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RELENTLESS
COMPETITOR**

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hat trick so hard?

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100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km). Astra VXR: Urban: 26.2 (10.8), Extra-urban: 43.5



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54 With the current grid so close, does Vettel have a realistic chance at a third title in 2012?

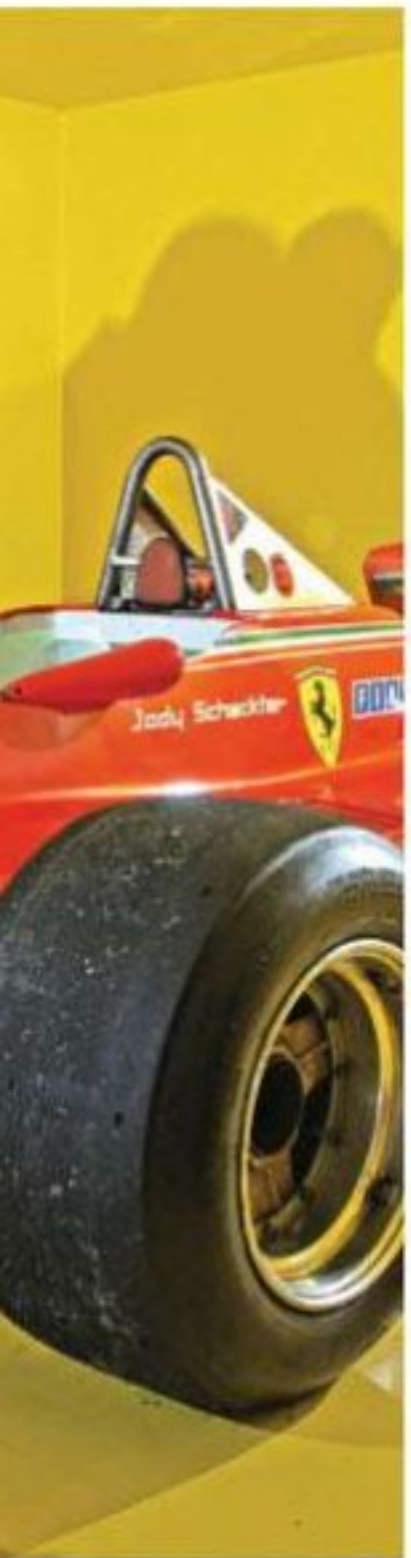


92 Maurice admires Jody Scheckter's car collection... in the grounds of an organic farm





62 We rate every intra-team battle as F1 enters the second half of the season

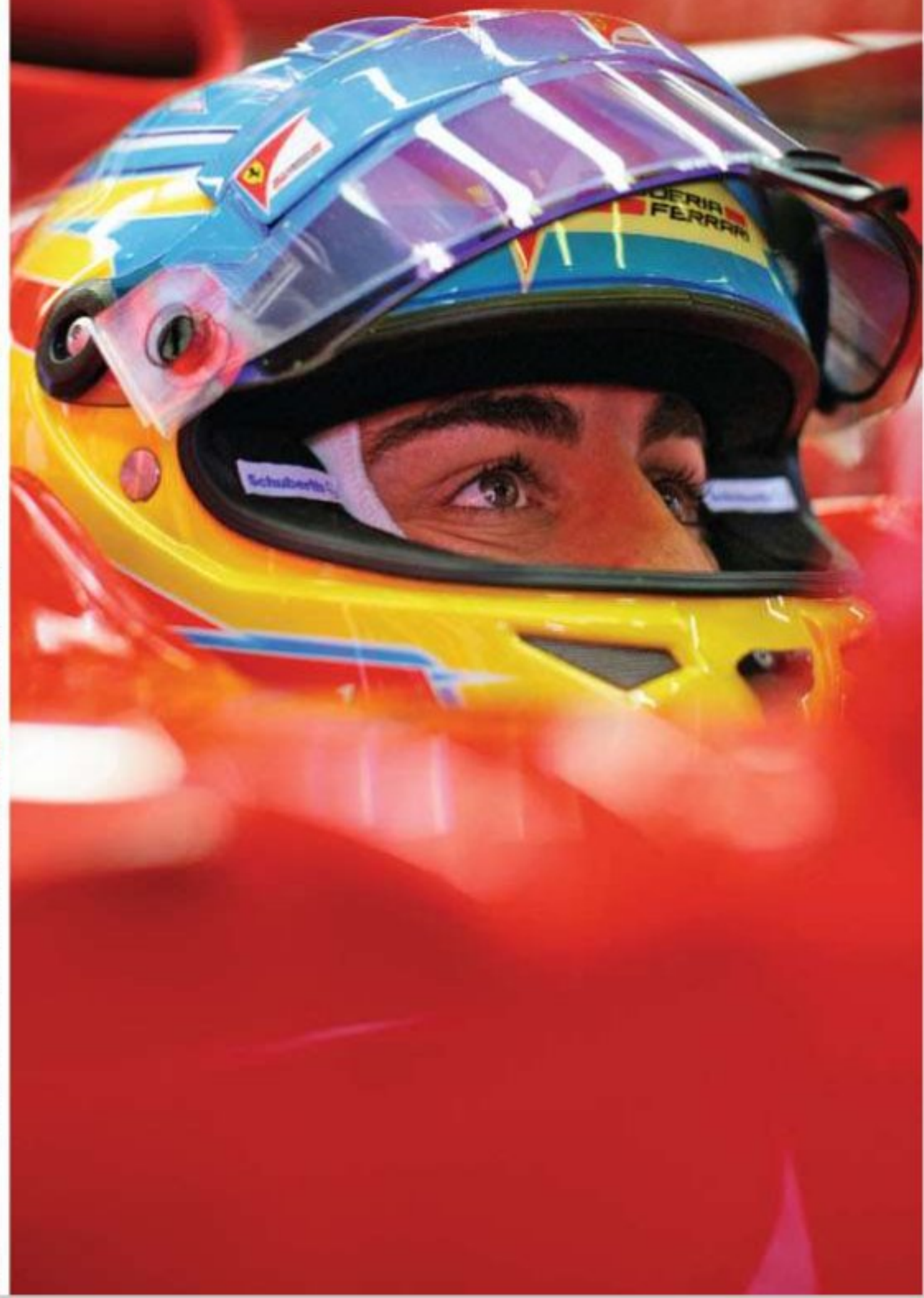


82 Heikki Kovalainen's driving is improving – out on track as well as on the golf course



40 **ALONSO SPECIAL**

He's constantly rated as the best current driver in F1. We investigate why...



86 It's 1976 and two men are fighting for the championship: James Hunt and Niki Lauda



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Parade

Back on course McLaren's resolve to remain in the title chase was confirmed in Hungary when, after claiming the team's 150th pole position, Lewis Hamilton battled against race-long pressure from the Lotus pairing of Kimi Räikkönen and Romain Grosjean, to take a morale-boosting victory

Where Hungaroring, Hungary **When** 3.48pm, Sunday 29 July

Photographer Lorenzo Bellanca/LAT

Details Canon EOS-1D X, 600mm lens, 1/800th at F5

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Parade

Inching ever closer Lotus are getting nearer and nearer to that elusive win and in Hungary they managed to bring both cars home on the podium, with Kimi Räikkönen taking second place for the third time this year. It surely can't be long now...

Where Hungaroring, Hungary

When 11.59am, Saturday 28 July

Photographer Lorenzo Bellanca/LAT

Details Canon EOS-1D Mk IV, 600mm lens, 1/640th at F5.6







Parade

Fiery determination As speculation about his future at Ferrari grows, Felipe Massa does his best to prove he should remain in the team for 2013. In Hungary, the Brazilian only narrowly failed to outqualify championship leader Fernando Alonso, missing out by just 0.056secs

Where Hungaroring, Hungary **When** 11.48am, Saturday 28 July

Photographer Lorenzo Bellanca/LAT

Details Canon EOS-1D MkIV, 600mm lens, 1/500th at F4.9



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STOP AND GO / Stewart Williams / 09.2012

Find out what makes Fernando fast in this very special issue...



It may be six years since Fernando Alonso last won a world title, but the Spaniard has never had the need to tell the F1 world that 'he'll be back' because, in all honesty, he's never been away. He's won races in every season since, bar one, and he's now leading the championship in a car that's widely agreed to be not the out-and-out fastest on the grid on his way to a possible third drivers' crown – and all the time he's cementing his reputation as the sport's most complete driver.

We've gathered together a panel of experts for our feature on [page 46](#) and they will tell you exactly what Fernando's strengths are, how he is able to consistently outperform his car and exactly what makes him so quick. We've also asked his main rivals what they make of him. And to give a full 360° perspective of the Spaniard, you've had your chance to put your questions to him in our regular 'You Ask The Questions' slot on [p40](#). Of course, one of the drivers trying to deprive Alonso of a third title is himself going for his third one this year. So, on [page 54](#), we sit down with Christian Horner and Adrian Newey to ask how Sebastian Vettel is coping with the pressure of attempting a title hat trick.

As F1 takes its customary mid-season break, it also seemed like the perfect moment to take a look at how each driver is stacking up against their toughest competitor – their team-mate – in our half-term report on [p62](#). And we've also taken a look at why there are currently no Italian drivers gracing the sport's highest echelon on [page 76](#).

So if you've suffering from post-Olympic blues, what better way to prepare yourself for the resumption of this classic season at Spa on 2 September, than to sit down with this cracking issue?

Maurice Hamilton looks around Jody Scheckter's car collection, before eating his way through his ice cream selection on [p92](#)



He's not the easiest to get hold of, but we've managed an Alonso special this issue. Jimmy Roberts puts your questions to him on [p40](#)



After an enjoyable spot of golf, Heikki Kovalainen and news ed Jonny sit down to discuss how Caterham's cheery Finn is rediscovering his drive ([p84](#))...



Special thanks to Nicola Armstrong, Pat Behar, Matt Bishop, Matteo Bonciani, Hanspeter Brack, Annie Bradshaw, Luca Colajanni, Steve Cooper, Didier Coton, Nicki Dance, Sophie Eden, Silvia Hoffer Frangipane, Ross Gregory, Hannah Griffiths, Chas Hallett, Clarisse Hoffmann, Norman Howell, Heike Hientzsch, Will Hings, Matt James, Sabine Kehm, Pasquale Lattunendu, Marieluise Mammitzsch, Dan Leach, Bradley Lord, Tracy Novak, Britta Roeske, Stephane Samson, Wolfgang Schattling, Alexandra Schieren, Maria Serrat, Eric Silbermann, Andy Stobart, Katie Tweedle, Tom Webb, Leanne Williams, Claire Williams, Lee Korman. Very special thanks to Team GB and especially Bradley Wiggins and Chris Froome who time-trialled their way to medals past F1 Racing Towers in Teddington





TECHNOLOGY OF CHAMPIONS

A victory lap for the Mobil 1™ forensics team.

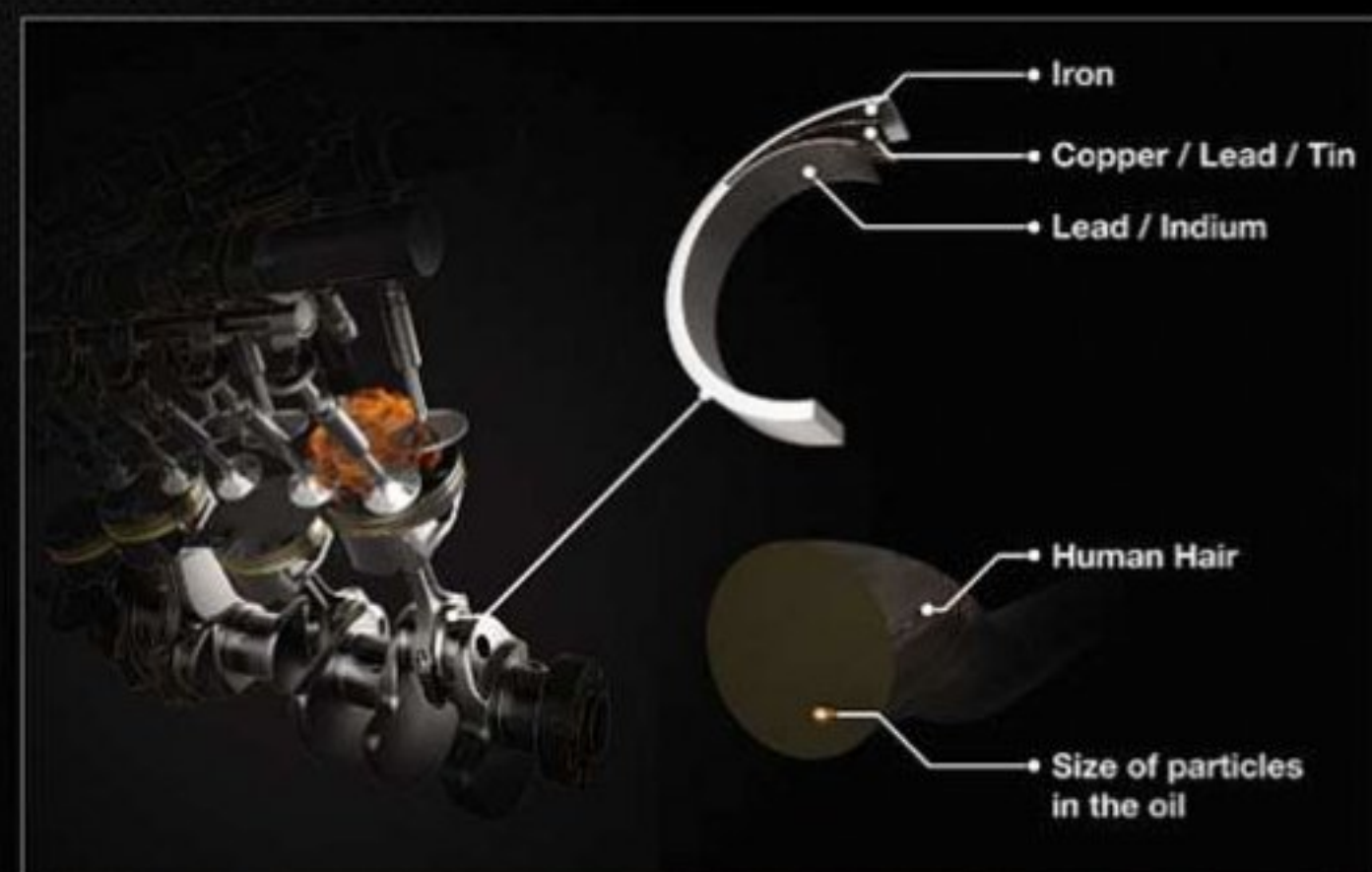
At the end of the 2008 Turkish Grand Prix, a routine trackside oil test conducted by the Mobil 1 technology team detected a fault with driver Lewis Hamilton's engine. Post-race evaluation identified a defective pump, which was then replaced. The following race, this engine powered Hamilton to victory at the Monaco Grand Prix, and he went on to win the season championship.

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the oil that can provide an early warning of potential issues. The ability to pinpoint the precise source of a potential problem helps improve reliability and keeps the car running at peak performance. For more information on Mobil 1, the world's leading synthetic engine oil brand, visit mobil1.com



Above: Under the microscope: Lead, indium, copper, tin and iron are five of 15 elements monitored during oil-analysis tests to help keep the race cars on the track.

Below: A Mobil 1 Race Engineer takes over 20 engine oil samples from the car during a race weekend.



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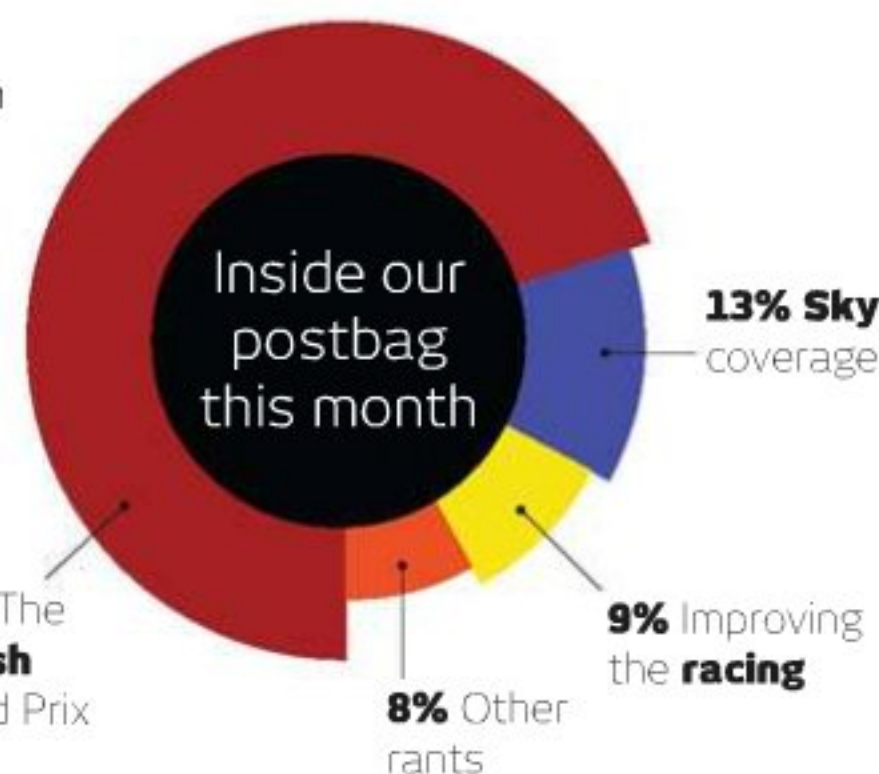
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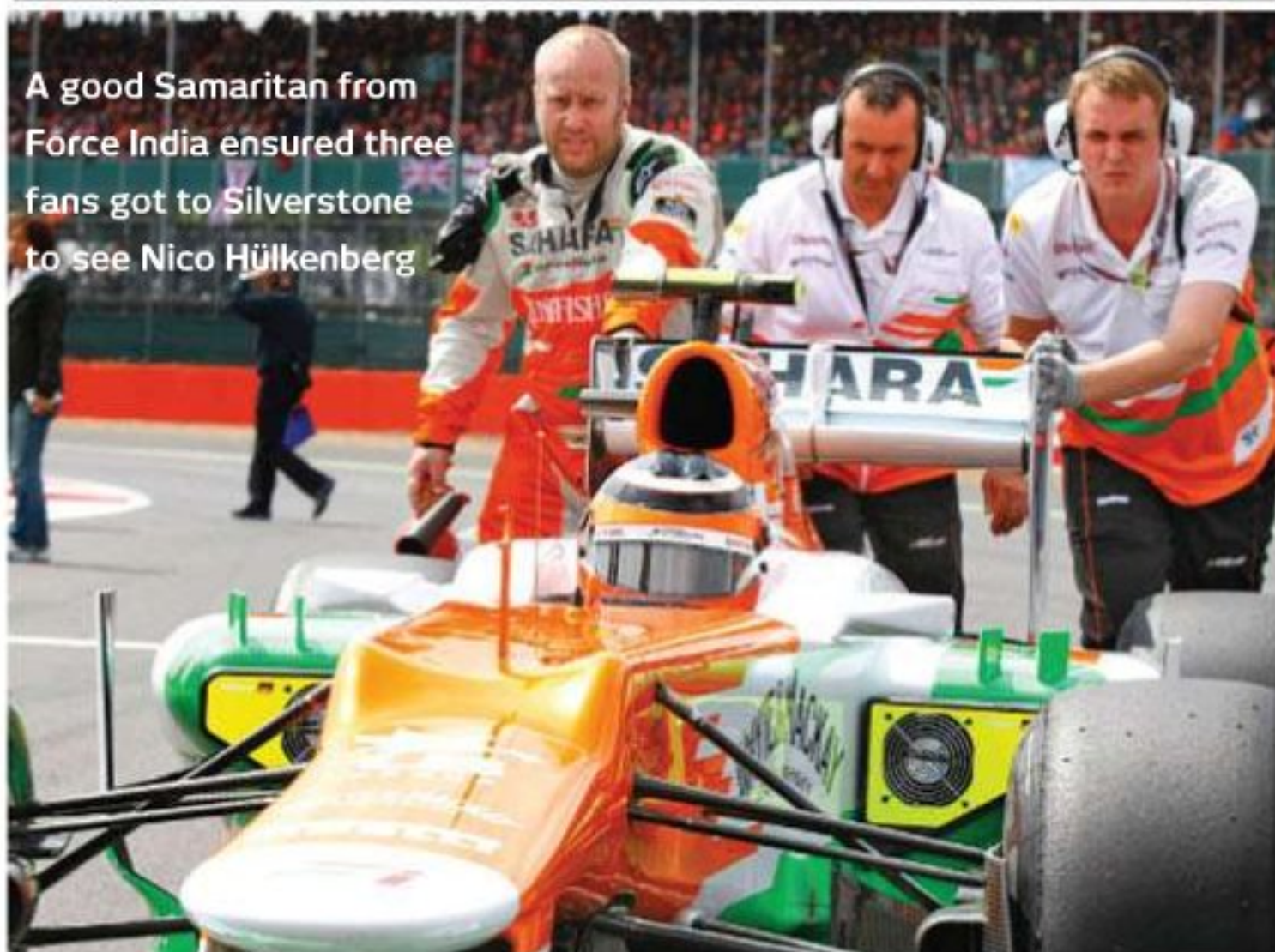
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STAR LETTER

A good Samaritan from Force India ensured three fans got to Silverstone to see Nico Hülkenberg



Force In-ternational Rescue

Having travelled from the Channel Islands to spend the British Grand Prix weekend in a campervan on the Woodlands campsite at Silverstone, we had to be turned away on Friday evening due to the terrible weather. We were then told on Saturday, while camping on a friend's drive in Middlesex, that the campsite was closed. Resigning ourselves to watching the GP on TV, we were saved by community spirit. Through Facebook, someone said we could park on their drive in Towcester and offered us a lift to and from the track. Our prayers had been answered.

The next morning we were ready to leave for the track at 5.30am as our driver had to be at work. "Where do you work?" we enquired. "I work on Nico Hülkenberg's car," came the reply. What followed our lift to Silverstone was a tour of the Force India factory and the track: the complimentary Force India T-shirts rounded it off perfectly and they didn't mind we were McLaren fans! So many thanks to Mike dos Santos and the locals of Towcester for all their help.

Steve Cole, Sam and Nigel
 Sark, Channel Islands, UK

There's no place like home

I decided not to go to the British GP this year, having been swayed by the dazzling lights of Singapore, thus bringing to an end a six-year love affair with Silverstone.

I followed every second of the weekend from the comfort of my armchair and, after watching the deluge and the resulting traffic chaos, complimented myself on a decision well made. My smugness continued until I saw the cars take the legendary Copse corner at such high-speed in the dry on Sunday. This highlighted why I made the journey to Silverstone every year.

Following F1 around the globe is great, but as with many other dedicated fans, all I need is a ticket for the Copse or Maggotts banking and I'm happy. There's something sentimental about setting up camp, waking before sunrise to secure a spot, and watching the morning mist lift. It's F1 at its purest and I recommend it to anyone.

Adam Berriman
 By email

Heads or tails?

The solution to drivers sitting out Q3 to save tyres is simple. Don't give them a set for running in Q3 but take away a set away if they don't run an out-, hot- and in-lap. Of course this shouldn't happen if a car failure forces a driver out.

And the choice of which tyre to take away should be made by the clerk of the course. He should toss a coin: heads it's primes, tails it's the options. Think of the TV coverage...

Tim Durmush
 By email

A fine balance

I was really looking forward to this season. With Sky having a dedicated channel, I was excited about having my F1 fix on a regular basis and enjoying more coverage.

My expectations haven't been met: the quantity is certainly there, but they've missed the mark on quality. I was expecting Sky to offer superior coverage, but I'd take it or leave it. I like technical detail, I like information and explanations, but Sky is boring me. Please try to be more fun: you can give in-depth technical info and have a personality at the same time!

Aidan George
 By email

To find out what readers make of the Sky coverage, turn to [p26](#)

STAR PRIZE

Steve Cole wins a pair of
 three-day admission tickets to
 the 2013 British Grand Prix at
 Silverstone. For more details
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CHAMPIONS AGREE

F1 IS BETTER THAN EVER

Our assertion last month that 2012 is the greatest season of F1 ever provoked plenty of debate. But we're not the only ones saying it...





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JENSON & LEWIS GET THE CARTOON TREATMENT

It's all fun and games at the MTC as the McLaren duo voice a new cartoon. Now find out how it could boost their on-track performance



25

WHY THREE'S A CROWD OVER AT WILLIAMS

The emergence of talented test driver Valtteri Bottas is presenting Sir Frank Williams with a difficult decision over his 2013 driver line-up



MARIO ANDRETTI F1 WORLD CHAMPION 1978



"F1 is enjoying its glory days right now; I truly believe that. The cars are phenomenal – they're a bit ugly this year, but they're still engineering marvels.

"In my opinion, the racing is as good as we've ever seen, thanks to KERS and DRS. Some people say it makes the racing artificial but it still takes strategy to execute correctly. All of these gadgets are working to make racing more exciting. You see overtaking now that we just haven't seen before in F1. All these elements combine to make it so enjoyable.

"I think you can qualify 2012 as a dream season of F1. From a spectator and a fan standpoint it's amazing – there's so much to look forward to with every upcoming race. Things have been so unusually unpredictable, which has really added to the interest."

SIR JACKIE STEWART F1 WORLD CHAMPION 1969, 1971, 1973



"I think 2012 is the best F1 season I've ever seen – I can't remember one

better. There have been periods with domination by one engine or by one particular team but we've had so many different cars leading races and threatening to win. It's not just McLaren, Ferrari and Red Bull – you've had Pérez leading in the Sauber, Maldonado leading in the Williams and Grosjean and Räikkönen leading for Lotus.

"The racing is sensational. A lot of it is to do with the tyres. Some drivers can coax the tyres into lasting longer but even the likes of Jenson haven't always been able to get their tyres to work. Those inconsistencies have provided us with a stimulating season."

DAMON HILL F1 WORLD CHAMPION 1996



"As a driver you want to win, but you also want to race. If you're not racing because your

position is pretty much set from lap five because there's no variation in form during the race, this means you basically finish the race where you qualify. That's dispiriting for the driver and boring for the spectators.

"What they've done this year has made F1 better than ever. It's more like GP2 where competition is strong throughout the field. There isn't a big difference between drivers of this calibre – you can see that from the difference between team-mates. If you have 0.3secs over your team-mate, you've crushed them.

"Mika probably would have won more championships had he been in a better car with McLaren. That was the nature of F1 in those days – you had to be in the best car."

MIKA HÄKKINEN F1 WORLD CHAMPION 1998, 1999



"Racing today is brilliant in my opinion; it's definitely better than it was in my time.

There's lots of overtaking and it's great for the spectators. F1 is certainly more exciting now than ever. It's absolutely great. There's been a lot of sound thinking behind making F1 as good as it is today. It's such a huge, complicated business and the FIA has done a brilliant job.

"F1 today is a very expensive, very challenging sport. It's always been a very costly programme for the teams and it's great what the FIA and the teams have done to get all of these great partners involved. Yes, F1 has unbelievable coverage around the world and a huge number of fans, but nothing that you see at a GP is automatic or has come easily."

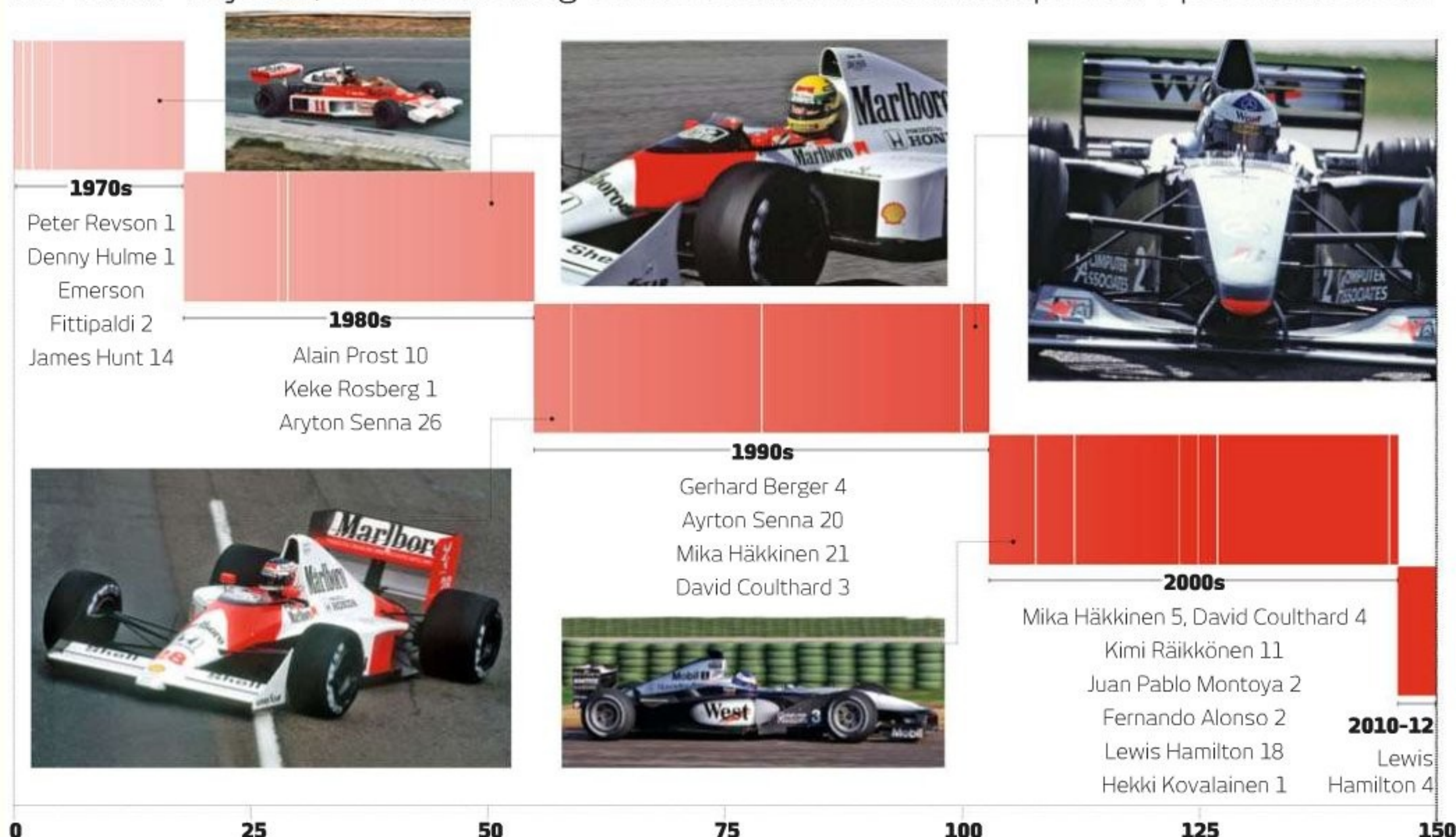
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PITPASS / McLaren celebrate 150 poles / Say goodbye to double DRS

NEWS

McLaren's journey to 150 pole positions

It's taken 40 years, but the Woking-based team have set an impressive personal record



TECH

Ban on double DRS was 'inevitable'

Teams have agreed to ban the technology for 2013, but there could be one exception...



Mercedes' double DRS has a hole in the rear-wing endplate to boost speed

It's been the most innovative technical development of 2012 but, according to *F1 Racing* technical expert Pat Symonds, the double DRS was always likely to be outlawed.

"It was probably inevitable that it would be banned for 2013," he explained. "The mood and attitude within Formula 1 at the moment is that new technology should be encouraged, but only to a point where it is worthwhile in the light of all the cost-saving that's going on. A good parallel is the F-duct where everyone worked away on it in the full knowledge that it would be banned the following year.

"Most designers have come to accept that that's how things are: if you come up with something that's against the normal run of play, it'll most likely be allowed

for a year, providing it doesn't break any regulations, and then it will be outlawed."

With the ultra-quick Spa and Monza next up, teams who have been working on the technology may want to press ahead despite the impending ban, especially given the tight nature of the current standings. But further down the grid, Symonds expects priorities to be elsewhere because after the summer break, focus tends to shift to the 2013 cars.

But, as he explains, Lotus are an interesting case: "They've been working on something different to the double DRS developed by Mercedes. It's something I'm not completely certain would be outlawed by the changes to articles 3.7.3 and 3.18.1."

So perhaps the double DRS could be here for a little longer...

/ New factory base for Caterham / A quick chat with Bruno Senna



NEWS

A new home to go with their new name

Caterham say their recent move to 'Motorsport Valley' is a mark of ambitious future plans

During the F1 summer break, Caterham moved from their old home at Hingham in Norfolk to new premises at Leaffield in Oxfordshire. The team bought the former Arrows and Super Aguri factory and are now within the confines of the so-called 'Motorsport Valley', the region in and around Oxfordshire where seven of the 12 F1 teams are now based. Being here gives them better transport links and should make staff recruitment easier.

The Leaffield factory is five times bigger than the one in Hingham and marks the next phase of the team's development, according to Caterham sporting director Steve Nielsen: "A lot

has been achieved since we first started out in 2010, but now we have a larger base, it means we are able to expand our operation.

"Nothing much has been done to the building since the last occupants moved out in 2000, but we've worked intensely to get the factory into shape. We decided that, given the critical phase the design team are about to enter, the summer break was the best time to make the transition," added Nielsen. "Over the next few weeks, more equipment will be transferred over from Hingham."

Caterham's Norfolk base, with its autoclaves, will continue to house the composites department of the company.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF LEAFIELD TECHNICAL CENTRE



1993 Bought by TWR/Arrows F1 team. Used by them until 2002



2006 Used by the Super Aguri team until they closed their doors in 2008



2012 Tony Fernandes moves his Caterham team from Hingham in Norfolk to Leaffield

FIVE MINUTES ON THE PHONE WITH...

BRUNO SENNA

WILLIAMS RACER AND F1'S MOST FAMOUS NEPHEW



We're over halfway through the season now – does it feel as if it's gone quickly?

It's gone faster than I wanted to be honest. Sometimes you look back and wish you were still on the fifth race. But that's how it goes – sport goes by very fast. I'm looking forward to the next nine races.

So how would you rate your performance this season so far?

I've scored points in six out of 11 races and while I could have scored more, I have to look at what I need to improve and try to work on that. There is always something to learn.

Is qualifying the main thing you're looking to improve on?

Yes, it's all about that. We've struggled in qualifying at times this year but sometimes it's just been bad luck. In the past I've got qualifying right and the racing has taken longer, but this year it's been the opposite – I've been strong in races and struggling in qualifying. It's a learning curve.

Do you use the tyre in a slightly different way in qualifying?

These tyres are very specific in terms of how much energy you can put into them. Sometimes in qualifying you want to push harder but you pay for it – you don't go any faster and you destroy them. Knowing from the previous year where to push really helps.

Are you looking forward to the second part of the year? They're the GPs you did with Renault...

Yes – I'll have a better perspective of what to do and what not to do. When I go to Belgium I'll know where I can push and can't push – same with Monza and Singapore.

Some drivers say you have to drive these tyres more in 'straight lines' – is that your experience?

Yeah, you have to make the corners really short. The minimum speeds of the Bridgestone and the Pirelli, are similar in terms of low- and medium-speed corners. But the Pirellis are slower than the Bridgestones if you combine turning with traction or braking with turning.



He's improving: Bruno made Q3 for the first time in Hungary this year

F1 Mastermind

Your chosen specialised subject: the world's greatest sport



- 1 What was Giancarlo Fisichella's highest ever finishing position in a world championship season?
- 2 As a constructor (as opposed to an engine manufacturer), how many F1 wins did Honda score?
- 3 How many classified finishes were there at the rain-afflicted 2008 British GP: nine, 11 or 13?
- 4 Timo Glock made his F1 race debut with which team?
- 5 What was the last year in which a Cooper entered at least one GP?
- 6 At which GP did Jenson Button secure his maiden F1 podium?
- 7 Minardi, Renault, McLaren – which team comes next in the sequence?
- 8 For which team did Mark Blundell take third at the 1994 Spanish GP?
- 9 How many times did Zolder host an F1 world championship GP?
- 10 I made my Formula 1 debut for Leyton House at the 1991 Japanese GP. The last of my 41 F1 starts came for Sauber at the 1995 Australian GP. Who am I?



