

surtees

three generations, one obsession



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a feature length documentary film

John Surtees OBE is unique even amongst that rarest of breeds - professional racing drivers. No man has ever equalled the most remarkable of his many achievements - world champion on both two and four wheels. It's unlikely that any man ever will.

John's story is one of dedication, determination and bravery. But that's not all. Incredibly, John is one of three generations of the Surtees family to garner success in motor sports.

Now in his mid-seventies, John Surtees has won no less than seven world championships on motorcycles as well as the Formula One championship for Ferrari. Of the 621 races he entered, he won an incredible 290. He claimed a further 103 podium places, recorded 48 fastest laps and 100 lap records. He ran his own Formula One racing team and he cheated death in a horrific racing accident in Canada in 1965. He is truly a legend of his era.

John's father Jack was a highly successful motorcycle racer both before and after the war, so it was perhaps inevitable that John would go racing. Eager to follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather and at the tender age of just eighteen, John's son Henry is the third generation of an extraordinary dynasty. Racing almost from when he could walk, Henry climbed rapidly through the ranks to challenge for the Formula Two championship and ultimately for a seat in Formula One.

Surtees (working title) follows the family as Henry mounts his campaign for the Formula Two crown - driving a racing car painted the very same colours as his father's car from 1972. The colours may be the same, but the racing world is now a very different place. In John's heyday, drivers could focus on driving rather than sound bites. It was also an era long before modern safety standards and drivers risked life and limb each and every time they took to the circuit.

Tragically, despite the cutting edge technologies employed to make modern motor sport safe, in only the fourth race of the season, Henry suffers a freak accident that results in his death.

It's an event that shatters John's world. How does a man who has survived into old age against all the odds, deal with losing his only son to the sport that they both loved?

Surtees is a story that encompasses triumph and tragedy, dedication and sacrifice. A story of a sporting hero looking back at his achievements and of a young man, full of promise, whose life is cruelly cut short.

The film celebrates an extraordinary sporting dynasty but also looks beneath the glamour and excitement of motor racing to tell a story with universal themes - men striving to be the best they can, success against the odds and tragedy and the unbearable pain of loss.



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