



Porsche 963 lagging in qualifying, Pfaff Motorsports strong once again

15/04/2023 The No. 6 Porsche 963 tackles round three of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship from the grid position six. During the qualifying for the Long Beach Grand Prix in California, works driver Nick Tandy from the UK turned his fastest lap in 1:11.406 minutes. His brand colleague Felipe Nasr from Brazil claimed P8 in the 20-minute hunt for top times on the city circuit close to Los Angeles. In the GTD-Pro class, the Sebring-winning squad Pfaff Motorsports secured a promising grid spot, planting its Porsche 911 GT3 R on third place.

The Porsche Penske Motorsport switches from long distance to sprint mode with the Porsche 963 in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship: next up on the calendar is the Long Beach event – which is the shortest race of the season at just 100 minutes long.

Qualifying

In sunny conditions and cool temperatures of around 17 degrees Celsius, the Porsche Penske

Motorsport works team struggled to get the tyres of both LMDh prototypes within the ideal operating window. This had already become evident in the morning's practice session and again at noon. Despite a mammoth effort from the qualifying drivers Tandy and Nasr, the gap to the fastest vehicles in the GTP class was significant. Given the lack of overtaking opportunities on the narrow US street circuit, the grid positions play a major role.

"We're disappointed – no question about it," says Thomas Laudenbach, clearly stating his impressions of the qualifying. The Vice President of Porsche Motorsport continues: "We started the race weekend with high hopes. However, we already noticed in the practice sessions that it was very difficult to get the Michelin tyres up to temperature, especially the front tyres. Hopefully, our engineers manage to significantly improve the setup for race day. The Sebring class winners Pfaff Motorsports tackle the GTD-Pro class from position three. That's a great place to start to give the Porsche 911 GT3 R the best chances in the race."

"Obviously, that's not the result we'd hoped for," concludes Jonathan Diuguid. The Managing Director of Porsche Penske Motorsport adds: "We've been off the pace since the first free practice. We'll continue to work tirelessly and systematically on possible improvements. Let's see what race day brings. One thing is clear: we're too far from the top and we need to find out exactly why."

Best Porsche 911 GT3 R tackles the GTD-Pro category from position three

The qualifying for the two GTD classes was stopped early after an accident involving PJ Hyett at the wheel of AO Racing's Porsche 911 GT3 R. Despite the heavy impact of the bright green 911 with its dinosaur livery, the American was uninjured. The vehicle with the nickname "Rexy", however, sustained severe damages and is unable to contest the race. In the Pro class, Frenchman Patrick Pilet heads into the Pro class from P3 in Pfaff Motorsports' No. 9 car. In the GTD class, the two entries from Kelly-Moss with Riley and the 911 GT3 R fielded by Wright Motorsports start from positions 11, 14 and 15 respectively.

The 100-minute sprint race on the spectacular street course along the Pacific Coast gets underway on Saturday at 2:05 pm local time (11:05 pm CEST). Outside the USA and Canada, the entire race can be viewed live on the website <https://imsa.com/tv>.

Drivers' comments after the qualifying

Nick Tandy (Porsche 963 #6): "Over a flying lap, we're too far off the competition. It's always tricky when a team arrives at such a special track with a completely new car. Our Porsche 963 feels really good and it's great fun racing through the streets of Long Beach. But the others are simply faster. Qualifying and racing are two different things. I'm sure the team will find some solutions by Saturday. I

believe we'll be closer over the distance."

Felipe Nasr (Porsche 963 #7): "The qualifying was difficult for us. We simply couldn't build up sufficient speed. We managed to make some progress during the practice sessions but there's still a long way to go to catch up to the frontrunners. We know where there's still room to improve. I hope the engineers come up with a good solution for this. In tomorrow's race, we are determined to fight our way forward as far as possible. I hope we can achieve a top 3 result."

Patrick Pilet (Porsche 911 GT3 R #9): "Our Porsche felt great in the first free practice but we still made some tweaks for the second session and learned a lot in the process. The team found an ideal solution: Our 911 was very strong in qualifying. On my first fast laps, I had to keep slowing down because of the yellow flags so that no one was endangered. My final lap was great again. I reached the eighth turn without any mistakes and really fast. And again, the yellow flags were there – what a shame! More would definitely have been possible. The car drives beautifully. I think our chances on race day look very good."

