

UP TO SPEED: MEDIA COVERAGE

SATURDAY 06 JULY

FORMULA 1
QATAR AIRWAYS
BRITISH
GRAND PRIX
2024

SILVERSTONE
05 - 07 JULY 2024



FIA FIA Formula 1
World Championship™

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Only rain dance can give Hamilton hope of Hollywood homecoming

Molly Hudson



It may not have the yachts of Monaco or the stunning scenery of Austria, but there is a special charm about Silverstone. The iconic Maggotts and Becketts turns, the grassy banks filled with fans and the festival-like atmosphere.

The star attraction for those fans is not Stormzy, who performed on the main stage last night, but rather Lewis Hamilton, the most successful driver in the history of this circuit. He has dominated at Silverstone for a decade, winning seven of the past ten races.

He may be nearing the twilight of his career, at 39, and has not won a race since 2021, but away from the track his profile continues to grow. And he is not the only ageing megastar on the grid this week: Brad Pitt is there too.

Indeed, Hamilton has been a key part of a new film, *F1*, that will be released in 2025 and aims to give the audience an immersive view of the sport. Pitt stars as a former driver who returns to Formula 1, alongside Damson Idris as his team-mate at APXGP, a fictional team on the grid. Pitt, 60, and the film crew have been shooting scenes at Silverstone, a second visit to the track after last year's plans were thwarted by the Hollywood actors' strike.

Pitt performed "hot laps" around the track on Thursday and Hamilton has provided invaluable input for the film, directed by Joseph Kosinski. The Mercedes driver is yet to see the footage but has joined Zoom calls with producers — going through scripts line by line to ensure every detail is accurate. APXGP even have a hospitality hub in the paddock this weekend, replicating the real teams.

While F1 bosses are keen to ensure that the film-makers and actors can work without interference, hundreds of fans gathered to try to sneak a peek of Pitt. He was not the only star surrounded by photographers this week, as Roscoe, Hamilton's bulldog, happily wandered outside the Mercedes



Hamilton, accompanied by his bulldog Roscoe, has had to cede star billing to Pitt, right, who has been shooting scenes at Silverstone this week for the new F1 film

hospitality centre. It was a sign of the home comforts the seven-times world champion enjoys at a circuit that has provided some of his happiest memories.

The pit straight was renamed the Hamilton Straight in tribute to him and he regards his maiden home win in 2008 as one of his greatest.

"I think 2008 will always probably be my most special grand prix win here, in the rain," he said. "It was because it was the trickiest conditions a racing driver will experience. The level I was able to

operate on that day, it was 68 seconds that I won by, and [the most] I think I've ever won by."

Rain could prove to be the best hope for Hamilton to end his wait for a first win since Saudi Arabia in December 2021. For much of the period since, Mercedes have struggled under the present regulations.

George Russell, his team-mate, has two wins since he joined the team, but both required collisions involving Max Verstappen. On pure pace, despite significant upgrades in recent weeks, the

Criticism for Red Bull

Zak Brown, the McLaren chief executive, has accused Red Bull of disrespecting FIA regulations in their communications with Max Verstappen during his battle on Sunday at the Austrian Grand Prix with Lando Norris that ended with a collision that was "predominantly" the fault of Verstappen.

"Until someone tells Max, 'hey that's against the regulations', he's not going to know any different. I'm disappointed that such a great team like Red Bull, that the leadership almost encourages it. We all have a responsibility on the pitwall to tell our drivers the dos and don'ts."

Mercedes duo require a little help. "We are in a much, much better place," Hamilton said.

"The car has been difficult, to say the least, in the last few years, [now] the car isn't bouncing, which is great. We finally fixed that earlier this year, we moved our seat position back. We fixed so many elements of the car, and George getting the win last week shows that we are close. I'm hoping. We need the weather to play a bit of a part this weekend. I'll be doing the rain dance."

Hamilton, Russell and Lando Norris all have reasonable hopes of winning tomorrow, although, if the showers do dodge the Silverstone circuit, the latter is likely to be vying for the victory with Verstappen, the two fastest drivers in dry conditions.

Russell appeared slightly confused when asked if he was happy to be part of a promising era of British drivers, given the individual nature of the sport. "I wouldn't say it's a cool thing to be involved with, necessarily," he said. "But being a Brit it's nice to see the Brits doing well, and I still believe that when I was a kid, racing, the Brits were the most competitive. We were always the best in the rain as well, because when we raced against the Europeans we had so much more experience [of it]."

Perhaps they will join Hamilton in his pre-race rain dance.



Coping with wind and cold is key to driving perfect Silverstone lap

Alex Albon



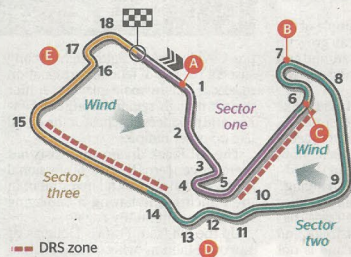
Williams F1 driver

To have a good lap around Silverstone, you need to have a lot of confidence. It requires high speed and precision driving. A lot of the corners lead to one another; turn 3 leads to 4, turn 6 leads to 7, and through the Maggotts, Becketts and Chapel complex. If you're slightly out of position, you compromise your lap time through the remainder of the sector.

The biggest challenge about Silverstone is the wind, with the circuit being on an old airfield. It is cold, windy and very British! You feel British when you arrive here.

Whenever the car is going into the wind, it adds downforce to the car,

Albon's guide to navigating the track



- A** His crash in 2022
- B** Williams struggles in long corners
- C** Best overtaking point
- D** Favourite section: Maggotts, Beckett & Chapel
- E** Where he sat as kid in the stands

extra air resistance. Through turn 3, 5, and entry of 7, all of these corners are headwind corners, which make the car feel really nice to drive.

The other wind is the total opposite. You lose downforce.

Sometimes the wind direction swings during a turn. Some cars are more wind sensitive than others — at Williams, our car is at the higher end, and produces better downforce when the wind speeds are low.

How they stand

Drivers	Points
1, M Verstappen (Neth, Red Bull)	237pts
2, L Norris (GB, McLaren)	156
3, C Leclerc (Mon, Ferrari)	150
4, S Pérez (Mex, Red Bull)	135
5, S Pérez (Mex, Red Bull)	118
6, O Piastri (Aus, McLaren)	112

Constructors	Points
1, Red Bull	355
2, Ferrari	291
3, McLaren	268
4, Mercedes	196
6, Aston Martin	58

wind is high or changeable is to speak with your engineer, and tune the balance with your brake bias, or with your differential settings to try to tie everything together. That is a huge amount of the skill around this circuit.

Overtaking is mostly done into turn 6, you try to get the driver off line into 3 and 4, get them to defend, and then you wait for turn 6 to make the overtake because there's a big DRS [drag reduction system] zone there.

Almost every driver will tell you that the section featuring Maggotts, Becketts and Chapel is one of the best in the world. As drivers, we crave the feeling of speed, and the feeling of an F1 car.

Street tracks are generally low speed, and our cars are heavy and lazy and big, so we don't like that. We like high downforce, high speeds. The change of direction and the speed of this section is amazing. It makes us feel alive.

Strangely, around this track we've always been pretty good, but that's also because the corners are quite short. Apart from 7 and 15, most of the corners are less than 90 degrees. Your job as a driver when the

The Daily Telegraph

McLaren demand action on Verstappen

Brown urges FIA to enforce regulations after Norris crash
Red Bull accused of 'almost encouraging reckless driving'

By Tom Cary
SENIOR SPORTS CORRESPONDENT
at Silverstone

Zak Brown has raised the stakes ahead of tomorrow's British Grand Prix, calling on the sport's governing body, the FIA, to "enforce the regulations" properly if it wants to avoid a repeat of the Lando Norris-Max Verstappen crash in Austria last Sunday.

McLaren's American chief executive also hit out at rivals Red Bull,

accusing them of a "lack of respect for the regulations" and adding he was "disappointed" that Red Bull's leadership "almost encouraged" Verstappen's driving in Spielberg.

Norris and Verstappen are expected to be well-matched again this weekend – Norris topped both practice sessions yesterday, albeit Verstappen did not complete a clean lap – raising the possibility they could go wheel to wheel again.

Tension is mounting after Sunday's race in Spielberg, where they collided while battling for the lead.

Norris, who was forced to retire with a puncture and trails Verstappen by 81 points in the championship, was initially furious. The Briton, 24, described Verstappen's

driving as "reckless, stupid and desperate", and admitted it could affect their future relationship.

However, he sought to play down his comments this week, saying he had "overreacted" in the moment and describing the incident as "pathetic". But Brown has not backed down, and called on the FIA to be more consistent when applying the rules, and Red Bull to show stronger leadership.

"Until someone tells Max that's against the regulations, he's not going to know any different," Brown said. "I'm also disappointed that a great team like Red Bull ... that the leadership almost encourages it. You listen on the radio as to what was said. We all have a respon-

sibility on the pitwall to tell our drivers the dos and don'ts in the races, so I think we need to have respect for the regulations.

"We've seen a lack of respect [from Red Bull] ... whether it's financial regulations, or sporting, or on-track issues with fathers and things of that nature. I just don't think that's how we need to go racing – and we need to guide our drivers on what is right or wrong. Had it been addressed earlier then maybe that incident wouldn't have taken place."

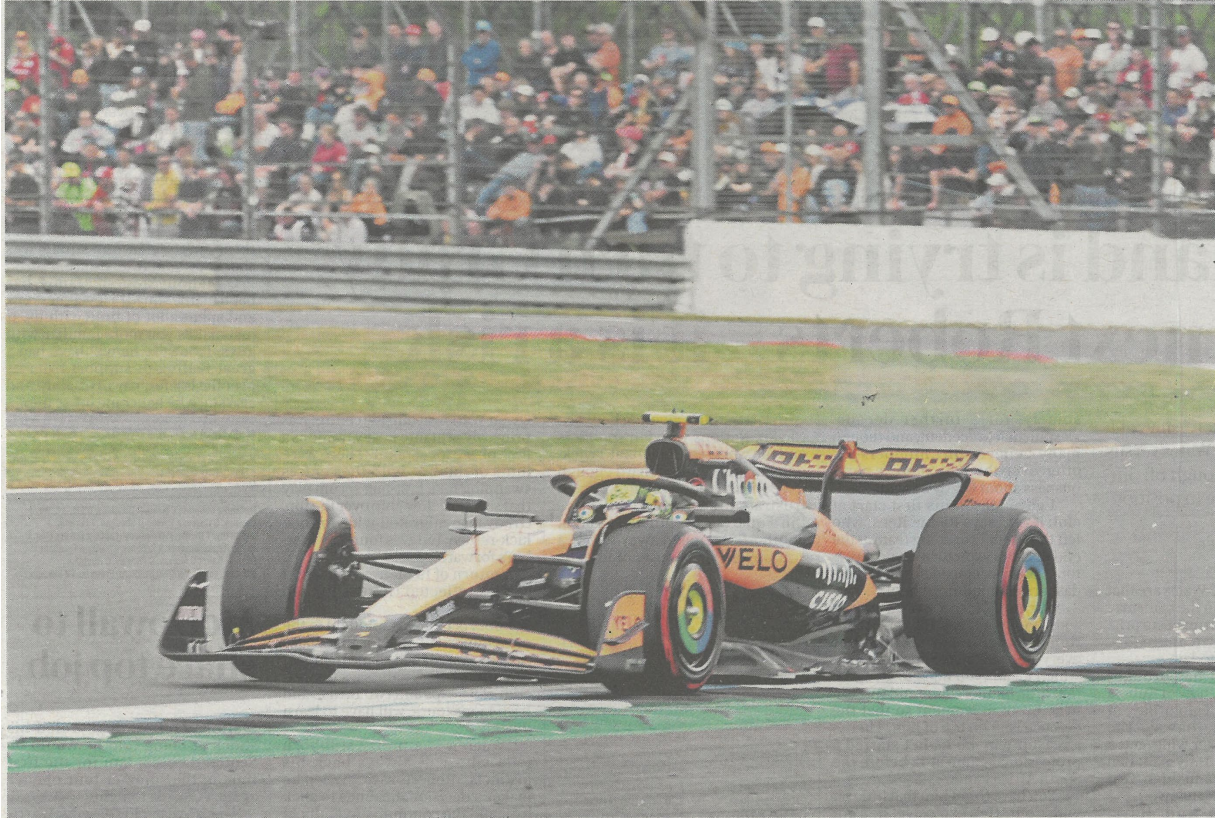
Asked whether he would speak to Christian Horner, the Red Bull team principal, about his concerns, Brown added: "That is the FIA's role. I don't really have any interest in speaking with Christian."

Brown, who denied that Norris was "too nice" to be a winner, also called on the FIA to employ full-time stewards.

"I think given the level F1 is at, how difficult the job is, hats off to the stewards who are here every weekend," he said.

"It's not to be disrespectful of them. But I think as we reflect on [Austria], and this is something the FIA agrees with, we need to invest more in our stewarding to have greater consistency and enforcement of the regulations.

"Doing it on a part-time basis for the level Formula One is at is difficult because Max and Lando were just duking it out, as you'd expect them to do."



Home hope:
McLaren's Lando Norris (left) on his way to topping both practice sessions at Silverstone

British GP
Silverstone details

Timings for this weekend's British Grand Prix at Silverstone:

Today
3pm-4pm:
Qualifying

Tomorrow
3pm: Race

TV Live on
Channel 4 and
Sky Sports

Security guard arrested in Schumacher blackmail plot

By Tom Cary

A security guard who worked for Michael Schumacher's family has been arrested in connection with a blackmail attempt.

