

No smoke without fire: Tobacco companies in quiet return to Formula One

February 17 2019, by Raphaëlle Peltier, With Rebecca Frasquet And Afp Sydney Bureau



Ferrari's car SF90 for the 2019 season features the Mission Winnow logo

Tobacco giants Philip Morris and British American Tobacco have formed partnerships with their scientific research subsidiaries and Formula 1 teams Ferrari and McLaren more than a decade after cigarette

advertising was banned from the sport.

US giant Philip Morris International (PMI), whose Marlboro brand was long associated with Ferrari, re-entered the sport last October, branding Ferrari cars with "Mission Winnow" and a logo that hints at the white-on-red triangles of the old Marlboro packs.

"Mission Winnow is aimed at illustrating our commitment to constant development. This initiative shines light on the new Philip Morris and our partners and our commitment and common desire to develop for the best," the group's communications director Tommaso di Giovanni explained.

Since the Japan Grand Prix in October the Ferrari cars, drivers' helmets and outfits have featured the Mission Winnow logo of three white arrows.

Since 2006, Formula 1's ruling body FIA has been firmly opposed to any advertising or sponsoring of cigarettes or tobacco.

But with teams struggling to meet their budget requirements, the allure of advertising revenue from so-called "Big Tobacco" is clear to see.

McLaren cars are to feature advertising for "A Better Tomorrow", a British American Tobacco (BAT) scientific research subsidiary linked to less controversial electronic cigarettes.



Ferrari driver Sebastian Vettel (left) wearing "Mission Winnow" on his overalls at last year's Abu Dhabi Grand Prix

BAT also said it would carefully study the varying rules in different countries which govern tobacco branding.

"We still need to determine which brand activations to implement in which countries, but we will of course respect regulatory environments," their spokesman said.

Marlboro men

Opposition to the partnerships between motor racing and tobacco groups, or any flaunting of anti-tobacco advertising, is mounting.

The Australian Grand Prix Corporation said it was concerned Philip Morris branding on Ferrari cars and driver uniforms at the Japan Grand Prix had breached Australian regulations when it was broadcast in the country.

"The Australian Grand Prix Corporation has been in regular communication on this very important matter with all key stakeholders.

"The AGPC works to ensure that the hallmark Victorian events we stage meet the requirements of government," the AGPC told AFP this week.



Ferrari and their prominent Marlboro sponsorship in 2006

Di Giovanni insisted Philipp Morris had not broken any laws.

"The logo on the outfits and cars and on our internet site comply with laws in Australia and in the state of Victoria," he said.

"We are currently working with the organisers to understand their concerns," he said.

A spokesman for the AGPC told AFP the ball was in the court of the Victoria Dept of Health and Human Services and that the department and the Grand Prix organisers were in touch with Ferrari on the issue of whether the Mission/Winnow logo contravenes the Australian ban on [tobacco](#) advertising.

Meanwhile the Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) confirmed they are looking into broadcasts by Australian networks of the Japan Grand Prix.

The ACMA is investigating broadcasts of the Japanese Formula One Grand Prix broadcast on Network Ten and Fox Sports. The investigation is ongoing.

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