

= Mark Webber =

Mark Alan Webber ( born 27 August 1976 ) is an Australian professional racing driver , currently competing in the FIA World Endurance Championship as a Porsche works driver in LMP1 , in which he is one of the three reigning World Drivers ' Champions .

After some racing success in Australia driving Formula Ford and Formula Holden , Webber moved to the United Kingdom in 1995 to further his motorsport career . Webber began a partnership with fellow Australian Paul Stoddart , at that time owner of the European Racing Formula 3000 team , which eventually took them both into Formula One when Stoddart bought the Minardi team . He also beat future F1 World Champion Fernando Alonso , then 19 , in the 2000 International Formula 3000 season .

Webber made his Formula One debut in 2002 , scoring Minardi 's first points in three years at his and Stoddart 's home race . After his first season , Jaguar took him on as lead driver . During two years with the generally uncompetitive team , Webber qualified on the front two rows of the grid several times and outperformed his teammates . His first F1 win was with Red Bull at the 2009 German Grand Prix , which followed second places at the 2009 Chinese Grand Prix , 2009 Turkish Grand Prix and 2009 British Grand Prix . By the end of 2009 , Webber had scored eight podiums , including another victory in Brazil . His eight podiums in 2009 compares to only two podiums in the first seven years of his career . He added ten more podiums in 2010 , including victories in Spain , Monaco , Britain and Hungary . Webber finished the 2010 season in third place having led for a long period , losing out to teammate Sebastian Vettel in the final race of the season . Webber added another race victory in the 2011 Brazilian Grand Prix , as he once again finished third behind champion Vettel and runner @-@ up Jenson Button . Webber partnered Vettel again in the 2012 season , outperforming him in the early season and looked to be a major title contender but fell away with no wins in the second half of the season after two in the Monaco and British Grand Prix . He finished the season in sixth position . Webber was also a long @-@ term director of the Grand Prix Drivers ' Association , the Formula One drivers ' union .

On 27 June 2013 , Webber announced he would be retiring from Formula One at the end of the season . He began to race for Porsche in 2014 , on a long @-@ term deal , racing LMP1 Sportscars in the FIA World Endurance Championship . Webber is one of six drivers of the Porsche 919 Hybrid , and in November 2015 he became World Endurance Champion in the # 17 car , alongside Timo Bernhard and Brendon Hartley . The trio race with the # 1 on their car in 2016 . After his retirement from F1 Webber joined the BBC F1 team as an occasional pundit and reporter from 2014 @-@ 2015 and has joined the Channel 4 F1 Team in the UK for their coverage in 2016 as a full @-@ time pundit .

= = Early life and career = =

Webber was born in Queanbeyan , New South Wales , son of Alan Webber , a local motorcycle dealer , and his wife Diane . Webber has one older sister , Leanne , and two nieces . He attended Karabar High School in Queanbeyan for his secondary education . He began his relationship with sport at a young age , working as a ball boy for premiership winning rugby league team , the Canberra Raiders , during the late 1980s . However , motorsport was where his interest lay , listing Formula One World Champion Alain Prost and Grand Prix motorcycle racer Kevin Schwantz as his childhood heroes . Starting out racing motorcycles , Webber moved to four wheels in 1991 , taking up karting at age 14 . He won the New South Wales state championship in 1993 , and moved straight to the Australian Formula Ford Championship after his father bought him an ex @-@ Craig Lowndes Van Diemen FF1600 . Working as a driving instructor at Sydney 's Oran Park Raceway between races , Webber finished 14th overall in his debut season . Continuing in the series in 1995 , Webber scored several victories , including a win in the support race for the Australian Grand Prix at Adelaide . He finished the series in fourth place , but perhaps more importantly , he teamed with Championship coordinator Ann Neal , who gained him a seven @-@ year sponsorship with Australian Yellow Pages , and would become his manager , accompanying him on a trip to England

to try to start a career in Europe .

= = = Europe = = =

Webber was given a test at Snetterton with the Van Diemen team , and subsequently earned a works drive for the team at the 1995 Formula Ford Festival , at Brands Hatch , where he finished third . That was good enough to prompt the team to signing him for the 1996 championship . Before moving to Europe permanently , Webber won the Formula Holden race at the 1996 Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne . During the 1996 British Formula Ford Championship , he took four victories on his way to second place overall , finishing a strong season with a win in the Formula Ford Festival . He also won the Spa @-@ Francorchamps race of the Formula Ford Euro Cup , taking third in the series despite competing in only two of the three rounds . His results throughout the year saw him voted as Australian motorsport 's " Young Achiever " and " International Achiever " of 1996 . Two days after his Festival victory Webber completed a successful test for Alan Docking Racing , and was signed by the team to graduate to Formula Three in 1997 .

= = = Formula Three and sportscar racing = = =

Without the financial backing he had enjoyed during his time in Formula Ford , Webber and his team struggled to find the money to fund their 1997 championship campaign . He was almost forced to quit halfway through the season , but was able to obtain significant financial and personal support from Australian rugby union legend David Campese , which helped him to complete the year . Mark has since stated he has been able to pay back the money Campese gave him .

Webber took victory in just his fourth ever F3 race , at Brands Hatch , leading from start to finish and setting a new lap record in the process . He took a further four podium finishes , including a second place in the support race for the 1997 British Grand Prix , and finished the season in fourth overall . Webber also took strong finishes in the Marlboro Masters at Zandvoort ( 3rd ) and the Macau Grand Prix ( 4th ) , both times making his circuit debut .

During the 1997 season , Webber was approached by Mercedes @-@ AMG to compete in sportscar racing . Although he initially declined the offer he was persuaded at the end of the year when invited to participate in a test session for the team at the A1 @-@ Ring in Austria . Mercedes @-@ AMG were suitably impressed with Webber , and he was signed as the official Mercedes works junior driver for the 1998 FIA GT Championship , alongside reigning champion Bernd Schneider . Travelling around the world , including the United States , Japan and Europe , the pair won five of the ten rounds on their way to second in the overall standings , beaten to the Championship by teammates Klaus Ludwig and Ricardo Zonta by just eight seconds in the final race at Laguna Seca . Webber remained with the Mercedes @-@ AMG team for 1999 , and was promoted to his own race car for the season . However , his sportscar career came to an early end after he flipped twice on the Mulsanne Straight during practice for the 1999 24 Hours of Le Mans race . An aerodynamic fault on the team 's Mercedes @-@ Benz CLRs caused Webber to become spectacularly airborne during both practice and race @-@ day warm up , with the same fate befalling teammate Peter Dumbreck five hours into the race . Both drivers escaped uninjured , but the crashes forced Mercedes to shelve their sportscar program for the year and Webber to reconsider a return to open wheel racing .

