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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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HAMILTON EDGES CLOSER TO THE CROWN

MEXICAN GP GLORY HELPS MERC MAN ON HIS WAY **P4-5**



Ott Tanak wins first WRC crown - then quits Toyota

CHAMPION!



Tanak and the Toyota team celebrate in Salou

By David Evans

Ott Tanak ended 15 years of French rule in the World Rally Championship at last week's Rally Spain, but will now turn his back on Toyota and defend his title with Hyundai.

Second place was enough for Tanak and co-driver Martin Jarveoja to become the first Estonians to lift the World Rally Championship on an historic Sunday in Salou.

A delighted Tanak told MN: "We've been in the fire and we've been in the water, but I can feel these difficulties have given me some kind of strength to use in a good way. I've done that."

Full story, p2-3



Neuville was on top in Spain



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MOTORSPORT NEWS



BROWNE BLITZES THE FORMULA FORD FESTIVAL

BRANDS HATCH HONOURS GO TO RAY DRIVER **P24**

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How Edwards won back-to-back BRC titles

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FOR MOTORSPORT NEWS STAFF CONTACT DETAILS PLEASE SEE P31



Tanak's future has been the subject of speculation

By David Evans

Newly crowned World Rally champion Ott Tanak will be announced as a Hyundai driver in the next week.

Motorsport News understands he has signed an agreement with the South Korean firm earlier this month, a move which will end a two-year stay at Toyota.

Official confirmation of the agreement, which places Tanak in a four-driver team alongside arch-rival Thierry Neuville as well as Sebastien Loeb and Dani Sordo, is expected imminently.

News of Tanak's departure from Toyota further complicates an already muddled driver market and sparked immediate speculation that the man he lifted the world title from, Sebastien Ogier, could move into his Yaris WRC for his final season in rallying.

Tanak would not be drawn on his future, telling MN: "When things are still open, you get this kind of speculation."

Neuville immediately extolled the virtues of his new team-mate, saying: "I am very open. As I said before, I prefer to have Tanak in a Hyundai than against me in a Toyota. And the Hyundai would



Ogier has been tipped to replace Tanak in the Toyota line-up

develop quicker with his knowledge, for sure, and having Tanak in the team shows the motivation of Hyundai in the upcoming seasons and engagement. This is everything I need to win rallies, I need this engagement and I need good team-mates and we need development."

Hyundai Motorsport director Andrea Adamo, a man not normally short of words, insisted on a theoretical approach. "If," he said, "and I repeat the word 'if' this was to happen, this dream of yours, then I would have to say if everybody believed in what you wrote then it means Hyundai has taken large steps in terms of credibility and this makes me happy. For you to write what you write means that

Hyundai has a good image in the WRC. That's good."

There are indications the news could be confirmed before the end of this week, but Tanak will be bound by contractual obligations until the end of December.

He is thought unlikely to be released to drive an i20 Coupe WRC for the first time before the start of January.

Toyota team principal Tommi Makinen said: "I don't know what it opens [in terms of options]. It could open many, many discussions. It is also not so good, like I told you before, to potentially have two [top] drivers in one team - we need one each in all of the teams to make sure the fight is fair and good for the championship." Makinen's opposite number at

HOW TANAK HELD HIS NERVE IN SPAIN

HEADLINE NEWS

Photos: Red Bull Content Pool, mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Champion Ott Tanak will leave the Yaris behind

TANAK READY TO PUSH HYUNDAI INTO THE WINNER'S CIRCLE

New world champion jumps ship to join the South Korean firm



Adamo: signing is a boost

Hyundai, Adamo, has always made it clear he has no time for such philosophy. The Italian said: "My job is to do the best job for Hyundai. I am here to win for Hyundai. If I have the money, then I [would] buy all of the best drivers and I keep them all in this team."

Asked if some of his future discussions would be with Ogier, Mäkinen replied: "I have seen many times during this season [a] not-so-happy face from him. Many rallies we have seen things that have been not so absolutely correct and I mentioned to somebody that I have been worried that he is going to retire, maybe even at the end of this year. Things have been bad [for him], but you never know what can happen."

Asked about his future, Ogier replied: "This is maybe not the time to think about those questions, when the emotions are high from this rally."

Asked how confident he was of keeping Ogier in a C3 WRC next season, Pierre Budar said: "We have a contract for next year with him."

Ogier's own chances of a seventh title were scuppered in Spain when his Citroen suffered a hydraulic failure which forced him from the lead on Friday morning.

Relations between Ogier and Citroen have been strained at times this season – especially when he greeted a seventh-placed finish in Germany by being candid enough to inform the world he "couldn't drive the C3."

Relations between Ogier and Citroen's Paris HQ will be tested further by a social media post from Ogier's wife, one of Germany's preeminent sports reporters, Andrea Kaiser. Shortly after the six-time world champion dropped four minutes, she tweeted: "Not much to say about @CitroenRacing!!! Shame on you to sit a world champion in a car like that" [sic].

As Budar said, Ogier is under

contract with Citroen, but it would not be unheard of for another manufacturer to buy a driver out of an agreement and Toyota would certainly have the financial wherewithal to do so.

On the face of it, Tanak's switch could work in the favour of his Toyota team-mates Kris Meeke and Jari-Matti Latvala. But, while the Northern Irishman and the Finn bring experience and speed to the team, there would remain a question mark over the Japanese manufacturer's ability to sustain a title threat – especially with Kalle Rovanpera already signed to drive the squad's third Yaris WRC.

There is talk of Toyota following Hyundai's lead and running drivers in part-programmes in an effort to exploit running order regulations. Mäkinen is no fan of such a policy, but with the likes of Hayden Paddon, Craig Breen and Andreas Mikkelsen available next season, it could prove a viable option for the Puuppola-based team.

But none of that is the concern of Tanak and his world champion co-driver Martin Jarveoja who will place the number one on the doors of a Hyundai for the first time in the manufacturer's history.



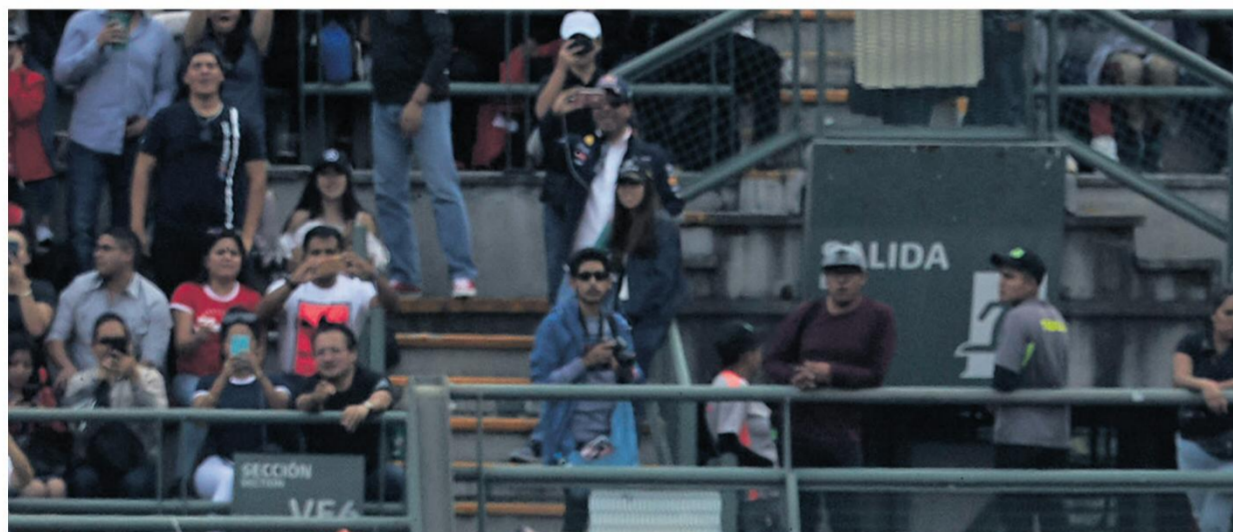
Thierry Neuville, pictured above, says that he would welcome Ott Tanak to the Hyundai team

MEXICO GP REPORT

BY JACK BENYON

HAMILTON BEATS THE ODDS

Champ-in-waiting pulls off a stunning strategy to win



A superb stint on the harder tyres set up Hamilton's victory



Lewis took his 10th 2019 win



Hamilton and Verstappen get friendly on the opening lap



A delayed pitstop ruined Leclerc's charge



Vettel turned up the pressure in the final laps

FIVE KEY TALKING

1. Hamilton pulls off an improbable victory

What will it take to force Lewis Hamilton to falter? The Mercedes driver scored another unlikely win in Mexico with what seemed to be the weight of the world in adversity on his shoulders.

With his character systematically taken to pieces in the weeks leading up to the event over his comments on social media (see column, page 7) and the absence of his race engineer Peter 'Bono' Bonnington for a medical procedure, there were plenty of flames to fuel adversity. Ferrari has been the better team and has only squandered races to Mercedes since the summer break through strategy errors or reliability issues, and a big long straight would suit the roaring V6 of the Prancing Horse.

Then, in qualifying, Red Bull jumped on the Scuderia's bandwagon and beat the two Ferraris to pole through Max Verstappen, albeit he was later penalised (see right) and demoted to fourth behind the Ferraris and Hamilton.

Even in the first phase of the race, onlookers would have been mad to predict Hamilton could win. He was almost pushed off the road at the start by Sebastian Vettel – who said he didn't see the Mercedes – and then Hamilton got a massive dollop of oversteer at Turn 2 which sent him careering towards Verstappen on the outside. Luckily both took to the grass and rejoined.

Hamilton had to work his way past Carlos Sainz to take fourth behind leader Charles Leclerc, Vettel and the fast-starting rookie Alex Albon. But then Merc made the gutsy decision to call Hamilton in early for hard tyres. Ferrari predicted the tyre would last 30 laps and Hamilton would need to do closer to double that to make his strategy work.

It provided a stunning strategic encounter, as Hamilton pitted early on the one stop, Vettel and Valtteri Bottas also one-stopped but pitted much later and Leclerc and Albon two-stopped.

Ultimately, Hamilton's early stop meant he had to run longer on the tyre, which he took more than 10 laps before Vettel and Bottas, but it gave him track position.

A spellbinding second stint from Hamilton kept the tyres alive, making it clear they would last a lot longer in the cooler conditions of Sunday. Hamilton managed a gap of just over three seconds for over 20 laps, but was calm, assured and delivered one of his best wins of the year.

Vettel and Bottas headed Leclerc and Albon – who was the top Red Bull after more Verstappen antics.

After regathering at the start, Verstappen lunged at Bottas entering the stadium section in what appeared to be a typically incredible 'Max move', but when Bottas turned in to the corner he clipped Verstappen's rear right and caused a puncture just five laps into the 71-tour race.

He drove all the way back through the field with over 60 laps on the hards – more than double what Ferrari expected was possible – to take sixth behind Albon.

"I think he could have challenged to win the race with the speed that we had," said Red Bull chief Christian Horner in a race where he believed it had the best car.

Sergio Perez held off a charging Daniel Ricciardo in the closing stages to score a brilliant seventh for Racing Point, in front of a crowd which reportedly totalled over 300,000 people during the course of the weekend.

Pierre Gasly headed Nico Hulkenberg, the latter nerfed off the road at the last corner on the last lap by Daniil Kvyat, who was handed a 10-second penalty for his role in the incident. Kvyat's antics did have a net win for Toro Rosso as it promoted Gasly two spots.

POINTS FROM MEXICO CITY

2. Max gets in more hot water...

When Valtteri Bottas ploughed into the wall at the final turn of the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez on his last lap in qualifying, few could have predicted the melee that would ensue.

Max Verstappen took his second career pole and was bullish when asked about the fact that he had improved on his final sector time, despite a yellow flag for Bottas's wrecked Merc. When asked if he backed off he said: "It didn't really look like it did it? No."

He was clearly agitated at the questions – despite not being under investigation at the time of speaking, just after qualifying – and exclaimed "I think we know what we are doing, otherwise we wouldn't be driving an F1 car".



Verstappen had a fraught event

The FIA took a different view. Merely taking that lap away from Verstappen wouldn't have cost him pole as his first lap was also good enough to best allcomers. But the stewards decided to give him a three-place grid penalty, referencing Vettel – who was ahead of Verstappen on the road – who

slowed adequately for the incident. "It is disappointing to be handed a grid penalty for the race," was Verstappen's official quote. Only to be a fly on the wall when he found out.

Bottas's crash had wiped out the light box and marshal post, meaning neither Verstappen nor his team would have got a message to say there were yellow flags, and the physical yellow flag is on the outside of the corner where Verstappen would be looking to the right at the apex. His recalcitrant comments in the press conference can't have helped his cause, especially when the topic at hand is safety. Vettel slowed adequately and Verstappen didn't.

Ultimately, because of Mexico's long main straight, losing the pole here is one of the best places for it to happen. But it wasn't to be Verstappen's weekend...

3. Lewis wins without Bonnington

"Lewis, it's Hammer time," has become arguably Formula 1's most popular catchphrase in recent years, a message delivered over the radio to Lewis Hamilton by his race engineer Peter 'Bono' Bonington when it's time for Hamilton to push.

But for the first time since joining Mercedes in 2013, Hamilton was without his trusty sidekick as 'Bono' is missing Mexico and the next race at Austin for a medical procedure.

It couldn't come at a worse time as Hamilton looks to wrap up a sixth world title.

Instead, Hamilton's performance

engineer Marcus Dudley took on Bono's immense shoes, and the team delivered one of its best results of the season with a slightly irked Lewis – he thought he'd been brought in too early for his pitstop – kept in check by his new handler.

"I think we've had good races [this year] but it definitely feels like one of the better races that I've had, particularly with the things that were thrown at us at the beginning," said Hamilton. "Bono was on the radio, we were texting all weekend and I really just wanted to make him very proud this weekend. He's devoted so much of his life to me for these seven years. I'm sure he's happy with today's race."



Hamilton: winning partnership

4. The technical stand-off in Mexico City

The race at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez is characterised by its high altitude, and the cars generally tend not to work close to their optimum performance window due to the reduced air density.

The teams bring the same

aerodynamic package here that they do in Singapore and Monaco, despite the monstrous main straight, because the cars struggle to produce downforce in the thinner air.

Mexico City has an altitude of 2,250m and so the air density drops by about 20% compared to that at sea level.

Due to those conditions, the teams would go much faster if they developed a bespoke aero package for this track, but they elect not to because they would have to pull engineers and aerodynamicists away from other important work to be done for the rest of the races and 2020, not to mention the financial implications.

The engines are also strangled. The FIA mandates the maximum size of the turbine in the turbo, and the teams who fit a turbine smaller than that for the rest of the season here can bring a bigger turbine to increase turbo power to make up for the 20% loss of power in Mexico.

As turbo and compressor work harder in Mexico, this can increase the heat under the bodywork, making reliability an issue as all the teams have to open bodywork and refine brake cooling to keep the car at the right temperature.

Mexico has a specific set-up



5. McLaren snatches nothing from the jaws of success

McLaren has been riding the surf of a wave in Formula 1 recently, but there were no big points for Lando Norris and Carlos Sainz in a woeful outing in Mexico.

Sainz had a nailed-on sixth position – having run as high as fourth – fade to a 13th-place finish purely because his McLaren acted like a wet dog on laminate flooring on the hard tyre,

Norris was thwarted in the pits

sliding all over the circuit and inducing an extra pit stop.

"Unfortunately, as soon as we put the hard [tyres on] the car just switched off, the rear grip switched off, and we started going backwards," said Sainz.

"Unfortunately, because we were in a

very good position today but, yeah, things that happen once in a year, I guess."

At least Sainz escaped his pitstops unscathed though, as team-mate Lando Norris was released unsafely from his pit with a front-left issue – blamed on the wheel thread – and he had to stop at the end of the pitlane to be wheeled back to his garage. After getting going again, the standout rookie was consigned to the back of the field for the rest of the race in another luckless outing, which have come to define his season.



RACE FACTS

Results © 2019 Formula One Administration Ltd

MEXICAN GRAND PRIX
Circuit: Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez **Laps:** 71
Race distance: 189.75 miles **Lap:** 2.672 miles
Lap record: 1m18.741s (Valtteri Bottas, 2018)
2018 winner: Max Verstappen (Red Bull)

TYRE CHOICE

Prime **HARD**

Option **MEDIUM**

Soft **SOFT**

RESULTS

FIA Formula 1 World Championship, round 18/21

POS	DRIVERS	NAT	CAR-ENGINE	TIME
1	Lewis Hamilton	GBR	Mercedes	1h36m48.904s
2	Sebastian Vettel	DEU	Ferrari	+1.766s
3	Valtteri Bottas	FIN	Mercedes	+3.553s
4	Charles Leclerc	MCO	Ferrari	+6.368s
5	Alexander Albon	THA	Red Bull-Honda	+21.399s
6	Max Verstappen	NLD	Red Bull-Honda	+1m08.807s
7	Sergio Perez	MEX	Racing Point-Mercedes	+1m13.819s
8	Daniel Ricciardo	AUS	Renault	+1m14.924s
9	Pierre Gasly	FRA	Toro Rosso-Honda	-1 lap
10	Nico Hulkenberg	DEU	Renault	-1 lap
11	Daniil Kvyat	RUS	Toro Rosso-Honda	-1 lap*
12	Lance Stroll	CAN	Racing Point-Mercedes	-1 lap
13	Carlos Sainz Jr	ESP	McLaren-Renault	-1 lap
14	Antonio Giovinazzi	ITA	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap
15	Kevin Magnussen	DNK	Haas-Ferrari	-2 laps
16	George Russell	GBR	Williams-Mercedes	-2 laps
17	Romain Grosjean	FRA	Haas-Ferrari	-2 laps
18	Robert Kubica	POL	Williams-Mercedes	-2 laps
R	Kimi Raikkonen	FIN	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	L58/overheating
R	Lando Norris	GBR	McLaren-Renault	L48/withdrew

* = 10-second penalty for contact

Winner's average speed: 117.588mph Lap leaders: Leclerc 1-14; Vettel 15-37; Leclerc 38-43; Hamilton 44-71

FASTEST LAP | CHARLES LECLERC 1M19.232s

ON LAP 53 (AVERAGE SPEED: 121.519MPH)

QUALIFYING

POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Leclerc	1m15.024s	11	Perez	1m16.687s
2	Vettel	1m15.170s	12	Hulkenberg	1m16.885s
3	Hamilton	1m15.262s	13	Ricciardo	1m16.933s
4	Verstappen	1m14.758s*	14	Raikkonen	1m16.967s
5	Albon	1m15.336s	15	Giovinazzi	1m17.269s
6	Bottas	1m15.338s	16	Stroll	1m18.065s
7	Sainz	1m16.014s	17	Magnussen	1m18.436s
8	Norris	1m16.322s	18	Grosjean	1m18.599s
9	Kvyat	1m16.469s	19	Russell	1m18.823s
10	Gasly	1m16.586s	20	Kubica	1m20.179s

* = three-place penalty for ignoring a yellow flag



Late contact with Daniil Kvyat ruined Nico Hulkenberg's challenge

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

DRIVERS			CONSTRUCTORS		
POS	DRIVER	PTS	POS	CONSTRUCTOR	PTS
1	Lewis Hamilton	363	1	Mercedes	652
2	Valtteri Bottas	289	2	Ferrari	466
3	Charles Leclerc	236	3	Red Bull-Honda	341
4	Sebastian Vettel	230	4	McLaren-Renault	111
5	Max Verstappen	220	5	Renault	73
6	Pierre Gasly	77	6	Toro Rosso-Honda	64
7	Carlos Sainz Jr	76	7	Racing Point-Mercedes	64
8	Alexander Albon	74	8	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	35
9	Sergio Perez	43	9	Haas-Ferrari	28
10	Daniel Ricciardo	38	10	Williams-Mercedes	1

NEXT RACE: UNITED STATES GRAND PRIX, NOV 3

RACING NEWS

Photos: LAT

F1 ROUND-UP

Blocking teams

Formula 1 boss Ross Brawn has revealed that two teams blocked the proposal for reversed grid qualifying races to be trialled at three GPs in 2020. Unanimous agreement was required to get the proposal through, but it was defeated last week. "The teams initially said they would agree with it and then two teams put their hand up at the last meeting and said they wouldn't agree with it," said Brawn. It is understood some top teams had simulated the proposed systems – with a short Saturday race where the championship order was reversed to set the grid – and concluded it would be too difficult for their cars to progress through the field. Mercedes boss Toto Wolff has revealed his team was one of those voting against the plans.

Sad F1 market

Nico Hulkenberg failing to land a seat for 2020 would be proof of how "sad" F1's driver market has become, says his former teammate Sergio Perez. Outgoing Renault driver Hulkenberg is fighting to keep his place on the grid after the team elected to replace him with Esteban Ocon for the 2020 season. Options elsewhere appear very limited, especially as Hulkenberg does not bring significant sponsorship backing. "It just shows how sad Formula 1 is, that talent in the end, or results, don't count enough in the sport," said Perez, Hulkenberg's Force India team-mate from 2014-16. "There are so many other factors, politically, and so many other factors out of the hands of the athlete or the sportsman. It should be his decision, whether he wants to continue or not."

Williams tension

Robert Kubica has denied there is any "tension" between him and Williams following the row over a new front wing design at the Japanese Grand Prix. Kubica claimed a decision to let him use the upgraded part at Suzuka had been reversed at the last minute and intimated it showed a team bias against him. The new component was used by both Kubica and team-mate George Russell in Mexico last weekend. "The situation is not easy, but I have a good relationship with the team, and for sure one episode is not affecting my relationship with the people who I'm working with," Kubica insisted. "We are on the same boat, and I think we all better understand our situation, although we probably sometimes have a different point of view."



Renault could be driving away from Formula 1

UNCERTAIN F1 FUTURE FOR RENAULT SQUAD

Team disqualified for illegal driver aid but faces deeper doubts amid strategic review

By Jonathan Noble

Renault has admitted that its future in Formula 1 will be considered as part of a major strategic review it is about to embark on – news that emerged a day after the team was disqualified from the Japanese Grand Prix for running an illegal driver aid.

As the French car manufacturer bids to turn around a fall in revenue and move on from the disruption caused by the arrest of former Renault-Nissan alliance boss Carlos Ghosn last year, it will examine all aspects of its business.

Interim CEO Clotilde Delbos

made clear that, although she was not specifically targeting Renault's F1 programme, the firm's grand prix activities would fall under the spotlight of a review that was about to begin.

Asked whether Renault would consider stopping non-essential activities such as F1 and its Alpine brand, Delbos said: "I am not specifically targeting those two activities that you mentioned but clearly the review of the 'Drive the Future' plans means that we put on the table [everything]. It is like a normal process. It is just not a minor review."

