



## Racing Families – The Hills

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Hello, this is Racing Families, a mini series from Sidepodcast looking at some of the most well known names in motorsport, and their brothers, cousins, fathers and sons. We've covered two big names already, and now it is time to move on to our third. Today we're looking at the Hill family.

Graham Hill won his first Formula One championship in 1962 with the British Racing Motors, or BRM team. His route into the sport had been fascinating, with the start of the career in the Royal Navy. Once out of the forces, he tried his hand at a few laps around Brands Hatch, and it wasn't long before he was hooked, joining Team Lotus as an F1 mechanic. Pretty soon, he was allowed behind the wheel and in 1958, he made his debut out on track in Monaco. For the 1960 season, he made the switch to BRM, where his first championship awaited.

In 1967, he returned to Team Lotus, and the following year he added another title to his name. In 1969, he was unable to successfully defend his title, and a crash at the penultimate race of the year at Watkins Glen saw him suffer two broken legs. Hill continued in F1 until 1975, setting up his own team a couple of years earlier to support his career. After results were not forthcoming, he decided to retire to concentrate on running the team rather than racing for it.

F1 was not Graham's only passion though, and he remains the only person to hold the Triple Crown of Motorsport - winning an F1 World Championship, the Le Mans 24 Hours race, and of course, the Indy 500.

Hill died in 1975, after the plane he was piloting back from Paul Ricard to the UK crashed upon landing in adverse conditions. He left behind a wife, two daughters, and a 15 year old son - Damon Hill.

Damon tried his hand at motorbike racing, and moved through the ranks to single-seater formulae. At the very end of the 1988 season, he made his debut in the International Formula 3000 series, where he stayed for the following three years. He never won a race, a best place finish in second being all he could manage. Nevertheless, he was granted a test role with the Williams F1 team, which led to his Formula One debut in 1992, at the relatively late age of 32.

Damon's debut race in F1 was with Brabham, but the team's financial struggles meant Hill was both late starting the season, and not even slightly competitive during his first year. He only managed to compete in two races, failing to move through pre-qualifying at many of the other events. Brabham didn't make the end of the season, so Hill was left with his Williams links to get him a race seat for 1993. Now the results started coming in, and he finished third in the championship, the next year second, in 1995 second again, and by the end of 1996, Damon Hill had become world champion.

Despite being defending champion in 1997, and having a few teams desperate to sign him up, Damon chose Arrows for his next challenge. And it really was a challenge. As defending champion, he finished the year 12th with only 7 points. From Arrows he moved to Jordan for two years, but the results still were not forthcoming and Hill retired from Grand Prix racing.

Many racing families have some kind of record to their name, and the Hill family is no different. They remain the only father-son combination to have both scored a Formula One world championship.

And the story doesn't end there. Damon's son Joshua is currently racing his way through some of the lower formulae. In 2010, he competed in the British Formula Ford championship, 2011 was all about British Formula



Renault, whilst 2013 has him in the European Formula 3 series. He's got a way to go to make that statistic three generations of F1 champions, but there is plenty of time yet. As Josh's website quite rightly states: "He has a couple of tough acts to follow, but he's bravely undaunted."

That's all for this episode of Racing Families. I hope you're enjoying the series so far, and have left your thoughts about the drivers we have covered over on Sidepodcast.com. Join me tomorrow when we will look at our fourth fabulous family.

