

Racing to End Alzheimer's – Passions meet on the track for Porsche customer race team

10/05/2022 Nothing brings out the passion in a racing driver like a Porsche race car. Unless, of course, it's a Porsche race car with a cause.

Nick Galante, along with co-driver Sean McAlister and his Hardpoint team members, finds himself in that enviable position this season in IMSA Michelin Pilot Challenge competition. Galante, a Boston native living on the Monterey Peninsula, is driving the No. 22 Racing to End Alzheimer's Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS Clubsport and raising money for a cause that is near and dear to his heart.

Galante met racing enthusiast and businessman Philip Frengs during his day job – as a caddy at the prestigious Pebble Beach Golf Links. The pair hit it off over their love of both golf and racing, and quickly found another common bond – loved ones contending with Alzheimer's.

Frengs launched Racing to End Alzheimer's as a charity in 2017, with 100 percent of the funds raised

going to the UCLA Alzheimer's & Dementia Care Program and the Nantz National Alzheimer Center at Houston Methodist and chose Galante, who was also instructing at Skip Barber Racing School while living on the Monterey Peninsula, as his driver.

"I was caddying full time, while focusing on racing part time," Galante said. "I didn't have any sponsors and I was racing on my own dime – I started with go karts and then moved to racing my own car at auto cross events in Marina. Then, in 2007, I tried out for a scholarship at a racing school in Sonoma – the Jim Russell Championship Series Scholarship Shootout. I placed second, but I had a guy who was helping me out who I met at the golf course, and he helped me pay for the first race that season in Sonoma and I ended up beating the guy who did win the scholarship. That was my start, and things took off from there. I started in a driving school, and now I instruct at Skip Barber's school, so everything came full circle."

That led to a championship in what was then IMSA's Continental Tire Sports Car Challenge ST class in a Porsche Cayman, followed by a second championship in 2018. Now, he returns to his Porsche roots with Hardpoint for the 2022 season.

Through five seasons of Racing To End Alzheimer's, Galante and his respective teams have raised more than $500,000 through a popular donation program that allows loved ones who are currently suffering, or have passed on, from Alzheimer's to have their names on the side of the car. For a $250 donation, the name and hometown appears on the car beginning with the next race and rides through the end of the season. Freng's company, Legistics, matches each and every donation.

"Philip realized that with that unfortunate disease, there's not much you can do as a loved one to help ease it," Galante said. "He decided he wanted to create something to raise awareness and create a charity that does give back and raise funds to help find a cure and put a spotlight on this disease."

Six million Americans, and 50 million people worldwide, are affected by Alzheimer's. It was personal for Galante, as well.

"This is a cause close to my heart because I lost my grandmother to Alzheimer's 10 years ago, and her name is one of the names that rides with us on the car," he said. "My aunt is currently battling it as well, and she also rides with us, along with Phil's wife. We have names of people all over the world who ride with us. Phil comes to every practice and test session; he comes to everything and is one of the most dedicated race sponsors I've ever seen. He's 100 percent immersed in it, and we could not ask for a better sponsor and partner – he inspires me."

Now, Galante and McAlister – the 2019 Hurley Haywood Scholarship winner for his previous success in Porsche single-make championship efforts – can celebrate honorees and their families with podiums in their Hardpoint Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS Clubsport.

Next Up.

The no. 22 Racing to End Alzheimer's Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 RS Clubsport will be in action this week at the Mid-Ohio 120.

The Mid-Ohio 120 Michelin Pilot Challenge race will stream live on Peacock on Saturday, May 14 beginning at 4:00 p.m. ET/1:00 p.m. PT with a rebroadcast on USA at 3:00 p.m. ET/Noon PT on May 21.

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