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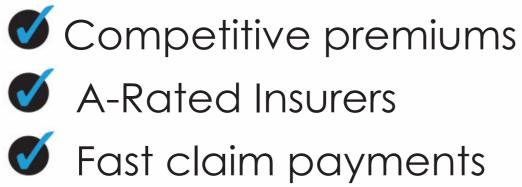
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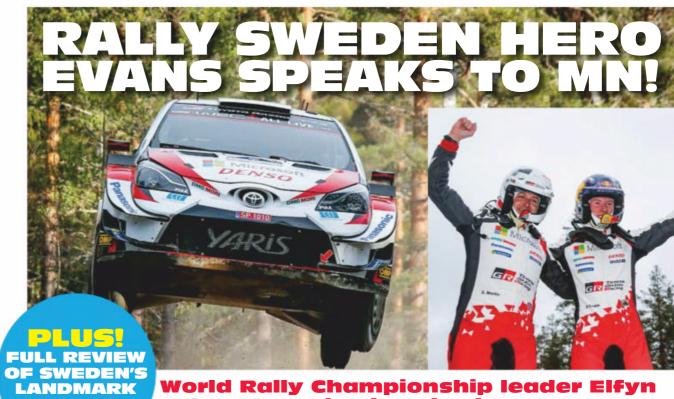
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# **THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT** 10008PDF

■ FEBRUARY 26 2020 ■ EVERY WEDNESDAY ■ £3.60 ■ FORMERLY MOTORING NEWS



World Rally Championship leader Elfyn reflects on his historic victory

# **LEWIS'S TRICK NEW CAR BLITZES F1 RIVALS IN FIRST TESTING By Matt James**

EVENT

The Mercedes team has dominated the opening official test sessions at Barcelona, clocking lap times way ahead of its rivals.

The world title-winning squad has hit the ground running with its new W11 design, with Lewis Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas each recording laps that were unmatched by rival teams. At the end of the three-day

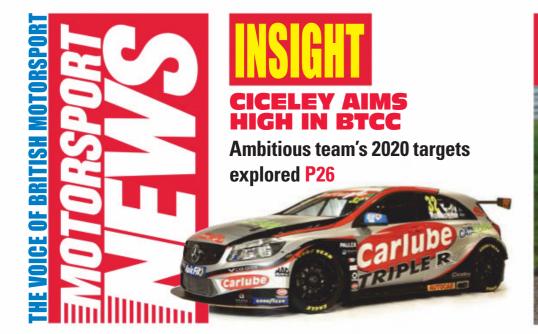


session in Barcelona. Ferrari had struggled but there were some impressive times from both the Renault and Racing Point teams.

Meanwhile, Mercedes has defended its use of a trick steering component – the dual axis system – which other teams have flagged up. Technical bosses of the Silver Arrows team say that the system has been created in full knowledge of the FIA. Further testing continues today (February 26).

All the new cars rated, P23

5









English plate style diff (30/90 ramps)	
Available 18 tooth (mates with semi-floating	
conversion kit)	
Available 22 tooth (mates with std. halfshaft)	
Spare plate kit	
Spare side gears, 18 or 22 tooth (please state)	
English CWP, 3.54, 3.7, 3.9, 4.1, 4.4, 4.7, 4.9, 5.1, 5.3	
Spare side bearing, top quality	
Crush washer	
Crown wheel bearing	
Pinion bearing	
Atlas into English semi-floating hub kit,	
inc. (2) '4340' halfshafts, 18 tooth	
English axle weld-on brace ring	
Special 10mm axle brace, English axle	
SPARES	
Semi-floating hub assembly (less bearing)	e
Bearing '4340'	
Halfshaft, suit semi-floating kit	
Flange, not semi-floating, suit std. axle	
Flange, Group 1 type	
Brake disc, 265 x 10	
A MARKEN AND A CONTRACT	

#### HELICAL LSDs (ATBs), BLACKLINE

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English axle, Caterham, 22 spline	£324.00	£388
Atlas axle, 16 spline	£354.00	£424
Ford FWD - Escort, Fiesta, Focus, KA,		
Orion, Puma (BC/1B5 trans)	£399.00	£478
Sierra 7", Caterham	£399.00	£478
Focus ST170, Mini Cooper 'S'		
(6-speed Getrag box)	£399.00	£478
Mazda MX5 (94-05)	£399.00	£478

ach £144.40 £17.

each £34.50 £4

#### TRANSMISSION PARTS, BLACKLINE

4-speed bearing type gearlever	£38.50	£46.20
5-speed bearing type gearlever	£40.50	£48.60
5-speed quickshift conversion kit	£13.50	£16.20
M10 ally 'Pro' gearknob	£14.90	£17.88
M10 white or black nylon gearknob	£12.50	£15.00
Propshaft, Type 9 - English or Atlas axle	£89.50	£107.40

		LH 2:4 ra	
		LH 2:2 ra	
		OEM style steering rack mounts	pair
	£474.96	Roller bearing top mount - spherical bearing,	each
	£474.96	Roller bearing top mount - roller bearing,	each
	£47.40	Roller bearin plastic dust covers	pair
£32.50		Spherical bearing race type top mounts	pair
	£277.80		-
	£23.88		-
	£7.08		
	£11.88		
£14.90	£17.88		
£443.80	£532.56	TCA's 'Pattern' style	10-00
£39.90		TCA's 'OEM' style	
£99.50	£119.40	TCA bush insertion tool	
		Twin cam anti-roll bar	
h £144.40	£173.28	Anti-dive kit	
£48.90	£59.76	World cup X-member	
£77.50	£93.00	World cup mounts	pair
£59.50	£71.40	RS2000 track rod ends	each
£59.50	£71.40	Group 4 style all steel U/J coupling	
ch £34.50	£41.40	4-link kit	
		Heavy duty 4-link kit	
KLIN		Group 4 round turret kit	kit
		Mk1 spring shackles	car set
C224.00	6200.00	Mk2 spring shackles	car set
	£388.80	OEM Escort RS struts	each
£354.00	£424.80	Group 4 spec. front RS struts	each
5300 00	C 170 00	Escort RS stub axles	pair
	£478.80	RS steering arms	pair
£399.00	£478.80	Heavy duty steering arms, gusseted	pair
	C 170 00	Quick fit steering arm kit	pair
	£478.80	Ally hubs - standard or Group 4	each
£399.00	£478.80	Stub axle hardware kit	
		Watts linkage kit	
CKLIN		Taper leaf springs, 146lb rate	each
		Ally tube strut brace, round tube	
£38.50	£46.20	Work style 60mm oval tube strut brace	
£40.50	£48.60	Rear lamp protectors	pair
£13.50	£16.20	Chassis mounted sump guard, wet sump	
£14.90	£17.88	Kaylan mudflaps, 4mm (500x300)	pair
£12.50	£15.00	Body jacking kit	car set
C00 50	C107 10	F 11 I A LADIAND CE	

Ford hub nut socket, 3/4"D, 65mm

£214.50	£257.40	
£16.80	£20.16	
£49.50	£59.40	
£49.50	£59.40	
£9.50	£11.40	
£49.60	£59.52	
	L	
OEM TCA's		

563

pair

pair

£76.20

£199.50 £239.40

£49.50 £59.40 £44.90 £53.88

£51.50 £61.80

£12.90 £15.48

£137.00 £164.40

£16.50 £19.80

£119.50 £143.40

£13.90 £16.68

6.20		full installation kit, FIA homologation E Kit E159.80 £191.76	X 037.13
£36.50	£43.80		
£63.50	£76.20	Escort Laminated	& He
E14.90	£17.88		
£59.50	£71.40	Escort Mk1 front laminated screen (inc	( mhhor)
£31.00	£37.20		
£106.50	£127.80	Escort Mk2 front laminated screen (inc	
£28.50	£34.20	Escort Mk1 Front heated laminated scree	
£10.50	£12.60	Escort Mk2 Front heated laminated scree	n (inc. rubb
£19.80	£23.76	Escort Mk1 front screen rubber	
£119.50	£143.40	Escort Mk1 rear screen rubber	
£185.00	£222.00	Escort Mk2 front screen rubber	
£65.00	£78.00	Escort Mk2 rear screen rubber	
£17.00	£20.40	Laser windscreen chip repair kit	
£23.50	£28.20	14" or 17" rear view mirror	
£96.95	£116.34	A REAL PROPERTY OF A REAL PROPER	
£128.00	£153.60	Escort Mk2	Rubb
£130.00	£156.00		
£69.50	£83.40	Bonnet bump stop	pair
£79.50	£95.40	Bonnet rail bump stop, set of 4	<ul> <li>S. (S. (S. ))</li> </ul>
£9.60	£11.52	Bonnet bump stop, centre-rear	
£49.50	£59.40	Wiring loom bulkhead grommet	
£10.90	£13.08	Bonnet release cable grommet	
10 C 10 C		0	



4.25 ltr FIA plumbed-in fire system,

#### ated Screens

M16 Calipers from

£89.00 £106.80

Escort Mk1 front laminated screen (incl. rubber)	£69.50	£83.40
Escort Mk2 front laminated screen (incl. rubber)	£69.50	£83.40
Escort Mk1 Front heated laminated screen (inc. rubber)	£198.60	£238.32
Escort Mk2 Front heated laminated screen (inc. rubber)	£198.60	£238.32
Escort Mk1 front screen rubber	£24.92	£29.90
Escort Mk1 rear screen rubber	£23.92	£28.70
Escort Mk2 front screen rubber	£29.08	£34.90
Escort Mk2 rear screen rubber	£29.08	£34.90
Laser windscreen chip repair kit	£13.90	£16.68
14" or 17" rear view mirror	£14.90	£17.88

#### er Parts

Bonnet bump stop	pair	£6.20	£7.44
Bonnet rail bump stop, set of 4	·	£10.90	£13.08
Bonnet bump stop, centre-rear		£5.10	£6.12
Wiring loom bulkhead grommet		£6.90	£8.28
Bonnet release cable grommet		£5.20	£6.24
Steering column bulkhead grommet		£7.20	£8.64
Handbrake backplate dust boots	pair	£7.10	£8.52
Spedo cable bulkhead grommet		£5.20	£6,24
Throttle pedal pad		£5.20	£6.24
Brake and clutch pedal pads	pair	£8.00	£9.60
Shock absorber top caps	pair	£13.90	£16.68
Rear bumper side plugs, set of 4	a stores	£9.90	£11.88
Oil line bulkhead grommet		£5.10	£6.12
Brake servo rod bellows		£5.20	£6.24

PLEASE NOTE: All prices in Red are EXCLUSIVE OF VAT

## COMMENT



The gloves are on! F1's top men are starting to draw the battle lines after testing

# EARLY SPEED IS ALWAYS A BENEFIT

iven the early clues from preliminary testing, Mercedes looks very comfortable as having the fastest car of the new designs that have been revealed for the grand prix season ahead. That is very good news for Lewis Hamilton, but maybe less so for F1 itself.

Casual fans bemoan the lack of competition in grand prix motor racing. Perhaps what they mean is they are bored of one man winning all the time. Hamilton's dominance does not mean that F1 is non-competitive: it simply means that the six-time world champion is on a different level in terms of performance than anyone else. But initial times are hard to read, because not all of the teams are running their latest-spec cars and some outfits that already know they are in for a tough season might run their machines with some trickery to make sure they get a confidence-boosting position on the timesheets. We will have to wait and see, but things certainly look good for Hamilton and his team-mate Valtteri Bottas ahead of the 2020 campaign. Scott Mitchell is our man on the ground in Barcelona, and he has cast his eye over the 2020 line-up to shed some light on who is going to take the fight to the three-pointed star this season. His analysis starts on page 23. Elsewhere in this issue, we focus on the stunning performance of the joint World Rally Championship leader Elfyn Evans on Rally Sweden. Not only did the Welshman lead from start to finish, he put his illustrious team-mate and six-time title-winner Sebastien Ogier in the shade too. There are threats coming though as Ott Tanak has found his feet with Hyundai and Kalle Rovanpera grabbed a sensational podium. Colin Clark tells us what it means, starting on page 20. We also look at the chasm between the lower rungs of National rallying in this country as Luke Barry spoke to the young up-and-comers who are swapping their R2-spec cars for more powerful R5 versions, and he finds out the tricks of the trade. See page 18.



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## **TOYOTA STAR SPEAKS TO MN**

Welshman Evans talks to us after his dream result



**Climbing National rallying's ladder** 





#### Matt James

matt.james@kelsey.co.uk

#### The event that overcame weather adversity

#### **P23** THE HEADLINE-MAKERS ARE REVEALED

We assess the new F1 line-up and delve into the design tweaks



News: Racing News: Rallying News: Historic News: Sporting Scene Reports: National rallying Interview: Elfyn Evans Feature: Going from R2 to R5 Feature: F1's new cars Feature: Ciceley Motorsport Column: Hal Ridge What's on/readers photos



FOR MOTORSPORT NEWS STAFF CONTACT DETAILS PLEASE SEE P31

## **RACING NEWS**

#### IN BRIEF

#### **Miami GP closer**

The Miami Grand Prix has scored a major victory in its battle against local opposition as it continues to prepare for a slot on the 2021 Formula 1 calendar. The GP has faced stern opposition from local residents and will no longer use public roads, with the proposed circuit instead being built around the Miami Dolphins NFL stadium. Although commissioners tied 6-6 in a vote held last Wednesday, a potential roadblock for the planned event, it means the approval of both the city of Miami Gardens as well as the county will not be required going forward.

#### **Two-day Chinese GP?**

A two-day Chinese Grand Prix between the Brazilian and Abu Dhabi Formula 1 races has emerged as one option to get the event back on the calendar. The outbreak of coronavirus in China forced race promoters to postpone the original event, which had been due to take place in Shanghai on April 19. Even before that decision was made though, F1 chiefs were clear that they would look at all possibilities to try to reschedule the race later in the year - despite the difficulties of finding space for it. The proposal is for the Chinese GP to take place on November 22, as part of a triple header with Brazil and Abu Dhabi.

#### **Ocon impressed by grip**

Esteban Ocon says he felt more grip than he's ever experienced in a Formula 1 car after his morning in the Renault on the first day of testing in Spain last week. Ocon made the observations when comparing the Renault with the world championshipwinning Mercedes W10, which he sampled throughout 2019 in the Brackley team's simulator, and drove at Paul Ricard in a Pirelli tyre test in September. "I think if you take it in account the fastest lap time, we're already faster than the fastest lap time of last year's first day," he said. "So I think the cars are just evolving year-by-year. It's hard to compare, but the amount of grip I feel now I think I've never felt it before."

# MERC SPARKS QUESTIONS WITH STEERING TRICKS

'Novel' system for Lewis's new racer, but team says sport's governors are aware of the tweaks



#### By Luke Smith and Adam Cooper

**Mercedes Formula 1** technical chief James Allison says the FIA is aware of the team's "novel" steering system that debuted at preseason testing last Thursday.

Mercedes sparked intrigue after Lewis Hamilton was seen moving his steering wheel towards him on the straights during the morning test run at Barcelona, which appeared to alter the toe angle of the front wheels.

reducing drag on the straights. Speaking on Thursday at Barcelona, Allison said the new system was called 'DAS'standing for 'dual axis steering'. "We have a system in the car, it's a novel idea," Allison said.

"We've got a name for it. It's called DAS, if you're interested. "It just introduces an extra

dimension to the steering, to the driver, that we hope will be useful during the year. "But precisely how we use it, why we use it, that's something we'll keep to ourselves." The legality of the system was immediately questioned after onboard footage from Hamilton's car emerged, but

Allison stressed the FIA was aware of its usage.

"This isn't news to the FIA, it's something that we've been talking to them about for some time," Allison added.

"The rules are pretty clear about what's permitted on steering systems, and we're pretty confident that it matches all of these requirements."

Ferrari driver Sebastian Vettel compared the system with the

you have the feeling all of a sudden, you might have the wheel in your hand," he said.

