Porsche 963 lagging in qualifying, Pfaff Motorsports strong once again

20/08/2025 Qualifying, IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, round 3, Long Beach (USA)

- The two Porsche 963 start from positions six and eight
- Pfaff Motorsport's Porsche 911 GT3 R on P3 in the GTD-Pro class
- GTD qualifying red-flagged after accident with AO Racing's 911
- Shortest race of the season takes off on Saturday at 2:05 pm local time

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.

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. Sörensen/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/Priaulx (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

Porsche Penske Motorsport celebrates historic first win with the Porsche 963

- Nick Tandy and Mathieu Jaminet win the thrilling sprint in Long Beach
- Victorious duo takes the lead in the drivers' championship
- Teammates Matt Campbell and Felipe Nasr secure podium result with third
- Pfaff Motorsports achieves third in the GTD-Pro with the Porsche 911 GT3 R
- Round four of the IMSA championship on 14 May in Laguna Seca

The new Porsche Penske Motorsport works team celebrates its first victory with the Porsche 963 hybrid prototype. At round three of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship, the No. 6 car driven by Nick Tandy and Mathieu Jaminet came out on top after a gripping race. In the 100-minute sprint through the streets of Long Beach, their team colleagues Matt Campbell and Felipe Nasr took the flag in third place with the No. 7 car. In the GTD-Pro category, Pfaff Motorsports scored a podium result with the Porsche 911 GT3 R.

In glorious sunshine and set against the stunning backdrop of the Pacific coast, the IMSA series treated fans to an extremely entertaining show on the narrow street circuit in Long Bach. Hollywood, barely 50 kilometres away, could hardly have staged it better. The two Porsche 963 fielded by Porsche Penske Motorsport had started the race from positions six and eight. In the first lap, the two ca. 500 kW (680 PS) cars benefitted froma collision among the leading pack in the early stages and inherited second and fifth place.

The first stint drivers, Nick Tandy from the UK and Brazilian Felipe Nasr, fended off fierce attacks from their rivals and brought the two Porsche 963 into the pits midway through the race for a scheduled service and driver change. There, the new Porsche Penske Motorsport works team opted for a daring strategy: Unlike the rest of the competition, instead of changing the wheels on both vehicles, the squad

put its trust in the excellent durability of the Michelin tyres. The time gained in the pits propelled the two “Made in Flacht” hybrid prototypes to the front of the field.

While Frenchman Mathieu Jaminet confidently turned his laps, his brand colleague Matt Campbell had his hands full in the final phase. The No. 7 car came under repeated attacks, which the Australian cleverly and resolutely countered or fended off. A minor collision, however, caused slight damage to the rear. Moreover, the tyres deteriorated rapidly over the last ten laps. With nine minutes left on the clock, Campbell lost two positions initially but reclaimed third place after an accident involving the No. 10 Acura in a battle with the leading Jaminet. Ultimately, the race ended behind the safety car.

“What an exciting and fantastic race,” says a delighted Thomas Laudenbach, Vice President Porsche Motorsport. “It was a spectacle from the first to the last lap. Our team chose an optimal strategy and did a perfect job with the pit stops. Our drivers gave their utmost and drove flawlessly without exception despite coming under enormous pressure. This performance was deservedly rewarded with our first victory. Many thanks to everyone in the team, our employees in Weissach and all our partners who made this success possible. I’m sure today’s victory will give our team extra motivation in the FIA WEC as they head into Sunday’s race in Portugal.”

“This day will go down in the history of our team. The first victory with the Porsche 963 is incredibly important to us,” says Jonathan Diuguid, Managing Director Porsche Penske Motorsport. “We put in so much energy and work to be able to celebrate such a success. Our strategy was certainly risky, but it paid off. We owe this triumph to every single person in the team. What Matt Campbell did in the battle for second place at the end was awesome. He had the sister car’s back in the important final phase. I’m enormously proud of the entire team!”

Pfaff Motorsports customer team scores podium with the Porsche 911 GT3 R

The GTD-Pro class race was equally as thrilling to the last moment. Thanks to a strong team effort and flawless drives, the Frenchman Patrick Pilet and Klaus Bachler from Austria secured a spot on the podium for Pfaff Motorsports. The No. 9 car fielded by the Canadian team reached the flag in third place. In the GTD class, the identical models campaigned by Wright Motorsports and Kelly-Moss by Riley finished without drama on positions ten, twelve and thirteen.