The arrest in Germany came following those of a 53-year-old, named as Yilmaz T, and his 30-year-old son, on June 19. According to the public prosecutor's office in

Wuppertal, the two men had private photos of the family.

German media reported that the father and son demanded €15 million (£13.7 million) in return for not sharing the photos, and were said to have promised the former security guard a commission.

The two men transferred "individual files" to the family to show they had access to documents about Schumacher, investigators claim.

Inquiries into how they obtained the photos led to the arrest of a third suspect, a 52-year-old former security guard, in the town of Wulfrath in western Germany.

A spokesperson for the Schumacher family declined to comment when approached by *Telegraph Sport*.

Schumacher, the seven-time Formula One world champion, was seriously injured in a skiing accident in 2013. The 55-year-old has not appeared in public since.

The two initial suspects were arrested in a supermarket parking lot in Gross-Gerau, Hesse. According to the investigators, they are on probation in another case. Authori-

ties searched eight properties, as well as the main residences of the two men, seizing several data storage devices.

It is not the first attempt to blackmail the former racing driver's family. In 2017, the Reutlingen district court in Baden-Württemberg sentenced a 25-year-old man for attempting to blackmail Schumacher's wife Corinna Schumacher for

€900,000. He had threatened that otherwise something would happen to the children. The man was handed a suspended sentence of 21 months.

In May, Schumacher's family won a legal action against a German magazine which printed a fake AI interview with the former F1 driver. *Die Aktuelle* had claimed it had an interview with the motorsport legend but the article, published in April 2023, in fact contained quotes which had been computer-generated.

German tabloid *Bild* reported that Schumacher's family was awarded €200,000 in compensation for the claim.



Tragic: Seven-time F1 world champion Michael Schumacher was seriously injured in a skiing accident



Jonathan McEvoy at Silverstone



It may not go down well across the old World War Two airfield in front of more than 160,000 patriotic fans, but Max Verstappen is the best driver in the world.

He sits in the Red Bull motorhome, a floor up, relaxed on a sofa, away from the noise. He can smile and laugh, and exhibits a champion's resilience not to care for popularity. He has plenty of acclaim in the Netherlands, but even that he could live without. Here at the British Grand Prix, he is more likely to be booed than cheered this weekend.

Over at the Farm site on the Silverstone estate, where Verstappen and several other drivers are staying, he is oblivious to the festival atmosphere. In his motorhome, he sits on his simulator driving into the early hours. His headphones protect him from the cacophony. 'I didn't

F1 is full of Brits so no wonder people don't back me!

MAX VERSTAPPEN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Smiling assassin: Verstappen is unfazed by his critics SHUTTERSTOCK



WATCHING BRIEF...

BRITISH GRAND PRIX



Qualifying: 3pm. Race: Tomorrow 3pm. TV & radio: LIVE on Channel 4, Sky Sports and BBC 5 Live.

even know there was music playing,' said Verstappen.

The loud accompaniment on the journey to this weekend's race has been the spat with Lando Norris, the highly talented 24-year-old McLaren driver who carries the weightiest burden of home expectations and was quickest in both yesterday's practice sessions.

The pair collided in Austria last Sunday as they vied for the lead. Norris called his pal's stubborn defence 'reckless, stupid and desperate', accusing him of moving under braking, thus of contradicting the rules and endangering them both.

To recap quickly: Verstappen was handed a 10-second penalty for not leaving a car's width to Norris. It's true he didn't, but as Norris later admitted, he could have used more of the kerb to avoid contact. The two talked the next day and again on Wednesday

and patched up their differences. Norris then backtracked in his press commitments on Thursday, a climbdown that invited the impression he had yielded a psychological advantage to the 28-year-old Dutchman.

'I don't listen to whatever anyone else has to say criticising me or being positive,' said Verstappen defiantly. 'I'm here with my team and the people who are involved with my success — they're who I listen to and speak with to judge my performances.'

'Everyone can have their opinion. That's fine. That's not going to define how I live my life off track or how I behave on it.'

But the triple world champion reasons that the British bias in the sport — seven of the 10 teams are based in England's 'Motorsport Valley' — has played its part in demotivating him.

'Eighty to 85 per cent of the press in F1 is English,' he says. 'So you have quite a dominant

force with that. In the back of their minds, most would prefer their national driver to do well or in the case of an incident naturally pick the side of their countryman. Ex-drivers, most of them are British, so it's a bit of a one-sided affair.'

As have the past two seasons been. Last year, Verstappen won 19 of 22 races. This year he has won seven out of 11 and leads Norris in the championship by 81 points. But it is closer than last year, with the Somerset-born challenger a consistent threat in machinery at least a match for the Red Bulls.

Recent races have been gripping, not least as Norris has grown in confidence since his maiden victory in Miami.

Are Red Bull, though distracted by the scandal that gripped the sport in the early part of the year, when team principal Christian Horner was accused (and cleared in an internal investigation) of

sending sexually suggestive messages to a female colleague?

The furore rumbles on with Verstappen's father Jos, a combative ex-Formula One racer, a constant critic of Horner. Only a week ago, tensions erupted again when Jos accused his nemesis of objecting to his participation in a parade of old cars at the Red Bull Ring.

'With the way I grew up, these kind of things won't unsettle me,' said Verstappen, whose parents divorced when he was nine.

'For me, these are quite minor disturbances. I know how to focus on the race and how to get the best performance out of myself, even with what might be going on in the background.'

'That said, it's always nice to have a fully friendly environment. Everyone was talking about it (the scandal) at the beginning of the year but it definitely improved a lot up until this point.'

'Then came the last race. I'm confident even that that will be sorted

out. Sometimes you need to give it a bit of time and not get too emotional about it.'

For now, he wants to stay at Red Bull, where he has a contract until 2028. But Mercedes wait in the wings. Verstappen takes a practical view of his future, saying: 'I always look at it from a performance side of things. As well as at the people around me and the working relationship I have with them. It's a whole team effort. It's very important for us to try to keep that group together. For the moment that is the case.'

But on one subject, he will not budge. Jos is going nowhere. 'For sure,' said Verstappen of the man who reared him as a young karter with care and tough love.

'He's not coming to every single grand prix nowadays, naturally, because of having a family and racing himself in rallying,' adds Max. 'We are a family. He's always been there for me and that will never change.'

HENRY CLARK at Silverstone

McLaren boss Zak Brown has accused Red Bull of 'encouraging' Max Verstappen to drive outside the rules after the world champion's clash with Lando Norris last weekend. Verstappen and Norris, Brown's No 1 driver, collided in the closing stages of the Austrian Grand Prix.

That forced the Brit to retire, just as he was vying for the lead and looked on course for only his second race win.

Norris, charged up by the emotion of what unfolded, said after the race that he would 'lose a lot of respect'

Brown on warpath over Red Bull 'lack of respect' as crash repercussions rumble on

for Verstappen If the Dutchman refused to accept responsibility for the crash.

But he rowed back on those comments yesterday ahead of this weekend's British Grand Prix, insisting Verstappen has nothing to apologise for. Brown, though, clearly remains perturbed by the episode.

In particular, the American was left annoyed by Red Bull's behaviour over the team radio, where they made it clear they

felt the blame lay at Norris's door in the incident's aftermath. 'Until someone tells Max that's against the regulations, he's not going to know any different,' said Brown.

'It is disappointing that such a great team like Red Bull, the leadership almost encourages it. 'You listen on the radio as to what was said — we all have a responsibility on the pit wall to tell our drivers the dos and

don'ts in the races, so I think we need to have respect for the regulations.'

Asked whether he would pull Red Bull team boss Christian Horner up on the incident, Brown said: 'That's the FIA's role. I don't really have any interest in speaking with Christian.'

The McLaren boss continued his dig at Red Bull and Horner, who has also found himself answering questions over a

falling out with Jos Verstappen, Max's father, on several occasions this season.

Horner was also in charge of the team when they were found guilty of breaching the sport's cost-cap rules in 2021.

'We've seen there is a lack of respect, whether it's financial regulations or sporting on-track issues with fathers and things of that nature,' said Brown.

'I just don't think that's how we need to go racing and we need to guide our drivers on what is right or wrong.'

'Had it been addressed earlier then maybe that incident wouldn't have taken place.'



22 **Sun** Saturday, July 6, 2024

HYPER MISSILES BID BY F1 TEAM

CAR maker McLaren is helping military chiefs to build a hypersonic missile.

The Formula One team has joined the arms race in a bid to knock Russia and China out of pole position.

The goal is to develop a super-fast rocket that can corner and swerve at speeds over 4,000mph.

The MoD wants them within six years as Russia and China already have them. Hypersonic missiles can

EXCLUSIVE by JEROME STARKEY

manoeuvre at faster than Mach 5 – five times the speed of sound – making them hard to take out.

Russia has unleashed Kinzhal and Zircon hypersonic missiles in Ukraine. Some were downed by

US Patriot rockets despite Vladimir Putin's boast that they were unstoppable.

China stunned the US F1 team . . . McLaren

and its Nato allies by test-firing two hypersonic weapons in 2022.

Vice Admiral Andrew Burns said McLaren understood the need for an "advantage over any rival".

He said: "Defence and motorsport have much in common, including a competitive instinct fuelled by a need to win."

Piers Thynne, CEO of the Surrey-based McLaren Racing team, said: "We're proud to have signed the Armed Forces Covenant."





62 Sun Saturday, July 6, 2024

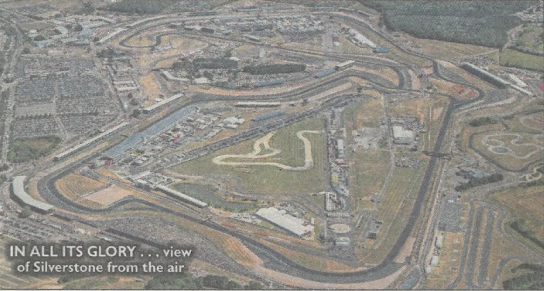
FORMULA ONE

THE BRITISH

Reflected

glory.

LEW SEES HIMSELF IN LIONS' EURO BID



IN ALL ITS GLORY... view of Silverstone from the air

LAPPING IT UP AT SILVERSTONE

LANDO NORRIS topped both practice sessions at Silverstone yesterday.

And here, the British driver (below) takes us on a lap of the circuit.

ABBEY & FARM CURVE

The first corner at Abbey is flat out. Drivers have to throw the front of the car into the corner and then hang on to it because we immediately go into the Farm Curve. There is also a bit of a bump in there, so if we are too aggressive the car will destabilise.

VILLAGE & THE LOOP

Next is the slow section of the track as we enter Village. It provides an overtaking opportunity, albeit not an easy one.

It is very easy to lock the front right under braking, which compromises our line into the left-hander, The Loop.

The exit is key because the kink at Aintree takes us on to the long Wellington Straight and the first of two DRS zones.

BROOKLANDS

We then head into the old part of the circuit, driving at nearly 220mph, before we approach the long left-hander at Brooklands. Here we brake and shift down the gears - and there is a chance for overtaking on the outside.

LUFFIELD & WOODCOTE

Luffield, the next right-hander, is endless and the most frustrating corner on the track. We turn in and want to jump on the throttle immediately but we have to be patient - we have to wait as we battle with understeer.

There are two lines you can take: go deep and focus on a good exit, or slow down earlier and carry a tight line.

If we do the latter, we will be faster through the bend but our exit will be compromised.

PIT STRAIGHT & COPSE CORNER

Up next is the old start-finish line and the high-speed right-hander at Copse - where Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen collided in 2021.

We take the bend at 190mph, so if we miss the apex we won't make the corner.

MAGGOTS, BECKETTS & CHAPEL CURVE This has to be the best set of corners in Formula One.

The first left at Maggots is a small flick but at the next right-hander it is important to carry speed to the point that you use three-quarters of the track. If you use all of the asphalt, it is difficult to get back on line for Becketts.

If you are a bit wide on the first part it just multiplies the problem through the remaining series of corners.

HANGAR STRAIGHT & STOWE

Hangar Straight provides the second DRS zone before we arrive at Stowe.

Although Stowe gives us an overtaking opportunity, it is not a good one because it is so fast.

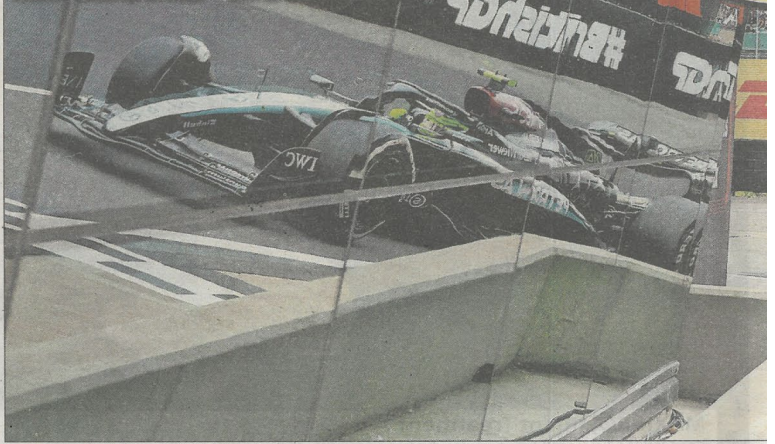
It's vital to hit the apex at Stowe. If you don't, the front of the car washes out and you end up on the astroturf on the exit.

VALE & CLUB CORNER

We dip down on to Vale and then rise up just after the pit entry.

