

THE OFFICIALS NEWSLETTER

2019 FORMULA 1 EMIRATES UNITED STATES GRAND PRIX

Meeting Michael Masi



I met Michael Masai at AGP in Melbourne after he had been selected to fill in as Race Director for Charlie Whiting, who had suddenly passed away on Wednesday night of race weekend. After I was properly vetted by the new (this year) F1 Press Delegate, I was allowed to have a USGP Newsletter interview with Race Director Michael at COTA.

As Race Director, Michael has been to circuits around the world, working with a different set of marshals each time."Every set of marshals around the world share a common passion. And that is very, very clear. And for me that's the most important part. We're all here, me included, all of us because we have this amazing passion for the sport, as a whole. We enjoy Formula One, and everyone is bonded by that common thread that we have. So some of the passion in some of the countries is unbelievable. There are different little processes that different countries do differently, particularly because of what happens at a national level. But, overall, for me, motorsport in general let alone in F1, does not happen without people. Charlie said it many times, and I will say it, 'Without the trackside, without the officials group as a whole, we don't have an event.'

"Now, everyone can have as much technology as they like. But, our marshals, our passionate marshals and officials everywhere are a critical lifeline for the sport. Just last weekend in Mexico we had a light panel in Valteri Bottas' incident where the cord was cut to the light panel when he hit the wall. So the underlying point is that the good old Yellow Flag was being waved down at the Marshaling Point. And that is why we have both systems. The common passion and love for the sport is something that is universal the world over. And it makes it worthwhile, even when you're having a crappy day.

"It's becoming more and more common for foreign marshals to travel to other circuits. You can see it as you go around the track and see the national flags on the turn stations. It's something that's been encouraged for a number of years. And from a FIA perspective, it's been trying to standardize a number of processes and procedures through its training that has been happening at a local and regional level, as well as national level, to encourage people to travel abroad if they can. We're also very fortunate that in the current day that traveling from one country to the next is not what it was even 20 years ago or even 10 years ago. It's become the norm to hop on a plane and travel somewhere, particularly if you come from a faraway place as do I.

"The new job is working out well. No doubt what happened in Melbourne was a tragedy. Charlie was not only a friend to many of us, he was a mentor to me and yes, I do look up occasionally, and ask if he's trying to test me. But I'm very lucky that the FIA Team that I work with is a brilliant team. From Melbourne we pulled together, we're all a team. Everyone has helped each other. The way that the team pulled together that weekend, considering all the circumstances, I certainly couldn't be more proud of the team of people that I work with. They are a superstar team and to have the support and assistance from the various marshals and officials in each country, and working with each of them in different ways and their support in helping makes me feel welcome. Particularly, because I am the junior of our group. from a number of events participated. It has been a huge way to make things easier. Most important the teams and the drivers, the F1 Group, and the FIA themselves, have been brilliant in their support of me. I couldn't have asked for a more open welcome from everyone across the year, which has made my job a whole lot easier. There's challenges in everything we do, but from that approach, I couldn't ask for more. "

The interview covered a number of topics, which will be found in this and the next issue of the Newsletter. I look forward to another interview in Melbourne and next year at COTA.

Lynne Huntting


20
A
COURSE
USA1344
2019
20

SCRUTINEERING

The Scrutineers have two team meetings with Jo Bauer, FIA F1 Technical Delegate and Scrutineer Chief Suzanne Royce. Bauer was pleased to see so many familiar faces, knowledgable and experienced. There are two Scrutineers assigned to each team garage, one for tires and one for the garage. Often the garage scrutineers are assigned to the same team each year, which provides continuity. The Garage Scrutineer has a log, with a separate sheet for each session. If the Scrutineers doesn't know what they're observing, they are to ask.

The tire checkers each have an electronic tablet for recording data, and if necessary, photographing a tire - which is the only thing allowed to be photographed by that Scrutineer.

There is a mandated maximum flow rate during the garage fueling, and there must be two crew members present appropriately attired and equipped. There is telemetry involved and highly proprietary. What flows in the garage stays in the garage.

All 30 of the scrutineers were onsite Thursday for team introductions and familiarization











SPORTSMANSHIP FLAG

Race Director Michael Masi reintroduced the practice of using the Sportsmanship Flag, which hasn't been used for a while. Its a black and white flag, to chastise but not penalize a driver for an on-track action. This flag is directed by Michael and displayed by the Starter with a number board to the offending driver. It also serves to show everyone at the race that Race Control is aware of what the driver did.

