Transkript Interview Louis Delétraz

[Louis] 17:31:02

Hi, David. Oh, I can't hear you.

[Louis] 17:31:08

Yeah, yeah.

[David Ghirardi] 17:31:08

Alright, now? Okay, great, I was muted on my... That's it. You know, granted... worked out. I'm really happy.

[Louis] 17:31:16

Yeah. Thanks for being flexible. How are you?

[David Ghirardi] 17:31:21

Yeah, it's... it's okay, bud. How are you?

[Louis] 17:31:25

Good as well, thank you. So, where are you from? Yeah, from the survey part, right?

[David Ghirardi] 17:31:27

I'm from Switzerland I'm from Zurich.

[David Ghirardi] 17:31:31

Sorry? Yeah, from Cirque.

[Louis] 17:31:33

From the Swiss-German part. Okay, nice, nice, nice. And you go to uni, to school there? To uni?

[David Ghirardi] 17:31:39

Uh, yes, at the gymnasium at high school. Yeah. Um, is it okay for you if I record the... Meeting? Okay, and I'm gonna make a transcript, because let me, uh... for later.

[Louis] 17:31:43

Okay, high school, nice. Cool.

[Louis] 17:31:50

Yeah, sure. Sure, sure.

[Louis] 17:31:57

Yeah, that's fine, no problem.

[David Ghirardi] 17:31:59

Great. Okay, thank you. Um... I'm just gonna start, I said, okay, I'm... Probably the first summer, I could ask you some personal questions, and then maybe, like, more, like, race... With the racing, strategy, whatever, like this.

[Louis] 17:32:06

Yeah.

[Louis] 17:32:13

Yep. Sure.

[David Ghirardi] 17:32:14

Um, my first question would be, uh, how did you get into racing, and how did your career go, like.

[David Ghirardi] 17:32:22

How did you find your way into, like. The Le Mans race.

[Louis] 17:32:27

So I... I grew up... In motorsport, because my father was racing.

[Louis] 17:32:32

So, um, when I was, uh, 2 years old or something, I ended up at the racetrack with my mom and my dad, so yeah, I guess you... without realizing, you start liking things like this, you know, the smell, the cars, the...

[Louis] 17:32:46

The passion starts young. Um, and my dad didn't really necessarily want me to race, but I liked it when I was, like, 10 years old, I said I would like to do karting, and... Then I did carding, went not too bad, and we continued, and he supported me, so that's how I got into it, and went throughout the ladder, so...

[Louis] 17:33:05

Having a family member was a big help.

[David Ghirardi] 17:33:05

Okay. So, my next question would be, like, what's your family's view of your job, so... Maybe that's really an answer, or would you like to say something more, or... Like...

[Louis] 17:33:16

Yeah.

[Louis] 17:33:21

Well, I think I pretty much answered me. My dad was racing and doing some side jobs with the real estate.

[Louis] 17:33:28

Um, and, uh, I think he's... His goal, his... goal would be for me to be professional into race car.

[Louis] 17:33:35

If I can, um, and it worked out, so I think, yeah, he's happy. And my mom was also always with with me following and bringing me to the tracks, as I didn't have a driving license.

[David Ghirardi] 17:33:46

Oh, okay. And do you have, like, siblings, or...? We have only changed? Oh, okay.

[Louis] 17:33:51

No, I'm an only child.

[David Ghirardi] 17:33:54

And maybe, what's your personal, like, biggest success that you think, whoa, that's really... Now, you... I realized, Paul, I did it, or...

[Louis] 17:34:06

I think... For me, it was quite hard to, you know, the dream was Formula 1, and, um, it was... quite hard to say, okay, I will not go to Formula 1, because there's politics and money involved.

[Louis] 17:34:19

But I always loved endurance racing, so the fact that now I think.

[Louis] 17:34:23

I made it professionally into endurance racing. I work with a manufacturer.

[Louis] 17:34:28

Is, uh, on the big picture, uh, an achievement that I'm very proud of.

[Louis] 17:34:32

Uh, in terms of racing, I think, uh... the last few years, winning so many races in LMP2, so many championships with the WEC, the LMS, And the IMSA is the big tree.

[Louis] 17:34:46

Some very happy of that, and hopefully we can add more.

[Louis] 17:34:50

The best race, I would say, was Sebring for me last year.

[Louis] 17:34:54

The 12 hours of Sebring with, uh, which we want with Akura, uh, the last fight at night was probably my biggest win in my career, so I'm big, uh... good memories.

[David Ghirardi] 17:35:05

Great. And maybe you said you... would have... would like to have made it to Formula 1, so my next question would be, like, do you have some personal goals, or that you want to achieve, or... Did you have some, and do you have chiefted it now, or...?

