



## Forgotten F1 Teams – Toleman Motorsport

---

Hello and welcome to the fourth episode of Forgotten F1 Teams, a miniseries brought to you by Sidepodcast. We are delving into the history books to find out about those teams who are no longer in the sport, and trying to find out why. Today, we're looking at Toleman.

Towards the end of the 1970s, businessman Ted Toleman began to get involved in motorsport, as well as a little bit of powerboat racing. He entered the Formula Ford 2000 series and was involved with the March team in British Formula Two. He hired Rory Byrne as a designer, but while Byrne worked his magic, he continued to purchase customer chassis.

At the end of 1980, Toleman announced his plans to enter F1 for the following season. Byrne had designed the TG181, they had a turbocharged Hart engine, and brought in drivers Brian Henton and Derek Warwick. It wasn't really a great debut year. Their season didn't start until the fourth round, and both drivers failed to qualify until Henton got through in Italy, the third race from the end. He finished tenth. Warwick qualified at the season closer at Ceasars Palace but retired from the race.

The new car wasn't ready for the 1982 season, so the drivers – Teo Fabi replacing Henton – continued with upgraded 181s. They still managed to spend their time retiring from races, or not qualifying in the first place. The 183 was ready midway through the year and was only used twice, but did allow Warwick to score the fastest lap at the Dutch Grand Prix. He retired from that race, though.

Once again, the cars were updated for the next season, with Fabi replaced by Bruno Giacomelli. New sponsors were brought on board, including BP, and that saw an increase in budget. The results began to pick up with Warwick scoring points in the last four races of the season. Giacomelli also managed one points finish, and the team finished 9<sup>th</sup> in the constructors championship.

For 1984, Warwick moved up to Renault, whilst Giacomelli was replaced by Johnny Cecotto. Warwick was replaced by the new and highly sought after Ayrton Senna. Although they both retired from the first race in Brazil, Senna was soon picking up points, and scored the teams highest finish at the Monaco Grand Prix. It was an incredibly wet race, so much so the running was stopped with only 31 laps completed, not even half distance. He finished second behind Prost in the McLaren, and many people wondered if he would have won had the race been completed.

At the British Grand Prix, Senna was again on the podium, scoring a third place. Cecotto, however, crashed heavily during qualifying and broke both his legs. His season and his F1 career was over. Toleman ran just one car for the next three events until they got to Italy.

By this time, Senna was being headhunted and had signed with Lotus without telling his team. Toleman was not impressed, and suspended Senna for the Italian Grand Prix. They brought in Stefan Johansson and Pierluigi Martini to race, with Stefan finishing fourth. Senna was back for the last two races, and he and Johansson finished the season together.

Ahead of the 1985 season, Toleman suddenly found themselves with tyre supply problems. Way back in their Formula Two days, they had upset Goodyear by switching to Pirelli for improved performance. In the midst of 1984, they did the same thing to Pirelli, preferring the Michelin rubber. Unfortunately for them, Michelin withdrew from F1 at the end of the year. The only reason Toleman managed to find a supply was because rival team Spirit had folded, allowing them to step in and take the Pirelli tyres.



The issues meant they missed the first few races, and although they had planned to have Johansson in their single entry, he moved on before they got going. Teo Fabi was brought back in and spent the first few races retiring. Midway through the year, Toleman did a deal with Benetton to become a major sponsor for the team. They immediately began to run a second car with Piercarlo Ghinzani behind the wheel, but the results did not improve. They scored no points that year, and suffered a heck of a lot of retirements.

At the end of 1985, Benetton bought out Toleman. They renamed the team Benetton Formula, and kept Fabi on for the next season. In 2000, the team was bought out by Renault, but that is another story.

That's all for this episode of Forgotten F1 Teams. I hope you're enjoying the series so far. Don't forget you can leave suggestions, comments and feedback at [sidepodcast.com](http://sidepodcast.com) or email me [Christine@sidepodcast.com](mailto:Christine@sidepodcast.com). I'll see you tomorrow with our fifth Forgotten team.

sidepodcast.com  
YOUR WEEKLY F1 FIX