= = = Formula One testing and signing = = =

Webber spoke to Formula One team owner Eddie Jordan , who introduced him to fellow Australian Paul Stoddart . Stoddart offered to underwrite the necessary \$ 1 @.@ 1 million budget for Webber , and gave him a drive in his Eurobet Arrows Formula 3000 team for 2000 . As a result , Webber also got his first taste of a Formula One car , completing a two @-@ day test at Barcelona in December 1999 for the Arrows F1 team .

Webber was signed as test driver for the Arrows F1 team for 2000 , and also gained sponsorship

from Australian beer company Foster 's whilst competing in Formula 3000 . Webber took victory in round two of the season at Silverstone , and finished the series with two fastest laps and three podiums on his way to third overall ? the highest position of any rookie that year . Contract issues meant that Webber was never able to drive the Arrows A21 car , and rejected a full contract offer for 2001 in July . However , he was offered a three @-@ day evaluation test for Benetton at the end of the year , outpacing F1 drivers Ralf Schumacher and Giancarlo Fisichella at Estoril . The results were good enough to earn him the test driver role with the team for 2001 , and he also agreed to take on team boss Flavio Briatore as manager in return for finance for a further F3000 season . Webber joined the championship @-@ winning Super Nova Racing team , and despite winning at Imola , Monaco and Magny @-@ Cours , he finished second overall to British driver Justin Wilson . Webber was replaced as test driver for Benetton for 2002 by Fernando Alonso , but Briatore managed to secure Webber a contract to race alongside Alex Yoong in the Stoddart @-@ owned Minardi team , making him the first Australian in Formula One since David Brabham in 1994 .

= = Formula One career = =

= = = Minardi ( 2002 ) = = =

Webber made his Formula One debut at his home race , the Australian Grand Prix . This was the first race of an initial three race contract and was extended until the end of the season after his first race . He qualified 18th of the 22 cars , over 4 seconds away from the pole position time , but 1 @.@ 4 seconds ahead of teammate Yoong . The start of the race featured a spectacular accident between Ralf Schumacher and Rubens Barrichello , the aftermath of which forced eight cars to retire from the race . Webber , who had a problem with his launch control at the start , battled with a broken differential to fend off the experienced Mika Salo in a much faster Toyota and finish fifth . The result made Webber just the fourth Australian F1 driver to score World Championship points , and the first Minardi driver to score points since Marc Gené in 1999 .

Webber was forced into retirement in the Malaysian Grand Prix , before picking up consecutive 11th @-@ place finishes in the following two races . He , along with Yoong , was forced to pull out of the Spanish Grand Prix due to potentially dangerous wing failures during the weekend .

Webber picked up two more 11th @-@ place finishes , but was unable to score points for the remainder of the year , his next best result coming in France , where he finished 8th . In the Hungarian Grand Prix , Webber lost two kilograms in weight over the length of the race as he was forced to drive without a drink after his water bottle broke . Webber was able to outqualify Yoong ( and Anthony Davidson , who replaced Yoong for the Hungarian and Belgian Grands Prix ) in every race , and his two points in Australia were the only points that Minardi scored all season , helping them to 9th in the Constructors ' Championship , ahead of Toyota and Arrows . Webber 's results earned him the " Rookie of the Year " award in F1 Racing magazine 's annual Man of the Year awards ( receiving 53 @.@ 70 % of public votes ) , the Autosport.com " Rookie of the Year " award and " F1 Newcomer of the Year " at the annual Grand Prix Party " Bernie " Awards . In light of his season , notable Formula One journalist Peter Windsor related Webber to 1992 World Champion Nigel Mansell , saying they had similar amounts of " raw talent " . In November 2002 it was announced that Webber would join Jaguar Racing for the following season alongside Brazilian Williams test driver Antônio Pizzonia .

= = = Jaguar ( 2003 ? 2004 ) = = =

= = = = 2003 = = = =

Webber 's Jaguar career started disappointingly when he qualified in 14th place for the Australian Grand Prix before being forced to retire on lap 15 with a rear suspension failure . The following race

in Malaysia was problematic for Webber ; Giancarlo Fisichella began reversing towards him on the starting grid and then Webber 's in @-@ car fire extinguisher discharged into his face . He was eventually forced to retire from 8th position with an oil consumption problem .

Webber took provisional pole position in Friday qualifying of the Brazilian Grand Prix , out @-@ qualifying local driver Rubens Barrichello by 0 @.@ 138 seconds during a rain @-@ affected session . He continued his good performance in the Saturday session taking a career @-@ best 3rd on the grid , Jaguar Racing 's best qualifying performance in their four @-@ year Formula One history . In the race , which was hit heavily by rain , Webber was in seventh place when he attempted to cool his tyres by driving through a puddle lying off @-@ line in the final corner . The resultant lack of grip caused Webber to crash heavily into the pit straight walls , leaving debris on the track which caused a second major crash ; Fernando Alonso hitting a stray tyre . The race was subsequently red @-@ flagged , and although Webber was originally classified in 7th , an FIA investigation found a timekeeping error which meant that Webber was placed 9th in the re @-@ classification .

Webber 's good qualifying form continued into the San Marino Grand Prix but at the start of the race he had dropped from 5th to 11th by the first corner because of a launch control failure that affected both Jaguars . He retired from the race after 54 laps with a driveshaft failure , his fourth consecutive non @-@ finish for the year . His luck improved in the following races though , taking his first points in Spain and signing a new 2 @-@ year contract with the team reportedly worth US \$ 6 million per season .

