



Racing Families – The Andrettis

Hello and welcome to a brand new episode in the Racing Families mini-series from Sidepodcast. As you may expect we're looking at the great and the good from the world of motorsport, but particularly those that are keeping it in the family. Today, it's time for a sprawling family legacy, and the name? Andretti.

You've probably heard of Mario Andretti. He's tried his hand at pretty much every type of racing there is on four wheels, and been largely successful too. The 73 year old American is now, naturally, retired, but in his sporting career he added to a long list of titles, and broke far too many records to mention. Mario was F1 World Champion in 1978, driving for Team Lotus, having joined the sport ten years earlier. Before that, in 1969, he won the Indy 500, which he continued to participate in for 29 years altogether. After his F1 stint, with a little bit of a crossover, he appeared in the CART series, winning that championship in 1984. He's also tried his hand at NASCAR and the Le Mans 24 Hour race, with his best finish an overall second place.

With this kind of DNA, it's hardly surprising that the Andretti family are one of the more extensive in racing. Mario Andretti has a twin brother called Aldo, and in their very early days of racing, they built up a stock car together and took turns behind the wheel. They continued racing for about ten years, between 1959 and 69, but after two serious accidents, Aldo gave it up. The first fractured his skull and left him in a coma, but after recovering from that he continued. The second saw him crash into a fence and sustain serious facial injuries. Some reports suggest he had 14 fractures to his face. It's no surprise he quit racing after that.

Aldo had two sons, John Andretti and Adam Andretti. John has tried his hand at a lot of racing series, although primarily focusing on the various NASCAR championships, and the CART/IndyCar series. Adam, the younger brother, got a bit of a leg-up into racing by his elder sibling, helping him into some junior formulae. He's participated in the Indy Lights series, plus NASCAR Southwest, and US Formula 3, but it's fair to say he hasn't made the name for himself that other Andretti's have.

That is Aldo's side of the family wrapped up, now let's go back to Mario. He also had two sons, Michael Andretti and Jeff Andretti. Michael moved up through the lower ranks to the CART series, finishing his first year seventh in the 1984 championship. He won the title in 1991, taking eight of 17 victories, and on the strength of this, he moved up to Formula 1. In 1993, he took a seat in the McLaren team alongside Ayrton Senna, but it was not a successful year for him. Michael racked up a lot of retirements, until he was replaced by Mika Häkkinen three races from the end of the season. Leaving F1 under such acrimonious circumstances, he returned to the CART series, where there were more victories waiting for him, although alas, not another title. Nowadays, he is more of a team owner than a racer, with the current Andretti Autosport IndyCar team.

Jeff Andretti raced in the CART series from 1990 to 1994, with Indy 500 entries to compliment this racing. After a serious crash in 1992, though, in which both his legs were broken, Jeff lost his competitive edge, and his racing career did not continue for much longer afterwards.

Just one more generation to discuss, and that is Michael's son Marco. He races for the Andretti Autosport team in the IndyCar series, and has had a brief peek at Formula 1, testing for the now-defunct Honda squad. He's also raced in the A1 Grand Prix series, and had a go at the 12 Hours of Sebring. At 26, the future of the Andretti name in motorsport rests on his shoulders.

That's just a small glimpse at the Andretti clan, we could talk about them for hours. They've created and broken many records, including being the first family to have four relatives compete in the CART series. They also had three



separate years in which there were four relatives competing in the Indy 500. There's that saying about quality, not quantity, but I think the Andrettis have a little bit of both.

That's all for this episode of Racing Families. I hope you've enjoyed this look at the heart of one motorsport family tree. We've got plenty more to come so leave your thoughts on Sidepodcast.com and join me tomorrow for the next racing name.

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