

# Jonathan Agnew



**A**s a controversial Formula One season comes to an end in Abu Dhabi this weekend, fans and competitors alike must be praying that the final race does not produce a farce entirely of the sport's

own making. The decision to award double world championship points in the last race of the year has to be one of the most short-sighted attempts to make a sport more exciting that there has ever been. It threatens to make a mockery of months of hard work and consistent performances, and damage the integrity of F1.

In case you have not been following this particular drama, Lewis Hamilton goes into the final race 17 points clear of his nearest rival and Mercedes teammate, Nico Rosberg. Normally such a margin would be enough to secure the title, but not this year. Rosberg has won only five races to Hamilton's 10, but should the German be victorious on Sunday and take double points, Hamilton will have to finish in second place to claim the drivers' championship. If Rosberg is second, Hamilton must finish higher than sixth. Confused? Of course we are.

This is what happens when the administrators meddle with a sport that for all their bluster and years at the top they understand only superficially. They profess a love for F1, but ultimately their only interest is to make it as attractive as possible to

the television companies who fund it. The reason they decided to introduce this crazy rule is because the brilliant Sebastian Vettel had won four titles in a row, including last season's with races to spare. 'How dare one individual dominate to that extent?' they said. 'He's making it boring.'

Their solution is no different from giving Pete Sampras' opponents bigger tennis racquets, or making the great West Indian fast bowlers of the 1970s and 80s release the ball from 25 yards rather than 22.

Top-level sport is often dominated either by an outstanding individual or team. To think there's something wrong with that is to fail to understand sport. For as much as we marvel at the excellence produced by the very best who keep setting new standards, we also admire their tenacity when their powers start to fade and note the significance of the moment they are finally knocked from their perch for ever.

If a professional sport needs to be sustained by artificiality and gimmickry, it cannot be taken seriously.

***'The double points rule threatens to damage F1's integrity'***

---

*jonathanagnew.com  
@Aggerscricket*