Masi said "This flag has actually been around for a long time, and just brought back to F1. The last time it was used in F1 was 2010 in Malaysia, but it was in Charlie's notes for a couple of times last year. Previously it's been used a lot in other FIA championships all the way down to the lower categories; and Tim Mayer (FIA Permanent Chairman of Stewards) said it's used a lot in WEC. The reason for reintroduction was discussed with the teams and the drivers It was actually seen as a public sign, "more of a display that we've seen something we don't necessarily agree with but not to the extent at that point that it requires a penalty. It's just a change of system from where we notify the team one-on-one. We're actually doing it for public display to tell everyone - spectators, marshals, officials, the teams, that we've seen it. I think the way it's been received is seen as a good thing. This flag is my instructions, rather than from the Stewards."





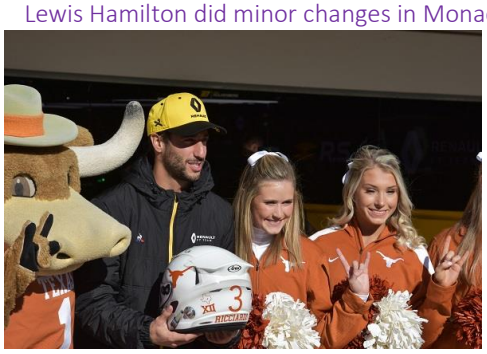
TSP AKA LIGHT BOARDS

The waterproof light panels, with a neck strap, are operated by a dedicated TSP Operator on each post. They basically haven't changed since their introduction in 2009, although they have evolved. One exception is the TSPs in Pit Lane, which have been updated for the two WayBridge post, with technology ever changing in the LED world. The Light Board has LED lights and a cord going to a power supply. EM Motorsport Ltd of England supplies the TSPs to F1 and they have been homologated into T1 which has brighter LEDs. The TSPs have buttons for many of the flags - yellow, double yellow, Virtual Safety Car, Safety Car, blue, red and white. It is powered by a generator, attached by a cord - which can be cut as was learned in Mexico.

The TSP supplier feels the Light Boards are a safety device, putting the panels where they can be seen by the driver and keep the operating marshal in a safe position. This information is used, among other things, to improve safety. The folks at EM would love to hear feedback from the track marshals about how the TSPs are working, any suggestions or remarks. Channeling that flow is being discussed.

HELMET CHANGES

F1 Drivers are allowed one 'substantially different' helmet livery change per season. Daniel Ricciardo displayed his special helmet design for the COTA race, with a Texas Longhorn theme. Drivers can keep their exact same base livery with very similar color scheme, but make minor tweaks to it essentially, that's fine. Ricciardo's team sought permission prior and was approved. The helmet change can only be for the one race. Lando Norris is a good example of keeping the same livery for every race, but for the Japanese race, changed the design on the side to change his name in English to Japanese characters. But the livery and colors were identical to other races. Sebastian Vettle and Lewis Hamilton did minor changes in Monaco to honor Niki Lauda.
















COURSE
USA1482
USA1048



MEET THE PRESS

The Officials Newsletter Team is back. For us it is a cooperative effort and without the team working together with each other, COTA and ACCUS, it couldn't happen. And the payoff is that we all get to work with you, observe and record you, and especially get to know you.

Ron Searle divides his time between Houston and Melbourne, Australia. He's a retired gas development manager. At AGP in Melbourne he's been one of the AGP Officials Gazette's photographers for the past ten years. Ron does the USGP Newsletter layout and is one of the photographers. He started with the first COTA race and has been to most ever since.



Jon Cronk of Morgan Hill CA is a Technical Marketing Director in Silicon Valley. He works as a Course Marshal & Flagger in SFR SCCA, and started with the USGP Newsletter in 2013. He's one of the USGP Newsletter photographers.

Pablo Matamoros from St. Paul MN is an educator coordinator for the St. Paul School District. He is an IndyCar photographer and also manages a motorsports website, Estilo Deportivo. He's one of the USGP Newsletter photographers and has been coming since 2016..

Lynne Huntting of Oakland CA is a motorsports journalist and lifetime member/flagger of SFR SCCA. It was her idea to have the USGP Officials Newsletter, based on the AGP Officials Newsletter which she started 22 years ago. The COTA newsletter has been facilitated and supported by ACCUS. Lynne writes and takes the occasional photograph.

Sydney Davis Yagel is now from Indianapolis IN, where she is the General Manager for SCCA ProRacing. Here at COTA she is working with F4 US as well as Race Admin for the Marshals. Sydney designed the USGP Newsletter logo and did design layout the second and third years. Sydney also facilitated the Newsletter being posted online with the SCCA Southwest Division website.

The first two issues of the USGP Newsletter are now posted on line, as well as archived issues 2014-2018. http://sowdivscca.com/f1/