



Penske's Maestro: Karl Kainhofer and the History of Penske Racing

Gordon Kirby

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Karl Kainhofer, an Austrian-born Porsche-trained master mechanic, was Roger Penske's personal race mechanic, preparing many of the cars Penske raced in the late nineteen-fifties and early sixties. When Penske started the Penske Racing organization in 1966 Kainhofer was the first man he hired as a full-time employee, and over the following ten years Kainhofer became chief mechanic for Mark Donohue's Can-Am, Formula 5000 cars, Indy cars and Formula 1 cars. After Donohue's tragic death at the Austrian GP in 1975 Kainhofer started a second career as the boss of Penske's engine shop. Over the following twenty-two years he was Penske's chief engine man, before retiring at the end of 1997, after thirty-two years with Penske Racing. Through a career that spanned 40 years from 1958 through 1997 Kainhofer scored a remarkable 170 wins from 535 races, including 22 with Donohue in the USRRC, Can-Am and Indy cars, plus 94 wins, nine Indy 500s included, as the chief engine builder for Penske's Indy cars from 1977 through 1997. In researching and writing 'Penske's Maestro' veteran American racing writer and award-winning author Gordon Kirby interviewed more than sixty people who worked with Kainhofer at Penske Racing over the years. Hence the book relates not only Karl's life history but also the inside story of Penske Racing's first 32 years. 'Penske's Maestro' includes more than 400 photos plus a complete statistical record of Kainhofer's amazing career. Fully Indexed.

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