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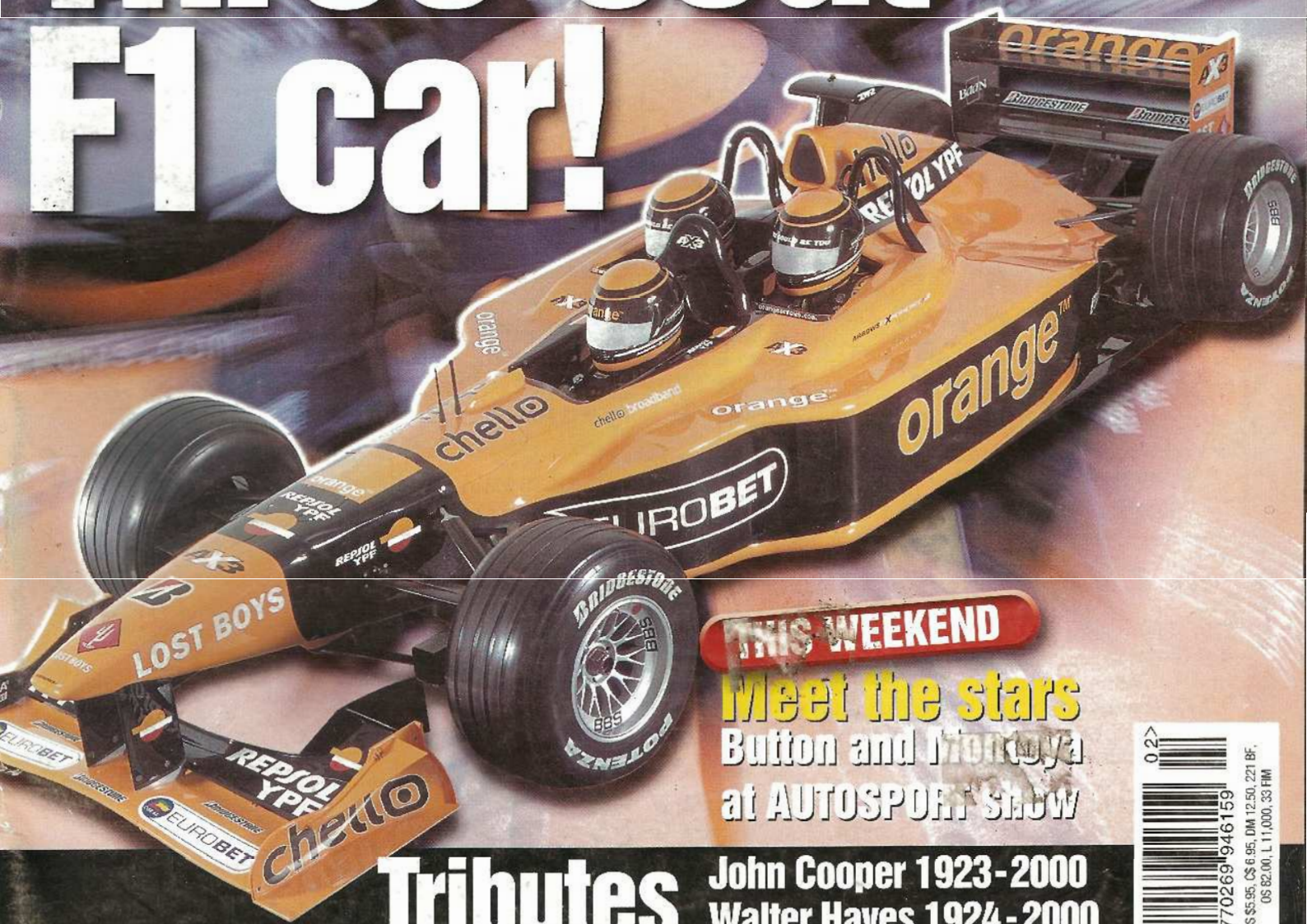
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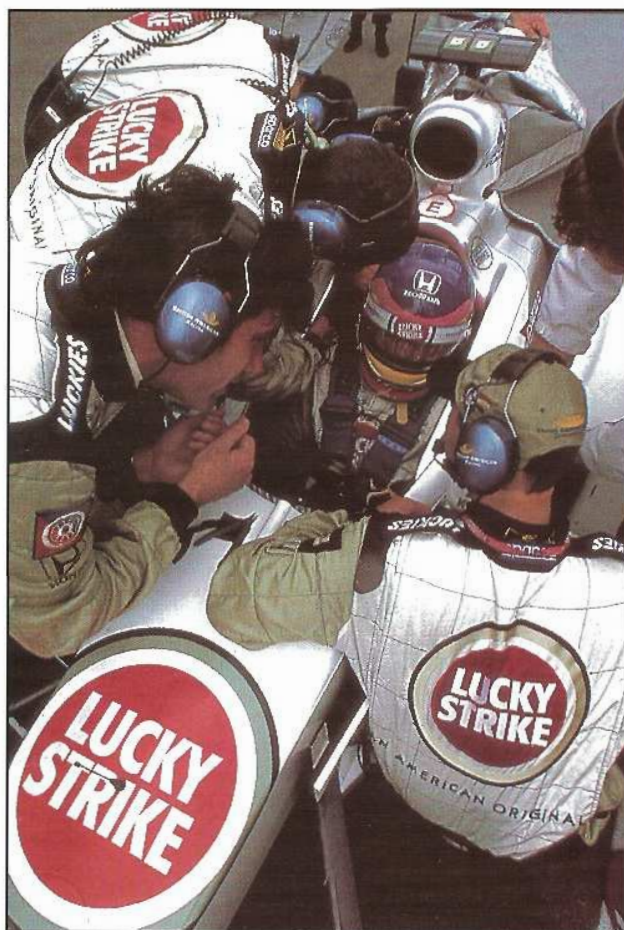
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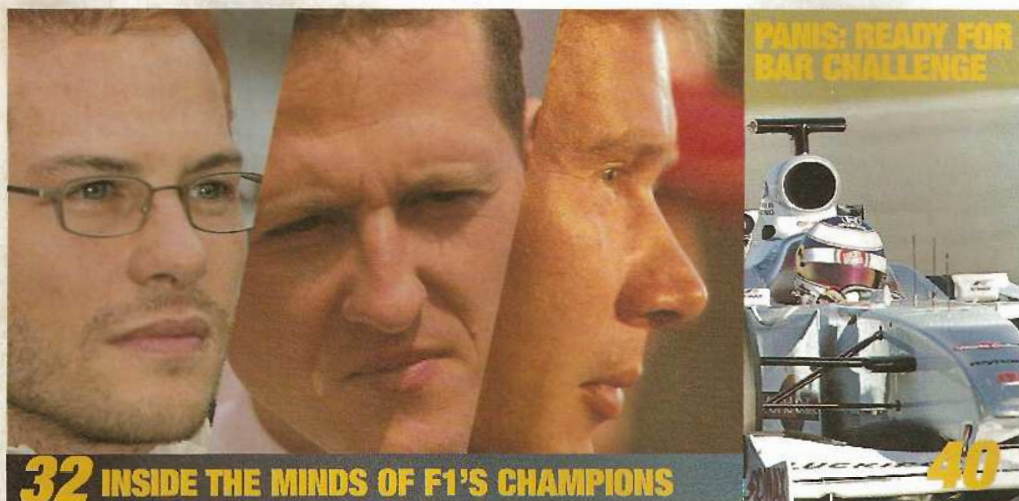
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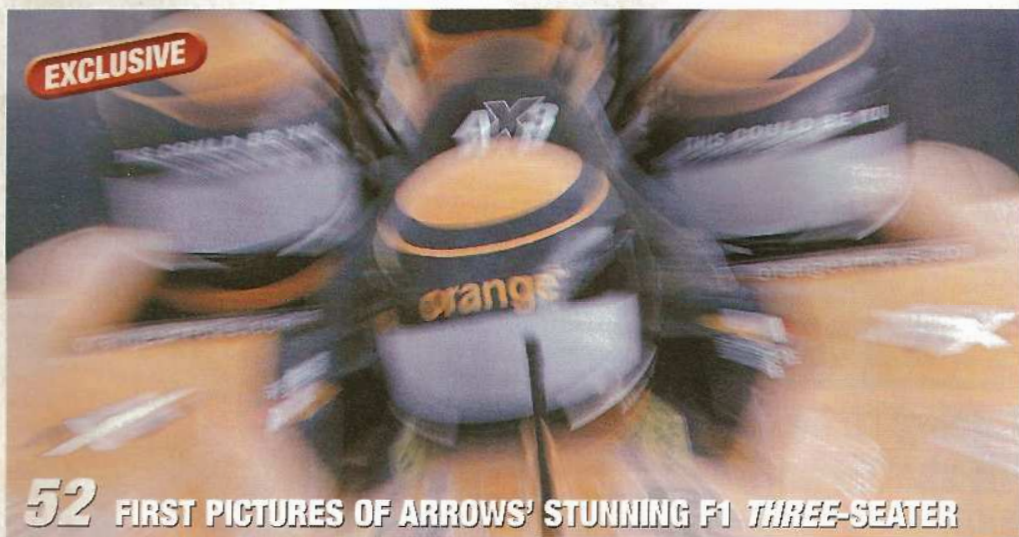
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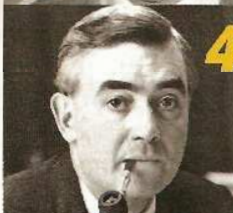
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Back to basics

Jaguar is determined to gain more respect in Formula 1. Team chief Rahal says the no-nonsense R2 is its first step. By **Jonathan Noble**

New Jaguar boss Bobby Rahal is confident that the team's back-to-basics philosophy for its 2001 challenger will restore respectability to the Big Cat this year.

The team's new R2 was unveiled on Tuesday at Jaguar's Whitley design and engineering centre, after AUTOSPORT had gone to press. It has ditched many of the radical and unproven concepts which made its predecessor so troublesome in its first Grand Prix season last year.

"I look at this as the first true Jaguar," said Rahal, who took over the reins last month. "My goal for this season is respectability, which sounds somewhat nebulous, but it is something that only comes with thought and solid reasons. It's our first step."

"Personally, I am a great believer that there is no magic bullet for finding performance. It is in the details - it is good solid design. If you look at the cars produced by Williams, I don't think anyone has ever portrayed the team as cutting-edge but it does it right. Its cars are solid and that is what we strive to create here. We want a workable platform and one that can be developed throughout the year."

Rahal was quick to dismiss suggestions that the late arrival of the team's new technical director, Steve



Rahal knows the team must improve

"Is it going to be earth-shattering or ground-breaking? No"

BOBBY RAHAL

Nichols, who took over from Gary Anderson last month, means the new car will suffer from the same design weaknesses, such as the unreliable shared oil system, which affected the 2000 challenger.

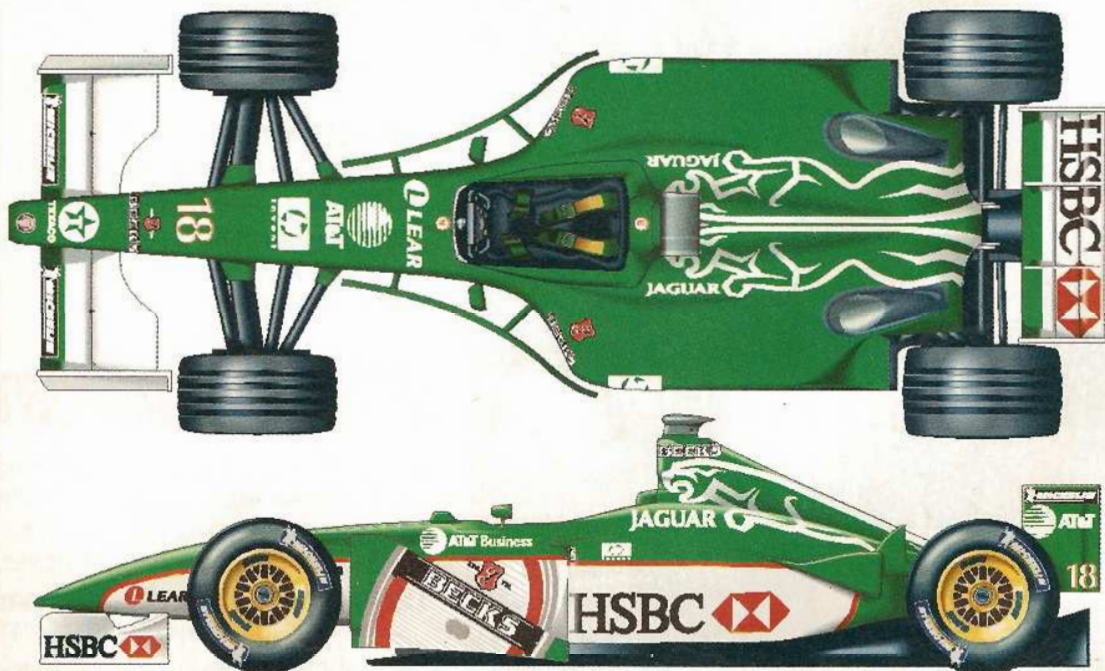
"The new car has been designed by John Russell, who came from Williams and did not have anything to do with the 2000 car other than try to fix parts of it. I like the way John approaches things."

"Is the car going to be earth-shattering or ground-breaking? No. But I don't think that is how you become competitive, I think you have to get a good basic structure and go from there."

Jaguar proved to be one of the disappointments of the 2000 campaign when it finished only ninth in the constructors' championship despite massive hype and budget.

Rahal's comments about the new conservative approach were backed up by Nichols. He said he has no concerns about the design, which was settled before his arrival.

"I think race cars should be inherently pretty conservative," said Nichols. "In fact, radical race cars almost never win championships. By the time a radical concept wins a championship it has become the norm. It took the turbo engine six years before it won a championship and it's almost always like that."



Outwardly, Jaguar's 2001 contender looks similar to last year's car, but is actually almost a whole new design from the ground up



The first Jaguar contender suffered greatly from

"I think you need to develop your radical ideas internally and test them to the point that they are absolutely bulletproof. When you have a full understanding and they're fully reliable - then you can race them."

The Jaguar R2, which does not look dissimilar from its predecessor, is completely new from the R1 apart from the front upright. "There are some areas where we carry development from the R1, though," said chief designer John Russell.

One of the main areas where the team has concentrated was on the mid-corner instability, which made the R1 so difficult to drive. "The car was basically sound, but there was an issue with the underbody which didn't really show up until the car had completed enough running," added Russell.

"Eddie is the last of the late-brakers and very sensitive to rear-end grip, which was where we had a problem. This was identified by some track tests, and we have worked hard to

for new Jaguar



reliability caused by its over-complexity and an aerodynamic instability problem. The squad reckons it has rectified both of these problems on the latest challenger

ensure that the R2 does not replicate the difficulty?"

However, the team is making few predictions about its state of competitiveness this year, although it is aiming to be chasing front-running teams like Williams and Benetton.

"There should be a significant improvement over last year, but the thing you never know is how much progress everyone else has made," said Nichols. "I think people were more disappointed with last year because of finishing fourth in the constructors' championship (as Stewart Grand Prix) the previous season. Everyone thought that we had arrived - but it is never like that.

"I am hoping we will bounce back in 2001, although realistically we are not in a position to compete with

Ferrari and McLaren. I hope the group we are competing with is Jordan, British American Racing and Benetton, but I also want us to occasionally frighten Williams.

"There are no fools in this business, though, and everyone is trying as hard as they can with the resources they have. It will take some time, but I do think from what I've seen of the car that we have identified the problems of last year and made significant steps forward. I've got high hopes, but I don't want to say too much."

Rahal added: "I think there is a lot of excitement, a lot of hope and everyone is anxious to see the new car out there performing. I am very excited about how the team is coming. We are ready." ■

"I do think that we have made some significant steps forward" STEVE NICHOLS

RETHINK FOR NEW TEAM SUPER-HQ

JAGUAR has been told to rethink some of the plans for Ford's new motorsport complex because of fears over car congestion and rare, protected wildlife.

Although plans for the £100 million factory, which will house Jaguar Racing and Cosworth, have been approved in principle, the local planning committee has expressed fears about the 1200 staff driving to the facility in their cars.

"We have approved Ford's plans, but only in principle so far," said planning committee chairman John Townsend. "It is conditional on a few things. One of those is that it will not have 1202 parking spaces. We have asked Ford to look at how some staff can come in by bus. We don't want 1200 cars on site.

"We would rather have 20 people on one bus than 20 people in their own cars. Everything has been very amicable, but the details have to be

got right and we have to go to integrate it into the countryside."

Townsend has been surprised that the local village, which is besieged by traffic during major race meetings at Silverstone, has not had many objections to the arrival of a second Formula 1 factory at the circuit. Jordan's base is situated across the road from the track's main entrance.

"I expected quite a backlash from the local village over the plans," added Townsend. "But there have been very few objections and all the negotiations have been carried out in an extremely positive atmosphere."

Ford is also going to have to formulate plans to rehouse a population of local rare newts, which live in the area earmarked for the factory. The species is protected and it is thought that Jaguar will build new ponds within the grounds of its base.

Jaguar officials would not comment on the matter.

Honda targets 2002 title ch

Japanese car giant Honda is setting its sights on world championship-challenging form within two years.

The company's motorsport director, Takeo Fukui, has said that he is expecting the company, which supplies British American Racing and Jordan with works engines, to win a race this year before securing clean sweeps on the podium in 2002.

"We want to win one, at least [in 2001]," Fukui said. "I should hope we win one, now that we have four drivers. Maybe the year after that, we'll be able to sweep the podium."

Fukui's hopes for success are backed up by sources in Japan who claim that the Honda engine is now producing an impressive 840bhp. Its power delivery range is also said to be a vast improvement over that of last year's engine.

Honda, which won five World Drivers' Championships in the late '80s and early '90s, returned to F1 with BAR last season after a seven-year absence. Its efforts helped secure the team fifth place in the constructors' championship and Fukui added that he was more than

pleased with the outfit's performance, even though Honda has decided to supply engines to Jordan as well.

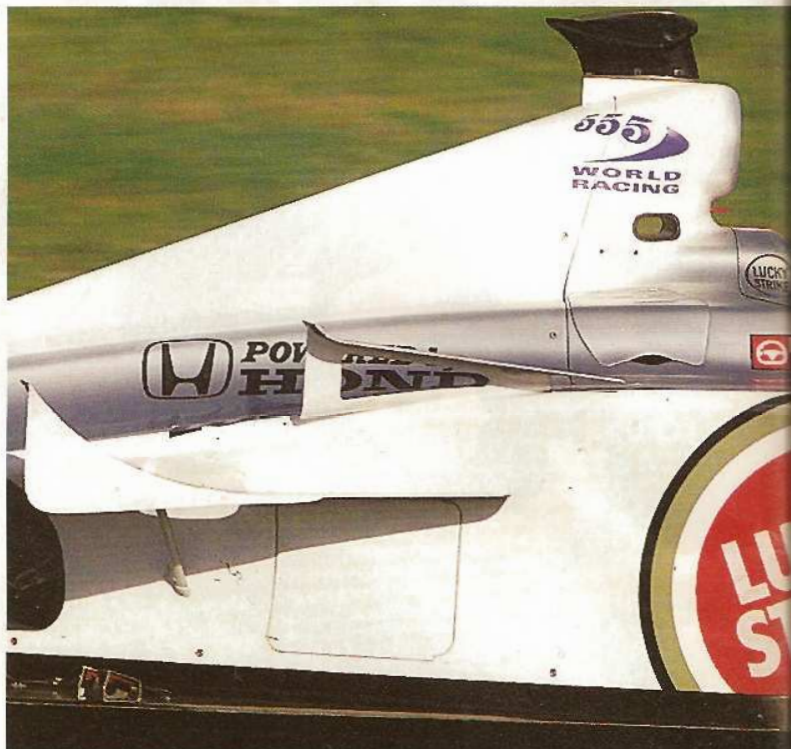
"I thought BAR learned a great deal," he continued. "So looking at it like that, you could say the team had a fruitful year. Judging by general, average standards, BAR made huge progress. It ended up where it did all the way from last place. The people at BAR are very happy."

Fukui has also revealed that he played a part in convincing Jacques Villeneuve to stay at BAR for another season despite lucrative offers from other teams, including Benetton.

"From what I'd heard, he was getting great offers as far back as the spring," he said.

"When I went to San Marino, I talked to Villeneuve in person. It was then that I told him that he ought to stay with BAR because Honda will be serious next year.

"In June and July, we demonstrated that some of our new engines were packed with potential. I think he felt then, first hand, that Honda wasn't all talk. He's probably expecting a lot out of next year."



Jacques Villeneuve begins his third year at BAR with engine supplier Honda looking for its

Todt will stay, says Ferrari boss

FERRARI president Luca di Montezemolo has given the firmest indication yet that the team's sporting director, Jean Todt, will remain at the team after his contract expires at the end of this year.

Speculation in recent months has suggested that Todt would turn his back on the sport - and the Frenchman has said on several occasions that he was undecided about his future.

"Whether I stay at Ferrari or not I can't give an answer at present," said Todt recently. "My contract expires in 2001, so I'll have to come up with a

decision in the following months."

But Montezemolo has made it clear he is confident that Ferrari will keep hold of the man who is credited with helping Ferrari back to championship-winning form.

"Todt will remain at Ferrari even after the expiry of his current contract," said the Italian. "He will stay, you can be sure of that."

"Todt was right when he said that we have not yet spoken about his future, but we will do so in the next few weeks."

"The strength of our team comes with its stability. I have made great

efforts to obtain that stability and I will do everything in my powers to maintain it in the future."

Montezemolo himself has said that he would like to take a break from his present job, but the demands of it force him to continue.

"I really would like to take a year's sabbatical."

However, I am resigned to the fact that I will not be allowed to do so," he said.



Talks imminent

Heidfeld stars at Barcelona

NICK Heidfeld has vindicated his move from Prost to Sauber after impressing with a strong performance in testing at Barcelona at the end of December.

The German, who endured a miserable debut season with Prost last year, was outpaced only by Jarno Trulli's Jordan on the final day - and was quicker than McLaren's and Ferrari's representatives.

"I really think that Sauber will be a good team in the next three years," said Heidfeld.

"Obviously one day, like all the other drivers, I want to be world champion, and it's going to be tough to do that with Sauber, especially because in the next few years there will be even more big companies coming in. However, I will just try to do my best, and then we will see," he said.

Pace-setter Jordan was delighted with the work completed as both Trulli and Heinz-Harald Frentzen ran through a comprehensive testing programme ahead of the launch of the new car next week.



Inspired

BARCELONA TIMES

1	J Trulli (Jordan)	1m19.59s
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6	K Raikkonen (Sauber)	1m20.61s
7	O Panis (BAR)	1m20.61s
8	H-H Frentzen (Jordan)	1m20.66s
9	A Wurz (McLaren)	1m20.85s
10	P de la Rosa (Arrows)	1m21.28s
11	A Pizzonia (Arrows)	1m22.52s
12	D Manning (BAR)	1m23.36s
13	T Sato (BAR)	1m23.50s
14	M Hynes (BAR)	1m24.16s
15	L Badoer (Ferrari)	1m24.19s

Sauber ups youth policy

PETER Sauber has denied suggestions that he is taking a gamble by running two young drivers this year - and instead thinks that his men bring new hope to the Swiss outfit.

The Hinwil-based team has signed 23 year old Nick Heidfeld, who has just one season of F1 behind him, and Kimi Raikkonen (21), who has competed in only 23 car races.

"I cannot see Nick as a risk factor," said Sauber, who had experienced drivers Mika Salo and Pedro Diniz last year. "Sure, he has only one year of Grand Prix racing under his belt but you also need to keep in mind that he tested for three years with McLaren-Mercedes."

"Heidfeld is a driver who can develop a car together with his engineer. That will be important for us because that is a gift not given to every grand prix driver."

"Regarding Kimi, our expectations were lower but he has surprised us a lot with what he said about the car and how methodically he worked. He is amazingly precise about his impressions in the car."

Both drivers have shone in recent testing (see story left) and the team has denied that its cars have been running underweight.

"Every day I feel more confident and the lap times show that I am learning every day," said Raikkonen.

Challenge

Suzuka in bid to retain GP

HONDA has upped the ante in the battle to secure the Japanese Grand Prix in the future by promising an £18 million upgrade of its Suzuka circuit.

In the light of arch rival Toyota's intentions to turn its Fuji Raceway into a Formula 1-standard facility, Honda is hoping that the improvements to Suzuka will allow it to keep the race there after the current contract expires in 2006.

The work, which will be completed in time for the 2002 event, is the first major overhaul at the circuit since it hosted a GP for the first time in 1987. Its paddock facilities and safety standards have fallen behind many of the sport's other facilities since then.

Changes will be made to some of the run-off areas, and some of the circuit's quickest corners will be widened, but it is not thought that the actual layout of the track will be altered, as Suzuka is generally regarded as the most challenging track on the calendar after Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium and Monaco.

Fuji is the only other circuit in Japan to have hosted the Grand Prix when it held two events in '76 and '77.



first race victory since the 1992 Canadian GP

Driver aids plan agreed

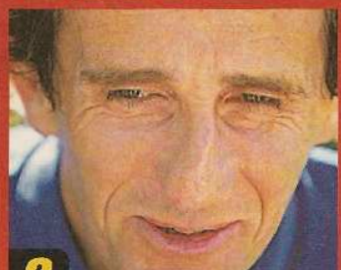
THE return of traction control to Formula 1 appears to be a formality after the team's technical directors all agreed on the means to satisfy the demands of the sport's governing body, the FIA.

The teams had been asked by the FIA to come up with a way of introducing a series of safety devices, such as radar detection for wet weather, if they were to be allowed electronic devices such as traction control from the Spanish Grand Prix, the fifth race of the year.

The matter, which was discussed at the end of last month by F1's think-tank, the Technical Working Group, will be formalised at another meeting on January 26. Team bosses are meeting the FIA on February 14. If agreement is reached at that meeting then the matter will be put to a vote by the FIA World Council.

But one leading technical director has said he doubts whether devices like radar detection will have such a positive effect on safety.

"If I'm given a safety system that allows me to identify where the other cars are, I will use that information to go a little faster," he said. "I'd ignore the safety margin I had kept before."



8 Prost boosted by cash deal



10 Pizzonia signs for Petrobras



13 Rydell rejoins Volvo

"It's the best seat in the business. I don't feel any pressure at all"

HAYES LANDS PRIZE DRIVE AT MANOR, P15



20 Delecour delighted with Focus

Gascoyne plays down chances

BENETTON technical director Mike Gascoyne has called for caution about the team's prospects in 2001, despite growing optimism about the outfit's chances this year.

Gascoyne, who has secured a major coup in signing Jordan's chief designer Mark Smith to work on Benetton's 2002 Renault car, believes there is still a long way to go before the team can realistically challenge McLaren and Ferrari.

"Mark, who will join us after he has served his notice at Jordan, is experienced, capable and a good friend of mine," said Gascoyne. "He

will work on the 2002 car with Tim Densham and it is all part of building our team for the future.

"But if being successful was as easy as flicking a light switch then everyone would have done it. So I think for us to sit there and claim that it is all going to be wonderful straight away is wrong - and no one would take such a claim seriously anyway.

"We are putting in place all the resources we need to challenge Ferrari and McLaren and win the world championship. Getting

people of the quality of Smith is part of the process, but I would still

emphasise that being successful is not something that happens overnight."

Gascoyne has already made several changes at Benetton, including the appointment of Steve Nielsen as team manager.

He added: "We are going in the right direction now and we want to get there as quickly as possible, but to

make significant improvements takes time."

GASCOYNE



Urged caution

BAR founder quits team

RICK Gorne, one of the founding members of the British American Racing outfit, has quit the outfit in order to pursue other interests.

Gorne, who had previously played a key part in the rise of respected racing car manufacturer Reynard, was BAR's Motorsport Development Director.

"I have personally achieved all that I can at BAR," he said. "It has been one of the most exciting, rewarding and challenging projects to have been involved with.

"Helping to create a Formula 1 team was a major achievement and I'm proud to have been part of it. However, it's time for me to move on. I have many opportunities ahead of me and I'm looking forward to new challenges."

Gorne, who already manages drivers Marc Hynes and Olivier Beretta, will now also look after the interests of Jaguar's Luciano Burti.

He will also work on a consultancy basis for a number of other clients, including some outside motor racing.

GORNE



Other interests

Hungary secures ad ban exemption

The Hungarian Grand Prix's future has been secured, despite the imposition of a stringent tobacco advertising ban in the country.

There had been fears that the race would be dropped from the calendar if the government did not make an exception for the event, which is sponsored by Marlboro.

But the country's government has given an exemption for "world class motorsport events on the request of the organisers".

"We had feared inestimable damage because of the ban," said circuit chief Ferenc Studniczky.

CLUB AUTOSPORT



119 Threat for Jim Russell school



120 Brookspeed heads ISC interest

New cash injection boost for

Prost Grand Prix's hopes of bouncing back from a disastrous 2000 season have received another boost following a major marketing and sponsorship deal with the Pan-American Sports Network (PSN).

The two companies began talks soon after it became clear that a proposed PSN buy-out of Minardi had fallen through at the end of last season.

This new deal will see Prost and PSN work closely together to try and increase marketing opportunities around the world. The squad has already received a cash injection over the winter when former driver Pedro Diniz bought into the team.

"It was clear to us that an alliance between PSN and Prost Grand Prix is a good match, with a huge potential," said team principal Alain Prost. "They come to join and strengthen the solid structure Prost Grand Prix forms."

The PSN deal means it is virtually certain Prost's second driver will be South American, to satisfy the media giant's biggest market.



PSN deal

This year, PSN supported Argentinian Gaston Mazzacane, but the company has not said for definite that he will be central to its efforts for 2001.

Brazilian Enrique Bernoldi is also strongly linked with the drive, but Brazil is not a big market for PSN, whose sole focus is on the Spanish speaking South American nations.

A PSN spokesman refused to comment on any reports that the company would force a driver on the team.

However, Prost's confirmed driver, Jean Alesi, has said he thinks the squad would benefit from having a Frenchman on board.

"Ferrari can afford not to appoint Italians," Alesi said. "But I think Prost still has its identity to build.

"Although it sometimes annoys Alain, you can't deny this French identity. There are one or two young drivers - Stephane Sarrazin and Jonathan Cochet among them."

The pair were expected to test for the outfit before Christmas, but only Bernoldi and Spaniard Oriol Servia, who is an outsider for the drive, were given runs.



Prost is hoping that the extra cash received through the PSN deal will help it progress up the

Too early to judge Button, says Schumacher

MICHAEL Schumacher believes it is too early to judge whether Jenson Button will become one of Formula 1's superstars, although he has hailed the Benetton driver as one of the sport's brightest prospects.

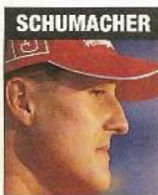
Schumacher, who has not spoken at length about the young Englishman before, claims that many other drivers have made as big an impact as Button in their debut season before fading from form.

"People were extremely critical when they heard Button was arriving in F1 without experience of F3000," said Schumacher.

"But I was always under the impression that if someone is able to go in the car, be fast immediately and not crash then he has the talent and the right to be in F1.

"He proved to be fast immediately, he did not crash very often, he had a few offs naturally but he made very few mistakes and he is simply one of the future stars.

"But then we have had many of them and it is another step to really finally do it. I think he has the talent and the ability to do it. Give him time and then we will see.



Praise for Button

"No one can really say yet what will be the outcome [of his Grand Prix career], but this year was the right base to build upon."

Schumacher saw at first hand this year just how quickly Button adapted to F1 when he was outqualified by the Briton at the challenging Spa-Francorchamps circuit.

It was the most impressive first time performance at the Belgian race since Schumacher's own F1 debut at the circuit in 1991.

Maranello avoids circuit noise ban

FERRARI will be allowed to continue testing at its Fiorano and Mugello tracks after the Italian government backed down over plans to limit noise pollution.

There had been speculation that cars louder than 70 decibels - the same level as a Formula 3 car - would only be allowed to run for 12 days per year. This would have prevented Ferrari testing at its home tracks.

But the government will allow tracks 60 days of running with noise above the 70-decibel level, freeing up Ferrari for its normal activities.

Benetton leads at Estoril

JENSON Button led a rain-affected Michelin test at Estoril in Portugal before Christmas, heightening hopes that his Benetton team could challenge Williams this year.

Button, who concentrated on evaluating tyres for Michelin, set his best time on the dry final day of the test before it was washed out.

Ralf Schumacher quit the test early because of a continuing flu bug, which he has now recovered from. It meant his Williams team-mate, Juan Pablo Montoya, was able to use two cars to continue gaining mileage. He ended the test second quickest.

"It was my first time here in an F1

car," said the Colombian. "I was here in 1997 testing with an F3000 car, but that was quite different."

Jaguar's Luciano Burti was third quickest overall, but impressed on the rain-affected first day of the test when he set the quickest time overall from team-mate Eddie Irvine.

TESTING TIMES

1	J Button (Benetton)	1m22.010s
2	JP Montoya (Williams)	1m22.171s
3	L Burti (Jaguar)	1m22.310s
4	E Irvine (Jaguar)	1m22.328s
5	M Gene (Williams)	1m23.031s
6	M Webber (Benetton)	1m23.601s
7	R Schumacher (Williams)	1m31.095s



A VISION OF THE FUTURE, PERHAPS? Mika Hakkinen and Boris Becker enjoy a friendly round of golf in the year 2029. No, this isn't the result of time travel machinery. It is merely the latest advert for Mercedes-Benz, which is due to hit the small screen soon

Prost



grid following a disastrous 2000

Hynes completes test for BAR

MARC Hynes got his first proper taste of Formula 1 machinery at the Barcelona test before Christmas as he lined up for British American Racing.

The former British Formula 3 Champion, who has joined the team's driver development programme, ended the test a few tenths slower than BAR's other young driver, Japan's Takuma Sato, who had previously tested for Jordan.

"I was pretty much comfortable with the car straightaway, but I would have loved to have completed more laps," said Hynes, who ran with last

year's Bridgestone rubber. "But it was a good first step in Formula 1.

"The biggest surprise was the grip in the fast corners. You get used to the speed and the brakes pretty quickly, but the grip is phenomenal. It must be so physical to get the best out of new tyres in the fast stuff in qualifying."

Hynes does not know whether he will test for the team again, and is also waiting to hear about a seat with the PacWest Indy Lights team.

"I had the test last year, which went well, and now I am waiting to see what they decide," he added.



Marc Hynes had his first test for BAR and was amazed by the car's grip in fast corners

Ferrari denies flotation plan

FERRARI has moved to dismiss suggestions that parent company Fiat is planning to float it on the Milan stock exchange.

Reports in the British press have implied that Fiat was considering the move to both reward staff with stock options, which would help prevent them considering moves elsewhere, and raise finance for the revamping of sister marque Maserati.

Ferrari president Luca di Montezemolo made it clear recently that he was worried about losing several of his key members of staff with lucrative offers from other Grand Prix teams.

"The headhunters are swirling around Ferrari making offers for our best people," he said. "We've already lost two."

Such a float, which would come on the back of Ferrari's most successful year ever, with 4000 cars having been sold and title success in the Formula 1 arena, is expected to raise around £200 million.

However, a Ferrari spokesman claimed: "There has never been any plan to float Ferrari on the Milan stock exchange.

"Any decision regarding an eventual share sale on the stock exchange is up to the majority shareholder, not Ferrari."

Brit legends mourned

TWO of motorsport's most respected names from the past have died.

John Cooper and Walter Hayes died on December 24 and Boxing Day respectively, after AUTOSPORT's January 4 issue had closed for press.

Cooper is best known as the revolutionary boss of the eponymous marque that changed the face of Formula 1. He built the first rear-engined Grand Prix cars, which took Jack Brabham to the 1959 and '60 world championships, and was also responsible for the Mini Cooper.

Hayes was the Ford executive who was the architect of the Blue Oval's

enthusiastic embrace of motorsport in the '60s. He persuaded the make to finance the Ford Cosworth DFV engine in '67. The powerplant went on to dominate Grand Prix racing for the next 15 years.

Cooper's funeral was held at Arundel Cathedral last Thursday. Contemporaries such as Roy Salvadori, Tony Brooks, Jackie Stewart and Ken Tyrrell, who read the eulogy, were in attendance.

A reception was held at Cooper's garage in Worthing after the funeral.

OBITUARIES

p48



An array of floral tributes flooded in for John Cooper, including one from the BRDC (left)

NEWS IN BRIEF

FORMULA 1

Ferrari has denied reports that it has reached an agreement with Michelin for a supply of tyres from the start of the 2002 season. "The story is not based on any fact and it will not in any way influence our excellent technical and sporting partnership with Bridgestone," said the team.

Benetton has been linked with a sponsorship deal with mobile phone giant Vodafone. The company's main rival, Orange, sponsors Arrows.

Peter Sauber believes F1 is suffering because there is too much money around. "It is not really useful to spend so much just because the money is there," he said. "If teams are not spending it on testing, they spend it in the wind tunnel or other things."

Motor racing's governing body, the FIA, is a joint-sponsor of *The Rules of the Game*, a European Conference on Governance in Sport which takes place in Brussels next month.

Jenson Button has promised to be more aggressive in 2001. "If I go over the top, I go over the top," he said. "I will be a lot more confident and a lot fitter, physically and mentally."

Jordan has got involved in Britain's most successful powerboat championship by putting its name to a competitor in the 2001 Honda Formula 4-stroke Race Series. The boat will be sponsored by Jordan's new High Intensity Drink, which has been designed specifically for drivers.

Jacques Villeneuve, Damon Hill and Jenson Button are set to take part in the annual charity 24-hour ski race at Villars in Switzerland this weekend.

Minardi boss Giancarlo Minardi remains adamant his team will compete this year, despite no firm news on the rumoured buy-out by Mecachrome. "We're doing everything to come to a solution, because time is money and Grand Prix dates don't move," he said.

Moscow's deputy mayor, Joseph Ordzhonikidze, who was instrumental in signing the deal for the city's new race track, was injured in a violent shooting before Christmas.

The Barcelona circuit in Spain will soon have an extra 20,000 seats following an upgrade on the start-finish straight grandstand.

Jackie Stewart has said that news of his son Paul's cancer was a worse blow to his life than seeing many of his friends die at race tracks. "All my life I've avoided the unpredictable happening, so it was particularly horrible for me," he said. "I've seen death close up. Many of my friends in racing have died, but it was always someone else – not me or my family."

Pizzonia rejects F1 for Petrobras

British Formula 3 champion Antonio Pizzonia has turned his back on the chance to race in Formula 1 this year to compete in Formula 3000 with the Petrobras Junior team.

The Brazilian's management has claimed that it had two offers on the table for F1 race deals in 2001, but that Pizzonia was in no rush to make it into the top flight.

"Antonio has turned down two opportunities to race in F1 next season," his agent Carl Gerrish said. "His confidence is amazing and when he comes into F1 he wants it to be with the right team. He's just 20 years old, still gaining experience and when you have a talent like that, there is no rush."

"Antonio knows F3000 will be competitive with some seasoned drivers around," Gerrish added. "If he finishes in the top three of the championship in his first season, on new circuits, he'll have done a good job."

Pizzonia tested for the Arrows Grand Prix team at Barcelona just before Christmas, lapping on

2000-spec Bridgestone tyres. He was not allowed the latest rubber because he is not a Bridgestone-contracted driver. "I'm a bit tired because I have not driven a racing car for a few months," he said. "The main pressure was on my neck and they say that Barcelona is tough on that area of the body. So I'm looking forward to doing some training to improve my fitness and muscle strength."



PIZZONIA
In no rush to F1

Fellow Brazilian Ricardo Sperafico will join Pizzonia at Petrobras. The pair both tested in November for the team that won the F3000 International Championship title last year with Bruno Junqueira.

Sperafico has strong links with Petrobras, the Brazilian oil company that gives its name to the team. He is the reigning Italian F3000 Champion.



PIT & PADDOCK RACING NEWS

Pizzonia eyes Petrobras seat

New British Formula 3 champion Antonio Pizzonia looks set to join the team that took Bruno Junqueira to this year's F3000 title.

in Belgium last Sunday. He said: "Next year starts tomorrow for me. I have to start again, even though the F3 season isn't finished yet. Petrobras has invited me for the Barcelona test."

Junqueira this year, could still have a chance of retaining his drive, but would need to bring a budget to the team. Petrobras, the South American team that gives the team its name,

NEW FO
Ex-Fo North F3000 will

Pizzonia tested for the championship-winning Petrobras team last November alongside new team

Luyendyk in Indy 500 return

TWO-time Indianapolis 500 winner Arie Luyendyk is coming out of retirement in an attempt to conquer the classic race once again.

The 47-year-old quit racing at the end of 1999, but has rejoined his former team Treadway Racing for his Brickyard return in May.

"I just felt like racing again," Luyendyk said. "When I left Indy last year I said when I came back it would be as a driver. I don't think it will take much time to get back into the swing of things. We'll do some

testing at Las Vegas and Fontana."

He expects to warm up for the Indy 500 by racing his G-Force in another Indy Racing League round.



LUYENDYK
Out of retirement

Indy G-Force engineer Tim Wardrop will work with Luyendyk, renewing a partnership that goes back to the Dutchman's spell at the team between '96 and '99.

Since retiring, Luyendyk has worked as a TV broadcaster covering the IRL.

He won the Indy 500 in '90 with Shierson Racing, then again in '97 with Treadway.

Renault proposes F1 talent ladder

RENAULT will set-up its own staircase of talent to find new drivers and engineers for its Formula 1 team.

Patrick Faure, boss of Renault Sport, said: "Our intention is to create our own 'nursery' system in the lower formulas to provide a stepping stone for young, talented drivers to grow from Formula Renault to F1, by passing through F3 and F3000."

"We are evaluating the possibility of creating direct links with various teams. It would not only allow us to recruit and develop young drivers, but also engineers and mechanics."

Melo joins Durango for second season

THE Italian Durango team has signed Jaime Melo to head its return to the Formula 3000 International Championship this year.

The 21-year-old was targeted by the squad thanks to his performance in a test at Jerez back in 1999.

"We have a wonderful opinion of him from that test," said a team spokesman. "He is young, fast, good technically and has a year's experience of the circuits."

Melo drove for Petrobras Junior in his rookie F3000 season last year, but Durango missed the championship.

De Ferran sets test pace

GIL de Ferran kicked off his Champ Car title defence before Christmas by setting the quickest time of the winter at the Sebring road course.

The Team Penske star completed two days of running at the Florida track, a popular venue for pre-season Champ Car testing. He was consistently quicker than anyone who ran in December.

"It was really nice to be back in the car after a month and a half," de Ferran said. "It was good to jump back into the car and get on with it again. It went quite well. We were in the 50 second [bracket] most of the time, quite easily, and from what

I've been told that's OK. I haven't got too rusty!"

De Ferran's speed takes on greater significance because of the January test ban that is now in effect.

The 33-year-old has also talked about his desire to continue racing in Champ Cars and has stated that he has no plans to attempt a switch to Formula 1 like Juan Pablo Montoya.

"Don't misunderstand me as someone who does not like F1, I adore that category as I was a fan," he said. "But now I drive for one of the most prestigious teams in the world. I am very content. While they still want me here, I will stay."



De Ferran set the pace when he tested a 2001 Reynard at Sebring just before Christmas

as seat

Pizzonia has tested for a number of F1 teams, including Arrows



mate and fellow Brazilian Ricardo Sperafico

Newman-Haas settles row

THE conflict between the Newman-Haas Champ Car team and its sponsor Texaco has been settled.

The oil giant had filed a lawsuit against the squad for a breach of contract following Michael Andretti's switch to Team Green. But an out-of-court settlement has been reached between the parties.

Texaco was angered by the move because it believed Newman-Haas' replacement for Andretti, Cristiano da Matta, was a less bankable name from a marketing point of view. It had threatened to terminate a five-year

contract with the team.

The settlement that has been brokered means that Texaco will only sponsor da Matta's car in 2001. Teammate Christian Fittipaldi has backing from US supermarket chain Kmart.

"It's basically been worked out," said team boss Carl Haas. "It's been a little delayed over the holiday period, but we have reached an agreement."

The loss of Texaco would have been a huge blow for the team which is already set to lose Kmart at the end of 2001. The company has suffered a decline in profits in recent years.



Texaco-backed da Matta ran the 2001-spec Newman-Haas Lola for the first time at Sebring

Test quells Texas fears

FEARS that the Texas Motor Speedway could be too dangerous for Champ Car racing have been quelled after Kenny Brack tested at the oval before Christmas.

