

Lap Time: 1:15.50 min.

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25/05/2020 The fastest one-make cup of Germany debuted 30 years ago. Olaf Manthey is the man of the season.

The perfect setting for a historic moment. The sun is already warming the air on the last day of March, 1990, and the bleachers are packed as the Porsche Carrera Cup debuts in Zolder, Belgium. From 1986 to 1989, the Porsche 944 Turbo Cup served as a precursor for the series' subsequent success story. From 1993 onward, the Porsche Supercup started as part of Formula One. On this day in Belgium, at the new Carrera Cup's first qualifying, Olaf Manthey rolls out of the pits in a green Porsche 911 Carrera 2 Cup. The thirty-four-year-old from the Rhineland is known in the touring-car community as a drift artist: always hard on the gas, always in a light power slide—the driving style is his trademark, as is his handlebar moustache. He hardly hits the course before having to brake. Yellow flags are everywhere; he needs to let up on the gas. "So I drove two or three laps and carefully warmed up the tires," he recalls. "The rubber was at the perfect temperature when I could finally let loose!" Ideal conditions to claim pole position with a lap time of 1:15.50 minutes.

At the race on Sunday he manages yet again to beat the huge field of thirty-eight technically identical 911 Carrera 2 Cup cars to win the first race of the new series. At the end of the season—nine contests later—Manthey is the clear winner. A passionate drifter, he had to adopt a radically new approach to his driving style, because with the 911 he was driving a rear-engine race car for the first time in his career. “As soon as you drift a little you lose an enormous amount of time,” he says. “The car demands an absolutely clean line.” Manthey forces himself to adapt, which he describes as “incredibly difficult.”

The first Cup champion’s extraordinary ambition drives him to start his own Porsche team. Manthey’s team wins the Porsche Supercup four times, the legendary twenty-four-hour race on the Nürburgring six times, and the GT contest in Le Mans with a factory contract (1999, 2013, and 2018), as well as the World Endurance Championship (2015, 2019). Olaf Manthey’s final word: “The love for Porsche that was born in Zolder continues to this day.”

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