BUILD AYRTON SENNA'S

LOTUS RENAULT 97T

Ayrton Senna

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ORIGINAL VERSION
Editorial Planeta DeAgostini S.A.U.
Avda. Diagonal, 662-664, 08034 Barcelona, Spain

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ADAPTATION
UK Published by De Agostini UK Ltd
c/o Royds Withy King, 69 Carter Lane, London EC4V 5EQ

USA Published by De Agostini Publishing USA, Inc.
299 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10171

DE/AT/NL/HU/PL/CZ/SK/LT/SE Published by De Agostini Publishing S.p.A.
Via G. da Verrazano 15, 28100 Novara, Italy

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Printed in Czech Republic

ISSN: 2755-3043

CUSTOMER SERVICES:

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ITALY
Pubblicazione periodica edita da De Agostini Publishing S.p.A.
Uscita n. 15 del 23/10/2023
Pubblicazione periodica quattordicinale fino alla n°6, poi settimanale

Registrazione n. 744 del 12/04/2023 presso il Tribunale di Novara
Iscrizione al ROC no21243 del 21/6/2011

Direttore Responsabile: Pietro Boroli

De Agostini Publishing S.p.A.
via G. Da Verrazzano 15 - 28100 Novara
Redazione: via G. Pepe 44 - 20159 Milano

Stampa: AF BKK, s.r.o. Czech Republic

Data di prima pubblicazione: 05/05/2023

Poste Italiane S.p.A. Spedizione in abbonamento postale DL 353/2003
(conv.in L. 27/02/2004 n. 46) art. 1, comma 1, CNS Novara

L'Editore si riserva il diritto di variare la sequenza delle uscite della collezione e/o i prodotti allegati. Forme e colori possono variare rispetto a quelli raffigurati.

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Prezzo numeri successivi 11,99 €.
Salvo variazione aliquote fiscali.
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Formula 1 chronicles

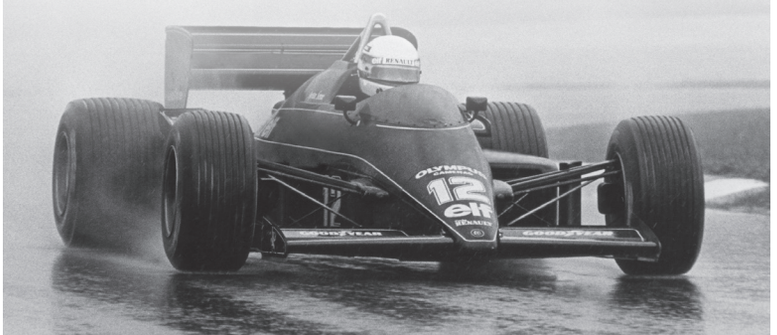
American driver Mario Andretti became Formula 1 Champion in 1978 in his Lotus 79

Life of an idol

The announcement of Ayrton Senna's deal with Lotus vexed Toleman, but the teams eventually got along with each other

Assembly

Front left wheel mounting



MARIO ANDRETTI

Master of victories

Winning in some of the most preeminent racing categories, the versatile American driver clinched the Formula 1 Title in 1978 in his Lotus 79

Few drivers in the history of motorsports have achieved as much success as Mario Andretti. With total of 111 victories across various racing categories, including Formula 1, IndyCar, NASCAR, and Endurance, Andretti is widely regarded as one of the most versatile and accomplished drivers of all time. Moreover, his career longevity is truly remarkable. He is the only driver to win official races in the same category in four different decades – Andretti's first IndyCar victory came in 1965, and his last one in 1993, when he was 53 years old.

Although "Super Mario" is best known for his dominant performance in IndyCar racing, where he secured four Titles in 1965, 1966, 1969, and 1984, his crowning achievement came in Formula 1. In 1978, he won the Formula 1 World Championship, driving for Lotus in only his fourth full season in the category and his third with Colin Chapman's team.



