

Formula 1 is a sport defined by speed, innovation, and fierce competition. But in this world of high-tech machines and split-second decisions, one group has often remained in the shadows – women.

Throughout history, women have played a role in the sport, though not always in the spotlight. From trailblazing drivers like Maria Teresa de Filippis and Lella Lombardi to today's engineers, mechanics, strategists, and team principals – their contributions have shaped the sport in more ways than many realize.

In this magazine, we highlight the women who are, and have been, paving the way for the future of Formula 1. We tell their stories, celebrate their achievements, and explore how the sport can become even more inclusive.

But why the name? An apex is the midpoint of a corner on a circuit that drivers will aim to hit to secure the fastest possible lap time. The apex of a turn is about pushing boundaries while staying in control – just like women making their mark in a male-dominated sport.

Welcome to a world where passion, skill, and ambition know no limits. Welcome to Apex – Women in Formula 1.

Ellinor Ekbom



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EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT FORMULA 1

If you're new to Formula 1, you may have a few questions about the sport and how the action-packed tour of the world is staged year in, year out. Well, we've got you covered. In an all-in-one explainer, we take you through the basics from how the championship was formed to the circuits visited, the drivers behind the wheel and the teams involved up and down the pit lane...



What is Formula 1?

Formula 1 is the highest class of international single-seater racing and the pinnacle of motorsport. With its unmatched speed, precision, and prestige, there's truly nothing like it.

Though it's a team sport – with pit crews changing all four tires in under two seconds – the drivers are more like fighter pilots than sportspeople. They face intense g-forces, make split-second decisions, and push both their bodies and machines to the absolute limit.

Drivers race for the F1 Drivers' Championship, while teams battle for the Constructors' title and prize money. Each Grand Prix is held in iconic locations worldwide, and the 2025 season marks F1's 75th anniversary, with 24 races and six Sprint weekends from March to December.

How many drivers and teams race in F1?

A total of 20 drivers and 10 teams makes up the current Formula 1 grid, with each squad fielding two cars.

Driver experience ranges from multiple world champions Lewis Hamilton and Max Verstappen, to rookie racers in their first full-time F1 seasons such as Kimi Antonelli and Oliver Bearman.

When it comes to teams, there are those who have been in F1 since the early years, such as Ferrari and McLaren, or relative newcomers like Haas who entered the sport ahead of the 2016 season.

Where does F1 race?

A total of 24 races in 21 countries across five continents are included on the Formula 1 calendar. Classic tracks such as Silverstone, Spa-Francorchamps and Suzuka, combined with more recent additions including Las Vegas, Miami and Saudi Arabia give an exciting and varied selection of circuits that offers plenty to look forward to.

Monaco, Monza, Silverstone and Spa are circuits that still feature on the F1 calendar from the very first season in 1950, although plenty of safety-based changes and track layout modifications have been made since then.

Formula 1's inaugural season featured seven rounds, spread out from May to September, predominantly staged in Europe – the exception being the Indianapolis 500 in the United States, which most F1 drivers sat out.

Many new European events arrived as F1 developed, with the following decades also bringing adventures to South America, North America, Africa, Asia, Australia and, most recently, the Middle East – well and truly putting the 'world' in world championship.

How does the F1 weekend work?

The standard Formula 1 weekend sees each event take place over three days – typically Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Fridays are dedicated to practice, featuring two 60-minute Free Practice sessions (FP1 and FP2). These sessions allow teams to gather vital data, test upgrades, and fine-tune their car setups to suit the circuit's unique conditions. Engineers and drivers work closely to optimize performance, making adjustments based on tire behavior, fuel loads, and track evolution.

Saturday kicks off with a final practice session (FP3), giving teams one last chance to dial in their setups. Then comes Qualifying – a high-stakes, three-stage shootout that determines the starting grid. In Q1, all 20 drivers compete, but the slowest five are eliminated. Q2 sees the next five slowest cut, setting grid positions 20 through 11. The top ten drivers then fight it out in Q3 for the best starting positions, with the fastest securing pole position.

Sunday is race day – the main event. The drivers battle at high speeds for points, podiums, and the win. Strategy and split-second decisions are key as teams fight to outpace the competition.

How long do F1 races last?

Formula 1 races generally last between an hour-and-a-half and two hours, though this can be impacted by Safety Car periods that slow the field down or red flags that halt the action – see the 2023 Australian Grand Prix as a prime example.

Each race on the calendar has a set number of laps based on the length of their circuit. The distance of every race is almost always equal to the fewest number of laps that exceed 305 kilometres.

Monaco is an exception to the rule, where the race length is equal to the fewest number of laps needed to exceed a distance of 260km, given the lower speeds of its street circuit nature.

What is the F1 Sprint?

The F1 Sprint is a short, high-intensity race covering 100km – around one-third of a typical Grand Prix distance – and lasting about 30 minutes. With no mandatory pit stops, the Sprint is designed for flat-out racing rather than strategic play, creating fast-paced, action-packed competition. These small points can play a big role in the World Championship.

On Sprint weekends, the format shifts slightly. Sprint Qualifying takes place on Friday to determine the Sprint grid, replacing the second practice session. The Sprint race then happens on Saturday, while traditional Qualifying for Sunday's Grand Prix follows later that day, keeping the weekend full of on-track drama.

Points are awarded to the top eight finishers in the Sprint – ranging from eight points for the winner to one point for eighth place.

In 2025, six venues will host Sprint races: China, Miami, Austin, Qatar, Belgium, and Brazil. Each circuit is selected for its strong overtaking potential, helping ensure every Sprint is an unpredictable, action-packed showdown that keeps fans on the edge of their seats.

Why is it called Formula 1?

The reason why Formula 1 is called Formula 1 is two-fold.

First up, the 'Formula' is a set of rules – covering car design, engine size, component usage and much, much more – that all competitors must abide by. Secondly, the '1' simply denotes that it is the premier formula.

How do F1 cars work?

Thousands of parts are involved in creating some of the fastest and most advanced racing cars on the planet – spanning detailed bodywork, suspension elements, turbo-hybrid power units, eight-speed paddle shift gearboxes, 18-inch tyres and much, much more.

When the engine powers it forward, an F1 car essentially acts as an aeroplane flipped upside down, with front and rear wings – and everything in between – pushing the car down onto the track and giving it incredible levels of grip through corners.

That said, F1's current technical regulations are based around a 'ground effect' aerodynamic concept, with several carefully designed tunnels underneath the car's floor sucking the car to the track surface to generate even more downforce.

This, combined with simpler bodywork than previous years, means less 'dirty air' – or disrupted airflow – is created and allows cars to follow each other more closely, opening up additional overtaking opportunities and adding to the on-track spectacle.

What are F1 cars powered by?

F1 cars are powered by turbocharged V6, 15,000 RPM engines, featuring kinetic and thermal energy recovery systems that together create the 'power unit'.

Today's F1 power units comprise the following elements: the internal combustion engine (ICE), motor

generator unit-heat (MGU-H), motor generator unit-kinetic (MGU-K), turbocharger, energy store (ES), control electronics (CE) and exhaust.

Over the course of the season, a driver may use no more than four ICEs, MGU-Hs, MGU-Ks and turbochargers, two energy stores and control electronics, and eight of each of the four elements that make up a set of exhaust systems – otherwise grid penalties will apply.

F1 cars currently use E10 fuel – 10% renewable ethanol – but the sport is pushing for more and is working with major fuel manufacturers to develop a 100% sustainable fuel that will be introduced in 2026 – when the new era of F1 hybrid power units is introduced.

Where are F1 teams based?

Most Formula 1 team factories can be found in the United Kingdom, with seven operations calling England their primary home.

This includes a couple of caveats, such as Haas also having facilities in Italy (thanks to a component supply arrangement with Ferrari) and the United States (where their other motorsport activities are based), and Alpine supplementing their UK headquarters with a division in France.

As for the other three teams, Kick Sauber are located in Switzerland, while Ferrari and Racing Bulls both operate out of Italy.



What's the difference between F1 & the FIA?

F1, more specifically Formula One Management (FOM), is owned by United States-based media company Liberty Media and hold the sport's commercial rights.

The FIA, founded in 1904, is the governing body for a host of motor-sport competitions around the world, including Formula 1. They oversee the technical, sporting and financial regulations, ensuring that competitors are sticking to the rules, and set stringent safety standards.

F1 works with the FIA to put on a show – hence the official name: 'FIA Formula One World Championship'.

When did F1 start?

Formula 1 was formed as a world championship competition back in 1950, with the first-ever race held at the Silverstone Circuit – a former Royal Air Force station – in the United Kingdom on May 13 of that year.

Six more events were staged in a season which saw Alfa Romeo driver Giuseppe 'Nino' Farina become the sport's first world champion – edging out team mates Juan Manuel Fangio and Luigi Fagioli.

While motorsport had been taking place since the late-1800s, with Grand Prix events growing in popularity across the following decades, 1950 marked the start of the official F1 championship that remains to this day.

Who are the most successful F1 drivers of all time?

From F1's all-time list of world champions, Lewis Hamilton shares the overall record of seven drivers' titles with Michael Schumacher. Hamilton claimed his first title with McLaren in 2008, before adding six more at Mercedes between 2014 and 2020,



while Schumacher won the 1994 and 1995 crowns with Benetton, adding another five (in a row) at Ferrari from 2000 to 2004.

As it stands, Hamilton also holds the record for the most race victories, logging 105 ahead of the 2025 season, along with the most pole positions too, having taken 104.

Fellow multiple champions include Juan Manuel Fangio, who racked up five titles in the 1950s, Alain Prost, who won four across the 1980s and 1990s, Sebastian Vettel, who collected a quartet of championships on the bounce from 2010 to 2013, and reigning champion Max Verstappen, who took his fourth consecutive crown in 2024.

Ayrton Senna was a driver who looked poised to reach even higher numbers in his legendary F1 career, but a tragic accident at the 1994 San Marino Grand Prix left him with a tally of three, alongside several other famous names.

Fernando Alonso, who won back-to-back in 2005 and 2006, joins Hamilton and Verstappen as the only title-winning drivers on the grid in 2025.

Who are the most successful F1 teams of all time?

While the F1 drivers' world championship was in place from the inaugural 1950 season, the constructors' equivalent did not arrive until 1958, when Vanwall triumphed over Ferrari.

Since then, Ferrari have established themselves as the most successful team in terms of championship wins, collecting 16 constructors' titles over the decades. Williams and McLaren are next on the list with nine crowns each, followed by Mercedes on eight. Red Bull have six.

As for drivers' titles, Ferrari lead the way on 15, with McLaren their nearest challengers on 12, ahead of Mercedes (nine), Red Bull (eight) and Williams (seven).

Ferrari have also racked up the most race victories, having claimed 248 so far (ahead of the 2025 season), followed by McLaren (189), Mercedes (129), Red Bull (122) and Williams (114). ★



*Irina Shayk for Vogue
Italia, May 2024.*



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WOMEN IN FORMULA 1

Maria Teresa de Filippis is remembered as the first woman to have entered a Formula 1 World Championship grand prix.



1958

Maria Teresa de Filippis

Maria Teresa de Filippis was the first woman to compete in a Formula 1 World Championship Grand Prix. Born in Naples in 1926, she began racing after a bet with her brothers and quickly rose through the ranks with strong performances in hill climbs and sports car races. In 1958, she made her F1 debut at the Belgian Grand Prix, driving a Maserati 250F and finishing tenth. Though she faced gender discrimination – famously being denied entry to the French Grand Prix – her determination broke barriers. After retiring in 1959, she remained involved in motorsport until her death in 2016, leaving a lasting legacy for women in racing.

Lella Lombardi was an Italian racing driver best known as the only woman to score points in a Formula 1 World Championship race. Born in 1941, she started racing in Italy and progressed to F1 in the mid-1970s. In the 1975 Spanish Grand Prix, she finished sixth, earning half a point due to the race being cut short — a historic achievement for women in motorsport. Lombardi competed in 12 F1 races and later found success in sports car racing. She remained a pioneering figure for women in racing until her death in 1992.

1975

Lella Lombardi

Lella Lombardi is the only female driver, who has scored points in Formula 1.



A HISTORICAL TIMELINE

In 1976, British Olympic ski racer Divina Galica switched sports and tried to secure a spot in the British Grand Prix. This marked the only time more than one female driver (Lombardi and Galica) has participated in qualifying for a grand prix.

Four years later, South African Desiré Wilson tried to qualify for the British Grand Prix, and fell short. But the same year, she achieved another milestone by becoming the only woman to clinch victory in any type of F1 race, triumphing at Brands Hatch in the British Formula One Championship.

Giovanna Amati

The most recent female driver to take part in the F1 World championship was Italy's Giovanna Amati, 1992.



The most recent female driver to take part in the F1 world championship was Italy's Giovanna Amati, who, at the start of the 1992 season, joined the British Brabham team. However, she encountered difficulties in qualifying and was unable to secure a spot in any of the three races she entered, before being replaced by male drivers.

1992

1976

Divina Galica

In 1976 both Lella Lombardi & Divina Galica participated in qualifying for a grand prix.



Susie Wolff

2014

A further two decades would pass before Britain's Susie Wolff became the most recent female driver to participate in F1 during the 2014 season, but only in some practice sessions.



Susie Wolff participated in practice sessions during the 2014 season.

"STREET CIRCUITS ARE BORING."

Tracks like Baku, Jeddah, and Singapore have produced chaotic, unforgettable races. Monaco, okay – maybe it's the exception.

"TEAMMATES GET IDENTICAL CARS."

In theory yes – but in practice, upgrades may come, setups can differ, and car behavior may suit one driving style over the other.

"DRS MAKES OVERTAKING TOO EASY."

Many overtakes still require skill, tire management, and strategic positioning. DRS can bring you close – but doesn't guarantee a pass.

MYTH BUSTERS

"LEWIS ONLY WON BECAUSE OF THE MERCEDES CAR."

The car helped, obviously, but Lewis dominated teammates, adapted to rule changes, and pulled off legendary drives in the wet and under pressure. A top car doesn't guarantee seven titles.

"RAIN RACES ARE ALWAYS MORE EXCITING."

BUSTED

Partially true. While rain can spice things up, modern safety rules (like red flags and delays) can slow or neutralize the drama. Sometimes it's just... aquaplaning and waiting.

"ONLY THE TOP TEAMS MATTER."

Midfield teams often provide the closest, most dramatic racing – and many top drivers started there. See Bottas at Williams and Vettel at Toro Rosso.

"YOU CAN TELL EVERYTHING BY QUALIFYING."

Race pace, tire degradation, weather, and strategy shake up Sunday results a lot. Some teams focus more on race setup than qualify. Saturdays are only half the story.



STILL FIGHTING FOR A SPOT

Despite decades of progress in motorsport, no woman has started a Formula 1 race in nearly 50 years. But the winds of change are blowing. From Susie Wolff's historic drive in 2014 to today's efforts with the F1 Academy, the fight to get more women on the grid is in full swing. But how far have we really come, and when will we see the next female driver in a Formula 1 race?

