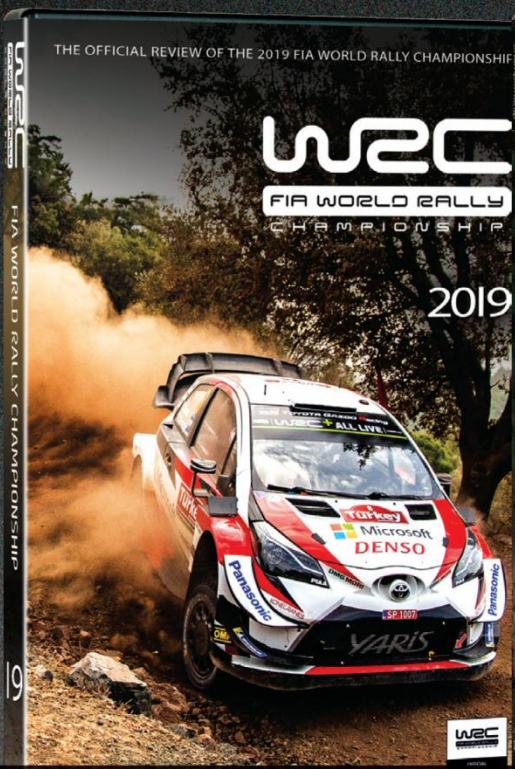


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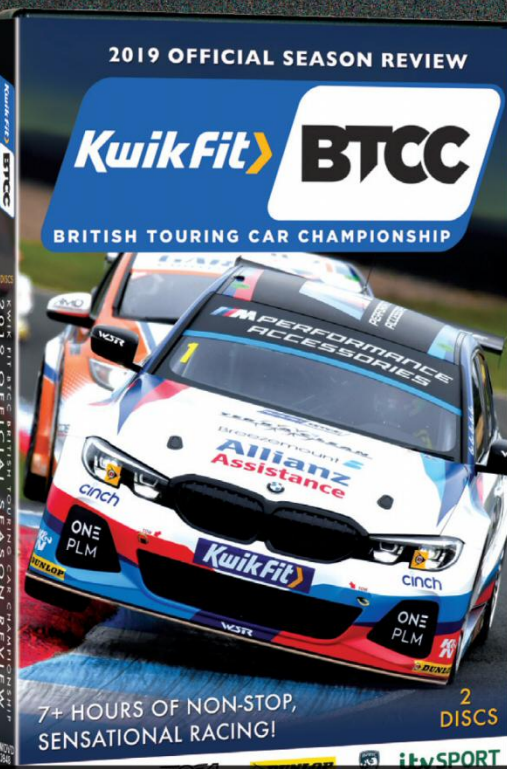
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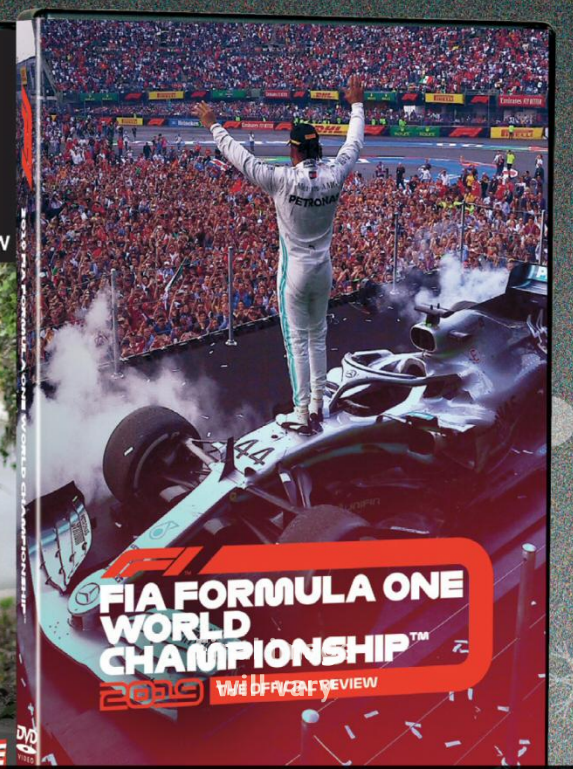
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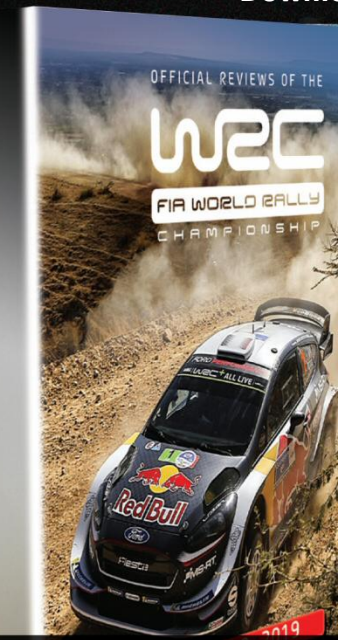
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P22



Multiple race winner gets a huge career leg-up for 2020

HOGGARD SNATCHES YOUNG DRIVER OF THE YEAR PRIZE



By Kevin Turner

British Formula 3 Championship racer Johnathan Hoggard scooped the biggest prize of his fledgling career by taking the Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award on Sunday night.

He beat three other finalists to be named as the victor at the Autosport Awards ceremony at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London.

Hoggard, the 31st winner of the award, said: "I'm over the moon! I'm lost for words. I've been waiting for over a month for this and it's been agonising."

The Lincolnshire racer says lifting the accolade, which comes along with a prize drive in a Red Bull Formula 1 car and a £200,000 cash jackpot and other awards, will boost his future.

"We were waiting until [the award announcement] to finalise our plans," he said. "You never know what opportunities can open up."

Full story, p2-3

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MEET THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP'S TEENAGE SENSATION

KALLE ROVANPERA LOOKS AHEAD TO HIS FIRST YEAR IN THE WRC TOP FLIGHT



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HOGGARD DRIVER OF THE YEAR

Lincolnshire British F3 driver beats other finalists

By Kevin Turner

BRDC British Formula 3 runner-up Johnathan Hoggard was announced as the 2019 Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year at the Autosport Awards last Sunday.

The 19-year-old beat Japanese Formula 3 race winner Enaam Ahmed, W Series champion Jamie Chadwick and BRDC British F3 frontrunner Ayrtton Simmons after fitness and simulator tests at Red Bull, and two days of running at Silverstone in MotorSport Vision Formula 2, Ligier LMP3 and Aston Martin Vantage GT3 machinery.

Hoggard will receive £200,000, an Aston Martin Red Bull Racing F1 test, a run in an Aston Martin Vantage GTE World Endurance Championship challenger, full membership to the British Racing Drivers' Club and an Arai helmet.

The award was first given out in 1989, and former winners include David Coulthard, Dario Franchitti, Jenson Button, George Russell and Lando Norris. McLaren F1 driver Norris was also present at the awards and collected the British Competition Driver of the Year honours.

Tough test

Hoggard finished as runner-up in the 2019 British F3 Championship behind winner Clement Novalak.

The Lincolnshire driver took seven wins throughout the duration of the 24-race season, and was only 23 points from the championship summit in his Fortec Motorsports machine.

He took more wins, more pole positions and set more fastest laps than any other driver in the category during 2019.

The former British Junior Karting champion began his racing career in British Formula 4 with Fortec Motorsports. He only contested the second half of the campaign but scored a podium finish at Silverstone on his way to 16th in the standings.

In 2018, he remained with the Fortec Motorsports team and contested the full F4 season. He was an eight-time race winner on his way to third in the standings behind Kiern Jewiss and Simmons.

He collected his Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award on stage at the Grosvenor House Hotel on Sunday night.

He explained: "Coming out of the test days I was happy with how I drove, but I didn't know if it'd be enough."

"Driving without the lap times is like having one of your senses taken away. To hear my name

being called was amazing. I did quite well in the Ligier and Aston Martin, using the limited time we had, and got close to the reference drivers."

Judges impressed

During the assessment sessions at Silverstone, Hoggard impressed the judges with his raw pace in all of the different race cars that were used.

He was the stand-out performer, even when the track became slippery due to the conditions.

Hoggard explained: "It was quite tough knowing how well I was going. In BRDC British F3 I was relatively quicker [than the others] in the wet and I just drove to the grip levels I had."

The award judging panel was led by ex-Formula 1 driver and British Racing Drivers' Club vice-president Derek Warwick and comprised of double BTCC champion Jason Plato, successful McLaren and Lola designer Mark Williams, Le Mans-winning engineer Leena Gade, factory Aston Martin driver and 1996 Award winner Darren Turner, GT team boss and 1997 Award winner Alexander Sims, experienced commentator Ian Titchmarsh and Autosport magazine editor Kevin Turner. Judge Darren Turner said:

HOW THE NATIONAL ORGANISING CLUBS FARED IN 2019

HEADLINE NEWS

Photos: LAT



Hoggard beat three other finalists to win the trophies

AUTOSPORT YOUNG DRIVER AWARD WINNERS



2014: George Russell



2004: Paul di Resta



1998: Jenson Button



1992: Dario Franchitti

CLINCHES YOUNG THE YEAR ACCOLADE

ts to scoop £200,000 prize pot

“The person that did the best was the person who asked the most questions beforehand. Johnathan showed very, very strong consistency.”

“The ambient temperature was quite cold for the Aston Martin runs. The tyres came out of the oven and then dropped away and then plateaued, so the best lap was generally at the beginning of the run. He understood that and managed it. Once the tyres plateaued, he didn’t overdrive it.”

Hoggard also excelled in the pursuit test which was held in the MSV-operated F2 machines.



Judge Turner was impressed



Johnathan Hoggard was surprised by award win

Future perfect

Hoggard is assessing his options moving forward and his campaign for 2020 should be revealed soon.

He explained that winning the award could change the trajectory of his plans for the following season.

“We were waiting until tonight to finalise our plans,” he said. “You never know what opportunities can open up. It’s weird winning the award – I’ve seen it on TV and in the magazine and many winners have gone on to F1, so I don’t know what could happen next.”

He is already set to contest the Daytona 24 Hours in January thanks to winning the 2019 Sunoco Whelen Challenge.



Hoggard finished third in British F4 in 2018 season

YEAR	DRIVER
2019	Johnathan Hoggard
2018	Tom Gamble
2017	Dan Ticktum
2016	Lando Norris
2015	Will Palmer
2014	George Russell
2013	Matt Parry
2012	Jake Dennis
2011	Oliver Rowland
2010	Lewis Williamson
2009	Dean Smith
2008	Alexander Sims
2007	Stefan Wilson
2006	Oliver Turvey
2005	Oliver Jarvis
2004	Paul di Resta
2003	Alex Lloyd
2002	Jamie Green
2001	Steven Kane
2000	Anthony Davidson
1999	Gary Paffett
1998	Jenson Button
1997	Andrew Kirkaldy
1996	Darren Turner
1995	Jonny Kane
1994	Jamie Davies
1993	Ralph Firman
1992	Dario Franchitti
1991	Oliver Gavin
1990	Gareth Rees
1989	David Coulthard

RACING NEWS

F1 ROUND-UP

Red Bull's progress

Red Bull Racing Formula 1 team principal Christian Horner says that the outfit's first season with Honda power in 2019 has been "beyond expectations". Max Verstappen took three wins for the team, but this was fewer than the five Red Bull advisor Helmut Marko had targeted. "I think it's been a transitional year for the team," said Horner. "It was always going to be – [it was] the first engine [manufacturer] change we've had in 13 years. Nine podiums is a really impressive performance this year. This really has been beyond expectation and in many respects the relationship with Honda has been fantastic, the reliability, the performance increased with each engine."

Chester to exit

Renault chassis chief Nick Chester is leaving the team as part of the major restructuring of its technical department. Chester has been part of the Enstone team since the start of the century, joining the then-Benetton outfit as a race engineer and going on to hold multiple roles as it morphed into the Renault works team, then Lotus and then Renault again. His role was thrown in doubt last month when Dirk de Beer was hired as head of aerodynamics, as Renault sought to address the shortcomings that have led to its slump in form this season.

Ferrari's early loss

Ferrari boss Mattia Binotto says the team "lost" the 2019 F1 season last year when designing its car. The Italian team started pre-season testing strongly but that did not translate into results at the start of the year, and it had to wait until the Belgian Grand Prix – after F1's summer break – for its first win. Asked where he thought Ferrari lost its fight with Mercedes this year, team principal Binotto said: "I think we lost this last year when designing that car. Because at the end, we've not been competitive at the start of the season. And there are reasons for it."

No hiding for teams

F1 teams will not be allowed to use screens to hide their cars from fans and rival outfits during winter testing, following a rule change agreed by the FIA. Though F1's regulations ensure teams keep cars on display during grand prix weekends, there has previously been no such restriction in place for pre-season testing. That means teams, eager to keep their technical developments secret from rivals, have put covers on car parts or kept them completely hidden behind screens during the pre-season build-up. At last week's meeting of the FIA's World Motor Sport Council, it was agreed that a rule change be introduced that prevents teams from hiding their cars.



Green has also lamented limited design freedom

2021 F1 CARS WILL BE "NASTY TO DRIVE"

Racing Point technical director Green says new machines will be "quite unstable"

By Adam Cooper

Racing Point technical director Andrew Green believes the 2021 Formula 1 cars will be a "nasty piece of work to drive" because they will be aerodynamically "quite unstable".

The basic concept of the '21 regulations is that drivers will find it easier to follow the car ahead, thanks to the ground effect design, which in theory should lead to better on-track action.

Green says research by both

his and other teams into the definitive rules indicates that, while the following driver does indeed benefit, the dirty air from his own front wing will create its own issues. He believes teams should have more freedom in terms of what they can do to address the problem.

"I think there are areas that could do with being freed up around the front wing," he explained. "Around the front of the car I think it's incredibly restrictive to the point where it's really going to hurt the handling of the car.

"It's going to be a real nasty piece of work to drive. I think it's something that if they allowed a little more freedom would allow us to sort that out, but still retain the intent of the ground effect car and low following wake."

Asked to elaborate, he said: "Aerodynamically, it's going to be quite unstable. I don't think that's a nice thing to have. You want cars that are a bit more predictable, so that drivers can attack, be sure what they've got underneath them, they know what's going

to happen, they can drive the car at the limit knowing that it's stable at the limit.

"From what I see at the moment none of those statements are true for 2021. It's more about what's happening at the front of the car, and where the dirty air is going, right into the tunnels. The car currently is creating its own dirty air."

Green suggested that teams have had little opportunity to contribute to changes to the rules.

"It's not open to be addressed – we're not in charge of writing

the rules," he added. "I think there are some fundamental issues that could do with some addressing.

"I think the concept is doable, but I think the wording needs some refinement, should we say, to make it into a set of regulations that reflect the intent. What's presented as a 2021 model by F1, and what's written in the regulations, are two different things.

"There are some areas where it's extremely restrictive to a point where it's almost impossible to design anything."



Merc boss is in demand

HAMILTON: WOLFF HAS BEEN APPROACHED BY TOP DRIVER OVER 2021 F1 SEAT

Formula 1 world champion Lewis Hamilton says his rivals want to join Mercedes and that a top-line driver is among those calling team boss Toto Wolff about a move.

The six-time title winner is out of contract after next season, as are Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas, existing Ferrari driver Sebastian Vettel and Red Bull's Max Verstappen.

At the FIA's end-of-season awards, Hamilton said the 2021 driver market was already throwing up intrigue, and that another driver present on Friday evening had been chasing Mercedes chief Wolff

about a drive.

Verstappen, linked with a Mercedes 2021 move earlier this year, was on stage shortly before Hamilton was speaking.

Two-time F1 champion Fernando Alonso, who has made clear his interest in a potential F1 return in 2021, was also present as one of Toyota's World Endurance champions.

"It's an interesting time because there's a lot of drivers who are seeking positions everywhere," said Hamilton. "I'm talking about the calls Toto gets from every driver, including the one who was up here just recently, asking to come.

"Everyone is trying to leave their team to come to where we are – which is an understandable thing because everyone wants to win, they all want to be a part of a winning formula."

Hamilton has said before that staying with Mercedes, which has run him to five titles in six years, is his priority for 2021.

However, he reiterated that he has "not really put a lot of energy" towards making a decision, having previously admitted he was not looking forward to more contract negotiations.

"I love where I am and I love the people that I work with,"

said Hamilton. "So it's really difficult to walk away from something you love as much as I do.

"I've been with Mercedes since I was 13 so it's really hard to imagine myself anywhere else."

Despite that, Wolff has estimated there is a 25% chance that Hamilton will join Ferrari for 2021.

"I think from the rational [side], everything speaks for continuation of the relationship, from both sides," he said. "But equally, there is a 25% chance that we are not in control of, so we'll see how the next months pan out."

RALLYING'S LATEST STAR READY TO TAKE ON THE BIG GUNS

PAGE 20

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'Ingram's route to title glory'
How Briton claimed the ERC honours, p25



Pole set for F1 reserve role and DTM

Kubica to drive for BMW in DTM rookies test

Ex-Williams Formula 1 driver Robert Kubica was due to drive for BMW in the DTM rookie test at Jerez that begins today (Wednesday).

Kubica, who has been replaced by Nicholas Latifi at Williams for 2020 following a challenging F1 comeback, has already outlined his ambition to combine an F1 simulator role with a racing programme elsewhere.

Kubica's management had been in touch with Audi as it evaluated his post-F1 future but Audi motorsport boss Dieter Gass has since indicated the manufacturer is likely to retain its line-up for 2020. But BMW, which lost to Audi in all three titles in 2019, is undergoing a review of its structure and driver line-up, potentially opening the door to a race seat after Kubica indicated a DTM switch was likely.

Kubica has tested a DTM car before, having driven a V8-powered Mercedes in 2013 in a test that impressed the manufacturer.

"I would like to thank BMW Motorsport for the opportunity to test at Jerez with the BMW M4 DTM," said Kubica, who raced for BMW Sauber in F1 between 2006 and '09.

"I am already very much looking forward to the test and to getting to know the DTM race car with its turbo engine. I can well imagine a future in the DTM.

"I am looking for a new challenge, and the DTM is certainly just that. The series has a top-class field and the standard of driving is extremely high. However, we must first wait and see how I get on at the test."

Briton Nick Yelloly is due to test alongside Kubica, while sometime IndyCar driver Ed Jones headlines Audi's rookie contingent.

PEUGEOT JOINS UP WITH REBELLION FOR WEC

LMP1 privateer squad will assist manufacturer when it returns to Le Mans in 2022

By Jamie Klein

Peugeot will join forces with LMP1 outfit Rebellion Racing for its new hypercar project in the World Endurance Championship.

The announcement follows last month's news that Peugeot will return to the top flight of sportscar racing in 2022 in a bid for a fourth victory in the Le Mans 24 Hours with a hybrid-powered contender.

Rebellion's current LMP1 programme will be merged into Peugeot Sport's operation, based in Satory, where the 908 HDi FAP programme was operated from 2007 until the marque's withdrawal from sportscar racing in early '12.

Rebellion's existing chassis partner ORECA, which had previously been linked to a role in a potential Peugeot hypercar programme, was not mentioned in the announcement.

Jean-Marc Finot, motorsport boss at Peugeot parent company PSA, said: "The programme will kick off in 2022 and we are extremely happy to be teaming up with one of endurance racing's big names.