[Louis] 17:35:21

I think goals always evolves. Um, if you want to be the best in your sport, you always have to aim for more.

[Louis] 17:35:28

So, for sure, I had a dream of Formula 1, I had a super license, didn't work out, because, yeah, it's true, there's only 20 seats.

[Louis] 17:35:37

And there's many good drivers, so... and then there's also the money side of things, which is always complicated in sports.

[Louis] 17:35:42

So, that's it, but I don't... I mean... Of course, I would have loved to, but I don't regret. I love endurance racing. I would say my next big goals now would be to to win, um, the... in the overall category in IMSA?

[Louis] 17:35:57

Uh, okay, this year's... Started by Lee, but, you know, never know. I have still time in my career.

[Louis] 17:36:02

And, uh, win the big ones, Le Mans 24 hours, uh, 24 Hours of Daytona, and Yeah, those, uh, those iconic races... to put them on my Palmeras.

[David Ghirardi] 17:36:12

Okay.

[Louis] 17:36:14

We do the next goals.

[David Ghirardi] 17:36:16

Um, I would now ask if maybe something like, uh... the race, maybe, like, Le Moore specific, or generally just racing, um... Maybe what's the biggest challenge during the race, and maybe, like.

[Louis] 17:36:25

Mm-hmm.

[David Ghirardi] 17:36:31

Maybe the race week before, or do you watch, like, your... If you're what you eat, something like this.

[Louis] 17:36:38

I think the biggest challenge of Le Mans is it's, like, every 24 hour... Race is making it to the end.

[Louis] 17:36:47

It's long, it's tiring, physically and mentally. Uh, drivers cannot make any mistakes.

[Louis] 17:36:53

So, in any condition, it's daylight, hot, and then night and cold, and it can be rainy, and how the truck could be wet, the other part could be dry.

[Louis] 17:37:02

So it's not anymore about ultimate lifetime, it's about endurance racing, where stay alive, be fast, no mistakes, and... We always say, let's try to make it to the morning without any scratches, and then you should be in a good position.

[David Ghirardi] 17:37:16

Okay.

[Louis] 17:37:16

I think that's... that's it. In terms of preparation, we always do simulator, and I'm someone pretty simple with food, I just try to stay healthy, get my sleep.

[Louis] 17:37:27

And just get some chicken and pasta, and I think that's the best for a driver.

[David Ghirardi] 17:37:33

Great. And maybe, like, the... more, like, mindset... Like, what mindset do you have before the race, and while you're behind the wheel?

[David Ghirardi] 17:37:43

What do you think about, and maybe...

[Louis] 17:37:45

I'm someone who's very calm in general, but I want to win, so the whole preparation, the whole week.

[Louis] 17:37:52

The mindset is, let's make a fast race car. Let's build the atmosphere around We want to carve them as fast in the race, not in qualifying.

[Louis] 17:38:02

Uh... we want to have the best understanding in the team between the mechanics, the engineers, the drivers, to make sure there is no misunderstanding, and we can operate operate well, and again, mistakes from drivers happens, but also mistakes from teams, so...

[Louis] 17:38:16

I want to have zero regret that I... did not miss something, and uh... And that's, I think, the way you should approach them. Cover every single detail, and be as prepared as possible, because if something happens, often it's probably your fault.

[David Ghirardi] 17:38:34

And maybe if something would happen, like, how do you calm down, or, like, say.

[David Ghirardi] 17:38:40

Okay, it happened, and... Like, just... I don't know how to say, like, just finish, uh, finish with the... Oh, I don't know the word in German... in English.

[Louis] 17:38:46

Yeah, not panic.

[Louis] 17:38:52

Yeah, not panic and finish the job, yeah. I understand, I understand.

[Louis] 17:38:58

Um, I think... that's probably one of the... of my... Qualities is, like, again, I say, pretty calm.

[Louis] 17:39:06

Uh, you should not overreact, especially when you're in the car, it's easy to lose your mind.

[Louis] 17:39:12

Um... If you... if you're on slicks and it's raining.

[Louis] 17:39:16

There's nothing you can do except survive and go back to the pit. You're gonna lose a minute, a minute and a half is gonna be painful.

[Louis] 17:39:22

But just focus on what's happening now, just... look ahead, what's happened, you cannot catch up. The biggest mistake you can do is by... Oh, I lost 5 seconds before, I will try to catch up. There is no catch-up 5 seconds. We're always on the limit.

[Louis] 17:39:36

And if you go above the limit, you crash. So, I think you... My uptake is, I made a mistake, happens to everyone, I... let's put it behind and keep doing my job, keep hitting my marks.

