



# AUTO+ WOMEN IN MOTOR SPORT

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## WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM A FRIEND

How Tatiana Calderón is racing forward thanks to Women in Motorsport Ambassador Susie Wolff





CONTACTS:  
IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS  
ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER OR  
STORIES FOR THE NEXT ISSUE, WE  
WOULD LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.  
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Welcome to the latest edition of the FIA's Auto+ Women in Motorsport newsletter.

With a multitude of competing series and a range of budgets to choose from, plotting the path to the top of the racing ladder is a tricky prospect for any young driver and getting the right advice at the right time is crucial. For F3 racer Tatiana Calderón navigating that path was proving difficult, until she met Williams Martini test driver and FIA Women in Motorsport Ambassador Susie Wolff and a whole range of possibilities began to open up. In this edition we exclusively bring you the full story of their collaboration.

Elsewhere, as motor sport seasons get into full swing across all categories, we bring you news of some exciting new developments for female racers. In rallycross we report on how Women in Motorsport Commission member Ramona Karlsson is bravely taking on the challenge of racing in the European Rallycross Championship as both competitor and team owner and in touring car racing we hear how Mikaela Åhlin-Kottulinsky is taking on Audi Sport's new TT Cup series, which will run alongside the hugely popular DTM championship.

As ever, we hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter and we welcome your feedback.

Your AUTO+ team



FIA F3 European Championship

# Driving forward together

After a tough 2014 season, Tatiana Calderón was struggling to decide on her next career move. Then she met Williams MARTINI Racing official test driver Susie Wolff and when the FIA Women in Motorsport Ambassador saw Calderón's potential, the pair agreed a partnership, building a new pathway towards the Colombian's success

The route from karting to the top of the racing ladder has always been notoriously tricky, with any number of tempting career paths along the way turning into blind alleys. In more than one case a wrong turn on team choice or even on the right series in which to race has led to the end of a promising career.

Tatiana Calderón, who won several karting championships and is still the first and only woman to climb the podium at

the Colombian Rotax Championship, was at something of a crossroads at the end of a difficult second season in the FIA Formula 3 European Championship last year, the Colombian racer unsure of what her next move would be.

Then, while attending the final DTM race of last season, at Hockenheim, she met Williams MARTINI F1 test driver and FIA Women In Motorsport Ambassador Susie Wolff. The pair struck up a conversation focusing largely on Calderón's career and experience to date and her future options. It soon became clear that there was much that Susie could do to help.

"When I met Tatiana at the last race of DTM last year I was a bit confused as to why I'd never heard of her before despite the fact that she'd been racing Formula 3 for a couple of years. She was very determined, very focused and in all honesty she reminded me of myself 10 years ago," says Wolff.

"But when we met she didn't have a drive," she adds. "She didn't know which championship to do, which team to go with. She was getting advice from a lot of different people who all thought they knew what was best for her and she was a bit confused."

The pair's first conversations resulted in Wolff helping with a few pointers, but it soon evolved into a more serious working relationship when Calderón asked the Women in Motorsport Ambassador to manage her.

"She said, 'okay, well, you've done more in two weeks for me than anyone ever has and please can we work together' and that's when I had to make a decision," says Wolff.

"Initially, I felt I wasn't really ready to take on such a role, the timing didn't feel perfect, but it was one of those things where I said 'I'm not willing to let her fight it alone'. As soon as I knew I could make a difference, I couldn't say no. Also, it was about giving something back to the sport."

The resulting management agreement is a development Calderón is delighted with.

"Susie is probably the most successful female driver there has been in the last decade in Europe and I admire her for everything she is achieving," she says. "I see her as a role model and couldn't imagine a better person to take advice from at this point in my career. I had no clear plan on what my next step was going to be. She really helped me analyse and decide which was the best move for my career."

For Wolff the key to progress for her new charge was to put her in the right team in the right championship.