PHOTO THEO LIU TEXT MATT WARWICK





Lily Muni He in
Miami 2024.



»IN 10 YEARS YOU'LL SEE A WOMAN STARTING AN F1 RACE.«

Another race track, another Formula 1 grand prix. But a real moment is occurring.

There's a commotion in the Silverstone paddock, as a figure emerges through a doorway behind a waiting car. Hundreds of camera shutters click. Journalists jostle for view as a new member of the racing fraternity slides on a star-design helmet.

A woman is competing in a Formula 1 car - a moment she has dreamed of her whole life.

But it all grinds to a halt. An oil pressure problem shuts down the engine, the car comes to a stop. Bar one more outing in Germany, that would be it in terms of a woman driving at a Formula 1 race weekend.

No, it's not 2025. It's 2014. A decade on, the clock is still ticking.

The driver was Susie Wolff, behind the wheel of a Williams car taking part in first practice at the 2014 British Grand Prix. She was never assigned to race.

– Most probably now looking back with perspective, I had to work harder for their respect because there

was just that underlying doubt that I was good enough, says Wolff.

– Of course there are difficult moments because when you are the only one, suddenly there's lots of attention on my gender instead of my performances on track.

– But I tried to not let those distract me because I knew performance is power, and as long as I did a good enough job on track... But there was this natural scepticism - I was a young girl in a very male-dominated environment.

Now, as the managing director of the Formula 1-affiliated all-female F1 Academy, and Formula 4 level talent series, she can be a big part of another big moment.

Sitting in an otherwise empty boardroom at F1's headquarters in Kensington, London, she discusses the challenges she now faces.

– In my role there are days where I get despondent by... 'lack of support' is the wrong word... but how difficult it is to break tradition and to come with the F1 Academy to encourage people that this is

something that needs to be given time and space and support, says Susie Wolff.

– Female participation in motorsport has never gone above 5%, so in the numbers game it's been difficult for women to get to the pinnacle because we simply don't have a big enough talent pool.

– So first and foremost, we need to get more participation and create those visible role models, because sometimes in life you have to see it to believe it. We are a movement rather than a moment.

So why, unlike in other elite sports, has the presence of women in F1 reduced over the past decade?

After Maria Teresa de Filippis' three starts in the 1950s came further breakthroughs in the 1970s, as Divina Galica entered - though did not start - three grands prix, and the legendary Lella Lombardi took part in 12 races for March and RAM, before Desire Wilson in 1980 and Giovanna Amati in 1992 failed to qualify for a handful of races between them.



Ferrari's Pit Wall Stand,
Monza 2024.



» IF IT'S NOT ME OR THE OTHERS IN THIS CHAMPIONSHIP,

It leaves Lombardi as the last woman on the Formula 1 grid, 48 years ago.

Was it tokenism? However well-intentioned, that was how the recent trend of female 'development drivers' at F1 teams was dismissed by many in the sport. All involved knew that those drivers would never sit in the cockpit of an F1 car in anger.

But there's little doubt the prospects at least are improving. The short-lived but significant W Series changed the landscape in 2019 before folding last year. It had been a welcome disruption in a sport too often asleep to diversity.

The spirit of the W Series remains. And with it is a new optimism in what is a far more structured sport in the modern age - where the

degree of experience drivers need to get into an F1 car is greater than it was in Lombardi's time.

If Formula 1 and the FIA, motorsport's governing body, are going about getting women into the sport in a more integrated way this time, that comes with a public expectation, rather than a hope, that there will be results.

Initiatives include the new F1 Academy Discover Your Drive: a grassroots programme to encourage female participation from ages as young as eight. Last week a formal diversity and inclusion charter, external was introduced too.

- I like to be optimistic, but I'm also a realist, says Wolff. We have some big emerging talents coming through and I would definitely like

to say within 10 years you'll see a woman starting a Formula 1 race.

- If you look at the trajectory and journey any driver has to go on, for every driver that wants to be Oscar [Piastrri] or Lando [Norris], you need about 10,000 of them to try simulators or karting until you get that volume of participation, concurs McLaren chief executive Zak Brown.

- Just like in every other sport, just like in football, there are 10,000 that want to be Messi, so that's why we spend our time in esports and F1 Academy and grassroots.

McLaren have their own F1 Academy drivers in Bianca Bustamante and Ella Lloyd.

- We need a much greater volume of participants at grassroots.



HOPEFULLY IT'S THE 10-YEAR-OLD WATCHING US. «



– I think it's going to take time, the journey from karting to Formula 4 to Formula regional to Formula 3 to Formula 2... it's about a 10-year journey and we're kind of just getting started.

Other figures in the F1 paddock are optimistic of a breakthrough in the next decade too. Stefano Domenicali, the sport's chief executive, will not predict a timeframe, but says 'it will happen'.

But perhaps the most important voice in all this currently is Abbi Pulling, who won last year's F1 Academy title during the Qatar Grand Prix weekend.

– We'll never know specifically [when it will be], says Pulling. If not in the next five to 10 years, then we hope that it's soon.

Following her title win, the 21-year-old will take a fully funded seat in the British GB3 championship to continue on the long road to proving her worth on track.

– F1 Academy has been really good for us getting track time and inspiring the next generation, she says. If it's not me or the others in this championship, hopefully it's the 10-year-old watching us.

– Two or three years ago, I couldn't finish a season because there was nothing left in the pot [because of the sponsorship money required]. If it wasn't for [my team] Alpine and F1 Academy I wouldn't be racing, simple as that – the support I've been getting is huge.

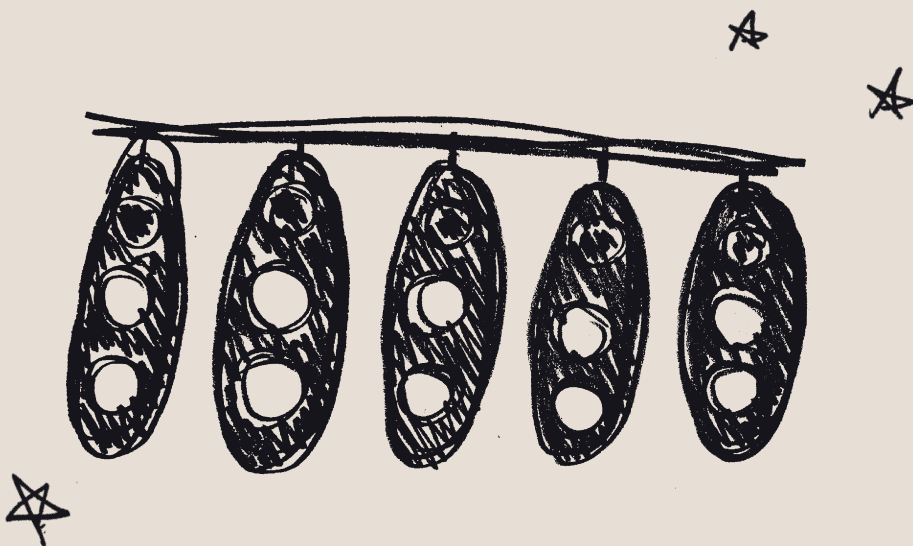
France's Doriane Pin, who came second, is another who has put in

a number of impressive performances, including in sports car racing, where she out-drove several highly experienced male competitors in Portugal in heavy rain in a Ferrari 488 GTE in 2022.

For this new generation, the motorsport successes are most definitely already happening.

Wolff has brought experience and a sense of mission to her role as F1 Academy boss.

There was her own unfinished business in not making it to an F1 race, and the years spent in motorsport fighting for respect as well as position, including as a driver in German Touring Cars and managing the Venturi Formula E team. Now, she's using that drive to open the door wider for those coming up behind her.



»THEY AREN'T JUST ABOUT GIVING WOMEN A CHANCE TO RACE; THEY'RE ABOUT CHANGING THE PERCEPTION OF WHAT IS POSSIBLE.«

– On a daily basis, there's sometimes a lot of frustration that things are not moving quickly enough, but then I get to a race track or an email from a parent and we have completely changed their perception of the sport, she says.

– It's going to take time, but we are changing the course of people's perception of the sport and that will become something very powerful.

Wolff believes there are no physical barriers in terms of the demands of the cars. F1 cars have power-steering, and cars in supporting categories – such as Formula 2 and 3 – do not.

– Having driven an F1 car, and having driven it very competitively, I know it's possible, she says. It's not something I'm trying to guess or convince people of; it's something I fundamentally believe. It is possible.

– If I look back 10 years when I was sat in that F1 car at the British and German Grands Prix, I can feel how much the sport has changed.

– The fanbase is growing and growing, now 40% of the audience

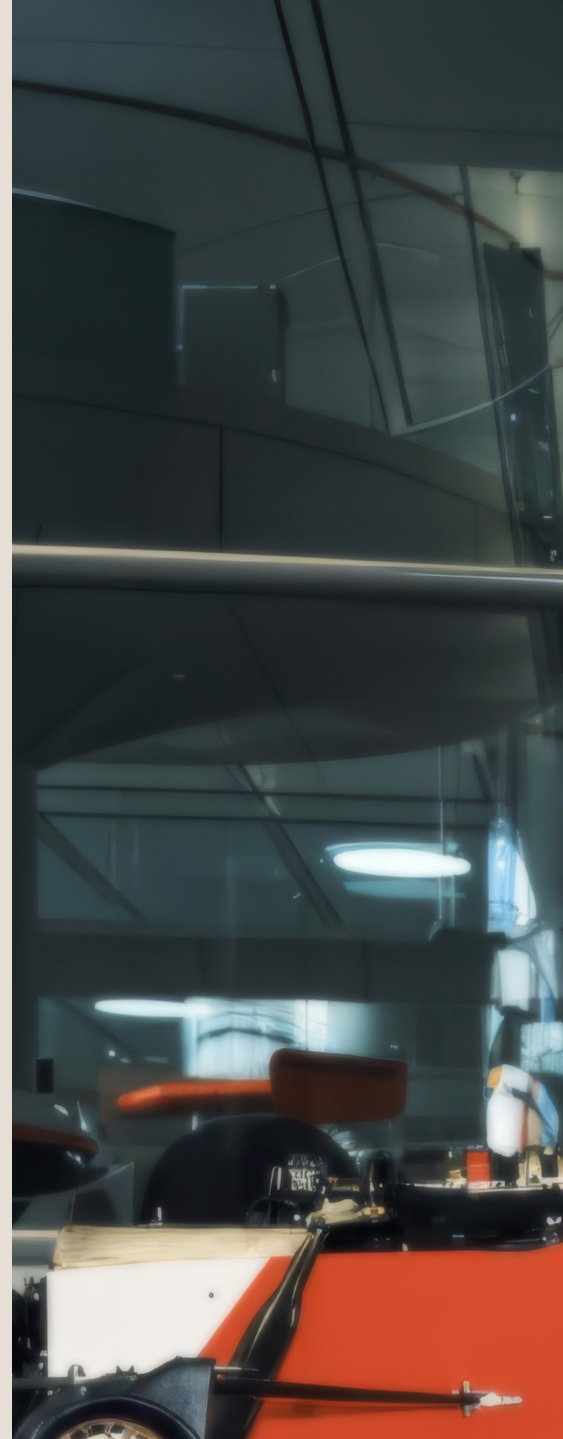
is female, and the fastest growing demographic is 18-24 year olds. The idea Formula 1 is for older males has been smashed on its head.

– I always had a vision, and it would actually mean everything to me, Wolff concludes.

The clock, though, is still ticking. Yet, there is a growing sense that change is inevitable. All of the pieces are falling into place – initiatives are expanding, young female talents are breaking through, and the conversation surrounding girls and women in Formula 1 is louder than ever before.

While the road to seeing a woman take a full-time seat in Formula 1 remains long, the sport is no longer as resistant to progress as it once was.

Investment in grassroots motorsport is increasing, sponsors are beginning to see the value in supporting female drivers, and the F1 Academy is nurturing a new generation of racers who now have a structured path forward. The landscape is shifting – and for the first time in a long time, the dream feels within reach.



But for all the optimism, challenges remain. The motorsport ladder is still an expensive and highly competitive environment, and young female drivers often struggle to secure the same level of funding and sponsorships as their male counterparts. The issue isn't just about talent – it's about opportunity. Even the most skilled female drivers need access to the right teams, the right equipment, and the right training to stand a chance of making it to the top.

This is why initiatives like the F1 Academy and grassroots programs are so crucial. They aren't just about giving women a chance to race; they



F1 Academy driver
Bianca Bustamante, 2024.

are about changing the perception of what is possible. They provide young girls with visible role models, showing them that they, too, can dream of competing at the highest level. They help dismantle the outdated idea that Formula 1 is an exclusive club reserved for men.

And change is happening beyond the cockpit as well. More women are taking on key roles behind the scenes – engineers, strategists, team managers, and executives are making their mark in a historically male-dominated industry. The sport is slowly but surely evolving, becoming more inclusive at every level.

The next breakthrough moment might not be this season, or even the next, but the progress being made today will pave the way for the future. When a woman finally lines up on the grid, helmet on, engine roaring, it won't be a token effort or a publicity stunt – it will be the result of years of hard work, dedication, and belief that the sport can be better.

That day is coming. And when it does, it won't just be a victory for one driver – it will be a victory for every woman who has ever dreamed of competing in Formula 1. It will be a moment that redefines history, proving once and for all that talent

knows no gender, only opportunity.

For now, the dream remains just out of reach, but the momentum is undeniable. The barriers that once seemed insurmountable are beginning to crumble, and the next generation of female drivers is no longer asking if they belong in Formula 1 – they know they do.

The journey may still be long, but the destination is clearer than ever. One day soon, a woman will line up on the grid, not as a novelty or an exception, but as a competitor. And when that moment comes, it won't just be the end of a long wait – it will be the beginning of a new era. ★



*Irina Shayk for Vogue
Italia, May 2024.*



SUSIE WOLFF

F1 Academy managing director and former professional race driver



MODERN ROLE

F1 Academy Managing Director, Susie Wolff, began her competitive motorsport career over twenty years ago, starting out on the karting track. After cutting her teeth in karting, Formula Renault and DTM for Mercedes-Benz, Susie went on to make history at the 2014 British Grand Prix by becoming the first woman to take part in a Formula 1 race weekend in 22 years.

Following her retirement from driving in 2015, Susie launched Dare To Be Different, a call to action aimed squarely at driving female talent by inspiring the next generation and increasing female participation in all aspects of motorsport.

In June 2018, Susie was appointed Team Principal and shareholder of ROKiT Venturi Racing in her first formal move into team management and ownership. In November 2021, she was promoted to the role of Chief Executive Officer of Monaco's only racing team. That season was the team's most successful one to date earning a Vice-World Championship title.

In March 2023 Susie Wolff has been appointed as the Managing Director of the F1 Academy, the all-female driver category that aims to develop and prepare young female drivers to progress to higher levels of competition.

