



## **Sir Jackie Stewart on the changing face of Formula 1**

The world of Formula 1 is changing. Now in the second year of the post-Bernie Ecclestone era US giant Liberty Media, who bought the sport's commercial rights a year ago, are beginning to implement their masterplan and have big ideas for the future of motorsport's elite category.

One person who has seen more change than most in the sport is three-time World Champion Sir Jackie Stewart, whose on and off-track career spans six decades. Speaking exclusively to our own Elle Haus, the 78-year-old admitted, "Change is always in some way a concern".

2018 has already delivered major changes with the axing of the grid girls (replaced with grid kids) and the introduction of the controversial Halo device, both of which have the Paddock split. And Formula 1 purists are concerned the sport is at risk of losing its soul.

As Stewart reflected, the sport has always been "a sophisticated European thing".

"And Americans coming into that are feeling somewhat new and therefore somewhat defensive. And their decision making is saying, 'well this is the way it is, we own it now'," he added.

It's this approach that has caused the fear within the Formula 1 fraternity that Liberty Media, in their attempt to reinvent the sport, will Americanise it. But the Scotsman believes it will "soften down".

"They're culture changes we're dealing now, with management that are American. And there's only been very few Grands Prix in the history of the sport in America per se.

"But these people [Liberty Media] are in film, they're in music, they're in entertainment and they're in Motorsport".

Liberty Media will soon launch F1 TV, a subscription service which will allow fans access to commercial-free live streams of each race with added enhancements. They also recently announced a collaboration with Netflix to produce a 10-part documentary series of the 2018 Formula 1 World Championship.

"I'm confident they will bring bigger communications to the people [including] their internet program which did not exist in the Bernie days, that's going to be one of their biggest things. Social media is going to be much bigger [and] that's good for sponsors.

"We need to bring sponsors in, not just for the track but for the teams. With the economy being what it has been recently there are not as many major multi-national corporations coming into Formula 1. But if you're getting much more media space, then that's what they [sponsors] want.

"So I think the Americans will do that better than we've ever had it before. I'm looking forward. I think it's going to take a little bit of time. It won't happen in the first year or the second year. But once they get more comfortable with it, the marketplace [will] realise the true potential.

"I personally think it's all positive."

**Originally published in Paddock Magazine**

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