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Classic Ford wheels from £69.00 £82.80

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X-Flow ally radiator	£179.60	£215.52
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M16 calipers to fit vented discs (no spacers needed), pair £98.50 £118.20
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PLEASE NOTE: All prices in Red are EXCLUSIVE OF VAT

JASON PLATO: THE BTCC'S PANTOMIME VILLAN SPEAKS OUT

Tin-top legend answers MN readers' questions p12



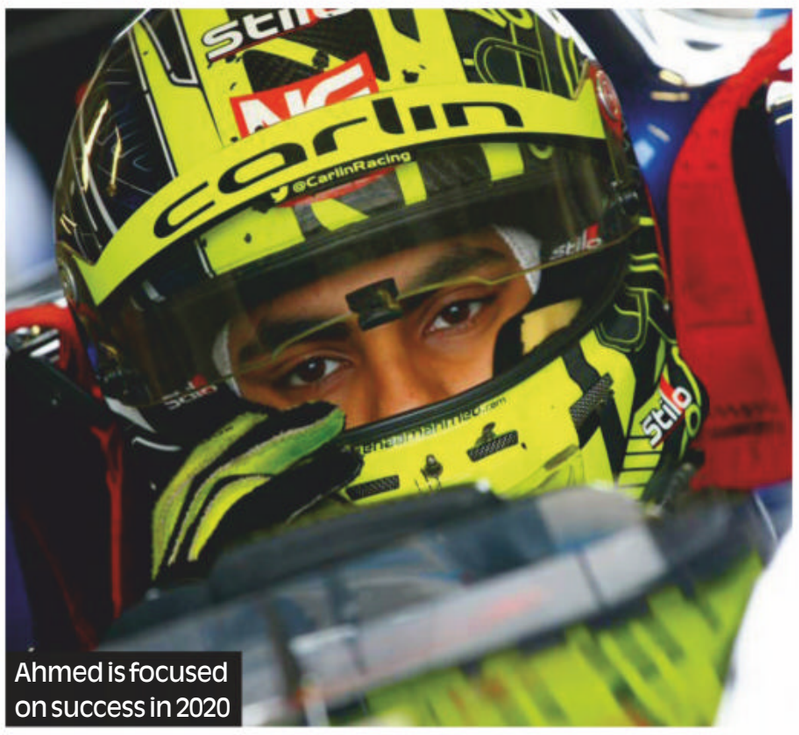
THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MOTORSPORT NEWS

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Rising British star has put coronavirus behind him and is determined to seize 2020's FIA F3 crown

'WARRIOR' AHMED READY TO KICK START F1 QUEST



Ahmed is focused on success in 2020



By Graham Keilloh

Rising British star Enaam Ahmed is focused on wowing grand prix team bosses this year by winning the Formula 1-supporting FIA Formula 3 championship after battling back from the coronavirus.

Following two tricky seasons, Ahmed has told Motorsport News he is determined in 2020 to conquer F3 where he'll compete with Carlin.

"A good season to me is simply to be the champion," he said. "I'm not going to give you the old classic answer, 'oh let's see how it goes'. No, I'm here to win, that's it.

"The really top guys like [Lewis] Hamilton have this, when I go out there I just want to literally kill everyone, it's just like a warrior mentality. And that's helped me a lot in my career fight, even when I have had adversity and people have stopped me achieving what I want. I'm not going to be put in the ground so easily."

Full feature page 8-9

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT MOTORSPORT NEWS

INTERVIEW

THE NEW BRIT ON THE WRC BLOCK

Gus Greensmith opens up to MN p16



INSIGHT

THE LAUNCHPAD FOR A FUTURE GENERATION

How British Junior RX made motorsport heroes p18



RETRO

HOW MOSS OPENED THE FLOODGATES

Sixty years on from a Lotus breakthrough p22



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COMMENT

Photo: Jakob Ebrey



Tin-top legend Jason Plato leads the British Touring Car Championship pack in 2019

DIVISIVE, BUT A PURE-BORN RACER

What do you think of when you hear the name Jason Plato? Most likely, you will have one of two reactions and I will predict them.

You might think he is mustard, the British Touring Car Championship's equivalent of Gilles Villeneuve – arms, elbows, success, incident and action. On the other hand, you might well think he is the motorsport equivalent of Wimbledon FC when it beat Liverpool in the FA Cup final in 1988. That day, the Crazy Gang beat the Culture Club. And Plato, justifiably, can also be called president of the BTCC's Crazy Club.

Whatever you think, what is irrefutable is that Plato has been the headline act in the BTCC since he first stepped into it in 1997. And now look at him: on the cusp of winning 100 tin-top races and there is no hint of him being any less committed to the category. Plato has told us before that he enjoys winning but that feeling only lasts for 100 yards after the chequered flag has fallen. A few feet later, he is thinking about how to win the next one.

Sure, he has 'played' MN sometimes to get what he wants from media coverage, but that is another string to his bow. It is not only about what he does behind the wheel, it is about his vision of what happens away from it that is almost unique among his rivals. It is about being as savvy as you are fast.

Look at the deals Plato has brought into the BTCC. Myriad manufacturers and sponsors have been introduced to the series through him. The sizeable checklist that has nothing to do with the simple fact of Plato performing behind the wheel. It has something to do with delivering value, and proving that value, through success, to those partners.

Plato might be the president of the Crazy Club on track, incident-packed, determined to win and a man who goes on to deliver the wins. For any true motorsport fan, isn't that what you want? Describe what you want a proper racing driver to be, and I think you've just described Jason Plato. He takes time to answer MN readers questions this week.

Elsewhere in this issue, we look at two of the rising stars on the global stage as deputy editor Graham Keilloh speaks to FIA F3 racer Enaam Ahmed, and Luke Barry catches up with WRC starlet Gus Greensmith.

We take a look at the huge roster of success from Junior Rallycross in the UK, scope out the success of Castle Combe and also reflect on Lotus's first F1 victory, 60 years ago. As the disjointed season looms closer, there is plenty for UK fans to get excited about.



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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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Retro: Lotus's first Formula 1 win

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RACING NEWS

EXEMPTIONS ARE A BOOST FOR BRITISH GRAND PRIX HOPES

The UK government's move to make special coronavirus exemptions for elite sports events appears to have guaranteed Silverstone's place on this year's Formula 1 calendar.

The culture secretary Oliver Dowden said last week that moves would be made to protect events like the British Grand Prix, Champions League football and cricket events. It will relax regulations on personnel travelling to the UK to take part in sport.

Silverstone is due to host back-to-back F1 grands prix, currently scheduled for August 2 and August 9.

Dowden said: "It's up to each individual sport to decide when to resume competition; they know their sports best. But football, tennis, horse racing, F1, cricket, golf, rugby, snooker and others are to return to our screens shortly."

The current F1 schedule begins in Austria on July 5 and July 12, followed by a race in Hungary before the two Silverstone events.



Abt's sim ploy backfired

Abt ditched by Audi after esports impersonation

Formula E driver Daniel Abt has split with Audi after letting a sim racer drive in his place in a recent FE Esports round.

Abt has competed with Audi in real-life FE since the category's inception in 2014. He was disqualified from last week's virtual Race at Home Challenge Berlin E-Prix and fined €10,000 after it was discovered that sim racer Lorenz Hoerzing had competed in his stead.

After being suspended with immediate effect by Audi, two-time FE race winner Abt released an online video in which he apologised and explained his actions.

"The idea came up that it would be a funny move if a sim racer drove for me to show the other, real drivers what he is capable of," Abt said. "It had never been my will to keep this secret from [other drivers]."

WILLIAMS F1 IS UP FOR SALE AMID FINANCIAL WOE

Legendary British grand prix team is on the hunt for new investors

Photos: Motorsport Images, Audi Communications, Jakob Ebrey, Team Hard

By Matt James

The Williams Formula 1 team and its group of companies have been put up for sale.

The news follows the group posting a £13 million loss in 2019, and now the squad is seeking fresh investors. If that funding can't be found, and it has admitted it has had no approaches so far to salvage the team in its current guise, then the entire operation could be sold.

The team, which was founded by Sir Frank Williams in 1977 to carry on his initial steps in the sport as Frank Williams Racing Cars, is now run by Frank's daughter Claire Williams.

She said that the team, which parted ways with prime sponsor Rokit, a mobile phone firm last week, had enough finances to make it through to the end of the 2020 campaign. Williams also said that the current coronavirus situation had added to the team's woes.

Claire Williams said: "Frank is always aware of and up to speed with every decision the board takes and is supportive. He wants to ensure the future success of his team and understands and agrees this is the right time to seek inward investment to achieve that. I have every confidence we will find the investment we need."

The firm's managing director Mike O'Driscoll said that the sale was "just one option" for the future of the team, which finished last in the F1 constructors' championship last season.



Williams has struggled in recent seasons

McLAREN SLIMS DOWN AS 1200 JOBS AXED

One quarter of the staff at McLaren will be laid off as a result of poor sales during the coronavirus pandemic, and 70 positions will be lost within the firm's Formula 1 team.

McLaren chairman Paul Walsh said in a statement: "We now have no other choice but to reduce the size of our workforce. This is undoubtedly a challenging time for our company, and particularly our people, but we plan to emerge as an efficient, sustainable business with a clear course for returning to growth."

The team has also said that there will be another round of redundancies in 2021 after the F1 budget cap, which was rubber-stamped last week by Formula 1 teams and bosses, comes into force.



Alonso (l) is part of a stellar Le Mans entry

ALL-STAR CAST FOR THE VIRTUAL LE MANS 24 HOURS

Fernando Alonso, Max Verstappen and Charles Leclerc are among the all-star driver line-up for the forthcoming 50-car Virtual 24 Hours of Le Mans Esports endurance contest.

The virtual race will take place over 24 hours on June 13-14, the dates ordinarily scheduled for this year's real-life Le Mans 24 Hours before it was postponed until September due to coronavirus. Also just like the real thing, the race will have day and night driving, driver and tyre changes and refuelling, as well as damage and technical issues.

Jenson Button, Lando Norris and Rubens Barrichello are also due to compete, as are several recent LMP1 aces such as Sebastien Buemi and Andre Lotterer, plus many top Esports drivers.

Each car's line-up has to include at least two professional racing drivers and no more than two Esports or simulation drivers. Le Mans organiser the ACO and the World Endurance Championship are involved in the event's running.

TEAM HARD OFFERS PAID GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP DRIVE IN SCHOLARSHIP

Team Hard is offering a fully-funded 2021 Ginetta GT4 SuperCup championship drive with the squad in its latest scholarship competition.

The prize, worth around £150,000, of a season in the British Touring Car Championship-supporting category is on a full arrive-and-drive basis as well as includes 10 test days and a 12-month management programme.

The team first ran a scholarship contest in 2013 and the contest for a 2020 drive was won by Ollie Brown, who will make his competitive motorsport debut with the team in this year's GT Cup. For the 2021 scholarship the involvement of sponsor RCIB Insurance has allowed the prize to go up a level to the GT4 SuperCup.

The contest is open to anyone over the age of 16 with a senior race licence or anyone without a race licence who holds a full UK driving licence. The contest is not intended for those already with significant senior-level racing experience, though anyone unsure of their eligibility can contact the team for confirmation. The cost of entering is £500 and the assessment days will be held at the end of this season.

"Anyone can enter and anyone can win," Team Hard's marketing manager Joshua Bashford told Motorsport News, "and this year's a prime example, Ollie Brown has never raced a car in his life. He turned up and he was the fastest thing we've almost ever seen in terms of someone who's just out the box. This is about giving someone who hasn't had the chance to fulfil their dream."



The Team Hard Scholarship will offer Ginetta outing

NATIONAL MOTORSPORT SET TO RESTART ON JULY 4

Motorsport UK confirms that organisers can start applying for permits for race meetings

By Graham Keilloh

Motorsport UK has confirmed national racing is set to recommence on July 4 and applications for event permits were due to open on Monday this week (June 1).

UK motorsport's national governing body has suspended its sanctioned events until June 30, though recently issued guidelines for how post-suspension race events can be run safely amid coronavirus health considerations.

Now it has made its latest step in gradually getting racing back on. In July all events holding a Grade C or D Championship permit, considered club championships, will be eligible to race.

However to reduce potential travel, no national or British championship events – those with a Grade A or B Championship permit – will be allowed to race during that month.

All events must be held behind closed doors and appoint a Covid-19 officer to ensure compliance with guidelines.

Also, to ensure sufficient volunteers and officials are available, there will be a limit on the number of event permits issued for July to 50% of those in the corresponding month of 2019. However, Motorsport UK has told Motorsport News that this last measure is a "fluid situation" depending on events' ability to run and the not to not overstretch volunteer and other resources.

The body added that it will have a better idea in the early part of this month of which events it can allocate permits to, and outlined that all applications for July it had received up that point in the latter part of last week will be issued a permit, subject to MUK regulations and guidance.

Photo: Jakob Ebrey, Paul Lawrence, Steve Jones, Porsche Motorsport



UK club contests can race in July

Motorsport UK chairman David Richards said: "It is now right that we move in step [with government easing of restrictions] and introduce the next stage of our phased restart.

"We always said that, when the conditions were right, we would take a responsible decision to resume motorsport in order to sustain the sport, jobs and the economy.

"We have explained our plans to government and are fortunate that motorsport takes place outdoors over large controlled spaces."



The 2020 Silverstone Classic is off due to coronavirus

SILVERSTONE CLASSIC IN 2020 CANCELLED

The news that the 2020 Silverstone Classic has been cancelled, the latest key date to fall victim to the coronavirus pandemic, has been met with disappointment across UK historic racing.

Uncertainty over being able to run with spectators, the likely impact of the revised British Grand Prix dates and the prospect of no European entries due to quarantine rules were all factors in the final decision for the July 31-August 2 event.

Event promoter Goose Live Events has confirmed that the Classic will be back for the event's belated 30th anniversary edition in 2021 and ticket holders will be offered full refunds or the option to roll their tickets over for 2021.

Nick Wigley, CEO of Goose Live Events said: "Given the current circumstances and the unclear outlook on timescales, staging a postponed event – which was our original back-up plan – isn't something we can plan for with any degree of certainty if we are to deliver the style of Classic that we all know and love.

"I can't tell you how sad this news makes me feel. For the last 12 years it has been my life's focus to build the Classic into the most amazing family-friendly classic racing festival, but our priority at all times is the safety and well-being of those attending our events – as well as our own team. We're incredibly grateful for everyone's continued support."

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP AND SPRINT CHALLENGE UNVEIL CALENDARS FOR 2020

The Porsche Carrera Cup GB and Porsche Sprint Challenge GB have confirmed their revised race schedules for motorsport's resumption in 2020.

The Carrera Cup will support eight of the nine planned 2020 British Touring Car Championship rounds while the new-for-2020 Sprint Challenge supports the other BTCC event, at Croft. Three of the remaining Sprint Challenge rounds will be British GT Championship supports, while its 2020 schedule starts in mid-July at Snetterton in a Porsche Club GB event. There is a single mid-September date clash for the two Porsche categories, when Carrera Cup is at Thruxton and Sprint Challenge is at Donington Park.

BTCC released a revised nine-meeting calendar for its delayed 2020 season a month ago and British GT followed in mid-May with its own six-event schedule.

Porsche Carrera Cup GB also still plans to hold four exclusive tests, at Donington and Brands Hatch on dates to be confirmed as well as Knockhill on August 26 and Silverstone National on September 23.

James MacNaughton, Porsche Cars GB's motorsport manager, said: "It was a core objective for our original 2020 calendar to try and avoid any date clashes between the two championships to try and help the teams, many of whom run cars in both championships, manage their resources as effectively as possible. Despite the condensed nature of the revised provisional calendar, it's remarkable that there's only one clash of dates and we'll be working with teams to ensure that works as smoothly as possible."

CALENDAR

Porsche Carrera Cup GB

RND	CIRCUIT	DATE
1-2	Donington Park	Aug 1-2
3-4	Brands Hatch Indy	Aug 8-9
5-6	Oulton Park	Aug 22-23
7-8	Knockhill	Aug 29-30
9-10	Thruxton	Sep 19-20
11-12	Silverstone National	Sept 26-27
13-14	Snetterton 300	Oct 24-25
15-16	Brands Hatch GP	Nov 14-15

Porsche Sprint Challenge GB

RND	CIRCUIT	DATE
1-2	Snetterton 300 (Porsche Club GB)	Jul 11-12
3-4	Donington Park GP (British GT)	Aug 15-16
5-6	Brands Hatch Indy (Porsche Club GB)	Sep 6
7-8	Donington Park GP (British GT)	Sep 19-20
9-10	Croft (TOCA)	Oct 10-11
11-12	Silverstone Grand Prix (British GT)	Nov 7-8



Porsche GB category pair have unveiled dates

STRONG RESPONSE TO BRANDS HISTORIC CURTAIN-RAISER

The Historic Sports Car Club has reported a strong response for entries for its planned Brands Hatch July 11-12 meeting that is set to start the historic race season.

The club took 170 entries in a week for the Historic Super Prix event on the Grand Prix circuit, which remains subject to government and Motorsport UK directions, and HSCC is now reworking the timetable to make the race meeting a one-day event for as many categories as possible.

