

Honda Performance Development

Now in its third decade, Honda Performance Development (HPD) is the technical operations center for Honda's high-performance racing activities, including the Honda HI17TT twin-turbocharged Indy V6 engine and aerokit bodywork package utilized in IndyCar Series competition.

HPD also oversees the Acura Motorsports efforts in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship and Pirelli World Challenge GT Series, utilizing the new Acura NSX GT3; and offers a wide range of products for grassroots, club and entry-level professional racing.

From entry-level karting and quarter midgets to the pinnacle levels of motorsports competition in the Verizon IndyCar Series and international sports car racing, HPD has expanded its services over the years, and now offers a complete range of products to meet the needs of competitors at all levels of the sport.

Founded in 1993, when Honda announced plans to enter American open-wheel racing, HPD entered Championship Auto Racing Teams (CART) competition in 1994, winning its first manufacturers' and drivers' championships in 1996. Three more manufacturers' titles (in 1998, '99 and 2001) and five drivers' crowns (1997-2001) followed.

No other manufacturer has matched Honda's success in Indy cars, which includes 219 race victories, 15 drivers' championships, six manufacturers' championships and 11 Indianapolis 500 victories from 2004-2016.

From 2006-2011, Honda served as single engine supplier to the IndyCar Series. Through six years as the single engine supplier, 98 different drivers completed 1,188,376 miles of practice, qualifying and racing with only six race-day engine failures. No race-day failures were reported for the entire 2008, 2010 and 2011 race seasons. For the same period, Honda powered the entire 33-car starting field at the Indianapolis 500. And for six years in a row – and the only six times in Indy 500 history – there was not a single engine-related retirement in the event.

In 2012, manufacturer competition returned to IndyCar, along with the introduction of 2.2-liter, V6 turbocharged engines. Dario Franchitti joined the exclusive ranks of three-time Indy winners and gave Honda its ninth consecutive '500' triumph that year.

A major milestone was reached in 2013, when Honda recorded its 200th Indy car race victory with Ganassi Racing's 1-2-3 sweep at Pocono Raceway, led by Scott Dixon and teammates Charlie Kimball and Franchitti. Dixon went on to win the 2013 IndyCar Series championship, the ninth Indy car championship for a Honda-powered driver.

HPD's sports car racing efforts, meanwhile, have resulted in more than 60 race victories and multiple manufacturers' and drivers' championships in multiple series, including the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship and Pirelli World Challenge.

The company's sports-car racing debut in 2007 at the 12 Hours of Sebring marked the first win for HPD's LM-V8 engine and the first for a Honda racing engine designed and developed outside of Japan. HPD won the LMP2 title in the inaugural 2012 World Endurance Championship and has twice won the LMP2 category at the 24 Hours of Le Mans since 2010.

In 2013, HPD and Honda again swept the LMP1 and LMP2 manufacturers', engine, team and drivers' championships in the American Le Mans Series; while HPD-equipped Strakka Racing claimed the LMP1 class win at the 24 Hours of Le Mans for private team entries.

In January 2016, HPD claimed its first-ever victory in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship's Rolex 24 at Daytona International Speedway, partnered with the Extreme Speed Motorsports team. Additional race wins at Sebring, with ESM, and with Michael Shank Racing at the season-ending Petit Le Mans secured the North American Endurance Championship for Honda.

In 2009, HPD announced a new Grassroots Motorsports initiative, introducing a new engine for the popular Formula F category; expanding Honda support for karting, quarter midget, NASA and SCCA Club Racing; developing the Honda Fit for the popular new B-Spec category; and entering off-road and rally competition. HPD continues to explore additional ways to assist amateur and entry-level professional racers in achieving their motorsports goals.

HPD's latest pinnacle-level racing program marks the return of Acura, American Honda's premium brand, to motorsports in the IMSA WeatherTech SportsCar Championship and Pirelli World Challenge.

After two seasons, and three race victories, for the Acura TLX GT in Pirelli World Challenge competition, HPD and Acura Motorsports will introduce the Acura NSX GT3 in 2017. Together with partner teams Michael Shank Racing and RealTime Racing, the Acura NSX GT3 will be racing against other manufacturer-supported teams from Aston-Martin, Audi, Cadillac, Bentley, Ferrari, Lamborghini, Lexus, McLaren, Mercedes-Benz and Porsche this season.

Today, HPD operates out of a multi-level, 123,000-square-foot Research & Development facility in the northern Los Angeles suburb of Santa Clarita, California. HPD's headquarters includes engine design facilities; comprehensive engine R&D operations; prototype and production parts manufacturing; race-engine preparation and rebuilding areas; a material analysis laboratory; quality-control inspection areas; five engine dynamometer test cells; a machine shop; an electronics lab; a parts center; administrative offices and multiple meeting/conference rooms.

After joining the company as its first associate and General Manager in 1993, Robert Clarke served as president of Honda Performance Development from 2005-2007. Previously, HPD was headed by Thomas Elliott (1993-2002) and Yasuhiro Wada (2003-2004). From 2008-2012, Erik Berkman, one of Honda R&D Americas' most experienced project leaders, served as HPD president, while simultaneously serving as Vice President of Corporate Planning and Logistics for parent company American Honda Motor Co., Inc.

In 2012, Art St. Cyr, chief engineer for automobile development at Honda R&D, took over as HPD President. St. Cyr is assisted by a senior management team including Steve Eriksen, Vice President and Chief Operating Officer; Marc Sours, Chief Engineer; Tom Reichenbach, Senior Manager, Technical Division; and Race Team Leader Allen Miller.

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