He then went on to score points in five of the next six races on his way to moving into the top 10 in the World Drivers ' Championship , the run of results interrupted only by an engine failure in Monaco . One of his best races came in Austria where despite starting from the pitlane and suffering a drive @-@ through penalty he set the race 's third fastest lap , behind only the Ferraris of Michael Schumacher and Rubens Barrichello , finishing in 7th place .

At the British Grand Prix , as the procession of cars exited the Becketts corner onto the Hangar straight on lap 11 , now @-@ defrocked priest Neil Horan cleared the fence wearing a kilt whilst waving banners with the statements " Read the Bible " and " The Bible is always right " . Horan ran towards the sequence of cars forcing several cars to swerve to avoid him . Webber came closest to hitting Horan in a terrifying parallel to the accident at the 1977 South African Grand Prix where volunteer track marshal , Jansen Van Vuuren , ran across the main straight to aid a car and was hit at 274 km / h ( 170 mph ) by Welsh driver Tom Pryce . The safety car was deployed to remove Horan from the track , and Webber eventually finished 14th .

After Silverstone , Webber had scored 12 Championship points , compared to Pizzonia 's 0 , and after much speculation it was announced that Minardi driver Justin Wilson would replace the Brazilian for the remainder of the year . The German Grand Prix saw Webber 's sixth retirement of the season after he made a last lap lunge on Jenson Button in an attempt to salvage a point from the weekend .

Consecutive points finishes in Hungary and Italy saw Webber climb to ninth in the drivers ' standings with a 5 @-@ point margin over Button . He was unable to hold on to this position however , after one too many laps on dry tyres saw him spin out from the lead of the United States Grand Prix , and a disappointing 11th @-@ place result in Japan . These meant that he had finished on equal points with Button but lost out on a countback .

Although Wilson scored a point in the United States Grand Prix , Webber had still never been outqualified by a team @-@ mate and , late in the year , Jaguar announced that rookie Christian Klien would team up with Webber for the 2004 season . Webber 's results again earned him plaudits in the press , winning the 2003 " Driver of the Year " award from Autocar magazine .

== == 2004 == ==

Continuing with Jaguar in 2004 , Webber qualified sixth for the first race of the season , the Australian Grand Prix , but faced his second consecutive retirement from his home race , this time as a result of a gearbox failure . At the following race , the Malaysian Grand Prix , Webber produced

the best qualifying performance of his career up to that point by splitting the dominant Ferraris to line up second on the grid . The race was less rewarding with a near @-@ stall at the start meaning he was well outside the top 10 by the time the cars reached turn 1 . An aggressive lap saw him move up to ninth place but during an exciting battle with Ralf Schumacher , they collided , forcing Webber to pit with damage to his front wing and tyre . In his desperation to make up for the lost time , Webber exceeded the pitlane speed limit and was handed a drive @-@ through penalty which left him even further behind . More frustration eventually led to the end of his race as he spun into the gravel trap on the outside of the final corner on lap 23 .

The situation improved for the following race in Bahrain though , as Webber picked up his first point for the season despite a small mistake in qualifying which left him starting 14th and marked the first time he had been outqualified by his team @-@ mate in F1 . He was unable to continue his point scoring form , however , as intermittent electrical problems in San Marino and a lack of grip in Spain meant that he could do no better than 13th and 12th in those races .

Webber suffered two engine failures in practice for the Monaco Grand Prix , the first of which forced Webber to extinguish it himself after being unable to find a track @-@ side marshal willing to help . In the race , Webber was forced to retire because of a loss of engine power . He was able to pick up two Championship points in the following race with a seventh @-@ place finish in the European Grand Prix . Webber had lined up 14th on the grid , after being handed a one @-@ second penalty for yellow flag infringements during Friday practice , but was able to move through the field to take his points tally to 3 . After the race , he was criticised by Michael Schumacher for refusing to yield when Webber had emerged from his pit stop slightly ahead of ( but one lap behind ) Schumacher . Upon hearing the comments , Webber said he " would do exactly the same again " in the same situation .

There were consecutive retirements in Canada , where he was hit by Klien , and the United States where he suffered an oil leak . A change of luck gained him a 9th @-@ place finish in the French Grand Prix and preceded a further championship point in the British Grand Prix ; although his total of 4 points compared unfavourably to his 12 scored by the same time in the previous season . It was at this stage that former team @-@ mate Pizzonia returned to racing as a replacement for the injured Ralf Schumacher and accused Jaguar of favouritism towards Webber during their time as team @-@ mates saying that Webber received new car parts one or two races before Pizzonia . The claims were categorically denied by Jaguar boss David Pitchforth , and whilst Webber did not publicly comment on the situation at the time he had his best result of the season finishing sixth in the German Grand Prix , running ahead of Pizzonia for the entire race . Meanwhile , reports emerged that Jaguar could not guarantee that they would compete in Formula One for the 2005 season and on 28 July , it was announced that Webber would drive for WilliamsF1 for 2005 and beyond . He would later admit this was the team that his " heart was always set on " . Webber was unable to build on his points tally , however , and 10th place in Hungary followed by a first @-@ lap accident in Belgium with 9th in Italy and 10th in China saw him sitting 13th in the Championship .

The penultimate race of the season , the Japanese Grand Prix saw Webber produce another good qualifying effort as he set the third fastest time . His race ended prematurely though when he suffered from a badly overheating cockpit , the cause of which could not be determined by Jaguar . The Brazilian Grand Prix marked both Webber 's last race for Jaguar and Jaguar 's last race in Formula One , ending sadly for the team , as Klien turned into a corner colliding with Webber as the Australian attempted to make up for a pit stop delay earlier in the race . Webber was forced to retire due to the damage and watched the remainder of the race from the grass on the outside of turn 1 as Klien finished 14th .

= = = Williams ( 2005 ? 2006 ) = = =

Webber was granted an early release from his Jaguar contract to be allowed to test with his new team , Williams , over the winter . Williams had announced that Jenson Button would drive for the team in 2005 alongside Webber but , after claims that Button was still contracted to BAR , his contract with Williams was overturned . With his new team @-@ mate undecided and going down to

a "shootout" between Nick Heidfeld and Pizzonia, Webber hit back at Pizzonia's claims of unfair treatment during 2003, claiming the Brazilian was lying and saying he was a "loser" for believing that there was favouritism towards Webber, comments which led to a reprimand from his new team.