"The response has been excellent and above our expectations," said Andy Dee-Crowne of the HSCC. "Sadly, it seems unlikely that we will be able to welcome the European racers that often support our events due to quarantine restrictions, but there are clearly a lot of people who want to get racing again."



2021 Monaco Historic suits Bronson

MONACO MASTER BRONSON RECONSIDERING RETIREMENT

Leading Historic Grand Prix Car racer Julian Bronson says that he may well delay retirement plans in order to contest the rescheduled Grand Prix de Monaco Historique in 2021.

Bronson is a Monaco master, with four wins and a second place to his credit on the street circuit but considered retiring from racing when the 2020 event was cancelled. Now approaching his 70th birthday, Bronson was faced with a two-year wait for the next edition of the traditionally biennial race meeting. The news that Monaco will run in both 2021 and 2022 has however made him rethink plans to sell his highly-successful front-engined Scarab Grand Prix car from 1960.

"It is a fantastic event and it is absolutely one of my favourites," Bronson said. "It is such a privilege to race at Monaco and I'd been thinking about retiring, so I thought I'd done my last race there. I've had the Scarab for about 10 years and the thought of waiting another two years was too much. Now I'm going to think again!"

IN BRIEF

Power joins British F3 esports contest

IndyCar champion and Indianapolis 500 winner Will Power was set to join the latest round of British Formula 3's iRacing championship last Sunday. The Esports contest seeks current and former British F3 drivers to compete, and Power raced in British F3 in 2003 and '04. Power said: "It's [Esports] a great platform for young guys, you can work on so many areas of your racing, I couldn't imagine having that when I was in British F3". In the previous round of the weekly contest, the second race of two was won by British touring car star Tom Ingram.

Combe confirms double-headers

Castle Combe Racing Club has confirmed that its Formula Ford, Saloon, GT and Hot Hatch championships will all have double-header races contained on a single day at each of its opening four rounds of 2020. The Combe season kicks off on July 4 and the subsequent rounds take place on August 1, August 31 and September 19-20. The club's original 2020 calendar also contains its October 3-4 Autumn Classic and it has recently added a provisional October 17 date. Content for both is to be confirmed.

Mike Bell

Motorsport News is sad to report the death of historic racer Mike Bell after a battle with cancer. Norfolk-based Bell was a popular member of the historic racing fraternity and was renowned for his superb standards of car preparation as well as being a competitive racer. Most recently he raced a Ford Escort Mk1 and a rare Gilbern sportscar in events in the UK and across Europe.

Advertising enquiries: 01233 228753

RALLY NEWS

BREEN'S WRC RETURN STILL ISN'T CERTAIN

Government decision regarding mass gatherings holds key to Rally Finland

By Graham Lister

Craig Breen is due to find out this week if his second outing with the factory Hyundai team this season will go ahead.

Breen has been called up to drive a third works i20 Coupe WRC on Rally Finland – the world championship round he knows best.

The event is due to host the resumption of the WRC season from August 6-9, providing the country's government decides against extending measures banning mass gatherings beyond the end of July; a prospect that remained on the table when Motorsport News closed for press.

Rally Finland is dependent on ticket sales, making a behind-closed-doors event a non-starter. And with Kai Tarkiainen, the rally's clerk of the course, previously telling Motorsport News that planning issues would count against a replacement date being sought, Breen's 11th Finland start is not certain.

Breen finished seventh for Hyundai in Finland last season and again in Sweden this year. He's set to partner Thierry Neuville and Ott Tanak at the team which has not taken a WRC podium in Finland.

"Obviously we are all anticipating the safe running of the rally," said Breen "Me and Paul [Nagle] really can't wait to get back in the car again."

Breen's Finnish experience

Craig Breen has form when it comes to competing in Finland. He was third on its WRC counter in 2016, his first podium at world level, and completed the top three on the Finnish championship Itaralli in February, his first outing for Team MRF Tyres, his European championship employer.

"My track record in Finland is not bad, getting on the podium in 2016, and of all the world championship rallies it's probably the one I have most experience of and am most comfortable on," Breen said. "I've been quite consistent in the past, delivering points and results, and that's what the team are looking for.

"Rally Finland is incredibly fast in places with big, wide roads and jumps through the forests. It's a special place and if you feel confident, like you've got everything in hand and feel safe, you can really do some incredible things. But the most important part is to feel really confident so you can push. When I had my good results there, I was in that zone and had that feeling, it becomes very easy."

BREEN IN FINLAND

Breen's 10 Rally Finland appearances

YEAR	POS	CAR
2019	7th	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC
2018	8th	Citroen C3 WRC
2017	5th	Citroen C3 WRC
2016	3rd	Citroen DS3 WRC
2015	DNF (engine)	Peugeot 208 T16 R5
2014	DNF (medical)	Ford Fiesta WRC
2012	DNF (accident)	Ford Fiesta S2000
2011	N/C (2, WRC Academy)	Ford Fiesta R2
2010	19th	Ford Fiesta S2000
2009	26th (1, Fiesta T'phy)	Ford Fiesta ST

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com



2019: Breen was seventh



Bakkerud has won in every World RX car he has raced

BAKKERUD SEES GREAT POTENTIAL IN GCK MEGANE

World RX driver Andreas Bakkerud says he wants to bring some "calm" to the GCK squad as he seeks to take the Renault Megane to the front of the grid.

The RX Cartel pilot is hoping his experience of three different cars and teams in World RX – OlsbergsMSE Ford Fiesta, Hoonigan Racing Division Focus RS RX and EKS Audi S1 – will boost the car's development.

"After the season in 2018 I stayed one day longer testing the Megane [in South Africa] and I was very, very surprised and also very keen to get my hands on it because it's a car which I think has a lot of potential," Bakkerud said.

"I think GCK has shown great pace many times but maybe needs more time to get an established, stable driver and inputs and more calm in the team maybe. I hope I can come in and bring something of that with the knowledge I've got.

"I've won with every car I've driven so I kind of have to win with the Megane as well. When we manage to put all the pieces together I'm very sure we can be one of the most successful teams of World RX 2020 and onwards."

JUNIOR WRC WON'T REPLACE SARDINIA

Junior WRC bosses have no plans to replace Italy on the schedule, hoping instead the postponed event can run later in the season.

Based on the island of Sardinia and originally set for an early June date, the Italian round was meant to follow Rally Sweden after the earlier axing of Rally Chile from the calendar.

Championship boss Maciej Woda told Motorsport News: "We are hoping Italy will win with the virus and will be able to organise a rally. No further updates until then can be expected."

Finland and Germany are the other two JWRC events. Britons Jon Armstrong, Ruairi Bell and Catie Munnings are among those competing in the series.



Tom Kristensson won JWRC season opener in Sweden

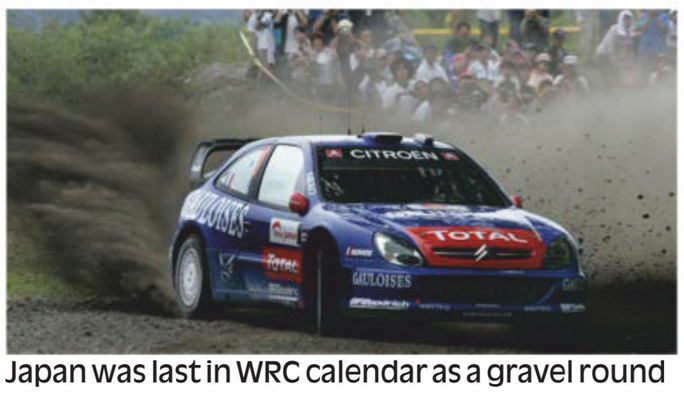
JAPAN STILL GOING AHEAD DESPITE COMPLICATIONS

Rally Japan bosses say their event is still due to take place from November 19-22, despite accepting that preparations have been "affected by the pandemic".

Planned as the deciding round of the season using all-asphalt stages, a statement from the organisers read: "The Rally Japan Management Office is in touch with the FIA, Japan Automobile Federation and WRC Promoter to monitor the situation closely.

"We are determined to put in all efforts to hold the event as planned in November in Aichi and Gifu Prefectures. We will take actions accordingly with the situation. We greatly appreciate the understanding and support of all fans looking forward to Rally Japan and all involved parties."

Speculation persists that WRC Promoter will follow the World Touring Car Cup by completing its stalled season with events in Europe only, with one source close to Motorsport News reporting that no international cargo shipping is being planned this year.



Japan was last in WRC calendar as a gravel round

OBITUARY

Phil Boland

Motorsport News was saddened to learn of Phil Boland's passing last week after a short illness.

He was still working as the GT Cup's technical coordinator this year after leading Myerscough College's motorsport team from 2000-12, but Boland's roots were in rallying. He first competed in the late 1960s as a driver and a co-driver, and partnered legends such as Jean-Pierre Nicolas and Henri Toivonen.

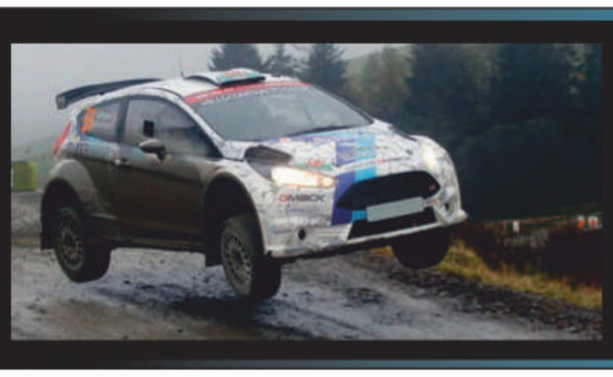
But Boland soon got out of the cockpit and started running race and rally cars for his Boland Motorsport outfit.

WRC TV's Julian Porter drove for his team under the Ford Racing banner in the 1999 British Rally Championship and remembers the warmth of Boland's character.

"He had a big booming voice but was so gentle with it. He got flustered like we all do but was so hands on with the team and only wanted to do the best. He really made you feel special and cared so much about his team. He was so down to earth."

Boland was a loving husband to Annette and his daughters Rachael, Sarah and Joanna, and will be missed by the entire motorsport fraternity.





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GOVERNING BODIES WORKING ON RALLYING'S RETURN

Both Motorsport UK and Motorsport Ireland have outlined plans to resume stage rallying as soon as possible.

MUK is working to reintroduce motorsport on July 4 (see page five) but any return for rallying is still with the caveat of no co-drivers for the time being.

As reported in MN last week, rally time trials are seen as the solution and planning for these has progressed. Aberystwyth and District Motor Club has confirmed its intention to hold one at the Sweet Lamb Rally Complex on August 9.

Six runs – three in each direction – are offered, a total of 24 stage miles, with entries costing £300..

Motorsport Ireland, meanwhile, hopes rallying can potentially commence on August 10 once Phase 5 of the Irish government's coronavirus roadmap has been reached. An expert group is being set up to create guidelines as to what a sporting return might look like, and the findings from this are expected to be presented to Ireland's various motor clubs later this month.

A meeting is proposed on July 25 with the intention of sorting out the Irish calendar for the remainder of the year.



Irish competition could return by late summer

YATES CONSIDERING HIS OPTIONS FOR THE REST OF THE SEASON

M-Sport man says title pitch is off the radar amid reworked 2020 programme



Yates is unsure which rallies he will do

By Luke Barry

Rhys Yates reckons he's unlikely to be chasing a championship in either the World or British Rally Championship this year due to the condensed rallying calendar caused by the coronavirus.

Yates was aiming for the British title alongside his WRC2 programme with M-Sport in 2020 but hasn't rallied since February because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Should it go ahead as planned, Yates's next event would be Rally Finland in August but he told Motorsport News that he's assessing the situation.

"We'll have to suck it and see," he said. "[We need to] see what rallies are coming out, see how it lies. Nobody's going to be chasing a championship, well I'm certainly not going to be, because they've just missed too many rounds.

"I know there's people throwing things about forgetting this year and starting again next year when championships are up and back going again rather than going and wasting budget on events you've done before that you were [committed to] because of a championship," Yates added.

"So that's what you've got to kind of weigh up and look at that. I'm not saying that's what we're going to do but you've got to consider that."

McLEAN RETIRES FROM COMPETITION

The current shutdown of rallying has prompted veteran Bernie McLean to end his career after 55 years of competition.

McLean has been rallying since 1965 and contested the 1968 RAC in a Ford Escort RS1600. He has spent the last 15 years running the only Lotus Elise in UK forest rallying, claiming numerous class awards.

Due to the uncertainty caused by the coronavirus, McLean and co-driver Garth Howell view this as the most logical time to retire.

Ironically, they retired at service on what proved to be their final event, this year's Cambrian Rally, rather than risk the car on a second run through rough stages.

Aged 74, McLean will now take a step back after intending to the Rallynuts Stages in April before it was cancelled.

He said: "I always had a hankering for a Lotus Elise and asked a dealer to find the oldest and most knackered Elise he could find as I was going to throw most of it away."

The Elise will go to Aron Brown, part of McLean's service crew, but is not likely to be seen in competition.



Lotus is unique in the UK

DONINGTON DOUBLE HEADER REPLACES KNOCKHILL IN MN CIRCUIT CALENDAR

Organisers of the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship have announced a provisional 2020-21 season calendar with the key change being a second round at Donington Park in December.

This replaces the Knockhill round in Scotland which had been on the calendar for the past three years. It also means the series will visits two circuits twice for the first time in its history with Cadwell Park again hosting two rounds.

The Neil Howard Stages at Oulton Park will open proceedings in November before the NHMC Cadwell Stages Rally and the first trip to Donington. A month's break then follows before rounds at Brands Hatch, Cadwell Park, Snetterton, Anglesey and the season finale at Donington complete the eight-round season.

Championship coordinator Darren Spann said: "I am delighted to be announcing this fantastic provisional calendar for 2020-21 season. We once again visit the best circuits in the UK and to be visiting Donington Park twice is a true bonus. I can't wait for the new season."

CALENDAR

MNCRC 2020-21

RND	DATE	VENUE
1	Nov 7	Oulton Park
2	Nov 22	Cadwell Park
3	Dec 6	Donington Park
4	Jan 16	Brands Hatch
5	Jan 31	Cadwell Park
6	Feb 20	Snetterton
7	March 3	Anglesey
8	March 21	Donington Park



Eight rounds at six circuits for MNCRC



Clubmans Rallycross will kick off with a double-header

UPDATED CALENDARS FOR UK RALLYCROSS SERIES

Revised calendars for both domestic rallycross series, the British Rallycross Championship 5 Nations Trophy and the BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross Championship, have been released.

The rebranded 5 Nations British RX series plans to begin at the traditional Lydden Hill August Bank Holiday weekend event (August 30-31), with round two at Knockhill a month later. The second half of the four-round campaign will be held at Pembrey in Wales (October 17-18) and Mondello Park in Ireland (November 14-15). The Dutch round at Valkenswaard hasn't been given a new date but is planned to return to the schedule in 2021.

The BTRDA Clubmans series meanwhile has launched a five-round calendar, set to begin at Pembrey (August 8-9) with a double-header event. Lydden Hill will host round two a fortnight later (September 12), before visits to Blyton Park (October 4) and the season finale at Knockhill on October 18. Clubmans racers will count their best four scores from the five rounds but must count their score from the Knockhill finale.

CALENDAR

5 Nations Trophy 2020

RND	DATE	VENUE
1	Aug 30-31	Lydden Hill
2	Sep 26-27	Knockhill
3	Oct 17-18	Pembrey
4	Nov 14-15	Mondello Park

BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross 2020

RND	DATE	VENUE
1-2	Aug 8-9	Pembrey
3	Sept 12	Lydden Hill
4	Oct 4	Blyton Park
5	Oct 18	Knockhill

Advertising enquiries: 01233 228753

FEATURE

ENAAM AHMED: ALL SET

The exceptional youngster has had a trying 18 months, including a bout of coronavirus. But he tells



Ahmed's only aim in FIA F3 this season is the title

Enaam Ahmed looked every inch the next big thing. Stunningly fast, and instantly so. Charismatic, strong analytically, popular in his teams yet possessing other-worldy focus and determination.

In 2017 with Carlin he blitzed British Formula 3, winning 13 races out of 24. Then for 2018 with Hitech he moved to the FIA Formula 3 European championship, for the final season of that parent category to the current Formula 1-supporting F3.

Ahmed started well with two early-season race wins and poles, an especially fine showing for a series rookie. But, from mid-year, he struggled acutely in the wake of Prema's sudden pace upturn. And it checked Ahmed's seemingly unstoppable momentum.

"I just started to over drive and get influenced by stupid people," Ahmed explains to MN of his European F3 campaign two years ago. "I probably wouldn't have won the championship, but [I was] throwing a really good result in the championship away."

What promised to be at least a top five in the table turned into an underwhelming ninth.

