



Forgotten F1 Teams – Series 1 Omnibus

Welcome to Forgotten F1 Teams – a mini series from Sidepodcast. These shows were originally released over seven consecutive days but are now gathered together in this omnibus edition.

Simtek Grand Prix

You're listening to Sidepodcast, and this is the latest mini-series: Forgotten F1 Teams. I think it's probably self explanatory but this is a series dedicated to profiling some of the forgotten teams. Forget about your Ferrari's and your McLaren's, what about those who didn't make such an impact on the sport, but still have a story to tell? Those are the ones you'll hear today. Thanks should go to Scott Woodwiss for suggesting the topic, and the teams, and we'll dive right in with Simtek Grand Prix.

Simtek Grand Prix was born from Simtek Research Ltd, the name standing for Simulation Technology. The company founders were Nick Wirth and Max Mosley, both of whom had serious pedigree within motorsport. Mosley had been a team owner before with March, and Wirth was a mechanical engineering student who was snapped up by March as an aerodynamicist, working underneath Adrian Newey. When March was sold to Leyton House, Mosley and Wirth both decided to leave, and joined forces to create Simtek. Originally, the company had a single office in Wirth's house, but it was soon obvious they needed a bigger, more wind-tunnel shaped base, which they built in Oxfordshire.

Mosley had the connections that meant racing teams from all over the globe were interested in using their research technologies, but while keeping the clients satisfied, Simtek began designing an F1 car for BMW in secret. The plan never came to fruition, however, and BMW delayed entry to the sport.

When Mosley became the president of the FIA, he sold his share of the company to Wirth. Another relatively unknown team Andrea Moda bought the unused and now out of date F1 cars originally meant for BMW, but there was absolutely no success in store for them. Simtek went on to design a car for another team, but that also fell by the wayside, leaving Wirth frustrated. He decided to enter his own F1 team, Simtek Grand Prix. Jack Brabham came on board with some financing, and in 1993, the team was announced with David Brabham as one of the drivers. They ran Ford engines, but immediately got it wrong. The first design was based around active suspension technologies, which were suddenly banned, so they changed to an earlier design, which was overweight. Without sponsorship, Simtek searched for a pay driver and signed Roland Ratzenberger, for the first five races. They eventually found backing from MTV as well.

However, it was only the third race in when disaster struck and Ratzenberger was killed. This was the same race weekend in 1994 when Ayrton Senna lost his life, and the tragedy rocked the rookie team. Tradition dictated that Brabham should pull out of the race, but he decided to continue with the weekend, which helped pull his colleagues together, and they decided to honour Ratzenberger by completing the entire season. The rest of the year saw two more serious injuries for Simtek but the team kept on keeping on. Money was tight, and sometimes they would only run one car, but towards the end of the season, things became more even. They scored an impressive, and best, 9th at one race, albeit a weekend with many retirees.

After the season was over, MTV decided to minimise their sponsorship deal, and David Brabham, the hero of the team so far, decided to move to British Touring Cars. Wirth was undeterred and started 1995 with a new chassis, and a new driver in Jos Verstappen. Verstappen managed to equal the best ever 9th position for Simtek in an impressive race at Argentina, but other than that, there were only three finishes from two drivers over five races.



The debts were mounting, as well, as deals were made and broken, and funding couldn't be found. Simtek auctioned off some of their property, but it couldn't make a dent in the millions that were owed. The team had to close mid-season. Wirth tried to apply his engineering skills to Benetton in 1997, but after a couple of bad seasons, he left F1 and took up a career in robotics.

That sums up our first forgotten F1 team. Let me know your thoughts either on the team, or this series, perhaps a team that you'd like to hear about. Leave your comments on the blog at Sidepodcast.com, call our voicemail on 0121 28 87225, or email me Christine @ sidepodcast.com. I'll be back tomorrow with the story of another forgotten team.

Pacific Grand Prix

You're listening to Sidepodcast and this is our latest mini series, Forgotten F1 Teams. It's all very well talking about BMW, Honda and Williams, but there are teams out there who are important to the history of F1, and yet are not very well known. Sidepodcast wants to address this problem. Yesterday we talked about Simtek, today it's the turn of Pacific Grand Prix.

