



ADVANCEMENT FOR ALL



INTERNATIONAL MOTOR SPORTS ASSOCIATION

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ADVANCEMENT FOR ALL

Advancing Opportunity: Access to Success

From IMSA's earliest roots over a half-century ago to current times, one thing has always been clear: motorsports is a community of people, like a family, doing what they love and striving to do it better every day. I believe fewer things are as important to the future of our sport, and our racing community at large, than the inclusion of talent, irrespective of background or means.

Within IMSA, our aim for advancing opportunity is seen across the spectrum:

Through the annual Diverse Driver Development Scholarship, we provide funding and career-building support to promising, emerging talent who may traditionally have fewer advantages to make progress toward their goals.

In the educational advocacy of technical engineers, we are investing in natural thinkers and problem solvers whose work accrues to help others.

With our many automotive industry partners, IMSA provides the platform that serves as a catalyst in developing both innovative products and cultivating skilled people.

By taking our series around 12 North American race circuits, we see the positive impact on local communities, through increased engagement, and economic impact and career growth.

Every person's unique experience offers differences in perspective, ultimately bolstering the impact of the IMSA race series, the people involved, and the greater community we serve.

John Doonan President, International Motor Sports Association



CHAPTER ONE

BEHIND THE WHEEL, OVER THE WALL: Developing Ambition

Today's IMSA platform continues its growth as a diverse ecosystem of energized new driving talent, highly skilled innovators, and passion-propelling partners.

Every weekend, eyes and ears are tuned to the looping circuits of asphalt, analyzing, cheering, celebrating the boldly emblazoned team cars. As the landscape of motorsports fans transforms, so does the field of drivers they cheer.

The IMSA Diverse Driver Development Scholarship, established in 2022, set out to identify and support skilled competitors from diverse backgrounds. The yearly award increases access to our sport through substantial financial assistance from IMSA and supporting partners, mentorship, and overall driver development.



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COURTNEY CRONE



"I'm choosing the VP Racing SportsCar Challenge race series now to get more seat time as a solo driver."

Courtney Crone, LMP3 Race Driver, Forty7 Motorsports, No. 99 Duqueine D08

Intention is a linking thread among emerging IMSA talent. 2023 IMSA Diverse Driver Scholarship recipient Courtney Crone set her driving focus with a long-term approach. By the age of 21, Crone had a seat in the Forty7 Motorsports No. 99 car. Piloting the prototype was a natural evolution in a career of driving nearly anything with wheels: motorcycles to Midget series to Formula cars.

The 2023 Rolex 24 Hours at Daytona saw the launch of the IMSA VP SportsCar Challenge – 45-minute sprint races comprised of LMP3 and GT4 classes. In her third season within the Le Mans Prototype 3 car, Crone secured a podium for her solo-drive win. Gaining seat time and planning with long-term partners Red Dragon keep her sights set on the big four endurance races: Daytona 24 Hours, Sebring 12 Hours, Watkins Glen 6 Hours, and Petit Le Mans 10 Hours.

Crone notes that the Diverse Driver Scholarship has been incredibly valuable to her long-term driving goals. IMSA has provided a platform to prove the young driver's talents, to gain visibility for her craft, and expose her to pathways from sprint to endurance racing.

With her recent LMP3 sprint podium finish at Daytona, Crone was offered a seat as the first female driver in the Prototype Germany Cup, with Gebhardt Motorsport.



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It's a proactive environment here--building networks and connections, and gaining mentorships are all part of my progress to a full season drive.



JADEN CONWRIGHT

Jaden Conwright, GTD Race Driver, NTe Sport, No. 42 Lamborghini EVP

Jaden Conwright, recipient of the inaugural 2022 IMSA Diverse Driver Scholarship, centers his career around the long-term sustainability of the drive. He credits IMSA for cultivating a culture of support.

