



Blogspot: Rick Yoon, Driving Am-Bition

- **KCMG driver shines a light on how he started racing**
- **Physical fitness and conditioning highlighted**
- **Yoon: “This is the best thing I’ve ever done”**

The term ‘driving ambition’ might be an over-used term but it applies so perfectly to Hong Kong-based Korean businessman Rick Yoon that it’s impossible to avoid. Audi R8 LMS Cup driver Yoon is the personification of the ideal amateur racing driver; applying the same passion, dedication and systematic approach to his chosen sport that has made him so successful in the world of finance.

But Yoon did not spend his youth glued to the TV watching his racing heroes in action and dreaming of the day he could take to the race track. Instead, and unusually, Yoon was bitten by the racing bug later in life and quite by accident. “I was never much interested in cars,” he explains. “But I *am* very competitive. Most of the sports that I do, I do quite OK in.”

Just two years ago, Yoon bought a supercar and, realising it was more than a little hot to handle, was encouraged to take an advanced driving course in the road car to learn to tame the beast.

“I was enjoying it,” says Yoon. “As you get older, it’s difficult to find something you enjoy so when you find it, you just have to go for it. I wanted to feel the difference of a race car, so then I went to Italy for three days. That was my first time sitting in a race car. I had a decent performance and then I got my racing license. That was June 2015, and I’d bought the car in February so it was a pretty sped up process. I had my first race in July 2015 in Shanghai, and the second race was in Sepang, Malaysia that August. After I tried the Audi R8 LMS GT3, I was completely hooked.”

Yoon did two races in the new GT3 in 2016, at Chinese Taipei’s Penbay International Circuit and at the Shanghai International Circuit, and returns to the Cup for a full season in 2017.

“Motorsport is very new to me, but it’s the best passion that I’ve ever had apart from my job,” he says. “I just enjoy every aspect of it. It’s not just about the rush of the top speed, which is what most people ask me about. You know, “how fast have you ever gone?” It depends on the corner. It can be really scary at 60 kph on a corner!”

“I like the overall aspects of the sport: taking the risks, being in control. You need to be physically fit so I started to exercise again. I thought my physical peak was at 22, and I worked out quite a lot until I was 24. After that I was basically using whatever I’d built up. When I was turning 38, I took up this sport and realised it was physically demanding, so I started working out again. I lost 5kg from my peak, so everything seems to be working out for me. This year I’m turning 40, so it’s keeping me energetic and passionate.”

The Audi R8 LMS Cup now has four expert service partners: Absolute Racing; KC Motor Group (KCMG); Phoenix Racing Asia and WRT. Each of these provide





comprehensive race packages essential for businessmen such as Yoon who need to maximise every moment of their time.

“Service partners are an essential part of this hobby. Without the team’s support and help there’s no way I could do this. The arrive and drive package for amateur drivers is great. You don’t really need to think about anything. The teams are professional and they know what they’re doing. They prepare the car so you have trust in it. When you’re driving the car at 240 kph, you’d better make sure the car is in good shape. This season my team, KCMG, is doing a great job.”

“Already in this short period of time, I’ve had an exciting career. I’ve been through quite a bit of drama, but the importance of a technically very strong team and mechanics cannot be overstated. They’re hard working and stay in the pit for however long it takes to fix a problem. That level of dedication is really appreciated by the drivers. Without their help, there’s no race. That’s a really essential part. Finding a good team and finding good partners, having professional drivers around you, that is a really big benefit as a sportsman.”

Sharing the track with the likes of former Formula One driver and three-time Cup champion Alex Yoong is an added bonus for amateur drivers, and Yoon makes an interesting point about the advantages of data sharing, a key component of the Cup: “As a sportsman, I’m an amateur but I have big aspirations. It’s important to know the benchmark. Pro drivers sharing their data within the team gives you confidence of what the car can do. You can see where you are and know what the car can do, so you can push without too much concern. That helps me develop my skill set and driving skills. That’s very important.”

Now an impassioned ambassador for motorsport and the Cup, Yoon is keen to share his new-found passion with his friends. He is hoping the sport can be made more widely accessible in Asia in order for it to really take off.

“After I got into this hobby, I was looking for friends. I was recommending it to all my friends that this is the best thing I’ve ever done and it’s really exciting. There are still obstacles for motorsport to boom in Asia, like the lack of a proper training programme. There’s no systematic way of getting into this hobby. There are a lot of people interested but they don’t know where to start or how to start.”

Audi sport customer racing Asia is already busily addressing this issue, with plans under development to increase the opportunities for would-be drivers to gain the necessary skills and experience to eventually join the Cup.

Yoon, meanwhile, has definitely set the bar high in terms of his progression from ordinary motorist to racing driver in the region’s most competitive one-make championship in such a short time. His passion for motorsport is palpable and he exudes determination from every pore. Yoon is the epitome of a genuine sportsman and leaves no doubt that he is truly a man driven by ambition.

