



F1

Formula 1 *Study Guide*



AGENDA

Evaluating the role of the FIA in Regulating Formula 1 and Developing Reforms to Ensure Transparency, Fairness, and Accountability in Decision Making.

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FOR THE COMMUNITY, BY THE STUDENTS.



THE BASICS

Formula One is the most prestigious and popular motorsport in the world. This complex and exciting sport consists of 24 grand prix in one season (the numbers may change in future years or be changed by the committee), with a grid of 10 teams and 20 drivers, using cars built by teams spending millions of dollars and driven by drivers of exceptional ability. Each Grand Prix weekend is composed of practice sessions, qualifying sessions, and the main race.

Teams

There are 10 teams in Formula One, each led by a team boss and each taking two cars on the track. For 2025 season the teams are, Mercedes-AMG Petronas F1 Team, Oracle Red Bull Racing, Scuderia Ferrari, McLaren F1 Team, Alpine F1 Team, Aston Martin Aramco Cognizant F1 Team, Haas F1 Team, Williams Racing, Visa Cash App RB Formula One Team, Stake F1 Team Kick Sauber and these teams compete for the championship every season. The teams raise significant funds through sponsorships, prizes and broadcasting rights and design, build and develop cars using the most advanced technology.

Pilots

In Formula 1, there are 20 pilots who have exceptional driving skills, physical fitness and mental endurance. All pilot's education for motorsports started from 3-5 years old with karting. Every team has got 2 main pilots in order to compete for all grand prix. Race Format Formula One seasons consist of 24 grand prix (for 2025 season) which are organized all around the world. Every grand prix weekend has got practice sessions, qualifying sessions, and the main race.

Current Pilots:

The 2025 Formula 1 grid features Max Verstappen and Yuki Tsunoda at Red Bull, Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri at McLaren, George Russell and rookie Andrea Kimi Antonelli at Mercedes, Charles Leclerc and Lewis Hamilton forming a dream duo at Ferrari, Fernando Alonso and Lance Stroll continuing with Aston Martin,

Pierre Gasly and Jack Doohan representing Alpine, Esteban Ocon and Oliver Bearman at Haas, Alex Albon and Carlos Sainz teaming up at Williams, Nico Hülkenberg and Gabriel Bortoleto driving for Kick Sauber, and finally Liam Lawson and Isack Hadjar lining up for Racing Bulls

Practice Sessions:

One grand prix weekend includes 3 practice sessions on Friday and Saturday. These sessions allows pilots to familiarize themselves with the track conditions and fine-tune their cars and allows teams to collect data and develop strategies for the race.

Qualifying Sessions:

On Saturday pilots try to do their fastest laps in order to get a head start on the race. Qualifying sessions consist of 3 parts as Q1, Q2 and Q3. In Q1 all pilots go out on the track and try their fastest laps, last 5 grid positions are determined in Q1 by looking at lap times, but the slowest 5 pilots are eliminated in Q3. In Q2 15 pilots go out on the track and try their fastest laps, the slowest 5 pilots are eliminated in Q2 too. The fastest 10 pilots go out on the track and try their fastest laps in Q3 and all grid positions with pole position are determined in Q3. The qualifying rounds not only determine the grid order, but also show the performance of the drivers and teams. This exciting battle is one of the most important and engaging parts of the Formula 1 weekend.

Main Race :

The Main Race takes place on Sunday, the main race lasts roughly two hours, covering over 300 kilometers. During the race the drivers have to make pit stop strategies, overtaking attempts and tyre management in order to maintain their position, move up and earn points. The driver who finishes first scores 25 points, second place earns 18 points, and third place receives 15.

Technical Regulations:

Formula One cars utilize high engineering technologies to reach

high speeds on the straights of the track, to stop at corners and to turn corners as quickly as possible. These engineering technologies are subject to strict technical regulations in areas such as aerodynamics, engines and chassis. The aim of these regulations is to ensure that the sport remains fair and competitive, but also to guarantee the safety of cars and drivers.

Aerodynamics:

Aerodynamics in Formula One is the branch of engineering that analyzes how the air will pass over the car and, as a result, tries to increase the downforce of the car in certain areas of the track and to reduce the downforce in certain areas in order not to reduce the speed.

