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KART LONGA, F1 VITA BREVIS

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Let me tell you all about (k)art.

Art(hur) Ingels (little is known about the man around the blogosphere and on top of everything grandprix.com refers to him as "Ingles") apparently built the world's first kart in Southern California.

Another anonymous website claims that "at the first national meeting of the Go Kart Club of America, Art was awarded a plaque which bore the inscription 'Father of the Karting Sport'."

Let's leave his ghost in peace now; anyway, the "disease" quickly spread to Europe and in 1964 a 100cc World Championship was held.

Since then, guys like Peterson, Prost, Senna, Piquet, Schumacher and more recently Trulli, Button, Alonso, Hamilton and Liuzzi all cut their teeth on karting which shows the importance of the discipline.

Poor Vitaly Petrov who had no experience in karting in the early stages of his career openly admits he's lacking a bit in the preparation department and tells everybody not to follow his example.

No current or former F1 driver was available for comment; it meant I had to dig deeper and here are some random quotes on karting from various F1 stars.

R. Kubica: "I've always enjoyed driving karts. It was a great fun to compete in karting - lots of competition and not so much politics. The world of kart racing allowed me to stand out and take the path leading to F1. In karting there is always competition. There is always someone who wants to be the fastest but overall I think it is good fun."

M. Schumacher: "You don't have the close competition in Formula One that you have in karting, because in karting it is permanently wheel to wheel. It's a close thing plus it's easier to get the good equipment and be there. In Formula One it is something else again. And that is why I like karting very much."

J .Alguersuari: "I love karting like Formula One as I like to drive cars. In 2009 I did the World Cup and this year hopefully I can do another race. Between Formula One races I go to Italy to train and also in Spain here at some tracks. Karting I think is the best method to train for a driver for Formula One, for rally, whatever, as you train a lot of things and you also do cardiovascular training and at the end what you need is to drive. Also the fact I am training quite a lot on karting as we don't have much testing in Formula One, I mean we have no testing in Formula One, so for me it is always nice and at the end it is another tool to drive."

Earlier this year McLaren - the spiritual home of all native Ronspeak speakers - announced they have signed Dutch karting star Nyck de Vries to their YDDP ("young driver development programme" if you must know).

Martin Whitmarsh produced yet another mesmerizing statement on the subject: "Nyck appears to be a very exciting prospect." Appears? I'm loving that!

De Vries seems like a fast young dude with a decent sense humour; the World Karting Champion in 2010 describes his trials and tribulations this way: "When I was 4 years old, my parents bought me a babykart. With this kart I drove my first ever lap at the property of my father's company, a track which was made out of old tyres.

"Later on I started practicing at an indoor track in Heerenveen, where I could practice before the opening times of the public. The first time I drove on an official track was in Amsterdam. After that we immediately found a road to a small circuit in Strijen, where we had a really nice time.

"In 2002 the KNAF nominated me as the 'Rookie of the Year'."

This is what NDV had to say on his 2010 title: "The World Championship was difficult and in the final we had opted for a new set-up. Jordan Chamberlain took the lead at the start and, honestly, I really thought that I was never going to catch up with him. Then in the last four laps the gap was reduced. When I saw the 'Last lap' board I said to myself that I just had to try something; the opportunity to win the World Championship might never arise again. And I made it!"

Yummy! The desire to win is amazing, so I hope he'll be the one replacing Lewis or Jenson at McLaren around 2016 when these "old" (by F1 standards) farts retire from Grand Prix racing straight to DTM, WTCC or maybe to Le Mans to carry on with McLaren's GT programme.