



DANICA PATRICK: Driver, No. 10 Ford Fusion

Birthdate: March 25, 1982
Birthplace: Beloit, Wisconsin
Hometown: Roscoe, Illinois
Residence: Phoenix
Marital Status: Single

There are plenty of well-known athletes throughout the world, but those who command mainstream attention are simply known by one name. Babe, Wilt, Mickey, LeBron, Kobe, Shaq...and Danica.

Danica Patrick, driver of the No. 10 Aspen Dental Ford Fusion for Stewart-Haas Racing (SHR) in the Monster Energy NASCAR Cup Series, joined the mainstream ranks by going against the current, immersing herself and succeeding in the male-dominated world of professional motorsports.

Patrick burst onto the scene in May 2005 when she stunned the world by leading 19 laps and finishing fourth in her first Indianapolis 500, becoming the first woman to lead laps and score a top-five finish in the historic race. One week later, she graced the cover of *Sports Illustrated*, becoming the first Indy car driver to be featured on the front page in 20 years.

Three years later, in April 2008, Patrick became the first woman to win a major-league open-wheel race in a North American series with her victory in the IndyCar Series Indy Japan 300 at the Twin Ring Motegi oval in Japan. That victory set her up for her second *Sports Illustrated* cover just three weeks later, making her only the fourth racecar driver (joining Jimmie Johnson, Dale Earnhardt Jr., and Al Unser) to twice grace the cover of the popular magazine.

Patrick's story begins in Roscoe, Illinois, 90 miles northwest of Chicago and 5 miles south of the Illinois-Wisconsin state line, where she was raised. Like many of today's successful drivers, including SHR co-owner Tony Stewart, Patrick began competing in go-karts at a young age. During her time in karting from 1992 to 1997, she won numerous regional titles while also winning the World Karting Association Grand National Championship in 1994, 1996 and 1997. Stewart captured the same title in 1987.

From there, Patrick made a career-changing decision, leaving the comfort of friends and family in the Midwest to move to Europe to compete in the cutthroat world of European road racing. After spending the 1998 and 1999 seasons driving in the British Formula Vauxhall series, Patrick moved to the British Zetec Formula Ford series for 2000 and 2001. She earned plenty of attention by finishing second in the prestigious Formula Ford Festival in 2000 at the famous Brands Hatch road course in England, the highest finish ever for an American in the event.

Patrick's accomplishments in Europe caught the eye of three-time IndyCar Series champion and 1986 Indianapolis 500 winner Bobby Rahal, who signed Patrick to drive in the United States for his team, Rahal Letterman Racing (RLR). After opening the 2002 season by winning the professional portion of the Toyota Pro/Celebrity race from the pole at the Long Beach (Calif.) Grand Prix, Patrick competed in five Barber Dodge Pro Series events for RLR. She again impressed by scoring a season-best fourth-place result at the Vancouver Grand Prix in Canada.

Patrick moved up to the Toyota Atlantic Series in 2003 and became the first woman in series history to finish on the podium with a third-place result at the road course in Monterrey, Mexico. She improved that effort by one spot when she finished second on the street course in Miami. Patrick finished the year sixth in points with five top-five finishes.

She continued to improve in 2004 as she finished third in the Toyota Atlantic point standings with an impressive run of 10 top-five finishes in 12 races. In June of that season at the road course in Portland, Oregon, Patrick became the first woman in series history to win the pole before finishing second in the race. Her runner-up finish earned her the points lead, making her the first woman to ever lead the Toyota Atlantic standings.

In 2005, Patrick moved up with RLR to the IndyCar Series. It didn't take long for her to become a factor. In just her fourth career start, she qualified second and led 32 laps en route to an impressive fourth-place finish at Twin Ring Motegi.

Her momentum from Motegi carried her into one of the most memorable performances in more than a century of racing at Indianapolis Motor Speedway. Patrick set numerous records during her Indianapolis 500 debut and set the tone early when she posted the fastest lap on the opening day of practice. She went on to set the fastest practice lap five times throughout the month – more than any other driver – including on Pole Day and Carb Day.

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Patrick's practice lap of 229.880 mph on Pole Day was the fastest of any driver during the month and the fastest turned by any woman in the history of Indianapolis Motor Speedway. During her qualification attempt, Patrick made an impressive save as her car bobbed in turn one on her first lap, earning rave reviews for her car control by longtime racing observers. She ended up qualifying fourth, the best starting position ever by a woman in the historic race.

On race day, 11 laps before the end of the 200-lap race, Patrick blew past leader Dan Wheldon and held the point until lap 194, when she was forced to back off the pace to conserve enough fuel to make it to the finish. Patrick ended up fourth and earned Rookie of the Year honors.

