

Vettel is bound to be distracted by Ferrari axe, says Brawn



Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel reacts prior to a race (file photo)

Reuters | London

Sebastian Vettel endured a nightmare start to the season in Austria on Sunday and Formula One's motorsport managing director Ross Brawn suggested being dropped by Ferrari for 2021 had affected his concentration.

Vettel, a four-times world champion with Red Bull, qualified only 11th at the Red Bull Ring and then tangled with McLaren's Carlos Sainz in the race, finishing 10th for the final point on offer.

Spaniard Sainz is also the man replacing the German at Maranello next year alongside

Charles Leclerc, who finished a surprise second on Sunday despite Ferrari's performance problems.

"It was a difficult start to Sebastian's final season with the team," said Brawn, a former Ferrari technical director and ex-Mercedes team boss.

"Everything must be swirling round in his head, after he found out Ferrari did not want to renew his services for next season.

"Sometimes, the things that put off a driver are quite subtle. Sebastian has appeared surprised and shocked by what has happened and it must be a distraction, understandably so."

Guardiola at a loss to explain Man City defeats

AFP | London

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola says he is struggling to understand why his team score so many goals and limit the opposition to so few chances but have still lost nine Premier League matches this season.

City, who relinquished the league title to Liverpool, lost 1-0 at Southampton on Sunday despite dominating possession (73%) and peppering the Saints goal with more than 20 shots.

Striker Che Adams sealed

victory for 13th-placed Southampton and condemned City, who beat Liverpool 4-0 in their last game, to a third successive league defeat away from home.

Champions Liverpool have lost twice in the league all season.

"We're leading in goals. We create a lot of chances," said Guardiola, who lost a third straight away league game for the first time in his managerial career.

"We're a team who concede less -- no team conceded as few chances as us but we lost a lot of games."

Hamilton didn't push for others to take knee

Lewis Hamilton was joined by all but six Formula One drivers in taking a knee

AFP | Spielberg

Lewis Hamilton explained he did not push for his fellow drivers to take a knee prior to Sunday's Austrian Grand Prix and said he was "grateful" to the 13 who joined him.

The six-time world champion, who finished off the podium in fourth after suffering two penalties on a tumultuous day, said he had avoided requesting the move as he clarified his role in drivers' talks before the race.

"I never requested, or demanded, that anybody take the knee. I never even brought it up," he said.

"Seb (Vettel) and Romain (Grosjean) both raised it and asked the drivers whether or not they would do it and there were several who said they wouldn't.

"I let everyone say what they wanted and then I just opened up to them and I said 'Look, guys, just so you know -- I will be doing it, but you do what you feel is right'."

Hamilton thanked his fellow competitors for their gesture pre-race.

"And I'm really, really grateful to those who did kneel along with me. I think it's still a really powerful message, but ultimately whether or not you kneel, or do not kneel, that's not going to change the world.

"And it's a much, much bigger issue across the world. I think everyone has a right to their own personal choice and, for me, personally, it was what I felt was right to do, but I didn't



The 2 Seas car in action during the race

make the decision until last night (Saturday)."

Hamilton, the sport's only black driver, said the impetus for the group gesture came from the sport's "End Racism" stance.

The message was emblazoned on all the drivers' t-shirts, while Hamilton's Black Lives Matter shirt had it on his back.

Six drivers -- Charles Leclerc, Max Verstappen, Daniil Kvyat, Kimi Raikkonen, Antonio Giovinazzi and Carlos Sainz -- did not kneel, a move that undermined F1's 'We Race As One' stance at the first major international sporting event in Europe since the coronavirus lockdown.

Leclerc, Verstappen and Giovinazzi tweeted their reasons, but their reluctance to kneel was seen by many critics as reducing the group action to an



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LEWIS HAMILTON

empty gesture.

"I honestly don't know everyone's different reasons or opinions," said Hamilton.

"I'm aware of some opinions from some of the drivers, but that's more of a private thing and I wouldn't like to share it.

"Ultimately, I think nobody should be forced into a scenario where they have to kneel."

He also revealed he had been forced to remain quiet in the past when he had intended to take a knee to support NFL star Colin Kaepernick's protest made during the American national anthem.

"I had a helmet and everything made in red with his number on the top," said Hamilton.

"But, back then, I was kind of silenced. I was told to kind of back down, don't support it, which actually I will say that I regret."

