BUILD AYRTON SENNA'S

LOTUS RENAULT 97T

Ayrton Senna

18





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Formula 1 chronicles

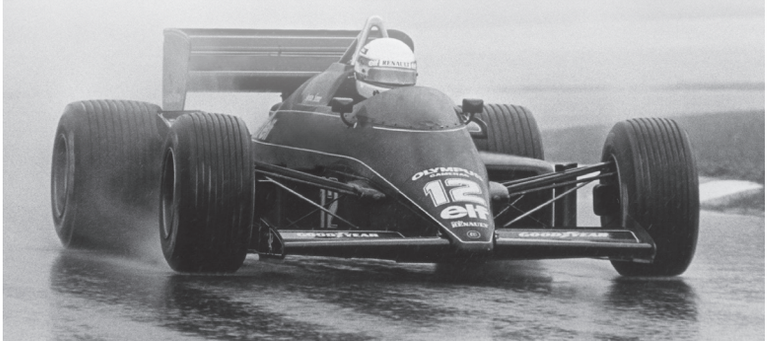
After a lengthy hiatus, Lotus was once more starting a season with a car that lived up to the team's legacy

Life of an idol

Peter Warr's dream of seeing Ayrton Senna drive for Team Lotus was finally realized at the start of the 1985 F1 season

Assembly

Front wheel (II)



The publishers thank the Ayrton Senna Memorial for its worthwhile contribution to the content on the Driver's story.

Ayrton Senna Institute

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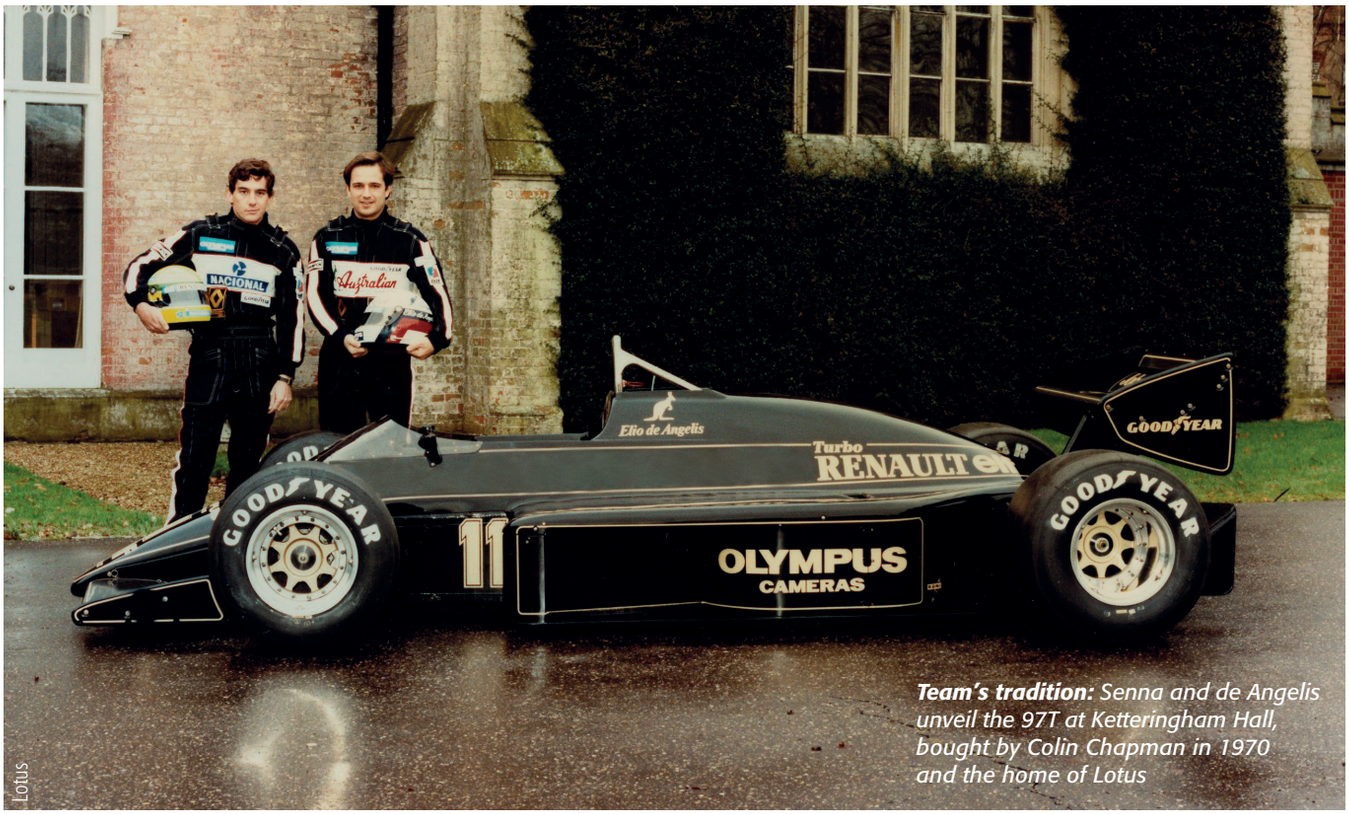
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THE LOTUS 97T

