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GP BRAZIL
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AN ALMOST INDEPENDENT F1 NEWSPAPER



DESTINY'S CHILD

CAN LEWIS MAKE HISTORY?

THE THIRD MAN

Even though he blasted his way back into title contention in China, you'd be forgiven for thinking that Kimi Raikkonen was out of the picture given the focus on his two rivals. But the Finn is still fighting and yesterday took fourth place on the timesheets behind the McLarens and team-mate Felipe Massa. Photography: Sutton Images

SATURDAY BRAZIL 20·10·07

After rain in Japan and in China, in Brazil... it rained. F1 better start going green quickly or we'll be racing submarines soon. A damp track meant it was out with the wet tyres again for the teams, some more than others. Lewis, Jenson and Taku used two sets in the morning – not allowed. And so the alarms sounded again, though not at McLaren, where it was greeted with good humour. Elsewhere, Lewis received some smoke signals from home, Rubens proved he's F1's most generous pilot, and Flav and Bernie got a little bit richer as GP2 provided a nice end-of-season bonus...



BARRICHELLO PRESENTS...

Rubens Barrichello has long been a leading contender for the 'nicest guy in the paddock' award, and this year he went to great lengths to keep the title. On Wednesday, he hired a São Paolo kart track where more than 80 Honda F1 guys and girls had a fun day out. In a hard-fought series of heats and then a final, featuring over qualified drivers Anthony Davidson, James Rossiter, Christian Klein and Rubens himself, the Brazilian finished second to Davidson. Narrowly missing out on first place did nothing to dampen Rubens' spirits, however, and after a prize-giving ceremony, he presented each of his guests with an iPod Nano engraved with a Barrichello Racing logo. It was, he said, his way of thanking the team for their efforts during a difficult year. Still not finished, he then declared that the top-finishing non-pro karter, Honda truckie Paul 'Benny' Benstead, would receive his helmet after Sunday's race. And who said F1 drivers were all selfish?



TAXI DRIVER

It's a typical topic of conversation for any F1 personnel taking a cab across the cities we visit. "What brings you to Istanbul/Shanghai/São Paulo?" they say. "Oh yeah, I reckon I could drive in F1." Sure you could. But, then again, London Times correspondent Ed Gorman has found someone who's got closer than most. Ed has used the chauffeuring skills of one Antonio Rogatto, who modestly admits to knowing the racing lines of Rubens Barrichello better than most. "I never beat him though," reveals Antonio, who's been a taxi driver for three years. "We raced karts together when he was in his mid-teens and I was about 25. He was amazing – the man to beat. It didn't surprise me that he got to F1. He looked like a champion, for sure. We raced at the kart track at Interlagos. He and his dad would often give me technical advice."



MIDFIELD TACKLE

Who says the constructor's championship is over? The rivalry in the midfield is just as intense as it is for the drivers up front, and with only four points separating Williams and Red Bull Racing, both teams will stop at nothing to gain an advantage. So it was always likely that this week's inter-team Petrobras-organised soccer match would turn nasty. Having beaten Toyota and McLaren, Williams went up against RBR and earned a morale boosting victory. However, Kazuki Nakajima's race debut was looking shaky after a dramatic two-footed tackle from a Red Bull mechanic. Fortunately, there was no FIA steward on the sideline.

SMOKE SIGNAL

"Go Lewis" has been emblazoned on the tarmac next to London's iconic Battersea Power Station. Created with 50-foot lettering written in burned rubber, stunt man Russ Swift laid down his good luck message with the help of a Caterham Seven, a Yamaha superbike and three sets of tyres. The stunt (above) was organised to launch the Xbox 360 game Project Gotham Racing 4.

HAVE A GREAT RETIREMENT

FOM's Roger Finnis is retiring from Formula One after more than 30 years in the business. He joined Tyrrell in '76 and stayed on as number one mechanic until '98, when the team became BAR. He did try working as an MOT tester, but couldn't stay away from racing and returned to work in FOM's On-Board Camera Department. Sunday will be his 490th grand prix. Roger would have liked to hit the magic 500 races, but his wife Sheila said enough was enough. Apparently, he still wears Tyrrell team kit despite repeatedly being asked not to.

TELLY ADDICTS

Kangaroo TV revealed on Thursday what will be available to fans this weekend as part of its schedule of regular programming next season. As well as broadcasting the race, commentary and stats, the handheld device will also give viewers behind the scenes access with magazine-style features about the cities hosting the race and new technologies, as well as interviews with key paddock personalities, from drivers and management to the essential workers around the circuit. Much of the footage will be filmed on site over the race weekend. Kangaroo plan to gain access to all the teams, and the programming will be similar to what you might get on your TV back home.



GP2: A SELL OUT

On the same day that GP2 announced that all 13 current teams have signed on for a further five years, it has been revealed that the series has been taken over by Formula One owners CVC Capital Partners. Despite no official announcement, a GP2 spokesman confirmed to the Bulletin that the sale, estimated at approximately US$300 million, has gone through. It is sure to give the series a stronger financial footing and continued proximity to F1.

CORRECTION

Yesterday's tribute to Glenn Campbell contained an error. Glenn passed away from lung cancer, not throat cancer.



Championship position will determine garage allocation next season. Does being at the start of the pitlane make a difference?

HOW DOES THAT WORK?

Neil Martin, head of strategic operations, Red Bull Racing answers:

Having the first pitbox in the pitlane is, at some circuits, sometimes an advantage as the cars can drive directly into their box, without the need to swerve into it. If the car does not land precisely in the box for a pitstop, the length of the pitstop can be significantly increased as the wheel guys and fuel man have to shuffle from their original place to the position where the car has actually stopped. The disadvantage of the first pitbox is that if you are the first car to pit in a train of cars, all changing from (for example) dry to wet, you may have to wait until all cars have passed your garage before you are able to launch from the box. Obviously that is a major disadvantage. The first pitbox may also have space to queue both cars, if there is a double shuffle required, whereas garages further down the pitlane may not have enough space.

