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Balancing an F1 Academy title tilt with a normal life

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Whenever Chloe Chambers is back in the United States, she lives a seemingly normal life, with much of her time spent watching Netflix and hanging out with friends.

But the reality is, the American's life is far different from the typical woman her age. For a good portion of the year, she is immersed in the fast-paced world of being a race driver in the F1 Academy.

The 21-year-old, who competes for Campos Racing under the Red Bull Ford programme, now sits third in the drivers' standings with 93 points heading into the Oct 3-5 Singapore round of the all-women series.

With two more rounds to go, France's Doriane Pin leads the charge with 127 points, ahead of second-placed Dutchwoman Maya Weug (107).

Being able to strike a balance between the exhilaration of racing and knowing when to relax has been key to Chambers' on-track success.

"For me, I'm pretty strong mentally on my own. I have a pretty good balance between taking time off to relax, and then getting into the zone for race weekends or testing or just driving in general," said Chambers in an interview with The Straits Times on Oct 1.

"I kind of know when to switch off, so I can have that time to not really think about racing, to just unwind a bit, so that I'm not constantly going every day of the year."

She was speaking on the sidelines of the Pen-To-Pit Lane event held at the National University of Singapore, organised in partnership with Red Bull Racing, ahead of the Singapore Airlines Singapore Grand Prix this week.

There, she shared her experiences as a race driver, including her early start in the sport.

American Chloe Chambers, 21, with an NUS Formula SAE R25e car at the National University of Singapore on Oct 1. The Campos Racing driver is third in the all-women F1 Academy series ahead of the Oct 3-5 Singapore leg. ST PHOTO: SHINTARO TAY

She first tried karting at age seven and began competing a year later, claiming regional and national championships over the years.

Alongside racing, she also did competitive swimming, as she realised she had a knack for head-to-head competition, adding that it was "my kind of calling, and racing magnifies that to the extreme".

Before she began racing single-seaters for a partial season in the F4 United States Championship, she became a Guinness world record holder at 16 for the fastest vehicle slalom, racing a 2020 Porsche 718 Spyder and navigating 50 cones in 47.45 seconds.

After that, she competed in the W Series, the F1 Academy's predecessor, the 2023 Porsche Sprint Challenge North America and Formula Regional Oceania Championship in New Zealand, becoming the first woman to secure pole and win a race in the latter series.

The following year, she joined Campos Racing in the F1 Academy under the Haas banner in 2024 but moved to the Red Bull Ford Academy programme for the 2025 season.

After finishing sixth in her rookie season, she is making waves as a title contender this season.

With this being her final year in the series – drivers can compete for only two seasons – she is determined to make the most of her opportunity.

She said: "I think the biggest pressure this year comes from it being my final year in F1 Academy – it's your last chance to make something happen.

"That's where the most pressure has come from, not from switching teams or anything like that. Most of it is from myself, wanting to maximise this time that I have in F1 Academy."

As she looks to take the next steps of her career, Chambers wants to make her mark not just through results, but also by hopefully inspiring others.

She said: "At the end of my career, I just want to be remembered for making an impact of some sort.

"Results can say things, but if those results end up making an impact, then I think that's kind of what I would look for. I don't just want results on paper to be short term."

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