

**F1 Ferrari on top in Bahrain despite pit drama**

**F2 Britain's next star Norris wins**

**MOTOGP 'Destructive' Marquez hits Rossi as Crutchlow triumphs**



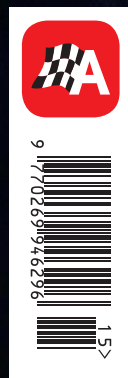
# AUTOSPORT

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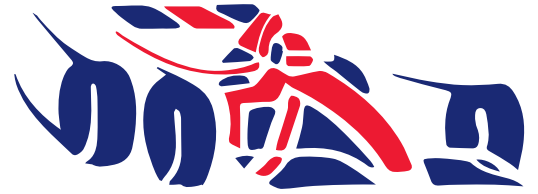
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# A BETTER RACE, BUT THERE IS STILL WORK TO BE DONE

That was better. After an unsatisfactory Australian Grand Prix, the Bahrain event last weekend was far more entertaining. There was some decent overtaking and a battle for the lead that kept things tense right to the chequered flag.

There were several factors that contributed to a more interesting contest. Having some cars (such as Lewis Hamilton's Mercedes) out of position often helps promote overtaking, the circuit layout was more helpful than that in Melbourne, and – crucially – Pirelli's new-for-2018 tyre compounds meant there were more strategy options. Teams weren't quite sure how to play it and that unknown helped create a little bit of randomness. The unloved DRS zones were also just about right in Bahrain to make moves possible without becoming too easy.

Of course, none of this means that Formula 1 should not address its more fundamental problems: ridiculous costs and too much downforce. As has become the norm, Liberty made some promising sounds with its future F1 vision last Friday (see page 4), but the wider world has still been left a bit thin on detail. If that makes negotiation with the teams behind the scenes more productive, then that's something the fans *may* put up with, but there has to be some real progress to ensure consistently better racing and more potential winners in future. It is now five years – and 99 races – since a team other than Ferrari, Mercedes or Red Bull took victory.

● Outside of F1, there was some real class on display last weekend. Sebastien Ogier is now in the sort of form that should have WRC rivals concerned, Cal Crutchlow rose above the strange goings-on at Argentina's MotoGP round, and Lando Norris again underlined why we want him in an F1 seat sooner rather than later with victory in F2.



*Kevin Turner*

**KEVIN TURNER**  
EDITOR  
kevin.turner@autosport.com



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Tee/LAT, goldandgoose.com

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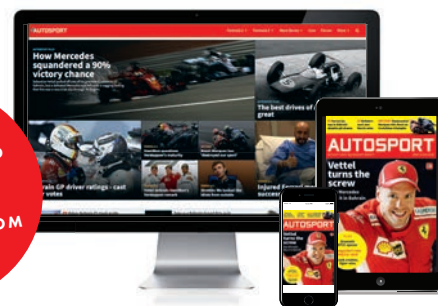
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## F1 TO START DEBATE TO SH

### FORMULA 1

Ross Brawn and Chase Carey (above) shared Formula 1 owner Liberty's vision for the future last Friday at the Bahrain Grand Prix. While it gave the 10 teams plenty of food for thought, it was a presentation rather than a debate, and the next step will be a series of individual meetings with teams, where more details will be ironed out.

"It was a more a meeting to pass the information and to pass the views onto the teams," Brawn told Autosport. "The teams need to digest it now, then the discussion proper will start. It was a straightforward meeting with no major controversies."

The first step towards 2021 was made last October, when outline power-unit regulations were issued in conjunction with the FIA, triggering negative reactions from Ferrari and Mercedes and even talk of pullouts and breakaways.

The Bahrain presentation went far beyond technicalities and regulations, and crucially included a breakdown of how the sport will operate commercially when what is generically still known as the Concorde Agreement, but is actually 10 separate bilateral deals signed by Bernie Ecclestone with the individual teams, runs out at the end of 2020.

F1 currently operates with a double-

whammy system that ensures that the big players earn most of the money – there's a sliding scale of performance payments that's heavily weighted towards the top finishers in the constructors' championship, plus guaranteed bonus payments for the established players regardless of current form. It's that imbalance that has left so many teams struggling to survive.

The focus will now be more on rewarding performance, and ensuring that even those at the lower end of the results table can generate a decent income. The big teams will in turn lose out, although Liberty balked at robbing Ferrari completely of its heritage status. In its role as F1's oldest team it is still guaranteed a significant bonus payment understood to be worth \$40million, substantially less than it will be earning until 2020.

Liberty wants to reduce what it believes are unnecessary costs, by way of standard parts that have no impact on the racing. In addition it has confirmed a move towards

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**"THERE ARE THINGS  
THAT SEEM ALMOST  
UNACHIEVABLE, LIKE  
A \$150M COST CAP"**





MAUGER/LAT

## APE STATUTES OF LIBERTY

the much-talked-about budget cap, which has been pegged at \$150m.

Brawn's idea is a simple and very logical one – the emphasis should not be on how much you spend, but how wisely you use your resources within a restricted budget.

While many areas are not covered by the \$150m figure, such as driver salaries or marketing costs, getting down to it will represent a major challenge for the biggest players, who will have to make significant changes to the way they operate, and dramatically reduce headcounts.

Ferrari made no public comment on Liberty's plans, preferring to keep its powder dry. But Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff tried to see the positives. "It's very good to have a starting point now, to know what Liberty's vision is," he said. "They made it very clear on revenue distribution, on cost cap, on regulations, on engines. It was pretty clear.

"All of us went off looking at those numbers, looking at those regulations. It is far enough away that we can enter those discussions open-minded, trying to seek compromise. There are things that seem very difficult today, almost unachievable, like a cost cap of \$150m.

"That is, from today's standpoint, tremendously difficult. But it's clear that we are living in the same financial reality.

We need to contain costs, there needs to be a downwards slope. And I'm very keen in engaging in such a discussion."

Red Bull is another big loser, having made a very lucrative deal last time around, thanks to its status at the time as the team to beat, and an especially close relationship between Dietrich Mateschitz, Christian Horner and Ecclestone, which now counts for nothing.

"You have to see it as a group," said Red Bull's Helmut Marko. "We lose money at RBR, we gain money at Toro Rosso. And the overall costs will be reduced. So if you look at the whole picture, it's something which we could consider. We like, and we believe, that there has to be a cost reduction. How you do it has to be found."

One of Liberty's main goals is to ensure that there are still enough cars on the grid in 2021 by ensuring the survival of those who are struggling, and the proposals were welcomed by the midfield teams.

"What the owners tried to do was outline something that was fair to them, fair to the manufacturers, fair to small teams, new teams, old teams," said Force India COO Otmar Szafnauer. "When I look at what was presented – and today wasn't about detail, it was about the big picture post-2021 – I think they did a good job."

ADAM COOPER

## Brawn moots qualifying races idea

### FORMULA 1

Ross Brawn has raised the idea of a Saturday qualifying race for grands prix for consideration.

F1's managing director of motorsport is helping draw up a series of rule changes from 2021 in a bid to attract a bigger audience, and one proposal suggested is to totally change the way the grids are decided, via a qualifying race.

Speaking in an interview with Sky's Martin Brundle, Brawn suggested that qualifying races would be more exciting than current timed qualifying, and would help shake things up on Sundays too.

"What we've done is invited lots of stakeholders to give us a view on the race weekend," Brawn said. "The objectives are: can we make financial improvements, help the teams in terms of their finances, can we help the promoters have a better show and can we get some diversity into the race without making it false?"

"If we can get some diversity into the starting grid, which is genuine because it's come from a race, maybe that's worth considering. Having an extra race is an impact on the teams, but we need to look at the whole thing."

Brawn said the key target for F1 owner Liberty was a format that is better for fans. "We've got to look more externally at what Formula 1 needs to be rather than internally," he said. "Move away from the personal objectives of each team and look at what Formula 1 should be. We've put our ideas to the teams and asked them to consider them carefully."

JONATHAN NOBLE



ETHERINGTON/LAT

STAT

46

Number of overtakes  
in Bahrain GP

## F1 stalemate on overtaking – before Bahrain GP thriller!

### FORMULA 1

A Bahrain Grand Prix meeting of the Formula 1 Technical Working Group failed to come to any firm conclusions over ways to increase the amount of overtaking in 2019.

The meeting was called by the FIA's Nikolas Tombazis in part as a response to an Australian Grand Prix that featured very little overtaking. A team of engineers under F1 chief technical officer Pat Symonds has been working on concepts for the 2021 package, but ways are also being sought to improve the racing for next season.

The two main points of discussion were the potential introduction of a bigger and higher rear-wing flap intended to increase the DRS effect, and changes to the front wing to make it easier for drivers to follow the car ahead.

Research has indicated that front-wing elements designed to interact with the wake around the front wheels create an airflow that has a negative effect on the following car.

"There are some proposals going to the teams in the next few days for some things we could potentially do for 2019," Ross Brawn told Sky Sports. "If you look at the front wings we have now, they are massively complex, and the flow regime around the wing is incredibly complex, which makes it very

sensitive to the car in front.

"So we simplify the front wings, then arguably you could say that you're going to go back in the right direction. Everything we have done in the last few years has gone in the wrong direction."

But neither of the ideas generated much support from the teams. While it was acknowledged that DRS is a relatively easy way to address the problem, the system remains unpopular with fans, and is not liked by Brawn, and there was a debate among the team technical representatives about whether it was the right way to go.

Regarding the front wing, teams felt that it was already too late to start making such a significant change to the 2019 package, although in theory technical changes for next season do not have to be rubber-stamped until April 30.

There was also little appetite for a postponement until 2020, which would mean a lot of work on an aero package that would be used for just one season, prior to big changes for '21.

When the teams were asked to contribute data for research, the discussion reportedly turned to gardening leave and the recent cases involving FIA employees Marcin Budkowski and Laurent Mekies, with teams now wary of giving too much information away to neutral parties.

ADAM COOPER

## Todt wants Safari and endurance

### WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Night stages, more-diverse routes and the return of Kenya's Safari Rally were all given the seal of approval for the World Rally Championship from FIA president Jean Todt at last weekend's Tour de Corse.

Visiting his home round of the championship – an event that remains close to his heart from when he was competing on Corsica as a co-driver, and one he described as "the perfect venue for a WRC round" – Todt talked to the media about the series' future.

Asked for his feelings on suggestions that more shorter stages was the best route to an improved social-media profile – as discussed by former FIA rally director Jarmo Mahonen – Todt said: "It's not an easy question. For me, rallying is not a sprint; rallying should be endurance, adventure. Personally, I would love to have some night stages, I would love to see people going in the middle of the night to watch the rallies and I would like to see more service parks, but I understand this is more the history than the future of rallying."

Todt maintained that there was no pressure on rally organisers to deliver shorter itineraries – not a view necessarily shared by the events Autosport has contacted – and he used Corsica as an illustration.

"It's great when you see the first stage [30 miles long] in Corsica when we have more unpredictability," he said. "They don't get any information during the special stage and the driver can make a difference.

"You know one of my problems with actual racing? The cars are too reliable. I mean, look at Formula 1: things are so efficient, it's so much work with the simulation facility and the cars are so reliable. This is something I feel is not so good for the sport, we like and I like things more unpredictable. Racing needs to have some unpredictable flavour."

On calendar discussions, Todt said the Safari was targeting a 2020 return: "I am pushing [for the Safari's return]. It's true that I would be very happy if WRC could host in the coming years one event in Africa. FIA is global, WRC is global and I already feel Africa shouldn't be lost. But I said that they need to be a candidate event to demonstrate you can justify being included in the calendar. It won't be in 2019."

DAVID EVANS







**WEC** An upgraded version of the Porsche 919 Hybrid, with more power and active aerodynamics, has posted a lap around Spa quicker than Lewis Hamilton's pole time for last year's Belgian GP. Neel Jani's 1m41.770s in testing on Monday was 0.783s below the F1 mark and 12s faster than the best 919 time around Spa from last year. Porsche set out to prove the pace of an unrestricted LMP1 car as part of the farewell tour for its three-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner. **Photograph by Porsche**

## IN THE HEADLINES

### VERSTAPPEN: MERC OK

Red Bull star Max Verstappen has said that it would be unfair on Mercedes if Formula 1 effectively banned the so-called 'party-mode' engine settings in qualifying by imposing a parc ferme on powerplants between qualifying and the race. Red Bull chiefs Christian Horner and Helmut Marko have advocated the move, but Verstappen said: "It's up to F1 to maybe change the rules to make it more difficult to develop things and stuff, but you shouldn't now take it away because they are really, really good. It's unfair to them."

### SENNA STANDS IN

Bruno Senna is to race in this weekend's European Le Mans Series opener at Paul Ricard with United Autosports. The Brazilian ex-F1 racer will replace Filipe Albuquerque, who has a clashing IMSA SportsCar round at Long Beach, alongside Phil Hanson in the team's LMP2 Ligier squad.

### ALESI MISSES OUT

GP3 racer Giuliano Alesi has missed out on an ELMS seat with G-Drive Racing after testing with the team's LMP2 ORECA. The highly rated Andrea Pizzitola will therefore slot in alongside Jean-Eric Vergne and Roman Rusinov, although Vergne misses this weekend's Paul Ricard opener because of a clash with the Rome Formula E race. Swiss Alexandre Imperatori will deputise.

### GIOVINAZZI FOR LM24

Ferrari protege and Sauber F1 reserve Antonio Giovinazzi has been confirmed in the Prancing Horse's Le Mans 24 Hours line-up. Giovinazzi will join Pipo Derani and Ferrari long-timer Toni Vilander in the #52 AF Corse-run 488 GTE. Daniel Serra slides in with reigning World Endurance champions James Calado and Alessandro Pier Guidi in the #51, while Sam Bird and Davide Rigon are joined by Miguel Molina in the #71.

### JUNCADELLA INJURED

Mercedes DTM returnee Daniel Juncadella is racing to get fit for next month's Hockenheim season opener after breaking his collarbone in a mountain-bike accident. The Spaniard has had an operation on the injury, and has had stitches.

### FEWTRELL TOPS TEST

Renault protege Max Fewtrell topped the last pre-season Formula Renault Eurocup test at the Nurburgring last week. The Briton, last year's rookie champion, edged R-ace GP team-mate Logan Sargeant by 0.149s, although much of the two days was hit by rain. Yifei Ye and Richard Verschoor were next up for Josef Kaufmann Racing.

# WTCR: a promising start

## WORLD TOURING CAR CUP

A Hyundai blockade at the front of the field and precious few overtaking opportunities failed to dampen reviews of the new WTCR era of World Touring Car racing, which kicked off in Marrakech last weekend.

Hyundais scored five of the nine podium places on offer, with 56-year-old veteran Gabriele Tarquini taking an early series lead thanks to two wins. But with three other marques – SEAT, Volkswagen and Audi – making the rostrum, and 18 cars within a second in the first part of Sunday qualifying, the weekend was far from the whitewash an initial glance at results may suggest.

Marrakech's Moulay El Hassan circuit configuration has always made overtaking tricky, but Rob Huff said the switch to TCR regulations had at least allowed the cars to get closer, something that was a struggle with the previous generation of TC1 cars.

"There was a bit of a kerfuffle at the start of race three," said Huff, who scored a podium in Saturday's first race. "I had a good switchback as everyone went deep into Turn 1, but then I was side by side with my new team-mate [Mehdi Bennani] into Turn 2, and at this point of the season there's no point taking any risks. After that, there wasn't much to do except follow everyone around. I was following very closely behind in both races, which is something we can do in these TCR cars."

Three-time British Touring Car champion Gordon Shedden finished fifth on his debut, before missing out on 10th place and a reversed-grid pole position by 0.084s in Sunday's second qualifying.

The World Touring Car newboy was convinced the product would look better when the World Cup heads to more-conventional tracks. "I think they've done a great job with it," Shedden told Autosport. "You can see Eurosport have put a lot into making it an event. That's really important. The racing will be spectacular this year – this maybe isn't the best [circuit to show that], but you can already see it's lively out there, and I still believe that we'll have some phenomenal races as the year goes on."

Hyundai Motorsport customer racing head Andrea Adamo praised the lengths organisers had gone to between announcing WTCR last December and preparing the series ahead of the opening round.

"I have to say, I was amazed by the job that Eurosport, FIA and WSC have done in three months to set up this," he said. "I'm so happy about what they have done. I'm happy about Hyundai, of course, but I could have the fastest car in the world and if you don't have a proper platform to show it, it's useless. I want to thank all the people for what they have done to establish WTCR."

**JACK COZENS**

**➔ P52 WTCR REPORT**



## Toyota ahead, but not by as much as it seems

### WORLD ENDURANCE

Toyota dominated the times in a confusing World Endurance Championship test at Paul Ricard last week. The two TS050 HYBRIDS were well clear of the privateer LMP1 ranks, but all was not as it seemed.

The table-topping times by Toyota drivers Mike Conway and Anthony Davidson of 1m32.662s and 1m34.655s over the course of the two days compared with the fastest privateer lap of 1m37.034s by Vitaly Petrov in the best of SMP Racing's AER-powered BR Engineering BR1s. That was a massive gap given the rulemakers' promise of lap-time parity between hybrid and non-hybrid machinery.

That gap, however, was as artificial as the rules that have been introduced for the 2018-19 superseason to bring the independents closer to the one remaining factory squad in P1. Toyota revealed on the second day of the test that it had been running outside of the Equivalence of Technology in the opening session, when its quickest times were set.

Toyota will be racing the TS050, now going into its third season, largely in the specification in which it finished 2017. One development, however, is

a new cooling system and, to put this under stress in the relatively cool conditions at Ricard, Toyota opted to run with more power both from its V6 twin-turbo engine and its hybrid systems.

This was a test, remember, and there was no scrutineering or requirement to run according to the rules. Toyota insisted that it had made its intentions clear to the rulemakers, the FIA and the Automobile Club de l'Ouest.

"We had a new cooling system to validate, and during winter we knew it was not possible," explained Toyota Motorsport GmbH technical director Pascal Vasselon. "We were hoping a bit higher temperature, so we have been stressing our cooling systems and that means you have to ask a bit more power than is allowed."

Toyota came back to within the limits prescribed by the EoT published for Ricard shortly before the end of the daytime session on Friday. After that the high-downforce car in which Conway had set the 1m32s didn't break 1m38s, and the low-downforce car failed to get under 1m39s.

That could suggest that the privateers are actually ahead of the Toyota, given that the BRE, Rebellion Racing's new Gibson-engined R-13 and the ByKolles

ENSO CLM-Nissan P1/01 all posted best times in the 1m37s bracket. But this was a test, after all.

The low-downforce-specification TS050, which Toyota will race at both the WEC opener at Spa next month and at the Le Mans 24 Hours in June, ran through the night and completed a total of 623 laps. That was more than 3600km.

Toyota will almost certainly be ahead of the privateers when the superseason kicks off at Spa. The rules governing the EoT have been written to ensure that.

The promise of lap-time parity from series bosses when they announced their rescue plan for the WEC after Porsche's LMP1 withdrawal came too late for it to impose new rules for the coming summer. Instead, they had to engage with Toyota to find a way to save the series.

The Japanese manufacturer agreed to many things, including a massive reduction in the fuel available to it – three laps' worth at Le Mans in fact. But it didn't agree to parity. One designer from the opposition suggested that "proximity" would be a better word to describe the gap enshrined in the rules.

It appears that Toyota has been promised a lap-time advantage of 0.5s, measured around the long lap at Le Mans. That goes



## TOP TIMES

POS	DRIVER (CAR)	TIME
1	<b>Mike Conway</b> (Toyota)	1m32.662s
2	<b>Anthony Davidson</b> (Toyota)	1m34.655s
3	<b>Vitaly Petrov</b> (BR1)	1m37.034s
4	<b>Andre Lotterer</b> (Rebellion)	1m37.044s
5	<b>Stephane Sarrazin</b> (BR1)	1m37.574s
6	<b>Tom Dillmann</b> (ENSO CLM)	1m37.795s
7	<b>Oliver Rowland</b> (Ginetta)	1m38.156s
8	<b>Renger van der Zande</b> (BRE)	1m38.264s
9	<b>Michael Simpson</b> (Ginetta)	1m39.925s

## LMP2

POS	DRIVER (CAR)	TIME
1	<b>Pastor Maldonado</b> (ORECA)	1m40.771s
2	<b>Nicolas Lapierre</b> (ORECA)	1m41.088s
3	<b>Matthieu Vaxiviere</b> (ORECA)	1m41.227s
4	<b>Giedo van der Garde</b> (Dallara)	1m41.323s
5	<b>Ho-Pin Tung</b> (ORECA)	1m41.748s
6	<b>Weiron Tan</b> (ORECA)	1m41.857s

## GTE

POS	DRIVER (CAR)	TIME
1	<b>Gianmaria Bruni</b> (Porsche)	1m51.332s
2	<b>Kevin Estre</b> (Porsche)	1m51.837s
3	<b>Harry Tincknell</b> (Ford)	1m52.010s
4	<b>Olivier Pla</b> (Ford)	1m52.118s
5	<b>Matteo Cairoli</b> (Porsche)	1m52.936s
6	<b>Ben Barker</b> (Porsche)	1m53.133s

with the one-lap advantage on stint length and a five-second advantage in the time it takes to refuel. Together they should ensure that the TS050s are unbeatable.

That said, all the privateers had a good couple of days at Ricard. SMP, whose cars are run by ART Grand Prix, came out on top, not surprising given that they have had their Dallara-built BR1 up and running since October.

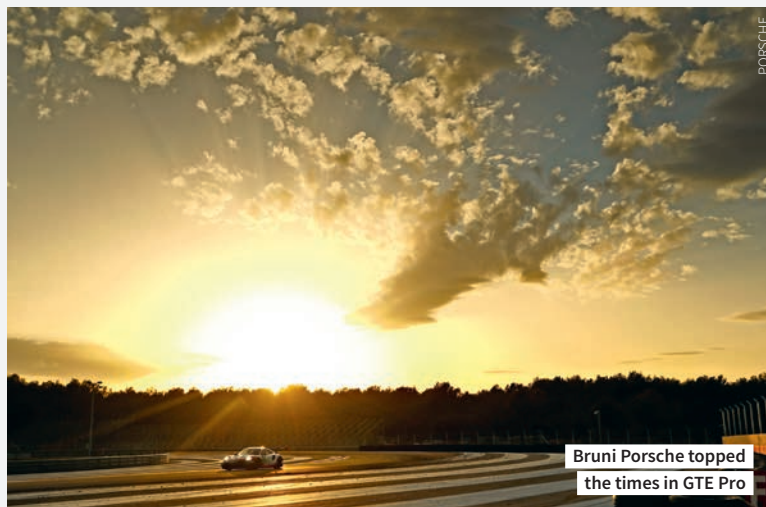
ByKolles proved that it has made giant strides with its P1 contender courtesy of the test programme it has undertaken since dropping out of the 2017 WEC mid-season. Tom Dillmann, a winner in both GP2 and Formula Renault 3.5, set a best lap of 1m37.795s, which put him best of the privateers at the time.

Rebellion's new ORECA-built contender completed nearly 150 laps, despite not turning a wheel prior to the week of the test. Andre Lotterer's fastest time in the car was only one hundredth from Petrov's best.

Manor, the least prepared of the privateers, brought up the rear of the P1 times and completed the fewest laps. But its second Ginetta-Mecachrome G60-LT-P1 turned a wheel for the first time over the course of the test.

**GARY WATKINS**

## PORSCHE AND FORD IN FRONT IN GTE, BUT CONFUSION OVER WHO'S TRYING



Bruni Porsche topped the times in GTE Pro

Porsche and Ford dominated GTE Pro in the WEC test at Paul Ricard. The Porsche 911 RSRs and Ford GTs monopolised the top spots in the times for much of the two days, the four cars ending up a second clear of the rest.

Porsche driver Gianmaria Bruni posted the fastest time of the test with a 1m51.332s, while Kevin Estre set a 1m51.837s in the second factory 911 RSR. Harry Tincknell led the way for the Ganassi Ford team on a 1m52.010s. Best of the rest was Alessandro Pier Guidi for the AF Corse Ferrari team on a 1m53.250s, mixed in among the GTE Am Porsches.

What was going on isn't exactly clear. One wag from Ford suggested that "it

looks like only two manufacturers are trying", while Ferrari lamented on the changes to the Balance of Performance. Meanwhile, Aston Martin and BMW, which were giving WEC debuts of sorts to their respective new challengers, played their cards close to their chest and chose not to criticise the BoP.

An automated BoP system was introduced last year that is based entirely on data accrued at the races, but new arrivals have to be a starting point. That goes for the evo version of the Ferrari 488 GTE, as well as the BMW M8 GTE and the second-generation Aston Martin Vantage GTE.

**GARY WATKINS**



Form of newcomer BMW's M8 GTE is unknown

# Stoneman reverses retirement for LMP1



## WORLD ENDURANCE

British single-seater ace Dean Stoneman was ready to quit motorsport before getting the chance to race for the Manor Ginetta World Endurance Championship LMP1 team.

The 27-year-old, a race winner in GP3 and Indy Lights, hadn't competed since dropping out of Strakka Racing's Blancpain GT Series squad mid-season in 2017. He was considering calling time on his racing career, but that changed when the offer came to race one of Manor's Ginetta-Mecachrome G60-LT-P1s.

"Until three weeks ago my helmet was

hung up; I had decided to take a step back," said Stoneman, who raced in GP3 with the Manor team. "After such a disappointing season last year, I really was considering calling it a day. This kind of car is what I like, having always been a single-seater driver. I'm excited to be back in a race car and very grateful to Manor and Ginetta for giving me this opportunity."

Stoneman's deal with Manor and Ginetta covers the opening two rounds of the WEC at Spa next month and then the Le Mans 24 Hours in June. He will team up with reigning European Le Mans Series champion Leo Roussel, who is also confirmed for the

first two races, and Ginetta test driver Charlie Robertson.

WEC LMP2 regular Alex Brundle will graduate to P1 in Manor's second entry alongside Oliver Rowland and a yet-to-be-disclosed third driver. "I have been lucky enough to enjoy success at the highest level in LMP2 cars, both at Le Mans and in the WEC," said Brundle, "so I feel ready and excited to make the natural progression to LMP1."

Stoneman, Brundle and Roussel all got their first taste of the Ginetta G60 at the WEC test at Paul Ricard last week (above).

GARY WATKINS

# Rosberg takes stake in Formula E

## FORMULA E

Nico Rosberg is to give Formula E's new car its first public demonstration and has revealed that he became a Formula E investor "some time ago".

The 2016 world champion, who visited the 2017-18 FE season opener in Hong Kong (right), will drive the Gen2 car at next month's Berlin event. Rosberg will have a 10-minute

demonstration slot prior to the action starting at the Tempelhof Airport-based eighth round of the season.

"I'm really excited to get behind the wheel of the Gen2 car," Rosberg said. "Since my retirement, I've become very interested in the e-mobility movement and its potential to positively impact our society and our planet. I've therefore also long believed in the potential of Formula E

and came on board as an investor some time ago."

FE CEO Alejandro Agag hailed Rosberg's decision to invest in the championship: "He's such an incredible ambassador for world motorsport and a champion – so it's also another fantastic endorsement for the ABB FIA Formula E Championship to have Nico as an investor and shareholder of Formula E."

ALEX KALINAUCKAS







## John Miles 1943-2018

### OBITUARY

He looked like a geography teacher and spoke with professorial assurance; he allowed his BRDC membership to lapse (although he later rejoined); and he had no interest in modern Formula 1 – not because it was better in his day but because there were better things to be done today.

John Miles, who has died aged 74, was not your average racing driver.

His parents were actors – father Bernard was created a life peer – and his sisters followed this artistic lead. John preferred the smell of axle grease and the roar of engines. Happy to get his hands dirty, home-tweaked Austin 7s were his ‘karting’.

In Diva GT and then Lotus Elan – with payment-in-kind support from Willment Racing – he caught the bug and the eye with a swathe of victories that led to third place in the 1965 Grovewood Awards and the 1966 Autosport GT title.

Enter Colin Chapman: a relationship that blew hot and cold for four seasons. Miles the driver was thrilled by promotions to and from Formula 3 – he was runner-up in the 1967 Les Leston Championship – and Formula 2; and Miles the engineer was in thrall to the buzz Chapman created. But this left him unready for F1 and the demands Chapman would make upon him.

His testing and racing in 1969 of the 4WD F1 Lotus 63 (right) – regulars Jochen

Rindt and Graham Hill had washed their hands of it – was a poisoned chalice. So too was the original anti-dive/anti-squat Lotus 72 of '70. An uninterrupted F2 campaign with Winkelmann Racing and more races in a proven 49C – in which he finished fifth at Kyalami – would have been a more sympathetic preparation for and introduction to F1.

“John and I started together in club racing,” says Jackie Oliver. “His approach was different to mine; he was a deep thinker interested in its technical aspects. We both got our big opportunity with Lotus too. But whereas my performances in the best car in F1 [the 49 of 1968] led to other things, that didn’t happen for John when he drove the 72. I’d had Graham for a team-mate; John had Jochen, who I suspect would not have been so cooperative.

“And Colin wanted drivers – a Clark, Rindt or an Andretti – who were his equal to help him drive the team forward. He was not much interested in young guys plonked in at the deep end; John and I were grateful and in awe and Colin didn’t deal with that well.”

When Miles argued against the sudden removal of his 72’s wings during practice for the 1970 Italian GP – Chapman had browbeaten quicker men than this analytical, methodical newcomer – his card was marked... And likely stamped by Rindt’s fatal accident the next day, his 72 without wings when probably it suffered a brakeshaft failure similar to that endured by Miles at the preceding Austrian GP.

The ‘Dear John’ phone call – Chapman delegated team manager Peter Warr – was a shock leavened increasingly with relief. The buzz was fading. Two non-championship outings in 1971 with Louis Stanley’s madcap BRM – Miles qualified on the second row for the Race of Champions – hardly reinvigorated him.

Another national title that same season – achieved in a DART-run Chevron B19 – and the outsmarting of the works Ford Capris in a privateer machine at the ETC’s Paul Ricard 6 Hours of 1972 contained much of what had drawn Miles to the sport, but it was insufficient to prevent this polymath retiring, aged 30.

“We’d both raced Lotus 41s and it wasn’t very good; it cost me a year of my development,” says F3 rival Derek Bell. “But John was willing and capable of making it better. He was bloody quick. One of the guys you knew you had to beat. He tended to stand at the back and not say much. But he was bright and had his finger on the pulse. When he started writing, his articles were profound.”

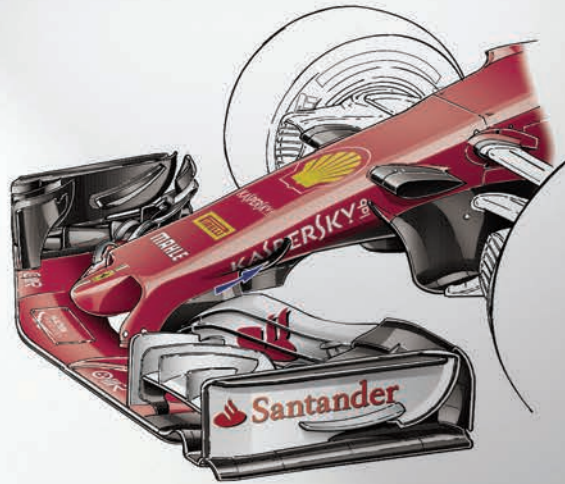
Miles’s stint as an *Autocar* road tester – “My first proper salaried job!” – was followed by more than 30 years as a vehicle dynamics engineer of global repute with Lotus Cars, Aston Martin and Multimatic. He also co-founded an eponymous music label dedicated to British contemporary jazz.

**PAUL FEARNLEY**





# THE ART OF RACING



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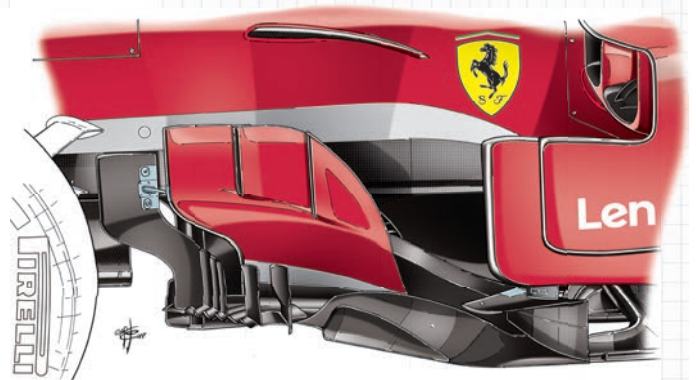
## FERRARI ADDS CRITICAL COMPLEXITY

During pre-season testing, the bargeboard area on the Ferrari looked fairly basic when you compared it to the Mercedes, but small developments have been introduced, most recently in Bahrain, increasing the complexity and performance of this very influential area.

The bargeboards basically help everything else to work; the front wing, cooling, underfloor, diffuser and Coke-bottle area would all suffer if these components weren't working properly, so it is a huge area of development.

The front area, with the three vertical red vanes and the components below them, combine to help pull airflow out from underneath the raised front of the chassis. This, in turn, reduces the blockage behind the front wing to improve its performance. The lower area helps prepare the airflow for the leading edge of the underfloor.

