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MEXICAN GP REPORT P4

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CHAMPION!

TITLE NUMBER FIVE CEMENTS HAMILTON'S PLACE AMONG THE GREATS



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A RETURN TO WRC TOP STEP
FULL RALLY SPAIN REPORT P20**

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Former team-mate Rosberg tips Briton

HAMILTON CAN BREAK ALL RECORDS



Brit described race as 'horrible', but fourth was enough

By Stephen Lickorish

Lewis Hamilton's former Mercedes team-mate Nico Rosberg believes the Briton can go on and break Michael Schumacher's Formula 1 records over the next two years after clinching his fifth title in Mexico last weekend.

Rosberg, the 2016 F1 champion, believes that Hamilton is capable of eclipsing Schumacher's record of seven titles and 91 race wins before his current Mercedes contract expires at the end of 2020.

Hamilton is only 20 wins shy of Schumacher's score, having added another nine victories to his tally so far this season.

"For Lewis now, with five titles,

unbelievable," said Rosberg, in a message posted on his YouTube channel. "It's crazy to think, and equalling [Juan Manuel] Fangio [as a five-time world champion] - crazy.

"He can seriously go for Schumacher's records now. He's got two more years on the contract, and Schumi is only two titles away, 20 race wins away, even that's possible in two years.

"It's amazing. He can really try to become statistically the best of all-time, which is unreal, but it is a possibility, and I'm sure he's going to be motivated by that."

Hamilton says he needed some "special moments" to secure a fifth title this year.

Sebastian Vettel led the standings for Ferrari at the mid-point of the season, but since then Hamilton has won six of the last nine races - and sealed the crown with a fourth place in the Mexican Grand Prix, with two races still remaining.

"Through the year there were a lot of testing times for us," Hamilton said. "Even on weekends where we didn't have

the package and we were on the back foot, we'd come away with wins even though we weren't the quickest.

"It took some special laps, it took some special moments in the car and I honestly could just re-live those moments all the time. Some of those experiences I had in the car were really magical.

"I think I had a great year last year and I was thinking to myself, 'How can I raise the bar, how can I squeeze some more out of myself?'"

"There is no secret formula but somehow I managed to find that balance and that flow and I've had some of my best races of my career. I think that's ultimately why I'm sitting here."

Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff reckons Hamilton was driving better than ever this year but this was the toughest of the four titles the Briton has won with the manufacturer.

"This is the best Lewis Hamilton I've seen in the last six years," said Wolff. "He has driven better. He has been better out of the car. Very, very complete. But as we try to reach for more, it is



Vettel was defeated again

HEADLINE NEWS

Photos: LAT

to become the best

LITTON



Hamilton has matched Fangio as a five-time F1 champion

never completely complete. It sounds stupid."

When asked if he thinks 33-year-old Hamilton will continue in the series into his late-30s like Kimi Raikkonen, Wolff said: "He has that at the moment and as long as he is motivated and enjoys what he is doing he can go on for many more years."

"As long as he is in a good car and continues enjoying what he does today, I think there is more to come. But I think the reason he

has won the fifth championship, is that he concentrates on the job in hand, and not look too far away. Before reaching seven, there is a sixth to win and we haven't scored a single point for that one."

Hamilton admitted his disappointing performance in the Mexican GP – where Mercedes struggled compared to Red Bull and Ferrari – wasn't how he wanted to wrap up the title. "It was a horrible race," Hamilton conceded. "We were struggling. I was trying to hold on and bring the car home."

He also paid tribute to his paternal grandfather, who passed away in the week leading up to the race.

"I really, really want to just do him proud and make my dad proud, because this is a difficult time for all the family," he said. "I just called my dad and I know he's proud of what we've achieved, and I know he's proud of me which has always been my goal – and I know grandad would be proud of us as well."

Mercedes's attention now switches to the constructors'

championship as it aims for a fifth consecutive title double.

The German manufacturer has a lead of 55 points over Ferrari heading into the final two races with a maximum of 86 still available.

"The job is not done yet," said Wolff. "We are very happy about the fifth drivers' championship because that is the most visible and most important championship, but there is a constructors' championship still out there that we want to secure and win."

"It is not easy as you can see today, and I think you can only count records once you close the book. And I don't see us closing the book at the moment, we enjoy what we do and that is why I am not looking at this at the moment."

Vettel says it was "horrible" to miss out on the title again but paid tribute to Hamilton.

"He drove superbly all year," said Vettel of his rival. "He was the better one of us two. I told him it was well deserved and to enjoy it."

Additional reporting by Scott Mitchell

"He can become the best of all-time"

NICO ROSBERG



HOW LEWIS BECAME A FIVE-TIME CHAMP

2008

1st Lewis Hamilton (McLaren-Mercedes)

2nd Felipe Massa (Ferrari)

3rd Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari)

The path to Lewis Hamilton's first crown was not a smooth one, and the McLaren driver fought tooth-and-nail against Ferrari, and especially Felipe Massa. After winning the opener in Australia, he took further victories in Monaco, Britain and Germany, but Massa was never out of his slipstream in the hunt for the crown. Hamilton had a seven-point buffer going into the last round at Interlagos in Brazil. In drizzling conditions, a small slip by the intermediate-tyred Hamilton allowed Sebastian Vettel into fifth place – which, with Massa leading, was the position the Brit needed. However, on the very last lap, both Vettel and Hamilton pounced on the Toyota of Timo Glock, who was struggling on his dry tyres. Hamilton sealed his maiden crown by a single mark.



TITLE NUMBER ONE

Hamilton took a last-gasp title win

2014

1st Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)

2nd Nico Rosberg (Mercedes)

3rd Daniel Ricciardo (Red Bull-Renault)

There had been some background criticism of Lewis Hamilton's decision to join Mercedes from McLaren in 2013, with many outsiders believing he was chasing the dollar. But he knew that the German firm was well down the road with its hybrid technology and, when it came on stream in 2014, Lewis was proved right. Hamilton went into the double-points finale with a 17-point lead over his team-mate Nico Rosberg with 10 wins already in his pocket – indeed, he had gone on a five-race winning streak from the Italian race at Monza to the USA GP at Austin. Rosberg suffered electrical problems at the Yas Marina circuit and could only finish in 14th spot, while Hamilton won again.



TITLE NUMBER TWO

Lewis stood tall after Yas Marina

2015

1st Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)

2nd Nico Rosberg (Mercedes)

3rd Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari)

This was a much easier run for Lewis Hamilton, who only failed to finish on the podium on two occasions in the opening 16 races. Again, it was his team-mate Nico Rosberg who pushed him hardest, and there was some friction between the two with some very close on-track moments. One of the major blots for Lewis had been a botched pit call under F1's first ever virtual safety car in Monaco, which cost him his 19-second lead. Hamilton had the title wrapped up with three races left to go and took the title with a victory at the American Grand Prix in Austin. Mercedes won all but three races during the course of the season with Sebastian Vettel's Ferrari taking the others.



TITLE NUMBER THREE

America was the scene of hat-trick

2017

1st Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)

2nd Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari)

3rd Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes)

This was a much more competitive season with Ferrari starting off strongly and Red Bull having the pace to win on occasion. Sebastian Vettel won three of the opening six races for the Scuderia but Mercedes fought back and Lewis Hamilton went on a run of five wins from six races. However, at the Mexican Grand Prix with two races remaining, there was a three-way collision between Max Verstappen, Vettel and Hamilton at the third corner which put Hamilton to the very back and forced him to charge through the pack. With Vettel battling to fourth spot, a lame ninth position was enough for Hamilton wrap up the title.



TITLE NUMBER FOUR

A struggle to ninth was enough



TITLE NUMBER FIVE

2018 (so far...)

1st Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 2nd Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari) 3rd Kimi Raikkonen (Ferrari)

This could be described as the season where Ferrari threw it away with a series of tactical mistakes – and some driving ones from Sebastian Vettel as well. Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes were on the back foot over the opening period of the season and perhaps a snapshot of the year was the British Grand Prix at Silverstone where Hamilton qualified on pole and was then taken off on the opening lap. His battle back through the pack to rescue a second place kept the heat on. A run of six wins from seven races in the middle of the campaign really turned the screw on Ferrari and Hamilton was able to secure the crown at the Mexican GP with two races remaining.

MEXICAN GP REPORT

BY JAMES ROBERTS

Red Bull stole the show on the day Lewis Hamilton was finally crowned

VERSTAPPEN PLAYS IT SAFE FOR FIFTH WIN

Verstappen made it back-to-back wins in Mexico City



Ricciardo doesn't like Sundays much...



Critical tyre wear made life hard for Hamilton

Max Verstappen scored his fifth grand prix victory with a dominant drive in the Mexican Grand Prix last Sunday. But the final laps were not entirely stress free. On the Red Bull pitwall, his engineers were praying there wouldn't be a repeat of the mechanical problem that caused second-placed Daniel Ricciardo to retire from the race.

Verstappen ran a cautious final few laps to take a well-deserved win, with the two Ferraris rounding out the podium positions. But Sebastian Vettel's second place – and more significantly Lewis Hamilton's fourth – was enough to bring the drivers' championship to a conclusion.

After the race, as they emerged from their cars in the Foro Sol stadium section of the lap, Vettel went across to applaud Hamilton on equalling the great Juan Manuel Fangio's five world championships.

"I congratulated him as he's been superb all year and the title was well-deserved," said Vettel. "Number five is something unbelievable and I told him to keep pushing because I need him to be at his best to fight against next year."

It had been a difficult afternoon for Hamilton, who spent 71 laps around the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez nursing his tyres. He finished over a minute behind Verstappen, while his team-mate Valtteri Bottas (in fifth) was a lap down. Hamilton said it had been a "horrible" race.

"I got a great start and was working my way up and I really don't know what happened after that," said the Mercedes man. "I was just trying to hold on and bring the car home."

Fourth place in Mexico, coming 50

years after Graham Hill won his second world title at this venue, cemented his position as one of the greatest drivers of all-time and just two titles short of Michael Schumacher's record.

Qualifying

A joyful Ricciardo admitted he was "holding a lot in" as he celebrated his first pole position since Monaco and Red Bull's first front-row lock-out since Austin 2013 – its first of the hybrid turbo era.

The Australian eclipsed his team-mate by just 0.026s, beating him on the final run of qualifying and upsetting the form book as Verstappen had set the fastest time in all three practice sessions prior to qualifying.

Verstappen was quickest of anyone in his first run in Q3, stopping the clocks with a 1m14.785s lap, nearly two tenths ahead of the opposition, despite not having the outright fastest pace in any of the three sectors.

But on his final timed lap, Ricciardo was imperious, not putting a wheel out of place to record only the third pole of his career (and his first outside of Monaco). His team-mate was clearly upset that he had been denied his first pole position and as he parked his car on the start-finish line at the end of qualifying, eased his foot off the brake to knock the second-placed marker board over in disgust.

"The whole qualifying was crap," said the Dutchman when he climbed disconsolately out of his car. "The engine braking was not how I wanted it and I was getting a lot of rear locking on downshifts when I came off the throttle. I had to go forward with the brake balance to stabilise the whole car."

In the fight for the title battle, Hamilton took third – one place ahead of Vettel. The Brit was much happier with his car's performance in comparison to its tardy pace on Friday.

Behind Vettel came the two Finns, Bottas from Kimi Raikkonen then the two Renaults and Saubers making up the top 10. The latter two teams ran their quickest Q2 laps on the faster but fragile hypersoft tyre.

Hamilton's best hope for Turn 1 on Sunday would be to get ahead of both Red Bulls, but he was also conscious of what happened last year when he picked up a puncture thanks to contact with Vettel in the first series of corners.

The run down from the start to the braking zone at Turn 1 is the longest of the year – at 800 metres – with plenty of scope for slipstreaming for those behind the front row. Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff said the grid had potential for "carnage" down the straight and through the opening corners.

"You have the two Red Bulls who have the least straight-line speed on the front row, then us, followed by the Ferraris who are almost 10kph up on everybody else. When I visualise it, I hope we come out with two cars intact..."

Race

In the event, the fears for chaos in the opening couple of corners were misguided as the first five rows managed to negotiate their way around the first sequence of bends unharmed.

Hamilton made the best start, instantly getting ahead of Ricciardo, who bogged down with too much wheelspin off the line.

As the Mercedes split the two Red Bulls, he came alongside Verstappen, but the Dutchman held the inside line as they approached the braking zone for Turn 1 with the Ferraris and Bottas's Mercedes boxed in behind the front pair. Hamilton, knowing he couldn't afford not to finish the race, braked early and allowed Verstappen to take the lead.

Behind the front two, Bottas had

'Perez retired with a long brake pedal'
Home town heartbreak, below



ROUND 19

Photos: LAT



Verstappen's fifth career victory was taken with relative ease once he had grabbed the lead at the start

made a strong start from fifth to get up to third, but he was out-manoeuvred by Ricciardo, who was trying to claw back lost ground. As the field entered Turns 4 and 5, Vettel went wheel-to-wheel with Bottas's Mercedes and managed to take fourth – with the pair making the slightest of contact on the short blast up to Turn 6.

Although the frontrunners had managed not to trip over each other, further back Force India's Esteban Ocon hit one of the Renaults and broke his front wing. The debris from the incident then flew into the path of Fernando Alonso and lodged in his McLaren. Two laps later the Spaniard stopped at Turn 11 to retire with a loss of water pressure and that prompted the deployment of the virtual safety car.

Once racing resumed, Verstappen was easily able to extend his lead over Hamilton, while the Mercedes came under pressure from Ricciardo behind. Right from the off, Hamilton was hampered by the graining in his Pirellis, in particular the front-left, so his team made the decision to stop him (and Bottas) for fresh rubber as early as lap 11.

In contrast the two Ferraris were the last of the frontrunners to pit, delaying their tyre stops until lap 17. A lap prior to that, Hamilton had caught Raikkonen and bravely duked it out with the Ferrari around Turns 2 and 3, giving Mercedes's team boss Wolff a scare with his bravery.



More disappointment for Alonso

When the first round of stops were over, Verstappen held an eight-second lead over Hamilton, followed by Ricciardo, Vettel, Bottas and Raikkonen.

On lap 29, Vettel was challenging Ricciardo for third place when the virtual safety car was deployed for the second time in the race. This time Carlos Sainz had come to a sudden halt – thanks to an electrical shutdown – in the stadium section of the lap.

The VSC led to Force India pitting local hero Sergio Perez for his first stop. The Mexican had started 13th, but had moved up to seventh in the race and the timely intervention of the VSC was perfect for his strategy.

When he emerged from the pits he was right behind Charles Leclerc's Sauber in ninth and the pair was just ahead of the Ricciardo-Vettel duel for third. As they both tried to weave around the traffic, Vettel took advantage and nabbed the place off the Red Bull.

Unfortunately for the Mexican faithful, Perez's strong drive came undone a few laps later when he retired with a long brake pedal.

Vettel's strong pace meant once he'd dispatched Ricciardo, he was soon on the tail of his championship rival. On lap 38 he got a run on Hamilton into Turn 1 and despite covering the inside, the Brit knew there was no point defending too hard. His concern now was holding back Ricciardo and, eight laps later, the Australian had closed onto his gearbox.

On lap 47, Hamilton locked up defending into Turn 1 and lost the place to Ricciardo. Then he was immediately on the radio to his team to say: "These tyres are dead guys."

He was called in for his second stop later that lap and switched to a set of used ultrasofts. Both Verstappen and Vettel also took the opportunity to stop for new Pirellis, but once Red Bull

looked at the condition of the race leader's tyres, decided to keep Ricciardo out – as he'd inherited second place back from Vettel.

In the closing stages – on much older rubber – the Australian defended brilliantly from Vettel and Red Bull looked set to achieve a 1-2. But with nine laps remaining, an ominous puff of smoke emerged from the back of Ricciardo's car and he was forced to retire with a suspected hydraulic failure.

"This sucks and it is at a point where I feel why should I even come on a Sunday? There hasn't been a clean weekend for so long due to many different reasons and it's breaking my heart," said a dejected Ricciardo.

"Deflated comes to mind but this feels deeper than that. It just doesn't seem to happen for me on a Sunday."

When Verstappen saw his team-mate retire, he asked his team to turn his engine down to ensure he got to the finish. The satisfaction of winning, certainly made up for the disappointment in losing pole the day before.

Understandably all the fanfare was reserved for Hamilton, taking fourth place to wrap up his fifth world championship. Speaking to the press after the race he was asked about the achievement of matching Juan Manuel Fangio.

While Hamilton was respectful in victory, so too was Vettel, clearly drained now the title fight was finally over. But in an extraordinary moment of sportsmanship, the Ferrari man entered Mercedes's engineering debrief after the race and congratulated the team and his former colleague James Allison on their success. It was a classy act in what has been a hard-fought battle. For Vettel, 2019 can't come soon enough. For Hamilton, who is driving better than ever, he too, probably can't wait to close in on Schumacher's title record...

RACE FACTS

Results © 2018 Formula One Administration Ltd

MEXICAN GRAND PRIX

Circuit: Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez **Laps:** 71
Race distance: 189.75 miles **Lap:** 2.672 miles
Lap record: 1m 18.741s (Valtteri Bottas, 2018)
2017 winner: Max Verstappen (Red Bull)

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RESULTS

FIA Formula 1 World Championship, round 19/21

POS	DRIVERS	NAT	CAR-ENGINE	TIME
1	Max Verstappen	NED	Red Bull-Renault	1h38m28.851s
2	Sebastian Vettel	GER	Ferrari	+17.316s
3	Kimi Raikkonen	FIN	Ferrari	+49.914s
4	Lewis Hamilton	GBR	Mercedes	+1m18.738s
5	Valtteri Bottas	FIN	Mercedes	-1 lap
6	Nico Hulkenberg	GER	Renault	-2 laps
7	Charles Leclerc	MON	Sauber-Ferrari	-2 laps
8	Stoffel Vandoorne	BEL	McLaren-Renault	-2 laps
9	Marcus Ericsson	SWE	Sauber-Ferrari	-2 laps
10	Pierre Gasly	FRA	Toro Rosso-Honda	-2 laps
11	Esteban Ocon	FRA	Force India-Mercedes	-2 laps
12	Lance Stroll	CAN	Williams-Mercedes	-2 laps
13	Sergey Sirotkin	RUS	Williams-Mercedes	-2 laps
14	Brendon Hartley	NZL	Toro Rosso-Honda	-2 laps
15	Kevin Magnussen	DEN	Haas-Ferrari	-2 laps
16	Romain Grosjean	FRA	Haas-Ferrari	-3 laps
R	Daniel Ricciardo	AUS	Red Bull-Renault	L61/hydraulics
R	Sergio Perez	MEX	Force India-Mercedes	L38/brakes
R	Carlos Sainz	ESP	Renault	L28/electrical
R	Fernando Alonso	ESP	McLaren-Renault	L3/accident

Winner's average speed: 115.599mph Lap leaders: Verstappen 1-13; Vettel 14-17; Verstappen 18-71

FASTEST LAP | BOTTAS 1m18.741s

ON LAP 65 (AVERAGE SPEED: 122.28mph)

QUALIFYING

POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Ricciardo	1m14.759s	11	Ocon	1m16.844s
2	Verstappen	1m14.785s	12	Alonso	1m16.871s
3	Hamilton	1m14.894s	13	Perez	1m17.167s
4	Vettel	1m14.970s	14	Hartley	1m17.184s
5	Bottas	1m15.160s	15	Vandoorne	1m16.966s
6	Raikkonen	1m15.330s	16	Magnussen	1m17.599s
7	Hulkenberg	1m15.827s	17	Stroll	1m17.689s
8	Sainz	1m16.084s	18	Grosjean	1m16.911s*
9	Leclerc	1m16.189s	19	Sirotkin	1m17.886s
10	Ericsson	1m16.513s	20	Gasly**	

* = three-place penalty for causing a collision ** = 20-place combined grid penalties for replacement gearbox and additional power unit elements used



Vandoorne scored for McLaren-Renault

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

DRIVERS

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Lewis Hamilton	358
2	Sebastian Vettel	294
3	Kimi Raikkonen	236
4	Valtteri Bottas	227
5	Max Verstappen	216
6	Daniel Ricciardo	146
7	Nico Hulkenberg	69
8	Sergio Perez	57
9	Kevin Magnussen	53
10	Fernando Alonso	50

CONSTRUCTORS

POS	CONSTRUCTOR	PTS
1	Mercedes	585
2	Ferrari	530
3	Red Bull-TAG Heuer	362
4	Renault	114
5	Haas-Ferrari	84
6	McLaren-Renault	62
7	Racing Point Force India-Mercedes	47
8	Sauber-Ferrari	36
9	Toro Rosso-Honda	33
10	Williams-Mercedes	7

NEXT RACE: BRAZILIAN GRAND PRIX NOVEMBER 11

RACING NEWS

F1 ROUND-UP

Gutierrez return?

Ex-Sauber and Haas driver Esteban Gutierrez is aiming to return to Formula 1 next season with Williams. Gutierrez was dropped by Haas after 2016 and his only race outings since have been sporadic Formula E and IndyCar appearances. However, he has retained a link to F1 by joining Mercedes as a simulator driver and has attended some races with the team. "I am working very hard, I've been preparing a lot this year, I am very motivated," said Gutierrez, who has always benefited from strong financial support from Mexico. "I've been working with Mercedes, a very professional team, actively on the simulator, doing different things, and I am really positive about the future."

Haas' Rich sponsor

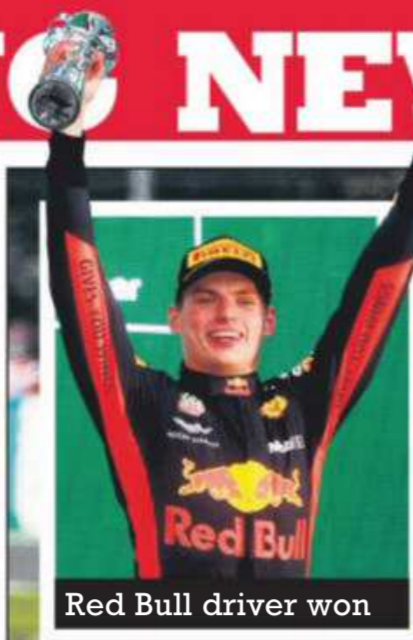
The Haas team has agreed a new title sponsorship deal for 2019 with the Rich Energy company that failed to buy Force India earlier this year. The UK-based energy drinks firm has explored various opportunities to link up with teams, and attempted to buy Force India earlier this year. It later claimed it was still in a position to take over the team when it went into administration, but that door was firmly closed after Force India was saved by a consortium led by Lawrence Stroll. This new deal will prompt a rebranding of Haas's livery, and is the team's first title sponsor since it joined F1 at the beginning of 2016.

Williams pit fine

Williams has been fined €25,000 for "endangering" its pit crew with an unsafe release of Lance Stroll's car during the Mexican Grand Prix. A member of the Williams crew was knocked to the ground when Stroll departed his pit stall after his second pitstop at Mexico City, but escaped uninjured. The stewards ruled the car was "released unsafely" and "in a manner endangering team personnel". Their statement added: "The stewards determined the entire pitstop sequence was complete and that the mechanic being struck was as a result of a minor miscoordination at the conclusion of the pitstop sequence."

Vandoorne unnoticed

Outgoing McLaren driver Stoffel Vandoorne believes other strong performances from him in the second half of the season have gone unnoticed because he didn't score points. The Belgian ended his 14-race points duck by finishing eighth in Mexico last weekend. "I think there have been some really good races a couple of races ago as well but today everybody notices because we are rewarded with points," he said. "[I'm] very happy today with the performance, after lap one we were last and we had to make a great recovery. We had some good overtakes on track, we made the tyres last in the crucial moments, we attacked when we had to attack."



Red Bull driver won

VERSTAPPEN ADMITS TO OVERDRIVING IN 2018

Different approach after early races pays off



Verstappen says he's backed off

By Scott Mitchell

Max Verstappen has admitted he was guilty of overdriving earlier this season and believes backing off has made him a faster Formula 1 driver.

The Mexican Grand Prix winner was involved in a succession of incidents at the start of the year, culminating in crashing out of practice and missing qualifying in Monaco, where Red Bull was dominant.