Engines:

Formula One engines form the heart of the car and are the part that gives the real power. They are power units designed to deliver high performance and efficiency. In the latest regulations, these engines are 1.6 liter turbocharged hybrid engines. Technical regulations limit the size and weight of the engines, the time the engine is tested and the budget required, as well as certain regulations that determine how much fuel the engines can take and how much exhaust emissions they can produce to achieve the 0 carbon emission target in order to protect global climate change, which is a major goal of the world. There are 4 engine manufacturers in Formula One today. These are Ferrari, Mercedes, Renault, Honda (rebranded as Red Bull Powertrains)

Technical Specifications:

Type: 1.6-litre turbocharged hybrid engine

Power: More than 1000 horsepower

Weight: Minimum 150 kilogrammes

Components:

Internal combustion engine

MGU-H (Heat Recycling Unit)

MGU-K (Kinetic Energy Recycling Unit)

Battery

Electronic control unit

Internal Combustion Engine: The engine works like a conventional petrol engine and drives the wheels of the car by turning the crankshaft.

MGU-H: Converts heat from exhaust gasses into electrical energy. **MGU-K:**

Converts the kinetic energy from the car's wheels into electrical energy during braking. **Battery:** Stores the electrical energy generated by MGU-H and MGU-K.

Electronic Control Unit: Coordinates and optimizes all components of the engine and the hybrid system

Chassis

The chassis forms the skeleton of the Formula 1 car and carries all other components such as the engine, gearbox and suspension. Formula 1 chassis are made of carbon fiber and other extra light and robust materials for high rigidity and durability. Technical regulations determine the size and weight of the chassis and the materials that can be used in their construction.

AGENDA OVERVIEW

The Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile (FIA) plays a central role in overseeing Formula 1, setting the technical, sporting, and ethical standards that govern the championship. Yet, as the sport has grown in global influence, so have the debates surrounding how its rules are applied and who holds the power to interpret them. Questions over inconsistent stewarding, opaque investigations, and perceived bias have sparked concern about whether decision-making within the FIA remains fair and transparent. This agenda invites delegates to critically assess how the FIA manages its regulatory responsibilities and to identify where greater oversight, clarity, or reform may be required. Participants are encouraged to explore measures such as independent review panels, clearer communication channels, data-based stewarding systems, and more accountable leadership structures. The objective is to design a framework that not only strengthens trust between teams, officials, and fans but also upholds Formula 1's integrity as a truly global and merit-based competition.

Importance of this agenda

Formula 1 is not just a sport; it is a multi-billion-dollar global industry watched by hundreds of millions of fans. Every decision made by the FIA directly affects the credibility, competitiveness, and global reputation of the championship. When governance fails, the consequences are not limited to a single race; they impact the image of F1 as a whole.

The FIA's rulings determine who wins championships, how much teams can spend, what technologies can be developed, and how drivers are disciplined. A single inconsistent decision from the race stewards or an unclear interpretation of a regulation can change the outcome of a season, damage a team's reputation, or cause sponsors to reconsider their investment.

Fairness and transparency are the foundation of any legitimate sporting competition. If fans, teams, or drivers believe that the FIA's decisions are biased, inconsistent, or politically influenced, trust in the sport begins to erode. Such perceptions can spark public outrage, reduce viewership, and weaken the long-term stability of the championship.

Maintaining fairness is also vital for innovation. Formula 1 has always been a testing ground for new technology and engineering breakthroughs. However, when teams feel that regulations are unevenly applied, it discourages creativity and undermines the "level playing field" that the FIA claims to protect.

At its core, this agenda is about ensuring that the FIA remains a responsible, accountable, and impartial regulator, one that safeguards competition, respects its stakeholders, and protects the integrity of the world's most prestigious motorsport.



MAJOR PROBLEMS

1. Lack of Clarity in Decision-Making

The FIA's decision-making process often happens behind closed doors, leaving teams and fans guessing about the reasoning behind rulings. The infamous 2021 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix remains a symbol of this, a last-lap call that changed the championship and exposed how fragile transparency in race control really is. Even today, stewarding decisions rarely come with detailed public explanations, leading to speculation and mistrust. For a sport that brands itself as the pinnacle of fairness and precision, unclear verdicts can destroy credibility. Restoring confidence demands structured, well-documented, and public explanations for every critical FIA decision.

2. Conflict of Interest Allegations

Over the past few seasons, the FIA's leadership has been shadowed by allegations of personal bias and political influence. Reports linking FIA President Mohammed Ben Sulayem to selective interventions in team matters, such as the 2023 Red Bull internal conflict, raised questions about impartiality. When the very top of the governing body appears compromised, every ruling beneath it loses legitimacy. The FIA must demonstrate that its leadership is independent and free from political or commercial interference. Implementing independent ethics committees and transparent internal investigations could rebuild lost faith in the institution.