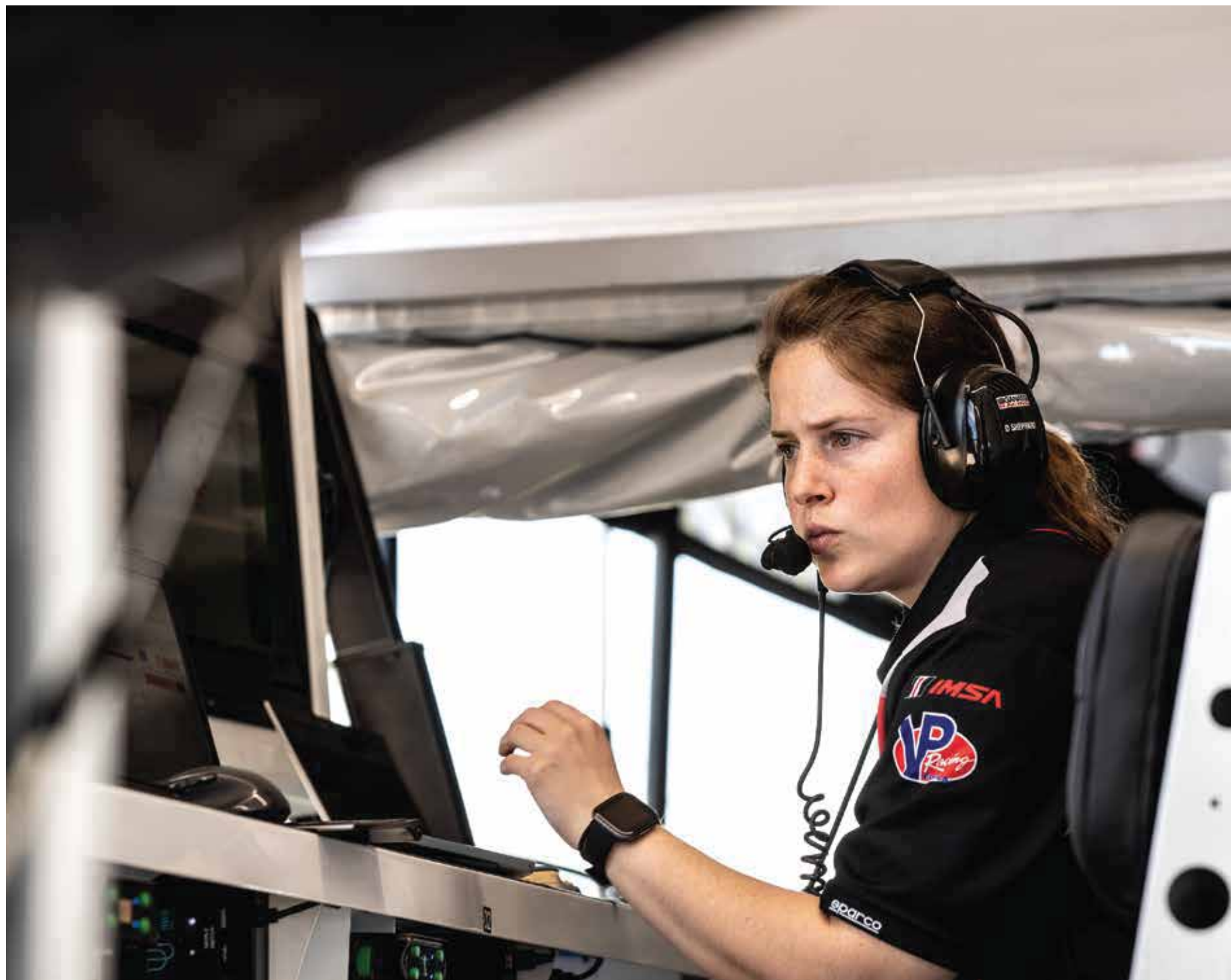
Initial experience was earned through karting, and his talent showed. Conwright secured his first sponsorship early on, moving from karts to cars at the age of 14. Within two years, the young driver was earning championships in Pro Formula Mazda and relocating to Italy, eventually earning a spot among the world's best junior F4 drivers. Honing precision, feeling the impact of a fraction of a second, and a dogged resolve from the back of the grid – all of this positioned him to move to F3.

The 23-year-old's growth mindset takes its cues from early parental guidance: "Race for fun but strive for college."

From a 4.2 GPA to earning six podiums in the Porsche Carrera Cup Italia, Conwright remained invested in developing a longevity of skill. Back in the U.S., he was hired into several IMSA team drives: an Audi R8 GT4, Cayman GT4, and eventually landing in NTe Sport's No. 42 Lamborghini Huracan EVP, for the Lamborghini Young Driver Program.



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Danielle Shepherd, Race Engineer Chip Ganassi Racing

A diversity of experiences, coupled with IMSA's multi-faceted structure create an ideal development trajectory for emerging talent. This extends outside of the cockpit, to the pit wall. There, you'll find race engineer Danielle Shepherd, seated amid the roar of an IMSA fleet, analyzing data, and making performance and strategy decisions.

