



whisk compared to what I drive now. I now have two 600hp Mercury supercharged engines that drive a 41-foot boat."

That boat achieves well over 100mph in case you were wondering and it does this on a track, the sea, where the surface is forever changing. There are no brakes, just the friction of water on the hull and the boat often leaves the surface altogether and occasionally will even dive below it as they hit waves and enter what is known as the green room, as the waves close over the boat and crew. These high performance racing craft have a team of two, the driver who steers and navigates the boat around the course and the throttleman who opens and closes the throttles as the boat leaps through the water. They are very much a team.

"Patrick, my throttleman, and I work very well together but I am always screaming out for more power, more speed from him. Most times the more

power you have the more control I have as a driver. When we race we will always make mistakes. My race instructor says that we may make a thousand mistakes during a race; you cannot be perfect in these extreme conditions, but we can win the races by making a thousand fewer mistakes than our competitors.

"I have to say if it was not for my personal trainer, James Seilo, who is brilliant with me, I think my injuries in these two accidents would have been a lot more severe; James has got my body in good condition and that helped me survive."

So with two serious racing accidents within a month, injuries to both her and her throttleman, a husband who is also her engineer tired of visiting her in hospital and the fact they lost their beloved boat, will she continue to race next season?

"Will I race again? I have no idea at the moment. I have just had my nose operated on and been told by the surgeon I am to do nothing for three months so

the rest of this season is gone." Her voice had softened by now and taken on a sad note. "I won't know for sure until I drive a boat again in anger, see if I still have what I need. Whatever happens I will not leave the sport. If I am not racing there is plenty else I can do as each event takes a great deal of organising."

After what the sport has done to her this year it would be understandable if she felt a little hard-done-by by the thing she loves, but then she made a heartfelt plea. "Please only say positive things about the sport; I love what we do. Everyone who races has jobs or businesses they go to during the week and then at weekends we head off all around the place to race. They are friends and if help or parts are needed for the boat we all share and help, but once on the water and racing – there is nothing like it." ■

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