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Ferrari reveals its F1 plans – and, finally, a Le Mans return

There's little doubt that Ferrari was the on-track disaster story of Formula 1 in 2020. From being Mercedes' main rival and winning three races (which could have been more) in 2019, the famous Italian team slumped to sixth in the constructors' championship.

The reasons for that – the fallout from the engine controversy, a draggy car and Sebastian Vettel's troubles – are well known, but solving them is rather harder. As Alex Kalinauckas explains on page 22, Mattia Binotto seems confident that the key problems have been solved. Ferrari won't defeat Mercedes this season but, if it can recover to third in the constructors' table while focusing on the new regulations due to arrive in 2022, it should give Charles Leclerc, Carlos Sainz Jr and fans some reasons to be cheerful.

Probably even more exciting for enthusiasts, though, is that Ferrari is returning to the top class of the Le Mans 24 Hours (p4). Despite not having run a factory assault for outright honours since 1973, Ferrari is still third on the all-time wins list, behind Porsche and Audi, on nine (including 1964, above). That it will now take on those two, as well as Peugeot, Toyota and others, from 2023 is a huge boost for sportscar racing and motorsport as a whole. Many fans have been waiting for this moment for many years – perhaps other big names such as McLaren could be persuaded to join in too...



Kevin Turner

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**NEXT WEEK
11 MARCH**

Aston Martin special
We talk to the key F1
players and recall the
GT successes



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Charles Coates/Motorsport Images

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FERRARI JOINS LE MANS HYPERCAR RANKS



LE MANS 24 HOURS/WEC

Finally! Ferrari is returning to top-flight sportscar racing. The Italian manufacturer will make its first factory bid for outright Le Mans 24 Hours honours for half a century in 2023.

Ferrari announced last week that it is developing a new Le Mans Hypercar for a step up to the top class of the World Endurance Championship in two years' time. Its 2023 WEC entry will end a hiatus from the sportscar racing big time stretching back to the three-litre Group 6 312 PB of 1973 driven by, among others, Jacky Ickx, Carlos Pace and Brian Redman.

The decision to build the first Ferrari prototype since the 333 SP was developed for privateers to race in IMSA's World Sports Car class in 1994 follows what the manufacturer called "a period of study and analysis" of the new rules for the Hypercar class that "it proactively helped to establish".

Ferrari has made no secret of a desire to return to the front of the grid in world championship-level sportscar racing since the FIA, along with WEC promoter and Le Mans organiser the Automobile Club de l'Ouest, began working on a cost-effective replacement for the LMP1 category in the spring of 2018. It was involved in the original round-table discussions and then the working groups that came up with the original LMH rulebook announced in December of that year.

Ferrari was subsequently among the dissenters who went back to the rulemakers in 2019 arguing that the regulations as published were still too expensive. It pushed for something dubbed GTE-Plus, an idea that never made it into the working groups, and then

welcomed, with certain caveats, the LMP2-based LMDh initiative revealed in January 2020.

Ferrari Competizione GT boss Antonello Coletta, whose department is heading up the new programme, expressed reservations about developing a car around one of the chassis produced by the four licensed LMP2 constructors. He described that as "problematical" for Ferrari, and revealed as recently as last November that developing an LMH remained in the mix.

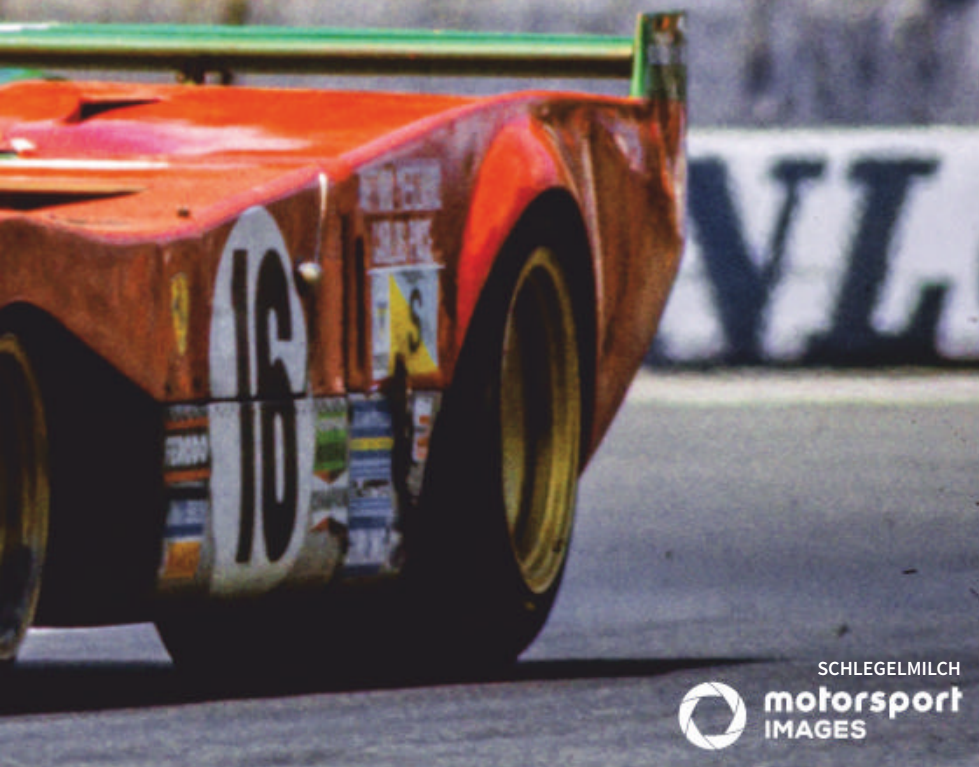
"We did preliminary studies on both LMH and LMDh," explained a Ferrari spokesman. "LMH gives us the possibility to share technical innovations and solutions with our road cars and the chance to produce something that looks like a road car."

Ferrari has played down the significance of the introduction of a budget cap in Formula 1 for 2021 in the decision to give the green light to the new sportscar programme. "Not connected" is how a Ferrari spokesman described the F1 cost cap in relation to the marque's prototype return.

Ferrari president John Elkann said that, in building an LMH contender, "Ferrari once again asserts its sporting commitment and determination to be a protagonist in the major global motorsport events". Those comments were part of an announcement that stretched to fewer than 250 words, revealed little about the programme and included no technical details.

What we do know is that the car will be an LMH prototype. The rules, in theory at least, still allow for a road-based LMH contender. Whether it will be a hybrid has yet to be clarified, although Ferrari's rhetoric about technology and synergies with its road-going sportscars suggests that it will be.

Ferrari last raced in the top class at Le Mans as a works team in 1973. This is Carlos Pace in action



SCHLEGELMILCH
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IMAGES

Ferrari will be entering the WEC with a factory team, though what that means isn't clear. It has only said that it will be making an "official engagement" in the WEC, and hasn't revealed whether that will be with a team run directly from the factory or by a partner such as AF Corse, which has masterminded its GTE Pro campaigns in the WEC since 2012. The partnerships it forges could also cover the development of the car, it stated. But again it has yet to reveal what areas these might cover and with whom they might be. The 333 SP, for example, was developed in conjunction with Dallara.

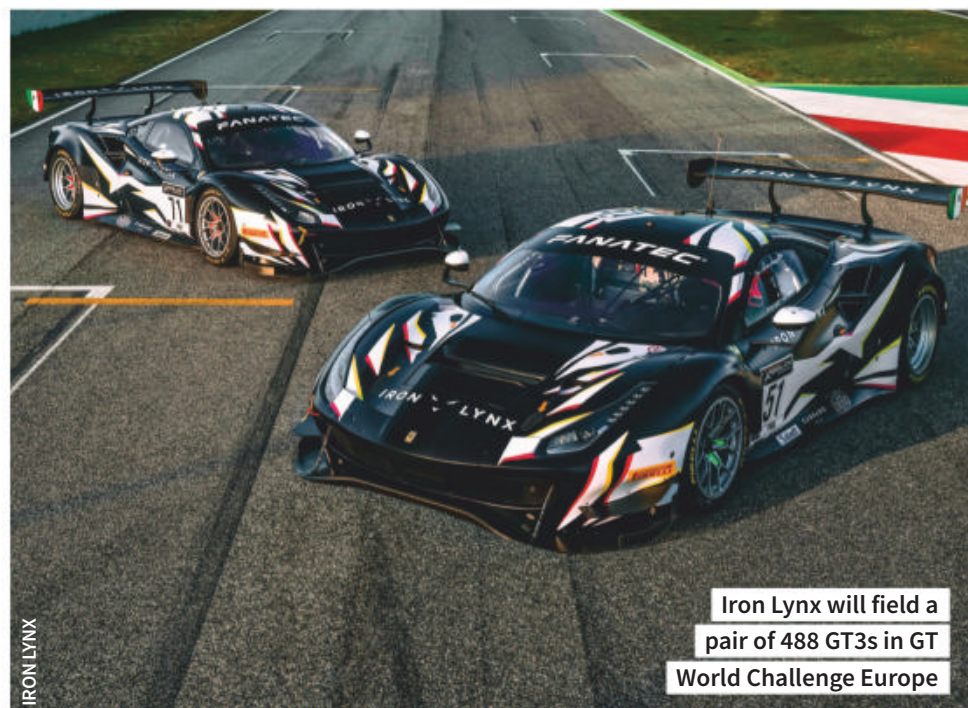
Ferrari's LMH contender could be up and running in little more than year. The spokesman explained that a protracted period of testing is envisaged before the new prototype races for the first time. "The roadmap for the car is to start testing in 2022," he explained. "We want to be on track in early 2022 so we can have a full year of testing." He ruled out Ferrari taking part in any races for development purposes next year in the same way as Peugeot will. The French manufacturer will give its new LMH a debut in 2022 ahead of its first full WEC campaign the following year.

Selling cars to privateers "could be an option", according to Ferrari, while racing the car in the IMSA SportsCar Championship in North America at some point is also on the table. The spokesman stressed, however, that the WEC is the "first and main goal".

The make-up of the driver crews, the name of the car and technical details will be part of future announcements.

GARY WATKINS

➔ P19 OPINION



Iron Lynx will field a pair of 488 GT3s in GT World Challenge Europe

F1 test driver Ilott to bid for Prancing Horse GT title

GT WORLD CHALLENGE

Ferrari Formula 1 test driver Callum Ilott will contest the GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup with the Iron Lynx team in 2021.

The Briton (below) will be part of a two-car factory attack on the five-round endurance leg of the GTWCE in 2021 by Iron Lynx as Ferrari bids to repeat the drivers' title it won last year with Alessandro Pier Guidi and the AF Corse team. Ilott will share one of the team's two Ferrari 488 GT3s with Ferrari F1 development driver Antonio Fuoco.

The two members of Ferrari's Academy junior programme will be partnered by Davide Rigon, who has moved over from the marque's World Endurance Championship GTE Pro line-up. Pier Guidi will be joined in the sister entry by fellow factory driver Nicklas Nielsen and

Frenchman Come Ledogar.

Ilott, who got his first taste of a 488 GT3 at Mugello last week, said: "To get my first experience in GT and endurance racing in such a competitive series is obviously a steep learning curve, but we've got a great line-up. I'm really excited to get to experience it, and it should be a lot of fun actually."

Iron Lynx team boss Andrea Piccini expressed no doubts that Ilott will rapidly get up to speed in the GT3 car.

"I'm sure he is going to be fast," he said. "Look at someone like [Raffaele] Marciello: he was quick straight away and within two seasons he was the fastest Mercedes driver."

Ilott was announced by Iron Lynx last week when the team took the wraps off its 2021 programme, which will encompass 14 Ferrari entries across five championships. These include two cars in GTE Am in the World Endurance Championship and an additional entry for the Le Mans 24 Hours.

Iron Lynx's WEC assault incorporates the all-female line-up of Rahel Frey, Manuela Gostner and Michelle Gattling. The so-called 'Iron Dames' car will also contest the European Le Mans Series, with Katherine Legge replacing Gattling, as part of a three-car assault by the team. It will run a further two cars in the Le Mans Cup support series on the ELMS bill.

GARY WATKINS





Hannu Mikkola

1942-2021

OBITUARY

Among the titans who put the World Rally Championship on the map through the 1970s and 1980s, few could challenge the versatility and leadership of 1983 title winner Hannu Mikkola, who has passed away at the age of 78 after a long illness.

The first deluge of international success accrued by Nordic talent such as Rauno Aaltonen, Timo Makinen and Pauli Toivonen in the early 1960s helped pave the way for Mikkola to usher in a new generation on the cusp of the world championship era.

Born in Joensuu in May 1942, Mikkola first entered a rally in 1963, and would remain on the national scene, balancing opportunities to compete with the demands of academic life. But after victory on the Tampere and Helsinki rallies of 1967, he elected to pursue an international programme the following year.

On the 1968 Austrian Alpine Rally, Ford rally boss Bill Barnett found his much-vaunted new Escort Twin Cams being chivvied by this unknown Finnish student. Mikkola finished second overall at the wheel of his privateer Lancia, and his works Ford debut followed a few weeks later on the 1000 Lakes. Driving a third car alongside Bengt Soderstrom and Ove Andersson, the newcomer claimed victory from Simo Lampinen's Saab by three and a

half minutes. After this, the Escort Twin Cam proved fragile and, aside from more success for Mikkola on the 1000 Lakes, Ford fell behind the competition.

Barnett was replaced by Stuart Turner, architect of the Mini Cooper's glory years, and whose eyes were fixed upon the publicity value of the 16,000-mile World Cup Rally that was planned for 1970. Replacing the exotic Twin Cam with a bored-out Kent pushrod gave the car reliability, while having England footballer Jimmy Greaves in one of the team's entries brought huge star power. Mikkola's victory and the subsequent Escort Mexico line of road cars sealed his place in the affections of successive generations of Ford enthusiasts.

In 1972, after another fraught season, Ford elected to throw all its efforts for the season towards the Safari Rally. Mikkola delivered, becoming the first non-African to take victory on the most gruelling of all annual events. But such successes were rare, and Mikkola grew disenchanted with Ford's lack of consistent success. He was a free agent by the mid-1970s, and drove for Opel, Fiat and Peugeot, most often with Jean Todt co-driving.

These years of wandering ended at Toyota, where Mikkola forged a definitive partnership with Swedish co-driver Arne Hertz. Nevertheless, the Corollas and Celicas were not yet fully competitive, and

a rapprochement was made with Ford for 1978, bringing five wins on British events.

In 1979, the inaugural WRC drivers' title rapidly developed into a two-horse race between Mikkola and his team-mate Bjorn Waldegard. The Swede made the early running, but Ford shied away from the expense of contesting the two African events: the Safari and the Ivory Coast. It did, however, permit its drivers to tackle these events with Mercedes. Long-distance expert Mikkola was able to claw back some lost ground on Waldegard as a result, but lost out by one point.

In 1980, with Ford on sabbatical, Mikkola began to receive overtures from Audi Sport, which was developing its exotic but complex turbocharged, four-wheel-drive Quattro in preparation for a WRC campaign in 1981. Mikkola's mechanical sympathy and economical cornering style were prized by the team in Ingolstadt but, although the Finn was impressed by their concept, he worried that the learning curve presented by so much ambition might prove too steep.

He agreed initially to act only as development driver through 1980, and enlisted the help of David Sutton's team, which brought its hard-earned savvy as well as a competitive car from which to benchmark performance. The result of this development work was the Audi Quattro's mythical debut as course car

on the 1980 Algarve Rally, which Mikkola completed half an hour faster than the winning Ford Escort of Antonio Zanini.

Unreliability plagued the Quattro through 1981, although Mikkola was proud to become the first non-Swede to win the Swedish Rally, and ended the year with victory on the RAC Rally. In 1982, he drove the full WRC season with Audi Sport and the British Open in a Quattro prepared by Sutton. He and Michele Mouton were joined by Stig Blomqvist on selected WRC events, and the trio delivered Audi's first manufacturers' crown.

The following year, with the evolved Group B Quattros, Mikkola was declared team leader and swept to four wins and the title, including his seventh and final victory on the 1000 Lakes, a record only equalled by Marcus Gronholm.

Blomqvist was anointed as Audi's title contender for 1984 and Mikkola was content to play a supporting role, dutifully following the Swede home in Monte Carlo, the Acropolis, Argentina and Ivory Coast as they steamrolled the drivers' and manufacturers' crowns.

By 1985, Mikkola was largely phased out of Audi's WRC programme in favour of Walter Rohrl, but he relished driving the monstrous, bewinged Audi Sport quattro S1 at any opportunity, resulting in victories on the Olympus Rally in the US and the Finnish Mantta 200. Another landmark win came on the inaugural Hong Kong-Beijing marathon, driving an ex-works Quattro for Andy Dawson's team. Mikkola's 18th and final WRC win came on the 1987 Safari at the wheel of the cumbersome Group A Audi 200 quattro, beating Rohrl in the sister car.

Four seasons in the WRC passed with Mazda before Mikkola stepped back from full-time competition. His last outing in the top flight came in 1993 on his beloved 1000 Lakes, finishing seventh in a works Toyota Celica. In 1995, Ford entered the 25th anniversary running of the London-Mexico rally with a Sutton-built Escort in which Mikkola won, and he would later delight crowds at historic events worldwide until ill health began to take its toll.

"What I remember is a friend, a colleague and a team-mate... always equal as him... a gentleman in this world, which was really appreciated," Mouton told Autosport. "We really had a fantastic time. We laughed so much! He taught me how to drive with left-foot braking, but I also learned how to play golf with him, so we were really like a family."

Autosport extends its condolences to Mikkola's wife Arja, their children Juha and Vesa, and their four grandchildren.

NICK GARTON

Making history in Escort
on 1972 Safari Rally



MCKLEIN

Mikkola won his beloved
1000 Lakes Rally on way to
1983 world title with Audi



MOTORSPORT IMAGES

He became a draw at
historic events in late life



J BLOXHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Silverstone 'cautiously optimistic' on Brit GP crowd

FORMULA 1

Silverstone is hoping that spectators can attend the British Grand Prix in July following the latest UK government announcements.

The government last week unveiled its roadmap for easing the current lockdown measures, including plans for spectators to attend live sporting events by the summer. Prime Minister Boris Johnson told parliament that "the turnstiles of our sports stadia will once again rotate" as he outlined the blueprint.

Under the proposals, large outdoor seated venues will be permitted to allow up to 10,000 people or 25% of their total seat capacity – whichever is lower – from 17 May. This could be increased as early as 21 June, leading to suggestions that many of the UK's major summer sports events, including the British Grand Prix, could enjoy capacity crowds amid the ongoing vaccination campaign and falling COVID-19 case numbers.

"I'm cautiously optimistic, there is a long way to go," Silverstone managing director Stuart Pringle said in an interview with BBC 5 Live. "But the requirements have been clearly set out. There are variables that are within nobody's control, if another variant of concern were to arrive, or if there was a problem with the vaccination rollout. But equally, things have been going well, and I think that people want to get behind an opportunity that gives some light at the end of the tunnel."

Pringle was hopeful that the spread of the grandstands across the Silverstone site would aid the push to

get a crowd back at the British Grand Prix, which was run behind closed doors last year. He was also open to the idea of using vaccine passports to ensure those attending had been protected against COVID-19, saying the possibility had already been discussed with the government.

"I think for fans, if it involves a little bit of effort, or possibly even a bit of cost, the chance to go and see your team, to see your favourite sport, that's something that we'd all consider this summer," he said.

F1 was forced to run the majority of its races behind closed doors last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but is hopeful of getting a crowd at the majority of events in 2021.

"At this stage, I'm still optimistic that the bulk of the season will see spectators," said F1 global director of race promotion Chloe Targett-Adams in a Blackbook web seminar. "It's obviously very territory-specific, location-specific. You look at the UK, we're in such a positive place, the government has done a great job with the vaccine rollout. It enables planning around the British GP with our Silverstone promoter and feedback from UK government at this stage [for] that to go ahead on the basis that there will be fans attending."

"We're hopeful that by the end of the year, at least in the majority of locations, we should be having fairly – I hesitate to use the word large, because we're still in a pandemic, and there are variants you don't know – meaningful crowds, and operation of our hospitality."

LUKE SMITH

Glickenhaus on track in Italy

WEC

The new Glickenhaus Le Mans Hypercar is up and running – but not in time to be on the grid for the opening round of the World Endurance Championship opener at the Algarve Circuit next month. The US manufacturer has opted to miss the race to focus on testing and development.

The Glickenhaus-Pipo 007LMH hit the track at Vallelunga last week, completing more than 100 laps with Romain Dumas and Franck Mailleux driving. That left little more than a month for development and then homologation of the car prior to the Portuguese event scheduled for 4 April.

Marque boss Jim Glickenhaus explained that his team had "learned a lot" over the course of the two-day test. The focus on the opening day on Thursday was calibrating the car's electronics, but on Friday the solo car, he said, "just kept lapping, lapping and lapping".

"We only did 20 laps on Thursday, but we completed around about 100 on Friday," he revealed. "We were able to test all those things you need to, like the clutch and the launch control, and we did some good set-up work."

The first test of the 007 had to be pushed back from early February as a result of delivery delays. That forced Glickenhaus Racing to skip the Algarve event, which it had planned to contest with both its entries. "It is very important that we get the car right so that when we start racing it's good, because once we homologate it's locked for five years," said Glickenhaus. "I am playing the long game here."

Glickenhaus will test at Monza this month and then undertake a 30-hour endurance simulation at Motorland Aragon in April, after which the car will be homologated in time to take part in round two of the WEC at Spa on 1 May.

GARY WATKINS



Cammish loses Honda seat

BTCC

What is going on at Team Dynamics? That was the question British Touring Car Championship fans were asking on Tuesday this week when the team announced a parting of the ways with Dan Cammish – third in the points in 2019 and 2020 – after one season of his existing two-year deal.

Amid speculation that Honda is no longer supporting the Dynamics-run Civic Type Rs, the team said that it will announce one driver on Friday of this week, with the other ‘confirmed over the coming weeks’. Cammish’s 2018-20 team-mate Matt Neal, whose family founded Dynamics, said in a statement: “Dan is a fantastic guy and has been a great driver for us! We wish him all the very best for the future and will very much be keeping in touch.”

Cammish found out last Friday that he had no place in the team for 2021. “It’s disappointing but that’s motor racing,” he told Autosport. “I need to dust myself off and look at my options for the future. The BTCC and Dynamics gave me a platform to raise my profile, give me a fanbase, and show how I can adapt from rear-wheel drive to front-wheel drive.”

Cammish added that his chances of staying in the BTCC are “close to nil. By



the time I got wind that something was changing, all the seats were taken, certainly at the teams that might be interested in me.” He said that he could bid to return to Porsches – a two-time Carrera Cup GB champion, he was fourth in the Supercup in 2017 before switching to the BTCC.

Neal, 54, has been looking into stepping down from BTCC driving for 2021 for some time. The series grapevine has long linked Dan Rowbottom, who contested the 2019 season in a Ciceley Motorsport Mercedes, with one seat, and now speculation is mounting that three-time BTCC champion Gordon Shedden could be in line for a headline-grabbing return in the other Civic.

Neal is known to have been lobbying over the winter to acquire a third TBL entrants’ licence, which could theoretically have left room for Cammish in the line-up, but that the required level of approval from teams in a vote put to them by series organiser TOCA was not forthcoming. Neal wrote on social media: “Devastated we couldn’t keep him [Cammish] on the grid. Thanks to the few individuals who blocked our attempts but real thanks to those who welcomed the competition and supported our efforts.”

Neal declined to comment to Autosport about his own prospects of driving or the speculated return of Shedden.

