



## 2026 CHINESE GRAND PRIX

13 - 15 March 2026

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<b>From</b>	The Stewards	<b>Document</b>	20
<b>To</b>	The Team Manager, Atlassian Williams F1 Team	<b>Date</b>	13 March 2026
		<b>Time</b>	14:15

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The Stewards, having received a report from the Race Director, summoned (document 17) and heard from the driver and team representative, have considered the following matter and determine the following:

**No / Driver** 23 - Alexander Albon

**Competitor** Atlassian Williams F1 Team

**Time** 12:37

**Session** Free Practice 1

**Fact** Car 23 performed a practice start on the grid while another car was stationary on the same side of the grid

**Infringement** Breach of Article B4.2.2c of the FIA F1 Regulations.

**Decision** Driver: Reprimand (Driving).

**Reason** The Stewards heard from the driver of Car 23 (Alexander Albon), team representative and reviewed video, telemetry and in-car video evidence and determined that Car 23 performed a practice start while another car remained stationary in front of it on the same side of the grid.

The driver candidly admitted that he misjudged what the car ahead of him would do. The car ahead of him, Car 12, was on the grid for a considerable length of time and he was expecting Car 12 to perform his start while he was preparing his car for the practice start. However, Car 12 remained stationary. Given the length of time that Car 12 was on the grid, this caught the driver of Car 23 by surprise, which led to the breach.

However, in mitigation, he explained that the new cars for 2026 require a preparation sequence before a start that takes approximately 20 seconds. By way of contrast, in 2025, that was merely 2 seconds or thereabouts. So, there is a significant difference in the way that the cars need to be prepared in order to perform the start. So, while it was usual to wait for the car in front to perform the start before the car behind began its preparatory sequence in the past, this could lead to serious delays in the practice starts this year.

If each car was required to take that length of time (ie 20 seconds or more), and the frontrunners might well need longer, then the practice start procedure would need to be looked at again.

He also highlighted via telemetry that as soon as he realised that Car 12 had not performed its start and he had, he braked hard and slowed down. This was clear from the telemetry as well.

Article B4.2.2c of the FIA F1 Regulations is clear that “under no circumstances” should a car perform a practice start when there is another car stationary in front of it. The mandatory nature of this prohibition highlights the serious safety concerns with such an action and the potential for danger to the cars and drivers.

In this case, although the performance of the start was clearly in breach, the driver took steps to mitigate the situation as soon as he became aware of the issue. We also took into account the fact, as the teams were informed at the start of the season, that the cars are completely new and different from the cars from 2025. Beyond performance, they also need to be prepared and driven differently.

Taking all that into account, in particular the mitigatory circumstances set out above, we impose a reprimand (driving) on Car 23.

Competitors are reminded that they have the right to appeal certain decisions of the Stewards, in accordance with Article 15 of the FIA International Sporting Code and Chapter 5 of the FIA Judicial and Disciplinary Rules, within the applicable time limits.

Decisions of the Stewards are taken independently of the FIA and are based solely on the relevant regulations, guidelines and evidence presented.

**Nish Shetty**

**Matthew Selley**

**Pedro Lamy**

**Zheng Honghai**

**The Stewards**