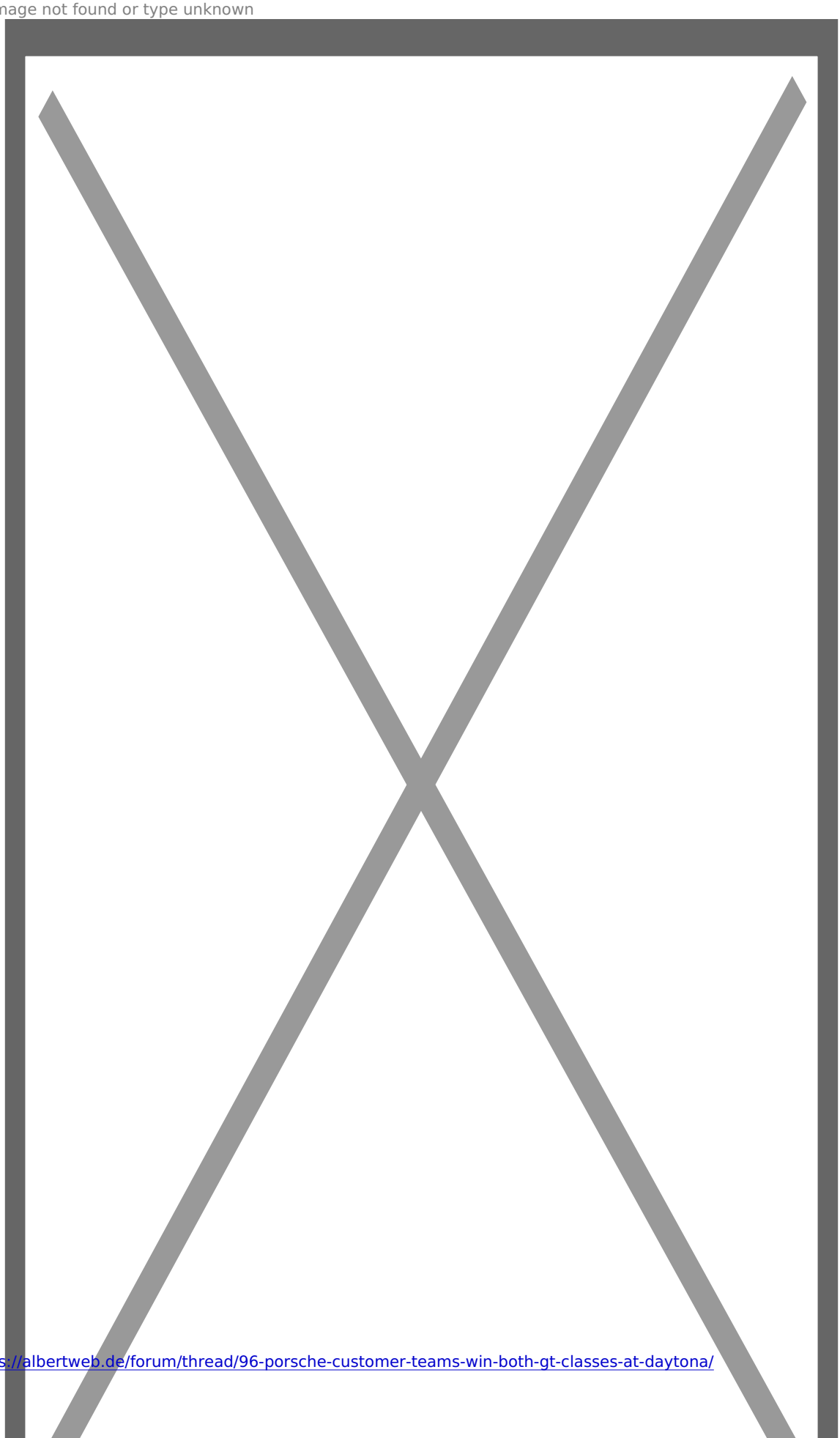
Porsche Customer Teams Win Both GT Classes at Daytona

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> Porsche customer teams have left an indelible mark on the 24 Hours of Daytona. The 911 GT3 R fielded by Pfaff Motorsports won the new GTD-Pro class after a gripping duel with KCMG. In a big showdown, the works drivers Mathieu Jaminet from France, Matt Campbell from Australia and Felipe Nasr from Brazil beat the crew of the customer squad from Hong Kong.