"The most important thing was finding the right team, knowing the right people to work with, so that she improves – just putting together a solid program, not being distracted left and right by 10 different people telling you 10 different things," says the Williams driver.

A move to GP3 was discussed and a test undertaken but with a strong showing in the second half of her 2014 F3 season to build upon and with options opening up in the series, they opted to stay with the FIA championship.

"After I tested the GP3 car in Abu Dhabi last November we looked at our options and it didn't take us long to decide upon another assault on FIA F3," says Calderón.

Wolff concurs: "We went through all the different options and for me it was very clear that she had to go for F3 and have a very successful season. After that it was just about getting her into the right team and convincing that team to take her, and making sure that that team had the belief that she could achieve things."

That team turned out to be one of the most experienced and successful on the grid – Carlin.

"I knew Trevor [Carlin] from my days in Formula Renault and then initially Formula 3 and though I never got to race for

his team, it was always 'the team' to be with. I called him and we discussed Tatiana's potential and her career to date. I knew she was an option for him but everyone wants to race for Carlin so he had to believe in her as much as I did. He decided to go with her and then we called Jost Capito, Head of Volkswagen Motorsport and asked whether they would consider supporting her and he also said yes."

Elevated to a top-level team and with powerful backing from a major manufacturer, Calderón believes Wolff has secured the best possible package for her this year.

"We wanted to be in the best position we could for 2015, and I feel my deal with Carlin powered by Volkswagen gives me just that," she says. "Carlin is one of the most successful teams in Formula 3 and for me it represents a huge opportunity to show what I am capable of. I have the right people around me and want to make the most of this opportunity."

With a secure season in place earlier than expected, Calderón can now focus fully on her racing.

"Having my deal sorted early will help me hit the ground running once the season starts at Silverstone," says the 21-year-old. "The FIA F3 European Championship is one of the toughest single-seater series in the world, so I'm expecting a very strong competition again, probably more than any other year. I want to be fighting for podiums and I know I'm going to have to work harder than ever to achieve it. I'm determined to make it happen."

Wolff, too, is determined to see Calderón deliver on the potential she sees in the young racer.

"We've set clear targets," she says firmly. "I'm a great believer that you've always got to have a target; you've always got to know what your goal is at the end of the season and for us the clear goal is to get her on a podium."

Wolff believes that with her experience she will also be able to help Calderón's performance behind the wheel.

"I think my experience will help, because some of the issues she has with her driving are things I remember having in DTM," she says. "So I can relate back to my own experience and discuss this with her. For me it's about guiding her and not letting her make the mistakes that I did."

For Wolff managing the young racer is a chance to put her wealth of experience to use.

"I wouldn't say I agreed to manage Tatiana out of any sense of duty, but, as I said, there is a definite sense of this being a chance to give something back to the sport and specifically to help one member of the next generation of female racing drivers," she says. "Throughout your motor racing career you amass a huge amount of experience and you build a network of people you work with and trust and to be able to pass on that experience and to access that network to help another young female driver is important to me."

Calderón, meanwhile, is certain of the ultimate benefits of her association with the Women in Motorsport Ambassador.

Wolff, she believes, has helped provide a platform on which the Colombian can finally show her true racing skills and she helped carve out a clear new pathway for the 21-year-old, one full of potential.

"Susie understands the intricacies that we have to go through and what I need to be the best I can," Calderón says. "She knows what my goal is, and we are going to work towards that in order to make it happen. She believes in me and I believe she can help me find the way to get there."

Pro Stock Drag Racing

# Queen of the quarter mile

Hers isn't a name known globally and outside of her home nation of the USA her chosen racing category might not garner the same kind of coverage given to circuit racing or rallying, but in America Erica-Enders Stevens has become one of the country's biggest motor sport stars thanks to a brace of unique 2014 achievements.