A common scene: *Mario Andretti on the podium at the 1978 Dutch Grand Prix, holding the winner's trophy*

IMPRESSIVE DEBUTS

In fact, Andretti made his Formula 1 debut a decade earlier, in 1968, also driving for Lotus. Already a two-time IndyCar Champion, he was invited by Chapman to run the US Grand Prix at Watkins Glen, where he thrilled the crowd when he secured pole position. Gearbox problems forced him to retire from the race before the midpoint, but he was able to make a strong impression in the elite racing category.

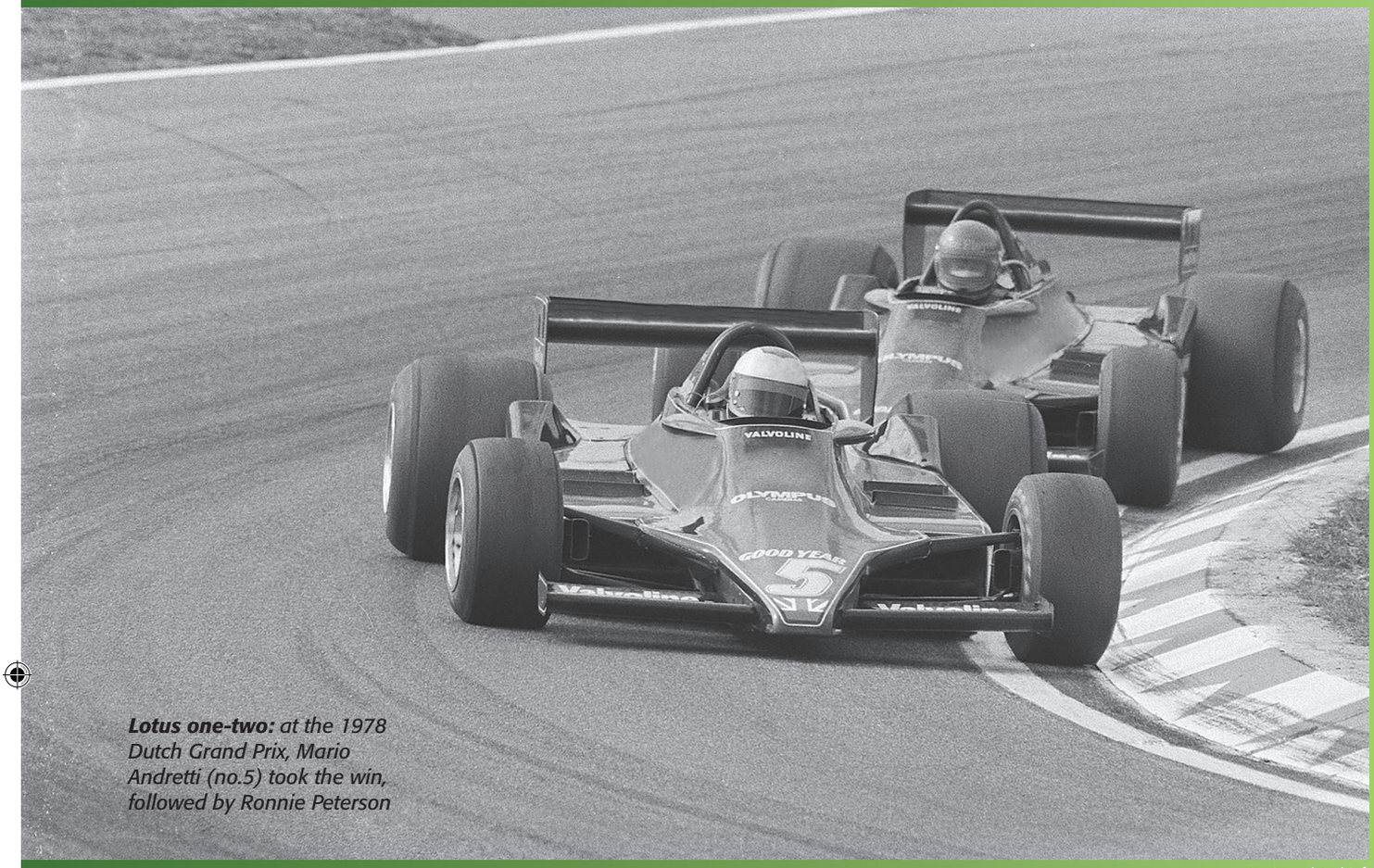
Mario Andretti had a few starts and stops in Formula 1 racing between 1969 and 1970, driving for Lotus and STP. Despite one third-place finish at the 1970 Spanish Grand Prix, he had seven retirements. However, he had a chance to drive for Ferrari in the 1971 season opener at Kyalami in the South African Grand Prix, and he did not disappoint the legendary Enzo Ferrari. On his Formula 1 debut for the *Scuderia*, he secured the victory, a feat previously accomplished only by Juan Manuel Fangio in 1956.

