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ECONOMIC NEWS AND ANALYSIS FROM THE RACING WORLD



Gascoyne leaves Toyota

Mike Gascoyne has left Panasonic Toyota Racing with immediate effect following a fundamental difference of opinion with the top management of the team about the way the team should develop. Our spies tell us that the problem which led to Gascoyne's departure was related to a clash of opinions with Yoshiaki Kinoshita, the General Manager of Toyota's Motor Sport Division and the Executive Vice President of Toyota Motorsport. He is the second most senior executive involved in the racing program, under Toyota Motor Corporation Executive Vice President Kazuo Okamoto, a Toyota main board member.

Kinoshita has been involved in Toyota's racing activities since 1989 when he first worked on the World Rally Championship program. He was also involved in the Le Mans program of 1992-1993 and then from 1996 to 2001 was in America in charge of the Toyota CART program. Since 2004 Kinoshita has been in charge of all technical developments in Toyota motorsport activities around the world and since last year has had an executive role in the team. Gascoyne joined the team in 2003 and so his recruitment pre-dated the active involvement of Kinoshita.

The split is indicative of the clash of cultures between the corporate world and the motor racing fraternity. Gascoyne has always been one of the most extreme examples of an aggressive get-up-and-go engineer who is not frightened to speak his mind in corporate circles. His arrival at the team made a significant difference and his departure is seen in F1 circles as a victory of corporate minds against what is needed in racing.

Gascoyne's replacement will be Pascal Vasselon. He is currently General Manager (Car Design and Development) which is not a good sign as Vasselon has spent most of his career working in a big company atmosphere at Michelin. The only way to judge who is right is to watch results but in F1 circles there are fears that the management will not drive the project forward as Gascoyne has been doing. In terms of design it will make little difference as there are three design groups in place: two headed by John Litjens and Mark Tatham which deal with the next cars, and the third headed by David Nielsen looks at the longer-term developments. The aerodynamics department is now under the control of Jason Somerville.

Burgess leaves MF1

Adrian Burgess, the sporting director of MF1 Racing for the last year, has departed the team. Burgess joined the team at the start of last season from the Carlin Motorsport Nissan World Series team, working alongside Trevor Carlin, who was named sporting director after Eddie Jordan sold the team to Alex Shnaider. This did not last long and in June Carlin resigned and Burgess moved from the role of general manager to become sporting director.

Burgess has now decided that enough is enough and we hear that two other Carlin recruits engineer Bradley Joyce and chief mechanic Ricky Taylor have also gone with him. His departure means that the job of sporting director will now be shared between team manager Andy Stevenson and chief race and test engineer Dominic Harlow.

The departure of Burgess is another blow to the team and a sign that things are not getting any better at MF1 Racing and if there is not an input of money soon, the engineering team - which has so far remained much the same as in Jordan days - will start to break up and the value of the team will collapse still further. Team owner Alex Shnaider says that he is not going to sell the team but we hear that there is a price tag of around \$60m if there is a buyer out there mad enough to pay. Unfortunately,

without more money the value of the team is going to continue to slide. At the moment the team is being funded largely by the drivers and by money from the TV fund. Shnaider and managing-director Colin Kolles continue to try to find money for the team from Russia although there seems to be little interest in F1 in business circles in that country. There may be companies that are interested in the sport but Shnaider has thus far been unable to convince them to back him. It is quite possible that when the FIA decides which teams should be allowed an entry for 2008 MF1 will not have as impressive a dossier as some of the aspirants and being turned down for an entry for 2008 would wipe out much of the value left in the team. Thus, if Shnaider is worried about this possibility, now would be a very good time to swallow his pride and sell. That would probably entail a big loss on the money he has invested but would avoid further costs later in the year.

There are whispers around that Craig Pollock may be lining himself up to buy the old Jordan operation and set about building up a stronger team. It is not clear from where the financial backing for that would come but Pollock is well-connected and should have learned from his mistakes in the past at BAR.

Pollock is known to have been one of the teams that put in an entry for 2008 with the FIA.

Saunt leaves Renault

Red Bull Racing is not going to be getting many Christmas cards this year as it continues to lure away top people from rival teams as it builds up its engineering team for the future. The recent hiring of McLaren's chief aerodynamicist Peter Prodromou followed the recruitment last year of Adrian Newey and a number of other key people over the winter months. RBR has now lured away Renault's head of manufacturing Keith Saunt, who has been the man behind the industrial might of Renault F1 in recent years.

