

AS DRIVING CAREER ENDS PATRICK REMAINS DRIVEN

Patrick is the only female to win an IndyCar Series race

New York

Danica Patrick may soon no longer be a race car driver but the only woman to win an IndyCar race remains as driven as ever as she speeds towards one last Indianapolis 500 and the end of a ground-breaking career.

Patrick will bring her career full circle on the Indianapolis Motor Speedway's famed oval on May 27 when she climbs into the cockpit of her electric green GoDaddy liveried Chevrolet one last time as one of North America and the world's most recognisable athletes takes a final bow.

"I've always said that I hope people remember me as a great driver and a woman. I hope it's in that order," Patrick said. "I hope it's one of those stories where they are like she was awesome and a girl and it was cool to see something like that, something unique and different.

"I don't want them to not remember that I was a girl.

"I'm here largely because I am woman, I just try to lead by example.

"It's a tough subject because I think people expect, want me to be an advocate for women in a certain way but really I am just about people achieving their highest potential."

While Patrick is routinely viewed as a pioneer and a standard bearer for women's causes she sees herself as more of an inspirational figure than an advocate.

On the racetrack, however, Patrick is simply another racer.

She established herself as an elite driver and fierce competitor in IndyCar, blazing a path to the winner's circle when she took the checkered flag at a race in Japan in 2008.

But it was the Indy 500 where the diminutive driver loomed large by taking third in 2009, the best result ever at the Brickyard for a woman driver.

Patrick was never able to match that result in NASCAR despite driving for Stewart-Haas Racing, one of the top teams.

She competed in almost 200 NASCAR races but never found Victory Lane, her best result being sixth at Atlanta in 2014.

Biggest Success

Her biggest success in NASCAR came in 2013 when she grabbed the Daytona 500 pole.

"I didn't have as good a results in NASCAR as I wanted," Patrick said.

"It's more difficult in some ways just because I was fighting for a top 10 or the top 20 and IndyCar I was fighting for a top five or a win.

"I still fought really hard, they are still both difficult but as far as tangible results that people understand IndyCar went better so for that I loved it."

Although Patrick will be getting out of the race car, she will not be slowing down.

One of the most marketable athletes in North America, she has been able to turn her fame and passions into businesses.

She is an author, has her own wine and clothing line and a growing interest in yoga and fitness.

What Patrick is not interested in is starting her own race team like one of her fellow trailblazers Sarah Fisher but she does plan on staying involved with her sport and did not completely rule out the possibility of getting back into the cockpit.

"I'm never going to say never," Patrick said. "Long answer short I don't see myself in any capacity staying and racing in a significant way.

"Always be supportive and watch and be curious but I don't see myself owning a team or touring, it's just not in my nature.

"I'd like to inspire people from the heart so that they were driven from the inside and help them generate confidence in themselves or by taking care of themselves," Patrick added.

"One of the things that I've done my whole life and I get this from my dad, I've always just been a dreamer."

(Reuters)



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