He reacted badly to suggestions he needed to change his approach but has won twice and scored six other podiums in the 13 races since.

"The difference is I just listen to myself," he said after Sunday's win. "I do my own thing, even if there are a lot of things written, I really don't care."

"My dad always told me in go-karting, back in the day, if I was maybe overdriving or something, he would always tell me, 'Max, even if you think you are not going fast enough, it's still fast enough'."

"So basically, for my feeling, I just



Early races marred by errors

backed it out a little bit and that seems to make me a bit faster."

Verstappen always insisted he did not need to change his driving but has been credited by his team for blending his speed with calm driving and better decision making.

He had even admitted ahead of the Mexican GP that he had spoken to his father Jos earlier this season about how to deal with those "difficult moments".

"I think in the beginning of the season I was always overdriving maybe a little bit," he said in an interview for F1's official YouTube channel.

"I wanted a result too much. So, I just

basically slowed down a bit, which made me faster."

Verstappen's miserable start to the season has morphed into his most successful F1 campaign.

The 21-year-old has two wins and nine podiums, matching his victory tally from last year but with five extra rostrums and two races remaining.

He has also eclipsed his best-ever points tally, from 2016, and is only 11 points behind fourth-placed Mercedes driver Valtteri Bottas in the standings.

Asked how impressive it is that Verstappen has reined himself but still produced such strong performances, Red Bull team boss Christian Horner said: "It's all part of his growth with experience."

"He went through a tough part at the beginning of the year but really since Montreal he's driven some incredible races. That [experience] was the only missing piece."

"All drivers make mistakes, you see that up and down the paddock. It's what you learn from them [that counts]."

Ricciardo slams his 'cursed' car

Daniel Ricciardo was left feeling "helpless" and keen to hand over his "cursed" Red Bull Formula 1 car to Pierre Gasly after another mechanical problem robbed him of a podium in Mexico.

Ricciardo, who will be leaving Red Bull at the end of the year to join Renault and will be replaced by Toro Rosso driver Gasly, retired from the Mexican Grand Prix while fighting off Sebastian Vettel for second place late on.

His exit from the race marked his sixth retirement in the past 11 grands prix.

"I don't think 'frustration' is the word anymore," Ricciardo told TV crews after the race. "Everything feels hopeless."

"Honestly, now where I am, I don't see the point of doing the next two races. I haven't had a clean race or weekend in so long. I'm not superstitious, but... the car's cursed."

Ricciardo started from pole but bogged down at the start, allowing Max Verstappen and Lewis Hamilton through.

He said: "Helpless I think is the best word. Just things are happening on Sunday which I've got no more explanation for. The car... I'll let Gasly drive it, I'm done with it."



Common sight for Ricciardo

Hartley says he's 'not allowed to comment' further on Gasly remark after questioning Toro Rosso claim

Brendon Hartley says he is "not allowed to comment" on a remark he made disputing Toro Rosso's claim that Pierre Gasly's Formula 1 car was damaged in America.

Hartley's F1 career is under threat with ongoing speculation linking Nissan e.dams Formula E driver Alexander Albon to the second Toro Rosso seat.

But he went against the team's

report after the United States GP that Gasly was limited by damage was untrue.

"I feel like I have got stronger all season," said Hartley. "I proved that in Austin [with ninth place], despite what it says in the press releases there was nothing wrong with the other car in the race."

"I know I've been doing a good job and been a big help to the

team in terms of development with Honda and been a team player all season. I hope I'll be there next year."

Gasly and Tost were both quoted in Toro Rosso's post-race press release commenting on damage

Hartley's future is uncertain

to Gasly's floor, a communication that the team stands by.

Asked after qualifying in Mexico on Saturday if he stood by his own remarks or had any new information regarding the situation, Hartley replied: "I'm not allowed to comment on that."

Gasly reiterated his floor was damaged when asked to describe it.

He said the first impact occurred when he ran off-track avoiding the crash between Lance Stroll and Fernando Alonso at the esses on the opening lap and he had "a pretty big jump".

On the comments Hartley made about the Austin damage, Gasly said: "At the moment he says a lot of things. I don't need to comment anything."

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*'Birkett Six
Hour Relay'*
Racing reports, p28



Photos: LAT



McLaren MP4-28
was the car used

2017 MABA WINNER TICKTUM DRIVES McLAREN FORMULA 1 CAR



Ticktum drove at Silverstone

Dan Ticktum experienced his first ever taste of Formula 1 machinery at Silverstone last week, his prize for winning the 2017 McLaren Autosport BRDC Award.

The 19-year-old won four times to finish runner-up in the Formula 3 European Championship this season with the Motopark team, losing out to eventual champion Mick Schumacher.

After an installation lap around the circuit's Grand Prix layout in the 2013 McLaren MP4-

28 layout on intermediate tyres, Ticktum undertook four runs of five flying laps.

He told *Motorsport News*: "Everyone will say it who's done it, but it is impossible to put into words [how driving an F1 car feels]."

"It's been hard work with a lot of ups and downs but to be sat in an F1 car is more than a dream. I feel like I've completed my life almost, I'm just so happy!"

"[The experience] is like taking everything in Euro F3 and then doubling it. All the

techniques to drive it, I've noticed there's quite a lot of similarities, some of which you'd expect.

"But the noise is just incredible and I won't ever forget that - my first time driving an F1 car.

Amelia Lewis, the McLaren graduate engineer who ran the test, added: "We were obviously really impressed with what he was doing, so we wanted to make sure he got the opportunity to do all of the runs. I think everyone in the team is impressed with how he's performed."

QUICK LAPS THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP

Penske's Joey Logano booked his place in the NASCAR Cup title decider by sealing Martinsville victory after a last-corner clash with Martin Truex Jr. Reigning champion Truex passed long-time leader Logano to lead with two laps to go, before Logano elbowed back ahead on the last turn... Naoki Yamamoto claimed his second Super Formula title in the Suzuka season finale, after holding onto victory ahead of pre-event points

leader Nick Cassidy by just 0.654 seconds. Super Formula's new-for-2019 car was demonstrated by ex-Formula 1 drivers Takuma Sato and Kazuki Nakajima prior to the event... **World Touring Car Cup points leader Gabriele Tarquini extended his advantage with victory in the final race at Suzuka, after on-the-road winner Kevin Ceccon picked up a time penalty. Rob Huff, the 2012 World Touring Car**

champion, scored his second win of the season in the reversed grid second race. In race one, Ceccon delivered Alfa Romeo its first race victory in the series... The Ginetta privateer LMP1 team will miss its third straight round of the World Endurance Championship at Shanghai next month. The CEFC TRSM Racing Ginetta-AER G60-LT-P1 has yet to race with the AER engine that replaced the Mecachrome unit after

the car competed at Le Mans in June... **IndyCar driver Robert Wickens has clarified the severity of his injuries in an Instagram post, describing himself as "a paraplegic today". The Schmidt Peterson Motorsports driver suffered extensive injuries in a severe crash at Pocono in August and continues to undergo "specialty rehab for people with spinal cord injury and brain injury".**



New BMW car breaks covers

BMW's DTM 2019 model hits track

BMW has completed the first test miles of its new two-litre turbocharged 'Class One' M4, preceding the DTM's 2019 regulation changes to tie up with Super GT.

The DTM will switch from V8 engines to four-cylinder units next season, although they will not come into effect in Japan's Super GT series until 2020.

It is expected that DTM power outputs will rise by 100bhp to a total of 620bhp, with a top speed in excess of 180mph.

Driven by Bruno Spengler,

who won the DTM title in 2012, the modified M4 made its first appearance at BMW's Dingolfing group plant ahead of pre-season testing next month.

Jens Marquardt, the marque's motorsport director, said: "Our first few kilometres of the Class One era went very positively. We are happy with all the functional tests.

"The new turbo sounds awesome. However, its most impressive attribute is its efficiency - despite being considerably more powerful than its predecessor."

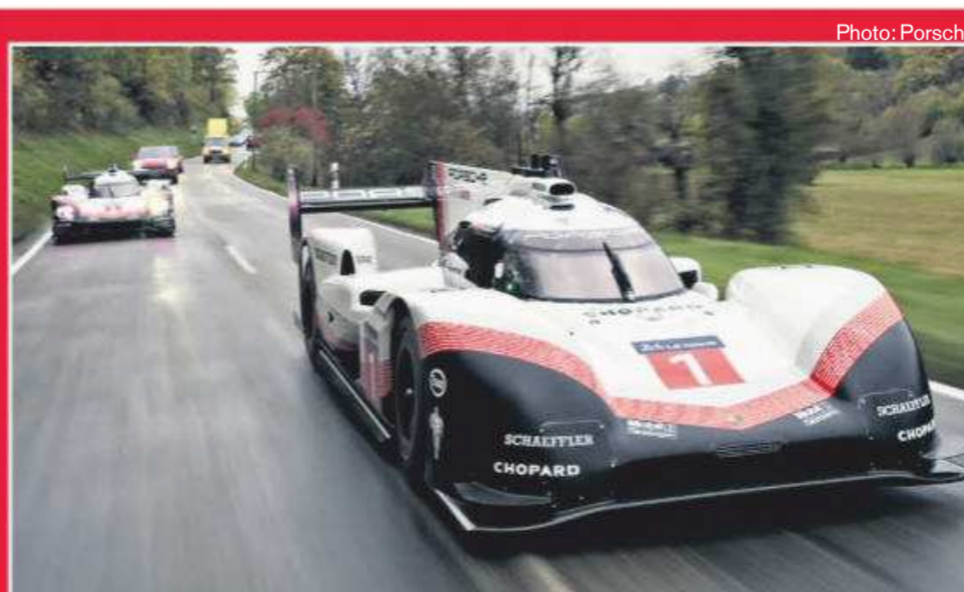


Photo: Porsche

Mark Webber has driven the record-breaking Porsche 919 Hybrid Evo on public roads in Stuttgart ahead of its hand-over to the German manufacturer's museum. Webber and Marc Lieb, who was at the wheel of an LMP1-specification 919 Hybrid, drove the 15km from Porsche's research and development centre in Weissach to the Porsche museum in the Zuffenhausen district of Stuttgart last Thursday morning. The journey was the final leg of a so-called 'Tribute Tour' for the ultra-successful 919 World Endurance Championship contender, which in uprated Evo form lapped faster than a Formula 1 car at Spa and took an unofficial lap record on the Nurburgring Nordschleife.

F1 RACING ASSOCIATE EDITOR

JAMES ROBERTS

"A dose of unpredictability is just as valuable"



It was at Toto Wolff's media briefing on Saturday afternoon where we were invited to "speak up" with our questions for the Mercedes boss.

Unlike most races, the Mexican GP organisers had a DJ playing a very loud dance set in the middle of the paddock. For Mercedes on Saturday, the party hadn't started yet. There was still a job to do and so it was an unnecessary distraction.

This lively area included a free bar, food stall, table football and even a barber's - removing beards but retaining moustaches in aid of the charity foundation 'Movember'.

These paddock initiatives were unheard of in Bernie Ecclestone's era, but their introduction into the sport is a sign of F1's more open and fun vibe. Still, with engineers trying to pour over screens of data, having a thumping soundtrack, would not have helped their concentration.

The packed grandstands makes this GP one of the best of the season. In the past three years, the race has won the FIA's 'Promoter of the Year' award at the prize-giving gala.

Since the race returned to the calendar in 2015, it has consistently set the bar for how a grand prix in the modern era should look and feel. Entry and exit out of the circuit takes you through the giant converted baseball stadium - the Foro Sol - at the final sequence of corners and it's an extraordinary place to watch a sporting event.

While originally bemoaning the loss of the great Peraltada corner, the new tight, twisty section - that also features the podium - is a brilliantly atmospheric amphitheatre which holds 30,000 fans of the 130,000 capacity of the circuit.

But it's not just the work the organisers do, because by a quirk of its locality, the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez brings its own challenges. Situated 2,300 metres above sea level, the track is by far the highest on the calendar, a further 1,500 metres higher than F1's next highest: Interlagos in Brazil.

The altitude means the air is thinner, so teams run higher levels of downforce. There is also less oxygen going into the engine and to create the necessary pressure the turbo has to spin faster, putting increasing demands on the power unit.

That, combined with the slippery and smooth surface meant that Red Bull came to the fore and locked out their first front-row in the turbo-hybrid era (since the start of 2014). Aside from Hamilton's title win, it was great to see Ricciardo on pole and Verstappen take the victory. For all the work the circuit does, F1 needs to understand that a shake-up of the established order and a dose of unpredictability is just as valuable.



AGREE/DISAGREE?
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RACING NEWS

IN BRIEF

Hill calls it quits

Open Sportscar Series racer Graham Hill called time on his 22-year racing career at Donington Park earlier this month, finishing third in class in the opening race. "It was actually a relatively easy decision for us," said Hill, who started his career by hillclimbing a Caterham, before moving to circuit racing with Westfield machinery as well as competing in Formula Ford 2000 and, latterly, Radicals.

Brooks is selected

Ethan Brooks has been selected as next year's Ginetta Junior Scholar. The British Schools Karting champion was chosen from the dozens of applicants after three days of assessments at Blyton Park, featuring driving, fitness and media tests. He will receive a fully-funded season in the series in 2019. This year's Scholar, James Taylor, finished sixth in the standings.

C1 signing

Scottish karter Ryan Smith has become the first driver to sign up for the inaugural season of the Scottish C1 Cup. The 23-year-old from Edinburgh will drive for renowned Mini Cooper outfit Minimax Motorsport, one of the driving forces behind the new-for-2019 championship. Smith said: "This will be my first season racing a car, which is something I've been wanting to do for a while now, so I'm really looking forward to getting out there."

Chosen Parks

Ginetta Junior Ireland racer Rob Parks Jr has been chosen as the final 2018 Motorsport Ireland Young Racing Driver of the Month. The 16-year-old was nominated for September after taking a win and a second place in the series at the Leinster Trophy meeting. He becomes the final contender for the Sexton Trophy award, joining James Roe Jr, William Kellett, Cameron Fenton, Jake Byrne and Charlie Eastwood.

Thompson stays at Team Hard for 2019 BTCC season

Bobby Thompson will remain in the British Touring Car Championship in 2019 with Team Hard in one of its VW CCs.

The 22-year-old, a former VW Cup title winner, graduated to the BTCC this year with Team Hard and he scored a best finish of seventh place in race three at Rockingham. He was also inside the top 10 at Snetterton in the middle of the season. Thompson will join Mike Bushell, who is also remaining with the Kent team.

Thompson said: "After sitting down with [team principal] Tony Gilham and seeing the changes to the cars and the team itself I am 100 per cent certain that we will be in a position to make huge strides up the grid in 2019.

"We showed glimpses of what we are capable of in 2018 but when we sat down to discuss the future we all recognised where we needed to improve to turn those glimpses into regular top 10 performances."



Thompson will remain with Team Hard

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Mick Walker



Barwell will run upgraded Huracan Evo next season

MINSHAW EXITS BRITISH GT AS BARWELL GETS NEW LAMBOS

Runner-up to focus on new challenges, while Cocker/De Haan remain

By Stephen Lickorish

British GT runner-up Jon Minshaw is the latest front-running driver to reveal they won't be contesting a full season in the series next year, as Barwell has unveiled its first pairing for 2019.

Minshaw, 55, has finished second in the standings, alongside Phil Keen driving a Barwell Lamborghini Huracan, in each of the past three seasons. He's taken a total of 13 wins in the series.

Minshaw will depart



It is understood he has other commitments for 2019 and will contest a select few international events, and could make the odd

British GT appearance.

Minshaw joins 2018 champion Flick Haigh, '16 title winner Derek Johnston and '17 victor Rick Parfitt Jr in ruling out a full campaign next season.

A new driver will be announced soon and is expected to partner recently-unveiled Lamborghini factory racer Phil Keen.

The team has announced that 2004 British GT

champion Jonny Cocker and Sam De Haan will continue with the squad as Barwell takes delivery of upgraded Huracan Evos for next season as part of a new three-year deal with the Italian manufacturer. The pair finished eighth in the standings this year.

Team boss Mark Lemmer said: "We are thrilled to announce the continuation of our highly successful partnership with Lamborghini with the new Huracan GT3 Evo. The Evo is exactly that, a natural evolution of what has already proved to be a fantastic car. We are privileged to welcome back Sam and Jonny and we can't wait to reveal an exciting driver

for British GT in the coming weeks."

The team has also unveiled some of its drivers for the Blancpain GT Series Endurance Cup next year. Am Cup champions Leo Machitski and Adrian Amstutz will return in one Huracan, while Scot Sandy Mitchell will be back in another.

● TF Sport has confirmed Alex Toth-Jones as its first driver as the team returns to the GT4 category of British GT. As well as running the new GT3 Aston Martin Vantage, TF Sport also plans to run two of the new GT4 model as well. Toth-Jones joins the team after finishing fifth in the Ginetta GT5 Challenge this term.

Ginetta Junior champion Smalley has first run in a G55 with Elite team

Ginetta Junior champion Adam Smalley has tested a G55 for the first time recently ahead of a possible move into the GT4 Supercup next year.

The 17-year-old claimed the Junior crown by eight points from team-mate Louis Foster this year in his second season of racing.

He has now tested a G55 at Donington Park with the Elite Motorsport squad that powered him to the Junior title.

"In karting I had driven on slick

tyres but it was nothing like that, the grip level was unbelievable and the power was amazing," said Smalley of his first outing in the car. "It was really good. That's the way we're looking at going but it's all down to budget. It's still on the touring car package with ITV4 coverage and that's attractive for sponsors."

Smalley says he would like to remain with the Elite team next year having also won last season's Winter Series with the outfit.

"They've [Elite] done a fantastic

job for me this year – they won the teams' championship, took a 1-2 in the drivers' championship and I only had one mechanical failure all year," he added.

"Ed's [Ives, team boss] done a fantastic job – he rocked up three years ago with one car and now he's won the championship. I get on with everyone really well so it would be a shame to leave them."

Elite made its GT4 debut this term with Harry King, who finished third in the standings.



Smalley targeting GT4 Supercup move for 2019

BRSCC defends its involvement in organising controversial new female-only W Series

The British Racing and Sports Car Club has defended its role as the organising club for the controversial new W Series.

The new international single-seater championship, which is aimed at helping females reach Formula 1, approached

the BRSCC about the role.

The series will hold six rounds in support of the DTM next year with a prize pot totalling \$1.5million available, including \$500,000 for the overall winner.

"It's new and ground breaking but it has caused a

lot of controversy and discussion," said Dominic Ostrowski, BRSCC competitions director. "I can see both sides but anything that creates more opportunity has to be a good thing.

"There will be 20 or so

women that come through this and that's got to be a good thing, it gives them more opportunity to experience a high-profile race meeting. I think it's got to increase the chances of women getting to the higher levels of the sport."



BRSCC is the organising club



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Ginetta winner stays with Richardson

Browning graduates to British F4 for 2019

Ginetta Junior title contender Luke Browning will graduate to British Formula 4 next season.

The 16-year-old will remain with the Richardson Racing team that he has competed with in Ginettas for the past two campaigns. He finished third in the standings this year, taking eight wins.

"The fact that I'm able to remain with the team has been a key factor in this deal because we have developed a really good working relationship over the past two seasons," said Browning. "They have helped to mould me into the driver I am and we know how each other works, so there is no-one else I would want to graduate with."

"Running in a single-seater is going to be totally different to anything I've done before, but the team has good experience of the car and we have a good testing programme to help me get up to speed."

Richardson didn't compete in British F4 this term, having previously run Harry Webb in the series in 2017.



Geraghty won in finale comeback

Scottish Mini champion Geraghty plans return

Last year's Scottish Mini Cooper Cup champion Mark Geraghty will make a full-time return to the series in 2019.

The Perthshire driver took a year out of the championship this season to race in the 750 Motor Club's Club Enduro as well as an outing in the C1 Challenge at Croft.

Geraghty has now bought back his championship-winning Mini Cooper, run by Andrew Lamont Motorsport, ahead of a full-season assault in 2019.

"Having tried a few different championships and cars this year, I personally feel there is no match to the adrenaline-packed Scottish Mini Cooper Cup for the budget," Geraghty said.

Geraghty won the Mini title in his first year of racing before selling his car. He made sporadic appearances in the Hot Hatch and Fiesta championship this year before making a winning return to the Mini Coopers at the season-finale earlier this month.

While Geraghty will rejoin the series, four-time race winner Hannah Chapman will graduate to the Mini Challenge Cooper Pro series for 2019. The 25-year-old will drive the car in which fellow Scot Kyle Reid took 12 out of 17 race wins en route to the title this year. "I feel like I've done my time at Knockhill and want to see how I do on other circuits," Chapman said. "Filling Kyle's shoes will be tough."



Planning issue caused delays

LAKE TORRENT FUTURE UNCLEAR AS DEVELOPER HITS CASH WOES

The future of the proposed £29million Lake Torrent circuit in Northern Ireland has been thrown into major doubt after the developer behind the project went into receivership last week.

It was planned for the new track to be completed by the end of 2019 and initial groundwork on the circuit, situated 40 minutes from Belfast, was carried out last year but progress then began to stall.

The delays were caused by a planning issue – surrounding whether or not there are old mineshafts on the former quarry site.

Matters came to a head last week

when backers of the project refused to provide promised funds until the planning issue is resolved, leading to Manna Developments – the firm behind the circuit – entering receivership.

In a statement, Manna said: "Whilst this is a disappointing development, it has not come as a surprise. Funding remains in place to deliver Lake Torrent but, as is the case with any loan, there are conditions which relate to the release of funds."

"Unfortunately the challenges in resolving one particular planning issue have been such that it hasn't been possible to fulfil the relevant conditions. Our funding partner is

aware of the status of the planning, but remains committed to making the funds available.

"The MP for the area is entirely aware of the planning condition, which has caused such delay, and has been working diligently to try and bring a resolution for the benefit of Manna Developments, Lake Torrent and the people of Northern Ireland, not least those in his constituency. Like us, he is hopeful that matters can be resolved quickly."

"Everyone needs to work together to seize this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to really further enhance Northern Ireland's reputation on the

global motorsport stage."

Ben Willshire, managing director of Driven International – the firm that designed the circuit's layout – added: "On our side we were waiting for an update from Manna Developments."

"We've prepared all the drawings for the FIA and FIM but weren't actively working on the project and were waiting on the next steps."

"We've done all we can to help and it's a shame because I think the project has got huge potential."

The circuit had signed a three-year contract to host a round of World Superbikes, but the series will instead visit Donington Park next year.



New Clio is set to be introduced in 2020

Development work is underway on the new fifth-generation Clio Cup car

Development work is underway on the new Renault UK Clio Cup car that is set to be introduced in 2020.

The current 220 Trophy Clio has been used in the UK since 2014 and has provided some of the closest title battles in the championship's history.

No specific details have yet been revealed about the new car but Renault Sport Racing sporting manager Tarik Ait Said says there won't be a sudden reduction in lap times with the fifth-generation machine.

"Development is underway but we are

not looking for outright performance," he told MN. "We are going to try and take all the feedback we have from the teams now to try and make the car."

"One reason for the success of the Clio Cup is cost control and we have to make sure the car is affordable for everyone. We see the paddock is growing with bigger teams but at the same time we have to be careful it doesn't turn into a very expensive category."

"In France we have some drivers who could race in GT3 but they don't want to go quicker and feel this [Clio

Cup] is the right thing for them. Part of our customers are these people."

"One thing we heard from the Clio 3 to the Clio 4 was the Clio 4 [current car] was quite a big step forward with the paddleshift and for a lot of customers it was too complicated for them. We want to make it simple for teams and customers."

Ait Said also paid tribute to the quality of the racing the current car has produced in the UK.

"I think the Clio Cup races in the UK are probably the craziest [of all the series] and it's so competitive," he added.

Max5 organisers hope for a boost to entries next year with more Mk4 MX-5s in build

Organisers of the Mazda Max5 championship are hoping to raise its profile next year after the 2018 series ended with 11 starters at Brands Hatch last weekend.

Co-ordinator of the British Automobile Racing Club-run championship, Jon Halliwell, says three Mk4 cars were almost complete in preparation for the

new season, work was ongoing with new sponsors, and all involved were trying to draw in competitors from rival Mazda series. A new tyre deal will also likely mean the appointment of a single supplier.