[Louis] 17:39:50

Stay focused, and especially not... don't start thinking in the car with 12 hours to go, oh, uh, maybe we're close to the wind, maybe not, you never know with all the safety cars, and... Where?

[David Ghirardi] 17:40:03

Um... when you're... during the race, when you're not driving, what do you do? Do you sleep, or...?

[Louis] 17:40:13

I sleep. It's very important to sleep. I basically... my rhythm... During Le Mans, there is no morning, no evening, no breakfast, it's like... The race starts, and you know, the race starts at 4pm, but... We are options 8, so it's not 24, it's, like, 36 hours, the race.

[Louis] 17:40:30

For everyone. Um... I go in the car. I jump out of the car, go straight to the hospitality, get food.

[Louis] 17:40:36

Usually chicken and pasta. And, um, straight after food, I go to the motor room, get a shower.

[Louis] 17:40:43

And in bed, sleep as much as I can. Usually, you get maybe two and a half hours of sleep, if you're lucky.

[Louis] 17:40:49

3 hours, so try to get them early. If it's 4PM and you have to sleep, you sleep at 4pm, and uh... Not easy to do, but that's... the best way to end up fresh.

[Louis] 17:40:59

Because you have to think, when you wake up in the morning at 8, And there's still, like.

[Louis] 17:41:06

Times over 8 hours of racing left. Yeah, 8 hours of racing left, which is super long.

[Louis] 17:41:12

And often that's where people are tired and make mistakes, so I just want sleep, sleep, sleep.

[David Ghirardi] 17:41:18

And... I mean, sleep is very important for you, and how do you manage if you have a races, how do you manage with the chat lag? Maybe if you have, like.

[David Ghirardi] 17:41:26

A few races at once, so they're just, like... really near together.

[Louis] 17:41:31

Yeah, it's, it's, uh, for sure a lot of management in... I would say in Le Mans you want to sleep, and it's not always easy with the noise and... And I... I always hope And try to be in teams and lineup we trust.

[Louis] 17:41:46

And for me, when I go out of the car, I switch off the TV, and I try not to follow the race. It's very difficult to do wheels.

[Louis] 17:41:52

Keep an eye on timing, but it's... You have to disconnect, otherwise you don't sleep.

[Louis] 17:41:57

Um, jet lag, I mean, Le Mans, same time zone for me, so there's no issue, but when I go to America.

[Louis] 17:42:03

I always try a few days before the race to... offset myself, eat at the times I would eat in America.

[Louis] 17:42:09

And in the plane, also sleep at a time that... the 90s on arrival, you know?

[David Ghirardi] 17:42:14

Okay.

[Louis] 17:42:15

Uh, trying to get a day or two ahead of it.

[Louis] 17:42:18

And, uh, the same on the way back, if I have to.

[Louis] 17:42:21

To readapt quicker.

[David Ghirardi] 17:42:24

And, uh, do you have a preferred stint time, maybe, like, when you drive, like, more in the evening?

[David Ghirardi] 17:42:30

Or night, maybe.

[Louis] 17:42:31

I really enjoyed the night. I think it's peaceful, um... you really get into a tunnel vision kind of mode.

[Louis] 17:42:39

The traffic is much easier, because, I mean, you see the headlights, so you can plan, I think.

[Louis] 17:42:44

Uh, better, also the track is... if it's dry, it's fast, so it's, um, it's a nice time.

[Louis] 17:42:51

Of the... of the race. Also, early morning, when the sun comes, it's, you know, at 5, 6 AM, you're tired, and you don't really want to be here anymore.

[Louis] 17:43:01

But, um, when the sun comes out, it gives everyone some hope.

[Louis] 17:43:06

But Andy's clothes.

[David Ghirardi] 17:43:08

Yeah, I think that's really beautiful. Yeah. And... with your team, are you involved, like, in the strategy, or how much, and what do you decide, or what does the team decide, and...

[Louis] 17:43:22

I think it's a mix of, for sure, the team is much bigger decisions, uh, on strategy.

[Louis] 17:43:27

But, um... drivers, like, I've been around quite a bit now, uh, you understand when you're in a car what's happening, and in the end.

[Louis] 17:43:35

They need to make decision based on the feedback we have on track, so, like.

[Louis] 17:43:40

Decisions on tires, and what to do, the driver, like, I will have a big impact.

[Louis] 17:43:44

Uh, but then the decision if there's a safety guard to pit or not is on the team and strategist. We have dedicated strategist Uh, for the race, and if they have a doubt, they will ask us questions. Like, I always tell them, I'm sleeping, but my phone is on if there's an emergency, like, I'm always happy to talk and give my opinion.

