

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MOTORSPORT NEWS



RAMPANT RICCIARDO



RED BULL MAN TRIUMPHANT...

... AS VETTEL SUFFERS IN CHINA **P4**

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RALLY GB 2018

UNDER THREAT



By David Evans

WRC round hanging by a thread after route clash

Wales Rally GB organisers and the FIA are on a collision course over the governing body's failure to sign-off on the route for Britain's round of the World Rally Championship.

The organisers of Britain's WRC round had planned to combine a test around the Great Orme with a run through the streets of Llandudno as the event's powerstage in October, but the FIA could kill the plans by denying the event a waiver for current regulations.

Full story p2-3

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MOTORSPORT NEWS

CHAMPION COMES OUT FIGHTING



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Route row might spell trouble for UK's

**CLOUD
RALLY
FUTURE**



Rally GB is designated as a gravel rally in the WRC year

By David Evans

The FIA's refusal to green-light a revolutionary Wales Rally GB route could jeopardise the event's future on the World Rally Championship schedule.

Motorsport News understands the FIA is set to decline the Deeside-based event the required waiver to run the route it wants. The FIA's concerns are thought to be safety-related, but the addition of the Great Orme-Llandudno powerstage is a sticking point. The FIA thinks it would not be worthy of the five bonus points on offer for the powerstage. Regulation 13.3.2 of the WRC's sporting regulations dictates that the powerstage should: 'Be representative of the rally.'

The decision rests with FIA rally director Yves Matton as Rally GB is a nominated gravel rally and therefore needs to seek a waiver to run an asphalt stage – and *MN* understands that waiver is unlikely to be granted.

Matton reportedly argues that the proposed test is not representative of Rally GB. Asked on the record for news of the Rally GB route, Matton told *MN*: "We are in discussion with the Rally GB organiser about their route, it is too early to say any more at this moment."

Wales Rally GB managing director Ben Taylor wouldn't be drawn on the situation, stating: "We have sent our route to the FIA and the teams to get their feedback and approval as is normal. This year's route does contain some radical proposals that we believe will create a fantastic event but, in order to deliver them, we require a degree of support from the FIA. We're now working with the governing body and WRC Promoter to make sure everybody gets what they want from our rally."

Yesterday's [Tuesday] official launch of Wales Rally GB was canned when it became clear there would be no solution to the current impasse.

While the route for this year's

event can be fixed, *MN*'s sources have talked in ominous tones about the potential knock-on for the event and its immediate future in the WRC schedule.

The Welsh Government has worked tirelessly to ensure the adoption of close-road legislation went through Cardiff in time to allow the October 4-7 event to use the new laws to offer the sort of revolution Taylor and his team planned.

The plan to run the Great Orme was seen as a real opportunity to bring the sport to tens of thousands of people, and to showcase the Welsh coastline and the town of Llandudno on worldwide live television.

This year's route was also reckoned to be the springboard to an extension to Wales' deal to retain Britain's WRC round beyond the end of this season. The current three-year agreement between Rally GB and Wales ends in December and *MN*'s understanding is that, while IMS (the financial arm of British motorsport's governing

showpiece WRC event

HANGS OVER GB



The Great Orme stage is planned, but needs waiver

body) is talking to potential backers, the preferred option is to remain in Wales beyond 2018.

A well-placed source told MN: "The potential fall-out is massive. It's not too much of a stretch to say a decision not to go with this plan could cost Britain its round of the championship.

"Wales is absolutely on the boil for this; it's rightly been seen as a fantastic way to show off some of its most beautiful coastline. The

event has moved to the front of October this season, giving real potential for great weather, big crowds and some amazing shots from the helicopter.

"Nobody's under any illusions here, the organisers are aware that the Great Orme is different in nature to the rest of the route, but the problem here really lies with woolly rules. If asphalt stages can't be run on gravel rallies then why has a waiver been issued for such a stage in each of the past five years? The issue is with waivers, especially when so much of the argument is utterly subjective. And in terms of a powerstage being worthy of five points, are any of these final six-mile stages really worthy of the points? The powerstage is a promotional creation and should be treated as such."

The teams are undecided, with some pointing to the dangers of the Great Orme stage running high above the Irish Sea.

The source added: "Really? It's too dangerous? We've just come from Corsica and folk are saying

that Great Orme's dangerous..."

Opinion among the drivers is split, with some wanting to stay in the woods and some being able to see the promotional value of bringing 30,000 fans into Llandudno to watch a rally.

One senior team principal said: "I don't understand what the problem is here... we have the chance to do something exceptional, something which will genuinely bring the rally to the people and the drivers are crying about it. The drivers are professionals, they should do their jobs: drive where their co-drivers tell them to drive and let the organisers run the rally.

"If this doesn't happen it's a stupid decision from the FIA and it's a huge missed opportunity for the promoter. Sometimes, I don't understand this sport - we wonder why we stay hidden away behind the trees."

Wales Rally GB organisers are understood to be working with the FIA, but would not be drawn on a timeframe for a decision.



Llandudno gets great crowd numbers on GB

"The route does have radical plans"



BEN TAYLOR

CHINESE GP REPORT

BY JAMES ROBERTS

Australian profits from Red Bull's smart thinking on the pitwall

RICCIARDO KEEPS HIS HEAD



Ricciardo was the star of the show



Hamilton struggled all weekend



Vettel was set to win before contact

The Shanghai crowd cheered with delight as the victorious Daniel Ricciardo held his soggy race boot aloft and took great joy in swigging the sweet taste of his race-winning champagne.

In contrast, the two Finns either side of him, Valtteri Bottas and Kimi Raikkonen, looked glum. They reached for their champagne bottles and downed their sorrows before spraying the fizz, ruining another opportunity missed.

Last Sunday's Chinese Grand Prix was a genuine three-way fight between Mercedes, Ferrari and Red Bull, but it was an opportunist strategic decision that gave Ricciardo the advantage.

He handed his 'shoey' to his number one mechanic, Chris Gent, who also savoured the spoils. His appearance on the podium was an acknowledgement of the brilliant work the Red Bull mechanics had made the previous day.

Ricciardo had suffered an engine failure in Saturday morning practice and his crew managed to fit a new power unit in under two hours with just a minute of qualifying left to spare. It was the difference between starting sixth or from the back of the grid.