We are back on the brakes - it will be bumpy - and again there are two options: carry a lot of speed through the left-hander at Vale and lift through Club, or take a slower approach to Vale and power out of Club Corner.

We then pull through the final bend and up and across the start-finish line - renamed the Hamilton straight after Lewis won his record-equalling seventh world championship in 2020 - to complete the lap.





GRAND PRIX Tomorrow, 3pm, sky sports

LEWIS HAMILTON knows what it is like to feel the weight of a nation's hopes on your shoulders – just like Gareth Southgate's Three Lions.

After all, up until three seasons ago, the Stevenage-born Mercedes driver was virtually the only one bringing it home.

He returns to Silverstone this weekend, the home of the British Grand Prix and the iconic track that became a happy hunting ground, having won this race eight times in his career.

It will be the last time he races at Silverstone as a Mercedes driver following his shock move to Ferrari next term.

Hamilton will have one eye on the footie, though, given he is a diehard England fan and will wrap up qualifying today just in time for the nation's Euros quarter-final with Switzerland.

The 39-year-old says he feels for youngsters like Jude Bellingham, 21, Phil Foden, 24, and Bukayo Saka, 22, who have battled through grumbles and moans from England supporters to reach tonight's crunch clash. Hamilton has drawn comparisons to when he was thrust on the scene in 2007 before first winning at Silverstone as a fresh-faced 23-year-old back in 2008.

He said: "I remember being young and thrown into the spotlight. I can't imagine how it is like for those guys on the pitch. "The pressure from the whole country weighing on you. It is tough.

"I'm really proud of our team just with all the difficulties that they've experienced and faced just time and time again.

"Continuing to get up and the resilience has just been really impressive. If I was to

By **ISABELLE BARKER**

go back, if I could tell myself things in 2007, I could have handled things better. "I could have had a better team around me. I think, at the time, I didn't have a team around me.

"People don't realize, you're really, really thrown in at the deep end and if you don't have the right support structure..."

"Family is one thing, but I'm talking about people to help protect you and safeguard you and make sure you don't fall down all the pit-holes that there are."

"I'd probably have been in a happier place as a youngster."

The fifth time Hamilton won at Silverstone was the same weekend England made it to the 2018 World Cup semi-finals in Russia. Hamilton even vowed to fly out to the final in July that year had Southgate's side beaten Croatia.

He added: "I try not to get too amped up! You know how England always is with the World Cup. I don't want to apply too much pressure.

"We've got such a talented pool of players. We just need them to be in synergy."

For the first time, Hamilton is last out of the three British drivers fancied to finish on top of the podium this weekend.

He is still searching for a first win since the controversial 2021 Saudi Arabia Grand Prix.

However, his glittering legacy has evolved from first-place finishes into the strength

of this class of 2024. The fact McLaren's Lando Norris and Mercedes' George Russell are fighting Red Bull star Max Verstappen at the top of the grid is a testament to Hamilton's 16 years of graft in F1.

Hamilton added: "When I was younger, maybe I felt the pressure, but we have so many British drivers now, so the pressure's a bit off.

"It's nothing to do with me. We produce really great drivers for some reason. We have a history of it and it's great to see. I feel very proud to be amongst them."

Mercedes have launched a fierce comeback in recent weeks, with Russell toasting only his second-ever F1 win in Austria last time out and Hamilton finishing third on the podium in Barcelona before that.

He added: "This is a huge boost for everyone back at the factory who has been working tirelessly over the last few years and not been getting that success."

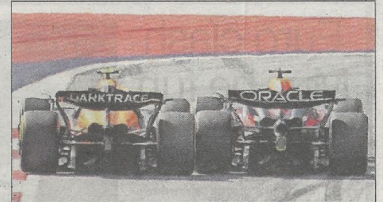
After more than a year of deliberating with the finest creative minds in showbiz, the title of Brad Pitt's new Formula One movie was revealed yesterday.

It is safe to say the name has left fans stunned and rather underwhelmed as they decided on, drum roll please... F1.

F1, an Apple Original Films production, is due for release next summer, with Pitt (above) and his co-stars filming at races around the globe for the past few years, including at Silverstone this weekend.

Taking to social media to react, one Formula One fan sneered: "What a boring and unimaginative title."

While another added: "Must have taken them ages to come up with that."



RULE BREAK . . . Verstappen collides with Norris (left)

Zak attacks Max whack

ZAK BROWN has accused Red Bull of a "lack of respect" and encouraging driver Max Verstappen to break Formula One rules.

McLaren boss Brown is still seething over the collision between the Dutchman and his star Lando Norris, which KO'd the Brit's Austrian Grand Prix.

Stewards hit Verstappen with a ten-second rap and two points on his race licence – but Red Bull's triple world champ was still able to finish fifth in Spielberg.

And now Brown has accused Red Bull boss Christian Horner of encouraging his star's rule-breaking.

Ahead of tomorrow's British GP at Silverstone, Brown stormed: "Until someone tells Max that it's against the regulations, he's not going to know any different. "It's disappointing that in such a great team like Red Bull, the leadership almost encourages it, because you listen on the radio to what was said.

"We all have a responsibility on the pit wall to tell our drivers the dos and don'ts and what's going on in the race.

"We need to have respect for regulations." Horner told Verstappen over the radio that Norris "did not behave correctly" and that his star driver "was desperately unlucky".

Brown also accused Red Bull of disrespecting

By **ISABELLE BARKER**

F1's financial rules before alluding to Horner's sour relationship with Verstappen's father, Jos.

Red Bull were punished for breaching the cost cap in 2021 which Brown, at the time, claimed constituted "cheating".

Brown (below) said: "We have seen a lack of respect at Red Bull, whether it's financial regulations, sporting on-track issues, or with fathers and things of that nature. "We should guide our drivers on what is right or wrong. Had it been addressed earlier, maybe the incident with Lando wouldn't have taken place."

Mercedes chief Toto Wolff backed the American's attack on Horner.

The Austrian said: "Regulations give boundaries to the drivers – what's on, what's not."

"I agree with Zak, it's always amusing to see one-dimensional comments of team principals."

Quizzed if he would speak to Horner, Brown replied: "I don't really have any interest in speaking with Christian."

Norris, who trails leader Verstappen by 81 points going into the race at Silverstone, had tried to put a lid on the Austrian GP bust-up after initially demanding an apology from the Dutchman.

And Brown added: "Some drivers might enjoy a public spat – but he and Max have a very strong relationship."



Hold on to that lead!

Hamilton takes bulldog Roscoe for a Silverstone walkies yesterday before taking his Merc for a spin in practice

DRIVER STANDINGS

Max Verstappen	237	Sergio Perez	118
Lando Norris	156	Oscar Piastri	112
Charles Leclerc	150	George Russell	111
Carlos Sainz	135	Lewis Hamilton	85



The Guardian

Pitt makes pit stop as McLaren chief puts boot into Verstappen

Giles Richards
Silverstone

Grey clouds loomed over Silverstone yesterday but were no dampener for an audience determined to have a good time at this weekend's British Grand Prix, where organisers are making every effort to ensure the business of racing goes hand in hand with the business of show.

Formula One wants its meetings to be destination events and Silverstone has embraced this philosophy wholeheartedly. Tomorrow before the race, DJ Pete Tong will be revving the crowd up with a set on the grid before the Eurovision queen and Ted Lasso star Hannah Waddingham delivers the national anthem. They will come after a weekend of live music at the circuit which includes Kings of Leon and Stormzy.

Were this not enough, the makers of Brad Pitt's F1 film, on which Lewis Hamilton serves as a co-producer, chose yesterday at Silverstone to announce the title of the movie.

After no little wait and doubtless plenty of focus groups and bouncing ideas around in boardrooms, they



▲ Brad Pitt announced the title of his F1 film at Silverstone yesterday

Race briefing



The race Silverstone, the old Northamptonshire RAF airfield that hosted the inaugural F1 World Championship round in 1950, hosts round 12 of a bumper 24-race season. Halfway there. The context Max Verstappen (Red Bull) tops the standings on 237 points, Lando Norris (McLaren) is second on 156 points. Norris flies the British flag, well ahead of Mercedes' George Russell (7th) and Lewis Hamilton (8th). The TV It's Channel 4's sole live race of the season, while Sky Sports F1 is as usual fully across the weekend.

Qualifying Today, 3-4pm Live Ch4/SSF1; Ch4 highlights 11.10pm Grand prix Tomorrow, 3pm Live Ch4/SSF1; Ch4 highlights 11.30pm

opted to go with what it says on the tin. "F1" it is then, set for release in June next year. Filming will continue this weekend here. As the cast rub shoulders with their real-life counterparts, F1 doubtless will be pleased at the Hollywood glamour on the wind-swept old airfield.

Yet for all that, first and foremost for the crowd set to be sold out to the tune of 160,000 tomorrow, is anticipation for a race that is teed-up to be a showdown between the two title contenders, Max Verstappen and Lando Norris, on a stage that could not offer a better platform on which to demonstrate their talents.

After the pair clashed at the last round in Austria there was bad blood in the air between the two friends, particularly it seemed for an aggrieved Norris. Independent observers rubbed their hands together gleefully at the prospect of a spot of proper needle and a feud between F1's two young guns, only for the pair to reveal on Thursday that they had met, cleared the air and all was once more spiffy between them.

As shame perhaps for fans of a more dramatic narrative but at least yesterday the McLaren CEO, Zak Brown, was happy to put the boot in again. "Until someone tells Max: 'That's against the regulations' he is not going to know any different," he said. "There was a missed opportunity for the stewards to make note. I am disappointed in such a great team like Red Bull that the leadership almost encourages it.

"We need to have respect for regulations and we have seen the lack of respect. I don't think that's how we go racing."

There is no guarantee that the rekindled bromance will last. Norris's McLaren is set to be quick through the fast corners of Silverstone, potentially even quicker than the previously dominant Red Bull of Verstappen, who leads the British driver by 81 points in the world championship.

The resurgence of McLaren this season has revitalised what was in danger of becoming another cake-walk for Verstappen. Since Norris won in Miami he has been vying at the front in almost every race with Verstappen. He knows the way his rival drives and that no quarter will be given and he has taken the lessons from Austria on board.

Behind them Ferrari have lost ground just as Mercedes have moved up a gear, with Hamilton's team confident they can at least potentially be in the mix for a podium.

In practice Norris was on top in the first session, immediately at ease at Silverstone with his teammate Oscar Piastri in third, behind the Aston Martin of Lance Stroll with Verstappen 0.3sec back in fourth.

In the afternoon, Norris was once more on top with Piastri in second and Red Bull's Sergio Pérez in third, 0.4sec back. Hamilton was sixth and Verstappen seventh.



► Toto Wolff admits he was stung by Lewis Hamilton's decision to leave Mercedes for Ferrari
MARTIN DIVISEK/EPA

'We are like a couple and we are working on it'

Interview

Toto Wolff
Mercedes boss says his relationship with Lewis Hamilton's is healing despite his star driver's defection

Giles Richards

After what might be considered an enormously long honeymoon period, Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes are now handling the breakup. Yet on the eve of the British Grand Prix, the team principal, Toto Wolff, believes the relationship he and his team have forged with the seven-time champion will yet last the ages.

This weekend's race will be Hamilton's last for Mercedes at

Silverstone as his move to Ferrari at the end of the season marches inexorably closer. He and Wolff both joined the team in 2013 and enjoyed unprecedented success together, Hamilton taking six titles and Mercedes eight constructors' championships.

What has been most notable however is how close the pair have become over those 12 seasons; beyond the professional to a personal friendship, a bond highly unusual between principal and



▲ Lewis Hamilton with Toto Wolff after winning the Turkish GP in 2020
ACTION PRESS/SHUTTERSTOCK

driver. Little wonder then that when Hamilton told Wolff he was leaving before the season began it was painful. "I was surprised about the timing when he told me, I didn't see it coming," says Wolff. "That stung a bit."

Time has been a healer and now almost at the midpoint of the season, Wolff and Hamilton have had the chance to adjust to their new circumstances. Hamilton in leaving the team with whom many had assumed he would see out his career and Wolff to a future without their talismanic driver and indeed, his friend.

Wolff believes they have both adapted with maturity and care. "It's almost like we are a couple that are working on it," he says, "We have to actively, when you know you need to make sure the relationship works well and I think we are doing it from both sides."

"My motto is play hard, forgive quickly and apologise when you are wrong. So it's not changed my feelings for him as a friend because I forgive quickly. My personal relationship to him is going to be much less affected than one would think."

At Silverstone this week Hamilton was once more asked whether he was being edged sideways by the team. The process of beginning to exclude a driver from sensitive information relating to next year's car but the 39-year-old insisted that his relationship with them remained entirely positive.

"I haven't been excluded from any meetings," he said. "We're still working on this car and trying to get the car to the front, so it's still very collaborative."

They will probably struggle to make the front at Silverstone where Red Bull and McLaren will have the advantage on the sweeping high-speed corners of the circuit. Nonetheless that they are still working well together is a point Wolff maintains has been a key part of the team beginning to unlock the pace in their car over recent races having stalled so badly since the regulation changes of 2022.

"I don't have regrets. I always look at the opportunities, even though they look like a curveball"

"If you asked me when Lewis said he was leaving how the year would be, it would have ingredients of it being awkward," he says. "But since the car launch it has not been awkward at all. He has been a great contributor to the team's resurrection. The dynamic and spirit in the team is high."

Conjecture has been rife as to the reasons behind Hamilton's decision to call it a day with Mercedes, with the team's poor performances since 2022 considered a contributory factor. Yet Wolff will not allow himself to dwell on what might have been.