"Rebellion Racing's experience of the WEC will be a big asset as we put together the strongest possible team for our programme, and this was corroborated by the team's recent victory in Shanghai.

"The roles will be divided as a function of our respective competencies but we will form a single entity working out of Versailles-Satory."

With Peugeot's hypercar contender not expected to race until the 2022-23 season, it raises the prospect of Rebellion's R-13 continuing beyond the conclusion of the current 2019-20 campaign, going up against new machinery from Toyota and Aston Martin.

Rebellion owner Alexandre Pesci said: "I believe that the passion of our two companies speaks for us as a common and simple language. Together, we are going to build a car and team to compete in what promises to be a fiercely-contested championship as we seek to begin a successful record together."

It was also announced that in January 2020, the new combination's technical squad will "lay down the project's main lines", per a Peugeot statement, with the race team then being put into place.

● It has been confirmed the new top class of the WEC will be known as Le Mans Hypercar when it comes into force next season. The hypercar name was billed as a working title when ideas for the replacement for LMP1 were first outlined in June 2018, but has now been formally adopted with a decision of last week's FIA World Motor Sport Council in Paris.



Photos: LAT

Peugeot is third car maker to commit to hypercar entry



Dropped Red Bull junior has a new programme for the 2020 season

TICKTUM SIGNS FOR DAMS FOR F2 ATTACK

Former Red Bull Formula 1 junior and double Macau Grand Prix winner Dan Ticktum will move into Formula 2 with DAMS in 2020, alongside category stalwart Sean Gelael.

The move will result in Ticktum's first full-time campaign since he was dropped by Red Bull and lost his Super Formula seat in June – he later completed two rounds of the Formula Regional European Championship.

Ticktum recently stated that he has had interest from multiple F1 teams about joining another junior programme, but said he could quit motorsport if a path to F1 was closed.

Ticktum's DAMS move means he returns to the team where he completed three GP3 rounds in 2017.

"It's an honour to be joining DAMS in Formula 2 for 2020," said Ticktum. "Having competed with them in GP3 in 2017, I'm looking forward to being back with the team and continuing to build on those successes.

"By winning the teams' title this year, DAMS has again shown that they are one of the best outfits out there. Francois [Sicard, team boss] and his team have a reputation in the Formula 1 paddock for producing top drivers, as well as for offering them the best support to get them to F1."

Bentley launches Motorsport Academy with Team Parker

Bentley has developed a new Motorsport Academy in partnership with Team Parker Racing that aims to enter three drivers in next season's GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup.

Following the path of Aston Martin and McLaren in creating junior schemes for GT drivers, Bentley's year-long scheme will offer the successful applicants fitness and media training, simulator coaching, engineering courses and mentoring from a Bentley works driver in addition to a race programme in the five-round series – which includes the Spa 24 Hours – with the Continental GT3. From an initial pool of eight applicants,

the final three will be chosen following a three-day test at the Algarve circuit this week (December 11-13) and announced at the Autosport International Show at Birmingham's NEC in January.

The car, run by British GT frontrunner Team Parker, is expected to be entered in the Silver Cup class.

"The programme will focus on driver progression, with a clear link where they can race with Bentley," said Paul Williams, Bentley's director of motorsport. "The Bentley Motorsport Academy will be a training ground for developing new and exciting GT talent as the next generation of Bentley Boys."



Winners of the junior scheme will race Bentley in GT World Challenge Europe

QUICK LAPS THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP

Formula E will officially become an FIA world championship from the start of its 2020-21 season. The electric single-seater series will therefore join Formula 1 and the World Endurance, World Rally and World Rallycross championships in holding the elevated status with the

governing body. FE has fulfilled the criteria for having world championship status – four manufacturer competitors and races on three continents – since its second season, with the delay in gaining the grade understood to be related to higher associated team entry fees...

South Korean venue Inje Speedium is a surprise final addition to the World Touring Car Cup calendar for 2020. The circuit – which has three layouts, the longest of which is 2.428 miles long – hosted the Asian Le Mans Series in 2013 and '14. It was due to stage a SuperFormula race in '13, though this event

was cancelled... BMW has announced it will introduce a new GT3 model for the 2022 season, based on the upcoming next-generation M4 road car, to replace the ageing M6 GT3. The M6 GT3 has been in action since the 2016 season, and in that time it has taken two wins in the Spa

24 Hours and victory in the FIA GT World Cup at Macau, and it appeared in British GT for the first time this year. However, this season BMW has struggled in GT3 racing against newer machinery from Porsche and Audi, while Mercedes is also introducing a new GT3 car for 2020.

RACING NEWS

Boardley to race BMW for Team Hard

British Touring Car Championship racer Carl Boardley will switch to a WSR-built BMW 125i M Sport as he remains in the category with Team Hard in 2020.

Boardley, a multiple National Hot Rod champion, contested his first full season in the BTCC this term with Team Hard, driving one of its VW CCs. He finished 29th in the standings with four points-paying drives in the 30-round season.

The 44-year-old, who previously raced in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup, has purchased the BMW, which he believes will enable him to progress as it is a return to his preferred rear-wheel-drive format.

The BMW 125i M Sport was introduced by WSR in 2013 and has taken 37 wins and 118 podiums during its time in the BTCC. Colin Turkington took two titles in the German machine in 2014 and again in 2018.

Boardley, who is an experienced car builder on the short oval scene through his Carl Boardley Motorsport firm, said: "I'm over the moon to be back in the BTCC for 2020. I will admit that the 2019 season had its demons, but we used it to find our feet and understand the workings of the BTCC."

"There were several options available [in racing for 2020] but when WSR mentioned the availability of an established title-winning car, I couldn't help but take an interest."

"I have a great working relationship with [team boss] Tony Gilham and his Team Hard squad so this is a fantastic fit for everyone involved."

Boardley joins the recently-confirmed Jack Goff and Mike Bushell (VW CCs) in what will be a four-car team for 2020.



The BMW 125i M Sport



Boardley (r) and Gilham



Northern Irishman won in new BMW



Turkington is four-time champ

TURKINGTON BIDS TO BREAK RECORD

BTCC champion to remain with WSR for 2020 and seeks unprecedented fifth crown

By Matt James

British Touring Car champion Colin Turkington has targeted breaking Andy Rouse's record of four titles as it has been confirmed he will again lead the WSR works BMW line-up in the category in 2020.

The 37-year-old Northern Irishman first joined the WSR squad to race a Team Atomic Kitten-branded MG ZS in 2002 and has spent all but three of his 15 seasons in the BTCC with Dick Bennetts' operation. Turkington has 51 race

victories, which places him fourth on the all-time list, and 40 of those have come at the wheel of WSR-run machines.

He has taken all of his overall drivers' titles with the Lower Sunbury-based team and they have all come at the wheel of a BMW. He has also taken four of his five Independents' Trophy triumphs with the team.

He snatched the 2019 title in the final meeting at Brands Hatch in October when he placed sixth in the last of the 30-race contest to finish two points clear of Pirtek-backed team-mate

Andrew Jordan and factory Honda racer Dan Cammish.

Turkington said: "Going into 2020 with Team BMW will mark my 16th season in the BTCC and I couldn't be happier. Remaining with the team was never in doubt and we're excited to be defending our titles together."

"Becoming a four-time champion was a very special moment, but I am motivated to keep striving for more. Racing with this team gives me the best chance to achieve further success and so I'm thankful to BMW and WSR for these golden opportunities."

"The consistency of the car and personnel is a great boost and further motivates me as we get to see what the potential of this BMW 3 Series actually is. There was a lot of 'new' to contend with in 2019 in terms of the car and my engineer, so familiarity of environment should only enhance things."

Team principal Bennetts said the 2019 campaign was one of his most satisfying in the 39-year history of WSR. The operation designed and built three of the new BMW 330i M Sport machines for the BTCC, and it was a winner from its

very first meeting at Brands Hatch in April.

Turkington, along with factory team-mate Tom Oliphant, won the manufacturers points ahead of Honda.

Bennetts added: "Colin first drove for us 18 years ago and has been at the forefront of virtually every success we've had in the British Touring Car Championship."

"He's one of the best drivers the series has ever had, so it's fantastic that he'll once again lead the charge for Team BMW in 2020 as he aims for a record-breaking fifth title."



Iconic tin-top brand Alfa Romeo will be represented in the new ETCR electric touring car series, after car builder Romeo Ferraris launched a project based on the Giulia model. The outfit, which does not have official backing from Alfa, built the original Giulietta and subsequent Giulietta Veloce for competition in TCR categories, and becomes the third operation to commit to ETCR – which is scheduled to launch with a five-round programme in 2020. Cupra launched its e-Racer last October, while in September Hyundai Customer Racing revealed an electric version of its Veloster model.

Oliphant to remain with BMW alongside champion Turkington

This year's Jack Sears Trophy runner-up Tom Oliphant will remain with Team BMW for a second season in the British Touring Car Championship in 2020.

The 29-year-old stepped up to the WSR-run attack this year for his second campaign in the BTCC and scored points in 21 of the 30 rounds on his way to 11th in the overall drivers' contest. He scored two podiums during the year.

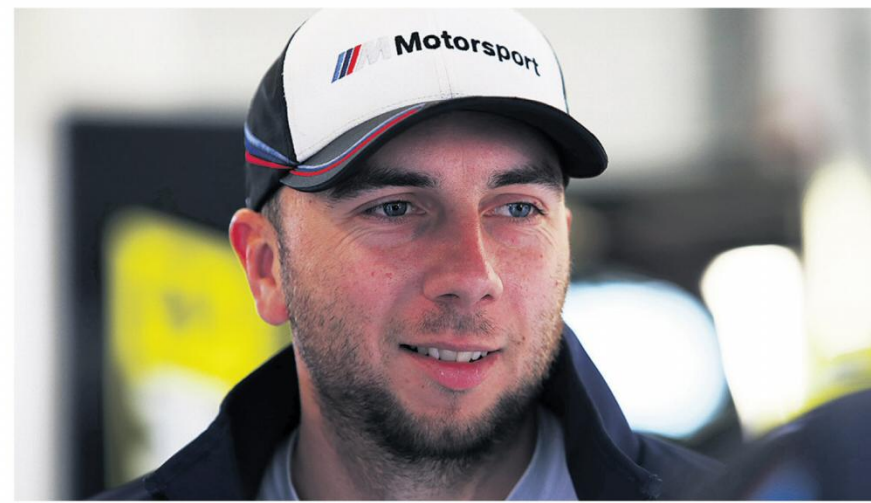
He also finished in second place in the Jack Sears Trophy, which was contested this season for drivers who had not previously finished on the rostrum in a BTCC race. It was a division he won 12 times.

The Leamington Spa-based driver, along with the sister Team BMW machine of Colin Turkington, helped BMW to win the BTCC manufacturers' competition.

Oliphant said: "I loved every

second racing with [Team BMW] this year, they are a fantastic team and have really helped me develop as a driver."

"With the experience and expertise of the WSR team behind me, I feel I made good progress as a BTCC driver across the campaign. Getting onto the overall podium a couple of times were the highlights of the year, and I can build on those performances for 2020."



Two podiums for BMW driver in his second BTCC campaign

McLAREN CHOOSES NEXT YOUNG RACERS

Ginetta GT5 driver Milner among the selection to tackle British GT4 with Tolman

Photos: Jakob Ebrej



Tolman will again run two McLarens



Milner is 2016 Junior Saloons champion

By James Newbold

McLaren Automotive has announced four new drivers for its Driver Development Programme who will be placed with McLaren partner team Tolman Motorsport in British GT next year.

The sole British driver, Ginetta GT5 Challenge graduate Katie Milner, will be joined by Australian Harry Hayek, whose career was interrupted by a back-breaking testing

shunt at Snetterton in BRDC British F3 in 2017, and two drivers with experience of the McLaren 570S GT4 in ADAC GT4 this year; Morocco's Michael Benyahia and Swiss Alain Valente.

The quartet were selected after a two-day shootout at Snetterton featuring 14 other drivers, including British GT race winners Dean Macdonald and Callum Pointon, 2018 British F3 champion Linus Lundqvist and 2017 British F4 champion Jamie Caroline. In addition to fitness and media

sessions, the drivers were given two free practice sessions, a qualifying run and a race run to simulate a British GT weekend.

Milner, the 2016 Junior Saloon Car champion, says that she had moved into Ginettas with the aim of preparing herself for a switch to GTs and was hopeful of making a good impression in her first season.

"It's going to be a huge learning curve," she said. "It's going to be really exciting to work with a team-mate and the other two

drivers as well and learn from them. I think we'll all be able to bring something different to the table and hopefully with all the support that we're going to get, we'll all be brought on quickly. The guys that raced last year had a shot at the championship, so that would be amazing to do the same."

Danny Buxton, Drive team leader at McLaren Automotive, said that each driver would be attached to a mentor as in previous years, and that the

final pairings would be decided once testing gets underway next year. He added that outgoing quartet Josh Smith, James Dorlin, Jordan Collard and Lewis Proctor would all be offered roles with McLaren.

"We were really lucky this year with the guys that we had and 100% they will be involved with McLaren looking ahead," Buxton said. "We've just got to figure out to what level that is and also try and get some more budget from the CEO!"

IN BRIEF

O'Brien stays

British GT4 racer Connor O'Brien will remain with Optimum Motorsport for a second season in an Aston Martin Vantage GT4 next year. The 19-year-old had a difficult campaign in the new-for-2019 machine, scoring a best finish of ninth at Oulton Park with team-mate Jack Butel after stepping up from the Ginetta GT5 Challenge. Optimum will again run two cars in GT4, and has acquired a second GT3 machine that it hopes to enter in SRO's renamed GT World Challenge Europe.

Century's drivers

Century Motorsport has signed Ben Hurst to join Andrew Gordon-Colebrooke in its BMW M4 GT4 in British GT next year. Ginetta GT4 Supercup graduate Gordon-Colebrooke scored the best result for the defending GT4 teams and drivers champions in a trying season with fourth at Brands Hatch alongside team boss Nathan Freke, and will share with Canadian Hurst, who raced Academy Motorsport's Aston Martin this season.

Goodyear Minis

The Mini Challenge JCW series will follow the British Touring Car Championship's lead by switching from Dunlop to Goodyear tyres for next season. The series – which joins the BTCC support package for 2020 – will use the new Eagle F1 SuperSport slick tyre range from Dunlop's sister brand Goodyear, allowing drivers to race on tyres similar to those used within the BTCC.

Clubsport races

A five-event calendar for the British Racing and Sports Car Club's Clubsport Trophy has been unveiled for next year. The club trialled the mini-enduro series at two meetings this season – attracting 34 and 41 entries – and will now expand this into a full calendar of events in 2020. The season starts on the Silverstone International circuit (March 22), followed by trips to Brands Hatch (May 17), Croft (June 27) and Donington Park (August 2), before concluding on Silverstone National (September 13).



Valluga will run Cavers and Humphris in Cayman series

First drivers sign up to new Porsche Sprint Challenge with Valluga Racing

Club racers Carl Cavers and Ian Humphris are the first drivers to sign up for the new Porsche Sprint Challenge GB series for next year.

The new manufacturer-backed category features the Porsche 718 Cayman Clubsport GT4 and will run across the British GT and British Touring Car Championship support bills in 2020, as well as having one round alongside the Porsche Club series.

Both Cavers and Humphris will drive for the Valluga Racing

squad, having driven for the team in other series this year. Cavers raced a Lotus Elise in Club Enduro – as well as competing in the Ferrari Formula Classic series – while Humphris was a winner in a Valluga Porsche in Britcar.

The team made its Carrera Cup debut this year and will now expand into the new Cayman-based series too.

"The championship is a great addition to the UK motorsport scene and Porsche have

produced a fantastic, user-friendly race car in the 718 Cayman GT4," said team boss and ex-Carrera Cup driver Benji Hetherington.

"I'm very pleased to have Carl and Ian signed up. We've enjoyed working with them previously and they're both quick racers. It's great that they've committed so early, as it allows us to prepare properly with a good testing programme over the winter and have the best opportunity to enjoy a successful season."

Alastair Rushforth Motorsport plotting two or three-car entry in first full Ginetta Junior campaign in 2020

Alastair Rushforth Motorsport plans to expand to running two or three cars for its first full season in Ginetta Junior next year.

The squad entered the series for the first Thruxton meeting of 2019 after Rushforth left In2 Racing and

driver Roman Bilinski followed suit. Another of In2's drivers, Zak Taylor, also made the switch when he began racing later in the year.

Rushforth, who previously worked for frontrunning outfit Elite Motorsport, says the learning

conducted during this year will stand the team in good stead for 2020. Taylor will again drive for the team and Rushforth is in talks with a couple of karters too.

"For a lot of the year, we were a one-car team, which is never easy,"

said Rushforth. "Only one meeting was it two cars. We learned so much this year, doing it on our own like that. Every meeting there has been an evolution of how we came across and that's going to continue. "I can't wait and I'm very excited

about it. Zak's overall results in the Winter Series didn't show his true pace but that's to be expected with a one-round meeting. His pace was fantastic and he qualified fourth for every race. It left me very positive going into next year."



Taylor will stay with team

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'CSCC has largest grids'
Club racing's hits and misses, p22



CLUBMANS TO JOIN MSVR PORTFOLIO

Championship organisers decide to end long association with the BARC

Photos: Gary Hawkins, Steve Jones



MSVR calendar was more attractive for Clubmans

By Stephen Lickorish

Clubmans Sports Prototype Championship organisers have decided to end the category's long association with the British Automobile Racing Club as the series will run with MotorSport Vision Racing next year.

The Clubmans Register was investigating buying track time from other clubs – following its 2019 season finale being at a British Racing and Sports Car Club meeting – when MSVR made a good offer to take the championship under its banner.

Clubmans Register chairman Mike Evans says that the

category's southern competitor base made the calendar the BARC offered unattractive.

"It's a championship that people dip in and out – it's not a championship where everyone does every round," said Evans. "We have a core of a dozen who do every round and then there's about 15-16 that dip in and out, and nearly all of those guys are from the south Midlands or south east so we get good grids at Silverstone, Donington Park, Brands Hatch and Snetterton. As we go further afield to Pembrey, Anglesey and Cadwell Park our numbers tend to reduce there."

"The calendar and circuits are critical to how it works out –

if we have two meetings in the same month we tend to have lower numbers. We've been with BARC for about 50 years and they've treated us well but the calendar they came up with wasn't very good.

"The calendar had Silverstone in mid-March which is not the best time of year – our guys don't tend to come out of the woodwork until mid-April. Then it was Pembrey and Anglesey and it didn't really work. Someone from our committee was looking to see if we could buy track time from other clubs. MSVR came back to us with a really good calendar and we thought for 2020 we would give it a go with them."

Evans says the reaction to the move from competitors has generally been positive despite it being a major change after a long relationship with the BARC.

"There's some people that are upset we're leaving BARC because they've looked after us so well but they understand the situation and it's about making the costs affordable," he added.

It is expected that entry fees will be lower with MSVR next year and the championship's provisional calendar begins at Donington Park in mid-April and also features trips to Snetterton, Silverstone, Oulton Park, Croft and Brands Hatch.



Rule tweaks will open Special Saloons up to wider range of cars

MODSPORTS ALLOWS MODERN ENGINES

The Classic Sports Car Club has moved to broaden the appeal of its Special Saloons and Modsports series by introducing a parallel set of classes for Pre-1994 cars powered by modern engines from next season.