If Ricciardo was appreciative of the hard work of his mechanics, on Sunday he had his strategists to thank in helping him score the race win. When a safety car made a surprise appearance at a little over half distance (after debris littered the track thanks to the two Toro Rossos hitting each other) Red Bull pulled both their drivers into the pits and fitted them with fresh soft rubber, in contrast to Mercedes and Ferrari, which left their drivers on worn mediums.

The time lost pitting behind the safety car was negligible and the two Red

Bulls suddenly had the pace to attack their rivals. Ricciardo got ahead of his team-mate Max Verstappen after the Dutchman had another on-track encounter with Lewis Hamilton.

Following on from the contact the pair made in Bahrain, Verstappen attempted to attack the Mercedes driver around the outside of the high-speed Turn 7, ran wide and ultimately lost the place to his team-mate.

Ricciardo then fought his way past Raikkonen, Hamilton, Sebastian Vettel and race leader Bottas to secure the win. He did so with his trademark, late-braking, clean racing moves and powered ahead of the opposition, 11 laps from the flag.

Behind him, Verstappen clattered into Vettel at the hairpin, which forced them both to spin and the Dutchman was slapped with a 10-second time penalty. Max was fifth at the flag, while with a hobbled Ferrari, Vettel took eighth – behind McLaren's Fernando Alonso.

A number of drivers left the Shanghai International Circuit on Sunday night cursing their bad luck or lack of form. In contrast, Ricciardo couldn't hide his delight at the result. He was asked after the race what his reaction would have been if someone had told him in winter testing he would win a race before Mercedes this year. His response: "Holy testicle Tuesday!"

Qualifying

Throughout Friday practice, the long-run pace of the Ferrari, Mercedes and Red Bull was so close that it was almost impossible to tell who had the advantage. But one thing was clear, the qualifying simulations of the two Ferraris were clearly faster, so it was no surprise they locked out of the front-row of the grid on Saturday.

But the Mercedes drivers were further off the pace than they expected,

the lower temperatures during qualifying seemingly working against their car's ability to bring the tyres up to the correct operating temperatures.

In qualifying, Raikkonen had been consistently quick and he lit up the timing screens on his final run in Q3. By setting purple times in both the first and second sectors, pole looked assured. But his team-mate Vettel aced the final few corners of the Shanghai lap to snatch pole position away from the Finn. It was likened to a tennis champion, who when faced with a break point, volleys back to serve the winner.

Behind the Ferraris and Mercedes (Bottas ahead of Hamilton) came the two Red Bulls of Verstappen and Ricciardo. For the latter, it was touch and go whether he would make qualifying at all.

During Saturday morning's FP3 session he felt the engine in the back of his Red Bull tighten and it spewed its contents along the back straight. Dejectedly, Ricciardo stepped out of his broken machine before he could make it back to the pits. What followed was a superb repair job by his mechanics to install a new power unit in time for qualifying. The job would usually take three hours, but they managed it in two. With just four minutes and 40 seconds of Q1 remaining, his Red Bull fired-up and he took to the track to commence his one and only flying lap with a minute on the clock.

"Daniel was pretty calm," said his race engineer Simon Rennie. "I'd told him to mentally prepare for the possibility that he might only get one shot at it. Ideally I'd have liked to give him at least three laps, five if possible – but as the clock counted down that looked unlikely. He was ready though: he was very calm and prepared to deliver when it mattered. That said, he was obviously quite keen to get on with

'Red Bull crew were the stars of the show'
How the race was won, below



ROUND 03

Photos: LAT



Ricciardo celebrated with another 'shoey'

it because he had a massive drift coming out of the garage."

Ricciardo made no mistakes and his mechanics high-fived each other in the garage, knowing just what a race against time it had been.

Race

As the two Ferraris sprinted away from the line, Vettel squeezed his team-mate Raikkonen to fend off any attack. That caused the Finn to brake early allowing Bottas to nip into second around the outside, as the pack swarmed into the first few corners. Verstappen needed to maximise his advantage of starting on the ultrasoft tyre and also out-braked Raikkonen into Turn 6.

Hamilton, who struggled all weekend with the balance of his Mercedes, was fifth at the end of the first lap, ahead of Ricciardo, the two Renaults and the two Haas machines. And the top runners stayed in that formation (Vettel leading Bottas and Verstappen) until the first stops for fresh rubber, with teams favouring a one-stop to the more durable medium compound tyre.

Unsurprisingly, Red Bull was the first of the frontrunners to pit on lap 17, as it had started on the ultrasoft. Conscious that Ricciardo could have the pace to undercut Hamilton for fourth, Mercedes radioed Hamilton into the pits, and he resumed still between the Red Bulls. But now Max was quick,



Max Verstappen came under fire

setting the fastest lap of the race, and second-placed Bottas was forced to pit one lap later to stay ahead of the flying Dutchman.

The lead Ferrari of Vettel should have also pitted, but he waited one more lap and when the German emerged from the pits – Bottas had taken the place ahead of him. Having been beaten in that strategic play, Ferrari decided to leave Raikkonen out and as he slowed through degrading tyre wear, he eventually backed Bottas up into Vettel's path.

"But..." said Bottas after the race, "when I was closing on Kimi, I knew what Ferrari were planning, but he was struggling so much [with his tyres] that it didn't work," and as a result, Vettel was unable to seize back the lead.

Once out of the way, Raikkonen pitted on lap 27 and fell to sixth place, but the race was about to take a decisive turn.

Heading into the hairpin, Pierre Gasly crashed into the back of his team-mate Brendon Hartley, sending shards of Toro Rosso carbonfibre onto the racing line. The team had asked their drivers to swap positions at T14 and Gasly assumed it would be under braking for the hairpin, rather than on the exit of the corner.

The debris called for the deployment of the safety car. The leaders: Vettel and Bottas had already passed the pitlane entrance, but coming out of Turn 14, Red Bull called both their drivers in, for another double-stacking pitstop. It was that speedy strategic decision that won Red Bull the Chinese Grand Prix.

