

FORUM

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LAT

Carl Edwards' smash at Talladega raises safety questions

TEARS OVER TIERS?

I have been following the ongoing controversy over the 2010 Formula 1 regulations on your website in recent weeks and, to be honest, I'm a bit baffled by it all. What is wrong with a two-tier F1 any way? To me it looks a really exciting prospect – a powerful KERS, more design freedom and even four-wheel drive available for the low-budget teams, that's pretty incredible and would be awesome to watch, especially if these open technology cars were taking on the current breed of unlimited expenditure race teams.

Yet from what I understand, the teams already in F1 are throwing a proper wobbly about it, though I just can't understand why. It seems a good way to balance the performance of the cars and a good way to control costs in the sport. But once again it seems politics are getting in the way of engineering freedom.

Cletus Bishop
Mooresville, NC

NASCAR LUCK

I guess those trackside at Talladega had a real adrenalin rush and Carl Edwards' airborne car added to the entry ticket value. Thankfully, no one was killed, but at these sort of speeds it becomes difficult to completely eliminate such an accident unless speed restrictions are imposed. Yet the essence of NASCAR is speed and close proximity racing, so improvements to the fencing might be something that needs to be considered to ensure next time nothing clears them and goes into the crowd. Perhaps certain on-track etiquette rules between drivers also need to be developed further? If a driver's car jumped the fence and killed his family would he feel it is worth the speed rush? But, if like in the Edwards' crash, it missed everyone then it would certainly add to the value of the entry ticket!

K Andreassend
via website

THE BUSINESS

The land of opportunity



CHRIS AYLETT

Doing business with middle America is a sure fire way to succeed

The USA remains the largest motorsport market in the world, and that's why an MIA group of 20 leading British companies visited NASCAR and the Indy Racing League in May.

The USA has not escaped the credit crunch, but motor racing grid sizes remain better than in other countries, both in NASCAR and in IRL. Major events still attract huge crowds and, even when NASCAR loses 10,000 spectators from a total of 160,000, it's clear the market remains vast!

And the crowds are enjoying their racing. When the racing is good it draws spectators and a TV audience, closely followed by sponsors looking to promote their brands. The result is some brands are gaining market share during this downturn. Those will be the first to buy better value motorsport packages, which will bring spending and enthusiasm back to motorsport.

Cost controls exist everywhere. But top-class performance requires even better value from clever engineering solutions, based on race-proven experience. And in these times, such winning experience and knowledge is in greater demand than ever.

The diversity and value of US motorsport is its strength, with its 'middle market' motorsport remaining strong. Literally thousands of weekend racers still enjoy their sport, damaging their cars and buying new products. This is the heartland of America, where motorsport is a truly broad church. The mainstream encompasses such diverse activities as off-road racing, drag racing, road racing and oval racing. Venues can have dirt or tarmac surfaces and vehicles can be open or closed wheel. Beyond the mainstream, there's tractor pulling, rock



PRI

For US business opportunities, head for PRI

crawling and swamp racing, all of which have their own enthusiastic followings.

Currently, exchange rates open up opportunities for overseas suppliers, who must deliver fast and locally. Exotic technology has never been at the forefront of US motorsport – just good value, winning solutions are required.

However, Europe remains fixated on 'high cost' single-seat racing, the

perception of which will hold back new competitors from entering. Yet these new entrants are exactly what is needed for the market to grow out of recession.

I am a real fan of motorsport business in the USA and

encourage any supplier to have a go at this market. They speak one language, buy good value from coast to coast and deal in one currency. Niche markets in the USA are where fortunes can be made. There's no need to dominate major sectors – success often lies in a small, rich vein – find one, then focus on it and excel in it.

The PRI show in Orlando in December attracts over 40,000 businesses to meet, place orders and plan next year's campaigns. The MIA recommends this event for US business development, as it is one of the most influential in the motorsport world.

Chris Aylett is CEO of the Motorsport Industry Association www.the-mia.com

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