This is a very complex area, as it works like a small diffuser in its own right, improving the performance of the front of the underfloor in the area

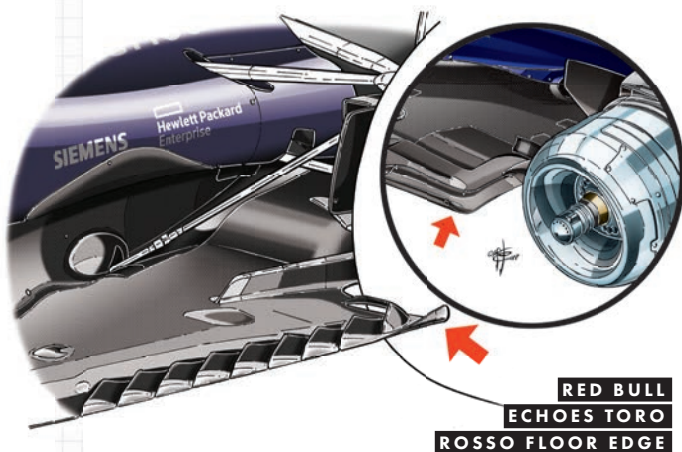


just below the Ferrari logo.

The vertical vanes on the outer corners of the sidepods are there to reduce the negative effect the turbulent area behind the front

tyre would normally have on the underfloor and undercut sidepods. All this adds up to better underfloor performance.

**GARY ANDERSON**



**RED BULL  
ECHOES TORO  
ROSSO FLOOR EDGE**

## RED BULL'S VITAL FLOOR TWEAKS

Red Bull has altered the detail of the outer edges and the rear corner area of the floor, just in front of the rear tyre. This area is critical to the performance of the underfloor.

Normally the low pressure created under the car will try to pull airflow in underneath the car, reducing the performance of the diffuser, and in turn that reduces the performance of the underfloor. Toro Rosso (above, inset) ran something similar in this area at last year's Italian Grand Prix.

These vanes on the outer edge of the floor and the detail of the rear corner of the floor

work like a skirt, sealing that area from leakage.

The airflow being displaced by the rear tyre rotating onto the track surface connects up to this area, and this displaced air pulls the airflow across the top of the floor through the vanes and out around the outside of the tyre contact patch.

In the past, sealing the tyre and floor gap was critical, and some teams even used the maximum floor deflection they could get away with in this area to help seal the underfloor.

**GARY ANDERSON**

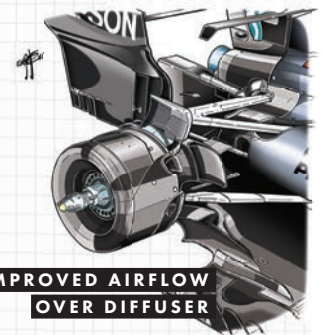
## HOW MERCEDES GAINS FROM UNIQUE SUSPENSION

Mercedes is the only team to have raised the pickup point of its rear upper wishbone in 2018, a move that improves both the downforce level of the car and the consistency with which it is delivered.

Mercedes has gone for a more-inboard and higher pickup point. The pullrod pickup appears to be just below the wishbone pickup, allowing better system stiffness without adding weight.

This will also allow Mercedes to move the lower wishbone higher and away from the diffuser upper surface, creating better airflow over the top of the diffuser. This, in turn, helps to get more airflow out of the diffuser itself and improves overall underfloor performance.

More importantly, it removes the blockage of the outboard end of the wishbone and pullrod inboard and upward that little bit, allowing Mercedes space to use rear brake



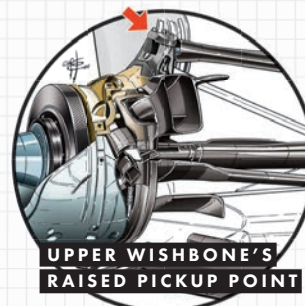
**IMPROVED AIRFLOW  
OVER DIFFUSER**

ducts with more turning vanes.

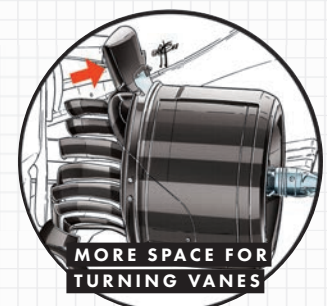
These improve the performance of the outboard area of the diffuser and also produce downforce in their own right. This load goes directly onto the tyre contact patch, so there is no time lag in the grip this produces as the suspension moves up and down over kerbs and bumps.

Also, under braking, when the rear of the car starts to rise and semi-unloads the rear contact patch, this load, directly onto the wheel and tyre, is more consistent and improves the reliability of the rear grip and corner entry.

**GARY ANDERSON**



**UPPER WISHBONE'S  
RAISED PICKUP POINT**



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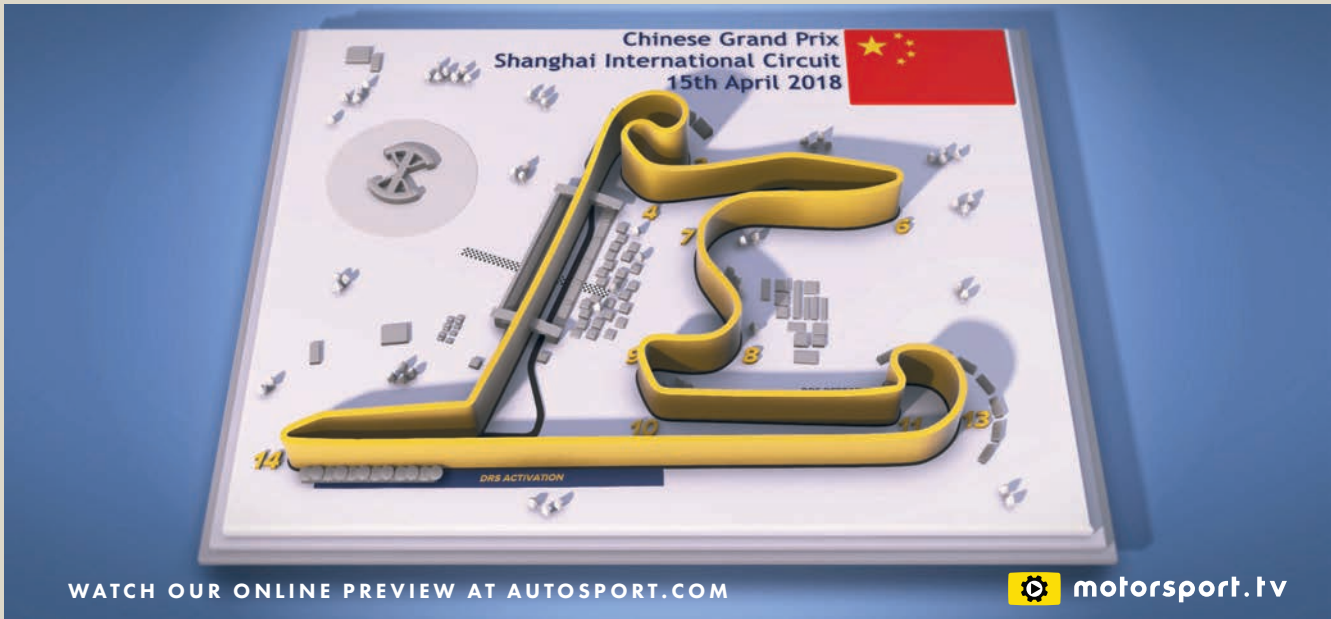
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# F1 CHINESE GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



**UK START TIMES**

**FRIDAY**  
FP1 0300 FP2 0700

**SATURDAY**  
FP3 0400 QUALIFYING 0700

**SUNDAY**  
RACE 0710  
**LIVE ON SKY SPORTS F1**  
BBC RADIO 5 LIVE 0630

**HIGHLIGHTS ON CHANNEL 4**  
RACE SUNDAY 1400

**TYRE ALLOCATION**

SUPERHARD	HARD	MEDIUM	SOFT	SUPERSOFT	ULTRASOFT	HYPERSOFT	INTERMEDIATE	WET
		▲	▲		▲		▲	▲
		AVAILABLE	AVAILABLE		AVAILABLE		AVAILABLE	AVAILABLE

**TRACK STATS**

**LENGTH** 3.387 miles  
**NUMBER OF LAPS** 56  
**2017 POLE POSITION**  
 Lewis Hamilton 1m31.678s  
**POLE LAP RECORD**  
 Lewis Hamilton 1m31.678s (2017)  
**RACE LAP RECORD**  
 Michael Schumacher 1m32.238s (2004)

**PREVIOUS WINNERS**

2017	<b>Lewis Hamilton</b>	Mercedes
2016	<b>Nico Rosberg</b>	Mercedes
2015	<b>Lewis Hamilton</b>	Mercedes
2014	<b>Lewis Hamilton</b>	Mercedes
2013	<b>Fernando Alonso</b>	Ferrari
2012	<b>Nico Rosberg</b>	Mercedes
2011	<b>Lewis Hamilton</b>	McLaren
2010	<b>Jenson Button</b>	McLaren
2009	<b>Sebastian Vettel</b>	Red Bull
2008	<b>Lewis Hamilton</b>	McLaren



**THEMES TO WATCH**

**CAN HAMILTON GET HIMSELF OFF THE MARK?**  
 Sebastian Vettel made it two out two in Bahrain – the first time since 2004 that Ferrari has won the first two races of an F1 season. Lewis Hamilton was mighty in China last year, and Mercedes desperately needs a victory after squandering two great opportunities.

**WILL RED BULL'S NIGHTMARE CONTINUE?**  
 Red Bull thinks it has a very fast car in race trim, but so far hasn't really shown it. Grid penalties, overdriving, the lack of respect Verstappen showed Hamilton in Bahrain, plus poor Renault reliability means it currently languishes behind McLaren.

**CAN WILLIAMS PICK ITSELF UP?**  
 Bahrain was a disaster for Williams, which was slowest of all on pure pace in the desert and has come nowhere near scoring points so far. Sergey Sirotkin admits the team “looked like idiots from outside”, but hopes that greater understanding may lead to an improvement this weekend.



# GAMBLING ON POWER

*It will soon be time for Red Bull to decide whether it wants to annul its marriage to Renault – the question now is whether Honda represents a better partnership*

EDD STRAW

**S**tick or twist? This is the question Red Bull must answer as it considers whether to continue to use Renault or switch to Honda propulsion in 2019. When the deal was first done for Toro Rosso to become Honda's works partner last year, this seemed an optimistic hit-and-hope with a low probability of paying off, but Pierre Gasly's convincing fourth place in last weekend's Bahrain Grand Prix has elevated it to the status of a more serious proposition.

Bahrain was just one performance and, even in the back of a car produced by one of Formula 1's more modest teams, a gap of almost a second in qualifying to the Red Bull-Renault does not represent a miracle. But it suggests that Honda is making real progress and that the performance gap between it and Renault is narrowing.

Today, Renault is still the better choice for Red Bull. But in the longer, or even medium, term this could change. During the pre-season, the talk was of the deficit between Honda and Renault engines being in the order of 0.5s per lap. In Bahrain it was probably half that. The peak power deficit is reckoned to be just 12bhp, and although that is far too simple a way to evaluate relative performance, this is telling.

## **"IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE TO ASSUME HONDA IS NOW GUARANTEED TO SUCCEED"**

The crucial moment will likely be an upgrade currently slated for the Canadian Grand Prix in June, aiming to deliver a step of around 27bhp. Renault will not be standing still, but there's a possibility that this could make Honda the supplier of the third most potent power unit in F1. Honda upgrades have disappointed before so there's no guarantee of this being delivered, but if it does happen then it will strengthen the case for the change.

There's also the important question of all-round performance. Peak power is one thing, but Honda still needs to prove that it can not only improve its V6 (in particular when it comes to mastering the advanced combustion technology its rivals have made significant gains with), but also ensure that its ERS package is maximised. Bahrain is a power circuit of sorts, but not one that puts undue demands on every aspect of a modern F1 power unit.

Toro Rosso went into its partnership with Honda confident that the performance of the engine was better than perceived in the outside world. This was based on the ongoing performance analysis conducted by all of the teams, and the view has been given further credibility by McLaren's difficulties since switching to Renault. While McLaren struggled for driveability when running Honda and has found an improvement after changing to Renault, Toro Rosso has found the reverse.

There's also the potential benefit for Red Bull of, for the first time, becoming a genuine works team in F1. There were times, particularly during the previous generation of V8 engines, when it was the de facto works Renault team, but this would be very different. Toro Rosso, in public at least, claims the working relationship with Honda has been very encouraging and they have established a more collaborative process.

Red Bull's thinking is straightforward: it is looking for performance. Currently it has a Renault engine lacking the requisite performance and reliability to win the world championship. In particular, it is missing the extreme qualifying modes that would allow Red Bull to start races up front. Honda has a qualifying mode of sorts, one some suggest in relative terms is worth a bigger step than anything Renault can provide, and this is another area it is thought to be working hard on improving this year.

This is the fifth year of the V6-turbo-hybrid engine regulations and Renault has still not convinced anyone it has the technical knowhow and, crucially, the investment level to match the offerings of Ferrari and Mercedes. Having its own works team sucking up money won't help, and the feeling inside Red Bull is that it does need a change to get back to championship-winning ways.

Honda has failed more than it has succeeded since returning to F1 and, despite the struggles McLaren has endured since switching to Renault, it would be a mistake to assume Honda's engine programme is now guaranteed to succeed. But the signs are encouraging. Red Bull could use Honda engines for two seasons and still have the freedom to switch to a new supplier for the new regulation set in 2021 – Aston Martin and Porsche are both keeping a close eye on F1.

Given its struggles over recent years, confidence in Renault is not in great supply at Red Bull. And there's already enough circumstantial evidence to suggest that the gamble would be worth taking. In a few months, the definitive evidence could make it look even less of a risk.

Switching to a manufacturer that has been so troubled since returning to F1 cannot be taken lightly. But in order to win, sometimes you have to be willing to risk losing. 🍀



# YOUR SAY

*Who wants to see an F1 car driving fast? Heaven forbid that a car should drive at any speed other than its most reliable and fuel efficient!*

TIM POLLARD

### Is 10 minutes a waste of time?

After 50 years of reading Autosport and following F1, can someone please tell me what the 10 minutes' additional time of TV coverage is all about, as it appears to be a complete waste of time?! And please don't get me going on the one-hour-later starting time. Come back Bernie, all is forgiven.

**Raymond Graves**  
Sheffield

### Save money by ditching the celebs

If money is to be saved in F1, start with the hospitality. Cut back on the bored so-called celebrities and hangers-on.

**Darren Hollebhone**  
Byemail

### Don't be a party mode pooper

So the latest piece of silliness in the tech wars around F1 is the idea from Red Bull that 'party modes' should be abolished. After all, who wants to see an F1 car driving fast? Heaven forbid that a car should drive at any speed other than its most reliable and fuel efficient! And why not take it further? Let's get rid of that pesky overtaking thing and just start everyone off for the 'race' with 10 litres of fuel in the car and declare the winner to be the driver that drives with greatest fuel efficiency and makes his car go furthest. That sounds like a spectacle-and-a-half, doesn't it? I just wish I was joking...

**Tim Pollard**  
Byemail

### Levelling the playing field will fall flat

Christian Horner has been going on about parity of engines for a while now. I don't remember anyone complaining about Adrian Newey designing a better chassis when Red Bull was winning all the time (above right, in 2010). I can't see why there seems to be more stigma attached to having an engine that has been designed to give more power than the others than to a chassis designed to have better handling or aerodynamic efficiency.



If there is parity in the engines, then there should be parity in the chassis as well. To make sure it is totally fair, they should all be put together by the same engineers as well. Oh, wait a minute, that's beginning to sound like Formula Palmer Audi, so perhaps we could get Jonathan Palmer to run it? All the data could be shared so we could really find out who the best driver is in F1. Just think of the hundreds of millions that could be saved.

Do we really want that? No, I don't think so.

**Dave Coward**  
Byemail

### Grid girls out in the cold

It was rather disappointing to see at the sogfest that was British GT at Oulton Park that despite the arctic conditions, grid girls were still in evidence. Perhaps it was the weather that really showed just how outdated this practice is. And this on a day when a female driver made Brit GT history. Perhaps, for once, the F1 owners who retired this old-fashioned and sexist spectacle were doing the right thing.

**John Cooke**  
Byemail

## HAVE YOUR SAY, GET IN TOUCH

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# HOW MERCEDES SQUANDERED A 90% VICTORY CHANCE

*A daring strategic gamble should have delivered victory to Mercedes and Valtteri Bottas in Bahrain, but the opportunity was lost*

EDD STRAW, GRAND PRIX EDITOR

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY  
LAT IMAGES/SUTTON IMAGES







MERCEDES HAD THE BAHRAIN GRAND PRIX WON ON LAP 21. WELL, ALMOST. ACCORDING TO team boss Toto Wolff, there was only a one in 10 chance of Ferrari winning despite Sebastian Vettel being in the lead. And yet, 36 laps later, Vettel claimed his second consecutive grand prix victory, albeit by the slim margin of 0.699 seconds from the Mercedes of Valtteri Bottas.

“I think we had won the race already after coming out on the medium behind Sebastian with a gap we were able to close down, knowing Ferrari would either have to stop once again or would run out of tyre if we were to push them,” said Wolff when asked if his team could have done anything differently. “This was the moment I would say 90% probability was on us winning, and we lost that.”

For the second race in succession, the question is, ‘How did Mercedes lose from a winning position?’ In the season-opening Australian Grand Prix, it was an ostensibly simple combination of an unfortunately timed virtual safety car and a team miscalculation of lap-time deltas, but in Bahrain it was far more complicated – at least in terms of the on-track machinations.

Things started to unravel for Mercedes long before the 90% calculation was made. During the race in Melbourne, Lewis Hamilton had a hydraulic leak in the gearbox leading to bearing damage that

didn’t prevent him finishing, but did necessitate a premature change in Bahrain. The result was a five-place penalty relegating Hamilton’s Mercedes W09 from fourth to ninth on the grid.

Friday and Saturday did not go especially well for Mercedes, the main issue being their struggle to keep the rear tyre temperatures under control on the supersoft compound. This continued into qualifying, with Bottas and Hamilton separated by just over a tenth of a second and on the second row behind Ferrari’s Vettel and Kimi Raikkonen. That Hamilton ran on the softs in Q2 was significant, as it not only meant he started on them and went into the race on a one-stop plan, but it also ensured he wouldn’t have to use the troublesome (for Mercedes) supersoft in the race.

“On a track like Bahrain, with a very abrasive circuit and lots of heat, we struggle,” said Wolff after qualifying. “On the softs the car was much better, but putting the softer compound on,



Verstappen attacked  
Hamilton at the start  
of the second lap



the supersoft, it looks like we're overheating and therefore not extracting the optimum grip.

"In the last years, we always seemed to struggle on particular circuits. We were struggling in Monaco, a bit in Budapest, Sepang, Singapore. Bahrain was one where we were successful in terms of results in the past, but sometimes it was not trivial to find the right set-up."

Mercedes was always going to be stronger in the race, and so it proved. But with Ferrari showing a good turn of pace and having the advantage of track position, Bottas and Hamilton needed the race to come to them. Hamilton's penalty meant Bottas was always likely to be the main man for Mercedes, and he was. But the Finn's performance was that of an accomplished understudy rather than a genuine leading player.

At the start, Vettel assumed the lead while Raikkonen struggled for grip on the dirty side of the track and lost second place to Bottas. This immediately nullified Vettel's rear-gunner advantage. But while Bottas tracked Vettel at the front during the first stint, there were some other, very significant, moves that made victory simultaneously more and less likely for Mercedes.

Hamilton made progress off the line by scything between Esteban Ocon's Force India and Nico Hulkenberg's Renault. But this was the

only thing that went right for Hamilton early on, as his victory chances took a hit when he dropped back behind both on the brakes after being boxed in at Turn 1. He then left the door wide open into Turn 8 to let Fernando Alonso past.

"If there was a chance of the race win I lost it in the first laps," said Hamilton. "I had a really good start and then I opted to go down the inside of Magnussen. But I saw him move and then I couldn't come across to the left because I had all the guys on the left, and then I was on the defence for ages, then I came round in 10th."

He also let Max Verstappen, who started 15th after an unexpected 150bhp kick from his Renault engine spun his Red Bull into the barrier in Q1, get on his case. On lap two, Verstappen legitimately dived up the inside into Turn 1 but failed to factor in Alonso's presence, a miscalculation that led to him running wide into Hamilton and clobbering Hamilton's front-right wheel with his rear-left. The result was a puncture and differential damage eliminating the Red Bull from the race shortly after he rejoined having visited the pits.

While he was on three wheels, Verstappen cruised past Daniel Ricciardo's stricken Red Bull, which had suffered a sudden loss of all electrical power while running fourth, suspected to be a consequence of an energy-store problem. Red Bull had looked fast, perhaps the fastest, on race pace in practice and this wiped >>



**"THIS WAS THE POINT WHERE  
MERCEDES SUPPOSEDLY HAD  
A WINNING HAND"**



Ferrari and Mercedes  
appeared closely  
matched on race pace

out a serious threat from behind for Mercedes. Up went the victory chances for the Silver Arrows.

After the intervention of the virtual safety car, Bottas continued to chase Vettel, with Raikkonen slipping back. Hamilton got himself back in gear and started to recover. After restarting ninth, he jumped to sixth in one great move by passing Alonso, Ocon and Hulkenberg on the run into Turn 1 on lap six. Soon after, he dispatched the remarkable Pierre Gasly, driving a brilliant race on his first taste of the front end of the F1 field after starting fifth, for fourth place. That put Hamilton in play, but Bottas was still the real victory shot for Mercedes.

Given the pitstop undercut was an effective weapon, Mercedes called Bottas in on lap 18 after he'd closed the gap from 3.2s to 2.165s. Ferrari responded instantly and brought Vettel in. Mercedes then U-turned and instructed Bottas to stay out and, with Vettel seemingly committing to a two-stopper by taking soft Pirellis, Mercedes opted to leave Bottas out for a couple more laps. After Raikkonen also came

in, Bottas stopped to take mediums and attempt a one-stop race, rather than the softs and two-stop that was Plan A.

This was the point where Mercedes supposedly had a winning hand, or 90% of one, and all Bottas needed to do was play the cards well enough to gain track position. Initially, he and Mercedes assumed this would be handed to them by Vettel stopping again. From Bottas crossing the line at the end of his out-lap to start lap 22, for the next nine laps, starting with his fastest of the whole race, he took 0.395s per lap out of Vettel to close to 4.175s behind the Ferrari.

For a few laps, Mercedes and Bottas held the gap, but from laps 35-43 Bottas dropped back at a rate of 0.434s per lap, still comfortably within the pitstop window. The penny then dropped and, on lap 44, Bottas picked up the pace into the 1m34s bracket in a bid to close what had grown to an 8.2s gap. With Vettel firmly in the 1m35s and starting to struggle more, the gap closed rapidly. But it wasn't until the end of lap 55 of 57 that Bottas got into DRS range. That meant he had just two laps, and four and a half bites of the DRS, to make a move.

His chance came on the last lap as he closed rapidly on Vettel on the approach to the braking zone for Turn 1. But after a half-hearted look at the options, Bottas backed out of it. He wasn't close enough to attempt a move after the DRS zone on the back straight into Turn 11, and had to settle for second.

"I was definitely watching him to see if he left the door open or if he was expecting or not expecting me to try something," said Bottas. "I saw he was expecting it and ready to block the overtake, so I understood there was no possibility. You could always kind of go for it and bang wheels and have a crash, but it was just a bit too far. Not that much, I was only a few metres away and could have gone for it. But that was just a little too far."

The question is whether Hamilton, Ricciardo or Verstappen might have, in the same position, made the move stick. There were plenty in the paddock who thought they would have done, and again question marks about Bottas's killer instinct in wheel-to-wheel battle, which



Electrical problem  
caused Ricciardo  
to stop early





Raikkonen had to abandon after pitlane drama



Bottas seemed to be not quite incisive enough at the end

has been a discussion point since his Williams days, were raised. He's a classy driver trying to assert himself as a top gun and retain his Mercedes seat, and this felt like a significant moment in his bid to earn a new Mercedes deal. Then again, at least he didn't do what Verstappen did earlier in the race and come away with nothing.

Behind, Hamilton closed to just 6.512s off the lead over the line, gaining from Raikkonen's pitstop disaster on lap 36. Called in for his second stop while running 13.3s ahead of Hamilton, and 1.6s behind Bottas, Raikkonen left the pitbox after erroneously being given the green light.

But as a result of the left-rear wheel proving stubborn, the stop wasn't over and he hit the wheelman, who suffered two fractures in his leg. Raikkonen was told to stop, and that was that for his race. That meant Mercedes didn't have to worry about a Ferrari charging from behind, further strengthening its position.

It wasn't just Bottas who squandered this 90% victory shot. What if Mercedes had timed it right for him to undercut Vettel at the first stop and gained track position there? Then, might he have simply run to the end on mediums in the lead and taken his fourth grand prix win? And if he had stayed on Plan A, would this have ensured Vettel stopped again and brought one-stopping Hamilton into play?

"We were going to stop on the lap when Sebastian did," said Bottas. "When he didn't stop we had to do the opposite and do a few more laps, which in the end maybe was a good thing because if we would have stopped that lap we would have stopped for a two-stop. I'm not sure with the soft tyre we could have done as long a stint as Sebastian did."

And what if Mercedes had let him attack more during the nine-lap phase when he dropped back? Part of that was down to managing the temperatures of the car, but part of it was also conservatism on the part of Mercedes. Could he have been allowed to push slightly harder, and maybe had a few more laps to try to pass Vettel? Or would the tyres have given up? >>



## QUALIFYING

Kimi Raikkonen is the perennial Bahrain nearly man. Heading into qualifying for this year's race, he had eight podiums here without a win and not one pole position. After the first runs in the Q3 top 10 shootout, he was on top and within touching distance of only his second pole position since 2008.

Sadly, as has too often been the pattern for Raikkonen on Saturday afternoons in recent years, he couldn't nail it when it mattered. Sebastian Vettel, who had run wide at the final corner on his first run, instead annexed his 51st career pole position by a margin of 0.143s. Raikkonen, meanwhile, failed to improve and was actually two tenths slower than he had been on his first run.

"Far from ideal with the traffic," said Raikkonen, who passed both Renaults.

"It was such a messy thing, I was passing people and doing this and that, so it's disappointing because it's been good most of the weekend."

Vettel described his lap as a "cut-and-paste" of his first run, and the 0.171s he gained in the final sector more than made up the gap to Raikkonen.

Valtteri Bottas was third and disappointed not to get on to the front row, although never quite showed the pace to be able to do that. Lewis Hamilton, with a five-place grid penalty hanging over him thanks to a hydraulic leak during the Australian Grand Prix that forced a gearbox change heading into Bahrain, was a tenth further back and, like his team-mate, struggling to control rear-tyre temperature.

Red Bull set its sights on having at least one car on the front row, but Max Verstappen signed off from qualifying after just one run in Q1. This was thanks to an unexpected power kick exiting the Turn 2 left-hander.

"We had a 150bhp increase, which is a bit odd," said Verstappen. "The corner isn't flat-out, but it was like an on-and-off switch. It spun up the rear tyres quite aggressively, and then I spun. I didn't anticipate it at all."

Ricciardo gave away 65% of his deficit to pole on the straights of the first sector, ending up 0.440s down – and almost a second clear of the star performer of qualifying, Pierre Gasly. The Toro Rosso-Honda driver was a standout throughout, winning the tight midfield battle by 29 thousandths from Kevin Magnussen's Haas.

**"It was like an on-and-off switch and then I spun"**

Max Verstappen



TRACKSIDE VIEW

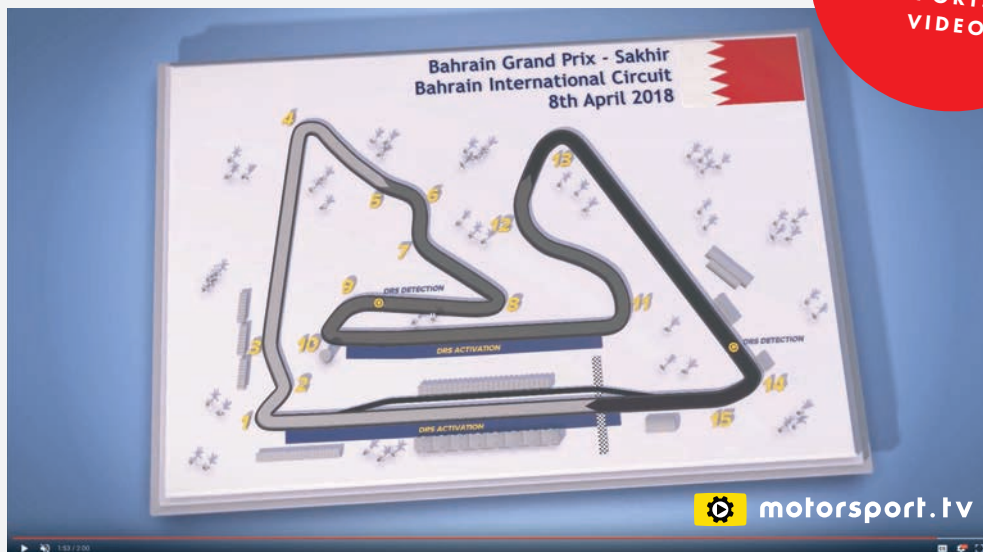


BAHRAIN'S TURN 11 IS A LONG, uphill left-hander at the end of the back straight. In qualifying trim, it requires only a shift down to fourth gear and demands a tricky balance between carrying entry speed, completing the turning and getting the power on at the exit.

Watching during the first free practice session, the difference between the two Ferrari drivers is marked. Kimi Raikkonen turns in decisively, as is his wont, and has to live with understeer throughout much of the corner. You can sense his impatience at waiting for the front end to respond before he can feed the power in. On one occasion, this manifests itself as Raikkonen turning in earlier but clouting the inside kerb and spitting himself wide. He deals with the understeer fine, but it does limit the exit.

Sebastian Vettel, as you'd expect, is trying to be more proactive on the entry, often taking a couple of bites of the steering wheel to try to work the rear harder to counteract it.

Both are effective, Raikkonen's more pleasing to the eye but Vettel's more dramatic. And they reveal a car that is fundamentally now pretty well balanced, but still limited a little by understeer and



the difficulty Vettel has in controlling the rear precisely. Over the weekend, however, in the serious sessions amid lower track temperatures, the track very much comes to Ferrari.

There is also a contrast between the two Haas drivers. For both, the car looks serene and very planted, but Kevin Magnussen is able to keep the minimum speed up despite the understeer. Team-mate Romain Grosjean is looking for

something on turn-in that the car will not give him, with the result that he is more inconsistent through the long corner.

At Mercedes, there are moments when Valtteri Bottas struggles with the rear end towards the exit of the corner, perhaps being a little too aggressive on the throttle after getting out of the first phase and hanging the back of the car out. Hamilton doesn't have moments like that, but is at times a little

tentative, which reflects the troubles with keeping the rear tyres in the optimum window on the supersofts that plague Mercedes in qualifying.

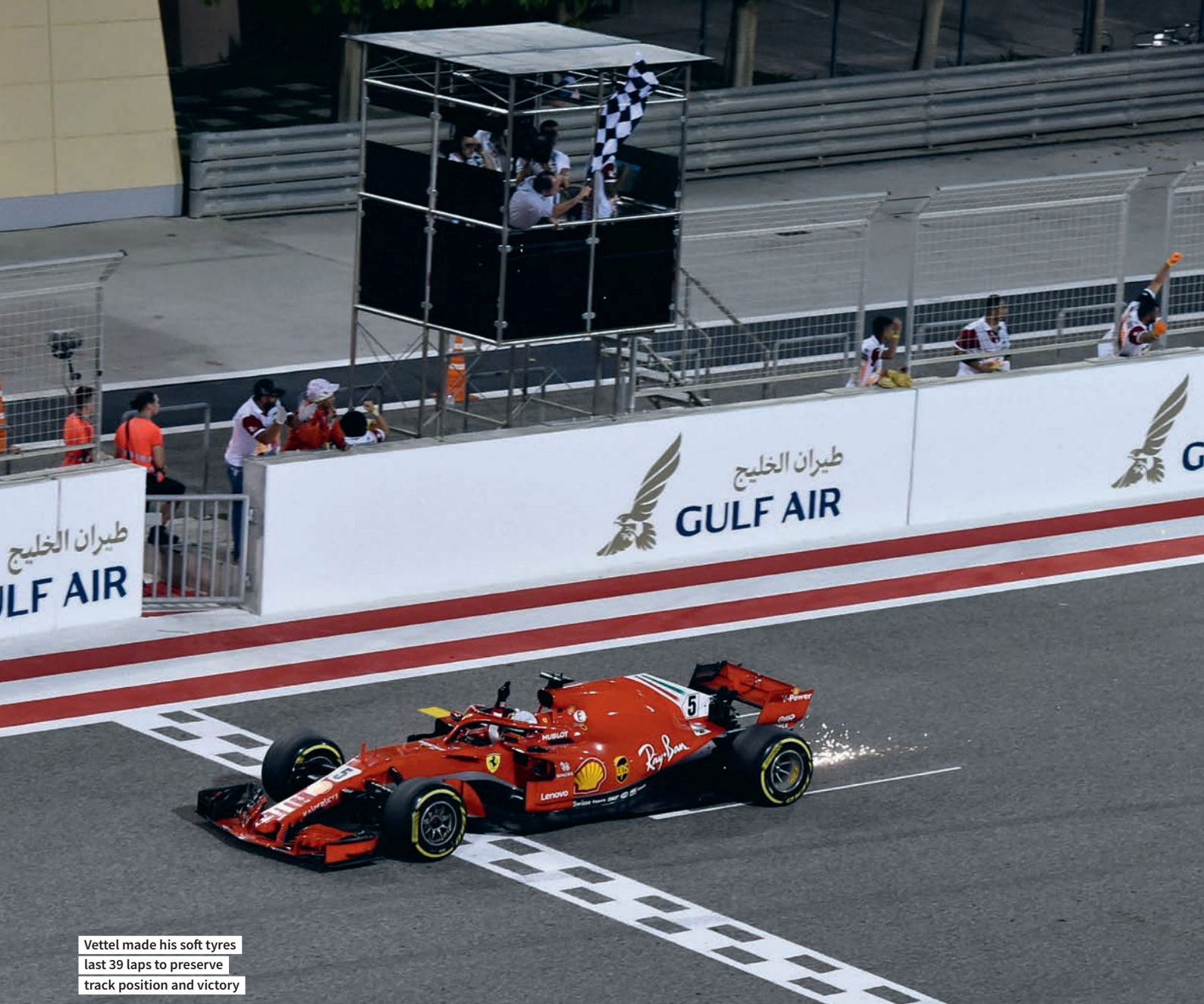
The Toro Rosso is eye-catching. During testing, the car had a weak front end, and while the understeer is there it's not too serious and Pierre Gasly and Brendon Hartley can carry reasonable speed through the corner. A promising sign...