"We are really launching a deep review of our 'Drive the Future' plan in order to take into account

the new context of the market, the change in usage, mobility etc and the current situation of the group. Everything can be on the table at some point. This is a deep review of our strategy and of our plan."

Ghosn was a driving force in committing Renault to returning to F1 as a works team in 2016, and giving it a long-term plan to return to the front of grand prix racing. But despite the team making progress to finish fourth in the constructors' championship last year, this season has been more of a struggle.

The team is also having to face up to the fact that, despite the introduction of a budget cap from

2021, it will likely have to increase its own financial commitment if it is to take on the might of Mercedes, Ferrari and Red Bull.

The disqualification from the Suzuka results cost Renault Daniel Ricciardo and Nico Hulkenberg's sixth and 10th place finishes. The FIA ruled that the team's brake balance adjustment system did not directly contravene the wording of the technical regulations related to that area, but was illegal under the rules prohibiting driver aids. The protest was launched by Racing Point, which had learned of the system from an ex-Renault employee.

Team boss Cyril Abiteboul

said it was important to stay "optimistic" about the outcome of Renault's review of its F1 programme, and denied that the disqualification would be a factor.

"I can't deny it – it doesn't help," he admitted. "But in my opinion that is minimal against a number of news happening in today's world, in the automotive world, in the F1 world, and the reason why we decided not to appeal is that we wanted to put it behind rather than let it drag on."

"The story of top five between Racing Point and Renault in Suzuka is not going to affect the long term strategy of Renault in the sport. We have been in the sport for 42 years."



Some squads have questioned the reasons for Ferrari's turnaround

FERRARI BOSS "HAPPY" IF RIVALS PROTEST HIS TEAM'S ENGINE

Ferrari team boss Mattia Binotto said he would have welcomed rivals protesting his squad's engine at the Mexican Grand Prix, as paddock rumours swirled that a protest was being planned.

In the event, nothing was submitted following the race, in which Ferrari started from the front row but only finished second and fourth.

Speculation about Ferrari's straightline performance has been mounting for some weeks, with rival teams regularly

pointing out how much they are losing out in comparison. But Binotto said if a protest did come to pass it would actually allow Ferrari to clear its name.

When asked about the possibility of a protest by MN on the Mexico grid, Binotto said: "I would be happy because then we can show how stupid they are, and stop the rumours."

Red Bull's Christian Horner is among those who have recently highlighted how strong the Ferrari is on the straights. "The Ferrari is just so fast

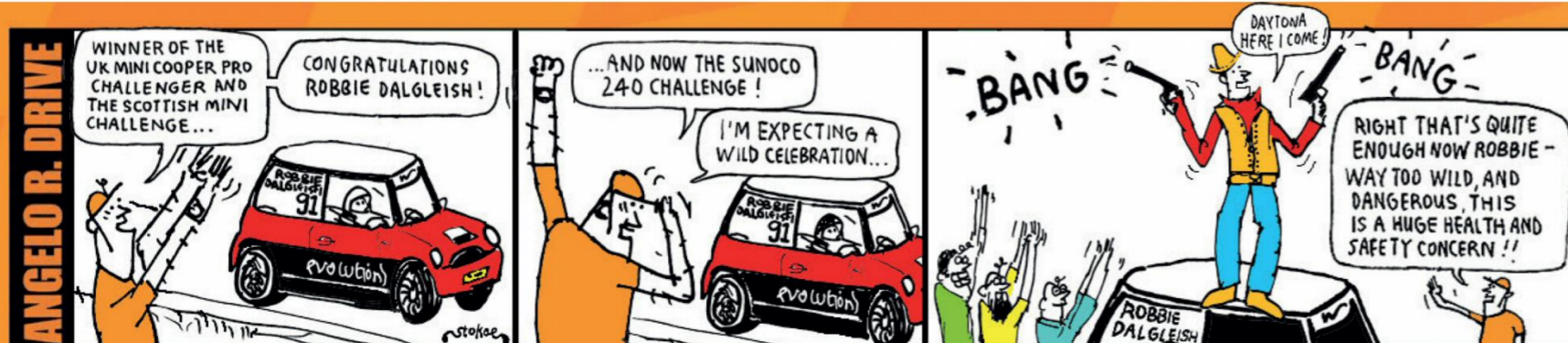
on the straight, it was 0.89 seconds quicker in a straight line with Sebastian [Vettel]," he told Sky F1 on Friday.

"When you look at all the others, the Honda engine is now getting pretty close to the Mercedes, the Renault is pretty much there as well."

"The standout at the moment, the benchmark, is the Ferrari. It's not just a little bit, it's whoppingly large, the difference. That's what we've got to try and make up in the corners."

WE LOOK AHEAD TO THE NEW MN CIRCUIT RALLY SEASON

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'Clark's Escort Mk1 to return'
Historic news, p13



McLAUGHLIN AVOIDS INJURY IN 43g SHUNT

Supercars points leader suffers massive crash at Surfers Paradise

By Andrew van Leeuwen

Runaway Supercars championship leader Scott McLaughlin escaped uninjured from a horrific 43g crash in race two qualifying at last weekend's Surfers Paradise event.

McLaughlin's DJR Team Penske Ford ended up parked on its side in the incident. He was able to extricate himself from the car but was ruled out of that day's race – in which he could have clinched the title.

McLaughlin said he was surprised that light contact with the inside wall at the first chicane sent him so violently into the outside one.

"We tried to do a shootout lap there, just practising for the shootout, and I just clipped the wall, the concrete... I've done it all weekend, but I clipped it further around the corner," he said. "It surprised me. When it hit, by the time I was on my side, I was like 'jeez'. It all happened real quick. I've given myself a clip around the ear."

He watched that day's race from hospital – coincidentally



McLaughlin's crash denied him chance of sealing title

in room #17, the same as his race number – while having precautionary checks including an MRI scan. Team boss Ryan Story said: "He sent me a number of photos and messages during the race. He was watching very intently while he was undergoing a bit

of those precautionary checks and things. He was deep into it."

Story also thanked the series' medical staff for their meticulous approach.

"Their advice is something you always take into account," he said. "When they're telling you, with a hit like that, you

need to take further checks, you take them.

"We couldn't be more grateful for the care that Scott received and we're very, very fortunate he got the all-clear."

McLaughlin is expected to be fit to return to competition for the Sandown 500 next weekend.

QUICK LAPS THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP

Former British Formula 4 frontrunner Oscar Piastrì clinched the 2019 Formula Renault Eurocup title with fourth place in Abu Dhabi last weekend. The Australian, who finished second to Jamie Caroline in British F4 in 2017, only had to secure seventh to put the title beyond rival Victor Martins' reach and drove a cautious race as his opponent took victory... The R-Motorsport Aston Martin squad has split with engine partner HWA following just one season together in the DTM. R-Motorsport endured a difficult first season in the series with its Vantage DTM, after it built four cars in just 90 days and suffered from an underpowered and unreliable engine. While there was a breakthrough in reliability following a test after the Misano round, there were repeated engine-related reliability problems in the season finale

at Hockenheim. MN understands R-Motorsport is already working on securing an alternative engine supplier, despite HWA making a contractual offer to continue into 2020... **Andy Priaulx says Nicky Catsburg should be excluded from the remainder of the World Touring Car Cup season for their clash at Suzuka, but Catsburg believes Priaulx was at fault. As Priaulx moved to the inside and braked for the first corner, Catsburg – who a lap earlier had been allowed through by his title-contending BRC Racing Hyundai team-mate Norbert Michelisz – hit the rear of the Lynk & Co 03. That sent Priaulx, who had been in a three-car Cyan Racing train behind Yvan Muller and Yann Ehrlacher, through the gravel trap and into the barriers, while Catsburg ceded a position to Michelisz**



Piastrì, '17 British F4 runner-up, won Formula Renault Eurocup

after the contact but before the safety car was deployed. "That was totally intentional to swap positions and then drive me off the road," said

Priaulx. "That was the most unsporting thing I've ever seen in my life. He was using his car as a weapon of intent, that is super-dangerous."

Correa stands up for the first time since suffering severe leg injuries in Spa Formula 2 crash

Injured Formula 2 racer Juan Manuel Correa has stood up for the first time since the Spa accident that led to him being put in an induced coma and undergoing multiple operations on injuries that could have resulted in the amputation of his right leg.

Correa was involved in an enormous crash at Raidillon in the F2 feature race on

August 31, hitting the car of Anthoine Hubert – who was killed in the accident.

Since then, Correa has had an extremely turbulent medical path that included over a week on a life-support machine after his lungs filled with liquid owing to his body going into shock following the impact. He underwent a 17-hour surgery on his leg last month, followed

by smaller procedures.

He has been visited in his London hospital by the likes of Red Bull F1 driver Alex Albon and Macau crash victim Sophia Florsch, among other racing personalities and members of his family domiciled in America.

He recently took over his social media pages again for the first time since the crash

and has been posting regular updates on his Instagram profile.

The American driver captioned the Instagram post of him holding a frame with: "First time standing up. Slowly progressing."

A nurse asked him, "how does that feel?" to which Correa replied "horrible" before laughing and sitting down again.

MN'S MAN IN MEXICO

JACK BENYON

"Hamilton can influence millions of people"



"I think F1 is in probably not the strongest place to tell people that this is what we should do, because to really go that route we should all stay at home and forget the racing."

So wonderfully Kimi. Raikkonen was of course referring to the climate debate instigated by Lewis Hamilton's social media posts in the last two weeks.

If you've been under a rock, Hamilton used his social media accounts to tell his followers about how we are damaging the environment – farming, meat consumption and excessive travel are causing serious damage to the planet and that irreversible change is ahead.

Most would agree he is correct. But unfortunately his social media post threw up more criticism of hypocrisy than open arms.

Declaring all farming is bad for the environment is wrong, it isn't. And without farming, how do we sustain a plant-based diet? Also, if every human being switched to a plant-based diet immediately, then the world wouldn't be able to sustain it.

However, Hamilton went a lot more in depth during the Thursday press conference, saying he had sold his jet, urged Mercedes and Tommy Hilfiger – with which he has a clothing line – to use more sustainable materials and urged F1 to do its bit about the environment and neutralising its carbon footprint.

Many reacted like Raikkonen. Perhaps the most outspoken response came from Max Verstappen, who said that F1 shouldn't "overreact" or be "drama queens" over the debate.

Hamilton's poignant and brilliant explanation of what he's doing to improve the environment in his press conference was fantastic, and did a lot to reconcile some of his thoughts on social media, which were simply not expanded on until Thursday.

Wherever you stand on the environmental debate, why shouldn't F1 – and everyone in it – do its bit? Whether it's reducing private jet flights or reducing plastic bottles in the paddock, every little helps. Word in the paddock is that F1 – the organisation – has considered its ecological impact and is working to put together a plan of action to improve things.

Hamilton may be a polarising character, but even if 10% of his social media following take heed of his campaigning, he has 13 million followers on Instagram alone and 10% would constitute 1.3 million people enlightened by his campaigning.

If that's the case, then Lewis will have a bigger impact on improving the environment by continuing to race, as opposed to taking Raikkonen's stance of F1 packing up and going home.

Formula 1 has given Hamilton a platform to become the celebrity he is and, as well as providing that platform to influence those 1.3 million people, the championship, teams and drivers have a responsibility to step up and match Hamilton's work for the good of the future of the planet. I just wish Lewis made the poignant plea in the first place, as opposed to making short and sweeping statements on social media without giving more context.

How ironic that continuing to race in that case could be the thing that helps improve the environment for the better, even though it was the main reason Hamilton was being called a hypocrite for his comments in the first place.

RACING NEWS

IN-BRIEF

Mitchell misses out

Former British GT driver Sandy Mitchell narrowly missed out on victory in the Lamborghini Super Trofeo World Finals at Jerez last weekend, as Dane Frederik Schandorff was crowned champion on countback. Mitchell, who shared the #101 Prestige Performance/Wayne Taylor Racing Huracan Evo with Andrea Amici, finished second to Schandorff and his Target Racing team-mate Jonathan Cecotto in race one before winning the second race. Schandorff ultimately claimed the title due to his six regional championship race wins to Mitchell/Amici's three.

Elkmann's title

Peter Elkmann secured his third CIK European Superkart Championship in a row last weekend at Le Mans. He took two wins, allowing him to sit out the finale. British F125 Open Superkart champion Liam Morley was reunited with his twin-cylinder superkart and finished third in the opener. He struggled in a wet race two but took a last-lap win in the final race to seal second in the championship.

New head office

British motorsport governing body Motorsport UK will move its head office to the new Bicester Motion site next year. Rather than being based in Colnbrook in Berkshire, the organisation will move location to be closer to the motorsport community. It is proposed the Bicester Motion complex will include a hotel, conference centre and test track in future years, allowing Motorsport UK to host training and testing events from its base, along with sprints.

BTCC TO TRIAL TOP 10 SHOOTOUT

Series will alter qualifying format at Snetterton and it could be used more widely

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Gary Hawkins



Snetterton round will feature new format

By Matt James

Bosses of the British Touring Car Championship will introduce tweaks to the sporting regulations next season, which will include a new qualifying system that will be trialled at Snetterton at the end of July.

Instead of the usual 30-minute session, drivers at Snetterton will have a 25-minute period to record lap times, and the top 10

fastest competitors will then go into a 10-minute shootout. The times will be reset and the 10 drivers will then get the track to themselves to set a further benchmark time to fix the first five rows of the grid.

BTCC chief executive Alan Gow explained that it would be an experiment and that, if it is a success, it could lead to further alterations.

"We are always looking at how we can spice things up, so

we thought we could give this system a try," said Gow. "It is not a one-shot for each driver, they will be able to set as many laps as they want in the final period to determine their starting positions.

"We are not saying that this is something that will be adopted everywhere, but it is something we want to trial and see how it works."

There will also be changes to the way tyres are nominated.

Since the introduction of the option tyres, entrants have been required to nominate when they will use the joker tyre before qualifying. That will be scrapped in 2020, with drivers able to opt to use the joker tyre at any point during raceday itself.

Croft, which takes place in the middle of August, will join Snetterton as a round where each driver is required to use the hard, medium and soft tyre over the course of the three events. It

was an initiative successfully trialled at Snetterton this year.

Drivers will still have an allocation of joker tyre usage, and they are not allowed to use the special rubber more than three times in either race one, race two or race three.

Gow added: "Croft is a suitable event for us to do the three-tyre choice because, after it was resurfaced at the beginning of 2019, the new surface will allow us to do it."



JMH Auto Lamborghini pair will step up to British GT

GT Cup class champions Stanley and Seale to join British GT grid full-time next season in Huracan

GT Cup GTO class champions John Seale and Jamie Stanley will step up to British GT full-time next year with JMH Auto after two exploratory outings in the team's Lamborghini Huracan GT3.

Seale, who made his British GT series debut at Donington Park in 2018 in a Ferrari 488 Challenge with Marcus Clutton, has raced with BGT regular Stanley since

2014 when they won GT Cup's GTC class in an FF Corse-prepared Ferrari 458 Challenge.

They scored a point in 10th at the Silverstone 500 this year and also entered the following round at Donington, but elected not to race.

"I'm really excited about John's move up to British GT next season, it's a nice challenge to get stuck into as next year will be our fifth season together,"

Stanley said. "We're under no illusions that we'll need to bring our A-game to fight for the same success we have enjoyed in GT Cup, but we're up for the challenge."

Stanley, who flew from Mugello after engineering FF Corse driver Laurent De Meeus in the opening Ferrari Challenge Europe race to compete at Snetterton, will enter the

Walter Hayes Trophy in a Fox Motorsport-run Van Diemen RF02 that he acquired last year.

It will be Stanley's first appearance at the event – the scene of his first ever car race in 2005 – since 2011.

Britcar and GT Cup race winner Sam Neary will also graduate to British GT next year and join his father Richard in the Team ABBA Racing Mercedes-AMG GT3.

Dempsey disqualified for Formula Ford Festival tangle with Smith

Two-time Walter Hayes Trophy winner Peter Dempsey was excluded from the second semi-final of the Formula Ford Festival at Brands Hatch for hitting Rory Smith into retirement.

Dempsey climbed from seventh to battle Smith for third, but hit the rear of the Medina JL18 at the apex of Druids.

Smith was unable to continue, for which Dempsey was disqualified and had to fight for a place in the final via the

Last Chance race.

Dempsey said: "He braked earlier than I anticipated and I took him out. It wasn't intentional but unfortunately he spun, rolled back and hit my car again. He was out of the race.

"You've got to be aggressive. I was aggressive as I ever am but I miscalculated, and unfortunately I ruined his weekend as well. I was very fortunate to make the Last Chance race."

Dempsey did appeal the

decision, but it was thrown out by the stewards.

Defending Festival winner Josh Smith was also caught up in the incident – hitting the brakes to avoid Rory and spinning in the process.

Smith recovered to finish 13th but elected not to take part in the Last Chance race.

● Festival runner-up Niall Murray entered the event in a Van Diemen modified by team boss Bernard Dolan. Dubbed the BD20, denoting Dolan's initials, it is based around an RF99 and features a revised tubular chassis and adjusted rear suspension geometry. But Dolan said he would not commit to building his own bespoke cars. "Niall put it [down as a BD] as a bit of a joke," Dolan said. "Overall it's still a Van Diemen. You're not going to reinvent the wheel now. It was just always something I wanted to try."



Dempsey (1) was disqualified for this clash with Rory Smith



Steve Barlow rode his luck in the second semi-final of the Formula Ford Festival when he narrowly avoided a blow to the head from the right-rear wheel of Peter Lucas's Van Diemen RF88. Lucas lost his car through Paddock Hill Bend, which left Barlow and Tom Cloet with nowhere to go. Barlow's avoiding action meant he clouted into Cloet and was then speared by Lucas. As he sat prone, the jettisoned wheel just about bounced clear.

F2 champion Bacheta joins Birkett Relay grid

Luciano Bacheta's class shone through on his British racing return at Silverstone last weekend, when he won the 750 Motor Club's 69th Birkett Six Hour Relay on scratch with the Breakell Radical Heroes team.

The 2012 FIA Formula 2 champion was driving a Radical SR3 alongside South African-born Hollywood film stuntman Wade Eastwood and stalwart clubman Charles Graham.

"I've worked with Wade for a while and he's been trying to get me to do this race for years," said Bacheta, 29, still wearing his 2010 McLaren Autosport BRDC Young Driver finalist's overalls. "It's not fitted before, but this time I was available and thought 'why not?'"

"It was treacherous, really, really wet. It was just hanging on. I've had such a good weekend and there was a really positive spirit in the pits."

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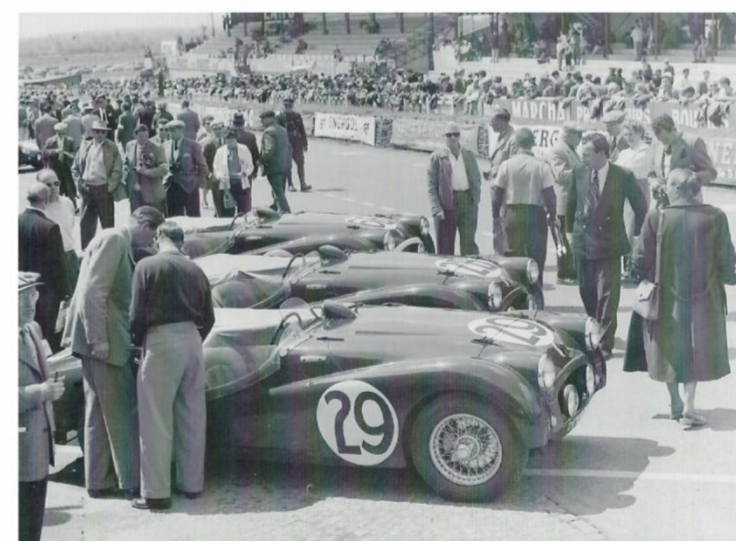
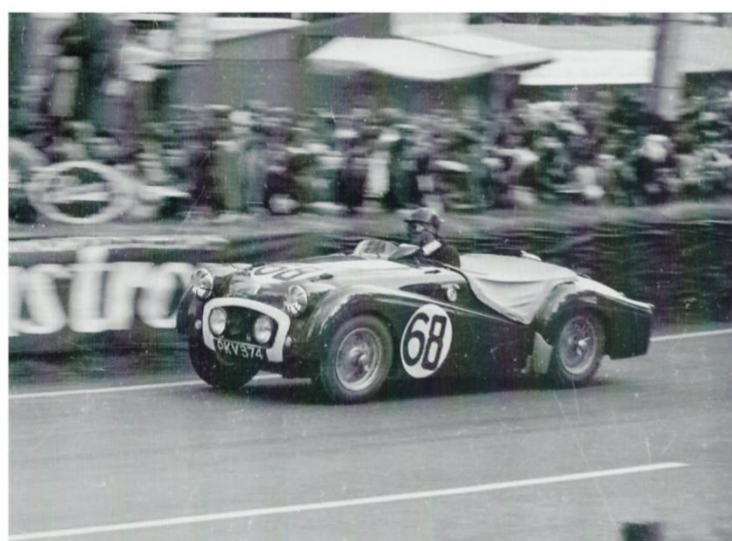
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RACING NEWS

TANDY TO CONTEST ENDUROKA FINALE

Le Mans winner will return to club racing roots as his JTR squad makes first endurance foray

Photos: Gary Hawkins, LAT, James Wadham



Tandy has been racing in IMSA this season



EnduroKa finale has been dubbed the IndyKa 500

By Stephen Lickorish

Le Mans 24 Hours winner Nick Tandy will return to his club racing roots by contesting the final round of the EnduroKa season at Brands Hatch next month.

Tandy will tackle the November 17 race – dubbed the IndyKa 500, lasting over eight hours – alongside a group of friends he made earlier in his career. The

car will be run by his Porsche Carrera Cup GB squad JTR and it will be the team's first foray into endurance racing.

"For 20 years of my racing career I was building and running my own race cars as a necessity to go racing," said Tandy, who won Le Mans in 2015 and has been competing in the IMSA SportsCar Championship for Porsche this season.

"For the last eight years or so,

I haven't had to work on or build my race cars and I missed it! I saw the launch of EnduroKa at the start of this season and I've always been a big Ford man [having competed and run cars in British Formula Ford] so I quite liked the idea of working on a Ford again.

"It's going to be a team of friends, two of which I've raced with previously. There will be Lewis Selby of the Mini 7 Racing Club – I used to race Mini Se7ens

with him in 2003-4 and we've become good friends.

"There's also Elliot Mason and he races in Formula Vee – his brother David raced in the TVR Tuscan Challenge – and we used to race in Ministox together. And there's James Rhodes who was the inaugural MGF Cup champion in 1998 and lives in the same village as me. He's coming out of retirement and got his race licence again to have a bit of fun."