Heidfeld was finally announced as Webber's 2005 team @-@ mate at the Williams season launch on 31 January, with Webber admitting he was pleased with the eventual decision. Webber's move to Williams brought about comparisons to Alan Jones, Australia's last F1 World Champion, also in a Williams. Expectations were high as Webber's former team boss Paul Stoddart predicted Webber would take his first victory in 2005 while Williams technical director Sam Michael said Webber would eventually win the World Championship with Williams.

===== 2005 =====

In his first race for the team, the Australian Grand Prix, Webber took 3rd on the grid but was beaten to the first corner by David Coulthard and eventually finished the race in fifth which finally matched his effort with Minardi in '02. His best chance to do so though came in the following race in Malaysia. After qualifying fourth, Webber was defending third position having overtaken the Renault of Giancarlo Fisichella at turn 14. An optimistic Fisichella (who was struggling due to a lack of downforce and tyre grip) slipstreamed Webber on the back straight and attempted a counter @-@ pass down the inside of turn 15. Unfortunately, Fisichella locked his brakes and slid into the side of Webber's car, eliminating both drivers from the race. This allowed Heidfeld to inherit third place and Fisichella was later reprimanded by race stewards for causing the incident. It was later revealed that Webber had competed in the first two races suffering a fractured rib, from an injury he had sustained during pre @-@ season testing at Barcelona, though he "didn't want to make a fuss" about it and would be fully fit in time for the Bahrain Grand Prix.

After qualifying fifth in Bahrain, Webber had been as high as third place in the race but he ultimately finished sixth, taking his points tally to 7 for the season. He followed this up by qualifying fourth and finishing a disappointing 10th after twice running wide off the track in the San Marino Grand Prix, although his position was revised to 7th after the disqualification of the BAR team and a resulting penalty to Ralf Schumacher. The race was a poor one for Williams (Heidfeld was 9th before the reclassification), but Webber hit back at the Spanish Grand Prix, qualifying 2nd and finishing 6th, his fourth points scoring finish in the first five races.

The following race in Monaco saw Webber take third place, the first podium finish of his career. On the rostrum Webber looked noticeably disappointed with the result after losing second place to team @-@ mate Heidfeld due to the Williams team pitting Heidfeld before Webber causing Webber to lose time behind the slow Alonso. Webber had been ahead of Heidfeld for most of the race and would probably still have been second had the team pitted them in the more regular sequence. This best result of Webber's career was followed by one of his worst at the European Grand Prix when, after qualifying third, he locked his brakes in the very first corner of the race and collided with Juan Pablo Montoya, forcing him to retire. Heidfeld started from pole position to finish in second place overtaking Webber in championship points in the process.

The race in Canada was affected by this previous result, as Webber was only able to qualify 14th, but he was pleased with an eventual 5th @-@ place finish and a further 4 Championship points. The United States Grand Prix was the beginning of a lean streak for Webber with just one point @-@ scoring finish in the next seven races, a seventh in Hungary, and by this stage he had slipped from 6th to 10th in the World Championship. Webber had another poor race in Turkey where he collided with Michael Schumacher after the German changed lines in the braking area, causing extensive damage to both cars.

With Heidfeld injured, Webber's former Jaguar team @-@ mate Antônio Pizzonia stepped into the second Williams seat adding pressure on Webber to perform well given the public argument the pair had towards the end of 2004. The Italian Grand Prix saw Pizzonia driving to seventh whilst Webber was caught up in a first @-@ corner incident which led to him finishing 14th. The roles were reversed for the following race in Belgium as Webber finished in fourth place and Pizzonia retired.

after a collision with Juan Pablo Montoya in the closing laps . With rumours spreading that Heidfeld had in fact signed with BMW Sauber for the 2006 season , Pizzonia continued in the race seat , and in the Brazilian Grand Prix , was clipped by David Coulthard in turn one . The contact caused Pizzonia to spin into the path of Webber forcing extensive repairs to the Australian 's car . Webber took 17th place , setting the 8th fastest lap of the race , but was not classified as a finisher .

The final two races of the season saw Webber take 4th and 7th to consolidate his 10th place in the Drivers ' Championship . Webber described the 2005 season as " frustrating " and acknowledged that his reputation had somewhat diminished but opted to stay on with Williams despite an offer from BMW Sauber . Webber 's team @-@ mate for 2006 would be German Nico Rosberg , becoming the seventh driver to partner Webber since 2002 .

Webber was awarded the Lorenzo Bandini Trophy in 2006 for his 2005 season .

= = = = 2006 = = = =

For the first time in Webber 's career the first race of the season was not held in Melbourne , but in Bahrain , due to the original date clashing with the Commonwealth Games . Webber qualified 7th and had a solid race to finish 6th and pick up 3 Championship points . Although Webber was considered by some to have the better race performance , this was generally overlooked when Rosberg set the fastest lap in his debut race and moved up through the field despite a first @-@ lap incident .

Webber 's two following races in Malaysia and Australia were cut short due to mechanical problems . In Malaysia , Webber started 4th on the grid and was still running in that position before a hydraulics failure ended his race on lap 14 . In his home race , Webber qualified seventh and was leading the race before his gearbox failed on lap 22 . Webber had taken the lead of the race on lap 21 , becoming the first Australian to lead the Australian Grand Prix since John Bowe had done so in the early laps of the non @-@ championship 1984 Australian Grand Prix . A sixth @-@ place finish in San Marino saw Webber move up to 9th in the Championship . In the European Grand Prix , hydraulics failure struck again ending his race after he had fought his way back to 12th from his 19th place start on the grid due to a mid @-@ weekend engine change .

The Spanish Grand Prix marked the first time Webber failed to make the top 10 cut @-@ off in the new qualifying system and he struggled during the race finishing ninth . Monaco , however , saw a huge improvement with Webber qualifying on the front row , after Michael Schumacher 's grid penalty , holding third for a large part of the race before retiring when his exhaust burned a wiring loom . Webber 's car was not as disadvantaged as at most other venues , as aerodynamic efficiency is not as important at Monaco .