"Ours was the original championship, but the 2006 breakaway movement had a huge impact on our grids,"

said Halliwell. "We have been tempted to join the others but have always decided to dig our heels in."

Halliwell, an electrician when he's not racing, was himself a class champion in 2017, but a serious injury at work almost a year ago has kept him off the track for the whole of 2018. He still faces further surgery but

plans to return.

He added: "I was out of the picture for some months and the championship has partially suffered for it, but we have lots of good things happening for 2019."

Unlike other Mazda MX-5 categories, the Max5 series is open to all of the first four generations of the model.



The British Automobile Racing Club series had 11 cars in Brands finale

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RACING NEWS

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Ian Hoggood, Gary Hawkins

JACKSON DECIDES AGAINST HAYES ENTRY

Historic champion to focus on 2019, as Moyers heads field



Jackson not racing



Entry of 100 is expected

Newly-crowned Historic Formula Ford 1600 champion Cameron Jackson has decided against competing in the Walter Hayes Trophy this weekend after a recent test.

Jackson had planned to contest the Silverstone event in a Speedsport-run Van Diemen RF07 alongside fellow Historic Ford racer Ed Thurston, but has now decided to focus on developing the car for next year.

"We had a bit of a testing programme, had issues along the way, so we've not really been able to develop the car," he said. "Myself and Mike [O'Brien, Speedsport boss] made the decision not to do it. We

don't want to just make up the numbers, we want to prove we can get right on the pace.

"A couple of things went wrong, we had some engine issues, we ran out of time to get the car on the button. Last year, we did it and had some issues and struggled for pace, I don't want to be in that position again. Those guys are running around in those cars all year and the teams are well versed, they have their set-ups and data and we're starting from zero.

"I think the intention is to keep developing the car, race it a few times next year to prove its pace ahead of next year's festival-type

events at Brands and Silverstone."

This year's entry list is headed by 2017 winner Michael Moyers in his Kevin Mills-run Spectrum 011C. Moyers did not contest the Brands Hatch Festival a fortnight ago but will return to action at the Hayes after a partial season in the National Championship this year.

Other possible frontrunners who didn't contest the Festival, but will be back for the Hayes, include Castle Combe champions Josh Fisher (Van Diemen JL14) and Roger Orgee (Spectrum 011C).

Festival winner Josh Smith will be looking to add to his success, while

runner-up and National champion Niall Murray is not participating.

Other drivers to watch include three-time Hayes winner Joey Foster, along with past podium finishers Stuart Gough and Oliver White.

Scottish champion Ross Martin and 2016 Festival podium finisher Chris Middlehurst are both late entries for the Hayes and have yet to be assigned a heat.

Event organiser James Beckett says he's "very pleased" with the numbers for this year's event and expects the final total entry to top 100 cars, with it standing in the late 90s as MN closed for press.

HEAT DRAW

Heat 1

Josh Fisher
Van Diemen JL14
Michael Eastwell
Spectrum 011C
Richard Taring
Jamun M92
Rick Morris Royale RP29

Heat 2

Matt Cowley
Van Diemen JL013
Luke Cooper Swift SC16
Jordan Dempsey
Spectrum 011C
James Clarke Ray GR18

Heat 3

Carter Williams
Ray GR10
Julian Van Der Watt
Spectrum SC11
John Svensson
Van Diemen JL12K
Tom McArthur
Van Diemen LA10

Heat 4

Michael Moyers
Spectrum 011C
Ivor McCullough
Van Diemen RF00
Stuart Gough
Van Diemen JL16
Andrew Schofield TBA

Heat 5

Joey Foster Firman
Rory Smith Medina JL18
Jake Craig Ray GR18
Mike Gardner TBA

Heat 6

Oliver White Medina JL17
Josh Smith
Van Diemen JL13
Colin Mullan Ray GR11
Roger Orgee
Spectrum 011C

New prototype series to launch

The UK Sports Prototype Cup, which is launching in 2019, will have a class dedicated to the new Revolution car.

Due to be unveiled this week, the 3.7-litre Ford V6-engined machine has been created by Radical Sportscars co-founder Phil Abbott and will race in the newly-created Revolution UK Trophy.

The British Automobile Racing Club-run series will hold races alongside Britcar at Brands Hatch, Silverstone, Donington Park, Oulton Park and Snetterton, with a race at Portimao in support of the European Le Mans Series.

"Rather than trying to balance the performance of a variety of different cars, any class of more than eight cars will be promoted as its own event with the Cup," said James Bailey, motorsport agency and director at Pitbox91, the series promoter.

"The Cup will be launched with two such categories, The Revolution UK Trophy and the Trophy for Radical SR3 cars."



Karting slalom course was tackled at Silverstone

D2BD 'Girls on Track' event at Silverstone

Susie Wolff's Dare to be Different initiative hosted the UK round of "The Girls on Track" karting challenge at Silverstone last Sunday.

Created by the FIA Women in Motorsport Commission, The Girls on Track gives girls between the ages of 13 and 18 the opportunity to compete for free in a kart slalom contest, with the best drivers going through to a European final at Le Mans in 2019.

Over 100 girls attended the Silverstone event and 20 were put through to the next round. They were a mix of complete newcomers who had never sat in a kart before, girls who had done a little bit of karting and experienced racers,

such as Ginetta GT5 Challenge driver Katie Milner.

Former cadet karter Brooke Childs, 15, was one of the selected drivers.

"I didn't know what to expect from it. I was a bit apprehensive before I did it, but I'm really happy I've done it," she said.

"I think it's a good opportunity for all the girls to be getting back into sport."

As well as the karting challenge, groups of the girls got to experience changing a Formula 1 wheel, science and engineering challenges, a road safety task and talks with female employees of the NIO Formula E team, Prodrive and Renault.



Super Touring has struggled for entries

New club set to gain first championships

The British Automobile Racing Club-run Modified Saloons and Tin Tops, which have been a familiar feature on mainly south eastern circuits in recent years, look set to switch to the Classic and Modern Motorsport Club for the 2019 season.

Competing drivers had a meeting at Brands Hatch to discuss the change, which would take them under the wing of the organisation set up by Classic Sports Car Club co-founder

Richard Culverhouse.

While Tin Tops retains healthy grids, Modified Saloons has dwindled this year into single figures. With the Intermarque series also set for a change, the moves reflect the decline of BARC's South Eastern region as a race-organising body.

Regular Modified Saloons frontrunner Malcolm Wise commented: "I don't get involved in the politics, but I'll wait and see what's on offer."



Modified Saloons could join Classic and Modern Motorsport Club

Dunlop relaunches a bespoke Super Touring tyre

Dunlop has relunched its Super Touring tyre, with the aim of boosting grid sizes in historic racing.

During the late 1990s, the British Touring Car Championship housed a four-way tyre war between Dunlop, Pirelli, Michelin and Yokohama.

After being tested by two-time BTCC champion John Cleland and prolific Historic Sports Car Club Super Touring Car Trophy racer James Dodd, Dunlop has reintroduced a similar-specification into production.

To reduce costs for competitors, the new tyre will be more durable than its 1990s counterpart but produces similar grip. It follows demand from competitors, and will also be constructed using the same compound as the current BTCC tyres, which Dunlop also builds.

Size restrictions meant Hoosier

supplied the HSCC grid which has struggled to consistently attract more than 11 entries outside of headline events such as the Silverstone Classic.

Dunlop Motorsport's Michael Butler, who offered tyre support to Super Touring teams in period, said: "Cars that are this advanced need a bespoke tyre."

"In the nineties, there were no limits on tyre development. We had qualifying tyres, specifications for sprint and endurance races and different tyres to suit each manufacturer. Modern day historic racing teams do not need this complexity. We've used the latest materials to replicate the performance of that 'tyre war' era but with the durability and consistency that's important for a season on a sustainable budget."



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HISTORICS

"Tucker ended with a podium finish"
Mustang man's joy, below



Photos: Paul Lawrence

DOWN THE WORKSHOP

1913 CHALMERS

Current owner: Andy Lloyd

It is pretty unusual

"It is a four-cylinder, five-litre, 36hp car from Detroit. Hugh Chalmers was the man behind NCR, National Cash Registers, and made a lot of money in the 1890s. The new technology was automobiles, so he bought a company called Thomas-Detroit and the engine in this is derived from a Thomas design."

There are not many left

"The Chalmers was a mid-range car and they got a reputation for building good solid cars. In 1908, he invested six million dollars, which was a lot of money, and built a million square foot factory. Everything was done in-house and they probably built 70,000 to 80,000. There are only about 40 left and the ones that are left were put away and forgotten."

It came to the UK

"This was found by a chap from Nottingham and brought into the UK in the 1990s. He used it as a roadster and I bought it six years ago as a chassis, two axles and an engine, to build for VSCC speed events."

It is also a road car

"I found pictures of original racing Chalmers in 1909 and 1910 and it's the greatest thing I've ever driven. It is just fantastic and I've been competing with the VSCC for six years. But I also drive it on the road and I've done over 3000 miles this year. We did a lap of the Lake District in it!"

There are no front brakes

"It's got brakes on the back, the handbrake is a drum, the footbrake is a band and I can lock the wheels up virtually anywhere. There are no brakes on the front and we don't have shock absorbers. There is a great big back axle like something off a lorry and it has a four-speed crash gearbox, which was very advanced at the time."

Maximum speed is 53mph

"There is a wooden steering wheel with controls for ignition and mixture. The engine doesn't have any oil pressure, it just runs on splash. It revs to about 2000 maximum and 53mph is about flat out. I only sold my ex-Dick Johnson Group A Sierra RS500 touring car a year ago and I have no regrets. I raced it for two years and went to some of the best events and then it gave me a pension."



Fancy 53mph in this...?

ROBINSON HEADS FOR SILVER FERN ASSAULT

British ace to make the trip to New Zealand for epic event



Robinson will head to New Zealand to rally

By Paul Lawrence

Leading British historic rally contenders Matthew Robinson and co-driver Sam Collis are mounting a serious assault on the Silver Fern Rally in New Zealand next month.

The eight-day event covers 830 stage miles in a total route of 2200 miles and finishes with the famous 28-mile Motu Road

stage. The rally starts in Hamilton on November 24.

The two leading characters from the BHRC are tackling the marathon event for the second time, but this year will revert to a Ford Escort Mk2. On the last Silver Fern, in 2016, they ran a Fiat 131 but have now hired an Escort from Grant Shand's Rally Xtreme operation.

"There's probably nobody better for the event," said

Robinson. "It is a lot easier, as taking your own car can take up a lot of your time."

Shand has extensive experience of the event, both as a competitor and a car preparer.

"It's like my biennial holiday," said Robinson who will be partnered by regular co-driver Collis. "We can just about control him for a week or two. We've just got to go

and see what we can do.

"Competing on North Island will be a new adventure for us, and they say it is a lot tighter and so it might suit us a bit better. We went to South Island last time and it was like Whacky Races, just flat out. You just have to tick every stage off, one by one, and see how far you can get. We'd love to do well but first we'd love to finish."



No Yorkshire for R.A.C.

Officialdom scuppers R.A.C. Rally plans to return to Yorkshire

The Yorkshire forests will not figure in the route for the 2019 Roger Albert Clark Rally.

The organisers had hoped to take the rally back into Yorkshire during the Saturday leg of the November 21-25 rally, but the

regional Forestry Commission has rejected the request on the grounds that the event is too close to the Malton Stages.

Rally manager Colin Heppenstall had planned two options for Saturday. He will now run a leg

from Carlisle covering up to 100 stage miles across Kielder in a tough 12-hour day. Crews will travel to Carlisle on Friday after 60 stage miles in Wales. "We must accept the decision of the forestry authority," said Heppenstall.

Special Saloon ace Dickinson passes away

Motorsport News is sad to report the death of Tony Dickinson, one of the leading Special Saloons racers of a generation.

Dickinson, from Boston in Lincolnshire, died recently aged 71 and is best remembered for racing incredibly quick Skoda Special Saloons built on sports-racing car chassis.

With the support of the family

garage business, Dickinson's first success was in 1970 in an 850cc Mini and he progressed through Sunbeam Stiletto and Ford Escorts, taking a class title with an ex-Broadspeed Escort in 1976.

However, the greatest success for this popular racer was in Skodas and he took four Wendy Woods class titles on the trot from 1979 to 1982.

VSCC ready to return to Brands Hatch

The Vintage Sports-Car Club will run a race meeting at Brands Hatch next season as vintage racing returns to the Kent track after a long gap.

The VSCC race calendar, branded as Formula Vintage, will cover five events as well as an Endurance Race at Snetterton at the end of the season.

The Brands Hatch date on Bank

Holiday Sunday (August 25) replaces the popular Mallory Park race meeting, which has traditionally hosted the annual Edwardian Race.

The VSCC racing season starts with a two-day Silverstone meeting (April 13/14) and takes in Oulton Park, Donington Park and Cadwell Park in May, June and July.

Precious aero-engined Edwardian machines to tackle Goodwood

Mighty 100-year aero-engined cars from the Edwardian era will again star at Goodwood during the 77th Members' Meeting on April 6/7.

Following the success of the inaugural SF Edge Trophy race at the 2017

event, the amazing cars will be back next spring.

The race builds on the Edwardian racing movement pioneered by the Vintage Sports-Car Club and the pre-1918 cut-off will ensure that all the cars on the grid will be at least 100 years old.

"The skinny tyres and solid rear axles make the cars want to oversteer," said Matt Hearn, Goodwood's Motorsport event content manager. "It is quite possibly one of the most unfamiliar-but-exciting spectacles of the weekend."



Monsters for Goodwood

IN BRIEF

Smith's honours

Rob Smith has been confirmed as winner of the Over 50s challenge within this year's Historic Formula Ford Championship. The Merlyn Mk20 racer had a fine season to fend off the advances of Brian Morris (Lola T200) and Tim Brise (Merlyn Mk20). In the Silverstone Finals weekend, half of the drivers on the 30-car grid qualified for the over 50s award.

Tucker's luck

After a trying season in his Shelby Mustang GT350, Historic Road Sports racer Larry Tucker ended the year with a podium in the final race at Silverstone. The Mustang runs in a livery that pays tribute to Mark Donohue's 1965 car. "We've had a lot of problems with it, but it went well at Silverstone," said Tucker. "That's my first podium in five years."

R.A.C. interest

Competitor response to the 2019 Roger Albert Clark Rally has been strong and 95 deposits have now been placed. "To have over 90 deposits over a year ahead of the event is remarkable," said rally manager Colin Heppenstall. "Importantly, the great majority of those entries are from crews that we know and so the potential for drop out is relatively low."

Hutchison's swap

Reliant Scimitar racer John Hutchison plans to make his single-seater debut next season in a Formula Junior Envoy. Hutchison acquired the car from Germany five years ago and has now completed a rebuild. "It went to Germany in 1980 for a rebuild but it never got done," said Hutchison, the race competitions secretary of the MG Car Club. His father, also John, races a Lotus 18 in Formula Junior.

Silver Fern entry

Matthew Robinson and Sam Collis (see lead story) are among nine UK crews contesting the New Zealand Silver Fern Rally. Welsh crew Meirion Evans and Iestyn Williams are heading back to defend their 2016 victory, while Roger Chilman and Max Freeman will tackle the event for the first time. Phil Squires, Andrew Siddall, Barry Jordan, Ken Davies, John Midgley and Simon Tysoe are all entered.

Museum discount

Ahead of its closure on November 5, admission prices to the Donington Collection have been cut in half and adult admission is now only £6. Following the announcement of its closure, the collection has been very busy recently, although some of the loaned cars have already been removed. The Donington Collection principals have thanked visitors for their interest over the past 45 years.

Star cars

Two famous single-seaters will grace the HSCC Open Wheel grid on Saturday at the Walter Hayes Trophy meeting at Silverstone. The ex-Martin Brundle F3 Ralt RT3 of David Turnbull and the ex-Niki Lauda F2 March 722 of Australian-based Stephen Weller will be in action. However, Stephen Worrad's Formula Atlantic Chevron B49 could be quickest of all the entries.

RALLY NEWS

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com, LAT

M-SPORT TARGETS LOEB

Wilson targets Ogier replacement for 2019



Frenchman turned down M-Sport in '05 for Kronos

By David Evans

M-Sport Ford World Rally Team principal Malcolm Wilson will talk to Sebastien Loeb in an effort to finally bring the nine-time World Rally champion to his British team.

Loeb's future remains unclear after Peugeot's decision to withdraw from World Rallycross – a decision Loeb says he had no idea was coming.

While Loeb won't commit to a full programme of rallies next season, the Frenchman is understood to be keen to talk about the potential for selected events.

PSA Group CEO Carlos Tavares was quick to point out to *Motorsport News* that Loeb remained under contract with Peugeot-Citroen, but Wilson said he would be making

contact to talk to Loeb once again. Loeb confirmed to *MN* that he will be happy to talk to the Briton about next season (*see sidebar*).

Loeb's countryman Sebastien Ogier will depart M-Sport at the end of the year, having helped the British squad dominate the WRC with both titles last season.

Currently, Wilson has no replacement for Ogier – but said Loeb would be the perfect man.

"I've always been a big fan of him and what he can do," Wilson said. "We've seen that pace and potential on the three rallies he's done again this year. It would be ridiculous not to talk about what could be possible now. Who knows what can happen, but I would be very, very interested in him coming back to our place and having a run in the car."

Wilson is also willing to take Loeb

on a part-programme. "I understand his reasons why he might not want to do the whole year," he said, "but I have no doubt we could make this work for him as well as for us."

Loeb tested an M-Sport Ford Focus RS WRC in Greystoke in 2005 with the possibility of joining the team in 2006 when Citroen was taking a sabbatical from the WRC. "It was fantastic to see him in the car at that time, said Wilson. "We knew what he wanted and we knew we were going to find the money to do it. But in the end he wanted to stay with Citroen – I think by then he knew that 2006 would be an interim year and they made a commitment for a longer-term with the new car for 2007. He was a French driver in a French car with a French team."



Loeb and Wilson discussed WRC deal in 2005



Rallycross programme ends

What could be next for Sebastien Loeb?

Peugeot's decision to withdraw from World Rallycross might have moved Sebastien Loeb closer to a World Rally Championship return.

Undoubtedly Citroen will work harder than ever to secure a third C3 WRC (*rally news, page 15*) to ensure a potential berth is open to Loeb alongside confirmed drivers Sebastien Ogier and Esapekka Lappi.

Should that not happen or should the nine-time champion fancy a change, a seat in a Ford Fiesta WRC is available.

There's always been huge respect between Loeb and M-Sport team principal Malcolm Wilson and, having never driven for any other manufacturer other than Citroen in the WRC, Loeb has admitted in the past that he would be curious to see what life is like outside of Versailles.

Asked about his future, he said: "It was a nice feeling to fight again and to win and maybe this does give me more desire to come back next year – this is where I feel better, rallying is my discipline. But in another way, I know why I retired – it's a lot of time and involvement. Will I come back full-time? No, it's not what I want. Will I come back for some rallies? Maybe, but even that is complicated."

Asked if taking Peugeot's 208 WRX cars in-house with Sebastien Loeb Racing was an option, he told *MN*: "That's one of the options we're thinking about."



Sordo's set for new deal

Hyundai set to tie-up third driver deal with Sordo's part-programme this week

Dani Sordo will be confirmed as a Hyundai driver for another part-programme in next year's World Rally Championship this week.

The Spaniard's deal has been expected for some time and *Motorsport News* understands it was only held up by the absence of a calendar for him and the team

to decide which seven rallies he will contest.

Asked earlier this week about Sordo's progress this season, team principal Michel Nandan told *MN*: "Dani's had one of his best years, maybe even his best. He has been really strong and fast all of the time. He's as motivated as he's ever been."

Now in his 14th season as a professional

WRC driver, the 35-year-old has scored two podiums from seven starts and was in the mix and running second on his home round of the series, Rally of Spain last weekend.

Sordo's deal will tie up the third of a four-driver team, with Hayden Paddon widely expected to be confirmed for the other half season in an i20 Coupe WRC next year.

NO SURPRISE WHO GETS MN'S RALLY SPAIN STAR DRIVER AWARD

PAGE 23



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**"I am still right
in the title hunt"**
Neuville's prediction, p16



Breen is on Citroën's radar

CITROËN EYES A THIRD ENTRY FOR WRC NEXT SEASON

Citroën will go in search of its first manufacturers' championship crown since 2012 next season – with the squad currently negotiating to run a third C3 WRC in 2019.

When Citroën confirmed Sébastien Ogier and Esapekka Lappi, the French firm suggested there would be no third car. Citroën CEO Linda Jackson has confirmed to *MN* that policy has changed. "We are currently in discussion with our partners

about a possible third car," Jackson told *MN*. "We're looking at it. The car has proved itself and the combination of the car and the new drivers are going to give us success.

"We think we can win the championship. Let's be honest, you wouldn't take one of the best drivers and not want to win, we want to win – you don't go into this if you don't want to win."

Loeb had committed his future to the World Rallycross Championship with Citroën's

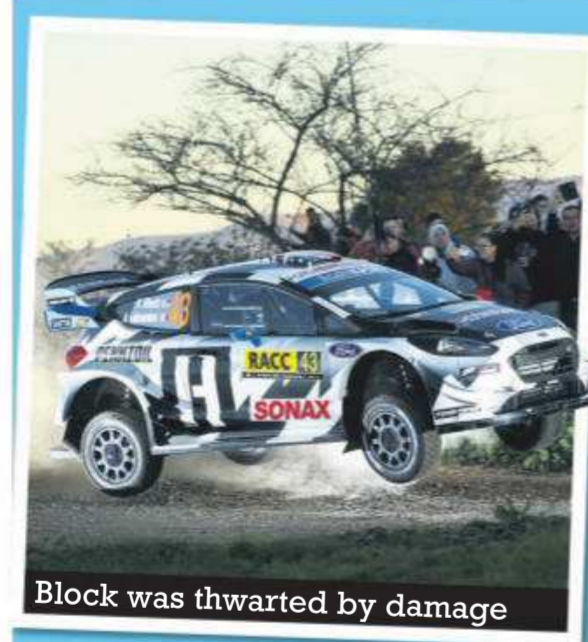
PSA sister brand Peugeot, but when the team pulled out of WRX earlier this month, Loeb was left with nothing.

Jackson said: "Sébastien is part of the PSA family and obviously lots of discussions are being had with Sébastien. I can't really comment, that would be unfair to talk about what he does or doesn't want to do. He's part of the family and I'm sure there will be something that Sébastien wants to do and that will help us. There's lots on the table

and we wait for Sébastien to give us his choice."

Asked about Breen and his chances of retaining a Citroën seat into the new year, Jackson added: "Craig is looking at his future and I'm sure there will be something coming out for Craig. Craig is doing a fantastic job for us and if there is a third car, he'll be in the mix for that."

Jackson also confirmed Citroën's commitment to the WRC for the next two seasons – the duration of Ogier's contract.



Block was thwarted by damage

Block looking to expand his programme with more rallies

Ken Block is expected to be back in a rally car more regularly next season, with the American star planning further events around the world.

Block returned to the World Rally Championship for the first time in four years in Spain last week, but his outing was shorter than planned after his car suffered mechanical damage following a crash on Friday's final stage, prohibiting a return for the weekend's asphalt action. Block told *MN* he was

delighted to be back, saying: "I'm just fortunate to get the chance to drive this car on these events. How many drivers get the chance to go back to Formula 1 and compete at that level, that's what I'm doing here. It's been tough: I've been out of the car for a long time and two days testing to drive a car like this isn't really enough."

Talking about his future plans, Block added: "I want to do more next year. Nothing's decided, but it would be great to do some events at home and

in places like New Zealand. And, of course, it would be great to drive this car again."

Hoonigan Racing team manager Derek Dauncey added: "It's a big ask for Ken to come and jump into one of these cars. The boys at the front are in them every week, but this was a pretty steep learning curve for Ken."

MN understands Block's team is building a Ford Escort RS Cosworth to replace the Group A version he lost in a fire at the New England Forest Rally in July.