Saunt is an F1 veteran having started his career with Team Lotus in 1987. He moved on to Benetton and gradually in the 1990s took on more and more of an operational role. He left the team for a while but returned in 2001 when Renault bought Benetton and he has been in charge of manufacturing ever since. He will join Red Bull in six months as head of operations.

In recent months Red Bull Racing has taken on Renault chief mechanic Jonathan Wheatley and designer Rob Marshall. It has also hired Toyota race engineer Humphrey Corbett and BAR's Kieran Pilbeam.

Further hirings are expected in the weeks ahead.

Damon Hill and the BRDC

Damon Hill has been nominated as a potential new President for the British Racing Drivers' Club. The election will take place on April 28. It is not yet clear whether Hill will face any opposition for the job but he has been nominated by board members Jackie Oliver and Mike Knight, and his selection has been unanimously supported by the board of directors. This however does not guarantee no opposition as the board is unpopular in some circles for its recent dealings with the property development company St Modwen. The plan to lease the track to St Modwen and develop the site to ensure that the British Grand Prix continues in the long-term now appears to have been dropped because of opposition from within the membership but no alternative has yet emerged from those who opposed the plan and one is led to the conclusion that this is because there is no plan. Bernie Ecclestone has made it very clear on several occasions that unless the track is upgraded the British Grand Prix may move on but Ecclestone's problem is that there does not appear to be a viable alternative to Silverstone as no-one will pay the fees that he is asking. There is also supposed to be a clause in the contract between the FIA and Formula One Management that certain Grands Prix will have protected status and Britain is supposed to be one of these but it is not clear how the FIA would enforce such a clause. The loss of the British GP would be a blow to Silverstone although some BRDC members seem to think that the circuit could survive quite well without it. Others argue that Silverstone would be committing suicide if it drops the link with F1

Hill has the international profile to be seen as an ambassador for British motorsport and it is hoped that his candidature will help to improve the image of the BRDC which tends to be seen as a club of old racing drivers rather than one which is very attractive to the youngsters of today.

No meeting for the Paper Tiger F1 teams

The 22 organizations which have put in entries for the 2008 FIA Formula 1 World Championship - including the 11 existing teams - will not be meeting with the FIA as had been planned. The meeting was due to take place at the Heathrow Hilton on April 10 but was called off once the number of teams entered had been announced and that message reported in the media. It was never very clear what the meeting was going to discuss and the conclusion that one might reach from this was that the image of 22 teams was more important than the substance.

The reality, of course, is that the majority of the 11 unknown teams are not a very serious group. Some of those who put in entries do not own a racing team, others have the hardware to run GP2 teams and the ambition to be in F1 but they do not have the money to pay for it all. Ironically, the candidate with the highest number of ducks in a row is probably Paul Stoddart who has the experience, the team headquarters, the staff and even cars and engines to be able to have a team up and running in a few weeks. It is hard to imagine that the FIA will be keen on letting such a vocal critic of the federation back into F1 that easily. Of the rest most can talk a good game but would disappear without trace if there was serious money to be paid.

The FIA is to decide who gets the entries based on who has the best qualifications and there does not seem to be any kind of appeals process involved. Anyone who left out who wants to be in will have to buy one of the 12 teams.

The important point in the entry process is that it is supposed to be a form of commitment from the supposedly rebel teams. For the teams vying for the final available "franchise" the commitment is minimal. Most are well aware that they will not be chosen and if they are they would probably have to sell the franchise rather than try to run a team.

The actual wording of the entry document says that a team undertakes "to participate in each and every event" in the 2008 World Championship and agrees to be bound by the provisions of the International Sporting Code, the 2008 Formula 1 Technical Regulations and the 2008 Formula 1 Sporting Regulations.

In addition there was an undertaking to pay the entry fee no later than November 1, 2007.

There is no commitment beyond that and anyone signing up could easily depart if at some later stage it felt the need to quit. Offering the team for \$1 to an ambitious newcomer would allow any team to get off the hook.

EU attacks tobacco cheaters

The European Commission is going after member countries who are failing to comply with EU tobacco legislation. The commission has formally notified the Czech Republic, Italy, Hungary and Spain that they are not in compliance with the EU Tobacco Advertising Directive of 2003 as they have allowed exemptions from the tobacco sponsorship ban in their national legislation, which they are not allowed to do.