At the British Grand Prix , Webber was taken out on the first lap after an incident with Ralf Schumacher and Scott Speed . In France , Webber suffered a spectacular tyre blowout at maximum speed which he managed to control and return to the pits , parking in the garage . Germany was one of Webber 's strongest races of the year where he was on target for a podium finish until mechanical failure stopped him with only 9 laps to go . The Hungarian Grand Prix was another retirement for Webber as he slid into a barrier in the wet conditions and crushed his front wing under the chassis of the Williams . He finished only 10th in Turkey , where despite running fourth after a first @-@ lap accident , he struggled from then on .

After another disappointing qualifying session at the Italian Grand Prix where he qualified 19th , he finished in tenth place . In China , Webber scored Williams ' first point since Rosberg 's 7th in the European Grand Prix by finishing eighth , after passing the struggling David Coulthard in the closing stages of the race , after qualifying 14th . He qualified in the same position in Japan , but a lack of grip from his Bridgestone tyres saw him crash out of the race after 39 laps . His last race for Williams and the final race of 2006 at the Brazilian Grand Prix ended in disappointment . After starting 11th , he collided with his team @-@ mate Rosberg on the first lap and suffered terminal damage to the rear of the car . Overall , it was a generally dismal season for Webber , scoring only 7 points to finish 14th overall in the drivers championship .

== Red Bull ( 2007 ? 2013 ) ==

Webber 's two @-@ year contract with Williams ended at the end of 2006 . The team held an option on his services for 2007 which they chose not to take up on its original terms and although Webber had expressed his desire to stay with the team , Williams offered Webber a considerably smaller salary than had been stipulated in the original contract for the option year . Under advice from his manager , Flavio Briatore , Webber then sought another drive . Williams quickly elected to promote current test driver Alexander Wurz to a race seat . Williams team boss Sir Frank Williams stated that he was reluctant to wait for Webber to commit to the team once the option for future years had expired , though he did not blame Webber for waiting to see if there was a seat available at another team .

After some speculation of Webber joining the Renault team , which was run by Briatore , it was announced on 7 August 2006 that Webber would join Red Bull Racing for 2007 to partner David Coulthard , replacing former Jaguar Racing teammate Christian Klien . It is rumoured that Briatore arranged an agreement with Red Bull that , if they offered Webber a race seat , Renault would supply them with engines . On 26 January 2007 the new Red Bull RB3 challenger was unveiled in Spain , and Webber drove the car in a shakedown in Barcelona on the same day . The car featured heavy revisions to the team 's previous cars and looked very much like designer Adrian Newey 's previous cars which had either won or come close to the World Title . The car was fitted with a Renault RS27 engine .

=== 2007 ===

At the first race of the season in Melbourne , Webber qualified in 7th place and held that position for the early part of the race , managing to finish in 13th position after the RB3 suffered from a throttle @-@ related malfunction and a jammed fuel flap . At the Malaysian Grand Prix , he again out @-@ qualified his more experienced team @-@ mate Coulthard and finished tenth , which was encouraging for the team in such a new and radical car . Bahrain was also going well for both drivers , who were running in sixth and seventh positions , until both cars retired due to mechanical malfunctions . Webber again was hampered by the aforementioned jammed fuel flap , radically affecting the aerodynamic drag , a vital set @-@ up consideration for the Sakhir circuit .

The potential of both the car and Webber , who had certainly worked well to out @-@ qualify his vastly more experienced team @-@ mate , was highlighted by the closeness they had to other teams which ran the Renault engine and although the Adrian Newey @-@ designed car had flaws which contributed to Webber 's scoreless season to that point . Though the pace of the car seemed to be picking up , with Coulthard qualifying in the top @-@ 10 for the Spanish Grand Prix , Webber was unable to convert his early weekend pace into a competitive grid position due to hydraulic problems . His race was much the same with a similar hydraulic problem leading to him retiring early in the race whilst team @-@ mate Coulthard notched up the team 's first points with a fifth @-@ place finish .

Webber finally recorded the second podium of his career at the European Grand Prix after qualifying in 6th position . A rain spiced race and the retirement of Kimi Räikkönen , who was running third at the time , allowed Webber to claim third on the podium despite almost losing the position on the penultimate corner as he battled with Alexander Wurz .

His best chance at winning a race occurred at the Japanese Grand Prix where , in the wet conditions , Webber ran in 2nd place , setting the 3rd fastest lap of the race after the two McLarens . Towards the end of the race , Webber was running 2nd behind Lewis Hamilton , with no further pit stops to make , when Sebastian Vettel , driver for sister team Scuderia Toro Rosso , ran into the back of him when Hamilton suddenly reduced his speed in poor visibility and heavy rain under a safety car , taking both cars out of the race . He had been lapping faster than Hamilton due to damage on the McLaren 's sidepod from contact with Robert Kubica . Out of the current Formula One drivers , until his win at the 2009 German Grand Prix , Webber has had the second highest number of starts without a win , and is often referred to as the " unluckiest man in modern Formula



One " , a title that was reinforced in Japan as Webber started the race suffering from food poisoning and vomited inside his helmet during the first safety car period . When questioned by ITV 's Louise Goodman about the race ending collision Webber commented : " Well it 's kids , isn 't it . Kids with not enough experience , doing a good job then they fuck it all up , " Webber was particularly critical of Hamilton 's driving that led to the accident , describing his antics as " shit " . Webber also stated the British press attacked him for criticising their " golden boy " Hamilton .

Webber again looked strong at the final race of the season in Brazil . Webber qualified fifth in front of both BMW Saubers and behind only the Ferraris and McLarens . Webber looked strong in the race , running as high as fourth , before yet another mechanical failure brought an end to a disappointing but promising season for the Australian .

= = = = 2008 = = = =

As per his contract , Webber started the year in Melbourne with Red Bull Racing . He recorded top @-@ six lap times in each of the three practice sessions , and was on his way to the top ten in the qualifying session when the front right brake disc in his car failed going into turn 6 during Q2 , sending him spinning off into the sand trap ending his qualifying session , and resulting in 15th position on the grid . Although starting well , he momentarily went off the track at turn 1 to avoid being involved in contact that had already erupted . Webber made several positions by turn 3 but an incident involving himself , Kazuki Nakajima and Anthony Davidson when he was slightly contacted by Davidson whilst trying to avoid the struggle between the other two drivers , ended his race .