Drivers, including Mauricio Gugelmin, voiced concerns that speeds could top 250mph around the 1.5-mile oval, which has switched from the Indy Racing League to CART for 2001. But Brack only lapped around the 220mph mark during 150 laps in his Team Rahal Reynard.

Rahal's general manager Scott Roembke said: "We ran basically the set-up Kenny raced with at Fontana at the end of the season. With a one inch wicker [gurney wing flap] he ran 212-213mph, flat-foot all the way round. Without a wicker he ran 220mph. It depends on what wicker and what boost you use."

The single-day test on the high-banked oval was overseen by CART's chief steward Kirk Russell and Rahal's technical director Don Halliday. "No problem at all," Halliday said. "All the hype we've heard was not for real. The car behaved like a normal race car."

Russell and CART's technical experts will study data from Brack's car to determine specific wing and boost rules for the Texas race which takes place on April 29.

Pruett loses NASCAR drive after one year

FORMER Champ Car star Scott Pruett has lost his drive in the NASCAR Winston Cup.

The 40-year-old only made the switch to stock cars in 2000, but has been sacked by the PPI Motorsports team to make way for Ricky Craven.

Pruett endured a trying rookie season, ending up 37th overall in the points standings.

Team boss Cal Wells, for whom Pruett also drove in Champ Cars, said: "Ricky's extremely hungry and talented. We have a chance to surprise people."

STAN FOX 1952 - 2000

FORMER Indianapolis 500 racer Stan Fox was killed in a road accident in New Zealand before Christmas.

The 48-year-old, who made eight starts at the Brickyard, was made famous by a huge crash at the 500 in 1995. He suffered severe head injuries which ended his race career.

Since his recovery, Stan had set up an organisation, the Friends of the Fox, to support people with similar injuries to his own.

He was in New Zealand on business for the organisation when he was killed.



ALEX ZANARDI kicked off preparations for a return to Champ Cars in a test for his new team, Mo Nunn Racing, before Christmas. He ran at the Homestead road course, lapping just 0.1s slower than Team Green's Paul Tracy. "I feel like I'm back in my office," he said. See p54.

NEWS IN BRIEF

CHAMP CARS

Long-time Champ Car team sponsor and owner Jim Gilmore was killed in a road accident on New Year's Eve. He is best known for his links with US legend AJ Foyt, whose team he co-owned when the Texan was in his prime during the 1970s.

Dale Coyne Racing is expected to field a brace of Ford-powered Lolas in Champ Cars this year. 2000 driver Alex Barron is the favourite for the lead seat.

Mo Nunn Racing has been approached to run Italian Felipe Giaffone in the Indianapolis 500 this year. Team boss Mo Nunn has said that if the project goes ahead, it will not affect the Champ Car squad.

US RACING

Indy Lights team Conquest Racing has signed Brazilian Nilton Rossoni, this year's Barber Dodge series champion, for next season.

Inaugural US Formula 3 champion Stuart Crow has retired from the sport.

Argentinian Martin Basso has re-signed with Michael Shank Racing for the 2001 Toyota Atlantic series, after finishing fourth overall last season. Brazilian Hoover Orsi will also return to series with Hylton Motorsports.

NASCAR

Top Winston Cup team owner Rick Hendrick has been given an official pardon by US President Bill Clinton for his conviction for mail fraud in 1997. The 51-year-old car dealership king was consigned to one year's house arrest, a special dispensation as he battled against leukemia.

Mike Wallace, brother of NASCAR ace Rusty, is returning to the Winston Cup this season after landing the drive in Ultra Motorsports' Ford Taurus, piloted by Michael Waltrip in 2000. Cup regular Ted Musgrave will replace Wallace in Ultra's Truck Series entry.

NASCAR journeyman Hut Stricklin has landed a full-time Winston Cup drive with veteran team owner Junie Donlavey for 2001.

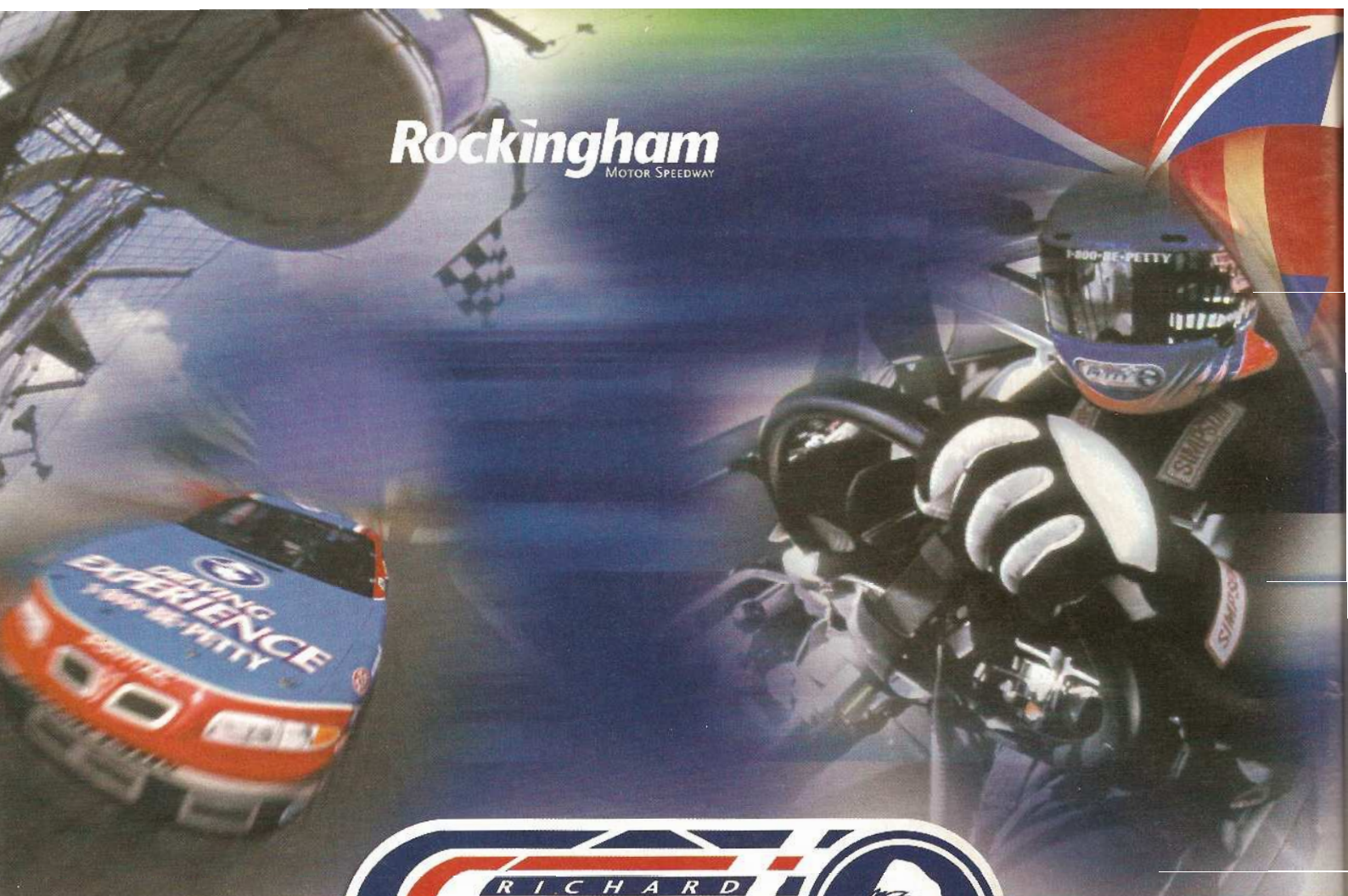
Former Indycar driver Willy T Ribbs is to race in the NASCAR Truck Series this season with Bobby Hamilton's Dodge team. Famed as one of the few African-American professional drivers, Ribbs raced in the Trans-Am series in 2000.

FORMULA 3000

Super Nova is talking to six drivers to fill one of its seats, according to team boss David Sears, including Belgian Jeffrey van Hooydonk. The other car will be driven by either Mark Webber or Fernando Alonso.

Brno in the Czech Republic has been awarded a race in the Euro F3000 series. It will take place on May 20.

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Rydell returns to Volvo fold

Former British Touring Car champion Rickard Rydell could return to the series as part of a development programme with Volvo this year. The Swede has signed a three-year deal to return to the marque with which he won the 1998 BTCC title. Rydell will spend this season testing and developing a new car which Volvo plans to enter in next year's European Touring Car series. "I've signed an agreement to develop the car this year," he said. "They want to see if it is competitive

before deciding on a return to the ETC from 2002."

Rydell turned down a deal to join the Mercedes DTM line-up to remain with Volvo. "It was difficult to do both so I decided to concentrate on Volvo," he said. "If the car is ready maybe they will look at some races this year."

The only series running anything approximating to next year's likely ETC rules in 2001 is the BTCC. When asked if this meant a possible brief return to

Britain, Rydell said: "I guess so."

The S60 is believed to be the most likely car for the project. Prodrive, winner of the 2000 BTCC with Volvo parent company Ford, is tipped to build it, with some sources claiming work has already begun.

Volvo sports boss Olle Odsell said: "We know who's doing it and we want to announce it at the right time.

We want to build a car and test it through the summer."



RYDELL
Three-year deal



Rickard Rydell last drove for Volvo in the BTCC in 1999. He will test and develop a new car this season to prepare for Volvo's ETC bid

DTM leaves Donington out

THE planned British round of the German DTM has been canned.

Donington Park's suggested date on October 7 has now been assigned to the Hockenheim finale.

The trip to Britain was controversial with the teams, with Opel lobbying against it on the grounds of cost.

Belgian track Zolder's date has also been scrapped, meaning just two 'away' races at Austria's A1-Ring and Zandvoort in the Netherlands.

Zolder managing director Jos Verschraege said: "There were never any indications that there might be a problem, but at least they have guaranteed us that we will have a round in 2002."

The circuit will go ahead with track improvements, including a widening, bigger run-off areas and the removal of the tight Villeneuve chicane.

DTM CALENDAR

HOCKENHEIM	APRIL 22
NÜRBURGRING	MAY 6
OSCHERSLEBEN	MAY 20
SACHSENRING	JUNE 17
NORISRING	JULY 8
LAUSITZRING	AUGUST 12
NÜRBURGRING	AUGUST 26
A1-RING	SEPTEMBER 9
ZANDVOORT	SEPTEMBER 23
HOCKENHEIM	OCTOBER 7

Janspeed back in the BTCC

THE Janspeed name is to return to the British Touring Car Championship after an absence of six years.

The British company is linking up with GA Racing to field a two-car squad of Alfa Romeo 156s in the Production class under the name GA/Janspeed Racing.

Janspeed has a long history in touring car racing, its last project being the works Nissan Super Touring squad in the early '90s.

GA ran its Alfas mainly in the National Saloon series in 2000, but suffered reliability problems.

The project, which will be based at

Janspeed's Salisbury premises, will extend to running a Super Touring Honda Accord in selected rounds of the European Touring Car Championship. Swedish ex-Honda driver Stefan Lindberg is also involved with the programme.

GA boss Gary Ayles said: "With Janspeed's work on the engine front and constant development on the cars, I think we have all the ingredients to turn it around."

Janspeed marketing director David Morley added: "The full weight of Janspeed's engineering capabilities is behind this project."

Barwell retains Hondas

BRITISH Touring Car Championship team Barwell Motorsport has shelved plans to move up to the series' top division in 2001.

Barwell has given up on its hopes to move into the Touring class with a team of Vauxhall Astra Coupes. Instead, it will remain in the Production division with a two-car squad of Honda Accords.

The move means that James Kaye, who finished a close runner-up to Peugeot's Alan Morrison in the class in 2000, will start the

campaign as one of the title favourites.

Team boss Mark Lemmer will not partner Kaye for a second season. Instead, he will race a third Accord in selected rounds of the European Touring Car Championship's new Super Production series.

Barwell spokesman Chris Needell said: "We'll definitely be running two Accords in BTC Production. James will probably carry on with his and

we'll be running a second 2000-spec car for another driver. We are speaking to many candidates."



LEMMER
Move to ETC



Gary Ayles (far right) believes GA's link-up with Janspeed will lead to BTCC success in 2001

BRIAN KREISKY 1948 – 2000

TV producer and entrepreneur Brian Kreisky was killed in a light aircraft crash just before Christmas.

The 52-year-old died along with four other family members shortly after take-off from Blackbushe airport on December 23.

Kreisky was best known in motorsport for his work in the TV industry. He formed the Videovision company in the '70s which produced the infamous Havoc crash videos. The company then joined forces with Hay Fisher Productions in 1992, forming the Motor Sports Consortium.

Having produced programmes

on rallying, sportscar racing and motorcycling, he was involved in the TV coverage of the British GT Championship and Formula 3 on Channel 4.

Along with his TV work, Kreisky also became involved in driver management, looking after ex-Formula 1 driver Francois Migault. He also had an involvement in the Melchester Racing team which ran US racer Gordon Smiley in the Aurora British F1 championship.

Flying was a passion and he had been a licenced pilot since '93.

He is survived by his wife Cathy and children Tamara and Lisa.



Kenny Brack
Team Rahal
Rookie of the Year 2000 - CART
HT-12 Ferro-Carbon™

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Hayes lands top Manor seat

UP-AND-coming Northern Irishman Derek Hayes has secured the seat from which Marc Hynes and Antonio Pizzonia won the past two British Formula 3 championships.

Hayes, 22, will lead the attack of Manor Motorsport as the team bids for a hat-trick of crowns.

Although Hayes's Dallara-Mugen is theoretically identical to those of teammates Mark Taylor and Jeffrey Jones, he will be engineered by team boss



'No pressure'

John Booth, who ran Hynes and Pizzonia to their titles.

"I'm very, very happy," said Hayes. "It's the best seat in the business so it's looking good."

Hayes graduated to F3 from Formula Palmer Audi in last November's Korean Super Prix, but was prevented from starting when he crashed his Manor Dallara.

"The idea of doing Korea was to show the team my capabilities behind the wheel," he said. "Up until the crash I'd shown my speed and

feedback and what I could do."

Hayes denies that securing the two-time title-winning seat puts him under extra pressure. "I don't feel any pressure at all," he said. "At the end of the day I'm the dark horse. I'm very excited. It's the biggest opportunity I'll get in motor racing."

Hayes's main rival for the Manor drive, Italian Gianmaria Bruni, now looks almost certain to re-sign for Fortec Motorsport this week.

Booth was returning from holiday and was unavailable for comment as AUTOSPORT went to press.



Qualifying for the Korea Super Prix was the first time Hayes drove for Manor. Now he will lead the team's bid to win a hat-trick of titles

Lotterer hits Jaguar jackpot

GERMAN Formula 3 star Andre Lotterer is to team up with Australian James Courtney in Jaguar's British F3 line-up.

The two drivers were due to be revealed as part of the Jaguar Racing launch on Tuesday of this week.

Lotterer, 19, was not one of the eight drivers assessed by the Jaguar F3 squad last autumn. However, he has tested impressively with the sister Formula 1 team.

He finished fourth in last year's German F3 rankings with Bertram Schafer Racing, scoring three race

wins and staying in title contention until the final meeting.

Courtney, last year's British Formula Ford champion, has long been tipped for a seat with the team. Lotterer, meanwhile, was a latecomer to the race for a Jaguar drive, and ousted Briton Gary Paffett (see below) at the eleventh hour.

He appears to have the credentials to challenge for the title in his first season of British F3. He missed the major international races last year, but competed successfully in the Formula Renault Eurocup in 1999.

Paffett eyes Duma lifeline

British rising star Gary Paffett's best chance of competing in Formula 3 this season lies with the new Duma Racing team.

The reigning F3 Scholarship Class champion appeared a shoe-in for the Jaguar squad, but was passed over at the last minute in favour of German Andre Lotterer (see above).

Paffett's manager Martin Hines was unhappy with the late timing of the decision in an off-season where the top F3 teams have filled up unusually early.

"We were disappointed," said Hines. "We were told we were looking very



Passed over

good from a very high level within Jaguar, and that's given the others [drivers] a four- or five-week start on looking for other seats."

But Hines believes that Duma, run by Paffett's 2000 engineer Pete Berry, is a good option. "You need a Dallara chassis, a Mugen or Toyota engine, a bloody good

engineer - which Pete is - and the best driver, which I know I have," he said.

He also said that Paffett has an opportunity in the Formula 3000 International Championship and for a Formula 1 testing arrangement, but would not elaborate.

F3 for GP Sunday slot

FORMULA 3 racers are now looking almost certain to support the British Grand Prix this year - with a race on Sunday morning.

Plans are progressing well to revive the junior category's support slot, which was dropped in 2000, for the country's motorsport showcase.

The Sunday morning plan is a further boost for F3, which has not enjoyed such a prestigious position on the timetable since 1986.

Between '87 and '99, the F3 race took place after Formula 1 qualifying on Saturday afternoon.

Silverstone director Roger Etccl said: "We're hoping to get confirmation fairly soon. It's not the norm - we've had to ask for special dispensation from the FIA for it. It will be a non-championship round open to international entries, and will not be televised, which is the only way that the FIA will accept it."

F3 teams are delighted with the Sunday morning plan. Fortec team manager David Hayle said: "Absolutely fantastic. The best thing that could happen for F3 other than it being included in the championship. It's brilliant that they've done it."

More good news for F3 is that the German GP organisers are planning to stage two races at Hockenheim.

AUTOSPORT
International
INCORPORATING THE RACING CAR SHOW
January 11-14th 2001
NEC BIRMINGHAM

Button to make guest appearance at indoor action extravaganza

Jenson Button will make a guest appearance in the first British Eurosport Thunderdrome show at 1030 on Sunday January 14. The Benetton F1 star will officially open the last day of the show at 0900 before making his way to the indoor arena for the first of the five race and rally spectacles. Combined show and Thunderdrome tickets can be booked in advance at £20 or £23 on the day.

Subaru's world championship rally star Richard Burns will attend the opening press and trade day of the show today (Thursday). Richard will visit the AUTOSPORT Central Stage at 1215 and the Subaru stand during the afternoon.

Shell Honda motorcycle Grand Prix rider Chris Walker will complete the line-up of Britain's top riders visiting BIKESPORT. Walker joins four-time World Superbike Champion Carl Fogarty, plus a host of other bike stars at the inaugural BIKESPORT.

Walker will also join the host of riders trying their luck on three wheels. At 2pm on Friday January 12, Walker will line up alongside Neil Hodgson, Red Bull Ducati riders John Reynolds and Sean Emmett and Virgin Yamaha's Jamie Robinson for a Reliant Robin battle in the British Eurosport Thunderdrome.

Olympic rowing heroes Matthew Pinsent and James Cracknell will roar up to the NEC on Saturday January 13 on their Yamaha R1s. At 2pm, the pair are taking part in a head-to-head Caterham obstacle challenge against the clock in the live action arena, the British Eurosport Thunderdrome.

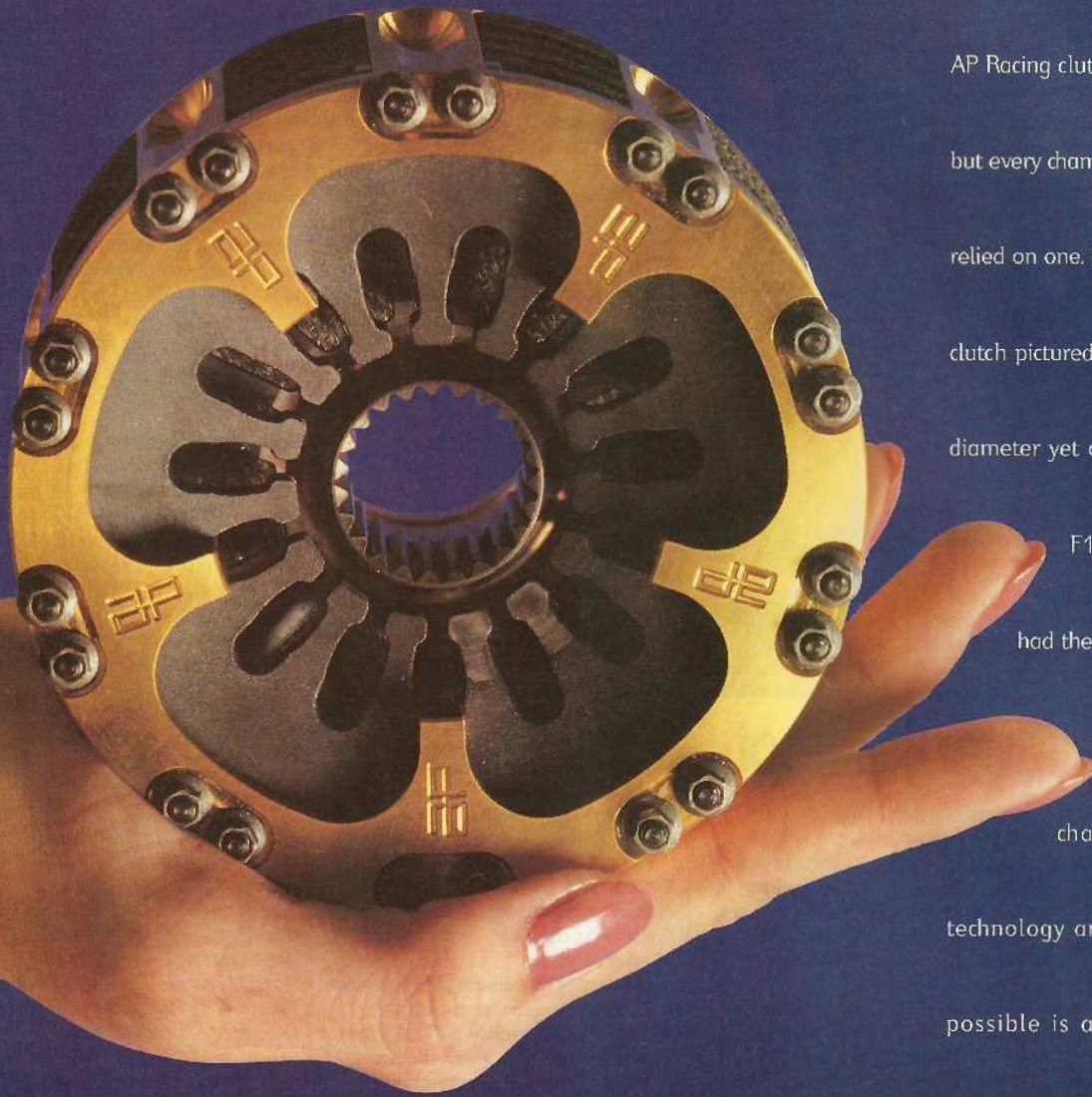
LWT will be making a one-hour programme about AUTOSPORT International 2001, which will be broadcast on Sunday January 21. Coverage will include interviews and launches, plus action from the British Eurosport Thunderdrome. The programme will be broadcast on ITV regions across the country - see your TV guide for details of timings.

For the latest on the show check out the web site at www.autosport-international.com

To book tickets call 0870 264 4444 and save pounds on combined entry and Thunderdrome tickets.

CROWN JEWEL

Clutch shown actual size



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Aston eyes supercar

Aston Martin could build an all-new rear-engined supercar for its projected return to the Le Mans 24 Hours in 2002.

The Ford-owned manufacturer has finally admitted it is gearing up for a sportscar comeback, as revealed in AUTOSPORT last summer. At the same time, it has indicated that the privately funded project might not be based on the front-engined Vanquish, due to go into production this year.

Renowned sportscar designer Graham Humphreys is undertaking a feasibility study to work out what it would take to compete alongside the Chrysler Viper, Chevrolet Corvette and radical Saleen S7 in the GTS class. However, a company spokesman

emphasised that the evaluation had only just begun, and no decisions have been made.

The backer of the project, Aston Martin customer and enthusiast Les Edgar, explained that the only criteria were that the car "had to look like an Aston and potentially be able to be driven on the road". He added: "It's up in the air what the car will be. I'm leaving that up to Graham."

Michael Cane, whose crack GTC squad has been announced as a partner in the project, said: "The

mission is to produce a race winner."

Cane conceded, however, that the new rear-engined S7R developed for American muscle-car builder Saleen by Ray Mallock Limited in Britain had "moved the goal posts" in GTS. He said: "If something akin to the Saleen is required, that's what we will do."

GTC will be involved in the build of the new car. It should begin testing by the end of the year with British driver Chris Goodwin and will undertake a race programme based around Le Mans in 2002.



Partner in project



An artist's impression of how a bespoke, rear-engined Aston GT challenger might look. The real thing is set to debut at Le Mans in 2002

Hoshino Jr takes third Carlin drive

LEADING British Formula 3 team Carlin Motorsport will run a third car in the 2001 championship.

Japanese Kazuki Hoshino will race in the Scholarship Class alongside the team's top-division ace Takuma Sato and Anthony Davidson.

Hoshino, son of Japanese racing legend Kazuyoshi, drove for Carlin last year in Junior Formula Ford and the Formula Renault Winter Series.

Team boss Trevor Carlin said: "Our winter testing with Kazuki convinced us that he is ready to take the step to F3 Scholarship."

Bouchut moves up to Viper

FORMER Le Mans and Daytona winner Christophe Bouchut will race a Chrysler Viper in this season's FIA GT Championship.

The winner of the N-GT crown in last year's series is moving to the top division with Larbre Competition, the team with which he took the title in a Porsche 911 GT3-R.

Bouchut, 34, said: "The FIA GT was really good last year and will be even better in 2001. I really wanted to stay and I'm very happy to be moving up to the Viper. "Our target is to go for overall

victories next season. We don't know the car, but Larbre is a good team."

The identity of Bouchut's team mate in the Viper is unclear, although it won't be his co-champion in 2000. Fellow Frenchman Patrice Goueslard will continue to drive the team's Porsche in the new season.

One possibility is that the ultra-successful Viper driver Karl Wendlinger could be loaned to Larbre by Chrysler's factory squad. He is expected to race its new LMP prototype this year.



Happy with plans

Saulnier signs Fukuda

JAPANESE Formula 3 star Ryo Fukuda is to link up with veteran team boss Serge Saulnier for a full-scale attack on the French championship.

Saulnier has stepped up his campaign in his homeland after bowing out of the British series and handing the reins of his old team, Promatecme, to former technical director Chris Weller.

The new effort, to be known as Saulnier Racing, will run a pair of Renault-engined Dallaras. It will be based at Promatecme's old French headquarters at the Magny-Cours Grand Prix track.

Driving for the LD Autosport team,

Fukuda took the 2000 title fight to eventual champion Jonathan Cochet before running out of funds. He then teamed with Promatecme to finish third in the Macau Grand Prix.

Saulnier said: "We are going to fight for the French championship. We've also got a programme to do the international races and maybe we shall come to Britain for the Grand Prix support race."

Fukuda will face Portugal's Tiago Monteiro - who will re-join ASM after flirting with British series teams last month - and promising Frenchman Mathieu Zangarelli, who remains with Signature.

O'Connell joins the Corvette GTS team

OUSTED prototype Panoz driver Johnny O'Connell has been snapped up to race for the factory Chevrolet Corvette GTS squad this season.

The 38-year-old will make his debut in the Corvette C5-R in next month's Daytona 24 Hours alongside Dale Earnhardt and his son, Dale Jr, as well as ex-patriate Briton Andy Pilgrim. He will then contest the enduros at Sebring, Le Mans and Road Atlanta's Petit Le Mans.

Corvette programme manager Doug Fehan said: "He came to us, but the team is very pleased to get him, because I know just how quick he is."

NEWS IN BRIEF

TOURING CARS

Two-time Bathurst winner Steven Richards has made a surprise switch to the Ford Tickford Racing squad for this year's Australian V8 Supercar campaign. Richards, 28, has quit the Kmart Racing Holden team to link up with established Ford star Glenn Seton. FTR parted company with Neil Crompton late last year.

Scottish touring car hero John Cleland has played down reports that he is considering a BTCC comeback in 2001. "I'm committed to ASCAR," he said, "and it would have to be a hell of a deal to tempt me back to the BTCC. But I'm passionate about touring cars. It's like being married - you don't walk away after 12 years and not miss it."

FORMULA 3

Team Meritus has filled both its seats for the British F3 Scholarship Class. Swede Peter Nilsson, who joined the series at the tail end of 2000, will be partnered by Irish Formula Renault graduate Michael Keohane in the two-car squad of Dallara-Toyotas.

Fortec Motorsport has five drivers in the frame to join Gianmaria Bruni (who is likely to re-sign this week) in British F3 this year. Matt Davies (a Fortec driver in 1999), fellow Brit Tim Spouge, Americans Alex Gurney and Philip Giebler, plus Yugoslav Milos Pavlovic are all contenders for what could even expand to a three-car team. Pavlovic tested with the team before Christmas (below) at Donington.



MICK WALKER

F3 Scholarship Class team Diamond Racing has re-signed Briton Mark Mayall for a second season.

Top Formula Renault team Cram Competition is graduating to F3 with the driver it piped to last year's Italian title. The Italian squad has signed the promising Raffaele Giammaria to compete in the German championship this season.

SPORTSCARS

US sportscar legend Hurley Haywood and Porsche regular Sascha Maassen have joined Champion Racing's Daytona 24 Hours driver line-up for its Lola-Porsche B2K/10.

Reigning Indy Racing League champion Buddy Lazier is to make a sportscar return to race Robinson Racing's Riley & Scott at Daytona.

BTCC star Rickard Rydell wants a drive in the Le Mans 24 Hours, as long as it does not clash with his new Volvo testing contract (see story on page 13).

NEWS IN BRIEF

SPORTSCARS

Champ Car racer Max Papis will drive a Dyson Riley & Scott at Daytona for the second year in succession.

Jon Field's Intersport Lola headed the times after the first day of the traditional pre-Daytona 24 Hours test. He set a best time of 1m40.494s, less than 0.1s ahead of Jack Baldwin in Robinson Racing's Riley & Scott.

Two-time Australian Super Touring Champion Brad Jones was drafted into Audi's ALMS squad at Adelaide when Allan McNish was forced to sit out Saturday's qualifying. McNish had aggravated a minor back injury while removing his kilt after a photocall, but recovered sufficiently to leave Jones on the bench for the race.

Former FIA GT2 Champion Justin Bell could be in line for a drive with Jay Cochran's Westward Racing team in this year's ALMS. The Briton, dropped by Chevrolet for 2001, said he was in "heavy negotiations" with the team which will run a pair of Panoz Roadsters. Indy Lights convert Peter Boss will also race for the team.

Former TWR and Panoz sportscar boss Tony Dowe will mastermind Kelly Moss Racing's attack on the ALMS with a pair of Porsche 911 GT3-Rs. Last year, the Brit ran Dick Barbour's similar Porsches until mid-season.

The Pilbeam-Nissan MP84 entered by Roy Baker's Project 2000 Raceworks team was prevented from starting the Adelaide ALMS race after a scrutineering wrangle. The validity of the car's FIA crash test was not accepted.

The new 2001 Panoz Roadster made a brief debut in the final ALMS round at Adelaide on New Year's Eve (below). Jan Magnussen managed only



two laps before alternator problems brought the car's outing to an early end.

Next year's Spa 24 Hours FIA GT round takes place on August 4/5, not July 28/29 as reported last week.

Opel DTM driver Christian Menzel made his ALMS debut in the third Dick Barbour Porsche 911 GT3-R at Adelaide, and is expected to become a contracted full-time driver with the Weissach marque this season.

Italian team Durango Formula has abandoned its sportscar plans with the new GMS chassis it ran in the second half of last year's SportsRacing World Cup, electing instead to concentrate on its Formula 3000 campaigns.

Bentley signs up British

Sportscar stars Andy Wallace and James Weaver will head the driver line-up in Bentley's all-British car when the historic marque returns to the Le Mans 24 Hours.

Former Le Mans champ Wallace and multiple US sportscar title winner Weaver were confirmed as drivers for the EXP Speed 8 at this week's Detroit Auto Show. Also announced was American Butch Leitzinger, a long-time team mate of the two Brits at Dyson Racing.

No comment was available from Bentley or the drivers prior to the announcement in the US, which was scheduled after AUTOSPORT went to press.

Weaver was always in line for a seat in one of the Bentleys, to be run by Richard Lloyd's Apex Motorsport team. The 46-year-old carried initial testing with the British-built car last year and was known to have an undertaking to contest the race with Apex. Wallace, 39, another Lloyd favourite, led his Audi UK line-up at Le Mans back in 1999.



WEAVER
Place confirmed

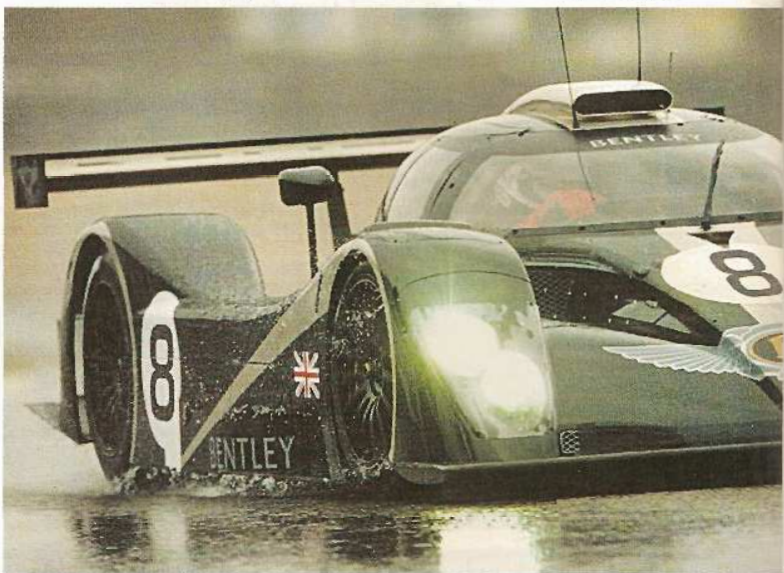
The identity of the third British driver and Leitzinger's team mates in the 'foreign' Speed 8 will not be announced for some time - probably not before the middle of February.

Bentley denied that there are strict criteria governing the choice of remaining driver. Speculation that the final Brit would be an up-and-coming sportscar driver and that the marque wanted a German were played down.

A spokeswoman said: "It's not about age or nationality. It is about getting the right people for the job."

Other names linked to the vacant Bentley seats include Germany's Ralf Kelleners, former Le Mans winner Stephane Ortelli and Britons Mark Blundell and Johnny Mowlem.

The two EXP Speed 8s will run on Dunlop tyres, renewing a relationship that reaches back to



James Weaver, who has carried out testing duties on the Bentley EXP Speed 8 so far, was

McNish returns to Risi for Daytona

NEWLY-crowned American Le Mans Series champion Allan McNish will make his only race start of the season in next month's Daytona 24 Hours.

The 31-year-old has left Audi to test for Toyota's fledgling Formula 1 squad, but will fit in the American enduro before the Japanese marque's programme begins in earnest. McNish will contest the race with the Risi Competizione Ferrari squad, for which he finished second at Daytona in 1998.

McNish has never made a secret of his desire to add a Daytona win to his sportscar CV, which includes victory

at Le Mans in '98 and last year's ALMS title. "I want one of those Rolex Daytona watches [awarded to the race winners] and I'm too tight to buy one myself," he joked last season. "It'll be good to be back at Daytona and to team up again with Risi," he said on the announcement of the deal.

Hopes that McNish could team up with sportscar sparring partner David Brabham in the Ferrari have now disappeared. The Australian, who beat McNish to the 1989 British Formula 3 Championship, had agreed to drive the car as long as it didn't clash with testing of the new

Panoz 2001 Roadster. A test pencilled in at Sebring for Daytona week has been confirmed.

Brabham, 35, said: "Panoz is my number one programme this year, but I am disappointed because I always enjoy racing at Daytona."

McNish will team up with Risi regulars Ralf Kelleners and Eric van de Poele, but there will be no replacement for Brabham.

Meanwhile, Risi technical director John McLoughlin believes the 333SP can be competitive. "The Ferrari still has potential for long races such as Daytona," he said.



ALLAN McNish SEALED the 2000 American Le Mans Series title thanks to his victory in Adelaide on December 31. The Scot (right) needed only to start the race in order to claim the crown ahead of team mate Dindo Capello (left). However, a back injury threatened at one stage to keep him out of the event altogether. Full ALMS race report, page 78

Saleen concentrates on customer's race

AMERICAN muscle-car builder Saleen is putting its full weight behind the first customer for its S7R GTS racer in next month's Daytona 24 Hours.

The company has scratched its own entry from the enduro to concentrate efforts on a privateer car run by Paul Gentilozzi's Rocketsport team. Saleen race boss Daryl Cozens said: "The way to make it happen was to stand back. This shows that we are committed to our customers."

Gentilozzi, who tested his car last week at Daytona, is due to share with fellow Trans-Am racer Johnny Miller.

sh stars

Petty lines up Porsche seat

Bentley's five pre-war Le Mans victories. The move also represents Dunlop's return to top-flight competition at Le Mans for the first time since the early 1990s, following a period of restructuring in its British competition's department.

Bob Heywood, general manager of Dunlop Motorsport, said: "The time was right for us to come back, and that coincided with Bentley's return."



confirmed for the Le Mans 24 Hours on Tuesday

NASCAR frontrunner Kyle Petty will join fellow Winston Cup aces Dale Earnhardt and his son Dale Jr in next month's Daytona 24 Hours.

Kyle, 40-year-old son of stock car legend Richard, will drive a privateer Porsche in the GT division. That means he will not be pitched directly against the Earnhardts, who are pairing up in a factory Chevrolet Corvette in GTS.

Petty has been tempted back to the 24 Hours by Orbit Racing boss Leo Hindery whose two 911 GT3-Rs will be run by Porsche preparation expert Michael Colucci Racing.

Hindery said: "This is just a fun thing. I've known Kyle forever, and I'm a business partner with Richard. Kyle is such a personality that when two segments of the sport start crossing over, fan interest will increase exponentially."

A deal for Petty to race a Chrysler Viper with his father at Daytona last year failed to come to fruition, but he has contested the enduro before: back in 1986, he drove a Ford.



Tempted back

ELMS chief plans a 'star car'

THE boss of the European Le Mans Series wants to field a celebrity car in the new championship this season.

ELMS executive director John Macdonald has outlined his desire to see big-name drivers from each of the five European countries the series visits taking part in their home race.

"It would be good to have a big-name Austrian in at the Salzburgring. Alex Wurz [former Benetton Grand Prix driver] would be ideal," said Macdonald. "Imagine if we could get Jean Alesi in for the Vallenga race! He'd put bums on seats and I'm sure he would be blistering in a sportscar."

Macdonald's initial plan for the 'star car' revolves around a 2001 Panoz Roadster, most likely to be run by David Price Racing.

"We still have to find the finance to do it, but I believe it's possible. For example, if we had an event sponsor we would run the car in their colours for that race."

Further details of the inaugural ELMS, including television coverage and the prize fund, are due to be announced today (Thursday) at the AUTOSPORT International show, which is currently taking place at Birmingham's NEC.



US CHASSIS constructor Riley & Scott has released this sneak preview of the successor to its ultra-successful MkIII sportscar. The significantly new MkIII Series C, depicted with a Le Mans-spec single rollhoop, is expected to turn a wheel for the first time next month



JORDAN LAUNCH PLUS Frentzen v Trulli

TEAM-MATES SQUARE UP FOR F1'S CLOSEST FIGHT

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Delecour buoyed after Focus

Ford's new signing, Francois Delecour, is confident of winning rallies and beating world champions Peugeot next year.

The Frenchman had his first taste of the Ford Focus World Rally Car in a one-day test near the M-Sport factory in Cockermonth, under snowy conditions that were more reminiscent of Sweden than north-west England.

He said: "I am very, very happy with my first impressions of the car. In many areas, it is a lot better than the Peugeot."

The 206 World Rally Car is popularly reputed to be the class of the field, so Delecour's comments have encouraged the Ford rally hierarchy.

He added: "The engine is better at high revs than the Peugeot, although at low revs the Peugeot has an edge. Actually though, they are quite similar as the differentials work in much the same way."

"The Focus seems very easy to drive and it is more comfortable than the Peugeot. I have more room to work in, whereas the Peugeot was a bit small."

"Generally speaking, I feel stronger than in the Peugeot, and I think we can beat them. We have to."

The 38-year-old completed his winter testing programme over two days earlier this week near Gap, in the South of France. Although his rivals have completed more pre-event preparation, Delecour says that he is unconcerned.



Encouraged

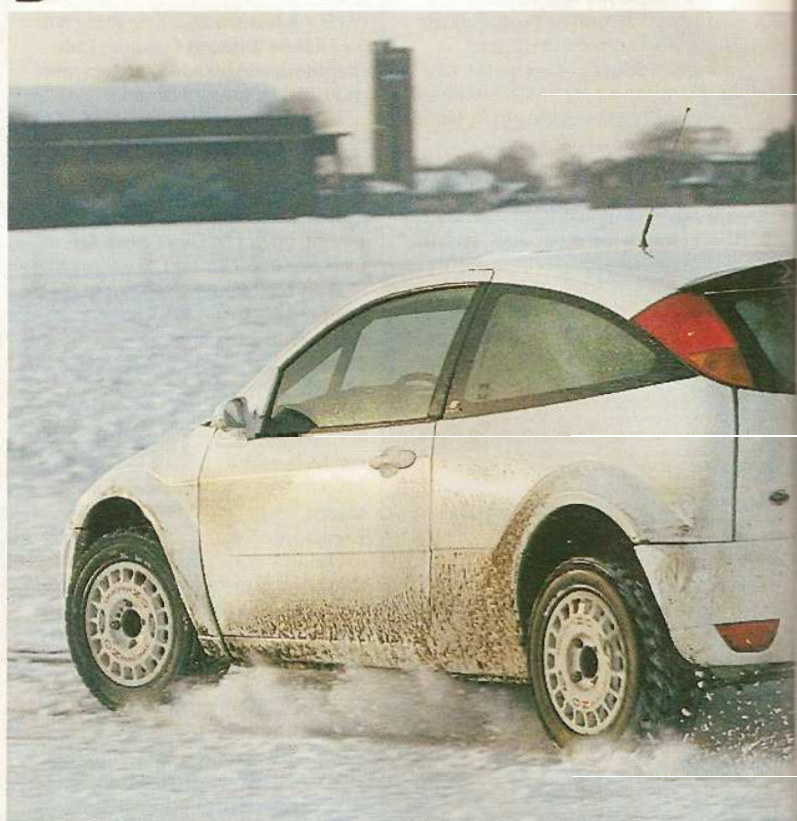
"For me, it is not a problem to come to the Monte with little testing," said the Frenchman, who has finished on the podium of the mountain event five times, including taking one overall victory.

"I think it is certainly possible to win again."

Ford team boss Malcolm Wilson said: "I don't need to

see Francois drive to know his capabilities, but I'm encouraged by his views so far."

"He's obviously had the advantage of driving only the 2001 car - which we know is a big step forward from what we had before - but it does concern me if he says we can improve the power of the engine at the bottom end. It's something that we'll be working hard with Cosworth to resolve."



Francois Delecour got his first run in the Focus World Rally Car in the snows of Cumbria

No deal for Kankkunen

FOUR-time world champion Juha Kankkunen will not sign a binding contract with Subaru this year.

His manager, Timo Joukhi, said: "The reality is that Juha will not be signing a contract with anybody."

"Subaru offered him a programme that was too small, and so he has decided to keep his opportunities open so that he can drive for other people. That does not mean that he won't drive a Subaru this year - it is still a good relationship."

Speculation in the Finnish media recently suggested that the 41-year-old has severed his links with the

Japanese marque. Kankkunen, however, denies it.

"That is a rumour," he said. "I would like to drive a Subaru on more than one rally and less than 14. From there, we will see, but I am talking to Prodrive about arrangements."

Joukhi estimates that Kankkunen will drive in "three or four" world rallies. However, he hinted that Kankkunen had other opportunities outside of the world championship, including rallycross and ice-racing.

A Prodrive spokesman said: "The ball is really in Juha's court. It's up to him to decide."

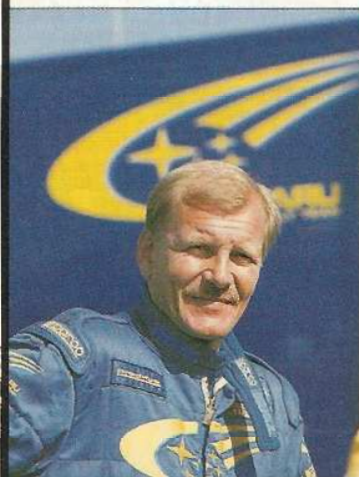
THE FOURTH MAN

ONE of the key reasons why Subaru could not make any guarantees to Kankkunen this year is because it has effectively committed to run a fourth works car for Toshihiro Arai.