Spain has passed legislation which allows tobacco advertising for three years for motor racing events; Hungary has allowed an exemption from the ban on tobacco advertising under special circumstances which related to economically important events for Hungary. Italy and the Czech Republic have also allowed tobacco sponsorship to continue in certain circumstances. The Commission says that the four countries must bring their legislation into line with the directive or face punishment.

In October 2005, the Commission warned 12 member states that they had not given the necessary details about their national legislation regarding tobacco. Germany and Luxembourg have still failed to comply with that demand and are now in the process of being taken to court as a result.

BMW has a good idea

One of the great criticisms in recent years in Formula 1 is that the teams do not do enough for the race fans. BMW is now challenging that idea with a new display that will be seen at six races this year which will give the fans a chance to feel what life is like in the F1 pits and paddock, the inner sanctum which fans are never allowed to visit.

The answer is to create a virtual experience and BMW has come up with "The Pit Lane Park", an area in which fans can experience what it is like to be in the thick of the action with a pitlane and garage area set out just as it is at the races. Inside the garages there will be a selection of cars, some race-ready, others stripped down allowing fans to see and even touch parts of the cars to see just how different they are to regular machinery. There will be the opportunity for the fans to sit in an F1 cockpit and be photographed in BMW racing overalls and, of course, pit stop challenges, quizzes and driving simulators.

At each of the races the drivers will make appearances and answer questions from the fans and there will be a merchandising area attached.

BMW will debut the display at the Nurburgring and it will reappear at the Barcelona, Silverstone, Montreal, Monza and Shanghai races.

Super Aguri acquires Menard composite equipment

Super Aguri F1 has acquired all the equipment and staff of the Menard Engineering Limited composite division at Leaffield and has leased the area in which the department is housed until the end of 2008. MEL has been doing all of Super Aguri's composite work in recent months but the deal was felt to be necessary to secure access to the autoclaves whenever they are needed. MEL has commissioned a second composite facility on the site and will continue to offer composite manufacturing to its other customers, which include firms in the military and aerospace world and in movies.

As part of the deal six MEL employees are joining Super Aguri F1, a company which was established in 2003 when John Menard purchased the TWR Engineering Group and the premises of the Arrows F1 team.

Although this deal would seem to tie the new F1 team to Leaffield, it is always possible that autoclaves can be moved elsewhere at a later date. However, with most of the staff coming from the immediate area it is less likely that the team will move to be near the Honda Racing F1 team in Brackley in the near future.

It is perhaps worth noting that a new planning application was recently submitted for the development of a new business park at Brackley Sawmills, in the north of the town. At the moment there are no signs that this will house any F1 activities but it is zoned for light engineering and research and development activities.

WHISPER WHISPER WHISPER

■ Eurosport has announced that it will be screening at least five kart events this year including the World Championship at Angerville in France on October 1 as part of its deal with the FIA for the media and marketing rights to the 2006 CIK-FIA World and European Karting Championships. The agreement, which was made in December, will increase Eurosport's involvement in the sport as it has a similar agreement for the FIA World Touring Car Championship.

■ Rahal Letterman Racing has named Jeff Simmons as Paul Dana's replacement in the Ethanol Panoz-Honda. Simmons has enjoyed considerable success in the IRL Indy Pro Series in the recent years, winning seven races and finishing runner-up in 2003 and 2005 but he had not been able to find the backing to break into the IRL. The 29-year-old Connecticut driver took part in the 2004 Indianapolis 500 with Mo Nunn Racing.

■ The International Speedway Corporation has revealed its financial results for the first quarter of 2006 which see revenues up from \$179.4m in 2005 to \$193.9m this year. The impressive increase in performance is chiefly due to an increase in the TV rights fees for the Nextel Cup and Busch Series races. In addition to that, corporate sponsorship and hospitality revenues are also up. The quarter is a busy one for ISC with the Daytona 24 Hours, the Daytona Speed Weeks and the 500, in addition to a Nextel Cup race at the California Speedway.

■ The Lloyds TSB Insurance company has signed a deal to be the title sponsor to the British F3 International Series for 2006. The championship has not had a series sponsor in recent years since the end of a deal with Green Flag in 2002. Previous series sponsors since the national championship began Vandervell (1977-1980), Marlboro (1981-1985), Lucas (1986-1989) and Autosport (1997-1999).