"With Daniel we decided to go more aggressive and try a two-stop race anyway because he was sixth and had the most to gain," said RBR team boss Christian Horner. "The guys had already done a phenomenal job in doing a double stack at the first stop and when the safety car came out we

said, 'right, let's do it again.' Max was further up the road than Daniel, but we got them both in, turned around and none of the leading pack elected to do that. We were on the better tyre for the last 23 laps compared to the guys who had done about 13 laps on theirs. That enabled us at the restart to get into them pretty quickly."

At this stage it was Verstappen who had the best shot for the win, but when he came up to try and overtake Hamilton – around the outside of Turn 7 – he quickly found he'd run out of road and lost a place to his team-mate in the process. There was further frustration when he hit Vettel while trying another pass late in the race.

There were no such dramas for Ricciardo. On lap 37 he passed Raikkonen on the back straight, he out-braked Hamilton into Turn 14 on lap 40. Two laps later he passed Vettel for second and finally, made the move for the lead up the inside of Bottas at Turn 6 on lap 45. It was a thoroughly deserved and superbly executed win; a perfect example of maximising opportunity.

"I don't seem to win boring races," he said. "A week ago in Bahrain my head was down after [retiring]. Yesterday I didn't think I was going to get out in qualifying, now to be here... this sport is crazy. It's frustrating that so many variables are involved in F1. Sometimes I question why I chose this sport because there's so many things out of your control and it does get you down a lot – but when you have a day like this it's worth 50 of those bad ones."

Saturday's engine change will come back to haunt Ricciardo later in the year, when he gets an inevitable grid penalty. For the moment, that champagne tastes sweet. Next up is Baku, a race he won last year after crashing in qualifying.

Right now, a similar result doesn't seem that implausible...

RACE FACTS

Results © 2018 Formula One Administration Ltd

CHINA
Circuit: Shanghai International Circuit Length: 3.385 miles Race distance: 189.568 miles Laps: 56
Lap record: Lewis Hamilton 2017 – 1m31.678s
2017 winner: Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)

Date: April 9
Weather: Dry

TYRE CHOICE
MEDIUM
SOFT
ULTRASOFT

RESULTS

FIA Formula 1 World Championship, round 3/20

POS	DRIVERS	NAT	CAR-ENGINE	TIME
1	Daniel Ricciardo	AUS	Red Bull-Renault	1h35m36.380s
2	Valtteri Bottas	FIN	Mercedes	+8.894s
3	Kimi Raikkonen	FIN	Ferrari	+9.637s
4	Lewis Hamilton	GBR	Mercedes	+16.985s
5	Max Verstappen	NED	Red Bull-Renault	+20.436s
6	Nico Hulkenberg	GER	Renault	+21.052s
7	Fernando Alonso	ESP	McLaren-Renault	+30.639s
8	Sebastian Vettel	GER	Ferrari	+35.286s
9	Carlos Sainz	ESP	Renault	+35.763s
10	Kevin Magnussen	DEN	Haas-Ferrari	+39.594s
11	Esteban Ocon	FRA	Force India-Mercedes	+44.050s
12	Sergio Perez	MEX	Force India-Mercedes	+44.725s
13	Stoffel Vandoorne	BEL	McLaren-Renault	+49.373s
14	Lance Stroll	CAN	Williams-Mercedes	+55.490s
15	Sergey Sirotkin	RUS	Williams-Mercedes	+58.241s
16	Marcus Ericsson	SWE	Sauber-Ferrari	+1m02.604s
17	Romain Grosjean	FRA	Haas-Ferrari	+1m05.296s
18	Pierre Gasly	FRA	Toro Rosso-Honda	+1m06.330s
19	Charles Leclerc	MON	Sauber-Ferrari	+1m22.575s
20	Brendon Hartley	NZL	Toro Rosso-Honda	L51/gearbox

Winner's average speed: 118.962mph Lap leaders: Vettel 1-20; Raikkonen 21-26; Bottas 27-44; Ricciardo 45-56

FASTEST LAP | DANIEL RICCIARDO 1m.35.785s ON LAP 55 (AVERAGE SPEED: 127.307mph)

QUALIFYING

POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Vettel	1m31.095s	11	Magnussen	1m32.986s
2	Raikkonen	1m31.182s	12	Ocon	1m33.057s
3	Bottas	1m31.625s	13	Alonso	1m33.232s
4	Hamilton	1m31.675s	14	Vandoorne	1m33.505s
5	Verstappen	1m31.796s	15	Hartley	1m33.795s
6	Ricciardo	1m31.948s	16	Sirotkin	1m34.062s
7	Hulkenberg	1m32.532s	17	Gasly	1m34.101s
8	Perez	1m32.758s	18	Stroll	1m34.285s
9	Sainz	1m32.819s	19	Leclerc	1m34.454s
10	Grosjean	1m32.855s	20	Ericsson*	1m34.914s

* Five-place penalty for failing to slow for yellow flags in qualifying



Hulkenberg was a strong sixth

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

DRIVERS			CONSTRUCTORS		
POS	DRIVER	PTS	POS	CONSTRUCTOR	PTS
1	Sebastian Vettel	54	1	Mercedes	85
2	Lewis Hamilton	45	2	Ferrari	84
3	Valtteri Bottas	40	3	Red Bull-TAG Heuer	55
4	Daniel Ricciardo	37	4	McLaren-Renault	28
5	Kimi Raikkonen	30	5	Renault	25
6	Fernando Alonso	22	6	Toro Rosso-Honda	12
7	Nico Hulkenberg	22	7	Haas-Ferrari	11
8	Max Verstappen	18	8	Sauber-Ferrari	2
9	Pierre Gasly	12	9	Force India-Mercedes	1
10	Kevin Magnussen	11	10	Williams-Mercedes	0

NEXT RACE: AZERBAIJAN GRAND PRIX APRIL 29

RACING NEWS

Photos: LAT

F1 ROUND-UP

Miss me, please

Lewis Hamilton says he feared being caught up in Sebastian Vettel and Max Verstappen's accident in Shanghai. Hamilton managed to skirt around the outside of the collision when it happened with 14 laps to run. "I was worried about catching [crashing into] them, especially as they were trying to turn around, so I thought I might get caught there," said Hamilton. "I came towards the apex and saw them both facing me, so I had to go left."

