

# Seeding the Future

**07/04/2020** The North American Porsche Young Driver Academy has been preparing the next generation of motorsport stars for more than eight years.

Since 2012, Porsche Cars North America (PCNA) and Porsche Motorsport North America (PMNA) have provided aspiring race car drivers from the United States and Canada an opportunity to develop their professional skills at the North American Porsche Young Driver Academy (PYDA). The focus of the wide-range of specialists in their field that participate in PYDA is to provide a curriculum to teach skills in and out of the race car that will benefit the drivers for years to come. Through its first eight years, the 33 drivers who have graduated from the PYDA are a perfect example of the Academy's founding precepts to find and train the best young race car drivers in North America. Graduates have gone on to claim race wins as well as major domestic and international championship not only in GT cars but prototype sports car, NASCAR, IndyCar and rally racing.

While education has always been the hallmark of the two-day invitation-only event held each fall, the "Academy" also determines the IMSA Hurley Haywood Scholarship winner. The annual award provides the selected driver a package of tangible assets to present to teams in the IMSA Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge USA by Yokohama for the upcoming season.

"I've been impressed with the quality of the attendees during each of the eight iterations, and this past November's Porsche Young Driver Academy was no different," said Porsche Legend Hurley Haywood. "The young drivers come from increasingly diverse backgrounds and are sharper, more media savvy and confident every year."

Porsche has a long history of young driver development. One of the first manufacturers to create not only a "factory driver" group but also a "junior" program, Porsche continues its efforts to assist young racing talent outside of its "works" efforts. The Porsche Young Driver Academy was founded by the two arms of Porsche on this continent to recognize and help develop the talent of drivers competing in a Porsche one-make series – such as Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge USA by Yokohama and the Porsche GT3 Cup Challenge Canada by Yokohama – Porsche drivers who are currently racing in a non-one-make series – including the Michelin Pilot Challenge – or an IMSA-sanctioned development series that does not use Porsche race cars.

The two-day Academy puts four drivers through intensive classroom activities with the objective to broaden and sharpen talents not only behind the wheel but also out of the cockpit as well. In fact, the first day is held in the Porsche Track Experience classroom with personality profiles, technical briefings, media training and more. The classroom is used to give each participant the tools to maximize their results in a variety of situations a professional driver will face throughout his or her career. The comprehensive experience includes classroom exercises, engineering lessons, on-camera interview skills, media training and more. Time with Porsche works driver Patrick Long is supplemented by

Porsche racing legend and lead Porsche Track Experience instructor Hurley Haywood. These world-renowned drivers offer not only invaluable experience behind the wheel of Porsche race cars, they each have an intimate understanding of how to be successful in motorsport out of the car as well.

While tweaked each year, the PYDA syllabus is founded on the principles and practices of Porsche's European Junior selection process. Originally drafted for this market by Long, currently Porsche's only North American factory driver, the core of the program beckons back to when Long himself took part in the selection process.

Texan Riley Dickinson is the 2020 IMSA Hurley Haywood Scholarship participant. By virtue of his performance both on and off the track, Dickinson was selected for the honor at the 2019 Porsche Young Driver Academy held at Barber Motorsports Park outside of Birmingham, Alabama in November of 2019. The 2020 class will be announced in the fall of this race season.

Dickinson is the fourth recipient of the IMSA Hurley Haywood GT3 Cup Scholarship, joining Sean McAlister (2019), Max Root (2018) and Jake Eidson (2017). The scholarship was expanded in 2017 from an initial program started by IMSA, Porsche and Yokohama in 2014. Previous IMSA Scholarship recipients include Victor Gomez IV (2016), Elliott Skeer (2015) and Michael Lewis (2014).

"[It's] is a huge honor and especially meaningful to me for several reasons," said Dickinson. "Being able to represent an American racing icon like Hurley Haywood is something that I'm going to be extremely proud of throughout the entire year and will look back on with great memories.

"I can't thank everyone enough involved with the Porsche Young Drivers Academy and the scholarship for making it a professional grade learning experience for me and the other contenders."

The scholarship provides more than \$85,000 in value for Dickinson and includes the following benefits:

- Full-season, premium entry for the 2020 GT3 Cup Challenge USA season provided by IMSA
- One free set of race tires per event provided by Yokohama
- \$20,000 in parts credit provided by Porsche Motorsport North America
- A custom driver suit and other safety products provided by OMP
- Two full sets of brakes provided by PFC Brakes
- Promotional consideration by RACER Magazine

While the final GT3 Cup Challenge USA season remains tentative due to calendar changes following the COVID-19 crisis, Dickinson will compete in the full GT3 Cup Challenge USA schedule once racing resumes. Currently, the Six Hours of The Glen weekend at Watkins Glen International, June 25 – 28, is targeted for IMSA's return to racing. The series, which enters its 16th season as one of Porsche's 24 one-make series in the world, has planned its finale for the Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring week at Sebring International Raceway, November 11 – 14.

In 2020, Yokohama is entering its 12th season of support for the series, which produces intense competition for semi-professional and aspiring professional drivers.

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Subline: 911 GT3 Cup at Barber Motorsports Park

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