MODELS

AIVA ANAGNOSTIADIS

F1 Academy recruit, the Aussie teen redefining motorsport

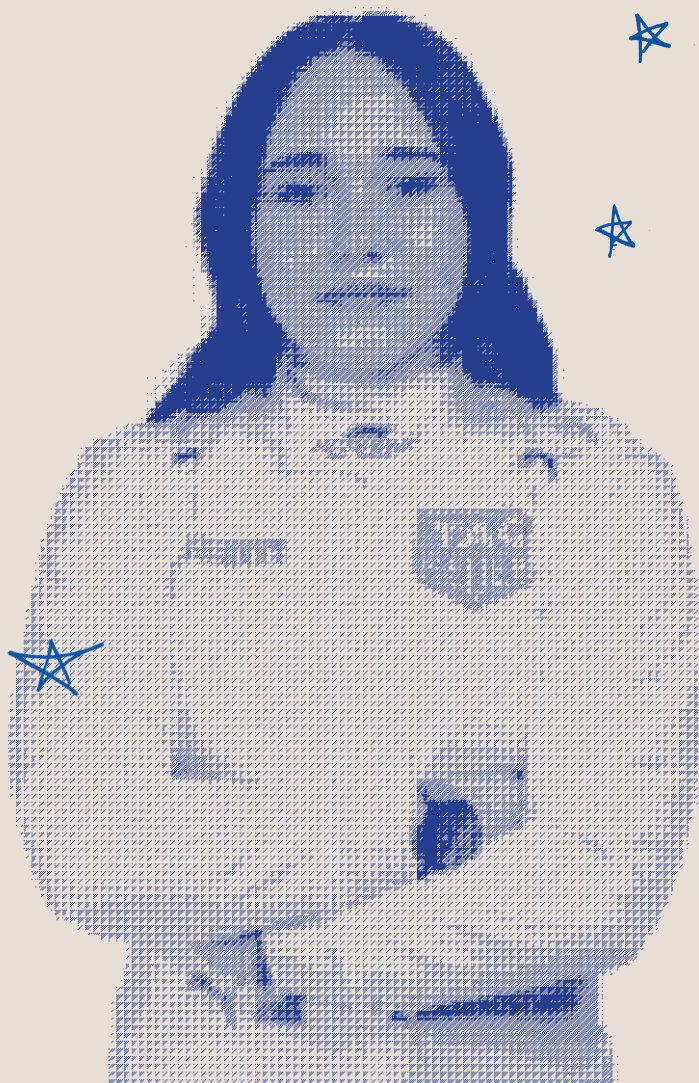
If this is your first time hearing the name Aiva Anagnostiadis, I can assure you, it won't be the last. The 17-year-old F1 Academy star on pressure, grid parity and breaking new ground for women in motorsport.

Anagnostiadis is here to disrupt the grid. Born into a family where motorsport wasn't just a passion but a way of life, the Australian driver has been on a relentless trajectory since she first gripped a steering wheel. Now, as the first Australian woman to be selected as a driver for the F1 Academy, she's proving that raw talent and unshakable ambition are enough to rewrite the rules. She's racing toward a future where women don't just compete in Formula 1 – they win.

At just six years old, she was already navigating the curves of a karting track, racking up podium finishes like it was second nature. Fast forward a few years, and she's competing in the Indian F4 Championship, laying the groundwork for her single-seater career.

The world took notice when she represented Australia in the FIA Motorsport Games. Now, with her sights set on Formula One, Aiva is proving she's not just here to compete – she's here to lead.

Relocation, sacrifice, resilience – her journey is nothing short of relentless. To fuel her F1 dreams, Aiva's family moved from Melbourne to Europe, solidifying their belief in her talent. For Aiva, there's no plan B – only full speed ahead.



ABBI PULLING

Alpine driver, the winner of F1 Academy 2024

For Abbi Pulling, taking the 2024 F1 ACADEMY title was more than just an achievement or a trophy – it was a lifeline.

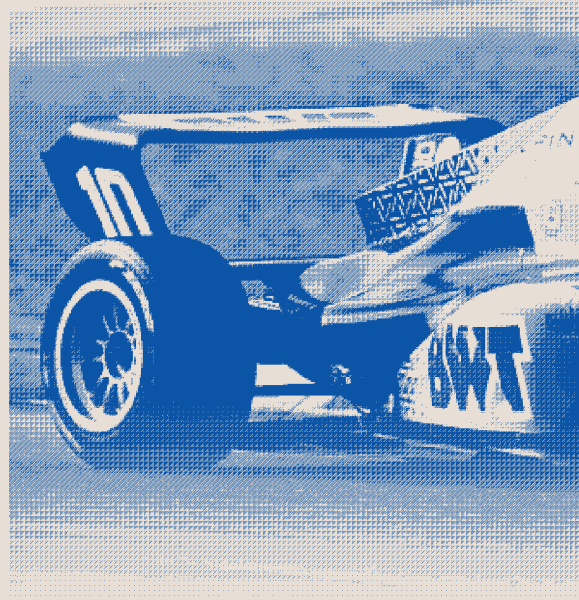
The 21-year-old has never shied away from the fact that motorsport is a cut-throat business, particularly after budget difficulties forced the Briton to curtail her British F4 campaign three years earlier. But, faced with an unclear future, Pulling knew that being crowned F1 ACADEMY Champion wasn't merely a goal, it was her only option to keep her racing dream alive.

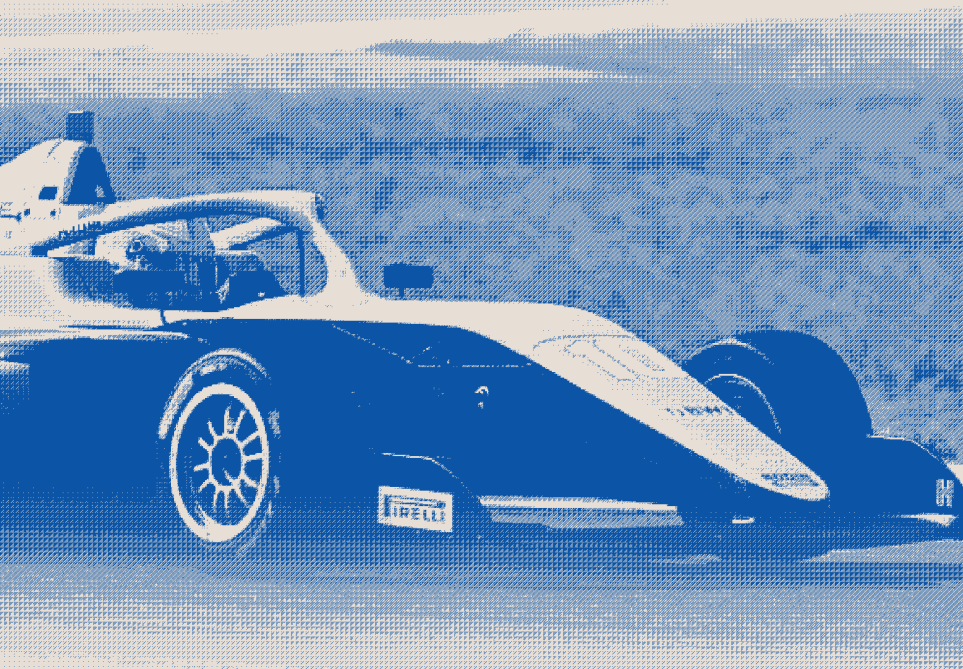
With the weight of that uncertainty, the Alpine junior could have easily crumbled. Yet the driver that emerged was one filled with maturity and an abundance of raw speed who would storm to title glory and earn a GB3 Championship seat.

Pulling won by 121 points – a testament to the hard work she'd put into it. She bagged a record-breaking nine wins out of a possible 14, 10 pole positions, five Grand Chelems (pole position, fastest lap and winning while leading every lap) and never once finished off the podium.

Delivering back-to-back pole positions and victories next time out in Miami, the Alpine driver missed out on a clean sweep weekend by only one point for the fastest lap in Race 1 and she set the tone for the rest of her year.

– I got quite a lot of criticism for no reason really. To prosper from any mistakes that were made in front, I put myself there and the people around me made sure I knew that. It just fuelled me for the rest of the season to prove a point that I deserve to be there.





» I WANT TO SHOW THAT
I'M NOT JUST A
FEMALE, I'M A FAST
RACING DRIVER.«



As Pulling's advantage out front stretched to 95-points after Round 5 in Singapore, complacency could have easily slipped in. With a maximum of 112 points up for grabs, the Briton was on the home stretch, but she knew she'd have a fight on her hands from Mercedes' Doriane Pin and Ferrari-backed Maya Weug.

– The only time I really allowed myself to think 'actually I've got this' was after Singapore, replies Pulling after being asked when she first thought the title was hers to lose.

Pulling adds:

– I have a lot of respect for both Doriane and Maya. I think Maya the last couple of races really upped her game and Doriane, she's done LMP2 with Daniil Kvyat. Having a former F1 driver as your teammate, you're not going to be slow, you're going to be tough to beat.

– After Jeddah, I thought this is going to go down to the wire. I really thought that me and her would be going wheel-to-wheel until the very last lap.

Never resting on her laurels, Pulling has gone above and beyond what she hoped to achieve last season, but she recognises there's still a way to go.

– I went into this year wanting to improve upon myself and really put a lot of focus off-track on the mental side, Pulling explains. I think I've really developed that, I think I can still improve a little bit. I'll put a lot

of focus on the physical side over the winter, making sure that when I get into the car I'm not restricted physically. That's the worst feeling as a driver when you can't get the maximum out of it for that reason.

F1 ACADEMY's prize of a fully-funded seat in the GB3 Championship has played a vital role in enabling Pulling to make her long sought-after step up to one level below Formula 3.

Although relieved to have her plans secured long before the GB3 campaign begins in April, Pulling's work has already begun and she won't settle for anything less than her full potential.

– The CEO of Formula 2 and Formula 3 two years ago gave me the opportunity to jump in an FIA F3 car and I've never forgotten that day. It was one of the best days of my life.

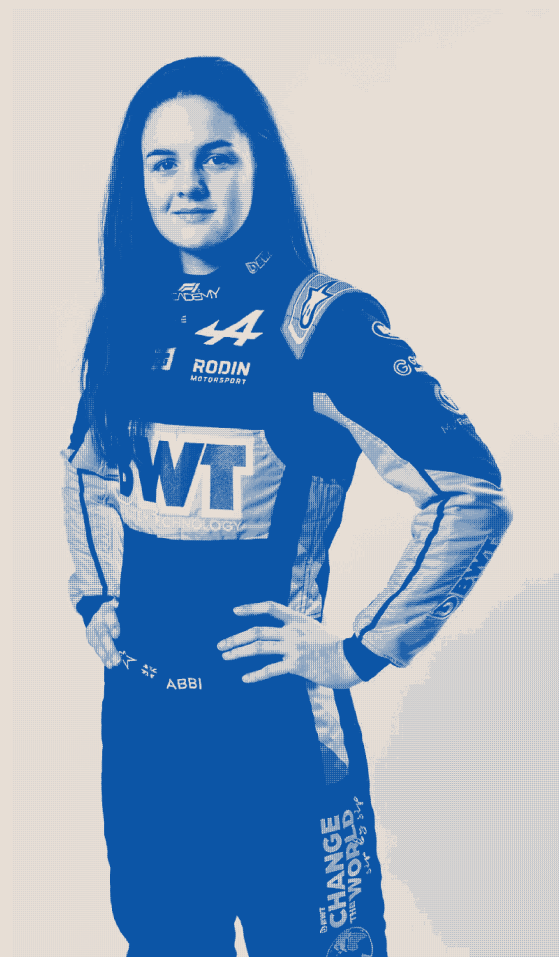
– A lot of people have said 'what do you expect?'. To be honest, I really have no idea. It's way too early for me to know from testing where I'm going to be, but of course I am always striving to be at the front fighting for trophies.

– Even if I'm not there at the beginning, there'll be some quite experienced drivers in the Championship, probably second-year drivers that are used to a car with more downforce.

– I hope that I can keep progressing throughout the season and end the season very comfortable in a car that's bigger and faster.

As she prepares to face GB3, she's focusing on soaking up every bit of experience the new machinery and environment offer. 'Every lap is a chance to learn,' she says.

– The goal is to build confidence, understand the limits, and sharpen my racecraft so that by the end of the season, I've not only adapted but truly arrived. ★



SUSIE

Interview

WOLFE



Changing perceptions of a woman's place in motorsport and funnelling the next generation of female talent towards Formula 1 was never going to be an overnight fix.

But, for F1 ACADEMY Managing Director Susie Wolff, change is already afoot. As the all-female series prepares to enter its third season, she discusses how F1 ACADEMY is accelerating action and fostering a pathway for female talent both on and off the track.

Few series can claim to have made such strident steps forward to achieving their mission in the way F1 ACADEMY has. In the early stages of what Wolff considers a 'long-term project', the series has taken up its place on Formula 1 Grand Prix weekends, ensured that all 10 F1 teams are supporting a driver and pushed its reach to become a global platform for championing change.

– I think it was always clear we had one shot to get it right, Susie Wolff explains. We knew we had to get it right and build a strong foundation. In a short space of time, we've achieved a lot – joining to race with Formula 1, having the F1 teams onboard and some great partners that have taken liveries and we are now increasing to 18 cars.

– We can be very proud of what we've achieved in a short space of time, but this was always a long-term project. We need to see more young girls in karting and they're calling it 'the F1 ACADEMY effect'.



– I've never seen so many young girls in karting and that – for me – is just as important as the success of the series because we need to inspire the next generation. We need to get more young women racing for the best to rise to the top.

– We had to build up our global database, understand who's out there racing and what the talent pipeline looks like to ensure that we had enough talented young drivers to increase the grid, Wolff says. And to make sure that it's set in the future because, with the two-year rule, you need to make sure that there's a pipeline of talent coming up.

» THE TALENT IS THERE «



– We have Katie Denver (F1 ACADEMY's Performance & Talent Development Manager) going to kart races and Formula 4 tests around the world to make sure that we are keeping an eye on the next generation coming through. It was really on the back of understanding that participation is growing and the talent is there that we decided to increase the field.

Whilst Mercedes' Doriane Pin or Ferrari junior Maya Weug might be more recognisable faces, the 2025 field overall features less experienced drivers embarking on their first or second single-seater seasons compared to the 2024 grid.

However, this is something that Susie Wolff sees as beneficial to fulfilling the series' core aims – moulding drivers from an earlier stage to better equip them to progress up the road to F1.

One of the biggest changes for the 2025 F1 ACADEMY season is the increase from 15 full-time cars to 18, including a dedicated Wild Card seat at every round. Becoming the series' sixth team, Hitech TGR join the list of renowned junior category teams competing, who have been responsible for bringing up many of F1's current generation of drivers. Although it was clear that

15 cars weren't enough, Wolff stresses that the process of expanding the grid had to be proactive and grounded in identifying upcoming prospects.



» WE NEED TO BE

– It was always going to be the case that certain drivers were coming in with less experience, that's why our minimum age is 16, she admits. We want the young girls to come in who have the potential because we believe in our environment, they can excel and develop in the correct way.