Firstly, in November of 2014, Enders-Stevens made history by becoming the first woman to win the world title in the National Hot Rod Association's Pro Stock drag racing class, which forms part of the bigger NHRA Mello Yello Drag Racing Series, the second most popular form of motor sport in the US behind NASCAR. Taking six wins during the season, Enders-Stevens wrapped up the title at the final round in Pomona, California to become just the third woman in history to win an NHRA title.

That achievement was soon followed by a second unique feat, with respected US motor sport magazine *Racer* handing Enders-Stevens its Racer of the Year award. Over the past 20 years the award has been presented to some of the biggest

names in global motor sport, including Jacques Villeneuve, Michael Schumacher, Juan Pablo Montoya, Lewis Hamilton and Dale Earnhardt Jr. Enders-Stevens is the only female racer to win the award.

Enders-Stevens (31) began her drag racing career at the age of nine, racing alongside her younger sister Courtney and encouraged by her father, who also raced.

"I grew up at the track watching my dad race, and I always wanted to be a driver," she says. "When NHRA came out with the Junior Drag Racing League in 1991, where kids from eight to 17 could race, I said, 'Daddy, please!'"

While her father remains her chief inspiration, Enders-Stevens was also encouraged by the feats of female racers such as Shirley Muldowney, the first woman to win an NHRA title, and the subject of the Hollywood movie 'Heart Like a Wheel'.

"I wouldn't have ever gotten involved in racing if it wasn't for my dad. But Shirley is a legend of our sport and a hero of mine, as well as [motorcycle drag racer] Angelle Sampey. What they did for females in motor sport is pretty significant."

Enders-Stevens enjoyed a long and successful career in junior drag racing, even getting her own story turned into a movie – the Disney Channel's 'Right on Track' film of the late 1990s – and a race-winning senior career, with her first win coming in 2012.

"[That victory] was really important because it took seven years and seven final rounds to get that first win in Pro Stock," she says. "Any victory is great, but you'll always remember that first one. It was really exciting, and it was the culmination of a lot of hard work by a lot of people. Plus, I got engaged that day, too, so I'll cherish a lot of great memories of that day."

It was last year's campaign that provided her major breakthrough however. As well as her six season wins, she also became the first female winner of the K&N Horsepower Challenge, an NHRA Pro Stock specialty race in Las Vegas. She also set both ends of the Pro Stock national record with an elapsed time of 6.464 seconds and a speed of 215.55 mph last season in Englishtown, New Jersey.

The success, she says, is in large part down to a switch to the Elite Motorsports team and the people she works with.

"[The 2014 success] was about people," she says. "People are the most important part of the puzzle and I finally had a group that stood behind me 100 per cent and believed in me. We had fun together, had a common goal, and that's why we won the championship. The move to Elite Motorsports was huge. I've never had a team owner who treated his people like Richard Freeman does. He's a great man and a great leader."

"To win the Pro Stock title means the world to me and my team," she adds. "It was a dream come true and something that was a goal of mine since I was a kid. There are a lot of people who raced for 50, 60 years who haven't been able

to accomplish that, so I'm really honoured and humbled to have been able to realise that dream at a young age. It's the culmination of everything you worked for in one day. It's insane."

And as for the *Racer* magazine award, Enders-Stevens says that she's honoured to be in the company of drivers such as Hamilton and fellow drag racer John Force.

"I honestly can't put into words how I felt after I found out I had won the Racer of the Year award," she says. "First of all, I am incredibly thankful for all the fans who took time to vote for us. I've always said my fans are the best, and they proved it again."

"I have tremendous respect for all the drivers who were a part of the Racer of the Year voting, and to be mentioned alongside great drivers like Kevin Harvick, Lewis Hamilton, Will Power and my drag racing brethren like John Force and Tony Schumacher is an honour."

With the highs of a championship-winning 2014 behind her Enders-Stevens has no intentions of throttling back and is determined to defend her title with the same ferocity it took to win the crown.

"The next challenge is one every championship team faces: To stay on top," she admits. "It's a different position to be in, to be the hunted instead of the hunter. Two huge, new rule changes were implemented this year that have kind of levelled the playing field, so our immediate challenges are overcoming that new tyre and new fuel."