He added he was unsure of what to expect at future races, but said he would not take a knee during a national anthem.

"I think it's really, really great that F1 and particularly Mercedes have taken note of the issue that we're facing across the world and decided to do something about it."

Santella returns to BRAVE CF, signs multi-fight deal

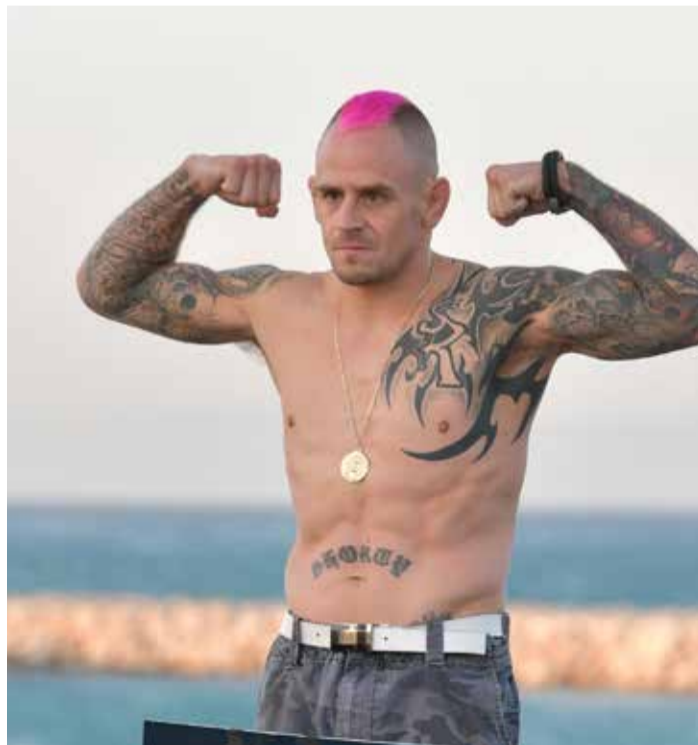
TDT | Manama

Another top Flyweight contender has reached an agreement with BRAVE Combat Federation to resume his presence and has signed a new multi-fight deal with the truly global promotion. The latest name in the 57kg division to join the list is American star Sean "Shorty Rock" Santella.

With a professional record of 23 wins, 7 losses, and one draw, "Shorty Rock" is one of the most accomplished Flyweights in the United States, being ranked #1 in several state and regional rankings within the country.

Previously, Sean Santella had one fight under BRAVE CF's banner, against Russia's Velimurad Alkhasov at BRAVE CF 14, in Tangier, Morocco, back in 2018. He ended up being defeated by Alkhasov via unanimous decision in a tough battle between two top Flyweights.

Since then, Santella bounced back with three consecutive wins in his home country of the United States, all of them within the year of 2019. He then got



Sean Santella

himself a spot in the international platforms, by rejoining BRAVE CF, now in a multi-fight deal.

At BRAVE CF's Flyweight division, Sean Santella will be welcomed once again by the likes of Jose "Shorty" Torres, Marcel

Adur, Zach Makovsky, among others, in one of the deepest 125 lbs rosters in the entire MMA world.



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India worried T20 World Cup delays could impact IPL start date

AFP | Mumbai

India's cricket leaders are becoming impatient with the world body's delays in deciding whether the Twenty20 World Cup will go ahead this year amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The World Cup holdup is stopping the Board of Control for Cricket in India from setting a date for its biggest earner, the Indian Premier League.

The International Cricket Council has said it will make a decision in July on the future of the 20 over event which was due to start in Australia in October. But no date for a meeting has been announced.

"Why they (the ICC) are delaying we have no idea," BCCI treasurer Arun Dharmal told AFP, adding the BCCI was "already planning (the IPL) and we are looking for a window."

"We will see how the situation pans out," he said. "We will explore options whether we can have it here or overseas."



IPL Trophy is seen at the stadium prior to the final 2019 (file photo)

The United Arab Emirates and Sri Lankan cricket boards have already shown interest in hosting the T20 tournament that attracts global superstars such as England's Joe Root, West Indies batsman Chris Gayle and South Africa's Faf du Plessis. The IPL has twice been held outside India in years that it clashed with national elections. South Africa hosted the 2009 event and part of it was held in United Arab Emirates in 2014.

Dharmal added that the BCCI will look to open domestic tournaments, such as the Ranji trophy, in September to kick-start the game post-pandemic.