– I have no problem that we have drivers with less experience because, in the end, that's what Formula 4 is. It's the first step up into the single-seater ladder.



A GLOBAL SERIES«

— Our calendar is something we can be very proud of, says Wolff. We need to be a global series because the awareness in the platform needs to inspire talent on every continent to make sure that we have more young women coming through.

This season also sees the return of reverse grids after a year away — a move that Wolff champions as vital for those wanting to knock on the door for F3 and F2 in years to come.

— First and foremost, it's in other race series so, when they progress up, they will be faced with reverse grids, Wolff says. It also allows those racing at the front to still have to fight through from the midfield and learn and develop their racecraft.”

Racing on an international scale has become a cornerstone of the series' calendar, transitioning away from a European-centric schedule in its first season to one that covers three continents, including Shanghai's debut that took place in late March.

Heading to some of the most iconic F1 weekends, F1 ACADEMY will have a sizeable presence across the pond with three North American races and becomes the first open-wheel support series to race along the Las Vegas strip.

2025 F1 ACADEMY CALENDAR

MARCH 21-23
SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL CIRCUIT
CHINA

APRIL 18-20
JEDDAH CORNICHE CIRCUIT
SAUDI ARABIA

MAY 2-4
MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AUTODROME
UNITED STATES

JUNE 13-15
CIRCUIT GILLES VILLENEUVE
CANADA

AUGUST 29-31
CIRCUIT ZANDVOORT
NETHERLANDS

OCTOBER 3-5
MARINA BAY STREET CIRCUIT
SINGAPORE

NOVEMBER 20-22
LAS VEGAS STRIP CIRCUIT
UNITED STATES



» F1 ACADEMY CREATES THOSE OPPORTUNITIES,



BUT WE'VE STILL GOT WORK TO DO«





» WE NEED
TO SHOW
THAT WE
ARE CREATING THE
RIGHT PLATFORM FOR
DRIVERS TO PROGRESS UPWARDS«

One driver taking the next step on the single-seater ladder is Abby Pulling. As the 2024 F1 ACADEMY Champion, she received a fully-funded seat in the GB3 Championship with Rodin Motorsport alongside 20 days of testing to support her campaign.

Wolff is naturally keeping a watchful eye on Pulling's performances.

– We are 100% behind Abby. The way she won last year's series in such a dominant style, we want to give her the best shot of success in the next category up.

– We need to show that we are creating the right platform for drivers to progress upwards, so I'll be following Abby's races very closely and it's very important to me that she goes on to be successful in the next category up.

– The participation that we're seeing from young female karters has never been so high and they're not just competing, they're competing at the front, which is just as important.

– It's about developing and nurturing the pipeline to make sure that we have the next generation coming through, she says.

– If I compare it to 10 years ago, it's taken huge strides forward and in a positive way. I think Formula 1 needs to take that credit because the sport has developed in such a way that there are more talented women in the paddock.



Wolff continues:

– I see it more as a movement than a moment and not every little girl in the world wants to be a racing driver. But if she can be inspired by seeing what's possible, in what's still regarded as quite a male-dominated environment, then I think that can be a positive for us.

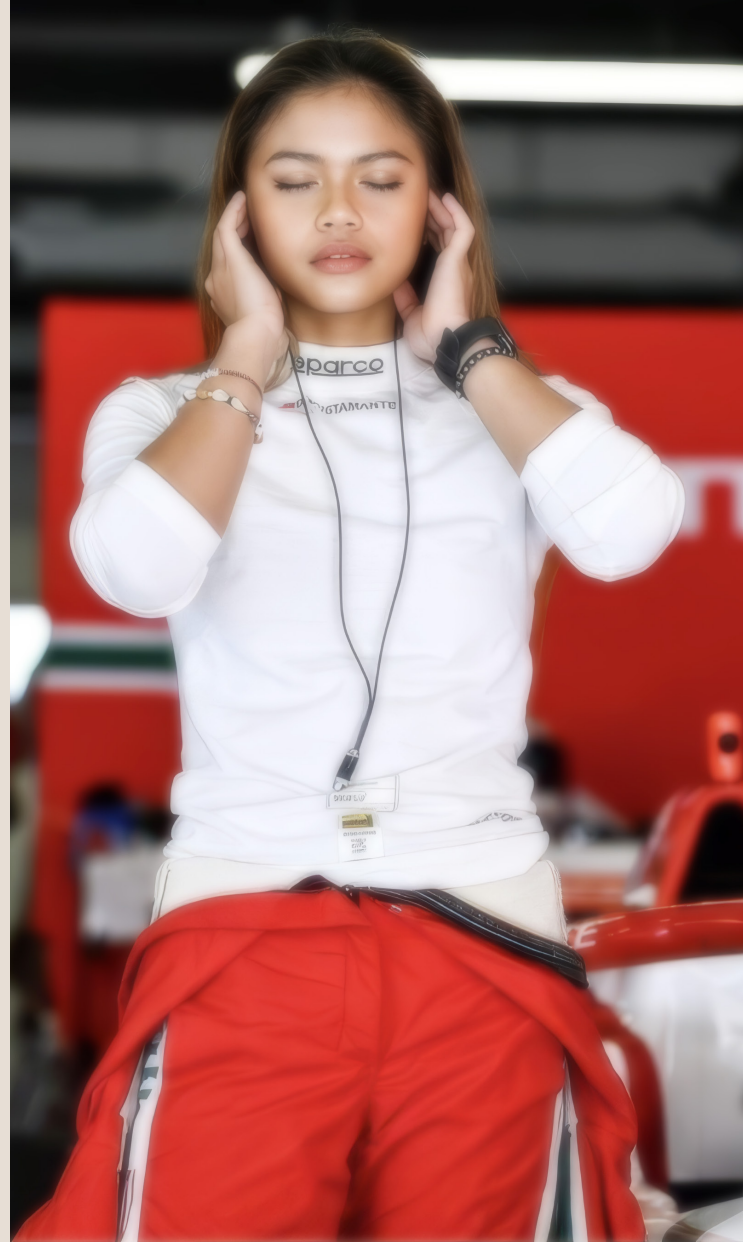
Harnessing her experiences not only as a driver but as a former Team Principal of Venturi Racing in Formula E, Wolff recognises that she has a unique perspective of the hurdles young female drivers face but also the practicalities needed to overcome them.

– It's a huge advantage that I have gone through the path and the journey that they're all taking now, she says. I know what the challenges are and I know how tough it can be.

– But I also know, having run a team for four years, what it takes in the business side to make things work. I think that perspective of both has been really advantageous in trying to build up F1 ACADEMY in the right way for long-term success.

Setting out her vision for the next five to 10 years, Wolff sees 2025 as pivotal, with her hopes that F1 ACADEMY's Netflix docu-series will 'put us on the map'.

Ultimately, although getting the first female F1 driver to enter an F1 race since 1992 remains the headline goal for most fans, Wolff understands that it's a numbers game. With only 22 spots on the F1 grid from 2026, it's up to F1 ACADEMY to spur on the movement of young talent, increasing the amount of young girls getting involved at an early age in the hopes of driving a new generation forwards.

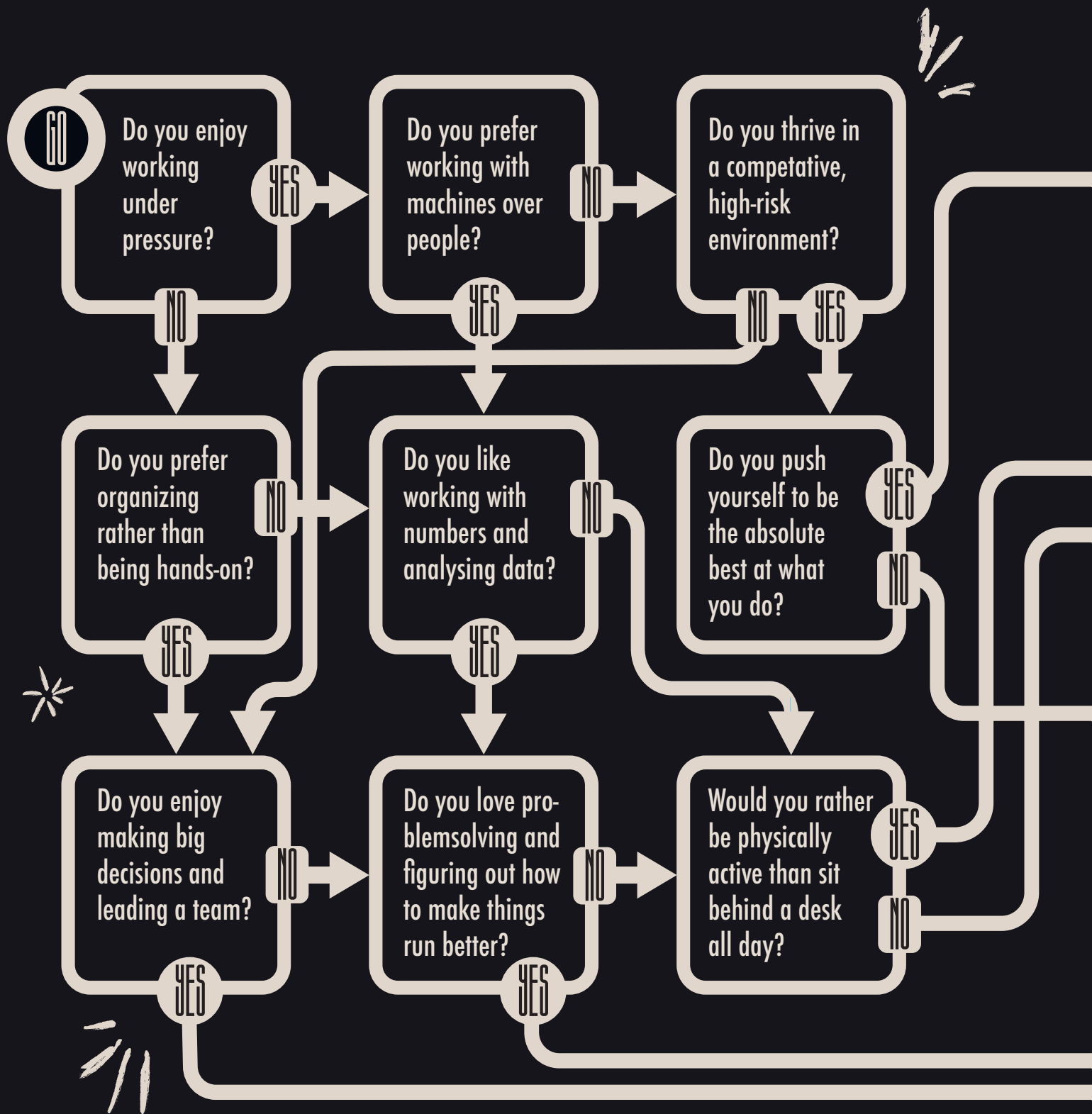


– I would like to see there being big competition for the best 18 drivers to make it in (to F1 ACADEMY), she concludes. I would love to see the progression of the best onwards and upwards in motorsport.

– This was always a long-term project and, in the mid to long-term, we need to see more young girls competing in karting and more talented young drivers progressing up the ladder in the hope that one can make it to the pinnacle of the sport. ★



WHAT'S YOUR ROLE



IN FORMULA 1?



F1 DRIVER

You live for adrenaline and competition. You thrive under pressure and love taking on new challenges head-on. You're all about speed, precision, and pushing yourself to the limit.



RACE ENGINEER

You're the problem solver of the team. You love technology and figuring out how to make things work better. Without you, nothing runs smoothly.



TEAM PRINCIPAL

You're a leader and a strategist. You keep everything in order and ensure success, always thinking ahead to the next challenge.



WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES

In the high-stakes world of Formula 1, leadership has long been a male-dominated domain — but a number of groundbreaking women have risen through the ranks to redefine what's possible. From boardrooms to pit walls, they've brought sharp intellect, strategic vision, and resilience to a sport known for its intensity and pressure. Monisha Kaltenborn, Claire Williams, and Silvia Bellot each carved their own path into F1 history, proving that expertise and determination know no gender. Their stories mark important milestones in the sport's evolution, and serve as powerful reminders of the value of representation at the top.

Monisha Kaltenborn's journey from a lawyer to the first female Team Principal in Formula 1 history was marked by determination, resilience and confidence that transcended barriers. She shattered stereotypes of women only working in the sidelines of motorsport and set a precedent for future generations of women in motorsport.

From Law to the Fast Lane

Born in India in 1971, Monisha moved to Vienna, Austria, as a child, where she pursued a degree in law at the University of Vienna before earning a master's in International Business Law from the London School of Economics in 1996. Initially, motorsport was not part of her career plan. However, fate had other ideas... She joined the Fritz Kaiser Group in 1998 – co-owners of the Sauber F1 Team at the time. This opened the doors to F1, a world she would soon come to shape.

MONISHA KALTENBORN

Rising Through the Ranks

In 2000 Kaltenborn joined the Sauber F1 Team to head the legal department. She gradually made her way up the order, becoming a member of the Board, and then taking on the CEO role in 2010. Her expertise in legal and corporate affairs, coupled with an unwavering commitment to the team, made her a trusted figure within the organisation.

At the end of the 2011 season, Peter Sauber, the founder of Sauber, retired from F1 and announced Kaltenborn as his successor. He then transferred one-third of the team's equity to Kaltenborn, making her an owner of the team. After just two years at the team, in 2012, Monisha Kaltenborn became history's first-ever female team principal in F1!

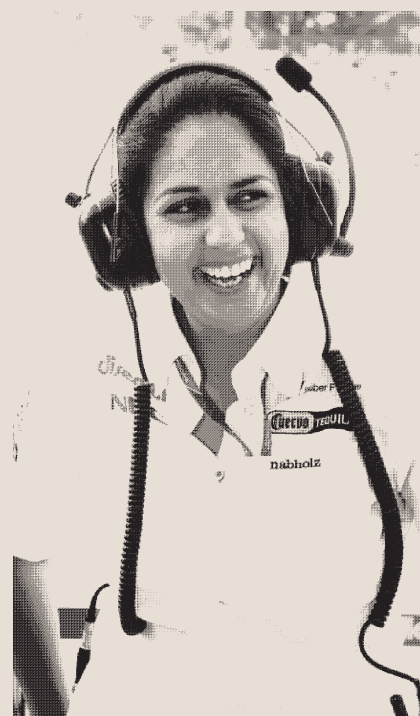
Leading Sauber Through Challenges

Taking charge at a critical time, Kaltenborn navigated Sauber through financial challenges while making strategic decisions that would shape its future. Under her leadership, Sauber continued to compete at a high level despite limited resources. She was responsible for managing the team's performance on the track while also securing funding, negotiating partnerships, and handling media scrutiny with poise.

Despite her best efforts, the team faced persistent financial difficulties, leading to its eventual sale to Longbow Finance in 2016.

Though she remained at the helm for another year, Kaltenborn left Sauber in June 2017.