"I could just imagine it feels weird. But if it's faster and there's no [safety] concern you go for the faster option. "We had the F-duct many

years ago, and we drove around with one hand most of the tracks. "That wasn't safe, but it

was fast. "So you do what you're pushed to do, but then that's why we have the FIA obviously, to look after us and make sure things make sense, and we have got our hands on the wheel."

outlaw teams from running

running and you put on your running shoes, and then somebody asks you to run with your flip-flops. You can also

do that, but it just feels different." While rival teams are now considering whether to copy the idea themselves, or challenge it by arguing that the toe-angle illegally changes the front suspension, it has emerged that the FIA has already moved to

#### **No tyres for McLaren**

McLaren ran out of tyres after completing more laps than expected during the opening day of Formula 1 pre-season testing, according to Carlos Sainz Jr. Sainz enjoyed his first extended run in the new McLaren MCL35 car last Wednesday at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, racking up 161 laps. Sainz said it was a considerable feat to have completed so many laps on the very first day of testing. "Basically we couldn't do more laps because there were no more tyres available," he said. "We didn't have a single problem in the car of reliability, which means we ended the day just doing pitstop practice and starts, with not much more to do.'

The adjustments would theoretically offer a better set-up for corners while also

**TESTING TIMES – LATEST** 

F-duct solution pioneered by McLaren in 2010, which required drivers to use their hands or knees to block holes in the cockpit area for an aerodynamic benefit. "I think it's quite weird, when

#### **HAMILTON LOOKS** LONG-TERM IN F1

Lewis Hamilton says his next contract decision will take into account his "five-10-year plan", but is not planning to rush into negotiations with his Mercedes Formula 1 team.

The six-time world champion's current deal expires at the end of this year, and he has been linked with a possible move to Ferrari should he opt not to extend his stint with Mercedes.

Speaking after the morning session on the second day of F1 testing in Barcelona last week, Hamilton admitted that he had recently spoken informally with top Daimler management at the Laureus Awards-where he was recognised with the Sportsman of the Year-but saw no urgent need to open talks with team boss Toto Wolff while prioritising

Elaborating on that comment, he said: "Imagine you're used to anything like it in 2021.

F1's 2021 regulations, which were published last year, are clear that any changes to the angle of the steered wheel can only be made by the steering wheel rotating in a defined way.

#### Formula 1 pre-season test 1 overall breakdown

up to Fri	iday	lunch	

POS	TEAM	DAY 1 LAF	PS IDA	¥2	LAPS	DAY 3	LAPS
1	Mercedes	1m16.976s 173	1m	118.387s	106	1m15.732s	65
2	Alfa Romeo	1m18.386s 138	3 1m	17.091s	134	1m18.035s	65
3	Renault	1m17.873s 118	1m	n17.749s	93	1m17.102s	76
4	Racing Point	1m17.375s 110	) 1m	17.347s	145	1m17.338s	52
5	AlphaTauri	1m17.698s 116	i 1m	118.121s	147	1m17.427s	62
6	Red Bull	1m17.516s 168	1m	17.912s	134	1m17.636s	86
7	McLaren	1m17.842s 161	1m	n18.474s	137	1m18.274s	76
8	Ferrari	1m18.289s 132	1m	n18.154s	122	1m18.384s	40
9	Williams	1m18.168s 136	i 1m	118.266s	116	1m19.004s	44
10	Haas	1m18.466s 106	i 1m	118.496s	158	1m18.380s	48



"I know Toto is keen to, but right now the focus is obviously trying to make sure you're getting ready for the season. It ramps up, and you just want to start on the right foot.

"So it's not something that I really get bogged down with at this period of time."

Lewis says there is no rush to ink new driving contract

on his pre-season preparations.

"I've not really put much thought into it, to be honest," he said.

"I don't know when I'm gonna sit down and talk. I don't see a particular rush. I think our goals are aligned – in a couple of months I'm sure we'll sit down.



## ASTON MARTIN PAUSES HYPERCAR PROGRAMME

#### Valkyrie project on ice as manufacturer weighs up sportscar rule amendments

#### **By Gary Watkins**

Aston Martin has put its entry into the LM Hypercar division of the World Endurance Championship later this year on hold.

The move means that the Valkyrie hypercar will not make its race debut at the Silverstone 2020/21 opener this September. Aston cited last month's announcement that the next breed of IMSA SportsCar Championship prototypes will be able to vie with LM Hypercars in the WEC from the start of the 2021/22 season for the postponement.

It stated that it "will now pause as it considers whether to continue in any future prototype class" and that it remains "open to working with both organisations to find a suitable pathway for any future participation".

Aston stressed that it will continue in the WEC as a factory with its existing GTE Pro programme. Aston Martin Racing president David

Aston Martin Racing president David King said: "With such momentous change taking place in sportscar racing, the decision to pause our entry into the WEC Hypercar class gives us the time and breathing space to calmly assess the status of the top level of the sport, and our place within it.

"Competing against our closest rivals on the road in GT racing makes perfect sense: [the] Vantage is winning in some of the most fiercely-contested sportscar classes in global motorsport, and long may this continue."

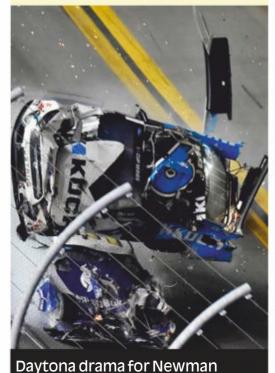
#### Newman released from hospital after 500 hit

NASCAR driver Ryan Newman has been released from hospital following his crash on the final lap of this year's Daytona 500.

Newman, 42, was injured in a last-lap wreck in last Monday's rain-delayed Daytona 500, when contact at the final corner tipped him hard into the barrier, which in turn sent him airborne in a frightening incident.

He was transported by ambulance to Halifax Medical Center in Daytona Beach, Florida, where his condition was described initially as "serious" but not life-threatening.

Last Tuesday, his Rousch Fenway Racing team issued an update on Newman's condition, noting that he was "awake and speaking" to medical staff and his family at the hospital, before he was released on Wednesday.



#### New drivers lined up for Formula E test at Marrakech

Formula E teams have announced their driver line-ups for the upcoming Marrakech test, which will take place on Sunday (March 1) after the e-prix.

W Series champion and Williams F1

#### BRIT HUFF CALLS TIME ON WORLD TIN-TOPS

Rob Huff will no longer be a World Touring Car driver after 15 years and 350 races.

Huff, 40, who won 31 times between WTCC and WTCR, and the world title in 2012, will instead concentrate on developing Teamwork Huff Motorsport in China, where he also coaches local drivers.

Although he won't be on the WTCR grid in 2020 after being left without a drive following Volkswagen's withdrawal, Huff plans to contest historic events, plus rounds of the China Touring Car Championship. However, he's not ruling out a WTCR return in 2021 or an appearance when the series visits Macau, where he's a nine-time winner, in November.

"Rob has been a fierce and highly accomplished racer on track and a great ambassador off it," said WTCR boss Francois Ribeiro. "He will always be part of

the family."

Meanwhile, WTCR events will switch back to a two-race format under cost-cutting measures.

#### BTCC's new hybrid power ready ahead of schedule

Technical bosses of the British Touring Car Championship, due for introduction in 2022, say that the development of new hybrid technology for the series is running ahead of schedule.

The contract for the new system was awarded the contract to Cosworth Electronics. BTCC chiefs have said that they will now select an existing BTCC race car for the initial hybrid integration and comprehensive testing programme. Testing and simulations will then begin

to refine the exact nature of the driverselectable hybrid power delivery – how many seconds per lap, when and how it can be used, as well as configuring the varying amounts of regeneration and hybrid power that will be used to replace the current success ballast system.

The additional hybrid power will be used by each driver using a steering wheel mounted button after lap one. This will provide new competitive strategies and opportunities during each race.

Alan Gow, BTCC chief executive, said: "I'm incredibly pleased with the progress we are making on this project. One always assumes there will be some hiccups along the way, but so far there has been nothing." development driver Jamie Chadwick will make her third outing at the wheel of FE machinery when she drives for Jaguar.

Fellow W Series regular Alice Powell will be at the test as well for Envision Virgin Racing, who will also run reigning Super Formula champion Nick Cassidy.

Mercedes will run FIA Formula 3 driver Jake Hughes and former Mercedes DTM driver Daniel Juncadella, with Brit Jann Mardenborough testing for Nissan e. dams and Ferrari junior programme driver Arthur Leclerc – brother of Charles – out for Venturi.



### HAMILTON JOINS TEAM HARD FOR 2020 BTCC CAMPAIGN

Nic Hamilton has landed a drive with Team Hard Racing for the 2020 British Touring Car Championship in a VW CC.

Hamilton took part in the majority of the 2019 season at the wheel of a Motorbase Performance Ford Focus until funding issues forced him out. He failed to register a point.

The half-brother of six-time F1 world champion Lewis will line up alongside Jack Goff and Mike Bushell in a VW CC, while Team Hard Racing will also run Carl Boardley in a BMW 125i M Sport.

Hamilton, 27, said: "I'm superexcited to be with Team Hard Racing for the 2020 season. Last year was so challenging for me, coming close to facing a reality where my career might be over was really tough. But people stuck by me, kept me focused and upbeat, and I'm now in great place to start a new chapter behind the wheel. Team Hard Racing are the most professional team I've worked with. Their tenacity, motivation and belief inspires me."

Team Hard managing director Tony Gilham said: "I'm delighted that Nic has chosen to join the team for the 2020 season.

"His determination and drive to succeed has really lifted the whole team as we prepare three brand new Volkswagen CCs."

## **RACING NEWS**

## TCR the latest to sign up for Porsche Cayman

Ginetta Junior squad Total Control Racing is the latest outfit to reveal plans to race in the new Porsche Sprint Challenge GB series this season.

The Porsche category, which features the Porsche 718 Cayman GT4 Clubsport and includes races on both the British Touring Car Championship and British GT support bills, has already attracted a diverse range of teams and drivers, TCR being the latest.

TCR has achieved success in a variety of BTCC support series and has previous history with Porsche after running Jason Templeman to third in the standings in the inaugural Carrera Cup GB season in 2003.

It will now make a comeback to Porsche competition running Ginetta Junior graduate Theo Edgerton in the Sprint Challenge and aims to field a second car too.

"We've always enjoyed being with Porsche as we've been with them in the past," said team boss Lee Brookes. "We had the opportunity with a customer that was looking at Porsche and he bought a car and we agreed we would run it for him."

Edgerton has also tested a British Formula 4 car with Arden but opted to commit to the Porsche series, which features six events compared to the 10 of F4.

A number of other teams and drivers have already signed up to the Sprint Challenge including Carrera Cup outfits Valluga Racing – running Britcar racer Ian Humphris and Club Enduro driver Carl Cavers – and In2 Racing, which will run historics competitor Ambrogio Perfetti. Another historics regular, Pete Chambers, will also compete for Mike and Andrew Jordan's JRT squad.

#### Academy swaps to Mustang GT4 monsters

Academy Motorsport owner Matt Nicoll-Jones will return to racing in British GT this year, sharing with team regular Will Moore in one of the squad's newly-acquired Ford Mustang GT4s. Nicoll-Jones, the 2008 GT4 champion, last raced alongside Moore in 2018, when they managed a run of four straight podium finishes before two retirements derailed their title aspirations. After a difficult season with the new Aston Martin Vantage GT4 last year, Academy has committed to run the Multimaticbuilt Mustangs that narrowly missed out on last year's title with Seb Priaulx and Scott Maxwell. The team has also been appointed as a European agent for the cars. "We're only doing it to try and win it," said Nicoll-Jones, who will also contest the European GT4 series with Moore. "Now we've partnered up with Multimatic, we've got everything there to be able to do it." Meanwhile, Jordan Albert has been signed to race a second car, as the 23-year-old prepares to embark on a first full British GT season since 2018. Albert, who made his GT4 bow in 2016 with Beechdean AMR, only raced once last year after departing McLaren's Driver Development Programme at the end of 2018.

# SHEDDEN BACKAT THE WHEELWITH DYNAMICS

#### BTCC triple champion rejoins his old team to deputise for injured friend Matt Neal

#### **By Matt James**

Three-time British Touring Car champion Gordon Shedden will undertake pre-season testing for Team Dynamics as a replacement for the injured Matt Neal.

Neal is recovering from a mountain bike accident which he suffered in early January. That means Shedden, who has spent the last two seasons racing for Audi in the World TCR contest, will step into the FK8 Honda Civic alongside Dan Cammish to help with preparations for the BTCC, which kicks off at Donington Park on March 28-29.

Neal said: "My recovery is going well and everything is starting to mend; I'm doing everything possible to get in the car for the first round at Donington at the end of March. "However, we have

undertaken a lot of changes to the

car over the winter period that we need to try on-track and we need to do this with a back-to-back comparative test programme. There was no better choice than my old team-mate Flash [Shedden]. He knows the team, he knows our work ethic and he is the natural choice to jump into my seat."

Shedden has yet to tie up a full-time drive for the 2020 season following Audi's withdrawal from the WTCR. He said: "Team Dynamics has always been my race family and I'm happy to help out. We have kept in constant contact since I went to WTCR and I have been down and seen the boys on a number of occasions over that two-year period.

"I haven't driven the Honda Civic Type R FK8 yet so I'm really looking forward to getting behind the wheel and assisting with its development."



#### New Classic Era Challenge collective expects oversubscribed grids in '20

A new racing series has been launched by the Classic and Modern Motorsport Club and will incorporate several Aston Martin Owners Club categories.

The Classic Era Challenge will include the CMMC's Pre '64 series, as well as the Jack Fairman Trophy and Innes Ireland Cup.

The Jaguar Enthusiasts'

Hawthorn Trophy will also contest the Classic Era Challenge races, which will be held at up to 10 meetings throughout the year.

The majority will be 30-minute races for one driver, with the Cadwell Park meeting on July 26 scheduled to be a 45-minute race for two drivers.

AMOC made the decision to only host one meeting this year – Silverstone on October 3 – after struggles over the winter.

"It's come about mainly because of the AMOC," said CMMC founder Richard Culverhouse. "Their series are coming over, the JEC are over the moon and have been really supportive, and the first event at Castle Combe [April 13] has great support. We could be getting nearly oversubscribed on



Jack Fairman series will be part of the Classic Era Challenge

Club's XK Challenge and

some tracks."

#### Prior makes dream F3 jump with Lanan Racing

Piers Prior has completed Lanan Racing's line-up for the upcoming BRDC British Formula 3 season.

The 22-year-old will compete in his first full season of car racing, having only ever raced a singleseater on one previous occasion. That was in F1000 machinery at Silverstone last year, where he won. Previously he has had oneoff outings in the Mini Challenge and MG Cup as well as prize test drives in single-seater machinery. He will join British F3 race winner Josh Mason and British F4 graduate Bart Horsten at Lanan. "I've wanted to race in British F3 since I've been old enough, just getting the budget is very difficult and I can't quite believe it's happening," he said.

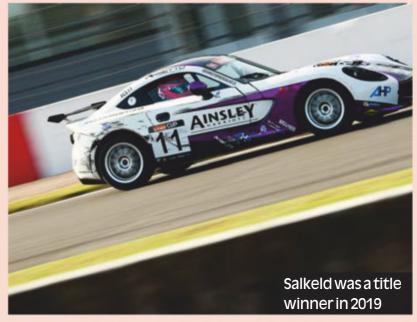
"There's lots of drivers who have got more experience in single-seaters in general and in the series. At the start of the season I will be learning and trying to wring as much speed as I can out of the car but I want to be challenging for trophies by the middle and end of the season, I just need to get the experience." • Ulysse De Pauw will remain with Douglas Motorsport for a second campaign in British F3. The Belgian took a best result of second place and seventh overall in the standings last season.



#### **SALKELD LEADS AN INFLUX OF DRIVERS TO GINETTA SUPERCUP**

Ginetta G40 Cup champion Chris Salkeld will graduate to the **Ginetta GT4 Supercup** this season, while regular Supercup frontrunner Tom Hibbert will again race in the series. Salkeld secured the G40 title in dramatic fashion by passing Rob Keogh on the final lap of the Donington Park finale and he will now step up to the GT4 Supercup, remaining with Assetto Motorsport. "After everything the

"After everything the team did for me last year, it was a no brainer for me to stay with them to make the step up to the GT4 Supercup," said Salkeld, who will race in the Pro-Am class. "It's a big step up for me this year, but one that I'm really excited about making.