Talk, talk Toro

Toro Rosso has blamed a miscommunication for its two drivers clashing in China. Pierre Gasly torpedoed Brendon Hartley into the hairpin, leading to the race-changing safety car to pick up the resulting splinters of bodywork. Gasly said: "They told me on the radio, 'OK Brendon is going to let you past at the end of the straight' so I expected him to let me by. I tried to brake to avoid him but it was way too late." Hartley said he'd planned to let Gasly by on the corner exit. "It's clearly a bit of miscommunication," he said.

Thrown away

Red Bull advisor Helmut Marko says Max Verstappen threw away victory in China through his clash with Sebastian Vettel. Marko told the Movistar TV channel: "Max overdid it by trying to overtake Vettel. Yes, it was a mistake from him and he apologised. That can happen in racing. There was victory for him on the table, but he gave it away. But still it was a very good drive from both our drivers. He's 20. He's still bloody young and it can happen."

Not a fair fight

Fernando Alonso says his late-race fight with Vettel wasn't a fair one, due to the Ferrari's floor damage after his tangle with Verstappen's Red Bull. Alonso passed Vettel through Turn 2 for seventh place on a tough weekend for McLaren, but the move ended with Vettel on the grass. "Obviously it wasn't a fair fight because Sebastian had damage and I was faster in the corners," said Alonso. "He was running wide so I saw the door open and went for it. But he kept going, and in that situation you need to back off at one point."

Low McLaren

McLaren's Eric Boullier has admitted that perhaps the team aimed a bit low with its performance targets this year. McLaren is now a regular points-scorer with Renault power, but could only lock out row seven in qualifying after another weekend where it lacked pace. "The car is a match for the [CFD] target, so maybe that means the target was not the right one," said Boullier. "We need to revise in terms of ambition what we need to do."

HAMILTON WAS 'IN NO MAN'S LAND' IN CHINA

World champion admits he was bemused by lack of pace

By Robert Ladbrook

Lewis Hamilton has confessed to being "in no man's land" during a difficult Chinese Grand Prix weekend that proves he has a fight on his hands if he is to win a fifth world title this season.

Winless from the first two rounds of the season, Mercedes struggled in Shanghai with Valtteri Bottas clinging on to second and Hamilton just fourth. It marked the first time in the V6 hybrid engine era that a Silver Arrows driver hasn't mounted the top step of the podium for three races.

Across the weekend Mercedes lacked pace compared to the Ferraris, and the team was also undone by Red Bull's quick decision to put both of its drivers onto the softer-compound tyres during a late safety car period.

Hamilton appeared dejected for most of the weekend, being out-qualified by Bottas and then struggling to make an impact.

"I was in no man's land. I had no pace. I was just trying to hang on to whatever I had," raved Hamilton, who is just nine points down on championship leader Sebastian Vettel after the German's costly clash with Max Verstappen.

"Obviously we've got a tough battle ahead of us,

Lewis: not at his best

particularly on my side. I'll say my side, but also us as a team, we've been underperforming. This weekend has been a disaster, so I've got to try and rectify that and get myself back into normal performance mode. Otherwise valuable points will be lost. I can't have these disastrous weekends."

Mercedes head Toto Wolff agreed that Hamilton hadn't been on-song.

"The whole weekend we were just not good enough," Wolff said. "We just need to get our act together."

"Like the car, Lewis wasn't in the best place this weekend. He's the best driver in my opinion, but even the best have times when they are not 100 per cent. And if you have a car that's not performing as expected, and tyres that are not doing what you think they should do, and then the strategy goes against you... Everything just goes in the wrong direction."

Wolff explained that unpredictable tyre performance hindered the Mercedes duo. They struggled to switch the tyres on during qualifying, and then overheated them during the race. Wolff said they were "bouncing between freezing and overheating".

"You can see how fast the picture can change," he added. "Valtteri would have deserved to win this race, he drove brilliantly. But the luck was against us."



Hamilton cut a stark figure in Shanghai

Vettel questions safety car timing that cost him China glory

Sebastian Vettel has questioned the call to introduce the safety car during the Chinese GP, a move that ultimately cost him a chance to fight for victory.

Vettel was firmly in the mix at the head of the field when the two Toro Rosso cars collided, leaving bodywork debris on the track at the hairpin. The field completed two laps before the safety car was called to let marshals clear up the mess.

However, when it did appear the leading cars had already passed the pit entry, allowing those behind the chance to stop and change tyres. Vettel

dropped places against the cars with fresh tyres on the restart, before finishing eighth after a clash with Max Verstappen.

"I need to understand why we had a safety car changing the race," said championship leader Vettel. "In 2014 Hungary we had a similar situation, where the leaders were disadvantaged because the safety car came once they passed the pit entry. I understand if something happens and you have to react straight away, but we had two laps of the debris on the track, so why not call the safety car

half-a-minute or so sooner and then everybody has the chance to decide whether they pit or not?"

FIA race director Charlie Whiting countered: "I don't look to see who is going to be advantaged or disadvantaged. We've had the safety car for 20 years, and we know that in every intervention there will be winners and losers. If you sit there and work out who is going to be advantaged and work it out so everyone has exactly the same chance, we don't have time for that. It's not our job to do that."

Verstappen accepts blame for accident

Max Verstappen has accepted blame for his collision with Sebastian Vettel last weekend, and has apologised to the world championship leader.

Verstappen was hunting down the Ferrari for third place when he made a late lunge into the hairpin, only to collide with Vettel and send both cars into a spin.

The stewards gave Verstappen a 10-second penalty for the move, dropping him to fifth place.

"I could see he [Vettel] was struggling on the tyres and tried to brake late in the corners, but I locked the rears and hit him. It was of course my fault. Not what I want," said Verstappen.

"It is easy to say after that I should have waited, and that probably would have been the best idea, but unfortunately it happened."

Vettel said Verstappen apologised straight after the race. When asked if he thought Verstappen needed to calm down, Vettel said: "He's done enough races, but this can happen if you've done 300 races. You mustn't forget that inside the car the judgments are very difficult to make, but you have these things in your mind and make sure you don't crash. He could easily have taken his front wing off or got a puncture, so we were both lucky."

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'Bird was very fortunate in Rome'
Formula E report, p23



Photos: LAT



Porsche 919 Evo beat the F1 pole time at Spa last week

RECORD-BREAKING PORSCHE TO RUN AT GOODWOOD AND BRANDS

Porsche's record-breaking Porsche 919 will run at Brands Hatch and Goodwood later this year, after breaking the outright lap record at Spa-Francorchamps last week.