[Louis] 17:44:02

I just think as a driver, you should not be the one making the decision, because you don't always have all the vision.

[David Ghirardi] 17:44:07

Okay. Mm-hmm. And Barry, maybe, like. Mad at the team that they made, like, a decision that you didn't want, or do you think that impacts your performance, or...?

[Louis] 17:44:21

It happens that, you know, not necessarily mad, but you can be frustrated. Sometimes you're racing, and you don't always make the right decision Um, I would say... I can be mad if, you know.

[Louis] 17:44:34

Stuff doesn't make sense? But I think I'm surrounded by great people, and it doesn't happen often, those situations.

[Louis] 17:44:41

If you make a mistake, because you could not know when the safety car will come out, this is pure luck Uh, there is no point to be mad. You have to suck it up, and everyone tries its best.

[Louis] 17:44:51

And one day you win, one day you don't, and if you're... You don't accept to lose, then you should not to a sport, because it's impossible to win all the time. So, I try to be calm, sometimes it's heated, and on the radio you get mad, but, uh, you know, we're not the same people from in the car to out the car.

[David Ghirardi] 17:45:07

Yeah. Um, and what's your relationship, like, with your... you're always in the team, and with the mechanics, and what relationship do you have with them?

[Louis] 17:45:18

Uh, usually a very good relationship, I think, without the mechanics and engineer, we're nothing.

[Louis] 17:45:23

So, uh, it's very important that, uh. I mean, to work with people and enjoy it. If you don't enjoy it, it's a long time than people you don't like, so... I'm lucky, I have very good people around me, and I try to share, we try to go for dinners, and, you know, sometimes have a beer together after an event is always, uh...

[Louis] 17:45:41

Important. And, uh, yeah, my goal is always to try to build a team around us drivers, and then you're much more powerful, because if there's trust, you go further ahead.

[David Ghirardi] 17:45:53

Okay. And... Is there something special, maybe, with the 24 Hours of Le Mans? Is there, like, special preparation in the team, or, like.

[David Ghirardi] 17:46:06

What you do is prepare especially for the race, or...

[Louis] 17:46:11

On my side, I mean, for sure, it's a huge event, so Le Mans a long track, 13 and something kilometers.

[Louis] 17:46:18

Weight is important, so I always try to... a month and a half before the race, I cycle more, I'm careful more with food. I'm light in general, but if you can gain a 2 kilo or two, it's for free So I try to lose some weight.

[Louis] 17:46:32

Um... in terms of the team, yes, it's the biggest race of the year, so we go next week now, in two days to Spa.

[Louis] 17:46:39

To shake down the car, it's a brand new car, not brand new, but not new parts on it.

[Louis] 17:46:46

Um... I mean, try to prepare the event, do some setup work before, to be as ready as possible when we arrive at Le Mans.

[Louis] 17:46:54

And I mean, you know, the mechanics and engineers are almost there a week before the prologue.

[Louis] 17:46:59

Which is crazy, but it's such a long event, and... You have to build up into it, so the preparation is... is... I would say much, much bigger than the other events.

[David Ghirardi] 17:47:10

And you mentioned, like, you... the health aspect with the 2 kilograms, and uh... maybe we sometimes think... Mmm, maybe racing isn't that good for my body, or is it, like.

[David Ghirardi] 17:47:26

Does it do something, or...?

[Louis] 17:47:27

I think it's okay, it's a tough sport because we lose a lot of weight when we're in the car, it's hot. We can lose 2 to 3 kilos a stent.

[Louis] 17:47:35

Um, but it's mostly water, and you need to hydrate and just be ready for this.

[Louis] 17:47:39

But I don't think, you know, we don't have to push our body as much as someone who's doing Tour de France or marathons.

[Louis] 17:47:45

For me, those people are crazy. With a lot of respect, I say crazy, but uh... that cannot be good for the body to be... running so long and so fast, I don't know how... and every day.

[Louis] 17:47:57

We have a sport which is physical, it's complete, but it's... we don't need to be insane.

[Louis] 17:48:03

Put it this way. So, I don't think it has a bad... influence on the body, I do think sometimes on the lower back, it can be painful because of all the bumps and the hits.

[Louis] 17:48:13

Uh, but it's not unhealthy, I'm not worried about this. I train to be fit to race, and not suffer in the car. I don't want my performance to be impacted by my physical.

[David Ghirardi] 17:48:25

Um... For you, how important is, like, the... I mean, the qualifying is pretty important, but, like.