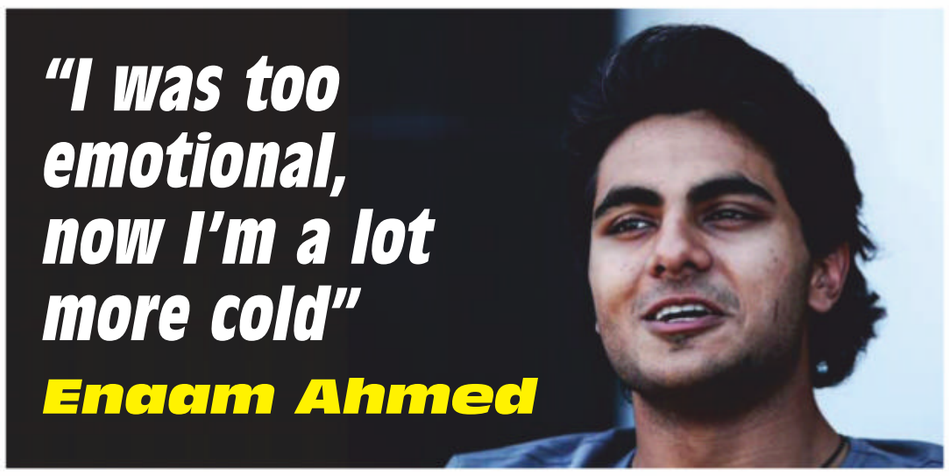
And it more generally related to what Ahmed accepts has been his main shortcoming among the many positives of the opening paragraph. "I probably was a little too emotional in 2018," Ahmed notes. "That was my biggest thing that I needed to work on. Seeing a championship getting slipped away like that, that's probably the biggest thing that I've learned. Now I'm a lot more cold about it."

Sam Waple, Ahmed's Carlin team boss from British F3, concurs. "His natural talent is very high," Waple explains of Ahmed to MN, "he's obviously got a very good natural understanding of what he's capable of and what he wants out of the car and he's got that very good feeling for what he needs to go fast. We often see with some of the lesser-experienced drivers is they're not really sure what they want out of the car, they don't really know why they're fast or what's happening, but with Enaam it's quite the opposite.

"Where he needs to work, I always thought, is a strong mental confidence and keep working on that then he [stays] up the front. But if he's in the middle of the pack [he needs to know] how to drive himself forwards rather than backwards. [That's] something I've seen him struggling with a little over the last couple of years.

"In his FIA F3 [European] year with Hitech he started strong, and then through the middle of the year started to get into a bit of a slump, didn't manage to get himself out of it. I genuinely believe that that's all mental. He's got the natural feel and ability to drive up the front but it's just getting that mental side.

"When you look at for example Lando [Norris, another Carlin graduate], his mental strength is exceptionally strong. That's one of the things that drives him out of a bad session. Enaam needs to work on that. Once he can get that in the right place, and I think he will, then he can be unstoppable."



Ahmed notes also that other things impeded during his European F3 campaign, which he's also learned from. "I just threw it away because I let people influence me to do the wrong things and I listened to too many people, so now I know what's best for me and they can all piss off frankly," he says.

"[It was advice] just for the driving. People telling me their opinion and what they think I should be doing and me, being me, I was turning 18 at the time, I was a young kid wanting to prove myself, wanting to make everyone happy, and that was a mistake I made. So I listened to them even though most of it was bullshit to be honest. And I'd actually try and do it and you don't have time to do that, it's best to stick to what you know and what you feel is right for you in your gut. I won't be making that mistake again.

"Also [I've learned] just not wasting time with other drivers or things like that, it's just a real waste of energy, and I'd rather stick to myself now. I never used to be like that, I used to always be the joker of the paddock, but now I'm not interested. I want to destroy them completely, I don't care."

Worse for Ahmed, his iffy end to the 2018 season lost him a potential major investor, who was set to fund his progress to F1. Ahmed thought he might even not be racing in 2019, but got a last-minute deal for Japanese F3. It was an experience Ahmed was glad of, and not just because he bagged third in the table despite the almost vertical learning curve.

And this year, having recently turned 20, Ahmed will indeed compete at F1 meetings, in FIA F3, and is doing so back 'home' with Carlin. Yet like everyone else he had to put his 2020 ambitions on hold due to the coronavirus-related lockdown. And again Ahmed's experience was worse than for most, as he in fact contracted the virus.

"That was horrendous," Ahmed explains, "I was completely finished for a month, I couldn't leave my bed for two weeks and then I couldn't move. I was so ill, so so so ill, I never felt anything that bad in my life. I couldn't exercise, I just had no energy to do anything. Now I'm OK luckily, but it was really bad.

"I started coughing non-stop, not hard but just really annoying. Next day I woke up I was horrendous, I was the most ill I've ever been in my life. It was like a small symptom the day before, then boom! It hit me really hard, high fever, shivering, my mum said it didn't look like I opened my eyes for two weeks. I don't even remember the first week of the illness because I was so out of it. I didn't take any medication either because I prefer for my body to fight it on its own.

"I'm fully recovered now. I lost a lot of weight through the virus, but also now that I can't put that weight back on yet because I'm fasting [for] Ramadan. I'm very skinny, I've got no strength at the moment to do anything, I need to put some muscle back on."

Ahmed has managed to put the lockdown to good use though. "Now I feel like the lockdown's been the best thing that's happened to me to be honest because now I feel ready," he notes.

"From the beginning of this season I wasn't in the best frame of mind and prepared that I could be, but now on the lockdown I've been working on myself, not physically, 100% it's been mental. [It was] just deep thinking about yourself and helping understand myself better."

So Ahmed has not only identified his shortcomings but, he reckons, has dealt with them ruthlessly. And Waple notes



Photos: Motorsport Images, Jakob Ebrey, Paul Lawrence

TO STRIKE BACK

Graham Keilloh that he is ready to conquer all before him once again



Ahmed dominated British F3 with 13 wins from 24

indeed that such characteristics mark Ahmed out even more than his brilliant pace. "His work ethic is greater than most I've worked with," Waple says. "His focus and the way he goes about a race weekend and how dedicated he is to winning is extremely high. I don't see that in a lot of the drivers we have."

Ahmed is aware of his own determination too: "The really top guys like [Lewis] Hamilton have this, when I go out there I just want to like literally kill everyone, it's just like a warrior mentality. Like I really want to literally rip their hearts out and eat it, and that's how I am. And that's helped me a lot in my career fight, even when I have had adversity against me and people have stopped me from achieving what I want to achieve that's what's helped me to keep going, because I'm not going to be put in the ground so easily."

Waple tells a tale of the final race of Ahmed's British F3 championship year, where Ahmed, his title won, was told to follow team-mate Cameron Das home to ensure a rare 1-2-3 for Carlin drivers in the final table. "Enaam in his racing-driver wisdom took a big lunge into the bottom hairpin and basically shoved Cameron out the way [and] went on to win the race," Waple says, "[and] he clipped Cameron's front wing and made him box. [Das] ended up P5 in the championship because of it. Enaam just couldn't accept that he couldn't win that race. We fell out for a little while over that."

Waple also recalls that Ahmed's determination to improve was evident even amid leaving British F3 rivals well behind: "He put a lot of development on himself, he put an awful lot of pressure on himself to be better throughout 2017.

"From the middle of the year he'd already decided that he was going to move up the following year to FIA F3 [European] and mentally he was preparing himself for that and realised that the competition was going to be a big jump, so we saw him engage another gear.

"[He thought] 'I don't just need to be P1, I need to be P1 by a few tenths, I need to be so far up the road that when I go to FIA F3 that I'm competitive'. It didn't matter how many races he won in British F3, he still had that drive and that push to make sure that he was developing."

Just about everything looks in place for Ahmed to show in 2020 what he's really made of. Although, with that, and with what's gone before, results are a necessity.

Waple recognises this: "He's going to be thinking he needs to win it [the championship], I think that's in his head [that] he needs to use this year as a stepping stone to the next and if he doesn't do very well I think he'll be thinking 'well what have I got now to do?' So he'll be putting an awful lot of pressure on himself to be right up the sharp end for sure."

It's a challenge though that Ahmed is absolutely up for. "A good season to me is simply to be the champion, that's about it to be honest," he asserts. "I'm not going to give you the old classic answer that I used to give and most drivers give, 'oh let's see how it goes'. No, I'm here to win, that's it, f*ck everything else." ■



Ahmed prepared for step up during F3 year



Ahmed in late-2018 GP3 testing for ART at Abu Dhabi



Ahmed enjoyed his experience last year in Japanese F3



Carlin's Sam Waple (right) worked with Ahmed in British F3

FF1600 man Tarling's coronavirus recovery

Historic Formula Ford battler Richard Tarling is planning a gentle return to the cockpit after recovering from Covid-19.

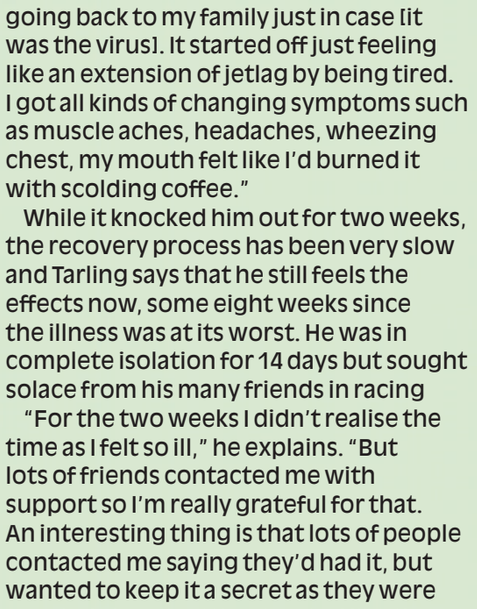
The 41-year-old, who was the 1999 Formula Palmer Audi champion, has earned a reputation as a tough and fast competitor on track, but the battle he faced over the opening months of this year when he contracted the disease on his return from an overseas race was tougher. The Henley-on-Thames driver had been to the other side of the world to follow his racing dream and he thought it was simply the rigours of his late-January trip that had caught up with him – even though he was fully aware of what was happening on a global scale.

He explains: "I had flown back from racing at the Phillip Island Classic and we had a very busy tiring trip. I had already decided to self-isolate for a week before going back to my family just in case [it was the virus]. It started off just feeling like an extension of jetlag by being tired. I got all kinds of changing symptoms such as muscle aches, headaches, wheezing chest, my mouth felt like I'd burned it with scolding coffee."

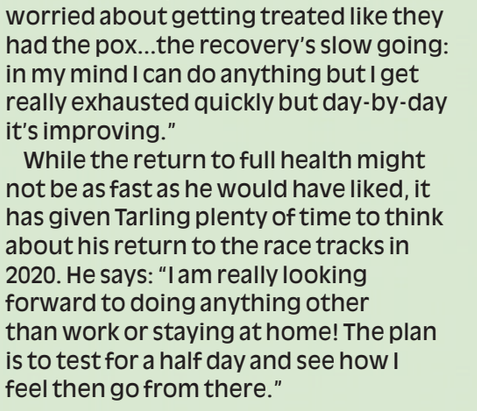
While it knocked him out for two weeks, the recovery process has been very slow and Tarling says that he still feels the effects now, some eight weeks since the illness was at its worst. He was in complete isolation for 14 days but sought solace from his many friends in racing

"For the two weeks I didn't realise the time as I felt so ill," he explains. "But lots of friends contacted me with support so I'm really grateful for that. An interesting thing is that lots of people contacted me saying they'd had it, but wanted to keep it a secret as they were worried about getting treated like they had the pox...the recovery's slow going: in my mind I can do anything but I get really exhausted quickly but day-by-day it's improving."

While the return to full health might not be as fast as he would have liked, it has given Tarling plenty of time to think about his return to the race tracks in 2020. He says: "I am really looking forward to doing anything other than work or staying at home! The plan is to test for a half day and see how I feel then go from there."



Tarling felt symptoms after trip



Tarling in Historic Formula Ford

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COLUMN

CHRIS INGRAM

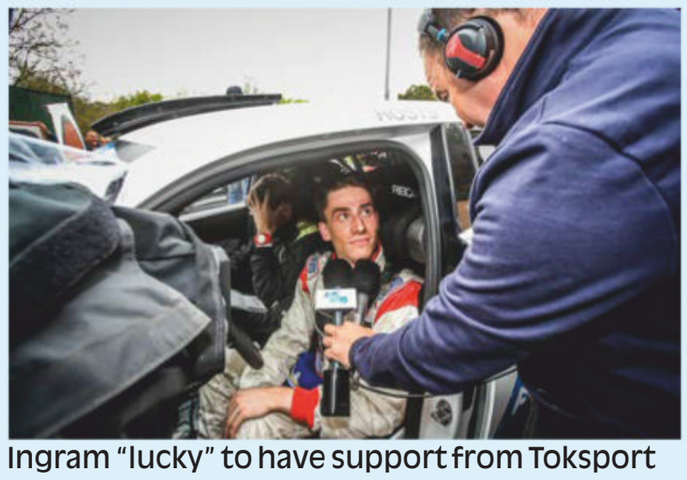


European champion says rallying needs to go to the people

Photos: fiaerc.com



Ingram: Change is needed in UK



Ingram "lucky" to have support from Toksport



Closed-road events are the future says Ingram

This year has certainly been a weird one for rallying. No rallies have run since the beginning of March and a lot of drivers, me included, haven't driven a single kilometre since last year. But in times of adversity we must look to change things and I feel now is the perfect time for UK rallying to take a look at itself and improve.

At the moment, there is a lack of structure in some parts of our sport with too many similar events and not enough opportunities for young drivers to get involved. In my opinion James Williams and George Lepley are the brightest young drivers in the UK at the moment but neither of them have really had the chance to properly progress and show the world what they can do.

There aren't enough youngsters wanting to become rally drivers and that's concerning, particularly when you compare things to 15 or 20 years ago. Even for me, I feel that if I was five years older I could be in a similar position to Elfyn Evans but opportunities have been more limited for me so what hope does the next generation have in the next five years?

If you look at Motorsport Ireland and what it's doing with its Rally Academy; it's perfect. But nobody's stepping up and doing that in the UK. Callum Devine, who I will be competing against in the European Rally Championship, will receive great support through the scheme this year which will be of huge value. And it has a whole load of other young drivers that have a good opportunity to progress thanks to Motorsport Ireland's help.

I'm very lucky that I've found a team in Toksport that believe in me and wants to help me get to the next level, but what hope do young British drivers have when there's no-one in the UK backing them?

Streamlining the British Rally Championship and offering a bigger incentive to win the main R5 class would help. Ypres was a great addition to the BRC but more could be done. Having a round of the ERC in Britain, like we used to have with the Circuit of Ireland, would be a massive benefit too. If it's possible, this should be a priority for Motorsport UK as it will bring huge tourism money and give some of our local stars the chance to shine on a bigger stage.

Closed-road rallying has been the big positive over the last few years. It's the best news we've had for ages and we need to capitalise on that. I'm seriously considering entering the North West Stages or the Jim Clark Rally in something like a Subaru Impreza S12B WRC soon. I've had a couple of conversations and that would be just something else.

These rallies are the future as it's important that we bring rallying to the public and not hide away in the forests. If we had a closed-road rally as the British World Rally Championship round for example it would be so commercially appealing and would be much more accessible to loads more people.

Sadly I think Wales Rally GB has lost some of its charm – people outside of the UK don't seem to care about it anymore – so either a permanent or a rotational move to a closed-road event would be mega. Whether they can take the rally across the UK again like they used to I'm not sure, but the British round of the WRC used to be the biggest spectator event in the country and it definitely isn't now.

I worry that no young drivers will be interested in rallying. This is the best sport on the planet and the UK was one of its founding fathers, so it goes hand in hand. Since Colin McRae and Richard Burns, rallying has been neglected in the UK. Elfyn Evans is second in the WRC yet nobody who's not a rally fan knows who he is outside of Wales. We all need to come together to save the future of UK rallying.

Speaking of coming together though, I want to sign off by mentioning the MN Chris Ingram Rally Challenge on DiRT Rally 2.0. I was blown away by the camaraderie and the competition within the series, it was such good fun. I've had quite a few people asking me if we're going to do another one. Watch this space!



Opportunities no longer there for youngsters



MN Ingram series may return in the future

"We all need to come together to save the future of UK rallying"

SPECIALIST

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FEATURE

JASON

I WAS READY TO QUIT,

The most successful British touring car driver in terms of



Jason Plato: back to the top of the BTCC



Plato handled the Van Diemen Formula 3 chassis

For two-and-a-half decades, Jason Plato has been right in the thick of the British Touring Car Championship, dividing opinion and mopping up the race wins.

The Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra driver, who has been through some tough seasons recently, put himself back in the spotlight with a victory in the final round of the 2019 competition at Brands Hatch and he is fully fired up for the 2020 campaign.

He has made a decent living by racing in the BTCC and fronting Channel 5's Fifth Gear road car programme, which has boosted his profile beyond that of any other driver on the grid. During the pitlane walkabouts at each event, his is still always the longest queue.

While he waits for the new season to come around at Donington Park on August 1-2, he took time out of his schedule to answer Motorsport News readers' questions. As ever, he is searingly honest.

MN sets the scene: After success in Formula Renault, including winning the series' first European title in 1991, Jason Plato's single-seater career was on an upward trajectory. He didn't have a lot of cash, but he knew that Formula 3 was the next step. Finance determined that he would drive for Van Diemen in its brand new single-seater. It would only last half a season before the money ran out, and it was Van Diemen's only attempt at the category.

