



## Circuit Notes

*by Peter Hubbard*

### **Formula 1™ drivers close out 2013 season playing ‘musical cars’**

**AUSTIN, TX (Nov. 14, 2013)** – A handful of Formula 1™ drivers arriving in Austin for the upcoming FORMULA 1 UNITED STATES GRAND PRIX at Circuit of The Americas™ are involved in a season-ending game of musical chairs, with many still looking for 2014 commitments. And that topic dominated the FIA pre-race news conference today at the track.

The latest driver to lose his seat for the upcoming 2014 season is Vodafone McLaren Mercedes' Sergio Perez. The shocking news came just hours before the young Mexican takes to the grid to race in front of thousands of fans, family members and friends, who came from his homeland to watch him race.

Team principle Martin Whitmarsh announced that McLaren's 21-year-old Danish development driver, Kevin Magnussen, would replace Perez as Jenson Button's teammate in 2014. Magnussen is the son of former F1™ driver Jan Magnussen, who was part of the Ford-Stewart team in the late 1990s. The young legacy impressed McLaren with his driving skills of late, winning this year's Formula Renault Series title by 60 points over another young McLaren development driver, Belgian racer Stoffel Vandoorne.

Perez was philosophical in expressing his regret over the sudden dismissal in today's media briefing.

"Obviously, McLaren is a great team, so I have nothing bad to say about them. I really want to wish them the best," Perez said. "We have had a very difficult season all year long. It was definitely not what I was expecting and also not what McLaren was expecting, especially as when I signed (to replace Lewis Hamilton) for them. Last year they had such a competitive car, but it's clearly not what we have right now and we didn't have it all season long. It's no secret that it has been a disappointing year for both parts.

"Hopefully, I can find the best seat available for next year and for my career. The fact is, I'm only 23 years old, and I feel like I have a lot to give to the sport. And I really hope I can find another seat for next year. There are some options...but I won't stay in F1 just to stay in F1. I have to find just the right option for myself...and I'm fairly confident that something good will happen," he concluded.

Joining Perez in the unemployment line, at least temporarily, is current Williams F1 driver Pastor Maldonado. Unable to follow up on his impressive win at the Spanish Grand Prix last year, he has just one driver point to his credit through 17 rounds of this season. On Monday Williams announced that current Ferrari driver Felipe Massa will replace Maldonado for 2014.

In September Massa lost his seat at Ferrari to current Lotus driver Kimi Raikkonen. The Finnish driver rejoins the Ferrari to team with Fernando Alonso, who replaced Raikkonen when the Finn left Ferrari in 2008 to try his hand at World Rally racing. Raikkonen, who suffered an injury following an accident at the start of the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix will be replaced this weekend by Heikki Kovalainen, who has been temporarily released from his assignment at Caterham's reserve driver to race for Lotus in the last two Grands Prix of the season. To date, Lotus has not named a replacement for Raikkonen for 2014.

Also moving up next year will be by Australian driver Daniel Ricciardo of Scuderia Toro Rosso, who will join reigning champion Sebastian Vettel as the replacement for retiring Red Bull driver Mark Webber.

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