Car for a top-class team

In 1985, after a lengthy interlude, Lotus was beginning a Formula 1 season again with a model worthy of the team's great legacy



Team's tradition: *Senna and de Angelis unveil the 97T at Ketteringham Hall, bought by Colin Chapman in 1970 and the home of Lotus*

Lotus

In the words of Peter Warr, Lotus' team manager, "[It is] a stronger, more refined, and more developed version of an already good car." This phrase was strategically chosen by the Lotus communications department to open the press-release presenting the new Lotus 97T in February 1985. It showed the team's total and unrestricted confidence in the third car born under the supervision of technical director Gérard Ducarouge. As Warr made a point of noting, the 97T was part of the new Lotus lineage, descending directly from the previous model, the 95T. Although the 95T did not record a victory during the 1984 season, it had taken Nigel Mansell and Elio de Angelis to the podium on six occasions. Just as importantly, it displayed a reliability that had not been seen for a long time at Lotus: de Angelis finished 12 of the season's 16 races.

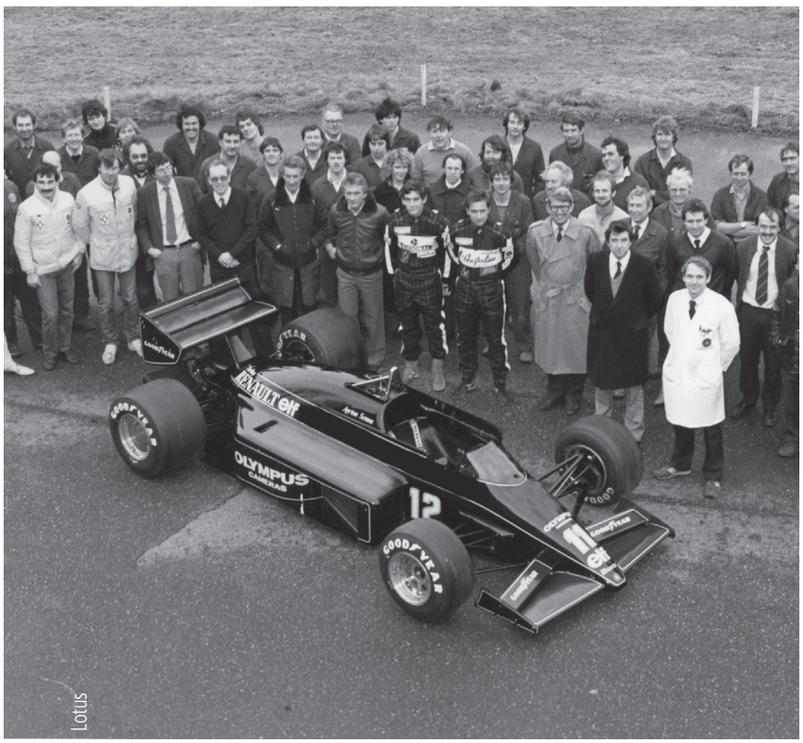
"We are all looking forward to racing with the 97T," said Lotus' team manager, Peter Warr

The car's major negative point was its high fuel consumption, which prevented the drivers from getting the most out of the Renault V6 engine – in order to to save fuel, they sometimes had to refrain from activating the turbo.