Tandy has carried out a first test of the Ford Ka and said "it was great fun to drive".

He added: "If we come last, we come last and if we crash on the third lap it doesn't matter. It's the whole point of the series to share it with friends and share the costs. If we have fun, we might come back next year."

Robb Gravett, the 1990 British Touring Car champion, is also set to tackle the Brands event.

Johnson plots full GT Cup campaign in 2020

Piers Johnson returned to racing for the first time this season in preparation for a full GT Cup campaign in 2020.

Johnson, a multiple British GT race winner in the 2000s, shared an Aston Martin GT4 car with David Holloway in the GT Cup finale at Snetterton last weekend, taking a best result of 12th out of the two endurance contests.

They were run by Optimum Motorsport, and intend to continue their partnership into next year.

"We've been trying to get back out there for three or four meetings now," said Johnson.

"We're back now and the plan is to be back for the full season next year.

"It's different when you move teams and we're getting used to a new car. It's much more powerful, but we're learning a lot already."

RX-8 Trophy to run with different CSCC series

The Classic Sports Car Club will move its RX-8 Trophy class from the New Millennium series to the Turbo Tin Tops grid for 2020.

The one-make class for the rotary-powered Mazda was introduced at the start of the season to support the New Millennium series, which caters for post-2000 production cars.

With that grid over-subscribed in 2019, the RX-8 Trophy will switch to the Turbo Tin Tops, for forced induction front-wheel-drive machinery, to alleviate the pressure.

CSCC director David Smitheram said: "When we started the [RX-8] class for this season, the aims were to provide a different way of racing on a shoestring budget in a road-legal, fun-to-drive car. This is exactly what we have achieved, while avoiding the usual pitfalls of one-make racing."

The decision followed consultation with the RX-8 Trophy drivers, and it is hoped the Turbo Tin Tops' lower average lap times will better suit the pace of Mazdas, which are strictly limited on modifications.



Perera (leading) helped Igoe claim a clean sweep of wins

Blancpain racer Perera makes winning GT Cup debut at Snetterton

Former GP2 and Superleague Formula racer Franck Perera joined the GT Cup grid and grabbed a brace of wins in the season finale at Snetterton last weekend.

The Frenchman, who has most recently raced for the FFF Racing Team in the Blancpain GT Series, joined Michael Igoe in a WPI Motorsport Lamborghini Huracan for the visit to Norfolk, winning both endurance races with the British GT regular.

Perera said he hopes it could be a longer partnership

into next season.

"I have to see what happens with Lamborghini for next season, but this was a very positive weekend for me with Michael," he said.

"It's the first time I've worked with the team and it's been a good weekend for us. We're now looking forward to the future and for what we can do together with Lamborghini, but this for sure was a good test for me."

Perera jumped into the car in the second half of both races, the first held in sodden conditions:

"Obviously [Saturday] we had horrible weather, but today it was dry and it's good to end the weekend in a good way like this."

Despite not picking up a class victory all weekend, the JMH Automotive McLaren 570S pairing of Steve Ruston and John Whitehouse pipped the GTC Lamborghini pairing of James Webb and absent brother Tom Webb to the overall title.

"The car's been awesome all year," said GTH class driver Ruston. "We never really had any dilemmas with it."

Luti, Bray and Van Nierkerk win the UK class of 24-hour C1 race at Spa as Hollamby joins grid

The Finishline UK with Preptech trio of Paul Luti, Chris Bray and Danie van Nierkerk took the UK Citroen C1 class win at the Spa 24 Hours last weekend.

An initial duel between GT ace Maxime Martin – making his C1 racing debut in the GMP Developments car – and Renvale RT-Motor Sensors'

Sam Weller preceded a few hours of domination from the two Renvale cars.

But both cars suffered damage to the rear after contact in the rain and brought Finishline to the fore, just after dawn.

Luti brought the car to the chequered flag, a lap clear of AB Motorsport's Brian Trott,

Stuart Symonds and Oliver Allwood, with Stephen James holding onto third with Weller and Mark James.

British Touring Car team boss Shaun Hollamby had his first ever race at Spa when he joined Tommy Field, Nick Smith, Graham Coomes and Steve Gales in one of Tollbar

Racing's C1s for the 24-hour race.

"Everyone assumes I have raced here, but this was my first time," he said. "I was invited about a week before the race and thought why not."

They were inside the top 10 after six hours, before losing a wheel and then retiring with gearbox problems.



Finishline UK with Preptech squad took the UK honours in enduro

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HISTORICS

'Chateau Impney nominated'
RAC Historic Awards, below



DOWN THE WORKSHOP

BRABHAM BT21 FF1600

Current driver:
Michael Grant-Peterkin



Brabham has family history

It started as an F3 car

"It was a car that Tony Trimmer built from an ex-Formula 3 chassis that belonged to Tetsu Ikuzawa and run by Frank Williams. Tetsu crashed it in 1967 and Tony asked Frank if he could rebuild it into a Formula Ford using the bits in Frank's garage."

Martin Grant-Peterkin bought it

"Tony then raced it quite successfully in 1968 and I think he came second in the Formula Ford championship and it was one of very few Brabhams that ever raced in Formula Ford. Tony sold the car to my father Martin for the 1969 season and he raced it in '69, '70 and a little bit of '71. Dad was in the army at the time based down at Bovington."

It went to the US

"Dad raced the Brabham until he got posted to Germany in 1971 when he sold it. It was away from the family for quite a while and I think it went to the States before Matthew Watts at Retro Track and Air bought it in the 1990s. It came back from the US and Matthew raced it quite successfully and then we bought it in 2001."

Michael G-P now races it

"I've got two brothers so it is debatable who it belongs to, but it is owned by our family. But I put the effort into it, so I race it. Dad did drive it at Castle Combe about five years ago on a trackday, but he doesn't drive it any more. So it's only been me racing it in the last decade."

He won at Castle Combe

"The chassis is great and it goes extremely well. The Merlyn Mk20s are at the front of Historic Formula Ford and it struggles a bit to keep up with them. I had a pole and a win at Castle Combe recently, but there are a lot of younger kids coming through Historic Formula Ford."

It is very original

"The chassis is very original and the gearbox casing. We've never had a serious prang in it. It is a unique and beautiful car with a great history. The chassis is probably stiffer as it was built for F3. I probably only do three races a year due to my work commitments with Blakeney Motorsport, but there are perks to the job as I got to drive an E-type in the Spa Six Hours recently and we were the first E-type home."



Watkins plans outings in iconic Escort Mk1

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com, Paul Lawrence

CLARK'S WINNING CAR BACK IN ACTION

Famous Ford Escort Mk1 that won 1972 RAC Rally to return to the stages

By Paul Lawrence

One of the most famous Ford Escort Mk1s of a generation will return to competition next year when the ex-Roger Clark 'LVX 942J' is re-prepared for rallying.

The car in which Clark and Tony Mason won the 1972 RAC Rally is destined to make a comeback in the hands of works

Escort guru Dave Watkins, who is now co-owner of the car.

Following Clark's success in 1972 and '73, the car was bought by Roy Cathcart in Ireland in 1975 and remained with him until his death four years ago. Watkins bought the car from Cathcart's estate and is determined to use it in selected competitive rallies.

"It was in its winning 1973

Scottish Rally colours but we're putting it back to its 1972 RAC livery of Esso Uniflo," said Watkins, who has rallied several ex-works Escorts over the past decade.

"We plan to get historic papers and use it in competition. It wants to be seen. Roy Cathcart rallied it in the 1970s but it's not been used much since then. It's on the button but it has come

apart for the paint shop and we're going through it.

"The car needs to do some iconic events like Rally GB and the Roger Albert Clark Rally: just a few prestige events as well as demonstration events like Goodwood and the Eifel Classic. Roy's sons kept it for a while but then decided to sell it and we were put in touch through a mutual friend."



Closed-road events to star

Jim Clark Rally joins British Historic calendar

The inclusion of the Jim Clark Rally is the major change for the 2020 British Historic Rally Championship calendar.

The schedule, which grows to eight rounds, takes in five gravel and three asphalt events, including two major closed-road rallies. New is the Jim Clark Rally in late May, which returns to the

calendar after a break and uses closed-road stages in the Scottish borders.

Meanwhile, the Carlisle Stages moves to a new date in late October to become the final round of the season, while the former Pirelli Rally in late April will be the first of two visits to the Kielder region.

CALENDAR

2020 British Historic Rally Championship

DATE	EVENT
March 28	Rally North Wales
April 25	Kielder Forest Rally
May 29-30	Jim Clark Rally
June 14	Red Kite Stages
July 26	Harry Flatters Rally
Aug 22	Ulster Rally
Sept 25-26	Trackrod Rally
Oct 24	Carlisle Stages

New Production Car Challenge from HSCC

The Historic Sports Car Club has unveiled the Production Car Challenge, a new race series for production touring, sports and GT cars from the 1980s.

The new series will be open to cars with standard bodyshells and only minor modifications to engines and suspension.

The club plans to run several pilot races later in 2020, ahead of a fuller programme in 2021. The series will complement the existing Historic and 70s Road Sports Championships.

HSCC CEO Andy Dee-Crowne said: "This will sit very well alongside our existing portfolio of categories and offer another way into historic racing for newcomers to the sport. Our aim is to grow the category over the next couple of seasons."

Herbert gave the Lotus its second race in five years



EX-SURTEES LOTUS 18 MAKES RARE RACE APPEARANCE

The Lotus 18 Formula Junior raced in period by John Surtees and Henry Taylor for the Ken Tyrrell team had only its second race in five years at the Castle Combe Autumn Classic earlier this month.

Wiltshire-based autograss competitor Adrian Herbert raced the car that his father bought at auction five years ago. It was previously owned and raced by Jon Milicevic.

With his son now competing in autograss, Herbert does

not have many free weekends but hopes to race the famous car more often in the future.

He finished 12th at Castle Combe in only his second circuit race. The first had been in the Lotus at the 2017 event.

IN BRIEF

R.A.C. tickets on sale

Spectator tickets are now on sale for the Roger Albert Clark Rally (November 21-25). Tickets can be ordered from now until November 12 and range from £10 per car on Thursday evening and Friday in Wales to an 'access all areas' pass at £80 per car for the complete five days. Full details are at racrmc.org

Award finalists

Historic motorsport events and race series are part of the new Royal Automobile Club Historic Awards for 2019, which will be presented on November 21. The Castle Combe Autumn Classic, Chateau Impney and the Vintage Sports-Car Club Le Mans start at Silverstone are shortlisted for event of the year while Equipe GTS and Historic F2 are finalists for race series of the year.

Historics on Malton

Steve Bannister and Dave Robson will head more than 20 historics away on Sunday's Malton Forest Rally in Yorkshire. The local Ford Escort Mk2 legend will be chased by more Mk2s for Chris White and James Potter while Richard Lane will have regular BHRC driver Ben Friend co-driving in his Mk2. Several crews are using the event as a shakedown for the Roger Albert Clark Rally.

Early Classic grids

Early grids confirmed for the 2020 Silverstone Classic include FIA Masters Historic F1, FIA Masters Historic Sports Cars, Masters Historic Touring Car Challenge and the Royal Automobile Club Tourist Trophy for Historic Cars. The races for pre-'66 Minis, which featured last summer to mark the iconic car's 60th birthday, will also make a welcome return next season.

Lancia's new owner

The Group B Lancia Delta S4 that Henri Toivonen drove to victory on the 1985 Lombard RAC Rally sold for £675,000 when auctioned by Sotheby's in its London Olympia sale last Thursday. Toivonen drove chassis 202 on the 1985 rally, which was the first competitive rally for the S4. It is one of only four Delta S4s to win a round of the World Rally Championship.

HSCC on display

The HSCC will display six historic race cars at the Classic Motor Show at the Birmingham NEC on November 8-10. The display on stand 1-330 is designed to appeal to show visitors who may have considered historic racing to be out of their reach. A Fiat 127, Mini Cooper, Austin Healey Sebring Sprite and Renault 5GT Turbo will be included.

Barrett is back

Paul Barrett, the 2018 British Historic Rally champion, will contest the Roger Albert Clark Rally for the first time this November in his Ford Escort Mk2. The Northern Irishman has done very little rallying in the past 12 months due to business commitments but is now planning a concerted attack on the five-day event next month.



Barrett will return on R.A.C.

RALLY NEWS



Alonso will join Gazoo Racing



Photos: Toyota Gazoo Racing

The Spaniard says he has to learn to be less cautious on the desert event

ALONSO: DAKAR WILL BE A HUGE LEARNING CURVE

F1 champ ready to tackle desert classic for the first time with Toyota Gazoo Racing in a V8 Hilux

By David Evans

Two-time Formula 1 world champion Fernando Alonso says it's impossible for him to be perfectly prepared for his first Dakar attempt in January.

The Spaniard was confirmed as part of Toyota Gazoo Racing's line-up for January's Saudi Arabian event in Spain last week. Alonso, who will be co-driven by five-time Dakar bike winner Marc Coma, outlined his intentions to MN.

"I try to target impossible goals," said Alonso, who will use a four-wheel-drive Hilux, "and then try to make them possible, slowly with the right people around you and learning from the best. Here I have some of the best drivers with Giniel [de Villiers] with Nasser [Al Attiyah], with [Bernard] Ten Brinke and Marc [Coma] alongside. Thanks to that I try to make the 20 years' experience they have in six months. It's impossible on the paper, but let's see in January."

Asked if it was possible to be perfectly prepared for Dakar, Alonso replied: "I don't think so. I don't think even the top guys are sure they are fully prepared. In my case this is impossible, with the lack of experience. And it's such a long rally, I've never done so long period of racing."

"I need to see how I manage that physically and mentally. There are stages of more than five or six hours and you don't have time to relax – that was a big surprise for me at the beginning. At a race track you are on straights and you are in same circuit. Here every kilometre is new every day, you cannot blink. When I was trying to take a drink of water I found



Alonso joins a stellar Toyota line-up



Alonso has raced the Hilux already

myself trying to drink while I was still looking at the road. It's very demanding, you cannot take your eyes off the road. When you have 12 or 15 days, the mistake can arrive. I need to avoid that."

Alonso has already endured a tough start to his off-road career. He rolled his Hilux on the Lichtenburg 400 in South Africa and crashed while running in the top 10 on the Morocco Rally last month. His next competitive outing will come on either the Ulma Rally in Saudi Arabia next month or Abu Dhabi's cross country event in December.

The priority for Alonso is to make the finish of Dakar.

He said: "The first statistics I saw say 60 per cent of the cars don't finish, so only four cars from 10 get to the end, so it would be nice to be one of those four. At the same time I would like to be competitive. Maybe not over the whole of Dakar, but on some of the stages where I feel good. To be competitive some days is one of the targets, and the result, like I said, if you get to the finish without any trouble then maybe the result can be good."

His team-mate Al-Attiyah is confident a

trouble-free run would leave Toyota's defending World Endurance champion in good shape in January.

The three-time Dakar winner said: "He needs to finish without any risks or problems and, believe me, top 10 he can finish for the first year."

"The first time I meet Fernando in Qatar, I was waiting for him 0600hrs in the airport. When I meet him and shake the hand, I asked him: 'Do you want to go to the hotel or do you want to go to the sand dunes?' He told me: 'Nasser, I need to go to the sand dunes to learn more kilometres from you. I have two days here. What's your plan? We can do it. I need you to give me more power.'"

"I knew then straight away that this guy, he wants to learn. Coming from Formula 1, it's totally different from what we do in cross country and Dakar. It was 45 degrees outside and I was really worried about him. He told me not to worry, he needed to learn to survive the heat and the dunes. I was really happy for him – he's very strong in mind and we know he's one of the best Formula 1 drivers in the world. We are so happy to have him in the team."

FERNANDO ALONSO Q&A

Has your rate of improvement been what you hoped it would be so far?

"Yeah, I think so. We still have a lot to learn, but generally speaking I'm happy with the progress we did. I remember the first rally out in Namibia and out of the service park we have a bump in the road which is 40cm or half a metre. I ask Marc [Coma, co-driver], so where do we go now? We cannot jump this. Which way we need to go? I was scared to break the car. He looked at me and said: 'Go straight now, don't worry.' The car could take that and now we're going over bumps of metres and metres."

How much are you changing the car?

"Sometimes I have some feelings that I can pass to the team, sometimes they are the same as they have and sometimes there are feelings that we cannot improve with the car; I feel a lot of roll and movement in the high-speed corners and always their answer is always the same: 'This is a two-tonne car and you are two metres high. Forget about your feelings from Formula 1!'"

What about after the Dakar Rally next year?

"Next year, after Dakar, I want to prepare for another Indy 500 attempt with good preparation and for 2021, let's see what happens. Formula 1 with new regulations is something I need to look at very carefully."



So you're still interested in F1?

"I will see when the new regulations are confirmed, they're still 50:50. When they are confirmed, if I see Formula 1 becoming more interesting and mixed and without one team dominating as now, it could be a potential possibility to come back."

Did you learn to work on the car for Dakar?

"Yes. This is another part that's interesting, we have been learning and training mechanically to change parts on the car. Marc has still to do more, the co-driver does more than us [drivers]. We went through some programmes, we had to change front and rear suspension and driveshafts – all of these things that can happen in the stage."

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE MN CIRCUIT RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

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'Neuville did a perfect job'
Hyundai man's title hope dies, p20



ANGER AT RALLY SPAIN'S '20 AXE

Popular round will drop off the calendar for one season

By David Evans

The most influential voices in Spanish motorsport have condemned the FIA's decision not to include the event in the 2020 World Rally Championship calendar – Rally Spain will return in 2021 as an all-asphalt event.

Rally Spain has been a regular fixture on the calendar since 1994, but the Salou-based event will step aside for Rally Germany next season.

President of the Spanish motorsport federation Manuel Avino, who sits on the FIA's World Motor Sport Council, told Motorsport News: "We have to respect this decision, but I'm not happy with this kind of rotation and it was not my vote in world council."

Rally director Aman Barfull offered a deeper and more frank analysis of the events which led to Spain's round being shelved in favour of Germany.

"We were shocked and disappointed when we found out," he said. "We had a contract for 2019 and 2020 and finally we need to make a new contract without 2020, but with 2021 and 2022 instead. We understand nothing, but we think this is political reasons – but it's not the [fault of the] promoter."



Rally Spain will become an all-asphalt event when it returns

"It's not an official explanation, but Germany don't have the Formula 1 and Spain, we have the Formula 1 [and WRC] and Germany will need one world championship. It's a crazy situation."

"Now in Europe we are 10 [rounds] and in the future we are eight. Two European rallies have to go out. We are Tarmac and European and Germany is the same; we go out."

Looking towards the next WRC counter in Catalunya, Barfull ended speculation about the location and surface of the event. There had been talk the rally could move to the Circuit of Catalunya just

outside Barcelona. "No," said Barfull. "We [will not] move. The circuit has the facilities, but it doesn't have the hotels or the stages and Salou, Costa Daurada, they pay for the rally – the circuit doesn't pay for the rally. We will stay here."

"It's true we go to become all-asphalt again. It's a shame I think the mixed surface is quite exciting, but having just Tarmac is a little bit cheaper for us and it is cheaper for the teams and when WRC Promoter is making a list, the cost is coming into this."

Rally Spain is expected to run in Catalunya in some form next season.

Local hero Dani Sordo was

Weather we can't stop event

The average monthly rainfall for the Tarragona region in October is 75mm. On Tuesday night – two days before the start of Rally Spain – 200mm of rainfall fell on Salou and the surrounding area.

Fortunately, the rain stopped just before Rally Spain organisers would have been forced to modify the route due to flooded stages. The recce was hit, however, with practice at the shakedown stage shifted to Wednesday evening.

Rally director Aman Barfull told MN: "After Tuesday night, shakedown was a swimming pool. The street stage was also under water. We worked for the day and the night and finally it was OK."

"In the mountains, the roads were not so bad. We had some places where we had to move some big stones, but the roads were OK. And the gravel roads are quite hard and can take the rain."

similarly frustrated, having just competed and finished second in front of what looked like one of the biggest crowds in the event's history.

"It's weird," Sordo told MN. "You have seen this amount of spectators, it's totally crazy not to have this rally next year. We do so many rallies with no people. Is something wrong? Look, look at the number of people on the stages, even on Thursday and Friday, how many people come? The organisation and everything is nice. Why they don't do this rally and we go to the sh*t rallies? Next year this rally has a holiday and it will be sad."

Citroen gets to the bottom of Ogier's steering dramas

Citroen team principal Pierre Budar has revealed details of the failure that cost Sebastien Ogier his chance to fight for a seventh World Rally Championship title in Spain last week.

The Frenchman was leading the Salou-based penultimate round of the WRC when a hydraulic issue dropped him nearly four minutes on stages two and three.

Budar told MN: "The problem for Sebastien was a simple pipe, just some damage to the hydraulic pipe and the fluid came out. The reason he lost the gearshift and the steering is

because both run on the same pump. It was a pipe itself that was damaged, not a connection. It was not stone or rock damage, it's not clear how this happened and it's not something we've had before. It's a very straightforward and simple pipe that we have used and use on all of the cars for many years without any specific problems, nothing was touching the pipe. We have to understand more on this."

The team is also investigating the engine fault that ruled Esapekka Lappi's C3 WRC out on the penultimate gravel stage on Friday.

Despite a disappointing weekend, Budar said he was encouraged by the speed Ogier had been able to show on the asphalt stages.

"It's an improvement from where we were," said Budar, referring to the squad's last Tarmac start in Germany, where they finished seventh and eighth. "The work we have done is positive and it's going in the right direction."

Ogier was in broad agreement with the improvements on asphalt, but still complained about a lack of traction – particularly at the rear of the car – on slower corners.



Ogier's bid was thwarted

Junior World Rally Championship to spread its wings to Chile for the first time in 2020

The Junior World Rally Championship will take crews outside Europe for the first time in its current form, when the series includes Rally Chile next season.

The JWRC calendar was revealed at last week's Rally Spain and includes two changes from this year's schedule as Chile and Germany replace Corsica and Rally GB. The all-Ford Fiesta R2 series will begin in Sweden before heading across the Atlantic for the Concepcion-based Rally Chile, back to

Europe for some rough gravel in Sardinia, smooth gravel in Finland and an autumn finale on a double points-paying Germany.

Series co-ordinator Maciek Woda told MN: "I asked the crews a theoretical question in Finland about whether they would like to go outside Europe, providing there was no cost implication apart from the extra money to spend on the flight. The reaction was that this would be brilliant."

"We have a good relationship with the organiser in Chile, so I spoke to them and this was

another positive reaction, so we made it happen. The organisers in Chile are helping with the logistics, so it doesn't cost more to go there. It's a nice, smooth rally and it'll be a completely new one for everybody next year."

The Junior formula has travelled outside Europe before, with Mexico, Argentina, and Jordan all hosting rounds, but the series has been entirely European based for the last decade.