3. Inconsistent Stewarding

Formula 1 drivers, teams, and even fans have long complained about inconsistent stewarding. Two drivers can commit the same offence but receive completely different penalties depending on who the stewards are that weekend. The 2023 Austrian Grand Prix is a prime example: chaos erupted over unclear track limit penalties, creating confusion and anger across the paddock. This inconsistency undermines the FIA's promise of a level playing field and gives an impression of favoritism. The introduction of a fixed panel of experienced stewards or an AI-assisted decision system could help ensure consistency and fairness across all races.

4. Poor Communication Between FIA and Teams

In a sport where milliseconds matter, unclear communication can ruin entire races. Several recent incidents, from delayed red flags to inconsistent track limit calls, reveal how poor coordination between the FIA and team radios leads to unnecessary chaos. The lack of transparent communication also creates confusion among fans, who often have no idea why a certain decision was made mid-race. Clear, real-time communication logs between the FIA and teams, made public after each event, would drastically improve accountability and rebuild trust in the governing process.

5. Financial and Ethical Transparency

Behind the glamour of Formula 1 lies a murky world of financial dealings, from penalty fines to new race hosting contracts. The FIA has been criticized for lacking openness about where the money goes, especially when new races are awarded to countries with questionable human rights records. This raises ethical concerns about whether financial gain outweighs moral responsibility.

Transparency in budgeting, spending, and sponsorship decisions is essential if the FIA wants to be viewed as a responsible global institution. Releasing annual audited reports and creating an external financial review board could restore integrity and public trust.

KEY INCIDENTS

Abu Dhabi Grand Prix 2021

The 2021 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix remains one of the most debated moments in F1 history. A late safety car and Race Director Michael Masi's last-minute decision to let only certain cars unlap themselves allowed Max Verstappen to challenge Lewis Hamilton on the final lap, a call that flipped the championship outcome. Many fans and teams accused the FIA of bending its own rules to create entertainment, rather than enforcing consistency. The incident exposed how much power individual officials held and pushed the FIA to restructure race

control, introduce clearer protocols, and enhance communication transparency during critical moments.

Ferrari Engine Scandal 2019

In 2019, suspicions arose that Ferrari's power unit was breaching fuel-flow regulations, giving them a speed advantage. The FIA investigated but concluded the matter with a confidential settlement, refusing to disclose the findings publicly. Rival teams were furious, claiming the secrecy damaged the sport's credibility. This controversy demonstrated how a lack of transparency in FIA investigations can lead to mistrust among competitors and fans. It also highlighted the need for clear, public communication on technical compliance issues to ensure fairness and confidence in the FIA's decision-making.

Qatar and Las Vegas Grand Prix 2023

Both the 2023 Qatar and Las Vegas Grands Prix showcased tensions between safety, scheduling, and commercial priorities. In Qatar, drivers faced extreme heat conditions that led to health concerns, while in Las Vegas, late-night sessions and last-minute disruptions drew criticism from teams and spectators. Many questioned whether the FIA and F1 management had prioritized spectacle over driver welfare. These events reignited discussions about how race calendars are approved and whether the FIA should play a stronger, more independent role in protecting sporting integrity and safety standards.

Christian Horner Investigation 2024

In early 2024, Red Bull Racing's team principal, Christian Horner, was investigated for alleged misconduct within the team. The process, handled internally by Red Bull rather than the FIA, was criticized for its secrecy and lack of external oversight. Although Horner was cleared, the controversy sparked debate over the FIA's limited authority in off-track ethical matters. It emphasized the need for a transparent and independent system to address allegations of misconduct across teams, ensuring accountability at all leadership levels within the sport.

SUGGESTED MODERATED CAUCUS TOPICS



How can the FIA strengthen independent oversight so that audit and ethics functions are not beholden to its presidency?

Should the FIA make stewarding decisions (and their rationale) publicly available in real-time or after races, to increase transparency?

In the context of F1's commercial expansion, how should the FIA ensure that sporting rules aren't compromised by business interests?

What mechanisms should be introduced to ensure consistent and proportionate penalties across teams and drivers, to prevent perceptions of bias?

How can representation of smaller teams / non-major stakeholders be enhanced in FIA's decision-making structures to promote fairness?

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