



Williams Racing Team hope to push Formula One technology to new levels as they attempt to close the gap to the dominant Ferrari team. Williams are spending a reputed £25m on a new, state-of-the-art wind tunnel that they hope will give them an aerodynamic design capability beyond that of their rivals.

The planned tunnel, which should be ready in time to be used to design the team's 2004 challenger, is said to be the most advanced in F1. That could give Williams a crucial advantage in aerodynamics, the most important part of F1 car design - and an area in which the team have been struggling in recent years.

Williams already have one of the most advanced wind tunnels in the sport - but they hope the new one will take them on to a completely new level. A source close to the team said: "It is going to be very special - no-one else has anything like it." The team had the best wind tunnel in F1 through the mid-1990s, when it dominated the sport for much of the time.

But since then other teams like Ferrari and Renault have built more advanced tunnels - and McLaren have their own being built at the moment. Head has admitted that Williams' aerodynamic performance has been lacking since 1998.

That also happened to be the first year since 1991 that the team had to design a car without the input of Adrian Newey, who is reputed to be the best aerodynamic designer in F1.

### SARAH FISHER FORMULA ONE DRIVER



21-year-old Sarah Fisher became the first woman in 10 years to drive a Formula One car and the first ever to try out a

McLaren, Fisher completed a demonstration run on the race track in the regular spare McLaren MP4-17 car in September. Sarah recently visited McLaren's headquarters in Surrey for a seat fitting and to meet team members.

Sarah competes in the Indy Racing League and in August became the first woman to qualify on pole position in a major open-wheel championship as well as securing second and third place finishes and has raced in the Indy 500.

McLaren stated through our 39-year history we have never had a female drive one of our Formula One cars so I guess it's about time. Sarah's demonstration will assist in promoting Formula One in America further and give her a taste of the category."

"I'm obviously very excited about driving a Formula One car in front of my home crowd," she said. "It's extremely rare to get a chance like this and I can't wait."

The last women to try, unsuccessfully, to qualify an F1 car for a race was Italian Giovanna Amati in 1992.

Michael Schumacher says that he is happy to extend his contract at Ferrari "in principle", but says that it is too early to begin contract negotiations. The German has been widely expected to retire in 2004, but now Schumacher and manager Willi Weber have both suggested that he will continue racing.



Schumacher said: "It's too early to be thinking beyond 2004. In principle, we both want to continue working together - under which conditions, we'll see then."

Webber, who has previously claimed the German would retire when his existing contract expires, said that Schumacher is keen to stay with Ferrari but said talks would not begin until next year.

He said: "Michael has a contract until 2004, and we'll be talking to Ferrari about a possible extension only in 2003. "In principle, Michael says Ferrari would be the only team he would drive for beyond 2004." Last week Schumacher dropped his first hint that he was considering racing on after 2004.

He added: "Anyone who thinks he is close to retiring doesn't know the Michael Schumacher I see. He enjoys himself more and more each race." And Brawn hinted that the team of senior people who have helped make Ferrari the dominant force in the sport are also likely to continue. The contracts of Brawn, chief designer Rory Byrne and sporting director Jean Todt all expire with Schumacher's at the end of 2004. "If that continues, there is every reason I'll stay longer than 2004. That just happens to be a date that is the end of my current agreement.

"Jean and Rory and Michael - we are so fortunate that none of us are going to let it drop easily, so watch this space." He added: "It's very enjoyable. We all love Ferrari, and I don't think we're all going to stop in 2004 and let it drop.

"They are things to be discussed in the future in a few more years but none of us want to harm Ferrari and for sure Ferrari will continue in a very competitive position for much longer than 2004."

# F1

