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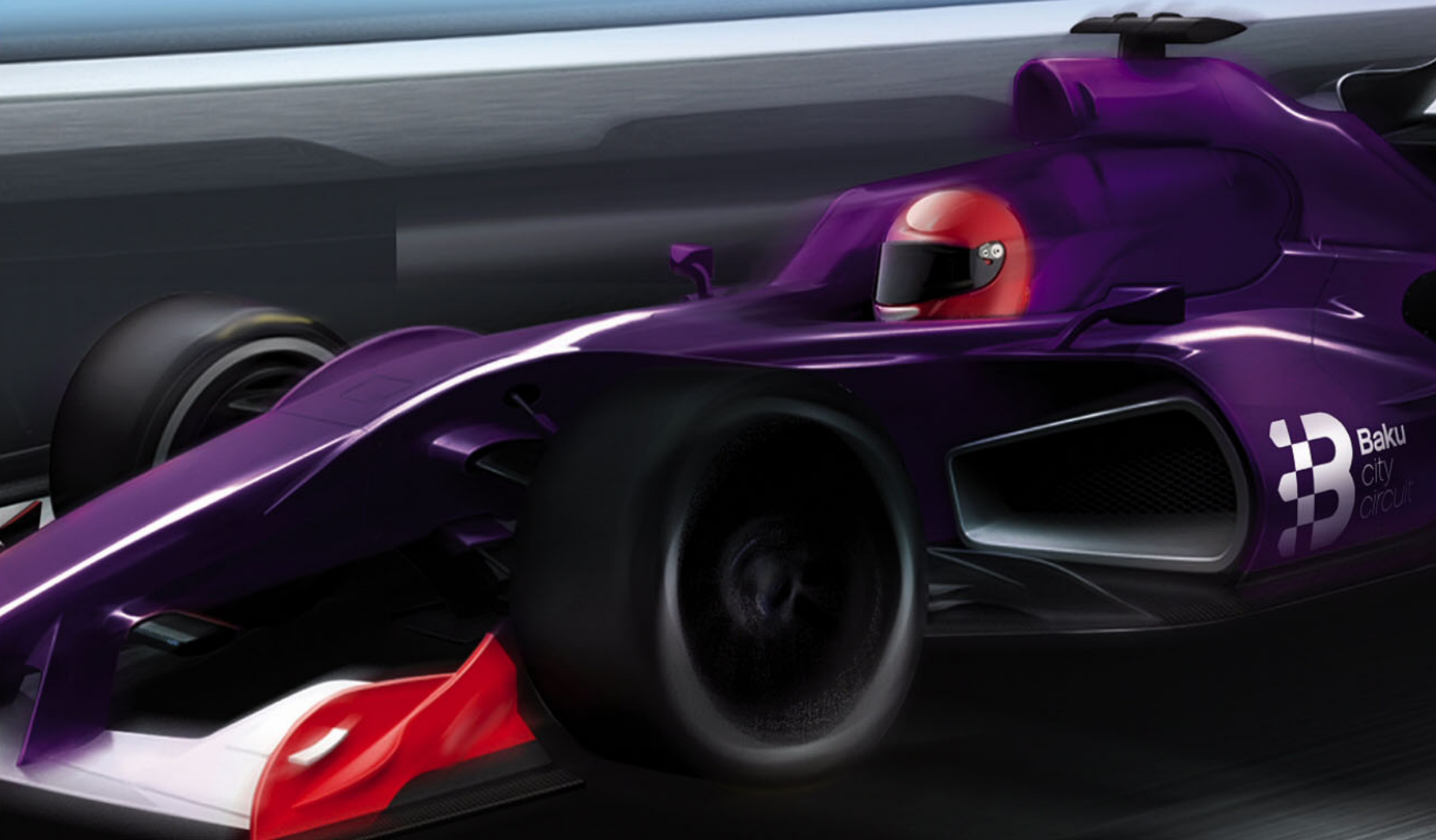
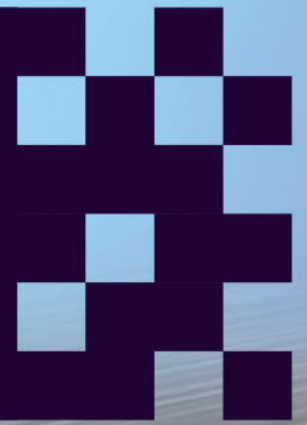


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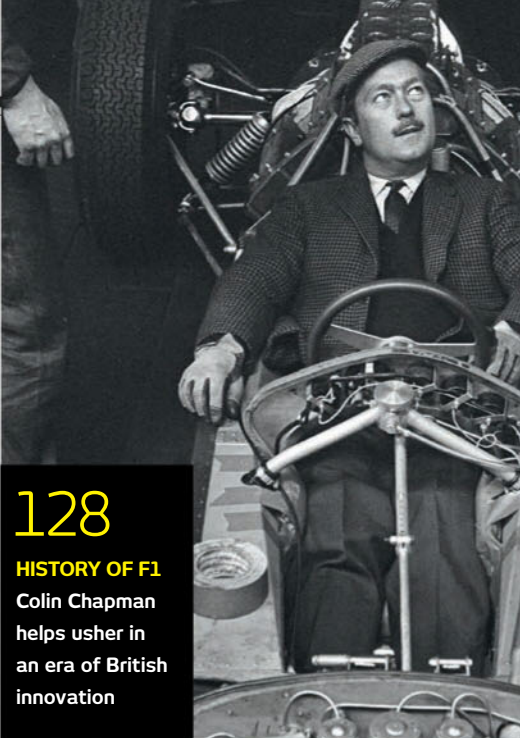
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DAVID COULTHARD

Teams and drivers from the 2016 grid are evaluated by a man who knows more than most



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DANIEL RICCIARDO

He's reset his outlook over the winter break and is ready to prove himself again

Good luck Haas – you’ll need it!



Follow Anthony on Twitter: @Rowlinson_F1

Bold, crazy, certifiable?

These and many other adjectives could be (and have been) applied to new Formula 1 team entrants over the decades. And now more than ever we must reach for superlatives to describe the scale of the undertaking involved in

launching a new F1 team from scratch. For that’s what Haas F1 have done in pitching their entry for 2016, evolving it from smart idea to a fully fledged team in the space of just 18 months or so.

Sure, they’ve been exceptionally pragmatic in their approach: a chassis from Dallara; an engine, transmission and a host of other permitted parts direct from Ferrari; control tyres; and a UK base previously used by Marussia. Each of these elements make the genesis of a Formula 1 team somewhat easier than it would be for any start-up launching truly from nought.

Yet the challenge ahead for Haas is daunting. There’s that 21-race odyssey for starters. Then the tricky business of moulding several hundred staff into a team. Haas also face their own unique logistical challenges in coordinating operations from their Banbury HQ when neither engine nor chassis supplier are on site.

And that’s before any mention of the dire recent record of new F1 entrants: HRT and Caterham, both now defunct; Manor (née Virgin) battling on after six turbulent seasons – although their performance trajectory is happily beginning to turn upwards.

Indeed, the last genuinely successful Formula 1 newcomers were Red Bull, in 2005, who, as history records, bought a thinly resourced Jaguar Racing, pumped in cash and a whole heap of racing savvy, and then added some of F1’s finest technical minds to the mix as they went about building layers of excellence to achieve domination from 2010-13.

Perhaps that’s where Haas should train their gaze as they undertake their epic adventure: aiming to be the best, even as they have to frame their ambition within the limits of the available resource. Running a title-challenging F1 team costs somewhere in the region of £300m per season, and while Haas have not set their bar that high initially, nor are they a fly-by-night operation thrown together on the whim of a rich benefactor. Haas Automation, the company behind Haas F1, are “the largest CNC machine tool builder in the Western World” as their website proudly proclaims and in 2014 they enjoyed their best ever year, with revenues topping \$1bn. With lavish funding potentially on tap, there’s every reason to take Haas F1 seriously, even as they work through the inevitable early-season teething troubles. No one really knew what to make of Red Bull Racing, after all, when they brought their own brand of fizz to the F1 paddock more than a decade ago. But Formula 1 found out soon enough.

So, as the good ship F1 prepares to embark once more on a round-the-world voyage, we wish the very best of sporting fortune to all who sail in her – and especially to those brave souls taking the plunge in uncharted, though surely piranha-filled, shark-infested, waters.

Contributors



Malcom Griffiths

Has camera bag, will travel. Malcy on the move for *F1R*

Not one, not two, but *three* shoots from top freelance lensman, Malcolm ‘Malcy’ Griffiths. Check out his handiwork on pages 62-3, 72-5 and 78-82.



Benjamin Wachenje

Re-imagines Seb Vettel as ‘Mister 50 Per Cent’ (p56)

From spray-can artist to gigs with *The Guardian* and *Rolling Stone*, Benjamin now works regularly for some of the world’s top brands.



James Roberts

Anyone would think the UK winter was a little chilly

A shy, hibernating beast, *Jamus Robertus* can be hard to find in winter. But we tracked him down in Paris with new Brit in F1, Jolyon Palmer (p78).



David Coulthard

Always a pro, behind the wheel or in front of the lens

Who better to ask for a pre-season form guide than DC? The 13-time F1 grand prix winner turned highly respected TV pundit doesn’t hold back (p36)!



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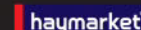
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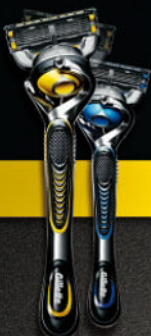




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Parade

Spark up Fresh from his winter break, Lewis Hamilton is back where he belongs. Driving into the sunset, the world champion has a clear track in front of him to put the brand new Mercedes W07 Hybrid through its paces. He manages 66 laps before lunch and another 90 in the afternoon to amass an impressive 451 miles on the first day

Where Barcelona, Spain **When** 4.25pm, Monday 22 February 2016

Photographer Sam Bloxham/LAT

Details Canon EOS-1DX, 600mm lens, 1/1000th at F5.6







Parade

Eye of the storm Jensen Button returns to the cockpit of a McLaren-Honda hoping the new MP4-31 will be more reliable than last year's car. Despite an early morning glitch, he ran 84 laps of the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya to complete five more laps than McLaren achieved in the first four days of testing 12 months ago...

Where Barcelona, Spain

When 11.02am, Monday 22 February 2016

Photographer Steven Tee/LAT

Details Canon EOS-1DX Mk II,
85mm lens, 1/250th at F4



Parade

Nobody's fuel After Sebastian Vettel enjoyed two days of near faultless running in the red (and now, white) Ferrari, Kimi Räikkönen's first morning in the SF16-H is limited to just four laps due to a fuel problem. Despite that glitch, Kimi managed 78 laps in the afternoon and declared himself much happier with the handling of his new car

Where Barcelona, Spain **When** 11.50am, Wednesday 24 February 2016

Photographer Sam Bloxham/LAT

Details Canon EOS-1DX, 600mm lens, 1/640th at F4.5







ALFA ROMEO 18



TYRE REVOLUTION 20



K-MAG RETURNS 24

F1 INSIDER

NEWS ■ OPINION ■ ANALYSIS

NEWS

Engine development limits to be scrapped

Token system will be axed to help lagging manufacturers catch up, but fuel efficiency will remain a priority

Formula 1 bosses have agreed to end restrictions on engine development in an attempt to make the sport more competitive. The move to abandon the controversial 'token' system has yet to be officially ratified, but high-level sources say that there is unlikely to be any attempt to block it, since all the engine manufacturers have now agreed to it.

Under the current regulations, the various parts of the engine carry 'token' values depending on their effect on performance, and manufacturers can develop up to a maximum limit of tokens – with the number permitted reducing each year. But the system has been criticised for being overly complicated and for having the potential to permanently enshrine performance disparities.

The theory behind axing the token system, is that by freeing manufacturers to develop their engines in any way in which they see fit, the performance of the various power units should eventually converge. The ban on in-season development has already been lifted for 2016 – just as it was for 2015 – and the number of tokens has been raised from 25 to 32, the same as the three manufacturers who competed in 2014 were allowed last year.

Abandoning the token system altogether is an attempt to give Renault and Honda the chance to catch up with Mercedes and Ferrari. All involved agree that it is bad for F1 to have two such large manufacturers struggling for competitiveness.

But Red Bull design chief Adrian Newey has criticised the move, saying it will lead to a "spending frenzy" and that the "gaps will get bigger not smaller".

Newey, whose views may be rooted in a concern that Red Bull's route back to competitiveness is looking increasingly difficult without a works engine partnership, says that previously the agreement had been that the engines would be frozen at a certain point and that "teams who were behind would still be allowed to keep developing".

Newey said the amounts being spent by manufacturers were "eye-watering" and that companies not prepared to spend as much – notably Renault – would be left behind.

However, there will be attempts to ensure that spending is still kept under control. The total number of engines allowed for each driver per season is likely to be reduced from four to three, possibly for 2018. And there will be a series of mandated parts that cannot be developed. Limits on the amount of development time permitted have also been suggested.

But the key drivers of fuel efficiency – the combustion process and the hybrid system, especially the MGU-K, which recovers energy from the turbo – will remain free. Over the past

The engine token system is set to be abandoned, letting other manufacturers catch up to the dominant Mercedes engine





Mercedes boss Andy Cowell believes there is no reason why engine manufacturers lagging behind cannot quickly catch up

two seasons these have driven quite remarkable advances in thermal efficiency – the measure of the proportion of energy in the fuel that is delivered to the crank as power.

Mercedes F1 engine boss Andy Cowell says that the 2.4-litre V8s used until 2013 ran at 29 per cent thermal efficiency, about the same as a road-car petrol engine, with road-going diesels at about 38 per cent. The Mercedes F1 power unit is already operating at better than 45 per cent thermal efficiency – and well over 50 per cent when the hybrid system is fully deployed.

“Thermal efficiency is going up,” Cowell says. “From where we were in 2014 we took a good step up for 2015. Where we are at today with our thermal efficiency is mind-blowing when you step back and look at it.

“It is definitely going to go up in the future as well because nobody has said that we have reached the limit here. When I walk around the factory I never hear people say: ‘That is the best we can do; that is optimum.’”

These gains, Cowell says, will eventually be directly transferable to road cars. He adds that

NEWS DIGEST

The month’s big stories at a glance

14.1.16 Volkswagen motorsport director Jost Capito announced as new CEO of McLaren Racing 19.1.16 Formula 1 engine manufacturers agree customer-engine cost deal

25.1.16 Manor announce consultancy arrangement with former McLaren and Ferrari engineer Pat Fry



26.1.16 Red Bull could be fined over Verstappen demo run on Kitzbuhel ski slope 3.2.16 Kevin Magnussen given Renault race seat 4.2.16 Michael Schumacher’s former race engineer Chris Dyer joins Renault’s vehicle performance group 10.2.16 Pascal Wehrlein secures Manor race seat

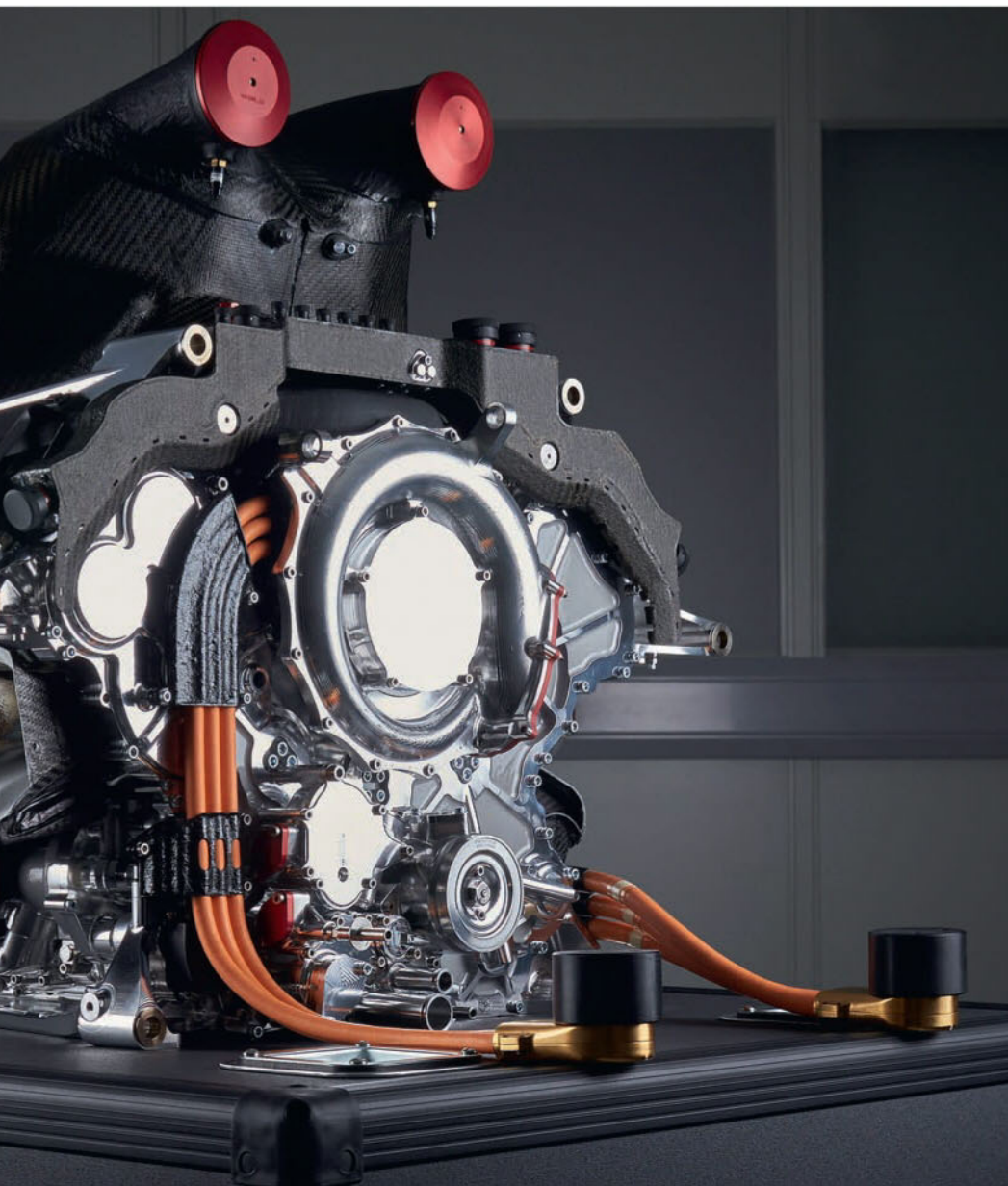
there is no reason that the companies currently lagging behind in F1 cannot catch up – nor why F1 would be unattractive to new manufacturers.

“There is no unobtainium in the engine,” he said. “There is no magic. It’s all do-able.

“Do you need to get yourself set up with a group of people with the right attitude and four or five dynos and connected with key suppliers? Yes, but it’s not impossible and it’s easier to do than in the V8 and V10 era.

“It’s easier for company X that currently sells cars and is doing that efficiency-technology drive to go: ‘We want to come in and compete, and let’s do it.’”

Cowell said he was expecting a significant step forward from Honda in 2016 after their struggles in their debut season. He described Honda as “a big threat”, adding: “They are going to make some big, big gains.”



PHOTOS: ALASTAIR STALEY/LAT; GLENN DUNBAR/LAT; STEVE ETHERINGTON/LAT; MERCEDES



Ferrari ran the Alfa Romeo logo in place of Fiat branding on the engine cover of their 2015 car; could Alfa now be set for a full return?

there remains the question of whether the company could afford such an expense.

The Alfa brand predates Ferrari, but has long been the problem child of the Fiat empire. Poor build, excessively quirky design, haphazard ergonomics and indifferent dealer service drove mainstream buyers away. In recent years, Fiat have sought to reposition Alfa as a sporting brand to rival the likes of Mercedes, Audi and BMW, but perceptions have yet to change.

Alfa's new models will be rear-wheel drive, explicitly targeting two of their three big German rivals, but product is only one element of marketing success, and recent statistics show Mercedes and Audi sales accelerating away from BMW. Could the lack of a top-line motorsport link be harming BMW's brand perception?

Money is a problem – Fiat Chrysler Automobiles is the most heavily leveraged car maker in the business – but there are deals to be done. *F1 Racing* understands Renault's recent re-acquisition of Lotus was nudged over the finishing line by securing favourable commercial terms from Formula One Management; likewise, Red Bull magnate Dietrich Mateschitz has voiced his frustrations with F1. He may be willing to sell Toro Rosso, a team already based in Italy and using Ferrari engines, which would suit Alfa Romeo very nicely.

OPINION

Why Alfa Romeo should come back to Formula 1

As Alfa begin a new-model salvo, Ferrari president Sergio Marchionne insists they 'must consider' a return to the sport

Alfa Romeo dominated the first two years of the F1 world championship before succumbing to financial chaos, and their evocative badge has not adorned an F1 car since 1985. Now, though, Sergio Marchionne – boss of parent company Fiat Chrysler Automobiles and president of Ferrari – has stated the case for a comeback.

"To re-establish itself as a sport brand," Marchionne said in an interview with *Gazzetta dello Sport*, "Alfa Romeo can and must consider the possibility of a return to race in Formula 1."

It would be easy to dismiss Marchionne's rhetoric as mere cant, or to pick apart the nuances of words in translation, and, indeed,

QUIZ



ENGINES

- Q1** How many cylinders did the BMW engine have in Nelson Piquet's 1983 title-winning Brabham BT52?
- Q2** Who was the last driver to win the world championship using an engine with a 'flat' cylinder layout?
- Q3** With which F1 team did Honda return with a turbo engine in 1983?
- Q4** Which team attempted to compete in F1 in 1990 with a 3.5-litre V12 engine?
- Q5** Also in 1990, which road-car manufacturer entered F1 with a

- flat-12 engine that was designed and built by Motori Moderni?
- Q6** Yamaha's F1 campaign in the 1990s was masterminded from a Chessington factory that used to be home to which F1 team?
- Q7** Which manufacturer won only one world championship race under their own name, but designed and built engines that claimed three drivers' titles in the 1980s?
- Q8** At Dijon in 1979, who took the first win for a turbocharged car?

- Q9** Which manufacturer's V12 engine was briefly used in 1957 and then came out of retirement at the start of the 3-litre era in 1966?
- Q10** Jim Clark won the 1966 US GP with BRM's outsize H16 engine. How many camshafts did it have?
- Q11** Ronnie Bucknum has the honour of giving which manufacturer their F1 debut in 1964?

- Q12** When was the Jim Clark Trophy introduced for drivers of normally aspirated machinery?
- Q13** McLaren's first F1 car used a downsized Indianapolis engine from which manufacturer?
- Q14** The FIA 'froze' the spec of the 2.4-litre V8 formula in which year?
- Q15** In '06, which engine builder claimed to have exceeded 20,000rpm?

1 Four 2 Jody Scheckter 3 Spirit 4 Liffe 5 Subaru 6 Brabham 7 Porsche 8 Jean-Pierre Jabouille 9 Maserati 10 Eight 11 Honda 12 1987 13 Ford 14 2007 15 Cosworth

McLaren poach Volkswagen rally chief

Former Sauber and Ford Motorsport man Jost Capito to fill the long-vacant CEO role at McLaren



Capito is the head of VW's highly successful rally team, who have won the last three world titles. He is likely to leave VW for McLaren in April or May

McLaren will have a new CEO of their Formula 1 operation before long, following their recruitment of the head of Volkswagen Motorsport Jost Capito.

Capito, 57, does not yet have a start date, but will become chief executive officer of McLaren Racing, reporting to chairman Ron Dennis, once he is free of his responsibilities to Volkswagen. This is expected to happen in April or May.

Eric Boullier remains in his position as racing director, the *de facto* head of the F1 team at races. Capito's role will be to ensure that McLaren, as a company, are in a fit state to allow the team to return to the top level of F1.

His position is confirmation of a role that McLaren said they would fill as long ago as early 2014, following the coup in which Dennis ousted former team principal Martin Whitmarsh – whose many titles included the one Capito will now take on. Jonathan Neale, who had filled the

role on a temporary basis, is now chief operating officer of the McLaren Technology Group.

Capito is the head of VW's highly successful rally campaign, which has clinched the last three world titles. Before that, he held senior positions at BMW, Porsche, Ford and the Sauber F1 team.

Dennis described him as “an extremely impressive, competitive and ambitious individual, who comes to us with a very wide range of automotive and motorsport experience”.

As testing started, Honda's Yasuhisa Arai (left) was replaced by Yusuke Hasegawa (right)



But returning McLaren and Honda to winning ways will be his biggest challenge yet. VW's success in rallying was almost a given. They had the best car, the best drivers and the biggest budget, although Capito undoubtedly played a role in ensuring that was the case.

McLaren lack nothing in their driver line-up of Fernando Alonso and Jenson Button, but they are at the start of a so-far rocky relationship with Honda and are still rebuilding after producing uncompetitive cars in 2013 and '14.

Further management changes have been made at Honda, with the under-fire head of their F1 programme, Yasuhisa Arai, being replaced by Yusuke Hasegawa. The changes come as Arai nears the management retirement age of 60.

His other motorsport activities will be taken over by head of R&D Kenji Ohtsu, while Yoshiyuki Matsumoto has been appointed the supervising director of the F1 project.



NEWS

Drivers unite to demand better-performing tyres

Years of complaints gain focus as leading drivers engage with Formula 1's tyre supplier to chase a high-grip future

Pirelli have agreed to look into designing higher-performance tyres for 2017 after the drivers made it clear they were unhappy with the current high-degradation rubber. The drivers' views were represented at a meeting of major stakeholders at Pirelli's Milan headquarters in early February, which was attended by Sebastian Vettel, Nico Rosberg, Kimi Räikkönen, Daniel Ricciardo, Daniil Kvyat, Valtteri Bottas and Felipe Massa.

Also at the meeting were Pirelli chairman Marco Tronchetti Provera, F1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone, FIA president Jean Todt, Ferrari chairman Sergio Marchionne, McLaren boss Ron Dennis and the heads of Mercedes, Red Bull and Williams.

Before the meeting, the drivers' dissatisfaction with the current tyres had finally been made public through the Grand Prix Drivers' Association chairman Alex Wurz. He told the BBC the drivers wanted to "help and support

GPDA chairman Alex Wurz has voiced the drivers' desire for higher-grip tyres



Pirelli to construct a tyre fit for maximum-attack racing".

He said the drivers wanted tyres that "allow them to push and extract everything possible from these extraordinary race cars again, because that's what F1 is about, the pinnacle of motor racing, which we all love.

"The drivers want to underline very clearly that they would love Pirelli to produce a tyre that goes faster around corners as well as being safe. If we get sticky tyres, we will have happy drivers, and happy drivers mean authentic and honest performance, pure message for the product and driving the cars to the maximum.

"That's what we want and, according to the fan survey we did last year, that's what all the fans expect."

Wurz's comments, and the subsequent involvement by the drivers at the meeting, mark a sea-change after years of muted dissatisfaction with Pirelli's tyres. These have to be managed carefully to avoid going beyond a certain temperature threshold. If tyres exceed this temperature, their performance never comes back. The drivers have never liked these characteristics, but have only occasionally voiced dissatisfaction after being warned to air their views only in private.

F1 BANTER

PASSNOTES

Your essential F1 briefing #24 Tokens



Name Tokens
Age Just over two years
Appearance Moribund

What? Tokens are no more? I've still got a load from my local launderette that I haven't used!

You don't have laundry facilities in your abode? Join the 21st century, chum.

I suppose I could use them to play bingo.

From you, I always expect a token gesture.

Very droll. Anyhow, of what do you blither?

The supremely complex, abstruse and *recherché* system of tokens to restrict Formula 1 engine development is to be scrapped from next year.

Oh good. I never quite grasped it anyway.

Well, the idea was that the complete power unit was broken into 42 areas, each of which had a 'weight' in tokens from one to three, depending on their importance, coming to a total of 66.

Clickety click! See, I said we could play bingo.

So it would theoretically cost you 66 tokens to change every part of the engine. But the amount of tokens each team could spend, and the areas they could change, was to reduce every season. Last year, the number of tokens dropped to 32.

Er, half a fat lady and one little duck! This isn't really working, is it?

So they all say – particularly the manufacturers, who can't keep up with Mercedes. Renault's Cyril Abiteboul said, "An F1 dictated by the performance of the engine is not good for anyone."

Sounds like a bit o' bull to me. Hasn't Adrian Newey been banging that drum for years?

He has. But get this: he hates the engine unfreeze. He told Reuters that it would lead to a "spending frenzy", and that for those manufacturers who aren't willing to put hand in pocket "the gaps get bigger not smaller".

Aero whizz complains that aero isn't as important as it used to be. Meh.

You could at least make a token effort to comprehend the gravity of the situation.

They've always got to have something to complain about. It'll all come out in the wash...

Boom, boom!

Do say You'll never take our freedom!

Don't say But you're welcome to these tokens

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*Visible flakes seen at 2ft with regular use. **Based on Nielsen Shampoo value shares, from July 2014 to June 2015.
***With regular use vs. non-selenium containing anti-dandruff shampoos, against visible flakes seen at 2ft.



COLUMN

MOTOR MOUTH

What we're talking about at *F1 Racing Towers*

HELLO TO NEW TEAM HAAS

It had been a few years since I'd last visited the Formula 1 facility on Overthorpe Road, a stone's throw from junction 11 of the M40 motorway. Last winter the Banbury base was acquired from Marussia by the American Haas F1 team and, after accepting an invite to interview team principal Guenther Steiner in early February, I was pleasantly surprised by the facelift the new owners had given the place.

Make no mistake, this start-up F1 team is unlike any other we have seen in recent years: there is a clear marketing strategy and cash-flow doesn't seem a problem. And it's very similar to Red Bull in one major respect: Gene Haas has a product to sell.

Haas tooling machines are big business in the US and he is expanding, using F1 as a platform to tell the world. With Ferrari backing and a credible driver in Romain Grosjean, this team could be a surprise success.

James Roberts

Haas F1: shaping up to be a credible proposition



Pastor Maldonado: leaving F1, for now

FAREWELL TO PASTOR MALDONADO

It's with a twinge of regret that we record the departure of Pastor Maldonado from F1, leaving, against form, with a whimper, not a bang. 'Crashtor', after all, brought a great deal of entertainment to the sport over his six seasons in the top echelon.

He'd always do *something* in a race – occasionally something brilliant, like his 2012 Spanish GP win; more often something a little crazy. His speed and skill were never in doubt: see his lap 69 'save' at last year's Austrian GP – a great moment of car control. And at Monaco in 2011, he was sixth in a woeful Williams, before a biff with Lewis Hamilton.

But it's for a moment in Venezuela that I'll best remember him. On a sponsor-pleasing trip to Caracas, Pastor was charged with entertaining the crowds with an F1 car show run. What *not* to do? Crash. What *did* he do...?

Anthony Rowlinson

NEWS

Channel 4 firm up F1 broadcast team

Susie Wolff joins C4, alongside Coulthard and Edwards, at F1's new terrestrial UK TV home

Ben Edwards is to remain as Britain's terrestrial television Formula 1 commentator and will be joined by Susie Wolff as a co-host

Edwards, who joined the BBC's coverage team in 2012 after the corporation split the rights with Sky, has now signed to move to Channel 4, although no official announcement had been made as *F1 Racing* went to press.

He will continue his widely praised partnership in the commentary box with David Coulthard, whose Whisper Films company won the contract to produce the coverage. However, BBC F1 presenter Suzi Perry will not be involved.

Perry's replacement is tipped to be Steve Jones, who has worked on Channel 4's youth shows *T4* and *The X Factor USA* and is a favourite of Jay Hunt, Channel 4's chief creative officer. Susie Wolff will co-host the F1 broadcasts.

Channel 4, who are promising innovation, look set to employ many of the same people who produced the award-winning BBC coverage.

Former BBC F1 editor Mark Wilkin has been confirmed in the same role, and former BBC F1 producer Sunil Patel will be executive producer for F1 on Channel 4.

The channel were in talks with Eddie Jordan, but his decision to sign up to the BBC's revamped *Top Gear* may stop him working for C4: the channel have already insisted Coulthard could not do both.

Pitlane reporter Lee McKenzie is expected to remain part of the team, while ex-F1 driver Karun Chandhok is tipped to fill the second reporter's role. Tom Clarkson will stay with the BBC to work on Radio 5 Live and it is understood that Jack Nicholls will now anchor the radio station's coverage full-time.

Behind the scenes, Steve Aldous, who worked for both ITV and BBC as assistant editor, is staying on, as is director Richard Carr, while Channel 4's new head of F1, Stephen Lyle, is also a former BBC director.

Channel 4 will also retain the team of technicians who worked behind the scenes for the BBC and, before that, ITV.

Recently retired Williams test driver Susie Wolff will co-host Channel 4's Formula 1 coverage



PHOTOS: CHARLES COATES/LAT; STEVEN TEE/LAT; ZAK WAUGER/LAT



Go Further

Ford LET GO OF WHAT YOU KNOW





The 2016 Renault line-up, from right to left: racers Jolyon Palmer and Kevin Magnussen and reserve driver Esteban Ocon

NEWS

Magnussen and Wehrlein will join the 2016 F1 grid

McLaren refugee Kevin Magnussen finds a home at Renault, while Mercedes place reserve driver Pascal Wehrlein with Manor

Former McLaren racer Kevin Magnussen is to return to F1 with Renault after the team dropped Pastor Maldonado. Magnussen was drafted in when Maldonado's sponsorship money dried up due to an economic crisis in his home country of Venezuela, following a drop in global oil prices.

Maldonado was contracted to pay \$46m, all up front. The team gave sponsor PDVSA, Venezuela's national oil company, several chances to pay but finally resorted to signing Magnussen at the end of January.

Magnussen, who was released by McLaren at the end of 2015 following a year as their reserve driver, admitted that Renault had saved his career. "This was make or break," he said. "Luckily, I made it. This is a massive opportunity

because not many drivers get a second chance. I can't tell you how happy I am."

Magnussen, 23, had originally been promised a second season at McLaren, alongside Fernando Alonso in 2015, only for board-level politics, to swing the decision back in Jenson Button's favour. Magnussen will partner Jolyon Palmer,

German Pascal Wehrlein (left) and Indonesian Rio Haryanto (right) have been confirmed as Manor's new driver pairing for the 2016 season



who defended Maldonado while also making it clear he preferred Magnussen alongside him.

"He's not a bad driver," Palmer said of Maldonado. "He won GP2 and he won a grand prix, remember. Last season he ran Romain Grosjean close. It was just that he made mistakes at important moments. But I think Kevin will present a stronger, more consistent challenge. He and Jenson were very even at McLaren."

Meanwhile, Mercedes protégé and DTM champion Pascal Wehrlein, 21, will make his F1 debut for Manor this season, having signed a one-year deal. Indonesian GP2 racer Rio Haryanto, who is said to have secured £10m in backing from the Indonesian government, beat the team's 2015 drivers Alexander Rossi and Will Stevens to the remaining seat.

Manor are currently undergoing a major restructure. In addition to the Mercedes engine deal and a technical partnership with Williams in which Manor buy in the car's rear end, there have been various staff changes over the winter. Having recruited former McLaren sporting director Dave Ryan to run the team at the track, Manor have now signed up two of his former colleagues: Pat Fry as a consultant, and Nikolas Tombazis as chief aerodynamicist.

