Stryker Race Cars Reveals the Engineering Vision Behind Its Multi-Surface Performance Platform on EPARTRADE's Race Industry Now

Stryker Race Cars took center stage on EPARTRADE's Race Industry Now webinar series with an in-depth technical discussion titled *"The Stryker Story: From Pikes Peak to the Ultimate Rally and Off-Road Machine."* Hosted by Brad Gillie from SiriusXM, Ch. 90, Late Shift, the webinar featured Stryker Race Cars Co-Founders John Annunziata and Cole Powelson, who shared the engineering philosophy, drivetrain strategy, and motorsports experience that led to the creation of one of the most versatile high-performance vehicle platforms in modern motorsports.

Built around the idea of creating a lightweight, highly capable machine equally at home on pavement, gravel, rally stages, hill climbs, and off-road terrain, the Stryker platform represents a fusion of professional motorsports experience and advanced OEM-derived powertrain technology.

From Professional Motorsports to Building the Ultimate Driver's Machine

The webinar opened with the personal stories behind the company's formation.

John Annunziata explained that while he built a successful business career outside of motorsports, racing remained a lifelong passion. His relationship with Cole Powelson began years ago at the racetrack, where the two connected while competing and wrenching in the paddock.

Powelson, who brings more than two decades of professional motorsports experience to the company, detailed a career path that included Porsche factory training, professional race team operations in IMSA, GT3 Cup, and the American Le Mans Series, as well as the founding of Life Motorsport and Sierra Cars.

That background shaped the philosophy behind Stryker Race Cars: develop a machine capable of delivering elite-level driving dynamics across multiple motorsports disciplines while maximizing driver engagement and mechanical reliability.

"We wanted to create a vehicle that could work in all these different areas and be really competitive," explained Powelson during the webinar.

Engineering a Platform for Asphalt, Gravel, Rally and Off-Road Use

One of the most technically compelling portions of the webinar focused on Stryker's drivetrain and platform architecture.

Rather than attempting to develop a proprietary engine package from scratch, Stryker intentionally leveraged an existing high-performance OEM-derived platform already proven in some of the harshest racing environments in the world.

The vehicle utilizes a modern Rotax turbocharged 3-cylinder engine paired with a 7-speed dual-clutch transmission integrated into an advanced all-wheel-drive system.

According to Powelson, the decision was heavily driven by durability, packaging efficiency, and proven competition pedigree.

“We looked at what was already being produced at an extremely high level and asked ourselves what powertrain package was the most exciting, current, and capable,” he explained.

The drivetrain selection was backed by extensive real-world racing validation. During the webinar, Powelson noted that the same Can-Am Maverick R-derived powertrain architecture has already demonstrated winning capability in demanding environments including the Baja 1000 and King of the Hammers.

That competition-proven durability allows Stryker to operate the powertrain below its maximum stress limits, increasing long-term reliability within the company’s lightweight chassis application.

Powelson explained that many boutique vehicle manufacturers often repurpose engines never originally designed for the specific application, creating compromises in drivability, thermal management, or longevity. By contrast, Stryker’s approach was to start with a robust modern package engineered for severe-duty environments and optimize the surrounding chassis, suspension, and systems integration around it.

Dual-Purpose Dynamics with Switchable AWD Capability

A standout feature discussed during the webinar was the platform’s ability to seamlessly transition between rear-wheel-drive and all-wheel-drive operation.

With the push of a button, drivers can engage AWD functionality, allowing the car to adapt rapidly between driving environments and traction conditions.

That flexibility gives the platform a unique capability envelope rarely found in purpose-built motorsports vehicles.

Whether configured for aggressive tarmac performance, rally stages, time attack competition, hill climbs, or off-road terrain, the Stryker chassis was engineered to deliver highly communicative handling while maintaining durability under extreme loads.

The founders emphasized that the project was heavily influenced by their collective racing experiences across multiple disciplines rather than focusing on a single niche category.

Lessons from Pikes Peak and Multi-Discipline Racing

Pikes Peak International Hill Climb played a major role in shaping the company's engineering direction.

Powelson discussed how experiences in hill climb competition, endurance racing, time attack, and off-road racing all contributed to the development mindset behind Stryker Race Cars.

The team's objective was not simply to build a fast vehicle for one specific use case, but rather to engineer a platform capable of excelling in highly varied conditions while preserving driver confidence and control.

That philosophy aligns closely with the growing demand among modern performance enthusiasts for vehicles that blur traditional category boundaries.

The Stryker platform reflects that evolution, combining lightweight construction, advanced drivetrain integration, and motorsports-focused chassis development into a package designed for both professional competition and high-end enthusiast applications.

Creating a Machine That Delivers Emotion and Driver Engagement

Beyond the technical details, the webinar also highlighted the emotional side of motorsports engineering.

Powelson described the experience of driving race cars as something unmatched, but emphasized that sharing those experiences with other drivers has become equally rewarding.

"As I get older and have kids and check experiences off the bucket list, sharing that experience with other people and making them feel like heroes is incredibly rewarding," he explained.

That perspective has become a core part of the Stryker brand identity.

Rather than focusing solely on specifications or headline performance numbers, the company is prioritizing driver immersion, confidence, and adaptability across multiple forms of motorsport.

EPARTRADE Continues Showcasing Motorsport Engineering Innovation

The webinar is part of EPARTRADE's ongoing Race Industry Now webinar series, which continues to spotlight cutting-edge engineering, technology, and innovation throughout the global motorsports industry.

Hosted weekly by leading industry personalities and featuring engineers, executives, racers, and technical experts, the series has become a major platform for sharing advanced motorsports knowledge with professionals worldwide.

The Stryker Race Cars episode provided viewers with a rare behind-the-scenes look into the development philosophy and technical decision-making involved in creating a modern multi-purpose performance platform capable of competing across radically different racing environments.

For engineers, racers, fabricators, and performance enthusiasts alike, the discussion offered valuable insight into how advanced OEM powertrain technology, lightweight chassis engineering, and multi-discipline motorsports experience can converge to create a highly innovative vehicle concept.

For more information, **watch the full webinar here.**