"We want to go back-to-back, and that's the whole team's goal. I have the smartest, most talented guys in the business, so I know anything is possible. We'll continue to work hard and have fun."



Erica Enders-Stevens accepting her title trophy and (right) racing her Chevrolet Camaro in the NHRA Pro Stock series.

Women of Australian Motorsport

# Commission member Williams tells WAMS seminar that motor sport has 'no barriers'

Williams F1 deputy team principal, and newly-elected Women in Motorsport Commission member Claire Williams, hailed motor racing as a sport "without barriers" in a talk given to more than 300 guests from the worlds of business and racing at an annual event hosted by the Women of Australian Motorsport during the week of this year's Australian Grand Prix.

For the past four years WAMS has hosted a number of networking functions during race week with the support of the Confederation of Australian Motor Sport (CAMS), and this year a new initiative with the Melbourne Business School provided the opportunity for Williams to speak not only to motor sport professionals but the wider business community about increasing participation and developing opportunities for women in motor sport.

At the event, which was hosted by WAMS Executive Committee member Amber Anderson at the MBS graduate facility in Carlton, Williams spoke about the need to help the younger generation to get into motor sport earlier, to assist with the growth of women's participation long-term, the key ingredients of teamwork and the business of motor sport, while also commending the sport for being a strong equal opportunities industry for women.

"What I love about Formula One is that there are no

barriers to entry for women to come into the sport because all we're looking for is the best talent," she said. "So when I'm recruiting, I don't care that the person I'm talking to is a man or a woman, but are they going to do the best job for my team."

"Similarly, for racing drivers, we're one of the very few sports in the world that allows women to compete alongside men. There are no barriers for a woman to line up on the grid on a Sunday afternoon.

"Formula One and its stakeholders are really trying to push the diversity conversation, so if you do come to the paddock nowadays you see so many women working in so many different roles that have traditionally been roles for men."

She added that the existence of positive role models at the top-level of motor sport is one of the most important ingredients in helping increase the participation of women, and that organisations such as the FIA's Women in Motorsport Commission and WAMS are instrumental in promoting such role models.

"Their roles are so important because they can create pathways, they can mentor, they can guide the younger generation of females that want to come up in our sport," she said. "Susie Wolff is a perfect example of a great trailblazer in Formula One because it is all about role modelling, and showing the younger generation of women that you can come and do this because people are doing it already."



Claire Williams addresses WAMS Australian GP business seminar.

F1 in Schools

# Malaysian girls claim Commission award at F1 in Schools World Finals

A team from Malaysia raced to victory at the 2014 F1 in Schools World Finals, winning the FIA Women in Motorsport Award at last November's event in Abu Dhabi.

The squad of five girls, who called their team Proton Elitus, hail from the SMK USJ 13, a secondary school in the Malaysian city of Subang Jaya. Four of the girls are 16 years old and one is 18 and they formed the team in June 2014 citing Williams F1 test driver and FIA Women in Motorsport Ambassador Susie Wolff as their inspiration. On the way to their Abu Dhabi win the team collaborated with a number of companies including Proton, Malaysia's national car company, and they met with Malaysia's Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir and Malaysia's national rally driver Karamjit Singh.

The FIA Women in Motorsport Award is handed out based on the engineering excellence of a team's car, an interest in motor sports, strong communication skills and on the strength of the team's ability to manage their project.

The Proton Elitus team was presented with its award by Formula One race steward and FIA Women in Motorsport Commission Ambassador Silvia Bellot.

Colossus F1, from England, were crowned as the 2014 F1 in Schools World Champions.



(Clockwise from top left) FIA Women in Motorsport Ambassador Silvia Bellot with the award, the Proton Elitus team celebrate their win and the girls pose with their car.



