



KONICA MINOLTA



WTR  
WAYNE TAYLOR RACING

# RICKY TAYLOR

## *Driver Bio*

When your name is Ricky Taylor and you're the son of three-time sports car racing champion Wayne Taylor, it would seem inevitable that you will end up driving racecars for a living at some point in your life.

And when your dad is the owner of a successful race team in America's most competitive road racing series, there's probably a good chance you'll be spending at least some time in the driver's seat of one of his racecars.

So, it came as no surprise that Ricky Taylor, at the ripe young age of 20, assumed the role of full-time co-driver with veteran Italian driving ace Max "The Ax" Angelelli in the No. 10 prototype at the outset of the 2010 GRAND-AM Rolex Sports Car Series season that kicked off a highly successful three-year run with the team that netted seven wins and 10 pole positions for the young driving star. After a one-year stint with the No. 90 Spirit of Daytona Corvette DP team in 2013, Taylor returned to his dad's team in 2014 to be the full-time co-driver with his younger brother Jordan after the team's dramatic and dominating championship campaign of 2013.

As inevitable as it seemed, the young Taylor took over the coveted co-driver's seat in the Rolex Series' perennial title-contending team in 2010 not necessarily by virtue of his name or his family connection, but by exhibiting a smooth and crafty driving style much like his legendary father's and a racing prowess that extends far beyond his 20 years at the outset of that season.

And even though he began racing go-karts just for the fun of it before he was 10 year old, it wasn't until several years later that Ricky Taylor actually decided he wanted to race cars for a living.

"When I was really young and just starting racing, Dad wasn't pushing me at all," Taylor said about his early years on the racetrack, about when father Wayne Taylor's illustrious career saw him win the prestigious 24 Hours of Le Mans in 1998 and then move on to run the popular Cadillac sports car racing program in the American Le Mans Series during the early 2000s.

"I was just doing it for fun with no huge interest at all," Ricky Taylor continued. "But then, all of a sudden, one day it clicked and that's all I wanted to do, and that was it. I was probably about 13. That was the year my dad 'retired' after running the Cadillac program. He had more time to spend with us at the kart track. It was that period in my life that I became more focused on racing. With Dad's help, it just clicked."

And click it did. In 2003, at the age of 13, Taylor won the Central Florida Regional Karting Championship in and around his Orlando stomping grounds, a title run that included a win in the inaugural 24 Hours of Ocala.

The following year, while Wayne Taylor embarked on his latest racing venture – overseeing SunTrust Bank's debut as sponsor in the Rolex Series in 2004 and co-driving the SunTrust Racing prototype with Angelelli – Ricky Taylor began making moves into larger, more powerful Skip Barber open-wheel cars.

After tasting a measure of success in karts and open-wheel cars in 2004, Taylor evolved into a bright spot on the racing radar by earning a Skip Barber Karting Shootout Scholarship in 2005, going on to win a pair of races, two poles and eight podium finishes in Skip Barber competition, and he even did a cameo appearance in a Star Mazda open-wheel car at Road Atlanta, where he qualified on the third row.

In 2007, Taylor burst onto the regional and national scene by winning the Skip Barber Southern Series title with six race wins, three poles and 12 podium finishes, including a track record at Virginia International Raceway in Alton. He also finished second in the Skip Barber National Championship with a pair of race wins, five podiums and a series-high five pole positions. The five poles put Taylor in the elite company of Scott Speed and Salvador Duran tied for the second-most poles in a Skip Barber National Championship season.

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As Taylor hoisted trophy after trophy on open-wheel racing weekends in 2007, more and more heads began to turn and take notice, not the least of which was on the shoulders of his father Wayne Taylor.

The elder of Wayne Taylor's two sons, in his father's mind, had clearly earned a chance to test one of the high-powered Daytona Prototypes that produce some of the most competitive, side-by-side road racing in the world as part of the Rolex Series traveling road show. During the year, Taylor, then 17, got to drive a DP car for the Spirit of Daytona Rolex Series team, and the one and only SunTrust Racing prototype. Testing was a success, and Rolex Series insiders went on to declare Ricky Taylor ready to tackle Rolex Series competition.

Fast-forward to the 2008 season-opener, where Taylor was inserted into the driver lineup for the 46<sup>th</sup> Rolex 24 At Daytona alongside his dad, Angelelli and Michael Valiante.

"I was kind of in my own world, minding my own business, pushing as hard as I could and trying to do as well as I could during those Skip Barber years," Taylor said. "Looking back, I don't really know how it came about to drive his team car. My dad and a lot of other people had their eye on me and felt like I was ready.

