

Porsche announces new North American Selected Driver and Junior programs

18/11/2022 New Pyramid program offers North American drivers clear path from novice to GTP

Porsche has a long tradition of not only developing winning race cars but also successful drivers. The Porsche Motorsport Pyramid began as an informal pathway for drivers to grow their craft and experience from novice laps to the podium at the 24 Hours of Le Mans. In the mid-2000s, that course was more formalized first in Europe and then North America. With the introduction of the Talent Identification Program North America up to customer teams entering Porsche 963 prototype race cars, Porsche Motorsport North America (PMNA) has further tuned the steppingstone process to the top – all through Porsche race cars and technical support – for drivers, teams and marketing partners.

President and CEO Volker Holzmeyer announced today that PMNA will further improve the Porsche Motorsport Pyramid in the United States and Canada. The step-by-step strategy now offers a clear entry for aspiring race car drivers from high-level kart racing into the entry level GT4 sports car racing.

In addition, two proven aces from the Porsche Carrera Cup North America Presented by the Cayman Islands have been named to the updated Porsche Selected Driver Program North America. This trio will be provided placement assistance as well as support to compete at the next level of open competition within the Porsche racing “family”.

Talent Identification Program North America

Motorsport has a natural entry point with karting events. However, little has been done to ease the jump for drivers from kart to automobile racing. Porsche Motorsport North America will remedy that with the inclusion of Talent Identification Program North America program to its Motorsport Pyramid.

The objective is to recognize young talent at the sharp edge of kart racing and help provide a platform, and the tools, to perform in Porsche race cars. A shootout using a Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport will provide one of four chosen karters the opportunity to earn a scholarship in the Cayman class of the Porsche Sprint Challenge North America by Yokohama next season.

To highlight this, Holzmeyer and Porsche racing legend Patrick Long will be on-site for the 25th running of the SKUSA Supernationals at the Rio Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada. Participants can visit the PMNA booth to see the Porsche GT4-spec contender November 16 – 20. As one of the world's largest and most prestigious karting events, the Supernationals draw talent from around the globe.

Porsche Junior Carrera Cup and Sprint Challenge North America Programs.

The Porsche Junior program was developed to provide a bridge between one-make racing and factory driver status. It provides an opportunity for exceptional talent to be trained by Porsche to maximize performance at the factory level. The Porsche Carrera Cup North America Junior Program was first introduced in 2021 and is being fine-tuned entering 2023 through increased education and financial support. Like in Carrera Cup, North America's premier one-make race series, drivers in the Sprint Challenge North America Junior Program will now also enjoy specialized training in areas such as tires, chassis dynamics, media and fitness as well as the same financial support as Carrera Cup. This extension of the junior program to Sprint Challenge delivers a key first step in the develop in young talent within the North American market, will accelerate progress through the ranks, strengthen skills earlier and maximize performance sooner.

Porsche Selected Driver Program North America

2022 Porsche Carrera Cup North America champion Parker Thompson (Canada) and two-time Carrera Cup race winner Trenton Estep (San Antonio, Texas) have each been named to represent the premier one-make championship in the Porsche Selected Driver Program North America for 2023.

Each driver will receive mentoring from Patrick Long, financial support and assistance in securing a seat with a Porsche customer race team at the next level as part of the position. In addition, each driver will have the honor of carrying the Porsche Selected Driver Program North America signet on their helmet and uniform for the coming season.

While Thompson is finalizing his plans within the Porsche Motorsport Pyramid for next season, the core of Estep's 2023 plans are already set. He and MDK Motorsports will move up the Porsche Pyramid to open competition in the SRO Fanatec GT World Challenge powered by AWS. The 2018 Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge champion will race a new type 992 Porsche 911 GT3 R race car with Seth Lucas.

The Selected Driver title highlights the three as special talents within the Pyramid system. The objective of the program is to assist the drivers with a hand-up to the next level of the sport through support both in and out of the car. A Selected Driver is neither an official Porsche factory driver nor a Porsche Junior but is highlighted for the open competition categories such as IMSA and the SRO.

Comments

Volker Holzmeyer, President and CEO, Porsche Motorsport North America.

“In North America we have such a huge market, we have so much talent. That is why we want to show them the pathway to get to the top level with Porsche. From 2023 on, we will create something new, taking care of the whole driver development Pyramid. First, scouting for talent at the karting level, elevating the drivers to Carrera Cup and, finally, helping them get into GT and even GTP racing. The long-term goal is to find someone in karting, develop them through Sprint Challenge, Carrera Cup and GT racing, ultimately having them on the podium at Le Mans. To find the next Patrick Long.”

Patrick Long, Motorsport Driver Mentor, Porsche Motorsport North America.

“My role with this program is to help these drivers understand where I have sat and where I can help them with their learning curve. The goal is to help the mental approach as they transition from sprint to endurance racing. It isn't about teaching them to drive faster. They know how to race, how to turn quick lap times, but if I can help them in their application and preparation, how they can work within their teams, then I have done my job.”

MEDIA ENQUIRIES



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