The Secret Diary of Hermann Schnell, Aged 18 8/13

Wednesday, 17th October

Carlo has announced he is to leave the team at the end of the season. Kevin muttered something about other announcements being bears shitting in the woods and the Pope being a Catholic. Not sure what he means, but who cares? This could be the last time I have to make the tea. Goodbye sugar, goodbye spoons, goodbye longlife irradiated dairy-free milk substitute, hello fame, hello glory, hello trophies, goodbye Oscar. Don't let the door hit you on the way to IRL obscurity. The team principal has already left a text message. He says he has a special job for me this weekend! Could this be it?

Thursday, 18th October

Accosted at breakfast this morning. Showing the usual lack of civility, two reporters asked where I was going next year. I'm not at my best with a mouthful of cornflakes, so I spluttered that we were looking at several options. When did I start referring to myself in the plural? Then another strange thing happened. I strode into the paddock while Elise was unloading a crate of cabbages. I mentioned that she looked very beautiful today. Just like that! Casual as anything. Am I finally turning into a real driver/ladies man? Probably not, because about seven paces later the enormity of it hit me, my knees turned to jelly and I had to spend several minutes pretending to study a rack of headsets while waiting for the dizzy spell to pass. That only happens when I look at photos of the FW14B. I will ask her out. I will.

Friday, 19th October

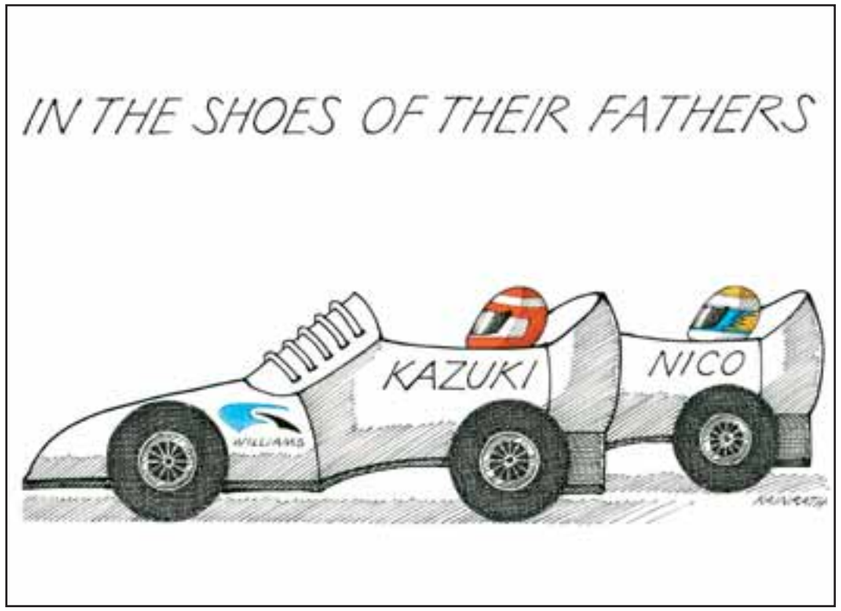
Elise asked me out! Usual set-up, good morning, here's your cornflakes, would you like to come to Rio? Apparently, she'd been trying to ask me for ages. We're leaving directly after qualifying. And I thought the day was going to be terrible. Turns out that the team principal's special job was to be first into the garage with a broom to chase out the rats before anybody important was bitten. Admittedly I got the job done 0.3s faster than any of the other test drivers, but this really isn't what I signed up for. Dad told reporters that I have two offers for next season. In private he confessed that these were to advertise spark plugs and to appear as Cinderella at the Oxford Playhouse over Christmas. Apparently, it's symbolic of my rise to fame. Symbolic of his struggle with reality more like.

Saturday, 20th October

WHAT?! The team principal announced Oscar will almost certainly get the drive next season. He wanted me, but assumed I'm moving elsewhere. Once again fate hands me a poo sandwich. Thank you very much Dad. The boss has already left for the airport. I have to catch him and set him straight. But if I do that, I'll be standing up Elise. What do I want more? To finally fulfil my destiny and assume my rightful place as a racing legend, or have sex with an actual real woman? I'm writing my diary because I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do.



PHOTOGRAPHY: THOMAS BUTLER, GP2 SERIES, LAT, SUTTON IMAGES, CRISPIN THRUSTON



TECHTALK: WINTER RULES

How winter programmes help small teams to catch up.

BY GRAHAM TAYLOR

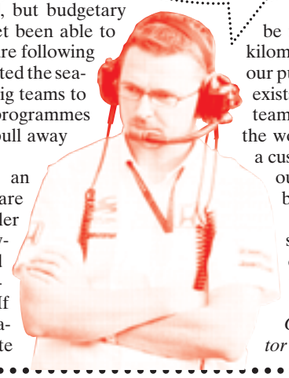
At this time of year everyone is talking about their winter programmes. At Super Aguri F1 Team that depends on the deals that are done over the next few weeks. Certainly, we will be a 'customer team' should the Concorde Agreement allow us to be so. If it doesn't, then the future it less certain. The obvious course would then be to continue development of the existing car. We have several months of design updates ready to implement – they've been modelled, but budgetary constraints mean we haven't yet been able to utilise them. In many ways, we are following the classic Sauber model: we started the season well, but the ability of the big teams to sustain R&D and test and race programmes simultaneously has seen them pull away as the season has progressed.

Supposedly, we're entering an era in F1 where regulations are being shaped to help the smaller teams by providing a level playing field. This hasn't happened yet and I don't see it happening in the foreseeable future. If anything, design freezes and stable regulations have the opposite effect – they help the bigger teams with the most resources. In the past, a smaller team might take a chance with an innovative design and might be rewarded with a faster car. This winter, the improvements will be incremental and the teams with the most resources will be able to grind out those increments at a faster rate.

The situation is far from impossible however. Fortunately, F1 isn't all about technology. There is as much to be gained from excellent teamwork as there is from mechanical upgrades. We've had a good season, but we could have done better, had we executed different race strategies and were smoother in our operations. But this is something we can work on over the winter period.

It isn't that Super Aguri F1 Team has underperformed. We've made rookie errors that an established team would not necessarily have made. With two seasons behind us we are constantly refining our craft. To our advantage we have very high morale. The team is exhausted, but we finish the season in a happier frame of mind than most in the pitlane, giving us the impetus to hone our skills in the off-season.