PHOTOS: ALASTAIR STALEY/LAT; SAM BLOXHAM/LAT; MALCOLM GRIFFITHS/LAT



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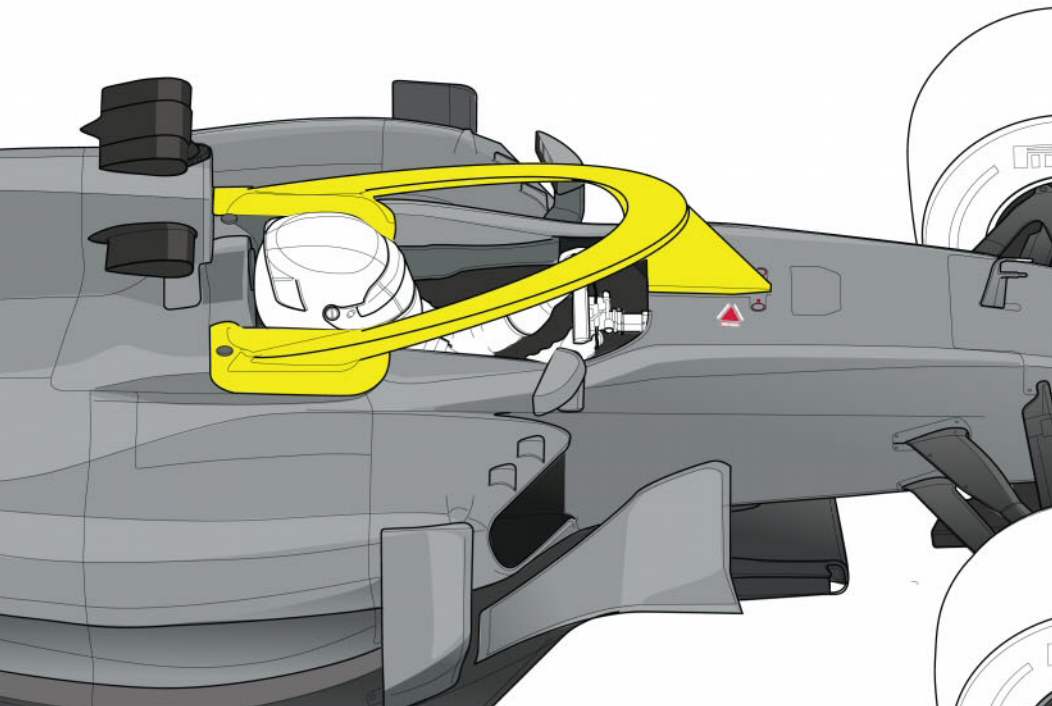
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NEWS

F1 will use 'halo' cockpit protection from 2017

FIA and team technical delegates agree to introduce system to protect drivers' heads, but details have yet to be worked out



Formula 1 bosses have committed to introducing driver head protection for the 2017 season. They have adopted the so-called 'halo' device, which tests showed was the best compromise between increased safety and loss of peripheral vision.

F1 safety delegate Charlie Whiting informed the teams of the FIA's determination to introduce the device, along with the raft of other rule changes for 2017, at a meeting in late January. An insider told us that the FIA "sees no reason why it can't be introduced in 2017".

The move has the full backing of the Grand Prix Drivers' Association, whose chairman, Alex Wurz, said: "Obviously the drivers are happy that the technical team representatives agreed for the additional head protection coming in for 2017 following the drivers' recommendation and the FIA research.

"We will now enter the design phase, where the drivers need to be open to a slightly different visibility spectrum due to the additional structure. Equally, I am curious as to how the

The 'halo' device stretches out from the sides of the cockpit and is the best compromise between safety and loss of peripheral vision

teams will be able to make the new solution look cool and fast."

The halo features arms stretching forward from each side of the rear of the cockpit, curving round to meet in front of the driver, where they are supported by a longitudinal strut aimed at reducing the impact on visibility as much as possible. But exact details of the device that will ultimately be adopted are yet to be finalised.

Teams are researching how best to implement what will be a standard device – everyone is in favour of an FIA-mandated design.

Consideration is also being given to fitting a screen to the front of the halo as a further layer of protection against flying debris. Research on this is, however, still at an early stage.

"Whether that happens for 2017 remains to be seen," says a source. "But it is certainly something we are studying."

NEWS IN BRIEF



TORO ROSSO TO TRUMP RED BULL?

Ferrari power will give Toro Rosso the edge over Red Bull – at least over the opening races of the 2016 season, according to Red Bull team principal Christian Horner. "Toro Rosso have bolted in 0.8 seconds into their car through a different power unit," he said. "That is a significant amount of performance... We've got our heads down and hope to create surprises later on in the year."

ITALIAN GRAND PRIX DEAL HELD UP

Talks to secure the long-term future of the Italian Grand Prix ended without agreement at a meeting last month. Monza's current contract expires after this September's race. Automobile Club of Italy president Angelo Sticchi Damiani said funding has been secured, and was hopeful that another meeting – scheduled for after *F1 Racing* went to press – would yield a positive outcome.



BUTTON RETURNS TO PATRIOTIC DESIGN

Jenson Button will revert to a Union Jack-based colour scheme for his helmet design in 2016 after inviting his fans to choose via an internet poll. Button last ran those colours in early 2014, before changing to a pink scheme in honour of his late father. Last season he raced with an angular white and red design.

QUALIFYING REVAMP PROPOSED FOR 2016

As *F1 Racing* went to press, an elimination-style qualifying format was being considered for this year, although any changes need to be approved by the F1 Commission. Technical changes for 2017 were also further refined.

ILLUSTRATION: CRAIG SCARBOROUGH; PHOTOS: SAM BLOXHAM/LAT; STEVEN TEE/LAT

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NEW PEUGEOT 308 GTi

MOTION & EMOTION



PEUGEOT



Pat Symonds explains
THE SCIENCE BEHIND...
The 2016 rules

F1 TECH

There are few technical changes for 2016 ahead of the major changes in 2017, so presumably the cars and racing will remain largely the same?

From a technical point of view, that is correct. The changes are relatively minor and many aren't even visible, but have been made with the aim of increasing safety year on year. The eagle-eyed may spot that the cockpit sides next to the driver's head are now 20mm higher. More importantly, the load that they have to accept during the chassis homologation process has increased from 15kN to 50kN. In simple terms, this means a side load of over five tons can now be resisted by the chassis, giving much improved protection to the driver's head in an accident.

Some technical changes have been made to improve the experience of the spectator and so all 2016 cars will have a new standard telemetry system that has been designed in conjunction with FOM who handle the broadcasting. This will help them better integrate data into enhanced video for network distribution.

There has also been a change to the exhausts, in that the turbocharger wastegate exhaust must now be separated from the main turbine exhaust which has been done not for any technical reason, but to improve the sound.

So will we hear a difference in engine noise?

Yes, there will be a difference. In the 2015 cars, the wastegate pipe vented straight into the main exhaust tailpipe. This meant that even if the wastegate was closed, the pipe branch between the two acted as what is known as a side-branch resonator. This has the effect of dulling a particular acoustic frequency and reduces both the volume and nature of the sound produced. With the regulations now eliminating this, we should hear an increase in sound of around 1.5dB even with the wastegate closed.

The effect will be more pronounced with the wastegate open, although you must remember that one of the cornerstones of the current F1 technology is that the turbocharger has a motor/

generator attached, which means the wastegate rarely opens on a normal lap. Even in qualifying mode it opens for less than 20 per cent of the time. But when it is open, the engine will sound louder and we may even hear some of the signature noises of the old turbo engines. The total increase in sound will be around 3dB.

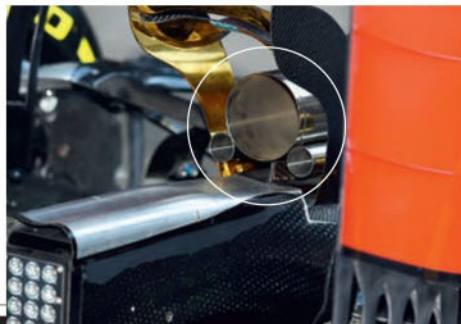
What are the big sporting regulation changes?

These are perhaps more far-reaching and range from having only eight days of pre-season testing rather than the normal 12 days in which to totally test and characterise your car before the season starts, to the ability to use the Virtual Safety Car in practice sessions. More significantly, the tyre situation is very different to how it was in 2015 and will have a profound effect on the racing.

With testing reduced even further, will we see more unreliability in the early races?

The bigger teams won't be too concerned as they have great engineering depth they can bring to bear to ensure much of the work is done on rigs before the car goes near a circuit. Remember that not too many years ago we had unlimited testing before the first race, but reliability was, if anything, worse. Where it will present a bigger challenge is to smaller teams and in particular the new team, Haas, who have no previous data with which to work. They will need to compress the experience that other teams have built up over many years into eight short days.

The wastegate exhaust is now separated from the main exhaust to help improve the sound



The new tyre regulations seem radical; surely this will make races less predictable as teams will make different choices of compound?

When the idea of a more open tyre choice was first mooted, it seemed a good idea and relied on teams being able to make a completely free selection of tyre compound at each event. While the purity of logic prevalent in most teams might well have dictated them making similar choices, there was always the chance that a team may have gone out on a limb occasionally and produced an unexpected result. However, as is so often the case when a committee debates an idea, the final outcome is a diluted form of the original and I feel that we will see little difference in choices from team to team even though, with the introduction of a new ultrasoft tyre, there are now five compounds to choose from.

Of far more significance is the fact that Pirelli are introducing an under-tread layer that will lead to a more pronounced drop in performance as tyres wear to around the 70 per cent level. This was tried by some teams at the post-season test in Abu Dhabi and will be rolled out from race one. Ironically, with teams now having to choose their compounds well in advance of an event, the choices for the first three races have been made before winter testing starts and therefore before full evaluation of the implications of this change.

What about further restrictions on driver aids?

Restrictions on radio messages are being reinforced, with one subtle change. Previously certain topics were prohibited from dialogue between teams and drivers, but there is now a list of 32 topics, which are the only ones that are allowed to be discussed. In addition, there are further restrictions from the start of qualifying on some of the engine torque control parameters and, most importantly, the driver may now only use one clutch paddle rather than the two used in the race start procedure. **F1**

NEXT MONTH EXOTIC MATERIALS



Pre-season testing has been reduced from 12 days to eight. This shouldn't affect bigger teams with greater resources, but smaller teams and the new Haas F1 entry may suffer



PETER WINDSOR

RACER'S EDGE

Authority, wit and intelligence
from the voice of *F1 Racing*

As you read this issue of *F1 Racing* the new season is but a couple of weeks away. So here are the things I'm most looking forward to from Formula 1 2016:

THE AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX – AS ALWAYS

I saw my first Australian GP at Warwick Farm and I've been hooked ever since. Even without this year's race, Stirling Moss's display of skill at Albert Park 60 years ago would still resonate around the globe. Jack Brabham's first win in a car bearing his own name came in Australia; and, in 1966, Graham Hill became the first man ever to spray champagne on a podium – Lakeside's podium, close to Brisbane.

Jim Clark's last GP win was in Australia – in 1968 at Sandown Park, Melbourne. Jim loved Australia and he drove one of his greatest races while duelling with the ultra-talented Frank Match at Lakeside in 1965. When we lost Jim in an F2 race in rainy Germany, David McKay's *Daily Telegraph* column said it all: "A few weeks ago we said goodbye to Jim at Mascot Airport. I said, 'See you next year, my friend,' as I always did. Now he won't be coming back. Now there won't be a 'next year.'"

Today's Australian GP rests comfortably as the only four-day weekend on the F1 calendar.

Why I can't wait for F1 2016 to begin

Other circuits try to emulate it; all fail. Nothing compares with the energy of Albert Park. The Australian legacy is secure.

WATCHING LEWIS HAMILTON...

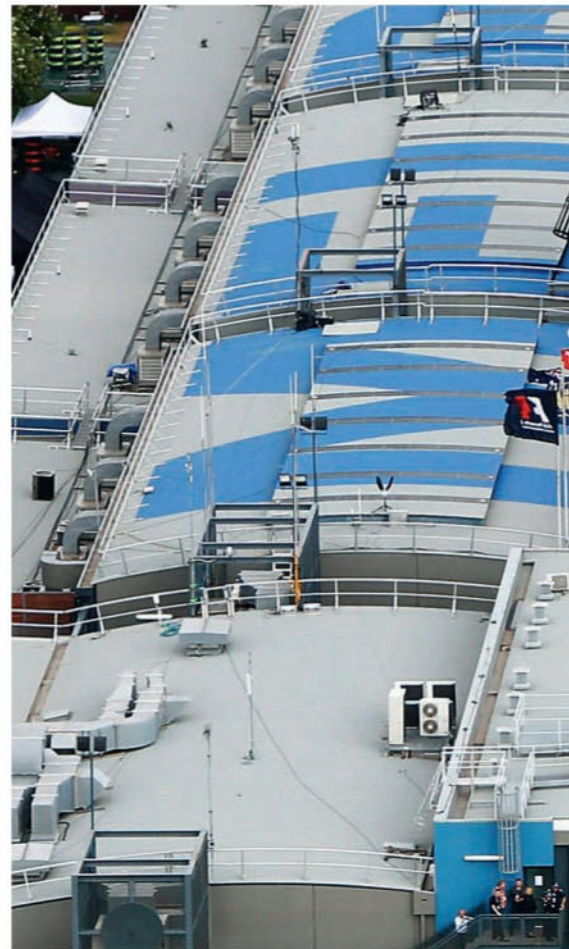
...even on an empty track – because the guy sits right at the heart of how human beings best control a racing car. All his movements are instinctive; all of them are supple. Lewis is, of course, very human and very capable of making mistakes – but that's not the most interesting part; that's for the paparazzi and the slow-mo replays.

The essence of Lewis is knowing that, when you see him approach a corner, any corner, his inputs are absolutely *right*. That's how Varzi and Nuvolari would have driven, you say; that's how Fangio, Moss, Clark and Stewart manipulated the steering and the pedals; that's how Senna, Prost, Mansell and Schumacher handled the dynamics. You know it can't be done any better. I could sit and watch Lewis drive all day – alone or driving within the pack. It makes no difference.

SEEING HOW FERRARI WILL TAKE THE FIGHT TO MERC

I'm a big fan of Ferrari technical director James Allison, if only because he knows a lot about aircraft, flying and pioneering aviators (which is always a good sign, as confirmed over the years by such notables as Dan Gurney, Colin Chapman and Jim Clark). But 2016? It's a no-excuse year for James: he's now got a massive budget, massive facilities, and massive drivers.

In theory, Ferrari should be right there at the top of this technical era; in practice, it will be excruciatingly difficult to out-Merc Mercedes. How James goes about this, conceiving the car, managing his team of engineers, dealing with the politics, being an Englishman in Maranello – this will be one of the great narratives of 2016.



WATCHING DANIEL RICCIARDO THE YEAR AFTER 2015

I think he'll be stronger and even sharper in 2016. Daniel is, in many ways, the flip-side of Lewis: you wouldn't want to watch him endlessly on an empty track – except perhaps through Eau Rouge at Spa or into Casino Square at Monaco – but he's brilliant to watch when he's street-fighting. He has exquisite feel for the right millisecond in which to make a move; he has a great sense for the overall balance of a race. Like Nigel Mansell, Daniel should never be discounted.

FINDING OUT HOW RENAULT WILL RE-INVENT THEMSELVES

I used to love the way Renault went about their racing: Viry-Châtillon, François Castaing, the legacy of Amédée Gordini, Patrick Depailler,

"I could sit and watch Lewis drive all day – alone or driving within the pack. It makes no difference"



There's so much to look forward to this season. From the thrills of Australia's season-opener (below), to watching individual talents such as (from left to right) Lewis Hamilton, James Allison and Daniel Ricciardo



Renault-Alpine. It was France as I'd imagined it: racing blue, Gauloises, croissants and big cafés au lait. Then came the turbo era – all Jean-Pierre Jabouille, René Arnoux and Marie-Claude Beaumont.

No one can deny the influence of the various Formulae Renault through the ages. And who knows how much money the company has spent on motorsport since the 1960s? The knockers love to knock, but personally I've always had time for entities that habitually put money into broad-brush motorsport. The Fords, the Red Bulls, the Toyotas. Last year was, for Renault, a struggle from which lesser companies would have run. Instead, they've re-invested in the old Toleman-Benetton-Lotus outfit and are still spending a fortune on engines. The regrouping will be sinuous; the viewing will be compulsive.

HEARING THE HONDA...

...with its new waste-gate exhaust. I didn't mind the sound of most of the F1 engines in 2014/15. Indeed, it was refreshing not to have to wear earplugs 24/7. The Honda, though, with its strange staccato clicks sounded like a misfiring tractor – and never improved. Put this in the context of the high-revving V12s and 10s that the great Japanese purveyor of multi-cylinder engines used to produce and you see my point. Anyway, with the new exhaust regs may come a new Honda sound. Listen up.

HANGIN' OUT AT FORCE INDIA

The purest team on the grid. Vijay Mallya doesn't need the aggro of F1 and yet he persists, ever the racer. The team's budget isn't big; the factory is still old-Jordan; but the guys are all blue-chip – and that includes the two

drivers signed on merit. That's the beauty of SFI: there aren't too many committees. They just get on with the racing.

ENJOYING TORO ROSSO

They have retained their Italian heart despite Red Bull ownership. What I think about Force India applies to Toro Rosso – with the proviso that they have a Mateschitz solidly behind them rather than an on-the-edge Vijay. It gives them a larger comfort zone... but less tang.

AND, FINALLY... WATCHING MAX VERSTAPPEN


This guy is on a learning curve every minute of every day. To talk to Max is to talk to Michael Schumacher in the Benetton years or to Nigel Mansell when he was in F3. To watch him is to watch a Lewis-in-the-making. 

ILLUSTRATION: BENJAMIN WACHENIE; PHOTOS: SAM BLOXHAM/LAT; CHARLES COATES/LAT

35 AWARDS NEED WE SAY MORE?



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DAMON HILL

KING OF THE HILL

Cockpit savvy from the 1996 world champ, exclusively in *F1R*

Recently, I watched a fascinating but slightly disturbing documentary called *Going Clear*. For those of you not familiar with the Church of Scientology, it is worth noting that it has a fearsome reputation for destroying its attackers, so I'll choose my words carefully.

It was founded by a determined individual called L. Ron Hubbard who had a singular ability to draw people into his unique worldview and ambitions. Eventually, he tired of earthly things and moved on to explore the cosmic realm, leaving his hardcore devotees to carry on his works on our feeble planetoid.

Under the management of his number-one lieutenant, his church eventually became extraordinarily powerful and rich. So powerful and rich, in fact, that it was able to crush a claim by US tax agency, the IRS, that it was a business (thus taxable), by issuing 17 lawsuits against IRS officials. 'Attack!' L. Ron had decreed. 'Never defend!' It's a great motto – if you want Hell on Earth, that is. Religions can have some very odd beliefs, if you ask me – although very few do. Thank God.

The more I saw of this documentary, the more I could see patterns appearing that looked familiar. 'OMG!' I thought. 'It's like F1!' Tell me what you think...

PORTRAIT: BENJAMIN WACHENIE; PHOTO: SUTTON IMAGES

"Control Ferrari and you can have the most powerful piece on the board"

Who needs religion when you've got F1?

The key thing is to have a messianic leader, someone with massive charisma and the ability to strike fear into the hearts of those who would depose him. Or her. Also, they must have 'passed over to the other side'. No, not Indy, further than that, all the way to where the sun sets for the last time.

A non-existing founder is essential, because then the myth can be born and embellished into a sacred truth that custodians enforce with terrifying zeal. The church then becomes an untouchable entity whose right to exist can never be challenged for fear of the wrath of its followers. Something like Ferrari, perhaps?

Now, to be clear, I'm not comparing Enzo Ferrari to L. Ron Hubbard save for in one respect; they founded something that people believed in and are no longer alive. Just like Steve Jobs or Walt Disney. That's it, okay? No letters, no emails, no tweets. Nor am I saying that the FIA/FOM are like the Church of Scientology. That would be stupid. Of me.

But I think that *if* there were such a thing as a religious aspect to our sport, then Ferrari would be it. Which is why it is a problem for F1, because you can't have infallible competitors, nor can a sport favour one competitor over another. That would be nonsense, right?

But it is oft said that Ferrari is F1, which is a problem because it has become something of a fought-over football since Enzo went to the Great Garage in the Sky. Control Ferrari and you can have the most powerful piece on the board – maybe even the whole board. And there have been no end of attempts to do that.

For some time, F1 has been managed by an Enzo disciple and devotee in Mr Ecclestone. Bernie has served Ferrari well. The Scuderia have had a 'sweet deal' from FOM for years. But I fear Bernie has a formidable opponent in FIAT-Chrysler chairman (and Ferrari boss)

Sergio Marchionne – another poker player. Marchionne also has his arm around the shoulder of F1's prodigal son, Mercedes.


Look at Bernie's hand, meanwhile, and all I can see is a Red Bull, and, much as we love 'em, they ain't no Ferrari. Which is another problem, because what we *don't* want is for Homo Corporatus to move into our crazy world of fun and spoil it. We need another Bernie to keep the water boiling before some accountant turns F1 into a theme park with soft-play areas.

How different it all was back in the day. The founding fathers were dyed-in-the-wool, 100 per cent rebel racers, plucky privateers, gutsy *garagistes*. But there was a 'special one' who managed to enchant an entire planet. Enzo



"Ferrari is F1, which is a problem because it has become a fought-over football since Enzo went to the Great Garage in the Sky"

created his own mystique, a magic, a quasi-religious fervour. His Scuderia is treated with the same respect and awe usually reserved for the Sistine Chapel or the Mona Lisa.

So how are we going to keep that spirit alive? I have a solution: Bernie announces he is the son of Enzo; Toto Wolf accuses him of blasphemy and seeks judgment from Governor Marchionne. Christian (geddit?) Horner denies he knows Bernie three times before the rooster crows. Marchionne asks us who to release, Ron Dennis, Sir Frank Williams or Bernie, but we can't decide so they are crucified during Friday practice. Bernie rises on raceday to frighten the b'jesus out of Jean Todt, who retreats to an FIA monastery to write his confession, and F1 becomes a certified religion. Well, it is nearly Easter. And think of the tax advantages. 



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DIETER RENCKEN

POWER PLAY

The stories F1's bigwigs would rather you didn't know...

Remember the December 2015 issue of *F1 Racing*? Our cover declared, with justifiable excitement: 'TECH FUTURE SHOCK! FATTER SLICKS, SEXY AERO, MORE POWER...'

We had accurate renderings of new-look rear wings and wider, delta-swept fronts; there was bullish talk of six-second lap-time gains – info garnered from leading F1 technical sources. It was enough to make any F1 fan a bit sweaty-palmed as they picked up the mag, nervously hoping against hope that the sport might at last be heading in the right direction.

Sadly, it seems this excitement was premature, for now the signs are that while downforce *will* be increased, it will be a much smaller increase than planned. Engines will have no major power boost (just regular year-on-year gains) and tyres will degrade more than even in the recent past. Lower lap times? Reckon on three seconds, if all goes to plan...

It's sobering to reflect that our December cover was based on comments and insights from leading F1 stakeholders, uttered during interviews or in press conferences. In fact, in September 2015, F1 technical directors spoke of gaining three seconds solely from lower-profile tyres, with the rest split equally between engines and downforce. So what went wrong?

F1's future suddenly seems much slower

Following a two-day Strategy Group/Formula 1 Commission summit in January, comments on 'faster F1' were conspicuous by their absence. Team bosses are usually vocal about decisions taken in such meetings, but after this most recent gathering all were oddly mute. Only a little later did it emerge that we'd have to halve our expectations of how much faster F1 might become.

The shift is indicative of the regulatory malaise from which F1 seems unable to extract itself. What looked good on paper (who wouldn't leap at the chance of resetting lap records that have stood since the sport's late V10 era?) simply cannot be put into practice, primarily due to warnings on downforce levels issued by Pirelli.

It's tempting to point fingers at the tyre supplier, but blame must be apportioned elsewhere, for not only are their products hampered by (cost-driven) test restrictions, which curb such activities to a handful of days annually – usually immediately after grands prix – but 50 per cent of their yearly F1 spend (estimated at £75m) ends up with commercial rights holder FOM for 'bridge and board' circuit signage. That rather limits what's left for R&D into experimental F1 tyre technology.

When the 2017-19 tyre contract was up for grabs last October, Michelin tendered alongside Pirelli, but are said to have lost out after planning to "invest in development, so

we can make the show even better, rather than commercial matters". As one Michelin source recently put it to *F1 Racing*: "The FIA told us the choice from FOM is Pirelli."


Our Michelin man also said his company had prepared presentations for technical directors that demonstrated 1.5-second lap-time gains from tyres, so long as 18-inch wheels with low-profile tyres were adopted to replace the archaic 13-inch, high-aspect combo that harks back to 1993. He said technical directors were advised that existing sidewalls could not cope with targeted downforce increases.

Yet Pirelli say "there is no appetite for low-profile tyres among teams", which they put down to the cost of redesigning suspension and other dynamic components to bring in larger rims. That said, the World Endurance Championship and World Rally Championship had no such issues, so clearly they have generous commercial masters. A year's supply of F1 Pirellis costs £1m.

The upshot is that shortly before the January summit, Pirelli warned that the 2017 proposals required revision for safety reasons. Either that or unacceptably high tyre pressures would be imposed to cope with sidewall stresses. This led to fears that the requisite pressure increases would negate any performance gains! Welcome to the fabulous logic of Planet F1.

Thus cautioned, the Strategy Group returned the proposals for revision, rather than rubber-stamping the fruits of the Technical Directive. Pirelli requested a meeting with the FIA, FOM, teams and drivers to frame future F1 tyre technology and test regulations. As a supplier bound to deliver what the customer orders, it would be unfair to blame Pirelli for this farce.

The final decision on 2017's regulations is due at the end of February. After that date, F1's governance demands unanimous agreement on any changes scheduled for the following year. Yet some technical directors are talking of postponing the regs reset to 2018. Not just diluted, then, but further delayed.

By which time, dear reader, there's even a slim chance that Michelin may be back in the frame for F1's tyre-supply contract, as Pirelli's contract extension for 2017-19 has yet to be formalised. You read it here first... 

Pirelli CEO Marco Tronchetti Provera and motorsport director Paul Hembery with FOM's Bernie Ecclestone



"As one Michelin source put it to *F1 Racing*: "The FIA told us the choice from FOM is Pirelli"

PORTRAIT: BENJAMIN WACHENIE; PHOTO: ANDY HONE/LAT



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Multiple grand prix winner and new Channel 4 analyst David Coulthard casts an expert eye over 2016's hot-shots and hopefuls

INTERVIEW JAMES ROBERTS
PICTURES STEVEN TEE/LAT

That

long winter break is nearly over: we're just days away from the magic moment when the red lights go out and the 2016 Formula 1 season roars into action. The Australian Grand Prix will be the first in an epic 21-race season, in which Lewis Hamilton, Nico Rosberg, Sebastian Vettel *et al*, will duke it out across the globe before the final laps bring the year to a close under the floodlights of Abu Dhabi at the end of November.

This 67th edition of the Formula 1 world championship features new arrivals (Renault are back in F1 and American team Haas join the grid), new drivers in the form of British rookie Jolyon Palmer and young guns Pascal Wehrlein and Rio Haryanto, and a new venue: a street race in Azerbaijan's capital Baku.

Can Nico Rosberg take the fight to his Mercedes team-mate Lewis Hamilton? Will Sebastian Vettel deliver Ferrari's first drivers' championship since Kimi Räikkönen triumphed in 2007? Can Honda improve their performance following a dismal season spent underpowering the McLarens of Fernando Alonso and Jenson Button?

David Coulthard, a multiple grand prix winner with Williams and McLaren before he took up the microphone as a TV commentator, answers all these questions and more in our 2016 team-by-team guide to the new season of Formula 1.

And even *he's* in a new role for 2016, as the lead player in Channel 4's coverage; they have taken over the BBC's free-to-air contract and will be screening ten races live. Here DC presents his forthright views on all 11 teams as they prepare for an explosive, action-packed season of grand prix racing.



MERCEDES LEWIS Vs NICO: ROUND THREE

Lewis Hamilton is a global superstar, while Nico Rosberg is a German-Finnish motor racing star. Nico's not as big as Lewis, so it's beneficial to Mercedes for Lewis to win the title again – he is the greater generator of interest, which ultimately leads to people buying Mercedes products.

Nico's great hope is that the form he showed at the end of last season can continue into the start of this one. What we need to understand is: did Lewis back off because his job was done, or did Nico suddenly find himself in a position where he was no longer under pressure to deliver?

Nico and Lewis donning **boxing gloves** is different to Alain Prost duelling with

Ayrton Senna. There is an edge to Lewis, but it doesn't come out in the same way it did with, say, Michael Schumacher. We've had a couple of flashes of it – in Austin, when he won the championship, he said: "It's not easy being my team-mate," which was interesting as that was the first time that he'd gone down that route. It was almost as though he was a big cat toying with a mouse.

It's now starting to become crucial for Nico to prove that he can do it. I never won a world championship, but I do know what it feels like to lose a world championship to a team-mate and watch them deliver more consistently, and that's what Nico has experienced over the past couple of years. →



MURRAY
ON
MERCEDES

Can anyone beat the brilliant Mercedes superstars? After another winter's development, I don't think so. But can Nico beat Lewis often enough to become world champion? My heart says yes but my head says no. So same again then.

FERRARI THE VETTEL FACTOR

The big question is: can Sebastian Vettel deliver a **trophy** to Ferrari where Fernando Alonso couldn't? Vettel is younger, so he still has that hunger and that need to deliver – plus, I get the impression Seb puts in just that bit more work away from the circuit, and I think that will help carry him forward. Until very recently, he was the only current driver to have visited Pirelli to try to understand their design philosophy – and almost certainly to try to influence it towards his driving style.

A lot rests on tech boss James Allison, and the team he's built around him, to make the next step. The engine has obviously made a big leap, but what's the next stage in efficiency? It's one thing being able to deliver a reasonable qualifying lap, but fuel efficiency is a part of modern Formula 1 and a key element in being able to mount a challenge to Mercedes.

We are hopeful, of course. Just as we want to see good racing between Nico and Lewis, we also want to see Ferrari in the mix. If they're not up there, then it's just going to be another Mercedes intra-team battle.

Kimi Räikkönen is a shadow of what he was, but he's a good number two who will always be a few places and several seconds behind his team-mate. Kimi isn't delivering consistently; I know it's always difficult to criticise Kimi



because he's a fan favourite for whatever bizarre reason (I've been his team-mate, so I do feel I've got some inside knowledge here!), but I don't think he has the work ethic.

He relied on talent to deliver his title, and that ship has sailed. He can't just rely on his speed any more, as displayed by Sebastian coming into that team and making it his own.



MURRAY
ON
FERRARI

If James Allison and his colleagues have improved their car as much as they did last year, 'Super Seb' could match Fangio's five world titles. I'd love to see that: F1 needs Ferrari success. But Kimi will need to pull his socks up.



WILLIAMS ONLY JUST MAKING THE PODIUM

Winning is in the DNA of Williams. I understand that they have certain commercial pressures to run a successful business, however, they *should* have won a race in the last two years. They definitely should have won in Austria 2014, yet came up short for reasons I suspect they must have analysed repeatedly.

Williams winning would bring a lot of pleasure to many people in the paddock, but I can't see how they can jump from their **bronze medal** position in the constructors' championship with the resources they have. I remember asking Patrick Head a few years ago whether it was brain power or money that was restricting Williams' performance, and while someone in marketing said to me that it was financial, Patrick looked me straight in the eye and boomed: "Brain power!" That's because Patrick is old-school and he knows that money alone won't buy you success, it's about clever ideas and a well-oiled machine.



MURRAY
ON
WILLIAMS

It's done me good to see Williams back up there after years in the wilderness but, sadly, I don't think Pat Symonds and co can overcome the moneyed might of Mercedes and Ferrari in 2016. Another third place could be on, though.

RED BULL IN NEED OF POWER

Red Bull clearly believe this is will be another difficult year, perhaps even more difficult than last year. I'm not privy to what developments they can make to their **Tag-Heuer-branded Renault** engine. Mario Illien is working on the engine side and I know him well. He's a creative person and prepared to take chances. Red Bull are a world championship-winning team and part of their philosophy is that they would take a chance.

It's going to be difficult for them. The momentum that Daniel Ricciardo had in his first year with the team, going against Seb and winning, was great, but then they took just three podiums last year, which shows how easy it is to start losing that momentum.

Adrian Newey still has a lot of hunger; he is still involved as much as he wants to be involved, but he's also doing other things. I still think there's a perception that they had a chassis last year that was equal with the Mercedes, and in some areas even better, but with much less horsepower. However, they won their championships with much less horsepower than their competitors – even in the V8 era the Renault didn't have as much grunt.

There is a lot of youth and energy among the management and mechanics at Red Bull and they will continue to be a quality Formula 1 team.



MURRAY
ON
RED BULL

After a ghastly 2015 I've no doubt that the 'Milton Keynes' bit of the new car will be up to it, but I wonder about the TAG Heuer/Renault bit. If there isn't enough grunt for the two Dams to fight at the front, Red Bull top brass will hit the roof.



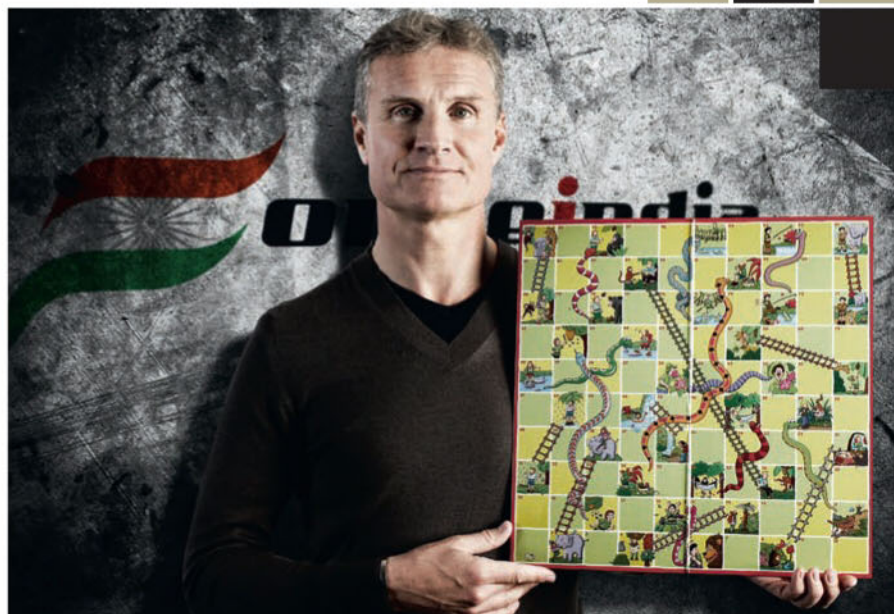
FORCE INDIA SUCCESS ON A SHOESTRING

They were impressive at different points of the year, so just like a game of **Snakes and Ladders** they went up and they went down. There was a slow start, but it picked up once the development came on – the opposite to how it went in 2014. I remember their technical director Andrew Green from Red Bull; he's one of those guys who's very good with tight budgets at small teams. And you have to agree, Force India have consistently done a good job with the resources they have.

I've not seen the company's financial records to see if they sustain a good business model, but if they genuinely want to be one of the top three F1 teams on the grid, there has to be a step change in investment and structure, because you need the increase in manufacturing and you need the brain power.

I see Sergio Pérez as a bit of a Heinz-Harald Frentzen. It perhaps wasn't the right time for him when he went to McLaren and he didn't seem to get much out of the car, but he may be the right guy for this team with different pressures on him. We do know he can make tyres last, so he must have a good feel for energy inputs into the tyres.

Both he and Nico Hülkenberg are very good drivers and I could see either one of them doing a better job than Kimi is at Ferrari. →



MURRAY
ON
FORCE
INDIA

What a gallant lot Vijay Mallya's people are to have worked the wonders they have with the money they've got. With an impressive car and two fine drivers, they could go up a place in the constructors' contest if Red Bull aren't up to snuff.



RENAULT WHERE'S THE VA-VA-VOOM?

It's good for Enstone that they have road-car backing from Renault now, but I find their commitment to motor racing bewildering. I started my career and subsequently drove a lot of races with Renault power, and over the history of the sport they've had a great record of technology and winning. But they've never embraced the teams they've worked with or really positioned themselves as a serious F1 brand in the way Ferrari or Mercedes have.

Renault have had every opportunity to 'own' Formula 1, but they haven't seized it. They've owned a team, sold the team, owned a team... are they coming or going? That's what I find difficult about Renault. They are respected engineers, but I don't think they've been very good at communicating and marketing their success in Formula 1.

I do, however, think this is a great opportunity for Kevin Magnussen and new boy Jolyon Palmer because they will get some longevity out of the start-up, since the team will want some stability over the next few years as they build momentum. In my mind's eye, Kevin should be the team leader as he's had that bit more experience. But if Jolyon can beat Kevin regularly, I think that will confirm Jolyon as a really good driver. This is a great opportunity for him and could be the start of something big.



MURRAY
ON
RENAULT

As what was underfunded Lotus develops into full-fat Renault, this will be a rebuilding year for the gritty Enstone team. With new boy Jolyon Palmer and ex-McLaren Kevin Magnussen in the cockpits, let's not expect miracles.

NEW TYRE RULES FOR 2016

Pirelli's new purple-marked 'ultrasoft' slick tyre is just one of the changes in store for the new season...

To encourage more pitstops in 2016, the FIA has tweaked the rules governing tyre compounds. Teams will now take three, rather than two, compounds to each race.