"When JWRC was going to Argentina and those places, there

were three or four cars," said Woda. "Now we go and we'll take 12 or 14 cars – we're going to be the biggest team out there in Chile. It's good for the guys to do a long-haul rally and South America is a great audience for us. Switching GB for Germany means we have all surfaces covered. It's a shame we can't be in Wales, we enjoyed it this year, but maybe we'll be back in 2021."

The prize for next year's JWRC champion remains the same, with the winner taking delivery of a brand new Ford Fiesta R5 Mk2.

GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

DAVID EVANS

"The hybrid future is now nearing reality"



This time they needed a bigger room. Last Thursday the finest engineering brains in the World Rally Championship were accompanied to the latest technical working group meeting by their bosses, the team principals.

There remains a concern that the move towards a hybrid World Rally Car for 2022 is taking too long and is looking too expensive. FIA rally director Yves Matton knows engineers as well as anybody. He spent years employing and watching Citroen's best make the Xsara, C4 and DS 3 better and better.

Engineers make things faster, more efficient, more dynamic, more effective and, of course, more expensive.

Last Thursday in Spain, the WRC saw the light. The 2022 World Rally Car will be hybrid, but it's only going to be electric for a few kilometres at a time. There's not going to be any hybrid performance boost in the stages, it's purely for use in and around the service park and in towns.

It really doesn't need to be flash. It needs to come off the shelf, complete with a battery for next to nothing.

As one team principal said: "The engineers want to make us a spaceship when all we need is a washing machine."

It's that straightforward. What we don't need is over-engineering. Bolt in the battery, whack on the motors and let's crack on.

Making it any more complicated than that will only serve as a potential barrier to entry for new, inbound manufacturers. That's not what we need. We need to be making this championship as cost-effective and high in value to car makers as possible.

What was encouraging in Spain was that the FIA and the manufacturers finally appeared to be on not just the same page, but on the same paragraph on the same page. And it's Matton we have to thank for that. He's a busy man and attending technical meetings like that one probably aren't the best use of his time, but what he did was allay most of the fears the teams have about spiralling costs. Yes, some of the tenders for the electrical gubbins have come in ridiculously expensive and they're far too flash for the requirement we have, but that's not the way we're going.

The tender process isn't finished yet. When it is, if we're still staring at a space race then that's the time to take aim at the governing body, but Geneva has promised us a set of regulations by December, so let's wait and see what comes out of those first.

The hybrid solution's not behind, it's on track. The problem we have is that we're already two or three years late laying the track down.

Beyond Thursday and all the talking, last week demonstrated, once again, just what a stunning sport and spectacular championship we have in rallying and the WRC. What we don't need to do now is trip ourselves up trying to over-complicate the future just for the sake of it.

Make it safe, simple and silent and that'll do for us. We don't need any more and we can't afford any more from a hybrid solution.

RALLY NEWS

Mull tracking system saves spectator's life

Competitors on the Mull Rally have praised the use of a tracking system which potentially saved the life of one fan on the Scottish island earlier this month.

The Sporttraxx system was used in every car on Mull, allowing the organisers to follow them via a GPS signal deployed every five seconds.

Subaru Impreza driver Gordon Cunningham pushed the system's SOS button on the fifth stage of the event and was relieved at the speed of response which helped save the life of a spectator.

Cunningham slid off the road in Dervaig and, while helping push the car back onto the road, one fan fell into the river.

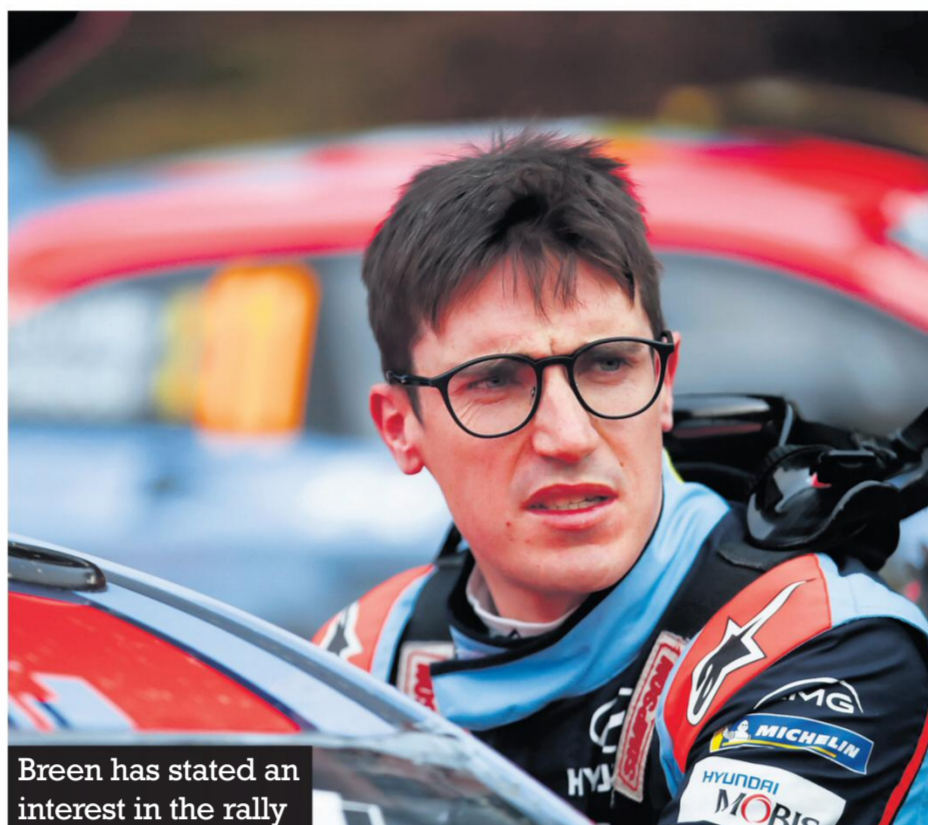
"He was face down in the water," said Cunningham. "He went under the bridge, but we managed to get him out the other side. We pushed the button and we had the ambulance there in about 30 seconds.

"They performed CPR, got the water out of his lungs and he's still here. Definitely the tracking system is a good step forwards."

Deputy clerk of the course Iain Campbell said the system had made the task of keeping an eye on the cars considerably simpler this time around.

"The geography of the place makes it hard to track the cars," said Campbell, "but the Sporttraxx system worked really well. OK, there were a couple of black spots, but the cars were very rarely out of range for more than a few seconds and, there's no doubt, it helped us get the ambulance away very, very quickly in stage five."

The Scottish island event is considering adding in a live timing element to the tracking system for next season.



Breen has stated an interest in the rally



Hirvonen would use Escort Mk2

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, LAT

WRC STARS KEEN TO TRY ICONIC MULL RALLY

MacKinnon eager for Scottish event to attract the highest calibre of driver possible

By David Evans

Mull Rally winner Paul MacKinnon is hoping his home event can attract a World Rally Championship star or two next year.

Former Ford and Citroen factory driver Mikko Hirvonen has twice tried to make it to Mull and is hopeful of being there next season.

The Finn would drive a Ford Escort Mk2 if he did make it

to Tobermory.

Craig Breen is another WRC star who has talked of making the journey for the first time.

"I've heard so much about the place," said Breen.

"It sounds fantastic, but I'd probably not be bringing the Metro for the first time!"

MacKinnon added: "It would be a dream to get somebody like Mikko or Craig over here.

"It would be fantastic to get the chance for the local

guys to have the opportunities to prove ourselves against some of those drivers at that level. Not that I'm sure I'd be able to show them anything though!"

Ford Fiesta R5 driver MacKinnon admitted he'd been impressed with the speed of some of the drivers further down the order at the event earlier this month.

"I was looking at some of the times and you can see the

next generation are coming now," he said. "That's good.

"This event needs the competition, but at the moment it's still a lot about the old guard like me and Daniel [Harper], Calum [Duffy] and John [MacCrone]."

MacKinnon was also quick to praise the organisers of the island event in being so fast to get the event back once closed-road legislation was passed in Scotland in

the summer. "The guys did a really good job," he said. "It's been a long time since [the last Mull Rally in] 2016 and it would have been tough to wait another year.

"It's a great event, but we need to keep making it bigger and better to keep the people coming. That's what would make it so good to get a top-level driver over here next year – could you imagine the buzz about the place?"

Jim Clark added to 2020 SRC calendar

The 2020 Scottish Rally Championship will become a dual-surface series for the first time since 2013 as the Jim Clark Reivers Rally returns and the Argyll Rally switches from gravel to Tarmac.

The Snowman Rally kicks off proceedings a month later than its usual February slot, with the Speyside Stages and Jim Clark Rally next on the schedule. Just a week after the Jim Clark is the Scottish Rally, which is a counting round of both the SRC and the BTRDA for 2020.

A further two weeks after the Scottish Rally is the Argyll Rally, which will be the second of two closed-road events, as the Grampian Forest and Galloway Hills rallies conclude

CALENDAR

2020 Scottish Rally Championship

DATE	EVENT	LOCATION
March 7	Snowman Rally	Inverness
April 18	Speyside Stages	Elgin
May 31	Jim Clark Reivers Rally	Duns
June 6	Scottish Rally	Moffat
June 20	Argyll Rally	Dunoon
August 8	Grampian Forest Rally	Banchory
September 19	Galloway Hills Rally	Dalbeattie

the season. Organisers of the Border Counties Rally have been unable to commit to running an event in 2020, but it is widely expected to return in 2021.

"We are delighted to be returning to a mixed-surface format and the events on offer in 2020 really do have something for everybody," said SRC chairman, Gordon Adam.

"There may be some

competitors who would rather not compete on Tarmac, but because only five of a potential seven scores will count, these drivers will not lose the chance to win their class or overall title.

"We felt that when we had the opportunity to give our competitors this choice, it was important to do this given the fairly major format changes we have made for the 2020 season."

ERC HYUNDAI OUTING FOR DEVINE ON RALLY HUNGARY

Callum Devine will compete in next weekend's European Rally Championship finale, Rally Hungary, as he assesses a move into the championship next year.

The Irish Tarmac Rally Championship regular will switch from his Ford Fiesta R5 to a PCRS-run Hyundai i20 R5 for the event, courtesy of support from Motorsport Ireland.

The 25-year-old took his maiden rally win on his last event, the Donegal

Devine will use an i20 R5 in ERC

Harvest Rally, having finished third overall in the ITRC standings.

"It came together quite quickly, to be honest," explained Devine.

"It's thanks to Hyundai Customer Racing and Andrew Johns [Hyundai's R5 sales associate]. We made contact with him and this chance came up. They wanted to send a driver to the ERC's final round and I was able to do it with the support of Motorsport Ireland.

"It wouldn't have happened without the [Motorsport Ireland Rally] Academy.

They're working with Hyundai on several projects and have a good link with them. We plan to do the ERC next year and Hyundai might be interested in coming on board with that as well."

With next year in mind, Devine is keeping his focus on finishing Rally Hungary and getting as much experience as possible. He has completed a few shakedown runs in the i20 R5, but only on a track, and is keen to learn as much about the car as possible.

"Hopefully we can get with the car," he added. "I just want to go and learn as much as I can so I know what to improve on next year."



MN CIRCUIT RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP WIDE OPEN FOR 2019-20 SEASON

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'Browne romps to victory'
Formula Ford Festival report, p24



MOFFETT WANTS NEW M-SPORT FIESTA R5 OUTING THIS YEAR

Irishman wants to assess as many R5 options as possible ahead of 2020 campaign

By Jason Craig

Former Irish Tarmac champion Josh Moffett has said he is in the process of trying to secure a drive in M-Sport's all-new Ford Fiesta R5.

Moffett is weighing up his options in the run up to next season and is keen to test as many R5 cars as possible.

Moffett and his older brother Sam attended a test day at M-Sport over the summer where they spent time with the Fiesta and got the chance to talk to engineers.

"I am trying to get a rally sorted in the new Fiesta but the dates aren't working at the minute," he told Motorsport News.

"There are some options, which we are looking at, and hopefully we can find a suitable date before the end of the year to try it.

"It would be nice to try the new Fiesta and the new Skoda [Fabia] but unfortunately at the minute none are available for hire.

"Hopefully that will change in the near future and we can get a drive in both of them.

"I only got to drive it [the Fiesta] on an airfield [in the summer], so it's hard to say [how good it is]."

Moffett has already sampled the Hyundai i20 R5, which he drove to fifth overall on June's Donegal International Rally.

He was also among the first to get behind the wheel of Volkswagen Motorsport's Polo

GTI R5. This came on the recent Donegal Harvest Rally where he finished in fourth place.

At one point he was fighting for the lead in the German supermini before a spin on the penultimate stage put him out of contention.

"The car felt good and in some ways was rather similar to the Hyundai," he explained.

"The engine in the Polo had a lot of torque and it felt very steady in the fast stuff.

"We had one quick test in the car followed by a very tricky, short, rally but it went well.

"If we had some more time with the car I think we could improve elements of the set-up but for our first time out in the car I was very pleased."



Photos: Martin Walsh, LAT

New model has been used in 2019

Payne heads Malton entry in search of fifth consecutive win as Bainbridge aims for maiden podium with Skoda Fabia

Ian Bainbridge says he is now full of confidence with three rallies under his belt behind the wheel of his Skoda Fabia R5 ahead of this weekend's Malton Forest Rally.

Bainbridge is targeting a maiden outright podium having finished just 1.9 seconds away from the rostrum on the Trackrod Forest Stages last month.

"[We have] a much better feeling with the car now," Bainbridge told MN. "[On the] Woodpecker and Galloway [Hills]

the car had a base gravel set-up which was far too stiff to give confidence, the car felt skittish.

"We've softened the suspension a lot and the boys at [Dom Buckley] RSC have done a great job altering the throttle and brake set-up to suit me. The confidence is now there and we will start to lean on the car to see what it can do. SS1 is important as Ollie [Mellors] always seems to start at 100%."

Winner for the past four years, Charlie Payne has entered in his Ford Fiesta RS WRC and leads

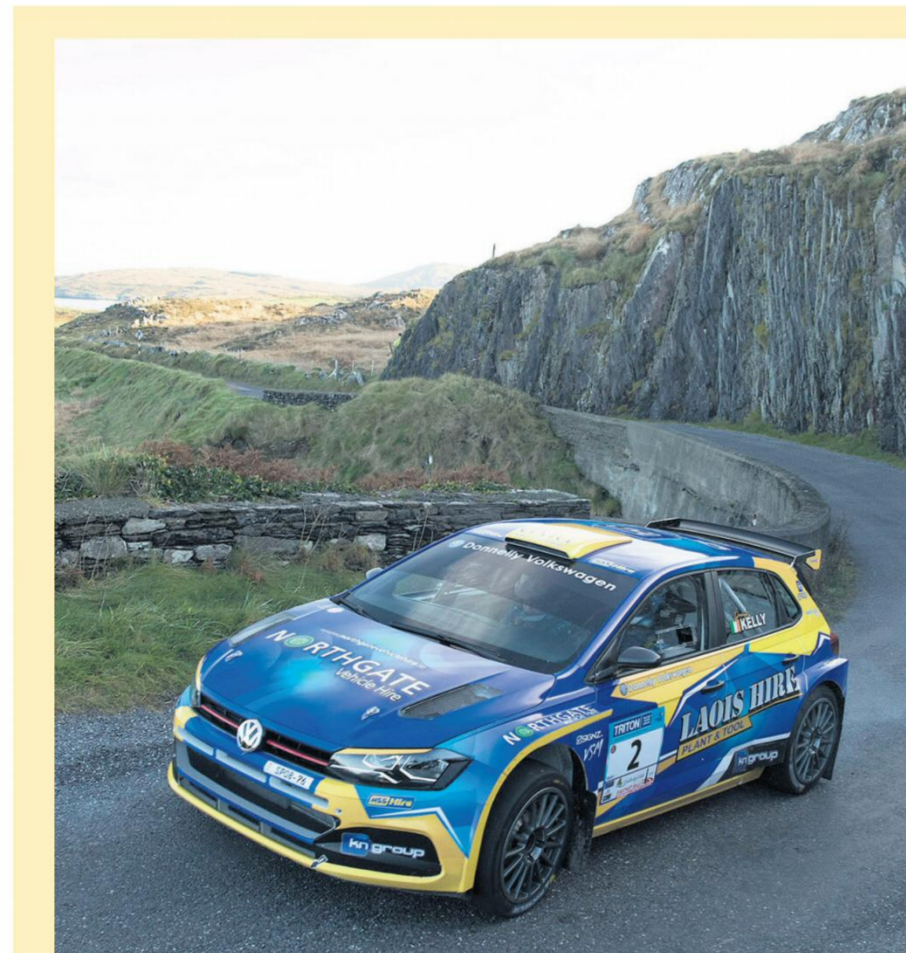
the seeded entry ahead of Ollie Mellors, who will be a favourite for victory in his Proton Iriz R5 given his recent Woodpecker and Trackrod victories. Mellors finished third on the Malton in 2017 and second last year, so a repeat of his 2013 victory is a real possibility.

Stephen Petch and Thomas Preston bring Fiesta RS WRCs along, with the latter hoping for a strong result after clutch issues on the Trackrod and a handbrake release problem on Wales Rally GB National.

ENTRY LIST

Malton Forest Rally, Pickering, NYorks, November 3

NO	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR
1	Charlie Payne/Patrick Walsh	Ford Fiesta RS WRC
2	Ollie Mellors/Ian Windress	Proton Iriz R5
3	Stephen Petch/Michael Wilkinson	Ford Fiesta RS WRC
4	Thomas Preston/Carl Williamson	Ford Fiesta RS WRC
5	Ian Bainbridge/Jamie Edwards	Skoda Fabia R5
6	John McIlwraith/Jonathan Fowler	Subaru Impreza
7	Daniel Hiorns/Chris Purvis	Subaru Impreza
8	Steve Petch/John Richardson	Ford Fiesta S2000
9	Simon Green/Andrew Thorpe	Subaru Impreza
10	Rob Snowden/Mark Fisher	Subaru Impreza



The winning margin on the Fastnet Rally was 37.1 seconds

KELLY TAKES FIRST WIN AT WHEEL OF VW POLO GTI R5

Fastnet Rally

By Martin Walsh

Organiser: Skibbereen & District Car Club
When: October 27 **Where:** Bantry, Co. Cork
Championships: Irish National Rally Championship; Southern 4 Rally Championship; SDCC Championship
Stages: 8 **Starters:** 94 and 20.

Victory on the Fastnet Rally, the final round of the Irish National Rally Championship, provided Donagh Kelly and co-driver Conor Foley with a first win aboard their Volkswagen Polo GTI R5.

They finished 37.1 seconds clear of Damian Tourish/Domhnall McAlaney, with Welsh crew Mel Evans/Patrick Walsh (Skoda Fabia R5) 50.8s further behind in third.

There was only two seconds between Kelly and Tourish after SS1. Two locals, Vincent McSweeney (Mitsubishi Lancer E9) and Daniel Cronin (Ford Fiesta R5) were next, the latter

worried about an overheating problem, before both crashed out on the second stage.

After the opening loop Kelly, who admitted to experiencing a few moments and a tyre choice which was too soft, was 15.5s ahead of Tourish as Evans slotted into third albeit 21.6s further behind. Evans was followed by the Escort Mk2s of Gary Kiernan, Chris Armstrong and JF Shovelin.

Kevin Eves struggled with the springs on his Toyota Corolla initially but eventually did enough to secure third overall in the National series and annex the rally.ie award.

Kelly, with a change of tyres for the repeat loop, moved 31.6s clear and backed off on the final pair of stages when the car felt a little twitchy.

Tourish took second and Evans regained third at the expense of Kiernan, who

retired with a broken differential on SS7. David Kelly (Toyota Starlet) won the Junior category to secure a Billy Coleman award nomination.

Results

1 Donagh Kelly/Conor Foley (VW Polo GTI R5) 1h01m.26.2s; 2 Damian Tourish/Domhnall McAlaney (Ford Escort Mk2) +37.1s; 3 Melvyn Evans/Patrick Walsh (Skoda Fabia R5); 4 Chris Armstrong/Dylan Doonan (Escort Mk2); 5 David Moffett/Martin Connolly (Toyota Starlet); 6 JF Shovelin/Emmet Brosnan (Escort Mk2); 7 Aaron McLaughlin/Darren Curran (Ford Fiesta R5); 8 Kevin Eves/Chris Melly (Toyota Corolla); 9 Daragh O'Riordan/Mikey Walsh (Escort Mk2); 10 Kevin Barrett/Declan Tumlity (Subaru Impreza WRC).

Class winners: Desmond Roche/Mairead Duane (Honda Civic); Robert Leech/Denny Greaney (Proton Satria); John/Andy Hayes (Civic); Thomas O'Rourke/Tomas Scallan (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); McLaughlin/Curran; Barrett/Tumlity; Robert/Oria Beamish (Opel Corsa); Victor/Susan Beamish (Vauxhall Nova); Jason Ryan/Peter Keohane (Starlet); William Nolan/Shane O'Mahony (Corolla); Kieran Hayes/Andrew Purser (Peugeot 205); Moffett/Connolly; Armstrong/Doonan; Mick Cremin/Sean Egan (Lancer E9); Kieran Reen/Mark O'Leary (Civic); David Kelly/Kenny Bustard (Starlet); Ned Flahavan/Anthony Roche (Lancia Fulvia); John O'Connor/Michael Breen (Escort); Brendan Cumiskey/Liam Moynihan (Lancer E10); Emma Nott/Declan Casey (Escort Mk2).

Capacity entry for Buihth Showground

Next weekend's Buihth Showground Stages boasts a full entry of 60 cars and will be led by last year's winners Sam Davies and Martin Lasper.

The Vauxhall Nova crew will tackle a combination of loose and asphalt stages which will make up the 36-mile route next Saturday.

Marshals are needed for the event organised by Herefordshire Motor Club. Contact Martin Williams, chief marshal on 01544 388337 or email martinstoys@icloud.com if interested.

Spectators are welcome at £10 per car for a full day's action. For further details visit herefordshiremotorclub.co.uk

Hat-trick of Belgian titles for Reddington

Irishman John Reddington has won the Flanders International Rally Challenge championship for the third consecutive season.

Alongside co-driver Darragh Mullen, the Ford Fiesta R5 crew took sixth overall at the recent Hemicuda Rally in Belgium but second in the FIRC points behind rivals David Campling/James Ducker (Subaru Impreza WRC).

Reddington's three previous maximum scores and one further second place in the nine-round series gave him the title with one event remaining.

Having used a Millington-powered Ford Escort Mk2 throughout 2019, Reddington admitted his new mount was very different. "It's only our second rally in the Fiesta," he said. "It is slower on top-end power but the brakes are much better and the handling is more controllable."

