season of official "works" status in the WeatherTech series with a string of victories remains the primary focus of the CORE autosport-run team. The event will be held near the factory team's home-base on the continent in nearby Rock Hill, South Carolina.

Famously known for the Coca-Cola 600 traditionally raced the Sunday evening before Memorial Day, the North Carolina facility revamped the old road course layout used in 2000, adding corners and curbing to make the track a more traditional feeling road course. Much like its counterpart, the Daytona International Raceway in Florida, the Charlotte track, known as the "ROVAL", uses a portion of the 1.5-mile tri-oval and purpose-built corners in the interior of the track. In early testing, the 2.32-mile, 10-turn track has proven a challenge to drivers as they learn to balance the raw speed of the banked oval with the infield portions of the track.

The schedule for the GT-only weekend includes a 60-minute opening practice on Friday, October 9 at 7:30 p.m. ET to prepare for night racing on the lit race course. A second practice session is set for Saturday morning beginning at 9:45 a.m. through to 11:00 a.m. ET. GTD qualifying is set between 2:00 – 2:15 p.m. Saturday with GTLM following at 2:25 p.m. for 15-minutes to set the grid for the green flag at 8:05 p.m. ET.

## **Pfaff Forward. Canadian-Based Porsche Privateer to Return to IMSA GTD Competition.**

After a prolonged absence from the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, caused by travel restrictions for team members and drivers, Pfaff Motorsports will return to the series for the signature 10-hour Motul Petit Le Mans scheduled for October 17. The No. 9 Motul-sponsored "Plaid Porsche" 911 GT3 R will be driven by IMSA Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Canada champion Zach Robichon (Canada), Porsche development driver and Nürburgring lap-record holder Lars Kern (Germany) as well as Intercontinental GT champion, Dennis Olsen (Norway). The same trio raced the Pfaff Automotive Porsche at the Rolex 24 At Daytona in January. They were joined in the season-opening round by Porsche factory driver Patrick Pilet (France).

Steve Bortolotti, Team Manager, Pfaff Motorsports.

"It was very disappointing not to be racing in July when the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship made its return. We felt we had all the pieces in place to make a run at the championship in our sophomore season. Our team is made up predominantly of Pfaff employees who work in our dealerships when not racing; travel restrictions between the United States and Canada made a full season return impossible in July when the series resumed. However, for Petit Le Mans, quarantining for two weeks upon returning to Canada for the series' signature event made sense for all of us, especially as a way to thank our partners for sticking by our side during these challenging times. Motul Petit Le Mans is one of the most exciting events on the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship calendar. Our partners at Motul and Porsche Motorsport North America have been incredibly supportive during this challenging season, and we couldn't be more excited for our return to IWSC championship competition at Motul's headline event."

## Season in 2021.

The Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup now revs up for the 2021 season. The successful Esports championship run on the iRacing simulation platform heads into its third year on January 9, 2021 – treating fans and drivers to some gripping sim racing action with the virtual Porsche 911 GT3 Cup race cars during the winter months. Ten rounds will be contested through late April to make-up the third-year of the virtual Porsche one-make championship. In addition to storied race tracks such as the Nürburgring-Nordschleife and the Circuit des 24 Heures in Le Mans, the virtual Interlagos Grand Prix venue in Brazil, the Formula 1 street circuit of Montréal and the Hockenheimring are also among the venues for the first time. Once again, participants will have the opportunity to compete for valuable championship points and a total of \$200,000 in prize money.

A look at the final round of the current season – scheduled for later this week on Saturday, October 10 – underlines just how close the competition is in the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup. The title decision goes down to the wire at the final round held on the digital version of the Grand Prix track of Monza in Italy.

The 2021 season will see minor tweaks to the regulations to ensure even more suspense. The most important change is likely to be that instead of a set race duration – currently 15-minutes for the sprint race and 30-minutes for the main event – the rounds will be contested over a distance of approximately 25 and 50-miles (40 and 80 kilometers) respectively. Qualifying becomes even more critical next year as the fastest driver will start the sprint race from pole position. Previously, the first eight qualifiers have tackled the sprint race in reverse order. However, in the main race, the eight top-placed drivers will start in reverse order.

The 40 grid spots for the virtual one-make cup are highly coveted. This season's top 20 drivers automatically qualify for next year's series. Another 20 sim racers will have the chance to pit themselves against the seasoned specialists in the coming year. Five qualifying races determine who gets these places. The first qualifying round is scheduled for October 24 on the simulated Okayama International Circuit in Japan. The aspiring racers will compete on a different race track every week through November 21 with the virtual Porsche 911 GT3 Cup race cars.

From Thursday morning to midday Saturday, races will be held at two-hour intervals on the upcoming circuit. Every driver can contest as many rounds as they like. The 30 sim racers with the best points are eligible to take part in the "shootout" race, which is always held on Saturday at 8:45 a.m. ET (2:45 p.m. CEST). After five of these qualifying rounds, the top 20 in the overall ranking receive a grid spot for the 2021 Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup.

Marco Ujhasi, Manager Esports Porsche Motorsport.

"When it comes to suspense, the current season of the Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup is hard to beat. We've witnessed many action-packed races, and the title fight will only be decided at the finale. The high level of driving skill and the huge popularity among fans have exceeded our expectations. But

we can't afford to rest on our laurels. So, we're shifting up a gear to propel this fantastic sport forward. For 2021, we've collaborated with our partners to develop the calendar and the sporting format and we're looking forward to some great sim racing. My special thanks go to title sponsor TAG Heuer and Vodafone for their strong backing."

## 2021 Porsche TAG Heuer Esports Supercup Schedule.

January 9 – Brazil: Interlagos (10/20 laps)  
January 16 – Spain: Barcelona (9/18 laps)  
January 30 – Germany: Hockenheimring (9/18 laps)  
February 06 – Great Britain: Silverstone GP circuit (7/14 laps)  
February 20 – USA: Road Atlanta (10/20 laps)  
February 27 – Canada: Montreal (10/20 laps)  
March 13 – Belgium: Spa-Francorchamps (6/12 laps)  
March 27 – Germany: Nürburgring Nordschleife, 24h version (3/4 laps)  
April 10 – France: Le Mans (3/6 laps)  
April 24 – Italy: Monza (7/14 laps)

(Brackets indicate the number of laps for sprint and main race).

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