"We're looking firmly at 2020 as a development year, with a new championship, new car and a new style of racing to learn." Salkeld's fellow G40 Cup race winner Daniel Morris will also progress to the GT4 Supercup and will race for the Triple M Motorsport squad. Meanwhile, Tom Hibbert – who finished third in the standings last year – will contest another season with Triple M.

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## **RALLY NEWS**

#### INGRAM TELLS THE BBC OF HIS RALLY STRUGGLE

Chris Ingram has spoken about the mental struggles he faced during the build-up to his cash-strapped European Rally Championship title triumph in Hungary last November.

ABBC Sport documentary *Too Skint to Win*? hears from Ingram as he walks the streets of Manchester one week before the ERC finale, and follows him during the event.

Ingram reveals to BBC Sport's Matt Warwick the impact the loss of his main sponsor, 11 Degrees clothing, on the eve of the 2019 season had, and how his financial struggles took their toll. "Going to a rally was living the dream," Ingram said. "Whereas at home I was stressed, a bit down, especially when I didn't know if I could do the next rally and carry on everything I've sacrificed my life for. It actually made me pretty depressed.

"At times I've lost connection from my family and everyone from my whole life because I've dedicated everything to this sport."

Ingram relied on a crowdfunding campaign launched by his mother Jo to help secure the budget to compete.



New recruit was too careful

#### CAUTION COST ME A PODIUM, SAYS OGIER

Six-time world champion Sebastien Ogier put his final-stage podium reversal in Sweden down to not taking as many risks as his 19-yearold team-mate Kalle Rovanpera.

Rovanpera, on his second WRC outing in a World Rally Car, started the points-paying stage 0.5s behind Ogier, but went quicker by 3.9s to take third place and a powerstage maximum score.

"Kalle did an excellent race and deserved his podium," said Ogier. "His attacking driving [on the powerstage] paid off on very tricky roads. Even though I kept up a fastenough pace to take bonus points, the fact that I didn't go all out in taking risks perhaps cost me the podium. Of Elfyn Evans' win, Ogier was quick to congratulate his teammate, praising him for his "very fine victory". After watching Ogier being outgunned by his younger teammates, Toyota team chief Tommi Makinen underlined his long-held stance that the Frenchman would not receive any preferential treatment in the title chase. "We have a new crew in Elfyn and Scott who have the potential to win the title and we have Kalle and Jonne following behind," Makinen said. "There are many good ideas to support them and let them do even better.'



## **EVANS THANKS FANS FOR SAVING HIS SWEDEN WIN** Public moved stage obstacle to give Toyota Yaris man a clear run

#### **By Graham Lister**

Elfyn Evans wants to thank the fans whose actions prevented "disaster" from occurring and kept him on course to win Rally Sweden earlier this month. Evans moved to the top of the world championship standings with a commanding first victory on the Torsby event, leading from start to finish in a factory Toyota Yaris co-driven by Scott Martin.

However, footage emerged following the event showing three spectators hauling a

banner out of the road on the Hof-Finnskog stage.

It had been attached to a frame that was reportedly nudged inadvertently by Evans's Toyota team-mate Sebastien Ogier, who was running ahead of him on the road in Scandinavia. Speaking to Motorsport News on his return to Wales from Sweden, Evans, who watched the footage on YouTube, said: "It's hard to say on the video what the banner was made of, whether the car would have just flown over it, whether it would have broken something," Evans said. "Nonetheless thanks

for those guys for making an effort to move it.

"They didn't have to and obviously I'm grateful to them. It could have been nothing, it could have been a disaster as well."

An exclusive interview with Evans is on page 17.



Jon Armstrong admits he can't afford any more slip-ups in his bid to win the Junior World Rally Championship. The Northern Irishman was hander. Although co-driver Noel O'Sullivan was unhurt, Armstrong went to hospital for precautionary checks before returning to the service park in

got a dropped score so this will have to be it now," he told WRC All Live. "It was just too much entry speed. The rest was history as they say." Armstrong was eighth in JWRC before he crashed on his first try of the latest-spec Fiesta R2T. "I was adjusting the set-up on the go. The stage where we went off, we were on [winner] Tom's [Kristensson] pace. That's a positive," he said.



speaking following his huge crash on Rally Sweden's third stage earlier this month.

His Ford Fiesta R2T struck a telegraph pole at 95mph and became briefly airborne before slamming into a bank after he went off on a fifth-gear rightTorsby, where he complained of a sore back.

Having used up his dropped score, Armstrong admits he needs a perfect run to the end of the season.

"I shouldn't have made this mistake but thankfully we've

#### HYUNDAI BOSS THINKS THERE IS MORE TO UNLOCK IN TERMS OF 2020 PERFORMANCE

Hyundai Motorsport boss Andrea Adamo is demanding more from his team and drivers following their Rally Sweden defeat to Elfyn Evans and Toyota. Thierry Neuville lost his championship lead to the Welshman, while Hyundai slipped 10 points behind Toyota in the makes' contest. In a barbed outburst, Adamo highlighted Jari Huttunen's achievement in finishing as the leading Rally2-class driver in a privateer i20 R5, rather than offering any praise to Ott Tanak, who scored his first podium for the team in second place.

"I can't say we are happy," said the Italian. "We have highlighted again that there are situations in which we are not demonstrating the level of performance. We have never really been in the fight and always had a defensive approach. I would like to say thank you to Jari Huttunen, Mikko Lukka and the 2Brally team for an amazing win. Also, thanks to Andrew Johns from our customer racing division for pushing to make this happen. I am proud to see my people so committed."



Hyundai underperformed



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## **RALLY NEWS**



Rowan will join Breen

#### BREEN HEADS TO FINLAND FOR ERC PREPARATION

Craig Breen will step up his European Rally Championship preparations when he heads to the third round of the Finnish Rally Championship this week with John Rowan.

Breen's last visit there in 2015 saw him finish a minute and two seconds clear of Kajetan Kajetanowicz. Breen would eventually go on to end the season second in the title race.

Rowan-who regularly co-drives for David Bogie and used to sit with Josh Moffett - will take the place of Breen's regular co-driver, Paul Nagle in Finland.

The change or personnel is needed as Nagle is unavailable for Saturday's rally, which takes place in Joensuu to the east of Finland, close to the border with Russia.

Crews will tackle five special stages in the North Karelian area, including a Spectator Stage at the Joensuu Raceway.

In total, they will tackle almost 100km (60 miles).

The pair will compete in the same Hyundai i20 R5 that will be run by the Italian BRC Racing Team and entered under the Team MRF Tyres banner. Breen's last outing in the car was December's Monza Rally Show.

As well as competing for overall honours in Finland, Motorsport News

## **SWEDEN IN THE SPOTLIGHT AFTER WEATHER-HIT EVENT** Second round of the WRC under scrutiny after FIA demands a 'snow' rally

**By Graham Lister** 

FIA chiefs want Rally Sweden to remain in the world championship – providing it's a proper winter event.

This year's rally was blighted by warm temperatures causing a dearth of snow and icepacked roads.

The conditions forced organisers to halve the number of stages, with only five taking place in Sweden and the remaining four in neighbouring Norway.

Following the initial round of stage cancellations, the Karlstad superspecial was also shelved along with the first run of Likenas.

Speaking during his visit to Torsby, which he said was partly to acknowledge the local organisers for ensuring the event went ahead, FIA president Jean Todt said: "I am sure the problem will be addressed and what happened this year will not happen again, and soon we will find again a Swedish rally with snow, which is its identification." Yves Matton, who heads up the FIA rally department, accepted it would be difficult for the event to move away from its Varmland hub, from where it generates the bulk of its revenue, but suggested there might be demands for a revised route.

"It's up to them to give us a clear plan of how we can be sure that we can go on a place where we will have a proper snow rally," Matton told reporters in Sweden. "They clearly understood they have to work on it and come with one or more proposals to ensure we can stay in Sweden. We want to stay in Sweden, we don't want to go to another place, but we asked [the organiser] to react." Although Rally Sweden's

Although Rally Sweden's contract with WRC Promoter has another two years to run, the event route must be submitted to the FIA six months ahead of its scheduled running for governing body approval.

Rally Sweden organisers have been contacted for comment.





#### Latvala eager to bounce back on Sardinia reprise

Jari-Matti Latvala will get a "perfectly" prepared Toyota Yaris WRC for his next world championship start, which is likely to be in Sardinia.

Latvala's return in Sweden in a privateer Yaris ended on the first morning due to an electrical issue that took hold on the second stage and caused the car to cut out and even spin.

He decided against restarting on day two to save his budget said: "I feel very sorry for the mechanical trouble on the Yaris Jari-Matti and Juho [Hanninen] had. I had wanted them to drive and to enjoy as much as possible, but this time it didn't go well. I heard they will come back for Rally Italia Sardegna. We will prepare the Yaris WRC perfectly for them to fight."

Latvala, who is confirmed for Rally Finland in August, told *Motorsport News* earlier this month that was hoping to add Wales Rally GB to his schedule, but that it was "depending on one sponsor".

understands that the SM Eastern Rally outing will also see Breen and Rowan take the lead in helping MRF to develop their gravel tyres.

"Craig sent me a text message recently and asked if I would be available to go with him to Finland.

"Naturally I said yes," Rowan told MN. "Craig is trying to get as many miles in the car as he possibly can as he looks towards the ERC."

Breen is no stranger to the European Rally Championship, which kicks off on the Portuguese island of Azores at the end of next month. Electrics stopped Latvala's outing

for an additional event, which is like to be Italy's WRC counter from June 4-7. Toyota chairman Akio Toyoda

#### Magalhaes: All the same in the co-driver's seat...

Bruno Magalhaes will return to the ERC this season, swapping one co-driving Magalhaes for another. With Hugo Magalhaes partnering Pedro Almeida in ERC3 Junior this year, Bruno Magalhaes has recruited Carlos Magalhaes instead. Carlos Magalhaes co-drove his namesake to two Portuguese titles and fifth

in the 2010 Intercontinental Rally Challenge. It's their first campaign together since 2014.

"Hugo didn't know about this project when he decided to go with another driver. But we are good friends," said Bruno Magalhaes. "I decide to go with Carlos Magalhaes because, as you know, to be my co-driver you need to be called Magalhaes."

#### **THIRD ENTRIES APPROVED FOR FACTORY WRC TEAMS**

WRC Team entries will return to the World Rally Championship this year with manufacturers contesting the WRC able to enter an additional one-car outfit. What will effectively be a satellite squad must enter seven WRC events in 2020, including one outside Europe, with a current-specification World Rally Car. To be eligible for points, there must be a team competing in the world championship for makes using a car of the same homologation family. The creation of WRC Team entries gives manufacturers the

entries gives manufacturers the option of fielding an additional driver or drivers outside of their three-strong main factory efforts, something Toyota did with Takamoto Katsuta in 2019.





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## RALLY NEWS



Top to honour Manus Kelly

#### **TRIBUTE CASH POT FOR MANUS KELLY'S FAMILY**

Thousands of pounds have been collected for the wife and children of the late rally driver Manus Kelly. Hundreds of people have placed an order for a limited-edition jersey designed to honour his memory.

The special tribute is the work of Megan McCusker who is the girlfriend of David Bogie's regular co-driver, John Rowan.

Manufactured by sports brand O'Neills, the top borrows its colours from Glenswilly GAC and Donegal's footballing teams. Kelly was involved with both over the years at different levels.

The back of the shirt is dedicated to the S12B Subaru Impreza World Rally Car Kelly steered to victory on the Donegal Rally in 2017.

It was his first international win and paved the way for success on the Killarney Rally of the Lakes the following season in the same '07-spec car.

"I worked closely with Donal Kelly-Manus's brother-and Bernie Kelly, Manus's wife," said McCusker. "The jersey received approval from the entire Kelly family after lots of emails and hours of research.

"The idea was simple: to keep Manus's memory alive," she continued. "The proceeds raised will go to Bernie and the kids. The response has been incredible-there are so many good people out there." Kelly lost his life on the third

and final day of last year's Donegal Rally when his Hyundai i20 crashed. The fatal accident involving the 51-year-old and co-driver Donall Barrett happened on the meeting's

# **TEJPAR TO TACKLE BRC** IN PROTON IRIZ R5

**UK returnee relishing challenge in top series and might expand her ambitions** 



#### **By Luke Barry**

Nabila Tejpar wants to see progression in her driving on each event as she steps up to a British Rally Championship campaign in a Proton Iriz R5.

Tejpar will use the same Rally in Germany, but she Proton James Williams took to revealed she found the car fifth place on the Cambrian easier to drive than her outgoing Peugeot 208 R2. Rally and will contest the next

four Tarmac rounds with the potential to add the Galloway Hills Rally to her programme as well.

Her only experience of the Iriz and four-wheel-drive was sharing driving duties with her father Aziz on last year's Eifel

Tejpar, who will be co-driven by Portuguese Hugo Magalhaes, believes a Tarmac campaign on rallies she's done before "made sense" as it is her stronger surface and it eradicates an extra element of learning.

"I'm really excited, I'm looking forward to it and the BRC has always sort of felt like home so it's coming back to a

known place," Tejpar told MN. "I've gone out to Europe for the past couple of years and I've dabbled with the BRC, I haven't really committed to it, so it'll be nice to come back.

"I'm not expecting to go out on West Cork and blow the world away. I'm going to try but if it doesn't happen first rally I'm not going to take it too hard. I want to see a progression by

the time I get to Clacton or Ypres; so long as I'm progressing every rally that's fine.

Tejpar is looking forward to Tendring & Clacton as it is her home event and a rally that a lot of her rivals have never contested before. "I was always going to do that rally in this car to try and see what we could do," she said.

Fanad Head stage.

Huge crowds of mourners gathered for Kelly's funeral, who was a winner of the Donegal Rally on three consecutive occasions between 2016 and 2018.

Away from rally driving, Kelly was a popular businessman and councillor.

Despite the married father-of-five being well-known in Irish rallying, McCusker says it has still come as a surprise the number of people who want a jersey.

"Initially the aim was to sell around 200 of the jerseys," she said. "That level was reached within 24 hours."

Woodhouse back for Donington after Snetterton return

Previous MN Circuit Rally Championship title winner Ian Woodhouse will compete in the season finale at Donington Park in preparation for a fullseason tilt next season.

The 2016-17 champion returned to the series at last weekend's Snetterton Stages, having claimed victory at Cadwell Park back in November. With a rebuilt Ford Escort Mk2, Woodhouse insisted his Snetterton outing was not to be

taken too seriously with no championship on the line.

"We're back, but just going out there to have a bit of fun really and have a play before we get back to anything serious," he said. "We're going to do Donington at the end of the season, then we'll see what shape we're in."

Chris West also returned but retired. West plans to compete on the upcoming North West Stages and Tendring & Clacton Rally.

#### JIM CLARK TRUST LAUNCHES TRAIL IN THE BORDERS

The Jim Clark Trust has unveiled a new tourist route called the Jim Clark Trail that coincides with the reopening of the Jim Clark Motorsport Museum.

**Starting and finishing** outside the museum in Duns, the 50-mile route takes travellers on a scenic tour of the Scottish Borders past important locations from 1963 and '65 F1 world champion Jim Clark's

personal and professional life. These include Clark's

home town of Chirnside where his gravestone and a memorial clock can be found and both the Winfield and **Charterhall airfields which** used to host motor races in the 1960's.

The idea is for visitors to learn about the history in the museum and then experience an interactive tour themselves.

"The Jim Clark Trail is an exciting new adventure for all visitors, on a far more modest scale to the North Coast 500," said chair of the Jim Clark Trust, Ben Smith.

"[It is] a stunning driving tour celebrating the rich heritage and culture of the Borders."

The tour is free of charge while museum tickets cost £5 but are valid for 12 months.

#### New Scottish closed-road event to cover more than 50 miles on debut showdown in July 2020

Dumfries & Galloway based Machars Car Club are to organise the first new closed road rally in Scotland since the legislation was passed over a year ago.

Centred on the town of Stranraer, the Coast 2 Coast Rally will take place on Saturday, July 25. This will be the third such event in

Scotland after the Mull and Jim Clark rallies.

"It will follow the Irish cloverleaf pattern with central servicing," said Roy Campbell, rally manager. "The cars will do one loop of three stages then back to service, a second loop followed by service and then a final loop before the run in to the finish."

