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The faces behind the 24H SERIES live stream

Meet 0221 Mediagroup, the broadcasting partner of the 24H SERIES for over 10 years.

Together with the 24H SERIES we have evolved and have grown into experts of live motorsport coverage. Grown into experts of the racetrack, but in a completely different way than each driver and team member knows it.

It all started with one race a year, the 24H DUBAI, and the moment CREVENTIC added more races and the 24H SERIES grew; our partnership began. Our coverage expanded over the years and we proudly added 'F1 quality' RF Onboard cameras to our specialties.

Together with Radio Show Limited we are making sure the world can follow LIVE what is happening on track.

You can not only find us at the race tracks but also at festivals, concerts, sport events like basketball or rowing and other exciting public events. Besides these events we also cover studio productions and green screen production which includes virtual reality and digital worlds.

We offer the complete package and will make each production a success, small or big.

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Reach out to us, maybe we can help.

But first: we race.

We wish everyone an exciting and fun race, hoping that this is the start of a good season.

Stay safe!



It turns out, when looking back at his 50 races (so far) with CREVENTIC, Joe Foster's memory is pretty impressive! During an in-depth conversation, Joe speaks enthusiastically about long-time running mates Charles 'Charlie' Putman, Charles Espenlaub and Shane Lewis, the jump from 991 to GT3 competition and the titles won therein, the secrets behind his team's success at Mugello and Portinão, and why racing without brakes is trickier than it looks. Gentleman that he is, Joe also goes into detail about a significant recent moment in his life with the dignity and grace fans have come to expect from the 2018 Overall GT Drivers' champion. Oh, and we weren't expecting either Roger Penske or Patrick Dempsey to put in an appearance, but, still...

Images | Petr Fryba | Eric Teeken | Nico Mombaerts



Some caption for this 2015 picture

Joe, you started your first 24H SERIES race at Paul Ricard in 2015, two rounds after Charlie and Charles also debuted with CREVENTIC. How did that opportunity come about?

Joe Foster "Well, I've known Charlie and Charles for many years now. Charles and I used to work together at the Panoz Racing School in Road Atlanta and at Sebring, and we met Charlie as part of both activities... golly, way back in 2000! By 2015, Charlie had done quite well in the US – he'd won a couple of championships with Charles – and they decided to do something different and go race in Europe. And the 24H SERIES was a wonderful opportunity to sample that.

"At the time, I was running in ALMS [the American Le Mans Series] with Dempsey Racing, and was also doing IMSA. Then at the end of 2014, the Porsche program I was doing in the US came to an end, as these things do, and [Charlie] invited me to join them as part of their European extravaganza.

"My first race at Paul Ricard was a longer race, so we actually brought another friend over from the US, called Dave Russell, who was a compatriot of ours for years in the instructing world – he was one of the lead instructors at Skip Barber for years – and still owns an Aston Martin team in IMSA. We all had a great time!"

It went so well, you stayed on with Charles and Charlie for 2016, and took your first class win together in Mugello. As a group, you've only missed the class podium once at Mugello. Does the event just suit you guys really well?

JF "I think it's the food!" [Laughs] "Obviously we love coming to Italy, and we love Mugello: it's a high-speed track, it's a daunting track with a lot of fast, blind corners, and it's super fun to drive, whether it's in the 991 class or the GT3. We just love going there."



Some caption for this 2016 picture



Some caption for this 2017 picture

We're used to you competing with Charles, Charlie and Shane, but you also raced intermittently with Xavier Maassen in 2016 and Andy Pilgrim in 2017. What memories do you have of them as teammates?

JF "Xavier and Andy are both fantastic, accomplished drivers. Charles and Charlie met Xavier back when they were running with Prospeed [Competition] at some of the British GT and SRO [Blancpain Endurance Series] races in 2013. He ran with them in Zandvoort: he's Dutch and he was bloody quick there!

"Andy emigrated to the US when he was quite young, and most of his racing has been done there. Obviously he was an incredibly successful factory driver for General Motors. So he was a great addition to the program and helped us get on the podium with the 991 at some of the longer races. But Andy had extended opportunities in the US, so... I think after Andy was when Shane [Lewis] stepped in...?"

Adam Christodoulou joined you for 2018...