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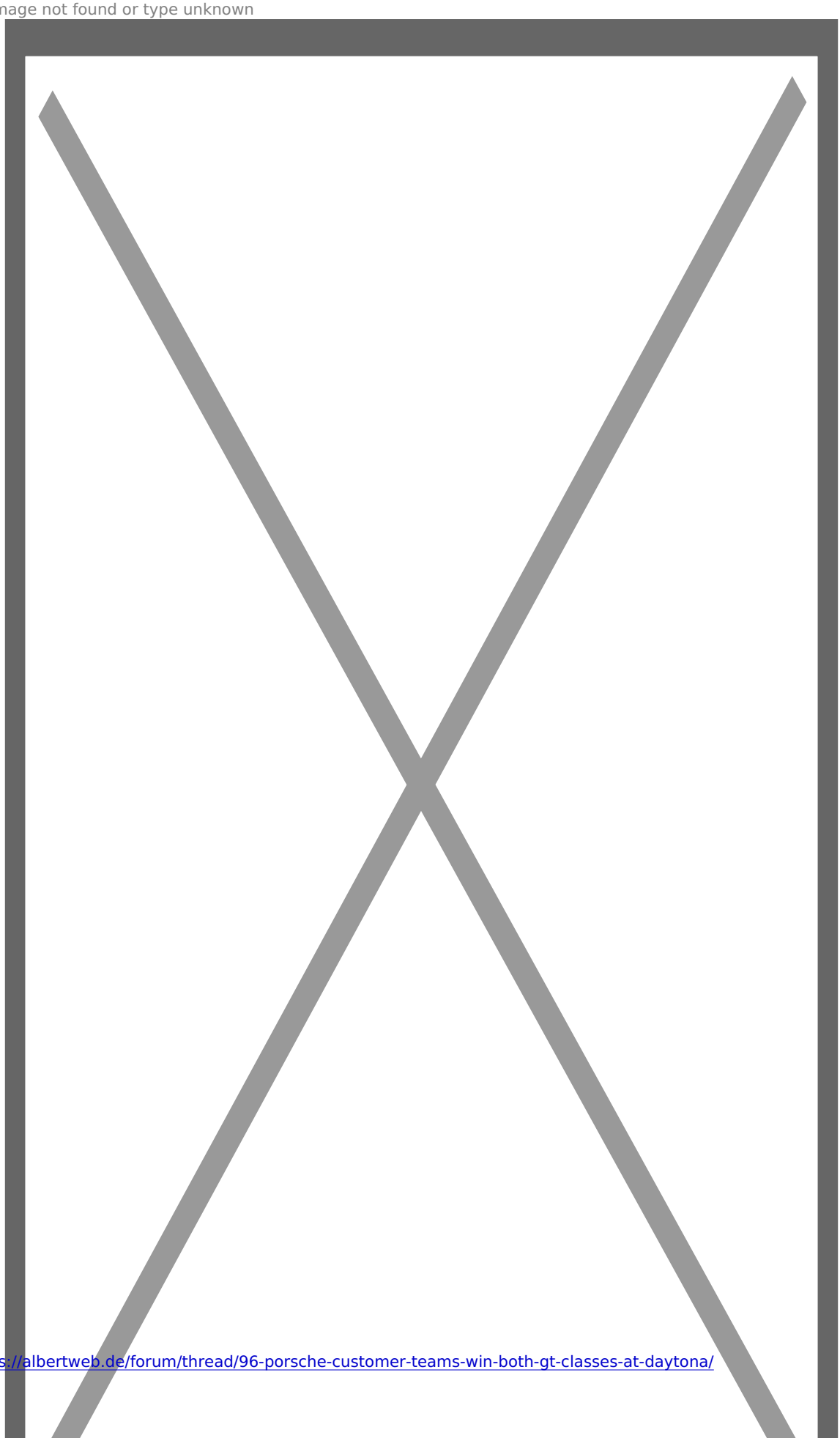
In the GTD category, Wright Motorsports clinched victory with the GT3 car from Weissach. Works driver Richard Lietz (Austria) shared the No. 16 vehicle with Jan Heylen from Belgium, Zacharie Robichon from Canada and American Ryan Hardwick. With these results, another great chapter has been added to Porsche's history as the most successful manufacturer at the endurance classic in Florida: 18 overall wins as a constructor and four as an engine partner, and now 80 class wins round off the Daytona statistics for the sports car manufacturer from Stuttgart.

In sunny but unseasonably cool temperatures for the US state of Florida, the 61-strong field took off on Saturday at 1:40 pm. In the early stages of the race, Porsche's strong customer teams gave a clear indication of their intentions and swapped places at the front of the GTD-Pro class for hours on end. With the field repeatedly reined in by incidents during the first twelve hours, no one was able to eke out a decisive lead. With a total of eleven full course yellows, the drivers spent almost four hours behind the safety car. The situation settled early on Sunday morning: a phase that finally put the Porsche 911 GT3 R into promising positions to fight for class wins.

