

[Transcript] Sky Sports F1 Podcast / Guenther Steiner reveals the truth behind Mick's Schumacher's Haas exit!

Hello, everyone. Welcome to this week's episode. Now, before we go back racing in Baku, we've got one final guest for you this week, and that is the Haas team principal, Gunter Steiner. He popped by for a chat to talk all things F1 and his starring role in Drive to Survive. Thank you as well to all of you who sent in questions. We tried to get through as many as possible. I hope you enjoyed the conversation.

Gunter, welcome to the Sky Sports F1 podcast. Thanks for having me.

Great to get you on. How are you, first of all?

Fine. Perfect. In the moment, we had a little bit of time off, which doesn't mean that we didn't work. I was going to say, because obviously, you get the summer break, where you're not allowed to work on the car, but we've now got this April break, because obviously, we've lost the Chinese Grand Prix, and you are allowed to work on the car. So how's it been, and what have you been able to achieve?

You're always working Formula 1. Even if you don't race, it's not like that the people can go home and do nothing. You know, like in a normal job, you always keep pushing, and there's always something to do. And the same is for me. You just do things which you may be otherwise. You spread them out a little bit, but it's a good way to catch up. I mean, we had three races, plaster testing, and then with this time, you called the time off. It's not time off. We didn't go racing for one weekend. It wasn't off. But anyway, you just catch up and you try to get ahead. So when you get in now, the busy, busy season, which is now it's a double header coming, and then a triple header, which is quite intense. At least if you start then with having cleaned up all your work, which you left back, it's always nice.

Yeah, absolutely. Right. This is how it's going to work. You've got a brand new book out, which was very good. So I want to talk about this. And then I also want to get into some questions from the fans as well, at home, who've sent them in in their droves. So there's an awful lot to get through. But let's talk about the book. What made you want to write a book?

It, like a lot of things in my life, it just happened, you know, I didn't plan to write a book. Somebody approached me, you know, you want to write a book and I was like, yeah, I don't want to write a biography. I mean, everybody, a lot of people have done it. And it's not something, you know, you say I want to do yet. I still want to work. I'm not retiring. So I'm not as important as the as the drivers. And I said, I don't really want to do that. And then I was told, no, the book will be your year. That was now, I think, 80 months ago that I was approached. It will be about next season, you know, just like a diary. We write about how the years have what is happening. And I said, yeah, but if nothing exciting happens, what are we going to write about it? You know, because at the time, I didn't know what will happen. I said, we are pretty sure that something something interesting will happen with you because there's always drama around you. And I said, yeah, you know, after a while you think, yeah, maybe it's pretty cool because I knew that the funds like the Netflix series, so I said, maybe it's a good thing for the funds and maybe people can have fun with it. And that in the end was the reason why we did it. Yeah, it's set out with dire entries, isn't it, throughout the 2022 season. The first thing that I noticed was just how much you move around. So you've got a home in North

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Carolina, that's your that's your house. That's where you sort of you live. Then you've got an office in Maranello, factory in Bambry. And of course, you're going to every single Formula One race with the team. So I mean, how on earth do you manage any time off? I don't need a lot of time off. For me, my job is what I like to do. So it doesn't mean that I have time off when I work, but it's something I enjoy. So it doesn't come difficult for me. But when I have time off really, you know, when there is a weekend between races, I just go home to North Carolina and stay with my family and and and do very little on the weekend. You know, I don't have any any hobbies or anything like this. So I just stay with my family and try to relax to to get to get my energy back to get going again. For the 2022 season, it was quite an interesting year to follow, right? Because you'd had two years, 2020, 2021, very disappointing for the team. And 2022 was actually the year where it seemed like you guys really kicked on. And I mean, you ended the year with 37 points, you know, which compared with the the lower points totals in the other years is obviously a good year. Yeah, absolutely. And as you just said, 2020 and 2021 were very difficult for the team. They're very difficult for me. And then we put a lot of effort into 2022. And obviously, the risk by doing that was you're all 2021 off, but also you go into 2022, with everybody's expecting you to do better or to make a step, you know, so the pressure is pretty high. But I was pretty convinced I'm doing this a long time, motorsport. And so I was pretty convinced that we can succeed. And I think we made a good step forward in 2022. In racing, it's never good enough, you know, that so even if you win, it's not good enough because and we are pretty far away from winning. But we made a step and we now have again, a solid platform, I will call it. Yeah, it was definitely a good year to follow you guys. I want to know how the audio book was to record. I assume you did an audio book, right? How was that? Yeah, it was painful. But maybe not only for me, also for the sound engineer, you know, because again, it was one of the things they said country would be nice if you do an audiobook. And in the beginning it was no, I forgot the time, I'm not going to do it. And then some said, but people want to hear your voice with your book, you know, because of your accent and and and all that stuff. But I always think that all the other people have got an accent. I haven't got one, you know, by the way. So but but then I did it. And it was it is more work than I anticipated. But things like this, I always say, either I do it right, or I don't do it. So I put the effort in. And even if it doesn't work, at least I can say I put the best effort in I can, you know, if it isn't good enough, I mean, can happen. There is always something you cannot do. So it was heavy going, you know, and I did it in three days. But I feel a little bit sorry for the sound engineer listening to me for three days, you know, and sometimes I get stuck on on one word that I couldn't say it anymore, because it's, you know, my first language is not English. So you guys don't understand that you've got the word, which you cannot say anymore. And you have to repeat it and repeat it. But in the end, it all worked out. Yeah, well, I think the audio bit will be great as well, because it's, yeah, as a way of as a way of getting into your head and how you are throughout the year, I think it's a brilliant, brilliant book. And now some of the some of the big topics that kind of you cover in that book, I want to get into one of those is makes you mackering and the the cost of his crashes on the team. And you put that about \$2 million across the whole