MARCUS SIMMONS



Audi misses FE buyout deadline

FORMULA E

Audi won’t cash in on its Formula E team when it quits the championship at the end of the season after it missed the deadline to agree a buyout deal. Various parties held talks with the manufacturer, but control of the licence has now returned to Formula E Operations.

Audi gave technical support to the Abt Schaeffler entry for the first three FE seasons before taking it over. A long-time

Volkswagen Group affiliate, Abt was one of the interested buyers. But a statement read: “for various reasons no contract could be closed”.

Abt has been given permission by Audi to return to FE for the 2021-22 season and beyond with a new manufacturer, although it will retain ties with the VW Group through its Extreme E Cupra entry.

Audi team boss Allan McNish (left) told Autosport: “There are some natural deadlines. You

have technical deadlines and some contractual ones. We had a lot of discussions when it was clear we were stepping out. We tried very hard to make sure the entity, the team, lived on, but unfortunately we couldn’t achieve it in the timescale.”

The team guided Lucas di Grassi to the drivers’ title in 2016-17, and the experienced Brazilian has held talks with “two or three teams” about remaining in FE.

MATT KEW

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Grosjean hits the track for first IndyCar tests



SKIBINSKI/INDYCAR

INDYCAR

Ex-Formula 1 driver Romain Grosjean feels that he's learning what it takes to be fast in an IndyCar after his first two days of testing with his new team Dale Coyne Racing.

The 34-year-old Frenchman got his first taste of IndyCar action in DCR's Honda-powered car at Barber Motorsports Park last week. A spin into the sandtrap at the tricky downhill Turn 1 caused him to lose some track time as repairs were carried out, and he finished the day last, albeit within one second of the pacesetter, Rinus VeeKay

of Ed Carpenter Racing.

Grosjean then took part in an eight-car test at Laguna Seca on Monday this week. He was less than 0.25s behind the Chevrolet-engined Arrow McLaren SP machine of Pato O'Ward, who topped the times, and just a couple of hundredths slower than his DCR team-mate Ed Jones.

"It's only testing and there were only seven other cars here, so it's great that we're in the game, but I'm not reading too much into it," Grosjean told Autosport. "The important thing is that we definitely learned a lot and I'm definitely getting better. I

think we've made some progress. I'm starting to understand the car better.

"If I'm honest, it's very different from Formula 1, the way you drive it. But I'm getting up to speed and feeling more confident in it, more comfortable. We made a fair amount of set-up changes and I felt how they work, so we're getting there."

Grosjean, who will compete in all 13 of IndyCar's road and street course events for Coyne, is expected to get one more day of testing, at Sebring, before the season opener at Barber Motorsports Park on 18 April.

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

Muller in Rosberg Audi as another BMW joins in

DTM

Audi DTM star Nico Muller is to return to Team Rosberg, the team with which he began his career in the series, for the switch to GT3 rules in 2021.

The Swiss, who was runner-up to Rene Rast last year with Abt Sportsline, will spearhead the line-up of Rosberg, which has, as expected, committed to running a brace of Audi R8

LMS machines. Muller, who will once again dovetail the DTM with his Formula E programme, will be joined by little-known American Dev Gore. The 23-year-old's European CV amounts to a 2019 Blancpain Endurance campaign in a Strakka Racing Mercedes, plus some 2018 Euroformula Open outings.

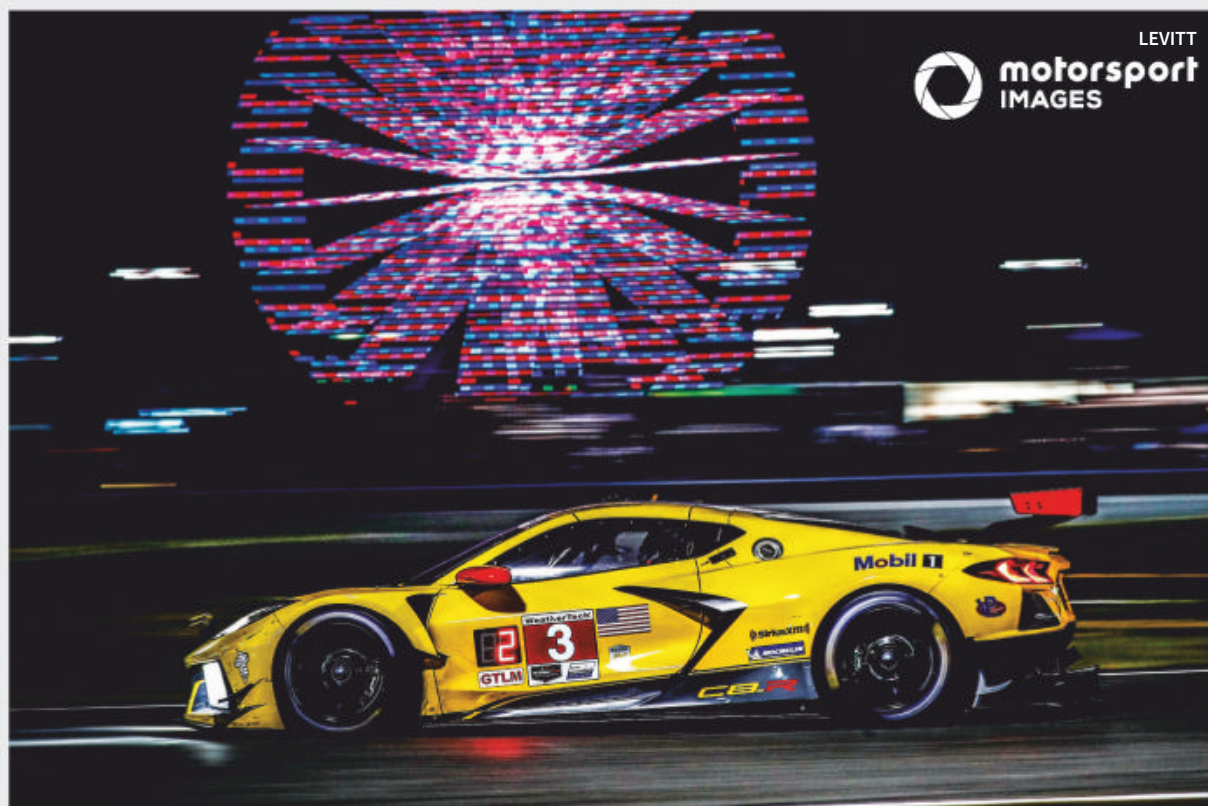
The BMW and Mercedes line-ups have also been bolstered in recent days.

Top GT3 team Rowe Racing has emulated Walkenhorst Motorsport in committing to run at least one BMW M6 GT3. Rowe last year won the Nurburgring 24 Hours with the M6, and the Spa equivalent with a Porsche.

Haupt Racing Team, the squad of ex-DTM Audi and Opel driver Hubert Haupt, has pledged to field two Mercedes-AMG GT3s, with Maximilian Gotz linked to a DTM return in one seat.



DTM



Corvette closes on LM return

WEC

Chevrolet has given the clearest indication yet that it will be back at the Le Mans 24 Hours this year by entering the 2021 World Endurance Championship opener at the Algarve circuit next month.

Corvette Racing will field a solo C8.R in the eight-hour race in Portugal over the Easter weekend to be driven in GTE Pro by Oliver Gavin and Antonio Garcia. It looks set to be the first of two appearances in the WEC ahead of Le Mans in June.

A rejig of the IMSA SportsCar Championship calendar means that the mid-engined 'Vette will not be in action in North America after this month's Sebring 12 Hours until the end of June. That would appear to leave the way clear for at least one Chevy to race at the Spa round on 1 May.

"There will be more to say shortly," said a Corvette spokesman after the Algarve entry list was revealed last week. "Not everything is in place, but it's all positive stuff."

Chevrolet appears to be awaiting clarification on the 2021 WEC calendar at a time when the world health crisis is still raising question marks over the viability of the opening races, Le Mans included, on

their current dates. The Pratt & Miller-run Corvette squad withdrew from last year's 24 Hours when the revised IMSA schedule made its participation untenable.

This isn't the first time that the General Motors marque has put in an appearance in the WEC outside of its annual foray to Le Mans, which until last year was unbroken since 2000. It fielded a Corvette C7.R at the Shanghai and Sebring rounds of the 2018-19 season, contested last year's Austin fixture with the C8.R, and would have raced in this month's Sebring 1000 Miles had the race not been cancelled.

Gavin's return to the cockpit of a Corvette isn't a surprise. It was made very clear last year that he was only standing down from the full-time line-up.

Former DTM driver Ferdinand Habsburg is remaining with the WRT squad for its expansion into the WEC this year. The Austrian, who completed his second season in the DTM with the Belgian squad last year, will race its LMP2 ORECA-Gibson 07. Charles Milesi, who raced in Super Formula last year, has also been confirmed in the line-up alongside the already-announced Robin Frijns.

GARY WATKINS

IN THE HEADLINES

CHADWICK AT WILLIAMS

W Series champion Jamie Chadwick has secured a third year at the Williams Formula 1 team as a development driver. Chadwick, who will again race in W Series this year and compete in Extreme E, will enjoy an expanded simulator programme.

FE RESERVES NAMED

Jaguar and the Venturi Mercedes team have snapped up Sacha Fenestraz and Jake Hughes respectively as reserve drivers for Formula E. Fenestraz, who has a full race programme in Japan this year, drove for Jaguar in last season's Marrakech rookie test, while Hughes has experience with NIO 333 and Mercedes.

VISCAAL'S F2 DEBUT

FIA Formula 3 Championship race winner Bent Viscaal will make his Formula 2 debut with Italian team Trident at this month's opening round in Bahrain. The Dutchman, whose sole F3 triumph came at Silverstone, is only on board for one round at present. Trident has confirmed a second year in the other car for Marino Sato, the Japanese who won the 2019 Euroformula Open crown.

FOURMAUX'S WRC CHANCE

French talent Adrien Fourmaux will get his maiden top-class World Rally Championship start on next month's Rally Croatia at the wheel of an M-Sport Ford Fiesta WRC. Fourmaux, whose main focus this year is WRC2, has also gained the support of Red Bull. M-Sport boss Rich Millener said: "Clearly, they have seen the same Ogier-esque performances in Adrien as we have."

YOUNG'S HONDA DEAL

Jack Young, the 19-year-old Northern Irishman who won the 2019 Clio Cup UK title, has joined works Honda tin-top operation JAS as a development driver. Young will race a Civic Type R for Slovakian squad Brutal Fish Racing in TCR Europe this year.

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MERCEDES W12

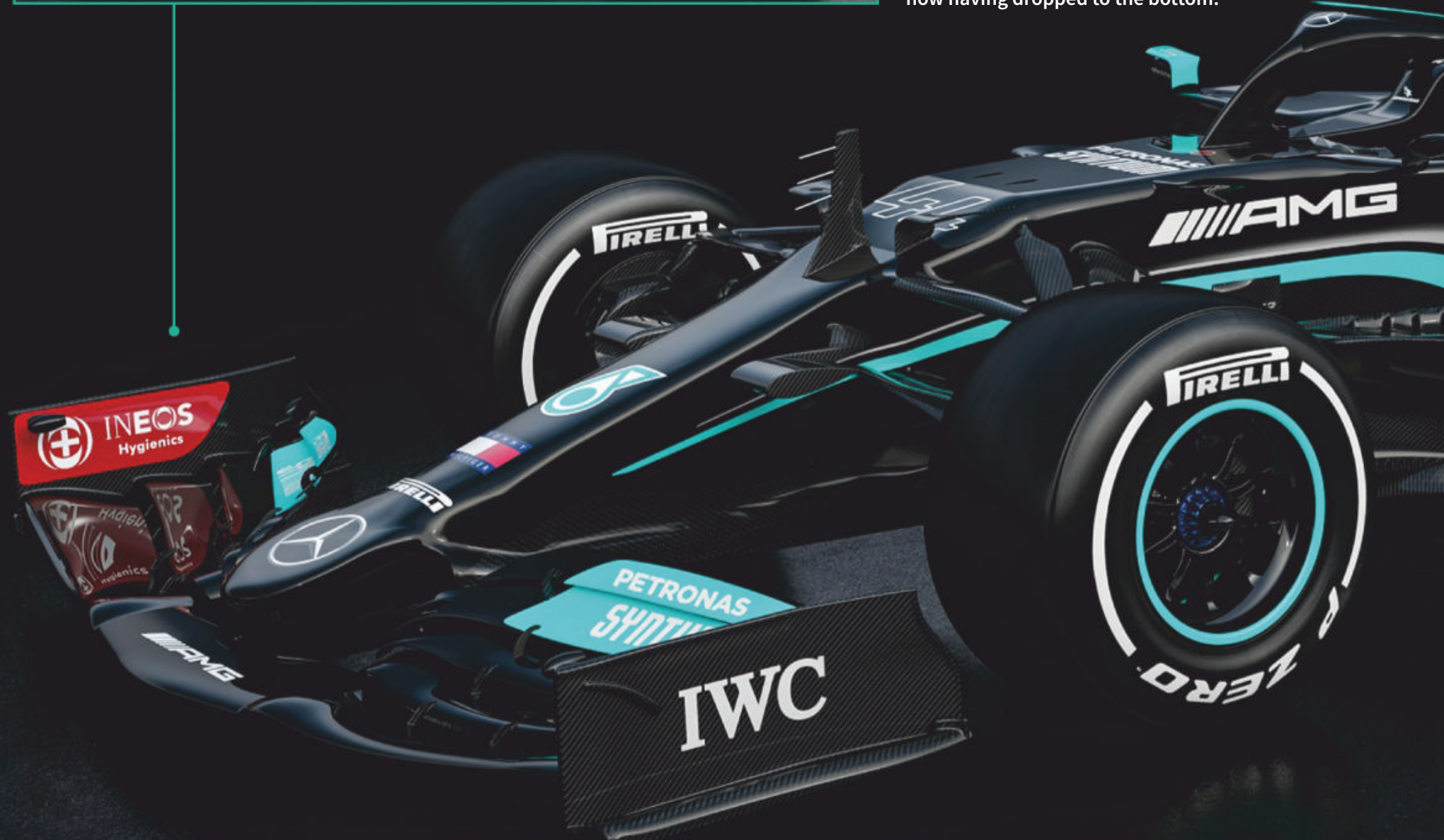
JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

The car that's most likely to be this season's pacesetter has had a long gestation, although significant changes aren't being revealed right away

PHOTOGRAPHY MERCEDES

FRONT END

Mercedes pressed pause on its 2020 development early to steal a march on 2021, but it seems that the team is trying to keep a lid on any wide-scale updates for the time being. At the front, the car retains the split-end front-wing element that the team has used over the past couple of seasons, shortening the length of the top element to satisfy the five-element regulation mandated by the rules. The team made sporadic appearances with a more conventional front-wing design at selected events last year, so this can be generally interchangeable. The front-brake ducts also appear to have been flipped upside down, with the widest part of the inlet now having dropped to the bottom.

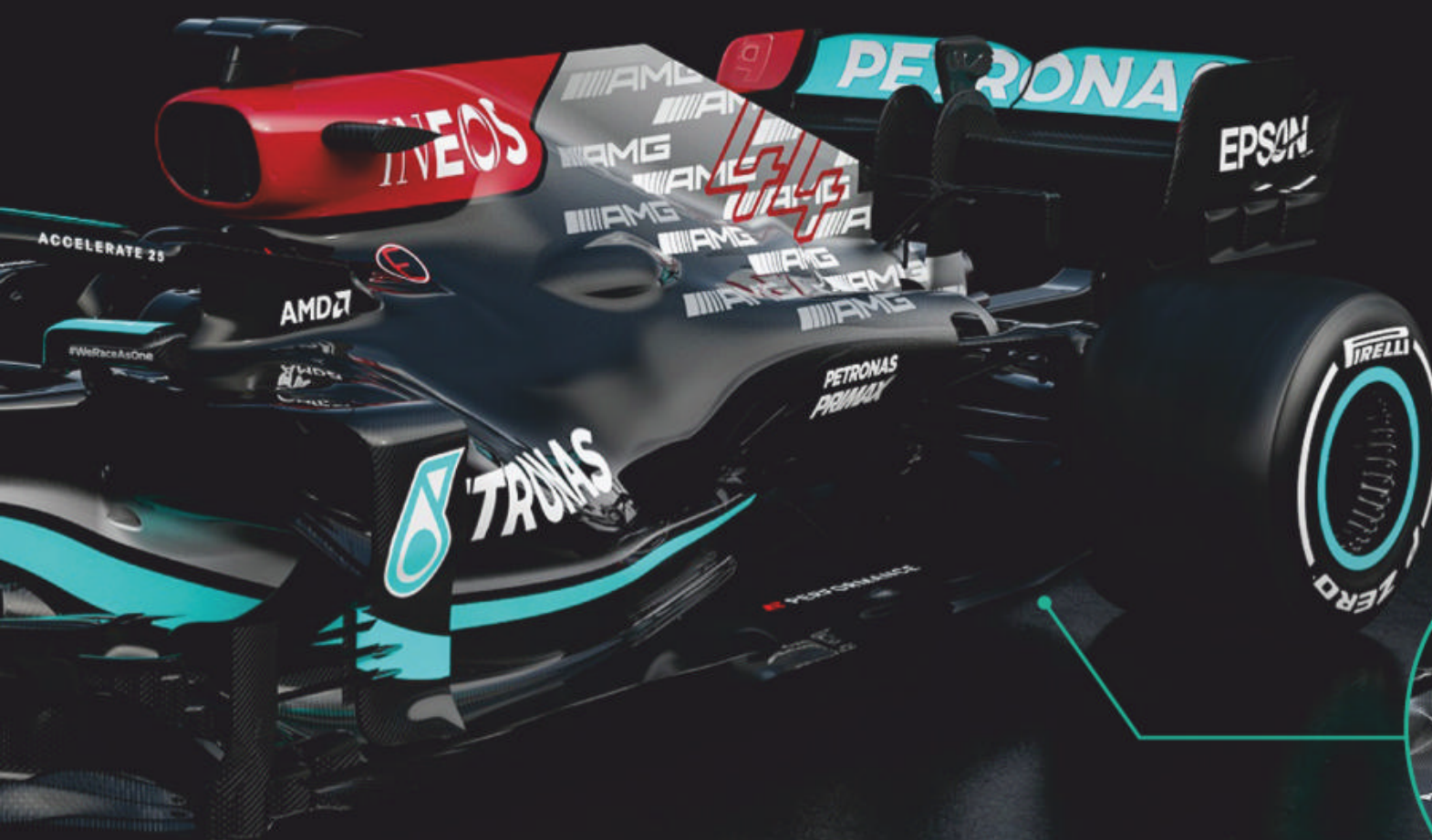




BARGEBOARDS AND FLOOR

The bargeboards also feature a few differences in structure over last season. The leading edge, where 'F1 W12' features, appears to have been shuffled further forwards, and has grown slightly taller to interact with the small fin set back behind the top wishbone. The upper horizontal 'boomerang' features a slightly upturned tip too, allowing for a different

placement of any vortex generated and, behind that, the turning vane attached directly to the sidepod now extends all the way to the floor. Unsurprisingly, the new floor has been kept relatively hidden; it does seem to feature a small rise in the rear corner, as many of the other launched cars have done, but further changes have been kept in the dark.



Floor features a small rise in the rear corner, an element shared with other 2021 cars



GOODBYE DUAL-AXIS STEERING

The W12 is shorn of DAS, which has been banned for 2021. The removal of the toe-change device controversially added to the W11 means the team has to get on top of warming its front tyres in a more traditional manner. DAS had helped the team enjoy monstrous form in qualifying and on race restarts with improved tyre temperatures, so the team will have to recoup that passively. One area the team needs to get on top of is the change in tyre construction: Mercedes notably overheated its rear tyres in last year's 70th Anniversary Grand Prix at Silverstone and will need to find a balance between warming them up quickly and finding a way to dissipate excess heat.

POWERTRAIN

To extend its current advantage over the field, Mercedes' High Performance Powertrains division has once more developed a new power unit. A few weeks ago, new engine chief Hywel Thomas suggested that the team was facing a few teething problems with it although McLaren, having resubscribed to the Silver Arrows' powertrain delivery service, suggested that it hadn't encountered too many issues at this stage. Regardless, Thomas explained that the new engine has some "innovative" new elements to it. "Our new product is a characteristic Mercedes-AMG power unit, but we've worked hard to take the next development step," he said. "Stable regulations mean that it's getting increasingly challenging to unlock additional performance, so you need a focused approach. We've also got some completely new innovations that will be in the racing PU for the first time."

ALPINE A521

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

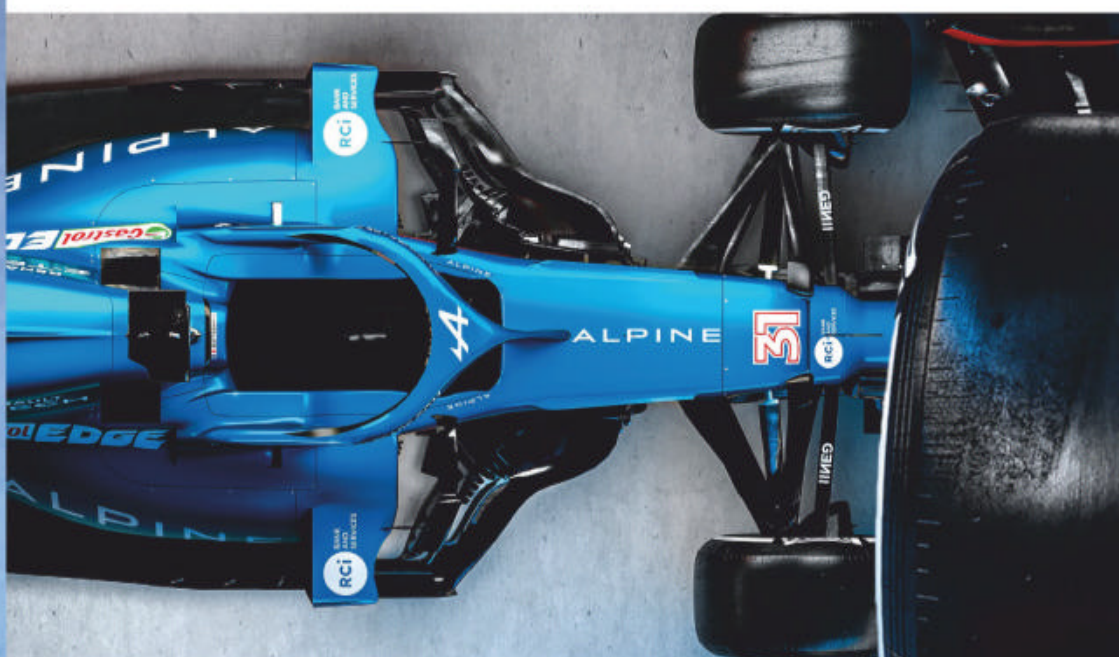
The rebranded Renault's 2021 machine looks the part, but can it deliver for the returning Fernando Alonso?

