THE OFFICIALS NEWSLETTER
UNITED STATES GRAND PRIX



CHATTING WITH CHARLIE

Charlie Whiting is the FIA F1 Race Director, Starter, and Safety Delegate. He also is head of the F1 Technical Department, which includes managing the logistics of each F1 race meeting. He has his finger on the button, literally. Charlie starts the races with the famous red to green lights.

The COTA circuit is in fine shape. There were reports of serious bumps in a few places especially in Turn 12 area after the wet season and Hurricane Harvey; but they were ground out. It had to be done. The track is an unusual composition, as the ground here moves an awful lot; and when it gets water in it, it moves even more.

This is probably one of the best new circuits. It was perfect to start with. There were no problems the first year. It was quite remarkable, really. And now it looks more 'lived in.'

FIA has mandated the Halo - cockpit frontal protection for F1, F2, and F3 in US starting in 2018. Drivers are accepting the new Halo. It's fine, no problems. Since Singapore and Monza, there has been a flurry at each race to run a dummy Halo. The F1 teams run it for a few laps. These cars aren't built to accommodate a proper Halo. These are just a dummy thing - the same shape as the real one, but not fixed on in a robust way.

In Friday FP1 Sebastian Vettel/Ferrari and Marcus Ericsson/Sauber ran the dummy halo for a couple of laps. According to a Sauber mechanic, it takes about ten minutes to mount/dismount.

The F4 Series is massively popular worldwide. Sixty cars have already been sold in the US. Fourteen countries run F4 now, and next year France will join. South Africa will probably start the following year, and there's been strong interest shown by Brazil and Argentina. Japan, Germany and Britain are doing well.

Charlie said it was certainly nice to see former USGP F1 Flag Chief, Kathy Maleck, involved with the US F4 Series.

F1 Car numbers come from FIA. Permanent drivers can choose from available numbers. The one-off drivers use one of the two Reserve Driver numbers assigned to the team. An example of this is Toro Rosso's Brendon Hartley, who will run #39 and Toro Rosso FP1 driver Sean Geleal will run #38. When Pierre Gasly returns for the Mexican F1, he is considered a permanent driver and has chosen #10. When Carlos Sainz left Toro Rosso for Renault, he took his #55 with him.

F1 doesn't do financial penalties for infractions as do some other series which run at COTA. F1 imposes proper sporting penalties. No one can buy his way out of a penalty, such as exceeding pit lane speed or "Not respecting the flag." That can be defined "as not moving over quickly enough to let the other car pass for a Blue Flag, not slowing down enough for a Yellow Flag, or going too fast or not coming in for a Red Flag".

The F1 drivers have new garage signs with their portrait and country flag, car number, and visual effects. China was the first race when these new signs appeared, and they are quite attractive. They are provided by the local tracks.

Charlie was pleasantly surprised to learn that the corner worker numbers were the highest ever for COTA USGP. There are no changes to the instructions to the marshals for this race from previous 2017 races.

"It's a little different coming to the US because sometimes there's a different approach to various things. Car recovery, for example. The way we like it done is not the way it's normally done in the US, but everyone has adapted very well to how we like things done. I look forward to the track inspections every morning to say Good Morning, and the marshals all wave to us. We know how well everybody works here."

RHEA DODS



Rhea Dods from Vallejo CA is the Race Control Communicator - Flag Back-up. She sits in Race Control connected to those on back-up radios, which include 20 TSP Operators and 38 marshals. Rhea sits next to Jim Swintal who is linked to the marshals on the landline and they exchange information they receive on their respective nets. She works all on-track sessions, and all her communications are logged electronically. This is Rhea's fourth year in this position at USGP.

Rhea signed up to work as a Communicator, and was both complimented and terrified when asked by Race Chairman, Bill Armitage, to staff this position. She has been a Communicator in San Francisco Region SCCA since she first joined in 1968. Since 2013 she has been Assistant Communications Chief, Co-Chief and now Chief for the past two years. In addition to volunteering at all the SFR and Reno Region events, for the past thirty years, she has been working for Sonoma Raceway in the Command Post. She is retired from her day job in clerical accounting.