THIS BOY CAN DRIVE

Keeping an eye out for the Hamiltons of tomorrow



Mathéo Tuscher Who is he?

A 15-year-old Swiss racer who has a very impressive karting background and recently won his first race in the FIA Formula 2 championship.

How good is he?

Last season, in his first year in cars, Tuscher took eight wins en route to overall victory in the Formula Pilota China series aged just 14. This year, driving far more powerful Formula 2 machinery, he's continued to impress mightily, scoring pole on his maiden outing at Silverstone.

Anything else we need to know about him?

Like his racing hero Michael Schumacher, baby-faced Tuscher was introduced to racing at a very young age – he first drove a kart when he was just three years old.

F1 chances

Tuscher is in with a chance of an F1 test with Williams if he can wrest the championship from the clutches of last month's 'This Boy can Drive' subject, Luciano Bacheta. Since Vettel, everyone in F1 has been on the look out for the next young star – and that could play into Tuscher's hands.

NEWS

Stay Tooned for McLaren's marketing push

McLaren's new hit cartoon is opening up a host of commercial opportunities – which could be great news for Lewis and Jenson



By now you've probably seen *Tooned*, McLaren's new animation series in which Jenson Button and Lewis Hamilton voice cartoon versions of themselves getting into all kinds of scrapes at the MTC. But while the series looks certain to achieve McLaren's initial goals of attracting a younger audience and warming up their 'cold' brand image, it also seems to have opened up a new revenue stream.

"The response we've had so far suggests a fertile market for merchandising and other licensed products," McLaren's group brand director John Allert told *F1 Racing*. "But the other opportunity is that a number of our sponsors have expressed interest in using *Tooned* in their own marketing campaigns. Commercial opportunities are interesting, but they're not the principal reason we conceived the idea.

"Everything we do in some way contributes to us hopefully becoming more competitive on track and winning titles. If *Tooned* can make us a more popular team, that will enable us to generate revenues that can be used to develop the race team. Its objectives are entirely consistent with winning, which is what we're all about."

Disney's animated film franchise, *Cars*, reportedly makes £1.2billion a year in merchandising. McLaren self-funded the initial run of 12 episodes of *Tooned*, but if they can bring in even a fraction of what Disney does with *Cars*, then that can only be good news for Jenson and Lewis's prospects.



Answers: 1 Fourth in 2006 2 Three 3 13 4 Jordan 5 1969 6 2004 Malaysian GP 7 Ferrari (they are all F1 teams Fernando Alonso has driven for in chronological order) 8 Tyrrell 9 Ten 10 Karl Wendlinger

PHOTOS: LORENZO BELLANCA/LAT; LAT; ARCHIVE; MCLAREN; FORMULA 2

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Sebastian Vettel and Mark Webber, Red Bull Racing Drivers



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Name: Pastor Maldonado
Age: 27 GPs started: 30
Points: 30 // // // // // // // //

Name: Valtteri Bottas
Age: 22 GPs started: 0
Points: 0 // // // // // // // //

Name: Bruno Senna
Age: 28 GPs started: 37
Points: 26 // // // // // // // //

PHOTOS: SUTTON IMAGES

RESHUFFLINGS

Williams face another driver dilemma

Their current driver line-up has delivered a win, regular points and some very much needed funding... but can they afford not to promote their talented reserve driver Valtteri Bottas?

Remember the winter of 2010 when, with Pastor Maldonado and his stash of cash waiting in the wings, Williams agonised over their driver line-up before releasing the highly rated Nico Hülkenberg? Well, the team could soon be facing a similar dilemma as their talented reserve driver Valtteri Bottas continues to stake his claim for a race seat.

The 22-year-old Finn, who won last year's GP3 series, is driving in 15 FP1 sessions with the team this season and recently impressed at the young driver test at Silverstone. Not only did he show excellent pace on long runs during a full race simulation, but in a mock qualifying run he set a time capable of taking pole at the British Grand Prix, albeit with

distinctly different track conditions. Frank Williams made a surprise appearance at the low-key test to watch Bottas in action, while chief operations engineer Mark Gillan said afterwards that the Finn has "the building blocks to become the real deal".

"You never stop learning but after every single Friday session I feel more and more ready to race," Bottas told *F1 Racing* recently.

But while Williams won't want to let another potential star slip through their fingers (anyone remember a certain Jenson Button?), releasing either one of their current pairing of Pastor Maldonado and Bruno Senna would mean losing a driver who brings significant funding to the team.

Interestingly, while Bottas is currently managed by Didier Coton (with assistance from Mika Häkkinen), he has received financial backing from Toto Wolff, Williams' recently appointed executive director, who has just revealed that he takes a 5 per cent commission on the Finn's contract. So should Bruno and Pastor be worried? Not so, according to Wolff:

"It's definitely a conflict of interest; this is why, since last year, I have refrained from interfering in any kind of negotiations or discussions between the team and Valtteri's management group."

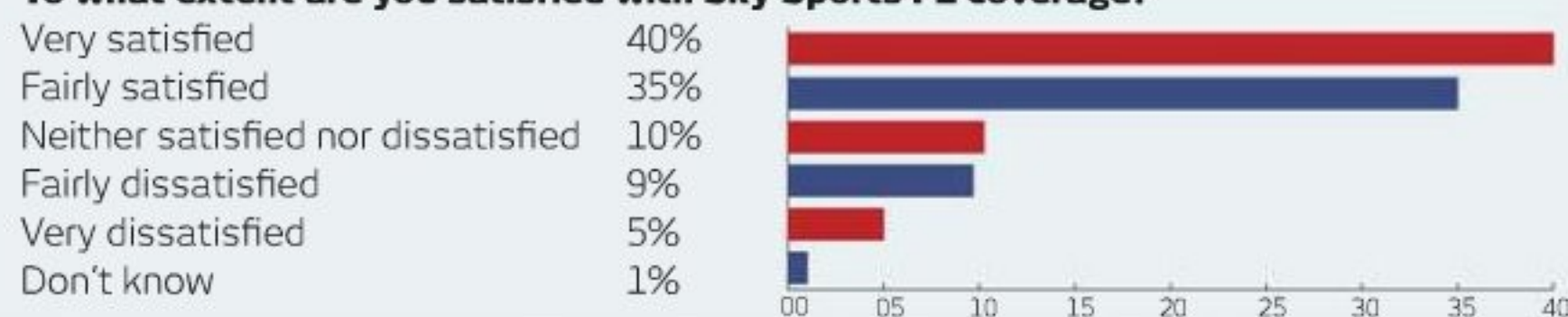
Conflict or not, Williams have a decision to make because three into two just won't go.



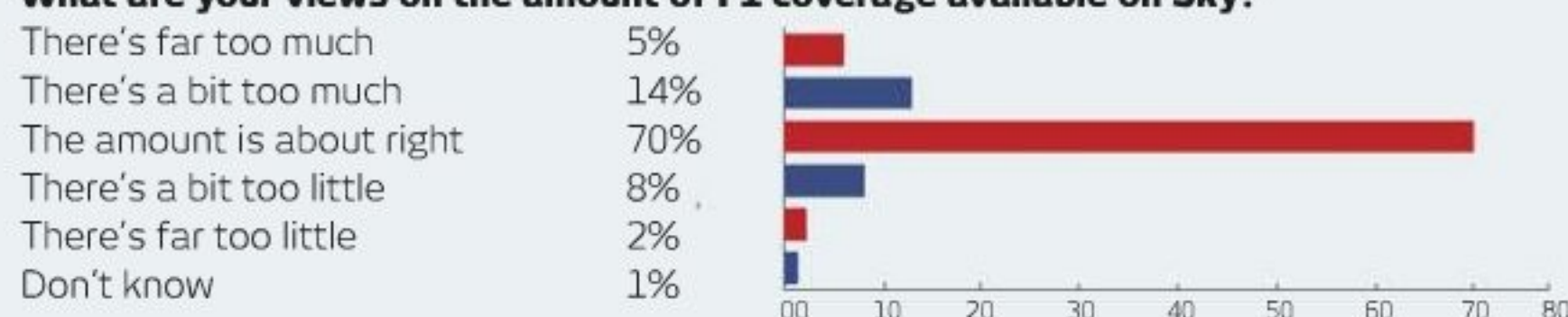
Fans have their say on Sky Sport

An incredible 4,857 members of our Global Fan Community responded to our survey on UK TV coverage of F1. Here's what the 2,638 Sky subscribers think of what's on offer

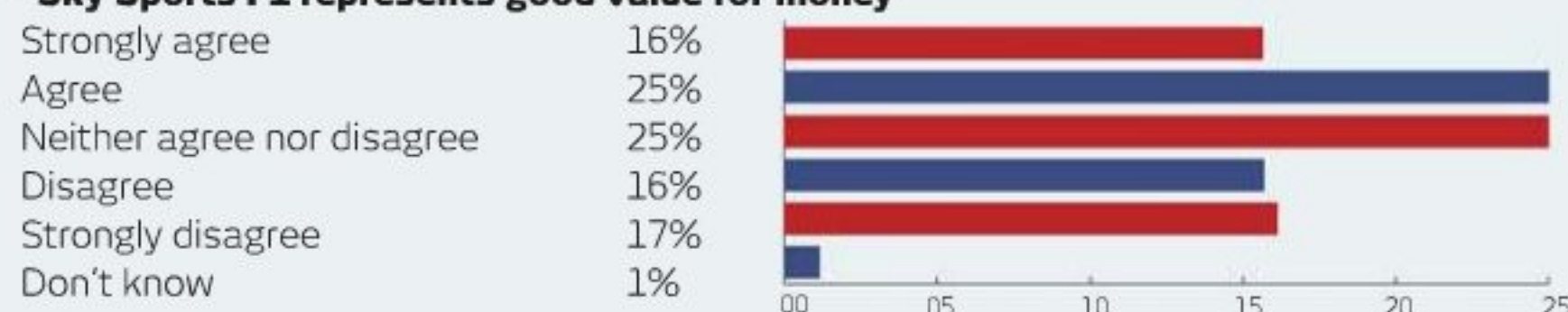
To what extent are you satisfied with Sky Sports F1 coverage?



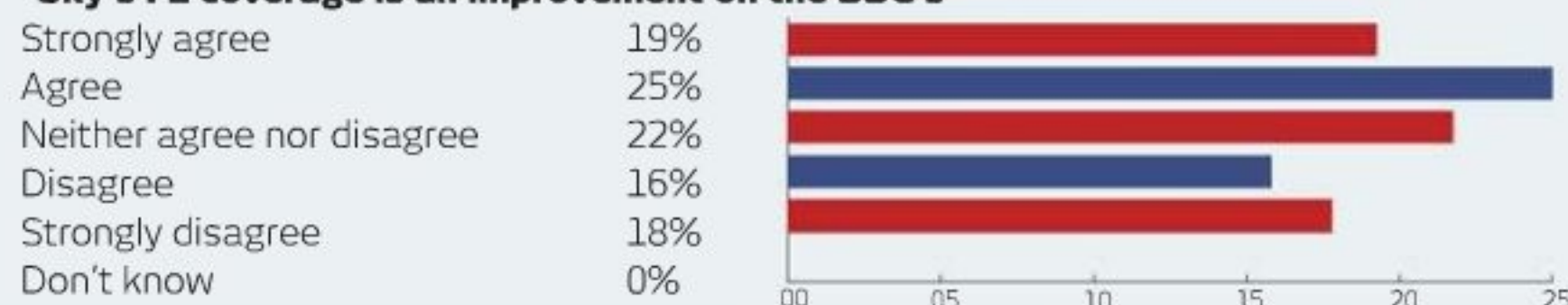
What are your views on the amount of F1 coverage available on Sky?



"Sky Sports F1 represents good value for money"



"Sky's F1 coverage is an improvement on the BBC's"



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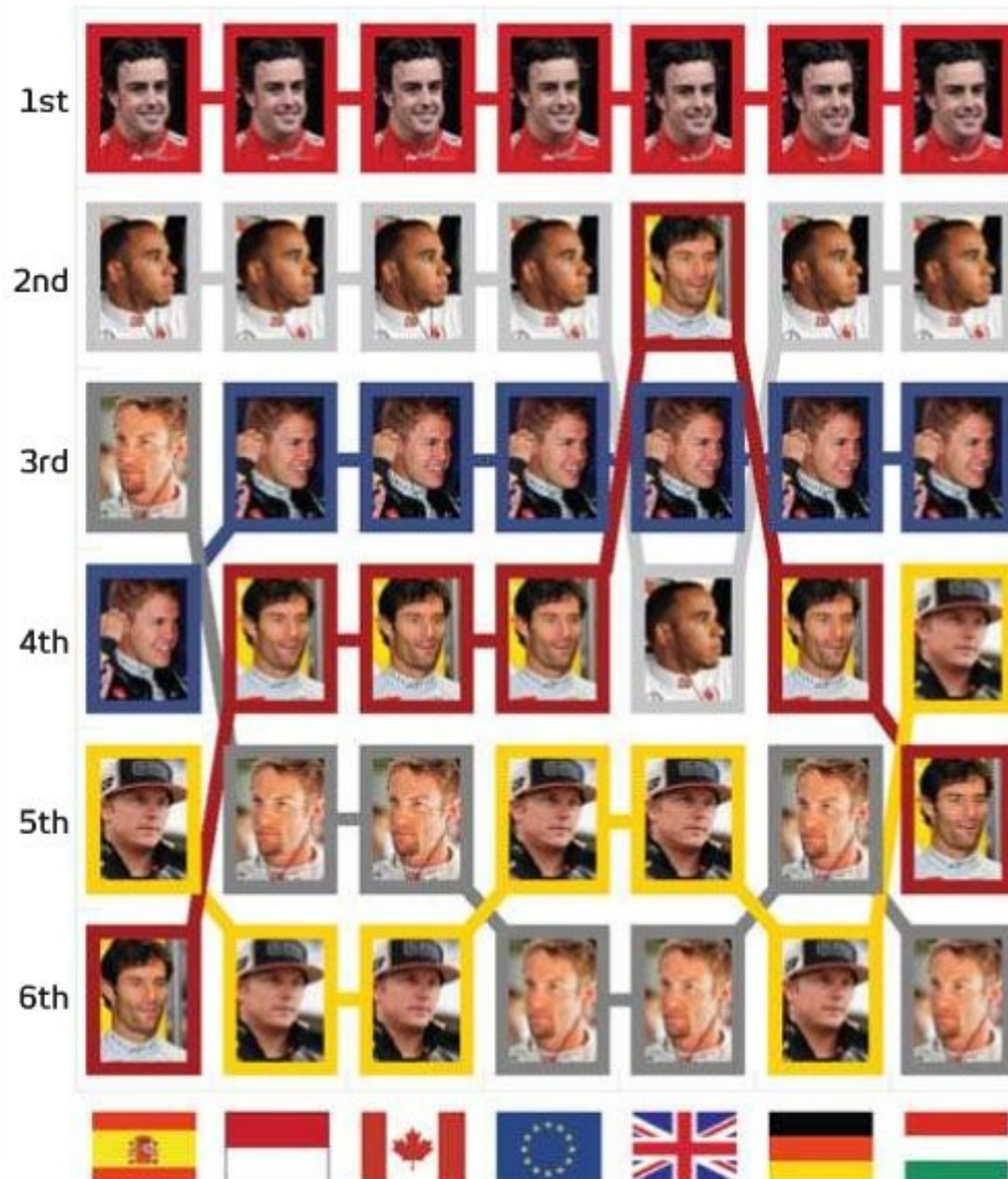
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Alonso holds on to top spot

For the seventh consecutive race, you voted the Ferrari driver as champion-in-waiting. Meanwhile, Kimi Räikkönen continues to climb up the standings...



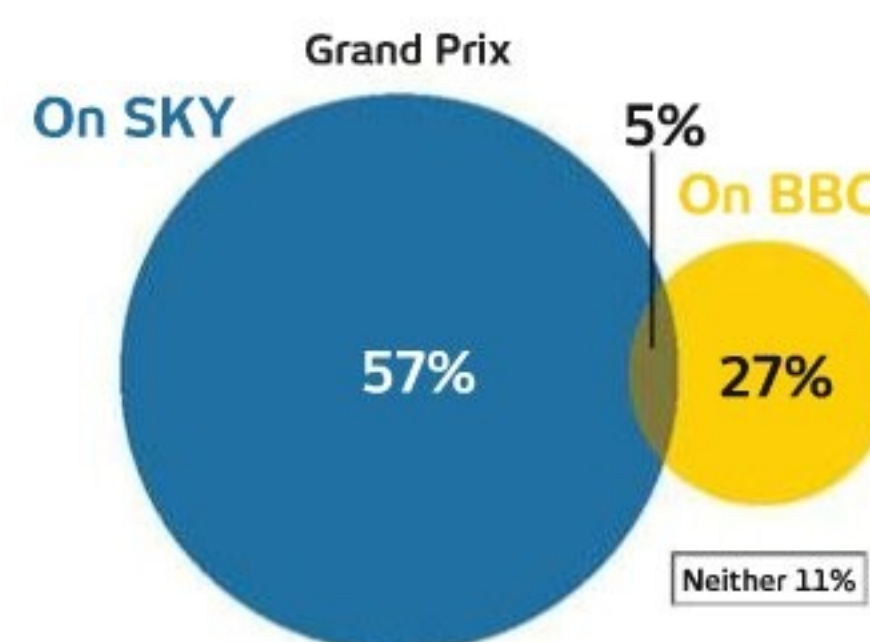
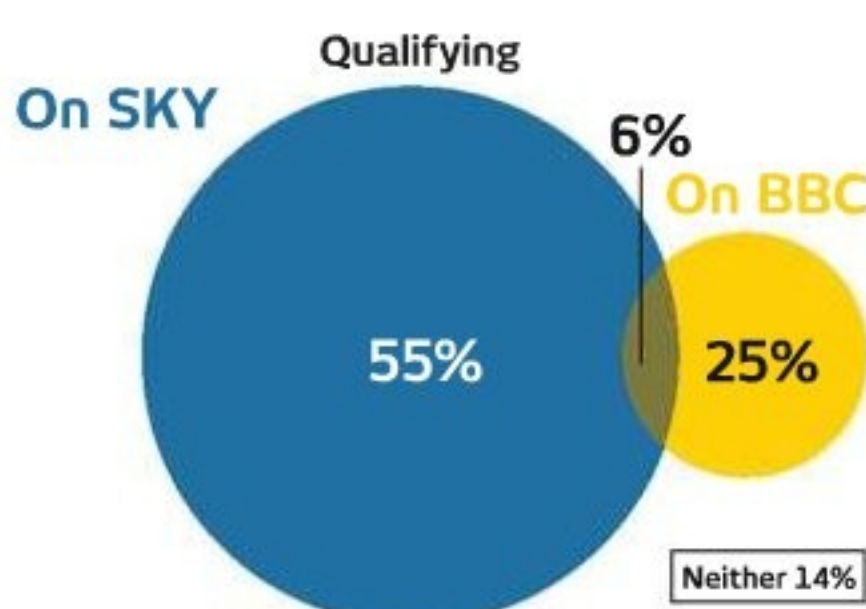
How Sky viewers watched the British GP

Of the 2,638 Sky F1 subscribers who responded to our survey on UK TV coverage, this is how they chose to watch events unfold at Silverstone



Both the BBC and Sky Sports F1 channel showed every practice session live. The BBC's practice coverage was available on the red button as well as online

When it came to qualifying, the BBC picked up a greater share of viewers than they had for the practice sessions.



Surprisingly, over a quarter of Sky F1 subscribers watched the British Grand Prix on the BBC. And 31 per cent also watched the BBC's post-race forum

76 per cent of the fans we surveyed subscribed to Sky because of F1

NEWS

From the prat perch to the boardroom

Flavio Briatore is set to star in *The Apprentice*. Those with the surname 'Piquet' need not apply...

From dating supermodels to co-owning a football club, ex-F1 team principal Flavio Briatore has always been a multi-faceted character. But now the man who helped guide Michael Schumacher and Fernando Alonso to world championship success is set to become a TV star after signing up to play the Alan



He's hired

Sugar 'boss' role on Italy's version of *The Apprentice*.

"I'm very happy to participate in this project," said Briatore of the show, which will air on Sky Italia later on this year. "I have always believed in and backed young talent, and it gives me great pleasure to confront their ideas and their ambitions. The concept of *The Apprentice* is in line with my way of working and it will be a challenge, not only for candidates but for me as well. I hope that the public like the programme."

We think Briatore will be a hit: after all, he's well-practised at uttering the immortal tagline "you're fired". As Nelson Piquet Jr will testify...



"You're fired"

GAMING

It's F1, but not as you know it

F1 Race Stars game ditches realism for bonkers acrobatics

In recent years, Codemasters have released a string of ultra-realistic racing simulations, but for their latest game they've turned the world of Formula 1 quite literally on its head. *F1 Race Stars*, which is set for release this November on Xbox, PS3 and PC – is all about *Mario Kart*-style gameplay and features larger-than-life versions of all the 2012 drivers in miniature versions of their cars.



The latest developments at Yas Marina are well under way...

But if you think that sounds unorthodox, it's nothing compared to the racing itself: cars can jump, loop-the-loop and collect power boosts – all firsts for a licensed F1 game.

"We're really excited to bring the whole cast of F1 into a fun new world of racing," said Chris Gray, the game's senior producer. "We've really let our art and design teams off the leash to bring F1 stars' personalities alive

in a new way and create a game where racing fans of all ages can jump into all-action solo, split-screen and online multiplayer races."

If you prefer more realistic racing games don't worry – *F1 2012*, the latest game in Codemasters' BAFTA-winning series, will be out in September. It sounds like F1 gaming fans won't be leaving the house much over the winter months...



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Pat Symonds' TECHNOLOGY MASTERCLASS

Lifting the cloak of secrecy on F1's complicated parts

THIS MONTH: CARBON FIBRE



Layers of carbon-fibre cloth are shaped into a mould



THE THEORY EXPLAINED



To ensure the carbon-fibre cloth is properly consolidated, it is covered with a thin plastic sheet to which a vacuum is applied – this ensures the material is engaged correctly with the mould. As shown here, this is done in an autoclave, which cures the material

Is there more than one sort of carbon fibre?

Yes – 'carbon fibre' is an umbrella term, like the word 'metal'. Depending on how they are manufactured, carbon fibres can be tuned for high strength or high stiffness or combinations in between. They can also be used with several different types of resin and be woven in numerous different ways. Each combination has unique properties for the designer to exploit.

What type of carbon fibre is used to make Formula 1 cars?

The carbon fibres used in F1 are called PAN fibres, which originate from polyacrylonitrile. Once this polymer has been produced, it is stretched and oxidised. It is then purified by a process called carbonisation, which involves heating it in a nitrogen-filled oven at 2,500°C. This produces fine carbon filaments that are each around a fifth of the diameter of a human hair. These filaments or fibres are impregnated with a resin which, when cured, binds them together. It's a tricky process, which helps explain the high cost of the material.

How is it used to make F1 parts?

Usually, a pattern is machined from a special epoxy tooling block, then coated and polished to a smooth surface to make a solid representation of the final shape. Carbon fibre is draped over the pattern and cured to form a female mould.

The carbon-fibre 'cloth' will have been bought already impregnated with resin. It's cut to shape and laid into the mould, with a laser often being used to position it precisely. For a big component such as a chassis, the outer skin is cured in an autoclave first, then the honeycomb core is applied and finally the inner skin is formed.

The autoclaving process adds pressure as well as heat. This cures the resin, thus providing a rigid support for the fibres.

How adaptable is carbon fibre as a material to work with?

The huge advantage of carbon fibre composites is that they can be contoured so their properties will act in the direction and sense required. So if you know the path a load will take through a component, you can lay the carbon fibres to handle that load. This makes the material very

efficient as the lay-up can be designed to give the required strength or stiffness without adding too much mass. Carbon fibre is nearly three times as strong as steel, yet only a fifth of the weight.

What percentage of an F1 car is made of carbon fibre?

Around 80 per cent of the volume of solids in an F1 car is carbon fibre. Yet amazingly, this only contributes to around 20 per cent of the weight.

What further potential does it have?

Carbon fibre's biggest enemy is heat as it breaks down the resin matrix that supports the fibres. For high-temperature applications, such as brakes and clutches, a material known as carbon-carbon is used. It's more costly and harder to use, but it *could* be used in an exhaust system.

Thirty years ago, I worked on a carbon-fibre engine that was raced in the IMSA championship. It had four-cylinders and weighed just 70kg. That technology could emerge once more now prices have dropped. And NASA have even made carbon foam into radiator material. It's currently too fragile for F1 cars – but its time will come.

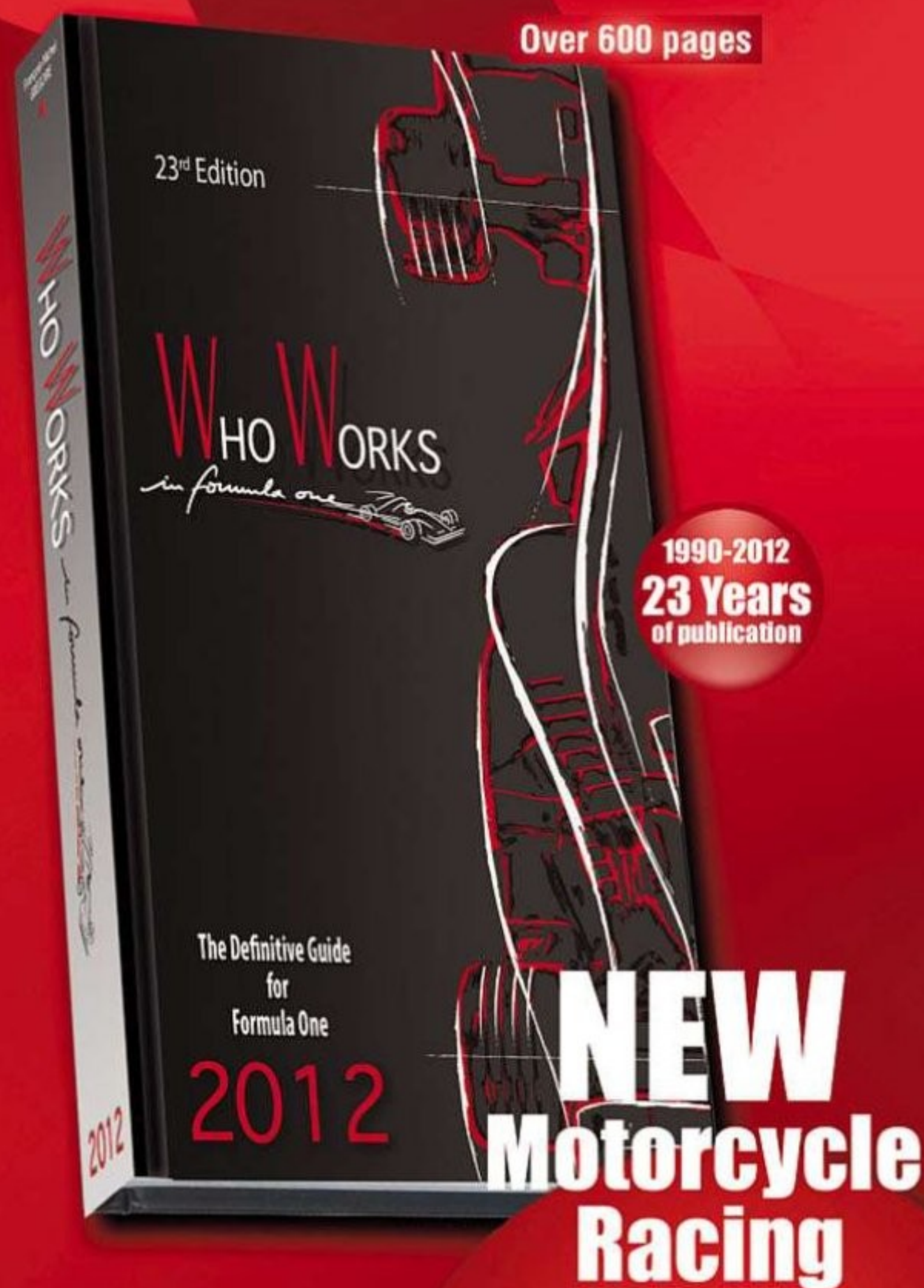
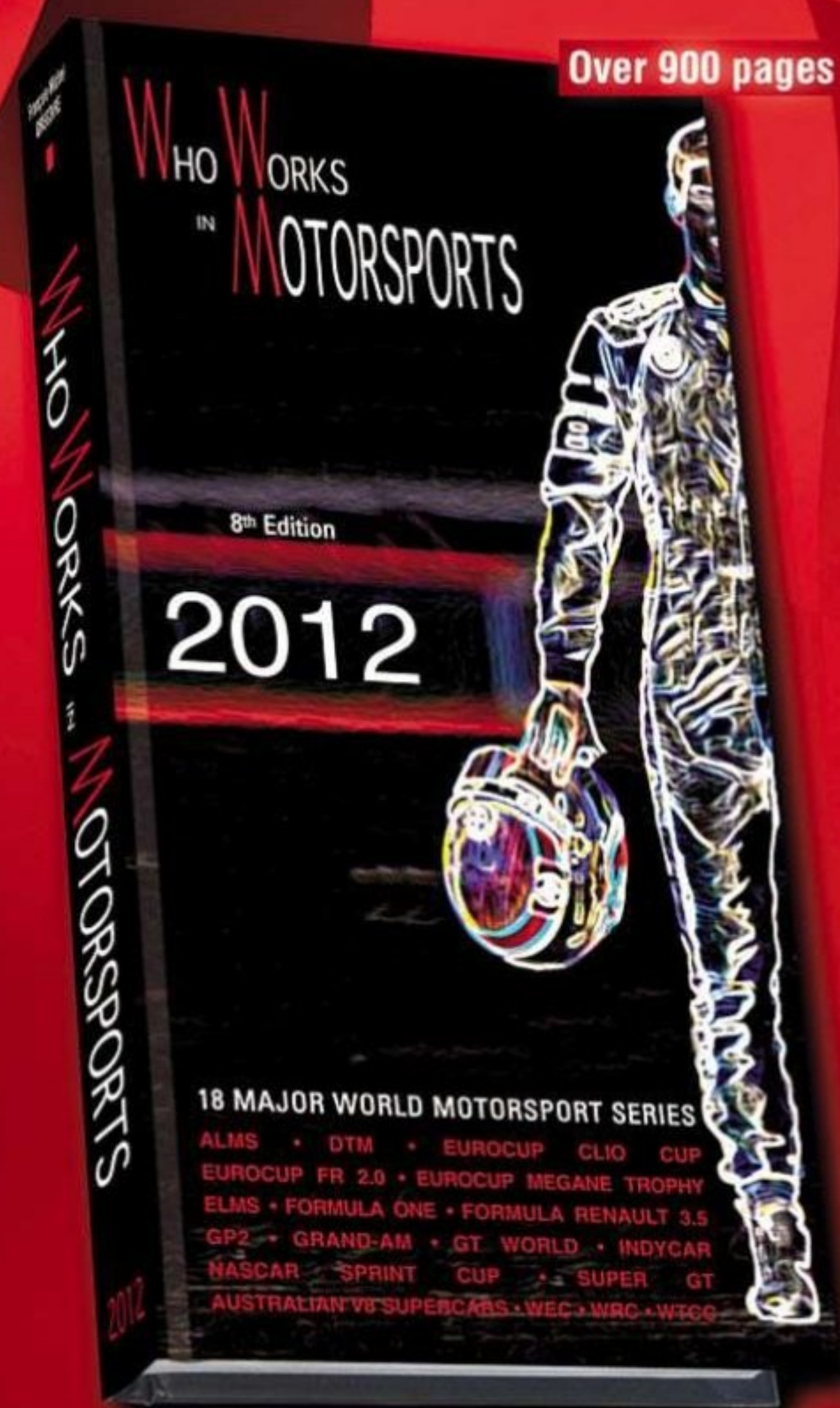
Turn to pages 106 and 110 for Pat's analysis of the German and Hungarian Grands Prix >>



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RAW NEUVE

Jacques Villeneuve: older, wiser... but no less opinionated

Is Felipe the only option?

So what will Ferrari do about the seat next to Fernando Alonso in 2013? It could still be filled by Felipe, I suppose: he's probably their safest option at the moment. Right now, they have a good team where Alonso is comfortable winning races and leading the world championship – so are they really going to bring in an unknown factor? Would they want to upset that balance?

You have to look at what's best for the team, and since Alonso's running so well, it's best not to rock the boat because, ultimately, all Ferrari want to do is win the world championship – and it doesn't matter how.

It seems as if they are simply focused on one driver winning the title, and they're not overly concerned where the other driver finishes. I don't think they deliberately want to have a clear number one and number two, but that's how things have panned out.

Massa's been in Alonso's shadow this past three years, but they make a good team...



I thought that Mark Webber would be a good option, but he's since secured a deal with Red Bull for another season. I was surprised by their decision to retain him given his performances in 2011, but this season he has been driving a lot better and it seems the car is much more suited to his style than to that of his team-mate. Webber has definitely stepped up in 2012.

So what other options remain open to Ferrari? Should they gamble on a younger driver? And how do the likes of Sergio Pérez, Paul Di Resta and Nico Hülkenberg stack up? Until they run

next to someone like Alonso it's impossible to tell how good they are. They race well, but put them in a winning car alongside a winning driver, and it could all change. When a driver is no longer the underdog and has no choice but to win, their make-up changes completely.

In the past, there have been other drivers who have done well in middle-ranking outfits, but as soon as they've moved to a top team, the pressure has changed and they've collapsed. So it's hard for Ferrari to look very far beyond keeping what they've already got.

An impressive pitstop

I noticed at the German GP that McLaren managed a 2.4-second pitstop – the quickest of the year so far. Now that was just crazy-quick, but they may well get it even faster as the year goes on.

It would be different if they had four guys around the car, but with all those mechanics it runs like it's a machine: it's so impressive. It's just

unfortunate that when it goes wrong, they lose so much time.

Lewis has suffered with bad pitstops, and he keeps getting caught up in other people's mistakes – which is a shame as he's been driving so much better this season. But year on year, his performances aren't always consistent. In 2012 he seems focused, but in previous years he's been too aggressive



and has made mistakes. He's always fast, but it's all down to his thought process really, which can vary greatly. It's a bit strange and something he definitely needs to improve on.

Back behind the wheel again



I'm currently standing in for the injured Greg Murphy in select V8 Supercar races in Australia. The cars are tricky: they run a spool instead of a diff, so you unload the inside rear wheel to make the car turn. When you get on the gas it just snaps – like a heavy kart. It's a challenge, but a great experience.

THE JV KEY



Silly shunt



Driver error



Controversy



What a car



Fantastic drive



Good call



Bad call

MURRAY WALKER



"So are the FIA right to have the single-tyre-supplier policy they currently have? I think they are..."

Back in July, I had enormous fun at the British Grand Prix, back behind the microphone doing a sort of guest appearance with BBC TV. I was on air during Saturday's miserably wet qualifying session, when we were broadcasting for some three-and-a-half hours, and on Sunday's Red Button Forum, in pouring rain in front of many thousands of Silverstone's wonderful fans – the likes of which you see nowhere else. Privileged as I was to be under cover, my heart went out to them for their cheerfulness in adversity, their unrivalled enthusiasm and their dedication.

During the Forum, Eddie Jordan asked me what I thought of the power-boosting KERS and aero-tweak DRS and I said I was very much in favour of anything that encouraged passing and

made the racing more competitive, which both those things certainly do. Some people regard the rear-wing-adjusting drag-reduction system as a gimmick that falsifies the racing, but it is no more of a gimmick than compulsory fuel stops or tyres constructed so they deliberately wear out after comparatively few laps.

