



A LONG HISTORY OF EFFICIENCY

CONGRATULATIONS to World Champion Lewis Hamilton for using his authority and influence to promote sustainability, not just in motorsport, but in all walks of life. While this is really an admirable initiative – as is Formula E's announcement that it has achieved a zero carbon footprint (see News) – motorsport from the beginning has been about total efficiency, but only in the very recent past has it become fashionable to promote this aspect.

The FIA is in the process of formulating new F1 regulations that will include biofuels playing a more important role as F1 targets a net-zero carbon footprint by 2030. NASCAR already has a huge green initiative. It is busy with recycling, emissions reduction, tree planting and many other aspects of sustainability. Many NASCAR teams and tracks also rely on solar power as an energy source, including Daytona International Speedway, Indianapolis Motor Speedway, Michigan International Speedway, Pocono Raceway, Sonoma Raceway, JR Motorsports and Roush Fenway Racing. IndyCar, meanwhile, is embracing a "Shift to Green with Biogas" initiative with Biogas Americas, with Andretti Harding Steinbrenner Racing waving the banner.

International Motor Sports Association (IMSA) announced earlier this year it has further expanded initiatives for its IMSA Green Racing programme. This includes increased involvement in the US Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) SmartWay Program, discovery and implementation of solar energy within its paddocks and progress in the current move to electric and hybrid technologies in the mobility field.

However, it is the Automobile Club de l'Ouest (ACO) that has the longest history in this area. It has always been in the vanguard of sustainable initiatives, although it was not always fashionable. "Racing improves the breed" was what Charles Faroux – one of the foremost French motor journalists and engineers of the past century, as well as the 24 Hours race director for over three decades – had in mind when in 1922 he contacted Georges Durand, the ACO president. Faroux's idea was that a 24-hour continuous race for production cars would

test their entire equipment.

In 1924 the "index of performance" classification was introduced, the winner being the car having exceeded the minimum distance required for its class by the highest percentage. It was meant to favour and attract French manufacturers as they mostly built only small-capacity cars, and the prize money offered was higher than for the overall winner. The index was abandoned in 1981.

In February 2019, the ACO really pushed the boundaries when it announced H24Racing with [GreenGT](#). The goal was to lead the way with hydrogen-electric-powered cars that will join the combustion engine grid as part of a new class in the 2024 Le Mans 24 Hours. The plan is to showcase and promote the hydrogen-electric powertrain as the mobility of the future.

Since its launch the project has moved on with alacrity. On the Friday preceding this year's race, the new hydrogen-powered H24, which is lighter, technologically more evolved and quicker than the current LMPH2G, was unveiled by the H24Racing team. ACO president Pierre Fillon also officially opened a hydrogen filling station prior to the race, which is located near the aerodrome, opposite the circuit. It is open to the city's buses and will soon be serving trucks and fleet vehicles. The initiative is part of the ACO's ongoing commitment to zero-emission transport.

Innovations made in racing eventually benefit us all as the technology tried in the white heat of top-level motorsport filters down into the vehicles we drive every day. So don't be an apologist for liking and supporting the sport. 

William Kimberley
EDITOR