Qualifying result

GTP class:

1. Albuquerque/R. Taylor (P/USA), Acura #10, 1:09.909 minutes
2. Blomqvist/Braun (UK/USA), Acura #60, 1:10.583 minutes
3. Bourdais/van der Zande (F/NL), Cadillac #01, 1:10.981 minutes
6. Campbell/Nasr (AUS/BR), Porsche 963 #7, 1:11.406 minutes
8. Tandy/Jaminet (UK/F), Porsche 963 #6, 1:11.591 minutes

GTD-Pro class:

1. Hawksworth/Barnicoat (UK/UK), Lexus #14, 1:17.817 minutes
2. Gunn/Riberas (UK/E), Aston Martin #23, 1:17.958 minutes
3. Bachler/Pilet (A/F), Porsche 911 GT3 R #9, 1:18.083 minutes

GTD class:

1. Sørensen/de Angelis (DK/CDN), Aston Martin #27, 1:17.811 minutes
2. Montecalvo/Telitz (USA/USA), Lexus #12, 1:18.376 minutes
3. Sellers/Snow (USA/USA), BMW #1, 1:18.383 minutes
11. Brynjolfsson/Hindman (USA/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R #77, 1:19.629 minutes
13. Hyett/Priault (USA/UK), Porsche 911 GT3 R #80, 1:19.767 minutes
14. Udell/Bleekemolen (USA/NL), Porsche 911 GT3 R #92, 1:19.807 minutes
15. Metni/van Berlo (USA/NL), Porsche 911 GT3 R #91, 1:20.789 minutes

Full results on <http://imsa.alkamelsystems.com>.

Preview

Porsche Penske Motorsport travels to round three of the North American IMSA series in Long Beach feeling highly motivated. After the dramatic 12-hour race in Sebring, the factory squad is now determined to bring home a top result from the Pacific Coast of the United States with the Porsche 963. However, the contrasts could hardly be greater: Next up after the two longest races of the year comes the shortest event of the season – with the short 100-minute sprint on the 3.167-kilometre city circuit held as part of the IndyCar Grand Prix weekend. Qualifying for the event is particularly critical: overtaking on the Long Beach Street Circuit is rare and when all goes well, the teams come into the pits only once.

“After the spectacle in Sebring, our Porsche Penske Motorsport now faces the next highlight,” explains Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport. “Racing on the streets around Long Beach has a very different character compared to the first two events of the season at Daytona and Sebring. It’ll be an intense sprint. We’ve worked meticulously to prepare our two Porsche 963 for this special challenge. After narrowly missing out on our first victory at Sebring, we have a clear goal for Long Beach. I’m looking forward to an exciting race in the GTD classes and I’m certain that our customer teams can be winners with the Porsche 911 GT3 R.”

“First we tackled the two endurance races in Florida over 24 and 12 hours, next up is the short sprint in Long Beach – the challenges in the early part of the IMSA season could hardly be more different,” exclaims Urs Kuratle. The Director Factory Motorsport LMDh adds: “We drew important conclusions from our outing in Sebring. Now we finally want to reap the rewards in Long Beach. Our two Porsche Penske Motorsport squads again face another intense weekend: while the IMSA team competes in California, the WEC crew will be tackling round two of the world championship in Portimão. We aim to score maximum points on both sides of the Atlantic.”

Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport: “We are ready to tackle something different this week, with the first sprint race of the year at Long Beach. These types of races play out totally different than the endurance events, so as a team we need to have a different mindset and a different type of preparation in the shop. For us, we are encouraged by the speed we had in Sebring and hope that can transfer over to Long Beach. This is an important race for us as well, because we will be sharing the weekend with our Team Penske counterparts in IndyCar, so there will be a lot of eyes on how we perform. Our goal is to qualify up front, minimize mistakes and hopefully bring home the win at one of the legendary races in North America.”

