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Monger's F4 crash sparks Indy Lights safety modifications

By David Malsher

Tony Cotman, Indy Lights race director, has revealed that Billy Monger's huge Formula 4 accident in which he lost both legs has prompted modifications to the Dallara IL15-Mazda for 2018.

Monger's JHR Development-run Mygale F4 car crashed at high-speed into the stalled Carlin Racing-run machine of Patrik Pasma during a race at Donington Park in mid-April.

Cotman says that within a week team owner Trevor Carlin, who runs four cars in Indy Lights, approached him to see what could be learned and applied to the Dallara IL15.

"Trevor came to see me at Barber and to be honest, it's him that brought the issue to my attention," Cotman told Motorsport.com. "He said it was a situation that would be worth looking at for the Lights car.

"So what we're looking at is primarily around the rear attenuator area, trying to make sure that the quick-lift brackets aren't the first thing to make an impact when there's a nose-to-tail accident.

"Obviously there's never anything completely accident proof, and it is difficult, but we've got to look at it. The shape the attenuator means it works good for withstanding rear impacts but the nose of the car behind can slip under it at the moment because of the height of the nose compared with the attenuator."

However, Cotman said the issue is complex since the height of the IL15's nose has been dictated for another safety reason.

He explained: "The height of the nose can't be any more than 45mm below the center point of the rear wheels' hubs.

"The reason for that specific height, is that if you're running behind someone and you rub your nosecone on their rear wheel, it shouldn't lift the nose up and take the car over the top of the car in front.

"But yeah, that means the nose is not currently high enough to be bang on to the attenuator in the event of a nose-to-tail collision, particularly under big braking g-loads. That obviously raises the back of the car ahead and lowers the nose of the car behind."

Cotman added that he and Dallara are also looking at ways to adjust the trajectory of the car in front, should the car behind jack up its rear end.

"Because these remedies can't be completely fail-proof, we're going to take the opportunity to alter what happens if the worst comes to the worst and the nose of the car behind does go under the car in front," he said.

"We're looking at how we can stop one car riding on top of the other all the way up the centerline. We want to divert it off the center line so the gearbox of the car in front doesn't get up toward the cockpit of the car behind.

"So we're examining the best way to fix these things and we'll change them in the off-season."