PHOTOGRAPHY ALPINE

BARGEBOARDS

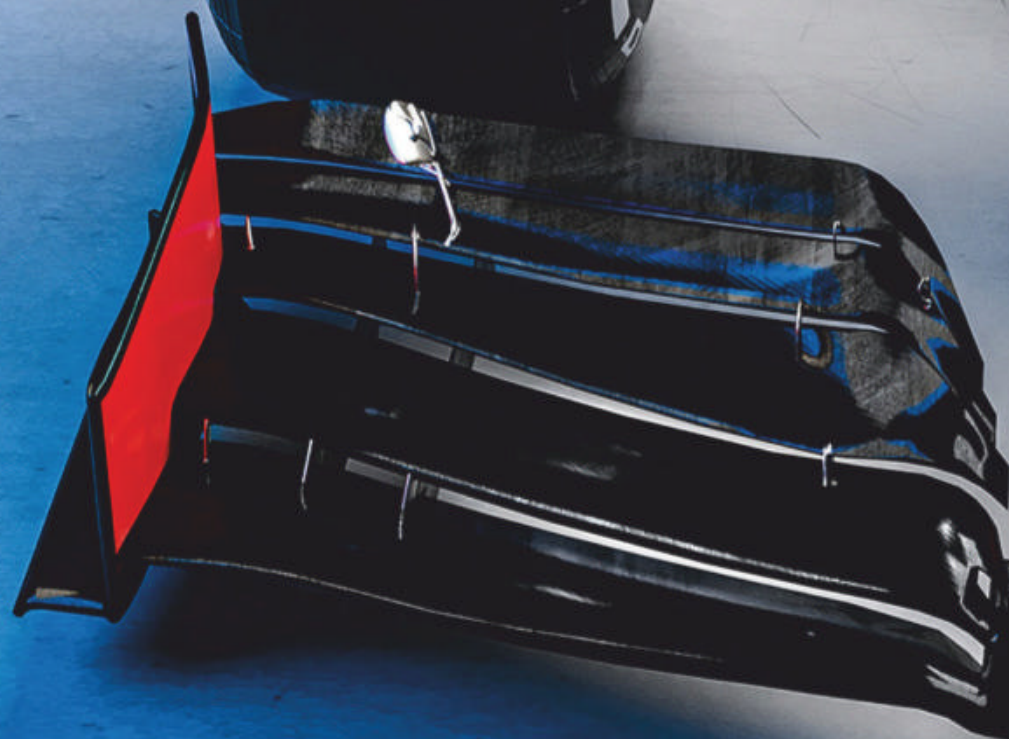
The A521 bargeboard package isn't wildly different to those on last year's Renault RS20, and retains the shutter-blind structure on the side of the car, which leads into a fairly short-chord boomerang. But the team has elected to part the two vanes looping over the sidepod inlet, moving away from the decision it made

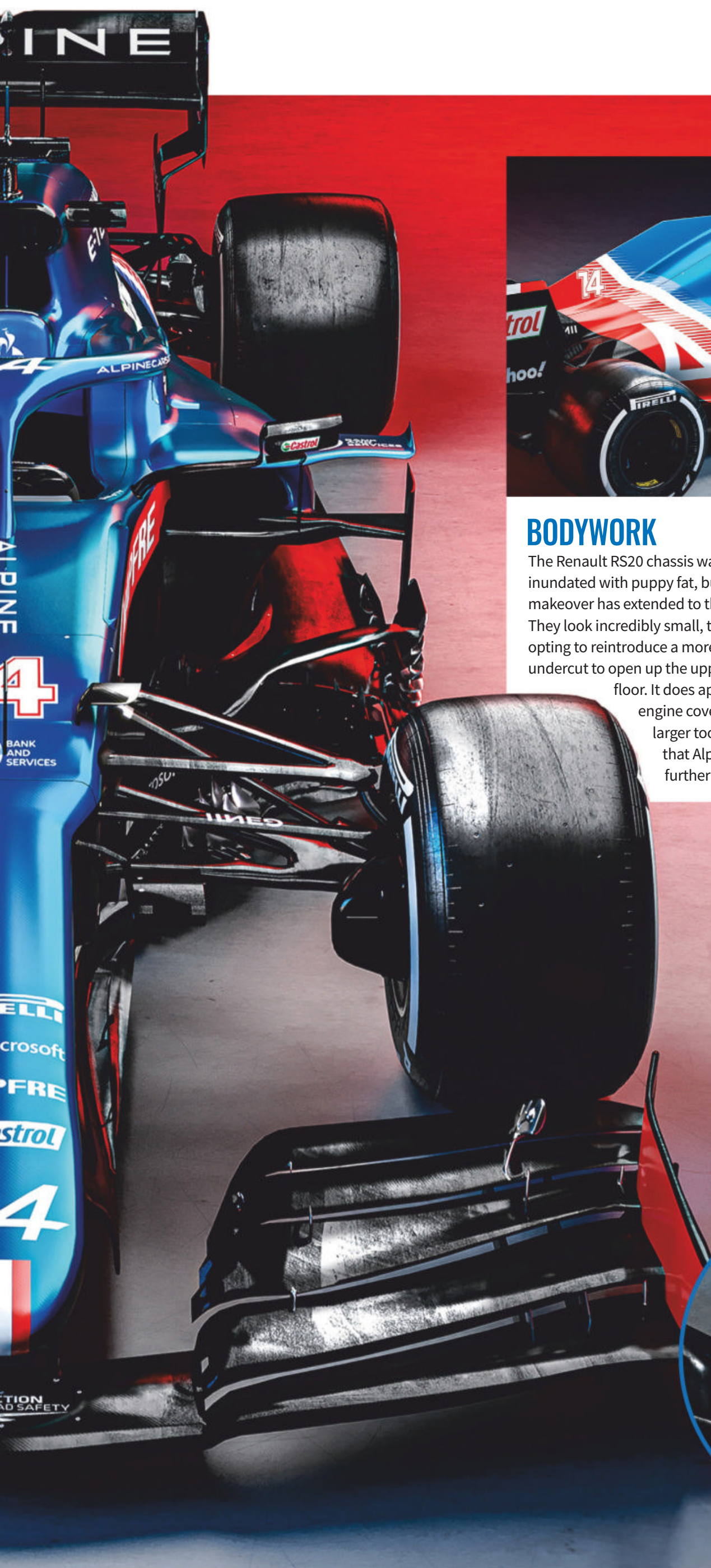
midway through 2019 to unite the two. The freed-up horizontal winglet curls up at the tips, meaning that the team can build a tip vortex where it needs to and send it down the car to help the floor. The vertical piece now extends down to the floor, given that the team has had to discard the floor slot that previously occupied that space.



FLOOR

Like its rivals, Alpine has kept the floor relatively concealed, not wishing to give its secrets away. There is a small curl in the rear corner, meaning that the design is altogether similar to the construction that it used in free practice at the 2020 season-closing Abu Dhabi Grand Prix. There is a change forward of that – the slot that sat alongside the raised portion of the floor is no longer there, because the new floor rules means the teams can no longer have them. This has allowed Alpine to move the vertical turning vane down, in an attempt to exercise some control of the airflow around this area. There's also a supporting fin towards the back, but there should be further changes to the design once we see it in the flesh.





BODYWORK

The Renault RS20 chassis wasn't exactly inundated with puppy fat, but the Alpine makeover has extended to the sidepods. They look incredibly small, the team opting to reintroduce a more traditional undercut to open up the upper face of the floor. It does appear that the engine cover is a little larger too, suggesting that Alpine has further cut back

on the cooling paraphernalia present in the sidepods and moved it further inboard. Either that, or the blue livery and accentuated French identity mean the rollhoop is a Ligier JS5 tribute act. Either way, it appears that the designers have worked hard on the cooling package to give the team a little more latitude with its aero package. Extracting the maximum from the partially neutered diffusers will be significant in 2021.

FRONT END

Alpine has apparently retained the thin-nose crash structure that it used last season, and also appears to have kept in step with its front-wing philosophy, using two straightened, short-chord top flaps to keep airflow attached as the wing cambers more aggressively towards the rear edge. The cape attached to the underside of the nose appears to be more aggressive, and the team has slotted the outboard edges. It also links up with the aero architecture underneath, cumulatively working to send airflow outwards, and further protecting the floor from the turbulence from

the front tyres. With fewer developments on the floor now allowed, Alpine seems to have considered prevention the best cure for the diffuser efficiency.



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Ferrari's Leclerc versus Sainz era

The Italian squad is focused on turning its fortunes around. A key part of that will be maintaining as harmonious a relationship as is realistically possible between its drivers

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

It was intriguing to watch Antonio Felix da Costa and Jean-Eric Vergne collide during the second Formula E race in Riyadh last weekend and wonder how their DS Techeetah team had not solved its team-mate racing tensions. Rewind 12 months, and the sparks of a flashpoint were already flying after Vergne had aggressively edged his team-mate towards a wall in Santiago, before a team-orders flare-up occurred in Mexico City. DST went on to secure a second title double come the end of that marvellous run of Berlin races, with da Costa extending its run of drivers' titles to three, and all was well. Until, again, it wasn't last weekend.

The day before the black-and-gold team-mates needlessly flirted with disaster, the Formula 1 squad most recently grappling with intra-team war was sending a clear message on this topic. "There is not a single individual that counts more than the team itself," said Ferrari team boss Mattia Binotto, flanked by Charles Leclerc and new signing Carlos Sainz Jr at its 2021 launch.

During the past two F1 seasons, since the Netflix-immortalised clashes between Haas drivers Romain Grosjean and Kevin Magnussen, Ferrari has chalked up the most significant team-mate rancour. Once Leclerc's rise through the ranks as a Ferrari junior was capped by his promotion to be Sebastian Vettel's team-mate, their on-track relationship rapidly combusted.

Leclerc took a while to be a regular frontrunner during 2019, but

"Sainz has twice almost fallen off the F1 carousel, arguably through little fault of his own"

he landed an early blow in his fight with Vettel in Bahrain, when he defied team orders to retake a lead he would later cruelly lose to an engine cylinder failure. By the time Leclerc was soaking up the Tifosi's adoration on top of Monza's famous podium – and how quickly F1 yearns for such joyous, crowd-filled scenes to become the norm once again – he'd landed another blow by not giving Vettel a tow during the farcical final runs in qualifying. All was forgiven by his victory, but then there were further team-order controversies in Singapore and Russia, before it all blew up spectacularly at the Brazilian Grand Prix.

For all the pain of those moments, there was a clear winner, Leclerc rewarded with a lengthy new contract, and Vettel told his Ferrari time was ending before the 2020 season had even started.

Even after a clear victory in the team-mate hostilities, there was

to be another collision, as Leclerc wiped out Vettel at the start of the Styrian GP, although this embarrassing gaffe was more to do with Ferrari's new star gambling to gain places early on rather than trying to make another point about team status.

Vettel is now preparing for a new start at Aston Martin, with Sainz taking his place. The Spaniard is living a dream of many F1 racers: pulling on the red race suit and climbing aboard a Ferrari.

Sainz's story is one worth paying attention to. His famous surname creates a "shadow" he says "I will never be out of", but that's simply a reflection of his admiration for his double World Rally champion father. He's highly rated, with a reputation for relentless racing often cited as one of his hero Fernando Alonso's best traits. Yet Sainz has twice come close to falling off the F1 carousel. That was arguably through little fault of his own, as Red Bull's young driver stable became too saturated and Renault discarded him in favour of Daniel Ricciardo, now his replacement at McLaren.

Sainz's recent qualifying results against F1 team-mates suggest he may struggle to match Leclerc on pure speed (his 8-8 draw against Lando Norris was his best result since beating Daniil Kvyat 8-6 in 2017, before heading to Renault and ending that season on a 3-1 defeat to Nico Hulkenberg).

But Sainz's progress at McLaren was clear to see – his generally calm head impressed the team, and Ferrari was watching from the sidelines. His determination was clear at Monza last year as he chased Pierre Gasly hard in the closing stages, overcoming the disappointment of a safety-car pitstop that cost him the chance to win when Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes gave the race away.

Sainz has a hard task to get on Leclerc's level in 2021, given the reduced testing and design carryover requirements mean his new team-mate has a wealth of 2020 experience to draw upon. But this season is surely set to be one of rebuilding for Ferrari.

The real pressure, for both Sainz and Ferrari's management, will come if/when it gets back to fighting at the front of the grid. There are early signs that Ferrari won't repeat its 2020 disaster in 2021, but 2022 remains the most likely early chance for it to return to title-challenging status.

In recent years, only Mercedes has really proved that it can handle two drivers battling at the front, and even that comes with the caveat that outside opposition hasn't regularly been a substantial threat. So, Ferrari is wise to sow seeds of peace as early as possible.

Alongside this, Sainz now has his own unique challenge – to establish a home in what is clearly Leclerc's team, while writing his own legend. 🏁



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Ferrari back in the big time

What was already shaping up to be the dawn of a new golden age of sportscar racing has been given a further boost by the Italian manufacturer's decision to join the party

GARY WATKINS

A bright new future for the top flight of sportscar racing. Massively reduced costs. Prototype machines that can be made to look like their road-going brethren. And a surplus of resources from its Formula 1 programme becoming available.

The stars have aligned for Ferrari's long-awaited factory return to the pinnacle of sportscar racing.

Everything came together for the decision that preceded Wednesday's announcement of the Italian manufacturer's bid from 2023 to add to its tally of nine outright victories at the Le Mans 24 Hours. It seems it is just a happy coincidence that Ferrari's first factory assault with a prototype will come on stream half a century on from its last such campaign in 1973 with the 312 PB.

This was an opportunity that was too good to turn down because sportscar racing really does seem set for another golden age. Ferrari is developing a Le Mans Hypercar, like Toyota and Peugeot, for the World Endurance Championship, while Porsche, Audi and Acura are taking the alternative route into what is simply — yet confusingly — called the Hypercar class with LMP2-based LMDh prototypes. It would be too strong to say there was an imperative for Ferrari to throw its hat into the ring, but there was a clear draw to enter a class that's surely going places.

The LMH category, and LMDh more so, has been conceived to drastically reduce the cost of racing at the top of the sportscar tree.

“The rules ensure stylists and not just aerodynamicists can have a say in how the car looks”

No longer will a manufacturer have to come up with a nine-figure budget, as was the case in LMP1. Antonello Coletta, boss of the Competizione GT department overseeing the prototype return, suggested a year ago that LMDh would allow Ferrari to race at the front of the WEC field for little more than it spends in GTE Pro. LMH will require a bigger budget, but his comments give an insight into the thinking behind Ferrari's return to the sportscar big time.

Ferrari, of course, has been an ever-present force in the world of GT racing for the past quarter of a century, and has graced the WEC grid in GTE Pro with the factory AF Corse operation since the rebirth of the series in 2012. Sportscar manufacturers need to go racing with the cars they sell, or something at least resembling them. LMH offers that chance while shooting for the biggest prizes on offer. The rules have been framed to ensure that the stylists and

not just the aerodynamicists can have a say in how the car looks.

That was among the factors that weighed in favour of LMH when Ferrari made its final decision. So too did the fact that an LMDh car would be based on something that wasn't, well, a Ferrari. The marque has traditionally had a chauvinistic approach to racing car design and build. You get the impression that it couldn't countenance a machine developed around someone else's P2 car, even if it did bear the Prancing Horse on the front and have one of its engines in the back.

Developing an LMH car will be more expensive than going down the LMDh road. But the fact that Ferrari is going to have a surfeit of resources — money, people and technology — now that Formula 1 has finally introduced a budget cap for 2021 can't be ignored. That's despite Ferrari's protestations that there is no link between its factory sportscar return and the reduction in costs of going F1 racing.

It can be no coincidence that the last time Ferrari was evaluating a step up to the top class of the WEC came in 2013, when cost restrictions were on the table for 2015. Then-Ferrari president Luca di Montezemolo said in December 2013 that the company would build an LMP1 “sooner or later”.

The budget cap was quickly shouted down by the big teams, Ferrari among them, and there was no more talk of P1. Six years on, and F1 finally has a budget cap in place. The \$145million for this season, which will come down in two five-million chunks in 2022 and 2023, is significantly down on the \$175m originally agreed back in 2019.

Ferrari was against the reduction and, back in April last year, F1 team principal Mattia Binotto declared that the marque might have “to look further at other options for deploying our racing DNA” in the face of a reduced budget requiring a cut in manpower. Some interpreted that as a threat to quit F1, but it would be more correct to suggest that it offered another hint of a prototype return.

There's an irony to the freeing up of resources from the F1 team playing a part in Ferrari's decision. Its long-standing participation in what can generically be called the world sportscar championship was axed for 1974 by that man Montezemolo. In his new role as team manager, Montezemolo reckoned it was time to focus resources on F1 to re-establish Ferrari at the sharp end of the grand prix grid. His strategy did the trick: Niki Lauda won the marque's first drivers' title for 11 seasons in 1975, and then one followed every other year through to the end of the decade.

Of course, it's not as straightforward to say that Ferrari is shooting for overall Le Mans win number 10 just because there's a budget cap in F1. The decisions of major motor manufacturers are never that simple. But whatever they were, we should look to the heavens and thank those lucky stars. 🍀

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What kind of Marquez can we expect when he returns?

MotoGP needs the Honda rider back on track for his star appeal and the benchmark he provides for the rest of the pack. His team has faith that he'll return undiminished

LEWIS DUNCAN

As a means to fill some of this seemingly endless lockdown void we're currently observing, I recently rewatched the 2020 Spanish motorcycle Grand Prix. Last year's MotoGP season opener has now, of course, become a day of infamy that effectively ended Marc Marquez's bid for a seventh title.

But it was so very nearly a day that would have been remembered as one of Marquez's best. After shooting off-track at Jerez's Turn 4 left-hander while leading on lap five of 25, Marquez began a comeback that displayed all his devastating talent as he carved back from 16th to podium contention by the 21st tour. A lap later, he crashed chasing Maverick Vinales and broke his arm.

Now, MotoGP in 2020 was utterly breathtaking, arguably the best season in grand prix motorcycle racing's 70-plus-year history. But rewatching that Spanish race was a reminder of how much we really missed Marquez and his genius on two wheels.

Last year's totals of nine different winners and 15 podium finishers, plus four manufacturers taking victories with a mix of factory and satellite squads, was no fluke. It was the ultimate proof of Dorna Sports' rules concept, which began with the much-maligned CRT (Claiming Rule Teams) regulations back in 2012.

“What Honda expects from him is irrelevant compared to what he expects of himself”

But throughout the season it was repeatedly mentioned by riders that the championship was missing its reference, and they their true benchmark. Undoubtedly nine riders could win races again in 2021, but could they do so with Marquez present? That's probably the biggest question of the many swirling ahead of the new campaign starting on 28 March.

Mercifully (and anyone not excited about this seriously needs to get over 2015), Marquez will be back in 2021, and hopefully sooner rather than later. His right arm has started to show signs of healing following December's third operation, and he hasn't ruled out making it to the grid for the Qatar Grand Prix, although he's definitely out of this week's Qatar test.

“Always I try to be optimistic and I try to have the next goal,” he told the world's media during Honda's 2021 launch on 22 February.

“So, my goal was try to be in the Qatar test. I will not be in the Qatar test, but during that week I will have a doctors' check, and then my second goal will try to be in the Qatar race. We'll see if it's possible.

“If it's not possible, it will try to be in Qatar 2. If it's not possible, we will try to be in Portimao [in mid-April]. But first of all, of course the most important thing is that the doctors check the bone consolidation is going in a good way, so when the doctor says, ‘OK, the bone consolidation is fixed’, then we will continue with the rehabilitation.”

Marquez has fully come to terms with his “mistake” last July in trying to race in the Andalusian GP, just days after operation number one on his arm, and his race-by-race approach to his return is proof of that. As was his admission that even if doctors give him the green light to throw his leg back over his RC213V in mid-March, he's actually not in the necessary shape to do so yet.

This leads to the other big question of 2021: what kind of Marquez will we get back? It's widely expected that Honda will be able to just plug in and play its golden child. But he's not raced since last July, and Marquez himself will place a lot of expectation on his own shoulders. Just as a journalist is often overcome with doubt at the start of a new season, wondering whether they can get back into the swing of things and resume as they were when the previous campaign finished, imagine the anxiety six-time MotoGP world champion Marquez will be carrying as he tries to get back to normal!

From Honda's point of view, what it expects from him is irrelevant compared to what he expects of himself. And whatever the case, the team believes that Marquez will find a way to be his old self eventually. “The only thing I know is that he will find a way to still be Marc Marquez, and this you can only do by yourself,” Honda team boss Alberto Puig noted. “Of course, the team will help him, we will support him like always at 100 per cent, but what we expect, what we hope, what we think, is nothing. The important thing is what he expects from himself and what he thinks he must do to go back to his full potential.”

When a date for his comeback is finally locked in, expectation from fans and the media will skyrocket. But Marquez must be afforded space to get up to speed without pressure. With this, by the end of the year the old Marquez will have returned in full bloom.

And MotoGP as a whole needs this. Firstly, because of the blockbuster spectacle that comes with Marquez, but also to offer the rest of the grid the benchmark they've been missing. If they can prove themselves to be just as successful with a fully fit Marquez present, it will be proof beyond doubt that 2020 really is MotoGP's normal. 🏁

INSIGHT FERRARI

How Ferrari hopes to recover from its worst F1 nightmare in 40 years

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

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COATES

The reasons behind Ferrari's plunge down the Formula 1 pecking order came from two directions. But it could be argued that both had the same source: the team itself. Whatever Ferrari was doing with its previous engine design – the FIA has never stated that it was doing something illegal, but there is strong suspicion regarding its fuel-flow operation in 2019 – it got serious negative attention. The governing body conducted a lengthy investigation, and subsequently issued a string of technical directives aimed at closing ambiguities in the power-unit rules.

These applied to all engine manufacturers, but hit Ferrari hardest. And it did so in two areas, as the aerodynamic developments on 2020's SF1000, which were aimed at widening the range of tracks where the Italian team was competitive, suddenly lacked the power punch expected to overcome the drag these parts created. This explained its pre-season woes now over a year ago.

While these self-made issues were hurting Ferrari, its main opposition was striking another blow – by improving itself. Mercedes had been so spooked by the string of Ferrari victories in 2019's summer and early autumn that it essentially vowed to pile even more innovation on its 2020 design. The resulting W11 is surely set to go down as one of the best cars in F1 history, and it pulled Mercedes further away from its plummeting former frontrunning rival. The depth Ferrari eventually reached was

sixth in the constructors' championship – its worst finishing position since placing 10th in 1980.

Understanding Ferrari's 2020 nightmare is vital when considering its dream for 2021. The cost-saving design carryover requirements that stem from the economic squeeze of the COVID-19 pandemic mean that no F1 team can produce an all-new car this year. Indeed, this unique season in modern F1 means the competitors will be entering the upcoming campaign with various elements of their 2020 reality still hanging around. The question therefore facing Ferrari, ahead of next week's unveiling of its SF21 challenger, is can it recover from its 2020 disaster and rapidly climb back to its 'Class A' position alongside Mercedes and Red Bull?

Based on the signs and suggestions coming from the red team, a successful turnaround is possible – but, and the team itself is at pains to point this out, there are limits to how far back up the grid it can climb. Whatever the result is going to be, if Ferrari wants to get back to where it was, its engine simply must produce more power.

"Last year, the main issue was the speed on the straight lines – not only the power, but both power and drag," says team boss Mattia Binotto. "We've worked a lot, both on the power unit and the aerodynamics, to reduce the drag of the car. And based on our simulations today, on what we can see in terms of power output from the dynos and the drag of the car from the windtunnel, I think that we've recovered quite a lot of speed on the straight lines. So,



Ferrari's focus is to restore its place in F1's 'Class A', fighting with Mercedes

“We’ve been pushing a lot and seeing the improvements. And for now, it looks positive”

I’m expecting speed not to be such an issue as it was.”

Of course, it’s one thing to state this ahead of the season and another to deliver the sought-after substantial step – possibly as much as 60bhp to draw back level with Mercedes, which made its own engine gain last year. In its efforts on the new engine, Ferrari is understood to have introduced a new cylinder-head design and made its turbine lighter. But there is a sign from elsewhere that should give Ferrari fans comfort regarding its power potential, and it actually concerns its other former main rival: Red Bull.