Pirelli have already announced that supersoft, soft and medium will be the three compounds they'll take to the opening four races of 2016: Australia, Bahrain, China and Russia. And it's likely we'll only see the new ultrasoft tyre being used at street races such as Monaco and Singapore.

Each team is again allowed 13 sets of dry tyres throughout the weekend, but Pirelli will

hold back two. At the first four events, this will consist of one set of the soft and one set of the medium for every driver to use in the race, although they only have to use one if they choose.

Pirelli will also hold back a set of supersofts for those who make the Q3 top-ten qualifying shoot-out (drivers who don't make Q3 still have the option of using a supersoft set in the race, as they do now.)

As per 2015, if it remains dry, drivers must use two different compounds during the race. The difference this year is that they

will choose from three compounds. The remaining ten sets (not held back for the race or Q3) can be chosen by teams and can differ between their drivers.

While this may seem complicated, it could throw up different strategies for drivers in the same team. For example, one driver could choose more soft and medium compounds for the weekend and not progress as well in qualifying, but he would then have an advantage in the race of not needing to pit as frequently.

In contrast, his team-mate could choose more supersoft and soft compounds and start higher up the grid, but he'd need an extra stop to get rid of his supersofts.



MURRAY
ON
SAUBER

I always have the sad feeling that the hard-trying and enormously likeable Sauber are desperately struggling just to keep afloat, and unless they can find new funding I don't see why 2016 should be any different. That would be a great pity, because I think Felipe Nasr has really got what it takes.

TORO ROSSO YOUTHFUL PROMISE

Here you have two very quick and very exciting, **young guns, going for it** and with Max Verstappen in particular, I think you're looking at a future world champion. What really stood out in his rookie season was his racing. There are lots of quick racing drivers who can turn it on for one weekend, but his wheel-to-wheel combat racing was exceptional. He didn't make many mistakes... okay, Monaco was a big one when he crashed into Grosjean, but even that was well-handled. He'd said he was expecting one big crash in his first season: that was it and he got it out of the way.

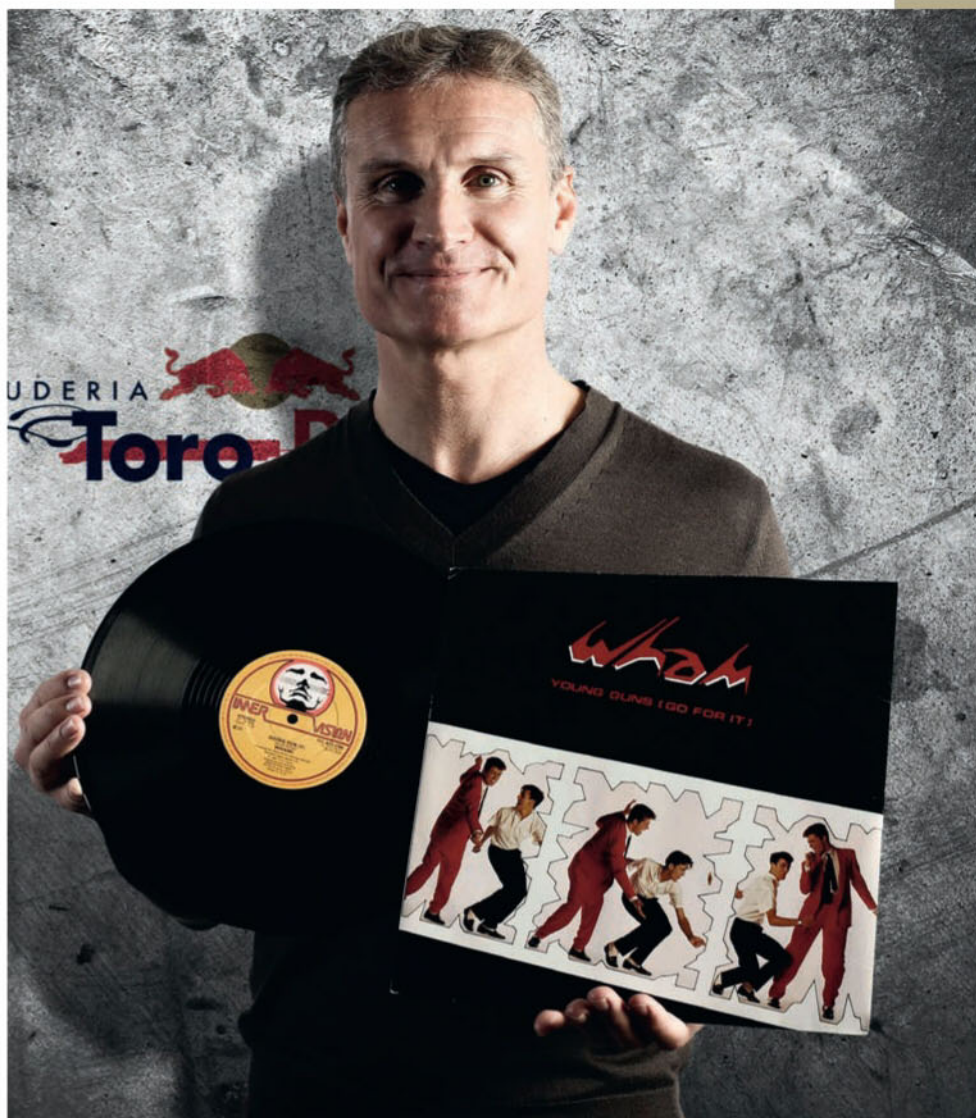
No one overtakes around the outside of Blanchimont at Spa – but he did. Fantastic

commitment; he judged it perfectly. But, I might add, he also had a bit of Tarmac run-off. At my peak I would never have made that move because the consequences would have been grass and a high-speed crash. But he knows the run-off is his friend and he can get away with using it. There's no doubt he'll win grands prix and championships in the future.



MURRAY
ON
TORO
ROSSO

Now this could be very interesting. With a fine chassis and a sturdy Ferrari power unit replacing rickety Renault horses, the amazing Max Verstappen and the very impressive Carlos Sainz, could even find themselves fighting for podium places. A breath of fresh air!



SAUBER NOW YOU SEE THEM...

Sauber are a little bit like Renault but without the success: they're not very visible, are they? You need **binoculars** to see where they are and it's difficult to understand what they're doing. I walk past their motorhome in the paddock and apparently Monisha Kaltenborn is great, plus Eddie Jordan always speaks very highly of Peter Sauber... which probably means that he got some money out of him at some point! But, overall, they are a bit of a mystery to me.

However, that's not to criticise the hard work that all the staff there put in to run and maintain a Formula 1 team. Having said that, if I have one criticism of them, it relates to the contract dispute they had with their drivers in Australia last year. It should never have got to that stage and, frankly, that was very embarrassing for them. →





McLAREN THEY HAVE TO MAKE IT WORK

I'm still in shock that the partnership between McLaren and Honda was allowed to start as badly as it did. I have to believe that McLaren didn't know Honda's performance levels would be that poor. McLaren cannot afford in modern F1 to take the hits they did last year because it affects sponsors. And although Honda are paying at the moment, manufacturers come and go. They've gone through their lowest of lows and this is by far their worst ever run. They have gone **back to the future**, as they had so much success with Honda in the past – can they do it again? They *will* come back, I'm sure.

Honda must be able to engineer their way into something more successful. Whether that comes in time for Jenson and Fernando to show their skills remains to be seen. It's unlikely that they'll win the championship this year. Should they be in the top ten? Absolutely. Should they be getting podiums? Absolutely. This is McLaren-Honda.

Rarely does Ron Dennis admit to any weakness in the team, but he did say it's not all Honda's fault. It's been a very painful period if you're a hardcore McLaren fan. As for Fernando Alonso, I think he's comfortable with his achievements and his financial position. He enjoys racing, but mentally I think he already has his exit plan sorted. Senna did that at McLaren if you remember, building Senna bikes and creating a brand. His mind was moving off-track and I've started to see that with Fernando. You go from youth and absolute focus to getting older and having more responsibility with family and kids, and then you find younger people coming through. There is always that transition. →



MURRAY
ON
McLAREN

I just can't believe that Honda, with their shining image so badly tarnished by an appalling 2015, won't have got their act together over the winter. If they have, Fernando and Jenson could be back towards where they should be. And if they haven't... there'll be hell to pay



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MANOR IT'S TIME TO PROVE THEMSELVES

Graeme Lowdon and John Booth have gone and now ex-McLaren men Dave Ryan and Pat Fry are in charge: I worked with them both and know them well. I have great respect for their achievements and if they are fully empowered, and financially given the hand they need, then I think this team will

catapult themselves up the grid. They have a Mercedes engine now, a Williams rear end, plus a promising new driver in Pascal Wehrlein.

But they need to improve and must deal with new team Haas coming into the sport, who could embarrass them by becoming the best start-up team for some time. It will be interesting to see what they can do this year.



MURRAY
ON
MANOR

My heart bleeds for John Booth and Graeme Lowdon following their departure from the team they so tenaciously built. New team manager Dave Ryan knows which way is up and he's got a mountain to climb, but Mercedes power will be a big help upwards and onwards from the foothills.



HAAS THE ONLY WAY IS UP

This team have strong potential to deliver this year. They have the commitment from Ferrari and are expected to achieve a high level early on. Guenther Steiner has been hired by team owner Gene Haas to run the team, and he's someone I know from my early days at Red Bull. He went off to America and did NASCAR, met up with Gene and now he's back in F1. They've made a good choice in hiring him: he'll do a solid job and he's brought in a few ex-Red Bull and Jaguar people. It's a young team and they might need a **dummy** to soothe the inevitable teething troubles, but they have a very good business model.

Haas did the same thing in the US to promote his products: he bought a Hendricks NASCAR and went and won the championship. So they could be the surprise of the season. →



MURRAY
ON
HAAS

A good team from America would be a big boost for F1 and Haas could be it. I'm impressed with the sensible way they've gone about things, and with Ferrari support and Romain Grosjean they could be a dark horse for mid-field places.



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Your cut-out-and-keep guide to the important new bits in Formula 1 this year



3

1 A NEW PLAYER IN THE UK F1 TV STAKES

Channel 4 will show ten live races in the UK this year (without ad breaks), picking up the rights from the BBC. Sky Sports F1 will continue to show all 21 races live.



2

Red Bull will use rebranded Renault engines in 2016, but the car will be known as a Red Bull Racing-Tag Heuer RB12.

Toro Rosso have ditched the Renault power unit in favour of using Ferrari engines.



4 THE NEWBIES

F1 has two new teams this year. Renault are back after taking over the Enstone-based Lotus team, and American newcomers Haas F1 will also be joining the sport.



5

K-MAG'S BACK

Kevin Magnussen has been handed an F1 lifeline, taking a race seat alongside British rookie Jolyon Palmer at the new Renault Sport F1 team.



6

A HAPPY RETURN

The German GP returns to F1 after a year off, with a race in July at Hockenheim.

VW motorsport boss Jost Capito will join McLaren in the spring as their new CEO.

7

A Virtual Safety Car (VSC) can now be implemented during any session over a grand prix weekend.

8

ALL CHANGE AT MANOR

Dave Ryan returns to F1 as the new boss of Manor in place of outgoing Graeme Lowdon and John Booth. And the team will now use Mercedes V6 engines in place of Ferrari power.

9

10

F1 HEADS TO BAKU

Formula 1 will travel to a new country in 2016. The Grand Prix of Europe will take place along the streets of Baku, the capital city of Azerbaijan.



11 COME FEEL THE NOISE

New exhausts mean the 1.6-litre turbos should sound 20 per cent louder this year.

12

WELCOME WEHRLEIN

DTM champion Pascal Wehrlein makes his F1 debut alongside Rio Haryanto with Manor.

MORE CHOICE

Drivers can now choose from three compounds at each GP, and Pirelli have introduced a new purple-striped ultrasoft tyre.

13



European GP
17-19 June



14

For the purpose of accident-analysis, all cars will now be fitted with an FIA high-speed camera, and all drivers must now wear in-ear accelerometers to record the G-force of any impacts..

15

Esteban Gutiérrez is back racing in F1 alongside Romain Grosjean at the new Haas F1 team.



PHOTOS: GLENN DUNBAR/LAT; SAM BLOXHAM/LAT; ALASTAIR STALE YLAI; SHUTTERSTOCK; HAAS F1

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PODIUMS
15/19
WINS
6/19
POINTS
322



PICTURES ADRIAN MYERS
WORDS ANDREW BENSON



POLES 2015
11/19
FATEST
LAPS 8/19
PODIUMS
17/19
WINS
10/19
POINTS
381

Seconds out... Round three! →

For a third season in a row it seems inevitable that the F1 world title will be fought over by the same two protagonists: Mercedes' Nico Rosberg and defending champion Lewis Hamilton. But, as Andrew Benson suggests, simmering subtexts could entwine to pen a rather different narrative...



that much was very clear. Much as Lewis Hamilton tried to play it down, Nico Rosberg's run of form at the end of last season got to the newly crowned world champion.

Fresh from winning the title with victory in the US Grand Prix, Hamilton had talked about wanting to just keep on winning. "So, what now?" Hamilton said. "That's simple. Keep going. I just want to go racing. There are no particular goals, except to keep winning."

But he didn't. In the last three races, there was no mistaking that there had been a shift in form at Mercedes. Three Rosberg poles – making it six in a row in total – were converted into three wins, and Hamilton could seemingly do nothing about it. Race weekends started with the new three-time champion saying he was determined to win, and ended with him in monosyllabic form in news conferences, grasping for explanations.

"A couple of races," says 1996 world champion Damon Hill, "and you can say it doesn't matter. But if you're Lewis, after that it starts to look a bit worrying. It matters because he has his racer's pride. And a grand prix is a grand prix. Even though he's won championships, races are valuable things. Nico rather surprised Lewis and got him on the back foot."

The big question now is: can Rosberg keep it going? Can he hold on to the form that made Hamilton look beatable, and mount a genuine title challenge in 2016? And, if he *can*, what effect will that have on Hamilton and Mercedes?

SO WHAT HAPPENED AT THE END OF LAST YEAR?

By the end of 2015, an explanation for the reversal in form between Hamilton and Rosberg had seeped out of Mercedes. It was related to the increase in tyre pressures imposed by Pirelli following the failures at the Belgian Grand Prix, and the changes Mercedes had made to the car after the increased tyre pressures were found to be the single biggest contributing factor to the team's bizarrely off-form weekend in Singapore.

A tweak was made to the setup, particularly in the front suspension and, according to insiders,

Rosberg worked a lot harder at understanding what it meant and how to get the best out of the car in its new configuration. Hamilton, they claimed, eased off once his title was in the bag.

Hamilton denied that was the case – at least consciously – but he did allude to the changes, which he said had affected his confidence in the car. That seems to make sense. But former F1 driver Alexander Wurz, a previous team-mate of Rosberg and chairman of the Grand Prix Drivers' Association, is not convinced. "I think it is more of a PR/media explanation the team has come up with, that such subtlety suddenly changes their performance," Wurz says.

"Especially for someone like Lewis.

"I don't buy into the little technical detail that changes everything, because any little different thing over his career could have done the same. And Lewis is not so sensitive on that. He doesn't need to think too much. To change his driving style, he just adapts by nature; something like this shouldn't be the case.

"I think it is much more the case that you are hungry, so you go to eat. After the main course, you still fancy a dessert, but you are kind of full. And it is the same with winning the world championship. And with someone as strong as Rosberg next to you, who gained a little bit of momentum at the same time, it changes quickly, you know? It makes us appreciate the level at which Lewis performed in the first part of the season. Just edging off that hunger a little tips it over in favour of the team-mate."

For many, including both Hill and Wurz, there was an element of Rosberg raising his game as well, perhaps stung by the embarrassing way in which the end finally came. "Nico steeled himself not to go down without a fight," Hill says. "Even though the main fight was over."

"Once the championship was decided," adds Wurz, "Nico was focusing more on himself and not any more: 'Okay, what is Lewis doing?' In defeat, there is a different mental approach to racing. At the beginning of the season, Nico actually focused too much on Lewis; what he was doing on setup, what he was doing in terms of

tyre choices. Even to the point where when he was on pole, he didn't line it up straight, but was just pointing towards Lewis.

"The mindset was: 'Okay, I defend against Lewis.' And not: 'I'm attacking the first corner to get there first.' But by the laws of physics, you have to go straight for the best starting performance. For a character like Lewis, he picks that up, he feels it, and he actually gets energy out of this."

WILL ROSBERG'S FORM CONTINUE?

Did Rosberg start the 2015 season with this mental state as a direct corollary of the way 2014 ended, with a dispiriting defeat at the final race? He made a good fight of his first title campaign, even if circumstances were in his favour, and recovering from his loss can't have been easy.

On one level, Rosberg faces the same situation again – only worse. He was not beaten in 2015; he was humiliated. Hamilton crushed him with 11 poles in the first 12 races and ten wins out of the first 16 (which should by rights have been 11 victories, had Mercedes not messed up his strategy in Monaco).

But on another level, Rosberg is in a much better position. After his success in the final few races, he now has evidence that he *can* beat Hamilton consistently, and that can only have given him confidence. He talks constantly of the "small margins" between them; perhaps he now believes he might have removed them. Will that make a difference to his performance?

"It could," says Hill. "We saw a new determination in Nico, and maybe he grew in confidence a bit. He showed he wasn't prepared to take it lying down. Lewis will turn up full of beans and confidence as he always does. He has been tweeting pictures of himself training, the message being: 'Now I'm getting ready for the fight again and I'm up for it.' He will be full of that stuff. But these cars are very sensitive to setup and how you use them to get the best performance. And Lewis is going to have to perhaps work a bit harder on the technical side, which is where Nico is very strong."

Wurz says: "I am curious to see how he approaches it. I have seen Nico over the years being extremely good in coming back stronger from setbacks, adapting very quickly."

The barrier over which Rosberg has to jump is higher than many will allow, though. This is not just about last year, or even the past two years. It is about a lifetime. Hamilton and Rosberg were teenage team-mates in karting, and Hamilton won out. He has now beaten Rosberg in each of

their three seasons as team-mates together at Mercedes in Formula 1.

WILL HAMILTON'S LIFESTYLE AFFECT HIS CHANCES?

In the context of their careers, it is little wonder Hamilton struggled to comprehend Rosberg's upturn in form last season.

One of the explanations he offered was that he had been celebrating his title win perhaps a little too much. It was the first time he had publicly acknowledged that his jet-set lifestyle might have been affecting his performances on track.

Elsewhere, though, the subject had already come up much earlier. One team boss went so far as to say to this writer last season: "Lewis is lucky he has Rosberg as his team-mate. He's got him in his pocket. He wouldn't be able to get away with that stuff if it was Alonso or Vettel or Ricciardo in the other car."

Mercedes have always insisted that Hamilton performs better when let off the leash, and allowed to live his life as he wants. Contrasting the relaxed, self-expressive, confident figure of now with the tortured soul of some of his McLaren days suggests they have a point.

Wurz agrees: "As long as he's performing, it's good. Other drivers do the same thing – they just don't admit to it in public. He has chosen to show off his wealth and planes and lifestyle and he is very calculating, for in doing so he is establishing his position as a global star. I think it has no influence."

Hill is less sure. "If you really can stay up all night partying and then turn up and still be 100 per cent, then you're pretty exceptional, because the margins are very, very small between what is necessary to be at the top of your form, and what is necessary to be just as good as the rest."

"Last year, at one point he tweeted he was here, there and everywhere between races, and I thought: 'Bloody hell. That would wipe me out. That amount of jet lag would put me on my back for a week.' That was before a grand prix. And sure enough, Nico beat him. Nico is not a slouch and Lewis can't afford to give him a glimmer of hope if he is really going to beat him."

As long as Hamilton's motivation remains high, however, this is unlikely to become a long-term problem. "If it was having an effect, I think he would change his lifestyle and raise his game," says one insider. "You have to keep coming back to the fact that he is just a phenomenal talent, and he knows he is. So he knows he just has to get that back and he is there again."

Will a third title, with which he emulated his childhood hero Ayrton Senna, blunt Hamilton's



"Lewis is one of those rare drivers like Michael Schumacher, where one, two, three titles is not enough. They just want to keep on doing it"

Damon Hill

ambition? Hill thinks not: "Being the most winning British driver is one hell of an accolade and he might think: 'Well, if I never win another race, I've done an amazing thing and that will be good enough.' But Lewis is one of those rare drivers, like Michael Schumacher, where one, two, three titles is not enough. They just want to keep on doing it. I can't imagine him going →

HANDBAGS!

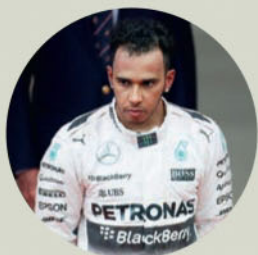
How intra-team tension escalated over the course of 2015



NICO IRKED BY LEWIS

CHINA With Mercedes spooked by Vettel's tyre-related win in Malaysia, Hamilton runs this race at the slowest possible speed. Rosberg feels his team-mate has deliberately backed him into Vettel's Ferrari and makes the point angrily and publicly. Hamilton dismisses his complaints, saying he was merely running his best race.

AUSTIN Rosberg is infuriated by what he says is Hamilton's overly aggressive driving at the first corner and by his own error in throwing away the win and handing Hamilton the title as a result. A cap-flinging incident follows before a sulky podium appearance by Rosberg.



LEWIS IRKED BY NICO

MONACO Hamilton is distraught after a strategy error hands victory to Rosberg. "It was like the kettle had boiled to the top," he says. "I tried to cool down. I prayed and asked for strength to get through the next couple of hours."

MEXICO Stuck behind Rosberg but unable to pass, Hamilton tries to grab the win by staying out when Nico is called in for tyres. The team order him to pit. Hamilton later claims the team have gone out of their way to keep Rosberg happy after his Austin error.

into the season giving any indication that he is the slightest bit worried about Nico."

SO COULD IT ALL BLOW UP ON TRACK?

Hamilton's talent notwithstanding, both Wurz and Hill believe it is at the very least possible that Rosberg could mount a much sterner challenge this year. In which case, the question becomes whether Mercedes can keep the internal tensions between their two drivers under control.

Team boss Toto Wolff has already warned that he would give consideration to changing the driver line-up if things started to get out of hand. This is, in effect, a warning to Rosberg, whose contract runs out at the end of 2016, while Hamilton is starting a new three-year deal that takes him to the end of 2018.

Wurz says it will "definitely be tense". But Hill counters that opinion: "I just don't think that Lewis and Nico are actually that volatile a combination. You're not talking Senna-Prost; it is nothing like that. They are not aggressively nasty about it. Nico is too diplomatic. I think he would be the one who defuses it.

"Lewis could try to antagonise things, but you need a foil. You need someone to rise to the bait. And I don't think Nico is that someone. Nico's answer will come from the way he drives."

Equally, the prospect of a closer challenge coming from the Ferrari camp this season – which seems inevitable to a degree, all things being equal and given the rules stability – is likely to take some of the sting out of any intra-team rivalry.

"They would have another target beyond each other," Wurz says. "So to an extent it may help the team internally with the pressure."

A POSSIBLE CONCLUSION

Both drivers have good reason to believe that they can win out. Hamilton has the evidence of his history in Formula 1 and his own awareness of the sheer scale of his talent. Rosberg, meanwhile, knows exactly what he is up against, but has shown he can beat Hamilton; he just has to find a way to do it more often.

So, all things considered, what should we expect of Hamilton versus Rosberg, part three?

"The odds are on Lewis again," Hill says. "You have to look at long-term form and that says Lewis wins every time.

"But the question is whether something really did change in Nico. And it's never wise to discount any competitor in Formula 1. It doesn't matter who you are; they always have the capacity to surprise you."



IS A RE-RUN OF '86 ON THE CARDS?

F1 Racing's principal photographer Steven Tee recalls the fight for the F1 title in 1986, and ponders whether intra-team rivalry might create a similar outcome in 2016...



The 1986 season was my second year on the championship trail. At that time, LAT were working for Mobil and Canon, two of Williams' major sponsors, so I spent a lot of time with the team that season. It was obvious there had been a breakdown in the relationship between their two drivers, Nigel Mansell and Nelson Piquet, and, as the season developed, the animosity was being driven by Piquet.

I'd got to know Mansell when we did some work for Lotus in 1984 and 1985. Because he was a Brit I was hoping that he could be champion that year. But the infighting was causing Williams problems. Nigel should have wrapped up the title in Mexico, but fluffed his start and had to fight his way back through the field. I flew from Mexico to Australia, for the season finale, and truly believed he would win the championship in Adelaide. He was the quicker of the two Williams drivers and I was sure that he wouldn't have more bad luck. During that weekend, McLaren's Alain Prost wasn't even spoken of as an option, despite still having a mathematical chance of winning the drivers' title.

So it was a huge shock to everyone that neither Williams driver clinched the championship, not least to Prost who celebrated in uncharacteristic fashion by stopping just past the flag and leaping up and down once he got out of his car.

It makes you wonder whether infighting at Mercedes could give Vettel a chance of winning in his Ferrari this year...



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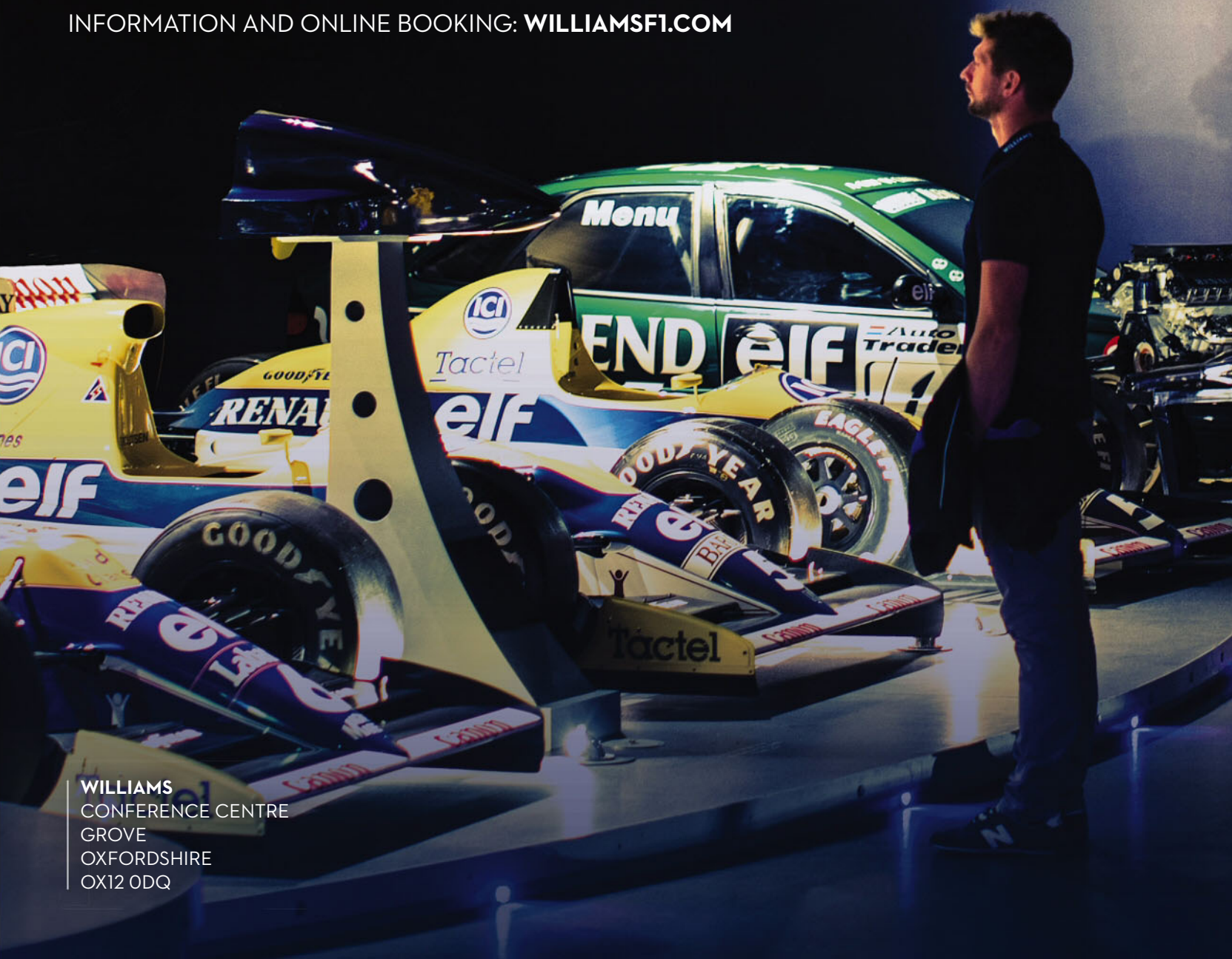
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MERCEDES AMG PETRONAS FORMULA ONE TEAM



5a Reynard Park, Brackley, Northamptonshire, NN13 7BD, UK

COMPANY	TEAM HISTORY	KEY PERSONNEL
Name Mercedes-Benz Grand Prix Limited	Founded 1886	Head of Mercedes-Benz motorsport Toto Wolff
Chassis F1 W07 Hybrid	First GP France 1954	Executive director (technical) Paddy Lowe
Engine Mercedes-Benz PU160C Hybrid	Races started 127	Managing director, Mercedes AMG High-Performance Powertrains
Website mercedesAMGF1.com	Wins 45	Andy Cowell
Twitter @MercedesAMGF1	Poles 53	Engineering director Aldo Costa
	Fastest laps 38	Technology director Geoff Willis
	Points 2,285	
	Drivers' titles 4	
	Constructors' titles 2	

F1 RACING SAYS...

Mercedes' rivals had 15 weeks from the end of last season to the opening day of practice in Australia to figure out a way to stop the team from Brackley strolling to a third consecutive brace of titles. It isn't long enough. There's no deficit of will, no shortage of passion; driver talent is abundant, pockets are deep, the rules aren't changing and Mercedes have a settled team. Short of a miracle, it's difficult to see anything changing – although for the sake of F1 we hope that's just a lack of imagination on our parts.

The real interest at Mercedes, of course, is the internecine battle between the drivers. When it mattered last year, Lewis Hamilton put Nico Rosberg in the shade. That changed once the pressure was off, although whether that was a case of Hamilton lacking the motivation or, as was suggested, Rosberg responding better to car evolution, will be important – potentially even title-determining.

DRIVERS

Car number	44	Car number	6
LEWIS HAMILTON (GBR)		NICO ROSBERG (GER)	
Born 7 January 1985 (age 31)		Born 27 June 1985 (age 30)	
Place of birth Tewin, UK		Place of birth Wiesbaden, Germany	
Height/weight 1.75m/66kg		Height/weight 1.78m/67kg	
Race engineer Peter Bonnington		Race engineer Tony Ross	
Twitter @LewisHamilton		Twitter @nico_rosberg	
F1 HISTORY		F1 HISTORY	
Debut Australia 2007		Debut Bahrain 2006	
Races started 167		Races started 185	
Previous team McLaren		Previous team Williams	
Wins 43		Wins 14	
Poles 49		Poles 22	
Fastest laps 28		Fastest laps 14	
Points 1,867		Points 1,209.5	
Drivers' titles 3		Drivers' titles 0	
2015 position 1st		2015 position 2nd	

RESULTS IN 2015	Position 1st	Points 703	1st 16	2nd 13	3rd 3	Points-scoring races 19	Pole positions 18	Fastest laps 13
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MR 50%

Ferrari

Like your favourite pizza-delivery man, Seb Vettel has a knack for delivering just what you need. And for Ferrari, that's a podium hit rate of one-in-two.

Edd Straw explores the secrets of Seb's success

Sebastian Vettel is F1's Mr 50 per cent. Why? Because he has finished on the podium in exactly half of his 158 starts – a better record than any of his rivals bar Lewis Hamilton, and a strike rate almost identical to that of his hero, Michael Schumacher. Yet there are some – admittedly an

ever-diminishing group of naysaying hold-outs with the zeal and intransigence of hardened conspiracy theorists – who still question the four-time world champion's quality.

Vettel's first season at Ferrari in 2015 should really have disabused any remaining doubters of

their more fanciful notions, despite it following on from his disappointing final year with Red Bull, when he couldn't adapt his style to the demands of a car requiring more progressive use of the rear end on turn-in.

Ferrari recruited Vettel because of his proven track record and his determination to win a fifth drivers'

championship. But if anyone at Maranello bought in to the idea that he was a flat-track bully able to operate only in the narrow performance window of a perfect car, it wouldn't have taken long for him to change their minds. Vettel was an instant hit with

the race team – just as he was with the *tifosi*. →

ILLUSTRATION BENJAMIN WACHENJE



PHOTOS: LAT ARCHIVE

Over 2015, Sebastian Vettel had an impressive strike rate of 13 podiums in 19 races for Ferrari

You don't have to look too far back to find an example of Vettel's credentials as a driver capable of thriving under pressure. On paper, last October's third place in the US GP was a regulation result, one of seven finishes behind a brace of Mercs. Yet even Vettel's harshest critics would argue that the circumstances on Austin race day had set him up to fail.

He was an unremarkable fifth in qualifying, when a penalty dropped him down the grid by a further eight places to start in 13th. Yet he

was seventh by the end of the first lap and snapping at the heels of second-placed Nico Rosberg by race end. Vettel himself pointed out it was a mixed-up race, due to the Safety Car periods. But he stuck at it and was quick enough to take on the best driver in the field late in the race. And that wasn't a one-off.

But back to his critics. They'd maintain that Vettel can't overtake, and this belief became one of the most frustrating pieces of received wisdom among F1 fans during his Red Bull years. It comes down to how you use statistics. Yes, he won only three of his 42 victories from a position lower than the front row of the grid. But Red Bull's strategy at their 2010-13 peak was to set pole using a downforce level at the upper end of the spectrum for a given track, break the DRS tow to anyone close enough to follow, then control the race. So while the car had the best ultimate lap time, straightline speed was a weakness. On one occasion, in qualifying for Spa in 2011, Vettel was the fastest through the speed trap at the top of Eau Rouge, and slowest by the end of the Kimmel Straight.

Having a strategy based on not *needing* to overtake is very different, however, from being incapable of passing. Remember when Vettel pulled off one of the most spectacular passes in recent memory by blasting past Alonso with his left-wheels on the grass at Monza 2011? That was an example of a driver going to the limit to overcome the deficiencies of his car: his RB7 was too slow in a straight line to let him squander a chance such as that. That typifies Vettel, who never expects a second chance and tends not to waste the first.

Abu Dhabi 2012 also stands out. Having lost his P3 on the grid on account of not having enough fuel left to give the mandatory sample, Vettel got his head down after starting 24th from

SO MUCH, SO YOUNG

Youngest to 40 F1 wins

27 years, 269 days
2015 Malaysian Grand Prix

Youngest driver to win same grand prix twice

24 years, 98 days
2011 Japanese Grand Prix

Youngest F1 GP winner

21 years, 73 days
2008 Italian Grand Prix

Youngest podium finisher

21 years, 73 days
2008 Italian Grand Prix

Youngest polesitter

21 years, 73 days
2008 Italian Grand Prix

Youngest race leader

20 years, 89 days
2007 Japanese Grand Prix

Youngest driver to set a grand slam (pole, win, fastest lap, led all laps)

24 years, 119 days
2011 Indian Grand Prix

Youngest world champion

23 years, 134 days
2010 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix

Youngest double world champion

24 years, 129 days
2011 Japanese Grand Prix

Youngest triple world champion

25 years, 145 days
2012 Brazilian Grand Prix

Youngest quadruple world champion

26 years, 116 days
2013 Indian Grand Prix

the pits and finished third. The highlight was a glorious move around the outside of Jenson Button's McLaren, while a wheel-rubbing moment with Bruno Senna's Williams early on showed his ability to take it to the limit without going too far.

Earlier that year, after a poor qualifying performance at Spa, he lined up in tenth. Again, he had poor top speed, so could not simply rely on DRS-assisted passes. He finished second, laying down the foundations for this early in the race with some old-school passes at the chicane that minimised time loss to the leaders. Fast, consistent and incisive, and again, no sign of his head dropping.