Despite the retirement in Australia , the next 5 rounds saw a string of point @-@ scoring positions , including a 4th at Monaco in the wet , one of the few finishers not to have made a mistake and subsequent pit @-@ in , however his performance was overshadowed by Hamilton 's win . Until 2009 , this was Webber 's best start to an F1 season since 2005 with Williams , managing five consecutive points scoring races .

On the Thursday of the British Grand Prix weekend , it was announced that Webber had agreed to a one @-@ year extension to his contract at Red Bull Racing , leaving him contracted there until the end of the 2009 season . During qualifying for the Grand Prix , Webber equalled his best qualifying position with 2nd position on the grid , in front of Kimi Räikkönen and behind pole position @-@ holder Heikki Kovalainen . As a result of Timo Glock 's penalty from the Belgian Grand Prix for illegally passing Webber under yellow flags in the final lap ( s ) of the race , Webber was awarded 8th place and the point that came with it .

At the first night race in Formula One , the Singapore Grand Prix , Webber qualified in 13th position . Red Bull pulled in both Webber and David Coulthard for their pit stops as soon as they could when the safety car came on track , due to Nelson Piquet , Jr. crashing , giving them both great track position . This led to Webber running in 2nd place before a gearbox issue put him out of the race on lap 29 .

Webber qualified 13th at the Japanese Grand Prix . After some first corner incidents he was stranded in last place ; from there he progressed up the order , at one point in time sitting in fourth . Following his pit stop he emerged in 10th , with Nick Heidfeld and Nico Rosberg yet to pit , from where he continued to push , regained 8th once the two drivers in 8th and 9th both went in for their final pit stops . With two laps to go , Webber 's tyres were close to bald ? being compared to slicks . Losing almost 3 seconds a lap to the chasing Ferrari of Felipe Massa , who was on fresh tyres , he defended his point vigorously . Pressured by the Ferrari , he was out @-@ powered by the superior engine of Massa and although great attempts at saving his place were shown , he finished in a hard @-@ fought 9th position , on a one stop strategy which was then upgraded to 8th position after a post @-@ race penalty to Sébastien Bourdais .

In China , Webber 's engine failed on the home straight during the final practice session leaving him with a ten @-@ place grid penalty . During qualifying on Saturday afternoon , he ended in 6th after Heidfeld was demoted for impeding Webber 's team @-@ mate Coulthard , and so Webber had to start from 16th after his penalty . Webber was on the grid in 16th and managed to end the first lap up four places in 12th before taking the 11th position off Glock on the second lap . By the first pit

stop , Webber had overtaken Rubens Barrichello and Piquet Jr. for 9th place , but inevitably dropped back once he had entered the pits . The two @-@ stop strategy that the team had adopted was not successful and Webber finished in 14th place . The Brazilian Grand Prix was team @-@ mate Coulthard 's last race before his retirement from F1 . Practice was close with the leading seven cars , including Webber in 7th , being less than a second apart . In Saturday afternoon qualifying , Webber managed 10th on the grid , and finished the race in 9th position .

Webber finished the season in 11th place in the Drivers ' Championship with a total of 21 points , his most successful season after 2005 at Williams at that point in time .

===== 2009 =====

Webber remained with Red Bull for 2009 , where he was joined by Sebastian Vettel after David Coulthard 's retirement at the end of 2008 . After sustaining a broken leg in a road accident during his charity event in Tasmania in the off @-@ season , he returned to testing on 11 February with steel rods in his leg .

At the opening round in Australia , an error in qualifying left him in 10th on the grid for the start of the race . On the second lap of the race , Webber crashed with Heikki Kovalainen , Adrian Sutil and Nick Heidfeld following their efforts to avoid a collision with Rubens Barrichello , causing all except Barrichello to pit .

The Malaysian Grand Prix saw Webber qualify seventh and gain two positions due to penalties to other drivers . The race , which was halted early due to monsoonal rains , ended under the safety car with Webber in fourth . He was provisionally placed eighth , but further investigation brought his position up to sixth . He was awarded 1 @.@ 5 points due to the half @-@ points decision at the conclusion of the race . The Chinese Grand Prix proved a breakthrough for Webber . Starting in third position , the race began under the safety car due to heavy rain . Webber eventually brought his car home in second position , marking Webber 's career @-@ best finish and was also the first win ( and 1 ? 2 finish ) for the Red Bull team .

The Spanish Grand Prix saw Webber qualify fifth fastest and finish third , and he took fifth in Monaco . He followed this up with his equal career best second place in Turkey , equalling this result in the subsequent British Grand Prix at Silverstone .

Webber qualified on pole for the first time in Formula One at the Nürburgring for the German Grand Prix . This was the first time an Australian driver had claimed pole position since Alan Jones in 1980 . He went on to achieve his first Formula One victory despite receiving a drive through penalty early in the race for causing an avoidable collision at the start when he hit the Brawn GP of Rubens Barrichello . Webber went on to dominate the race and win ahead of his teammate Vettel , heading a Red Bull 1 ? 2 and closing the gap to the Brawns in the Constructors ' Championship . Webber moved up to third in the drivers ' championship after his win , at that time his best position in Formula One , passing Barrichello in the championship standings .

On 23 July , Webber signed a new contract committing him to the Red Bull team for the 2010 Formula One season . Three days later , he finished third in Hungary , moving into second place in the Drivers ' Championship . Webber also set his first ever fastest lap in Formula One . On 21 September 2009 the FIA banned Webber 's manager , Flavio Briatore , from all FIA related activities and announced that it would not renew the superlicence for any driver managed or otherwise associated with Briatore . Since then , Briatore has been reinstated into Formula One and negotiations concerning management has since been declared legal .

