



Forgotten F1 Teams – Jaguar Racing

Hello and welcome to the second episode of the second series of Forgotten F1 Teams – a mini series brought to you by Sidepodcast. In these seven shows we're exploring the history of teams you might have forgotten, even if they weren't that long ago. Today we're looking at Jaguar.

Jaguar owners Ford had been a presence in Formula 1 for a while, supplying engines to Williams, McLaren and Lotus. In the middle of 1998, they purchased Cosworth, and the next year, they decided it was time to up their involvement in the sport. They bought out Jackie Stewart for full ownership of Stewart Grand Prix, and rather than naming the team after the parent company, Ford decided to promote their higher brand of motor – Jaguar.

2000 was their first full season as a constructor, and they brought Eddie Irvine and Johnny Herbert on board to create and market an all-British team. They ran with a delicious green livery, which was actually the same colour as their title sponsor Beck's, rather than British Racing Green, as you might have expected. The first few results were not great and it wasn't long before the team were set for a restructure. Indycar team boss Bobby Rahal was brought in to take the helm. He didn't have long to make his mark though, before things were changing again.

At the end of the year, Ford put Wolfgang Reitzle in charge of their F1 outfit, and he was determined to improve things by bringing in new people. He hired Niki Lauda with a job title of Head of Premier Performance Division. The Jaguar team fell under his jurisdiction.

Rahal and Lauda disagreed over a lot of things, but particularly when Rahal wanted to bring Adrian Newey over from McLaren. They got as far as signing a contract, however Ron Dennis persuaded Newey to stay with him at McLaren. This left Rahal embarrassed, and in a difficult position with the team. After he and Lauda continued to disagree over driver Eddie Irvine, Rahal left the team. Their best result that year was with Irvine, a third place finish at Monaco.

Lauda was fully in charge for 2002, but their campaign was even worse. With Pedro de la Rosa joining Irvine, the team saw 19 retirements out of 34 starts, and their best result was another third place podium finish for Eddie at Monza. By now, Ford were beginning to realise just how costly F1 could be, particularly as only the Jaguar arm of their company was getting the marketing benefit, and the Ford name was lost behind the team. For the 2003 season, they slashed the budget and implemented a two year timeframe for getting increased results.

The new cost-cutting regime saw Lauda made redundant along with a large number of staff. Tony Purnell was brought in to replace him, whilst Mark Webber and Antonio Pizzonia were given the race seats. More bad results followed with Webber occasionally managing to scrape into the points. After his fifth retirement at the British Grand Prix, Pizzonia was replaced by Justin Wilson for the remaining five races. Wilson fared no better, although he did pick up one point.

For a little continuity in 2004, Webber was retained with Austrian driver Christian Klien taking the second seat. The team managed to secure sponsorship from Steinmetz with a film tie-in at Monaco. Promoting the Ocean's Twelve movie, George Clooney was in the garage, and Klien's car was fitted with a massive, and very expensive diamond, in the nose cone. At Monaco. What do you think happened?

The car met the barriers at Turn 1 and the diamond mysteriously disappeared. Insurance covered any monetary damages, but where did that diamond go, I wonder?



Perhaps the team knew that their future was on shaky ground, because 2004 was a year of fun. Two of the mechanics picked up an inflatable donkey, some merchandise from the Shrek films. For whatever reason, they decided to bring the donkey with them to all the races, taking photographs and publishing them on a website. At the end of the season, everyone in the paddock signed the donkey and it was auctioned off for charity.

That was the best bit of publicity the team could manage and by the end of the year, Ford made good on their ultimatum. The results weren't there, so they decided to sell the team. Webber left and moved over to Williams, whilst Klien stayed on with the new buyers – energy drinks giant Red Bull. It's worth noting that Webber returned to Red Bull in 2007 and races with them now.

That's all for this second episode of Forgotten F1 Teams. You can leave your feedback on the teams we've covered so far, or any suggestions for future episodes on sidepodcast.com, on the wiki, or email me Christine at [sidepodcast dot com](mailto:sidepodcast.com). I'll be back tomorrow with our third Forgotten team.

sidepodcast.com
YOUR WEEKLY F1 FIX