

## Engine Trio Launches Attack on F1's Compression Ratio Controversy

By Quinn Higby



Formula 1's biggest pre-season battle is not happening on track. It's unfolding in the FIA meeting rooms as the three major manufacturers, Audi, Ferrari, and Honda, mount a coordinated revolt against a serious compression ratio controversy. These power unit suppliers have united to stop what they characterize as [blatant rule-bending](#) that threatens to give Mercedes and Redbull an incredible advantage. The stakes couldn't be higher. Audi, Ferrari, and Honda have invested billions in developing engines they believe comply with regulations, only to watch as their rivals exploit a technicality worth 10-15 horsepower per lap. Now don't be fooled, this isn't mere complaining, at least not anymore. It's now a strategic retaliation, evolving into a fierce campaign bent on forcing the FIA to intervene before the March 1st homologation deadline. Before this technicality locks in the advantage permanently.

The core of Audi, Ferrari, and Honda's complaint is that rival manufacturers engineered engine parts that bypass the FIA's static compliance checks at the mandated 16:1 compression ratio when cold, not when racing. However, the exploit relies on [thermal expansion](#), meaning that when racing, the engine gets hot, leaving it to expand to approximately a 18:1 compression during actual running conditions. From Audi, Ferrari, and Honda's arguments, the unambiguous conclusion is that regulations must apply at all times, not just during cold inspections in the paddock, and that they would never allow a technicality like this to pass. These three manufacturers followed the conservative interpretation, designing engines genuinely limited to 16:1 across all conditions, and now face competitive punishment for their compliance. So the question is: can Audi, Ferrari, and Honda stop the compression ratio controversy in time?

First came formal complaints. The trio requested clear and unambiguous rule clarification and enforcement action from the FIA. Second, they quickly mounted a barrage of detailed legal arguments asserting that the term *ambient temperature*, according to the technical regulations, refers to the operating temperature during racing, not the inspection temperature in controlled environments. Finally, third, they've signaled willingness to lodge official protests at the Australian Grand Prix if the FIA fails to act decisively. However, in the January 22 FIA meeting, when Audi, Ferrari, and Honda pushed aggressively for a definitive ruling, the FIA yielded no clear answer. Something the trio viewed as unacceptable given the time constraints. If the three can successfully prove a regulatory violation, they could theoretically force the accused teams to redesign engines mid-season, though post-homologation rules make this nearly impossible, which explains their fierce urgency in this F1 compression-ratio controversy.

The FIA now faces a tough dilemma. The engine trio is demanding immediate action. They want a clear rule that engines must comply with compression limits at racing temperatures. This would force rival manufacturers to redesign their power units or face disqualification. The possible outcomes are all explosive. Ban the technology and face lawsuits from accused teams. Allow it and risk unbalanced competition for years. Defer a decision and let the dispute continue with protests and appeals. This F1 compression ratio controversy could shape the entire 2026 championship before any racing begins. The three manufacturers have made their stand clear. They will not surrender without exhausting every option.

## American Dream: Cadillac's Formula 1 Entry

By Quinn Higby



After years of political wrangling, the iconic American brand Cadillac is set to make history as Formula 1's newest team. Backed by General Motors and TWG Motorsports, Cadillac becomes the first completely new team since Haas in 2016. This marks them as the first American manufacturer to field an F1 car in decades. However, Cadillac's Formula 1 entry was not easy.

The road to Cadillac's Formula 1 entry wasn't smooth. When GM's Cadillac brand and Michael Andretti's Andretti Global first announced their F1 bid in January 2023, they faced an unexpected obstacle. While the FIA (Formula 1's governing body) approved their entry, Formula One Management, led by CEO Stefano Domenicali, outright rejected it. The existing teams questioned what value Andretti would bring to the sport, and F1 officials suggested they'd only reconsider if GM committed to building its own power units rather than buying engines from another manufacturer. Or as they say: A customer team.

The stalemate lasted nearly two years, but in a surprising turn of events, Michael Andretti, whose name had been on the project from day one, stepped back from day-to-day leadership in late 2024. Dan Towriss's TWG Global investment group then took over business operations, rebranding the effort and making GM's Cadillac the face of the team, agreeing to invest hundreds of millions of dollars to design, develop, and manufacture their own Formula 1 power units from scratch. Michael then moved to an advisory role while his father, 1978 F1 World Champion [Mario Andretti](#), joined the board of directors to lend credibility and experience, paving the way for Cadillac's Formula 1 entry.

With Cadillac now front and center and GM's long-term engine commitment formalized, Formula One Management finally granted approval in March 2025, allowing Cadillac's Formula 1 Entry in the 2026 grid. The team now operates from four locations across the United States and England, with its headquarters and manufacturing hub in Fishers, Indiana. Even going [as far as to sign](#) the Mexican veteran, [Sergio Pérez](#), pairing him with [Valtteri Bottas](#). However, Cadillac's Formula 1 entry still faces one major challenge.

While GM committed to building its own power units, creating a competitive F1 engine from scratch takes years. So rather than rush an underdeveloped engine to the grid, Cadillac will lease proven Ferrari power units for 2026, 2027, and 2028. This gives them time to learn F1 operations while GM's engineers develop, test, and refine their own Cadillac-branded engine. When 2029 arrives, they'll switch to their homegrown power unit, becoming F1's sixth engine manufacturer alongside Mercedes, Ferrari, Honda, Renault, and Red Bull Powertrains, cementing Cadillac's Formula 1 entry.

Cadillac made a dramatic entrance by revealing its striking asymmetrical livery during a Super Bowl commercial, featuring predominantly white on one side and black on the other. The team has already impressed by completing 164 laps during Barcelona testing in late January. Pre-season testing continues in Bahrain from February 11-13, before Cadillac's race debut at the Australian Grand Prix on March 6-8, aiming to show that America's F1 return is more than bold marketing.