Both are requirements designed to improve the show – and they work. I used to love the fuel stops because they added extra drama, which was great to get excited about. But I must admit that we were lucky there were no major fires when they were part of the scene. In these days of fanatical concentration on health and safety, a serious fire that caused fatalities could have stopped the sport dead in its tracks. However,

when all is said and done, what governs the on-track competitiveness of the teams most of all nowadays are two things – aerodynamics and tyres – neither of which the general public knows or cares much about.

The former BBC TV head of sport, Jonathan Martin, used to say that Formula 1 is the most complicated sport of them all to commentate on because of its technical complexities and the fact that it is about far more than just the drivers. It's also about their cars and the formulation and execution of their strategies by their egghead team-mates in the pitlane, supported in real time by people working in their home countries, looking at TV screens and making decisions. But most of all it's about the tyres. Where improved aerodynamics can save mere tenths of a second, better tyres can save whole seconds. Greater grip makes quicker laps.

However, to most road-going motorists, tyres are round, black objects that they buy reluctantly because they have to, which give them no pride of ownership, improvement in status or extra driving pleasure, and for which they just want to pay as little as possible. Indeed, most motorists couldn't even tell you what make of tyre is on their car – do you know? This is why tyre companies support F1. To give their brand some personality and desirability, as well as the immense development advantages they get from the extreme demands of racing.

Like car manufacturers, tyre companies tend to dip in and out of F1 but, over the years, the sport has benefited hugely from the fact that there has always been at least one of them that is keen to go racing. Englebert and Continental were great racing brands before and after World War II, with Continental providing the rubber for the fabled Mercedes-Benz Silver Arrows. My late employers, Dunlop, have always been enthusiastic and successful supporters of car and motorcycle racing, with superstars such as Jim Clark and Stirling Moss on their books – and I well remember our pride when Jackie Stewart won his first world championship in 1969.

Goodyear, led by their iconic racing manager Lee Gaug, had greater success than any of their illustrious rivals with an awe-inspiring 51 world championships and 368 GP victories ranging from their first with Richie Ginther and his



"Dunlop have always been supporters of racing – I remember their pride when Jackie Stewart won his first title in 1969"



Forthright chatter from the legend of F1



"It was Michelin who introduced radial tyres to F1 and who later slaughtered the opposition as a result, forcing their rivals to follow their lead"

1.5-litre V12 Honda at Mexico in 1965, to their last with Michael Schumacher's Ferrari at Monza in 1998. Thirty-three glorious years. Then it was Bridgestone's turn, the then little-known Japanese company entering F1 to enhance brand awareness and credibility which they brilliantly did, mostly as a sole supplier, with a run of near non-stop success until their withdrawal in 2010.

Firestone and Avon have participated in F1 but two of the greatest names of all are those of Pirelli and Michelin, both long-term and mighty successful supporters of all kinds of motorsport.

It was Michelin who introduced radial tyres to F1 and who later slaughtered the opposition as a result, forcing their rivals to follow their lead, only to withdraw when the FIA decided to limit F1 to one tyre supplier. "We are in it for competitive reasons" said Michelin. "Developing our products by beating our rivals in the heat of competition is what we want to do. Being the only one in the game is of no interest to us."

So are the FIA right to have the single-supplier policy they currently have? It's contentious but, I think they are. If the teams using one

tyre company's products are consistently winning, while their rivals who are contractually committed to other companies are unable to move, it dramatically reduces the competition and, therefore, the appeal of the sport. On the other hand, there's the fact that if there is only one supplier of a low-interest product, its success is far less likely to be talked about than if there were two or more fighting for supremacy, with the winner getting the promotional glory.

But we are where we are and Pirelli, who supplied the tyres for my all-time hero Tazio Nuvolari, who shod those glorious Alfa Romeo 158s of the early 1950s and who contributed to three of the great Juan Manuel Fangio's five world championships as part of their brilliant long-term racing record, are currently making a mammoth success out of their sole-supplier situation. Briefed by the FIA to produce tyres that will not go the distance, allied to a requirement for the teams to use two different compounds in every race, they have created a situation where having the right tyre strategy is essential for a team's success and where it is impossible for the commentators and the media not to constantly talk about tyres in general and Pirelli in particular. Short of Bernie Ecclestone, Paul Hembery, the Pirelli racing manager, must be the most consulted and quoted individual in Formula 1. Job done and ten out of ten. Who said tyres are dull? 

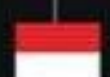


"For 2012, Pirelli have created a situation where having the right tyre strategy is essential for a team's success"



"THE BEST RACE I'VE BEEN TO"

Passion, drama and excitement from your greatest grand prix moments



MONACO 2012 / RICHARD & GAIL HOPLEY / UK

"We told Jake about our F1-themed wedding!"



"My wife Gail and I went to the Monaco Grand Prix in May this year with tickets for all four days. We were told that if we

had weekend tickets we could do a pit walk on the Friday, so we took a good camera with us and hoped to meet as many drivers as possible from behind the barriers. We managed to see both Paul Di Resta and Nico Hülkenberg and we wished them good luck for qualifying.

"Later on we met Nigel Mansell, who had his arm in a sling, on his way to a tiny boat in the harbour. I asked him for a photo, to which he happily said yes – although he had to run off shortly afterwards to avoid being mobbed! After that we started walking towards Casino Square. As we



were going down the hill we noticed another celebrity walking towards us.

It was BBC F1 presenter Jake Humphrey. We told him and his wife about our recent F1-themed wedding. Gail was blushing and her heart was thumping as she swooned over Jake! We asked him what he does when DC and EJ go on a bit and he replied 'I just ignore them!'"

2012 MONACO GP

- Webber won his second race here in three years
- Rosberg was second and Alonso third
- Just seven seconds covered the top six



MONTRÉAL 2002 / JAMES HALFORD / IRELAND

"I saw Michael take Ferrari's 150th F1 victory"

"The best race I have been to was the Canadian Grand Prix in back in 2002. Montréal is such a great town with a fantastic atmosphere and I was lucky enough to see a classic race.

"The night before the grand prix, I went to a PR event where I got to meet Juan Pablo Montoya and



won a Jordan GP team shirt. Michael Schumacher won the eventful race on the Sunday, which was significant as it was

Ferrari's 150th Formula 1 victory. It also came just a few weeks after the infamous 'staged finish' at the A1-Ring.

"As you can see in the picture, not everybody present was happy with Schumacher's win here – but I certainly was!"



"As you can see, not everyone was happy with Schumacher's win"



MELBOURNE 2005 / MATTHEW JORDAN / UK

"When we emigrate, Australia will be our home grand prix"

"We went to the Australian Grand Prix in 2005, which was an incredible experience. We went there on honeymoon as my wife had always wanted to visit Australia, so we planned our trip around the GP.

"We had seats on the start/finish line and managed to attach our Welsh flag to the fence.

You can spot the flag on the F1 season review DVD at the start of the race!

"We can't wait to go there again when we emigrate to Australia later this year – it will be our home GP."



TELL US YOUR GREAT GP MOMENTS! If you've got a story from a race you've been to, email us at thebestraceivebeento@haymarket.com

Now *that* was a car



No7: The Ferrari F2004

The car that signed off the most dominant era in F1

In the ultra-competitive world of F1, it takes a vast amount of dedication, organisation, teamwork and technical expertise to edge ahead and produce the best car on the grid. To do it again and again over five years is nothing short of miraculous. To the neutral racing fan, Ferrari's crushing of the opposition in the early 2000s may not have been entirely edifying, but from an engineering perspective it was staggering. The F2004 represented the Scuderia's final flourish of domination before Renault finally caught and surpassed them.

After a tight 2003 season, many predicted 2004 would be the year that Ferrari were finally toppled. Despite winning both titles, the Prancing Horse had struggled with the F2003-GA and the F2004 was to be an evolution of that machine.

To start with, Ferrari's technical team of Rory Byrne and Ross Brawn shortened the wheelbase, lowered the centre of gravity and honed the suspension. They also improved the aerodynamics by redesigning the gearbox,

bodywork, radiators and exhausts. On the engine side, with power plants now having to last a full race weekend, Paolo Martinelli and Gilles Simon worked hard to make the 053 V10 ultra-reliable.

Despite these changes, the F2004's out-of-the-box pace was average, giving hope to Ferrari's rivals. But the Scuderia were working flat-out with Bridgestone to get maximum performance from the Japanese rubber. At the first race in Australia, these efforts were vindicated: Michael Schumacher took pole, fastest lap and victory, while team-mate Rubens Barrichello was second. It was a sign of things to come: Ferrari won 15 of the 18 races on the calendar (eight of them one-twos) and both drivers' and constructors' crowns.

Such was the predictability of another Ferrari race win that many viewers turned away from the sport – surprise results were out of the question because the F2004 never broke down on race days. In simple terms, this was one of the greatest cars the sport has ever seen.



F2004 tech spec

Chassis	Carbon-fibre monocoque	Transmission	Ferrari Electro-hydraulic 7-speed	Notable drivers	Michael Schumacher Rubens Barrichello
		Wheelbase	305cm	Years raced	2004, 2005 (F2004M)
Engine	3-litre Ferrari 053 V10	Weight	605kg (inc driver)	Wins	15
Power	865bhp	Fuel	Shell	Poles	12
Tyres	Bridgestone				

PICTURES FERRARI





200

Two hundred issues. Sixteen seasons. Nine world champions – and all of them in the October 2012 issue of *F1 Racing*. That's right, we've assembled all the champions from Damon Hill to Sebastian Vettel (via Messrs Villeneuve, Häkkinen, Schumacher, Alonso, Räikkönen, Hamilton and Button) for possibly our most world-exclusive mega-feature ever.

**On sale, in limited edition,
with an exclusive FREE
champions poster, from
Thursday 20 September.
Don't miss out.**

Fernando Alonso

The man described by pretty much everyone as the best driver in F1 isn't prepared to let us in on the secret of his favourite magic trick, but will reveal which certain someone at McLaren has never made it onto his Christmas card list...

WORDS JAMES ROBERTS PORTRAITS LORENZO BELLANCA/LAT

When **Fernando Alonso** enters the room, you immediately notice his presence. The two-time world champion commands attention wherever he goes. Whether he's being chased by autograph hunters outside the circuit gates, or pursued by cameramen within the confines of the F1 paddock, Fernando's every move is tracked and recorded. But then if you consistently deliver the sort of on-track performances that he's been producing this season, you're always going to be the focus of attention.

His impressive drives this year have netted him the lead in the drivers' championship and, sitting on top of the world, he is all smiles when we meet – between rain showers – in Ferrari's paddock motorhome at Silverstone.

Eyeing up the deck of your question cards, Fernando coolly and calmly picks up the first

one as he prepares to commence being quizzed on everything from his sporting idols, to life at Maranello. His thoughts and movements are once again recorded for posterity...

This year's tyres seem very sensitive to the car's setup; how can drivers maximise the tyres' performance during the race and also over one lap in qualifying?

Adrian Bennett, UK

The tyres are definitely one of the critical factors this year, and knowing how to manage them is the key to winning or getting a good result. Their behaviour varies from track to track and it also depends on the weather. It's essential not to put them under too much stress right at the start of a stint and, above all, when you are near the 'cliff' – by which I mean the point you reach when the

drop in performance is such that you start to go really slowly: being able to predict this moment can easily help you make up several places. As for qualifying, I would say that this year there are no problems and if last year we struggled to get the hardest compound up to temperature, now the situation is much better.

Who was your childhood hero when you were growing up?

Chris Grabham, UK

Honestly, I didn't have a particular sporting idol if that's what you mean – not when I was a kid and not even now. However, there are a lot of sportsmen that I admire, such as Alberto Contador, Pau Gasol, Rafa Nadal and Andrés Iniesta. But not one of them is a hero for me in the strict sense of the word. →





Who among your fellow drivers has been the toughest opponent of your career?

Johan Backa, Finland

Of those in Formula 1, I'd say Lewis Hamilton and Felipe Massa: Felipe is usually underestimated, but I can assure you that it's not an easy task to stay ahead of him.

Which technical modification would you implement to improve the racing in F1?

Ignasi Barba, Spain

I don't think there is one particular solution that I'd like more than another. The challenge is to adapt to the current regulations and try to win whatever the situation.

When you arrived at Maranello, what impressed you the most?

Yannick Hedou, France

In Maranello it's all about Ferrari, and you can feel it in the air everywhere: it's almost a religion, with pride in an amazing history, a passion for the present and faith in the future.

Do you keep in touch with Robert Kubica? What are his chances of a return to F1?

Wojciech Konstanty, Poland

It's very hard to say whether Robert will return to 100 per cent fitness and be able to race again in Formula 1. Now and again we speak and I know how much it hurts him to be so far away from what has always been his world. He has to keep calm and think first and foremost about recovering total functionality of his body, then he can think again about racing.

Are you planning to stay with Ferrari until the end of your Formula 1 career?

Maria Kopylova, Russia

I have already said it many times before: this will be my last team in Formula 1.

How different is life at Ferrari compared with life at McLaren?

Nicola Ruccolo, Canada

They are two complete opposites: two teams that take different routes to be winners, but one of them, and it's not hard to work out which, has something extra; the warmth of a family that makes it unique in the world.

Congratulations on your win in Valencia: it looked like it was the happiest victory of your career. Would you agree?

Darren Rolls, Australia

Yes, it was a really special moment. To win again in front of my home crowd after such a long time was very emotional. I'm not the type who cries easily, but up there on the podium, looking at a crowd made up of people who had perhaps

made a lot of sacrifices to be there that day, I was overcome – which I'm sure you can understand.

Fernando, what do you value most in life?

Luca Iaboni, Italy

My family, and I was lucky enough to be born into an amazing one.

What is the biggest regret of your career?

Carli Reyes, Philippines

I have no specific regrets. I've made mistakes – who hasn't? But I learned something from each one, which has helped me to improve and become the driver that I am today.

A few years back, at Monza, you said that Formula 1 was no longer a sport. After your recent win in Valencia, during the press conference, you said that F1 is still a sport. What made you change your mind?

Martin Saluzzo, UK

Sometimes I say things on the spur of the moment, plus I was younger then... definitely these past few years I rediscovered my love of racing, which I had lost a bit a few years back. But even the bad experiences help you to mature.

Is Ron Dennis on your Christmas card list?

PD Hughes, UK

No.

What is your favourite magic trick?

Nancy Stevens, UK

If I tell you, I'd have to explain it to you and then it wouldn't be a successful trick!

What is your biggest ambition in life?

Steven Gregory, UK

I don't know, as I still have a lot of years ahead of me to think about it. I wanted to race and to win and I have succeeded in that – but I have not yet set myself a target for the future.

How did you feel the first time you saw yourself in the mirror with red overalls?

Andres Blanco, UK

I thought they suited me very well...

What went through your mind during your huge accident in Brazil in 2003?

Jon Reynolds, UK

Whenever you end up in the barriers or off the track you only ever have one thought, which is to do all you can not to get hurt. Danger is always part of our job as drivers, but it is not exclusive to us. Every day on the road, you see how much risk there is, which is why road safety education is so important, right from school age. We work on this with schools, through the foundation that bears my name and with the FIA.



"To win again in front of my home crowd, after such a long time was very emotional. I'm not the sort that cries easily, but up there on the podium, looking at the crowd made up of people who had perhaps made a lot of sacrifices to be there that day, I was overcome"



INSETS: ANDY HONE/LAT

Can you explain why your team-mate Felipe Massa is struggling so much?

Kevin Dalby, UK

Felipe struggled a bit at the start of the season, but from Bahrain onwards the situation has improved. However, he was also a bit unlucky, but then in the past few races the good results have started to come. His contribution will be vital in the fight for the title: Felipe is still a very talented driver, even if many people seem to have forgotten that. →

"Lewis is a great driver, capable of getting the maximum and sometimes even more than the maximum out of his car. He is one of the strongest rivals I have ever faced"



Would you ever drive for McLaren again?

Tim Dormer, UK

As I said earlier, Ferrari will be my last team...

Does anything scare you?

Daniel Yeowart, UK

Yes: spiders.

How would you feel if Sebastian Vettel joined Ferrari?

David Ashcroft, UK

Good, why not? He'd be welcome.

Can you drive any Ferraris of your choice around Fiorano? What Ferrari production car you would most like to drive?

JD Ware, UK

Often when I'm over at Maranello, the production GT car engineers ask me for my opinion on their prototypes, so a few times I've ended up testing road cars on track: a few days ago, I tried the F12 Berlinetta and it was a pleasure to drive it.

I saw you driving the 1951 Ferrari 375 car at Silverstone last year – you seemed to be having fun sliding it around. Would you prefer it if current F1 cars had less grip?

Simon Cooke, UK

It's true I had fun, but you don't know how much fun I have driving a modern Formula 1 car.

Fernando, how do you rate Lewis Hamilton as a driver?

Annie King, UK

He is a great driver, capable of getting the maximum and sometimes even more than the maximum out of his car. He is one of the strongest rivals I have ever faced.

Aside from yourself, who is the next best driver on the grid?

Thomas Giles, UK

I don't know if I'm the best driver, but what I can say is there are a lot of very quick drivers around – including Hamilton, Vettel, Felipe, Kimi, Button, Rosberg, Webber, Di Resta and Hülkenberg and I'm sure I've forgotten some others. And even if it is true, you can't produce miracles if you don't have a quick car. But if I had to choose just one name, I'd say Michael Schumacher. More than me saying it, it's the numbers in his career that do the talking.

Fernando, do you have any rituals before the start of a race?

Michael Wojdat, USA

No, I don't do anything special – nothing that can be regarded as a ritual. I try to concentrate as hard as possible, to check with my race engineer about all the last little details on the car and to discuss the latest updates regarding the strategy, or, for example, the weather situation.

Out of you, Sebastian Vettel and Lewis Hamilton, who is going to win the drivers' championship this year?

Rhodri Evans, UK

If I could predict the future, I'd tell you. But I cannot, therefore I don't know, as it depends on so many factors – especially on what our respective teams manage to do. But then, I don't think the fight is restricted to just the three of us. You can definitely include Mark Webber and maybe also someone else... this season is very closely matched and that means it takes very little for someone to be back in the running and that includes those who are a bit further back in the classification at this point in time.

You must have had plenty of career highs, but what has been your worst race?

John Knowles, Ireland

Ah, there have been quite a few races I'm not happy about, either because I made mistakes or because the result was very disappointing or just because they were very boring. One of the races that definitely does not belong in my collection of favourites would be Abu Dhabi 2010 and it's easy to work out why...

What is the biggest risk you've ever taken?

Dimitar Petrov, Germany

If you think about it, there are risks in so many daily activities, but precisely because we tackle those situations every day, they don't actually seem that dangerous. That's why I think it's important to ensure that from an early age kids understand the importance of road safety education or, on a completely different subject, vaccination against various illnesses, such as polio, which are becoming ever more widespread. These are two areas I feel very strongly about, and in my own small way I try to do something through my foundation or as an ambassador for UNICEF.

What is your favourite movie?

Greg Salt, UK

I don't have a favourite film and, in fact, I don't go to the cinema very often.

Fernando, I am the owner of an Alonso kart. Does it make you proud that so many young drivers across Europe are winning championships with your brand?

Michael Ward, UK

You have made a great choice! Of course, I am happy that so many youngsters have chosen the

Which world title was better? You vs Räikkönen in 2005 or you vs Schumacher in 2006?

Simon Longley, UK

The first title was incredibly emotional; the second came as a result of beating the most successful driver in the history of the sport and a team that

was going through what was probably an unrepeatable cycle. But the third one, which I will win sooner or later with Ferrari, will be even better...



Emotional scenes at Renault in 2005 and 2006 as Alonso wins the title first from Kimi, then from Schuey. But he reckons the one he takes for Ferrari will be the sweetest of the lot



kart that bears my name. And if they go on to win, then that's even better.

How would you respond if a team message came through to you saying, "Felipe is faster than YOU"?

Shelagh Doyle, UK

I would do what was best for the team, as I've always done in my career. At Ferrari, everyone is well aware of the first and binding rule, which is that the interests of the team always come before those of the individual.

Fernando, the team have made amazing progress with the F2012, do you think that the forthcoming developments will be enough to hold back Red Bull, McLaren, Lotus and Mercedes?

Rich Brabham, USA

I think we have not yet reached the top: there are teams that are still quicker than us. It's true that we have made up ground compared to the start of the season, but it's not enough. Our aim is to always have the fastest car on track, whether it's raining or hot, whether we're running the supersoft or the hard tyres, on street circuits or the fastest tracks. And there is still much to be done to reach this objective.

What type of music do you listen to?

Bartłomiej Zawadzki, Poland

There's no one type I prefer more than another. I like listening to all sorts according to what time of day it is, or what I am doing at the time.

I love your mascot Tomita. Are we going to see photos of him on a podium, in a press interview or with a winners' trophy soon?

Marian Sheldon-Davies, UK

If you follow me on Twitter @alo_oficial you can find a lot of photos of Tomita in some of the situations you mention. But it won't be on the podium as that's forbidden by the rules. 📱

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ALONSO

F1's fastest driver?

With two world titles and an ability to make his Ferrari win races it shouldn't, **Fernando Alonso** is frequently cited as the best driver in the sport. So we assembled a panel of experts to ask: is that true?

WORDS ANDREW BENSON

PICTURES LORENZO BELLANCA/LAT

THE PANEL



GARY ANDERSON
BBC technical analyst



MARTIN BRUNDLE
Sky F1 broadcaster



IVAN CAPELLI
Italian F1 commentator



DAVID COULTHARD
BBC F1 broadcaster



STEFANO DOMENICALI
Ferrari team principal



GIANCARLO FISICHELLA
Ferrari test driver



ALAN PERMANE
Lotus trackside operations director

INSETS: ANDREW FERRARO/LAT; CHARLES COATES/LAT;
ALASTAIR STALEY/LAT; JEFF BLOXHAM/LAT; SUTTON IMAGES



A

n hour or so after winning the Canadian Grand Prix, Lewis Hamilton was still on a high and he found one aspect of his victory particularly sweet – beating Fernando Alonso.

“I love racing with Fernando; he’s, like, the best driver here,” Hamilton said.

Why the man Alonso regards as his biggest rival chose that moment to remove the qualifying “one of” he usually applies to that statement is irrelevant. Hamilton was merely adding one more voice to a view that this year seems hard to dispute.

Firmly ensconced alongside Hamilton and Sebastian Vettel as one of Formula 1’s ‘big three’, regard for Alonso’s abilities has rocketed this season following his stunning performances in a Ferrari that began the season 1.5 seconds off the pace.

“He is simply one of the all-time greats,” Mercedes team boss Ross Brawn announced at the British Grand Prix. “He wins races he shouldn’t win... races he’s got no right to win. And that’s the mark of a great driver.

“He’s not had a great car this year but he’s on top of the championship. He has managed to get there because of what he is: the driver he is.”

So what exactly makes Alonso so good? And is he *really* the best in the world?

To answer that question, *F1 Racing* has assembled a panel of experts who have raced against him, worked with him and observed him throughout his career.

They are: Ferrari team principal Stefano Domenicali; their reserve driver and Alonso’s former Renault team-mate Giancarlo Fisichella; Lotus (formerly Renault) trackside operations chief Alan Permane; ex-F1 drivers and now television pundits David Coulthard, Ivan Capelli and Martin Brundle, and former Jordan, Stewart and Jaguar technical director Gary Anderson, now the BBC’s technical analyst.

They’re rated him on different aspects of his character, and this is what they’ve got to say...

TALENT

Fisichella: He is a great driver, a fantastic driver. It’s unbelievable how he judges the limit of the car, the circuit and the tyres. In a race, he is so consistent. He understands when is the moment to push, when is the moment to save the tyres. He’s always, always on the limit when he needs to be. At the moment he is a good step ahead of the others.

Capelli: He’s always operating at 110 per cent on very single lap. And he’s able to drive through problems with the car.

Permane: In Monza qualifying in 2006, half the car was ripped off. We measured the downforce he’d lost, calculated what that should have translated to in lost lap time – yet he lost nowhere near that. It’s like he refuses to accept it.

Brundle: He’s Senna-like in his innate feel for where the grip is, and he knows how much grip to expect before steaming into a corner.

Anderson: The guys at Ferrari feel he does things with the car that they have never seen any other driver do. They say that often: “That was him; that was not the car.” They just don’t believe that could happen.

The people saying that weren’t necessarily in the same position when Michael Schumacher was there; they’ve moved up a bit, so they

might not have known Michael as well. But they are second to none in their appreciation of Alonso’s talents, his motivation and his lack of criticism. When things are bad, he’s part of the team.

Coulthard: He’s spent most of his career at the front so you don’t see him doing a lot of overtaking and you could argue Lewis is a better instinctive racer. But Lewis is involved in more incidents, and Alonso’s passes on Mark Webber and Romain Grosjean around the outside into Turn 2 in Valencia show his skills. He knows when to give it up – that shows strength of character and racing ability.



RELENTLESSNESS

Permane: His biggest strength is, of course, his pace, but if he sees an opportunity, no matter how small, he absolutely seizes on it and won’t let go. Show him a tiny crack, and he’ll drive a wedge through it to win. And it’s very rare he shunts. Very, very rare. Even when he’s absolutely on the limit.

“The guys at Ferrari feel he does things with the car that they have never seen any other driver do”
Gary Anderson

Brundle: He’s fast in a race; consistently fast. He’s always there somewhere and he always picks up other people’s pieces. When the victory’s there to be had, like at Silverstone last year, he’ll go and take it.

Domenicali: We are speaking about something most human beings cannot understand. When you are within the final couple of tenths, every lap, every race, every year and you keep that very consistent, it means you have a great ability to maximise your concentration and performance at the highest level. This is for me the incredible characteristic that I have seen.

Capelli: He is not driving in blinkers; he is thinking all the time. In Canada, for example, he was in a critical position at the end of the race. He had been battling for victory and then he was fighting for fifth. Inside the cockpit he was already evaluating the situation and he realised a few points in this kind of championship are important. On the other hand, Lewis found himself in the same situation in Valencia, but instead of saying ‘these points in this race are enough’, he fought with Maldonado and lost everything. This is why Fernando is one step above other drivers.

Permane: He’s incredibly strong around pitstops. His in-laps especially are just unbelievable. If you take the pitstop out of it and look at the entry time, to the stop and the exit bit, he’s consistently one of the quickest, and he works on it.

He’s unbelievably good at always stopping in just the right place. That’s not to be underestimated. If you do that 99 or 100 times out of 100, they know you’re going to stop there so they don’t have to move out of the way, whereas with a lot of people, the mechanics track the car in. Every time it’s in the right place, it makes it even quicker. →





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COMPLETENESS

Domenicali: What I see now that is different to how things were in the past is his level of maturity. I believe he is reaching his peak in terms of the global points you need to consider when you are talking about the characteristics of the fastest driver, a man within a team and a person who has to interact with the environment around him. He has really developed.

Coulthard: He is the benchmark in that he won his world championships some time ago, yet he still remains super-quick, super-motivated and a true team leader. He is committed to his training, to being at the factory, to doing the simulator stuff. All of that reeks of 'man on a mission'.

Brundle: It's interesting to follow Alonso on Twitter. He obviously trains pretty hard – harder than I gave him credit for. He's really on it, and his work ethic is just massive.

Domenicali: What is amazing is how he can see the race from the cockpit while he is driving without all the info we have on the pitwall. It is incredible how he can understand exactly what is going on around him.

Permane: A great example was in Fuji 2008. He was in front, but Kubica was catching him or just about as quick as him, and Alonso came on the radio and said: "Fill me short, I can win this." Then he did however many qualifying laps and broke him. That's sort of him in a snapshot. I'd never heard a driver do that before.

Domenicali: He relies a lot on the quality of the people in the team and he pushes them to make sure there is always another step up in improvement everywhere. He is not a superficial man. He wants to go into detail and understand all the different implications of everything. This is very beneficial to the people around him, because it helps to keep the right pressure.

Fisichella: He is so close to the team. He goes very often to Maranello and stays with the mechanics, goes out with them for dinner, plays football with them, goes out on the bike with some of them. The human philosophy is very important in F1. The mechanics need to see a driver who is good, who is quick, but they need to feel the friendship with him as well.

Permane: He's not like the new breed of driver who will sit there for hours pouring over data. He's not interested in that at all. In technical meetings, he gives the impression that he's not listening – not always anyway. But if you ask him a question at the end, he knows everything.

He's very, very sharp when it comes to that sort of thing. It's the same with the sporting regulations. And I know he's one of the drivers Charlie Whiting listens to most when he speaks in the driver briefings. He doesn't often talk, but when he does it makes a lot of sense.



WEAKNESSES

Brundle: His ruthless speed, consistency and ability to not trip over other cars is greater than his ultimate raw speed. Hamilton and Vettel will pull a lap out of the bag and you think: 'Where did that come from?' I don't remember thinking of Alonso on pole like that, although I do remember thinking it in Monza 2006. That was one of the most extraordinary qualifying laps I can remember. So I don't think he's a bad qualifier; I don't think it's a weakness – I just don't think it's his greatest strength.

Anderson: I don't believe anybody else could have done what he has with that Ferrari this year. However, I do believe that if they both had a car at the front, Vettel could be that bit better.

Coulthard: I wouldn't be comfortable with writing him off on a qualifying lap. I don't think he has a weak spot.



"If he sees an opportunity, no matter how small, he seizes it and won't let go. Show him a crack and he'll drive a wedge through it"
Alan Permane



Domenicali: First of all we shouldn't forget that in the last couple of years there were situations where the capability of some drivers to score a great pole position was about the great relation between them and a fantastic car. If you put all his laps together, Fernando is absolutely at the very highest level of this kind of classification. If we can give him a good car, he will get the pole position.

Fisichella: Over one lap he is maybe the fastest by just a little bit. There are people like Hamilton and Vettel who are very close to him, but even in a qualifying session he is quick when he has a good confidence in the car. But he is incredible in the race compared to other people.

Permane: He absolutely cannot cope with being beaten by his team-mate. That's his weakness, and actually it's also a strength. →

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Welcome to the Inside.



"He's an extraordinary talent... a two-time world champion. He's probably one of the best – if not *the* best – drivers in the sport" *Lewis Hamilton*

What Alonso's on-track rivals say about him...

Jenson Button

"Fernando is extremely talented, he is a double world champion and he's fast. Is he the fastest in the sport? Probably not, and he would probably say the same thing – but he is very intelligent. In some ways we're similar, in other ways we are definitely not. One of the ways in which we are similar is in terms of wanting a team of people around us. We need that support to really help us achieve. When you race against him and beat him, it feels special. I respect him a lot and he's a clever driver, so that is why he's always a threat."

Sebastian Vettel

"The driver who stands out the most is probably Fernando – he's one of the most complete drivers. But Lewis is very, very quick and there are plenty of others."

Lewis Hamilton

"Despite the relationship we've had, I think our friendship and the respect we have for one another has got a lot stronger. I learned a lot from him as a driver and I improved my driving thanks to having him as a team-mate. He is an extraordinary talent with incredible speed and he'll always give his best. He's a two-time world champion and he's probably one of the best, if not *the* best driver in the sport."

Mark Webber

"I was watching at one track and Fernando Alonso came into this high-speed turn in the Ferrari. I could see the finer things he was doing. You could tell he was working hard. The car didn't look bad – it was Fernando ahead of the car doing his profession, and it's good to see that."

Fisichella: Just once in China 2006 when I was quicker than him in the race, he blamed the team because we didn't work together to help him get a better result. But just that time. The rest of the season was okay, even when I was a couple of tenths quicker than him. He was quiet. He understood the problem; he understood why he was not quick enough, but it was okay.

Coulthard: When he left McLaren [after falling out with the team at the end of 2007], I thought: don't beat him up because he's walked away. You have to admire his strength in saying: "You know what? I was sold something you didn't deliver. I don't care if I've got a three-year contract."

I can imagine the sales pitch. Ron Dennis does great honeymoon. And Alonso was prepared to walk away from that contract. It wasn't about Lewis, which is why they are able to co-exist today in an amicable way. It was about the team failing to deliver what they had promised him. That takes balls and conviction, and if I look back at my career I wish I had had a bit more balls and conviction because it may cost you in the short term but in the long term there is a lot you can gain from it.

Domenicali: That is all part of the maturity I mentioned. I believe, in that respect, Fernando has matured a lot.




IS HE THE BEST?

Anderson: In a front-running car, my opinion is that Vettel is as good as – and might even be a smidge better than – Ayrton Senna. I don't think Alonso is ever there. But in race conditions Alonso will pull a better result out of it than Vettel would other than if Vettel's got the tools to do the job.

Coulthard: Seb is great, but he's still young. Lewis has already had his first emotional roller coaster of his young life. Alonso looks like the safest pair of hands.

Brundle: It's a very strong statement to say he's the best but would he be top of my list right now if I was a team boss? He probably would, actually.

Fisichella: He is doing the maximum he can do, and no one can do a better job than him. 

Andrew Benson is the F1 editor for bbc.co.uk/sport



Red Bull

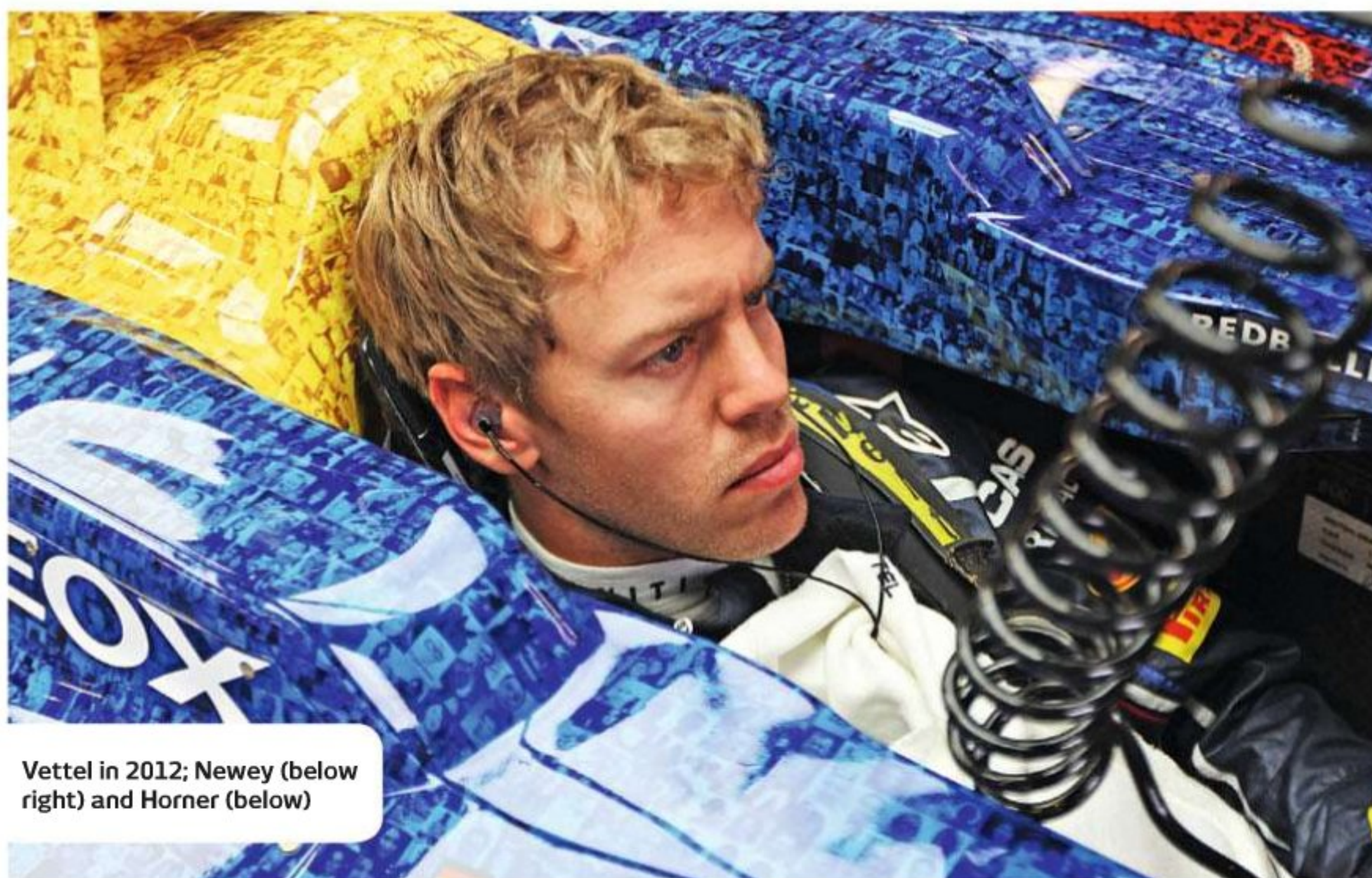
THIRD

TIME

LUCKY

Sebastian Vettel is discovering that challenging for a third consecutive world title is no easy task. But as Adrian Newey and Christian Horner tell *F1 Racing*, they have every faith in the Red Bull ace's ability to deliver another crown

WORDS JAMES ROBERTS **PORTRAIT** VLADIMIR RYS/GETTY IMAGES



Vettel in 2012; Newey (below right) and Horner (below)

There have been a few moments this year when we've seen a different side to Sebastian Vettel. Not the usual cocksure swagger or that prank-playing boyish grin – quite the opposite, in fact. We've seen some darker aspects to his character: thunderous glares and moments of glove-flinging fury. And it seems that these moments of frustration have come to characterise his inconsistent 2012 season so far.

