brillio PODCAST

# Driven by Data
# Inside the Fast Lane
# with Alex Albon

## Podcast Transcript

**Dragos:** Welcome to Driven by Data - Inside the Fast Lane podcast, where we explore the high octane intersection of speed, precision, and innovation. I am Dragos Stoica, Country Manager, Brillio, Romania. And I'm your host today. I'll start with the disclosure. I'm a huge fan of F1 since I was six, so this episode is a personal highlight. Today we are going beyond the grandstands and pitwalls to uncover what really powers F1. Not just horsepower, but human insights, relentless innovation and intelligent data. Behind every corner. Taken at 300km/h. There is a strategy behind every decision on the track, a cascade of data, and behind every driver, a network of engineers, analytics and partners working in real time to gain milliseconds that make all the difference. Today, we are thrilled to be joined by someone who knows what it means to live at this at age of speed and strategy. He's cool under pressure, bold in overtakes, and always thinking three corners ahead. Please welcome Alex Albon, F1 driver at Atlassian Williams Racing.

**Alex:** Thank you very much.

**Dragos:** Alex you have been with the team since 2022. And over the past few seasons you have been a driving force, literally and figuratively behind some of the strongest performances from point finishes in 2023 and 2024. Now to an impressive form in 2025, highlighted by P5 in Australia, P7 in China, P9 in Monaco, in both Monaco and in Japan, and recently P6 in Belgium, which was impressive. Alex, you constantly deliver strong results on some of Formula One's most demanding circuit with such an impressive journey. You as a driver, how much do you rely on data to shape your performance?

**Alex:** It's an essential part of our work. I would say that we have been surrounded by data since I was 12 years old, looking at data on a computer screen and using it as a method to go and drive faster, being able to interpret it and apply it. For example, before every session we go out, we look at historical data, studying trends and corners where we previously struggled, and identifying areas for myself as a driver where I need to improve. Then we do our sessions, and post-sessions we're again using data to make sure that when we go into qualifying, we know exactly what we need to do at every single corner. That's just one part of it. Realistically, there's also the data on the aerodynamics of the car, the suspension of the car—it all goes a long way. And it's not just about the car, it extends past the gym as well. I'm always looking at the screen after every training, understanding where I should improve a little bit better and how I can bring more value on the track.

**Dragos:** Exactly.

**Alex:** We find that we use data as a communication tool in many ways, because the engineers and I are constantly in discussion. It can be difficult for engineers to fully understand what the driver actually wants in the car, and the data brings us all together. I can point out specific areas—"you see here, this is what I don't like in the car, we need to improve this"—and it gives us a common ground to have that discussion as a team. In fact, the best teams in the world are the ones that can communicate effectively and use data in the most productive way possible.

**Dragos:** I understand... And then, very interesting on top of it all, you have—as you mentioned before—the team aspect. Working as a team, how does it feel knowing there's an entire group of engineers across various departments working behind the scenes while you're out on track?

**Alex:** Yeah, it's a huge team. At Williams we're over a thousand people now, which is amazing. Firstly, the culture within the team is that we're all striving to be the best we can be. I have a huge team behind me, and I know they're trying their best and doing everything they can to find that last little bit of performance. What's interesting for me, especially, is just how diverse the team is. We can go from aero mapping—where we study data and look at plots of real information the car provides on airflow—to running that through CFD, then into the wind tunnel and correlation work. Beyond that, there are so many different departments: vehicle dynamics, which looks at suspension, and many others. As a driver, one of the biggest things I had to learn when joining such a huge organization was how to actually use all this data—how to speak to the right people and get the most out of everyone. That's something I'm still learning, but it's amazing. In the beginning, you feel a little lost, but over time it becomes a well-oiled machine where we're all working together.

**Dragos:** And I do feel it's quite a huge pressure on you. Everybody relies on you.

**Alex:** It is because, when I first joined Formula One, I was 23. A lot of the people in the job were much older—engineers in Formula One are often between 35 and 45 and beyond. At that time, I didn't even have the confidence in myself as a person, as an individual. We would do team talks in front of a thousand people on stage, and I remember how daunting that felt because I didn't yet have the life experience. I didn't even know how to properly communicate to a large crowd of people.

**Dragos:** They were waiting for you

**Alex:** You just see all these eyeballs looking at you. But now I've gotten comfortable with it—comfortable with the team and with who I am. And now the synergy between all of us is much better.

**Dragos:** And I think every time, it continues to build and repeat from year to year, and that's visible in the results. You can see the difference. What's unique is being part of a challenger team like Atlassian Williams Racing?