When Shepherd entered university, her career path felt uncertain, but she knew that motorsports was embedded in her from a young age. She grew up in Ohio, watching open-wheeled Indy cars with her family. Eventually, her math and physics degree – and an invested academic mentor – connected her to an internship, via Davidson College, with a NASCAR Team. During her tenure, connections were made that led to future positions in IndyCar.

Shepherd's beginnings as a data engineer (ensuring telemetry data captures, overseeing comms functionality) led her to a position with Chip Ganassi Racing. Over the course of four years, Shepherd's career shaped itself around race simulation engineering. Her work focused on IndyCar simulation, in a variety of modeling scenarios which included writing code and developing tools to help with the optimization of race car setup.

The skill of this self-proclaimed "data and physics geek" didn't go unnoticed. Shepherd was promoted to IMSA Race Engineer for Chip Ganassi, putting her in the rare company of one of the only female engineers that crossed the pit wall. This time, Shepherd was charged with the performance of the CGR No. 02 Cadillac Racing DPI-V.R. Her first win as race engineer came shortly after, with a victory at Sebring 2022.

IMSA's diverse playing field is a leading edge for innovation, notes Shepherd, with clear pathways of longevity. It's a place to put her skills to use, to not just grow within her career, but to thrive.





CHAPTER TWO

ENGINEERING TOP TALENT: Attract, Develop, Retain

IMSA's investment in diverse talent spans from the paddock to the organization's own crew of motorsports dreamers. They are women and men who found their way to the helm of managing critical data and equipment, keeping every race car and crew on track. Behind the scenes, IMSA's technical team blends a range of pathways with a life-long passion for motorsports..

Emily Rivera, Data and Electronics Engineer, IMSA

Emily Rivera grew up near Tampa, attending the 12 Hours of Sebring every year with her dad since she was 11. Her education intentionally placed her at a local automotive-focused high school, “the only one in the nation with a dyno at that time,” Rivera laughs. From there, it was on to a degree in computational mathematics and a fortuitous meeting with IMSA reps at a college career fair. An internship soon followed.

“It was always a dream to work for IMSA,” says Rivera, who began her 4th year with the technical team, and her first full season as an IMSA employee. On a regular day, she conducts safety inspections, ensuring correct installation of car data systems. On a race weekend, Rivera has eyes on data feeds, telemetry, and radio metrics. All of this creates a full picture of what is occurring on the track, readying the engineer to alert the team of any suspicious activity. Now, it is Rivera bringing her dad to the races, both enjoying the journey’s full circle.



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Watching data telemetry, we are taking information in with all live senses. It’s like conducting a symphony.

David Bascombe, Jr.