"I never have regrets," he says. "Things happen for a reason, people take decisions for good or bad. I always look at the opportunities, even though they look like a curveball. All of us here like the challenge of something new. I don't see this as a goodbye from the Mercedes family, because he will always be part of that, part of our legacy and part of our history, something to be proud of."

For Hamilton the British GP is always a homecoming, a celebration in which he takes genuine pleasure and he still speaks fondly of how he began to establish a relationship with the fans at his first win here, a masterclass in the rain in 2008.

He was in a league of his own that year, finding grip and pace where others were pirouetting off track with abandon in conditions the British driver seemed to thrive on. Hamilton has a poor memory of races but when asked this week, he recalled instantly that he won by a whopping 68 seconds that day.

"2008 will always be probably the most special, my first Grand Prix win here in the rain and my first real, I would say, engagement or the beginning of the journey with the fans here," he said.

So it is a farewell to Silverstone with the silver arrows before a return in the red of the prancing horse next season. A poignant moment for Mercedes and Hamilton but as Wolff concedes, as nothing to when they bid goodbye at the close of the season.

"Will it be emotional at Silverstone? I can't judge that," he says. "But I think it will be emotional for the team and Lewis when it comes to the last race. That will not be an easy thing."



CULTURE

No Pitt stops as racing film title revealed



Brad Pitt's previously untitled Formula One blockbuster, co-produced by Lewis Hamilton, will be called *F1*.

Pitt (*inset*) will be filming scenes for the movie at this weekend's British Grand Prix at Silverstone – with the 60-year-old American racing an adapted Formula Two car between practice sessions.

It is hoped that the film – which will be released next June – will build on the popularity of Netflix's *Drive to Survive* series.

A teaser is set to be released ahead of Sunday's race.



FORMULA ONE BRITISH GRAND PRIX

LANDO THE GIANT

McLaren's British driver is F1's coming force - and even has Max running scared, writes Kevin Garside at Silverstone

On a stage featuring three British drivers, one a seven-time world champion, another the winner of last week's Austrian Grand Prix, it was to the third that all eyes were drawn. The zeitgeist at Silverstone is riding not with the Ferrari-bound Lewis Hamilton, nor with his Mercedes teammate George Russell but Lando Norris, a driver replete with boy-band appeal and balls of steel.

For a catalogue of complex reasons Hamilton has never quite felt the universal love of his countrymen. Russell is beginning to demonstrate real authority, keeping Hamilton in his mirrors all season and mopping up in Austria after Norris and Max Verstappen hit the nuclear button over the closing laps. He does not, however, have the elusive, indefinable star quality that endears us to Norris.

When Sky were looking for their perfect talent cross-over cameo this weekend, they chose Norris and his bucket hat to partner darts supermova Luke Littler in a game of fantasy arrows, a love-in worthy of Andy and Emma at Wimbledon. For his forfeit, Littler was submitted to a lap around Silverstone with Norris at the wheel of a supercar.

How he copes with the G-forces through Maggots and Becketts will be revealed in a special slot during the race-day programming.

It's as if we have been waiting for this moment to arrive, the point at which talent, experience and serendipity coincide to propel Norris into Verstappen's orbit. Norris is in his sixth season in Formula One. The fresh-faced wonder with which he entered the sport is retained but the innocence has been driven out of him. He arrives at the British Grand Prix as a rapidly maturing racer with the toolkit to take down Verstappen. And everybody is up for it.

Verstappen, too, as the ruthless defence of his realm at Zeltweg revealed. Both were sending signals in a needless coming together.

Lando Norris bounced back from his collision with Max Verstappen to complete a practice double for the British Grand Prix. Norris was fastest in the first session and finished quickest later in the day. Norris headed Oscar Piastri in a McLaren one-two at a murky Silverstone, with Red Bull's Sergio Perez third.

onwards. That was my childhood dream. But this is a sport that never stops. You have to put that behind you and almost forget it and reset. You are competing against more professional teams with smart people, quicker drivers, people who are trying to play more games with you, that kind of thing."

This toughened version of Norris has been forged by the remarkable rise of McLaren, who served notice at this race a year ago when Norris finished second, of the potential to sustain a title challenge. Though the performance arc of car and driver has continued its upward curve, the essential appeal of Norris remains unchanged. He is the face of this team, the driver around whom McLaren are reshaping.

McLaren's veteran team photographer, Steven Tee, has watched his development closely from his days as a reserve driver in 2018. He recognises in Norris the elements that separate the great from the good. "He is very liked in the team. In that first year he used to

bring cups of tea into the garage on a tray. He literally was the tea boy. He was very happy to do that. The same core bunch of mechanics are still there and for that reason alone they love him. Andrea Sella [team principal] has created a really

strong bond with that team and Lando is a big part of that," Tee told **i**. "I have worked in the

garage with [Ayrton] Senna, [Michael] Schumacher, [Fernando] Alonso, Lewis and he seems to me to have the same qualities. When he needed to put a lap time in he could put one in, even as a rookie driver. I always thought that was a big thing. He has stepped up every time when he has needed to and refused to let his head drop when the car has not been great. Two years ago they had a problem. We were in Bahrain for the first test and if his head was going to go down it was going to be then."

Photographers are often the best source of intel about car and driver performance. From their privileged trackside vantage points little escapes the power of the lens as it bears witness to the entry and exit lines through corners, the behaviour of the cars under braking, over the kerbs, etc.

"On track he certainly ticks the boxes of the big guys," Tee said. "Very rarely makes a mistake. He rarely spins. Barely had a shunt. When you are in the garage watching, he goes out and bangs a time in. We have not seen the best of him yet but what we have seen is nightly impressive. If McLaren give him the car, I can see no reason why he won't be world champion."

That is kind of how it looked at the end of first practice on a grey Silverstone afternoon when Norris put his

McLaren at the top of the time sheets. It's only practice, of course, but in the case of Norris a pattern is forming, and bucket hats are flying out.





The Business of Formula One

Inside Fernando Alonso interview Page 4 • The race for drivers Page 2 • Fred Vasseur fires up Ferrari Page 3

Saturday July 6 2024

www.ft.com/reports

'F1 festival' secures Silverstone future – at a price

Circuit bets on music to attract crowds but ticket costs draw fans' ire, writes *Samuel Agini*

In the days when Bernie Ecclestone ruled Formula One, Silverstone's place on the calendar was far from secure.

F1's former supremo would periodically threaten to move the British Grand Prix from the 3.6-mile Northamptonshire track, which hosted the first F1 race in 1950 and remains one of the fastest on the calendar.

Even after Liberty Media's \$8bn acquisition of F1 in 2017, the relationship remained rocky. Silverstone, which is owned by the non-profit British Racing Drivers' Club, at one point threatened to walk away as a host due to "inadequate profitability".

But, in spite of this turbulent history, Silverstone has now cemented its F1 status, having agreed a deal earlier this year that will see it host the event until 2054. This long-term contract follows the transformation of what used to be a traditional motor race into a four-day festival with live music acts and 60,000 campers on site at the former RAF airfield.



The cumulative attendance over race weekend totalled 400,000 in 2022, climbing to a record-breaking 480,000 last year as fans flocked back to live events in the wake of the pandemic.

However, ticket prices have been rising and, this year, Silverstone's festival comes in a congested summer of music

This year's event features rock band Kings of Leon, rapper Stormzy and drum and bass group Rudimental

and sport, featuring Glastonbury, Euro 2024, Wimbledon and the Olympics.

Still, the scale of the event is such that the crowd on race day far exceeds the 90,000 who cram into Wembley Stadium to watch English football teams play the country's favourite sport.

"We're not selling 90 minutes of

action... you can genuinely be [enjoying the event] between 6am and 1am the following morning", says Silverstone boss Stuart Pringle. "You seldom get a duff race at Silverstone... often it's right up there in the races of the year."

This turnaround is no mean feat given that Liberty Media has expanded to

Grandstand view: but the Grand Prix race is now one part of a four-day event with big-name music acts and other entertainment

glamorous locations such as Miami and Las Vegas. New races in Saudi Arabia and Qatar generate significant promoter fees for F1, piling further pressure on classic tracks such as Silverstone, Monaco, and Monza to keep up.

Silverstone, though, seems to have benefited from the sport's booming popularity under US ownership. Netflix's *Drive to Survive* F1 series introduced the sport to new demographics, including more women and girls. Pringle credits the show with "overcoming one of motorsport's inherent challenges": revealing the personalities hidden by helmets.

And Liberty's efforts to diversify the wider F1 audience have also helped attract a new demographic to Silverstone. In parallel, Pringle has diversified the track's business to lessen reliance on the Grand Prix, which typically accounts for more than half of revenues, which totalled £73m in 2022. He is targeting revenue from merchandising, conferences and events. For instance,

Continued on page 2

Racing simulator bars show power of the motorsport brand

Licensing The name above its doors is accelerating F1 Arcade's expansion, writes *Samuel Agini*

Formula One has always revelled in being a travelling circus. But, when the global racing series leaves town, its American owners want to ensure that it is not out of sight and out of mind. F1 Arcade, a racing simulator experience that combines a day or night out with gaming, is implementing expansion plans, particularly in the US, as the sport tries to get closer to fans, reach new demographics, and stay in touch throughout the year.

Adam Breeden, chief executive and founder, says F1 Arcade caters to young people who "want experiences" and "don't just want to eat and drink". Breeden has a long history in "experiential hospitality", having previously co-founded ping pong bar chain Bounce, and darts-themed Flight Club.

The difference, this time, is that his latest venture bears one of the most famous brand names in sport.

"With the F1 brand above our door, there's an inherent trust that comes with it, but also a higher burden of responsibility to deliver on quality," Breeden says.

"It allows us to offer a champagne cocktail rather than just a normal burger. We could easily do this without the F1 brand... but I probably underestimated the power of the brand."

F1 Arcade is the latest part of a strategy by the sport's commercial rights owner to get closer to its audience. Liberty Media chief Greg Maffei has made clear that the group wants to strengthen its ties with F1 fans — another step in a plan that took off with Netflix's *Drive to Survive*, a dramatic documentary series that is widely credited with boosting the sport's popularity.

That helps to explain why Liberty is investing in F1 TV, a media service that goes direct to viewers. More recently, Liberty decided to run the Las Vegas Grand Prix itself, instead of the traditional model of outsourcing the event to another promoter.



'Experiential hospitality': customers at one of the F1 Arcade gaming bars

"One of the historical challenges for the business, I would argue, was [that it was an] amazing spectacle but, when the circus came to town, [F1] didn't know who attended, didn't know why they attended, didn't know what their real preferences were, or what they

wanted," Maffei told the FT earlier this year.

Liberty Media and F1 led a £30m fundraising in F1 Arcade last year that also won support from McLaren Racing's chief Zak Brown and its driver, Lando Norris.

These themed restaurant, bar and gaming venues are an example of how Formula One's owner is able to license the motorsport's brand to bring in new revenue streams.

The flagship site, close to St Paul's Cathedral in London, opened ahead of Christmas 2022. Now, F1 Arcade, which has already expanded to Birmingham in the UK and Boston in the US, plans to add venues in Washington DC and Las Vegas, and have more than 50 destinations open by the end of 2027.

The business is attempting to leverage the unprecedented popularity of the sport in the US, with hundreds of thousands of fans showing up to races in Texas, Miami and Las Vegas. The company is already holding "watch parties": screening Grands Prix live for US fans. Corporate events are another target.

Jon Gardner, US president of F1 Arcade, says customers there spend more and have different habits to those in the UK, requiring another approach.

"In the UK, everyone is focused on the race — there's not as many drinks," Gardner says. "The bar is full the entire time in the US [and] they're still engaging with the Sims throughout the race."

Even so, the company is competing for customers at a time when many are being more discerning about how they spend the pounds and dollars in their pockets. Breeden acknowledges the challenge but believes that focusing on quality will ensure customer loyalty.

"We're planning to roll out F1 Arcade locations strategically, balancing speed and cost of capital. The US market is extraordinary, with huge potential for growth," he says.

The currency is also developing its "virtual currency and loyalty programmes", he adds, "creating a frictionless experience for guests and gathering valuable data on their preferences."

Liberty Media's growth could open up more opportunities for F1 Arcade. The US group announced in April that it had agreed to buy MotoGP, the elite motorcycle racing series, pending regulatory approval. So might the business bring MotoGP to the F1 Arcade?

"You'd have to have motorcycle simulators, but the playbook's ready to go to do a different kind of simulator concept," says Breeden. "It's not out of the question; we need to look at it more deeply."

Race for costly drivers highlights their value

Talent Competition to fill next season's hot seats is particularly fast and furious, says Jonathan Noble

Formula One's driver market merry-go-round is often known as the "silly season", but this year it has been sillier and earlier than ever before. "The driver market exploded in April – and, normally, no one talks in April," observed Red Bull's motorsport adviser Helmut Marko early that month.

The trigger for the rush was Lewis Hamilton's decision to go early, in February, by announcing that he would leave Mercedes at the end of the year to join Ferrari.

This, in effect, opened up a top-line cockpit that many had thought closed – and also meant that race-winning Ferrari driver Carlos Sainz suddenly needed a new team.

The picture became still murkier a few weeks later, amid the fallout over an investigation into alleged inappropriate behaviour by Red Bull team principal Christian Horner towards a female employee. Horner denied the allegations and was cleared by an investigation conducted by a barrister at the company's request. But his accuser appealed against the decision.

That made world champion Max Verstappen's future with Red Bull uncertain, despite him appearing to be locked in until the end of 2028. Last week, however, he confirmed that he would stay for 2025.