**EDD STRAW**



Vettel is more proactive on corner entry than team-mate Raikkonen





Vettel made his soft tyres last 39 laps to preserve track position and victory

There's an interesting comparison to the two other drivers who did similar stints on the mediums that suggests Mercedes may have been too conservative. Marcus Ericsson ran three laps shorter than Bottas and averaged only 1.680s slower. Ericsson was 2s slower than Hamilton, who stopped three laps later, while Stoffel Vandoorne stopped two laps after Hamilton and was only 1.461s slower than him. Different cars, different situations, but it hints at complacency from Mercedes, given that it surely had the car to have a bigger advantage over those midfielders.

What must not be ignored is the part Vettel's drive played in victory. There's an unflashy brilliance to what he did, for many drivers would have failed to make the softs last the seemingly impossible 39 laps he did to get to the end. Add to this the need to manage the closing rate of Bottas and it adds up to a superbly executed victory. He said on the radio with 10 laps to go that he had everything under control, but it was far from straightforward.

"That was a lie, there was nothing under control," said Vettel. "When they told me the pace of Valtteri at that time, there was no way I could do that. I was doing the maths inside the car with 10 laps to go – at that pace he's going to catch me!

**"VETTEL SAID HE HAD EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL, BUT IT WAS FAR FROM STRAIGHTFORWARD"**



Gasly eminently deserved his fourth place

"I tried to keep it as clean as possible. I tried to make the tyres last, nursed them as much as I could, and it worked. But just! Valtteri had a bit of a sniff, but fortunately he ran out of laps."

Vettel genuinely earned what stands as one of his best victories in F1. But you can't help but think he was relieved it wasn't one of the more incisive of the frontrunners chasing him down in those final laps. Hamilton, six seconds away, and the two Red Bull drivers, long since out of the race, would surely have been more formidable foes.

Any of those drivers in a Mercedes might well have turned a 90% victory shot into a dead cert. And Bottas, partly responsible for the 10% chance of defeat coming to pass along with Vettel's excellence and the Mercedes strategy, will know this more than anyone. ✨





SUTTON

## Mechanic run over in Ferrari pits

A Ferrari pit-crew member was hospitalised with a broken leg during a botched pitstop that ended Kimi Raikkonen's race early.

Francesco Cigarini was preparing to fit a new left-rear tyre during Raikkonen's second stop when the driver was mistakenly told to leave the pit box.

Raikkonen ran over Cigarini's left leg as he pulled away, leaving him with a fractured shinbone and fibula. Cigarini, who works on Sebastian Vettel's car outside of the pitstops, was transferred to Bahrain's BDF Hospital where he was operated on overnight.

After the race Ferrari began investigating why its automated system told Raikkonen that the pitstop was finished and he could leave. The system triggers a green light when the car has four wheels refitted, but Raikkonen's left-rear had not been removed, and when he pulled away he still had the old tyre on.

It is against the regulations for a car to have a mismatched set of tyres, which is why Raikkonen was instructed to stop in the pitlane. Ferrari was fined €50,000 for the unsafe release.

F1 race director Charlie Whiting called the incident "slightly perplexing" and, when asked if he thinks the teams need to face bigger penalties to make pitstops safer, he added: "I don't think so. The rules are very clear, what happens during the race, the principal being that a driver stopping on the track is a big enough penalty."

# Gasly restores Honda's F1 pride



Pierre Gasly and Scuderia Toro Rosso claimed Honda's best result since the Japanese manufacturer's return to Formula 1 in 2015 with a strong run to fourth place.

Boosted by the introduction of modified MGU-H and turbochargers – a reaction to the engine failure that put Gasly out of the season-opening Australian

Grand Prix – and aerodynamic upgrades including a new floor, Toro Rosso was fast throughout the weekend and had the edge in the battle for best of the rest behind the big three.

Twenty-two-year-old Gasly, in only his seventh F1 start, pipped Kevin Magnussen to sixth fastest in qualifying and started fifth thanks to Lewis Hamilton's

gearbox penalty. He held position at the start and moved up to fourth when Daniel Ricciardo retired on the second lap. Gasly came under attack twice from Magnussen, notably when the Haas driver tried a move around the outside of Turn 11 after the virtual-safety-car restart. The pair made contact, and Gasly picked up minor floor damage that cost a



STALEY/LAT

### BIG NUMBER

# 49

#### 2015 ITALIAN GRAND PRIX

Marcus Ericsson's ninth place ended a 49-race points drought for the Sauber driver that stretched back to the Italian Grand Prix in September 2015 (left).





small amount of downforce.

But he was still able to pull away from the rest of the midfield, led by Magnussen. Despite slipping back a place when Hamilton passed him, he reclaimed fourth when Kimi Raikkonen retired. Gasly crossed the line 55.722s behind third place, but 12.812s clear of Magnussen.

“He’s been on it all weekend,”

said Toro Rosso technical director James Key. “Having the pressure of being on the third row of the grid, then having a well-managed race and to do it to the level he did is really encouraging.”

Brendon Hartley’s race was ruined by a 10s penalty for hitting Sergio Perez, and a 30s post-race penalty for not following formation lap procedure (see p29).

## Q & A TOYOHARU TANABE

**It took Honda just two races with Toro Rosso to score a better result than in three years with McLaren. Honda F1 technical director Toyoharu Tanabe is “not very interested” in such a comparison, and more focused on using this result as a springboard.**



find the balance point. When you push too much performance you pay sometimes. Or you don’t push very much, still you fail sometimes. So, it’s difficult. But we try to achieve both, step by step, to a higher level.

**How important was it to see an immediate improvement in reliability?**

We started the investigation just after the [Australian GP] failure trackside and also in Japan. We sent the parts from both cars back to Sakura; they had a look at what was wrong. Since 2015 we had a lot of failures. That experience helped us fix the problem in a short time as well.

**How much progress have you made in the ERS?**

It’s very difficult to tell how much, but after practice on Saturday our engineers discussed how to use the system with the drivers and we decided on the detailed strategy. I believe that worked. From the development point of view maybe the internal combustion engine is one of the biggest components to improve.

**And how big a boost is it for the 2018 development programme?**

Hmm, we will see! But I hope everybody here at Toro Rosso and Honda is happy, and I hope that gives us much more energy to develop for the future. Our development is not only reliability, it is performance. We need to

# Ericsson ends 31-month points drought



Marcus Ericsson thinks that shedding 5kg of body weight before the start of the season has helped the boost in form that ended a points drought stretching back to the 2015 Italian Grand Prix.

The Sauber driver combined a strong first lap and a one-stop strategy to climb from 17th to ninth in the Bahrain Grand Prix and bank his team’s first points of the season.

The Swede is one of the tallest drivers on the grid but reckons his new lower weight, combined with Sauber also getting its 2018 car down to the weight limit, is paying dividends.

“It’s been a tough winter for me but

I’ve been working my ass off to make sure I take my opportunity this year,” he said.

Ericsson has outqualified his new highly rated rookie team-mate Charles Leclerc in the opening two grands prix of the season and comfortably outraced him in Bahrain, as Leclerc struggled after mistakenly pushing for an alternative strategy.

Ericsson could have taken the record for consecutive F1 starts without a points finish had he endured another barren season.

“It’s a great relief because I had some very difficult years,” he added. “You can feel a weight lifting from your shoulders.”



# CONGRATULATIONS TO GEORGE GAMBLE

ON HIS FIRST WIN IN THE PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB, ON HIS DEBUT WEEKEND IN THE CHAMPIONSHIP.

George Gamble had a successful first weekend in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB at Brands Hatch after winning the second race of the weekend. Amigos Team Parker Racing driver Gamble started second on the grid and, in tricky wet conditions, and was able to pounce when the leader ran wide at Clearways on a safety car restart to take the victory.

With a fourth place in the opener, Gamble currently sits third in the championship points.



@GEORGEAMBLE23

GEORGE WOULD LIKE TO THANK  
TEAM PARKER RACING, AMIGOS BEER  
AND CONTRACT FURNITUREGROUP



CONTRACT  
FURNITURE GROUP







## Hamilton: Verstappen wasn't respectful



Lewis Hamilton said that Max Verstappen's move at Turn 1 on the second lap of the Bahrain Grand Prix, which resulted in a collision, fell outside the established boundaries of professional racing etiquette.

Verstappen dived up the inside into the right-hander but failed to factor in Fernando Alonso's presence. He moved wide having already carried in significant speed, and pushed Hamilton

to the track's edge. Verstappen's left-rear wheel hit the front-right of Hamilton's Mercedes, causing a puncture and ultimately race-ending damage to the Red Bull.

"It was an unnecessary collision," said Hamilton. "There needs to be a certain respect between drivers. I need to watch it again, but it didn't feel like a respectful move. It was a silly move for him because he didn't finish the race and obviously he's

tending to make quite a few mistakes recently."

Verstappen defended himself and claimed Hamilton would not have been happy in his position.

"I had a good run out of the last corner and went for the inside," he said. "Lewis was trying to go around the outside and at one point I was ahead. There was still enough space on the left but I got a touch on the left rear and it destroyed my diff."

## McLaren salvages seventh and eighth

Qualifying ended badly for McLaren – Fernando Alonso and Stoffel Vandoorne were 13th and 14th, behind both Honda-powered Toro Rossos. But after what was described as an "emergency debrief" on Saturday night, the team salvaged seventh and eighth places in the race, remarkably moving up to third in the constructors' championship, ahead of Red Bull.

"We benefited from a couple of retirements, but our pace allowed us to recover," said racing director Eric Boullier. "Stoffel did a brilliant job because he was last after the start. The team did the job; the drivers drove very well.

"I should be relieved – seventh and eighth is where we believe the pace is. Even for a week [before China], we are third in the championship, which is funny. We're still not happy with what happened yesterday [in qualifying]. We are going to move forward from this, and we don't want any repeat."

Alonso was close to sixth-placed Nico Hulkenberg, but backed off to bank the result by being lapped, thereby avoiding having to complete the final lap. Vandoorne, who suffered from wheelspin at the start and dropped to last, drove a strong final stint on medium tyres to recover to one place behind Alonso.

McLaren admitted to making a misjudgement in set-up and configuration for Bahrain that compromised its weekend, suggesting that it was struggling to get the tyres working, as well as running downforce that proved too draggy.

## Hartley hit with double penalty

Brendon Hartley showed promising pace during the Bahrain Grand Prix weekend, but his prospects of achieving a maiden points finish were stymied by a pair of penalties.

Hartley earned his first punishment, a 10-second penalty, for punting Sergio Perez's Force India into a spin at the Turn 4 right-hander on the opening lap while attempting to take 10th place. Stewards deemed this to be Hartley's fault, and he had to observe the sanction at his



first pitstop, which dropped him to 18th and last.

He recovered to finish 13th on the road, just 27 thousandths behind Perez, but the pair was relegated to 16th and 17th when both drivers were hit with 30s penalties for failing to respect the formation-lap procedure.

Perez overtook Hartley on the formation lap, after Hartley was slow away from the grid, and he did not allow Hartley to recover position, while Hartley failed to follow a procedure that dictates that drivers who do not recover position before the first safety-car line must start from the pitlane.





**FREE PRACTICE 1**

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Ricciardo	1m31.060s
2	Bottas	1m31.364s
3	Raikkonen	1m31.458s
4	Vettel	1m31.470s
5	Hamilton	1m32.272s
6	Grosjean	1m32.516s
7	Gasly	1m32.779s
8	Sainz	1m32.885s
9	Magnussen	1m32.971s
10	Hulkenberg	1m33.104s
11	Alonso	1m33.223s
12	Leclerc	1m33.278s
13	Vandoorne	1m33.364s
14	Stroll	1m33.379s
15	Sirotkin	1m33.467s
16	Hartley	1m33.497s
17	Ericsson	1m33.508s
18	Perez	1m33.662s
19	Ocon	1m33.794s
20	Verstappen	no time

WEATHER 30C, sunny

**FREE PRACTICE 2**

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Raikkonen	1m29.817s
2	Vettel	1m29.828s
3	Bottas	1m30.380s
4	Hamilton	1m30.472s
5	Verstappen	1m30.745s
6	Ricciardo	1m30.751s
7	Hulkenberg	1m31.220s
8	Gasly	1m31.232s
9	Alonso	1m31.282s
10	Vandoorne	1m31.422s
11	Grosjean	1m31.591s
12	Sainz	1m31.601s
13	Ocon	1m31.809s
14	Perez	1m31.868s
15	Magnussen	1m31.969s
16	Leclerc	1m32.372s
17	Stroll	1m32.382s
18	Sirotkin	1m32.474s
19	Ericsson	1m32.733s
20	Hartley	1m32.908s

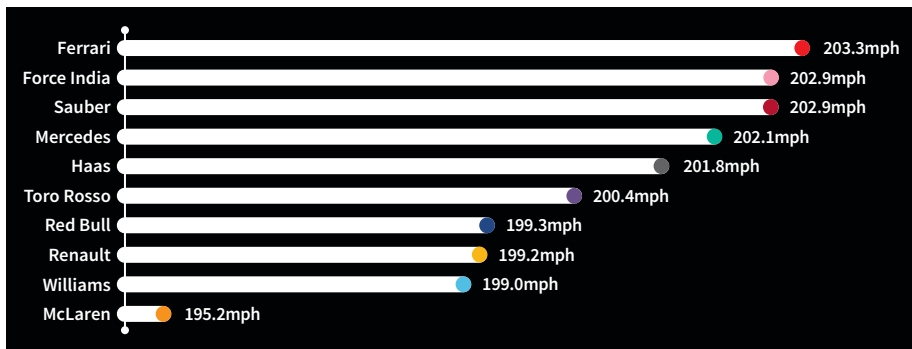
WEATHER 27C, dark

**FREE PRACTICE 3**

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Raikkonen	1m29.868s
2	Verstappen	1m30.393s
3	Ricciardo	1m30.452s
4	Hamilton	1m30.691s
5	Vettel	1m30.719s
6	Bottas	1m30.781s
7	Hulkenberg	1m31.144s
8	Sainz	1m31.200s
9	Gasly	1m31.438s
10	Alonso	1m31.445s
11	Hartley	1m31.460s
12	Grosjean	1m31.513s
13	Ocon	1m31.554s
14	Perez	1m31.564s
15	Magnussen	1m31.737s
16	Ericsson	1m31.859s
17	Vandoorne	1m31.860s
18	Leclerc	1m32.047s
19	Sirotkin	1m32.463s
20	Stroll	1m32.865s

WEATHER 29C, sunny

**SPEED TRAP**



**QUALIFYING 1**

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Raikkonen	1m28.951s
2	Vettel	1m29.060s
3	Bottas	1m29.275s
4	Verstappen	1m29.374s
5	Hamilton	1m29.396s
6	Ricciardo	1m29.552s
7	Magnussen	1m29.594s
8	Sainz	1m29.893s
9	Gasly	1m30.121s
10	Perez	1m30.218s
11	Hulkenberg	1m30.260s
12	Ocon	1m30.338s
13	Hartley	1m30.412s
14	Vandoorne	1m30.479s
15	Alonso	1m30.530s
16	Grosjean	1m30.530s
17	Ericsson	1m31.063s
18	Sirotkin	1m31.414s
19	Leclerc	1m31.420s
20	Stroll	1m31.503s

**QUALIFYING 2**

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Vettel	1m28.341s
2	Hamilton	1m28.458s
3	Raikkonen	1m28.515s
4	Bottas	1m28.794s
5	Ricciardo	1m28.962s
6	Hulkenberg	1m29.187s
7	Magnussen	1m29.623s
8	Sainz	1m29.802s
9	Gasly	1m29.836s
10	Ocon	1m30.009s
11	Hartley	1m30.105s
12	Perez	1m30.156s
13	Alonso	1m30.212s
14	Vandoorne	1m30.525s
-	Verstappen	no time

WEATHER 29C Dark

**QUALIFYING 3**

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Vettel	1m27.958s
2	Raikkonen	1m28.101s
3	Bottas	1m28.124s
4	Hamilton	1m28.220s
5	Ricciardo	1m28.398s
6	Gasly	1m29.329s
7	Magnussen	1m29.358s
8	Hulkenberg	1m29.570s
9	Ocon	1m29.874s
10	Sainz	1m29.986s

**SEASON STATS**

**DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP**

1	Vettel	50
2	Hamilton	33
3	Bottas	22
4	Alonso	16
5	Raikkonen	15
6	Hulkenberg	14
7	Ricciardo	12
7	Gasly	12
9	Magnussen	10
10	Verstappen	8
11	Vandoorne	6
12	Ericsson	2
13	Sainz	1
14	Ocon	1
15	Perez	0
16	Leclerc	0
17	Grosjean	0
18	Stroll	0
19	Hartley	0
20	Sirotkin	0

**CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP**

1	Ferrari	65
2	Mercedes	55
3	McLaren	22
4	Red Bull	20
5	Renault	15
6	Toro Rosso	12
7	Haas	10
8	Sauber	2
9	Force India	1
10	Williams	0

**QUALIFYING BATTLE**

Hamilton	1	1	Bottas
Vettel	1	1	Raikkonen
Ricciardo	1	1	Verstappen
Perez	1	1	Ocon
Stroll	1	1	Sirotkin
Hulkenberg	2	0	Sainz
Gasly	1	1	Hartley
Grosjean	0	2	Magnussen
Vandoorne	0	2	Alonso
Ericsson	2	0	Leclerc

**WINS**

Vettel	2
--------	---

**FASTEST LAPS**

Bottas	1
Ricciardo	1

**POLE POSITIONS**

Hamilton	1
Vettel	1





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STARTING GRID



RACE RESULTS 57 laps - 191.54 miles

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISHTIME	LED	TYRES
1	Sebastian Vettel (D)	Ferrari	1h32m01.940s	49	SSu, Sn
2	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Mercedes	+0.699s	3	SSu, Mn
3	Lewis Hamilton (GB)	Mercedes	+6.512s	5	Su, Mn
4	Pierre Gasly (F)	Toro Rosso-Honda	+1m02.234s		SSu, Sn, SSu
5	Kevin Magnussen (DK)	Haas-Ferrari	+1m15.046s		SSu, SSu, Sn
6	Nico Hulkenberg (D)	Renault	+1m39.024s		SSu, Sn, SSu
7	Fernando Alonso (E)	McLaren-Renault	-1 lap		Sn, Mn, SSn
8	Stoffel Vandoorne (B)	McLaren-Renault	-1 lap		SSn, Sn, Mn
9	Marcus Ericsson (S)	Sauber-Ferrari	-1 lap		Sn, Mn
10	Esteban Ocon (F)	ForceIndia-Mercedes	-1 lap		SSu, Mn, Sn
11	Carlos Sainz (E)	Renault	-1 lap		SSu, SSu, Sn
12	Charles Leclerc (MC)	Sauber-Ferrari	-1 lap		Sn, Mn, SSn
13	Romain Grosjean (F)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap		SSn, Sn, SSn, SSn
14	Lance Stroll (CDN)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap		Sn, SSn, Mn
15	Sergey Sirotkin (RUS)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap		Sn, Mn, SSn
16	Sergio Perez (MEX)	ForceIndia-Mercedes	-1 lap		Sn, Mn, SSn
17	Brendon Hartley (NZ)	Toro Rosso-Honda	-1 lap		SSn, Sn, SSu
R	Kimi Raikkonen (FIN)	Ferrari	35laps-wheel		SSu, Sn
R	Max Verstappen (NL)	Red Bull-Renault	3laps-accdamage		Sn, SSn
R	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	Red Bull-Renault	1laps-electrical		SSu

FASTEST LAPS

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Bottas	1m33.740s	-	22
2	Hamilton	1m33.953s	+0.213s	51
3	Grosjean	1m34.053s	+0.313s	47
4	Alonso	1m34.168s	+0.428s	47
5	Magnussen	1m34.327s	+0.587s	29
6	Raikkonen	1m34.337s	+0.597s	22
7	Vettel	1m34.453s	+0.713s	21
8	Sirotkin	1m34.563s	+0.823s	42
9	Hulkenberg	1m34.667s	+0.927s	50
10	Hartley	1m34.689s	+0.949s	44
11	Gasly	1m34.863s	+1.123s	46
12	Ocon	1m35.043s	+1.303s	38
13	Leclerc	1m35.058s	+1.318s	40
14	Perez	1m35.075s	+1.335s	35
15	Ericsson	1m35.093s	+1.353s	26
16	Vandoorne	1m35.131s	+1.391s	30
17	Stroll	1m35.266s	+1.526s	32
18	Sainz	1m35.535s	+1.795s	35

WEATHER 28C Dark

TYRES n - New set u - Used set Available | SH - Superhard H - Hard M - Medium S - Soft SS - Supersoft US - Ultrasoft HS - Hypersoft Int - Intermediate W - Wet

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 124.873mph. FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 129.153mph

RACE BRIEFING

PRACTICE FINES

**RAIKKONEN** Team fined €5000 for unsafe release

GRID PENALTIES

**HAMILTON** Five-place penalty for replacement gearbox

RACE PENALTIES

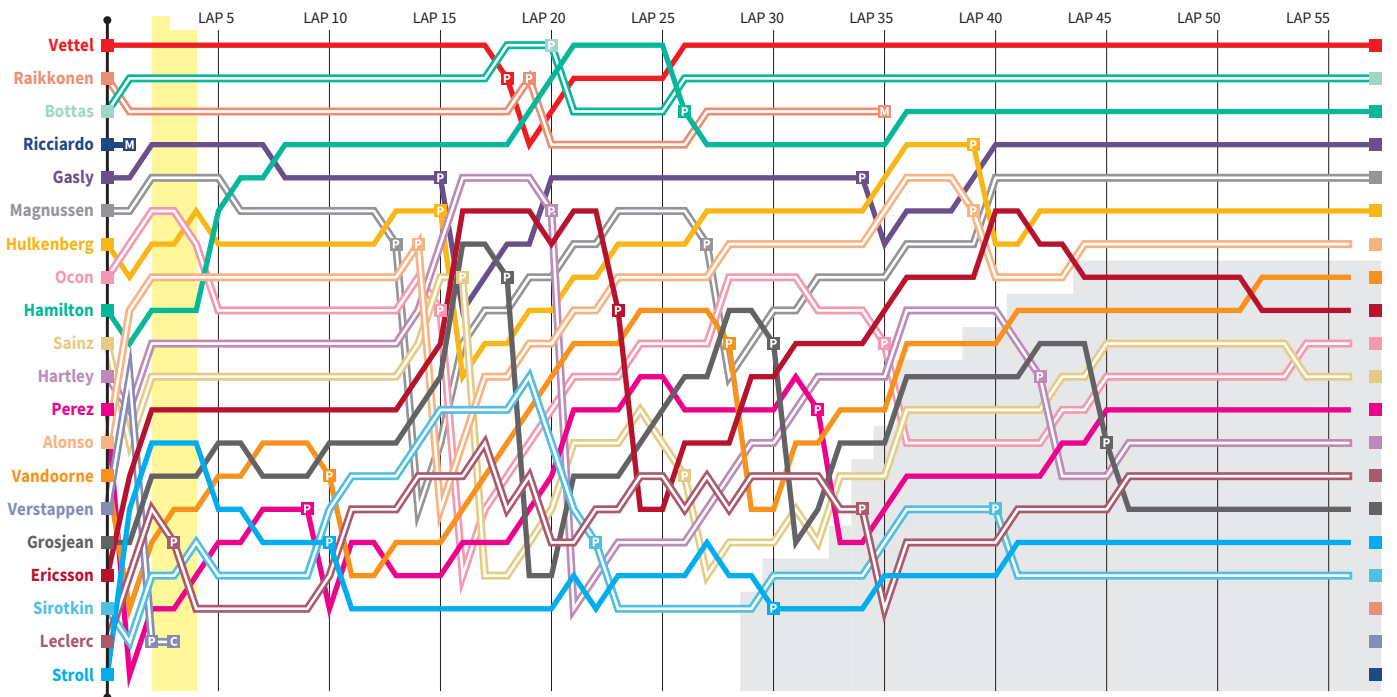
**PEREZ** 30-second penalty for overtaking on formation lap  
**HARTLEY** 10s time penalty and two penalty points for causing a collision

**HARTLEY** 30s penalty and two points for failing to re-establish correct order by first safety car line  
**RAIKKONEN** Team fined €50,000 for unsafe release

STAT  
**200**  
Vettel started his 200th world championship GP and took his 49th win

NEXT RACE  
**APRIL 15 CHINESE GP**  
Shanghai, China

LAP CHART What happened, when



▣ Pitstop ▣ Crash ▣ Mechanical failure ▣ Spin ▣ Penalty ▣ Car lapped ▣ Safety car

# PERFECTION IS A GASLY BUSINESS

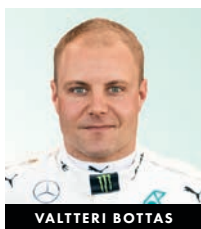
*On a weekend where many established aces fell short of their potential, Toro Rosso's newcomer played an absolute blinder*

EDD STRAW

## MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

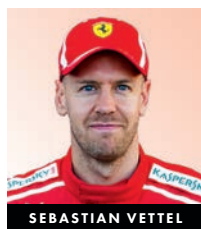


VALTTERI BOTTAS

**8** There was a lot of good for Hamilton, who performed well on his 31-lap stint on mediums. But he never looked fully comfortable on Saturday and Sunday, and qualified just behind Bottas. By his own admission he was too tame in the early laps, costing him any chance of winning.

**8** Outqualified Hamilton and then came close to a last-gasp victory. But did he show the qualities that make the difference between a good driver and a great one? He probably could have made Vettel work harder late on, and was perhaps too content to settle for second place.

## FERRARI



SEBASTIAN VETTEL

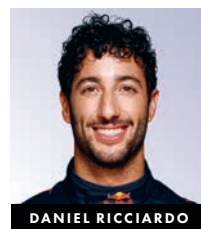


KIMI RAIKKONEN

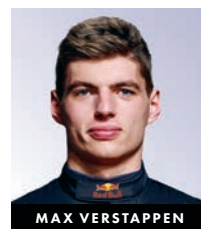
**10** Vettel dug deep when he needed to, and avoided repeating the mistake of his first Q3 run, to pip Raikkonen to pole. He drove a great race; switching to a one-stopper required a 39-lap stint on softs while keeping Bottas just far enough behind. It looked easy, but was anything but.

**8** He was a serious pole threat but failed to improve on his second Q3 run – partly thanks to having to pass both Renaults. His race was decent, but a little subdued in stint one, and after losing a place at the start he never got back into the frame for victory. But he was blameless for the pitstop accident.

## RED BULL



DANIEL RICCIARDO

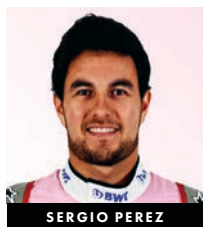


MAX VERSTAPPEN

**7** Qualifying was decent, since although he could probably have found another tenth, the Red Bull didn't quite have speed to be higher up. His race performance hinted that he had the pace to be a factor, but mostly he can only be evaluated on his decent practice and qualifying form.

**6** Verstappen can be let off for his qualifying crash, given the 150bhp power surge that caused it. But his clash with Hamilton was unnecessary. The move was on, but he went too deep and left Hamilton nowhere to go. His reputation for being too aggressive was overstated in the past, less so now.

## FORCE INDIA



SERGIO PEREZ

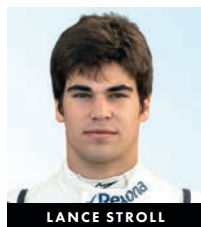


ESTEBAN OCON

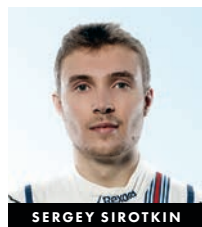
**6** Perez was disappointed not to make Q3; battery-power deployment issues in Q2 were blamed. His race went pretty well for four corners until he was booted into a spin. He should be experienced enough to avoid the penalty for the formation lap procedural blunder, though.

**7** Did a great job to slip into Q3 in a Force India that had started the weekend looking incredibly difficult to drive. But the team made good progress and he strung it together on Saturday. The race was hard work, but he stuck at it and picked off Sainz late on to pick up his first point of the year.

## WILLIAMS



LANCE STROLL

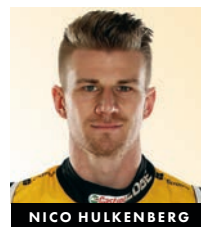


SERGEY SIROTKIN

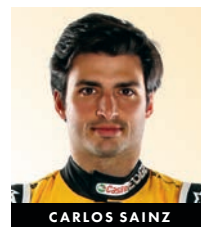
**6** Complained that the Williams was uncooperative and fickle in qualifying, which was reflected in him qualifying last, albeit only just under a tenth slower than Sirotkin. He made a racy start, jumping to 15th before sustaining wing damage in a clash with Grosjean, and overall drove pretty well.

**6** Was the quicker of the Williams drivers in quali, and did well to outqualify a Sauber in what was the weakest car of the Bahrain weekend. His first full F1 race was a messy one, understandable in the circumstances, and he couldn't overhaul Stroll despite his team-mate losing time to a wing change.

## RENAULT



NICO HULKENBERG



CARLOS SAINZ

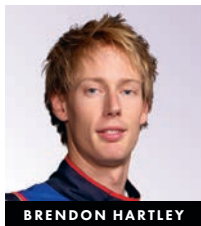
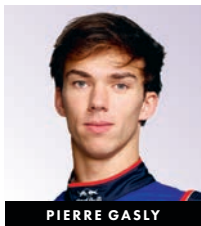
**8** There's no indication that a Renault could have qualified or finished any higher than Hulkenberg did, although the 24s margin to Magnussen exaggerates the performance gap – partly down to Renault's strategy with a long middle stint on softs. Overall, a good weekend's work.

**6** Sainz never seemed entirely at home with the Renault, battling to find the right balance. This left him off Hulkenberg in both qualifying and the race. He was in the mix for points, but having to end the race with a 26-lap stint on used softs ultimately condemned him to 11th place.





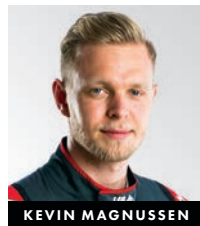
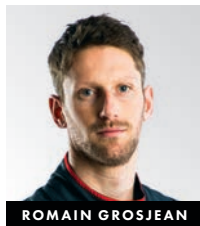
## TORO ROSSO



**10** Looked utterly at home near the front end of the F1 grid, and even had to deal with compensating for some minor damage sustained in the clash with Magnussen at the restart after the virtual safety car. Textbook stuff for a driver who delivered a high-class weekend's work.

**6** Hartley's performance level was better than his results relative to Gasly suggest. A small error on his key Q2 lap cost him a potential Q3 place, which was excusable. But clattering into Perez was clumsy – as was getting a 30s penalty for failing to follow the correct start procedure.

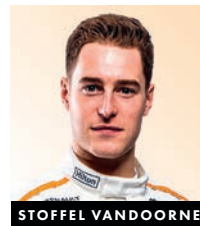
## HAAS



**5** When your team-mate makes Q3 while you're out in Q1, then finishes fifth while you're 13th, it's a bad weekend's work. Qualifying was compromised by not warming up the tyres correctly, but the race started promisingly before bits of bargeboard fell off and he slid into obscurity.

**9** Magnussen was better at harnessing the understeery Haas than Grosjean in qualifying. Drove a punchy race, getting away with moments with Hulkenberg and Gasly, to match the team's best F1 result of fifth. Maybe a perfect Saturday could have allowed him to finish ahead of Gasly.