"The 24-hour is a good first race to do if you're going to do your first race in a new kind of car. All you really have to do is stay on the lead lap and keep the car clean. It's easy to fly under the radar in a 24-hour race. It's easy to not let yourself do anything too great or too terrible. It turned out to be a great way to start because it wasn't a high-stress situation or high-pressure situation. And it turned out that I even led the race, which was exciting."

It was also exciting for Wayne Taylor, to say the least, to see his eldest son run competitive laps during his three driving stints and his role in the team's top-five finish. In addition, Taylor's younger son Jordan, who's two years younger than Ricky, participated in the event, as well, in a GT-class car to make it a true family affair.

Having passed his first racing test with flying colors, Ricky Taylor was on a clear path to become a full-time driver in the Rolex Series. Three races after the fifth-place finish in the 2008 Rolex 24, Taylor hooked up with upstart Beyer Racing for a one-off run at Virginia International Raceway in Alton. He then co-drove with Burt Frisselle for six races in the Doran Racing prototype, scoring a top-five at Barber Motorsports Park in Birmingham, Ala., and three other top-10 finishes.

In 2009, Taylor ended up driving the full Rolex Series campaign for Beyer Racing and finished 11<sup>th</sup> in the season-ending points with a top-five, seven top-10s, and 33 laps led, including a race-high 22 in the August race at Watkins Glen (N.Y.) International. It all added up to some invaluable experience. In 2010, he broke through to score his first Rolex Series win alongside Angelelli on Memorial Day at Lime Rock Park in Lakeville, Conn. He also scored his first career pole with the his father's team at Barber Motorsports Park in Birmingham, Ala., and added another at the July 4 Brumos Porsche 250 at Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway. He personally led 113 laps on the year – fourth-best in the series – and co-drove with Angelelli to second in the Rolex Series championship for the team's best finish since the 2005 championship campaign. In 2011, Taylor enjoyed his best season to date with three victories, a streak of six consecutive pole positions, and he extended his series-record streak of races in which he's led to 17 by leading laps at every race. His 311 laps led in 2011 was more than any other Rolex Series driver.

"There's no substitute for seat time no matter what you're driving," said Taylor, who added three more wins and a pair of pole positions en route to sixth in the championship in 2012 alongside Angelelli before a one-year stint in 2013 with the No. 90 Spirit of Daytona Corvette DP team. "GRAND-AM was just so competitive, getting to know the cars that I did the previous few years – the Crawford, Riley and Dallara – I was able to feel more of what it took in order to run well and deal with various situations. That made coming to my dad's team a lot easier."

In addition to readily available advice from his father, Taylor was able to learn from numerous other seasoned veterans.

"Between the different teams I was driving with, there was always somebody to go to," he said. "Andy Wallace at Beyer, and Kevin Doran, they're both excellent and they've been doing this for a long, long time. And between my dad and Max and Simon (Hodgson, SunTrust Racing's general manager), I had endless resources with so much knowledge. There's just so much to learn, and I don't think that'll ever stop."

In his first two seasons back with WTR in 2014 and 2015, Taylor and his brother co-drove to four victories, 11 podium finishes and three pole positions.

Two of his most memorable races came in 2014, which started with his father Wayne's last hurrah in the driver's seat at the season-opening Rolex 24 At Daytona. The Taylor brothers, their father and Angelelli crossed the finish line with a solid second-place finish. That year ended with an emotional and dominating win at the Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta. It came 16 years after Wayne Taylor co-drove to the overall win in the very first Petit Le Mans.

In addition to his duties in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship in 2016, during which he and his brother co-drove to three victories and seven podium finishes and one pole position, Taylor returned to the prestigious 24 Hours of Le Mans for the first time with the factory Corvette Racing team alongside his brother. He also drove the final five FIA WEC races of the season with the French Larbre Competition team with podium finishes at Shanghai and Bahrain.

The 2017 season opened with career milestone wins as the Taylor brothers debuted the all-new No. 10 Konica Minolta Cadillac DPi-V.R with back-to-back resounding victories at the season-opening Rolex 24 At Daytona and the Mobil 1 Twelve Hours of Sebring. The Daytona win was with co-drivers Angelelli in his last career race and four-time NASCAR Cup Series champion Jeff Gordon. The Sebring win came with new third driver Alex Lynn of Great Britain.

Taylor is single and lives in Lake Mary, Florida. He continues to pursue a mechanical engineering degree at the University of Central Florida.

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