

ROSS BRAWN INTRODUCES THE NEW BRAWN GP FORMULA ONE TEAM

Q. Congratulations Ross on your acquisition of the former Honda Racing F1 Team and a positive outcome after the uncertainty of the past few months.

A. It has been a challenging few months for the team, certainly, but I am very pleased that we have finally reached a successful conclusion and the future of the team has been secured.

Q. Tell us about the Brawn GP Formula One Team. Who owns the team and how will it be structured?

A. I would like to start by saying that it is a great shame that we are no longer able to continue with Honda Motor Company, having worked together for so long. Following Honda's decision to withdraw, we needed to find a way to secure as many jobs as possible, ensure the team's continued participation in Formula One and make best use of the state of the art facilities that we are fortunate to have here in Brackley.

Quite simply, I have purchased the team from Honda. As the owner I will continue to be supported by the incumbent management team, who have worked closely with me throughout the sale process and will continue to do so in the future.

Q. It appears that there were a number of options available to Honda, from closing the team down to accepting an offer from one of the various third parties who have been mentioned. Why did Honda choose this route?

A. Honda wanted to make every effort possible to secure the future of the team. Closing down the team was always a last resort. It wouldn't be appropriate for me to comment on the options available to Honda. Suffice to say that the Honda board recommended and approved this route and I'm obviously very pleased that they reached that conclusion.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Honda for their fantastic co-operation and support - particularly those members of the senior management who were closely involved with concluding our agreement - and for the faith they have demonstrated in myself and our team.

Q. As you say it has been a challenging period. How is team morale?

A. There is no denying this has been a difficult time for everyone at our Brackley base, but I am immensely proud of the great spirit and fortitude that I have witnessed in the factory over the course of the past few months. The process of designing and manufacturing our new car, which has continued concurrent with the efforts being made to secure the team, has been reasonably straightforward. That is particularly pleasing given that our car was designed around a different engine and both the chassis and gearbox have been modified to accommodate the new engine. Our first test with the new car, though much later than we would have liked, will be an emotional moment for everyone in the team I'm sure.

Q. Tell us about your new partnership with Mercedes-Benz.

A. We are very fortunate to have secured an engine supply agreement with Mercedes-Benz and our new car, the BGP 001, will be powered by the 2.4 litre Mercedes-Benz FO108W Formula One engine. I would like to express our appreciation for their support over the past few months and we look forward to working with them as we seek to maximise the development and testing of the BGP 001 car in advance of the first race.

Q. Your driver line-up remains unchanged. Presumably continuity of drivers is going to be crucial to you with such limited time with which to prepare for the new season?

A. We are very fortunate to have two experienced drivers in Jenson Button and Rubens Barrichello. They will enable us to hit the ground running when we test for the first time in Barcelona next week. After four years as team-mates, their experience with our team in Brackley, our systems and our engineers, will prove a real asset. Jenson and Rubens have always had a great relationship and we expect to see them pushing each other hard over the season to get the best performance from the car and drive forward its development.

Both drivers are extremely motivated having trained hard over the winter to ensure that they were in the best possible physical condition. We look forward to their first thoughts on the BGP 001 at next week's Barcelona Test.

Q. Tell us about your testing programme in advance of the first race of the season?

A. We have conducted an initial shakedown of the car at Silverstone today and both the car and team are now heading to Barcelona where we will participate in the full team test at the Circuit de Catalunya on 9-12 March. Later next week we will head down to Jerez in Spain for a further three day test on 15-17 March. We obviously have a significant test programme to work through and this will require our full focus.

Q. Realistically, how tough is it going to be getting up to speed given that the other teams have had a substantial head start?

A. The biggest hurdle we faced was being in a position to race in Melbourne and we will now be able to achieve that target. Initially we may experience some reliability issues resulting from the lack of track testing but we feel we have a good car and we hope that our performance will be respectable. We are confident in the fundamental design principle of our car and look forward to the opportunity to develop it further as the season progresses.

Q. What are your expectations for Melbourne in three weeks' time?

A. The debut race weekend with 20 brand new cars is always difficult to predict and on this occasion I'm not even going to try. What I *know* we can take away from Melbourne is an enormous sense of pride and achievement at having already met and overcome our biggest challenge.

Q. Finally, what can you tell us about the striking new livery of the BGP 001?

A. We are very pleased with the new livery, which was designed for simplicity to reflect our current position at the inception of Brawn GP. Black and white seemed a natural place to start and the fluorescent yellow gives it a more striking touch of visibility. It's very different to any other car on the grid.

Media Contacts

General Media Enquiries - Nicola Armstrong

Direct Dial: +44 (0)1280 844096
Mobile: +44 (0)7793 844549
Email: NArmstrong@BrawnGP.com

Head of Media Communications - Tracy Novak

Direct Dial: +44 (0)1280 844212
Mobile: +44 (0)7736 630753
Email: TNovak@BrawnGP.com

www.BrawnGP.com