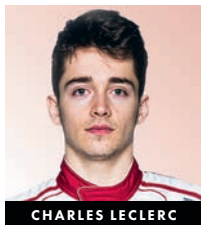
## McLAREN



**8** Three-tenths down on Alonso in qualifying, Vandoorne made up for it in the race save for the first few seconds when he wheelspun down to last. It's difficult to compare his race pace directly with Alonso, since they were never on comparable tyres, but he did a great job to turn it around.

**8** He was at a loss to explain the qualifying troubles, which were primarily down to a set-up error that made the tyres tricky. But he drove his usual relentless race, and couldn't have delivered a better result given the Haas and Toro Rosso ahead of the McLaren.

## SAUBER

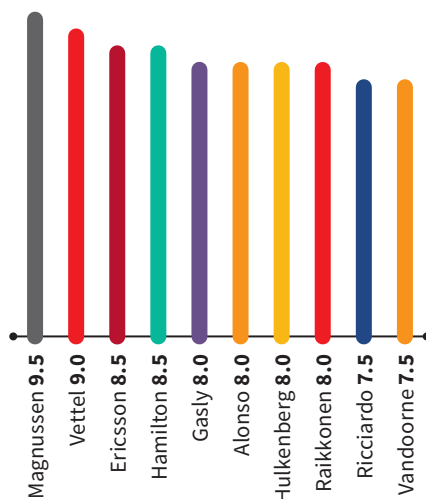


**9** Ericsson was 0.221s off his ideal lap time in quali – partly because of pushing too hard early on his final lap. But his race drive is hard to fault, rising to 12th then executing a one-stop race well and lapping a respectable two seconds a lap slower than Hamilton on a comparable stint.

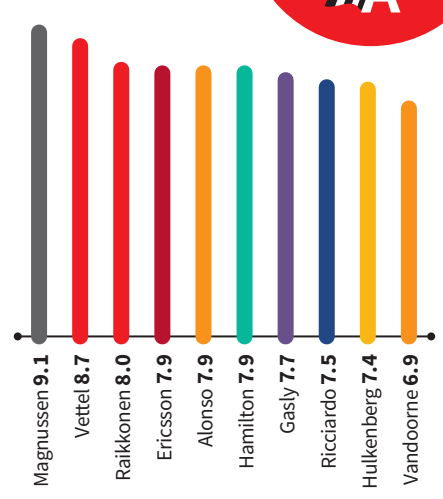
**6** Three-tenths slower than Ericsson in qualifying, and his race started badly when he picked up a flatspot early on. He decided to pit under the virtual safety car and never really recovered. Race pace was decent enough, but his role in pushing for a one-stop strategy led to his unravelling.

### TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS

AUTOSPORT'S RATING AFTER ROUND 2



READERS' RATING AFTER ROUND 2



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# Ogier steps up a gear and moves clear

*Five-time world champion Sebastien Ogier was on sublime form in all conditions on the challenging asphalt of Corsica*

DAVID EVANS

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY MCKLEIN









**F**rom the outside it's a bland, beige, unbranded container at the side of the runway at Bastia airport. Inside? It's the nerve centre of Sebastien Ogier's tilt at a sixth straight World Rally Championship title.

The M-Sport Ford World Rally Team's unostentatious operational HQ is surrounded by swankiness: the brains behind Citroen's operation look down on it from first-floor hospitality; Hyundai's triple-level facility offers an even more commanding vantage point; and Toyota's bungalow compensates for its lack of height with a palatial gloss.

Yet they all trail a crew guided by 12 people packed inside that dull container. The plush race truck that once offered engineers and senior team personnel their own desks, darkened windows and climate control has gone. Sold.

Team principal Malcolm Wilson and his deputy Rich Millener are perched on the same corner of a work bench. "The struggle's real," Millener smiles thinly.

For the first time, Autosport was given access to this inner sanctuary for the Tour de Corse last weekend. Ordinarily such areas are a strict no-go to those further down the food chain. Only two rallies ago, M-Sport's container door was kept firmly shut as plans were laid within to tactically stall Ogier's start to the Rally Sweden powerstage.

But last Sunday we were allowed in to watch the morning's 34-mile run from Vero to Sarro-Carcopino, just inland from Corsica's west coast.

With Ogier starting the final day 44 seconds clear of his nearest rival, and M-Sport's second factory Ford Fiesta WRC (the all-Welsh entry piloted by Elfyn Evans and his stand-in co-driver Phil Mills) well on its way to completing a fine first outing for the new partnership, the season's longest stage so far wasn't quite as critical as it might have been. Regardless, the process was the same and silence descended as the start time approached.

The arrival of WRC All Live and coverage of every stage of every rally has transformed these command centres. Before this year,

the team would nervously consume the vast majority of stages via split-time displays and a tracking system plotting the cars' progress as dots on a screen. But now it's wall-to-wall TV with nowhere to hide.

The cars moved into the stage and the only discussion inside the container was a brief confirmation of split times, as Wilson remarked on an early charge from Ott Tanak, the Estonian formerly of these parts. Another point of intense focus was the progress of Evans compared with Hyundai's Dani Sordo, the Spaniard with whom he was vying for fifth.

In terms of footage, the teams receive the same general feed that's beamed around planet Earth; they don't have tailored coverage showing only their own cars. This isn't necessarily an issue.

"I'll be honest," said Wilson, "we're sometimes a bit happier when it's not our cars on screen..."

There was no doubting that the atmosphere took on a nervier edge when a Fiesta onboard filled the screen. Every kerb looked closer, every gear change more laboured. And that noise... did anybody hear that change in the engine note?

Mid-stage, the camera cut to Esapekka Lappi pulling over to change a puncture on his Toyota. Cue a burst of activity as the M-Sport crew crunched the possible implications on the road, should Lappi be delayed and come out in front of one of the Fiestas. He didn't.

A fraction over 34 minutes after the lights went green for Ogier, his co-driver Julien Ingrassia thumbed a button on his side of the car.

"Stage clear," said the five-time world champion co-driver. Mission control's response: "Time for Julien: 34, zero, zero point four."

And relax. For now. "That'll do," smiled Wilson. "One down, one to go."

Just over two hours later, the second Sunday run was done and Ogier, Ingrassia and the British team celebrated its third win from four starts. Last season they managed to secure a fifth title for Ogier with just two wins from 13 events. It's difficult to imagine a better start to 2018.



M-Sport looked weak in comparison with burgeoning Hyundai late last season, but now there are few doubts about which of the WRC's big four has wintered well.

"It's true we were missing something at the end of last year," said Ogier. "We made a step [last time out] in Mexico and another here. But it's not perfect yet, there's always more to do – don't tell the team it's perfect. We have to keep pushing."

Ten days out from the Tour de Corse, at the pre-event test, M-Sport head of rally engineering Chris Williams had a fair idea they were on the right road.

"My comments [to Chris] were a bit more positive than normal after the last test," admitted Ogier.

Corsica and the first asphalt encounter of the season offers a real indication of who's where with their car. If it's bone dry, you'll have a fair idea of which engine's pulling the best. Mixed conditions demonstrate a car offering the best feedback to fill a driver with confidence, while full wet shows who's got what in terms of traction.

Ogier was sublime on a changeable day one, and even better in the dry over the rest of the weekend. Admittedly, running at the front of the field on the cleanest road first time through Friday's stages offered a small advantage, but rivals who pointed to that were clutching at straws. Blown away by Citroen in Corsica 12 months ago, the French Fiesta left the rest for dead last week.

"Seb's very direct in what he wants and we've spent time working towards what he



It's a tight squeeze in the M-Sport event command centre





Ogier feels that the  
Fiesta is becoming  
even more competitive

## “We made a step in Mexico and another here. But it’s not perfect yet – there’s always more to do”

wants,” said Williams. “We have one or two small pieces that are new, but it’s all fine-tuning. We made a step forward with damping; the geometry’s slightly different.”

Demanding drivers are nothing new to Williams, who cut his teeth with Carlos Sainz at the sport’s highest level.

“Working with Carlos was pressure,” he said. “He was a workaholic. All the time: push, push, push. Even when the other guys were testing, he was straight on the phone as soon as they had finished: ‘What have they been doing? What have you tested?’ When we first tested the Escort [WRC in 1996], he didn’t get out of the car and if he thought you were taking too long working on the car between runs he started beeping the horn and shouting: ‘Come on, I want to go!’”

Williams is typical of the M-Sport hardcore: he’s been there and seen it all. But none of them have seen anything like the sort of dominance being exerted right now.

And that brings us back to that pointedly unflashy beige container.

Wilson is well known for running the tightest of ships. It’s no coincidence that as he’s been trimming the niceties, the car’s been getting quicker. And as the car gets quicker, Ogier relaxes and drives faster still.

From the moment Ogier arrived at Volkswagen in 2012 to the moment of his dieselgate-enforced departure four titles later, he wanted for nothing with the German manufacturer. He was comforted and cosseted at every turn. M-Sport was always going to be different. Ogier quickly learned to live without his own space in the team’s hospitality, but a lingering doubt remained about longer-term development and the required budget to tailor the Fiesta to him. Those doubts have gone.

That was evidenced in Mexico last month. A minute ahead at the start of the powerstage, how much would Ogier risk a bankable 25 points for a potential bonus of five? Time after time in the Polo he delivered the perfect weekend, something he’s yet to do with the Fiesta. In Mexico he came within 0.4s of a perfect 30 points (before being penalised for clipping the chicane). And in Corsica, there was even more proof of a driver in complete harmony with the machine and team around him.

Williams has seen that from the inside: “He is more at home with us now. He knows we’re very focused on him.”

Wary that such talk might tempt the slightest complacency, Ogier steers clear.

“It’s difficult to compare the teams and the cars,” he said, “but it’s sure that it’s >>

### IN THE HEADLINES

#### MILLS RETURNS

2003 World Rally champion co-driver Phil Mills returned to the series to navigate M-Sport’s Elfyn Evans to fifth. Evans’s regular co-driver Dan Barritt was absent after a knock on the head during their Rally Mexico crash. Mills admitted the speed of the current cars took him by surprise.

#### KOPECKY DOMINATES WRC2

Jan Kopecky delivered a peerless performance to dominate WRC2 in his factory Skoda Fabia R5. The Czech star won the class by close to two minutes. Skoda had high hopes of a one-two, as Ole Christian Veiby ran second until a transmission problem dropped him back to fourth at the finish.

#### FRENCH DOMINATE JUNIORS

Frenchman Jean-Baptiste Franceschi scored a maiden Junior WRC win, edging his countryman and rival Terry Folb to a half-minute win after Folb faded through the event’s second half. The two Ford Fiesta drivers were three minutes ahead of their nearest rival, Swede Emil Bergkvist (Fiesta).

#### PORSCHE OUT, ABARTH WIN

John Coyne took his Tuthill-built Porsche 911 GT3 to the Tour de Corse for the first time last week, but just under 20 miles into the rally he “ran out of road and talent” on a left-hander that tightened more than he’d hoped. He went off the edge in SS1 and admitted it required considerably more time to get the car back up the bank than it had taken going down. Italian Andrea Nucita won the R-GT class in his Abarth 124.

#### TROUBLED DEBUT FOR CITROEN C3 R5

Citroen’s all-new C3 R5 made its debut in Corsica. Two cars were prepared for Citroen junior driver Stephane Lefebvre and Yoann Bonato and run by PH Sport. The two C3s suffered significant brake problems, which left Lefebvre off the road and Bonato (below) a distant second in WRC2.







Hyundai struggled with understeer throughout the event

“Hyundai failed to find anything like the form it located to win in Corsica last season”

coming better and better with M-Sport. But, you know...”

Yes, there’s always room for improvement. The team has heard this one time and again. And they’re not going to stop hearing it any time soon.

Not that they need to be told. The drive, push and passion for back-to-back success is as strong as ever behind those beige walls.

**Weather worked for Toyota**

Rarely has an Autosport-delivered weather forecast been so badly received. Wednesday’s storms were reckoned to be returning to the island come Sunday, but sharing that news with Esapekka Lappi didn’t go down very well.

With a grimace, he said: “If you are right, then we are in trouble.”

Round four really was a rally of two halves for the Yaris WRCs. Suspension changes for this season left the Finnish-based squad experimenting with new dampers. It’s fair to say the opening day’s damp and dirty patches had them scratching their heads.

Once it dried for the remainder of the weekend, performance improved no end. The Toyota drivers shared three stage wins apiece with Sebastian Loeb, and Lappi was quickest across the whole day.

It was hard to know who to be more impressed with: Tanak was in the Yaris for the first time on asphalt, but he had more knowledge of Corsica. Lappi had more experience of the car, but he’d only done one and a half Corsicas before. Certainly, it wasn’t Jari-Matti Latvala. Or it wasn’t until his last few minutes in the car on the island.

Latvala was nowhere through the first half of the rally. Sporting his most serious face, he said: “We made a mistake in the test. We brought a race car for this rally and it didn’t work.”

The thinking was very straightforward: stiffen the rear of the car, load the front up on the brakes and get it turning in on a sixpence. Nobody had factored in a wet and very muddy sixpence. “We were losing the rear of the car all of the time,” said Latvala.

Set-up changes transformed the car for Jari-Matti at lunchtime on day two, and he repaid the team with quickest split times on the first afternoon stage. Then he dropped it in a left-hander, rearranging the right-rear.

“I don’t normally smile after a crash,” said Latvala, “but this time I did because now I know the car is quick.”



Latvala reconfigured his Toyota’s bodywork



Loeb parked his Citroën in a ditch



Happily for Toyota, our weather call was wrong, but a final-morning puncture still contrived to ruin Lappi's race for second. He stopped, changed and finished sixth, winning the powerstage to salvage a small crumb of comfort.

Where the Finns failed, the Estonian delivered. Tanak was an absolute master on his way to second. "I found the sweet spot with the car," he said. "We'd been having understeer, then oversteer, and we couldn't find the balance, but once I did that the car was giving me really good confidence. I'm happy with this."

**A test for the rest**

'Understeer' was the word of the week at Hyundai, which failed to find anything like the form it located to win in Corsica last season. The ultimate insult came for Thierry Neuville when a final-stage problem cost him his chance to challenge for bonus points. Neuville remained third overall, but his face said it all as he stood to the side and slightly lower than Ogier and Ingrassia as they serenaded him with a top-step rendition of *La Marseillaise*.

Citroen's nine-time champion Loeb had some fond recollections of that same song being played in his honour. He also arrived chasing a fifth Corsican win.

Pundits began to take the returning giant's challenge significantly more seriously after he led and looked capable of winning in Mexico last month. And he started where he left off – on sublime form. He was second only to Ogier in the opener, and the Citroen star's SS1 time was rightly lauded – he was running at the back of the WRC pack on the dirtiest of roads and on a stage his rivals knew better than him.

Unfortunately that was as good as the weekend would get for Loeb in terms of the overall classification. Failing to get the C3 turned into a second-stage left-hander following a quick right dropped him into the deepest of ditches – and left him there.

That he was fastest on half of Saturday's stages while driving purely for fun served merely as a demonstration of what might have been, had Friday been different.

Citroen's home round was soured further after Paul Nagle mistakenly told Kris Meeke to take a left-hander in fifth gear rather than third. They both escaped unscathed and an all-nighter from the team put them back on the road for the final day. Nagle put his hand up immediately, but Meeke was even quicker to point out that he'd made plenty of mistakes of his own...

Up front, Ogier turned what was supposed to be one of the tightest WRC rounds in years into a championship benefit for himself. He locked it down on day one and controlled it thereafter. His rivals need to find an answer before Argentina later this month, because you can rest assured there are plenty more bright ideas behind those dull beige walls. ✎

**RESULTS ROUND 4/13 TOUR DE CORSE, APRIL 5-8**

POS	DRIVER / CO-DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	<b>Sebastien Ogier</b> (F) <b>Julien Ingrassia</b> (F)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	3h26m52.7s
2	<b>Ott Tanak</b> (EST) <b>Martin Jarveoja</b> (EST)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	+36.1s
3	<b>Thierry Neuville</b> (B) <b>Nicolas Gilsoul</b> (B)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+1m07.5s
4	<b>Dani Sordo</b> (E) <b>Carlos del Barrio</b> (E)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+2m02.6s
5	<b>Elfyn Evans</b> (GB) <b>Phil Mills</b> (GB)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+2m06.1s
6	<b>Esapekka Lappi</b> (FIN) <b>Janne Ferm</b> (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	+2m33.5s
7	<b>Andreas Mikkelsen</b> (N) <b>Anders Jager</b> (N)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+2m43.4s
8	<b>Jan Kopecky</b> (CZ) <b>Pavel Dresler</b> (CZ)	Skoda Motorsport II / Skoda Fabia R5	+10m34.8s
9	<b>Kris Meeke</b> (GB) <b>Paul Nagle</b> (IRL)	Citroen Total / Citroen C3 WRC	+10m40.5s
10	<b>Yoann Bonato</b> (F) <b>Benjamin Boulloud</b> (F)	PH Sport / Citroen C3 R5	+12m26.0s

**OTHERS**

14	<b>Sebastien Loeb</b> (F) <b>Daniel Elena</b> (MC)	Citroen Total / Citroen C3 WRC	+20m58.0s
16	<b>Mauro Miele</b> (I) <b>Luca Beltrame</b> (I)	Dream One Racing / Citroen DS 3 WRC	+24m12.6s
37	<b>Armando Pereira</b> (F) <b>Remi Tutelaire</b> (F)	Armando Pereira / Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+43m52.4s
R	<b>Bryan Bouffier</b> (F) <b>Xavier Panser</b> (F)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	SS8-engine
R	<b>Jari-Matti Latvala</b> (FIN) <b>Miikka Anttila</b> (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	SS5-accident damage

**DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP**

1 **Ogier** 84; 2 **Neuville** 67; 3 **Tanak** 45; 4 **Mikkelsen** 41; 5 **Meeke** 36; 6 **Lappi** 36; 7 **Latvala** 31; 8 **Sordo** 30; 9 **Breen** 20; 10 **Evans** 18.

**MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP**

1 **Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT** 111; 2 **M-Sport Ford WRT** 107; 3 **Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT** 93; 4 **Citroen Total** 81.



**STAGE TIMES**

STAGE	FASTEST	LEADER	SECOND
SS1 La Porta - Valle di Rostino 1 (30.47 miles)	Ogier 31m53.8s	<b>Ogier</b>	Loeb +9.7s
SS2 Piedigriggio - Pont de Castirla 1 (8.42 miles)	Ogier 7m59.9s	<b>Ogier</b>	Meeke +21.1s
SS3 La Porta - Valle di Rostino 2 (30.47 miles)	Ogier 31m44.1s	<b>Ogier</b>	Neuville +33.7s
SS4 Piedigriggio - Pont de Castirla 2 (8.42 miles)	Lappi 7m59.4s	<b>Ogier</b>	Neuville +33.6s
SS5 Cagnano - Pino - Canari 1 (22.13 miles)	Loeb 21m58.6s	<b>Ogier</b>	Neuville +34.2s
SS6 Desert des Agriates 1 (9.60 miles)	Loeb 8m32.4s	<b>Ogier</b>	Neuville +38.4s
SS7 Novella 1 (10.81 miles)	Tanak 11m07.7s	<b>Ogier</b>	Neuville +41.6s
SS8 Cagnano - Pino - Canari 2 (22.13 miles)	Lappi 21m44.7s	<b>Ogier</b>	Neuville +47.7s
SS9 Desert des Agriates 2 (9.60 miles)	Loeb 8m31.1s	<b>Ogier</b>	Meeke +49.5s
SS10 Novella 2 (10.81 miles)	Tanak 11m07.1s	<b>Ogier</b>	Tanak +44.5s
SS11 Vero-Sarrola-Carcopino (34.28 miles)	Tanak 33m46.9s	<b>Ogier</b>	Tanak +31.0s
SS12 Penitencier de Coti-Chiavari [Powerstage] (10.10 miles)	Lappi 9m41.2s	<b>Ogier</b>	Tanak +36.1s





# Ingram emerges from an action-packed opener

*Independents ruled the roost at Brands Hatch, with the Speedworks Toyota Avensis driver topping the points after his race-three victory*

MATT JAMES

**T**om Ingram headed an Independents' day rout at Brands Hatch in the opening event of the British Touring Car Championship season. The Speedworks Toyota Avensis driver was smiling on the top step of the rostrum after the weekend's finale, following a meeting that had left a lot of his rivals scratching their heads.

His triumph had followed an under-pressure win for Eurotech Racing's Jack Goff, from his third straight pole position in the series, in the opening encounter, and a stunning race two in which the slick-tyred Senna Proctor held his nerve in the Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra to land his (and the car's) maiden BTCC triumph.

Ingram left the circuit at the top of the points table after a topsy-turvy day. His position had seemed unlikely just 24 hours earlier when he had posted only the ninth best time in qualifying and was searching for answers.

Speedworks team boss Christian Dick

said that the squad didn't press the panic button despite the driver reporting snap oversteer after Saturday. "We looked at the data and there's always the temptation to make big alterations," he explained. "But we looked at the fractions lost on the two quickest laps, and they were both down to traffic. We could have ended up chasing something that wasn't there."

Ingram's day started with a couple of bold overtakes and fourth in race one. The car's prowess at putting its power down on the exit of Clearways helped him to jump leader Andrew Jordan (WSR BMW) in race two before the wet tyres on his saloon started to wilt and the slick-tyred train of Proctor and company (including fellow first-time podium visitors Jake Hill and Ollie Jackson) surged through. He eventually finished 11th.

The climb to victory in the finale was helped by some falling off in front of him but also that grip level out of Clearways again, as he unseated Rob Austin's HMS Racing Alfa Romeo Giulietta from top spot.

"The car has been awesome today," Ingram

bubbled. "It's been amazing without weight and amazing with it. We have to be happy."

Goff was another who *should* have been happy after race three. His game defence of first place in the opener showed real class, and demonstrated that his Eurotech Civic, fitted with the latest-specification Honda motor, is a potent force with a strong baseline set-up.

But Goff felt that there was a chance missed at Brands. After the win, he was the highest placed of those limping around on knackered wet tyres in race two to cling on to 10th. A whack from Jackson as he rose to fourth in race three damaged the hatchback and he eventually slumped to eighth. It was a solid weekend, but one he felt could have delivered more.

"I'm pleased but frustrated at the same time," said Goff. "We've had a great start to the season and shown where we are. I was pleased to top the wet-tyre guys in race two, but race three should not have happened the way it did. There were some wild moves going on out there."





LAT IMAGES

Third in the standings leaving Brands was Adam Morgan (Ciceley Motorsport Mercedes-Benz A-Class), who nicked second place from Austin in the dying throes of race three. Sixth in race one had been followed by a tyre-hampered 13th in race two, before his charge in the finale. It was a race weekend where no-one in the team felt they had fully exploited the strengths of the car, so the points banked were a welcome relief.

For Team BMW's Colin Turkington, there was just relief to see the flag at the end of race one after beginning his campaign in 2017 with a non-finish following contact.

The squad – which also fields Jordan and Rob Collard – had been all at sea with the set-up of the rear-wheel-drive cars through practice and qualifying, with an understeer problem plaguing all of them. Overnight head-scratching gave Turkington salvation in race one and he chased Goff home, but his BMW dropped into 'safe mode' at the start of the warm-up lap for race two, which scuppered his chances. The battle from 27th to ninth in race three was a rescue job, and actually gave the Northern Irishman cause for optimism.

"That climb through the pack has given me the confidence that we can race with this car because it hasn't felt that good in testing," admitted Turkington. "We haven't been flashy at all up to the start of race three, but come race trim I now know we are not far away."

Jordan's weekend started well. A strong getaway in race one and a definitive pass on Dan Cammish's Team Dynamics Honda gave him a podium, but it unravelled from there, with overcooked wets in race two and a struggle in the mid-pack in race three. >>

## Proctor's switch to slicks comes good for maiden win

It had been more than five years since Vauxhall won a race in the British Touring Car Championship, but Senna Proctor's triumph in race two was memorable for so many more reasons.

It was the 19-year old's first in the BTCC and it was taken when he – along with a few other brave men – took the decision to start on slicks on a damp but possibly drying track.

For 22 of the 27 laps, it looked like the wrong decision but then, remarkably, all the wet-tyred frontrunners ran out of grip.

Proctor was in a train including Aiden Moffat's Mercedes A-Class, Jake Hill (Team Hard Volkswagen CC) and Ollie Jackson (AmD Tuning Audi S3) that simply steamed its way to the front.

There was a slightly sour taste and Proctor was given a verbal reprimand for his part in contact with leader Moffat, but the sweetness of the champagne made it palatable for the Yorkshireman. All three rostrum finishers had never made it onto the podium before.

The success was a bit of a blur for the top rookie from 2017, and he admits the race was confusing.

"I knew I was in front of Aiden, then I saw a Team Dynamics car in front of me and I wondered if he was in the lead," said Proctor. "I didn't get confirmation that I had won the race until I'd got over the line. It took them until Clearways to tell me on the radio, but I still wasn't sure. When I got to parc ferme, there was no-one else there so I thought it must be me!"

It was Proctor, and it was a popular win –

plus the first for Adam Weaver's Power Maxed Racing squad. It has been a bold team ever since it linked up with Vauxhall to bring the British firm back into the BTCC in 2017 as a factory blessed operation.

That boldness seems to have permeated Proctor too. "Everyone else could have put slicks on, couldn't they? It was an equal opportunity for everyone," he said. "I told my engineer Rob Peacey on the out-lap that there were drying patches, and he said, 'Let's put the slicks on.' If the boys at the front had wets on and we had wets on,

**"Everyone else could have put slicks on, couldn't they? It was an equal opportunity"**

Senna Proctor

we weren't going to win, but with that call we gave ourselves a chance.

"The start of the race was looking a bit ropey, to be honest: I wasn't really making the progress I would have liked. Then it all came good for me. At the end, Jake was behind me and putting the pressure on me. But we got our heads down. Those last laps were very tense.

"I can't tell you what this means to me – this is a monkey off my back, if you like. We're going forward all the time and this is the next step in that progress."

Proctor's gamble paid off in race two as he bagged his first win



LAT IMAGES



He left the meeting 13th in the standings.

That was way better than Collard, who was chasing set-up all weekend. A race-two shunt didn't help and he walked away with a solitary point.

Coming into the weekend, a point would have been a long shot for the factory Subaru team and its lead drivers, reigning champion Ash Sutton and Jason Plato. It had chosen not to test extensively pre-season as team chiefs knew they were going to swap to Swindon Race Engines-tuned powerplants, but only one of those was available at Brands due to the late deal.

That meant Sutton had an older spec (and well used) Mountune version of the flat-four motor, while Plato had the Swindon one. Neither was expecting much. But as was the case last year, Sutton pulled it out of the bag, thanks in no small part to the damp weather. "Looks like my rain dance worked..." he grinned on Sunday morning.

He went from 18th to seventh in race one, a drive typified by his press-on spirit and aggressive overtakes. Tyres restricted him to 12th in race two, but his stealthy climb to fourth in race three showed why he won the title last year.

"This was a meeting to get through and just keep ourselves as much in the hunt as we could," said Sutton. "It's all we could do: we had to maximise everything and we did that. We can be happy with what we did."

Plato, on the other hand, was struggling. His race results were 20th, 22nd and 19th as he got to grips with the new powerplant, which has yet to run at full power. He nevertheless reported that it should be an improvement when it's fully on-song.

The Team Dynamics Honda squad came to Brands Hatch cautiously optimistic with the new-shape Civic Type R. The caution was thrown in because the car had only shown flashes of potential and Matt Neal's team-mate Cammish was new to the BTCC.

After 15 minutes of the 30-minute qualifying session, both of those fears were allayed as Cammish was the only driver to lap the Indy circuit in under 48 seconds all weekend to put himself top of the pack.

The new recruit was "through the floor"



Goff drove brilliantly to hold off Turkington in the first encounter

when he was stripped of his time for missing a red light demanding that he stopped at the technical check area as he headed into the pits after his run. He recovered to start fourth, but that was just the beginning of a torrid weekend.

The team admitted to not going far enough in bolting a wet set-up on the hatchback, and Cammish's tyres dropped off a cliff after he had run in the top three for the first half of the opening race. In race two, he was one of those who went for wets as the track dried, and he plummeted to 16th. Race three was a set-up experiment on the softer Dunlop covers for 11th spot. It was knowledge gained, but promise unfulfilled.

Neal, on the other hand, was punted out of race one, which left him on the back foot. The team again admitted to getting caught out in race two when it tried to cover off the drying track by switching to slicks before its driver took a pitlane start, but the softly sprung car was ill-handling and a trip through the gravel left him two laps down. A climb to 12th in race three

was some encouragement.

Team technical director Barry Plowman admitted the frustrations, but was interested to see how the title chase plays from here on: "There will be role reversal with a lot of these guys at the top of the points table now because we have always gone to round two with a lot of weight and some of the others haven't."

And some of those others who shone at Brands Hatch were the gamblers, the drivers who took the dry-weather punt in race two. Aside from winner Proctor (see p41), one of the main beneficiaries was Austin in the new Alfa.

He qualified 11th in a car that is still new to the team, but was ruled out of the opener after contact with Tom Oliphant's Ciceley Mercedes. That put Austin on row 15 for race two and prompted his slick-tyre bravery – with some persuasion. "That one was down to the team," admitted Austin. "I wasn't sure. To start with, I thought it was wrong but it came to us."

"That gave us sixth place and with a bit of luck – I think someone was watching over us – I was drawn on pole for race three."

He earned a podium in that race, which was a decent debut for the new hatchback. "That was the first race run we had done on the soft Dunlops too," he said. "We still have a lot to learn, so we have to be happy with what we've done."

His was an excellent cameo in the meeting, as were the second and third-place finishers in race two, Hill and Jackson. Both took their chances when they came and – while they were helped by Proctor nudging Aiden Moffat's Laser Tools Racing Mercedes out of top spot – both proved a point that they perform when the odds are in their favour.

As many of the frontrunners proved last weekend, though, rarely are the odds favourable in the BTCC. ❄





**RESULTS RACE 1 (27 LAPS – 32.613 MILES)**

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Jack Goff (GB)	Eurotech Racing / Honda Civic Type R	27m11.465s
2	Colin Turkington (GB)	WSR / BMW 125i M Sport	+0.547s
3	Andrew Jordan (GB)	WSR / BMW 125i M Sport	+2.481s
4	Tom Ingram (GB)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Avensis	+3.577s
5	Tom Chilton (GB)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus RS	+11.290s
6	Adam Morgan (GB)	Ciceley Motorsport / Mercedes A-Class	+12.263s
7	Ash Sutton (GB)	Team BMR / Subaru Levorg	+14.578s
8	Dan Cammish (GB)	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R	+15.087s
9	James Cole (GB)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus RS	+15.612s
10	Chris Smiley (GB)	BTC Norlin Racing / Honda Civic Type R	+15.715s
11	Brett Smith (GB)	Eurotech Racing / Honda Civic Type R	+16.352s
12	Ollie Jackson (GB)	AmD Tuning / Audi S3 Saloon	+24.724s
13	Rory Butcher (GB)	AmD Tuning / MG6	+25.244s
14	Aiden Moffat (GB)	Laser Tools Racing / Mercedes A-Class	+27.530s
15	Rob Collard (GB)	WSR / BMW 125i M Sport	+28.106s
16	Tom Oliphant (GB)	Ciceley Motorsport / Mercedes A-Class	+28.689s
17	James Nash (GB)	BTC Norlin Racing / Honda Civic Type R	+29.739s
18	Tom Boardman (GB)	AmD Tuning / MG6	+30.860s
19	Bobby Thompson (GB)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	+31.281s
20	Jason Plato (GB)	Team BMR / Subaru Levorg	+32.190s
21	Michael Caine (GB)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	+36.255s
22	Stephen Jelley (GB)	Team Parker Racing / BMW 125i M Sport	+36.635s
23	Josh Price (GB)	Team BMR / Subaru Levorg	+40.825s
24	Sam Smelt (GB)	AmD Tuning / Audi S3 Saloon	+52.214s
25	Jake Hill (GB)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	-1 lap
26	Sam Tordoff (GB)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus RS	-2 laps
27	Senna Proctor (GB)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra	-2 laps
NC	Josh Cook (GB)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra	18 laps
R	Rob Austin (GB)	HMS Racing / Alfa Romeo Giulietta	6 laps-accident damage
R	Matt Neal (GB)	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R	0 laps-accident
R	Matt Simpson (GB)	Eurotech Racing / Honda Civic Type R	0 laps-accident damage
R	Mike Bushell (GB)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	0 laps-accident damage

Winner's average speed 71.96mph. Fastest lap Cook 55.849s, 77.86mph.

**QUALIFYING**

1 Goff 48.038s; 2 Tordoff 48.131s; 3 Turkington 48.143s; 4 Cammish 48.145s; 5 Jordan 48.152s; 6 Neal 48.164s; 7 Chilton 48.229s; 8 Simpson 48.246s; 9 Ingram 48.257s; 10 Smith 48.268s; 11 Austin 48.289s; 12 Cook 48.310s; 13 Morgan 48.328s; 14 Cole 48.379s; 15 Oliphant 48.396s; 16 Smiley 48.402s; 17 Moffat 48.419s; 18 Sutton 48.437s; 19 Collard 48.456s; 20 Jelley 48.473s; 21 Proctor 48.478s; 22 Bushell 48.650s; 23 Jackson 48.652s; 24 Butcher 48.715s; 25 Hill 48.729s; 26 Nash 48.771s; 27 Thompson 48.844s; 28 Boardman 48.853s; 29 Plato 48.919s; 30 Caine 48.959s; 31 Price 49.174s; 32 Smelt 49.219s.