Using the former Stena Line ferry operator's truck parks beside Stranraer Harbour as the service base, competitors will tackle nine stages totalling 52 miles.

With a lack of experienced closed road clerks of the course on the UK mainland, Machars CC has enlisted the help of the experienced Michael Johnston

from Northern Ireland. The five-time Ulster Rally clerk said: "I was asked about six months to help get a brand new event off the ground. I've had a look at the proposed stages and there is a good mix of really fast stuff and technical sections although there will be a need to have two or three chicanes to manage the average speeds!"



## RALLY REPORTS

Photos: SMJ Photography, Martin Walsh, William Neill

#### **CLASS ROUND-UP**

Persistence paid off at last for Ashley Davies as the Peugeot 205 man grabbed a long-overdue Class C victory with 11th place overall. Davies pushed to the limit at times. His dominance was asserted by nearest rival Mike English finishing 1m30s adrift, Davies also taking MN points in class while English bettered fellow Escort driver Gary Mason for second spot.

In class B, MN runner Chris Ruck dominated in his Opel Corsa. Over a minute further back, Paul George finished second in his Mazda MX-5, third going the way of Mark Peterson and Jim Bowie (Citroen C2 R2).

Andrew Egger was only confirmed as a Class A runner on SS4, but the class spoils were never in doubt. Egger survived a scare on SS4 when he lost a driveshaft, forcing him to "limp over the finish" before repairs were completed.

A distant second was Adam Ripper, but that was enough to continue the Nissan Micra man's winning streak in terms of MN points as rival Ron Walker could only net fourth. Tyre choice was key for most as the storm intensified late in the afternoon, While Bird's domination was

enough for D2 spoils, Morris was rewarded with the D1 honours in second overall.



Davies pushed the limits

## **BIRD KEEPS UP THE PRESSURE FOR CIRCUIT SPOILS**

**Dan Mason** watched the Ford Focus man fly to MN victory once again



## his winning ways

rank Bird can not stop winning. Fresh from a hat-trick of MN Circuit Rally Championship wins this winter, he broke Chris West's dominant stranglehold on the Snetterton Stages.

Fresh from signing a deal to race with Bentley this season, Bird's fifth straight rally win looked primed to be his hardest yet. Not, as expected, from the threat of looming Storm Dennis, but from previous champions Chris West and Ian Woodhouse joining him on a competitive entry list in Norfolk.

Two-time champion West was handed the number one seeding for his first event since last year's Cadwell finale, but it proved a curse rather than a blessing. "I just can't compete with the 4WD cars around here" bemoaned West, after shipping 20 seconds on stage one as Bird loomed larger in his mirrors with each passing corner.

The four-wheel-drive advantage of Bird's ex-Munchi's Ford Focus WRC07 came to the fore in uncertain greasy conditions, laying down an early marker for fourth-placed West, who fought for the honours in the front-wheel-drive opposition in his Peugeot 306 Maxi.

West's usual exuberant style instantly returned, but the Jersey Rally winner's charge came to a halt on the third stage at Coram Bend with fuel starvation. It briefly sparked back to life, but failed again in the infield.

Minutes prior to that, a driveshaft issue had also meant a late stage start, which co-driver Keith Hounslow said was "the quickest driveshaft change you could imagine. It was out and then a new one put in after about five minutes."

Bird's main contender was out, leaving him in the prime seat to make it four MNCRC wins on the bounce and continue his climb up the championship standings.

Storm Dennis threatened, but never really arrived in the manner weather forecasters had touted it would. Wet tyres were utilised in the morning, but strong winds kept the surface dry enough to warrant a change to drier compounds later in the morning.

"We're on wets, but it feels like it needs to be a bit wetter for them to work," said Woodhouse of his early choice, and he was one of the many Ford Escort drivers willing for a downpour. It never came, needed as conditions dried out in the intensifying winds. Bird and navigator Jack Morton's biggest problem remained, however. "It will be hard to take the championship with Barry [Morris] doing quite well at the moment," said Bird, commenting on his nearest rival all day – the Darrian T90 GTR of the Irishman. Bird would ultimately

RESULTS

**P05** 

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Bird/Morton

**MN Circuit Rally Championship** 

DRIVER/CO-DRIVER

Frank Bird/Jack Morton

Paul Smith/Dale Bowen

Barry Morris/Tom Hutchings

Richard Wells/Calvin Houldsworth

Ian Woodhouse/Paul Rowland

Steven Finch/Sam Fordham

Martin Hodgson/Tony Jones

Steve Tilburn/Jack Tilburn

Mike Taylor/Martin Haggett

Paul Murro/Callum Cross

Steve Harris (Opel Corsa S1600)

meaning that the Escorts could

not make the inroads they

Round 6/8, Snetterton circuit, February 15, 2020

Class winners: Bird/Morton; Morris/Hutchings; Ashley Davies/Freddie Hewitt

(Peugeot 205 GTI); Andrew Egger/Adam Brown (Vauxhall Nova); Chris Ruck/

MN Class winners: Class A: Adam Ripper/Ray Ripper (Nissan Micra); Class B:

Ruck/Harris; Class C: Davies/Hewitt; Class D1: Morris/Hutchings; Class D2:

CAR

Ford Focus WRC 07

Mitsubishi Lancer Evo

Ford Escort RS2500

Talbot Subeam Lotus

Darrian T90 GTR

Ford Escort Mk2

Ford Escort Mk2

Ford Escort Mk2

Ford Fiesta

Ford Fiesta

dominate, winning all eight stages to confirm victory by 2m29s ahead of Morris before the storm finally intensified. "We got lucky with the weather today," said the winner, who kept his title hopes alive. "We need some of our rivals to have problems still ideally." The battle for second could have gone the way of Paul Smith, but for mishaps before the afternoon loop. The Fiesta's driveshaft also needed replacing after succumbing through the gravel section of SS4, while a marker strike on SS3 resulted in a 10s penalty – a "gift voucher" as he quipped.

**TIME** 58m07s

+2m29s

+3m06s

+3m55s

+4m15s

+4m18s

+4m48s

+4m54s

+5m50s

+5m51s

Morris held onto second place by 37s to close the championship lead to 21 points, helped by a misfire hindering title rival Mike Taylor's Talbot Sunbeam Lotus. Morris said "It's been about making sure we don't do anything daft, and pick up some good points. We made some good tyre choices today."

Knockhill podium finisher Richard Wells finished a strong – and often sideways – fourth in his Mitsubishi Evo, beating previous champion Woodhouse who returned simply for a "play" in his Ford Escort Mk2 with no title on his mind for this season.

## **CHAMP WRIGHT PICKS UP THE SPEED**

#### Kirkistown Stages By William Neill

Organiser: North Armagh Motor Club Ltd

and Mark McGeehan suffered a vibration from a rut on the repeat, the margin to the Mini John Cooper Works WRC because we took a longer route," said the Skoda Fabia R5 driver. Fifth fastest on the stage with Paddy Robinson stopped hopes of dispersing the front two runners. He finished 13.7s back from McGeehan. Ashley Boulton had his first R5 experience co-driving for Gareth Sayers in fourth, 36.8s from the podium; despite the Ford Fiesta's engine brief stop mid-SS4. Also on a first, Jason Mitchell's first series run ended fifth with Kenny Bustard, improving from 17th on SS1. **Emma McKinstry and Barry** Groundwater both spun and tied but, by being faster on four stages, the latter earned sixth. Results

## WILSON MEASURES HIS PACE TO WIN

Willie Loughman Carrick-On-Suir Forest Rally By Martin Walsh



punctured once more at the end. McKenna finished fourth. Gary Kiernan (Ford Escort) had a few moments on the stage en route to clinching the twowheel-drive category and fifth position overall from Lucey. Mickey Conlon (Ford Escort) was hampered by a broken clutch but still finished seventh as Owen McMackin (Escort) was one of the casualties on stage five. New York-based Enda McCormack (Hyundai i20 R5) Jordan Hone (Opel Adam R2) and Pauric Duffy (Ford Fiesta R5) completed the top 10.

When: February 15 Where: Kirkistown Race Circuit, County Down Championship: Motorsport UK Northern Ireland Rally Championship Starters: 74 Stages: six

Reigning Northern Ireland champion Stephen Wright said gauging the pace for his second win at the storm-ridden circuit, by 5.2 seconds in a Ford Fiesta R5, was difficult.

Admitting caution on the opener, Wright and Gary McKenna were an early second, 1.2s down, but when the fatherand-son partnership of Derek was closed to just 0.3s. On the first pass of the longest stage, at 4.4-mile, Wright was 4.6s faster than McGeehan and was in command by 7.6s with one test remaining. Some late concern, catching a car on another lap on SS6, meant McGeehan snatched a final-stage win but not enough to alter the result. Derek McGarrity was uncertain of SS5's direction arrows. "I ended up adding an extra 100 yards to our stage



Wright was cautious to start with and then sped up

#### 1 Stephen Wright/Gary McKenna (Ford Fiesta R5) 31m38s; 2 Derek McGeehan/Mark McGeehan (Mini John Cooper Works WRC) +5s; 3 Derek McGarrity/ Paddy Robinson (Skoda Fabia P5): 4 Gareth Savers/

Paddy Robinson (Skoda Fabia R5); 4 Gareth Sayers/ Ashley Boulton (Fiesta R5); 5 Jason Mitchell/Kenny Bustard (Fiesta R5); 6 Barry Groundwater/Neil Shanks (Subaru Impreza S11 WRC); 7 Emma McKinstry/Kenny Hull (Fiesta R5): 8 Alan Carmichael/Ivor Lamont (Fiesta R5); 9 Keith White/ Gavin Campbell (Ford Escort Mk1); 10 James Kennedy/Heather Kennedy (Ford Escort Mk2) Class winners: Andrew Bushe/Ivor Lamont (Vauxhall Chevette HSR): Marshall Kennedy/ Wendy Blackledge (Peugeot 306 CTi); Philip White, Kyle Diffin (Nissan Micra); Michael McGarrity/ Damien Garvey (Peugeot 208 R2); Sam Adams/ Michael Johnston (Escort Mk2); Kennedy/ Kennedy; White/Campbell; Andrew Bustard/ Martin Harte (Mitsubishi Lancer F8): Liam McFall/ Matthew McKenna (Mitsubishi Lancer E10); Wright/McKenna

Organiser: Carrick-On-Suir Motor Club When: February 16 Where: Carrick On Suir, Co. Tipperary Championships: Valvoline Irish Forestry Championship; Motorsport Ireland Junior Rally Series & South East Rally Championship Stages: 6 Starters: 70

Former Billy Coleman award winner Armagh's James Wilson (Hyundai i20 R5) made light of the elements and the opposition to take a comfortable victory in the Carrick-on-Suir-based Willie Loughman Forest Rally. It was a measured start to his Irish Forest Rally Championship bid as he came home 41.8 seconds ahead of the Mitsubishi Lancer E8 of Michael Carbin with Liam Ryan (Ford Fiesta WRC) overcoming three punctures to finish 38.9s further behind in third. Arthur Kierans, Conor Mohan and Keith Moriarty were the respective co-drivers. Overnight rain and strong winds from Storm Dennis made for difficult conditions as Wilson reaped a 13.7s lead from the relatively short stages at Ahenny and Anner. Marty McKenna (Fiesta WRC), who punctured on the first stage, was second on the latter with Carbin second on SS1.

Wilson took an easy win

A five-year sojourn wasn't that obvious as Ryan slotted into fourth place ahead of Mitsubishi pair, Keith Power and Gerard Lucey.

A more confident Wilson went 27.4s clear on the repeat of both stages. Carbin moved back into second as Ryan's Fiesta suffered front- and rear-right wheel punctures on SS4 to slip 9.3s further behind in third.

Power retired when his Mitsubishi rolled on its side and, although it landed back on all fours, he withdrew at the service park.

Eleven retirements on the first run through SS5, the 13-mile Gurteen stage, brought some logistical difficulties and the organisers cancelled the final stage.

That was enough for Wilson to claim the spoils ahead of Carbin and Ryan, who

#### Results

1. James Wilson/Arthur Kierans (Hyundai i20 R5) 25m. 51.8s; 2, Michael Carbin/Conor Mohan (Mitsubishi E8) 26m. 33.6s; 3. Liam Ryan/Keith Moriarty (Ford Fiesta R5); 4. Marty McKenna/Martin Brady (Ford Fiesta); 5. Cary Kiernan/Darren O'Brien (Ford Escort); 6. Gerard Lucey/ JJ Cremin (Mitsubishi E9); 7. Mickey Conlon/Grace O'Brien (Ford Escort); 8. Enda McCormack/Liam Moynihan (Hyundai i20 R5); 9. Jordan Hone/Paul Hone (Opel Adam); 10. Paraic Duffy/Jeff Case (Ford Fiesta R5).

Class winners: David McCauley/Andrew Moore (Honda Civic); Jordan Hone/Paul Hone (Opel Adam R2); Eoin Neville/Brendan Quinn (Honda Civic); Enda McCormack/Liam Moynihan (Hyundaii20R5); Marty McKenna/Martin Brady (Ford Fiesta WRC); Beau Roberts/Tadhg O'Sullivan (Chevrolet Kalos); Mike Garahy/Iarla McCarthy (Ford Fiesta WRC); James Dunphy (Toyota Corolla); Alan Commins/Joe O'Brien (Ford Escort); Gary Kiernan/Darren O'Brien (Ford Escort); Mark Murphy/Anthony O'Sullivan (Subaru Impreza); Brian Brady/Eamonn Creedon (Honda Civic); Gerard Lucey/J. J. Cremin (Mitsubishi E9); Reece Pollock/John Burke (Nissan Micra).

## HISTORICS

### DOWN THE PUB HANS CIERS

**Formula Junior racer** Age: 56 Lives: Bruges, Belgium



Ciers is learning from Wilson

#### He was a late starter

"It started a long time ago. When I was 181 had a motocross bike and then I worked a lot and it was not until I was 50 that I bought my first race car. I always wanted to try racing when I could afford it. I started racing with a Lotus 20 in Formula Junior. That's what I wanted to do. I also have a Mallock U2, which is a one-litre F3 car but I race with Juniors as an invitation."

#### **Rival Sam Wilson** coached him

"I've now done three years of racing and I've tried to pack a lot in to try and catch up a little. I did a lot of testing with Sam Wilson before I did my first race. It was a big step to start racing, because I'd never sat in a race car before and in a Lotus 20 you are very low to the ground! It's very beautiful if someone like Sam is passing you in a corner: it is nice to see and maybe learn a little bit more, I hope."

#### **Dave Abbott** prepares his cars

"I met my best friend Tom de Gres when we went for our racing licences. We were in the same group at Mettet in Belgium. It was because of Tom that I met Dave Abbott in the UK. I've raced in the UK and all over Europe in the Lurani Trophy for Formula Junior. In 2019, I did all the Lurani races and as much as possible in the UK. Anglesey was a really nice track to go to last year."



**PRO DRIVERS COULD BE BARRED** 

FROM MASTER HISTORIC RACING

Only drivers with the "right attitude" will be accepted for 2020

membership rules have been amended for the new season

to give the Masters team the

"Pro drivers are a problem and

it's a problem with have to deal with head-on," says Maydon.

"Last year we declined entries

thought their driving was either

wrong spirit. We're not going to

accept pure pro drivers who step

too aggressive or they had the

from four drivers because I

option to reject entries.

#### McCormack's back Marty McCormack and Tom

series and they share cars

with other drivers. Jake Hill is

another fabulous driver who

has really got the right spirit."

concerns over driving standards

in the Mini celebration races at

last year's Silverstone Classic.

last year that the amount of

Nicky Grist in his ex-Juha

Kankkunen Toyota Celica

an ex-Colin McRae Subaru

555-liveried Subaru Imprezas.

Legacy. Next up are three

GT4 and Ian Gwynne in

"I thought in a couple of events

contact was unacceptable. If you

don't want your entry," he added.

are that determined to win, we

Maydon also raised his

Photos: Paul Lawrence

'McCormack is back'

North Wales Rally entry, below

Llewellin are among the first 50 entries for Rally North Wales on March 28, which includes the opening round of the British Historic Rally Championship. McCormack will be reunited with ace co-driver Phil Clarke as Clarke's programme with Jason Pritchard does not include the Dolgellau-based rally.