TIME TO TAKE ON

Ducarouge and chief designer Martin Ogilvie would look into this issue for the 97T, aiming to solve it or at least improve it. "Initial tests in the lab and on

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Teamwork: *The Lotus team pictured with the new 97T model*

the track showed considerable improvements, pointing to more power with less fuel consumption. Since most of our rivals will be using the same types of tires as ours [Goodyear], I believe we will all be running on relatively equal footing," assured Warr. "So, I'm much more confident than last year – and we're all looking forward to racing the 97T."

With its carbon-fiber composite chassis, the 97T had the minimum weight allowed by Formula 1 regulations in 1985: 1,190 lb (540 kg). Despite being smaller and more slender than its predecessor, it promised increased horsepower with the new version of the Renault V6 engine and the Garrett turbocharger. Among other advances, the 97T also featured carbon-fiber brakes and improvements in aerodynamics and suspension.

"We have the complete package to pursue the 1985 World Championship," pronounced Brian Wray, the marketing director for Imperial Tobacco – the parent company of John Player Special – in the press release. It was easy for him to say – it was up to Ayrton Senna and Elio de Angelis to convert words into results.

JOHN PLAYER SPECIAL LOTUS 97T

TECHNICAL SHEET

MAIN DIMENSIONS
Length: 166 in (422 cm)
Width: 85 in (215 cm)
Weight: 1,190 lb (540 kg)
Wheelbase: 107 in (272 cm)
Front track: 71 in (181 cm)
Rear track: 64 in (162 cm)

BRAKE SYSTEM
Ventilated carbon-ceramic disks front and rear. Brake balance manually adjusted by the driver

GEARBOX
Designed and built by Lotus using Hewland internals

FUEL TANK
Single ATL cell, rubber coated and instaled inside the main frame behind the driver

BODY
One-piece Kevlar wrapping around the nose, cockpit, and rear. Carbon-fiber underside

CHASSIS
Carbon-fiber/Kevlar panels with aluminum honeycomb monocoque and Kevlar reinforcements

ENGINE
Renault V6 Turbo

COOLING
Water and oil radiators and air-to-air intercoolers mounted symmetrically on the sides of the chassis

TIRES
Goodyear radials

CLUTCH
Two 18.4-cm-diameter disks with hydraulic drive

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ARRIVAL AT LOTUS IN 1985

Big-team driver

Fulfilling a long-time dream of Peter Warr, the Norfolk racing team welcomed Ayrton Senna, a young driver with much promise who would have a car to challenge for the Title

Peter Warr had been keeping an eye on Ayrton Senna since his days racing in Formula Ford 2000, in 1982. However, it was not until the following year that the new Lotus boss made his first move for the Brazilian driver. He quietly called Senna to a meeting at Ketteringham Hall and offered him $50,000 to race for the team during the 1984 season. Senna accepted the offer, and Peter Warr was overjoyed to deliver the news to the team's sponsor. However, representatives from Imperial Tobacco, the parent company of John Player Special, tried to quash Warr's excitement. To the company, it made more business sense to keep Nigel Mansell, who could offer greater visibility in the British market.

Facial paralysis sidelined Ayrton Senna at the beginning of the 1985 season, causing him to miss out on his initial tests with Lotus

A year later, however, the executives would literally pay dearly for the decision to let Senna go. The driver's exploits in the Toleman team not only revealed to everyone what Warr had known for a long time, but also increased the value of Senna in the market. In addition, the driver now had a tough lawyer, Englishman Tony Clare, and businessman and friend Armando Botelho. And so, to secure Senna's services in 1985, Lotus had to pay a sum that was more than ten times the amount offered the previous year: in addition to $500,000 for Ayrton, $85,000 to settle the Toleman termination.