International Women's Day

# FIA championships support International Women's Day



Racers, officials and promoters from across the FIA's championships joined millions around the world in supporting International Women's Day, which took place on March 8.

First held in 1911, International Women's Day is organised annually and represents an opportunity to celebrate the achievements of women while calling for greater equality.

In Mexico, at the Rally Guanajuato round of the World Rally Championship, (left), FIA Women in Motorsport Commission President Michèle Mouton joined members of the commission and a host of women working in various capacities at the rally to celebrate this year's theme, Make it Happen, designed to encourage effective action for advancing equality.

Meanwhile, at the Argentinian round of this year's World Touring Car Championship, (above), representatives of the FIA, a number of WTCC teams, local race promoter Messe Frankfurt and WTCC promoter Eurosport Events gathered for a photograph on the start/finish straight at Autódromo Termas de Río Hondo.

AKK/AL Autoliitto/Suomen Mootoriliitto ry

# Finland's motor sport day for women exceeds expectations



Participants at the recent Finnish women's motor sport day staged in the town of Loppi.

Three of Finland's main motor sport and motoring organisations and a number of local automobile importers came together last month to host a special motor sport day for women, with hundreds turning up to meet stars of Finnish motor sport and to try out racing machinery.

Held in the town of Loppi, 40 kilometres north of Helsinki, the event was organised by Finnish ASN AKK in partnership with Fédération Internationale de Motocyclisme (FIM) member Suomen Mootoriliitto ry and motoring organisation the Automobile and Touring Club of Finland, which sanctions motor sport disciplines such as autoslalom, EcoRun and regularity runs.

The event brought together a host of national motor sport stars and their machines in order to encourage motor sport participation among women in Finland, with Swedish Touring Car Championship driver Emma Kimiläinen, rallycross and folkraace (rallycross) driver Outi Kurki-Rahikainen, Finnish motocross star Sanna Kärkkäinen and enduro rider Hanna Reinola all on hand to answer questions from participants regarding their racing machinery and motor sport in general.

There was also the chance to experience the thrill of a drive,

with a number of participants managing to take the wheel of a national V1600 class rally car. AL's Sport division, meanwhile, gave visitors an opportunity to find out about EcoRun and autotests.

"It was very clear that there's been need for this kind of occasion," said Tiina Lehmonen, CEO of AKK. "There are lots of women who are interested in motor sports, but they don't know how to get involved or how to take up various disciplines of the sport. The philosophy behind this event was to present them with different options in both competing and in working on the organisational side of things. We are already planning a second similar event for late summer."

Nita Korhonen of Suomen Mootoriliitto ry added: "This latest event is a prime example of how we can pool our resources. Together we are stronger. The number of women in motor sport has been on the increase in the past few years. A female rider is no longer frowned upon in the paddock or on the grid."

As well as the three motoring and motor sport organisations the event was staged in association with the Finnish importers of Mercedes-Benz, Citroën, Peugeot, BMW and Toyota.

Motor sport programmes

# Mazda and WEC racer Keiko Ihara launch talent search for female drivers

FIA Women in Motorsport Commission member and World Endurance Championship racer Keiko Ihara has joined forces with motor manufacturer Mazda to launch a project designed to discover new female racing talent in Japan.

The project will invite women interested in motor sport to apply for test and training programmes that will eventually lead to one or more drivers competing in the single make Mazda MX5 Cup or in Japan's Super Taikyu endurance series for sports and touring cars.

Ihara, who last year became the first woman to appear on the WEC podium after finishing third in the LMP2 category at the 6 Hours of Fuji, explains that the collaboration with Mazda came about as part of a wider campaign to involve more women in motor sport in Japan.

"As a representative of the FIA's Women in Motorsport Commission over the past two years I've had a series of discussions with major Japanese stakeholders, including governmental organisations and car manufacturers, in order to help build an environment in which women can participate in motor sport with fewer obstacles," she says.