The Japanese driver, who drove a Prodrive Allstars car last year, will campaign a new-shape Impreza on 10 rallies.

Arai's machine will be branded identically to the factory cars, but his main focus will be the Teams' Cup.

A Prodrive spokesman said: "There is a big strain on logistics, so we were thinking that maybe Toshihiro and Juha could share a car. It's a question though of whether or not that is acceptable to Juha."



Kankkunen will not sign with Subaru

Gardemeister to drive 206WRC

SEAT refugee Toni Gardemeister will drive a Peugeot 206 World Rally Car on the opening two rounds of the World Rally Championship.

The 25-year-old has secured a deal to use a Grifone-run Peugeot in Monte Carlo and Sweden, but is hopeful that the deal could be extended to other world rounds.

Gardemeister, who had been tipped for the third Ford drive said: "I am very happy, because I thought it would not be possible to have anything after Ford took Delecour."

The Finn's Peugeot will run in a lesser specification to the factory

cars, but he is still confident of achieving strong results.

"I'm sure I can get in the top six on the Monte," said Gardemeister, who finished fourth there last year. "The target is the podium."

Gardemeister's options after Sweden are unclear. "If possible, I would like to drive some more in the Peugeot," he said. However, he has also been linked to a third Mitsubishi - although this is unconfirmed by Ralliart - and a Grifone-run Toyota Corolla WRC. The Finn hopes to contest half of the series this year, in a bid to secure a works drive for 2002.

Laukkanen lands Corolla

FORMER British champion Tapio Laukkanen has secured a Toyota Corolla World Rally Car for the Swedish round of the world championship next month.

The Finn will drive a Toyota Team Sweden car, and seems set to use the same Corolla on the Rally of Portugal in March.

He said: "We've got a deal for Sweden, but I think we will use it for Portugal too. We also have options for Greece as well."

Laukkanen is targeting a works Mitsubishi drive for his native Rally Finland in August.

"The problem is that we are not the only ones looking for the third Mitsubishi," he said.

"But my manager is talking to them and I hope we can do a deal."

The 31-year-old has also considered a Grifone-run Peugeot 206 WRC or Toyota Corolla, but it seems that he is less likely to run in a customer Ford Focus.

"Many people want one, so I think they are short of cars," he said.

The Finn has effectively ruled out a return to the British championship though. "I have not thought about that," he said.

s tests



and pronounced himself confident of wins

Higgins gets works Ford seat

FORMER British Rally champion Mark Higgins has been confirmed as Ford's driver in the series for the coming season.

The 29-year-old will drive a factory Focus World Rally Car on all seven rounds of the championship, and is aiming to repeat his 1997 title win.

Higgins said: "To get the chance to drive the best car in the world with the best team is breathtaking. I don't want to take anything away from the cars I have driven before, but it's been a long time since I've felt this excited about the season ahead."

A Ford spokesman said: "Mark is one of the most experienced drivers in Britain, and the opportunity of a full British programme is an exciting prospect for him and for us. We're delighted to be returning to a series where we've had so much success."

Higgins is hoping to add some world championship rounds and testing duties to his programme, but this is a long way from being finalised. "The main thing is actually getting the factory drive in a WRC."

The Manxman will continue to be co-driven by Bryan Thomas this year.

Factory Puma for Rowe

TWO factory Ford Pumas will be entered in the Formula Rally series this year - and one of them will be driven by former British champion Martin Rowe.

He has been without a drive since Renault left British rallying in 1999.

The 29-year-old did only one British championship event last year, the Jim Clark Rally, at the wheel of a Ford Puma.

Now he is renewing his links with the marque for a campaign which could even stretch to the Junior World Championship.

"I'm delighted to be back with a

manufacturer," he said. "If I can raise the money, I'll be looking to do as much as I can on the world series."

Despite not competing regularly last year, Rowe has been keeping fit by testing a variety of rally cars.

"I don't think not competing will be a handicap," he said. "I'll do the job to the best of my ability and we should get some decent results."

Rowe will be co-driven by Chris Wood, who teamed up with him on the Jim Clark Rally.

Rowe's foreign team-mate will be revealed today (Thursday) at the AUTOSPORT International show.

Mitsubishi youth plan

MITSUBISHI boss Andrew Cowan has said his team needs to invest in young talent to stay on top of the game.

The Japanese marque intends to run a third car on selected events this year, but has yet to commit to any specific drivers or rallies.

"That's something we need to think about carefully," said Cowan.

"However, it's obvious to me that we need to look to the future of the sport and experiment with some young drivers. It's something that



Looking ahead

other teams have done and something that has always been in our own plans as well. If we look at a few, we might hopefully find someone we want to hang on to."

But Cowan did not rule out the possibility of hiring more experienced drivers for one-off events, according to Mitsubishi's needs in the championship.

"Essentially you run a third car for one of two reasons: to develop a young driver, or as a blocking manoeuvre to take away points from your rivals on certain events."

Evo 2 Hyundai to get radical look

HYUNDAI'S 'Evo 2' Accent World Rally Car will look strikingly different to its predecessor, thanks to a new aerodynamic package.

The new Accent will also feature an active front differential, extended suspension travel, and revisions to the engine which will improve power and driveability.

Lead driver Alistair McRae said: "The new car should help us take another big step forwards. I'm looking forward to it."

The car will make its debut in the first quarter of the season.

French political group attacks Paris-Dakar

THE Paris-Dakar Rally has been slated as "an indecent show of luxury in a continent of absolute poverty", according to a radical French political organisation.

The Mouvement Critique du Sport, an anti-sport lobbying group, has criticised it for "using a continent scarred by AIDS, food shortages and debt as a backdrop for sport."

As we closed for press Mitsubishi's Hiro Masuoka had taken the lead of the 10,739-kilometre rally from Jean-Louis Schlesser. Latest updates can be found at www.dakar.com.

Solberg praises new Impreza

SUBARU driver Petter Solberg has had his first taste of the new-shape Impreza 44S on gravel, and has emerged quietly confident from the experience.

The Norwegian said: "It is a very, very good car. I now know what it is capable of, but I don't want to make any predictions in public."

Solberg tested the Impreza on asphalt near Monte Carlo at the beginning of this week and said: "On asphalt you can really feel the extra stiffness in the car, which doesn't make such a big difference on gravel."

Richard Burns tested the asphalt car before Christmas, although his runs were cut short by engine failures. He said: "We are fairly sure we know what the problem was and it was something specific to that car."

● Subaru has taken the surprise decision to nominate new signing Marko Martin for points on the Monte Carlo Rally rather than Solberg. Team manager John Spiller said: "We just had a feeling it would be better. It was a whim, almost." Solberg said: "It's absolutely no problem for me. I have no experience of Monte Carlo."



The Impreza 44S has been tested on gravel and asphalt, with favourable driver reactions

NEWS IN BRIEF

Stages five and 10 of the Monte Carlo Rally, which run between the villages of Demuyes and Castellane have been cancelled, as the Automobile Club de Monaco has not got permission to use the road. A stage running from Comps sur Artuby to Castellane will replace it.

Prodrive has had an internal shake-up. Now, customers' rally programmes will be aligned much closer to the factory team. The sales operation has moved to a new base in Warwickshire, while Prodrive Motorsport will remain at the Banbury HQ.

Reigning Group N champion Manfred Stohl has expressed reservations over the new showroom class rules. He said: "The main uncertainty is the consequence of the new, stronger gearboxes. We do not know how this will affect the casings, clutch and gearbox."

Citroën has appointed former co-driver Michel Perin as team manager.

Britain's Super 1600 rally championship has been renamed Formula Rally, from Rally Masters. Series organiser Andy Moss will officially launch the series at the AUTOSPORT show today (Thursday).

Volkswagen has appointed Sam Roach as its Head of Motorsport operations in the UK.

ON THE BOX

Thursday January 11

BRITISH EUROSPO

0730-0800, 1730-1800, 2130-2200, 2345-0015 Paris-Dakar Rally
1800-1900 Rally Season Review

Friday January 12

BRITISH EUROSPO

0730-0800, 2130-2200 Paris-Dakar Rally
SKY SPORTS 3
2000-2100 Max Power

Saturday January 13

BRITISH EUROSPO

0045-0115, 0730-0800, 1630-1700, 2345-0015 Paris-Dakar Rally
SKY SPORTS 2
1400-1500 Max Power
SKY SPORTS 3
1000-1230, 1700-1930 World Motor Sports
2300-0000 Max Power

Sunday January 14

CHANNEL 5

1930-2000 Motorsport Max

BRITISH EUROSPO

0730-0800, 2130-2200 Paris-Dakar Rally
SKY SPORTS 2
0800-0900 Max Power
SKY SPORTS 3
1630-1730 Max Power

Monday January 15

BRITISH EUROSPO

1230-1300, 2130-2200 Paris-Dakar Rally

Tuesday January 16

CHANNEL 5

0220-0245 European Drag Racing

0245-0310 Motorsport Mundial

0310-0335 Through The Gears

BRITISH EUROSPO

1230-1300, 2130-2200 Paris-Dakar Rally

SKY SPORTS 1

1430-1700 World Motor Sports

SKY SPORTS 2

1000-1230 World Motor Sports

1330-1430 Max Power

SKY SPORTS 3

2300-2330 A to Z of Motorsport

Wednesday January 17

BRITISH EUROSPO

1230-1300, 2130-2200 Paris-Dakar Rally

1800-1830 AUTO MAG

SKY SPORTS 3

1400-1430 A to Z of Motorsport

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Two true innovators



I was greatly saddened to hear of the deaths of John Cooper and Walter Hayes - two of the truly great innovators in motorsport.

The impact they had on racing and rallying, at both at a national and international level, was immeasurable through Cooper's rear-engined Formula 1 cars, Mini Coopers, the 500cc Formula 3 cars and Hayes' Ford DFV engine.

There are few people who can say that the legacy of their inventions continues to this day, but they were two of them.

Daniel Hopkins
Sheffield
Yorkshire

It should be Sir Murray

I feel that I have to write regarding the fact that Murray Walker has either been forgotten, or simply ignored in the New Year's honours list for a knighthood.

Murray has, throughout his lifetime, devoted himself to the sport he so



Arise Sir Murray Walker. Or perhaps not

loves, and in so doing his enthusiasm has rubbed off on seasoned motor racing fans like myself. It has also attracted new people to watch and become fans of the sport.

He has recently announced his retirement at the end of 2001, and I believe a knighthood would be an

honour richly deserved, although the man himself would probably argue against getting an award for doing something he enjoys.

Alan Jackson
Woking
Surrey

Don't float Ferrari

I welcome the denial by Fiat that it is thinking of floating the Prancing Horse. A Formula 1 team controlled by the City would have potentially disastrous consequences. The team could end up being run by a board of people, as happened with the Scuderia in the early 1990s, leading to a general sense of confusion.

Even worse, the team may experience the problems faced by Jaguar last year, when its publicity duties seemed to be more important than the track performance.

Surely the Ferrari legend, and the competitiveness of the red cars, will only be maintained if the team stays privately owned.

Jonathan Walters
London

BAMBER'S VIEW



WHAT THE PAPERS SAY with Anthony Peacock

IN A shock move, Ferrari is to give up making cute sports cars and build luxury cruise liners instead. At least that was my first thought on seeing *The Guardian's* headline: "Fiat considers floating Ferrari."

Very disappointingly, the Italian giant is planning a voyage onto the stock market rather than the construction of the next Queen Mary.

But if you like travelling in style, steer clear of the Paris-Dakar rally. It's an event which has always captured Fleet Street's imagination, probably because nothing else is happening. Britain's hero is motorcyclist John Deacon, who finished sixth in 1999. He is featured

"Crashing on the first day can wreck your chances"

JOHN DEACON ON THE PARIS-DAKAR RALLY

in most of the coverage, and comes out with a useful piece of advice in *The Independent*: "Going too fast and crashing on the first day can wreck your chances."

John comes from Cornwall, and is every (column) inch the local hero. The *Plymouth Evening Herald* says: "The organisers have tried to give the 2001 race a more traditional feel, banning support flights and

putting the emphasis back on the racers to make repairs. Hopefully they will not have to contend with quite as many bandits this time."

It echoes another clipping published in *Private Eye* a while ago, which reported on an Asian country's scheme to have snipers



stationed on roofs to shoot pickpockets on sight. "We are confident," a government official said,

Times and dates correct at time of press



BOTH PICTURES: LAT

No holds BARred: Can Craig Pollock and Jacques Villeneuve take the team to the top in F1?

Poetry in motion

I have to say that I thoroughly enjoyed the write up on *Rendezvous*. I was riveted – the way in which Mr Roebuck portrays the film can only be described as printed Murray Walker.

Having seen both *Bullitt* and *Ronin*, I thought there could not be anything better, but I'm sold by Mr Roebuck's words and would like to know where I could purchase a copy.

Roberto Capella
Norfolk

Rendezvous is available to order on the Internet as a US video only through amazon.com, priced \$49.99. Delivery usually takes four to six weeks, although the film does occasionally go out of print.

From caravans to 2CVs

How dare Simon Arron describe caravan racing as a futile concept! Stylish cars towing race-prepared caravans around glamorous race tracks at unbelievable speeds.

As a lad in the marketing department of Lucas (who they?), it was I who convinced the marketing director the firm should sponsor caravan racing after Repco pulled out. I was encouraged by one John Wickham, now of Bentley, then of the BARC.

OK, maybe Simon's right. Now, after very many years of reading your journal and learning how to do things properly, I've moved onwards and upwards. I race a 2CV. Nuff said.

Martin Harrold
Birmingham

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Pollock's doing a top job

I may be swimming against the tide here, but you can't help wondering why Craig Pollock has to put up with so much sniping.

In my opinion he's doing a top job despite what appear to be increasingly desperate attempts to upset the BAR boat.

When looking at the hard facts it's possible to see that BAR is already producing better results than the much-missed Tyrrell team, although that would be expected considering the ingredients in the BAR cake (Honda, Villeneuve and the funding available.)

Fortunately, and Pollock has been careful to point this out, he has the support of the BAR shop floor and particularly his top driver and friend Jacques Villeneuve, as well as Honda.

OK, it could be said that Pollock is not cut from the same cloth as Sir Frank or Eddie Jordan but by his own admission he says that the racing bug bites deep and won't let go. Glad to hear it!

If BAR can jettison the dead-weighters then I can see them going all the way to the title, and so can Jacques.

Dave Claridge
Cannock
Staffs



him

"that there won't be many mistakes..."

Not everyone is a fan of the Paris-Dakar though.

Especially not the Polisario Front, a separatist group in Morocco.

According to a Polisario spokesman quoted in *The Times*:

"The passage of the Rally through the Western Sahara is an insult to the wishes of the Saharan people." Showing an admirable degree of free enterprise and self-belief, the Polisario propose to shoot anybody who doesn't agree with them.

The *Daily Mail* carries a lengthy

piece on why Jackie Stewart should have been mentioned on the New Year's Honours list, while *The Times* has extensive coverage of Russia's plans to build a Grand Prix track. But the Jeremy Paxman prize for merciless irony goes to a snippet in *The Daily Telegraph*, reproduced for your delectation in its entirety. "Giancarlo Minardi has promised that his team will be on the grid for the start of the Formula 1 season in March." That's the good news. But – "The Italian team is yet to confirm a sponsor, an engine deal, or drivers."

Apart from that though, everything's ready to go...

AUTOSPORT

Enduring legacies

A week of contrasts. AUTOSPORT is clouded, of course, by the deaths of two of racing's most loyal and visionary servants, John Cooper and Walter Hayes.

Both massively influential in different fields, their legacies in design and manufacturer involvement continue to dictate the formula that is Formula 1. Their loss is keenly felt throughout the industry, by all those who knew and worked with them, as comments in AUTOSPORT's extended obituaries evince.

But in a dark week there is nevertheless a massive splash of colour in the shape of the Arrows three-seater F1 car. While it is not a racing machine as such, this spectacular creation promises the fortunate few a previously unattainable insight into modern F1.

McLaren's F1 two-seater, brilliantly though it has fulfilled its mission to offer an adrenaline-fuelled 'shotgun' ride, has nevertheless been slightly compromised by the in-line seating arrangement which restricts the forward view.

"In a dark week there is still a massive splash of colour"

Arrows' AX3, however, promises almost unhindered forward vision to those wishing for the motorsport ride of a lifetime.

It must pain certain individuals at McLaren that AX3's 1+2 seating arrangement is borrowed from none other than McLaren's own F1 road car...

Futuristic and arguably frivolous it may be, but the AX3 marries motorsport creativity and commerce in a manner of which Hayes and Cooper would most likely have approved.

The marketing of motorsport was Hayes' genius, expressed most profitably with the Ford-Cosworth DFV engine. The potential of just such a marketing coup to Arrows and its sponsors will not have been lost on the team when the project was first mooted.

The car hardly sits alongside F1's most successful engine in the motorsport hall of fame, but it stands to blaze its own trail, nonetheless.

AX3's radical nature would surely have raised an appreciative eyebrow, too, on the face of John Cooper, consummate innovator that he was.

When his team left F1 in the late '60s, he lamented even then, more than 30 years ago, that fun had begun to leave the sport.

How fitting that this week of all weeks the AX3 should put a smile back on the face of motorsport.

Anthony Rowlinson
Editor



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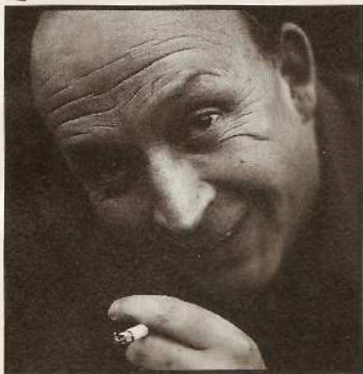
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Dear John

Motor racing legend, car nut and all-round nice bloke – John Cooper will be remembered as all of these as his death is mourned in Formula 1 circles

Coincidence can be unsettling. A day or two before Christmas, as I was drinking a glass of wine, lost in nostalgia while perusing Michael Cooper's magnificent new book, *Sixties Motor Racing*, the phone rang. It was a friend letting me know that John Cooper had died.

By chance the book lay open on a stunning photograph of a Cooper, Jo Siffert's Maserati-powered car, leaping apparently skyward at the Nürburgring in 1967.

Our paths never crossed professionally, for John retired his team from racing three years before I began writing about it, but I came to know – and immensely like – him through interviews we later did, plus a succession of Eoin Young's 'Barley Mow' lunches.

Cooper was a wonderful raconteur. "Bernie [Ecclestone] was one of my early customers. He bought a Cooper 500 from me, and I remember he wanted chromium-plated wishbones! We didn't reckon that very much because it hardened them, and made them more brittle, but he insisted. That came back to me when I read how these days everything in the paddock had to be lined up just so. Appearance was always very important to Bernie.

"Even then, you could tell he had a brilliant mind: he was a great mate of

"I wouldn't swap my era in F1 for this one. I might be rich but I'd miss the fun"

JOHN COOPER

Salvadori's – they were both motor dealers – and he'd walk into Roy's showroom, glance over the stock and make a bid for the lot! Roy'd be totting things up on paper – and eventually he'd find that Bernie was spot on! Incredible way with figures, he had, and it seems to have stayed with him..."

History, I think, has always underrated John's place in motor racing. There remains a reverence for Colin Chapman, and rightly so, given his record as an innovator,

but Cooper put the driver in front of the engine long before Lotus did; modestly, John always ascribed that to expediency, rather than inspiration.

"Well, putting the engine in the back of a 500cc F3 car was the only logical thing to do – we were using motorcycle engines and chain-drive, after all. And it went on from there."

Even by '59, only Cooper's little company in Surbiton was building rear-engined F1 cars. Chapman slaved on with his 'mini-Vanwall', and Enzo Ferrari maintained that in a Grand Prix car the engine should be at the front.

"Quite true, that," John remembered. "At Monza, in '59, he told me he would never ever build a rear-engined car. I think the first one appeared at Monaco the following year!"

It was the 1960 season that Cooper recalled with particular pride. The year before his team had won the World Championship with Jack Brabham, but in some ways it had been fortunate; more logically the title should have gone to Stirling Moss, then driving a Cooper for Rob Walker.

In '60 Lotus finally went rear-engined, with the 18, and at Buenos Aires, the opening race, Innes Ireland was very quick in it – while it lasted.

"Coming back from that race, Brabham, Bruce McLaren and I realised we needed a new car very quickly – in fact, we did half the

'design' work on the aeroplane! By May it was racing, and of course Jack went on to win five races on the trot with it, and his second championship.

"That was a lovely season. Everything was so simple. We used to build a chassis for £3000; a Climax F1 engine cost £1250, and we'd do at least two complete race meetings without stripping it down. Then, so long as it hadn't blown up, it cost about £70 to have it overhauled. We'd only take two or three mechanics to the races, and they had to drive the transporter and everything, then come back and rebuild the cars!"

By the end of '68, though, Cooper had decided to stop. It was the right time, he felt, because by then it was obvious you needed a Ford DFV engine, and John's close association with BMC (as it then was), with the Mini-Coopers, rather precluded that.

In other ways, too, John felt the moment was right. "The fun began to go out of it when the big money arrived, didn't it? I don't mean that to sound bitter, but I'd got into it largely for pleasure, lived through all those years when it *was* fun, and could see the difference. I like to think we went about our racing professionally – but in an amateur spirit, if you like. There must be so many people around who have never seen it as other than a business, and I feel rather sorry for them."

Now I, and anyone else who knew

him, will miss John Cooper's tales, of parties remembered, characters met, jokes enjoyed.

"That chap Lee Iacocca, who became the guru of the American motor industry, came to Watkins Glen in '61. He was with Ford then, and I said to him, 'I hear you might be going into F1'. 'No,' he says, 'we're not interested in F1. What we're gonna do is Grand Prix racing!' I didn't pursue it any further..."

"At that same race I had a meeting with Howard Hughes, in the back of an air-conditioned limousine. He was talking about going into the motor business, and we discussed a possible deal, which never came to anything. I believe it was about the last time he was seen in public. He obviously wasn't quite as barmy as he later became, but even so I can remember thinking, 'We've got a right one here...'"

Lovely man, John. After learning of his death, I went back to his namesake's book, and thought how sad it was that now he would never see it, for he would have adored it, as I did. Four hundred and fifty large pages of supreme photography of a time long gone now, but alive in the mind of anyone who witnessed it.

"I'm still interested in F1," Cooper would say, "but I don't think I'd swap my era for this one, to be honest. I might be very rich, but I'd miss the fun." ■



The spectacular shot of Jo Siffert's Cooper-Maserati at the Nürburgring in 1967. Cooper's cars took consecutive F1 titles in '59 and '60

PICTURE SUPPLIED BY MICHAEL COOPER

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DAMIEN SMITH
FEATURES EDITOR

Read between the lines

Some say that F3000 is a career cul-de-sac. No, it is a vital step on the ladder to GP racing

It has to be said that as a finishing school for Grand Prix racing, Formula 3000 does not have the best record of graduates since it became a one-make category five years ago. The bare statistics make rather bleak reading for a championship that has always inspired contentious opinions over its merits.

Just four F3000 drivers have made it to Formula 1 since Lola became the sole chassis supplier in 1996. These are Ricardo Zonta, Nick Heidfeld, Juan Pablo Montoya and Stephane Sarrazin. Both Zonta and Montoya had to race elsewhere before stepping up to F1, despite having won the F3000 title, while Sarrazin has just one GP start to his name, with Minardi.

Since '97, when the first graduates of the modern F3000 should have filtered through, a total of 17 drivers have made their F1 debuts, including this year's rookies, Montoya and Kimi Raikkonen. Four makes a pretty small percentage for F1's official feeder formula – a series that even runs on the same GP bill.

Its Japanese cousin, Formula Nippon, has the best record of producing GP drivers with six in this period – although these do include Shinji Nakano, Norberto Fontana and Esteban Tuero, none of whom exactly set the world alight in F1. Three have come straight from Formula 3, one from Formula Nissan, one from the defunct International Touring Car series and one from sportscars. Then there is Raikkonen, who is missing out all these categories and stepping straight up from Formula Renault.

So should we write off F3000 and is there an argument for it to return to a multi-chassis formula, a philosophy that FNippon has never abandoned? Well, the answers to those questions are no – and no.

Critics of the one-make formula say that it is out of touch with the needs of F1, that it can never work at such a high level of the sport. I do not agree with this. F3000 is a drivers' formula, first and foremost. It is designed to develop talent, and despite those damning statistics, it is actually working.

It cannot be denied that compared to F1, the cars are big, heavy and simple. The argument against them is that the style of driving the Lola has no correspondence to F1. But the



The single chassis formula means driver talent is brought right to the fore in F3000

Zytek engines are very powerful and the cars are not easy to master. The competition is hotter than hell too. There is no doubt that you have to be good to win in F3000 – which means the formula is doing its job.

Zonta, Heidfeld and Montoya are just the first of the one-make formula's success stories. Others are on the way. Bruno Junqueira and Nicolas Minassian may have gone to Champ Cars instead of F1, but they have plenty of time to come back to Europe – and they have the talent too. Then there is F3000's current crop. Mark Webber, Fernando Alonso, Giorgio Pantano, Antonio Pizzonia – all have tested F1 cars and the signs are that they have bright futures to look forward to. And don't forget talented Brits Darren Manning and Justin Wilson, along with half a dozen others who can make the grade.

It is true that all of these talents need the right teams and engineers to be winners, just like at every level of

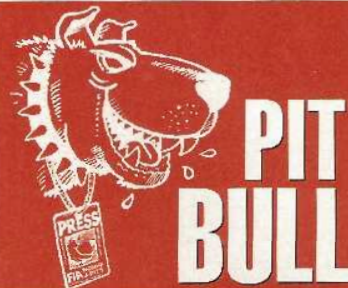
motorsport. One-make formulas do not make the professionalism of teams irrelevant. But the driver still makes the biggest difference in F3000 – just as it should be.

Teams still find F3000 a huge challenge despite the technical simplicity and anyway, there can be no going back to a multi-chassis formula in Europe. The current format is the best way of keeping costs from spiralling out of control. Budgets are already over the half a million mark for most drives. Imagine what they would be without control chassis, engines and tyres. Few drivers could afford it and F3000 would die.

Of course F3000 is not perfect, but it is in very good health. So if it has crossed your mind, as it has mine from time to time, that the category is a dead-end street for drivers, think again. Give its new crop of stars some time and they will prove that F3000 is a true breeding ground for F1. ■



Juan Pablo Montoya is one of the few Formula 3000 stars who have graduated to F1



Racing's gossip columnist with bite

■ Which bright spark was it who once claimed that "it never rains but it pours?" The Formula 1 teams arrived at Estoril before Christmas hoping that the heavens would open, and a bit of wet weather practice could be sneaked in (after all, there is a British Grand Prix happening this year).

They were understandably put out when they were greeted by cloudless skies, so a lorry was soon organised to go round and dampen the track. Good thinking, you might think. Except that the minute the lorry had finished, it suddenly tipped it down on an apocalyptic scale. To the extent that nobody was able to go out at all, and the drivers had to spend all afternoon playing Pooh



sticks down the pit lane. Still quicker than driving a Prost, though...

■ Essential to rustic life are church fetes, village halls, and worthy organisations such as twinning committees. These serve not only to broaden cultural horizons, but lend an air of gravitas to places which would otherwise be eminently unnoticeable (such as "Little Sodbury twinned with Aix-en-Provence"). Silverstone is the latest village to succumb to such a craze – after the British GP deal was announced somebody stuck up a sign reading: "Silverstone twinned with Berniec-le-Stone."

Finally, the Daily Express warns us that motor racing can be bad for your health. It's not so much the risk of getting run over, more the chance of piling on the pounds as you slump in front of the TV listening to Murray's high-pitched tones for weeks on end. Don't believe it? Then just read the example of this country's newly crowned Slimmer of the Year, 31-year-old Paul Davidson. "The motor racing fan, who used to eat 18 packets of crisps a day, has now lost more than 19 stone..."

Davidson, who weighed almost 36 stone two years ago, plans to spend his prize on a VIP trip to the Monaco Grand Prix (hopefully avoiding the burger vans).

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John Surtees catches up on all the latest news in his favourite magazine before the Bridgehampton CanAm race of 1969. Surtees qualified third in his McLaren M12 but retired with engine

failure 58 laps into the race. McLaren celebrated a one-two in the event with Denny Hulme leading Bruce McLaren home in the McLaren M8Bs, Jo Siffert was third in the Porsche 917A.

THEN AS NOW

10 YEARS AGO

GRAND Prix driver **Nigel Mansell** and Lola's **Eric Broadley** were recognised on the New Year Honours list, receiving an OBE and MBE respectively (AUTOSPORT, January 10, 1991).

British F3 squad Alan Docking won the Avon Team Award. Series runner-up Mika Salo notched up six wins for the team in 1990.

Silverstone unveiled its revised 3.202-mile GP circuit. Work was also under way at Snetterton to reprofile the Russell Chicane and resurface the start-finish line area.



Honour of OBE bestowed upon Mansell

20 YEARS AGO

The Osella Formula 1 team signed Argentinian **Angel Guerra** and Italian **Beppe Gabbiani** for the new season (AUTOSPORT, January 8, 1981).

David Hobbs announced plans to drive for BMW America in the IMSA GT Championship.



Osella signed drivers Guerra and Gabbiani

30 YEARS AGO

Graham McRae kicked off his Tasman series campaign with a popular home victory at Levin (AUTOSPORT, January 7, 1971). The McLaren M10B driver crossed the line 13.9 seconds clear of the similar car of Australian Neil Allen. Chris Amon's STP-entered ex-Andretti F1 March was a distant third.

Works Chevron B19 drivers Brian Redman and Richard Attwood made it six in a row in the final Springbok Championship round at Goldfields. Redman snatched the lead from the Mike Hailwood/Dave Charlton Lola 45 minutes from the flag and won by just over a minute.

40 YEARS AGO

Porsche duo **Stirling Moss** and **Jo Bonnier** repeated their Cape Town success with a one-two in the South African Grand Prix at East London (AUTOSPORT, January 6, 1961).

50 YEARS AGO

TJ Boughton drove his Renault to victory in the Veteran Car Club Boxing Day Rally (AUTOSPORT, January 5, 1951). His prize was a free lunch for four with champagne.

ANNIVERSARIES

January 11

Carroll Shelby (b 1923), Brett Bodine (b 1959), Colin Bennett (b 1943), Sir John Rogers (b 1928)

January 12

Roger Clark (d 1998), Piero Taruffi (d 1988), Emanuele Pirro (b 1962), Alan Rees (b 1938)

January 13

John Bolster (d 1984), Mauro Forghieri (b 1935), Gianni Morbidelli (b 1968), Ron Tauranac (1925), Gavin Wills (b 1967), Bob Earl (b 1950)

January 14

Giancarlo Fisichella (b 1973), Ian Harrower (b 1947), Stuart Turner (b 1933)

January 15

Owen Evans (b 1958), David Kennedy (b 1953), Bill Stroppe (b 1919)

January 16

Alberto Crespo (b 1920, d Aug 14, 1991), Piercarlo Ghinzani (b 1952), AJ Foyt Jr (b 1935), Jean-Claude Migeot (b 1953), Cyrille Sauvage (b 1973)

January 17

Richard Burns (b 1971), Rauno Aaltonen (b 1938), Lake Speed (b 1948)



Pirro, 39



Fisichella, 28



Burns, 30

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Jackie Oliver

FEW people in motorsport can really claim to have 'done it all', but Jackie Oliver is one of that select group.

In his 40-year career in the sport, the 58-year-old has spent time on both sides of the pit wall - firstly as one of the crop of versatile drivers who achieved success through the 1960s and '70s in single-seaters and sportscars, then as a team boss with the Arrows outfit in Formula 1.

Despite nearly winning three Grands Prix, first with Lotus, then with BRM in the mid-'60s, Oliver achieved most of his success in sportscars, taking wins at Sebring and Le Mans alongside Jacky Ickx in '69, and the Daytona 24hrs and Monza 1000km in '70.

After seven more years in top-level single-seaters, sportscars and Cam-Am in the US, Oliver took up the role of team boss in '78 by founding the Arrows F1 outfit with Alan Rees and Tony Southgate.

The team has achieved little in F1 (only one pole position is logged in the record books), but has had several near misses at that maiden GP win. It has also been hardy enough to survive where other more successful teams have fallen by the wayside. When it was bought by Tom Walkinshaw in '96, Oliver sold out his majority share and took a back seat role before finally bowing out at the start of '99. He has spent the time since "fishing, playing golf and looking



Oliver: wants to see old team Arrows win

"Racing is like smoking, bad for your finances, but addictive"

at new business opportunities".

"I've missed it," he admits. "It's like smoking - bad for your financial health, but addictive. It was sad to leave, but it was time. I still watch with interest how the team is doing, and I'd dearly love to see it win, but consistently - not through luck." TW

launch of the all-new fordracing.net at autosport

The screenshot shows the Ford Racing website in an Internet Explorer browser window. The browser's address bar displays "https://www.fordracing.net". The website's navigation menu includes "Live Home Page", "Apple Computer", "Apple Support", "Apple Store", "Microsoft MacTopia", "Office for Macintosh", and "Internet Explorer".

The main content area features a banner for "100 years of racingpassion" with sub-headers "Anniversary model collection" and "Anniversary DVD video", and a "Ford Racing's shop" button. Below this is a news ticker: "Ford Martini secures second in world series 2000".

On the left side, there is a sidebar with the "2001 new features" section, which includes:

- SMS
- Live results
- Web chat with team members
- Exclusive news & views from Nicky Grist
- Web cam during official team test shakedown

The central area contains a collage of various Ford racing cars from different eras, including a Ford Focus WRC 2000, a Ford Sierra RS500 1987, a Ford Taurus NASCAR 1999, and a Ford GT40 Mk IV 1967. A "100 years of Ford Racing 1901-2001" logo is also present.

On the right side, there are several promotional boxes:

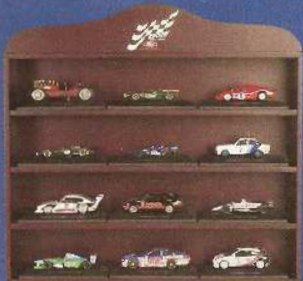
- "100 years of Ford RACING"
- "WRC NANO-RACING GAME"
- "JOIN OUR CLUB TEAM Ford RACING"
- "RS fordfocus RS"

The browser's status bar at the bottom indicates "Opens the Home Page."



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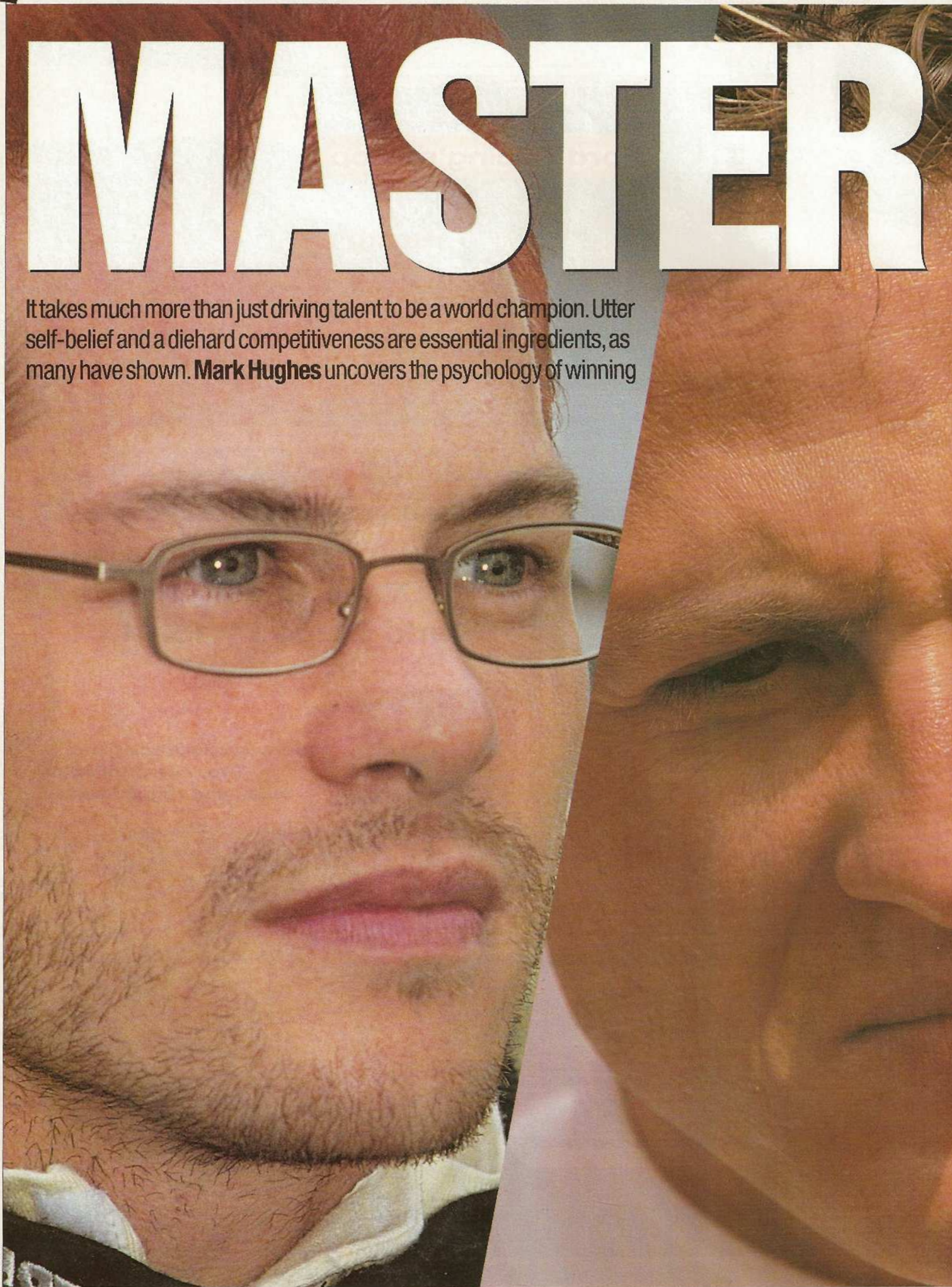
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It takes much more than just driving talent to be a world champion. Utter self-belief and a diehard competitiveness are essential ingredients, as many have shown. **Mark Hughes** uncovers the psychology of winning



ALL PICS: LAT

MINDS

What makes a champion? There is no template. But here are some clues.

Ricardo Zonta found the experience of driving alongside Jacques Villeneuve at BAR last year a bruising one. "It was very, very difficult," he says. "The whole team was centred on him. If I was ever faster than him, or close to his times, then he wouldn't like it. When he was faster than you he made sure you knew about it. He wanted you to know he was the better driver. He is very strong in the mind and tries to play with your mind to make you feel uncomfortable."

In 1995, Johnny Herbert was barely any slower than team-mate Michael Schumacher in qualifying for the first race in Brazil. "He said, 'you're going well,'" recalls Johnny, "but then from the next race I was denied any access to his telemetry." Herbert never again posed an in-team threat to the German.

Behind Mika Hakkinen's return to form in Austria last season, a small but seemingly vital change was made within the team at his insistence. No one is saying what it was, but it ►

"When Villeneuve was faster than you he made sure you knew about it. He plays with your mind to make you uncomfortable"

RICARDO ZONTA



The mind games behind the rivalry between Alain Prost (left) and Ayrton Senna (right) were in full flow by the 1989 French Grand Prix. The 'games' went on to become open warfare

benefited him and worked against team-mate David Coulthard who fell back into the support role after assuming the role of being McLaren's cutting edge for a few races.

Schumacher, Hakkinen, Villeneuve: the three world champions on the Formula 1 grid. Their driving styles have little in common, their technical approaches even less so. But such anecdotal evidence suggests there may be some common ground.

"The layman tends to assume that a champion is a champion because he can turn the wheel and press the pedals better than the next guy," says Sheridan Thynne, former Williams commercial manager and aide to '92 world champion Nigel Mansell. "But talent in the car is very rarely what decides who will be a champion. There have been exceptions to that, but on the whole it is much more to do with the way these guys operate outside the car."

Two Williams team-mates - Carlos

Reutemann and 1980 champion Alan Jones - illustrated this well. "I don't think we've ever seen a driver with much more natural talent than Reutemann," says the team's former designer, Frank Dernie. "He was quite remarkable, but he was easily out-psyched. Not by Jonesy, but by himself. After Silverstone in '81, he had a massive lead in the championship and he came in and said 'sorry guys, but there is no way for me, I cannot win the championship.' We were thinking 'there's no way you can lose it, mate'. But he did. He was very superstitious and used to have his palm read and the tea leaves and so on and maybe someone had told him he couldn't win it. He also had this idea in his head that the team didn't want him to win it, that we wanted Jonesy."

"Jones was just a real tough cookie. He thought Carlos was a wus. In fact, he thought they all were; the only driver he had a grudging respect for was Gilles Villeneuve; the rest he

"Talent in the car is very rarely what decides who's champion" SHERIDAN THYNNE



Carlos Reutemann oozed natural talent, but his superstitious nature let him down when



Three of a kind: Michael Schumacher, Mika Hakkinen and Jacques Villeneuve share the distinction of being the only former champions lining up on the 2001 grid. All three have



Johnny Herbert was barely slower than Schumacher at Benetton in Brazil '95, but then Schuey denied the Brit access to his telemetry

Conversely, others have failed to win titles despite being adequately served in these departments.

"I think it's unrealistic to expect even champions not to need the occasional arm around the shoulder," says Thynne. "During the war my father was briefing an agent about to be dropped behind enemy lines and this guy was not, I understand, the most loveable character. A high-powered general sat in and listened to the briefing and said afterwards to Dad that he didn't know how he could be so helpful and supportive to such an arsehole. Dad replied: 'Well, in 12 hours time you and I won't be having hot knives stuck under our fingernails. He may be.' I think it's quite reasonable that champions should get support. I don't think they are all these stand-alone people, like Jones."

So what, then, do they have in common? "They are more trouble," asserts Thynne. "They are highly demanding and expect an enormous amount from everyone - management, technical people, the man who makes their cocoa. Everything has to be exactly how they ask it to be. In return for that, they deliver. Not everyone on the staff of an organisation is motivated by slightly stropic, slightly awkward people. That means you have to make sure that everyone understands early on that these demanding guys are what champions are all about and if you *do* make their cocoa right, you get results."

"There was a case where David Coulthard ran into the wall coming into the pits a few years ago and it turned out the reason was that the tickover was too high on his engine and that he had mentioned it two races earlier, saying 'if you've got a minute guys, could you fix it.' A champion wouldn't ever use the phrase 'if you've got a minute'. He would say 'there's something wrong here and until you fix it I'm not getting in the #1/ing car'. He will not waste time talking about what is good with the car and he will complain like hell if something can be even half a per cent better."

But hang on a second. That describes perfectly someone like Senna, Schumacher, Prost or

thought were girls' blouses. He didn't have the delicate feel of Reutemann, he was not as gifted. But he was definitely a champion."

"I think Alan Jones had a highly developed contempt for the rest of the human race," summarises Thynne, "which stood him in good stead on a number of occasions."

So Jones was hard-headed,

impenetrable and with his own highly-developed self-support psyche; the very qualities that prevented the more gifted Reutemann from achieving Jones' success. It's a nice, sharply-defined case study, but on its own still fails to give a full picture. Drivers have become champions with less personal armoury than Jones.

