



AP Photo/Matthew Childs

Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc of Monaco, left, tries to overtake Red Bull driver Max Verstappen of the Netherlands after a pit service, during the British Formula One Grand Prix at the Silverstone racetrack, Silverstone, England, on July 14.

Bigger tires in store for Formula One

By JIMMY GOLEN
Associated Press

NEWPORT, R.I. — Formula One tires are getting a makeover to make them look more like the ones auto racing fans can buy for their own cars.

The circuit will switch to 18-inch tires beginning in the 2021 season, one of a series of changes it is making as it embarks on a new contract with the Italian tire-maker Pirelli that begins next year and runs through 2023. F1 has used 13-inch tires for decades.

"The change ... is designed to more closely align Formula 1 tires with street tires, allowing an even greater degree of technology transfer between them," the company said.

Other changes where the rubber meets the road: No more heating blankets, narrower front tires and tires that will degrade more slowly, a modification that could drastically affect race and pit stop strategy.

Some of the changes were announced by the F1 last year. Pirelli shared more details with The Associated Press this month during an event for the 2021 America's Cup; the company is a sponsor

and technology partner with the Italian challenger Luna Rossa.

"Formula One is the pinnacle of the technology in motor racing," Marco Crola, the Chairman and CEO of Pirelli North America, told the AP at the New York Yacht Club in Newport before the America's Cup challengers gave an update on their progress. "This one is exactly the same in water sports."

Pirelli noted that the bigger tires will have far-reaching effects on the build of the car. The 13-inch models, with their high sidewalls, served as half of the suspension for the car, and the 18-inch ones will create more aerodynamic resistance.

"The move to a new size is a significant change for the teams, as it's not just as simple as swapping a 13-inch tire for an 18-inch one," the company said in a statement to the AP. "Plenty of work has to be done to understand the challenges involved."

Some details remain to be sorted out when FIA, the Formula One governing body issues its regulations. Pirelli will begin testing the new tires later this summer and through 2020 on the Formula Two circuit.

Kurt Busch, crew chief enjoy victory after Daytona criticism

By DOUG ALDEN
Associated Press

LOUDON, N.H. — When fans slammed crew chief Matt McCall for costing Kurt Busch a win at Daytona, he was a good sport and made a video for social media of him reading the criticism — even a critical tweet that came from his wife.

The feedback has been quite different this week.

Busch raced to his first victory with Chip Ganassi Racing last week at Kentucky — in part because of a call McCall made before overtime — and McCall has been able to focus on what's ahead rather than answering for any mistakes.

"It feels great, but I'm terrible about celebrating. Literally, when I get home, I'm already thinking about the next week," McCall said Friday. "That's the way I've always been and I've always raced. I think it's because when you're in a sport like this, you're expected to win."

That hadn't happened until last Saturday, when Busch edged brother Kyle in a two-lap overtime shootout at Kentucky Speedway. It was the first time Kurt beat his little brother in a head-to-head NASCAR finish, but more importantly, it was a victory for the elder Busch, McCall and Ganassi, who had been in position to win the week before at Daytona before lightning struck — literally.

Busch was in front after making it through a massive accident unscathed. NASCAR said the race was one lap away from resuming, but McCall called Busch in for a quick pit stop, which turned out to be the end of the line.

Lightning quickly followed and the race was eventually called, leaving McCall with a backlog of angry mes-



AP Photo/Timothy D. Easley

Kurt Busch celebrates his win in the NASCAR Cup Series auto race at Kentucky Speedway in Sparta, Ky., on July 13.

sages from fans questioning his logic, among other things.

McCall said he may have taken it hardest of all.

"There's stuff that's out of control," McCall said. "Our car was good enough to possibly win the race if we raced, so that made it a little bit harder to not stay out."

The Busch/McCall/Ganassi fortunes changed in Kentucky and this time it was McCall who was widely credited with a crucial call that helped the team to victory on four fresh tires.

"We just sort of got pretty lucky there to have the caution at the end," McCall said. "Kurt had a really good restart and made it happen."

The result lifted the Ganassi and Team Chevy spirits considerably this week as the circuit headed north for Sunday's Cup Series race at New Hampshire Motor Speedway, where Busch swept both races in 2004 and also won in 2008.

Now 40, Busch is on a

one-year contract and trying to enjoy each stop.

"Each week is fun because there's speed to be found and teamwork to work on to make sure we're going to have the best weekend," Busch said. "It brings it back to that passion and desire when I was younger to go out there each week and try to make sure we're getting the most out of each session."

With Busch as his driver, McCall said it's almost like having a co-crew chief and extra hand in the pit crew. Kentucky was Busch's 31st Cup victory and never bashful, Busch always has a few "suggestions" for his crew on how to make the car perform better.

"His feedback and the information he provides and what he asks for, it's pretty precise," McCall said. "I feel like he asks for what he needs and he asks for what we need to win. He just pushes for everybody to try and get better each week."

Busch, whose victory last week clinched him a play-

off spot, said he learned the value of communication growing up racing with his father, Tom.

"When you learn from an early age and a successful racer like my dad was, it gets instilled in you on how to communicate the proper things with the car and gives you that confidence to know what you want changed in the car," Busch said. "I just want their jobs to be easier because if they're jobs are easier, they're doing better and ultimately the car that I'm driving will have better results."

McCall said Busch has made a considerable effort to ease the transition into his new team such as group outings and hosting dinners. He also took a group of team leaders to Pittsburgh for a visit with Ganassi and a Cubs-Pirates game.

"He communicates with everyone. He tries to keep everyone involved," McCall said. "He does a good job with trying to keep the morale high."

Pagenaud wins 2nd straight pole at Iowa

By LUKE MEREDITH
Associated Press

NEWTON, Iowa — Simon Pagenaud will start first in Saturday's IndyCar race at Iowa Speedway after winning the pole for the second week in a row.

Pagenaud, who won in Toronto last weekend starting from the front row, posted an average speed of 180.073 mph to capture his third pole of 2019 and his 13th overall.

Will Power qualified second, followed by series leader Josef Newgarden and Takuma Sato. Defending Iowa champion James Hinchcliffe was fifth and Alexander Rossi, just four points behind Newgarden, will round out the third row.

The pole winner has never won an IndyCar

race at Iowa's 0.875-mile oval in 12 tries, though.

"Traffic plays a big role in this race," Pagenaud said. "It's about having a good car in traffic, a good car on long runs. Most of the time it finishes under smash-and-dash at the end with a late yellow."

TEAM PENSKE'S POLE DOMINANCE

Pagenaud's qualifying win was the fifth straight for Team Penske at Iowa and the eight in 13 tries. But the powerhouse squad has only won the race once in Newton, when Helio Castroneves notched his final IndyCar victory in 2017.

"There's very strong competition within the team. But as you can see, Team Penske is phenomenal. They give us the fastest cars," Pagenaud said.



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