

Jean Todt: “Motorsport is a freedom we need to preserve”

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23/03/2021 Jean Todt has dedicated his life to motorsport, starting out as a rally co-driver and notching up major successes in the world's most important racing series as a team principal. Since 2009, he has been President of the FIA. In the latest Inside E podcast, the Frenchman talks about racing during a pandemic, the Formula E success story and the social responsibilities of the FIA and motorsport.

“For me it's important that motorsport is not only seen as sport and entertainment but also as a development laboratory to make motoring safer.” According to Jean Todt, innovative solutions have not only improved safety in racing cars in recent years, but have contributed significantly to keeping people safe on the roads. “All of the progress we've made in this area has clearly saved lives in motor racing and contributed to saving lives on the road.”

According to Todt, one of the main challenges of our time – alongside COVID-19, climate change, health and diversity of society – is achieving gender equality. As far back as 2009, the FIA established the Women in Motorsport Commission to support women on their chosen paths. The face behind this initiative was the successful rally driver Michèle Mouton. “We want more women in motorsport. Not only in the cockpit but also in management positions within the FIA, in administration and as marshals at the tracks,” says Todt. The all-female team at the 24 Hours of Le Mans last year was a milestone in this endeavour. “There’s still a long way to go for women, in motorsport, too. But they’re motivated and want success – and we’re there to support them.”

Right now, however, it is motorsport during a pandemic that is keeping Todt busy. “We are respectful of the situation,“ says the FIA President. “We’ve been very creative, also with the organisation of the calendars, and we were able to restart important championships.” This is a tribute to the immense commitment and excellent cooperation of all involved. “When working together as a team, we’ve demonstrated that it is possible to face difficult situations with success.”

He regards Formula E as a success story. The concept, which was born on the back of a napkin in a Paris restaurant in 2011 with Todt at the table, came to fruition faster than expected. This world championship not only brings attractive motorsport to major cities but also dispels the still-widespread reservations about electric cars. “Formula E offers innovative cars and exciting races. In this way, it raises public awareness about the important role of electric cars in future mobility.”

Todt’s passion for motorsport started in his childhood. He is also optimistic about its future. “Progress in recent years, especially in terms of safety and sustainability, has been absolutely sensational,” he says. “Motorsport is a dream for many and a freedom we need to preserve.”

Info

The Porsche Formula E podcast is available in English and can be downloaded in the Porsche Newsroom. Inside E is also available on other platforms, such as Apple Podcasts, Spotify and Google Podcasts.

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