

THE LUCK AND SKILL OF THE IRISH, ONE ON ONE WITH 2 TIME LEMANS WINNER, KARTING'S PAT LONG

GORACING

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Pat Long Behind the
Scenes Video from
LeMans 24 Hour**

Photo by Rick Dole

Long Way Home

Karting's Pat Long, Living the Dream

Go: Your family is well known for their St. Patrick's Day festivities, how was this year's party? Pat: A lot tamer than last year and we'll just leave it at that.

Every time you win a race is it Saint Patrick's Day? They try that, but everybody is pretty respectful of the venue and knows what is acceptable. The social scene is still pretty tight with uncle Pat, Everett Giebler, my dad, and all the rest of the karters. Long Beach has really turned into a home race for me for the last three years. It's a big one for my dad and I get to see everyone. This year I saw Phil and Everett and all sorts of old karting faces, it was cool.

Would you say that it is "Pat Long Beach"? I tried to do that with my antics on track, but we need to get on the top step of the podium before we can call it that.

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It ruined a perfectly good headline for me; I was really cheering you on for my own selfish headline reasons. It's like they tell us in racing sports psychology. You judge your own performance and not the outcome of the race, because there are so many unknown factors that are out of your control. It seems like the stars have aligned ever since I drove the track in 06. I've been there the last three years in different cars and ever since I hit the track it has been a special event for me. I get extra charged up with it being a home event. I think man; I'm racing at the Long Beach Grand Prix. The place I grew up idolizing my past CART heroes of the day and being up to no good with my karting buddies sneaking into the pits and all the rest. It is special to have everybody there friends and family wise and to see so many familiar faces. It is the first place that I have ever really felt the home

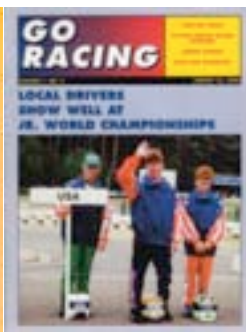
court advantage with my own game. It gives me a little extra fire and I think that is where my good start stemmed from and that momentum carried on through the first half of the race.

It was a great start to the race, but it has to be hard for you living in so many different places around the world to have the advantage somewhere has got to be pretty cool. It is hard to draw off of one place, but I still feel like a So-Cal boy even though I haven't been there for a while, it is definitely home because of the people. I'm finding it better on the East Coast right now. In saying that I've only been here about a year and a half. I loved England for the first two years but by the end of the 3rd I wanted to get the heck back to California. Maybe that will be the same here, but so far so good. It is a good avenue for training and I find myself being acclimated to the heat and humidity

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Photos by Porsche AG & Rick Dole



If you're keeping score at home, this makes 4 covers over the last 13 years for one of karting's brightest stars

garages. That's what I need, a garage. The tough part is trailer'ing stuff in and out and having the right tools.

Really, you cant fit a kart in the back of your 914 or Carrera GT? They have roof racks in Europe. Have you seen those guys? They have a Fiat 500 and a roof rack with a 125 actually sitting on top of their car. It is pretty sweet, but I haven't found one to fit my Cayenne yet.

So your not driving an Audi diesel? No, no diesel in the Porsche family yet, well not directly. I'm driving a naturally aspirated family wagon, but it is pretty stout. It is the new GTS. I was doing this test drive show with Tommy Kendall and we had the thing at Laguna and just pounded it all day driving it literally at braking markers that would put you on the front row for a Koni Challenge race, and the thing is 5000lbs. It was awesome, it is pretty set up and I'm humbled to have one in my driveway.

They are not wrong when they say, "there is no substitute" It's cool and a great perk for sure.

Much better then racing for Specialized bikes and having to ride everywhere. Definitely, but riding a bike for a living wouldn't be a bad job either. It could be

worse if I race for like...KIA. As it is I get plenty of funny looks at the fuel station when my current car is a 911. People stare and look and comment on how I have daddy's toy out for the night. I just play along telling them how nice it is to be rich and spoiled, how could you ask for anything more.

What does your series have that sets it apart from other series? Manufacturer involvement. You have such a diverse group of manufacturers that have different things they are working on to develop into their road car technology. It gives them a way to promote all their latest stuff. You have alternate fuels and cleaner burning fuel technology. Green is cool right now and that's something that's good to give back, but also to use a venue like motorsport that is almost contradictory to the environment to excel the technology to the thing we do most of the time, sit in traffic on the freeways in our daily drives. If you look back to the best days of CART, they had manufacturers behind it. Mercedes, Honda, Ford, Toyota, everybody was there and that's what we need more of in some of the other circles. That's the trick in sportscar racing and that's where you get paid drivers.

