Circuit racing, one of the oldest and most prestigious forms of motorsport, has a rich history that dates back to the early 20th century. The origins of circuit racing can be traced to Europe, where organized races were first held on public roads before purpose-built tracks became the standard.

The first recorded circuit race took place in France in 1906 with the running of the Grand Prix de l’Automobile Club de France, marking the birth of Grand Prix racing. Early races were grueling endurance events held on closed public roads, often spanning hundreds of miles. These races tested both the durability of the vehicles and the skill of the drivers, setting the foundation for modern motorsports.

During the 1920s and 1930s, circuit racing expanded rapidly, with legendary tracks such as Monza (1922), Spa-Francorchamps (1921), and the Nürburgring (1927) becoming key venues. European manufacturers, including Mercedes-Benz, Alfa Romeo, and Bugatti, dominated the racing scene, producing cutting-edge technology that influenced commercial automotive development.

After World War II, circuit racing entered a golden era, leading to the establishment of the Formula One World Championship in 1950. This series quickly became the pinnacle of circuit racing, attracting the best drivers and manufacturers. The 1950s and 1960s saw the rise of iconic figures such as Juan Manuel Fangio, Stirling Moss, and Jim Clark, who showcased remarkable driving prowess.

Parallel to Formula One, other forms of circuit racing flourished. Sports car racing, including the 24 Hours of Le Mans, became a major spectacle, emphasizing endurance and teamwork. Touring car championships gained popularity, particularly in Europe and Australia, offering a more production-based approach to racing. In the United States, the development of stock car racing led to the formation of NASCAR in 1948, which evolved into one of America’s most beloved motorsports.

The 1970s and 1980s were marked by advancements in aerodynamics, turbocharged engines, and safety innovations. Tracks were redesigned to improve driver protection, and regulations became more stringent to ensure competitive racing. The era also saw the rise of corporate sponsorship, bringing increased media coverage and financial support to teams and drivers.

By the 1990s and early 2000s, circuit racing had become a global phenomenon, with Formula One expanding to new markets, endurance racing growing in prestige, and national touring car series gaining strong followings. Advancements in technology, including telemetry, hybrid powertrains, and data analytics, have since revolutionized the sport, making modern circuit racing more sophisticated and competitive than ever before.