In 1971, the American driver scored a win in his first race for Ferrari, a feat that only Fangio had accomplished until then

Andretti's first full Formula 1 season was in 1975. He joined the American team Parnelli, which had won the 1970 IndyCar Championship with Al Unser. However, the experience was far from ideal: the car was unstable and unreliable, breaking down in half of the races. Andretti's best result was a fourth-place finish in the Swedish Grand Prix. In the third round of the 1976 season, the team folded, and Andretti made the move to Lotus.

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Mario's son, Michael Andretti, was an IndyCar champion in 1991; Mario's grandson, Marco, has also represented the family on the track



Lotus one-two: *at the 1978 Dutch Grand Prix, Mario Andretti (no.5) took the win, followed by Ronnie Peterson*

Nationaal Archief

BACK IN THE GAME

Despite the challenges the team faced with the Lotus 77, Andretti gradually mastered the car. In the latter part of the season, he achieved third-place finishes in the Netherlands and Canada, and he ended the year with a triumphant victory in the Japanese Grand Prix on October 24, 1976. It was the team's first F1 victory since Swede Ronnie Peterson won the Monaco Grand Prix in 1974.

Colin Chapman's team made a comeback in 1977 with the new Lotus 78. Andretti recorded four victories and finished third in the Drivers' World Championship, behind Ferrari's Niki Lauda and Jody Scheckter of the surprisingly successful Walter Wolf Racing team.

The ultimate triumph came in 1978. Andretti began the season well, winning the Argentine Grand Prix with the Lotus 78. His success continued when the revolutionary Lotus 79 made its race debut in the sixth round in Belgium. With this car, Andretti won five of the next eight races and he secured the Championship with a sixth-place finish at the Italian Grand Prix on September 10, 1978. However, there was no great celebration because his teammate Ronnie Peterson suffered a serious accident in the race and died in hospital the next morning.

AMERICAN TABOO

Andretti's victory at the 1978 Dutch Grand Prix on August 27 would also be the last by an American in Formula 1 – a 45-year record that still stands at the start of the 2023 season. Mario remained in Formula 1 until 1982 before returning full force to IndyCar, where he won his last category crown in 1984. He is a born winner.

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LEAVING TOLEMAN

After the controversy, the happy ending

Ayrton Senna's agreement to drive for Lotus infuriated Toleman, but the teams ironed out their differences and the Brazilian driver departed with a podium finish in Portugal

Everyone, and it was indeed everyone, knew that it was only a matter of time before one of the top Formula 1 teams would make a move to sign Ayrton Senna from Toleman. The question was not if, but when and where the Brazilian driver would go. On August 26, 1984, during the Dutch Grand Prix, Lotus officially announced the signing of Senna for the following year, putting to rest the long-standing rumors. However, the impending departure proved to be more problematic than expected, causing Senna a lot of headaches for the rest of the season.

Toleman claimed that it had not been informed of the deal by either the driver or Lotus, and declared that they would go to court over the issue. In a dramatic statement after the Dutch GP, the team said that Senna's exit would "put at risk the Toleman team's future participation in motor racing, given the impossibility of finding another driver to replace Senna, on whose participation in the team all sponsorship projects during the three-year contract are based." Later, the team also announced Senna's suspension for the next race, the Italian Grand Prix, hitting him where it would hurt the most.