You mean people actually get paid to race? Who knew? Racing on other peo-

and a lot less travel. 04, 05, 06 I commuted from So Cal to the east coast, as many karters do as well. As you know you sit on the plane all day Wednesday then have to be at the track at 6am Thursday, which is 3am at home. I felt like I was just going on a bad trip, for lack of a better expression. Being on the east I can make it most places with 2 hours of flight time and be home Sunday night instead of spending all day Wednesday and all day Monday trying to get to where I need to be. Plus, there are a lot of teams based down here now with Charlotte being second to Indy in popularity. It makes early season testing a lot easier and extends my week at home. There's a good circle of drivers here and in the St. Pete area as well as Miami. I've heard of some wild karting nights down at Moroso, but I haven't been able to do much of that because of time. I still have full support from SSC and SSC East so for them to give me a kart where ever I'm living is pretty cool. I need to get more active in karting. I heard Capes built a place to test their Formula Fords out of garages and that it was a good kart track too, with Go Racing Magazine



Photo by Rick Dole

Pat lights up the night under braking at Sebring



With five straight wins in WKA's Constructor's Cup Formula A Pat spent more time on the podium in two years than most karters will ever in their careers

ple's money is certainly the best way to do it, especially when that person is "the captain" Roger Penske. Dude, Penske, how cool are you racing for Penske? More like how cool is he? That's the part that is trick. The guy has been around forever and we've all seen his greatness. Waking up early on Memorial Day weekend and tuning into the 500. To have him on the radio with me, calling the strategy in what sometimes is a war zone of racing on a street course with four classes running is humbling, it's honoring but it's also just fun. The guy is fired up and wants to win. He's a hands on guy, he knows the name of everyone on the team and knows where all three of his organizations are racing and usually is at all three events somehow. He sits on all these boards of huge companies and also has three highly successful race teams. He is a sportscar guy, he raced at Lemans himself, so he's into it and it pumps everybody up when he rolls in. It's cool working with him.

How many series are you running right now? I'm only full time in the AMLS, I've been to the first three of the Grand Am series and I will do the 24 Hours of Spa and the Lemans 24 Hours as stand alone events.

Being a factory hired gun is a great position to be in. Not a bad gig at all, especially when you are teamed up with Penske on the full time championship hunt. The Penske is real high profile and the ALMS is the pinnacle of sports car racing right now, and that's the cool part. On a different level, and almost as cool is the Porsche enthusiasts that I meet from all over the world, especially here in the US. Porsche Club of America, and Porsche Owners Club all have huge, huge track days filled with fanatics. It's a lot like karting; they all share that common passion and is the big social scene. Meeting all the people, and carrying the Porsche flag is cool, but I'm a realist and know that it won't last forever. So, I'm going to strike while the iron is hot and go drive while I'm in demand. One day I will be begging to drive, so why not race while I have the chance.

I think you might have a few good years left in you. You are one of the few karters who have made a successful transition from open wheel racing into the sports car ranks. You see guys out there still clinging on to the IRL/Champ Car dream and the few seats available. Is being one of the hottest young sports car racers in the paddock something

that you had to do with no seats in open wheel, or was it something you planned all along? More the first than the second, but I've always felt I needed to follow the manufacturer's involvement. When all the manufacturers went to the IRL the drivers who went too made the right decision, I think. Look who came out ahead in the end? There are also a lot of people in sports car racing that do it for passion and not for a paycheck. They've been successful enough in their businesses that racing becomes their golf game. That is a big part of our economy and I realize that. I do a lot of coaching and teaming up with amateurs. That's a cool element that helps strengthen our type of racing. When I was a Junior 2 driver hanging out in the Champ Car pits I listened and took advice from any driver or team owner that would give me five minutes of their time. I began to mold my goals around what they said and to align myself with the manufacturers. So when the potential came for me to test for a AAA Porsche team I had to take it seriously. Lemans was already in my mind since I'd been there and lived there with Phil Giebler while we were racing the Elf series. I knew how huge that race was and how big sports car racing really is around the world. All that was in the back of my mind and I was at a crossroad where I was



Pat keeps fit at Porsche's training center in Cypress. The hard work pays off with 2 LeMans wins already under his belt