#### Short in sight

Renowned co-driver Phil Short is the latest star confirmed for the Deja vu Ireland West retro event on September 25-26. Short, who won the Circuit of Ireland in 1973 alongside Jack Tordoff in a Porsche 911 Carrera RS is a regular on the Deja vu events and will be co-driven by his wife Lyn. His most recent role was sporting supervisor of the Junior WRC.

#### **Myherin sings**

The famous Myherin stage in mid-Wales will return to use on the Rallynuts Stages on April 18, a round of the HRCR Stage Masters and the opening round of the Welsh Historic Championship. The former Severn Valley Stages will run in Myherin and Hafren and the five-stage event will conclude with a 13-mile stage in Hafren and Sweet Lamb.

#### Sunbeam shines

Sir Malcolm Campbell's 1920 land-speed record breaking Sunbeam has now been equipped with a replacement gearbox as the National Motor Museum continues to restore and preserve the famous 18-litre V12-engined car. The original gearbox was removed after the Second World War and now a unit based on a Bentley C-Type has been adapted and fitted.

#### **Crewkerne action**

The inaugural Heritage Sporting Trial will be held near Crewkerne in Somerset on June 14. The new category is for the early post-War specials and cars like Dellows that run without fiddle brakes. This extension of the Historic Sporting Trials movement will be run by the HSTA, the Midland Trials Car Club and the Dellow Register and will be open to a range of pre-1959 open trials cars.



#### **McRae to head away the Chester Rally Revival**

Jimmy McRae will lead a 60-car field away on Saturday's Network Q Chester Rally Revival for a day of demonstrations in the Chester area.

into our world, take the big prizes

and we never see them again."

emphasise that many high-level

owners in two-driver races are

not the cause of these changes.

Simon Hadfield, Nick Padmore,

Maydon. "They are elite drivers,

but they give something to our

"We've no problem with

drivers like Martin Stretton,

Andy Wolfe and so on," said

Maydon was keen to

racers who share cars with

Five-time British Rally Former stars Louise Aitkenchampion McRae will drive Walker and Neil Wilson will flag the cars away from a the mighty five-litre Vauxhall-Chevrolet of Mick Strafford around a series of venues, with the Rednal kart track near Oswestry being the prime spectator venue for those with pre-bought tickets. McRae will be followed by

Advertising enquiries: 01233 228753

IN BRIEF

#### He hopes to race at Goodwood too

"We also now have an ex-Stirling Moss 500cc Formula 3 Kieft from 1951 so we have an invitation for the Goodwood Members' Meeting. Dave is rebuilding it, so we hope it will be ready. I've never raced at Goodwood so I hope it will be very special."

#### He's now trying trials

"For the future I like to race my Junior and maybe do some more races in the 500cc Kieft. At Zandvoort I can race them both in the same event. Now lalso do Historic Sporting Trials and I share the car with Dave, and he teaches mealot. There is nothing like this in Belgium and we are having a lot of fun. It's a bit mad, but we love it."

The five-litre powered Vauxhall will head a list of rally stars

#### **Pankhurst goes back** into forest rallying

By Paul Lawrence

**Professional racers may** 

founder Ron Maydon.

Maydon said that his

not be admitted to Masters

Historic Racing series this

season according to Masters

organisation is prepared to ban

pro drivers if their driving and

with historic racing. The race

regulations and the club's

attitude is deemed incompatible

Nearly 40 years after he last rallied in the UK forests. Terry Pankhurst will return to gravel rallying to field a Ford Escort Mk1 in this year's British Historic Rally Championship Pankhurst competed extensively in Escorts the late 1970s and early 1980s and will now enter a Mk1 RS2000 in Category 2 of the BHRC, starting on Rally North Wales on March 28.

"It's back to the forests for the first time since the early 1980s," said the Dimma Peugeot styling expert, who has most recently run a special Peugeot 205 in demonstration events. His co-driver will be his nephew Jamie Sparks, who was a young lad when Pankhurst last rallied on gravel.

ceremonial start at Chester race course on Friday evening, while spectators can also see the cars at Oulton Park from 1400hrs on Saturday. The entry also includes a Clan Crusader and Ford RS200s.



#### **BLETSOE-BROWN READY TO REJOIN THE FORMULA 2 GRID**

Chevron racer Mike Bletsoe-Brown will rejoin the Historic Formula 2 grid this spring after his B27 was heavily damaged in a tangle with a backmarker on the run to Stirlings Bend at Brands Hatch last May. The rebuild is now nearing

completion. Bletsoe-Brown has now added a second B27 to his stable after finding a restoration project in America. The second car is virtually identical to his existing BDGengined car and has undergone a complete rebuild.

"I'll race one of them in Historic Formula 2, starting at Hockenheim in Germany at the end of April, and the other one in HSCC Aurora races," said the owner of Sywell Aerodrome near Northampton.

#### F2 fills up

There has been a rush to secure places on the forthcoming Historic Formula 2 grid after entries opened earlier this month. Continuing the high level of competitor support from last season, more than 20 entries for the Silverstone Classic races were quickly snapped up. The HF2 season starts at Hockenheim at the end of April.

#### E-type tribute

The date for the key celebration of 60 years of the Jaguar E-type in 2021 has already been set for the weekend of June 12-13 next year. The E-type Club will take over the Shelsley Walsh hillclimb venue in Worcestershire to mark the birthday of the classic sports car first built in 1961. Plenty of action on the 1000-yard hill is planned.

## **SPORTING SCENE**





## **KRISTOFFERSSON CLOSE TO NORLD RX RETURN** Multiple title-winning Swede could make a comeback – even for partial programme

#### **By Hal Ridge**

Former double World Rallycross Champion Johan Kristoffersson is nearing on a deal to return to the series this year.

The Swede told *Motorsport News* last month that he would make a decision on his 2020 programme after Rally Sweden had taken place and, having finished third overall in WRC 3 driving a Volkswagen Polo R5 in event, Kristoffersson says he is now just weeks away from finalising his plans.

While the former WTCR driver is still assessing rally and circuit racing outings, he is working hard on making a return to the sport in which he won back-to-back World titles in 2017 and 2018.

"Rallycross is one thing that we are looking quite closely at and we are doing a lot of work now with the car that Sondre [Evjen] will drive in the European Championship [with the KMS team],"Kristoffersson told MN. "In two or three weeks, I'm pretty sure that we have to decide and see what we do."

One option for the Swede could be to share the Volkswagen Polo that Evjen will drive in European events, Kristoffersson potentially taking the wheel for the World RX rounds where the European series doesn't run, but with commitments to Swedish Volkswagen Dealers and Bauhaus, his primary sponsors, Kristoffersson ideally needs to compete in the Swedish and Norwegian World RX rounds, where Euro RX also takes place.

"If I would like to do a couple of rallycross events, obviously the car is busy for Sweden, Norway, France, but it's free for Barcelona and Portugal [the first two rounds]. So either we try to see if we can do a couple of events outside the European championship to share the car, we start the season maybe in Barcelona and see what we can do after that, or we try to do a couple of events together with Evjen, on the big rounds for us. Then we have to find another car, but it also gives us some more time until that. My wish is to do the World Championship."

#### Svardal swaps to Rustad VW Polo

Former European Rallycross TouringCar racer Sivert Svardal will race the Volkswagen Polo that carried Tommy Rustad to the Euro RX Supercar crown in 2015 this year in the same series. Svardal previously campaigned a Mazda RX-8 TouringCar in last year for the European

In last year for the European Championship division in 2018, and has continued to run the car in his native Norway, but will now step up to Supercar for the 2020 campaign.

"I have to adapt to all the power in the Supercar and hopefully keep up with the speed and level of the competitors," said the Norwegian. "My previous experience from racing Euro RX **TouringCar** will hopefully help me in many ways. The biggest advantage from my previous experience is that I am mentally ready to race on such big events which will help me handle the pressure.

"My hopes and expectations for the 2020 season are to learn as much as possible. There are several experienced and talented drivers who will race Euro RX this season, and my hope is to learn from them and evolve as a driver."





#### **Ostlund targets Nordic Lites title on return to crack OlsbergsMSE team**

Linus Ostlund will start the RallyX Nordic Supercar Lites season as title favourite first Lites crown. "The whole Nordic season last year was better than we had hoped for," he said. "It was our first full campaign in Supercar Lites and we didn't expect to finish where we did, so we were very happy with the results. The victories were very special, [the last round at] Tierp more so because we didn't really have the speed that weekend, but we were there when it counted and were able to win. "Of course it's not a bad result if we finish second or third [this year] but I think we have the pace and the tools to do the job. "We'll be back this year for the Swedish round of RX2 and we're working on more events in RX2 as well." Ostlund is the latest in a number of drivers to sign up for the Nordic RX support series.

this year having committed to a second season with the OlsbergsMSE team.

Last year Oslund finished second in the standings to champion Ben-Philip Gundersen in the single-make support division but remaining with the Andreas Eriksson-run outfit will put him in one of best places to win his

## **TITANS CONTEST ADDS SUPERCARS**

The Titans RX Europe series that was created for the 2019 season will be joined up by a Supercar support category this season.

Titans RX, which uses single-make, four-wheel-drive spaceframe Pantera RX6 machines developed by MJP Racing, held Supercar support races at the British and Hungarian rounds last year. It will now run the Titan sRX Supercar Cup in a bid to attract Supercar drivers more regularly to events. The support series will held over 10 rounds in five double-header weekends.

The final rounds at the Estering will be run as a Grand Finale and will be worth double points.

TitansRX CEO Max Pucher said: "I am so pleased to come true on our promise to offer more racing for FIA Supercars as well. We had two very exciting rounds of Supercar racing at TitansRX as support class in 2019 and the fans enjoyed the combination of seeing both racing series on both race days immensely."



Supercars will be bolted on to the Titans RX schedule in 2020

#### **Birmingham National Hot Rods gets the official chop**

The opening round of the 2019-2020 National Hot Rod season will now take place at Hednesford on March 29 after the planned kick off at Birmingham has been officially axed following uncertainty over the track's future. The Birmingham circuit has no electrics and there is a threemonth repair time on the burnt out transformers. Also, tenants tried to secure a lease to operate the venue for racing but the shortterm nature of the deal, which was for only 12 months, means it is not financially viable. In a statement, Spedeworth

Motorsport boss Deane Wood,

whose firm operates National Hot Rods and several other formulas, said: "Obviously, this is now going to cause issues with the published fixture lists. I am asking for everyone to be patient whilst this situation is addressed. Once progress in updating the fixture list is underway further announcements will be made on our websites. "I apologise for any inconvenience and I hope

inconvenience and I hope everyone can understand the situation." No decision has yet been made

whether to replace the lost Birmingham round.

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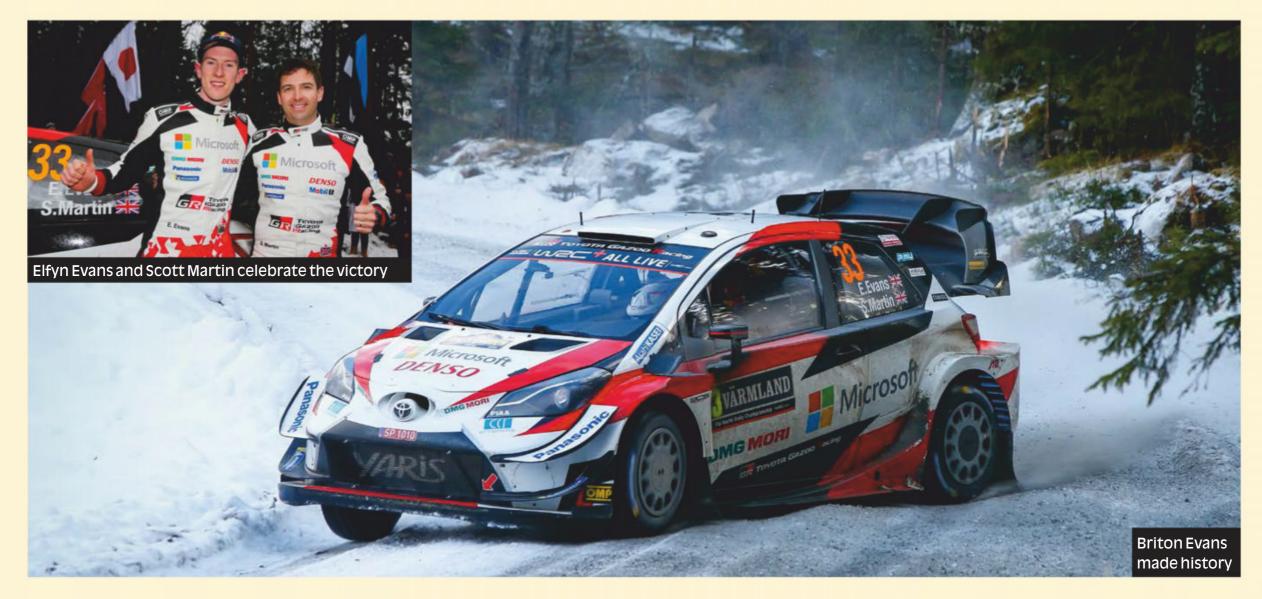


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## INTERVIEW



British hero reflects on his biggest career win to date on Rally Sweden



Ifyn Evans made a nation proud with his dominant victory on Rally Sweden. Not only that, the Welshman has now moved into the joint lead of the World Rally Championship, showing a clean pair of heels to the

established stars. Motorsport News spoke to him about his landmark result.

Evans on... Ott Tanak's second-stage win

"We knew halfway into the stage we were quite a bit faster than everybody else but the last half of the stage was predominantly loose gravel. I think I said at the end of the stage it's 'going to clean like hell in here'. And, sure enough, Ott clawed the time back and a little bit more in the second half of the stage. I'm not saying it was all down to the conditions but there was an element of conditions in that second half of the stage and therefore I knew not to panic and everything I was doing otherwise was okay. So, I just went into the next stage and did exactly the same as I'd done in the previous two and that worked out."

#### Evans on... the rogue banner

"I saw it when I got home actually. It's hard to say on the video what the banner was made of, whether the car would have just flown over it, whether it would have broke something. Nonetheless thanks for those guys for making an effort to move it. They didn't have to and obviously I'm grateful to them because with stuff like that you never know what could have been the outcome. It could have been nothing, it could have been a disaster as well. It's impossible to say if they saved my rally but I owe them some thanks for their efforts."

#### Elfyn Evans on... ending British victory Sweden drought

"I don't want to sound rude but stats don't really affect me that much. As a driver I just want to try to win at the end. I wasn't there when Richard [Burns] or Colin [McRae] or who came before was trying to win Sweden and what the circumstances were so it's not fair for me to try to compare or take anything from that."

#### Evans on... winning a short, snow-less rally

"It kind of does matter because we don't go to rallies for 120 miles or whatever it was we did. Although it was a different set of circumstances somebody was still going to come from ISwedenI having won the rally and taken full points. Everybody knew what was on offer before we went in. Of course, we all want the classic conditions with an ice base and big snowbanks but we didn't have it and we knew we were never going to have it. So, we had to just try to make the most from the weekend."



Gravel made the usual icy rounds even tougher

#### Evans on... Tommi Makinen's backing

"It's nice to have those comments but the team has given fantastic support since I've joined and I don't suspect much will change now. The team has always maintained from the outset that every driver will have an equal opportunity and that's all we can ask. The team is working exceptionally hard to give us all the best possibilities."

#### Evans on... going first on the road in Mexico

"I've not really done it much in my career but the best thing we can do is forget about it to be honest and just get on with whatever we have. It's inevitable that gravel rallies always clean. You have to take these points when you can, there's not much point in overthinking tactics at this stage of the year. It is what it is and we just have to go in and make the most of it."

"The team works hard to give us all the best chance"





## Luke Barry learns how to master the step up from R2 to R5 rally weapons



Meirion Evans has vast experience of all types of R5 machinery

t had just gone lunchtime on Saturday February 8. Four of seven stages had been completed on the Cambrian Rally and Motorsport News was patrolling the service area at Coleg Llandrillo. We spied Tom Williams, who was on his first competitive outing in a Ford Fiesta R5.

