



NICK OLLILA: Technical Director

Birthdate: July 18, 1953
Birthplace: Detroit, Michigan
Hometown: Warren, Michigan
Residence: Mooresville, North Carolina
Children: Nicholas

Nick Ollila (pronounced Ol-li-lah) is the technical director at Gaunt Brothers Racing, with the motorsport veteran overseeing the team's engineering department.

Ollila came to Gaunt Brothers Racing in May 2020 after a three-year stint as the technical director for Kelly Racing in the Virgin Australia Supercars Championship. The Warren, Michigan-native returned to the United States in time for the resumption of the 2020 NASCAR Cup Series schedule, which began May 17 at Darlington (S.C.) Raceway as NASCAR became one of the first major North American sports to return to action since the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Nick brings considerable insight into what we're doing with our current inventory of racecars and what we'll be doing with our NextGen car in 2022,” said Marty Gaunt, president and CEO, Gaunt Brothers Racing. “He has deep experience in all forms of motorsports, specifically in embracing technology and managing people. Nick also has a strong rapport with our partner Toyota, as many of the people he worked with when he was at Red Bull are the same people there today.”

Gaunt first worked with Ollila in 1997 when the two were at Kranefuss-Haas Racing. Gaunt was the general manager of the NASCAR Cup Series team and Ollila was its chief engineer. Their NASCAR paths crossed again 10 years later when both worked at Red Bull Racing – Gaunt as vice president and general manager, and Ollila as chief aerodynamicist.

“It's the people who make the cars go, and Nick has been making cars go since the early '70s,” Gaunt said. “We're lucky to have a lot of long-term employees who have been with us for 10 years, but scaling up from running a part-time schedule to a full schedule meant bringing in more people. Coming up with the recipe of having all the right people in all the right places isn't easy, but Nick is a good chef.”

NASCAR is where Ollila has spent the bulk of his career, which includes being the drivetrain specialist at Rod Osterlund Racing in 1980 when Dale Earnhardt won the first of his seven NASCAR Cup Series championships.

“Motorsports is my passion, and I'm proud to have turned it into a career,” Ollila said. “I've spent time in a variety of racing series, but NASCAR is the one that intrigues me the most. The level of competition is unmatched, so success is very satisfying. I've known and worked with Marty Gaunt and many of the people at Gaunt Brothers Racing for years. They've got a great foundation and they're building for the future, and I'm very happy to be a part of shaping that future.”

Ollila's racing career began at Team Penske in 1972 as a mechanic. He prepared cars for each of the series in which the organization competed, a lineup that included INDYCAR, NASCAR, Can-Am, Formula 5000, sports cars and Formula One.

NASCAR became Ollila's focus in late 1976. He joined DiGard Racing as the team's drivetrain specialist, working with NASCAR Hall of Famer Darrell Waltrip until the end of the 1978 season, whereupon he went to work for Osterlund.

INDYCAR and Penske beckoned in 1982, and Ollila returned as the team's engine builder, enjoying four championships (1982, 1983, 1985 and 1988) and four Indianapolis 500 victories (1984, 1985, 1987 and 1988).

That Penske connection led Ollila back to NASCAR in 1990, where he became the lead engineer for Hall of Fame driver Rusty Wallace. It was the beginning of a 20-year stint in NASCAR.

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Ollila worked at Kranefuss-Haas Racing from 1995-1997 where he established and led the engineering and aerodynamics departments. He then went on to an eight-year career at Roush-Fenway Racing as its chief engineer and director of aerodynamics. In 2005, Ollila moved to Richard Childress Racing as its director of aerodynamics where he implemented Indoor GPS, a laser-based measuring system for large-scale metrology that was a first for the industry.

In September 2007, Ollila joined nascent Red Bull Racing as chief aerodynamicist. His efforts greatly aided the team's development, a point punctuated by driver Brian Vickers scoring the outfit's maiden victory in August 2009 at Michigan International Speedway in Brooklyn and qualifying for the NASCAR Playoffs.

Ollila served as a consultant specializing in computational fluid dynamics (CFD) and computer-aided design (CAD) from 2010-2016 before heading overseas to Australia, where his first stint was at Arise Racing. There, he was the operations manager and technical director, which segued to his role with Kelly Racing in the Virgin Australia Supercars Championship in late 2017.

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