People stare and look and comment on how I have daddy's toy out for the night

trying to get to the Formula 3 or Atlantic level. I went to the test and did well. They sent me home to think about it, telling me that if I was ready to go down this road that they needed a full commitment to them. They didn't want someone who was going to continue to chase the F1 open wheel dream. That was a lot to face at 21 seeing how everything had been aimed at single seaters and open wheel and the hype coming off the Red Bull challenge. I didn't think I was willing to give up on that yet. I was all ready to go that way, but I called all those people who had given me the five minutes before. The fact that they were willing to put a factory name behind someone of my age that was unproven made it unanimous that I sign. It made my decision freer and easier. All the guys like Bobby, Danny Sullivan, and Bob Bondurant, all these guys that had helped me along the way reinforced that it was a great opportunity. Since I signed that first year I have never looked back and reconsidered what it would be like to do something else. I never think that I should have that guys ride because I beat him in Junior 2 at Jacksonville in 1994. Its never been like that. I'm racing, I get paid to race and I win races and that is the icing in the cake. It has been an awesome ride the last six years and one I started out not really being qualified for.

So do you think guys like Auberlen, Fellows, Said, and O'Connell are just guys who are using racing as their golf
Go Racing Magazine

game? I think those guys are the ones proving that some of the best drivers in the world are in sports car racing and they have shown how to make a really good living and to make it last a long time. Those are the guys who have done it right in my opinion.

What are some of your most favorable karting accomplishments? Some of these young punks might not know that you were a damn fine karter. I don't know, that's a hard one to grab. I think the 1997-1998 Formula A days were the best. When Formula A was the class and I won the first 5 of 8 races in the WKA Constructors Cup. Only five counted and I had the championship locked up early. That was pretty hotly contested North American championship at the time and that is one I'm quite proud of. Winning over in Europe had to be my biggest accomplishment for the sheer fact that it was the thing we all talked about and dreamed of as kids, racing in Europe. When I crossed the finish line I was "wow this is cool". Winning the 1998 Winter Cup at Lonato, which had guys in the race that have now raced or are still racing in F1, makes it special still today. It was a great time to be with CRG, guys that I looked up to like Menetti, and Rossi were dominating. Region 7 when I raced it from 1990-1997 was probably the most competitive racing. IKF was the place to be and the best show in town. It was pretty cool running with some of those kids and seeing them still today.

Some still karting and others like Buddy Rice at the top of the food chain. Those are the days that no one can take away. I still try to get out to the track when I can, especially in California. Certainly the best days of my karting career were in So Cal, and going to the Mid West for the nationals were some of the best summers ever.

Joe Ramos gave me a kart to race a few months back out at a Gatorz race. I hadn't ran a kart since 1998 and it worked me over. I was stuck in International, but wishing I was in Masters. SSC, there is a story. My dad, Ramos, Tininni and Ryan from KRC all sat down at Charlotte in 97 for dinner and talked about bringing SSC and CRG together. How the dealer network with Cycle Barn could help promote karting to new people. They provided me the opportunity to go over to Europe and live. Not just a summer, but live and race there as an American. They were all such a part of my development as a driver. SSC, CRG and Joe Ramos deserve a shout out for that. I feel that they helped bring karting up to another level, more mainstream level. Whether that's good or bad they still deserve the blame or credit for bring karting to a more business level.

They have been influential in shaping karting over the last ten years for sure. They were really the first to introduce the turn key kart to the people but putting them in motorcycle shops. You didn't



» **2008** — Drive the #6 Penske Racing Porsche RS Spyder in the American Le Mans Series in 2008.

» **2007** — Long spent the 2007 season primarily focused on returning the #23 Ruby Tuesday Championship Racing Team in the Grand American Rolex Series with a win at Laguna Seca, in addition to 11 top-ten finishes. Victory in the Petit Le Mans classic at Road Atlanta in their #7 Penske Porsche RS Spyder. Long piloted the #76 IMSA Performance-Matmut Porsche GT2 to the LMG2-class victory in the 2007 24 Hours of Le Mans. 2nd place in the G2 class of the 24 Hours of Spa.

» **2006** — In GT2, Long achieved three wins, three seconds, one pole and two fastest race laps. Rolex Grand American Series competing in 12 of 14 races posting two race wins, one qualifying race win, three pole positions and stood on the podium a total of seven times. Long's average qualifying result was second for the season. Fourth in the Grand-Am Cup standings taking one win and one second place. Long competed in thirty six (36) feature events and served as the Test and Development driver for the Alex Job Racing/Daytona Prototype/Porsche Crawford. Long achieved more wins than any Porsche Factory Driver in 2006.