The news that the teams unanimously agreed to an engine freeze from the start of 2022 was a significant boost to Red Bull, given its recent engine-partner relationship struggles and Honda’s upcoming F1 exit. But it’s worth noting that Ferrari has gone from being firmly against the freeze to voting for it. Speculation is rife here, but it would surely be highly illogical for Ferrari to vote for a rule that would continue its power pain if it didn’t think it had gone some considerable way to solving the problem. Therefore, it will be worth



closely checking the speed-trap figures for all the teams running Ferrari power when testing gets under way in just over a week.

But, as well as all this expectation of progress, there is also the knowledge that engine manufacturers only get one chance to upgrade power units in 2021. Any issues or remaining performance gaps can’t be fixed with subsequent design tweaks, and indeed these would be solidified by the freeze (unless a change required under *force majeure* was allowed by the FIA). Nevertheless, Ferrari’s hope is real. “It looks like quite a good step and I think there’s been a lot of good work,” says Charles Leclerc. “We’ve been since the start of the [year] pushing quite a lot and seeing the improvements of the car. And for now, it looks positive on paper.”

As Binotto states, to correct the second problem that hampered Ferrari’s 2020, the team also needs to sort out its draggy chassis. While this ran alongside the engine deficit in harming Ferrari last year, it’s likely a harder issue to fully solve thanks to the carryover requirements in 2021. Ferrari has opted to spend its >>

two upgrade tokens at the rear of its latest challenger, which is one of the key areas to succeeding this year, as all the teams look to claw back the 10% downforce cut created by the mandated changes to the floors. The nose area remains open for aerodynamic development outside the token restrictions, so Ferrari must use what aero freedom it has to solve the front-end problems its drivers encountered with the SF1000.

“We hope to be competitive, but we will know it only in Bahrain [in testing and then the opening round],” says Binotto. “It’s always relative to what the others are doing, but we think our car is certainly more efficient compared to the one we had last year. When I say efficient, again it’s both from the aero point of view and from the power-unit point of view.”

Binotto and Leclerc are speaking from the Ferrari Museum in Maranello, seated in front of a gigantic screen wall that at various times is filled with the webcam images of watching journalists and

“I’ve been working as I’ve done in the past, to understand what my weaknesses were last year”

fans. Alongside them is, so far, the most visible change from Ferrari’s 2020 nightmare. Carlos Sainz Jr is making his fourth new start in seven seasons as an F1 driver. As he joins Ferrari, he becomes the second former Red Bull junior to pull on the famous red race suit. The driver he replaces is the other. And Sainz’s fortunes this year, particularly compared to Sebastian Vettel’s results in 2020, will be a key part of the recovery Ferrari hopes to achieve. The Spaniard may be shaded on pure pace by Leclerc, but he is a determined character who only seems to be growing in strength.

Looking at Leclerc’s 2020 points haul and comparing that with Vettel’s shows a stark difference: 98 points to 33. Of all the regular points-scoring teams (with Alfa Romeo and Haas excluded from this group alongside Williams due to their small points totals), the points-percentage difference between Leclerc and Vettel was the biggest. All told, Vettel scored just 33.7% of Leclerc’s total (the smallest points-percentage gap between 2020 team-mates was at McLaren, where Lando Norris scored 92.4% of Sainz’s total).

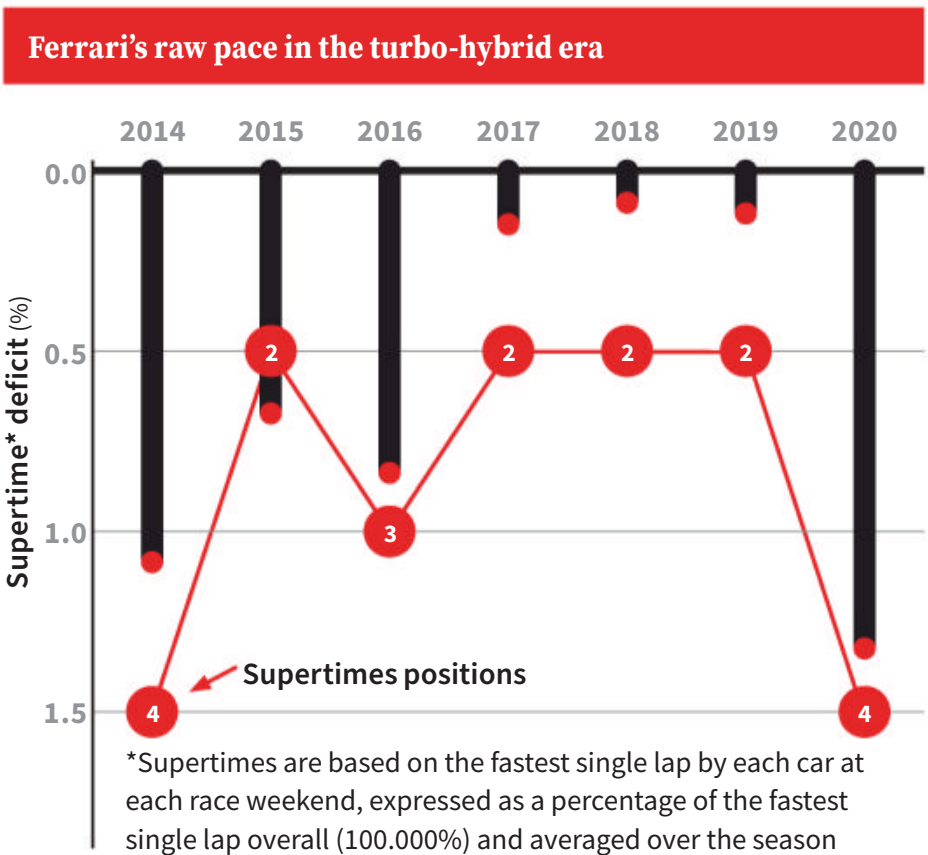
Crudely put, had Ferrari’s other car been able to bring in the same points total as Leclerc managed, then it would have ended the year on 196 points and clinched fourth place in the constructors’



standings. But that recalculation conveniently ignores what an unusual season it was for Ferrari’s latest leading light.

Leclerc produced some of 2020’s best drives despite Ferrari’s car shortcomings. His one-stop execution in the 70th Anniversary Grand Prix was tremendous. So was his qualifying lap for the Sakhir GP that netted him fourth on the grid at a venue that showcased Ferrari’s problems, given he’d have been a deserving winner of the 2019 Bahrain GP, from pole, before his engine-cylinder failure. But, the day after that impressive qualifying display, Leclerc had his third lap-one clash of the season, following the embarrassing shunt that also eliminated Vettel at the start of the Styrian GP and his tap with Lance Stroll that put the Racing Point driver out in Russia. After sending Sergio Perez in the other Racing Point spinning at the start of the second Bahrain race, this time it was Leclerc out on the spot. He later hinted at his first-lap gaffes being the occasional result of his efforts to overcome the SF1000’s problems.

Leclerc’s star has only been on the up in F1, and to be clear his performances across 2020 deservedly elevated his stock further, but Ferrari’s fall down the pecking order presented him with a new problem. In the main, he was an outstanding asset in the team’s





Vettel had a poor 2020 season, with clangers such as Eifel GP spin

quest to get what it could from a difficult year, taking two podiums on the way. But on the first real stage of its recovery, Ferrari now needs Leclerc to be error-free and just excellent.

“I’ve been working in a similar way as I’ve done in the past, trying to understand what my weaknesses were last year,” he says of his efforts over the winter. “I still believe that tyre management is something I shall push. I improved massively last year, and I hope there will be another step this year. That’s what I’ve done basically – trying to look at past races, trying to understand what we could have done better as a team, as myself in the car, [to] try to improve on that matter especially.”

Both drivers in Ferrari’s new line-up know that their main target is to get the team back to where it should be, which was an overarching message they and Binotto are striving to convey in their launch messages. “The team comes first,” says the boss. “The team matters, and there is not a single individual that counts more than the team itself. It’s something of which we are all aware.”

Aside from the Styrian madness, and some Vettel fury regarding another bold Leclerc passing attempt (successful this time) at the second start of the first Bahrain race, the intra-team tension that had been so prevalent at Ferrari in 2019 was gone. It is, after all, easier for F1 team-mates to co-exist harmoniously when the prizes of wins and titles are beyond their team’s reach. Leclerc even ran a helmet livery to honour the departing Vettel at the season finale, which is not to suggest this touching display was not sincere, but serves as a reminder of how different things were between Ferrari’s drivers a year after their clash in the 2019 Brazilian GP.

“Certainly the team scoring is important – both drivers know it,” adds Binotto. “I’m expecting Carlos to be very fast and competitive this season, as I know that Charles will do [as] he has last year. We certainly need a good car to perform better. But I’m expecting both of them to do well and to have a greater season than last year.”

It’s not just Ferrari’s driver line-up that has been changed ahead of the new campaign. After its previous chassis department leader, Simone Resta, left to join Haas at the end of 2020, the team has reorganised this area. Enrico Cardile now heads the chassis department, which has been split into four separate divisions: vehicle concept, chassis performance engineering, chassis project engineering and vehicle operations. The chassis design division will have an additional role within Ferrari’s trackside engineering work this season, and the team has made alterations to its commercial and marketing set-up too.

Binotto explains that Ferrari felt “there was a necessity of making the structure in the organisation simpler and clearer”, but the »





changes also reflect the additional challenges F1 teams face in 2021. As well as adapting to F1's new cost cap, which Binotto says did not result in Ferrari's decision to enter the World Endurance Championship from 2023, like all squads it knows it can drastically improve its position in the pecking order if it nails the 2022 rules reset. For this reason, Binotto will again choose to skip races – once the opening part of the season has passed – during the upcoming campaign, staying in Maranello to oversee work on the 2022 designs, much as he did on two occasions last year (he also missed the season finale due to illness).

“Our focus during 2021 will be developing the 2022 car,” Binotto explains. “That will be the main target, so we will not spend much time on the 2021 [car] during the season. There is always a balance, it's a choice that we need to make at some stage, but the 2022 car is such a big change that there is at least a minimum quantity of

“Our focus during 2021 will be developing the 2022 car. That will be the main target”

exercise and design and projects that need to be developed. So, most of the effort will be in there.”

Through all the major rules resets F1 has enacted since the turn of the millennium, Ferrari has not been able to emerge as the championship's dominant squad (of arguably the three most significant regulation overhauls – 2009, 2014 and 2017 – Mercedes, initially as Brawn, has been the only team to do so). But there is a slight difference this time around, which was not a consideration 12 months ago, when the teams were preparing for a year spent updating their 2020 cars alongside the switch to the new machines that had been expected for 2021. Now, alongside the cost cap, F1 has a minor form of performance balancing in effect, as the allowances on windtunnel testing and CFD usage are governed on a sliding handicap scale. This means Mercedes will have 90% of what was previously allowed for at least the first six months of 2020 (there is a reset after this point based on the order of the new season), while Williams gets to use up to 112.5% of the time the

Could Le Mans beckon Ferrari's Formula 1 star?

When Formula 1 was put on hold last spring as the COVID-19 pandemic began to surge, drivers were left stepping into the virtual world to get their racing fix. Although it may not be a substitute for the real thing, it was a gateway for some to other forms of racing.

In the case of Charles Leclerc, the 24 Hours of Le Mans Virtual organised by Motorsport Games was all the excuse he needed to add another career goal to his list: racing at Le Mans for real one day.

“It's a legendary race in motorsport,” says Leclerc, who was part of a virtual Ferrari squad including Alfa Romeo F1

driver Antonio Giovinazzi and F1 Esports champion David Tonizza. “Definitely one day, I would like to be part of it.”

The prospect took a big step forward last week when Ferrari announced its return to prototype sportscar racing for 2023, establishing a Le Mans Hypercar programme in the top tier of the World Endurance Championship.

The Prancing Horse will contend for its first outright Le Mans victory since 1965, when Masten Gregory and Jochen Rindt won in a Ferrari 250 LM (right). Both drivers also featured in F1 races through the same year – future champion



teams could run these tools in 2020. As a result of its disaster last year, Ferrari has at least six months with 102.5% permitted.

The results of the 2022 reset will best define how Ferrari is set up to challenge in F1's changing realm, as will be the case with its rivals too. But the coming campaign will at least provide some insight into how the team is recovering from its latest setback in trying to win a first F1 title since its 2008 constructors' crown.

As it was ahead of testing in 2020 – but for very different reasons this time around – the team is striking a calm, pragmatic note. After all, even if the new engine alone reverses the losses its 2020 power unit incurred versus the controversial 2019 design, then that only theoretically brings Ferrari back to where things were two years ago. Mercedes, after dealing with a reliability problem that may well have cost it points had last season started on time, made a power step in response to Ferrari's 2019 performances. Honda is hoping to provide Red Bull with its best turbo-hybrid engine before formally dropping the keys to its UK F1 engine facility to the other

side of Milton Keynes. Ferrari is therefore wise to promise little while trying to deliver more than expected. It's a mantra that has worked wonderfully for Mercedes during its F1 domination.

"Certainly, last year was a big, big disappointment," says Binotto. "We know that we cannot repeat such a bad result. We know that we need somehow to do better in 2021. But I think what counts even more is our will to win. I'm not saying that we will win. I think that we need to be realistic."

"I do believe that our car is better than last year's. Obviously, you cannot compare them [totally] because there is a change in the aero regulations on the floor and on the back. But the way I've seen the car developing both in the windtunnel and on the dyno, I believe that somehow we made a significant effort. The gap to the best last year was very important and not something that we recover in a single winter."

For all its efforts to downplay expectations, Ferrari knows it can't repeat its 2020 nightmare – or endure a worse ordeal in 2021. ❧

Rindt was in his first full season – as was the trend through that era. Racers were rarely confined to a single series, instead exploring as many racing avenues as they could.

With the exception of Nico Hulkenberg's and Fernando Alonso's successful forays into sportscar racing in the past six years, recent F1 drivers have rarely crossed codes in such a fashion. But with the Hypercar programme announced, and Leclerc's interest piqued, the door seems to have been opened again.

The question was put to Leclerc during Ferrari's F1 team launch last week, and received a warm reply. "I love Le Mans, I've always been

a fan of Le Mans," Leclerc said.

"If the opportunity arises, then I will be very happy to join. At the moment, my main focus is Formula 1. But, again, if there is an opportunity, why not?"

Since his stunning sophomore campaign in 2019, Leclerc has been front and centre of all of Ferrari's efforts. Although it has a trusty roster of sportscar ringers already on its books that will undoubtedly be bolstered further by its raft of youngsters and the natural interest from outsiders, sticking its F1 star into one of its Le Mans seats would only add to the hubbub around its return to the Circuit de la Sarthe.

Ferrari's decision was surely



aided by F1's new budget cap, regardless of Mattia Binotto's claim that it was "not a consequence of the financial regulations at all". But tangible assistance and collaboration from the F1 arm of the *Gestione Sportiva*, while not a necessity or a priority, is something he was open to. "No doubt, if as

[the F1 team] we may somehow support with knowhow, expertise, we will do it," he said.

As support goes, lending the Ferrari Le Mans squad one of the current generation's brightest motorsport talents in Leclerc would be an excellent starting point.

LUKE SMITH



What Ferrari has to do to win again

The former Ferrari, Red Bull and McLaren engineer on what he's learned about successful teams, and what the famous Italian squad needs to do to get back on top

RODI BASSO

In the history of racing, Ferrari and Formula 1 have always appeared to be the two faces of the same medal. Their endeavours have inspired and changed many lives, including the life of this writer. It was a privilege to start my F1 career there (in 2000), where I learned the potential of a worldwide marketing, technology and business platform. I was also incredibly lucky to start working in a company such as Ferrari where my eyes could appreciate and learn what human, strategic and operational excellence look like.

But it is not only a matter of tech and business. Before everything, F1 is a sport and an entertainment. For this important reason, a fairly balanced turnover of winners has to be guaranteed.

There are active and passive levers to change the destiny of a championship. The first lever is changing rules, and this is when regulators challenge the engineers and the drivers with new concepts and technical paradigms possibly aligned with the automotive road maps. The second lever refers to a natural evolution within the teams, where the right balance between leadership and domain knowledge can make the difference between drinking champagne on the podium or only an

orange juice on the flight back home.

Let's get to the point. Ferrari's last constructors' championship was back in 2008 under the helm of Stefano Domenicali. What is needed for the next title and when is it going to happen?

Back in 2000, I started working in a very successful team, but I was always reminded of the path to get to those successes by those who were there previously. They told fascinating stories and proudly showed the scars. The Ferrari of the early 1990s was completely lost (just ask Alain Prost). Then Jean Todt arrived, and I've been told that he spent a lot of time with the employees in the garages, workshop, production and all the functions of the team.

The Ferrari of those days was disjointed and divided in silos, with a counterproductive blame culture that was paralysing any attempt to change the direction of their destiny. Each department was trying to do the minimum, hide the risks and be as conservative as they could in order not to be the reason for a show-stopper.

Then, across 1996-97, Michael Schumacher, Ross Brawn and Rory Byrne came on board from Benetton. They spent the initial phase understanding the nuances of the Italian culture and then started the revolution by bringing in new



“A counterproductive blame culture was paralysing any attempt to change their destiny”

racing people, coming up with solutions, and promoting a system view that has not only an engineering focus but also a human approach that acts as glue.

I will never forget when Ross asked us to picture the car in the middle of the meeting room and to make the effort to address two tasks. The first was to understand how each department could contribute to the lap time. If every department could take one tenth of a second off, this would result in a second of performance as you added up all the contributions.

The second challenge was to understand how each department could help fix the issues of the other components they were interfaced with. This has always sounded to me like the instructions you hear when you are in an aircraft before



take-off: in case of emergency, put the mask on you first and then you can see if you can be of any help to those around you.

This is leadership.

When I joined Red Bull in December 2005, it was in some ways a new team built from the legacy of the Jaguar squad. That was another chance to see with my own eyes what it takes to build a winning operation, and I can proudly show some interesting scars myself now. In this case, Christian Horner and Adrian Newey were leading the charge. It took them about a year to understand the culture and what could be saved. Then, again, they started hiring racing people from all the teams (especially Renault), and this made that experience an amazing journey as you could learn all the possible design, production and race engineering approaches to running an F1 car.

The injection of new people generates a boost of new energy and the disappearance of the usual silos or old expressions such as 'we've always done it like that', which is a podium killer. In addition, it fosters the mindset of rewriting the history of the sport through hard work and pursuit of excellence.

In my lucky life, I also had the chance to be close enough to the McLaren F1 team while I was leading the motorsport unit of the sister company Applied Technologies. When I joined the group in 2016, the team was not in great shape. The innovation process was assertively top-down and complex. The pressure on results led to a rising blaming culture.

It was the time when Honda joined F1, and the slope of its learning curve certainly didn't help the team. Zak Brown joined to attract sponsorship and he made many changes in the top technical management, including bringing in Andreas Seidl to lead the team.

The two of them worked on restoring the F1 team spirit and simplified the organisation by getting rid of the idiotic matrix organisation. As a result, the clarity on roles and responsibility came back, together with the ownership of all the contributions

every employee was coming up with. It took three years to benefit from this change and see results.

At this point, it is crucial to highlight that I have met incredibly good people in my race life, and most of them may perform or not depending on the working conditions and team culture. It is down to their alignment to that specific team chemistry.

The commonalities of these successful recovering strategies are: understanding the current culture; hiring new people with an established reputation in racing (vertical competence); and creating the right environment to make them work well together (leadership and organisation). In addition, all the teams I have mentioned had a clear priority: winning races to promote a brand.

One of the main challenges for Ferrari is its success in the stock exchange as a group. Sergio Marchionne successfully detached the success on the race track from the success on the (finance) market. He also reduced the fixed costs in the team by hiring either automotive employees or low-profile racing engineers in leading positions. Strategically, today *#essereFerrari* (*#beingFerrari*) recalls the Hamletic doubt: to be or not be committed to win?

This is what Mattia Binotto has inherited and what doesn't make his life any easier. Will he have the autonomy to follow the recovery plan he knows well to compete for a championship title? I wish, for him and the tifosi, that this is the case, with the caveat that they will need to be patient for another three to five years for changes in the team, commitment from the board and efficient work before celebrating. And the rumours about Philip Morris not being willing to renew their sponsorship agreement from 2022 will only make it more challenging.

Enzo Ferrari used to say: "Many people love cars, but maybe I never found someone with my perseverance and animated by such a dominating passion in life. I have no interests other than racing cars."

Forza Ferrari. 🏁



SUTTON

Above: Bennetts with Senna in 1982. Below: emotion in 2019 as Turkington wins fourth title



WEST SURREY RACING AT 40

It's four decades since one of UK motorsport's most successful teams made its debut at Silverstone in British F3. And now it's top dog in the BTCC. Time to blow out some candles with boss Dick Bennetts

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**
IMAGES

Forty years ago this week, a little five-man team named West Surrey Engineering, thrown together over the previous month, made its debut in the opening round of the British Formula 3 Championship at Silverstone. And Jonathan Palmer, one of those five men, took victory on 1 March 1981 in his Toyota-

powered Ralt RT3. This was the same chassis that, at the end of 1980, had won the last four races of the series in the hands of Stefan Johansson, carrying the Swede to the title with Ron Dennis's Project 4 Racing.

Project 4's Dick Bennetts had engineered and run that late Johansson charge and, after rejecting an offer from Dennis to lead the McLaren F1 test team, the Kiwi was the man

who would head up WSE. In 1982, basking in the glow of Palmer claiming the 1981 crown, that little team became West Surrey Racing. Following multiple British F3 successes it moved into the British Touring Car Championship, where it is now the standard setter for BMW. Time to look back with Bennetts, now 73 but very much still at the helm, at four storied decades.



A DOSE FROM THE DOCTOR

Jonathan Palmer's Formula Ford backer, West Surrey Engineering chief Mike Cox, bought the ex-Johansson Ralt RT3 from Ron Dennis to go to British F3 with the young doctor in 1981.

Bennetts had returned home to New Zealand, where he ran his old mate Dave Oxton in a Ralt RT4 to the 1981 Formula Pacific title in the Southern Hemisphere summer. And then he got persuaded back to the UK... "I said I'd think about it, and we basically set up the team while I was 12,000 miles away," he reminisces. "I came back mid-February

and we got up and running. They had built a little workshop at the side of WSE, and that's where we were based with our little A-series Ford transporter that would only just hit 50mph. We had Dave Stevens, who was JP's Formula Ford mechanic, as a number two, and I got a friend of mine, Harvey Spencer [ex-Brabham, now Carlin], to come and work with me as mechanic/engineer. We had a bit of help from JP's brother Jamie. He was our weekend gofer."

Bennetts had to persuade Cox that Palmer

needed a spare Toyota engine from Italian tuner Novamotor: "He said, 'It's won the first four races, it must be good!' But I said, 'Yeah, but it's a racing engine and they do wear out'. We did four races without a spare engine – we were sitting there with our fingers crossed all the time. Eventually Mike and JP got five grand out of BP Sunbury, and we put that sticker on the front of the cockpit covering and got a spare engine. There were so many races in those days, and we could alternate the engines while the other one was rebuilt."



Senna in the November
sun at Thruxton in 1982

MOULDING A FUTURE LEGEND

WSR carried Enrique Mansilla to the runner-up spot in British F3 in 1982, and that attracted newly crowned European and British Formula Ford 2000 champion Ayrton Senna da Silva to try out the team in the end-of-season non-championship race at Thruxton. A year later, he was feted as British F3 champion following a thrilling duel with Eddie Jordan Racing-run Martin Brundle.