Ingram was a safe pair of hands as he left Brands atop the table

**RACE 2 (27 LAPS – 32.613 MILES)**

1 Proctor 25m41.530s; 2 Hill +0.568s; 3 Jackson +1.761s; 4 Boardman +2.393s; 5 Moffat +3.348s; 6 Austin +9.395s; 7 Simpson +16.386s; 8 Bushell +17.145s; 9 Butcher +17.770s; 10 Goff (75kg) +22.213s; 11 Ingram (48kg) +24.101s; 12 Sutton (27kg) +25.780s; 13 Morgan (33kg) +27.807s; 14 Nash +28.166s; 15 Cook +28.514s; 16 Cammish (21kg) +30.268s; 17 Smiley (15kg) +31.456s; 18 Tordoff +31.638s; 19 Cole (9kg) +36.923s; 20 Smith +38.708s; 21 Jordan (57kg) +40.609s; 22 Plato +41.774s; 23 Price +42.342s; 24 Caine +48.575s; 25 Smelt -1 lap; 26 Collard -1 lap; 27 Turkington (66kg) -1 lap; 28 Chilton (39kg) -1 lap; 29 Neal -3 laps; R Thompson 22 laps-accident damage; R Oliphant 18 laps-accident damage; R Jelley 0 laps-spin.

Winner's average speed 76.16mph.

Fastest lap Proctor 49.757s, 87.39mph.

GRID RACE 2 Decided by result of Race 1.

**RACE 3 (27 LAPS – 32.613 MILES)**

1 Ingram 23m52.580s; 2 Morgan +3.237s; 3 Austin (33kg) +4.202s; 4 Sutton +8.939s; 5 Bushell (21kg) +10.376s; 6 Butcher (15kg) +10.500s; 7 Simpson (27kg) +10.992s; 8 Goff (9kg) +11.913s; 9 Turkington +12.068s; 10 Cook +12.503s; 11 Cammish +12.894s; 12 Neal +14.628s; 13 Tordoff +15.033s; 14 Jackson (57kg) +15.127s; 15 Proctor (75kg) +15.634s; 16 Smiley +17.254s; 17 Jordan +17.321s; 18 Boardman (48kg) +20.438s; 19 Plato +21.777s; 20 Oliphant +22.413s; 21 Moffat (39kg) +22.831s; 22 Smith +26.435s; 23 Jelley +26.775s; 24 Caine +26.953s; 25 Smelt +28.041s; 26 Thompson +28.288s; 27 Chilton -2 laps; 28 Price -2 laps; 29 Hill (66kg) -3 laps; R Nash 7 laps-accident damage; R Cole 1 lap-accident; R Collard 1 lap-accident.

Winner's average speed 81.95mph.

Fastest lap Turkington 48.500s, 89.66mph.

GRID RACE 3 Decided by result of Race 2, with top six reversed.

**CHAMPIONSHIP**

1 Ingram 40; 2 Goff 37; 3 Morgan 30; 4 Austin 26; 5 Sutton 26; 6 Turkington 25; 7 Proctor 23; 8 Jackson 21; 9 Butcher 20; 10 Bushell 19.

# Newgarden makes most of bold strategy

*The reigning champion used new tyres to leap to the front for Team Penske – and it was super-rookie Robert Wickens who was denied again*

DAVID MALSHER

**L**ap 231 of 250, with the cars running under caution for only the second time of the night, was the crucial one. Crucial for IndyCar, hoping to create a memorable race at Phoenix's 1.022-mile oval, now known as ISM Raceway. Crucial for Robert Wickens, who, as in the opening event at St Petersburg, had starred in a manner that should force some established IndyCar drivers to question their own abilities. And crucial for Team Penske's reigning champion Josef Newgarden.

Newgarden, who had qualified only seventh (slowest of the Penske trio), had been running second behind team-mate

Will Power when they made their second stops, but the Chevrolet-powered pair were vaulted by four Honda drivers who had made that second stop up to 10 laps earlier: the Schmidt Peterson Motorsports pair of James Hinchcliff and Wickens; Ryan Hunter-Reay of Andretti Autosport; and Chip Ganassi Racing's Ed Jones. Firestone's Cara Adams reckoned there was 10-12mph difference between fresh rubber and 50-lap-old rubber, pretty much as the tyre company and IndyCar had planned. In effect, this quartet had demoted the silver Penske cars by the simple expedient of laying down faster laps sooner.

With this knowledge in mind, Penske

president Tim Cindric had called Newgarden early for his third stop and, once an off-strategy Sebastien Bourdais stopped on lap 206, it put Newgarden in the lead, although there was a caveat: he would now need to save fuel more than his rivals to make it to the end. Roger Penske would have pulled the same move for Power, but the 2014 champion, who led the most laps (80), had been wrongfooted by a resurgent Alexander Rossi making a late pass to unlap himself into Turn 1, and the #12 car had skated into the wall.

"I knew I'd go a little bit in the grey when I gave him room," a disbelieving Power said, "so I braked, changed down to third – and I



Newgarden makes his outside move on Wickens for victory





still hit the wall. Honestly, it was like hitting ice. Went in front first, broke the right-front toelink, and then the rear swung and hit the wall and broke the right-rear toelink too. It felt like such a slow shunt.”

Despite having a prime rival out of the way, Newgarden still needed a caution period to save fuel. Yet when it came, courtesy of his closest rival Jones smacking the Turn 4 wall, Cindric made the call to sacrifice track position for a splash of fuel and fresh tyres. It left Wickens and Hinchcliffe running one-two for SPM, and Rossi in third.

“Honestly, I didn’t know if that was the right call,” said Newgarden, “but I don’t want to question Tim. He normally doesn’t let me down; the team doesn’t normally let me down. Whatever they say to do, I’m always going to do it. But I always think, ‘Did we do the right thing?’ I think after winning the race, we did the right thing!”

Most other frontrunning teams thought the same, and Ganassi star Scott Dixon and

## “The last pass was risky. I didn’t know how that was going to go”

Hunter-Reay both followed Newgarden in. The champion was thus able to still emerge from pitlane in fourth and, as per IndyCar rules regarding the last 15 laps, three backmarkers in front of him were ordered to drive through the pits, leaving Newgarden with a straight shot at the leading trio. Even so, winning the race looked a tough task. Even with these new aerokits, the track does not lend itself to passing without the cooperation of the driver in front, and Newgarden had just seven green-flag laps to get the job done.

But Newgarden had so much momentum at the final restart that Rossi and Hinchcliffe were dismissed by the time the #1 Penske machine exited Turn 2, and he quickly homed in on Wickens. The Canadian rookie, mindful of his St Petersburg retirement and how leaving an open door can be a hazardous business when being chased by a fellow youngblood, moved smartly over to protect the inside, and forced Newgarden to focus his efforts on going the long way around. And eventually, at Turn 1 on lap 247, that’s precisely what he did.

“The last pass was risky; I didn’t know how that was going to go,” said Newgarden. “I didn’t know if it was going to work, but it was good. The tyres make a huge difference. I had 50-lap newer tyres. With that, with how much he had to check up in Turn 1, he gave me just enough room.”

It was Newgarden’s eighth IndyCar win, his third on an oval, and he now leads the points race. But Wickens was no less impressive, given his circumstances. The polesitter from St Petersburg amazingly managed to carry his momentum into Phoenix for his first-ever oval race weekend.

Not only did he start sixth alongside Hinchcliffe, but once SPM’s early stopping strategy had paid off so magnificently that the pair could run one-two from lap 129, he was able to stay close behind the five-time race winner. So close, in fact, that when Hinchcliffe lost rhythm with a failed attempt to lap Gabby Chaves, Wickens was able to slice past and lead the next 29 laps. Following their third stops, he remained ahead of ‘Hinch’ and, in retrospect, it seemed strange that SPM didn’t split its drivers’ strategies for that final sprint to the chequers by calling one of them in for fresh rubber under caution.

Team co-owner Sam Schmidt, who had been working with Piers Phillips on Wickens’s strategy, said: “We thought Josef would pit but Robert wanted to go for the >>

## Super Mario CART (and USAC too)

There have been few racing drivers as versatile as Mario Andretti. Arguably none. But last weekend, ISM Raceway – formerly Phoenix International Raceway – paid tribute specifically to his IndyCar career. Last week was the 25th anniversary of Andretti scoring his 52nd and final IndyCar victory there, his fourth at the 1.022-mile oval.

Andretti’s winning span in the US’s premier racing series was an incredible 28 seasons, and included four titles and the 1969 Indy 500. And while there were almost five years between his penultimate and final wins, Mario was remarkably consistent over this period, racking up 18 podium finishes. From 1988 through ’93, his final championship positions were 5-6-7-7-6-6. Only ’94, his final season, could be considered a bust, with a solitary podium in a Newman/Haas Lola that was simply no match for the Penskes.

The 1993 Phoenix race is chiefly remembered for Andretti’s rookie team-mate Nigel Mansell backing his car hard into the wall in practice, injuring his back and forcing him to miss the race; Paul Tracy leading by almost two laps until making an ill-judged lapping manoeuvre on Jimmy Vasser; and Emerson Fittipaldi crashing out while leading.

As Andretti (below) said: “What a beautiful crash, you know what I mean?! I felt bad, but only for a little bit. You’ve got to take advantage of everything possible. Being optimistic is very important. If you say, ‘I haven’t got a chance today’, you’re done. No matter what, you’ve always got to feel it can happen.”

While the early 1990s were Andretti’s twilight years, the determination remained fierce, the bravery unquestionable. Four months after his last win, he set an IndyCar speed record during qualifying for the Michigan 500, earning his 67th and final pole position at 234.275mph – aged 53.



LAT IMAGES

## IN THE HEADLINES

**AT LEIST HE FINISHED**

AJ Foyt Racing's Matheus Leist had a wild IndyCar oval debut. At his first stop, the Brazilian rookie hit a new tyre laid out for him. On the second stop, he was sent before the left-rear changer had finished, swiftly losing the wheel, which bounced down to the track. Having half-spun in pitlane, he spun-turn back the right way, but penalties left him several laps down.

**ANDRETTI ANONYMITY**

Despite running a livery that paid homage to his grandfather Mario (see panel, p45), Marco Andretti had a horrible weekend. In qualifying the car's skid plate was dragging along the track, and from 20th on the grid he could rise only to 12th, convinced the centre of pressure was wrong on his car and being "way behind on front wing".

**CARPENTER ANNOYED**

Ed Carpenter, who races only ovals, had a decent run from 18th to seventh, but the owner-driver was left unhappy by James Hinchcliffe's tactics in defending sixth place. "I really don't like the blocking rules on ovals," he said. "I don't think there's a place for it in oval racing but we can't seem to get away from it."

**RLLR'S POST-TEST LETDOWN**

Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing, the team that led all four sessions at Phoenix in pre-season testing two months ago, made little impression last weekend. Graham Rahal, starting 12th, led only during pitstop sequences, and finished ninth, while Takuma Sato started 13th and finished 11th. Both felt their strategy of long stints was what cost them so dear.

**ROSSI: A TITLE CONTENDER**

Alexander Rossi's second consecutive podium finish was his seventh top-six finish in the past eight races, including his victory at Watkins Glen last year. Asked if he believed Rossi will arrive at the Sonoma season finale in contention for the championship, his Andretti Autosport strategist and team manager Rob Edwards replied: "Yes, I'm 100% convinced. He's a special driver."

**KAISER'S INDYCAR DEBUT**

Indy Lights champion Kyle Kaiser made his IndyCar debut with Juncos Racing. He qualified and raced in the midfield before contact with the wall put him out.



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win, understandably, and I knew if we pitted him that we'd have no chance. We told the #5 [Hinchcliffe's half of the team] what our plan was and suggested a split strategy, because James was struggling a little more in traffic than Robert was. But they made their own call, and that's fine.

"Honestly, I thought about five people would stay out on old tyres for that final run, and that would have won us the race: Josef would have come out sixth or seventh and would have had too many cars to pass to reach us. But hell — second place — not bad for a rookie, huh?"

It was ironic that Wickens should beat Rossi in the process, given the controversy in St Pete, but Rossi was probably the man of the night. He demoted third-place qualifier Power at the start, and kept pace with the two front-row starters ahead — surprise polesitter Bourdais in Dale Coyne Racing with Vasser-Sullivan's St Pete-winner Honda car, and Penske's 2017 Phoenix victor Simon Pagenaud. Yet amazingly, when IndyCar debutant Pietro Fittipaldi's Coyne car hit the Turn 4 wall on lap 41 and everyone else hit pitlane under the subsequent caution, the front three drivers all made crucial errors, which is how

**“Unfortunately we probably gave away a win today, but that's the way it goes”**

Power assumed the lead. Bourdais slid too close to the wall and felled his left-front tyre changer, without injury; Rossi slewed to a halt diagonally in his pitbox and squeezed a couple of crew members (again without hurt); and Pagenaud slid long in his box. Pagenaud fell to midpack, while both Bourdais and Rossi dropped near the back and then went a couple of laps down after serving drivethrough penalties. Yet Rossi dug in and made a reported 52 on-track passes to claw his way back into contention.

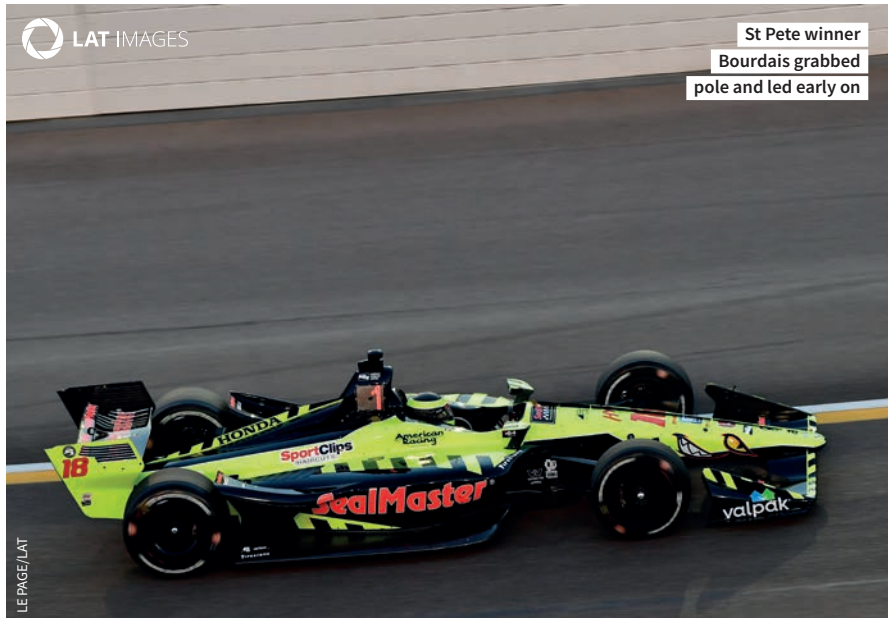
"The only reason I was able to do that was because the team gave me an unbelievable car," said Rossi. "We spent so much of our time and brain effort and research between the open test and here on focusing on tyre life. Hopefully it's something we can keep an advantage on people for the next short ovals, but in this series it's amazing how





Rossi stormed back to third. Here he leads Dixon and Hunter-Reay

ABBOTT/LAT



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St Pete winner Bourdais grabbed pole and led early on

**RESULTS** ROUND 2/16, PHOENIX (USA), APRIL 7 (250 LAPS – 255.500 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	<b>Josef Newgarden</b> (USA)	Team Penske/Dallara-Chevrolet	1h44m00.3552s
2	<b>Robert Wickens</b> (CDN)	Schmidt Peterson Motorsports/Dallara-Honda	+2.9946s
3	<b>Alexander Rossi</b> (USA)	Andretti Autosport/Dallara-Honda	+3.4890s
4	<b>Scott Dixon</b> (NZ)	Chip Ganassi Racing/Dallara-Honda	+3.8175s
5	<b>Ryan Hunter-Reay</b> (USA)	Andretti Autosport/Dallara-Honda	+4.0122s
6	<b>James Hinchcliffe</b> (CDN)	Schmidt Peterson Motorsports/Dallara-Honda	+9.4497s
7	<b>Ed Carpenter</b> (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing/Dallara-Chevrolet	+9.4731s
8	<b>Tony Kanaan</b> (BR)	AJ Foyt Enterprises/Dallara-Chevrolet	+9.8650s
9	<b>Graham Rahal</b> (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing/Dallara-Honda	+10.1747s
10	<b>Simon Pagenaud</b> (F)	Team Penske/Dallara-Chevrolet	+10.3247s
11	<b>Takuma Sato</b> (J)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing/Dallara-Honda	+10.9443s
12	<b>Marco Andretti</b> (USA)	Andretti Herta Autosport/Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
13	<b>Sebastien Bourdais</b> (F)	Dale Coyne Racing/Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
14	<b>Spencer Pigot</b> (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing/Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
15	<b>Gabby Chaves</b> (CO)	Harding Racing/Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
16	<b>Zach Veach</b> (USA)	Andretti Autosport/Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
17	<b>Charlie Kimball</b> (USA)	Carlin/Dallara-Chevrolet	-2 laps
18	<b>Max Chilton</b> (GB)	Carlin/Dallara-Chevrolet	-3 laps
19	<b>Matheus Leist</b> (BR)	AJ Foyt Enterprises/Dallara-Chevrolet	-9 laps
20	<b>Ed Jones</b> (UAE)	Chip Ganassi Racing/Dallara-Honda	228 laps-accident
21	<b>Kyle Kaiser</b> (USA)	Juncos Racing/Dallara-Chevrolet	174 laps-accident damage
22	<b>Will Power</b> (AUS)	Team Penske/Dallara-Chevrolet	153 laps-accident

**Winner's average speed** 147.395mph. **Fastest lap** Bourdais 20.6270s, 178.368mph.

**QUALIFYING 1** Bourdais 188.539mph; **2** Pagenaud 188.148mph; **3** Power 186.852mph; **4** Rossi 186.824mph; **5** Hinchcliffe 185.741mph; **6** Wickens 185.362mph; **7** Newgarden 185.279mph; **8** Hunter-Reay 184.706mph; **9** Kanaan 184.595mph; **10** Fittipaldi 184.548mph; **11** Jones 184.313mph; **12** Rahal 183.920mph; **13** Sato 182.960mph; **14** Kaiser 182.859mph; **15** Pigot 182.015mph; **16** Leist 181.817mph; **17** Dixon 181.804mph; **18** Carpenter 181.244mph; **19** Chaves 180.932mph; **20** Andretti 180.199mph; **21** Chilton 178.462mph; **22** Kimball 177.499mph; **23** Veach 175.733mph.

**CHAMPIONSHIP**

**1** Newgarden 77; **2** Rossi 72; **3** Bourdais 70; **4** Rahal 63; **5** Hunter-Reay 62; **6** Hinchcliffe 61; **7** Dixon 60; **8** Wickens 57; **9** Kanaan 43; **10** Andretti 40.

people catch up. You've got to take podiums when you can get them. Unfortunately we probably gave away a win today, but that's the way it goes."

If Rossi was among the several who blew great chances to win, it was perhaps inevitable that Dixon would be the man to make the best of a bad situation. Qualifying only 17th – "a bit of a mystery, to be honest" – he stayed out of trouble, took advantage of strong pitstops from the #9 crew and clawed his way up the leaderboard to fourth at the chequered flag. He had even been running ahead of Rossi before electing to follow leader Newgarden into the pits at the final caution, so perhaps gave away a podium finish, but Dixon – and Hunter-Reay – were able to demote Hinchcliffe in that final sprint. In fact, 'Hinch' was lucky to hold on to sixth, for both Ed Carpenter, in his first race of the season for his own team, and AJ Foyt Racing's Tony Kanaan were mere hundredths behind at the flag.

It was appropriate that the three drivers on the podium were the stars of the race and had truly earned their moments of glory. Appropriate, too, that in Firestone's 500th Indycar victory, the race outcome had been defined by tyre strategy. ❄️



## Crutchlow stars, but controversial Marquez seizes the headlines

**MOTOGP**  
**RIO HONDO (RA)**  
**APRIL 8**  
**ROUND 2 / 19**

Normally, Cal Crutchlow's expertly judged run to a third career MotoGP victory would be the main headline from an action-packed second round of the season in Argentina, but reigning champion Marc Marquez ensured this wasn't the case. The headlines were all his, and for all the wrong reasons.

The main takeaway from a chaotic encounter at Rio Hondo was the reprise of grand prix motorcycle racing's most bitter feud, the result of a clash between Marquez and Valentino Rossi that left the Italian on the ground and absolutely irate.

The incident occurred at the long Turn 13 right-hander while the pair were battling for sixth place in the latter stages of the race as Marquez recovered from an earlier ride-through penalty. Marquez arrived too hot, locked his front wheel, clouted the blameless Rossi and ran him out onto the grass, where the Yamaha hit the deck.

Addressing the media, Rossi said the ordeal left him "scared" of Marquez, whom he accused of "destroying the sport" for what Rossi described as a premeditated attempt to take him out of the race. The sour atmosphere mirrored that of Sepang

in 2015, when an infamous coming-together between Marquez and Rossi sowed rancour and cost Rossi the chance of that year's title. Back then, opinion was divided as to whom to blame, but this time there could be no doubt that Marquez was in the wrong.

Almost from the outset, things went awry for Marquez. He stalled on the grid, and his choice to bump-start his works Honda and retake his grid slot landed him with a ride-through penalty that dropped him from the lead to outside the top 20.

Marquez was by far the quickest man on track, but got into trouble with the stewards again when he hit Aleix Espargaro's Aprilia at Turn 13. The punishment was just to drop one place, which barely slowed the reigning champion's seemingly inexorable progress up the order.

After 15 of the 24 laps, Marquez was back inside the top 10 and making short work of his rivals – Qatar winner and 2017 title rival Andrea Dovizioso didn't put up much of a fight – until he ended up behind Rossi. After the clash he was fifth at the chequered flag, but a 30-second penalty for 'irresponsible riding' dropped him to 18th.

The Marquez-Rossi controversy overshadowed a thrilling four-way battle for victory between Crutchlow, Johann Zarco, Alex Rins and surprise poleman Jack Miller, who was the victim of his own inspired tyre

choice immediately before the start. The Pramac Ducati rider had gambled on slicks on a drying track on Saturday to snatch the first pole of his MotoGP career and, after a brief shower just before the start of the race on Sunday, he made a similar choice.

That was in contrast to the remaining 23 riders on the grid – who soon realised, as the track dried, that they'd made a mistake.

The events that followed can only be described as surreal: faced with Miller being the only rider on the grid for the start, and the prospect of a potentially unsafe mass pitlane getaway, organisers took the choice to delay the start and allow everybody else to form up on the grid. This, however, was unfair on Miller – as the only rider to have made the right tyre choice, he was entitled to an advantage. And so, after a heated meeting of team managers on the grid, Miller was given a head start of six rows.

Miller led the opening lap and, although Marquez reeled him in and passed him on the second tour, he regained the advantage when the Honda man had to serve his penalty. He led Rins, Zarco – who earlier escaped penalty for hitting Dani Pedrosa and causing him to crash at Turn 13 – and Crutchlow for the middle part of the race.

Crutchlow, however, was conserving his front tyre for the final push. With eight laps to go the LCR Honda man made his move.





Marquez (93) hit Rossi and made him crash out



Crutchlow judged race to perfection to take his third MotoGP win

He picked off Zarco's Tech3 Yamaha before profiting from a mistake by Rins, and then pressured Miller into an error next time by to lead at the end of lap 18.

Zarco found his way past into the lead next time around, but on the penultimate lap Crutchlow made what proved to be the race's decisive move. He hung on to win by 0.251 seconds and became the first British rider to head the championship table since Barry Sheene in 1979.

Rins picked up his first MotoGP podium (as well as Suzuki's first since 2016) in third ahead of Miller, while lead works Yamaha rider Maverick Vinales and Ducati's Dovizioso were the chief beneficiaries of Marquez's post-race punishment, bagging fifth and sixth places.

Marquez's penalty also had the side effect of promoting Jorge Lorenzo, who suffered a torrid weekend in the changeable weather, to 15th and the final point of the afternoon.

JAMIE KLEIN

RESULTS ROUND 2/19, RIO HONDO (RA), APRIL 8 (24 LAPS - 71.671 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Cal Crutchlow (GB)	LCR Honda	40m36.342s
2	Johann Zarco (F)	Tech3 Yamaha	+0.251s
3	Alex Rins (E)	Suzuki	+2.501s
4	Jack Miller (AUS)	Pramac Ducati	+4.390s
5	Maverick Vinales (E)	Yamaha	+14.941s
6	Andrea Dovizioso (I)	Ducati	+22.533s
7	Tito Rabat (E)	Avintia Ducati	+23.026s
8	Andrea Iannone (I)	Suzuki	+23.921s
9	Hafizh Syahrin (MAL)	Tech3 Yamaha	+24.311s
10	Danilo Petrucci (I)	Pramac Ducati	+26.003s
11	Pol Espargaro (E)	KTM	+31.022s
12	Scott Redding (GB)	Aprilia	+31.891s
13	Takaaki Nakagami (J)	LCR Honda	+32.452s
14	Franco Morbidelli (I)	Marc VDS Honda	+42.061s
15	Jorge Lorenzo (E)	Ducati	+42.274s
16	Alvaro Bautista (E)	Aspar Ducati	+42.625s
17	Thomas Luthi (CH)	Marc VDS Honda	+43.350s
18	Marc Marquez (E)	Honda	+43.860s
19	Valentino Rossi (I)	Yamaha	+52.082s
20	Karel Abraham (CZ)	Aspar Ducati	+1m03.944s
21	Xavier Simeon (B)	Avintia Ducati	+1m10.144s
R	Bradley Smith (GB)	KTM	17 laps-accident
R	Aleix Espargaro (E)	Aprilia	13 laps-electronics
R	Dani Pedrosa (E)	Honda	0 laps-accident

WEEKEND WINNERS

MOTO2

RIO HONDO

1 Mattia Pasini

Kalex

2 Xavi Vierge

Kalex

3 Miguel Oliveira

KTM

MOTO3

RIO HONDO

1 Marco Bezzecchi

KTM

2 Aron Canet

Honda

3 Fabio Di

Giannantonio

Honda



Mattia Pasini

Winner's average speed 105.903mph. Fastest lap Marquez 1m39.902s, 107.612mph.

QUALIFYING 2 1 Miller 1m47.153s; 2 Pedrosa 1m47.330s; 3 Zarco 1m47.365s; 4 Rabat 1m47.681s; 5 Rins 1m47.743s; 6 Marquez 1m47.754s; 7 A Espargaro 1m47.845s; 8 Dovizioso 1m48.247s; 9 Vinales 1m49.044s; 10 Crutchlow 1m49.304s; 11 Rossi 1m49.326s; 12 Iannone 1m49.975s.

QUALIFYING 1 1 A Espargaro 1m49.128s; 2 Dovizioso 1m49.518s; 3 Abraham 1m49.878s; 4 Lorenzo 1m50.063s; 5 Redding 1m50.175s; 6 P Espargaro 1m50.324s; 7 Simeon 1m50.364s; 8 Petrucci 1m50.449s; 9 Bautista 1m50.606s; 10 Luthi 1m50.833s; 11 Smith 1m51.007s; 12 Morbidelli 1m51.012s; 13 Syahrin 1m51.142s; 14 Nakagami 1m51.387s.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Crutchlow 38; 2 Dovizioso 35; 3 Zarco 28; 4 Vinales 21; 5 Marquez 20; 6 Miller 19; 7 Petrucci 17; 8 Rossi 16; 9 Rins 16; 10 Iannone 15; 11 Rabat 14; 12 Pedrosa 9; 13 Syahrin 9; 14 Morbidelli 6; 15 P Espargaro 5; 16 Redding 4; 17 Bautista 3; 18 Nakagami 3; 19 Abraham 1; 20 Lorenzo 1.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Honda 45; 2 Ducati 38; 3 Yamaha 36; 4 Suzuki 23; 5 KTM 5; 6 Aprilia 4.



Miller's hard-won advantage did not last long

LAT IMAGES



Norris built an enormous lead in the first laps

## Norris gives Carlin the perfect return

**FORMULA 2**  
**BAHRAIN (BRN)**  
**APRIL 7-8**  
**ROUND 1 / 12**

He'd taken five championships in three years, and also earned the prestigious McLaren Autosport BRDC Award in 2016, so it really should be no surprise that Lando Norris opened Formula 2's new era with a dominant victory in Bahrain.

Not only that, but McLaren Formula 1 junior Norris returned Carlin to the top step of the F2 podium after its one-year hiatus from this level, in a fashion that must have the rest of the field quaking in its boots. Norris engaged hyperdrive to extend his lead in the feature race to nine seconds in as

many laps, a lead that proved unassailable.

The new Dallara F2 car – featuring a turbo, bigger front and rear wings and, yes, the halo – ran reasonably reliably on its debut, with the usual teething issues being handled with varying success from teams and drivers. Last year's series runner-up Artem Markelov, a four-year veteran of GP2/F2, was the first to fall foul in practice as his lapping was limited with what appeared to be an electrical issue. Fast forward to the feature race and the Russian Time machine was one of the first to be hit by the new 2018 car's tricky clutch.

Markelov stalled on the formation-lap grid and that sent him to the pitlane. But at one of his strongest circuits, he should never have been ruled out. He was well into

the top 10 of the 20-car field before the race hit 10 of its 31 laps and, after going longer than most in the first stint, he was set for a latter-half charge. He disposed of all but Norris and the winner's Carlin team-mate, Sergio Sette Camara. The Brazilian showed over the weekend that his defensive driving is as good as any in the field. Markelov briefly grabbed second into Turn 1 on the last lap, but Sette Camara pulled off an epic cutback to reclaim the position.

Alexander Albon, on a one-event deal with DAMS, was hamstrung by a lack of DRS, which helped Markelov to breeze past, and could well have taken a podium on merit.

After qualifying, talk had been of the potential battle between Norris and fellow Brit George Russell, the Mercedes junior driving for ART Grand Prix, with last year's GP3 title bulging from his back pocket.

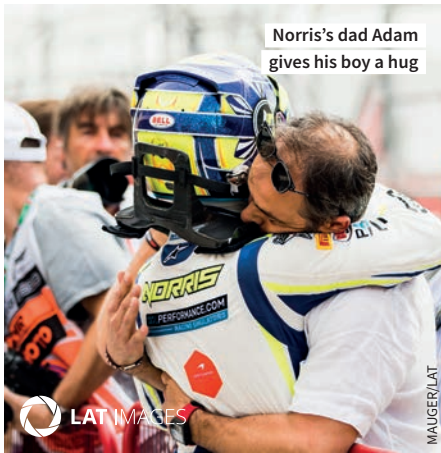
Ultimately, the rivalry never reached fever pitch because of poor starts by Russell. He and his team-mate, Renault F1 junior Jack Aitken, both suffered starting issues in each race. The duo endured heavy wheelspin in the sprint race and Russell could only finish fifth, and it was worse in the sprint race, as both drivers stalled and sat still on the grid.

"Driver error is what happened," said Russell. "The cars are very tricky to get off the line, even coming out of the pitlane. The [clutch] travel is very short, which means the driver has to bring a lot of precision, where they set the clutch, and I just got it wrong today."

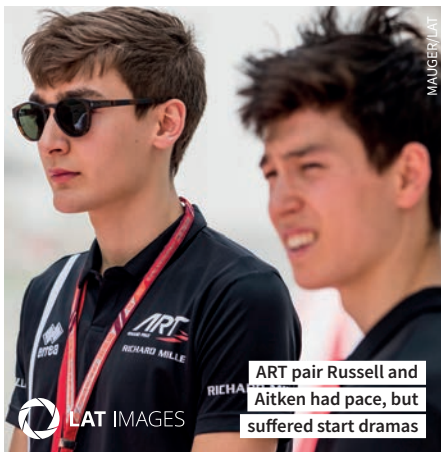


Markelov made stunning recovery in feature race, then he won the sprint





Norris's dad Adam gives his boy a hug



ART pair Russell and Aitken had pace, but suffered start dramas

Russell believed he was 8s faster than race winner Markelov if the sprint race had gone to plan, but he and Aitken were consigned to the back of the field.

There was no such problem for Markelov though, who was quickly up to second. Nyck de Vries, filling Charles Leclerc's enormous shoes at Prema Racing, shot into the lead, usurping Arden's reversed-grid poleman and F2 debutant Maximilian Gunther. De Vries, who had struggled for pace on his way to sixth in the feature race, pitted nine laps into the 23-lap sprint. It was a strategy the team tried successfully last year with Leclerc, but de Vries couldn't emulate the Monegasque, his progress taking him only to fifth.

As soon as de Vries pitted, it was Markelov's race to lose, and he held a gap of around two seconds for the remainder of the race, declaring at the end "I will fight for the title". Behind Markelov, for a few laps Gunther looked well out of his depth. A frantic exchange about brake bias with his engineer was followed up with two lock-ups as the Carlin cars of Sette Camara and Norris closed in. But the German composed himself and simply drove away in a brilliant recovery. He left Sette Camara and Norris – who struggled with a misfire early on – to battle, and another robust defence from Sette Camara delivered him the position.

Norris and Markelov were standouts, but there were enough strong showings through the field to hint this will be a tight season.