Kaltenborn told The Independent: "I'm really passionate about my job and if I can give other people the courage to simply do what they believe in."



A Champion for Women in Motorsport

Beyond her time at Sauber, Monisha has been a strong advocate for greater female representation in motorsport. Throughout her career, she has highlighted the challenges women face in leadership positions and has been vocal about the gender disparities in F1. She noted how media coverage often overlooked her technical knowledge in favor of business-related questions.

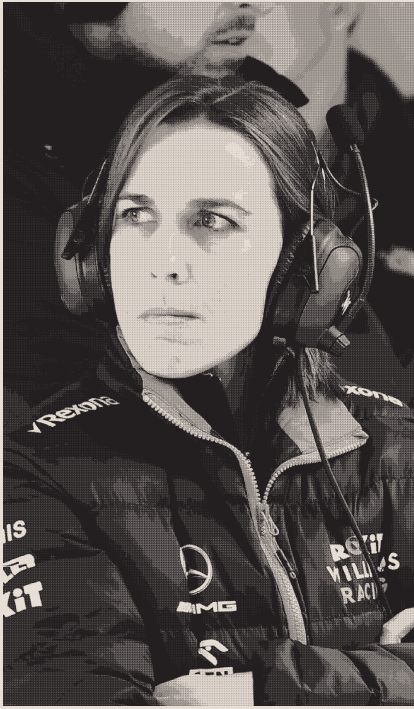
Her involvement with the FIA's Women in Motorsport Commission, established in 2009, helped inspire change, encouraging more young women to pursue careers in the industry.

An Inspiration for Future Generations

Monisha Kaltenborn remains a symbol of resilience and determination. Her story sends a powerful message: dedication, hard work and a dash of chance can defy stereotypes and reshape industries.

As the first female team principal, she ensured that the path she carved will lead many more women into the highest echelons of motorsport.

Monisha Kaltenborn did not just enter the world of Formula 1 – she changed it. And in doing so, she has shown countless others that they too can turn their ambitions into achievements.



Born into motorsport royalty, Claire Williams carved out her own legacy in Formula 1. As Deputy Team Principal of Williams Racing, she led one of the sport's most storied teams through triumphs and challenges, balancing heritage with the pressure of modern competition. With a steady hand and deep passion for racing, she became one of the most influential women in the paddock — and a symbol of leadership in a male-dominated world.

CLAIRE WILLIAMS

From Political Science to the Paddock

Born in Windsor, Berkshire, in 1976, Claire Williams is the daughter of Sir Frank Williams, the founder of the Williams Formula One team. After earning a degree in politics from Newcastle University in 1999, she began her career as a press officer at the Silverstone racing circuit. In 2002, she joined the Williams F1 team as a Communications Officer, marking the start of her journey within the family business.

Climbing the Ranks at Williams

Claire's dedication and skill saw her rise through the ranks at Williams. By 2010, she was Head of Communications, and in 2011, she took on the role of Head of Investor Relations, playing a pivotal role in the team's public listing on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange. In 2012, she became the Director of Marketing & Communications and the Williams family representative on the board. Her ascent continued in 2013 when she was appointed Deputy Team Principal, effectively managing the team's day-to-day operations.

Steering the Team Through Challenges

Taking over during a challenging period for Williams F1, Claire implemented significant changes to revitalize the team. She restructured the engineering department, secured a partnership with Mercedes for power units, and brought in drivers Felipe

Massa and Valtteri Bottas. These strategic moves led to a resurgence, with the team finishing third in the Constructors' Championship in both 2014 and 2015. Her leadership was instrumental in restoring competitiveness to the storied team.

Advocating for Diversity and Inclusion

Beyond the racetrack, Claire Williams was a strong advocate for diversity and inclusion within motorsport. She championed initiatives to promote greater female participation in Formula One and worked to create a more inclusive environment within the team. Her efforts contributed to broader conversations about representation and equality in the sport.

Legacy and Life Beyond Formula One

In 2020, after the sale of the Williams team to Dorilton Capital, Claire stepped down from her role as Deputy Team Principal. Her tenure left a lasting impact, not only in terms of competitive achievements but also in setting a precedent for female leadership in Formula One. In recognition of her contributions, she was appointed Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 2016. Claire now serves as a brand ambassador for WAE Technologies, maintaining her influence in the industry.

A Trailblazer for Future Generations

Claire Williams' journey in Formula 1 stands as a powerful example of resilience, leadership, and legacy. As one of the few women to have led a Formula 1 team, she not only upheld her family's name but also carved out her own identity in a male-dominated sport. Her impact goes beyond race results — she opened doors, inspired future talent, and proved that leadership in motorsport knows no gender. Her story continues to inspire the next generation of women aiming to leave their mark on Formula 1.



From the paddock to the stewards' room, Silvia Bellot has broken barriers as one of motorsport's most respected officials. Rising through the ranks to become the first female race director in F2 and F3, her journey reflects a blend of deep racing knowledge, resilience, and a passion for fair play. With a career rooted in motorsport from a young age, Bellot continues to shape the future of racing—one rulebook at a time.

SILVIA BELLLOT

A Voice of Authority in the Paddock

Silvia Bellot has carved out an influential space for herself in the fast-paced world of Formula 1, not behind the wheel or on the pit wall, but through the rulebook. As a seasoned motorsport official and FIA F1 steward, Bellot has become one of the most respected names in race governance – a space historically dominated by men.

Starting Young with Big Ambitions

Born in Barcelona, Spain, Bellot entered the motorsport world at the age of just 16. Her early exposure to race organization and regulations quickly led her down the path of officiating – a road rarely taken by women at the time. By 21, she had already made history as the first woman to be appointed as a steward in Formula 1.

Breaking Barriers in Race Control

Bellot's appointment wasn't just symbolic – she's been at the forefront of enforcing the rules in the world's top racing series, including Formula 1, GP2, and DTM. Her calm, informed decision-making has earned her the respect of teams and drivers alike. She has served as a permanent steward for multiple F1 Grand Prix weekends, helping to maintain fairness in a sport where milliseconds can determine victory or defeat.

A Global Figure in Motorsports Governance

Her influence extends far beyond the Formula 1 paddock. Bellot has worked across numerous international racing championships and has held key positions within the FIA. She was elected to the FIA Women in Motorsport Commission, where she advocates for greater inclusion and representation of women across all areas of the sport.

Championing Women in Racing

Passionate about diversity in motorsport, Bellot uses her platform to promote gender equality in the field of race officiating and beyond. She actively mentors young women entering the sport and supports initiatives aimed at breaking down barriers for female participation. Her presence has helped redefine what authority looks like in Formula 1.

Driving Change, One Race at a Time

Silvia Bellot's journey proves that influence in Formula 1 isn't limited to what happens on the track. Through her work, she has helped modernize the image of race governance, bringing more balance and inclusivity to the steward's room. With her ongoing commitment to fairness, professionalism, and progress, Bellot remains a vital figure in the sport's evolving story.

Recognized by the Motorsport World

Bellot's groundbreaking contributions haven't gone unnoticed. In 2013, she was awarded the prestigious FIA Outstanding Official of the Year – the first woman to ever receive the honor. The award highlighted not just her technical excellence and professionalism, but also her role in inspiring a new generation of women to see themselves in positions of authority in motorsport.

Looking Ahead

As motorsport continues to evolve, Silvia Bellot remains at the heart of its transformation. Whether she's representing Spain at international FIA events, supporting diversity initiatives, or overseeing the world's most high-stakes races, she's a powerful reminder that leadership and expertise transcend gender. Her legacy is still being written – one decision, one race weekend at a time. ★



LINGO

≡ Talk the Talk of the Track ≡

Know the terms, live the race. Whether you're trackside or watching from the sofa, understanding the language of Formula 1 brings you closer to the action. Here's your guide to sounding like a paddock pro.

≡ Race & Strategy ≡



DRS (Drag Reduction System)

A moveable rear wing flap that boosts top speed for overtaking in designated zones.

Box, Box

Pit stop time! This is what engineers say to call the driver in.

Undercut

A strategy where a driver pits earlier than a rival to gain time on fresher tires and potentially overtake them once they pit.

Overcut

The opposite of the undercut – staying out longer to build a time gap and overtake after the other driver pits.

Push

Driver speak for "Go full throttle!"

Aero & Tire Talk ≡

Dirty Air

Turbulent air from the car ahead that messes up your grip and aero.

Clean Air

What every driver wants – undisturbed airflow for top performance.

Graining

Rubber build-up on the tires = less grip.

Blistering

Overheated tires forming bubbles = bad news for lap times.

Marbles

Loose rubber debris off the racing line – avoid if you want to stay on track.



Tech & Timing

Sector Time

Lap divided into 3 sections – green means personal best, purple means fastest overall.

Parc Fermé

Car lockdown zone after qualifying/race – no more tweaks allowed.

Lock-up

Tire skids during heavy braking, causing flat spots (and a nasty vibration!).



Race Outcomes

DNF (Did Not Finish)

When a driver doesn't make it to the end of the race.

Backmarker

A lapped car that must let leaders pass – can impact strategy big time.

Lights Out

The red lights go off – and it's race on!







THE WOMEN BEHIND THE SCENES

Although women have long worked behind the scenes in Formula One, few are visible in the spotlight. From engineers to marketing directors, several women share their paths into the sport, the challenges they've faced, and why visibility is key for inspiring the next generation.

PHOTO *MARK THOMPSON* TEXT *NIAMH LEWIS*

»THERE'S NOT MANY OF US IN PUBLIC FACING ROLES, IF ANY.«

Twelve years ago Chloe Targett-Adams joined Formula One as a corporate lawyer, and is now the sport's director of global race promotions. When she walked into the office for the first time, there were more women present than anywhere else she had worked, and it was the first time she had a female boss – Sacha Woodward Hill, who joined F1 in 1996 as a general counsel.

"That was in a time when it [F1] was known to not have any women in it," Targett-Adams told ESPN. "It was a mixed perception even then."

"We know in the past there were female drivers, although sadly not for many, many years. Whether it's a female thing or not, there's not many of us in public facing roles, if any. I think that's always, for me, one of the most interesting things about Formula One."

"As much as there is still to do, there was a real base of women and that's something that is really important for us to remember. There are all these incredible women who really paved the way before us, whether that was from a commercial side and marketing and PR, legal or business, and even a bit on the engineering side and a little on the driving side so what that shows to me is F1 is not necessarily discriminatory against women."

"It's just that we've not done enough to really open up access and showcase women working in the sport that there always has been, that actually it is a really great place for women to work and to build a career."



But an ESPN survey can reveal the extent of the lack of women within the sport. Although 38% of Formula One Management's 569 employees are female, data from teams is substantially lower.

On the public-facing side (discounting grid girls, whose role in the sport was revised in 2018) there have been few women in the sport's 70-year history. The last woman to drive in a grand prix was almost half a century ago. Three women have been involved as development drivers within the last eight years but none have got further than a first practice session.

Other than drivers, only two women have managed teams, and neither are still working in the sport.

ESPN surveyed all 10 F1 teams on how many women are in senior roles within the team, and of the race team – the core performance group who travel to grands prix – what percentage are women:

Mercedes has the biggest workforce with around 1,000 employees. 117 of those are women, and 31% are in senior roles. In Mercedes' core race team of 65 people, four are women, and of a further 20 people working at the factory in the race support team, four of them are women (20%).

Haas, who are the smallest team on the grid – 167 people, 15 of whom are women (9%).

McLaren have 66 people who regularly travel in the race team, five are women, and one woman in the team is in a senior management role.

Sauber said like all teams the size of the race team varies, but on average there are 51 people regularly travelling to races, of these five are women (9.8%). As for the Formula 1 side of the company thirteen women work in senior roles.

Red Bull, **Ferrari**, and **Williams** did not respond to ESPN's survey. **Aston Martin** and **Alpine** said they were unable to provide the requested information, and **Racing Bulls** said: "Whilst we do have a high level of females in senior roles here at the factory we don't have in the race team."

There are women who work as engineers, directors, in marketing and hospitality for teams and across the F1 business. The numbers might be small, but they have important roles.

On Alfa Romeo's pitwall is senior strategy engineer Ruth Buscombe, who says although she was inspired by legendary F1 engineers Paddy Lowe and James Allison, a female engineering role model was missing.

"I think that was one thing I was really missing – although there were women working in Formula One

you couldn't see them, and it's very difficult to be what you can't see," Buscombe told ESPN.

"Rather embarrassingly, I went from wanting to be a princess to wanting to be a Formula One engineer, there was no happy middle. I always loved maths at school and enjoyed the problem solving part of it. When I realised you could do maths in sport and competition that was the coolest thing in the world for me. My focus then was doing the subjects that people who went into F1 did."

"I was very lucky that when I turned up to secondary school aged 11, my maths teacher's daughter was studying engineering at Cambridge and she was my hero – I was like 'if she can do it then I can do it'. She went on to be a pilot and is a brilliant lady, she is maybe not as famous a name as James Allison, but Emily Todd was my inspiration."

Mercedes' wind tunnel technician Dr Kathryn Richards told ESPN her venture into studying STEM subjects, and subsequently F1, started when her aunt took her plane spotting at an airport. She was hooked, and her father took her to Silverstone in 1986 to watch a grand prix. That is then the seed was planted and she went on to study aerospace engineering, and gained PHD in vehicle aerodynamics.

"I was a big fan of Michael Schumacher at the time," Richards says. "I wanted to go to the Benetton factory and see the wind tunnels. I wrote a letter and it



was picked up by a guy called Willem Toet [Australian F1 aerodynamicist and now sales manager at Alfa Romeo] and he replied and said yes, come along and bring a guest.”

As Richards comes towards her 16th year at Mercedes (formerly BAR-Honda when she joined), she says Toet’s support when she was starting out as a student was key: “If it hadn’t been for him I wouldn’t be where I am today.”

Women at work

Of the women ESPN interviewed, there were mixed responses on how aware they are of gender bias on a regular basis.

Steph Carlin, commercial manager of Formula Two team Carlin, told ESPN it just takes one comment to be reminded of inequality.

“For the majority of the time, it’s a really rewarding job so I don’t see myself as a woman in a male dominated industry, I just feel like most of the time I’m trying to do the best job I can,” she said.

“We have 15 drivers at Carlin and that’s different every year, and different driver managers, and then all of a sudden you’re woken up with a bit of a jolt when

metimes act as them as well but I don’t have a problem.

“I’ve managed to get some young females in work experience. One of them wants to be a driver, another wants to be a mechanic. So in that perspective it’s made a difference on some people’s career paths.”

Buscombe says it depends who you’re surrounded by. “Certainly in Alfa [Romeo] it’s definitely not a factor, when I was hired the team principal was a woman [Monisha Kalternborn who departed in 2017] so you can really see the environment there. They just want the best.

“I think there is [an unconscious bias]. I think if you asked everyone in F1 and their results were anonymous they probably would say as a result of their upbringing they have to challenge their own beliefs and their own perception of what makes an engineer.”

