

On the grid: How they line up for 1998

The new breed of skinny cars with grooved tyres – the biggest single change in design in 15 years – could lead to a much closer title fight. Formula One correspondent *Tony Dodgins* looks at the cars and drivers and predicts a spectacular season ahead

Williams Mecachrome

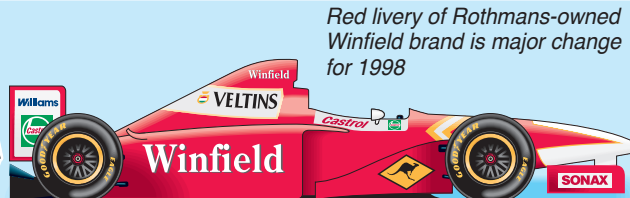
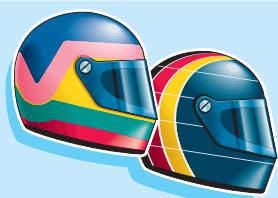
Main sponsor
Winfield

1

Jacques Villeneuve
Canada. Age 26
33 starts, 11 wins
Current World Champion

2

Heinz-Harald Frentzen
Germany. Age 30
65 starts, 1 win



Red livery of Rothmans-owned Winfield brand is major change for 1998

New FW20 is first complete car since chief designer **Adrian Newey** left for McLaren. Engine development may slow without Renault works support. Nevertheless, strong infrastructure will guarantee potent challenge. Expect **Frentzen** to be closer to **Villeneuve** this time around

Ferrari

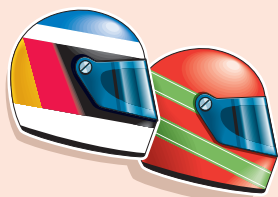
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Marlboro

3

Michael Schumacher
Germany. Age 30
102 starts, 27 wins
World Champion 1994, 1995

4

Eddie Irvine
Britain. Age 32
65 starts, no wins



New F300 is first 'in-house' Maranello chassis for five years

With **Michael Schumacher** on board Ferrari don't need to build the best car, just come close. The team's last world champion was **Jody Scheckter** back in 1979 and new technical group led by **Rory Byrne** and **Ross Brawn** are out to recreate Schuey's Benetton success of 1994-95

Benetton Mecachrome

Main sponsor
Mild Seven

5

Giancarlo Fisichella
Italy. Age 25
25 starts, no wins

6

Alexander Wurz
Austria. Age 24
3 starts, no wins



New B198 is first Benetton from new chief designer Nick Wirth

With new boss **David Richards** at the helm, a talented and determined young driver pairing, the dominant engine of past seasons – albeit without Renault works support now – and Bridgestone tyres, the potential is there for Benetton to win. Much will depend on the new car

McLaren Mercedes

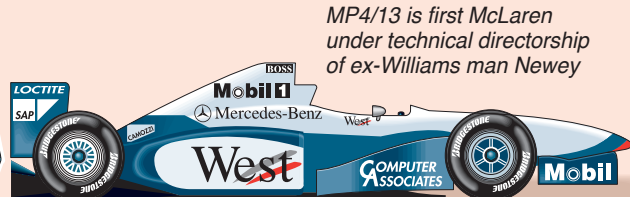
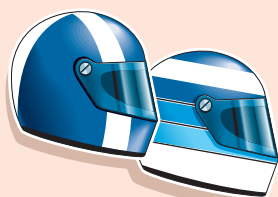
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West

7

David Coulthard
Britain. Age 26
64 starts, 3 wins

8

Mika Hakkinen
Finland. Age 29
96 starts, 1 win



MP4/13 is first McLaren under technical directorship of ex-Williams man Newey

High expectations. The Mercedes V10 is strong, **Hakkinen** is considered to have the natural speed of Schumacher and, with **Coulthard**, forms a highly potent driver pairing. Bridgestone tyres may be a plus and new technical director **Adrian Newey** could be the final piece in the jigsaw

Jordan Mugen Honda

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Benson & Hedges

9

Damon Hill
Britain. Age 37
84 starts, 21 wins
World Champion 1996

10

Ralf Schumacher
Germany. Age 22
17 starts, no wins



B&H/Mastercard gives team best sponsorship base in its seven year history

Eddie Jordan has opted for blend of youth and experience with **Damon Hill** alongside **Ralf Schumacher**. Hill had a trying season in 1997 and will want to reassert himself, but does the fire still burn? Strong Peugeot engines have gone to Prost but Honda input may compensate

Prost Peugeot

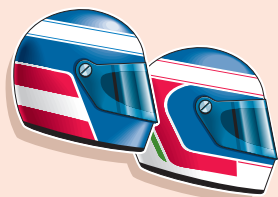
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11

