

# EWEN SERGISON <sup>F1</sup>

IN THIS SPECIAL FEATURE, we talk to Ewen Sergison, who has been a recent addition to the Masters paddock and racer in the Masters Racing Legends. Find out more about his racing story and what led him to racing with Masters....

**“I’M STILL THE ONLY PERSON TO FINISH MONACO IN THAT SHADOW BECAUSE GRAHAM HILL NEVER DID.”**



# INTRODUCING EWEN SERGISON

Having campaigned both a Surtees TS9B and a Shadow DN9A in Masters Racing Legends since 2022, Ewen Sergison is a relatively new face in the Masters paddock. Still, he has been around in historic motor racing for a full decade, with multiple outings in the illustrious Goodwood and Monaco events headlining his historic career so far. The 2023 season saw his first full year in the Masters series for 1966-'85 Formula One cars, racing the immaculately turned-out Flame Out-liveried Surtees. We spoke to Ewen during the season-closing Algarve Classic Festival in 2023.



## HOW DID YOU END UP IN HISTORIC MOTOR RACING?

“Well, I’ve always raced. We used to run cars in the Monoposto club, which is single-seaters. One of my customers, Jim Blockley, had an Historic F3 and he put an advertisement out on Racecars Direct for a race engineer. And I thought, well, it’s probably a bit much for me, but I’ll apply anyway. He gave me the job in 2013. That was when I first started looking after historic cars. It sort of barrel-rolled from there. Once you’re at the events, you start looking after cars for people, and then you get more customers. I think we ran our first F1 car in demonstration days in 2018, and then it’s just carried on, and eventually I ended up driving them.”

## WHEN WAS THE FIRST TIME YOU DROVE AN F1 CAR?

“Also, it was the same first time I ever drove Monaco. Yeah, a baptism of fire! It was the ex-Graham Hill Embassy-liveried Shadow DN1 in 2021. I was also racing a Maserati 6CM at the same event. I’d actually driven the Maserati pre-war Grand Prix car quite a lot before that, so luckily, I got to learn a bit of Monaco in that before I jumped into a DFV-powered F1. And I’m still the only person to finish Monaco in that Shadow because Graham Hill never did. We sold it the year after and Emanuele Pirro was driving it – and he didn’t finish either!”

**YOUR FIRST MASTERS EVENT?**

“That was the Silverstone Classic in 2022. It’s the only Masters Racing Legends race I did apart from Monaco before we decided to do a full season this year. It was quite funny, really, because if I’d done one more race, I could have ended up something like fourth in the points last year. So, the owner of the car decided he wanted to do more races this season. We sort of half worked out that if we do most of the races – because, for a few years, there’s not always been consistently strong opposition to the class – we could actually win the series as well. And then this year, Nick Padmore and Chrome Cars decided that they wanted to win the championship! But we like Masters, it’s all very friendly and nicely run.”

**IN IT TO WIN IT OR JUST FOR FUN?**

“Well, we always want to win and bring the silverware home. We run our business a bit like a racing stable. The customers say what racing they want to do and we’ll try to find a car that’s not been winning races that should or could be. We’ll prepare it, make it as reliable as we can, hopefully, win some races, and then they sell it. The Surtees is not for sale, though, she’s a keeper and actually was first raced on the day that the owner was born.”

**WHAT’S IT LIKE TO RACE BY FAR THE OLDEST CAR ON THE GRID?**

“I always feel like I’m up against it. If there were four championships, one for each class, I’d be champion of nothing because I’ve not raced anybody in class this year. So, I’m always racing more recent cars. Even though the Surtees is good, we’re on the back foot – there’s no aero. I mean, everyone comes out for the Monaco and Goodwood events, but why the owners of pre-72 cars don’t do more in the Masters, I don’t know. So now I’ve got to compete against a 1976 Lotus 77 in a 1971 Surtees TS9B. It’s not a fair fight, but it’s a great challenge.”