'IF ANYTHING, DESIGN FREEZES AND STABLE REGULATIONS HELP THE TEAMS WITH THE MOST RESOURCES'



The team will have two weeks to recuperate after Brazil. Whether or not we are at every test is still a matter for discussion. Our budget might be better spent elsewhere, but it would be to our advantage because every kilometre adds to our knowledge, and our purpose – the reason why the team exists – is to support the Honda works team in their ultimate aim of winning the world championship. That is what a customer team should do and obviously having four cars would be better than two.

I also hope that we retain the same drivers. Both have developed excellent relationships with their crews and that would serve us well going forward.

Graham Taylor is sporting director of Super Aguri F1 Team.

ON THIS DAY...

OCTOBER 20

1991 Ayrton Senna wins the world title in Japan in what was arguably his best (or least controversial) season. His friend Gerhard Berger wins the race.



Watch highlights of the season.
YouTube search: F1 + 1991 + highlights

1955 JRR Tolkien's The Return of the King is published, completing the Oxford professor's Lord of the Rings trilogy.



Watch the trailer for the film
YouTube search: Return + King + trailer

1973 The Sydney Opera House opens its doors to the public.



The history of the house
YouTube search: Sydney + Opera + Documentary

BIRTHS

1956: Danny Boyle, film director. Choose the introduction to Trainspotting.
YouTube search: Trainspotting + Intro

1973: Dannii Minogue, singer, actress and JV's Ex.
YouTube search: Dannii + so + under + pressure

DEATHS

1977: Ronnie Van Zant and Steve and Cassie Gaines of Lynyrd Skynyrd die in a plane crash. Yeeha! It's Freebird.
YouTube search: Lynyrd + Skynyrd + Free

ON THIS RACE DAY...



1993 McLaren's Ayrton Senna wins at Interlagos and Williams' Damon Hill scores his first podium in second place.

Watch the race highlights.
YouTube search: F1 + Brazil + 1993

PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON IMAGES, GETTY IMAGES, ACTION IMAGES



Alan was puzzled, Steve reckoned it was over there, Mark couldn't remember...



...so he took his team out on track to look for himself...



..."No really guys, I'm certain it was this corner last year where I dropped that five reais coin."



"Look Lewis, we've done the best we could. We've removed all the gravel from the outside of the pit lane entry and the organisers have let us put up this coloured ribbon to help your line of sight, but they won't allow your pit crew to stand here on your in-lap to push you back on track."

TRACKED DOWN

You were safe from the Bull's Eye in the paddock yesterday because he was out doing his usual track walk. But lucky for us there were still plenty of you being silly out on the Interlagos circuit.



It's the usual end-of-season closing down sale, but there are no takers for the Renaults, Williams and Hondas.



It seems that Fisico was still suffering from the gastric flu he picked up in China...



...and the organisers were immediately on hand to make sure it didn't melt their nice new asphalt surface.

PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON IMAGES, XPB, GETTY IMAGES

TOUGH AT THE TOP

It's a huge weekend for McLaren, better make sure the garage is prepared...

THE GRAND SLAM
After an alleged 'door failure' in China, McLaren have worked hard over the last week to ensure their drivers have total equality at Interlagos. They've also bought some slightly heavier hinges.

CHARITY
Apparently the $100 million penalty isn't going to come out of the racing budget. So expect to have a tin shaken in your face at the paddock gate this weekend.

A DOG'S LIFE
Apparently Martin acquired a chocolate labrador for Ron. It's absolutely loyal, has a soft mouth and doesn't foul the carpet. Qualities that have been in short supply around the boss this year.

BARBED WIRE
Of course this is just an artist's impression. There isn't really barbed wire down the middle of the McLaren garage. It would interfere with the landmines.

SIGNS
Whose name is going to be above the other McLaren garage next season? So far the only driver not linked with the seat is Fernando Alonso.

HYGIENE
Apparently there's a guy stationed down at McLaren to ensure there's no dirt this weekend. That seems a bit silly: have you ever seen McLaren anything other than spotless?

PEDRO
When the FIA informed Pedro they wanted to see his records, he helpfully sent over a first edition gatefold of Bruce Springsteen's Greetings from Asbury Park.

THE SHOOTER
Ron has recently taken up shooting. Saturday afternoon press briefings will be much more polite in the future.

ILLUSTRATION: STEVE WILLIS. PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON IMAGES, CORBIS, REX FEATURES, XPB

MCLAREN'S PARADISE LOST

This weekend, McLaren's turbulent season comes to an end as the title race is settled in Interlagos. Pairing the world champion with F1's brightest new star has made the team the sport's dominant force, but behind the scenes they've been plagued by tales of infighting. The Red Bulletin looks at McLaren's path to São Paulo.

MCLAREN LAUNCH, VALENCIA
MONDAY, JANUARY 15

Lewis Hamilton "It's better to sit back and say he's going to be number one. That's where I have to work to and close that gap. We might get to the first race and it's a lot closer than people expect."

Fernando Alonso "After winning the last two championships you cannot arrive at the first race in 2007 hoping to be on the podium or in the points, you need to be the best. I hope to have a car that helps me to become champion and I hope to help the team to take the constructors' title."

Martin Whitmarsh, McLaren COO "We have what we believe is the most exciting F1 driver line-up for many years. Fernando is obviously an extraordinary double world champion, and we have the excitement of the debut year for Lewis. In time, we have little doubt he will be a winning driver in the sport." ➜





In Malaysia (above) and Monaco (top), Hamilton was second to Alonso as McLaren began to dominate the season. But by Canada, Lewis (below) went one better to seal his first F1 victory, to Fernando's 'discomfort'.



AUSTRALIAN GP
SUNDAY, MARCH 18

Lewis Hamilton 3rd (6pts)
Fernando Alonso 2nd (8pts)

Hamilton "F1 is a dream, but to be third in your first race you don't expect."

Alonso "I was lucky to overtake Lewis in the second pitstop. It was a good fight."

Whitmarsh "Lewis will be a world champion, it is just a question of time."

MALAYSIAN GP
SUNDAY, APRIL 8

Hamilton 2nd (14pts)
Alonso 1st (18pts)

Hamilton "That was the most difficult race I've ever had. Felipe Massa had a couple of moves but I managed to trick him into outbraking himself."

Alonso "It is absolutely fantastic and difficult to believe, but we have to give a big thanks to everybody."