“That’s not necessarily just male, it goes for women, we all need to make sure we don’t walk into a room with subconscious bias and create opinions about someone because of the way they look, the colour of the skin, what they believe or who they love, and it’s a unanimous problem that all sports and companies have. It’s only going to get better if everybody checks their privilege at the door and focuses on being aware of bias and once you’re aware of it you have a chance to challenge it.”

» IT'S VERY HARD TO BE WHAT YOU CAN'T SEE. «

somebody would prefer to speak to Trevor [Carlin, team founder] instead of me. It doesn’t happen very often and most of the time I don’t even think about being in a male-dominated environment but every so often, maybe once a year, there will just be somebody who would like to speak to Trevor because he’s the person they feel they need to speak to and normally Trevor will say ‘no Stephanie will deal with that.’

“It’s only when you have conversations like this and you look around and how many other women are there at a management level in racing, it’s still quite rare.”

For Richards, being the only woman in her department and the only wind tunnel technician in the sport doesn’t bother her. At Mercedes, she has a few aerodynamicists who are women for company. But she has inspired more women to study STEM subjects and taken on women for placements and work experience with the hope there will be more coming through.

“I’m quite used to it now actually, it doesn’t really bother me,” she says. “When I went through college there were women on my course so I’ve been quite used to it since an early age and I just accepted it straight away when I started. I’ve never had any problems, I get on well with guys, I’m almost like one of the guys and so-

How important is a female driver?

How important is it to have a public-facing role model, like a driver? Targett-Adams says: “I think it’s really important because the more visible females you have in Formula One, the more obvious it is for a young girl to show that that is something that’s possible from any background that you don’t think, ‘oh, that’s for other people’. It is about inspiring the next generation, isn’t it? But also about creating those opportunities.”

F1’s director of marketing Ellie Norman told ESPN: “The most visible role is your driver and your team principles, but there are so many other roles, whether it is engineering or it’s marketing, there are lots of strong female role models leading and driving a lot of the business in Formula One.”

“We see more and more talented women in all roles throughout the paddock now. And in 2021 we have W Series joining so they’re going to be at eight events across this year. The role that W Series can play in women joining that racing triangle, because one of the brilliant things about F1 where it’s different to other sports is there isn’t a women’s team, so from a competition perspective, women have always been able to race against men and it comes down to: how good are you?”



How good are you, but also how much money do you have? Formula One is an exclusive sport and requires huge sums of money to compete.

"That in itself is a huge barrier for people of all backgrounds – that needs to be addressed. Scholarship system for all talent," Carlin says.

"There's nothing wrong with transparency and honesty," Targett-Adams says. "No one is trying to hide away from anything. This is where we are and this is where we want to get to, so there's a good start. Let's not celebrate it [the lack of diversity], because you can always do better, but let's acknowledge it."

A variety of voices makes for better problem solving

Diversity is as much about representation as it is about sharing ideas. When people from different age-groups, genders, cultures, and socioeconomic backgrounds get together, there's a lot more people bringing a wider variety of skills and expertise which previously is unlikely to have been part of the discussion.

With that comes innovation and more problem solving, says Targett-Adams. "In F1 there's obviously a huge amount of engineers, so better problem solving is always going to be a good thing. Then from a business perspective, clearly you then can generate more growth through that so to me it's a win-win."

Going into her 10th season in the sport, Buscombe says the landscape of F1's talent has changed massively. When she started, there were no women on the pit wall. Now there are some, but she won't stop fighting for equality until there is at least 50%.

"The cars will go faster and the racing will be more exciting and the championship will be more technically brilliant and more entertaining to watch if we have the best person for the job in every single role, from technical to media, to mechanics to drivers, even though it's not going to be a quick fix," she says. "Trying to move forward to a place where we have more equal opportunities, inviting people in and getting the best candidates whoever that is a really important process."

"It shouldn't be a numbers ticking exercise, because strategy is statistics – I can say this with some level of professional skill. Statistically it's impossible that all the best candidates come from sub-sections of society. So we're going to have the best drivers, engineers, and the best sport if we take it from everywhere."

"Imagine how rubbish F1 would be without people like Lewis Hamilton racing, because of the colour of their skin and I hope in 20 years time or even sooner we are saying similar comments about women and people outside of Europe who don't have that opportunity from the grassroots level up."

Some of the sport's stakeholders are also looking for change. In June, F1 launched We Race As One which aimed to highlight inequality. Mercedes had a black livery across 2020 and launched Accelerate 25 – a programme to become more diverse and inclusive, with at least 25% of new starters coming from under-repre-

sented backgrounds. There are other programmes: FIA Girls on Track, which recently opened the door for a spot in Ferrari's driver academy, as well as Formula Student, which encourages school children to take up STEM subjects.

Norman highlights a specific example of an unforeseen issue between genders where the governing body (FIA) can help level the playing field. "I remember Tatiana [Calderon, who drove in Formula Two for BWT Arden] talking to me about the brake pedal in F2 cars. Her foot size is smaller than a lot of her male competitors which meant that with the brake pedal being uniform across all of the cars, when she was pressing the brake pedal, it was pretty much her toes on the pedal instead of the ball of her foot. So there's less pressure going through that pedal. The team was able to work with the FIA to show that there is a physical difference here, which is detrimental to her ability."

Claire Williams told ESPN that before she left Williams, there was progress with training and the aim to eradicate unconscious bias and provide support that



under-represented groups may need.

"I do think it's important that you have representation across every area of your team, or any industry in life," she says. "You do it because it's the right thing to do and it was so important to me and it's important to have those women in all different divisions because they are role models and they send a message to the next generation of girls who are looking at F1 as a potential workplace destination and if they see women in the sport, they will then feel it's ok for them to come into the sport."

Many people argue that in the pinnacle of motorsport, it's about finding the best person for the job rather than meeting quotas. The problem is the talent pool of skills-based roles among under-represented groups is small, and it's too early to track any progress from the initiatives. Change must come from the top of the sport at owner and governing body level down to the grassroots to increase interest and uptake. The women in today's roles have paved the way and are an inspiration to the next generation.

"The amount of women coming up through engineering as mechanics is so small compared to the amount of men," Carlin says. "In terms of the average applicant, we very rarely get applicants that are female and I really do think it's because the issue lies at the grassroots where school children are making options and decisions as to what route they're going to go down."

"It really does start in school and there's fewer girls making those decisions and taking those options than the boys. And in the same way, the mechanics that go on to do courses at college, the uptake of women at that point is so minute compared to men – that's where the real issue lies and why I see so many few female applicants by the time you get to our stage."

Carlin adds it is a positive step that in 2021, people are having conversations on diversity that they were not having before. More can be done than putting stickers on racing cars, such as research and investment, and perhaps encouragement that women can be princesses and F1 engineers. ★



Race engineer Laura Meuller at pre-season testing in Sakhir 2025.



Formula 1 presenter
Lissie Mackintosh





2025 SEASON BINGO

ROOKIE PODIUM	DELAYED RACE	ANIMAL ON TRACK	WILLIAMS TOP 5 FINISH	WET RACE
SAUBER DOUBLE POINTS	DRIVER SWAP	+3 RED FLAGS	OCON TIME PENALTY	RICCIARDO MAKES AN APPEARENCE
YUKI SWEARS ON RADIO	MERCEDES 1-2	HOME RACE WIN	ALL BRITISH DRIVERS SCORE POINTS	LEWIS PODIUM
A RACE WITHOUT DNFs	TEAMMATES COLLIDE	STROLL CRASHES	LANDO BREAKS TROPHY	MAX DNF
LAST LAP OVERTAKE	TYRE ON TRACK	10+ POSITIONS GAINED	FERRARI 1-2	BRITISH DRIVER WINS SILVERSTONE

TECHNICAL INNOVATION

★ ★
Hannah Schmitz

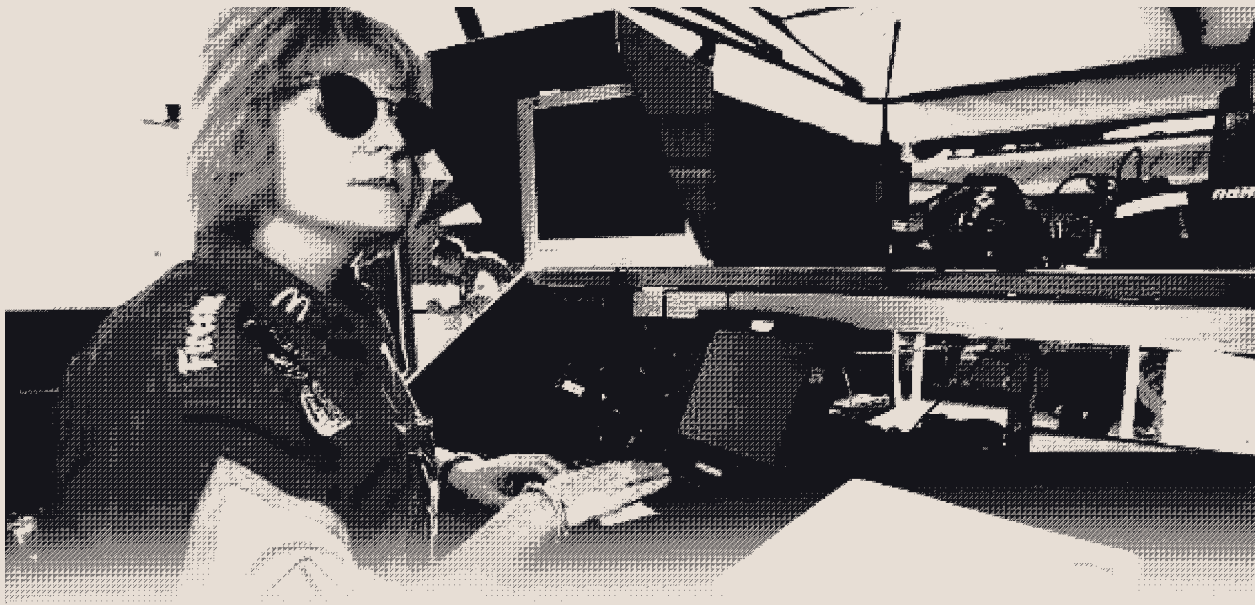
Strategic Architect of Red Bull Racing's Success

Hannah Schmitz, born in May 1985, has become a central figure in Formula One strategy as the Principal Strategy Engineer for Red Bull Racing. A graduate of the University of Cambridge with a Master's in Mechanical Engineering, Schmitz began her career at Red Bull in 2009, initially focusing on modeling and simulation. Her analytical prowess and decision-making skills quickly propelled her into the strategy department, where she has since master-minded numerous race-winning tactics. ★

Schmitz's strategic brilliance was notably displayed during the 2019 Brazilian Grand Prix, where her bold decision to pit Max Verstappen three times led to a remarkable victory. Her contributions have been pivotal in Red Bull's championship triumphs in 2021, 2022, and 2023. Beyond her technical expertise, Schmitz is celebrated for her composure under pressure and her role as a trailblazer for women in motorsport. In 2022, she was honored with the Female Engineer of the Year award by McLaren Applied, recognizing her as an inspiring figure in the industry.

★ ★
The mastermind
behind Red Bull's
title charges ★ ★





Engineering Trailblazer Across Racing Disciplines

Born in 1964 in the UK, Diane Holl has carved an extraordinary path through the highest echelons of motorsport engineering. Graduating with a degree in mechanical engineering, she began her career in Formula One, where she contributed to the design and performance optimization of race cars. Her expertise and leadership led her to become the first female chief engineer in the Championship Auto Racing Teams (CART) series, notably working with Della Penna Motorsports in 2000.

Diane Holl

FIRST woman race engineer in F1

Holl's versatility is evident in her seamless transition across racing disciplines. After her tenure in CART, she brought her engineering acumen to NASCAR, joining Hendrick Motorsports as the Director of Vehicle Engineering. In this role, she has been instrumental in advancing the team's aerodynamic and vehicle performance strategies. Holl's career reflects a relentless pursuit of excellence and a commitment to breaking barriers in a traditionally male-dominated field.

AND ENGINEERING

THE ANATOMY OF A FORMULA 1 CAR



WHERE SPEED, SCIENCE,
AND PRECISION MEET

A Formula 1 car is more than just a machine built for speed — it's a finely tuned symphony of aerodynamics, power, and engineering innovation. Every inch of an F1 car is designed with purpose, pushing the limits of performance while keeping the driver safe at over 300 km/h. Here's a breakdown of what makes these extraordinary vehicles tick:



The Monocoque: A Carbon Fiber Fortress

At the heart of every Formula 1 car is the monocoque – a one-piece survival cell made from ultra-lightweight yet incredibly strong carbon fiber composite. This central structure encases the driver and is designed to withstand extreme impacts. The monocoque is not only the core safety feature but also the foundation to which the car's suspension, engine, and aerodynamic components are attached.

Aerodynamics: Mastering Air

Aerodynamics are perhaps the most crucial factor in a car's performance on the track. The front wing is the first element to slice through the air, shaping airflow around the tires and directing it along the car's body. The rear wing, often adjustable, provides stability and crucial downforce – pushing the car toward the track surface to improve grip through high-speed corners. Underneath, the car's floor and diffuser manipulate air to create ground effect, effectively "sucking" the car to the track and allowing for faster cornering without losing traction. Every vent, curve, and panel is sculpted to reduce drag and maximize downforce.

Power Unit: A Hybrid Heart

Today's Formula 1 cars run on incredibly efficient hybrid power units. At the center is a 1.6-liter V6 turbocharged engine, capable of revving up to 15,000 rpm. But this is just one part of the story. F1 power units also include two energy recovery systems: one captures kinetic energy from braking (MGU-K), while the other collects heat energy from the turbocharger (MGU-H). These systems store energy in a battery and redeploy it for extra power, reducing fuel consumption without sacrificing performance.

SUS: Precision Handling

The suspension system is what keeps the car stable and responsive at extreme speeds. Most F1 cars use a double wishbone layout with either pushrod or pullrod setups. These systems allow the engineers to fine-tune how the car handles different track surfaces, how it reacts in corners, and how well it maintains tire contact – all of which are essential for grip, balance, and driver confidence.

Brakes: Stopping on a Dime

Slowing down from 300 km/h into a tight chicane requires immense braking power. F1 cars are equipped with carbon-carbon disc brakes, capable of operating at temperatures over 1,000°C. Brake balance can be adjusted by the driver mid-race, optimizing performance depending on tire wear, fuel load, or track conditions. Despite their extreme performance, the brakes are designed to be incredibly lightweight to minimize unsprung mass.

The Halo and Safety Innovations

Safety is non-negotiable in Formula 1. Alongside the robust monocoque, the most visible safety feature is the halo – a titanium structure that arches over the cockpit, designed to protect the driver's head from flying debris or heavy impacts. It has already proven its value in several major accidents. Crumple zones, head and neck support devices (HANS), and mandatory crash testing all contribute to making modern F1 cars some of the safest race machines in the world.