Even so, the wider driver market had already been stirred up by Sauber's new

owner, Audi, seeking to get ahead with its driver choices, and stressing that it intended to be a "player" in the market rather than a spectator. That meant pushing for its key targets – Sainz and Haas's Nico Hülkenberg (the latter now confirmed) – to commit early, to help Sauber attract the top technical staff the team believes are needed to move up the grid.

In turn, Sauber's eagerness to get decisions from that duo forced other teams and drivers to make calls. Red Bull had to weigh up whether to stick with Sergio Pérez or try for Sainz but, in the end, the team went for continuity. Sainz then appeared to hold out for as long as possible for Mercedes (which seemed in no rush to resolve the situation), and also found himself courted by Williams.

The market went into overdrive, with other drivers nervous about potentially losing out – especially with the likely arrival of rookies Oliver Bearman (aged 19 and expected to be confirmed by Haas in the run-up to the British Grand

The dilemma of paying for a superstar or picking a youngster is one faced by Mercedes for next year

Prix) and Andrea Kimi Antonelli (aged 17 and racing in F2 with Prema but set for Mercedes) in 2025.

This battle for drivers comes against the backdrop of a very close F1 grid where talent is more important than ever, as losing a couple of tenths of seconds because someone's standard is in the cockpit is unacceptable.

That is why Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff says the kinds of wages commanded by the likes of Max Verstappen

and Lewis Hamilton – in the region of \$60m–\$70m – are not ludicrous.

"Drivers are very good value," Wolff says. "Put a great driver in a car, it will make all the difference, especially in a field where between P1 and P15 is six or eight tenths [of a second per lap]."

While the advantages of a driver can be judged on the impact they might have on positions in the constructors' championship – where each place is worth roughly \$10m – the benefits potentially extend far beyond that.

McLaren chief executive Zak Brown says: "I don't think there's any prize money economies that kind of justify the jump [in prize money alone from a higher salary]. But you get more sponsorship the more successful you are. You also get to recruit the best talent, because people want to go to the best team."

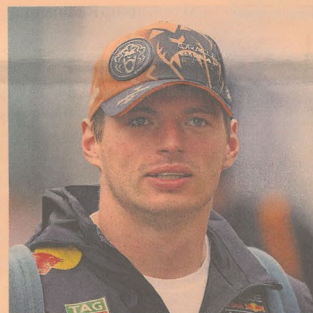
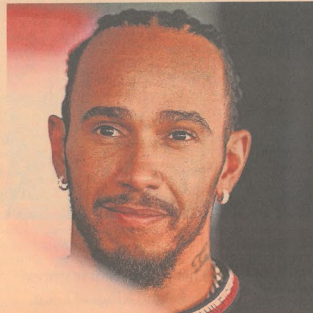
At a time when teams are mindful of every dollar spent because of F1's cost cap – which mainly limits spending on car performance – driver salaries are growing. This has put power in the hands of the drivers and their managers, and means salaries are unrestrained as the value of the top stars increases.

"I think it's going to drive up driver salaries, because you have some teams that appear to have an unlimited cheque book," notes Brown.

But top drivers' spiralling wages may yet risk pricing them out of the market if teams feel that they can achieve as much with a rising star, who would come much cheaper.

Rookies such as Oscar Piastri – who are likely to be earning less than \$10m per season – are a bargain compared with some more established star drivers, who earn four or five times that much.

The dilemma of paying for a superstar or picking a youngster is one Mercedes faces for next year, as it edges closer to



Merry-go-round: (clockwise from top left) Lewis Hamilton; Carlos Sainz; Oliver Bearman; Max Verstappen

promoting its junior star Antonelli from F2 to replace Hamilton. The difficulty of making that kind of decision is eased by the fact that the team appears unlikely to be in contention for the title.

Wolff says: "When you look at the Mercedes situation, I think we can go for the rookie because, as it stands, we're not fighting for championship, and the chances of doing that in '25 are – if you're realistic – pretty slim. So that can be an environment [where] a young

driver can be educated for the future. The argument on the flip side is you want to have an experienced driver that can help you catch up quicker, because he will know how the car should drive."

While there is potential for top wages to exceed \$100m in the next few years, one driver manager – who did not want to be named – insists there is value in paying a high price.

"On civvy street, it's bankers levels but, when you look at the impact Lewis

has had on Ferrari's profile, and what Max has done with Red Bull consistently, it would be hugely costly to miss out on all those victory shots and incredible images going forward," the driver manager says.

"The teams see all the numbers and they are comfortable to sign the cheque," he adds. "They don't have a gun to their head – you sign the contract because that's the number they are expected to pay."

'F1 festival' secures Silverstone's GP future

Continued from page 1
UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak launched his Conservative party election manifesto at the track, in June.

High fixed costs are a significant burden on the business, but profits have increased since the pandemic, according to the most recent accounts.

Concerns have been expressed from within the sport, however, over the cost of attending this year's race. Seven-time world champion Sir Lewis Hamilton urged Silverstone to ensure that families could still afford to be there.

"The only thing I would ever say is that we have to watch ticket prices," Hamilton said in the build-up. "I think they're continuing to rise and [with] the cost of living nowadays, I think it's too high."

When tickets went on sale, general admission on the Sunday was priced at £199, or £249 for the main three days of the event. Three days in the grandstand was £359.



Big names: Self Esteem is among the acts performing this weekend

Pringle stresses that Silverstone offers a range of price points. "Ultimately, the tickets are not cheap [but] they're great value. It is not something that every single member of British society can afford to come to but a lot of people can – and a lot of people are choosing to do so."

Silverstone expects total attendance to hit 465,000 over all four days, a decrease on 2023. On social media, fans have complained about the rising costs.

Pringle's aim is to put on an event that keeps fans happy even if the race does not end with the result they want. Home favourite Lando Norris could be the crowd's best hope of a perfect day. Spice will be added by the controversy at last

weekend's Austrian GP, where Norris did not finish after aggressive defence by Red Bull's Max Verstappen.

But, if Verstappen dominates, Pringle has other headline acts in store. The event will feature rock band Kings of Leon, rapper Stormzy, drum and bass group Rudimental and singer Self Esteem. Top music acts are "absolutely a way to reduce the risk of a Max domination", Pringle says, despite the cost of booking high-profile performers in addition to paying fees to F1 for the event.

And, even if Verstappen does seal victory for the second year running, this time the home crowd can head to an after-party run by Mahiki – a club better

Silverstone back on track



known for hosting celebrities in Mayfair. "It's eye-watering and sleep-disturbing but, actually, the risk for me sits around just relying on a motor race and just hoping that the Brits will come through and that you don't get successive wet [rainy] years," Pringle says. "It's slightly counterintuitive because it costs you more and the volumes of people that you've got to get in are significant."

Longtime attendees have noticed the change. Silverstone used to be synonymous with muddy fields, traffic and bad parking, recalls one, who declined to be named. "You wouldn't want to pay 600 quid or take your family there if that's what you were going to have," she says.

The refreshments have expanded, too, and now include "everything from oysters and champagne to a burger to a traditional fish and chips, Mexican, Chinese, curry, Asian – you name it," says Stephen Freeman, chief executive of Freemans Event Partners.

With younger crowds, Freeman says lager is making way for "experience drinks and Instagram-type drinks", such as prosecco, champagne, cocktails and gin and tonics. But, he notes, burgers are "still the most popular product by far".

Pringle is particularly conscious of the need for Silverstone to welcome that new generation of F1 fans. Female fans made up 41 per cent of attendees at last year's Grand Prix, he says.

"If you'd told me even as recently as five years ago, let alone 10 years ago, that the audience would be nearly 50:50 male-female split at the British Grand Prix or at a motor race in Great Britain, I'd have thought you were on mind-bending drugs," Pringle says.

"White middle class, middle England-dwelling men like me used to be the mainstay of motorsport events but that isn't the case now," he adds. "If it was the case I wouldn't be spending the money we are on Stormzy... because he ain't that demographic's cup of tea."

"Our event is a very, very realistic cross-section of British society, it also incredibly represents modern Britain. I'm incredibly proud of the fact we've achieved that, and you know there's more to do."

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Interview **Frédéric Vasseur** Long after the team's last championship win, the Frenchman is bringing brio – and Lewis Hamilton – writes *James Allen*

How Ferrari's chief is making the scuderia swagger again

Success in any sport requires confidence as much as talent. But confidence is far more fragile. In team sports, managers often need to change an entire culture in order to reverse a slump in confidence.

This is something that anyone who has led Scuderia Ferrari HP knows all about. Ferrari F1 team members are uniquely exposed to external forces, as the team represents all of Italy, every two weeks, on the world stage. The gales blowing in from the media, from the huge fan base known as the *tifosi*, as well as the higher corporate layers of the automotive company and its sponsors, can easily send the team off course. It has happened often before.

The current team principal is Frédéric Vasseur, widely known as Fred and only the second non-Italian to lead Ferrari in 75 years. The first, another Frenchman, Jean Todt, won 14 world championships for drivers and constructors between 1999 and 2008. Those were the glory days, with Michael Schumacher behind the wheel. Since Todt left, Ferrari has not won a single world title. Red Bull and Mercedes have dominated.

So, last year, Ferrari chief executive Benedetto Vigna and chair John Elkann brought in Vasseur. Now 56, Vasseur managed the Renault and Sauber F1 teams after two decades of success with

his own ART GP team in the junior categories. He brought through Sir Lewis Hamilton, Nico Rosberg and several other drivers who have become household names.

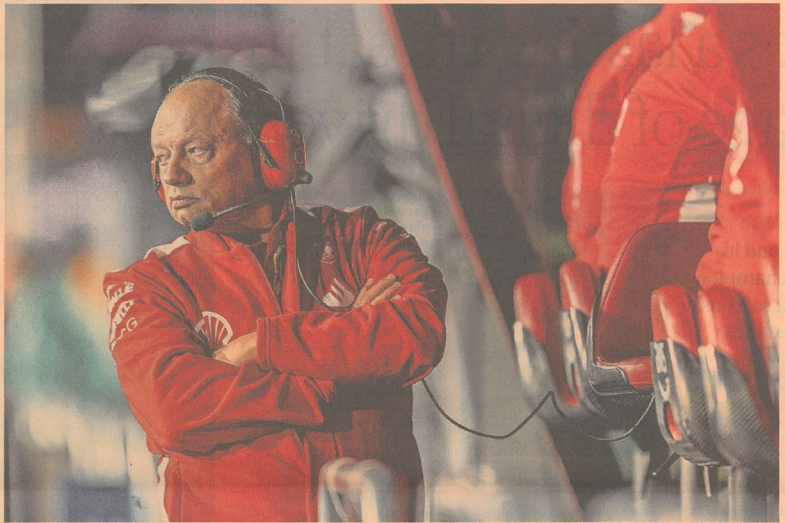
Fifteen months into Vasseur's tenure, Ferrari is getting its swagger back. Operationally, the team is sharper and makes fewer mistakes. Results on track have improved, despite some recent setbacks. But the biggest boost came in February, when Hamilton shocked the F1 world by announcing that he would quit Mercedes for Ferrari in 2025.

Twenty years after they won together in F3, Hamilton and Vasseur are getting the band back together.

"Lewis was an important symbol because it sends a positive message to the paddock for the future of the team," says Vasseur in his bright, modern office in Maranello, near Bologna. "He had to make a choice: 'Where do I have the biggest chance to win the world championship in 2025, '26, '27?' And he said, 'Ferrari'."

"For us, [Hamilton's arrival is] also the best way to attract good people. We have good people at Ferrari, but I want to reinforce."

"Most [F1 technicians] are in the UK. If you move from Mercedes in Brackley to Red Bull in Milton Keynes you keep the children at the same school, you keep the same house. From Friday to Monday, you can switch.



'We don't have to be scared': Fred Vasseur is changing the team's attitude to managed risk Alamy

Coming to Italy, it's a different story. You have to move the family; it's a change of life. The move of Lewis will help us," he says.

Hamilton's signature has boosted the confidence of a team that was already progressing. Wins in Australia for Carlos Sainz and in Monaco for Charles Leclerc, along with strong performances in other races, mean that Ferrari is back in the hunt, if not quite at the level of Max Verstappen and Red Bull Racing.

But the gap is narrowing. Vasseur has tackled the blame culture that was rife in the team. He pushes the engineers

'Lewis was an important symbol because it sends a positive message to the paddock for the future'

and staff in other roles he calls "performance differentiating" to be more aggressive, and to take more risks. They trust him to take the blame himself if it does not work out.

"If you are scared about the capacity of taking risk, you take margins everywhere," says Vasseur. "And, in our business, you can have five cars in one-tenth of a second. I spent the last 15 months pushing everybody. Because the more we take risks, the better we will be in the management of risks. I'm really pleased with the step forwards."

"At Ferrari, we don't have to be scared about the consequence of what we are doing. The team, perhaps in the past, was a bit scared about external forces. But it's my job to manage this; to push them to be a bit more aggressive. And then to take on the mistakes when we are [making] mistakes."

What makes Ferrari unique – and its employees uniquely vulnerable – is that there is no let up. The employees live in the environs of Ferrari's Maranello base, and they have to contend constantly with the consequences of the results – both good and bad. Whether at the café, the school gates, or in the supermarket, Ferrari's most recent race performance is always a talking point.

For Vasseur, being French gives him a certain detachment, some thinking time and the space to take the emotion out of situations. He learnt from Todt that, for Ferrari to be successful, the team principal has to act as a human shield against the external forces, allowing the team to get on with their work.