“We did a half-day test at Snetterton, and he was very impressive straight out of the box,” Bennetts recalls. “We just took Quique [Mansilla]’s car up there with the same set-up he’d run, Ayrton hopped in, a couple of laps, back in, checked it around, out he went and then I thought, ‘Bloody hell, this bloke’s good.’”

Senna dominated at Thruxton: “Ayrton said, ‘I want to run with you. Everything was perfect, car was great, we were great.’

Unbeknown to me EJ was chasing him as well, but he was probably trying to sign him up for 10 years [on a management contract]. But Ayrton said, ‘I’m happy now, we’re going racing’, and he disappeared – just a handshake, and went back to Brazil. A few phone calls and we got a contract done, and he arrived back quite late, but he was confident.

“One of the things I always remember is that we always got a new car every year, and he said, ‘Where’s the car I drove at Thruxton?’ ‘We’ve sold it.’ ‘But I liked it, I wanted that car. There’s nothing wrong with that car!’ ‘I know there wasn’t, but we start with a new one each year.’ He was quite taken aback that we’d sold that car. We sold it to Helmut Marko for Gerhard Berger [who raced it in the European championship].”

A ONE-YEAR SPELL IN F3000

After Mauricio Gugelmin had become WSR’s third British F3 champion, in 1985, the team snapped up FF2000 king Bertrand Fabi and FF1600 battler Damon Hill for the following season. “It was 21 February and Bertrand got killed down at Goodwood,” reflects Bennetts. “I was about to close down. We’d never had a serious accident before, no injuries at all, and to have a fatal one... I’d taken a big gamble on Damon, but we couldn’t then do anything, so I got Murray Taylor to run Damon.

“Then Mauricio called me and said, ‘I’ve heard what’s happened, I want you to run me in 3000’. I said, ‘We’ve never done 3000’, and he said, ‘I don’t care, what you did for me in 1985 is enough to convince me’. We got a March 86B late and it had pullrod front suspension – very complicated and we’d never run it before – so it wasn’t the best year. But a beautiful-looking car in black.

“And then of course we had the major drama at Pau when he wrote it off in qualifying. We’d made big changes from the previous session, and he was so quick up the hill before the bridge that with the downforce, the car bottomed out when he hit the brakes, and he just went straight on into the concrete parapet. The worst ever time it could happen because we were racing at Spa the next weekend. We were going to have a gentle cruise up through France, but it was a panic back to England, put a new tub on it, back out for Spa. Not the most enjoyable year.”

Bennetts learned a lesson then: don’t get involved in stuff you haven’t had time to prepare for: “We knew we could do a good job, but if you’re not prepared and don’t know how the car works... Even though we knew what we were doing, and Mauricio was very good, it was embarrassing for him and for us. It was very tight schedules, and not much money to test with. But we did it again in 1996 with the Ford Mondeo!”



Gugelmin at Pau, but
soon he trashed his
beautiful March 86B



“Where do I sign the visa form?”
Hakkinen with Bennetts, Eddie
Irvine and engineer Rob Creswell

SUTTON

HAKKINEN: TALENT AND LAWYERS WIN IT

In the late 1980s, WSR ran a string of Marlboro-backed talents in British F3. That continued in 1990, when Mika Hakkinen starred to defeat fellow Finn Mika Salo to the crown. But there was a worrying time before the mid-summer Oulton Park round.

“I got a phone call at my home about nine o’clock at night. ‘Immigration Terminal 2 here, is that Mr Bennetts?’ ‘Speaking.’ ‘We have a Mr Ha-Haa-Ha-kki-nen here.’ ‘Oh yeah, Mika. What’s the problem?’ ‘We’re not letting him in, he’s got to go back to Finland.’ I said, ‘Woah you can’t do that, we’ve got a race this weekend.’ He said, ‘We’ve

warned him five times to get a visa, and he’s come back again, he still hasn’t got one, so we’re putting him on a plane.’ I said, ‘No you can’t do that, please please please.’ I got down on my hands and knees, and they let him in on the condition that he went straight away and got sorted out.

“On the Friday he had to go and see Philip Morris [Marlboro parent company] and sort out a lawyer to start getting the visas done. We were testing on the Friday at Oulton, and the rumour went down the pitlane that Mika was sent back to Finland, because his car was sitting there in the pitlane. We were running Christian Fittipaldi,

trying to sort out a new rear wing. Christian said, ‘That’s better’, so we bolted it onto Mika’s car. And then about quarter to five Mika comes rushing into the track. I said, ‘Right, get changed, get in the car. Quick. You’ve got about seven minutes left.’

“So out he went slowly, bedded the brake pads, and then boom. Quickest. P1. I’ll never forget Steve Robertson’s dad Dave coming down and saying, ‘We’re all wasting our effing time. We thought we were in for a good weekend, that bloke turns up, does five laps and goes P1.’ They’d all been pounding round all day. That was a wake-up call for everyone.”



Barrichello turns in
to Graham Hill Bend
at Brands Hatch

SUTTON

BAD STARTS, BUT A GOOD FINISH

After Hakkinen, WSR lined up with reigning Opel Lotus Euroseries champion Rubens Barrichello for British F3 in 1991. The Brazilian took nine poles, but frequently wasted them with poor starts and claimed ‘only’ four wins. That meant he had to come from behind to defeat David Coulthard (zero poles) to the crown.

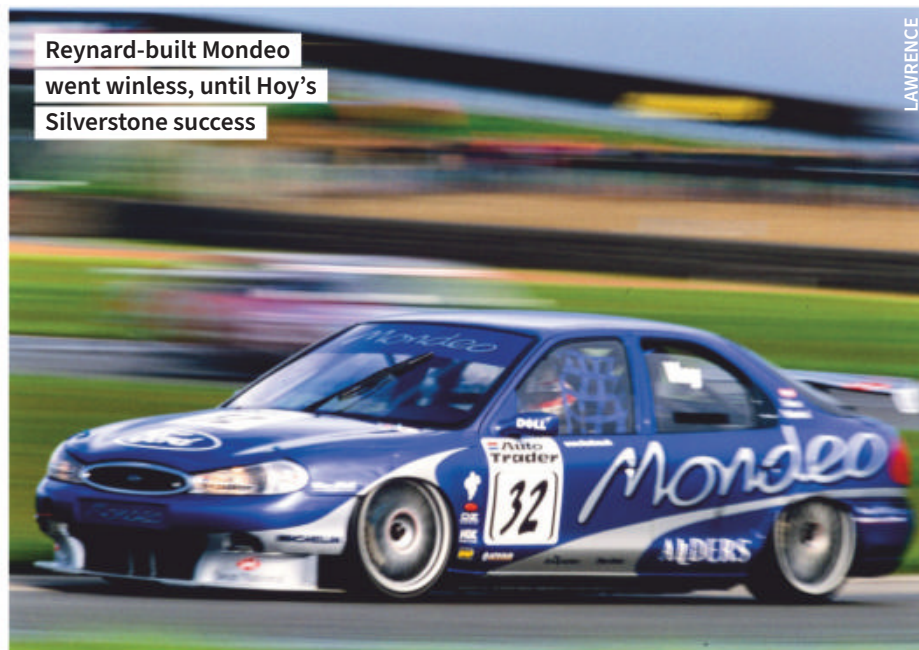
“At Silverstone for the first race – pole position and he stalled it,” remembers Bennetts. “I thought, ‘This is not a good start to the season’. We took him and Jordi Gene to Santa Pod to do practice starts. We did nine, and Jordi beat him seven times. He

just couldn’t get to grips with getting off the line. But blindingly quick. He arrived with us at 18 years old, left us at 19 as British F3 champion.

“He was very young, very quiet, but very focused what he wanted to do. He knew how a car worked, his feedback was good, whereas Mika just had raw talent. Mika couldn’t tell you the nitty gritty of how the car worked, and did his debriefs with his hands – he turned them one way, understeer, turned them the other way, oversteer. Rubens could explain our method: turn-in, mid-corner, exit. Intelligent young lad.”

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Reynard-built Mondeo went winless, until Hoy's Silverstone success

LAWRENCE

FEELING BLUE, AND THEN A WIN

WSR moved into the BTCC with Ford in 1996, and it became the biggest trial of the team's existence. The capture of Nigel Mansell for selected rounds in 1998 was a huge story, but it was another moustachioed Brit, the late Will Hoy, who provided the only win for a WSR Mondeo, at Silverstone that year. Hoy was running sixth when rain arrived. He was one of the last to pit, had intermediate tyres fitted, and emerged in a comfortable lead he maintained to the finish.

"We made a very good call with the pitstop, but we also had some absolute top-notch pit equipment," says Bennetts. "We'd spent some money on some magnetic [wheel] sockets made in America, so I think we were about 10 or 15 seconds quicker than anyone with our pitstop. He got out well in the lead and he held onto it."

Malcolm Swetnam, then the team manager, was in phone contact with his wife at their house not far away to find out what weather was heading to the track. "We still do that these days," says Bennetts. "People we know who live near the circuit, we ring them up and say, 'What's the weather like?' We have about five different weather apps, we have a radar, but you don't know if you can ever trust them."

"You couldn't have got a nicer guy than Will. He once said to me on the quiet, 'Why are you staying in the same hotel as the mechanics? You're the boss.' And he gave me all the names of these mega country hotels where he stayed. I tried it a couple of times, and then I went back to being with the lads. But he was a down-to-earth guy. Really good with people, really friendly. Just such a shame he left us so early."



Reid and Hughes pose with Lola-built car at Pembrey. But storm clouds lay ahead

HONDA DISACCORD

WSR swapped BTCC manufacturers with Prodrive for 1999, so was now representing Honda. With the Accords, James Thompson and Peter Kox finished fourth and seventh respectively in the standings. For 2000, Kox was replaced by Tom Kristensen, while a third car was run for Gabriele Tarquini by Honda Motor Europe's Italian team, JAS Motorsport.

"We were asked to do a wish list from the 1999 car for the 2000," says Bennetts. "Top of our list was more [suspension] caster – the 1999 car we could only get about seven degrees caster out of it. The 2000 car arrived with *five* degrees caster. So I rang up [Honda Motor Europe]: 'My guys downstairs have just told me it's got five degrees, we're looking for 12/14.' And they said, 'It's got no power steering on it, that's why it's only got five degrees' – that's the max you could have without power assistance. They said they did some research, and the team in Italy told them that power steering could be unreliable. I said, 'That's very true, it can be, but why have the other manufacturers down the grid all got power steering?'"

"That started the disagreement, and I then contacted Ron Tauranac [whose Ralt company WSR had won five titles for in British F3, and whose cars had dominated F2 with Honda engines]. Ron rang Japan, and Honda got some money for us. We were told it was a six-month project, but we had the bit between the teeth and we made one set of power steering in two weeks. And we put it on Tom's car, went out and wow – much better. 'We've got 12 to 14 degrees caster, we're on the right track now.' Then we get a call: 'Why have you fitted power steering?' 'Because that's what we need.' 'We told you you're not supposed to.' 'Well, sorry. We've got master drivers here like Tom Kristensen, James Thompson – we've got to give them the best.' So then, a week later, they rang up: 'Can we have power steering for Tarquini's car?'"

"Wanting to win, we gave it our best, but probably upset our relationship with Honda Europe. We were more interested in winning – fixing things up and getting out there."



TURNING CONSTRUCTOR AT THE LAST MINUTE

The BTCC's new BTC Touring rules arrived for 2001, and WSR joined late in the season with the new Lola-built MG ZS. Problem was, a spat between Lola and MG Sport & Racing over IP rights resulted in WSR having to design and build two completely new cars in time for 2002...

"When the problem arrived at the end of 2001, it was oh no – we had to hurriedly build two new cars," shudders Bennetts. "We were asked in October, after the last race, when whatever the problem was came to a head. We had 35 people here in those days. It was hard work, but there was no option when we were told. Those

were the days of clocking up a serious lot of hours... We managed it but it was a hell of a lot of work, and then to gear up and run four cars, not two, that just added to the workload. It was really only when we got to 2003 that we started going properly."

The reason for four cars was that a new satellite squad, Team Atomic Kitten, came into being to enter the Lola-built MGs for Gareth Howell and a BTCC debutant who would become pivotal to WSR: Colin Turkington. In the hands of Anthony Reid, Warren Hughes, Turkington and Rob Collard, the WSR-built MG ZSs would win 14 BTCC races up to the end of 2006.





Dixon had a whizz in A1GP car, before going back to win five more IndyCar titles

A KIWI LEGEND WORKS WITH... SCOTT DIXON

WSR returned to single-seaters in A1GP, when it ran Team New Zealand in the inaugural season of 2005-06. The team would go on to run the USA and Singapore entries too, but its best campaign was with the All-Black car. Matt Halliday drove in the majority of races, and Jonny Reid in some, but the team also welcomed Scott Dixon – then a one-time IndyCar champion – to the cockpit for practice at the Dubai round.

The Dubai Autodrome was the first venue designed by WSR's Clive Bowen, Bennetts and Drew MacDonald, who all then worked on

Hampton Downs in New Zealand. MacDonald also created the revised Silverstone GP Circuit in 2010, alongside Populous Design.

“For Scott it was his first time in an A1GP car, so that was difficult,” points out Bennetts, “and to go to a brand new track you’ve never seen... Luckily we had every corner radius because we designed Dubai Autodrome. We could tell him every radius, every bit of camber of every corner. But it also highlighted we had an engine problem that weekend. Really interesting to listen to Scott’s feedback, but yeah, when we overlaid it

we were down on power, so we complained to the engine supplier [Zytek] about it and they reckoned there was nothing wrong with it.

“We were quicker off the 180-degree corner onto the main straight, because Scott got the right line pretty quickly. And down the end of the straight we were down quite a bit. Unbeknown to the engine builder, I got an overlay [of data] from a friend of mine at another team running the same rear-wing set-up. It would have been good to have someone like Scott in the car for a season. Top man. I still follow his races.”



Turkington leads Muller amid the Japanese gloom

WINNING IN THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

WSR's switch to BMW 320si Super 2000 machinery for the 2007 BTCC paid dividends in 2009, when Colin Turkington triumphed to grab his first title in a final-round thriller against Fabrizio Giovanardi and Jason Plato. Still only 27, Turkington wanted to use that as a springboard to the World Touring Car Championship, but it proved difficult to raise a budget.

Eventually, a five-round campaign was pulled together. Turkington had already claimed two podiums at Brands Hatch, and one at Brno, when the Okayama round in Japan came around. In pouring rain, he finished second in the reversed-grid race to the works BMW of Augusto Farfus, but three weeks later Farfus was excluded for running an illegal gearbox. Turkington inherited victory, but he should have won it on the road anyway...

“It absolutely poured down, and we’d never run Yokohama wets,” says Bennetts. “We just changed the car to what we did with BTCC Dunlop wets, and out he went and we were quick.”

BMW's Andy Priaulx still had a shot at the title, so WSR had agreed to help the works cars of Priaulx and Farfus if necessary. Sure enough, Turkington let Farfus through to lead, while they were shadowed by the RML-run Chevrolet of eventual champion Yvan Muller. Then, with Priaulx now out of the race and title contention, a switcharound should have happened.

“Of course what happened then is this privateer spun, there were yellow flags and no overtaking on the last lap,” says Bennetts. “But apparently RML protested the works team’s six-speed ’box, and they were deleted from the results.”

**WSR ON FIRE
– LITERALLY**

The first WSR-built car for the current NGTC regulations was the BMW 125i M Sport, which made its debut in 2013. Colin Turkington took it to the 2014 crown, his second title success.

The next day, BTCC live-TV broadcaster ITV turned up at WSR for its traditional post-season interview with the champion. “Col being Col, he was hungry, and he put a bread roll into the toaster, and he went out into the workshop to do his filming,” laughs Bennetts. “Then after about five or 10 minutes the fire alarm went off. Smoke was billowing out everywhere. He could have burned the building down, and that mark’s still underneath the cupboard in the canteen. We’ve kept it there for memories.”



THE LAST-MINUTE TITLE

The 2019 BTCC Brands Hatch showdown was a thriller. Turkington had claimed a third crown in 2018 at the wheel of the 125i, and this time around he and team-mate Andrew Jordan were in the mix in the new BMW 330i M Sports. So too was Dan Cammish in his Team Dynamics Honda Civic, and team-mate Matt Neal was on hand to help on a slippery track.

“In race two, Matt gave Col a nudge down at Graham Hill Bend and turned him around,” recalls Bennetts. “He finished 25th, and we thought, ‘That’s it, game over’. Col thought the same, but it’s never over ‘til it’s over.”

Cammish had the title in his grasp when, on the penultimate lap, he had brake failure at Hawthorns and crashed out. With Jordan fourth, Turkington’s rise to sixth was enough for a fourth title. “It’s our first ever 1-2 finish,”

points out Bennetts. “We knew there was a possible problem with Dan’s car because we could see from about lap three or four his brakes were glowing red up into Druids, and we thought for that early in the race something wasn’t right.

“So yeah, poor bloke – totally out of Dan’s control. He locked up the rears and that was it. Game over. Colin was incredibly emotional, because after race two we’d had a little chat and we thought, ‘Right, just do our best, looks like it’s gone now’. So to then be told on the radio on the in-lap that he’d won it, I’ve never seen him so emotional. He was banging the steering wheel, he was shouting – he’s normally Mr Quiet. Dented the roof of the new 3 Series, but that’s all right – we didn’t mind that.”

WEST SURREY RACING WINS		
DRIVER	WINS	YEARS
Colin Turkington	46	2003-20
Ayrton Senna	15	1982-83
Mika Hakkinen	13	1989-90
Rob Collard	13	2005-18
Andrew Jordan	10	2017-19
Jonathan Palmer	8	1981
Anthony Reid	8	2001-04
Enrique Mansilla	5	1982
Mauricio Gugelmin	5	1985
Allan McNish	5	1989
James Thompson	5	1999-2000
Rubens Barrichello	4	1991
Sam Tordoff	4	2015-16
Bertrand Gachot	3	1987
Tom Kristensen	3	2000
Warren Hughes	3	2002-03
Jordi Gene	2	1991
Vincent Radermecker	2	1994
Marc Goossens	2	1993-95
Stephen Jelley	2	2009
Andy Priaulx	2	2015
Roland Ratzenberger	1	1987
Eddie Irvine	1	1988
Derek Higgins	1	1989
Christian Fittipaldi	1	1990
Oswaldo Negri	1	1992
Cristiano da Matta	1	1995
Will Hoy	1	1998
Peter Kox	1	1999
Tom Onslow-Cole	1	2007
Tom Oliphant	1	2020

RACE CENTRE

FORMULA E DIRIYAH • WRC ARCTIC RALLY • WORLD OF SPORT



MERCEDES DOMINATION MAKES WAY FOR CONTROVERSY

Banned cars, hospitalised drivers and reports of an attempted missile strike stole the headlines from Nyck de Vries after a dramatic season opener

MATT KEW

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES



Formula E called its delayed 2021 curtain-raiser the 'Diriyah E-Prix'. But labelling the double-header night races on the Riyadh Street Circuit as 'Motorsport's Greatest Hits: Volume One' better reflects events. Mercedes domination, an already vintage overtake, a victorious Sam Bird

extending a record, champion team-mates clashing, two terrifying crashes, attempted fisticuffs and a heap of sporting and political controversy all played out in Saudi Arabia.

The series employed its usual razzmatazz to emphasise the unpredictability that looks set to ensue this term, with 10 teams eminently capable of winning a race. But come the bitterly cold media-pen session on Friday night, drivers were already batting away premature questions asking if Mercedes' recent grip on F1 was ready to be transposed to FE.

The group qualifying format, which has the top six drivers in the points head out first on to a green and slippery circuit, goes a long way to preventing a monopoly from any one team or driver. And yet, from the way Nyck de Vries cleaned up in every session aboard his Silver Arrow 02, perhaps those reporters had a point — as well as a headline — to chase. Never before in FE had one driver topped both practice sessions, headed group qualifying and the superpole shootout before never being overtaken in the race to win at a canter.

Tuning into his team radio, the 2019 FIA F2 champion was utterly composed on the way to his maiden series spoils. He was happy with car balance, and keeping on top of a fluctuation between under and overconsuming useable energy. That left plenty of time for the cool Dutch racer to >>

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utter an array of bewildering codes as he relayed frequent sit reps to race engineer Albert Lau: “Kilo-Alpha-Eight-November-Golf... Kilo-Five-Alpha-Quebec-Charlie.”

His impeccable 4.1-second triumph over the customer Mercedes of Venturi Racing ace Edoardo Mortara meant the works team secured back-to-back wins, with team-mate Stoffel Vandoorne having scored the manufacturer’s first triumph in the final race of last season.

Technical and operational errors in 2019-20 had hidden the depths of de Vries’s talent, and he was classified an entirely unrepresentative 11th in the final standings. Vandoorne ended up a fortunate and distant second to runaway champion Antonio Felix da Costa. But under the renewable-energy-powered LED lights in Saudi, de Vries’s pace and ability shone bright. Team principal Ian James reckoned his driver was “on fire” when he spoke to Autosport, which wouldn’t be our only chat of the weekend...

In truth, the bulk of the opening 32-lap contest was little better than processional. By FE standards, the elevation changes over the 1.5-mile lap are dramatic. But the fast and flowing sweeps from left to right, combined with dust piling up off line, meant spectacular lunges for position were the preserve of the heavy-braking zone into Turn 18. That was except for Mortara, who executed a breathtaking and millimetre-perfect double overtake.

With the pace of Porsche front-row starter Pascal Wehrlein ailing, Jaguar Racing pilot Mitch Evans was in pursuit down the back straight. Then, in stormed Mortara, sitting on the 35kW power boost provided by one of two four-minute attack-mode activations. He surged past Evans on the right and then darted across, bound for the disappearing gap that split the rear of Wehrlein’s car and Evans’s nosecone. Mortara sliced it to perfection, bagging second place at the flag. Comparisons to the Mika Hakkinen-Ricardo Zonta-Michael Schumacher sandwich from the 2000 Belgian Grand Prix were well founded.

There was another Spa similarity waiting in the wings. Alex Lynn turned in noticeably early at the first corner as he attempted to defend sixth from Bird, now at Jaguar in the highest-profile FE driver move to date. Bird was left with nowhere to go in most people’s



“IT WAS DONE DELIBERATELY TO SCREW US, WHICH IS NOT ON. HE CAME OUT IN FRONT OF US. HE WAS GOING SLOW”

eyes, not least the stewards’. The pair collided and spun, ending up nose to nose so that Lynn could see exactly what a gesticulating Bird made of his driving.

Suspension busted, Lynn was out on the spot. Bird continued, radioing in that strange noises were coming from his car. Seven laps later he retired in the pits, jumped out of his I-Type 5 and stormed down the pitlane to confront Lynn. Choice words were exchanged, but team members were there to intervene and prevent a fully blown copy of the Schumacher-versus-David Coulthard garage tussle from the 1998 Belgian GP.

Bird’s red mist did make way for a cloud with a silver lining. A non-score placed him in group four for qualifying ahead of race two. He would set his first flying lap on asphalt that was nicely rubbered in and ready to offer up lap time. What’s more, with Bird expected to go the distance this season, several of his potential key title rivals were plonked right to the back of the grid. One of them was team-mate Evans.