Seeking greater reliability, sustainability and stabilised running costs to boost grids, the first major regulation revision in nine years has been carefully considered, targeting newcomers with complementary cars. It also gives stalwarts the option to re-equip original chassis should the need arise.

"New separate classes and an overall winner for Pre-'94 cars running later technology will keep the look of the grid correct," said CSCC director

David Smitheram. "The series already has several period cars racing with Chevy LS and Honda VTEC engines, where owners have removed expensive originals for safe keeping. We have previously turned away otherwise correct cars – such as Minis and Imps running bike engines and Escort Mk1s and Mk2s with Millington, Ford Duratec and Honda S2000 engines – but these will now be welcomed."

Three modern engine classes will be split by capacity: over 2300cc and all forced-induction; 1401-2300cc and up to 1400cc, plus a 'taster' set for promoters' option cars. The series will also feature an expanded five-event calendar next year, centred on a special event at Thruxton on July 25-26.

New Student Motorsport team is the latest to commit to revamped Clio Cup UK for 2020

A brand-new team called Student Motorsport will enter the Clio Cup UK for the first time next year, plotting a two-car entry.

The team will be the racing arm of Student Motorsport, which runs an online network to connect students and graduates with educators and motorsport companies.

Founder John Paul Latham says he was offered the opportunity to get involved in the Clio Cup for 2020 and believes it is a good chance to help promote the network as well as to help the next generation of mechanics. "The Clio Cup is a very

professionally run series – it's a great starting point," he said. "It's very accessible and it's a great place not just to develop drivers but to develop the next mechanics, engineers and team operators. They're not particularly difficult to run and you can't do a lot to the cars so you have more time to focus on training people. What I want to do is build a team and there's no greater feeling than sitting back and watching it all tick away."

Latham has previously run cars in the Mini Challenge through the College of West Anglia Motorsport squad.

He added: "What I've created is a network a bit like LinkedIn, where we have students, graduates, education centres and professionals in motorsport giving a breadth of opportunities. We wanted to start getting the message out

there. It's going to help education improve and there's lots of interesting developments planned, including racing. It showcases the individual schools, colleges and courses."



Clio Cup will feature new fifth-generation car next year

DEPUTY EDITOR

STEPHEN LICKORISH

"It's good series aren't afraid of trying something new"



The Clubmans Sports Prototype Championship and Alfa Romeo Championship are among the longest-running UK racing series.

That organisers of both categories have decided to jump ship and switch organising clubs for 2020 after decades at their previous homes demonstrates there are some major changes going on in the world of club motorsport.

The Clubmans Register has a history with the British Automobile Racing Club that dates back to the 1960s, while the Alfa Romeo series had run with the British Racing and Sports Car Club for the entirety of its 37-year existence. That organisers have decided to end such long associations is not a decision taken lightly. But it perhaps indicates that the two largest clubs no longer have the pulling power they once did.

Increasing sections of the club racing world have shifted to a model where individual series buy track time from the clubs. And that means it is easier for championships to break away and go elsewhere if what they have been offered does not fit their needs. That is what has happened in the case of Clubmans as a switch to a schedule with MotorSport Vision Racing proved more attractive.

Entry fees are another key issue. It is no secret that some clubs have higher entry fees than others and that was one of the factors that led to the Alfa Romeo Championship joining the 750 Motor Club for 2020. At a time when costs are increasing anyway following rises in circuit hire charges and Motorsport UK's significant hike in event permit fees, this is becoming an ever-more important aspect.

The Alfa Romeos aren't the only series to swap the BRSCC for the 750MC in recent times. The F1000 single-seater championship made the same decision for 2019 and it has proved to be a good one. While it was averaging 13 cars last year, this season that has been up to 18 – meaning it has lost its long-held yellow warning card from Motorsport UK after its lack of previous entries.

"It's very pleasing that we are considered to be an attractive paddock to come and race with," says 750MC competitions manager Giles Groombridge. "There's a lot of championships that have been struggling for a number of years and continued when maybe there needs to be a bit of reset in the industry in terms of the number of competing championships."

Categories moving between clubs is certainly nothing new but the fact that two such long-serving series have decided now is the time for a change makes it so significant. Others may well have a change of scenery too, with the Classic Formula Ford 1600 Championship going from BARC to Historic Sports Car Club control. Whether the moves pay off remains to be seen, but it is good to see championships are not afraid of trying something new in a bid to survive and thrive.

● Turn to page 22 to find out which were this year's most popular clubs and series – and which really struggled.

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HISTORICS

'Lowe and Robson topped Grizedale'
Ford Escort crew top the historics, below



Photos: Paul Lawrence

DOWN THE PUB

DAVID BENNETT

Roger Albert Clark Rally star
Age: 37 Lives: Manchester



Bennett shone on the R.A.C.

He's from BTRDA 1400s

"We did BTRDA 1400s from 2008, starting in Rally First and we won that for two years. Then we progressed up to 1400S and won that in 2015. I've had a bit of a sabbatical since then. The changes to the running order came along and I got busy with work, so I kind of stepped away from rallying."

He had a chance in a Ford Escort

"My uncle Steve Bennett, who owns the Ford Escort, runs Sabelt UK and he bought the car a few years ago and we thought it would be nice to put a result on the car so why not have a go at the Roger Albert Clark Rally. Mark Egglestone, Stuart's brother, is the guy who has prepared the car and he did an amazing job of keeping us going through the rally."

It was a big rush

"We did Greystoke back in July as a warm-up and the Trackrod, which didn't go to plan. We had an engine built, new gearbox and back axle so a lot came together all at the last minute. We only got it rolling-roaded on the Tuesday before the rally."

He loved the event

"Mark was pulling all-nighters and Steve has put a lot into the car, so all I really had to do was turn up and drive. It's the first time we've done anything like this and it was brilliant. It was absolutely epic but there are times when it is completely gruelling. But when you are there and you are on it, it's fantastic."

The result was remarkable

"I'd not had much time in the car and we had the fog to deal with. The windscreen wipers aren't very good on a Mk1 Escort, but when we had a clean run it really started to click and I was absolutely thrilled to be 10th overall in a 1600cc car. We thought we might sneak towards the top 20 if things went well with a 1600 Cross-flow with 160bhp. The fog was a bit of a leveller and my background is road rallies, so I like driving at night."

He'd like to do more

"This has given me a few things to think about. I'd only ever done BTRDA front-wheel-drive stuff before but I'd fallen in love with rear-wheel drive and longer events like the Roger Albert Clark. It would be incredible to have a Mk2 Escort-BDG but a Pinto like Stuart Egglestone could be the next step."



Formula Fords will have 10 races

JIM RUSSELL'S LIFE TO BE HONOURED

Driver and race-school boss to be celebrated at Snetterton HSCC showdown

By Paul Lawrence

The life of the late Jim Russell will be celebrated in a new two-day historic race meeting at Snetterton next spring.

Russell, who died in March aged 98, started racing at Snetterton in 1952. He won the British Formula 3 Championship three years in a row from 1955 to 1957 but stopped competing after being

injured at Le Mans in 1959.

In 1956 he set up the first motor racing school at Snetterton and played a key role in the early career of drivers like Emerson Fittipaldi, Derek Bell and Jacques Villeneuve.

It is planned to stage a display of cars relevant to Jim Russell's life and the Historic Sports Car Club is keen to hear from anyone with a suitable car.

The HSCC's Jim Russell

Trophy Meeting (April 4-5) will feature 10 Formula Ford races to honour the memory of the racing school pioneer and also the early heritage of the Formula Ford Festival. Before moving to Brands Hatch in 1976, the first four Festivals were run at Snetterton from 1972 to 1975.

The race line-up will include double headers for Historic Formula Ford, Classic Formula Ford, Heritage Formula Ford, Historic

Formula Ford 2000 and a double-header for modern Formula Fords running under the Champion of Snetterton title.

Andy Dee-Crowne of the HSCC said: "We are delighted to be able to honour the memory of a man who did so much for the sport. Snetterton is the ideal place to celebrate Formula Ford and we will have races for cars spanning 50 years of the category."

Walker promises to get his Ford Escort back on the rally stages

Rally driver Alan Walker has pledged to rebuild his Ford Escort Mk2 after coming close to losing the car on the opening stage of the recent Roger Albert Clark Rally.

The car erupted into

flames when a fuel line broke or became detached early in the Radnor stage. However, with the help of following crews, Walker managed to get the fire out.

"I'm hoping to have the car rebuilt in time for Rally North

Wales in late March," said Walker. "That's a workable target. The engine is now out ready for a rebuild. Everything in the engine bay, including the wiring loom, is gone but it's not as bad as it first looked."



Walker will make return



Rosenberger's Tuthill-run Porsche topped Stig Blomqvist

ROSENBERGER'S EAST AFRICA JOY

Austrian driver Kris Rosenberger and co-driver Nicola Bleicher won the East African Safari Classic Rally when the rally finished in Mombasa on Friday after nine tough days.

Rosenberger, who last rallied in Kenya back in 1989, took his Tuthill Porsche 911 to a 93-second victory over the similar car of 2015 winner Stig Blomqvist.

Just 17 cars from 20 starters finished the rally

and in ninth were Welshmen Osian Pryce and Dale Furniss in a Ford Escort Mk1. Despite a catalogue of problems, Pryce set several fastest stage times on his first experience of rallying in Africa.

"It was a fantastic rally and our tactics were 100% right," said Rosenberger. "We also know that it's really hard to beat Blomqvist. He had more problems than us and we still think he is the man and so we are happy to be here."

Greats to grace Autosport International

Five ground-breaking cars from the sport's history will be exhibited as part of Autosport International's Retro Future campaign on January 9-12.

To celebrate the 70th anniversary of Formula 1, Autosport International will be showcasing some of motorsport's most revolutionary designs.

The top five technologies as voted by fans include three

grand prix cars: the active suspension of the Williams FW14B, the revolutionary monocoque structure of the Lotus 49, and the all-conquering McLaren MP4/4.

Joining the line-up will be the low-drag Le Mans-winning Jaguar XJ-9 and the Lancia Stratos as the first bespoke rally car. Examples of all five icons are due to be on show at the Birmingham NEC.



A classic rallying Lancia Stratos will be at Autosport show

IN BRIEF

Greenway award

The annual presentation of the Norman Greenway Trophy will be to the aggregate Historic FF1600 winner at Snetterton next April. It is presented in memory of commentator Greenway who was the voice of Snetterton for many years. The weekend coincides with what would have been his 98th birthday and his family, including his wife Barbara, plan to be present.

Grizedale winner

When pacesetter Matthew Robinson dropped six minutes on the second stage, John Lowe and Dave Robson ended the Grizedale Stages as the leading historic crew. The pairing took their Ford Escort Mk2 to a class-winning 13th overall to wrap up Lowe's first year in a full-spec historic Mk2.

DAF for sale

The unique DAF 55 V8 Super Saloon first built in the early 1970s is now for sale for £50,000. The iconic lap record-breaking racer was built by Tony Hazlewood, who later bought it back and restored it. The DAF ran at the Goodwood Festival in 2011 but has not been raced for many years and is now being sold due to long-term illness.

Smith's success

Ben Smith chalked up a finish on his first proper experience of forest rallying, Saturday's Grizedale Stages. The son of double British Historic Rally champion Steven drove the ex-Guy Smith Ford Escort Mk1 RS2000 after tackling a range of asphalt events in a Renault Clio. Seasoned co-driver Phil Spurge guided Smith through the Lake District event.

Pryce tome

Authors Darren Banks and Kevin Guthrie have confirmed plans to write a new book on the life of Welsh Formula 1 driver Tom Pryce. They have pledged to donate all the proceeds, barring production costs, to the fund for a statue in memory of Pryce in his hometown of Denbigh. Fifty people have already contributed their memories of Tom to the project, including former F1 driver John Watson.

Funnell returns

The Morris Minor Special Saloon of James Funnell could be back on the grid in 2019 after an absence of 25 years. Funnell last raced the car in 1994 but has been rebuilding it over recent times. A return to racing in the Classic Sports Car Club's Special Saloons and Modified Sports Series is the ultimate goal.

Classic confirmed

The date of next year's Silverstone Classic has been confirmed for the weekend of Friday July 31 to Sunday August 2, running two weeks after the British Grand Prix. Two more races have been announced with both the Masters Endurance Legends and the International Trophy for Classic Pre '66 GT Cars returning to the line-up.



The Classic will run in August

RALLY NEWS

Photos: Julien Perez, mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Tänak (above) got to grips with the i20

TANAK: THERE WILL BE NO WAR WITH TEAM-MATE NEUVILLE

Estonian world champion pledges that intra-squad harmony will break out

By David Evans

Reigning World Rally champion Ott Tänak has scotched talk of a potentially damaging rivalry between himself and Thierry Neuville inside the Hyundai team for next season.

Tänak completed his first test aboard an i20 Coupe WRC last week and, while he declined to comment on the details of the test (see Motorsport News on January 1 for a full report), admitted he was looking forward to starting his title defence with the South Korean squad.

Given the Belgian's undisputed number one status at Hyundai since 2014, some feel it could be difficult for Tänak to establish his authority, despite his world champion status.

Asked if he felt he was joining Neuville's team, Tänak replied: "Actually, [team boss] Andrea [Adamo] invited me to join his team, so I can say I am going to join the Adamo team!"

"In the end we are the drivers to do the

job. It's a new year and we start with a blank sheet of paper. Nobody has any points and we are all going to fight for our own championship and for the teams' championship – it's as simple as that. I don't see any problems.

"From my side, I can say I'm professional and I have a job to do. As a team, I'm confident we are very, very strong together with Thierry. I'm sure there will be a big fight [in the team], but as long as the fight stays in the stages, I don't see any problems. And normally it should work out that this is the case: if you have a strong team-mate then it makes the team stronger. I know Thierry and I will be pushing the team for the development of the car. It's going to be an exciting season."

Talking more about his decision to leave Toyota, Tänak said: "It's always easier to stay where you are, but I feel plenty of motivation to keep pushing. I can't stay on one title, I have to have more. Through the year I kept in touch with Adamo and he's the kind of guy who likes to push as much



Neuville has been the number one at Hyundai since he joined in 2014

as I do. I hope we can have a good match with the full motivation to fight for the championship – that's my feeling: that's the team to be in to fight for the championship."

Beyond any potential rivalry inside the team, Tänak says Sebastien Ogier will be a danger man following his switch to Toyota. Like Tänak, the Frenchman got

his first taste of his new 2020 wheels in the French Alps on Sunday and Monday.

"I know which tools I had when I was at Toyota and I know [what] he has to drive next year," said Tänak. "Ogier is always a threat, he's a sporting guy who can be aggressive and go for what he wants. No doubt he will go for everything next season. He and I, we start in the same

place, we both have a lot to learn for the new year with the new team.

"Toyota is a professional place and generally the team is good – I'm sure he will get some big support. Toyota's a team which always wants to win. We will have some big fights next year, but I'm sure they will be fair fights for the title."

Toyota Gazoo Racing technical director Tom Fowler told MN he is comfortable with the level of technical knowledge Tänak has taken with him from Toyota to Hyundai regarding the 2020 car.

"We don't have a huge amount of work coming with the car for early next season," said Fowler. "Ott will know we have focused on some weight saving, but he doesn't know the areas – which are deep within the car – where we've been working. The only other [homologation] joker we're playing is on gear ratios, which is designed to deal with the torque from the engine and extend the life of the gearboxes."

"We're not concerned about what Ott knows about our car."

BIRD RUFFLES FEATHERS AT KNOCKHILL

PAGE 19



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'Rovanpera keen to get started'

Toyota's new WRC recruit, p20



WORLD RALLY TEAMS BEGIN PREPARATIONS FOR 2020 SEASON

Squads descend on the Alps for mileage ahead of Monte Carlo's WRC opener



Toyota's new drivers got to grips with the Yaris WRC machine



Loeb put testing mileage on the Hyundai ahead of Monte

By David Evans

Monte Carlo Rally testing began in France last week, with Hyundai and Toyota running in the Alps, while M-Sport Ford will begin its round one preparations early next month.

Champion Ott Tanak remained tight-lipped on the details of his test – and the revised parts he requested from his new Hyundai team – but did, however, confirm at the FIA prize-giving event in Paris that he felt comfortable with the car during his day of testing in the French Alps.

Tanak worked with team-mates Thierry Neuville and nine-time

world champion Sebastien Loeb, both of whom were also in action in the Alzenau-based team's test car last week.

Hyundai's main rival for next season, Toyota, was also hard at work, with the Yaris WRC running for seven days. Kalle Rovanpera was first to test the car, followed by Elfyn Evans and Sebastien Ogier – all three of the frontline drivers ran for two days with Takamoto Katsuta driving on Tuesday, the final day.

Both teams ran in similar conditions with early-morning frost giving way to dry roads. Neither team ran high enough to chase snow and ice, preferring to give the drivers a base of

consistency to learn their new cars.

Toyota's technical director Tom Fowler, talking to MN ahead of the final two days, said the test had been positive.

"It's been good," he said. "Everybody seems happy. I wasn't on the test, but I've been in constant contact with the engineers."

"Monte Carlo is such a difficult event to test for. Until a driver has been with a team for a long time, it's difficult to go through all the possible permutations of what might happen. With Elfyn, he knows it's important for him to understand early in the season what the changes do to the car. He

went to the test with one of our Monte-specific set-ups, which starts out as a dry Monte set-up evolving into different areas depending on the conditions.

"We showed Elfyn what that was and then let him move in different directions with spring rates and spring balances. That means he'll know the options if he starts to get a bit of understeer, he'll know what he can do with the bars and the springs. Generally the changes do the same things from car to car, it's physics at the end of the day, but the steps the teams take to make those changes can vary."

The teams will return to France early in the new year.

KALLE ROVANPERA TOYOTA'S NEWCOMER

Q&A

The Monte test was your first time driving the current car, how difficult is it to jump in the car and be ready?

"It's not the easiest way to do it. But for Monte and, I think, at least the first few events it's just learning the car. You have to learn so many things, this is a different car to what I drove before, so in the beginning it will be about trying to survive. After the beginning of the

season then let's see how it goes."

What's the reaction to your news like in Finland?

"I think it was quite big news for many people and everybody in Finland is supporting quite much, this is nice to see."

What's the pressure like?

"There is, anyway, no chance for me to be fast in the beginning of the season, I'm

just learning the car and hanging in there with the big boys, trying to learn some of the new tricks and the speed and maybe after that we can start to try to do some results."

Is it good to have experienced team-mates in Sebastien Ogier and Elfyn Evans?

"It's nice to have these guys, like you say they have a lot of experience already. Even if they do something differently or do something by themselves then

we can learn from them and how they are setting the car up and why."

You're a 19-year-old, what's normal life like at home – do you still see much of your mates?

"I still see some of my friends, there's still time for this. But with Skoda Motorsport testing last season, there were quite a lot of days away from Finland. It will be busy like this again, for sure."



Teams now have the option of running another satellite entry in 2020 WRC contest

The FIA has opened the door for manufacturers to run second teams in the World Rally Championship next season – with Hyundai and Toyota both considering additional entries.

Last week's meeting of the World Motor Sport Council in Paris confirmed the move.