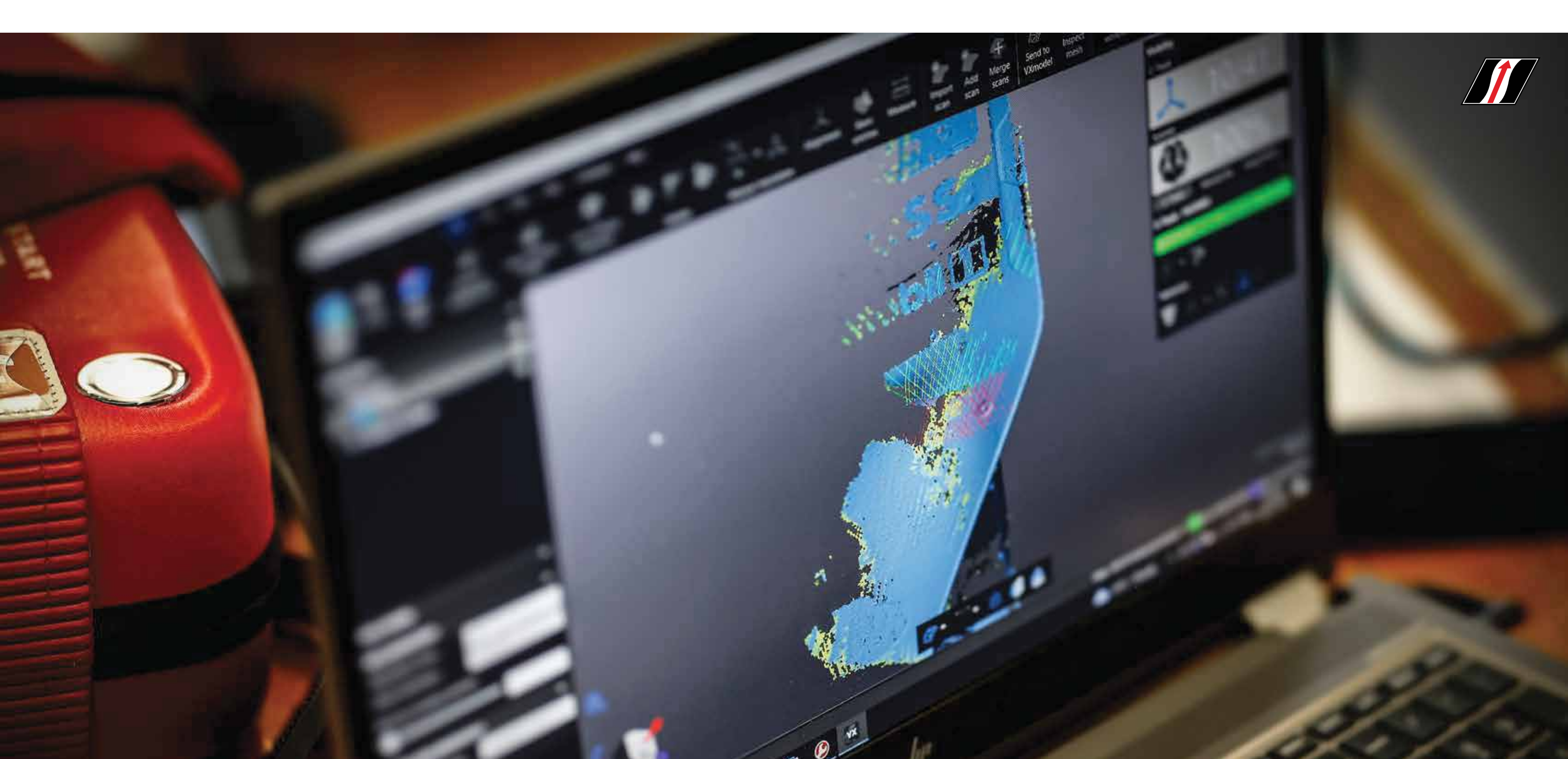
David Bascombe, Jr., Senior Technical Engineer, IMSA

Like Rivera, David Bascombe Jr., credits his father with early motorsports experiences, as an F1 fan while stationed for the military in Germany. Long drives as his father’s co-pilot fueled quiet global ambitions. Bascombe Jr. jumped on the race simulator as a teen, beginning his own motorsports journey. After studying engineering as an undergraduate, he went on to complete graduate studies in the U.K., majoring in automotive engineering.

A stint with F1 assessing computational fluid dynamics led to partnering with a wide range of race teams. The 2020 Rolex 24 Hours saw a 2nd place podium for Magnus Racing (Squadra Corsa). Soon after, Bascombe Jr. secured a permanent position with IMSA. It is the realization of a long-held goal for him, with room to grow.

“We engineers ask ourselves ‘what do we need to go to the next level?’ With IMSA, we have everything we need here.”





John Strudel, Senior Manager, Technical Systems, IMSA

John Strudel's route to IMSA points toward the ways in which opportunity can develop at any time. Though a race fan since childhood, Strudel came to his role after exploring other careers. "My path was a little different. I returned to college at age 30, set on mechanical engineering." He enrolled in the University of North Carolina-Charlotte Motorsports Engineering program. Today, his day-to-day finds him recording and reviewing real-time race data.

Success is increasingly a multi-faceted strategy of talents: the forte behind the wheel, sophisticated wrenchers in the paddock, and teams of engineering and math minds. "A race weekend can log over 100 gigabytes of data," notes Strudel. This is an immense amount of hard information, enhancing a historically anecdotal analysis of a car's performance. As Strudel points out, "We are taking data to the next level."

CHAPTER THREE

PARTNERSHIPS ON TRACK: Activating Opportunity for All

Every good race series is made up of fuel, tires, and the beginnings of visions born years before. To achieve success, it takes a community of partners invested in not just wins, but in people.

Manufacturers, suppliers, circuits – all are linked in the ecosystem of the IMSA motorsports community. Embedded within are leaders committed to growing and supporting a diversity of talent and integration of support.



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**Laura Wontrop Klauser, Sports Car Racing Program Manager,
General Motors**

At General Motors, Laura Wontrop Klauser oversees the race teams making up Camaro GT4, Cadillac V-Series.R, and Corvette C8.R. Klauser is the conduit between teams and engine and chassis suppliers; her role is also integrated into the car design and development groups, along with future planning for brand and race series participation.

