

# Kurtis Kraft-Offenhauser

**Cartrix 0930 Kurtis Kraft-Offenhauser  
- Johnnie Parsons, United States Grand Prix 1950.**

By Holger "Slaasshh" Thor

Among Formula One fans all over the world, the Indianapolis Speedway may be best known due the scandal race back in 2005, where only 6 cars participated because of tyre problems with all the Michelin equipped teams.

Less known is the fact, that in the first eleven years of the official FIA World Championship for drivers, namely 1950 to 1960, the races on the old original oval circuit were official Grand Prix's approved by the FIA. None of the European teams choose to participate over the years, since their cars did not fit into this special US kind of race. Nevertheless the winners and runner ups received the traditional points 8-6-4-3-2 for the first five places and an additional point for fastest lap.

So if you look in old point tables covering the World Championship of these years, a few more or less known American drivers will pup up. One of them being Johnnie Parsons, but more about him later.

Late in the forties Frank Kurtis started to construct so called "midget racers", being open wheeled formula cars. He used different engines in these cars, and since it was tradition in the US to call the cars by the names of their sponsors as well, Kurtis's first Indianapolis racer I 1949 received the rather exotic name Wynn's Kurtis Kraft-Offenhauser. Wynn's being the sponsor and Kraft-Offenhauser the engine. He hired fellow American Johnnie Parsons to drive his car in the race. With race number 12 Parsons finished a fine second.

The Spanish brand Cartrix has released a fine model of this car under article number 0931. Unfortunately this car does not fit into my vintage Grand Prix car collection, since the FIA World Championship was not run in 1949. This is a bit sad, since it is a very fine little car.



Johnnie Parsons in his Wynn's Kurtis Kraft-Offenhauser #1 preparing for the Indianapolis race May 30th, 1950. A fine and well deserved victory will follow. A total of 15 Kurtis Kraft-Offenhauser racers participated in this race, so there should be plenty of fine liveries to choose from, should Cartrix some day want to release more versions of this fine model. Especially if they are as colourful as this one!

But Cartrix 0930 Kurtis Kraft-Offenhauser is perfect for my collection. Frank Kurtis continued his work in 1950 with the same driver, engine, sponsor etc. Only difference being the red car now repainted in screaming yellow. With race number 1 Johnnie Parsons qualified as number 5 on the grid, and when the race was flagged to an end after 138 of the planned 200 laps because of heavy rain, that years Indy being one of the wettest ever, he was declared winner, and the fastest lap of the race was his as well. So even if Johnnie Parsons only did participate in this single round of the World Championship that year, he ended up as number 6 in the point table with 9 points to his tally. The championship was made up of a total of 7 rounds, and the first ever World Champion became the Italian, Dr. Guiseppe "Nino" Farina in his Alfa Romeo 158 with 3 victories and 30 points ahead of his team mate Juan-Manuel Fangio from Argentina, also with 3 victories but 27 points.

Johnnie Parsons continued to participate in the Indy until 1958, with the only noteworthy result being a third place in 1956, which again brought him 4 points in the World Championship table.

That means that Johnnie Parsons statistically has participated in 9 Grand Prix's, winning one of them and gained a total of 13 points. At little odd since he never raced outside the USA!

Johnnie Parsons holds another "record" as well. So far he is the only Indy winner ever to have his name written wrong on the enormously Borg-Warner Trophy. Until renovation of the trophy in 1991 he was to be found under "Johnny Parsons".

Johnnie Parsons died of a heart attack in 1984, 66 years of age.