"I think Alan Jones had a highly developed contempt for the rest of the human race, which stood him in good stead on occasions" SHERIDAN THYNN



he looked set to win the 1981 world title



different driving styles and approaches to technical problems but, despite these differences, they all share crucial psychological traits that have helped them to their title wins



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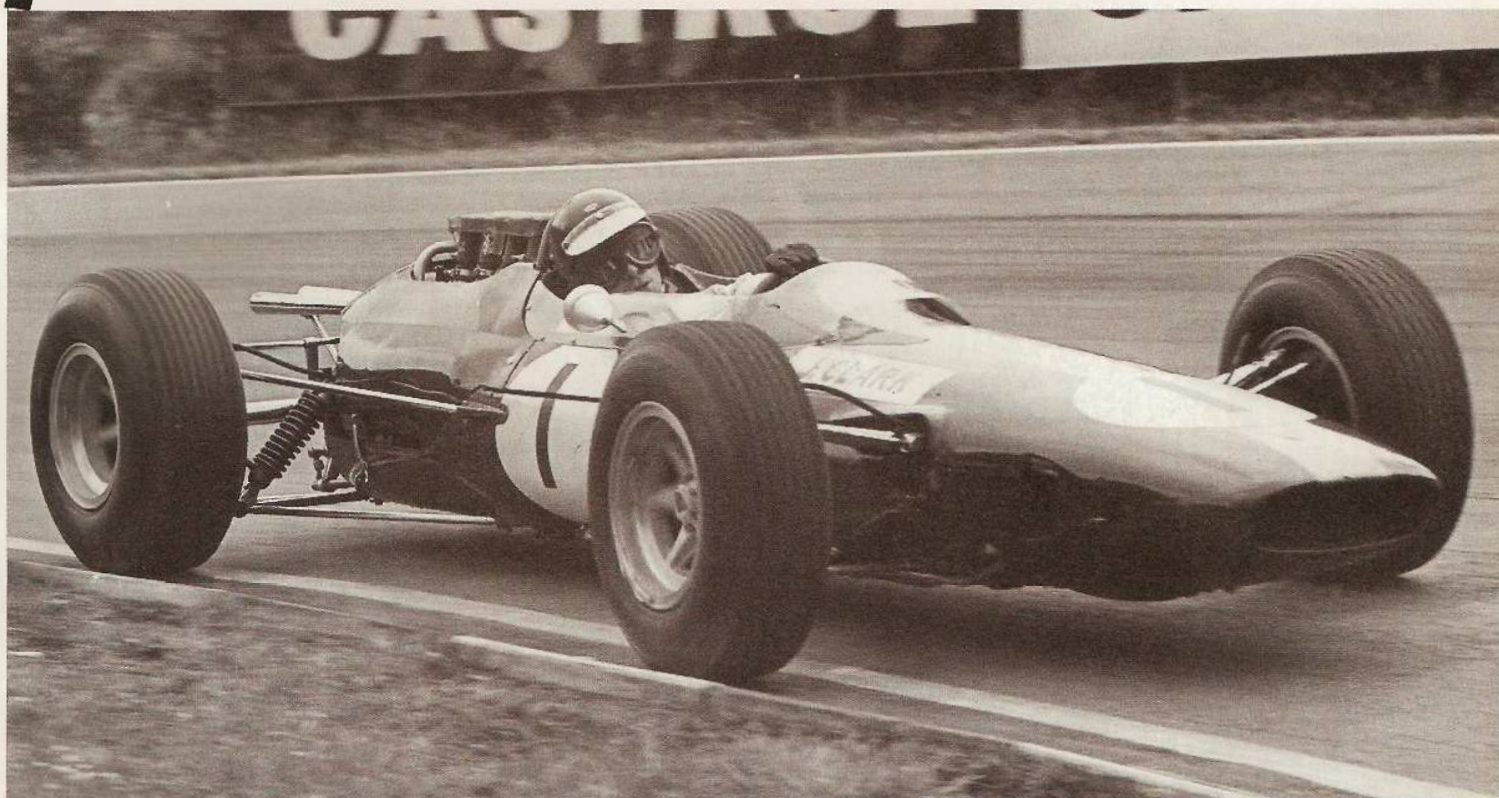
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Jim Clark, pictured here in the 1965 Lotus, showed none of the arrogance often associated with champions, but hid a steely determination under his unassuming manner

◀ Lauda, but what about one of the greatest champions of all time, Jim Clark – an utterly unassuming man?

Peter Warr was at Lotus in the days of Clark, and there once again in the time of Senna. In between he worked with Rindt, Fittipaldi, Andretti, Scheckter, Hunt, Rosberg and Piquet, world champions all. He will tell you that Clark was as intense about the business of winning as anyone he has ever seen, regardless of his exterior meekness. "We were at a party in Colin Chapman's house," recalls Warr, "and someone produced a pogo stick. Someone bet someone else they couldn't get up to the first landing with it – people were knocking lights off the wall and falling over. Then Jimmy had a go and he got straight up there. Then someone produced a log with a board on top and you had to keep your balance on the board while



Although officially on an equal footing with John Watson at the Brabham team in '78, Niki Lauda assumed the mantle of number one

"Most of the really great champions have been introverts. Extroverts cannot concentrate for long enough" FRANK DERNIE

it rolled on the log, and heavy money was being bet about who could stay on it for a minute. Which no one could. Then Jimmy got on and after being there for two minutes asked if someone would pass him his drink. Even in the most trivial things he could not accept not being the best. It went right through him, just as it did all the other champions."

Clark was able to maintain his exterior reserve but still channel his extraordinary competitiveness

thanks largely to his close friendship with Lotus boss Colin Chapman. A similar situation exists between '98 and '99 world champ Mika Hakkinen and McLaren boss Ron Dennis.

Most are not so fortunate and never find their perfect racing partner. Instead, their intensity demands they find the skills necessary to make things happen. It is this that often makes them seem difficult. "Most of the really great champions have been introverts," asserts Dernie.

"Extroverts cannot concentrate for long enough. They might have a good year through being in the right place at the right time, but basically those just destined to be champions are introverted – because that is exactly the trait required to drive a racing car fast for two hours."

It's a complex chemistry, and one in which the team plays a vital role in providing the right environment for a champion's qualities to find expression. It becomes more than doubly complex when you put two such men in the same team.

McLaren team co-ordinator Jo Ramirez recalls the Prost/Senna era of the team. "It was at the first test for '88, when Ayrton had just joined us. The other teams had been testing at Imola all week. Alain went out and was under their times on his second lap. He came in and said, 'I promise you, I'm driving it virtually with one

hand. This thing is so quick.' We only had one car there and, of course, Ayrton was itching to have a try. When Alain's session was finished Ayrton was waiting to get in but Alain stayed in the car. Eventually, Ayrton starts complaining and only then does Alain get out, laughing.

"When Alain could get the car perfect, he was unbeatable. On those days not even Ayrton was as quick. One of those times was in France in '89. Halfway through final qualifying, Alain came in and changed into his civvies. We asked him what he was doing and he said 'if Ayrton can beat that time, then he deserves pole.' He then watched from the pit wall in his civvies where Ayrton could see him and you could see Ayrton trying harder and harder but going slower. At the next race Ayrton did the same thing; set a fantastic time, changed into civvies and stood on the ▶

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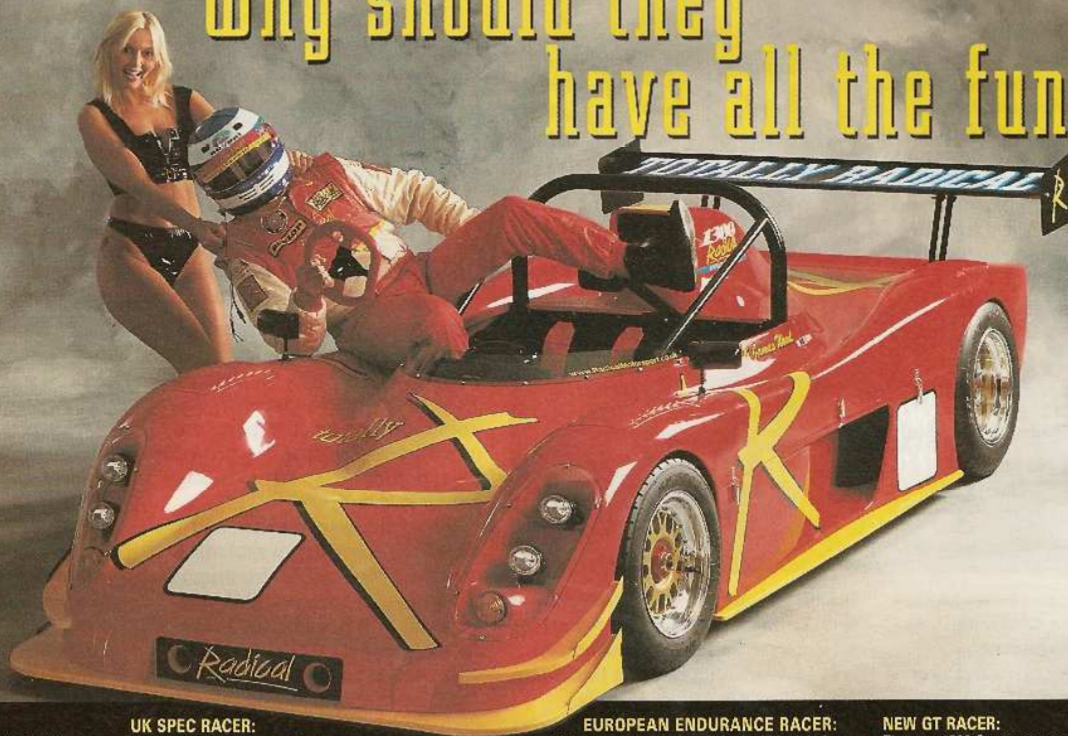


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It was in 1968 that Jackie Stewart first realised that he had achieved the kind of status that allowed him to dictate the pace of races

◀ pit wall watching Alain going slower."

Such mind games were really just the opening shots there. It escalated to the point of warfare and wasn't even resolved when one of them - Prost - sought out a new team. The resolution was probably in Japan '90 when Senna kept his right foot to the floor, with no intention of lifting, despite the looming corner and Prost's Ferrari. Senna was at that moment prepared to die or kill rather than yield. The outcome, of course, was that Senna was king. The relative safety of modern F1 cars and circuits had enabled battles for supremacy - which have always been part of the sport - to distil down to this basic essence for the first time. Not savoury, yet the inevitable outcome of conflict between men with the will and desire of champions in an era where survivable high-speed impacts are the norm rather than the exception and where vague notions of honour and sporting conduct can therefore be subjugated to competitive needs.

With this view of a champion's competitive intensity and where it can ultimately lead, those earlier stories of Schumacher, Hakkinen and Villeneuve stymieing the efforts of their team-mates can be seen as just the tip of a competitive iceberg; there's far more there if pushed. Once it becomes apparent that a driver is in this category, there's an element of self-fulfilment; he will become recognised by his peers as a champion, someone they don't yet feel equipped to take on. A miraculous path opens out in front of them in traffic, fights that might otherwise be carried to them

"I'd always thought life was about being fair - and it's not" JOHN WATSON



Damon Hill felt it unfair that Williams personnel favoured Nigel Mansell in France in '94

somehow never quite materialise. Jackie Stewart can remember when it dawned on him that he had made some sort of breakthrough. "It was at the end of '68. I'd already been winning races, but I suddenly discovered that I could dictate the pace of a race. If I was in front, those behind me weren't pressing me as hard as they might because on some level they knew it was pointless. The

pressure only came when you got some keen hot-head coming in who didn't know that you couldn't do that." With that status comes an aura, one which the team responds to, as Warr explains: "You just knew when you had a champion on the books. It was obvious. Even if they had yet to attain it. All without exception could have said 'set the nose cone on fire' and the team would have done it; they would

follow these guys anywhere. There was an aura of confidence that surrounded them when they were moving around in the garage and the pits. The team would go on to a different level with these people around, partly from their personalities and partly because you knew if they weren't on pole there was something wrong with the car."

In France in 1994 a would-be champion possibly learned a valuable lesson from a former one. "Damon Hill had been fairly lukewarm about Nigel Mansell returning to Williams," relates Thynne, "and after qualifying, with both Williams cars on the front row for the first time that season, I asked Damon what he thought now. He replied that he thought it 'unfair' that the chassis and engine people had responded to what Nigel had said when they were pretty much the same things he and David Coulthard had been complaining of all season."

I replied that I thought Damon should eliminate the word 'unfair' from his vocabulary. No serious sportsman files anything under 'unfair' because that's tantamount to admitting that it cannot be dealt with. Then I pointed out that he had all weekend to watch Nigel operate and to see why people responded to him the way they did."

The contrast reminded Thynne of the last time Mansell had closed off Williams - at a test at the close of '90 after two seasons at Ferrari.

"Afterwards he asked the Elf people 'what number fuel are you on?' and they didn't understand his question. He then explained that at Ferrari Agip was on 1990-16/b2 because they improved their fuel after each test. He proceeded to give them a really hard time about it until eventually Elf went to Bernard Dudot at Renault to complain, Bernard went to Patrick Head who then relayed a message to me to tell Nigel to stop giving Elf a hard time. But a little while later Elf began to develop their fuel."

John Watson cites Niki Lauda as the man whose example finally made him understand the true dynamics of success. "When I was at Brabham, Bernie [Ecclestone] asked me what I thought of the idea of Niki joining us the following year. I told him that was fine by me - I was happy to pit my skills and judgement against anyone, so long as we were treated equally. Bernie agreed to that and I had it in writing that we were equal. I soon came to realise it is not what is written on the paper that decides who is a number one. Niki just assumed the role, and he radiated this confidence. I came in during one qualifying session to find I had no qualifying tyres left - Niki had taken them."

"This confidence, focusing everything on yourself, sends out a signal, in the way you see with Schumacher today. It can be taken as selfishness, but it's not; it's understanding that the reality of life, the way you get on is to take life and mould it to your needs. Previously I'd always thought life was about being fair and equal - and it's not." ■

Quicksilver to gold BAR

Olivier Panis experienced one of the best seasons of his career as the number three driver at McLaren in 2000. Now he is ready to face Jacques Villeneuve at BAR. By **Jonathan Noble**

To improve not prove. That is British American Racing new-boy Olivier Panis's mind-set as he heads into the 2001 season after a whirlwind 12 months that have resurrected his Formula 1 career. In fact,

the Frenchman did more for his reputation without a single race under his belt during the 2000 season than he did with many of his performances out on the track - including that '96 Monaco Grand Prix victory.

As McLaren's third driver, working closely with twice world champion Mika Hakkinen and David Coulthard, Panis was not only able to prove he could match the highly-rated regulars on out-and-out speed, but it also



sorted out his head after the disillusionment of his final two seasons at Prost in '98 and '99.

And it is the resulting rediscovered inner confidence which has left the 34-year-old convinced he will be able to cope with the demands of racing alongside Jacques Villeneuve this year and deal with the kind of mind games that affected predecessor Ricardo Zonta.

"I know Jacques well, I speak to him quite a bit and I think we respect each other a lot," says Panis. "I need him, he needs me and it is important for us to work together. To be honest, I am not very bothered about all these stories of mind games because I respect Jacques and I have always wanted to work with a very quick driver. I am sure we are going to work well together."

"I had a fabulous season with McLaren last year. The people were so good and they helped me a great deal. I now know my performance compared to Mika and David and I know that when I get inside the car I am quick. That's going to be

important for me now."

Panis is clearly ready to knuckle down and help his new team move forwards this year. He was almost blown away by the baseline competitiveness of BAR's 2000 contender when he tried it out in pre-Christmas winter testing sessions and feels that only minor improvements stand between the team's current performance and regular success.

"I am very pleased with what I have found here, to be honest," continues Panis. "It has gone really well so far and that leaves me very confident. I imagine the car is quite good because BAR-Honda had a very good season last year, but the baseline is so good it has surprised me. I am sure that will mean I will push more and more to make sure that we can be competitive."

"But there is not one particular area of the package that needs to be focused on because we need to improve all parts of the car, if that is possible. In F1 it is not so easy to improve and make big leaps forward," he adds.

"I am not very bothered about all these stories of mind games"

OLIVIER PANIS

What early testing has shown, however, is that the tyre war between Bridgestone and Michelin could well prove to be the joker up BAR's sleeve. When the Bridgestone rubber has been more competitive than Michelin, it has seen the Brackley-based outfit leapfrog ahead of Benetton and Williams to be the team swapping the top times with McLaren and Ferrari.

Such a situation repeating itself over GP weekends has not been ruled out by Panis and let's not forget he has probably done more mileage on Bridgestone rubber than any other driver on the grid.



The Frenchman will bring experience to BAR and went well in testing (above and left)

"I've been with them for a long time now because I worked with them when they entered F1 in '97 and I was close to them last year with McLaren. I understand Bridgestone's work well and think we have a good level of competitiveness for next year.

"Bridgestone has always done a very, very strong job and I am sure that the fight with Michelin will be at the highest level. The tyre war will see certain cars go quicker this year and maybe at some races there will be times when all the Bridgestone runners are ahead. We will have to wait and see."

But where Panis feels BAR will be stronger this year than it has been in its previous two campaigns is on the driver front - because there are two experienced guys at the helm. Team principal Craig Pollock has said on many occasions that it was not the best situation for the team and rookie Zonta to enter the sport together.

"Looking back on the first year, the best thing that BAR could have done would have been to have had an

experienced driver alongside Jacques," remarks Pollock.

"We needed two guys who really knew what an F1 car could do and really accelerate the progress in the car itself.

"With Olivier coming in, the reason is clear cut. He has experience from both Ligier and Prost, he is an older guy and he will not put up with the potential hackling from Jacques, which he will get. He also arrives here with very good baggage after a year with McLaren."

Panis could not agree more about Pollock's view on having two experienced stars. "I think that will be important, yes," he adds. "Although Ricardo is a quick driver, you need experience as well. My experience and that of Jacques will help the team a lot. Both of us need to work to get the best car possible. I think we will have a good package."

But as far as predicting firm results, Panis claims it is too early to say anything for definite. "I don't know yet," he smiles. "I prefer to wait until the first GP and say after that." ■



Panis looks on as former F1 champion Villeneuve celebrates victory in the 1997 Spanish GP



John Cooper

One of the most influential men in motor racing history, John Cooper was also one of the nicest. By **Doug Nye**

John Cooper was one of the most profoundly influential characters in motor racing history – and, importantly, he was also one of the nicest. That's a much-demeaned word these days, but in the case of genial, pipe-smoking, warm-hearted, straight-as-a-gun-barrel John Cooper, I choose it with painstaking care.

John's death on December 24 at the age of 77 truly ends an era through the last half of the 20th Century, in which he and his peers – all great but very different men – built Britain's pre-eminence in our sport worldwide.

This again might seem an old-fashioned sentiment, but it was a plain

objective in the 1940s when the story of 'modern' racing really kicked off – and British motorsport prestige was virtually zero. Now nearly all the leading characters in that drama of the '50s and early '60s are gone – John Cooper having been the last surviving truly great Formula 1 team principal from those formative years. How many were they, this driven band? Barely more than 10, for sure...

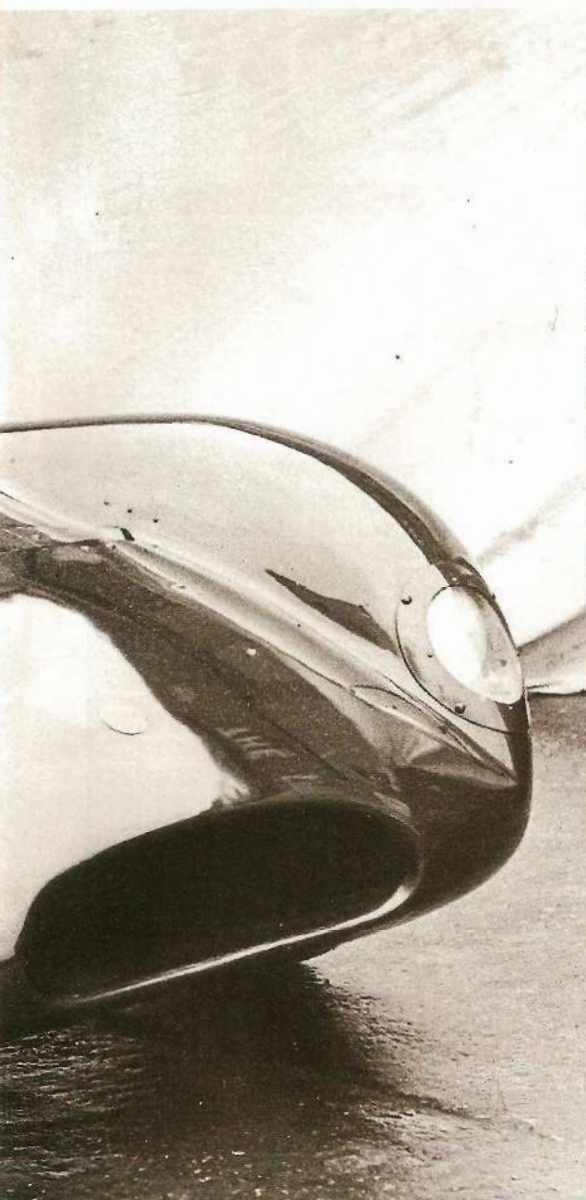
While Tony Vandervell's Vanwall team scored the first all-British win in a world championship Grand Prix and then took the first all-British F1 world title with its '58 constructors' championship, it was the Cooper Car Company which picked up that

coveted cudgel. Urged on by his customer Rob Walker, and by drivers Roy Salvadori and Jack Brabham, it was under John Cooper's direction that his tiny Surbiton works team propelled Sir Jack Brabham to the shrewd Australian's first two drivers' championship crowns in '59 and '60; won back-to-back F1 constructors' titles those same two years, and revolutionised race car design by proving that engine-behind-driver was the technology of the future. Then, just as the cherry on the cake, John fathered the Mini Cooper saloon car programme – to create the iconic production car of the swinging '60s.

John Cooper was that great rarity

within the motor racing world, a leading personality with no enemies, and few serious detractors. He was classically regarded as being a straight dealer – perhaps lacking the hard commercial edge of his rugged father, Charles, perhaps devoid of a harsh killer instinct in business. Yet he is remembered with almost unalloyed affection and respect.

He was born on July 17, 1923, in Kingston, Surrey. His father ran a modest garage in nearby Surbiton, maintaining – among other customers' cars – the unique racing Wolseley 'Viper' campaigned at Brooklands by Kaye Don. John grew up surrounded by exciting machinery. ▶



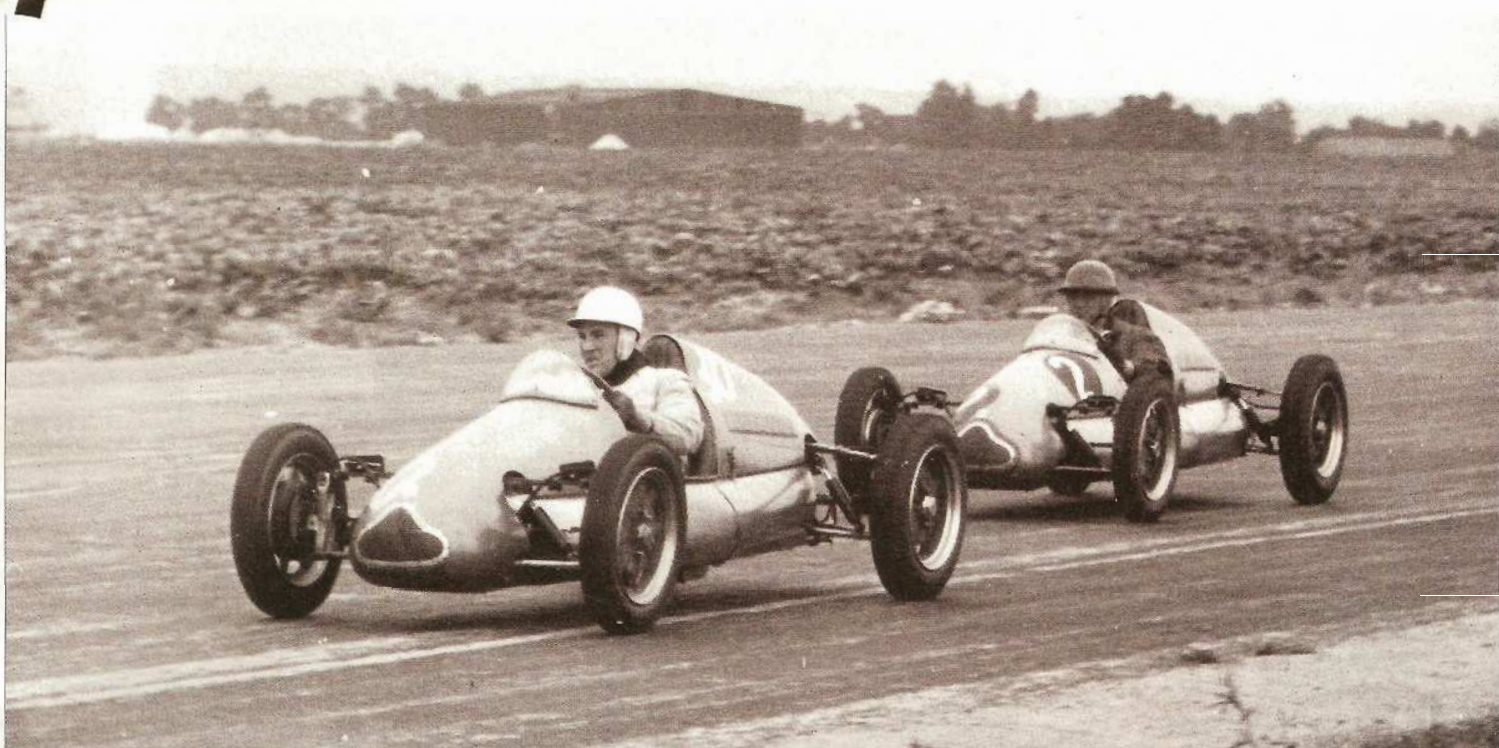
John in one of his beloved sportscars, the Cooper T39 Bobtail.

On retirement, John Cooper opened his own garage bearing his name in Ferring, near Worthing, which still exists today

1923-2000



Jack Brabham races a Cooper T51 in the 1959 US Grand Prix at Sebring. The rear-engined model revolutionised race car design and secured driver and constructor titles in '59 and '60



Stirling Moss' career took off in Cooper's 500cc junior formula machines. He used the category as a springboard to further success and returned to Coopers in later years in F1

◀ His best pal from childhood was Eric Brandon, equally bedazzled by cars and motorcycles. Eric once recalled their formative years in Surbiton like this: "When there was a crash on the Kingston by-pass, you'd see the ambulance whizz by, with a police car pulling out to follow it from the station opposite Cooper's Garage, and Charlie Cooper cranking up his breakdown truck in hot pursuit. While he was gone, John and I would be pinching petrol from his pumps for our motorcycles..."

At the age of 15, John left Surbiton County School to become an apprentice toolmaker. After RAF service as an instrument maker in '44-'45, he and Eric were determined to go motor racing and in '46 - with Charlie's tacit approval - they built themselves a single-seater racing car for the new 500cc 'poor man's motor racing' Formula.

They took two scrap Fiat 500 front-ends, welded them back-to-back to provide an all-independently suspended chassis, then added a 500cc JAP single-cylinder motorcycle engine behind the driver's seat, with chain-drive to the back axle. This first racing Cooper single-seater was very successful. They built a second for Brandon in '47 and to fulfil demand for replicas in '48, Charles and John Cooper founded The Cooper Car Company Ltd to build a batch of 12 500s for sale. One of their first customers was 18-year-old Stirling Moss. A few years on, another would be a young Bernie Ecclestone...

Business boomed. The Cooper Car Co quickly became the world's largest manufacturer of specialist racing cars, blazing the trail that Lotus, Lola, March, Reynard and so many more have followed to this day.

John Cooper provided enthusiasm and drive, Charles firm financial control (and restraint). While Charlie



Pedro Rodriguez's Cooper-Maserati at Spa in '67. Cooper's F1 glory was gone, however

carolled, "Why change it when we're winnin'?" son John would add the confidential (and crucial) aside, "I'll arrange it, just don't tell Dad."

He also proved himself a most capable racing driver with victories at Monza, twice at Rouen, and more.

In '52 John scored the first 100mph 500cc race win, at Grenzlandring on the Dutch/German border, and at AVUS, Berlin, in '53, he drove his streamlined works car. He was forced to push-start it unaided after a first-lap collision, and sensationally overtook the entire field to win brilliantly. Avuncular, pipe-smoking, good bloke he might be - but John Cooper could also be a tiger when he wanted to...

Into the early '50s, he diversified into front-engined sports and single-seater racing cars. Mike Hawthorn of course originally burst to prominence in a '52 F2 Cooper-Bristol. He went on to excel worldwide, racing Coopers from the tiniest '500' to the heaviest

F2/F1 car specially made for the '57 Monaco Grand Prix. Jack Brabham pushed it home sixth, after running third. On twisty circuits, these rear-engined Coopers could plainly challenge the front-engined establishment in F1.

Moss then drove Rob's baby Cooper to score the first-ever world championship F1 victory for a rear-engined car, in the '58 Argentinian GP, and at Monaco a second Walker Cooper won, driven by Maurice Trintignant. Into '59, and John Cooper - ever persuasive and engaging - talked Coventry Climax into building two full-sized half-litre engines for his works drivers - Jack Brabham and Bruce McLaren. Under his team direction they promptly won the '59 and '60 F1 world championship titles and by '62 every F1 car designer put the engine where Cooper had - behind the driver.

Meanwhile, John Cooper had competed against Mini designer Alec Issigonis in hillclimbs from '46 to '47, and after the Mini's sensational launch loaned one at Monza to Fiat's ex-Ferrari chief designer, Aurelio Lampredi - who returned it grinning from ear to ear: "This is the car of the future. If it wasn't so ugly, I'd shoot myself!"

John would recall: "I put it to George Harriman, BMC's new boss, that he should market a tuned version. They gave me a car and I asked Ginger Devlin to tune it." Michael 'Ginger' Devlin's basic description of life within the team defines John's role; "Charlie Cooper used to sack me on a weekly basis, but John always took me back."

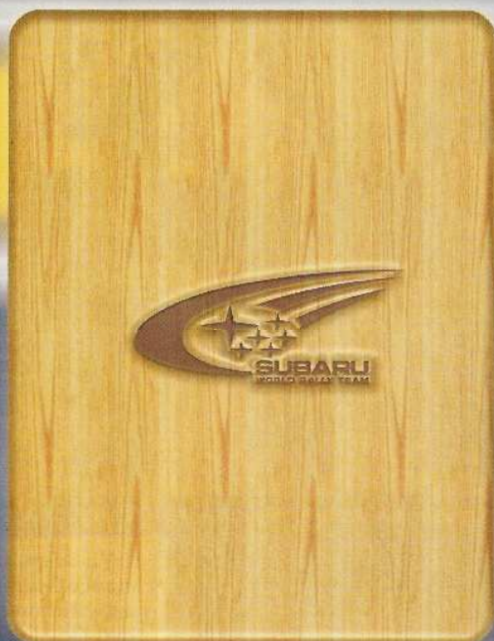
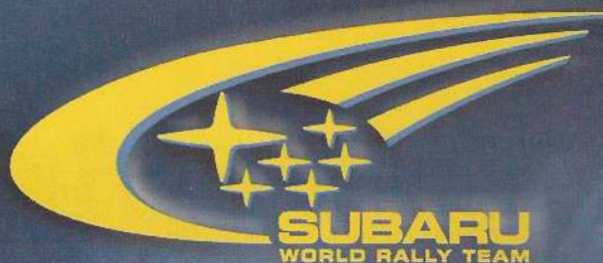
John and 'Ginger' tuned the Mini's engine, added disc brakes and a remote-gearchange, profoundly impressing Harriman who instantly offered John £2 per car royalty. They shook hands - there was never a formal contract - and the 'Mini- ▶

"One of the first customers of the Cooper Car Co was a young Stirling Moss"

Cooper-Jaguar sports.

For '55, John Cooper and his tiny team - most of whom were as much his friends as employees - devised a rear-engined sports car using a proprietary Coventry Climax fire pump engine. This 'Bobtail' Cooper-Climax was another dominant success, and from it Cooper created a rear-engined 1500cc Formula 2 car for '56-'57, easily enlarged to attack F1.

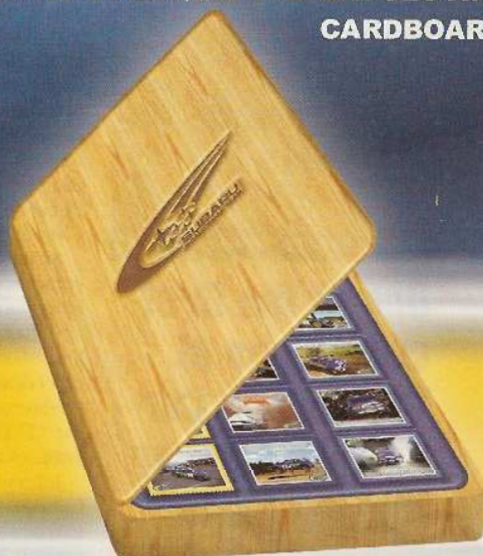
Urged on by Roy Salvadori, Rob Walker had an enlarged 2-litre hybrid



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“Donald Stokes asked me what I did. I said I won races and dropped by once a fortnight to wind up Issigonis”

JOHN COOPER



Above: Paddy Hopkirk won the Monte Carlo Rally in a Mini Cooper, which has now been reborn (right)

◀ Cooper was born. It dominated its racing and rally classes virtually throughout the '60s, won multiple championships and four consecutive Monte Carlo Rallies in '64-67 - only to be controversially disqualified in '66. "Drive a Mini Cooper - the most fun you can have with your clothes on" was one enduring claim. "If your tyres survive more than 2000 miles you've driven it like a wimp" was another.

The Mini Cooper's enduring appeal did not extend to Donald Stokes of British Leyland, however. "He wondered why BL, with 100,000 employees, needed me. Stokes asked me what I did. I said I won races and once a fortnight I dropped by to wind up Issigonis. He objected to paying me a royalty." Stokes then killed the Mini Cooper - for a while.

The extrovert showman in John Cooper relished every moment of the fame his cars had brought, until May '63, when he was badly hurt as his new 'Twinny-Mini' prototype crashed. "The publicity killed the twin-Mini idea stone dead," he would explain. "A pity - four-wheel drive, years before the Audi Quattro..." He was soon back in harness but it was many months before he was fully fit. His men believe he was never the same while Cooper Cars continued racing.

In fact their fortunes had sagged after '60. Their uncomplicated practicality was overtaken by more sophisticated, and later better-funded, rival teams. To be so upstaged after having shown the way would leave most real racers soured and bitter. But John Cooper was a better man than that. His outlook was quite the contrary - to his dying day he thought the world of 'Chunky' Chapman's designs, yet might add "Perhaps I built safer cars."

Still far from fit when Charlie Cooper died in October '64, John missed 'The Old Man' desperately. He sold out to the Chipstead Motor

Group in April '65 but continued to co-direct the F1 team (with Roy Salvadori) into '68, before it closed in May '69.

Retiring then to the Sussex coast, John founded the garage business which still bears his name in Ferring, near Worthing. That name was already assured a place in motorsport and motoring history, but Cooper was nevertheless delighted in the '90s when first Rover Japan, and later the parent company, backed the development of a new generation of Mini Coopers - first using tuning kits and later selling complete cars.

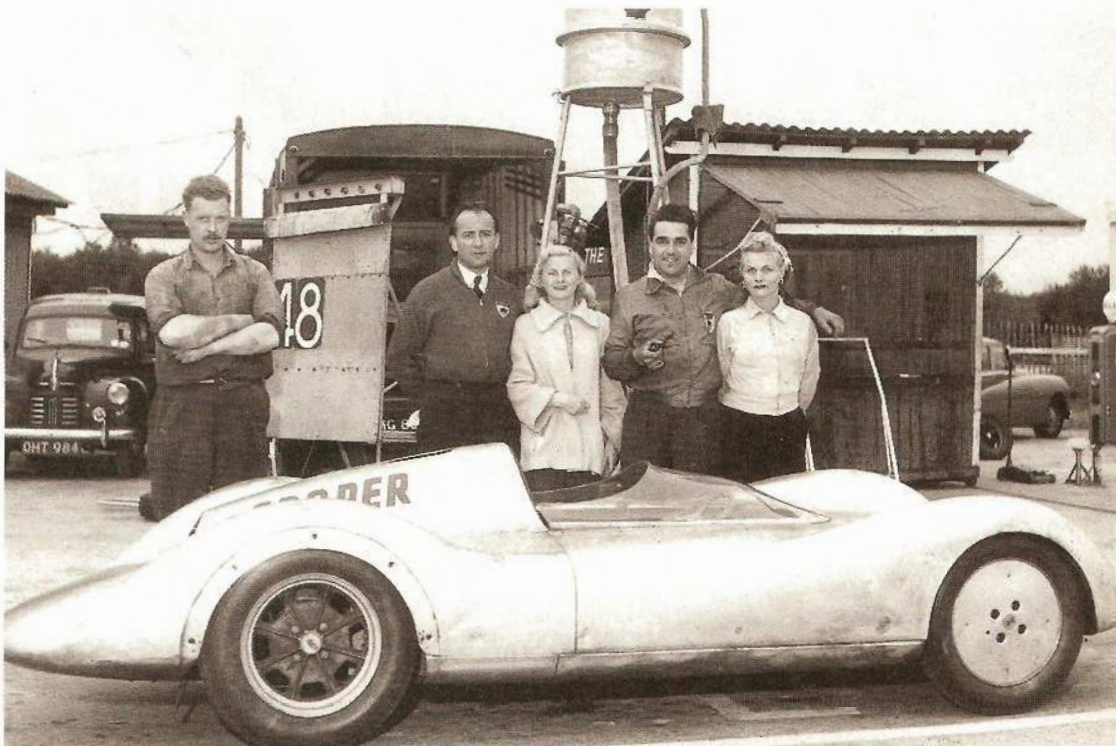
BMW enthusiastically embraced the project, and just before his death John expressed his delight when son

Michael drove the prototype new BMW Mini Cooper.

Above all, John Cooper was a lifelong car nut. He loved fast cars, and he loved racing, and he loved talking about it all with like-minded people. He was very gregarious, but scratch the surface and he was also a worrier, and when there was nothing to worry about he'd invent something - until some other excitement or fun would divert his thoughts. Perhaps the most telling epitaph for John Cooper's approach comes from a former works manager, who told an ex-AUTOSPORT assistant editor in the '50s: "I love working for Charlie and John. They pay bugger-all, but you'd

never have as much fun anywhere else. Nobody has as good a time as us chaps at Cooper's."

What greater compliment could anyone pay? John Cooper was awarded the CBE last year for services to the motor industry. He leaves a wife, Paula, a son Michael and daughter Sally. Another daughter, Tina, predeceased him. We extend our condolences to the family and to all of this great man's many friends, throughout the motoring and motor racing world. An era has ended. ■



From left: Cooper's engineer 'Ginger' Devlin, childhood friend Eric Brandon, pictured with Sheila Brandon, John and Pauline Cooper



Walter Hayes

In his various guises at Ford, the former newspaper editor helped shape today's F1. By **Simon Taylor**

You can trace today's partnerships between Formula 1 teams and giant car manufacturers back to the vision of one man, almost 40 years ago.

Walter Hayes, who died of lung cancer on Boxing Day at the age of 76, was the first industry executive to comprehend fully the huge marketing and corporate image-building power of motorsport. Almost single-handedly, he propelled the dull, unsexy Ford marque into the racing and rallying limelight.

Yet Walter had no background in cars nor a youthful passion for

motorsport. He began his working life as a journalist, originally joining the *Daily Mail* as a copy boy. Within a year, he was a sub-editor and, within two, chief sub. Soon he was associate editor of the *Mail* and then editor of the *Sunday Despatch*.

As the 1950s ended, Ford boss Sir Patrick Hennessy was in despair about his product's dreary image. He discussed his problems with his media mogul friend, Lord Beaverbrook, who suggested he use a big salary to tempt Fleet Street's brightest young editor. And that was how, in 1961, Walter found himself working for a car company, as Ford's

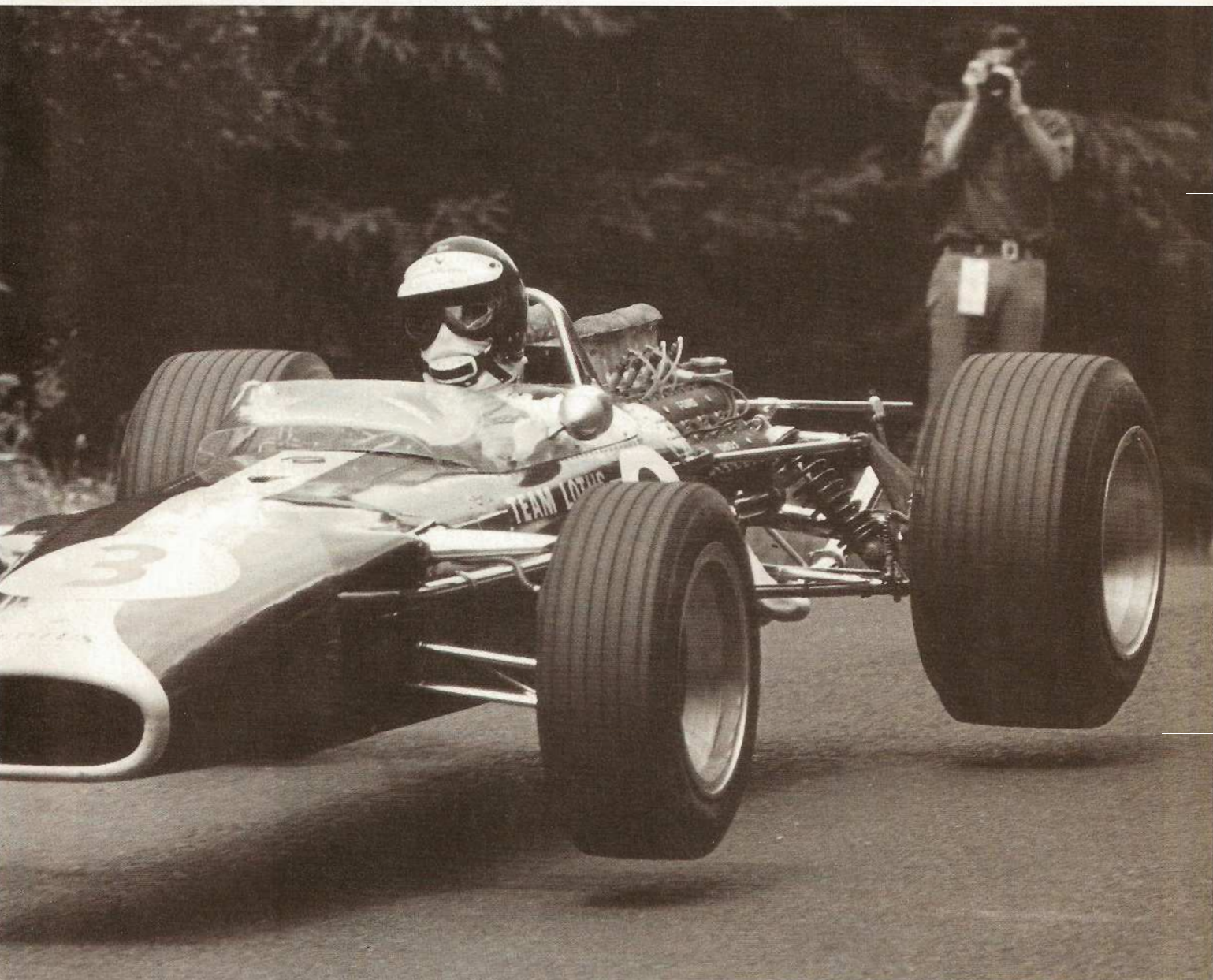
new director of public affairs.

One of his first jobs was to breathe some life into the image of the new Ford Cortina. He spoke to the only person he knew in motor racing, Lotus boss Colin Chapman, whom he'd hired as a celebrity motoring correspondent on the *Despatch*. The result was the Lotus-Cortina - a major innovation as the first bread-and-butter saloon to borrow technical knowhow, and kudos, from F1. The giant-killing works team of racing Lotus-Cortinas, headed by reigning world champion Jim Clark, did wonders for the Cortina's staid reputation.

Walter quickly learned what was

what in motorsport and became an acute spotter of talent. When a young Scottish Formula 3 driver came onto the Ford Motor Show stand in '64, there was no obvious connection: the lad had already signed for BRM for his first F1 season. But Walter was keen to get him on side, so gave him a free Ford Zodiac. From this banal beginning grew the incredibly fruitful and lasting relationship between Ford and Jackie Stewart.

Then in '65, Coventry Climax withdrew from racing: a body blow for the British F1 teams, including Lotus, which used its engines. Chapman mentioned his



1924-2000

Walter Hayes (top left) was the man behind the DFV (inset) which powered Jim Clark's Lotus 49 to victory first time out in '67. Hayes was also responsible for the Lotus-Cortina (above)



The Power of Knowledge



"I consider the Stack Predictive Lap Timer to be an essential part of my race car and through choice would never race without it!"