» **2005** — The 24 year-old driver earned his first ever victories at the 12 Hours of Sebring, Petit Le Mans and Monterey Sports Car Championship endurance races and added titles at Road America and Mosport for five career wins all earned in '05. He won his first ALMS pole position at Lime Rock Park and assisted the team in its pole winning time at Sebring. Long finished second at the 24 Hours of Le Mans.

» **2004** — Won his first 24 Hours of Le Mans in his rookie appearance at La Sarthe. He earned six podium finishes in the ALMS with a season-high of fourth (twice- Mid-Ohio and Road America). He finished all nine events in the top-10. He also won the (GT2 class) of the FIA Bahrain GT Championship Festival.

» **2003** — Long made his debut as a UPS Porsche Junior factory driver in Germany' Porsche Carrera Cup. He won one race and took two other podium finishes as a rookie in the series, won twice in British Carrera Cup and ran a select number of Michelin Porsche Supercup races. In Supercup, Long finished second at Nürburgring after taking the pole and drove to third at Monaco. At the end of the season, he made his ALMS debut finishing fourth in GT at the Petit Le Mans.

» **2002** — Long moved up to the British Formula Renault series finishing eighth in the championship, including a pole and win at Snetterton. He was chosen as one of the final six drivers in the Red Bull F1 Driver Search program where he was first recognized by Porsche.»
2001 — He raced in Europe as the lead driver of the Van Diemen team in Formula Ford. He won three races, two poles and took second in the championship.

» **2000** — Long moved to England to compete in the British Formula Ford Zetec series where he raced to eight top-10 finishes, including a win and a pole.

» **His start** — A prodigy, Long began racing karts at eight after driving his first kart at six. He went on to capture several state and national titles and raced in the Belgium Junior Championship where he finished second. In 1997, he became the lead driver for SSC Racing winning the IKF Formula A title and the WKA Constructor's Cup. He moved to Europe to pursue his career at age 17. Once in Europe, he gained immediate recognition by becoming the first American (in 1998) to win an International European karting event in 20 years. He went on to win 15 WKA Constructor's Cup series races in a row placing second in the international North American Karting Championship. The success still ranks as the highest finishing position for an American in the series. He moved to France in 1999 to make his debut in automobiles. Long placed third overall in the Elf Campus series and won nine of 11 races in the Skip Barber Formula Dodge Series in the United States that season.

» **Outside the Cockpit** - Long is single and separates his time between homes in Germany and Belleair, FL. Likeable and laidback, Long brings a unique style and youth to Porsche as the only factory American driver. Beyond his duties racing for Porsche, Long enjoys maintaining a physical fitness routine. To do so, he focuses on road bicycles, surfing and motocross. When possible, he continues to kart. He speaks English, French, Italian and German.

ships. Kids today have four or five chances at winning a Duffy at each event. What is going on with that?

I know. I hate to really compliment the euros on anything, but they really know what they are doing with a limited number of classes. They had something like 160 drivers enter KF1 at the Winter Cup this year. That's the way to do it, one class with 60 instead of ten with only six. You only need three drivers entered to win a Duffy. It should be 30 or nothing. Ridiculous for sure.

Anything else you might want to add?

I'm stoked that you gave me the chance to tell a little bit about my story and talk about Region 7 and Constructors. I hope the new batch of kids get something from it. When my management called me about doing an interview I said to put you guys to the top of my list. Go Racing is where I came from, and I totally wanted to do something with you. I rely on Go Racing to keep track of the karting world and it's super cool now that you have an online edition. It's hard to keep track of all the new kids in karting and Formula 3. I need to so I know who it is that will be gunning for my job later on.

Read the complete interview with Pat Long and see more photos @ www.goracingmagazine.com

need to know how to mount a wet clutch on a KT100 just get in it and go. Their dream I think is a lot of peoples dream, to make karting like quads, where every fifth house has one in their garage.

It's so weird to think of the Scott Speed/AJ Allmendinger era as being after you. You are so young. You look at the guys who came through in your time, the Gieblers, the Barrons, Danica, Rice, all these people. It's peculiar to think of Scott having his prime karting days after you had already moved on, and your only 26. I know it's pretty wild. Somehow it all changed. You look at karters resumes now and last year they won 17 national championships. What the hell? How many nationals are there in one year? It used to be one Junior 1 class and one Junior 2 class and the guy who won the race was the freaking man. He would have to go run speedway or enduro to get another Duffy that year. Now it seems like all the series just give out national champion-