Question: "What was the Van Diemen Formula 3 car really like to drive: [team boss] Ralph Firman has said it was the chassis he was most proud of?"
Russell Scobbie
Via email

Jason Plato: "That car was a work of art. It was beautifully done. The tub was amazing. All of the front suspension installation was very trick for that time but, in my opinion, there was a fundamental flaw with the kinematics of the rear suspension. When the loads came up the rear pushrods and they came into the rocker arm, there was masses of stiction. If you look from the gearbox down the line of the car, the pushrods came up at, say, 30 degrees. How it then turned that 30-degree moment of thrust through to a longitudinal mechanism wasn't great. It was all a bit wrong.

"You would be able to set the thing up on the flat patch – bear in mind set-up is critical in those types of car – and you could twist the back of the car and the corner weights would be all skewwhiff.

"There were bits where the car was great – the front end was amazing – but the rear was just a bit unpredictable. Being a freshman in Formula 3, it was just very difficult to drive and be consistent with."

MN sets the scene: After the single-seater dream died, Plato scratched around for a deal. He ended up dominating the Renault Sport Spider series in 1996, which put him right under the nose of the Williams-run Renault British Touring Car Championship team. The championship was in the middle of a revolution in terms of the types of drivers who took part. It was no longer and old man's game, and younger drivers were beginning to break through.

Question: "Do you think you were a trailblazer for young drivers looking at the British Touring Car Championship as a career option?"
Malcolm Munt
Via email

JP: "I certainly went towards it but I didn't share the view that it was full of a load of old blokes though. In years prior to me getting involved, arguably so. But when I really focused on it, there were drivers like Alain Menu, Jo Winkelhock, Frank Biela, Rickard Rydell, Gabriele Tarquini – mind you, Gabriele does fit the more senior driver bracket because although he is a delicious guy, he is about 700 years old!

"Just before Super Touring came, when Alfa Romeo brought that crazy homologation special out with that wing in the boot in 1994, the grid of drivers was unbelievable. Back in those days, Rydell was a real up-and-coming driver and the BTCC was *his* destination."

MN: But you get drivers coming into touring car racing now who haven't necessarily fallen off the single-seater ladder and then gone to the BTCC. They have had it as a target from the very outset of their careers…maybe because of your success.

JP: "Yes, I guess that is true. That is what happened to me when my single-seater aspirations were over – which was quite quickly!"

Question: "If you could drive any

PLATO

BUT I'VE BOUNCED BACK

race wins answers readers' questions. By Matt James

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Motorsport Images, Gary Hawkins



The first British Touring Car Championship win in a Laguna in 1997

racing car through history what would it be and why?"
Greg Tomkins
Via Facebook
JP: "That's a toughie! There are quite a few!"
MN: Give us your top three then…?
JP: "One, most certainly, would be the Ferrari 312T4 and the T5. The ones that Jody Scheckter and Gilles Villeneuve drove in 1979 and 1980 in grand prix racing. Whenever you see pictures of Villeneuve in that car, he is always sideways. It looked amazing. The reason I say that is I was about to start karting and I had a poster of Gilles on my bedroom wall and he was my hero. He was everything. That car has got a special place in my mind, even though it might not have been the greatest Formula 1 car of all time.

"Years ago, when I was working for Fifth Gear, I went down to test a Ferrari at Fiorano. I went into Enzo Ferrari's flat at the circuit, all the behind the scenes stuff. I walked into Enzo's little office and on his desk there was an open diary, a purple felt-tip pen which he was famous for writing with and one photograph of one driver and it is Gilles. How amazing is that?

"I am good friends with Scheckter, we see a lot of each other, and I am so close to convincing him to let me drive the 1979 world championship-winning 312T4 he has. That would be all my dreams come true. I have been working on it for about five years.

"Another car would be a Porsche 917 because of the original Le Mans movie with Steve McQueen, which is lush, although I am not sure I would be brave enough to drive it too fast.

"Another one would be the beautiful, which I have looked at in great detail because Frank Williams had one once, coke-bottle shaped Ferrari [the 1989-1990 640 and 641]. What a great-looking car. And also Red 5, the 1992 Williams FW14B."

Question: "Which pre-Super Touring-era British Touring Car Championship car would Jason most liked to have driven competitively?"
@huntbrothersf1
Via Twitter
JP: "That would have to be a Ford Sierra RS500. It has got to be."
MN: We always had you pegged as more of a Jaguar Mk2 guy with a twirling moustache…
JP: "Funnily enough, I used to work for Tom Walkinshaw Racing as a gofer when they were running the works Jaguar XJSs in European Touring Cars in the early 1980s. I used to help out there in the summer holidays. I used to make the tea, hang the pitboard out, anything really. I was there at Silverstone in 1984 when there was a massive shunt at Woodcote and Chuck Nicholson and just about everyone else went off in the wet. I have told this story to [then TWR XJS driver] Martin Brundle and he denied it, but this did happen: he came to the factory and he threw his car keys at me and said "wash my car". He's since said that he'd never have done something like that, but I didn't feel bad about it because he was the hero back then. So maybe I would

continued on page 14



The 97-time race winner is on a charge

Advertising enquiries: 01233 228753

FEATURE

have liked to have driven an XJS in the European championship."

Question: "Out of the touring cars he's ever raced which was the best?"
@grewky
Via Twitter
JP: "The Renault Laguna in 1997. That was something else, that thing."
MN: Because that was the first touring car you raced, though, you didn't really have a reference point. You must have thought all touring cars were that good…
JP: "I thought all BTCC cars were maybe that good until the 1998 Renault Laguna came along and it wasn't all that special! I remember my team-mate Alain Menu, very early on that year at Silverstone when we were on the drivers' parade, putting his arm around me and saying "mate, we have got *some* machine here this year – this thing is the best I have driven in my life". That always stuck with me. I knew the car was quick, but it took a while to realise just how good it was."
MN: How come it took you until Snetterton in August in that season, your first in 1997, to win a race: after all, you had been on pole for the first three rounds of the campaign…
JP: "There was a bit learning. It took me a while to get good starts. And also, tyre management back then was crucial. Alain Menu could drive a race distance faster than me – he could drive laps that were just as fast, but he looked after his tyres. It took me a while to get my head around that. And let's not forget, Alain was the best in the world back then and I was a puppy. It took a while. And also, after the first two events and sticking it on pole, I was walking around with my heels a bit high and my chest puffed out. I was probably having too much fun and not working hard enough.

"Alain started to beat me in qualifying and I was always playing catch up because he was leading the points. I couldn't have a go at him [due to team orders], but I was fine with that.

"Snetterton was the first time really that we could fight together and it would make no difference if he came second, because he was so far ahead in the points. I felt confident enough to step up. Remember, even though my deal was a three-year deal, it was three one-year deals with options. I couldn't f**k it up. I didn't want to screw things for myself by being a twat."

MN sets the scene: Jason Plato is known as a take-no-prisoners racer, and that has often brought him into conflict with others on-track. Among those ongoing rivalries is his battle with Team Dynamics driver Matt Neal, which almost came to blows at Rockingham in 2011.
Question: "Matt Neal spoke about the discussions about you joining Team Dynamics, could you have been Matt's team-mate?"
Barrie Anderson
Via Facebook
JP: "When were there discussions!? What actually happened was Steve Neal, Matt's dad who used to own the team, thought I had the keys to a factory Volvo deal in the British Touring Car Championship, which I actually did for a short time until things changed. Steve didn't have a works deal at that time and consequently I became his mate again.

"I did hear a whisper that they did once contemplate me joining Matt in the team. Could I ever drive at Team Dynamics with Matt? I would find it very difficult because there is such a lot of stuff that has gone under the bridge between me and him. It would be very, very difficult.

"If it was me and someone else in the other car and not Matt, then possibly so. I might be able to make that work. Team Dynamics are very good operators and they understand if someone's good, they are good, but nevertheless, when there is a family member in the driving seat, then it is very difficult. A better question would be 'would I be happy for him to be my team-mate in any other team?'. And the answer would be yes: bring it on."

Question: "If Jason could, where would he punch Matt Neal?"
@BTCCAddict
Via Twitter
JP: "Well I simply wouldn't. I am a lover, not a fighter."

Question: "You have had many hard-fought battles through the years, who was the toughest opponent you ever raced against?"
Robert Medland
Via Facebook
JP: "There have been so many. Yvan Muller was hard, and slippery, and devious and political. He lied more than all the current government ministers put together. But he was a brilliant, and I mean brilliant, driver but just hard work. Frank Biela was hard but fair, Alain Menu was hard but a brilliant driver, as was James Thompson. Even Matt Neal, when he is in the groove he can be a really tough opponent. Rickard Rydell was tough too.

"The one I enjoyed racing against the most though was Fabrizio Giovanardi. I had a really nice relationship with him. We knew exactly where we were with each other and I didn't mind taking a little bit from him because I knew it was done professionally and there was a reason for it. Generally, it was just a little lean, like a can opener – it was just a nibble which made you think 'ooo, you clever f**ker'. It was never a punt, it was a winkle. And he knew that I will give it back. He was great to race against, and I am very fond of Fabrizio.

"I did cross him, by sheer mistake, in the World Touring Car Championship round at Silverstone in 2005 when I came second to Rydell in the SEAT. I had a moment with Fabrizio and it was totally unintentional. I just caught him on the fast Becketts section. I was inside him, but I just let the car run wide a bit too much and I clattered him. It screwed him up because he had got on the marbles, and I didn't want to do that. I got the look afterwards from him as if to say 'I will remember that'. And he did get his own back.

"It was at Spa later that year. It was the race that determined the reversed grid, and I was sat in eighth which would have been pole later. He just f**king did it back to me: a little tap which pushed me wide and lost me places. On the slowing down lap we glanced at each other through the windows and I could just see the look in his eyes, which was saying 'we are even now'. I was fine about that."

Question: "Is there a team offer or drive that Jason didn't take up or missed out on, that looking back with hindsight, he wished he had?"
@RPGilb
Via Twitter
JP: "Yes, there is actually. In Formula Renault UK in 1991, both me and [rival] Bobby Verdon-Roe had a big prize indemnity for winning the series, and it was a rough season. If I won the championship, that would have given me the budget for Formula 3 in 1992 and I had a deal agreed with Paul Stewart Racing. My indemnity was worth £250,000: I was going to PSR, boom. It all went wrong [Verdon-Roe won the Formula Renault title] and that was it.

"Beneath all of that, we really didn't have a pot to piss in. I might have had about £50,000 in total. All the F3 seats were filling up. I knew what was going on with the new Van Diemen F3 project because I had been a works Van Diemen driver in Formula Renault. There were two F3 seats left: Fortec, which was a relatively unknown F3 team at that point, and the Van Diemen drive.

"I knew that Kelvin Burt had a little bit more money than I did. I got a tip off that Kelvin was after the Van Diemen drive because, on paper, that looked like it was going to be the better seat. I woke up one morning and decided I was going to go and get [Van Diemen boss] Ralph [Firman] out of bed. I went to his house and I knocked on his door on 0530hrs. His wife Angie came down and asked me what I was doing at that time of day, but I told her I had to speak to Ralph. In I went, I sat in the kitchen and Ralph came down in a dressing down with a fag on, and I told him I wanted the F3 drive. I didn't have the full budget, nowhere near, but I told him I would find the rest of it. I left with the drive in my pocket.

"Kelvin then went and did the deal with Fortec and that was a good thing for him [he finished third in the standings with two wins and went on to win the title in 1993]…and I lost my drive halfway through the year because I didn't have enough budget."

Question: "Does working in TV on Fifth Gear benefit your racing skills in any way? And equally does it cause you any issues?"
Luke Barry
Via Facebook
JP: "I think it does benefit my racing



Plato beat Muller to the title in 2001



Up against the world's best: Plato and Alain Menu were team-mates



Going toe-to-toe with Team Dynamics rival Matt Neal in 2006



The time with BMR in the Levorg present Plato with "dark moments"



Hooning around has its benefits: Plato's incredible 'save' in 2009



Making a point with a BMR Racing Subaru at Knockhill in 2017



A second BTCC title win came in an RML-run Chevrolet in 2010



Plato's BTCC career began with three poles

skills. Remember 2009 when Jonny Adam clouted the back of my Chevrolet at the top of Paddock Hill Bend at Brands Hatch at the opening meeting of the season? I had what can only be described as an accident [Plato's car was fully sideways for the whole of Paddock Hill Bend and he performed a stunning save]. I put the fact that I was able to rescue the job down to all the telly driving and hooning around. A lot of credit also has to go to [co-host] Tiff Needell, because I learned a lot of things from him. The save that day at Brands wasn't a motor racing reaction, that was a telly driving reaction that just kicked in.

"You never get cars sideways like that on a race track, but you do when you are f**king around in front of a camera. It has helped, because I am not spooked by going backwards in a front-wheel-drive car through a corner. It is now fun for me."

Question: "Who's the most talented person he's seen in a road car on Fifth Gear or otherwise?"
@TedClarke777
Via Twitter
JP: "Tiff Needell, honest to God. I am f**king good at doing telly driving and performing to a camera and hanging it right out next to the cameraman and keeping everyone alive. But Tiff is different gravy, he is a genius. He is a bit unorthodox: his hands are everywhere and he lets go of the steering wheel and lets it spin in his hands. I don't, I always walk the wheel and keep my hands on it.

"We are the only show on TV that does this because we have got proper drivers, but Tiff can position a cameraman like I would but he will be a lot braver than me. He will position a camera and go hooning into a corner at 100mph in a Ferrari 458 or something and he will be literally on the lockstops and he will miss the cameraman by an inch. Unbelievable.

"He is unhinged though, and I have punched him in the face more than one occasion as I have been a passenger and he has been mucking around. I hate being a passenger. I don't like it, and he knows that and he plays up to it."

Question: "You open your garage and you can only have three road cars in there. What are they?"
Jack Crowther
Via email
JP: "Nice question Jack! One would be practical, it would be a tank where I can chuck everything into it – the kids the luggage, the dogs, everything. Something like a Range Rover or a Porsche Cayenne. It would have to have a turbo and a V8: a wagon with a bit of grunt.

"One would most definitely be the original Gordon Murray-designed McLaren F1 GTR. Me sat in the middle with my two girls either side – does life get any better? That would be something for special occasions. I would also want a Mercedes-Benz 300SL roadster for when I have just had my hair done and I am feeling a bit handsome.

"Can I have one more? It would be the car I have just sold, ironically: a Porsche 911 Turbo S Exclusive Series. It is an everyday car, but goodness me it is fast. That would be my daily drive."

MN sets the scene: Jason Plato joined BMR Racing in 2015 and it introduced the Subaru Levorg in 2016. After showing good pace initially, the 2017 and 2018 seasons were a struggle, with only one win. It was a perplexing drop-off in form from a man who had been in the top three of the championship from 2006 through to 2015.

Question: "What really went on at BMR Racing in those final couple of seasons? By the way, it is great to see him back at the front for Power Maxed Racing!"
@DarrenTimms
Via Twitter
JP: "I really can't talk about it. I don't want to, because it was a very dark period of my life. I feel really had over actually. I brought a lot to that table and to have it all mucked up and to be had over so badly was just not nice. I nearly pulled the pin on everything and stopped racing altogether. I have never been uncompetitive in my life ever and I was at the back of the field and yet my team-mate in 'the same car' was at the front. I was being shafted. As time went on, I know why, and I can't talk about that because it is litigious. There are still things going on.

"It was terrible and I was a nightmare to live with and I hated everybody and the world. I am not saying I am special, but I have given everything I have had in life to go racing. It was sad and nasty, but the perverse thing about it is that in many ways, I am quite pleased I have had that moment and I learned a lot about myself because of it.

"Go back to 1997 when I began in the championship, I have had a very good run and I have always put things together and been able to bring new manufacturers to the grid. Whatever car I have jumped into I have turned it around and I have always won races and had a spring in my step – so much so that I didn't give a f**k about anybody because all was right in my world. That is selfish, but good racing drivers are. But the BMR Racing experience broke me and it is probably fair to say that some of the lack of pace I went through was because I was in such a terrible place with it all. I knew I would turn up and my car would be crap, but I couldn't do anything about it. And I can't [am not allowed to] tell you why, even now.

"I just woke up one day and I knew I had to get out of that situation. I got the show on the road again [by pulling together a deal with Power Maxed Racing], and I managed to pull it off and it has been great: we won the last race last year. In the second half of the year, we were generally pretty competitive.

"Also, the other thing which perhaps people don't understand but it was pretty valid to me at the time I was at BMR was that I had turned 50 when this all happened. I have a big profile on social media and I was getting it from everywhere. People were saying I was just too old, and I knew it wasn't down to that.

"So that gave me the energy to go back out there I felt I had to go and prove people wrong. I am so pleased I didn't pull the pin, because I learned a hell of a lot about myself."

MN: Did it mean that the winning feeling was still strong in you?
JP: "That's not strictly true. It is not about the winning feeling, it is when you don't have a chance to win that it really kicks you. There is no point then. If I am not in the race and not competitive, then there is no point, but I knew I could be and if I had the right kit, then I would be. Of course, the world doesn't work like that. People were just saying 'well, you are getting old now and a young lad [team-mate Ashley Sutton] has come along and kicked your arse'. Honest to God, that last win at Brands Hatch last year was great and I was back with a team where I knew a lot of the people in the team and I trusted them. When they say something is an 'eight', it is an 'eight', it is not an '11'.

"That is one of the things I am most proud of: when the chips were down, I managed to turn it all around."