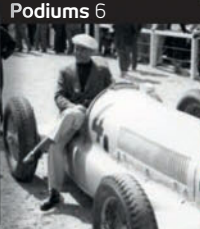
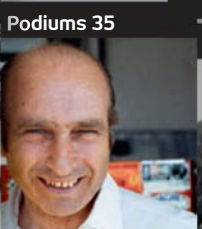

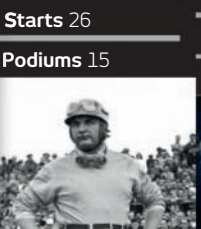
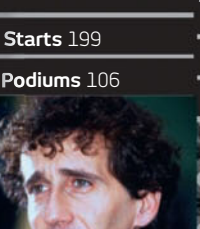

Vettel's ability in the face of adversity is exemplified not only by recoveries through the field, but in the robustness he displays when under pressure. The best example of this was the greatest grand prix win he never actually had to fight for, wheel-to-wheel: Monaco 2011. Yes, Vettel won the race, but Vitaly Petrov's late crash, which caused a red flag and allowed the field to change tyres before a restart, ruined a tantalising denouement.

Vettel had led early on, but a mistake at the first round of pitstops meant he was given the harder tyres. Red Bull made the bold decision to continue to the finish. So in the closing stages we had three champions running nose to tail: Vettel on very old












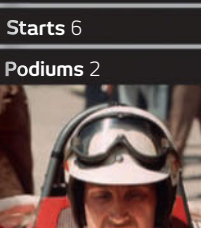
tyres, two-stopping Alonso on younger tyres and three-stopping Button charging on fresh rubber.

Vettel drove immaculately, getting good exits from corners – even with limited rear traction – when he really needed to. He protected the rubber in corners where there was no chance of a pass. On lap 57 of 78, Alonso was right there with Vettel. Five laps later, Button joined them.

"His critics maintain that Vettel can't overtake. But having a strategy based on not needing to overtake is very different, however, from being incapable of passing"

D SERAFINI 100% Starts 1 Podiums 1 	L FAGIOLI 85.72% Starts 7 Podiums 6 	J FANGIO 68.63% Starts 51 Podiums 35 	G FARINA 60.60% Starts 33 Podiums 20 	J GONZALEZ 57.69% Starts 26 Podiums 15 	A PROST 53.27% Starts 199 Podiums 106 	A ASCARI 53.13% Starts 32 Podiums 17 
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F1 PODIUM STRIKE RATE

M HAWTHORN 40% Starts 45 Podiums 18 	J STEWART 43.43% Starts 99 Podiums 43 	J CLARK 44.44% Starts 72 Podiums 32 	A SENNA 49.69% Starts 161 Podiums 80 	S VETTEL 50% Starts 158 Podiums 79 	M SCHUMACHER 50.65% Starts 306 Podiums 155 	L HAMILTON 52.10% Starts 167 Podiums 87 
F ALONSO 38.49% Starts 252 Podiums 97 	D HILL 36.52% Starts 115 Podiums 42 	K RÄIKKÖNEN 34.78% Starts 230 Podiums 80 	P HILL 33.33% Starts 48 Podiums 16 	M PARKES 33.33% Starts 6 Podiums 2 		

It would have been hard for Vettel to hang on in there for the final six laps, but if he'd continued eking out performance as he was, he would have won – on the shabbiest rubber.

“Seb would have been pretty difficult to pass,” reckoned Red Bull chief technical officer Adrian Newey. “Think back to Nigel Mansell at Monaco in 1992 when he was seconds faster than Ayrton Senna but could find no way past him.”

Fernando Alonso – one third of the elite triumvirate at F1’s very pinnacle, alongside

Vettel and Lewis Hamilton – is rightly lauded for his relentless, never-say-die attitude. Vettel is the same. No race sums that up more than Brazil 2012, the very grand prix in which he made one of his most needless blunders. Vettel entered the weekend running head-to-head with Alonso for the title; he started in fourth, due to rain in qualifying, but dropped to eighth after a poor start. On the first lap, he turned in clumsily on Bruno Senna’s Williams and was pitched into a spin before being collected on the right rear.

What happened thereafter was extraordinary.

The hit was so hard that Vettel was certain he wouldn’t finish. But with the title at stake, he went for it anyway and began setting rapid lap times in recovery. His car *was* damaged, but fortunately not badly enough to fail and pitch him into the unforgiving Interlagos barriers.

Every driver makes mistakes and Vettel is not infallible. The great ones make them rarely and recover immediately. For Vettel to keep his head and show the courage required to put himself on the line, was extraordinary. It represented a will

to win that transcends fear for personal safety.

It was the kind of performance that Ferrari will need if they are to have any chance of winning the championship this year. If the red car is close to the Mercedes, even if it’s a little inferior but blessed with consistent characteristics that let Vettel get the best out of his aggressive rotation of the rear on turn in, it might just give him a shot at the title. **F1**

Edd Straw is the editor of *Autosport* magazine



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PHOTOS: GLENN DUNBAR/LAT: FERRARI

SCUDERIA FERRARI



Via Abetone Inferiore n. 4, 41053, Maranello, Italy

COMPANY	TEAM HISTORY	KEY PERSONNEL
<p>Name Ferrari SpA</p> <p>Chassis SF16-H</p> <p>Engine Ferrari 059/5</p> <p>Website formula1.ferrari.com</p> <p>Twitter @ScuderiaFerrari</p>	<p>Founded 1929</p> <p>First GP Monaco 1950</p> <p>Races started 908</p> <p>Wins 224</p> <p>Poles 208</p> <p>Fastest laps 233</p> <p>Points 6,262.5</p> <p>Drivers' titles 15</p> <p>Constructors' titles 16</p>	<p>Chairman Sergio Marchionne</p> <p>Managing director and team principal Maurizio Arrivabene</p> <p>Technical director James Allison</p> <p>Power unit director Mattia Binotto</p> <p>Production director Corrado Lanzone</p>

F1 RACING SAYS...

Ferrari took a huge step up in 2015, but it was a feeble bunny-hop compared to the leap they need to make now. Three victories, second in the constructors' and third and fourth in the drivers' championships, represented a great return for Maranello last year and for any other team consolidation would be good enough – but Ferrari aren't any other team. There are plenty of realists in red who may think differently in private, but settling for second simply isn't an option.

Hope for Ferrari comes from the engineering group put together by technical director James Allison – but there's a bigger picture to consider. With changes coming for 2017, outdeveloping Mercedes in 2016 by the tenths needed requires a massive investment of resources – resources that could be put to use ensuring Ferrari come out of the blocks well at the start of F1's next era. Allison and co have to decide whether to stick or twist. **F1**

DRIVERS

Car number	5		Car number	7
SEBASTIAN VETTEL (GER)			KIMI RÄIKKÖNEN (FIN)	
<p> </p> <p>Born 3 July 1987 (age 28)</p> <p>Place of birth Heppenheim, Germany</p> <p>Height/weight 1.76m/62kg</p> <p>Race engineer Riccardo Adami</p> <p>Twitter N/A</p> <p> </p>			<p> </p> <p>Born 17 October 1979 (age 36)</p> <p>Place of birth Espoo, Finland</p> <p>Height/weight 1.75m/70kg</p> <p>Race engineer Dave Greenwood</p> <p>Twitter N/A</p> <p> </p>	
<p>F1 HISTORY</p> <p>Debut USA 2007</p> <p>Races started 158</p> <p>Previous teams Red Bull, Toro Rosso, BMW-Sauber</p> <p>Wins 42 Poles 46</p> <p>Fastest laps 25</p> <p>Points 1,896</p> <p>Drivers' titles 4</p> <p>2015 position 3rd</p>			<p>F1 HISTORY</p> <p>Debut Australia 2001</p> <p>Races started 230</p> <p>Previous teams Lotus, Ferrari, McLaren, Sauber</p> <p>Wins 20 Poles 16</p> <p>Fastest laps 42</p> <p>Points 1,174</p> <p>Drivers' titles 1</p> <p>2015 position 4th</p>	

RESULTS IN 2015	Position 2nd	Points 428	1st 3	2nd 4	3rd 9	Points-scoring races 18	Pole positions 1	Fastest laps 3
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TOP GEAR

Here's the essential kit that Williams driver **Valtteri Bottas** has to take with him each weekend he goes racing

WORDS JAMES ROBERTS
PHOTOS MALCOLM GRIFFITHS



VENTILATION VEST

They're not used in races, but drivers will often wear these vests on the grid at hot events such as Malaysia and Singapore. The vest keeps a driver's core body temperature low by circulating pre-cooled water or gel through thin tubing sewn between its Nomex layers.



UNDERWEAR

Since the mid-1970s, drivers have worn underwear made from fire-retardant Nomex. These seamless all-in-one garments cover the legs, arms and chest and can withstand temperatures of up to 400°C.



GLOVES

These are created using Computer Aided Design (CAD) 3D drawings to ensure that they are a perfect fit with no excess material getting in the way. Originally the palms and fingers on racing gloves were made from suede to improve the grip on the steering wheel. But in 2008, Sparco became one of the first manufacturers to replace suede with a revolutionary sticky resin. The result is a lighter glove that provides more feel and grip for the driver because of the thinner material.

DRINKS BOTTLE

This will be filled with an isotonic drink to replace lost salt, sugar and energy, helping to keep a driver properly hydrated.



BOOTS

Racing boots tend to be made from cushioned leather (Alpinestars have used exotic materials such as kangaroo leather in the past), with thin rubber soles to provide grippy contact with the foot pedals. Some drivers prefer to have their boots laced right up to the toe, while others use just a strap.

SOCKS

These are made from a fire-proof but breathable fabric that keeps feet cool, while allowing sweat to wick away.

RACING HELMET

F1 helmets must undergo the most rigorous tests to ensure they pass the FIA's stringent safety standards. These include being dropped onto a steel anvil and being subjected to a 830°C flame. They can also withstand being run over by a 55-tonne tank.



BALACLAVA

Also made from fire-proof Nomex, the balaclava is worn beneath the helmet and is durable, comfortable and lightweight.



HANS DEVICE

The Head and Neck Safety (HANS) device is used in virtually every discipline of motorsport and was made mandatory in F1 in 2003. It is effectively a tether connected to the back of the helmet, which rests on a carbon fibre support that sits on a driver's shoulders. The device weighs 700g and limits unrestrained movement of the head and neck in an accident.



RACE SUIT


Companies who produce these specialist made-to-measure suits have found innovative ways of weaving materials and constructing textiles to combine flame-resistance with cooling properties. Over the past 20 years, the breathability of race suits has improved by 55 per cent, while their weight has been reduced by 40 per cent.



WATCH

Everything in Formula 1 is calculated to the second, so there's no excuse to be late for a sponsor's engagement.

KNEE PADS

These prevent the knees from knocking into each other inside the cockpit, and from hitting the monocoque when cornering. The pads can be switched to either side of the leg, depending on the direction of the track and the propensity for left- or right-hand corners. 



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WILLIAMS MARTINI RACING



Station Road, Grove, Oxfordshire, OX12 0DQ, UK

COMPANY TEAM HISTORY KEY PERSONNEL

Name Williams Grand Prix Engineering Limited
Chassis FW38
Engine Mercedes-Benz PU160C Hybrid
Website williamsf1.com
Twitter @WilliamsRacing

Founded 1975
First GP Argentina 1975
Races started 649
Wins 114
Poles 128
Fastest laps 133
Points 3,338
Drivers' titles 7
Constructors' titles 9

Team principal
 Sir Frank Williams
Deputy team principal
 Claire Williams
Group CEO Mike O'Driscoll
Chief technical officer
 Pat Symonds
Head of performance engineering Rob Smedley

F1 RACING SAYS...

Did Williams have a good year or a poor one in 2015? It's not an easy question to answer about a team who have finished third two years in a row. On the plus side, they were a more solidly assured third in 2015; on the minus they were leapfrogged by Ferrari.

So, what then for 2016? Williams have a secure financial position, good drivers, top technical talent and excellent motivation – but they're still privateers with a customer engine trying to take the fight to the works teams. Short of a technical magic bullet, it's difficult to see great progress being made at Grove. That said, Williams struggled with operational performance in 2015, losing points through pitlane clangers and mystery setup anomalies. Pat Symonds reckons 22 points per weekend is the magic number to compete for second in the championship, so that means more podiums in 2016. Luckily a fully fit Valtteri Bottas and a rejuvenated Felipe Massa both look up for a scrap.

DRIVERS

Car number	19	Car number	77
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FELIPE MASSA (BRA)

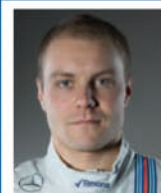


Born 25 April 1981 (age 34)
Place of birth
 São Paulo, Brazil
Height/weight 1.66m/59kg
Race engineer
 Dave Robson
Twitter @MassaFelipe19



F1 HISTORY

Debut Australia 2002
Races started 229
Previous teams
 Ferrari, Sauber
Wins 11
Poles 16
Fastest laps 15
Points 1,071
Drivers' titles 0
2015 position 6th



VALTTERI BOTTAS (FIN)



Born 28 August 1989 (age 26)
Place of birth
 Nastola, Finland
Height/weight 1.73m/70kg
Race engineer
 Jonathan Eddolls
Twitter @ValtteriBottas



F1 HISTORY

Debut Australia 2013
Races started 56
Previous teams N/A
Wins 0
Poles 0
Fastest laps 1
Points 326
Best result 2nd
2015 position 5th

RESULTS IN 2015	Position 3rd	Points 257	1st 0	2nd 0	3rd 4	Points-scoring races 16	Pole positions 0	Fastest laps 0
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15

Don't write
me off

Dismiss Daniel Ricciardo at your peril. We may be about to see him hit new highs in 2016 as **Peter Windsor** suggests

PICTURE ADRIAN MYERS

Don't expect miracles. Red Bull's 2016-spec Renault engines aren't going to leapfrog the team straight into Mercedes-Ferrari championship territory.

Look for a win or two, however. Look for the team to take up where they left off... in 2014.

Last season – 2015? Call it “good for the soul”. Nigel Mansell knew about times like that – 1988, the year after he nearly won the championship being a good example. So did Jim Clark: world champion in '65, a one-race winner in '66. →



Daniel has realised that the past is irrelevant and that nothing else matters more than the next move – the next lap, the next race...

And, as an interesting aside, both drove absolutely at their peaks in the years following those blips. Nigel moved mountains in the embryonic 1989 Ferrari 640; Jim was breathtaking in the 1967 Lotus 49.

Based on that methodology, we'll see Daniel Ricciardo never better than in 2016. The great starts, the stunning passes: these we know; these are part of what Daniel is. Likewise the svelte throttle-and-wrist movement when the back end of the car goes walkabout at high speed or jinks over a bump. Many are the drivers who take Eau Rouge flat with plenty of downforce; few are the heroes who live with a skittish rear up the hill in lower-downforce mode. Daniel Ricciardo could have applied his correction a milligram too abruptly when on the limit at Spa, as Romain Grosjean did at Sochi in 2015 (Turn 3, lap 11) – but he didn't. His was the perfect blend of man, machine and daunting corner.

That sort of touch overwhelmed even Seb Vettel in 2014, accustomed as Seb's feet and hands were to lots of normally aspirated Renault torque and a superglued Newey front end. Daniel, with no preconceptions and nothing like the same front or torque he had on the 2013 Toro Rosso, immediately found his sweet spot in the RB10. Entry to Casino Square, Monte Carlo: Vettel – understeer, throttle in-and-out as he pitches the car over bumps. Ricciardo – neutral to oversteer, throttle gently teased.

But last year was different. The others pulled away; the spiral at Red Bull was downward. Other factors also entered Daniel's field of perception. There was a very fast 21-year-old Russian named Daniil Kvyat. When your

team-mate is Vettel and he outqualifies you, that's okay; the flip-side is always the kudos of outqualifying a four-time champ. It's different when it's a young punk who outqualifies *you*.

Then the afterglow of winning three grands prix in 2014: the expectation, the increased demands, the personal standards that must be maintained. Add to that the success of Seb Vettel at Ferrari: Daniel whipped him in 2014 and now here was Seb, taking on the Mercs. Difficult to stop your mind wandering towards what could have been. Ricciardo had surpassed the stage of being just happy to be racing in F1; instead there was the ongoing stress of trying to be in the right car at the right time. Could he join Ferrari for 2016? What if Red Bull switched to quicker engines? Again, more distractions.

Clearly, the Red Bull car-engine package for 2015 was below par: the first phase of the year was marked by Renault's search for reliability and consequent loss of performance. And the RB11's sweet spot seemed to be smaller than that of the RB10. Kvyat outqualified Daniel for the first time in Spain and then repeated the feat in Canada. Daniel's career was in danger of freefall.

The Canadian Grand Prix itself marked the lowest point of his year. Kvyat finished

ninth. Ricciardo, completely lost, placed 13th. Even as the paddock pack-up began, however, Daniel was rebooting. An impromptu meeting was staged in the team office.

Daniel pointedly sat his close friend and trainer, Stuart Smith, at the end of the table. Daniel and Christian Horner sat opposite Helmut Marko and Daniel's race engineer, Simon Rennie. No more Mr Nice Guy. No more Mr Big Smile. Everyone knew that Marko used to say that Ricciardo "doesn't have enough ****"; now we'd see how it was. Now it was time to talk."

Daniel Ricciardo is as far from the Aussie Grit idiom typified by Mark Webber as Perth is from Queanbeyan (1,927 miles, for the record) – but he's nonetheless fair dinkum. If Mark is Canberra Raiders, Daniel is... Justin Langer. Langer, a brilliant, former opening bat for Australia and now a leading coach, has at least two things in common with Daniel (beyond their athletic excellence). They attended the same school, Newman College, and they both share a love of martial arts combat.

So it was, mentally speaking, in the hours that followed the Canadian GP. As the conversation zapped from setup, to handling, to the 'other car' and then to Daniel, Daniel began to assert himself. Suddenly he realised, as you do in martial arts, that the past is irrelevant and that nothing else matters more than the next move – the next lap, the next race. He wasn't out there to prove himself against Kvyat; he was Daniel Ricciardo and he could win races and championships in the right car. As tough as the season was, and was going to be, he wanted to



enjoy his racing in the knowledge that he had the full support of his team. He could deal with it, providing that they could deal with it too.

Langer experienced similar catharsis when he was dropped from the Australian team during an Ashes tour: "In the nets, or in minor matches, I was batting like a busted arse," he said. "It was that bad. Then I stopped, suddenly aware of what was wrong. I had to relax. I was so uptight that it was impossible to move. I stood as still as possible and relaxed my shoulders and hands. Suddenly my feet were dancing again and I felt alive for the first time in weeks..."

Thus it all came back for Ricciardo. The car was difficult in Austria, in the next race, but Daniel overcame a grid penalty to finish tenth, smiling inwardly at the passes he was manufacturing as he climbed relentlessly through the field. He was brilliant again in Hungary; he was astounding in his drive to second place in Singapore; and he wasn't the Red Bull driver who hit the wall in qualifying at Suzuka – Kvyat did that, reminding everyone that spiky inputs will always be penalised when track borders are tight. Daniel, whose foot and hand movements are more rounded, again excelled in Suzuka, despite his start-line skirmish – and then in the wet in Austin.

Out with the old; in with the new. Ricciardo's re-set was completed when he returned home to Australia to take part in the inaugural Perth Speed Fest in mid-December, 2015. The vast

Ricciardo meets his fans and recharges his batteries at Perth Speed Fest in December

...so dismiss at your peril the Ricciardo smile

West Australian sky, the somnolent Barrack Street Jetty, the new drag strip and speedway track at Kwinana Beach, down by the old refinery. And his people out in there in their thousands, lining up just to say 'hi'. Daniel hadn't won a race in 2015, but it didn't matter. He is stronger and still there's the other stuff he can always bring to a race-day audience, such as the Rindt-like feel for oversteer and the ability to zap Alonso's Ferrari at a re-start (as he classically did in Austin, 2014).




With Perth's People screaming as one, donutting an F1 car had never felt better. He signed every T-shirt, every programme. He revisited his life as a kid in the amazing guise of a guy lucky enough to be racing in F1.

The goals, then, for 2016 as the new season launches in Melbourne, are to maximise all that is good about Red Bull – about what is still arguably the best *race* team in F1; to extract new energy from the Renault engine relationship; to back himself on setup and strategy – Kvyat is just another driver to beat; and to remember, always, how much he loves F1.

So dismiss at your peril the Ricciardo smile: it engenders that time in Trinidad, when Steve Waugh, the embodiment of Aussie Grit, was being battered by Curtly Ambrose, the West Indian fast bowler. Despite the blows, Waugh stood there, "staring his tormenter in the eyes," as Langer later recalled. "His unflinching nerve that day earned him the respect of the entire team. It was a defining moment for us and for the career of Steve Waugh."

For Waugh's stare read Daniel's smile. That'll be the Ricciardo who'll line up in Melbourne this year, the Daniel I bumped into at Spa when I'd been reminding Seb Vettel about his tough year at Red Bull in 2014 with a view to seeing if he, Seb, thought he was driving differently in 2015.

"I nearly butted in when you said that," chuckled the honey badger. "I was about to say, 'You mean when I whipped Seb's arse?' but I thought better of it." He was grinning then – and he was beaming still by the time he reached the Red Bull Energy Station. 

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PHOTOS: ALASTAIR STALEY/LAT: RED BULL



RED BULL RACING



Building 2, Bradbourne Drive, Tilbrook, Milton Keynes, MK7 8AT, UK





COMPANY	TEAM HISTORY	KEY PERSONNEL
<p>Name Red Bull Racing Limited</p> <p>Chassis RB12</p> <p>Engine Tag Heuer</p> <p>Website redbullracing.com</p> <p>Twitter @redbullracing</p>	<p>Founded 2004</p> <p>First GP Australia 2005</p> <p>Races started 203</p> <p>Wins 50</p> <p>Poles 57</p> <p>Fastest laps 47</p> <p>Points 3,052.5</p> <p>Drivers' titles 4</p> <p>Constructors' titles 4</p>	<p>Chairman Dietrich Mateschitz</p> <p>Team principal Christian Horner</p> <p>Chief technical officer Adrian Newey</p> <p>Chief engineering officer Rob Marshall</p> <p>Chief engineer, car engineering Paul Monaghan</p>

F1 RACING SAYS...

Ever popped around to see friends and experienced the uncomfortable realisation that your arrival has interrupted an almighty row? Being in the presence of Red Bull and Renault top brass last season felt very much like that... complete with the sensation that they just wanted you to leave so they could get back to throwing the crockery.

The change from a *de facto* works arrangement to a customer supply shouldn't unduly hurt Red Bull in 2016, and optimists in Milton Keynes might hope team ownership spurs Renault on to ramp up development. It's hard to imagine Red Bull improving on fourth if they don't get a more competitive engine because there really wasn't much else wrong with the RB11, particularly after the summer break when evolution of the front end and tweaks to the suspension setup gave the drivers more confidence. Another plus for Red Bull in 2016 will be the emergence of Daniil Kvyat alongside established star Daniel Ricciardo. **F1**

DRIVERS

Car number	3	Car number	26
			
<p>DANIEL RICCIARDO (AUS)</p> <p> </p> <p>Born 1 July 1989 (age 26)</p> <p>Place of birth Perth, Australia</p> <p>Height/weight 1.80m/64kg</p> <p>Race engineer Simon Rennie</p> <p>Twitter @danielricciardo</p> <p> </p>		<p>DANIIL KVYAT (RUS)</p> <p> </p> <p>Born 26 April 1994 (age 21)</p> <p>Place of birth Ufa, Russia</p> <p>Height/weight 1.75m/58kg</p> <p>Race engineer GianPiero Lambiase</p> <p>Twitter @Dany_Kvyat</p> <p> </p>	
<p>F1 HISTORY</p> <p>Debut Britain 2011</p> <p>Races started 88</p> <p>Previous teams Toro Rosso, HRT</p> <p>Wins 3 Poles 0</p> <p>Fastest laps 4</p> <p>Points 360</p> <p>Drivers' titles 0</p> <p>2015 position 8th</p>		<p>F1 HISTORY</p> <p>Debut Australia 2014</p> <p>Races started 37</p> <p>Previous team Toro Rosso</p> <p>Wins 0</p> <p>Poles 0</p> <p>Fastest laps 0</p> <p>Points 103</p> <p>Best result 2nd</p> <p>2015 position 7th</p>	

RESULTS IN 2015	Position 4th	Points 187	1st 0	2nd 2	3rd 1	Points-scoring races 18	Pole positions 0	Fastest laps 3
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Red Bull

HULK'S QUESTION OF SPORT

We go behind the scenes for **Nico Hülkenberg's** star turn on the BBC's legendary sporting quiz show

WORDS STUART CODLING

PICTURES MALCOLM GRIFFITHS



Monday 5 January 1970. British cinemagoers still have time to enjoy the brief spectacle of George Lazenby as James Bond in *On Her Majesty's Secret Service*. Harold Wilson is entering his last six months as UK Prime Minister. And at 6.20pm on BBC One, the comic celebrity quiz show *A Question Of Sport* begins what will become a virtually uninterrupted run on UK TV.

"A new quiz that will be featuring some of the most famous incidents and events in the history of sport," announced the *Radio Times* billing. *QoS* has outlived original anchor David Vine and team captains Henry Cooper and Cliff Morgan. It has survived turbulent eras of great social change to become a bastion of primetime light entertainment. Its guest list is a proverbial *Who's Who* of sports personalities: the opening night featured George Best and cricket legend Ray Illingworth.

Tonight, Nico Hülkenberg is to join that pantheon, lining up with rower Helen Glover on Matt Dawson's team, and pitted against Reading FC winger Hal Robson-Kanu and four-time snooker world champion John Higgins on Phil Tufnell's team. The remnants of the storm that left the USA's eastern seaboard under several feet of snow are now howling around Salford's →







MediaCityUK studio, promising a bumpy approach to Manchester Airport for our star. We shutter our jackets against the gloom and pop in via the stage door.

F1 Racing is not a publication to dabble in party politics, but we are pleased to report that despite the government's sustained assault on the BBC's budgets, the hospitality suite is well stocked with finger food. This is a good thing, since the *QoS* production team motors through three recordings a day, with a continuous rotation of guests ushered hither and thither by an army of runners; other studios within the building are also in continuous use.

Another feature of modern TV studios: corridors. So many of them. Dr Who would have a veritable field day running down corridors such as these as he sought to evade massed hordes of Daleks, Cybermen, *et al.* Eventually we arrive at Nico's dressing room. The ensuing conversation is worth repeating verbatim:

F1 Racing: We're going to see if we can get a photo of you with Sue Barker.

Hulk: Who?

F1R: She's the host. Very famous in this country. A national treasure. She used to play tennis.

Hulk: I should know this. I'm a big tennis fan.

F1R: Hmm, maybe a little before your time...

Hulk: Ah.

F1R: They'll ask you questions about all sorts of sports. How are you on sports trivia? What's the maximum possible break in a game of snooker?

Hulk: The what in what, sorry?

F1R: What's the maximum possible break in a game of snooker?

Hulk: I know this much [holding finger and thumb a narrow distance apart] about snooker.

F1R: They're going to ask you about snooker.

Hulk: Why?

F1R: There's always a question about snooker. Just remember: 147.

Hulk: Okay, I can remember that.



"NICO HAS HIS CONFIDENT FACE ON, AND HIS COMMAND OF SPORTING TRIVIA (UNUSUALLY, THERE ARE NO SNOOKER QUESTIONS) HELPS PUT HIS TEAM IN THE LEAD"



From far left: Another life goal achieved as Nico hits the bullseye; so that's Sue Barker; captains lead their teams into the fray. Below: lights, camera... action



At this point, Will Hings, Force India's PR manager, known from one end of the paddock to the other for his patience, tut-tuts and says in a chiding tone, "Stop scaring him, Codders!"

To salve the Hulk's pre-show nerves we direct the subject to the F1 here-and-now. Last year his season only really got going when the definitive version of the VJM08 came on stream at Silverstone, having been delayed by the team's tight finances and the transfer of aero research to Toyota's more modern windtunnel facility in Cologne. Yet still he seemed at a disadvantage to team-mate Sergio Pérez at races in which tyre wear was critical, such as Spain and Italy. But

when the Pirellis proved more forgiving there was no stopping him, as was the case in Brazil.

"Yeah," he says. "Well, Spain was the A-spec car, but I did a three-stop and Checo [Pérez] did two. I remember – I was so angry afterwards because we really had problems with the car back then. Monza – that race was tough, but the car had aerodynamic problems that were eating up my tyres. But you're right, that wasn't the best."

Nico is so far yet to drive the VJM09 and try the new Pirelli dual-layer tyre construction (see Pat Symonds' explanation of this on page 28), but in most other respects, he has continuity from last year; a year he finished strongly.

"I haven't seen the need to change anything much," he says. "I've got a seat fitting at Silverstone tomorrow and I'll be meeting with the engineers to see what's new."

We thread our way downstairs and along more corridors to the backstage green room, where Nico plays darts under the watchful eye of Irish rugby powerhouse Jamie Heaslip and seats one in the bullseye. "There!" he exclaims. "I've achieved all my life goals now."

The captains arrive: Phil Tufnell introduces himself cheerily, followed by Matt Dawson and – yes! – Sue Barker. Our F1 star, having been briefed by a producer, is now fully up to speed.

"Do you want to win?" he asks Dawson.

"We're all ex-pros here, mate..."

The studio audience has been professionally fluffed by a warm-up act, and greets the guests with a hearty cheer. Nico has his confident face on, and his command of sporting trivia (unusually, there are no snooker questions) helps put his team into a lead which they hold until a catastrophic quick-fire miming round, the 'sprint finish'. Since British audiences love an underdog, the outcome receives a roar of approval.

But Nico has clearly made an impact. Over the applause, a man in the row behind *F1 Racing* can be heard saying to his wife, in an incredulous tone of voice, "A funny German?!" **F1**

A Question of... F1

To warm Nico up for his star turn, we put him through a quick-fire quiz about his own career



1 What was the name of the Williams chassis in which you made your Formula 1 race debut in 2010?

NH: [Sharp intake of breath] I should know this. They're all numbers, right? FW... 32. [Giggles] That was a guess.

F1R: Correct. [However, it later transpires later that photographer Malcolm has enacted his own version of the alleged 'coughing major' controversy in Who Wants To Be A Millionaire? and signalled the answer]

2 In which grand prix did you take your first points finish?

NH: That was Malaysia 2010, my second grand prix. It was pretty good, I think – sixth or seventh?

F1R: Correct! Although you actually finished in tenth place.

NH: No! Are you sure? It was better than that! Not even ninth?

F1R: Tenth according to Forix. Sorry!

3 What is the name of this year's Force India chassis?

NH: VJM09. Easy! I'm all about the present, you see.

F1R: Correct.

4 Where did you set your first fastest lap in Formula 1?

NH: [Sucks air in through his teeth] Oooh, well it hasn't happened too many times... Singapore 2012?

F1R: Correct.

5 When you started from pole at Interlagos in 2010, who was immediately behind you on the grid?

NH: Webber.

F1R: Correct. Final score, four out of five... pending stewards' decision on spectator involvement in Question 1...

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SAHARA FORCE INDIA FORMULA 1 TEAM



Dadford Road, Silverstone, NN12 8TJ, UK


COMPANY	TEAM HISTORY	KEY PERSONNEL
Name Force India Formula 1 Team Limited Chassis VJM09 Engine Mercedes-Benz PU160C Hybrid Website forceindiaf1.com Twitter @ForceIndiaF1	Founded 2007 First GP Australia 2008 Races started 150 Wins 0 Poles 1 Fastest laps 3 Points 627 Drivers' titles 0 Constructors' titles 0	Team principal and managing director Vijay Mallya Deputy team principal Robert Fernley Chief operating officer Otmar Szafnauer Technical director Andrew Green Sporting director Andy Stevenson

F1 RACING SAYS...

Force India have come a long way in eight seasons. Specifically, they've come from scoring no points and finishing last to finishing fifth and being podium contenders. It's quite an achievement for one of F1's 'have-nots'. So can they maintain that momentum in 2016?

Drivers Nico Hülkenberg and Sergio Pérez have been upbeat about their chances, with Pérez claiming they could have competed with Red Bull and Williams in 2015, had the team started the season with the B-Spec car introduced at Silverstone. That they didn't, however, exposes the inherent weakness of the smaller teams: Force India lacked the financial clout and resources to compete with their better-funded rivals. Despite moving up the constructors' table, Force India scored fewer points in 2015 than they did in 2014, benefitting from McLaren's woes. If the works teams get their act together, it's going to be a tough year for Force India under the technical stewardship of Andrew Green. **F1**

RESULTS IN 2015	Position 5th	Points 136	1st 0	2nd 0	3rd 1	Points-scoring races 15	Pole positions 0	Fastest laps 0
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DRIVERS	
Car number 27	Car number 11
  <p>NICO HÜLKENBERG (GER)</p> <p>Born 19 August 1987 (age 28) Place of birth Emmerich, Germany Height/weight 1.84m/74kg Race engineer Bradley Joyce Twitter @HulkHulkenberg</p> <p>F1 HISTORY Debut Bahrain 2010 Races started 94 Previous teams Sauber, Williams Wins 0 Poles 1 Fastest laps 1 Points 290 Best result 4th 2015 position 10th</p>	  <p>SERGIO PÉREZ (MEX)</p> <p>Born 26 January 1990 (age 26) Place of birth Guadalajara, Mexico Height/weight 1.73m/63kg Race engineer Tim Wright Twitter @SChecoPerez</p> <p>F1 HISTORY Debut Australia 2011 Races started 93 Previous teams McLaren, Sauber Wins 0 Poles 0 Fastest laps 3 Points 266 Best result 2nd 2015 position 9th</p>

Force India

RENDEZ-VOUS PARIS

We shadow **Jolyon Palmer** as he steps up from Lotus reserve driver to F1 rookie with the factory Renault team. Pressure? What pressure?

WORDS JAMES ROBERTS

PICTURES MALCOLM GRIFFITHS

We start this story where our time with Jolyon Palmer ends. We've just spent two days with Renault's rookie signing and now he bids us farewell, and eases out of his black Renault Clio RS before striding off assuredly into the Viry-Châtillon engine facility of the reborn Renault F1 team.

Over the past two days, Palmer has been meeting-and-greeting his new paymasters. During that time, he shook hands with them all: from the top echelon of the Renault corporate hierarchy, to the mechanics on the shop floor. Being welcomed into →





Renault

Palmer with team-mate Kevin Magnussen and Renault reserve driver Esteban Ocon at launch of the 'new' Renault F1 team



the bosom of Renault has been his dream come true. At the official launch, the first of his two days of engagements, he recalled cheering on Fernando Alonso as a teenager. Ten years on, now aged 25, he's set to start his first season as an F1 racing driver with the very team who powered his hero to two titles in 2005 and '06.

Portraits of Alonso still adorn the walls at Renault, as do those of Renault-powered champions Alain Prost, Nigel Mansell and Sebastian Vettel. There's even a podium mugshot of Red Bull team principal Christian Horner enjoying happier times during the Red Bull-Renault winning streak, prior to the very public breakdown in relations between the partners in 2015.

While Palmer hopes to join that gallery of champions, he admitted that the team "won't be challenging for the title this year." Indeed, the tone of the launch, at Renault's Technocentre the company's main road-car R&D facility, just outside Paris, was measured and low key. For despite huge investment, estimated at around £200m

per season, and long-term F1 commitment (Renault have signed up to compete until at least 2020) this first year will be one of transition. Podiums are targeted only for some time "within the next three seasons".

The launch was Palmer's first public outing for Renault, since they took over the ailing Lotus team in a protracted purchase played out over the end of last season. Their previous 'works' foray, from 2000-09, was predominantly a Flavio Briatore-led campaign with tacit support from France. This time, Carlos Ghosn, chairman and CEO of Renault-Nissan Alliance, took centre stage at the launch, outlining a corporate-led strategy, which, he said, would encourage the sale of Renault cars through brand promotion in F1.

The world's press, plus luminaries including Alain Prost and FIA president Jean Todt, came to the launch to meet the team's new management and drivers. Palmer took to the rostrum with team-mate Kevin Magnussen and reserve driver Esteban Ocon. Together with racing

director Frédéric Vasseur they tugged at a sheet to reveal the newly liveried RS16. This wasn't the 2016 car, and nor was the livery 'final', but the important detail for Palmer was that on its nose it displayed a '30' – the number Jolyon used over 13 Friday practice sessions for Lotus last year; it's the number with which he will compete this season.

Pastor Maldonado, announced last autumn as a 2016 Renault driver, was dumped just before the launch to make way for Magnussen. "I feel sorry for Pastor, as he's a nice guy," said Palmer to one of the assembled TV crews. He continued to give the same answers to largely the same questions from a string of interviewers, be they from RAI Sport of Italy, Atresmedia of Spain, Denmark's TV2 or Sky Sports News.