JF "Oh Adam, another great addition! Bear in mind, as we got more and more success with the AMG GT3, Mercedes themselves took more and more interest in us. And that brought Adam to us, as a factory AMG guy. We all wanted to raise our game, and the best way to do that was to work with somebody who knows the car like the back of his hand, which Adam absolutely does. We learned a lot from Adam, and we were very grateful to have him in the team."

One year earlier in 2017, you took the 991 Drivers' title with Charlie and Charles, PROsport Performance won the 991 Teams' title, and you won six of the seven rounds that year!

JF "That was the year we went to the Red Bull Ring, and that was



Some caption for this 2017 picture



Some caption for this 2018 picture

a crazy race! Everyone had much higher brake pad wear than anticipated, and we were just throwing pads at the car over the 12 hours. We were trying to stretch to the end of the race without stopping, but for most of the last 30 minutes, it was metal-to-metal with the front brakes. I remember, I even drove through the gravel a couple times just to slow the car down! At the very end, I didn't drive into the pits, or parc fermé, because I was afraid I wouldn't be able to stop. I just let [the Porsche] grind to a halt on the front straight.

"I still have those metal backing plates in my office to look at every day!"

"For most of the last 30 minutes, it was metal-to-metal with the front brakes."

You made the jump from '991' to 'GT3' with the Mercedes for 2018, and immediately won the overall championship! Given the level of competition in the 24H SERIES nowadays, do you think that could happen again?

JF "Honestly... I don't know. This has always been a very competitive series, but I think, now, it has hit another level. There's a new wave of competition come into the series with the [Porsche] 992 GT3 and the [Ferrari] 296. And we are still, to all intents and purposes, in the same car as 2018!" [Laughs] "So there's a natural evolution happening, and it's definitely more competitive now than it was in 2018. And 2018 wasn't easy."



Some caption for this 2018 picture



Some caption for this 2019 picture

Are you sure? Because you made 2018 look easy!

JF [Laughs] "We were successful, honestly, because we used the same philosophy as we did with the 991. We had great engineering and great preparation, and we really worked hard on the tyres on long runs, and worked to perfect the strategy. It was a lot of effort."

Shane joined you for 2019, and, coincidentally, that was the first full year in which 'CP Racing' didn't win a race. How much blame does Shane get for that?!

JF [Laughs] "No no, Shane was actually a huge addition! "I think you have several things at play. You've got the series growing and getting more competitive, which is a good thing. And also, with strategies and especially the Code 60s, anything you do strategically is still a highly-educated guess. Sometimes you win those gambles and sometimes you lose them. And in 2019, honestly, we just lost more of them than we won."

2020 was a truncated year for obvious reasons, but what are your memories of the revived 'Coppa Florio' that year and the Pergusa circuit?

JF "I thought it was a lot of fun! Like Mugello, the food was amazing!" [Laughs] "But it was a new venue, quite unique, and you could really picture what racing there must have been like in the '60s and early '70s when [Autodromo Pergusa] was in its heyday. We're not sure the circuit suited the Mercedes very well, compared with, say, the shorter wheelbase cars that were good in the short chicanes. But we certainly enjoyed it.

"Also, at that time, I was still in recovery mode. You've probably noticed that I missed the first race in Dubai at the beginning of that season. I was quiet about it at the time, but the reason was, in December [2019], I found out I had throat cancer. So I spent most →



Some caption for this 2020 picture



Some caption for this 2017 picture

of 2020 dealing with surgeries and radiation, and all of that. "I will say, the race in Sicily was a really big deal for me emotionally, because I had spent that whole year, quietly in the background, fighting this other deal. I had to move to Houston in Texas, from Atlanta, for a while for treatment."

Do you mind if we ask about your recovery...?

JF "The things they do to you to make it go away aren't friendly! In fact I'm still having side effects from all of the treatment. But I'm in remission now, so it's all good."

"I can't lie, 2020 was a shitty year. And in the middle of Covid too. So at the end of the year, to have such a fun result with the team – Shane drove an amazing closing stint – meant so much. I still wasn't myself, but the guys were very patient. Charlie didn't have to do it, but he let me drive because he was using 'getting back in the car again' as motivation to fight."

Charlie has told us before about his quad bike accident and how endurance racing helped his own recovery. These are very, very different circumstances of course, but did you find motor racing helped with your recovery in a similar way?