Sheard only likely to do part-time season

Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship stalwart Paul Sheard expects to have fewer appearances behind the wheel at rallies this season.

The reigning Class B champion will hand his Mazda MX-5 over to regular team-mate Paul Gorge for the coming campaign, which begins this weekend at Oulton Park with the Neil Howard Stages.

The Sheard Autosport team's circuit racer Steve Dolman will compete alongside Gorge in another MX-5.

With four cars for Sheard to focus on, including a third MX-5 for endurance racer Mike Watson and a Ford Puma for son George, he says a full-time return will have to wait until the following season.

"I'll miss it, but the plan is to finish off our new builds to compete in Class B again next year," said Sheard. "Next year they'll be done, and we think they'll be seriously quick."

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The 100 plus miles stage rally will take place over many of the Isle of Man's iconic stages that have just been used on this year's National event. They include Keristal, Ronague, St Marks, Druidale, Staarvey and everyone's favourite Baldwin's.

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MN CIRCUIT PREVIEW

Photos: Chicane Media, SMJ Photography



Tilburn will try to go one better

TITLE SET TO BE WIDE OPEN

With last year's champion not returning full-time the crown is up for grabs. By **Dan Mason**

If it ain't broke, don't fix it' is very much the mantra for the 2019-20 Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship which returns for a fifth season, starting with this weekend's Neil Howard Stages at Oulton Park.

Last season was ultimately all about the winning partnership of Chris West and Keith Hounslow as they scooped the title for a second year in succession, but their closed-road Tarmac rally plans mean their visits are limited this season with only Cadwell Park in November confirmed.

It means the overall title battle is now blown wide open, with consistency arguably the key to success.

That was Steve Tilburn's trump card in last season's championship. Upholding the flag for the Ford Escort Mk2, runner-up Tilburn was not always the fastest but excelled, and enters more relaxed with business distractions out of the equation. Arguably his biggest rival will be returning champion Ian Woodhouse, in a rebuilt Escort Mk2, who will be vying for another title. Outright victories could well be shared between numerous

big hitters from last season.

Frank Bird is perhaps the most likely. The single-seater racer, son of rally star Paul, brought a Ford Focus WRC '07 to the fray last season and proved an instant hit, taking success in Wales at the Anglesey visit earlier this year.

He now returns with co-driver Jack Morton alongside, although calendar clashes potentially limit Bird to only a handful of meetings rather than a title tilt. Similarly, Peter Smith's spontaneous outings in Fiesta RS WRC machinery could put him in with a shot of the occasional victory.

Last year's Oulton winner Kevin Procter will miss the opening event, replaced by super-sub Andy Scott as the Fiesta S2000 Turbo carrying #1 will defend its Neil Howard Stages crown. Fellow Ford Fiesta rivals Steve Simpson and Patrick Walsh should provide tough competition.

The remaining classes will keep fans guessing. Class A was a tense affair last year, won by Dale and Andrew Lawson in their MG ZR, which may soon graduate to Class B. They lead a real scrap for the coming campaign with frontrunners Craig Aston and Adam Ripper (Nissan Micra) their key rivals. Aston narrowly missed out last season, but keeps

finding improvements in 'Sharon' – his Toyota Yaris.

Class B hits the reset button on a battle that ended abruptly last season. Series stalwart Paul Sheard resorts to sporadic appearances, handing his Mazda MX-5 to Paul Gorge to fight off an improving Ashleigh Morris. The latter's spectacular roll at Knockhill came just as she began to pressure the experienced Sheard, but expect the Fiesta driver to be rejuvenated.

In Class C, it will be defending champion Ryan Connolly (Ford Puma) looking over his shoulder for Mike English (Escort Mk2) and Cathy Sewart (Talbot Sunbeam Lotus). A spanner in the works could be Joshua Davey in his rapid Darrian T90, a rally-winning car always in contention on its best days.

There are no major changes to the calendar this season, which begins this weekend at Oulton Park for the Neil Howard Stages. The championship will then travel to Cadwell Park for the first of two visits, Knockhill, Brands Hatch, Snetterton and Anglesey, before finishing at Donington Park in March.

Fans can enjoy Torque-produced coverage of the championship through Amazon Prime, Frontrunner, Facebook and YouTube throughout the year. ■



Dale and Andrew Lawson's MG ZR won Class A last year but might move up

CALENDAR Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship 2019-20

DATE	EVENT	VENUE
Nov 2	Neil Howard Stages	Oulton Park
Nov 17	Cadwell Park Stages	Cadwell Park
Dec 8	Knockhill Stages Rally	Knockhill
Jan 18	Brands Hatch Stages	Brands Hatch
Feb 2	Alan Healy Memorial Stages	Cadwell Park
Feb 15	Snetterton Stages	Snetterton
Mar 1	Lee Holland Stages	Anglesey Circuit
Mar 15	Donington Rally	Donington Park



Class C winner: Connolly



Mellors Elliot Motorsport is offering the chance to drive its Iriz R5

New Proton Iriz R5 prize 'a serious opportunity' for overall MN champion

Without doubt the biggest change to the championship this season is the chance of a lifetime for the overall winner to get behind the wheel of an R5-specification rally car.

That's the prize on offer for this season's championship winner courtesy of Mellors Elliot Motorsport (MEM), which is offering a test drive in its fully FIA-homologated Proton Iriz R5 rally car.

With household MN Circuit Rally Championship names otherwise distracted, the prize could arguably be anyone's and rallying stalwart Paul Sheard believes it is "a serious opportunity".

"For most of the competitors we have out there it's a dream to get into that sort of kit, so it's a real incentive and it will be something to keep you at as many events as possible," he says.

"Sometimes, in these situations it's the

dedicated ones that deserve it more; people like Cathy [Sewart] who have been loyal and are always there in older cars, rather than those in exotic cars. It ought to be that way."

One of those expected to be in the running is last season's runner-up, Steve Tilburn, who highlights reliability and consistency as key factors in deciding who will get to sit in the Iriz come the end of the season.

"We were always around the top five and top 10 because – OK we were quick – [but] we were lucky that we had such massive reliability," says Tilburn.

"In rallying, the first thing you have to do is finish, which is why you spend that time fiddling with it to keep that reliability."

Tested by the likes of two-time World Rally champion Marcus Gronholm, the Iriz has had wins on the Trackrod and Woodpecker

Stages with Ollie Mellors and Ian Windress and it is beginning to prove its pedigree.

New kit is not for everyone, however. Tilburn and Ian Woodhouse lead those proudly upholding the flag of the classic Ford Escort Mk2, an iconic sight at circuit rallies, and that mechanical pride is still something felt through the MNCRC paddock.

"[R5s] might not be for me," says Tilburn. "If anything, I'd probably stick to racing Escorts and maybe build a new one. It is youth versus the old boys. We've hopefully got more competition from Escorts because the WRC and R5s were getting away from us. Now you've got Ian Woodhouse coming back and he's even better than he was."

This season's champion will earn a day with MEM including an hour's driving time, engineer support and data analysis.

RALLY SPAIN



BY DAVID
EVANS

Hyundai's man does all he can, but it is not enough to stop Toyota's new champion

Thierry Neuville's win helped Hyundai to top makes' points



NEUVILLE CAN'T HALT TANAK'S CORONATION

It was, quite possibly, the shortest news story of the season. For three minutes and 56 seconds, Thierry Neuville was at the very heart of the World Rally Championship. Winning Rally of Spain might – *might* – have forced this year's title decider Down Under. Then Ott Tanak arrived at the end of the 17th and final stage. He wrote his own story.

On Sunday afternoon in the shadow of the Prades Mountains, Tanak ended 15 years of French rule and became the first man since Petter Solberg to be crowned World Rally champion and called something other than Sebastien. It's all about Ott now.

In fact, it'd been all about the Toyota man from Friday morning – much as he did all he could to deflect the attention and dodge the limelight.

Ahead of the event, Tanak was a man focused entirely on the task in hand. Striding into the press conference, sunglasses firmly in place, he took his seat



Steering slowed Sebastien Ogier

and prepared to bat off whatever came his way. Yes, there were nerves, but they were useful nerves – the sort that offered extra motivation.

Ogier smiled. And said what more than a few were thinking.

"I liked to hear that Ott has been feeling [like that] a bit," said the Frenchman, "because he never shows anything. I know that he is a normal person in his private life, but sometimes, you are starting to worry if he has any feelings or if he is a machine!"

Tanak has been a machine for the duration of this season. And much of last year too.

But now, more than ever, he knew he needed the machine around him to function perfectly.

The mathematical permutations were mostly straightforward, but the powerstage's five bonus points did provide something of a numeric curveball. One fact remained: a win for Tanak would end 15 years of French rule in the WRC.

To keep the Tricolore high above the service park for another year, Ogier had to be up and out of the blocks. He had to fly.

"We have to be ahead of Ott," said the champion. "That's all there is to say."

Admittedly, the Gandesa opener was only 4.34 miles, but it was first blood to the Citroen man. And that mattered. Ogier was seven-tenths of a second ahead of Dani Sordo, but 1.8 seconds up on fifth-placed Tanak.

"It's not so often we are faster than Ott," smiled the leader. "We'll take that. Maybe we took a bit of a gamble on the tyre, but they [his championship rivals Tanak and Thierry Neuville] did the same thing, so let's see..."

Torrential rain in the days ahead of the penultimate WRC round of the season had given way to bright sunshine and warm temperatures. But how warm? That was the question. According to Sebastien Loeb, very warm. Hyundai's French star was the only one going out on hard Michelins. And we know from last year's Rally of Spain, the nine-time champ's pretty good at pulling on the right boots at the right time.

For Ogier, his selection of covers was the least of his worries 100 metres into the second stage.

Co-driver Julien Ingrassia takes up the story.

"The first corner was a flat-out left corner and I have seen that he is releasing the throttle," said Ingrassia. "Then on the next straight he told me we have no more the powersteering. We have to swallow this. We have to keep pushing and keep trying like we have for the rest of our careers."

The leader lost 44s in just under 12 miles. But the bigger concern was the 24-miler from La Fatarella-Vilalba. The rally's longest stage lay in wait to test the champ's mental and physical strength.

He made it through, but lost three minutes. Watching the onboard from the #1 Citroen made for grim viewing as Ogier hauled the thing from corner to corner. Across the line, the Frenchmen sat there. Not a word was spoken.

Ogier said: "I knew straight away, the car started feeling heavy, then it was gone completely and that was the start of the nightmare morning. It was challenging to make it through with no powersteering; it was hard, I have big blisters on both my hands and I really suffer, but I

try my best to bring the car here.

"I will try to stay in the race, even if the motivation is difficult to find. I knew that everything was gone, every hope of a good result was gone and most probably my hope for the championship. It's very disappointing."

Suddenly, the service park was looking closer at the longer-range mathematics. Ogier was Tanak's obvious rival, but what was it Neuville had to do again? Eleven points. The Belgian needed to score 11 more than the series leader to force the matter to a Coffs Harbour conclusion.

Now more than ever, Neuville needed his fellow i20 Coupe WRC drivers to pull together and produce the WRC equivalent of a rolling maul to go straight over the top of Toyota and Tanak.

And he got it.

Neuville and Sordo were sublime, but Loeb's effort on the road from La Fatarella to Vilalba in the morning was quite astonishing. And they were only bettered by his second shot in the afternoon. Last year's Rally Spain victor was the absolute master of the 24-miler and was more than 10s faster than anybody else across both runs. Winning the previous week's Rallye Ciudad de Granada (a Spanish Gravel Championship round) showed Loeb's time on the loose wasn't wasted and he led Neuville and Sordo.

On Friday evening, Hyundai's 1-2-3 looked as solid as the England front row lining up against the All Blacks the following morning.

All three of the i20 men have towering speed on Tarmac, but Loeb uttered a word of caution.

"Tonight it could be not much better,"

grinned Loeb. "But I have no idea what will happen tomorrow. I was not really good on Tarmac in Monte Carlo and Corsica [in the Hyundai]. Then I did some little rallies and made some changes, not a lot, but the steering is feeling better and we have less understeer after some work on the centre diff. At the last [Tarmac] test the feeling was good – I just hope I can find that feeling again tomorrow."

Hyundai Motorsport director Andrea Adamo echoed those thoughts. Or at least some of them.

"Tonight is nice, but it's not special," he said. "The wall has been written on by Tanak and Kris Meeke in Germany [in terms of asphalt speed from the Toyota]. So we'll keep our feet on the ground. We go to bed tonight and tell ourselves well done, but we also have to look to ourselves in the mirror and not lie to ourselves. It's clear we still have to improve on Tarmac."

"It's one thing to win and another thing to come home first. Sometimes this year, we came home first and sometimes we won. Let's see..."

Psychology? Reverse psychology. Or just poetry. Who cares? The only thing that really mattered were Neuville's times in a hunkered-down yet gravel-rashed Hyundai.

First two Tarmac stages? Fastest and fastest. He led.

"I had a good feeling in the first two," said Neuville. "The car was really nice, but then we had some brake problems in the third stage, the brakes were gone from the middle [of the stage]."

The lack of ability to slow his i20 had grown his advantage at the front of the field and Neuville was 11.4s up on Loeb at lunchtime on Saturday. Sordo was a

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'He rarely looked outclassed'
Katsuta's Rally Spain rated, p23



ROUND 13

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Thierry Neuville knew he needed to win – and did – but it just wasn't enough



Tanaka kept the pressure on and landed crucial points on the powerstage

er five down and crucially Tanak now 26.6s behind in fourth. (this update: fourth place wasn't high. Tanak would probably need a powerstage win to clinch the crown. Tanak's thoughts? Same as they been from the moment Ogier's griping tightened. "There's a long way to go," he said (kept on saying). "I think we can't let mind wander. It's quite far. We have a bit to do. We need to make our normal job. Our normal weekend." Times this year, Tanak's made his 'normal' weekend and that was what Hyundai folk were afraid of. Tanak's rarely the most talkative of characters, but last week he retreated a further. Not that you'd have known the outside, the nerves got hold of. He was far from his normal self. The closest we got to anything like an mission was when he accepted he was having a normal weekend on anything normal weekend. But he just kept on going off the answers and pulling his power down over his eyes. You could see from his driving, this wasn't coming naturally. "I can't find the rhythm," he said Saturday's second stage. Then he reeled off four fastest times snipped ahead of Loeb into third on the eve of the final day. Rhythm found, Hyundai's armour held. Sunday? Depends if I can find the same rhythm." Tanak said. "I started to relax a bit this afternoon. I found a way to drive more normally. More like myself. Still, I need to be in the middle of road."

Sordo staying ahead of Tanak was vital for Neuville. If Tanak got to second place, Thierry knew he needed everything – the win and the powerstage. And Sordo was absolutely superb for the first three stages of the final day. Fastest on stages 15 and 16, he extended his advantage over Ott from 3.1 to 5.8s. "Dani's flying!" exclaimed a genuinely delighted Neuville at the end of the penultimate test. He knew his team-mate had done enough to load the pressure onto the Toyota man, forcing him to make a decision; to walk a tightrope. For Tanak, the choice was a simple one: risk everything in an all-out shot at powerstage glory – and when I say everything, I mean *everything*. Had Tanak stacked it in stage 17, Neuville would have been 12 points down going to Australia. Much as Tanak kept telling everybody it didn't matter so much ("don't forget, there's still Australia...") he didn't want that to happen. The last three days had been pretty shocking from a pressure perspective. He didn't want to spend the next two and a half weeks with the championship dominating his every thought. In the words of his manager and mate Markko Martin: "He wants to get this bloody thing done." On the flip side, Neuville had nothing in personal terms – even if Adamo might have disagreed from a company perspective – to lose. Neuville would give his run everything, he needed every point he could lay his hands on; he knew victory on the rally alone probably wouldn't be enough.

Continued on page 22

STAGE TIMES

- **SS1 Gandesa 1 (gravel) (4.35 miles)**
Fastest Ogier 4m16.8s **Leader** Ogier
Second Sordo +0.7s
- **SS2 Horta-Bot 1 (gravel) (11.81 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 10m18.5s **Leader** Neuville
Second Sordo +0.4s
- **SS3 La Fatarella - Vilalba 1 (gravel and asphalt) (24.14 miles)**
Fastest Loeb 26m30.9s **Leader** Sordo
Second Neuville +1.0s
- **SS4 Gandesa 2 (gravel) (4.35 miles)**
Fastest Sordo 4m12.0s **Leader** Sordo
Second Neuville +4.2s
- **SS5 Horta-Bot 2 (gravel) (11.81 miles)**
Fastest Loeb 10m01.5s **Leader** Sordo
Second Neuville +4.6s
- **SS6 La Fatarella - Vilalba 2 (gravel and asphalt) (24.14 miles)**
Fastest Loeb 25m46.8s **Leader** Loeb
Second Neuville +1.7s
- **SS7 Savalla 1 (asphalt) (8.75 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 7m25.9s **Leader** Neuville
Second Loeb +3.2s
- **SS8 Querol 1 (asphalt) (13.21 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 10m52.4s **Leader** Neuville
Second Loeb +7.5s
- **SS9 El Montmell 1 (asphalt) (15.16 miles)**
Fastest Tanak 12m16.2s **Leader** Neuville
Second Loeb +11.4s
- **SS10 Savalla 2 (asphalt) (8.75 miles)**
Fastest Tanak 7m25.2s **Leader** Neuville
Second Loeb +15.6s
- **SS11 Querol 2 (asphalt) (13.21 miles)**
Fastest Tanak 10m55.6s **Leader** Neuville
Second Loeb +16.5s
- **SS12 El Montmell 2 (asphalt) (15.16 miles)**
Fastest Tanak 12m12.7s **Leader** Neuville
Second Sordo +20.6s
- **SS13 Salou (asphalt) (1.39 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 2m35.7s **Leader** Neuville
Second Sordo +21.5s
- **SS14 Riudecanyes 1 (asphalt) (10.16 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 10m13.5s **Leader** Neuville
Second Sordo +22.2s
- **SS15 La Mussara 1 (asphalt) (12.87 miles)**
Fastest Sordo 10m58.5s **Leader** Neuville
Second Sordo +17.5s
- **SS16 Riudecanyes 2 (asphalt) (10.16 miles)**
Fastest Sordo 10m11.4s **Leader** Neuville
Second Sordo +15.2s
- **SS17 La Mussara 2 (asphalt) [Power Stage] (12.87 miles)**
Fastest Tanak 10m49.6s **Leader** Neuville
Second Tanak +17.2s



Toyota had strong support in Spain

COLIN CLARK

"Tanak has learned to walk tall in the WRC"



Well it's been a long time in the making but, on Sunday, Ott Tanak was crowned as the world's best rally driver. And my goodness me, did he deserve it.

But it's been a far from easy ride to the very top of rallying for the now eminently likeable Estonian. And I use the word 'now' intentionally, because there was a time where actually it was very hard to like the younger version of Ott.

Most of us first noticed Tanak's undoubted talents when he earned himself a place on the Pirelli Star Driver scheme way back in 2010. His speed, commitment and potential was clear right from the start but, as many young drivers have found out over the years, those attributes alone are rarely enough to forge a path to the very top.

But Tanak was different. Even back then he was doing things in the stages that his contemporaries just couldn't match.

Tanak was, as I've hinted at, a bit of a difficult personality back then. The older folk amongst us might even have referred to him as a bit of a precocious child at times. And so when Malcolm Wilson's M-Sport team took a punt on the talents of Tanak in 2012 and gave him the opportunity to make a name for himself in a World Rally Championship car, they always knew there was an element of risk involved.

And ultimately it was risk too far. Tanak was quick, mighty quick at times. But he was also incredibly strong willed and hot-headed, and he crashed, actually he crashed a lot. When he stopped listening to Mr Wilson you knew the writing was on the wall and Tanak was unceremoniously dumped.

And with that he disappeared. The prodigiously talented but fatally arrogant youngster seemingly had blown his opportunity. And he disappeared for almost 18 months.

But herein lies the real point of this tale. Tanak didn't just disappear to lick his wounds and feel sorry himself. He used that time to work out what he wanted to do with his career and how was going to achieve what he knew was possible.

When he returned to the WRC in 2014 he was a different person. He disappeared from the scene as a damaged boy and reappeared as a confident young man. He made the most of every opportunity and learned from every mistake. It was a remarkable transformation.

And from that point Tanak never really looked back and never really looked like anything other than a champion in waiting.

I remember my old friend George Donaldson telling me in late 2015 when the Tommi Makinen-Toyota project was first being discussed that Tommi's number one signing should be Tanak. He was convinced even then that Ott was the man to give Toyota their first driver's title since Didier Auriol way back in 1994. Well he was of course absolutely right.

Tanak has had championship-winning qualities right from the outset. He's had to work hard and learn some painful lessons along the way to achieve his ultimate goal. But he is our 2019 champion and now has the opportunity and the ability to kick on and become a truly great champion.

NOW TURN OVER TO READ MN'S DRIVER RATINGS

RALLY SPAIN



BY DAVID EVANS



The champion-elect was in the headlines

Tanak rides out the centre of the storm

Riots, rain, Twitter, more rain and 2001 all over again.

The number of newlines running through Salou last week was just incredible. For us, for MN, for you and for me, the biggest – beyond Ott Tanak becoming a world champion – is the news that he's taking his number ones and shipping out of Toyota. Bound for Hyundai.

Launching a story like that at MN's sister website Autosport.com is not something you do easily. The question of where the Estonian would be going has been a running theme since he first told me he wanted to get his 2020 deal nailed early. That was when we were in his car driving to MM Motorsport's fancy new facility on the outskirts of Tallinn. That was April. The first half of the year. Six months on and the deal's done. Finally.

Very, very few saw him leaving Toyota. Me included until a week or so before the start of Spain. In terms of dramatic departures, this one's right up there with Richard Burns taking his numbers ones from Subaru to Peugeot 18 years ago.

In the days before the start of last week's penultimate rally of the season, all eyes were on the sky. Providing you were beneath an umbrella, that is. In one night, three times the average monthly rainfall fell around Salou.

The plastic barriers marking the shakedown and seafront superspecials weren't exactly where the organisers had left them. They were everywhere. Floating. The depth of water varied somewhere between knee and mid-thigh on the poor marshals who stood, shell-shocked at what was happening.

For 36 hours the organisers worked flat chat to drain the water and turn a swimming pool back into a shakedown stage. Credit to them. It was an unbelievable effort.

And once the flag dropped, the sun shone and temperatures rose towards the mid-20s, drying the sodden roads and leaving the late arrivals to wonder what all the fuss had been about.

Talking of fuss, Sebastien Ogier's wife probably bagged herself a few more followers on Twitter last Friday. She posted an incendiary message soon after the steering tightened on her husband's Citroen.

"Not much to say about @CitroenRacing !!! Shame on you to sit a world champion in a car like that" [sic]. There followed some unsavoury emojis and hashtags which furthered her point.