Following his podium at the Hungarian Grand Prix , two ninth placings , two retirements and an unlucky Japanese Grand Prix saw Webber drop to fourth in the Championship , collecting no points . However , he went on to win his second Formula One race in Brazil , starting from second position on the grid , securing fourth place in the 2009 Championship . In the final race of the season , Webber managed second behind teammate Vettel . The result was Red Bull Racing 's fourth 1 ? 2 result of the season .

===== 2010 =====

In 2010 , Webber continued to race with Red Bull . He qualified for pole position five times ( in Malaysia , Spain , Monaco Turkey and Belgium ) ; won four races ( Spain , Monaco , Britain and Hungary ) ; finished second in Malaysia , Belgium , Japan and Brazil and third in Turkey and Singapore . After the Monaco Grand Prix , Webber led the drivers ' championship , the first Australian to do so since Alan Jones in 1981 . In June 2010 , Red Bull Racing announced that Webber had signed a one @-@ year extension to his contract , meaning that he would remain with the team for the 2011 season .

At the European Grand Prix , Webber crashed into the back of Heikki Kovalainen 's Lotus , sending the car flying through the air , collecting a track advertising board and landing upside down . The car then bounced back and crashed into the tyre barrier at high speed . Webber received only minor injuries , but retired from the race .

At season 's end , Webber was third in the drivers ' championship , behind Vettel and Alonso . He had led the championship until the Korean Grand Prix , when he did not complete the race . Webber could still have won the championship if , in the final race at Abu Dhabi he had won the race and Alonso had finished no higher than third . Vettel won the race and the drivers ' championship and Red Bull Racing the constructors ' championship .

Webber drove the last four races of the season with a small fracture in his right shoulder , the result of a mountain bike accident .

At the 2011 British Grand Prix , Webber was presented with the Hawthorn Memorial Trophy for 2010 .

===== 2011 =====

Webber started the 2011 season with a fifth @-@ place finish at the Australian Grand Prix , having started from third on the grid , after struggling to keep up with teammate Vettel due to a damaged chassis . In Malaysia , he qualified third but his KERS completely failed at the start and as a result , dropped down over 10 places but staged a strong recovery back to 4th , with fastest lap . In China he qualified eighteenth after another KERS failure , but passed 15 cars on track to finish third . In Turkey , Webber qualified second ? his best qualifying result of the season at that point ? but lost the position to Nico Rosberg at the start . After passing Rosberg and reclaiming second , he then spent the rest of the race battling with Fernando Alonso , ultimately finishing second after passing Alonso with 8 laps to go . In Spain , Webber secured pole , but lost ground at the start again and had to settle for fourth . Webber qualified third in Monaco but dropped a place at the start and later a pit stop delay dropped Webber outside the top ten , however he recovered to fourth by passing Kamui Kobayashi on the penultimate lap , and set his fourth fastest lap of the season .

Webber claimed pole position in a drying qualifying session at Silverstone , beating Vettel by 0 @.@ 032 seconds . The race however did not go as well , as a slow start followed by slow pitstops meant that Webber found himself running fourth behind Alonso , Vettel and Lewis Hamilton . Towards the end of the race , a strong charge saw Webber pass Hamilton and then close the gap to Vettel 's second position , when his team asked him to " maintain the gap " and not try to make a move on Vettel . Although Webber ignored his team 's requests and tried to pass Vettel , Vettel was able to hold him off and finish second , with Webber taking third place .

Webber took his only victory of the season at Brazilian Grand Prix , taking the lead from team @-@ mate Vettel after he developed a gearbox issue . With this result , he moved into third place in the championship , ahead of Fernando Alonso . Webber also achieved his seventh fastest lap of the season at the race , with no other drivers scoring more than three in the season . This resulted in him winning the DHL Fastest Lap Award for the first time .

===== 2012 =====

On 27 August 2011 , it was announced that Webber would remain with Red Bull into the 2012 season , alongside team @-@ mate Vettel . Webber qualified fifth for the Australian Grand Prix ,

ahead of team @-@ mate Vettel ? sixth ? and achieved his best result at his home race with fourth place .

Webber followed this result with three more fourth @-@ place finishes in succession , at the Malaysian , Chinese and Bahrain Grands Prix . He inherited pole position for the 2012 Monaco Grand Prix ; having set the second fastest time in Q3 , he was elevated to first position owing to Michael Schumacher 's five place grid penalty for an incident at the 2012 Spanish Grand Prix . He won the race ahead of Nico Rosberg and Fernando Alonso , who were second and third , respectively . This was the third win in a row for a Red Bull Racing driver at Monaco , and the first time that six different drivers won the first six races of a World Championship season . In doing this also , he became the first Australian to achieve two wins at Monaco .

Webber achieved his second win of the season at the British Grand Prix , passing Alonso late in the race . Following the victory , Webber signed a one @-@ year contract extension with Red Bull , for the 2013 season . Webber later qualified on pole for the Korean Grand Prix , ahead of team @-@ mate Vettel , but apart from this he struggled in the second half of the season with his only podiums after his win in Britain coming in Korea and India where Red Bull were unbeatable .

= = = 2013 = = =

Webber was retained by Red Bull Racing for 2013 , which was to be his last season with the team . At the opening leg in Australia , he qualified on the front row but only managed a sixth @-@ place finish in the race . Tensions between himself and teammate Vettel rose after the German overtook Webber in the closing stages of the Malaysian Grand Prix to take the win despite the team 's order to hold positions . Webber took another podium in Monaco . In June 2013 , Webber announced that he would be leaving Red Bull at the end of the season , having signed for Porsche to drive their new LMP1 car in 2014 in the FIA World Endurance Championship ( WEC ) including the Le Mans 24 hour race . Webber took another podium in Britain after a battle for victory with Nico Rosberg during the last lap . He finished third in Italy , his fourth podium of the season . Consecutive retirements in Singapore and Korea ended his contention for second place in the championship . Webber scored his first pole of the season in Japan , outqualifying his team @-@ mate for the first time in the year , and finished second in the race . Webber scored his thirteenth pole position to equal Jack Brabham 's qualifying record for Australian F1 drivers at the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix . In November , Webber admitted that he had been ' very close ' to signing a deal with Ferrari for 2013 and 2014 .

