



PORSCHE

Press Release

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Preview, IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, Round 1, Daytona (USA)

Porsche customer teams well-prepared for the endurance classic

Stuttgart. Porsche customer teams will field one 911 RSR in the GTLM class and four 911 GT3 R in the GTD category at the season-opening round of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship in Daytona on 30/31 January. After the successful performance at the first-ever qualifying race last Sunday, expectations are high for the 59th edition of the famous 24-hour endurance classic in the USA. At the three-day “Roar before the 24” test event on the 5.73-kilometre circuit, the teams prepared for the upcoming challenge with total concentration and meticulousness.

“During the test sessions and the qualifying race, we made considerable progress with our Porsche 911 RSR campaigned by the WeatherTech Racing customer squad,” says Steffen Höllwarth, Head of GTLM Operations. “Although we’ve gained and implemented a lot of those findings, we still have some homework to do before the start of the race. I’m feeling really positive about the season-opener at Daytona.” The WeatherTech Racing customer squad will be supported by the experienced German team Proton Competition during the 2021 season. At the qualifying race, works driver Kévin Estre from France and the American Cooper MacNeil secured the third grid spot in the hotly-contested GTLM class.

“During the drives with our four 911 GT3 R, we noticed that we’re very strong in both wet and dry conditions. This gives our teams, the drivers and the whole Porsche crew a real boost as we head to the 24-hour race,” concludes Sebastian Golz, Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R. During the “Roar before the 24”, the four GT3 vehicles fielded by Pfaff Motorsport, TGM, Hardpoint EBM and Wright Motorsports

covered a total distance of 3,472 kilometres. “All of that data is now being analysed,” explains Golz. “Using this information, we’ll work with the teams to further improve the vehicle setup to optimally prepare for the race.”

The race

The Daytona International Raceway in Florida, which opened in 1959, distinguishes itself from other tracks most notably by its steeply banked turns. The slope incline reaches up to 31 degrees in the oval passage of the 5.73-kilometre racetrack. This requires a special vehicle setup. Porsche is by far the most successful manufacturer at Daytona. The Stuttgart automobile manufacturer has achieved 18 overall wins as a constructor and four as an engine partner, with a further 78 class wins rounding off this success record.

The Porsche customer teams

The WeatherTech Racing team tackles the GTLM category with a ca. 515 hp Porsche 911 RSR. The cockpit of the No. 79 vehicle is shared by Kévin Estre from France, his factory driver teammates Richard Lietz from Austria and Gianmaria Bruni from Italy as well as the American amateur driver Cooper MacNeil. In the GTD class, the Pfaff Motorsports customer team takes up the first North American long-distance race of the year from a promising position. The Belgian works driver Laurens Vanthoor and Canadian Zacharie Robichon finished the qualifying race in second place at the wheel of the No. 9 car. For the 24-hour race, the pair shares the Porsche 911 GT3 R run by the Canadian customer squad with works driver Matt Campbell from Australia and Porsche development driver Lars Kern (Germany).

Unchanged from last season, Wright Motorsports’ No. 16 car is manned by the American works driver Patrick Long and his compatriot Ryan Hardwick. The two receive support from Belgium’s Jan Heylen and the Austrian Klaus Bachler. The team takes up the race from ninth on the grid. Sharing driving duties in the identical (No. 88) 911 GT3 R fielded by Hardpoint EBM are New Zealander Earl Bamber, American Rob Ferriol, Christina Nielsen from Denmark and Katherine Legge from Great Britain. The

team achieved 14th place in the qualifying race. The TGM squad did not take part in the qualifying and thus the vehicle driven by the all-American driver lineup of Ted Giovanis, Hugh Plumb, Matt Plumb and Owen Trinkler starts the race from the last grid spot.

Live streaming of the race

The first race of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship season at Daytona gets underway on Saturday, 30 January, at 3:40 pm local time (9:40 pm CET). The race over 24 hours can be viewed outside the USA and Canada on www.imsa.com. Live timing of all sessions is available at scoring.imsa.com.

The schedule (local time, CET -6 hours)

Thursday, 28 January

11:05 am – 12:05 pm: Free practice

3:20 – 4:35 pm: Free practice

7:15 – 9:00 pm: Free practice

Friday, 29 January

11:20 am – 12:20 pm: Free practice

Saturday, 30 January

3:40 pm: Start 24 Hours of Daytona

Drivers' comments before the race

Kévin Estre (Porsche 911 RSR #79): "Like my works driver colleagues Gimmi and Richard, I'm returning to Daytona after a long break. I'm really looking forward to it. The race is one of the biggest and most spectacular in the world. We've worked systematically with our new team to prepare for the season-opener and we scored a great result with third place in the qualifying race. I expect we'll make some progress with our 911 RSR during the race week. I'm feeling very confident."

Laurens Vanthoor (Porsche 911 GT3 R #9): “Our good result in the qualifying race has given us extra motivation. The 100-minute event was the perfect way to prepare for the huge task ahead of us. The processes are very tight and well-thought-out. I firmly believe that everything will come together even better in the lead-up to the 24-hour race. We have a great car, a strong team and a formidable driver crew.”

Earl Bamber (Porsche 911 GT3 R #88): “We have a few things to sort out before the start of the big race. During the test drives, we managed to make good progress with the setup of the Porsche 911 GT3 R. More improvements will follow. Our team is new, as is our driver squad. If we can continue to make progress in the practice sessions, I think our chances look good.”

Patrick Long (Porsche 911 GT3 R #16): “Our preparation during the test days was going really well – until we had an accident during the night practice. We had to change the chassis. The team did a perfect job in a very short time, but we’re still not back to the same setup level as we were before the incident. So we’ll have to work extremely hard in the first sessions of the race week. We’re up against a top-class field. A result in the top five would be a big success for us.”

Further information, film and photo material in the Porsche Newsroom: newsroom.porsche.com. The Twitter channel @PorscheRaces provides live updates from Porsche Motorsport with the latest information and photos from racetracks around the world.