We hardly need reminding that Sebastian is the youngest back-to-back world champion in the history of F1 and yet, if he wants to achieve a third successive title – something neither Jackie Stewart nor Ayrton Senna managed – he'll have to dig deep within his armoury and deliver the kind of performances he produced time and time again over the previous two seasons.

There's no doubt that 2012 is Vettel's toughest season yet, but his closest allies at Red Bull will tell you he's more than capable of retaining his crown. They concede that this year has presented him with a huge challenge, yet they believe his never-say-die attitude will stand him in good stead.

"When the odds are stacked against Seb, he never ever gives up," says his close confidant and Red Bull team principal Christian Horner, who is keen to flag up two races that define this spirit: "Remember when he came seventh at Silverstone in 2010, where every lap he never gave up? He made passing moves on both Sutil and Schumacher, which turned out to be crucial in the grand scheme of the points standings that year.

"Then I remember Korea in 2010, when we thought the chances

of winning the drivers' title had gone up in a cloud of engine smoke," continues Horner. "In the debrief afterwards, he was saying: 'We can still do this!' He was the most upbeat person there and, ultimately, he was right. There's a quality within him that keeps him pushing; he's very, *very* driven.

"Sebastian has tremendous natural speed and great intelligence within the car. He has the ability to think and adapt to many situations – look back at Monaco in 2010 when he made the tyre last an unbelievable number of laps – he can make different strategy options work for him. He's a great driver to have in your team."

In the closing stages of a world championship showdown, Vettel has proved that he's one of the best and Red Bull will be calling on those seemingly unstoppable, →



PHOTOS: PAUL GILHAM/GETTY IMAGES; MARK THOMPSON/GETTY IMAGES





"He learns
all the time.
He's like a
small child,
soaking up
information
like a
sponge"

Adrian Newey

confident-verging-on-arrogant performances as the season heads towards its 20-race climax.

There have been struggles with setup, regulation tweaks to the blown diffusers that have affected car balance, plus the vagaries of the 2012 Pirellis, but Red Bull technical director Adrian Newey insists Vettel is able to consistently adapt himself to any problem.

"He's tremendously naturally talented and very intelligent in terms of his learning process. Like any human being, he makes mistakes, but he rarely makes the same mistake twice. He learns *all* the time," Newey insists.

"Over the past few years, I've got the feeling that every time he climbs out of the car he has learnt something new. He's like a small child, constantly soaking up information like a sponge. He absorbs things the whole time – late into the evening he'll be going through details with the engineers, looking at the data and looking at his own driving. He'd make a good engineer as he has a naturally inquisitive mind: he tries to look at everything from all angles."

Even in his dominant 2011 year, Vettel frequently pitched his RB7 into the tyre wall in Friday practice sessions. In Turkey, Canada, Japan and Abu Dhabi, he pushed his car beyond its limits then learnt not to exceed them again in qualifying, each time putting his car on pole in the process.

"It was a self-belief and self-confidence that you see in all the truly great stars of motor racing," Newey confirms. "It's that ability to push to the edge and beyond and then to step back and act as if nothing has happened."

"Sebastian has the ability to process things very quickly and he makes a very steep learning progression from his mistakes. If you look at his 2009 season there were some errors early on, but there were also some great drives. It was the same in 2010, but his ability to withstand the pressure at the end of that year is what enabled him to become world champion."

Immediately after winning that first world title, another aspect of Vettel's character was revealed, one that arguably put him in an even greater position to deliver so

strongly the following season. At the end of an exhausting 2010, he had secured his lifetime's ambition of winning a world title and could have quite justifiably put his feet up and celebrated. Not a bit of it. Two days later, he was back in Abu Dhabi for testing.

"As far as he was concerned, yes, he'd won the championship, but he still wanted to test the new Pirelli tyres," says Christian Horner. "It was his choice – we didn't force him to run them. In fact, we said that there was quite a lot going on and we were happy for a test driver to take over that role. But, no; he insisted he wanted to run on that tyre and take that knowledge into the winter. He also took it upon himself to go and visit Pirelli to try to understand their philosophy with regards to the tyre."

Vettel was, in fact, the only driver who went to visit Pirelli during the winter of 2010/11. It seems like a no-brainer, yet he was the only driver with the savvy and the wherewithal to make the effort.

Subsequently, his performances in 2011 were even stronger. His team-mate, Mark Webber, was

closely matched to Seb in 2010, but last year there was more of a gap, for which Newey suggests a number of reasons:

“Part of it was Seb having the confidence of a world title behind him; part of it was the continuation of that learning curve I mentioned earlier; and part of it was that Mark’s confidence had been knocked a little bit so, in truth, he probably performed slightly below his potential,” Newey admits. “We also took our exhaust effect a step further last year, which gave different handling characteristics, and it seemed that Sebastian was able to adapt his driving style more easily compared with Mark.”

Horner concurs: “Going into last year he was riding on the crest of the momentum that the world title gave him across those final five races of the year. He adjusted and adapted quickly to the peculiarities of the new tyre and applied himself

Vettel's place in the standings at the mid-point of 2010, 2011 and 2012

STANDINGS	1ST	2011 186 points, 1st in standings, 5 wins
	2ND	
	3RD	
	4TH	2012 85 points, 4th in standings, 1 win
	5TH	2010 90 points, 5th in standings, 1 win

AFTER 8 RACES

well with more confidence and more experience; he raised the bar to an unbelievable level.”

But as we reach the mid-point of 2012, Vettel’s title challenge hasn’t gone as smoothly as it did last year. Despite a podium in Australia, he tangled with Narain Karthikeyan in Malaysia and was furious when he failed to get into the top ten during Q3 in China.

Those who were witness to his temper wondered if he was starting to have personal doubts. That evening in the Shanghai paddock, one high-profile paddock source said this: “Maybe Vettel realises that all his past success has primarily been down to how good his car is. When you’re always winning, you think it’s down to your own talent; when suddenly you’re not winning, you realise it was actually because of the car.”

So what does Christian Horner make of this theory?

“I think the top drivers never lose confidence in their own ability, Alonso is a perfect example. He hasn’t had the best car in the past few years but he never gives up. Sebastian has the same qualities: when it doesn’t work out for him he still drives with great intelligence, determination and discipline.

“He’s had to face criticism in the past in addition to other pressures and as he develops as a human being he starts to gain those life experiences so that he’s now better able to deal with those challenges that F1 throws up.

“Yes, in China he wasn’t happy, but he wears his heart on his sleeve; he doesn’t hide that. In the immediate aftermath he’s upset and disappointed, but give him half an hour and he’s immediately focused on getting the best out of the next day. Don’t forget he ultimately finished fifth in that race. This year is different to →

Seb’s first win of 2012 came in Bahrain, a far cry from his total dominance in 2011



PHOTOS: ANDREW FERRARO/LAT; STEVE ETHERINGTON/LAT; ANDY HONE/LAT; PAUL GILHAM/GETTY IMAGES; MARK THOMPSON/GETTY IMAGES

"When the odds are against Seb, he never, ever gives up"

Christian Horner



Vettel bows to his team after that first title triumph in 2010



Post-glove-flinging incident in Valencia 2012

last, but his application is as strong as ever and he's putting in even more effort."

And that's probably the concern for his rivals. After a disappointing Saturday he bounced back to add to his points haul in China. Just one week later in Bahrain, he secured pole position and followed that up with victory. Yes, there have been other moments of frustration, notably the alternator failure while leading in Valencia, but his rivals need to be wary of the constant threat of his fortitude.

What's even more impressive is that Sebastian does all of this with no manager, no hangers-on, no bag carriers. He has the support of his

father, Norbert, but has none of the other personnel with which a number of less successful drivers surround themselves.


"He's a shrewd guy," says Horner. "He's his own man and yeah, he is pretty savvy. He enjoys a good relationship with Bernie Ecclestone for example. They spend a bit of time together; they play backgammon and spar off each other. Bernie recognises his character and also understands that Sebastian is very respectful of the heritage of the sport. He's a great ambassador for F1 and puts an awful lot back in."

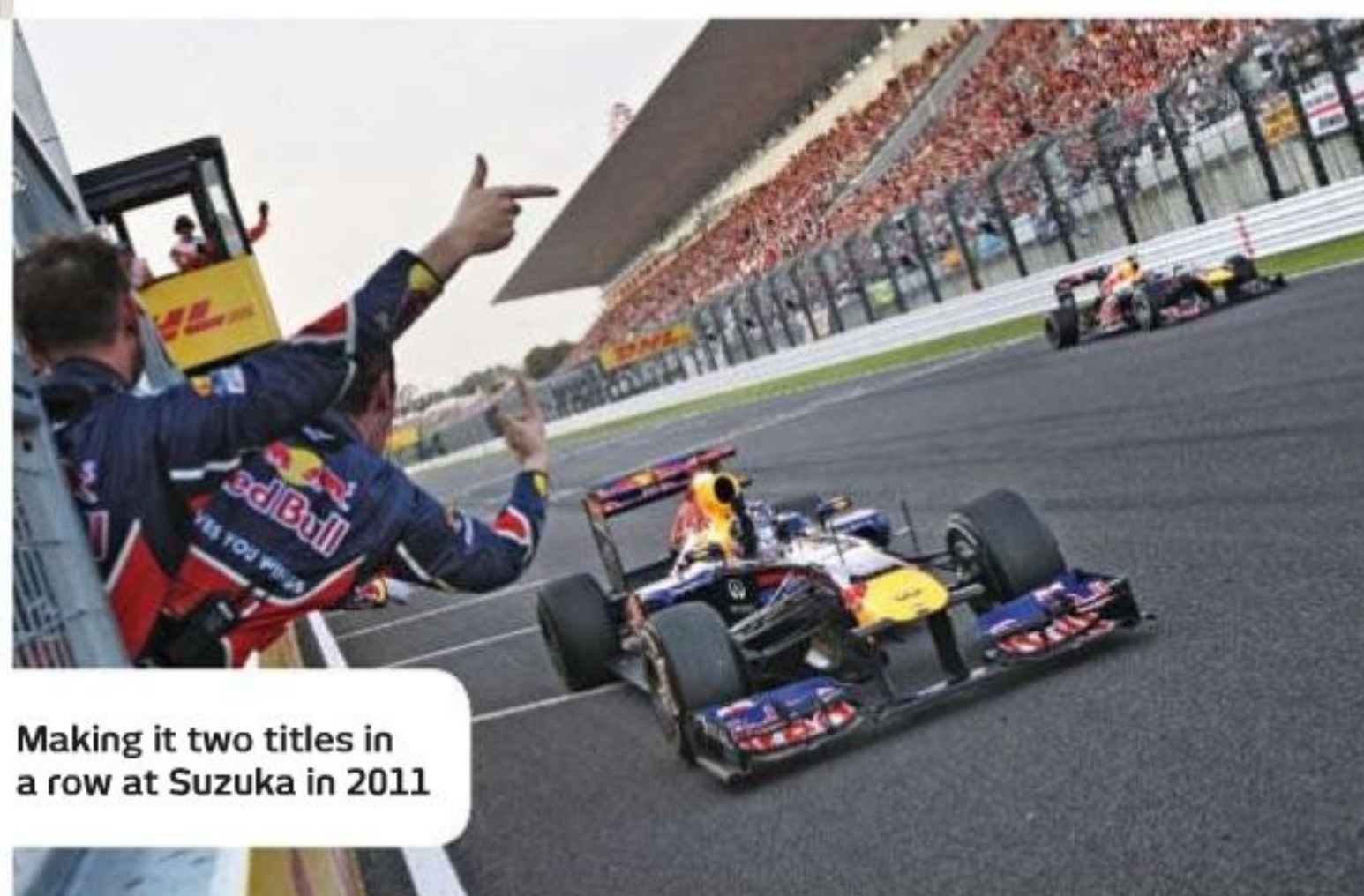
Newey argues that it's Vettel's understanding of the nature of the

sport that will stand him in such good stead this season.

"I haven't really seen any change in his demeanour or any increase in his frustration this year, and anyone who understands the history of the sport knows how things ebb and flow. History dictates that you will have good years and bad years. I know – I've been through it. Every year you give it your best and in some years you will be more successful than in others for reasons that aren't necessarily within your control or just because your own performance is fluctuating. But that's the nature of the beast and as long as you have confidence in yourself to ride through it, you will."

So with more experience, an ability to learn from his mistakes, great resolve, superb pace and the confidence to not let frustration get the better of his performances, it's fair to say that Sebastian Vettel is still right up there in this year's title hunt. Be warned, he could still manage to make it a sensational three in a row.

And the last word goes to Adrian Newey: "I think it's fair to say that this season – whatever happens – if he wins, it will have been the hardest of the three." 



Making it two titles in a row at Suzuka in 2011

PHOTOS: VLADIMIR RYS/GETTY IMAGES; KER ROBERTSON/GETTY IMAGES



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COCKPIT PROTECTION

Formula 1 cars can never be made 100 per cent safe, but in the cockpit area improvements are made every year to reduce driver vulnerability

WORDS JONATHAN REYNOLDS PORTRAIT LORENZO BELLANCA/LAT

1 Headrest

One of the most important safety developments of the last decade has been the introduction of cockpit-surrounding, energy-absorbing foam headrests. These help reduce the risk to a driver's head in the event of another car becoming airborne, and will absorb energy if a driver's helmet strikes the side of the cockpit in the event of a crash. Because the properties of this foam (and therefore its effectiveness as an energy-absorber) can change at different ambient temperatures, three different types of colour-coordinated headrest are used. The FIA tells the teams which one must be used during each session – blue for temperatures above 30°C, pink for temperatures between 15°C and 30°C and pale blue for temperatures below 15°C.

2 Neutral button

"If, for whatever reason, the car is stuck in gear and won't move, the marshals will press the neutral button on the top of the car," explains Jakob Andreasen, chief engineer at Force India. "Strictly speaking it's not a true neutral – the button is actually linked to a separate pneumatic bottle that is used to separate the clutch plates so the car can be pushed."

3 Seat

The moulded carbon-fibre seats used in F1 are not fixed within the car. They must be detachable so that in the event of an accident, medics can remove the driver and seat as one – which is particularly important if a spinal injury is suspected or the driver is unconscious. To remove the seat, the seat belts are undone followed by the four straps that secure the seat. These double as belts to hold the driver in place.

4 Roll hoop

If the car flips, the two roll hoops protect the driver – there's an airbox behind his head and a small protrusion on the chassis in front of him. When he's seated, his helmet must sit below a theoretical line between these two points.



5 KERS warning light

If the KERS system is powered off and no fault has been found, this light will glow green. If the light is not green, then no one should touch any part of the car because it could potentially be live. When the driver is sat in the car the cockpit acts as a Faraday cage, protecting the driver from electrical charges. He must, however, be careful exiting the car if the green light is not illuminated: "In the most serious KERS state, the driver should not bridge the ground to the chassis," explains Andreasen. "Basically that means he has to jump from the chassis to the ground so as not to become the bridge between the two and complete the electrical loop."

6 G-force warning light

This light is extremely useful to those arriving first on the scene in the aftermath of an accident. Accelerometers in the car measure the severity of the impact, and if it exceeds 15G in magnitude, the warning light will illuminate. The car's accident-data recorder will deliver this information directly to the FIA and circuit medics. Even if the driver appears uninjured, doctors at the medical centre must examine him if the warning light has been illuminated.

7 Seat belts

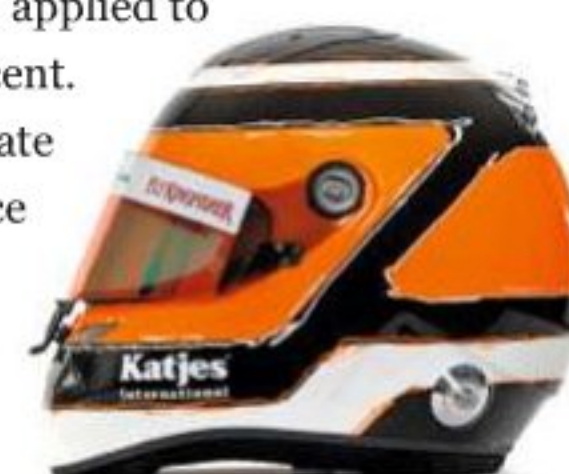
F1 seat belts attach to the car's monocoque. They are made of specially woven polyester and consist of shoulder straps, lap straps and crotch straps, all meeting at a central buckle. The regulations require that a driver must be able to undo them with a single hand movement so he can get out of the car within five seconds.

8 Helmet & HANS device

Helmets are constructed using layers of carbon fibre, polyethylene and a fire-resistant material called aramide, while the visor is made of a strong polycarbonate reinforced with a strip of Zylon (the material used in bullet-proof vests).

The HANS device reduces head and neck injuries and consists of a carbon-fibre shoulder collar that is connected to the helmet by two straps. Tests prove that the device reduces typical head motion in an accident by 44 per cent, the force applied to the neck by 86 per cent and the acceleration applied to the head by 68 per cent.

The regulations dictate that the HANS device must have no hard objects within 25mm of it inside the cockpit.




9 Monocoque

To stop objects penetrating the cockpit, the survival cell's flanks are reinforced with Zylon and carbon-fibre panels. To further protect the driver, no fuel, oil or water lines are allowed to pass through the cockpit. The driver's legs sit within what's known as the 'leg tunnel', which is padded to protect the legs as they move about.

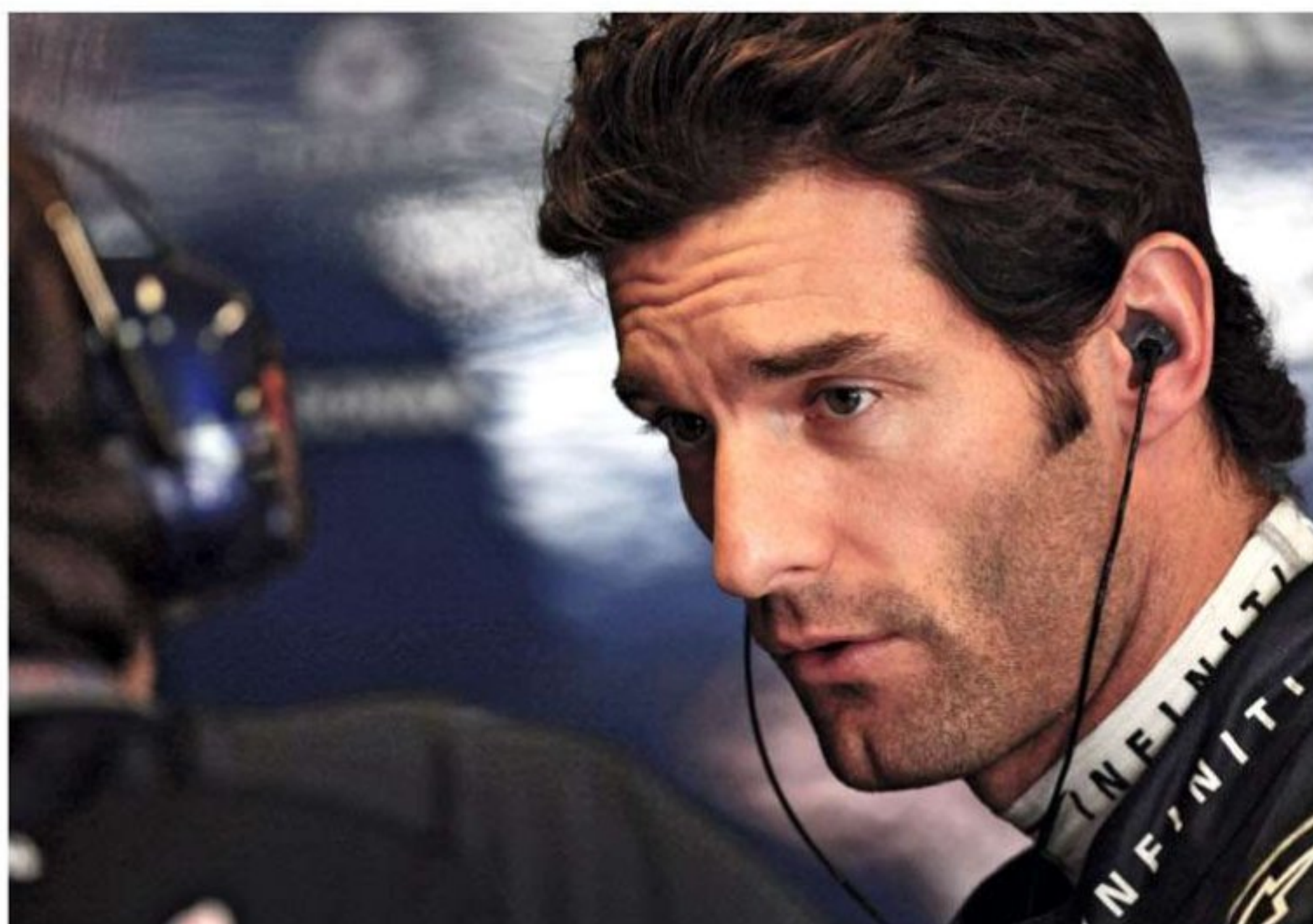


10 Fire extinguisher

A 2.4kg powder fire extinguisher is fitted between the seat and the chassis. This is activated either automatically or by the driver or a marshal flicking a switch by the driver's leg in the event of a fire. Nozzles located in the cockpit and the engine bay will then disperse powder. 

Mid-term Report

We're past the halfway point of an incredible season, and as F1 takes a well-deserved summer breather, **Peter Windsor** offers a detailed analysis of the rivalries within each team, in championship order, to identify their chances of success as the countdown to the finale begins...



Webber

VS

Vettel

Mark Webber's win in Brazil last year was more than just a box neatly ticked: it was his platform for 2012, the springboard from which he would grind out his winter training programme and so sharpen his skills. Mark's best hope within a Seb-centric Red Bull team, would be for the car to be less than the dominator it was in 2010-11. If the new 2012 regs dragged the RB8 back into McLaren-Ferrari territory, then 'Aussie Grit' was going to be the guy to wring the most from the car. That is what he does; that is who he is. Sebastian Vettel, meanwhile, as a double world champion, was always going to maximise a great car and perhaps leave a little bit of space if the Red Bull was less than that.

So it has been proved: when the RB8 has been less than perfect, Mark has ground away at lap times, combining good racing sense with athletic skill par excellence. Monaco qualifying and the mixed qualifying conditions at Silverstone were cases in point. No one outflights Mark Webber through Becketts when grip is there to be found (rather than to be indulged). After the British GP, Mark had outqualified Seb five-four and, in addition, had scored two wins to Seb's one.

"Seb's in trouble," they began to whisper. "Webber's got him." Ha! Seb Vettel's qualifying lap at Valencia had already said all that needed to be said (a) about his motivation; and (b) about his ability to drive a great car at the absolute limit.

So how to split them? Both drive superbly in traffic, combining aggression with prudence in Prost-like quantities. Mark tends to have more of an edge in damp conditions and the wet and also on some fast corners – particularly in change of direction. Seb was quicker in sector 1 in Suzuka in 2009 but Mark was better there in 2010-2011. Mark owns Monaco, but then Seb is impossible to beat through those slow-direction changes at Valencia and Singapore. And in terms of feeling the surface of the road – the ultimate ability to maximise the ever-changing commodity that is grip – all the evidence is there to suggest that Seb has a small advantage.

They combine to make the perfect team, which is why Adrian Newey loves them; there'll never be a day when Adrian is unsure about his car's genuine pace. McLaren have that with Lewis, and Ferrari have it with Fernando – but no other team can be absolutely, 100 per cent confident of

where they're going – only Seb, Mark, Lewis and Fernando can give you that assurance.

This can also be a problem, of course: two equally great drivers will inevitably take points from one another, particularly when the racing gets close. All is calm now, but expect a firecracker or two if Seb and Mark end up a few points apart with just three races to go.

And then who will win? This year's Mark, I think, is able to dig deeper when the going is tough. This is partly due to hunger, partly due to accumulated road dust. Seb, though, has the political weight of the team behind him – and the confidence that comes from having done it all before. The three-race finale for 2012 couldn't be more balanced: Abu Dhabi (a Seb circuit); Austin (a clean sheet of paper); and then Brazil – a Mark track from as long ago as the Jaguar days. →



"Expect a firecracker or two if Seb and Mark are points apart with three races to go"



Stats



Most laps raced in one position

Vettel

143 in 4th

Webber

121 in 3rd

Points

Vettel 122

Webber 124

Retirements

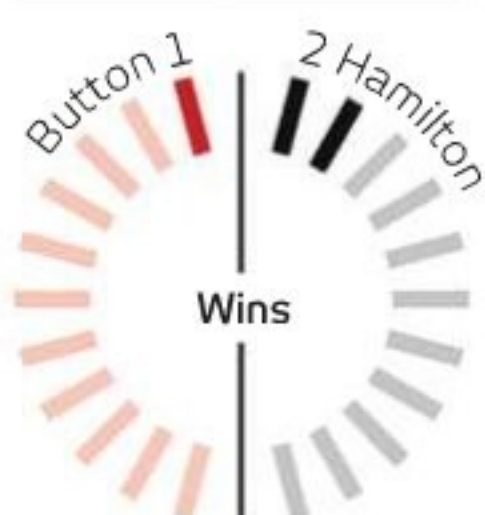
Vettel 1

Webber 0





Stats



Most laps raced in one position

Button

79 in 14th

Hamilton

137 in 3rd

Points

Button 76

Hamilton 117

Retirements

Button 0

Hamilton 1



McLaren

Hamilton

VS

Button

This comparison is settling back down again to where it was in 2010. Last year remains the conundrum – the year in which Lewis slipped backwards a little and Jenson, relishing the polish and depth of the world's best-presented F1 team, capitalised on an already impressive McLaren rookie season. Now the differences are these:

Jenson (as he has done from the day he first drove a Williams) sculpts an ultra-smooth, Jim Russell textbook racing line. His use of throttle and brake – and of throttle against left-foot-brake overlap – is as near-perfect as it can be in a left-foot era. And his feel for throttle-

against-loaded-outside-rear is right up there with that of Kimi (when Kimi was at McLaren). He is brilliant, therefore, on long corners; in the wet; and from apex to exit on slow corners. And he knows, of course, how to look after a set of tyres.

Lewis in 2010 was arguably inferior to Jenson in all of these departments, and spent most of 2011: (a) realising his faults; and (b) doing something about them. For 2012, he has emulated

the best of Jenson and applied these new performance levels to his own, very brilliant repertoire – to wit, an Alonso-like ability to find subtle moments in which to straighten out the corner, thus enhancing his ability to make quick changes of direction; his unmatched (in this era) feel for the brake pedal in the big stops from high

speed; and – as is the case with Fernando – his innate feel for manipulating the car at exactly the right rate and time. Lewis also has softer initial steering and brake input than Fernando – a comparison that isn't really relevant to Jenson because of

"Lewis spent 2011 (a) realising his faults; and (b) doing something about them"

Jenson's longer, more-rounded corners.

So it was no surprise that Lewis had outqualified Jenson eight-three prior to the summer break (or that it was the same at the same point last year). I believe you can also say that Lewis is more 'fearless' than Jenson – partly because of the way he drives (Lewis's straighter approach and lower minimum speed provides more scope mid-corner to react to sudden changes in the variables) and





partly because of their temperaments: Lewis relishes the concept of having to deal with high-speed flick oversteer (if that is what it comes down to), while Jenson will always try to improve the car if it doesn't feel quite right.

As things currently stand, McLaren have a driver combo about as effective as Ferrari's – with the proviso that Lewis plays the Fernando role. If it swings the other way, as it did in 2011, McLaren as a team are about as harmonious as P-Diddy on a bad day. Jenson is capable of more than Felipe, however, so Lewis will always have that unwanted pressure to deal with. From McLaren's standpoint, you could also argue that Lewis wouldn't be the driver he is today if it weren't for the pace and professionalism of Jenson Button – and that the two of them will continue to push one another to greater heights.

That's true – but it isn't necessarily the best way to win a drivers' championship (as Fernando is proving – and as Michael proved at Ferrari). Will the points Lewis 'lost' to Jenson in Melbourne, for example, be significant by the time they get to Interlagos? That is the sort of question that Michael never liked to have to answer when he was winning. →



Lotus

Räikkönen

VS

Grosjean



As good as Kimi was/is/will be, it seemed that at Ferrari he was generally always about a tenth slower than he had been at McLaren. Knock away a further tenth thanks to his 'retirement' year and that leaves him about two-tenths away from where he used to be in his golden era. He's still great to watch as the ultimate 'manipulative' driver who, at his best, could combine Alain Prost's early-corner phase with Jenson Button's accelerative touch – but traces of that greatness are now tinged with a desire only to step on the boundary line when things feel absolutely right.

In that straight shootout with Michael Schumacher at Silverstone – one lap, one set of Pirelli intermediates – it was Michael who came out ahead. And in the qualifying stats of 2012, it is the young pretender, Romain Grosjean, who leads Kimi eight-three. Juan-Pablo Montoya in 2005-06 could only dream about stats like that.

But have no doubt, if Lotus produce a car as superior as the 2009 Brawn or the Red Bull RB6 or RB7, Kimi will be your man. Having learned about Pirellis the hard way in China, he can now nurse his tyres with the best of them – and he knows how to stay out of trouble. Short of that sort of mechanical weaponry, however, today's Kimi is always going to be vulnerable to a very quick guy who will extract the absolute maximum from a car that isn't particularly easy to drive. To Kimi's credit, this worries him not a jot. He's Kimi and he races his way. Always has. Always will. That's why we like to see him in F1.

Kimi is precisely the sort of team-mate Romain Grosjean needs at this moment in his career. Romain was the new French star at Renault – and then it all went wrong. He was obliged to return to obscurity, to dig deep and to work hard. He did all of that. Then came his second chance: he would be racing for Lotus alongside Kimi.

Romain could only gain from the pairing; Kimi could only lose. And, at present, that's how it seems to be going. The big issue is how Romain develops from here on in. Yes, he is super-quick and he's perfectly placed to learn from Kimi. In this sense, he faces the second half of 2012 pretty much as Nico Rosberg faces it: he needs to capitalise on all his existing, great qualities while at the same time adopting some of his team-mate's craft. Kimi, by contrast, just needs a better car; that's the only way he's going to beat a driver like Romain at this late stage of his career. →

"Romain could only gain from this pairing; Kimi could only lose. And that's how it's going"





Stats



Highest finish

Driver	Highest finish
Räikkönen	2nd
Grosjean	2nd



Most laps raced in one position

Driver	Most laps raced in one position
Räikkönen	90 in 3rd & 4th
Grosjean	90 in 2nd

Points

Driver	Points
Räikkönen	116

Grosjean	76
----------	----

Retirements

Driver	Retirements
Räikkönen	0

Grosjean	4
----------	---

Ferrari

Alonso VS Massa

In terms of one great racing driver – Fernando Alonso – maximising his chances of winning the drivers' title, Ferrari have created the perfect line-up. It's come by chance, mind, because I doubt anyone expected Felipe Massa to fall so perfectly into the role of number two. For Felipe, everything changed that Saturday in Hungary in 2009 when he was struck by a flying spring from Rubens Barrichello's Brawn. He returned to F1 in 2010 but things were not the same. He was quick – but not as quick as before. The old flaws – the sharp-edged steering inputs, the reflexy moments mid-corner – began to take centre-stage. The sublime, confident, one-lap specials, born of anticipating the car's movements rather than reacting to them, were confined to the 'sent' folder. Suddenly, Felipe was 'the guy in the other car'.

There's nothing wrong with that – and Felipe can win again, in the right circumstances. Casting an Eddie Irvine or a Rubens Barrichello to Fernando's Michael was never going to be easy. And yet Ferrari have just that in Felipe Massa. He is as quick as a Pérez but makes fewer mistakes. He is not as fast as a Webber, but he won't take points from Alonso – Hockenheim 2010 was proof of that. And the unobstructed points Fernando has earned so far in 2012, when the Ferrari has for the most part been less than a frontrunner, could yet win him the title. If Alonso had a Webber or – worse – a

"Felipe isn't as fast as a Webber, but he won't take points from Alonso"

Lewis in the other car, he might already be ten or 15 points shy of his current total. And then the politics would really erupt.

As for Fernando, well, he's just getting better. He is still the

super-fast racer who regularly carried a Renault on his shoulders, regardless of how many wheels it had lost, or wings it had shed. But he's no longer the sulky kid who resented Lewis Hamilton's pace at McLaren. And why would he be? He's got what every racer wants: a long-term Ferrari contract and no one to annoy him in the other car. By the law of averages, he'll win a few titles more... and 2012 could well bring the next.

What's enthralling about Fernando is the balance he strikes between assertiveness and prudence, while lapping just within the absolute limit. Names like Stirling Moss, Jim Clark and Jackie Stewart spring to mind when you think of Alonso – names that also rendered the second car inconsequential. And Fernando wraps it all in that Spanish charm of his, reminding you that he is an elder statesman and a new kid on the block, his flick knife concealed from sight.



Stats



Most laps in which position

Alonso
216 in 1st

Massa
107 in 9th

Points

Alonso 164

Massa 25

Retirements

Alonso 0

Massa 1

Mercedes

Rosberg

VS

Schumacher

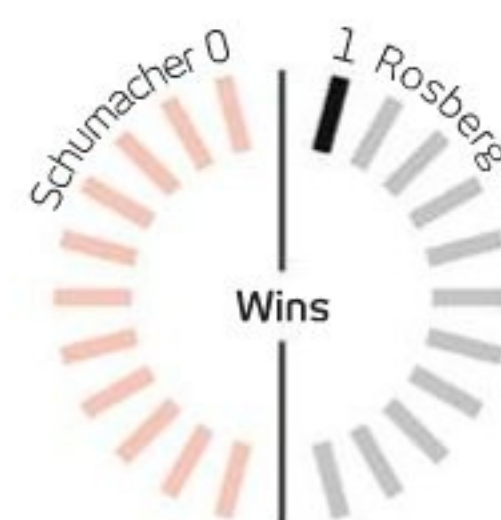
How drives the Michael of 2012? I'd say he is within about a tenth of his best days at Ferrari but that in so doing he makes more small mistakes: slightly too late with the key brake-pedal pressure here; a tad too much throttle mid-corner there. Was it the wizardry of the Benetton and the quality of the Ferrari package that disguised those glitches back in the day? I suspect not. In 2005, when the Ferrari wasn't a great car, Michael drove it on the ragged edge with relatively few errors. Still wondrous today, though, is Michael's ability to make tiny errors yet still record The Lap – as we saw most recently in qualifying at Silverstone. Like Kimi, Michael had but one run on intermediates. He sat right on the edge of the level of grip, snaking and darting his way around the quick stuff – and the result was a stunning P3. His pole at Monaco, too, was sensational.