The Steering Wheel: Command Center

Far from a simple wheel, the F1 steering wheel is a high-tech control panel. It houses over 20 buttons, dials, paddles, and screens that allow the driver to make real-time adjustments to engine settings, energy deployment, brake balance, and even communicate with the pit wall. Drivers must operate it with precision, all while navigating corners at high speed.

The Tires: The Final Frontier of Grip

No part of the car connects more directly with the track than the tires. F1 tires are specially engineered by Pirelli to perform under extreme conditions. Teams choose from a range of compounds – from soft (maximum grip, faster wear) to hard (less grip, longer-lasting) – depending on strategy and weather. Tire temperature, pressure, and degradation are constantly monitored, as even the smallest fluctuation can dramatically affect performance. A well-timed tire change can make or break a race.

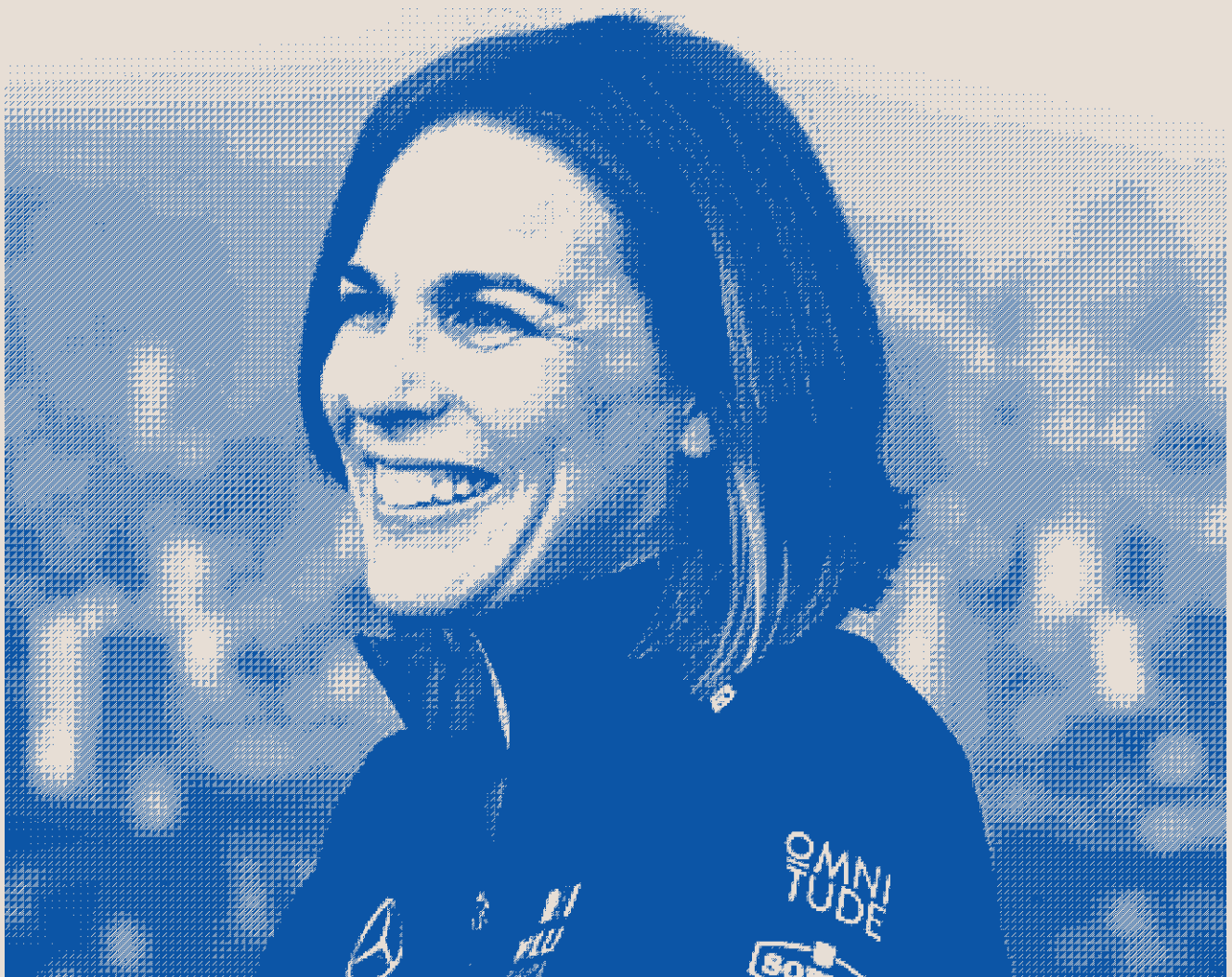
From nose to tail, every part of a Formula 1 car is designed for one thing: performance. It's a machine where engineering meets artistry, built to dominate the track while protecting the human being inside. Understanding its anatomy is like looking under the skin of a futuristic beast. ★



Leading one of Formula 1's most historic teams through triumphs and challenges, Claire Williams carved out her legacy in a male-dominated sport — while learning to value her own voice along the way.

Interview

CLAIRE



WILLIAMS

Across seven seasons running Williams, the team co-founded by her father Sir Frank, Claire Williams achieved 15 podiums (only two others – Toto Wolff and Christian Horner had a higher tally during that period) and twice guided her squad to third-place in the Teams' Championship.

To secure the squad's future, the Williams family sold the team to private investment firm Dorilton Capital in 2020 – and that marked the end of the family's 40-year presence in the sport.

It was a role that had only once previously been filled by a woman – Monisha Kaltenborn was leading the Sauber team at the time – and one which she used to encourage positive change across the business.

– When I first started in this sport, there were very few women, Williams explains. And most women who worked in F1 did the jobs women traditionally did – in hospitality, media and marketing.

– In the early days, I never thought a whole lot of it. I gave Susie Wolff the opportunity to drive our car in 2014 and that got a huge amount of interest and Susie has gone on to do incredible things promoting women in motorsport herself.

– Around 2016, my interest in trying to promote women in motorsports ramped up as I had quite a lot of things happen to me in the three years of leading the team and I wanted to turn some of those experiences into positives for others.

– We started doing more to bring more women into engineering roles at Williams and encouraged women we had in engineering roles to become ambassadors and speak at schools to encourage the next generation.

» WHEN I TOOK OVER IN 2013, 9% OF MY WORKFORCE WERE FEMALE. WHEN I LEFT IN 2020, 19.5% WERE FEMALE. «

– Then when I got pregnant in 2017, after probably putting off the fact that I wanted to have a baby because I was running an F1 team, it was really hard. I thought to myself, ‘How was I going to do this?’ and I was the boss. Not many people at Williams had a baby – so it was treading new ground.

– We needed to create a better pathway for women so that it’s easier for them to start families while also wanting to work in F1. We started changing policies at Williams around maternity and also paternity. Then we ramped things up by creating the ‘Women at Williams’ network to educate and engage and create a better environment for women to thrive in our workplace.

»IF IT WASN'T FOR HER,
A LOT OF PEOPLE SAY
WILLIAMS WOULDN'T
HAVE EXISTED.«



Much of Claire Williams’ inspiration came from her parents Sir Frank and her mother Ginny. Sir Frank’s role in transforming Williams into one of the most successful teams F1 has ever seen is well known, but perhaps less so is his wife’s part in that.

Ginny was Sir Frank’s rock, the person who always

found a way in the very difficult times – when money was tight – to find a way to keep the door open so that her husband could focus on running the racing team, and the person who helped Sir Frank fight on after his car accident.

And that was all while bringing up three children – Jonathan, Claire and Jamie.

– So many people who will have known my mum would have known how amazing she was, says Williams. Her greatest strengths were her resilience and bravery, and if it wasn’t for her, a lot of people say Williams wouldn’t have existed.

– She was the real hero behind the scenes. There were a lot of incredible women behind the scenes back in those days that were there supporting their husbands going out and working in the crazy world of F1.

– Everyone knows my dad and what he achieved, but he wouldn’t have achieved what he achieved without having my mum by his side.



Taking the reins as Deputy Team Principal in 2013, she stepped into a fiercely competitive environment with the weight of expectations on her shoulders — as one of the few women in a leadership role in the sport. Yet, she embraced the challenge head-on, driven by a belief in the team's potential and a commitment to maintaining its fiercely independent spirit.

Her leadership extended beyond race weekends. Claire became a powerful advocate for greater female representation in motorsport, using her platform to call for more opportunities for women in technical and managerial roles. Balancing business pressures with personal values, she was determined to modernize the team without losing its soul — a mission that made her tenure not only about results, but about legacy.

While the final years of Williams' tenure as boss were painful, with the team struggling for performance in an ultra-competitive field where most rivals' budgets dwarfed those of the British squad, Williams achieved an immense amount of success both on and off the track across her tenure — and secured the future of each and every employee for the foreseeable. Does she ever allow herself to be proud of what she achieved?

— I never used to, she admits. Someone asked me what my strengths and weaknesses were and my brain immediately went to my weaknesses and I couldn't think of any strengths.

— I'm now learning to appreciate my strengths and to be proud of what I have achieved. I ran Williams, a legacy team in Formula 1, for many years. And as much as my last few years weren't successful, five years of my tenure were very successful.

— Outside of Toto and Christian, I was the highest podium scoring TP in the sport for many years. I am really proud of that.

— It doesn't sit comfortably. Pride is not a comfortable emotion for me. I'd much rather focus on the bits that didn't go well as I think that's where the greatest lessons are learned. I probably got that from my mum. ★

» I'M NOW LEARNING
TO APPRECIATE MY STRENGTHS... «





THE ABOLITION OF GRID GIRLS

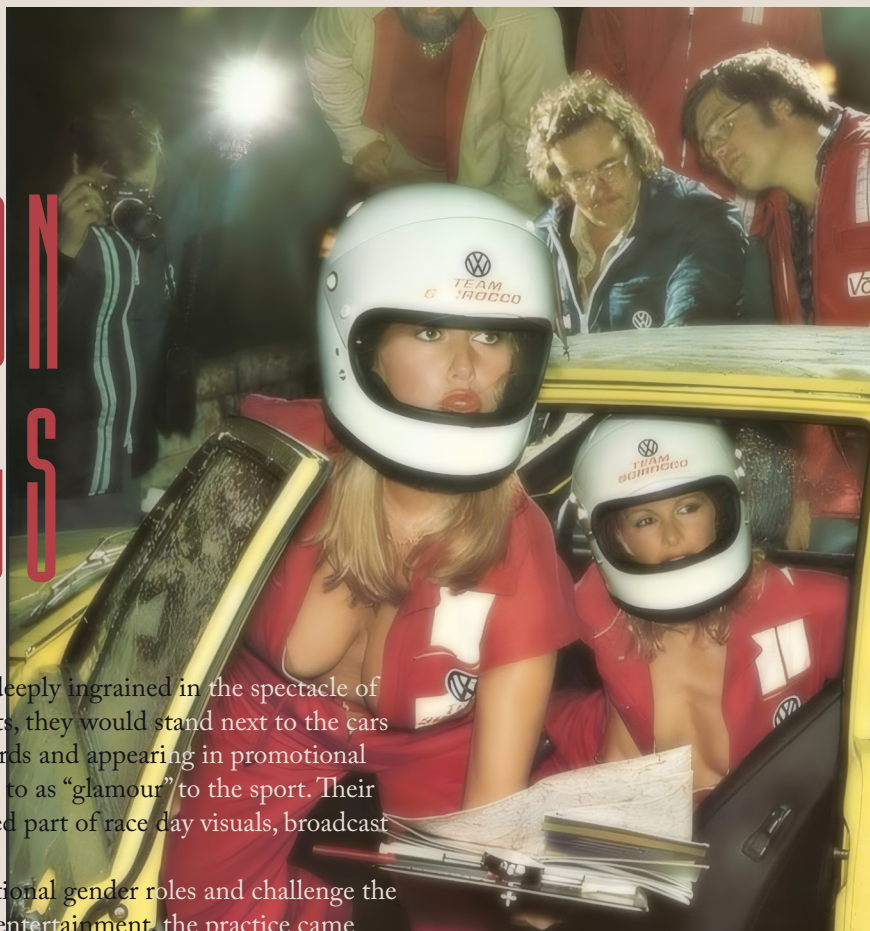
For decades, the image of “grid girls” was deeply ingrained in the spectacle of Formula 1. Dressed in coordinated outfits, they would stand next to the cars before the race, holding driver name boards and appearing in promotional material, adding what was often referred to as “glamour” to the sport. Their presence became a tradition – an expected part of race day visuals, broadcast around the world.

But as society began to question traditional gender roles and challenge the way women are portrayed in media and entertainment, the practice came under increasing scrutiny. In 2018, Formula 1 took a bold step by officially ending the use of grid girls. The decision was based on the belief that the sport must evolve to better reflect modern values of inclusivity, respect, and equality.

The announcement sparked widespread debate. Many praised it as a progressive move – one that sent a strong message about Formula 1’s willingness to grow beyond outdated traditions. Supporters argued that the role of grid girls, while often filled by women who participated willingly, reinforced a narrow view of women’s involvement in motorsport – as passive figures existing to enhance the visual appeal, rather than active participants in the sport’s success.

Critics of the decision, however, claimed it was unnecessary and even patronizing. Some felt it took away a platform and income source from women who had made a career in modeling or promotional work. Others viewed it as a loss of harmless tradition in an attempt to be politically correct.

But the shift wasn’t just about removal – it was about replacement with something more meaningful. Formula 1 introduced the “Grid Kids” initiative, inviting young karting talents and aspiring drivers to take the place of grid girls. These children, selected by local motorsport clubs, now get the chance to stand alongside their heroes on the grid. The initiative is designed to inspire the next generation and reflect a more accurate picture of the sport’s values –



competition, ambition, and diversity. This move also aligned with Formula 1's broader efforts to promote inclusion across all areas of the sport. Programs like the F1 Academy and initiatives from teams such as Mercedes' "Accelerate 25" and Ferrari's Driver Academy now provide platforms for women to grow as engineers, strategists, mechanics, and drivers.

The impact of this cultural shift is also being felt among fans. With a growing female fanbase, particularly among younger generations,

Formula 1 is no longer just a sport for the few—it's becoming a space where more people feel seen, represented, and welcome. Social media, documentaries like *Drive to Survive*, and grassroots motorsport programs have opened new entry points into a world that once seemed closed off.

In today's paddock, the presence of women in key roles – from race engineers like Ruth Buscombe and strategists like Hannah Schmitz to executives like Susie Wolff and Claire Williams – proves that progress

is not only possible, but already underway. The abolition of grid girls may have been symbolic, but it was also practical: a clear message that women belong in Formula 1 not for how they look, but for what they contribute.

This cultural shift, though still evolving, continues to shape the future of the sport. It reminds us that tradition is not always sacred – and that sometimes, letting go of the past is the first step toward a better, more inclusive future. ★

A STEP TOWARDS EQUALITY IN MOTORSPORT



FORMULA 1 AS A TRAVEL DESTINATION

A race weekend in Monaco will always top the bucket list for a F1 fan – for its storied history, high-octane glamour, and distinctive street circuit.

