

"My hobby is my profession"

30/01/2015 When the Porsche Team Manthey arrives at the race track, Ina Fabry is already waiting for them. As the coordinator for the drivers and team, she is the one who prepares the schedules and ensures ideal on-site working conditions are in place.

Behind the pit lanes of Fuji International Speedway, the last containers have been unpacked. The setup crews for the teams have finished their work. Five days before the World Endurance Championship (WEC) in Japan, the drivers' paddock of the race track at the foot of Mount Fuji is so clean it looks like a Swabian housewife has swept the paddock with an efficient broom.

Now the work of Ina Fabry can begin. Her main job is to ensure that drivers and engineers find everything they need for their work upon their arrival. In Weissach, she has put together the deployment schedule for the Porsche Team Manthey, which is coming to the starting line at Fuji with two 911 RSR race cars. She has booked flights, hotel rooms and rental cars for 50 people.

factory drivers

Now she is making sure the Internet connections work at the engineers' work stations, that there are enough monitors ready for use and that the catering has been arranged. "Once the team arrives at the race track, everything has to work right", she says. "Everybody has to be capable of going to work immediately."

Ina Fabry is driver and team coordinator for Race Operations at the track, a newly established department at Porsche Motorsport in the spring of 2014. The name of the position reflects the broad diversity of her daily tasks only nominally but it still sounds "better than gofer", she adds with a grin. One of her main tasks at Weissach is to provide support to the GT factory drivers. Regardless whether they are needed for tests or film shootings, whether they are to appear at group events or in front of the media – all these in-house and external requests end up on her desk.

She checks whether the drivers are available on the days requested and helps to decide who is to be deployed at what event. "I know best where they are at any given moment", she says. "For example, it makes no sense to fly in Nick Tandy from England for a press conference in Paris if Patrick Pilet lives right near Paris."

Marc Lieb and Timo Bernhard also raced go-karts at the same time

She doesn't just take care that the drivers don't have to make unnecessarily long trips. She always keeps an eye on the costs as well. And she makes sure the events are scheduled equally, so "every driver gets his chance". Ina Fabry learned about the fascination of Porsche in the summer of 2007 as she went through an internship at Porsche Motorsport in the Business Relations department. She got the motor racing bug way back in childhood. She comes from a family of motor racing enthusiasts and spent the weekends largely with her parents and siblings at one race track or another.

But just to be a spectator was soon not exciting enough for her. So she began to race go-karts. She was so good at go-karts that she climbed up in the formula classes. In 2004, she finally made it to Formula 3. "It was a great time. It's funny because a few of the drivers to whom I now provide support were my competitors once upon a time", she says. She raced against Richard Lietz in the ADAC Formula. Marc Lieb and Timo Bernhard also raced go-karts at the same time she did, albeit in another age group.

When she took over the driver and deployment schedule for Porsche Motorsport in April 2012, she didn't need much time to learn the ropes there. Already during her course of studies in Sports Management at the University of Tübingen, she, as an intern at Porsche, assisted her predecessor at the job in 2008–2009.

She never gets bored. She is always learning something new

In particular, what does she enjoy most at her job? "Having a great deal to do with people, with a wide diversity of characters. That's what makes it interesting." She never gets bored. She is always learning something new. "I love visiting the many different race tracks all over the world and always having to adapt to new countries and new cultures."

Her favourite race track is in Argentina, stuck in the monumental landscape of San Luis. "Too bad it isn't on the WEC calendar", Fabry adds. Of all the race tracks upon which Porsche competes in the sports car world championship, she likes best the Circuit of the Americas, located in Austin, Texas.

Ina Fabry is rarely stymied for an answer. Only when asked about her hobbies does she pause and reflect a moment or two. "My biggest hobby is my profession", she finally says. "There's not much time left for anything else." Then she remembers reading, preferably crime novels or fantasy novels. If the story is exciting, the 31-year-old Ina Fabry will spend the entire free weekend reading at home as a couch potato. Besides that, she is involved with the "Woman & Motor Sport Commission", established by the International Automobile Federation (FIA) five years ago, which is headed by the former rally star Michèle Mouton.

Today, women have an established place in motor racing

The commission's task consists in providing support to women in motor racing, as functionaries and officials too. First and foremost, it promotes young women race drivers and provides support to them on their way up.

This is a cause close to Ina Fabry's heart. "You saw in earlier times women in motor racing only from Formula 1 when they had the privilege of holding up the number plates in the starting line-up. To do so, you didn't have to do much except look great", she says. Thank goodness, that has changed now. Today, women have an established place in motor racing. And they prove every day that they're good at it." She herself is a great example of it, even if her role is a different one.

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