Alister Lyle, Current MGF Championship leader, Pole setter 9 out of last 11 races

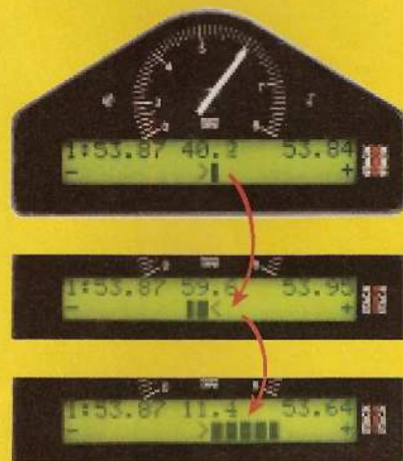
"When I was first introduced to the Stack Dash with Predictive Lap Timer (PLT) I can honestly say that I didn't take much notice and wasn't that interested" Alister remembers. "It took 3 or 4 races to get into it, but since then I have to say it has become an essential tool I use every time I go on the track!

The PLT doesn't drive the car for you, but yard by yard, it shows exactly how well you are driving. In qualifying I often find that I think that I have spoilt a lap by making a mistake, but the PLT tells me I am still up on my best previous lap. There are also times that I feel like I am driving really well but the system shows me I am actually driving slower, and in a race it helps me to drive a consistent pace and maintain lap times within a few 1/10ths.

The great thing about the Stack display is that I can spot the PLT's bar graph out the corner of my eye – without taking my eyes off the track. The biggest benefit of the system for me has to be that if I make a change, for example in gear selection or driven line, I can immediately see what the effect is. I don't need to wait to analyze the data on a PC off track, and then have to try to remember exactly what I did that made a difference."

PREDICTIVE LAP TIMING

- The Predictive Lap Timing system – with performance meter – is the ultimate real-time performance feedback system.



- The continually updated bar graph readout instantly shows a time gain or loss between the current and fastest previous lap. It is therefore easy for the driver to see if he has made an improvement, shown by the bar graph moving to the right of its previous position, even on a lap which is slower overall.

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“He was indeed an extraordinary judge of people, able to give men of genius the tools to do the winning for Ford”

Hayes was influential in Ford's rise in motorsport as a whole, as Roger Clark took the Ford Escort to victory in the '76 RAC Rally (above)

plight to Walter over dinner one evening and Hayes realised the value of getting the F-word onto the winner's rostrum. In a Ford policy committee meeting, under 'any other business', he nonchalantly asked for a budget of £100,000 for Keith Duckworth's Cosworth Engineering to develop a Ford engine for F1.

For a huge company like Ford it was an impossibly small amount of money, even then. Walter once told me it was one-tenth of the cost of equipping the Cortina with synchromesh on bottom gear. But even he could not have foreseen the value, or the longevity, of the success wrought by that tiny initial investment.

The Ford-Cosworth V8 DFV (double four-valve) made its bow mid-season at the '67 Dutch Grand Prix. With Jim Clark at the wheel of Chapman's new Lotus 49, it won first time out. Then Walter shrewdly made the DFV available to any team that wanted it and, between them, Lotus, Matra, Tyrrell, McLaren, Williams and Brabham took 12 of the next 15 World Drivers' Championships. The DFV went on winning for an incredible 17 seasons and its 155 GP victories make it the most successful racing

engine of all time.

In rallying, with the Cortina and then the championship-winning Escort, in touring cars and in sportscar racing, Walter saw to it that the Ford logo shone. Ford's desire to win Le Mans originally came from Detroit, stung by its failure to buy Ferrari. But, after Ford USA decided

that racing was politically incorrect, Walter arranged for the whole Le Mans project to be sold to John Wyer and John Willment and, under the JW Automotive banner, the GT40s went on winning.

Walter Hayes was fond of saying that his only talent was the ability to spot talent in others. This ignored his

razor-sharp mind, his frightening grasp of all the angles and his ability to think three or four steps ahead of everybody else. But he was indeed an extraordinary judge of people, able to give men of genius - Chapman, Duckworth, Stewart, Tyrrell, Wyer - the tools to do the winning for Ford while he supported them from behind the corporate barrier.

Walter's rocket-ship progress up the Ford ladder took him to vice-president, then vice-chairman, and he spent five years as vice-president in Detroit, becoming a close friend of the Ford family. He was awarded the CBE for services to motorsport and, in 1989, having reached the age of 65, he retired - but not for long.

Ford bought the ailing Aston Martin company and Walter came back to be its chairman. His vision of a lighter, more modern, more available model bore fruit in the DB7, the most successful Aston Martin ever made. With Aston now healthy, he retired again, still wearing many hats - life president of Aston Martin, governor of the University of Michigan Library, chairman of the Churches Conservation Trust, trustee of the Grand Prix Mechanics Trust and many more. In the garage of his house, Battlecrease Hall, alongside his humble daily Focus, he cherished a restored DB6 and a Ford Model A. His short, neat figure remained a familiar sight at industry functions, totally up to date with whatever was going on, talking urgently and quietly as he always did, his ever-present pipe clamped between his teeth.

Now, as Daimler-Chrysler, Fiat, Honda, BMW, Renault, Toyota and Ford themselves redouble their efforts, and their multi-million dollar budgets, to win in F1, Walter Hayes' initiative in conceiving the Cosworth DFV can be seen for what it was: the act of a visionary. Not to mention quite unbelievable value for money. ■



Clockwise from left: Mario Andretti in the Lotus in 1978, Jochen Rindt in the Lotus in '70 and James Hunt in the McLaren in '76. All three were powered by the Cosworth DFV



JACKIE STEWART ON WALTER HAYES



Above all, Walter was a gentleman of great dignity and style. But he was a man of very wide peripheral vision. He had more activities than most people realise. He was of course a very good writer, which was his first day job, but he became probably the finest public relations officer that the motor industry has ever had. Ford Motor Company, I suspect, will never fully understand or appreciate just how much Walter did for them. One of the things he saw was an opportunity of using motorsport to get Ford in Europe

away from only the blue-collar buyer. He made Ford classless yet socially acceptable. Few people know that he was considered to be the governor of the BBC. He was involved in a number of prestigious charities and trusts, and was one of the first trustees for the Mechanics Grand Prix Charitable Trust.

In typical Walter style, he put me under contract when I was standing at the Earls Court Motor Show in October 1964, looking at a white Ford Zodiac with red upholstery. This man standing next to me asked if I liked the car. Of course, I said, it was very nice. "Would you like to have it?" he asked. I looked at him sideways, not knowing who he was.

"That would be very nice," said I. "Well you can have it," he said, "and I'll also give you a cheque for £500 if you agree to drive for us next year. My name is Walter Hayes and I know who you are."

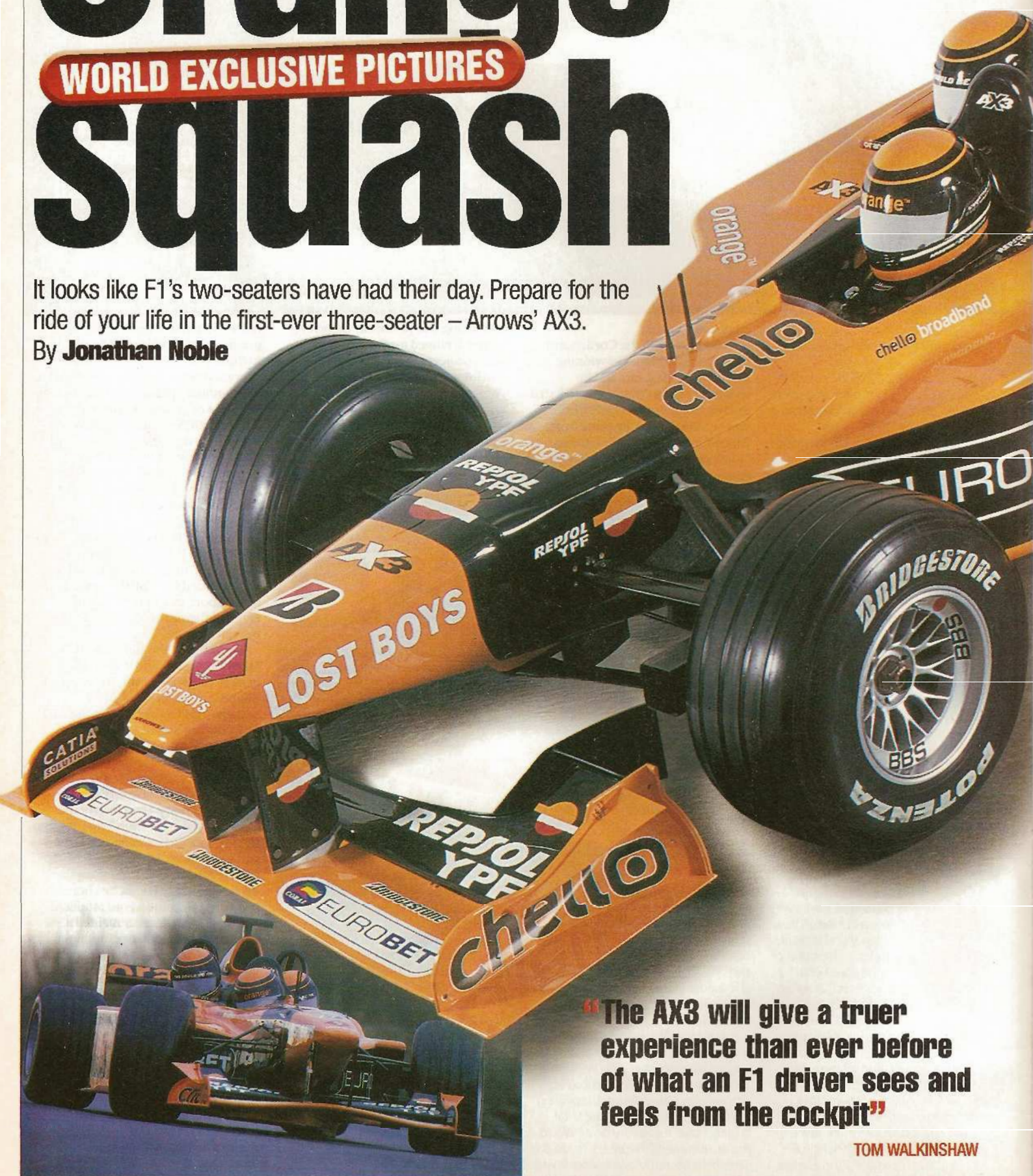
From that point on I was under contract to Ford Motor Company. To this day that contract remains in place - if not for the same amount of money!

Walter was unique in the world he lived in. I consider myself extremely privileged to have not only worked with him, but been his friend. To Elizabeth, his wife, and his sons and daughter, Richard, Jeremy and Harriet, we send our sincerest condolences and deepest sympathy.

Orange WORLD EXCLUSIVE PICTURES squash

It looks like F1's two-seaters have had their day. Prepare for the ride of your life in the first-ever three-seater – Arrows' AX3.

By **Jonathan Noble**



"The AX3 will give a truer experience than ever before of what an F1 driver sees and feels from the cockpit"

TOM WALKINSHAW

“Passengers will feel the same forces on their head as a driver”

STEVE HOOD



Formula 1 two-seaters may have been around since 1998, but in the fast-paced world of Grand Prix racing they are now just so last year. Welcome to the future of passenger rides in motor racing's top-level cars with the latest in pit-lane accessories: the three-seater.

The Arrows AX3, which is being unveiled to the public for the first time on the main stage at the AUTOSPORT International show at Birmingham's NEC today, is being touted as the closest any 'normal' human being can come to experiencing what it feels like to drive a Formula 1 car.

Even though there will be a slightly cosy feel, because of the two passengers, the AX3's experience will stand above those of the two-seater. There will not only be the amazing acceleration and braking forces which have categorised everyone's experience of the two-seater cars produced by McLaren and Arrows, but the view over the shoulders of the man at the wheel will give a unique insight into what GP drivers see and feel at 200mph.

"The AX3 has been designed to give a truer experience than ever before of what an F1 driver sees and feels from the cockpit," says Arrows boss Tom Walkinshaw. "A lot has been written about the acceleration, G-forces and braking capabilities of these racing cars, but we are now

furthering the opportunity to give people an appreciation of what it's really like."

The two passengers in the AX3 are situated slightly behind and to the side of the driver, similar to the cockpit arrangement of the McLaren F1 road car. This seating position means there is no need for the head protector, which has separated the driver and passenger in the more traditional two-seaters. And the fact that the passengers are free from visual restraints ahead means they will not only be able to see the track ahead of them - but also feel the air, and possibly the odd insect, smashing into their helmet visor.

"The main aim of the three-seater is to create an experience that is even better than in a two-seater," says Arrows' head of marketing, Steve Hood. "By sitting slightly to the side, passengers will have a totally uncompromised view of the track ahead, which is what a driver sees, so they can see corners coming up and think, 'Hang on, didn't we pass what would normally be a sensible braking point 100 metres ago?'"

"A three-seater will also place the passengers directly in the airstream, so they feel the same forces on their head as a driver, which in a two-seater the passenger is more shielded from. These elements, plus the fact of being sat at the same height as the driver, will provide a more realistic view of what an F1 driver experiences."

Triple action: the three-seater design gives passengers a direct view of the track, so they can see and feel exactly what a Formula 1 driver experiences at speeds of up to 221 mph

AX3 TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Engine	2999cc, 680bhp, 72deg V10
Chassis	Carbon monocoque adapted from Arrows A20
Gearbox and transmission	Carbon fibre six-speed semi-automatic
Tyres	Bridgestone
0-100mph (0-161km/h)	5.0 seconds
Top speed	221mph (356km/h)
Weight	640kg
Wheelbase	3445mm
Length	5590mm
Height	1000mm
Width	1798mm
Fuel tank	130 litres

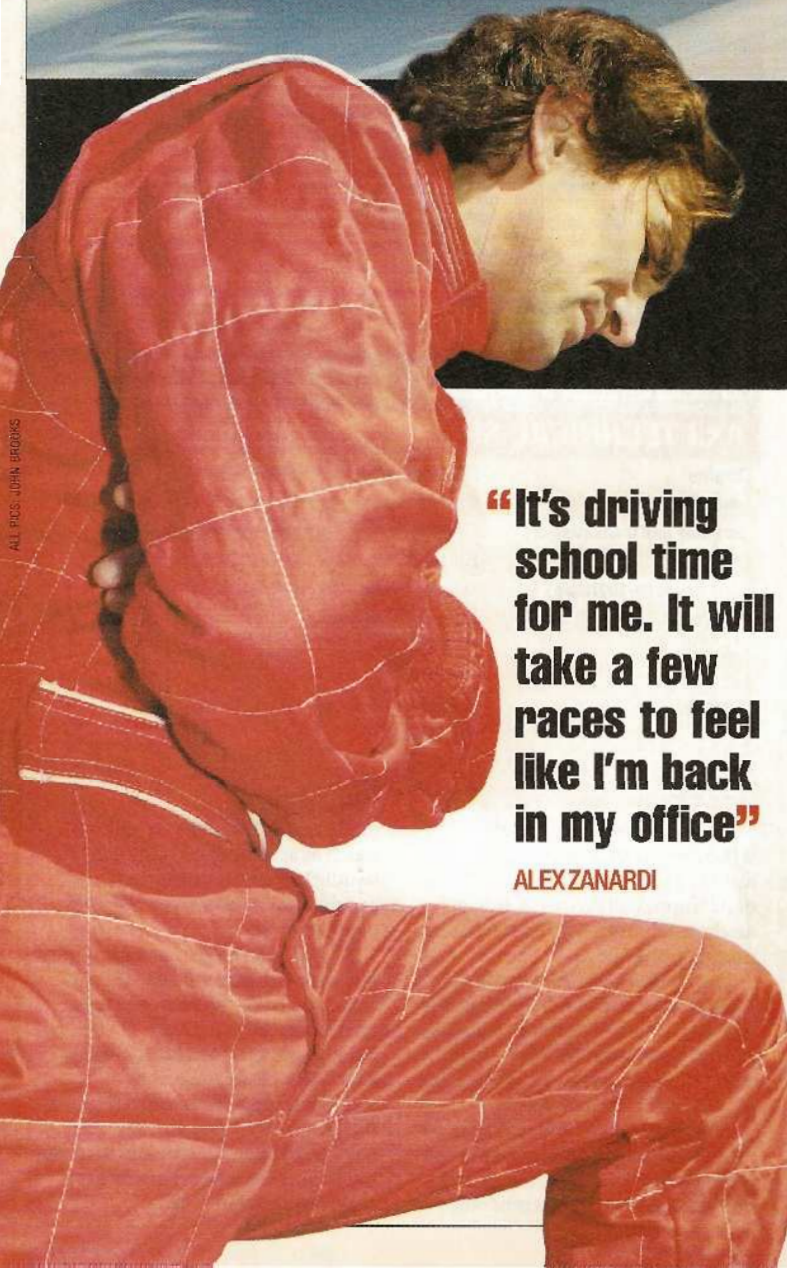
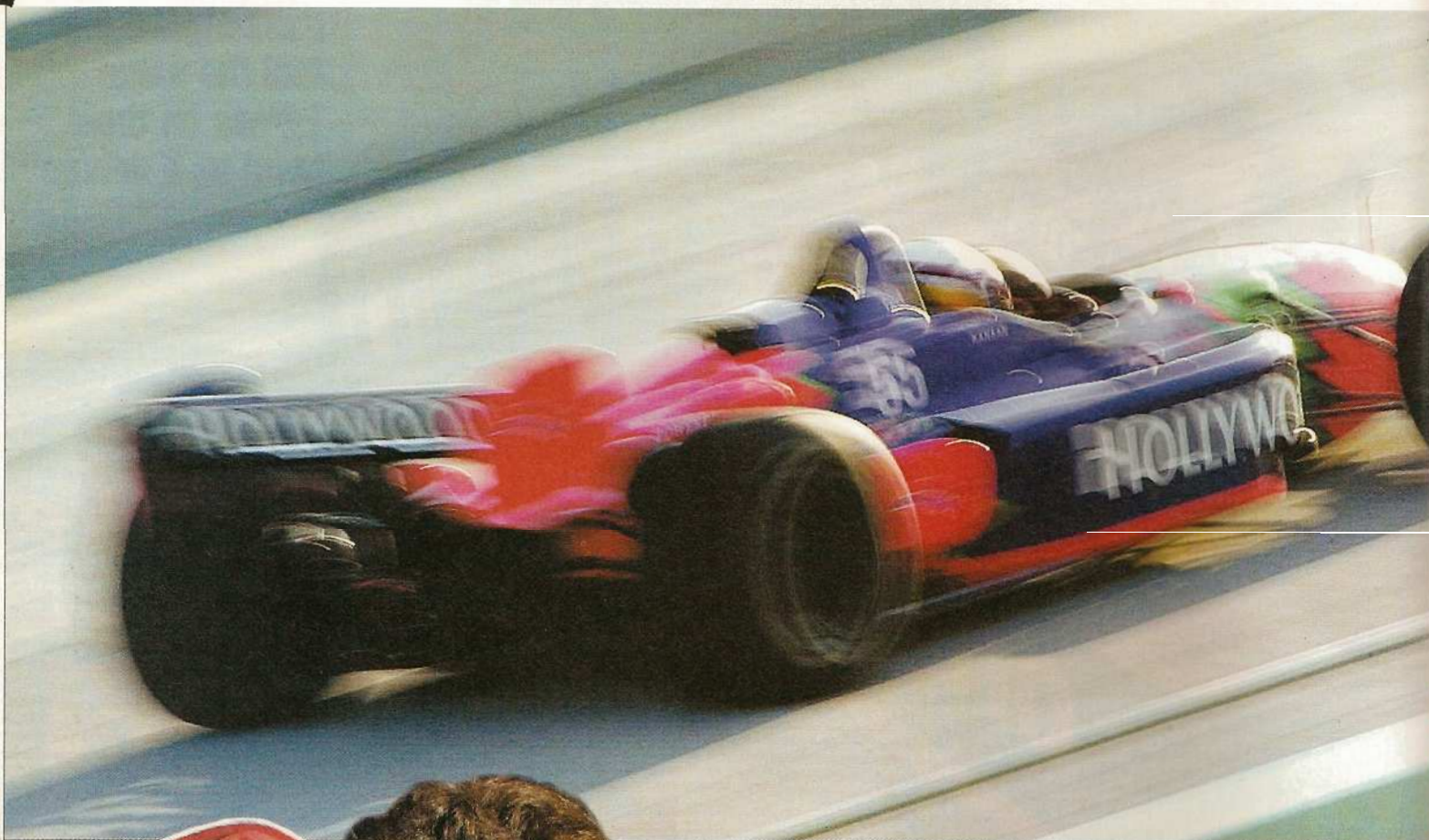
Arrows is confident that the AX3, which accelerates from 0-100mph in just five seconds and has a top speed of 221mph, will prove the ride of a lifetime. It is not known yet what lap times it can achieve.

The car has been built to the highest safety standards and features Arrows' own V10-developed engine producing around 680bhp - more than enough to get an understanding of what an F1 car feels like.

The two AX3s which will be used for the passenger runs are expected to hit the tracks in May. Those lucky enough to get in the hot seat will

enjoy around five laps - about as much as an untrained body can handle before the cornering, acceleration and braking G-forces take their toll.

No decision has been made about just who will drive the car, but it is expected to be the team's as-yet-unannounced test driver. Those likely to get a taste of life in the fast lane will include the team's sponsors, supporters and VIP guests. But the team is open to offers from any outside party interested in trying it out for themselves. Now, where was their number... ■



BACK O

“It’s driving school time for me. It will take a few races to feel like I’m back in my office”

ALEX ZANARDI

After a deeply disappointing 1999 season with Williams-Supertec and a year on the sidelines, Alex Zanardi is back in the saddle this winter. Teamed with rapid young Brazilian Tony Kanaan in Mo Nunn’s expanded Reynard-Honda team, Zanardi hopes to recapture the form that won him back-to-back CART titles in ’97 and ’98.

Team boss Nunn engineered Zanardi’s cars during the Italian’s three years with Chip Ganassi’s team. Nunn and Zanardi became great friends during that time and Nunn’s second-year team should provide the perfect environment, on and off the track, for his comeback.

Zanardi completed his first test in one of Nunn’s Reynard-Hondas at the Homestead road course a few days before Christmas. He did not run many laps on the first of his two days of testing, but he covered plenty of miles on the second day, lapping within a few hundredths of a second of team-mate Kanaan and Paul Tracy, who was testing one of Team Green’s Reynard-Hondas.

Other than a short, one-day test in one of Nunn’s cars at Sebring last

summer when Nunn was half thinking of Zanardi substituting for the injured Kanaan, this was Alex’s first serious run in a race car in more than a year, since the end of the ’99 Formula 1 season. As everyone knows, seat-time is all-important in motor racing, and both Nunn and Zanardi were delighted with how quickly he settled in.

“On the first day Alex said he was a little rusty and tense and not relaxed. He was holding on too hard,” Nunn said. “It wasn’t coming quite as naturally as it should. But on the second day he seemed very relaxed and was just taking it in his stride and the car was responding to everything he said. He felt the changes. He was able to give the feedback like he did before in ’97 and ’98.

“I know it’s early, but he seems exactly as he was before. He’s as pumped and argumentative as he used to be.”

Zanardi’s quickest lap on his second day took 68.3 seconds, compared to a best of 68.25s by Tracy. Kanaan drove the same car Zanardi tested for two days earlier in the week, lapping in 68.4s right away. “Tony was very quick,” Nunn said.

ALL PICS: JOHN BROWN



No place like Homestead: old friend and team boss Nunn helped Zanardi get back up to speed during his test (above)

ON TRACK

Following a year in the wilderness, Alex Zanardi has a chance to resurrect his career in CART, and has already shown that his speed is undiminished. By **Gordon Kirby**

"Right off the bat he did 68.4s. So they were all within a tenth and obviously the track was getting a little better as the week went on. But it's going to be good. We're going to give Chip [Ganassi Racing] some pressure!"

Zanardi was equally encouraged. "After the first day I realised that I could go a little faster, but I still have to work a lot of rust out of my arms. On the second day, though, it felt a hundred times better. It was coming back very quickly. I was much more relaxed at the wheel. I certainly was not as tired as I was after just a few laps on the first day. It was very easy for me to drive, much easier than the first day, so it will come back."

The realities of getting back up to speed in a high-performance race car were clear to Zanardi after his first day of testing. "It's obviously driving school time for me," he said at the end of his opening day. "There are a lot of things I can't do right now. It's a question of getting familiar with the car, getting the feel again with the steering wheel and gear lever, making sure that I get all the things right and go back to driving in a very natural and smooth way."

"We're trying to personalise the

car. It will take a few days of testing. Probably the whole winter testing is not going to be enough for me to get back to where I was at the end of '98 in terms of my familiarity with the machine and the driving. It will take a few races to feel like I'm back in my office."

However, Zanardi's second day left him much more satisfied with his progress. "We were very pleased," he said happily. "We ran a lot of miles and the test was very positive as a first contact for me with the car. Certainly there were two good reference points, one of which is Tony who is very fast, we all know that. And the other one is Tracy, who was running the other day and I was as fast as him. So it's very encouraging for a guy who hasn't been driving the car for one year. We tested a lot of things as well, so I'm very happy."

"I really enjoyed the two days," Zanardi went on. "It was a pleasure to talk to people who speak my same language. We really enjoyed that and we're certainly gonna enjoy more of it if we keep getting good results from the tests. But it's a good team and Tony (Kanaan) is a great guy, and I have this great gift to be working

again for people who I know are really nice. Tony is one of these guys. So it's good. I'm happy and I'm pumped up, and we'll see what comes out of it."

Zanardi says the biggest challenge for the team is escalating itself up to running two cars after fielding just one car for Kanaan in 2000.

"There is some concern in the sense that the team is new and we still have to put together a lot of things," said the Italian. "But everybody's pumped up

and we have a great engine, a great car and very good sponsors. We've got a good technical group of engineers and we've got good mechanics."

"It will take a little bit of time for the team to gel but that's really the only down point of the whole thing. The team is young and we have to grow in some areas but the desire is there. I'm sure it's just a question of time."

Zanardi's car will be engineered by Nunn himself and former Ohlins shock absorber engineer Jim



Friends like these: Zanardi is delighted to be working with Kanaan (centre) and Nunn

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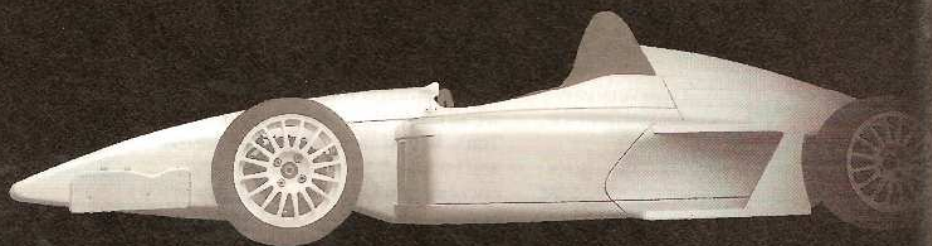


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No stopping him now: Zanardi's Reynard-Honda will be engineered by Nunn himself this year, with help from ex-Ohlns shock engineer Jim Anderson. Both have worked with Alex before



Speed demon: Zanardi set a best time of 68.3s at the test, on a par with Kanaan and Tracy

Anderson. "I worked with Jim at Ganassi and his ambition is to become a race engineer, not just be involved with shock programmes," Zanardi said. "So he's going to be, basically, my engineer, with Morris supervising the whole thing."

"I'm happy because Jim is very talented and he has a passion behind him. He's an experienced guy with shocks but also he's been around Champ Cars a lot so he knows what's going on and he is happy about this opportunity to work with Morris. I think it's a very good situation."

Nunn's team moved into a new base last month, and is now located just across the freeway from the Indianapolis airport. Steve Newey and Brad Filbey run the team for Nunn, who lives in Florida, and Donny Lambert has moved across from Patrick Racing to be Zanardi's chief mechanic. Dave Popielarz continues as Kanaan's chief mechanic.

Kanaan has been an enthusiastic supporter of the team's expansion to two cars and of Zanardi becoming his team-mate. "It's absolutely necessary to run two cars to be seriously competitive and Alex and I have a very good relationship as friends," he said. "I think we're going to work well together."

Team owner Nunn is equally optimistic. "We got a lot covered in the test and the one big thing is I think Alex and Tony are going to work well together," Nunn said.

"I think that Alex is going to be a big help to Tony. They'll be able to discuss things, technically and otherwise. They're friends already so we're pleased with the situation."

Nunn says he expects both of his drivers to be competitive in 2001. "We'll see if we can get a win. That's the first goal," Nunn declared. "And if we do that there will be one heck of a celebration for sure!" ■

IF ANYONE CAN, KANAAN CAN

IT IS generally believed throughout the CART paddock that Tony Kanaan should really make his mark in 2001. The 26-year-old won the Indy Lights championship in '97 and was CART's rookie of the year in '98, driving a Reynard-Honda for Steve Horne's team. Kanaan scored his first Champ Car victory in the '99 Michigan 500, beating Juan Pablo Montoya by half a car length. Horne's team had been sold the previous winter to Jerry Forsythe and Forsythe sold Kanaan's contract to Mo Nunn last winter.

Nunn's team raced last year with Mercedes engines which were spectacularly unreliable, robbing Kanaan of result after possible result. Back with Hondas this year, Kanaan should be a contender to win races.

"Tony is pumped," Nunn said.

"He's ready to deliver. He never put a foot wrong, never locked a wheel in the Homestead test. We worked through a lot of brake and suspension stuff in the two days he drove the car and he was fast right away. It didn't take him any time at all to get up to speed, just like always."

Kanaan is delighted to have Zanardi as his team-mate and Honda engines behind him once more. His sights are set high. "I'm sure we can be in a position to win races," Tony said. "I don't want to say we can win the championship, but I definitely think we're going to be very competitive and can win races. If we can put a lot of strong races together then we can win the championship. So I'm going to try to win some races, then think about the championship."



High hopes: Nunn (left) has been impressed by Kanaan, who aims to win races in 2001



The AUTOSPORT International show 2001 starts today (Thursday). **Andy Bothwell** reveals how you can be in the right place at the right time

SHOW AND

The first major motorsport event of 2001 – AUTOSPORT International – opens its doors once again at the Birmingham NEC.

Now in its 11th year, the spectacular four-day motorsport extravaganza is looking bigger and better than ever. More than 83,000 visitors are expected to peruse the 550 stands, and the show will host more than 100 car, driver and product launches.

AUTOSPORT'S stand and Central Stage, located in Hall Seven, is where all of the major launches will take place, along with interviews and autograph sessions.

The main feature on the AUTOSPORT stage will be the sensational new Arrows three-seater

Formula 1 car that is being unveiled at the show. Also featuring will be the crocodile-liveried Audi R8 in which Allan McNish and Rinaldo Capello won the American Le Mans Series finale at Adelaide on New Year's Eve.

Visitors to our stand will also be able to race against each other, or against some of the stars of motorsport, on our Sony Playstation 2 consoles. The consoles will be running a brand-new game called GT3, which will not be available in the shops until March, and among the prizes up for grabs for contestants on each day of the show will be one of the sell-out machines. Several of the original Playstations will also be offered as prizes.

To help guide you around the maze of stands, launches and special events

“Juan Pablo Montoya makes his first public appearance as a Williams driver”

at AUTOSPORT International, we have produced a comprehensive timetable of events on the AUTOSPORT stage, plus some of the events taking place elsewhere. All of the details are correct at the time of going to press, but be warned – the timetable is always subject to last-minute changes and alterations.

THURSDAY JANUARY 11

08:30 Conference programme

For the second year running, AUTOSPORT International is hosting a series of lectures and conferences featuring keynote speakers from the world of motor racing. The first of the two half-day conferences is called Maintaining Pole Position – the current economic value and future of the motorsport industry.

09:00 AUTOSPORT International and Engineering open to the trade and media

AUTOSPORT International 2001 opens its doors at the beginning of a four-day motorsport extravaganza. The first



TELL

two days of the show are dedicated to members of the trade and media, as well as Motor Sports Association and British Racing and Sports Car Club licence holders. The public days will open on Saturday morning.

10:00 Arrows F1

Arrows has built the world's first three-seater F1 car - the AX3 - and will reveal it on AUTOSPORT'S Central Stage. The car, part of the Arrows F1 Xperience project, will be unveiled by a celebrity guest and interviews with key project personnel will take place on the stage.

10:30 Lotus Motorsport

The Lotus Sport Elise series wowed the crowds when it supported the



Champ Car racer Kenny Brack will be at the show to talk about the coming season



Murray Walker will open the public days

British Touring Car Championship last year and a presentation will be made to champion Adam Wilcox.

10:45 Proton Rally Masters car launch

11:30 Adrian Reynard

The chassis manufacturer boss will be talking about his involvement in many parts of motorsport.

11:30 Gary Ayles Racing

Tin-top ace Gary Ayles returns to the British Touring Car Championship this year with a pair of stunning Alfa Romeo 156s. The cars will be unveiled for the first time at the Janspeed stand.

11:45 Rockingham Motor Speedway

American-style oval racing hits Britain this year with the eagerly-awaited British debut of the US-based Champ Car series. The Rockingham Motor Speedway at Corby opens in May with the Coys Historic Festival, while the Champ Cars visit the 1.5-mile circuit in September. Circuit bosses Peter Davies and Chris Tate will be on the



The F1 Racing pit lane will be one of the star attractions at AUTOSPORT International, as visitors can get up close and personal with the latest in Formula 1 technology

AUTOSPORT stage to talk about how the project is progressing and discuss their hopes for the Speedway's opening season.

12:00 Bentley Le Mans model

The famous Bentley name is returning to Le Mans this year - 70 years after quitting the classic enduro in 1930. The marque's new EXP Speed 8 coupe was recently launched at the Detroit Motor Show but a 40% scale model of the car will be unveiled on the stage.

12:00 Rally Masters

The Rally Masters will be one of two premier rally series on the domestic scene this year and promises to be quite a spectacle, with Ford, Peugeot, Proton and Volkswagen all entering.

12:30 David Richards

The ex-Subaru WRC boss now holds the television rights to the series and is aiming to make the world championship a global spectacle on the scale of Formula 1.

13:00 John Reynolds

World Superbike rider John Reynolds will be on hand for the first holding of BIKESPORT at AUTOSPORT International. He will be appearing on the main stage to talk about his hopes for the coming season with the Reve Red Bull Ducati team and new teammate Sean Emmett.

13:15 Jos Foulston

As part of the new BIKESPORT show, the boss of the British Superbike Championship will discuss his plans for the series in 2001.

13:30 Bobby Rahal

Bobby Rahal stepped in as the interim boss of CART, Champ

HOW TO GET THERE

WITH more than 83,000 people expected to visit AUTOSPORT International over the four days of the show, everyone is going to want to avoid the scrum to get in.

The good news is that the venue, Birmingham's NEC, is centrally located and easily accessible by plane, train and automobile.

By car, the NEC is about a 20-minute drive east of Birmingham city centre and there is easy access to several major motorways. By rail, it's just as simple, with Birmingham International Station a short walk away from the front doors of the centre.

For those who fancy a slightly more exotic arrival, Birmingham International Airport is situated right next door to the NEC.

How to get there

By train: the NEC is connected by a short, covered walkway to Birmingham International Station, which has regular services to and from London Euston and Birmingham New Street stations.

By road: the venue is just off junction six of the M42, which has easy links to the M6, M5 and M40. Parking is available for 24,000 cars and is accessed via slip roads off the M42.



By air: Birmingham International Airport, which is served by a dozen airlines covering more than 40 worldwide destinations, is right next to the venue.

How to get tickets

Tickets for the two public days can be bought in advance from the NEC hotline on 0870 264 4444 or from the official show website: www.autosport-international.com. Tickets are priced £13 (£10 for under 15s and over 65s). Children under five can enter free.

British Eurosport Thunderdrome tickets are £10 on the door or £7 in advance. There is a special advanced offer price of £20 for combined AUTOSPORT International and Thunderdrome tickets. One-day trade tickets are £10 and an 'all days' ticket is £25. There are discounts of 10% for groups of 10 plus or 15% for 50 or more.

When is it?

Thursday January 11 - trade/press
Friday January 12 - trade/press
Saturday January 13 - public
Sunday January 14 - public
Open between 0900 and 1800.

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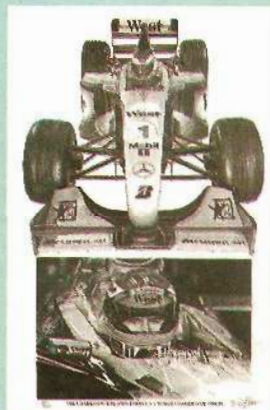


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The AUTOSPORT stand and central stage will be the location for the major launches

◀ favourite and independent king Matt Neal. The pair will talk about their plans for this year and sign autographs.

14:15 Johnny Mowlem
The sportscar ace has had a good year in the American Le Mans Series, finishing 11th in the GT class standings with Team Skea in a Porsche 911 GT3-R. He is looking to move up to prototypes next year and is in the frame for several seats.

14:15 Niki Lauda
The three-times Formula 1 World Champion and one of the most famous names in motorsport will be giving an interview and question-and-answer session on the AUTOSPORT main stage.

15:00 Ford Rally Masters car launch

15:30 Giorgio Pantano
The newly-crowned German Formula 3 champion will be graduating to Formula 3000 this year and is the first from the Team Brask stable to reach that level. He will be discussing the year ahead.

15:30 British Eurosport Thunderdrome

15:45 Caterham Cars

SATURDAY JANUARY 13

09:00 Public days of AUTOSPORT International open
After the two trade and press days of the show, the doors will be opened to the general public. The public days of the show will be officially opened this year by ITV Formula 1 commentator Murray Walker.

10:00 Juan Pablo Montoya
Look out for Colombian Juan Pablo Montoya setting hot laps at the BMP kart track before he appears on the stage in his public debut as a Williams Grand Prix driver.

10:15 Murray Walker
As one promising name enters F1, another old hand is leaving. The 'voice of Formula 1' announced his retirement last month. He will be on the main stage to talk about his final season in F1.

10:30 British Eurosport Thunderdrome

10:45 Arrows F1

11:00 Lister GT drivers autograph session
Current FIA GT champion Jamie Campbell-Walter will be joined by British GT graduate and new teammate Ian McKellar Jnr in the works Lister Storm.

11:15 Rockingham Motor Speedway

11:30 Carl Fogarty

11:45 ASCAR

12:00 British Eurosport Thunderdrome

12:15 Porsche British GT team

12:30 Allan McNish
The sportscar ace clinched the American Le Mans Series drivers' title on New Year's Eve in Australia despite injury fears. He will be on the stage to talk about his amazing year and the season ahead.

12:45 Pedro de la Rosa
Arrows F1 driver Pedro de la Rosa finished 15th in last year's World Championship but it was a year of good progress for the Spaniard and the team.

13:15 Richard West

13:30 British Eurosport Thunderdrome

13:30 Kimi Raikkonen
Controversially, the young Finn was recently granted a superlicence allowing him to race in Formula 1 this year. When he takes to the grid with Sauber in Australia in March, he will become the most inexperienced Grand Prix driver in history, having completed just 23 car races.

14:00 Anthony Davidson
The rising single-seater ace had an excellent 2000. Last year's Formula Ford Festival winner has an exciting year ahead of him. He will be racing in the British Formula 3 Championship with Carlin Motorsport and has sealed a test deal with F1 team British American Racing.

14:00 Coys Auction (Hall 10)
Coys, specialists in fine historic cars, will stage an auction of more than 45 classic racing cars and memorabilia for the second consecutive year at AUTOSPORT International.

14:15 Celebrity Question of Sport

14:45 Jason Plato

15:00 British Eurosport Thunderdrome

15:30 Charity auction
Motorsport enthusiast Bill Williams will return to the show for the fourth year running to hold his charity auction, which is sure to be a hit.

16:00 Hill Rally Climb awards

16:30 British Eurosport Thunderdrome

SUNDAY JANUARY 14

10:00 Jenson Button
The Brit had a sensational rookie year in F1 in 2000 for the Williams team after making the dramatic leap from Formula 3. This year, he joins Giancarlo Fisichella at Benetton with a two-year stint 'on loan'.

10:30 British Eurosport Thunderdrome

10:45 Arrows F1

11:00 Carl Fogarty

11:00 Lister drivers autograph session

11:30 Allan McNish

10:45 Jenson Button and Jim Rosenthal

12:00 British Eurosport Thunderdrome

12:15 Anthony Davidson

12:30 Jaguar F3 team

12:45 John Reynolds and Sean Emmett

13:30 British Eurosport Thunderdrome

13:30 Darren Manning
The British American Racing test driver will be racing in Formula 3000 again this year and will be talking about his hopes for 2001.

13:45 Richard West

14:00 Porsche British GT team

14:15 Champions of the Future
Most of today's motorsport stars started their careers in karts. The director of the three McLaren Mercedes-backed Champions of the Future series, Carolyn Hoy, will be on the stage to present prizes to the current champions.

14:45 Jason Plato

15:00 British Eurosport Thunderdrome

14:45 Charity auction

16:30 British Eurosport Thunderdrome



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But the record setting didn't stop there. When Fernandez won his second race of the year in Australia, he posted the record 40th win for an Indy Lights graduate in the FedEx Championship Series. And it was only appropriate that the record 40th win was earned in the No. 40 Tecate/Quaker State Reynard Ford, owned by Indy Lights founder U.E. "Pat" Patrick.

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Dayton Indy Lights President Roger Bailey (from left), series founder U.E. "Pat" Patrick, Adrian Fernandez and Dayton Motorsports Manager Joe Barbieri celebrate 40 FedEx Championship Series victories by Indy Lights graduates.

2001 Dayton Indy Lights Championship Schedule

March 11

Monterrey, Mexico

April 8

Long Beach, California

April 28

Fort Worth, Texas

June 3

West Allis, Wisconsin

June 24

Portland, Oregon

July 8

Kansas City, Kansas

July 15

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

August 12

Lexington, Ohio

August 26

Madison, Illinois

September 2

Joliet, Illinois

October 14

Monterey, California

November 4

Fontana, California

For more information about the Dayton Indy Lights Championship, contact Roger Bailey in the United States at (248) 362-6200. www.indylights.com



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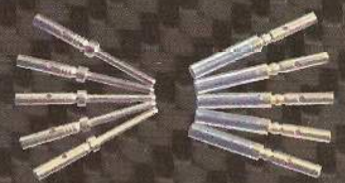
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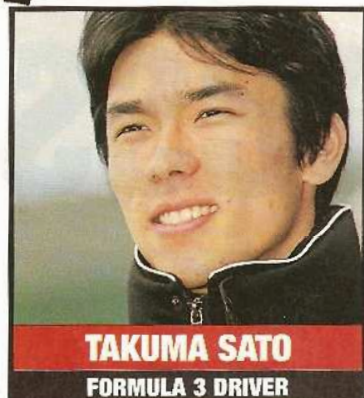


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Double top

The Japanese Formula 3 star could not believe his good fortune when he was offered the chance to test for two Formula 1 teams in Spain



TAKUMA SATO
FORMULA 3 DRIVER

Testing for two different Formula 1 teams during December has been a great experience, and hopefully it will lead to me being a member of British American Racing's driver development programme in 2001.

Both tests were arranged independently of Honda, even though it backs me now and both Jordan and BAR are Honda teams.

With Jordan there is a connection between Eddie and my manager, Andrew Gilbert-Scott, who have known each other a long time. I don't know Eddie well and I've only spoken to him a couple of times, but he seems keen on up-and-coming young drivers.

Suddenly they called me for a seat-fitting, which was to take place only two days before the test at Jerez. The test team had already gone to the circuit and there was only one monocoque, and that meant a funny story. The carbon-shell seats take a long, long time to make and we had only two days. Andrew has done a couple of aerodynamic tests for Jordan, so they used his seat and just cut a piece out for me. I didn't know until they'd completed it and I went to look at the back of the seat, and

"I was quite surprised at just how much downforce there was in the gravel trap"

there was written 'AGS 2000'. We had to take it to Spain in the hand-luggage with a bag full of pedals and bits.

Even though it was short notice, I was mentally prepared for the test because I knew that some day it would happen. I just wanted to end my Formula 3 commitments for the year and not get confused by having Formula 3000 or F1 tests during the season. However, when I turned up at Jerez only a couple of people recognised me. Even the mechanics and engineers were expecting Ricardo Zonta!

The car was fantastic. When you accelerate, endless power; when you brake, amazing. It started to rain and I half-spun into the chicane on my very last lap and got stuck in the gravel. I waited for it to dry but there was another shower. I wanted to go out again, but Jarno Trulli did one lap and said we should stop.