The IMSA race

Round three of this year’s IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship will be contested on the Long Beach Grand Prix Circuit. The 3.167-kilometre city circuit features eleven turns and is regarded as the American equivalent of the Monaco Grand Prix. The course runs in a clockwise direction around the

Long Beach Convention Center. Its special features include the sweeping start-finish straight along the Pacific coast and the sharp right-hander at the end of the lap. The temporary circuit has served as a racetrack since 1975 and hosted Formula 1 eight times between 1976 and 1983. On the third weekend in April, the popular American IndyCar series will be contested at Long Beach, in which Team Penske is also represented with a team.

The Porsche teams and drivers

Four regular IMSA drivers share the cockpits of the two Porsche 963 fielded by the Porsche Penske Motorsport factory squad in the GTP class. Nick Tandy from the UK and Frenchman Mathieu Jaminet helm the No. 6 vehicle, with the No. 7 sister car shared by Australian Matt Campbell and Felipe Nasr from Brazil.

In the GTD-Pro class, Austria's Klaus Bachler and Patrick Pilet from France drive Pfaff Motorsports' No. 9 Porsche 911 GT3 R. In the GTD category, Kelly-Moss with Riley fields two Porsche. Sharing driving duties in the No. 91 car are Alan Metni from the USA and the Porsche North America selected driver, Kay van Berlo from the Netherlands. American Alec Udell and Jeroen Bleekemolen from the Netherlands drive No. 92 entry campaigned by the customer team from the US state of Wisconsin.

Alan Brynjolfsson and Trent Hindman from America compete for Wright Motorsports as the regular drivers in the No. 77 Porsche. AO Racing relies on PJ Hyett from the USA and Sebastian Priaulx from the UK. Thanks to its distinctive dinosaur livery, their bright green No. 80 Porsche 911 GT3 R has been nicknamed "Rexy".

An overview of the teams and drivers

GTP-class (Porsche 963):

Porsche Penske Motorsport (#6): Mathieu Jaminet (F), Nick Tandy (UK)

Porsche Penske Motorsport (#7): Matt Campbell (AUS), Felipe Nasr (BR)

GTD-Pro class (Porsche 911 GT3 R):

Pfaff Motorsports (#9): Klaus Bachler (A), Patrick Pilet (F)

GTD-class (Porsche 911 GT3 R):

Wright Motorsports (#77): Alan Brynjolfsson (USA), Trent Hindman (USA)

AO Racing (#80): PJ Hyett (USA), Sebastian Priaulx (UK)

Kelly-Moss with Riley (#91): Alan Metni (USA), Kay van Berlo (NL)

Kelly-Moss with Riley (#92): Jeroen Bleekemolen (NL), Alec Udell (USA)

The schedule (local time, CEST -9 hours)

Friday, 14 April

9:00 am – 10:00 am: Free practice 1

12:45 pm – 2:30 pm: Free practice 2

5:15 pm – 5:30 pm: Qualifying GTD-Pro/GTD

5:40 pm – 6:00 pm: Qualifying GTP

Saturday, 15 April

2:05 pm – 3:45 pm: Race (100 minutes)

Drivers' comments ahead of the race

Nick Tandy (Porsche 963 #6): "Long Beach should be fantastic in a GTP car. I've been lucky enough to compete there a lot but never in a prototype – that's going to be exciting. Plus, we share the weekend with our Penske friends from the IndyCar series. Perhaps we could swap information which would assist both teams."

Felipe Nasr (Porsche 963 #7): "We're about to face the first street course of the season set against the unique backdrop of Long Beach. The circuit is super technical with several pretty tight corners but it's also very exciting. I always enjoy going there, especially with its great vibes from the Californian fans. With many other series competing there, the level of grip usually increases during the weekend. This factor is the key to finding the best setup for the car. We learned a lot in Sebring, now we have to continue this work. We aim to climb to the top of the podium with our Porsche 963 soon."

Klaus Bachler (Porsche 911 GT3 R #9): "I've never competed in Long Beach so again I'm stepping into new territory. However, there is one advantage: because it's a temporary street course, nobody has been able to test and practice there before the race. I'll definitely prepare well. Luckily, I have a great teammate with Patrick Pilet at my side. He knows the track and can share a few tips with me. I like street circuits and I'm super excited about the race weekend."

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



Holger Eckhardt

Spokesperson GT and Customer Motorsports, Esports
+49 (0) 170 / 911 4982
holger.eckhardt@porsche.de

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