■ Our spies in America report that communications magnate Rick Weidinger is planning to enter a team in the Indianapolis 500 under the "We the People" banner seen this year on his A1 Team USA car. The A1 car has been run this year by Dave Price Racing from its headquarters in Great Bookham, Surrey, in England, and has run drivers Bryan Herta and Phil Giebler. Price is not expected to be involved in the US operation and with Herta racing in the 500 for Andretti Green Racing it is likely that Weidinger will have to look elsewhere for a driver. Scott Sharp, who is director of race operations for A1 Team USA, is also due to run in the 500 for Fernandez Racing in the colors of Delphi. Weidinger ran an Indy Racing League team in 2004 season in partnership with Tom Kelley but sold the team to Tony George at the start of 2005. The team became Vision Racing.

■ Alex Tagliani is to rejoin Team Australia in the Champ Car World Series this year. He will partner Will Power in the Derrick Walker-run operation. The team was in talks with Ryan Briscoe but these failed to come to fruition and so team owner Craig Gore has decided to perpetuate the weird arrangement of Team Australia running a Canadian driver. Briscoe and Gore must have fallen out fairly dramatically as Ryan has decided that he would rather race for A1 Team Australia and in the Holden Racing Team V8 Super Car team in the long distance races at the end of the year rather than racing for Team Australia in Champ Cars.

■ Bob Veith, an Indycar driver who competed in 54 races between 1955 and 1968, has died at the age of 81. Veith won the Indianapolis Rookie of the Year Award in 1956 and went on to compete in 11 Indianapolis 500s, qualifying fourth in 1958. That year he was second at Milwaukee, his best Indycar finish, and in the autumn raced in a Bowes Seal Fast Special at Monza in the Race of Two Worlds, finishing second and third in the first two races but suffering a wheel failure in the third, which put him out of contention overall.

BEHIND THE WHEEL

Stories of the men who have raced in the FIA Formula 1 World Championship

Brian Hart

Hart was trained in airframe and aero-engine design at the De Havilland aircraft company in Hatfield during the late 1950s. The firm had a number of engineers who built and raced their own cars in 750 Motor Club events and Hart was in the thick of it along with the likes of Maurice Philippe, Len Terry and Mike and Frank Costin. In 1958 Mike Costin and Keith Duckworth established Cosworth and Hart, who was racing in Formula Junior, was an early recruit. In the years that followed he worked as a Cosworth development engineer and raced in Formula Junior and sports car events and in 1963 won a Grovewood Award as promising young driver. He moved up to Formula 2 in 1964 and won an impressive victory at Enna, beating Frank Gardner, Paul Hawkins, Peter Revson, Guy Ligier, Mike Spence, Richie Ginther and others. He would remain a Formula 2 star until the end of the 1960s, and in 1967 made his one and only start in the Formula 1 World Championship driving a wooden-chassised Protos F2 car at the Nurburgring when F2 cars were run with the main F1 field. After that Hart went back to F2 and won his last major race for Bob Gerard in the 1969 Rhine Cup at Hockenheim. That year he established Brian Hart Ltd, to service Ford's FVA racing engines. He was soon commissioned to develop Ford products and designed the Ford BDA, which would become the backbone of Ford's rally programs throughout the 1970s. Hart's F2 FVA won the European F2 title in 1971 with Ronnie Peterson and this was followed by Mike Hailwood's title with a BDA. After that, however, BMW and Renault came into F2 and Hart decided to build his own engines, which became winners in 1977 and 1978. At the end of 1978 Ted Toleman agreed to fund Hart and the Toleman-Hart combination dominated F2 in 1980 and so Toleman commissioned Hart to build him a 1.5-liter turbocharged F1 engine for 1981. Hart turbo engines were used throughout the 1980s in F1 - notably by Ayrton Senna in 1984 - but at the end of 1987 the F1 rules changed and Hart did not have the money to build his own engines and so he joined forces with Cosworth to develop the company's DFZ and DFR engines. In 1992 Hart funded his own V10 engine and announced an exclusive deal to supply Jordan Grand Prix in 1993 and 1994. Hart continued to build F1 engines for customers until 1999 when Tom Walkinshaw bought Brian's company. Hart was by then 63 and decided he had had enough and retired to a house in rural France.

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