A statement from the WMSC read: "To offer WRC teams more opportunities in the

context of their participation, manufacturers are now able to enter an additional one-car team with a separate competitor identity and will not be permitted to score points for the main WRC factory team."

Hyundai Motorsport director Andrea Adamo said he was ready to "invent" new possibilities to keep Craig Breen and Andreas Mikkelsen in a factory i20 Coupe

WRC. Splitting a car between the pair – potentially with Breen also running a WRC2 programme – is understood to be on the cards.

Tommi Makinen's squad will run an additional Toyota Yaris WRC for Takamoto Katsuta for the majority of the season, with Jari-Matti Latvala also confirmed for Sweden and Finland and potentially three more events.



Toyota ran Katsuta in 2019

Britain's European Rally champions Chris Ingram (r) and Ross Whittock (l) collected the silverware following their season-long triumph at Friday night's FIA Gala Night in Paris



Replacement could be slotted in for Chile

WRC Promoter is still chasing a replacement event for the cancelled Rally Chile, with a decision potentially coming on a 14th round of the championship after the start of next season.

The Concepcion-based event was canned earlier this month after a state of emergency was declared in Chile following political and social unrest. Spain lost its slot on the 2020 calendar, sparking immediate speculation that Salou could make a quick return to replace April's planned

South American event.

WRC Promoter managing director Oliver Ciesla told MN nothing is decided yet.

"It might be difficult to find a replacement event," he said. "We are working on this right now, but it's not entirely clear if we go to 13 or 14 rallies next year."

Asked if the schedule had to be nailed down before the start of next month's season-opener in Monte Carlo, Ciesla added: "There's not really a deadline."

GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

DAVID EVANS

"Extra cars could open up rallying's tactical play"



Regardless of how spectacular next year's WRC 2, WRC 3 and Junior WRC cars will be – and they will be – the millions of fans standing at the side of the road are there primarily to watch Ott Tanak and his colleagues in their factory World Rally Cars.

The big cars with the big stars are always going to be the biggest draw. With that in mind, the World Motor Sport Council's decision to ratify second, single-car teams from the WRC manufacturers has to be a good thing; anything to see another one of these stunning cars coming past.

What worries me is the potential this also offers for Hyundai and Toyota to take a tactical approach to the WRC. Andrea Adamo's demonstrated he's the master of such method this year, rotating his drivers (all except Thierry Neuville) regularly to ensure he had a factory car far enough down the order to take advantage of preferable day-one conditions on hot, dry rallies. Time and again we saw Dani Sordo, Sebastien Loeb and Andreas Mikkelsen used as cannon-fodder in Hyundai's battle for a maiden world title. And who are we to criticise? Adamo got the job done in his first season as general of the blue and orange army.

And nothing's more certain than the fact we can expect a similar approach next year. Question is: will Toyota respond? Tommi Makinen's always been clear: he wants his crews in the car on every rally; as a former driver he understands the need for regular seat time better than anybody.

Equally, he has to be pragmatic and understand there's a principled approach and there's making the job harder than it really needs to be. If Sebastien Ogier and Elfyn Evans finish 1-2 in Monte next month, then it snows like mad on the eve of round two in Sweden, Toyota's potential for taking big points will be decimated.

Now, last week's WMSC ruling in Paris doesn't mean Latvala can score for the main Toyota team, but it would open an opportunity to run Kalle Rovanpera in the second squad and promote Latvala to the factory car. And Latvala running ninth on the road, having missed the season-opener in the Alps, could be a particularly potent combination. And not one easily ignored by Makinen.

The potential benefits as the season plays out from Mexico to Sardinia and all the loose gravel roads between, are even more marked.

It would be naive not to expect the teams to play the game. And there's a big part of me that enjoys that element of a Friday and Saturday evening. It's fascinating to watch the brains behind the respective operations trying to outmanoeuvre their opponents with one arm tied behind their back courtesy of a ban on communications between team and car once the crews are into the stage.

My concern here is the potential collateral damage if the WRC's big two start to try to outdo each other. Where does that leave M-Sport? The Cumbrians might run a third Ford Fiesta WRC on the odd outing here and there, but anything approaching the resource to fight Toyota and Hyundai is well beyond them right now. So the gap between the haves and have-nots grows again.

And the last thing we need right now is the loss of another team...

RALLY NEWS

MELLORS WANTS IRIZ R5 ON WORLD STAGE

MEM's Proton could make its appearance in WRC 2 next season

By David Evans

The British-based Proton team Mellors Elliot Motorsport is closing on a WRC 2 entry for next season with the Iriz R5 ready for its full World Rally Championship debut.

The Iriz R5 has competed on a variety of British and Irish national events, but team principal Chris Mellors wants to take the team to the next level and chase another world title for the Malaysian manufacturer.

"It feels like we've been working towards this moment for a long time, but we know what we've got with the car now," said Mellors, who has developed the Iriz R5 through his company.

"We've got a little bit more testing to do later this month – we're hoping Marcus Gronholm [two-time WRC champion] will be back over to run the car again for us – and then we'll be ready for the sign-off spec for 2020."

Mellors is talking to a number of drivers about the season ahead and understands the timeframe to get an entry in for Monte Carlo is before December 20.

"There are some good options out there, but everybody seems to be waiting on everybody else," added Mellors, whose son Ollie has won four events on the

bounce with the car, including last weekend's Grizedale Stages (see report, page 17).

"We've all been waiting to see what Hyundai and Skoda and all the other guys are doing, but it's coming to decision time now.

"We've done some more work on the engine recently and everything else is ready. The car's got all the right bits on it with Reiger suspension, Xtrac transmission and Cosworth electronics, everything is there and it's all bolted to a superb and very strong chassis."

Proton has a long history of challenging for WRC class honours, with P-G Andersson finishing a close second to Craig Breen driving a Satria S2000 in the 2012 S-WRC. Karamjit Singh won the 2002 PWRC at the wheel of a Proton Pert, while Alister McRae lifted the 2011 Asia Pacific title at the wheel of a Satria.

Mellors added: "There's huge interest in what we're doing with the rally programme in Malaysia. Proton is keen to increase commitment from their end and there are some partners in Kuala Lumpur looking to get involved as well.

"We're working to tie these ends together so we can get back out there on the world stage. We've built this fabulous car and we want to show folk what it can do."



The Proton Iriz R5 has been developed by MEM

Photos: Pro-rally.co.uk, LAT



Rallycircuit Cote d'Azur win went to Mercedes F1 driver Bottas

BOTTAS ENDS SEASON WITH MAIDEN RALLY VICTORY

Mercedes Formula 1 driver Valtteri Bottas scored his first rally win with success at last weekend's Rallycircuit Cote d'Azur event at Paul Ricard.

The Finn dominated the all-asphalt rally and went one better than the second place he managed at this year's French Grand Prix, also held at Le Castellet.

Bottas won five of the

nine stages in a PH Sport-run Citroen DS3 WRC, leading Robert Consani's Skoda Fabia R5 home by 50 seconds.

Bottas has already confirmed he will return to the scene of his rally debut earlier this year, when he drives a Ford Fiesta WRC at next month's Arctic Lapland Rally in Finland.

Paul Ricard was not the only European race track

echoing to the sound of rally cars last weekend, with the popular Monza Rally Show won by Volkswagen Polo R5 driver Andrea Crugnola.

Hyundai's World Rally Championship star Dani Sordo finished second, 11s behind, with third place enough for Andrea Nucita to lift the €10,000 Hyundai i20 R5 Trophy prize as the first private i20 home.

Road rally driving debut for M-Sport's Millener ends with class spoils

M-Sport Ford World Rally Team principal Richard Millener is backing grassroots rallying after making his debut as a road rally driver earlier this month.

Millener finished second on Exmouth Motor Club's Barbara Carter Memorial Road Rally earlier this month and has told Motorsport News he will be back in the lanes as soon as possible.

"I've done road rallies before, I co-drive for my dad when I was younger," said Millener. "I kept in touch with a lot of the guys in

Devon and said I'd like to come back down and have another go when I had time."

Seeded at car two, Millener finished second overall – and first expert – on the Tiverton-based event. That result – with co-driver and former M-Sport colleague Mike Gilbey – has got him hooked again.

"I want to do more," added Millener. "We did 140 miles and had an absolute ball. Mike got one of the plots wrong and I'll be honest, I was a bit over ambitious at a couple of junctions; Mike might have

had to get out and give us a bit of a push on one corner, but it reminded me why I got involved in this sport. And why I love it so much.

"Road rallying has to be one of the most cost-effective ways into rallying and it still teaches you so many valuable lessons. OK, map-reading isn't quite as necessary as it once was in this sport, but you're competing and making decisions in a high-pressure situation. I'd absolutely recommend it to anybody looking for a way in."



Millener (r) with co-driver Gilbey after finishing road rally

Pirelli commits to ERC3 Junior for 2020

While the World Rally Championship awaits the identity of its single tyre manufacturer from 2021, Pirelli will continue to supply the ERC3 Junior series next season.

The Italian tyre giant was confirmed as the supplier at last week's World Motor Sport Council meeting – the same meeting which had been tipped to deliver news on the WRC's control tyre deal for the year after next.

Motorsport News understands Citroen's departure from the WRC has complicated the process, with Michelin now reworking its strategy in the loss of the French manufacturer. No confirmation has been given on when any announcement will be made on the WRC front.

Talking about its ERC3 Junior commitment, Pirelli's rally activity manager Terenzio Testoni said: "Pirelli is delighted to continue as the single supplier of tyres to the FIA ERC3 Junior Championship as part of our company-wide philosophy of promoting young talent in rallying to ensure the future of the sport. We look forward to another exciting season of great rallies and with the aim of discovering more champions of the future."

'So close yet so far to BTCC title'
Dan Cammish insight, P24



Photos: Pro-rally.co.uk, Hyundai Motorsport

Promo Racing Team
ran Hyundai i20 R5



McERLEAN'S MAGIC MONZA ROSTRUM

JBRC champion bags class podium at popular Italian event

By Jason Craig

Junior British Rally champion Josh McErlean says finishing as one of the top Hyundai i20 crews on his first visit to the Monza Rally Show was "the icing on the cake".

McErlean and co-driver Keaton Williams finished third in the Hyundai i20 R5 Trophy at the Italian event last weekend and received a cheque for €3,000.

The 20-year-old was on course to finish the rally in 15th place overall before a faulty

transmission sensor on his Promo Racing Team i20 R5 cost him three places over the course of Sunday's final two tests.

"Those small issues dropped us down the leaderboard but we still had a lot of fun," he told Motorsport News. "There was such a great atmosphere at the event – it is a bucket-list rally.

"We learnt so much across the weekend and getting the chance to work with an Italian team was a nice challenge; it makes you think about things a little more.

"We were consistently

improving over the weekend which was our main goal.

"To compete on the same event as World Rally Championship drivers [Dani Sordo, Andreas Mikkelsen and Craig Breen] and be close to their times gives us confidence going forward.

"To leave the event among the top three Hyundai Motorsport Trophy finishers is the icing on the cake, especially as there was a huge Hyundai Motorsport presence there."

Promo Racing Team was full of praise for McErlean after the

event and suggested they would be happy to work with him again in the future.

"We have been at the Monza Rally Show the past three years but this is one of the best results we've achieved," said team mechanic Luca Marchesi.

"The two guys have a great desire to learn and understand the car. For all of us involved with the team it was really nice to work with them.

"They put in much higher commitment than some drivers who go to Monza."

McCourt's broken wrist on the mend

Cathan McCourt says he is confident of being fit for the opening round of next year's Irish Tarmac Championship after sustaining a broken wrist on the Killarney Historic Rally.

The reigning Irish Forest Rally champion was contesting the event in his family-owned Ford Escort Mk2 and sat as high as fifth after the opening three stages with co-driver Grace O'Brien last month.

However, on stage four he lost control of the car on a second-gear left-hander and the kickback from the steering wheel broke his right wrist.

"It all happened on Moll's Gap," he explained. "There was oil all over the road on that particular section of the stage and it caused the car to dive, nose first, into a bank. The car is not too bad; breaking my wrist was the worst part.

"It should take six weeks to heal. That's enough time for me to be ready for the Galway Rally."

Despite bowing out in such unfortunate circumstances, McCourt says he was satisfied with his performance up to that point.

"I was getting to grips with the car quite quickly and was happy with how it was going considering I hadn't sat in it since last year," he added.

"There were a lot of talented drivers there and to be fifth after the first three stages with no moments was good."

Wells aims for BTRDA outings

Richard Wells aims to compete in the BTRDA next year after claiming a maiden Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship podium in a newly-acquired Mitsubishi Lancer E9.

Wells, who raced in a Ford Fiesta R2T last season, switched to the Mitsubishi ahead of the current MNCRC campaign and finished third at last weekend's Knockhill Stages on the car's third outing.

"We're hoping to take part in some BTRDA rallies next year, that's the plan for the moment," said Wells, who



The newly-acquired Mitsubishi Lancer E9 took podium

had Calvin Houldsworth co-driving him.

"It's a new car for this season, so we're just getting to grips with it at the moment. It's going very well.

"There's a couple of them [rounds] back-to-back, so I think we have to look at how to get it switched back to a gravel set-up in between. We'll see how we get on."

Ford Escort Mk2 for Edwards on Christmas Stages at Croft Circuit

Two-time British Rally champion Matt Edwards will compete in a fourth different car in as many events when he gets behind the wheel of a Ford Escort Mk2 on this weekend's Christmas Stages.

Edwards drove a Fiat 131 on the Trackrod, a Hyundai i20 R5 on Wales Rally GB and returned to his usual Ford Fiesta R5 for the Neil Howard Memorial Stages at Oulton Park last month.

He will drive Pete Smith's Escort Mk2 on the Christmas Stages at Croft Circuit, using it as an opportunity to evaluate recent changes made to the car over the past 12-18 months.

"This is just a test run out to see how it goes," Edwards told MN. "It's [about] getting out there and having some fun. Results are good at the end of the day but you've got to be realistic, the four-wheel-drive cars [driven by Kevin]

ENTRY LIST

Christmas Stages, Croft Circuit, December 15

NO	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR
1	Kevin Procter/Patrick Walsh	Ford Fiesta S2000
2	Frank Bird/Jack Morton	Ford Focus WRC07
3	Matt Edwards/Rhys Stoneman	Ford Escort Mk2
4	Tony Bardy/Reg Smith	Ford Focus WRC00
5	Chris Ford/Neil Colman	Ford Fiesta R5
6	Paul Swift/Jessica Swift	Ford Escort Mk2
7	Ian Woodhouse/Paul Rowland	Ford Escort Mk2
8	Mark Jasper/Don Whyatt	Ford Escort Mk2
9	Martin Hodgson/Tony Jones	Ford Escort Mk2
10	John Griffiths/Nigel Wetton	Subaru Impreza

Procter, [Frank] Bird and [Tony] Bardy [will be quick] so the chances of winning are not likely."

Six-time winner of the event Kevin Procter leads the crews away in search of another victory, but will have last weekend's Knockhill Stages

winner Frank Bird snapping at his heels. Tony Bardy won the event back in 2005 and is another tipped to be in the mix in his Ford Focus WRC00. Ian Woodhouse, 2016-17 Motorsport News Circuit Rally champion, is another contender fresh from victory on the Cadwell Stages Rally.

MN'S ROAD RALLYING EXPERT

IAN MILLS

"It does not reflect well on the sport"



The recent Mel Harries Memorial Rally ended in some confusion after 48 crews were disqualified for failing to stop at a give

way; all at the same junction! It meant there were just 10

classified finishers and I must admit that I was dismayed when I heard of the incident.

On many occasions in the past I have pushed for greater enforcement of the give way rule. It's not a regulation to be taken lightly – after all it was introduced following a fatal accident on a road rally in the 1970s. It requires all forward motion to cease at designated junctions.

There has been a gratifying willingness to enforce the rule in recent months, a move largely driven by the Welsh Association of Motor Clubs. Two crews were disqualified on the Cilwendeg, with three more similarly dealt with on the Powys Lanes. These numbers would seem to reflect the true size of the problem. I haven't heard at any time that the vast majority of road rally competitors are tearing out of every junction on the route, without any care or consideration for other road users.

On the Mel Harries, the give way that caused the problems wasn't a straight forward T-junction or cross roads either, it was one after a three-metre diagram control. Crews entered a farmyard, collected a signature from the marshal, then, almost straight afterwards, had to stop at the exit which almost immediately led onto another junction on the public road, where the route turned left. It was this second halt that caused all the disqualifications. The two junctions were so close that they almost touched at an oblique angle by the farm gate post.

There seems little contention that all competitors stopped at the marshal post in the farm yard, then at least once more, but the vast majority were judged not to have stopped at the second junction. Not that they could have come charging out as all had stopped just before the halt sign. Despite this, three-quarters of the entry were thrown out of the rally.

The episode does not reflect well on the sport. To outsiders it will confirm their unfounded prejudices that road rallying equals road racing. In addition, it will have done nothing to encourage the newer competitors as almost the entire lower half of the field was thrown out, and there was just one novice classified as a finisher.

The give way rule is one to be taken seriously, it is about safety, but the events on the Mel Harries seem to have reduced it to a bit part in a trick to catch out competitors.

AGREE/DISAGREE?
letters@motorsport-news.co.uk

STRATTON NETWORKS EYE BTCC GROWTH WITH MOTORSPORT VENTURE

PROMOTIONAL FEATURE



Expanding across further teams in the British Touring Car Championship and other top-flight UK series is the aim of Stratton Networks after a successful maiden season in the motorsport industry.

The Hertfordshire-based company has more than 20 years of experience providing IT and technical solutions, primarily to the media and TV industry, having worked with companies such as Warner Brothers and the Endemol Shine Group.

An opportunity at the start of 2019 means motorsport has now become a new venture, having provided satellite solutions for Excelr8 Motorsport in the BTCC.



The team now has its own dedicated satellite internet service at race meetings after previously relying on the crowded 4G network that was used by other teams and the thousands of fans at each event.

Jason Panayiotou, director at Stratton Networks, said: "I think there is a need for it, at the end of the day a lot of people in the vicinity are using their phones or iPads and it's all done via 4G.

"With the smaller series like a lot of the clubman racing you turn up to a race track and it's not mega busy so they're not going to have a problem.

"But when you start dealing on a higher level like the BTCC you're talking about huge crowds and those people create a strain on the general 4G network.

"What happens now is they get their own fast, dedicated and secure internet bandwidth to deal with all their data, their analytics, weather reports, social media and reporting directly back to their workshop."

The equipment can either be bought or hired from Stratton Networks with training provided on how to use the system.

Being at the cutting-edge of the latest technology and providing a reliable and competitive service means the company is in the perfect position to expand its portfolio throughout motorsport.

"I'm looking at it as a perfect opportunity to provide a great solution to all the teams and a dedicated service to them, it's quite important; this is the BTCC," added Panayiotou.

A statement from Excelr8 Motorsport, which will use Hyundai i30 N Performance Fastbacks next year, pictured above, said: "We contacted Stratton Networks because we needed a stable and reliable data connection for race track days.

"Nick Allett, their technical consultant, advised throughout the whole process and we couldn't be happier with this exceptional and consistent service."