Patrick went on to win poles at Kansas Speedway in Kansas City, Kentucky Speedway in Sparta and Chicagoland Speedway in Joliet, Illinois, tying her with Tomas Scheckter for most poles by a rookie in a season. Patrick finished 12th in points with seven top-10 finishes and earned the series' Rookie of the Year honors while also being named the series' Most Popular Driver.

The 2006 season began with Patrick making her GRAND-AM Rolex Sports Car Series debut in the Rolex 24 At Daytona (Fla.) International Speedway, co-driving a Porsche Crawford with Rusty Wallace, Allan McNish and Jan Lammers for Howard-Boss Motorsports. Unfortunately, the team suffered a mechanical failure just past the nine-hour mark, putting them out of the race early with a 24th-place finish.

In the IndyCar Series that year, Patrick scored a pair of fourth-place finishes en route to a ninth-place finish in points. At Indianapolis, she continued to impress as she started 10th and finished eighth while again being named the series' Most Popular Driver.

In 2007, Patrick switched to Andretti-Green Racing (now Andretti Autosport) and continued her rise in the season-ending point standings with a seventh-place result on the strength of 11 top-10 finishes. She tied Sarah Fisher's record for best finish by a woman with a second-place effort at the Belle Isle street circuit in Detroit and was named the series' Most Popular Driver for the third consecutive year. Patrick again performed well at the Indianapolis 500 with her third straight top-10 finish as she came home eighth in the rain-shortened race.

With her skills improving each year, it was only a matter of time before Patrick found victory lane. It finally came in April 2008 at Motegi. It was a win that was heard around the sports world and helped propel Patrick to her best-yet points finish, as she ended the year sixth in the standings on the strength of nine top-10 results. Unfortunately, despite starting fifth in the Indianapolis 500, her string of top-10 finishes in the event came to an end after she was involved in a pit-road collision with Ryan Briscoe on lap 171 and placed 22nd.

In 2009, Patrick again opened the racing season in the Rolex 24 At Daytona, where she finished eighth driving a Crawford Pontiac with Andy Wallace, Rob Finlay and Casey Mears for Childress-Howard Motorsports. At the Indianapolis 500 in May, she started 10th and finished an impressive third, the best result ever for a woman at Indy.

Patrick continued to climb the points ladder as she ended the season fifth in the standings with 10 top-10 finishes – the third consecutive year she compiled at least 10 finishes of 10th or better.

More records came Patrick's way in 2010 when, following the August race at Sonoma (Calif.) Raceway, she set the record for most consecutive races running at the finish. Sonoma marked the 29th time she had completed a race without a DNF (Did Not Finish), and she ended the year 10th in points. Once again, she was solid at Indianapolis with a sixth-place finish despite starting a career-worst 23rd.

While the IndyCar Series continued to be Patrick's main focus, she began dabbling in stock cars in 2010. She started her stock-car career with an impressive sixth-place finish in the season-opening Automobile Racing Club of America (ARCA) event at Daytona. A week later at the same track, Patrick made her NASCAR debut in the Xfinity Series and finished 35th after being involved in a multi-car accident midway through the event.

She continued to adapt to the heavier stock cars throughout a 13-race Xfinity Series schedule in 2010. Her average finish in her first seven races was 31.1. Her average finish in her final six events improved to 24.3. To gain additional stock-car experience, Patrick competed in the NASCAR K&N Pro Series East race in September at Dover (Del.) International Speedway, where she started 13th and finished sixth.

In 2011, Patrick continued to drive in both the IndyCar Series and the Xfinity Series. She finished 10th in IndyCar Series points with nine top-10 finishes, including a 10th-place result in the Indianapolis 500. In her first seven starts at Indianapolis, Patrick accumulated six top-10 finishes and completed 97.7 percent of the laps available. Once again, she did not record an IndyCar DNF in 2011, extending her series-record streak to 50 consecutive races of running at the finish.

On the NASCAR side, Patrick continued to improve while running 12 Xfinity Series races with an average finish of 17.4. She scored three top-10 and six top-15 finishes, including a fourth-place result in March at Las Vegas Motor Speedway. The finish was the best ever by a woman in a NASCAR national stock-car series, besting a fifth-place run by Sara Christian in a NASCAR Cup Series race in 1949 at Heidelberg (Pa.) Raceway.

In addition to her success at Las Vegas, Patrick led 13 of 100 laps in the July Xfinity Series race at Daytona en route to a 10th-place result.

