Jack Nicholls: “We're all working towards making Formula E even better”

04/12/2020 In the latest “Inside E” podcast, pit lane reporter Nicki Shields and commentator Jack Nicholls talk about their work on the official global TV broadcasting of the ABB FIA Formula E World Championship, about bonding across the teams, and what it was like when Porsche entered the series a year ago.

They have experienced the Formula E success story up close and personal from day one. They were on board when the electric race series started its first season in 2014; Nicki Shields as pit lane reporter, Jack Nicholls as commentator. “It just worked out. I was in the right place at the right time,” says Nicholls, about how he became the voice of Formula E.

From a young age his path into motorsport was mapped out. He was still a tot when his father took him to watch Formula One at Silverstone. Later, he worked as a track marshal at smaller races in the UK. Then, at some point, he started to commentate on them.

Meanwhile, Nicki Shields comes from a family of passionate racing fans, starting with her grandfather, so it didn't take her long to make up her mind when the Formula E offer landed in her inbox: “There's nothing better than combining your passion with work,” says the British presenter. “You should do it whenever possible.”

Her days at the racetrack are long and intense. Shields usually gets up at 04:45, and yet she rarely makes it to the bus on time. “Jack is always on time, I'm always too late,” she laughs. Her workspace is the pit lane. While Nicholls is sitting in the commentator's box, she is in the garages looking for stories to interest her viewers. Between sessions she gets drivers and team principals on the mic' and sometimes celebs who swing by Formula E. When she has wrapped up the final interviews after the race, Shields, in her own words, is “pretty shattered”. Nicholls might not be on the go as much as she is, but the sessions in the speaker's booth are, he insists, not always that comfortable: “All I want to say is Diriyah, Saudi Arabia, 30 degrees Celsius, 90 per cent humidity – and then the air con went on strike.”

When Shields travelled to Beijing for the first race in 2014 nobody would have guessed that Formula E would be such a resounding success. “We arrived and weren't even sure if the race would be taking take place,” she remembers. “Back then, if someone had said we would be where we are now, we wouldn't have believed it.”

What still impresses Nicholls the most is the sense of community and camaraderie that prevails in Formula E. “No matter what happens on the track, we eat together, and drivers from different teams

talk to each other and laugh together," he says. "We're all working towards the same goal. Everyone is there to win, but also to make Formula E even better."

Porsche's first season made a great impression on Nicholls. "The team's learning curve was incredible," he says. "Porsche entering with its grand history in motorsport really enriched Formula E." He is even more enthusiastic about André Lotterer's pole position in Mexico City than his second place in the very first race in Diriyah. "You can end up on the podium by chance," he says. "That doesn't happen with pole."

Info

The Porsche Formula E podcast is produced in English and is available now in the Porsche Newsroom. "Inside E" is also available on other platforms such as Apple Podcasts, Spotify and Google Podcasts.

Audio

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