Contact Stratton Networks

www.strattonnetworks.co.uk

Hertfordshire Office:
01992 240 030

London Office:
020 3327 0789



RALLY NEWS

FIVEMILETOWN SPRING RALLY JOINS NEW CHAMPIONSHIP

Event will be first round of the new-for-2020 Northern Ireland Gravel Challenge

Photos: William Neill, pro-rally.co.uk



Niall McCullagh won Fivemiletown this year

By Jason Craig

The Fivemiletown Spring Rally will be the opening round of an all-new championship next season, which will consist of four forest-based events.

The Northern Ireland Gravel Challenge has been formed and consists of the Fivemiletown (February 22), Lakeland Stages (September 5), Bushwhacker (September 26) and Glens of Antrim rallies (November 14).

Despite holding clubman status until now, the Fivemiletown Spring Rally has proven popular with many Irish-based

British Rally Championship drivers given its early date on the calendar.

Those who have entered it in the past include Sam Moffett – the winner from 2016 at the wheel of a Ford Fiesta R5 – and ex-Pirelli Star Driver Mark Donnelly aboard a Citroen DS3 R3.

This year's winner was Niall McCullagh at the wheel of a Mitsubishi Lancer E9.

"We love to see developments like this in rallying," said a spokesman from Omagh Motor Club, which will promote the rally. "We are honoured to get the chance to host the first round of the championship and also the penultimate

round when it's the turn of the Bushwhacker Rally. Everyone associated with the rallies and the championship as a whole is hoping that as many crews as possible will support the series to ensure that it is a success."

The new championship has been formed as the Northern Ireland Rally Championship will cease to exist in 2020. Instead the Gravel Challenge will form a four-round forest-based contest while the Motorsport UK Stage Rallies will be a five-round battle on Tarmac.

Given the changes that are coming down the line, those involved in the

planning of next year's Fivemiletown intend to increase stage mileage for teams, which this year was just under 27 miles.

"Every one of the crews we spoke to after this year's rally told us that they wanted longer stages but as the safety plan has not been finalised yet we are not able to say by exactly how much," added the spokesman.

Sponsored again by the owner of motorsport transmission manufacturer Samsonas, Martynas Samsonas, all proceeds from the rally will go to the Northern Ireland Air Ambulance charity.

Four wins from four events for Mellors and Proton Iriz

Grizedale Stages Rally

By Phil James

Organiser: Furness & District Motor Club When: December 7 Where: Ambleside Championships: ANCC, ANECCC, NHRC Stages: 5 Starters: 57

Ollie Mellors and Ian Windress were fastest on the final stage and took what appeared to be a comfortable win on the Grizedale Stages Rally, the winning margin 45 seconds in their Proton Iriz R5.

But, as is often the case, it wasn't that straightforward, as Jock Armstrong and Cameron Fair had started the final 18-mile Grizedale test with a seven-second advantage in their Subaru Impreza over the Ford Fiesta RS WRC of Thomas Preston and Carl Williamson.

Mellors and Windress were a further seven seconds back and seemingly unlikely to make it four wins from four in the Iriz.

But, with just three miles remaining, Armstrong's Impreza touched a bank and spun, forcing him to drive back up the stage to spin the battered Impreza around before continuing.

Worse befell Preston as, having set a brace of fastest times through the two Broughton Moor stages, he then failed to make the final Grizedale stage start owing to an alternator failure that couldn't be rectified.

Earlier in the day Mellors had been quickest through the first Grizedale nine-miler, but a puncture midway into

Grizedale South that then wiped out a brake pipe dropped him to third. He also had to contend with three-wheel braking through the Broughton Moor tests before the issue could be resolved at service.

That allowed Armstrong to move into top spot with Preston in close contention and it stayed that way up until the final-stage drama.

Stephen Petch and Michael Wilkinson had a late scare, backing off in the final stage after fearing the rear tyres on their Fiesta RS WRC had lost their effectiveness. Some ominous noises from the rear differential on the final road section suggested that may have been the problem but they made the finish to complete the podium.

Seb Perez and Alex Lee were giving a UK gravel rally debut to M-Sport's new Fiesta R5 Mk2 and, despite collecting a pair of punctures, finished fourth. Alan Carmichael and Claire Williams had to contend with a misting windscreen throughout and, despite a stall at a SS5 hairpin, brought their Impreza home fifth.

More Imprezas followed, headed by Daniel Hiorns and Chris Purvis. They had punctured on stage two and gained three places over the final stage despite the alternator failing. That feat was matched by Gary Tomlinson and Liam Whiteley, who suffered a last-stage half-spin but still claimed seventh place. The WRC version of Phil and Simon Pickard finished eighth.

It was a tough event for Simon Bowen



Mellors and Windress trailed by 14 seconds heading into the final stage

who had to drive most of the stages 'as seen' after co-driver Richard Robinson fell ill and was unable to read any notes after the opening stage. The Fiesta S2000T crew finished ninth, ahead of John Rintoul and Ross Hynd, who survived a couple of excursions in their Skoda Fabia S2500.

Barry Lindsay and Caroline Lodge finished 11th to claim the Class 2 and first two-wheel-drive award in their Peugeot 206, but only after reeling in

the Talbot Sunbeam Ti of Mark Shaw and James Coxon on the final stage.

Results

1 Ollie Mellors/Ian Windress (Proton Iriz R5) 45m58s; 2 Jock Armstrong/Cameron Fair (Subaru Impreza) +45s; 3 Stephen Petch/Michael Wilkinson (Ford Fiesta RS WRC); 4 Seb Perez/Alex Lee (Fiesta R5); 5 Alan Carmichael/Claire Williams (Impreza); 6 Daniel Hiorns/Chris Purvis (Impreza); 7 Gary Tomlinson/Liam Whiteley (Impreza); 8 Phillip/Simon Pickard (Impreza); 9 Simon Bowen/Richard Robinson (Fiesta S2000T); 10 John Rintoul/Ross Hynd (Skoda Fabia S2500).

Class winners: Pete Gorst/Phil King (Vauxhall Nova); Barry Lindsay/Caroline Lodge (Peugeot 206); John Lowe/Dave Robson (Ford Escort Mk2); Mike Wolff/Mark Twinnam (BMW E30); Perez/Lee.

ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

Lying second at halfway, George Williams and Cadog Davies (Ford Escort Mk2) came through to win the **Eagle Rally** by just one second from Martin Curzon and Dafydd Evans in a Mk1 version.

Both were well ahead of third-placed Geraint Parkes and Jamie Mills (Honda Civic), who took Expert class honours by a narrow margin from Richy Williams and David Price (Vauxhall Astra).

There were a number of disqualifications as the driving standards observer came down hard on crews, including Welsh champions-elect Mark Lennox and Ian Beamond (Escort Mk2) losing third overall and for Beamond, the ANWCC Navigators' title.

Novices Nigel Hughes and Ben Morgans (MG ZR) beat all the Semi-Experts to take 13th overall, the Semi class won by Lewis Sim and Rhiannon James in a Renault Clio with 16th overall. Eight of the top 10 seeds all failed to be classified as finishers with various maladies.

Dave Thomas

Eagle Rally

Organiser: Newtown & DAC When: December 7-8 Where: Powys Championships: WAMC, ANWCC Starters: 73 Results

1 George Williams/Cadog Davies (Ford Escort Mk2) 2m46s; 2 Martin Curzon/Dafydd Evans (Escort Mk1) +1s; 3 Geraint Parkes/Jamie Mills (Honda Civic); 4 Richy Williams/David Price (Vauxhall Astra); 5 Matt Rees/Rhys Griffiths (SEAT Ibiza); 6 James Giddings/Rhodri Evans (Peugeot 206 GTI); 7 Daniel Williams/Shawn Richards (BMW 318 Ti Compact); 8 Daniel Owens/Jenny Evans (Nissan Micra); 9 Craig Bowler/Dave Andrew (Civic); 10 Colin Davies/Guto Davies (Escort RS2000).

Class winners: Expert: Parkes/Mills; Semi-experts: Lewis Sim/Rhiannon James (Renault Clio); Novices: Nigel Hughes/Ben Morgans (MG ZR).

Prize drive on offer for Junior ITRC winner

The winner of the Junior Irish Tarmac Rally Championship next season will be given the chance to drive an R5-specification car.

The new-for-2020 initiative, which is worth more than £20,000, has been created to encourage greater participation in the category after only 12 drivers took part this year.

The prize is the work of championship coordinator Paddy Flanagan, five-time Irish Tarmac champion Eugene Donnelly and Mellors Elliot Motorsport – the team that has developed the Proton Iriz R5 the winner will get to drive.

"There are a lot of extremely quick and incredibly talented young drivers in Ireland. They are the future," Flanagan told Motorsport News. "We have to try our best to support them as much as we possibly can. I can think of quite a few young lads who deserve the chance to drive an R5 car."

"There is the Billy Coleman Award, which is fantastic, but not everyone is going to be in with a shout of winning that. What we are offering the winner of next year's Junior Championship is a fully funded drive in a Proton Iriz R5 on one round of the ITRC in 2021."

"We have some small details to finalise but the response from younger drivers has been very positive and it's great to have the support of Eugene Donnelly and Mellors Elliot Motorsport."

Flanagan believes there is also every possibility that reigning ITRC champion Craig Breen could return to the category next year on a bit-part basis as he helps Hyundai Motorsport with development work.

Breen and Paul Nagle emerged runaway winners of the series in 2019, returning maximum scores on every event they started in an R5.

"Craig might give it another go," said Flanagan. "I would love to have Craig and Paul back in the championship next year."



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Photos: SMJ Photography

CLASS ROUND-UP

Class B produced a feel-good story to warm the hearts of the local fans even in the most undesirable of winter temperatures.

Ashleigh Morris upheld Scottish honours with a fine Class B victory in her Ford Fiesta R200, bouncing back just 12 months after a spectacular barrel roll at the same circuit threatened to halt her rallying progress.

Morris and navigator Jamie Mactavish took the fight to a flying Chris Ruck – unbeaten this season prior to Knockhill – from the outset, easing out a slender lead early on before the latter's Opel Corsa slid wide twice on SS4 after slipping into neutral at the low speed infield section.

Morris stayed consistent during changeable conditions, claiming the class victory by 26s on her way to finishing 13th overall. "It's been close between us and Chris, the car is actually quite good in the wet as it suits us against theoretically faster cars," said Morris, who took maximum MN points and her first class win since Anglesey 2018. "We're feeling good at the moment."

In a rally of survival, Mike English took the cautious approach early on in conditions he described as "the worst that I've ever driven in during a rally". It paid off, though, as he took **Class C** spoils and MN points with a late surge after a sluggish start.

"I just need to take a step back and get through this one," he said during a treacherous morning.

Battling wiper problems caused by the strong winds, the Ford Escort Mk2 driver added to his Cadwell Park success by overcoming Johnnie Mackay's Fiesta ST with a series of faster times in the afternoon loop.

Class A went the way of the Vauxhall Nova of Nathan Hogg comfortably, finishing 2m41s clear of nearest rival Eamonn Kilmurray (Citroen C2 GT). MN honours in class were claimed by Ron Walker, who tested the limits in his nervous Ford Puma to achieve fourth in class and add to his strong points hauls from Oulton Park and Cadwell.

D2 victory went to overall winner Bird, who also claimed full MN points. Fifth-placed Kyle Adam was rewarded for his fine showing in his Escort Mk2 with overall honours in the **D1 class**, the MN win going the way of Barry Morris despite ending with an identical time to the Talbot Sunbeam Lotus of Mike Taylor after a late moment.



Morris took Class B



Single-seater racer Bird made a splash

BIRD OVERCOMES THE SCOTTISH ELEMENTS

Treacherous weather failed to dampen winner's spirits. By **Dan Mason**

Frank Bird battled extreme elements at Knockhill to seal an emphatic victory in the third round of the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship. A rookie to rallying 12 months ago, single-seater racer Bird looked the polished article in Scotland as he claimed six stage wins from eight to ensure his second MN rally win of 2019.

With many of the championship regulars utilising their one mandatory dropped score, Bird and co-driver Jack Morton entered the trip to Fife as arguably the favorites in a Ford Focus WRC07, but it also gave the local contingent a chance to spoil the party.

The real unknown proved to be Mother Nature however, as inclement winter conditions made for a tricky afternoon for all out on track.

"Horrible" was Bird's verdict on the conditions, although he and main rival John Marshall were not fazed as they entered battle in the morning.

Bird, revisiting the Fife circuit he previously raced at in British Formula 4, made his intentions clear from the start and took an eight-second lead over Marshall on the first run of the day before conditions worsened and the gap swiftly extended to 15s on the following stage.

"It's actually not that bad, it's quite grippy," was Marshall's early verdict. Bird concurred: "There's a lot of grip out there, even in this heavy thing!"

Local hopes rested on Marshall, driving a Ford Fiesta R5 in place of a Skodaru V1 he opted out of bringing for reasons centred on insurance, but he felt he had made it too easy for Bird initially.

Bird's defining moment was on SS3 as, despite two significant lock-ups and a tyre stack clip which cost him 10s, he still beat Marshall by 5s to extend his lead when it seemed certain to be slashed.

Rain intensified after the break and Bird stretched his legs over his nearest challenger to 30s, which more than doubled following three successive stage

wins. Only a second bite at the tyre markers late in the day gave Bird cause for concern, as he took a convincing first MNCRC victory since Anglesey in March.

"There were a few mistakes, a few stalls at hairpins, but overall it was good," said the winner. "I love [rallying] now; I've got the bug."

Marshall upheld local honours as top Scot but was 1m15s in arrears. "Frank Bird is a fantastic driver," he said. "I'm longer in the tooth at 57 [years of age]."

The Ford men left behind a fierce five-car battle for third that went the way of Richard Wells, who picked up a popular first podium since switching to a Mitsubishi Lancer E9.

"We definitely wanted that, especially after we didn't start at Cadwell when the car had a sensor problem in testing the day before," said Wells. "There was a couple of lock-ups on that final stage to keep us on edge, but other than that the car was spot on today."

The final podium spot should arguably have gone to Joshua Davey's Darrian T90 which took fastest time on SS3 and SS4, but gearbox and ignition problems resurfaced two years after the same issue denied him victory.

Wells held off the charging Subaru Impreza of Neil Roskell by just 7s, as the Darrian GTR of Barry Morris challenged but lost vital time on the final stage and fell to sixth behind Kyle Adam, best Ford Escort Mk2 finisher in fifth overall.

Five seconds covered fifth to eighth as Cadwell runner-up Mike Taylor (Talbot Sunbeam Lotus) was seventh, tailed by Stephen Tilburn (Escort Mk2) as both grabbed crucial championship points. Barry Groundwater's Impreza followed in ninth, while Paul Murro continued his strong form, adding a third top 10 finish of the season in his Escort Mk2.

Freddie Milne, son of the late former Scottish Rally champion Donald, was one of those to retire as his Fiesta R5 ended in a sodden ditch after stopping with technical gremlins earlier in the afternoon. Brian Watson's ill fortune continued, his Impreza suffering a blown turbo.

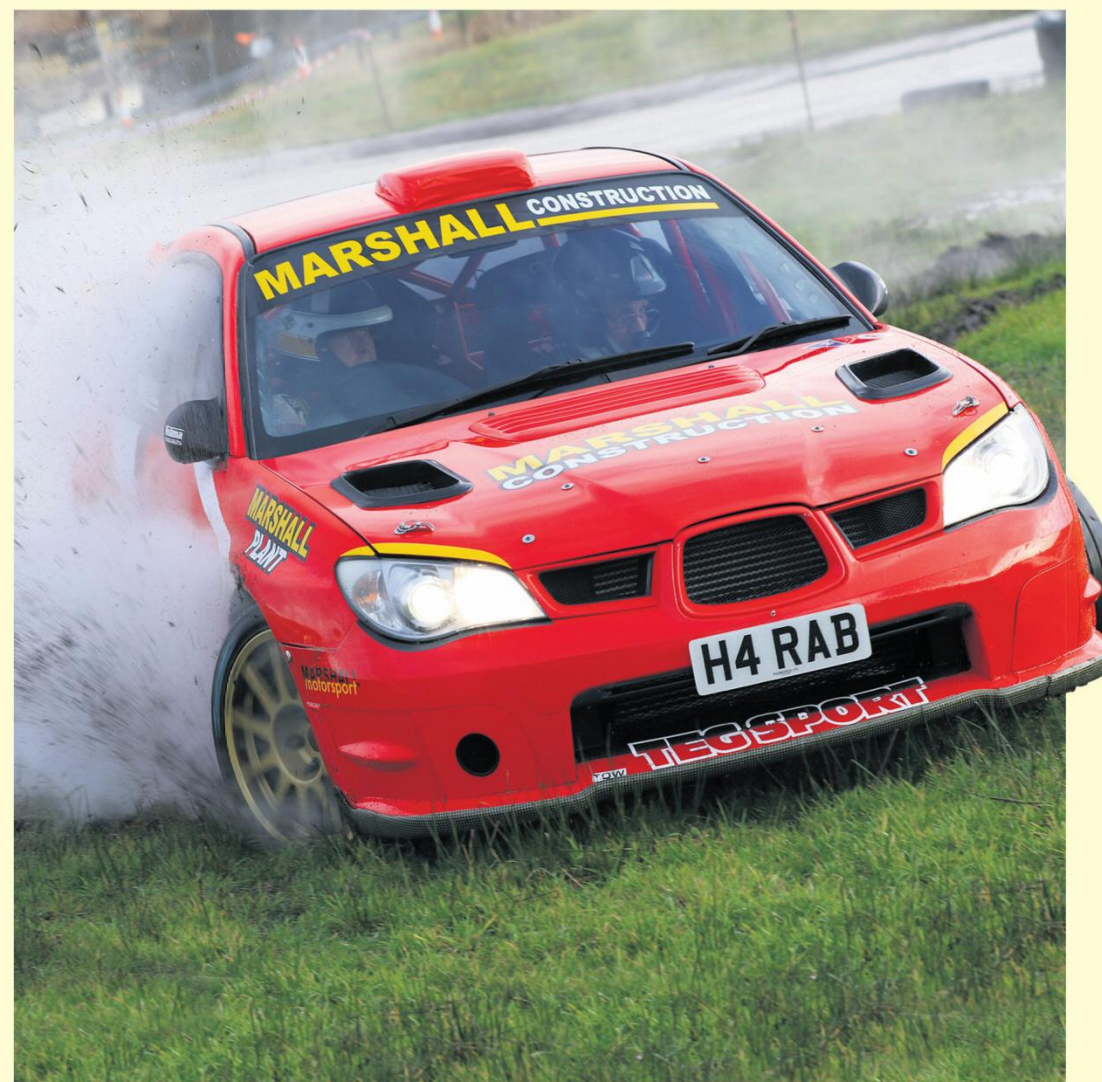
RESULTS

Knockhill Stages, Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship, round 3/7, December 8

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Frank Bird/Jack Morton	Ford Focus WRC07	38m43s
2	John Marshall/Scott Crawford	Ford Fiesta R5	+1m15s
3	Richard Wells/Calvin Houldsworth	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	+2m41s
4	Neil Roskell/Jonathon Kennedy	Subaru Impreza	+2m48s
5	Kyle Adam/Fiona Moir	Ford Escort Mk2	+3m07s
6	Barry Morris/Tom Hutchings	Darrian T90 GTR	+3m08s
7	Mike Taylor/Martin Haggett	Talbot Subbeam Lotus	+3m08s
8	Stephen Tilburn/Jack Tilburn	Ford Escort Mk2	+3m12s
9	Barry Groundwater/Sean Donnelly	Subaru Impreza	+3m22s
10	Paul Murro/Callum Cross	Ford Escort Mk2	+4m07s

Class winners: Nathan Hogg/Greg Halfpenny (Vauxhall Nova); Ashleigh Morris/Jamie Mactavish (Fiesta R200); Mike English/Andy Robinson (Escort Mk2); Adam/Moir; Bird/Morton

MN class winners: Ron Walker/Amy McCubbin (Ford Puma); Morris/Mactavish; English/Robinson; Morris/Hutchings; Bird/Morton.



