Woman in Le Mans world

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

When the 165 drivers entered to take part in this yearâ€™s Le Mans 24 Hours line-up in the town center for the traditional driversâ€™ parade this Friday, one will perhaps stand out more than the rest. Liz Halliday For the second consecutive year, 28-year old UK-based Californian Liz Halliday will be the sole female representative on the grid for the round-the-clock endurance race as she takes the fight to her male rivals driving an LMP2 Courage LC75 for French team Del Bello Racing.Despite an increase over recent seasonsâ€™ in the amount of women involved in motorsport, dual-sportswoman Halliday, who combines her career as a racing driver with that of an equestrian three-day eventer, continues to fly the flag for women in endurance sports car racing and at Le Mans.â€œI feel really privileged to be able to do Le Mans three years runningâ€• she said. â€œIts always been a special race for me and my family and it has such a long, illustrious history behind it. The whole week is just incredible and I donâ€™t think there is another motor race on the planet that can compare with it right now. This really is the big one and it is definitely the highlight of my year.â€•Halliday plays down the importance of her role as the single female on the grid however. â€œI guess itâ€™s cool to be the only woman in the race, but when I am out on track I never think of myself like that. Itâ€™s not a case of me being a woman racing against the men. Iâ€™m just another racing driver when Iâ€™m out there and try to go about my job as professionally as possible. However, if people want to portray me as representing women drivers at Le Mans, then so be it, and I hope to do a really good job.â€• When it comes to the lack of women racing, not just at Le Mans, but in sports cars in general Halliday isnâ€™t too sure as to the reason why, but believes experience is certainly a factor.â€œYeah I think experience is a big factor at Le Mans. Teams sometimes tend to look for drivers who have driven the race before, so I think the fact that this will be my third consecutive time here certainly helps. I donâ€™t think thereâ€™s one definitive reason why there arenâ€™t any other women racing here though. I guess maybe part of it is the lack of women in sports car racing in general at the moment. Maybe in the future more women will start to look at sports cars as a way of advancing their careers in the sport, but for the time being Iâ€™m happy where I am because I love this type of racing.â€•The big question is will 2007 see Liz move closer to achieving her lofty career goals in her chosen sporting disciplines. On the equestrian front she has her sights on the US Olympic equestrian team in 2012 and is pursuing a programme of events in the hope of achieving that ambition. In the shorter term however, becoming the first woman to win the Le Mans 24 Hours is also on the agenda. Having signed with Del Bello Racing in the wide open LMP2 class this year, that dream could become a reality. Alongside Russian GP2 driver Vitaly Petrov and Frenchman Romain Iannetta and with a competitive Courage / AER / Michelin package, whoâ€™s to say that dream wonâ€™t become a reality?