In reality, Senna was not happy with the way Lotus handled the announcement, as it was made sooner than expected. Peter Warr, Lotus' manager, explained that he had made an early statement because he believed everyone had already known about the negotiation. "It was a very bad start for me at Lotus, which didn't fulfill the agreement with me," Senna declared to the *Folha de S.Paulo* newspaper on August 27, 1984. However, Senna maintained that he had not broken any contract, as there was a termination clause in the document, and that the agreement had already been communicated to the team. "Nevertheless, Toleman's reaction to Senna's decision was publicly hostile and threatening," clarified an official note from the driver, issued on September 6. "This caused serious and unjustifiable damage to his name and excellent reputation."



"It is very important that everyone knows the truth about my decision. Out of loyalty, and supported by the terms of the contract, I told Toleman in advance that I would run the '85 season for Lotus"

Ayrton Senna

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The zenith: *in the 1984 season, Ayrton Senna led Toleman to the only three podiums in its history*

Without Senna, Toleman had a disastrous 1985 season, managing to complete only two races. At the end of the season, it was sold to Benetton

WHITE FLAG

Senna thought about appealing to race in the Italian Grand Prix, but ultimately gave up, leaving his car in the hands of Swede Stefan Johansson, who was hired by Toleman for the last three races of the season. To calm the situation down, Senna went to Monza to speak with the Toleman staff and the press. In an interview with *O Globo* newspaper on September 7, he said: "It's crucial that everyone knows the truth about this situation. I don't want Toleman to make me look ungrateful. The truth is that I informed them in advance, based on the contract, that I would be racing for Lotus in the '85 season out of loyalty."

After the Italian GP, Toleman also expressed a desire for peace. Peter Gethin, the team manager, told *O Globo* on September 10, "I'm working to clear the air and make sure everything ends peacefully. Our only intention was to defend our contractual rights, not create problems for the driver."

Peace would finally arrive. A week later, on September 18, the newspapers announced that the driver and the team had reached an agreement and that Senna would return to the Toleman cockpit for the European and Portuguese Grands Prix. During the first practice sessions for his last race for Toleman in Portugal a month later, Senna told *Jornal do Brasil* newspaper on October 19, 1984, "The atmosphere here is great. Everyone is helping me, and that's why I want to finish my time with Toleman with a strong performance."

Senna's third-place finish in Portugal would be his final podium for Toleman. The following season, the team would return to tough times: Italian Teo Fabi managed to finish only two races, with a 12th place his best standing, while his teammate Piercarlo Ghinzani would never finish a race. At the end of 1985, Benetton, the Italian clothing company that had become Toleman's main sponsor in the middle of the year, took over the team, which was renamed Benetton Formula in 1986.