Volkswagen bosses pleased with debut outing for new R5 Polo

Volkswagen Motorsport will look to enter a selection of rallies to continue the development of its Polo GTI R5 next season.

The world's latest R5 car made an immediate impression at last week's Rally of Spain with both Petter Solberg and Eric Camilli setting fastest times – the cars ran first and second mid-way through the opening day. Only Camilli's car suffered any mechanical issues when a selector rod on the gear-box broke on Saturday, while he was leading WRC2. Solberg went on to finish third in the class behind factory Skoda drivers Kalle Rovanperä and Jan Kopecký. Motorsport director Sven

Smeets said he was happy with the performance and now looks forward to going away to find more pace.

Smeets told *Motorsport News*: "We are very, very happy with the first event. We have learned so much more than we would on a test and that's what we were here for. We have a list of places where we know we can get quicker. We faced a steep learning curve on gravel and especially on Tarmac in the rain – Petter had never tested the car in these conditions and we don't have so much experience. "We've made changes to the car where we wouldn't have in competition. Petter wanted to

make changes to find out how the car would react so we could learn more than in the test – on the test you quickly learn the road and then you set the car up for that one road. Here it's a compromise, but we learned a lot. We had a small problem, but the selector rod's a standard part and something we can easily sort."

Smeets said no decision had been made on a possible next outing for the factory's test car.

"It won't be this year and it won't be Monte Carlo," said Smeets. "We have customers going to Sweden so there's no point in us going there and, for sure, we won't go to the overseas events [outside Europe].



The new VW R5 was rapid

We might go to some European events, maybe we'll do Ypres or Barum or something."

He confirmed he wanted to continue to work with Camilli and Solberg in the test programme, with both drivers potentially returning to competition in the car.

GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

DAVID EVANS

"Toyota was banned from the WRC..."



There was so much to talk about in Spain. There was the championship fight, the return of the legends (including Volkswagen), tyres, weather, Barcelona's frustrating one-way systems, old cars and bull fighting.

And it's to yesterday to which I turn. Yesterday being 1995, via lunch with legendary Belgian journalist Michel Lizin, who introduced me to Maurice Guaslard, team manager at Toyota Team Europe between 1990 and 1995.

Rewind 23 years and head north back up the coast to Lloret de Mar. Press record, sit back, listen and marvel at every team manager's biggest nightmare, the one where the world's biggest car maker is caught cheating and knows full well it will be thrown out of the World Rally Championship.

Juha Kankkunen, a driver not known for his love of, or pace on asphalt, was rocketing away with the 1995 Catalunya Rally in his Toyota Celica GT-Four. Then, on the Capafons stage, he crashed. And the scrutineers decided to take a peak at the bent and broken #2 ST205.

"Even now," smiled Guaslard thinly, "it's still a very sensitive subject. Too many people knew and maybe the wrong people knew. I knew. I knew what was going on.

"We had been doing some [engine] test on the bench and the benefit was obvious out of tight corners. But, for me, the risk was too high to go with this system. It wasn't necessary, we didn't have to win. The car was so perfect – we had spent so long testing with Juha and everything was working. Juha was comfortable in the car and on these roads.

"We had developed the [illegal variable] restrictor a long time before. We developed a lot of things which weren't authorised or legal. But, don't forget, you do this as part of the engine development and the restrictor would have been used on the bench to stress the engine.

"[TTE president] Ove Andersson knew about this, he knew about everything. No decision was taken in that team without him knowing. And the part was in the car and in the engine during the event – but it was not supposed to be there for the whole time. It was not supposed to be there at the end. But then Juha crashed."

The team was summoned to the stewards. Scrutineers had found something. Hours later, the game was up. Days later, TTE was out of the world championship. Banned for 12 months.

"Some people said it was a shock," said Guaslard. "It was not a shock. We knew straight away that we would be ejected. There was no need to start the party, instead we knew it was time just to pack up and go. There was nothing else to do – we played with fire. But this was the old time when everybody played with fire, the only thing you had to be sure of was that you did not get burned. We got burned."

Lunch on Thursday was over way too soon. Not much has the edge over Hyundai's pasta, but Guaslard's road back to 1995 did.

RALLY NEWS

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Middle Eastern frontrunner

Al-Attiyah on the verge of history

Nasser Al-Attiyah stands on the verge of becoming the most successful rally driver in the history of the Middle East Rally Championship at this weekend's Kuwait Rally.

Only Vojtech Stajk can stop the Qatari from being crowned in Kuwait and if the Czech driver were to steal this year's title for himself, history would still be made with the first non-Arab driver ever to wear the MERC crown. But with two wins and a second place from the first three rounds, Ford Fiesta R5 driver Al-Attiyah is looking to surpass Mohammed bin Sulayem's record.

Victory in Kuwait would give Al-Attiyah a 14th title – equalling bin Sulayem. Officially, bin Sulayem missed out on one title, however, after the 1991 Middle East series was shortened because of the Gulf War. It only ran three rounds when the FIA demanded four to qualify it as an official Regional title.

Al-Attiyah has already surpassed bin Sulayem in terms of individual event wins, with 67 compared to his Dubai rival's 60.

NEUVILLE: I'M STILL READY FOR TITLE

Hyundai man says he is in a prime position for Australia



Neuville is pleased to be running second

By David Evans

Hyundai driver and last year's Rally Australia winner Thierry Neuville insists he retains the upper hand in the fight for this year's World Rally Championship, despite losing the lead of the series to Sebastien Ogier in Spain last week.

The Belgian relinquished his grip on the WRC's top spot – a position he's held since Sardinia in the middle

of the season – after finishing fourth compared with Ogier's runners-up spot in Salou. Ogier's return to the lead is, however, a double-edged sword – it means he will be forced to sweep the likely hot, dry Australian gravel roads clear when the series reaches its finale in New South Wales next month.

Asked who he thought held the upper hand ahead of round 13, Neuville told MN: "Not Seb [Ogier]. I think it's better to be second and just a few points

behind. It's always difficult to say: if I get a problem he will be champion. But I think it's not the most uncomfortable situation. The gap is small, it will be interesting.

"It's time somebody else was cleaning the road! We're looking forward to Australia now, it's going to be intense and interesting."

Predictably, Ogier wasn't on the same page when it came to potential championship fortunes down under.

"I'm happy to be going there in the lead of the championship," he told MN. "It will be tough, I know it will be tough – we all know it will be tough. But it's better to have the points in the bag, I always said this. Honestly, I didn't really think to play the tactics – it's impossible to think to drop time and drop points to take a better place on the road in Australia. But I've done it before [won from the front] and I'll try to do it again."



Pryce is ready for Spain

Pryce set to give competition debut to ORECA's R4 kit

Osian Pryce is set to be the first driver to compete in an R4-specification car when he drives a Toyota Etios on this weekend's Rallye Ciudad de Granada in Spain.

The 2016 Drive DMACK Trophy champion will drive the car that ORECA – the kit's developers – has used to hone the machine with test driver Stephane Sarrazin.

Pryce, who will be co-driven by usual partner Dale Furniss, will handle the car now run by the

ASM Motorsport team on the 60-mile gravel event.

"I know very little about the event," he said. "It's all come about in the last few days. I was grateful that ASM Motorsport and ORECA have asked me to drive it to showcase the R4 and I visited the team in Barcelona last weekend."

"From what people tell me, I'll be the first person to use it in competition, which is really cool. It's a great opportunity for me to get back out and to promote the R4 kit,

there's a lot of interest in it. It's really nice to be asked to do it and a good opportunity for me."

Welshman Pryce has competed sporadically in 2018 while attempting to fund WRC2 outings, with the focus now switching to next year.

He did win the Escort Rally Special event in Belgium to celebrate 50 years of the model, and has impressed in multiple outings in the British Historic Rally Championship this year.

Meeke ready to test and pleased with Yaris pace

Kris Meeke will test again in Finland with Toyota next week, after visiting a World Rally Championship service park for the first time since May to meet members of his new team.

Meeke drove the Yaris WRC for the first time earlier this month and admitted he was further encouraged for his first season with the Toyota after seeing yet more pace from the car in Spain.

"It's nice to see that," said Meeke, who won Spain for Citroen last season. "The Toyota is competitive yet again. I just wish I could get behind the wheel, especially after some great memories from here last year."

Meeke's second test in the Toyota will take on a different dimension



Meeke and his new boss Makinen

after winter's early arrival in Jyväskylä. The area close to the team's Puuppola factory has snow and is likely to endure freezing temperatures into the middle of next week.

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'Edwards took the title but was pushed hard by rivals'

British Rally Championship review, p25



Photos: M&H Photography

NEW CLOSED-ROAD EVENT IN WALES

Three motor clubs in Wales have joined to organise Wales' first closed-road asphalt rally.

Aberystwyth and District, Lampeter and District and Newtown and District Motor Clubs – with the Teifi Valley Motor Club expected to join – have united to form the Cardigan Bay Rally, which is set to feature 40 miles of action on public roads.

The event will be based on the westerly coast of Wales. It is likely to use parts of Aberystwyth, a popular holiday town for beaches and watersports, and has the backing of the local council.

Ceredigion County Council cabinet member Councillor Dafydd Edwards told the *Tivy-Side Advertiser*: "It's uplifting to know that road closure rules have changed within England and Wales and we can use our popular rural roads that are better than roads on the continent.

"On a personal note I think this event will raise the profile of the area, not only during the event, but after the event with tourists."

Organiser Andrew Edwards told *Motorsport News*:

"We have spoken to members of the public along the route and the result was overwhelmingly positive. The Motor Sports Association has been very supportive and we are in constant discussion to move planning for the event forward."

Motorsport News understands the event is hoping to run in 2019 if it can organise it in time but the intricacies of planning a closed-road event could delay the organisers.

If it does go ahead in 2019, both England and Wales are set to host a fully closed-road stage event with Rally Tendring and Clacton – the first of its kind held in south east England in April this year – and the Cardigan Bay Rally making up the calendar.

The government in Scotland is yet to pass a bill that would enable the new closed-road legislation, but talks are ongoing. Bosses of the Mull Rally and the Jim Clark Rally are campaigning for the bill.



Clacton Rally was popular



Davies (l) and Gilbey (r) in 'IDZ 555'

Gilbey eyes more wins after Welsh title triumph

Michael Gilbey insists the motivation remains high to continuing winning road rallies after wrapping up the Welsh Road Rally Championship's navigator's class.

Second on last weekend's Rally Cilwendeg with Andy Davies in his Subaru Impreza GC8 – known affectionately by its number plate 'IDZ 555' – was enough to seal the title. He has also sat with Kevin

Davies and Mark Lennox this year, but says his job will not be complete until Andy Davies has taken his title as well.

"That's why I'm not making as much of a fuss of winning the championship as I could have on social media," says Gilbey.

"If he ended up falling short I'd be more disappointed for him than I would be happy for myself. He's put so much into it and

I wouldn't have achieved this without his effort.

"It's something I've wanted to win since I was 12 years old, for the entirety of my adult life I've wanted to be Welsh Road Rally champion. It probably isn't going to sink in for a while yet.

"I want to win the remaining events and the fire is still burning. I'm naturally a very competitive person."

Andy Davies to Irish Tarmac series

Andy Davies will switch to the Irish Tarmac Rally Championship next year in his Subaru Impreza N12B, before making a step up to an R5 car.

Ex-BTRDA NR4 frontrunner Davies needs 90 points from this weekend's Powys Lanes rally to secure the Welsh Road Rally Championship drivers title in his Subaru Impreza GC8. It would be the first time a four-wheel-drive car has won the series.

He could have sealed the title last weekend with second on the Cilwendeg, but *MN* understands the forthcoming Eagle Rally will run, meaning another scoring opportunity for his opponents.

Davies will compete on the Pokerstars Rally – his first visit to the Isle of Man – next month, before a full attack on the Group

N championship in the ITRC in 2019.

"I just want to become as rounded of a driver as I can," said Davies of the move to Ireland. "I want to do as much as I can with the car before we upgrade to an R5.

"I think I got everything out of the car I could in the BTRDA on gravel. Having done the road rally championship this year, I've enjoyed Tarmac a lot more. We did Clacton and Donegal. Donegal is what hooked me to be honest. The atmosphere, how well received we were having come from Wales. I enjoyed the event and I enjoyed it more than my last few BTRDA events.

"The car is homologated, so we can have a go at the Group N championship and get some Tarmac under our belt."



Subaru driver wins title after series checked its tie-break rules

Dylan Davies secures Welsh title amid confusion

Dylan Davies and Llion Williams have taken the Welsh Rally Championship title after a query revealed that Matt Edwards was not the champion.

Subaru Impreza driver Davies takes the crown on a tie-break with Edwards, the final round – the Wyedean Stages – having been cancelled last month.

An event statement said: "The reasons for the cancellation are many, far too many to be overcome in the short time left before the event was due to run."

Davies therefore seals the title ahead of Edwards and Ford Fiesta RS WRC driver Luke Francis.

"We are naturally disappointed that the scheduled final round of the championship, the Wyedean Stages will not happen as the event was set to provide a great climax to the season, but that doesn't detract from Dylan and Llion's achievement in what has been a hugely competitive season," said organiser David Evison.

"We are looking at all aspects of the championship to see if there are ways we can improve it and make it even more attractive to competitors. We will be unveiling further details very soon."

The championship received a record number of entries this year.

GROUP NATIONAL EDITOR

JACK BENYON

"Sbeng: an introduction to road rallying"



It's been a good decade since I'd been to a road rally, and never had I been to a fully fledged round of the Welsh Road Rally Championship. What a night. I never thought a trip to Newcastle Emlyn would be drier than one to Salou for Rally Spain...

The Cilwendeg Rally – organised by the Teifi Valley Motor Club – is one of the most prestigious events on the calendar, and thanks to an invite and typical methodical planning from Michael Gilbey – who sealed the Welsh navigators championship at the weekend – I got to see what it was all about.

First, a glossary. At this point I was expecting explanations of things like 'petrol' and 'regularity'. Nope. 'Sbeng' loosely means banter, 'bachan, bachan' means good and 'IASU BOIS' written in capitals can be used as a surprise to good and bad things. After that I was lost.

I can't remember seeing so many people in a service park as I did at the start of the Cilwendeg in this tiny town in South Wales. At 2100hrs, young families and kids were still committed to seeing anything from a Toyota Corolla to the four-door Ford Escort Mk2 rarely seen outside of road rallying but so popular within it.

With Derek Keohane chauffeuring in a tidy Overfinch Land Rover Discovery, complete with 2000s Clubland Classics on shuffle and navigated by Tom Perrot and Josh and Derek Mullen, we were off at 2315hrs ready for a good five hours of action. Complete with a tonne of sandwiches in the back and a car full of sbeng, it felt like 'the good old days', and they wouldn't end until 0600hrs.

What a buzz. The Cilwendeg felt like a thrilling rally spectating time machine had been engaged, except for seeing the odd Peugeot 106 or something else more modern fly by.

Having been used to the restrictive (and necessary, that's not a dig at the authorities) viewing on forest and some closed-road rallies in recent seasons, the freedom available on this event was a pleasant surprise as it takes place on public roads.

It was great to see some of the stars of the discipline, like Kevin Davies – the event winner – up-and-comer Rhodri Evans and Andy Davies in a beautiful Impreza GC8 with the familiar Subaru rumble, in action alongside ace navigators.

With a full entry of almost 90 starters, the event looks in rude health, although from what I saw, the clerks of the course – Richard Evans and Nigel Nelson – retiring should cause concern. Often the clerk/competitor relationship is a tough one but the pairing appear to be respected in their decisions, and able to enjoy the event and joke with crews about the ups and downs of the night while still maintaining gravitas.

Despite the 400 mile round trip – and the fact I could have been in Salou and back quicker than it took me to get from London to Ceredigion – I'll be back next year.

The trip also had the happy overlap between the story to your left, a chance to see some of the roads that will be used on the Ceredigion Rally as soon as next year. Those competitors really are in for a treat.

AGREE/DISAGREE?
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RALLY NEWS

Photos: SMJ Photography, Jakob Ebrey, Kevin Money

WEST A DOUBT FOR OULTON MN OPENER

Reigning champion's car isn't ready...yet



West faces race to be ready for title defence

By Jack Benyon

Reigning Motorsport News Circuit Rally champion Chris West faces a race against time to be ready for the opening round of his title defence this weekend at Oulton Park.

West has a new Smith and Jones-tuned 2.5-litre engine for his Peugeot 306 Maxi this year but, alongside work commitments, he is struggling to get the car ready in time for Saturday's

Neil Howard Stages. "I'm trying [to get the car ready] but there aren't any guarantees," said West, who is co-driven by Keith Hounslow.

"It isn't looking very likely at the moment. I'll do my best, if I do turn up I won't be going for a win, I haven't had the time to test it.

"If I am there won't be any pressure from my side and we'll be looking to finish the rally."

West is still confident of the chance to defend his crown once the car is

running smoothly. "I wouldn't be doing it otherwise, I'd be at home," he added.

"Once we sort these teething issues out I'm confident. It may not be this year that I win it again, but I'm certainly going to try. It's a different car to drive, it's lighter, handles differently. I was surprised at how different it feels. It's going to take time to get used to it, seat time is everything.

"The grunt is phenomenal. It's around a 33 per cent increase in power.

It's a big chunk. When I went from the two-litre to the 2.3-litre, it was around a six per cent increase."

Oulton Park isn't West's favourite event on the calendar, his best result at the Cheshire venue is third, scored last year.

The winner of the last two Neil Howard Stages, Kevin Procter, leads the entry list, while David Richards makes a return to the co-drivers' seat for the first time in a decade alongside Graham Coffey in his Ford Fiesta RS WRC.

ENTRY LIST

Neil Howard Stages, Oulton Park, November 3

NO	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR
1	Kevin Procter/Derek Fawcett	Ford Fiesta RS WRC
2	Steve Simpson/Patrick Walsh	Ford Fiesta R5
3	Graham Coffey/David Richards	Ford Fiesta RS WRC
4	James Yates/Rhys Yates	Skoda Fabia R5
5	Chris West/Keith Hounslow	Peugeot 306 Maxi
6	Mark Kelly/Neil Colman	Ford Escort Mk2
7	John Stone/Jack Morton	Ford Fiesta S2500
8	Peter Smith/Sion Cunniff	Ford Fiesta RS WRC
9	Joshua Davey/Tamsyn Davey	Darrian T90
10	Nigel Feeney/Steve McNulty	Mini Countryman JCW WRC

Shinnors to Shinshiro for Japanese rally debut

Irish husband and wife pairing Matt and Catherine Shinnors will compete on this weekend's Shinshiro Rally in Japan, the candidate event the FIA will inspect ahead of the country's future return to the WRC.

The duo will drive a Toyota GT86 on the asphalt event for their first attack on the rally, which is based 168 miles from Tokyo.

Having worked in Japan before, Matt has wanted to do a rally in the region for some time.

"The Shinshiro Rally made perfect sense as the rally sounds very similar to my surname, Shinnors!" he said. "From what we have seen of the stages for the rally, they look tight and twisty, covered by trees. Our objective is to have fun and the Toyota GT86 is just the tool."

Earlier this year they competed on another WRC candidate event, for the Safari Rally, in a Ford Escort Mk2.

The only other non-Japanese crew set to compete contains Formula 1 race winner Heikki Kovalainen.

Davies aims for Bulth giantkilling repeat

Last year's winners Sam Davies and Martin Lasper will lead away the Bulth Showground Stages this weekend, with the duo aiming to repeat their giantkilling feat from last year.

The Vauxhall Nova pair head a strong entry for the 36-mile, 14-stage event based at the popular Powys venue. Among the 55 car entry, 2016 winners John Perrott and Keaton Williams will be hoping to get a finish under their belts, while Damian Cole will drive alongside Michelle Shaw in his similar Ford Escort Mk2.

Dan Evans (Suzuki Swift) and Ian Evans (Vauxhall Nova) keep up the theme of low-powered front-wheel-drive cars at the head of the order, while long-term competitor Theo Bengry also finds a place in the top 10 at car nine. Spectators are welcome at the event.

Malton attracts stellar entry with top BTRDA drivers and 47 Ford Escorts

The Malton Rally has attracted a stellar entry list to rival a BTRDA round in Pickering this weekend.

The last three BTRDA champions compete, with Charlie Payne and Stephen Petch in Ford Fiesta RS WRCs, while this season's champion Matt Edwards steers a Fiat 131 in the historic class.

Payne – last year's winner – and Petch will have Ollie Mellors for company in what is likely to be the new Proton Iriz

R5's last competitive outing before it is homologated in December.

Tom Preston – the Skoda Fabia R5 driver who won the 2017 Wales Rally GB National Rally – could also challenge in the same car.

In the historic class, Edwards heads a strong field of Escorts in Steve Bannister and Matthew Robinson, with 47 of the cars entered in what will be one of the last gravel rallies of the year the model turns 50.

ENTRY LIST

Malton Forest Rally, Pickering, November 4

NO	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR
1	Charles Payne/Carl Williamson	Ford Fiesta RS WRC
2	Ollie Mellors/Ian Windress	Proton Iriz R5
3	Stephen Petch/Michael Wilkinson	Ford Fiesta RS WRC
4	Peter Stephenson/TBA	Ford Focus WRC06
5	Guy Smith/Patrick Walsh	Ford Fiesta R5
6	Peter Smith/John Millington	Ford Fiesta RS WRC
7	Ian Bainbridge/Daniel May	Subaru Impreza
9	Steve Petch/John Richardson	Ford Fiesta S2000
10	Daniel Mennell/Tom Rodgers	Subaru Impreza GC8
11	Petr Krizan/Lukas Sintal	Mitsubishi Lancer E9



Payne took Malton victory last year

Waterman launches new team with the aim of helping juniors

Prestone Motorsport News Junior British Rally Championship driver Alex Waterman is set to launch a new team aimed at helping juniors step up to British Championship level.

Backed by his father Pat Waterman and John Considine, the EDSL Sport team has three Ford Fiesta R2Ts and one 1600cc car, and is looking to add one more of both.

The team will host a test and meet and greet at Walters Arena on November 17 where people can sample the cars.

"We've been thinking for a while of setting our own team up, I've just graduated so it's a good time for me and a few guys were keen to get involved," said Waterman.

"Having done the cadets as a fresh face into rallying and a bit of the juniors this year, we feel

there's space for someone to come and offer a fully rounded service at a reasonable price.

"We are trying to do things differently and take a more holistic approach, particularly covering the support and development of the crews in the junior classes, not just supplying a car for an event."

For more information on the team and test day, contact alexw@edslsport.co.uk.



Alex Waterman competed on Wales Rally GB in the BRC

Barbados prize for new BMW Compact series

A new championship for BMW Compacts has been launched, with the prize a chance to compete in Barbados.

The series, named Bimma Cup UK, is based on the hugely popular Caribbean series for the cars, with over 40 competing on the islands.

The new series will use near-standard BMW Compact 318tis, and will visit the Lookout Stages, Abingdon Carnival Stages, Pendragon Stages and Harold Palin Memorial Stages.

The winner will compete in the last round of the Caribbean Bimma Cup in November 2019.

Organiser Martin Stockdale, who has been competing on Rally Barbados since 2001, said: "Primarily, Bimma Cup UK is going to focus on affordability, fun and social interaction. Back when I started rallying in the 1980s we all helped each other along during events and had a bit of a party after, sometimes more than just a 'bit'."

Series founder Greg Cozier, based in Barbados, added: "There are lots of potential drivers out there who would have a go if rallying was more physically and financially accessible."

Interested competitors should contact Rob Brook – Rob@RB-Motorsport.co.uk – for regulations and details.

RALLY SPAIN



BY DAVID
EVANS

The old master was back to put the modern generation in the shade

The Citroen mechanic looked up at the screen anxiously. It read 0843, Sebastien Loeb's due time into the service park. He couldn't keep still. Moving from foot-to-foot, he went through some stretching exercises, trying to heat fingers chilled by a damp, dank autumnal seven degrees.

Eyes up, 0839hrs. More stretching. Four minutes later, the #10C3 WRC turned in. Action stations. The king was back.

Last time Sebastien Loeb woke up to a Sunday morning in Salou a 76th World Rally Championship win was waiting. Almost half a minute ahead, his DS3 WRC wouldn't miss a beat and the podium's top step was his.