"The more emotional and more passionate you are, the more fragile you are, because emotions are going up

and down. Monaco for everybody was a mega weekend. The week after, in Canada, was a disaster. But, when you are in the game, you feel that the difference between Monaco and Canada is very, very small: a few tenths of a second," he says.

"The perception of the results [is sometimes] much bigger than the reality on the track. It means that we have to stay calm. In both cases, you have to do the same analysis of what is going well and what is going wrong and you have to stay away from the emotion. Like this, you build up the confidence."

Ferrari has a strong record in the British Grand Prix, winning the race 18 times, including the scuderia's first ever F1 win in 1951. With the team's confidence growing, few would bet against it adding an 19th win this weekend.

The Business of Formula One

Analogue-era racer poses a lasting threat in the age of digital drivers

Interview

Fernando Alonso

How have F1 and its twice world champion changed in 21 seasons? He tells *James Allen*

When Fernando Alonso was 22 – a couple of seasons into his F1 career and already a Grand Prix winner – I asked him what was his goal.

"I want every other driver to look at me and say, 'He's the best,'" came Alonso's reply.

Today, in his record 21st season of F1 and still fighting towards the front of the grid with the Aston Martin team, he laughs at the recollection.

"Yeah, that probably was me back then," he says. "And I still feel the same way. Now, I hope when you meet a driver, they have that respect, knowing that you were a strong competitor and someone that is not giving up."

"I think, 20 years later, some of those goals were achieved with the championships. I can still achieve good things when I have the right equipment. Even when the car is not 100 per cent, they still need to keep an eye on me. I will always be a fighter. I didn't change my approach."

Turning 43 this month, Alonso is a two-time F1 world champion and a phenomenon in much the same way as Tom Brady in NFL: an athlete who is still competitive in a cut-throat



Double: Fernando Alonso celebrates retaining the world championship in Brazil in 2006 (left); and in Aston Martin colours today

professional sport well past his 40th birthday.

That is a milestone Lewis Hamilton will hit in January, as he embarks on his new adventure with Ferrari. Other drivers have struggled to match their previous levels once they move into their fifth decade: Michael Schumacher is a prime example. His final seasons at Mercedes never matched the intensity or speed of his prime Ferrari years.

Later this year, Alonso will also become the first driver in history to start 400 Grands Prix – or 35 per cent of all the F1 races in the sport's 75-year history. Although his car has been somewhat erratic this season, the Spaniard regularly qualifies close to the front and, last year, he scored eight memorable podiums for Aston Martin. So has anything changed in his driving and in how Alonso lives F1 today?

"Inside the car didn't change much; when I close the visor, it's exactly the same as 20 years ago," he says. "I do enjoy a little bit more everything outside the car. The contact with the fans. Even sponsor events, I didn't like before, it felt like a distraction. Now, I embrace it a little bit more. I feel it's part of the job."

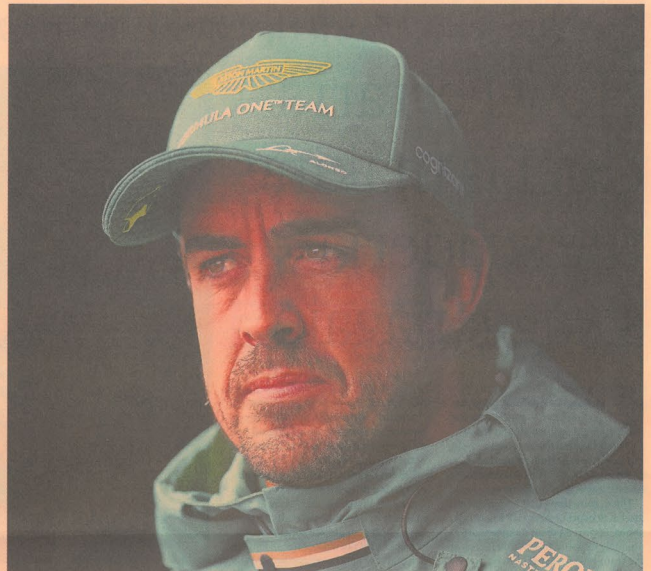
That Alonso has only two world titles to his credit does not tell the full story of this talented sportsman. He won those titles before he turned 26, beating Schumacher twice, in 2005 and 2006, with Renault. He has since raced for McLaren and Ferrari and came agonisingly close to adding titles on three occasions.

The infamous Alonso statistic is that he is just eight points from being a five-times world champion, which might have been a more appropriate record for a driver of his calibre.

In 2018, he briefly left F1. After all the narrow misses, the years toiling in uncompetitive cars, the frustration had become too much. He joined Toyota and won the Le Mans 24 Hours twice and the FIA World Endurance Championship, the second most prestigious series after F1.

"It's part of the sport," he says. "I

'In 2018, when I stopped . . . we were just actors in the movie of Mercedes, not able to fight at any point'



learned that throughout my career. At the beginning, it was difficult to process, to feel motivated after a thing that happened to you, or a failure. You felt it was not justice, it was not fair. But, at the end, you understand that this is part of the game, part of sport: NBA, football, it's the same. I learned that with time.

"In 2018, when I stopped, I felt that it was just too predictable, the Mercedes domination was too much. We were just actors in the movie of Mercedes, not able to fight at any point," he says.

"I had other challenges in my head with Le Mans and things that were more appealing. So I left. But, in 2021, after achieving the World Endurance

Championship and Le Mans wins, I felt that there was a bigger challenge; trying to be back in F1 and to succeed again," he says.

This weekend, in the British Grand Prix at Silverstone, Alonso lines up alongside rivals who are some 20 years his junior, such as McLaren's Oscar Piastri. Alonso arrived in F1 in the analogue age, alongside drivers including Schumacher, Mika Häkkinen, and David Coulthard. The current generation are digital-first, gung-ho, trained in simulators and academies. So how do they compare as competitors and as people?

"Definitely, there are some differences. I think the older generation were a bit more genuine," he says. "Different in character, in the way they

approached racing and life. They were very tough competitors.

"Now, I would say that they are very talented – maybe more than before because of all the preparation, the academies, the simulator work, the technology, and data they have available to improve and learn quickly. They arrive in F1 more prepared."

"But off track or with the helmet off, maybe they are a bit the same and more shy in the way they approach things. They have people who talk for them, for management, for media, for fitness," he notes. "They're well prepared, but maybe they lost a little bit their own character."

He may be the analogue driver in a digital age, but no one could accuse Fernando Alonso of lacking character.

The right formula: buying an F1 car

Ownership Devotees reflect on collecting Grand Prix motors, reports Rafe Uddin

Every Formula One car produces an unique timbre as it dances through corners and accelerates along straights – its engine generating hums, crackles, and roars fine-tuned to captivate the souls of motor racing enthusiasts.

That soundtrack was part of an experience that resonated with the young Nick Mason when he first visited the Silverstone circuit in the 1950s, with the F1 world championship still in its infancy in the aftermath of the second world war.

Decades later, the drummer from rock band Pink Floyd would return to the track behind the wheel of an F1 car – his own. Mason had purchased a 1983 Tyrrell 011, which he took to a test day at the circuit.

"I thought they'd yellow flag the day because the car was so fast compared with anything else," he says. "I thought the traffic was slowing down!"

Speaking on his way to Stoke in the West Midlands to start a two-month European tour – Nick Mason's Saucerful of Secrets – he recalls decades of collecting and racing cars, including several from the pinnacle of motorsport.

Days before he spoke to the FT, fans had gathered for a charity event at Mason's home in Wiltshire, south-west England, to view his collection. His cars include a 1965 Ferrari GTO sports car – the world's most valuable model, estimated to be worth at least £50m – that he purchased for £37,000 in 1977 (roughly £277,000 in 2024 prices).

Also parked on the lawn was Mason's first F1 car: a 2.5 litre 250F Maserati from 1957 with a top speed of about 180mph, and one of only 26 examples ever produced.

"Most of my buying was done quite a long time ago – when the cars weren't treated as they are now," the musician says. "The problem now is it's all about investment."

His collection was born from childhood enthusiasm but the growth of F1 in the past decade, following its acquisition by the US group Liberty Media in 2017,



Classic rock: Nick Mason in his 1957 Maserati at Silverstone in the 1980s – *Alamy*

has introduced a new clientele with an appetite beyond trackside experiences.

Retired F1 cars are valuable and, while they remain largely the preserve of car enthusiasts, they are now also deemed an investible asset, says Peter Haynes of auctioneers Sotheby's.

"F1 cars are a very rare thing and, by their nature, have been driven by famous racers and have incredible provenance," he explains.

Sotheby's sold the dominant Ferrari F2005-GA, driven by seven-time world champion Michael Schumacher to his sixth title in 2003, for £12.8m in 2022 – well surpassing an estimate of £8m in a record sale.

Several months later, the auctioneer sold Lewis Hamilton's race-winning 2015 Mercedes F1 W04 for £15.1m in a sign of buyers' whetted appetites.

For those aiming – and able – to enter the market, Haynes says it is first vital to determine the era of F1 car they

'I really like getting the cars out and I'm not mad about keeping them in museum condition'

desire, and whether it would need to run. Racing cars built before the 1990s are generally easier to run, while modern Grand Prix cars are dependent on software to fire up and require a dedicated team of engineers to hit the track.

"You really need to have a clear idea of what you're buying and how you're going to run a car," Mason agrees.

Buyers need to decide whether they will maintain and garage their F1 car or have it cared for and stored by a third party. Ferrari, for example, operates Corse Clienti, helping maintain and run younger race cars at circuits around the world for particularly wealthy clients.

Although auctions have grown in prominence in recent years, many deals for prized examples still take place

behind closed doors using brokers or informal networks.

"At auction, the opportunities for analysis are lower. You can't put them on a ramp [for close inspection]," says Simon Kidston, a dealer based in Geneva. "When they reach a certain value and historic significance, you start to see them more frequently at auction."

Kidston specialises in examples from the 1950s and 1960s and sold the only Mercedes-Benz W125 in private hands. The car was produced by the German manufacturer for the 1937 Grand Prix season and won the pre-F1 European championship.

His personal favourites are racing models that can still be run on public roads. "I drive a Grand Prix Bugatti regularly on the road for events like the Mille Miglia [a recreation of the 1,000 mile round-trip race between Brescia and Rome] or just to get the croissants on a Sunday," he says.

Mason, like other collectors, has been ambivalent about running his cars given their provenance. But, while some display theirs on plinths, his can often be seen on road or track. "I always hated the idea of being a car collector," he says. "I really like getting the cars out and I'm not mad about keeping them all in museum condition."

Cars from the musician's collection are seen speeding up the hill at Goodwood Festival of Speed in West Sussex most years – this year, the event takes place a week after the British Grand Prix. Other collectors will race their historic cars around Silverstone during a festival in August.

"Racing is not for everyone, especially an F1 car," Haynes says, noting the technical demands. "It requires a lot of skill and intuition. This is for a relatively small group of people who have the ability and passion to do that."

But, for almost all racers and collectors who grew up watching Grands Prix on the track or television, the appeal is captured by Mason: "It's living out a boyhood dream," he says.

Closing the gender gap in driver's seat and paddock

Women Presenters Nicki Shields (below) and Laura Winter share close-up views of life in the pit lane

It is almost half a century since a woman scored points in a Formula One race. Lella Lombardi finished sixth in the 1975 Spanish Grand Prix, earning half a point. And the fact that no female driver has gone further in the past 49 years raises many questions about the lack of women in motorsport.

Fortunately, this enduring gender gap has not gone unnoticed and we are now witnessing arguably the biggest change motorsport has seen. There is a monumental, paddock-wide effort to move the needle and create more opportunities for women to work or race within the sport.

Currently, 40 per cent of F1 fans are female – up from 32 per cent in 2018 – so it is now even more important to appeal to both women and men.

However, female drivers, on average, account for only about 10 per cent of competitors across all categories. So this is where the work needs to be done.

The all-female F1 Academy, with managing director Susie Wolff its driving force, has been transformative. On seven F1 race weekends, you can now also watch 15 of the best female drivers compete wheel-to-wheel. Ten of 15 cars feature F1 team liveries, with the remainder sponsored by global brands including American Express, Puma, and Charlotte Tilbury cosmetics. The series helps female drivers climb the ladder from F4, F3 and F2 to F1, and provides support to develop careers.

F1 Academy driver Abbi Pulling is another formidable force, having won four out of the six races so far this season and becoming the first female driver to win a British F4 race in May. But Pulling, 21, also shows how talent is not always enough in motorsport: she had to pull out of her second season of F4 in September 2021 due to funding issues.

She then raced in the all-female W Series, finishing seventh in 2021 and fourth in 2022, the final season. Pulling went on to join F1 Academy, where she is now able to develop and showcase her skills on a global stage.

Several other initiatives are now seeking to boost the number of women working or aspiring to work in the sport.

F1 is becoming more equal – but other motorsports lead

The Drive to Survive Netflix F1 series and an extraordinary 2021 season, which saw one of the greatest rivalries of all time, have had a seismic impact on F1, its popularity, global appeal and the demographic and size of the fan base, writes Laura Winter. The average fan is no longer male by default, and this is important.

In the paddock, improvements are happening and women are now visible, and wholly accepted in many roles, from hospitality and partnerships to communications, media and ultimately engineering and strategy. In the media pen, women report or lead coverage in most territories, such as Finland, Brazil, Italy, the UK and France, and on FTV, where I am lead presenter.

