



Ross Bentley Biography

Although Ross knew at the age of 5 that he really wanted to be a race driver, he also considered a career as a pro tennis player during his teen years. But after finding that he could not afford to spend the time practicing and training that most of his competitors could, he made the logical decision: "If I can't afford to play tennis at the highest level, then I better follow my first love and go racing!"

"My life has always revolved around driving and cars," declares Ross, professional racecar driver, driving instructor/coach, author, traffic safety spokesperson, entrepreneur and business coach. Combined, he has over 30 racing seasons and 25 years of driver training experience to become one of North America's foremost authorities on the art of driving.

Growing up in the Vancouver, Canada area, he raced at Pacific Raceway (then, SIR), Portland and the old Westwood circuits, moving from Formula Ford to Formula Atlantic, from Trans-Am to GT cars. He ultimately competed on the CART Indy car circuit in the early to mid-90s, racing against the likes of Mario and Michael Andretti, Bobby Rahal, Rick Mears, Al Unser Jr., Nigel Mansell, Emerson Fittipaldi, and Paul Tracy. Though he did not achieve his ultimate goal of winning in Indy cars while driving for the under-funded Dale Coyne Racing team, it did open up opportunities for him to move into the sports car racing world.

In 1994, Ross drove the first Ferrari 333SP in the 1994 IMSA series - and has the gold prancing horse pin to prove it! From 1995 to 2001, Ross competed in the IMSA, USRRC, ALMS, and Grand-Am series on a full-time basis, developing a

reputation as one of the top sports car drivers. In 1998, driving an M3 for the PTG BMW Team, Ross won the United States Road Racing Championship (forerunner of the current Grand-Am series).

Because he was busy developing his Speed Secrets Driver Development company by 2002, Ross competed on a part-time basis. But, in 2003, along with his Team Seattle teammates, Don Kitch and Joe and Justin Pruskowski, he won the Rolex 24-Hour Race of Daytona.

In 2005, Ross co-drove, coached and mentored “Team 16” in a history-making drive at the Daytona 24-Hour race. Ross’ teammates were all 16 years-old – the youngest competitors ever at Daytona. None of them had ever driven anything but an open-wheel car nor competed in a race longer than 40 minutes. Following Ross’ example, they drove a flawless race, and surprised many veterans with their performance. Today, these three drivers are capitalizing on what they learned: Adrian Carrio won the 2006 North American Formula Mazda Championship, Brad Coleman has won ARCA races and currently drives in the NASCAR Busch series for Joe Gibbs Racing, and Colin Braun, after being the youngest driver to ever win a professional road race in North America, is being groomed for a long career in NASCAR.

In 2008, Ross returned to tackle the Daytona 24-Hour race once again with Team Seattle, raising funds and awareness for the Seattle Children’s Hospital. This year Ross was again at the 24 – this time with Bullet Racing’s Porsche effort. Later this year, Ross will travel to France to compete at Le Mans – again with Team Seattle as they make their first attempt at this legendary event.

A self-proclaimed “learning junkie,” Ross has used his addiction to learning to study sports psychology, human performance, learning strategies, educational kinesiology, business, and coaching. And he’s used these disciplines himself and with others he has coached. His strength is in bringing out the best performance in people and teams in their sports, businesses or personal lives.

"In addition to racing, I get the biggest thrill from helping others learn to be better drivers, and to perform better in whatever it is they choose," says Ross. He has taught thousands of drivers to improve their skills and attitudes through his books, articles, driving schools and personal coaching. His driver training goals are to make the public roads a safer place to drive, help people learn to enjoy driving more, and to find and coach future racing champions.

In the course of any given week, he might be training instructors to teach new teen drivers, coaching an amateur or elite-level professional race driver, developing a training program for police officers, conducting a seminar on enhancing mental performance, or all of the above. His love of driving is perfectly matched with his passion for training, and he draws upon both to inspire people to achieve the satisfaction of peak performance.

Ross is currently one of the most sought-after and respected race and performance driver coaches in North America, if not the world. He expands traditional instructional methods by focussing on what is really driving the car... the driver's mind.

Ross' unique approach to coaching race drivers was highlighted in a Discovery Channel International documentary in 2005. When the producers of the show went looking for the top driver coaches in the world, they found two: Ross and Dr. Kerry Spackman, a neuroscientist working with the McLaren Formula 1 team. Both Spackman (who is partially responsible for Lewis Hamilton's success) and Ross' approaches to training drivers were noted to be surprisingly similar, in spite of their different backgrounds.

Ross coaches drivers of all ages, types of cars, and levels of the sport. He's worked with 8 year-olds in karting, amateur racers in their 60's, autocrossers, Indy 500 winners, flat track motorcycle racers, and top fuel drag racers. In addition to the U.S. and Canada, he has coached in Australia, England and Korea. His protégé, Colin Braun, (who he has been coaching in and out of the race car since Colin was 13), was recently signed to a long-term contract to drive for Roush Fenway Racing in NASCAR.

Ross has literally written the book on driving. He put his experience and knowledge of racing and human performance into the Speed Secrets books. Speed Secrets 1 through 6 represent the best-selling race driving technique books and his *Bob Bondurant on Kart Racing* is popular in the karting world. Additionally, Ross wrote an award-winning "Driving with Finesse" column on driving safety and technique in the *Vancouver Province*, British Columbia's most-read newspaper and his safe driving manuals have been used by the Justice Institute of B.C., BMW, Michelin, and a variety of other companies and organizations. He continues to write articles for numerous magazines, newsletters and websites.

From 1999 to 2006 Ross had the opportunity to drive and test the very latest offerings from BMW and other manufacturers. He was contracted by BMW North America to be the on-camera-expert, providing driving, evaluation and vehicle comparisons for BMW's internal satellite television network (used for sales training and customer comparisons).

Ross is at home in the technical world, as well. He was the Technical Advisor to Imago Systems Inc, providing driver training technical information for the design of a new computer driving simulator to be used by driving schools and government driver testing agencies. He currently consults on the training aspects for the Virtual GT racing simulator. Ross is also experienced in race car engineering and design, particularly shock absorber development and data acquisition.

While Ross has driven 230 MPH in an Indy car at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, he is also committed to helping teens and other drivers to learn to respect their limits. And so, Ross has now applied his passion to new teen drivers, and to organizations' employees who drive as part of their job. He co-founded SWERVE Driver Training and SWERVE Fleet Training to provide these services in the Washington market and beyond.

His passion for coaching has moved to encompass performance management in the workplace. Ross' particular strength is in bringing the best out of people and he's now using that ability to coach business owners, executives, and business teams.

That, in addition to coaching race and performance drivers, consulting to SWERVE Driver Training, driving race cars, writing books, feeding his curiosity about learning and spending time with his wife and daughter make for a rich and busy life! One thing is for sure: As his past has demonstrated, there is *no limit* to what Ross can and will be doing in the future.