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season. I'm intrigued to know what impact that has on a team like has. It has a big impact on a small team, but it also now has an impact even if it would be a bigger team, because with the cost cap in place, this is money, you cannot develop your car. Because if you can, and then you don't develop your car, your car doesn't go any faster. So everybody gets frustrated. So last year, has F1 was very close to the cost cap, we weren't completed there. But the two million, it's as simple as this, they just don't go into development, you know, and because you cannot make it up, even if you got the full budget, if they go away, this is where you spent your money. So it's never very good. So therefore, it is so frustrating, because you cannot do anything about it. It's not like, okay, now Gunther has to go and find another \$5 million on sponsorship, even if you find it, you cannot spend it anyway. Which was the which was sort of the final straw in terms of Mick? Was it Japan? He had that crash, didn't he on the in lap of a practice session? Was that when you kind of felt like he wasn't the driver that was going to take you further forward?

I think there was a certain frustration when this happens, I get very frustrated. I'm very emotional. And I say things, I maybe wouldn't say two hours later, to be honest. But when you're sitting there, and you know, the effort which went in, the effort the people put in, not me, I mean, all the people to make this cast to make it all happen. And then things like this happen. And you get frustrated. But there is not normally there is, you get this moment of, we need to change something. But then you have to think, if I change something, how do I change this into be better for the team? It's no point to make just a decision. We finish here. And then that I think where we started, where I start to really think, what do what do I need to do to take the team forward from where we are in 2022. 2022, we had, I call it a good, a decent car. Next year, which is now 2023, the plan was to have a little bit of a better car. What do we need to get everything out of the car to every point available, we take it home. And obviously, I came up then getting an experienced driver, but it is not one moment where you decide this is the moment, it comes over a little bit of time, and it just grows in you and say, we need to do something. And is that you taking your own responsibility for those crashes? You kind of take that yourself? Absolutely. I mean, you have to because the buck stops with me, you know, and you have to say, okay, this is what we did. I need to fix this, you know, I need to fix this for the team like I expect every team member to fix this area he or she is responsible for. What's your relationship like with Mick now? When you see him in the paddock, for example, do you stop say hello? And is it all very cordial? I didn't see him this year. Honestly, I think I saw him at testing and I said hello, but afterwards I didn't see him because he's now at the other side of the paddock, you know, where the where the champions are at the other side. So I didn't run into him in all three races. So I have no problem to say hello. I don't know how he will react. But I think we're all grown up. And in the end, we had two years together. We tried to do something. We gave Mick an opportunity, you know, which we also have to, I think needs to be respected as if one took the opportunity and or gave him the opportunity. And, you know, we all need to move on. And Formula One is quite a small circus, I call it. And, you know, in the end, there's no point to to fight or not to say hello to anybody. You refer in the book to some of the German media having it in for you. And I'm just intrigued if for you to explain how you think that had an impact on on Mick and perhaps Mick not being able to get the best out of the car last year. I think I was trying to put pressure on to keep me to blame all the team. And I don't