Warr, however, knew that the new kid on the block was worth every penny. "Ayrton was different from all the other drivers because he thought about everything, analyzed every detail, was very studious, and seemed to do in a race car only the things he had already thought about and decided upon," he told author Johnny Tipler in his book

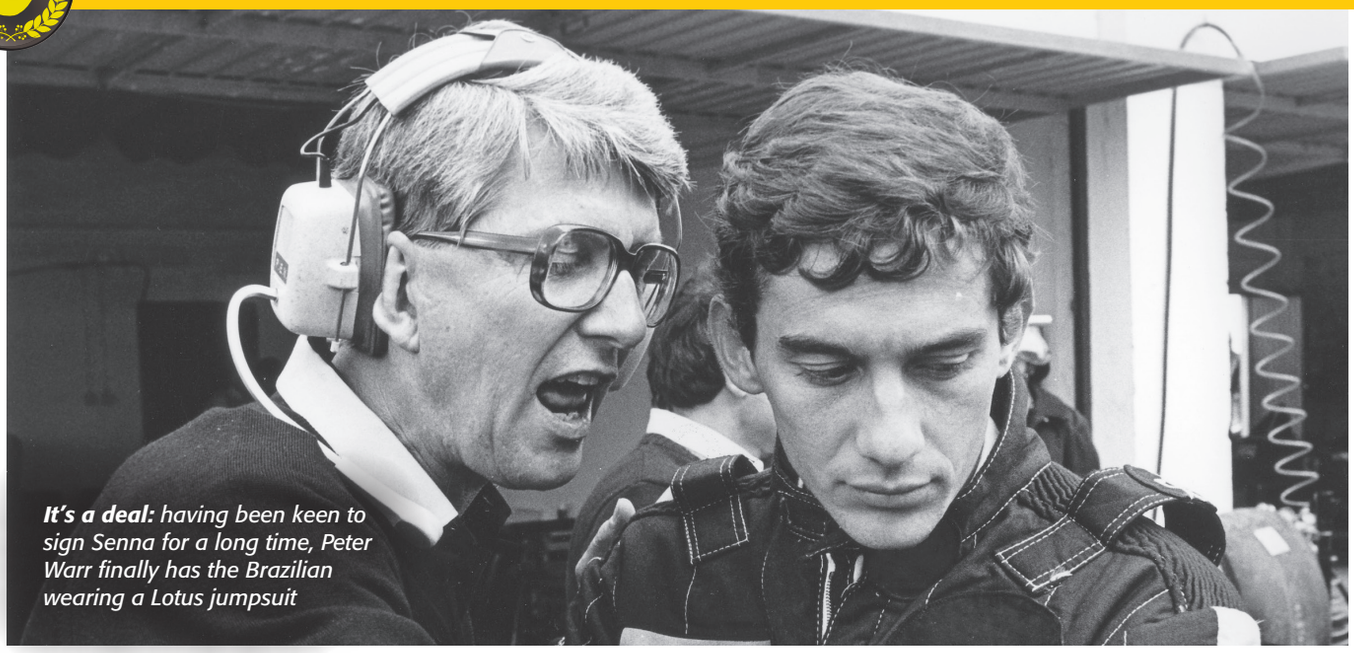


Lotus

"Lotus is highly experienced, united, and highly qualified to prepare a winning car. I will do my best from the early tests in Rio to start the season on an equal footing with the other teams"

Ayrton Senna

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It's a deal: *having been keen to sign Senna for a long time, Peter Warr finally has the Brazilian wearing a Lotus jumpsuit*

Ayrton Senna: The Team Lotus Years. "The most fantastic thing is that this whole process usually ended with Ayrton saying he could do something that we thought was completely unbelievable and impossible to achieve, and then he just went out there and did it."