In her work, Klauser sees a shift in building teams of skilled individuals. The drive toward future development and opportunity connects new talent and legacy, a melding of diverse experiences.

“We have brought on some incredible young people to our program, who are just blowing us away with what they are able to do.” Klauser encourages a sense of autonomy and trust, giving emerging experts the freedom and ability to do what they think is right to solve a problem. There is an intentional meshing of a new generation of technical experts with 20-year racing veterans.

“You can see the experienced and the up-and-coming learning together. This has given us a great opportunity to grow as a motorsports family.”





Michelle Hassinger, OEM Marketing Manager, ExxonMobil

Any IMSA weekend will find Michelle Hassinger alongside the Mobil 1 motorsports technical team leading Mobil 1 product and technical presentations, collecting first hand market insights, and building stronger relationships with partners that rely on Mobil 1 on the track. ExxonMobil is an example of the changing dynamic of partnership within IMSA.

“We are trackside on race day,” explains Hassinger. “Not only are we connecting consumers to our products for better success, but we’re also gathering feedback and conducting real-time research to provide insights on performance.”

From motorsports engineers to strategic account managers to marketing to executives, Mobil 1 creates a wrap-around experience with their presence at every race growing opportunity through agility and immediate response.

Hassinger highlights that hers is among many roles at ExxonMobil that touch motorsports, which is at the forefront of research and development. In many areas of the company, there are a variety of career paths to develop and apply next-generation technologies to help meet the world’s growing needs for energy.

Additionally, Mobil 1 is the presenting sponsor for the annual “[Women with Drive](#)” Summit hosted by Women in Motorsports North America, which is key in celebrating and expanding careers across all disciplines of motorsports.



Connie Nyholm, Owner and CEO, Virginia International Raceway

Increasingly across the IMSA platform, a diversity of leadership emphasizes the power of an expanded community. Another woman at the center of this work is Connie Nyholm and VIR. The story of this historic track – resurrected by Nyholm and business partner Harvey Siegel from an overgrown cow pasture in 1998 – is itself indicative of the advancement of potential.

Nyholm has invested in growing VIR as a center of opportunity. “The track is a connector of the broader racing community with the local community.” During IMSA events, the university SAE team meets with professional racing teams. The local ROTC and other ceremony talent are recruited from neighboring communities. VIR hires and trains locally, making it one of the region’s largest employers.

“VIR is a track that can be put through all the paces,” says Nyholm. Constant safety installations and improvements are key, with a focus on mitigating risk and preparing the track for any race series. While IMSA GTD classes run VIR each year, the historic track is fully prepped for supporting the newest hybrid technology.

Looking beyond the sweeping lines of an IMSA race circuit one sees the broader impact of the space within the motorsports platform. As Nyholm describes VIR, “A racetrack is a community for all.” It is a space of advancing diverse skills, encouraging a new generation of fans and drivers, and promoting an integrated landscape of possibilities—race cars, race series, partnerships, people.



Use your profession for the good of the community.

Connie Nyholm





Lyn St. James, Speaker, Author, Mentor, Racer, Co-founder, Women in Motorsports North America

IMSA's platform reflects overarching positive changes in our society. The motorsports community continues to grow both organically, and through intentional advocacy. Automotive Hall of Fame Inductee Lyn St. James emphasizes our sport as a place for any person driven to achieve what may seem impossible.

"Racing is extremely competitive, blind to gender, ethnicity and age. It is a sport that demands the best from everyone. Whether driver, engineer, crew member or team leader, one cannot be mediocre and succeed in motorsports. Racing requires problem solving and decision-making under incredible pressure. If you have the passion and talent, and remain dedicated to leaving no stone unturned, you will eventually win and be valued.

While motorsports has traditionally been male dominated, that is changing. We are a culture of successful individuals from all walks of life. Many leaders—both women and men—are creating opportunities, and celebrating the role models who show what's possible. In racing, if you can see it, you can be it. Join us!"



In racing, if you can see it, you can be it.

Lyn St. James



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The IMSA platform continually strives to be an accessible, inclusive environment that welcomes and enables people of all backgrounds and means to participate in the sport. Across the paddock, with our partners, we have many initiatives and programs designed to attract, develop and retain talent, especially from underrepresented groups.

John Doonan President, International Motor Sports Association



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