Citroen's team principal Pierre Budar maintained a dignified silence and offered only: "I have nothing to say about that. She is free. I have no contract with her, just with her husband."

And it wasn't like this was one of the quieter rounds of the championship. The world was watching. Whether it was the potential for a title decider or the chance of a Dani Sordo win, or maybe just because the world's fastest rally cars won't be racing these roads for 24 months, who knows? But last week was the busiest Rally Spain I think I've ever seen. Driving in past the PortAventura service park on Thursday (Thursday – that's the day with no competition...) was unbelievable. Cars mounted kerbs, roundabouts, pavements, grassy banks, gaps between trees – they were everywhere. And they were everywhere for miles.

People walked mile after mile after mile to watch their heroes last week. And not a single stage was lost to poorly placed or misbehaving spectators. The rest of the world could learn plenty from Spain last week.

The reward? A year's absence from the championship. Classic. Classic, that is, like total madness.

Continued from page 21

Neuville was edged by a heroic run from Elfyn Evans (the Welshman keen to salvage something from a fairly middling week in Spain)

And now for Tanak. Could he turn it on? Could he find the form and the speed that's kept fans around the world on their toes for the past two seasons?

Quickest at the first split by six tenths from Neuville. The split times were green for Tanak. They got greener. He got quicker.

Not for the first time in a Toyota, he flew across the finish in a time which made the best of the rest in the WRC look a little bit average.

In 12 miles, he was fastest by 3.6s. Not only had he smashed the five points, he'd nailed second and placed himself and co-driver Martin Jarveoja on the very top of the world.

Having bottled everything up for the last three days, the emotions spilled over as the Estonian pair realised what they'd done. Their powerstage pace was insane – more so when Tanak later revealed that he'd had to talk to himself midway through, telling himself to focus, tidy it up and get quicker. He listened. And turned in one of the finest single-stage performances in the history of rallying.

Crossing the flying finish, they shook hands and went directly to dreamland.

"We've been in the fire and in the water," said Tanak, literally and metaphorically with Portuguese flames and a Mexican lake. "We've experienced a lot of difficulties, but as I can feel today all these difficulties have given me some kind of strength and now finally I've been able to use it in a good way. The pressure has been at a different level this week. We were never able to take the challenge to fight with Thierry, I knew I could never take that risk. But when we



Rally Sardegna winner Dani Sordo proved to be the perfect wingman for title chaser Thierry Neuville

came to the final stage, I knew I had two options. I could wait and maybe Thierry doesn't get enough points and it just comes to me. But nothing comes to me in my life and I always

have to fight for everything. I had no choice. I had to fight."

And he won. And won big. As big as the dreams he'd dreamed since he was a boy.

For France, read Estonia. And so ended Belgium's 3m56s of fame, and that ended the shortest news story of the season.

BRITON BELL IS A STAR AS OSTBERG TAKES WRC 2 PRO SUPPORTS

Nineteen-year-old Ruairi Bell made history at last week's Rally of Spain, becoming the first Brit ever to win a round of the Peugeot Rally Cup Iberica.

Bell arrived in Salou for the first time on the back of a brace of fourth places in the Spanish-Portuguese Peugeot 208 R2 series, with his maiden win moving him up to second in the standings with one round left to run.

The one-make championship classified its finishers after the gravel stages on the opening day, by which point Bell had amassed a 29-second lead.

"It's a great result," he said at the

finish. "I'm really pleased. It's been quite tough on those stages – the roads are a bit rough after the World Rally Cars have been over them. And we only get eight tyres to get through the day, so we had to be a bit careful – especially when there's 10 miles of Tarmac in the middle of the long stage. But they're just brilliant stages. As well as being the first British driver to win, I think I'm the youngest ever winner of a round as well, which is fantastic."

While the Peugeot Rally Cup Iberica round was done on Friday night, the crews were allowed to complete the rest of the world

championship weekend if they wanted. They did.

Bell came home with third in class on Sunday afternoon, having learned plenty from a weekend on the asphalt.

Citroen's Rally Spain might have been something of a nightmare in the main World Rally Car category, but the French firm did enjoy dominance across both R5 categories, with Mads Ostberg winning WRC 2 Pro and Eric Camilli taking the WRC 2 class in a pair of C3 R5s.

Ostberg was masterful on the opening day's gravel stage to lead from the first stage. A brake problem cost him half a minute towards the end of Friday, but he had enough in hand over an off-form Kalle Rovanpera.

The Norwegian endured his own struggles once the rally moved to asphalt on Saturday morning, with the same confidence and feeling eluding him on the fast, smooth Catalan roads. Just as things were starting to get interesting and Rovanpera got the gap down below 10s, disaster struck for the recently crowned WRC 2 Pro champion. He dropped his Skoda Fabia R5 on the notoriously slippery seafront stage in Salou and knocked the right-rear wheel out of line.

Ostberg was more than capable of defending a 42s advantage over

Jan Kopecky (Fabia R5) through the final day. He did that to score a third Pro win of the season. Rovanpera finished third with Britain's Gus Greensmith fourth after a puncture on Friday took the wind out of his sails aboard the Ford Fiesta R5 Mk2.

Camilli took control of WRC 2 from the asphalt stages onwards, having trailed countryman Pierre-Louis Loubet on the loose. A puncture early on Saturday afternoon didn't help the Skoda driver, but in reality he couldn't contain Camilli's Tarmac speed. Ultimately, it was Finn Emil Lindholm who brought his Volkswagen Polo R5 home second in WRC 2, 1m40s down on the winner.

It's impossible, however, to leave this sidebar without mentioning former Junior World Rally champion Nil Solans who contested only his third rally of the season and his first in a VW Polo R5. He won 10 of the 17 stages and would have scored a celebrated home win had it not been for two punctures on the long La Fatarella test on Friday.

His brother Jan Solans – this year's JWRC winner – made his R5 debut and finished one place behind his big brother in a Fiesta R5 Mk2. Solans Jr suffered a two-minute penalty on Saturday night.



Ostberg resisted the pressure to take victory in the WRC 2 Pro class

DRIVER ANALYSIS BY DAVID EVANS

SEBASTIEN OGIER
CITROEN C3 WRC **4/10**

Ogier has very little to do with this four – it's all Citroen's. The defending champion deserved far, far more than this on the weekend he handed over a crown he's worn since 2013. Should I tweet? Maybe not...



ESAPEKKA LAPPI
CITROEN C3 WRC **1/10**

And to go with Ogier's four, Citroen can have a one for Lappi. The friendly Finn was warming up nicely and looking ready to play himself into the fight when the engine ahead of him went pop.



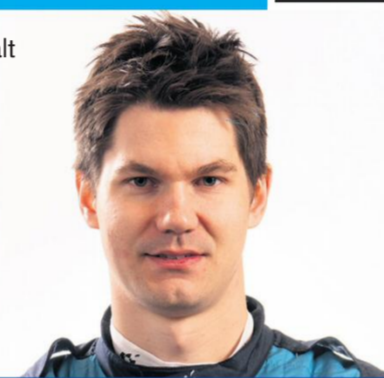
ELFYN EVANS
FORD FIESTA WRC **7/10**

Was heading for a five before he sent it through the final stage. If only he'd pulled that centre diff map out of his back pocket earlier in the week, he might have engaged in the fight for the podium.



TEEMU SUNINEN
FORD FIESTA WRC **6/10**

Struggled with the asphalt section on Friday's long stage, but then showed some potential in places once the cars were in Tar-trim for the weekend. Bouncing off a rock face on the final stage only cost a handful of seconds, fortunately.



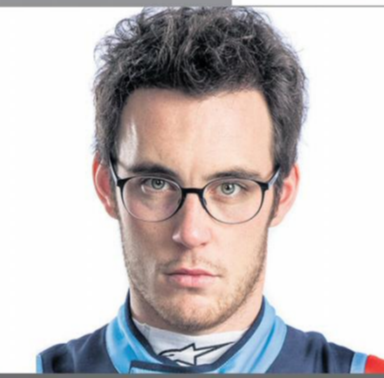
DANI SORDO
HYUNDAI i20 WRC **9/10**

Should we have given him a 10? Nearly. His effort on Sunday morning to try to keep Tanak behind was as surefooted and superb as anything we've seen from him. And finally, he had the beating of Loeb in his own backyard.



THIERRY NEUVILLE
HYUNDAI i20 WRC **10/10**

Absolutely couldn't have done more. Came for the win and delivered on his promise, taking a first success since Argentina in April. Undoubtedly one of his strongest performances right when the pressure was at its highest.



SEBASTIEN LOEB
HYUNDAI i20 WRC **8/10**

Utterly brilliant and unbeatable on the long stage on Friday to lead at the end of the opening day. Thereafter, rarely looked as racey as his teammates on the Tar and Sunday slipped almost into obscurity.



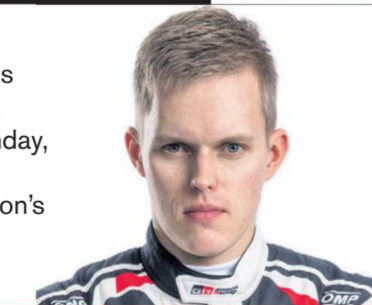
JARI-MATTI LATVALA
TOYOTA YARIS WRC **6/10**

Latvala never looked like he was going to find the form which carried him into the lead here 12 months ago and was lucky to get away with kissing the barrier on Saturday's beach stage on his way to fifth place.



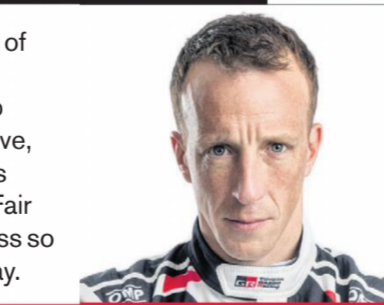
OTT TANAK
TOYOTA YARIS WRC **11/10**

Bloody hero and drove the final stage like one. Kept his nose clean through Friday, Saturday and much of Sunday, then won himself a world championship on the season's last 12 miles of asphalt. This guy. Just, this guy.



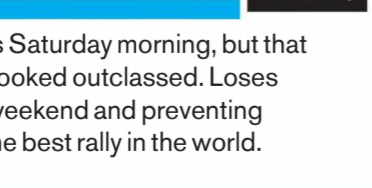
KRIS MEEKE
TOYOTA YARIS WRC **5/10**

This one comes courtesy of Seb Marshall. In an effort to end the argument, Seb suggested we settle on five, seen as that's what it says on both sides of the car. Fair enough. Great Friday. Less so Saturday. Middlin' Sunday.



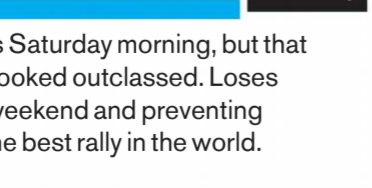
TAKAMOTO KATSUTA
TOYOTA YARIS WRC **8/10**

Gearbox failure spoiled his Saturday morning, but that aside, he rarely – if ever – looked outclassed. Loses points for testing on Mull weekend and preventing Dan Barritt from starting the best rally in the world. Shocking Taka, shocking.

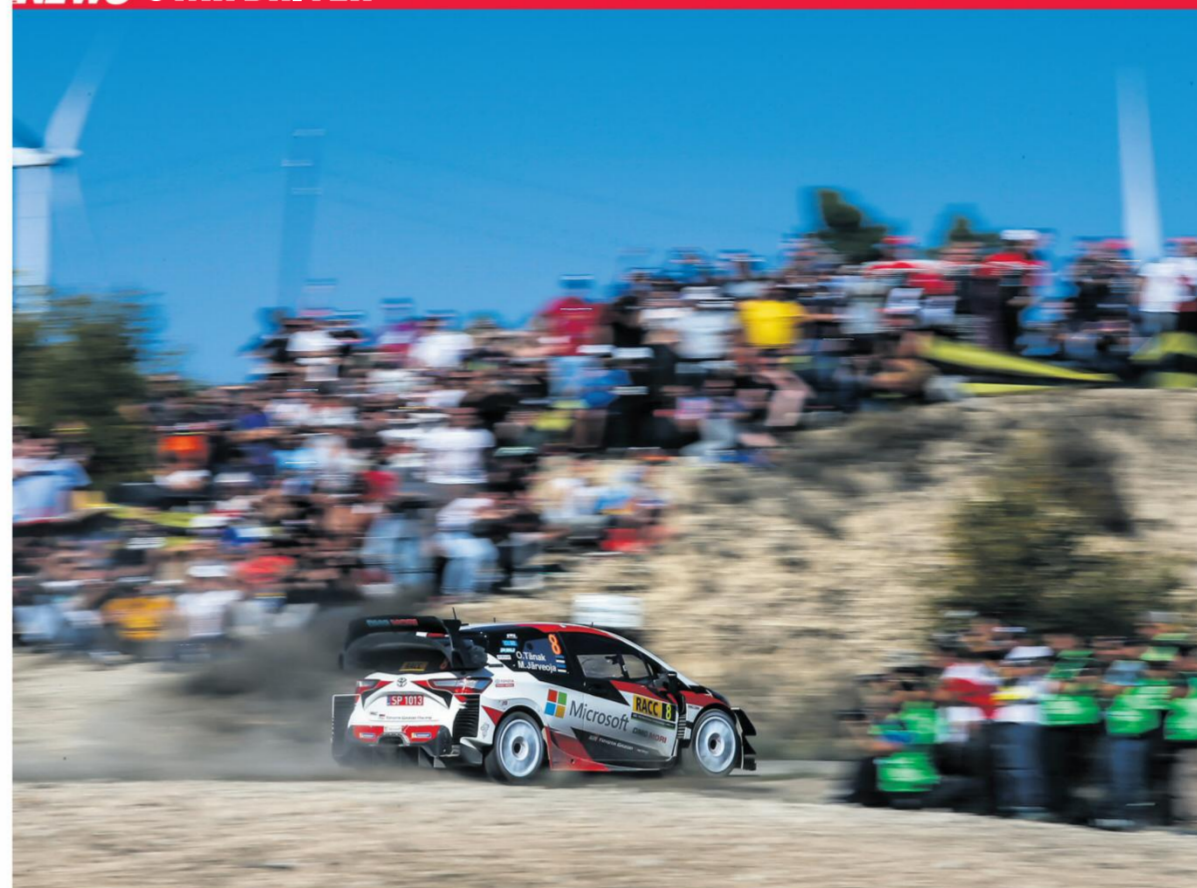


RUAIRI BELL
PEUGEOT 208 R2 **9/10**

Superb maiden Peugeot Rally Cup Iberica victory for the 19-year-old in Spain. Gets a bonus point for his potted history of the championship and detailed insight into how it works to a disappointingly off-the-pace Motorsport News.



MOTORSPORT NEWS STAR DRIVER



OTT TANAK

Drove with great restraint for the first 16 stages before taking a brave pill and pulling the biggest of big gears to thread his Toyota Yaris WRC on a mesmeric dash down some of the season's fastest lanes to snatch a five-point powerstage and a world title. Class.

MOTORSPORT NEWS WOODEN SPOON



TRIO OF SKODAS

Not one wooden spoon this time, but three of them. Step forward Kalle Rovanpera, Nikolay Gryazin and Fabio Andolfi. Don't you boys listen to Nicky Grist? Don't you remember his consistent line about superspecials not winning you rallies? All three Skodas hit the wall on the seafont. Upside? Short walk to the pub.

RESULTS

Round 13/14, Rally Spain – Cost Daurada 2019, October 24-27

POS	DRIVER/ CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Thierry Neuville (BEL)/Nicolas Gilsoul (BEL)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	3h07m39.6s
2	Ott Tanak (EST)/Martin Jarveoja (EST)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+17.2s
3	Dani Sordo (ESP)/Carlos del Barrio (ESP)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+17.6s
4	Sebastien Loeb (FRA)/Daniel Elena (MCO)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+53.9s
5	Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN)/Miikka Anttila (FIN)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+1m00.2s
6	Elfyn Evans (GBR)/Scott Martin (GBR)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+1m14.2s
7	Teemu Suninen (FIN)/Jarmo Lehtinen (FIN)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+1m47.6s
8	Sebastien Ogier (FRA)/Julien Ingrassia (FRA)	Citroen C3 WRC	+4m20.5s
9	Mads Ostberg (NOR)/Torstein Eriksen (NOR)	Citroen C3 R5	+8m24.6s
10	Eric Camilli (FRA)/Benjamin Veillas (FRA)	Citroen C3 R5	+8m47.2s
29	Kris Meeke (GBR)/Sebastian Marshall (GBR)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+42m20.0s
39	Takamoto Katsuta (JPN)/Daniel Barritt (GBR)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+55m56.8s
R	Esapekka Lappi (FIN)/Janne Fern (FIN)	Citroen C3 WRC	SS5/engine

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

DRIVERS

POS	DRIVERS	PTS
1	Ott Tanak	263
2	Thierry Neuville	227
3	Sebastien Ogier	217
4	Andreas Mikkelsen	102
5	Elfyn Evans	102
6	Kris Meeke	98
7	Jari-Matti Latvala	94
8	Dani Sordo	89
9	Teemu Suninen	89
10	Esapekka Lappi	83

MANUFACTURERS

POS	TEAMS	PTS
1	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT	380
2	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT	362
3	Citroen Total WRT	284
4	M-Sport Ford WRT	218

FORMULA FORD FESTIVAL

BRILLIANT BROWNE DELIVERS A FESTIVAL MASTERCLASS

Browne was unstoppable at Brands, beating his more experienced rivals. By **Matt Kew**



Victory never looked in doubt for Browne



Browne (c) defeated Murray (l) and Cowley in the final



Murray didn't have the pace to stop Browne and settled for second



Cowley was in the thick of the action in semi-final and final

If the end result was similar, the nature in which both last weekend's Formula Ford Festival final and the 2018 edition were sealed could scarcely be more different. Twice there was an unexpected victor, who triumphed at the expense of perennial favourite Niall Murray. But whereas last year Josh Smith claimed his win on the final lap, and with good fortune as Murray and Oliver White outbraked themselves, this time Jonathan Browne was nigh on untouchable at Brands Hatch.

Browne entered the event with slightly damp powder: just one National FF1600 Championship win to his name this season, scored in the first race at Oulton Park back in May. But for his turn of speed and utter domination of the Festival, spectators weren't to know. For Browne, the upshot of a muted year was that pressure was limited heading into the weekend.

"I just decided to send it this weekend and everything just worked, everything clicked," said the Irish driver, who is only in his second year of car racing. "This has been my best track and I haven't won here until this weekend. I picked a good time to do it." Browne began the event as he would go on, setting the fastest time of all during qualifying before running on to a 0.5-second lead in his heat. But it was the first semi-final that truly set the tone, as he chalked an emphatic 5.5s victory. The winning margin in the final might have been a comparatively tight 2.7s, but that remains a country mile in FF1600 terms.

The Cliff Dempsey Racing driver aced his launch and all second-starting Murray could do was chase in his Van Diemen BD20 on the approach to Druids. Murray teased with a look around the outside of the corner, but ducked back behind.

Browne was then quickly given respite

thanks to his team-mate, as the safety car was called for Canada Scholarship driver Jonathan Woolridge, who had parked his Ray GR11 by the pitwall. That coincided with a tangle at the rear of the field as Pascal Monbaron and Alan Davidson headed on to the grass at Graham Hill Bend.

Browne nullified the immediate threat at the restart as he created a gap of more than 0.5s from Murray across the line, but then was the first to skate over a patch of oil at the apex of Graham Hill. A minor slide was the only visible indication as the GR19 driver began to stretch away from Murray in the closing eight laps.

Such was Browne's form, only once throughout the weekend did another car stick its nose in front. Again at Graham Hill Bend, in the rain-soaked second heat Michael Eastwell dived up the inside only to run across the conventional dry racing line. A lack of grip meant he slid wide to open the door for Browne to repass.

That included, it was a consummate performance which, in the absence of the Mazda Road To Indy scheme, earns 19-year-old Browne a British Formula 4 test drive next month with Fortec Motorsport. "I started tearing up on my way in," he said. "To do it with a clean sweep as well... cool! We deserve this as a team, we've been unreal. I am speechless. My smile is going to be on my face for a long time."

"Anything can happen and a bit of oil went down and I nearly lost it. That made things a little tricky and Murray started coming back and then I just got my rhythm back and won the thing. I feel like I was cautious but pushing at the same time, I didn't want to bin it. It's just been amazing."

A two-time winner of the Festival, Murray might have missed out on the Neil Shanahan Trophy but was happy to see his countryman win, in turn wrapping up the bonus 'World Cup' for the Republic of Ireland team.

"It was a deliberately fake smile last year

[when he finished second], but this is genuine," Murray said. "I just didn't have the pace. After the safety car, Jonathan broke the tow. If I couldn't win it then I wanted it to be him."

Murray's route through to the final had been marginally less straightforward. Thanks to a track limits infringement, the Team Dolan driver had qualified fourth for his heat. But he was quick to rectify the situation.

Polesitter Jordan Dempsey suffered masses of wheelspin off the line in wet conditions as Murray nipped by Oliver White into Paddock Hill Bend. When Peter Dempsey, starting second, ran wide at Surtees it was enough for Murray to slip through and canter on to the spoils by 8s. After a red flag following a nasty shunt when Peter Lucas spun at Paddock and was collected by Steve Barlow and Tom Cloet, the second semi-final was a lights-to-flag affair.

With Murray uncontested in second, the best action of the final was to be found in the six-car battle for the last podium spot. Matthew Cowley ultimately converted third on the grid, but historic Mini racer Chris Middlehurst had nipped through at McLaren. Cowley recovered on the run to Paddock Hill Bend, which left the door open for Eastwell to capitalise for fourth. Middlehurst then continued to tumble with Joey Foster, reigning National champion Ross Martin and Luke Cooper – lunging in his Swift SC16 around the outside at Surtees – demoting him to eighth.

At the very front, the final might not have delivered on the slipstream frenzy for which FF1600 is renowned, but that does nothing to diminish Browne's resounding performance. He not only survived but thrived in either low-grip conditions or keeping more experienced heads at bay.

And Browne will need to call on that ability to break the slipstream once more, with his sights set on emulating Murray by winning both the Festival and Walter Hayes crowns in the same season.

Photos: Gary Hawkins

Smith clinches the Fiesta crown after taking three podiums

SUPPORTS

Isaac Smith clinched the **Ford Fiesta** title on Festival weekend with a win and two podiums, crowning a season which has brought eight victories. Triumph for Smith was matched by disappointment for James Waite, who arrived at Brands as points leader.

Waite chose the perfect time for only his second 2019 win in a damp first race, but when poleman Zachary Lucas had his third off-track incident the safety car was called and Waite's advantage over Smith was gobbled up. Luckily for Waite, victory was ensured when green and chequered flags were shown together.