Nico is the flip side to that: he makes few small mistakes and is growing faster all the time. And now he has a win behind him, he can also allow himself space to be more aggressive in traffic and to take more risks in the wet and on street circuits. He definitely has the edge over Michael: he's more consistent over a lap, neater in traffic and bright enough to be able to swallow the best

numbers and shapes from Michael's telemetry. Michael, by contrast, can only be 43-year-old, seven-time-world champion, I'm-not-very-used-to-having-to-mix-it-with-the-drones Michael Schumacher. Whether or not this is a great thing for the team is another matter: if Hamilton or Alonso were driving a Mercedes alongside Nico, for example, would the car be further along the development line?

This in turn raises the question of the role played by the great test driver in today's F1. Is the descriptive, retentive old legend as valuable as the young guy who will put the car on the outside of the envelope as regularly as he sips his energy drink? Michael's return is of course as much a part of corporate marketing as it is of hard numbers, so that should always be taken into account. In the meantime, the big question, I think, is how good can Nico Rosberg become?

Stats



Most laps raced in which position

Schumacher
59 in 8th

Rosberg
83 in 10th

Points

Schumacher 29

Rosberg 77

Retirements

Schumacher 6

Rosberg 0



Sauber

Pérez

VS

Kobayashi

Given Kamui's thunderbolt arrival in F1 in 2009-10, his progress in 2011 was disappointing. Against rookie Sergio Pérez, he was outqualified eight-nine. Too much hype? Leaner and calmer, he has definitely made progress in 2012. As of the Hungarian GP, he is leading Pérez six-five in qualifying and has proved to be outstanding in the wet. There are fewer small mistakes, there is more method – and yet none of the fire has gone.

Pérez, meanwhile, is very fast and drives without structure and so with little thought to who he is racing against. His opportunity came in Malaysia, where the Sauber proved to be the class of the field. Fernando's tyres had gone and Sergio was only a couple of laps away from DRS activation. The Ferrari was a sitting duck, yet Sergio managed to clip a kerb and lose the win.



The two drivers, through mismanagement and error, have not yet been able to exploit the full potential of their Saubers. I suspect Pérez has a golden future: he is a Ferrari-contracted driver with plenty of Mexican support. The worry is Kamui. I think he'll continue to upstage Pérez in the second half of 2012, but whether he can retain a top seat without substantial sponsorship (tough to achieve in today's Japan) is a big question. To secure his future he needs the podium finish of which the C31 is eminently capable. →



Stats



Highest finish

Kobayashi Pérez

4th 2nd

Most laps raced in one position

Kobayashi
79 in 9th

Pérez
60 in 7th

Points

Kobayashi 33

Pérez 47

Retirements

Kobayashi 3

Pérez 2

Williams

Maldonado VS Senna

Considering how they drove in GP2, you'd think Bruno would match Pastor all the way to the podium. Not so: Pastor has the advantage on every circuit in virtually all conditions.

Maldonado improved over the winter of 2010/11, as he prepared for F1. He had always been fast: you don't pass quick drivers on the outside of Eau Rouge in Renault World Series without being a racer. By the time he was on the grid at Melbourne in 2011, he was a structured athlete who could shorten corners with little straight sections and apply load and power with discretion. So when the FW34 came along, he was in a great position to maximise its pace. Pressure from Alonso in the closing laps of Barcelona? He barely wavered.

Bruno has had less opportunity to develop: he's had to work harder than Pastor to find sponsors, and his Williams deal obliges him to sit out most FP1s, which shows in qualifying. He has more talent than people think and a great racing brain, as

proved in the changing conditions of Malaysia.

Bruno may be replaced by Valtteri Bottas for 2013 but he remains a good catch.



Retirements

Maldonado 2

Senna 1

Stats



Most laps raced in one position

Maldonado

72 in 13th

Senna

69 in 10th

Points

Maldonado 29

Senna 24

Toro Rosso

Vergne VS Ricciardo

This driver combo is born of alchemy. Ricciardo is a prodigy who has excelled in every category he's raced in, while Vergne is a former British F3 winner and WSR pace-setter – albeit beaten in that series by his team-mate, Robert Wickens.

There's something wild about these guys' driving styles; both create longish corners; both brake aggressively and late; and both know that this is a make-or-break season. To progress into 2013, one must dominate the other.

Daniel currently has the edge. Vergne drove beautifully in the wet in Malaysia but his races are often compromised by poor qualifying laps. I think this trend towards Daniel will continue. The STR7 isn't the easiest car to set-up on the grid but it's hard to be too critical due to the rookie status of these drivers. →



Points

Ricciardo 2

Vergne 4

Retirements

Ricciardo 1

Vergne 1

Stats



Highest finish

Ricciardo

9th

Vergne

8th

Most laps raced in one position

Ricciardo

106 in 14th

Vergne

106 in 15th

Force India

Di Resta VS Hülkenberg

Polished, contained, explosive: there's no doubt that Di Resta is not only a potential winner but also a potential world champion. Full credit, too, to Force India for hiring him on merit. And the replacement for Adrian Sutil is Nico Hülkenberg. The very Nico who had set pole for Williams in the penultimate race of 2010.

So far, it's been close. In qualifying, Paul leads six-five, although Nico has qualified as high as fourth. The standard of the driving of cars that have so far proved inferior to the Saubers has been extraordinarily high, and Paul and Nico work together well. So it's difficult, then, to predict who will emerge on top by season's end. The most accurate thing you can say is that the margin – either way – will be small enough to be more or less insignificant.

Paul's future is secure. And I think Nico, by the end of 2012, will have established himself as a driver who will be much in demand. The team's driver management is a case study in how to do it right: if they had a Sauber beneath them, either Paul or Nico – or both – could have won a race by now. As it is, the VJM05 is capable of having its day – it's high mid-field day, at any rate. On its bad weekends? Well, who knows where this team would have been with lesser drivers.



Stats



Highest finish

Di Resta

6th

Hülkenberg

5th

Most laps raced in one position

Di Resta

107 in 11th

Hülkenberg

105 in 10th

Points

Di Resta 27

Hülkenberg 19

Retirements

Di Resta 1

Hülkenberg 1

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Caterham

Kovalainen VS Petrov

Heikki had no trouble with his team-mate Jarno Trulli in 2010-11, and things are unchanged in 2012, despite the arrival of the podium-scoring Vitaly Petrov. That's confirmation of Heikki's steady improvement over the past few years – and of the high baseline from which he started in 2006-07. He lost his way at McLaren, in the slipstream of Lewis, but since then has worked hard. It shows in the results and in his driving. The corners are shorter; the initial turns softer.

Vitaly is a late-braking reflex driver – a Russian Vergne with Putin behind him as opposed to Helmut Marko. As such, he is under no external

pressure from Heikki or anyone else. He will be around for years and should score the odd podium finish, depending on the car he is in. Yet Heikki is more supple, and has more finesse. His best hope is for Caterham to produce a car as good as the Sauber; at worst, he should again score points and earn his place on talent alone.



Stats



Highest finish

Kovalainen 13th Petrov 13th



Most laps raced in one position

Kovalainen 109 in 17th
Petrov 110 in 18/19th

Points

Kovalainen 0

Petrov 0

Retirements

Kovalainen 1

Petrov 2

Marussia

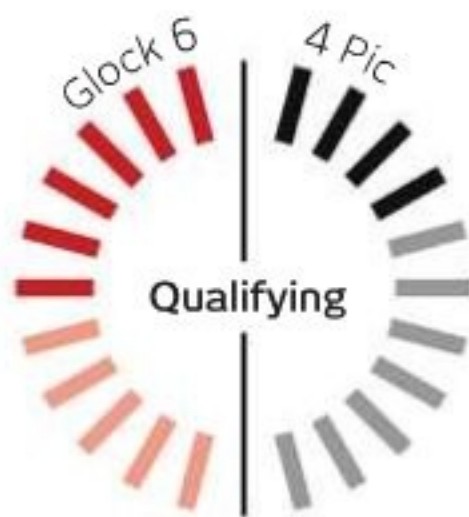
Glock VS Pic

Timo, as you would expect, is ahead here, but Pic is by no means shabby. He is close to his team-mate in terms of grid placing, yet lacks experience. He brings a ton of sponsorship money but, putting that aside, he is fast (as proved in WSR and GP2) and bright enough to learn from people around him (Olivier Panis and, yes, Timo Glock).



For his part, Timo, in a very difficult situation, is doing about the same job as Heikki. When times are this tough, and you're trying to help out in all departments, it's hard to focus on the driving. Yet Timo is doing that well. He knows he's a podium-quality talent; he also knows that, in today's world, he's lucky even to have a drive.

Stats



Highest finish

Glock 14th Pic 15th



Most laps raced in one position

Glock 131 in 18th
Pic 160 in 20th

Points

Glock 0

Pic 0

Retirements

Glock 1

Pic 3



HRT

Karthikeyan VS De la Rosa

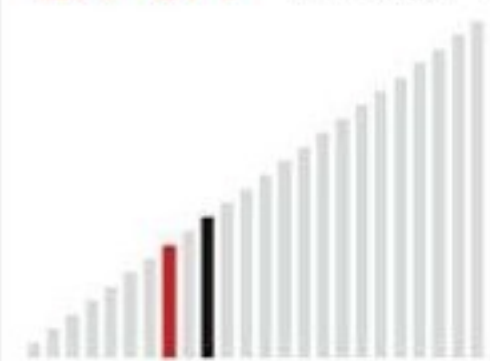


Stats



Highest finish

De la Rosa 17th Karthikeyan 15th



Most laps raced in one position

De la Rosa 127 in 21st
Karthikeyan 132 in 22nd

Points

De la Rosa 0

Karthikeyan 0

Retirements

De la Rosa 2

Karthikeyan 3

Pedro has looked very good all year, despite the smirks and raised eyebrows from outsiders over his career path. Pedro simply loves racing; and, although you'd struggle to call HRT a race team in 2012, sitting in an HRT F112 comes a whole lot closer than sitting in a McLaren simulator.

Pedro is as fast as his Japanese F3/F3000 results proved. And Narain is a reflexy, brave and skillful wet-weather driver who can also find solid grip in the dry. Pedro has outqualified Narain at every race up to the summer break, but sometimes performance has been closer than the stats would suggest. HRT is a happy team full of good people who love their motorsport. Good luck to 'em – and to Pedro and Narain. **F1**



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L O N D O N

A close-up portrait of Franz Tost, a middle-aged man with short, light-colored hair, smiling warmly at the camera. He is wearing a dark jacket over a light-colored collared shirt. The background is a soft, out-of-focus light blue.

Factfile

Date of birth

**20 January
1956**

Birthplace

**Trins,
Austria**

Team

Toro Rosso

Role

**Team
principal**

In
conversation
with

**Franz
Tost**

We catch up with the Toro Rosso boss to discuss everything from controversial pre-season double-driver swaps, to why Eddie Jordan reckons he's the best...

INTERVIEW JONATHAN REYNOLDS **PORTRAIT** GLENN DUNBAR/LAT

We're at the mid-point of the season: how would you assess Toro Rosso's year so far?

At the beginning of the season we were quite competitive – in Melbourne Daniel Ricciardo finished ninth and in Malaysia Jean-Eric Vergne finished eighth. So far I think the drivers are doing a reasonably good job. You can see that Daniel has a little bit of a speed advantage because he did 11 races last year, whereas for Jean-Eric everything is new. But the progress they are making is quite good. They are both very skilled drivers and I think that we'll see good performances from them in the second half of the season. From our side, we must improve the car's performance. It was quite competitive to begin with, but over the course of the season we've lost performance.

What do you put that down to – was it the other teams making better progress or did you go in the wrong direction?

No, we didn't go off in the wrong direction. We made some progress but where we gained 0.2 of a second, our direct competitors were gaining 0.3-0.4 of a second. That means that they are still in front of us. As the midfield is very close, it's not an easy exercise – but we have to find solutions.

Some people would say it is very difficult to develop a car with inexperienced drivers...

That plays a part, for sure, but that would be too easy an excuse. No, no, we must simply provide the drivers with a good, competitive car and then they will do a good job.



Have Daniel and Jean-Eric done enough to justify taking the places of Sébastien Buemi and Jaime Alguersuari?

It's a bit early to say. I always maintain that we need two seasons to evaluate the progress a driver makes. To come into F1 is one story. To stay in F1 and improve your performance is another story. That's in the hands of the drivers – with support from our side, of course. We have to give them the right package and then I'm convinced they'll do a good job because both of them showed good potential in junior categories.

It seems the teams are finding the 2012 tyres quite hard to understand – is that the case?

It's not easy but then tyres have never been easy. When more tyre manufacturers were involved, you had similar topics on the table. Also in those days, you had to think how to prevent graining or overheating the tyres and you had to manage tyre wear and degradation. From a race-strategy point of view, if you stay out too long you can lose a lot

of time. That's part of the strategy – to pit when it's best for the tyres, not just when your competitors do.

The tyres are keeping things very interesting for the fans...

Currently we have F1 races that are exciting because you can't predict the winner of the race as you could in the past. It's changed and that's good because F1 is entertainment.

Are you comfortable about Toro Rosso's future? There has been talk of a potential buy-out in the past...

I haven't heard anything about that. Fortunately we are in the hands of Red Bull and I hope it stays like this. It also depends on how successful we are. I hope we continue to improve and become a highly competitive team.

Cost-cutting is a big topic in F1 at the moment. Just how important is it to a team like Toro Rosso that F1 agrees on some cost-saving measures?

It's very important. The costs in F1 must come down. It's not necessary

to spend hundreds of millions – we can put on a show with less money. What's important is that a complete package is involved: currently we are talking only about cost-cutting for the chassis, not the powertrain. But the 2014 powertrain will cost us a fortune. I hope we can come up with a good solution quickly.


The other potential problem of the engine change is that one engine manufacturer could come out with an engine that's much better than the others...

This is the next big question. Currently the output from the engines is quite similar. In 2014 it could be the case that one engine manufacturer does a great job and their cars are in front. It's always the risk of bringing in a new engine.

Does it feel like a shame to interfere with the current winning formula?

Yes, but we have to do something for the future. The V8 as an engine is no longer on the right level for our environment or for fuel consumption. We can't ignore it. From this point of view I think the FIA has made the correct choice. The 1.6-litre, small-capacity turbo engine is the engine of the future and it's important that F1 shows this. In terms of entertainment we don't know where we'll end up.

Last November, Eddie Jordan told *F1 Racing* you were team principal of the season – why do you think he said that?

I don't know – you should ask him! The team principal of the year for me is the team principal who wins the title: simple as that. 

FRANZ TOST CV

2005 Becomes team principal at the newly formed Toro Rosso

2000 Is appointed operations manager for BMW's F1 programme.

1995 Becomes Ralf Schumacher's manager, following him into F1

1993 Appointed team manager at Willi Weber's F3 team, WTS

1989 Takes the role of team manager at EUFRA Racing

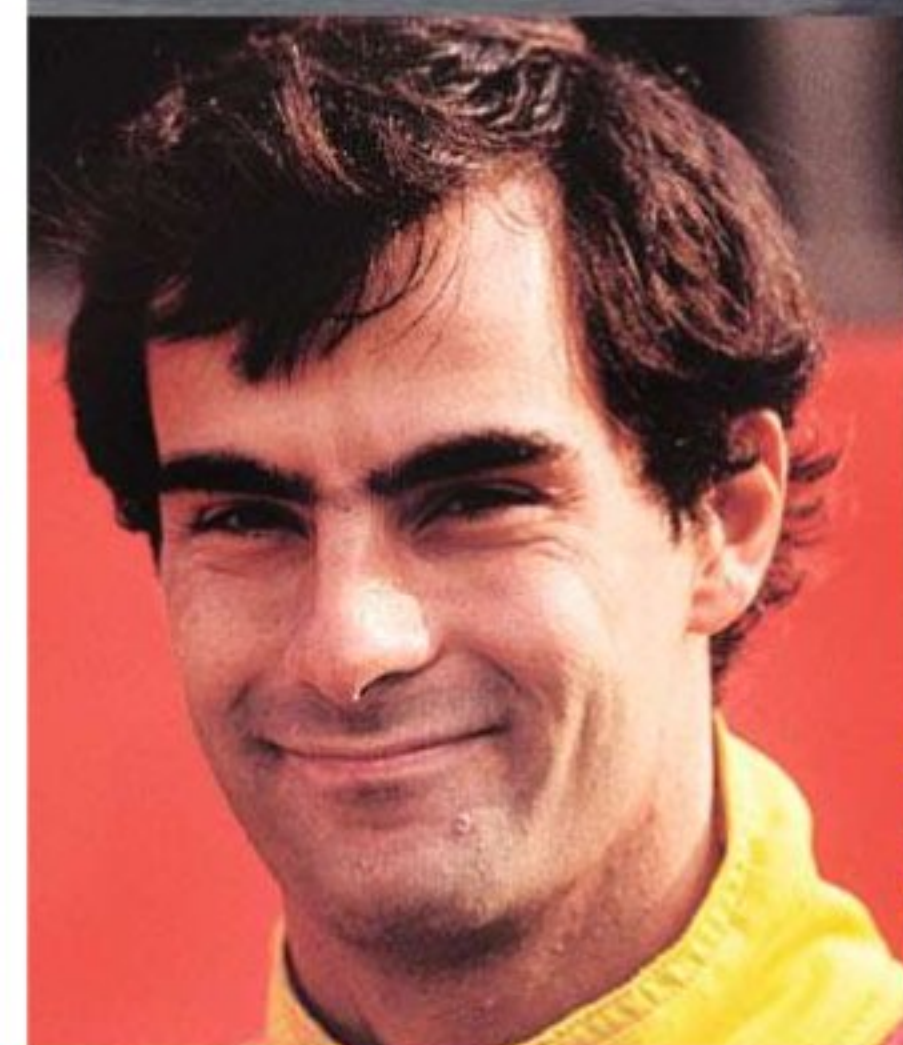
1986 Works at the Walter Lechner Racing School in Zeltweg

1985 Gains a sports management degree from Innsbruck University

1983 Wins the Austrian Formula Ford championship



ARRIVO





EDDERCI

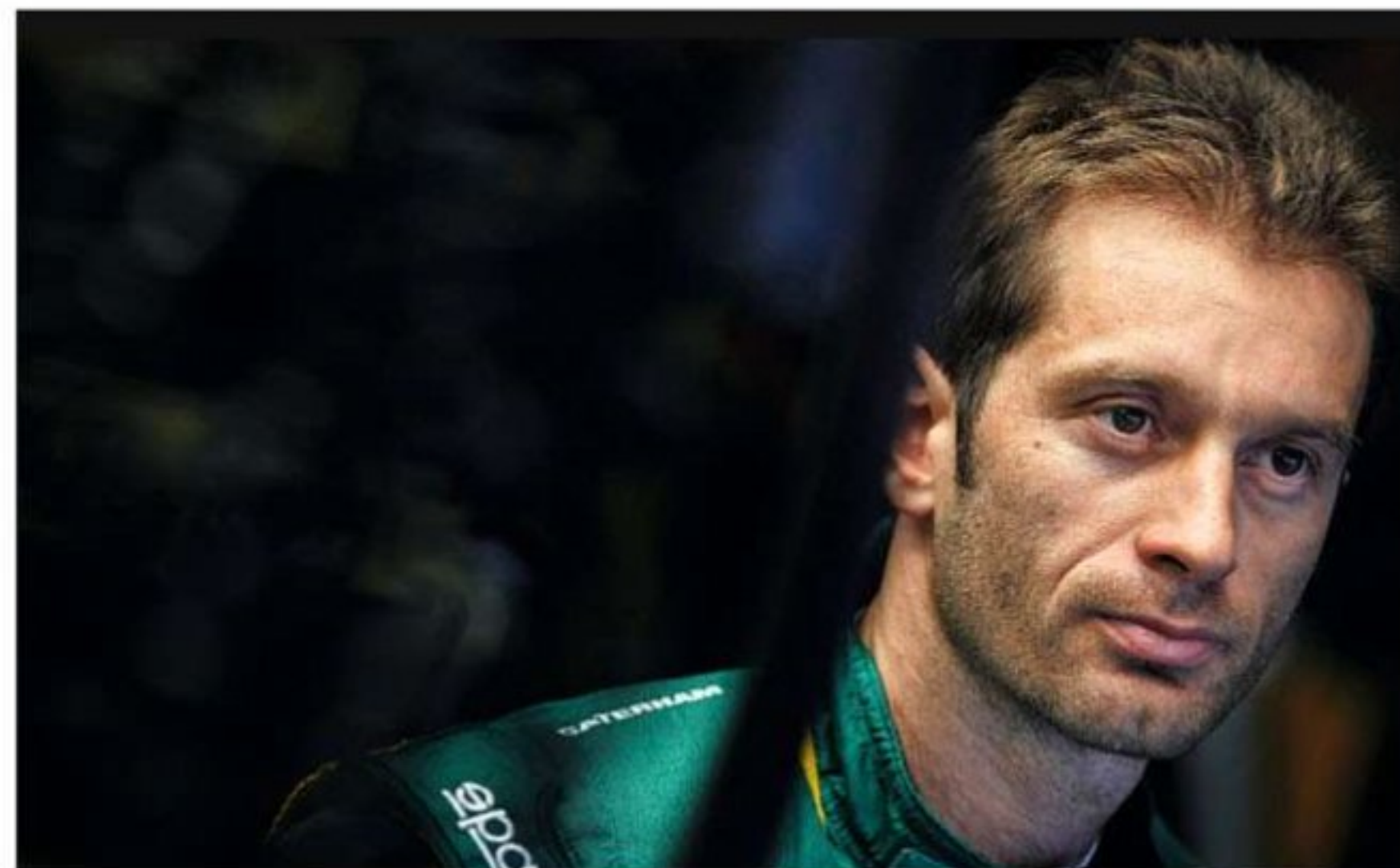
It seems astonishing, but the last Italian to win the drivers' world championship was Alberto Ascari back in 1953. So following on from Jarno Trulli's departure from the sport at the end of last year, **Will Buxton** poses the crucial question: why are there no Italian drivers in Formula 1?

PICTURES LAT ARCHIVE

Leaning forward onto a red plastic table, his chin resting against his right hand, index finger lightly tapping his top lip, Stefano Domenicali has the pensive look of a man deep in thought. But behind his glasses there is no glimmer of excitement in his eyes: no eureka moment. Instead there comes a sigh and a shrug of the shoulders...

"There's no magic answer to this question," he is forced to admit. It's a complex topic, but it's one that has almost been forgotten against the backdrop of one of the most exciting and unpredictable seasons in living memory. But it is a question that needs answering. Why are there no Italian drivers in Formula 1?

The lack of an Italian presence on the driver front should feel akin to hosting the World Cup without Brazil. And yet Italy, which we have always held to play an integral role in this sport, has a history of coming up short. For while Ferrari have been almost constant contenders over the past six decades, and Italy →



INSET: CHARLES COATES/LAT

ranks second only to Great Britain in terms of the sheer number of drivers to have participated in grands prix, the last Italian world champion was Alberto Ascari... in 1953.

"It's an unfortunate situation because we have such a great tradition," Domenicali concurs. "We've had some very talented drivers but we never had a champion who really stood out, who was very different to the others."

The statistics would seem to back this up. The 98 Italian drivers to have competed in F1 have

collected just 43 wins between them, and the last one of those came six years ago for Giancarlo Fisichella in Malaysia. The last F1 point to go to an Italian driver went to Vitantonio Liuzzi in the 2010 Korean Grand Prix.

But while a clear line of Italian succession always seemed to exist in years gone by, thanks mainly to Marlboro's limitless chequebook, today there is no such path.

"Trulli and Fisichella consolidated their presence," explains Italian driver manager

Enrico Zanarini. "Then we had Vitantonio Liuzzi who went via the Red Bull path, which seems like it was a difficult path to follow. Liuzzi was very unlucky and he was the last of a certain generation with accomplished performance and records and victories who deserved to have a place in Formula 1. Liuzzi, Trulli and Fisichella are all gone now and nobody else really stands out in a way that would make them deserving of a drive without bringing any sponsorship. That is the reality of fact."

And that is the crux of the problem: money. Notice that Zanarini doesn't claim there are no talented Italians around – merely that none of them could reach Formula 1 through talent alone. A man who understands this problem only too well is Luca Filippi, last season's GP2 runner-up and a man who outscored eventual champion Romain Grosjean in the second half of the year. And yet while Grosjean is now the toast of the F1 paddock, Filippi's name barely registers a mention.

"Romain deserves everything he has achieved so far, but then he has received support from Gravity, Lotus, Total... so he has had somebody who believed in him," Filippi explains. "You get to a certain point where you *need* somebody to believe in you. If it weren't for PDVSA, Maldonado wouldn't be in Formula 1; if it weren't for Telmex, Pérez wouldn't be in Formula 1. For me, the situation we have in Italy is just that nobody cares about helping us. I need to go out and look around to find small sponsors who bring only €15-30,000 euros. It doesn't help me at all, but it is all I can get."

Italy's most recent points scorer agrees.

"Basically I think the economic situation is very difficult at the moment. It's not just a problem in Formula 1," says Liuzzi, who now plies his trade in the Superstars Series. "In Italy, it means it is difficult to find sponsors or supporters who can help push you to the top level of any category. Obviously in terms of their brand, Ferrari are the focus in Italy, but Ferrari are always Ferrari and have always been there. It is a shame that drivers do not have the same level of support, but it is nothing new."

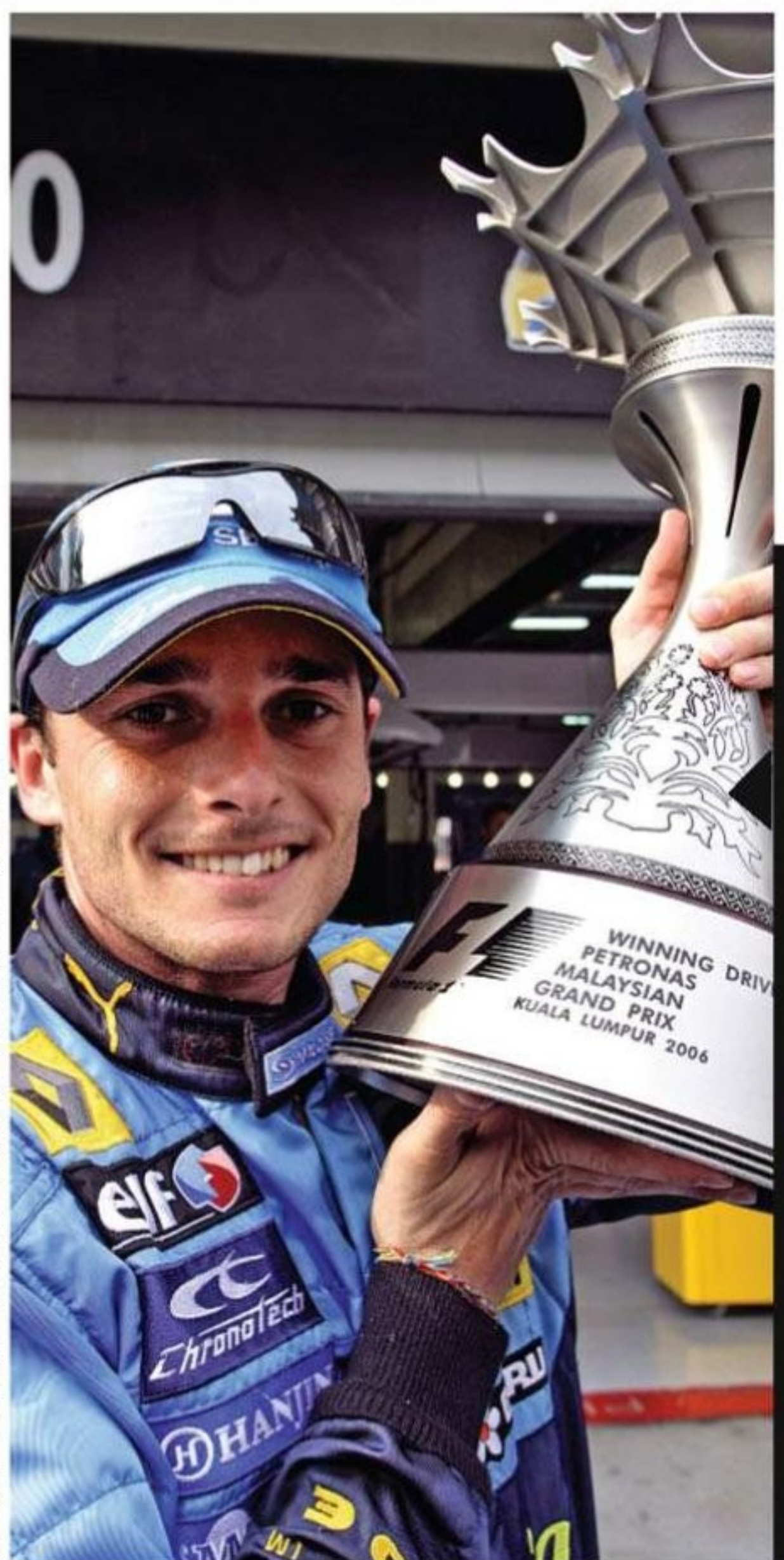
There are other factors at play, too, for modern Formula 1 has backed itself into a →



Last Italian points scorer
Vitantonio Liuzzi,
Korea 2010
Force India



Last Italian race winner
Giancarlo Fisichella,
Malaysia
2006
Renault





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NOTHING IMPOSSIBLE

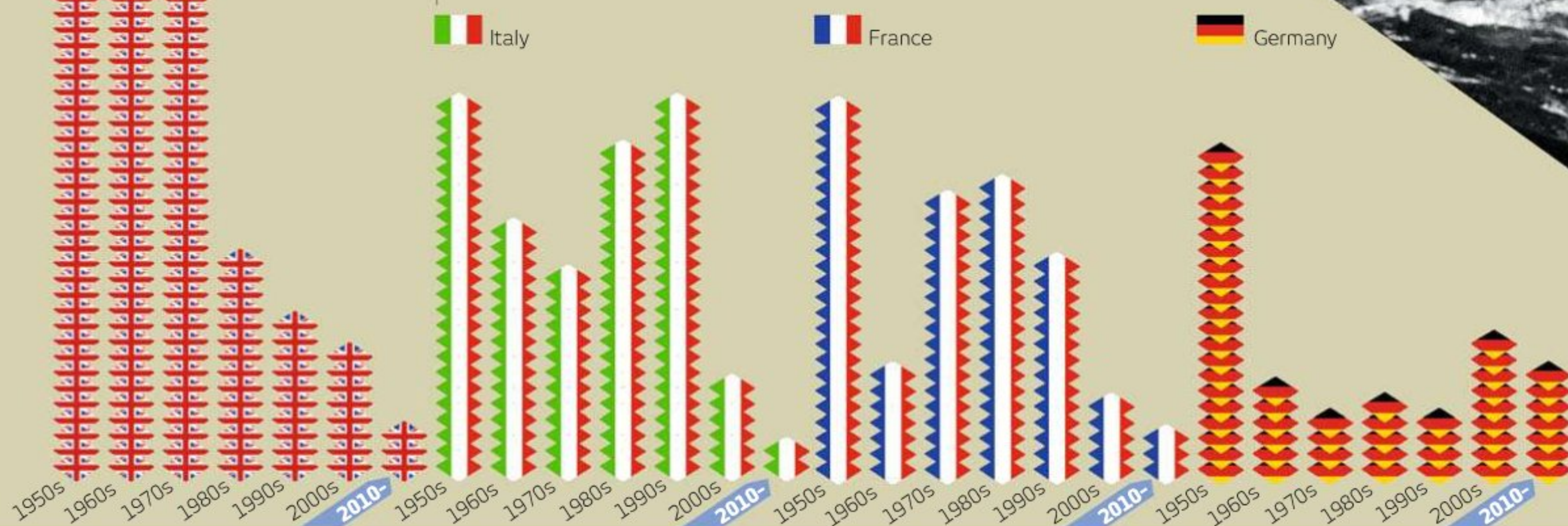
WWW.TORGOEN.CO.UK/STOCKISTS

 United Kingdom

It's been a slow decline...

A lack of one-off drives has led to fewer drivers competing overall, but the increasingly international flavour of F1 has reduced the amount of drivers from traditional motor-racing countries

NUMBER OF HOME-GROWN DRIVERS PER DECADE



corner with regard to its future generation. Ever since a fresh-faced Sebastian Vettel scored points on his debut, the trend has been to look for ever younger talent. Red Bull have led the way in hiring and firing, declaring drivers to be unsuitable for purpose and disposing of them seemingly before they've had chance to reach puberty. But when Vettel stunned F1 and won his first race at just 21 years of age, the same day that Italian Giorgio Pantano took the GP2 title aged 29, it was always going to go this way.

"Everybody is rushing for drivers to be ready at 20, which now I don't believe is right," Filippi explains. "There are always exceptions, but I believe you can get better and better up to 30, like Jenson Button did.

"What I think is a bit chilling is when you have a situation like the one with Vergne and Ricciardo, where they've been given a chance to drive in F1 without proving themselves in GP2. They were only 21 and 22 and they made us look older when I actually think we are the right age. Look at Alguersuari – he still has so much to build on. I'm sure that if he had the chance to race again then he would get better and better.

For now, he's too young for anyone to look at him and say 'yes' or 'no'.

"Romain is proving what I have always said: his first chance in F1 came too early. The same is true for me. I have to say that the 2012 Luca Filippi is a much, much better driver than the 2007 Luca Filippi who came third in GP2 and was called by Honda to drive their F1 car. My pace is so much more consistent; my mind is stronger. I thought I was good in 2007: I thought I had some ability, I thought I had some talent. And I obviously proved it because I got the chance to test in Formula 1. But if I were to compare how I was then with how I am now, now I would kick 2007 Luca Filippi's ass."


But even if a young driver is considered good enough to merit a shot at the big time, testing limitations mean he may never get a chance to show potential employers what he could bring.

"That is why we are pushing so hard to have more testing on the track," Domenicali explains. "Sooner or later there will be a boomerang effect if we are not able to react quickly. We have said that since the beginning. But unfortunately, we are alone in this. We are a lone voice among the

middle of all the others. We must respect the other position, but this is a very clear warning."

Formula 1 could well have lost its first Italian champion in nearly 60 years in the form of Pantano, Filippi or – if he can't find the megabucks to buy himself a shot at F1 – current GP2 standout Davide Valsecchi, but the sad fact is, we'll never know. With the European economy in meltdown and drivers unable to secure the backing required to get a chance with even the smallest of teams, F1 is further poisoning its future generation's prospects through a combination of restrictive testing and a desire to determine long-term ability before it's had a chance to mature – to the detriment of those who have made their mistakes, ironed out the creases and proved themselves at a level just shy of the pinnacle of global motorsport.

This year, Italy finds itself without an F1 driver for the first time in four decades. Which country will find itself in that situation come 2013? And which nation will suffer in 2014?

The writing is on the wall; a warning scrawled in Italian tears. Perhaps it is time we started paying attention. 

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The drive of his life

Having floundered in the top flight with McLaren, **Heikki Kovalainen** has found his swing again with Caterham, focusing on improving his driving in the cockpit – and out on the fairway, too

WORDS JONATHAN REYNOLDS





Cast your mind back to the 2009 Brazilian Grand Prix at Interlagos. As Jenson Button is mobbed by the world's media, having sealed the title with a sterling drive to fifth place, just along the pitlane, the man he'll replace at McLaren in a matter of months cuts a forlorn figure. Heikki Kovalainen, one-time GP winner, has just limped home outside the points in 12th position, some nine places behind his illustrious team-mate Lewis Hamilton. Without a drive for the following season and with his reputation having taken a battering over the preceding six months, Kovalainen's relatively brief tenure in F1 is already on the downslope. How could a driver who had shown enough potential two years earlier for McLaren to come knocking at his door have slipped so far, so quickly?

Fast forward three years and the contrast between the 2012-spec Kovalainen and the one in Brazil three years ago couldn't be more stark. Now aged 30 and into his third season with 2010 start-up team Caterham, the affable Finn is content and relaxed as we meet him on a rare weekend off for a round of golf at the Goodwood Downs course. And as it turns out, it's a fitting location to discuss exactly what happened in that difficult second season at McLaren.