Ron Dennis, team boss "Fernando's a team player but hasn't experienced winning at McLaren. Perhaps he thinks our efforts will be diminished. Lewis will be decisive and committed."

BAHRAIN GP
SUNDAY, APRIL 15

Hamilton 2nd (22pts)
Alonso 5th (22pts)

Hamilton "There's only one more step from here. It's a fantastic achievement and I'm extremely proud. We've worked extremely hard – myself, my family and my team – to get here."

Alonso "I'm left with a bit of a bitter taste from not being able to climb onto the podium. But we'll arrive in Barçelona leading the championship."

Whitmarsh "We have two drivers contending for the drivers' title. Lewis is a serious title challenger this year."

SPANISH GP
SUNDAY, MAY 13

Hamilton 2nd (30pts)
Alonso 3rd (28pts)

Hamilton "I am living my dream. To come into only my fourth grand prix and be leading the championship with the top two drivers here is incredible."

Alonso "I'm very disappointed with the race. If Kimi hadn't retired, I would probably be off the podium. That was not the aim of the race."

Whitmarsh "You have to understand how Fernando motivates and contributes to the team. He is an absolute competitor. He believes he can win the championship and will be out to beat Lewis and everyone else. There's pressure, but he has shown with two great world championship campaigns that he can deal with pressure."

MONACO GP
SUNDAY, MAY 27

Hamilton 2nd (38pts)
Alonso 1st (38pts)

Hamilton complains team strategy calls cost him victory.

Hamilton "I've come into my first season in F1 and finished second in my first Monaco grand prix, so I really can't complain. To see I'm at a similar pace to Fernando is positive, but I have the number two on my car and I am the number two driver."

Alonso "It has been a nice surprise to see how the team was performing this weekend. I have 16 or 17 wins in my career and I never won by more than one minute to the third guy. This is probably the easiest victory so far."

Dennis "Lewis is understandably disappointed and frustrated. He would not have been if a safety car had been deployed and he'd won the race. Time will tell. We do not favour anyone. There will be times and places when they're free to race, but this isn't one of them."

CANADIAN GP
SUNDAY, JUNE 10

Hamilton takes his first F1 win.

Hamilton 1st (48pts)
Alonso 7th (40pts)

Hamilton "The next dream is to win a championship, but we have to be realistic, I'm still a rookie and there are going to be hard times. It's hard to grasp. It all keeps getting better and better."

Alonso "I feel very much title favourite. Lewis is best positioned, but the title is still between four people."

Dennis "I'm not surprised because you just know Lewis can cope. He wants to be the best and he's clearly focused on that."

MONDAY, JUNE 11

Alonso (Admits 'discomfort') "I've never felt totally comfortable with a British team-mate in a British team. We know the support is going to him. I understood that from the start. I'm calm, but there's a certain impatience to return to the top."

INDIANAPOLIS, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13

Hamilton (Admits 'surprise') "I don't know why he would say that but I guess because he's Spanish and I'm British. I doubt he was expecting me to do so well. He's a two-time champion, but hasn't really been challenged and not by someone as close as me and as good a friend. It's difficult."

US GP
SUNDAY, JUNE 17

Hamilton 1st (58pts)
Alonso 2nd (48pts)

Alonso swerves towards pits during race, after being unable to pass Hamilton.

Alonso "I was very close but didn't pass. Eight points are better than nothing."

Whitmarsh "If Fernando got out of his car and was delighted that Lewis had beaten him, I'd be very worried. Two competitive drivers will always have a go at each other. There's pressure on Fernando from having such a young, confident and seemingly invincible team-mate."

TUESDAY, JUNE 19

Alonso "The championship starts from now when we get back to Europe. I'm more comfortable and confident everything will go well. We're better than we were last week, when I said they were happier when Hamilton won. They're more careful with their manners now. ➜













WHEN WE WERE FRIENDS...
Fernando Alonso and Lewis Hamilton team got off to a good start with Alonso's victory in Malaysia (top, left) but by Monaco (bottom, right), tensions were showing as the driver of the No 2 car began to challenge the world champion.

Alonso's luck started to turn mid-season with a win at the Nürburgring (below, left), but then there was controversy in qualifying in Hungary (below, right). By Spa, (main picture) it was clear that the team-mates were not willing to give an inch in the race for the championship.

➜ At Indianapolis, we saw a more general joy."

Dennis "It's different from Prost and Senna. The age gap is nothing and they really like each other. It's a situation where they say: 'I like you, but wish you wouldn't be so competitive.'"

MODENA, ITALY, THURSDAY, JUNE 21
District attorney opens criminal investigations against Ferrari's British head of performance technical development, Nigel Stepney.

FRENCH GP
SUNDAY, JULY 1

Hamilton 3rd (64pts)
Alonso 7th (50pts)

Hamilton "I got good points, but we need to keep on pushing. Ferrari are quick but I think we can take it to them at the next race."

Alonso "I have to be more worried about Lewis. I have to make up ground on him and we'll start with the next race. Some day the problems I had will affect him and I hope to be able to reduce the gap by six or eight points in one race."

Dennis "We're trying to behave correctly and balance how we respond to success and failure. I am phenomenally fond of both drivers. I have huge respect for Fernando's achievements and clearly I respect Lewis's achievements. I will not indulge in emotion that is counter-productive to the team's interests. I only consider those issues away from the track."

WOKING, UK, WEDNESDAY, JULY 4
McLaren's Mike Coughlan named as suspect in Ferrari-McLaren 'spy' scandal.

BRITISH GP
SUNDAY, JULY 8

Hamilton 3rd (70pts)
Alonso 2nd (58pts)

Hamilton "I need to step up my game. I'm still learning... we're going to a few tracks that I know, so it should make the weekend easier – but it doesn't."

Alonso "Since Canada I have been faster. With normal races I will reduce the gap. I must always be one step higher on the podium. It's good that the championship leader has more difficulties on track, especially in England, after pole."

Dennis (Speaking on Saturday, July 7) "If I start eulogising about anybody, I would probably start with Fernando. He's a double champion who gets on with the job, is very focused and really has an intense desire to win. It's easy to eulogise about Lewis because he is new to F1, but I want to be balanced."

PARIS, THURSDAY, JULY 12
McLaren summoned to appear before World Motor Sport Council, charged with bringing the sport into disrepute.

