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Getting to Know Formula One – Some Key Facts

- **In the beginning:** The first Formula One race in a Drivers World Championship was the **British Grand Prix, held on 18th May 1950** at the Silverstone racetrack. Later that year, the winner of this race, Italian Giuseppe Farina, was also crowned the inaugural Formula One World Champion.



- **A global championship:** Only seven races comprised the first 1950 championship, but over time the calendar has more than doubled in size. In 2006, there will be **19 races taking place in 18 different countries**, including at the newest venue in Turkey which debuted in the 2005 season.



- **Jostling for position:** Eleven teams will compete for the 2006 Constructors Championship with every team **entering a maximum of two cars into each race** throughout the season. The largest ever field competing in a grand prix was when 34 cars went head-to-head in the German Grand Prix in 1953.

- **Drawing in the crowds:** During the Formula One season races will be broadcast on live TV to **120 nations with a 161 million viewers** watching each race. As well as the huge television audiences, over 3.5 million people will attend Formula One races in person each year.



- **A long way round:** The distance of each Grand Prix is the least number of laps which **exceeds 305km (185 miles)**, and while **most races are completed in under 90 minutes**, races will be stopped after two hours and the leader who finishes his lap at the end of two hours wins.



- **Hitting the extremes:** As the fastest road machines on earth, Formula One cars can achieve speeds of up to **300 km per hour (185 mph)**, with engines that operate at over **18,000 revs per minute** and can generate **up to 1,000 horsepower**. During races, brakes can run as hot as 750 degrees Celsius and cars can develop 3.5Gs of cornering force.

- **On the grid:** Track **starting positions are decided during qualifying sessions** on the days before a race. 2006 will see a new 3 session format, with the first two sessions being 15 minutes each with the slowest five cars eliminated at each round, then the remaining ten cars competing in the final session to decide the places at the front of the grid.

- **Team sport:** Throughout races, cars, drivers can make one or more pit stops to refuel and correct any damage to the car. **At least 17 members of the team are involved in each pit stop** with three mechanics changing each tyre, two refuelling the car, one holding the stop/go sign, one lifting the car up from behind, one to hold the car from the front, one to clean the driver's visor and two to supervise. And all this will normally take place in under 10 seconds!



- While Europe is Formula One's traditional centre and remains its leading market, Grand Prix have been held all over the world and with races now in **Bahrain, China, Malaysia and Turkey**, its scope is continually expanding.

- **Technology drives performance:** During a season, teams **redesign up to 15% of cars** in the short time between grand prix races in efforts to continually improve speeds and road-holding performance.

- **Accident-prone:** The only recorded race where all racing drivers that began a race also finished it was in 1961 for the Dutch GP when **15 cars lined-up on the grid at Zandvoort and all 15 also finished**.

- **Best of the best:** The most successful Formula One racing car driver of all time is Michael Schumacher of Germany who has won the **Drivers Championship a record seven times** and during one unmatched spell was World Champion for **more than 1,800 days**.

- **Boy wonder:** The **youngest ever** driver to both take pole position and to win a grand prix is **2005 World Champion Fernando Alonso of Spain**. The world-famous **Monaco Grand Prix** continues to **race through the streets of the playground** of the rich and famous.



- **Off-road vehicles:** All except one of the Formula One circuits are specially designed racetracks.

- **Ready, set, go:** Grand Prix races start upon the extinction of all the red lights at one. This occurs between **0.2 and 3 seconds after the last red light has been lit**. This lapse of time is pre-programmed by the starter at each race, but kept secret.



- **Burning rubber:** While normal car tyres are made with heavy steel-belted radial plies and designed for durability with a life of around 16,000 km or more, **a F1 tyre is designed to last for, at most, 200 kilometers** and is constructed to be as light and strong as possible.



- **On the road:** Each team competing in the Formula One World Championship will travel around **160,000 kilometers (100,000 miles) a year** between races and testing sessions with some of the larger constructors doing more than that.



- **Hot work:** All drivers who enter Formula One need to undergo a period of conditioning to the physical demands of the sport. No other race series requires so much in terms of stamina and endurance. The extreme heat found in a Formula One cockpit puts vast strain on the body and drivers can **sweat up to 3kg of their body weight** during the course of a race.

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