"Sometimes golfers just lose their swing and they don't know what's wrong," offers



Under pressure in that final year at McLaren in 2009

Kovalainen. "It looks the same but the ball just doesn't fly in the right direction. That was the kind of feeling I had at the end of my second year at McLaren. I don't think I was performing very well. There were other things that were influencing me and I think I let it get to me. I wasn't a happy chap.

"When I was younger, I was competing with Nico Rosberg, Robert Kubica and Lewis Hamilton, but when I arrived in F1 it seemed like I lost out. It was really strange. After three years in F1 I sat down and thought: 'Shit, this isn't working. Something's not right; I should be able to deliver better performances.'"

Kovalainen realised that changes had to be made, and made quickly: "Physically I wasn't in a good condition. I wasn't necessarily unfit, but my health wasn't right. My energy levels were drained and I was kind of burned out. I did a lot of tests and analysis to see what was going on and I think I found the key issue. Since then I think my balance throughout the season has been good. My energy levels and health and fitness stay in the right area and my head is in the right place all the time, too. Even if I have a bad day at the office it doesn't faze me, it doesn't knock my confidence. I know exactly what I need to do and how to fix the problems, whether it's with the car or something else.

"It's thanks to my earlier struggles that I made changes – had things gone better for me, I might not have looked at them. When things start to go really wrong there are two options: you can either think 'I give up, I can't do this' or you can think 'I can definitely do this but something's not right.' I never thought I couldn't do it."

In December 2009, Kovalainen took the decision to sign with one of the three new teams joining F1 for 2010, Lotus Racing (now Caterham). He has spent the following two-and-a-half seasons without scoring a single world championship point but, looking back, he candidly admits it was absolutely the right decision for him to join the fledgling squad: ➔

Relaxed and confident alongside team-mate Vitaly Petrov (left) at Caterham in 2012



PHOTOS: CHARLES COATES/LAT; LORENZO BELLANCA/LAT; STEVEN TEE/LAT; ANDREW FERRARO/LAT

"At McLaren there were other things influencing me. I wasn't a happy chap"

"Had I gone somewhere in the midfield and tried to hang on in there, with the way my routines were it would have been a disaster: I'd have done maybe one or two years somewhere, then I would've been knocked out of F1. Instead, I started from the beginning again and it gave me time. It wasn't about pressure – I've always performed at my best under the most pressure – it was just about giving me time to fix the issues I had."

"I needed some time off to get my body functioning correctly. As it was a new team, I had a lot of time to myself rather than doing promotion and everything else. That gave me the chance to really start building in the right direction. Last year was the first year of that change. Now I'm comfortable pushing myself to the limit, not just on the track but workwise too. I know when I need to have a day off."

It's common for racing drivers to trot out the clichéd 'I'm driving better than ever' line but, in Kovalainen's case, it's probably fair to say that he is – even if it's not necessarily easy to spot on the timing screens. By consistently harassing the

Challenging for points out on track with the team he has helped make best-of-the-backmarkers



tail-end of the midfield in what is widely regarded as inferior machinery, the 2008 Hungarian Grand Prix winner has steadily rebuilt his reputation to the point where, with his contract at Caterham coming to an end, he could once again become a man in demand.


"Last year I felt I was driving at the level you really need to drive at in F1," he says. "Generally, the way that everything went in 2011 in terms of setting up the car and fixing problems was very good. Even if I had a bad race or a bad day I was always on top of it and I felt fully in control. I felt I was able to drive on the limit all the time. This year I feel I've carried on doing that."

There's no doubt that of the three teams that joined F1 in 2010, Caterham have made the most progress. The addition of KERS, Renault engines, Red Bull gearboxes and a growing technical department have all been significant, but so has the determination of Heikki, who has emerged from the 'number two' role he assumed at McLaren to become a genuine team leader.

"You can see from our lap times that we're going quicker and that's what it's all about," he says. "Since the start of the season, no one in our team has been happy with our performance – we were clearly targeting being higher up. But instead of being sad about it, people have just worked extremely hard and focused on what is, in my opinion, the right area – aerodynamics."

"We're looking ahead all the time. Most weekends, we can at some point challenge a couple of cars ahead of us, but of course you always want more. We want to be regularly outqualifying the Toro Rossos and maybe one of the Saubers or the Force Indias. Once we start doing that, once we join that group seriously, then it's game on."

It may soon be 'game on' out on the track, but back on the golf course it's 'game over' and we head back to the clubhouse.

"I feel like I've found my swing again," says Kovalainen with a smile. He has and, thankfully for him, not just on the golf course. 

PHOTOS: CHARLES COATES/LAT; LORENZO BELLANCA/LAT; ANDY HONE/GETTY IMAGES

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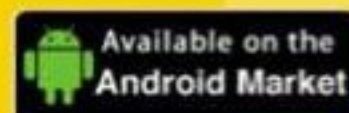
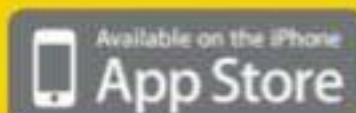
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Lauda VS Hunt

As *Rush*, the epic retelling of the 1976 title battle between James Hunt and Niki Lauda, enters post-production, the Austrian legend meets up with *F1 Racing*'s **Alan Henry**, who witnessed their incredible rivalry first-hand

PICTURES LAT ARCHIVE

For so many different reasons, this was the most obvious subject for a film about F1, yet it had been entirely neglected over the years. You might have thought that casting James Hunt – who pipped Niki to that year's title by a single point in one of the most dramatic championship finishes in the sport's history – would be relatively easy. But perhaps the very thought of trying to find someone who could convincingly play Niki Lauda through an F1 season that saw his appearance so drastically altered by the flames that engulfed his blazing Ferrari 312T2 at the Nürburgring, was simply beyond the capabilities of most casting departments.

To be brutally honest, with the exceptions of *Senna* and *Le Mans*, not since John Frankenheimer's *Grand Prix* in 1966 has anybody even come close to making a half-decent motor-racing epic. But that could all be about to change as →

Lauda leads team-mate Regazzoni at the start of the 1974 Spanish GP, the first win of the Austrian's career



Ron Howard's *Rush*, set for release in 2013, will retell the tale of the rivalry between good friends Hunt and Lauda in what is still one of the most dramatic championship battles ever fought.

It's now 19 years since Hunt passed away following a heart attack. How sad is that? The thought of James and Niki sitting at the back of the set, passing wry and ironic comments, is wonderful, but would have been a guaranteed migraine factory for any director. Hell, it's going to be difficult enough with Niki alone. "This is total shit, why can't you guys listen?" might be a typical interjection from the Austrian ace.

I caught up with Niki to chat about the film. He was cagey and cautious. He didn't want to talk too much about it because he was obviously locked into the promotional run-up to the film's official launch. Suffice to say, he was highly impressed with the efforts of director Ron Howard and screenwriter Peter Morgan. "They

understood," he says crisply. Those two words encapsulated the biggest compliment anyone could ever expect from Niki Lauda.

Niki admits he had a huge bond with James that extended back to a time when they were battling it out in 1-litre F3 cars in 1970; James in a Lotus 59 and Niki at the wheel of a McNamara. They were only 18 months apart in age and both progressed through F2 to the very threshold of F1 pretty much together. But whereas Niki cultivated the role of ascetic pragmatist, Hunt was the English public schoolboy who shot from the hip and asked questions afterwards.

"I first met James way back in 1971 when I joined March for my debut F2 season," Niki recalls. "In those days I was living in London, renting a flat near Victoria station from Max Mosley, who was then one of the March directors. Back then, James was then having a pretty tough time in Formula 2. The works

March chassis was crap, so James overdrove it and shunted a lot. But he was just so tough and resilient. And although we were from very different backgrounds, we were both rebels. Neither of our families were prepared to pay for our racing, or even help, so we had to make our own way. It was bloody tough."

James and Niki were so different in character, yet the fact that they were blooded together in the junior formulae helped create a special bond. Both trod rocky roads to the top, Niki with March, BRM and eventually Ferrari; James with Hesketh and McLaren. Niki won his first grand prix at Jarama in 1974, James a year later at Zandvoort. And on that day in Holland he beat the Austrian by a couple of lengths, signalling to Niki what he might have to expect in the future.

"No question, James drove beautifully and there was a great deal of excitement in the British press," says Niki approvingly. "If I am



Hunt's maiden win at the Dutch Grand Prix in 1975 for Hesketh



honest, I would have to say that I took things a little easier than I might have done as my main priority was scoring points that day. Even so, James's success took him through a psychological barrier, dammit!"

The 1976 season was an epic. Hunt had switched to McLaren as Emerson Fittipaldi's replacement, while Lauda was coming off the back of his first championship year with Ferrari. Before the start of the season, the clever money was on Niki. But Niki knew enough to know it wasn't going to be a walk in the park.

Yet nobody could have imagined it would have turned out to be quite such an unpredictably dazzling season. Niki had the initial advantage, but he was so badly burned in the Nürburgring shunt that few people believed he would ever race again, let alone be able to challenge for a

championship. James, so it seemed, had been left facing an unchallenged, open goal.

It had also been a bruising time for Niki for less obvious reasons. While in hospital he had received a visitor in the form of Emerson Fittipaldi. And the Brazilian driver brought with him news that clearly startled them both.

"Emerson told me Ferrari had approached him after my accident and asked if there was any possibility of his switching to Ferrari to replace me. The approach had been made by Ferrari team manager Daniel Audetto, so when I saw him for the first time after the accident, I asked him what in God's name he thought he was doing. He just said: 'Oh, it was Mr Ferrari.' Now I'm a pretty pragmatic kind of a guy, but to have the feeling you were being cast aside and given up on was a bit of a painful experience.

"By the time I got back into the cockpit for the Italian GP at Monza, I was two points ahead of

James in the battle for the title. I finished fourth and James did not score, so now I was five points ahead with three races to go. Then James was retrospectively disqualified from the British GP, handing me the win, and I went into the Canadian race 17 points ahead."

On the morning of that race at Mosport Park, there was a moment that splendidly characterised the affectionate relationship between Niki and James. They were in adjoining hotel rooms and James was awoken by a knock on the door. He opened it, and Lauda marched in, toggled up in helmet and racing suit, and announced: "Today I vill vin zee the world championship!" – then marched out again.

"We didn't let our personal friendship get in the way of our professional relationship," says Niki. "But I would say that James drove the last few races of 1976 – and the first of '77 – just about as well as any other time in his career." →



Suzuka 1976. Lauda retires amid truly frightening weather conditions, handing the title to Hunt (right)



Controversy at Brands Hatch: Hunt wins, but is retrospectively disqualified, passing victory to Lauda


And yet, in the end, Lauda simply got up and walked away from the championship. Here was a man who had stared death in the face at the Nürburgring and hadn't been the one to blink first. But at the end of the day, on a near-flooded track at Fuji, there were no more heroic reserves left for Niki to draw upon. His empty tank warning light had long since stopped flashing. It was on all the time now.

"I left Fuji before the end of the race," says Niki. "I told the guy who was driving me to the airport to keep his ears open to the radio to get the result. But just as we were approaching the airport, the car went through a tunnel. 'Yes, the race is over, but I didn't hear the result,' my new friend told me. But I didn't have to wait long to discover that I was no longer world champion. The Japanese Ferrari importer was waiting for me at check-in. I caught one glance of the expression on his face and thought: 'Oh, shit.'"

"James and I were both rebels. We had to make our own way"

Hunt, who with third place had won the championship by one point, was back at the circuit, partying until the small hours as the rain abated. But Niki had no regrets about retiring his Ferrari after only a couple of laps.

"Some people thought I'd taken a calculated gamble that James wouldn't finish, but that's bullshit," says Niki. "All credit to James because he'd taken advantage of the fact that I'd missed three races. It was a hard time for me. People were saying I was finished, that I should be chucked out of Ferrari. But James made some very supportive comments about me at the time, which I really appreciated. It was proof of the depth of our friendship. I miss him to this day."

Yet the real personal sadness came with James's death in 1993. Niki was visibly shaken. "What can you say about a man like this dying from a heart attack at such a young age?" he ponders. "James was one hell of a guy and we had plenty of good times together. Only after he'd gone did I hear that he'd had problems with depression, drink and drugs. But the willpower he used to confront them was fantastic. I'm not sure I would have been so strong." 

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THE MAURICE HAMILTON INTERVIEW

A lunch time chat with
the legends of F1,
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"I went straight into the wall. Cars came into the side of me. I went down in the cockpit. It went quiet. I looked up... they were coming at me again"

From causing one of F1's biggest ever pile-ups in 1973 to winning the 1979 title, **Jody Scheckter** has since added 'weapons training' and 'buffalo sausage production' to his rather interesting CV...

PORTRAITS ANDY TIPPING

Jody Scheckter hasn't changed one bit since he walked away from F1 at the end of 1980, one year after winning the world championship with Ferrari. Conversations with Jody have a tendency to be brief and to the point. He has no time to waste on trivia. Or, if truth be told, the past.

This is accentuated by his immense focus on the future as he draws together the many strands that have developed from his pioneering work at Laverstoke Farm in Hampshire. The original aim was simply to produce the best food possible for the Scheckter family but his pursuit of perfection has been overtaken by the complexities of organic farming in its many forms.

It is a venture that has developed a life of its own and now some 130 staff are needed to run the operation in the manner Scheckter requires. No excuses are given or accepted. Just as it was when he was racing hard, Scheckter asks no favours and expects none in return.

Today, Jody has been up since the early hours, pounding round the 2,500-acre estate in his Mercedes GL 4x4, chasing up a problem with the mozzarella 'being a bit too grainy' and nailing a potential difficulty involving sausage skins.

His pillared 18th-century stately home shows no evidence of Scheckter's former career. For that you have to cross the courtyard and enter an immaculate stable. Typical Jody: there is no fancy lighting or formal presentation, but virtually all the single-seaters he's ever raced are parked side by side on the gleaming tiled floor. They are all there, from the Formula Ford Merlyn to McLaren, Tyrrell and Wolf F1 cars, pride of place going to the Ferrari T4. The only notable absentee is the six-wheel Tyrrell P34. Now there's a question for the lunch table...

Maurice Hamilton: You've always had a thing about food, haven't you? I remember the 1975 British Grand Prix: you were staying at a hotel →



THE MAURICE HAMILTON INTERVIEW

in Northampton with Patrick Depailler. My dad and I were in the same hotel and I recall being in the restaurant when you sent your steak back...

Jody Scheckter: That would be right. Coming from South Africa, we're much better educated about different foods. But, yes: I love my food.

MH: Am I right in thinking that you had no agricultural connection at home at all. What was the family background? What did your father do?

JS: My uncle raced and my father had a Renault dealership. He gave me a second-hand R8 to go to work – but that soon became a racing car. I had no money, but I did what I could with it, scrounging bits and pieces.

MH: You did enough to get yourself into a Formula Ford and win a place on the Driver to Europe scheme. What did that involve?

JS: A ticket, a tow car and a trailer. I had £3,000: that was it. Ford helped and let me work on the car in their workshops in Boreham. Then I started winning – and crashing – I suppose.

MH: I was at Brands Hatch for the 1971 Race of Champions on the famous day of your first race.

You were spectacular. You would come through Clearways completely sideways. I mean, *totally* sideways. Did you drive like that because you enjoyed the exuberance of it all?

JS: The Renault had a locked diff, so probably that's where I got it from. Did I lead?

MH: You did.

JS: And then I spun and came back into second. Right?

MH: That's correct. Looking back, you were pretty wild. You were fortunate you didn't have any major shunts. You talked your way into the F3 Merlyn. Did you believe that you could do it?

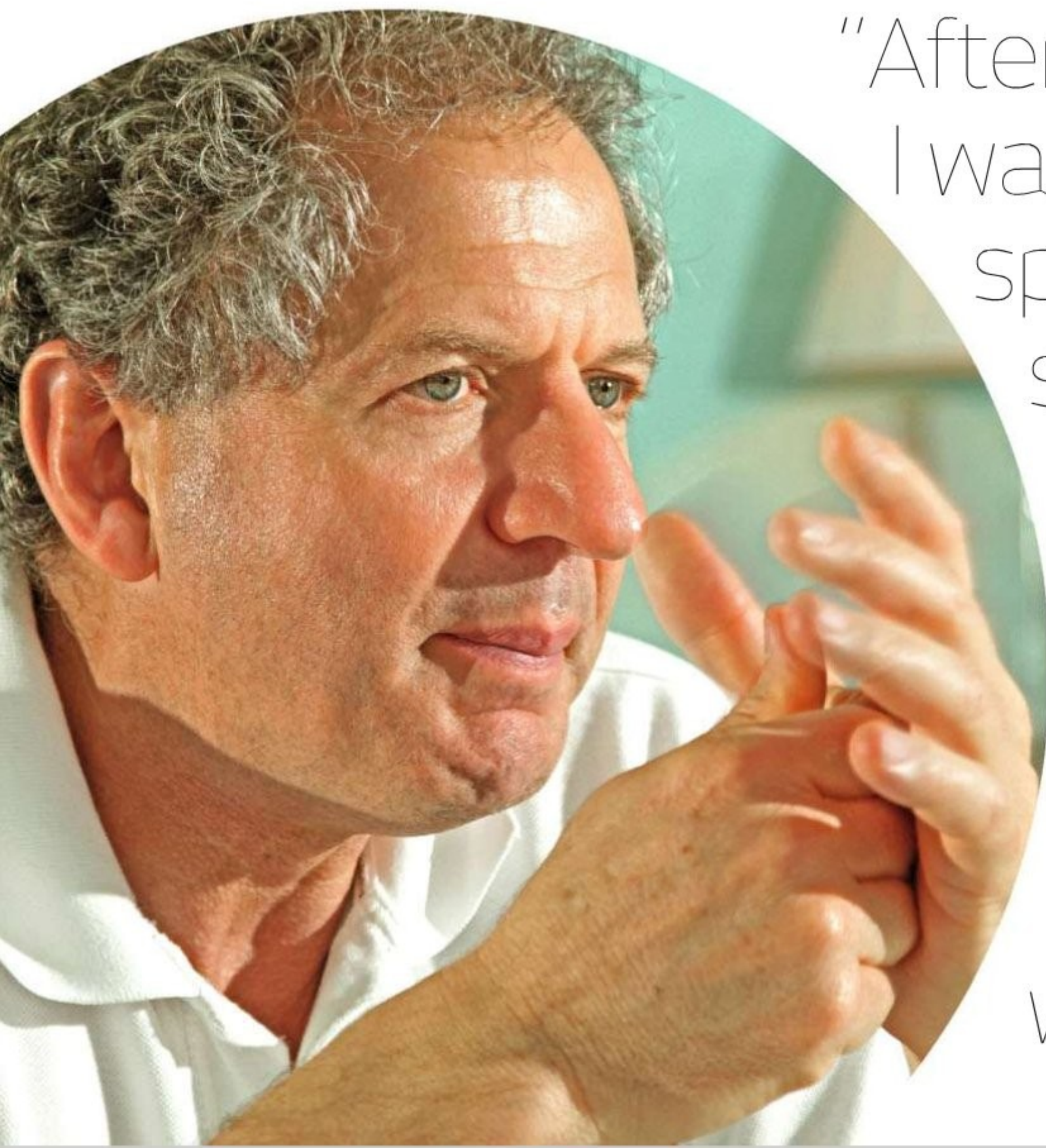
JS: Not really. I just tried to go as fast as I could. When you move on to bigger teams, you realise that your responsibility is to finish. I did well in Formula Ford, so I thought I could do okay in Formula 3. Then I thought I could also do Formula 2. Then it was: 'Well if I can do well in F2, can I get into F1?'



MH: So there was none of this burning ambition from the outset to be world champion?

JS: Not at all. I didn't follow F1; I didn't know much about it. Surtees and McLaren offered me F2 drives and eventually I took McLaren.

MH: That McLaren M21 you have is a lovely-looking car. I saw you win at Crystal Palace. That was a great circuit to watch. What was it like to drive? It was incredibly narrow...



"After the crash I wanted the spare car. They said: 'Forget it. Surtees is looking for you.' Three of his cars got written off"

JS: It was great to drive on. I loved it... okay, please help yourself to vegetables. Everything has been grown here of course.

MH: Thank you. What do we have here?

JS: Four different types of sausage... smoky buffalo, Cumberland, wild boar, pork-and-leek.

MH: I'll have a go at them all! Moving on to F1, you had a pretty spectacular third F1 race. That was in the McLaren M23 at the 1973 French GP at Ricard. Emerson Fittipaldi collided with you...

JS: I had been leading the whole race till then. He dived inside, I took my line and we crashed. It was not a place where you could overtake. I ran very little wing so I was quick down the straights and they couldn't get past me. Emerson came to the garage shouting at me: 'Young driver... blah, blah, blah!' I told him he'd had 42 laps or whatever to get past me and, if it happened again, I'd do the same. Then I walked away.

MH: A bit difficult to walk away from the next race, the British Grand Prix at Silverstone after that first-lap pile-up...

JS: I was lucky. Were you there?

MH: Yep, sitting in the Woodcote grandstand. I remember dust flying in the air as your left-rear got on the grass at the exit. The next thing I saw was your car completely broadside with the rest of the field coming flat-out through Woodcote. Then you rolled forward and nosed into the pit wall. I don't know about you, but it was absolutely terrifying from where I was sitting.

JS: I had my brakes full on and full lock on. I thought if I let go of the brakes, the car would go round – but it just went straight into the wall. Cars were hitting each other before they got to me. They

came into the side of me. I went down in the cockpit, it went quiet, I looked up – and they were coming at me again.

MH: I can't imagine how that must have felt.

JS: In those days – I'm not saying I'm tough or anything – I wanted to get in the spare car. They said: 'Forget it, you'd better hide: Surtees is looking for you. Three of his cars got written off.' But the good thing was there was no fire and, apart from one broken ankle, no one was hurt.

MH: It certainly did your career no harm because for 1974 you went to Tyrrell. How do you reflect on your three years with Ken?

JS: They weren't great years. Towards the end, I didn't agree with the six-wheeler, which meant I wasn't popular. They said the frontal area was less – which it wasn't. They said the brakes would be better. If it was flat and you were braking in a straight line, it was okay. But when you turned in, one wheel lifted up. These cars went well in Sweden, where I won. When I look back, I was joint leader of the championship when we left Monza in 1974 and then the brakes broke in Canada. I had four wins with the team so maybe I did better than I thought at the time.

MH: What about Ken's authoritarian way? Did that bother you?

JS: Not really. There was only one time when I got really upset. Ken always used pretty bad hotels. I'm about to book into this place in Long Beach when I realise it's an old people's home. One guy comes in and says: "Have you seen Mrs Whats-her-name in the last few days? She's dead in her room." I turned around, walked out and booked in somewhere else. Then the mechanics wanted to leave as well. Ken gave me such a lecture, and I was so upset about that – I hadn't told the mechanics to leave.

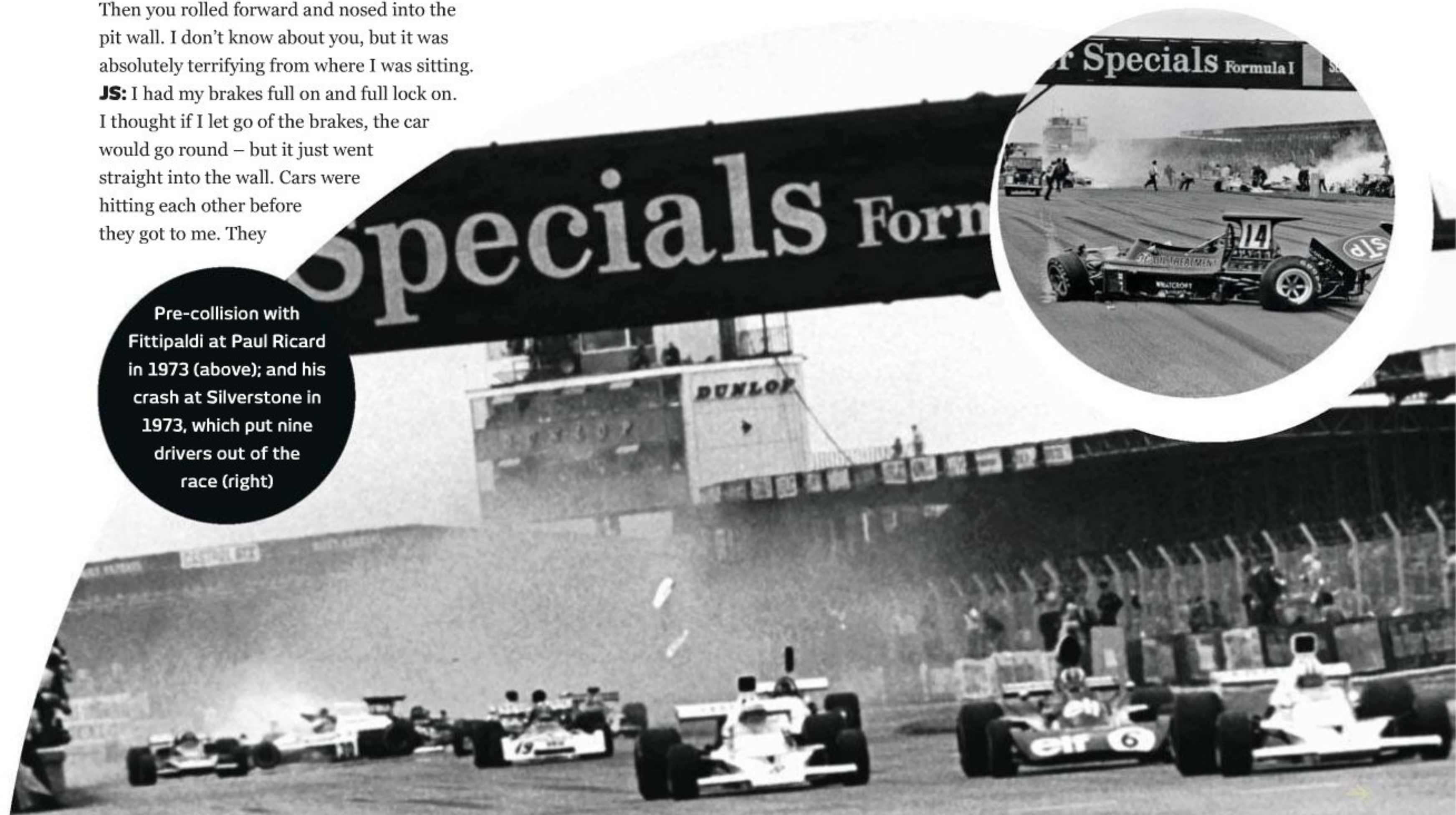
MH: I have to say, these sausages are brilliant... the Cumberland is my favourite. Moving on: you went to Wolf in 1977. Most people would usually hesitate before going to a brand new team...

JS: I just felt that my time was up at Tyrrell. There wasn't a lot else around. Walter Wolf had the money and I was told he delivered 80 per cent of what he talked about, which is still a lot more than anybody else did. So I said: "If I can get the right people around me, I'll join you." I got Peter Warr to come in as team manager and Roy Topp, my mechanic at Tyrrell, also came. It was a great year.

MH: And was the WR1 a nice car to drive?

JS: On the short circuits, very nice. We did a lot of testing. I sent a telex to Mr Ferrari at the →

Pre-collision with Fittipaldi at Paul Ricard in 1973 (above); and his crash at Silverstone in 1973, which put nine drivers out of the race (right)





THE MAURICE HAMILTON INTERVIEW

start of the season and asked if we could use Fiorano. No one had done that before. He agreed.

MH: Was he talking to you at that stage about possibly driving for him?

JS: I had been talking to Ferrari for three years so, yes, I must already have had the discussion by that stage. It's not that I knew him; I just thought I'd take a chance and send the telex. But, then again, I suppose they wanted to have another car go round Fiorano to see how it compared.

MH: Peter Warr was another authoritarian guy.

JS: He was fine, but you had to accept that everything needed to be his idea. It was okay until I wanted to leave at the end of the year. I wanted to go to Ferrari then but it didn't happen. So the second year with Wolf deteriorated a bit.

MH: And the second car, the WR5, was not as good. Which maybe explains why that one and the P34 are not in your collection?

JS: That's right. It's interesting... Patrick Head did a lot of design on the WR1, but not the WR5.

MH: So how did the Ferrari thing start off? Did you get a phone call?

JS: I had been down there a couple of times. Eventually, I just thought of a figure. I went to him and said this is how much I want; he eventually agreed and we signed a contract.

MH: It was \$1.2million, wasn't it? A big amount back in those days.

JS: Yeah, it was. And then there was prize money on top of that. I think probably only Niki Lauda was earning more than me. I did a two-year contract. Mr Ferrari was a tough guy – but it was a great experience.

MH: Did the Old Man play one driver off against the other, as we've been led to believe?

JS: He did. But I didn't feel it for my part because it wasn't really necessary with me and Gilles Villeneuve. But he made people anxious around each other within the company. He had journalists phoning up all the time and giving him information. I sent a telex after each race saying, "This is what I thought," and I made sure it went to Brenda Vernor, his secretary, because, being English, I knew she would translate it correctly. If it had gone to anybody else then stuff would have been, let's say, lost in translation.

MH: You're pretty direct – that's putting it mildly – and he must have appreciated that.

JS: [Grins] Yeah, we had good relationship and he respected me a lot, but Gilles, he loved. That was affection, really. Gilles spoke the language so that probably made things a little easier.

MH: Gilles was a law unto himself in many ways. But he was an honourable man.

JS: Very much so. People thought he was this carefree hooligan. But he wasn't. He liked that



Scheckter leads Ferrari team-mate Gilles Villeneuve at Monza in 1979 in the Ferrari 312T4 (left). He keeps the car at his farm today (right)

"At Long Beach, Ken Tyrrell checked us into an old people's home!"

image, so he showed off a lot. When he was in front of people, he'd wheelspin out the pits. Going from Monaco to Fiorano, he would drive perfectly normally until he got to within half a mile and then he would start revving and wheelspinning. He cared about safety; he worked closely with me when I was running the GPDA at that time. We always saw eye-to-eye. We never had any arguments.

MH: There's all this talk about Gilles being the fastest and he stayed right behind you at Monza in 1979 to let you win the championship. I'm sure he would have honoured any agreement but you were controlling that race, weren't you? You were going just as fast as you needed in order to win.

JS: Absolutely. I'll give you a bit of background, which sums up Ferrari. At the race at Silverstone, they gave me the wrong number of laps to go and I lost a place. I said: 'You lost me a place!' and, of course, that was all over the Italian newspapers: 'Scheckter says this about Ferrari.' I got the call

to be in Mr Ferrari's office first thing Monday morning. You know we were saying when we looked at the T4 before lunch how the exhausts were in the wrong place because they were in an area that affected the ground effect?

MH: Because of the flat-12 engine not being the right shape compared to the Cosworth V8?

JS: That's right. Well, we needed to have that changed and Mauro Forghieri [chief engineer] didn't want to do it. I went to Maranello after Silverstone and I said to Gilles: "Listen, we've got to stick together and tell them to change the exhaust-pipe layout." So the Old Man says to me: "What's going on? What have you done?" I say: "Listen, why are we fighting among ourselves? We need to fight the others." So when the Old Man asks what can we do, I say we want the exhaust pipes moved and Gilles says: "Yeah, we really need them moved." So they did that for Monza and it was lovely because suddenly we had more revs and more downforce.



We had qualifying tyres and Gilles was using one set after another and the newspapers back then were full of Gilles breaking lap records. He loved all that. But I put on hard tyres and worked on the car. I was quicker than Gilles in the race and, as soon as René Arnoux dropped out of the lead and I was in front, I just cut the revs and backed off for the last few laps to make sure.

MH: Your final year, 1980, wasn't so good. Two things I remember: you had a horrendous shunt during qualifying at Imola, which was three races before the end of the season. That shunt was much worse than people think, wasn't it?

JS: It tore my neck muscles and the bodywork was dented by my crash helmet. Yet when I tried to re-enact that later on, it wasn't possible to get my head even remotely close... I was about 15cm off when I tried my best. I couldn't believe my neck had stretched so far. The G-forces were incredible. It was a huge shunt; the engine was flattened and knocked the cams out.

MH: When you woke up on race morning, you knew all about it?

JS: It was like pulling a leg muscle and then you've got to go and run.

MH: I suppose your dilemma was that if you didn't race, people would say you couldn't be bothered because you were about to retire? They secured your helmet in some way to stop your head from rolling about too much and I remember writing that you had sandpaper of some sort on the back of your helmet and on the headrest to give you some grip and stability. But you had to hold up your head with one hand during the race and you finished eighth. You were fortunate more damage wasn't done.

JS: I was fortunate in a lot of accidents.

MH: My other memory was being in Montréal for the penultimate race when you didn't qualify. You looked very unhappy.

JS: I just couldn't get the tyres to work. I came up to John Watson during the last few laps →





THE MAURICE HAMILTON INTERVIEW

"Mr Ferrari made people anxious around each other. He respected me a lot, but Gilles he loved"

and we banged wheels going into a corner. I was desperate to qualify but John didn't realise. It was only afterwards when he saw I hadn't qualified that he understood why I did that. But, you know, that's the way Gilles was killed. Didier Pironi was quicker and Gilles was getting desperate to overtake cars.

MH: You did qualify for the final race at Watkins Glen. When you finished, you got out of the cockpit and walked down the nose... Your chief mechanic was in tears – not about the nose – but because that was it.

JS: That was Antonio Bellentani; I used to call him 'Vecchio Uomo' [Old Man]. He died recently – I went to his funeral. I had nicknames for all of them. Some were African names. I had a good rapport with the guys.

MH: Not all drivers have good relations with their mechanics...

JS: Those are not the good drivers. The ones who lead, they bring the team with them.

MH: Do you watch the grands prix now?

JS: Yes; I enjoy them. I wouldn't change it much from how it is now, although I think the tyre situation is lousy for the drivers. But I must say, at Valencia for example, the standard of driving is very high. I've never said that before. A lot of drivers were driving very well. Saying that, it's getting a little rough and I think that's because they're getting away with it. You can maybe touch without getting into trouble – if you touch them right. That was always the case. If you were overtaking someone, you had to get right alongside. Because if you weren't, they could always move over on you. If you were diving up the inside, you really had to make it stick and put yourself in a position where they couldn't do anything. Then there could be no argument.

MH: Your career in international motorsport was pretty meteoric; less than ten years from arriving at Brands Hatch in a Formula Ford to driving for Ferrari – and then walking away. You seemed to disappear as quickly as you arrived because that was the last we saw of you for about ten years. During your time in the United States, you made a fortune with weapons training systems. But you did all this with no reference whatsoever to your former career.

JS: Nobody in racing knew I was there. I went to the States, not as a world champion but as an ordinary guy looking to set up a business. I rented a little flat. We started from the bottom again. For ten years I never went to a grand prix. Then an old journalist mate of ours, Jeff Hutchinson, asked me to come up to the Canadian race. When I got there, I seemed to be more famous as the last Ferrari world champion than I was for actually being world champion.

MH: When you finally walked away from motor racing, was it deliberate?

JS: I stayed in racing for a while. I tried to set up something like the IROC (International Race of Champions); a race with the same cars and different drivers from around the world. I worked on it for a year but couldn't get it going.

MH: So why did you choose the States? What was the plan there?

JS: When I was living in Monaco, I saw a magazine advert about this weapons simulator system in which you interacted with a movie and a gun. I thought it was a great concept. A friend of mine did some research and more or less said that this was something that American law enforcement wanted. There was a system where you had a two-sided target on the range: there was a friendly face and a non-friendly face; it would swivel round and you had to make a decision. Ours was a movie which had a laser and you had to make a decision within a movie which was made up of real incidents. It was a first for simulating small arms.

MH: How easy was that to sell?

JS: The postal department, if you can believe it, were our first customers – they ordered ten. Then



I heard the National Guard wanted a system. When I asked what would be their dream, their ideal, they said it would be to have a whole squad – 12 people – training together. At that stage, I think I had five people in the company; I think two of them were consultants. We started trying to develop that. About four or five months later, the National Guard came and tried the prototype – and it worked. That was a great start.