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think that was good for Mick, you know, because in the end, they didn't actually try to divide us. But that was a debt, I think, because obviously he didn't feel good when he heard the things talked about me. And I didn't feel good coming from their side. So in the end, they tried to divide us. And as I always said, this is this is not good for Mick, even if you try to do this, because in the end, we have the team in the end decides who is going to drive the car, not the driver, which car he's driving. So it's no point to upset a team about the driver, because you want to say Gunther didn't take care enough of Mick and how I do things. So in the end, he scored points. Nobody says that is because Gunther managed Mick like this, nobody came with that one. And I don't

expect that because like, I don't expect to be blamed if he crushes, you know, because the driver has to do that himself to get the points and not to crush. And the responsibility with the team is to give the driver the best car they can, you know, and we always did that to be fair to both drivers that they both get the same level of car. We always did that. And then if we didn't do that, we explained that, for example, an upgrade only one part was available, and you share it, but we are very open about it. We never hit anything or gave an advantage to one or the other driver, because that's a principle of my of my life, you need to treat people fairly to get the best out of it. Because in the end, who is who wants the drivers to perform at their best? Me and the team. So why would I try to sabotage any of our drivers? So, you know, and that was not understood. And in the end, you know, this is part of our life of a team principle life that some people don't like what you're doing. So I mean, I think people know how I feel about it. I don't really care. I mean, if somebody doesn't like what I do, don't don't just say it, but it doesn't do anything. I will not change, you know, because I don't feel I need to change because of somebody who has no vote in the team. Moving on then to your to your driver lineup for this year with Kevin and Niko, obviously, a much more experienced set of drivers than you had with Nikita and and Mick. Looking back on having two inexperienced drivers in your team, do you would you now say that it's actually a better idea to have at the very least one experienced and one rookie, or would you point to just more experiences better within a Formula One team? I think at least you have to have now and I learned that lesson as well. But at the time, we didn't have a choice, you know, we took two rookies and we tried to make it work. And obviously now with having had the experience,

I can fairly say it was not a good experience. And but I'm not blaming the drivers. I'm blaming ourselves for it. You know, I'm not trying to put any blame is very difficult with having two rookies. And obviously, having two experienced drivers is for a team like ours is the best because we are still the youngest team in Formula One. And just getting always the advantage of a guy which has done this longer than we are doing it. Niko's driving F1 cars longer than has F1 exists. Think about that one, you know, so and that was always in the beginning, we started with that one, we had Roman and we had Esteban. Esteban did only one year before, but yet one year. And that year was not actually not so bad for him. So but then we swapped immediately to Kevin, which had already

two years in F1, because we always wanted to experience. And now we could have a driver, which one had five years and one, I don't know how many Niko's got, I think, between eight and ten, I don't even know, but more than the team has got. So in the moment, that is the we are in a very good position. And we are very happy with that, because that's what we were

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looking for. Just to give us that experience and to take us forward. And again, we cannot blame the other drivers for it. We knew when we took them on that they don't have the experience, you know, we have nobody else than us to blame that we make that decision. So and experience to make experience just takes times. And in Formula One, you haven't got a lot of time. Certainly not. Certainly not. And I want to ask you about the story that I read in the book about how you recruited Niko Holkenberg for the drive, because essentially, you played quite hard to get, didn't you? You said that you rang him once, and then you just didn't you waited to hear from him afterwards? Yeah, it is one of the things. And also at the time, when I rang him once, there was not really sure what we want to do yet, you know, so I just wanted to feel out if he's available or not. And also to feel a little bit how big his hunger is, how big he wants to come back in. Because if you think about, he was out of a full time ride for three years, which is a long time. Obviously, he did a few races, but I say full time, right? It's like, how much does he want to get back? And after a while, I think, and I don't know how he played it, but after a while, for a while, he didn't call. And then because I thought, I think in the beginning, he thought it is not serious what I'm doing, you know, and then after a while, I think it actually want to go back to F1. I better call this guy up because we had discussions in the years before he joining us and we never got to it. So I think and then it just started that I wanted to understand how hungry he is to get back into Formula One. Very hungry, clearly. Absolutely, I think. And it's very strange in Formula One, when these guys leave, also Kevin, when they leave, they're all, yeah, I cannot win races with the team I'm in because only two or three teams can win races. You know, I'm not in that team. So I go and do something else. I will be fine. I will go and win races. Then they go away. And I think they win a race in another series, you know, which is always in VEC or in IMSA or IndyCar. And it's always nice to win. But then I think they think back is, well, was F1 not fantastic, you know, because F1 is the pinnacle of racing. And then it's just one of these things. They just want to come back to F1. And then they get hungry again because they miss it. Same thing. If the sun is always shining, you don't miss the rain. But the day is raining, you realize, oh, the sun was actually pretty good, you know. It's a very good way of looking at it. One of the other really interesting sections of the book was about the start of the 2022 season when you had Nikita Mazepin and the title sponsor of your car. You had to lose both of those due to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Take us back to the start of that season. And when was the first point you understood that this was going to be a serious issue for Haas? We always knew that there was a clash. And because it was, but I personally didn't did not think that Russia will invade Ukraine. So we didn't make any arrangements, you know, we were not always, you think about, but you don't make any preparation or you don't make a plan B, because sometimes it's like whatever happens, it will something will happen, which is will be very strange because it, we didn't expect it because in the end you think here in 2022, a war happening in Europe, maybe not, you know, then how we got to know about it is very simple. I was on breakfast with Mr Haas with Jean on the first day morning, seven o'clock, as always with Jean in the hotel. That's a habit, is it? Every morning when he's at the truck. When he's at the truck, when it's late, it's seven o'clock, you know, because he cannot sleep with the jet lag. So obviously we have breakfast and it's very nice. It gives me time with him, you know, without, without, without other things to do. But then we were sitting there and we both, as you do at this stage normally, you go on your news and it was like the, you know,