Olivier Panis
France. Age 31
59 starts, 1 win

12

Jarno Trulli
Italy. Age 23
14 starts, no wins



New AP01 the first chassis to owe its designation to team owner Alain Prost

The team has doubled in size over the winter and is in the process of relocating to new factory. Peugeot engines and ex-Renault man **Bernard Dudot** as technical guru are plus points, as could be the Bridgestone tyres. Potential to be a winning team, but perhaps not quite yet

Sauber Petronas

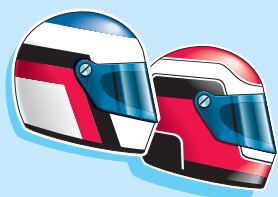
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14

Jean Alesi
France. Age 33
135 starts, 1 win

15

Johnny Herbert
Britain. Age 33
113 starts, 2 wins



Watch for interesting Alesi/Herbert internal battle

Peter Sauber admits that his team needs to expand its technical capability but the potential is there for surprises. The budget is strong, as is the Ferrari-built Petronas engine and Sauber is one of only three teams where both drivers have won races

Arrows Hart

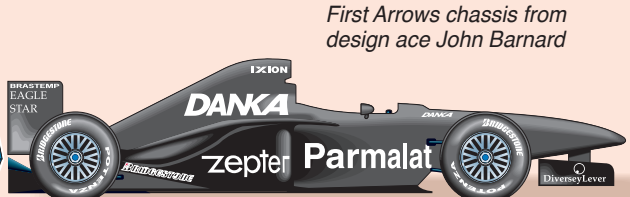
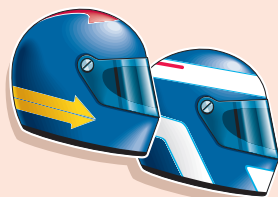
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16

Pedro Diniz
Brazil. Age 27
50 starts, no wins

17

Mika Salo
Finland. Age 31
52 starts, no wins



First Arrows chassis from design ace John Barnard

Difficult to assess. Last season was character-building but progress was made. Expect a good chassis from technical chief **John Barnard** and **Mika Salo** is a more than able replacement for the departed Hill. The team will use **Brian Hart's** newly developed V10 engine

Stewart Ford

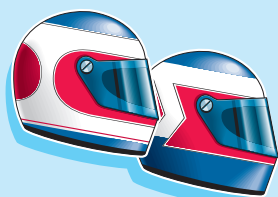
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18

Rubens Barrichello
Brazil. Age 25
81 starts, no wins

19

Jan Magnussen
Denmark. Age 24
18 starts, no wins



If it rains, keep an eye on Barrichello

Designing a new car while running a racing programme is the acid test. Stewart's move to a purpose-built facility will help and Ford are determined to get the job done, but don't expect miracles. **Barrichello** is under-rated and **Magnussen** will be more confident in his second year

Tyrrell Ford

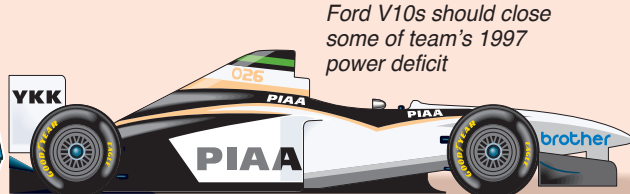
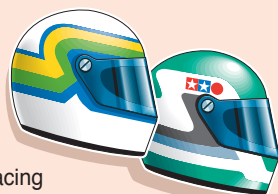
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20

Ricardo Rosset
Brazil. Age 29
16 starts, no wins

21

Toranosuke Takagi
Japan. Age 24
First season of Grand Prix racing



Ford V10s should close some of team's 1997 power deficit

The 1998 season will write the final chapter of the Tyrrell story before the remnants are swallowed up by newly-announced **British American Racing** in 1999. Sadly, it's hard to visualise anything but another underfunded year of struggle for Uncle Ken

Minardi Ford

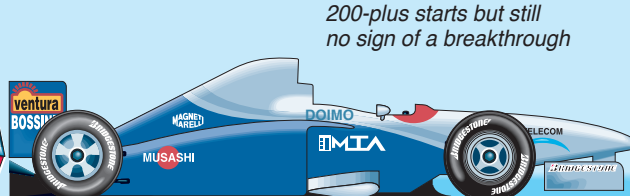
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22

Esteban Tuero
Argentine. Age 19
First season of Grand Prix racing

23

Shinji Nakano
Japan. Age 26
17 starts, no wins



200-plus starts but still no sign of a breakthrough

No prospect of escape from back of the grid goal for F1's minnows. Ex-Ferrari man **Gustav Brunner** will help the technical strength but the resources aren't there. Journeyman **Shinji Nakano** brings a fistful of Yen but the FIA's refusal to grant **Esteban Tuero** a superlicence is a blow