**JACK BENYON**

## RESULTS BAHRAIN (BRN), RACE 1 (31 LAPS – 104.096 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TIME
1	Lando Norris (GB)	Carlin	57m46.206s
2	Sergio Sette Camara (BR)	Carlin	+8.321s
3	Artem Markelov (RUS)	Russian Time	+8.532s
4	Alexander Albon (T)	DAMS	+9.349s
5	George Russell (GB)	ART Grand Prix	+13.947s
6	Nyck de Vries (NL)	Prema Racing	+14.661s
7	Sean Gelael (RI)	Prema Racing	+19.326s
8	Maximilian Gunther (D)	Arden International	+22.573s
9	Jack Aitken (GB)	ART Grand Prix	+28.559s
10	Ralph Boschung (CH)	MP Motorsport	+31.585s
11	Nicholas Latifi (CDN)	DAMS	+35.514s
12	Luca Ghiotto (I)	Campos Racing	+44.273s
13	Louis Deletraz (CH)	Charouz Racing System	+49.429s
14	Santino Ferrucci (USA)	Trident	+55.424s
15	Arjun Maini (IND)	Trident	+57.453s
16	Roy Nissany (IL)	Campos Racing	+1m27.436s
17	Antonio Fuoco (I)	Charouz Racing System	+1m47.169s
18	Nirei Fukuzumi (J)	Arden International	+1m50.462s
19	Tadasuke Makino (J)	Russian Time	-1 lap
NS	Roberto Merhi (E)	MP Motorsport	electrical

**Winner's average speed** 108.113mph **Fastest lap** Norris 1m48.072s, 112.020mph.

**QUALIFYING** 1 Norris 1m41.761s; 2 Russell 1m41.823s; 3 Albon 1m41.850s; 4 de Vries 1m41.880s; 5 Deletraz 1m42.174s; 6 Sette Camara 1m42.221s; 7 Fukuzumi 1m42.246s; 8 Makino 1m42.264s; 9 Aitken 1m42.282s; 10 Gunther 1m42.336s; 11 Fuoco 1m42.342s; 12 Ghiotto 1m42.414s; 13 Merhi 1m42.423s; 14 Maini 1m42.437s; 15 Latifi 1m42.447s; 16 Boschung 1m42.460s; 17 Markelov 1m42.816s; 18 Ferrucci 1m42.818s; 19 Gelael 1m43.016s; 20 Nissany 1m43.350s.

## RACE 2 (23 LAPS – 77.193 MILES)

**GRID RACE 2** Decided by result of Race 1, with top eight finishers reversed.

1 Markelov 42m42.161s; 2 Gunther +2.105s; 3 Sette Camara +3.803s; 4 Norris +5.043s; 5 de Vries +10.265s; 6 Ghiotto +15.696s; 7 Boschung +23.511s; 8 Fukuzumi +24.582s; 9 Deletraz +25.194s; 10 Latifi +25.687s; 11 Merhi +25.804s; 12 Fuoco +26.638s; 13 Albon +31.759s; 14 Maini +36.793s; 15 Nissany +43.989s; 16 Gelael +57.845s; 17 Makino +1m03.819s; 18 Aitken +1m39.757s; 19 Russell -1 lap; 20 Ferrucci -1 lap.

**Winner's average speed** 108.461mph. **Fastest lap** de Vries 1m47.711s, 112.396mph.

**CHAMPIONSHIP** 1 Norris 39; 2 Markelov 30; 3 Sette Camara 28; 4 Gunther 16; 5 de Vries 16; 6 Albon 12; 7 Russell 10; 8 Gelael 6; 9 Ghiotto 4; 10 Boschung 3.



Gunther composed himself to deny Carlin pair second in sprint



Tarquini leads Bjork  
on way to victory in  
inaugural WTCR race

## New era, old face as Tarquini tops opener

**WTCR**  
**MARRAKECH (MA)**  
**APRIL 7-8**  
**ROUND 1/10**

For everything new and revolutionary about the WTCR World Cup, it was an old hand who snatched the headlines on the first weekend in Morocco.

Gabriele Tarquini's key role in the development of Hyundai's first circuit-racing challenger, the i30 N TCR, meant he was always likely to feel at home on his return to the world scene, but surely even he could not have predicted the two wins he ended the weekend with.

And it was an old trick of the Italian's that set up the first of his victories. Tarquini hadn't been fastest in either practice session, was third in Saturday qualifying and probably didn't have the ultimate race

pace of polesitter Thed Bjork. But what he has long stored in his armoury is the ability to make demon starts – a strength he unleashed to full effect in the opening race.

Starting second, courtesy of BRC team-mate Norbert Michelisz dropping to the back for an engine change, Tarquini blasted past Bjork's YMR Hyundai off the grid, his getaway good enough to allow him to grab the racing line unchallenged before the long, looped Turn 1 left-hander.

Marrakech's Moulay El Hassan hasn't garnered a reputation for making overtaking easy since its layout was redesigned in 2016, so it was no real surprise when Bjork found it difficult to get close to Tarquini. Two safety cars only worked to Tarquini's advantage, as he caught Bjork napping and enjoyed a "relaxed" run to the finish to become the first WTCR race winner.

His second victory in Sunday's third

race was a near-carbon copy, but with one significant difference. As good as the veteran's starts can be, he's often needed those to make up for qualifying deficiencies. But in Marrakech, he was the cream of the crop come Sunday's traditional WTCC format, heading a quartet of Hyundais in the final segment to record his first World Touring Car pole since 2013.

The 56-year old did the rest of the hard work at the start once again, holding his lead as Yvan Muller tangled with Michelisz while trying to shut the door on the Hungarian, which in turn allowed Bjork into second.

The Swede hounded Tarquini harder than he had a day earlier, and the second of another pair of safety cars allowed him to close in. But he gave up his charge and ceded second to team-mate Muller late on, slotting in between the four-time world champion and his nephew Yann Ehlacher – one of the weekend's standout performers in his Munnich Motorsport Honda Civic.

That left Tarquini clear to canter to a second win, which he capped with the weekend's fastest racing lap.

In the interim, 2017 champion Jean-Karl Vernay proved the quality of last year's TCR International Series field beyond any doubt, easing to victory in the reversed-grid race. Vernay snuck his WRT-run Audi RS3 LMS ahead of Pepe Oriola on the run to the first corner and held that lead despite a tap from the Campos Cupra driver. Having finished fourth in race one, Vernay grew in confidence and controlled his pace to beat Mehdi Bennani's Sebastien Loeb Racing VW.

**JACK COZENS**



Vernay triumphed  
for Audi in the  
reversed-grid race



# Lowndes bounds back to the front

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS  
**SYMONS PLAINS (AUS)**  
**APRIL 7-8**  
**ROUND 3/16**

Craig Lowndes broke a 623-day winless streak with victory in Tasmania, while Jamie Whincup emerged from the third round of the Supercars season with the points lead thanks to a shocker for Shane van Gisbergen.

Veteran superstar Lowndes came into the Symons Plains weekend having not won a race since Queensland Raceway in July 2016, while his pole-position drought stretched even further back, to the QR round in 2015.

The 43-year-old looked sprightly enough on the Saturday in Tasmania, qualifying fourth and shadowing race winner and Triple Eight Holden stablemate Whincup home on his way to second place in the 120km opener.

But it was on the Sunday that Lowndes really rediscovered his mojo. First, he took pole with a dominant performance in the new three-tier qualifying session introduced for the short tracks in Tassie and Perth.



Lowndes then controlled proceedings throughout the 200km race, only briefly trailing Scott McLaughlin after the Penske Ford driver opted to short-fill on his stop. Even then Lowndes was quickly able to retake the lead with a well-executed pass at the hairpin, before cruising to a breakthrough 106th career win.

Between a win on Saturday and a third behind McLaughlin on Sunday, Whincup came away with the points lead. His cause was helped by van Gisbergen enduring a

terrible weekend. Car speed wasn't the problem for the Kiwi, it was simply a case of not being able to convert it into a result.

On Saturday van Gisbergen qualified on pole, but a decision to make his single stop early cost him dearly in terms of tyre degradation and he slipped to sixth. On Sunday he ran second behind Lowndes for the first stint, before an issue with the pedal box meant the throttle jammed with each brake application. He finished 25th.

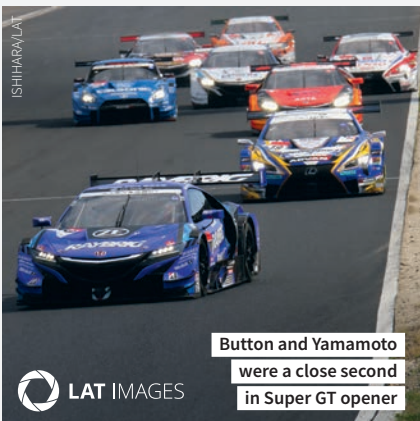
**ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN**

# Runner-up newboy Button completes Honda one-two

SUPER GT  
**OKAYAMA (J)**  
**APRIL 8**  
**ROUND 1/8**

Jenson Button made a tremendous start to his first full season in Super GT to take second in the Team Kunimitsu Honda.

Button's team-mate Naoki Yamamoto



took part in Q1 on a dry track to put the car through to Q2, where Button put in a fine drive on a nasty half-wet surface to qualify fifth. Then he scored the fastest time in race day's final practice session.

Button was the starting driver, got crowded at the start and dropped to eighth position, where he kept pace with the pack. The team decided not to change tyres at the pitstop, and when Yamamoto continued the car was into the lead.

Kodai Tsukakoshi had qualified the Real Racing Honda on pole and co-driver Takashi Kogure led most of the first stint, although lost out before the stops in a fierce battle with the TOM'S Lexus of Nick Cassidy. With Tsukakoshi on board, the car soon overhauled Yamamoto to win, although the gap was only 1.6 seconds at the finish.

After a slow stop, Cassidy's co-driver Ryo Hirakawa fought back to pass Kazuya Oshima, in the Team Le Mans Lexus started by Felix Rosenqvist, for third.

**JIRO TAKAHASHI**

## WEEKEND WINNERS

### WTCR

#### MARRAKECH

- Race 1 Gabriele Tarquini**  
BRC Racing Team  
Hyundai i30 N TCR
- Race 2 Jean-Karl Vernay**  
WRT  
Audi RS3 LMS TCR
- Race 3 Gabriele Tarquini**  
BRC Racing Team  
Hyundai i30 N TCR

### AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS SYMONS PLAINS

- Race 1 Jamie Whincup**  
Triple Eight Race Engineering  
Holden Commodore ZB
- Race 2 Craig Lowndes**  
Triple Eight Race Engineering  
Holden Commodore ZB

### SUPER GT OKAYAMA

- Takashi Kogure/Kodai Tsukakoshi**  
Real Racing  
Honda NSX-GT

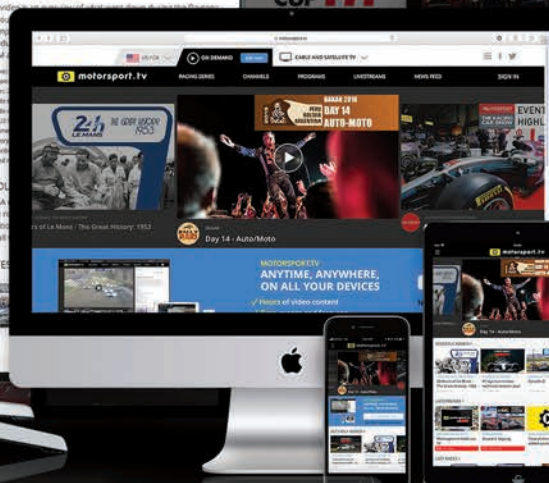
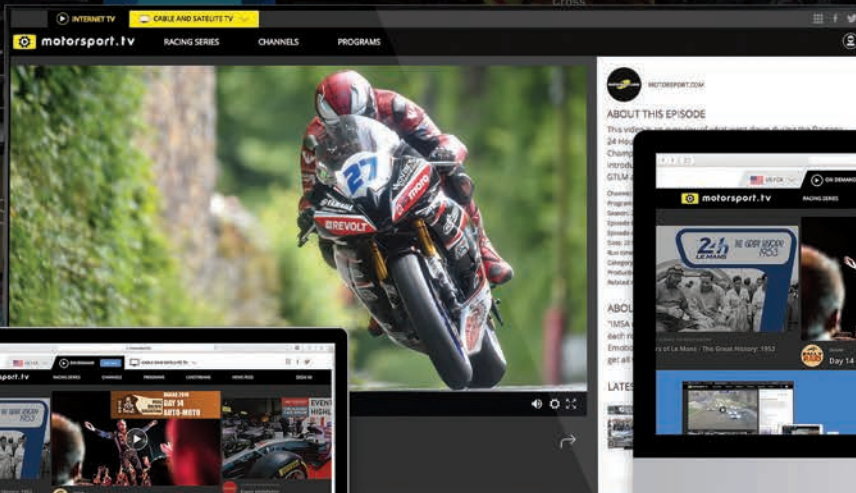
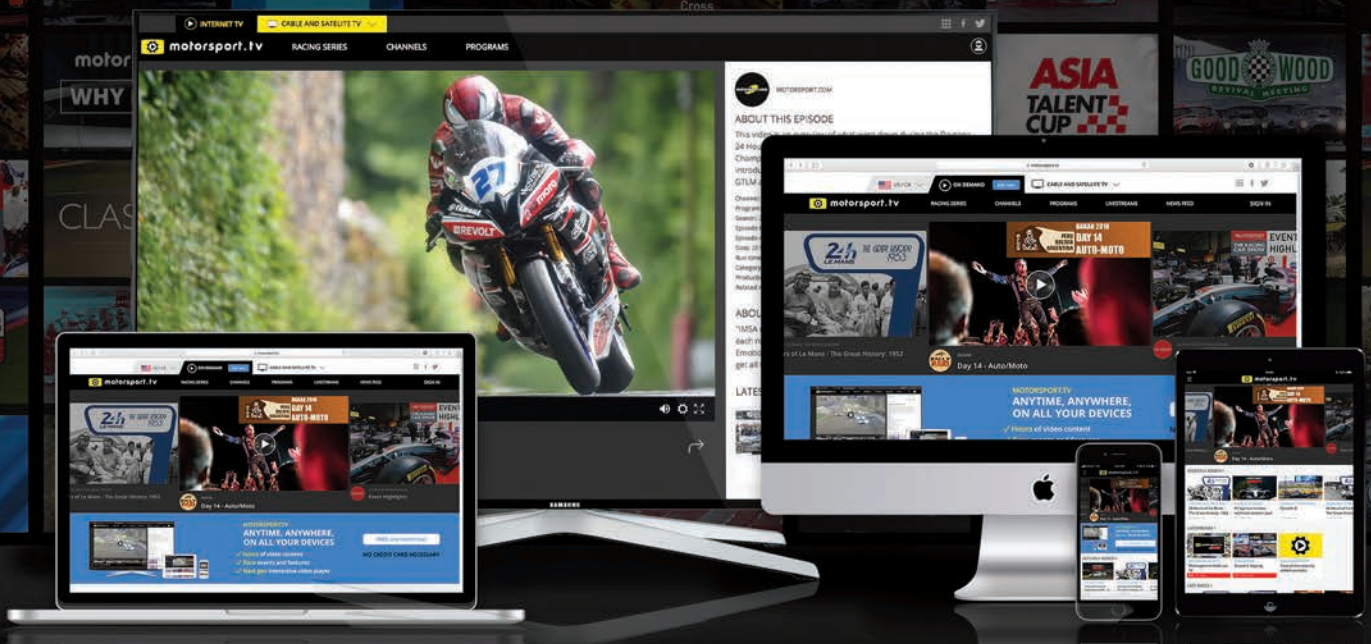




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# Audi steals Lambo thunder

**BLANCPAIN SPRINT CUP**  
**ZOLDER (B)**  
**APRIL 7-8**  
**ROUND 1 / 5**

Attempto Audi's Kelvin van der Linde and Steijn Schothorst (above) began the Blancpain Sprint Cup season with a victory in last Sunday's Zolder encounter.

For swathes of the season opener, it looked like the reigning overall champions Mirko Bortolotti and Christian Engelhart would start their title defence with a double. Having won Saturday's race, the polesitting #63 Grasser Lamborghini built a lead of around seven seconds on Sunday. But pitlane calamities wiped out their advantage and ultimately allowed the Attempto duo through, firstly when Bortolotti came in to hand over to his team-mate and the car stalled.

A drive-through penalty for improper pitlane procedure exacerbated the consequences of the mistake, handing the lead to the #2 WRT Audi of Will Stevens and Dries Vanthoor.

The WRT car had stopped a lap earlier to gain an advantage, but lost out a few laps later when Vanthoor earned a penalty for driving over a cone when exiting the pits, handing Schothorst a comfortable win by seven seconds.

Raffaele Marciello took second aboard the AKKA ASP Mercedes he shares with Michael Meadows, with third going to the Grasser Lamborghini of Andrea Caldarelli and Ezequiel Perez Companac.

The lead WRT Audi of reigning Sprint champions Robin Frijns and Stuart Leonard recovered from row six to finish fifth. Frijns had qualified on pole but was demoted for exceeding track limits.

## WEEKEND WINNERS

### BLANCPAIN SPRINT CUP ZOLDER

**Race 1** Mirko Bortolotti/  
Christian Engelhart  
GRT Grasser Racing Team  
Lamborghini Huracan GT3  
**Race 2** Kelvin van der Linde/  
Steijn Schothorst  
Attempto Racing Audi R8 LMS

### NASCAR CUP TEXAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY Kyle Busch (below)

Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota Camry

### NASCAR XFINITY TEXAS MOTOR SPEEDWAY Ryan Blaney

Team Penske Ford Mustang

### BRAZILIAN STOCK CARS CURITIBA

**Race 1** Felipe Fraga  
**Race 2** Lucas di Grassi

### SUPER TC2000 ROSARIO

**Race 1** Facundo Ardusso  
Renault Fluence  
**Race 2** Facundo Chapur  
Citroen C4 Lounge

# Busch denies fast Harvick

**NASCAR CUP**  
**TEXAS (USA)**  
**APRIL 8**  
**ROUND 7 / 36**

A "pathetic" performance in the pits cost Kevin Harvick the chance to reassert his and Stewart-Haas Racing's dominance of the 2018 NASCAR Cup, and Kyle Busch punched for his first win of the season.

Harvick's Ford had led by over 12 seconds at one stage and his hopes of a fourth win of the season were boosted

when a puncture sent nearest rival Martin Truex Jr into the Turn 4 wall. But Harvick's race fell apart as NASCAR's continuing problems with wheelguns returned: he lost eight places in the pits with a jammed nut. Harvick then proved to be the quickest on track as he recovered and he joined Busch's Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota at the front.

Ryan Newman's late crash caused a final caution, but Busch nailed the restart to narrowly defeat Harvick and hold on to the points lead.



LAT IMAGES



# INSIGHT

## WORLD RALLYCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP



MCMMASTER/PSRX/WX

Kristoffersson knows there can be no resting on his laurels



TOMBANKS

Polo has benefited from ongoing fettling by Volkswagen



TOMBANKS

Full factory effort from Peugeot is a first for WRX



TOMBANKS

GC Competition Megane looked quick in testing



TOMBANKS

PSRX squad starts season as favourites



# Open season for an open contest

*New challengers take aim at champ Kristoffersson as World Rallycross kicks off this weekend at Barcelona*

HAL RIDGE

**T**he post-season World Rallycross Championship video, produced for the FIA prizegiving, promotes all that is good about the sport. Despite having seen it many, many times, 2017 title winner Johan Kristoffersson couldn't help being glued to a rerun at the recent PSRX team launch.

"I do still enjoy watching that," says the Volkswagen Polo star. "That's rallycross itself: when they make a video like that and there's some good music... There's a lot of action in rallycross, so of course when the new season is just around the corner, you feel even more motivated to start to compete again when you watch it."

Despite being a class apart last season, the 29-year-old Swede still needs to be motivated if he is to stand a chance of defending his crown. The same goes for each of the 15 permanent 2018 entries. The PSRX team had things largely its own way last term and the cars of Kristoffersson and two-time WRX champion/team boss Petter Solberg will start the opening round this weekend at Barcelona as favourites. But if the array of new teams, new cars and pre-season testing form are anything to go by, World Rallycross will be anything but predictable this year.

Volkswagen Motorsport has continued tinkering with its WRC-based Polo for a second season in WRX, but Mattias Ekstrom has received increased input from Audi Sport: the 2016 WRX champion and two-time DTM title winner has ditched his touring car commitments to focus solely on rallycross and the new EKS Audi S1 Supercar, created as a collaboration between his EKS squad and the Ingolstadt manufacturer. He also has a new team-mate in Andreas Bakkerud, who has six WRX victories to his name.

Then there's Peugeot Sport, which has taken the running of its rallycross programme away from Kenneth Hansen's team to be the

first full factory effort in WRX. The French squad will start with a pair of new cars similar to the 2017 versions, but will implement step changes through the opening part of the year. By mid-season, the Parisians expect to be challenging at the front and have the right drivers to do so: rally legend Sebastien Loeb, who will be sharper than ever thanks to recent seat time in the World Rally Championship, and rallycross's most underrated talent, Timmy Hansen. His younger brother Kevin will drive a third, '17-spec car.

But if the old guard have any thoughts that they only have to watch out for each other, they're mistaken. Marcus Gronholm's GRX team has followed a similar route to that of VW by adapting an ex-WRC car; the Finn's squad is set to field Hyundai i20s for his son Niclas and triple European champion Timur Timerzyanov.

The Hyundais are the only cars not seen so far in pre-season testing, but the squad has been working hard behind the scenes. In place of the 1.6-litre WRC engine, the i20s are now powered by what is widely acknowledged to be the best customer engine in the sport, courtesy of Pipo Moteurs.

Gronholm Jr has shown flashes of pace in his first two campaigns, while Timerzyanov was a match for any driver in the pre-WRX era. If the Hyundai is competitive and Timerzyanov can rekindle the kind of performances that helped him dominate European RX events, he could be the dark horse for wins this season.

Also new is the GC Competition squad, with its Prodrive-built Renault Megane RS RXs. While the cars impressed with their testing pace at Silverstone last month, team owner and driver Guerlain Chicherit admits that he needs more experience to be able to challenge regularly at the sharp end. Chicherit is also racing in the French Rallycross Championship this year to gain that mileage, while team-mate Jerome Grosset-Janin embarks on his maiden WRX campaign after proving that he has what it takes to challenge for titles in Euro RX.

Making a return to the series after a year's absence as a full-time entry, OlsbergsMSE has revised its Ford Fiesta platform to use an inboard-suspension and front-mounted-radiator set-up similar to the Polo's. The squad will also field a pair of former event winners: Kevin Eriksson (son of team owner Andreas) and Robin Larsson.

Manfred Stohl's STARD team and Sebastien Loeb Racing will also run cars for Janis Baumanis and Gregoire Demoustier respectively in individual efforts this season. #

CALENDAR	
DATE	VENUE
April 14-15	Barcelona (E)
April 28-29	Montalegre (P)
May 12-13	Mettet (B)
May 26-27	Silverstone (GB)
June 9-10	Hell (N)
June 30-July 1	Holjes (S)
August 4-5	Trois-Rivieres (CDN)
September 1-2	Loheac (F)
September 15-16	Riga (LV)
September 29-30	Austin (USA)
October 13-14	Estering (D)
November 24-25	Cape Town (ZA)

WRX ENTRY LIST		
DRIVER	TEAM	CAR
Mattias Ekstrom	EKSAudi Sport	Audi S1
Andreas Bakkerud	EKSAudi Sport	Audi S1
Guerlain Chicherit	GC Competition	Renault Megane RS
Jerome Grosset-Janin	GC Competition	Renault Megane RS
Niclas Gronholm	GRX Taneco Team	Hyundai i20
Timur Timerzyanov	GRX Taneco Team	Hyundai i20
Kevin Eriksson	OlsbergsMSE	Ford Fiesta
Robin Larsson	OlsbergsMSE	Ford Fiesta
Petter Solberg	PSRX Volkswagen Sweden	Volkswagen Polo R
Johan Kristoffersson	PSRX Volkswagen Sweden	Volkswagen Polo R
Sebastien Loeb	Team Peugeot Total	Peugeot 208
Timmy Hansen	Team Peugeot Total	Peugeot 208
Kevin Hansen	Team Peugeot Total	Peugeot 208
Gregoire Demoustier	Sebastien Loeb Racing	Peugeot 208
Janis Baumanis	Team STARD	Ford Fiesta

AWNINGS



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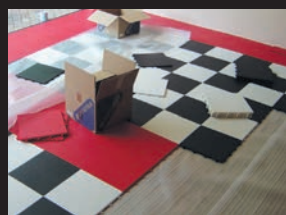
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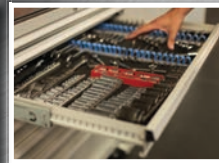


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To find out more about these positions and other roles at Red Bull Racing please visit [www.redbullracing.com](http://www.redbullracing.com)





Pearson will race his celebrated Lister-Jaguar in the memorial race

LAT IMAGES

## PEARSON JOINS ARCHIE SCOTT BROWN TROPHY GRID

### SCOTT BROWN TROPHY

Leading historic racer Gary Pearson will contest the Archie Scott Brown Trophy at Snetterton in September.

Pearson will drive his Lister-Jaguar, BHL 118, with which he has achieved many successes since restoring it. It will be Pearson's first appearance in the race for 1950s sportscars, which first ran in 2015 and honours disabled Lister ace Scott Brown, who was killed at Spa in 1958.

"Archie was unreal – what a character," said Pearson. "My old man was always friendly with [marque founder] Brian Lister, so it's nice to have that connection. Even our dog is called Archie!"

Listers have only won one of the three previous editions (Mark Lewis's Lister-Chevrolet in 2016), but Pearson is likely to be a frontrunner in his 3.8-litre machine around Snetterton's 200 layout.

"The Lister is just mega," he said. "I've had a lot of fun in that car and I love it."

Entries for previous Archie Scott Brown Trophies have been low, partly owing to calendar clashes. The September 22 event does not clash with the Spa Six Hours this season, as it did last year, so the hope is for a bigger field.

Race organiser John Turner said: "It's fantastic that Gary is going to bring the Lister. Hopefully that will attract some other big sportscars."

Julian Majzub's Sadler-Chevrolet led home three Listers to win the 2015 Trophy in a 12-car field, while Lewis led a marque 1-2-3 the following year after 11 cars started. A reduced entry was dominated by smaller-engined cars last season, during which the Lotus Elite of Colin Elstrop ran out the winner.

This year there will be a 30-minute FISCAR race for 1950s sportscars on the same day, and entry-fee reductions will be available for those competitors also contesting the Archie Scott Brown Trophy.

KEVIN TURNER



Pearson is a regular race winner in historics

LAT IMAGES



## REMEMBERING A GREAT, LOST BRITISH TALENT



Double amputee Billy Monger has rightly received plaudits for his remarkable return to racing following his terrible British Formula 4 crash at Donington Park, but this year another inspirational driver will be remembered.

Archie Scott Brown was born with significant underdevelopment of three limbs. In particular, he had no proper right forearm, just a thumb and palm below the elbow. And yet he became one of Britain's leading racing drivers in the 1950s, and only failed to achieve more on the world stage because some organisers couldn't believe he was as good as he was.

Instead, a man Stirling Moss once described as "capable of winning grands prix" made his name on the national scene, particularly in sportscars.

Scott Brown and his Jaguar-engined Lister became the combination to beat in 1957, defeating the works Aston Martins in a number of prestigious races, helping to forge the reputation of the fledgling marque.

Scott Brown was battling the Ecurie Ecosse Lister-Jaguar of Masten Gregory at Spa in May 1958 when he slid wide at the high-speed kink between Blanchimont and La Source. The Lister struck a sign, then rolled and caught fire. Scott Brown later succumbed to his injuries, aged 31.

Snetterton was the scene of some of Scott Brown's victories with Lister, and the Trophy race in his honour has been held there since 2015. Entries have struggled, but Gary Pearson's commitment is promising. I'll confess to a personal interest in that my father runs the race, but a big grid of powerful 1950s sportscars would surely be a fitting way to mark the passing of one of Britain's great lost talents.

KEVIN TURNER



# Stewards award full points for four-lap Oulton farce

## BRITISH GT

Phil Keen and Jon Minshaw have been confirmed as the current British GT points leaders after the championship stewards ruled to award full points for the abandoned second race at Oulton Park.

The Easter Monday encounter was curtailed after four laps behind the safety car because of heavy rain.

The meeting stewards referred the case to British GT's championship stewards to decide whether to award full points for the truncated race. British GT's rules say that a result can be declared as early as two laps into a contest, but the point of contention arose because the first part of the race ended

under a red flag rather than a chequered one, and a second part did not take place.

The stewards' decision has handed Keen and Minshaw the GT3 win, and Scott Malvern and Nick Jones the GT4 victory aboard their Team Parker Racing-run Mercedes-AMG GT4. Jonny Adam and Flick Haigh had won the first race aboard their Aston Martin, but Adam spun on the way to the grid for the second race.

The deteriorating weather forced the cancellation of the meeting, including Mini Challenge, Ginetta GT5 and Northern Sports and Saloons races.

The second round of the championship takes place at Rockingham on April 29.

ROB LADBROOK

## BRITISH GT CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	DRIVERS	CAR	POINTS
1	Phil Keen/Jon Minshaw	Lamborghini Huracan GT3	37
2	Yelmer Buurman/Lee Mowle	Mercedes-AMG GT3	27
3	Darren Turner/Andrew Howard	Aston Martin Vantage GT3	26
4	Jonny Adam/Flick Haigh	Aston Martin Vantage GT3	25
5	Marco Sorensen/Derek Johnston	Aston Martin Vantage GT3	20
6	Patrick Kujala/Leo Machitski	Lamborghini Huracan GT3	16



## HSCC GUARDS TROPHY

Touring car ace Anthony Reid is targeting further outings in a Porsche 911, after sharing with Le Mans winner Richard Attwood in the opening round of the Guards Trophy last weekend at Donington.

The duo finished 12th overall in the race organised by the Historic Sports Car Club at its Jim Clark memorial event.

Peter Auto is celebrating Porsche's 70th anniversary this year and has launched a 2.0L Cup for pre-1966 examples of the 911. The car Reid raced is destined for that series, which has 90-minute races at Spa, Dijon and Paul Ricard.

"I'm getting a brand-new Porsche racesuit made for me by the race organisers [Peter

Auto], so hopefully it's a good sign that I'll be doing more with the club," he told Autosport.

Reid has an extensive history with Porsche, having finished third in a 962 at Le Mans in 1990.

He joins his team-mate from last weekend, Attwood (who took the marque's first-ever Le Mans victory in 1970), and five-time LM24 winner Derek Bell as names expected to race in the 2.0L Cup throughout the year.

● Historic single-seater racer Cameron Jackson is planning a full assault on the Historic Formula Ford title in a Lola T200, and opened his season with a second and a fifth at Donington.

MATT KEW AND PAUL LAWRENCE



Gow will race in C1 Challenge (left) with Priaux Sr and Jr

**CITROEN C1 CHALLENGE**

British Touring Car Championship series director Alan Gow will return to competition later this season when he takes part in the Citroen C1 24-hour race at Rockingham on May 12-13.

The Australian will team up with three-time World Touring Car champion Andy Priaux, Priaux's son Seb – who won a race on his maiden weekend in British Formula 4

at Brands Hatch (see p75) – and friend Richard Solomons to tackle the event.

Gow said he was looking forward to the challenge: "I love 24-hour races. I used to regularly compete in the 2CV 24 Hours and I won it in 1999 at Mondello Park. I have history! I have also finished second and third in the 2CVs.

"With Andy, Seb and Richard in the car, I think we have the dream team – although that might be me putting the pressure on

the others in the crew. It's an event we'll just enjoy and the results aren't necessarily that important."

Gow's last 24-hour race was the Britcar race at Silverstone in 2007, but the BMW he was sharing failed to finish after mechanical problems. Gow's last sprint race was in the Scottish Mini Cooper Cup, also in '07, when he was disqualified for having the wrong combination of tyres on his car.

**MATT JAMES**

# Sowery to compete full-time in GT Open

**GT OPEN**

BRDC British F3 frontrunner Toby Sowery will make a full-time switch to sportscars this year driving a Lamborghini Huracan GT3 in the International GT Open Championship.

Sowery, who finished third and fourth in British F3 in 2016 and '17 respectively with Lanar Racing, will share the Team Lazarus car with

Formula V8 3.5 convert and ex-Formula 3000 boss Giuseppe Cipriani.

Sowery drove a Huracan in competition in the Super Trofeo Asia series last year, and was a race winner.

He said: "I've had quite a few years of doing the same British circuits with the occasional Spa [race] thrown in, but it's nice and refreshing to turn a page and have a fresh start in a new championship with GTs.

"The Trofeo is a bit different. It's a medium ground between a GT3 and a road car. I've tested the car at Spa and the pace looks good."

Sowery will also help with driver development for single-seater team KDC, set up by Emily di Comberti – whose son Aaron was Sowery's team-mate at Lanar – and ex-Sauber team principal Monisha Kaltenborn.

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## Celebration race at MG Live

### MGF CUP

The 20th anniversary of the launch of the MGF Cup will be celebrated with a special one-off race for the mid-engined sportscar as part of the MG Live event on the Silverstone Grand Prix circuit on June 2-3.