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Russia invaded Ukraine and wow. And he said, I think you got your day, your day is getting busy today. That was Jean's thing on it. And obviously I knew we need to do something. I just at the time, I didn't know what I took my director of communication. I said, come and sit with me in my office because I will make a lot of phone calls. And if you are there, I don't have to explain you what is happening. You hear it live. And I just started to phone up people and people started to call me up. And I had to wait until California was awake because they are nine hours behind because the board of house is sitting in California. And obviously I had to get their opinion about it. I got everybody's support. And we just decided that evening that we are going to cut ties with your Akali. And how did you break the news to Nikita? What was his reaction? I mean, with Nikita, we didn't break that day that waited a little bit because he had finished testing anyway. So it was very difficult to tell him, Nikita, we don't know what we're going to do because I think a young person, you need to think a little bit more about it's his career, it's his life in front of him. But in the end, we had to terminate him as well. Yeah, it strikes me as really interesting that this is all part of the role of a team principal. It's not just race, you know, turning up and racing over a weekend. You really do do all the aspects of being head of a team, head of an organization. Absolutely. And I think a lot of people don't see that because we didn't tell. But I mean, drive to survive showed a little bit what we have to do. We have to deal with sponsorship. We have to deal with the Federation. We have to deal with the promoter. We have to run a race team. It's like being a CEO of a big company, which has got a lot of different things going on. And just less people instead of being a big corporate with thousands of people. We are a corporate, the big teams with 6 to 800 people. And in the case of us, 200 people. But you have to do a lot of multitasking. Yeah. And one of the lines as well that you said at the end of one of the chapters was seriously who'd have my life, which I thought was really, really funny. And I think it just goes to show that you, especially that week, and then you also had the issue with the freight not arriving in Bahrain for the test on time. So you lost some time in testing. These are all issues. It's like firefighting, isn't it? Just one thing after another. Yeah. And especially that year last year was in the beginning was just so intense. There was always something new coming at us. And then also the freight being late. And then one team opposing that we can run longer one evening because we have an advantage. It's like, guys, I mean, it's not our fault. I mean, we don't get an advantage of running it. So you have to reshuffle everything and just try to do always your best. And going back to when we said in 2021, we are going to write this diary, nobody anticipated that all this happens. And this drama just happened is coming to us, you know. And I always say, can you imagine if you if we would put effort into great drama, what would we be able to do? You know, this is just for free, you know, this drama. That's funny that the publishers will say or you were saying to the publishers initially, I'm not sure there's going to be enough drama this year. And there certainly was. All right, let's let's move on to talk about Drive to Survive. And obviously, you've had a starring role in the series so far. It's it's really put you on the map for a lot of Formula One fans. Is it true you still haven't watched it back? Absolutely true. I find that remarkable. Have you not even seen like short clips or I saw one or two short clips, very short ones, you know, but I never watched it. And I think I can explain also why I didn't watch it. Because I'm doing I'm not doing anything. I'm