MN sets the scene: Jason Plato and his backer Tesco brought its energy drink brand KX into the championship in 2012 and it devised a young driver support programme to assist up-and-coming talent.

Question: "Hi Jason, during the KX Akademy, you had Tom Ingram under your wing: do you get any satisfaction, from how he's grown as a driver and from his commercial ability to bring in the sponsors?"
Matthew Kirby
Via Facebook
JP: "Absolutely. Tom was our first, for want of a better word, darling. He is a very, very good racing driver and I will never forget the race we had at Rockingham in 2015. I got him and he got me back and we kept swapping. I love it – he finished second, so I loved that even more!"
MN: You are very involved with the British Racing Drivers' Club too, as a director and you have an input into the Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award to find the next young talents?
JP: "I love working with the young drivers and I am proud to be a long-standing judge. I have seen some of the young drivers and debated them and helped pick the winners. We have seen some really *mega* drivers and to be on the inside of that is really special."
MN: Do any of the young drivers come and knock on your door for advice?
JP: "It has happened a few times, and it is mainly commercial stuff, which I am more than happy to give."

Question: "Racing is still very much your motivation, but with your commercial knowledge and experience with an academy set-up, would you ever consider running a motorsport team as team principal and if so, which series would you enter and who would your drivers be?"
Daniel Kerr
Via Facebook
JP: "I certainly know I could do the team management job, because I know how things need to work and I am very aware of what goes on in the judicial hearings too… and that is a key part. That and the politics and everyone pulling in the right direction, I am good at. I am not sure I would want to own a team, and I certainly wouldn't want to own one with my own brass. I would be up for owning one with someone else's brass, but I wouldn't want to sink my own hard-earned into a racing team. But I can see myself being a principal.

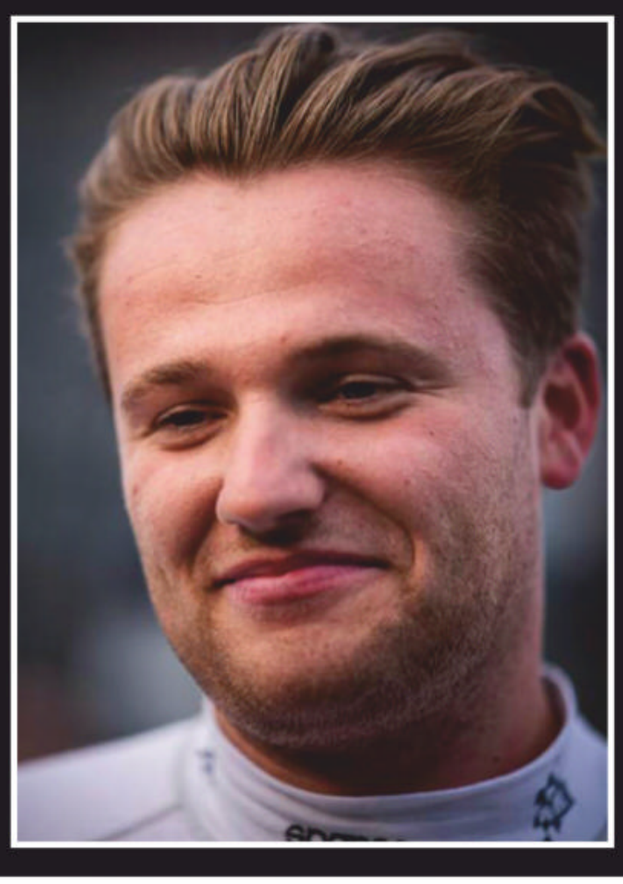
"I think I would be quite good at running the whole BTCC show, the whole game. Doing an Alan Gow role, I could cope with that. I am commercially astute, I understand image and marketing. I don't suffer fools, and nor does Alan! Maybe that would be the role for me. I am not very good at committees, and that's not how it should be run. I'd like to be able to say 'this is my train set, and if you don't like it, f**k off'!" ■

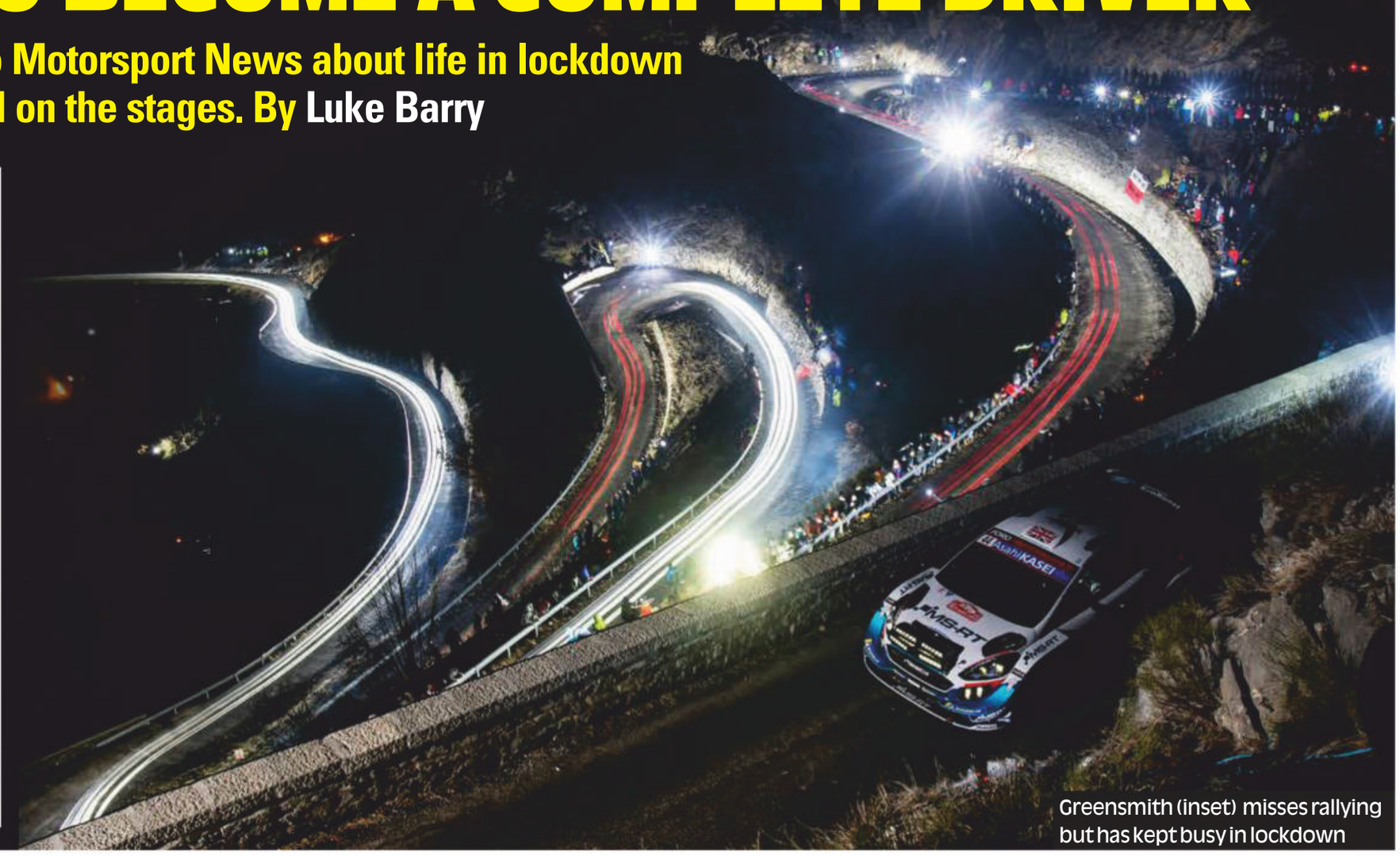
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FEATURE

GUS GREENSMITH: MISTAKES NEED TO HAPPEN IN ORDER TO BECOME A COMPLETE DRIVER

British WRC star opens up to Motorsport News about life in lockdown and how he plans to respond on the stages. By Luke Barry





Greensmith (inset) misses rallying but has kept busy in lockdown



Extra outings came last year in place of the injured Elfyn Evans



Creating a storm: Greensmith says mistakes are a part of learning



The Fiesta R5 Mk2 was heavily developed by Greensmith in WRC 2

Seven years ago Gus Greensmith was piloting a Nissan Micra in the Junior 1000 Championship against the likes of George Lepley, James Williams and Sam Bilham. Now, the 23-year-old is piloting a Ford Fiesta WRC against Sebastien Ogier, Ott Tanak and Thierry Neuville. That is one hell of a transition in such a short space of time.

But just like all other sportsmen and women, Greensmith's season has been heavily impacted by the coronavirus pandemic which has brought the World Rally Championship to a complete standstill. A pause of this magnitude is unfamiliar to the M-Sport Ford World Rally Team driver.

Greensmith tells Motorsport News: "A lot of work was put in for the 2020 season, so yes it's not a good feeling to not be able to get in the car and do my best. But everyone is in the same boat. There is nothing we can do at the moment except keep ourselves in good shape both mentally and physically before we get back into the action hopefully later this year."

Perhaps surprisingly though, Greensmith has found himself busier than ever since returning home from Mexico in mid-March, albeit not in the same ways as before. Instead of putting all his resources into preparing for the next world rally, he is helping out with the family trade.

"Covid-19 removed my usual everyday routine which was solely focused on the WRC," he says. "But with the season being postponed, I've been using my 'non-rallying skill set'. I've been offering assistance within the GAP group [PVC roofs, door and windows firm], whether that be communicating with customers, ensuring deliveries are made nationwide no matter the size or value of the order, or even sweeping the floors. I'm just doing what needs to be done. It's given me a new routine which has been nice whilst rallying is on hold.

"With such a large time frame expected before the next event, I allowed myself some time to relax and enjoy being with my family," he adds. "Usually I live in Poland, and to be honest, I've really enjoyed this. But in general, I've kept up my fitness programme and kept in close contact with my trainer Rupert Manwaring and we've continued to set ourselves monthly goals which we expect to reach."

As Greensmith points out, the WRC is still facing a rather lengthy period on the sidelines. Rounds in Argentina, Portugal, Sardinia and Kenya have all been called off with Rally Finland in early August seen as the most realistic resumption point but it's a fluid situation that is constantly subject to change.

A small chunk of the WRC season has already been completed though with Monte-Carlo, Sweden and Mexico all running before the world went into lockdown. Greensmith contested both the Monte and Rally Mexico as Sweden wasn't part of his programme, but things didn't quite fall into place.

Ice put paid to Greensmith's Monte Carlo when he lost the rear of his Fiesta and pirouetted down a ravine.

Mexico was more positive although he was a little mystified at a lower-than-expected pace which became somewhat irrelevant when he slowed on Saturday morning with mechanical gremlins.

Multiple months without competition affords plenty of time to reflect, but Greensmith is confident his form will rectify itself.

"I couldn't have done anything more in terms of preparation with my physical change [losing 21kg over the winter] being quite well noted before the start of the season," he explains. "So no, I wouldn't change my approach. But clearly my start to the season hasn't been up to par, so I will make improvements, make less mistakes and perform better like I know I can once we get going again."

Greensmith has attracted more detractors than most on his way to the WRC with some feeling that he hasn't earned his WRC seat. That Monte misdemeanour in particular provoked a social media hammering but Greensmith doesn't let this "background noise" affect him.

"There will be naysayers even if you're performing well, but obviously more so if you're performing badly," he says. "That's a part of life, it's not a big deal. I've shown undeniable potential but I'll also be the first to admit I've made mistakes. Reducing those mistakes will only come through time and experience, and I'm sure I will make more mistakes before I get it right."

Impressing his team and everyone else in the service park is all that matters. Greensmith says: "The people who know, know. They're the only people I need to impress. As long as the feedback I receive from those people is positive on the whole, that's all that matters. The rest remains background noise to me."

Just like all of his peers, Greensmith is chomping at the bit to return to WRC action. The potential is most definitely there in both car and driver to perform strongly, whenever that may be. New team-mate Esapekka Lappi bagged a strong fourth place finish in Monte and fifth in Sweden while Teemu Suninen scored a vital podium in Mexico.

But Greensmith admitted there could be elements that will be hard to readjust to when he gets back into competition.

"I miss the seat time and the travelling," he says. "Thankfully, we'll be back in the car at some point, so it's something I'm looking forward to. In terms of what I'll miss from home life, it would have to be my dogs. Aside from my family, my dogs [Ogre and Dorris] are what I miss most when I'm away during a rally."

Ogre and Dorris will be making the most of these next few months before Greensmith is back travelling the world and cementing his place in the World Rally Championship.■

Photos: Red Bull Content Pool



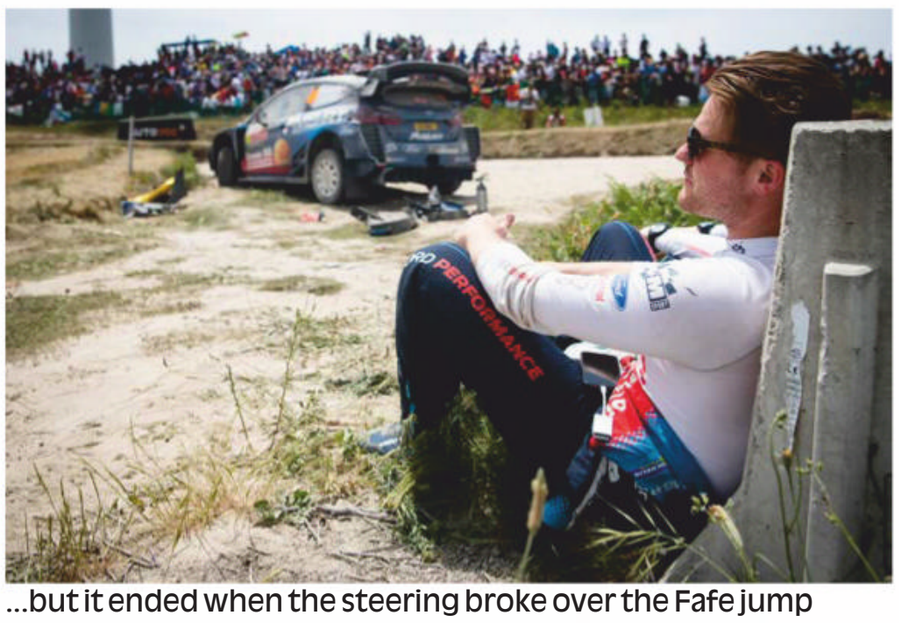
Taking the start in Mexico



2020: Greensmith's first season as full-time top flight driver



The Briton made his World Rally car debut in Portugal...



...but it ended when the steering broke over the Fafe jump

GREENSMITH'S RIGHT-HAND MAN: ELLIOTT EDMONDSON

Greensmith has had a number of co-drivers as he progressed through the ranks but the man that's now tasked with guiding him to the very top is Elliott Edmondson.

The pair first competed together back in 2015 but Alex Gelsomino came onboard in 2016 as Edmondson headed to the Junior European Rally Championship with Chris Ingram. Edmondson then sat with another promising Brit in 2018 – Rhys Yates – before returning to partner Greensmith last season as the pair were fully inducted into the M-Sport set-up.

At 26, Edmondson is still a youngster himself but has been rallying considerably longer than Greensmith, making his debut in 2011.

Several good national drivers have rallied with him too, including British champion Matt Edwards, Damian Cole, Callum Black and Neil Simpson.

In 2019 Greensmith and Edmondson rekindled their partnership as they look to take on the world together. Edmondson has been likened to Seb Marshall in the past, and you can't really get a bigger compliment than that.



Edmondson is Gus's man

THE WRC ADVENTURE SO FAR

2015: First foray into the World Rally Championship comes in Portugal – a rally Gus Greensmith considers home as much as Rally GB – amid his school exams. Driving a Ford Fiesta R2T in the Drive DMACK Trophy, Greensmith secures a best finish of fourth in Portugal and Poland.

2016: Another season in the DMACK Trophy beckons, mingled with select Junior BRC appearances. Peaks with second place in Spain to finish fourth in the championship. Makes R5 debut on Rally GB.

2017: With a Ford Fiesta R5 at his fingertips for a full season, Greensmith completes a European WRC2 season with a best finish of fifth position in Sweden. Takes nine stage wins across the season to finish 11th.

2018: Ties with M-Sport are strengthening and pace improves. Grabs four podiums across the season including on his first visit to flyaway rounds in Mexico and Argentina. Bags fourth in the championship.

2019: A split campaign between WRC2 Pro and the WRC. Kicks off with imperious Monte performance to finish seventh overall in an R5 car. Makes WRC debut in Portugal but broken steering over Fafe's famous jump is a disappointing end. Deputises for injured team-mate Elfyn Evans in Finland and Germany and gains valuable experience.

2020: First full season in the top flight. Equals best finish of ninth in Mexico after a trying start to the season but is aiming to get within the reach of the podium for the remainder of the season.



WRC 2 win in Monte Carlo last year was a career highlight

Gus Greensmith Q&A



Have you found any use in sim racing like so many others or is that not for you?
"I can see the benefits for circuit drivers, but personally I don't see sim racing offering any benefits to rally drivers at the moment. So no, it's not been something I have taken up."