Of course it was. The year was 2012 and nobody but Loeb had been on that top Spanish step since Markko Martin eight years earlier. The Frenchman had cornered the Catalan market for WRC wins. There was no news left in a Loeb win in this part of the world. It was all a bit processional. Dull even.

Not this time. A fortnight short of six years on, Loeb laughed off pre-event suggestions that win number nine could be anywhere near the horizon.

He described such talk as 'pretentious' and Loeb doesn't do pretention; he's the very antithesis of showy. Instead he talked quietly of the complications of this third and final chapter in the story of his 2018 World Rally Championship with Citroen.

Friday's gravel would be OK, he'd shown enough speed to lead on the dirt in Mexico earlier this year – and starting 11th on a road swept clean of the loose gravel should, in theory, offer both grip and confidence in the car. But then there was this talk of the rain coming on Saturday.

What was the problem? Loeb monstered many a rally in monsoon-like conditions down the years.

He leaned in, almost as though he didn't want anybody to hear. "I didn't test for this," he said. "I didn't have any rain in my test. I haven't driven a Tarmac stage in the wet for six years..."

And then he stalled at a hairpin in a pretty meaningless dash around Barcelona's Montjuic Park on Thursday. Going to bed 27th overall on Thursday night was not conducive to waking up Sunday morning eight seconds off the lead. It took time. But it happened.

Friday morning wasn't exactly ideal. The flip side of running on a cleaner road is the need for a harder tyre to deal with the more abrasive surface. The downside to the harder tyre is the lack of adhesion in the wet. A handful of damp patches cost Loeb his confidence. He just couldn't feel the car beneath him.

"I'm getting too much understeer," he grumbled, "I can't drive it like this."

When some drivers say that, it reads

as a direct criticism of the team. Don't read it like that. Loeb's mind was elsewhere. He was thinking out loud, his mind was with his engineers, investigating a solution.

A slightly more aggressive approach to the set-up and his attack in the stages delivered an improvement and second fastest on the second run at the 24-mile Fatarella-Vilalba. That good way to end Friday was enough to move him up to fourth place.

By the end of day one, two rallies had already developed. There was Ott Tanak in a class of his own, for the second rally in succession (and the fifth from the last six), and then there was everybody else.

This time Tanak's wasn't the only Toyota being talked about as Jari-Matti Latvala further extended his current purple patch. The Finn went quickest through SS3 to take the fight to his team-mate. One stage later and it had all gone wrong.

A brief aside here – we'll get back to Super Seb the first in a moment. Last year, the University of Rochester completed a survey that revealed a lot of swearing generally indicated a higher level of intelligence. Latvala showed himself to be, by some distance, the harbour's brightest light when he got to the end of stage four. In fact, momentarily, you could have been forgiven for thinking he'd been replaced by Gordon Ramsay. He didn't so much drop the f-bomb, he carpet-bombed it.

Turns out he'd had a puncture.

"F*****g hell!" raged Latvala. "I am so f*****g angry now. I would have won this rally if we hadn't just had this f*****g puncture."

Second had become 10th. His chance gone. Or had it?

Friday night and a penitent Latvala admitted he might have spoken too soon.

"If this rain comes, this is a new rally," he said.

So maybe he could win after all. "Maybe," he said with a bashful grin, "and sorry about that swearing..."

Loeb departed the service park hoping the rain would stay away and come back another day. The rain arrived. But it was so hard to call. It was on, then off. Drizzling. Raining. Pouring, briefly. Drizzling again. And that's all in the space of a pre-dawn, 15-minute service. What to do?

Dan Barritt knew. "Low intensity rain all morning..." he said, before adding with a grin: "...but it'll be pissing down in places."

Between service and the stages sat the Muntanyes de Prades. Alpine, but not exactly the Alps, this massif is enough to disturb the weather and drain the rain from the clouds.

What was happening on the coast, where the sun was still firmly tucked up and not yet troubling the horizon, mattered not a jot. The news, the intel and, possibly, the win and even the championship lay 50 miles away where road meets stage.

On mornings like these, radios are clamped to ears as service park spies lurk in the shadows trying to fathom what rubber rivals are running. It wasn't difficult.

Nobody in their right mind would be taking the hard in such chilly, damp conditions, but would anybody roll the dice and run with the wet.

Radios crackled. "Latvala, full wet." Silence. Requests to repeat echoed about the place. "Latvala. Full. Wet."

Hiding a compound is no problem for the teams, the tyre code H5 or S6 is hidden with a simple square of black

LOEB ROLLS BACK THE YEARS



tape. Hiding the FW3 is much less straightforward. It's a narrower tyre and comes with a radically different tread pattern.

And it only works in – as the name suggests – the full wet; the compound is so soft, any dry patches will immediately generate heat and take the edge off the tyre. All of which fed into the feeling of surprise at the selection.

When Esapekka Lappi and Tanak followed suit, a new precedent had been set. Never had a team headed for the stages with Michelin's FW3 bolted beneath all three cars (even if Lappi had a couple of softs in the boot).

When Saturday morning's opener was cancelled due to the high number of spectators, the Japanese team's rivals talked of its good fortune in now having a shortened distance over which it had to make the softest tyre work.

The feeling couldn't have been more different at Toyota. Strategy-wise, it had gone all-in and the team's newest recruit Kris Meeke explained the frustration.

"There was a lot of rain in that first

one," he said, pointing to a missed opportunity to lift lots of time from rivals. "And there's more rain in the last stage of the loop."

Make no mistake, Toyota was front-foot offensive on Saturday morning. And when Tanak and team-mate Latvala went 1-2 on the weekend opener, it was clearly the right choice.

Ironically, it was, quite possibly, the selection of that softest boot that cost Tanak so dearly as he became the Japanese squad's second high-profile puncture victim in 24 hours. He stopped, changed, and watched his world fall apart for the second time in three weeks. What was worse was the virtual championship standings at that point. Tanak was joint leading the title race with Thierry Neuville, with Sebastien Ogier three points back. That wasn't the moment to tell him as much.

Latvala took full advantage of his team-mates' agony to steal second place just behind Dani Sordo at lunchtime. And Latvala was right: a new rally had begun.

One loop later, at the end of Saturday,

six drivers were within 16.5s of victory. And Latvala was leading!

After all the rubber-based histrionics of Saturday morning, Michelin's engineers looked forward to a far quieter Sunday. And so it would be. Five of those six potential winners all poo-pooed the potential for a hard tyre. And who could blame them? It was seven degrees outside, it had rained most of the night and the roads were damp-borderline-sodden. Granted, there wasn't much more rain forecast, but the soft was the only choice.

The sixth driver? Welcome back to the story Mr Loeb.

It was a good job those mechanics had done their stretching exercises... with softs on the C3 and the boys about to fire the car up to leave service, Loeb changed his mind. Hards. All round.

With just about enough time, the wheels were whipped off and replaced. Cue more radio-based disbelief.

"I was convinced the good choice was the hard," said Loeb. "With the information I had, I was just sure this tyre could work in the damp – maybe



Neuville: A late sting in the tail

'Delivered the big performance he needed'
Elfyn Evans's rally rated, p23



ROUND



BACK



Loeb: Smiles after a remarkable 79th career victory



Loeb used a clever tyre strategy to climb to the top



Some of the tyre calls left M-Sport's Sebastien Ogier confused...

STAGE TIMES

- **SS1 Barcelona (1.99 miles)**
Fastest Ogier 3m35.3s **Leader**
Ogier **Second** Neuville +3.7s
- **SS2 Gandesa 1 (gravel) (4.35 miles)**
Fastest Tanak 4m19.6s **Leader**
Ogier **Second** Tanak +0.1s
- **SS3 Pesells 1 (gravel) (16.52 miles)**
Fastest Latvala 14m36.5s
Leader Tanak **Second** Latvala +6.1s
- **SS4 La Fatarella-Vilalba 1 (gravel and asphalt) (24.14 miles)**
Fastest Mikkelsen 27m01.2s
Leader Tanak **Second** Evans +11.7s
- **SS5 Gandesa 2 (gravel) (4.35 miles)**
Fastest Sordo 4m14.7s **Leader**
Tanak **Second** Evans +11.5s
- **SS6 Pesells 2 (gravel) (16.52 miles)**
Fastest Latvala 14m12.5s
Leader Tanak **Second** Evans +14.4s
- **SS7 La Fatarella-Vilalba 2 (gravel & asphalt) (24.14 miles)**
Fastest Latvala 26m13.2s
Leader Tanak **Second** Sordo +26.8s
- **SS8 Savalla 1 (8.77 miles)**
Stage cancelled
- **SS9 Querol 1 (13.21 miles)**
Fastest Tanak 11m30.6s **Leader**
Tanak **Second** Sordo +32.9s
- **SS10 El Montmell 1 (15.16 miles)**
Fastest Latvala 12m58.4s
Leader Sordo **Second** Latvala +0.3s
- **SS11 Savalla 2 (8.77 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 7m47.1s **Leader**
Latvala **Second** Sordo +3.9s
- **SS12 Querol 2 (13.21 miles)**
Fastest Loeb 11m25.8s **Leader**
Latvala **Second** Sordo +4.7s
- **SS13 El Montmell 2 (15.16 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 13m07.3s
Leader Latvala **Second** Ogier +7.2s
- **SS14 Salou (1.39 miles)**
Fastest Tanak 2m41.9s **Leader**
Latvala **Second** Ogier +4.7s
- **SS15 Riudecanyes 1 (10.16 miles)**
Fastest Loeb 10m22.6s **Leader**
Loeb **Second** Latvala +2.6s
- **SS16 Santa Marina 1 (9.01 miles)**
Fastest Loeb 8m08.9s **Leader**
Loeb **Second** Latvala +7.1s
- **SS17 Riudecanyes 2 (10.16 miles)**
Fastest Ogier 10m14.2s **Leader**
Loeb **Second** Ogier +3.6s
- **SS18 Santa Marina 2 (Power Stage) (9.01 miles)**
Fastest Tanak 8m02.5s **Leader**
Loeb **Second** Ogier +2.9s

COLIN CLARK

"The modern generation of cars are breathtaking to watch"



It's a very long time since rallying enjoyed such levels of popularity. In Spain last weekend we witnessed some glorious scenes on, off and alongside the stages.

The opening street stage in the centre of Barcelona perhaps should have given us a hint of what to expect in the coming three days. By the time the first car took to the stage you couldn't move anywhere in the vicinity of the glorious Fountain of Montjuic that provided the backdrop to what must be the most spectacular street stage in rallying.

There's a bit of a perfect storm raging in the rally world right now and it's quite evident by the number of spectators who turned up to watch the penultimate round of this year's championship in Catalunya.

The cars look sensationally desirable. I still spend way too much of my time admiring the beguiling perfect symmetry and crazy excesses of the rear end of the Toyota Yaris. It's bonkers with a capital B. It's also brutally quick and breathtaking to watch out on the stages.

The championship is providing more twists and turns than perhaps we've seen in the past two decades. Three drivers go to Australia with a chance of claiming this year's crown.

The nemesis of a many a motorsport series, predictability, has been well and truly banished from the WRC scene. Last year, seven drivers from four different teams won rounds of the championship. And this year, a nine-time former champion makes a return, just for fun, and snatches a fairytale-like win from our brawling title protagonists.

And on top of all that, we have a promoter who is actually promoting! And what a job it is doing. WRC All Live, where you can lock your doors, turn off your phone, banish the wife, kids and cat to the in-laws for the weekend and fully immerse yourself in the whole WRC experience for the entirety of every round is truly game changing. Rally fans can now sit at home and feel as if they are there, at every stage, and every service, witnessing every moment, every drama, every sweat soaked, muscle burning, mentally draining demonstration of raw emotion.

My God it's good.

But, and there very sadly always tends to be a 'but', there is a danger that lurks menacingly far too close to the surface of all this success. More popularity equals more fans and, as we saw in Spain, more brain dead morons. The scenes that the FIA shared with us from shakedown in Spain were truly shocking. It was scarily reminiscent of the bad old days where fans egged each other on to get closer and closer to the passing cars. There is ultimately only one way that this kind of behaviour will end, and that is in catastrophe.

As I've said here many times in the past, Michele Mouton as head of rally safety at the FIA is doing the most unbelievable job. I genuinely believe that she has already saved lives. Many lives. But with the sport's popularity on the rise, is it perhaps time for a radical spectator safety rethink?

better than the soft. We looked to what I had said when I drove tyre [with the DS3] and I could feel I could get some heat in it, it worked. The information we had was there and there would be rain and there was! I wasn't completely sure about the weather, but I knew myself for the fact I was worried if I went on the soft, nobody else would take the hard and would lose. So I said, let's go for it." And in doing so, Loeb encapsulated everything he brought to this fight under seat time in a modern-day car. He brought experience, the ability to read conditions and a willingness to back himself. The fact that Loeb wasn't in a championship fight made that battle slightly less complicated, until Ogier was hugely frustrated and watched his former Citroen team-mate and rival go fastest through the first loop of the final stage and into the lead.

Continued on page 22

RALLY SPAIN



BY DAVID
EVANS

RALLY ESSENTIALS

Day one: 92.01 miles; eight stages

Weather: sunny 13-24 celsius

- Not for the first time in recent rallies, the initial pace is set by Ott Tanak. The Estonian is flying through Friday's gravel roads. This time the Toyota driver's not demolishing everybody in every stage, instead he's demonstrating solid consistency – in the top three times on every test, he's almost half a minute clear on Friday night.
- Not in action since August, the upside to Dani Sordo's part-programme with Hyundai is a preferable place on the road on a dry day one in his homeland. He makes the most of a cleaner, grippier line to spend much of the day in a provisional podium slot before moving into second on the last Friday test.
- Sordo's Hyundai team-mates are struggling with Andreas Mikkelsen sixth and Thierry Neuville ninth, the Belgian having opened the road and swept the line all day.
- M-Sport's charge is being spearheaded by Elfyn Evans as the Welshman looks ahead to the weekend just 2.9s behind Sordo. He'd been second until a slightly untidy run through SS7 let the Spaniard by. Sebastien Ogier, like Neuville, is struggling for grip running second on the road – he's seventh.
- Sebastien Loeb is knocking the rust off, not having competed on the dirt since Mexico. Like Sordo, he's in a good place on the road and, once he dials some understeer out of the C3, he's up into fourth.

End of day one:

1 Tanak/Jarveoja 1h34m27.4s; 2 Sordo/Del Barrio +26.8s; 3 Evans/Barritt +29.7s; 4 Loeb/Elena +30.2s; 5 Latvala/Anttila +37.6s; 6 Mikkelsen/Jaeger +39.1s.

Day two: 75.68 miles; seven stages

Weather: rain/overcast 9-18 celsius

- The first stage of the day is cancelled after too many spectators brave the heavy Catalan rain and overload the weekend's first test.
- Once the day does get going, Tanak makes sensational use of Michelin's full wet tyre to move further clear at the top of the table. Unfortunately for the Estonian his tenure of the lead won't last much longer – he stops to change a puncture on the next stage and plummets to ninth place.
- Sordo leads for one stage before he's forced to give best to Jari-Matti Latvala. Hyundai's local boy struggles with the inconsistent conditions – especially the mud in the second run at El Montmell and slithers from second to sixth. Finn Latvala stays out front on Saturday night, but behind him the classification is getting closer and closer.
- Ogier is the man making the biggest move, jumping from seventh to second on Saturday. The defending champion's countryman Loeb is the meat in an M-Sport sandwich, 3.3s down on Ogier and 1.8s up on Evans.
- Positionally, Neuville's Saturday isn't quite as impressive as his title rival Ogier's – he 'only' climbs from ninth to fifth – but in terms of time nobody is as quick as the Belgian through Saturday. He scores two scratch times to move himself right into the fight for the podium or win.

End of day two:

1 Latvala/Anttila 2h35m01.8s; 2 Ogier/Ingrassia +4.7s; 3 Loeb/Elena +8.0s; 4 Evans/Barritt +9.8s; 5 Neuville/Gilsoul +12.7s; 6 Sordo/Del Barrio +16.5s.

Day three: 38.34 miles; four stages

Weather: overcast 6-15 celsius

- Loeb secures first WRC win in six years, while double podium for M-Sport boys Ogier and Evans plays the Cumbrian squad back into contention for a second consecutive manufacturers' title. Almost. The Brits go Down Under 25 points away from top team Toyota Gazoo Racing.
- Hyundai gains some ground on Toyota with Neuville and Sordo taking fourth and fifth ahead of Yaris drivers Tanak and Esapekka Lappi in sixth and seventh.
- Latvala is the day's biggest loser, dropping down the order after hitting a barrier in SS17 and sliding to eighth place.
- Craig Breen and Mikkelsen round out the top 10 after both suffering a tough event. The Citroen driver struggled to recover from a trio of spins earlier in the rally, while Hyundai's wayward Norwegian remained some way from the pace.

Continued from page 21

"The information was useless this weekend," he said. "Every time we got it wrong. Every time!" He signalled the interview was over by getting in his car and shutting the door.

Latvala was doing all he could. He'd started the day with 14 world championship titles right behind him. His platitudes about him having more WRC starts than either of his Sebastien rivals were starting to look a little thin as he shipped time to the Frenchmen. Latvala remained second, but 7.1s behind Loeb and 3.7s up on Ogier. Then Latvala's event went south when he clipped a barrier and punctured on the penultimate stage. This time there was no swearing. Just a head in hands.

One stage left and it was Loeb versus Ogier. A straight fight, nine miles and 3.6s between them after a sensational scratch from Ogier in SS17.

Ogier beat him in the powerstage, but not by enough. Loeb crossed the line, not knowing if he'd won or not. Breathing hard, he asked his co-driver Daniel Elena if it was enough. They didn't know. They'd done it by 2.9s.

Time after time we'd seen Loeb win here, but there was never anything like this emotion. Close to tears, the 44-year-old said: "This is an incredible feeling, an incredible win. I can't believe it. We had a half-spin at the roundabout this morning doing these stupid donuts, I was a little bit stressed after that. I didn't think we could do this. This is so satisfying."

Second place and second in the powerstage was enough to move Ogier back into the lead of the



A puncture ruined Tanak's chances

championship. A superb charge from Elfyn Evans, allied to a late puncture for Neuville, was enough for him to edge the man who'd topped the table coming into Spain.

Neuville was furious. Crossing the line with the rear-right Michelin in tatters, he couldn't contain his rage. Raising his hands he bellowed: "Putain!"

If you wanted to counter Thierry's French curse, you only had to look to the service park's red corner to see what this result meant to Loeb. Remember when he won his first title in Corsica, 2004? Remember

what he did? He turned a somersault. He did the same in Spain on Sunday. Not to be beaten, Elena completed his own forward roll.

Looking on, team principal Pierre Budar shook his head and smiled. He could scarcely believe what he'd seen. "It's astonishing," he said.

"Wonderful. To see the speed they could make when they have done no practice or when the tyre is not perfect and the set-up not exactly what they want, it's amazing. There are not many drivers in the world who can do this."

The popularity of this win extended well beyond Citroen – the prolonged applause greeting the winners' arrival at the post-event press conference told its own story. It overshadowed the fact that there is only three points between Ogier and Neuville with one rally left to go.

There's been no end of talk about the need for electrification in the World Rally Championship recently; courtesy of the reds' big little man and a breathtaking title race, the WRC couldn't be more electric right now.

Rovanpera crashes Solberg's party

For one rally only, Skoda could keep its wunderkind. Ahead of the final European WRC2 round of the season, the focus was all about a former champion and his team of former champions.

Petter Solberg and Volkswagen Motorsport stole Kalle Rovanpera's limelight and headlines in the lead up to the event. And then delivered on the hype on Friday lunchtime by bringing the all-new Polo GTI R5s back to service in first and second position.

Admittedly, Solberg's team-mate, rapid Frenchman Eric Camilli had misread the script and placed his car ahead of the 2003 champion's. Petter didn't mind. It didn't matter.

"I'm here to have fun," beamed Solberg, having leapt out of the car and into the Friday lunchtime sunshine in Salou. "I didn't have such great feeling from the car in the first one, but we made some changes and it was really nice in the last one – really nice to be fastest as well!"

The boy was back. And the giants from Hanover were right there with him.

Unfortunately for them, the dream didn't last. The teenager stormed the party and stole the show. Hampered by a dodgy damper on Friday morning, Rovanpera was sublime on a wet Saturday. Ignoring the fact that he'd never tested in those wet conditions, he bolted on the more

conservative wet tyre and set about the rain.

One stage into the weekend and boy wonder was out front and staying there. He didn't walk away with it though. Camilli was right with him until a selector rod broke in the Polo's gearbox in the second shot at Savalla and Rovanpera's team-mate Jan Kopecky still had designs on the perfect season, arriving in Spain on the back of five starts and five wins.

By the end, the two factory Fabia R5s had eased their way clear of Volkswagen Group stablemate Solberg.

A generation ago, it wasn't often that a Rovanpera beat a Solberg, but Kalle showed his father Harri where he'd been going wrong in Spain.

"I think I should be ahead of Petter," said Kalle with a grin, "I have been driving my car more than him this year, it's probably normal. It's been good. The rain wasn't so nice, but I made some good time with the softest tyre – I could move the car around a bit with this tyre. When it dried out on Sunday, we had quite a lot of understeer, but once we got rid of that in service everything was good."

Ahead of the start, Skoda had confirmed there would be no late Australia entry for Pontus Tidemand, therefore confirming Kopecky was, indeed, a world



Rovanpera was the form man

champion. "It was quite a strange feeling for the weekend," said Kopecky, "to know we were champions before the start. But when the rally started, we focused to this and made a nice result for the team."

Solberg was equally chuffed with the podium's bottom step. "We came here to learn about the car and to make it faster for the customer," said Solberg. "We did that. We made changes to the car to find out what would happen, knowing it might not necessarily make it quicker. It's been great to be back. We have seen speed from

me and from Eric and we've seen a great car from Volkswagen."

Outgoing European Rally champion Kajto Kajetanowicz was fourth with fellow Ford Fiesta R5 driver Nil Solans one place behind. The top six was rounded out by a second Solberg – Henning's Skoda Fabia R5.

Victory in WRC 3 was enough for Enrico Brazzoli to clinch the title. Brits Tom Williams (Ford Fiesta R2T) and Nabila Tejjar (Peugeot 208 R2) both ran well, but weren't registered for points. Fiesta driver Louise Cook finished behind them, but took third in WRC 3.

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

ROUND 12

DRIVER ANALYSIS BY DAVID EVANS



SEBASTIEN OGIER M-SPORT FORD FIESTA

Elated by his return to the top of the table, Ogier was frustrated at the mistakes his team made in the weather and tyre calls. Showed superb sportsmanship and genuine pleasure at Loeb's win. Bravo for that.



9/10

ELFYN EVANS M-SPORT FORD FIESTA

Duly delivered the big performance needed. Struggled for the ultimate pace when the set-up was awry, but his run through the final two Sunday stages was superb – and what M-Sport and Ogier needed.



8/10

TEEMU SUNINEN M-SPORT FORD FIESTA

First time here and it showed for the Finn. He was only in the top 10 for one stage and struggled even on his favoured gravel. On the asphalt, he was all at sea. Needs to learn and learn quickly from last week.



2/10

THIERRY NEUVILLE HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT HYUNDAI i20

Recovered from a shakedown roll, coped with cleaning the road then drove brilliantly through Saturday. Final-stage puncture cost him his chance of a podium and more precious powerstage points in his hunt for a first title.



8/10

ANDREAS MIKKELSEN HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT HYUNDAI i20

There was no respite from his nightmare season. The Norwegian looked lost and simply had no idea of how to or where to find some pace from the Hyundai. In the middle of all that, he went quickest in SS4. Bizarre.



1/10

DANI SORDO HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT HYUNDAI i20

Solid day on the dirt to start the weekend's asphalt action in a strong second. Remained at the races, but lost out badly in the muddy conditions on Saturday's final test and couldn't find the speed to re-engage on the final day.



6/10

SEBASTIEN LOEB TOTAL ABU DHABI CITROEN C3 WRC

There simply aren't the superlatives for this drive. Showed again why he's a nine-time world champ and how he'd won this event eight times. Delivered as Citroen was staring at a winless season.