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doing my job and people follow me and film me. So if I watch myself, I'm sure I would try to do things different. Then that would take me I would think the next time when I'm filmed, how should I behave and not and differently. I'm not an actor. An actor needs to watch himself to do his job better. I'm not an actor. I'm doing I'm not the principle. So I need to do a job. So that's why I don't watch it. So at least in my head, I always I don't start to think how should I how should I do next time when a camera is around. So I avoid to watch it in the moment. And after five, five seasons, I've got used to it, not to watch it and to explain to people why not because people say you're not interested. No, I was actually there. So I don't need to see me. I know how what I did and what I didn't do. Yeah, I think it's the fact that you yeah, seem very authentic on Drive To Survive. And I think, you know, fans particularly, they get quite a media watered down version of what happens in the paddock sometimes. That's what they see on Twitter or on TV. But I think the reason why you resonated so well was it was so authentic. I mean, there's no way you could act some of those pieces. I mean, I don't think. As I said, I didn't see it. So I cannot tell you if I can act. But this is me. And I think a lot of people which know me a long time, 20, 25 years, they can, they can tell you he was always like this and he didn't change, you know, that that's me, you know, and I am now too old to change that anyway. So I keep like I am and I'm not watching it. Maybe I'm watching it when I retire, you know, and I'm completely embarrassed about it. And don't go out of my house anymore. I don't think you should be embarrassed by it was very entertaining and very, very good. All right, final, final bit I want to talk to you about before we move on to the Q&A for it from people at home. There's a really nice quote at the start of the book by Nicky Laude. It says, a lot of people criticize Formula One as an unnecessary risk. But what would life be like if we only did what was necessary? And you speak about Nicky in the book quite a lot. And I just want to find out from you about your relationship with Nicky and how that developed and how he mentored you over over the years. It's very strange. I got into FF1 because of Nicky. I did, obviously I knew who Nicky was. He was, you know, when I was a kid coming from South Dirol, which is close to Austria, he was a hero to all of us, you know. And the day he called me or his secretary called me up asking if that Nicky Laude wants to speak with me for me, it was like, sure, I'm going to speak with Nicky Laude because I was working in rallying was perfectly happy what I was doing. But if somebody in my position says Nicky Laude wants to speak with you, you know, it's something. Yeah, sure. And we spoke. I went to see him for dinner in Vienna one day. And the next day he called me up, you're going to work for me. And we established a very good relationship the year I was with him at Jaguar. And getting into F1 is quite difficult. And as I said, I didn't try to get into F1. I was perfectly happy in rallying where I was. But being brought in by Nicky Laude to F1, it's just your introduction is so much quicker than if you have to do it yourself, because he's the guy which is respected. Everybody knows him. He introduces you to other people. And all of a sudden, you got credibility because of him. Because people say if Nicky trusts this guy, this guy must be pretty good, you know. And that was my way in. And in the year we worked together, I worked for Nicky. We established a very good friendship. And that continued when we both left Jaguar, you know, always, we were always in touch. We spoke at least once a month, even sometimes when something was happening weekly. And when I started to build a pass, Nicky again helped me because if Nicky Laude calls up somebody,

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it's a lot more than when Gunter Steiner calls up somebody, you know, so the difficult phone calls, I always said, Nicky, can you do me a favor? Can you call it? Sure. And I mean, the first meeting, the serious meeting with Stefano from Ferrari, the Monicali, Nicky and Bernie Ecclestone, Nicky instigated, you know, to say, hey, Bernie, you have to listen to Gunter. I knew Bernie from before, but you know, there is always people which wants to open a team. And that now this Gunter is coming and Nicky told him he's serious. And that was Nicky in making that introduction again. So my relationship was always very good. And sadly, he passed away a few years ago. And I think Formula One misses him quite a lot. Yeah, absolutely. Here, here. Okay, thank you. That was the that was the section on your book. We've now got quite a few questions from people at home. These are going to be a little bit random, you know, but I think I think they're going to be quite interesting. So the first question is a tweet from Sasha, which is referring to the door that Kevin Magnussen hits. Have Haas invested in more sturdy door brackets now, given that A, Kevin is back in the team and B, the season is longer than before? No, Kevin knows not to smash the door anymore. We don't need bigger, bigger, bigger doors or anything stronger. He just know he's not going to do that anymore. Is it what's happened to the door? Is it somewhere you should auction it? I think it would, I think it would give quite a lot of money. It's still in the motorhome. We still need it, you know, so we are planning to change motorhome for next year. Maybe auction it off. That's actually a pretty good idea. Yeah, did his question from Clarkson, did Kevin actually ever pay for the damage?

No, I mean, he's a driver. He would never pay for any damage, you know, driver. So very good. All right, Paul tweets, were you ever worried about Hülkenberg and K-Mag's previous issues when you hired Hülkenberg? How have you made them get along with one another this season?

No, I wasn't worried. I spoke when I looked around for a driver. I spoke with Kevin how the relationship was because I wanted to make sure that I'm not, you know, if they were still head to head, that I open another issue, you know, so I spoke with them and Kevin explained to me, you know, apparently they ran into each other at an airport a few years ago and they cleared out everything before, so he was actually very happy with having Nico as a teammate.

Yeah, seems like they get along very well this season, certainly to us in the media.

Ian tweets, will we ever see a truly independent team again like Brabham,

BRM or Williams, or has the growth in manufacturer teams changed the sport forever?

It's difficult to say. I mean, who would have expected Formula One to be what it is five years ago, you know? Can it go the other way that there is other private teams again that the manufacturers leave? I mean, the manufacturers left in 2009, 2010, they all ran away, you know?

I don't know. I cannot answer that, but I think what it is in the moment, Formula One is in a very good place and we try to keep it like this, but then we are not in control of financial crisis and things like this, so fingers crossed, we keep on going like this and stays like this, but I think a few independent teams will always stay around and I think they add a little bit of spice to the business, otherwise it will get too corporate in my opinion.