Speaking to him was illuminating. The Oxfordshire driver explains: "It's tricky because I'm not driving the car hard enough, I keep driving it like an R2. It's so different to the R2 car, you can drive it a lot harder. It's just ridiculous how fast you can go into the corners and the car is OK with it."

He admits that it has taken him a while to get his head around the different tricks required with the more powerful machine.

"Testing's testing but it's nothing like [competition]," Williams says. "This is my first time doing real competitive mileage where all you have is two passes on recce, [then you're] straight into the stage to commit to your notes and I knew it was going to be tough but I didn't think it was going to be that hard."

Williams eventually finished in seventh place overall on his British Rally Championship return, but he wasn't the only driver making his R5 debut. James Williams was, too, and he threaded his Proton Iriz R5 into fifth place. Like Tom, James has a strong bank of experience in R2 cars but next to no knowledge of R5. How did he find the experience?

"The trick [in R2] is trying to keep your speed up through the corners where you're trying to slide the car from one way to the other to keep the speed going and the momentum of the car," he explains. "You don't really get that with the R5, it just picks up speed. So you can just drive the corners like you would want to [as] you're not having to carry excess speed and be untidy.

"You can be a little bit more point-squirt and you can really be on the edge of the road because you know you've got the traction to come off it. That's what I found different anyway, but I think when I go on Tarmac I think there'll be a lot of similarity then [between R2 and R5]."

Those are two very different accounts on how to handle the jump from a frontwheel-drive R2 car to a four-wheel-drive R5. In a nutshell, James seemed to be able to get on top of it quicker than Tom did.

The step from R2 to R5 is commonplace nowadays when drivers are looking to progress their career. Josh McErlean is another to have recently leapt up a class after winning the 2019 Junior BRC in a Peugeot 208 R2. Although he likened getting the keys to a Hyundai i20 R5 for Wales Rally GB to "getting in at the deep end and we had to learn how to swim," he admitted his pace and how he adapted to the car exceeded his expectations.

"Obviously there was doubt in the mind going into those sort of circumstances but I think you just have to go in and say 'f\*ck it' as such!" McErlean said. "I'd always heard that the step from R2 to R5 wasn't as bad as you'd think but there is a lot of TECH SPEC

	R2-spec versus	R5-spec	
Engine	1.0-litre,	1.6-litre, four cylinder,	
	three-cylinder	32mm restrictor	
Transmission	Five-speed sequential,	Five-speed sequential,	
	front-wheel-drive	four-wheel-drive	
Power	200bhp	290hbp	
Torque	200Nm	475Nm	
Weight	1030kg	1230kg	
Budget (approx)	£80,000	£200,000	





## WHEN IS THE RIGHT TIME TO JUMP UP?

No other discipline presents as many variables as rallying. It's part and parcel of what arguably makes rally drivers the greatest all-round pilots on the planet. Evolving stage conditions are the main element but adapting to different cars is also a major challenge.

You'll have already read the thoughts of Tom Williams, James Williams, Josh McErlean and Meirion Evans on the challenges of graduating up to R5 from the R2 class. This is one of the most common steps of the rallying ladder and poses a real challenge with an increase in power and perhaps most crucially, the aid of the rear wheels also doing the driving.

The decision to switch from R2 to R5 is usually to progress a career, but unlike circuit racing, there is not always an obvious point in a driver's career to make the switch to more potent machinery. Take the two Williams' for example. Tom scaled back from the World Rally Championship to do a national event in an R5, while James stuck with the BRC and ticked the 'BRC1' box rather than the 'Junior BRC' one on his registration form.

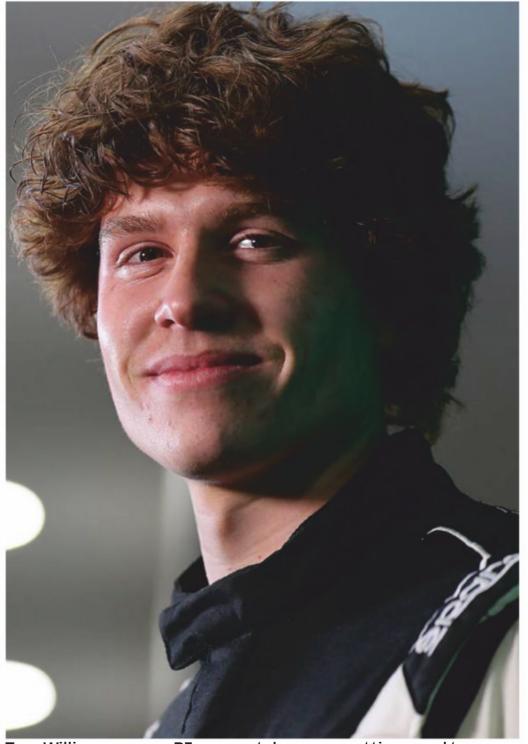
Is it a problem that there is no formulaic approach to advancing through the rallying ranks? To put it bluntly: no. Extending the point made right at the top of this column, this is another fantastic



variable in rallying. Instead of a predictable career path being laid out in front of a young hopeful, there are multiple different routes they can take. And the dynamic of drivers taking one step backwards to move two forwards (just look at Elfyn Evans) is truly fascinating. But equally, the machinery on offer perfectly aligns with each other. It's not unfair to describe an R2 as a baby R5 in the sense that they're both purpose-built, homologated hatchbacks with several different margues are available. The competition aspect is superb too as perfectly summed up by Meirion Evans: "Wherever you drive an R2 in the world there's going to be a lot of other R2 cars out. As soon as you get into an R5 it's just the same but the jump I found with R5 is the

Just like anything else in motorsport, adapting to the changes is all down to driver skill. Fast learners will prosper while others will take longer to adapt. **Luke Barry** 

experience the boys have got."



learning in it and you have to certainly get your head around it."

McErlean now has four R2 rallies under his belt and acknowledged that although the method of maximising performance is the same between R2 and R5, the way it's achieved is different. "It's all about corner exit speed and trying to get the drive [but] the driving style is a lot different to an R2," he says. "You have to use the car more as in weight transfer to get it move. Looking at R5 now [four months on], they're probably not as quick as you'd think on pure straight-line speed; it's definitely the corners where it makes up on the R2."

Meirion Evans now competes in the Irish Tarmac Championship with a VW Polo R5 after spending three years rallying an R2 across Europe but now has over a season of competitive R5 experience on his CV. Having sampled the Ford Fiesta, Hyundai i20, Skoda Fabia and the Citroen DS3 and C3 in the past as well as the Polo, , the Welshman is well placed to comment on the shift from R2- to R5-spec machinery. Evans reckons that there is no right time to progress but the trick is knowing when is best for the individual. Evans' first rally in an R5 was back in 2016 but he recognised he wasn't quite ready for the jump then. Two years later he tried again, and he described it as a "lightbulb thing" where it felt right straightaway. He argues the change can bring the best out of some drivers and provide a severe obstacle for others.

"It's very personal, I think it's down to you as a driver," he elaborates. "Nobody knows what the right thing to do is. Do you do R2 until you're really at the sharp end? I've seen across Europe a lot of people that have struggled in R2 have gone into R5 and found another gear. [But] whatever anyone says in R5, you can even look at world level. [Kalle] Rovanpera wasn't bang on the money straightaway. You need six or seven rallies just to sort of [get into it]. What helps [is] when you get an understanding of how to set the cars up as there's a lot more you can do than on an R2 car." The big unaddressed question thus far though is whether another four-wheeldrive car would be better preparation for an R5 than an R2 is. Evans has experience of Group N machinery, so has a theory here too.

"The Group N is a lazier car, it's a twolitre car with a bigger restrictor so it's a different style of driving whereas an R2 I think you have to drive it hard which sort of translates across to the R5," he said. "[In] an R5 you've got to make time on braking and cornering and being committed with it really. And I think that's where the R2 step is a sensible one because with an R2 you've got to find the time; it's sort of up to you to go and commit to things and brake late and you've got to drive [at] ten tenths."

What can be drawn from all of this insight then? R2 definitely appears to be a logical stepping-stone to R5 and vice versa but it can take some drivers much longer than others to adapt. If only it was all that simple in practice.

Tom Williams says an R5 car can take some getting used to

## WRC SWEDEN

## ELFYN COMES OF AGE NSWEDEN Motorsport News's man in the service park, Colin Clark,

reflects on a momentous WRC victory





ally Sweden was a little different this year – in fact it was a *lot* different. The talk in the weeks leading up to the event was all about the weather and the stage conditions.

For a while, the lack of snow and frozen roads put the running of the event in very real jeopardy. And it was only thanks to the heroic efforts of rally boss Glenn Olson and his team that we actually had an event at all. Yes, it was truncated and yes, it lacked snow. Yes, it looked like Finland at times but, at the end of the day, none of that really mattered.

That's because what Olson and his dedicated team delivered was one of the most memorable events seen in the WRC in years. It was a flat-out sprint from start to finish that intrigued and captivated for every corner and every straight of its meagre nine stages.

And you know what: much as we might have expected to hear drivers and team bosses complaining about dangerous conditions, the wrong tyres, stud retention, or any host of potential pit falls, there was actually very little in the way of moaning and whining. There seemed to be a solidarity around the service park that resulted in a collective determination to make the most of what was on offer and just get on with it. That hasn't always been the case in the past and it was refreshingly unexpected to see all parties, teams, organisers, the FIA and the Promoter working together in such a harmonious way.

Thank goodness they did because Rally Sweden didn't just offer us three days of enthralling entertainment, it also gave us a glimpse into the future. And if you're a British or a Finnish rally fan, the future looks dazzling bright. Let's talk first about our rally winner Elfyn Evans.

We've declared false dawns prematurely in the past for the young Welshman, most notably after his maiden victory on Wales Rally GB in 2017 and his dominant drive on Corsica last year. Looking back, it's clear to see that until the end of last year, Evans was still very much work in progress in terms of his title-winning credentials. Rally GB 2017 was impressive but there were always going to be question marks over the validity of the win. The advantage of running the DMack tyres was, in some eyes, so great that he couldn't fail to win. And in Corsica last year was undoubtedly impressive, but the Ford clearly was the best car for the twisty Tarmac roads that Evans dominated on.

This year and this victory look and feel very different, however. Evans appears to walk taller around the service park. He shoulders are back and his chin is up. He exudes confidence that we've not seen before and most tellingly, he looks and feels like he belongs amongst rallying's elite. And the elite we are talking about are the handful of drivers who start every event in the WRC with a realistic chance of winning. So, what's changed?

Well the move away from M-Sport seems to have unlocked the talent and potential that Tommi Makinen so obviously realised was there. Remember, the Toyota boss had a choice of some very talented and capable drivers at the end of last year and, for many observers, Evans wasn't near the top of that long list. But, as with so many things over the past four years, Makinen has demonstrated an uncanny ability to make the right call at the most demanding of times. For the first time in Evans' career he







"Rallying needs a home hero to grab the headlines"

> t really is difficult to overstate the importance of Elfyn Evans' victory on the snowless stages of Rally Sweden last week. This was a performance full of poise, full of confidence, full of the finest of rallycraft and,

perhaps most importantly for British rally fans, full of hope. There is hope that perhaps we are

on the verge of a return to the glory days of Richard Burns and Colin McRae. Nearly two decades have passed since rallying hit its peak in the UK as we celebrated regular WRC wins and British rallying was, as Burns put it himself, "on top of the World"...

The downhill descent since those giddy heights has been rapid and, at times, downright depressing. It's very easy to get used to and almost complacent about success. Accepting failure, on the other, hand is far harder to stomach.

And that's what we've sadly had to get used to over those two dark decades.

British rallying, it's fair to say, was in the doldrums. We were offered tantalising glimmers of hope in the last few years from Kris Meeke. His five rally wins were laudable and did

#### back with second

has the security of a two-year deal. You really can't underestimate the benefit of this to a driver's self-belief and confidence. And these two things are very often the difference between a driver who's is capable and competent and a driver who is brilliant and a winner.

He also knows that Makinen has employed him to go flat out and win rallies and, if he makes the odd mistake and writes off the odd car, it won't be held against him. Again, that wasn't always the case at M-Sport.

Evans now looks like a proper challenger for this year's drivers title. To be right up there and leading in Monte Carlo with one day to go was impressive enough. But to become the first Brit to win on this most demanding of events is truly exceptional.

Not since the glory days of Colin McRae and Richard Burns have British rally fans truly dared to believe that the next World Rally champion might come from these isles. Yes, we had the mercurial talents of Kris Meeke to get excited about for a few seasons. However, whereas Meeke's title aspirations were invariably dead and buried by Rally Mexico, Evans' aspirations are very real and very much alive and very much growing. And by the way, don't read any of the above as criticism of Malcolm Wilson's M-Sport outfit. Circumstances over the past too many years have meant that it does things its way and quite often that means competing at the highest level with one hand effectively tied behind its back.

It's no coincidence that two of the very fastest drivers in the WRC right now [Evans and Ott Tanak] served their apprenticeships under Mr Wilson. He equips young drivers with all the necessary skills and disciplines required to win at the highest levels.

It's just that the team isn't in the position currently to capitalise on that investment in talent and take them to the very pinnacle of rallying. We can only hope that Ford puts that right in coming seasons and we see a strong, fullyfunded and resurgent M-Sport competing on a level playing field.

Right now though, as British rally fans, it's time to get excited. Very excited indeed about the prospects for the young Welshman from Dolgellau. So what was the other headlinegrabbing story that emerged from the wind swept, sodden stages of Sweden? It was, without any doubt, the trust breath-taking performance of Evans' team-mate, dubbed the 'Finnish Freak': Kalle Rovanpera. It's hard to believe that Finland has waited almost as long as Great Britain for its next Word champion. For a country so obsessed with rallying, Marcus Gronholm's last title in 2002 seems like an eternity ago. In Rovanpera, though, the country has its next World champion. They might not have to wait too

They might not have to wait too many years to see that happening, either. His speed and confidence in only his second WRC outing in the Toyota Yaris was breathtaking. It's scary to think just how much better he can get. He's doing things in that car that many reckoned just weren't possible. He's explosively exciting to watch and you get the feeling that he has the temperament to match the talent. A unique combination that is very often the mark of champions.

This is not the year for an Evans-Rovanpera championship battle but, for sure in coming seasons, we can look forward to the delicious prospect of these two young guns lifting the bar even further and delighting us all with their precocious talents and skills, *Continued on page 22*  their bit to keep rallying interest alive on these shores.

But everyone knows that in order for any sport to thrive you need homegrown success. You need winners, heroes, champions, super stars. You need athletes that kids can look up to and aspire to be. And I firmly believe that person is Elfyn Evans. I've made the mistake in the past of prematurely proclaiming Evans' ascendency to rallying's elite. But this time it feels and looks so very different. It's much more than just the result. Circumstances seem to have come together that have released the full potential that many have seen in the young Welshman over the last years. And my goodness, to experience that is exhilarating in the extreme.

Will Evans end the season as World Rally champion? I really don't know, but the mere fact that he now could is more than good enough for me.

## WRC SWEDEN





#### *continued from page 21* Rally Sweden will be memorable

Rally Sweden will be memorable for a number of things but perhaps most pertinently, it feels and looks like it has signified the changing of the guard in rallying's hierarchy.

The obvious issues facing the Rally Sweden organisers didn't really need highlighting last week. The presence of FIA president Jean Todt and his assertions that this snowless situation must never be allowed to happen again did just that.

Todt was in Sweden ostensibly to offer his support to the organisers and the volunteers who worked so hard to make sure we had something resembling a rally to enjoy. But he was also there to underline his position on what Rally Sweden always has been and always should be about. The WRC only has one snow rally and this is it. A Rally Sweden without snow just doesn't cut the mustard with president Todt and he made that known in no uncertain terms. At the same time, he offered his continuing support to Rally Sweden as the host event for the championship's snow rally.

And therein lies a very big problem. Yes the rally can look to relocate to a location further north where the chances of guaranteeing snowy conditions are far greater. But the funding model for this event relies on two very important factors.