The event, which is being supported by the MGF Register, is being masterminded by long-time MG Car Club Cockshoot Cup competitor David Coulthard, who hopes to establish a 30-car entry.

"I bought a Cup car myself six years ago and I realised it was coming up to the anniversary, so I thought it was worthy of trying to round up enough cars," he said. "There were actually two series that ran in parallel in 1998: the BRDC-run MGF Cup, which was part of the Power Tour, and the MGCC

Abingdon Trophy, which was more club-based. They both had their first races on the same day in April '98."

The revival race will reflect that history, with separate classes for slick-shod cars in the spirit of the Cup, while cars akin to Trophy specification will race on treaded tyres.

"We have found the original prototype car driven by Tony Pond, but a lot of the Cup cars – only 30 were built – were sent to Australia, and a lot have been broken up to put the engine and drivetrain into Lotus Elises."

British Touring Car race winners Warren Hughes – who won the MGF Cup in 1999 – and Paul O'Neill are the best-known graduates. Original drivers such as Matt Kelly and Dave Loudon have been contacted about taking part in the event.

IAN SOWMAN

## Metro champ to MG Cup

### MG CUP

Reigning Metro Cup champion Mike Williams has moved on to the MG Cup for the 2018 season, having upgraded his Rover GTi over the winter break.

Williams retired from the lead of the opening race of the season at Silverstone last weekend with a fuel leak and was sixth in race two.

"I wanted to do something new so I have put an 1800cc engine in it, rather than a 1400," he said.

"I only had three weeks to do it so I still have the 1400 exhaust on, so the power curve plateaus for the last 1500 revs."

In addition to replacing the exhaust, Williams will also alter the final drive ratio at certain circuits in an attempt to give him the edge over the dominant Rover Tomcat Turbos.

IAN SOWMAN



WALKER

### IN THE HEADLINES

#### KAYE'S CARRERA DEBUT

Former British Touring Car regular James Kaye had a "baptism of fire" for his debut weekend in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB at Brands Hatch after agreeing a last-minute deal, claiming a best result of 11th after not testing the car before Friday practice.

#### GLEW IN GT CUP MOVE

Former Renault UK Clio Cup champion Phil Glew will race in the GT Cup this season. Glew will share a Ferrari 488 Challenge with Paul Bailey, competing for group GTC honours. ITV commentator Glew took two wins in the GT4 Northern European Cup last year.

#### BRITS' EURO GT4 VICTORY

Reigning British GT4 champions Will Tregurtha and Stuart Middleton claimed a victory on their GT4 European Series debut at Zolder last weekend. The HHC Motorsport Ginetta G55 duo finished second in the opening race, before winning race two after Tregurtha qualified the car on pole.

#### MEADEN'S CLASSIC WIN

Briton Richard Meaden, sharing with Frenchman Gerard Lopez, won two races at Peter Auto's historic season-opening Espiritu de Montjuic Catalunya Classic Revival event at Barcelona last weekend. Narrow Classic Endurance Racing 1 winners, they also won the Heritage Touring Car Challenge in a Ford Capri RS3100.

#### PULL MAKES GT SWITCH

BRDC British Formula 3 runner-up James Pull will contest the Lamborghini Super Trofeo Asia series this season with fellow Briton Jack Bartholomew after deciding to leave single-seater racing. Bartholomew won the Middle East title during the winter, having triumphed in all four races in which he was partnered by Pull. The two drivers are now targeting the Asian crown.

#### FUN FOR HALL/WEBSTER

The MAK Racing pairing of Chris Webster and Stuart Hall secured their first UK Fun Cup victory at Oulton Park last weekend, in a well-supported season opener. After two late safety car interventions, Hall just held off Henry Dawes/Chris Hart's 2Rent Dominos car by 0.190 seconds, with defending champions JPR Uvio third.

#### ROCHE BACK IN GINETTA

Multiple Mazda MX-5 champion Tom Roche made a return to the Ginetta GT4 Supercup last weekend at Brands Hatch, and intends to make the switch permanent. He took a best finish of second.



**HSCC** An estimated 500 people stood in silence on the Donington Park grid last Saturday to remember Jim Clark, 50 years to the day from the Scot's death. At the head of the grid was the Lotus 18 now owned by John Chisholm, the car in which Clark scored his first major single-seater win in 1960. At Knockhill, 250 medals were given to competitors to honour Clark. **Photograph by Mick Walker**

## Stuart McCrudden: 1946-2018

### OBITUARY

The motorsport fraternity is shocked and saddened to have lost Stuart McCrudden, a valued colleague, longtime Ford employee and racer turned event organiser and public relations guru last Thursday. He was 71 and had been battling cancer.

Charismatic and creative, Stuart was the beating heart of the Blue Oval's popular Escort Mexico and Fiesta Challenges.

He was also a major force behind popular radio and TV broadcaster Noel Edmonds' Cortina Mk3 and the late Mike Smith's Escort RS Turbo racing programmes.

Stuart had raced himself, in a Special Saloon Mini initially, but the pinnacle of his driving career was winning the 1990 Willhire 24 Hours at Snetterton – his favourite event – sharing a BMW M3 with a young Matt Neal, now a three-time BTCC champion, and Dave Wallis.

Having run the FIA Thoroughbred Grand Prix championship for the three-litre F1 cars of 1966-'85 with son Oli – now senior event manager with Formula E – more recently arch entrepreneur Stuart had run Honda's World Touring Car promotions via his SMAPR concern in rural Essex.

**MARCUS PYE AND GARY WATKINS**

## Lydden hosts its own race meeting

### LYDDEN HILL

Lydden Hill's plan to boost motor racing at the circuit came to fruition last weekend when the Lydden Hill Motor Club, already a promoter of rallycross events, organised its first totally asphalt race meeting.

Six entertaining races, three each for South Eastern Saloons/Sports and Ford Saloons took place on Saturday.

Former Lydden saloon champion Bill Richards and Bessie Mk2, his two-litre Duratec-powered Minivan, took two Saloon wins over Robert Knox (Maguire-Stiletto).

The Ashford engineer would have completed his hat-trick but his other car, a Mini Clubman, broke its differential while leading and so Knox went on to win.

David Nye fought off strong opposition to win the first Ford encounter, but next time out brake failure put him into the tyre wall and so Simon Horrobin went on to win the next two races.

David Abbott celebrated coming out of retirement with a fine second place in the opening Ford race and Peter Daniels, who has not raced at Lydden for four years, drove well to notch up a fourth, third and then a second place.

Daniels was delighted: "We got a practice period, a qualifying session and three races, all for £185. You can't go wrong."

Lydden will host further race meetings this season. On July 8 (Classic Touring Car Racing Club), August 18/19 (British Automobile and Racing Club Truck Festival) and October 6 (LHMC).

**KERRY DUNLOP**

## Jones in Purley Brabham

### HSCC HISTORIC F3

Former Red Bull Air Race pilot Steve Jones returned an ex-David Purley Brabham BT28 Formula 3 car to action at Donington Park last weekend.

Jones – who has campaigned a Formula Junior Cooper T67 in recent years – took ninth and seventh place finishes in the Historic F3 races in his first race outings in the car.

"The Brabham has so much more grip than my Formula Junior Cooper [T67] and it's a lot of fun to drive,"

said Jones. "I'm looking forward to getting nearer the front."

The car hadn't raced since the mid-1970s, and has been restored by Matthew Watts of Retro Track & Air. It was due to make its debut at the Goodwood Members' Meeting but Jones withdrew the car, along with others, owing to the poor weather conditions.

Purley won one race in the Brabham, pipping James Hunt (Lotus 59A) in the GP des Frontieres on Belgium's Chimay road circuit in 1970.

**MARCUS PYE**



Recently restored  
ex-David Purley BT28  
hadn't raced since 1970s

LAWRENCE





# MISSING THE POINT(S)

*When full points were awarded for a four-lap ‘race’ at Oulton Park, British GT was thrown into crisis – but you can’t just make up the rules on the fly*

ROB LADBROOK

**T**here’s nothing quite like a dollop of controversy to get the debate fired up on social media. Last week the British GT Championship – well, the championship’s stewards at least – served up the first generous portion.

It’s safe to say that their decision to award full championship points for the curtailed second race at Oulton Park on Easter Monday (which, owing to the seemingly perpetual precipitation, consisted of just four laps behind a safety car) divided opinion. But it wasn’t an equal division. In fact, the situation prompted an overwhelming wave of negativity against the championship organisers, whose defenders were tenacious but few in number. Regardless of which side you adopted, if you expressed a view you could expect to take some incoming fire.

So, here goes: here’s why I can see both sides of the argument clearly, but also why I (controversially) agree with the outcome.

Firstly, let’s consider and discard the 75% rule. Formula 1 and many other FIA-administered series use this as the threshold for when to award full championship points. If a race is stopped early but has exceeded 75% of the scheduled distance, its result is declared and points are given to all who should have them.

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## “BRITISH GT ALWAYS SEEMS TO DISCOVER THESE ANOMALIES BY TRIPPING OVER THEM”

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The SRO Motorsports Group is not run by the FIA. Therefore it has its own, crucially different rules. British GT’s regulations explicitly state that a result can be declared after the lead car has completed two laps. The 75% rule only dictates whether a race should be restarted or not, but even that is overruled if a race is stopped on safety grounds.

There is also currently no provision for awarding half points in British GT’s scoring system. There’s 1.5x scores allowed for the longer races, but that’s the only legal deviation from full points.

In this situation, the rule is clear. The lead car did complete more than two laps, and the race clock was ticking down as it did so. Some may say it wasn’t a race since it never went green, and the cars weren’t travelling at racing speed. But legally, it fulfilled every caveat in the rules to make it ‘a race’.

The fact is, the stewards at the meeting knew the rule, but weren’t sure whether to follow it to the letter of the law – given

the extenuating circumstances – or to leave that decision to the higher power of the championship stewards.

Now, contrary to some opinion on social media, the championship stewards are not just a bunch of chumps who don’t bother to attend races. In fact, they’re highly qualified, experienced and objective. They want what’s best for the competition, and the wellbeing of the championship.

They looked at the case and didn’t decide to award points just for the hell of it, or to upset people. They awarded the points because they followed the rules.

OK, so the rule may need to be rethought, since clearly the specific circumstances that arose at Oulton hadn’t been an issue before. I have full faith that SRO will address anything they need to. But how would the championship have looked if it directly contravened its own regulations?

That makes the majority of popular arguments pretty much invalid. ‘They should have given half points’ – if they did, they’d have been making the rules up as they go along, and open themselves up to protests. That’s no way to run a championship. Rules are set in black and white and distributed to every competitor before they sign up.

‘They should have declared it null and void’ is another line of argument. While I’d like to agree with that, once again it would be a case of reinventing the rules the championship is based on for the sake of expedience. Doing that sets a precedent for bending pretty much any other regulation you like.

Rescheduling it for another weekend was actually a good suggestion, but finding space on a busy timetable for an additional hour-long race isn’t easy. It could replace a practice session at a later race weekend on the calendar, but that would potentially compromise set-up work and other tasks competitors look to accomplish during practice. Plus it would mean risking their cars for an additional outing and potentially losing out on far larger points if they picked up damage that sidelined them for the remainder of the weekend.

It always seems to be British GT that discovers these anomalies in the rules by tripping over them – remember Rockingham’s safety-car debacle from last year, where the lead car was waved past into an unassailable lead because it was carrying a live track-limits penalty? That unintended consequence was spotted and fixed.

For now, the swift action of SRO and the stewards to reach a firm decision and stand by it should be applauded. Neither wanted this to rumble on, so why should it? British GT this year is the strongest it’s ever been. We’ve still got eight races and six weekends to go, so the title fight is far from decided. Perhaps that’s the bigger thing to focus on. ✂

TOCA SUPPORTS BRANDS HATCH APRIL 7-8



## Colliding Coates and Rivett share opening Clio honours

### RENAULT UK CLIO CUP

The results sheets may suggest comfortable wins for Paul Rivett and Max Coates in the opening races of the Clio Cup season, but that doesn't tell the full story of two frenetic contests.

The first was red-flagged after just three laps following a typical Brands Hatch Clio roll. The victim this time was Brett Lidsey, whose car flipped over after hitting the barriers backwards out of Druids following contact with Zak Fulk.

But already in that time Rivett had managed to storm into second

after staying round the outside all the way from Paddock Hill Bend and up through Druids to pass Jack McCarthy and Sam Osborne.

Three-time champion Rivett was again looking racy on the restart and on lap two dived down the inside of leader Coates at Paddock.

But Coates never allowed Rivett to escape and with three laps to go made an attempt to pass the WDE driver at Druids. He was too far back, though, and clattered into Rivett – gifting the Clio veteran a win, despite him missing virtually all of Friday testing with an actuator problem.

“We took a very different line – I tried a move and it didn't work,” was Coates' take on the attempted move. But it backfired badly for the Pyro driver as the contact damaged his steering.

This set up an incredible final few tours with a whole swarm of Clios ganging up on Coates.

He tried valiantly to hang on with his hobbled car, but ended up taking fifth after succumbing to James Colburn, Dan Rowbottom and Lee Pattison.

There were no such troubles for Coates in race two as he made a great start – beating poleman McCarthy off the line – and stormed to an easy win.

“It was a change to have a clear race!” beamed Coates. “Apart from the little bump with Paul the weekend was pretty much perfect.”

But it was again frantic behind. Rivett made another great start and had climbed to third when he was the victim of contact with Pattison and McCarthy at Graham Hill Bend that sent him wide and dropped him to sixth.

He didn't stay there for long. Rivett pulled off a series of great moves, culminating in a pass on McCarthy at Clearways to take second.

“I had three great starts, which is quite unusual for me,” joked Rivett. “We leave here leading the championship and I'm determined to get that fourth title this year.”

McCarthy salvaged something from his weekend, after disappointing getaways in both races dropped him back from front-row starts, by claiming the final place on the podium ahead of former British Touring Car racer Mike Epps and Pyro youngster Bradley Burns, following more close battling.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

## Browning survives own best efforts to win

### GINETTA JUNIOR

Luke Browning had done all the hard work. He had passed leaders Ruben Del Sarte and Adam Smalley to take first place in the second of the Ginetta Junior races, but then he looked to have thrown it all away as he ran wide at Graham Hill Bend.

The error dropped the Richardson Racing driver back to fourth on lap six of 17, but he quickly set about making amends. He soon deposed of Louis Foster and then in the closing stages pounced on the leaders on consecutive tours at Druids to reclaim his place at the front of the field and take a brilliant maiden win.

“I had my heart in my mouth,” he

admitted after making the mistake, while Smalley reckoned Browning had the faster car as rain intensified later in the contest.

There were three cars at the front of a terrific first race too. Smalley, his Elite Motorsport team-mate Fin Green and Del Sarte had a frenetic battle, from which Smalley emerged victorious, after light contact between the other two out of Paddock Hill Bend.

Further back, Foster took a brace of excellent fourth places and rookie-class victories – the first particularly impressive after keeping a stream of cars, headed by Browning, behind for the duration of the race.

STEPHEN LICKORISH





# Simmons banks F4 double

## BRITISH F4

Ayrton Simmons grabbed the early British Formula 4 advantage with two hard-fought victories.

Saturday's qualifying session crucially gave Simmons the edge as he pipped rookie Kiern Jewiss to pole position.

The JHR Developments driver almost threw away victory in race one, with a wide moment at Paddock Hill Bend on lap two. Fortunately for Simmons, "a small mistake" at Graham Hill Bend for Jewiss meant he could hang on to win.

It took Sebastian Priaulx until only his second race to claim his maiden victory in single-seaters. The Arden driver finished

third on the road, but 10-second jump-start penalties demoted Fortec Motorsport's Johnathan Hoggard and polesitter Patrik Pasma to fifth and sixth respectively.

Simmons lost out to Jewiss at Druids on the opening tour of a greasy final race, but the latter drifted wide at Surtees a lap later to hand his rival a second win.

A narrow third in race one, Dennis Hauger was then limited to seventh by a slow puncture second time out. A safety car to remove the bizarrely interlocked cars of Lucca Allen and Sebastian Alvarez gave Hauger a chance in the final race to attack Simmons, but ultimately he slid wide at Paddock Hill Bend to ninth.

DAN MASON

# Supercup brace for Ladell

## GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

Former Clio Cup racer Charlie Ladell starred in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup with two wins at Brands Hatch.

Rob Boston Racing's Ladell converted twice from pole position, tailed by Carl Boardley, who grabbed the final victory after Harry King's jump-start penalty.

"Gutted" when red flags aborted his strong start in race one, Ladell kept Boardley and King at bay en route to a "perfect" maiden win.

King's graduation from Juniors was seamless as he grabbed a podium ahead of a defensive Reece Somerfield, the podium unchanged in a wet race two.

Two spins at Surtees eliminated Somerfield, while Tom Roche's

lunge at Paddock Hill Bend left Tom Hibbert in the gravel and Roche out with steering damage.

"A clean car and three podiums" were Boardley's demands, and they were completed with race-three spoils. Roche recovered from 10th to a fine second place, with Ladell demoted 5s to third for disrespecting track limits.

A heavy race-one shunt at Druids ended Grahame Tilley's weekend – he and Adam Shepherd were powerless to avoid rookie Angus Fender, who spun after contact with Roche.

Michael Crees claimed two Am-class wins, although he was demoted to second behind Jack Minshaw for race-one startline contact.

DAN MASON

## RENAULT UK CLIO CUP

**Race 1 (17 laps) 1 Paul Rivett;** 2 James Colburn +4.727s; 3 Daniel Rowbottom; 4 Lee Pattison; 5 Max Coates; 6 Michael Epps. **Fastest lap** Coates 52.411s (82.97mph). **Pole** Coates. **Starters** 19.

**Race 2 (19 laps) 1 Coates;** 2 Rivett +2.346s; 3 Jack McCarthy; 4 Epps; 5 Sam Osborne; 6 Bradley Burns. **FL** Zak Fulk 58.834s (73.91mph). **P** McCarthy. **S** 19.

**Points** 1 Rivett 48; 2 Coates 45; 3 Epps 31; 4 Pattison 28; 5 Rowbottom 26; 6 Osborne 26.

## GINETTA JUNIOR

**Race 1 (18 laps) 1 Adam Smalley;** 2 Ruben Del Sarte +4.622s; 3 Fin Green; 4 Louis Foster; 5 Luke Browning; 6 Greg Johnson. **FL** Del Sarte 57.415s (75.74mph). **P** Smalley. **S** 21.

**Race 2 (17 laps) 1 Browning;** 2 Smalley +0.500s; 3 Del Sarte; 4 Foster; 5 Johnson; 6 Patrick Kibble. **FL** Browning 1m04.248s (67.68mph). **P** Smalley. **S** 21.

**Points** 1 Smalley 66; 2 Del Sarte 57; 3 Browning 56; 4 Foster 44; 5 Johnson 38; 6 Green 32.

## BRITISH F4

**Race 1 (26 laps) 1 Ayrton Simmons;** 2 Kiern Jewiss +0.362s; 3 Dennis Hauger; 4 Seb Priaulx; 5 Paavo Tonteri; 6 Johnathan Hoggard. **FL** Simmons 46.583s (93.35mph). **P** Simmons. **S** 14.

**Race 2 (24 laps) 1 Priaulx;** 2 Simmons +0.852s; 3 Jack Doohan; 4 Jewiss; 5 Hoggard; 6 Patrik Pasma. **FL** Hoggard 46.395s (93.73mph). **P** Pasma. **S** 14.

**Race 3 (23 laps) 1 Simmons;** 2 Jewiss +0.922s; 3 Tonteri; 4 Priaulx; 5 Josh Skelton; 6 Hampus Ericsson. **FL** Simmons 46.872s (92.77mph). **P** Simmons. **S** 14.

**Points** 1 Simmons 68; 2 Priaulx 49; 3 Jewiss 48; 4 Tonteri 25; 5 Doohan and Hauger 23.

## GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

**Race 1 (16 laps) 1 Charles Ladell;** 2 Carl Boardley +1.413s; 3 Harry King; 4 Reece Somerfield; 5 Tom Hibbert; 6 Tom Roche. **FL** Ladell 48.271s (90.08mph). **P** Ladell. **S** 19.

**Race 2 (26 laps) 1 Ladell;** 2 Boardley +0.516s; 3 King; 4 Jac Constable; 5 Carl Shield; 6 Michael Crees. **FL** Ladell 53.777s (80.86mph). **P** Ladell. **S** 18.

**Race 3 (26 laps) 1 Boardley;** 2 Roche +3.203s; 3 Ladell; 4 Shield; 5 Constable; 6 Somerfield. **FL** Boardley 49.014s (88.72mph). **P** Andrew Gordon-Colebrooke. **S** 18.

**Points** 1 Ladell 99; 2 Boardley 96; 3 King 68; 4 Constable 56; 5 Shield 54; 6 Gordon-Colebrooke 48.

## PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

**Race 1 (34 laps) 1 Dino Zamparelli;** 2 Tio Ellinas +3.683s; 3 Lewis Plato; 4 George Gamble; 5 Jamie Orton; 6 Tom Wrigley. **FL** Ellinas 52.632s (82.62mph). **P** Zamparelli. **S** 21.

**Race 2 (25 laps) 1 Gamble;** 2 Ellinas +2.074s; 3 Zamparelli; 4 Plato; 5 Wrigley; 6 Orton. **FL** Daniel Harper 47.136s (92.25mph). **P** Orton. **S** 21.

**Points** 1 Zamparelli 20; 2 Ellinas 18; 3 Gamble 16; 4 Plato 13; 5 Orton 7; 6 Wrigley 7.



Simmons (12) was run close for F4 honours

JEP/PLAT

# Gamble lucks into victory

## CARRERA CUP GB

It wasn't just in British Touring Cars where there was a surprise winner at Brands Hatch; the second Porsche Carrera Cup GB race produced a bizarre result too.

With an already mixed-up order after a partially-reversed grid, Lewis Plato looked to be in control until a mid-race safety car with Pro/Am racer Greg Caton stranded at Druids and Am driver Fraser Robertson pitched into a roll by Peter Kyle-Henney at Clearways. That wiped out a four-second lead for Plato and then, just before the restart, he ran wide out of the final corner and handed the lead to George Gamble.

There was no time for Plato to fight

back, as just three laps later the race was red-flagged with Iain Dockerill stranded at Clearways and fluid all over the track after a collision with Justin Sherwood.

That gifted Gamble the win in just his first weekend in the series, having finished third in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup standings last season. "That was a crazy race," he said. "I didn't know I had won!"

Tio Ellinas was classified second, with Dino Zamparelli completing the podium ahead of Plato.

Race one was less bizarre, with Zamparelli dominant throughout and Ellinas emerging ahead in the battle to best of the rest. Plato rounded off the top three.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Tarling (1) led the way in a stunning FF1600 encounter

WALKER

# HSCC opens with Formula Ford thrillers

**DONINGTON PARK**  
**HSCC**  
**APRIL 7-8**

Starting with a commemoration of double Formula 1 world champion Jim Clark on the 50th anniversary of his death, the Historic Sports Car Club's 2018 season opener will also be remembered for sensationally close racing.

Both Historic Formula Ford finals were epics, won by Ben Mitchell and Richard Tarling respectively.

Polesitter Mitchell fell to fifth on lap one when his Merlyn jumped out of gear hopping the kerb at McLeans. Unfazed, he fought back to pass the Lola of Cameron Jackson, Callum Grant's Merlyn Mk11/17,

Tarling in his Jamun and early leader Nelson Rowe's Crossle to seize first from fourth in a breathtaking dive into Redgate.

Sunday's round was incredible – "probably the best Formula Ford race I've ever seen," enthused HSCC chief Grahame White – with four leaders and the top seven split by a second at the flag.

Often three or four abreast, the order was decided by awesome slipstreaming and Jackson missing a gear, which blunted Rowe's nose, dumping him to fifth. Tarling – ahead for the fourth time – triumphed from Jackson, Mitchell and Grant. Ghislain Genecand, a brilliant seventh, earned 'Over 50s' honours, tailed by fellow Crossle driver Stuart Kestenbaum.

Having fluffed his gearchange off the line, '70s Road Sports polesitter Charles Barter's Datsun 240Z arrived at Redgate sixth in a huge pack. It took four laps for the champion to hit the front, whereupon he bested Russell Paterson's Morgan +8 for victory. Regretting a brush with Jez Clark, whose Lotus Elan ended up in the gravel, Jim Dean caught the Morgan before his Europa's brakes wilted.

Reigning Historic Formula 3 champion Jon Milicevic was "very disappointed" when challenger Andrew Hibberd spun on lap

three of Saturday's opener as the Brabham pair scrapped. Hibberd's recovery from 10s down was superb, the ex-Chris Irwin BT18 finishing half a length shy. A similar scenario played out on Sunday, when initial leader Hibberd bounced back from sixth to second. Ian Bankhurst was ecstatic with two thirds in his Project X Alexis Mk8.

Andy Park's Historic FF2000 title hat-trick quest started perfectly with two wins over past master Nelson Rowe in a 28-car field. Rowe shot from 14th in the opener after brake issues in qualifying. Andy Storer completed a Reynard podium lock-out on Saturday, but Davy Walton bagged third for Royale on Sunday.

Lee Cunningham gave Nick Edginton's Dallara 381/382 a dream debut, blitzing both Classic F3 races. The Safr of Pat Gormley and Keith White in his Ralt RT1 chased hardest, but the URS FF2000 contingent was right in the mix, particularly in the damp second race, in which those who opted for wets regretted their choice. RT3-driving Scot David Thorburn bagged third. Returnee Erik Pagano and Chris Lord were the most forceful Pinto pedallers in Van Diemen RF82s, but Drew Cameron and Chris Levy, after a race-one off, claimed the wins.

After Andrew Hibberd's first-lap



Classic F3 honours went to Cunningham (9)

WALKER



DONINGTON PARK  
WEEKEND WINNERS

## '70s ROAD SPORTS

Charles Barter (Datsun 240Z)

## CLASSIC FORMULA 3 WITH URS

Race 1 Lee Cunningham (Dallara 381/382)

Race 2 Lee Cunningham (Dallara 381/382)

## GUARDS TROPHY

Will Schryver/James Hadfield (Chevron-BMW B6)

## HISTORIC FORMULA 3

Race 1 Jon Milicevic (Brabham BT21B)

Race 2 Jon Milicevic (Brabham BT21B)

## HISTORIC FORMULA FORD

Heat 1 Harvey Sykes (Crossle 20F)

Final 1 Ben Mitchell (Merlyn Mk20)

Heat 2 Ben Tusting (Merlyn Mk20A)

Final 2 Richard Turling (Jamun T2)

## HISTORIC FORMULA FORD 2000

Race 1 Andrew Park (Reynard SF81)

Race 2 Andrew Park (Reynard SF81)

## HISTORIC FORMULA JUNIOR

Sam Wilson (Lotus 20/22)

## HISTORIC ROAD SPORTS

John Davison (Lotus Elan S1)

## HISTORIC TOURING CARS

Philip House (Ford Lotus Cortina)

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[www.mstworld.com/results/hssc](http://www.mstworld.com/results/hssc)

excursion in drizzle, Sam Wilson worked harder than he wanted to for Formula Junior victory in his Lotus 20/22. Once Pete Morton in his Lightning Envoyette had shaken off James Murray's Lola Mk5A, he closed to within a second of Wilson, who duly responded with fastest lap. "Grip was hit and miss, surprisingly high in places, none in others," he said.

Current champion Peter de la Roche parked his Lola Mk3 in the Craner Curves while a class-leading fourth. Morton's father Alex won the front-engine battle in his Condor-Ford, Mark Woodhouse having lost ground in his Elva-BMC 100. In a bid to repass Crispian Besley's Cooper T56, Nick Taylor's sister Elva ended up backwards in the chicane gravel bed.

Norwegian U2TC (for pre-1966 under two-litre touring cars) regular Martin Strommen only briefly regained his practice advantage over Phil House in an entertaining fight that was resolved by just 0.424s. The Lotus Cortina duo were harassed in damp conditions by reigning champion Steve Platts in his screaming Singer Chamois. Behind Platts, Adrian Oliver forged his Imp to fifth amid the Mustangs of Alex Thistlethwayte, Mark Watts and Greg Thornton.

MARCUS PYE

# Unusual suspects lead tricky Guards Trophy

**DONINGTON PARK  
HSSC GUARDS TROPHY  
APRIL 7-8**

On a treacherous track it was no surprise to see a Schryver and Hadfield-shared Chevron B6 win Saturday's Guards Trophy opener, except this time it was Michael's and Simon's sons Will and James who skated to victory on their debut together.

Schryver was among qualifying's early pacesetters, but Hadfield revelled in better conditions as the circuit began to dry. His final shot was 0.015 seconds shy of Charles Allison's pole time in the ex-Trevor Twaites 1970 RAC British championship-winning B8.

Allison led the race initially, despite thinking that he had picked up a puncture. But Schryver howled past and, after a massive oil spill from the Elva-BMW Mk7S of Nick Pancisi, handed Hadfield



Chevrons locked out Guards podium

a well-crafted advantage.

Greg Thornton's B8, an Avon-tyred invitee among the Dunlop-shod title contenders, passed Allison as he emerged from his stop. But Hadfield matched the 2013 FIA Masters Historic Formula 1 champion to score a sensational maiden victory.

Head-gasket failure halted Andy Newall and Andy Garside's Lotus 23B, promoting Jon Waggitt/Peter Needham's Lenham to fourth. Defending champion John Davison (in a replica of the Lotus Elan 26R 'Gold Bug' Jim Clark drove for Ian Walker) claimed GT honours.

MARCUS PYE

# Davison tops GT battle

**DONINGTON PARK  
HISTORIC ROAD SPORTS  
APRIL 7-8**

Lotus Elan S1 ace John Davison resolved to "get my head down" and escape the three Rover V8-powered cars that hemmed him in on the grid. But when 2015 champion Kevin Kivlochan found more traction on the resurfaced grid, the plan backfired.

As 'KeKi' snarled his dark blue Morgan ahead of Davison at the lights, Tim Pearce dived his +8 inside Richard Plant's for third into the right-hander, giving Kivlochan breathing space. "I had to find a way past Kevin. He drives the widest Morgan on the planet," said Davison, having outbraked him at the chicane.

Davison couldn't rest, for once Plant had breached Pearce's defences he closed on Kivlochan. Plant didn't stint in his efforts to unseat Kivlochan as Pearce faded.



Kivlochan (98) was just 0.5s shy of Davison (26)

Kivlochan was shown the chequer, Davison having confused the finish-line marshals by retracting his headlights on the final lap, taking away their recognition aid. Pearce watched the fun unfold, clear of Jonathan Rose debuting the ex-Paul Tooms double title-winning Elan.

Behind Rose, Mark Godfrey briefly snuck his open Ginetta G4 past veteran Bruce Stapleton's Morgan. Barrys Davison and Ashdown enjoyed a wonderful Elan tussle until Davison spun exiting Redgate.

MARCUS PYE

# Reid makes limited chances count with Mini treble

Reid took three wins, but work commitments will hamper his year



## **KNOCKHILL** **SMRC** **APRIL 8**

Kyle Reid started the new Scottish Motor Racing Club season at Knockhill in dominant fashion with a hat-trick of Scottish Mini Cooper Cup wins. But it was full-season driver John Duncan who left the Fife circuit happiest after a trio of podiums.

With reigning champion Mark Geraghty pursuing other ventures south of the border,

Reid stamped his authority on the weekend, taking pole position by 0.3s from Duncan.

A clean getaway amid the chaos behind was key to claiming victory from Duncan and Robbie Dalgleish in an opening race that was twice interrupted by the safety car. Simon Holderness and Craig Blake both found themselves in the gravel at McIntyre's early in the race, while Hannah Chapman and rookie Jake Hutchison also suffered race-ending contact.

Reid and Duncan replicated their results

in an entertaining second race, but Dalgleish's hopes were dashed by a blown clutch exiting the Hairpin.

The reversed-grid final race meant Reid had to work his way through from fifth, which he achieved superbly. The Aberdeenshire man snatched second at Duffus when series returnee David Sleight's ambitious dive up the inside of Dominic Wheatley didn't come off. Then he went on to assume the lead from Wheatley approaching half-distance.

# MG double for Burgess amid safety car confusion

## **SILVERSTONE** **MGCC** **APRIL 7**

The first part of a Silverstone MG Trophy victory double for Jason Burgess was clouded by post-race controversy following a safety-car restart.

Burgess summed it up: "It's not the most happy victory I have had. I don't like seeing my competitors feeling hard done by."

He passed Doug Cole marginally before the timing line when the safety car made a late dive for the pits that caught several competitors napping. Cole, who had climbed from fourth to lead the race within half a lap, was then shuffled back to third by Graham Ross at Brooklands three laps after the restart.

Cole was also frustrated in race two: early contact put him well down, but he had raced back up to fourth when forced to retire. Up front, Ross tried to outbrake Burgess at Brooklands but spun after door-to-door contact between the ZR190s.

Reigning champion Matthew Turnbull was immediately on the pace as he stepped up to the ZR170 division, but he was twice denied class victory by Paul Luti.