Yeah, absolutely, I agree. Emily would like to know if you could drive an F1 car around any track, which circuit would it be and why? First of all, I have no interest in driving an F1 car.

Really? A lot of people ask me, no. Why not? I haven't got enough talent, as simple as this, you know? You need quite a little, a lot of talent to drive these cars because you need to keep the

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tyres in temperature, which means you need to go fast, but not understanding, you know, apparently,

because I know the old one, the aerodynamics, you need to understand them that you that you trust the car because I'm used to drive a car without downforce, you know, like most of us, you know, all of a sudden you get this down for so, but I think if there would be a track, I would like to drive it. If I would have the talent, it would be a Suzuki because I think that's that's a very cool track for a driver. It must be so cool going through some of the corners there at that speed. It just must be something really, really cool. Yeah, they used to have two Seats for F1 cars, didn't they? Where I think you could be driven round at that sort of speed. That'd be pretty cool. Yeah, I was offered that one once when they were still around, but I didn't fancy it, to be honest. You're not a speed freak like some people are.

No, it's something strange. You know, when you work in this business, it's not something which intrigues me. Okay, very interesting, very interesting.

Ben on Instagram would like to know, how did you become a team principal? What was your path?

That's a big question. But can you try and, you know, I mean, if someone at home wants to be a Formula One team principal, what would be your advice? Maybe that's an easier question.

Yeah, at least so, because otherwise we are sitting here for a minute and saying my story, exactly, nobody may be falling asleep, you know, by telling them the story. But no,

it's, if you look at the team principles now, they're coming from all different directions. I think it's one of these things which in life, you need to, first of all, being at the right time,

at the right place, and then have worked in racing before. You need, in my opinion, some racing experience, and you can get it from various racing parts of it, you know,

varying categories, but you need to have been in racing, I think, because otherwise, you struggle, because it is quite a complex, I wouldn't even say complicated, but complex

environment to move into. And as proven in 2022, you need the ability to fight fires, you need the ability to be, you know, to balance opinions, you need all of that as well.

Exactly, you need to know the players, you need to know how to lobby, you need to do so many things, and you need to know people around in motorsports to be efficient, because otherwise, if you're not efficient, one little problem, it takes you forever to sort, and in F1, what you've, what you're not given is time.

Tomo tweets, was there a genuine chance you could have signed Charles Leclerc back in 2017, who just came off winning GP3 in 2016? No, he was a Ferrari driver, and obviously,

we could have had him as a one-year driver. At that time, we were not into having just a one-year driver, because for a team, that is normally not something you want to have,

because you train the driver, and then when, if he's a good driver, when he gets good, you move him on. So in the end, you're nothing else than a proving ground for a big team. So

that's why we didn't do it. If he wanted, I don't know if Ferrari would have given him to us for one year, but they gave him to Sauber at the time. So, but we were not actually bidding for him.

Yeah, he drove for you, didn't he, of course, in some practice sessions? Was, I mean, did you, did you see the talent at that point that you thought he was going to go on and be a top,

top-class driver? Yeah, we never have to forget, his first drive in an F1 car was with us in, in an FB, in an FB2, FB1, sorry. It's difficult to see in FB1, and the clever drivers, the really

fast ones, they do not do anything over the top, because they don't want to take any risk,

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and they are aware of this, because the worst thing for a driver, which gets a junior driver, which gets into F1, is to crash out in one of these FB1 sessions, because people will always remember that in F1, you never take that off your resume, that when you sit sat in an F1 car, the first or the second time in FB1, and you crashed it, that's you're already known as a crash, or even if, you know, you just tried a little bit too hard, so Charles was very smart in there, he just tried to get the feel for that one car, and did what he needed to do.

Yeah, he's turned out all right, hasn't he, now? Just a, just a bit.

Robert Sweets, who is your favorite driver to work with?

Or, or is? Or is, yeah. I mean, I work with so many drivers, also in rallying, you know, I mean, if you, if you work with legends like Colin McRae, you never forget about him, you know, because he was, the guy had so much talent, you know, it was like, I mean, nobody could believe what he could do with a rally car, and I wasn't there when he tested on F1 car, but he told me he was pretty good in it as well, yeah, so I wasn't there at that test, but I like to work with him. I like, normally I like to, to work with most of the drivers, I work with Eddie Irvine, that for sure was interesting, you know, so as you all know, and, no, but also with our current drivers, I enjoy, I'm, I'm, I'm, I enjoy working with them. Yeah.

Josh would like to know, what's your favorite hike in the Dolomites?