MH: How many people did you have at the end?

JS: There were 280 of us. We were in 35 different countries, had 95 per cent of the world market and our last three years generated \$29million, \$60million and \$100million.

MH: Blimey. How did you find running a business because you were very much your own man as a racing driver? You liked to do things your way. Suddenly, you've got to deal with people – which, er, was never your strong point.

JS: Yeah, I was never so good at pleasing people. I looked upon this in terms of becoming the team manager and not the driver. I hired professional shooters – the best in America. I hired them because the best competitive shooters trained the trainers in the American army. They were my 'drivers' if you like. They knew what to do. They guided me on what was needed.

MH: What lessons, if any, did you learn from F1?

JS: I learned to develop technology very quickly. I took a lot of those lessons into that industry and found I could develop things quicker than anybody else.

MH: So they would say: "Oh, we can't do that in the time available..." and you would say: "It can be done," because it's what you knew.

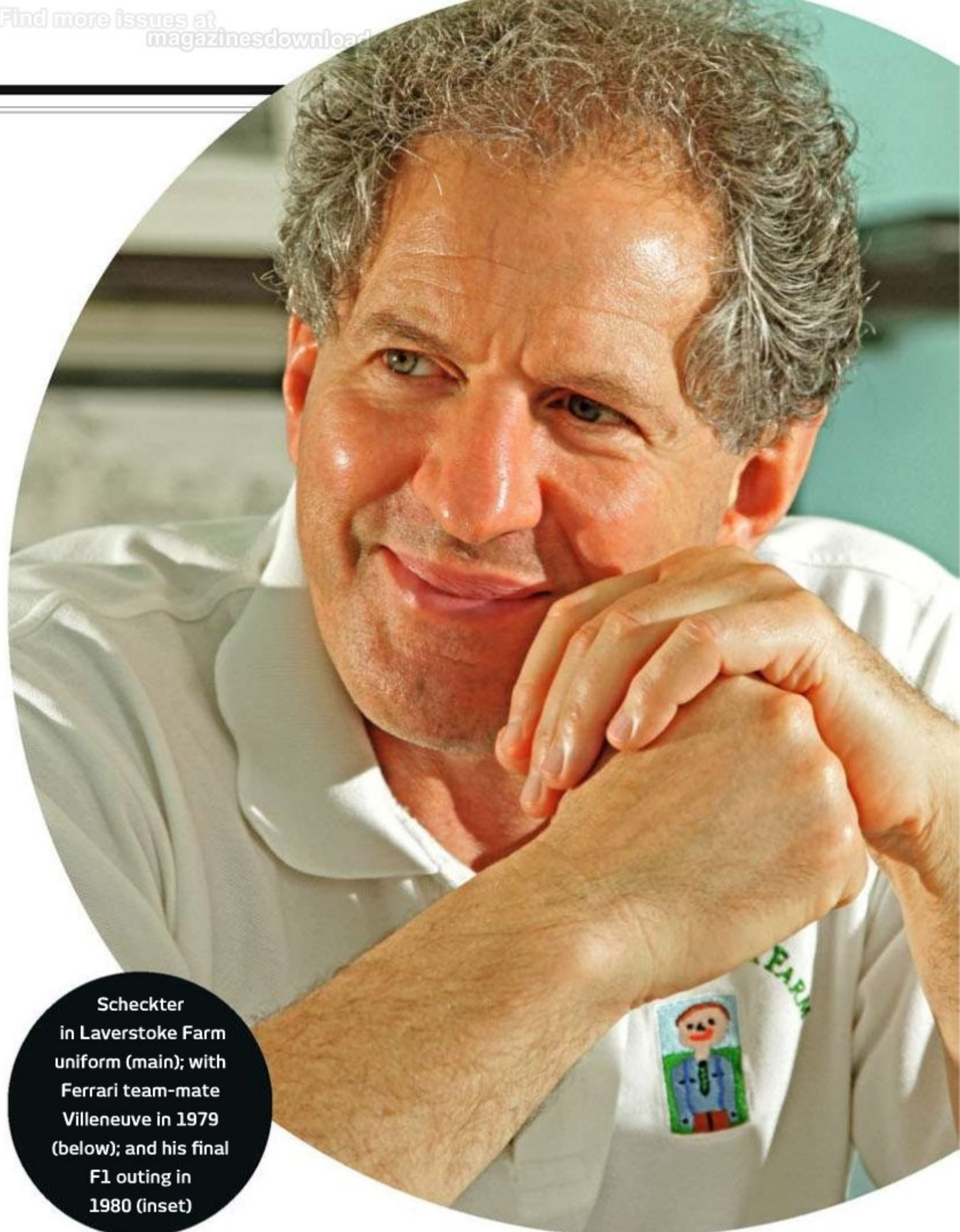
JS: Absolutely. My management skills were not great. But I had to get it done. You don't have to be nice. You can have a fight, as long as you get it done. But as you get more experience, you get more done without conflict. It was about making an effort. That's the one thing with racing; when the race starts, you're there or you're not.

MH: So how come you made the step from that life to farming in England?

JS: Clare, my wife, is English; she wanted to come back; the shareholders wanted to sell. It was the right time, so we sold up completely, came here and bought 530 acres. I began by more or less saying that I wanted to produce the best-tasting, healthiest food for myself and my family. That's how it all started.

MH: Are you saying it wasn't a business as such?

JS: No, it wasn't. I wanted to get the best chickens, the best lamb, the best beef cows. I started reading books and going to lectures all over the world, learning about soils and everything like that. I probably approached it the



Scheckter
in Laverstoke Farm
uniform (main); with
Ferrari team-mate
Villeneuve in 1979
(below); and his final
F1 outing in
1980 (inset)

same way as people approach Formula 1. You examine every single element from the beginning – which, in this case, is the soil. Apart from seafood, everything we eat comes from the soil; that's how important it is.

I studied the grasses, and then the animals. I felt I couldn't produce good meat by sending an animal away on a truck because it gets distressed. You can have the best soil, the best grass, the best animals – but, if you stress any one of those things, you have bad meat.

So I built an abattoir and then I bought a charcuterie place because I wanted to make salami. Then another place to do sausages. I was trying to do everything myself, from the land to the plate. I set up one factory making mozzarella and ice cream, and another one producing pies and pâté. We're doing miles too much.

MH: How do you make all that pay?

JS: We don't – and that's one of my big problems at the moment. I thought that if I produced the


best-tasting, healthiest food, people would buy it. I had so much to learn. I had some special breed pigs that were beautiful, organic, best-tasting... I went to sell them and was told they were the wrong shape! They gave me £5 each... okay, this is the selection of ice creams. I would challenge anyone to tell me that this is not the best ice cream in the world.

MH: What is it? It's amazing.

JS: Liquorice. The next one is dolce, then peppermint, then banana and then passion fruit. It's hard to market but the ice cream, which is made from our buffalo milk, is probably our most superior product. We're always looking to improve things.

MH: Typical racer: you mean as in 'you can always go quicker'?

JS: Exactly.

MH: You haven't changed, have you? What a lovely way to end this lunch. It's been really nice. Thank you. 

Way back when

Famous Formula 1 occurrences from the month of September, many moons ago...



THIS
MONTH
42
YEARS
AGO

Here's one we made earlier

When Matra chose not to supply Ken Tyrrell with chassis for 1970, Tyrrell built his own car in secret while running Jackie Stewart in a customer March 701. The Tyrrell 001 raced for the first time at the Oulton Park Gold Cup on 22 August, but made a stunning GP debut on 20 September at the 1970 Canadian GP. Stewart qualified on pole and led for 31 laps until he was forced to retire with a stub axle failure. The 001 managed second place in the first race of 1971, after which it was replaced with the almost identical 003, which Stewart took to his second world title.



THIS
MONTH
19
YEARS
AGO

Forever The Professor

Having fallen out with Ferrari at the end of 1991, Alain Prost took a sabbatical from Formula 1, returning as Nigel Mansell's replacement at Williams for the 1993 season. It was as if he'd never been away. 'The Professor' won seven of the first ten races and, despite a three-race blip from Hungary to Italy where he managed only a single third place at the Portuguese Grand Prix on 26 September 1993, he followed Michael Schumacher over the line in second to clinch his fourth world championship. And after that he really did stop racing in F1...



THIS
MONTH
52
YEARS
AGO

An American dream come true

His F1 career was short with just 48 starts, but when he won at Monza on 4 September 1960, Phil Hill became the first American to win a GP outside the United States, as all previous American victories had been at the Indy 500 when it was a round of the F1 championship. With Jack Brabham already champion and most of the British factory teams missing, Hill easily secured pole with his Ferrari D246 and, having overtaken team-mate Richie Ginther at the start, led a processional race that ended with a Ferrari one-two-three. He went on to win the title for the Scuderia in 1961.



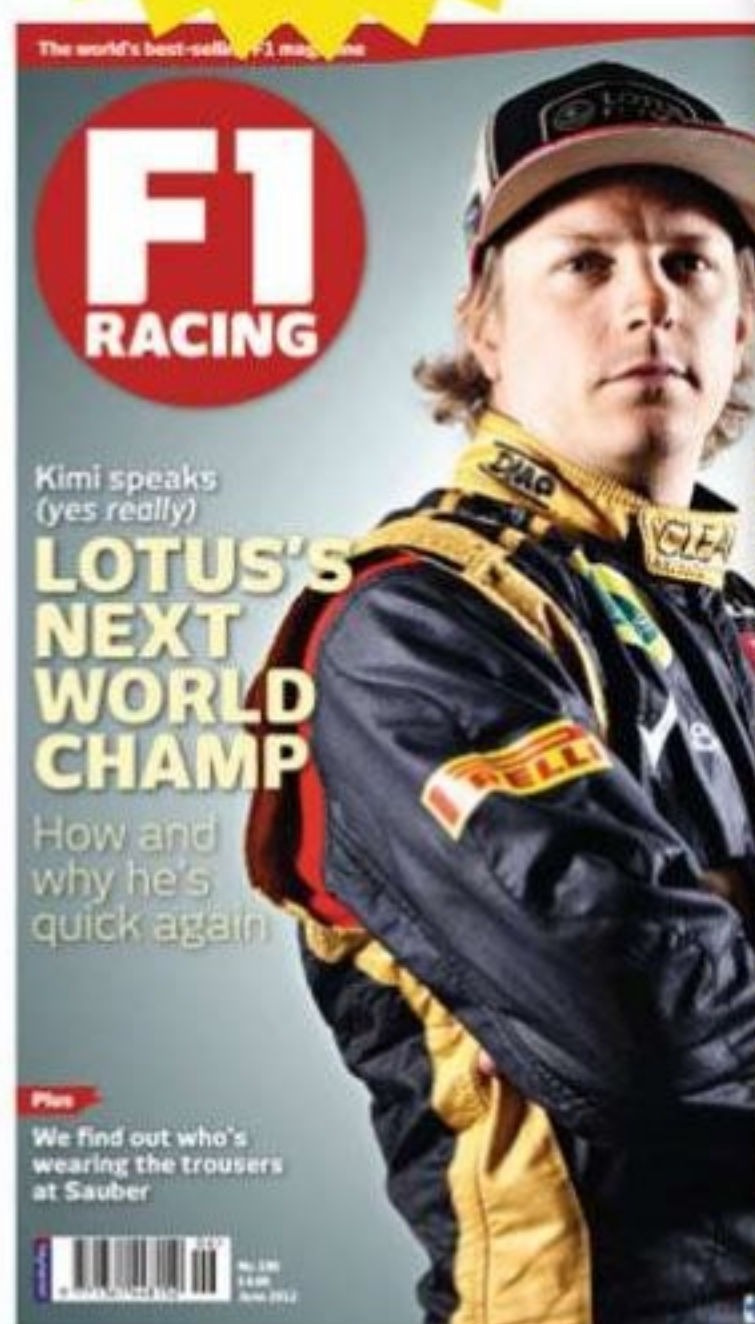
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Lewis returns to winning ways

The Brit converts McLaren's 150th pole into his second GP victory of 2012 in Budapest

GERMAN GP

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Alonso is the first to make it to three wins, extending his championship lead
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A truly excellent array of facial hair was on display at Hockenheim
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Now there's a blast from the past – Schuey sets the fastest lap



HUNGARIAN GP

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Lewis gets to go off on his summer hols with another win in the bag
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Grab a pen and sign a policeman... it's all the rage over here
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The fastest pitstop of the race certainly stood Lewis in good stead



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MAIN PHOTO: LORENZO BELLANCA/LAT. INSETS: CHARLES COATES/LAT, ANDY HONE/LAT



RACE DEBRIEF by Pat Symonds

German Grand Prix

22.07.2012 / Hockenheim

Win three for Alonso... Puncture for Hamilton... Penalty grid-drop for Vettel



Are we seeing a pattern emerge?

After the ever-changing results of the first seven races, Fernando Alonso extends his championship lead with his third win of 2012

The German Grand Prix has alternated between Hockenheim and the Nürburgring for the last four years now. Some purists may feel this degrades the race, particularly since Hockenheim was extensively remodelled for the 2002 GP. It is easy to forget that even in Britain the grand prix alternated between Brands Hatch

and Silverstone from 1963 to 1986 and, before this, Aintree hosted near-alternate races with Silverstone. I'd argue that interchanging the venue adds to the spectacle. The intervening two years generally involves such evolution of the cars that many of the lessons of the previous event become less relevant, thus making the outcome less predictable.

Despite the current fad for criticising Hermann Tilke, I believe the new circuit is far superior to the old one. It has kept all the atmosphere that the stadium section provides, while the new section adds a few reasonable overtaking areas and some interesting, if not particularly challenging, corners.

As far as the all-important tyres are concerned, severity here is low and the resurfacing done in 2010 has made the circuit even kinder to the rubber. The smooth surface has a low propensity to graining although warm-up is slightly slow. Given the crazy European summer, it was certainly the warm-up that was on the teams' minds as just 20 minutes into first practice, the inevitable rain started to fall. Prior to this, Button had set the fastest lap but, in reality, the times were irrelevant as the teams' carefully laid plans were scattered like the showers that sporadically dampened the track.

Second practice was worse as the rain became persistent and, although there was a period mid-session when conditions improved, the rain soon returned. A red flag brought the session to a premature end when Schumacher lost control coming into the stadium. He claimed it was due to a lapse in concentration, but it is likely that the simple act of altering some cockpit settings meant that a small flick of oversteer on a puddle could not be corrected in time.

The difficult conditions of the first day of practice meant it was difficult to assess some of the major upgrades brought to Germany. McLaren, still smarting from their recent loss of pace, had brought a major upgrade centred around a deeply undercut sidepod entry area, while Lotus had some interesting additional ear-like intakes on either side of the roll hoop. It is likely these are the entry to a new type of wing-stalling device, probably aimed at achieving the switching action used by the old F-ducts, without needing the driver to take any action.

Saturday practice started in good weather, with the teams all out trying to make up for lost time. In spite of the lack of knowledge of the tyres on this circuit, few made long runs on both types. There was some data for the harder tyre but little, if any, useful information on the softer one. The difference was expected to be small as the selection made by Pirelli was hard and medium, the same as was used at Valencia, and without the double step of compound stiffness that generally livens up a race.

While Q1 was dry, the radar showed a solid belt of rain advancing from the west. It did not take much computing power to determine that this would soon hit the track, and so it was, with Q1 being the only dry session. Joining the usual suspects this week was Vergne, although it has to be said that Webber, Button, Grosjean and Schumacher all ended up in precarious positions. These days nothing can be taken for granted in the early stages of qualifying.

Anyone who had suffered an elevated heart rate in Q1 as a result of trying to save tyres, soon realised their gamble had been unnecessary as loud claps of thunder were heard before the start of Q2. Sure enough, as predicted, the rain started just one minute before the session began. With everything pointing to the rain getting heavier, there was a rush to get out on intermediates while the track was still drivable. With the asphalt getting ever wetter, a few chose to change to the full wet tyre. It was a mistake as Hamilton, with temperature building in his intermediates, went fastest. Of those who changed, Grosjean and Rosberg were the biggest losers, taking no further part in qualifying.

The rain stopped just as Q3 began, but the surface water meant full wet tyres were needed. Times started to tumble as drivers acclimatised to the ever-changing track conditions and the worst of the water was dispersed. Each minute counted as first Hamilton, then Webber and then Vettel vied for the fastest time. Canniest, though, was Alonso. After a single timed lap →

View from the paddock

A matter of interpretation

The German GP started at 2pm, but the stewards had their hands full hours before that. FIA technical delegate, Jo Bauer, asked them to investigate both Red Bull cars after finding a possible breach of the technical regulations relating to engine mapping. Not everyone in the paddock had heard the news though – a journalist told Christian Horner that his team could be in trouble.

After a period of squabbling behind closed doors, word came out that Red Bull had escaped punishment because the way the regulation was written left it open to interpretation. Having escaped once, Red Bull were back in the stewards' room later in the day as Sebastian Vettel was investigated for his off-track pass on Jenson Button two laps from the end of the GP. Once again the decision hinged on an interpretation of the rules, only this time Red Bull lost out and Vettel was demoted to fifth.

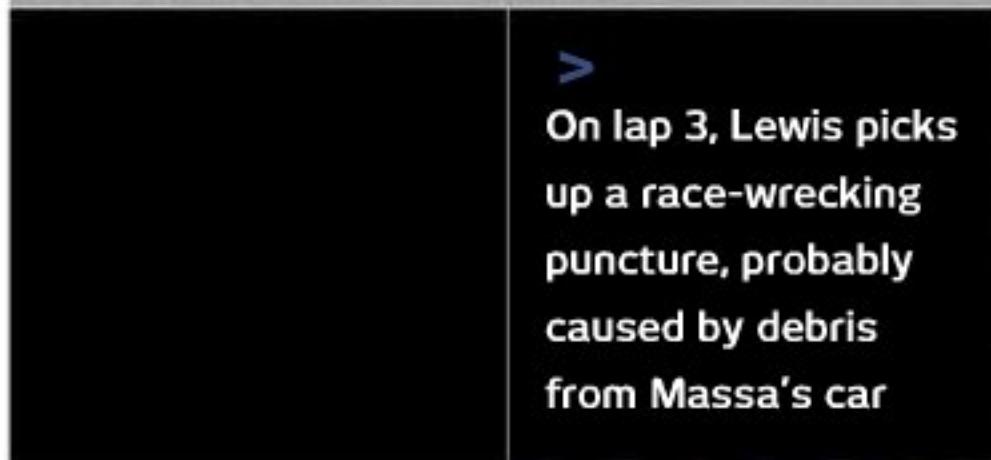
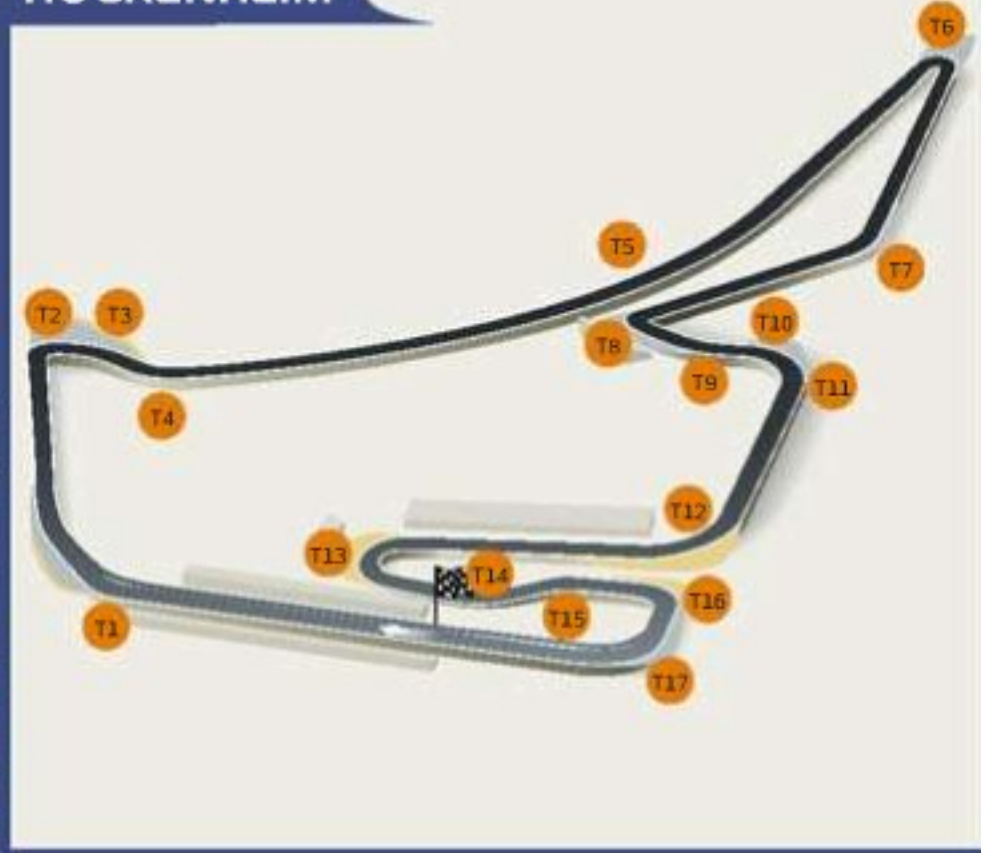
Jonathan Reynolds

The story of the race



V Alonso leads into T1, but further back Massa runs into the back of Ricciardo and loses his front wing

HOCKENHEIM



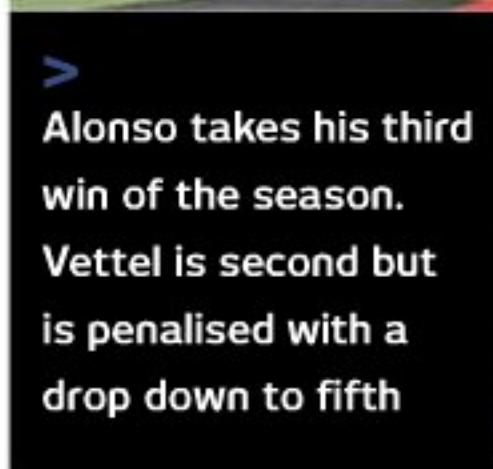
> On lap 3, Lewis picks up a race-wrecking puncture, probably caused by debris from Massa's car



> Button gradually moves up the order as Hamilton upsets Vettel by unlapping himself



< Having passed Vettel, Button briefly chases Alonso before being controversially re-passed by Vettel



> Alonso takes his third win of the season. Vettel is second but is penalised with a drop down to fifth



MAIN PHOTO: GLENN DUNBAR/LAT; ILLUSTRATION: ALAN ELDREDGE; INSETS: STEVE ETHERINGTON/LAT; ANDY HONE/LAT; GLENN DUNBAR/LAT; CHARLES COATES/LAT; ANDREW FERRARO/LAT; LARS BARON/GETTY IMAGES

on new tyres, he realised that the advantage was to be had by fitting hotter tyres and he dived into the pits. He emerged with tyre temperatures in the zone and on a track that, while far from dry, was significantly less wet. His first lap was enough to secure pole but his second put it beyond his competitors' reach, a full 0.4secs faster than Vettel. Räikkönen and Button tried the same trick but couldn't approach Alonso's time and both left it too late to put in a second lap. Interestingly, the tyres Alonso used to secure pole had done a single lap in Q2. Was this part of his master plan?

Sunday mornings rarely provide surprises but technical delegate Jo Bauer announced that the torque maps of the Red Bull engines had much less torque in the mid rpm range than at previous events. This was put before the stewards, and while they decided there was no case to answer, their response was phrased in a way that fuelled paddock speculation. This could be the start of a new battle that will further blur the distinction between engineering and politics.

Sunday dawned bright and at the race start the track temperature was creeping up. As the lights went out, the cars left the grid in orderly fashion with just Hamilton and Maldonado losing single positions. Further back, Massa,

Senna and Grosjean all had incidents that scattered carbon fibre – some of which punctured Hamilton's left rear tyre and significantly delayed him.

Vettel tried his utmost to hang on to Alonso but slowly slipped back and, by lap 9, was out of DRS range. Schumacher in turn was being dropped and was overtaken by Button on lap 11. On lap 18 Fernando made his first stop with Vettel staying out for another two rounds. It made little initial difference but, inch by inch, Vettel closed on Alonso, dragging Button with him.


At mid-distance, Hamilton, well out of place after his early stop, passed Vettel to unlap himself. This didn't go down well with Sebastian, particularly as it helped Button to close the gap. A good call by McLaren saw Jenson first to make a second stop. Even though Alonso and Vettel covered his move next time round, it was enough to get Jenson past the Red Bull. His elevation aided by a superb out-lap by Jenson and an excellent stop by the team, which, combined, was two seconds quicker than his rivals'.

It seemed it was all over but, in fact, it was Vettel who was now closing in on Button. With



Vettel and Button do battle on the penultimate lap – Vettel's subsequent excursion into the run-off led to a heavy penalty

a lap to go he dived for position into the hairpin. Button legitimately used the entire road as Vettel took all four wheels into the run-off area to power past. Post-race the stewards took a dim view of this, handing Vettel a 20-second penalty and dropping him right down to fifth.

Alonso took a well-judged but never-easy win. His delight was compounded by a dreadful day for the man currently ranked second in the standings, Mark Webber, who could manage no better than eighth. Meanwhile, the reigning champion, and the driver Alonso feels is his biggest rival for the title, is now 44 points adrift – effectively a win and a second place down. 

The GP you didn't see on TV

Taking you behind the scenes at Hockenheim as the weekend unfolded



Has it really been that long? Heikki celebrates 100 races – now share that cake out nicely



"If I make this banner a tiny bit bigger, maybe the cameras will pick it out from the crowd..."



Here come the traditional German costumes, music and moustaches!



It's like Teletubbies meets motorsport: this chap certainly won't have any difficulties making himself seen or heard

German Grand Prix stats

The lowdown on everything you need to know from the weekend at Hockenheim...

THE GRID

	
1. ALONSO FERRARI 1m40.621secs Q3	2. VETTEL RED BULL 1m41.026secs Q3
	
3. SCHUMACHER MERCEDES 1m42.459secs Q3	4. HÜLKENBERG FORCE INDIA 1m43.501secs Q3
	
5. MALDONADO WILLIAMS 1m43.950secs Q3	6. BUTTON McLAREN 1m44.113secs Q3
	
7. HAMILTON McLAREN 1m44.186secs Q3	8. WEBBER* RED BULL 1m41.496secs Q3
	
9. DI RESTA FORCE INDIA 1m44.889secs Q3	10. RÄIKKÖNEN LOTUS 1m45.811secs Q3
	
11. RICCIARDO TORO ROSSO 1m39.789secs Q2	12. KOBAYASHI SAUBER 1m39.985secs Q2
	
13. MASSA FERRARI 1m40.212secs Q2	14. SENNA WILLIAMS 1m40.752secs Q2
	
15. VERGNE TORO ROSSO 1m16.741secs Q1	16. KOVALAINEN CATERHAM 1m17.620secs Q1
	
17. PÉREZ** SAUBER 1m39.933secs Q2	18. PETROV CATERHAM 1m18.531secs Q1
	
19. GROSJEAN* LOTUS 1m40.574secs Q2	20. PIC MARUSSIA 1m19.220secs Q1
	
21. ROSBERG* MERCEDES 1m41.551secs Q2	22. GLOCK MARUSSIA 1m19.291secs Q1
	
23. DE LA ROSA HRT 1m19.912secs Q1	24. KARTHIKEYAN HRT 1m20.230secs Q1

* Five-place grid penalty for replacement gearbox
**Five-place grid penalty for impeding other drivers

THE RACE



THE RESULTS (67 LAPS)

1st	Fernando Alonso Ferrari	1h31m05.862s
2nd	Jenson Button McLaren	+6.949s
3rd	Kimi Räikkönen Lotus	+16.409s
4th	Kamui Kobayashi Sauber	+21.925s
5th	Sebastian Vettel Red Bull	+23.732s*
6th	Sergio Pérez Sauber	+27.896s
7th	Michael Schumacher Mercedes	+28.970s
8th	Mark Webber Red Bull	+46.941s
9th	Nico Hülkenberg Force India	+48.162s
10th	Nico Rosberg Mercedes	+48.889s
11th	Paul Di Resta Force India	+59.227s
12th	Felipe Massa Ferrari	+71.428s
13th	Daniel Ricciardo Toro Rosso	+76.829s
14th	Jean-Eric Vergne Toro Rosso	+76.965s
15th	Pastor Maldonado Williams	+1 lap
16th	Vitaly Petrov Caterham	+1 lap
17th	Bruno Senna Williams	+1 lap
18th	Romain Grosjean Lotus	+1 lap
19th	Heikki Kovalainen Caterham	+2 laps
20th	Charles Pic Marussia	+2 laps
21st	Pedro de la Rosa HRT	+3 laps
22nd	Timo Glock Marussia	+3 laps
23rd	Narain Karthikeyan HRT	+3 laps

Retirements

Lewis Hamilton McLaren 56 laps – damage

* includes 20 sec penalty for gaining advantage when rejoining track

THROUGH SPEED TRAP



Fastest: Jean-Eric Vergne, 198.63mph



Slowest: Pedro de la Rosa, 191.05mph

TYRE COMPOUNDS USED



Soft



Medium



Intermediate



Wet

CLIMATE

Sunny

21°C

TRACK TEMP

32°C



FASTEST LAP

Michael Schumacher, lap 57, 1min 18.725secs



FASTEST PITSTOP

Jenson Button, 16.831secs (entry to exit)

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

1st	Fernando Alonso Ferrari	154pts
2nd	Mark Webber Red Bull	120pts
3rd	Sebastian Vettel Red Bull	118pts
4th	Kimi Räikkönen Lotus	95pts
5th	Lewis Hamilton McLaren	92pts
6th	Nico Rosberg Mercedes	76pts
7th	Jenson Button McLaren	65pts
8th	Romain Grosjean Lotus	61pts
9th	Sergio Pérez Sauber	47pts
10th	Kamui Kobayashi Sauber	31pts
11th	Pastor Maldonado Williams	29pts
12th	Michael Schumacher Mercedes	29pts
13th	Paul Di Resta Force India	27pts
14th	Felipe Massa Ferrari	23pts
15th	Nico Hülkenberg Force India	19pts
16th	Bruno Senna Williams	18pts
17th	Jean-Eric Vergne Toro Rosso	4pts
18th	Daniel Ricciardo Toro Rosso	2pts
19th	Heikki Kovalainen Caterham	0pts
20th	Vitaly Petrov Caterham	0pts
21st	Timo Glock Marussia	0pts
22nd	Charles Pic Marussia	0pts
23rd	Narain Karthikeyan HRT	0pts
24th	Pedro de la Rosa HRT	0pts

CONSTRUCTORS' STANDINGS

1	Red Bull	238pts	10	Caterham	0pts
2	Ferrari	177pts	11	Marussia	0pts
3	McLaren	157pts	12	HRT	0pts
4	Lotus	156pts			
5	Mercedes	105pts			
6	Sauber	78pts			
7	Williams	47pts			
8	Force India	46pts			
9	Toro Rosso	6pts			



For comprehensive F1 statistics visit www.forix.com

PHOTOS: STEVE ETHERINGTON/LAT; CHARLES COATES/LAT; LORENZO BELLANCA/LAT; STEVEN TEE/LAT; ANDREW FERRARO/LAT

RACE DEBRIEF by Pat Symonds

Hungarian Grand Prix

29.07.2012 / Hungaroring

McLaren take their 150th pole... Third Hungarian win for Lewis... Another Lotus two-three...



McLaren are back in the hunt

As a precursor to the gold rush back home, Lewis Hamilton turns a triumphant pole into an triumphant British win in Hungary

As the teams arrived in Budapest it seemed hard to believe that we had now passed the halfway point of this tumultuous season. Anyone who had hoped for yet another period of Red Bull dominance this season will be disappointed. It is unusual in any sport to stay at the top for long and, with the exception of the Ferrari/

Schumacher era, two years is all par for the course in F1. That said, the team from Milton Keynes remain a threat on any type of circuit and entered Hungary with high hopes.

The team who have most surprised us this season are Ferrari. Full of woe about the dire performance of their car in pre-season testing they took an unexpected win in Malaysia and,

by the time the European season began, had become a force to be reckoned with. They can be inconsistent, but this is no real reflection on the team who were certainly not alone in experiencing the highs and lows of Pirelli tyre management. McLaren, having dominated the opening round saw a downward trend emerge through the scatter of results. Fortunately they appear to have reversed this in Germany and enhanced their position further still in Hungary.

The overperformers this year are Lotus and Williams. Both teams have a rich heritage somewhat tarnished of late and it is satisfying to see them re-emerge. But even better are Sauber. They've had to cut their cloth fine this past few years and yet, in a tyre-dominated season, their ability to go further and faster on the edgy rubber put them in a good position early on, before better-resourced teams discovered the intricacies of thermal management.

On the other hand, in spite of that vital first win in China, Mercedes remain enigmatic. In cool conditions they can find performance from both chassis and tyres. Yet small increases in temperature take the tyres out of their optimum window and the required increase in cooling seems to harm aerodynamic performance.

In many ways, teams are less aware of this type of ranking than F1's followers. To them, maximum effort in all areas is just the way of life. The season mid-point is significant only in that the design and development teams must balance the performance of their current car with the aspirations of their next.

And so one week on from Hockenheim, the teams assembled at the Hungaroring. Only Monaco is slower, and this track is both similar and different to the one that winds around the streets of the Principality. It shares the need for high downforce while demand for power is of far less importance than an engine with smooth torque delivery and driveability – as witnessed by the fact that no one fitted a fresh engine for this event. Conversely, the tyre energy requirement is in the mid-range of all tracks, encouraging Pirelli to bring soft and medium tyres – a step up from those used in Monaco. Perhaps the main difference is that the Hungarian turns are so long and testing. A car must be well-balanced to make a good lap time.

Budapest in the summer is hot and dry. This not only tests the cooling systems of the cars but also means plenty of dust is spread across the

asphalt. This doesn't encourage the teams to go out early in first practice; they prefer instead to leave most of the work until Friday afternoon. This plan was thwarted when, with very little warning, the inevitable rain started halfway through P2. Unusually for such a compact circuit, the rain was firmly rooted on its far side, with the pit area remaining dry for a time. As the full circuit became damp, and with a mixed forecast for the remainder of the weekend, many ventured out to find how they might have to handle similar conditions when it mattered.

For the second time in two weeks Michael Schumacher seemed unaware of his long-held *Regenmeister* title as he locked up going into Turn 12 and slid straight into the barrier. Other than that the first day was uneventful, although there were signs that McLaren had the measure of the circuit while Red Bull were not where they wanted to be. The reason for Red Bull's drop may have been to do with a directive issued by the FIA on the Wednesday before the race. This outlawed a ruse whereby torque delivery at medium engine speeds was delivered with wide throttles and excessive ignition retard, thereby increasing the momentum of the exhaust gases to enhance the aerodynamic performance of the car. This may not have transgressed the detail of the 2011 directive, but it went against the preamble requiring that engine configurations must not artificially alter the aerodynamic characteristics of a car beyond their primary purpose – that of generating engine torque. →

View from the paddock

F1 applies the brakes

After four tests, 11 GPs and 174 days on the road, F1 was ready for the summer break and a two-week factory shutdown. There never used to be a August break but now, with a calendar of 20 races – just eight of them in Europe – the gruelling schedule means everyone needs this chance to rest.

Those who dare to look at their diaries beyond August are in for a shock. There are nine races in just 12 weeks as the title showdown criss-crosses the globe across Asia, the Middle East and the Americas.

Endurance is crucial in this year's title hunt, as drivers and teams push themselves harder and harder. In recent years F1 has introduced a curfew so mechanics cannot pull regular all-nighters, while fitness experts ensure teams are eating the right food to ensure optimum concentration and performance. Such are the tight margins in F1, that nothing can be left to chance.