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FRONT LEFT WHEEL MOUNTING

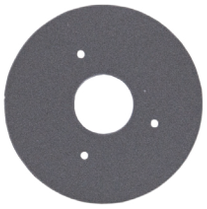
PARTS

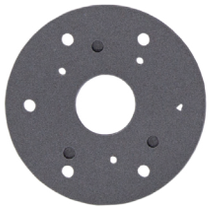

15A

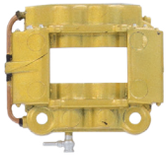

15B


15C


15D


15E


15F


15G


15H


15I


15J


AP


CM


MP


PM


SM


SP

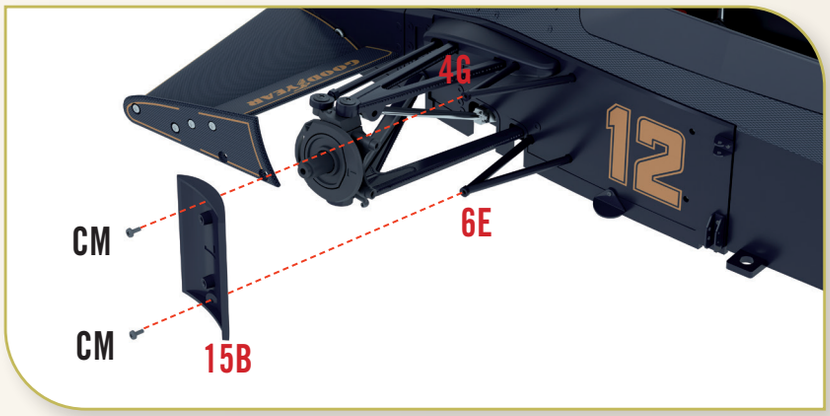
15A Front left wheel barge board 1
15B Front left wheel barge board 2
15C Front left wheel barge board base
15D Wheel hub
15E Brake disk 1
15F Brake disk 2
15G Front left brake caliper
15H Brake pads retainer
15I Washer
15J Front wheel barge board diagonal support

AP Screws 1.7 x 4 mm, 3 pcs*
CM Screws 1.5 x 3 mm, 5 pcs*
MP Screws 1.7 x 4 mm, 5 pcs*
PM Screws 2.3 x 5 x 6 mm, 2 pcs*
SM Screws 1.5 x 5 mm, 2 pcs*
SP Screws 1.2 x 5 mm, 4 pcs*

* Including spares

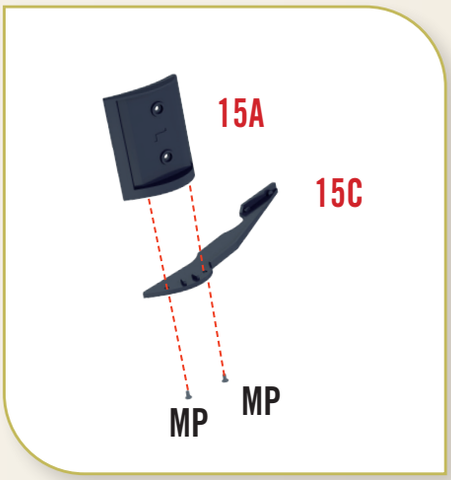
Publisher's note: the finish of the parts in the pictures may differ from the parts enclosed in this issue. This in no way affects either the product quality or the assembly instructions.

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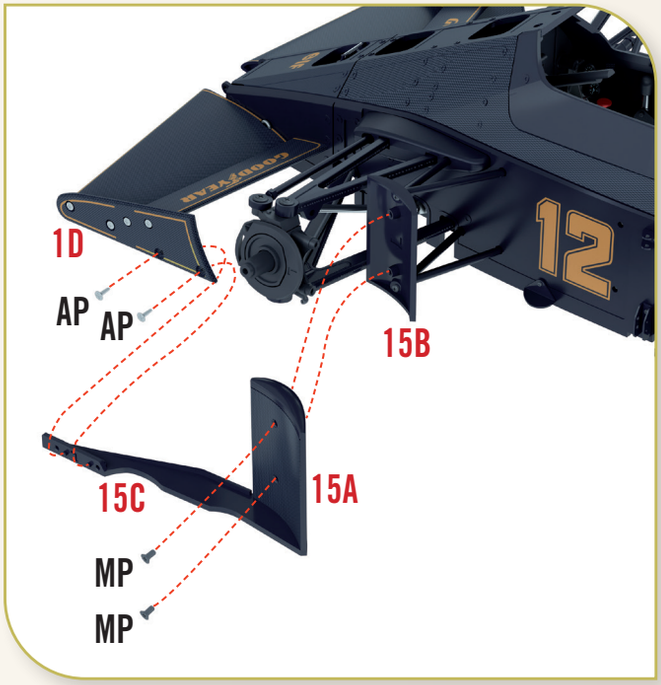
STEP 15-1

Note the alignment of the parts in the image and place the convex side of the front left wheel barge board 2 **15B** over the ends of the wheel barge board front side supports – the upper **4G** and the lower **6E**. Secure the part with two **CM** screws.