The BAR test was a very different



Sato leaves the Barcelona pit garage in the British American Racing machine. He was tested as part of a driver development programme

situation to Jordan. With Jordan I had 10-lap stints driving the way I wanted and trying different set-ups. With BAR it was a driver development programme which I had to follow, without dramatically changing the set-up of the car. Both Marc Hynes and I ran the same programme after Darren Manning had set a

benchmark. Also, we had to use the 2000-spec Bridgestone tyres which were two seconds off the 2001 tyres.

As a circuit, Barcelona has a completely different character to Jerez. There are so many high-speed corners that go on and on. And blind corners too – a really challenging and physical circuit.

On day one we had 25 laps each, with five-lap sessions in which we had three timed laps. That was hard, because my only circuit knowledge came from going out and watching in the morning, seeing which kerbs you can use and listening to the engine notes of the cars.

On day two, Marc did a three-hour session in the morning and I did three hours in the afternoon. We both had two new sets of tyres and did one 'long-distance' run of 10 laps, because they wanted to see how we were physically, as well as our feedback and driving technique.

It was difficult for me because it was quicker in the morning when there was no wind and it was 10 degrees cooler. The Bridgestone guy told me the afternoon was at least 0.7s slower. Even so I found a lot of time in the fast corners from getting more confidence and I was 0.7s quicker than Marc.

At one time during the test I had Jacques Villeneuve behind me trying to get by, but I couldn't let him go because I only had a three-lap stint and I was starting my first flying lap on new tyres. I knew that lap was going to be my quickest and that Villeneuve was going to be pitting at the end of the lap. I had to do my best – it was my chance and I had to take it! Anyway, the next morning he said hello to me so I think he is OK about it.

I made just one mistake in two days, at the last corner – which at Barcelona is 140mph – on my very last lap. I had done a 1m23.4s but lost time with a slide in one corner. I really wanted to beat that time on my last lap, but in the final corner I pushed a bit too hard and ran slightly wide off the track. I didn't hit anything and got back on the circuit, and I was quite surprised how much downforce there was in the gravel! Three downshifts and I kept going. Good fun.

Unfortunately, it meant I missed out by 0.1s on breaking Darren's benchmark time. That was very frustrating, but there you go.

For me, the main target in 2001 is to concentrate on my second year in the British F3 Championship with Carlin Motorsport.

If I get a chance to drive an F1 car again, well that will be very welcome, but F3 is my priority and I will only drive a GP machine if there's an opportunity to have a run in the F3 car before the next race. ■

FACTFILE

Name Takuma Sato
Age 23 **Nationality** Japanese
Titles won 1997 Suzuka Racing School Honda Scholarship

- Started karting in 1996 after success on bicycles in Japan
- Passed up Honda-backed season in Japanese F3 in '98 to try and forge a career in Europe
- Between mid-'98 and the end of '99 competed with Diamond Racing in Vauxhall Junior, EFDA Euroseries and National Class British F3
- Graduated to the main British F3 Championship with Carlin Motorsport for the 2000 season. Won four races

Mixing business

A successful car dealer he may be, but Steve Soper's first love is racing. And he is about to prove he still has what it takes with Peugeot in the 2001 BTCC. By **Nick Phillips**

Steven Soper, a 48-year-old BMW dealer from Lincoln, will drive a Peugeot 406 Coupe in the 2001 BTCC. Sounds like a snippet from the days when the BTCC was the playground of ageing car dealers - before the professionals moved in to put the series on to a higher level and line their pockets. In reality, it is far from that.

The reality is that this particular denizen of the motor trade is a driver first and a dealer second, and seriously good news for the BTCC. Soper was being paid to race touring cars when James Thompson was still in primary school, and only started his dealership in '99. He was earning a good living from tin-top racing well before the guys most see as the touring car old-guard started to earn a crust from the sport.

As Soper says: "I was getting paid before them and I'm still getting paid now, so I must be doing something right." Now, after 11 years as a BMW-contracted driver, he's joined Peugeot for another crack at the BTCC and,

matters, like the way a BTCC programme can now be dove-tailed into his business commitments.

"I looked at it and looked at it," says Soper. "Peugeot's been talking to me for quite a while and the more I heard about what was going on and changing the more I thought 'yeah I'd like to do that.'"

Peugeot boss Mick Linford is more interested in what Soper can bring him and, when you delve a bit deeper into Soper's self-image, the reasons for Linford's choice begin to look very convincing. "I don't want to make numbers up," says Soper. "I don't believe I will. I'm not doing it to take a salary home, I'm doing it because I want to do it, be competitive and contribute my package. And, if you look at the total package, that's where I hope my strength will be: technical set-up, working with people, generating that will to win, racecraft and speed. If a team-mate of mine is quicker than me, no panic, we've got two races. If he's quicker and he outraces me, well you know I'll have to be asking myself some questions.

"I don't believe I am the best but some of them are bloody average and I'm better than average"

STEVE SOPER



Soper has long been linked with BMW

though there are a whole raft of good reasons why he's doing it, there's no difficulty working out that at the heart of it is a strong belief that he can win.

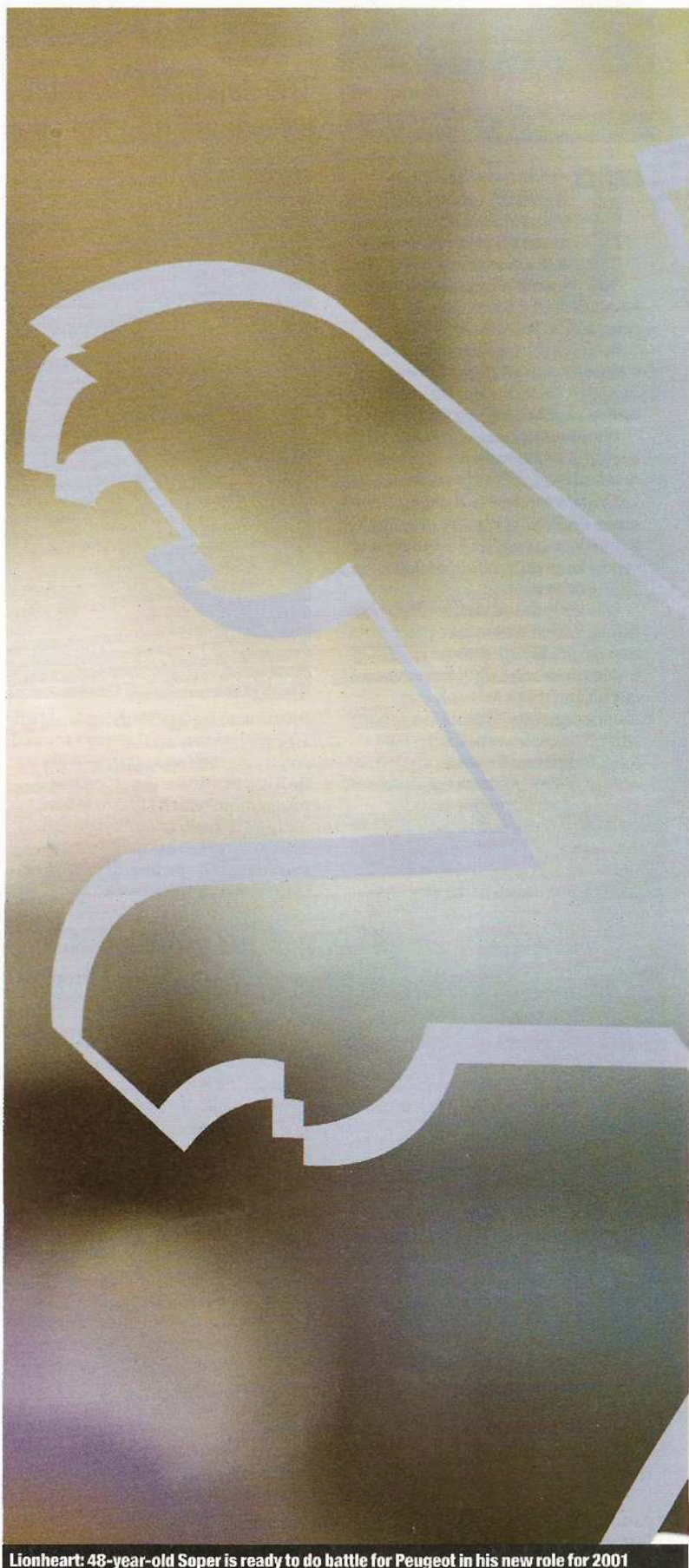
The background is a complicated range of issues. Firstly, he likes the new BTCC rules and management. "There won't be enough manufacturers in the first year, but in year two there should be a few more," he says. "The concept is better and it's not a £10 million budget, that's crucial. I'm no more of a judge than you; I just half fancy it."

Secondly, Peugeot's persistent wooing has clearly given him a boost when his BMW career appeared to be fizzling out. There are also practical

Either he's a superstar or I'm too slow. I'm not one of those who is always saying he's the best. I don't believe I am the best but some of them out there are fairly bloody average and I'm certainly better than average."

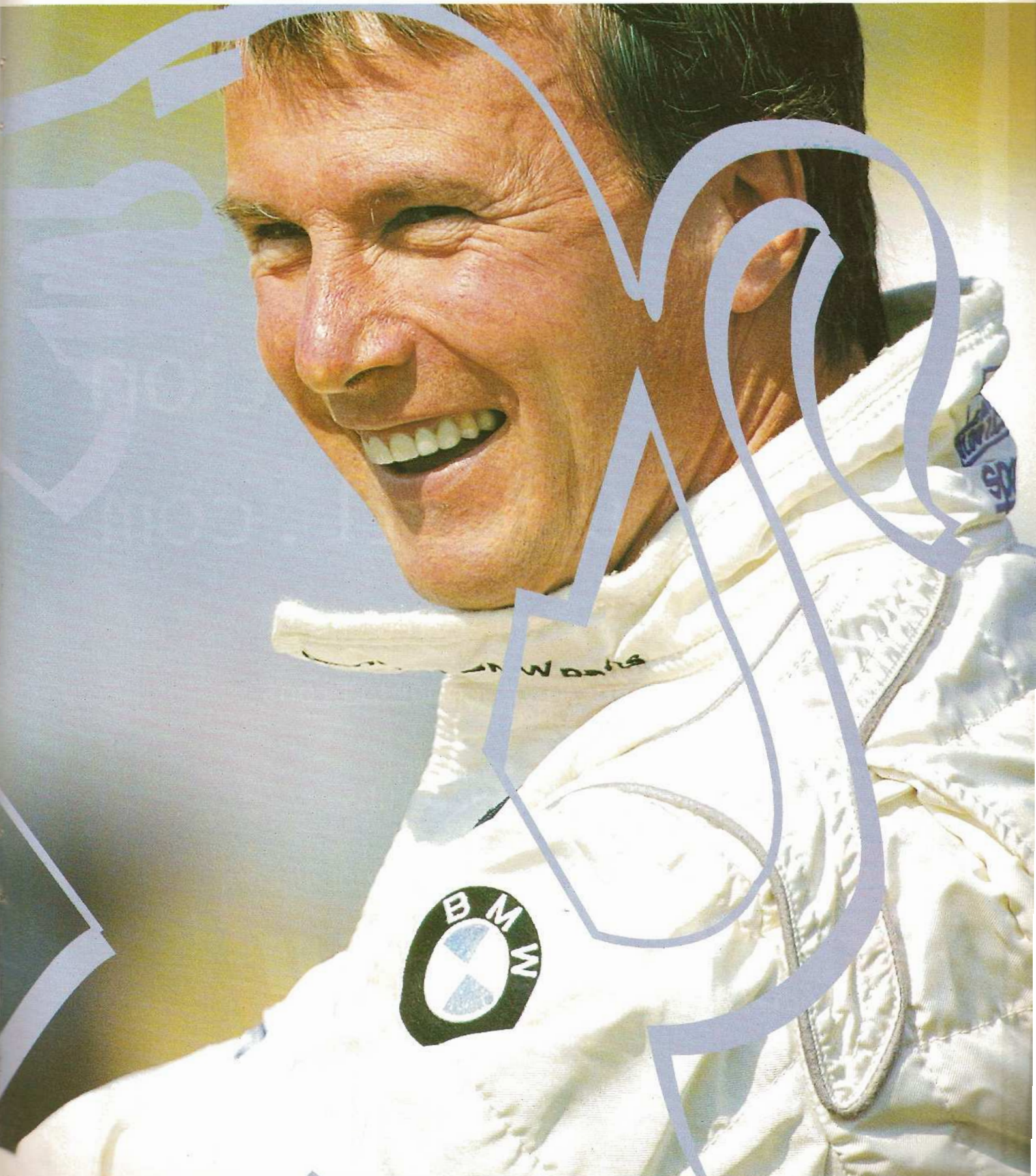
Linford has worked with plenty of drivers and teams and what he wants now is an operation that pulls together. "I don't want any egos," says Linford. "I can't have any. Soper is one of the older ones but, I have to say, he's got a much, much better attitude than some of the other older ones. He's very adaptable, can work well with other people and shares his knowledge with other people."

Soper's advanced age might



Lionheart: 48-year-old Soper is ready to do battle for Peugeot in his new role for 2001

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Soper (right) in the midst of that infamous run in with John Cleland in the '92 season

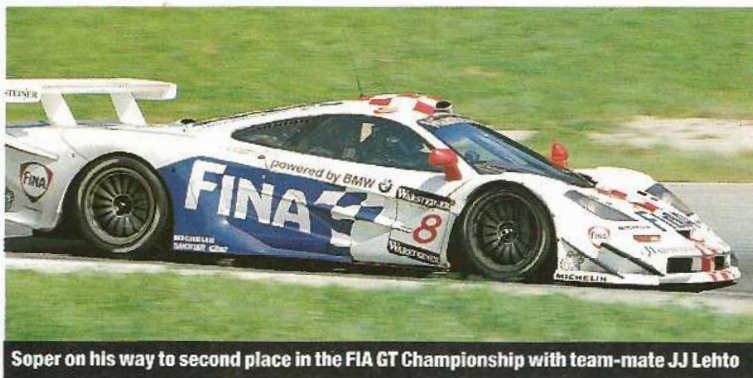
◀ have put some teams off and the one question mark must be whether he still has what it takes. After a 2000 which was more or less a sabbatical (he raced once in the Sebring 12 Hours), Soper has no doubts.

"I'm competitive," he says. "I don't think you ever lose that but you've got to want to do it to work with the team, the company, your team-mates, your engineers. If something's missing, then you lose your motivation and, as I say, Peugeot has been courting me for about four or five months. That in itself motivates you. And that's worth a few tenths." Contrast that with the BMW alternative. "The programme they're doing does not suit me," he says, before adding with a peal of laughter: "they haven't asked me to do it anyway."

Soper's break from BMW in racing is clearly a wrench. He's had fantastic success with the Bavarian marque and in '99 set up a big BMW dealership, Soper of Lincoln. However, he knows that his last BMW season was nothing to write home about and he's not afraid to explain why.

"I didn't enjoy the last race I did in the prototype. If I look back to '99, I felt I was on top of the car and on top of the situation. Then I look at Sebring and I hadn't driven the car since November so that was six months. All my colleagues had been testing. You need a lot of mileage to go quick in that type of car. I was rusty and didn't enjoy the race at all. You either need to do a whole programme or nothing in prototypes. Just to turn up every now and then is a potential health hazard, especially if you are determined to be competitive. And I'm bored at the moment with travelling around the world. Plus I've now got business commitments. The BTCC suits me."

"I want to do it and be successful. I'll be very irritated if I'm not" STEVE SOPER



Soper on his way to second place in the FIA GT Championship with team-mate JJ Lehto

In case you should mistake Soper's enthusiasm for the new BTCC's weekend-only format with a less-than-healthy attitude to the race team, he's quick to explain. "Don't read that as me not wanting to spend much time on the racing. Take it the other way round. You need to maximise what you can do in the weekend and I'm normally better at doing that than the average person."

Soper indeed is very strong on rapid car sorting and famously focused on that during race weekends. Happy to chew the fat at great length during the week, he can be distinctly terse when it comes to the race weekend. I once asked him how his car was going just after he'd qualified slightly worse than he'd have liked. "OK," came the reply. I pushed for a little more detail. "OK, OK," he came back. End of conversation, as Soper and engineer headed for the computer to digest the session's data.

LIFE BEHIND THE WHEEL

STEVE Soper was born in West London in 1952. He started competing in auto tests before he was old enough to drive on the road. When he was, he graduated to racing Minis and was soon a contender, winning four one-make titles between '77 and '81.

A step up into the BTCC brought five class wins in a Metro. He graduated to the top class in '83 with a Tom Walkinshaw-run works Rover Vitesse and, at the end of the season, was crowned overall champion, but a long drawn-out technical wrangle (it reached the civil courts) eventually went against him and he lost the title.

Soper was soon moving up again, this time into Europe, first with Rover and then (from '86) with Ford. He was a regular winner in the charismatic Eggenberger Sierra RS500s. He was runner-up in the '88 European Touring Car Championship for Ford and was then headhunted by BMW for its DTM squad in '89. A leading contender and frequent race-winner in the DTM, Soper, like all BMW's long-term drivers, was very much a team player.

By the early '90s, he was dabbling in the BTCC on top of his DTM schedule. A real highlight came in '92 when he

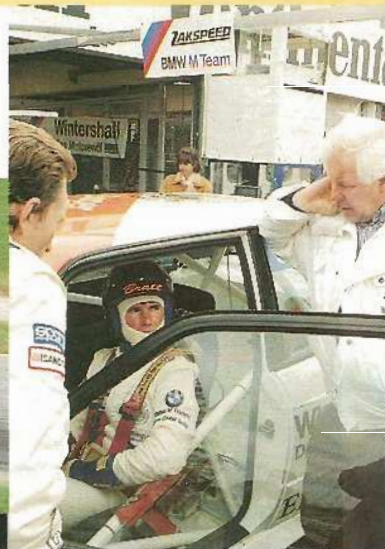
hunted down the wily Eric van de Poele on the very last lap of the Spa 24 Hours to take a brilliant win in a Bigazzi M3. He won it again in '95.

In '92, he also guested in the BTCC in a Vic Lee-run 318iS Coupe and, in an infamous last round run-in with John Cleland, effectively secured the title for team-mate Tim Harvey.

The following year he ran his only full BTCC programme since the disappointments of '83 and was pipped to the title by his team-mate, Jo Winkelhock.

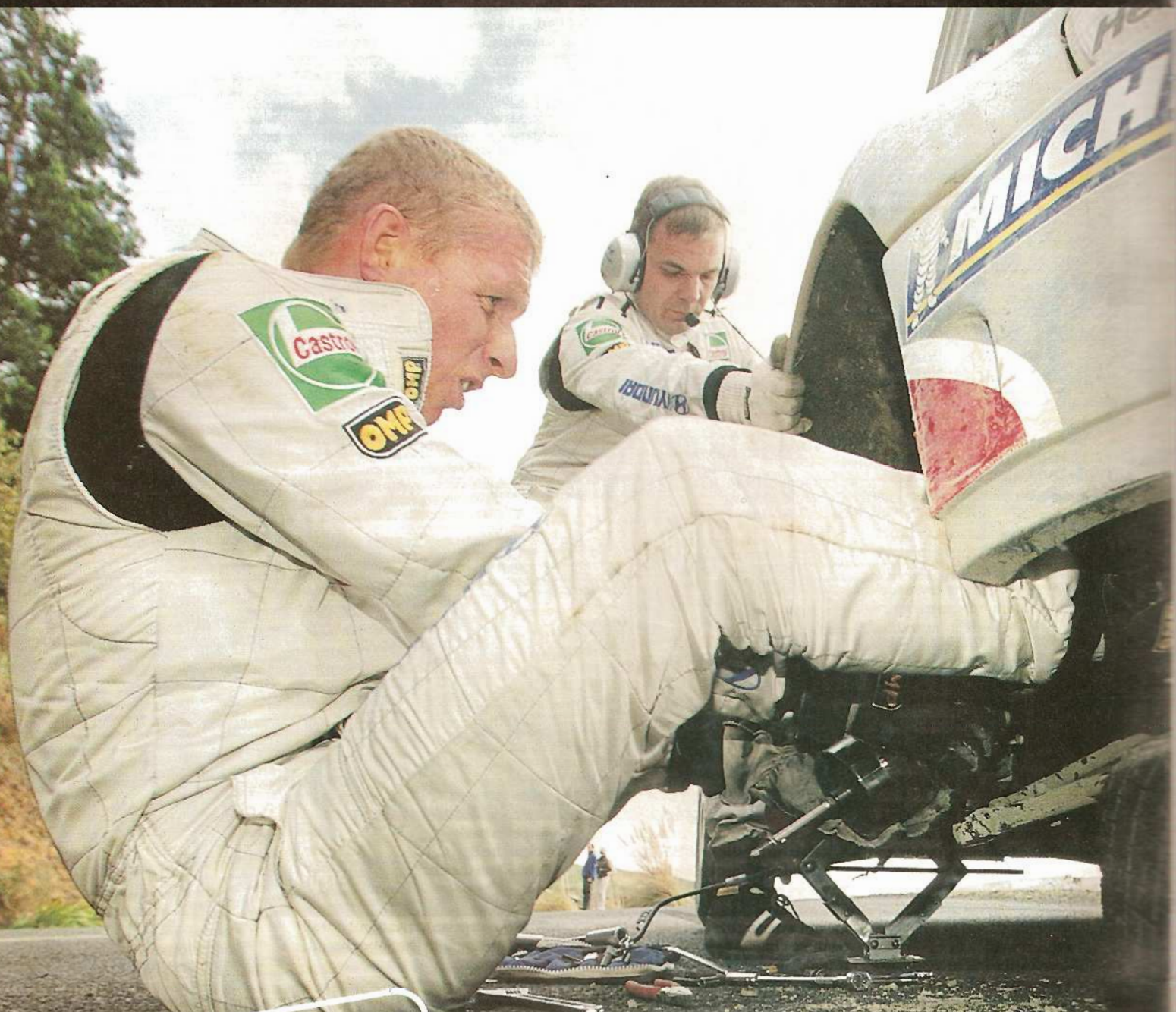
Then in '95, he won his only major touring car championship to date, a title which was taken very much against the odds and fierce local factory opposition in Japan.

With BMW losing interest in touring cars, Soper was soon sitting in sportscars instead. In '97 he was JJ Lehto's partner of choice in the McLaren F1 squad and finished second in the FIA GT Championship. He also stepped back into a touring car again and worked team-mate Winkelhock over on the way to winning the Macau Guia race. Moving into BMW sports prototypes, he was fourth at Le Mans in '99.



In 1990, Soper experienced his first drive for BMW in DTM (top). Before joining the German team, he was a star in European and world touring cars for Ford (above)

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Alister McRae has steadily climbed the timesheets throughout 2000



The saint

Alister McRae has waited a long time for success in world rallying, but is his patience about to pay off?

By **Anthony Peacock**

If patience really is a virtue, then Alister McRae is assured of a place alongside the Pope, Mother Teresa, or any saint you care to mention.

Back in 1995 - by rallying standards a lifetime ago - he won the British championship in a Formula 2 Nissan. His subsequent success on the world series seemed as certain as night following day.

However, it is only now, six years later, that he is contesting the full world championship - minus the Safari Rally, which his Hyundai team has decided to skip. Yet the 30-year-old is not bitter about missed

opportunities. The recent tendency in world motorsport has been to promote extreme youth, but McRae is a long way from thinking that he has been robbed of the best years in his professional life.

"There's no point in feeling, 'If I'd got this drive five years ago, I'd be world champion by now', because you just don't know," says McRae. "You have to look to the future."

The season coming up should give him more reasons to be cheerful than any other. The Hyundai Accent World Rally Car is finally turning into a competitive proposition, despite the fact that the manufacturer currently

has an image about as sexy as that of thermal underwear. There and again, 10 years ago it was only farmers who had heard of Subaru.

The Accent was introduced in Sweden last year, and like any new car had its share of teething troubles. These will happen: it is how a team deals with them that constitutes a real test. From the beginning, Hyundai earned the grudging respect of its rivals by promising little but delivering much, much more. The approach it took is epitomised by its motorhome. The MSD-run team has a six-year-old bus, formerly used as a Honda Touring

Car hospitality unit. The money is spent where it matters - on improving the car.

It is this drip-feed of evolution that has kept McRae with Hyundai for his third straight season. Having mastered the Coupe Formula 2 car, he is looking forward to making the Accent a true world contender.

"The aim is to be in a team that can fight for the championship," he says. "I would love that to be Hyundai if they could do it within the next couple of years."

McRae's patience is not infinite - hence the time limit. He had already been linked to Peugeot or Mitsubishi

KEY PLAYER

A SIGN of how serious Hyundai is about succeeding this year is the arrival of asphalt ace Piero Liatti.

He has been described by McRae as "one of the quickest asphalt drivers there is", and will partner the Scot on all the sealed-surface rounds, as well as running a third car alongside Kenneth Eriksson on selected gravel events.

Italian Liatti won the 1997 Monte Carlo Rally with Subaru, but has been out of a full-time drive since quitting SEAT at the end of '99. He starred on two guest drives for Ford in Corsica and Sanremo last year – where he was the quickest Focus on home soil.

Now he is bringing his experience to Hyundai – and so far he likes what he sees. "It is a very good basic package," Liatti said. "It needs development, but overall the car is good and nicely balanced. It's very easy to drive."

He is not being drawn into any predictions until he has had a chance

to test it further, but he has already identified a couple of key areas which need improvement. "The engine is slightly lacking in power, but that should improve," he said. "I feel very happy, and I'm encouraged by the fact that everybody at Hyundai has a real will to win. I honestly hope they succeed. They deserve it."

McRae is also looking forward to the 38-year-old's arrival. "There's a lot we can all learn from Piero," he said. "To get the chance to measure yourself against someone like him on asphalt is a great opportunity."

As yet, Liatti has not had his gravel programme specified, but he says he will consider staying with the marque in the future. He is a quiet, underrated driver who has been badly treated by some previous employers, yet in the right environment he is one of the quickest in the world. When he speaks, you can tell that the enthusiasm which



Liatti will bolster Hyundai's 2001 effort

deserted him after a couple of barren years has returned, that he likes the Accent more with every kilometre. Hyundai expects, and Liatti will deliver.



Alister McRae has often been touted as faster than his illustrious brother, Colin. Will the Accent give him the chance to prove it?

at the end of last year. However, the Lanark-born star is big enough to admit that his own driving skills have been under development as much as the car over the last year.

"It probably took up until New Zealand last year before I could attack 100%, like I used to do in Formula 2," he says. "When I drove the F2 cars, I never really thought about it – all the time I was as fast as I could go. At the start of last year, I could do it in the World Rally Car now and again, but I would say it did take more events than expected to get up to speed. A lot of this was due to the fact that we retired on a few rallies at the beginning of the year and I didn't get the experience."

In spite of this, the atmosphere at Hyundai is buzzing with optimism. The technical innovations for 2001 include an active transmission system, which has already been successfully tested, and a new engine. The 'Evo 2' car will make its debut in the first half of the season with a host of changes which should help the team take another step up the

mountain to title success.

The active transmission will make a big difference to the performance, as without it you have to run the front and centre differentials tighter than normal. This makes the car prone to understeer on twisty sections of road, which leads to increased tyre wear. The Accent's voracious appetite for Michelins has been a major bugbear this year, and McRae expects next year's car to be much easier to drive consistently over a long stage.

"I hope that by the middle of the year we can consistently fight in the top 10," he adds. "We want to try to get podiums this year."

It is fighting talk, but with an increased level of investment and testing this year there is no reason why it should not happen. As a package, the car is fundamentally good. However, limited budgets last year meant that testing concentrated on making the Accent reliable rather than quick. "Don't forget also that as a team we were all learning together last year," points out McRae. "We've

got some people coming in now who have experience of other top World Rally Cars. Hopefully we can lean on those guys a bit."

When it comes to getting the maximum out of the car, McRae relies only on himself. He says that carrying his famous surname does not affect him, as the only pressure comes from within himself.

"There are obviously a lot of comparisons between myself and

Colin, but it doesn't bother me," he concludes. "When I'm in the same car as him, or in a competitive car capable of winning, that's the only time you can say he is or he isn't faster."

Some people argue that Alister is, essentially, quicker than Colin. That, though, is not an issue to either of them. What is important to both is to never look back on the long road to the top. Even if you do need the patience of a saint to get there. ■



The younger McRae won the British Rally Championship in 1995 with a Nissan Sunny



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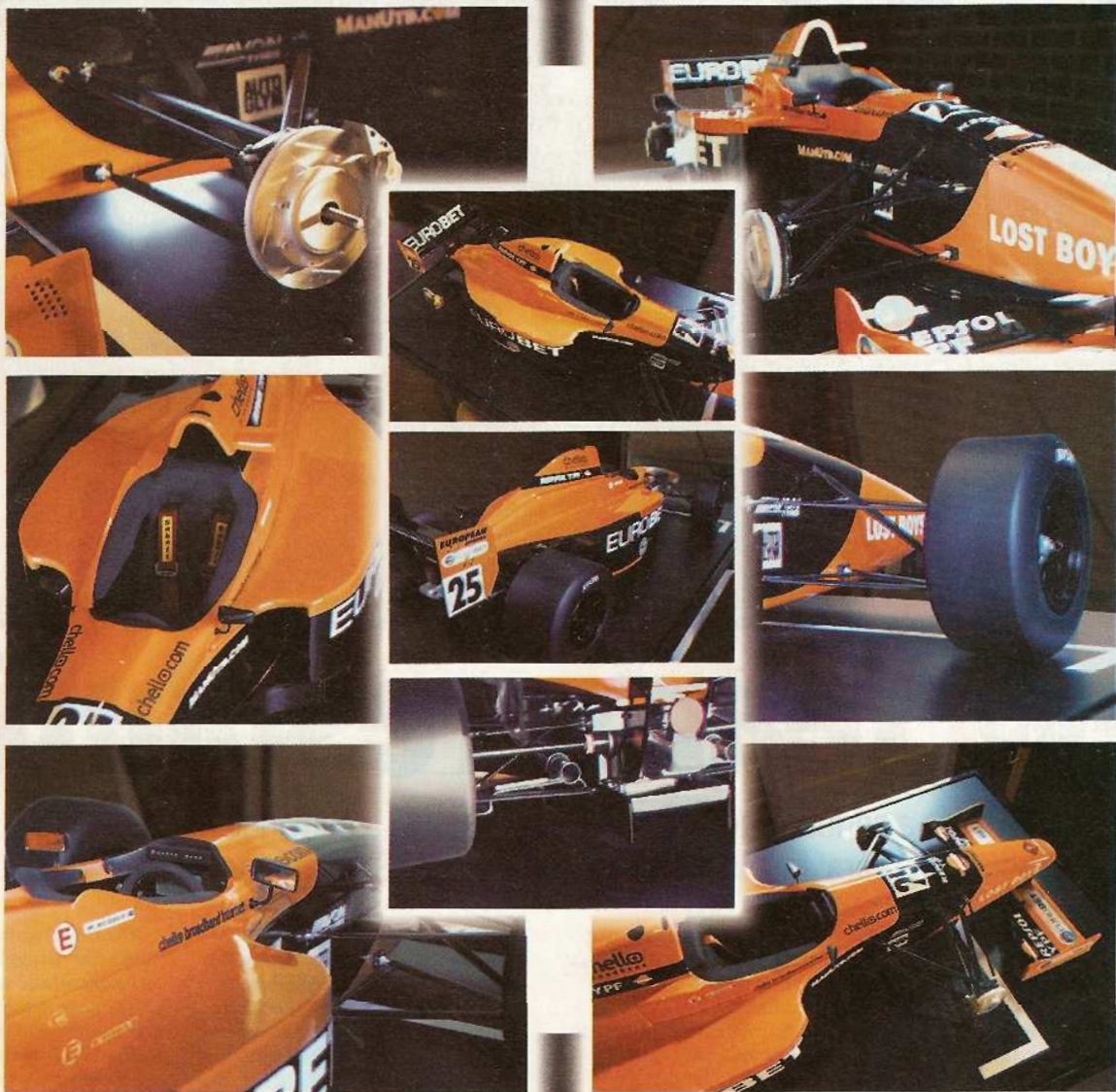
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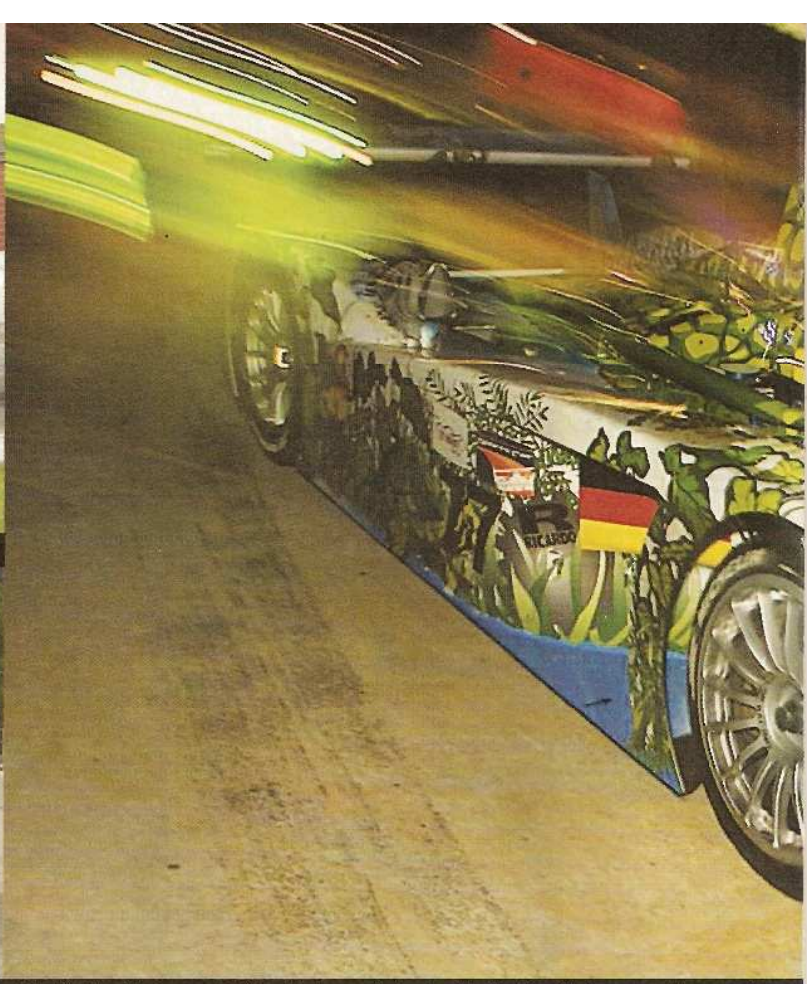
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Franz Konrad on his way to second place in the Lola-Ford, 21 laps behind the winners



McNish, having been outdragged by Biela up the pit straight, pushes to regain the lead



Rinaldo Capello tears out of the pits to regain the lead during the six-hour race down under

New Year's resolution

Allan McNish overcame a serious back complaint to storm to a convincing victory in the New Year's Eve 'Race of a Thousand Years' in Australia and seal the ALMS championship. By **Stuart Codling**

Allan McNish and Rinaldo Capello outclassed and outlasted all their rivals at the New Year's Eve 'Race of a Thousand Years' on the former Grand Prix circuit around the streets of Adelaide, pulling out a massive 21-lap victory margin by the end of the gruelling six-hour enduro.

For McNish, this race was little more than a rubber-stamping exercise: only Capello could overtake him in the championship standings and, with the Italian in the same car, this was highly unlikely – until McNish slipped a disc in his back while removing his kilt one night and was forced to sit out practice and qualifying. Audi called in 1996 Australian Super Touring Champion Brad Jones as a potential substitute and Capello went on to take his fourth pole of the year, ahead of team-mates Emanuele Pirro and Frank Biela.

On race day, the Scot declared himself fit and took the start, only to be outdragged by Biela up the pit straight. But McNish was in pursuit with his usual vigour and slipped by after 17 laps, was 11 seconds ahead as he completed the 25 laps necessary to collect championship points and had almost lapped Biela before he handed

over to Capello. And, by means of a farewell to the ALMS, he got back in as night fell and drove to the end. So much for the bad back.

"After Friday night, when I went to the hospital for an X-ray, I didn't expect to be driving the car," said McNish. "The team doctor prescribed rest and that's what enabled me to complete more than the 25 laps I needed to."

Second place fell to Franz Konrad's Lola-Ford after an extraordinary trail of misfortune befell the seven competitors on the grid that had separated his car from pole. "The team was a little bit down after we had a big crash on Friday," said the sportscar stalwart, "but we fixed the car nicely and in the race we had no problems. It's fantastic for my little team."

First of the others to go was Jan Magnussen in the brand new Panoz LMP. He had joked that he'd be in the pub by 5.30 but was probably hoping to manage more than two race laps before pulling off. The new car has

potential – and, just as important, it sounds good – but needs much more work. Cooling problems limited its running in practice and it qualified fifth, behind the two older Panoz chassis. In the race, its alternator drive broke on the second lap.

Both Panoz Roadster chassis have been sold, but endured such a litany of disaster in the race that the new owners must be sobbing into their soup. David Brabham was, as is his custom, quickest of the non-Audi runners, but was lapped within the first hour. His guest co-drivers, Australian V8 Supercar stars Jason Bright and Greg Murphy, both had big accidents which cost time in the garage and dropped them to ninth overall. The second car developed a long brake pedal which defied repeated attempts to fix, condemning Johnny O'Connell and Hiroki Katoh to 13th overall. Klaus Graf drove the final stint (and had a minor skirmish with the wall) after O'Connell pinched a nerve in his back.

The DAMS team's Cadillac Northstars struggled with understeer all weekend and were four seconds off the pace in practice. Mimmo Schiattarella had to qualify the Rafanelli Lola with a broken differential and was only a second slower than the R&S-built chassis. Both DAMS entries took an early bath, the Christophe Tinseau/Marc Goossens car due to a blown engine and the Emmanuel Collard/Eric Bernard one with broken steering.

Emanuele Pirro, pushing hard to keep up with Capello, shunted the second Audi just inside the three-hour mark. He understeered into the wall on the off-camber Banana Bend while lapping Konrad and left the damaged R8 parked for 50 minutes before limping it back to the pits for repairs. Given the rate of attrition in the prototype field, it still had a chance of making the podium.

Last out, tragically, was the Rafanelli Lola. Bar a brief scare when Norman Simon lost a wheel, it looked like the Judd-powered chassis was headed for its first podium since Charlotte. Didier de Radigues was running a comfortable second, several laps ahead of the third-placed Konrad, when it stopped out on the line just 45 minutes from the chequered flag. ■

"After I went to hospital for an X-ray, I didn't expect to be driving the car"

ALLAN McNISH

GTS/GT CLASSES

ORECA'S Olivier Beretta, Karl Wendlinger and Dominique Dupuy had a largely trouble-free run to victory – and third place overall – in the factory Viper's last outing. Their only challenge came from team-mates Ni Amorim and Jean-Phillippe Belloc, who lost out when they made an unscheduled pit stop to clear leaves from the Viper's radiator. Third fell to the Chamberlain Viper, piloted by Stephen Watson, Milka Duno and local driver Ray Lintott.

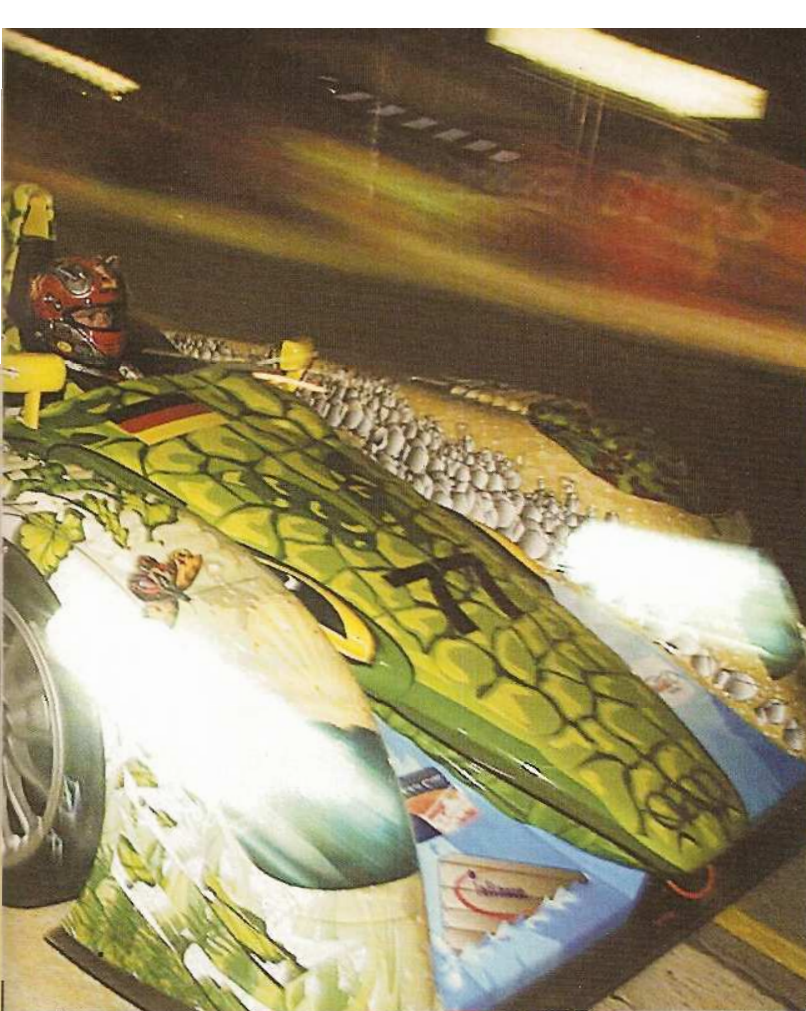
The GT class played host to a thrilling scrap between the Dick Barbour Porsches of Lucas Luhr and Sascha Maassen and the PTG BMW M3 of Bill Auberlen. The American hounded them mercilessly in his opening stint before handing over to Brian Cunningham, who had a misunderstanding with Pirro at the chicane and broke a half-shaft jumping the kerb. Maassen and Bob Wollek later dropped out of contention with gear selection problems, allowing

Randy Pobst (still in with a mathematical shot at the championship) into second.

This potentially interesting development came to nought when Pobst's alternator failed. British pairing Johnny Mowlem and Richard Dean also hit alternator problems – theirs fell out after they had worked the Skea Porsche up to third at mid-distance.

Luhr and Dirk Muller held on to win, handing a tearful Muller sufficient points to claim the drivers' championship. Barbour's pay-driver entry, crewed by Randy Wars, John Graham and Christian Menzel, took second place from the PTG BMW of Anthony Lazzaro and a dehydrated Terry Borcheller.

The last classified finisher was Kye Wankum's privateer Porsche outfit, who were lucky even to start because their supply of Pirellis did not turn up. They eventually managed to scrounge some rock-hard rubber destined for the Ferrari Challenge.



