

Mark Webber (AUS)

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Born: 27th August 1976

Where: Queanbeyan, Australia

Lives: Buckinghamshire, UK

Height/weight: 1.83 m/76 kg

Marital status: Partner Ann Neal

Hobbies: Sports, mountain biking, flying helicopters

It's been two years now since Mark Webber has had a roof over his head. After 215 Formula 1 Grands Prix, and having won nine of them, he left the F1 paddock to become a Porsche works driver. "It was a big change and a challenge to adapt to LMP1 and the intense teamwork, an entirely new experience," the Australian admits. Sharing the Porsche 919 Hybrid with two other drivers requires compromises for seats, pedal systems and set-up. The better a driver feels, the faster he is. Because this is vital and beneficial for all three of them, they take good care of each other. "I surprised myself by how much I enjoyed the sharing a car after a short period of familiarisation," he said.

Mark Webber, Porsche driver,
Silverstone 6h 2014

Webber is a straightforward man and he's honest with himself. In his book *Aussie Grit: My Formula One Journey*, published in 2015, he gives a deeper insight into his career. He left his home in Queanbeyan in New South Wales, Australia, at the age of 19 with a clear goal, to further his career as a racing driver in England. He was one of many, and one of those without a sponsor, but he had natural talent. He won the prestigious Formula Ford Festival in Brands Hatch, and also contested Formula 3 and Formula 3000. He was invited to join

the sports car programme at Mercedes, where the 24-hour Le Mans race was set to be the highlight of the 1999 season. The car and the team were considered favourites, but the aerodynamics were treacherous, with the car becoming airborne. Webber's car launched into a backflip in the qualifying session and again in the warm-up. He survived two dramatic crashes unharmed, but his career seemed to have run out of steam. The page turned, however, with a successful Formula 1 test drive for the Benetton team, which secured him a test and reserve driver position in 2001.

Webber's Formula 1 debut was distinctive, he finished fifth in 2002 in Melbourne with an inferior Minardi and in 2005 he scored his first podium with the former BMW Williams F1 team. He celebrated his first F1 win at the 2009 German Grand Prix with Red Bull Racing in his 131st Grand Prix. In 2010 and 2012 he won the Monaco Grand Prix.

After 15 years, it was an older and more mature Webber who returned to La Sarthe in 2014. His incident-packed experience from 1999 seemed far away, but until now a happy ending had evaded him. In 2014, as he was driving in second place with only two more hours to go, a bang from the powertrain shattered the dream. In 2015, the 919 that he again shared with Timo Bernhard and Brendon Hartley was running in the lead during the first third of the race, only to have a time penalty relegate them down the field. The trio launched a charge through the field to claim second place. The great triumph followed at a nerve-wracking finale in Bahrain. "To have scored my first World Championship title with Timo and Brendon with Porsche means a great deal to me," says Webber. He never talks about this feat without mentioning his teammates.

His affinity to Porsche, however, is nothing new. As a teenager he drove a 911, borrowed from a friend, and when he bought his own first Porsche he went straight for a Turbo model. What Porsche means to him: "Highly developed sports cars without being overstated, perfect for me and perfect in every scenario." Privately, however, he rings the changes, because at home in the garage sits a 918 Spyder, a 911 GT2 RS and a GT3 RS 4.0.

Mark Webber competes in the FIA World Endurance Championship, including the Le Mans

24 Hours, in a Porsche 919 Hybrid for the Porsche Team.

Career

2016 Porsche works driver WEC, LMP1

2015 Porsche works driver WEC, LMP1; Drivers' World Champion with Bernhard/Hartley; 4 wins (Nürburgring, Austin, Fuji, Shanghai); 3 pole positions; 2nd in Le Mans

2014 Porsche works driver WEC, LMP1; 3rd Silverstone, Fuji and Bahrain; pole position São Paulo

2013 3rd Formula One World Championship (Infiniti Red Bull Racing)

2012 6th Formula One World Championship (Red Bull Racing); 1st Monaco, Silverstone

2011 3rd Formula One World Championship (Red Bull Racing); 1st São Paulo

2010 3rd Formula One World Championship (Red Bull Racing); 1st Barcelona, Monaco, Silverstone, Budapest

2009 4th Formula One World Championship (Red Bull Racing); 1st Nürburgring, São Paulo

2008 11th Formula One World Championship (Red Bull Racing); 2007 12th Formula One World Championship (Red Bull Racing)

2006 14th Formula One World Championship (Williams F1 Team)

2005 10th Formula One World Championship (BMW Williams F1 Team)

2004 13th Formula One World Championship (Jaguar Racing)

2003 10th Formula One World Championship (Jaguar Racing)

2002 16th Formula One World Championship (KL Minardi Asiatech)

2001 2nd Formula 3000 Championship (3 wins); Formula One test driver (Benetton Renault)

2000 3rd Formula 3000 Championship (EFR/Arrows, 1 win); Formula One test driver (Arrows)

1999 FIA GT Championship (AMG Mercedes, opt out after the Le Mans 24 Hours)

1998 2nd FIA GT Championship (AMG Mercedes, 5 wins)

1997 4th British Formula 3 Championship (1 win)



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1996 2nd British Formula Ford Championship (4 wins); Winner Formula Ford Festival Brands Hatch

1995 4th Australian Formula Ford Championship; 3rd Formula Ford Festival Brands Hatch

1994 Debut Australian Formula Ford Championship

1991-1993 Karting

Source: Porsche