The Porsche used in the World Endurance Championship last season ran with a number of modifications in the hands of Neel Jani, in which it set a lap 12s faster than the pole time

from the same track in 2017.

The 1m41.770s lap was also almost 0.8s quicker than Lewis Hamilton's lap record, set during F1 qualifying in 2017. The reworked 919 hit 223mph.

The car will run at the Festival of Speed at Goodwood (July 12-15), and at Brands' Porsche celebration on September 2, as Porsche elected not to compete in the WEC this

year leaving only Toyota as a full manufacturer LMP1 entry.

Jani said of the 919 Evo: "The speed on which everything happens on a single lap with the 919 Evo is that fast that the demand on reaction speed is very different to what I was used to in the WEC. The grip level is a new dimension, I couldn't imagine this amount beforehand. It is definitely the

fastest car I've ever driven."

Porsche LMP1 boss Andreas Seidl added: "This additional success is the result of the LMP team's hard work and a proud day for the engineers. All six 2017 LMP1 drivers contributed to the project. It was our target to show the 919 Hybrid's abilities when we ease the restrictions that came from the WEC regulations."

QUICK LAPS THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP

Ex-Formula 1 driver Alexander Rossi took his first IndyCar win since the 2016 Indy 500 at Long Beach, on a weekend where he topped every session in his Andretti-run Honda-powered car. He survived four safety car periods to beat Penske's Chevrolet-propelled Will Power... NASCAR at Bristol was delayed until Monday due to rain, as MN went to press. Kyle Larson led as the race fell just short of half distance before rain interfered for a

third time... **Norman Nato, Olivier Pla and Paul Petit won the opening round of the European Le Mans Series at Paul Ricard aboard their ORECA/Gibson. Will Stevens was the highest finishing Brit in the car he shares with Julien Canal and Timothe Buret, while Liam Griffin, Alex MacDowall and Miguel Molina topped the GTs in a Ferrari...** Reigning DTM champion Rene Rast will contest the Nurburgring round of the World

Touring Car Cup (WTCR) in a third WRT-fielded Audi RS3 LMS. Rast will partner three-time British Touring Car champion Gordon Shedden, and reigning TCR International Series champion Jean-Karl Vernay. The race supports the Nurburgring 24 Hours, which Rast will also contest. His main focus is defending his DTM title... **Will Palmer is testing with GP3 squad MP Motorsport this week in Barcelona, after securing a late deal to test. He**

raced in Formula Renault Eurocup last year, finishing second in the standings with R-ace GP. He has yet to secure a full-time deal with MP, but will test the car. The season starts in Barcelona in May... Porsche Supercup driver Tom Sharp will compete in the series again with his family-run IDL Racing squad. The former Carrera Cup racer finished 23rd in the standings in his first year in the category last season...

Fewtrell leads the Eurocup standings

Brit Max Fewtrell took victory in the opening rounds of the Formula Renault Eurocup at Paul Ricard, and leads the standings heading to the next round at Monza.

Fewtrell - 2016 British F4 champion - got a poor start in race one and lost out to another British F4 convert and his R-ace GP teammate this year, Logan Sargeant.

"Can he be a threat this year?" asked Fewtrell of Sargeant after race one. "I think this race answered that question!"

"As for my results, I am a bit gutted. With the numerous start procedures, I think we had a clutch problem. I don't like looking for excuses, but we need to take a look at this. In any case, I'm delighted we scored a lot of points today for the team."

Sargeant had a sticking gear during race two ruling him out,



Fewtrell (c) won race two

and Fewtrell survived a safety car to beat Christian Lundgaard.

"Next week at Monza, I hope we will be as strong as this weekend, although it's a bit more difficult to lead due to the slipstream," added Fewtrell. "Nevertheless, we're not looking too far ahead and we will take the sessions one at a time."

Fewtrell was the highest finishing rookie in the standings last year, taking sixth with the Tech 1 Racing team.

Toyota prepares for Le Mans on three wheels

Toyota has tested its TS050 HYBRID on three wheels as it simulates random problems in its bid to break its victory duck at the Le Mans 24 Hours.

One of Toyota's 2018/19 World Endurance Championship challengers was sent out of the pits with a front wheel missing during an endurance simulation at the Aragon circuit last month so the team could learn how to deal with the situation should it arise in the race this June.

Toyota technical director Pascal Vasselon said: "In Aragon we have done one lap on three wheels and asked the team to bring back the car."

Toyota has been

exploring an array of problems in order to be as prepared as possible for the kind of exceptional circumstances that deprived it of victory at Le Mans in 2014, '16 and '17.

"We did not need as much mileage as the year before, so we have sacrificed mileage to train the team to handle fake problems," Vasselon said.

"The target was to train the team to handle the unexpected and it worked quite well."

As many as "20 to 25" different issues have been simulated by Toyota so far this year, including surprising the driver by ceasing all radio communication and simulating driveshaft failures.



F1 RACING ASSOCIATE EDITOR

JAMES ROBERTS

"Hamilton vs Verstappen is an intriguing battle"



Much was made of the comment Lewis Hamilton said to describe Max Verstappen in the aftermath of their contact at the Bahrain Grand Prix. When a Dutch journalist questioned Hamilton about his 'd***head' remark, Sebastian Vettel intervened to say that it was a heat-of-the-moment overreaction and shouldn't be a story.

Just a few days later, Hamilton and Verstappen shook hands to bring the matter to a close. As far as they were concerned, there was nothing more to add.

But after talking to old pros last weekend, they were of the belief this is a duel that will run and run. The on-track battle between the master (four-time champ Hamilton) and the apprentice (three-time race winner Verstappen) is turning into one of the great stories of the current era of Formula 1. And, guess what? They clashed again on-track, just three days after their handshake...

When Verstappen overtook Hamilton in Bahrain, he gently eased his Red Bull over to the left-hand-side of the track to get Lewis to lift. It isn't considered 'dirty driving' it's what anyone would do in wheel-to-wheel combat. But crucially, Lewis didn't lift. He stayed on the outside and the pair made contact. It was a warning shot from Hamilton to Max not to try the same trick, but you know the young Dutchman won't be deterred.

