



Racing Families – The Rosberg

Hello and welcome to a brand new mini-series from Sidepodcast - Racing Families. As you may expect we'll be taking a look at the great and the good from the world of motorsport, but particularly those that are keeping it in the family. I'm always intrigued by fathers, sons, brothers and cousins, all carrying on the family name, and if you're the same, then this is the mini series for you. We'll cover seven different families over the course of a week with a short show each day, and today we are starting with... Rosberg.

Of the current crop of Formula One racers, one of the biggest family names is Rosberg. Nico Rosberg drives for Mercedes, and has done so for the previous three seasons. Before that he was with the Williams team, with whom he made his F1 debut. Rosberg races as a German but he has dual nationality with both Germany and Finland. His mother is German, and his father is the Finnish Formula One driver Keke Rosberg.

Keke was the first full-time Finnish F1 driver, joining the series in 1978. He had worked his way through various junior formulae before being signed to the Theodore F1 team. The early results weren't promising due to the ability of the car, but Rosberg outdrove his machinery and raised eyebrows at the bigger teams. In 1982, he was signed to the Williams outfit, where he started picking up regular podium finishes.

1982 was a difficult season, full of politics both in the sport and within team and driver relationships. It was the year of Gilles Villeneuve's death and a season in which teams were often protesting about the regulations or technical infringements from their rivals. At the third to last race of the season, Keke Rosberg took his first Formula One victory. It was the Swiss Grand Prix, actually held in France, and Rosberg won after a stunning charge midway through the race. The win pushed him into the lead of the championship, and he remained there for the final two rounds to become World Champion.

Rosberg remained at Williams for three more seasons but the car was less competitive and the Honda engine only came to its peak as Keke decided to make his move away from the team. He joined McLaren for the 1986 season, hoping to continue the Woking team's back-to-back championship success for a third consecutive year. However, Rosberg couldn't take the fight to his teammate Alain Prost. With just one second place podium, sixth place in the championship and reflecting upon the death of his close friend Elio de Angelis, Rosberg retired at the end of the year.

His post-F1 career included some endurance racing, and participation in the German DTM series. He set up his own team, that also raced in Formula BMW and the A1 GP series, but was most prominent in DTM. That is where Rosberg's son, Nico, first remembers getting the urge to follow in his father's footsteps.

Nico doesn't talk an awful lot about having a famous father, but he has previously said: "I really grew up in the DTM paddock. I remember my father's last race very clearly when he drove at Hockenheim in front of 100,000 people and I was sitting next to him on the roof of his car and waving to the fans. That was the moment when I thought - one day, I want to do the same."

Rosberg Jr made his Formula One debut for the Williams team in 2006, having made his way up via his father's junior teams and expanding to others as well. He scored points on his opening race in Bahrain, but had to wait until his 111th race before standing on the top step of the podium. His second victory came in Monaco this year, 2013, where he won an incident-packed race around the principality. Notably, it was a Monaco win thirty years after his father took victory on those same streets in the 1983 race. They became the first father and son duo to both win in Monaco, and interestingly, for both of them, it was the second victory in their career.



Despite the comparisons and statistics that occur when you have a famous father's footsteps to follow in, Nico tries to ignore any expectations that are heaped on his shoulders. The father/son pairing have never seemed particularly close, and when recently asked what tips he gets from his champion father, Nico said: "The last advice he gave me was, Nico, when the track is drying out, you need to look for the light grey patches, because those are the dry patches. And my reaction to that meant he never, ever gave me advice anymore."

Family ties may be an extra burden but Nico Rosberg appears to have stepped out of his father's shadow successfully. He's still got a long way to go to match his father's success but so far, it seems both are proud of what the other has achieved, without being overly vocal about it.

That's all for this first episode of Racing Families, thank you for listening. We've got many more blood relations to talk about in the rest of the series, so please do join me again for part two, where another family will go under the microscope.

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