JF "Oh I'm sure it did. Charlie's accident was in 2014, and it was a terrible experience. It's certainly different to cancer, but it's similar in the sense that you have to sit down and contemplate... that it might all be over. You look at your life, and what you've accomplished and what's important – your family and your children – and it absolutely is a change in paradigm. So I think Charlie empathized because he'd had those same questions going through his head while he was laying under his bike for two days. "It was really loving and kind of him to let me back in the car, and to use that as motivation."



Some caption for this 2021 picture



Some caption for this 2022 picture

On-track, 2021 was a tough season for CP Racing, which only took one podium that year. Having won two titles quite quickly, was the team 'due' a disappointing year?

JF "Not necessarily. We still had a good time in 2021, regardless of what the stats are. And the key thing is, as you would expect, the series continued to get more competitive, went to some new circuits – which is great – and we had some bad luck mechanically that year. But if you look at our overall finishing record... the preparation by our crew was just outstanding! Racing's a numbers game, and sometimes these things catch up to you."

Finally – FINALLY! – in 2022, CP Racing takes its first overall win in the 24H SERIES at Portimão. Were there times when it felt that first win would never happen?

JF "Roger Penske used to say that all you can do is put yourself in a position to win and hope you get lucky. We're always hoping for overall podiums, and we always do the things we can control to put ourselves in that position, then hope things work out. At Portimão, it finally did!"

"We put ourselves in the right position, we had a competitive car, and honestly, we all really, really love Portimão. It's a super fun circuit – it's fast, it's blind, it's uphill, it's downhill – and we've always enjoyed it there. We'd actually gone testing there earlier that year in February, and we'd worked really hard on getting the data."

We're curious, which meant more to you in 2023: securing your first class win at Dubai, or taking a second overall win in Kuwait by the closest winning margin in series history?

JF [Laughs] "Well obviously both are amazing events. Phil [Quaife], I believe, was helping us in Dubai, and that was super fun: he's



Some caption for this 2023 picture



Some caption for this 2023 picture

a great kid to race with and learn from. Very fast. And obviously Kuwait was very special. It's clear that even an older guy like Espenlaub must want to win pretty badly if he's willing to put himself through those last 30 minutes!*

"It was clear we weren't the fastest car on the track. Honestly, the [Manamauri Energy by] Ebimotors guys were just faster over one lap the whole weekend. So it was a real team effort to 'serve up' Charles for that opportunity, in the sense that we were doing a fuel conservation strategy leading up to it. I had to double stint a set of tyres and basically 'make' fuel to shorten the last pit stop. For that final driver change, from myself to Charles, we came up with our quickest change all season, and the pit crew came up with their quickest tyre change all season. All of that got Charles out just barely in front of the Porsche, and after that, it was an incredible closing drive from Charles."

"Had he not gotten out ahead of the Porsche, Ebimotors would have won, easily."

*Amazingly, in a straight fight to the finish, Charles Espenlaub secured CP Racing's overall win at the 2023 Hankook 12H KUWAIT by just 0.537 seconds!

That's 50 races done in the 24H SERIES. What's next?

JF "At this point in my life, any day I can show up at the track with Charles, Charlie and Shane is found money for me, and I'm super grateful to be there. This is my 41st year in some form of professional motorsport: I first moved to England to do British Formula 3 when I was 17. It's been a long and crazy road, I've had a really good run, and I'm just full of gratitude. Why wouldn't I want to keep going?!"



Some caption for this 2024 picture

Notable results

2015
First series start
24H PAUL RICARD 2015 – 8th in 997 (with MRS GT-Racing)

2016
First 24H SERIES win
12H MUGELLO (with MRS GT-Racing)
3 class podiums (Paul Ricard / Barcelona / Brno)

2017
991 Drivers' champion
6 class wins (Mugello / Red Bull Ring / Paul Ricard / Imola / Portimao / COTA)

2018
Overall GT Drivers' champion – Europe and Continents
4 class wins (Imola / Portimao / Barcelona / COTA)
3 overall podiums (Navarra / Portimao / COTA)

2019
5 A6-Am podiums (Mugello / Spa / Brno / Portimão / COTA)

2020
2 class wins (Hockenheim / Sicily)
1 overall podium (Sicily)

2021
1 overall podium (Hungary)

2022
4 wins (1 overall), 1 podium (Estoril)

2023
GT3-AM Drivers', Europe and Continents
1 overall win (Kuwait)
2 overall podiums (Monza / Kuwait)
3 class wins (Dubai / Monza / Kuwait)



Some caption for this 2023 picture