Pacific had been around for a while, racing in some of the lower categories, and they'd done a pretty good job. Team boss Keith Wiggins had experience of racing and as a mechanic, and the moment he set up his team, he had acquired sponsorship from Marlboro, signed up a good Norwegian driver, and secured entry into the Formula Ford championships.

The progression was slow but steady, through F2, Formula Ford, F3, and F3000. Pacific's final year in F3000 saw familiar name David Coulthard driving for them, fighting for the title. He didn't manage it, however, and Wiggins set his sights on another, more exciting championship – Formula 1. The original aim was to participate in the 1993 championship, but a recession delayed the entry for a year. However, when 1994 arrived, it was full steam ahead. Engine supplier Ilmor were providing a pair of two year old engines, and Wiggins was using some of the leftovers of another failed F1 entry. Early testing signs were not good, the engine didn't seem to be able to cope, and the chassis had structural problems, but at the opening round in Brazil, Pacific out-qualified Simtek with one of their cars. They only managed three laps of the race before a collision, but this was progress.

The unusual events of the 1994 season keeping top teams and drivers out of the limelight, meant that Pacific did manage to qualify for some of the races, but their first racing achievement – if you can call 3 laps an achievement – was ridiculously short lived. Each time they did manage to get onto the grid that year, they never finished the race.

Roll on 1995, then, and Wiggins brought in a new design team, and partnered with the remains of the Lotus team. Some new aerodynamic devices, and well-known sponsors, and Pacific Racing was well on its way. The 1995 season saw several teams dropping out, which meant that with 26 spots available for each race, Pacific were guaranteed to get on the grid. Of course, they were generally at the back of the grid, and fought with Simtek and Fortis for the last few positions. Despite sponsors and pay-drivers, money was always an issue, and Wiggins would push for components to be run until breaking point. Gearboxes were a serious issue, with ten related retirements in the one season.

It wasn't always engineering problems that scuppered Pacific's chances for a result. At the 1995 European GP, both McLaren drivers were struggling in the wet, and the Pacific team took their opportunity getting both of their drivers past at least one McLaren. Things were looking good, until Pacific driver Montermini came into the pits, ran over his refueller thus breaking his leg, and of course, ran out of fuel.

There were rumours that Pacific would return in 1996, but in the end, Wiggins knew there was no more money. He withdrew from F1, and returned to F3000 for the next one and a bit years. Before 1997 drew to a close, Pacific



withdrew from motorsport altogether and was never heard of again. Keith Wiggins continues to be involved in other forms of motorsport, having tried his hand at both CART and now Champ Car management.

That wraps up today's show on Pacific, I'll have another Forgotten F1 team for you tomorrow, so stay tuned.

Forti

Welcome to Forgotten F1 Teams, a miniseries from Sidepodcast focusing on those teams that didn't make headlines, at least not for reasons they would have hoped for. We've looked at Simtek and Pacific, and now it's time for Forti.

If you heard yesterday's show about Pacific, you'll know that when they re-entered in 1995, they were guaranteed a place on the grid. That's because two teams had dropped and there was only one new team on their way in – that was Forti.

The team was created by Guido Forti at the tail end of the 1970s, and had run in Formula Ford, South American F3, then successfully in the Italian F3 series – taking three consecutive championships. By the early 1990s, the team had moved on to F3000 and were taking wins and aiming for the title. In 1993, two new drivers appeared in the Forti car, Olivier Beretta and Brazilian Pedro Diniz. The latter brought plenty of money with him, and a connection with Carlo Gancia, who was the driving force to the team's entry to Formula 1. With Diniz money, plus plenty of Brazilian sponsors on board, the team entered the sport in 1995 with a pretty good starting budget.