The stylish Kiwi was every bit da Costa’s main rival for the crown last year, but Jaguar largely rolled over in Berlin without a whimper. Combined with too great a

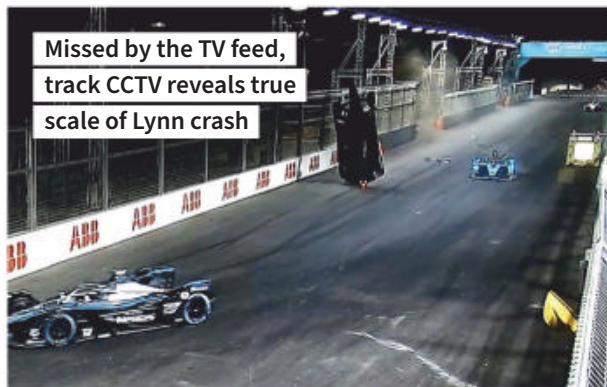
reliance on one driver to do the heavy points lifting, the team finished way down in seventh. To put it another way, its garage was towards the wrong end of the pitlane. So in Diriyah, when Evans emerged for the group one contest, Nissan e.dams had plenty of time to ready Oliver Rowland and release him immediately in front of the Big Cat. The Brit then put in a fairly leisurely preparation lap, premeditated or otherwise, and barely scraped across the line to post a flier in time. Evans, joined by Rene Rast, were victims of fine margins and failed to set a representative effort.

“It was done deliberately to screw us behind, which is not on,” Evans said. “He came out right in front of us. He was going slow in the pits, exiting the pits slow. By the time we got to Turn 5 on the out-lap, we were already behind schedule.”

With Andre Lotterer benched for qualifying after wrecking his Porsche in final practice, the odds for Bird getting pole kept being slashed. Then there was the absence of all Mercedes-propelled cars. In what was, very regrettably, the first of two hideous impacts that left drivers needing precautionary hospital visits, Mortara found himself buried in the TecPro barrier placed well beyond the runoff for Turn 1. After his smart run to sixth in FP3, he lined up for a practice start. His car never slowed for the corner and he ploughed straight on. The pedal was fully depressed, and yet brake pressure registered zero. “I thought it was pretty much the end for me,” he later said.

As former Audi and NIO 333 driver Daniel Abt noted on Twitter, it was uncomfortably similar to his Mexico City crash, when he too needed medical assessment. Fortunately, reports that Mortara was conscious, talking and could >>





Missed by the TV feed,
track CCTV reveals true
scale of Lynn crash



Wreckage of Lynn's
airborne shunt that
brought out red flag

move all his digits arrived before the ambulance had left the paddock.

To his great credit, James was remarkably open. "There are two issues at stake here," he said. "One is the failure of the front-brake system for whatever reason that might be. [Two], should the front system go into a failure mode, then a back-up system takes over. What we saw on Edo's car is that didn't happen."

It was a software issue, and so Mercedes engineers immediately isolated the problem and made the adjustments as necessary. In the meantime, according to the FIA, "the competitor cannot prove to the FIA technical delegate that the car is safe". The four Mercs (including Venturi's) were booted out of qualifying. The domination was on ice, and the first major political and sporting spats

of the season were now well under way.

The muted upshot was that de Vries, Mortara and Vandoorne weren't there to breathe down Bird's neck in qualifying. That said, Envision Virgin Racing's Robin Frijns picked up the mantle. His Saudi outing had started miserably with a free practice two crash, which tripped a G-sensor and forced McLaren Applied's hand to change his car battery. Frijns had to miss qualifying for race one as a result, and then cut his way from last to 17th.

Due to a slash in personnel passes to lower costs and boost travel efficiency in FE, the team's technical director Chris Gorne was reporting in from the Silverstone base. As has so often been the case over the past 12 months, a videocall came to the rescue.

"We had a Zoom-slash-debrief for two

hours together with the team at home in Silverstone to discuss because we needed to change something," said Frijns. "We couldn't have another day like we had [on Friday]. It was a drastic change that we did. We went completely in the other [set-up] direction."

The fix worked devastatingly. Frijns romped to pole by 0.289s, beating the surprising Sergio Sette Camara effort in the outgoing Dragon Penske Autosport machine. Bird, team-mate to Frijns for the previous two seasons, lined up third.

Much like de Vries had done, Frijns contended with energy-management issues but would prove powerless to resist an incisive Bird. Mirroring his results at the venue last term, Bird crashed out of one round and triumphed in the other to extend his record: he is the only FE driver to win a race in each season.

Not too far behind, DS Techeetah again proved the difficulty in managing its potent driver pairing of Jean-Eric Vergne and da Costa. They clattered in their scrap for an eventual final spot on the podium, with da Costa the aggressor in this case, pushing his stablemate close to the wall. Although the Portuguese lost out on track and came home fourth, he gained an artificial spot on the podium. Vergne was farcically penalised 24s for not using his second attack-mode boost. How was he meant to, when the race was red-flagged three minutes early?

That is a question that FE and the FIA must answer but, in context, it's little more



Scary car glitch meant
Mortara ploughed
straight on at Turn 1



than a detail. As Lynn dived with Evans, the Mahindra Racing driver was pincered against the wall and, unfortunately, did his very best impression of Mark Webber in the 2010 European GP. He launched upside down, crashed back to earth and skidded along the track, with the halo yet again proving invaluable for the tall London-based Essex man. The episode only came to a rest when the TecPro barriers once more acted as a solid buffer. Evans pulled up immediately to check up on Lynn, who was later discharged from hospital without injury.

An evidently sombre Evans said: "He clipped my rear wheel and had an aeroplane crash. It was really nasty. At one point I could see him above me. I saw him go into the wall and I jumped out to make sure he was OK."

And among the exhausting and exhaustive motorsport ensemble, might there have been one last 'greatest hit'? A Saudi-led military coalition intercepted a missile attack over Riyadh. This we know. It was blamed on Yemen's Houthi rebels, and reports tentatively suggested the presence of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on the grid had made FE a target. This we don't know. But its very happening and the snowballing of conjecture in the desert paddock – with many retroactively misrelating overhead bangs from the firework celebrations – meant a panicked and disconcerting end to a week that will go down as a 'Very Best of Racing' album that left a bitter aftertaste. 🏁

RESULTS ROUND 1, DIRIYAH (SAU), 26-27 FEBRUARY (32 LAPS – 49.610 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Nyck de Vries (NLD)	Mercedes / Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	46m44.765s
2	Edoardo Mortara (ITA)	Venturi Racing / Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	+4.119s
3	Mitch Evans (NZL)	Jaguar Racing / Jaguar I-TYPE 5	+4.619s
4	Rene Rast (DEU)	Audi / Audi e-tron FE07	+4.852s
5	Pascal Wehrlein (DEU)	Porsche / Porsche 99X Electric	+7.962s
6	Oliver Rowland (GBR)	Nissan e.dams / Nissan IM02	+9.318s
7	Alexander Sims (GBR)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M7Electro	+9.686s
8	Stoffel Vandoorne (BEL)	Mercedes / Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	+9.973s
9	Lucas di Grassi (BRA)	Audi / Audi e-tron FE07	+11.089s
10	Oliver Turvey (GBR)	NIO 333 / NIO 333 001	+15.518s
11	Antonio Felix da Costa (PRT)	DS Techeetah / DSE-Tense FE20	+16.225s
12	Jake Dennis (GBR)	BMW Andretti / BMW iFE.21	+17.025s
13	Sebastien Buemi (CHE)	Nissan e.dams / Nissan IM02	+17.273s
14	Norman Nato (FRA)	Venturi Racing / Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 02	+17.312s
15	Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA)	DS Techeetah / DSE-Tense FE20	+18.402s
16	Andre Lotterer (DEU)	Porsche / Porsche 99X Electric	+18.417s
17	Robin Frijns (NLD)	Envision Virgin Racing / Audi e-tron FE07	+18.822s
18	Tom Blomqvist (GBR)	NIO 333 / NIO 333 001	+19.072s
19	Nick Cassidy (NZL)	Envision Virgin Racing / Audi e-tron FE07	+19.951s
20	Sergio Sette Camara (BRA)	Dragon Penske Autosport / Penske EV-4	+20.174s
21	Nico Muller (CHE)	Dragon Penske Autosport / Penske EV-4	+20.586s
R	Maximilian Guenther (DEU)	BMW Andretti / BMW iFE.21	23 laps-accident
R	Sam Bird (GBR)	Jaguar Racing / Jaguar I-TYPE 5	22 laps-accident damage
R	Alex Lynn (GBR)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M7Electro	16 laps-accident

Winner's average speed 64.146mph. **Fastest lap** Vandoorne 1m09.583s, 80.208mph.

SUPER POLE 1 de Vries 1m08.157s; 2 Wehrlein 1m08.821s; 3 Rast 1m08.869s; 4 Mortara 1m09.317s; 5 Lynn 1m09.345s; 6 Evans 1m09.706s.

QUALIFYING de Vries 1m08.786s; Mortara 1m08.798s; Wehrlein 1m08.885s; Rast 1m08.959s; Lynn 1m09.133s; Evans 1m09.152s; 7 Lotterer 1m09.157s; 8 Bird 1m09.265s; 9 Guenther 1m09.277s; 10 Rowland 1m09.362s; 11 Sims 1m09.559s; 12 Nato 1m09.628s; 13 Turvey 1m09.631s; 14 Dennis 1m09.723s; 15 Vandoorne 1m10.128s; 16 di Grassi 1m10.474s; 17 Buemi 1m10.594s; 18 da Costa 1m10.735s; 19 Vergne 1m10.804s; 20 Sette Camara 1m21.445s; 21 Cassidy 1m22.020s; 22 Blomqvist 1m23.165s; 23 Muller 1m24.955s; 24 Frijns no time.

RACE 2 (29 LAPS – 45.326 MILES)

1 Bird 39m50.836s; 2 Frijns +2.194s; 3 da Costa +6.900s; 4 Sette Camara +12.817s; 5 Muller +13.924s; 6 Turvey +15.523s; 7 Rowland +16.389s; 8 di Grassi +20.612s; 9 de Vries +22.482s; 10 Wehrlein +25.395s; 11 Lotterer +27.257s; 12 Vergne +28.846s; 13 Vandoorne +29.112s; 14 Cassidy +33.079s; 15 Sims +43.885s; 16 Nato +48.192s; 17 Rast +1m06.254s; 18 Blomqvist +1m09.508s; R Buemi 26 laps-accident; R Guenther 26 laps-accident; R Evans 26 laps-accident; R Lynn 26 laps-accident; R Dennis 16 laps-accident; NS Mortara practice accident. **Winner's average speed** 68.249mph. **Fastest lap** de Vries 1m08.811s, 81.108mph.

SUPER POLE 1 Frijns 1m07.889s; 2 Sette Camara 1m08.178s; 3 Bird 1m08.405s; 4 Turvey 1m08.439s; 5 Blomqvist 1m08.732s; 6 Muller 1m09.060s.

QUALIFYING Frijns 1m07.810s; Sette Camara 1m08.333s; Blomqvist 1m08.367s; Bird 1m08.384s; Turvey 1m08.424s; Muller 1m08.432s; 7 Vergne 1m08.471s; 8 Buemi 1m08.544s; 9 da Costa 1m08.649s; 10 Cassidy 1m08.733s; 11 Guenther 1m08.797s; 12 Lynn 1m08.632s*; 13 Rowland 1m08.798s; 14 Sims 1m08.876s; 15 di Grassi 1m08.970s; 16 Wehrlein 1m09.601s; 17 Dennis 1m11.194s; 18 Evans 1m13.868s; 19 Rast 1m13.954s; 20 de Vries no time; 21 Mortara no time; 22 Vandoorne no time; 23 Nato no time; 24 Lotterer no time. * = grid penalty.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 de Vries 32; 2 Bird 25; 3 Frijns 22; 4 Mortara 18; 5 da Costa 15; 6 Evans 15; 7 Rowland 14; 8 Rast 13; 9 Sette Camara 12; 10 Wehrlein 11.

NEXT RACE

ROME E-PRIX 15 APRIL ISSUE

Will the new DS and Nissan cars launch the teams to the top?



Tanak at the top of the world

The Hyundai star made up for a disastrous Monte Carlo Rally by leading all the way on the snow-kissed stages of the Arctic

NICK GARTON

PHOTOGRAPHY MCKLEIN

Finland's Arctic Rally, drafted in at the last minute to replace Rally Sweden as the second round of this year's World Rally Championship, allowed Hyundai star Ott Tanak to kick-start his 2021 season with an assured win after scoring no points on last month's opener in Monte Carlo.

With Sweden abandoned in the face of a dramatic increase in the number of coronavirus cases this winter, the WRC grabbed with both hands this opportunity to move north into the Arctic Circle, with the promise of snow. The pre-event form book tilted strongly towards Toyota being the dominant force. For one thing, the team is Finnish to its core. For another, its young star Kalle Rovanner won the event in 2020. You could also add that the team's talent manager, former Intercontinental Rally Challenge winner Juho Hanninen, won the event in its traditional January slot on the domestic calendar at the wheel of a Yaris WRC. And let's not forget that Toyota's rivals at Hyundai and M-Sport were left in shell-shocked disarray after the opening round, where Yarises filled four of the top six places on the Monte.

One member of the Toyota squad who did not hold such high expectations was Monte Carlo winner Sebastien Ogier. The Frenchman knew that the honour of running first on the road for Day 1 would result in him sweeping the roads for those behind him, and that when the road order was swapped for Day 2, with the slowest going first, he would likely still be clearing a path for the rest. "For me the question mark is always going to be being first on the road on that one," he said before the start. "I need to pick up a better start position for the rest of the event and that's the plan for tomorrow, to try to give everything from the start."

The first day was always going to be tricky for Ogier from that perspective. It consisted of a single stage, Sarriöjarvi, run once in the afternoon sun and once after dark. At 19 miles it was one of the longest stages on the rally, starting with tight and technical turns and then heading out onto long, undulating straights. After the second pass the gap to



Exuberant Rovanner led Toyota charge and takes series lead

rally leader Tanak, winner of both stages, was a thumping 49.8s. "We'll see what we can do tomorrow, but it looks like we will be quite far away already," Ogier concluded.

Tanak had meanwhile built up a decent cushion of 16.2s over his Hyundai team-mate Craig Breen, the Irishman making his first WRC appearance since last September's Rally Estonia. Rovanner sat in third, with Thierry Neuville making it three Hyundais in the top four.

Being slightly larger than the Yaris, all of the i20 WRCs showed battle damage at the rear as they tended to clip the snow banks rather more often, but of more importance was that they were clearly

able to take less life out of their tyres than the Toyotas. Managing this process was something with which the Hyundai's bigger footprint clearly gave its crews an advantage. After their dominance in Monte Carlo, the Toyotas suddenly seemed rather less assured.

"I have to say that it's also part of the job done to prepare this Arctic Rally because we work a lot on the tyre management and these kind of things, because it was clearly our very weak point in Monte Carlo," said Hyundai team principal Andrea Adamo. "You know, when you made something like what we did in Monte Carlo, you have to deeply analyse your mistake and understand where you were especially weak... We were very bad to say the least, so here we work very hard."

Indeed, so much confidence did Hyundai's review inspire that Tanak elected to carry only one spare wheel – that was a strategy that proved costly in Monte Carlo, forcing his retirement after two punctures in a row. But in Finland, his decision, when combined with careful curation of his rubber, allowed the Estonian to take full advantage of the 23kg weight saving that came from dumping the precautionary spare.

Saturday was to provide the only full day's running, with a single loop of three stages run in the morning and repeated in the afternoon. Tanak sat 13th on the road and enjoyed the clearest path possible. After building his lead through the morning,



Ogier (sitting): "Can you bring me a gift of not running first on the road?"



“You have to deeply analyse your mistake and understand where you were especially weak”

it was clear that only misfortune stood between him and victory.

Of rather more dramatic interest was what was happening in his wake, as all three of the potential podium finishers began to find their pace blunted. In Breen's case, a degree of rustiness was the primary cause of his slide back down the order. On stage after stage he berated himself for not taking advantage of the 'perfect' car and the 'perfect' road position he had earned from his labours on Friday. Breen found himself pushing to go faster but, when he got up to the sort of speed he desired, his tyres began to go off under the strain. Catch 22. Or 'shite', as he put it on live TV.

Maintaining tyre performance was also a preoccupation for Roivanpera as he took second place, but could make no further inroads on Tanak's lead. As Roivanpera struggled to find a set-up that worked for him, it was his more experienced Toyota >>

LAPLAND BECOMES LAPPILAND



Lappi was in a class of his own in WRC2

The Arctic Rally is one of those mythical events in the sport's history: a name that ranks alongside the Midnight Sun, the Tour of Mull and the Liege-Sofia-Liege. It's always short, around 150 miles in competitive distance, and the 10 stages laid on for its WRC visitors amounted to this distance almost exactly.

On the inaugural running of the event, back in 1966, the crews had to contend with temperatures as low as -54C. Fast-forward 55 years, and in general the thermometer stayed rooted a degree or two either side of freezing point.

The main similarity between the Arctic Rally of 1966 compared to that of 2021 was that both were very strong events for Volkswagen drivers. Kari Sohlberg was crowned victor of the inaugural event at the wheel of a Beetle, while modern R5 Polos featured heavily in the action from both WRC2 and WRC3.

In WRC2, the service park was delighted to see a return for Esapekka Lappi, the former works Toyota and Citroen WRC driver. He was last seen rather tearfully quitting the sport on last December's Rally Monza after a frustrating season as a privateer with M-Sport, but returned on home ground to stake his claim upon any

potential seats for 2022. Driving a Movisport VW Polo, Lappi was peerless throughout the weekend, winning eight out of 10 stages to seal class victory.

There is a Finnish expression to describe idyllic contentment: *punainen tupa ja perunamaa*, meaning a red cottage and a potato field. Red cottages were much in evidence in Lapland and possibly even some potato fields nestled beneath the snow – certainly Lappi was in his happy place once again. “I don't know how to describe it for people who haven't driven a rally car,” he enthused. “It feels so great and the conditions are so good.”

The man he beat was another WRC refugee, Andreas Mikkelsen, who last month declared his ambition to dominate every event in his Toksport Skoda as a means to force his way back into the top flight. But domination was harder to come by in Lapland than he found in Monte Carlo. Mikkelsen could console himself with strong points for second place and a maximum score of bonus points from the powerstage, but in the commentary box the reigning WRC2 champion, another former WRC driver, Mads Ostberg, delighted in teasing his countryman before he too returns to the fray later this season.

“I think Andreas was maybe shooting a bit in my direction when he did some of his interviews at the start of the year,” Ostberg joked. “He wants to dominate, he don't want to think about the championship. Well, I think now he has to think about the championship! He cannot keep up with Esapekka, so I'm glad to see that he is starting to use his head.”

There were fewer fireworks in WRC3, in which Teemu Asunma's Skoda held out over the VW of Egon Kaur to win by 4.2s.



Mikkelsen domination plan went awry

team-mate Elfyn Evans who became the first man to beat Tanak to a stage win, claiming SS4 with a gritty performance as he fought to get in among the podium battlers.

Neuville was proving rather more adept at conserving his rubber, but admitted that he and new co-driver Martijn Wydaeghe had yet to gel on this event, even going so far as to suggest that he spoke the wrong language. “I struggle to clearly understand sometimes the notes,” Neuville said. “But anyhow I try to be very focused and do my job, go the rhythm I can go and sometimes I know I have to slow down, but we did the best out of it what we could this morning.”

Just as it seemed as though this unhappy Belgian ship was about to drift back into the clutches of Evans, however, the pairing came alive on the afternoon loop. Their day ended with a sensational second run through the Siikakama stage in the dark that was 12.3s faster than anyone else. “It was a really good stage, yes,” Neuville said. “Since the communication is working better, I can push harder without making mistakes, but we still need to improve. I’m not happy yet: we need to work on the system to get it better.”

That final stage was also remarkable as it brought a premature end to Ogier’s day, only 50 metres from the finish line. The reigning world champion ran a little wide entering the closing S-bend and wound up buried deep in the snow bank, climbing from his car, only to be confronted by the yellow marker board to denote the start of the flying finish. “Just tyre wear gone, obviously, I guess like for everybody,” he said after digging himself out. “It’s a weekend to forget when you come here first on the road, so at the end of the day not that bad.”

Ogier’s misfortune promoted Oliver



Neuville fell just short of Roivanpera in battle for second

“When you come to a new event you never know what to expect. The pressure was there for sure”

Solberg into sixth place overall on his debut in a WRC car, driving for Hyundai’s ‘B’ team. The 19-year-old had taken full advantage of his opportunity, setting the third fastest time on stage three and seldom dropping

out of the top five fastest times on any stage, although a costly overshoot had prevented him from getting much further up the overall order. Even so, Solberg was doing a solid job in keeping ahead of Toyota’s Japanese protege Takamoto Katsuta and the M-Sport Ford Fiestas of Teemu Suninen and Gus Greensmith, despite losing regular co-driver Aaron Johnston to a positive COVID-19 test — his seat was ‘kept warm’ by Seb Marshall.

Another unexpected departure on Saturday night befell local veteran Janne Tuohino thanks to a bizarre incident at his hotel. He was running in 12th overall at the wheel of a privately entered M-Sport-



Jean Todt and Michele Mouton joined podium for tribute to late Hannu Mikkola



Fourth-placed Breen
had choice words on live
TV for his tyre struggles

built Fiesta WRC, and had decided to treat himself to a sauna in the evening. Tuohino slipped, dislocating his shoulder and going out of the rally.

Sunday consisted of just one stage, the 13.96-mile Aittajarvi test, run twice with bonus powerstage points on offer on the second pass. With 24s in hand over second-placed Roanpera, Tanak merely had to cruise, but Roanpera now had Neuville less than 2s in arrears, with second place on the rally for either man handing him the drivers' championship lead.

Roanpera was only 0.1s faster than Neuville on their first pass through the stage, but then he claimed a close powerstage win to end the event as the youngest-ever WRC points leader. "This weekend I wanted to fight for top place and I made a mistake and it was not in the optimum pace," he said. "But I have to say I was pushing the whole weekend, maximum all the time. I think it was a good weekend from my side." Breen went second fastest, 0.1s ahead of Neuville and inadvertently denying his team-mate an extra powerstage point. Solberg briefly threatened to gatecrash the party with a raucous effort, but this ultimately came to naught when he took too big a bite out of the snow banks and spun close to the end of the stage.

