

F1: Final entry list published - new names but no new teams

It's short and brutal, the news from the FIA. In a statement issued in Paris this morning, USF1 are out and "Having considered the various options, the FIA confirms that it is not possible for a replacement team to be entered for the Championship at this late stage." So there's no good news for Stefan GP.

Or rather, there's no good news *yet*.

The statement goes on "In the coming days the FIA will announce details of a new selection process to identify candidates to fill any vacancies existing at the start of the 2011 season." It all arose because "The USF1 Team have indicated that they will not be in a position to participate in the 2010 FIA Formula One World Championship."

It's been a busy day for the FIA with a flurry of releases relating to other types of motorsport. But the news that was most eagerly awaited is the confirmation of the teams that are scheduled to line up in Bahrain.

The list evidences the financial troubles over the past few months.

Gone are Campos: bought last week and renamed - not as expected, though. Demonstrating that what works in one language often produces humour in another we now have HRT F1 Team.

Gone, too, are Manor following their bailout by Virgin.

Bizarrely, BMW Sauber - now formally confirmed - are BMW Sauber Ferrari.

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<td width=20>
<p align=center><strong>No.</strong></p></td>
<td width=190>
<p align=left><strong>Driver</strong></p></td>
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<p align=left><strong>Team</strong></p></td>
<td width=170>
<p align=left><strong>Constructor</strong></p></td></tr>
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<td width=20>
<p align=center>1<br>2</p></td>
<td width=190>Jenson BUTTON (GBR)<br>Lewis HAMILTON (GBR)</td>
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<td width=190>Michael SCHUMACHER (DEU)<br>Nico ROSBERG (DEU)</td>

<td width=190>MERCEDES GP PETRONAS FORMULA ONE TEAM (DEU)</td>
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<td width=190>Sebastian VETTEL (DEU)<br>Mark WEBBER (AUS)</td>
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<td width=190>Felipe MASSA (BRA)<br>Fernando ALONSO (ESP)</td>
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<p>Rubens BARRICHELLO (BRA)</p>
<p>Nico HÜLKENBERG (DEU)</p></td>
<td width=200>AT&T WILLIAMS (GBR)</td>
<td width=150>Williams Cosworth</td></tr>
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<td width=190>Robert KUBICA (POL)<br>Vitaly PETROV (RUS)</td>

<td width=190>RENAULT F1 TEAM (FRA)</td>
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<td width=190>Adrian SUTIL (DEU)<br>Vitantonio LIUZZI (ITA)</td>
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<td width=190>Sébastien BUEMI (CHE)<br>Jaime ALGUERSUARI (ESP)</td>
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<td width=190>Jarno TRULLI (ITA)<br>Heikki KOVALAINEN (FIN)</td>

<td width=190>LOTUS RACING (MAL)</td>
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<td width=190>TBA<br>Bruno SENNA (BRA)</td>
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<td width=190>Pedro DE LA ROSA (ESP)<br>Kamui KOBAYASHI (JPN)</td>
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<td width=190>Timo GLOCK (DEU)<br>Luca DI GRASSI (BRA)</td>

<td width=190>VIRGIN RACING (GBR)</td>
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With the first race weekend a week and a day away, teams are frantically polishing their final paint-jobs as they scurry to add last minute sponsors.

HRT is scurrying for another reason: having secured the services of Bruno Senna with no salary, Jose Lopez is hoping to negotiate the last seat on the grid: he comes with a dowry of some USD8 million - less the chunk he handed over to USF1 and which has been spent.

USF1 have said they hope to be in the Championship in 2011 - but few hold out much hope as the team has lost sponsors, staff have left and they are staring into an abyss of debt. That means that there is a chance that Stefan GP will be on the grid next year.

However, as we reported recently, there is some suspicion that the FIA never expected all teams to make it and that they really did not want 26 cars barrelling into the first corner with the inevitable consequences of mayhem.

Driver numbers have been allocated: Hamilton takes a back-seat to Button who is entitled to the coveted number 1 - but within the team he is unlikely to be the team leader. As foreshadowed, Rosberg has surrendered his number 3 to Michael Schumacher.

The list shows the depth of involvement of Malaysia in Formula 1: as title sponsor of the Mercedes McLaren Petronas Formula One Team, their name will be plastered on TV screens as the obsession with Schumacher dominates coverage: he is already the most featured driver in most pre-season TV advertising for the series - although his new team will be irritated that, mostly, he is shown in his old red kit.

Lotus (which is officially called Lotus Racing but no one is ever going to call it that) has been entered as the first ever Malaysian entry. The team recently said that when it eventually makes it to the top step, it will be proud to hear the Malaysian National Anthem played over an F1 circuit. Of course, that already happens every year at Sepang but that's different.

Not shown in the list but also demonstrating Malaysia's involvement is that Air Asia are a main but not title sponsor of Williams. AirAsia boss Tony Fernandes is hedging his bets: his airline is sponsoring a possible podium team whilst he and his pals own Lotus.

The confirmed list shows a significant boost for GP2 graduates: Bruno Senna, of course - and if Lopez doesn't take the second seat, it's a reasonable bet that it will go to Karun Chandock but one suspects that money will talk and Chandok doesn't have the backing that the Argentinian has - nor the spectacular run of success last year; Luca Di Grassi - another Brazillian is in as is Vitaly Petrov - who is fast but prone to accidents. And Barrichello shares the Williams entry with Nico Hulkenberg.

Some of those in their maiden season are in fast cars; some experienced drivers are in slower cars - or rather cars that have not reached their development potential.