"Firstly Jolyon, what are your expectations for the year ahead?"

"We'll see how good the car is when we start testing. We have to accept it won't be easy, but Renault are very ambitious and I'm looking forward to the challenge of moving up the order."



"WE HAVE TO ACCEPT IT WON'T BE EASY, BUT RENAULT ARE VERY AMBITIOUS AND I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO THE CHALLENGE OF MOVING UP THE ORDER" JOLYON PALMER

"And how does it feel to have Kevin Magnussen as your team-mate?"

"I'm pleased he's back; it's good for me. He has a proven track record and we'll work well together to push the team forward."

"What can Renault achieve this year?"

"It's hard to set expectations – we're swapping engines from Mercedes to Renault, so there are a lot of unknowns. What we do know is that it will be tough and we won't be challenging for the title."

For more than an hour, Jolyon reiterated the same answers with good humour.

And then it was done. So off to central Paris, the Champs-Élysées and Renault's showroom-restaurant L'Atelier for finger-food, champagne and a DJ-soirée.

Jolyon, Kevin *et al* arrived at L'Atelier just after 7pm to shake hands and socialise. This time it was a thoroughly French affair, with both drivers asked questions they didn't understand. Jolyon navigated the linguistic divide with a deft: "*Je ne comprends pas*"; Magnussen simply twinkled: "*Merci beaucoup!*" →

WHO IS FRÉDÉRIC VASSEUR?



Frédéric Vasseur follows in the footsteps of Red Bull team principal Christian Horner as a successful owner of a junior category squad, headhunted to manage the racing side of a Formula 1 team.

Horner ran his team, Arden, in F1's 'nursery school' comfortably winning the F3000 teams' and drivers' titles with Vitantonio Liuzzi in the category's final year, 2004. He was then appointed sporting director of Red Bull when they joined F1 in 2005, soon being promoted to team principal.

At the same time, Vasseur was finding success with his ASM Formula 3 team in Europe. Lewis Hamilton, Paul Di Resta, Romain Grosjean, Nico Hülkenberg and Jules Bianchi won the F3 Euro Series crown for ASM.

In 2005, Vasseur went into partnership with Jean Todt's son Nicolas and established ART Grand Prix in the new GP2 Series. He won first time round with Nico Rosberg and secured the drivers' title again with Hamilton in 2006, Nico Hülkenberg in 2009, and Stoffel Vandoorne last year.

Of Jolyon Palmer, he says: "I know him very well. In fact he has driven for me before in some GP3 test days. I'm fully convinced he'll be able to deliver in F1 as he had a fantastic season in GP2 in 2014 and was well ahead of the field. He also had very good consistency, finishing every race but one, and he's a clever guy who understands how to lead and push for the team. "I think he'll do a great job."



Early the next day, under leaden skies, a sleepy Parisian morning stretches slowly into life for our photoshoot with Palmer in front of the Eiffel Tower. While *F1 Racing's* expert lensman Malcolm Griffiths establishes his opening shot, Palmer chats about Lotus's financial difficulties last season and the much-needed shot-in-the-arm Renault's investment represents for 'Team Enstone'.

"Having been with the team for a year, I know the Enstone guys well," he says, "and they have a really good team spirit. Last year with Lotus was very tough with regard to funding, but they pulled through and to get a podium [Romain Grosjean's P3 at Spa] was a great achievement.

"Now with Renault support and investment, anything is possible. We've picked up the ashes of Lotus and it's going to be a rebuilding year. This is just the first step of a long future."

Palmer takes F1 Racing for a spin around the streets of Paris in the Renault Clio RS




Time is short and we climb into his Clio RS to fight through rush-hour traffic back to Renault's engine facility at Viry-Châtillon. We soon learn aggression is the key to progress – notably around the *Arc de Triomphe* roundabout, where the law of the road seems to be to give way to those joining the speeding circle.

This very quality – or the apparent lack thereof – was aired in an interview given at the start of the year by Lotus's trackside director of operations Alan Permane. He suggested publicly that Palmer needed to show more aggression than he did in the 13 FP1 practice sessions he completed in 2015.

"He told me that personally, so I wasn't particularly surprised when I saw the interview," says Palmer from behind the wheel of the RS. "He had a point, but when you drive a car in FP1, it's not perfectly designed for you and if you crash, then you ruin your team-mate's weekend.

"You can't really drive flat-out: if you do and crash, you're a villain. It's not the same when you're a Friday driver. It will be very different when I have my own car to race."

We're soon pulling off the A6 and we're back to where we started as we bid farewell to Jolyon, who climbs out of the RS and heads off towards the inner sanctum of Viry's engine plant. So restricted is access at Viry that photographer Malcolm isn't allowed to bring his Ford Mondeo hire car on-site: only Renault cars are permitted.

For Palmer the adventure begins here. When he takes to the starting grid in Melbourne, 16 months will have passed since his last race start, in Abu Dhabi, having wrapped up the 2014 GP2 title a month earlier. He's never looked more ready to get back behind the wheel. And with a manufacturer behind him, opportunity knocks... 

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RENAULT SPORT FORMULA ONE TEAM



Whiteways Technical Centre, Enstone, Oxfordshire, OX7 4EE, UK

COMPANY	TEAM HISTORY	KEY PERSONNEL
Name Renault Sport Racing Ltd	Founded 1898	Managing director Cyril Abiteboul
Chassis R.S.16	First GP Great Britain 1977	Racing director Frédéric Vasseur
Engine Renault R.E.16	Races started 300	Chief technical officer Bob Bell
Website renaultsport.com	Wins 35	Chassis technical director Nick Chester
Twitter @RenaultSportF1	Poles 51	Engine technical director Rémi Taffin
	Fastest laps 31	
	Points 1,318	
	Drivers' titles 2	
	Constructors' titles 2	

F1 RACING SAYS...

Lotus... er, sorry, Renault. In one sense, 'Team Enstone' are a success in 2016 by virtue of still being in the game, having endured the most turbulent 2015 to emerge – praise be – under new Renault ownership and securely funded. Last season, at various moments, kit and cars were impounded; crew were locked out of hospitality units and senior management spent more time in court than on the pitwall. It all suggested a team circling the drain. Renault's resumed stewardship puts all that firmly in the past – but there's still a way to go.

On-track prospects do not look great. Limited development of the 2016 car, a new power unit to integrate (a Renault PU having replaced a Mercedes) and that power unit being, by any reasonable expectation, a retrogressive step, do not constitute the well from which confidence springs. Rookie Jolyon Palmer gained experience as a third driver last year, while McLaren refugee Kevin Magnussen replaces Pastor Maldonado.

DRIVERS

Car number 20	Car number 30
KEVIN MAGNUSSEN (DEN)	JOLYON PALMER (GBR)
Born 5 October 1992 (age 23)	Born 20 January 1991 (age 25)
Place of birth Roskilde, Denmark	Place of birth Horsham, UK
Height/weight 1.74m/68kg	Height/weight 1.79m/78kg
Race engineer Chris Richards	Race engineer Julien Simon Chautemps
Twitter @KevinMagnussen	Twitter @JolyonPalmer
F1 HISTORY	F1 HISTORY
Debut Australia 2014	Debut Australia 2016
Races started 19	Races started 0
Previous team McLaren	Previous team Lotus (as reserve driver)
Wins 0	Wins 0
Poles 0	Poles 0
Fastest laps 0	Fastest laps 0
Points 55	Points 0
Best result 2nd	Best result N/A
2015 position Unclassified	2015 position N/A

RESULTS IN 2015	Position 6th	Points 78	1st 0	2nd 0	3rd 1	Points-scoring races 13	Pole positions 0	Fastest laps 0
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Red Bull

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JUNIOR



SCHOOL

Toro Rosso is where F1 rookies head for the chance to become a star. We joined a hopeful **Carlos Sainz** on his first factory visit of 2016

WORDS ANTHONY ROWLINSON

PICTURES MAX PEEF

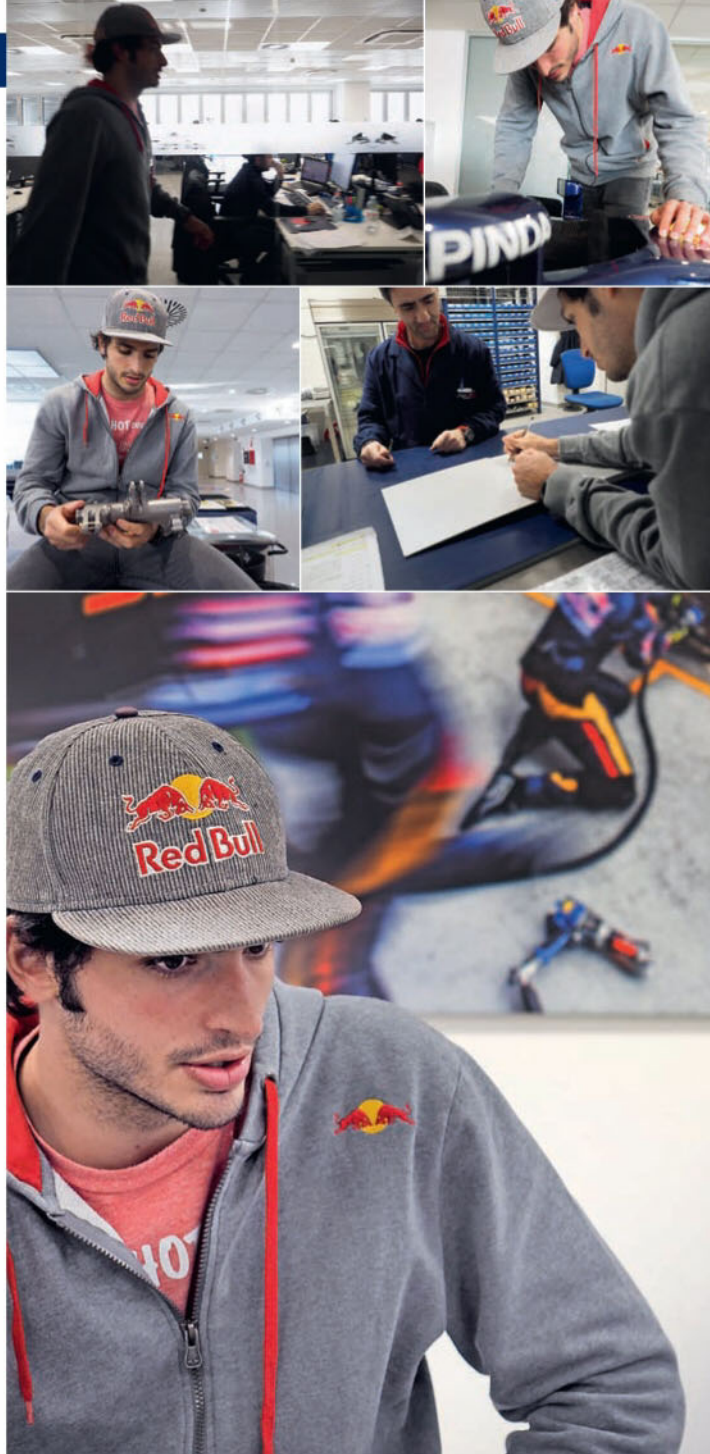
“First, coffee!”

With these two words, Carlos Sainz endears himself forever to the most unapologetically caffeine-dependent member of team *F1 Racing*.

“I’ve just had lunch with my engineers and I need, you know, a little pick-me-up,” he adds, with a somewhat devilish smile.

Sainz, easy of manner, is blessed at 21 with the kind of casual confidence that’s conferred by breeding. As the son of a rally legend (the *other* Carlos Sainz), Carlos the younger has race fuel in his DNA. He’s also been uncommonly well brought up. Unlike some who are exposed early to wealth and fame, he’s neither haughty nor stand-offish and appears genuinely interested in why *we* might be genuinely interested in *him*.

Not that dad would have broached any such arrogance. Sainz the first, or ‘King Carlos’ as the rallying fraternity would have it, is hugely famous in his home country, yet is a character of remarkable humility for one so talented. →



The young 'un, happily, is a chip off the old block, and while Carlos doesn't want to be framed by constant reference to his same-name dad, he has, nonetheless, an endearing respect for his old man's achievements: two world rally titles, 26 wins and, most recently, his stirring run to near-victory on this year's Dakar rally (at the age of 53!). Twitter-watchers might have noticed how excited @carlossainz became as @CSainz_oficial zeroed in on what could have been a famous victory, only for a gearbox failure to force his retirement.

"Yeah, it was the first time I felt really passionate about him competing," admits Sainz, sheepishly. "He put so much into it

– training and the development of the car – that it was great to see it coming together for him."

Chatter about dad isn't, however, why Carlos is here today, at Toro Rosso's Faenza HQ. Nor is he here to impress or make waves: he understands that the race track is where he'll have to do that this season. Rather, he's here to further embed himself within his team in year two of what's promising to be an extended F1 career, and learn as much as he can about the competition ahead.

Espresso secured (it has proven surprisingly difficult to source in this enduringly Italian race team), we head up to Toro Rosso's first-floor race bays, which are flooded with Bolognese sunlight, thanks to the tall windows that afford a

panorama of the nearby Apennine foothills. A wet Woking Wednesday this is not.

Who should be there for a seat-fit, but Max Verstappen, deep in talks with Xevi Pujolar, Toro Rosso's senior race engineer. They're huddled around the first built (of four) STR11 monocoques, grid-like side-impact structures clearly revealed with the bodywork off. There's also, under a red protective cover, a 1.6-litre V6 hybrid motor supplied by some other race team just down the road from these parts...

They were close in 2015, Max and Carlos, and for all the hoopla about teenaged Verstappen, it was Sainz who edged the qualifying tally 10-9. "But at the end of the year, it's just a number,"

"It's time for me and Max to be getting some more wall space, I think. And, you know, it can happen..."

Sainz finds time for a catch-up with F1 Racing on his pre-season visit to meet with his engineers at Toro Rosso's Faenza HQ

declares Sainz, surprisingly phlegmatic. "There were three or four times when Max had problems in qualifying and in racing I had five or six retirements." [Actually, he had seven.]

"We get along okay, you know," he continues, "much better than some people like to imagine. We're both young and we've been exposed to motorsport all our lives, so we've always had plenty to talk about."

Whether the relationship is strained, with the team's sights set on P5 in the constructors' championship and with both drivers knowing Toro Rosso is a 'springboard' not a destination, we shall see. These tyros know that the Red Bull driver programme brooks

no loser and failure of one to beat the other could result in the swift, harsh application of the Markonian boot.

The prize for he who prevails, though, is the promise of a glittering future, of the kind enjoyed by quadruple-champ Sebastian Vettel. As the youngster who took Toro Rosso's sole F1 victory, at Monza, in 2008, Vettel's presence permeates Faenza, not least because pictures from that fabled day are hung in seemingly every corridor.

"Yeah," smiles Sainz, "it's time for me and Max to be getting some more wall space, I think. And, you know, it can happen, even for a smaller team like ours. You need everything to come together, as it did for Seb. But it *can* happen..." **F1**

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PHOTOS: ALASTAIR STALEY/LAT

SCUDERIA TORO ROSSO



Via Spallanzani, 21, 48018, Faenza, Italy

COMPANY	TEAM HISTORY	KEY PERSONNEL
<p>Name Scuderia Toro Rosso SpA</p> <p>Chassis STR11</p> <p>Engine Ferrari 059/4</p> <p>Website scuderiatororosso.com</p> <p>Twitter @ToroRossoSpy</p>	<p>Founded 2005</p> <p>First GP Bahrain 2006</p> <p>Races started 185</p> <p>Wins 1</p> <p>Poles 1</p> <p>Fastest laps 0</p> <p>Points 266</p> <p>Drivers' titles 0</p> <p>Constructors' titles 0</p>	<p>Owner & chairman Dietrich Mateschitz</p> <p>Team principal Franz Tost</p> <p>Technical director James Key</p> <p>Team manager Graham Watson</p> <p>Chief race engineer Phil Charles</p>

F1 RACING SAYS...

While the rest of the Red Bull empire is adopting tones of strained civility towards all things Renault, Toro Rosso don't seem to have got the memo. The Faenza team are making no bones about their delight to be back in harness with Ferrari power, with the drivers particularly bullish about the gains they expect this year. Is that youthful enthusiasm or can a year-old Ferrari power unit really outperform Renault's 2016 efforts?

Certainly, there's a real chance it will. Max Verstappen and Carlos Sainz did good work last year and looked as if they belonged from the start. They'll be smarter, tougher and more ready in 2016 – which should make for interesting viewing. Sainz was comprehensively outscored by Verstappen in 2015, but the bald numbers obscure bad luck: he suffered seven mechanical retirements compared to Verstappen's three and, given that there was little to separate the two in qualifying, he will be very keen to make his mark this year.

DRIVERS

Car number 33	Car number 55
<p>MAX VERSTAPPEN (NED)</p> <p> </p> <p>Born 30 September 1997 (age 18)</p> <p>Place of birth Hasselt, Belgium</p> <p>Height/weight 1.80m/67kg</p> <p>Race engineer Xevi Pujolar</p> <p>Twitter @Max33Verstappen</p> <p> </p> <p>F1 HISTORY</p> <p>Debut Australia 2015</p> <p>Races started 19</p> <p>Previous teams N/A</p> <p>Wins 0</p> <p>Poles 0</p> <p>Fastest laps 0</p> <p>Points 49</p> <p>Best result 4th</p> <p>2015 position 12th</p>	<p>CARLOS SAINZ (ESP)</p> <p> </p> <p>Born 1 September 1994 (age 21)</p> <p>Place of birth Madrid, Spain</p> <p>Height/weight 1.77m/66kg</p> <p>Race engineer Marco Matassa</p> <p>Twitter @carlosainz</p> <p> </p> <p>F1 HISTORY</p> <p>Debut Australia 2015</p> <p>Races started 19</p> <p>Previous teams N/A</p> <p>Wins 0</p> <p>Poles 0</p> <p>Fastest laps 0</p> <p>Points 18</p> <p>Best result 7th</p> <p>2015 position 15th</p>

RESULTS IN 2015	Position 7th	Points 67	1st 0	2nd 0	3rd 0	Points-scoring races 13	Pole positions 0	Fastest laps 0
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GO FIGURE

We take a statistical look at the Swiss team's 23 seasons in F1 as Sauber and BMW-Sauber



Robert Kubica's win in Canada 2008, during the BMW-Sauber era, remains the team's only F1 victory in 23 seasons of competition

4 In the four years since Chelsea FC began sponsoring Sauber in 2012, the club have had four managers: Roberto Di Matteo, Rafa Benitez, José Mourinho and Guus Hiddink



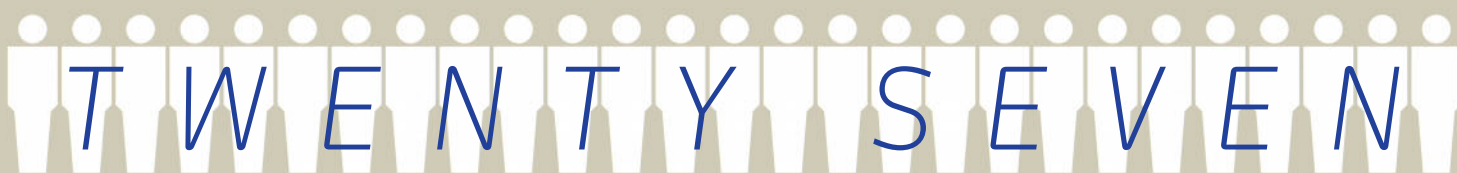
This year will be Sauber's 16th season with Ferrari power, although for nine of those years they were branded as Petronas engines



This year's F1 car is the C35. The 'C' in each Sauber is for 'Christiane', Peter Sauber's wife

Elevation of Sauber's
F1 base in Hinwil

1,854ft



drivers from 14 different countries have raced for Sauber

80% of Sauber was owned by BMW, from 2006-2009

EIGHT

The number of seasons Nick Heidfeld raced for the team – making him Sauber's longest-serving racing driver

24 Sauber's most famous motorsport triumph came not in F1, but when they won the 1989 Le Mans 24 Hours sportscar race



6,263 miles

between the birthplaces of the two 2016 Sauber racers: Kumla, Sweden (Marcus Ericsson) and Brasilia, Brazil (Felipe Nasr)



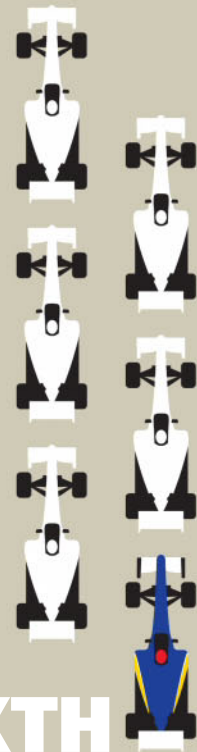
Five Sauber drivers have been disqualified from races: Johnny Herbert (France 1996), Mika Salo (Australia 2000), Robert Kubica (Hungary 2006) and Kamui Kobayashi and Sergio Pérez (Australia 2011)

1993

The year of the team's F1 debut in South Africa

20 RACES LED

out of 403 attended: a percentage of 4.96



SIXTH

in the highest number of race starts, with 400, behind Ferrari, McLaren, Williams, Lotus and Tyrrell



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PHOTOS: ALASTAIR STALEY/LAT: SAUBER



SAUBER F1 TEAM



Wildbachstrasse 9, 8340, Hinwil, Switzerland

COMPANY	TEAM HISTORY	KEY PERSONNEL
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Name Sauber Motorsport AG	Founded 1970	President of the board of directors Peter Sauber
Chassis C35	First GP South Africa 1993	Team principal and CEO Monisha Kaltenborn
Engine Ferrari 059/5	Races started 400	Operations director Axel Kruse
Website sauberf1team.com	Wins 1	Chief designer Eric Gandelin
Twitter @SauberF1Team	Poles 1	Head of aero development Mariano Alperin-Bruvera
	Fastest laps 5	
	Points 810	
	Drivers' titles 0	
	Constructors' titles 0	

F1 RACING SAYS...

Statistically, Sauber were one of F1's best performers in 2015 – which says rather more about the value of statistics than it does about Sauber's actual performance. The team did indeed climb from tenth to eighth in the championship – but this brought little cheer for F1's perennial underdogs. In many ways, it was the typical Sauber season with early promise evaporating as they were outdeveloped by better-funded rivals.

In the asset column for Sauber, however, the experienced Mark Smith has been with the team for long enough to have a genuine influence on the C35; the Ferrari power unit isn't the worst in the world; and in Felipe Nasr they possess a driver who looks quite a bit better than he should for someone weighed down by a heavy chequebook.

The expectation that Sauber will collect the wooden spoon in 2016 is not unreasonable – but then, success for Hinwil is based more around survival than points at the moment.

RESULTS IN 2015	Position 8th	Points 36	1st 0	2nd 0	3rd 0	Points-scoring races 9	Pole positions 0	Fastest laps 0
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DRIVERS

Car number 9	Car number 12
MARCUS ERICSSON (SWE)	FELIPE NASR (BRA)
Born 2 September 1990 (age 25)	Born 21 August 1992 (age 23)
Place of birth Kumla, Sweden	Place of birth Brasilia, Brazil
Height/weight 1.74m/64kg	Height/weight 1.75m/68kg
Race engineer Erik Schuivens	Race engineer Jörn Becker
Twitter @Ericsson_Marcus	Twitter @FelipeNasr
F1 HISTORY	F1 HISTORY
Debut Australia 2014	Debut Australia 2015
Races started 35	Races started 18
Previous team Caterham	Previous team Williams (as reserve driver)
Wins 0	Wins 0 Poles 0
Poles 0	Fastest laps 0
Fastest laps 0	Points 27
Points 9	Best result 5th
Best result 8th	2015 position 13th
2015 position 18th	

Sauber

Jenson Button

World champion, racing icon, national treasure... Jenson is all this and more. Yet he's about to face his toughest test yet: a grilling by the F1 paddock

WORDS ANTHONY ROWLINSON PORTRAITS STEVEN TEE/LAT

After surviving 16 years in the F1 viper pit, you'd expect to have acquired a few enemies. There would be a scar or three, surely, from knives inserted between the shoulder blades. You'd want to make sure you could still count all the fingers on your hands after innumerable handshakes of questionable integrity. You'd have grown a hardened shell, unseen but impenetrable and ever-present, to guard against unwelcome interaction. And most certainly, after 284 grands prix and counting, you would expect your enthusiasm to have dimmed somewhat.

Yet despite having essayed an enviably long and competitive F1 career, none of this applies to Jenson Button. Though undoubtedly now an elder statesman in a driver cadre that includes such eager pups as 18-year-old Max Verstappen, Button remains sharp, focused, hungry... all the myriad attributes needed to make up the package of a complete grand prix driver.

In Formula 1 terms he has become something of a national treasure – a respected presence so integral to the sport's proceedings, it seems almost unimaginable that a grand prix could start without him.

And, as *F1 Racing* discovered in preparing for this 'They Ask The Questions' interview, JB also has an awful lot of friends in F1. Rarely – in fact, never, in our experience – have paddock peers been so keen to participate in one of these bespoke Q&As, created by asking them what question *they* would like to put to Jenson.

He carries his position graciously, still putting energy into media time, for example, when many might long ago have become bored with such duties. Enjoy, then, his honest answers to this peer-group interrogation. For there is, after all, only one Jenson Alexander Lyons Button.

You've been team-mate to both Lewis Hamilton and Fernando Alonso. How do they differ? Who is better?

David Coulthard

[A groan from Jenson] Read the papers! [Laughter from a bushy-bearded McLaren press aide]. I answered this question yesterday!

F1 Racing: You seemed to say that Alonso was a tougher fight...

JB: In a race situation, Fernando is very consistent. Lewis can be unbelievably quick,

but on another day you'd wonder where he was. Maybe he has more experience now. Maybe Lewis is a different driver today. It is three years since we raced together [Button and Hamilton were McLaren team-mates from 2010-2012].

Would you have liked me to be your team boss?

Claire Williams

Would you have liked me to be your driver?!

F1R: I'd say from that she probably would...

JB: It sounds like it, is what I'd say to that.

What did you find in the bed when you bought that motorhome off me in 2003?

Mika Salo

Nothing! The only thing I did find was that there was no Harley Davidson on it... he had a Harley sprayed the same colours as the motorhome. That motorhome ended up being my manager's, so it has done the rounds. But it's a great old bus. I loved it. And, for me, that sort of living around a grand prix weekend is the way it's got to be.

F1R: Is it still in circulation?

JB: It's somewhere, yes. Around motorsport. →



McLaren Honda



Would you retire from F1 if the car is as bad again this season?

Bruno Senna

I might not have a choice – I don't have a contract after 2016, so I've got to do a good job as well. I'm hoping for big improvements. But obviously if we're still finishing at the back and I can't see light at the end of the tunnel, I won't be interested in continuing.

years ago and it feels like yesterday. I went out and Robin Frijns was driving as well. We had a little play around, but the problem was that in the kart I had, the seat wasn't deep enough so I did break my ribs, yes. But I had a great time – I really enjoyed driving again because I hadn't driven a kart since '98, '99. But the injury meant I couldn't test the F1 car all winter. Actually, that didn't really matter [the 2007 Honda was deeply uncompetitive, scoring only six points].

I'm surprised more drivers don't do it. It's just mega at European races. Old school. It feels like karting again.

What tips do you have for running a marathon for the over 50s?

Graeme Lowdon

He knows them all because I've told him already! We had lunch after the London Marathon, and a few beers, and we had a good chat then about him getting quicker and coming training and all sorts. It's good that he's going for it.

Do you remember breaking your ribs karting in Genk? And meeting me?

Max Verstappen

[Long pause] I remember breaking my ribs... I think it was the end of 2006. He would have been eight! Funnily enough, I was going through pictures yesterday and I came up with some from those days. And the scary thing is, that was nine

What's your favourite drink?

Daniil Kvyat

I love a spicy margarita – a spicy margarita is what I like.

Diamonds are forever?

Martin Brundle

[There's silence... then Jenson smiles. Clearly Brundle's reference is to something about which nothing will be said. Button offers only the following, cryptic comment...] Diamonds... diamonds are forever... He's a diamond geezer. It's a private joke. Diamonds are important in life... and feeling like a diamond is important.

What was your first memory of karting?

Allan McNish

[Still laughing from previous question] When I was seven years old, Dad bought me a kart. We were next to a pub car park and it was empty because it was in the morning. So I drove round

it, which was great. I loved the feeling of it and getting used to the pedals, but I got bored ever so quickly. He took me to an airfield and we spent half a day there... I got bored. So he took me to a circuit, which I loved, but again I got bored in a day. And then he put me in for my first race and I won it. I loved it and I was hooked. That was it. It was competition – it wasn't driving a kart. It never is. It's never driving a car; it's the competition that's exciting.

FIR: Is that why you're so into triathlon?

JB: Yes. Definitely. It's about doing a better job than everyone else.

FIR: Had you pestered him to get a kart? Or did he just get it for you?

JB: No. Not at all. I was so young. I didn't have a clue what a kart was.

How did you feel when you were first told you'd got the Williams drive?

Herbie Blash

Very emotional. I was obviously with Frank when he told me, and it was 20 minutes before I was announced to the world as an F1 driver alongside Ralf Schumacher. And he said [Button puts on a Frank Williams voice]: "Jenson, we have decided to go with you to race for us next year." Then Ralf came in. He was whinging that he hadn't been picked up from the hotel and that if he wasn't picked up the next time he wouldn't come to the circuit, and I was like: 'Oh my god.' Frank said: "Ralf, Jenson is going to be driving alongside you next year." Ralf said: "Yes, I know he is."

Then I went outside and saw my dad and both of us burst into tears. I called my mum and I got her answerphone – it's the only time I think I've ever got her answerphone, and she was gutted. It was an unbelievably emotional day. The funniest thing was, after that we didn't really do any testing before the first race. And it snowed for two days right after the announcement. I was still only 19 and I had driven three Formula 1 cars [Button had tested for Prost Grand Prix and McLaren]. I know that's not so young any more, but I remember having my birthday while we were testing. Technically I had no idea what I was doing. Engineering-wise I was terrible, but I think they realised that although I had no experience of racing F1 cars I could learn quickly.

Why haven't you retired?

Andy Stevenson

[Twinkling] Because I'm bloody good still! Because I'm *shit-hot* still! Cos I love it and I love racing and I have belief in this team. If I didn't, I would have stopped. And obviously I did think about stopping. But I do have belief in this team and I think that we can still do some good things in the future together.

How much fitter were you in 2004 compared with now?

Carlos Sainz

He means it the other way around... I'm a lot fitter now. Maybe he means how much fitter did you have to be, because of the downforce and grip. You had to be fitter then, definitely. I think I would have had a big advantage in 2004 if I had been at the fitness level I'm at now. I would have been much more competitive in races.

FIR: Your fitness really would have made that much more of a difference?

JB: Yeah, because some drivers just weren't fit enough. You could see it after the race when they got out of the car; they would faint when they got

on the podium. These days that doesn't happen because the cars are way too easy to drive in terms of fitness. So generally I am a lot fitter now because I like training. And I feel I'm good at doing triathlons. I work hard at it and I can get some pretty good results: I've qualified for the world championships, which is wicked.

Have you got another F1 world championship in you?

Johnny Herbert

Definitely, or else I wouldn't bother being here. I don't know if it will happen – who knows? – everything has to go your way. But I definitely feel like I haven't slowed down since 2009. I've gained experience and I'm a better driver.

Do you feel you've been robbed of the chance to challenge for a second title?

Damon Hill

A lot of drivers could say they were robbed of the chance, but, you know, my aim coming into F1 was to win the world championship and I've done that. We would all love to win more championships, but you've got to be in the right situation at the right time. Fernando Alonso has supposedly been the best driver in the world for so many years, but he hasn't won the world championship since 2006. That's more than nine years ago. So it's about being in the right situation at the right time. Personally, I don't like jumping around teams too much. It's important to be a part of a team, part of a family, and to grow with that family. And if it comes good for you, you feel like you've had a big involvement. Like Brawn. Maybe if I had jumped around a bit more I'd have had more chances. But maybe not.

Are you a lightweight? How much is too much to drink?

Lewis Hamilton

I can definitely drink more than him! That's all I do know and that's all that matters. And I've never crashed a road car.

How many cars do you own?

Valtteri Bottas

[Long pause as he mentally counts his collection. Steven Tee, F1 Racing's chief photographer titters: "It's obviously more than one isn't it?"] About 15. I probably own 15 cars that are 'mine' – cars that I don't buy for selling. But we have other cars, Richard and me [Richard Goddard is Button's long-time manager], that we share for investment purposes. But those 15 are my cars.

FIR: Can you single one out as a favourite?

JB: That's really difficult. The P1 is obviously pretty amazing. And the F40 is stunning... it's got relatively high mileage – 11,000 miles – →

"I love racing and I have belief in this team. If I didn't, I would have stopped. But I think that we can still do some good things in the future together"



THEY ASK THE QUESTIONS

but it's mint. I've seen cars with 1,800 miles that are terrible. It's really looked after. And I love my 1956 Vee Dub campervan – it's a real stunner. I've got my dad's Ferrari 550. I love his Corvette '57. There's a 1970 Pontiac GTO: that was my wedding car – really cool. And a car that means a lot to me for other reasons that I don't really want to say, probably my biggest investment, is a 275 Ferrari GTS. It's a cabriolet and absolutely stunning. It's black with a camel-colour leather interior. I've just bought it and haven't actually seen it yet, as I don't have it yet in Monaco. That one is very special.

You are such a good man. A gentleman. How do you maintain this?

Felipe Massa

I can't put it all down to myself. I would have to put it down to my friends and family. Who put me in my place – always! You've got to have good friends. All my friends are from school or my karting days from when I was eight or nine years old. My two best friends at my wedding I met when I was nine and ten, and that was through karting. So, friends from so many years. But then I have also met friends from over the years that I feel I have a real connection with. It's so important to have people around you who you care about and love. It keeps you the person you are and doesn't let you take off and become something that you shouldn't be.

Did you feel proud, the day you beat me on a pushbike?

Alex Wurz

Which time? I mean the list is quite long now isn't it, Alex? The first time I beat him on a pushbike – yeah, massively proud. That was a few years ago now. We have good bants. We



"Winning a grand prix is just adrenaline through the roof. A world championship is very different... when it actually happens, it's more of a relief"

cycle together quite a lot and we both have our own strengths. He's stronger on the flat; I'm stronger in the hills. But yeah, it's really good cycling with someone like him. We did a ride together up the Col de Turini a couple of months ago, which was wicked. It was so cool just to be headed out there on our own. We were out for ages. We got to the top of Turini, which is 1,600m and we were like: 'We've only got our short-sleeved tops on!' So we stole these bin bags off some signs on the road and we put them on and cycled down with these bin bags on us. It was proper high-tech. He's a good lad and he's going to enjoy life away from racing sportscars. He's got a lot of good friends down here and hopefully he'll be able to cycle more often.

FIR: His Strava times are going to take a pasting, aren't they?

JB: Yeah, they are.

How do you manage to stay so happy in your career and life?

Paddy Lowe

Same answer as the one before.

What was your favourite season?

Ron Meadows

There have been many, to be fair. Many poor seasons, but many great seasons. He wants me to say 2009 [Button's world championship year with Brawn GP, during which Ron Meadows was team manager]. And obviously, emotionally, 2009 was through the roof. In terms of my driving though, I would probably say 2011. Or possibly the last part of 2014. Or maybe 2015. Yeah, I think I've got better as a driver and have learned to deal with a car that maybe doesn't suit my style as much lately. So I think it's just about being 'fearless'. I don't put as much pressure on myself any more. I am more relaxed in my skin and that's probably why.

What advice can you give for me to have a career as long as yours?

Will Stevens

You always have to be willing to learn and put the time and effort in to learn, and never think that you know everything, because you never will. I'm still learning now, 16 years into the sport, and you obviously need to understand that just being quick is not enough. You've got to build on your talent; you have to spend a lot of time working with engineers, putting a good team of people around you and making the team believe in you. But you also have to work with

Left: last year was a tough one, with little to show in the way of results, but Button maintains the experience has made him a better driver



When will you next be back on the podium?

Bob Fernley

Hopefully this year. I don't know when, but the aim is this year. I mean, it's a massive gain... we need to make massive gains from 2015, but we have to aim high and we have to aim for podiums at the very least.

FIR: Does that feel possible?

JB: I really don't know. There's a lot coming... a lot of improvements. I don't know if we'll be able to consistently fight for podiums, but there has to be a day when you fall into a lucky situation and it can happen.