The team sourced designers and engineers from many different teams, including Fondmetal, Osella and Brabham. Forti got use of the Aerotek wind-tunnel in South Africa, although it appeared that the FG01-95 was just a reworking of a previous Fondmetal design. They were slightly behind the times as well, boasting the only manual gearbox on the grid, and starting life without an airbox. It wasn't unusual to see the team qualifying about 10 seconds off the pace, and finishing races sometimes 7 laps down. The car seemed to have good reliability, but being at the lower end of the grid made crashes almost inevitable. Both drivers finished just over half the race distance available in 1995.

In 1996, Diniz decided to move to the slightly more successful Ligier team. Moreno also left, so the team now comprised of Luca Badoer, and Andrea Montermini. The problem was, of course, that Diniz also took his money with him, and so Forti had to use their old cars for the new season. The new qualifying rules meant drivers had to be within 107% of the pole time, and this made things slightly more difficult for Forti. Only one car qualified in Australia, but the next few races saw both -drivers make it to the back of the grid. In Argentina, Badoer had an incident with his predecessor Diniz, where the Ligier flipped the Forti upside down. Badoer was fine, but it was just another notch on the DNF tally.

A new car was in the works, just the one, and when it was introduced, Badoer found himself almost 4 seconds faster than his team mate in the old chassis. The first result in the new car saw Badoer finish 10th. That was quite a result. When both drivers were given the new car at Monaco, they both qualified for the race. Unfortunately, Montermini didn't make it out of the tunnel in one piece, following a wet practice session, and Badoer scored himself a ban for bashing into Villeneuve.

Whilst the drivers had better equipment, and now just had to control themselves, there was some corporate work happening behind the scenes. A group called the Shannon organisation were interested in taking over Forti, as they were already running well in F3 and F3000. It all gets a little bit political, as the boss of Belco Avia announced the deal. They had done some work on the car, and rumours were that they were owed money by Forti. Shannon were reported to now own 51% of the team, but according to Forti, he had not seen any money, and so this was simply not true.



Out on track, the team were still struggling to qualify, and when they did, they barely made the finish line. In France, both cars got onto the grid, but had to be withdrawn because their engines had reached the end of their useful life. Money was owed to Cosworth, it appeared, and without Shannon coughing up, things were going downhill rapidly. Forti took the problem to the courts, trying to regain control of his ailing team from Shannon, but unfortunately things went Shannon's way. The announcement was made in September, and Shannon folded soon afterwards, meaning the end of the team.

That's all for Forgotten F1 Teams today. Leave your thoughts about what we've discussed at Sidepodcast.com or via the Voicemail, 0121 28 87225. I will be back tomorrow to discuss another F1 team.

Arrows

Welcome to Forgotten F1 Teams – a mini series from Sidepodcast chronicling the rise and fall of teams that couldn't stay the distance. This is the fourth show, we've already looked at Simtek, Pacific and Forti, but today we're talking about Arrows.

Arrows Grand Prix came to life in 1977, founded by previous Shadow employees, Franco Ambrosio, Alan Rees, Jackie Oliver, Dave Wass and Tony Southgate – the surnames of whom spell out Arrows... sort of. Based in Milton Keynes, their Formula 1 entry was a bit of a rush job, with their first ever car being produced in just 53 days. Riccardo Patrese was brought on board to steer the car and the early signs were promising. They finished tenth in their first race in '78, almost won their second, and picked up some points in their third Grand Prix.

Unfortunately, the team didn't have an easy start to life with some early controversies. Founder Franco Ambrosio had to leave the team after being found guilty of financial misconduct in Italy, and sent to prison. The team were then sued by Shadow for copyright on their chassis, which was upheld by the court. However, this didn't stop them, as while the decision was being made over the the copied chassis, Arrows had built a brand new car, which then took to the track without them having to miss a race.

Patrese was involved in a serious multi-car pile up at the Italian Grand Prix that year. Fellow driver Ronnie Peterson died after the accident, and James Hunt, who was also involved, led a successful campaign to get Patrese banned from racing at the next Grand Prix.

In 1984, Arrows partnered with BMW, who brought their turbo engines on board, and the team received sponsorship from Barclay – a cigarette company. Their championship efforts improved, from 9th up to 8th the following year. In 1987, when BMW split from the team, things got even better. 6th in the championship that year, and 4th the next.