CLASSY ITALIAN

Senna's teammate would be Elio de Angelis, who had raced for Lotus since 1981. The Italian had been Colin Chapman's last personal signing, and his unexpected victory in the Austrian Grand Prix on August 15, 1982, was symbolic for the team for two distinct reasons. The first was that it ended a four-year hiatus without a Lotus victory, which had last occurred in August 1978, with Mario Andretti, in the Dutch GP. The second reason was that it was the last victory with Chapman as team boss; Lotus' founder died in December 1982.

After a tough season in 1983, de Angelis was able to get the most out of the promising 95T designed by Gérard Ducarouge the following year. With four podiums and 11 races in the points zone, he finished third in the Drivers' World Championship, behind Niki Lauda and Alain Prost, both from the dominant McLaren team. Despite his experience and credentials, the Italian driver did not become Lotus' principal driver in 1985, but instead raced with car number 11, while Senna had number 12: the team would provide the same equipment and the same treatment to its two drivers. This situation would only change if one of them had a drive during the season that would justify a change in tactics. In any case, de Angelis, considered a gentleman by everyone in the Formula 1 world, was not really Senna's biggest obstacle in his first days at Lotus.

Facial paralysis sidelined Ayrton Senna at the beginning of the 1985 season, which resulted in the Brazilian missing his initial tests with Lotus. Caused by an inflammation of the mastoid – a bone in the face – the paralysis affected the right side of Ayrton's face and took three long months to completely heal. "It was good to feel how insignificant we are. No matter how much you plan your life, at any moment everything can change. I had just signed a contract with Lotus, the most important step in my career, and suddenly I felt my profession was over. I myself, as a person, felt shaken," he would declare a little later, in an interview with *Veja* magazine, on September 25, 1985.

GREEN LIGHT

After the scare, Senna was finally cleared to take the new Lotus 97T for a spin during the tests scheduled for the first half of February at Jacarepaguá – the same track that would host the first Grand Prix of the season in April. In an interview with the press at his office, Ayrton spoke about his expectations. "Lotus is highly experienced, united, and highly qualified to prepare a winning car. I will do my best from the early tests in Rio to start the season on an equal footing with the other teams. Deep down, I want to do everything to start by winning here in Brazil," he said in a statement reproduced by the *Jornal do Brasil* on February 5. His time was coming.

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FRONT WHEEL ASSEMBLY (II)

PARTS

18A



18B



18C



18D



18E



18F

18G



18H



18I



BM



DP



PM



18A Goodyear front wet tire
18B Front rim main barrel
18C Front rim center disk
18D Front rim outer hub
18E Front rim outer hub radial bolts
18F Front wheel nut safety clip
18G Front wheel nut
18H Front wheel center cap
18I Washer
BM Screws 1.7 x 4 mm, 5 pcs*
DP Screws 1.7 x 4 mm, 5 pcs*
PM Screws 2.3 x 5 x 6 mm, 2 pcs*

* Including spares

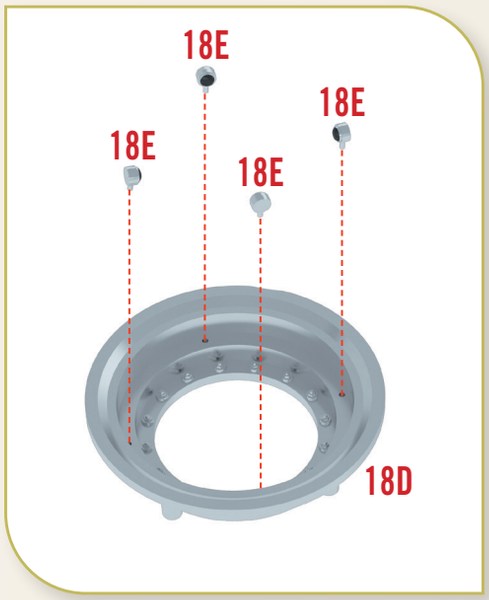
Publisher's note: the finish of the parts in the pictures may differ from the parts enclosed in this issue. This in no way affects either the product quality or the assembly instructions.