Mark Ashworth's battle-scarred TVR Grantura clung on to victory in the main Equipe GTS race despite contact with Tom Andrew's Elva Courier at Woodcote on the penultimate lap. This also brought Chris Ryan's Triumph TR4 and Tom Smith's MGB into last-minute contention. The overflow race ended in a photo finish, with Babak Farsian's MGB Roadster a nose ahead of Rob Cobden's Elva Courier after erstwhile



leader David Keers-Trafford took a self-imposed drive-through penalty having misinterpreted a warning flag.

Martin Brewer drove his Aston Martin Project 214 copy to victory in the inaugural Pre-'63 race, despite an off (while trying to avoid the spinning Elva of Paul and Tom Andrew) that briefly handed the lead to Sarah Bennett-Baggs/Mike Thorne's Big Healey. The Elva that Brewer had been trying to avoid finished second.

There was an impressive field for the BCV8 season opener, but it didn't include reigning champion Russ McCarthy owing to qualifying dramas. Rob Spencer just about led throughout, but the challenge from Neil



“It’s awesome to get three wins, but I’m not competing in the full season because of work commitments, which is a great shame,” explained Reid.

An enhanced grid of 15 cars helped the Scottish Sports & Saloons deliver two excellent races, won by Robert Drummond and Roddie Paterson.

Paterson showed great tenacity in his two-wheel-drive Caterham C400 as he fended off Drummond’s four-wheel-drive Ford Escort Cosworth and the similarly turbocharged Mitsubishi Evo of Kenneth McKell. Title contender Ron Cumming suffered mechanical problems in his Nemesis Kit Car throughout and failed to make the finish in either race. Oliver Mortimer claimed two Cooper S class wins.

Despite not having driven his Ray GR17 since November’s Walter Hayes Trophy at Silverstone, Ross Martin remained dominant in both Scottish Formula Ford 1600 races. The Mazda Road to Indy finalist broke the circuit lap record no fewer than five times en route to victory in race one, after Jordan Gronkowski’s Van Diemen broke down on the third lap. Martin then converted a second pole into victory in race two, beating Seb Melrose to the line, with the recovering Gronkowski third.

Reigning champion John Paterson began his quest for a fifth Scottish Legends title by remarkably taking all three wins on offer. He made up 10 places in two laps in the opening heat to take victory from David Newall and Ivor Greenwood.

Having taken race two at a canter from pole, Paterson then produced another



Drummond’s Escort (29) belches flames as he battles McKell’s Evo (37)



Ross Martin (1) was straight into a groove despite long winter

sensational drive from 16th to beat Ryan McLeish in the final race.

Robert Bremner cruised to a pair of Classic Sports & Saloon race wins in his striking AC Cobra V8, beating the Rover 3500 of John Kinmond in both. Kinmond fought off Raymond Boyd’s Porsche 911 in the first race, and the pair were joined in a stunning podium battle by Andrew Graham in his Triumph TR8 in race two. Fiesta XR2 class honours went to Martin Ramsay.

**STEPHEN BRUNSDON**



Fowler (86) ran Spencer (90) close for MGBCV8 win

Fowler intensified in the final laps. Ollie Neaves took advantage of a huge spin for Andrew Young to win Class C.

Ray Collier spun at Becketts, the second corner of the Cockshoot Cup encounter. Within two laps he was back into the lead in his ZR, and pulled clear of Philip Standish’s bright orange TF and Peter Bramble’s B, after Ashley Woodward’s ZS blew its engine.

The Tomcats of Matthew Simpson and Richard Buckley split the honours in the MG Cup contests, but Metro champion Mike Williams stole the show. He has uprated his title-winning GTi to run an 1800cc engine, but even that did not give him quite enough speed down the straights.



Ashworth (87) was defiant in his battered TVR

He guided it through the corners with sufficient commitment to spend plenty of time in the lead until a leak took hold. In his own words: “It was stinking of fuel and then it just died.”

Buckley had already retired with drive-flange failure, although he bounced back in the second race when the Metro was affected by gearbox issues.

In the absence of Williams, the Ashton brothers resumed their Metro Cup rivalry. Jack left Silverstone with bragging rights after his sibling Andrew was edged back to third by Dan Balster three laps from the end.

**IAN SOWMAN**

## WEEKEND WINNERS

### KNOCKHILL

#### BMW & FIESTA/HOT HATCH CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 Peter Cruickshank (Fiesta ST)  
Race 2 Wayne MacCaulay (Fiesta ST)

#### CLASSIC SPORTS & SALOONS CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 Robert Bremner (AC Cobra)  
Race 2 Robert Bremner (AC Cobra)

#### FORMULA FORD 1600 CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 Ross Martin (Ray GR17)  
Race 2 Ross Martin (Ray GR17)

#### SCOTTISH LEGENDS CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 John Paterson  
Race 2 John Paterson  
Race 3 John Paterson

#### MINI COOPER CUP

Race 1 Kyle Reid  
Race 2 Kyle Reid  
Race 3 Kyle Reid

#### SPORTS & SALOONS CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 Robert Drummond (Ford Escort Cosworth)  
Race 2 Roddie Paterson (Caterham C400)

For full results visit: [speedhive.mylaps.com](http://speedhive.mylaps.com)

### SILVERSTONE

#### BCV8 CHAMPIONSHIP

Rob Spencer (B GTV8)

#### COCKSHOOT CUP

Ray Collier (MG ZR 190)

#### EQUIPE GTS

GROUP A Mark Ashworth (TVR Grantura)  
GROUP B Babak Farsian (MGB Roadster)

#### EQUIPE PRE-63

Martin Brewer (Aston Martin DP214 Copy)

#### MG CUP

Race 1 Matthew Simpson (Rover Tomcat)  
Race 2 Richard Buckley (Rover Tomcat)

#### MG TROPHY

Race 1 Jason Burgess (ZR 190)  
Race 2 Jason Burgess (ZR 190)

#### METRO CUP

Jack Ashton (Rover Metro GTi)

#### MIDGET/SPRITE CHALLENGE

David Morrison (MG Midget)

For full results visit: [tsl-timing.com](http://tsl-timing.com)



MG Trophy drama at Silverstone

# Le Mans-style racers for the cost of a tin-top

*The 750 Motor Club's RGB championship has come a long way in a short time. Le Mans podium finisher Anthony Reid tested a range of cars to see just how far*

KEVIN TURNER

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY JEP/SAYLE





**A**n affordable sports-prototype, multi-make series with frontrunners who can lap at current British Touring Car Championship speeds sounds like a good idea. And that's what the 750 Motor Club's RGB championship – enamed RGB Sports 1000 for 2018 – now provides.

Begun as a series in 2001, the category for motorcycle-powered machines has developed a long way. Originally populated by Caterham-style front-engined cars, often run by one-man bands, now the series has specially built mid-engined racers run by small constructors. Privateers still compete, but the increasing professionalism of works teams from Spire and Mittell has made RGB a difficult club championship to win.

The racing at the front is tough and the variety of the field high, with a lack of downforce meaning that overtaking is also possible, so it seemed like a good idea to try some of the cars for an Autosport track test. Step forward, former BTCC star and 1990 Le Mans 24 Hours podium finisher Anthony Reid, who tried them at Donington Park. >>

Reid stepped in to test five RGB racers



## RULES AT A GLANCE

- Front, mid and rear-engined layouts are permitted
- Standard four-stroke motorcycle engines with standard ECUs
- 'Mechanical grip' formula, so aerodynamic development is strictly controlled



## Procomp Phoenix

After introducing himself to all the owners and drivers, and taken a look at the cars, Reid climbs aboard Oliver Hewitt's Procomp Phoenix for his first run. Although a number of (standard) motorbike engines are permitted in RGB, all the cars here are powered by a 1000cc Honda unit producing around 170-180bhp. Unlike the other four test cars, the Phoenix has the engine in front of the driver (and slightly to the left). "This one looks very different to the others," says Reid.

The Phoenix is the oldest car here, having been built by category ace Tim Gray 15 years ago as an STM Phoenix, but it has scored multiple championship successes. As well as numerous class titles, it won the overall RGB crown in 2005 (Gray) and '10 (Alastair Boulton). It has subsequently been developed further by Matt Gilmour at Procomp.

The front-engined cars have traditionally had their own class, but that has changed for 2018. RGB has moved to a single-class structure, with the front-engined machines allowed to run at 550kg, as opposed to the 580kg (up from 560kg) of the mid-engined racers.

"We're trying to get people like me into the series – a regular guy with a normal job," says professional photographer Hewitt, who only started racing four years ago.

"We need to be lighter because, although all the engines are the same, I lose more through transmission losses."

Hewitt started racing at the age of 30, and has only competed in RGB because it is "cheap and fast". He bought the Phoenix for £8500 and estimates £7000 for the seven-meeting, 14-race 2018 season.

RGB's control tyre is the street-legal Yokohama A048R, a set of which can last a whole season. Not being a slick, it also operates in a wide range of temperatures, just as well given the biting cold conditions at Donington as Reid heads out.

Hewitt has never seen his car on track before in the hands of someone else, but Reid is soon back in. The experienced racer has noted that the right-front wheel is locking – something Hewitt had also found on his preliminary run – and the brake bias is moved to the rear.

After another run, Reid is enthusiastic. "I can see why it's been so successful," he says. "It's benign and gives you confidence to push."

"With the engine offset to the left, when you brake you can feel the weight transfer to the left-front. It's quite lazy and it has mid-corner to exit understeer, but it's got good mechanical grip. And I love the engine. The last three laps I was stretching its legs."

That probably helps explain why Reid picks up a warning for breaking the 98dB noise limit, something Hewitt falls foul of again later in the day.

Fast Sabre is quick  
to change direction -  
"almost too pointy"



## AB Sabre t2a

Tim Hoverd's Sabre is next and has the engine in the more conventional position. The car, built in 2014, was designed by Andy Bates and Steve Wills at AB Performance, but Hoverd has done a lot of work himself, including suspension development and the carbon bodywork, which he did using resin infusion. Quite a few other design details (such as the pedal box) were done by Lee Baverstock from Garagisti.

"It's been through quite a few changes," says Hoverd. "The bodywork was designed by me, my son Tom and friend Adrian Moore [another RGBer]. Tom has a fancy qualification in aeronautical engineering, which at least means he's not a total aerodynamics amateur like me."

Uniquely in our quintet, the Sabre has paddleshift instead of a sequential gearchange. "It's a personal-preference thing," explains Hoverd. "I don't like taking my hands off the wheel. The gearing on the bike gearboxes is pretty close and if you're not careful you end up driving with one hand on the wheel

and the other on the shift lever. We're not allowed flat-shifters so all gearchanging is completely mechanical."

Hoverd budgets £12,000 per season, including testing (of which £1500 is for an engine rebuild), and finished fourth in the rear-engined class and fifth overall last year.

"The speed for the money is incredibly good," says Hoverd of the appeal of RGB. "The sound is fantastic – an RGB start is quite something. And the fact that we don't allow wings means the cars look quite retro."

Reid, who raced the MG-Lola EX257 Le Mans prototype, can see the Sabre's similarity to top-end sportscars. "Dynamically, it's more of a sports-racer than the Phoenix and it will be faster," reckons Reid. "It has very fast change of direction – almost a little too direct and pointy – but it also has mid-corner-to-exit understeer. The rear sits down, the front picks up and you get understeer, but it brakes well and fundamentally it is very good."



FAST FACT

Caterham driver Doug Newman was the winner of the first Fisher Sportscars Roadgoing Bike-engined car race, held at Snetterton on April 8, 2001.



Reid found Procomp Phoenix benign with good mechanical grip

BDN S3

Another privateer is Colin Chapman, who is on the RGB committee, and has provided his BDN S3 for Reid to try.

The BDN is a product of the Baldwin family – Bentley engineer Ian designed it, father Brian was the constructor/fabricator and Rob was the original driver. Chapman’s car (which he sold before the start of this season) was built from a kit in 2011. The rear bodywork was originally designed to take a rear wing – not allowed in RGB – so Chapman has had to modify the tail to prevent lift.

Chapman was a motocross competitor who switched to Caterhams and then RGB with a Fisher Fury. Over his 14 seasons, he believes his budget has typically been between £5000-£10,000 per year, with his more recent full campaigns costing £7200 including testing, or £6000 without.

“We can fix pretty much everything on them ourselves,” says

Chapman. “I get help on specialist stuff – my engines are done by Andy Bates at AB Performance and the support I get from Brian Baldwin is great.

“For performance per pound, I can’t think of anything that can match RGB.”

Reid finds the layout of the cockpit the most challenging thing about the BDN. “It’s the least ergonomically friendly – you’re sitting on the car rather than in it. You have to look really high up for the mirror [on the rollcage] and really low down for the dash,” he says. “You don’t spend a lot of time looking down the road!

“It doesn’t have a lot of grip – not as much as the Sabre – but it’s a well-sorted car. It’s got a good balance, is predictable and the brakes are good. It’s like a rear-wheel-drive touring car on old tyres. You feel safe and it’s a well-built car.”



Reid thought BDN lacks grip but is “well-built” and “well-sorted”





Current title-holder  
Spire GT-3's braking  
impressed Reid in test

### Mittell MC-52b v Spire GT-3

Spire has been the RGB constructor to beat for much of this decade, with Mittell becoming its chief rival. Scott Mittell ended a run of Spire title success in 2015, with Spire men John Cutmore and reigning champion Billy Albone striking back subsequently. It seems sensible for Reid to test these cars together.

Dan Larner's Mittell is first up. It's the car that took the 2015 crown and Larner bought it the following year. He had to sit out last season, but is planning to contest most '18 rounds. Like many of the other competitors, Larner estimates a budget of £5000-£7000 depending on testing and has made RGB his racing 'home'.

Now an engineer at Jaguar Land Rover, Larner used to be an instructor at PalmerSport, which enabled him to drive and instruct in a variety of cars. The Palmer JP-LM sports-prototype was his

favourite, so his research led him to RGB when he decided to go racing: "I knew what style of cars I liked and financially RGB is no more expensive than other 750MC championships."

Reid has a quick run and is immediately impressed, despite a sticking gear lever and slipping clutch on the car's first outing of the year. "The Mittell has a low-slung driving position, which I like – it makes you feel more part of the car," says Reid.

"It's got a very fine balance. The front is very accurate and you've got oversteer through the whole corner, but only a little bit."

He immediately jumps out and into the Spire.

Paul Nightingale's Spire Sportscars initially had success with Cutmore and its GTR model, but then Paul Rogers arrived with his Contour and started winning, forcing Spire to respond.

"The GTR was quite a bulky car, so we set out to make



Mittell MC-52b has fine  
balance with accurate,  
linear turn-in

ALL PICS: JEP/SAYLE



## BTCC PACE

The RGB lap record at Donington Park is 1m11.33s. The fastest race lap at last year's BTCC round was 1m10.19s.



something smaller and lighter," says Nightingale. "By the time we'd finished only the steering rack was the same."

The GT-3 was designed using CAD, backed up by windtunnel work at MIRA. Spire has now produced over 20 examples, which have won more than 100 races outright, and one has even made it as far as Japan. A bewinged Bikesports version has also been developed.

The new basic kit for the RGB-spec GT-3 is £7990 plus VAT, with a complete kit for customers to build costing around £26,000 plus VAT. For £32,000, you get a race-ready machine, including three sets of wheels and tyres. Along with Mittell's MC-53, it is at the cutting edge of RGB designs.

Spire's willingness and ability to push the boundaries has caused some tension with the rulemakers, providing a parallel with the higher echelons of the sport. "I like to interpret the regulations to try to give us an edge although it doesn't always work," says Nightingale. "They try to keep it very close and very tight."

It's something Chapman also acknowledges. "It is a development championship, but you also want to make sure money doesn't drive it," he says. "Every year Spire and Mittell bring new stuff out. Sometimes these changes comply with the letter of the regs but not the spirit, so if necessary we update the regs to ban a specific change. We have to keep writing out loopholes to maintain the performance-per-pound of the formula."

"We try to keep the fundamentals of cheap engines and no added aero, to keep it close to a mechanical-grip series."

The GT-3 at Donington still weighs 560kg, not the 580kg limit of 2018. An updated version is in the pipeline for Albone's title defence.

"It feels a great car just sitting in it," says Reid, who does have some difficulty with the headrest. He's soon up to speed and finds the GT-3 and Mittell difficult to separate.

"The performance levels of the Mittell and the Spire are very similar," he says. "The Spire has great brakes, though it's got a less-accurate turn-in – it's not linear like the Mittell. If you drive the Spire with commitment it has breakaway oversteer, which may be down to damper settings."

"I prefer the Mittell, but both are great cars, great fun to drive, with strong power-to-weight ratios."

"There's not much downforce and they're on treaded tyres. You can get out of shape in these cars and get them back. They talk to you." ❄

## REID'S RACE REQUEST

RGB's field has fluctuated between the teens and early 20s in recent times, and Reid is keen to join the fray after his day at Donington, with an outing in the Spire a possibility.

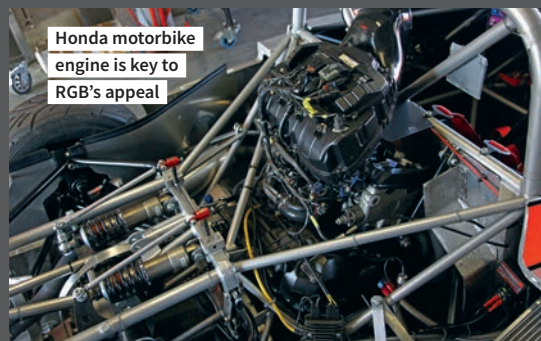
"The range of cars means there can be quite a big gap between them, but I think it's a great concept," reckons Reid. "It allows family-built cars like the Sabre to run with the semi-professionals. With a bit of development, it has the potential of the Spire and the Mittell, which is

quite an achievement for a home-built car.

"RGB is cheaper than many series and allows amateur drivers to compete in a sports-racing championship. It's also multi-make, so it's more of a challenge for the people building the cars."

"The bike engines give it a racy feel – they're high-revving, high-performance and light, so it makes the cars nimble. But I'll be able to tell you even more if I can get out in a race..."

## "THE CARS ARE HIGH-REVVING, HIGH-PERFORMANCE AND LIGHT"



### RGB CHAMPIONS

#### YEAR CHAMPION (CAR)

2003	<b>Andy Charsley</b> (Sylva Striker)
2004	<b>Tim Harmer</b> (Genesis Evo)
2005	<b>Tim Gray</b> (STM Phoenix)
2006	<b>Jonathan Wright</b> (Radical SR4, minus wings)
2007	<b>Derek Jones</b> (Fisher Fury)
2008	<b>Derek Jones</b> (BDN S2)
2009	<b>Tim Gray</b> (AB Performance Striker)
2010	<b>Alastair Boulton</b> (STM Phoenix)
2011	<b>Paul Rogers</b> (Contour)
2012	<b>Tim Gray</b> (Spire GT-3)
2013	<b>Matt Higginson</b> (Spire GT-3)
2014	<b>Matt Higginson</b> (Spire GT-3)
2015	<b>Scott Mittell</b> (Mittell MC-52b)
2016	<b>Matt Higginson</b> (AB Arion S2)
2017	<b>Billy Albone</b> (Spire GT-3S)

# FINISHING STRAIGHT

IN THE MEDIA • ARCHIVE • QUIZ



## SPECIAL INSIGHTS INTO A GOLDEN AGE

The standout appeal of David Hobbs's autobiography *Hobbo* is the variety. Not just in the sumptuous mix of machines, such as the Penske-run Ferrari 512 and the JWA Gulf Ford GT40, but in the drivers he shared with too – Jacky Ickx, Mike Hailwood and Mark Donohue to name but a few.

It's very much a slow-burning read, but that largely mirrors the stop-start nature of Hobbs's early career. There are enough nuggets to tide you through it in the form of his father Howard's experimentation and development of an early variation of the automatic gearbox – both Stirling Moss and Jim Clark would race it – and Hobbs's amusing inability to not anger his bosses as a Jaguar apprentice.

Early races in the national scene have the highlight of Hobbs rolling his father's immaculate and stunning Jaguar XK140 in his first race with it, before going to race an eclectic mix of cars – notably and successfully in a Lotus Elite.

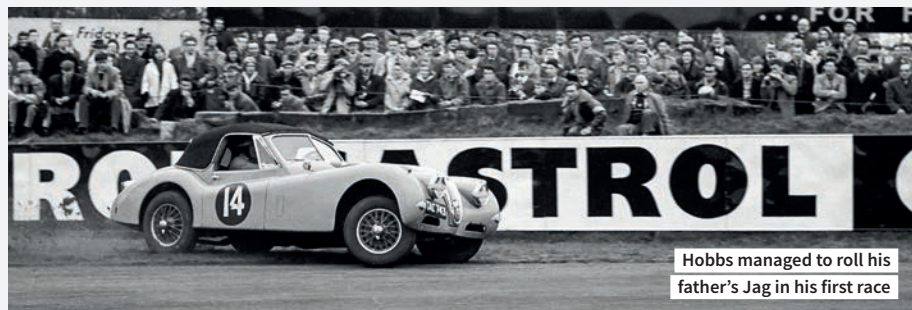
Unfortunately, those two expansive eras of Hobbs's life do mean that some other career moments are rather untapped –

including his one-off Honda Formula 1 drive at the 1968 Italian Grand Prix, which is covered off in passing, even though it came shortly before Honda pulled the plug on its F1 programme and closed a door on him.

That may be a consequence of the way the book was written: Hobbs recalled his career on audio before it was transcribed, corrected and sent to him to refine.

But if that impacted some areas of the book, it did at least allow the GT40 (pictured on the cover) to take centre stage. Thanks to the *Grand Tour's* epic Ford v Ferrari at Le Mans feature, and the litany of books and films covering its history, it's hard to make the topic feel fresh, but the book achieves this because of Hobbs's role in developing the car.

Working with Lola founder Eric Broadley on the marque's Mk6 through to the developmental Mirages, as well as the Ford GT40 itself, provided unique insight into the often painful route to its Le Mans win – although not in the hands of Hobbs. It's one of the areas where Hobbs imposing his wit and way with words pays off, most notably



Hobbs managed to roll his father's Jag in his first race





Hobbs was deeply involved in the GT40's development

when he declares Broadley's expulsion by Ford in the project as a mistake.

That distinctive narrative voice adds flavour to his account of his spell with Penske running the much-loved but unfortunate Ferrari 512, a car so annoyingly flawed that Hobbs described 1971 as one of the most frustrating years of his career.

His recalling of the legendary Roger Penske's team has wonderful insight into its Ferrari debut at Daytona in 1971. With the European "snobs" scoffing at the spotless Ferrari, it then had the last laugh by wiping the floor with the "grubby" Porsche 917s until an unfortunate crash cost it a win. It's exactly the sort of detail that's needed throughout and is only really replicated in the explanation of Hobbs's odd relationship with John Surtees – culminating in a five-page letter of vitriol when Hobbs left.

But while these are minor criticisms, Hobbs shows the worth of his time in journalism working as a TV commentator – realising that the star names he worked with and drove for are the key appeals – and wastes no time dropping in his experience of the "mollycoddled" Ickx and the extraordinary first-lap exploits of Clark.

It makes the book much more of a worthy read. It goes well beyond the confines of his career, into an extensive series of yearbook-like chapters that take in some of the most exciting eras of sportscar racing.

So even if the name Hobbs only captures motorsport fans of a certain era, look on this book as a great insight into motor racing in the second half of the 20th century.

**TOM ERRINGTON**



# The golden era of sportscar racing



Immerse yourself in 1980s sportscar nostalgia with this classic collection from Duke Video, available on demand. Go to <http://bit.ly/DukeSportscar> to start your free trial, if you're not already signed up. With 40 episodes available, featuring World Sportscar rounds from 1983-89, you'll be humming the tinkly synth intro before you know it...

## WHAT'S ON

### INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

#### CHINESE GRAND PRIX

**Formula 1 World Championship**

**Rd 3/21**  
Shanghai, China

**April 15**  
**TV Live** Sky Sports F1, Sunday 0530. BBC Radio 5 Live, Sunday 0700. Highlights Channel 4, Sunday 1400

#### INDYCAR SERIES

**Rd 3/16**  
Long Beach, California, USA

**April 15**  
**TV Live** BT Sport ESPN, Sunday 2100

#### IMSA SPORTSCAR

**Rd 3/12**  
Long Beach, California, USA

**April 14**

#### FORMULA E

**Rd 6/10**  
Rome, Italy

**April 14**  
**TV Live** Eurosport 1, Saturday 1500. 5Spike, Saturday 1430

#### EUROPEAN LE MANS SERIES

**Rd 1/6**  
Paul Ricard, France

**April 15**  
**TV Live** Motorsport.tv, Sunday 1045

#### FORMULA RENAULT EURO CUP

**Rd 1/10**  
Paul Ricard, France

**April 14-15**

#### WORLD RALLYCROSS

**Rd 1/12**  
Barcelona, Spain

**April 14-15**

#### NASCAR CUP

**Rd 8/36**  
Bristol, Tennessee, USA

**April 15**  
**TV Live** Premier Sports, Sunday 1830

#### EUROFORMULA OPEN

**Rd 1/8**  
Estoril, Portugal

**April 14-15**  
**TV Live** BT Sport 1, Sunday 1200

#### INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN

**Rd 1/7**  
Estoril, Portugal

**April 14-15**  
**TV Live** BT Sport ESPN, Saturday 1500. BT Sport 1, Sunday 1300

#### ADAC GT MASTERS

**Rd 1/7**  
Oschersleben, Germany

**April 14-15**

### UK MOTORSPORT

#### OULTON PARK 750MC

**April 14**  
Clio 182s, Club Enduro, BMW 330s, Bike Sports, M3 Cup, Armed Forces Race

#### SNETTERTON BRSCC

**April 14-15**  
F1000, Caterham 420R, Caterham 310R, Caterham 270R, Caterham Roadsport, Mazda MX-5s, BMW Compact Cup

#### CADWELL PARK BARC

**April 14-15**  
Caterham Graduates, CNC Sports/ Saloons, 2CVs, Karts

#### DONINGTON PARK MSVR

**April 14-15**  
Monoposto, Lotus Elises, Porsche Club, Trackday Championship, Trackday Trophy, Mini Challenge, Production BMWs, Racing Saloons

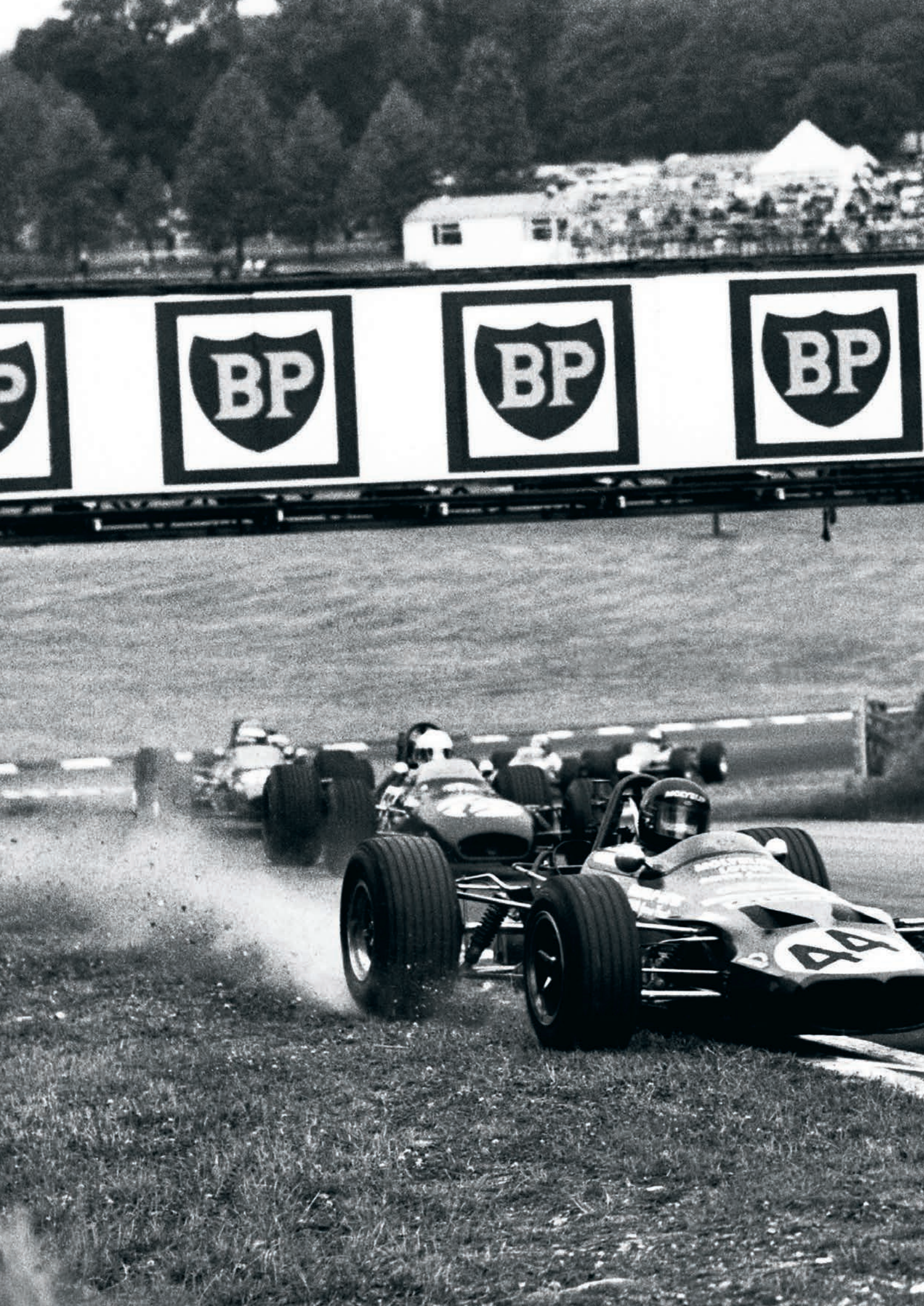
#### ROCKINGHAM BARC

**April 14-15**  
Britcar, Clio Junior, Michelin Clios, Mighty Minis, Junior Saloons, BARC Saloons, MGOC

#### MONDELLO PARK IMRC

**April 14-15**  
Formula Vee, BOSS Formula Libre, Stryker Sportscars, Touring Cars, Historic Racing Cars, Ginetta Juniors, Future Classics, Fiesta Zetecs, Fiesta STs, Supercars









**FROM THE ARCHIVE**

James Hunt puts two wheels on the grass exiting South Bank at Brands Hatch in his Lotus 59A. Hunt went on to take third place in this 1970 British Grand Prix Formula 3 support race, an event that was won by the Brabham of Mike Beuttler and needed two heats to sort out the final contestants.



## TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

### QUIZ

#### WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN?



GRIFFITHS/GP2

#### WHO IS THIS?

This influential Buckeye took a lupine route up the ladder, before making a step down to fly the flag. But he had to wait to get his true calling in the sport.

Following a quick brace of titles, he bounced his way into an epic battle, although he had to go it alone in order to get back to the very top.

After hanging up his helmet there was an unexpected call of the wild from a struggling big cat, but the adventure was short-lived and an offer to run the show took him back to his roots.

Like all others he eventually crossed the great divide. He scooped the biggest prize first time out and went on to play a key role in creating its biggest star.

After a stint as a part-timer, family ties roped him back in. In addition there have been various tests of endurance, keeping the propeller spinning for a foreign superpower.

#### ON THIS DAY

**1** Today is Corrado Fabi's birthday.

How many races did he do for Brabham standing in for his brother Teo?

**2** Hector Rebaque took his best F1 grid spot on this day in 1981. What was it?

**3** Satoru Nakajima made his F1 debut on this day in 1987. How many points did he score in his F1 career?

**4** For which manufacturer did Tim Harvey score its first BTCC win on this day in 1993?

**5** Today is Ellen Lohr's birthday. Where and when did she score her only DTM win?

#### NAME THE HELMET



#### LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

**Who, what, where, when** Nikos Zahos, making his only A1GP start. Brno, October 8 2006. He finished 19th.

**Who is this?** Alan Jones. **On this day 1)** Nico Rosberg, Lewis Hamilton. **2)** Jenson Button. **3)** James Thompson.

**4)** Monza 2005. **5)** John Cleland. **Name the helmet** Michele Alboreto.

## IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

**CHINESE GP:  
HAMILTON HOPES FOR  
SHANGHAI GLORY**



LAT IMAGES

DUNBAR/LAT

# AUTOSPORT

Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG  
**Tel** +44 (0) 20 3405 8100 **Email** [autosport@autosport.com](mailto:autosport@autosport.com)  
**Individual email** [firstname.surname@motorsport.com](mailto:firstname.surname@motorsport.com)  
**Website** [www.autosport.com](http://www.autosport.com) **Twitter** @autosport

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 Advertising Director **James Robinson**  
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**Laura Paterson** +44 (0) 20 3405 8129

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 NETWORK



#### Photography

Steven Tee  
 Glenn Dunbar  
 Sam Bloxham  
 Zack Mauger

#### Special Contributors

Gary Anderson  
 Alan Eldridge  
 Tom Errington  
 Rob Ladbrook  
 Stephen Lickorish  
 Stefan Mackley  
 David Malsher  
 Jonathan Noble  
 Marcus Pye  
 Nigel Roebuck  
 Jim Utter  
 Gary Watkins



#### CIRCULATION/TRADE ENQUIRIES

Seymour Distribution Ltd,  
 2 East Poultry Avenue,  
 London, EC1A 9PT.  
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