"Because of Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's policy to promote gender diversity, the Japanese Automobile Federation (JAF) also established a Women in Motorsport Working Group. Activities centred around raising awareness of the Women in Motorsport campaign in Japan last year and based on that Mazda and I launched the WIM 2015 programme with more specific motor sports activity in mind. Mazda is very interested in my Women in Motorsport efforts as their corporate mission is to provide driving pleasure to everyone."

According to Ihara the new programme is open to anyone who has a full driving licence and it has proved extremely popular since launching in mid-February.

"We've had 203 applicants in total and following interviews, 25 candidates will be selected and announced at the 'Motor Sport Japan' festival in central Tokyo on 11th April," Ihara says.

Once selected, the final 25 candidates will begin an intensive training programme aimed at turning them from everyday road users into fully-fledged racers.

"Eight training sessions have been scheduled to take place at Mazda's proving ground (a former race circuit) in Mine city from April to July," she explains. "Practice races will then be done at Tsukuba Circuit in August and on September 6th, four of the selected drivers will participate in the Mazda Roadster (MX5) journalists' cup.

"The outstanding performer or performers from the programme will then have a chance to participate in the MX-5 Cup or the Super Taikyu endurance series."

Ihara adds that the ultimate goal is to develop female drivers for top-level international competition.

"In the future, we would like to develop female drivers to participate in major races such as those of the WEC and 24 Hours of Le Mans."



Keiko Ihara at the announcement of Mazda's 2015 Women in Motorsport (top and centre) and (bottom) on the podium at last year's 6 Hours of Fuji WEC race.

FIA European Historic Sporting Rally Championship

# Celebrating Historic achievements

In January of this year, the FIA held its annual prize-giving for historic championships and female competitors were once again to the fore.

In the rally section, four ladies were honoured, all co-drivers. Former FIA Women in Motorsport Commission member Fabrizia Pons was presented with her Co-Driver award as European Champion in Category 4, while Gerda Zauner received her Category 3 award as Co-Driver, European Champion. Also honoured were Reeta Hämäläinen (Co-Driver, 3rd in Category 1) and Solja Mentu (Co-Driver, 2nd in Category 3).



Fabrizia Pons accepts her award as European Champion Co-Driver, Category 4.

Gerda Zauner with FIA Historic Motor Sport Commission President Paolo Cantarella.

Solja Mentu accepts her award for second place in Category 3 from Commission President Cantarella.

Reeta Hämäläinen, Jürgen Barth and Rod Parkin, Chairman, FIA Historic Rally Sub-Commission.



Gabriella Pedroni with (left) Category 2 winner Vaclav Janik and (right) Group E1 winner Nikolay Zlatkov.

FIA International Hill Climb Cup

# Pedroni at the top of the hill

One of motor sport's most popular disciplines, hill climbing attracts a diverse range of competitors to a huge range of series run around the globe. Thus, to triumph in the exceptionally hard-fought FIA International Hill Climb Cup is no mean feat.

That, though, is just what Gabriella Pedroni did in 2014, winning in the Production Group. The Italian's victory means she is the first woman to ever win an FIA Hill Climb title.

Born out of the merger of the former FIA International Challenge and the FIA European Cup, the IHCC is run over 14 events, and is concentrated mainly in Eastern Europe (notable exceptions being an event in Portugal and another in Spain).

Driving a Mitsubishi Lancer Evo VIII Group A, Pedroni, who works as a mechanical engineer by trade, took the title in style with three wins, four second places and two third-place finishes from the 10 rounds she contested.

"To be the first woman in the history of Hill Climb to win an FIA title really is something very special," she said. "Of course I am thrilled, and first and foremost I would like to thank my family, who supported me all the way."

"This is a victory for the whole family," she added. "When we set out, we really didn't consider this cup as an achievable objective. Indeed, I didn't even travel to Portugal and Spain. However, thanks to the good results in the first half of the season, we found ourselves well in the running, so we concentrated our efforts on the FIA Cup."