Greg Murphy's accident cost time in the garage and dropped his Panoz Roadster to ninth

Dirk Muller held on to win the GT class, helping him take the championship crown

RESULTS

December 31, American Le Mans Series, Adelaide (AUS), round 12 of 12, 225 laps – 531 miles

Pos	Driver (Nationality)	Team	Class	Car	Time	Best lap	Qualified
1	Rinaldo Capello (I)/Allan McNish (GB)	Joest Audi Sport	LMP	Audi R8	5h45m41.328s	1m25.21s	1
2	Franz Konrad (D)/Charlie Slater (US)/Alan Heath (AUS)	Konrad Motorsports	LMP	Lola-Ford B2K/10	- 21 laps	1m33.54s	9
3	Olivier Beretta (MC)/Karl Wendlinger (A)/Dominique Dupuy (F)	ORECA	GTS	Chrysler Viper GTS-R	- 23 laps	1m36.38s	10
4	Jean-Phillippe Belloc (F)/Ni Amorim (P)	ORECA	GTS	Chrysler Viper GTS-R	- 23 laps	1m35.52s	11
5	Dirk Muller (D)/Lucas Luhr (D)	Dick Barbour Racing	GT	Porsche 911 GT3-R	- 26 laps	1m36.85s	13
6	Randy Wars (MEX)/John Graham (CAN)/Christian Menzel (D)	Dick Barbour Racing	GT	Porsche 911 GT3-R	- 34 laps	1m39.14s	19
7	Terry Borcheller (US)/Anthony Lazzaro (US)	PTG	GT	BMW M3 E46	- 34 laps	1m37.78s	17
8	Milka Duno (V)/Stephen Watson (ZA)/Ray Lintott (AUS)	Chamberlain Motorsport	GTS	Chrysler Viper GTS-R	- 35 laps	1m36.72s	12
9	David Brabham (AUS)/Greg Murphy (NZ)/Jason Bright (AUS)	Panoz Motorsports	LMP	Panoz LMP-1 Roadster S	- 35 laps	1m26.53s	3
10	Brian Cunningham (US)/Niclas Jonsson (S)/Bill Auberlen (US)	PTG	GT	BMW M3 E46	- 35 laps	1m37.25s	16
11	Robert Orcutt (US)/Darren Palmer (AUS)/Christian D'Agostin (AUS)	The Racers' Group	GT	Porsche 911 GT3-R	- 37 laps	1m41.29s	25
12	Patrick Vuillaume (F)/Manfred Jurasz (A)/Francesco Gutierrez (E)	Haberthur Racing	GT	Porsche 911 GT3-R	- 38 laps	1m41.18s	21
13	Klaus Graf (D)/Johnny O'Connell (US)/Hiroki Katoh (J)	Panoz Motorsports	LMP	Panoz LMP-1 Roadster S	- 38 laps	1m27.97s	4
14	Mimmo Schiattarella (I)/Didier de Radigues (B)/Norman Simon (D)	Team Rafanelli	LMP	Lola-Judd B2K/10	- 42 laps	1m28.14s	8
15	Mike Fitzgerald (US)/Michael Petersen (US)/Randy Pobst (US)	White Lightning Racing	GT	Porsche 911 GT3-R	- 47 laps	1m38.46s	18
16	Emanuele Pirro (I)/Frank Biela (D)	Joest Audi Sport	LMP	Audi R8	- 55 laps	1m25.52s	2
17	Johnny Mowlem (GB)/Richard Dean (GB)	Skea Racing International	GT	Porsche 911 GT3-R	- 61 laps	1m40.79s	22
18	Sascha Maassen (D)/Bob Wollek (F)	Dick Barbour Racing	GT	Porsche 911 GT3-R	- 63 laps	1m37.70s	14
19	Kye Wankum (CAN)/Joe Foster (US)/Jeff Pabst (CAN)	Kyser Racing	GT	Porsche 911 GT3-R	- 66 laps	1m42.16s	24
R	Emmanuel Collard (F)/Eric Bernard (F)	DAMS	LMP	Cadillac Northstar LMP	72 laps	1m29.05s	6
R	Christophe Tinseau (F)/Marc Goossens (B)	DAMS	LMP	Cadillac Northstar LMP	54 laps	1m29.53s	7
R	Rohan Skea (AUS)/Doc Bundy (US)/Des Wall (AUS)	Skea Racing International	GT	Porsche 911 GT3-R	53 laps	1m41.05s	23
R	Hans Stuck (A)/Boris Said (US)/Johannes van Overbeek (US)	PTG	GT	BMW M3 E46	30 laps	1m30.00s	10
R	Jan Magnussen (DK)/Klaus Graf (D)	Panoz Motorsports	LMP	Panoz Roadster 2001	2 laps	1m28.75s	5

Fastest lap McNish, 1m25.21s

Audi enjoyed a near-perfect year of sportscar racing as it stepped up to a full endurance racing programme for the first time with its heavily revised R8 design and swept all before it.

The German marque's jewel in the crown was the crushing one-two-three whitewash in the Le Mans 24 Hours, but the dominance of the Joest-run R8 also provided Allan McNish the chance to shoot his star into orbit with a phenomenal season.

It seemed the Scot could do no wrong in a year when he not only lifted the American Le Mans Series crown but also received worldwide acclaim as the best man in sportscar racing and the biggest prize of all - a chance to get his break in Grand Prix racing with a Toyota Formula 1 testing contract for 2001.

Victory at La Sarthe was one triumph that did elude McNish as Audi stalwarts Emanuele Pirro and Frank Biela, along with Danish ace Tom Kristensen, followed up their Sebring 12 Hours win by landing first place in 'the big one'. But this defeat seemed to spur Audi's new-boy to even greater levels of commitment in the ALMS itself, as he and Italian co-driver Rinaldo Capello turned the tables on their team-mates to utterly dominate the second half of the 12-round US-based championship.

In the last eight events, the duo took seven pole positions and won six races - although all were hard fought - as the R8 came into its own. Capello played his part, without doubt. Under McNish's tutelage, he improved hugely in his first full sportscar campaign, took three poles in his own right and began to lose the cautious edge that marked some of his early-season performances. But the Scot was immense, his leadership and force of character turning their season around, sparked by a mesmeric display of driving in round five at

Scotland's Allan McNish was in a class of his own during the ALMS 2000 season



Debutant has



Rinaldo Capello (left) and McNish celebrate victory at Sears Point - a season turning point. The talented Emanuele Pirro was overshadowed by Audi rival McNish for most of the season.



a ball

Audi's first ever full endurance racing programme with the new R8 produced a fairytale season as the German marque dominated the American Le Mans Series, with Allan McNish proving his worth as the number one sportscar driver. By **Tim Scott**



The pits: pitstop strategy was to be a crucial factor in the successes of BMW and Schnitzer.



David Brabham, one of the stars of 2000, on his way to his only victory at the Nürburgring

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In the red: Jan Magnussen leads the grid into the first corner at Laguna Seca. The Dane finished eighth in the championship standings

◀ Sears Point when he lapped the entire field - Pirro included. Time and again he made decisive breaks or comebacks, with his drives at Texas, Portland and Petit Le Mans also sticking in the memory.

There's no doubt that the R8 was the class of field against the year-old opposition machinery fielded by the factory Panoz and BMW teams - that much was plain as the two R8s dominated the Sebring event on their race debut. But McNish always made the most of it, except in the wet at the Nürburgring when he uncharacteristically spun three times as he tried to make up for lost ground.

There's no doubting that Pirro and Biela suffered from not having McNish's previous knowledge of the US circuits, but they also definitely lost the psychological battle against the other Audi pairing. Winning Sebring and Le Mans put them on a high but they were knocked back by McNish's Sears performance. Then they lost what would have been a certain victory as Pirro was catching Capello at Mosport when he had an unavoidable collision with a backmarker Porsche, after which he showed commendable magnanimity. Then they lucked into their second win of the year at Texas when Capello's radio broke and did not pit under a crucial yellow flag ▶

AUTOSPORT'S TOP 10

1 Allan McNish



Hailed from all quarters as the best sportscar driver in the world. He had the best car,

but made the most of it. Combined unmatched speed and consistency with unrelenting determination to take first international title.

2 David Brabham



No one pushed the Audis harder than the gritty Aussie, and he regularly made

the ageing Panoz go at unreasonable speeds. Intelligent and a natural leader, he motivated the team and his team-mate.

3 JJ Lehto



Clearly did not have the machinery to match the very best but drove beautifully all

the same and remained upbeat and his cheerful self. To see him consigned to a GT car this year will be enough to make you weep.

4 Emanuele Pirro



Not the Italian's best season ever as he had to cede to McNish's ultimate pace,

but still showed himself a top-line professional. New to all the US circuits, but wins at both Sebring and Le Mans were highlights.

5 Jan Magnussen



Truly came of age as a sportscar driver this season, raising his game as he

stepped into the lead Panoz. Made a few mistakes, but to see him in full flight, chucking the car around, was something to behold.

SPEED	10
RACECRAFT	9
CONSISTENCY	10
TOTAL	29

SPEED	9
RACECRAFT	9
CONSISTENCY	10
TOTAL	28

SPEED	10
RACECRAFT	9
CONSISTENCY	9
TOTAL	28

SPEED	8
RACECRAFT	9
CONSISTENCY	8
TOTAL	25

SPEED	9
RACECRAFT	8
CONSISTENCY	7
TOTAL	24

6 Rinaldo Capello



Established himself as a world-class sportscar driver, not just supporting

team-mate McNish but also very quick in his own right. A little cautious in early season, but confidence grew all the time.

7 Jorg Muller



Strong year in which he matched Lehto for pace and skill, despite F1 commitments

elsewhere, which does him great credit. Sometimes over aggressive in traffic but had to be to make up for car's deficiencies.

8 Frank Biela



Had moments of brilliant pace throughout 2000, such as at Sebring and Mosport, but,

unfortunately, more often than not he lost out to Capello in qualifying. But remember it was only his first full year of sportscars.

9 Mimmo Schiattarella



Red blooded and fiery behind the wheel, he enhanced his reputation as

an extremely quick sportscar driver. His pole position lap at Silverstone was a highlight of the year - elsewhere wrung the Lola's neck.

10 Stefan Johansson



The final spot a toss up between Johansson and his young team-mate, Guy Smith.

They were evenly matched for pace, but the experienced Swede led the Reynard development with typical fortitude and good humour.

SPEED	9
RACECRAFT	7
CONSISTENCY	7
TOTAL	23

SPEED	8
RACECRAFT	7
CONSISTENCY	8
TOTAL	23

SPEED	8
RACECRAFT	8
CONSISTENCY	7
TOTAL	23

SPEED	8
RACECRAFT	7
CONSISTENCY	6
TOTAL	21

SPEED	7
RACECRAFT	7
CONSISTENCY	7
TOTAL	21



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Jean-Marc Gounon holds the advantage over the two DAMS Caddys at the Nürburgring

◀ period, but the flags and luck went against them at both Portland and Road Atlanta. Forced by team orders to follow McNish home at Laguna Seca for Audi's fifth one-two of the year, Pirro knew that their title challenge was effectively over – their third win in the penultimate race at Las Vegas was little consolation. Both were very quick all year but they could rarely match McNish on race pace.

McNish ended up as the sole champion because he scored more bonus points for fastest laps and leading races than team-mate Capello, but the vagaries of the ALMS points system was one of the factors that meant the title was only finally decided at the season's last round on New Year's Eve around the streets of Adelaide – when McNish overcame back pain to win on his Audi farewell before his move into F1.

With all top six positions heavily rewarded in the points stakes, it took McNish until round nine at Road Atlanta to finally overhaul the series lead of Schnitzer BMW stars Jorg Muller and JJ Lehto.

The Munich marque's car, the Le Mans winner in '99, proved very hard to balance all year but, with both driving on the ragged edge all the time and the Schnitzer team doing wonders with its pit work and strategy, they put together a string of six straight podium finishes that kept them ahead of the Audis.

They had based their lead on two brilliant victories at Charlotte and Silverstone when Joest was running its

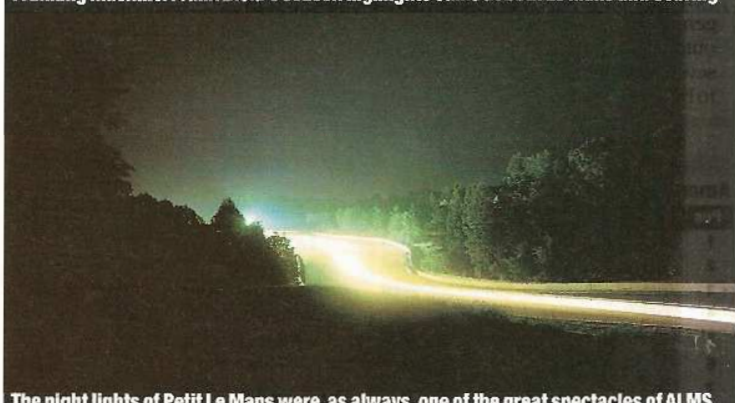
'99-spec Audi R8Rs as the new cars were saved for Le Mans, and struggled to match the BMWs and Panoz cars. Two wins slipped through their fingers, at Mosport, when Muller came second to Capello in the closest-ever competitive sportscar finish, and at the Nürburgring, when a slow puncture intervened in the closing stages, and they were left to rue their bad luck. Eventually Muller lost the points lead with an uncharacteristic mistake while in second place at Petit Le Mans, but it would have been a miracle if they had held their points advantage to the bitter end.

The second BMW of Jean-Marc Gounon and Bill Auberlen had a disappointing year as they were too erratic to regularly match their sister car. Gounon shone at Texas and Las Vegas to head Lehto, but the Frenchman tarnished his excellent reputation with rushes of blood at Portland, when he held up the pack while 17 laps down, and Laguna Seca, when he hit McNish off the road. Luck also went against them, although Auberlen counted his lucky stars when he stepped away virtually unharmed after flipping at Road Atlanta.

The lead Panoz duo of David Brabham and Jan Magnussen were surely the unluckiest of the lot during the year to only come away with one victory, at the Nürburgring. Brabham was excellent, as always, and, as Magnussen came of age as a sportscar driver, they formed a powerful partnership that got everything out of their car. Panoz race director ▶



Franking machine: Frank Biela's season highlights came at both Le Mans and Sebring



The night lights of Petit Le Mans were, as always, one of the great spectacles of ALMS



Office Mimmo: Lola's Mimmo Schiattarella had a good day at the office with pole at Silverstone.



To the max: Max Angelelli in the Cadillac – sadly the car couldn't match other factory cars

GTS CLASS

JUST for a moment it looked like the ORECA team's all-conquering Chrysler Viper had met its match. The truck-engined muscle car may have been unbeaten since its American Le Mans Series debut halfway through 1999, but the arrival of the definitive 2000-spec Chevrolet Corvette at Mosport in August looked as though it might halt the Viper steamroller.

The solo 'Vette C5-R should have claimed GTS class honours at the Canadian track and would have won but for a botched pitstop and the unsuitability of its Goodyear wet-weather tyres on a drying track. It

turned out to be a false dawn. The Chevy never looked as strong again, though it did sneak a couple of wins, at least one against the run of play.

ORECA had things more or less all its own way in 2000. So much so that its two pairs of regular drivers filled out the top four positions right through the season. Ahead from the start was the number one pairing of Olivier Beretta and Karl Wendlinger, joint winners of the previous year's FIA GT Championship. They notched up no fewer than nine class victories to the two of American team-mates Tommy Archer and David Donohue.



Beretta and Wendlinger dominated GTS

Fittingly, the final accolade in the Viper's five-year career as factory-entered race went to Beretta, who has notched up more than 30 victories with the GTS-R. The Monegasque retained the ALMS GTS crown by dint of

recording a greater number of fastest laps than his Austrian co-driver.

Chevrolet didn't take in a full ALMS programme, entering at least one 'Vette in half the races. The C5-R may have missed out on maiden victory at Mosport by 0.3 seconds, but didn't wait long before winning.

Ron Fellows and Andy Pilgrim triumphed in the Texas heat when a broken driver-cooling system hampered Wendlinger and Beretta. Ex-pat Brit Pilgrim pulled off the move of the season on Archer to chalk up win number two, only after the number one Viper had lost four laps in the pits. **GW**

GT CLASS

A FAMOUS name from the annals of sportscar racing returned to the scene after a 20-year hiatus, and promptly took up where it left off. Dick Barbour's re-formed Porsche squad made a winning debut in the American Le Mans Series at Sebring in February, exactly two decades after his overall victory in the 12 Hours.

The team's dominance of the series opener proved a taster of what was to come. Dick Barbour Racing was the class act in the GT division, winning nine of the 12 rounds. To be fair, it was no contest. The Road Atlanta-based squad enjoyed semi-factory status, had the fastest drivers and its 911 GT3-Rs were among the best-presented cars anywhere on the grid.



Barbour's Porsches were the class act

After the team won the first five races on the trot, it wasn't a case of if Barbour was going to win the class title, it was a question of which of its drivers would do so. Porsche juniors Dirk Muller and Lucas Luhr were well ahead by mid-season, but a series of mishaps handed the initiative to the not-quite-so-junior Sascha Maassen and the positively-senior Bob Wollek.

The difference between the two cars as the series headed for its Australian finale was a run of four clashes with prototype machinery for the Muller-Luhr entry. The dropped score rule meant the title remained wide open, but it was decided in favour of the early-season pace-setting car when gear-selection problems hit the team's sister Porsche. Muller easily claimed the title ahead of Luhr under the eccentric ALMS points system, but deservedly so given his tally of eight fastest laps.

The Alex Job Racing Porsche squad briefly looked as though it might take the fight to Barbour during a mid-season purple patch that yielded two wins for Randy Pobst and Bruno Lambert. The Prototype Technology

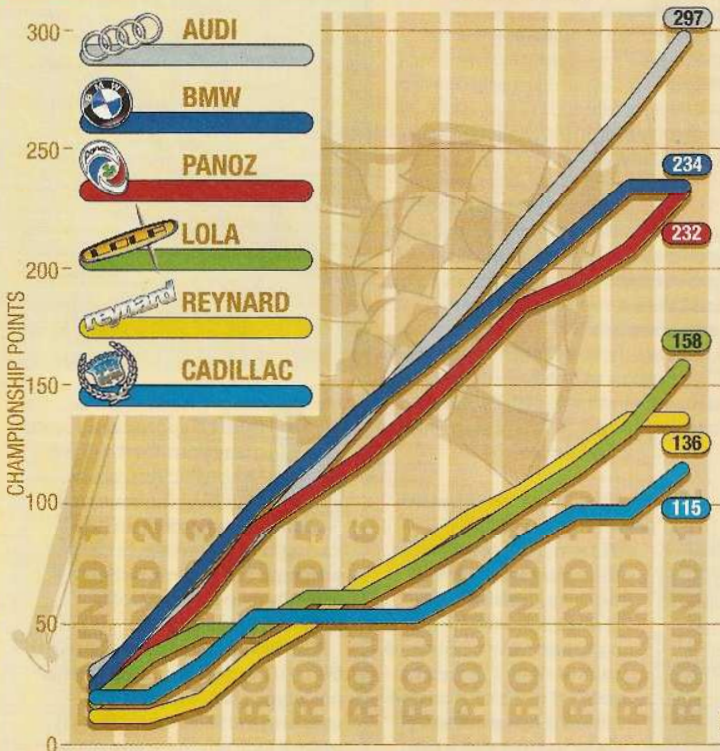
Group's ever-improving E46-shape BMW M3 took a solo victory at Laguna and won on the road at Sears before being disqualified on a technicality.

Britain's Johnny Mowlem, meanwhile, had an encouraging first full year at this level, justifying his claims for a prototype drive in 2001. **GW**



The new BMW M3 won a single race

CONSTRUCTION WINNERS



WINS AND POLES

Driver	Race Wins	Pole Positions
Allan McNish	6	4
Rinaldo Capello	6	4
Frank Biela	3	2
Emanuele Pirro	3	0
JJ Lehto	2	1
Jorg Müller	2	0
David Brabham	1	0
Jan Magnussen	1	0
Michele Alboreto	1	0
Tom Kristensen	1	0
Mimmo Schiattarella	1	1

SUPERGRID - AVERAGE QUALIFYING POSITION

- 1 McNish/Capello 1.83
- 2 Biela/Pirro 2.58
- 3 Brabham/M'ssen 2.66
- 4 Lehto/Muller 4.25
- 5 O'Connell/Katoh 4.66
- 6 Sch'lla/de R'gues 5.73
- 7 Gounon/Auberlen 6.08
- 8 Jo'sson/Smith 7.90

ALMS campaign with James Weaver as it put a Porsche engine into a B2K/10, but the combination was never truly sorted and it only entered two rounds. Konrad Motorsport arrived in the US for the last few rounds but its great moment came in the Adelaide finale when its car kept going to take a shock second place overall.

Cadillac's programme was based around Le Mans but the factory R&S and DAMS teams gave it a presence in seven races. DAMS proved the quicker of the two teams when they ran together but, despite superb driver line-ups, the R&S-built car was not in the same league as the other factory machines. While reliable, it could not match the pace of the top privateers and the US giant is returning to the drawing board. ■



Only the ALMS points system halted Rinaldo Capello from becoming joint champion



TELL IT LIKE IT IS

March 18 "You can't ask for more on a debut. The R8s have been very competitive all weekend. Le Mans is so different, a different kind of track. But then again, the Sebring winner last year won Le Mans, so you never know."

Audi's motorsport boss, Dr Wolfgang Ullrich, turns soothsayer after the R8s' dominant one-two finish at Sebring on its debut as a prelude to dominating Le Mans.



Audi win at Sebring

April 1 "I told Gabrielle Rafanelli to get his car out of the way because it was a lap down and he just told me to f*** off."

Italian team boss Rafanelli causes a storm by claiming his Lola is on the lead lap at Charlotte. It fends off David Brabham's Panoz as it chases Muller's winning BMW, much to the chagrin of Panoz's motorsport director, Dave Price.

May 13 "The BMW wasn't the best car today, but we optimised it and JJ and Jorg drove beautifully."

Schnitzer boss Charly Lamm tries to explain how Lehto and Muller came through to win a scintillating Silverstone race despite the car struggling for speed all weekend.

July 23 "To go off three times and not finish [at the wet Nürburgring] was a bit embarrassing. The objective here was to get a score on the board."

A fired up Allan McNish explains his motivation behind a mesmeric performance at Sears Point, where he scores his first ALMS victory after lapping the entire field during his stint behind the wheel.

July 23 "At the moment, I can't think of anyone who is better than Allan McNish in a sportscar. David Brabham is good, but I'd put Allan a little bit ahead of him. He keeps on surprising me. He's not just a fast driver, he also works with the team."

Joest Audi Sport's experienced chief engineer, Ralf Juttner, is

quite clear about who is the best around after McNish destroys the field at Sears.

August 6 "The last few laps were a nightmare for me. I had to take a lot of risks in the last couple of corners. I drove as if I was on slicks."

Italian Dindo Capello reflects on his nail-biting victory at Mosport as his wet-shod Audi just about



Closest ever sportscar finish

manages to hold off Jorg Muller's BMW over the line to win in Canada with the closest ever competitive sportscar finish.

August 6 "Manufacturers need to understand that, if they want to have a strong platform, they can't do it without privateers. We're looking at change, although we haven't bashed out the details yet."

ALMS boss Don Panoz (at Mosport) outlines plans to boost prototype numbers in 2001 by insisting that manufacturers supply equal equipment to privateer teams.

September 2 "This year the ALMS and Audi are my priority and my testing with Toyota fits in around that. Next year, everything switches around and Toyota is my main programme."

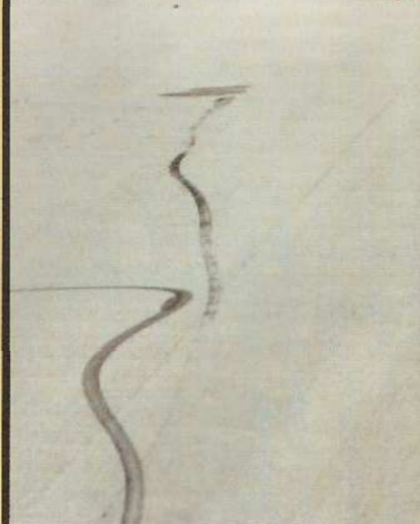
Allan McNish explains to the world that the sniff of a Grand Prix race seat through his Toyota F1 testing contract will take preference in 2001 - he'll likely only race in the Daytona 24 Hours this year.

September 10 "You've got 25 cars out there trying to put on a good show. We've been hit by prototypes seven times in the last three races and that's unacceptable."

Leading GT class Porsche team boss Dick Barbour slams the prototype drivers for the spate of backmarker bashing that reached a crisis point by early autumn.

September 30 "I could feel the air was different. My head was pulled forward by the vacuum [behind the Rafanelli Lola], then my visor flew open and up and over I went. I got out quick because I felt I'd spent enough time in that car - but, hey, these things can happen."

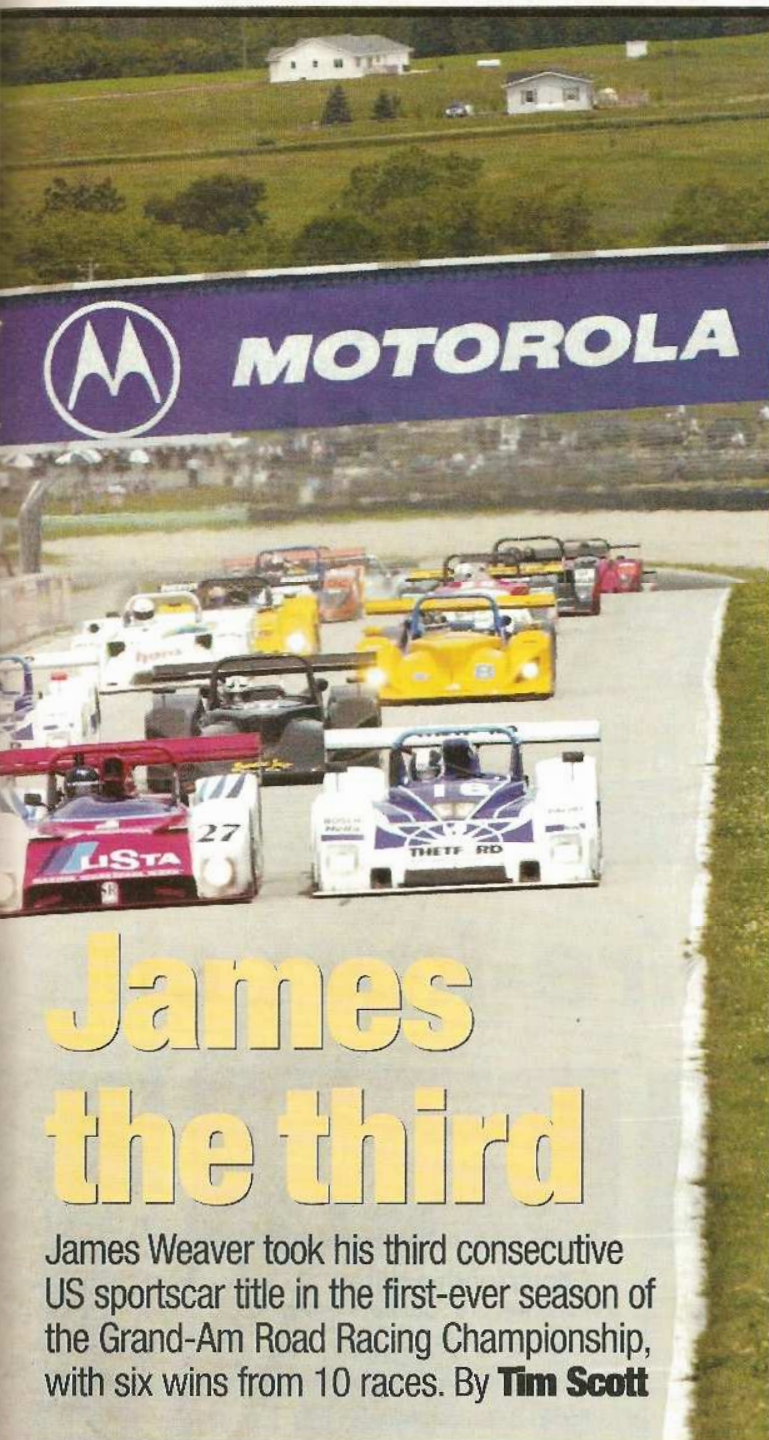
The ice cool works BMW driver Bill Auberlen explains how his car flipped backwards through 360 degrees as it crested the back straight at Road Atlanta.



James Weaver won his third US sportscar title in as many years for the crack Dyson Racing team by clinching the inaugural Grand-American Road Racing Championship, but he had to wait until the finale at Watkins Glen to finally reap the spoils of a hard-fought season.

The Briton's final tally of six wins from 10 races (which includes his prototype class-winning fourth overall in the Daytona 24 Hours) make it look an easy season for an established sportscar ace like Weaver, but in truth it was closer than it seemed.

The combination of Weaver, his venerable Riley & Scott-Ford and a string of different regular Dyson frontline co-drivers, such as Andy



James the third

James Weaver took his third consecutive US sportscar title in the first-ever season of the Grand-Am Road Racing Championship, with six wins from 10 races. By **Tim Scott**

Wallace and Butch Leitzinger, was usually the fastest in the series. But several other strong US privateer squads were tempted away from the factory-dominated American Le Mans Series to join Grand-Am's new initiative and give Dyson some truly strong opposition.

Foremost was Belgian star Didier Theys in the Doran Enterprises Ferrari 333SP, which it fitted with the highly-successful Judd V10 instead of the original Maranello V12 unit, and the similarly-powered Robinson R&S led by US veteran Jack Baldwin.

Although none of this machinery was particularly state-of-the-art, there was a lot to be said for opting for one of the two chassis that have been the mainstays of US endurance racing for the past six years. All three of these teams had actually ordered the new

Reynard chassis, but eschewed it in favour of their original mounts after disappointing early tests.

The older cars duly proved more than enough to see off the challenge of the new Lola B2K/10 of capable owner/drivers Jon Field and Scott Schubot (in both of which Oliver Gavin shone as he took his first leap



The first season of the Grand-Am championships saw packed grids (left) and another Brit, James Weaver (above), was the one to dominate the inaugural season of this sportscar series

into sportscar racing). This was partly due to teams knowing the spot-on set-up through years of practice and partly because the Grand-Am technical rules were manipulated in such a way as to ensure older cars remained competitive.

The rule setters did cause some annoyance among teams by also setting different restrictors for the various chassis/engine combinations. For example, the V12 Ferrari 333SP run by the extremely competent Risi team, never even managed a win despite its highly-talented pairing of Mimmo Schiattarella and Ralf Kelleners wringing its neck everywhere.

Indeed, the Judd proved the engine to have, not just because of its speed, but also its fuel efficiency, and this latter fact brought a win apiece for the Robinson (Phoenix) and Doran (Road America) teams. But there was also plenty of life in the good old stockblock Ford V8, as Dyson's pace proved – indeed, Weaver was unlucky not to do even better in the series. The Englishman and his various team-mates could have won nearly all the races but for better reliability.

At the Daytona 24 Hours, a clear lead became fourth due to engine trouble, allowing the ORECA Chrysler Viper to take victory. At the next race in Phoenix, Weaver handed Wallace the lead only for a puncture to drop them to third. At Homestead, Mid-Ohio and Road America there was mechanical failures that cost wins, but neither the Doran nor Robinson cars quite had the consistency to

take full advantage of this.

In all, there were 11 regular SR1 prototype class entries, a good number for a nascent series. Grand-Am, set up with the backing of the NASCAR ruling family, has the resources to continue on its plan, and seems likely to keep the majority of its teams in the series for 2001.

Its grids were usually full thanks to adding in a mix of other classes behind the leading prototypes. In mirroring the foundations of the SportsRacing World Cup, Grand-Am also introduced the SR11 Lights category into American sportscar racing, with encouraging results. It caught on quickly, with almost everyone opting for the Lola's rapid new B2K/40, it was the Archangel Motorsports car of Larry Oberto and US F2000 graduate Ryan Hampton, who proved the best to win the title commandingly from the surprising Kudzu Mazda of Dennis Spencer.

The Saleen Mustang of Terry Borcheller and Ron Johnson utterly dominated the GTO class section, while the numerically-strong GTU section was the preserve of the lead G&W Motorsport Porsche 911 GT3R.

“The Judd proved the engine to have through its speed and fuel efficiency”



John Field in the Intersport Lola – a rare new car in the Grand-Am series

GRAND AM-OVERALL STANDINGS

Pos	Name (nat)	Team chassis/engine	Pts	Wins
1	James Weaver (GB)	Dyson R&S-Ford	334	(6)
2	Didier Theys (B)	Doran Ferrari-Judd	304	(2)
3	Jack Baldwin (US)	Robinson R&S-Judd	301	(2)
4	Mimmo Schiattarella (I)	Risi Ferrari	285	
5	Elliot F-Robinson (US)	Dyson R&S-Ford	284	(1)
6	Andy Wallace (GB)	Dyson R&S-Ford	268	(3)
7	George Robinson (US)	Robinson R&S-Judd	266	(1)
8	Ralf Kelleners (D)	Risi Ferrari	262	
9	Jon Field (US)	Intersport Lola	254	
10	Butch Leitzinger (US)	Creighton Lola/Dyson	230	(4)

Pro-Karts



70mph twin Pro-Karts

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Pro-Kart Grand Prix League

An 8-round championship for individuals

League dates:
(all dates are Wednesdays)

- Round 1 ● 21st March
- Round 2 ● 25th April
- Round 3 ● 23rd May
- Round 4 ● 20th June
- Round 5 ● 18th July
- Round 6 ● 22nd August
- Round 7 ● 19th September
- Round 8 ● 24th October

Race day itinerary:

- 5:30pm Arrival and registration
- 6pm Safety briefing
- 6:30pm Timed qualifying
- 7pm Three point scoring qualification heats per driver
- 9pm Final for top drivers
- 9:45pm Presentation ceremony

Cost per round:

£65 per kart (incl. pers. accident insurance)

- Best 6 rounds count towards championship -

'Iron Man' 1-hour Pro-Kart Enduro

A 12-round championship for individuals with stamina

Championship dates:
(all dates are Sundays except R.9)

- Round 1 ● 18th March
- Round 2 ● 15th April
- Round 3 ● 6th May
- Round 4 ● 20th May
- Round 5 ● 3rd June
- Round 6 ● 17th June
- Round 7 ● 1st July
- Round 8 ● 15th July
- Round 9 ● 4th August (Sat.)
- Round 10 ● 2nd September
- Round 11 ● 16th September
- Round 12 ● 21st October

Race day itinerary:

- 5pm Arrival and registration
- 5:30pm Safety briefing
- 6:15pm Timed qualifying
- 6:30pm 1-hour individual enduro
- 7:50pm Presentation ceremony

Cost per round:

£95 per kart (incl. pers. accident insurance)

- Best 10 races count towards championship -

3-hour Pro-Kart Team Enduro

A 10-round championship for teams of 2-5 drivers (recommended)

Championship dates:
(all dates are Saturdays except R.6)

- Round 1 ● 3rd March
- Round 2 ● 7th April
- Round 3 ● 5th May
- Round 4 ● 26th May
- Round 5 ● 23rd June
- Round 6 ● 8th July (Sun.)
- Round 7 ● 18th August
- Round 8 ● 8th September
- Round 9 ● 6th October
- Round 10 ● 27th October

Race day itinerary:

- 2:30pm Arrival and registration
- 3:30pm Safety briefing
- 4:15pm Timed qualifying
- 5pm 3-hour team enduro
- 8:15pm Presentation ceremony

Cost per round:

£270 per kart.

- Best 8 races count towards championship -

Costs incl

(excluding practice sess

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Johnny Herbert,
British Grand
Prix winner

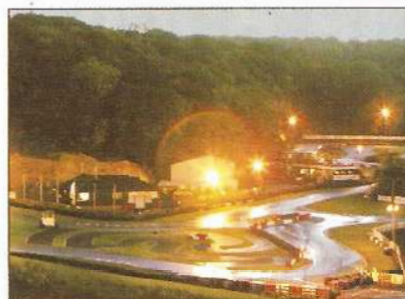


Thunderkarts



80mph Thunderkarts

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Updated Pro-Karts for 2001 season
(to new from March 2001)
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Pro-Kart/Thunderkart 6-hour Team Enduro

A 3-round championship in 2 classes
for teams of 3-6 drivers (recommended)

Championship dates:

- Round 1 ● Easter
Bank Holiday Monday,
16th April
- Round 2 ● Whitsun
Bank Holiday Monday,
28th May
- Round 3 ● Summer
Bank Holiday Monday,
27th August

Race day itinerary:

- 8:30am Arrival and registration
9:15am Safety briefing
10am Timed qualifying
10:45am 6-hour team enduro
5pm Presentation ceremony

Cost per round:

- £399 per Pro-Kart.
£475 per Thunderkart.

- All 3 races count towards championship -

3-hour Thunderkart Team Enduro

An 8-round championship for
experienced kart drivers only

Championship dates:

- Round 1 ● Saturday, 17th March
Round 2 ● Saturday, 14th April
Round 3 ● Saturday, 19th May
Round 4 ● Saturday, 16th June
Round 5 ● Saturday, 14th July
Round 6 ● Sun, 19th Aug (2:30-7:45)
Round 7 ● Saturday, 15th September
Round 8 ● Saturday, 20th October

Race day itinerary (Saturdays):

- 3:30pm - Arrival and registration,
followed by drivers' briefing, timed
practice, and a three-hour enduro.
Presentation of trophies will be at
8:45pm (approx.)

Cost per round:

- £325 per kart.

Note: This championship is incor-
porated into the BPKC Owner/Driver
Pro-Kart/Thunderkart Lease Series. Hire
teams compete in a separate class.

- Best 7 races count towards championship -



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Cost per hour:

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Andros Trophy king Yvan Muller leads the field away at Alpe d'Huez on his way to a sometimes unexpected second-round victory

Muller back from ice brink

Victory at Alpe d'Huez didn't look likely at one stage for Yvan Muller, but the ice racing king fought back for his habitual win. By **Jacquie Groom**

ANDROS TROPHY

Alpe d'Huez (F) December 16/17, Round 2/3

Even 60kg of success ballast, a broken gearbox and a distinctly lacklustre start failed to prevent Yvan Muller from taking his 26th event win and a commanding Andros Trophy lead.

"I'm relieved it's over," Muller said. "I learned my lesson last year. Then, I was totally dominating the event and

didn't win. This year everyone was having problems, including us, so I decided to do the absolute minimum, take no risks and get the maximum championship points."

The five-time champion's Opel Astra was soundly beaten by Marcel Tarres's Citroen Xsara in the first of the vitally important timed sessions. Muller dropped to fifth in the second session. "It has been a lot more

difficult to adapt to the 60kg than I anticipated," he said.

After dominating Saturday's first heat, Tarres seemed on his way to a first-day victory when the Citroen suffered an engine failure, putting him and Antony Beltoise out for the rest of the weekend. "I have never been so close to beating Yvan," said Tarres. "I know now that he is within my reach and I'll get him soon." A win

for Muller in his six-lap race gave him the lead on Saturday evening.

Jean-Philippe Dayraut had started well, leading the second timed session but tumbled down the order as his new BMW Z3 suffered a number of failures.

Electronic problems in the Nissan Micra threatened to sideline Stephane Peterhansel, once the team solved the problem, he was soon lapping consistently, finishing the first day in second behind Muller.

On the Sunday, with the ice wearing thin in places, Peterhansel was unbeatable, winning both three-lap heats and his final. Muller finished second, putting the two men on equal points over the weekend. By virtue of setting the better time in the timed sessions, Muller claimed his second win of the season.

Christian Beroujon inherited a career-best third in the Peugeot 306 he inherited from Pierre Colard.

The Promotion class was won emphatically by Laurent Fouquet's Renault Clio, despite pressure from Val Thorens winner Jean-Michel Neyrial. Philippe Gervoson finished third in his Renault Megane.

The Formula France event was won by biker Christian Lavielle, while Danny Sullivan failed to finish either race. ■

RESULTS Day 1 Yvan Muller (Opel Astra), 77 points; 2 Stephane Peterhansel (Nissan Micra), 74; 3 Patrick Herbert (Astra), 72; 4 Philippe de Korskak (Opel Tigra), 68; 5 Antony Beltoise (Citroen Xsara), 66; 6 Jean-Michel Neyrial (Tigra), 66. **Day 2** 1 Peterhansel, 80; 2 Muller, 77; 3 Christian Beroujon (Peugeot 306), 74; 4 Jean-Noel Lanctuit (Tigra), 71; 5 de Korskak, 70; 6 Laurent Fouquet (Renault Clio), 67. **Overall 1** Muller, 154; 2 Peterhansel, 154; 3 Beroujon, 140; 4 Herbert, 139; 5 de Korskak, 138; 6 Lanctuit, 135. **Points** 1 Muller, 314; 2 Peterhansel, 298; 3 Herbert, 275; 4 de Korskak, 270; 5 Beroujon, 251; 6 Neyrial, 255.

SOUTH AFRICAN STOCK CARS

Season review

VETERAN sportscar racer George Fouche won the inaugural South African Stock Car (SASCAR) title by virtue of season-long consistency.

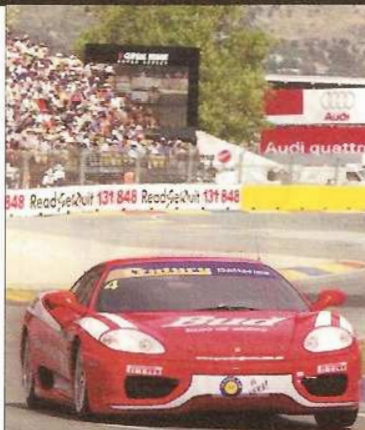
Fouche, who did not win any of the races, was consistent throughout the season, with Ben Morgenrood dominating the early rounds and Formula Ford champion Johan Fourie the end of the season.

SASCARs are broadly similar to the new British-based ASCAR, but

the series got off to a shaky start with a dispute over the rights. The loser was Phakisa, the country's only big oval.

Races were run at East London, Killarney and Kyalami, with oval rounds being staged at Killarney and the Wembley track in Johannesburg.

The cars were built to be run at a very low cost, Opel touring car star Deon Joubert managing to take third on his debut at Kyalami using borrowed tools in a car prepared by the series' spares supplier. *Barry de Klerk*



Out on his own: Noske blitzed the field

AUSTRALIAN GT

Adelaide (AUS) December 30/31, 23 & 12 laps

FERRARI driver Mark Noske was a class above the opposition in the non-championship Grand Touring Challenge which supported the American Le Mans Series finale.

Noske's 360 Modena was more than a minute in front of the Porsche GT3 of Adelaide knee surgeon Greg Keene in the opening 40-minute encounter, with Prancing Horse team-mate Rod Wilson in third.

Keene managed to get the jump at the start of the shorter second race and

held off Noske for a couple of laps before the Ferrari inevitably surged ahead. Dodge Viper driver Rusty French was third in this one.

The thin field of GT Nations' Cup regulars was augmented by machines from the supporting GT Production series, Mark King's Mitsubishi Lancer proving the best of them.

A delighted Noske said: "I've always loved the Adelaide circuit."

RESULTS Race 1 1 Mark Noske (Ferrari 360 Modena), 41m23.37s; 2 Greg Keene (Porsche 911 GT3-R), 42m38.44s; 3 Rod Wilson (Ferrari), 22 laps; 4 Michael Downard (Porsche); 5 Rusty French (Dodge Viper); 6 Mark King (Mitsubishi Lancer Evo V). **Fastest lap** Noske, 1m43.97s. **Race 2** 1 Noske, 21m01.10s; 2 Keene, 21m33.83s; 3 French, 21m53.58s; 4 Downard, 22m28.97s; 5 Winston Kim (Porsche), 22m29.67s; 6 Wilson, 22m33.11s. **Fastest lap** Noske, 1m43.28s.

RESULTS ROUND-UP

NEW ZEALAND FORMULA FORD

Taupo (NZ) December 29/30, Round 3/7, 5x18 laps

Race 1 1 Ken Smith (Van Diemen RF95), 12m52.158s; 2 Nicholas Ross (RF91), 12m52.661s; 3 Fabian Coulthard (RF92); 4 James Cressey (RF94); 5 Karl Wilson (RF91); 6 Simon Gamble (RF90). **Fastest lap** Cressey, 40.588s. **Race 2** 1 Ross, 15m19.632s; 2 Gamble, 15m19.839s; 3 Coulthard; 4 Smith; 5 Simon Richards (RF92); 6 Wilson. **Fastest lap** Gamble, 49.402s. **Race 3** 1 Ross, 12m40.355s; 2 Richards, 12m40.541s; 3 Cressey; 4 Coulthard; 5 Smith; 6 Wilson. **Fastest lap** Smith, 40.850s.



No wins, but George Fouche still scored consistently enough to take the 2000 SASCAR title

▷ **1:43 CHAPARRAL 2J MODEL**

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armchair enthusiast

Our monthly look at collectables for the motorsport fan

▷ **FERRARI BARBIE**

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Model McRae

As a result of the great response from readers wanting to buy the Colin McRae ceramic model from the Jim Bamber collection featured on the letters page in the December 20-28 issue (and *Armchair Enthusiast*, December 14), here are the details again: it is priced £29.95 and is available from www.colinmcrac.com. The collection also includes a model Jos Verstappen which costs £29.99 from www.orangearrows.com



AUTOSPORT CIRCUIT GUIDE △

The seventh edition of this comprehensive guide is fully updated for 2001. It is bound in an A5 folder packed with 600 pages of all the latest track information including detailed corner analysis, paddock maps, and practical advice such as how to get there, where to eat and local hotels. Priced £29.99. Published by What's On Motor Sport Ltd. Tel: 01993 891000. www.CircuitNews.co.uk



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1999 Radical Club Sports 'Championship Winning'
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1987 March F1 "Leyton House" 871
1969 TVR Vixen
1970 Tecno F2
1972 Giannini Gruppo 2 Corsa '500'
1973 Porsche 911 3.0IRS *
1954 MG TF
1972 Maserati Ghibli 4.9 Spyder *
1977 Porsche 911S 2.7 (LHD)
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Richard Burns – Rallying's would-be king

By David Williams

Published by Haynes, £15.99

A book about Richard Burns was bound to come out at the end of last year. It was the year, after all, where a fairytale script dictated he would win the championship and live happily ever after. But the publishers reckoned without a big bad wolf – or should that be a big bad lion? – stealing the spoils for Peugeot.