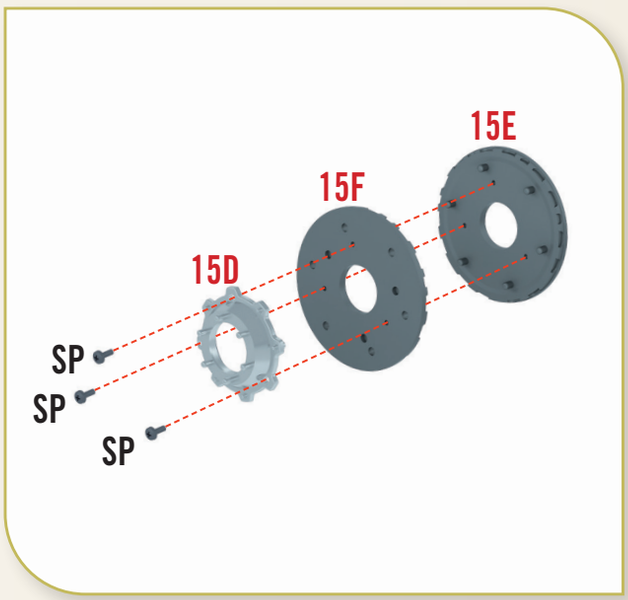
STEP 15-2

Attach the base of the front left wheel barge board 1 **15A** to the curved part of the front left wheel barge board base **15C**. From the side of this base **15C**, secure the parts with two **MP** screws.



STEP 15-3

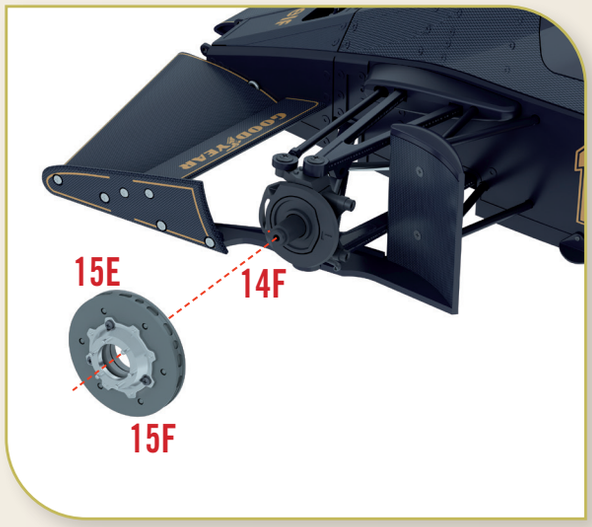
Attach one end of the front left wheel barge board base **15C** inside the front wing left endplate **1D** using two **AP** screws. Then attach one end of the front left wheel barge board 1 **15A** to the front left wheel barge board 2 **15B** with two **MP** screws.



STEP 15-4

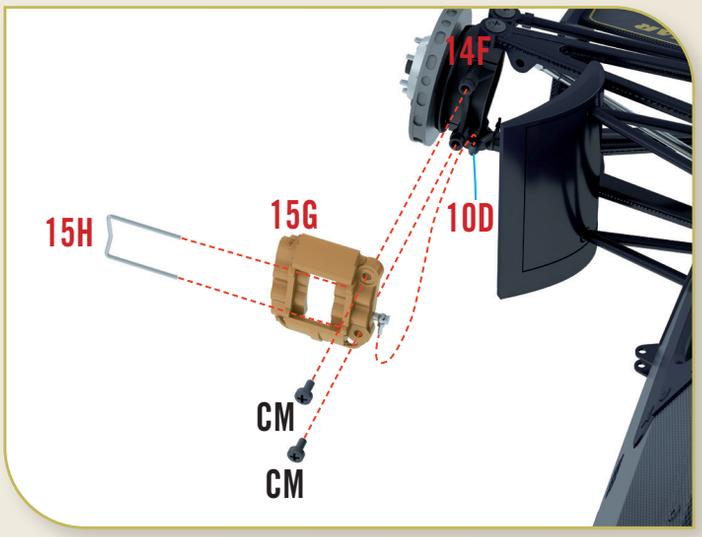
Carefully check the position of the parts in the picture and connect brake disk 1 **15E**, brake disk 2 **15F**, and the wheel hub **15D** with three **SP** screws.

