

## F1 PRE SEASON

Sixty four hours. That's how long F1 teams had for testing their 2019 cars at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya before the start of the season. So who made best use of that time and who was left wanting more? With the help of data, we rank the teams from 10 to 1 ahead of the season-opening Australian Grand Prix...

### 10th – Williams

In a word – poor. Starting 2 days late, and with less than ½ the laps of top teams completed.

**End of season prediction: 10th**

**Drivers:**

**Robert Kubica (Age 34),**

It is eight years since Robert Kubica – once rated as a future F1 world champion – suffered multiple injuries in a rallying crash and his hopes of fulfilling that potential faded. His return for Williams, in 2019, ranks among the sport's most inspiring and unlikely comebacks.

**George Russell (UK) (Age 21)**

He's the driver with the motto: "If in doubt, go flat out".

A brilliant baseline speed has served George Russell well as he totted up the titles on his way to Formula 1. The Briton stormed to the 2017 GP3 crown and delivered the 2018 Formula 2 crown under immense pressure. A refusal to cede ground to his rivals - and commitment to a tricky pass – underpins Russell's winning mentality.

### 9th - Racing Point (formerly Force India)

Bought last year by Lance Stroll's billionaire father

Car was campaigned in pre-season in very basic format – focus being (as in previous years) on reliability . The car is set to get a big facelift for Melbourne, with plenty of new parts, so should improve.

**End of season prediction: 8<sup>th</sup>**

**Drivers: Sergio Perez and Lance Stroll**

### 8<sup>th</sup> - McLaren

Smooth. That would be a good way to describe McLaren's pre-season,

**End of season prediction: 7<sup>th</sup>**

**Drivers:**

**Carlos Sainz**

**Lando Norris (UK) Age 19,**

Youngest winner of the competitive Formula 3 European series at age 17. An outing in the Daytona 24 Hours saw him turn on the pace in changeable conditions and impress his illustrious team mate Fernando Alonso.

### 7th – Alfa Romeo (formerly Sauber)

Add in a closer relationship with Ferrari and more influence from Alfa Romeo and you'd expect them to get stronger as the season goes on.

**End of season prediction: 6th**

**Drivers :**

**Kimi Raikkonen**

### **Antonio Giovinazzi (Italy) Age 26**

The *pilota* from Puglia can punch his way through the pack and pull off a plucky pass. He showcased this natural racing acumen during a blistering 2016 GP2 campaign where he finished a close runner-up to team mate Pierre Gasly. Has had a stint as a Ferrari reserve driver after a poor stint as a stand in driver at Sauber in 2017. The notion of a home-grown racer with the iconic Alfa Romeo brand is irresistible to many - now Giovinazzi has to prove he's the next Italian for the job.

### **6th - Toro Rosso**

Despite some impressive turns of speed, their long run pace was less impressive, as they sit around second-to-last in the pecking order.

**End of season prediction: 9<sup>th</sup>**

**Drivers: Daniil Kvyat**

### **Alexander Albon - About to turn 23**

Born in London but racing under the flag of Thailand, Alexander Albon's first word was said to be in Italian – and that word was Ferrari! Despite being great pals with George Russell, Albon left the friendship trackside as he took the F2 2018 title fight right down to the wire to come a very close 2nd.

### **5th – Haas**

They use a lot of parts from Ferrari, who are currently the pace-setters.

There were reliability niggles though, with Haas bringing out the red flag on several occasions during testing. So there is work to do if Haas are going to fulfil the potential of a car that looks intriguingly quick.

**End of season prediction: 5th**

**Drivers: Roman Grosjean and Kevin Magnussen**

### **4th - Red Bull**

This was not a terrible pre-season for Red Bull by any means, but it was not something worth writing home about either.

**End of season prediction: 3<sup>rd</sup>**

**Drivers: Max Verstappen & Pierre Gasly**

### **3rd – Renault**

You may be surprised by Renault's positioning in our ranking, but there is evidence to support our thinking. While testing chat was centred around Mercedes, Ferrari and Red Bull, Renault flew under the radar, quietly getting on with their programme – largely troublefree - and ticking all their boxes.

**End of season prediction: 4th**

**Drivers: Daniel Ricciardo and Niko Hulkenberg**

## **2nd – Mercedes**

### **End of season prediction: 2nd**

It says a lot about Mercedes' dominance in recent years that looking like only the second-best team after pre-season testing is seen as something of a disappointment.

**Drivers: Lewis Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas**

## **1st – Ferrari**

On pure pace, Ferrari's SF90 emerged as the fastest car in pre-season testing. It was quick straight out of the blocks and enjoyed an upward curve in performance throughout the eight days to end pre-season on top of the pile. The SF90 is clearly quick. Could reliability be their weak point in 2019?

### **End of season prediction: 1st**

**Drivers: Sebastian Vettel and Charles Leclerc**

### **Changes to this years rules:**

Less complex wing/aerodynamics to produce less rear turbulence to try to make overtaking easier  
Tyres specs are softer to make strategies more interesting  
Minimum weight for drivers rises to 80 kgs to stop lighter/smaller drivers from being advantaged (see the new "beefed up" Hamilton!!)

### **Changes to team arrangements:**

The emergence of 'B Teams': The alliance between Ferrari and Haas, Mercedes and Racing Point, Red Bull and Toro Rosso have been strengthened with sharing of parts reaching maximum allowed

Renault boss Cyril Abiteboul laments this change, which makes it harder for individual teams such as Renault, McLaren & Mercedes to compete. He believes that this "arms race" if unchecked it will change F1 forever, and not for the better. He doesn't think the spending cap to be introduced in 2021 will help as the allied teams can split development tasks

### **Formula 1 to focus on 2 key areas for 2019**

The first is to build not just on our technological leadership, but the incredible achievements in efficiency and sustainability for our cars and hybrid engines. The V6 hybrid turbo engines are a feat of engineering that promotes efficiency

Second, to continue to emphasise that Formula 1 is a sport for everyone. That means continuing to emphasise opportunities for females on and off the track and continue to expand as a global sport in every part of the world.

### **The new Schumacher**

He's long been tipped for the top, but it's emerged Mick Schumacher could make his Formula 1 test debut as early as Bahrain. The 19-year-old German, son of seven-time F1 champion Michael, is a member of the Ferrari Driver Academy and the reigning European F3 champion. This year he competes in F2, making him an ideal candidate to participate in one of F1 young driver tests occurring after the Bahraini and Spanish GPs.

### **What's Fernando doing?**

Fernando Alonso has confirmed he would say yes to a Formula 1 comeback if offered a leading drive. He will tackle the Indianapolis 500 this year as he seeks the 'Triple Crown', having won LeMans last year. "I'll do the remaining WEC races and Le Mans again, but my head is in Indianapolis and trying to win that race," he said. "I know it's the hardest of the three in the triple crown because I grew up in F1 and if you have a good car, you can win the championship. He is also continuing to do some test/development driving for McLaren

### **What's Nico Rosberg doing? Nico's gone electric**

Former Formula 1 world champion Nico Rosberg says it "wouldn't make sense" for F1 to continue using petrol engines in the future, as the automotive world begins to pivot towards electric power and other fuel sources in an attempt to clean up the planet's atmosphere. "If the whole world is selling electric cars, or hydrogen-powered cars, Formula 1 can't still be running on petrol engines, that wouldn't make sense," Rosberg told the BBC. "At some point they will have to switch I believe." Rosberg has championed eco-friendly racing for some time and is a minority stakeholder in the all-electric Formula E. F1's motorsport director Ross Brawn has suggested that the pinnacle of motorsport could follow the suit of FE in the future.