**Alex:** I felt like in the beginning it was fair to say we were more taking part than performing. Now the direction of the team is always moving forward, and there's a huge momentum building. There's an inner confidence and belief that we're going to achieve great things. I don't think there's another team on the grid that has consistently, year after year, made steps forward the way we have. It feels like the coaching, the performances, the progress—it's all feeding into each other, and everything is coming together. We're confident that very soon we'll see even greater results. When I first joined Williams, I felt like it was a team somewhat stuck in its old ways of thinking —leaning on its heritage. Being such an iconic team, its previous success almost stood as a testament to itself. But Formula One moves at such a fast pace, and if you don't adapt and

improvise, you can quickly get left behind. When James Vowles joined the team, it reignited open thinking. The egos dropped, the ears opened, and we really made a step forward. Communication began to improve, and that's a big part of why Williams wanted to work with a partner like Brillio—because in many ways, they're helping us be the best we can be to win.

**Dragos:** And we are the type of partners who are looking forward to being part of this team and growing together.

**Alex:** Yes. A team!

**Dragos:** What's it like to be supported—exactly as you mentioned—by a tech partner like Brillio?

**Alex:** I'd say the biggest thing is that it allows us to stay focused on track and on the driving side. One of the big challenges of being a driver in such a data-driven sport is knowing how to pick and choose what's actually relevant to you. There's such a huge stream of engineers and people working full-time across just two cars, and it's nice to know that a company like Brillio is handling some of the behind-the-scenes work. That support allows us to focus on driving and gives the engineers the space to concentrate on setup rather than getting lost in external data parameters. In terms of focus and consistency, it makes a real difference.

**Dragos:** Fantastic! Now, you're always driving fast—and when you're going at 300 km/h, does data still matter in that moment?

**Alex:** Definitely. So yes, actually, even the number that you're saying is a data point for us. Exactly. We do speed tests at various speed calculations—200 km/h, 250 km/h, 300 km/h —and we're scanning the car, always checking correlation and things like that. So it's very relevant. We have, in terms of reliability, even though or performance, it all goes hand in hand. And we, I think as a team, we are—we're growing together. We are definitely growing together.

**Dragos:**We are talking about data and making sure that things are getting correlated and communicated inside the team. But when it comes to resilience, it's a trait both athletes and business leaders need. You've had your share of fights and lows, which is okay—you are learning from this. How do you stay mentally resilient, and what can professionals in the corporate world learn from your journey?

**Alex:** Yeah. Well, firstly I would say resilience comes from the learnings we take from our mistakes. In many ways, these setbacks and these opportunities allow us to grow more. As a team, we have a very open policy of accountability and owning up to mistakes, and I feel like that process creates a very healthy culture within the team. As long as you can learn from them, you can even set data points to track and grow from mistakes. Most of our growth actually happens in those areas. I feel like the amount of times we've had setbacks has only made us stronger for the future.

**Dragos:** It is so impressive how you position yourself and how you stay so positive through this, because it's not easy to fail. You don't get too many opportunities or too many chances on the track, and it's extremely important to be so mentally resilient.

**Alex:** It's interesting, because it's a game—you're one team out of ten and you're competing against each other. And it's interesting to see how setbacks happen. For example, this year we've had a couple of engine setbacks. It was a temperature issue that we had on our car, but to see how the team came together to fix this problem in such a short amount of time, and to be that adaptable, shows real growth in the team. And in racing, everything happens very fast—you don't have too many weeks in between races. I think we had a solution within two weeks. In the normal corporate world, fixing problems like that could take years.

**Dragos:** Definitely. Now, when it comes to technology, F1 is at the cutting edge. But if you could invent—or wish for—one piece of tech that doesn't exist today to help you as a driver, what would it be?

**Alex:** I would say maybe a hyper-intelligent strategy tool would be something I'd definitely include in our strategy team. We actually have a group of strategists in Williams—maybe around 20 people in total—and they're looking at the weather, the tires, obviously the other teams, tracking their tire wear, their pace, whatever it might be. But there's still so much to learn, and there are almost never enough people. I think that's where, realistically, AI can go a long way. It can make these decisions live and be as reactive as we need to be. We have moments in a race—whether it's rain or the tires losing grip—where the strategist has to adapt and make decisions within a second. Sometimes we're already approaching the pitlane, and it's a box-or-not call. That's where software can really come to life and give us that one step ahead of every other team.

**Dragos:** I would have to say "Challenge Accepted!" We will have to understand how we address it in the long term. It's really exciting to see what we can do. What do you think the future of motorsport looks like with all the tech advancements happening today?

