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Fight for FIA leadership erupts in row

Exclusive



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Leaked emails show how senior figures are lobbying for Jean Todt to win vote

THE fierce battle to become the most powerful man in world motorsport was the subject of a new row last night after emails were leaked showing how senior figures at the top of the FIA are supporting Jean Todt.

The race to replace Max Mosley as president of the FIA – the sport's governing body – has already been subject to claims of partisanship by Mosley himself, who has publicly declared his preference for former Ferrari team principal Todt over An Vatanen, the Finnish former world rally champion, in the vote on Oct 23. Todt is seen as the candidate who will preserve the status quo while Vatanen is pointed as an agent for change.

The emails, seen by *The Daily Telegraph*, reveal that both Peter Duggwiler, an FIA regional director general, and David Ward, director general of the FIA Foundation, have been actively lobbying on behalf of the Frenchman.

In one email, dated Sept 1 and written from his FIA email account, Duggwiler, who also chairs the Motor Sport Safety Development Fund, which disburses large amounts of money on behalf of the FIA, implores key Todt sympathisers from motoring clubs around the world to "intensify your calls among the smaller clubs and the motorsport clubs in particular".

Duggwiler concludes: "I will send an updated lobbying list to those of you where changes have occurred and I will call you this week to see where we are so I can make an adequate report to Jean [Todt]."

In another email from Ward, apparently to Nick Craw, Todt's



Powerbroker: Max Mosley has openly declared his preference for the former Ferrari team chief to replace him

candidate to run the FIA Senate. Ward discusses Todt's potential strategy in North America, home of the American Automobile Association, one of the FIA's biggest and most powerful organisations and a key supporter of Vatanen.

"I fully agree with your suggestions regarding a more intensive lobbying strategy with the smaller mobility clubs," Ward says. "I think we need to expose the hypocrisy of the larger clubs and make sure that the smaller clubs stay with us."

The email concludes by suggesting that it is time to make the final appointments to Todt's 23-man 'cabinet'.

That email was sent from Ward's personal account but in another, sent from his FIA Foundation account to Todt, Craw and two other candidates on Todt's slate, Brian Gibbons and Graham Stoker, Ward includes a final draft of Todt's

campaign announcement and asks if anyone has any last-minute changes to the text.

The FIA Foundation, of which Todt and Vatanen are trustees, is a charitable organisation which Mosley maintains is independent of the FIA. It is registered with the UK-based Charity Commission Direct, which could take a dim view of Ward's actions.

Apart from appearing to favour one trustee over another, the Commission's guidance states that a charity's assets must be used only in furtherance of its objectives and that an employee must not undertake any activities that put the charity's reputation at risk.

The FIA Foundation, like the Motor Sport Safety Development fund, disburses huge amounts of money made up in part from fines such as the \$100 million levied on McLaren two years ago in

connection with the "Spygate" affair, making it a powerful lobbying lever. It is believed there is nothing in the FIA statutes which rules out employees lobbying on behalf of a candidate during elections, but French law would apply.

"I'm not qualified in French law but my understanding of the basic legal requirements for any election process in France is that there is an overriding duty of neutrality," said Oliver Hunt, a partner at Onside Law, a leading sports law practice. "That is stated to be the case for non-profit organisations such as the FIA." The FIA was unavailable for comment.

Two weeks ago Mosley sent a letter to Prince Feisal of Jordan, chairman of Jordan Motorsport and one of Vatanen's nominations as vice-president, in which he was scathing about the Finn's credentials and stated that Vatanen would lose

the election "and lose badly". The letter also appeared to warn those who support Vatanen next Friday that they can expect to be marginalised under a Todt regime.

Todt's camp, which picked up the support of seven-time world champion Michael Schumacher yesterday, has called on Vatanen to stop his "negative campaigning". Earlier this year, the Finn had accused Todt of the inappropriate use of private jets and funding for travel to campaign events, and was critical of the role of his partner Michelle Yeoh.

Vatanen has since said it was no surprise that powerful figures such as Mosley and F1 commercial rights holder Bernie Ecclestone were backing Todt, as they are trying to block a "mini revolution".

Both sides claim to have a majority of votes going into next week's election.

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Donington tempt investors in race to raise £120m

By Paul Kelso
Chief Sports Reporter

DONINGTON'S hopes of staging next year's British Grand Prix rest on a last-ditch fund-raising operation to try to fill the £120 million hole in the project's budget.

Donington chief executive Simon Gillett has just 10 days to convince Bernie Ecclestone that he has the money to

fulfil his 17-year contract for the race, and his hopes rest on an expensive bond issue launched yesterday.

Donington are hoping to raise £135 million that will pay investors up to 15 per cent in interest over seven years. The interest rate reflects the high level of risk in the project, and the fact that all investors know Donington is operating to an

Oct 23 deadline. A further incentive is that the bonds will be offered at a discount, meaning that investors will receive a premium when the bonds are repaid as well as interest.

Donington's priority is to secure the £12 million Gillett owes Ecclestone in staging fees for the race. Gillett had hoped to secure a letter of credit from Citigroup, but it

declined, triggering the breach of contract.

Rubens Barrichello insists he is still in talks with Brown GP about staying for 2010, despite reports that he has signed for Williams. Williams have also confirmed that their engine deal with Toyota has been terminated by mutual consent. Renault and Cosworth have been linked as suppliers for 2010.