



Racing Families – The Winkelhocks

Hello and welcome to Racing Families, a mini series from Sidepodcast taking a closer look at those who enter the world of motorsport because it runs in their DNA. So far we've covered families who have seen various degrees of success, but today we're looking at a family who didn't make too much of a mark on their respective sports, but kept on trying. Let us get started with today's family then - the Winkelhocks.

Germany's Manfred Winkelhock was due to make his F1 debut in the latter stages of the 1980 season. Jochen Mass had been injured at the Austrian Grand Prix, and was forced to sit out the following two events. Arrows gave the drive to New Zealand driver Mike Thackwell at the next GP in the Netherlands, and then to Manfred the following race weekend at Italy. Neither stand-in managed to qualify for their respective races, though.

With his F1 opportunity over before it had begun, Manfred returned to his Formula Two drive. He participated in the European F2 series for four seasons overall, but finished no higher than 8th in the championship. In 1982, he moved up to F1 full time, gaining a race seat with the German team ATS. The car was not great, and although Manfred managed a 5th place finish in only his second race for the team, that was the highlight. He picked up two points that year, but suffered seven retirements, three weekends without qualifying, and one disqualification. Winkelhock stuck with ATS for almost three years, participated in the final race of 1984 for Brabham, and signed for RAM Racing for 1985. Results were still thin on the ground.

Meanwhile, Manfred had been competing in sportscar and endurance racing, actually winning the 1000km of Monza in 1985 for Kremer Racing. He moved on to the 1000km of Mosport, but crashed towards the start of the race. His car went straight into a concrete barrier, it took the marshals almost an hour to get him out of the vehicle. He was air-lifted to hospital but died the following day.

Manfred had two brothers, Joachim Winkelhock and Thomas Winkelhock. Thomas competed in a few lower formulae, such as German Formula Three and European Touring Cars but he never made it as far as Formula One. Joachim did manage to get inside an F1 cockpit, but he did not start a single Grand Prix.

Having worked his way up through some junior series', and after taking a break following the death of his brother, Joachim won the German F3 series in 1988. The following year, the AGS F1 team gave him a seat, but he failed to pre-qualify for seven weekends in a row. That was more of a reflection on the team though, as out of 16 races, and two entrants per race, AGS only managed to start six GPs that year.

Joachim, quite sensibly, moved on to touring cars, and found his way to the DTM series. He was last spotted in 2003, picking up a point and finishing the championship 15th. Since retiring, he has returned to the family towing business.

That is not the end of the story, though. When he died, Manfred Winkelhock left behind him a five year old boy, who has followed in his father's footsteps. Markus Winkelhock has participated in both F3 and Formula Renault 3.5, and even made headlines in Formula One. He spent a couple of years as a test driver at the back of the field but was subbed in at Spyker F1 when Christijan Albers abruptly left. In a wet race at the Nürburgring, Winkelhock started last, and thanks to a lucky tyre call, found himself leading when the race was suspended due to the weather. Upon the restart, he fell down the order and eventually retired from the race.

Markus moved over to the DTM series for several years, and then on to the GT1 World Championship, where he won the title in 2012. Although the Formula One dream was shortlived for each generation of Winkelhock's, they can now rest easy that, for a moment, a member of the family was leading a Formula One Grand Prix.



That's all for this episode of Racing Families. I hope you're enjoying the series so far. Why not leave your thoughts over on Sidepodcast.com. And please join me tomorrow when we visit the fifth family in the series.

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