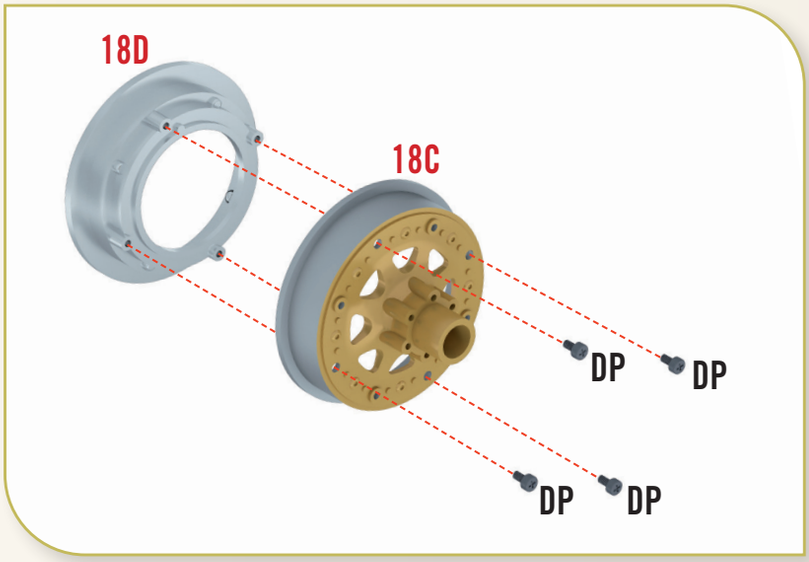
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BEFORE STARTING
Make the necessary checks to identify each of the parts. Read all the steps beforehand to get an idea of what to do during assembly.

STEP 18-1

Remove four front rim outer hub radial bolts **18E** from their sprue. As shown in the image, place them in the holes inside the front rim outer hub **18D**. Pay attention to the correct direction of the bolts.





STEP 18-2

Join the front rim center disk **18C** to the front rim outer hub **18D**. To do this, connect the four pivots on the front rim outer hub **18D** to the four holes on the front rim center disk **18C**, as shown in the image. Use four **DP** screws to attach the two parts.

STEP 18-3

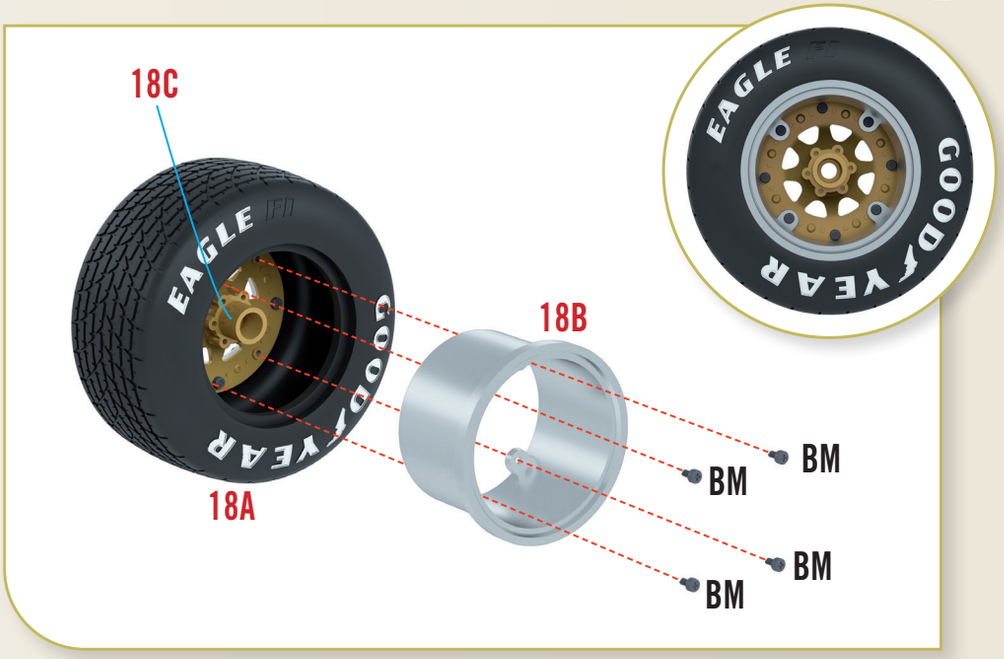
Place the assembled front rim center disc **18C** on the outer part of the Goodyear front wet tire **18A**. Note that the outer edge of the wheel should be perfectly aligned with the edge of the tire.