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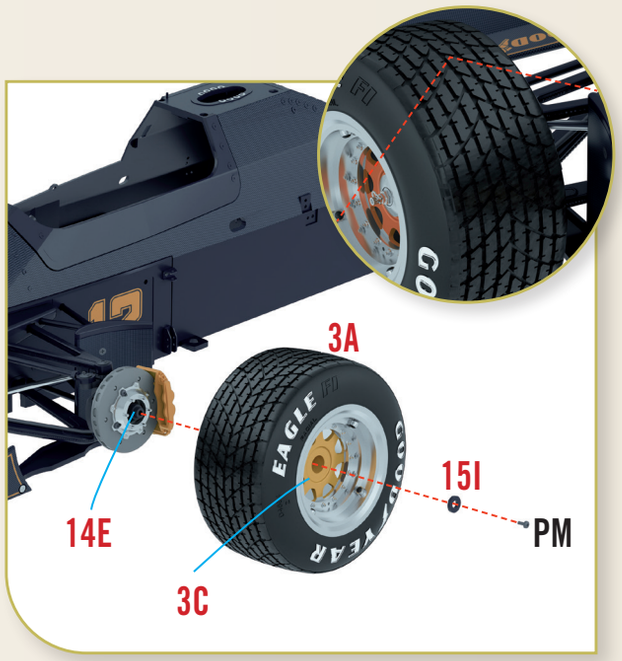
STEP **15-5**

Place the set of brake disks 1 **15E** and 2 **15F** over the end of the front left suspension upright 2 **14F**.



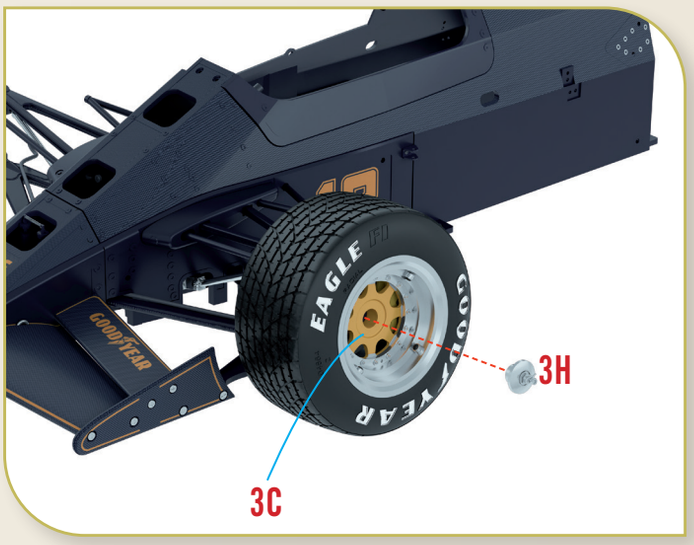
STEP **15-6**

Insert the two brake pad retainer rods **15H** all the way into the holes in the center area of the front left brake caliper **15G**. Then, align the two holes in the end of the caliper **15G** with the two holes in the front left suspension upright 2 **14F**. Secure the part with two **CM** screws. Finally, insert the front brake line **10D** into the small silver pin on the side of the front left brake caliper **15G**.



STEP **15-7**

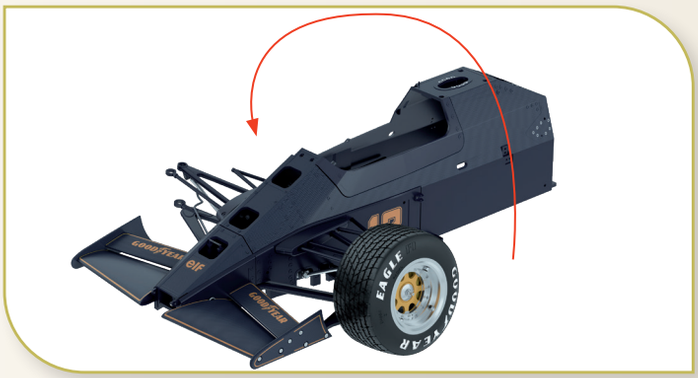
Take the left wheel assembly from issue 3 and place it on the front left suspension upright 1 **14E**. Then insert washer **15I** into the center hole of the front rim center disk **3C** and secure it with a **PM** screw. Make sure that the tire tread follows the pattern shown in the image.



