



# DREAMS DO COME TRUE

WHEN A DAY AT THE TRACK  
LEADS TO A PROFESSIONAL  
PODIUM AT DAYTONA

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**N**EARLY EVERYONE WHO STRAPS into a car and learns how to hit an apex possesses a dream, hoping their new-found skills will one day land them on the top step of a podium. There's the trophy, the click-clack of hundreds of camera shutters accompanied with thunderous applause from spectators and fellow competitors, a hug, maybe a little champagne, and the respect of professional racers. Of course, most people who compete in autocross or hone their skills at Driver Education (DE) events never come to realize that dream. But for some, that dream does come true.

**TRACK DAY**

These stories typically begin with a track day. At least it did for William Tally, MD. Tally, is an orthopedic and neurosurgical fellowship-trained spine surgeon specializing in scoliosis and complex degenerative and traumatic spinal disorders, with a practice at the Athens Orthopedic Clinic in Athens, Georgia. He describes himself as always having been a "car guy," but hadn't yet experienced the track until later in life. He would attend a PCA

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track day with a friend, which then opened the doctor's eyes to a way to develop his driving skills on track, and with it, an entirely new world that would eventually lead to that top step of the podium at the Daytona International Speedway.

Tally began where many people do: PCA's DE program. His chosen vessel to carry him on this journey was a friend's Spec Boxster (SPB). He'd go on to procure his own SPB and complete racing school. Then it was time for Club Racing. He completed his first wheel-to-wheel race in the 2018 PCA Club Race at the Circuit of the Americas (COTA).

The SPB class offered everything Tally sought: large car counts, challenging and competitive racing, and opportunities to hone his race craft. It also fostered new friendships and strengthened existing ones, like his friendship with fellow

Athens, GA, resident and 2019 SPB champion Topher Everett.

For two seasons, Tally enjoyed PCA Club Racing and the SPB class. He was getting better on the track, and the experience opened a new world of possibilities as he saw professional and semi-professional drivers and teams from the International Motor Sports Association (IMSA) in the PCA Club Racing paddock. "The quality of people in Club Racing is much higher than people probably think. From the staff, the teams, drivers, coaches, and mechanics," Tally said.

When Tally's friend, Everett, totaled his SPB in a Turn 1 incident at Road Atlanta, the two racers discussed their future and ways to continue their racing adventure, and the burgeoning GTB1 class was calling. Tally chose a 997-generation 911 to take him there.



#### GOING PRO

Tally won the 2020 GTB1 class championship and the Triple Trofeo Championship. His PCA success continued as he repeated his championship in 2021. But he wasn't keeping himself to racing within the confines of the PCA Club. In 2019, he scored a one-off ride in the Mazda MX-5 Cup series as well. Tally admits he didn't fare well in the race, but he had a blast, reveling in having tackled the famous Corkscrew at Laguna Seca in the screaming hornet that is a race-prepped Miata.

Looking for more professional action to complement his PCA racing, he was able to co-drive an Audi RS 3 fielded by FastMD Racing in the 2020 Michelin Pilot Challenge series season-opening endurance race at the Daytona In-

ternational Speedway. The team scored a podium finish, and Tally knew he needed to pursue more opportunities to race professionally.

In 2021, a seat in the JDC-Miller Motorsports Audi RS 3 opened up, and Tally joined the team that would find themselves on the top step of the podium after four hours of non-stop action. The margin of victory was only seven-tenths of a second over veteran driver Ryan Eversley's Honda. It was a dramatic win and a fantastic journey for Tally, who stood victorious in his third professional race.

#### THE PCA ROAD TO A DREAM REALIZED

Tally feels his experience on and off the track with PCA Club Racing was more than enough





to prepare him for what he would encounter in professional racing and series like IMSA. In three years, he had gone from rookie Club Racer to the winner of an IMSA endurance race at the “World Center of Speed”—Daytona. “There is a difference between PCA Club Racing and IMSA,” Tally said. “As you would expect, the intensity on the track is higher in IMSA. The rules are tighter, and any infraction is automatically viewed as trying to get an advantage. But I never felt overwhelmed on track; the racing was familiar to what I experienced with PCA.”