Thanks to this victory in Long Beach, Tandy and Jaminet have taken the lead in the drivers’ championship. In the GTP-class manufacturer’s classification, Porsche ranks third. Round four of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship will be contested in Laguna Seca on 14 May. The race on the legendary Californian circuit runs over 2:40 hours. This Sunday, the Porsche Penske Motorsport team faces its next big challenge: At the six-hour race in Portimão, two of the factory squad’s Porsche 963 tackle the Hypercar class. Round two of the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC gets underway on Sunday at noon local time (1:00 pm CEST).

Drivers' comments after the race

Mathieu Jaminet (Porsche 963 #6): "What a terrific feeling! We're all very relieved. When the Acura appeared in my rear-view mirror towards the end, I knew he was going to attack – after all, I was on the back foot with significantly older tyres. He tried to outbrake me in the first corner. I immediately realised he wasn't going to make the corner and took evasive action while he landed in the tyre barriers. That was some real nail-biting stuff at the end of the race. Now, we're celebrating the Porsche 963's first victory!"

Nick Tandy (Porsche 963 #6): "It was clear to us before the start that we couldn't win the race based on our pace. We didn't have the fastest car. So, we thought through all possible strategies before race day and agreed not to change the tyres. That's the beauty of sprint races in the IMSA series: there are always many conceivable scenarios and sometimes a gamble pays off. We didn't know whether the tyres would last the distance, but it worked out. We also owe our victory to our colleague Matt Campbell, who put in a terrific performance in the battle for second place. That was a super strong effort from him! The first victory for the Porsche 963 feels fantastic. It's a well-deserved reward for everyone around the world who put an incredible amount of work into this project."

Matt Campbell (Porsche 963 #7): "I'm delighted for my colleagues in the number 6 car. Victory at last for the Porsche 963. That's just so cool. I gave absolutely everything in the battle for second place, but in the end, I couldn't quite fend off the competition due to our deteriorating tyres. At least we got over the line in third place. It was a great day."

Felipe Nasr (Porsche 963 #7): "A super victory for the team, the first success with the Porsche 963 – we couldn't have dreamed of a better result. We had to start from quite far back and catapulted ourselves to the front of the grid with a perfect strategy. Of course, we also benefitted from the incidents involving the other cars. But still, we were flawless and squeezed the most out of today."

Klaus Bachler (Porsche 911 GT3 R #9):"Patrick put in a very strong first stint and handed the car over to me in second place. I managed to withstand the pressure from the Corvette behind me for a long time. However, things turned a bit chaotic in turn six when we were overtaken by a GTP car. My rival took advantage of this opportunity and pulled alongside me. He got past and I didn't get a chance to attack afterwards. Overtaking is really difficult at Long Beach. I didn't take any risks and brought the podium result home. Those were important points today in terms of the championship."

Race results

GTP class:

1. Tandy/Jaminet (UK/F), Porsche 963 #6, 78 laps

2. Yelloly/de Phillippi (UK/USA), BMW #25, 78 laps

3. Campbell/Nasr (AUS/BR), Porsche 963 #7, 78 laps

GTD-Pro class:

1. Hawksworth/Barnicoat (UK/UK), Lexus #14, 73 laps

2. Garcia/Taylor (E/USA), Corvette #3, 73 laps

3. Bachler/Pilet (A/F), Porsche 911 GT3 R #9, 73 laps

GTD class:

1. Sellers/Snow (USA/USA), BMW #1, 73 laps

2. Sörensen/de Angelis (DK/CDN), Aston Martin #27, 73 laps

3. Montecalvo/Telitz (USA/USA), Lexus #12, 73 laps

10. Brynjolfsson/Hindman (USA/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R #77, 72 laps

12. Metni/van Berlo (USA/NL), Porsche 911 GT3 R #91, 71 laps

13. Udell/Bleekemolen (USA/NL), Porsche 911 GT3 R #92, 71 laps

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