Fast forward to China on Sunday, Max was behind Lewis and attempted to pass. But perhaps a little rashly he tried on the outside of the ultra-fast Turn 7. There was never a chance of pulling that move off against Hamilton and he fell off the race track.

On Sunday evening Hamilton was asked if he'd attempted to overtake anyone at that corner before? "Not on any of the top guys," he said, tongue firmly in cheek.

Verstappen was in more bother later in the race, tangling with Sebastian Vettel, but we shouldn't criticise Max for his hard-nosed racing - it's what makes him so exciting to watch.

Nico Rosberg told me that, now as a fan, even he is disappointed when Verstappen retires from a GP. "You know he's just going to go for it and he'll create opportunities where there isn't one," said the 2016 world champ. "He's so good for the sport."

Another commentator remarked that the duel between Hamilton and Verstappen is reminiscent of when young Michael Schumacher started to rattle Ayrton Senna in the early 1990s. Remember Magny-Cours in 1992 when the pair collided? Senna afterwards suggested the youngster should show a little more "respect".

Sound familiar?

To suggest this little duel between Hamilton and Verstappen is a 'non-story' is wrong, it's an intriguing narrative with more fireworks to come.

AGREE/DISAGREE?
letters@motorsport-news.co.uk

RACING NEWS

IN BRIEF

Platt off to a flier

The MSA British Superkart Championship began at Cadwell Park last weekend and four-time champion Paul Platt staked a claim for title number five with two wins and a second place. Reigning champion Daniel Clark was the other winner. Clark was leading race three, but a broken chain ended his race and left Platt in the lead. He had a useful gap over 2016 champion Jack Layton until his tyres went off in the closing stages, but was able to hang on for his second win of the weekend.

Rose and a fire

Defending CNC Heads Sports/Saloons champion Paul Rose remains unbeaten this season, after picking up a double win in his Saker at Cadwell Park, with teammate Steve Harris and Dave Harvey's Locosaki completing the podium in both races. The first race ended behind the safety car after a multiple shunt at Park Corner, when early leader Roddie Paterson's Caterham blew its engine. His fuel tank split and started a fire, but all the drivers involved were unhurt.

Paul to LMP3

GT Cup runner-up Dominic Paul will switch to the LMP3 Cup for this season. Paul, who was also the overall GTA champion last year at the wheel of a Ginetta G55, will now partner Jack Butel at Speedworks Motorsport in a Ligier JSP3 as he moves to the prototype series.

Welch to GT Cup

The Welch Motorsport squad will contest the GT Cup this season as the team expands into endurance racing. Former Porsche Carrera Cup GB driver Matt Telling will compete alongside former GT Cup competitor Pete Parsons in the team's old Carrera Cup car.

Brabham film

A feature-length documentary on the life of triple Formula 1 world champion Jack Brabham is in production with previews planned for the 2019 Australian Grand Prix. Titled *Brabham: The Untold Story of Formula One*, development started in 2014 and it will feature Sir Jackie Stewart, Sir Stirling Moss and John Surtees.

Rare Ferrari auction

A rare Ferrari 250 GT Berlinetta Competizione 'Tour de France' is to be auctioned by RM Sotheby's in May. It is expected to fetch nearly £8 million. Two F1 cars – a 1992 Benetton B192 and 1999 Jordan 199 – will also feature in the auction. Meanwhile Bonhams estimates £5m for a 1953 Ferrari 625 Targa Florio Vignale that 1958 F1 champion Mike Hawthorn raced at Monza.

Caldwell's debut win

Brit Olii Caldwell took his maiden ADAC F4 win at Oschersleben last weekend after starting from pole in the partially reverse-grid race three. The 15-year-old had finished 10th in the opening race and eighth in the second race. The Prema Powerteam driver finished 14th after a part-season in British F4 last year with Arden.

Leaney's debut

Stefano Leaney and Neil Primrose began their Dutch Supercar Challenge assault with a victory at Spa aboard their Norma M20FC. Reigning 750 Motor Club Bikesports champion Leaney and Travis drummer Primrose won the 24-lap race by just 0.082s. The pair recovered to seventh in race two as they had started from the pits because the Tim Gray Motorsport pair were late to the grid.

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Cane will race with Douglas Motorsport



CANE RETURNS TO BRITISH F3 AFTER EUROCUP SNUB

Brit won't race in Renault Eurocup after 'issues' with Fortec team



F3 race winner Cane

By Stefan Mackley

Jordan Cane will return for a full campaign in BRDC British Formula 3 this year with Douglas Motorsport having pulled out of competing in the Formula Renault Eurocup series.

The 16-year-old was due to race with Fortec Motorsports in the series, which began last weekend at Paul Ricard, but has parted company with the team due to "a lot of issues".

"I won't be doing Eurocup this year due to a lot of things," he said.

"You want to be confident that you have got the gear to be competitive and the reason I made the decision is because we didn't have an equal chance.

"Both sides left it on a good note but it's just unfortunate it's cost us another season.

"I felt that I couldn't show my ability as much in Eurocup as I could back in British F3."

Cane has confirmed he will compete in the rest of the

British F3 season having taken three wins last season with Douglas on his way to eighth in the standings, despite missing the first two rounds due to being too young.

He raced in the opening round of 2018 at Oulton Park last month, replacing Alexandra Mohnhaupt just days before the event, but suffered a hairline fracture and torn ligaments in his left hand after crashing at the first corner on the opening lap in race two.

"I was testing Thursday and Friday at Rockingham last week and the majority of it was wet and it wasn't too straining," added Cane.

"In the dry session it did start to hurt a bit but you do more running in testing than on race weekends.

"With Wayne Douglas I had a great relationship and a great year in 2017.

"This season is just about getting as many wins as possible and enjoying it."

BTCC champ Sutton tops Thruxton test from Bushell and Neal

Reigning champion Ash Sutton topped the annual Thruxton British Touring Car Championship test in his Team BMR Subaru Levorg.

The 24-year-old clocked a 1m15.717s lap around the 2.356-mile circuit, which hosts the third meeting of the championship on May 19/20.

Nine of the drivers were underneath the qualifying lap record of 1m16.040s, which was set by Matt Neal last season in his Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R.