EUROPEAN GP, QUALIFYING
SATURDAY, JULY 21

Hamilton is airlifted to hospital after a qualifying crash. He is cleared to race.

EUROPEAN GP
SUNDAY, JULY 22

Hamilton 9th (70pts)
Alonso 1st (68pts)

Hamilton "I came here completely sick, had one of my biggest-ever crashes, then got a puncture, went into the gravel, it started to rain... It was a great weekend in terms of learning. You find the lessons from this and learn from them."

Alonso "It's an important race but the championship is so long. In Hungary anything can happen. It will be tight."

Dennis "To come away with Fernando closing the gap on Lewis and the team extending its lead in the constructors' championship by two points is a great conclusion to a challenging grand prix."



FIA WMSC MEETING, PARIS, THURSDAY, JULY 26
McLaren found in breach of article 151c of the FIA sporting code. But WMSC say they could not find evidence McLaren had used Ferrari technical information to their advantage, so impose no penalty.

TUESDAY, JULY 31
FIA sends spy case to its court of appeal.

HUNGARIAN GP, QUALIFYING
SATURDAY, AUGUST 4

Hamilton and Alonso accuse each other of trying to spoil their qualifying sessions. FIA strip McLaren of Hungary team points. Alonso demoted five grid places.

Hamilton "I don't understand why I was held back. You should ask the team."

Alonso "They told Hamilton what to do and he didn't listen."

Dennis "Lewis feels more uncomfortable with it than Fernando. If he feels too hot to talk about it, that's the way it is."

HUNGARIAN GP
SUNDAY, AUGUST 5

Hamilton 1st (80pts)
Alonso 4th (73pts)

Hamilton "Fernando doesn't seem to be speaking to me since yesterday."

Alonso "Hamilton isn't talking to the team. I don't have a problem. The team have the biggest one."

Dennis "There's tremendous pressure from two guys who are phenomenally talented, leading the championship and looking at every advantage. There's frustration and some mistrust. It's tough, but we will not deviate from equality. It's the foundation of the company."

TURKISH GP
SUNDAY, AUGUST 26

Hamilton 5th (84pts)
Alonso 3rd (79pts)

Tyre failure drops Hamilton to fifth.

Hamilton "You always have setbacks; we won the last race, and we have five to go. I'm still leading. It's not over."

Alonso "With a winning car I'm happy. I have a McLaren contract so the option for the near future is driving here. As far as I know, that's the only possibility."

PARIS, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5
FIA, with new evidence in spy case, schedules hearing for September 13.

MONZA, ITALY, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 7
FIA releases letters sent to McLaren drivers requesting all information they hold relating to spy case. ➜









→ SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 8
Alonso rejects claims he has attempted to sabotage McLaren by supplying FIA with information on spying affair in order to release himself from McLaren: "It's stupid to think I might have replied in order to damage the team, as I would damage myself. You must not forget I'm fighting for the championship."

ITALIAN GP
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 9

Hamilton 2nd (92pts)
Alonso 1st (89pts)

Hamilton "Everything the team has worked for could be taken away. It was going so well, then this big knife cuts off your blood line."

Alonso "A perfect weekend. In Monza I always had problems here, so to win here for the first time is very special."

Whitmarsh "We are a bit embattled at the moment, but we are a strong team. Everyone is committed to winning."

PARIS, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 13
McLaren fined $100m and stripped of 2007 constructors' points by FIA.

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS, BELGIUM, SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 15
Dennis reveals he had to tell FIA of evidence held by Alonso relating to spy scandal, to prevent driver from doing so himself, in wake of Hungarian GP qualifying spat: "You don't take your guns out and shoot people every which way. It's not a love-in. I want to have positive relationships with my drivers but it's difficult sometimes."

Anti-clockwise from top right: Fernando Alonso surveys the wreckage of his car – and perhaps his title challenge – from behind the barriers after he crashed in treacherous conditions at the Fuji International Speedway. Facing the press moments later, he says he needs "a miracle". Meanwhile, Lewis Hamilton drove to a brilliant win to take a 12-point championship lead.

A dejected Hamiton (opposite) trudges back to the pits in China after his first serious mistake of the year put him out while leading.

BELGIAN GP
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

Hamilton 4th (97pts)
Alonso 3rd (95pts)

Hamilton and Alonso almost make contact on lap one.

Hamilton "For someone who is always complaining about people doing unfair manoeuvres, and wanting to be fair, and someone I look up to… he has gone and swiped me and pushed me as wide as he could."

Alonso "I saw Lewis on the outside and that, instead of lifting, he used the part that's not the circuit, the safety part, to continue flat-out and end up side by side with me. I didn't have to do anything. It's just physics and logic. If you are doing Eau Rouge round the outside you have to lift the throttle."



PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON IMAGES, REUTERS, XPB, GETTY IMAGES, JIRI KRENEK, THOMAS BUTLER

Dennis "The easy option at the beginning of the season would have been to nominate a number one and a number two. The problem with that is the whole team becomes out of balance because the mentality becomes 'A team, B team' and that is just not an environment that grows the team. The price that I pay for being able to say to Fernando and Lewis, 'Race on the circuit and don't try to pressure me off the circuit' is certainly, for various reasons, much greater than in previous seasons."

FUJI, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27
Alonso "About the spying, I have nothing to say… I will try to do my talking on the track and try to do my job. Many of the things that have been said about the spying and about me are totally wrong and not the truth."

FUJI, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28
Hamilton "Alonso was looked at to bring it home, but eventually I have earned more respect from the team. And since what's gone on in the last few weeks, they've realised who the real people are in the team and who they really should back. Has he been loyal? No… you saw what he did to the team.

JAPANESE GP
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30

Hamilton 1st (107pts)
Alonso retired (95pts)

Hamilton "This is a great moment. Driving in the wet, leading and doing a last lap thinking of some of the races that Senna was in and Prost – it sort of made me feel that I'm on my way to achieving something similar to them."

Alonso "I'm not throwing in the towel, but unless there is a retirement from Hamilton we have to be realistic. It's very hard to recover six points. We need to race and just wait for a miracle."

Dennis "Clearly, Lewis is in a strong position, but it's clearly not over for Fernando."