A dry Sunday brought a big change of fortunes when Smith won race two from David Nye. Waite held an early second before slipping to fourth, and retired on lap 15 of 19 with engine problems.

Waite battled from 13th to third within two laps of race three, but a clash with Lucas caused a puncture, leaving Smith and Nye to settle the championship. Nye took the race and, although Smith lost second to Alastair Kellett, he'd done enough to be champion.

The **Irish Supercars'** annual Festival visit is usually a lively affair, and Saturday's opener lived up to expectations. A safety car intervention allowed the leading GT Light of Max Drennan to make up for the delayed start those cars were given, and he used his car's superior cornering to overcome the straightline speed of the Supercars and won easily. A bunch of drivers all wanted to be second, but Cameron Fenton had it from Gary Corcoran.

Race two in dreadful conditions was a different story, Philip Jones snatching a last-lap lead from Corcoran. Drennan was again best of the GT Light cars but couldn't exploit his handling advantage in the wet.

Tom Smith, a GT Light retirement on Saturday, was barely noticed on a drive to victory on Sunday, because all eyes were on a frantic contest for Supercar honours. Fenton took another win with Corcoran second, but Jones became provisional champion in third place.

Scott Mansell (Crossle) had an early lead in the first **Classic FF1600** race

but retired with a broken gear linkage. Tim Harvey (Van Diemen RF81) took over for his second victory of the year, chased by Henry Chart's Jamun. Chart was in command of race two, while Mansell charged through the field to take second from Harvey. Fifth place in the opener was enough for Rick Morris to secure the crown.

Alan Davidson (Mondiale) repeated his 2018 victory in the **Historic FF1600 final**, beating Matt Rivett's Van Diemen.

In **Sports 2000 Duratec**, Michael Gibbins (MCR) emphasised his new champion's status with win number seven from eight races. A substantial lead was cut to very little when second man Paul Trayhurn crashed his Gunn and triggered the safety car. Outgoing champion Tom Stoten took second from Joshua Law near the end.

Peter Needham led half of the **Sports 2000 Pinto** race, needing only a decent finish to take the championship, but he fell off at Clearways handing the race win and the title to Paul Streat.

Brian Phillips



Smith took an eighth win of the season to help wrap up the Fiesta title



Harvey won the opening Classic FF1600 contest after Mansell's retirement



Eastwell (l) and Foster clash in first semi-final



Davidson won the historic final

WINNERS

Formula Ford Festival

Heat 1: Matthew Cowley (Van Diemen JL13)

Heat 2: Jonathan Browne (Ray GR19)

Heat 3: Niall Murray (Van Diemen BD20)

Heats Last Chance race: Andrew Blair (Reynard 87FF)

Semi-final 1: Jonathan Browne (Ray GR19)

Semi-final 2: Niall Murray (Van Diemen BD20)

Last Chance race:

Ivor McCullough (Van Diemen RF00)

Jonathan Browne (Ray GR19)

Fiestas

Race 1: James Waite (ST)

Race 2: Isaac Smith (ST)

Race 3: David Nye (ST)

Irish Supercars/GT Lights

Race 1:

Max Drennan (GT Light)

Race 2: Philip Jones (Supercar)

Race 3: Tom Smith (GT Light)

Classic FF1600

Race 1: Tim Harvey (Van Diemen RF81)

Race 2: Henry Chart (Jamun T2)

Historic FF1600 Final

Alan Davidson (Mondiale M89S)

Sports 2000 Duratec

Michael Gibbins (MCR S2)

Sports 2000 Pinto

Paul Streat (Lola T87/90)

Fiesta Junior

Races 1 & 2: Joseph Loake

Tricky Festival experience for the North American scholarship entries

Josh Green only started his racing career in karts three years ago, but by the close of the first heat it was the 16-year-old who looked a sure-fire hit to wrap up Team USA Scholarship bragging rights.

He and fellow American Scott Huffaker earned their spot on the Formula Ford Festival entry list and among the Cliff Dempsey Racing stable after a two-day shootout at Road America.

Despite Green's inexperience, he relished the low-grip conditions on Saturday and qualified for the first heat in an admirable fourth.

Stringing a fast lap together was one thing, but he and Huffaker headed into their heats with one hand tied behind their backs. The duo contested the Northern FF1600 Championship races at Oulton Park earlier this month in preparation, but Dempsey decided that it was in the interests of car preservation to start both from the pitlane. That meant the formation lap was their first ever shot at a full-bore standing start. It was once he got the car rolling that

Green began to turn heads. Ciaran Haggerty bogged down to promote him up to third and then Green bolted down the inside of two-time Festival winner Joey Foster in to Druids.

In the first running of the second semi-final Green slipped back quickly, but he was given a second chance thanks to a red flag – when Peter Lucas spun at Paddock Hill Bend and was collected by Steve Barlow and Tom Cloet.

With under two racing laps completed prior to the shunt, the field reverted to grid order for a second attempt. Green was, for the most part, more stout in defence this time around but Huffaker and Haggerty overtook to push him back to sixth.

If Green had come out of the blocks fastest, Huffaker grew to match him as the event wore on.

For the final Huffaker, who races a Ligier LMP3 car in the IMSA Prototype Challenge, lined up eighth – four spots higher than Green. As Chris Middlehurst tumbled from third in the race, Huffaker attempted to capitalise with a late move into

Paddock Hill Bend. He made it stick but Middlehurst fought back, meaning Huffaker was classified ninth ahead of Green.

Considering they follow the path trodden by previous Team USA drivers Josef Newgarden, the 2008 Kent Festival victor and now a two-time IndyCar champion, plus newly-crowned Indy Lights title winner Oliver Askew, neither set the world alight.

But it was a solid foundation, particularly given Green's limited CV. He showed flashes of pace and now needs to match that with more aggressive racecraft for the Walter Hayes Trophy.

The USA pair fared much better than the Canadian Scholarship team, however. Jonathan Woolridge sought passage in to the final courtesy of the Last Chance race. He would go little further, having retired on the startline of the finale with electrical issues. F1600 driver Zachary Vanier made it a further six laps at least, but failed to finish when he rounded Druids and lost both second and third gear.



Huffaker and Green were ninth and 10th in the final



Josh Smith (r) was caught up in the clash between Dempsey and Rory Smith

No repeat Festival victory for GT convert Smith

After a stellar year at the wheel of a McLaren 570S GT4 in British GT, Josh Smith returned to Formula Ford 1600 machinery in an effort to become the first driver to score back-to-back Festival wins. But, with his plans for next season unconfirmed, the Van Diemen JL13 driver heads in to a winter of frustration.

In qualifying Smith's engine developed a misfire when under load, and so ninth was the best he could do. The opening heat, however, showed much more promise. Smith's intent was clear from the off as he climbed up to sixth on the opening lap. Ciaran Haggerty was dispatched through Clearways and he then demoted Callum Crawley for fourth before the chequered flag was waved a lap early.

That would prove the highpoint, though. When Peter Dempsey tagged Rory Smith into retirement at the apex of Druids in the second semi-final in their battle for third, Josh was left with nowhere to go. He stamped on the brakes and did well to avoid contact, but locked the rears and spun.

After taking the chequered flag in 13th, Smith made an early exit and elected not to try and fight for a top-six place in the Last Chance race. He had

only one aim for the weekend, and "didn't come here to finish second".

Dempsey paid the price for his indiscretion and was disqualified from the semi-final. But he sought passage with the Last Chance bout. From plumb last on the 30-car grid, the Ray GR15 driver recovered an astonishing nine places on the opening lap. With a move on Jack Kemp into Paddock Hill Bend, he had done enough for a top-six spot.

But he tripped over the rear of newly-crowned Classic FF1600 champion Rick Morris and skated on to the grass at Graham Hill Bend. Dempsey attempted to rejoin but threw in the towel, after watching much of the field pass, with only two laps left.

"I was very fortunate to make the Last Chance race and I drove really well, but I should have been smarter," said a remorseful Dempsey. "I got caught out, I should have been more patient. It's my own error."

He joined his fellow Dempsey – Chinese Formula 4 champion Jordan – on the sidelines for the final, Jordan Dempsey having wound up backwards in the gravel at Paddock Hill Bend on the opening lap of the first semi-final.

BRC REVIEW

Photos: Jakob Ebrey



Edwards: Two-time BRC champion (r)

EDWARDS DOUBLES UP AFTER INTENSE BATTLE WITH CAVE

Ford Fiesta R5 driver comes out on top again in British Rally Championship. By **Luke Barry**

POINTS

BRC1		
NO	DRIVER	PTS
1	Matt Edwards	111
2	Tom Cave	98
3	Alex Laffey	42

Junior BRC

NO	DRIVER	PTS
1	Josh McErlean	104
2	William Creighton	96
3	James Williams	66

M-Sport/Pirelli Junior driver in Fiesta R2T

NO	DRIVER	PTS
1	Ruairi Bell	54
2	Finlay Retson	49
3	James Williams	48

Prize fund goes to Bell

James Williams came within one-and-a-half stages of the lucrative €60,000 prize from M-Sport and Pirelli to put towards the 2020 Junior World Rally Championship, but a mechanical failure speared his Ford Fiesta R2T into the undergrowth from the lead of the Galloway Hills Rally.

And it was Ruairi Bell who was there to pick up the pieces. Entering the BRC as an unknown quantity, Bell and 2018 champion co-driver Darren Garrod went about their business quietly and took the prize.

Finlay Retson had been a constant threat but two costly crashes in Ypres and Ulster derailed his challenge. Williams meanwhile impressed to claw himself into contention after missing the Pirelli and contesting West Cork in a Vauxhall Adam. On pace alone he was the stand-out contender, with a devastating display in Ypres proving his prowess.

On paper, Matt Edwards had it easy on his way to the 2018 British Rally Championship. But no such qualms can be made about the way the Ford

Fiesta R5 pilot and co-driver Patrick Walsh won the 2019 edition against the perennial challenge of Tom Cave.

Three wins and a further two podiums were enough to give Edwards back-to-back titles and become the first British champion to achieve the feat since Keith Cronin in 2009 and '10.

For Cave, it was another season that was tinged with disappointment as the Hyundai i20 R5 driver recorded his third runner-up spot in the standings.

"The thing that made it the most difficult was that it was Tom," says Edwards. "I made no secret of it, I did want to beat Tom because I respect him for his pace and his experience so it meant a lot to compete against somebody at that level."

Edwards's season began in perfect fashion as a quality field of 15 R5 cars descended on Llandudno for the opening round – the Cambrian Rally.

Several leading Irish drivers joined the party, but it was Edwards, Cave and David Bogie that broke clear. Bogie took the accolade of being the season's first stage winner, but Edwards was the man as he nailed down his first home win after years of trying from Bogie, as Cave retired on the way back to service with two punctured tyres.

"To be on the pace again out the box with all that competition was great," Edwards

reflects. "It gave me a lot of confidence. We weren't worried about Tom's pace because he was obviously going to be strong but to prevail was really important for the rest of the year."

West Cork was next on the agenda for the first time and served up a scintillating scrap. Cave signalled his intent after an intense fight, edging Edwards by a mere 4.8 seconds to net his first four-wheel-drive BRC win. Cave then steamrolled to another victory on the Pirelli and stole the championship lead from Edwards, who was disqualified from fourth for driving on the road section with two punctures.

"It's won on the stages in my opinion so that was a bitter pill to swallow," Edwards admits. "But Ypres was always going to be a strong event for me. We had that in the back pocket."

Heading to Belgium the championship had become a two-horse race. The influx of Irish entries dried up after West Cork and the pair's nearest challenger, Bogie, sold his Skoda Fabia R5 after the Pirelli and wouldn't reappear.

Edwards had struggled with tyres in West Cork, but a new compound of Pirellis did the trick in Ypres. Both he and Cave suffered punctures throughout the blisteringly hot event, but Edwards was able to stretch clear and draw level with Cave in the championship. But it was a fraught affair.

"Early on Saturday we had a chronic misfire and it felt like a recurrence of the year before," recalls Edwards. "We nursed it for two of the legs on Saturday and it was potluck whether it was going to hold out. That was a tough event and a big relief to



Cave came close to winning title

get over the finish line."

The chips were down in Ulster. With two rounds left it was all square and somebody had to blink. In the end it was Cave, who first visited a field and then ripped a rear wheel off his i20 against a stone wall. Despite victory on the final round – the Galloway Hills Rally – it wasn't enough to seal a much coveted title.

"I definitely felt like we had the speed to win the title this season, but we probably had a bit too much bad luck over the course of the year," says Cave. "I feel like the Cambrian was ultimately a missed opportunity for us because, had we finished second as we should have, it probably would have been enough for the title."

"Perhaps the only regret from the year was maybe pushing a bit too hard for the victory [there]. It's fine margins that settled the title, and Matt had his own bad luck on the Pirelli. But that was probably the event [Cambrian] which cost us a lot."

Edwards had earned his break having outpaced Cave in Ulster before his rival's mishaps, and duly cruised to a distant third on the Galloway Hills – despite a heart-stopping steering problem on the opening loop – safe in the knowledge he'd secured another title.

"[This championship was] harder from a competition on the stages type of view but easier with the confidence I could close it out, I had the pace to do it," he surmises. ■



McErlean soared the highest in 2019

McErlean heads the Junior BRC standings after coming of age 2019 campaign

In a category that is always close, Josh McErlean rose above the parapet in 2019. The 20-year-old really came of age in his Peugeot 208 R2, grabbing a long overdue Junior British Rally Championship win on the second round – West Cork – before doubling up on the Pirelli and never looking back.

"Taking that win in West Cork proved we could do it, and it was controlled, it wasn't like it was a fluke so we knew we had the pace from there," McErlean says. "And the Pirelli definitely confirmed it as we won on both surfaces [Tarmac and gravel] which gave us a good mindset."

He survived the next round at Ypres with a fourth place to capture valuable championship

points and sealed the title in perfect style with a round to spare, courtesy of a joker-boosted victory on home soil on the Ulster Rally. As if the title wasn't enough, he was given the prize of lifetime and competed in a Hyundai i20 R5 on Wales Rally GB to cap of an incredible season.

While William Creighton swept to class success in both the Irish Tarmac and Irish Forestry championships, it never quite clicked in the JBRC. A superb recovery drive to second on the Cambrian following an early puncture became the theme of the season; fast but unfortunate. Creighton had to wait until the final round to win an event, but the wait for a JBRC title goes on.

James Williams was a favourite for the crown,

after finishing second to Steve Rokland in 2018, but ended up third despite flashes of brilliance. He craved the latest-spec Fiesta R2T but had to wait until Ypres to get one, by which time he was 44 points behind McErlean. He wiped the floor with everyone in Belgium and would've won in Ulster had his Fiesta not lost power.

James Wilson stunned himself with a close-fought opening round victory in Wales on the Cambrian Rally, but that was as good as it got. An accident waylaid him on West Cork before engine failure on the Pirelli, and his season came to a painful end on Ypres where he suffered heatstroke. Wilson switched to R5 machinery for the final two rounds.

RACING REPORTS

SILVERSTONE: 750MC BY MARCUS PYE
OCTOBER 26-27

Photos: Steve Jones

SEAT DUO'S VICTORY BID FAILS TO BE PUNCTURED



Rear tyre woe didn't stop Swift/Baker



Rushworth leads Hot Hatch field away, but collided with Sawley early on in second race

Not even a puncture prevented Carl Swift and Rob Baker (SEAT Leon Eurocup) from completing their Club Enduro hat-trick in a gripping finale, but Porsche Boxster standout Steve Cheetham landed the crown as the last 750 Motor Club championships of its 80th anniversary season were decided with a Grand Prix circuit bonus on a glorious autumn day.

Pacemaker Swift limped to the Area Motorsport pit with a deflated rear tyre, whereupon Baker returned to the fray with new rubber. While Baker was gaining ground, Luke Sedzikowski led in the Tegiwa BMW M4. He stopped after 36 laps with front brakes ablaze, which damaged a tyre valve, delaying David Whitmore's return with a quarter of the two hours remaining.

As Baker shot ahead, bold Lotus Exige pilot Joe Taylor – August's International circuit winner – hounded Whitmore for five laps before diving past into Village. Second place earned him the Class A title by four points from Swift/Baker. "I'm spent out but that race was fabulous; flat-out all the way," said Taylor.

The overall championship fight was between Class B leader Cheetham and the BMW 330 of former Stock Hatch racers Andrew Lightstead/Imran Khan in C. The latter duo did everything it could to win the division, clinging to a glimmer of outright hope should Cheetham suffer a rare defeat.

Khan capitalised after early leader Ben Hyland's Ginetta G40 was delayed refuelling before Luca Hirst took over. After a fine pursuit, he retook second from Darren and James Kell's Mazda MX-5 on the line. Lightstead/Khan thus notched 87 points, but Cheetham beat Pip Hammond/Gavin Johnson (Boxster) to claim his class and the overall title by two points. "It hasn't sunk in, but they got the win so I had to – and with 15 minutes to go I got horrible cramp," said Cheetham.

Playing catch-up after Rory Hinde

stopped to have their E36 M3's wheels tightened after two laps, Owen Fitzgerald set a stunning 2m19.79s (94.51mph) fastest lap en route to fourth in the race. Tim Gray took over his team's E46 M3 from Mark Betts and howled back to fifth, clear of brothers Matthew and Simon Wallis's earlier SEAT Leon.

The 40-minute Roadsports race fell to Kevin Dengate/Chris Lovett, their E46 M3 sans rear bumper following an off in Saturday's Six Hours. Early leader Warren Allen (Porsche Cayman) was 12 seconds adrift, well ahead of Hugh Gurney (E46 M3). In Class B Peter Erceg headed locals Nathalie McGloin/Andy Bayliss in a sister Porsche Cayman S. An epic dice raged for 18th, Tony and Jon Hobbs (Peugeot 106) shading Daniel Cogswell's unlikely but superbly driven Nissan Almera GTI.

The Hot Hatch title was serial Class C victor David Drinkwater's (BMW Compact) before a wheel was turned. Uncatchable in the morning, Ben Rushworth clashed with Stephen Sawley at Copse in race two. Both were eliminated as a disbelieving Ryan Steel darted through to become 2019's fourth winner.

Matt Rozier's failure to win the first concurrent Classic Stock Hatch race rewarded Lee Scott (Ford Fiesta XR2i) with another title. Stewart Place's Peugeot 205 – on its third engine in as many meetings – beat Scott into second in race one. Andrew Thorpe's oily Citroen took the later chequer, monstered by Rozier with Ted Cooper (Vauxhall Nova) edging Scott for third.

Michael Pensavalle powered through to win the BMW Car Club opener from Gurney with Graham Crowhurst best of the M2 set. Michael Cutt forced Pensavalle to run wide exiting Becketts in the tighter seasonal finale and screamed past to win. Paul Cook pipped Crowhurst while Cup class star Matt Page (Compact) topped the table with 13/14 wins as Jim Benson beat Darren Ball (330cis) in Class 6.

WINNERS

Club Enduro
Carl Swift/Rob Baker (SEAT Leon Eurocup)

Roadsports
Kevin Dengate/Chris Lovett (BMW E46 M3)

Hot Hatch
Race 1: Ben Rushworth (Honda Integra DC2)
Race 2: Ryan Steel (Citroen Saxo VTR)

Classic Stock Hatch
Race 1: Stewart Place (Peugeot 205 GTI)
Race 2: Andrew Thorpe (Citroen

AX GTI)

BMW Car Club

Race 1: Michael Pensavalle (E46 M3)
Race 2: Michael Cutt (E46 M3)

Birkett Six Hour

Team Relay
Handicap: The Three Amigos 2.0: David Drinkwater, Paul Hinson, Adam Read (BMW Compacts)

Scratch: Breakell Radical Heroes: Wade Eastwood, Luciano Bacheta, Charles Graham (Radical SR3/RSXs)

Since 1951, the Birkett Six Hour Team Relay has rewarded speed and consistency. In Saturday's 69th running, South African film stuntman Wade Eastwood, 2012 FIA Formula 2 champion Luciano Bacheta – on his event debut – and Daytona Karting's Charles Graham completed two more laps than their closest rivals in Radical SR3s.

But the big winners were The Three Amigos 2.0, Paul Hinson, David Drinkwater and Adam Read in humble BMW Compacts who dominated the hallowed handicap element, covering 12 laps fewer than the Suzuki Hayabusa-powered sports racers as 70 teams tackled Silverstone's GP circuit in conditions akin to an offshore powerboat race at dusk.

Handicappers Colin Ayre and Tim Moore agonised over their calculations, comparing dry and wet lap times on the previous layout, then factoring-in the tighter Vale/Club complex used for the first time. Targets and credit lap awards were further adjusted for 150 minutes of safety car intervention over nine interludes (the superb new Toyota GR Supra may have

recorded most laps!) then red-flagging it 21 minutes early, with Roonspeed Mini Sevens' Steve Trench parked atop Kiwi Dave Currey's Caterham, which had clouded the Wing pitwall.

That the top three handicap teams finished on the same lap was almost as impressive as the marshals' stoicism, but runners-up Team Darkside – the Parkin twins and Dylan Brychta sharing a trio of VAG diesels – rued the short-changing that torpedoed their anticipated fuel economy trump card. Two squads of Honda EP Civic Type-Rs, from Tegiwa and last year's scratch victor Area Motorsport, jostled with the best Britain's Armed Forces entry.

In a miscellany which spanned 1970s production saloon king Ivan Dutton's Austin A30 to a Ford GT40 replica, via hordes of Caterhams and a Porsche GT3 Cup, 'home side' the 750 Fettle's floated in with their Fiat-powered featherweights. David Bartholomew, Ed Pither and Richard Rothery's PRS 1b, James Jeffery (ADR), Chris Johnson (Racekits Falcon) and Lynfel Owen (Darvi Mk5B) finished 55th, less than they deserved.

Going for gold on distance, dancing around cars hidden in balls of spray, was a massive challenge even for the four Radical teams that headed the pre-ordained grid. "It was like driving in a video game," said *Mission Impossible* stunt designer Eastwood. "There was so much standing water, you just had to stay alive." Bacheta added: "It was great fun and fundamentally the cars [prepared by James Breakell's crew] were bulletproof." The elated Graham said: "I was the team's lightweight, and did one short stint, but after three successive seconds we've finally done it."

Rob Wheldon's RAW Breakells hit trouble en route to fifth when Bikesports champion Joe Stables spun his SR3 off, but new boys RJ Motorsport eagerly took up the pursuit, Ash Hicklin flying. Area Motorsport's Hondas were a brilliant third, pipping the boldly-driven Red Rascals BMW M3s. Team Darkside's diesels merited sixth, with Interceptor Racing's double-driven tin-tops on the same lap. The solo Clubmans team, stymied by 35-minute fuel range, made most pitstops (12), yet still soldiered home ninth.