James Roberts

The story of the race

V Schumacher causes an aborted start by stopping out of position then turning off his engine



> When the race finally gets under way, Hamilton leads from pole ahead of Grosjean's Lotus



HUNGARORING



< Jensen Button and Sebastian Vettel scrap for position behind Hamilton and Grosjean



> Kimi Räikkönen slowly moves up the order to emerge from his final pitstop ahead of Grosjean



> On his final stint, Räikkönen piles the pressure on long-time race leader Lewis Hamilton...

> ...but the British ace isn't put off and goes on to wrap up his second victory of the season



MAIN PHOTO: GLENN DUNBAR/LAT; ILLUSTRATION: ALAN ELDREDGE; INSETS: GLENN DUNBAR/LAT; ANDREW FERRARO/LAT; ANDY HONE/LAT; LORENZO BELLANCA/LAT

After a straightforward Saturday morning session, Q1 saw Ricciardo, one of the heroes of qualifying just one week earlier, join the usual six drop-outs. In Q2, most did a sighting run on used soft tyres followed by a fast lap on new tyres. Hamilton felt confident enough to do just one run, while both Lotus cars having already run new tyres on the first run, used a second set for safety. The big surprise came when both Williams drivers made the final stage while both Mercedes and Mark Webber were out.

In Q3, Hamilton gave a totally dominant performance. Knowing how important pole is on a circuit where overtaking is so difficult, he used two sets of fresh tyres. He needn't have worried as either run would have secured him first place and, indeed, his margin to Grosjean, himself impressive on his lap, was a full four tenths.

The race start, in extremely hot conditions, was compromised when Schumacher pulled up in the wrong grid position. This called for an extra formation lap, but Michael turned his engine off thinking the start had been delayed. Not knowing rules and procedures seems odd for someone so obsessed by attention to detail.

Once the cars were away, Lewis made a perfect start – although a wheel-locking moment into Turn 1 could have cost him dearly. Behind,

Grosjean resisted Vettel to take second and in so doing let Button slip by the Red Bull at Turn 2.

Grosjean kept Hamilton honest throughout the first stint while Vettel was unable to show any real pace behind Button. It wasn't until Button made his second stop that Vettel could unleash his Red Bull but, by then, it was too late.

Behind Vettel, Räikkönen had passed Alonso at the first stop and at the end of his second stint put in a series of laps that saw him close in on his team-mate by over a second a lap. These laps let him stop four laps earlier than Grosjean and use the undercut to emerge 1.6 seconds in front, having been as much as 12.8 seconds down earlier in the race. The pass was not as simple as that however, since after Räikkönen's stop he entered Turn 1 side by side with his young team-mate. A forceful move by the Finn and possibly a small contact put him in front to chase down Hamilton.

Webber and Button had switched to three-stop strategies early on. It was a strange decision, particularly for Webber who had started on the harder tyre to try to make amends



A delighted Lewis Hamilton takes his second win of 2012, his third win in Hungary and the 19th win of his F1 career

for his poor grid position and had made his first stop very late. Button's sixth place and Webber's eighth were scant reward for so much effort. Alonso meanwhile, knowing it was no day for heroics, calmly protected his championship lead with a solid if uneventful fifth place.

Hungary may have seen Hamilton finally make the title bid that so many expected pre-season, but both he and McLaren need consistency and a good development to realise such ambitions. Above all, we were reminded that races where the DRS is ineffective and tyres are conservative do not make for excitement. Let's hope the lesson is well learnt. 🏁

The GP you didn't see on TV

Taking you behind the scenes at the Hungaroring as the weekend unfolded



So many helmets, so little time. Petrov turns his back on a tough sartorial choice...



...although it might have been a bit easier if this beauty had been thrown into the mix



It's a sunny day, so why not sit on your car and relax? Now who's got the egg sarnies...



Introducing the traditional Hungarian Grand Prix tradition of autographing policemen



Rosberg demonstrates his co-ordination with a display of his keepy-uppy skills – using a ball that matches his boots

Hungarian Grand Prix stats

The lowdown on everything you need to know from the weekend at the Hungaroring...

THE GRID

	
1. HAMILTON McLAREN 1m20.953secs Q3	2. GROSJEAN LOTUS 1m21.366secs Q3
	
3. VETTEL RED BULL 1m21.416secs Q3	4. BUTTON McLAREN 1m21.583secs Q3
	
5. RÄIKKÖNEN LOTUS 1m21.730secs Q3	6. ALONSO FERRARI 1m21.844secs Q3
	
7. MASSA FERRARI 1m21.900secs Q3	8. MALDONADO WILLIAMS 1m21.939secs Q3
	
9. SENNA WILLIAMS 1m22.343secs Q3	10. HÜLKENBERG FORCE INDIA 1m22.847secs Q3
	
11. RICCIARDO TORO ROSSO 1m39.789secs Q2	12. DI RESTA FORCE INDIA 1m21.813secs Q2
	
13. WEBBER RED BULL 1m21.715secs Q2	14. PÉREZ SAUBER 1m21.895secs Q2
	
15. KOBAYASHI SAUBER 1m22.300secs Q2	16. VERGNE TORO ROSSO 1m22.380secs Q2
	
17. SCHUMACHER MERCEDES 1m22.723secs Q2	18. RICCIARDO TORO ROSSO 1m23.250secs Q1
	
19. KOVALAINEN CATERHAM 1m23.576secs Q1	20. PETROV CATERHAM 1m24.167secs Q1
	
21. PIC MARUSSIA 1m25.244secs Q1	22. GLOCK MARUSSIA 1m25.476secs Q1
	
23. DE LA ROSA HRT 1m25.916secs Q1	24. KARTHIKEYAN HRT 1m26.178secs Q1

THE RACE



THE RESULTS (69 LAPS)

1st	Lewis Hamilton McLaren	1h41m05.503s
2nd	Kimi Räikkönen Lotus	+1.032s
3rd	Romain Grosjean Lotus	+10.518s
4th	Sebastian Vettel Red Bull	+11.614s
5th	Fernando Alonso Ferrari	+26.653s
6th	Jenson Button McLaren	+30.243s
7th	Bruno Senna Williams	+33.899s
8th	Mark Webber Red Bull	+34.458s
9th	Felipe Massa Ferrari	+38.350s
10th	Nico Rosberg Mercedes	+51.234s
11th	Nico Hülkenberg Force India	+57.283s
12th	Paul Di Resta Force India	+62.887s
13th	Pastor Maldonado Williams	+63.606s
14th	Sergio Pérez Sauber	+64.494s
15th	Daniel Ricciardo Toro Rosso	+1 lap
16th	Jean-Éric Vergne Toro Rosso	+1 lap
17th	Heikki Kovalainen Caterham	+1 lap
18th	Kamui Kobayashi Sauber	+2 laps - hydraulics
19th	Vitaly Petrov Caterham	+2 laps
20th	Charles Pic Marussia	+2 laps
21st	Timo Glock Marussia	+3 laps
22nd	Pedro de la Rosa HRT	+3 laps

Retirements

Narain Karthikeyan HRT	60 laps - steering
Michael Schumacher Mercedes	58 laps - engine

THROUGH SPEED TRAP



Fastest: Nico Hülkenberg, 191.14mph



Slowest: Timo Glock, 178.532mph

TYRE COMPOUNDS USED



Soft



Medium



Intermediate



Wet

CLIMATE

Sunny

30°C

TRACK TEMP

43°C



FASTEST LAP

Sebastian Vettel, lap 68, 1min 24.136secs



FASTEST PITSTOP

Lewis Hamilton, 19.059secs (entry to exit)

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

1st	Fernando Alonso Ferrari	164pts
2nd	Mark Webber Red Bull	124pts
3rd	Sebastian Vettel Red Bull	122pts
4th	Lewis Hamilton McLaren	117pts
5th	Kimi Räikkönen Lotus	116pts
6th	Nico Rosberg Mercedes	77pts
7th	Jenson Button McLaren	76pts
8th	Romain Grosjean Lotus	76pts
9th	Sergio Pérez Sauber	47pts
10th	Kamui Kobayashi Sauber	33pts
11th	Pastor Maldonado Williams	29pts
12th	Michael Schumacher Mercedes	29pts
13th	Paul Di Resta Force India	27pts
14th	Felipe Massa Ferrari	25pts
15th	Bruno Senna Williams	24pts
16th	Nico Hülkenberg Force India	19pts
17th	Jean-Éric Vergne Toro Rosso	4pts
18th	Daniel Ricciardo Toro Rosso	2pts
19th	Heikki Kovalainen Caterham	0pts
20th	Vitaly Petrov Caterham	0pts
21st	Timo Glock Marussia	0pts
22nd	Charles Pic Marussia	0pts
23rd	Narain Karthikeyan HRT	0pts
24th	Pedro de la Rosa HRT	0pts

CONSTRUCTORS' STANDINGS

1	Red Bull	246pts	10	Caterham	0pts
2	McLaren	193pts	11	Marussia	0pts
3	Lotus	192pts	12	HRT	0pts
4	Ferrari	189pts			
5	Mercedes	106pts			
6	Sauber	80pts			
7	Williams	53pts			
8	Force India	46pts			
9	Toro Rosso	6pts			



For comprehensive F1 statistics visit www.forix.com

The Belgian GP preview

02.09.2012 / Spa-Francorchamps



by Bruno Senna

Changing altitudes and very changeable weather combine to help make Spa an unpredictable classic, with race-start chaos pretty much guaranteed

Spa is one of those tracks that knocks the wind out of you – it has so many changes in altitude. When you first get to Eau Rouge and realise how steep it is, you think: ‘Wow, how can that be?’ If you’re watching on TV, you can’t quite grasp the challenge this track presents.

Spa has flowing, high-speed corners and some low-speed corners – it’s got everything. It’s one of those tracks that everyone loves. It’s actually my favourite track of all. I enjoy Suzuka almost as much as Spa, but if the track at Suzuka was just one metre wider, it would be more comfortable for the speeds we run at there.

I know a lot of people say that Pouhon is now the most challenging corner at Spa – not Eau Rouge – but I disagree. I think the toughest areas of the track to get right are the corners after Les Combes. The secret is to brake and then get Malmedy right and then you are braking downhill to the right-hander (Rivage) and the left-hander after it. These two corners are very

difficult. They are a bit slower but there are always bumps that seem to be strategically placed. And of course when it’s wet it’s very slippery over there.

When I wake up on race-day morning at Spa, it doesn’t make any difference to me whether it’s clear or there’s heavy cloud. Because even if the day starts with absolutely perfect sunshine, you know that within five minutes it could be grey and raining. But Spa is an incredibly special



“Spa has flowing high-speed corners and some low-speed corners – it’s my favourite track of all”

track and it’s still special whether it’s wet or dry. For sure, it’s nicer to be racing in the dry, but wet races at Spa are also awesome.

I came back into a race seat at Spa last year and qualified really well in seventh place, but the race itself was not my proudest moment. It had been quite some time since I’d last raced in Formula 1, and I hadn’t driven the La Source hairpin on full tanks before. In fact we didn’t do any high-fuel running because it was so wet on the Friday, so it was all a bit too much and unfortunately I made a mistake.

There is always a bit of chaos at the first corner at Spa, some confusion, some cars tangling, front wings going one way or another... it’s to be expected. That challenge has been there from the 1980s until the present day. It doesn’t matter what they do to the corner; when you put a big hairpin straight after the start with so many cars lining up together, accidents are unfortunately always going to happen.



All you need to know about Belgium

CIRCUIT STATS

Round 12/20
F1 debut 1950
Track length 4.352 miles
Race distance 191.414 miles
Laps 44
Direction Clockwise
Lap record 1min 45.108secs, K Räikkönen, 2004
Full throttle 80%
Gear changes per lap 49
Safety Car probability 62%
Winners from pole 14
Tyre compounds Medium/hard

LAST YEAR

Winner Sebastian Vettel
Runners-up Mark Webber, Jenson Button
Pole Sebastian Vettel 1min 48.298secs
Fastest lap Mark Webber 1min 49.883secs
Retirements 5
Pitstops 52
Overtaking moves 65
DRS overtakes 24
Weather Overcast, 17°C

PREVIOUS WINNERS

Michael Schumacher	6
Kimi Räikkönen	4
Felipe Massa	1
Lewis Hamilton	1
Sebastian Vettel	1

TIMETABLE

Friday 31 August
Practice 1 09:00 - 10:30
Practice 2 13:00 - 14:30
Saturday 1 September
Practice 3 10:00 - 11:00
Qualifying 13:00
Sunday 2 September
Race 13:00



Spa-Francorchamps

BELGIAN GP SETUP NOTES

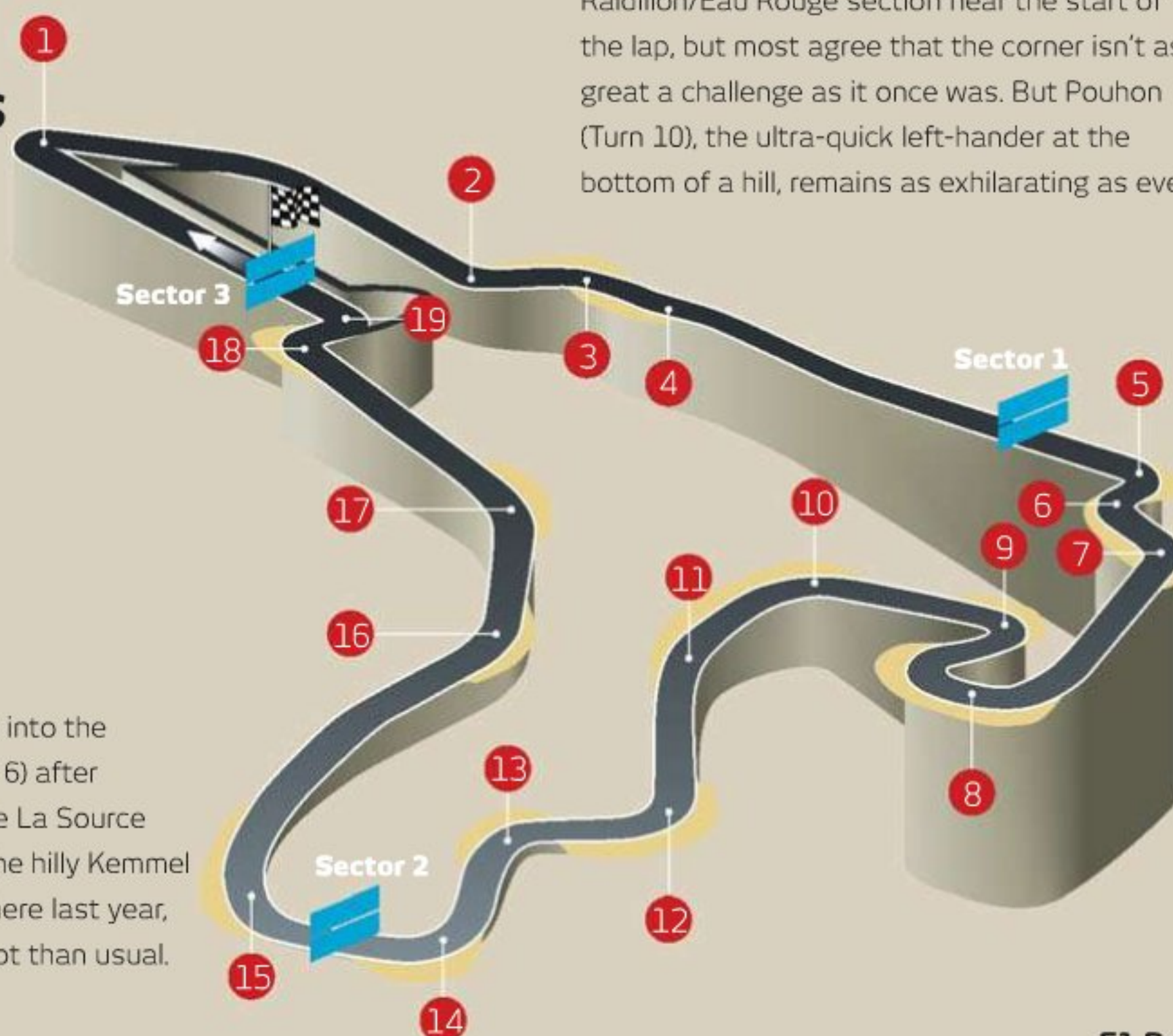
Bumpiness Medium
Engine severity Very high
Gearbox severity Low
Brake-wear severity Low
Aero settings Medium
Overtaking opportunities Medium
Track evolution High

TOP OVERTAKING SPOT

The best place to overtake at Spa is into the chicane at Les Combes (Turns 5 and 6) after the long, almost flat-out run from the La Source hairpin, through Eau Rouge and up the hilly Kemmel straight. The DRS zone was placed here last year, making it an even better passing spot than usual.

CIRCUIT HIGHLIGHT

The obvious circuit highlight is the sweeping Raidillon/Eau Rouge section near the start of the lap, but most agree that the corner isn't as great a challenge as it once was. But Pouhon (Turn 10), the ultra-quick left-hander at the bottom of a hill, remains as exhilarating as ever.



The Italian GP preview

09.09.2012 / Monza



by Bruno Senna

With low downforce and speeds topping 215mph, Monza is an incredibly fast track, and a classic race for drivers and spectators. The pasta's not bad either...

It's amazing that we get to race at the two great, historic circuits of Spa and Monza back-to-back. Monza is its own little world: it's so old and the fans are so passionate – it's got to be one of my favourite races. The ambience that the fans add to the place and the environment in general are just incredible. It's steeped in history and the track hasn't been spoiled much. They've retained its character fairly well, even after the chicanes were added, and it's still one of those really special races. Spa and Monza are the two races that I would never ever want to leave the calendar. There should always be a place for them in Formula 1.

For drivers, Monza is very tough challenge and a difficult track to master. It's one of those circuits where you can easily overdo it and flatspot a tyre, and then you're in trouble for that whole section of the race. But it's also surprisingly easy to underdrive as well.

In Monza last year, I was fastest through the speed trap at 215mph. At those sort of speeds, you are doing almost a hundred metres per second. So imagine a braking area of just two metres, which you need to accurately hit over and over again, with your tyres, fuel load and track temperature all constantly changing. The low downforce of the car makes it so difficult for a driver to put together a perfect lap because



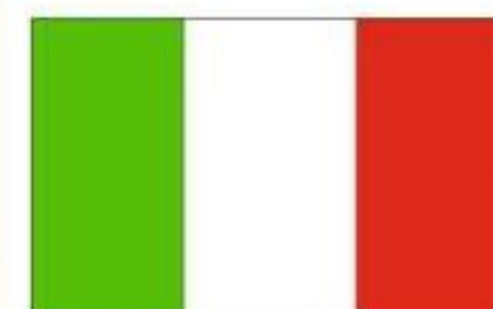
"In the race at Monza last year, I scored my first Formula 1 points, finishing in ninth place"

you have to be so precise. It's very tough and provides plenty of big challenges.

As a track, although it's high speed, Monza has a lot of decent run-off areas. Normally you don't see accidents happening here because of driver errors – it's usually a case of two cars coming together. But, as always, you hope that sort of thing won't happen.

I put in a really good qualifying performance at Monza last year when I made it into Q3 again. Then, in the race, I scored my first ever Formula 1 points, finishing ninth after an early stop had dropped me down to 18th. So obviously I have fond memories of the place and it's a track that I enjoy, so I'm definitely looking forward to coming back here this season.

And, of course, one of the highlights is the Italian food. No one can deny that it's very, *very* good. I'm not really a wine person, so I can't comment on that, but the food there is excellent!



All you need to know about Italy

Round 13/20
F1 debut 1950
Track length 3.6 miles
Race distance 190.6 miles
Laps 53
Direction Clockwise
Lap record
 1min 21.046secs,
 R Barrichello, 2004
Full throttle 83%
Gear changes per lap 46
Safety Car probability 30%
Winners from pole 20
Tyre compounds
 Medium/hard

LAST YEAR

Winner Sebastian Vettel
Runners-up Jenson Button,
 Fernando Alonso
Pole Sebastian Vettel
 1min 22.275secs
Fastest lap Lewis Hamilton
 1min 26.187secs
Retirements 8
Pitstops 35
Overtaking moves 33
DRS overtakes 18
Weather Sunny, 31°C

PREVIOUS WINNERS

Michael Schumacher	5
Fernando Alonso	2
Sebastian Vettel	2

Friday 7 September

Practice 1 09:00 - 10:30
 Practice 2 13:00 - 14:30

Saturday 8 September

Practice 3 10:00 - 11:00
 Qualifying 13:00

Sunday 09 September

Race 13:00

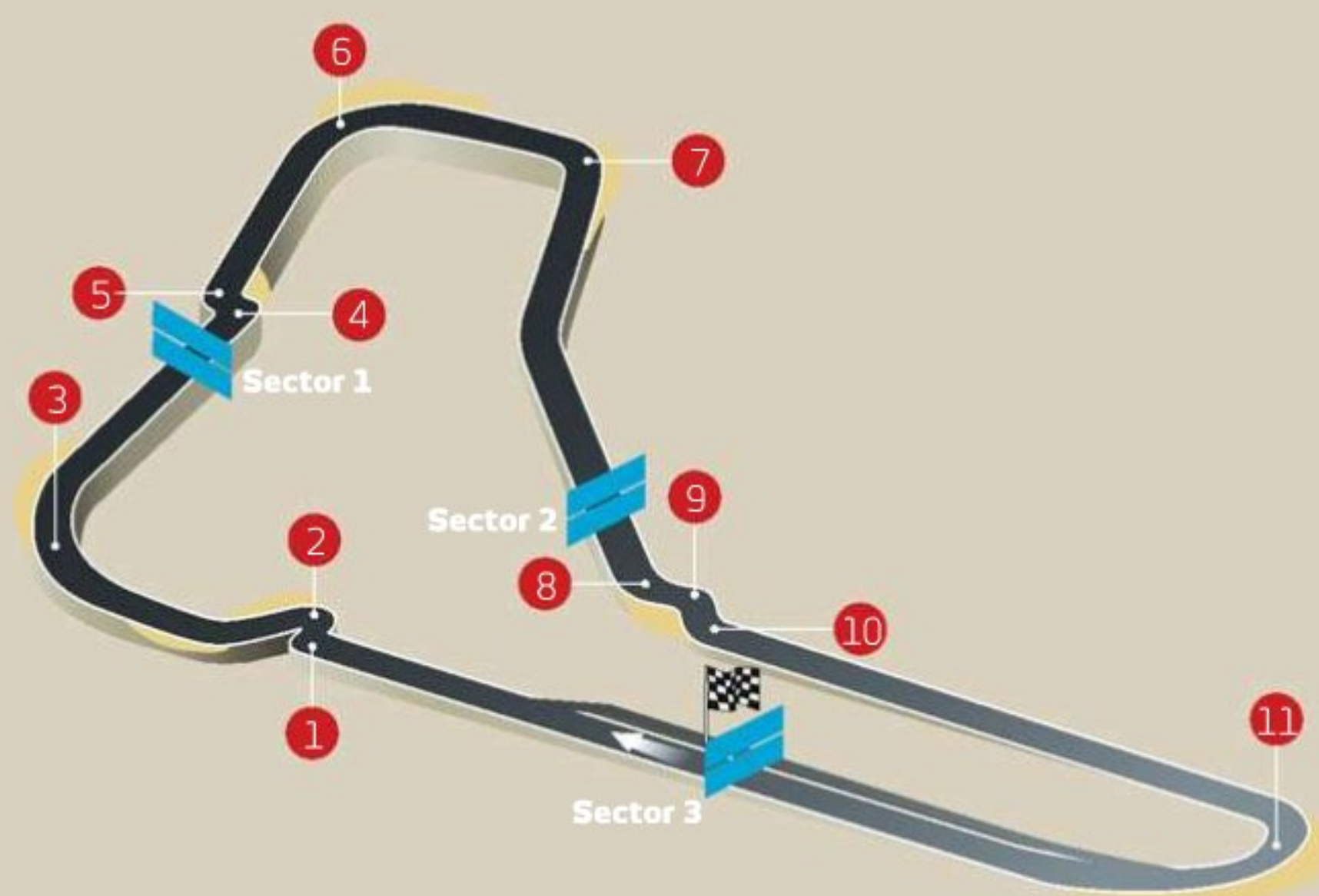
Monza

ITALIAN GP SETUP NOTES

Bumpiness Medium
Engine severity Very high
Gearbox severity Low
Brake wear severity Medium
Aero settings Very low
Overtaking opportunities Medium
Track evolution High

TOP OVERTAKING SPOT:

Last year, Monza was one of few circuits where the FIA applied two DRS zones. One was on the approach to the Variante del Rettifilo (Turns 1 and 2) and the other was on the run down to Ascari (Turns 8, 9 and 10). In 2012, expect most passes to be made into the Rettifilo chicane and the slightly less tight Variante della Roggia (Turns 4 and 5).



CIRCUIT HIGHLIGHTS:

Monza is a circuit dripping with history, and many of its corners are quite rightly described as 'iconic'. The sweeping Lesmo bends (Turns 6 and 7) are both challenging, as is the final corner, Parabolica (Turn 11). With a fast entry and long radius, there's a tendency for drivers to carry in too much speed, run wide then compromise their exit speed – a disaster given the long straight that follows.



Henry Surtees Challenge Announces Sensational Prizes for 2012 Event at Buckmore Park



In its second year the **Henry Surtees Challenge** all-stars kart showdown is aimed at bringing together the best of young motorsport talent to compete for a staggering range of prizes to aid them in their race programme preparation for 2013.

This year's competition will take place at Buckmore Park, Chatham, Kent on **Wednesday 24 October** and is seeking to attract drivers from all classes of motorsport who are in their 16th year and over.

The event, organised by former F1 world champion John Surtees OBE, will provide the top six drivers with a prestigious Henry 'H' trophy. Depending on the final number of prizes available, at least the top six top finishers will have a choice of the best career enhancing prizes ever offered at a UK kart meeting. Prizes for fastest lap, the most unlucky driver and a heavyweight prize for 80kg or above will also be awarded. The prizes currently include:

- Visit to Red Bull Racing in Milton Keynes with simulator time and evaluation by an F1 race engineer - donated by Christian Horner
- Simulator pre-test in the UK plus GP3 test with Carlin Motorsport in Portugal
- InterSteps Championship test with Falcon motorsport (for drivers in their 16th year)
- National B Formula Renault BARC test with Hillspeed Racing
- A full kit of Puma race clothing - 1 suit, 3 pairs of gloves, 2 pairs of shoes and 3 pairs of lifestyle shoes for the winner - donated by Puma SE
- 2 pairs of lifestyle shoes for second place - donated by Puma SE
- 1 pair of lifestyle shoes for third place - donated by Puma SE
- An Arai helmet prepared and painted to drivers own design donated by Arai
- Shell Pilota Experience at Ferrari, Maranello, Italy – driving on their Fiorano test track plus visit to the F1 facility - donated by Shell. Travel arrangements made and donated by Travel Places
- A pair of VIP F1 tickets including Paddock entry - donated by Bernie Ecclestone
- A supply of Teng Tools to the value of £1,000.00 - donated by IQ Supplies (Teamvise Limited)
- Motorsport custom-fit Driver Communication Earpieces together with Hearing Healthcare Package - donated by Hearing Electronics Limited
- A session on a simulator at iZone - donated by Andy Priaulx
- A pair of tickets to the Autosport Awards, December 2012 - donated by Haymarket Publications
- A bottle of Mumm champagne for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place winners

In addition the winner will be featured in a career profile in Motorsport magazine – Henry Surtees Challenge media supporter for 2012.

An entry for the meeting costs £500.00 and will showcase a broad spectrum of motorsport talent. Drivers from single-seater formulas, touring, sportscar classes, karting and motorcycling will share the track in the allcomers event. Drivers must hold an MSA licence, be a member of Club 100 or a Buckmore Park Elite driver.

Drivers wishing to take part in the event should contact **Buckmore Park Circuit, Maidstone Road Chatham, Kent, ME5 9QG** on **01634 201562**.





My month in F1

FRANK WILLIAMS

Every issue. Only in *F1 Racing*

SO FAR, SO GOOD

It was wonderful to win a race in Spain, but there's no doubt that we must do better. We're generally heading upwards, but we still have a long way to go before we can start troubling the likes of McLaren, Ferrari and Red Bull on a regular basis. Pastor has proved that he's properly quick, while Bruno really came of age in Hungary by driving a brilliant race.

PASTOR KEEPS PUSHING

I'm not going to make a serious fuss about Pastor's drive-through penalty in Hungary apart from to say he didn't do much wrong with that overtake on Paul Di Resta. But if drivers are constantly punished for moves like this, they may think twice before overtaking. The fire in Pastor's belly is what makes him such a special driver and I wouldn't want to see that extinguished. The stewards wouldn't have known how to deal with Alan Jones either. He took no prisoners and people were fearful of him. He wasn't dangerous, but he put his nose where others wouldn't dare, and then, of course, there was Ayrton Senna... now he didn't muck about, did he?

TIME FOR A BREAK

The summer break was very important for the team. It was a chance for people to spend time with their families and relax before the second half of the championship begins. Unlike the rest

of the team, I didn't actually take a break during August. I came into the factory every day as that's the only place I can get my proper exercise – it's either here or in a hospital corridor. I'm not really one for holidays, either.

F1 GOES GLOBAL

It's amazing to think that we have just two European races left this year. When I started out in Formula 1, the bulk of the races were in Europe, but we now have a fantastic geographical spread around the world, which gives F1 a truly international feel. The new races pay a lot of money too, and we have Bernie to thank for that. He's a brilliant man.

GREAT BRITAIN SHOULD BE VERY PROUD

It's been great having so much sport on TV during the Olympics, but I'm most interested in the track and field events. It's the marathon, the 10,000 and the 5,000m events that captivate me because I used to run long distances myself. To see Britain's Mo Farah take gold in these latter two events was an incredible boost for the country – he ran superbly. When I was at my peak, I could run a half marathon at a sub-six minute mile pace, which was hard work, but doesn't compare to the incredible times today's athletes can pull out of the hat. Overall, Great Britain's medal tally – 29 gold medals, 17 silver

and 19 bronze, adding up to an impressive 65, is something we should truly all be proud of.

HATS OFF TO THE OTHER SEB

I've loved watching the 2012 London Olympics: they've been a great tribute to Lord Sebastian Coe and his team. I got to know him a bit in the days when we were sponsored by ICI and he always struck me as an impressive man. He was very well-organised and a good public speaker. He's extremely competent, and that has certainly come across during the Olympics.

On my mind this month...

"We have a way to go before we can start troubling the likes of McLaren on a regular basis"



"Britain's Olympic medal tally is something we should truly all be proud of"

"There's now such a fantastic geographical spread of races around the world"



"I got to know Lord Coe back when we were sponsored by ICI and he always struck me as impressive"



Bruno really came of age in Hungary

For more information on Williams and what they're up to, visit www.williamsf1.com

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ALAN HENRY

Forty years and counting on the frontline of Formula 1

Will Lewis get to keep his trophies? Seems unlikely...

Sometimes you can't help but think that drivers and their managers go out of their way to look for trouble when it's time to renegotiate a contract – a task that should, in principle, be as straightforward and uncomplicated as buying a basketful of sprouts. Yet when it comes to this particular crunch, the man in the street often has a very different perspective on how negotiations are developing.

Immediately after the Hungarian GP, it emerged there could be a possible glitch in race winner Lewis Hamilton's very logical ongoing negotiations that were intended to bring about a seamless new contract with McLaren for next year and beyond. This horse is set to fall at the first fence if Hamilton insists on a clause allowing him to keep all the trophies that come his way.

I really doubt that Lewis will get his way on this particular issue. The McLaren protocol that the team keeps the trophies has long been set in stone at Woking. Drivers can have a replica made – although I'm not sure who pays for that little luxury – while the original joins the rest of silverware in factory-based display cabinets that stretch halfway to the M25. And that is not going to change – believe me.

It is important to remember where the seeds of this tradition germinated. After the 1989 Italian GP, winner Alain Prost dropped his trophy into the Ferrari-mad crowd in what Ron Dennis considered to be nothing more than a cynical ploy to jolly the fans ahead of the Frenchman's move to Maranello in 1990. Some McLaren insiders will shrug this theory aside, but I was in the McLaren motorhome with Dennis after the race and you can take it from me that he was almost white with fury. Put simply, he felt that Prost had let down both himself and McLaren. From then on in, Dennis vowed the team would keep the trophies.

Hamilton has explained that during his contract renewal talks with McLaren, the issue of trophies would be a crucial 'push point'. He reckons the two artefacts that are most precious to a driver are his crash helmet and trophies. "I don't care if they don't give me my cars, but those two things are what you put your blood and sweat into," he insists.

Very clever people, in my experience, have a knack of avoiding arguments they can't win. Those who advise Lewis should whisper that message softly into his ear. And soon.



Lewis and his winner's trophy in Hungary. He's not letting go. He's really not letting it go...

TROPHY? HE'D RATHER HAVE SOME SOAP...

Rounding off the great trophy debate, I was always amused by the lack of sentimentality demonstrated by Niki Lauda towards his own trophies. Having won the first of his three world championships in 1975, Niki cut a deal with a petrol station close to his home in Austria whereby they were given his trophies for display on permanent loan, in exchange for unlimited car washes for Niki's Bentley S3 and his Range Rover. That's my boy!



SORRY FELIPE, IT'S JUST NOT WORKING



Is it conceivable that Ferrari might re-sign Kimi Räikkönen for the 2013 season if they finally get round to replacing Felipe Massa? It seems like a workable solution to me. Although the Brazilian has demonstrated gently improving form during the first half of the season, to my mind his position is still extremely vulnerable. The way things stand at the moment, he's only got an outside prospect of staying on as Fernando's running mate. I just don't think that Felipe has done enough this year.



Could Kimi Räikkönen end up back in Ferrari red next season?

PHOTOS: CHARLES COATES/LAT; LAT ARCHIVE; DREW GIBSON/GETTY IMAGES;

The last time I... sang karaoke

Kamui Kobayashi on Japan's national pastime, making special cocktails... and fighting sharks

When was the last time you were happy in a racing car?

I'm always happy. Many people want to drive in F1 but they can't, so I'm always happy.

When was the last time you got angry in a racing car?

Angry? I'm never angry, I told you I'm always happy! I'm driving a car with power and a lot of grip, why would I be angry with that?

When was the last time you spoke to Bernie and what did he say?

We spoke on the grid recently but I couldn't hear because I had my helmet on. To be honest my mind was on racing but I had the excuse that I couldn't hear because my helmet was on.

When did you last go scuba diving?

I do scuba dive but I'm not interested any more because I've got a boat licence now and I like to go sea fishing. My dream is to catch a shark one day. You have to fight for three hours to catch one because it's so powerful. Last November I went fishing in the Seychelles and caught a two-metre fish. I had to fight it for an hour. What do I do with the fish I catch? I barbecue them.

What was the last film you saw?

The Bow. I hope you know it, it's a very nice movie. I watched it on the plane.

When was the last time you went out to dinner in Monaco?

The day before yesterday. Where did I go? I can't tell you because if I do everyone will go there. It's my secret restaurant.

When was the last time you went to your father's sushi restaurant?

I can't remember – ten years ago or something like that. I don't go home often and I don't like sushi anyway. I'm allergic to shrimp – if I eat shrimp I get a rash.

When were you last in Japan?

I can't remember. Two months ago I think. I only go back a couple of times a year.

Where did you last go on holiday?

I went to Okinawa, one of the southern islands of Japan. It was fantastic – really nice. It's not touristy. There are a lot of small islands with beaches. The sea is very clear, clearer than it is in the Maldives.

When was the last time you played a video game?

I play a video game every single day. I play *Mortal Kombat* on the iPhone. You can play it online against players who are coming from all over the world. It is very nice. I tell you, I could kill you very easily.



What was the last music you downloaded?

It was David Guetta, his new Ibiza mix. I like house music.

When was the last time you sang karaoke?

I have karaoke in my room in Japan but I only karaoke when I'm out. There are lots of karaoke bars in Japan – they are everywhere. It's a very popular thing to do. Everyone sings together, which is quite cool.

When was the last time you cooked for yourself?

I often cook but I can't remember. Do I cook Japanese food? No, I cook a special cocktail for a special girl.

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