Jenson has scored 50 podiums over the course of his F1 career... but the most recent of these was Australia 2014

the sponsors and make them understand they need you in the team. There are so many areas you need to work on to have a long career in the sport. I've learned a lot along the way, and it makes me smile when I think about how long my career has been and for what reasons.

What is the best nightspot in Tokyo?

Jolyon Palmer

That's really difficult, actually. There aren't many great places, but we always seem to be able to make a good party in Tokyo. For me, the best place in Tokyo is Robotaya, which is a restaurant that I go to every year over a grand prix, either before or after the weekend. And it's great food, a great atmosphere... for me that's what makes Tokyo. I also went to a whisky bar with Ricky Bobby – Ricky Bobby is Daniel Ricciardo – which was really cool. It's just off Roppongi

crossing. For me, the little places in Tokyo are more fun than the nightclubs.

What has been your best moment in racing so far?

Andrew Shovlin

Again, there have been so many great moments over my racing career. Winning a grand prix is a totally different sort of emotion to winning a world championship. Winning a grand prix is just adrenaline through the roof. It's the excitement of that particular moment in time, whereas a world championship is very different because you have been fighting for it for such a long time. When it actually happens, it's more of a relief than anything else. They are very different feelings. The one thing I would say about winning a world championship is that the adrenaline isn't as high as winning

a grand prix, but it's what you remember every time you wake up in the morning – that you have won a world championship and that you are a world champion.

I go out racing now for wins and the adrenaline of 'hopefully one day I will win'. Then you have the possibility of winning a world championship. So they're very different things. My favourite win so far? It was probably the Japanese Grand Prix at Suzuka in 2011. That was a very emotional race. And also I crossed the finish line in front of Fernando and Sebastian, two other world champions.

FIR: That's a decent podium...

JB: Yeah...

What do you think of the new toilets in the Brazilian GP paddock?

Sebastian Vettel

[The question prompts a knowing laugh.] There's a reason for that one. I bumped into Seb in the toilets there, and we decided that Brazilians don't have such big dumps as Europeans – because the toilets just do not flush everything away. It's like, they're brand-new toilets, lovely and all, and they still have the same flushing mechanism. So it's much nicer. But they still don't flush a giant poo.


You run a lot, but how much can you lift?

Daniel Ricciardo

I can lift him. He's tiny! I mean, the boy is ripped! I don't know how he's so ripped. The boy goes for looks, definitely. He's not a guy that trains for fitness. I could definitely lift him above my head. I might try that, actually...

At which point this year will you sit down with the management and discuss your future options?

Eddie Jordan

Who knows? Live in the moment! 

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McLAREN HONDA FORMULA 1 TEAM



McLaren Technology Centre, Chertsey Road, Woking, Surrey, GU21 4YH, UK

COMPANY	TEAM HISTORY	KEY PERSONNEL
Name McLaren Racing Limited	Founded 1963	Group chairman and CEO Ron Dennis
Chassis MP4-31	First GP Monaco 1966	Chief executive officer (from May) Jost Capito
Engine Honda RA616H	Races started 780	Racing director Eric Boullier
Website mclaren.com	Wins 182	Technical director Tim Goss
Twitter @McLarenF1	Poles 155	Director of engineering Matt Morris
	Fastest laps 152	
	Points 5,040.5	
	Drivers' titles 12	
	Constructors' titles 8	

F1 RACING SAYS...

It should get better. It has to, doesn't it? The second coming of McLaren-Honda has been a calamity, and you don't need Fernando Alonso screaming "GP2 Engine!" to see the root cause. A hurried development programme, no experience of running KERS and six years away from F1 give Honda an excuse. But after a year-long shakedown, they can do better.

McLaren have added Jost Capito to their management team, but of more immediate impact, the excellent Peter Prodromou, recruited from Red Bull in 2014, is now in a position to steer the aerodynamic direction of the 2016 car. But will better be good enough? Even if Honda magically close the performance gap, are McLaren capable of producing a chassis to make use of it? Statistics from 2015 back that up only so far. They looked more competitive on the chassis circuits but didn't suddenly challenge for podiums. The harsh reality is that they were a mid-table team for two years before Honda came along.

DRIVERS

Car number 14	Car number 22
FERNANDO ALONSO (ESP)	JENSON BUTTON (GBR)
Born 29 July 1981 (age 34)	Born 19 January 1980 (age 36)
Place of birth Oviedo, Spain	Place of birth Frome, UK
Height/weight 1.71m/68kg	Height/weight 1.82m/72kg
Race engineer Mark Temple	Race engineer Tom Stallard
Twitter @alo_oficial	Twitter @JensonButton
F1 HISTORY	F1 HISTORY
Debut Australia 2001	Debut Australia 2000
Races started 252	Races started 284
Previous teams Ferrari, Renault, McLaren, Minardi	Previous teams Brawn, Honda, BAR, Benetton, Renault, Williams
Wins 32 Poles 22	Wins 15
Fastest laps 21	Poles 8 Fastest laps 8
Points 1,778	Points 1,214
Drivers' titles 2	Drivers' titles 1
2015 position 17th	2015 position 16th

RESULTS IN 2015	Position 9th	Points 27	1st 0	2nd 0	3rd 0	Points-scoring races 5	Pole positions 0	Fastest laps 0
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McLaren Honda



M To the Manor born

Dave Ryan, the new team boss of Manor, was scapegoated out of Formula 1 in 2009. But now he's back in the game and focused only on the task ahead

Mild surprise greeted the news late last season that Dave Ryan would be joining Manor Racing as racing director for 2016. It

was intriguing on two counts: first, that Ryan should want to return to F1 after his sudden departure from McLaren amid 2009's 'Lie-Gate' scandal; and second, that this appointment was a sign of Manor's serious intent following their managerial upheaval at the end of last year.

You could then link the two by saying the choice was also a clear sign that Manor – along with those in the know within F1 – recognised that Ryan was the fall guy in the yellow-flag incident involving Lewis Hamilton's McLaren during the closing laps of the 2009 Australian Grand Prix.

More than anything, since his arrival, other key players have come on board, including former Ferrari men Pat Fry and Nikolas Tombazis. It could hardly be otherwise when you consider this no-nonsense Kiwi's vast experience and solid reputation. Given that he's been prepared to put his successful sportscar team on hold and has committed to commuting from his Surrey base to the Manor HQ in Banbury to work for a back-of-the-grid team, Ryan clearly believes Manor are a going concern.

"I was cruising along quite happily with VonRyanRacing," says Ryan. "We'd won two out of five races in Blancpain Endurance as well as the biggest race of the British GT Championship, so things were looking pretty good. A lot of hard work was beginning to pay off and I was looking forward to 2016.

"Then Bob Bell [former Renault F1 team boss and technical director, recently returned to Enstone] called me out of the blue for a chat and asked if I would consider something in F1. I wasn't really interested, but Bob was persistent and I thought it would do no harm to follow this up. I met Stephen Fitzpatrick [owner of Manor]; he's a pretty straightforward guy with a straightforward vision. To be perfectly honest, I still wasn't convinced at that stage, but then I went to take a look at the factory. At first glance the place seemed very small, with hardly anything in it. They were actually in the process of moving in, which didn't help.

"But then I met all their engineering guys and I've never come across such a passionate group of people. Every single one of them was

WORDS MAURICE HAMILTON
PORTRAIT STEVEN TEE/LAT

desperately trying their hardest to get a decent car on the grid for 2016. It wasn't a show; they genuinely wanted to do a good job. This is not a big lumbering

beast of a team that takes ages to make a decision; it's a small operation thinking on its feet and doing whatever it takes to make things happen."

Having ambition and determination is all very well, but surely they don't make a difference if the facilities aren't adequate to make a decent car?

"It's totally different to anything I've experienced before," explains Ryan. "Pretty much everything is designed in-house and made outside. And that's it. It's an expensive way of doing things over a short period, but then you're not locked into all the overheads over a long period of time.

"Then you find out about the long-term deal for a Mercedes engine and the Williams rear end. It's not just the gearbox, but the complete rear end of the car. Stephen has invested a lot of money to do that. He could have got a cheaper deal elsewhere if he was just in this to make up the numbers. So I came away thinking: 'Actually, this is bloody good!' I wanted to see if I could help make a difference to a team that wants to move forward."

From the outside, progress looked as if it might be bogged down in the aftermath of the sudden departures last season of former team bosses Graeme Lowdon and John Booth. But, according to Ryan: "There's no

baggage; no politics. I've met John Booth – he's a really nice guy – and I've spoken to Graeme Lowdon a few times. I don't know what the situation was before. The decisions were made a long time ago and I just came in on the end of it. I have huge respect for what they did with such a limited budget. But this is the next phase, going forward.

"We've got enough money to get the job done but we've got to be very careful and question everything. For example, we desperately need to upgrade the front of house: a central island in the garage like every team has now, and a new pitwall perch. That was going to cost at least £300,000, so I stopped all that. It'll be hard because we will have McLaren on one side of us and Haas on the other with a brand-new garage.

"Our view is to spend the money only on something we really need. Let's take it on the chin: let's make sure we're tidy and presentable and that the money we do have is spent on the car and on people. That's the philosophy we're adopting. I think it will be good. It's a fantastic challenge." **F1**

CV

Dave Ryan

1954 Born on 12 May in New Zealand

2015 Racing director, Manor

2011 Established VonRyanRacing GT and Endurance racing team

2008 Sporting director at McLaren. Worked with Emerson Fittipaldi, James Hunt, Niki Lauda, Ayrton Senna, Keke Rosberg, Alain Prost, Mika Häkkinen, Kimi Räikkönen and Lewis Hamilton

1990 Team manager, McLaren

1987 Factory manager, McLaren

1982 Chief mechanic, McLaren

1974 Mechanic, McLaren

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MANOR RACING



Manor Technical Centre, Chalker Way, Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX16 4XD, UK





COMPANY	TEAM HISTORY	KEY PERSONNEL
<p>Name Manor Grand Prix Racing Limited</p> <p>Chassis MRT05</p> <p>Engine Mercedes-Benz PU160C Hybrid</p> <p>Website manorf1team.com</p> <p>Twitter @ManorRacing</p>	<p>Founded 2009</p> <p>First GP Bahrain 2010</p> <p>Races started 111</p> <p>Wins 0</p> <p>Poles 0</p> <p>Fastest laps 0</p> <p>Points 2</p> <p>Drivers' titles 0</p> <p>Constructors' titles 0</p>	<p>Owner Stephen Fitzpatrick</p> <p>Racing director Dave Ryan</p> <p>Technical director John McQuilliam</p> <p>Chief aerodynamicist Nikolas Tombazis</p> <p>Engineering consultant Pat Fry</p>

F1 RACING SAYS...

At the back end of last season you'd have said things were looking rosy for Manor – or at least as rosy as could be expected for a team who finished last, cruising around to make up the numbers and trying not to get in anybody's way. The optimism stemmed from the fact that Manor had survived their period of purgatory and come out the other side with a new factory, a deal for a 2016 Mercedes power unit and, perhaps just as significant, a technical partnership with Williams to supply gearbox and suspension components.

The resignations of John Booth and Graeme Lowdon at the end of 2015 take some of the gloss off that. Former McLaren man Dave Ryan is now racing director, with Nikolas Tombazis as chief aerodynamicist and Pat Fry as an engineering consultant, so experience and operational leadership won't be lacking. On the driving front there are two rookies: Mercedes' DTM champion Pascal Wehrlein and wealthy Indonesian Rio Haryanto.

DRIVERS

Car number 94	Car number 88
  <p>PASCAL WEHRLEIN (GER)</p> <p> </p> <p>Born 18 October 1994 (age 21)</p> <p>Place of birth Sigmaringen, Germany</p> <p>Height/weight 1.75m/59kg</p> <p>Race engineer TBA</p> <p>Twitter @PWehrlein</p> <p> </p> <p>F1 HISTORY</p> <p>Debut Australia 2016</p> <p>Races started 0</p> <p>Previous team Mercedes (as reserve driver)</p> <p>Wins 0 Poles 0</p> <p>Fastest laps 0</p> <p>Points 0</p> <p>Best result N/A</p> <p>2015 position N/A</p>	  <p>RIO HARYANTO (IDN)</p> <p> </p> <p>Born 22 January 1993 (age 23)</p> <p>Place of birth Solo, Indonesia</p> <p>Height/weight 1.70m/58kg</p> <p>Race engineer TBA</p> <p>Twitter @RHaryantoracing</p> <p> </p> <p>F1 HISTORY</p> <p>Debut Australia 2016</p> <p>Races started 0</p> <p>Previous team N/A</p> <p>Wins 0</p> <p>Poles 0</p> <p>Fastest laps 0</p> <p>Points 0</p> <p>Best result N/A</p> <p>2015 position N/A</p>

RESULTS IN 2015	Position 10th	Points 0	1st 0	2nd 0	3rd 0	Points-scoring races 0	Pole positions 0	Fastest laps 0
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Showtime!

We go backstage with F1's new, (almost) all-American team as they step out from the wings. Now, there's nowhere to hide

WORDS JAMES ROBERTS
PICTURES LAT PHOTOGRAPHIC



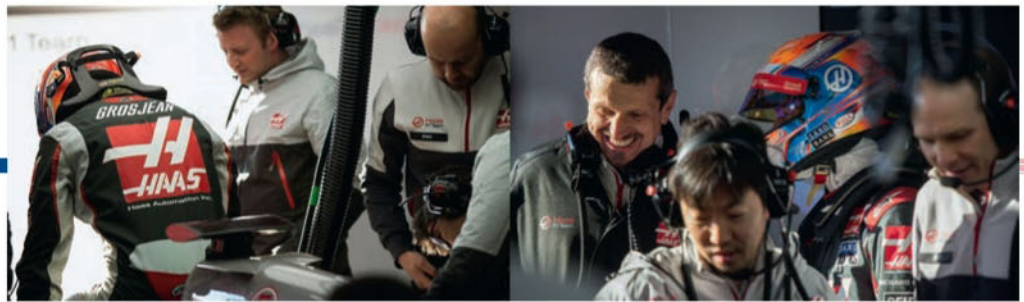


TEETHING TROUBLES

The brand new Haas VF-16 makes its pitlane debut at 7.50am on the Monday of the first Barcelona test. Inevitably there are a few minor issues to be resolved, and chief race engineer Ayao Komatsu liaises with the Ferrari engineers ahead of the car's first run.

GROSJEAN GETS GOING

Team principal Guenther Steiner is all smiles as Romain Grosjean successfully completes the new car's first installation lap.



FRONT-WING FAILURE

After a dozen timed laps, Romain Grosjean's running is brought to a sudden halt when the front wing falls off because of a problem with the carbon-fibre mounting points.

How Haas's five F1 bases work together

Facilities are split over two continents and five locations, but Guenther Steiner says Haas *can* overcome the logistical challenges

Haas F1 will this year be attempting to achieve something no other F1 operation has done before. They will run their team out of five separate locations on both sides of the Atlantic.

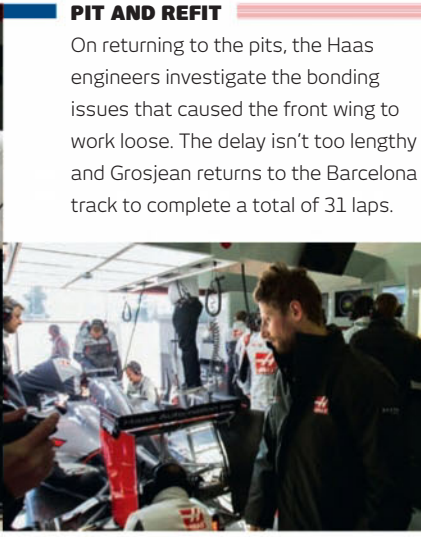
The R&D, design and build of their new chassis is taking place at the HQ of Italian race car manufacturer Dallara in Varano de' Melegari, near Parma. It's 70 miles from Ferrari's Maranello base, where the engine and gearbox are built.

Haas's UK headquarters are located at Overthorpe Road in Banbury. This is where the cars will be stripped down after each grand prix. It will also be the logistics hub for freight transportation.

Meanwhile, in the US state of North Carolina where the Stewart-Haas NASCAR team are based, a new purpose-built facility has been constructed on the campus at Kannapolis, which houses commercial operations and more R&D. Finally, team owner Gene Haas is located at Haas Automation in Oxnard, California.

"We think it will work, otherwise we wouldn't have planned it like this," says Haas team principal Guenther Steiner. "By being a US team and having a partnership with Ferrari - this is the best way to do it. For design and build, Dallara have all the infrastructure, but for the race team we knew the largest amount of people worked in the UK already, and if we set up a base in Banbury we didn't need to relocate. The chances were that people would be prepared to work for us as they were already based in the area.

"Ten years ago trying to put all these separate locations into operation would have been difficult, but with technology and data transfer it is easier. Of course, it's vital that we have defined lines of responsibility to ensure that it works."



PIT AND REFIT

On returning to the pits, the Haas engineers investigate the bonding issues that caused the front wing to work loose. The delay isn't too lengthy and Grosjean returns to the Barcelona track to complete a total of 31 laps.



FROM DAYTONA TO BARCELONA

Team owner Gene Haas (above left) arrives at the track a day after watching his NASCAR team contest the opening race of the year, the Daytona 500.



CLOSE OF PLAY

Despite the early problems, the day's running on the medium tyre ends strongly, with Grosjean completing three five-lap runs. He declares Haas's first day in F1 to be "positive". 🏁

WIN

A TRIP FOR TWO TO THE 2016 FORMULA 1 BELGIAN GRAND PRIX

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PHOTOS: ALASTAIR STALEY/LAT: HAAS

HAAS F1 TEAM



4001 Haas Way, Kannapolis, NC 28081, USA

COMPANY	TEAM HISTORY	KEY PERSONNEL
Name Haas Formula LLC Chassis VF-16 Engine Ferrari 059/5 Website haasf1team.com Twitter @HaasF1Team	Founded 2014 First GP Australia 2016 Races started 0 Wins 0 Poles 0 Fastest laps 0 Points 0 Drivers' titles 0 Constructors' titles 0	Owner Gene Haas Team principal Guenther Steiner Vice president of technology Matt Borland Reliability engineer Lawrence Burch Team manager Dave O'Neill



F1 RACING SAYS...

A new team! An actual, honest-to-goodness addition to the pitlane. Crisis? What crisis?

It's difficult to know what to expect from Haas, because F1 doesn't have experience of anything quite like it. History suggests that any new team will start from the back, and Haas, inevitably, are pre-judged on the performance of the last batch of entrants. This doesn't inspire confidence. It's also unfair on Haas, who will be a very different animal. They're an offshoot of a well-established racing organisation, have good financial underpinnings and an owner with realistic expectations.

The hope for Haas is that their Italian leg-up from Ferrari (and car design from Dallara) can put them straight into the midfield, rather than requiring Esteban Gutiérrez and Romain Grosjean to spend a season tooling around at the back. Against strong opposition, the sense in F1 is that there are a few teams out there less sorted than these new boys.

RESULTS IN 2015	Position N/A	Points N/A	1st N/A	2nd N/A	3rd N/A	Points-scoring races N/A	Pole positions N/A	Fastest laps N/A
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DRIVERS	
Car number 8	Car number 21
 <p>ROMAIN GROSJEAN (FRA)</p> <p> </p> <p>Born 17 April 1986 (age 29) Place of birth Geneva, Switzerland Height/weight 1.80m/71kg Race engineer Ayao Komatsu Twitter @RGrosjean</p> <p> </p> <p>F1 HISTORY Debut Europe 2009 Races started 83 Previous teams Lotus, Renault Wins 0 Poles 0 Fastest laps 1 Points 287 Best result 2nd 2015 position 11th</p>	 <p>ESTEBAN GUTIÉRREZ (MEX)</p> <p> </p> <p>Born 5 August 1991 (age 24) Place of birth Monterrey, Mexico Height/weight 1.80m/64kg Race engineer Gary Gannon Twitter @EstebanGtz</p> <p> </p> <p>F1 HISTORY Debut Australia 2013 Races started 38 Previous team Sauber Wins 0 Poles 0 Fastest laps 1 Points 6 Best result 7th 2015 position N/A</p>

Battlefield



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2016 CIRCUITS

THE TRACKS... THE STATS

Formula 1 crosses a Rubicon in 2016 as the calendar exceeds 20 grands prix for the first time, promising to be more action-packed than ever before. We also explore new territory in the form of a street race around Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan.

Sky Sports F1's commentator Martin Brundle knows a thing or two about street circuits, having made his name by finishing second on the road in Detroit in 1984. Here he gives us the lowdown on what to expect at Baku and from the other 20 circuits. →



1 Australian GP
18-20 March



2 Bahrain GP
1-3 April



3 Chinese GP
15-17 April



4 Russian GP
29 April-1 May



5 Spanish GP
13-15 May



6 Monaco GP
26-29 May



7 Canadian GP
10-12 June



8 European GP
17-19 June



9 Austrian GP
1-3 July



10 British GP
8-10 July



11 Hungarian GP
22-24 July



12 German GP
29-31 July



13 Belgian GP
26-28 August



14 Italian GP
2-4 September



15 Singapore GP
16-18 September



16 Malaysian GP
30 September-2 October



17 Japanese GP
7-9 October



18 US GP
21-23 October



19 Mexican GP
28-30 October



20 Brazilian GP
11-13 November

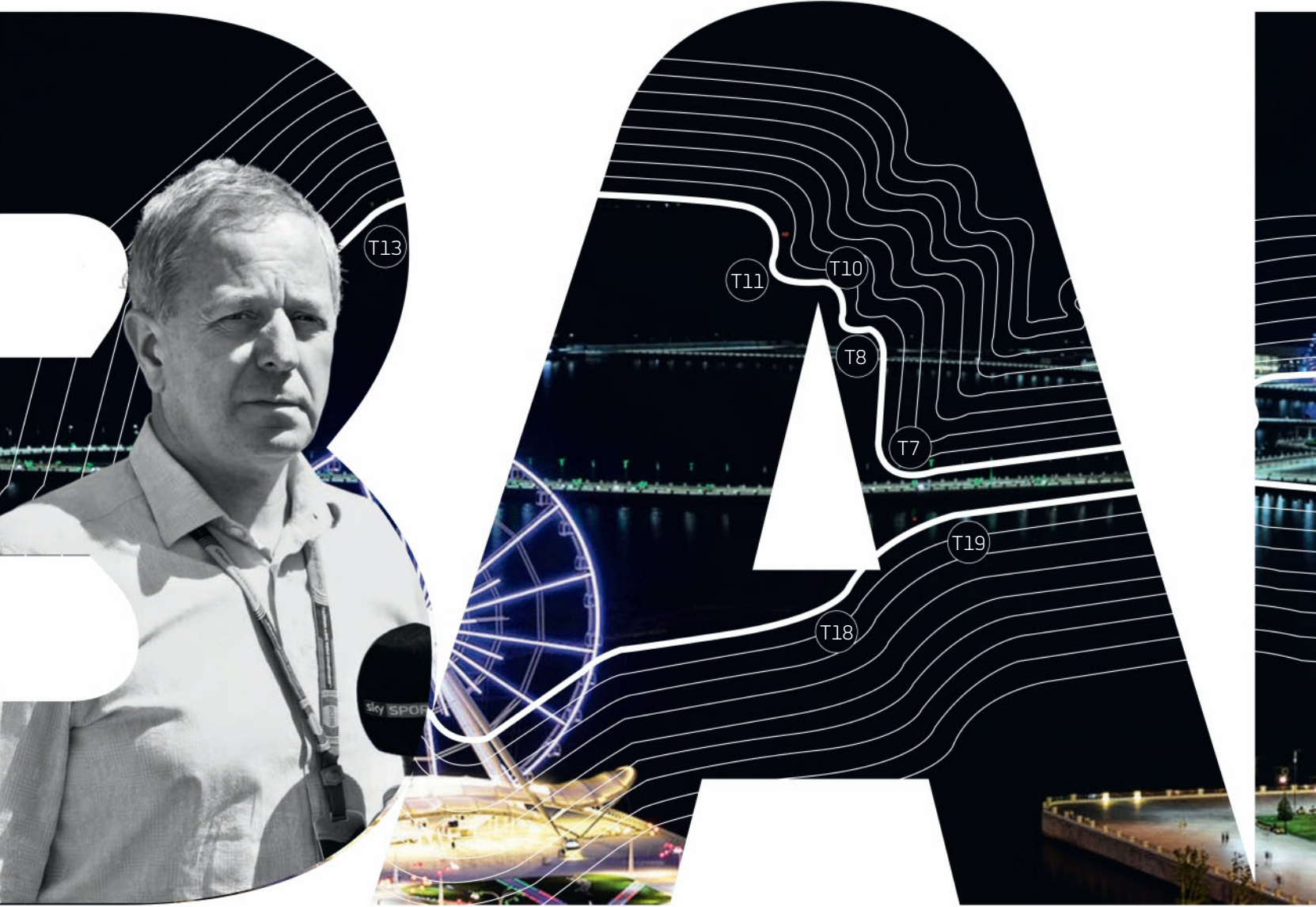


21 Abu Dhabi GP
25-27 November



CIRCUIT ILLUSTRATIONS: ALAN ELDRIDGE. PHOTO: ALASTAIR STALEY/LAT

BRUNDLER'S



Think Sochi-meets-Macau-meets-Valencia-meets Singapore!



A glamorous new addition to the Formula 1 calendar is sure to pose some fresh challenges, reckons Sky Sports F1's **Martin Brundle**

A new venue is always interesting and the race in Baku this June will be something we haven't experienced before. No doubt there will be challenges for all of the teams, the engine manufacturers, Pirelli and of course for the drivers, but, with my TV hat on, I'm quite a fan of new races.

From what I've seen of the layout, it's quite a long circuit – 3.732 miles to be precise – which would make it the second longest lap of the season. It'll be between Spa (4.352 miles) and Silverstone (3.66 miles). Circuit designer Hermann Tilke is saying a typical F1 lap should be about 101 seconds with an average speed of 210kph (130mph). So you'd expect the length of the grand prix to be around an hour and 40 minutes. That's in the ball park of what we normally have.

My Sky Sports F1 colleague Ted Kravitz visited Azerbaijan recently and told me there was a lot of track-surfacing work to do. My reaction to that was: bumps! In an F1 car they're like mini-mountains.

I've heard that Baku is a beautiful city, a bit of a cross between Istanbul and Barcelona, so it has that mix of ancient and modern. Plus, it's on the seafront, so as a venue it might have the feel of →

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the Valencia street circuit that Formula 1 raced at between 2008 and 2012.

The lap has some similarities to Sochi, in that there's a series of 90° left and right-handers but they come just after the start in Baku. The start/finish straight, which looks very long indeed, concludes the lap so engine power will really come to the fore. After the 90° turns, the circuit winds its way around the old town. So it goes from a very fast section into a technical one and then a very narrow and twisty section: that reminds me of Macau. I think it'll be just as important to get down the straights on maximum power as it will be to have a car that has the grip and traction to handle the twisty sections.

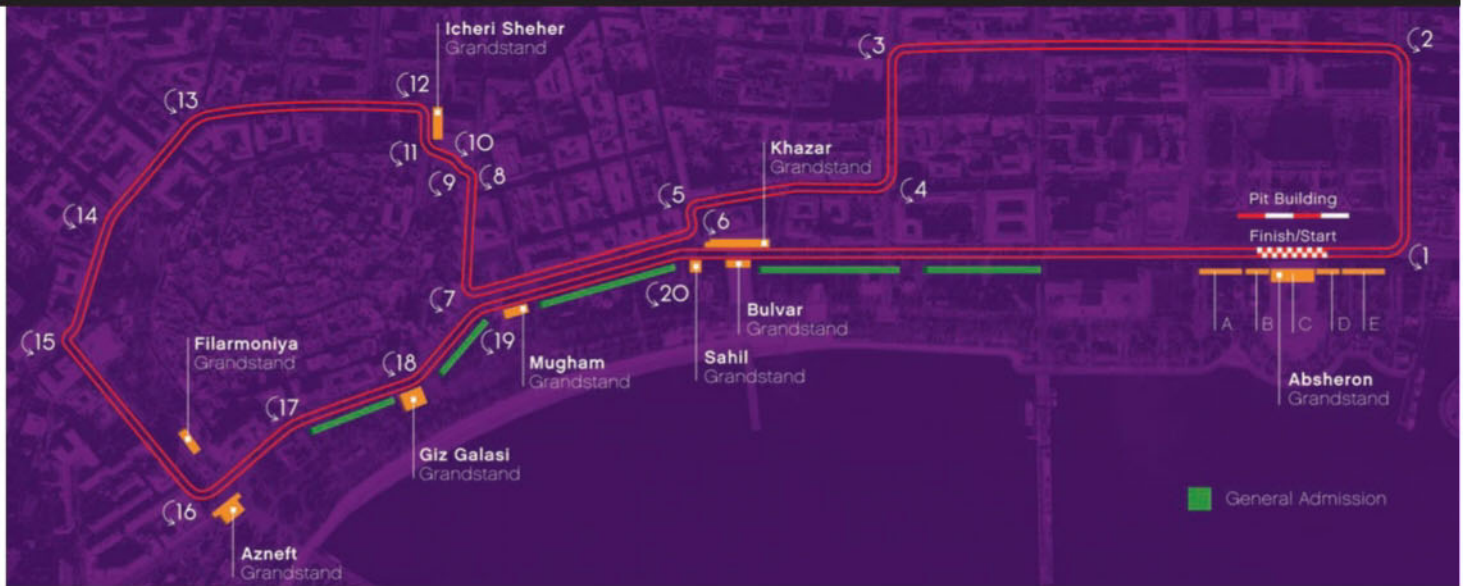
It gets very narrow in places in the old town, but no more so, than, say, the Anderson Bridge in Singapore. There's also a cobbled part that runs around an old castle and I get the impression they'll lay Tarmac over the cobbles for the grand prix and then take it up again, as they do for Formula E races.

It sounds like it's going to be quite an interesting combo on every lap with some generally anonymous modern sections that could be anywhere in the world, with something in the narrower streets that will look thoroughly recognisable – and very unusual.

I thought Azerbaijan would be quite Russian, but people say it's much more similar to Turkey and



Sky Sports F1® head to Baku's old town to scope out the best angles ahead of Azerbaijan's debut grand prix in June




"The start/finish straight – which looks very long indeed, concludes the lap so engine power will really come to the fore. After the 90° turns, the circuit goes from a very fast section into a technical one and then a very narrow and twisty section"

the race we used to have in Istanbul. And that's an example of a great track we've had that's now lost. We've lost South Korea, Valencia and India, too. I'm all for going to new venues, and it's exciting each year when we get a new driver or a new team, such as Haas F1 this year, but when we go to new countries such as Azerbaijan it's important that we don't lose the likes of Spa, Monza or Silverstone.

We've been to new locations and found some wonderful venues, for example Austin and Istanbul were great new circuits. I love both of those. Austin has got a fantastic layout; it's got interesting features and it really works well. I'm quite open-minded about new circuits. I know they have to stay within the regulations, so you'll find a lot of run-off and safety aspects, but Hermann Tilke tries to incorporate some local feel to the venue wherever he can – as he did with Bahrain, for example.

I understand that in this first year of the race, both qualifying and the race are going to have to start quite late on each day, close to 6pm, and that's to avoid a clash with Le Mans, which ends on that Sunday. They're not planning on putting any lights around the track, but as it's the middle of June, there should still be enough daylight – although there won't be any scope for delays from long red-flag periods.

But all in all it should be tremendous fun – and I'm looking forward to it. 



Where in the world?

A beginners' guide to Baku...

Baku is the capital of the transcontinental country of Azerbaijan. It's the largest city on the Caspian Sea and in the Caucasus region, straddling Eastern Europe and Western Asia. To date, it is probably most famous for hosting 2012's Eurovision Song Contest.

Baku takes its name from an old Persian word that translates as 'wind-pounded city'. It's a place steeped in history, and its old town, including the Walled City, Shirvanshah's Palace and Maiden Tower, which date from the 12th century, together constitute a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The republic of Azerbaijan declared its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 and most of its population of 2 million people are Shia Muslims. Over the past decade, the country has profited from abundant reserves of oil and gas, but in recent months the economy has been floundering due to a drop in oil prices. Local currency, the manta, fell by a third over the course of 2015.





AUSTRALIA

ROUND 01/21 ALBERT PARK, 18-20 MARCH

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "This is a challenging track because it's so slippery, which is tough on new teams and drivers. It's a great race with a top atmosphere, and a good way to start the season."

RACE DATA

Circuit name

Melbourne GP Circuit

First GP 1996

F1 races held 20

Laps 58

Circuit length

3.295 miles

Race distance

191.117 miles

Direction Clockwise

Winners from pole 9

Race start (UK) 5am

LIVE ONLY on

Sky Sports F1@



LAST YEAR

Winner Lewis Hamilton

Margin of victory 1.360s

Fastest lap 1m 30.945s, L Hamilton

Race leaders 2

Safety Cars 1 (3 laps)

Pitstops 17

Overtakes 11



BAHRAIN

ROUND 02/21 SAKHIR, 1-3 APRIL

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "Bahrain looks spectacular at night because of the floodlights. Races here can go either way: dull or amazing. But there's always plenty of action on the run down to Turn 1."

RACE DATA

Circuit name Bahrain

International Circuit

First GP 2004

F1 races held 11

Laps 57

Circuit length

3.362 miles

Race distance

191.53 miles

Direction Clockwise

Winners from pole 5

Race start (UK) 4pm

LIVE on

Sky Sports F1@



LAST YEAR

Winner Lewis Hamilton

Margin of victory 3.380s

Fastest lap 1m 36.311s, K Räikkönen

Race leaders 3

Safety Cars 0

Pitstops 43

Overtakes 35



CHINA

ROUND 03/21 SHANGHAI, 15-17 APRIL

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "I'm fond of the hairpin at the end of the long straight here followed by the unsighted left. That section often tends to generate controversy, incident and overtaking."

RACE DATA

Circuit name Shanghai

International Circuit

First GP 2004

F1 races held 12

Laps 56

Circuit length

3.387 miles

Race distance

189.559 miles

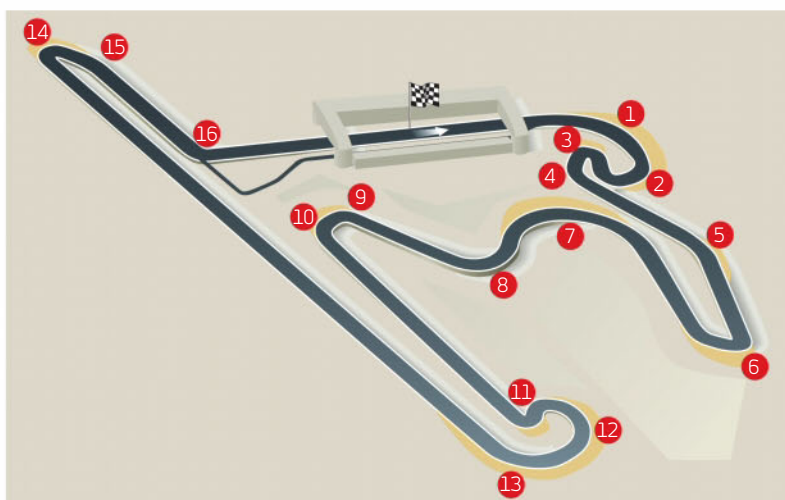
Direction Clockwise

Winners from pole 7

Race start (UK) 7am

LIVE ONLY on

Sky Sports F1@



LAST YEAR

Winner Lewis Hamilton

Margin of victory 0.714s

Fastest lap 1m 42.208s, L Hamilton

Race leaders 3

Safety Cars 1 (4 laps)

Pitstops 38

Overtakes 23

PHOTOS: SAM BLOXHAW/LAT; ANDY HONE/LAT; STEVE ETHERINGTON/LAT; STEVEN TEE/LAT



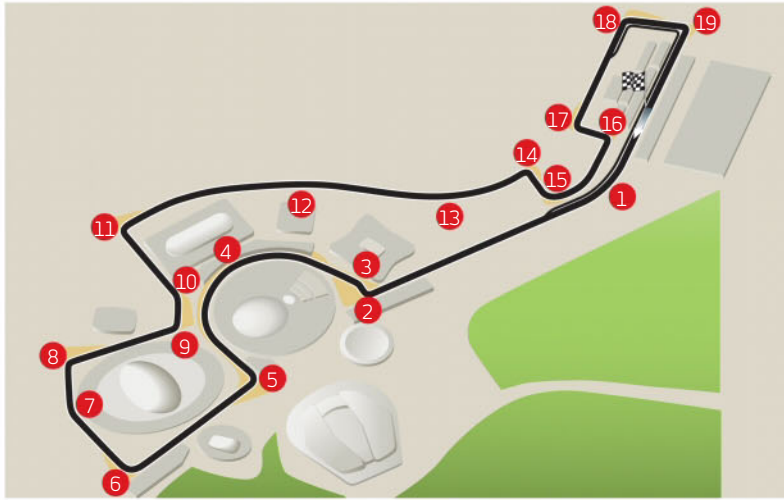
RUSSIA

ROUND 04/21 SOCHI, 29 APRIL-1 MAY

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "Sochi saw some action last year, didn't it? With Räikkönen and Bottas colliding at the end of the race and Romain Grosjean crashing his Lotus on the super long left-hander!"