Are you still in good contact with Elliott?
"Yes, we are in good contact, although sometimes it's hard to get hold of Elliott if he's occupied swiping through Tinder!"

Any thoughts on how rallying should resume and what can be done to lower costs? Would you change the 2022 regulations as is being suggested by many?
"Personally, I'm a big fan of the current era of WRC cars and that of the future hybrid World Rally Cars. The look, the noise and the speed is something that has grabbed the attention of motorsport fans that previously weren't too interested in rallying. However, the idea of a WRC-R5 class does make financial sense in the current economic climate and greater competition should always be welcomed and perused. I'll drive whatever I'm given."

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FEATURE

THE RALLYCROSS SPRINGBOARD FOR FUTURE STARDOM

The Junior Rallycross scene has launched some of motorsport's big names, says Hal Ridge

The latest crop of names leading the way in the Motorsport UK Junior Rallycross Championship, such as Luke Constantine and Patrick O'Donovan, are on a trajectory that could lead to great things.

Not only is that because they have obvious natural talent, but they are also on a well-trodden path. By its very nature, rallycross is a mix of smooth circuit racing finesse combined with the car control required to rotate a vehicle on unsealed surfaces while maintaining forward momentum in rallying.

For that reason, many drivers competing at the highest level in a variety of disciplines started out in Junior RX where, from 14 years of age, a competitor can drive a real car on real circuits.

Since the concept was first publicly aired at Lydden Hill in 2002, Junior Rallycross has produced brilliant, close single-make racing and provided a learning ground for youngsters to gain experience. What follows is Motorsport News's list of the top 10 Junior RX graduates.

1 Andrew Jordan

Then: *Junior RX title winner 2005*
Now: *Frontrunner in the British Touring Car Championship*

With eyes on a future career in rallying, Andrew Jordan embarked on a Junior Rallycross programme in 2004 and then secured the British Championship's Junior title the following year as a quartet of victories that put him just of reach of Irish driver Kyle Orr come the end of the campaign.

For 2006, Jordan became rallycross's then-youngest Supercar racer, and just missed out on the overall British Rallycross crown in 2007 in a final-round decider.

Without the commercial opportunities to continue in rallycross, Jordan left the discipline for circuit racing in 2008 and scooped the British Touring Car Championship in 2013.

He has more recently also returned to rallycross for selected starts and finished on the podium at his home round of the World Rallycross Championship in 2014. Jordan tops this list because using the multifaceted skill set gleaned in Junior RX, he has delivered at the highest domestic level in circuit racing, international rallycross and historic racing too.



Future BTCC star was an early starter in Junior RX



Doran went on to race at the top level



2 Liam Doran

Then: *Podium finisher in Junior RX in 2003*
Now: *Regular in the World RX championship*

It's difficult to decide if Liam Doran has ever reached his full potential. One of the most naturally gifted drivers to have graced the World RX grid, Doran's career has been full of ups and downs, success and misdemeanors.

Part of the public launch of the Junior rallycross concept in 2002, Doran would only manage one podium in the 2003 season and his driving ability wasn't truly realised until he raced a Supercar for the first time in 2008.

Since then, he has won five European Rallycross Championship rounds, claimed a pair of X Games gold medals (on both occasions against the odds) against tough opposition and also became one of the first trans-Atlantic big-name rallycross drivers. He claimed a maiden and arguably long-overdue World RX podium in Abu Dhabi last year.

Had Doran's career been more consistent in terms of teams, cars and sometimes temperament, he could and should have achieved much more but equally he's not done yet either. He's second in this list for the ability: on his day, to beat the likes of former World Rally champion Marcus Gronholm hands down.



Hansen won the title after Swift swap

3 Kevin Hansen

Then: *Junior Rallycross champion, 2013*
Now: *World RX round winner and frontrunner*

Kenneth Hansen's youngest son could easily have been second in this list, but by virtue of his age, achievements and the educated assumption that he is yet to reach his peak, he is third (but by the smallest of margins).

The Swede made his Junior RX debut in 2012, after first rolling engineer Graham Rodemark's Swift on a test day at Lydden Hill and went on to dominate the Junior series in 2013. He wrapped up the title before the end of the season.

He won titles in 2014 (RallyX Nordic) and 2015 (RX Lites Cup) in single-make Supercar Lites machinery and then emulated his father by winning the European Championship title in 2016 in a works-backed Peugeot 208 Supercar.

Having earned a manufacturer Peugeot contract, Hansen's career looked set to progress until the marque pulled out of World RX at the end of 2018.

But, as part of the family team last year he claimed an event win and was part of the squad's teams' championship success and challenged for the drivers' title until the final round too.

4 Chris Ingram

Then: *Junior RX competitor, 2009*
Now: *European Rally champion*

It's not unfair to suggest that Chris Ingram didn't set the world alight in his few Junior rallycross appearances in 2009. While he contested more Open Championship events than British RX rounds, he was far from a title contender. Ironically though, with Junior cars being cheap to operate, it's been later in his career where bigger budgets have been required that he has excelled, even when he hasn't had the funding required.

Having switched to Junior rallying in 2010, Ingram quickly climbed the ranks into R2 machinery for the British Rally Championship and won Motorsport UK's Young Driver of the Year award in 2012.

Opting to compete in the European Rally Championship's junior category in R2 machinery, he won the ERC's Junior Under 27 title in 2017. Last year though, against the odds and with constant budgetary constraints, he became the first British driver in 52 years to win the overall ERC crown.

Having shown flashes of brilliance matched with the consistency to mount a title assault, the world waits for Ingram to have the required budget to be let off the leash.



Ingram only made sporadic appearances in Juniors

Photos: ralycrossworld.com, Hal Ridge

5 Ashley Simpson

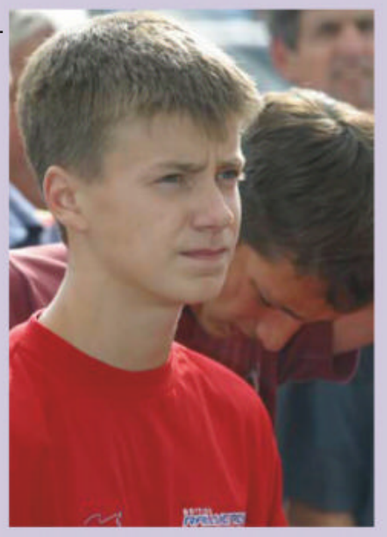
Then: *Junior RX 2003-2005*
Now: *On the sidelines*

Arguably one of the most naturally gifted drivers to ever climb aboard a rallycross car but, as is so often the case, without the required budget to progress, Ash Simpson's career never made it beyond his own family's means.

He raced full-time in Junior RX from 2003 to 2005 and, although never won an event in the British Championship's Junior division, he progressed year-on-year in one of the most competitive eras for the category. He was second on five occasions in 2005.

He then raced in the Production-based Stockhatch class and was immediately successful, before emulating those performances on the Open Championship's Procar 2000 category, which also brought a pair of starts in the European Rallycross Championship's Group N division in a Renault Megane in 2008.

Simpson then stepped up to Supernational with a Lotus Exige and claimed a pair of crowns against drivers in superior machinery, but without the required funds to progress further in the sport, his career ended there.





Simpson (left) was a star racer



Pritchard raced for two seasons



6 Jason Pritchard

Then: *Junior RX frontrunner 2003-2004*
Now: *Asphalt Rally Championship battler*

Switching from autograss to rallycross, Welshman Jason Pritchard contested the first season of Junior RX in 2003 and finished third in the standings. With more podiums under his belt the following year, Pritchard ended the campaign sandwiched between Simpson and Jordan in the championship, in fifth. He remained in rallycross to race a Peugeot 106 Maxi in 2005, before switching to rallying with the same car.

He has subsequently rallied all kinds of machinery, from Citroen C2 R2s (including winning the Citroen Racing Trophy) to Group N Subarus in the British Rally Championship. Pritchard has experience of competing in World Rally Championship rounds but is best regarded for his achievements driving ex-works M-Sport-built WRC machines to national Tarmac success, including multiple Manx National wins.

He is also a main player in historic competition, winning the British Historic Rally Championship and challenging for victory on the Roger Albert Clark Rally, driving an Escort Mk2.

7 Adam Gould

Then: *Junior RX frontrunner 2003*
Now: *On the sidelines*

With a string of podiums in the 2003 Junior series, Adam Gould finished second in the standings to champion Grant Rees, before switching his focus to the rally stages.

After competing in Ford Fiesta STs and a Renault Clio R3 in the British Rally Championship, Gould made it into the British Rally Championship top tier as part of the TEG Sport-run Pirelli-backed team for a trio of campaigns in a Group N Subaru Impreza.

His strong pace and promise were always compromised by budget constraints.

When he finished events he was more often than not inside the top six, and netted a number of podiums too. He also contested the Rally of Scotland, part of the Intercontinental Rally Challenge, in 2009 with a Peugeot 207 S2000 but retired with technical problems.

He also tackled a part-season in the circuit-based Renault UK Clio Cup in 2012.



Gould was one of the main players in the first season

8 Oliver Mellors

Then: *Junior RX round winner, 2011*
Now: *British Rally Championship battler*

Another driver who didn't spend as much time in Junior RX as he might have done, before heading for the rally stages, but Mellors used his time in the single-make 1300cc Suzuki Swift well with a victory to his credit in 2011. Had he completed the season, he would have certainly been a title contender.

After his short spell in rallycross, as part of the family Mellors Elliot Motorsport outfit Mellors jumped straight into Proton Satria Super2000-based machinery until 2017 when he debuted the MEM Proton Iriz R5 at the Goodwood Festival of Speed.

As the lead development driver for the car, Mellors has won the majority of events contested with the car. For 2020, he has embarked on a British Rally Championship campaign, finishing fourth on the Cambrian Rally season-opener.



Mellors was a leading battler back in 2011



Greer is now a major player in UK rallying

9 Jonny Greer

Then: *Junior RX, fifth in 2003*
Now: *British and Irish rallying*

Fifth in the Junior RX standings in the inaugural campaign in 2003, Jonny Greer won at Lydden Hill in 2004 on his way to third in the standings, beating future BTCC champ Andrew Jordan for the position.

He has since focused on rallying, first mainly in the Ford Fiesta ST Trophy in the UK and Ireland, before graduating to Mitsubishi Group N machinery.

Over the last half-decade, Greer has been a regular R5 contender, first with a Citroen DS3, then more recently with a Ford Fiesta in British and Irish events, where he's been a regular podium visitor.

10 Aidan Hills

Then: *Junior RX in 2011*
Now: *Circuit racing in Clubsports Trophy*

In the year that Mellors was racing at the front of Junior RX in 2011, it was karting convert Aidan Hills who claimed the crown, finishing level on points with Ryan Weston at the end of the campaign.

Hills then stepped up to the Swift Sport category and having contested a number of selected-round campaigns, he turned into a regular frontrunner and claimed a number of race wins and podiums.

He then decided to switch to circuit racing in 2017 and the Mazda MX-5 Supercup. In the Mazda series he won the Rookie of the year Award in his maiden campaign and then won races and finished third in the series the following season.

He repeated the success in 2019 and won the BRSCC Clubsport Trophy too.



Hills: circuit race ace

ROLL OF HONOUR

Junior champions: Started as Junior Minicross, became Junior Suzuki Swifts 2011

Mini

YEAR	DRIVER
2003	Grant Rees
2004	Joe Powis
2005	Andrew Jordan
2006	Kyle Orr
2007	Ben Rennison
2008	Daniel O'Brien
2009	Bradley Bailey
2010	Paige Bellerby

Suzuki Swift

2011	Aidan Hills
2012	James Ross
2013	Kevin Hansen
2014	Charlie Bean
2015	Bradley Durdin
2016	Sam Jones
2017	Tom Llewellin
2018	Tom Constantine
2019	Luke Constantine

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FEATURE



Combe's Saloon category is hitting quarter century

HOW CASTLE COMBE REMAINS KING

Castle Combe circuit not only celebrates 70 years in 2020, two of its championships – saloons and GTs – mark important milestones this year too. Graham Keilloh looks into the secrets of their success

If you attend a race meeting at Castle Combe, it doesn't take long to realise that it is no ordinary race meeting. There's the warm and vibrant atmosphere. Large grids and spectator banks filled with rather more people than are normally expected for a club event. The rapid and unforgiving track. Yet even more, what strikes is the local scene. Close to uniquely, the timetable is replete with four healthy circuit-based categories.

And with these, the proof of the pudding is in the longevity. The much-loved circuit this year celebrates its 70th anniversary, while last season the Castle Combe Formula Ford championship hit its half century. This year two more Combe championships reach significant milestones.

The Castle Combe GT championship marks its 45th birthday – as while the circuit-based Special GT series was first held in 1982, its roots trace to Combe's Special Saloon Car championship which ran from 1975 to '81. And the current Castle Combe Saloon championship also reaches 25 years.

Both milestones are intended to be marked this year at Combe race meetings, though the circuit's racing club, like everyone else, has had to put asterisks next to its plans due to the coronavirus-related disruption.

With both, the plan is to gather its past champions to join current drivers at a particular race meeting this season, as was done to mark the FF1600 championship's anniversary last year. While the GTs' 45 years will also be marked with a strongly GT-themed race meeting.

So what is Castle Combe's secret? The alchemy seems somewhat a mystery even to its most loyal attendees. "I've raced in other championships and things and, I don't know, there's something with Castle Combe that they just seem to have got it right," Combe Saloon and GT champion Gary Prebble tells MN. "Whether [it's] the rules and regulations in their series or something, it just works.

"The people in the championship seem to do it year in year out. There's got be something there? It speaks for itself.

"The way that it's run is perhaps not so corporate," Prebble continues of the family-run venue. "Some of the bits are a little old fashioned, you think 'I wish I had some pit garages or had some electric around the paddock'! There's a few things you think 'come on guys you need to get up with the times a little bit!'

"But just the atmosphere of the way that it's run [is what sets it apart]. It's so friendly to the point of laid back, obviously not safety-wise laid back but the atmosphere and the way that is done is more laid back. You know you can ring up, you can talk to people and generally just get to speak to all the right people when you want to."

And with the apparent conundrum of Combe's success, veteran racer Brian Cox reckons "the answer is very easy, because all the other circuits, they operate by going through the British Automobile Racing Club, the 750 Motor Club or the British Racing and Sports Car Club, and it's more impersonal. It's very personal at Castle Combe and you get to know a lot of people if you're going there regularly. If you're doing a multi-circuit championship you're moving around, you don't really get too matey with other drivers."

Twice GT and Saloon champion Ilsa Cox – who also is married to Brian – concurs: "[It's] family run, we've got to know [the late] Howard, Pat, Emma [Strawford] really well over the years, so it's like almost having another family.

"The atmosphere in the whole of the paddock if you've been going to Combe for a few years is fantastic and you get to know so many people. You often quite know their family, even if they're not in your class and you're not directly racing against them you have a good old giggle. It's just such a lovely friendly place to be."



Ilsa Cox: multiple title winner

Simon Thornton-Norris, who has won three of the last four Combe Saloon titles, says similar: "I've done a lot of national racing [at other circuits], and you struggle at most venues to get the atmosphere you get at Castle Combe, from the competitors, the paddock, and the spectators as well.

"They are very welcoming to people, they try and allow competitors in, whereas some other series or other places, they don't want a newcomer coming along and find reasons to exclude them for some technical infringements or make the infringements up."

Yet Brian Cox reckons, even so, there is more to it. "They've hit the button on picking championships that people want to race in," he says. "The Saloons has been a major hit for them ever since it was introduced in 1995, [and] they've just introduced, or is it three years now, the Hot Hatch. People can build the cars and they don't spend that [large] amount of money, and they're well disciplined, you know what the regulations are."

Regulations indeed are a major factor in Combe's success – framed to be simple and stable, and to ensure cost effectiveness.

Thornton-Norris notes: "The engines are quite free and [there is] very restricted suspension, tyres and basically no aero – there's massive entries. So [it's] sensible regulations, high entries and really really competitive and you have a good fun local circuit."

And once again the proof is in the pudding, this time in grid numbers particularly for Saloons. "You can't get bigger grids in the country," Ilsa Cox explains. "The only grid that challenges that is the CNC Heads, but the Saloon car championship has been amazing the way the grids have stayed big for decades. Not just years, decades."

Prebble agrees: "The Saloons [regulations] I think have never really changed too much, their main objective was to try and keep it cost-effective racing. And that's the bit that's really worked for them, as long as I can remember the Saloons have always been packed, the grids are always full,

18+

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Photos: Steve Jones



Castle Combe's GT championship can be traced back a full 45 years



Three-time Saloon champion Simon Thornton-Norris says stability is key

they've never really struggled for numbers. That speaks for itself. The way that the class structure is done, I think that's what keeps [people in], you can decide how much you want to spend."

Thornton-Norris believes stability, as well as listening to drivers, is key. "The regulations are left alone," he says. "They very slowly tweak them as and when required. When a tyre runs out they have to change tyre regulations slightly as happened a couple of years ago. They're tight in some areas and not in others, but there's no ambiguity about it, it's clear what the regulations are.

"[Also] there's not 10 classes in the race, there's four. And although that's a number it's easy for everyone to see where they slot into those classes and within the race. I think a lot of series struggle with too many classes and then you get fewer entries per class and you just turn up and you could win.