What is vitally important is that these women are in roles because they have had opportunities to earn the right to be there, on merit, not because it is fashionable, or looks like equality. Accusations of being the token woman will follow females in motorsport as long as it is seen as a mainly male space. While this is slowly changing and no longer feels the case in the paddock, someone forgot to tell the social media trolls. And all 20 drivers and 10 team principals are men and F1 cannot shy away from that.



Broadcaster Laura Winter is lead presenter on FTV

Trailblazing work is being done in other motorsports. Extreme E is an all-electric off-road series in its fourth season. It was committed to gender equality from the outset, becoming the first series with male and female drivers as teammates.

With equal time behind the wheel and on track, the performance gap between male and female drivers has closed by an average of 51 per cent since Season One, with the average now 1.5 seconds and female drivers often the quickest of the day.

Change and progress are undeniably happening, but they will not do so overnight.



Nicki Shields broadcasts on F1 Academy and Formula E

F1 Academy: Discover Your Drive is a grassroots karting programme aiming to encourage female participation from as young as eight, and is already producing results. The British Indoor Karting Championship has seen female participation more than double.

For the mixed-sex Champions of the Future series of kart races, F1 Academy

supports nine girls aged eight to 15. The top three finishers in the senior category will be offered an F1 Academy test.

Meanwhile, Girls on Track UK aims to inspire girls and women to believe they have a place in racing and to encourage interest in science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects, which could open up career paths.

Finally, the More Than Equal initiative, run by founder and Grand Prix winner David Coulthard and chief executive Ali Donnelly, uses a "science-based approach" to find and develop F1's first female champion. "All the science says there is no boundary between men and women competing at the same level in F1," he says.

Walking around a paddock in 2024 is a contrast to the past, too, with women in many roles. But there is a long way to go. Will we see a female F1 driver in the next 10 years? There are certainly no guarantees, but we are in a much better place today than we've ever been before. See p2 lead story for Red Bull case

BACK ON THE GLORY TRAIL

By Daniel Moxon

THREE decades on from the brilliance of Nigel Mansell and Damon Hill, Alex Albon is confident he can lead Williams to glory at Silverstone again.

Sir Frank's team were once the industry standard, particularly in the trophy-laden Nineties. And the track in Northamptonshire was their favourite playground, evidenced by six wins in seven years between 1991 and 1997.

There was Mansell in 'Red Five' dominating the 1992 championship in Max Verstappen-esque fashion.

He won the British Grand Prix that season after taking pole by almost two seconds.

Two years later a young Hill, still reeling from the death of team-mate Ayrton Senna 10 weeks earlier, did what his

Albon out to wake up sleeping giants

father Graham never managed and won his home Grand Prix. Jacques Villeneuve won the race twice for Williams but his 1997 victory remains their most recent at Silverstone, the venue for the team's first win in 1979 with the late Clay Regazzoni in the cockpit.

Albon has impressed since returning to the grid in 2022, though he has been nowhere near the podium, with Williams a shadow of their former selves.

However, the 28-year-old is certain team principal James Vowles, who joined from Mercedes early last year, has the right plan to wake up the

sleeping giants. Albon said: "He sees the journey and knows it's not going to be long. "When he says something isn't great he has a reason and a fix, which is the most important. "I'm excited. I believe in the journey."

Albon has already demonstrated that in the best fashion. Linked with Red Bull and Ferrari at the start

of the season, the London-born Thai driver rejected interest from both to sign a contract extension with Williams.

He added: "There was a temptation. Part of me was like, 'Am I willing to wait that long to get the fruits of the work that has been done?' "And it came down to yes."



ALBON: Wants Williams back in big time

RED BULL BLASTED

By Daniel Moxon

MCLAREN CEO Zak Brown has torn into Red Bull over Max Verstappen's aggressive driving.

Verstappen caused contact with Lando Norris at last Sunday's Austrian Grand Prix.

Brown said: "I'm disappointed in such a great team like Red Bull that the leadership almost encourages it, because you listen on the radio to what was said.

"We've seen there is a lack of respect - whether it's financial regulations, or sporting, on track, issues with fathers and things of that nature. We need to guide our drivers on what's right or wrong."



Albon engages with the Silverstone fans ahead of his practice session

CRICKET

ENGLAND'S winter will start with a three-Test tour of Pakistan in October.

Three Tests in New Zealand follow in December, while there are white-ball games in the Caribbean and India ahead of the Champions Trophy in Pakistan.

Lally anger at snub

WORLD OF SPORT

TOKYO GAMES stars Keely Hodgkinson and Josh Kerr headline a 64-strong British athletics team heading to Paris this month.

But a row rumbles on after it was confirmed no women will compete in the throwing events, with discus No.1 Jade

OLYMPICS

Lally saying she is preparing to retire, having been left feeling "ashamed" by the snub.

Hammer thrower Anna Purchase, who made the final of the World Championships in 2023, also misses out.

ALAN SMITH

- Who won MotoGP Race 2 at the 2024 Italian motorcycle Grand Prix?
- Which nation did United States women's football team beat 4-0 in Emma Hayes' first match in charge last month?
- Who knocked Britain's Dan Evans out of this year's French Open?
- Which county cricket club replaced the stag on their badge with a monogram in 2020?
- In what year did the rugby's Five Nations Championship become the Six Nations Championship?
- What is the forename of former world heavyweight champion Leon Spinks' son, who was undisputed world welterweight champion from 2003 to 2005?
- Which horse belonging to Queen Elizabeth II did Willie Carson ride to victory in both the Oaks and the St Leger in her 1977 Jubilee year?
- Which Scottish-born American golfer won the PGA Championship in 1920 and Open Championship in 1921?
- What name is given to the annual American football game between the champions of the NFL and the champions of the AFL?
- By what nickname was American baseball player Lawrence Berra known?

10 to tackle RATINGS
 1-3 Oh dear
 4-5 Small beer
 7-9 So near
 10 Sporting Seer

THE OVERTAKE

British Grand Prix By Daniel Moxon



Friend or foe? Lando must pick

POLE POSITION: LANDO NORRIS insists he and Max Verstappen remain good pals, despite their clash in Austria a week ago.

But words are cheap - let us see if they are still friends at the first corner tomorrow.

Norris, above, has been piling the pressure on his rival for a couple of months, and it was inevitable they would clash, with Verstappen having a track record.

It has got everyone in the Silverstone paddock debating whether or not it is possible to be friends with your championship opponent. Whatever the

answer, Briton Norris cannot afford to see Verstappen, below, as a mate when he pulls down his visor.

Even with Red Bull not as dominant as they were, the Dutchman continues to do the business and you have to be perfect to beat the champion.

Norris has learnt that in recent weeks - small mistakes cost him in Canada and Spain.

Going up against Verstappen is the biggest examination of his title credentials.

And he will fail if he cannot see that the Red Bull racer is his enemy, not his friend, in the world of F1.



BACK OF THE GRID:

BRAD PITT is in the Silverstone paddock again this weekend as filming for his new Formula One movie continues.

It was announced yesterday that the name of the hotly-anticipated film will be...F1.

I wonder how many executive meetings it took to land on that creative masterpiece?



FROM THE ARCHIVE:

LEWIS HAMILTON, left, has always been masterful in the rain - and delivered arguably his best wet-weather victory in 2008, winning by more than a minute in his iconic silver and red McLaren.



FAST FACT:

HAMILTON bids to earn his 12th Silverstone podium in a row. Despite the struggles of Mercedes in recent years, the seven-time F1 champion has continued to deliver in front of the British fans.



INSIDE TRACK: Carlos Sainz looks set to sign for Alpine after taking a U-turn on his plan to join Williams. Valtteri Bottas appears more likely to return to his old team to partner Alex Albon instead.



F1: BRITISH GRAND PRIX

Williams the

THREE decades on from the brilliance of Nigel Mansell and Damon Hill, Alex Albon is confident he can lead Williams to glory at Silverstone again.

The team founded by Sir Frank Williams once led the way in Formula One, particularly in the trophy-laden 1990s.

And the Northamptonshire track was their favourite playground, evidenced by six wins in seven years between 1991 and 1997.

There was Nigel Mansell in 'Red Five' who dominated the 1992 championship in the same fashion as Max Verstappen.

He won the British Grand Prix that season after taking pole by almost a full two seconds.

Two years later, a young Damon Hill, still reeling from the death of team-mate Ayrton Senna 10 weeks earlier, did what his father

ALBON BACKS BRIT SLEEPING GIANT TO GRAB GLORY AGAIN

EXCLUSIVE

by DANIEL MOXON

Graham never managed and won his home Grand Prix.

Jacques Villeneuve won the race twice for Williams but his 1997 victory remains the team's most recent at Silverstone, the venue for the team's first-ever win in 1979 with the late Clay Regazzoni in the cockpit.

Albon has starred for the team since he returned to the F1 grid in 2022, but has been nowhere near the podium, with Williams a shadow of their former selves.

But the 28-year-old is certain that boss James Vowles, who

joined from Mercedes early last year, has the right plan to wake up F1's sleeping giants.

Albon said: "We're in communication on a daily basis. He's honest. He sees the journey and knows it's not going to be long.

"When he says something isn't great, he has a reason and he has a fix, which is the most important."

"I'm excited - I'm in the meetings and I hear all the updates as to what's going on. I'm committed and I'm excited because I do believe in the journey."

Albon has already demonstrated that in the best possible way.

Linked with the likes of Red

Bull and Ferrari at the start of the season, he rejected interest from both to sign a contract extension with Williams.

A racing career is finite and he admits he was tempted to skip the queue but had seen enough during Vowles' tenure to be convinced that he can achieve his ambitions with his current employer.

He said: "Of course there was a temptation - and Williams understood that too. It was a very open discussion that we had.

"Part of me was like, 'Am I willing to wait that long to get the fruits of the work that has been done?' And it came down to yes."

Albon was born in London, grew up in Suffolk and is one of five Brits who will be on the F1 grid next year.

He races under the Thai flag, though, having chosen to represent his mother's homeland.

"I'm fully aware of my British background and my karting roots and whatnot, but I feel very Thai in terms of who I am," he explained.

But he still sees Silverstone as his "second home race", adding: "My family live 25 minutes from here. I learned how to race here, I got my racing licence at Silverstone when I was eight years old.

"Every Sunday we have a barbecue at my house, all my friends and family. So it's still very much a home race."



HEROES: Mansell (top) and Hill were both British winners

HOME RUN: Alex Albon drives the Williams car at Silverstone yesterday



conqueror



DREAM RACER: Alex Albon will aim to restore winning ways for Williams

ZAK ATTACK ON RIVAL'S TACTICS

by DANIEL MOXON

MCLAREN CEO Zak Brown has torn into Red Bull, accusing the F1 champions of a "lack of respect" and claiming they're "encouraged" Max Verstappen's aggressive driving. Brown launched his sensational attack at Silverstone yesterday after Verstappen caused contact with Lando Norris at Sunday's Austrian Grand Prix, ending both drivers' chances of winning.

The Brit, who was forced to retire, has forgiven his rival but his American boss is still seething. Brown fumed: "I'm disappointed in such a great team like Red Bull that the leadership almost encourages it, because you listen on the radio to what was said. "We all have a responsibility on the pit wall to tell our drivers the do's and don'ts of what's going on in the race, and so I think we need to have respect for regulations. "We've seen there be a lack of respect - whether it's financial regulations or sporting - on track, issues with fathers and things of that nature. I just don't think that's how we need to go racing. "We need to guide our drivers on what's right or wrong, and I think had it been addressed earlier, maybe that incident wouldn't have taken place."

Norris went fastest in both British Grand Prix practice sessions yesterday. Lewis Hamilton was sixth fastest in FP2 while Verstappen was only seventh quickest in the second session, four places behind team-mate Sergio Perez.

LANDO GOES FOR SILVERSTONE SPIN

A LAP of Silverstone with McLaren's Lando Norris (inset)

ABBAY AND FARM CURVE

The first corner at Abbey is flat out. The driver has to throw the front of the car into the corner, and then hang on to it on the exit, because we immediately go into turn two - the Farm Curve. There is also a bit of a bump in there, so if we are too aggressive the car will de-stabilise.

VILLAGE AND THE LOOP

Next, is the slow-speed section of the track, putting the brakes on as we enter Village, which provides an overtaking opportunity, albeit not an easy one. It is very easy to lock the front-right tyre under braking which compromises our line into the left-hander, The Loop, but the exit is key because the kink at Aintree takes

us on to the long Wellington Straight, and the first of two DRS zones.

BROOKLANDS

We then head into the old part of the circuit, driving at nearly 220mph, before we approach the long, left-hander at Brooklands. Here we brake and shift down the gears. Here there is a chance for overtaking.

LUFFIELD & WOODHOTE

Luffield is the most frustrating corner on the track. We turn in and want to jump on the throttle immediately but we have to be patient as we battle with understeer. There are two options - go deep and focus on a good exit, or slow down earlier and carry a tight line. Do the latter to be faster through the bend, but the exit will be compromised.

PIT STRAIGHT & COPSE CORNER

Up next, is the old start-finish line and the high-speed right-hander at Copse - where Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen collided in 2021. We take the bend at 190mph so if we miss the apex we'll never make the corner and we will be forced to use the run-off area on the exit.

MAGGOTS, BECKETTS & CHAPEL CURVE

This has to be the best set of corners in Formula One. The first left at Maggots is a small flick, but at the next right-hander, it is important to carry speed to the point that you use three-

quarters of the track. If you use all of the asphalt, it is difficult to get back on line for the next left at Becketts.