One is the financial input from the Varmland regional government inside whose boundaries the rally is based. They pay a big portion



#### Sebastien Ogier Toyota Yaris WRC 7/10

You wouldn't have believed before the event that Ogier would end up third best of the Toyotas in Sweden. His two junior team-mates have blasted out of the box this year and left the Frenchman somewhat behind. Once again demonstrated that he's not prepared to risk everything in what seems to be a calculated approach to challenging for this year's title. No doubt he'll bounce back with a beneficial start position in Mexico.



#### Elfyn Evans Toyota Yaris WRC 10/10

Without any question, this was the best drive of his career. Evans led from start to finish and hardly put a wheel wrong all weekend to land a second career WRC triumph. More than anything, it was the confident, self-assured nature of this drive that impressed onlookers the most. He has announced himself most emphatically as a genuine title contender and worthy successor to Colin McRae and Richard Burns.



#### Kalle Rovanpera Toyota Yaris WRC 10/10

The so-called Finnish Freak showed once again that he is more than capable of redefining the accepted norms of rallying. A podium on only his second outing in the Yaris WRC just shouldn't have been possible. That drive to take maximum Powerstage points was truly breathtaking. Commitment and risk balanced to perfection. It's truly frightening just how rapidly this kid is progressing Almosta nailed-on certainty that this season will bring his first victory.



#### **Ott Tanak** Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC 8/10

It was revealed at the conclusion of the event just how close the world champion was to not making the starting line-up on Rally Sweden after his monster off on the season-opening Monte Carlo Rally. The Estonian never seemed at his imperiously confident best but ground out a solid second place to kickstart his 2020 campaign. Knows the speed is there in the Hyundai i20 WRC, just has to work out how to unlock it.

Thierry Neuville

Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC 6/10 Suffered because of his road position on the opening morning but nevertheless, it was a somewhat subdued weekend for the Monte winner. He was never able to match the pace of the Toyotas and never seemed confident enough to get involved in the chase. He didn't seem too disappointed at the conclusion of the event and was buoyed by the opportunity his road position

**Rally Mexico.** 



**Craig Breen** Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC 7/10



Esapekka Lappi Ford Fiesta WRC 7/10 Getting to grips with the



**Teemu Suninen** Ford Fiesta WRC 4/10 Suninen came to this event

of the bills and therefore not unreasonably expect to benefit from key elements of the rally being located within their jurisdiction.

The other is that the rally relies on paying spectators to balance the books. As it stands the event is within reach of major population centres in Karlstadt and across the Norwegian border.

A move to the somewhat desolate and sparsely populated more northerly regions jeopardises the financial viability of the whole event and is clearly not a current option for the organisers.

A solution may lie in a relaxation of the current rules outlawing remote servicing and limiting the length of road sections.

It's possible that a workable solution could see the rally base remaining in Torsby with a remote service opening up the northern snowy stages.

Remote services aren't so popular with the manufacturers who have invested millions in some seriously impressive service park infrastructure. There is however a collective desire to see Sweden remain on the WRC calendar and at the same time come up with a solution to this year's unacceptable lack of snow.



will give him to bounce back on

Swedish fans enjoy the...sunshine



Ready to go: the WRC weapons

Breen has jumped into this car before and, without much seat time, challenged for stage wins. That just wasn't the case this time out in Sweden. The unique conditions didn't help and he struggled to perform the miracles that we've seen him capable of in the past. A solid drive though, no mistakes and no embarrassments and sitting comfortably as the insurance policy that team principal Andrea Adamo brought him on to be.

conditions and his new M-Sport-developed Ford charger proved challenging for the mercurial Finn. He built his pace as the weekend's stages progressed and he showed glimpses of the potential the car and driver pairing undoubtedly have. He was a lot more chipper than he had been on the opening Monte Carlo Rally and, mentally, seems to be in a good place. Better will follow,

#### with very high hopes indeed. He won stages on this event last year and led after day one. However, a high-speed off during shakedown knocked the young Finn's self-belief and he struggled for pace all weekend after that. He needs a confidenceboosting performance sooner rather than later and will look to Rally Mexico to spark into life after what has been a very mediocre start.

#### RESULTS

#### Round 2/13, Rally Sweden 2020, February 13-16

E	POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
	1	Elfyn Evans (GBR)/Scott Martin (GBR)	Toyota Yaris WRC	1h11m43.1s
	2	Ott Tanak (EST)/Martin Jarveoja (EST)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+12.7s
	3	Kalle Rovanpera (FIN)/Jonne Halttunen (FIN)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+20.2s
	4	Sebastien Ogier (FRA)/Julien Ingrassia (FRA)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+23.6s
	5	Esapekka Lappi (FIN)/Janne Ferm (FIN)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+32.4s
	6	Thierry Neuville (BEL)/Nicolas Gilsoul (BEL)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+33.8s
	7	Craig Breen (IRL)/Paul Nagle (IRL)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+1m00.9s
	8	Teemu Suninen (FIN)/Jarmo Lehtinen (FIN)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+1m24.5s
	9	Takamoto Katsuta (JPN)/Daniel Barritt (GBR)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+1m59.6s
	10	Jari Huttunen (FIN)/Mikko Lukka (FIN)	Hyundai i20 R5	+4m03.0s
	R	Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN)/Juho Hanninen (FIN)	Toyota Yaris WRC	Mechanical

#### NEXT ROUND

**Rally Mexico** 

March 12-15 Can Sebastien Ogier make it a hat-trick of wins in Mexico?

#### **Drivers' championship**

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Elfyn Evans	42
2	Thierry Neuville	42
3	Sebastien Ogier	37
4	Kalle Rovanpera	30
5	Esapekka Lappi	24
6	Ott Tanak	20
7	Teemu Suninen	11
8	Sebastien Loeb	8
9	Takamoto Katsuta	8
10	Craig Breen	6

#### Manufacturers' championship

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT	73
2	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT	63
3	M-Sport Ford WRT	40

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## INSIGHT

# WHO HAS STOLEN A MARCH IN THE RACE FOR GRANDPRIX GLORATOR

# Scott Mitchell was our man on the ground for the F1 launch season

his is the part of the season where no one loses. Every grand prix team is full of optimism and hope: no squad has lost a race yet, and no one is on the back foot.

Every team will shout about the prospects of its new machine and the potential that is locked within. The squads are pounding around Barcelona to try and get to grips with the intricacies of



Photos: LAT

**MERCEDES** Drivers: 44 Lewis Hamilton (GBR) 77 Valtteri Bottas (FIN) Car: Mercedes W11 EQ Engine: Mercedes M11 EQ Performance Races: 210 Wins: 102





After another dominant year, Mercedes has not backed off with the development of the W11. It has taken the weaknesses of last year's car – namely cooling and aerodynamic development – and attempted to turn them into strengths.

At the front of the car it has reinforced the architecture to make it more robust, while in the middle it has followed the trend of the rest of the grid by moving its upper side impact tube to the lower position. That, combined with the aggressive cut of the sidepods, helps further manipulate the airflow from the front wing.

Despite shrinking the sidepods, Mercedes has still been able to beef up its smaller radiators that caused cooling problems last year. That is complemented by greater engine cooling technology as well, raising the temperature tolerance to prevent the team getting caught out in hot conditions.

Mercedes also has what it calls an "adventurous" rear suspension layout, though it remains to be seen exactly what that means. The team says it has been done "in order to free up aerodynamic development opportunity".

The vibe from the team as testing began was promising, with typically strong performance and reliability and both drivers, ominously, reporting "sweet handling characteristics".

## INSIGHT



#### FERRARI Drivers:

5 Sebastian Vettel (DEU) 16 Charles Leclerc (MCO) Car: Ferrari SF 1000 Engine: Ferrari 065 Races: 991 Wins: 238 Ferrari's various flirtations with the title for three seasons have been rejected every time, but it hopes the leaner, sleeker physique of its SF1000 challenger will be enough to make the difference in 2020. Tighter packaging towards the rear of the car is the order of the day for the car that will take Ferrari past 1000 grands prix this season. Apart from that, it is difficult to spot the "extremes" Ferrari talked about at its launch. But it could be that maximising its existing concept adds up to the fine margins that have been missing in recent years. The Italian team also continues with

its departure from the Mercedes/Red

Bull front wing concept with a design that has the outboard edge fall away. The idea behind this is to direct the airflow outside the front tyre and improve aerodynamic efficiency.

Conversely, Mercedes and Red Bull have (like in 2019) opted to maximise the space allowed for the front wing – this makes it slightly harder to manage as the tyre is a big, bulky surface that screws up the airflow, but the reward is greater peak downforce if it is done properly. Ferrari is adamant it has made

Ferrari is adamant it has made downforce gains without abandoning its front wing philosophy. Its title hopes may well hinge on

whether that is true.



#### **RED BULL Privers:** 23 Alex Albon (THA) 33 Max Verstappen (NLD) Car: Red Bull RB 16 Engine: Honda RA620H Races: 286 Wins: 62

Given Red Bull ended the 2019 season with arguably the most competitive chassis, it is little surprise to see the RB16 born as a refined evolution of last year's contender.

There is little in the way of headline-grabbing changes, with the major priority areas – front wing and bargeboards – similar to before. Meanwhile, core architectural elements like suspension seem familiar.

Red Bull has opted for an 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it' mentality. This will partly be because it has dropped the ball at the start of the season for the last few years and expectations are high for a title assault this time, which means a continuation of that trend is not acceptable.

If Red Bull continues with the same level of performance as the end of 2019, then the main question mark versus its rivals will be the Honda engine. Honda has retained the same engine concept that has served it well since a troubled introduction in 2017 and facilitated major gains over the last two years in particular.

Red Bull's first day of testing suggested Honda's product is now ultra-reliable. Whether it is now a match for Mercedes and Ferrari in the performance stakes is the key question.



#### MCLAREN Drivers: 4 Lando Norris (GBR) 55 Carlos Sainz (ESP) Car: McLaren MCL35 Engine: Renault R-Tech 20 Races: 863 Wins: 182

A visible step change in McLaren's nose, sidepod shape and the packaging at the rear of the car offered the first hints that this team is prepared to make big changes in the bid to continue its strong momentum at the front of F1's midfield. The MCL35 looks like a car that is

prioritising all the right areas and there's enough different on show to say new technical director James Key has taken the first steps towards making McLaren's design his own. There are fundamental changes to this car, which McLaren had already acknowledged last year would need a season-to-season concept change. At the launch, Key said: "There are a lot of technologies around the front which would only have been possible with the new car.

"We added what we felt were opportunities we couldn't unlock on [last year's car] with the geometries we had."

McLaren has suggested that there is

still more to come with this design, as it focused on a "very basic" car to start testing with in order to log impressive early mileage.

In theory, upgraded bolt-on components – front wing development, bargeboards and rear wing – will bring performance over the coming weeks.

#### Photos: LA

#### **RENAULT** Drivers: 3 Daniel Ricciardo (AUS) 31 Esteban Ocon (FRA) Car: Renault R.S.20 Engine: Renault E-Tech 20 Races: 383Wins: 35

The team with arguably the most to prove in 2020 was the only team to launch without a car. When Renault finally showed its R.S.20, its new nose job was the big takeaway.

The French works team opted not to share images of the R.S.20 at its season launch, saying it was not ready, and instead releasing a few teaser images of renders of the car before it broke cover properly on the first day of testing (via a shakedown with barely any information released).

Apart from the dramatic departure in nose shape, Renault has not bucked the trend in opting for evolution for 2020. The structural elements like the chassis and gearbox are broadly the same as last year, with the emphasis placed on changing surface components.

"Even if you know a lot of the chassis, a lot of the gearbox, is actually very similar to last year, we've still changed front and rear suspension geometry," says Renault's F1 executive director Marcin Budkowski. "On the bodywork it's a completely different car."

Renault believes its engine is now powerful enough to do the job, so the emphasis in that department has been to improve reliability.





### ALPHATAURI

#### Drivers:

10 Pierre Gasly (FRA) 26 Daniil Kvyat (RUS) (As Toro Rosso) Car: AlphaTauri AT01 Engine: Honda RA620H Races (as Toro Rosso): 268 Wins (as Toro Rosso): 1

The team formerly known as Toro Rosso has not departed from its technical reliance on Red Bull just because it has changed its name (and is now sporting a very attractive new livery). Instead, this year's AlphaTauri should be the best incarnation of Red Bull's junior team yet.

Like a couple of its rivals, AlphaTauri is utilising F1's rules on parts-sharing to the full. So several core components on the AT-01 are from last year's Red Bull, and we know how competitive that was.

By taking what the rules allow in terms of front and rear suspension and many other areas, AlphaTauri's technical team has been free to plough its own resources into other important parts. There's differentiation in front wing concept, geometries and small details like sidepod shape to make this an AlphaTauri – not just a Red Bull B car.

The elements it has taken from Red Bull include rear suspension designed around a Honda engine – not a Renault design retro-fitted for a different power unit – so that aids the packaging process at the rear of the car.

## ALFA ROMEO

7 Kimi Raikkonen (FIN) 99 Antonio Giovinazzi (ITA) Car: Alfa Romeo C39 Engine: Ferrari 065 Races: 133 Wins: 10

Alfa Romeo's new car is predictable, to a degree: there are clear styling cues from Ferrari, as well as wider pitlane trends. That might seem an inelegant compromise, but the beefed-up technical team at the Sauber operation that runs Alfa's F1 effort should know what they are doing.

The investment made on the technical side caught Alfa out last year, as the aerodynamic department seemed to be producing more parts than the production side could handle.

That added up to an underwhelming first year back on the grid for the Alfa name proper, and the team needs to step up a gear in 2020. Keeping with its version of the Ferrari front wing concept, that sweeps down at the outboard end, means Alfa perseveres with a valid idea that it is adamant it can get the necessary aero balance from. It cannot be coincidence that Ferrari, Haas and Alfa all

struggled for peak aero performance last season. The spread of front wing concepts means that could still be a powerful differential, but the jury's still out.





#### RACING POINT Drivers:

#### 11 Sergio Perez (MEX) 18 Lance Stroll (CAN) Car: Racing Point RP20 Engine: BWT Mercedes Races: 21 Wins: 0

Building the car Racing Point always wanted to build looks suspiciously like Mercedes' 2019 challenger. But 'suspicious' in this context is not a bad thing, because it is a Mercedes customer team and it makes sense to maximise such an alliance when it is clearly defined in the rules.

Racing Point has jumped at that opportunity. Free from the budget restraints that held it back as Force India and impacted the 2019 car as well, the team has finally been able to start from a clean sheet of paper. Racing Point has gone beyond simply using the engine, gearbox and rear suspension from Merc. Now the front end – the nose but also front suspension – mirrors the Mercedes concept, as does the low amount of rake the car has.

It would be churlish to suggest Racing Point has simply copied Mercedes, even though the RP20 takes clear styling cues from last year's W10. The difficulty there is that any aero platform takes significant refinement to get working efficiently. If it was easy to simply replicate someone else's solution, Haas – which uses a similar technical alliance with Ferrari – would have been much more competitive than it was last year.



#### HAAS Drivers: 8 Romain Grosiegn (

8 Romain Grosjean (FRA) 20 Kevin Magnussen (DEN) Car: Haas VF-20 Engine: Ferrari 065 Races: 83 Wins: 0

Haas was right up there in the list of teams that were happy to see the 2019 season |end, and the hope is that the VF-20–which returns to the traditional colours of Haas Automation – will cure the crippling weaknesses of last year's car. What started as a fear that Haas could not get its tyres to work last year slowly transformed into a big downforce problem. Unlike Alfa, Haas has opted not to take inspiration from Ferrari's front wing. It seems to have opted for a middle ground between the two concepts having gone

seems to have opted for a middle ground between the two concepts, having gone with a version that swept down at the outboard end last year. Haas uses Ferrari gearbox and suspension components, but its partner Dallara is responsible for the aerodynamics. Departing from that Ferrari-style front wing will put Haas, in theory, on a more even keel with its midfield rivals. At the very least it eliminates a key variable that should help Haas arrow in on its weakness, if it remains.

"We realised in the middle of the season, that we needed to do something different for 2020, and we did," said team boss Gunther Steiner. "We've just tried to apply into the new car some of the things we learned."