10/10

CRAIG BREEN TOTAL ABU DHABI CITROEN C3 WRC

Running fifth with plenty of pace on Friday morning until he drops the C3 and loses the rear wing on a bank. A couple more spins on Saturday, not helped by the lack of a Tarmac test, didn't help matters.



5/10

JARI-MATTI LATVALA TOYOTA YARIS WRC

Reckoned a puncture cost him the win on Friday, but it was actually him hitting a barrier on Sunday that really cost him. Set some great times and looked strong, but ultimately came up short on an event where he should have delivered more.



6/10

ESAPEKKA LAPPI TOYOTA YARIS WRC

Couldn't find anything like the sweet spot his team-mates managed with the Yaris and found himself facing the wrong direction regularly. Spent much of the weekend looking like a man waiting for next season...



2/10

OTT TANAK TOYOTA YARIS WRC

Definite 10/10 for the first half of the rally. Consistent and quick through day one, his charge was ruined by a puncture on Saturday morning. Just about still in the title race after a superb powerstage win.



7/10

KEN BLOCK FORD FIESTA WRC

Loses five points for denying his fans the chance to see him on the weekend after he crashed on Friday evening. But picks up five for doubling up on the donuts in the Barcelona superspecial. Well, what did you expect?



10/10

MOTORSPORT NEWS STAR DRIVER



SEBASTIEN LOEB

Form is temporary but class really is permanent. Sebastien Loeb oozed class in Spain last week. He kept the car in the middle of the road when he wasn't sure, then found the sort of searing pace that carried him to nine world titles when it mattered.

MOTORSPORT NEWS WOODEN SPOON



PATRICK CROKE

Craig Breen's mate made a welcome return to the service park in Spain. Paddy's not a man to let his disability get in the way of his enjoyment of a WRC round, but featured among the highest-profile casualties of the changeable conditions when he rolled his wheelchair on Saturday.

RESULTS

Round 12/13, 54th Rally RACC Catalunya – Costa Daurada 2018, October 25-28

POS	DRIVER/ CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Sebastien Loeb (FRA)/Daniel Elena (MON)	Citroen C3 WRC	3h12m08.0s
2	Sebastien Ogier (FRA)/Julien Ingrassia (FRA)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+2.9s
3	Elfyn Evans (GBR)/Daniel Barritt (GBR)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+16.5s
4	Thierry Neuville (BEL)/Nicolas Gilsoul (BEL)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+17.0s
5	Dani Sordo (ESP)/Carlos del Barrio (ESP)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+18.6s
6	Ott Tanak (EST)/Martin Jarveoja (EST)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+1m03.9s
7	Esapekka Lappi (FIN)/Janne Ferm (FIN)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+1m16.6s
8	Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN)/Miikka Anttila (FIN)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+1m26.4s
9	Craig Breen (IRL)/Scott Martin (GBR)	Citroen C3 WRC	+2m07.0s
10	Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR)/Anders Jager (NOR)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+2m48.2s
11	Teemu Suninen (FIN)/Mikko Markkula (FIN)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+3m52.0s
21	Khalid Al-Qassimi (UAE)/Chris Patterson (GBR)	Citroen C3 WRC	+21m28.6s
30	Jean-Michel Raoux (FRA)/Laurent Magat (FRA)	Citroen DS 3 WRC	+35m14.4s
R	Ken Block (USA)/Alex Gelsomino (ITA)	Ford Fiesta WRC	SS7/crash

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

DRIVERS			MANUFACTURERS		
POS	DRIVERS	PTS	POS	TEAMS	PTS
1	Sebastien Ogier	204	1	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT	331
2	Thierry Neuville	201	2	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT	319
3	Ott Tanak	181	3	M-Sport Ford WRT	306
4	Esapekka Lappi	110	4	Citroen Total	216
5	Jari-Matti Latvala	102			
6	Andreas Mikkelsen	84			
7	Dani Sordo	71			
8	Elfyn Evans	70			
9	Craig Breen	61			
10	Hayden Paddon	55			

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REVIEW: BRC

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

With two events cancelled, the BRC was fast and fraught. By Jack Benyon



Title winners sealed it on Wales Rally GB



Garrod (l) and Edwards (r) won

EDWARDS DOMINATES FOR HOME TRIUMPH



Early crash cost Bogie

POINTS

NO	DRIVER	PTS
1	Matt Edwards	120
2	Alex Laffey	64
3	David Bogie	61
4	Rhys Yates	51

Prestone Motorsport News Junior BRC

NO	DRIVER	PTS
1	Steve Rokland	110
2	James Williams	91
3	Kevin Horgan	43
4	William Creighton	37

Cadet Class

NO	DRIVER	PTS
1	Jordan Reynolds	83
2	Johnnie Mulholland	80
3	Bart Lang	67
4	Finlay Retson	65

While the results sheet shows four event wins out of four and a dominant championship win for Matt Edwards, no one event was easy for the M-Sport Swift Rally Team driver and his navigator Darren Garrod.

The number of R5s was similar to the end of the previous season with 10 at the opening round. There were four names that stood out as the men who would battle it out for the title. Alongside Edwards, there was David Bogie, Keith Cronin and Rhys Yates.

Edwards was on the front foot with a 60-mile test before the first event, the Pirelli International Rally in Carlisle, in a Ford Fiesta R5 he'd driven the previous year. The only change was from Hankook to Pirelli tyres. Bogie could rival this continuity as he was back with CA1 Sport in his Skoda Fabia R5 for a third year and on DMACK's rubber for a second.

However, Bogie's title bid unravelled on the Pirelli Rally where he rolled. But he did end the season on Rally GB with a chance of the title. Even though he won the opening leg of the two-points scoring rounds in Wales, it wasn't enough.

The biggest loss to Bogie's title attack was, perhaps, the loss of the opening round, the Border Counties Rally. It was canned to bad weather. "Once we'd lost a gravel round and a rally I knew quite well, that was

disappointing," says Bogie. "I was eager to make up for it on the Pirelli Rally but to go there and make a mistake so early on put us on the back foot for the rest of the year."

Taking a leap forward as Bogie faltered on the Pirelli Rally was Yates, who arrived with pace in his Fabia and he could have won the rally. He showed much improved speed from 2017.

"The Pirelli Rally was a surprise, we didn't expect to be on that pace so soon," says Yates. "If we'd have gone into that event knowing we'd had that pace, we would have attacked more."

Cronin fought hard with Yates but had to settle for third on the Pirelli Rally behind his rival and Edwards. One of the criticisms of Cronin in recent seasons has been his gravel pace.

The second round, the Ypres Rally, was expected to see Cronin return to form. Switching to a Hyundai i20 for 2018 meant a third different car in as many seasons.

He pushed hard in Ypres, where he had won the year before, and had some major moments in trying to stay ahead of Edwards. A puncture caused by an excursion while leading the final nail in his title chances as he dropped to third place in Belgium. He wouldn't be seen again during the season.

Edwards had myriad electrical issues, but continued to fight and his relentless pressure on Cronin was enough to guarantee victory in Ypres.

One man not in the fight was Yates, who visited a ditch and then co-driver Elliott Edmondson became ill. Ultimately it was another case of great pace during the season but no result for Yates.

With Cronin gone, Yates and Bogie both stepped up to the mark on the Ulster Rally. Yates admitted he "ran out of talent" on a fast right-hander while closest to leader, Edwards, and Bogie struggled to match

the latter's step-up in pace. "Ulster was my best result," says Edwards. "The pace was there on stages I hadn't done and I was up against – and beat – the guy who ended up being Irish Tarmac champion [Josh Moffett]. I didn't just win the BRC bit, I wanted to win the rally. It's a famous rally and I love the history. I watched the WRC growing up but I always found the British Championship drivers more relatable."

After that, the series should have gone to the Isle of Man, but struggles obtaining road-closure permits less than two weeks before the rally was a shambles.

"I don't think we'll ever find out the correct story of what went on," says championship manager Iain Campbell. "It's disappointing from that perspective, but what wasn't disappointing was the action on the stages [this year]."

And he's right. The series does need more cars, but the four that did properly challenge for the title produced good scraps on all of the rallies. The loss of two events was just impossible to fix.

That left a Rally GB finale, where set-up struggles meant Yates wasn't on the pace from the get go and ended up in a Myherin ditch. It was a far cry from the promise and speed he'd shown all season and he could have won any of the events previous.

Edwards needed fourth on the first leg to win, and he delivered. Bogie knew it was over even before the event started.

Alex Laffey had a mathematical chance of the title, and the M-Sport driver built on his consistency this year finishing every event. A Rally GB fastest stage time in the BRC section will be something to remember.

But the man with most to take away from the year will be his team-mate, Edwards, whose fast but sensible approach delivered a brilliant title win. The others simply couldn't marry the same blend of speed and consistency. ■



Reynolds consistency key

Cadet Class win for Reynolds

Jordan Reynolds won the Cadet Class with just one victory on the Pirelli Rally. He finished second on the Ulster Rally and Wales Rally GB (twice), but engine woe in Ypres cut his finishing record.

It was a strong result in only his second full season of rallying, and the Welshman has won entries to next year's events in the Junior class.

With more luck, Finlay Retson would have had a great shot at the title. He set stunning times on Rally GB, his first time at the event, but two mechanical retirements, on the Pirelli and Ypres, offset his Ulster win.

Johnnie Mulholland took second in the series and was beaten only by Reynolds's consistency. He did take a leg win on Wales Rally GB and his pace has improved hugely this year.

Alone in the National Rally Cup, Mitsubishi Lancer E9 crew John Morrison and Peter Carstairs took the honours.

Yates: good speed



It went down to the wire but talented Norwegian Rokland took Junior BRC title

The Prestone Motorsport News Junior British Rally Championship delivered strong competition, and since the BRC relaunched in 2016 it's failed to go to a home driver with that being the case again this season.

Norway's Steve Rokland won the prize, but Welshman James Williams pushed him hard in his Vauxhall Adam R2.

In his fifth season in a Peugeot 208 and

his seventh in an R2 car, Rokland was always going to be competitive, but he blew the opposition away on the Pirelli. Indeed, he did on all the rounds apart from Ypres where he ended up in a ditch.

Rokland took a cautious approach to the penultimate round, the opening leg of Wales Rally GB, to secure the points he needed with a second place finish while Williams won the encounter.

Williams won in Ypres where he had also been strong the year before, but Rokland's crushing win on Rally GB sealed the title. Williams did everything he could.

William Creighton had an up and down season in his Peugeot 208 and his title bid never materialised. An off in Ypres and an engine failure in GB put paid to his chances, although there were a pair of second places on the Ulster and Pirelli.



Rokland was the stand out junior



Williams scored win in Ypres

PREVIEW

Photos: SMJ Photography

Circuit rallying is back to fill the winter months. By Jack Benyon

CAN WEST REPEAT MN SERIES GLORY?



Strong form last season: Mark Kelly

MOTORSPORT NEWS
CIRCUIT RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP
IN ASSOCIATION WITH MSVR

CALENDAR

Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship 2018/19

DATE	EVENT	VENUE
Nov 3	Neil Howard Stages	Oulton Park
Nov 18	NHMC Cadwell Stages	Cadwell Park
Dec 9	Knockhill Rally	Knockhill
Jan 19	Brands Hatch Stages	Brands Hatch
Feb 16	Snetterton Stages	Snetterton
Mar 3	Donington Rally	Donington Park
Mar 17	Lee Holland Rally	Anglesey Circuit
Apr 7	Alan Healy Memorial Stages	Cadwell Park



West's car has been improved for 2018/19

PRIZES

Overall

- Champion wins MSV test day, MSV season pass, 12-month subscription to *Motorsport News*
- Second gets 12-month subscription to *Motorsport News*
- Third gets 12-month subscription to *Motorsport News*

Michelin Cup

- Two tyres at each round to class winner drawn from a hat
- Two tyres at each round to the highest runner on Michelin tyres
- Eight tyres to overall champion, pair of Torq Racewear gloves
- Four tyres to second place driver
- Two tyres for third and fourth placed drivers

Protyre Cup

- Four tyres to highest placed driver after four rounds using tyres bought from Protyre
- Four tyres to highest placed driver from rounds five-eight using tyres bought from Protyre
- Four tyres to highest placed driver overall on tyres bought from Protyre, and a pair of Torq Racewear gloves

Sort Oils

- £75 to each class winner
- £75 for the Spirit of the Rally Award, which can be given to anyone, not just competitors

Torq Racewear

- Spirit of the Championship award wins five pairs of mechanics gloves



Quigley is back in his Clio Cup



Could John Stone challenge?

Back for a fourth season, the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship kicks off this weekend for another winter of rapid action, starting with the Neil Howard Stages at Oulton Park in Cheshire.

The championship has gone from strength to strength since its inauguration in 2015, and shows no sign of slowing down.

While it might not be rallying in its purest sense, it offers the format and a taster of gravel and asphalt, while offering the facilities as simple as toilets, cafes and garages that forest or closed-road rallies simply can't offer. It's a brilliant introduction to what multi-venue rallying is like.

In previous seasons it has been difficult to tell who will be the frontrunners in that year's championship. But there's one name at the top of the list this year who will be very tough to beat.

Reigning champions Chris West and Keith Hounslow return with their Peugeot 306 Maxi, their chances of a

repeat improved by a new Smith and Jones engine (a 30 per cent power increase, says West) and a switch to Michelin tyres. Having wrapped up last year's title with a round to spare, their rivals must be worried.

Mark Kelly leads the Ford Escort Mk2 brigade this year as 2016/17 champion Ian Woodhouse will sit the season out for an engine rebuild. Kelly improved rapidly in his car last year. Look out for him to win multiple events this season.

Pete Smith and John Stone bring interesting Ford Fiestas to the party. Stone's comes complete with a Millington 2.5-litre engine mated to an S2000 chassis. Smith will hope he fairs better in water than the car's predecessor Ott Tanak, who crashed the car into a lake on Rally Mexico in 2015. Caution – and perhaps flippers – could be needed in the Oulton Park watersplash.

For fans of the underdog, rapid pilot Steve Quigley has constantly outperformed his plucky front-wheel-drive Clio, and challenged for the title in its first year in 2015/16. He returns after a year out and his consistency could bring him into play.

And there's always one surprise

who pops up and takes the championship by storm. Josh Davey – if his Darrrian plays ball – could do just that having come so close to victory last year before a gear-box part issue ended his season before Christmas.

There's no major changes in the calendar this year (see above left) but the championship coverage is set to step up a gear. TV company Torque take over the production and although it is its first foray into rallying, the team is very familiar with the circuits involved and have interesting plans for how to bring the series to life. It also boasts the coup of joining Amazon Prime this year, which hosts TV shows, movies and music to thousands of people in the UK. Frontrunner, Facebook, and YouTube will all provide coverage, while *MN's* digital TV channel motorsport.tv will show plenty of coverage to keep up with the frantic action.

The championship has the unusual issue in rallying that it has to turn away sponsors each year as it has so many, and with many prizes on offer from multiple packages, the MN series is the perfect grassroots contest to get started in rallying. ■

What does an outsider make of the Motorsport News Circuit Rally series?

Motorsport News has a vested interest in the MN Circuit Rally Championship, so we brought in an independent adjudicator to describe what it's like to compete in the series.

British Touring Car Championship race winner Paul O'Neill will start his fourth rally in the series this weekend in a Paul Sheard Mazda MX-5. Having not done any rallying before, it's quickly become a staple of his calendar.

"I'll be honest, I thought it would be something I wouldn't like," says O'Neill, driving the plucky 1600cc car to second and third in class on the Neil Howard Stages and Lee Holland Memorial Stages at Anglesey last year.

"The changing surface is so alien to me. In a racing car I'd know or have an idea what's coming. With rallying, everything just changes all the time. I don't like stuff that's unpredictable. "But the whole nature of it being

unpredictable, turns out I properly love it. I love the organisation of the events, the fact that you have to rely on someone else sat next to you as well, working together to get the best out of the situation, and I love being against the clock.

"You're never sat around like you are at a race weekend either. It's bang, bang, bang...get on with it."

It hasn't always gone to plan, and it was a tricky baptism of fire on the 2016 event when the gearbox broke in a Mk3 MX-5, but more seat time and a switch to the Mk1 for 2017 yielded strong results.

"The first thing I found difficult was exiting the assembly area the wrong way [compared to circuit races] and going straight into the cones on my first go!" he adds.

"You don't have time to warm the tyres up, as soon as you touch the brakes for the first corner the car is

sliding straight away and that was tricky to start with. That's something I'm just not used to.

"I really didn't like that at first because it puts you on the back foot and you lose your confidence, coming from circuit racing. That's why I massively respect the other drivers in the championship, and at every level of rallying. What the drivers are able to do is brilliant."

With a strong class entry, many of the cars boasting more power than the MX-5, a class win may evade O'Neill again. But as competitive as he is, the urge to compete is yet to be extinguished.

"It's the highlight of my calendar," he says. "I didn't think I'd like it, but I'd do it full-time if I could."

Now to break it to him that the MN series isn't quite at a level where drivers are paid to compete. Not yet anyway...



O'Neill has taken to rallying in the MX-5



RALLY REPORTS

Photo: Russ Otway, Martin Walsh

PRITCHARD'S TITLE AS TAYLOR WINS

RESULTS

MSA Asphalt Championship, Cheviot Stages, round 6/6, October 28

NO	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Peter Taylor/Andrew Roughead	Ford Fiesta WRC	48m38s
2	Jason Pritchard/Phil Clarke	Ford Focus WRC05	+26s
3	Gordon Morrison/Calum MacPherson	Subaru Impreza	+1m02s
4	Stephen Simpson/Patrick Walsh	Ford Fiesta R5	+1m33s
5	David Hardie/John McCulloch	Subaru Impreza	+2m15s
6	Mark McCulloch/Michael Hendry	Subaru Impreza	+2m28s
7	Paul MacKinnon/Rob Fagg	Ford Fiesta R5	+3m27s
8	Barry Lindsay/Caroline Lodge	Peugeot 106 GTI	+4m27s
9	Lee Hastings/Cole Hastings	Subaru Impreza	+5m47s
10	Keith Robathan/Ken Bills	BMW M3	+6m11s

Class winners: Taylor/Roughead; Morrison/MacPherson; Lindsay/Lodge; Robathan/Bills; Ricky Wheeler/Martin MacCabe (Ford Escort); Ray Cunningham/Jared Gill (Austin Cooper S); Ross McCallum/James Ralph (MG Maestro); Stephen Bethwaite/Ann Forster (Vauxhall Nova Sport); Paul Kendrick/Luke Green (Escort RS1600).



Taylor bounced back for victory

Cheviot Stages Rally

By Paul Evans

Organiser: Whickham & District MC & Hadrian Motor Sports Club
When: October 28 **Where:** Otterburn Training Camp, Northumberland
Championships: MSA Asphalt Rally Championship; North of England Tarmacadam; Scottish Tarmac; ANECCC Stage Rally; HRCR Northern Historic; Swift Shining Stars; ANCC; Border Challenge **Stages:** 12
Starters: 88

Peter Taylor won a dramatic Cheviot Stages Rally in his ex-Robert Kubica Ford Fiesta WRC – while Jason Pritchard wrapped up the MSA Asphalt Rally Championship with second in treacherous Otterburn conditions.

Having been unable to do the previous day's recce, Taylor started cautiously – yet he was still fastest on the opening stage. He and co-driver Andrew Roughead had extended their advantage to almost a minute when they were blinded by the low sun and skidded into a signpost on SS10. Their lead was cut to just two seconds, but a stunning run over the final two stages brought the winning margin up to 26 seconds.

It was Taylor's second victory of the season on Northumberland's Otterburn Military Ranges, having won the

Tyneside Stages there earlier this year.

"We hadn't made a mistake all day, but then, with the sun in my eyes, a fifth gear into a third gear corner came out of nowhere," said Taylor. "I hit a signpost and got stuck and I was just about to turn the engine off and give up, when I put it in reverse gear and it popped out onto the road. It was a one-in-a-million chance! Then it was flat-out on the remaining stages to try and regain the lead, which we managed to do."

Snow, sleet and torrential rain made conditions extremely difficult and led to a number of very big accidents. No fewer than 34 out of the 88 starters failed to finish, with a large number of cars returning to the service area at The Airstrips on a tow rope.

The weather played a significant role in the outcome of the 2018 MSA Asphalt Rally Championship. Whoever finished ahead of the other between Daniel Harper and Jason Pritchard would become drivers' champion, while if they both retired then the absent series leader Wayne Sisson would win.

The title was decided on SS4 when Harper and co-driver Chris Campbell

skated straight on at a square right, after a monsoon-like downpour had turned a downhill section into a stream. Their Minisport-run John Cooper Works WRC left the road at speed: their rally, car and title hopes in tatters.

It was easier to count who hadn't had a near miss there, with Damian Cole/Jane Nicol first to go through the fence (and later retiring their Ford Focus WRC05 after an off on SS6), Dave Turnbull/Chris Purvis spinning (and later retiring their Ford Fiesta WRC with a damaged steering arm) and Steve Irwin/Ian Middleton ripping a rear wheel off their Vauxhall Nova. So crowded was the rally car graveyard that the stage had to be temporarily halted to clear the debris.

With Harper out, the pressure was on Pritchard – although he didn't show it as he produced another stunning masterclass performance in his Ford Focus WRC05. Despite the atrocious conditions, and on his first visit to Otterburn, Pritchard only made one small mistake, an overshoot at a junction on SS10, to bring the car home second overall – and scoring maximum

Asphalt Championship points for a third time – without a scratch.

Pritchard's title comes 30 years after his father Eian narrowly missed out on winning the same championship on Otterburn. It's his fourth major rally trophy in as many years, having won three MSA British Historic Rally Championships in a row (2015, '16 and '17), also with Phil Clarke co-driving.

Gordon Morrison/Calum MacPherson jumped a ditch and landed in the field at the now infamous SS4 corner, but recovered to finish an excellent third in their Subaru Impreza rounding out the podium, with it sealing the Scottish Tarmac Rally Championship overall.

A new Frank Meagher-inspired colour scheme was working wonders for Ross Brusby, who was an incredible fourth for most of the day in his Ford Escort Mk2. "I'm driving on the limit and hoping for the best," said Brusby, who was well ahead of many four-wheel-drive cars. Co-driven by Sam Collis, alas his brilliant run came to a cruel end with gearbox failure on SS10. Stephen Simpson/Patrick Walsh

finished fourth in their CA1 Sport-run Ford Fiesta, a big spin on SS4 their only near-miss after a good day, while David Hardie/John McCulloch survived late gear downshift problems to bring their TEG Sport Subaru Impreza home fifth.

Mark McCulloch/Michael Hendry finished just 13 seconds behind in sixth (Subaru Impreza). Mull winner Paul MacKinnon and co-driver Rob Fagg came home seventh after driveshaft and steering issues in their Ford Fiesta, while Barry Lindsay/Caroline Lodge finished an incredible eighth overall in their Peugeot 106 GTI. Lee Hastings/Cole Hastings (Subaru Impreza) and Keith Robathan/Ken Bills (BMW M3) completed the top 10.

Stephen Bethwaite/Ann Forster (Vauxhall Nova) won Class 1, beating John Cressey/Martin Cressey (Mini Cooper S) by just eight seconds. There were convincing class wins for Lindsay/Lodge, Ross McCallum/James Ralph (MG Maestro), Keith Robathan/Ken Bills (BMW M3), Ray Cunningham/Jared Gill (Austin Cooper S) and Adam Hanner/Wayne Wood (Peugeot 205 GTI).

ROAD RALLY ROUND UP

Kevin Davies/Dale Bowen won a closely fought **Rally Cilwendeg** to secure their third win on the West Wales classic. The pair set a blistering pace in the opening sections and had built up a lead of 25 seconds over Daniel Jones/Gerwyn Barry by the petrol halt. The latter crew retired in the second half with reported engine maladies.

The chase of the leaders was then taken up by Andy Davies/Michael Gilbey, who admitted to being slightly off the pace early on; the fastest crew after the restart, they closed their halfway deficit but were still half a minute behind at the finish.

