

Talented summiteer: Thomas Preining is the new champion

22/09/2018 Confident, professional, nerves of steel – these are the qualities needed to win titles. And these are the qualities that best describe the 20-year-old Austrian Thomas Preining.

For his second season in the Porsche Carrera Cup Deutschland, the Porsche Junior had a very clear goal in mind: to claim the crown. And the fit, dark-haired Austrian, who always has a witty quip on hand, withstood the pressure better than any of his rivals. Over the 2018 season, Preining took the chequered flag in first a total of nine times. And every time he crossed the finish line, he celebrated with a fist pump for the onboard camera.

Beating more than 100 candidates at a Porsche Junior shootout in the autumn of 2016 has given Preining a great deal of confidence. However, in his 2017 maiden season of the one-make cup series, he sometimes had to learn the hard way that a big ego can be a hindrance. Occasionally he would ace the opposition with an inspired performance, but mostly he stood in his own way. Concluding the season in sixth place simply wasn't good enough, so he hatched an audacious plan for 2018. Preining stepped up his training programme, watched what he ate and spent many hours on SIM Racing at his

home in Linz. In virtual duels with drivers like Christopher Zöchling, he strengthened his power of concentration and honed his competitive edge.

Preining kept his cool

Still, the start of his season with BWT Lechner Racing proved rocky. At the opening round in Oschersleben he scored eleventh and seventh. The gap to the then championship leader Michael Ammermüller after the doubleheader weekend was 36 points. Preining, however, kept his cool: At his home race on the Red Bull Ring in Spielberg, he launched his counterattack and won both races. His success in Styria marked a turning point. From the following nine races, Preining clinched seven victories.

Over the rest of the season, Preining combined his talent with his growing self-confidence. After round eight on the Nürburgring, he replaced his teammate Ammermüller at the top of the points table and stayed there until his decisive victory at the Hockenheimring. His way to the title was paved with ten pole positions and nine victories.

Preining discovered his passion for motorsport as a child. During a family holiday on the island of Mallorca, he sat in a go-kart for the first time at the age of seven – this marked the start of his career. The youngster began with karting, always accompanied by his parents. His father Andreas was no stranger to success in the motorsport scene. In the nineties he contested the Motorcycle World Championship. The younger Preining moved up to the ADAC Formula 4 in 2015, and went on to secure fourth overall in the feeder series the following year.

Preining values the work others do

After winning the Porsche shootout, Preining first had to find a cockpit. He gained his first experiences in the 2016 Carrera Cup with Konrad Motorsport, and added more foundations for success the following year with Lechner Racing. People like his open manner. Preining values the work others do, whether mechanics, engineers or sponsors, and he shows his appreciation. At race weekends he often spends time in the team tent long after the sessions are over.

With the Porsche Carrera Cup Deutschland title in his pocket, the upbeat young man has fulfilled a dream. Preining aims to turn his passion into a career – and he's well on the way to doing this. At the upcoming Porsche Mobil 1 Supercup finale in Mexico from 26-28 October, he has the chance to claim that title, too. Two races will be held there, with a total of 40 points up for grabs. Michael Ammermüller (119 points), Nick Yelloly (114 points) and Preining (105 points) could be crowned champion. And at the two remaining FIA WEC races in Fuji (12-14 October) and Shanghai (16-18 November), the summiteer contests his first two outings with the Porsche customer team Gulf Racing at the wheel of the fastest racing 911 of all time: the 911 RSR.

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