Conditions proved tricky for a number of crews, including Robert Marshall

INSIGHT

ROVANPERA

READY TO REWRITE THE SCRIPT IN 2020

David Evans investigates how a teenager will put himself in the history books in 2020



Victory in WRC Pro on Rally Finland was one of the bedrocks of Kalle Rovanperä's campaign

Teenager will strap himself into the top flight in 2020

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PIPERA

THE WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Pontus Tidemand looked slightly uneasy at the question. How best to answer it? What could he say about when Skoda Motorsport teamer Kalle Rovanner? Tidemand's a decent fella and, at the time, he was hardly a spent force in the sport when I spoke to him at Skoda Motorsport's conference in Prague earlier this year. But he'd seen enough of Rovanner – a driver a decade his senior – to know fighting against the odds of support coming the way of the young Finn was futile. "It's not so normal," Tidemand says. "It doesn't mean that in a bad way, I mean the sort of driver who comes every year and they're like a freak. He's quick. When you come to the end of the stage, it's sometimes best thing to look to his time if it's on the board already."

Rovanner really is that good. Tidemand's eyebrows were raised when Motorsport News broke the story in the summer that Tommi Makinen had named the son of one-time world rally champion Harri Rovanner. Half those eyebrows were raised at the amount of time it took one of the big teams to name their child prodigy on their books. It had been clear from the moment Tidemand's name blocks were screwed to the seats of a Toyota Starlet and a cushioned into the seat behind an impatient 17-year-old bound for armfuls of prize money that the future of the family was safe.

Last year, his first in a factory Skoda, he concluded with a brace of WRC 2 titles in Spain and Wales. Not a bad way to celebrate your 18th birthday. This season he has, of course, won his first world title with the WRC 2 Pro title. That's no more than anybody could expect. And actually, he made more of it than many predicted. Three crashes in Monte Carlo, Sweden and Corsica provided far from a ideal start. Germany, Turkey and France also went south from a results perspective. So, what gives? "The boy really up to the job?"

It is. "I don't know what came in the middle of the season absolutely underlines Rovanner's ability and, almost as importantly for one so young, his composure. After that most miserable trick of mistakes, he bounced back to a quartet of overall top-10 results in Spain, Portugal, Sardinia and Finland. He bounced everybody in WRC 2 Pro. A couple of mid-season months he moved Mads Ostberg's hand from the rear window and put both of his around the wheel and won the title. There was no pressure, no stress. Just pace and speed. Composure is something that has defined Rovanner's very early career. He landed his Fabia R5 on a dirt road with a parked car (with a woman still

CV

Kalle Rovanner

- Born:** October 1, 2000
- From:** Jyväskylä, Finland
- 2019:** Wins WRC 2 Pro title; Signs for Toyota Gazoo Racing
- 2018:** Skoda factory driver; Won two of seven WRC 2 rounds
- 2017:** Selected rallies around Europe; WRC debut in Rally GB, went off in Myherin; Won WRC 2 on second event, Rally Australia
- 2016:** Latvian Rally Championship in Skoda Fabia S2000; Wins first event, Rally Aluksne and four more to take Latvian title; Debut in Ford Fiesta RS WRC at Monza Rally Show, finishes second to Elfyn Evans
- 2015:** Wins Latvian Rallysprint title; Drives Starlet in Finland (Keuruu Miniralli) as course car
- 2014:** Tackles four Latvian rallsprints



Rovanner's career is on the rise

- 2013:** Switches to Citroen C2 for Latvian rallsprints
- 2011:** Competes in Estonia, using the Starlet in rallsprints
- 2008:** Stars on YouTube driving Toyota Starlet, aged eight

sitting inside) in Argentina last year wasn't particularly serene, but Kalle hasn't looked terribly stressed at any point so far.

Moments after Tidemand's revelation last year, I found Rovanner tucking into a vol-au-vent and Appletiser. I asked him when the move would be coming to Toyota. Let's face it, it's been on the cards since he was faster than Teemu Suninen and Esapekka Lappi at an early Yaris WRC test in 2016. I know, 2016; he was 16. Still at secondary school!

"Maybe I will drive [the] Skoda for the next two years," he smiles. There's nothing flash, no bluster, no bravado about this. It's a simple statement of fact. "I think I have time."

And that time is now. The one man who has seen this coming for the longest is his father Harri.

"I have followed my son for so many years already," says Rovanner Sr, a veteran of the World Rally Championship's top level. "I'm not worried for the future. We started on the lake, then we went to Latvia with a trailer, the car and us six guys."

"I remember when Kalle was 13, one of the mechanics who has been in rallying a long time, he went with him in the car and came back to me. He said: 'Hey, hey, hey, Kalle is there'. You know, it's not so easy for me to say these things as his father, but I think we can see that something is going to happen with Kalle. "He is 19, but in his mind already he is 25 or 30 years old. For me, I am never thinking about his age, for the last six or seven years he is so professional. It's not feeling like he is 19 years old. Even when he takes the holiday – like in the summer – he is not going away, he just goes to the workshop and builds an engine or works on somebody's car with the other guys."

As he says, Harri has stood at his son's shoulder throughout his time in the sport. But he understands there's a line between family life and rallying. He won't for example, work as his son's ice-note crew in Monte Carlo next month. "I couldn't do that job," he laughs. "I'm

too close and I would have too many eyes. They would be everywhere, I would be finding all the ice and the sh*t in every corner and slowing him down."

Talking of round one, Rovanner Jr's preparations have already begun for the Monte. He's in the Alps and back onboard a Yaris WRC for the first time in more than three years.

"The first test coming on these roads," says Kalle, "it's not so easy. The car I drove in 2016 was one of the first test cars – it's a big difference to what we have now."

"But for me, I have to learn in the first part of the season. I have a lot to learn. There are so many different things with this car, it's so different to the R5 car. In the beginning I will be trying to survive, but after the start of the season, let's see how it goes."

Having launched himself into a Citroen team alongside Sebastien Loeb, Sebastien Ogier is mindful of the potential pitfalls of pulling on your running shoes when, as a World Rally Car rookie, you really should be going out for a walk.

Ogier says: "It's a great chance for him and we have seen some of what he can do, but for sure, we need to leave Kalle. The best thing for him is to give him time to learn."

Toyota recruit Elfyn Evans echoes those sentiments and adds: "Kalle's young in terms of experience, but we've already seen him doing some fairly incredible things – in a short space of time, he's won WRC 2 [Pro] and, like I said, done some remarkable things."

As one of the younger factory drivers, is Evans looking forward to taking a junior by the hand and walking him through the early years of his career?

"I'm not sure about the holding hands bit," grins the Welshman, "but, yeah, of course I'll do what I can. It's strange, it only feels like yesterday I was getting those first opportunities for myself. The years tick by so quickly and before you know it you've had seven years in World Rally Cars. Like any professional sport, the career is pretty short, so you

have to make the most of it."

Typically sage advice from Evans and Rovanner's ready to make the most of it.

He adds: "It's nice to have Sebastien [Ogier] and Elfyn [Evans] as teammates, they have a lot of experience already. If they are doing something different [with the car set-up] or doing something for themselves then we can learn from that."

"There is, anyway, no chance for me to be fast in the beginning of the season. I just need to learn the car and hang in [there]. I have to learn the new tricks and the speed and maybe after that we can start to try to do some results."

Given the understandable furore that followed Rovanner's announcement as the youngest driver in WRC history to land a full-time, frontline factory drive, you can understand his admission that Rally Finland "could be nice" in 2020. Such sentiment's not born out of adulation or appreciation. It's simply because he'll know where he's going.

"All of the rallies can be quite complicated this year in the new car," he says. "I'm looking forward to them all, but with this different style of car, it could be difficult to find quickly the new way of driving with the World Rally Car. It's going to be interesting to see them in the new car."

"New Zealand is another one that could be really interesting in these new [2017] cars. Nobody really did that rally for a long time, so it's quite a new event for us all. That makes it more interesting."

Already, Rovanner's looking for ways to level the playing field. Everybody on the entry list for round one has more experience of a World Rally Car than he does and pretty much everybody has more experience of the rallies too.

Kalle doesn't have to look far for that experience though.

"My dad can tell me some stories," he says with a grin. Harri's not so sure.

"I can't tell him anything now," he says. "The last two years with Skoda has been the most fantastic school for him, fantastic. He has done a lot of testing and worked a lot with the engineers, everything. And anyway, he's never here now..."

Rovanner smiles at the memory of what he was up to aged 19. The dream was the same, as he watched Juha Kankkunen and Markku Alen at the height of their pomp through the mid-Eighties. But Harri's WRC debut didn't come until he was 27, when a broken propshaft aboard an Opel Manta stopped him in his tracks on the Leustu stage. Nine years on and heading into the same stretch of road and Rovanner's leading his home WRC round in a Peugeot 206 WRC. But Leustu's curse struck again, he lost the right-front wheel and retired immediately after the stage in 2002.

Never again has a Rovanner come as close to scoring a victory at home. Until now. ■

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com



In 2017, second place on Rally Liepaja in the ERC



The teenager learned car control in a Toyota Starlet



Rovanner tackled seven WRC2 rounds in 2018



Harri Rovanner's last WRC outing was on GB, 2006

INSIGHT

HITS AND MISSES OF CLUB RACING

MN investigates which of the 177 English series attracted the largest and smallest entries this year. By **Stephen Lickorish**

It sounds a very large number. There were 177 series organised by English clubs this year. Inevitably, some of those were more popular than others so MN wanted to look at exactly which categories and clubs performed best and which struggled to attract drivers. We averaged the entries per round for each series – discounting overseas events and categories attending fewer than four meetings – to work out club racing's hits and misses of 2019.

CSCC

Out of all the different organising clubs there is a very clear winner in terms of the one that attracts the largest entries across the board. That honour goes to the Classic Sports Car Club. To have an average of 31 cars per round at each of its series is a very impressive achievement and demonstrates the popularity of the club.

Leading the way is Swinging Sixties on 53 but there are a host of other categories all averaging over 30 cars. The club's director David Smitheram believes the format of having 40-minute pitstop races for one or two drivers is part of the reason for the popularity.

"We've had some cracking grids – Donington Park was a CSCC record, we had 410 entries, so we're pretty chuffed with that," he says. "The concept [mini-enduro races] has been copied by three clubs now but what they can't replicate is the care those volunteers bring."

Smitheram adds that it is both "a little

GRID SIZES

Most popular CSCC series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
Swinging Sixties	53
Magnificent Sevens	37
Tin Tops	37

Least popular CSCC series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
Modern Classics	19
Turbo Tin Tops	20
Club average	31

frustrating and it's very flattering" that other organisers are seeking to replicate the CSCC's success in their own offerings.

For the club's weakest grid to be Modern Classics with an average of 19 cars per round is another illustration of how the CSCC is thriving. But it must be noted the Turbo Tin Tops average was boosted by Puma Cup and Smart 4Two Cup drivers.



The Classic Sports Car Club has the highest average entry of all the clubs

750MC

An average of 26 cars across all of the 750 Motor Club's 19 formulae is a very impressive number and indicates how successful the club's 2019 season was. There is a common theme among its two most popular categories – Club Enduro and Roadsports – as both feature multi-marque endurance races.

"Club Enduro has more exotic machinery on the grid but in the lower classes it's still a very affordable access point into proper endurance racing," explains competitions manager Giles Groombridge. "It allows people to race any production car at a higher performance point than series like the C1 Challenge and EnduroKa – the guys who won Class C

have a pretty standard BMW 330."

But those were far from the 750MC's only successes as the Armed Forces Race Challenge, Toyota MR2s, Locost, BMW Car Club Racing and Hot Hatch all averaged over 30 cars.

The one real disappointment for the club was the new-for-2019 Type R Trophy as a number of Civics in build during the year never made an appearance, but Groombridge is optimistic that grids will double for next season.

RGB Sports 1000 was also lower than expected. "RGB is an unusual one because it's evolved away from its roots, which was very much in the British kit car industry where there were lots of cars you could drop a bike engine in and go racing,"

GRID SIZES

Most popular 750MC series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
Club Enduro	41
Roadsports	36

Least popular 750MC series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
Type R Trophy	8
RGB Sports 1000	16
Club average	26

says Groombridge. "The gradual loss of the front-engined cars and the speed of development of the rear-engined cars did limit the grid sizes. We've also had a few costly fires and failures, which took cars out for the season."



Club Enduro has proved to be the 750 Motor Club's most popular series

BRSCC

The British Racing and Sports Car Club wins the award for having the most popular category of them all over the course of the season as its MX-5 Championship for Mk1 models of the Mazda sports car attracted 57 entries on average. Its Compact Cup category also fared well, achieving 40 cars. BRSCC chairman Peter Daly believes this is down to the affordability of both categories.

"Both of those have got very good coordination and we've been able to create a paddock environment that's sociable and I think that's part of the success of them," he says. "They're relatively easy cars to buy and low cost and they're both very competitive at the front."

But as well as having some very successful series, the BRSCC also boasts the championship with the fewest entries of them all. Fiesta Junior averaged just five cars as, once again, the category struggled for numbers. The club ran several taster days during the year to try to build interest for 2020 and Daly is optimistic that will help grids expand.

Also struggling was the combined Touring Car Trophy and TCR UK grid but Daly believes that making the series once again the focus of a succession of meetings will raise interest levels. "We're looking to build a race meeting around it," he says. "At the tail end of 2019, the grids were improving and with input from Maximum Motorsport

GRID SIZES

Most popular BRSCC series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
MX-5 Championship	57
Compact Cup	40

Least popular BRSCC series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
Fiesta Junior	5
Touring Car Trophy & TCRUK	8
Club average	22

it looks sustainable now."

The club's Porsche Championship also averaged just nine cars but that will undergo a major revamp for next year to widen the number of eligible cars and alter the race formats.



Low-cost nature of the Compact Cup has helped it achieve large grid sizes

CCRC

Considering that all of the Castle Combe Racing Club's events take place at one circuit and that one venue happens to be one of the most south-westerly of all of the UK's tracks, for the club to average 22 cars per grid is no mean feat.

While the Combe Saloons and Hot Hatch Challenge once again led the way, the more significant figure was the 18 cars that the club's Formula Ford 1600 championship managed to attract on average. Considering

it was barely into double figures at some meetings in 2018, this was an impressive turnaround, aided by celebrations for the category's 50th anniversary this year.

"We got commended from Motorsport UK to say well done and they were pleased with the numbers going up and hopefully that will carry on," says club coordinator Jo Lewkowicz. "There's lots of different reasons [for the increase], like people wanting to do different things."

GRID SIZES

Most popular CCRC series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
Combe Saloons	30
Combe Hot Hatch	25

Least popular CCRC series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
Combe GT	16
Combe Formula Ford 1600	18
Club average	22



Castle Combe Formula Ford 1600's numbers have been boosted this year

HSCC

Historic racing continues to boast some of the most popular series in all of club motorsport, particularly in the case of categories that do not cost vast sums of money to compete in. That is something Historic Sports Car Club CEO Andy Dee-Crowne has recognised in his first season in charge of the club and he believes it is important clubs continue to diversify in order to maintain entry numbers. "Historic motor racing has a lot of clubs who are all aiming for the same people, which means there's a lot more choice out there in historic racing – and I think the clubs have to be changing their offering to meet members' needs," he says.

One of the ways the HSCC is doing this is by expanding its portfolio to cater for more cars from the 1980s next year but, in terms of the season just gone, it was Formula Junior and Historic Formula Ford 2000 that led the way entries-wise.

And, while none of the club's categories averaged fewer than 16 cars, there were several events where individual championships had tiny grids in 2019.

"I think there's a budget issue there," says Dee-Crowne. "There's no doubt that some venues [are less popular] and there's also whether it's a two-day meeting [or not]."

"One of our least attended meetings was Brands Hatch Indy,

GRID SIZES

Most popular HSCC series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
Formula Junior	30
Historic Formula Ford 2000	26

Least popular HSCC series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
Classic Clubmans	16
Historic Formula 3	16
Saloon Car Cup	16
XL Aurora Trophy	16
Club average	21

which didn't inspire people as much as we thought it would, but these things do go round in cycles."



Photos: Richard Styles, Steve Jones, Mick Walker, Ollie Read, Gary Hawkins

Historic Formula Ford 2000 has averaged a 26-car entry during 2019

MGCC

The majority of the MG Car Club's categories had very solid seasons – even despite the loss of the club's most popular event, MG Live, due to resurfacing work at Silverstone. The BCV8 Championship and MG Cup led the way and club competitions secretary John Hutchison was particularly pleased with the latter. "In MG Cup we've gained quite a few Rover Tomcats – we invited them as a bit of a test to start with to see how they compared [to existing cars]," he says. "That particular vehicle can be quite tuned but we've got them to a level where they're on a par with the MG ZRs

and ZSs. We've managed to attract seven, when you consider we had none a couple of years ago."

While MG Trophy numbers were lower than they had been in previous seasons – Hutchison says some competitors decided to either move up the racing ladder or race their MG ZRs in different MG categories – it was the Metro Cup that struggled the most in 2019, averaging just 14 entries.

"It's a fantastic, affordable grassroots way into tin-top racing and they're fun to drive," says Hutchison. "But the issue, especially with the Metro Turbos, is there's not many of them, and they are now becoming quite collectable in some

GRID SIZES

Most popular MGCC series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
BCV8	25
MG Cup	23

Least popular MGCC series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
Metro Cup	14
Cockshoot Cup	19
Club average	20

instances, so there is less desire to convert them into race cars."



Metros and Rover Tomcats were part of an MG Cup grid averaging 23 cars

BARC

There is no disputing which series boasted the largest individual grid this season. That prize went to the Citroen C1 Challenge when 99 cars started its 24-hour race at Silverstone in April. Even when ignoring this one-off race from the seasonal average, there were still around 35 C1s at each race meeting. But it was not all plain sailing for the series as the other 24-hour contest at Anglesey in September had to be cancelled due to a lack of marshals. British Automobile Racing Club general manager Ian Watson says it is difficult to know if that will prove to be a problem again in the future. "I'm never confident when you're relying on volunteers turning up to

man meetings," he says. "You can never be sure [on numbers] – it was Anglesey last year but all venues have their own individual problems and if you have got a lot of racing in the same areas at the same time, marshals will vote with their feet."

The Caterham Graduates categories also proved popular among the BARC's roster, although it is worth noting that these were regularly spread over two grids.