RADICAL HEROES' MISSION POSSIBLE



Winning Radical crew (2) fights through the traffic to take the Birkett scratch race spoils

RACING REPORTS

DONINGTON PARK: CSCC BY ANNA DUXBURY
OCTOBER 26-27

Photos: Mick Walker

CASSAR AND JORDAN'S NIGHT AND DAY WINS

Integra duo lead the Tin Tops field away



Mitchell (1) battles with Bate for the Magnificent Sevens glory at Donington Park

WINNERS

Night Races
Modern Classics/New Millennium/Magnificent Sevens: Jasver Sapra (BMW M3 E46)
Tin Tops/Turbo Tin Tops: Danny Cassar/Andrew Jordan (Honda Integra Type R)
Classic: Tony Blake/Aston Blake (Porsche 911 RSR)

Tin Tops

Danny Cassar/Andrew Jordan (Honda Integra Type R)

Magnificent Sevens
 Jonathan Mitchell (Caterham CSR)

Future Classics

Matthew Irons/Jake Severs (BMW 323i E21)

Classic K

Robert Farrell/David Coyne (Jaguar E-type)

Jaguar Saloon and GT Races 1 & 2: James Ramm (Jaguar XJS)

Swinging Sixties
Group 1: Gary Patterson/Anthony Ford (Rover Mini)

Group 2: Dave Roberts (Datsun 240Z)

New Millennium/Modern Classics

Peter Challis (Porsche 997 Cup)

Turbo Tin Tops

Dan Ludlow/Stuart Emmett (Honda Civic Type R)

Danny Cassar and Andrew Jordan were the stars of Donington Park's Classic Sports Car Club night races, with the pair taking a win and a third place despite it being the British Touring Car star's first time racing in the dark.

The duo were only intending to take part in the second of these races but, when an issue was discovered on their Honda Integra Type R during familiarisation, it was agreed that they would take the car of Jordan's father Mike and Nigel Ainge out in the first race. Despite their best efforts they couldn't beat Jasver Sapra's BMW M3, who charged up from 15th to take victory, and were just pipped to second by Tim Davis, who also went out in the evening in a borrowed Caterham C400.

Their own car fixed in time after all, Cassar and Jordan took an easy victory from pole as many of those behind ran into trouble. The pair also won the Tin Tops race earlier in the day ahead of the Honda Civic Type R of Andrew Windmill, who was leading after the close of the pitstop window. Cassar fought his way past at Redgate with two laps to spare, with the Peugeot 206 RC of Colin and Steve Simpson finishing in third.

The Magnificent Sevens race provided plenty of action with Gary Bate quickly taking the lead, before Tim Davis slipstreamed his way to the front until his pitstop, where he couldn't get his Caterham C400 to restart. While he would eventually get back out again he was way down the order, and had his problems compounded when his engine blew up on the final lap. This left Jonathan Mitchell in the lead but an extra

pitstop dropped him down behind Bate, who he then had to pass to take victory. That achieved, Mitchell narrowly missed hitting a spinning Caterham 420R which allowed Bate to close back in but not retake the place. Third went to Christian Pittard, much to his surprise after pitting numerous times due to chronic fuel pressure woes on his Caterham CSR, after John Cutmore had to limp home with a misfiring engine on the final lap.

Grandad/grandson pairing Matthew Irons and Jake Severs took the win in the waterlogged Future Classics race in their BMW 323i, gaining the lead after the polesitting Porsche 911 RSR of Tony and Aston Blake took their 90-second winners penalty during the pitstop. The Porsche did fight back up to second and crossed the line within 20s of the victors. The Blake pairing did however go on to win Sunday's Classic night race by over 40s from Ryan Mone's Porsche 944. Miles and Piers Masarati were rewarded with third after making the trip down to North London earlier in the day to pick up new brake calipers to get their Porsche 911 Turbo back out again in the evening.

Polesitters Robert Farrell and David Coyne (Jaguar E-type) took Classic K victory by nearly 30s despite Coyne losing a place by coming into the pits early after spotting a similar pitboard being hung out.

Both Jaguar races were won by James Ramm, while Chris Boon took the title with two sixth place finishes – two class wins for the Jaguar XK8. Championship rival Colin Philpott finished second and third, but he needed to have beaten Ramm to snatch away the title.

OULTON PARK: BY DOM D'ANGELILLO

OCTOBER 26

Photos: Mick Walker

Just like at Oulton Park earlier in the season, Porsche 991 driver Ian Humphries once again took advantage of Britcar Endurance's single driver pitstop rule to claim his second victory of the season.

While teams of two drivers must wait until 40% of the race is completed, individuals have the opportunity of stopping at any time during each one-hour encounter and, when an early race safety car was summoned, the Valluga Racing driver did exactly that.

The cause of the caution period was the Ferrari 488 of championship leaders Paul Bailey and Andy Schulz being stranded in the gravel after misjudging the treacherous conditions out of Cascades.

"I just overcooked it coming out of the corner," admitted Bailey. "It's the worst thing I've done all season so it's not as bad as it could have been."

With the safety car out for two laps while Bailey gradually wiggled the Ferrari out of the gravel trap and back onto the circuit, Humphries was immediately into the pits from third for his mandatory stop.

"The team were really

quick out of the box, and we always use the same strategy if there's an early-race safety car," Humphries explained.

With the SB Race Engineering Ferrari out of contention, and the Porsche of Humphries down the pack due to his stop, the lead of the race belonged comfortably to the Team ABBA BMW M3 of Richard and Sam Neary. The family duo, who were looking to make it three wins on the bounce after back-to-back triumphs last time out at Snetterton, excelled in the wet weather and had built a comfortable lead heading into the mandatory pit window.

As Sam Neary took over and exited the pitlane, the BMW was narrowly behind the early-stopping Porsche of Humphries and a brutal battle of German GTs unfolded, although it wasn't to last until the end of the race.

After just four laps, during which the gap never exceeded a second, the two came together and, while the Porsche remained unscathed, the BMW was forced into the pits and retired with a broken front-left steering arm.

"I got a better run out of the corner as he was struggling

to pass some backmarkers, got alongside him and we hit," Sam Neary said.

The resulting collision gifted Humphries a comfortable cruise home to victory ahead of the Moss Motorsport BMW 1M of Mike Moss and Kevin Clarke and the Saker RAPX of JPR Motorsport duo Steve Harris and Chris Hart.

The Saker pair had been ever present at the front of the pack for most of the season but were still searching for their maiden 2019 victory, which finally came in race two. The stars had aligned in more ways than one – with the Team ABBA BMW unable to make repairs for race two, the Porsche of Humphries handed a lengthy success penalty at its pitstop and the SB Race Engineering Ferrari some way down the grid due to its race one woes, the JPR Motorsport team was in prime position.

Getting past the Moss Motorsport machine on lap four, the Saker was off to claim a win of over a minute from the BMW 1M. "It's been a long time coming and we've done a lot of development of the car so it's great that we've finally got the win," said Hart.

ASTUTE HUMPHRIES WINS IN THE RAIN



Tactic of pitting under early safety car again played into the hands of Porsche Britcar racer Humphries

WINNERS

Britcar Endurance Championship
Race 1: Ian Humphries (Porsche 991)
Race 2: Steve Harris/Chris Hart (Saker RAPX)

CNC Heads Sports & Saloons
Races 1 & 2: Paul Dobson (Locost 7)

Mighty Minis
Races 1 & 2: Neven Kirkpatrick (Super Mighty Mini)

Michelin Clio Cup Series
Race 1: Ronan Pearson (Clio Cup 2000)
Race 2: Ben Colburn (Clio Sport 1600)


Dobson took narrow victory

SPORTING SCENE

LYDDEN HILL WINS THE RIGHTS FOR BRITISH RX

Kent circuit bosses takes over promotion of the UK's leading rallycross contest

By Hal Ridge

Bosses at Lydden Hill Race Circuit have won the tender to operate the Motorsport UK British Rallycross Championship for at least the next three years.

The Kent circuit will promote the series, while the Lydden Hill Motor Club, set to be renamed as BRX, will be the organising club at every event.

The series has been run for the last five years under the tender held between the British Automobile Racing Club and LHMC.

Lydden Hill, owned by multiple Supercar champion Pat Doran, has released a draft provisional calendar, including rounds at Pembrey, Knockhill, Mondello Park in Ireland and Valkenswaard in the Netherlands.

A statement released by the circuit said: "A number of Supercar teams who are not currently competing in

the championship have already committed for 2020. The format of events will remain largely the same, with some rounds having the addition of Truck Rallycross [which was announced earlier this year].

"The Supercar class will be run over a minimum of six weekends with a minimum of six rounds.

"Other classes will run under the current format, with a mixture of single and double-header weekend events. There will be a minimum of eight rounds for these championships. Keeping stability in the current class format will allow Lydden Hill to focus on improving grids, spectator and driver experience, championship marketing and the overall product."

The statement went on to say the series will run a single-make tyre across all classes, while the promoters will focus on increasing following and engagement across all media platforms.



Photos: Hal Ridge

The spiritual home of rallycross will operate the British Championship

Rally man Paddon eyes up a Projekt E challenge

World Rally Championship driver Hayden Paddon is eyeing a programme in the new Projekt E electric rallycross series next season that will support World Rallycross Championship events.

Paddon revealed plans to develop an electric Hyundai Kona rally car in New Zealand in August, working in technical partnership with Austrian firm STARD. The Manfred Stohl-owned team has also developed the single-specification electric kits that will be used in the Projekt E series next year.

"I'm not in a financial position to fund a drive but if there is an opportunity to work with a team [in Projekt E] then I would welcome that," Paddon told Motorsport News. "It works well with what we are doing in New Zealand with our own EV project and I think Projekt E will be an exciting series."

Paddon recently tested STARD's Projekt E Ford Fiesta between driving in WRC 2 for M-Sport at Wales Rally GB and heading to Spain to conduct a pre-Rally Australia test in the Cumbrian outfit's WRC Fiesta.

He said: "As part of this partnership [with STARD] I wanted to drive an EV car to have a better understanding of the technology and how the car may work differently. I was pleasantly surprised. I knew it would be fast but it was faster than I thought."

BRITISH RALLYCROSS



Second place on Sunday was enough for Godfrey

GODFREY SURVIVES CAR DRAMAS TO CLAIM A SIXTH BRITISH RALLYCROSS CROWN

British Rallycross

By Hal Ridge

Organiser: British Automobile Racing Club/Lydden Hill Motor Club **When:** October 26-27 **Where:** Croft Circuit **Starters:** 53

Engineer-turned-racer Julian Godfrey had to draw on all of his skill set in a dramatic final round double-header of the British Rallycross Championship to claim a record sixth title at Croft.

Godfrey and title rival Derek Tohill both struggled in wet conditions for the opening qualifiers in round seven on Saturday as Steve Hill set a pair of fastest times. He fended off the close attentions of Tony Bardy who was making a return in an Ollie O'Donovan-owned Ford Fiesta. It was preparation expert Bardy who took pole position for the final with fastest time in Q3.

It wasn't to be a dream result for Bardy or Hill, however. The latter retired his Mitsubishi Evo at the first corner of the final with a throttle sensor problem, while Bardy dropped to third behind a

fast-starting Tohill and Godfrey.

Bardy then repassed Irishman Tohill into the loose-surface Croft hairpin and that covered Tohill's windscreen with mud on a day where one of his mechanics described the track conditions as "more slippery than the inside of an ice cream".

Those track conditions played a key role in the outcome of the event. While Tohill was forced to back off from the rear of Bardy because a broken windscreen washer pipe on his Fiesta meant his wipers proved ineffective, Godfrey lost fourth, then fifth and then sixth gears on lap three. Worse still, his engine dropped onto three cylinders with what later turned out to be a snapped camshaft.

Despite all of that, he managed to hold on and claim the win, thanks in part to the slippery conditions making it difficult for Bardy to close the gap and launch an attack.

Godfrey worked into the night to repair the car and then set the pace

through qualifying in the final round on Sunday with a fastest time in each session to take pole for the final.

Tohill knew he needed to win to stand any chance of claiming the crown whereas Godfrey knew that if Tohill did win, third or better would secure him the title in a nip-and-tuck season between the pair.

As it was, Tohill made the best launch to take the lead in the final, having hounded Godfrey throughout qualifying on a constantly drying circuit, while Godfrey held onto second place and then managed the gap to Hill behind to take the runners-up slot and secure his sixth British title.

Hill qualified on the second row of the grid after further throttle problems on Sunday morning, then passed Bardy for third at the first corner of the final to claim his first podium of the campaign. Bardy was fourth, Simon Horton fifth and Steve Mundy sixth.

Tristan Ovenden completed an unbeaten season with a pair of wins

in **Supernational**, while Luke Constantine secured the **Junior** crown with a victory in the penultimate round and third in the finale. The title looked to be heading Patrick O'Donovan's way early in the last race of the year but the laurels went to Constantine when Roberts Vitols took the lead and victory. Constantine's brother Tom won the Swift Sport title against the odds with a pair of wins, while the other three title contenders all had off-circuit excursions.

Drew Bellerby won the final round of the **BMW Mini** class to clinch the title when David Bell ran into problems, while Chrissy Palmer secured his fifth **RX150** crown in a weekend where Renault UK Clio Cup battler Max Coates and newcomer Sam Clennell starred.

Results

Round 7

British Rallycross: 1 Julian Godfrey (Ford Fiesta) 5m11.913s; 2 Tony Bardy (Ford Focus) +0.968s; 3 Derek Tohill (Ford Fiesta); 4 Andy Grant (Ford Focus); 5 Simon Horton (Subaru Impreza); 6 Steve Mundy (Ford Fiesta).
Supernational: 1 Tristan Ovenden (Renault Clio) 5m37.206s; 2 Guy

Corner (Lotus Exige) +1.502s; 3 Craig Lomax (Citroen C2); 4 Paige Bellerby (Lotus Exige); 5 Dave Ellis (Suzuki Swift); 6 Jelle Blockx (Volvo 240).

Junior Rallycross (All 1.3 Suzuki Swift): 1 Luke Constantine 6m19.817s; 2 Patrick O'Donovan +4.544s; 3 James Constantine; 4 Roberts Vitols; 5 Ben Sayer; 6 Harry Garman.

Suzuki Swift (All 1.6 Suzuki Swift): 1 Tom Constantine 4m00.078s; 2 Dominic Flitney +1.825s; 3 Will Layton; 4 Ed Stallard; 5 Nikita Abramov; 6 Don MacLeod.

BMW Mini: 1 David Bell 6m03.437s; 2 Martin Hawkes +6.780s; 3 Andrew Hawkes; 4 Stephen Brown; 5 Ryan Cooper; 6 James Osborne.

Retro Rallycross: 1 Gary Simpson (BMW E30) 4m03.943s; 2 Tony Lynch (Toyota MR2) +7.470s; 3 Brian Hardman (Ford Escort MK2); 4 Ray Morgan (Ford Escort); 5 Phillip Collard (Renault 5); 6 Paul Smith (Volkswagen Polo).

RX150: 1 Chrissy Palmer 5m50.760s; 2 Sam Clennell +21.084s; 3 Steve Harris; 4 Brett Harris; 5 Stephen Jones, no more finishers.

Round 8 British Rallycross: 1 Tohill 4m30.304s; 2 Godfrey +0.677s; 3 Steve Hill (Mitsubishi Lancer E10); 4 Bardy; 5 Horton; 6 Mundy.

Supernational: 1 Ovenden 4m52.979s; 2 Corner +1.051s; 3 Bellerby; 4 Lomax; 5 David Erwin (Ford Fiesta); 6 Ellis.

Junior Rallycross: 1 Vitols 5m35.444s; 2 O'Donovan +2.758s; 3 L Constantine; 4 Sayer; 5 Ovenden; 6 J Constantine.

Suzuki Swift: 1 T Constantine 5m16.742s; 2 Max Weatherly +0.934s; 3 Stallard; 4 Joe Booth; 5 Abramov; 6 Layton.

BMW Mini: 1 Drew Bellerby 5m12.052s; 2 Brown +2.132s; 3 Osborne; 4 A Hawkes; 5 Cooper; 6 Eleanor Corner.

RX150: 1 Clennell 5m01.837s; 2 Harris +4.292s; 3 Max Coates; 4 Jones; 5 Palmer, no more finishers.

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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

MN SAYS...

How Tanak showed he has world class

There was real pressure on the Toyota man in Spain, but he truly delivered

It is very hard for those in the service park to claim to know Ott Tanak very well at all, because he keeps his cards very close to his chest. The new World Rally champion isn't one to demonstrate overt emotion, whether he has had a strong rally or whether things have not quite gone his way – with the exception of a cruel failure on Wales Rally GB in 2018, perhaps.

But now he has landed the biggest prize of his career as he brought his Toyota Yaris WRC home in second place on Rally Spain – and grabbed five vital powerstage points – to break the grip of French drivers on the WRC trophy which has gone back to 2004 thanks to the domination of Sebastien Loeb and Ogier.

This could spell trouble for his rivals. With the pressure off, with the first title landed, then Tanak will only relax more and is bound to get even faster. Add that to the ingredients in his armoury, and his service park foes will be fearing the worst.

Matt James, Editor (Twitter: @MattJMNews)



YOUR PICS

LETTERS@MOTORSPORT-NEWS.CO.UK

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



Family feud! Proud dad Christopher Jones sent in these two photos from his sons, who are arguing over who has taken the better picture. Seven-year-old Huw captured the Audi quattro on the recent Lombard Rally, based in Bath. His 15-year-old brother Owen took the snap of the Ferrari on the right. We asked Art Editor Mike Stokoe, and he called a draw. Deadlock in the Jones household



Fun in the rain at the glorious Knockhill track, by Alex Ireland



A flaming TVR tackles Silverstone, sent in by David Harbey



James Lomax enjoyed Wales Rally GB and sent in this photo



Very busy Club Enduro at Snetterton, sent in by Sam Nudd



Rich Cranston's shot of an Ecurie Ecosse Cavalier at Donington



Justin Ward's photograph from the 750 Motor Club at Snetterton



Time Attack at Mallory Park goes awry, sent in by Peter Atkins



Gary Hill saw the finale of the BTCC at Brands Hatch recently

GOT AN OPINION?

LET US KNOW: LETTERS@MOTORSPORT-NEWS.CO.UK

TV GUIDE



Hamilton beat Alonso to win the USA Grand Prix in 2007

LIVE TV

NASCAR: Texas

■ **Race:** Monday, 0600hrs, Premier Sports 2 (delayed)



Ahead of this weekend's United States Grand Prix, relive the 2007 edition with **F1 Classic Races** as Lewis Hamilton won after sustained pressure from McLaren team-mate Fernando Alonso (Thursday, 2000-2200hrs, Sky Sports F1).

Enjoy the final two **Porsche Supercup** races of the year from Mexico City as Michael

Ammermuller took his third title on the bounce (Friday, 1800-1900hrs, Eurosport 2).

The last round of the **European Le Mans Series** took place at Portimao, which you can see on Saturday (1030-1130hrs, BT Sport 2).

And catch the best moments from the **World Touring Car Cup** from Suzuka (Sunday, 1000-1030hrs, Eurosport 1).

LIVE F1

United States Grand Prix Sky Sports F1 HD

■ **Drivers' press conference:**

Thursday, 1600-1630hrs

■ **Welcome to the weekend:**

Thursday, 2200-2230hrs

■ **FP1:** Friday, 1545-1745hrs

■ **FP2:** Friday, 1945-2145hrs

■ **FP3:** Saturday, 1745-1930hrs

■ **Qualifying:** Saturday, 2000-2230hrs

■ **Race:** Sunday, 1730-2200hrs

■ **Highlights:** Sunday, 2230-2330hrs

Channel 4 HD highlights

■ **Qualifying:** Sunday, 0040-0210hrs

■ **Race:** Sunday, 2300-0100hrs

LISTINGS

RACING SATURDAY/SUNDAY

■ **Silverstone, Northants**

Walter Hayes Trophy: FF1600, Allcomers Closed Wheel, Allcomers Open Wheel, HSCC Closed Wheel **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**

Truck meeting: Trucks, Legends,

Pickups, Super Silhouettes, Junior Saloons **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1135hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1025hrs (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 €15, under 16 free **Web** mondello.ie

RALLY SATURDAY

■ **Oulton Park, Cheshire**

Graham Coffey Solicitors Neil Howard Stages **Starts** 0855hrs **Admission** adult £21, under 13 free **Web** nhstages.co.uk

■ **Crail Airfield, Fife**

Kingdom Stages Rally **Starts** 0900hrs **Admission** TBA **Web** glenrothes-msc.com

SUNDAY

■ **Pickering, NYorks**

Mellors Elliot Motorsport Malton Forest Rally **Starts** 0831hrs **Admission** free **Web** maltonmc.co.uk

SPORTING SCENE SATURDAY

■ **Stoke, Staffs**

Brisca F1 **Starts** TBA **Admission** TBA **Web** brisca.com

SUNDAY

■ **Hyde Park, London**

London to Brighton Veteran Car Run **Starts** 0656hrs **Admission** free **Web** veterancarrun.com

Details correct at time of press but please check before travelling



NEXT WEEK

UNITED STATES GRAND PRIX REPORT



OUT WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6



WALTER HAYES TROPHY
Can Moyers make it a hat-trick?

THE 2019-20 MN CIRCUIT RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP IS GO!

All the action from the Neil Howard Stages at Oulton Park

PLUS: ALL THE USUAL NEWS, VIEWS AND REPORTS

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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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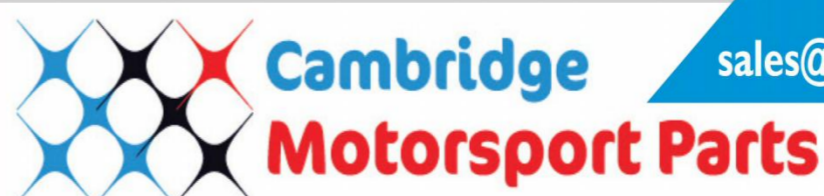


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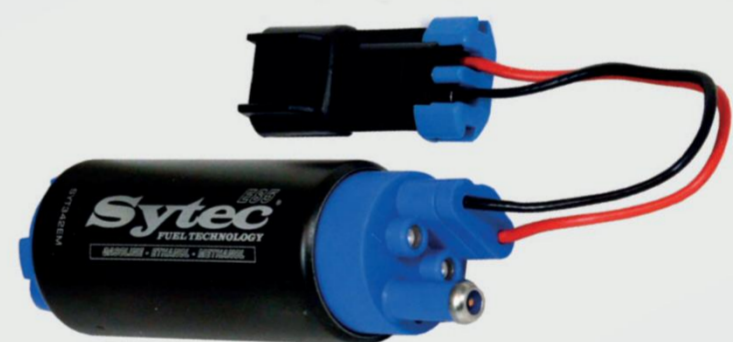
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