Strong comeback from Porsche Penske Motorsport goes unrewarded

31/05/2026 The Porsche factory team finished the 100-minute sprint race on the streets of Detroit in fifth and eighth place. After a disappointing qualifying session on Friday, the two Porsche 963 cars staged an impressive comeback during round five of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship on the tight, temporary downtown street circuit. However, their efforts were not rewarded. The hybrid prototype from JDC-Miller MotorSports and the Porsche 911 GT3 R from AO Racing finished a challenging day deep in the field.

DETROIT. The two Porsche 963 fielded by the Porsche Penske Motorsport factory team started from seventh and 10th on the Detroit street course. Kévin Estre showed great determination from the start behind the wheel of the No. 6 car. With strong moves, the Frenchman consistently worked his way up the field, allowing his teammate Laurens Vanthoor to enter the second half of the race on course for the podium, thanks in part to a perfect strategy. At times, the gap to the second-place BMW was less than a second. But the fierce battles took their toll: Later in the race, a collision through no fault of their own

necessitated an additional pit stop to replace the damaged 963 rear end. The No. 6 car ultimately finished eighth.

The No. 7 sister car had a less eventful race. Felipe Nasr from Brazil and Julien Andlauer from France drove consistently in the midfield of the GTP top category and finished the race in fifth place.

“That was certainly not our best day,” Urs Kuratle, Directory Factory Motorsport LMDh, said. “We knew before the start of the sprint race that it would be a difficult task. That proved to be the case. All Porsche race cars were set back by collisions and penalties. We are now looking ahead. We'll be back on the attack at the end of June at the six-hour race in Watkins Glen.”

Porsche is now in second place in the manufacturers' championship. In the drivers' standings, Laurin Heinrich (Germany) from the customer team JDC-Miller Motorsport is also in second place. The works driver duos Nasr/Andlauer and Estre/Vanthoor are in third and fifth place.

Customer teams in the GTP and GTD Pro classes stand no chance

The JDC-Miller MotorSports customer team fell behind the GTP field early on during Dutch driver Tijmen van der Helm's opening stint. Things hardly improved after the handoff to Laguna Seca winner Laurin Heinrich: two penalties and collisions sent the Porsche 963 far back in the field. The U.S. team finished the Detroit street race in eleventh place, two laps down. Things didn't go much better for AO Racing's Porsche 911 GT3 R, nicknamed “Rexy,” in the GTD Pro class. The British duo of Nick Tandy and Harry King crossed the finish line in 10th place.

The sixth round of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship will take place on June 28 at Watkins Glen International. The six-hour race in upstate New York is part of the Michelin Endurance Cup, along with the endurance races at Daytona, Sebring, Road America, and Road Atlanta (“Petit Le Mans”).

Further information and links

Hi-res pictures: Porsche at Detroit
All results and overall standings: Alkamelsystems
75 Years of Porsche Motorsport: The history of #Raceborn
Historic Detroit statistics: The race in numbers

Drivers' quotes after the race

Kévin Estre(Porsche 963 #6): “The first stint went really well, even though there were a lot of collisions and fierce battles on the tight street circuit. I fought my way up the field with everything I had. Our

strategy was spot on. After the pit stop, we were in third place. Unfortunately, another driver rear-ended us shortly after that. We had to pit for repairs. In the end, eighth place was the best we could manage."

Felipe Nasr (Porsche 963 #7): "We made the most of our limited resources on a difficult day. Fifth place was the absolute best we could do. We didn't have the means to move up any further. We'll take the points and focus on preparing thoroughly for the next race."

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