At the other end of the scale, three BARC series attracted just nine cars on average: Division 1 of the British Trucks, MaX5 and Michelin Clio Cup Series. Watson says it is not possible to combine the Division 1 and 2 trucks onto the same grid due to a 20-truck

GRID SIZES

Most popular BARC series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
Caterham Graduates	43
Citroen C1 Challenge	35

Least popular BARC series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
British Truck Racing Division 1	9
MaX5	9
Michelin Clio Cup Series	9
Club average	19

limit on track, which would regularly be breached if they were amalgamated. He also says the future of the MaX5 category is under review for next year.



Citroen C1 Challenge has topped British Automobile Racing Club's table

MSVR

There is a clear common theme among MotorSport Vision Racing's most popular series. All three of its best-performing categories are part of the organisation's MSVT trackday division. The Trackday Trophy and Trackday Championship have consistently boasted good grids previously but EnduroKa, which was new for 2019, was also popular too, averaging 27 cars. Again, this shows that competitors are interested in affordability and the success of EnduroKa once again shows that a car's limited performance cannot stop it from being a hit. At the other end of the scale, the

Cooper S class of the Mini Challenge had a standalone grid at the majority of its events this year. But, with it only attracting an average of eight cars, that does not seem necessary. Also, the F3 Cup again struggled for numbers with the top-level single-seaters failing to catch the imagination of club racers.

The club did not wish to discuss its season in any significant detail at this point but competition secretary Joe East did say: "MSVR has had a very strong season which very recently ended with a successful final round of the hugely popular EnduroKa series. We are currently analysing 2019 in some

GRID SIZES

Most popular MSVR series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
Trackday Trophy	31
Trackday Championship	30

Least popular MSVR series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
Mini Challenge Cooper S	8
F3 Cup	10
Club average	18

detail before making any final decisions on changes and evolutions for next year."



Trackday series were both popular

Others

Unlike the other clubs, the Vintage Sports-Car Club does not organise any particular series and instead runs individual races at its meetings. That makes it harder to compare but competition secretary Gemma Price says it has been a very strong season for the club, despite it being forced to cancel its Snetterton event due to a lack of entries. Away from the established players, the Historic Racing Drivers Club ran its own event for the first time at Lydden Hill and its Coys Trophy was its most popular series in 2019, averaging 28 cars. The fledgling Classic and Modern Motorsport Club stepped up its offering this year. Although its average Southern Super Saloons grid was 16 cars, this did fluctuate quite significantly and peaked with 26 at one Brands Hatch fixture.

AMOC

There is no escaping that this has been a very difficult season for the Aston Martin Owners Club – both on and off the track. While it has suffered from some desperately low grids in 2019, it also recently suffered the blow of having to take over the operation of its racing arm in-house at short notice, after it was previously outsourced. All of this leaves the club being forced into running a "skeleton calendar" next season. There are still some positives, as

the combined Jack Fairman Cup and Innes Ireland Cup grids attracted an average of 26 cars over the course of the season. But the club really struggled with a poor third event at Oulton Park, where only 36 entries were received across its series, and it failed to regain any momentum.

"We had a great opening round at Donington Park and Oulton Park just didn't attract people for some reason," says Peter Snowdon, long-time club racer and recently appointed director responsible for racing.

GRID SIZES

Most popular AMOC series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
Jack Fairman Cup & Innes Ireland Cup	26
Intermarque & Aston Martin GT4 Challenge	15

Least popular AMOC series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
Pre-War Team Challenge	8
GT Challenge	9
Club average	14



It's been a tough season for AMOC

GRID SIZES

Most popular other series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
Equipe GTS	48
Monoposto	45

Least popular other series

CATEGORY	AVERAGE ENTRIES
CMMC Production Saloons	15
Porsche Restoracing	15

INTERVIEW

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

HOW DAN CAMMISH STEPPED UP TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Matt James speaks to the Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R racer who came oh-so-close to BTCC glory



Cammish was in the heart of title battle



Honda man came up two points short

It was very hard not to feel sorry for Dan Cammish at the end of 2019. He had gone into the final race of his second season in the British Touring Car Championship at the top of the points table, with just 15 laps between him and the title.

In the end, the factory Honda Civic Type R driver suffered brake failure at the worst place of all to have it at Brands Hatch: going into the super-fast Hawthorn corner. He frised into the tyre wall and it allowed Colin Turkington's WSR BMW 330i M Sport to snatch back the advantage and win the crown by just two points.

"That was so tough to swallow," reflects Cammish. "I have had a tough couple of months since then, I will be frank. After 29 rounds, and up against some tough competition, we had a very realistic chance of taking the title. I had 14 podiums – almost half of the races – only for it all to be taken away through no fault of our own."

"When something like that happens, you just think about the hard work that you've put in, what your family and friends have been through, and the level of effort that the team had put in. It is just so disappointing. But I think the most important thing about it all is how I am able to bounce back from it. That is what my mind is focused on right now."

The fact that Cammish was even in with a shout was the sign-off to a highly impressive campaign. There were two wins but he had remained in the title hunt up against the onslaught of the brand new BMWs. It was remarkable.

Indeed, Cammish would tell anyone who would listen over the opening part of the battle that he was merely leading "Class B". He pointed that out repeatedly over the start of the year.

"I was the one who possibly had the closest insight of all into the strengths of the BMW – and credit to WSR for building a car that well and getting on top of it straight out of the box," Cammish says. "But I was fully aware

of what it could do and what it couldn't do. And it is not my job just to turn up and accept it. Of course I tried to make my point when I could, because I needed to try and get my views across. People have criticised me for having an opinion, but that is how I honestly felt."

By the time the series reached its halfway point – and with some rear-wheel-drive-friendly tracks already in the book – Cammish was 65 points behind table-topper Turkington. "I knew I just had to stick in there," says Cammish. "I wasn't haemorrhaging points to [the BMWs], but I wasn't gaining ground either. But I just had the feeling that things would swing back to me. You have to have that faith."

After a slight rule tweak, the BMWs did struggle over the latter part of the year and the Honda bandwagon was gathering strength. The fact Cammish

scored 63 points more than Turkington over the last 15 rounds proves the point.

The double Porsche Carrera Cup GB title winner says that resurgence from August onwards was partly due to the learning he had done in his maiden campaign in the BTCC in 2018.

That had resulted in two wins and 10th in the points, but learning about the ebb and flow of the tin-top contest was perhaps the biggest thing he took away from the season.

"The first year was interesting," recalls Cammish. "I was joining the best team on the grid in Team Dynamics, and I think there might have been a little bit of a target on my car. People were wondering who this guy was who didn't have any tin-top experience suddenly in one of the best cars on the grid."

"Also, there was some readjustment for me to do. My career had been on a GT

pathway. When you race in Porsches, it is all about qualifying, and racing wheel-to-wheel is rare. It is certainly not rare in the BTCC.

"That to learn how to race against certain people. A lot of the guys on the BTCC grid came up racing alongside each other in Renault Clios or in the BTCC. I hadn't raced against any of them because I came through a different path and I had to learn pretty quickly. It takes a while to suss people out."

Those building blocks for the 2019 charge were also founded on other things he picked up in the maiden challenge. He finished 10th in the standings, with two wins in the final meeting of the season at Brands Hatch.

"If I looked back, another 50 points would have given me third place in 2018," he says. "You reflect on the season and you can target where some of the points

went begging although I guess that is the same for everyone. You learn each point is worth fighting for. When you project that to 2019, you can see how vital that is. Who would have thought that at the end of the 30 races, there would be just two points between three drivers."

While there was the bitter pill of the championship loss to deal with, Cammish has now firmly established himself as one of the major players in the category and that was reflected when Team Dynamics signed Cammish for another two seasons back in August.

"OK, so I didn't win the title and that was a heartbreak," says Cammish. "But, I have a two-year deal so I know what I am doing in the future and it shows the faith the team has had in me and has in me going forward."

"That is probably the biggest prize of all that I could have taken away from 2019." ■

2019 SEASON HIGHLIGHTS

We asked the factory Honda driver Dan Cammish to select what he thinks were his best three drives of the 30-race campaign



1 Snetterton, race two

August 4

Race finish: 2nd

Second place in the opening race of the weekend meant that Dan Cammish went into the second event of the weekend with 48kg of success ballast and a host of fast-starting BMWs behind him. True to form, the rear-wheel-drive cars jumped ahead of the Honda early doors, but Cammish hung in there and battled back to second place, fending off Andrew Jordan to the line. "To be right in the mix with the pressure I was under, and having more weight than Jordan, was something special," says Cammish. "It was a real watershed and I realised that there was life in the title fight."



2 Thruxton, race three

August 18

Race finish: 1st

Sure, Cammish was fortunate to be drawn on the front row for the reversed-grid race but the Honda driver still had plenty of work to do. Colin Turkington's BMW jumped him early on, but Cammish restored the order pretty quickly and then pounced when leader Rob Collard's Power Maxed Vauxhall slid wide at Church. He survived a rain shower at the end to claim the triumph. "I needed to keep the points bandwagon rolling, and the conditions at the end made things very, very tricky," says Cammish. "There was a real sense of satisfaction with that."



3 Brands Hatch, race one

October 13

Race finish: 1st

A remarkable drive from 12th on the grid in a race that threatened rain, Cammish opted for slicks and hung on, while team-mate Matt Neal took advantage of a safety car to swap to wets. It was a close run thing either way, but Cammish clawed his way to the head of the pack. He eventually pulled a tip-toe overtaking move on leader Rory Butcher (AmDTuning.com Honda) to claim a vital win. "The pressure was on, I simply couldn't drop the ball," says Cammish. "The title was on the line, and I managed to win – by a big margin too. It was also pleasing to lead home a Team Dynamics 1-2."

INTERVIEW

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, ERC Media



Ingram has overcome a long and winding road

HOW INGRAM CONQUERED EUROPE

After battling budget problems and anxiety the 25-year-old Brit overcame it all in 2019. By **Stephen Brunson**

This year has been something of a revelation for Chris Ingram. It was a landmark year even if, according to the man himself, it was never meant to be. Alongside co-driver Ross Whittock, he became the first Briton to win the European Rally Championship since Vic Eلفord over 50 years ago.

His crowning moment at the final round of the season in Hungary was never guaranteed until the very end though, as he flirted between success and failure. In short, it was a microcosm of the arduous journey Ingram has travelled in his career.

"I fell in love with rallying when I was about 10 years old when my dad [former rally driver Jon] took me to the Trackrod Rally," Ingram says. "Everything associated with rallying; the smells, the fuel, the echo of cars in the forests, I just loved it."

"My dad got me started and he helped me financially. But, when we realised that I was decent, we've always struggled [to find] money."

His first steps in rallying came in

the F1000 British Junior Rally Championship between 2009-11, claiming the title in his final season.

At the age of just 17 he made his debut in the British Rally Championship in 2012, taking the Renault Twingo R2 Trophy in '13 and the same year had his first foray into the ERC on the Ypres Rally.

He took part in further rounds in 2014 with the help of Renault Sport but, as has come to dictate his rallying career to date, his budget began to run out towards the end of the season.

Fortunately for Ingram, he was picked up by Peugeot UK. That allowed him to continue competing in the ERC before joining the works Opel team for 2016, who guided him to the ERC3 title that same season.

"That was an unbelievable opportunity," Ingram explains. "The set-up was a proper junior factory team. We got engineers, data and a test programme. Just as I'd thought everything was going to be game over at the end of the previous year, these things happened at the right time. I've never had any big investment, I come from a very humble family and haven't been supported [financially] by them since I was 17."

His move to Opel also coincided with Whittock becoming his co-driver towards the end of 2017, with Ingram winning a second ERC3 – and Junior Under 27 – title before moving up to the R5 category for the following season.

At such a high level of competition, the expectations are always massive when it comes to delivering on promise. The pressures put on young drivers these days have increased tenfold for a number of reasons and are not helped by stand-out performances from the likes of teenage sensations Kalle Rovanpera and Oliver Solberg, who come from rallying dynasties.

Limited budget reduced Ingram to less than 20 miles of testing at the start of this year and, with the combined pressure of needing good results and bringing his Skoda Fabia R5 home without any damage, it took its toll on the Mancunian driver.

"Journalists are all very quick to praise these drivers like Rovanpera and Solberg who, don't get me wrong, are unbelievably talented and quick, but they've literally been in a rally car since they were kids," Ingram adds. "They've never had to worry about a single thing apart from driving fast."

"This year has been the most difficult



ERC title went down to the wire on Rally Hungary, but Ingram finished on top

of my life, I have been under so much pressure because the budget has been so tight. I was so anxious and it really affected my mental health to turn up to these events and prove I was good enough to everyone, trying to take the next step and then going home and being in a horrible environment and having no money. The contrast of living my dream on rallies and then going home and having nothing is massive."

Pressure is often one of the most misunderstood elements of elite sport.

While some thrive on the demands placed on them, others can wilt. For Ingram, he had reached rock bottom by mid-season, lost all confidence and crucially was running out of money yet again.

In times like these, he could have been forgiven for packing it all in following an agonising ERC1 Junior title defeat – and subsequent loss of a €10,000 prize – to Czech star Filip Mares on the latter's home event in Zlin by just 0.3 seconds. But the opposite happened.

"When we lost the championship, we gained a lot of self-belief because we had nothing to lose," says Ingram. "I couldn't drive how I used to: the anxiety and the pressure just kept building and it was making me push too hard all year. It took me getting to the bottom to realise that I just needed to relax."

That approach to the final two events of the year – in Cyprus and Hungary – didn't deliver his elusive first overall ERC win, but the bigger triumph was a history-making first British ERC title for 52 years.

"I couldn't give a sh*t if we never won a round this year to be honest," says Ingram. "Who cares about that if you can win the championship instead? The first Brit in over 50 years to do so, nobody can say anything [against that]."

INGRAM'S CAREER PATH



BRC life began in Renault Twingo

2009-2011
Contested the F1000 British Junior Rally Championship, taking the title in his third season

2012-2013
Moved into the British Rally Championship, securing the Renault Twingo R2 Trophy (UK) title in 2013. Made his European Rally Championship

(ERC) debut on the Ypres Rally in Belgium

2014-15
Joined Peugeot UK and continued to contest the ERC in a Peugeot 208 R2

2016
First major title as Ingram and Elliott Edmondson came out on top in ERC3 with factory-supported

Opel Adam R2

2017
Successfully defended ERC3 title and added the Junior Under 27 crown

2018
First season in an R5 but year was truncated due to illness. Came back towards the end of the season to claim two podiums

2019
Four podiums but just missed out on winning the Junior ERC1 title. Secured the overall title in thrilling fashion in Hungary, though, beating defending champion Alexey Lukyanuk

2020
Plans to move into WRC 2 depending on budget



First titles came with Opel Adam

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INSIGHT

Photos: John Fife, Chicane Media

A NEW BEGINNING

After a four-year hiatus the Jim Clark Rally successfully returned in 2019. By **John Fife**

Stages offered a challenge for crews

The Jim Clark Rally has always been a popular fixture in the Scottish Borders as well as much further afield in the world of rallying. When first introduced in 1970, forest rallying in Scotland was still in its infancy. Prior to that, the Scottish Rally Championship comprised of several Targa-style navigational rallies before introducing timed tests on Forestry Commission roads.

The first Jim Clark Rally therefore offered a mix of tests and stages with a variety of road surfaces, from three-ply farm tracks and the Tarmac of the old Charterhall Race Circuit to proper forest and private roads. The introduction of those original forest stages would soon enter rallying folklore with names like Twiglees and Castle O'er, Elibank and Cardrona, while the sections of private roads included Sisterpath, Sandys Gears, West Morriston and the Bield.

Fast forward to 2019 and – despite a four-year hiatus – the event remains as popular as ever despite some of these routes no longer being used.

This year's edition was not without its issues, as two stages on Friday had to be cancelled due to the adverse weather and a further two were affected due to incidents concerning competitors. Nevertheless, at the post-event debrief at the start of this month the organising team were rightly pleased with how well the return of the Jim Clark Rally had gone.

"I think the team did a marvellous job this year and that's a great boost ahead of next year's event," says deputy clerk of the course, Colin Smith.

"One of the most pleasing things has been the feedback not just from the Duns townsfolk but those in the villages and along the rally route. Of course, there are one or two who disagree with it, but on the whole this has been a positive experience and the vast majority of folk have

welcomed 'their rally' back. That's a good sign too. It's not just 'a' rally, they call it 'our' rally.

"At the debrief, this year's team more or less confirmed as one they wanted to help again next year so that's us off to a good start, especially since it's only six months away! We all felt the rally ran well, but we all felt we can do better next May with what we've learned, or relearned."

As Smith rightly points out, the rally will return to its traditional May date next year and will become part of the Scottish Rally Championship once again.

It's been a steep learning curve for all concerned over the past few years, a period when the return of the rally was never guaranteed following a fatal accident in 2014.

The Jim Clark Rally was not run while a joint Fatal Accident Inquiry was promptly held, both for the Jim Clark and the unrelated spectator tragedy on the previous year's Snowman Rally.

The outcome of the FAI in November 2017 recommended the adoption of 29 new safety requirements before the events would be allowed to resume. These were immediately accepted and implemented by the UK's governing body, the Motor Sports Association (now Motorsport UK), bar tracking.

A nationwide tracking system has yet to be universally adopted, although both the Jim Clark and Mull Rally used the Sporttraxx system which Craig Parry operates through his Onthepacenate rally services company.

Once the findings of the FAI were published, so began the push for new legislation which would allow the event to return. A new Bill was presented to the Scottish Parliament in March this year and was signed off in April.

Throughout the FAI process the organising team had continued their route planning and paperwork in readiness for the event to resume. This was imperative as there was a need to run an event this year to ensure next year's event could be granted a permit.

That ongoing process was hugely time

consuming. Alongside ongoing rally planning, the senior team officials worked as part of the SAG (Safety Advisory Group) which comprised of Scottish Borders Council, Police Scotland, the Scottish Ambulance Service, Scottish Fire and Rescue and the Roads Dept plus many other interested parties and organisations.

This year's event certainly felt like a new beginning, as everyone had taken lessons from previous tragic events, including spectators.

There was evidence of self-policing as some spectators started to drift closer to the stages after the opening cars had gone through, but they were called back by other spectators. That in itself is a very encouraging sign.

"Looking beyond next year, the new Act of Parliament will allow us to do an awful lot more," says chairman of the Jim Clark, Professor Dan Wright.

"For instance, in the past we were restricted to roads within Berwickshire, but under the new legislation we can go beyond the county boundaries. That opens up some fantastic new stretches of road in the Lothians to the south of Edinburgh.

"However, we won't be too ambitious too soon, but we have additional support promised from Event Scotland should we wish to expand our horizons.

"At a more local level, we used the new Jim Clark Museum premises this year ahead of the rally for recce signing-on. That went down well with rally crews taking time to look around, and make donations.

"In fact the museum staff have asked if they can be involved again next year, perhaps with a big screen showing live action."

Given what has transpired over recent years, the herculean efforts and determination of a small band of dedicated volunteers were rewarded with a hugely successful and well received event last month.

Now they've got to do it all over again for May 29-31! ■



New legislation means the Jim Clark Rally could use new routes in the future



There was self-policing between spectators which was a positive sign



Locals were pleased to see the return of 'their' event and came out to support

AWARDS

Photos: Motorsport Images

THE STARS COME OUT FOR MOTORSPORT'S BIGGEST NIGHT

The Autosport Awards evening gathered together some of racing's greatest names By **Matt James**



Lando Norris was British Competition winner



BTCC champion Colin Turkington won National Driver



Dick Bennetts' lifetime contribution was recognised



The Rookie of the Year spoils were taken by Alex Albon



The Moment of the Year award was won by Jean-Eric Vergne

It is the star-studded night of the year where the great and the good of motorsport gather to celebrate the achievements of the past 12 months – as well as the doffing the cap to highlights of some celebrated motorsport careers.

