CRAILLSY: 2020 Porsche PAYCE Carrera Cup Australia season preview

19/02/2020 Richard Craill, the voice of Porsche motorsport and sportscar racing in Australia, provides his form guide for the 2020 Porsche PAYCE Carrera Cup Australia. 'Craillsy' assesses the chances of this year's field ahead of the opening round in Adelaide.

Gallery: The 2020 Porsche PAYCE Carrera Cup Australia field

2020 storyline awaits ...

IF THERE'S one thing the Porsche PAYCE Carrera Cup Australia Series has had no lack of in recent years it's compelling storylines.

From the rise of Matt Campbell from being a complete unknown from country Queensland to a LeMans-winning factory Porsche ace to the dramatic story of Jordan Love's 2019 championship title and everything in between, good stories have not been hard to find in Australia's top one-make championship.

The 2020 season is unlikely to be any different, either, when it bursts into life with the traditional season-opener at the Superloop Adelaide 500 in South Australia this weekend.

The continued evolution of the Carrera Cup grid will once again see a host of impressive Porsche Michelin Juniors challenge more established, seasoned winners at the front of the grid. It's the Porsche Pyramid working at its very best.

Meanwhile, the Pro-Am class gets an almost complete refresh with a host of new faces set to take on more established Porsche hands there as well.

The 2020 campaign mixes a broad variety of circuits at some of Australia's largest motorsport events.

Following the traditional opener in Adelaide, an extended program at the Formula 1 Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne will see a longer-distance race added to the slate of existing sprint races at the Albert Park venue.

The series then heads to North Queensland and the streets of Townsville in July, with the top-end tour continuing across to Darwin a month later.

A return to Sydney Motorsport Park will see the championship race alongside the Supercars at the second 'Super Night' event, while the run home begins in earnest with a supporting slot at the inaugural OTR The Bend 500 in South Australia.

Bathurst will again go a long way to determining the champions in each class while the streets of Surfers Paradise will crown them.

Alongside the outright championship, awards up for grabs include the Mobil Pro class, the Endurance Trophy, Michelin Junior championship, Pro-Am title and the competitive Team's Championship.

Each is likely to be intensely competitive given the depth of the field on offer this year.

Porsche Pyramid brings up new talent

Proving the success of the Porsche Pyramid, a host of young guns stepping up from the Porsche Michelin Sprint Challenge into the 'main game' full-time this year.

2019 champion Harri Jones joins McElrea Racing, runner-up Aaron Love replaces older brother Jordan at Sonic Motor Racing and will be joined there by his Sprint Challenge teammate, Max Vidau as well.

It's the first time that the top three from Sprint Challenge have all made the step to Carrera Cup the following year and if their battles from last year continue, the contest for junior supremacy could be the highlight.

Two breakout stars of recent Carrera Cup seasons will likely join them in that battle: Cooper Murray joining Jones in McElrea's strong Mobil Professional Class attack, while Cameron Hill fronts for a third season fresh from a breakout 2019 campaign.

Murray's rookie season was impressive last year; sweeping the Townsville round in the middle of the year and slamming home nine top-three finishes from the final 12 races of the season, to finish fifth overall.

Canberra-based Hill will continue to field his entry under the banner of his own family team, though will again draw support from Garth Walden Racing. Hill finished sixth in the 2019 season – a year that delivered his maiden race win in a Hidden Valley stunner.

Joey Mawson (pictured right) will sit on the Adelaide grid too – and though he's not as well known locally as he should be, the young Aussie star is familiar enough with the Gen II 991 GT3 Cup Car he'll race for Wall Racing this week.

The Sydneysider, battle-hardened after years in the junior open-wheel system, contested last year's Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup in a field that included Porsche junior and former Australian champion, Jaxon

Evans. He scored a podium in Mexico, finished 11th overall and impressed plenty.

As if the six young-guns weren't enough, more established hands are also back to continue their campaign at the pointy-end of the pack.

Victorian Dale Wood is back for his third season, having been a contender for victories and titles across each of his first two years in the championship. Wood's ruthless consistency saw him lead the first half of the 2019 season only to fall agonisingly short in the final round to his junior teammate, Jordan Love.

Half centuries on the horizon

Milestones are in store for both Nick McBride – who will again represent Porsche Centre Melbourne – and Michael Almond, who returns to Sonic Racing for a third year.

All going to plan, both drivers will notch up their 50th Porsche Carrera Cup Australia round start when the series heads to the Australian Grand Prix in March. McBride won in Adelaide last year and ultimately finished fourth in the championship, while Almond finished seventh, remarkably, for the fifth time in his career.

