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# Sport

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## Verstappen threatens to quit

Molly Hudson  
Motor Racing Reporter, Jeddah

The crisis engulfing Red Bull deepened last night when Max Verstappen threatened to quit the team if his close ally Helmut Marko leaves.

Marko, an 80-year-old senior adviser to the team, has been at Red Bull since it launched in Formula 1 and is close to the world champion.

Verstappen was responding to comments from Marko earlier yesterday that he could be facing suspension as part of the fallout from the allegations made by a female employee against team principal Christian Horner. She accused Horner of controlling behaviour but an independent investigation exonerated him and she has since been suspended by the team.

Speaking in Jeddah before today's Saudi Arabian Grand Prix, Marko told the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation that there is a "theoretical possibility" he could be suspended by Red Bull and would miss the next race in Australia. Marko added: "In the end I decide for myself what I'm going to do."

When Verstappen was asked post-qualifying if he needed Marko to remain with the team for him to stay, he replied: "I've always said that to the team. They know that."

Verstappen also warned Red Bull that any move to oust Marko would be "not good for my situation [at Red Bull] as well".

Verstappen said: "From my side, I have a lot of respect for Helmut and what we have achieved together; it goes very far. Also my loyalty to him is very big. I have always expressed this to

everyone within the team, everyone high up, that he is an important part in my decision-making for all the time in the future as well within the team.

"It is very important that he stays within the team... including everyone else, it is a whole team effort. It is very important that we keep the key people together because I feel like if such an important pillar falls away — that is also what I have said to the team — that is not good for my situation as well.

"For sure, for me, Helmut has to stay. He has built this team together with Dietrich [Mateschitz, the Red Bull team founder who died in 2022] from day one and he has always been very loyal to the team, to everyone within the team, to make sure everyone would keep their positions from back in the day.

"It is also very important that you  
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## Bearman, 18, will become Britain's youngest F1 driver

Molly Hudson

Oliver Bearman, 18, will today become the youngest Briton to drive in a grand prix after he was called up by Ferrari when Carlos Sainz was diagnosed with appendicitis.

Bearman, who is from Chelmsford, has been at Ferrari since he was 16, when he left his school in the UK to move to the team's driver academy in northern Italy.

When he races in today's Saudi Arabian Grand Prix in Jeddah, he will be the third-youngest person of any nationality to drive in a grand prix; the youngest was Max Verstappen, who made his debut at 17 in 2015.

Bearman will be 11th on the grid

after a creditable performance in qualifying last night, given he had never previously driven an F1 car after dark.

He will start three places behind Lewis Hamilton, who will leave Mercedes to join Ferrari next season.

Bearman's father, David, the millionaire founder and chief executive of Aventura Group, the insurance company, watched nervously from the Ferrari garage as his son took part in qualifying.

Bearman, who becomes the 12th Briton to drive for Ferrari and the first since Nigel Mansell in 1990, speaks English with an Italian twang acquired while living in Modena for the past two years.

He hopes to prove he deserves a full-time place with an F1 team next season.

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