Webber started from fourth place in his final Formula One Grand Prix at the Interlagos circuit for the Brazilian Grand Prix held on 24 November . After a race @-@ long duel with the Ferrari of close friend Fernando Alonso , Webber finished his final race in second place behind team mate Sebastian Vettel , setting the fastest lap of the race . By finishing second , Webber jumped from fifth to third in the final championship standings , overtaking both Lewis Hamilton and Kimi Räikkönen , who did not compete in the final two races of the season . Despite their frosty relationship and winning his thirteenth race of the year ( and ninth in succession ) , Vettel was happy to hand the spotlight on the podium in Brazil to his retiring team mate , congratulating him on his career .

Webber finished his Formula One career with nine wins , forty @-@ two podiums , thirteen pole positions and nineteen fastest laps from 215 race starts .

= = Sportscar racing = =

= = = Porsche ( 2014 ? ) = = =

In 2013 Webber announced his return to sportscar racing , racing for Porsche as one of their drivers for the 2014 FIA World Endurance Championship as the marque returned to the top category of sportscar racing after a 16 @-@ year absence . Driving the Porsche 919 Hybrid Webber finished his first World Endurance Championship race in third at the 2014 6 Hours of Silverstone two laps behind the winning Toyota . At Le Mans , although still running at the finish , the team were thirty three laps

down and were therefore listed as Not Classified . Two more third @-@ place finishes followed at Fuji and Bahrain . At the 6 Hours of São Paulo , Webber 's Porsche took pole position , but was involved in a heavy crash towards the end of the race whilst passing the Ferrari of the 8 Star Motorsports team . Webber 's car split in two , but he avoided serious injury . Webber therefore finished his first season in 9th place .

In November 2015 he became World Endurance Champion in the # 17 car , alongside Timo Bernhard and Brendon Hartley . The trio race with the # 1 on their car in 2016 .

= = Outside motorsport = =

Webber lives in Aston Clinton , Buckinghamshire , England with partner Ann Neal and her grown @-@ up son from a previous relationship , Luke Barrett . Outside motorsport , Webber enjoys " most outdoor pursuits " including road cycling , mountain biking , tennis and fitness training . He has won the annual F1 Pro @-@ Am tennis tournament in Barcelona three times ( 2002 , 2004 and 2005 ) and was also runner @-@ up to Juan Pablo Montoya in 2003 . Webber is an avid rugby league football fan , supporting the Canberra Raiders , as well as being a football fan , supporting English Premier League club Sunderland . His favourite musical acts are Pink , Oasis , INXS , Dizzee Rascal , U2 and Feeder .

Webber is also a keen fan of motorcycle racing , and has made several trips to the Isle of Man TT Races . On Saturday 2 June 2012 , he was a guest at the Superbike TT , and was on hand to congratulate his close friend John McGuinness as he secured victory , and his 18th Isle of Man TT triumph .

In July 2015 , Mark Webber released his long @-@ awaited autobiography , Aussie Grit . The book covers his journey from Queanbeyan to the pinnacle of Formula 1 and during his book tour he candidly discusses his relationship with former Red Bull teammate Sebastian Vettel and how the media portrayed things differently to how they actually were .

Webber supports the North Melbourne Kangaroos in the Australian Football League .

= = = Charity Challenge = = =

In November 2003 , Webber organised and competed in a 10 @-@ day trek across Tasmania to raise funds for children 's cancer research charities . Starting in Marrawah on the state 's west coast , the trek involved 1 @,@ 000 km of cycling , kayaking and trekking along the southern coast and finished at Coles Bay in the east . Four teams of four competitors each started the trek , with only two teams ( including Webber 's ) completing the entire journey . Along the way , Australian sporting stars Pat Rafter ( tennis ) , Steve Waugh ( cricket ) , Cathy Freeman ( athletics ) , James Tomkins ( rowing ) , Guy Andrews ( iron man ) , and actor Joel Edgerton completed certain parts of the trek . The challenge concluded with a black tie dinner and auction to raise funds . Webber said he was driven to organise the event after the death of his grandfather to cancer , as well as his experiences with friends whose children had battled the disease .

With Webber 's switch from Jaguar to Williams at the end of 2004 , the challenge was postponed until 2006 , when he was able to secure a three @-@ year deal with the Tasmanian Government to hold the event . The 2006 event ( now named the " Mark Webber Pure Tasmania Challenge " ) was held over six days and covered nearly 600 km . Twelve teams competed in the event , and it raised A \$ 500 @,@ 000 for children 's charities .

The 2007 Mark Webber Pure Tasmania Challenge was launched at the 2007 Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne when Webber was joined by sports stars and Kylie Minogue , and Hollywood star Anthony Edwards . The trek was another gruelling physical and mental adventure race about Tasmania in aid of charity but albeit with a new format . Teams competed for honours in two unique categories : the Van Diemen Cup ? designed exclusively for corporate teams of four people , and the 2theXtreme Cup ? a two @-@ person elite team entry . Both categories trekked , kayaked and cycled alongside each other as they covered approximately 450 km through World Heritage wilderness and along the idyllic coast of the Freycinet National Park . It was held from 17 ? 23

November , and for the first time , one of Webber 's fellow Formula One drivers , Heikki Kovalainen , joined him in the challenge .

During the 2008 event , Webber broke his leg when his bike collided with a car . He did not suffer any other injuries , but had a pin inserted into his broken bone .

The event was not held in 2009 or 2010 .

In December 2010 , it was announced that the Challenge would return in 2011 . It was subsequently held in 2012 and 2013 as well .

= = Racing record = =

= = = Career summary = = =

\* Season still in progress .

= = = Complete FIA GT Championship results = = =

= = = Complete 24 Hours of Le Mans results = = =

= = = Complete International Formula 3000 results = = =

( key ) ( Races in bold indicate pole position ) ( Races in italics indicate fastest lap )

= = = Complete Formula One results = = =

( key ) ( Races in bold indicate pole position ) ( Races in italics indicate fastest lap )

? Half points awarded as less than 75 % of race distance was completed by the winner . ? Did not finish , but was classified as he had completed more than 90 % of the race distance .

= = = Complete FIA World Endurance Championship results = = =

\* Season still in progress .