Pedroni admitted that the 2014 campaign was a tough one, particularly as she filled many roles in a 'team' made up of herself and her father.

"It was a difficult championship, simply because I was up against a lot of really great drivers, champions of Europe. Also my team is a 'family team' and for this reason this title was so important for me. I'm the driver, the team manager, the mechanic!"

The next target for Pedroni is the European Hill Climb Championship.

"I'm preparing my racing programme," she says. "The car needs some updates for this season, because my target will be to try to win the Production Group of EHCC."

FIA European Rallycross Championship

# Karlsson steers her own course in rallycross

Rallycross racer and FIA Women in Motorsport Commission member Ramona Karlsson is taking on a unique challenge for this year's European Rallycross Championship, becoming the first woman to race and run her own team in the series.

A tricky first season in the championship saw Ramona hampered by car issues that caused her to miss several of the rounds she had planned to contest and this year she has decided to invest in a new car and run a full European Rallycross Championship programme and to compete in rounds of the World Championship with her own outfit, with the help of fans from all around the world.

It's an ambitious project but one Karlsson feels she is well equipped to take on.

"I ran my own team in the FIA Production Car World Rally Championship in 2012 and it really was a lot of work, but somehow I made it, at least with the practical stuff. However, I felt that the focus on the driving was suffering because of all the work with everything else, and I learned a lot from that."

"I didn't have any other choice at that time but now I have a lot of help from great team members and people that I work with, whose help enables me to focus just on the driving at the competitions. Between the competitions I will be the team manager, but at the competitions I will just be a driver and rely on my colleagues."

The first step was to identify the car she needed for 2015 and that happened last season, when she tested a VW Scirocco Supercar.

"It feels really great," she said after taking delivery of the new machine, which she sourced from Kristoffersson Motorsport, KMS, for whom it had been driven by Johan Kristoffersson and Ole Kristian Veiby. "I tested the car in Höljes last autumn, and it didn't take long until I decided that I really wanted this car."

Since then, Ramona has been working hard with sponsors to be able to buy the car and get it home to the workshop.

The next stage is to build a budget that will sustain the team through a full season and in order to achieve that, Karlsson has turned to a unique source – crowdfunding.

"It's moving forwards," she says of the funding campaign. "My goal is to reach 30,000 euros and then I can secure my start in the European Championship. The backers receive everything from specially-designed team supporter clothing, to exclusive VIP tickets to our team, their names on our trailer etc."

"I think it's such a great and warm feeling to see people's engagement with this," she adds. "Many of the people supporting the campaign have a strong connection to my background and values. I have worked against the odds from the beginning of my career and started from nothing. No one in my family competed in motor sport and I was also extremely shy as a kid. I've built up my team and career by myself and that has given me a lot of energy and an even stronger fighting spirit. I'd like to prove to myself and to others that everything is possible, and I know that many of the backers have the same values, and also see my team as a symbol for this."

If the budget comes through Ramona hopes to take on a full season of racing.

"I hope to run a full European Championship season, and the World Championship round in Höljes, and maybe some national events. At least seven competitions is my goal."

It's a brave endeavour but one Karlsson is enormously excited about.

"I'm working hard every day to be able to succeed, and there's no room for any feelings other than positive ones," she insists. "Without a positive mindset, you can never make it. Of course there are tough days as well, but that's part of the work. I'm used to ups and downs. I'm surrounded by great people, colleagues, sponsors and backers and that lifts me up again when things are tough."





Audi Sport TT Cup

# Lady of the Rings



In the final season of competition in Volkswagen's Scirocco R-Cup, Mikaela Åhlin-Kottulinsky made history, becoming the series' first female winner with a hard-fought victory at Germany's tough Norisring circuit. The Swedish racer ended the season as the championship's highest placed female driver, finishing ninth overall.

With the Scirocco R-Cup coming to an end at the final round in Hockenheim, after 17-years of competition, Åhlin-Kottulinsky's next move was open to question.