TEXT ARATI MENON &
ZAHRA SURYA DARMA



In 2024, over 6.5 million fans attended 24 Grand Prix around the world, making it the biggest year yet for motorsport, according to recent F1 findings. “We’ve seen a 50% growth in bookings in the space of three years,” says Simon Mawdsley, who cofounded Grand Prix Grand Tours, a company that sells motorsport travel experiences ranging from tick-ets to all-access packages.

Data from Nielsen Sports shows that F1 is now the most popular yearly sporting series, reaching a total audience of 750 million, with the fastest category of growth being women ages 16 to 24. “When we founded the business back in 2016, roughly 65% of all inquiries were from men,” says Mawdsley. “The numbers are now roughly equal between male and female inquiries – and the age of the average guest has fallen significantly.”

While nothing will surpass the thrill of the sport itself, the cultural associations have lent it a sheen of glamour, not to mention turned drivers and team principals into superstars.

There’s perhaps no more glamorous race on any calendar than the Monaco Grand Prix – the crown jewel of the racing season, with its distinctive circuit of narrow roads and a landscape filled with fast cars, superyachts, and more billionaires than there are square meters in the city-state.

It doesn’t stop with Monaco, either. “Formula 1 isn’t just a sport; it’s a global passport,” says Tiggy Valen, host of the F1 podcast Paddock Project. “You can soak in the glamour of Monaco from a yacht-lined harbor, or stroll through the tree-lined pathways of Notre Dame Island in Montreal before lights out...F1 turns travel into something cinematic.”

Mawdsley says more and more of Grand Prix Grand Tours’ clients are looking to destination races, such as Qatar or Singapore, and wrapping the event into a longer luxury trip. The Middle East, in particular, is very popular for its safety, family-friendliness, and quality of services, he says. “It’s not difficult to see the attraction.”

This year, more fans than ever will want a ringside seat to the action, including several new driver pairings such as Hamilton’s debut with Scuderia Ferrari – and a potential shake-up to the leaderboard. That energy will only mount in 2026, as F1 adds a new American team, Cadillac, to the grid, and rolls out major technical changes including sustainability regulations. There are even hints at new race locations, including the rumored move of the Spanish Grand Prix from Barcelona to Madrid.



»Formula 1 isn't just a sport; it's a global passport«

The best races to travel for

Monaco

The Monaco Grand Prix is synonymous with glamour. Widely regarded as the most iconic and prestigious race on the F1 calendar, it's a bucket-list race for motor-sport fans, old and new. Held since 1929, the race features a circuit that weaves through the streets of Monte Carlo, where yachts line the harbor and A-listers, royals, and celebrities gather to watch.

Singapore

Held on the streets of the Marina Bay area, F1's first night race of the year comes with a breathtaking skyline backdrop, with the towering skyscrapers and illuminated cityscape creating a seriously mesmerizing atmosphere.

Mexico City

The Mexico City GP is one of the most unique in the calendar. The race weekend often coincides with Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead), meaning the city is alive with colorful decorations, skull motifs, and traditional celebrations. Beyond the race, expect thriving street food, world-class restaurants, and deep cultural heritage.

Montreal

According to Paddock Project's Valen, Montreal is one of the most exciting races to travel for, because it transforms into an F1 playground, with "Old Town buzzing late into the night and Notre Dame Island offering one of the most scenic walks to a racetrack anywhere in the world."



Getting tickets to Formula 1 races

If you're looking to experience a Formula 1 race in person, know that it takes some planning. Tickets typically go on sale six to nine months in advance; however, some races are more in demand than others, so they can sell out quickly – book as early as possible to secure your preferred seating. Prices also vary significantly by race, with the Hungarian GP starting at just \$42, while the São Paulo GP kicks off at \$2,500.

There are several options for purchasing tickets, but the most straightforward approach is to buy directly from the circuit or event promoter. For instance, if you're planning to attend the British Grand Prix, the Silverstone website is your best bet. The official Formula 1 Ticket Store also sells tickets, though prices may be slightly higher as it operates as a third party. If you're looking for VIP access, exclusive hospitality packages like the Paddock Club and F1 Garage – Formula 1's most premium offering – can be secured through F1 Experiences. There are also travel specialists like Grand Prix Grand Tours who have a team of experts providing a spectrum of services from grandstand packages to an all-areas type of hospitality. And if you've racked up your Marriott Bonvoy points, you can bid for exclusive access to select races this season.

Do watch out for unverified third-party resellers as they could come with risks, including potential counterfeits or inflated prices. It's always best to purchase from official sources.

How to plan a trip around the races

Go for the race, stay for the city! On track, you'll find a variety of food trucks and brand activations to explore, along with exclusive access to the F1 Academy paddock at select races, where you can get up close to the cars and meet the drivers. But the experience goes beyond race day, so plan a trip around it. Grand Prix Grand Tours' Simon Mawdsley's advice? "Don't do it on a budget. Treat it as a holiday, and spend a few days either side of the event taking in the sights, sounds, and smells that the host city has to offer." Valen agrees, saying: "I've paired the Austrian Grand Prix with a day in Vienna's museums; the Mexico City GP with the best street art I've ever seen; and the Las Vegas GP with late-night blackjack."



What to pack to a Formula 1 race

Attending a Formula 1 race is an unforgettable experience, but with long days, big crowds, and unpredictable weather, it's important to come prepared. To make the most of your race weekend, here are a few essentials to bring along for comfort, convenience, and an overall smoother experience:

Comfortable walking shoes

Race circuits are expansive so expect to be doing a lot of walking. A trusted pair of sneakers will keep you comfortable.

Portable power banks

With all the photos, videos, and live updates, your phone battery will drain quickly. A power bank ensures you stay connected without worrying about a dead battery.

Sunscreen

Remember that some grandstands are uncovered, and with race days lasting for hours, it's crucial to protect your skin from the sun with a high-SPF sunscreen.

Sunglasses

Bright sunlight and glare from the track can be intense. A good pair of sunglasses will help you enjoy the race without straining your eyes. ★



Ear protection

F1 cars are very loud and if you're planning to bring young children, we recommend bringing earplugs or noise-cancelling headphones.

Raincoat

The weather can be unpredictable, so a lightweight raincoat will keep you dry without obstructing anyone's view.

Binoculars

If you're sitting far from the track or want a closer look at pit lane action, binoculars are a must.



AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX
MELBOURNE
MARCH 14-16



CHINESE GRAND PRIX
SHANGHAI
MARCH 21-23



JAPANESE GRAND PRIX
SUZUKA
APRIL 4-16



MIAMI GRAND PRIX
MAY 2-4



EMILIA-ROMAGNA GRAND PRIX
IMOLA
MAY 16-18



MONACO GRAND PRIX
MAY 23-25



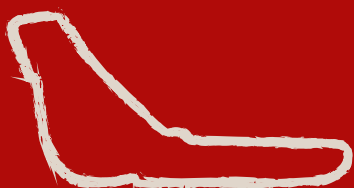
AUSTRIAN GRAND PRIX
SPIELBERG
JUNE 27-29



BRITISH GRAND PRIX
SILVERSTONE
JULY 4-6



BELGIAN GRAND PRIX
SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS
JULY 25-27



ITALIAN GRAND PRIX
MONZA
SEPTEMBER 5-7



AZERBAIJAN GRAND PRIX
BAKU
SEPTEMBER 19-21



SINGAPORE GRAND PRIX
OCTOBER 3-5



BRAZILIAN GRAND PRIX
SÃO PAULO
NOVEMBER 7-9



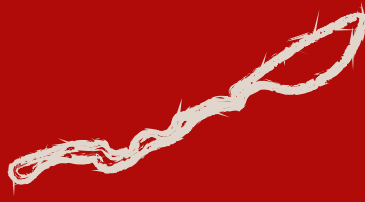
LAS VEGAS GRAND PRIX
LAS VEGAS
NOVEMBER 20-22



QATAR GRAND PRIX
LUSAIL
NOVEMBER 28-30



BAHRAIN GRAND PRIX
SAKHIR
APRIL 11-13



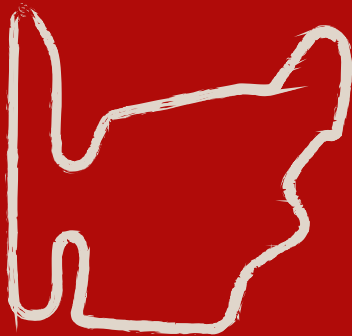
SAUDI ARABIAN GRAND PRIX
JEDDAH
APRIL 18-20



SPANISH GRAND PRIX
BARCELONA
MAY 30 - JUNE 1



CANADIAN GRAND PRIX
MONTREAL
JUNE 13-15



HUNGARIAN GRAND PRIX
BUDAPEST
AUGUST 1-3



DUTCH GRAND PRIX
ZANDVOORT
AUGUST 29-31



UNITED STATES GRAND PRIX
AUSTIN
OCTOBER 17-19



MEXICAN GRAND PRIX
MEXICO CITY
OCTOBER 24-26



ABU DHABI GRAND PRIX
YAS MARINA
DECEMBER 5-7

2025



FORMULA 1 PLAYLIST

1. Sports Car - Tate McRae 
2. Starboy - The Weeknd, Daft Punk
3. Baianá - Bakermat
4. AUS23 (1:1) - Charles Leclerc
5. Va Va Voom - Nicki Minaj 
6. Way Down We Go - KALEO
7. Bailando - Enrique Iglesias 
8. Life is a Highway - Rascal Flatts
9. Viva la Vida - Coldplay 
10. Smooth Operator - Sade
11. Memories - David Guetta, Kid Cudi
12. Pipe - Christina Aguilera, XNDA
13. Getaway Car - Taylor Swift
14. Tokyo Drift - Teriyaki Boyz 
15. The Chain - Fleetwood Mac
16. Money, Money, Money - ABBA
17. Skyfall - Adele 



» YOUNG WOMEN ARE OVERTAKING THE
F1 FAN BASE. I KNOW EXACTLY WHY. «



★ ★

If you watched the first race of the season, the Australian Grand Prix, you may have noticed something different about the crowd. And no, I'm not talking about the fact that everyone looked like a drowned rat (although we'll get to that).

The stands were absolutely packed with young women. The historically male-dominated sport has had a complete cultural reset, with women now making up 41 per cent of F1's global fan base. And in Australia? Sixty-five per cent of new F1 fans are female.

We're not just joining the party – we're taking over.

It's no longer a surprise to see groups of women discussing tyre strategies, following driver statistics, or passionately debating who's had the best qualifying lap. Social media has also played a huge role – TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter are full of fan accounts, race-day fits, and analytical breakdowns of each Grand Prix, often led by women who are just as informed and passionate as any long-time follower of the sport. This isn't just about surface-level engagement. This is about real passion, real knowledge, and real fandom – and it's reshaping what being an F1 fan looks like.

As a woman who just attended her first Grand Prix, I can tell you that the women at these events aren't just sitting around in merch taking selfies – although I did do both of those things (don't tell my mum that my Red Bull jacket was \$300).

While sitting standing in the grandstand for literally hours (1pm-5pm to be exact), my friends and I couldn't help but notice that we were some of the only people who were put the entire time. The men

around us? They were doing hot laps of their own, coming and going as they pleased.

Meanwhile, we were screaming our lungs out every time a car spun on the track, we were yelling every single driver's name, we were watching the body language of all the team principals and engineers, and we stayed focused for the entire duration of the event.

At one point, I even heard a woman behind me explaining to her boyfriend the difference between DRS and ERS. I mean... the dedication.

★

Even when the heavens opened up and it started absolutely bucketing down, we didn't move. Sorry to our carefully applied makeup and hair, but this was important. It's the kind of dedication that would make any seasoned fan proud – and it's happening all around the world, not just in Australia.

But we can't ignore the elephant in the paddock – the serious lack of women actually competing in the sport.

Despite the massive turnout of women in the crowd, F1 still has a long way to go when it comes to inclusion.



★ ★

»WE'RE NOT JUST JOINING THE PARTY – WE'RE TAKING OVER.«

★ ★

The last time a female driver attempted to participate in a Formula 1 race was in 1992 when Giovanna Amati entered three Grands Prix.

Since then, Susie Wolff has been the most recent woman to participate in an official F1 session, taking part in a practice session at the 2014 British Grand Prix as a test driver for Williams.

Initiatives like F1 Academy are starting to change that, offering young female drivers a clearer pathway through the junior ranks, but it's still early days. Representation matters, and while seeing women in team roles, engineering positions, and the paddock is a step forward, there's still a noticeable absence on the starting grid. The hope is that this new wave of interest – this generation of engaged, informed, and passionate female fans – will help create the demand and momentum necessary to finally break that barrier. After all, the passion is clearly there – both in the stands and behind the wheel. The next step is opportunity.

Of course, we can probably thank Netflix's *Drive to Survive* for this surge in female viewers. The show has done an incredible job of showing the extreme skill it takes to be in this sport, as well as the drama that unfolds behind the scenes.

But what the show has really done is make the sport more accessible. It's broken down the complex technical jargon and focused on the stories and personalities – something that resonates with everyone, regardless of gender.

What's most interesting is that it's not just Netflix – this shift has been supported by a growing media presence, podcasts like *Fast and Curious*, YouTube explainers,

F1 TikTok creators, and brands that are finally recognising the value in engaging with female audiences. From merch tailored for women to female-focused fan events, the sport is slowly becoming more inclusive. It feels like we're not being talked over anymore – we're being talked to. And more importantly, we're talking back.

Still, despite all the growth and positive energy, being a female fan isn't always easy. There's still the occasional eye-roll when

we show excitement, the patronising quiz on whether we really know the sport, or the assumption that we're just there for the "hot drivers" and not the actual racing. But here's the thing – we have proven over and over again that we are here because we genuinely love the sport, not because we have something to prove. The knowledge, loyalty, and support we bring to the Formula 1 community is unmatched. And with each race, each weekend, each season, we continue to shift the perception of who a "real" fan is.

There's also something incredibly powerful about the community that's forming around this cultural shift. Women are finding each other online and at race weekends, bonding over race strategies, memes, or their favorite team radio moments. F1 fandom has become a space for connection

– a shared language that transcends borders, languages, and time zones. Whether you're watching from home at 2AM in your pajamas or screaming trackside with your face painted in Ferrari red, there's a sense of belonging that's growing stronger every race weekend.

The truth is, Formula 1 is changing – not just in the pit lane or the paddock, but in the stands, on social media, and around dinner tables where women are leading the conversations. The engines are still loud, the politics are still messy, and the championship battles are still thrilling. But now, the fan base looks a little different. It looks like all of us.





A photograph of Susie Wolff, a professional racing driver, standing outdoors at a racetrack. She is wearing a bright yellow and orange racing suit with various sponsor logos, including 'DNE Fiber' and 'Stan-Frost'. She is holding a racing helmet with a white and blue design. The background is a blurred racetrack scene with other vehicles and spectators.

»WE ARE NOT HERE BECAUSE
WE ARE WOMEN, WE ARE HERE
BECAUSE WE BELONG.«

– Susie Wolff