None of the drama altered the fact that, with five stage wins from 10 completed, the weekend belonged to Tanak. "When you come to a new event you never know what to expect," the winner said. "This weekend we came to Finland, kind of home country of Toyota, and I mean also Roanpera was expected to be very strong. So the pressure was there for sure, and then we knew it's going to be very complicated to take the fight, but in the end I think we did a very good weekend... Just enough and nothing too much." ❄️

RESULTS ROUND 2/12, ARCTIC RALLY FINLAND, 26-28 FEBRUARY

POS	DRIVER / CO-DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Ott Tanak (EST)/ Martin Jarveoja (EST)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	2h03m49.6s
2	Kalle Roanpera (FIN)/ Jonne Halttunen (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	+17.5s
3	Thierry Neuville (BEL)/ Martijn Wydaeghe (BEL)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+19.8s
4	Craig Breen (IRL)/ Paul Nagle (IRL)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+52.6s
5	Elfyn Evans (GBR)/ Scott Martin (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	+1m01.5s
6	Takamoto Katsuta (JPN)/ Daniel Barritt (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	+1m37.8s
7	Oliver Solberg (SWE)/ Seb Marshall (GBR)	Hyundai 2C Competition / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+1m39.0s
8	Teemu Suninen (FIN)/ Mikko Markkula (FIN)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+2m09.0s
9	Gus Greensmith (GBR)/ Elliott Edmondson (GBR)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+3m39.4s
10	Esapekka Lappi (FIN)/ Janne Ferm (FIN)	Movisport SRL / Volkswagen Polo GTI R5	+6m07.0s
OTHERS			
20	Sebastien Ogier (FRA)/ Julien Ingrassia (FRA)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	+11m06.2s
39	Pierre-Louis Loubet (FRA)/ Vincent Landais (FRA)	Hyundai 2C Competition / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+30m01.0s
51	Lorenzo Bertelli (ITA)/ Simone Scattolin (ITA)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+1h02m53.9s
R	Janne Tuohino (FIN)/ Reeta Hamalainen (FIN)	Janpro / Ford Fiesta WRC	SS8-sauna accident

STAGE TIMES

STAGE	FASTEST	LEADER	SECOND
SS1 Sarriorjarvi 1 (19.29 miles)	Tanak 15m57.8s	Tanak	Breen +3.6s
SS2 Sarriorjarvi 2 (19.29 miles)	Tanak 15m52.9s	Tanak	Breen +16.2s
SS3 Mustalampi 1 (15.18 miles)	Tanak 13m54.5s	Tanak	Breen +23.6s
SS4 Kaihuavaara 1 (12.37 miles)	Evans 9m06.6s	Tanak	Roanpera +21.2s
SS5 Siikakama 1 (17.20 miles)	Tanak 12m30.1s	Tanak	Roanpera +23.6s
SS6 Mustalampi 2 (15.18 miles)	Tanak 13m57.3s	Tanak	Roanpera +25.0s
SS7 Kaihuavaara 2 (12.37 miles)	Roanpera 9m08.8s	Tanak	Roanpera +23.3s
SS8 Siikakama 2 (17.20 miles)	Neuville 12m44.0s	Tanak	Roanpera +24.1s
SS9 Aittajarvi 1 (13.96 miles)	Evans 10m07.5s	Tanak	Roanpera +19.2s
SS10 Aittajarvi 2 (powerstage) (13.96 miles)	Roanpera 10m02.4s	Tanak	Roanpera +17.5s



DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Roanpera 39; 2 Neuville 35; 3 Ogier 31; 4 Evans 31; 5 Tanak 27; 6 Breen 16; 7 Katsuta 16; 8 Dani Sordo 11; 9 Andreas Mikkelsen 6; 10 Solberg 6.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT 88; 2 Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT 77; 3 M-Sport Ford WRT 24; 4 Hyundai 2C Competition 22.

NEXT EVENT

RALLY CROATIA 29 APRIL ISSUE

They can put the studded tyres away now. It's unlikely to be as chilly in South-East Europe in late April as it was in the Arctic.

Byron excelled in the night to score second NASCAR Cup triumph



ARCE
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IMAGES

Rules stability crowns Byron the latest unlikely winner

NASCAR CUP
HOMESTEAD (USA)
28 FEBRUARY
ROUND 3/36

In the build-up to the 2021 NASCAR Cup season, many of the major talking points were based off-track. Whether it be the most radical calendar shake-up in championship history or household names entering as team owners, attention was directed away from the Gen6 car that was given a stay of execution as it was decided switching to an all-new machine in the middle of a pandemic probably wasn't the best idea.

Moreover, a 2019 freeze on car development in certain areas, such as aero and limiting engines (designed to keep costs down for 2020), was rolled over to 2021 for the same reason.

The result has been a very open start to the 2021 term, with two first-time winners in the first two races in Michael McDowell and Christopher Bell. And last Sunday, William Byron scored his second series win with a dominant drive for Hendrick Motorsports at Homestead.

Whereas last season felt at times like a Kevin Harvick and Denny Hamlin charity event, the increased parity

brought about by the freeze has tightened up the pack, so much so that seven different squads claimed a top 10 in southern Florida on Sunday.

While this was a single round, its broke down into two separate races: one taking place in the day, the other at night. The day was dominated by those running Ford Mustang equipment, with Penske duo Brad Keselowski and Joey Logano looking comfortable out front around the 1.5-mile oval. That was before Roush Fenway's Chris Buescher crashed the party, passed Keselowski and quickly cleared off.

With Byron in the chasing gaggle, only a caution reeled Buescher back in, although he would once again muscle past Keselowski to seal the stage win, and lead a career-best 57 laps.

Only an undercut from Martin Truex Jr at green-flag pitstops midway through stage two cost Buescher the lead, although a late caution turned stage two into a one-lap shootout. Truex and his #19 crew were aggrieved that stable-mate Denny Hamlin had the cheek to attempt to pass on that lap, where Byron sneaked through to pip Hamlin.

As the race transitioned into a cool Floridian night, the Fords dropped away



Logano and his fellow Penske chargers fell way back as race wore on

NKP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

as Byron began to assert control over the race in a manner expected of those who race Rick Hendrick's cars. The #24 led 100 of the last 108 laps to ease to a deserved win.

In a sign of the changing face of the race, Homestead specialist Tyler Reddick stormed forward as night set in, carving eight seconds out of Byron in 18 laps. Although Reddick felt earlier poor restarts left him with too much to do, he finished just 2.8 seconds behind Byron, with Truex pipping Kyle Larson to third.

McDowell steered his Front Row Motorsports machine to sixth — the first time either driver or car has recorded three successive top 10s. He described the run as “stinking awesome!”

Penske's drubbing ended with Keselowski 16th, Logano 25th and Ryan Blaney 29th.

JAKE NICHOL

Van Gisbergen opens batting with double

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
MOUNT PANORAMA (AUS)
27-28 FEBRUARY
ROUND 1/12

Shane van Gisbergen made a dream start to the 2021 Australian Supercars campaign with a pair of wins at Mount Panorama. The overwhelming title favourite wasn't peerless in terms of pace across the weekend, but two well-executed races and a slice of luck last Saturday helped him stretch his Bathurst winning streak to three on the trot, including last October's Bathurst 1000.

Saturday's opening 154-mile heat started out as an enthralling three-way battle between Tickford's Cam Waters, van Gisbergen, and new Dick Johnson Racing recruit Anton De Pasquale. That was until De Pasquale ran wide at The Cutting on lap seven and clobbered the wall, prompting the first caution of the race.

The field scrambled into the pitlane, early leader Waters taking a long fuel stop as his crew worked under the bonnet of his Ford Mustang. He returned to the track in fifth place but was back in the garage a lap later with a power steering failure.

That left van Gisbergen in control, the Kiwi cruising through the second and third stints to win. He did come under some pressure from a fast-finishing Chaz Mostert in the closing laps, but later admitted he was only pushing as hard as he needed to.

Even better for van Gisbergen was that his two key title rivals failed to fire, De Pasquale scoring nothing and Waters only salvaging a few points in 20th.

Sunday's action started with controversy. Waters, running third-last in the top 10 qualifying shootout, dragged some dirt onto the circuit on his in-lap. That led to Mostert having a monumental moment through The Esses, while van Gisbergen also lost time in the second sector on his way to pole. Waters was summoned to see driving standards



In the post-McLaughlin era, van Gisbergen needed only two attempts to win two pots

advisor Craig Baird after accusations he had done it deliberately but was later cleared.

Like on Saturday, it was Waters that led the opening stint after jumping van Gisbergen at the start. But once again the first round of stops proved critical, a mega out-lap from van Gisbergen helping him reclaim the lead. Once in front there was no stopping him, van Gisbergen later reflecting on an "insane" second stint that had his Triple Eight Commodore Holden ZB gap Waters' Mustang. He added: "It was qualifying laps the whole time. It was awesome." By the finish van Gisbergen was 6.1 seconds ahead of Waters. Mostert cemented second in the standings, 33 points behind van Gisbergen, with third place.

Jamie Whincup made a quiet start to his final campaign as a full-time driver for Triple Eight. The seven-time champion never looked like matching his team-mate, finishing the two races seventh and sixth.

The hard luck story of the weekend was

undoubtedly Tim Slade. After a year on the sidelines, he made a sensational return with the new, single-car Blanchard Racing Team. He put his customer Tickford Mustang second on the grid for race one and was in contention for third place – until a gear selection problem led to a high-speed crash on the run to Forrest's Elbow with five laps to go. The impact ruled the plucky squad out of the rest of the weekend.

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN



Slade punched above his weight prior to gear selection issues – and a massive shunt

WEEKEND WINNERS

NASCAR CUP
HOMESTEAD (USA)
William Byron
Hendrick Motorsports
(Chevrolet Camaro)

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES
HOMESTEAD (USA)
Myatt Snider
Richard Childress Racing (Chevrolet Camaro)

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
MOUNT PANORAMA (AUS)
Races 1 and 2
Shane van Gisbergen
Triple Eight (Holden Commodore ZB)



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- Knowledge of software lifecycles, development environment, source management and collaboration tools
- Experience with McLaren Applied Technology tools and libraries (GDE, ATLAS, etc.).
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HAWKINS

PANDEMIC CONTINUES TO CAUSE CALENDAR CHANGES

CORONAVIRUS

A number of tweaks have been made to the club racing calendar following the announcement of the English government's roadmap out of lockdown and Motorsport UK's confirmation that the sport can resume from 29 March – but more changes could be afoot.

Three English circuit racing clubs – the MG Car Club, the Classic Sports Car Club and the British Automobile Racing Club – had events planned in March that now cannot be run. The MGCC and CSCC are in talks over rescheduling those events, while the BARC has moved its Silverstone season opener to 24-25 April.

MGCC competitions secretary Mark Baulch says it is

CCRC plans smaller opening 2021 event

CASTLE COMBE RACING CLUB

The Castle Combe Racing Club has decided to press on with plans to run its season opener on Easter Monday, and this is therefore set to be one of the first club events to take place this year.

The 6 April meeting falls a week after Motorsport UK has said club motorsport can restart in England. The event was due to also feature races from the Historic Racing Drivers Club, but these have now been postponed until August to avoid the need for competitors to travel to the Wiltshire venue from across the country.

Instead, double-headers will be held for the CCRC's four categories – Formula Ford 1600, Saloons, GTs and the Hot Hatch Challenge – and this not only reduces the number of competitors, but also avoids the need for them to stay overnight, as many live in close proximity to the circuit.

"We were faced with a dilemma over what do we do," said CCRC chairman Ken Davies. "We'd lost three headline [HRDC] races but everyone was unanimous, 'Let's go ahead and start'. We've got our own races and will have double-headers for them all and have an eight-race programme. That will enable us to

start at 0930 and, all being well, finish about 1630/1700.

"Most of our competitors are indigenous to the area, but those people with further to travel have got a shorter day to make it easier. The paddock is going to be a lot less congested and there will be plenty of room for social distancing.

"We built up a bit of momentum last year and we want to hit the ground running and get on with what our core business is, which is running race meetings. We've had lots of enthusiastic emails and people enquiring [about the season opener]."

STEPHEN LICKORISH



JONES

Britcar has a new first round following postponement of BARC Silverstone opener

HRDC boss Thurgood feels patience is needed

JONES

P65 OPINION

understandable that no club motorsport can take place in March, and the club is now focusing on preparations for its next event at Brands Hatch at the end of April.

“It’s disappointing, understandable and partly expected,” he said of not being able to run the club’s opener. “It’s disappointing because we had a strong entry for that meeting, we were going to have some pretty full grids, both ourselves at MGCC and our guests Equipe Classic Racing. It shows there’s some pent-up demand. We were disappointed but understand there’s still a pandemic, and we do still have people being taken to hospital every day.”

The Historic Racing Drivers Club has gone a step further by not appearing at its Castle Combe opener (see below), and is reviewing the rest of its calendar. “We had a full calendar mapped out, which was a great one,” said club boss Julius Thurgood, who believes it is wrong to organise meetings in the near future.

“The only confirmed race date is 30 August at Castle Combe. We’ve got a number of ongoing conversations with circuits and I’ve suspended our membership because we haven’t got anything tangible to give our racers.”

Autosport understands that a number of leading clubs are evaluating whether or not to run meetings during the first two weeks in April, a period for which Motorsport UK has given the green light but when overnight stays are still not permitted.

Clubs have a range of options on the table, from progressing with their original plans, adapting timetables to make two-day events effectively two single-day meetings, or not running these fixtures at all. As Autosport went to press, decisions were imminent, with guidance being sought from Motorsport UK and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Members’ Meeting to October

GOODWOOD

The Goodwood Members’ Meeting has been postponed from its planned May date to October in the wake of the English government’s roadmap out of lockdown measures.

The event typically takes place in late March or early April, but was due to run slightly later than usual in 2021 in a bid to try to mitigate any lingering COVID-19 restrictions.

With only limited numbers of spectators being allowed at sporting events from 17 May at the earliest – and the Members’ Meeting falling on 15-16 May – organisers have opted to postpone it.

Instead of opening the Goodwood calendar of events, it will now conclude the season on 16-17 October.

The Duke of Richmond said: “We welcome the roadmap from the government and, while we’re disappointed that we won’t be able to host the 78th Members’ Meeting in May, we’re pleased that we can safely reschedule it to later in the year.”

The later date means the rally sprint that forms part of the Members’ Meeting will feature a full night stage.

None of Goodwood’s three main events – the Members’ Meeting, Festival of Speed and Revival – took place last year as a result of the pandemic, but a behind-closed-doors SpeedWeek was held instead. Both the FoS and Revival are set to be back to their respective traditional July and September dates this year.

Combe’s 2020 opener also featured solely CCRC series

Masters plans series of demos for 3.5-litre F1 and F3000 cars

MASTERS HISTORIC RACING

Masters Historic Racing will run a series of demonstrations for 3.5-litre Formula 1 cars and other powerful single-seaters built after 1985 at five meetings in 2021, including its Donington Park and Brands Hatch events.

The events, billed as Masters Single-Seater Demos, build on a trial last year at Brands aimed at 3.5-litre F1 machinery, which attracted only a handful of participants. The British-based organisation has now opted to widen the scope to include Formula 3000, GP2 and Indycars.

Masters boss Ron Maydon said: “We tried it last year, which proved difficult in the present circumstances, but we definitely

want to give it another go. We’re opening it up a bit because there are a lot of interesting things out there that aren’t 3.5-litre F1 cars and we want to welcome them all.”

Maydon said there has been “substantial interest” from potential competitors. But he refused to predict how many cars Masters might attract for Donington on 3-4 April amid the difficulties of international travel.

Historic racing regular James Hanson and two-time FIA Masters Historic Formula 1 champion Greg Thornton have declared an intent be at Donington. Hanson is intending to take part in an ex-Andrea de Cesaris Jordan-Cosworth 191, while Thornton is planning to bring two cars.

Thornton’s Titan Historic Racing



Jordan 191 could join this year’s demo cast



Brabham BT59 and Benetton B190 were at Brands event last year

organisation has eight cars that are eligible for the demos, including three Cosworth-powered Colonis: a 1989 C3, a C3C from the following year and a 1991 C4. He intends to field one of the Colonis and what he described as a ‘mini-Ferrari’, a Lola Formula 3000 car clothed in Ferrari F2002 bodywork, at Donington next month.

Ex-F1 driver Tony Trimmer is a candidate to share the driving duties at Donington. Thornton also revealed that he is hopeful that former Coloni F1 driver Roberto Moreno will be able to travel to Europe to drive one of Titan’s cars later in the year.

Maydon played down the chances of the demos developing into a full race series, but both Hanson and Thornton believe there are enough 3.5-litre F1 cars in running condition to make a championship viable.

Last year’s Brands event attracted a Benetton-Ford B190, a Brabham-Judd BT59, an Arrows-Cosworth A11 and a Leyton House-Judd CG901, while a Lola Formula 5000 car and a McLaren M23 also took part.

GARY WATKINS

Ginetta racer White takes next step with GT5 move

GT5 CHALLENGE

Ginetta racer Chris White is moving to a third rung of the Ginetta motorsport ladder in three years by progressing to the GT5 Challenge series this season with Raceway Motorsport.

White made his competitive debut in the Ginetta Racing Drivers Club before graduating to the G40 Cup last season with Raceway. He was a regular

frontrunner, taking four podiums. Despite the GT5 Challenge still being based around the G40, he says joining the series marks a significant change with the different specification of car.

“I [originally] wanted to go straight into GT5 because of the sequential gearbox – GRDC and G40 Cup are both manual,” said White. “But I didn’t want to run before I could walk and started off at a lower level.

“Although they look the same, the cars are different. There’s about 30 more horsepower with the GT5 and that’s quite a bit.

“I feel we’re going to have a good opportunity this year. My aim is 100 per cent focused on that Am championship.”

White will be joined by fellow G40 Cup podium finisher Ignazio Zanon in the GT5 Challenge.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



White was G40 Cup podium finisher in 2020

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IN THE HEADLINES

DOUGLAS REVEALS F3 DUO

Douglas Motorsport has announced Dexter Patterson and Reema Juffali as two of its drivers in BRDC British F3 this year. Patterson won the 2017 CIK-FIA Junior World Karting Championship and spent last season in Italian F4, where he took a best result of eighth. Juffali graduates from British F4, in which she raced with Argenti Motorsport in 2020.

HILLS STEPS UP TO GT5

Mazda MX-5 Supercup race winner Aidan Hills will graduate to the Ginetta GT5 Challenge this year. Hills will run his own Ginetta G40 in the series after taking a break from driving last year to focus on building his own team. Hills Motorsport will field at least four cars in the MX-5 Supercup for championship podium finishers James Cossins, Adam Bessell and Michael Knibbs, as well as Declan Lee.

McCOSH LEGENDS TRIBUTE

Legends has renamed its masters class award in honour of racer Gerard McCosh, who died last month. The award is presented to the top-performing driver in the division after each race day and will now be known as the Gerard McCosh Napoleon Award – Napoleon referring to the pink pig toy found on the back of McCosh's car. His favoured number 69 has also been retired as a mark of respect.

GIBBS'S FUNDRAISING WALK

Ex-Formula Ford racer Rob Gibbs, who battled Ayrton Senna on the Brazilian's car racing debut 40 years ago at Brands Hatch on 1 March, has raised more than £7000 for The Brain Tumour Charity to mark the occasion. Gibbs (below), who has a terminal cancer diagnosis, was unable to visit Brands due to COVID-19 restrictions but completed the equivalent 1.2-mile walk at The Oval Raceway in Angmering instead. To donate, visit [justgiving.com/fundraising/Robert-Gibbs4](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/Robert-Gibbs4)



McLaren DDP operation was paused last year, and GT4 entries will now be run by Rocket RJN

Button's Team Rocket RJN squad to run McLaren young drivers

BRITISH GT

McLaren's Driver Development Programme will return to British GT in 2021 after a year's absence, with Team Rocket RJN taking over the running of its pair of 570S GT4s from Tolman Motorsport.

Christopher Tolman's team had run the DDP operation since it began in 2018, finishing just 1.5 points shy of that year's teams' title and missing out by a single point in 2019. It also suffered near-misses in the drivers' standings, with Michael O'Brien and Charlie Fagg losing out to Jack Mitchell by two points in 2018.

McLaren Automotive's head of customer racing Danny Buxton told Autosport that the marque had put out a tender for all its customer teams to run the DDP programme – which was put on hiatus last

year when the pandemic hit – for 2021 and that “it just came down to a few tiny little things” in favour of the team co-owned by Bob Neville, Chris Buncombe and 2009 Formula 1 champion Jenson Button.

Buxton paid tribute to the “super job” done by Tolman and said he was excited by the “will to win” of the RJN team, which ran a McLaren 720S GT3 for O'Brien and James Baldwin in 2020 and last competed in GT4 in 2018 with a Nissan 370Z.

The four drivers set to represent the DDP in 2020 will remain in place this year, with Katie Milner joined by Harry Hayek, Michael Benyahia and Alain Valente.

Meanwhile, Ginetta GT4 Supercup racer and 2019 G40 Cup champion Chris Salkeld will step up to British GT this year, driving a Century Motorsport BMW M4 GT4.

JAMES NEWBOLD

Pulling joined by Loake at JHR for F4

BRITISH FORMULA 4

British Formula 4 podium finisher Abbi Pulling will remain with JHR Developments for a second season in the category this year, and will be joined by dominant Fiesta Junior champion Joseph Loake.

Pulling, 17, scored four podiums during her maiden season in single-seaters during 2020, when she finished sixth in the standings, and also made a one-off appearance in the Formula

Renault Eurocup.

JHR team boss Steve Hunter believes that Pulling could launch a title bid. “She did a great job last year with the little experience she had got and I have really high hopes for this year,” he said. “From where she left off last year, I think she can be in the hunt for the championship.”

Loake, meanwhile, joins JHR off the back of a storming Fiesta Junior season, where he won all eight races. He and Pulling line up alongside

already-announced karting graduates McKenzy Cresswell and Matthew Rees at the team. It is the first time since JHR joined the series that the team has run four cars.

“It's nice to get all four cars out together,” added Hunter. “It's a busy year, certainly compared with previous years, and bodes well for the championship. From what I've seen already, Joseph's going to be a good addition to the team.”

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Electric cars set for top tier of British Rallycross

BRX

Electric cars will join the Supercar field in the British Rallycross Championship 5 Nations Trophy this year, as the series becomes the first category in the UK to run electric and internal-combustion-engined cars together in the same races.

Electric vehicles using the powertrain developed by former World Rally Championship podium finisher Manfred Stohl's STARD firm in Austria will now be adopted by British RX pending final approval from Motorsport UK. The governing body outlined new technical and safety regulations for the use of electric vehicles in the UK last year.

The same machines were used in 2020 in the all-electric Projekt E support category to the World Rallycross Championship. Electric cars built by



STARD and machines retro-fitted with the same four-wheel-drive, three-motor, 450kW powertrain will be eligible.

"Rallycross itself was innovative from the outset and lends itself so well to the next era of motorsport," said BRX Championship coordinator Hannah Rynston. "To be the first in the UK to combine the two types of power is very exciting, and we're very much hoping to have a few STARD powertrain-equipped cars on the Lydden grid in May."

"We have been working on this behind

the scenes for a long time so it's great to see it becoming reality."

Reigning Projekt E series champion Natalie Barratt is among those making plans to race an electric car in British Rallycross this season.

"It's an exciting prospect and one that couldn't come soon enough for motorsport," she said. "The ERX [STARD electric] concept is exciting. I'm trying to put a team together and I'm hoping I can pull it off."

HAL RIDGE

Edwards to go for third title aboard VW Polo R5

BRC

Two-time British Rally champion Matt Edwards will contest the 2021 British Rally Championship at the wheel of a Volkswagen Polo R5.

The Welshman, who won back-to-back titles in 2018 and 2019, has predominantly competed with an M-Sport Ford since joining the series

in 2016, but this term will jump aboard a Melvyn Evans Motorsport-run Polo.

"I'm very excited to be returning to the British Rally Championship, not only to try for a third title but also to see what this season has in store," said the 36-year-old.

"My campaign will look very different from the last four years that's for sure, and

we have been working very hard over the winter to make sure we have the best package possible in the Volkswagen Polo. I truly believe we have the platform to go out there and get title number three."

The BRC season is due to begin with the Nicky Grist Stages on 10 July, after the opening three rounds – the Circuit of Ireland, Tending &

Clacton and the Jim Clark Rally – were all cancelled due to COVID-19 restrictions. Last year, only the opening Cambrian Rally was held.

The popular Ulster Rally, which was cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic and is no longer a BRC round, will go ahead this year. That event is scheduled to take place on 19-20 November.

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The resumption dilemma

Clubs have the green light to run race meetings in England from 29 March. But with overnight leisure stays effectively illegal until 12 April, it creates a conundrum

STEPHEN LICKORISH

“The fact that you can do something — this is true across so many other areas of life — doesn’t mean you should.” It may not be one of the more memorable quotes from a medical officer from one of the English government’s coronavirus briefings, but these words from Professor Chris Whitty carry a very important message. And they have become especially pertinent to the issue of the resumption of club motorsport.

Last week’s release of the government’s roadmap for emerging from lockdown in England contained the welcome news that grassroots outdoor sport can restart from 29 March. Governing body Motorsport UK swiftly followed with confirmation that it would begin issuing permits for non-elite events from that same date. But, as with so many things, the situation is not quite as clear as it first seems.

