



F1 Guide (Part 5) – The FIA

[Intro: Cedar Falls, Car Crash]

Welcome to the Sidepodcast Guide to Formula 1.

We've had a look at all the good stuff about F1, the speed, the races, the cars. Now it's time to take a look at the flip side to that – the rule enforcers. Your boo's and hiss's should be aimed at the FIA, who represent the interests of the majority of motorsport worldwide. I'd tell you what it stands for but it's in French and I probably wouldn't do it justice. They are based in Paris, y'see.

The FIA's main remit is to increase motorsport safety, manage championships, specify regulations and set calendars. Basically this means they have to make all the important decisions. They're also heavily involved in everyday road safety.

Other than Formula 1, they also preside over the World Rally Championship and the World Touring Car Championship. F1 is their highest profile sport though – the one that gets them in the news all the time, for both good and bad reasons.

Within Formula 1, the FIA face a constant battle with the manufacturer's who wish to spend more money more often, whereas the FIA continue to try to reign in excess spending by introducing restrictions such as two-race engines, and single tyre suppliers. The idea behind the cost-cutting measures is to make sure that the sport can include independent teams such as Williams – a team who's sole reason for being is to race in F1. Manufacturer's come and go but it's the independents who really stay on in people's hearts.

When a team is doing something a little bit dodgy, that perhaps another team wants to complain about, they take it to the race stewards. These are the people who make the decisions about particular races, including safety cars, flags, and they have the power to start and stop the race. They can be compared to the referee's in a football game or the umpire in a tennis match. If teams disagree with the steward's decision, they can escalate their complaint to the International Court of Appeal. This is run by the FIA, and is more like a court case with lawyers and such like. The ICA decision is final.

When it comes to safety, the driver's get to have their say in the form of the Grand Prix Driver's Association. This is basically a union for Formula 1 drivers, chaired by a nominated current driver. The GPDA was formed after the death of Ayrton Senna, as a way for drivers to air their views over the state of Formula 1 safety. Often, they don't agree with the FIA decisions, but with their only power being access to the media, they rarely make a difference. One final thing that the FIA do which affects us all, is research into motorsport and the environment, including cleaner fuels, and renewable energy. They are involved in several carbon neutrality schemes, for example reforestation projects. This way, they can keep Formula 1 safe and secure for the future.

We mentioned safety briefly today. Our next instalment of the Sidepodcast Guide to Formula 1 will look at safety in more detail.

[Out: Cedar Falls, Car Crash]