At the beginning of the next decade, the Japanese Footwork corporation became a prominent sponsor, and in 1991, this became the new name of the team. They kept it until 1996, when the sponsor withdrew support, and they became Arrows again. To replace Footwork, a new investor, Tom Walkinshaw was brought on board, and he successfully signed up defending champion Damon Hill. At the 1997 Hungarian GP, the team so very nearly got their first win, albeit mostly due to luck, but that ran out when a throttle problem meant Hill had to crawl to the finish handing the lead to Villeneuve on the final lap.

Walkinshaw gradually bought out ownership of the entire team, but under his reign, engine partnerships changed at the drop of a hat, and drivers were also coming and going. By 2002, Jos Verstappen was suing the team for breach of contract, Arrows was unsuccessfully trying to sue Pedro Diniz for leaving them, and Heinz-Harald Frentzen was suing them for not having been paid yet. By the middle of the season, Arrows had no money left, and suspicions were beginning to mount about their ability to continue in the championship. At the French Grand Prix, both drivers failed



to qualify, but it appeared that they could have had they tried just that little bit harder. The data showed that both drivers had been competitive in the first two sectors but not in the last. They were threatened with bringing the sport into disrepute, trying not to qualify because they couldn't afford to race. Before anything could be made of the situation though, the team had gone into liquidation.

A friend of Walkinshaw's bought up some of the team's assets to partner them with previous purchased Prost team assets, and enter Formula 1. The FIA disagreed. The rights for the chassis were picked up by Paul Stoddart of Minardi, and then by Super Aguri who ran a modified version in 2006.

Although compared to some of our Forgotten teams, lasting 15 years in the sport is a successful campaign, the team's greatest "achievement" is having participated in 382 races without a win.

That's it for this edition of Forgotten F1 Teams. Please let me know what you remember of the Arrows team on Sidepodcast.com or via the Voicemail – 0121 28 87225. I will be back tomorrow with our next Forgotten team.

Onyx

You're listening to Forgotten F1 Teams, a mini series from Sidepodcast chronicling the rise and fall of some of those teams you might not have heard of. We've already covered four teams this series, and now it's time for our fifth: Onyx.

The team began life as Onyx Race Engineering, at the tail end of 1978. Founders Mike Earle and Greg Field had plenty of experience between them, having competed in F3, F2, F5000, and Formula 1. In fact, the pair had teamed up to build the Lec F1 team in the 70s, but that had come to an end after a Silverstone accident, and Onyx was their next challenge.

The new team entered F2 for a couple of years, finding a competitive driver in Riccardo Paletti. In 1982, Paletti moved to F1 with Osella, but Onyx wanted him back for their own F1 entry the next year. Paletti was killed, however, at the Canadian GP, and the lack of plans meant the team began to flounder. Greg Field sold his half of the team but even that didn't seem enough to secure their future. Finally, things began to look up when the March F2 team was outsourced, and Onyx picked up the contract.

After several successful years in the sport, 1988 saw the March team uncompetitive, and Mike Earle was anxious to get back into Formula 1. He began to form his own team, bringing sponsors Marlboro and Moneytron on board, the boss of the latter buying shares in Onyx. This new investor, Jean-Pierre van Rossum began to be very vocal about how the already established team was being run.

Nevertheless, with a Cosworth engine on board, the ORE1 was ready to take to the track in the hands of Stefan Johansson and rookie Bertrand Gachot. 1989 was their debut year, but they could have so easily missed their debut race. The cars weren't finished until the morning they were launched, and then immediately flown to Brazil for the first race of the season. Once arrived, the cars still had tweaks here and there, and in the end couldn't make it through the pre-qualifying sessions that applied in the late 80s. It wasn't until the fourth race of the season that the team made it through the preliminary rounds and onto the grid, and even then the car retired. However, progress was being made, slow but sure, and Greg Field returned to the team he had left. At the French Grand Prix, the cars suited the Paul Ricard circuit perfectly and qualified 11th and 13th. Johansson scored a 5th place finish, but of course, the momentum only lasted for the one race.