"They listen to everyone, they take a forum between the drivers and ask people what they want and what they think and how's it gone and how it can be improved."

It applies to the GT championship too. "It's probably one of the most economic championships to run in, in terms of GT cars," notes GT competitor Jordan Billinton. "If you upgrade to GT Cup or Britcar the cost just goes through the roof.

"[It's] very competitive. There were one or two very very quick cars [last season]. We had a McLaren there, there's the Noble at the front, we've got a couple of [Mitsubishi] Evos, and the big Dodge Viper, so that's some serious bits of kit."

Twice GT class champion Bradley John adds: "There's been a good selection of competition, we all have a battle together."

Combe's success is matter of geography too, with the Wiltshire track well placed to pick up enthusiasts from much of the south of England, particularly the south-west, as well as Wales.

"It tends to attract local drivers," notes Ilsa Cox. "There aren't many that travel even as far as we do [from Hove]. Combe because of where it is it's got quite a big radius, within it you've got Bristol, then going east you've got the Swindon area all the way down the M4 corridor, it's quite a wealthy part of the world as well.

"People travel, come up from the West Country which isn't too far for them to do some racing if you're on a similar budget to us and it's basically what you can afford to do and to then be able to do such good racing with big grids, they've got it made."

And of course there is the quality of the Combe circuit itself. "I've been to a few other circuits but they're very different and I keep coming back to Castle Combe," notes Billinton. "All I can say is when you approach Avon Rise at sort of 150, 160[mph] and you have to turn in go over the brow and everything goes light and then slam the brakes on, that's quite a feeling, and there's not many tracks that can give you that."

Prebble reckons too that the track's characteristics have a wider benefit.

"It's good clean racing, I've never really had a run in with anybody," he says. "The driving standards have always been exceptional and I think a lot of people respect that for what the circuit is, there's no you huge run-off areas, it's quite a ballsy circuit because you haven't got loads of gravel traps, if you come off you're hitting a barrier. And I think people respect that at Castle Combe and it seems to attract good driving in general."

And in the final proof of the pudding, when you ask Combe competitors what can be done to improve the championships, they struggle. "I don't really know," Thornton-Norris says for one. "They've got it pretty spot on. I can't sit here now and think there would be something they could do to improve the racing, the spectacle for the people watching or the competitors."

As Prebble concludes: "Don't try and fix something that's not broken." ■

Cash prize to boost GT championship

Castle Combe GT grids are rarely of the scale of its Saloon cousin. This stands to reason, given GT cars' greater expense and lower reliability. One man, at least, is not content to leave it at that however.

Last year there was the rarest of things in modern-day club racing. A race with prize money. Combe's GT Challenge has a winner's purse of £1000 put up by Jordan Billinton, a Combe GT competitor and founder of building consultancy ME7. The race's second running was planned this year for the early-July meeting.

Billinton started racing relatively late in life, in late 2017 having passed his 50th birthday. Before that he was a long-time GT-loving spectator at Combe, despite not being local. "I suppose Snetterton or Brands Hatch or maybe even Silverstone [are] about equal distance [as my local circuit]," he tells Motorsport News, "certainly not Castle Combe over near Bristol, but [I've got] many friends there now, that's where the GT championship is. [It] feels like home for me."

And Billinton started the prize race for a couple of reasons. "I'm wanting to give back to the sport and do a little promotion, help the circuit, bring new people into the sport, particularly young people. I think it's vital because I see people retiring and not coming back.

"I see that as an important side to what I do because I had a lot of help at the start [of my racing], people doing things for free for me and giving their time and effort and motorsport can't fully operate without that, particularly at grassroots level.

And it's particularly important to Billinton that it's Castle Combe. "I really want to support that and see them build the classes and the races like they used to have 10, 15 years ago and put it really on the map in terms of GT racing and other classes, and get the crowd numbers up to double where they are now. That would be really fantastic because it's a great circuit," he says.



GT racer Jordan Billinton wants to double Combe's crowds



Saloon and GT champion Gary Prebble commends Combe racing

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FEATURE

Photos: ClassicTeam Lotus



The Lotus 18 was suited to the twists of Monte Carlo



To the victor, the spoils: Moss gets his trophy from Princess Grace

HOW LOTUS BEGAN TO BLOSSOM ON THE FORMULA 1 STAGE

It is 60 years since the British firm started to make its mark in grand prix racing. By Matt James

Over a 26-year period, Team Lotus took 74 grands prix victories. Colin Chapman's team was at the forefront of innovation and ingenious thinking throughout that period, and can be easily credited with reshaping Formula 1 on several different occasions. That includes introducing sponsorship in earnest, taming ground effect or perfecting the active bolt-ons which defined F1 through to the early 1990s.

The irony for Lotus, which was the UK's foremost racing car constructor, was that its maiden grand prix win came when the car was in the hands of a privateer. Rob Walker's team – and indeed driver Stirling Moss – had form for pulling the rug from a manufacturers' feet.

The alliance had ripped up record books in the Argentine Grand Prix in 1958 when Moss became the first man to win a world championship race at the wheel of a rear-engined car, using the nimble Walker-run Cooper T43. They'd beaten the opposition on that sweltering day in Buenos Aires by employing a clever strategy of not changing tyres during the shortened race. That, in itself, was a watershed. But at Monaco in 1960, which was 60 years ago last week, Moss and Walker did it again, this time at the wheel of a Lotus 18.

Clive Chapman, managing director of Classic Team Lotus and son of Lotus founder Colin Chapman, explains: "Moss winning the 1960 Monaco GP was a classic David vs Goliath-type story, which was well-received and an important boost to the Lotus marque, still in its relatively early days. Moss was naturally quick, thoughtful and mechanically sympathetic – all characteristics which were of utmost benefit at Monaco, back when the race was three hours long.

"Rob Walker and my father enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship which realised great success throughout the 1960s. Walker's enduring relationship with Sir Stirling Moss was even stronger. Evidently Walker, as privateer entrant and sponsor, provided Moss with what he needed in order to realise his prodigious ability."

Walker certainly did provide Moss with the equipment he needed. In the season-opening Argentine Grand Prix, Moss had entered in a Walker-run Cooper T51. But the avalanche of success from the Lotus 18 – works driver Innes Ireland had given a glimpse of its competitiveness in Buenos Aires by placing sixth – pointed in one direction. It is unthinkable today, but there were over three months until the next grand prix at Monaco. In that time the Lotus 18, which was also being used in Formula 2 and Formula Junior races, went on a run of success which included victory at Goodwood on Easter Monday and then success in the International Trophy meeting at Silverstone in both F1 and F2. That same day at Silverstone, Jim Clark won the Formula Junior race in a Lotus 18.

So the choice was clear: Moss persuaded Walker to get his hands on a Lotus 18 for the 18th running of the race in the principality, which took place on May 29. Walker wasn't the only one changing things in the face of the increasing revolution in grand prix racing. BRM turned up with its rear-engined P48s for Jo Bonnier, Dan Gurney and Graham Hill. Ferrari, too, had done the unthinkable and put an engine in the rear for the first time. Richie Ginther drove the new 246 alongside the more traditional front-engined versions for Phil Hill and Wolfgang von Trips (Cliff Allison had been due to race one too but crashed in practice).

The potential of the new Walker-Moss partnership in the Lotus was masked in the opening practice sessions in Monaco as an electrical fault meant that the session was untimed. But others were looking nervously to the Walker pit, just as they should have. In qualifying, which took place on the Saturday evening before the three-hour epic on Sunday, Moss set a record-breaking pace to top the 24 cars, a full second ahead of Jack Brabham's works Cooper T53-Cooper Climax.

With 16 machines on the grid in the old style three by two starting grid, it was all to play for. However, from the second row, Bonnier leapt into the lead at the 1500hrs start as the front row all bogged down with too much wheelspin. They were all way ahead of the factory Lotus cars, which were being handled by Alan Stacey, Innes Ireland and grand prix newcomer John Surtees.

Despite losing out initially, Moss soon passed Brabham and kept a watching brief on leader Bonnier. The Swedish racer would often wave Moss through as he was struggling with ailing brakes, but the Briton behind refused to play ball, preferring instead to hang back until lap 17, which was when he pounced down the inside into what was known then as the Station Hairpin.

That should have been the end of the drama, but this was Monaco. The clouds over the Cote d'Azur began to darken and spit rain, which meant caution was key: this was, after all, the first time Moss had raced this chassis. He began to reduce his pace while 1959 winner Brabham, who had also overcome Bonnier, took the opposite approach. That was the Australian's undoing as, although he'd overtaken Moss, he crashed at St Devote on lap 41, damaging the chassis. Having had outside assistance to get going again, he would eventually be disqualified.

The conditions improved and Moss began to manage his 14-second gap to Bonnier, but disaster struck the leader: the Climax V8 engine in the back of his Lotus lapsed onto three cylinders. A quick pitstop on lap 60 diagnosed that a plug lead had fallen off: it was a simple repair but costly in terms of time, and Bonnier retook the lead.

Moss began a charge, and it took him only eight laps to resume his position at the head of the pack to land Lotus's breakthrough victory. Bonner later retired with suspension failure and that left Bruce McLaren's Cooper almost one minute behind with Hill's front-engined Ferrari dinosaur as the only other machine on the lead lap. Fourth-placed Tony Brooks, in a Yeoman Credit Cooper, was the last full runner at the chequered flag, while other ailing cars were patched up to try and claim the final points on offer for those who could see the chequer.

The spoils belonged to Moss the maestro, and his glory brought him level with Alberto Ascari as the most successful F1 driver in terms of race wins on 13.

Injury ruled Moss out for much of the rest of the season after a crash in practice at Spa, but he returned to win the US Grand Prix to cement third place in the drivers' standings behind Brabham.

The Lotus factory team would have to wait until the very last race of 1961 to taste the champagne in its own right when Ireland won at Watkins Glen. But by that stage, the Lotus bandwagon was gathering the pace that it needed for it to go on and dominate large periods of Formula 1 ■



Monaco victory was Lotus's first – and Moss's 13th – in Formula 1



Moss slips inside Bonnier's BRM going into the Station Hairpin

RESULTS

1960 Formula 1 World Championship, round 2/10

POS	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Stirling Moss	Lotus 18-Climax	100 laps in 2h53m45.5s
2	Bruce McLaren	Cooper T53-Climax	-52.1s
3	Phil Hill	Ferrari D246	-1m01.9s
4	Tony Brooks	Cooper T51-Climax	-1 lap
5	Jo Bonnier	BRM P48	-17 laps
6	Richie Ginther	Ferrari 246P	-30 laps
7	Graham Hill	BRM P48	66 laps/spun off
8	Wolfgang von Trips	Ferrari D246	61 laps/clutch
9	Innes Ireland	Lotus 18-Climax	+44 laps
R	Dan Gurney	BRM P48	44 laps/suspension
DSQ	Jack Brabham	Cooper T53-Climax	40 laps/outside assistance
R	Roy Salvadori	Cooper T51-Climax	29 laps/overheating
R	Alan Stacey	Lotus 18-Climax	23 laps/chassis
R	Chris Bristow	Cooper T51-Climax	17 laps/gearbox
R	John Surtees	Lotus 18-Climax	17 laps/transmission
R	Maurice Trintagnant	Cooper T51-Maserati	4 laps/gearbox

Pole: Moss 1m36.3s. **Fastest lap:** McLaren 1m36.2s

WHAT'S ON

WHAT'S ON YOUTUBE



Plato shows class with a climb through the pack

It's true what they say. Talent never entirely fades. Hints, at least, always remain.

British Touring Car Championship legend Jason Plato in this Motorsport News issue answers readers' questions on his inimitable career. And YouTube supplements it with recent up-close evidence of Plato's skills from a season wherein results were meagre by his lofty standards.

We get aboard his Subaru for a race at sun-kissed Croft in 2018. He starts from the front row, though almost immediately cedes his lofty position via a jumped start drivethrough penalty (you can judge for yourself if it's justified). This drops him to 28th place, and the onboard footage then showcases Plato's varied overtakes in a fine recovery drive. He climbs 14 places within 10 laps.

And there is no 'rubbing is racing'. Plato's passes are instead reminiscent of how Rob Walker described Alain Prost's: so graceful and sure, almost like ballet… A pass of Stephen Jelley, outside-to-in at the exit of Tower Bend before braving it out on the outside of the Jim Clark Esses, is a highlight.

You can witness five minutes of this master at work by searching for 'Jason Plato Onboard | BTCC Croft Race 2 2018', and here is the link: youtube.com/watch?v=nuwZbRDGVII

Graham Keilloh

TV GUIDE

The world is beginning to slowly return to some sort of normality after the coronavirus brought it to a standstill over the spring. For the first time in a long while, there is some real-life live motorsport on TV this weekend from the opening round of the **IndyCar** series.

But as always there are plenty of offerings elsewhere throughout the week. Fans of dirt are well served with **World Rallycross Highlights** over on BT Sport 2. Action from Spa-Francorchamps, Silverstone, Hell and Trois Rivieres will be shown on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Tuesday respectively from 1000hrs-1100hrs.

There's some **World Rally Championship** action too with a look at the best moment from Rally Portugal on Wednesday (0600hrs-0700hrs, BT Sport 1) and the best moments from Rally Italia Sardinia on Saturday (1630hrs-1730hrs, BT Sport 2).

Sky Sports F1 has a plethora of programmes but MN recommends the two episodes of **F1 Classic Races**. The 1983 US Grand Prix West (Friday, 2100hrs-2145hrs) was the scene of John Watson's marvellous drive from 22nd on the grid to first place for McLaren. And the 2007 Canadian Grand Prix (Tuesday, 2100hrs-2315hrs) was a joyous occasion for McLaren too as Lewis Hamilton secured his first ever win in Formula 1.

FreeSports is once again broadcasting the **Supercars All Stars Eseries** on Thursday (0045hrs-0245hrs) while Channel 4 has an in-depth look at Formula E in **Formula E: And We Go Green** on Wednesday (0005hrs-0150hrs).

Luke Barry



Lewis Hamilton's first Formula 1 victory in Canada

LIVE TV

INDYCAR
GENESYS 300
Practice: Saturday, 1830hrs, Sky Sports F1
Qualifying: Saturday, 2200hrs, Sky Sports F1

ESPORTS
AZERBAIJAN GRAND PRIX
Race: Saturday, 1800hrs, Sky Sports F1

FORMULA E:
HOME CHALLENGE
Race: Saturday, 1530hrs, Eurosport 2
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ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!



Madeline Harbey's shot of the fan-favourite Opel Manta from the Nurburgring 24 Hours



Hannu Mikkola ready to roll, by Chris Noble



More from David Harbey: Porsche in flight



David Harbey's shot from the Nordschleife



Tom Chilton at Monza, by Dean Chilvers



Woe for Lewis in 2016, from Dean Chilvers

NEXT WEEK — OUT WEDNESDAY, JUNE 10

**Details correct at time of going to press; it's the editor's birthday, let's party…responsibly, of course…*

ROBERT REID: TELLING THEM WHERE TO GO
World title-winning co-driver speaks to MN



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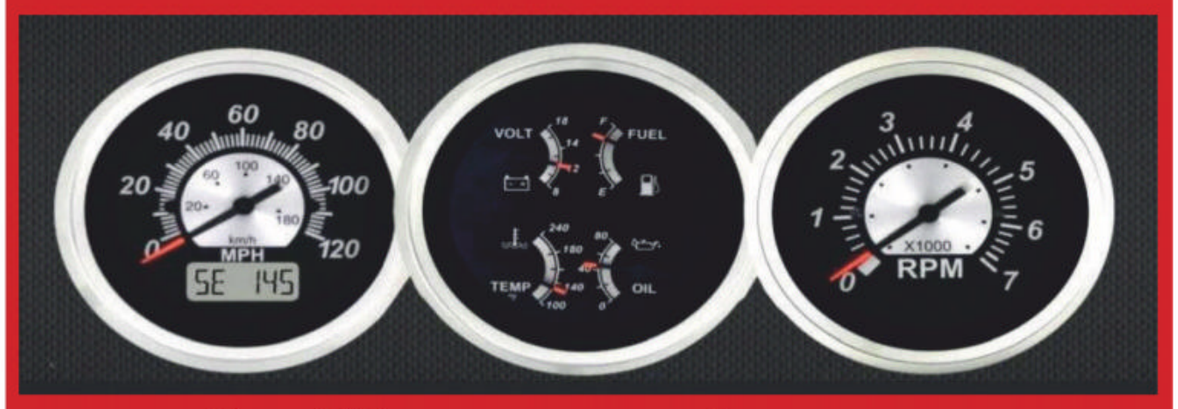
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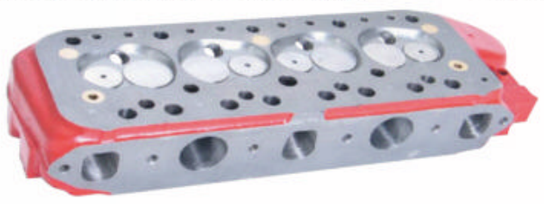
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Mini Road (Stage 2) Improved gas flow, increasing power and economy. Perfect for town, traffic & open roads.

850cc, 998cc, 1098cc - (29mm/25mm)	£1002
1275cc incl injection - (35mm/29mm)	£938



Road Sport (Stage 3) Improved gas flow, larger valves, designed for maximum Power, Torque & Economy.