HANGAR STRAIGHT AND STOWE

After the Hangar Straight and the second DRS zone we arrive at Stowe, which provides an overtaking opportunity but it is not a good one because it is so fast. It's vital to hit the apex at Stowe. If you don't, the front of the car washes out and you end up on the artificial grass on the exit.

VALE AND CLUB CORNER

We dip down on to Vale and then rise up just after the pit entry. We are back on the brakes - it will be bumpy - and again there are two options; carry a lot of speed through the left-hander at Vale and lift through Club, or take a slower approach to Vale and power out of Club Corner. We then pull through the final bend and up and across the start-finish line.



TORQUING POINT

LANDO NORRIS insists he and Max Verstappen remain good mates despite their clash in Austria a week ago. But words are cheap - let's see if they're still really friends at the first corner at Silverstone tomorrow. Norris has been piling the pressure on his rival for a couple of months now and it was inevitable they would clash at some point. Verstappen has a track record. It's got everyone in the paddock debating whether or not it's possible to be friends with your championship rival. Whatever is the answer to that, what Norris can't afford to do is see Verstappen as a mate after he pulls down his visor. Even with Red Bull not as

dominant as they were, the Dutchman continues to do the business and you have to be perfect to beat him. Norris has learned that in recent weeks - small mistakes cost him in Canada and Spain. Going up against Verstappen (below) is the biggest test of the British driver's title credentials. And he'll fail if he can't see that the Red Bull racer is his enemy, not his friend in the F1 world.



BACK OF THE GRID

BRAD PITT is in the Silverstone paddock again this weekend as filming for his new F1 movie continues. It was announced yesterday that the name of the hotly-anticipated film will be... F1. I wonder how many executive meetings it took for them to land on that creative masterpiece?



BRITAIN: EX FILES



LEWIS HAMILTON has always been masterful in the rain and delivered arguably his best ever wet-weather victory in 2008, winning by more than a minute in his iconic silver and red McLaren.

INSIDE TRACK



CARLOS SAINZ looks set to sign for Alpine after U-turning on his plan to join Williams, with Valtteri Bottas looking more likely to return to his old team to partner Alex Albon instead.

FAST FACT LEWIS HAMILTON is bidding to secure his fifth Silverstone podium in a row. Despite Mercedes' recent struggles, the seven-time champ still delivers at home.

FORMULA ONE

EXCLUSIVE
BY DANIEL MOXON at Silverstone
THREE decades on from the brilliance of Nigel Mansell and Damon Hill, Alex Albon is confident he can lead Williams to glory at Silverstone again.

Sir Frank's team was once the industry standard, particularly in the trophy-laden 1990s.

And the Northamptonshire track was their favourite playground, evidenced by six wins in seven years between 1991 and 1997.

There was Nigel Mansell in 'Red Five' who dominated the 1992 championship in Max Verstappen fashion. He won the British Grand Prix that season after taking pole by almost a full two seconds.

Two years later a young Damon Hill, still reeling from the death of team-mate Ayrton Senna 10 weeks earlier, did what his father Graham never managed and won his home Grand Prix.

Jacques Villeneuve won the race twice for Williams, but his 1997 victory remains the team's most recent at Silverstone, the venue for the team's first ever win in 1979 with the late Clay Regazzoni in the cockpit.

Albon has starred for the team since he returned to the F1 grid in 2022, but has been nowhere near the podium with Williams a shadow of their former selves.

But the 28-year-old is certain that boss James Vowles, who joined from Mercedes early last year, has the right plan to wake up F1's sleeping giants.

He said: "We're in communication on a daily basis. He's honest. He sees the journey and knows it's not going to be long."

"When he says something isn't great, he has a reason and he has a fix, which is the most important."

"I'm excited - I'm in the meetings and I hear all the updates as to what's

going on. I'm committed and I'm excited because I do believe in the journey."

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Linked with the likes of Red Bull and Ferrari at the start of the season, he rejected interest from both to sign a contract extension with Williams.

A racing career is finite and he admits he was tempted to skip the queue, but had seen enough during Vowles' tenure to be convinced that he can achieve his ambitions with his current employer.

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But he still sees Silverstone as his "second home race", adding: "My family live 25 minutes from here. I learned how to race here, I got my racing licence at Silverstone when I was eight years old."

"Every Sunday we have a barbecue at my house, all my friends and family. So it's still very much a home race."



BRIT WINNERS AT HOME GP FROM NIGEL TO LEWIS

- 1986, 1987, 1991, 1992 Nigel Mansell
- 1994 Damon Hill
- 1995 Johnny Herbert
- 1999, 2000 David Coulthard
- 2008, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019, 2020, 2021 Lewis Hamilton



ZAK ON ATTACK OVER RED BULL

BY DANIEL MOXON
 McLAREN CEO Zak Brown has torn into Red Bull - accusing them of a "lack of respect" and encouraging Max Verstappen's aggressive driving.

The American (right) launched his attack at Silverstone yesterday after Verstappen caused contact with Lando Norris at last Sunday's Austrian Grand Prix, ending both drivers' chances.

The Briton has forgiven his rival, but boss Brown is still seething.

He fumed: "I'm also disappointed in such a great team like Red Bull



that the leadership almost encourages it, because you listen on the radio to what was said.

"We all have a responsibility on the pit wall to tell our drivers the do's and don'ts of what's going on in the race."

He added: "We've seen there be a lack of respect - whether it's financial regulations, or sporting."

Norris went fastest in both British Grand Prix practice sessions yesterday. Team-mate Oscar Piastri was also in the top three, Lewis Hamilton was sixth fastest in FP2.

Verstappen was only seventh quickest in the second session.

BRITISH GRAND PRIX
TOMORROW, 3PM



HE'S ONE OF OUR OWN
Albon - who races under the Thai flag - throws hats to fans at Silverstone



TORQUE FROM THE TRACK
BRITISH GRAND PRIX



Lando must ditch pals act fast to be champ

BY DANIEL MOXON
POLE POSITION
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answer to that, what Norris can't afford to do is see Verstappen as a mate after he pulls down his visor.

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HAMILTON is bidding to secure his 11th Silverstone podium in a row this weekend - despite Mercedes' struggles in recent years, the seven-time champ has continued to deliver in front of the British fans.

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And he'll fail it if he can't see that the Red Bull racer is his enemy and not his friend, in the F1 world.

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FROM THE ARCHIVE

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SERENE WILLIAMS

Alex aims to wake up the sleeping giant that owned this race with Mansell and Hill



TAKE THE LEAD Norris (left) and Hamilton - with dog Roscoe - at Silverstone

LANDO'S TRACK GUIDE



A lap of Silverstone with McLaren star Lando Norris:
ABBEY AND FARM CURVE
The first corner at Abbey is flat out. The driver has to throw the front of the car into the corner.
VILLAGE AND THE LOOP
Next is the slow-speed section, putting the brakes on as we enter Village, which provides an overtaking opportunity. The left-hander is The Loop and it goes to the Wellington Straight DRS zone.
BROOKLANDS
The old part of the circuit, driving at nearly 220mph. There is a chance for overtaking around the outside.
LUFFIELD AND WOODCOTE
Luffield, the ensuing right-hander, is endless and is the most frustrating corner on the track.

PIT STRAIGHT & COPSE CORNER
Up next, is the old-start finish line and a high-speed right-hander.
MAGGOTS, BECKETTS & CHAPEL CURVE
The best set of corners in the sport. The first left at Maggots is a small flick, but at the next right-hander, you use three-quarters of the track. If you go wide it multiplies the problem in the rest of the corners.
HANGAR STRAIGHT AND STOWE
We exit Chapel Curve and head on to the Hangar Straight and the second DRS zone before we arrive at Stowe, which is an overtaking opportunity.
VALE AND CLUB CORNER
We dip down on to Vale and then rise up just after the pit entry. We then pull through the final bend and up and across the start-finish line.

ROUND 12 Tomorrow, 3pm
Live on Sky & Ch 4

SATURDAY 06 JULY: LINKS TO ONLINE COVERAGE

Headline	Media	Links
Zak Brown takes shot at Max Verstappen, Red Bull	Autoweek	https://www.autoweek.com/racing/formula-1/a61519289/mclaren-racing-boss-zak-brown-takes-shot/
Red Bull lack respect, says McLaren boss Brown	BBC	https://www.bbc.co.uk/sport/formula1/articles/cw9yd875ggno
What we learned from Friday practice at the 2024 F1 British GP	Autosport	https://www.autosport.com/f1/news/what-we-learned-from-friday-practice-at-the-2024-f1-british-gp/10631824/
Lando Norris topped FP2 on a successful Friday ahead of his teammate Oscar Piastri and Red Bull's Sergio Perez at the British Grand Prix	FormulaNerds	https://www.formulanerds.com/news/british-grand-prix-f1-free-practice-2-results/
McLaren boss condemns Red Bull behaviour ahead of British GP: 'We're seen a lack of respect'	Independent.co.uk	https://www.independent.co.uk/f1/f1-zak-brown-mclaren-christian-horner-silverstone-b2574919.html
Christian Horner responds to "brutally hard question" about faith in Sergio Perez	Crash.Net	https://www.crash.net/f1/news/1051757/1/christian-horner-responds-brutally-hard-question-about-faith-sergio-perez
Are McLaren really the team to beat at Silverstone?	Sky Sports	https://www.skysports.com/f1/news/12433/13173356/british-gp-are-mclaren-drivers-of-lando-norris-and-oscar-piastri-the-team-to-beat-at-silverstone
Hamilton admits Mercedes have 'work to do' after Friday practice at Silverstone as Russell gets set for mixed conditions	F1	https://www.formula1.com/en/latest/article/hamilton-admits-mercedes-have-work-to-do-after-friday-practice-at.2L3GeINOKTW50Satols2dJ
Perez doubt and Mercedes' Sainz hint throw F1 2025 curveballs	The Race	https://www.the-race.com/formula-1/2025-f1-driver-market-curveballs-perez-doubt-sainz-mercedes/
Horror crash at British Grand Prix silenced Silverstone but Zhou Guanyu still loves it	Talksport.com	https://talksport.com/sport/1951030/f1-horror-crash-british-grand-prix-silverstone-zhou-guanyu-george-russell/
Norris, McLaren sweep weather – affected Friday British GP practice	RACER	https://racer.com/2024/07/05/norris-mclaren-sweep-weather-affected-friday-british-gp-practice/
Hamilton offers 'open-door' policy to new British rival	RacingNews356	https://racingnews365.com/hamilton-offers-open-door-policy-to-new-british-rival
Zak Brown calls out Red Bull for 'inappropriate' behaviour over Verstappen radio	Plant F1	https://www.planetf1.com/news/zak-brown-calls-out-red-bull-for-inappropriate-behaviour-over-verstappen-radio

SATURDAY 06 JULY: LINKS TO ONLINE COVERAGE

Headline	Media	Links
Brad Pitt brings glitz to Silverstone but Brown still cold on Verstappen	The Guardian	https://www.theguardian.com/sport/article/2024/jul/05/pitt-brings-glamour-to-silverstone-but-brown-still-cold-on-verstappen
Daniel Riccardo could be handed a Red Bull lifeline as struggling Spaniard Sergio Perez faces the axe	The Daily Mail	https://www.dailymail.co.uk/sport/formulaone/article-13606081/Daniel-Ricciardo-handed-Red-Bull-lifeline-struggling-Spaniard-Sergio-Perez-faces-axe.html
McLaren boss turns fire on Horner after Norris U-turn	Reuters	https://www.reuters.com/sports/formula1/
Red Bull fined £16,900 and Hadjar warned for “serious” near-miss with Norris	Racefans.net	https://www.racefans.net/2024/07/06/racefans-round-up-06-07-7/
McLaren confirms talks with FIA over potential Verstappen guidelines breach	RacingNews365.com	https://racingnews365.com/mclaren-confirms-talks-with-fia-over-potential-verstappen-guidelines-breach
Ex-McLaren driver slams shameless media bias against Max Verstappen	Beyond the Flag	https://beyondtheflag.com/posts/ex-mclaren-driver-indycar-felix-rosenzqvist-slams-shameless-media-bias-max-verstappen-01j1zh415wgt
MPH: Mercedes F1 engine guru Andy Cowell will be perfect Aston Martin boss	Motorsport Magazine	https://www.motorsportmagazine.com/articles/single-seaters/f1/mph-mercedes-f1-engine-guru-andy-cowell-will-be-perfect-aston-martin-boss/
Ferrari drivers fear they won't be in the fight at Silverstone with McLaren 'in a different league'	F1	https://www.formula1.com/en/latest/article/ferrari-drivers-fear-they-wont-be-in-the-fight-at-silverstone-with-mclaren.2SDPIMwKOPc8iZkITSVIVw
British Grand Prix: F1 star Pierre Gasly handed massive grid penalty at Silverstone	The Mirror	https://www.mirror.co.uk/sport/formula-1/british-grand-prix-f1-star-33179633
F1 Live: Red Bull ripped apart as Toto Wolff calls out rival team principals at British GP	The Daily Express	https://www.express.co.uk/sport/f1-autosport/1919677/F1-live-Red-Bull-Verstappen-Norris-British-GP
2024 British Grand Prix Friday round-up: Norris fastest in practice at Silverstone	Silverstone	https://www.silverstone.co.uk/news/2024-british-grand-prix-friday-round-norris-fastest-practice-silverstone
F1 News Today: Red Bull star risks SACK as Brad Pitt Formula 1 film title REVEALED	GPFans	https://www.gpfans.com/en/f1-news/1024724/f1-news-today-red-bull-star-risks-sack-brad-pitt-formula-1-film-title-revealed-lewis-hamilton/