RACE DATA

- Circuit name**
Sochi Autodrom
- First GP 2014**
- F1 races held** 2
- Laps** 53
- Circuit length**
3.634 miles
- Race distance**
192.467 miles
- Direction** Clockwise
- Winners from pole** 1
- Race start (UK)** 1pm
- LIVE ONLY on
Sky Sports F1@



LAST YEAR

- Winner** Lewis Hamilton
- Margin of victory** 5.953s
- Fastest lap** 1m 40.071s, S Vettel
- Race leaders** 2
- Safety Cars** 2 (8 laps)
- Pitstops** 19
- Overtakes** 31



SPAIN

ROUND 05/21 BARCELONA, 13-15 MAY

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "Locations don't come much better than Barcelona. The Spanish GP has it all: good racing, culture, restaurants and nightlife – and it's a great start to the European season."

RACE DATA

- Circuit name**
Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya
- First GP 1991**
- F1 races held** 25
- Laps** 66
- Circuit length**
2.892 miles
- Race distance**
190.826 miles
- Direction** Clockwise
- Winners from pole** 19
- Race start (UK)** 1pm
- LIVE on
Sky Sports F1@



LAST YEAR

- Winner** Nico Rosberg
- Margin of victory** 17.551s
- Fastest lap** 1m 28.270s, L Hamilton
- Race leaders** 3
- Safety Cars** 0
- Pitstops** 46
- Overtakes** 27



MONACO

ROUND 06/21 MONTE CARLO, 26-29 MAY

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "Monaco has such a great tradition: it's like Wimbledon or the FA Cup. It's got all the glamour, but it's a bit of a chess match; be patient and something dramatic will happen."

RACE DATA

- Circuit name**
Circuit de Monaco
- First GP 1950**
- F1 races held** 62
- Laps** 78
- Circuit length**
2.074 miles
- Race distance**
161.734 miles
- Direction** Clockwise
- Winners from pole** 28
- Race start (UK)** 1pm
- LIVE ONLY on
Sky Sports F1@



LAST YEAR

- Winner** Nico Rosberg
- Margin of victory** 4.486s
- Fastest lap** 1m 18.063s, D Ricciardo
- Race leaders** 2
- Safety Cars** 1 (7 laps)
- Pitstops** 31
- Overtakes** 13 →



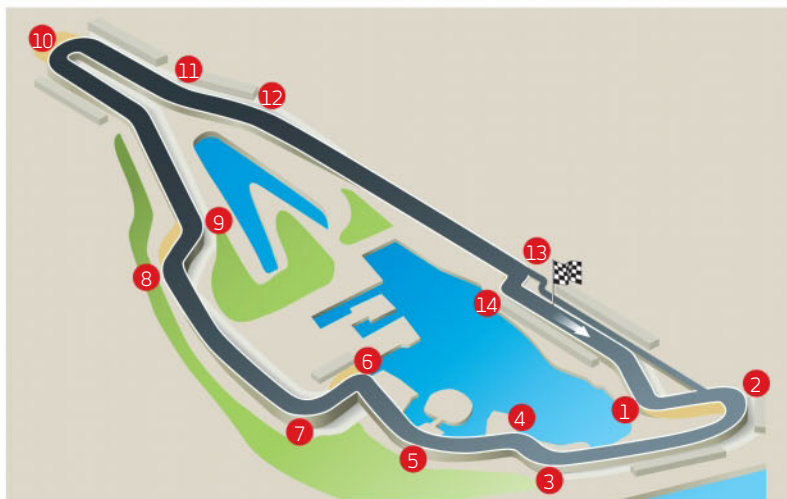
CANADA

ROUND 07/21 MONTRÉAL, 10-12 JUNE

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "This is a proper old-school circuit. It's narrow, slippery, a bit bumpy and if you take a risk to find time, then there's a very good chance you'll end up in the wall."

RACE DATA

- Circuit name**
Circuit Gilles Villeneuve
- First GP** 1978
- F1 races held** 36
- Laps** 70
- Circuit length**
2.71 miles
- Race distance**
189.686 miles
- Direction** Clockwise
- Winners from pole** 16
- Race start (UK)** 7pm
- LIVE ONLY on**
Sky Sports F1@



LAST YEAR

- Winner** Lewis Hamilton
- Margin of victory** 2.285s
- Fastest lap** 1m 16.987s, K Räikkönen
- Race leaders** 2
- Safety Cars** 0
- Pitstops** 25
- Overtakes** 36



EUROPE

ROUND 08/21 AZERBAIJAN, 17-19 JUNE

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "I'm surprised this is running back-to-back with Montréal. Getting all the cars and equipment from Montréal to downtown Baku is going to be an epic logistical challenge."

RACE DATA

- Circuit name**
Baku City Circuit
- First GP** 2016
- F1 races held** 0
- Laps** 51
- Circuit length**
3.732 miles
- Race distance**
190.171 miles
- Direction** Anticlockwise
- Winners from pole** N/A
- Race start (UK)** 2pm
- LIVE on**
Sky Sports F1@



THIS YEAR

The Grand Prix of Europe will be the first Formula 1 race ever to be held in Azerbaijan, taking place on a street track around its capital, Baku. The circuit will combine a narrow uphill section through the old city with a long blast along the seafront in the modern district.



AUSTRIA

ROUND 09/21 SPIELBERG, 1-3 JULY

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "I miss the Österreichring, as it actually used to frighten me, which is why I liked it. This new circuit is the opposite as it's sort of made for TV. But it's still a great place."

RACE DATA

- Circuit name**
Red Bull Ring
- First GP** 1970
- F1 races held** 27
- Laps** 71
- Circuit length**
2.688 miles
- Race distance**
190.773 miles
- Direction** Clockwise
- Winners from pole** 7
- Race start (UK)** 1pm
- LIVE ONLY on**
Sky Sports F1@



LAST YEAR

- Winner** Nico Rosberg
- Margin of victory** 8.800s
- Fastest lap** 1m 11.235s, N Rosberg
- Race leaders** 3
- Safety Cars** 1 (6 laps)
- Pitstops** 21
- Overtakes** 17

PHOTOS: STEVEN TEE/LAT; GLENN DUNBAR/LAT; CHARLES COATES/LAT; SUTTON IMAGES



GREAT BRITAIN

ROUND 10/21 SILVERSTONE, 8-10 JULY

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "This is one of the great tracks of the world. The new Turn 1 is mind-blowingly fast, as are Copse, Becketts and Stowe – they are fantastic corners whatever you're driving."

RACE DATA

- Circuit name**
Silverstone Circuit
- First GP** 1950
- F1 races held** 49
- Laps** 52
- Circuit length**
3.66 miles
- Race distance**
190.262 miles
- Direction** Clockwise
- Winners from pole** 17
- Race start (UK)** 1pm
- LIVE on
Sky Sports F1@



LAST YEAR

- Winner** Lewis Hamilton
- Margin of victory** 10.956s
- Fastest lap** 1m 37.093s, L Hamilton
- Race leaders** 4
- Safety Cars** 2 (5 laps)
- Pitstops** 33
- Overtakes** 14



HUNGARY

ROUND 11/21 BUDAPEST, 22-24 JULY

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "Hungary is just relentless; it is like a kart track. The unsighted Turn 4, at the top of the hill, is one of the toughest corners of the year. It's full-on for 70 laps – a wonderful race."

RACE DATA

- Circuit name**
Hungaroring
- First GP** 1986
- F1 races held** 30
- Laps** 70
- Circuit length**
2.722 miles
- Race distance**
190.531 miles
- Direction** Clockwise
- Winners from pole** 13
- Race start (UK)** 1pm
- LIVE on
Sky Sports F1@



LAST YEAR

- Winner** Sebastian Vettel
- Margin of victory** 15.748s
- Fastest lap** 1m 24.821s, D Ricciardo
- Race leaders** 2
- Safety Cars** 1 (7 laps)
- Pitstops** 60
- Overtakes** 32



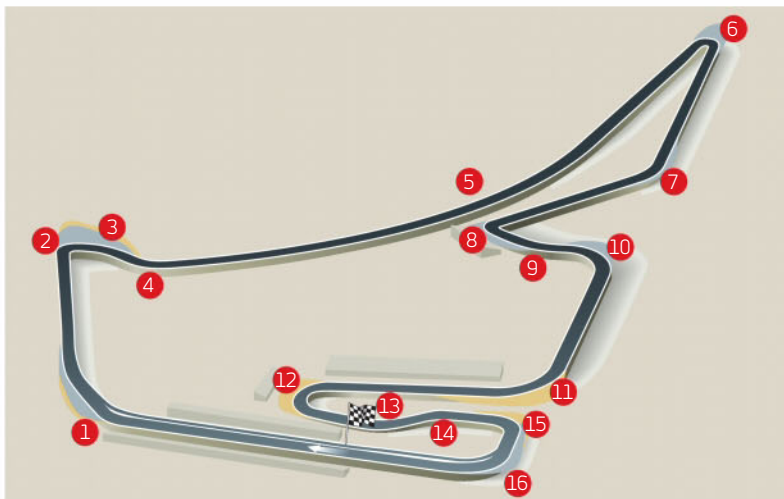
GERMANY

ROUND 12/21 HOCKENHEIM, 29-31 JULY

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "After a two-year break we go back to Hockenheim and if I was to design an ideal F1 track, I'd use the section from Turn 1 to the hairpin. It guarantees incidents and controversy."

RACE DATA

- Circuit name**
Hockenheimring
Baden-Württemberg
- First GP** 1970
- F1 races held** 34
- Laps** 67
- Circuit length**
2.842 miles
- Race distance**
190.424 miles
- Direction** Clockwise
- Winners from pole** 18
- Race start (UK)** 1pm
- LIVE ONLY on
Sky Sports F1@



WHAT HAPPENED IN 2014?

- Winner** Nico Rosberg
- Margin of victory** 20.789s
- Fastest lap** L Hamilton 1m 19.908s
- Race leaders** 1
- Safety Cars** 1 (2 laps)
- Pit stops** 55
- Overtakes** 65 →



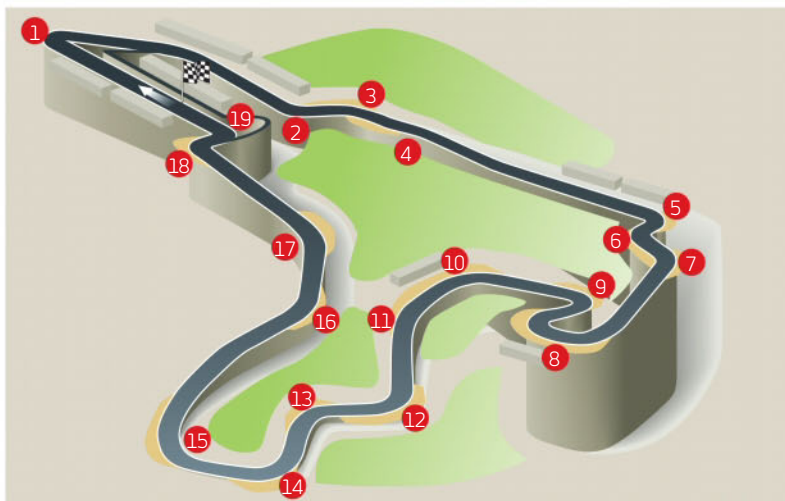
BELGIUM

ROUND 13/21 SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS, 26-28 AUGUST

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "I've been coming here since 1981 and every time I look up at Eau Rouge it always seems steeper and tighter than I remembered it. It's an amazing track – especially in the rain."

RACE DATA

- Circuit name**
Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps
- First GP** 1950
- F1 races held** 48
- Laps** 44
- Circuit length**
4.352 miles
- Race distance**
191.415 miles
- Direction** Clockwise
- Winners from pole** 16
- Race start (UK)** 1pm
- LIVE on**
Sky Sports F1@



LAST YEAR

- Winner** Lewis Hamilton
- Margin of victory** 2.058s
- Fastest lap** 1m 52.416s, N Rosberg
- Race leaders** 2
- Safety Cars** 1 (2 laps)
- Pitstops** 38
- Overtakes** 19



ITALY

ROUND 14/21 MONZA, 2-4 SEPTEMBER

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "When I walk the circuit for Sky on a Friday, it's exactly as I remembered in the early 1980s. As I move through the forest, I can hear the exhaust notes bouncing off the trees."

RACE DATA

- Circuit name**
Autodromo Nazionale Monza
- First GP** 1950
- F1 races held** 65
- Laps** 53
- Circuit length**
3.6 miles
- Race distance**
190.587 miles
- Direction** Clockwise
- Winners from pole** 23
- Race start (UK)** 1pm
- LIVE on**
Sky Sports F1@



LAST YEAR

- Winner** Lewis Hamilton
- Margin of victory** 25.042s
- Fastest lap** 1m 26.672s, L Hamilton
- Race leaders** 1
- Safety Cars** 0
- Pitstops** 23
- Overtakes** 31



SINGAPORE

ROUND 15/21 MARINA BAY, 16-18 SEPTEMBER

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "Physically, this is the toughest race of the season. Drivers compete for two hours in intense heat and humidity. Under floodlights, it's probably our showcase race of the year."

RACE DATA

- Circuit name** Marina Bay Street Circuit
- First GP** 2008
- F1 races held** 8
- Laps** 61
- Circuit length**
3.147 miles
- Race distance**
191.897 miles
- Direction** Anticlockwise
- Winners from pole** 6
- Race start (UK)** 1pm
- LIVE ONLY on**
Sky Sports F1@



LAST YEAR

- Winner** Sebastian Vettel
- Margin of victory** 1.478s
- Fastest lap** 1m 50.041s, D Ricciardo
- Race leaders** 1
- Safety Cars** 2 (10 laps)
- Pitstops** 42
- Overtakes** 11

PHOTOS: ALASTAIR STALEY/LAT; STEVEN ETHERINGTON/LAT; GLENN DUNBAR/LAT; STEVEN TEE/LAT; ANDREW FERRARO/LAT



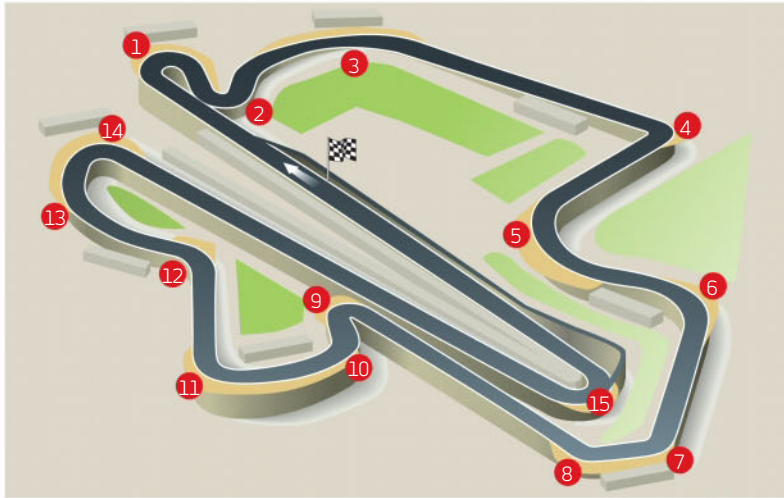
MALAYSIA

ROUND 16/21 SEPANG, 30 SEPTEMBER-2 OCTOBER

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "This was built up to 20 metres wide in places to promote overtaking, but you just end up with one line where the rubber's laid down and everyone follows each other."

RACE DATA

Circuit name
Sepang International
Circuit
First GP 1999
F1 races held 17
Laps 56
Circuit length
3.444 miles
Race distance
192.879 miles
Direction Clockwise
Winners from pole 9
Race start (UK) 8am
LIVE on
Sky Sports F1@



LAST YEAR

Winner Sebastian Vettel
Margin of victory 8.569s
Fastest lap 1m 42.062s, N Rosberg
Race leaders 2
Safety Cars 1 (3 laps)
Pitstops 50
Overtakes 60



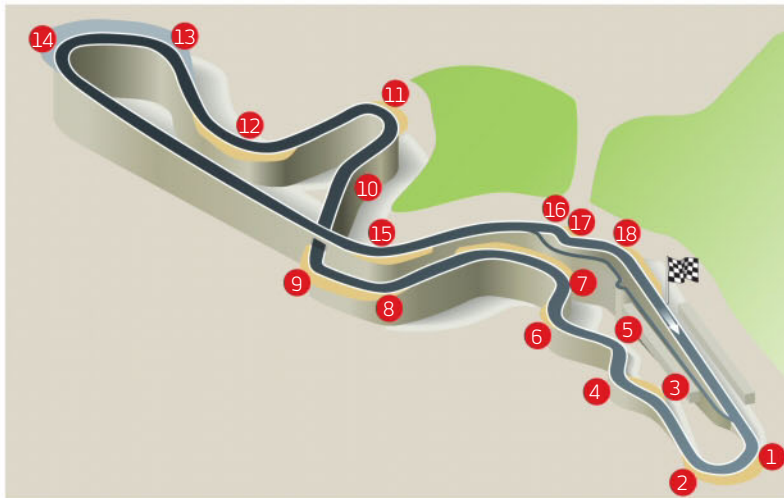
JAPAN

ROUND 17/21 SUZUKA, 7-9 OCTOBER

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "Suzuka is one of the tracks you want to drive as a racing driver. It's quite compact, it's a figure of eight, it's narrow and it's a place where the driver can make all the difference."

RACE DATA

Circuit name
Suzuka International
Racing Course
First GP 1987
F1 races held 27
Laps 53
Circuit length
3.608 miles
Race distance
191.054 miles
Direction Both
Winners from pole 12
Race start (UK) 6am
LIVE ONLY on
Sky Sports F1@



LAST YEAR

Winner Lewis Hamilton
Margin of victory 18.694s
Fastest lap 1m 36.145s, L Hamilton
Race leaders 1
Safety Cars 0
Pitstops 44
Overtakes 26



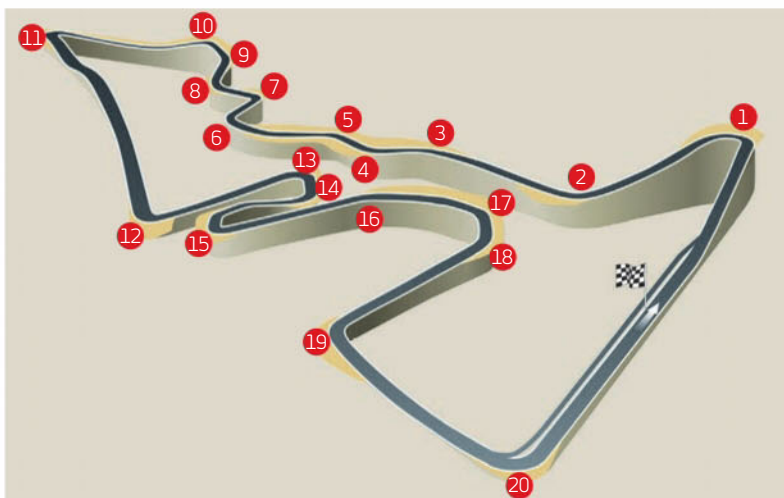
UNITED STATES

ROUND 18/21 AUSTIN, 21-23 OCTOBER

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "This is a brilliant place for a GP. The track is superb and the city is perfect. Austin reminds me of Adelaide: it's the right size, it becomes an F1 town and the track's a gem."

RACE DATA

Circuit name
Circuit of The Americas
First GP 2012
F1 races held 4
Laps 56
Circuit length
3.426 miles
Race distance
191.634 miles
Direction Anticlockwise
Winners from pole 1
Race start (UK) 7pm
LIVE ONLY on
Sky Sports F1@



LAST YEAR

Winner Lewis Hamilton
Margin of victory 2.850s
Fastest lap 1m 40.666s, N Rosberg
Race leaders 3
Safety Cars 4 (16 laps)
Pitstops 47
Overtakes 39 →



MEXICO

ROUND 19/21 MEXICO CITY, 28-30 OCTOBER

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "Mexico returned to the calendar last year and they've changed the circuit a lot since I last raced there. But the stadium section looks great with all those passionate fans."

RACE DATA

Circuit name

Autódromo Hermanos Rodríguez

First GP 1963

F1 races held 16

Laps 71

Circuit length

2.674 miles

Race distance

189.738 miles

Direction Clockwise

Winners from pole 8

Race start (UK) 7pm

LIVE on

Sky Sports F1@



LAST YEAR

Winner Nico Rosberg

Margin of victory 1.954s

Fastest lap 1m 20.521s, N Rosberg

Race leaders 2

Safety Cars 1 (6 laps)

Pitstops 38

Overtakes 27



BRAZIL

ROUND 20/21 INTERLAGOS, 11-13 NOVEMBER

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "In the past you could crash by yourself on a bump here, but they've smoothed the track out now, which makes it less challenging. There's such a great, carnival atmosphere here."

RACE DATA

Circuit name

Autódromo José Carlos Pace

First GP 1973

F1 races held 33

Laps 71

Circuit length

2.677 miles

Race distance

190.083 miles

Direction Anticlockwise

Winners from pole 13

Race start (UK) 4pm

LIVE ONLY on

Sky Sports F1@



LAST YEAR

Winner Nico Rosberg

Margin of victory 7.756s

Fastest lap 1m 14.832s, L Hamilton

Race leaders 2

Safety Cars 0

Pitstops 49

Overtakes 31



ABU DHABI

ROUND 21/21 YAS MARINA, 25-27 NOVEMBER

SKY SPORTS F1'S MARTIN BRUNDLE SAYS: "The season finale does look fantastic on TV, with the Yas Marina Hotel lit up and the track under floodlights. It's still an enjoyable place to visit and has superb facilities."

RACE DATA

Circuit name

Yas Marina Circuit

First GP 2009

F1 races held 7

Laps 55

Circuit length

3.451 miles

Race distance

189.739 miles

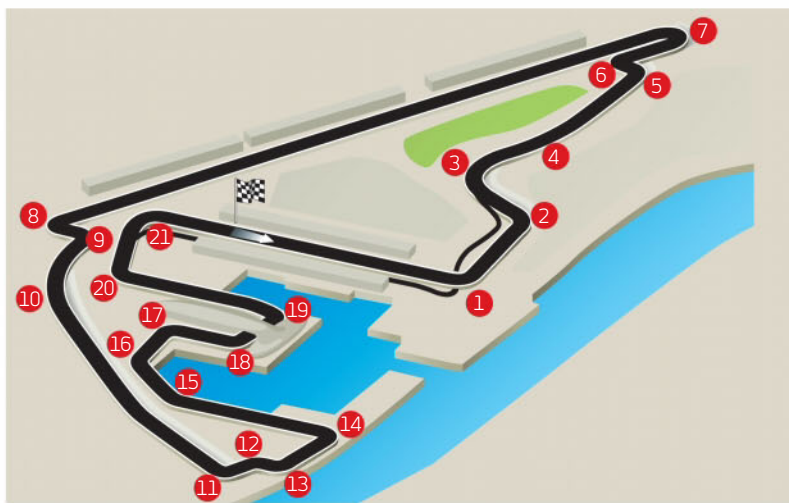
Direction Anticlockwise

Winners from pole 2

Race start (UK) 1pm

LIVE on

Sky Sports F1@



LAST YEAR

Winner Nico Rosberg

Margin of victory 8.271 secs

Fastest lap 1m 44.517s, L Hamilton

Race leaders 2

Safety Cars 0

Pitstops 42

Overtakes 26 **F1**

PHOTOS: CHARLES COATES/LAT; STEVE ETHERINGTON/LAT; ANDY HONE/LAT

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Every shredded tyre
Every pole position
Every failed pit stop
Every dehydrated driver
Every lock up
Every duel
Every chequered flag
Every fight



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Tony Brooks in his Vanwall
at the 1957 British Grand Prix,
on his way to a shared victory
with Stirling Moss

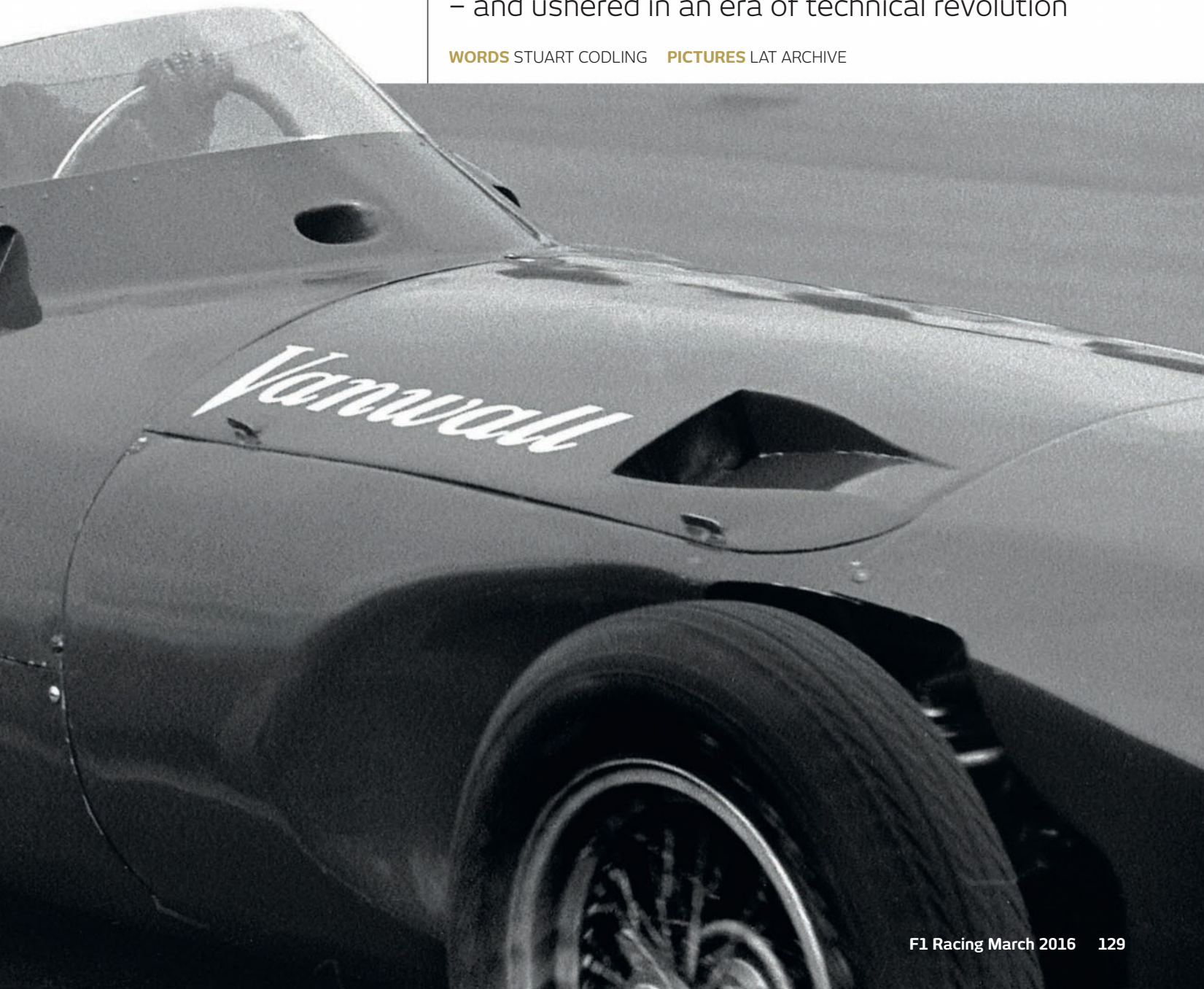


THE HISTORY OF F1 PART 3

THE BRITISH ARE COMING

Dismissed as a group of low-rent garage-based tinkerers, British teams rose to the fore in time for the emergence of the constructors' championship – and ushered in an era of technical revolution

WORDS STUART CODLING PICTURES LAT ARCHIVE



Tony Vandervell's Vanwall team enjoyed a breakthrough year in 1957, collecting a couple of wins, which included the victory shared by Tony Brooks (below left) and Stirling Moss (below right) at the British Grand Prix at Aintree

Although a new generation of talented British drivers had emerged on the international motor-racing scene in the early years of the F1 world championship, British *manufacturers* seldom cut it at the top level. It was not for want of trying.

In the early 1950s, Britain was one of the world's most energetic motoring nations. The wartime experience had left a legacy of inventive, self-reliant and motor-minded individuals who craved competitive stimulus. They threw themselves into the world of motorsport, campaigning everything from 500cc motorcycle-engined specials upwards. This, after all, was a nation that had perfected the likes of the jet engine and the bouncing bomb when its back was against the wall. There was a feeling that nothing was impossible – but perhaps this also engendered an element of hubris that wrought failure on the upper rungs of the racing ladder.

As Sir Stirling Moss explained last month [*The History of F1: Part 2*, *F1 Racing*, February 2016], cars such as the ERA he drove at the start of his grand prix career were conceptually clever in parts, but let down by lack of resource. Against the more industrialised simplicity of Ferrari and Maserati, cars improvised in sheds and garages were doomed to fail. Even the hugely publicised and well-resourced BRM, set up as a national prestige project, floundered almost from the very start: their new F1 car, powered by an ambitious but demonically unreliable 1.5-litre supercharged V16 engine, managed only a handful of demonstration laps on the weekend of the inaugural world championship grand prix in 1950, and swiftly became a national embarrassment in the months that followed. It was also the first F1 car to run disc brakes rather than drums, but that achievement was overshadowed by the general air of shame.

"A lot of the racing machinery used in the early 1950s was left over from before the war," says Moss. "The problem was that you had to take standard bits and pieces and use them on the race car, and because they were then put under far more stress, they tended to break. There were very few items you could buy that were purely for racing. The stub axles on the HWM were from a Standard Vanguard. Put on some tyres that were very grippy for their day and those components were undergoing far higher cornering forces than they had been designed to take. Sometimes it was more than they could stand."

Connaught were the first to break the stranglehold of the 'continental manufacturers' in international racing, when 21-year-old dental student Tony Brooks won the non-championship Syracuse Grand Prix in 1955, but a lack of financial resources continued to blight the company. With BRM in perpetual chaos, it was industrialist Tony Vandervell who properly planted the Union Jack at motor racing's peak, initially racing with a modified Ferrari to publicise his company's innovative 'thin wall' bearings, then later as a manufacturer in his own right under the name Vanwall. Prudently setting national pride aside, Vandervell bought a Maserati 250F rolling chassis so his engineers could strip it down and learn from its design.

"The British racing industry was more like a cottage industry," says John Surtees, then a successful motorcycle racer. "You had Alta and Connaught in the 1950s, but the person who really moved things on was Tony Vandervell. Of course you still had backyard operations – that's how Colin Chapman started with Lotus. It was just a lock-up garage in Hornsey."

Vandervell's often-stated aim was to beat the Italian giants – "those bloody red cars" – and he pursued that goal diligently, hiring





“Vanwall soon reached a level that matched Vandervell’s aspirations, and so dominant was Moss in the Pescara Grand Prix that he was able to stop for new tyres, an oil top-up “and a bottle of pop,” as the Pathé newsreels put it”



the young Colin Chapman (who also fancied himself as a driver, only to be put off after crashing at Reims in 1956) and aeronautical engineer Frank Costin to consult on the new generation of Vanwall cars. The four-cylinder engine was simple but powerful and based on the fundamentals of a Manx Norton single-cylinder motorcycle design, but joined with a common cylinder head and water jacket and mated to a Rolls-Royce crankcase. The gearbox was driver-unfriendly but essentially robust. To drive the cars, Vandervell hired Moss and Brooks, along with Formula 3 graduate Stuart Lewis-Evans, who was managed by a motorcycle dealer and moderately competitive F3 racer who went by the name of Bernard Charles Ecclestone.

Vanwall soon reached a level that matched Vandervell’s aspirations, winning grands prix in 1957 – including one on home soil – and so dominant was Moss in the Pescara Grand Prix that he was able to stop for new tyres, an oil top-up “and a bottle of pop,” as the Pathé newsreels put it. But F1, recovered now from the struggles of the early ’50s, was about to change again.

At the end of 1957 the FIA made two rule changes that would have profound implications for the sport, banning alcohol fuel formulations (in favour of 130-octane aviation fuel) and cutting the world championship grand prix distance from 500km to 300km (310 miles to 186 miles), in effect bringing race lengths down from three hours to two. This, along with the introduction of a world championship for constructors in 1958, created opportunities for the kind of competitors who had been virtually locked out of F1 since its inception.

Cars could now have smaller fuel tanks and would therefore be lighter, placing less stress on both their mechanical hardware and disposable commodities such as tyres. Agility became →



John Cooper (above). Jack Brabham had to push his Cooper over the line (right) at Monaco 1957, but in Argentina 1958, a Moss-driven Cooper (below) became the first rear-engined car to win a GP





Jack Brabham won two F1 championships with Cooper, in 1959 and 1960. Here he's shown post-victory at Spa 1960, a dark weekend on which Chris Bristow and Alan Stacey lost their lives and Stirling Moss was seriously injured

an increasingly significant element of the overall performance equation. Two constructors in particular were already well prepared for this, thanks to their experience supplying frontrunners in the 1.5-litre class introduced in Formula 2 in 1957: Cooper and Lotus.

Vauxhall car dealer John Cooper epitomised the post-war generation of British engineer-improviser-entrepreneurs. Having served an apprenticeship as an engineer, he was invalided out of the army after a gas attack in World War I. In the inter-war years he established a successful business rebuilding and selling war-surplus motorcycles, joined the orbit of racer and speed-record enthusiast Kaye Don, and even built a midget racing car for his young son, John. After World War II, Charles and John, along with a family friend, began to build their own specials to race in the 500cc class, powered by motorcycle engines. For expediency they put the engine behind the driver for a shorter and simpler connection between the chain-drive transmission and the rear axle. Success generated demand from other competitors, enabling the Coopers to establish a thriving business.

Rear-engined racing cars were not new – Auto Union and the pre-merger Benz got there first, before the war – but in a world in which the prevailing orthodoxy was that the horse should pull the cart, they were unusual. So unusual, in fact, that Cooper made front-engined F2 cars in the early 1950s, and built the early Vanwalls, until the circumstances converged

for them to have a eureka moment: right car, right engine, right driver. A rear-engined Cooper sportscar, powered by a small-but-robust engine supplied by Coventry Climax, and raced by the likes of driver-engineer Jack Brabham (newly arrived from Australia) demonstrated the superior balance of the rear-engine layout against competition with greater firepower, and Cooper soon began to explore the philosophy in F2 again. Against all design orthodoxy, draughtsman and part-time jazz musician Owen Maddock conjured a spaceframe chassis made entirely of curved tubes – as a joke, he said later, after becoming frustrated with Charles Cooper rejecting his more conventional layouts.

“The Coventry Climax engine really came from a fire pump – a military one,” said Brabham in an interview with this author in 2009. “It was made from aluminium, so it was very light, which was appealing from a racing point of view. The success and publicity encouraged Coventry Climax to create a version of the engine specifically for racing.”

Cooper's rear-engined T43 F2 car could manage a grand prix distance when fitted with a larger fuel tank, and the company entered a handful of grands prix in 1957, even though the largest capacity to which Coventry Climax could stretch at the time was a two-litre version of the FPF four-cylinder engine, half a litre short of the frontrunners. Around the streets of Monaco that mattered less, though, and Brabham duly fired the rear-engined philosophy's first warning shot,

running third until a fuel-pump failure forced him to push the car across the line for sixth.

The rise of one era and the decline of another overlapped in 1958. Maserati, financially spent, ended their works involvement in F1. Serial champion Juan Manuel Fangio fizzled out and retired. The world championship would be fought out between three British drivers: Peter Collins and Mike Hawthorn in Ferrari Dino 246s and Moss in a Vanwall – mostly. At the season-opening Argentine Grand Prix that January, for which Vanwall did not have a car ready, Moss and his favoured privateer team owner, Rob Walker, secured a last-minute deal to run the Cooper that Brabham had driven in 1957.