1275cc A+, A series carb models only	£1166



Grand Tourer (Stage 4)
Greater gas flow & competition valves, designed for mid range power & torque for better economy.

850cc, 998cc, 1098cc (32mm/28mm)	£1448
1275cc incl injection (35mm/30mm)	£1367

Performance Engines



Dynamic 1293cc (from 90 bhp) & 1380cc (from 104 bhp) engines.
Developed & perfected over the last 50 years,originally in our competition Mini's way back in the 1960's.
minisport.com for full range or call our experts!

Engine Kits	Stage 2	Stage 3
1293cc Half engine kit	£1133	-
1293cc Short engine kit	£1571	£1703
1293cc Full kit (Carb model)	£2476	£2816
1380cc Half engine kit	£1333	-
1380cc Short engine kit	£1771	£1925
1380cc Road kit (Carb model)	£2676	£2939

Built (Ready to Fit)	Stage 2	Stage 3
1293cc Carb engine	£3055	£3407
1293cc Injection engine	£3130	-
1380cc Carburettor engine	£3255	£3531
1380cc Injection engine	£3420	-

Full engine & gearbox units also available

Roller Rockers



Gives valves higher lift without changing the camshaft, also increases efficiency and reduces wear.

1.3 Ratio - Standard	£213
1.5 Ratio - Uprated fast road	£213
1.7 Ratio - Competition	£213

Cooper Conversion Kits



COOPER CONVERSIONS
COOPER S, "SI" AND "S WORKS"

1275 Twin carb 80 bhp S plus pack '90 - '92	£3490
1275 Injection 82 bhp S kit '92 - '97	£2010
1275 Injection 85 bhp S works conversion '97on	£2310
998 Twin carb 64 bhp conversion	£3340

Get your Mini Cooper conversion Kit expertly fitted at Mini Sport. Contact us for details.

Crankshafts

Precision reground by the experts at Mini Sport.



Reground	From £299
Wedged, reground 998cc or 1275cc	From £486

(all prices are EXCHANGE, we need your old crankshaft)

Pistons

Set of 4. All sizes available.



998cc Dished - Circlip fit	£305
1380cc Powermax 73.5mm	£336
1275cc Slipper high compression	£243
Omega 1275 cast pistons	From £441

Engine Stabilisers

The 'ULTIMATE' engine steady kit.



850/998/1098/1275cc & injection	From £30

Gearbox Steady

Prevents excessive engine movement, perfect for competition or fast road use.



Gearbox steady kits RH or LH side
Each £19

Flywheels

1 piece billet flywheels in 4.154Kgs, 4.432Kgs or 4.028Kgs.



Pre-engaged type	£147
Inertia type	£144
Lightened steel pressure plate	£94

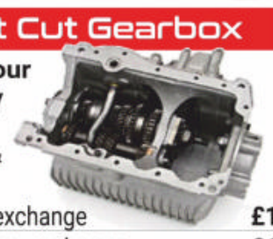
Clutch Plates



Competition type	£117
Sintered metallic full race	£235

Straight Cut Gearbox

Reconditioned in our workshops, & fully rebuilt with new Shafts, bearings & baulk rings.



Rod change gearbox, exchange	£1820
Remote change gearbox, exchange	£1782
Straight cut gear kit (4 synchro)	From £497
Straight cut drop gear kit	£233

Stage 1 Tuning Kits

over 20% Power Increase



Increased power, top speed & acceleration, with better fuel consumption & maintaining engine reliability.

Carburettor - Full kit	From £231
Carburettor - Half kit no exhaust	From £155
Injection - Pipercross filter	£325
Injection - K&N filter	From £363

Injection Tuning Kit

from 35% Power Increase



85bhp SPi Mini tuning kit, exchange	£1569
90bhp MPi Mini tuning kit, exchange	£1732

Kent Cam - Camshafts & Kits



KENT CAMS

Camshaft only **From £214**
Camshaft kits **From £292**

Engine Timing



Simplex set	£26
Duplex set	£35
Lightened duplex set	£57
Light vernier duplex set	£114
Kent vernier timing std	£182
Kent timing disc	£13

Oil Pumps



Slot drive 998cc or 1275cc	£17
Peg Drive 998cc	£17
Slot drive turbo	£41
Spider drive 1275	£17

4 Pinion Differential

Designed, developed and CNC manufactured by Mini Sport. The strongest power delivery to the road without using an L.S.D.



Pot joint type	£274
Rubber coupling type	£274
Equal length driveshaft kit (Hardy spicer)	£603

Quickshift Gearlever

Improved feel & faster, slicker gear changes.



Rod or remote gear change type **From £34**

Essential Gearbox Parts



Magnetic Oil Trap
Removes any metal particles from the oil.
Magnetic oil trap kit **£24**

Centre Oil Pick-up
Essential for all fast road & competition Minis.



Centre oil pick-up pipe **£29**

'R' RANGE BRAKE KITS

Includes a World 1st in Mini Design:
4-piston aluminium MONOBLOCK lightweight rigid brake calipers



It's the ultimate braking experience. Completely focused & performance oriented, the Mini Sport 'R' Range brake kit is equally at home on the track as it is on the open road.

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Parts | Price | Range



CV Joints



Outer CV joint - disc	£41
Inner pot joint	£37

Competition Drive Shafts



Steel pot joint type	Pair £174
Hardy spicer type	Pair £195

Swivel Hubs



Front alloy hub kit c/w hubs, steering arms, ball joints & fittings	Pair £548
Alloy rear hub ('84on)	£168
Fully built standard hubs c/w hubs, ball joints & bearings	Each £122

Drive Flanges



EN24 Hardened

7.5" 'S'/GT type	Each £30
8.4" Disc type	Each £39

Alloy Lightweight

7.5" 'S'/GT type	Each £83
8.4" Disc type	Each £83

Steering



Steering rack, RHD/LHD	£67
Quickrack, 2.2 turns, RH/LH	£119
Cooper S steering arm	Each £19
Track rod end - longer (for neg camber arms)	£16

Performance Ignition



Aldon distributor	From £162
Aldon distributor with Ignitor	From £280
Aldon distributor vacuum adv	From £176
Flame thrower coil - epoxy race	£87
Ignitor electronic ignition	From £137
Lucas sport coil	£34
Viper high power coil	£32



Powerlite Electrical



Lightweight alternator	£276
Hi torque starter 1Kw	From £180
Slimline inertia starter 1.6Kw	£259
MicroStart pre engaged Starter	£359

LCB Manifolds



Mini Sport LCB	£60
Maniflow superior LCB	£86
Maniflow large bore LCB	£226
Maniflow stage 2 LCB	£117
Maniflow large bore 3 into 1	£290

MANIFLOW The World's greatest exhausts for your Mini.

LCB Single box system side exit	From £102
LCB Twin box system centre exit	From £111
CAT Twin box system side exit	From £149
CAT Twin box system centre exit	£150
CAT Twin box twin DTM system centre exit	£205

Superflow Exhausts



Great performance & value!

Side exit, LCB	£83
Centre exit, LCB	£83
Side exit, Van, Estate	£91
Side exit, catalytic	£91
Centre exit, catalytic	£91

FLETCHER



Twin DTM

Twin DTM CAT system	£221
Twin DTM LCB system	£245
2.5" Side CAT system	£179
2.5" Side LCB system	£204
De-cat pipe	£37
Cat link pipe	£37

Suspension



ADJUSTA RIDE

Front set	£48
Rear set	£66
Full Mini kit	£98

Quick & Easy height adjustment. Replaces original trumpet & knuckle joint, without modification.

SPORTS Ride Premium Suspension tuning

Adjusta Rides, sports shockers, negative camber bottom arms & rear brackets, adjustable tie rods & poly bushes.



Bilstein B4 shockers kit	£260
Gmax shockers kit	£280
GAZ shockers kit	£379
KYB gas shockers	£292

Shock Absorbers



Spax std. or lowered	Each From £79
Paddy Hopkirk Spax	Set of 4 £294
Spax coil overs kit	Kit £672
GAZ std. or lowered	Each £49
GAZ Monotube coil overs	Each £81
Bilstein B4 Gas	Each £22
Bilstein B6 sport gas	Each £71

Suspension Parts



Front comp bump stops	Pair £25
Rear comp bump stops	Pair £24
Rose joints 1/2" (male)	£19
Rose joints 1/2" (female)	£22
Top shock mounting (RH/LH)	Each £26
Lower shocker mounts pin	Each £6
Alloy h/brake quadrants	Pair £31
Competition track rod end	£16

Poly Bushes



We manufacture the full range of bushes, standard to competition.

Carburettors



WEBER

All jets & service kits available!



40-45 DCOE carb	£456
40-45 DCOE kit	£762
7 Port linkage	£133

Single SU Carbs

HS2, HS4, HIF44	From £355

Twin SU Carbs Kits

1 ¼" HS2	£1048
1 ½" HS4	£1051

Inlet Manifolds

Alloy water heated	£46
40/45 DCOE	From £160
Twin HS2 or HS4	£107

Throttle Body



MPi Mini, quick & low cost upgrade

Mpi 52mm	£227

FACET Electric Fuel Pumps



Fast road solid state pump kit	£59
Comp. Solid state pump kit	£61
Silver top comp. Interrupter kit	£103
Red top comp. Interrupter kit	£106
Fuel Filter King	From £53
Petrol King pressure regulator	£54

Air Filters



Airfilter	Mini Sport	PiperX	K&N
1 1/4" HS2	-	£37	£106
1 1/2" HS4 cone	£37	£37	£92
HIF 44 cone	£37	£45	£96
SPi Induction kit	-	£77	£102
MPi Induction kit	-	£77	£127

'R' Division



'R' Range brake kit - Fast Road	£1399
'R' Range brake kit - Competition	£1499
Competition driveshafts - Hardy Spicer	Pair £255
Competition driveshafts - Pot Joint	Pair £255

Bottom Arms



Bottom arm - LH or RH	Each £41
Bottom arm shaft	Each £16
1.5°negative arms	Pair £43
2.0°negative arms	Pair £59
Adjustable, heavy duty	Pair £69
Adjustable rose jointed	Pair £84
Adj. heavy duty rose jointed	Pair £123
Uprated bush set, nylon	£16

Negative Camber Rear Brackets

Perfectly tune the rear wheel alignment, for perfect handling & to suit your driving style!



Rear bracket kit	£57

Tie Rods



Standard tie rod	Each £14
Adjustable heavy duty	Pair £35
Group 'A' adjustable	Pair £61
Group 'A' rose jointed	Pair £153
Tie rod bush set, uprated	£6

Negative Camber & Tracking Kit

1.5°negative camber bottom arms, Group A adjustable tie rods & rear brackets



Negative camber kit **From £119**

Roll Cages



Front roll cage	£207
Rear race with diagonal	£288
Multi point weld in cage	£933
Multi point bolt in cage	£1264
Door bars	Pair £129
Custom cages	
Six point bolt-in Mini roll cage - black	£1205

Sump Guards



Steel	£66
Extension	£52
RAC dura	£109
Monte Carlo	£94

Harnesses



Sabelt 3 or 4 Point

3 Point	From £94
4 Point	From £92

Mini Sport Ultimate Brakes

Mini Sport 4 Pot Alloy Calipers, the best brakes for your Mini. Ultimate stopping power.



7.5" Alloy Calipers, Brakes & Kits

7.5" 4 pot alloy calipers	Pair £299
7.5" Brake discs - cross drilled	Pair £77
7.5" 4 pot alloy caliper brake kits	£377
7.5" Brake disc assembly - drilled discs	£944

7.9" Vented Alloy Calipers, Brakes & Kits

7.9" 4 pot alloy calipers	Pair £299
7.9" Brake discs - grooved	Pair £87
7.9" 4 pot alloy caliper brake kit	£388
7.9" Brake disc assembly - grooved discs	£968

8.4" Alloy Calipers, Brakes & Kits

8.4" 4 Pot alloy calipers	Pair £330
8.4" Brake discs (Mini '84 on)	Pair £47
8.4" 4 Pot alloy caliper brake kit	£371
8.4" Brake disc assembly	£950

8.4" Vented Alloy Calipers, Brakes & Kits

8.4" 4 Pot alloy calipers	Pair £330
8.4" Brake discs - grooved	Pair £87
8.4" 4 pot alloy caliper brake kit	£418
8.4" Brake disc assembly - grooved disc	£1003

Sure Stop Kits



Developed with performance in mind, these brake upgrade kits with EBC Green Stuff brake pads, great value performance.

Cooper 'S' (10" wheels, X/drilled discs)	£110
Mini '84 on (12" wheels, X/drilled & grooved discs)	£74

Alloy Superfins

25% extra fins for better cooling! Lightweight alloy drum with 1" built in spacer, born from our competition pedigree.



Alloy superfins	Pair £123

Drum Brake Assemblies

Sold as pairs, assembled & ready to fit.



Rear Brake Assembly + Mintex shoes	Pair £135

Std. Disc Brake Assemblies



7.5" Cooper S Disc brake assembly	£713
8.4" '84on Disc brake assembly	£684
12" to 10" Disc brake conversion kit	£189

Brake Disc & Drum



Disc Cooper S - 7.5"	Each £29
Disc Mini '84 on - 8.4"	Each £15
Drum standard	Each £13
Drum spacer type	Each £19

All prices include VAT. Mini Sport disclaims any liability for errors & also reserves the right to modify all or any part of the product descriptions & prices.

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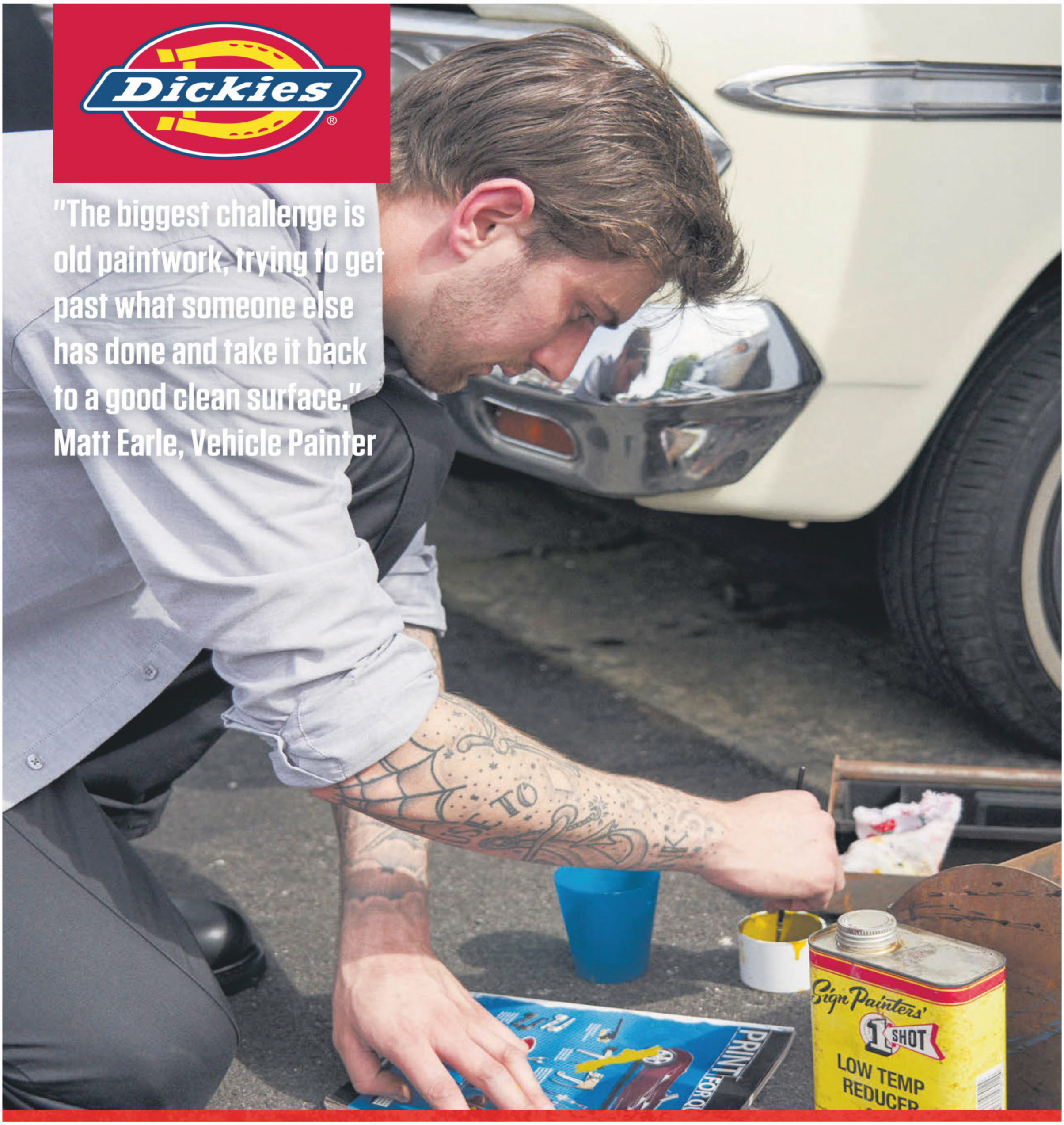
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