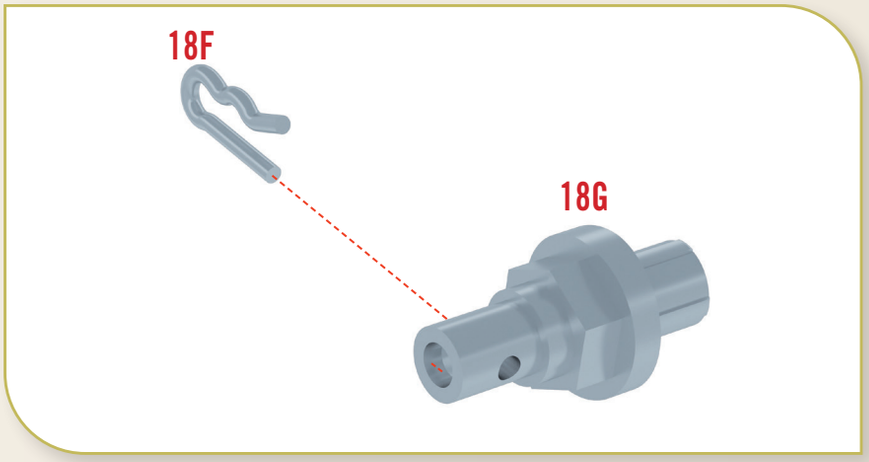


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STEP 18-4

On the other side of the tire **18A**, insert the front rim main barrel **18B**. Make sure the holes inside the main barrel **18B** align with the four holes on the front rim center disc **18C**. Connect the two parts of the wheel with four **BM** screws.