#### WILLIAMS

6 Nicholas Latifi 63 George Russell (GBR) Car: Williams FW43 Engine: Mercedes M11 EQ Performance Races: 732 Wins: 114 Williams has sounded a cautionary note with the unveiling of its FW43, which features "no fundamental concept changes". And that is not the most promising thing to hear given how bad Williams's 2019 car was. However, the famous team says it has noted a "healthy development rate" in windtunnel testing, and addressed core mechanical weaknesses that blighted its Formula 1 car last year. Those are low-hanging fruits, though, and the first signs from the FW43 are that it is a solid base for a car but probably the sort of machine Williams needed a year ago. That means it will likely be behind the curve again in 2020.

"We have paid significant attention to understanding the problem areas of the FW42 and we have carefully chosen parts of the car to develop," said Williams design director Doug McKiernan. Meanwhile, chief engineer Adam Carter added: "The decision to retain some of the core architecture of the FW42 means there has been less resource invested in developing new concepts." The suggestion is that Williams has been able to maximise the potential of its existing package. However, the rest of the grid might

However, the rest of the grid might have moved on too much for that to be enough.







his is a big season for Ciceley Motorsport. After a difficult 2019, saved by a mid-season change ofpersonneland attitude, the team is ready to come out fighting. On the face of it, two cars driven by Adam Morgan and Dan Rowbottom may not seem like a 'wow!'. After all, they both drove for the team last season, but scratch deeper than the surface and there is plenty new here. For a start, this is now very much a two-car team, both cars running the same livery under the Carlube Triple R Racing with Cataclean & Mac Tools banner. It doesn't roll of the tongue necessarily, but it reflects the key partners of the team. But this is more than a lick of paint and new stickers. The cars have been completely stripped over the winter, shot-blasted and repainted. Chief race engineer Steve Farrell has been instrumental in overseeing work on the cars, such as moving the power steering unit from the engine to the rear sub-frame to allow more cool air to circulate around the engine and drop the core temperature. A visit to Multimatic for a rig test on suspension and damper settings was positive and the cooling ducts have been further developed while the

cooling for the brakes has been improved as well. Some aero tweaks to the Mercedes-BenzA-Class have been looked into as well. "Everything has come under review," says Australian Farrell. With over 30 years experience in the sport, from running his own Milldent Motorsport team in FF2000 in the 1980s to a key role in Subaru's World Rally Team and the 1994 British Touring Car Championship-winning Alfa Romeo team on the way, there's not much Farrell doesn't know. "It was clear that everyone was up for a big push this year, and Russell Morgan [team owner] has given me a free rein. It's not just the car: it's processes as well that we have looked into such as how we set up dampers, differentials and so on. There is no revolution here, just methodical work. "With the [standardised, controlled]





**Expert engineer Steve Farrell** 





RML parts, there is not much that we can change," concedes Farrell. "But we have made a bit of an improvement on the cooling and I reckon we are going in the right direction." Farrell was brought in midway through last season after Ciceley was having a pretty torrid time. He explains: "I was working in the Chinese Touring Car Championship and Adam was racing out there. With not too many English speakers, we'd struck up a friendship and he opened up about the problems they were having and suggested that I went up to the team's base to talk about 2020. I walked in. said 'hello" and Russell asked what I was doing next weekend. That was Thruxton!" The benefit was immediate. "We started with a set-up that we knew. I think the Italians [Hexathron, fronted in the UK by Marco Calovolo] that were running the cars had just lost direction. They weren't convinced it was a competitive car but I can't see a fundamental reason why it won't still work. We just needed to address set-up, so we went back to basics and put some strong processes in place. "Before long, people's confidence came back and motivation went up. That was a big step forward. It was fascinating for me seeing what incremental differences can make and now we want to push on and restore Ciceley to where it should be, up near

the front. It's been overtaken by Speedworks and BTC, for example, and it's time to change that." Part of moving the cars up the grid depends upon the men behind the wheel, and so Farrell has spent time working on them too. An intensive simulator programme at iZone has been undertaken for both Morgan and Rowbottom. "It was no joy ride," laughs Farrell. "I adopted a carrot and stick approach, with a really big stick and a tiny carrot. At the end of a day on the sim they were exhausted but it needs to be intense because you're talking thousandths of a second in the BTCC these days so we need to find time where we can. I have had good results on sims in the past and it helps to understand what drivers are doing. I'm not sure that the guys thank me for it, but I'm sure it will help." Rowbottom in particular knows this is a crucial year. "Last year was tough. I probably lost a bit of confidence but with all the effort being made for this year I am really positive," he says. Farrell says: "We need to get Dan's confidence back, get his head in the right place. He can learn from Adam and he will be much more competitive." There is a quiet confidence in the Accrington team ahead of the season. "I can't see a reason why we aren't scoring regular podiums," reckons Farrell. "And if we are doing that, the points are mounting up..."

## Bringing the aspects together for 2020

Carlube Triple R Racing with Cataclean & Mac Tools. It might be the longest team name on this year's grid, but for Ciceley Motorsport's commercial director Norman Burgess, it reflects a huge amount of effort.

"First, we are running as a two-car team this year," explains Burgess. "That gives us a far better chance in the teams' championships because we can combine the points scored by the two cars, but on another level it shows how sponsors and partnerships work."

Mac Tools has adorned Burgess's cars for a number of seasons, and is also in British Superbike racing through his association with Paul Bird's team. Cataclean came with Dan Rowbottom and, after a season of testing the water, the brand has a clear aim: sell product. And when one of Burgess's allies moved to Terosyl, they worked hard on enticing the Carlube brand back into the spirit.

"I've ended up with three big names on the cars," says Burgess. "But this is more than just awareness and branding on the cars. We have been able to help Cataclean get a distribution channel through Mac Tools franchisees and now with Tetrosyl they are able to negotiate more commercial relationships. "Our race day hospitality centre isn't just about lunch, it's becoming a business networking area. If businesses are doing well through the BTCC, then they will stay in the championship and continue to support a team, but we have to work with them. For example, there is a Mac Tools tool fair in late February to which Dan [Rowbottom] and Cataclean are going. We work with our sponsors and commercial partners to give them exactly what they need. "The days of a team taking money and putting stickers on the cars are long gone."



## "The team needs to take a step forwards"



here are plenty of brave words coming out of Ciceley Motorsport right now. The team bosses know that it simply has to step up this season.

The Mercedes-Benz A-Class is five years old and, when it first hit the track in 2015, looked to have one of the most pliant chassis on the grid. But the team was taking its baby steps in the category and perhaps the big results were out of reach for the relatively inexperienced squad and driver Adam Morgan himself, as he was only in his third year in the British Touring Car Championship top-flight. He has gone on to take seven career wins, which is a decent return, but there has always been the feeling that the team and Morgan need to step up. When the now 31-year-old driver joined the BTCC, he was heading a new wave of talent and has arguably been overshadowed on that score by the likes of Tom Ingram, Ash Sutton, Rory Butcher and Jack Goff. Morgan is tied to the team because it is a family-run operation headed up by his dad Russell. It is very easy to overlook Ciceley while everyone is focusing on the drivers who have swapped squads or those changing to the perceived top-line teams. That is slightly unfair on Ciceley, but things will change in 2020. A twocar team with the highly amiable Dan Rowbottom will put Morgan on a strong footing, and the engineering depth in the team has been ramped up yet again. The commercial aspects are in line too. It is all very well to declare big intentions at the start of a season, because no one has lost a race yet and no one has seen a competitive timing screen. While the noises coming out of Ciceley are patter we might have heard before from others in a similar situations, there is a genuine optimism that the foundations are stronger than ever. The truth will be found out after 30 races, but the ingredients are ready to cook up some serious success.



## COLUMN



## Motorsport News' rallycross expert looks ahead





s is well covered within these pages, rallycross was created by television producer Robert Reed at Lydden Hill 53 years ago this month, and as such, as Brits we will always, quite fairly, claim the sport as our own.

But, as I sit here in a cafe in Sweden, I can't help but feel that this lot up here can claim a fair share of the discipline's ownership too. After all, aside from a handful of Russian and Norwegian successes, since our own Will Gollop claimed the European crown in 1992 drivers committed by this stage of the year, there was significant anguish about whether the world series would survive the 'manufacturer exodus' following 2018.

I'm fed of hearing about, and even more so writing about, the departure of the bigmoney manufacturer teams at the end of 2018 because the switch to a fully-electric world championship didn't happen, the FIA regulations for which I might add were at that stage sculpted around the wishes of those same manufacturers and others.

With a flurry of late entries, as it turned out the 2019 season was incredible. While I loved watching Kristoffersson operate on an insanely high level to strike dominance over Volkswagen team-mate Petter Solberg and the entire field on his way to two titles, having a handful of drivers that could win every round last season and a title-fight that not only went down to the wire but concluded in the most dramatic fashion with contact between the protagonists in the closing laps of the year was fantastic. It was an important year for real, hardfought, action-filled rallycross, where the discipline gained hugely from the unpredictably and drama. It will be hard pressed for a repeat of that campaign, but despite no teams having officially announced, I'm confident that the series will achieve similar numbers to last year and expect teams to begin announcing their plans within the next week. Much like the situation in Formula 1 for 2020, with teams needing to create new cars knowing a totally new rule set will come into place for 2021, this season is one of transition

for World RX, and could be ultimately be critical as electric cars will be introduced into the existing top-flight category next term.

Before that, in the fourth round of this year at Spa, the new Projekt E support series will begin, the first fully-electric category giving an insight into the new electric direction. How the electrification of rallycross plays out over the next 12 months will be critical to the future of the competition if it is to maintain the kind of exposure it deserves.

There will be plenty more on the concepts around Projekt E and the Kreisel-developed World RX electric kits, along with the outlook for each series within these pages in the coming months.

with his frankly ridiculous Bi-Turbo MG Metro 6R4, 17 of the last 27 top-flight Supercar titles have been won by Swedish drivers, including the four last World Championship crowns.

At the time of writing, over the last two days I've sat down and drank the slightly questionable kind of coffee on which these Nordic folk thrive, with a range of figures from the World RX rallycross paddock, past legends to current stars.

Two of those, the most recent drivers to win the World RX drivers' crown, double-champion Johan Kristoffersson and reigning title-holder Timmy Hansen have made no secret of their love for rallycross, and both are working on programmes for 2020.

Despite the fact that we're almost at the end of the second month of the year and, as yet, not one team or driver has announced their World RX participation, there's an air of positivity and calm from almost everyone I speak to about World RX 2020.

Twelve months ago, even with a number of

Finally, I would like to say that it's an absolute pleasure to be continuing as Rallycross Editor for *MN*. I don't come from a motorsport family, I discovered the discipline for myself as a child and prior to even attending any events I have clear recollections of thumbing the Christmas edition of the *Motoring News* in the back of my parents' car on the way to visit family in South Wales on Boxing day.

That *MN* will continue to be on the shelves every Wednesday, now with Kelsey Media as publisher, is in no small part thanks to the enthusiasm and commitment of its esteemed editor Matt James.

I'm looking forward to working on a range of features over the course of the season, along with all the usual stuff, to give readers more of an insight into the characters, whys and wherefores of rallycross. After all, it's the best motorsport there is.

## "There is no panic over the World RX in 2020"



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Frank Bird tackles Snetterton mud, from Justin Ward



A Pomeroy novelty, photograph by Bob Sketchley





Barry Morris on the Snetterton Stages, by Chris Collier



David Harbey's picture of Adam Ripper at Sntterton



A Porsche preparing at Donington, from Rich Cranston



Travelling in the finest of style at Silverstone's recent Pomeroy Trophy, photo sent in by Bob Sketchley



From Gary Hill: this time it's James Gornall's BTCC car



David Harbey's shot of a Ford Escort piercing gloom

A Peugeot 908 rounds Clearways, photo from Gary Hill



James Harvey went to an eclectic test at Donington

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## WHAT'S ON

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#### SUNDAY

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*Listings correct at time of press* 

#### **TV GUIDE**

With the second pre-season test of the 2020 Formula 1 season commencing today at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, why not relive one of the most iconic races at the track? Michael Schumacher took his first win with Ferrari in appalling conditions at the 1996 Spanish Grand and you can see his sublime performance with Classic F1 Races (Wednesday, 1200-1245hrs, Sky Sports F1).

Ahead of the next round of the 2019-20 Formula E Championship relive the action from Mexico City (Thursday, 2030-2130hrs, Eurosport 2), as Mitch Evans took a dominant win for Jaguar and with it the lead in the drivers' standings.

And finally, there's highlights of the World Endurance Championship from the Circuit of the Americas (Friday, 1400-1500hrs, BT Sport 1), with Toyota in search of another victory.

#### LIVE TV

**Formula E: Marrakech Race:** Saturday, 1330-1515hrs, BBC 2/1345-1500hrs, Eurosport 2

**NASCAR: Fontana** 

Race: Sunday, 2000hrs, Premier Sports 2



Mitch Evans was a FE winner

#### LIVE F1 TESTING



Nice sidepods on the new Williams

Day 1: Wednesday, 0900-1200hrs/1300-1700hrs, Sky Sports F1 Day 2: Thursday, 0900-1200hrs/1300-1700hrs, Sky Sports F1 Day 3: Friday, 0900-1200hrs/1300-1700hrs. Sky Sports F1



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#### **FILM REVIEW**

#### The Art of Racing in the Rain

It's that age-old motor racing story: driver aspires to race in Formula 1, runs out of finance on their way up the single-seater ladder and so adopts a dog that's voiced by Kevin Costner. Hang on a minute... that's not right.

Based on the novel by Garth Stein, The Art of Racing in the Rainfollows American racer Denny Swift and his furry golden retriever Enzono prizes for guessing who he's named after - who spend their evenings studying onboards, telemetry and video footage of Ayrton Senna at Monaco in 1984.

After his backers ran out of money during an F3 campaign, Swift switches over to endurance competition, racing a Turner Motorsport BMW M4 GT4 in the Michelin Pilot Challenge, graduating to a Porsche 911 GT3-R and then taking a curious step backwards into a Carrera Cup car.

Off track, driver meets girl, dog doesn't warm to her, driver and girl get married, girl gets pregnant, driver misses daughter's birth,



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laws sue for child custody.

The dog, presumably fed up with the unfathomable family politics that easily qualify for The Jerry Springer Show, then tries to relate the skills needed to be a great racing driver across to everyday life. After a surprise call up from Penske Swift is visited by token Italian talent scout Luca Patone (driving the "new" Ferrari 488, even though this scene is set a decade after he's driving the M4 that's, in reality, only a year older) and is offered a job as test driver for Ferrari. Curiously, Patone is impressed by Swift's ability to drift the car, which haemorrhages lap time.

As things begin to look up for Swift, he and Enzo go on a run but the dog gets hit by a car. Here the dog says: "Ayrton Senna didn't have to die at Imola", and it's a tough ask to steady rolling eyes. This is absolutely not a film for racing fans, but surely that's too niche a reference for the general public. It's hugely muddled and irked audience members will be even more aggrieved by the cheek of a montage that features Swift celebrating alongside Alain Prosthe hasn't earned his place!

Anyway, the dog just about survives and so Swift decides to use his new contacts at Maranello to secure a final treat: giving Enzo a passenger ride in a Ferrari 250TR.

Cut to eight years later, the dog is

where owners of the team's old disguised as Swift having made it to F1. We've lost track of how old he's meant to be at this point along a jagged timeline.

Then comes the closing song: Have You Ever Seen the Rain by the brilliant Creedence Clearwater Revival. Only, that's the thing. It may have taken a departure from the original source material (we're not sure, *Motorsport News* hasn't read it) but we count only one rainhit race. The title is one of many cheques the film can't cash.

It is cool to see the likes of Juan Pablo Montoya and Tristan Nunez listed as stunt drivers, but that's not enough to save this flick.

This review is scathing, but the truth is The Art of Racing in the Rain will anger motorsport enthusiasts. Those who can't appreciate Le Mans '66 for its Hollywood liberties have another think coming. Even if you can set the racing to one side, this is a film that drags, is wholly unsubtle and, above all else, confuses.

at a Ferrari Corse Clienti track day – F1 cars enjoy a whirl in their expensive machinery. This is

wife becomes terminally ill, in-

to race in the Daytona 24 Hours,

dead and Swift and his daughter are

Matt Kew

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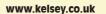
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