Michael Gilbey had already secured the Welsh Championship crown, but the result gave Andy Davies a firm hand on the drivers' title. His task was made easier as Mark 'GT' Roberts failed to make the start and George Williams was delayed for six minutes when a rotor arm broke; without that delay Williams could have challenged for a top placing.

Top seeds Dyfrig James/Emyr Jones, in fifth place at petrol, went out soon after the restart with carburettor problems. Meanwhile

John Davies had hoped to follow up his third place on Saturday's Exmoor Targa with a win on the Cilwendeg. However, having dashed back from Somerset, he found his Vauxhall Astra's engine not to be running smoothly and scrubbed his entry.

The **Exmoor Targa Rally** was won by Owen Turner/Rachel Vestey, they finished over two minutes clear of the field. Guy Woodcock/Will Rutherford had led initially but a broken throttle cable on one test and a puncture on a second ruined their chances. The runner-up spot was taken by Pat Thomas/Sam Davies.

Ian Mills

Results

Rally Cilwendeg

Organiser: Teifi Valley MC **When:** October 27/28
Where: West Wales **Championships:** WAMC & ANWCC **Route:** 120 miles **Starters:** 81.
1 Kevin Davies/Dale Bowen (Ford Escort) 54s;
2 Andy Davies/Michael Gilbey (Subaru Impreza) +30s; 3 Rhodri Evans/Diwyyn John (Escort);
4 Chris Hand/Dafydd Sion Lloyd (Escort); 5 Dale Furniss/Dai Roberts (VW Golf GTI); 6 Gavin Edwards/Cadog Davies (Escort); 7 Kevin Jones/Alan James (Toyota Corolla); 8 Kevin Kerr/Huw Rhys Manion (Escort); 9 Mark Lennox/Ian Beaman (Escort);
10 Dafydd Evans/Lee Taylor (Escort). **Class winners:** Jones/James; Daniel Williams/Shawn Richards (BMW 318).

Miraculous Escort Fastnet win for Tourish

Fastnet Rally

By Martin Walsh

Organiser: Skibbereen & District Car Club; **When:** October 28; **Where:** Bantry, Co. Cork. **Championship:** Final round, PlasticBags.ie Southern 4 Rally Championship. **Stages:** 9; **Starters:** 93 (80 main & 13 juniors).

Damien Tourish and Domhnaill McAlaney became the first Ford Escort Mk2 winners of the Fastnet Stages Rally since Bernard O'Brien in 1989. They headed competition from Melvyn Evans (Ford Fiesta RS WRC) and James Stafford (Darrrian T90 GTR).

Defending winner Daragh O'Riordan (Fiesta RS WRC) powered into a 7.3-second lead over local ace Daniel Cronin (Fiesta R5) on the opening stage. However, on a tricky second stage O'Riordan cut a corner too tight and dropped a wheel into a drain. He broke the track control arm, punctured a wheel, bent the steering and retired.

While new leader Cronin finished the stage 17.7 seconds ahead of Tourish, he struck an errant feline at the flying finish line and damaged the radiator. Although temporary measures

enabled him to start the third stage, they proved unsuccessful and he had to stop when the temperatures began to soar.

Tourish led Evans by four seconds, the latter – co-driven by Sean Hayde – lost over 10s with an overshoot.

Over the remaining six stages, Tourish prevailed with Evans reluctant to pursue the rally winner. Changes to the dampers brought Stafford and co-driver James F Stafford from 10th to third place.

Earlier, Vince McSweeney (Mitsubishi) and Barry Meade (Escort) battled for that position with Meade in control until he retired when he damaged the rear axle following an altercation with the scenery on the penultimate stage. Stephen Carey (Fiesta R2) was set for seventh until the gearbox broke on the final stage. His successor, Somerset's Martyn England (Ford Fiesta R5+), did more than enough to clinch the Southern 4 Rally Championship.

Results

1 Damien Tourish/Domhnaill McAlaney (Ford Escort Mk2) 1h00m49.6s; 2 Melvyn Evans/Sean Hayde (Ford



In a field headed by four-wheel-drive cars, Tourish took victory

Fiesta RS WRC) +21s; 3 James Stafford/James F Stafford (Darrrian T90 GTR); 4 Vince McSweeney/Michael Kearney (Mitsubishi Lancer); 5 Vincent O'Shea/Alastair Wylie (Escort); 6 Brian Brady/Leonard Tuite (Honda Civic); 7 Martyn England/Dawn England (Ford Fiesta R5+); 8 John McHugh/Brian Boyle (Toyota Corolla); 9 Jason Ryan/Peter Keohane (Civic); 10 Seanie McGrath/Ger Clancy (Civic). **Class winners:** Simon Duggan/Gavin Sheehan (Civic); Cal McCarthy/Derek O'Brien (Citroen C2 R2); John Bagge/Ron Mackey (Peugeot 306) Pat Price

Andrew Curran (Subaru Impreza) Michael Lenihan/Chris Brown (Suzuki Swift GTI); Michael P Kelleher/Eoghan McCarthy (Escort); Brady/Tuite; Colin Roche/Derry Long (Toyota Starlet); Kieran Hayes/Sean Ward (Peugeot 205 GTI); McHugh/Boyle; O'Shea/Wylie; McSweeney/Kearney; Emma Marie Nott/Declan Casey (Escort); George Swanton/Labhaoise Hyland (Escort); Denis Cronin/Helen O'Sullivan (Ford Escort); Adrian Kermodé/Jon Hawkins (Porsche 911); Colín O'Donoghue/Lianne O'Sullivan (Honda Civic).

RACING REPORTS

SILVERSTONE: 750MC BIRKETT RELAY BY MARCUS PYE

OCTOBER 27

Photos: Steve Jones

The 68th running of the 750 Motor Club's Six Hour Relay – honouring founder Holland Birkett – brought an unprecedented Scratch result as a team of front-wheel-drive saloons covered the greatest distance.

In the presence of a winning Bentley from 1951's inaugural event, 66 hopefuls set off on the Grand Prix circuit for the annual event.

If Carl Swift, Stewart Lines and 2013 handicap winners Lee and Shayne Deegan's intent to outrun Radical SR3s with a trio of mighty Seat Cupra TCRs sounded like bluster to some, they hadn't factored in their speed or the wet weather.

But for a broken CV joint on Swift's Team Cupra car at the beginning of his second stint, the Spanish machines made light work of increasingly sodden conditions once the forecasted rain came.

Superb drives by the Deegan brothers on their debuts in Area Motorsport's car led to ex-BTCC racer Lines holding off Breakell Racing Heroes' Wade Eastwood's orange SR3 over a heart-in-mouth 135th and final lap in traffic, battling standing water and near darkness.

Having rounded Brooklands and Luffield together, they accelerated through Woodcote and were split by two cars lengths at the chequer.

"That was incredible, but I'd have preferred to be the chaser," said Lines.

"These cars are awesome, even when it was aquaplaning on the straights," added Lee Deegan.

The battle for the Handicap trophy wasn't quite as close but still provided plenty of intrigue.

Paul Rose (JPR Motorsport, Saker), Classic Clubmans champion Clive Wood (The Defibrillators, Mallock Mk21/23 Proto) immediately split the Radicals of Eastwood and Brian Murphy (from James Breakell's twin squads) and Elliot Goodman (RAW Motorsport).

The Subaru engine in Rose's car developed a misfire second time out, but Steve Harris in his new 540bhp Saker and VW Fun Cup driver Dominic Jackson (RapX) got them home fourth.

Debutants Podium Preparation's handicap hopes took a blow when Andrew Stacey's Mini Cooper S broke in

RED RASCAL TEAM CLAIM HANDICAP HONOURS



BMW E46 was the car of choice in the Handicap

Friday testing, but a dash back to Andrew Jebson's Lincolnshire base to fetch a substitute Citroen C1 showed spirit.

With Chris Bailan's BMW 330 and Andrew Peck's Porsche 968 clearly much pacier, and expectations revised by the calculator boffins, they were surprised to lead the field for almost four hours.

By the end of the fifth hour Honda Civic Type R equips Reasonably Northern and Area Motorsport on 106 laps each – although the former would receive one extra credit lap in the final reckoning – went top. As the deluge continued, they hit a glitch apiece as Daniels Reason and Hobson slid off.

Led by Civic Cup champion Rob Baker

and runner-up Mark Grice, Area's clincher was a set of shared wet tyres to their rivals' cut slicks.

That wasn't enough though, for Red Rascal's BMW E46 M3s shared by Chris Lovett/Jamie Ingram, Russell Clarke/Kevin Dengate and Kenny Coleman/Reece Jones – leading a very strong marque representation – maintained their momentum and grew to victory.

Its 127 laps was topped-up to 144 with credits, a gross score matched by the Mostly Rusty Two Seaters Toyota MR2 Mk1s of Gareth Baxter, Neil Stratton, Adam Lockwood and Dave Hemingway, who received 30 bonuses, with Area Motorsport third.

RESULTS

Birkett Six Hour Relay - Handicap
 1 Red Rascal – Chris Lovett, Russell Clarke, Kenny Coleman, Kevin Dengate, Jamie Ingram, Reece Jones (BMW E46 M3s); 2 Mostly Rusty Two Seaters – Gareth Baxter, Neil Stratton, Adam Lockwood, Dave Hemingway (Toyota MR2 Mk1s); 3 Area Motorsport – Mark Grice, Rob Baker, Martin Dalzell, Daniel Hobson (Honda Civic Type Rs); 4 Reasonably Northern – Lewis Rose, Daniel Reason, Jason Ballantyne, David Vincent (Honda Civic Type Rs); 5 Routec Racing 330 Flyers – Martin Roche, Bill Redropp, Darren Ball (BMW E46 330s); 6 Caterham Billies – Max Lynn, Max Gaunt, Charlie Mizon (Caterham 7s). **Class Winners** Red Rascals; Mostly Rusty Two Seaters; Cupra Racing – Carl Swift, Lee Deegan, Shayne Deegan, Stewart Lines (SEAT Cupra TCRs); Podium Preparation – Andrew Stacey (Citroen C1); Chris Bailan (BMW E46 330); Andrew Peck (Porsche 968).

Scratch result

1 Cupra Racing – 2 Breakell Racing Heroes – Wade Eastwood, Ash Hicklin, Robert Rees, Charles Graham (Radical SR3s); 3 Breakell Racing – Brian Murphy, Lee Bailey, Aaron Bailey, Simon Garmiston (Radical SR3s); 4 JPR Motorsport – Paul Rose, Steve Harris (Saker S1-400s), Dominic Jackson (Saker RapX S1); 5 RAW Motorsport – Elliot Goodman, Barry Liversidge, John MacLeod (Radical SR3 RSXs); 6 Red Rascal. **CW** Cupra Racing, Breakell Racing Heroes; Red Rascal; Area Motorsport. **Fastest lap** Breakell Racing Heroes 2m09.35s (102.05mph). **Pole** RAW Motorsport. S 66.



Bentley which won inaugural 1951 event

BRANDS HATCH: BARC BY BRIAN PHILLIPS

OCTOBER 27/28

SMITH TAKES CONTROL WITH INTERMARQUE DOUBLE WIN

Lewis Smith took a major step towards his first Intermarque title with a double victory at the championship's penultimate round.

Nearest challenger Steve Burrows is still well in touch, though, and finished runner-up in both of Sunday's races after starting the day level on points.

Past seasons have been dominated by Matt Simpson and latterly Malcolm Blackman, with Smith a rapid but irregular threat since he joined the championship.

Last weekend he was in imperious form, leading throughout a damp first race. Burrows was delayed in traffic, helping Blackman to snatch second only to spin moments later. He recovered to take third, overtaking Ray Harris in traffic.

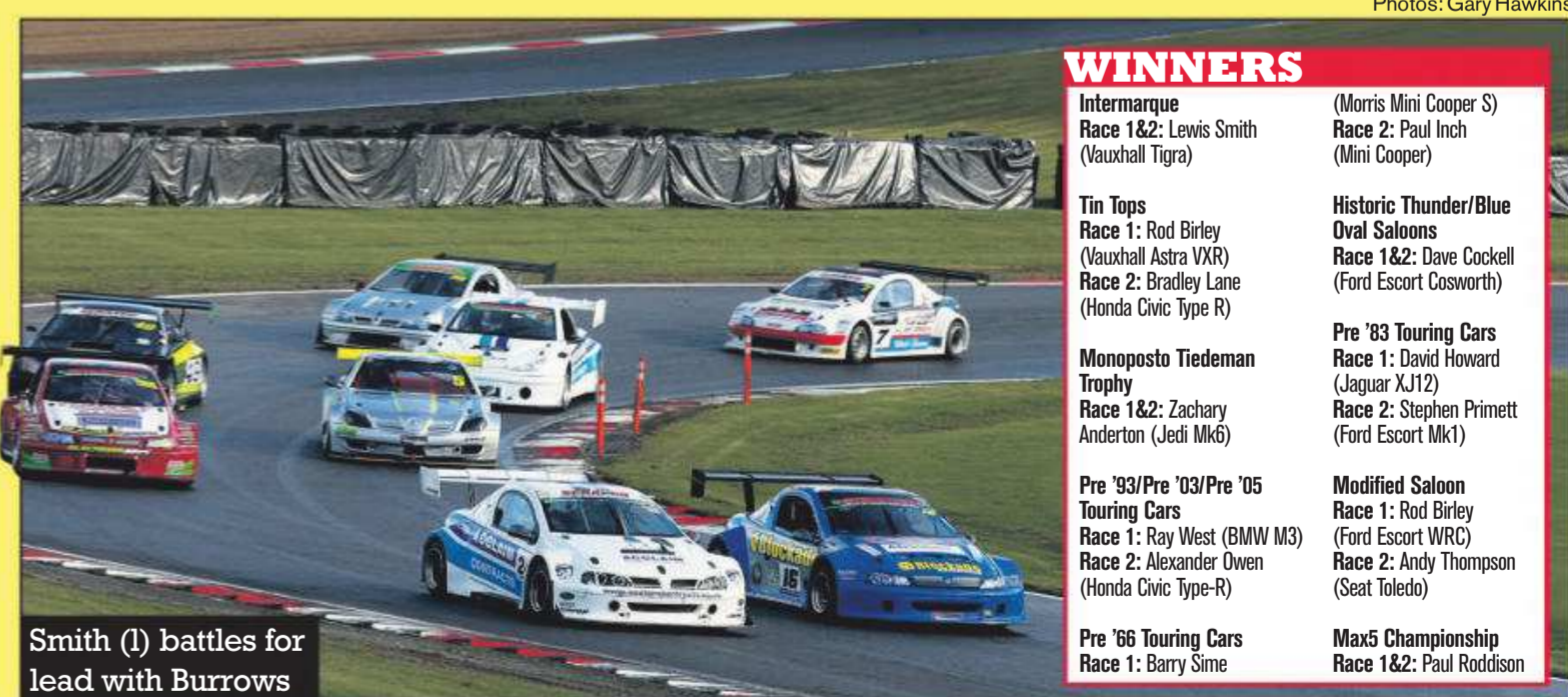
Smith started eighth on a part-reversed race two grid, but in a breathtaking three

abreast move went from third to first at Paddock Hill at the start of lap two. Blackman held second until his car died at Graham Hill, promoting Burrows. Harris reached the front of a closely matched group to take third.

A successful debut in a Vauxhall Astra VXR in the **South Eastern Tin Tops** earned Rod Birley victory ahead of Bradley Lane's Honda Civic Type R in race one. He followed the Sussex man home in race two but still secured a class win. Chris Bassett (Peugeot 205 GTI) twice joined them on the podium.

A pair of **Monoposto** races brought victories for Zachary Anderton's Jedi. Alex Fores' F3 Dallara led more than half of race one before finishing second, but retired in race two. This ended in confusion after a muddled safety car intervention, which also indirectly prompted a shunt when some drivers were unsighted as those ahead braked.

Four-time winner Ian Bower (BMW M3) plunged off at Paddock while chasing Ray West's M3 in pursuit of another **Pre '93** victory in the first of eight Classic Touring Car races. West missed Sunday's wet race with a lack of suitable tyres, leaving Alexander Owen (Honda Civic



Smith (1) battles for lead with Burrows

Type R) to win by more than 40s.

A broken clutch on Alan Greenhalgh's Ford Falcon after claiming **Pre '66** pole left Barry Sime (Mini) to a comfortable win on Saturday. Paul Inch (Mini) and Michael Sheraton (Ford Anglia) battled mightily for second despite Inch grappling with clutch problems. After overnight repairs, Inch mastered the wet conditions to win on Sunday.

Dave Cockell's Ford Escort broke an auxiliary drive belt in **Classic Thunder** qualifying leaving him 12th on the grid,

but he charged into the lead before half distance. Balginder Sidhu (BMW M6), Andrew Wilson (Holden Monaro) and Adam Hatfield (Toyota Avenis) finished next, but Lee Gillard's Subaru had hotly contested second when he tangled with a backmarker and crashed opposite the pits. Cockell won again on Sunday, but only just from a closing Ilsa Cox (SEAT Leon).

Highlight of the first day's action was a five-way contest for **Pre '83** honours. David Howard's getaway from fourth on

WINNERS

Intermarque Race 1&2: Lewis Smith (Vauxhall Tigra)	(Morris Mini Cooper S) Race 2: Paul Inch (Mini Cooper)
Tin Tops Race 1: Rod Birley (Vauxhall Astra VXR) Race 2: Bradley Lane (Honda Civic Type R)	Historic Thunder/Blue Oval Saloons Race 1&2: Dave Cockell (Ford Escort Cosworth)
Monoposto Tiedeman Trophy Race 1&2: Zachary Anderton (Jedi Mk6)	Pre '83 Touring Cars Race 1: David Howard (Jaguar XJ12) Race 2: Stephen Primett (Ford Escort Mk1)
Pre '93/Pre '03/Pre '05 Touring Cars Race 1: Ray West (BMW M3) Race 2: Alexander Owen (Honda Civic Type-R)	Modified Saloon Race 1: Rod Birley (Ford Escort WRC) Race 2: Andy Thompson (Seat Toledo)
Pre '66 Touring Cars Race 1: Barry Sime	Max5 Championship Race 1&2: Paul Roddison



Cockell won in Historic Thunder

Photos: Gary Hawkins

SPORTING SCENE

Eleven-race schedule for refreshed World RX line-up

An 11-round schedule will make up the World Rallycross Championship in 2019, one event less than in recent seasons.

Having been in the series since its inception, the Portuguese round at Montalegre has been dropped, with the year starting at a flyaway round for the first time, at Abu Dhabi's Yas Marina Circuit on the first weekend in April.

The calendar maintains a similar look to recent seasons, with Barcelona holding round two three weeks after the season opener, and Spa replacing Mettet as the Belgian round in May. The British event is at Silverstone on May Bank Holiday weekend.

The Swedish, Canadian and French rounds maintain traditional slots on the first weekends of July, August and September respectively, after a stop-off in Norway. The Swedish at Holjes has been announced as remaining on the series' schedule until at least 2023 in a five-year deal. The year will conclude with the Latvian round in September before the second event in Austin two weeks later and the final round in Cape Town at the end of November.

The European Championship will have a standalone round, at the Estering in Germany which won't host a round of World RX for the first time, Euro RX also joining World RX in five rounds, including at Silverstone as revealed by *Motorsport News* in September.

CALENDAR

2019 World RX Calendar

DATE	TRACK
April 5/6	Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi
April 27/28	Barcelona, Barcelona
May 11/12	Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium
May 25/26	Silverstone, Great Britain
June 15/16	Hell, Norway
July 6/7	Holjes, Sweden
Aug 17/18	Buxehude, Germany (Euro RX only)
Aug 3/4	Trois-Rivieres, Canada
Aug 31/Sept 1	Loheac, France
Sept 14/15	Riga, Latvia
Sept 28/29	Austin, USA
Nov 30/Dec 1	Cape Town, South Africa



Photos: Trevor Coulsen, Hal Ridge, Colin Casserley

O'Donovan (l), Godfrey (r) and Higgins

TRIO BATTLE FOR BRITISH RX

Silverstone to play host to a three-way shoot-out for national honours

By Hal Ridge

Three drivers enter the final round of the British Rallycross Championship at Silverstone this weekend separated by just five points.

The 2007 champion Ollie O'Donovan leads by four points from five-time champion Julian Godfrey, with three-time British Rally champion Mark Higgins just a point adrift.

Fourteen Supercars are entered for the season finale. The two worst scores from each drivers' first eight

rounds are dropped, but the Silverstone scores have to count to the final tally.

With three wins to his name in 2018 so far, first or second will be good enough for O'Donovan to claim his second crown, but if he is third with Godfrey, who also has a trio of victories or Higgins, who has twice been on the top step, taking victory, either challenger could take the title.

"It's very close but we can't get too wrapped up thinking about the points situation before the semi-finals," said O'Donovan. "I'm just going to go there

and do the best I can, then see how things are looking. I would love to win a second title and that's what we've been working really hard towards this year, that's why we focused on this instead of going to Europe. But, this is rallycross, you can't take anything for granted."

A number of drivers could also mix up the order with strong results at Silverstone, including returning 2016 champion Dan Rooke, driving for O'Donovan's team, World RX driver Oliver Bennett, and Belgian GT racer, Enzo Ide, making his rallycross debut.

"It's been an interesting first season in rallycross and now it all comes down to Silverstone," said Albatec Racing driver Higgins. "The team has given me a great car and it's a shame that we are not in a stronger position going into the final round after some interesting luck and on-track incidents. It's still very possible to win the championship and anything can happen."

"I hope we can have a fair, clean race, and with such a strong entry it will be very interesting to see the outcome of the final points."

OlsbergsMSE team to take a sabbatical from World RX while it looks for partner for an electric return

The OlsbergsMSE World Rallycross team will take a sabbatical from the series next season to focus on its customer programmes while working on a deal to compete in the planned electric switch from 2021.

The 2014 World RX teams' champion is yet to qualify for the

final in 2018 with drivers Kevin Eriksson and Robin Larsson. Team boss Andreas Eriksson has cited the cost of development as another factor why his privately-run team will take a break from the World RX next year.

"We have to do this for the company's longer-term future as the

cost to operate at a competitive level today in World RX is too high for us," he said. "Our belief is that with sensible changes to the technical regulations, most of the current Supercars have a long future and this discipline can continue to grow in a healthy way – as can our company."

OMSE is working on plans to align with a manufacturer to compete in World RX's planned electric switch.

Eriksson said: "We are looking forward to the arrival of electric rallycross in 2021, and as such will put our efforts next year into securing a manufacturer partner."

BTRDA RALLYCROSS

Constantine lands his biggest prize

BTRDA Rallycross: Croft

By Hal Ridge

Organiser: BTRDA When: October 28 Where: Croft Starters: 72.

In his maiden season of motorsport, 14-year-old Luke Constantine completed an unbeaten run in the BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross Championship junior category at the Croft season finale and became the youngest winner of the BTRDA Gold Star rallycross title.

Ahead of the finale, Constantine was far from assured of the overall crown. Former MSA Super National champion Tony Lynch, racing in the Super Modified category, had won on six occasions. However, that was pending an appeal from the previous round at Blyton a fortnight earlier. If the Blyton result had stood (where Lynch has been declared the winner) and Lynch won the last round, he would have beaten more competitors than Constantine over the course of the year. With each drivers' two worse scores dropped, Lynch would have lifted the overall crown.

But, in an appeal hearing at Croft, the Blyton win was returned to on-track victor Patrick Ryan, meaning that even though Lynch passed Mike Dresser in the Super Modified final to finish as top registered points scorer in the last race of the year, he missed out on the big trophy.

Dresser had beaten Lynch to



Luke Constantine claimed the BTRDA Gold Star at Croft

Turn 1 in the final and followed the similar Lotus Exige of eventual winner Dave Bellerby for the opening lap. Bellerby took the advantage as Lynch headed Ryan, to complete the podium. That gave Lynch the Super Modified title.

Luke Constantine fended off older brother Tom to seal his ninth Junior win as Tom secured the Junior title with second. Their cousin James Constantine finished a lonely third.

In preparation for the final round of the British Rallycross Championship this weekend at Silverstone, Ollie O'Donovan, the British RX points leader, used the Clubmans finale as a pre-event test and dominated to claim victory.