CHINESE GP, QUALIFYING
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 6

Hamilton "Never in a million years did I think I'd be challenging for the world championship in my first year. The main thing I've learned to do this year is take the biggest lumps of negative energy and turn them into positives. I'm not winning the championship through luck."

Alonso "I was expecting a lot more. We all were. The truth is that the treatment has not been very good. It's better to be silent than to lie, that's for sure, and that's something he [Dennis] should do more often, and I think the team would do better. Many of the scandals McLaren have been involved in off the track this year have been created by what he's done. Dennis didn't promise me anything. You are always hearing about that so-called equality in the team, but tell me what you brag about and I'll tell you what you are lacking. It's impossible to have equality in a Formula One team, there's always a better engine, a better lap to stop in, there's always a better option. I don't know what will happen next year, all I know is that I have a contract here and we will see. There are 10 teams that could be interested in me. I'm ready to do the best I can, to help the team, to have a good car and try to win races. But what they say or do, or days like at Spa, or all the lies that they leak to the press, both British and German, to go against me. That, inside my own team… They have to do something to improve the situation."

Bernie Ecclestone "I've been in Formula One a long time and I've never seen anyone like Lewis."

CHINESE GP
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 7

Hamilton retired (107pts)
Alonso 2nd (103pts)

Hamilton "When I came into the pits, it was like ice, I couldn't do anything about it. I couldn't see my tyres; they just felt like they were finished. When I was out of the car I was gutted because it was my first mistake all year… But you can't go through life without making mistakes. I am over it and we look forward to Brazil."

Alonso "I'm sure there's going to be equality. One thing is what they say about me, but what they do on track is different, and usually they have two cars that are exactly the same, capable of fighting for victory. That's what I think will happen in Brazil, so everything will be up to me. The second half of the season has been difficult, and it still is, but I think they are going to give us both the same opportunities, I think we need to make that clear. There's no problem there, but we know they are never going to have favourable feelings towards me. I hope both cars will be the same, and that we can have a good qualifying and that everything that happened here was just a coincidence and we can fight for pole in Brazil, which would be the only chance to fight for victory. The team has been saying many bad things about me, from Spa onwards especially… Dennis was the first to say that he was not speaking with me. From that point, I understood that the championship was not going to be easy."

Dennis "We'll address the issue of drivers in respect of 2008 after Brazil. We've said that all the way along. We've got binding contracts with both drivers and until any dialogue is opened up after the next race that's the way it will remain."

THE MISSION: GO-KARTING

WHERE: KARTÓDROMO ALDEIA DA SERRA, SÃO PAULO

WHEN: THURSDAY

WHAT THEY DID: COMPETED FOR THE FORMULA UNA RACE CUP



THE UNAS:

LEFT TO RIGHT: (TOP) AMANDA REGIMBAL, SAMANTHA WONG, SABRINA GUILLOUD, EGE KOBASAKOL, CORNELIA DOMA, SARAH SARRACHI, AKO KOIZMI, REBECCA BRAMICH (BOTTOM) HELEN ROWBOTHAM, RENÉE HERLOCKER, TAHNEE FRIJTERS, RAQUEL CHULVI, SAMANTHA ROSSATO, ANDREA SZIGETI, ALESSANDRA DENARI, CLAIRE-LOUISE JEDREK, JULIE CASIER











UNA GRAND PRIX

GRID GIRLS MAKE TRACKS

For their final challenge, the Unas went to the track to have their very own race showdown. Looks like they had a lot of fun...

PHOTOGRAPHY: THOMAS BUTLER



Jacques came to his first grand prix with Swiss racer Jo Siffert.

JACQUES DESCHENAUX

MY 509TH AND LAST GRAND PRIX

Brazil is the last race for legendary Formula One statistician Jacques Deschenaux, who is retiring after 35 years.

After 35 years of commentating for French-speaking Swiss TV, I will hand over to the Geneva studio on Sunday evening for the very last time after the Brazilian Grand Prix. So, thank you Lewis Hamilton and the McLaren team for not changing tyres in Shanghai, as the outcome of this race will help me forget that it's my final turn at the microphone.

Along with Giorgio Piola, my first grand prix was the 1969 Monaco race. I went with Jo Siffert, who was driving for Rob Walker at the time. I was a law student but moonlighting as a journalist, although I remember also having to polish the Cosworth engine in the back of his Lotus until it shone.

There was no paddock in those days and the cars were scattered around garages in the Principality, sometimes with a small area reserved for the F1 cars in the showroom window, which is where the mechanics worked in between sessions and before the race.

No paddock meant no motorhomes and no motorhomes meant there was nowhere to eat. The lunchtime menu invariably featured one word: sandwich. On Sunday, the start took place at 3.30pm to allow the royal family to have a little nap while the drivers ate in a restaurant, more often than not, wearing their race suits. On that day, the place was packed and Siffert called the waiter: "Hurry up a bit will you? I am racing this afternoon!"

"But sir, I've been racing around for three days now," came the reply.

Access to the pits was restricted. They had given out paper passes but there were too few to go around, so we passed them to one another through the fence. In the end, there were far too many people in the restricted area.

A few moments before the race, menacing clouds appeared. Siffert realised he'd forgotten the Plexiglass visor the drivers fitted to their helmets in case of rain and he sent me back to the hotel to get it just as the race was due to start. He told me to take the tunnel from the Casino and the Hotel de Paris, but as the sun reappeared, I decided to go round the track on foot. At the chicane, there was no pavement so I had to take a dinghy across the harbour to the Gasometer. Finally, I got back to the pits in time to see Siffert come third after 1h 57 minutes of racing.

There were no press releases then and no bland answers either. The drivers were happy to talk about their race even before the results were published on a noticeboard in the press room. Back then, we filed our stories by telex or by phone and it could take forever.

Today, thanks to internet and satellites, everything is easier. The pasteurised press releases go down no problem, the press officers are fine and smiling, the breakfast muesli at BMW-Sauber is as good as the lunchtime pasta at Ferrari, the sushi at Honda or the grande cuisine at Red Bull. But more and more, the human element is missing, the contact with drivers and team bosses, which is a shame when everything else is so enjoyable. Needless to say, I will have a large lump in my throat on Sunday after the podium ceremony when I finally hang up my microphone.