Ranged against six private Maseratis and three Ferraris, and half-a-litre down on engine capacity, Moss danced his way to victory even though the canvas was showing on his rear tyres by race end. Overheating and oil-pressure woes associated with the move to Avgas held back several of his rivals, but Ferrari's Luigi Musso could have passed him for the lead had he not been convinced that Moss would stop for new tyres (and therefore drop well out of contention, since the Cooper had bolt-on wheels rather than quick-change hubs). As Moss registered the first world championship win for a rear-engined car – and the first for a private entrant – Enzo Ferrari raged against the upstart ‘garagistes’.

Even so, veterans of the racing industry maintained that this result was but a blip, a combination of fortunate circumstances and Moss's undoubted genius behind the wheel. At world championship level, that impression lasted precisely four months, because at the very next round – Monaco – Maurice Trintignant beat Musso and Collins to win in another Walker-entered Cooper, this time with its engine bored and stroked to 2.2-litres. →

“Draughtsman and part-time jazz musician Owen Maddock conjured a spaceframe chassis made entirely of curved tubes – as a joke, he said later, after becoming frustrated with Charles Cooper rejecting his more conventional layouts”

HISTORY TIMELINE

1958

Stirling Moss ushers in the rear-engine era with a win for Cooper in Argentina. He moves to Vanwall and loses out on the title at the final round after refusing to protest an infraction by Ferrari's Mike Hawthorn, who becomes Britain's first world champion.

María Teresa de Filippis, the first woman to qualify for a world championship grand prix, finishes tenth at Spa in a private Maserati 250F. She quits F1 a year later after the death of her mentor Jean Behra.

1958

After years of embarrassing failure, BRM win a grand prix as Jo Bonnier beats Jack Brabham into second place in the P25 at Zandvoort.

Jean Behra is sacked by Ferrari after punching the team manager at Reims, then suffers a fatal accident while racing a Porsche at Avus.

Two grand prix wins and a string of points finishes are enough for Jack Brabham to win the world title at Sebring. Securing the championship underlines that front-engined F1 cars are obsolete.

1960

Stirling Moss takes the first grand prix victory for Lotus, in a privately entered car. The Belgian Grand Prix weekend underlines F1's dangers: a steering column failure on Mike Taylor's Lotus in practice sends him so far off the track that a search party has to be dispatched to find him. Chris Bristow and Alan Stacey are killed during the race, while Stirling Moss is injured when one of his wheels falls off.

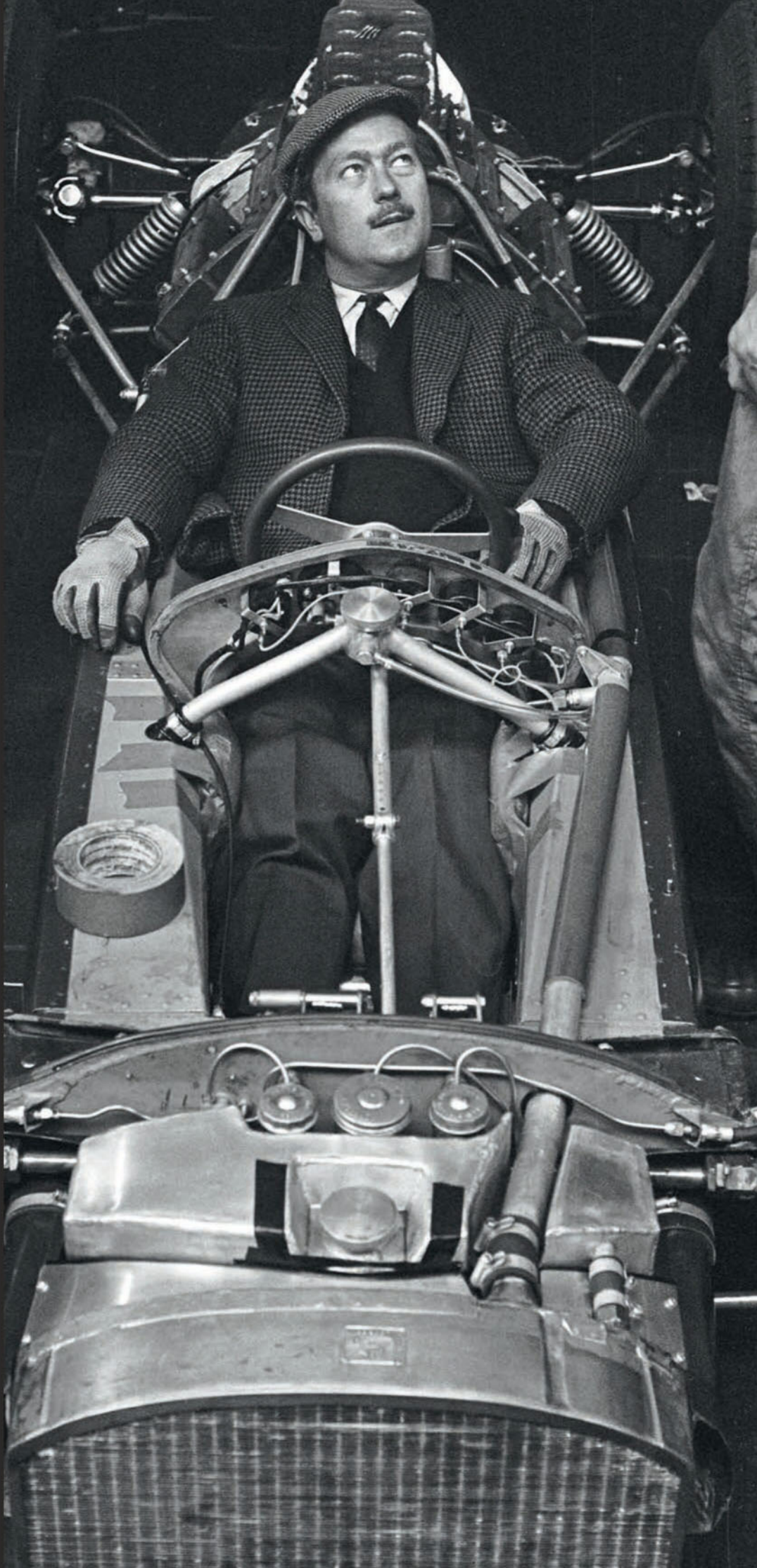
Organisers of the Italian Grand Prix find a way to load the deck in favour of a Ferrari victory, hosting the race on Monza's full length track which includes high-speed banking. Phil Hill takes the last GP win for a front-engined car.

1961

Ferrari are ready for the 1.5-litre era and the iconic 156 'Sharknose' lets Phil Hill become F1's first US world champion. He seals the title at Monza, with one round to go, but team-mate Wolfgang von Trips and 15 spectators are killed when von Trips locks wheels with Jim Clark's Lotus and flies off the track.

1962

Lotus move the game forward with the monocoque-chassis 25, but reliability costs Jim Clark dearly as Graham Hill lifts the crown in Tony Rudd's new V8-engined BRM. The final, deciding round is held in South Africa on 29 December.



Mercurial Lotus founder Colin Chapman (left and far right) with the colourful Innes Ireland (near right), who brought about Lotus's first grand prix win, as a works team, at Watkins Glen in 1961 (below)



“Colin Chapman had outgrown his lock-up garage, moved to new facilities in Cheshunt, and once he set his mind to rear-engined design there was no stopping him. His first effort, the Lotus 18, bloodied Ferrari’s nose at Monaco in 1961”

Also that weekend, Cliff Allison gave Lotus a sixth-place finish on their grand prix debut. But while the Lotus 12 demonstrated some creative engineering flourishes within its front-engined format – the transmission was at the rear, giving better balance and letting the driver sit lower – it was another case of clever ideas lacking adequate resources to create a satisfactory product. After another stab at improving the formula with the 16, Chapman would embrace the rear-engine concept for his single-seaters.

Over the remainder of 1958, the Vanwall-vs-Ferrari status quo was restored as the season moved to a dramatic conclusion in Casablanca, where Lewis-Evans suffered terminal injuries when his engine seized at high speed, pitching him into the barrier. Vanwall had enough points to claim the inaugural constructors’ championship, but in the tragic circumstances Vandervell could derive no satisfaction from his achievement. The man who had kicked down the F1 door for British manufacturers now quietly drew the shutters on his own racing operation. Hawthorn squeaked through to become Britain’s first drivers’ champion, but he would not live to defend his title, dying in a road accident on the Guildford Bypass the following January.

Front-engined cars would win just four more championship races, Indy 500 excepted. Casting a new block enabled Coventry Climax to bring the FPF four-cylinder to 2.5 litres for 1959, virtually eliminating the last remaining barrier to the new wave’s competitiveness. Rear-engined

cars were not only lighter with better primary balance, but the absence of a propshaft – which in a front-engined car had to run underneath the driver’s seat – meant the pilot could sit lower, forming part of a virtuous circle of reduced frontal area and better aerodynamics. The front-engined squad looked like lumbering leviathans in comparison, and the only remaining active constructors sticking to the format were Ferrari and the still-laughable BRM.

Brooks still made a good fist of remaining in contention for Ferrari until the end of 1959, winning two grands prix, but he owed many of his points finishes to the durability of his proven 246 Dino. In terms of outright speed, Brabham and Moss held sway for most of the year, the latter once again racing in a private Cooper prepared by Rob Walker. The factory team were often let down by their modified Citroën road car gearboxes, while Walker bought bespoke Colotti racing transmissions that were plagued by poor build quality. Brabham won the championship, but only after pushing his car over the finishing line at the season finale.

“The fuel was delivered in 44-gallon drums,” said Brabham, “then it was put into churns, then it was put in the car. Somewhere along the line we were a churn short because the engine cut out and the car coasted to a halt within sight of the finish line, about 50 yards away.”

The surprised beneficiary was Brabham’s young team-mate Bruce McLaren, who registered his first F1 victory.

Brabham won the title again in 1960, but another big change was in the offing. F1 became a 1.5-litre formula in 1961, and while the British manufacturers frittered away precious time lobbying against the change, Enzo Ferrari had a neat 1.5-litre V6 ready for his first rear-engined single-seater cars, which duly swept the board.

Cooper gradually diminished as a competitive force, prompting both Brabham and McLaren to quietly start their own racing teams away from Charles Cooper’s watchful eye. Meanwhile, Colin Chapman had outgrown his lock-up garage, moved to new facilities in Cheshunt, and once he set his mind to rear-engined design there was no stopping him. His first effort, the Lotus 18, was good enough for the agile Moss-Walker combination to bloody Ferrari’s nose at Monaco in 1961. Not bad for a chassis that used the suspension uprights of a Triumph Herald. Its successor, the 21, brought the factory team their first grand prix win later that year at Watkins Glen, piloted by the colourful Innes Ireland.

Chapman was already demonstrating the ruthlessness as well as the pioneering spirit for which he is remembered. Galvanised by the win, he teed up Surtees, who had made a sensationally assured transition from two wheels to four, and told Ireland his services were no longer required for 1962.

“Colin offered me the number-one seat at Lotus,” recalls Surtees, “but there was a big row with Innes [who believed he was already contracted for that position], so I walked away from it. The problem with Innes soured my start in F1 a bit. People didn’t like the new boy.”

It was a bad career move for Surtees, who missed out on Chapman’s next step forward. The Lotus 25 emerged for the 1962 season from sketches made on napkins while Chapman was dining out with Costin, his old collaborator: where conventional F1 design added bodywork to a frame that handled all the racing loads, how about making the body fulfil that function? It would not only cut weight but also, with integral fuel tanks on either side, let the driver sit even lower in the car, improving the aerodynamics still further – priceless in a low-power era.

Not for the last time, Chapman’s rivals would have to scramble to catch up. **F1**



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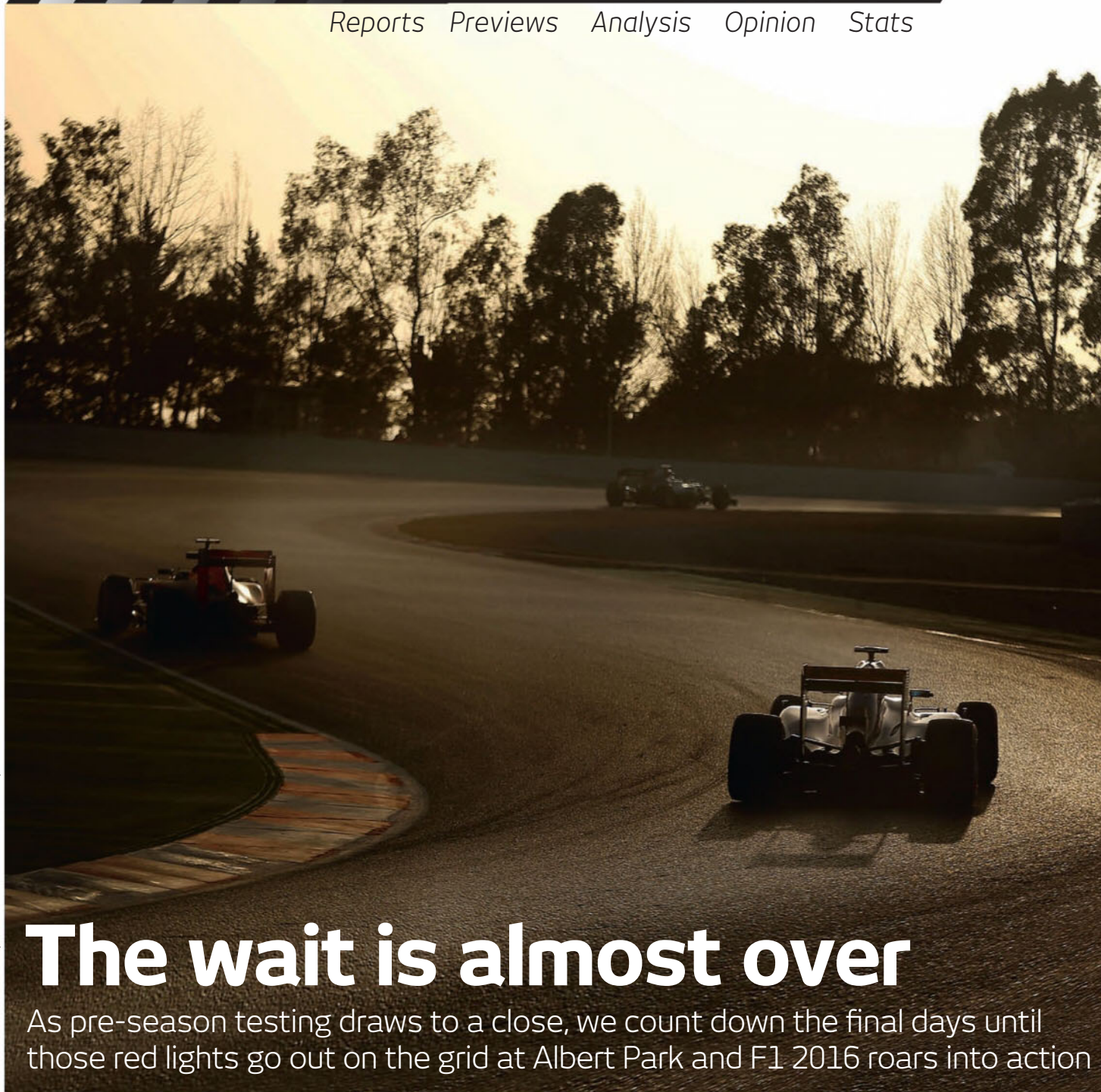
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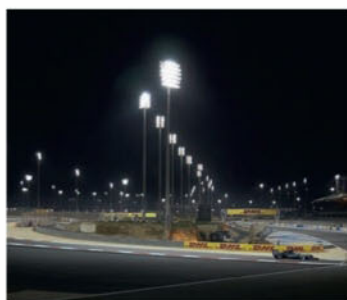
MAIN IMAGE: STEVEN TEE/LAT; INSETS: STEVE ETHERINGTON/LAT; STEVEN TEE/LAT

The wait is almost over

As pre-season testing draws to a close, we count down the final days until those red lights go out on the grid at Albert Park and F1 2016 roars into action



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AUSTRALIAN GP PREVIEW
Find out who's hot and who's not at Melbourne's lively season-opener



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BAHRAIN GP PREVIEW
Can Lewis Hamilton take his fourth win here on this floodlit desert track?



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INBOX
Goodbye to Pastor Maldonado, and why Lewis is no Ayrton Senna

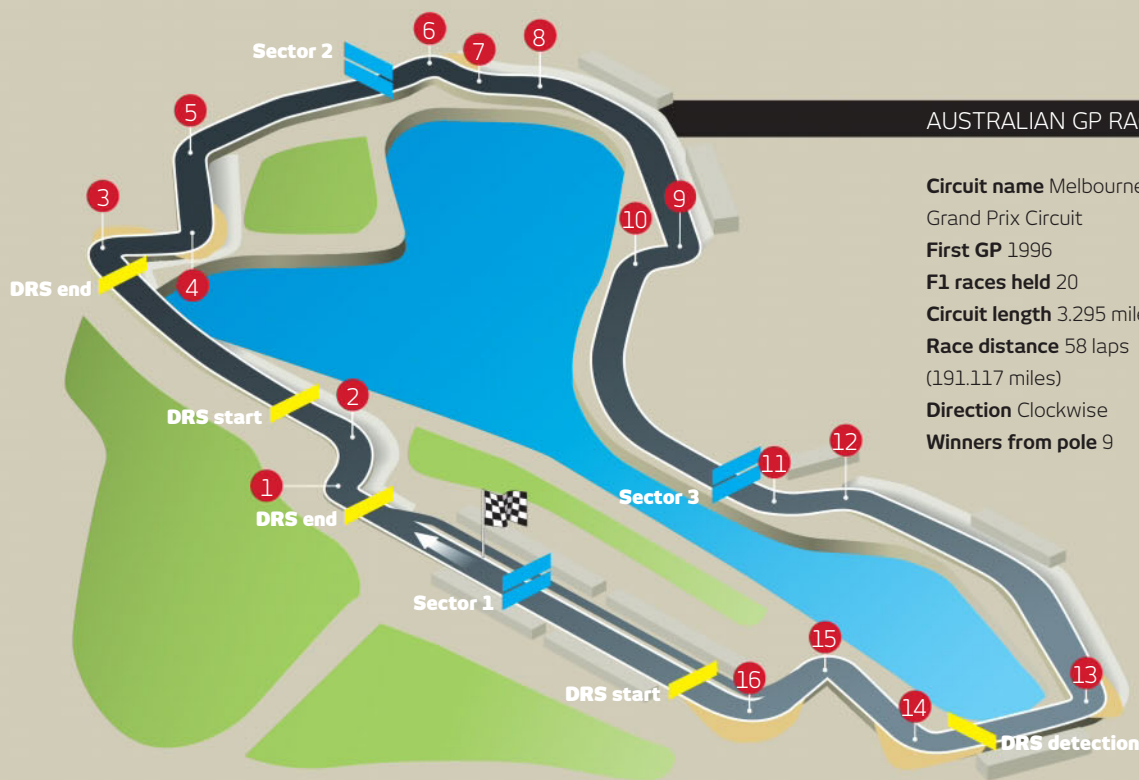


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MURRAY WALKER
...recalls the good times at the Beeb, and wishes Channel 4 all the best!



The Australian GP preview

Round 1 / 18-20 March 2016 / Albert Park, Melbourne



AUSTRALIAN GP RACE DATA

Circuit name Melbourne
Grand Prix Circuit
First GP 1996
F1 races held 20
Circuit length 3.295 miles
Race distance 58 laps
(191.117 miles)
Direction Clockwise
Winners from pole 9

TV TIMETABLE (UK TIME)

Friday 18 March

Practice 1 01:30-03:00

Practice 2 05:30-07:00

Saturday 19 March

Practice 3 03:00-04:00

Qualifying 06:00-07:00

Sunday 20 March

Race 05:00

Live coverage Sky Sports F1

Highlights Channel 4

ALL THE ANTICIPATION OF AN EXCITING SEASON TO COME

Over the past decade, only one non-world champion has won the Australian GP: Nico Rosberg, in 2014, and that victory set him up for a season that took him to the final round in Abu Dhabi as a title contender.

So we're unlikely to see an unfamiliar face atop the podium come 20 March. Circumstances conspire against freak winners at Albert Park: the bigger (richer) teams develop cars less prone to teething-troubles; experienced drivers know how to deal with the dislocating rigours of the longest of hauls and the unpredictable weather/track conditions of this part-time race-track in autumnal Oz.

On paper, this year's race is a shoo-in for Mercedes or Ferrari, but there's always the anticipation of not quite knowing who's hot and who's not. This, combined with Melbourne's insatiable fan base and the charms of the city itself, means it's still the race of the year for many. **F1**



Rosberg: the only non-champion to win at Melbourne in the past decade

WHAT GOES ON TOUR...

If you are 'blessed' with curly hair, life's just one long joke - for everyone else.

"You look like..." then take any one from Bobby Ball, Kevin Keegan, Alain Prost, Adrian Sutil's dad (just Google 'Jorge Sutil')... I've heard them all. *Ad infinitum*. Believe me. But none so frequent as 'Leo', as in 'Leo Sayer', twizzle-topped popstar and routine slam-dunk hitmaker of the 1970s.

So imagine my delight at the 2006 Australian Grand Prix when I found out via countless gleeful text messages that Leo Sayer, a lifelong F1 fan and latterly a resident of Sydney, was in the paddock. A meeting was inevitable; photographic evidence of adjacent barnets secured.

To Leo's eternal credit, he found mirth in our meeting at least the equal of those who've baited me over the decades. And we've remained friendly ever since. If you've got it, flaunt it, I say.

Anthony Rowlinson

WHAT HAPPENED IN LAST YEAR'S RACE...?

Winner Lewis Hamilton
Margin of victory 1.360s
Pole position 1m26.327s, L Hamilton
Fastest lap 1m 30.945s, L Hamilton
Race leaders 2
Safety Cars 1 (3 laps)
Pitstops 17
Overtakes 11



Lewis Hamilton dominated last year's race from pole. Sebastian Vettel's third for Ferrari was a promising start for the Scuderia after a wretched 2014, and Williams' Felipe Massa finished fourth. Only 15 cars took the start with Bottas, Kvyat and Magnussen (standing in for the injured Alonso) missing out along with the Manor Marussias. Eleven cars made it to the flag with Button's McLaren last.

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2/3 APRIL	DUNLOP MSA BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP	BRANDS HATCH	5-7 AUGUST	MCE INSURANCE BRITISH SUPERBIKE CHAMPIONSHIP	BRANDS HATCH GP
16/17 APRIL	BRITISH GT AND BRDC F4 CHAMPIONSHIPS	BRANDS HATCH GP	6/7 AUGUST	BRITISH GT AND BRDC F4 CHAMPIONSHIPS	SNETTERTON
30 APRIL - 2 MAY	MCE INSURANCE BRITISH SUPERBIKE CHAMPIONSHIP	OULTON PARK	27-29 AUGUST	MCE INSURANCE BRITISH SUPERBIKE CHAMPIONSHIP	CADWELL PARK
7/8 MAY	BLANCPAIN GT SPRINT SERIES	BRANDS HATCH GP	9-11 SEPTEMBER	MCE INSURANCE BRITISH SUPERBIKE CHAMPIONSHIP	OULTON PARK
20-22 MAY	MCE INSURANCE BRITISH SUPERBIKE CHAMPIONSHIP	BRANDS HATCH	10/11 SEPTEMBER	BRITISH TRUCK RACING CHAMPIONSHIP	SNETTERTON
28/29 MAY	MASTERS HISTORIC FESTIVAL	BRANDS HATCH GP	1/2 OCTOBER	DUNLOP MSA BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP	BRANDS HATCH GP
28 & 30 MAY	BRITISH GT AND BRDC F4 CHAMPIONSHIPS	OULTON PARK	14-16 OCTOBER	MCE INSURANCE BRITISH SUPERBIKE CHAMPIONSHIP	BRANDS HATCH GP
4/5 JUNE	DUNLOP MSA BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP	OULTON PARK	5/6 NOVEMBER	BRITISH TRUCK RACING CHAMPIONSHIP & FIREWORKS	BRANDS HATCH
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The Bahrain GP preview

Round 2 / 1-3 April 2016 / Sakhir



BAHRAIN GP RACE DATA

Circuit name Bahrain International Circuit
First GP 2004
F1 races held 11
Circuit length 3.362 miles
Race distance 57 laps (191.53 miles)
Direction Clockwise
Winners from pole 5

TV TIMETABLE (UK TIME)

Friday 1 April
Practice 1 12:00-13:30
Practice 2 16:00-17:30
Saturday 2 April
Practice 3 13:00-14:00
Qualifying 16:00-17:00
Sunday 3 April
Race 16:00
Live coverage Sky Sports F1 and Channel 4

A NEW CHOICE OF TYRE COULD MEAN FASCINATING STRATEGIES

Lewis Hamilton only has to win at Bahrain once more to equal Fernando Alonso's status as king of this point-and-squirt track. Alonso nailed two wins in his first stint at Renault and backed it up with that smash 'n' grab for Ferrari in 2010. But since the race adopted a nocturnal format in 2014, Lewis has been *the* man to beat.

Track temperatures are lower at night, but the track surface – based on an aggregate mix imported from Shrewsbury in the UK – is abrasive, and the Gulf winds can introduce dust. Tyre choice remains similar to last year, but Pirelli have added the super-soft compound to the regular menu of soft and medium. This gives teams an interesting choice, since the top four finishers all ran two-stop strategies in 2015, most going soft-soft-medium, but Kimi Räikkönen snatched second place thanks to a long second stint on medium rubber. **F1**



Can Lewis Hamilton take a fourth win at this night-time desert race in 2016?

WHAT GOES ON TOUR...

"Where shall we go for dinner?" An essential daily question at any race, and one that becomes more complex the more people are involved. And in the early days of visiting Bahrain, it generally meant ending up in our hotel's Indian restaurant.

One night in 2007, a freelance scribe asserted with great authority that he knew a good Italian restaurant. We co-opted a photographer with a car, piled in until its rear suspension was on the bump stops, and drove. And drove. And drove.

Over the following 50 minutes "I'm sure it's around here somewhere" became a recurring mantra, until finally: "Oh yes, this looks familiar."

We turned in to the back streets and found a dilapidated building with bricked-up windows and the tattered remnants of a red, green and white awning over a breeze-blocked doorway.

Chicken jalfrezi again, then...

Stuart Codling

WHAT HAPPENED IN LAST YEAR'S RACE...?

Winner Lewis Hamilton
Margin of victory 3.380s
Pole 1m 32.571s, Lewis Hamilton
Fastest lap 1m 36.311s, K Räikkönen
Race leaders 3
Safety Cars 0
Pitstops 43
Overtakes 35



Another comfortable win for Lewis Hamilton, as team-mate Nico Rosberg suffered brake problems and lost out on P2 to Ferrari's Kimi Räikkönen, while Malaysia victor Sebastian Vettel made do with fifth, behind Williams' Valtteri Bottas, after damaging his wing battling Rosberg. McLaren's woes continued as Fernando Alonso just missed out on the points and Jenson Button's car failed even to make it to the grid.

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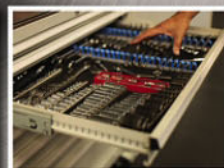


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★ STAR LETTER



Pastor at the peak of his powers, on the podium in Spain 2012, following his only victory in F1

So long, Pastor: it's certainly been interesting!

While I was heartened to hear that Kevin Magnussen is in line for a Renault drive (great young racer gets seat with potentially front-running team on merit shocker) I am saddened to see the back of Pastor Maldonado.

The news brought out the haters on the forums, saying good riddance. The debate will always rage about how much of his talent can be measured in dollars, yet following his exploits over the years has been a hell of a ride. In an age in which drivers are criticised for lacking personality, he was a breath of fresh air. I still recall a test at Silverstone a few years ago. At 9am everyone else was checking systems on slow out-laps. Not Pastor. On the first lap, his car screamed into view sideways and out of control. Awesome!

Remember when he held off Alonso to give Williams their first win in 15 years, only for the team garage to go up in flames an hour later? Yes, there have been too many mistakes, but you can't deny he's been entertaining. Good luck in the future Pastor. Some of us at least will miss you.

Tom Martin
Cardiff, UK

Is it crunch time for Nico?

Assuming that Mercedes' dominance continues into a third year, then this season will be a crucial one for Nico Rosberg.

After finishing second to Lewis Hamilton in both 2014 and 2015, Nico must feel that 2016 is make-or-break as he struggles to gain superiority over his team-mate. A third successive defeat by Hamilton could ultimately signal the end of Rosberg's Mercedes tenure.

I say this because Nico will face the dilemma of whether to continue to pit himself alongside Lewis in equal machinery, or remove himself from the situation, regroup, and try to mount a challenge elsewhere.

In recent years we've seen the likes of Rubens Barrichello, Felipe Massa and Mark Webber, all proven race winners, move on to pastures new when faced with these circumstances. It's not in a driver's psyche to stay in a top team, as a bridesmaid and never the bride.

With Nico's Mercedes contract due to expire this year, I really hope he can take the challenge to Hamilton this time round.

Adam Berriman
By email

The immediate future's bright

I just don't understand the barrage of criticism that F1 has been receiving lately.

Yes, Mercedes have dominated for the past two seasons. Yes, the battle between Lewis and Nico was poor last year. Yes, there should be more testing to allow the other teams to catch up. Dominating in F1 is nothing new, so people need to take their eyes off the front of the grid and look at the sport as a whole. Even if Mercedes dominate in 2016, there is plenty going on behind them.

Will Ferrari make further gains, and can Williams finally take the fight to the front? Will Red Bull slip further back? And what about Force India and Toro Rosso? Will Max and Carlos improve on their impressive debut seasons? What will Renault offer, now they're back as a works team? And can Manor see off the challenge of the new Haas F1 team and also close the gap to the midfield? Will Baku bring us a memorable race? And what on earth will happen at McLaren?

It's stories like this that will result in me being glued to the TV for 21 weekends of the year, just to see how they pan out. I'm also interested to see how Channel 4's coverage fares in the UK.

So, we've got a new team, a new circuit, new drivers, and a new channel to look forward to: bring on those five lights in Melbourne!

Craig Curtis
Swansea, UK

Something's changed

I'm 23 and have watched F1 for as long as I can remember. Now, I haven't got as much F1 watching experience under my belt as some of your other readers. I wasn't lucky enough to see the true greats of the sport like Senna and Prost, but when I first started watching F1, both Michelin and Bridgestone were tyre suppliers and refuelling was part of the race. This spiced things up. All the races were on free-to-air TV (albeit with adverts during the race, and when you came back the Safety Car was out and you had missed an incident!) and viewing figures were huge.

The racing now just isn't the same. The regulations need a shake-up and the coverage needs more consideration. Bring back refuelling I say, so drivers can push for the whole stint and don't need to save fuel. Yes, F1 is trying to cut costs, but whatever they do the teams will spend the money on something else. F1 is a sport that is supposed to have the best drivers in the world, so the cars should be the fastest there are and should not be



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required to do all this backing off and saving tyres and fuel.

I hope Channel 4 can bring back the coverage to the level of the 2009 era of BBC coverage and that somehow the bigwigs of F1 manage to save it. All I can say is good luck and I hope F1 can get back to where it was, before everyone switches off!

Robert Beeson
Lincolnshire, UK

Hamilton is no Senna

I am starting to grow a little tired of the countless comparisons made between Lewis Hamilton and Ayrton Senna.

Just because they both won three world championships and Lewis often mentions Ayrton as his boyhood hero, it does not mean they are two of a kind. They are completely different types of character. Ayrton was a private, complex and single-minded man. He was not particularly interested in fame, and lived for F1. He won the first of his two world titles battling Alain Prost, first as team-mates and then in different machines. His third and final championship success was achieved by fending off Nigel Mansell, who, for most of the season, was driving a superior car.

Lewis only just managed to win in 2008 battling against Felipe Massa in the Ferrari. And as much as Felipe is a great driver, he is not one of *the* greats by any stretch. And the past two seasons have seen Hamilton beat Nico Rosberg, again a good driver... but certainly not a Prost, Piquet, Mansell or Lauda.

Lewis is also preoccupied by hanging out with various celebrities, making music, going to fashion shows and dating pop stars. I do not even think the two would have much to chat about beyond driving the car.

If there is a driver on the grid who has most in common with the great Brazilian, it would have to be Fernando Alonso. Don't get me wrong, Lewis is a great driver and his performances have proved so since his impressive debut season. But he is never going to be loved or remembered in the way Ayrton has.

Thomas Green
Cornwall, UK

A great, but not yet a legend

I'm not sure I'm willing to award Lewis 'legendary' status quite yet. True, he has three Formula 1 world championships to his credit, but, to be fair, luck has been on his side to a great extent.

In 2008, had the rain held off for another 90 seconds in Brazil, Massa would have been champion. Fast forward to 2014, and suppose that Lewis's car, rather than Nico's, had failed in the last race of the year. True he was fairly dominant in 2016, but name me another 'legend' who was beaten three times on the trot in a championship season by his team-mate.

I'll count Lewis in the 'great' category for now; a sort of Nigel Mansell, with much better championship luck.

Brooks Esser
By email



Senna leads Prost at the 1990 Spanish GP: Thomas Green and Brooks Esser would argue Lewis has some way to go to achieve this level of greatness

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MURRAY WALKER



UNLESS I'M VERY MUCH MISTAKEN...

"You won't be surprised to learn that I've got strong feelings about the BBC's decision to abandon F1"

You might expect those feelings to be of rage or condemnation, but they're not. The BBC didn't opt out through lack of enthusiasm, but because they had to make savings as a result of government funding cuts. You and I may feel savings should have been made elsewhere, but, sadly, *we're* not in charge. So my reaction is one of sadness and regret at the loss to F1 of a great organisation and the team they created.

Sadness and regret because the BBC are responsible for the historic establishment and growth of interest in F1 throughout the English-

speaking world. When, in 1978, as a result of enthusiasm for F1 generated by James Hunt's 1976 championship victory, they decided to cover *all* the races instead of just the occasional one, they did so with just half-hour highlights, but then steadily ramped up their involvement until they were garnering audiences of 5-6 million viewers in the UK, plus thousands more in Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, Canada and everywhere else that English was spoken.

James Hunt left the cockpit to join me in the commentary box for 13 memorable years and

while we didn't always see eye to eye, the public liked the combination of my excitement and James's authoritative and provocative observations. "The trouble with Jarier is that he's a French wally – always has been and always will be." How the viewers loved his outspokenness!


But nothing lasts for ever. The BBC were so successful that the better-funded ITV thought: "We'll have a bit of that" and outbid the Beeb in 1996. "I didn't make the change just because of the money" Bernie Ecclestone told me. "They'll do it better." And, from 1997, they did, building on the Beeb's lower-budget programming, while production company North One did a great job with increased transmission time, better facilities, more people and innovative content.

While the BBC licked their wounds ITV reaped their reward, only to trip up over the same problem the BBC had faced in 1996: money. They needed more of it for football, so, in 2009, off they went and back came the BBC now with, seemingly, enough funds to do the job.

But, as I say, nothing lasts for ever. For years Sky TV had been lusting after F1, and in 2012 they struck a deal using the promise of a dedicated Formula 1 channel, great enthusiasm and seemingly bottomless pockets. The result was brilliant and the BBC was demoted to poor relation, in spite of which they continued, in my view, to do a great job. But now they're out.

I had many wonderful years with the BBC; with ITV, too, plus contributions to Sky. Working with BBC and ITV heads of sport Jonathan Martin and Brian Barwick and other greats, such as Steve Rider, Jim Rosenthal, Neil Duncanson of North One, Sir Jackie Stewart, James Hunt, Jonathan Palmer, Graham Hill, Jody Scheckter, Alan Jones and the commentary box colleague with whom I was happiest of all: Martin Brundle.

Yet I owe what I've achieved to the BBC and mourn their departure. Still, it consoles me that, in addition to Sky TV's superb coverage for those who can afford it, we'll still have free-to-air coverage from Channel 4, and I hope that, in addition to David Coulthard, they'll appoint others from the excellent former BBC team, too."

So my deepest sympathy to the BBC, my best wishes to Sky and Channel 4, and to Bernie Ecclestone my thanks for letting us have a choice of riveting coverage of our great sport. 



"The BBC are responsible for the historic establishment and growth of interest in F1 throughout the English-speaking world"



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