However, determined to pursue a career in touring cars, the arrival of the new Audi Sport TT Cup competition made the choice simple.

Gaining a place in the Cup competition was not so easy, however, with Audi receiving 165 applications from 30 nations for just 18 seats in the series. The final choice was made by an expert panel featuring Audi Sport TT Cup coach Markus Winkelhock, Le Mans winner Marco Werner and former rally driver Sepp Haider.

"We intensively reviewed every single application and in a multi-stage selection process chose the 18 drivers who are now given the chance to prove themselves in the Audi Sport TT Cup," said series' Project Leader Rolf Michl. "Our aim was to have a very international and attractive field – and we've achieved this."

Kottulinsky will be one of two female drivers to line up for the first TT Cup event at Hockenheim on 2 May. The other is 22-year-old Polish driver Malgorzata Rdest. Hailing from the city of Krakow, Rdest took part in the final selection event for the FIA Women in Motorsport-supported drive in the VW Scirocco R-Cup in 2013.

In 2013 Rdest also competed in the BRDC Formula 4 Championship in the UK and won the series 'Who Zooms' award for completing the most overtaking moves during the season. Last year she raced in Poland's VW Golf Cup.

The new TT Cup series, using 2-litre, four cylinder engines putting out over 300hp, begins on May 2 and will be contested over six double-header rounds.

Best of all for Kottulinsky, the series runs on a number of tracks that she knows well from her R-Cup career and will also take place on the undercard of the massively popular DTM championship, the series that remains the 22-year-old's ultimate goal.

After last year becoming the first woman to win a race in the now discontinued VW Scirocco R-Cup, Sweden's Mikaela Åhlin-Kottulinsky has stepped up to race in Audi's new TT Cup and has high hopes for the future



Mikaela, let's take a quick look back at your progress last season. Do you feel now that it was a 'breakthrough' season for you?

*Yes, it really was. For me it was the season where I really understood that I'm a good driver and I started to trust my abilities. It was a year where I really showed myself that I have good pace.*

Of course, the major moment was that historic win at the Norisring. What did that mean to you?

*At the moment I won it wasn't so much about making history that made me so insanely happy, it was more that I showed myself I really could do it!*

*The race before Norisring had been a tough one and I struggled a lot, so I really needed that win to boost my confidence; to show myself that "Yes, I can!"*

*It only became a bigger deal after the fact. Then I started to realise that I'd done something no one had done before, and that I would forever be the one, the only woman to win a race in Volkswagen's racing history. That was big.*

At the end of the season what did you feel you had achieved and were you sure of your next move?

*I felt that my pace throughout the season had been really good, even though it wasn't always shown in the results, plus I had also figured out a way to do better in qualifying, which I've always struggled with.*

*In terms of the next move, for me, ever since the Audi Sport TT Cup was officially announced, my target has been to be on the starting grid in 2015.*

That's now a reality, so what are your hopes for this season?

*To learn as much as possible and do my best every time, on every lap. What comes out of that, we'll see. I'm a slow learner and need some time. But, when I get that time, I know I'm a tough competitor.*

How did the Audi Sport TT Cup drive come about?

*My decision to apply for the Audi Sport TT Cup was because Audi is very close to my heart. My grandfather Freddy Kottulinsky was one of the founders of Quattro, and also the Audi Driving Experience. I am also working now for Audi Driving Experience, so as you understand Audi is very close to my heart. I also believe you can develop a lot within the Audi family, and hopefully all the way to the DTM.*

How does the Audi Sport TT Cup compare with the Scirocco R-Cup in terms of the feel of the cars, racing, competition?

*The concept is very similar, but the cars are completely different. I wouldn't say you have an advantage from driving the Scirocco R-Cup, since the cars are so different.*

Is it important for your career that you will be racing alongside the very popular DTM series?

*Definitely. Since my dream and goal is to drive the DTM, to drive at the same arenas, around the same people is of course very valuable.*