THE IMPROBABLE STATISTICS

For almost 30 years, Jacques Deschenaux has published the Grand Prix Guide, the "bible" for all F1 journalists. He assures us that, despite his retirement, the book will continue for years to come. For his final grand prix, he has picked out a few unlikely statistics:

Senna's least famous win over Prost:
Stealing his slot for leaving Zeltweg airport after an Austrian GP.

The most heavily toasted victory:
Jacques Laffite's party in an Austrian restaurant in 1981.



The least celebrated victory:
Riccardo Patrese in Monaco in 1982, as he didn't know he'd won.



The shortest grand prix for a driver:
Australia 1999 for Jean Alesi, as his Sauber-Petronas did not make it from his place on the grid to the start line.

The earliest result in a world championship fight *due* to be *decided at* a particular race:
Nelson Piquet in the 1987 Japanese GP, when he became champion after Nigel Mansell pulled out after crashing in Friday practice.



The strangest pole positions:
Both courtesy of Rubens Barrichello: in Belgium in '94 and in France in '99, when he set the time at the start of the session just before the rain came.

The most unrecognised pole sitter:
Patrick Tambay, at Long Beach in 1983, as the night before the race, he sat next to an American VIP guest who didn't even know he was a driver.

The shortest team debriefs:
Those held by the Ligier team in Austria, as Jacques Laffite was always in a mad rush to go fishing, pick mushrooms, play golf or tennis.

The earliest warm-up:
Dallas 1984 at 7am because of the heat. Jacques Laffite turned up in pyjamas as a protest.

The quickest journey home:
Ayrton Senna in Monaco 1988. He went straight home without calling in at the paddock, having crashed at Le Portier, just 200 metres from his apartment.



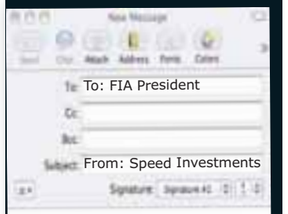
The greatest duel:
Arnoux-Villeneuve at the 1979 French GP at Dijon.

The best grand prix:
The next one, even though I won't be there to commentate on it.

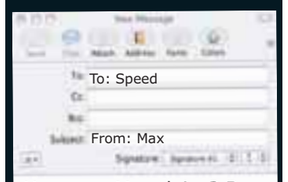
PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON IMAGES, GETTY IMAGES

MAIL BOX

Does Bernie really have godlike powers? So it would seem...



Dear Max,
We've been thinking a bit about Bernie lately. After last weekend we reckon he's finally achieved demi-God status. Remember that typhoon in China? How it miraculously turned around just before the race? How do you think that happened? And then there was the unlikely but perfect result thus guaranteeing a primetime title fight showdown. If you want more proof, instead of signing documents he's taken to saying "By my will shall it be done". We know he's been influencing the lives of mortals for years, but this is getting weird. Everybody's tip-toeing around the office, being careful not to annoy him, just in case he turns them into a pillar of salt or a gekko. No change then but what do you think we should do?



Hmmm... My advice? Buy him a white robe, and start genuflecting every now and again. Just relax, God is good, or at least he always has been to me.
Cheers, Max.

PHOTOGRAPHY: SUTTON IMAGES, GETTY IMAGES

BAD TRIPS...

LATE TO BED

A broken coupling in Mike Doodson's gearbox delayed a coupling of a more romantic nature at the 1973 British Grand Prix.





Horror stories involving travel? There have been a few. The nightmare trip that stands out, though, involves my attempts to get to Silverstone for the 1973 British Grand Prix. That was my second year as F1 Press Officer for John Player Special. The deal was that John Player would pay my salary, while Lotus would supply me with a car. The car was several months late in arriving, then I got a call from Lotus manager Peter Warr to say that a Lotus Elite Plus 2 had been allocated to me. "Can I pick it up tomorrow?" I asked. "Hang on," said Peter, "the chairman has put a few scratches in the roof that will have to be polished out." It turned out that Colin Chapman himself had rolled the car in a Norfolk ditch.

So, it's July '73 and I'm all set to go up to Silverstone. I had recently fallen in love with one of the young women at the agency that handled JPS' motorsport interests and I had managed to get a double room at the team's hotel for the weekend of the race.

We travelled separately to the circuit. Heading north out of London on Thursday afternoon, however, I stopped at a red traffic light. Moments later, I noticed a dirty Austin A35 van alongside me. The man at the wheel looked across and revved his engine. The lights turned green, I gunned my engine and dropped the clutch. The little van lurched away but I stayed right where I was. A rubber coupling had broken in the transmission and I wasn't going anywhere.

The office got someone to tow the car to the nearest Lotus dealer, but he refused to accept it because his workshop was full of Elites, all immobile with exactly the same problem as mine and not a spare coupling to be had in the country. There was no alternative but to tow it to my flat in Islington, where I spent the night. The lady slept alone in our big bed in Silverstone.

Nevertheless, our relationship continued for almost seven years and she made a name for herself in PR with a leading oil company. They even named a minor oilfield in the North Sea after her. If you're reading this, Sossidge, it would be great to see you again…

24 HOUR PADDOCK PEOPLE...

fashionista!

WITH MICHAEL SCHUMACHER

Bom dia beautiful people,
I am mais feliz to be back in Brazil, where I competed in my final magnificent race last year, so becoming the legend I am today. And on Sunday, somebody else will become a legend too, though obviously not as big a legend as I, because that would be impossible. Whatever happens, this weekend will change them all, not least little Fernando. It is being said that he has agreed to go home to Renault. And how this will suit him, as you can see from my très chic makeover. How very French he looks mes petits cochons! McLaren is obviously not for him so I say c'est la guerre and vive la difference. Until next season babies, this is Michael saying: you can never have too many pairs of shoes!



24 HOUR PADDOCK PEOPLE...



RITZ SOMMELIER/MUMM CHAMPAGNE EVENTS MANAGER

HUGHES TREVENNEC

One of the most popular men in the paddock, Hughes supplies the champagne for the podium celebrations, but when he worked at the Ritz in Paris he saw plenty of parties...

IT WAS ACTUALLY FORMULA ONE that came to champagne first, by hosting a grand prix in Reims. But since then, champagne has followed Formula One and become a podium tradition.