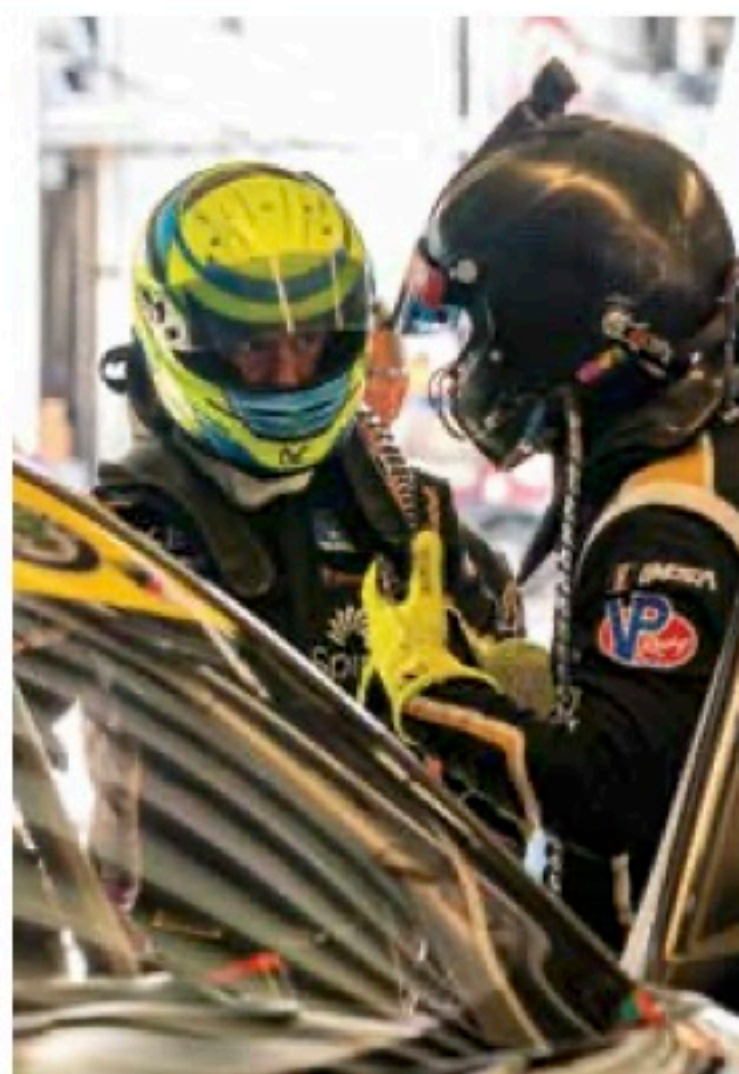
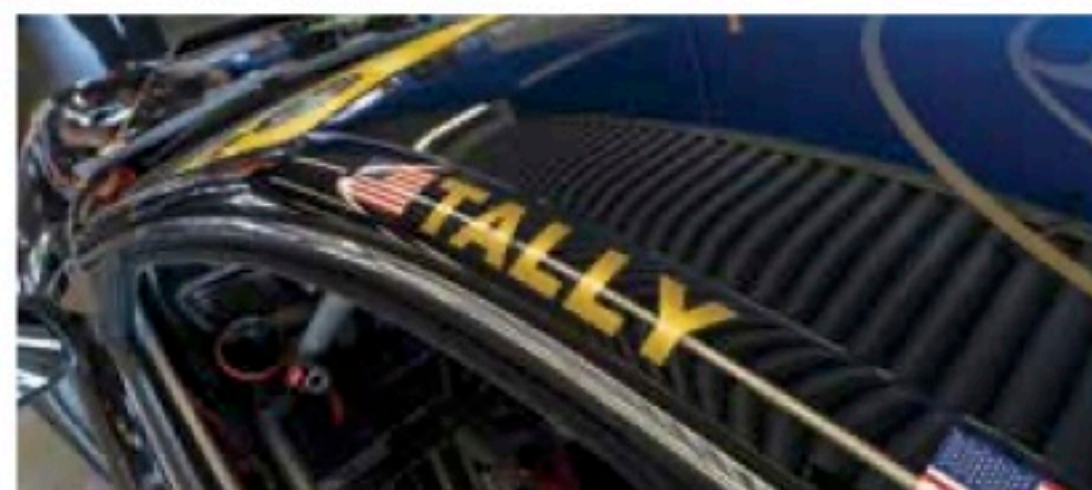
In 2022, he moved from the GTB1 class to the GTC7 class, racing 991.2 Cup Cars. The transition from a converted race car to one purpose-built from the Porsche factory was exciting. It provided more opportunities for Tally to experience professional-grade equipment on the track. He did well for himself and finished the year third place in the standings. 2023 should have been the year Tally challenged for the title, but a catastrophic engine





failure derailed his PCA racing for the season. Thankfully for Tally, he had another ride waiting for him.

A full-season opportunity to co-drive a Honda Civic Type R TCR class car for LA Honda World Racing in the Michelin Pilot Challenge series awaited the doctor in 2023. The team began the year with Tally as a regular, on the podium at Daytona. The rest of the calendar had its ups and downs, but the experience of racing an entire season was practically a dream



come true for Tally.

Due to a significant overhaul of the Honda team for 2024, Tally found himself without a ride, a position familiar to many drivers. However, a little over a month before the season-opening race at Daytona, it was announced Tally would join KMW Motorsports with TMR Engineering to co-drive their Alfa Romeo Giulietta Veloce for the 2024 season.

He sat fifth in the TCR class when the green flag waved to start the 2024 BMW M Endurance Challenge at Daytona. The plan was for Tally to start the race with a double stint. He climbed to fourth position after the first round of pit stops, but it wouldn't last. As he entered Turn 3, contact from a trailing car sent his Alfa into one of the Hyundais, damaging both vehicles. Following the driver's meeting instructions, Tally limped the car to a safe position to avoid a red flag or further calamity behind him. Unfortunately, it was too safe because IMSA left him there. The other cars involved in the incident crawled back to pit lane while the rest of the competition raced for fif-

ty-one minutes before a caution flag allowed Tally to be rescued and returned to the pits.

The team was able to fix the car in fifteen minutes, but eventually, another issue would result in a Did Not Finish (DNF). Disappointed with how the race unfolded, Tally remains ready for the season's challenges. (He also thinks PCA's Stewards might have handled his incident better, but we don't need to tell IMSA.)

"The best analogy is that PCA [Club Racing] is a competitive learning environment, with people there to help you have fun but also get better," Tally said. "IMSA is like a final exam. There are no margins for error, but the overall feeling is similar."

PCA Club Racing is an amateur series, but its structure, staff, teams, and drivers are far from amateur. Tally's story is impressive, but he's not alone. Club Racing's strength is that it provides an opportunity for everyone. Whether you only want to have fun at the track with friends or work to realize your higher competitive goals, PCA Club Racing has you covered; just ask William Tally. ■