I think that one he saw on Netflix. Yeah, exactly. Yeah, it's, there is a story behind it. If you're from that area, it's the highest mountain there is 3,900 meter. And if you are from there, you normally do it, you know, the amount, and I'm getting older now, and I never did it. So I took the opportunity to do it, you know, and I really enjoyed it. Yeah. What is it about hiking that you like? It's just being out in the nature, you know, I get the feeling there is something bigger than us, than the human being, there is something there, you know, I just get the feeling of freedom and, and get in that feeling, you know, there is something big out there, you know. Lovely. We should go hiking. You've sold me, you've sold me. The grinder gamer would like to know, what is your favorite sport aside from motorsport? I mean, I'm not practicing any sport myself, but to watch, I quite like to watch ice hockey, but I follow a little bit football, soccer, whatever we want to call it, but I just follow it. But I would say if I would do something else, really following it would be ice hockey, because I played it when I was a kid. Yeah. Do you have a football team? No, not really. No, because no, no. Okay. All right. Sure. Sure. I don't want to divide.

Yeah, I can understand. I can understand. There's a treat here. What's, what's your personal standout highlight moment from your time in F1 so far? I think it's when we, when Haas F1 started in Australia in 2016, it's the time there, you know, to start an F1 team from scratch. It's a big challenge with a lot of people told us it will never happen or we will be closing down sooner than we ramped up to go to a race because we, we, we introduced a complete different business model, how to do things and then going out there, being at the start, being competitive is just a nice feeling. You know, it's a nice feeling for the team. There was so many people which worked day and night to get there, you know, and give them the feeling to be there, to be organized as the other ones, even if you have to work day and night and then at the race scoring, at our first race scoring points, it was just a fantastic feeling.

Yeah. And still getting strong. Yeah. All these years later. Josh would like to know on Twitter, who wins in a boxing tournament between the team principals on the grid?

Who, who would, if you were up against one of the team principals, who would you be most scared

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of?

I think the, the, the fittest one is Toto, you know, but that has made him the best fighter, you know. So I wouldn't be scared of anybody, to be honest, you know, you think one could say, oh yeah, I could take them on. You can take them on. Yeah, yeah, I could take them on. Yeah, I'm scared of anybody there. Yeah. See if we can all go as that. I hope we don't have to go there, you know, that we are boxers. Yeah, yeah, fingers crossed, fingers crossed. We'll settle it on the track, not in the, not in the ring yet. Exactly, yeah.

Matt, you would like to know what your favorite part of a race weekend is?

Qualifying and race. I mean, that is, that is why, why I do this job. I, I, I still enjoy that adrenaline when you go out there on qualifying and when a race starts, you know, and the qualifying,

I think it's more intense as a burst of, of adrenaline and, and energy while the race is more like you need to stay calm because a lot of things can happen while in qualifying, a lot of things can happen, but they are fast and furious at you, you know, so, but these are the two moments

which I love. Yeah, agree, agree. Josh would like to know, as a former mechanic and engineer for rally cars, do you think F1 drivers complain too much? Or I would say, because obviously you've had experience in NASCAR as well. So you've seen a lot of different racing categories.

What do you make of Formula One drivers compared with other drivers in other categories?

I think race car drivers in general complain a little bit. It's just like, I think in F1, because they've got so much more exposure, we know about it more and maybe they can be a lot vocal, but it is, it is a way to voice when you are not content. But yeah, sometimes they should realize that they are actually complaining at the high level because being one of 20 in the world to drive this, this fantastic car, there's not a lot to be complained about, I think, especially now when all the cars, they are decent, you know, and obviously sometimes something can go wrong.

But what I want to say to that one, we then complain about the driver when they crash and they cannot understand why we complain, you know, so it's, I tell my drivers about that as well, I make them aware of, yeah, maybe the team did something wrong and you can complain, but next time when you do wrong, be careful what you get to hear. Yeah, I can imagine, I can imagine.

Clair would like to know, do you think your star turn in Drive to Survive has proven of commercial benefit to Haas? I would think so, you can never prove marketing thing, but I think it has given the team a lot of more exposure to different sponsors and that I think it may be attractive more sponsor, Moneygram, which is a sponsor for us this year, our title sponsor, very good company, and for sure they like what was done there, you know, have they done it just because of that, I don't think so, but does it help, yes. Yeah, certainly got more exposure for all F1 teams, not just those at the front of the grid, right? Correct, it gets more exposure for everybody, I think, and opening up to people to look inside and what we brought to the party, I think everybody should be happy, and F1 is very happy what they did for them.

How have you seen F1 change in the time? Since Drive to Survive has come out, have you noticed a change, say, in the amount of fans or the demographic of the fans, perhaps?

