

From Porsche Junior to Le Mans winner

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22/06/2015 There are days and moments in the life of a race driver that will never be forgotten. For Earl Bamber that day was June 14th, 2015, and the moment was the award ceremony after the Le Mans 24 Hours.

Standing on the podium high above the pit lane alongside his teammates Nick Tandy (Great Britain) and Nico Hülkenberg (Germany) after just winning the world's most famous endurance race in the Porsche 919 Hybrid, Earl Bamber revelled in the exuberant cheering of ecstatic fans.

"It was overwhelming to hold this trophy in my hands and be cheered by so many people," says the 24-year-old New Zealander. "When you dream of winning Le Mans that would normally be about the time you wake up. But this dream continues in real life." The sensational victory on the Circuit des 24 Heures marks the pinnacle of his meteoric career from Porsche Junior to works driver and celebrated Le Mans

winner – all in just over a year.

Earl Bamber's career began in karting in 2004

Earl Bamber is no stranger to success. But thanks to Porsche's support and his racing campaigns in Porsche's brand trophy series, his career, which began in karting in 2004, got a significant boost. The first critical step was beating all other aspirants from the worldwide make cups to win the junior selection shootout. In a comprehensive selection process, the eight candidates had to not only turn fast laps but also demonstrate their technical understanding and analytical skills in setting up the Porsche 911 GT3 Cup. And no one did this better than the newly-crowned winner of the Porsche Carrera Cup Asia from Down Under.

As a reward, Porsche gave him 200,000 Euros and the chance to prove himself in the international Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup for the 2014 season. And in the flagship series of Porsche's one-make cups run as support to Formula 1 races, Earl Bamber shone again. As a Porsche Junior, he won the season-opener on the Circuit de Catalunya on the outskirts of Barcelona, and collected victory number two on the demanding Ardennes circuit of Spa-Francorchamps. At the end of the season he was crowned champion. In the Carrera Cup Asia he scored eight victories and ten podium spots to take home the title for the second time, and also added two race wins in the Porsche Carrera Cup Deutschland. To top off his banner season, he climbed into the cockpit of the Porsche 911 RSR for the first time and promptly pocketed second place at Petit Le Mans on Road Atlanta, one of America's long distance classics.

“Receiving backing from Porsche was the chance of a lifetime as a race driver,” says Earl Bamber, who lives in Kuala Lumpur/Malaysia, recalling his first phenomenal season with Porsche. “Right from the start I felt I was in good hands and that gave me a lot of confidence. I've met some really terrific people and as a race driver I've reached a whole new level in every respect.”

Things continued at this pace. For 2015, he was signed on as a works driver and, after successful tests in the Porsche 919 Hybrid, quickly stepped up into the LMP1 programme. After Spa-Francorchamps, Le Mans was only his second race in the premier class of endurance sport. This task did not faze Earl Bamber either: he confidently mastered the most extreme situations as if he had spent his whole life at the Circuit des 24 Heures.

Nick Tandy also celebrated his first success in Porsche's brand trophy series

The same can be said for his teammate Nick Tandy. The Briton also celebrated his first major success in Porsche's brand trophy series. In 2011 he won the Porsche Carrera Cup Deutschland, and picked up the Porsche Cup the following year as the most successful private Porsche driver worldwide. Tandy joined the Porsche factory squad in 2013. At the wheel of the Porsche 911 RSR he immediately snatched

victory at Petit Le Mans and in the 2014 season at the 24 Hours of Daytona as well as at the WEC race in Silverstone. After their Le Mans victory, Earl Bamber and Nick Tandy will now contest the Watkins Glen round of the Tudor United SportsCar Championship in the USA on 28 June in a Porsche 911 RSR.

“We are all very proud of Earl and Nick. Their victory at Le Mans is yet another example of the success and the effectiveness of the Porsche youth development concept,” says Head of Porsche Motorsport, Dr Frank-Steffen Walliser. “And it also underlines the importance of Porsche's brand trophy series as a career stepping stone for young race drivers who, like Earl and Nick, bring the necessary talent, a great willingness to learn and the critical will to succeed. Porsche opens all doors to those who are really fast.”

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