LISAKAY FOYLE



LisaKay Foyle is the new Chief for USGP F1 Pit/Grid/Paddock. She has a crew of 30 Pit Marshals who work in the F1 Pit Lane, as well as up in the Support Paddock in Lot K. LisaKay worked on this team for three COTA USGP's.

When she retired as VP of a bank in Sebring Fl, she was hired "to do the books" for Don Panoz's new race Series. That began her 17-year career in Race Management. She has worked with various professional organizations including TRG Aston Martin, and for the past four years, as Series Coordinator for the Trans-Am Series.

When she and husband James moved from Sebring to Texas four years ago, they joined SowDiv Region SCCA where she serves as a Steward and Secretary. Here they became involved with COTA, working in race management for WEC, F1, FE, and Moto GP. LisaKay has worked as Secretary of the Meeting for all the US FE events. She enjoys the details and organizational aspects of race management.




Building K
Event Cente
PIT LANE


DHL
PIRELLI
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Emirates
ORMULA ONE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
2017 FORMULA 1 UNITED STATES GRAND PRIX
MEDIA CEN
USA2009
USA2088
MEDIA CENTER
USA2005
USA2031
PIT LANE ALL TIMES
USA2007
SCRUTINEER
USA2052
CM. PIT & GRID MARSHAL
USA2085
PIT MARSHAL



BAKU BOYS

Seven marshals from Baku, Azerbaijan are working Turn Three, with an American Communicator. They originally had thought they'd like to spread out and mingle with other marshals, but opted to have a country corner. In their country, they are all Sector Marshals.

Azerbaijan holds but one race a year - a street course F1. Last year was the inaugural race, named the European Grand Prix, won by Nico Rosberg. This year it was the Azerbaijan Grand Prix and was won by Daniel Riccardo.

The race promotors sent key sector marshals to other F1 venues to learn and train, including Russia, Bahrain and Japan. They'd like to go to Australia but said the trip is even longer than to Texas. They've had Australian marshals come to Baku to train and work.

Although some of the Baku marshals have been to the US on business, this is the first time to USGP for them all. They are thoroughly enjoying themselves.

GARY BESCHLE

Gary Beschle from Pipe Creek TX, is the 2017 USGP F1 Chief Starter, his first year in this role. He has worked as Starter at COTA for several professional and support events, as well as driver's school and track days. He's very excited about working USGP, as he's always wanted to work as a Starter.



For the F1 event, he will be at the Finish post. For other sessions he might be found at the Start post, a quarter-mile up Pit Lane. There are three other Starters on his team - Terry Walsh, who has worked as Starter at all COTA F1's and ten other USGP'S, Kuzuma McFarland from WA, and Diane Tedeschi from OH.

Gary has been a COTA track employee since it opened six years ago, filling many roles, including corner marshal, Pit Lane, Race Control, and recovery for Moto GP. His love for motorsports goes back to his days as a racer in modifieds (1934 Ford with a flat V8) and go-karts in New York. He also wrenched on modifieds.

Gary moved his family to Texas in 1984. After he retired as a manufacturing planner in the microwave communications business, he made his avocation his vocation at COTA. His wife. Linda, also works many events at COTA and is on the Hospitality team this weekend. He has belonged to Alamo Region SCCA.

WANT TO SEE MORE?

For those who are interested in seeing more of the photos from this 2017 USGP weekend, we've have a work-in-progress link you to check. CLICK HERE. It will be updated as the weekend progresses.

For those who wish to read the USGP Officials Newsletter, here is the link, compliments of the Houston Region SCCA. Thanks you Kenny Baker and Sydney Davis Yagel for facilitating this service. Back issues are also archived on this site.

http://sowdivscca.com/f1/