The big showdown

Taking turns in the lead became the main focus for Pfaff Motorsports' No. 9 entry and the No. 2 car fielded by KCMG. However, the big showdown only came in the last of 17 safety car phases. After the final pit stop, Mathieu Jaminet rejoined the race with a 0.5-second advantage over Laurens Vanthoor. At the wheel of his blue and silver 911, the Belgian repeatedly pulled alongside the leader, treating spectators to a nail-biting show with multiple contacts and wheel-to-wheel battles. In the last three minutes of the 24-hour race, a breathtaking duel unfolded between the two customer squads that had racing fans leaping from their seats: in the penultimate lap, Vanthoor swept past Jaminet in a tough but fair move. The Frenchman refused to give up. In an extraordinary attempt to fend off the counterattack, Vanthoor spun in the final lap and finished in third place with his teammates Dennis Olsen (Norway), Patrick Pilet (France) and Alexandre Imperatori (Switzerland).

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Over long stretches, various cars from different manufacturers alternated at the front of the GTD class. A clever strategy and brilliant driving performances ultimately paid dividends for Wright Motorsports' Porsche 911 GT3 R. In the last hour of racing, Jan Heylen successfully fended off attacks from his pursuers. On the podium, the Belgian celebrated the first GTD class victory for Porsche in five years with his teammates Lietz, Hardwick and Robichon."Customer racing at a factory racing level – that's what we witnessed today at Daytona," said a delighted Sebastian Golz, Project Manager Porsche 911 GT3 R. "That finale has left me speechless. We can only emphasise how difficult this race was and the high level of professionalism of the teams running all seven vehicles. Victory in the GTD class and first and second in the GTD-Pro class! That's no picnic in a race with 35 GT vehicles. It's a well-deserved reward for the teams, the drivers and Porsche."

The No. 79 car of WeatherTech Racing had no say in the impressive finale in the new GTD-Pro class. The team lost ground early on with electrical defects. Later, their efforts were hampered by several penalties and off-course excursions. American Cooper MacNeil and his teammates Matteo Cairoli from Italy, Julien Andlauer from France and Belgian Alessio Picariello ultimately achieved eighth place. The TGM customer squad crossed the finish line seventh in the GTD class after 24 hours without any major incidents. Hardpoint missed out on a potential top result due to multiple incidents and penalties and concluded the season-opener event in North America on P10. Three hours into the race, the Porsche 911 GT3 R campaigned by GMG Racing retired after an accident on Saturday afternoon.

Thanks to their successes in the two GTD classes, the teams and drivers of Pfaff Motorsports and Wright Motorsports lead the IMSA championship rankings. These two crews also top the leaderboard in the IMSA Michelin Endurance Cup, a competition encompassing the endurance races at Daytona, Sebring, Watkins Glen and Road Atlanta. Round two of the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship is another classic: The 12 Hours of Sebring on 19 March. On the same weekend, the FIA World Endurance Championship WEC season kicks off on the former airfield, where the Porsche works team again fields two 911 RSR in the GTE-Pro class.

Result GTD-Pro class

1. Campbell/Jaminet/Nasr (AUS/F/BR), Porsche 911 GT3 R #9, 711 laps
2. Pier Guidi/Calado/Serra/Rigon (I/GB/BR/I), Ferrari 488 GT3 #62, 711 laps
3. Vanthoor/Olsen/Imperatori/Pilet (B/N/CH/F), Porsche 911 GT3 R #2, 711 laps
8. Andlauer/Picariello/Cairoli/MacNeil (F/B/I/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R #79, 673 laps

> ## Result GTD class
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> 1. Hardwick/Heylen/Lietz/Robichon (USA/B/A/CDN), Porsche 911 GT3 R #16, 707 laps
> 2. Lally/Potter/Pumpelly/Adam (USA/USA/USA/GB), Aston Martin #44, 707 laps
> 3. Andrews/Skeen/Davison/McAleer (AUS/USA/AUS/GB), Mercedes-AMG #32, 707 laps
> 7. Giovanis/Trinkler/H. Plumb/M. Plumb (USA/USA/USA/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R #64, 697 laps
> 10. Ferriol/Legge/Wilson/Boulle (USA/GB/GB/USA), Porsche 911 GT3 R #88, 672 laps
> 21. Washington/Bachler/Sofronas/Bleekemolen (USA/A/USA/NL), Porsche 911 GT3 R #34, 88 lapsThe post Porsche Customer Teams Win Both GT Classes at Daytona first appeared on 9 Magazine.
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