

Beat: Sports

Mercedes-AMG Petronas Motorsport

Technical transition ahead of 2019

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USPA NEWS - Mercedes-AMG Petronas Motorsport announced a planned transition of its senior technical leadership which will see the baton handed on to the next generation of leaders within the Team for 2019 and beyond.

Aldo Costa (57) has chosen to move into the role of Technical Advisor to the Team from the beginning of 2019, in order to spend more time with his family in Italy. Aldo joined Mercedes in 2011, following a highly successful Formula One career with Ferrari and Minardi, and played a central role in structuring the Team's technical organisation and leading it to championship success.

As part of the transition to the future, the Engineering Group led by Aldo has evolved in recent months. In the months to come it will take an even sharper focus on car design activities. Chief Designer John Owen (45) will become the senior member of this group, under the leadership of Technical Director James Allison. John has been with the team since 2007.

In parallel, Performance Director Mark Ellis (54) has decided to retire from his current position and to take a sabbatical beginning mid-2019. Mark returned to Brackley in 2014 following six years with Red Bull Racing that included multiple world championship wins, and continued that run of success with Mercedes. He previously worked with BAR and Jaguar Racing in Formula One.

Chief Vehicle Dynamicist Loic Serra (46) will be appointed Performance Director by the end of 2018 and Mark will support this transition until the middle of next year. Loic has worked for Mercedes since 2010.

This pro-active implementation of the organisation's succession planning draws on the internal capability that has been built in recent years by identifying and developing future leaders within the Team. The changes are being made with the full buy-in of all involved.

Team Principal Toto Wolff commented:

"This is a significant moment for our Team and a great opportunity. We have said many times that you cannot freeze a successful organisation; it is a dynamic structure and I am proud that we are able to hand the baton smoothly to the next generation of leaders inside the team. We have been in discussion for many months with both Mark and Aldo about how best to implement this transition and to empower their successors. They could not be more different personalities but they have both respected that difference and their legacy with Mercedes will stand test of time. Since the early days of 2013, Aldo and I have shared many dinners in Oxford as fellow European exiles, as well as some amazing days in the car at the Mille Miglia last year.

I have got to know not just an outstanding individual but also somebody who has taught me so much about Formula One and the humility it takes in order to be successful. With Mark, when we first met we could never have imagined the success we would achieve together. He has been a sparring partner in the truest sense of the word "" and I will miss our ""tough love" discussions with their shared passion for our Team and driven by the ultimate will to win. Mark and Aldo have both helped to shape the timing and manner of these changes, and the Team's future is very bright with John, Loic and our entire technical leadership working under James' direction."

Performance Director Mark Ellis commented:

"After 30 flat-out seasons in motorsport, 19 of them in Formula One, I have decided it is time for me to take a sabbatical from the sport. On a personal level, it will allow me to take a (hopefully well-earned) break to consider my next steps while remaining part of the Mercedes family, whilst on a professional level, it has enabled us jointly to plan the succession in a structured way and create and develop the space for the next generation to step up. I would especially like to thank Toto for allowing me the space to bring my best to this incredible team and the opportunity to share the incredible journey over the last few years as well as the support from all my fellow engineers.

This is without a doubt the best team I have ever worked with, at every level of the organisation; it is packed full of awesome people

with a shared determination to deliver excellence in a humble, open and collaborative manner, a truly cohesive organisation which I shall miss. Our championships in recent years have been underpinned by the approach of developing our people along with our long-term capability; this transition is proof of that philosophy in action.

Engineering Director Aldo Costa commented:

“The last seven years with Mercedes have been an amazing experience ““ not just successful professionally but also a life experience that has enriched me and my family, and given us a more open and international mind-set. Back in 2011, it took just a few weeks to settle in the team and dedicate myself to this new challenge. The reason for the easy fit was the attitude of my colleagues, with their warm welcome, respect and collaborative approach all the way through the team.

This has been especially true with Toto: we share a professional challenge and also a personal passion for racing, and I have been grateful for his trust and full support in what I have tried to achieve. We have seen the team progress and achieve success, and now our next challenge is to create an even stronger group to meet the challenges of the next decade. Over the past year, I have worked with Toto and James to develop a long-term succession plan to help the next generation do the job in the best possible way. I am happy to leave the baton in the capable hands of John and James ““ and to continue to support the new organisation as a Technical Advisor to ensure it prospers in the future.”

Technical Director James Allison concluded:

“Our drivers, anyone who is a fan of our Team and, most of all, those of us lucky enough to work at Brackley and Brixworth, owe both Mark and Aldo a huge debt of gratitude. As a Johnny-come-lately to this Team my own sense of gratitude is larger than most: not just for the fun and challenge of working alongside them over two seasons, nor only for the huge power of the engineering groups that they have created and lead, but above all for the unique manner and grace of their intended departure. Aldo and Mark signalled their intention to step down over a year ago and have continued to give heart and soul to the company. Every day they take the fight to our competition with undiminished vigour and yet both men have reached deeper still in order to help me and others in the planning and implementation of their succession. Mark and Aldo pass on an unrivalled technical legacy to worthy and well-prepared successors to whom they have set a magnificent example of top-drawer technical leadership.”

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