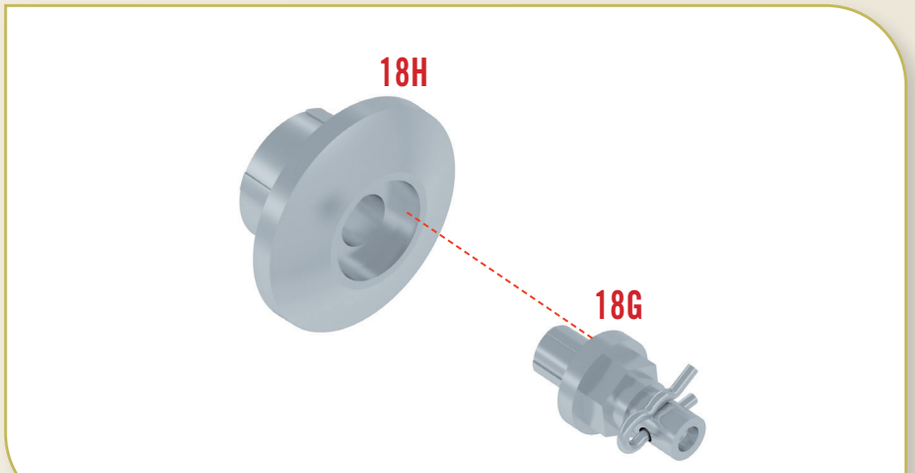


STEP 18-5

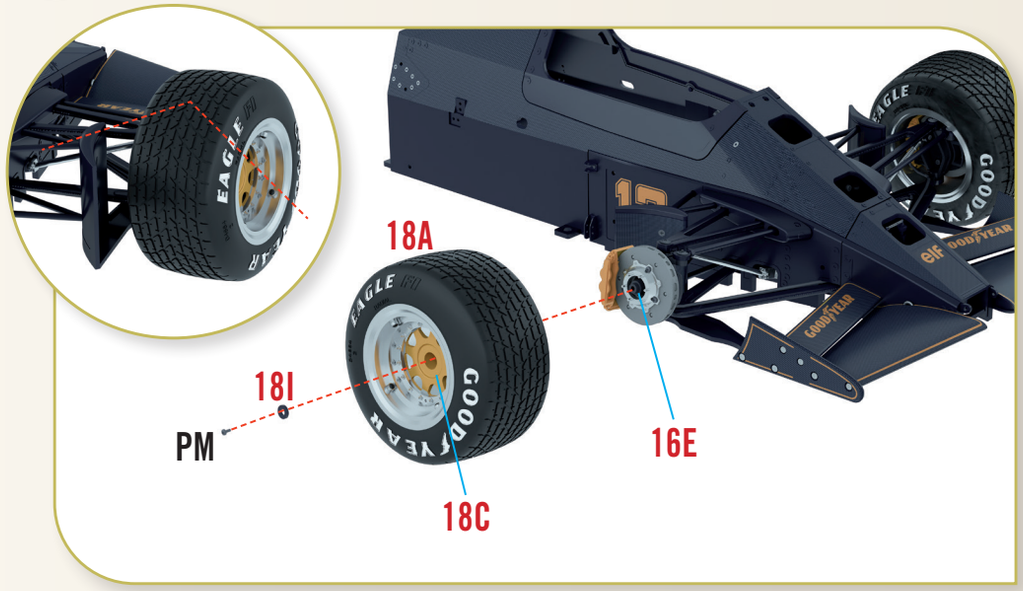
Place the straight part of the front wheel nut safety clip **18F** into the hole on the front wheel nut **18G**, as shown in the image.

STEP 18-6

Insert the front wheel nut **18G** into the inner hole of the front rim center cap **18H**.

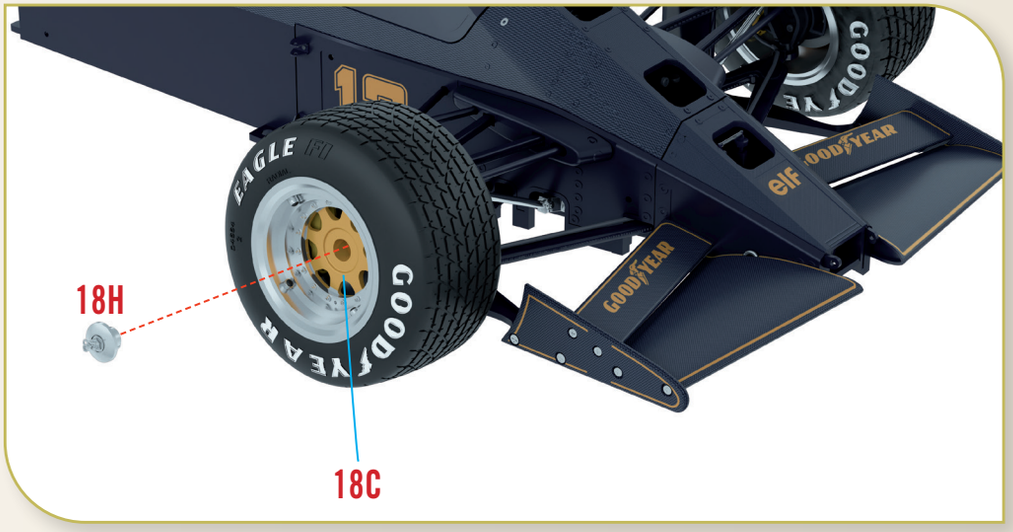


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STEP 18-7

Place the front right wheel assembly on the front right suspension upright **16E**. Insert the washer **18I** into the central hole on the outside of the front right center disk **18C** and fix it with a **PM** screw. Make sure that the tread "arrows" on the tire **18A** are pointing forward, as shown in the detail image.



STEP 18-8

To complete the assembly, gently insert the front wheel center cap **18H** into the central hole in the front rim center disk **18C**.

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
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