O'Donovan led the Clubman 4x4 (Supercar) final throughout, while returning Supercar racers Tommy Graham and Derrick Jobb battled over second, Graham prevailing.

Dan Beattie claimed another Production 4x4 final victory in his Subaru Impreza from Swift Sport racer Dominic Flitney.

Citroen Saxo driver Dale Ford led Luke Mason in a close Production category encounter in the final to claim victory, with Andrew Smith completing the podium. Fourth was enough for Irishman Keith Kershaawe to win the class title.

In the Classics, pole starter Shaun Buckley made a poor start as Darren Grimston seized the advantage to claim victory at his home circuit ahead of Martin Peel.

Results
Clubman 4x4: 1 Ollie O'Donovan (Ford Fiesta); 2 Tommy Graham (Ford Fiesta) +15.328s; 3 Derrick Jobb (Ford Focus); 4 Mike Manning (Ford Fiesta).
Super Modified: 1 Dave Bellerby (Lotus Exige); 2 Tony Lynch (Ford Ka) +1.405s; 3 Patrick Ryan (Vauxhall Nova); 4 Slawomir Woloch (BMW M3).
Production: 1 Dale Ford (Citroen Saxo); 2 Luke Mason (Peugeot 106) +1.773s; 3 Andrew Smith (Renault Clio); 4 Keith Kershaawe (Peugeot 106).
Production 4x4: 1 Dan Beattie (Subaru Impreza); 2 Dale Ford (Citroen Saxo) +2.987s; 3 Paul Davis (Subaru Impreza); 4 James Lyon (Nissan Pulsar).
Classic: 1 Darren Grimston (Vauxhall Nova); 2 Martin Peel (Peugeot 205) +4.804s; 3 David Ewin (Ford Fiesta); 4 Ryan Taylor (BMW E30).
Junior: 1 Luke Constantine (Suzuki Swift); 2 Tom Constantine (Suzuki Swift) +0.389s; 3 James Constantine (Suzuki Swift); 4 Patrick O'Donovan (Suzuki Swift).

BRISCA F1

Tough going for Shoot Out battlers

BriSCA F1: Birmingham and Northampton

By Colin Casserley

Organiser: Speedworth Incarace When: October 27/28 Where: Birmingham Wheels and Northampton International Raceway Starters: 56/37.

Birmingham Wheels played host to the last Tarmac round of the National Series Shoot Out on Saturday night and Dan Johnson rounded out his season with a consolation and final double.

That left him thinking what might have been if his shale car had not developed engine problems that prevented him attending the shale rounds of the contest.

On Sunday at Northampton, Will Hunter chalked up a heat and final double. Hunter also missed some rounds of the Shoot Out due to family commitments and, even with the points from Northampton, he is too far behind the series leaders to make an impact.

At Birmingham, George Elwell, the final winner at the previous Tar round at Skegness, grabbed the early lead with Joe Nickolls in a close second place. Further back, Johnson broke free of a fierce battle among the Shoot Out drivers and began to close on the race leader. Elwell suffered a puncture on his outside front tyre just after the halfway



Will Hunter was on top in Northampton's Shoot Out round

point, which allowed Johnson to take control of the race. Nickolls came under pressure for second from Lee Fairhurst in the closing stages but held on for the runner's up spot.

At Northampton, Hunter dominated his heat and was soon at the front in the final. He said: "To win heat and final was a dream at the start of the season. I have to thank my family and crew who have made it possible, I could not have done it without them."

It was a mixed weekend for the Shoot Out leaders. Stuart Smith Jr chalked up a win in the Grand National on Saturday night but suffered heavy damage in a heat race crash on Sunday. The team were able to patch the car together for the consolation and final but he failed to score in the Grand National. Second-in-the-charts Frankie Wainman Jr suffered

damage in his heat race on Sunday but was able to repair his car to record a win in the Grand National.

At the end of the meeting, Smith and Wainman are tied on points at the top of the points table.

Mat Newson took advantage and a solid points scoring weekend to move into third place in the standings and is just three points off the top spot.

The Shoot Out series continues at Stoke on Saturday with the final round the following week at Belle Vue in Manchester.

Results
Birmingham
 1 Dan Johnson; 2 Joe Nickolls; 3 Lee Fairhurst; 4 Karl Hawkins; 5 Frankie Wainman Jr; 6 Martin Spiers; 7 Mat Newson; 8 Stuart Smith Jr; 9 Will Hunter; 10 Danny Wainman.
Northampton
 1 Hunter; 2 Newson; 3 F Wainman Jr; 4 Jake Harry; 5 Smith Jr; 6 Paul Hines; 7 D Wainman; 8 Karl Roberts; 9 Frankie Wainman Junior Jr; 10 Steve Malkin.

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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

MN SAYS...

Lewis finally underlines his position

The Mercedes-Benz man has landed his fifth crown at last, and isn't slowing down

OK, so a fourth place finish in the Mexican Grand Prix was not really the way that Lewis Hamilton would have wanted to land his fifth world championship title, but that didn't really seem to matter. He had finally met his date with destiny – and his joy was unbounded.

Even Sebastian Vettel acknowledged that Lewis's performance this year had been on another planet, and he encouraged his principal rival to maintain his level of competitiveness so that the two could enjoy another fight next season. Given the comparative performances of the two drivers across the campaign which is now coming to an end, that is highly fanciful from the Ferrari driver. If the drivers perform at their same level next season, then Hamilton is likely to continue to outstrip the German.

There is talk of Michael Schumacher's seven titles record becoming large in Hamilton's focus, and he has signed a two-year deal to remain with Mercedes-Benz. What once seemed impossible is becoming more and more real, and that is a testament to the new world champion's abilities.

Matt James, Editor (Twitter: @MattJMNews)



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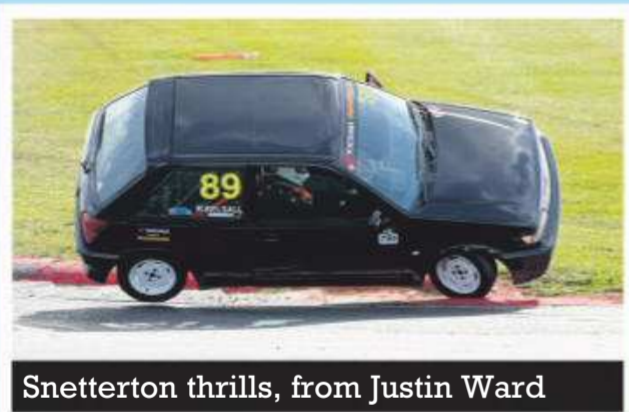
**ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S
FAVOURITE OF
THE WEEK!**



Dan Webster's Mini shot from Oulton Park



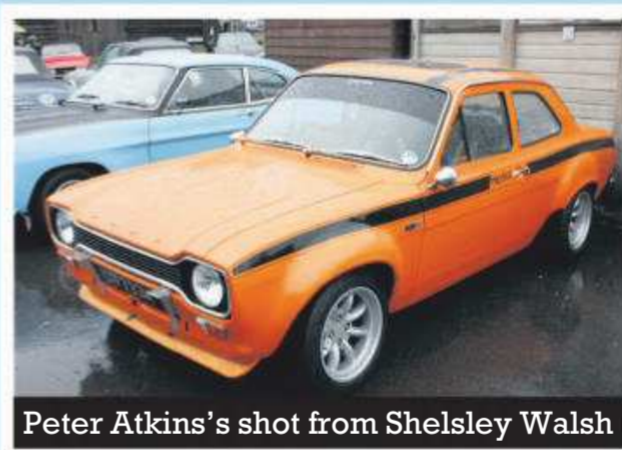
Richard Cranston went to the British Racing and Sports Car Club meet at Donington



Snetterton thrills, from Justin Ward



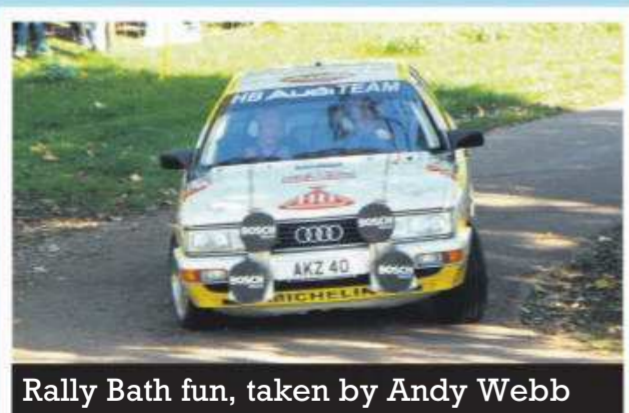
Duncan Stephens was on the Tamar trial



Peter Atkins's shot from Shelsley Walsh



Hannah Doran's shot from Snetterton



Rally Bath fun, taken by Andy Webb



Richard Salisbury from Wales Rally GB



More Mini action, from Graham Lomax



Gary Woollett enjoyed the close-quarters action at the recent Formula Ford Festival

GOT AN OPINION?

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TV GUIDE

Watch the final round of the 2018 **Porsche Supercup** championship from Mexico City as reigning champion Michael Ammermuller was within touching distance of reclaiming his crown (Thursday, 1530-1600hrs, Eurosport 2).

This week's **F1 Classic Race** is the 1998 Hungarian Grand Prix (Thursday, 2100-2320hrs, Sky Sports F1). Twenty years ago, against the faster McLaren cars, Michael Schumacher and Ferrari successfully implemented a

three-stop strategy to claim an unlikely victory.

Enjoy the best moments from the penultimate round of the **World Rally Championship** from Spain (Friday, 1730-1830hrs, BT Sport ESPN). The title battle reached fever pitch between Sebastien Ogier and Thierry Neuville, while Sebastien Loeb rolled back the years with an emotional and unlikely win.

And catch the final round of the **European Le Mans Series** from Portimao (Saturday, 1500-1600hrs, BT Sport 3).



Schumacher and Ferrari took famous win at Hungaroring in 1998

LISTINGS



Trucks will be in action this weekend at Brands Hatch along with Pickups and much more

RACING SATURDAY/SUNDAY

■ **Silverstone, Northants**
Walter Hayes Trophy: FF1600, Open Wheel, Closed Wheel, BWRDC Ladies Race, Allcomers
Starts Saturday, racing from 1145hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 0900hrs **Admission** adult £15, under 15 free **Web** silverstone.co.uk **Contact** 08704 588260
 ■ **Brands Hatch, Kent**
BARC meeting: Trucks, Pickups, Legends, Junior Saloons **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1145hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1030hrs (qualifying from 1000hrs) **Admission** adult £25, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

SUNDAY

■ **Mondello Park, Ireland**
Fiesta Endurance Race
Starts racing from 1200hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Admission** adult Euro 15, child free **Web** mondello.ie

RALLY SATURDAY

■ **Oulton Park, Cheshire**
Graham Coffey Solicitors Neil Howard Stages
Starts 0855hrs **Admission** Adults £16, teenagers 13-15 £10 **Web** nhstages.co.uk
 ■ **Kirkistown Circuit, Newtownards**
Carey Cleaning Machines Kirkistown Stages Rally
Starts 1000hrs **Admission** TBC **Web** zeklair.co.uk/mamc
 ■ **Builth Showground, Powys**
Hansford Plant Hire Builth Stages
Starts 0915hrs **Admission** TBC **Web** herefordshiremotorclub.co.uk

SUNDAY

■ **Pickering, North Yorkshire**
Mellors Elliot Motorsport Malton Forest Rally
Starts 0831hrs **Admission** free **Web** maltonmc.co.uk

SPORTING SCENE SATURDAY

■ **Silverstone, Northants**
British Rallycross
Starts 0900hrs **Admission** adult £15, under 15 free **Web** rallycrossbrx.com
 ■ **Stoke, Staffs**
BriSCA F1
Starts 1700hrs **Admission** TBC **Web** brisca.com

SUNDAY

■ **Hyde Park, London**
London to Brighton Veteran Car Run
Starts 0659hrs **Admission** free **Web** veterancarrun.com
 ■ **Hednesford, Staffs**
National Hot Rods
Starts 1400hrs **Admission** adults £17, concessions £12, children £7 **Web** nationalhotrod.com

Listings correct at time of press but check before travelling

LIVE TV

NASCAR: Texas Motor Speedway

■ **Race:**
 Sunday, 1930-0030hrs, Premier Sports



NASCAR will race in Texas

NEXT WEEK

OUT WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7



WALTER HAYES TROPHY REPORT

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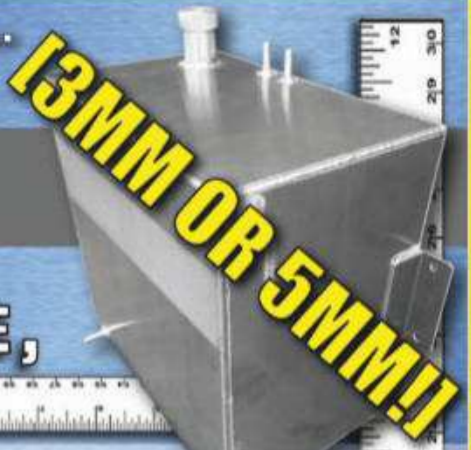
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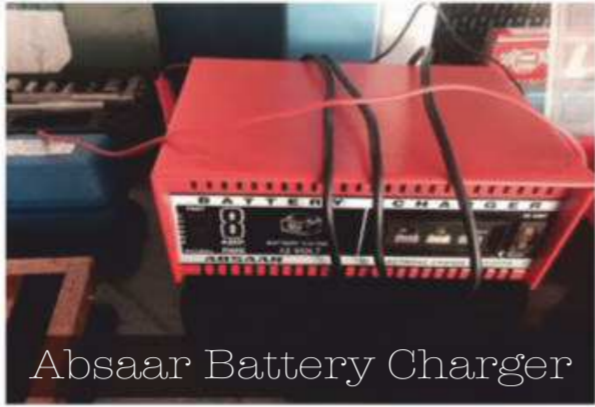
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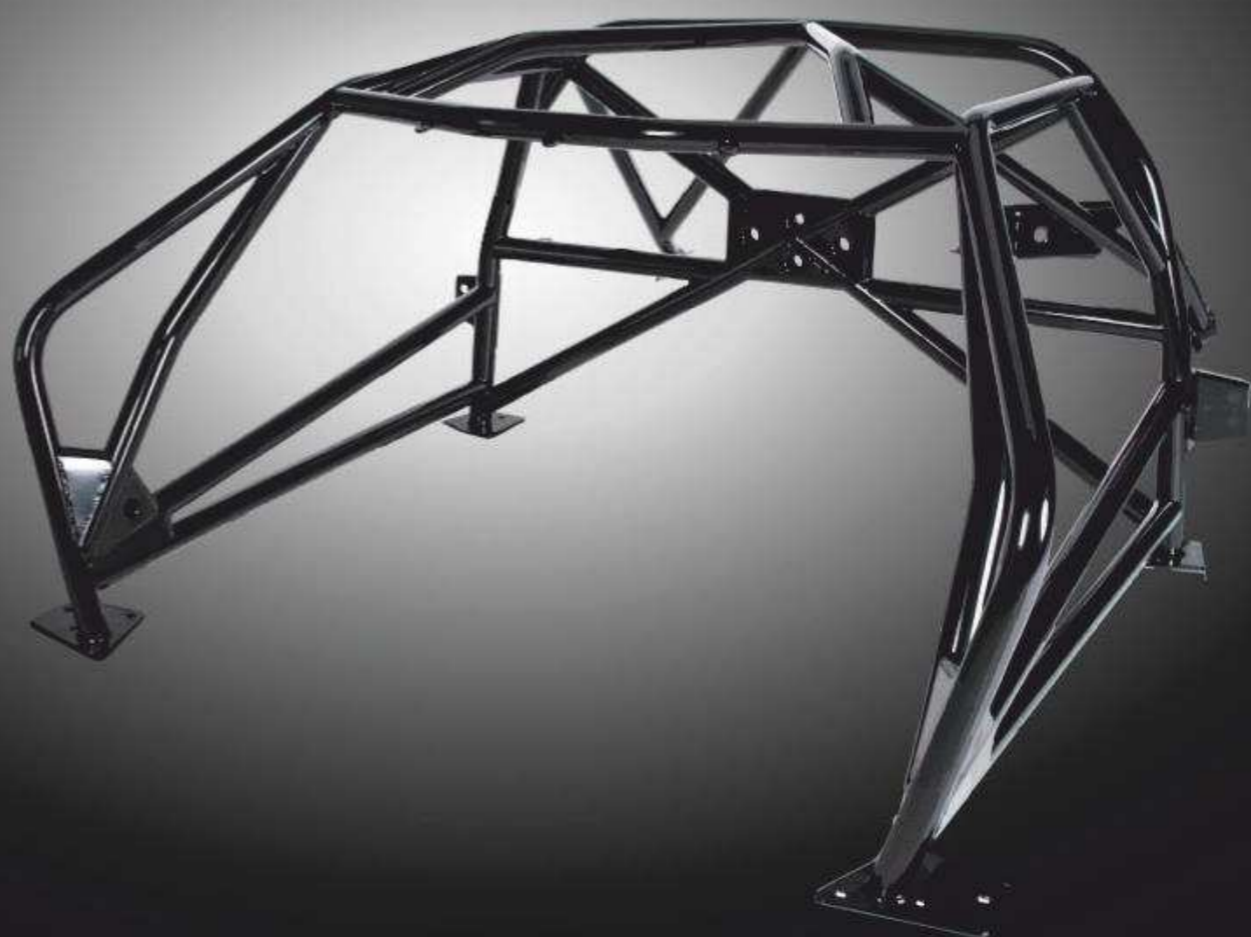


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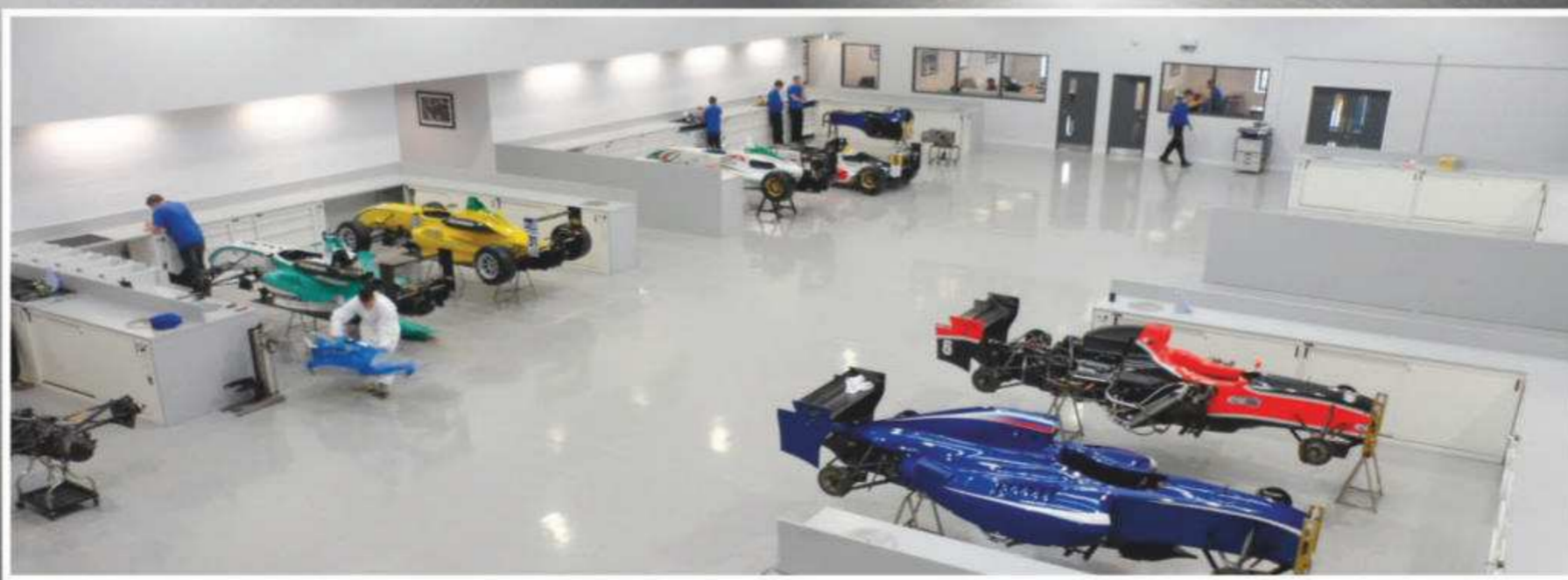
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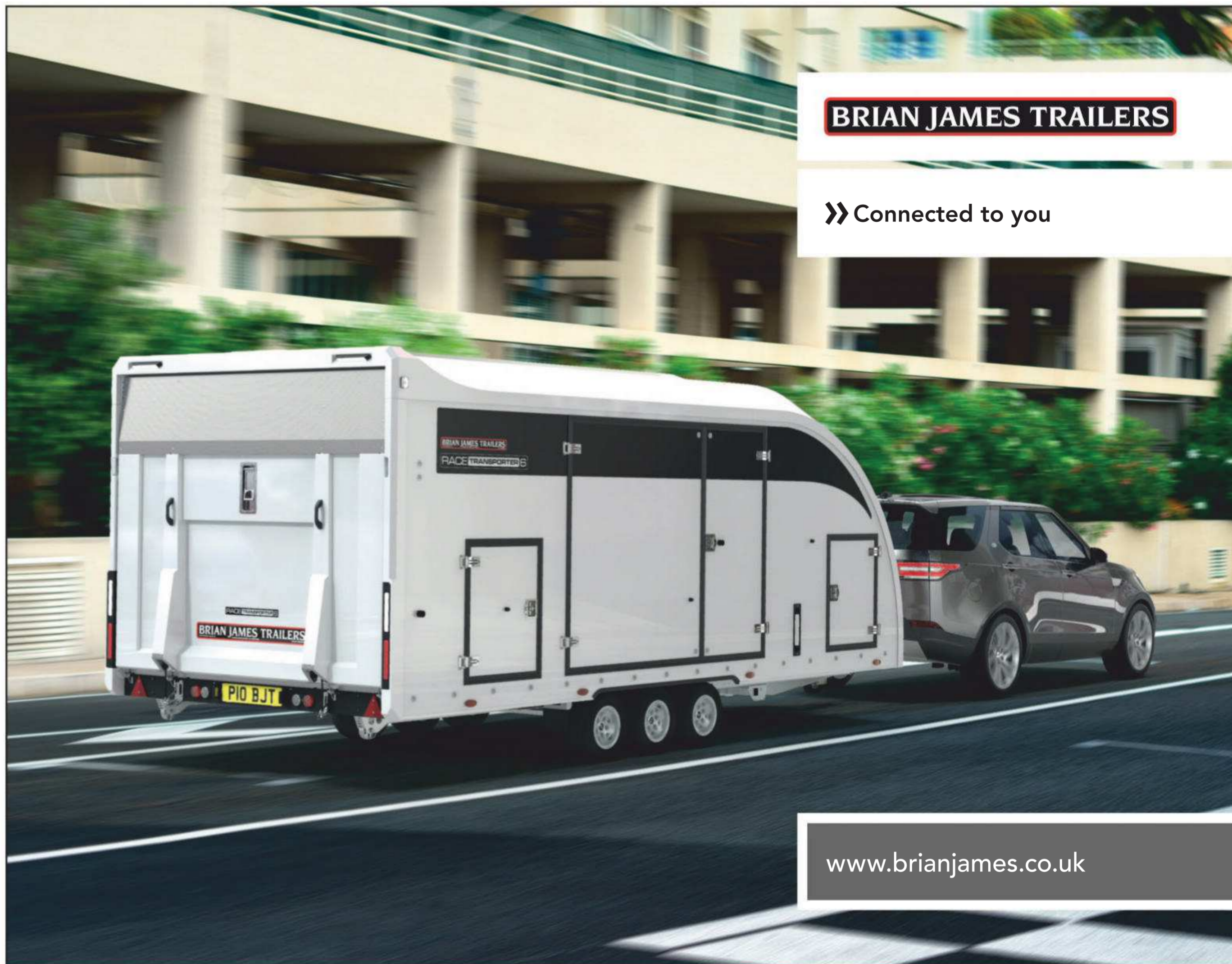
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