The uncertainty over when clubs should actually begin their season stems from the announcement that overnight stays will not be permitted, except for certain reasons, until at least 12 April. That means there will be a minimum of two weekends where English motorsport can take place when it’s doubtful that overnight stays are allowed. Currently, you can spend a night away from home for work purposes and the provision of voluntary services — this would cover club racing team personnel that run cars on a professional basis, as well as paid and unpaid organisers

“There’ll be a minimum of two weekends where it’s doubtful if overnight stays are allowed”

and officials. But, to me — and others have interpreted the rules differently — competitors themselves are not clearly covered by those exemptions. At the point when Autosport went to press, further guidance is expected from Motorsport UK about what is allowed in terms of staying at circuits.

While some have taken a cavalier attitude, others are adamant that overnight stays relating to club motorsport should not take place. Historic Racing Drivers Club boss Julius Thurgood says: “It’s a really serious issue and we’ve got to exercise a little more patience. The guidelines are simple: you can’t travel and you can’t stay overnight. What is the urgency? We’re in March and we can say, if everybody behaves themselves, we will be out of it by the end of June.

“We know people want to get back to motor racing, but we’ve

got to understand — especially in historics — we have a cross-section of people. We have competitors who are over 70 and we have younger competitors in their twenties all from different walks of life — we’ve got people from Devon and West Yorkshire, from the Midlands and Norfolk.”

Thurgood feels it is irresponsible to bring such people together at this time, and the HRDC has elected not to have races at Castle Combe on 5 April. These will instead be held in August. You could argue that Motorsport UK should not grant permits until 12 April to avoid this issue of overnight stays. But that ignores the swathe of grassroots events organised by local car clubs. Scores of autotests, trials, sprints and more can take place with a smaller number of competitors all local to the event where there is no need to stay away from home — and the same applies to the Castle Combe Racing Club. It is pressing on with plans for its Easter Monday meeting with a reduced timetable that allows a later start, and its competitors are generally in easy travelling distance to the circuit.

There are other ways in which organisers can reduce the risks of transmission at events. For example, the new MG Car Club season opener at Brands Hatch on 24–25 April is set to feature a number of categories that only race on one day. “That’s the easiest way to limit the number of people in the paddock,” says club competitions secretary Mark Baulch. “We did that quite successfully at our first meeting at Donington Park last year and had a lot more space.” Baulch also points out that the traditional early morning rituals of signing on and scrutineering, which could begin at 0730, are now completed online ahead of the event, meaning competitors do not need to arrive so early. This in turn, makes travelling to and from an event in the space of one day easier.

Let’s be clear, we’re not talking about a huge number of events over the course of those first two weekends of April, when just 10 circuit racing meetings are planned at present. Some of these are at central locations such as Donington Park and Silverstone, where it’s again easier for the majority of competitors to travel to without needing an overnight halt. Others are at more distant venues such as Croft and Cadwell Park, where this is much harder.

It’s not necessarily a clear-cut decision for clubs to make over these early-April meetings. If they have been given the go-ahead to run events, and with many experiencing significant amounts of pent-up demand to go racing, it’s preferable to get the season under way. But if one of these events goes ahead, competitors stay overnight at the track, and an outbreak of COVID-19 occurs that is directly related to this, then it could put motorsport in a very difficult position indeed. Perhaps, it’s therefore better to heed Prof Whitty’s advice and hold back. We’ve all had to become very patient during this pandemic, and waiting a while longer for the season to start is a small sacrifice to make. 🌱

RACING WITH AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE

Mental health has become even more significant during the coronavirus pandemic and lockdown, but one racer used his rookie season to encourage people to talk about the issue

STEPHEN LICKORISH

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP  motorsport
IMAGES



There were some very important messages promoted through motorsport during 2020. Mercedes switched its Silver Arrows to black to showcase its commitment to tackling racism; many of the Formula 1 teams carried #weraceasone branding, and some rainbows, as part of the championship's initiative to promote diversity; while other cars featured NHS stickers to highlight the tremendous work the health service has done during the coronavirus pandemic. And Andrew Cohen-Wray's Ginetta in the Ginetta Racing Drivers Club series was also adorned in stickers, raising awareness of an issue that has become even more significant amid the struggles of the pandemic.

On the side of his Ginetta were stickers for the Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide charity. Cohen-Wray has a strong bond with the organisation, since his brother committed suicide. It was an incredibly difficult time for him, especially as he had lost his memory a few years beforehand as a result of post-traumatic stress disorder following his time in the police. This meant he had, in effect, only known his brother for three years. The charity was a lifeline to him and he was therefore keen to give something back.

"I lost my brother to suicide in 2012 and that had a massive

impact on everything," says Cohen-Wray. "The biggest struggle was because, when I lost my memory in 2007, from 2007 to 2009 I lived with a 24 to 48-hour memory for two years. From 2009 I was able to retain memory. When I lost my brother in 2012, I had only really known him from 2009, which was really hard.

"Having been a police officer, and dealt with a number of suicides, it was really weird being on the other side of it. It's nice to be able to give back, because the SoBS charity were incredibly helpful. I went to their monthly meetings and we talked about what had gone on. When I was in the position to go racing and have advertising space, my first thought was to get talking about this stuff.

"I was honoured that SoBS offered me to be an ambassador for them and it gives me a great platform to talk about this. There's still a massive amount of stigma around mental health, so to get people to open up is really hard. It's hard talking about it, but you've got to get it out there.

"In the police, I dealt with a high number of dead bodies and didn't talk about it. We never really dealt with those mental problems, which then bit me on the backside massively.

"Motorsport is a predominantly male environment and many people are away from home for four or five days for race weekends.



“THERE’S STILL A MASSIVE AMOUNT OF STIGMA AROUND MENTAL HEALTH, SO TO GET PEOPLE TO OPEN UP IS REALLY HARD”

Men’s mental health in the pitlane — there’s a lot of work to be done getting men talking about it and being open about it, and I thought putting the logo on my car will trigger some conversations. That can only be a positive thing.”

From the moment he decided to embark on his own racing journey, it was clear that Cohen-Wray wanted to help educate people based on his experiences. As for actually competing himself, that was the realisation of a long-held dream.

“My day-to-day job is a mental health scientist and performance coach, so I work on the psychology of athletes and racing drivers,” says Cohen-Wray. “I’ve been around pitlanes for a good few years. Business was going really well and I thought, ‘I fancy a go at this, and let’s put my money where my mouth is and see how I go.’

“Driving’s always been a passion — when I was in the police, I was predominantly involved as a driver. At the end of my job >>



Cohen-Wray took the plunge last year and started racing, with a switch to Aspetto proving successful



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Rookie was ambassador for Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide charity



interview, I was asked why I wanted to join the police and I said, ‘I wanted to drive fast legally.’ My uncle used to kart and he had a nasty accident at Snetterton and my livery is a tribute to him.”

Cohen-Wray picked up his Ginetta just before the pandemic struck, so it was “sat on my drive staring at me for a few months”. But, when he was finally able to make his debut at Oulton Park in August, he admits the season proved to be a steep learning curve.

“There’s a big difference between roadcraft and racecraft,” he says. “I found I drove the car very smoothly, as I would on the road, and I’m not as aggressive as I probably should be. It was a tricky season and, for the last round, I joined Assetto Motorsport and the progression went through the roof and I came away with three class wins. It’s been a steep learning curve, but it’s been enjoyable and I’ve managed to have some good racing.”

Since joining Assetto, the team has been able to tap into the work Cohen-Wray does with drivers and athletes on a day-to-day basis, and this has helped both sides to improve. “My job is making drivers go faster and working on their mindset, so me being able to share how I operate has been really beneficial to the team,” he says.

Cohen-Wray has worked with drivers throughout the motorsport spectrum, from karting to British Touring Car and Formula 2 racers, and says the work he does is very much tailored to the individual. “It could be working on confidence and self-belief, or developing endurance if they’re doing a 24-hour race and staying focused,” he explains. “Also, there’s performing under pressure – it’s very intense as you’re taking in so much data. It’s a massive sensory overload, so it’s helping them to understand that and working with them to make them go faster.”

Cohen-Wray is targeting a top-five points finish as he progresses to G40 Cup



“WHEN I LOST MY MEMORY, I COULD’VE SAT AT HOME AND LIVED ON BENEFITS. BUT I WAS ALWAYS PUSHING MYSELF”

“We’re [psychology] thought of as the 1% [of performance], but we should be the 99%, because your head and brain is like your engine and it powers everything you do so, if you can get that bit running right, the rest of it is really easy. Everything else should be the 1% stuff. The driving should be the easy bit – you do all the testing to get that right, but very few drivers work on their psychology. It’s breaking down that stigma – people think they’re coming to you with a problem. It’s not about coming with a problem, it’s about getting it right from the start.”

After his rookie season, Cohen-Wray is certainly hoping to be quick from the start of the 2021 campaign. He’s stepping up to the G40 Cup with Assetto, and believes that work carried out during testing at the end of last year was crucial to unlocking more speed. This has given him confidence for the season ahead.

“I’ve had a season in the GRDC and the next step is the G40 Cup, which is exciting,” he says. “It’s got two rounds on the touring car package, which is good to be in that paddock. I would be hoping for a top-five finish in the championship and as many podiums as possible. I’ve got that belief now that I’ve got the pace.”

But even getting on the starting grid is remarkable considering all of the challenges that Cohen-Wray has had to overcome. It would have been easy for him to have given up, but instead he is spreading important messages both in his day job and on the track, as well as providing inspiration for others.

“It shows people that you can go through that kind of trauma and crap and see some horrific things, and you can go on and do some fantastic stuff,” says Cohen-Wray. “It shows you can be resilient and come out with a positive story – it gives people a little bit of hope. Even if someone is depressed, or going through a terrible stage in their life, they will be able to relate to it in some form.”

“I’m just a human being, I’m not anything special. I’ve just been in the wrong place at the wrong time, but it’s how you come out at the end of it that inspires people to make changes to their life. When I lost my memory, I could’ve sat at home and lived on benefits. But I was always pushing myself out there and pushing the limits and I’ve done some really cool stuff.”

Achieving strong results upon his graduation to the G40 Cup, while continuing to spread his important message, would certainly be another addition to that list. ❧

FINISHING STRAIGHT



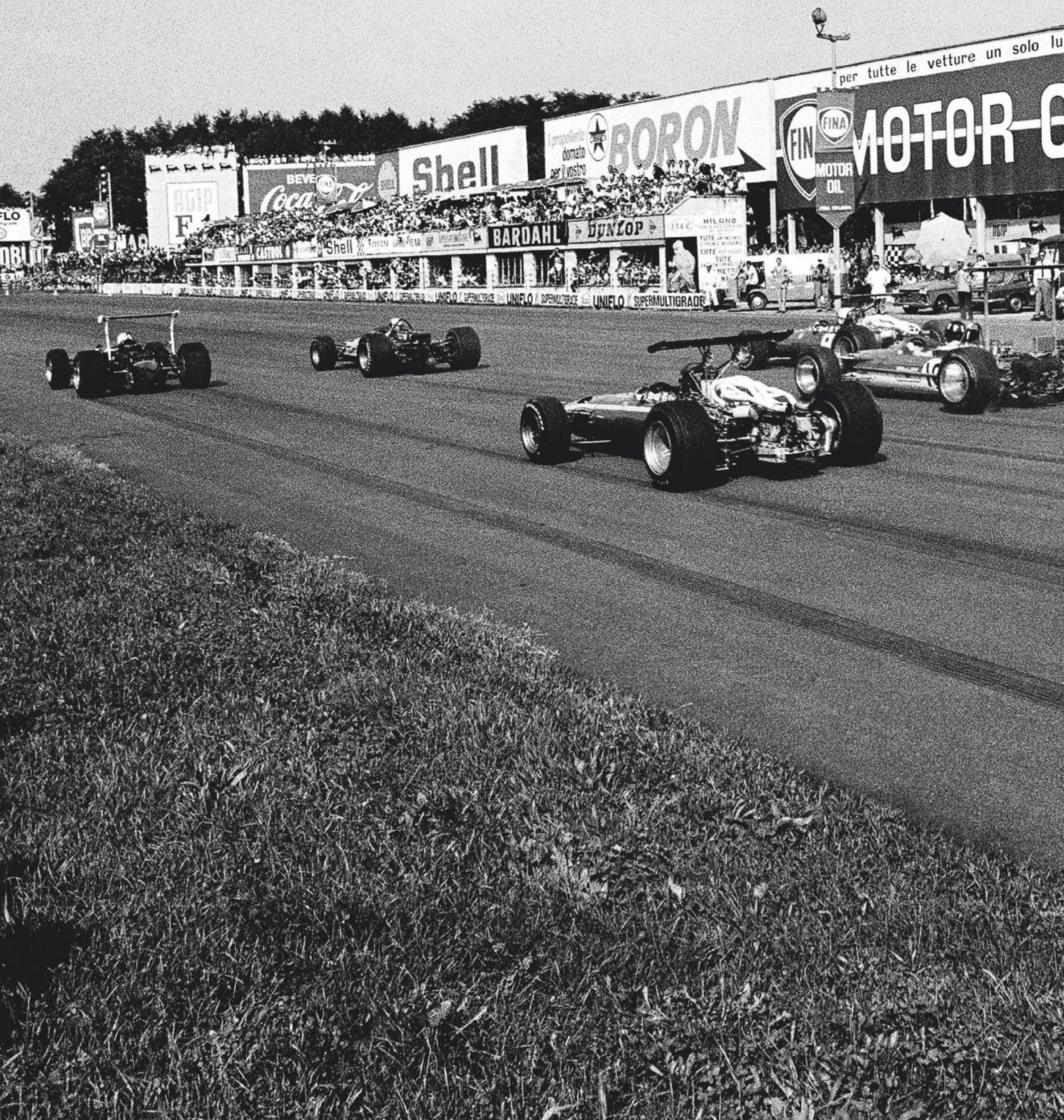
FROM THE ARCHIVE

Brian Redman leaps towards victory in the 1973 Nurburgring 1000Km aboard the Ferrari 312 PB he shared with Jacky Ickx. “This was the only Ferrari race in

two years where we actually had [team] instructions,” remembers Redman, who also recalls ‘team-mate’ Arturo Merzario ignoring the orders to hold position and needing to be manhandled out of his car

at the pitstop! Ferrari finished 1-2 anyway, taking the second of only two wins against its main 1973 rival, Matra. For more from Redman, look out for his 10 best races in next week’s issue.





FROM THE ARCHIVE

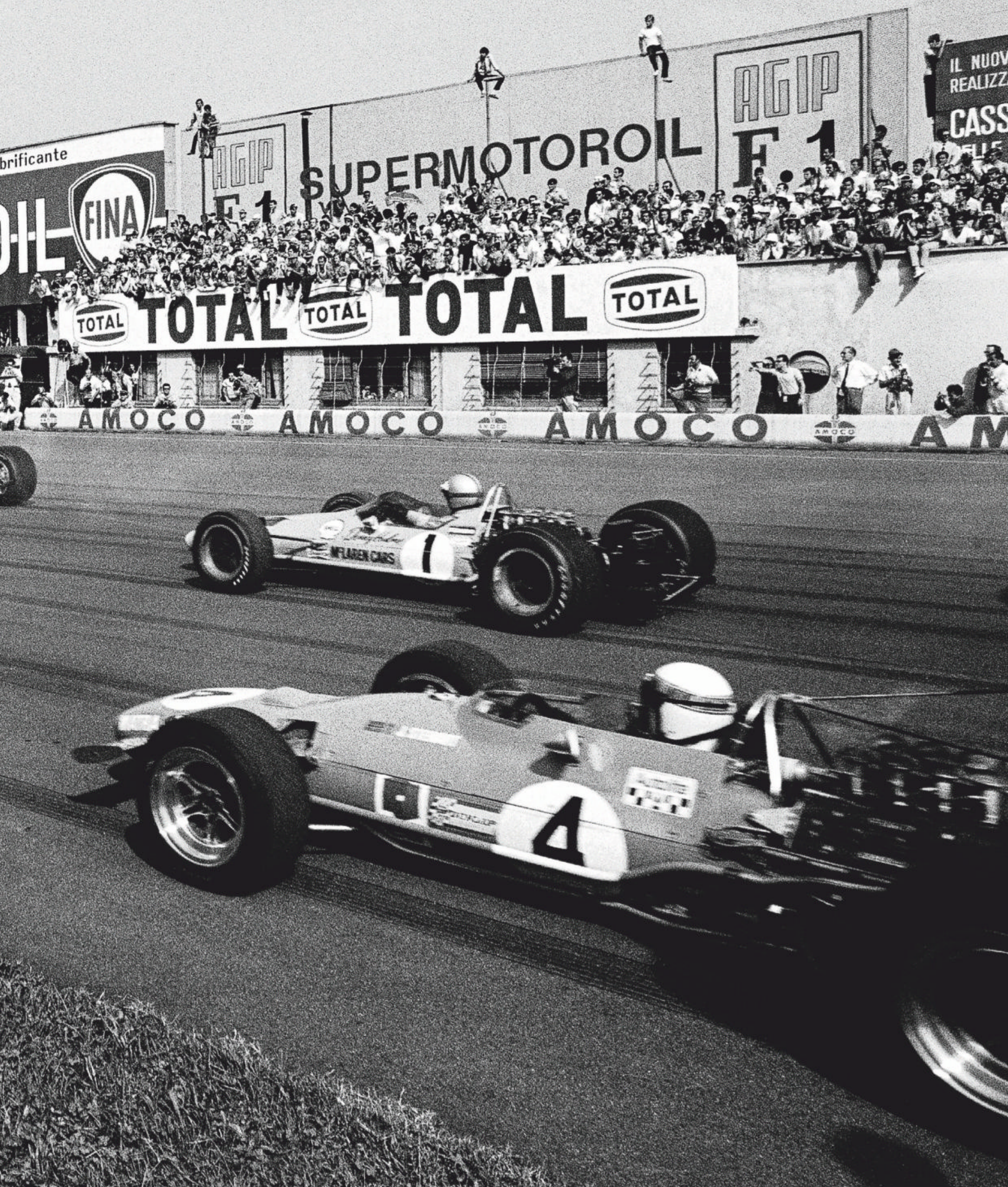
Polesitter John Surtees (in the bewinged Honda RA301) leads Bruce McLaren (McLaren-Ford M7A), Chris Amon (Ferrari 312), Graham Hill (Lotus-Ford 49B), Jacky

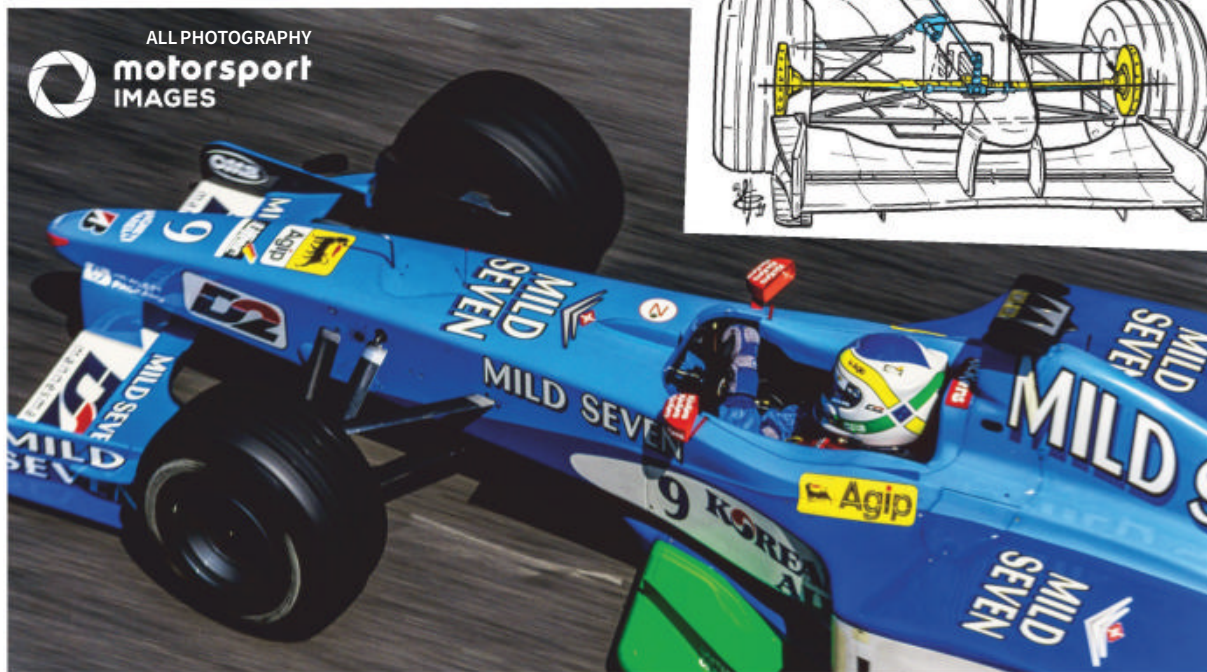
Ickx (Ferrari), Denny Hulme (McLaren) and Jackie Stewart (Matra-Ford MS10) at the start of the 1968 Italian Grand Prix at Monza. Hulme went on to win the race ahead of Johnny Servoz-Gavin (Matra),

who pipped Ickx, affected by fuel vapourisation issues, for second place across the line. None of the other drivers in this picture were among the three remaining, and lapped, classified runners.



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IN DEFENCE OF...

FRONT TORQUE TRANSFER

Back in 1998 when I was at the Benetton Formula 1 team, we had Nick Wirth as the chief designer. He was always trying to think up innovative ideas, and one was the FTT system – a differential between the two front wheels that would transfer torque from the loaded outside wheel. In theory, it would help the drivers to brake later and improve cornering stability.

Because the restricted space prohibited a mechanical-style diff, the designers came up with a cylinder packed with sintered plates in a viscous fluid. After extensive R&D work, the first unit was fitted to a modified B198, mounted on the front bulkhead. Such was its complexity, it took two guys to fit the top steering-arm bolts.

We tested it with Giancarlo Fisichella at Magny-Cours, and a water tanker sprayed its contents onto a section of the track to help us understand how it worked in the wet. Fisichella liked it despite the heavier steering, remarking that front-end grip was improved, especially in the wet.

The FTT was put into production, but unfortunately the results of testing on

further units could not match that of the first one, known as the 'Golden Unit'.

To make the installation legal for the B199 due to the crash-test requirements, the unit had to be fitted inside the chassis in front of the pedals. The wheelbase was increased to accommodate this, which led to other complications. Not only was the assembly heavy, the driveshafts disrupted the air coming off the front wing. This made the airflow to the sidepods and floor unstable, so the car became unpredictable.

The regulations then were not as strict as today, but there were objections from other teams when we started to use it on the B199 as they considered the system to be a braking aid out of the driver's control – the same logic used to scrutinise DAS last year. The FIA deemed FTT was legal, but it was only raced once – without success – before being regrettably shelved. It was hugely disappointing as we thought it would be worth at least 0.3 seconds per lap, depending on the circuit, and could maybe bring back the winning ways of 1994-95.

TIM WRIGHT

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

Aston Martin special

HELLO TO F1 AND FAREWELL TO A GREAT GT ERA



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Autosport, ISSN number 0269946X, is published weekly by Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG, United Kingdom. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named Air Business Ltd, c/o Worldnet Shipping Inc., 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY 11256. Subscription records are maintained at Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG. Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent.

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Tel: +44 (0) 20 7429 4000.
 Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd, 28 Planetary Road, Willenhall, Wolverhampton WV13 3XT.
 ISSN 0269-946X. Autosport is published weekly by Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG.

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