The Autosport Awards is the night of the year where the major players in motor racing come to be recognised.

As well as crowning the coveted Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year award, which was collected by British F3 racer Johnathan Hoggard, a host of the sport's big names received the plaudits for their efforts at the sharp end of motor racing.

Unsurprisingly, world champion Lewis Hamilton was crowned as the International Racing Driver of the year and his Mercedes car was named as the machine of the season. McLaren's F1 newcomer Lando Norris was British Competition Driver of the year, while the Rookie of the Year 2019

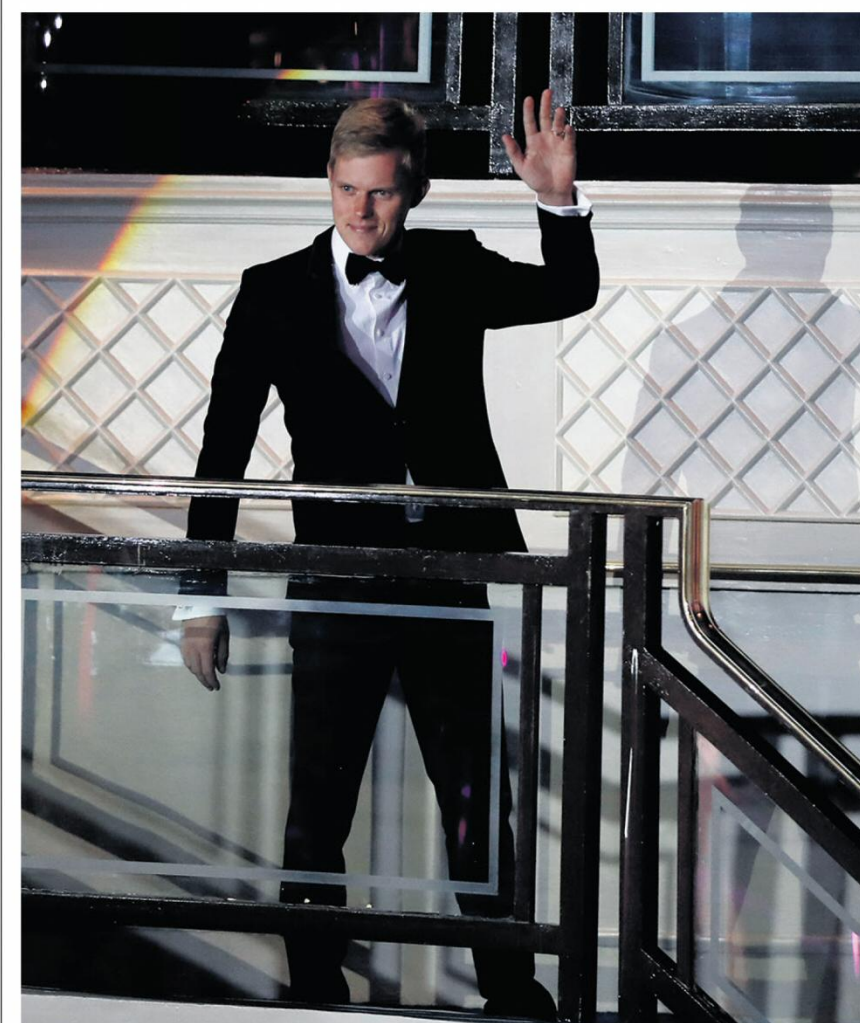
was named as Red Bull's new incumbent Alex Albon.

World Rally Championship winner Ott Tänak collected the International Rally Driver of the Year, while his weapon, the Toyota Yaris WRC, was named as the Rally Car of the Year.

British Touring Car Championship winner Colin Turkington picked up the National Driver of the Year accolade.

Luke Dardis picked up the Engineer of the Future prize, while the John Bolster award, named after Autosport's founder and long-time technical editor, was given in honour of the late F1 race director and safety guru Charlie Whiting. Formula E king Jean-Eric Vergne was handed the new Moment of the Year accolade for defending his title.

The pioneering and innovation award was given to the all-female W Series, while there were two Gregor Grant awards handed out to recognise achievements in motorsport. WSR head Dick Bennetts collected one, while bosses of the Monaco GP, which celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2019, were also feted. ■



World Rally champion Ott Tänak was a special guest visitor

SPORTING SCENE

RUSSIAN ROUND ADDED TO WORLD RX SCHEDULE

Final roster confirmed for 2020 World RX Championship with St Petersburg round

Photos: World Rallycross, Kerry Dunlop

The World RX will visit Russia in 2020



By Hal Ridge

The Igora Drive motorsport complex near St Petersburg, Russia was announced as the final addition to the 2020 World Rallycross Championship calendar after December's World Motor Sport Council meeting in Paris last week.

The Russian event will take place on July 18-19 as the sixth of 11 rounds. The World RX schedule was published with two TBCs at the end of October, with Russia now joining Latvia in filling the remaining places.

The rallycross layout at the Igora Drive motorsport complex sits alongside the Hermann Tilke-designed circuit that will

also host DTM for the first time next season. While the St Petersburg event will mark the first time a top-flight international rallycross event has been held in the country, Russian driver Timur Timerzyanov, from Kazan, is a triple European champion and World RX event winner.

To date, the biggest rallycross event

CALENDAR

2020 World RX

DATE	VENUE
1 April 18-19	Barcelona, Spain
2 May 2-3	Montalegre, Portugal
3 May 16-17	Spa, Belgium
4 June 13-14	Hell, Norway
5 July 4-5	Holjes, Sweden
6 July 18-19	St Petersburg, Russia
7 Aug 1-2	Nurburging, Germany
8 Sept 5-6	Loheac, France
9 Sept 19-20	Riga, Latvia
10 Oct 30-31	Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi
11 Nov 14-15	Cape Town, South Africa

held in Russia has been the annual Presidents' Cup event at Kazan in Tatarstan, run each August, where drivers like Timurzyanov, 14-time European champion Kenneth Hansen and triple European champion Sverre Isachsen have competed in the past, along with Tatarstan's president Rustam Minnikhanov.

GCK wins energy tender supply deal

The World Motor Sport Council has revealed that GCK Energy has won the energy supplier tender for both the World Rallycross Championship and Junior Rallycross Championship from 2021 to 2024.

The firm is headed up by GC Competition World RX driver and team owner Guerlain Chicherit. GCK entered World RX as a team in 2018, and this year ran five cars in the series.

In a statement, the firm said: "Throughout 2019 GCK have showcased sustainable energy solutions within the World RX paddock, operating the team technical, hospitality and administrative facilities 100% autonomously on renewable power."

"This news means that GCK Energy, in partnership with IBS and Socomec Group, will further develop these mobile energy solutions in order to power all of the competitors in the electric rallycross championships from 2021."

WINTER RALLYCROSS

STERKENS LEADS THE BELGIAN INVASION AT LYDDEN HILL



Ling overhauled Sterkens to claim glory in the Over 1600cc final showdown

Winter Rallycross: Lydden Hill

By Kerry Dunlop

A trio of barnstorming Belgians blitzed the best of British opposition at the second round of the Lydden Hill Winter Rallycross series on Saturday when Jos Sterkens, Bart Coninx and Peter Byloos finished 1-2-3 in the Superfinal.

It could have been a very different story if the Brits had not been stricken with such a high rate of attrition. John Cross managed to complete just the first practice session before his Lancia Stratos was loaded up again, Chris Scott suffered a front suspension failure on his Suzuki Swift and the spectacular Vincent Bristow popped a rear tyre on his BMW 328.

Sadly, Tristan Ovenden, the winner of last month's opening round of the

Lydden Winter Rallycross series, was a non-starter this time as his Clio's 3.5 V6 engine was being refurbished in Julian Godfrey's workshop.

Fred Ling suffered the most critical retirement when he was forced to pull out while leading the Superfinal for the 10 fastest drivers.

Ling was a clear candidate for pole position after he had won all three heats and the final for the Over 1600cc category with a feisty two-litre Ford Fiesta prepared by himself and his dad Dave, a former regular rallycross frontrunner.

The SEAT Ibiza of Coninx, Ling's class rival, was in the centre of the front row alongside former European Championship contender Sterkens, now 65, who had qualified from the Retro category with his purposeful, high-winged, Zetec-powered Ford Escort Mk1. Rear-wheel drive helped Sterkens



Abbie McGuinness won the Juniors

surge ahead at the start but Ling was much quicker in the corners and on the opening lap he drew alongside at the hairpin, outbraked the Belgian at Paddock Bend and then swept around the outside to seize the lead. But then it was all over for the Brit as he pulled off the track after only one lap.

Sterkens raced on to take a narrow victory over Coninx, Byloos and Bristow, undoubtedly the greatest showman of the day, who wore his tyres down to the canvas.

Winners
Over 1600cc Final: Fred Ling (Ford Fiesta) Up to 1600cc Final: Tomasz Wielgosz (Peugeot 106) Classic & Retro Final: Jos Sterkens (Ford Escort Mk1) Juniors Final: Abbie McGuinness (VW Lupo)

Ehrlacher and Panis share the spoils in Andros opener

Yann Ehrlacher and Aurelien Panis shared the spoils in the opening weekend of the Andros Trophy series at Val Thorens, which for the 2019-2020 winter season has switched to all-electric cars.

Ehrlacher beat reigning four-time champion Jean-Baptiste Dubourg to victory on Saturday, as Panis finished third, ahead of his father and former F1 driver Olivier and World Rallycross star Andreas Bakkerud.

It was Panis Jr who won on Sunday aboard his Audi A1, beating nine-time World Rally champion Sebastien Loeb,

the Hyundai WRC driver making the first of two selected appearances this winter, to victory.

Making it a double podium for DA Racing's new Renault-backed ZOE, Nicolas Prost beat team-mate Dubourg to the final podium position.

Panis's double rostrum finish gives him an early points lead, ahead of Ehrlacher, with Dubourg and Prost placed ahead of Bakkerud and Loeb.

Sylvain Pussier and Stephane Ventaja claimed wins in the Elite class, as RX Academy racer Clementine Lhoste finished on the podium on Sunday.



Panis Jr was the Sunday winner

Titans RX reveals calendar and drops British round

The Titans Rallycross series will not hold a round in the United Kingdom in its second season next year.

Founded by former World Rallycross driver Max Pucher, the series for single-make Pantera RX6 machines was won by Kevin Hansen this year, and held its third and fourth rounds at Lydden Hill.

Despite holding talks with Lydden Hill, Knockhill and Mondello Park in Ireland about a 2020 event, the series will not visit the UK next year.

The 2020 Titans RX season will begin at the MJP Arena in Austria (April 25-26), before heading to Nyirad in

Hungary (May 9-10), Montalegre in Portugal (June 27-28), Essay in France (July 11-12), Trois-Rivieres in Canada (August 1-2) and Esterling in Germany (September 12-13) before a season finale at Nyirad on October 3-4.



Titans will not visit Britain in 2020

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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

MN SAYS...

Heralding the next wave of superstars

Motorsport News lauds the best of the new crop of future motor racing heroes

Within the pages of this issue, you can read about two young men in a hurry who are likely to have long and successful careers towards the very pinnacle of motorsport. Alongside Johnathan Hoggard's Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award triumph, we talk to Toyota's new World Rally Championship recruit Kalle Rovanpera.

Both are at the start of their respective journeys, but the horizons for 2020 and beyond seem to have been brought into sharp focus. Rovanpera is very keen to play down the expectations over his likely results in the Toyota Yaris WRC, which he will pedal alongside the team's new recruits Sebastien Ogier and Elfyn Evans. He will be in no better place to learn his craft and perfect his speed.

For Hoggard, he is now in the position to choose which direction his career will be headed in 2020. The recognition he has earned will go a long way towards opening whichever doors he wants. The future looks bright for both of them.

Matt James, Editor (Twitter: @MattJMNews)



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Photographs must be of a good quality and please send no more than three images



Regular contributor Rich Cranston has been back on the beat during Donington Park testing, capturing this Ginetta LMP3 racer



A Smart car tackles the Camel Classic, by Duncan Stephens



Richard Salisbury's shot from the Roger Albert Clark Rally



Andy Manston's photo from the recent Great Bustard Rally



Yvonne Williams's shot of Rob Hughes from Anglesey Circuit



A flaming F2 machine from Abu Dhabi, taken by Dean Chilvers



Another picture from the R.A.C. Rally, sent in by James Dewar



A Ford Escort cutting things fine, shot taken by Brian Morgan

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TV GUIDE

There's another chance to see a repeat of this year's **Macau Grand Prix** as some of the best young talent took to the famous streets where the likes of Ayrton Senna and Michael Schumacher have claimed victory (Thursday, 0745-0845hrs, Eurosport 1).
 Catch the best moments from the opening two rounds of the **2019/20 Formula E**

Championship from Saudi Arabia as Brits Sam Bird and Alexander Sims began the season in style (Friday, 0745-0845hrs, Eurosport 1).
 And finally, the stars of the motorsport world were out in force for the **Autosport Awards** last weekend and you can see the best moments on Saturday (1830-2000hrs, Sky Sports F1).



Sims took maiden FE victory

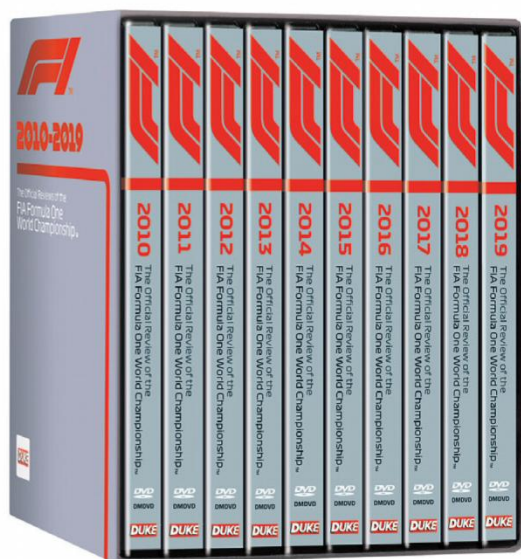
LIVE TV

WEC: Sakhir
Race: Sunday, 1700-2030hrs, Eurosport 2
WTCR: Sepang
Race 1: Sunday, 0700-0800hrs, Eurosport 1
Race 2: Sunday, 1000-1105hrs, Eurosport 1
Race 3: Monday, 0000-0130hrs, Eurosport 1 (delayed)

CHRISTMAS GUIDE TO DVDS

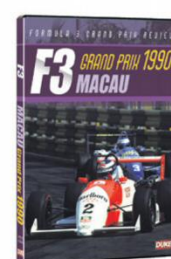
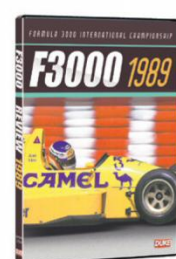
Duke Video's festive selection is packed with new offerings, with a DVD boxset showing the 2010-2019 Formula 1 seasons available for the first time. See Sebastian Vettel's meteoric rise to four-time world champion with Red Bull eclipsed by Lewis Hamilton adding a further five titles to his 2008 success. His latest title this season is also available separately, and as part of a bundle with boxsets of previous decades.

Rally and junior single-seater fans are also catered for, with retro films showing the heyday of the Safari Rally – returning to the World Rally Championship calendar next year – and Mika Hakkinen's infamous clash with Michael Schumacher at Macau in 1990 new to DVD.

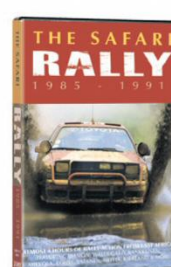
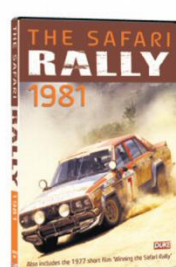


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THE 50 DEFINING MOMENTS OF 2019



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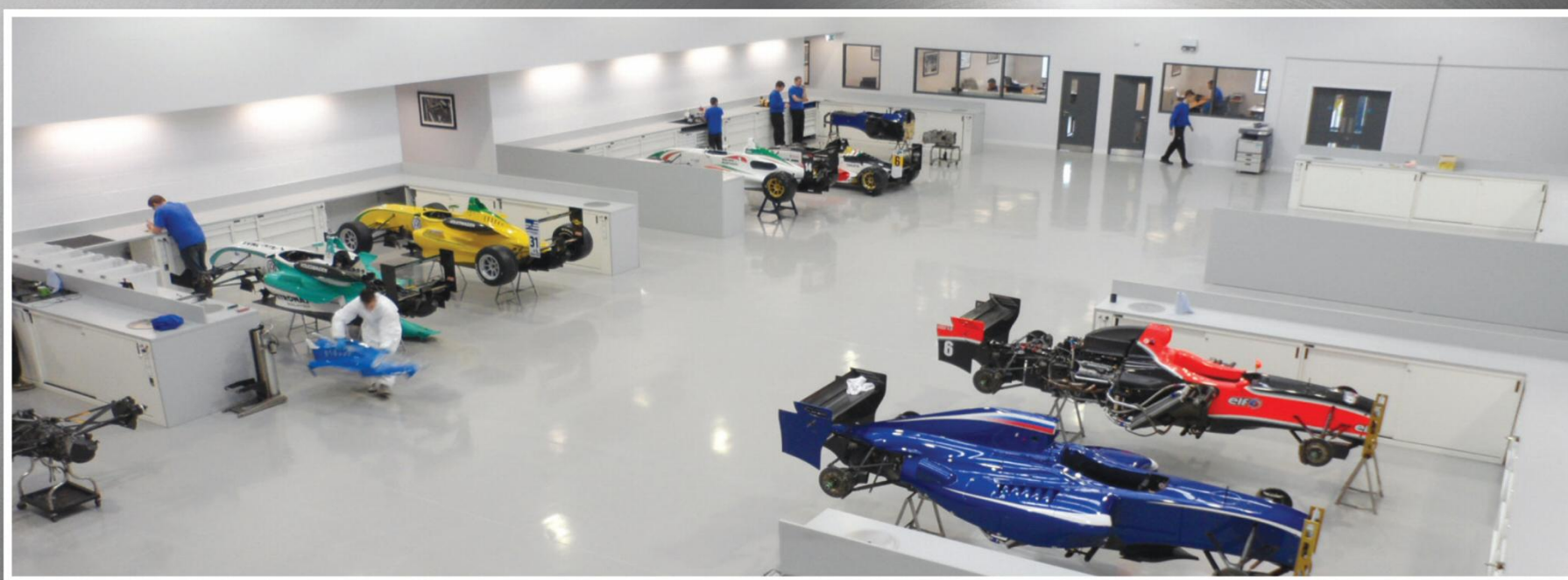
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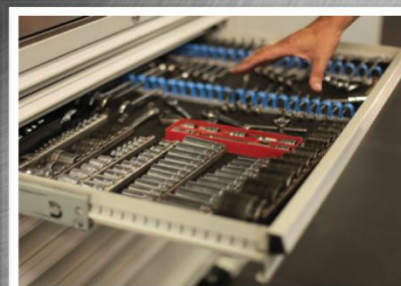


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