STEP **15-8**

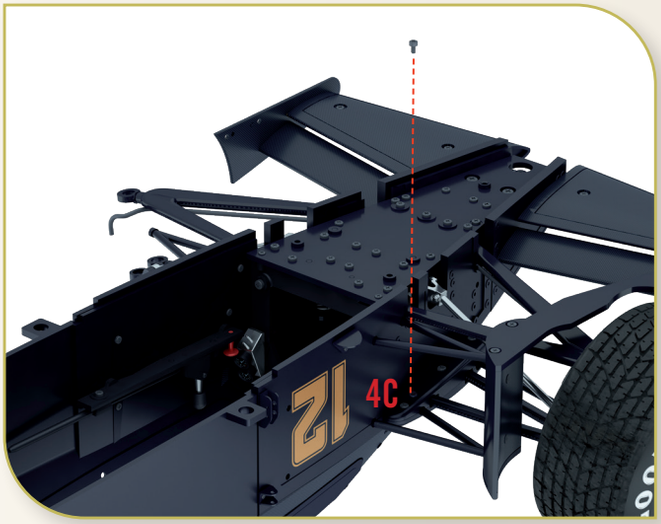
Applying light pressure, fit the front rim center cap **3H** into the cavity on the outside of the wheel front rim center disk **3C**.

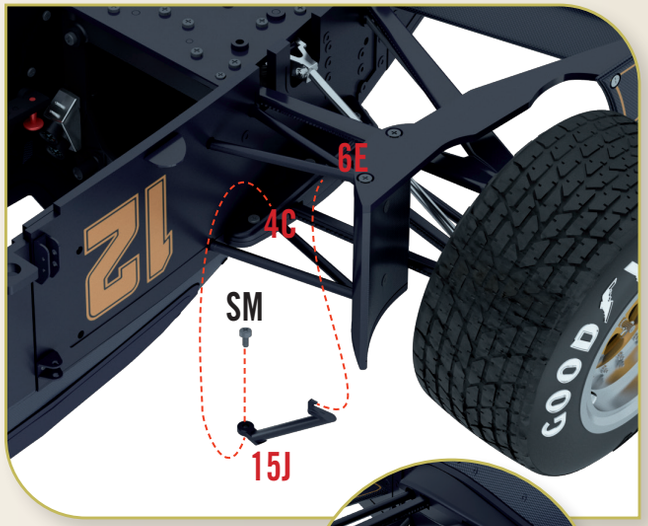
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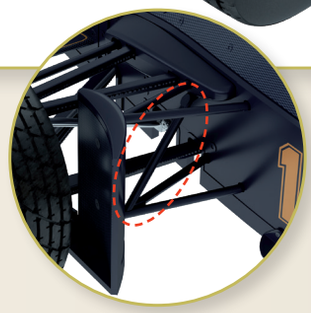


STEP 15-9

Gently rotate the current assembly of your Lotus, paying special attention not to damage any piece. Place it on your work surface.







STEP 15-10

Remove the indicated screw from the front left suspension mount fairing bottom **4C** (above left). Next, place the hole end of the front wheel barge board diagonal support **15J** over the same hole in the front left suspension mount fairing bottom **4C** and secure it with an **SM** screw, without tightening (above center). Finally, place the opposite end with a hook of the front wheel barge board diagonal support **15J** at the junction of the arms of the front wheel barge board top support **6E** (above right). Tighten the **SM** screw.

FINAL ASSEMBLY

This is the image of the set of parts that we have assembled in this issue:



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Ayrton Senna
Turbo
12
OLYMPUS
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