Whilst still desperately struggling to reach the grid each race, behind the scenes, confusion was starting to creep in. The Moneytron owner van Rossum was telling the press that he was spending cash on getting a Porsche engine, and



encouraging top names to drive for the team, but in reality, he was starting to balk at the high cost of being involved with Formula 1. He finally announced that if Onyx didn't get the engine deal he was after in time for the 1991 season, then he would pull out of the sport. Before it came to that, though, he was making his influence felt within the team, suspending, and ultimately firing Gachot after comments he had made about the lack of testing he was allowed to do.

The team threw replacement Lehto into the car with no experience, so it was no surprise that he didn't get through pre-qualifying for the Portuguese Grand Prix. However, in Estoril, 1989, Johansson did manage to get into qualifying and on the grid, starting from 12th. He chose to do the entire race on one set of tyres, which saw him up to third. With the rubber wearing out he was overtaken by two Williams cars, but they both retired before the end of the race. A podium finish for the Onyx team!

There were no more results to come that year though, and development on the car had stalled. Van Rossem was gradually distancing himself from the team. Mike Earle and Greg Field both left, and although replacements were found, things were becoming more and more fractured. Despite having a year in hand to look for a replacement supplier, van Rossem stuck by his threat to quit once the Porsche deal fell through. Peter Monteverdi, a classic car collector, bought half the team, with the other half divided between businessman Karl Foitek and Ferrari dealer Bruno Frei.

For 1990, Lehto was kept on as a driver and he was to be teamed up with Karl Foitek's son. Gregor Foitek was driving for Brabham for a couple of races, though so Johansson was retained briefly. When Foitek arrived, Johansson sued for breach of contract. Former employee Alan Jenkins, jumped on the bandwagon and also brought a lawsuit on the team.

With the best result of 1990 being an unlikely 7th at Monaco, Onyx was in trouble. Monteverdi didn't have the cash to develop the car, and he wasn't prepared for how much work and how difficult running a Formula 1 team was. Halfway through the season, he changed the name of the team to Monteverdi, but it only lasted for two more races. With mounting debts, the cars were simply patched up rather than individual parts being replaced or developed. Karl Foitek pulled out of the team, and took his son with him. Onyx, now called Monteverdi, had no choice but to fold.

That's all for yet another team story in the history books of Formula 1. I'd love to hear your comments about this show, or about the team, via voicemail – 0121 28 87225 – or on the blog sidepodcast.com. I'll be back tomorrow with another Forgotten F1 Team.

Life

Welcome to Forgotten F1 Teams, a mini series from Sidepodcast that takes a closer look at those teams who have gone down in history without a trace. So far we've discussed Simtek, Arrows, and Onyx but today we're going to look at Life Racing Engines.

The story of the Life F1 team is a short one. They were only in the sport for one year, and came out with nothing to show for it. The team boss was Ernesto Vita, who came from Modena in Italy. In 1989, he saw the potential of making a quick profit by selling engines to F1 teams. He snapped up the designs for an unusual engine, built by an ex-Ferrari engineer Franco Rocchi. Their W12 was quite special as it was designed with three rows of four cylinders instead of two rows of six. The theory was that the engine could be as small as a V8 but kick out enough power to match a V12. The high concept engine was ready to be sold but now Vita had to get the technology out there. He couldn't find a partner within the sport, so decided to go it alone. Thus, the Life entry to Formula 1 was born, specifically engineered to attract a buyer for the engines.



This brings us on to the 1990 F1 season. Vita wanted to enter his engines in the competition, so he picked up the old FIRST team chassis for his debut season. The small problem of that chassis having actually failed the FIA crash test, and been refused entry to the 1989 season didn't faze Vita, and some modifications saw the Life entry complete. Vita had signed up Gary Brabham, bolted on some Goodyear tyres, and fitted his new engine design into the car. The new chassis featured some strange designs, including additional airboxes, and very low cockpit sides. Despite being just as bad, if not worse, than the original FIRST chassis, the FIA approved entry to Life, and their season began.

