

# Michael Schumacher

German race-car driver

**Michael Schumacher**, byname **Schumi**, (born January 3, 1969, Hürth-Hermülhein, [West Germany](#) [now in Germany]), German race-car driver who set records for the most [Formula One](#) (F1) [Grand Prix](#) race victories and F1 series championships. As a youth, Schumacher became interested in go-kart racing, an enthusiasm that was supported by his father's management of a go-kart track. In 1984 and 1985 he won the German junior [karting](#) championship, and in 1987 he captured the German and European karting titles. The next year, at age 19, he left karting and became a driver of Formula Three (F3) cars, vehicles that were less powerful than the F1 racers. Two years later, in 1990, he won the German F3 championship.

In 1991 Schumacher moved up to F1 competition as a driver for the Jordan team. He switched to Benetton the following year and won the drivers' world championship for that team in 1994 and 1995. Before the 1996 season he moved to the Ferrari team and finished third in the championship standings. After suffering a broken leg in a crash in 1999, Schumacher rebounded to win a third championship the following year, which was Ferrari's first drivers' title since 1979. His 2000 win was the first in a string of five consecutive world championships (2000–04), and his grand total of seven F1 titles broke [Juan Manuel Fangio](#)'s record of five that had stood for nearly 50 years. In 2005 and 2006 he finished in third and second place in the F1 standings, respectively.

Schumacher retired at the end of the 2006 campaign to serve as a test driver and adviser for Ferrari. At the time of his retirement, he had 91 F1 Grand Prix race victories, which shattered the previous record of 51, held by French driver Alain Prost. In December 2009 Schumacher announced that he would return to F1 for the 2010 season as a driver for the Mercedes team. He spent three seasons with Mercedes, but he never won a race and never finished higher than eighth in the overall F1 standings during his comeback, and he retired again in 2012.

While Schumacher experienced unprecedented success on the track, he was also—through a combination of winner’s purses and endorsements—one of the best-paid athletes in the history of sport. His annual income was estimated at \$100 million at the peak of his career. Schumacher was also known for his charitable efforts. He was named special ambassador for [UNESCO](#) in 2002 and made headlines for his \$10 million donation to the relief effort for the [Indian Ocean tsunami](#) of 2004.

In December 2013 Schumacher fell while skiing in [France](#) and hit his head on a rock. Despite his wearing a helmet at the time of the accident, he sustained a significant brain injury and was placed in a medically induced coma until the following June.