Sutton: Fastest time a bonus

"I wasn't even going for a time," said Sutton. "We were basically here to work through a programme and we did that, so to clock the fastest time is a real bonus."

Sutton was using the older-spec Mountune engine in his Levorg, but said that the team was aiming to switch to the



new Swindon Racing Engines-tuned version from the second round of the championship at Donington Park this month.

Second fastest was Mike Bushell in the Team Hard VW CC. He was 0.026s adrift of Sutton. Neal was third in the new-shaped Honda Civic Type R but said he was still working on fine-tuning the set-up of the hatchback and he caused two red flags during the morning's running with throttle problems.

Neal said: "The engine was working well but this is still a journey for us."

BTCC TESTING

Where: Thruxton When: April 12 Weather: Cold but dry

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TIME
1	Ashley Sutton	Team BMR Subaru Levorg	1m15.717s
2	Mike Bushell	Team Hard VW CC	1m15.743s
3	Matt Neal	Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R	1m15.811s
4	Jack Goff	Eurotech Racing Honda Civic Type R	1m15.960s
5	Sam Tordoff	Motorbase Performance Ford Focus RS	1m15.962s
6	Tom Chilton	Motorbase Performance Ford Focus RS	1m15.979s
7	Josh Cook	Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra	1m15.981s
8	Dan Cammish	Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R	1m15.997s
9	Aiden Moffat	Laser Tools Racing Mercedes-Benz A-Class	1m16.043s
10	Senna Proctor	Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra	1m16.109s
11	Brett Smith	Eurotech Racing Honda Civic Type R	1m16.187s
12	Colin Turkington	WSR BMW 125i M Sport	1m16.201s
13	Adam Morgan	Ciceley Racing Mercedes-Benz A-Class	1m16.239s
14	Andrew Jordan	WSR BMW 125i M Sport	1m16.241s
15	Matt Simpson	Eurotech Racing Honda Civic Type R	1m16.412s

Saunders' TVR returns in GT Cup

Bernie's V8s driver Mike Saunders will return to the GT Cup this season aboard his TVR Cerbera GT which was last raced in 2013.

The car, manufactured in 1996, suffered an engine failure in its last outing four years ago but has been repaired and serviced ahead of the opening round this weekend at Donington Park.

Saunders was a regular in GT Cup and took an outright victory with the car in 2011 at Spa-Francorchamps.

"The GT Cup: the best I can describe it is it's a challenge, hard racing but with a friendly atmosphere," said



TVR Cerbera last raced in 2013 before engine blew

the 31-year-old, who will run the car alongside his dad, Tony.

"I think sometimes other series are maybe not quite as competitive in my experience and I do like the competitive

side, I like the challenge.

"The DNA of the road car is still there, it's the same chassis, same suspension mountings and same H-pattern gearbox as the road car."

Triple Eight will return to racing, says Scott

The Triple Eight name will return to motor racing according to the team's owner Warren Scott.

Scott runs the Team BMR Subaru Levorg programme in the British Touring Car Championship, and took on Triple Eight Racing, which was running the two works MG cars in the tin-top series, two seasons ago.

Since then, MG has pulled out as a manufacturer and the cars have been sold. The MG6s are being run this season as private entries driven by Tom Boardman and Rory Butcher under the AmD Tuning.com banner.

Triple Eight Racing is the most successful touring car championship team in the UK, winning eight manufacturers' titles, six teams' titles and six drivers' crowns under the



Triple Eight ran MG cars

leadership of Ian Harrison.

Scott still owns the Triple Eight Racing name and says he is keen for it to be rekindled. "We intend to be racing with Triple Eight, either in TCR or some kind of endurance racing," he said. "That is the plan for the time being, and I like to think that the name will be active for the start of next season. I still have the team name and its equipment, and we are just assessing the best way forward, but Triple Eight will return."

RACING NEWS

Photos: Gary Hawkins, Steve Jones, Richard Styles

OBITUARY

Stuart McCrudden 1946 – 2018

The motorsport fraternity is shocked and saddened to have lost Stuart McCrudden, a valued colleague, longtime Ford Boreham employee and racer turned motorsport event organiser and public relations guru earlier this month. He was 71 and had been battling cancer.

Charismatic and creative, Stuart was for many the beating heart of the Blue Oval's popular Escort Mexico and Fiesta Challenges.

He was also a major force behind popular radio and TV broadcasters Noel Edmonds' unlikely Cortina Mk3 and the late Mike Smith's Escort RS Turbo racing programmes, looking after sponsors, VIPs and fans.

Stuart had raced himself, in a Special Saloon Mini initially, but the pinnacle of his driving career was winning the 1990 Willhire 24 Hours at Snetterton – his favourite event – sharing a BMW M3 with a young Matt Neal (now a three-time BTCC champion) and Dave Wallis.

Having run the FIA Thorougbred Grand Prix championship for the three-litre F1 cars of 1966-'85 for a decade with son Oli – now senior event manager with Formula E – more recently arch entrepreneur Stuart's SMAPR concern in rural Essex has run Honda's World Touring Car promotions.

FORMER FF1600 MAN SHORTLE TO MAKE A RACING RETURN

Champion of Brands frontrunner will make a comeback in Mini Se7ens this year

Shortle was a
FFord regular



A leading name from Formula Ford 1600 racing in the 1980s, Rick Shortle, is set to challenge for a championship again after a break of 25 years when he joins this year's Mini Se7en grid.

Shortle was a successful racer in the Kent-powered single-seaters, notably in the Champion of Brands series in the mid-1980s. Since then he has raced a selection of saloon and sports cars but stopped racing full-time following the 1993 Honda CRX Cup.

The 69-year-old from Woodford will now make a full return at the wheel of a Mini Se7en, running in the S Class. His car will be backed by Geoff Mason, the head of Fusion Events and he

will race to promote the Motor Sport for MS charity, which has been set up by Noel Wilson.

"I honestly can't wait to get back out there as it's been such a long time since I did a proper racing campaign," said Shortle. "I've had a few one-offs here and there, but nothing meaningful until now.

"I've known Geoff for a good while and I couldn't believe it when he offered me this chance. It took a while for him to pick me up off the floor when he told me I'd be going racing again.