IN MY ROLE WITH MUMM, and before with Moët & Chandon, I was the man all the drivers wanted to meet. I was the man who would hand over the bottles on the podium. Now the protocol has changed, but I am still the bottle-giver at the Monaco Grand Prix. I have been since my first season in 1983. Perhaps that was because Prince Albert was doing work experience under my guidance at the time.

HOSPITALITY IS MY BACKGROUND, and after finishing hotel school I took a job as a sommelier at the Ritz in Paris, giving advice on wine for the rich and often famous. I remember when the Rolling Stones were on tour in 1976, and rented, exclusively, two whole floors of the hotel. They partied all night and broke everything, I don't think there was a TV or window left unshattered. They ordered hundreds of bottles of alcohol. I came in to see salad bowls strewn about, full of cocaine. I just told them, if you want a drink help yourselves.

IT WAS A PALACE INHABITED by fascinating people. Billionaires would often come in for secret rendez-vous with their mistresses. Some of the tips we were given were immense. I was once handed 2,500 Francs (380 Euros) for bringing a man a bottle of water. And I remember fondly the Countess Osborne, from Jerez de la Frontera, heiress to the Osbourne sherry millions. Every season she would come to Paris for fashion week. But she wouldn't leave the Ritz – she was too drunk. She just lived in the Hemingway Bar, and at the end of the week she would stumble home.

AFTER A YEAR AT THE RITZ it was time for me to undertake compulsory military service. I joined the French Navy. They looked into my background and made me head waiter, in charge of the Officer's mess. The ship I was on was like a floating embassy, with food and drink befitting the eminent people who would come aboard to dine. After all, rich dining is a great French tradition that they navy are only too keen to uphold. We had huge parties in places like Istanbul and St Tropez, and whenever we crossed the equator we would prepare a feast, and usually cover ourselves in glue and duck feathers and jump overboard.

BACK IN THE 1980S FORMULA ONE had the same appetite for fun. And, in addition, I have attended 24 Le Mans and 20 Paris-Dakars. These days my job is to maintain relationships with the teams and media in the paddock, and also entertain clients up in the Paddock Club. But I do quite miss pouring for people. It's still a dream of mine to own my own a Parisian bar. I enjoy the conviviality. And, of course, the wine.

THE LINE-UP

Who does what around the paddock?



JONATHAN WHEATLEY

Red Bull Racing's team manager makes sure everything runs like clockwork. A passionate motorsport fan, his dad raced cars and his first British Grand Prix was seen from his mother's arms aged two. Jonathan used to race Ducatis but gave it up when his three children arrived.



LUCY NELL

Cambridge graduate Lucy, press officer at Spyker, enjoys reading Freud and watching obscure film noir. For someone so smart, it's a surprise she locked herself in a toilet in Canada and couldn't get out. Next August she'll be getting married in Florence to a Prodrive engineer.



IAN MATTOCKS

Ian works for *Evolution*, a logistics company that helps Williams and Super Aguri in the Paddock Club. While qualifying to become a chef, he worked in a department store. They didn't think much of his food, and made him stand in the street to entice people inside, dressed in a bear costume. His mother was Ursula Andress' double in Dr No.

PHOTOGRAPHY: CRISPIN THRUSTON, SUTTON IMAGES

GRIDDLE

In case you're wondering where you'll be after Brazil, here's a reminder. Name the following F1 teams' headquarters.

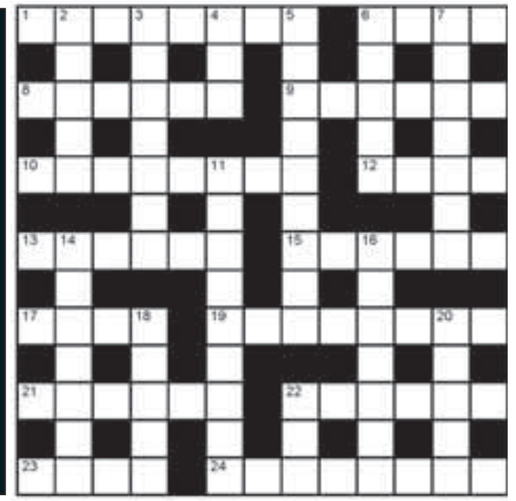








F1 CROSSWORD



ACROSS

1 Michele --, Italian driver who had five F1 wins, the last being the 1985 German Grand Prix (8)
6 Carlos --, driver whose only F1 victory was in his own country in 1975 (4)
8 Polish driver with BMW Sauber, along with Nick Heidfeld (6)
9 Tyre manufacturer (6)
10 British driver with Super Aguri, along with Takuma Sato (8)
12 Fake (4)
13 Frizzle (6)
15 Son of one's brother or sister (6)
17 Heavy stick, used as a weapon (4)
19 Deep open crack in a glacier (8)
21 World Champion in 1981, 1983 and 1987 (6)
22 John --, British driver whose first F1 victory was the 1976 Austrian Grand Prix (6)
23 An Italian white wine (4)
24 Army unit (8)

DOWN

2 Austrian driver who won the World Championship three times (5)
3/6 French driver whose only F1 victory was the 1996 Monaco Grand Prix (7,5)
4 Long and distinct period of history (3)
5 An authoritative regulation, decree, law, or practice (9)
6 See 3
7 A simple stately hymn tune (7)
11 World Champion in 1979 (9)
14 Peter --, a contemporary of Stirling Moss (7)
16 Ghost (7)
18 Gianmaria --, a Minardi driver in 2003 and 2004 (5)
20 Open contempt or disdain (5)
22 Hairpiece (3)

Answers in tomorrow's Red Bulletin

THE RED BULLETIN

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Cover Steve Willis.

GARAGE BANDS

AERODYNAMIK

F1 is at the cutting edge of technology, so the music coming from the pits should also be futuristic. With so many German drivers, it's only natural to form a heavy industrial synthpop supergroup in the style of Tangerine Dream, Can and Kraftwerk. We present the aural sculptures of Autodrom, featuring Nick Heidfeld on synthesizer, classical pianist Adrian Sutil on synthesizer, Ralf Schumacher, synthesizer, Sebastian Vettel (synthesizer) and Nico Rosberg on drums, sorry, synthesizer. Instead of vocals, Autodrom use sound bites from team bosses, feed them through a vocoder and play them backwards. In 10 years, all music will sound like this.

Illustration: Mike Dolan/Zeeganrush.com