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### **YOUR BEST DAY IN MOTOR RACING?**

“In 2016, I won the Historic F3 race at Zandvoort. That was mega – and I won a watch! That was probably my best race, but my best feeling was having my dad with me at Monaco in 2021 when I got on the podium in the Maserati 6CM. I won the class but also finished third overall, so I got on the podium at Monaco. Because I built the engine in that, that’s one thing that’ll never leave me. After we won, I was in tears going through the tunnel because I’m thinking this is an engine I built with my own hands, and I’ve just won Monaco in it. That was an immense emotion. With one race in between, I then jumped into the DN1, and we finished tenth in that as well, so that was a great weekend!”

### **AND YOUR WORST DAY?**

“I don’t know what year it was, but I had three cars that were all ours. All family-owned cars, and we were running them at Anglesey in Wales – my wife Rachel’s dad driving one, Rachel’s mum driving one, and Rachel driving one. And I basically said to them, I’ve got a really busy winter, and all I ask is that all the cars come home in one piece. Then, in testing on the Friday, Rachel’s dad hit the wall and snapped the car clean in half, and then at the start of the first race, Rachel’s mum spun and hit Rachel. So, all three cars had a wheel missing, and one was completely snapped in half. That was probably my worst day of racing...”

### **BEST CAR YOU’VE EVER DRIVEN?**

“The Surtees TS9B – it’s just like a little go-kart. It’s a short wheelbase, and there’s no front aero. To be able to say that I’ve actually gone around the lap where the car’s been sliding completely within control, all safe, while I’m driving it as fast as it can go – it makes you think, Mike Hailwood and John Surtees did this in this car, and I’m doing exactly the same. That’s quite a nice feeling. Whereas the DN1 and the DN9 that I’ve driven, I don’t think I’ve ever had them at that limit yet. But this one I seem to have just gelled with straight away.”



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#### **AND THE WORST CAR?**

“You have to define worst because the worst handling car I’ve ever driven was the Studebaker that I’ve just raced at the Goodwood Revival. But that’s not the worst experience of a car, as that was still fun. The worst car was a works BTCC Toyota Carina E touring car. That was just boring; it had no charisma. I’ve driven slow cars, a lot slower than that, but this was just a pointless drive. I’m not into tin tops really...”

#### **YOUR FAVOURITE CIRCUIT?**

“In the world, I would say Zandvoort. In the UK, Cadwell Park. But I’d say Zandvoort is probably the overall winner. It has got everything that I love – the undulations, blind corners, fast corners, slow corners, and it’s just very technical. The more technical, the better. But during this weekend, it has changed to Portimão!”

#### **WHY DOESN’T MASTERS GO TO...**

“I don’t know. I haven’t got anywhere on my bucket list; it all seems to be ticked off. I mean, I hate Silverstone, but I know the Silverstone Festival is always a big meeting, and it’s a lot better in a Formula One car than anything else. I’d never really want to go to Paul Ricard, because that’s the same. It’s all laid out with lines; it could be going anywhere. But Brands Hatch is awesome in an F1 car – really good. So I don’t know. I suppose Monza or Imola, maybe...”

## WHO'S THE RIVAL THAT YOU FEAR OR RESPECT THE MOST?

"It's probably going to be an obvious choice, but that's my brother-in-law, Mark Harrison, because I've known him so long. He's so quick for how little time he has had in historic Formula 1 cars. Their father-and-son team seem to have done a really good job of it. They used to just do three F1 events a year, between them as a family, because they also had a big commitment with Monoposto as well. But I'm pretty sure they're going to concentrate on historic racing now. They've got a couple of F2 cars, so I think the two brothers are going to race the F2 cars, and then Mark will race the Shadow DN9 F1 in Masters Racing Legends still."

## AND FINALLY, WHO'S YOUR BEST MATE IN THE PADDOCK?

"I don't know anyone that well really yet, but this year I've seen a lot of Mark Hazell, and he's just a real fun character. And literally, he fell in love with my son, Alfred, who is travelling with us to all the circuits. Even when he's walking up to the podium after he's just finished a race, he's shouting to Alfred, trying to get a wave while he's on the podium. So I think he's good for the club as a person. But, if I can include off the track, then my son Alfred is my best friend in the paddock; he comes to all the races with me and has more photos than I do in his little push-along car! Hopefully, one day, we'll be on the grid together."



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