**Alex:** So firstly, you can already see it. If I take the simulation world that we're getting into—young drivers now are spending more and more time in simulators, and it's becoming more accessible. The level and the correlation that these young kids are getting at home is getting closer and closer to what we feel on track. You're getting kids who have never driven any kind of single-seater car arriving for the first time and, within a couple of days, being just as good as the ones who have been doing it for years. You can already see how that's accelerating the learning curve. Even my brother—he's never driven a go-kart in his life. During the shutdown, during Covid, he spent a lot of time on my simulator at home, and the speed at which he picked it up was scary. He's so good on the simulator now—he's quicker than me.

**Dragos:** So, we have a competition, right?

**Alex:** I have had internal competition between us both. And it's very impressive!

**Dragos:** Interesting. And what I feel is that as we continue growing in this area of technology, the transition will only become smoother.

**Alex:** Yes, I agree, I agree. I think even at Williams we're working on a project around how quickly we can get access to the simulator to keep correlating and getting things as close as we can. The calculations behind it are huge and we end up spending so much time correlating these things. If we can get to a point where we have an automated, hyper-intelligent time model that can really give us feedback, that would be a big step forward. Tires, for example, are the most difficult thing to simulate out of everything we do because of the way they change properties—when they're heating, when they're getting stretched, when they're flexing—all these kinds of things.

**Dragos:** And that's what with the grip, the way you are driving as well is changing.

**Alex:** Exactly! The simulator we have for the tire model, the one we use at the moment is extremely complicated, and yet it's still the hardest thing to get right. We still struggle with it to this day.

**Dragos:** True, I understand. And again, we are here to come back up and to help as much as possible. Now, let's say you change roles a little bit and swap with someone at Brillio for a day—not too much, just for a day, since you still need to continue being a driver. What job would you pick, and why?

**Alex:** It's a good question—I'm not sure. I think the easy answer is the CEO, but I wouldn't want the

pressure of that. So I would say I'd like to understand more about the software engineering side of the company and the roles they have to play. Of course, I'm sure everyone is extremely smart and I'd be quite far behind on the knowledge, but it would be really nice to see the teams working together and coming up with ideas and solutions to the challenges they're asked to solve. So yeah, whenever you have time, you're more than welcome to see how it is.

**Dragos:** Believe me, it's not as hard as being an F1 driver—but definitely challenging in its own way. Now, as we're almost at the end of our discussion, do you think a partnership like this has helped bring fans or tech people closer to the sport?

**Alex:** No, definitely. I think bridging the gap between the fans and the teams has always been a constant focus. If you look at how we're using data now—even in what you see on the Formula One TV feed—showing relative performance gaps and chances of overtaking around the circuit when you're reaching another driver, it's educating the fans. I think it brings everyone closer. And nowadays, even casual fans—I've realized just walking around the streets of London, for example—seem to understand the basics of the sport really well and even the difficulty of it. That's also maybe partly down to the TV shows we've been doing recently, but it's nice. There's a real appreciation for what we do. And I think the world of Formula One, and the technology behind it, is inspiring younger viewers as well.

**Dragos:** What do you think about our partnership, and what message would you share with my colleagues at Brillio who are working behind the scenes?

**Alex:** I think we've obviously had a fairly new partnership, but it's amazing to already see the steps we've taken as a team. Sitting on the Williams side, it feels like there's so much we can do and keep building in that direction. With the speed at which technology is advancing, and the way Brillio can help give us the performance we want in the car, there's a huge opportunity there. The faster we can work together and improve the areas we're focusing on, the more I see it as a real step toward becoming a top team.

Thank you so much. I really appreciate all the kind words you've said about the team, and they will appreciate that as well.

**Dragos:** And what I can tell you from behind the scenes is that every colleague at Brillio who works with Atlassian Williams Racing is a huge fan of F1.

**Alex:** I realized!

**Dragos:** They want to bring more and more ideas to see how they can help the team and bring it to the front of the grid.

**Alex:** It's been really exciting to see. It's amazing to see the passion within Brillio to really help us. I've been on a few Zoom calls with some of the Brillio people working on the Williams side of things, and it was really inspiring to see how involved they wanted to be.

**Dragos:** A big thank you to you, Alex, for taking us behind the scenes and showing how data, determination, and the great partnership between Atlassian Williams Racing and Brillio bring real performance on and off the track.

**Alex:** Thank you for having me.

**Dragos:** Until next time, stay curious, stay fast, and keep pushing boundaries. Thank you.