In 2012, Patrick moved from the IndyCar Series to a full-time stock-car schedule, competing in the Xfinity Series for JR Motorsports while also competing in 10 NASCAR Cup Series races for SHR.

She opened the 2012 season by qualifying on pole for the Xfinity Series race at Daytona, making her the first woman since Shawna Robinson in 1994 to win a pole in any of NASCAR's top-three divisions. She concluded the season with a top-10 finish in the Xfinity Series standings to eclipse the 63-year-old mark of Christian, who finished 13th in the final Strictly Stock Series point standings in 1949.

Patrick's full season of Xfinity Series racing in 2012 produced a record-setting 10th-place finish in the final point standings, with four top-10 finishes, an average start of 14.9 and an average finish of 18.8. Patrick led laps in six of 33 races, including a season-high 20 on the road course at the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve in Montreal. Her best finish of eighth came in April at Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth, and she scored a ninth-place effort at Bristol (Tenn.) Motor Speedway in August. To close the season, she brought home two top-10 results at Kansas and Phoenix International Raceway during the season's final four events. And, picking up where she left off during her IndyCar Series career, Patrick was voted the Xfinity Series' Most Popular Driver for the first time.

Her partial NASCAR Cup Series schedule in 2012 began with the season-opening Daytona 500 and concluded with a season-best finish of 17th in November at Phoenix.

In her first full season of racing in NASCAR's premier series in 2013, Patrick made her presence known in the year's first race. In the 55th running of the Daytona 500, Patrick won the pole by setting the fastest time in qualifying and then finished eighth in the race, the highest finishing position ever for a woman in the "Great American Race."

She led laps 90-91 under caution, becoming the first female to lead NASCAR's most prestigious race, and held the top spot under green through laps 127-129 to become the first woman to lead a NASCAR race under green. The only other woman to lead laps in a NASCAR Cup Series race is Janet Guthrie, who led five laps under caution in 1977 at Ontario (Calif.) Motor Speedway.

By leading laps in the Daytona 500, Patrick joined an elite club of only 14 drivers to have led both the Daytona 500 and the Indianapolis 500. The other drivers to accomplish the feat are A.J. Foyt, Mario Andretti, Al Unser, Bobby Unser, Bobby Allison, Jim Hurtubise, Johnny Rutherford, Tim Richmond, John Andretti, Robby Gordon, Juan Pablo Montoya, A.J. Allmendinger and Stewart. Of those 14 drivers, only Patrick, Foyt, Andretti, Gordon, Montoya, Allmendinger and Stewart have led at least five laps in each race.

Patrick's eighth-place finish in the Daytona 500, coupled with her six top-10 finishes in the Indianapolis 500, make her one of only 17 drivers to have top-10 results in each race. The other drivers are Foyt, Montoya, Gordon, Rutherford, Allmendinger, Stewart, Kurt Busch, Mario Andretti, Al Unser, Bobby Johns, Cale Yarborough, Dan Gurney, Donnie Allison, Jerry Grant, Paul Goldsmith and Tom Sneva.

After scoring one top-10 and four top-15 finishes, Patrick placed second in the Rookie of the Year competition and made history by competing in every race on the 2013 schedule. No other woman raced a full NASCAR Cup Series schedule in the more than 60-year history of NASCAR.

In 2014, Patrick continued to show progress in NASCAR's elite division. She earned a career-best sixth-place finish at Atlanta Motor Speedway in August, which also marked the highest finish by a female at the 1.54-mile oval. Patrick closed out the season with three top-10 and four top-15 finishes. She also led a total of 15 laps and improved her average starting position by 7.8 spots and her average finish by 2.4 positions over the previous season.

Early in the 2015 season, Patrick once again broke NASCAR Cup Series records. After scoring top-10 finishes at Martinsville and Bristol in the spring, she set a new mark for the most top-10 finishes of any female in NASCAR Cup Series competition with a total of six top-10s. The record was previously held by Guthrie at five top-10s. Patrick went on to finish 24th in the driver point standings, her highest result to date.

Patrick entered the 2016 with a new crew chief, Billy Scott. After scoring 14 top-20 finishes and leading a total of 30 laps, Patrick ended the season 24th in the championship standings. As they continued to build their relationship throughout the year, Patrick and Scott worked hard to develop a solid foundation to build upon as they enter the 2017 season.

One of the most recognizable athletes in the world, Patrick has graced the cover of *ESPN: The Magazine* and *TV Guide* and was featured in pictorials in the 2008 and 2009 *Sports Illustrated* Swimsuit Issue. She has appeared in 14 Super Bowl commercials, more than any other celebrity.