[David Ghirardi] 17:48:32

You are a free people, and how do you decide who drives when, maybe, like, the free practices also, and... how important is it to you?

[Louis] 17:48:41

For breakfast, we always try to share accordingly, and uh... and if there's someone who's struggling a bit more happens, you try to give him more track time, but... I mean, that's the normal... try to find a compromise. Quality, in Le Mans, I've always been doing it since 2021. It's a track I like a lot. I've always been fast there, so somehow I always end up qualifying.

[Louis] 17:49:01

But honestly, I don't care. For sure, it's nice to put it on pole position.

[Louis] 17:49:05

Um, but it doesn't matter for the race, so I always focus on the race car, and then if you're fasting quality, great. It's bonus, and it's fun to... to pushing quality there, without traffic.

[David Ghirardi] 17:49:15

Okay, um, great, and... The... my next question would be, like, more to, like, again, to you, and maybe, like, what do you do in the off-season, and... Spend time with your family, or

[Louis] 17:49:29

The off-season is pretty short, because Daytona is in January, and then I do Asia and Le Mans in December, so there is... Not much time in between, but let's say that when I'm home every two weeks.

[Louis] 17:49:40

Uh, I try to see my friends from school that I was at, because those are my friends from a long time, see family, catch up.

[Louis] 17:49:47

And train, off-season it's time to train to... Yeah, go cycling as much as I can, and... hikes and whatever other sports I can go to the gym and all of that.

[David Ghirardi] 17:49:57

And while the season is on, like. How do you find time to spend... time with your family and friends, and...

[Louis] 17:50:06

I think it's 230, 40 days a year traveling, so it's a lot.

[Louis] 17:50:12

Uh, but yeah, what I'm basically... when I'm back, I have not much to do uphold trains. That's the great thing about or jobs is, um... When we were home, we're home. And, uh, that frees up time to make things. Not easy to make it work, because people are working on the week, and sometimes we're not

[Louis] 17:50:28

But, uh, yeah, you just... just adapt to a different schedule, talk with people, need to plan a bit ahead, basically, but it's not a... not, uh, too hard.

[David Ghirardi] 17:50:40

Um, I think... That's it, I have one last question, like, what advice would you give to, like, a wrong young racing driver that's just the beginning of... the career.

[Louis] 17:50:53

Um... well, I think you should... you should never give up. It's a tough sport. There's, uh, 80% of shit moments in motorsport, and 20% of good ones.

[Louis] 17:51:01

And that's a big number, 20%. So, uh, yeah, there will be rough times, but just keep it... keep it down, trust yourself, and if you're fast, eventually it will turn out good, so... So yeah, don't give up.

[Louis] 17:51:15

And, uh, I think something to remember as well is always be nice, because you never know, it's a small ward, and... uh... when you're a bad person, it'll always catch up with you, so it's important to... Stay grounded.

[David Ghirardi] 17:51:29

I have another question, sorry. Maybe, like, did you have, when you were young, have idle, or... did get some advice from anybody that you thought it was really helpful.

[Louis] 17:51:39

Sure, I would say two drivers. One is, um, is Sebastian Vettel, because I remember very well, I... obviously, he won everything.

[Louis] 17:51:49

I really like the character of him, and I got to meet him when I was really young, I was in Formula 4.

[Louis] 17:51:55

And I was so surprised how nice he was Folder World Champion, he took time with me, he was in the padlock.

[Louis] 17:52:01

He sat down with me at a table, spoke, because we were in the same team he was 15 years ago.

[Louis] 17:52:07

And, uh, just so humble, so nice, so dedicated and passionated, so I thought that's a great role model.

[Louis] 17:52:13

But, uh, I also grew up, thanks to my dad, with Marcel Fassler.

[Louis] 17:52:18

Um, Marcia Fasser, who was... he's also Swiss, and he lives not far from you.

[Louis] 17:52:23

So, um... he won everything with Audi, he's such a great person, so fast, and I always looked up to him

[David Ghirardi] 17:52:30

Okay. Great, thank you very much for the interview.

[Louis] 17:52:35

No problem. Wish you all the best with your work. And yeah, send me a copy when you're done

[Louis] 17:54:40

Cool. Then, uh, just, uh, yeah, just text me on WhatsApp, so I have your number, too, and we talk when we're at Le Mans.

[David Ghirardi] 17:54:41

Mm-hmm. Great. Mm-hmm.

[David Ghirardi] 17:54:48

Sure, great, thank you very much again, and... I hope you have a great time.

[Louis] 17:54:51

Word. Good luck.

[Louis] 17:54:56

Thank you. Thank you

[David Ghirardi] 17:54:57

With preparing, and good luck.