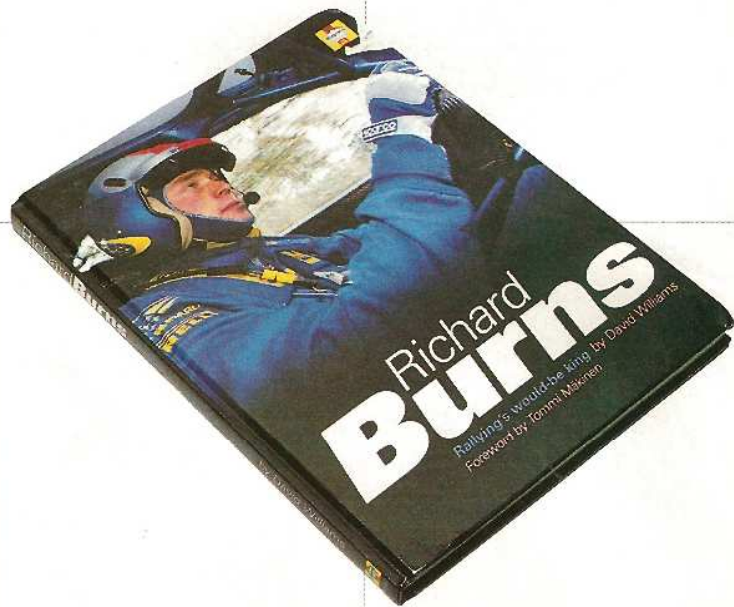
The result is a biography which wants for nothing apart from a satisfactory conclusion. The story of Burns' rise to the top is compelling, but you are left wondering whether or not the final chapter is missing. This, of course, is no fault of the author, the publisher, or even Burns himself. Blame one Marcus Gronholm.

For most readers, it is Burns' early career which holds the most fascination anyway. You learn about his childhood, the way he learnt to drive in an old Alfa Romeo, and the Under-17 car club where the seeds of his talent were sown.

The author has done a painstaking amount of research and it is clear that he has spoken at length to the people most important to Burns at every stage in his development. To be applauded, too, is the way that tawdry and superfluous details have been avoided: the book is a very carefully crafted study of one man's determination to reach the top. It is clearly laid out, accessibly written and contains several hitherto unseen photographs. No feelings are spared, with the arguments and the downsides described in detail as harrowing as the action is thrilling.

If this book has a message, it is that nobody, however gifted, can reach the pinnacle on their own. Burns' career was boosted by a number of benefactors, whose contribution is made clear in the text.

Williams' book is well worth a read – both for enthusiasts and drivers who want to know if they have what it takes to get to the top. As for Burns – maybe that final chapter will be written at the end of this year. **AP**



Autocourse 2000-2001

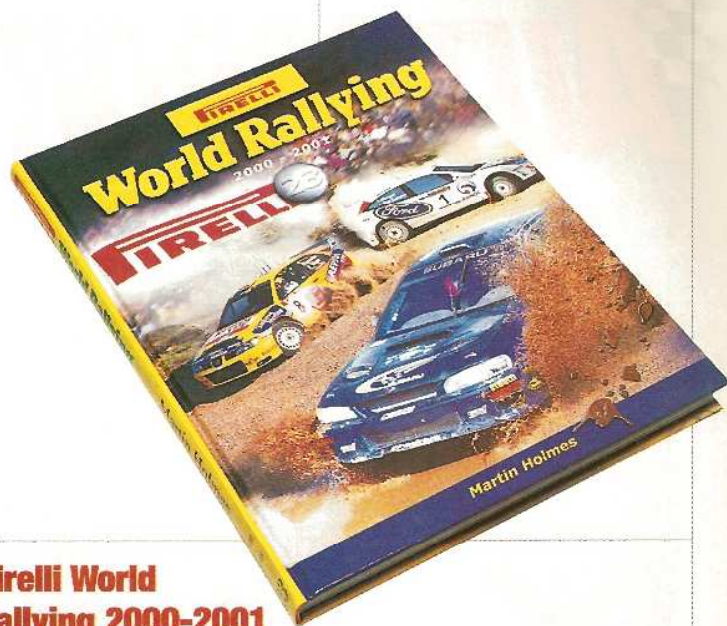
Published by Hazleton, £35

This is a special anniversary for *Autocourse*, as the publication celebrates 50 years of putting out its famous review of world racing. And it is possibly the best ever.

The book kicks off with the top 10, which is again going to cause controversy in some quarters. Editor Alan Henry writes: "If there is one element of the *Autocourse* editorial equation which never ceases to attract comment – be it approval or sniggering derision – it is the top 10 of the season."

You will not be disappointed this time. A highlight, for this reviewer at least, is Mark Hughes' disarmingly frank examination of Michael Schumacher. And the Formula 1 review is undoubtedly a masterpiece from the finest scribes in the business.

But while the meat of the book concentrates on Grand Prix racing – in the inimitable style we have come to expect – there is a lot more to it than just Formula 1. GTs and Formula 3000 are covered in great depth, as well as national racing. For the numerically minded, there is the omnipresent stack of results and statistics at the end, automatically ensuring that *Autocourse* remains the only book you will need about circuit racing in 2000. **AP**



Pirelli World Rallying 2000-2001

By Martin Holmes

Published by Martin Holmes Rallying, £19.95

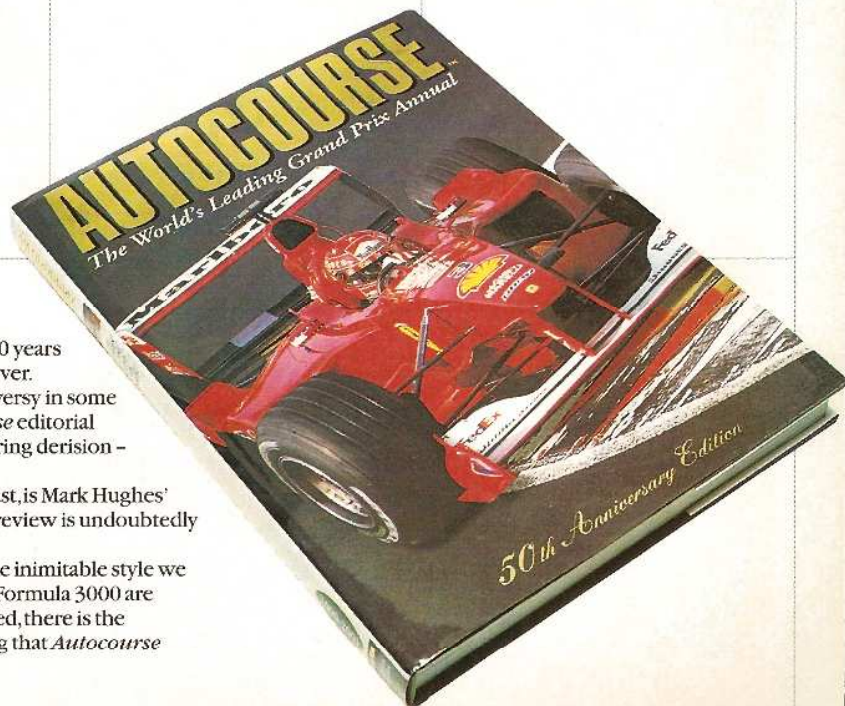
As much of a fixture on the World Rally scene as the Col de Turini and fog in Wales, the 23rd edition of *Pirelli World Rallying* continues to be an essential *tade mecum* for both people who work in the sport and those who watch it.

Publishers often boast that such-and-such a work is the "definitive guide" to its subject or "contains everything you need to know" about it. For once, you can believe the hype. The book does not deviate from its tried and trusted formula of round-by-round reports, followed by information on the drivers, teams and championships that have constituted rallying over the last year.

Want to know who was fourth in the Slovenian Championship? No problem. Or maybe you would like to see a picture of the car that won the Saturnus Rally. Like every European Championship rally winner, it will be there. Add to that comprehensive driver biographies and an exhaustive technical rundown featuring every manufacturer that builds rally cars, from Subaru to Suzuki.

If your passion for rally cars has caused people to question your social acceptability, you will be pleased to know that there is a comprehensive list of chassis numbers and registration plates used by every manufacturer throughout the season. All the FIA championships are covered (including off-road) and there is an especially detailed section on the British Championship, which, like everything else, is copiously illustrated.

If you are serious about rallying, having this on your shelf is essential. Personally, I probably use it two or three times every day. Rather than just creating a book, Martin Holmes has created an institution. Long may it live. **AP**



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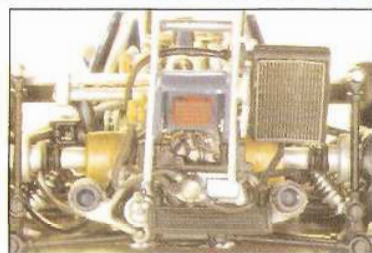
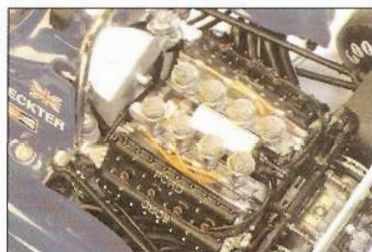
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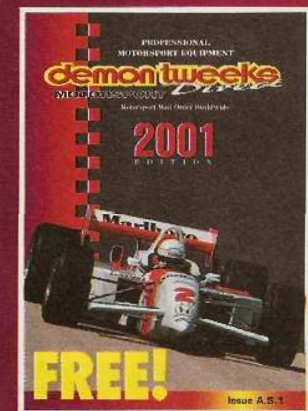


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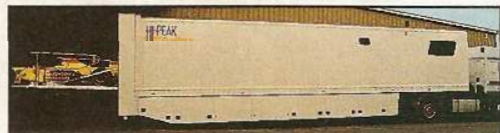


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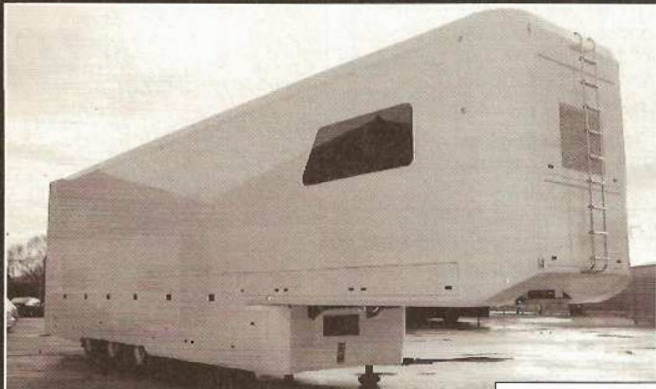
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Email: personnel@formula-palmer-audi.com or fax to 01234 360415**



TECHNICAL SUPPORT ENGINEERS

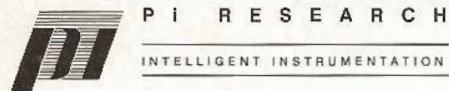
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Ref: DRH0019

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Ref: DRH0020

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Fluent English and French

Ref: DRH0021

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Ref: DRH0022

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Jim Russell school threat

The future of the Jim Russell Racing Drivers' School in the UK is under threat following the decision of the Rockingham oval to end its deal with the motorsport academy before it has even begun.

The shock move leaves the school, formerly based at Donington Park, Snetterton and Silverstone, without a home at a major British venue for the first time in its 44-year history.

The Jim Russell academy, which has four other international branches, boasts Emerson Fittipaldi, Jenson Button and Jacques Villeneuve among its former pupils.

UK branch boss John Kirkpatrick, who sealed the agreement for the move to Rockingham (AUTOSPORT, January 6 2000), was negotiating a

deal for new cars for the school before the news broke. An engine deal with Honda was also rumoured to be on the cards.

It has run Vauxhall-powered single-seaters and saloons in the past, and several of its young drivers have been helped into Formula Vauxhall Junior, which Kirkpatrick helped to establish.

Kirkpatrick said of the decision: "It's a devastating blow. We have other projects, but this puts us in a difficult position."

The school's desire to run at a major circuit is complicated by the fact that racing schools run by Brands Hatch Leisure already exist at Brands itself, as well as its sister tracks Oulton



"Devastating"

Park, Snetterton and Cadwell Park. Silverstone operates schools at its own site, plus Donington Park and Croft circuits.

"It's hard to see a solution," said Kirkpatrick. "I can't see any suitable tracks."

Rockingham, which called the Russell deal "an important piece in the jigsaw" at its

launch, was unable to comment.

Jim Russell's Race Mechanics Training scheme, unveiled last year, is said to be fairly secure after renewed backing from other partners, but the future of the Richard Petty NASCAR Driving Experience, to be run by Jim Russell Management, is unclear. However, Rockingham is keen to keep some on-track access at the circuit.

Works boost for Lister ace

SPORTSCAR ace Mike Jordan will partner British GT runner-up David Warnock in the works Lister Storm for this year's championship.

The GTO team boss was set to race a Lister for new team Premier 1 Racing alongside the works effort, but the death of team principal Brian Kreisky last month (see *Pit and Paddock*, p13) means that the deal is off.



GT title chance

Lister boss Laurence Pearce, is now likely to concentrate on a single car entry.

The move leaves former Grand Prix driver Mike Wilds, who would have been Jordan's partner, with limited options for this year. His drive relied on funding from Kreisky, while Jordan had a separate sponsor.

Jordan said: "We were shocked by Brian's death. Without his backing, Premier 1 Racing cannot happen, so I am very grateful to Laurence and David for giving me this chance."

Warnock, who was tipped to share his car with FIA GT champion Jamie Campbell-Walter, added: "It's great to have Mike's experience on board. I'm determined to get back on top."

Jordan, who shared the lead car of his Team Eurotech Porsche GTO outfit with inaugural class champion Mark Sumpter, will remain the Eurotech team boss.

Sumpter will be partnered by former Caterham champion Shaun Balfe next year (see p122).



The Jim Russell Racing Drivers' School has helped a crop of drivers in national and international racing, but faces a bleak future in 2001

FRenault veteran tipped for top Manor Motorsport seat

RISING single-seater racer Leighton Walker has been strongly tipped to join reigning British champion Manor Motorsport in this year's Formula Renault 2000 title chase.

The 22-year-old, returning for his third year in the category, is close to finalising a deal with the team which won the series with Kimi Raikkonen last year. He has been run by Motaworld for the last two seasons.

Walker said: "I'm in line for the seat - I won't deny that - and Manor is where I want to be. It would give me the best chance of winning, but nothing is signed yet. I am waiting for

the go-ahead from my sponsors before I can say anything more."

Manor Motorsport has already re-signed rising American racer Richard Antinucci, a front-runner in the FRenault Eurocup with JD Motorsport before joining Manor for the end-of-season British Winter Series, as well as his fellow Winter Series racer Matt Griffin. Team manager Tony Shaw said any decision on Walker rested on team boss John Booth, who is currently on holiday.

Walker said he has also had talks with other teams adding that a deal should be done within two weeks.



National racing veteran Leighton Walker has spent the last two seasons with Motaworld

HUMBLE PYE

Farewell to three fine gentlemen who made motorsport's history

THE deaths, over the Christmas and New Year break, of John Cooper and Walter Hayes, have robbed motorsport of two gentlemen who were passionate about both ends of the racing spectrum and were influential in adjoining eras.

Cooper, who with his father Charles, kick-started Britain's production racing car industry with their 500cc motorbike-powered Formula 3 cars, brought accessibility to speed and circuit events, and a rear-engined revolution post-war.

Star graduate Stirling Moss claimed the Surbiton company's maiden Grand Prix win – also a first for Coventry-Climax engines – in Argentina in 1958. Despite Jack Brabham's subsequent world titles, I often felt the marque's achievements to be undersold amid the rise of Lotus.

Cooper was on the wane as a Grand Prix power when Hayes gave the green



John Cooper was a real racing enthusiast

light for Ford's backing of the Cosworth DFV engine. But 1967 did not just mark the debut of the most successful power unit in Formula 1 history, but also the birth of Formula Ford.

As with 500cc F3, this simple class enabled the man in the street to go racing, and Hayes' patronage of Nick Brittan's Formula Ford register in those exciting, early days played an enormous part in the class's credibility.

John Cooper was always charming; never more so than when his protégé Stirling Moss was knighted last year. I met Walter Hayes only once – at a Brands Hatch Formula Ford test – and found him similarly fascinating. Certainly, the sport at club level owes both men a huge debt of gratitude.

Another splendid character also gone is Sir Nicholas Williamson, the dashing Baronet who pioneered the use of Formula 5000 cars and DFV engines in speed hillclimbing and twice won the RAC British championship.

I saw him win at Great Auclum in 1971, but missed his fearless driving of the village fire engine. On one rare call-out, a shiny-helmeted Sir Nick unfortunately emptied the water tank down the chimney of the house next door to the one on fire.

The town of Mortimer, Berkshire, like the sport he loved, will never be the same again.

MARCUS PYE



Brookspeed heads new int

Leading British GT outfit Brookspeed Motorsport has opted to run a pair of Chrysler Viper GTS-Rs in the Interactive Sportscar Championship this year.

The team, which took two wins with a Lister Storm driven by Tiff Needell and Dave Clark last year, was set to run a privateer Viper in British GTs again, but has decided to move to the ISC.

It will run ORECA's American Le Mans GTS title-winning Viper, and is keen to field a second car from ORECA or top FIA GT outfit Carsport Holland. Reigning Lotus Sport Elise champion Adam Wilcox has been signed, and Needell and Clark are in the frame for the other seats according to team boss Martin

Braybrook. He added: "The ISC is where we want to be. The chance to run cars of this calibre is one I relish."

The team is also looking to stay in British GTs with a GTO car new to the class.

Fellow British GT outfit Mike Haines Racing is also considering an ISC move with its two-car Lotus Esprit squad. Team boss Mike Haines said: "It's on if we can get drivers with budgets for the second car. Interactive coverage is the way ahead."

German DTM outfit Abt Sportsline and sportscar marque Darrian have confirmed ISC entries, while West Surrey Racing, Ray Mallock Limited and Prodrive have looked at the series, along with British and FIA GT teams Lister and Cirtek.



First signing

ISC SECURES FULL TITLE STATUS FOR 2001

THE Interactive Sportscar series has secured full championship status for its inaugural season, successfully ending a lengthy battle for the right to have a points-scoring system.

ISC bosses have faced resistance to their plans, which some national racing figures felt mirrored the rules for British GTs too closely. The series had to pass the Championship Control

Panel – a body of Britain's top racing clubs set up by the Motor Sports Association – before it could be registered as a full championship.

Series boss Dominic Chappell said: "This should have happened months ago. It's important to attract interest from sponsors and teams."

LAST LAP

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Brookspeed Motorsport was a regular frontrunner

Fortec seals FRenault return

TOP single-seater outfit Fortec Motorsport will enter a two-car team in this year's Formula Renault 2000 championship, as predicted in AUTOSPORT (December 14).

The outfit will use FRenault as a training ground and feeder for its teams in the British Formula 3 and FIA Formula 3000 championships.

It has bought the cars from fellow Formula 3 team Carlin Motorsport, which is pulling out of the category after competing in the Winter Series to focus on British F3.

Fortec has not had a junior arm since its Euroseries Formula Opel

squad in 1999. It competed in FRenault in the early '90s, winning the series with TVR ace Bobby Verdon-Roe in '91. It considered a 2001 FRenault campaign as early as last summer (AUTOSPORT, June 29), but said it was unlikely at the time.

Team boss David Hayle said: "We are in the process of setting the team up and talking to drivers. It's the right place to be – it's going somewhere, and it's the right formula for young drivers. We intend to participate successfully. There would be no point in being there solely to make up numbers on the grids."

PAT LONGHURST 1939 – 2000

MULTIPLE club racing champion Pat Longhurst, arguably the staunchest supporter of Modified Sportscars from its 1970s heyday, died after a heart attack on December 31. He was 61.

Longhurst and Bob Jarvis – pals since their teens and subsequently partners in a motor trading business – started racing in '68 with a pair of Formula 4 Vixen-Imps.

Both became synonymous, however, with Davrian Developments, Adrian Evans' concern which made tiny fibreglass sportscars in the famous motorsport mews off North Street, Clapham, South London. The duo put the marque on the racing map, their

three-wheeled, 1142cc Imp-powered machines habitually slaying giants such as Jon Fletcher's Lotus Elan and John Cooper's Porsche 911.

As diminutive as his beloved cars, Pat won the BARC's STP Modsports crown in '80, pipping future touring car ace Steve Soper's Fiat X 1/9 with help from Steve Roberts in his Mini-engined Davrian at Thruxton's finale.

Pat stopped racing last year, but was enjoying running a Suzuki Swift GT for stepson Anthony Ridd. To his wife Jenny and family, Chris, Dawn, Anthony and Natalie, AUTOSPORT extends its sympathies. Pat's funeral will be in Maidstone on January 11.

Turkington nears Van Diemen seat

THE works Van Diemen Formula Ford Zetec team is set to sign Winter Series racer Gary Turkington as its fourth driver.

Sources said the deal was likely to be announced at the AUTOSPORT International Show, which opens today (Thursday). The Ulsterman will join Swedes Robin Rudholm and Richard Goransson, as well as American Pat Long, at the works outfit.

Van Diemen is expanding its team to four cars in response to the five-car squad of the works Mygale team Haywood Racing.

Top Swede linked to Fford Zetec drive

FORMULA Ford Zetec ace Robert Dahlgren could make a return to the category this year.

The Swede raced for the works Van Diemen outfit last year, finishing fourth in the championship.

He has been linked with several single-seater outfits, including Van Diemen customer Aztec International and Formula Renault 2000 frontrunner Motaworld.

He said: "I'm closer on one than on the other. I have had talks with other teams too, but hope to know where I am going within the next two weeks."

Interest in ISC series



its Chrysler Viper GTS-R last year, but is looking for more wins with an ex-ORECA car in 2001

Caterham ace signs for GTO champions

REIGNING British GTO champion Mark Sumpter will share his Team Eurotech Porsche 911 GT3-R with former Caterham champion Shaun Balfie next season.

Sumpter won the GTO title last year with Team Eurotech boss Mike Jordan, who steps up to the GT class this year (see p119). Balfie ran a GTO Lotus Esprit in last year's series.

The team will also field a 911 GT3-R for Porsche Cup aces David and Godfrey Jones, as well as a third in several races for Norwegians Steinar Mikkelsen and Ake Gustavsen.

Sportscar racer in Porsche link

ONE-MAKE sportscar ace Simon Hill is in talks with British GT outfit Bob Watson Motorsport to race in the GT class of the series next year.

The Renault Spider and Lotus Sport Elise frontrunner tested for the team at Silverstone last November, and is keen to race alongside Neil Cunningham in the outfit's Porsche 996 GT car in 2001.

He said: "It's a possibility, and it's top of my list, but I still have a few irons left in the fire."

Team boss Bob Watson was unavailable for comment.

Marcos ends Mantis series

THE Marcos Mantis Challenge will no longer race in Britain next year because of a shortfall of interest for the one-make sportscar series.

Entries for the championship have waned this year as the series has taken a regular guest role in the British GT's GTO class.

Teams are eager to step up to full-blown GTO machinery, and Marcos is keen to tap this market with upgrade kits for the Mantis Challenge cars.

A pan-European Mantis Challenge series has been tipped to take place next season, but will be based out of Holland with mainly European dates.

Win Norman, boss of engineering firm Eurotech, and one of five key shareholders in the Marcos marque, said: "There are not enough cars and it's a matter of money - the best thing to do is to look at the competition. We want to focus on building GTO cars and upgrade kits rather than one-makes because it's a bigger market."

Frontrunning Marcos Mantis and GTO team boss John Griffiths said the decision was a disappointment.

He added: "From day one, we had good fields. They are good cars and it could have been as big as the TVR Tuscan series if pushed, but there was always a big question mark on the future of Marcos."

Porsche to alter GT plans

THE line-up of Porsche GB's British GT series assault could be due to change in the next few weeks.

The UK arm of the German sportscar marque is planning to enter the GTO class of the British GT series with a pair of its 911 GT3-R cars, run by series veterans Parr Motorsport.

The drivers will comprise a mix of young guns and experienced racers. Rising single-seater drivers Richard Lyons and Marino Franchitti have been named as two entries, while bike ace Terry Rymer and single-seater and tin-top veteran Kelvin Burt were said to be in the frame for the

second car. A Porsche Cup assault with rally ace Barbara Armstrong has also been confirmed to date.

Although the line-up is the subject of debate within Porsche GB, a spokesman denied rumours that the scheme had been scrapped and that the move was due to pressure from Germany to enter the Grand Prix-supporting Supercup series.

He said: "We're defining what will happen, but we'll be in PowerTour one way or another. We want to go back into national racing and that's still the aim. Elements could change, but I wouldn't say that it's radical."



WORKS ULTIMA GT TEAM Colin Blower Motorsport shook down the car of club racer Jean-Francois Bhill at Silverstone before Christmas. The three-year-old car, which has never raced, could be run by the Frenchman in Castle Combe GT events

NEWS IN BRIEF

Top French Formula Ford Zetec outfit Graff Racing is set to quit the category, as predicted by AUTOSPORT (October 19, 2000). The outfit, which also runs a French Formula Renault 2000 team, will focus on the slicks-and-wings series this year.

Rising single-seater racer Tom Herridge will return to Motaworld Racing for the Formula Renault 2000 series this year. Herridge, who raced with the team last year, joins Winter Series champion Mark McLoughlin in the outfit. Several drivers are in the frame for the third remaining seat.

Formula Renault 2000 team Aztek Race Engineering looks set to sign single-seater racers Charles Hall and Mohammed Fairuz for 2001. It has one seat left to fill for this year.

Spanish karting ace Roberto Fumero is one of four drivers in a shoot-out for the seats at top Formula Renault 2000 outfit Team DFR. The double 125cc champion joins Winter Series driver Fabio do Carno and single-seater racers Danny Watts and Daniel Scandian in the fight for the three slots.

Frenault 2000 team Falcon Motorsport is set to sign Winter Series racer Alex Kapadia as well as Sukhit Sandher, who raced in Junior Formula Ford last year with Wes-Tec Racing.

Monegasque karting ace Clivio Piccione, who finished runner-up to Colin Brown in the World Karting Championships, has signed for the works Mygale Formula Ford Zetec team Haywood Racing for this year's Avon Junior Fford championship.

Former British Touring Car champion Ray Mallock Limited is expected to unveil one of the drivers for its assault on the British GT title with the Saleen S7-R at the AUTOSPORT International show this weekend. The team has been linked with a possible Interactive Sportscar campaign with an Opel Coupe DTM car, although a spokesman said the plan was an unlikely one from several options.

The grid for the British GT race at Knockhill this year is "99% certain" to be split into two races for the GT and GTO classes, as predicted by AUTOSPORT. However, the possibility of a British Grand Prix support slot alongside the planned Formula 3 race (see *Pit and Paddock*, p15) has been denied by series bosses.

Experienced Fford Zetec race engineer Roger Parkes is setting up a two-car Van Diemen team in the Avon Junior Fford series this year. Parkes worked with the likes of Benelux Fford champion Peter Walsh during his time with Van Kalmthout.

Entrepreneur Mark Harper is trying to put together a one-make series for the 55bhp Mercedes Smart car for 2002. He is aiming for a budget of £12,000.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Thruxton's pre-season test sessions will be run on the afternoons of February 21 and 22. Single-seaters and saloons/sportscars will each be allocated two 55-minute sessions per day. Book on 01264 772696.

The VW Cup has announced a 12-round calendar. Provisional dates are: March 25, Donington Park; April 28, Oulton Park; May 19/20, Snetterton; June 3, Cadwell Park; August 12, Snetterton; September 9, Brands Hatch.

Rising karter Joshua Fisher, son of former Castle Combe GT star Brian, will graduate to Formula 600 this year. His team will run two Jedi-Hondas.



MICK WALKER

Historic sportscar specialist Phil Stott Racing shook down two of the five cars it will be running in this year's Group C Revival series at Donington Park last month. Nick Randall tested the newly restored 1988 ex-Henri Pescarolo Spice (above), while Mark Wright gave a 1989 Argo JM19 a run. The team also plans to run the Spice at Daytona and Sebring this year.

The Castle Combe Saloon Car Championship will have a new title sponsor next year. Although Pagid Performance Braking has sponsored the series for the last three years, it has opted to make way for a new company.

Formula Junior Elva racer Mark Woodhouse will step up to the rear-engined class with the Lotus 20/22 in which Mike Hibberd won last year's Aston Martin Owners Club title.

AUTOSPORT regrets to report the death of club racer Richard de la Rue, aged 53. Richard began racing in 1966 and competed in Formula 750, Monopostos, Formula Libre, Clubmans Formula and Formula Ford. He leaves a wife, Rachel, and two children, Helen and Matthew.

**NICK WILLIAMSON
1937 – 2000**

DOUBLE British Hillclimb champion Sir Nick Williamson died on New Year's Eve at the age of 63.

The Baronet burst on to the scene with a beautiful Brabham BT21 in 1967, and won his first RAC round at Bouley Bay, Jersey, a year later.

He was the first to realise the potential of a Formula 5000 V8, scoring a debut victory in a McLaren M10 at Prescott in '69, as well as taking the '70 title. He won again with a Formula 2 March in '72.

Sir Nick was also the first to win with Cosworth DFV power in '73. He won his last national round at Bouley in '76.

Circuit gets 'dry run'

The Rockingham circuit will host a 'shakedown' club meeting two weeks before its official inaugural meeting, the Coys Historic Festival, in May.

The May 12-13 club event, organised by the British Automobile Racing Club, will feature eight races including the BARC Formula Renault, Pentel Ginetta and BMW series, but will not be open to the public.

Instead, it will be used as a dry run for the Corby circuit before its official opener on May 27-28.

Rockingham boss Peter Davies said: "The plan is that we should

operate a 'behind closed doors' meeting to test all our systems among friends with the BARC."

BARC competitions manager Dale Wells added: "The races will count towards the various championships, but the real reason for doing it is so that the circuit can check its marshal posts work and that the emergency services are happy with the set-up."

"During the weekend, we have enough time to run all the races three times, if it were necessary."

Rockingham will also hold a staff training session in late April to try out the circuit's other facilities.



The Rockingham circuit is taking shape and will be tested before its official opener in May

McRae pledges junior rally team

BRITAIN'S most famous rally driver, Colin McRae, is planning to start his own junior team in order to boost the careers of young drivers.

The Scot plans to follow in the footsteps of his team mate, Carlos Sainz, who has run a successful junior team in Spain for several years.

Sainz's team uses 1600cc Pumas, and McRae said he would look to a manufacturer for support.

The 32-year-old commented: "I always wanted to do something like this after I stopped rallying at this level. It's very difficult for young rally drivers in Britain these days: they're not getting a lot of support. My name is right at the forefront - so I'm trying to give something back."

Ford Racing European Director Martin Whitaker has hinted that Ford might support such a scheme, but McRae has not indicated when he will put his plans into action.

The Scot is also planning a rally school and a bonus scheme, as well as the scholarship he already supports.



MCRAE

Future plans

Historic campaign for Prosport racer

RADICAL Prosport racer David Knox enjoyed his first season of racing so much that he has bought Richard Budge's Chevron B8 in order to add historic enduros to his programme.

Knox plans to share both cars with coach Steve Markey, whose father John raced B8s internationally in the 1960s. Markey Jr also drove his mother's B8 a decade ago.

Knox's Chevron was supplied to Steve (father of British touring car ace, Matt) and Richard Neal's Team Supra and was raced by Mancunian Chevron agent Rodney Bloor.

Five V-Sports racers sold for 2001 series

MOTORSPORT talent backer Team Brask has sold five of the new V-Sports Racing cars for this year.

One car will be run by the outfit for Ben Lewis, brother of junior T-Car racer Ryan, who raced in the 2000 Formula Palmer Audi Winter Series.

Danish investor Hans Thygesen has bought one car, which will be on show at the AUTOSPORT International show in Birmingham this weekend.

Two of the newly built cars feature Mercedes and Chevrolet bodies, while BMW and Audi bodies are said to be under construction.

F5000 veteran to boost Force cup

THE world's greatest Formula 5000 racer, triple US champion Brian Redman, has boosted the Force's Transatlantic Challenge series by putting his name to the trophy for the 1972-77 class.

The ex-patriate Briton, who still races a Lola T330/2 similar to those in which he won the 1974-76 titles, hopes to attend one of the rounds.

Highlights of the season should include a big reunion at Brands Hatch on July 21-22 as well as the TOCA support slot there in October and the Mondello Park meeting in May.

Karting championship considers night races

THE Champions of the Future karting series could boast an end-of-season night race next year.

The four classes will race at PF International on April 1, Kimbolton on April 29, Whilton Mill on May 27, Larkhall on June 24, Buckmore Park on July 22 and the Three Sisters circuit on August 19.

An after-dark event at Rowrah on September 16 is a distinct possibility according to founder Martin Hines. "It's a maybe," he said. "Anything looks better at night, and we'd quite like to try it out."



ALEX AMES (ABOVE) and Paul Lind both celebrated double wins in the British Racing and Sports Car Club's annual Plum Pudding event at Mallory Park on Boxing Day. Ames won both Formula Ford 1600 races while Lind took the two Saloon and Sports GT cups

STEVE JONES

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The Mallock P21 heads up an impressive field of National Supersports cars which are ready to battle it out again this year



Design for race life

The National Supersports class is giving young race car designers a chance to shine. By **Marcus Pye**

Budding Adrian Newseys face a major dilemma today. Degree courses in motorsport engineering may have whetted young designers' appetites, but the proliferation of one-make classes and diminishing marque numbers have slashed early career openings - at least in the single-seater world. But look beyond such rarified strata, and there

are still opportunities to get noticed. The National Supersports class is a prime example, if not unique. It is a comparatively rare animal in that it encourages free thinking within regulations left just loose enough to tax the engineer's ingenuity. Ten squads responded last year, and their solutions to the problem of creating a competitive two-seater sports prototype boosted interest, not least

because the cars looked so different. The constants of the formula are the ubiquitous two-litre Vauxhall production engine - spiced up with hotter cams and bigger carburettors to develop 230bhp in the frontrunning SP1 class - a five-speed transaxle, four wheels and relatively durable Dunlop control tyres. The designer's task is to flesh out this skeleton, evolve a bracket to connect the key

components and carry the driver, plus sitting room for a companion. Beyond a ban on monocoque chassis, pretty much anything goes with the proviso that a minimum weight of 600kgs (including pilot) is imposed. Mallock Racing, master of the long-lived front-engined Clubmans formula in which the NSSC tree is rooted, swept the board when its P20 - expertly developed by Ray Mallock's



The Gunn chassis was twice a winner in the SP2 class last year. Another double winner last season was the Mantis chassis. Juno Racing enlisted the help of Brunel University for its car

“Mallock Sport swept the board with its P20 and set new standards in '99”

RML concern and driven by Chris Ward – set new standards in 1999. Last year, Ray's 18-year-old son, Michael, enhanced an extraordinary family tradition by driving an update of the same chassis to the title, under the guidance of his uncle Richard Mallock.

After a storming start by the flying Mallock, rivals piled on the pressure and closed the gap. Ex-Formula 750 champion Andy Jones pushed hard in his Nemesis, and could have pipped the youngster but for a prang at Zandvoort. Stalwart Mike Swinnerton – previously a frontrunner in the neat John Chapman-originated Mantis – fulfilled the genial Rob Bicknell's prophecy by making his eponymous creation a double race-winner by mid-season. And Ward returned with a two-year-old Nemesis to win the last round.

Four winners underlined the series' combative nature, but the PowerTour regular boasted greater depth within a maximum field of 18 cars. The long-awaited Zeus, with '98 champion Neil Riddiford, qualified on pole first time out for Silverstone's GP circuit finale. Jade and Phantom cars showed well, as did one-off Slique and Gunn chassis, the latter twice an SP2 (200bhp) class winner with karter Neil Burroughs at the wheel. With new machines expected for 2001, and a good PowerTour/BTCC support calendar, the general overview looks quite rosy.

Since the current new car market is small (perhaps five per year, often to repeat customers), the formula needs second-hand cars released for its growth. Constructors therefore run tight ships, relying on selling spares and running cars for their bread and butter. Apart from Mallock Sport and Peter Coleby's GPC Motorsport team, which has made 15 Nemesis cars in the past six years, most are one-man bands. Ewan Baldry's little Juno Racing set up has enlisted Brunel University's assistance for its car, which tested late last year.

Besides its challenges for technicians, series promoters believe that the NSSC offers a viable alternative



AUTOSPORT's Marcus Pye gave the Mallock P21 a run and found it easy to drive. He also put the Zeus through its paces (below)

TRIED AND TESTED

PRIOR to the quantum leap to rear-engined machines, the performance of Clubmans A-Sport cars astonished. The pace of development has quickened subsequently, and costs have risen, but the current frontrunners are sensational. Brief dalliances with the Zeus, Nemesis and Mallock left strong impressions on Silverstone's National circuit. Regrettably I missed out on the race-winning Bicknell, apparently a corker too.

Long and low, the Zeus ZME05 is a fine showpiece for Peter Sneller's respected engineering company. Its quality and finish are outstanding. Like the Mallock, it would not look out of place on an international grid. Some rivals are more utilitarian than the £50k machines, yet still perform. Two race outings have already

underlined the Zeus's potential. What's needed now is a pukka engine, and dry testing to sharpen its agility in corners.

Paul Gibson's Nemesis 2000 is sleeker than its predecessors, with an air of March 75S about its lines. Damp patches on line thwarted all-out lappery, dammit, but the Peter Coleby-built chassis clung tenaciously through Brooklands and the Luffield 'spoon', exhibiting traction and being easy to control. A rolling chassis costs £32k, so you could have one on track with a strong second-hand engine for a little over £40k. Great value.

Having driven the works Mallock P20 prototype happily in torrential rain last year, Robin Webster's evolution P21 (which features tidied-up rear suspension) was a treat in the dry. Lithe,



well balanced and with demon brakes, it was the easiest of the trio to drive, with optimum cockpit ergonomics a bonus. A back-to-back dry run against the Nemesis was not possible, but it carried speed beautifully through Copse, and felt right.

If you think the cars are pricey, one sage at the Clubmans Register dinner put things into perspective when he recalled that in the 1970s Clubmans A cars cost twice as much as a new MGB. Given that an equivalent MGF costs £20k, perhaps it's not so far out of kilter.

to young drivers who cannot afford six figure sums for Formula Ford Zetec or frontline British GT seasons. "These are 150mph cars capable of lapping Spa-Francorchamps in 2m25s – an average speed of 107mph – and close to GT qualifying pace at other circuits, for a fraction of the cost," says prime mover Swinnerton. "That teaches drivers a lot about set-up, and, with

global interest in sportscars booming, could pave the way to the American or European Le Mans Series."

Career-hungry Mallock's big-league debut in Australia last month has established a link between the National and International formulas which clearly tempt the more ambitious marques. Tony Sinclair of Jade is building a Nissan V6-powered

chassis – albeit for domestic events – but for the likes of Mallock, Nemesis and Zeus' more expensive upgraded chassis may appeal to a wider, bigger-spending, clientele. And a more lucrative market might ultimately be the key to greater interest in prototype racing at an affordable junior level. That's where National Supersports should be. ■



Tony Sinclair of Jade with its Nissan V6 chassis. The Zeus ZME05 has shown its potential.

Paul Gibson's Nemesis 2000 was sleeker than its predecessors and appealed to big spenders

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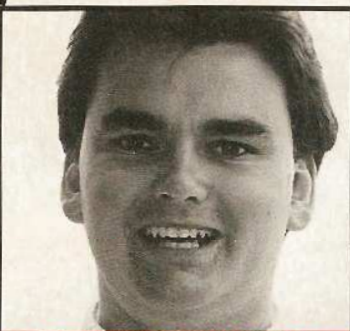
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Made for TV

The Interactive Sportscar Championship heralds a new age for motorsport, according to its founder



DOMINIC CHAPPELL
INTERACTIVE SPORTSCAR BOSS

As a driver, I have raced in most countries and I've seen the way that the sport can be run and promoted. Britain is the home of motorsport and makes incredible cars, but still has a problem with the presentation of the sport.

Our company specialises in supplying interactive content for television media partners. We looked at several concepts, but felt that motorsport offered a much better interactive experience than is being done with other sports, such as football and cricket.

The coverage is what is really exciting. As the viewer you will be able to flick between watching the lead eight cars, or any car the director has a particular interest in.

There have been a lot of questions about how the interactive coverage will work and whether the technology is available, but we are pleased with how things are progressing. We're using a simple, user-friendly telemetry system - not a state-of-the-art system that tracks cars to within one millimetre or 1/5000th of a second - that will give a good interactive television experience, and people will find it easy and fun to use.

"We want to reverse the rot that has set in with dull racing programmes"

As people become more aware of interactive coverage, we will be looking at other powersports such as powerboating and motorcycling.

We looked at single-seaters and touring cars, but, because GT racing holds the biggest-selling games rights at the moment and is in the public awareness, we thought that it was an arena we would like to specialise in. It also has sex appeal - the noise and the speed - and we are selling content for people who like riding in a Ferrari or a Porsche rather than a Ford Mondeo or a Renault Laguna.



Chappell says some manufacturers have struggled to get into the FIA GT Championship

Already, we are confident that we will have cars from Lister, Lotus, Marcos, Porsche, Viper, Ferrari, BMW, Audi, Mercedes and possibly Opel on the grid next year. We have spoken to most teams who run those cars, or manufacturers themselves, and we're very active about placing teams with drivers, marques with teams and sponsors with teams.

We are talking to professional engineering teams with the capacity to enhance and build the equipment that they have got, but we are conscious of the fact that everyone

a saleable computer game - we are working with a very large game manufacturer at the moment who is very much behind us - this is the way they see the games industry going.

We are also looking to give a new environment to the television public and we're very keen to promote the drivers and the teams, rather than the manufacturers, and to use them as household names - then we'll create a must-see viewing experience.

We will be promoting very heavily the sex appeal of the series and trying to reverse the rot that has set in with boring motorsport TV programmes. We have spent the last year and a vast amount of money looking into that. People say "we need more" - with the interactive coverage they will be more immersed in what we are doing.

We will also be looking at the promotion of the series for the spectator. I think the reason why people do not turn up is that they don't know what is going on that weekend. We have a large budget for local people, the majority of any crowd, to be aware of what is going on at the circuit - they're the people we want to be watching the interactive coverage when we race at the next venue.

We are keen to promote motorsport in the correct professional way, which has just started to be done, but we felt we could enhance it and make it a much better package. I have spoken frequently with Donington Park boss and British Motorsport Promoters chairman Robert Fearnall about different aspects of motorsport and, maybe in the future, if the packages are right and everyone feels comfortable, the two can become one, but right now we feel our destiny lies with our own path. ■

has to start somewhere, so we are not turning our back on smaller car manufacturers.

Marques such as Lister, which were relatively small-scale several years ago, now win championships and do very well. Things have moved on since then, but why shouldn't other teams be given the chance that Lister was?

There has been a lot of debate about whether there is room for two similar series in Britain, but I think there is room for one specialising in GT cars and a more open series for sportscars.

The definition of sportscars covers a far wider range of models. I know two or three manufacturers have been frustrated trying to get into the FIA or British GT series, but why shouldn't people be able to race DTM cars, which are exotic, fast sportscars?

Next year we will be developing a system where online gamers will be able to race in a virtual world against real drivers and we're confident that, in the next 12 months, we will have



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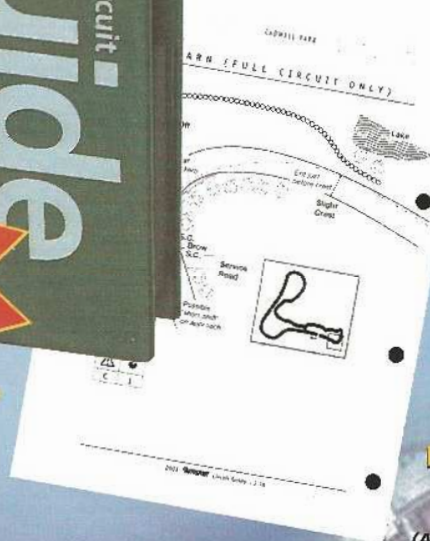
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