**Beat: Health**

# Michael Schumacher`s family says seeing "small, encouraging signs"

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**USPA News -** Retired German race car driver Michael Schumacher, who was severely injured in a skiing accident in France nearly three months ago, is showing "small, encouraging signs" of recovery, his family said on Wednesday, while acknowledging the "long and hard fight" still to come. The family said that they believe Schumacher will awaken and pull through his 11-week medically induced coma, despite the severity of his injuries.

They made no comment on his current condition but doctors have been attempting to wake him during the past 1.5 month. "We are and remain confident that Michael will pull through and wake up," said his spokeswoman Sabine Kehm in an e-mailed statement on behalf of the family. "There sometimes are small, encouraging signs, but we also know that this is the time to be very patient." Recent media reports have questioned whether Schumacher could ever regain consciousness due to the severity of his injuries, but his family indicated on Wednesday that the length of the healing process is not important to them. "It was clear from the start that this will be a long and hard fight for Michael. We are taking this fight on together with the team of doctors, who we fully trust. The length of the process is not the important part for us," Kehm said on behalf of the family, which is known to dislike attention from the press and has remained mostly silent over the past months. The lengthy "wake-up process" began in late January when doctors first began to reduce sedation in the hopes the seven-time champion would regain consciousness. Despite the nearly two months that have passed since the start of the process, the family said they remain confident about Schumacher`s eventual success. "We try to channel all the energies we have toward Michael and we firmly believe that this will help him. And we believe that he will also win this fight," Kehm said on Wednesday, adding that Schumacher had overcome many "precarious situations" in the past. The 45-year-old Formula One legend suffered a severe head injury from a skiing accident on December 29, 2012, when he fell and hit a rock while skiing with his family on the slopes of the French Alps in Meribel. Schumacher was placed in a medically induced coma and has since undergone two operations to remove blood clots from his brain. Schumacher, with 90 wins, 68 pole positions, 75 fastest laps, 1354 points and seven world titles, is regarded by many as the greatest Formula One driver of all time. He won two titles with Benetton, in 1994 and 1995, before switching to Ferrari in 1996 and going on to win five consecutive titles from 2000. He first retired after winning the 2006 Italian Grand Prix but returned to Formula One in February 2010, only to retire for a second time after finishing in 14th position at the Brazilian Grand Prix in November 2012.

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