

F1 – Di Resta Future Still Uncertain



A guaranteed seat for the 2014 Formula 1 season is still to be guaranteed for Scottish driver Paul di Resta. The Force India driver made an excellent start to the season, scoring points in seven of the opening eight races and equalling his career-best finish with a fourth place in Bahrain. However since Pirelli made a change to the construction of the tyres, di Resta has failed to score a single point. His team mate, Adrian Sutil, has only managed to score three points in the same period, highlighting the adverse effect the tyre changes have had upon Force India. Di Resta is currently in eleventh place in the World Drivers' Championship on thirty-six points, ten ahead of his team mate, but a failure to score in the second half of the season has left question marks over the twenty-seven-year-old's future in the sport.

Despite Force India having an option to take up di Resta for 2014, they have yet to confirm any intention to do so, and on Thursday, di Resta's manager Richard Goddard voiced his concerns over the driver's future: "It is a tricky situation. We're still under option – we haven't been told we're not going to be signed. But if the option lapses and doesn't get taken up, then it is a case of waiting to see if Force India come back to us."

Di Resta is also at a disadvantage in that he does not have the major financial backing from sponsors that would almost guarantee a place for next season. Many teams are swayed by the amount of sponsorship a driver can bring, and while drivers such as Pastor Maldonado (PDVSA) and Sergio Perez (Telmex) bring considerable financial backing with them, di Resta does not. Goddard admits that money issues make it

tricky to predict the availability of a seat: "It's difficult to know what will happen. There are a lot of drivers in the sport with money and a lot of teams that need money. That is probably the biggest issue, that it is not just outright talent that gets you a seat in the car any more."

Nevertheless, BBC analyst Eddie Jordan believes that di Resta has done enough to secure a seat for 2014 and beyond. The former F1 driver told BBC Radio Scotland that the Scot's earlier season form has proven that he is worthy of a place in F1, whether at Force India or elsewhere: "What he has in abundance is speed – he then has talent. He's having a particularly torrid time at the moment but that doesn't mean he's lost his talent or his speed. There are other teams. We must not forget about the opportunity that Paul has."

Jordan also pointed out that di Resta's talent has not gone unnoticed, even by the bigger teams such as Ferrari: "He's on the minds and lips of lots of the team bosses, right up to the highest level. I remember interviewing Ferrari chairman Luca Di Montezemolo and of the three or four drivers that he mentioned, Paul was one of them."

While the top seats at Red Bull, Ferrari and Mercedes are all confirmed, there is still the possibility of vacancies at Lotus, who have yet to announce Kimi Raikkonen's replacement, and McLaren, who have not confirmed whether or not Perez will remain with them. Force India are also still an option for di Resta, as they traditionally leave their driver announcements until after the season's end. Where the Scot will end up is still uncertain at the moment, but there many options still open to him to secure his future in Formula One.