

# Jürgen Barth – at work everywhere for Porsche

**Jürgen Barth is one of the most versatile figures in German motor racing. He took victory at Le Mans in 1977 driving the works Porsche 936.**

Jürgen Barth works for Porsche as a racing driver, head of customer sport, rally driver, mechanic, FISA representative in Paris and as a TV commentator in German, English and French. He also writes very detailed books about Porsche racing cars and organises racing series primarily for GT cars. It would be easy to continue listing his various responsibilities and activities. Barth can still laugh about his versatile nature decades later. Recounting a story from 1977, he says, 'I had won the 24 Hours of Le Mans in June, and a short time later I was working as a mechanic for Sobiesław Zasada in the London–Sydney Marathon. As a Le Mans winner!' Working for Porsche during the East African Safari in 1974, he was not only closely involved in preparation work, but also on hand to help when the rear axle rocker arms of the 911 broke. Because jacks would have sunk into the mud, the mechanic held up the car while Jürgen Barth lay in the dirt and swapped the part, nicknamed the 'banana'

Jürgen Barth completed an apprenticeship as a mechanic and industrial management assistant at Porsche. His first race was in 1969, four years after his father, European Hill Climb Champion Edgar Barth, died of cancer. His first race in Le Mans was as soon as 1971, when he took eighth place in a 911 S. In 1977, he drove the works 936 into a clear lead with Jacky Ickx and Hurley Haywood before a cylinder failed. It was Barth who took the badly damaged 'five-cylinder' Porsche over the finish line to claim victory, following the exact instructions of senior race engineer Peter Falk. In 1980, he won the 1,000 km race at the Nürburgring with Rolf Stommelen, driving a 908/03. At the 1981 Monte Carlo Rally, Barth and his long-time professional companion and friend Roland Kussmaul took eleventh place. In Weissach, Barth drove the very first laps with the Porsche 956, which would later become so successful. In 1982, he finished third in Le Mans with the 956, recording a faster time than either of the winners in 1983, Hurley Haywood and Al Holbart. One sentence he said is still applicable decades later: 'I haven't hung up my helmet yet!' Even to this day, he is keen to jump in whenever a private Porsche team is looking for a driver.