

# Kelsey Patterson

## In the Pits at Pittsburgh

— interview and photos by Kevin Varrato

*Editor's note: During the recently completed Pittsburgh Vintage Grand Prix, Victory Lane Magazine photographer Kevin Varrato took the time to interview several of the participating drivers. The second of these interviews is with Kelsey Patterson, who drives a 1964 Jaguar XKE, and who is making her debut at Schenley Park this year, finishing 18th in her race with a best lap time of 3:07.633.*

**Kevin:** What is your name, age and where are you from?

**Kelsey:** My name is Kelsey Patterson age 23 from Pittsburgh, PA

**Kevin:** What car do you drive, year, make, class, engine size.

**Kelsey:** 1964 Jaguar XKE, Group 5 O2L Car #523

**Kevin:** How did you get into auto racing?

**Kelsey:** It's a family thing my great uncle Allen has been doing this for 33 years, and I kinda got into it this year.

**Kevin:** You mentioned this is your first competition race?

**Kelsey:** Yes, it was exhilarating, yeah it was a lot to focus on but your mind is kinda clear and just drive, I love to drive and there is nothing like being able to drive that fast legally.

**Kevin:** Have you raced anything other than the Jaguar?

**Kelsey:** Yes a Mazda Miata and an F-pro, at Pitt Race and South Jersey Region, is where I got my novice permit in the Mazda Miata.

**Kevin:** Since this is your first race what was your most memorable moment so far?

**Kelsey:** Well the first memorable moment was last week when I was doing the BMW club race my car actually caught fire, so that was my first kind of real real memorable experience and I think the last lap of this race will be pretty memorable to me. Because I lined up with my brother and cousin, we all were in Jags. Hopefully someone got a good shot of the three of us lined up goings across the start/finish line.

**Kevin:** You just drive for family?

**Kelsey:** Yes, just Patterson Racing.

**Kevin:** I know you are new to racing but have you started any rituals, or anything to get you prepped for racing or any motivational advice that's been passed down?

**Kelsey:** Yes. "Just go fast." that's all pretty much what I have been hearing all weekend, and "oh, don't set the car on fire," obviously. Go fast, no fires. I really don't have any rituals yet but I am going to work on that, maybe figure out if there is something that I did and had a better race versus when I didn't do and had a worse race, but nothing yet.

**Kevin:** If there is one race track you would drive what would it be?

**Kelsey:** My brother loves Watkins Glen, and I've heard that is a really fun track to race, so that is probably next on my list, but have always wanted to race at Schenley and three months into getting my novice permit I did.

**Kevin:** Since you are new to racing, what advice do you have for someone that wants to get into racing, especially girls? There are not too many women on the race circuit, your motivation to do it, yours is family driven but being a role model to them once they find out you are a race car driver.



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**Kelsey:** I believe that I am. My little cousin Abby, she is 11 now, and she is next in line. I think her seeing me out there really kinda makes her want to do it too, she will be allowed, she will be alongside me. The only advice I would probably give to another female racer getting into racing is not to be intimidated by the male ego, cause woman can do a lot of things the same and sometimes better. There is nothing like lining up and people being surprised there is a woman behind the wheel of a race car. That was a big ego boost for me this week, sitting on the starting grid and having people walking by saying "that's a girl." [chuckles.] That's a confidence boost and I think it will do a lot for the sport. Everyone has been referring to me as the next Danica Patrick — she is such an influential woman in racing. I think if more females started to do it, they would become more popular, would become the norm for females to be behind the wheel of race cars.

**Kevin:** If you had your choice to be behind the wheel of any race car what would it be?

**Kelsey:** Honestly I have always wanted to get behind the wheel of a Mini. They are so light, so fast and so cute. My mom has one, it's her everyday car. They are so much fun to drive. On top of that they are really cute. There is nothing like a girl having her own car to decorate and get behind the wheel and race. I think Mini Coopers would be the car I want.

**Kevin:** How would that fit into the family of Jags even though your mom has one?

**Kelsey:** Yeah, well racing wise, not very well, I would probably be the only one in a different group with the Mini, but I will stay with the Jag.



How Kelsey's mother watches the race,