A combination, there is more fans and demographic, for sure, a lot of young people are tuning in now

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because they were shown what actually happens there and they think it's pretty interesting, as you said, there is a lot of things going on, it's just opened it up to a lot more people, and a lot of people which watch it now, they watch racing, I meet a lot of people in airports and things and say, hey, I'm watching F1 only because of you or because of Drive to Survive, or and they just tell you because they said, I had no interest before in it, but I watch it and now I'm a big fan, especially in the States, you know, I live there and it's pretty crazy there in the moment. Yeah, exploded, hasn't it, in the US. Alan would like to know, what's the hardest lesson you've learned in motorsport that's helped you going forward? The hardest lesson is quite few, I imagine. Yeah, there is a lot of hard lessons, but the lessons I've learned to never give up, to keep on going, I mean, I now can take a very recent scenario where never giving up and believing in yourself helps you. Who would have given us the credit that we can do a pole position in a race? We did it last year in Brazil. Obviously, we did it under very strange circumstances, but we managed the circumstances better than all the other teams. So I think you just to work, to need to work always hard and always do your best with what you have got and what you can do, the opportunity will arise, because if you say, oh, it will never happen anyway, it will not happen. So you always need to believe in yourself. Yeah, absolutely. Alex would like to know, if you could take any two drivers from the grid to replace yours, which two drivers would you take? This would be controversial, won't it? Yeah, I think it would be controversial, but that can be open about it, because they are not coming to drive for me anyway. So, you know, that's all that problem, the controversy, you know. I think it would be Max for sure, and either Charles or George Russell. Okay, why Max? What is it about Max, apart from the obvious? Yeah, I think he in the moment is just the driver, which talent-wise and mentally-wise, is just on a peak, you know, he's just on top of the wave, you know, he can do anything with a car in the moment, everything seems to be going right for him, and he has got them. His talent is very high. Yeah, I was wondering if you were going to say Max and Lewis? I wouldn't say Lewis, because he's getting on with age, you know, but there is another one which with age is very good, is Fernando. I mean, the guy is over 40, and, man, he knows how to drive a race car. He certainly does, yeah, yeah. I just would have liked to have seen you manage Lewis and Max, I think that would have been quite an interesting dynamic. Yeah, I mean, yeah, that maybe, I didn't even think about that one, because I don't think about it. If I do something like this, I think of that one afterwards. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I think the drive to survive cameras would have a field date if you were managing them. Caleb would like to know, if you were the CEO of F1 and you could change one thing about the sport, what would it be and why? I wouldn't change a lot in the moment, and I'm not just saying that to be nice to F1, but there is a lot of change going on in the moment where Stefano Domenicali is a good friend of mine. We talk quite a lot, and we always see if there is new things going on, like now hopefully in Baku, we have got the sprint qualifying, that is a thing I started to mention last year, because I think if you have a sprint weekend, a sprint race weekend, the Saturday morning session is boring as hell, in my opinion. You know, it's boring for me. I can imagine what the fun is, even more boring. So if you do a qualifying there, it's good. But I think there is a lot of stuff going on in the moment,

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which is very good for F1. And I don't think there is, for me, one thing which I would say, this would make it better in the moment. You know, we have to fine tune. There's a lot of things going on. We have got three races in the States. They want to stabilise the races in the States, the three of them, before making new ones. I think this is all good things are going on. So in the moment, I would love to stabilise the sport where it is now, and then keep making it growing, because we are at such a high level that we cannot always think everything just keeps on growing, because that is not going to happen. Okay, final question from Sathvek. What advice would you give to someone who is interested in pursuing a career in motorsports, either as a driver or part of a team? As a driver, I mean, you need to go and start go karting and just work your way up and be honest with yourself to see if you've got enough talent, because otherwise you're going to spend a lot of money and nothing will come out of it. But you need to try. Coming in as an engineer, mechanic, get involved in, if you want to be an engineer, go to university, make your studies, get good grades. I mean, that's very important. And then just try in your free time to help out a smaller race team, you know, in Formula Four, Formula Ford, Formula, whatever I always say, just get involved in that you understand the dynamics of racing. That is a big help if you then join one day Formula One. Yeah, because yourself, I mean, you've done almost every role, right, right from the very bottom all the way to the top. Absolutely. And I still say to the team, I could do about 80% of the job, not as good as the people which are doing it now, because I'm out of training, but I can see a lot and they know that they cannot pull the wool over my eyes, because if they tell me something, they know, Gunther maybe knows what I'm telling them, you know, so they're very careful about telling me something which is not true. Just a bit of some scare tactics, just a few. Gunther, thank you so much for your time. Really, really appreciate it. Best of luck for the rest of the season. We look forward to following House's progress. And we will be back next Tuesday after the Azerbaijan Grand Prix to look back at that. We hope you can join us then. Bye for now.