At the first race, Brabham failed to qualify pretty spectacularly. The engine misfired, and the eventual laptime was 38 seconds off pole position. At the second event in Brazil, Brabham barely got out of the pitlane before the car ground to a halt. He branded the entire organisation of the team as a joke, and left. Life managed to persuade Italian driver Bruno Giacomelli to step in, taking him from his duties as test driver for Leyton House. The next few races saw Giacomelli continue the tradition of not being able to qualify, with one race seeing him over 7 minutes off the eventual pole position time.

After 12 disastrous attempts at pre-qualifying, the team got rid of their W12 engine and brought in a standard Judd V8 instead. Unfortunately, the modifications made to allow for the original unusual design meant the engine cover wouldn't fit over their new equipment. The car couldn't even take part in the Portuguese pre-qualifying, and the team moved on to Spain. By this time, the engine hassles were sorted out, but they were still 20 woeful seconds off the pace, and it was obvious that they weren't going to be able to pull things together, so they decided to ditch their F1 efforts two races before the end of the season.

Vita managed to find a buyer for a majority shareholding, but within months, the team had completely disappeared.

That's it for this Forgotten F1 Team. Don't forget to visit Sidepodcast.com to leave your comments on the disaster that was Life Racing Engines, and I will be back tomorrow with the final forgotten team.

Eifelland

Welcome to the final episode in this Sidepodcast mini series – Forgotten F1 Teams. We've covered from the lows of Life to the highs of Arrows, and now it's time to check in with our final team – Eifelland.

In your travels, you may have come across a German caravan company called Eifelland Wohnwagenbau. In the 1970s, Eifelland owner Gunther Henerici started sponsoring a couple of teams in the lower formulas, plus German F1 driver Rolf Stommelen. In 1972, Henerici decided that he'd set up his own team for Stommelen and enter the world of F1 constructors. He bought a March 721 chassis, and commissioned Luigi Colani to redesign it. This is where the fun starts.

Colani had good credentials, having designed several successful sportscars, but he didn't necessarily have all the knowledge required to create a Formula 1 car. Either that, or he was just having a laugh. The rear wing on his design was simply an extension of the bodywork, curving upwards, with no gaps for the air to squeeze through. The front wing was just as odd, and then Colani went and installed an airbox ahead of the driver for good measure. The best bit of the car, though, was the lack of wing mirrors. Colani decided the best way for a driver to see whether he was about to be lapped was by means of a periscope mirror, starting directly in the driver's line of vision, and extending upwards. With a V8 Cosworth engine and some Goodyear tyres, the Eifelland car was launched.

During testing, it seemed as if Colani's idea might work, as some fast times were recorded, but the car lacked downforce, and the unusual wings were causing heating problems. The bodywork was swiftly redesigned to include a more conventional rear wing. In fact, Colani's designs were gradually eroded from the car as more standard parts



were integrated to the chassis. In the hands of Stommelen, the Eifelland only entered 8 races in Formula 1, but was respectable throughout.

The first round at South Africa saw a 13th place finish, and in Monaco, Stommelen was 10th. The car was to go no higher than 10th in it's participation but recorded that finishing position again at the 6th round in Britain. It wasn't until Germany, the next race, that the Eifelland suffered its first mechanical retirement, due to some electrical problems. This is pretty impressive for a brand new rookie car trying to recover from some bizarre initial designs. Notably, at several opportunities, the Eifelland showed up the works March team, proving that whatever was going on with their aerodynamics wasn't that bad.

Unfortunately, by this time, Henerici was beginning to have doubts about the financial benefits of being involved in the sport, and he sold the caravan business to window manufacturer's Meeth. The team turned up to Austria, racing under the name Team Stommelen. They were running in 15th before the engine gave out and Stommelen had to retire. Eifelland's new boss wasn't interested in racing at all, and pulled the team out before the end of the season. The team assets were sold to Hexagon Racing, who took part in some non-championship events, and also never made their mark on motorsport.

That's it for this show, and this series of Forgotten F1 Teams. I hope you've enjoyed the trip down memory lane, and I'd love to hear your feedback on the blog sidepodcast.com or via voicemail 0121 28 87225.

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