Volante Rosso return with experienced Josh Hunt while 2017 champion David Wall is also back for more: the Sydneysider ending the year with a sweep of all three races in the Gold Coast en-route to third position in the championship. Since his return to the championship in 2016, Wall has never finished outside of the top three in the final standings, enforcing his status as one of best in the series.

Rounding out the Mobil Pro pack is David Russell, who makes a return to the championship he last contested on a full-time basis in 2015.

Sharing the Lago Racing entry with car owner and regular Pro-Am contender Roger Lago this year, Russell will contest four of the eight rounds – but you can bet he will contend in each of them: His 38 round starts have delivered 10 podium finishes and 4 race victories along the journey; plus the runner-up spot in his last full season.

Pro-Am battle also fierce

Like all Porsche one-make series, the on-track battle isn't just limited to the Mobil Professional class and the internal fight between the Michelin Juniors: The Pro-Am battle is just as worthy.

The Round 1 grid will feature two former class champions, and possibly two of the best ever to claim the Pro-Am crown.

Four-time Champion Stephen Grove lines up on the Adelaide grid as the series most successful Pro-Am

driver ever, battle hardened from a season in Mobil 1 Supercup last year where, along with long-time friend and competitor Marc Cini, he represented the local championship as 'Team Australia'.

He'll be joined by triple champion Max Twigg, who makes a welcome return to the championship as he looks to add to his remarkable tally of 13 round and 46 individual race victories this year.

Cini, the most experienced driver in the series' history, is back while experienced Pro-Am regulars Dean Cook (BMF Racing), Tim Miles (McElrea Racing), Indiran Padayachee (Rentcorp Racing) and Scott Taylor (Scott Taylor Motorsport) are all back for full-season campaigns, while David Ryan – who has six prior Carrera Cup round starts to his credit – is also locked in for the full year.

After making his debut on the streets of the Gold Coast last year, Greg Ward will embark on his maiden full-season campaign in Adelaide.

The 2020 Porsche PAYCE Carrera Cup Australia series launches into action this Thursday 20 February at the Adelaide 500.

Each round will see every qualifying and race shown live on Fox Sports 506 and Kayo Sports, with selected races also shown on free-to-air via Channel 10.

You can follow the championship via the series' official website, www.carreracup.com.au, or the official Porsche Motorsport Australia social media channels; @PorscheMotorsportAU on Facebook and Instagram, and @PorscheMSpAU on Twitter.

Former Champions

Year	Pro	Pro-Am
2003	Jim Richards	-
2004	Alex Davison	Dean Grant
2005	Fabian Coulthard	Dean Grant
2006	Craig Baird	Rodney Jane
2007	David Reynolds	Rodney Jane
2008	Craig Baird	James Koundouris
2011	Craig Baird	Max Twigg
2012	Craig Baird	Max Twigg
2013	Craig Baird	Max Twigg
2014	Steven Richards	Stephen Grove
2015	Nick Foster	Shane Smollen
2016	Matt Campbell	Tony Bates

Year	Pro	Pro-Am
2017	David Wall	Stephen Grove
2018	Jaxon Evans	Stephen Grove
2019	Jordan Love	Liam Talbot

Image Sublines

Path: media/Images/img_1.jpg
Title: Sonic2020.jpg
Subline: Max Vidau will partner Michael Almond in the Bob Jane T-Marts Porsches this season

Path: media/Images/img_2.jpg
Title: Love2_2020.jpg
Subline: Aaron Love will graduate from Sprint Challenge to Carrera Cup in 2020

Path: media/Images/img_3.jpg
Title: Mawson2020.jpg
Subline: Die Keller erstrecken sich über eine Gesamtlänge von 30 Kilometern

Path: media/Images/img_4.jpg
Title: Wood2020.jpg
Subline: Sonic driver Dale Wood will carry backing from Timken in 2020

Link Collection

Link to this article
https://newsroom.porsche.com/en_AU/2020/motorsports/2020-carrera-cup-aus-season-preview-19991.html

Media Package
https://pmdb.porsche.de/newsroomzips/8a54239e-da07-4837-a24f-2505b5ea7b43.zip

External Links
https://www.instagram.com/porschemotorsportau/
https://www.twitter.com/PorscheMspAU
https://www.instagram.com/porschecars_au
https://www.twitter.com/PorscheAus
https://twitter.com/craillsy