"I did test a single-seater a few months ago, but in truth I had this feeling that it wasn't for me anymore. I'm no young gun, so saloons was the better way to go.



Rick Shortle will race Mini

"I tested the Mini for the first time at Brands Hatch recently and loved it. By the end of the day I was setting competitive times and having a great time with it.

"The key is to take the thing by the scruff of the neck and drive it hard. I was surprised actually at how quickly I got back into the swing of things."

The Mini Se7ens has attracted 31 registrations so far, with the S Class accounting for 10 of those.

Spec parts give Miglia entries a boost

The Mini Se7en Racing Club has credited the introduction of spec components for a surge in interest in its top-line Miglia Championship this season.

The Miglia category, which caters for the more powerful 1293cc cars, had struggled for entries in recent seasons with grids dipping as low as just 10 cars at Oulton Park in 2016.

In reaction, the series organisers mandated the introduction of spec Ohlins suspension dampers and comes, an ATB differential and removed the rule that allowed the use of a front rollbar.

Grids stabilised to mid-teens across the course of last year, but so far 25 drivers have registered for the season-opener at Pembrey this weekend.

"The Miglias has suffered badly in recent years, mainly because I think people started to perceive it as an uneven playing field," said M7RC's Colin Peacock, who will himself race a new car built and run by Mini tuning legend Bill Sillis this year.

"Last year we saw things stabilise, but this year the entries have really grown and we're seeing the guys from the Se7ens step up as they've realised it's not as intimidating and expensive as they thought."

The Miglia field is further boosted by the Libre class, which allows more modified cars that don't fully conform to Miglia regs to compete. That category so far has 11 registrations.



Miglias proving more popular with 25 drivers registered

John Cooper's grandson joins Mini Challenge

The grandson of Mini tuning legend John Cooper will contest the full Mini Challenge season this year, and aims to move up to the top flight JCW category before the end of the season.

Charlie Cooper made his motorsport debut at last weekend's Cooper Pro class season-opener at Donington Park, racing one of the naturally aspirated 1.6-litre machines with Exce8 Motorsport.

He is the grandson of John Cooper, who founded the Mini Cooper performance variant of Alec Issigonis's original Mini design. The family's tuning legacy has continued under the John Cooper Works moniker, which was founded in 2000 by John's son, Michael Cooper.

Charlie, 37 from London, will act as a brand ambassador for Mini through his maiden season, which is set to culminate in an outing in the 255bhp JCW Championship finale at Donington Park in September.

"There's so much to learn, but it's so exciting to be



Cooper made his race debut

involved in something that's pretty much a family legacy," said Charlie Cooper, who took a brace of 14th-place finishes.

"When I was younger I did some karting but then pursued rugby for many years until a knee injury put me out. To get the chance to go racing is a bit of a dream as it's something I never thought I'd do. I've done a few trackdays before but racing is a totally different experience. It's very full-on and I'm learning a lot. The goal is just to improve as the year goes on and be competitive, and then not to embarrass myself in the JCWs at the end of the year as they're a whole new league of performance."

Ahlers wins as the CSCC season begins

Keith Ahlers celebrated 25 years of Morgan +8 ownership with his 98th and 99th **Morgan Challenge** victories at the Classic Sports Car Club's season opener at Snetterton earlier this month – but it wasn't all plain sailing.

Cautious away from pole in race one, he blasted into the lead down the Bentley Straight only to take to the Esses Complex escape road. "I missed my braking point," admitted a sheepish Ahlers, who rejoined in fourth. He thereafter set about redressing his error and eventually overhauled Andrew Thompson.

Race two was an easier affair for Ahlers as he unseated fast-starting Thompson on the second lap.

Ian Everett only briefly relinquished the lead of the **Group 1 Swinging Sixties** race during the pitstop phase before the BMW 1502 mounted local racer reclaimed top spot. Malcolm Johnson's Lotus Europa was the early Group 2 leader but the rumbling V8s of Daniel Williamson (Chevrolet Corvette) and Raymond Barrow (Camaro) later usurped him.

Alan Tice led the early **Classic K**

laps but a tardy driver change with Chris Conoley dropped the pair behind the Turner of Luke Wos and Joe Ward's TVR Grantura.

The Miles and Piers Masarati-driven Porsche 911 Turbo, which was languishing in 18th place after the stops, steadily fought back to steal the **Future Classics** victory four laps from the finish.

The **Tin Tops** produced a thrilling finale in which Russell Hird looked to have secured victory, having held off Tom Mensley's persistent attempts to dislodge the Honda Civic racer, but a track-limits penalty dropped Hird to fourth. The Colin Simpson/Steven Simpson Peugeot 206 carved into the leading pair's advantage just narrowly failing by 0.008s to dislodge Mensley's winning Renault Clio.

The demise of Stuart Daburn's TVR Tuscan in the **Modern Classics** race allowed BMW M3-mounted Edward Leigh an easy run to the flag while Mark Smith and James Moulton-Smith's M3 finished almost a lap ahead of Gary Hufford's example in the **New Millennium** event.

WINNERS

Classic K Luke Wos (Turner Sports)	Modern Classics Edward Leigh (BMW M3 Evo E36)	Open Series Jonathan Mitchell (Caterham CSR)
Future Classics Miles Masarati/Piers Masarati (Porsche 911 Turbo)	Morgan Challenge Race 1: Keith Ahlers (+8) Race 2: Keith Ahlers (+8)	Swinging Sixties Group 1: Ian Everett (BMW 1502 2000) Group 2: Daniel Williamson (Chevrolet Corvette 7400)
Jaguar Saloon & GT Championship James Ramm (XJS)	New Millennium Mark Smith/James Moulton-Smith (BMW M3 Evo E36)	Tin Tops Tom Mensley (Renault Clio)
Magnificent Sevens Peter Ratcliff (Caterham CSR)		



Ahlers won in Morgan Challenge



Williamson won in Swinging Sixties

HISTORICS

DOWN THE PUB WITH

JUSTIN MAEERS

Vintage specials racer
Age: 52 Lives: Market Harborough

He's mainly raced vintage cars

"I started off with the RIP Special, which is a four-wheeled version of a three-wheeler Morgan, and then moved on to GN Dragonfly, which Tom Walker is now campaigning. I then stopped vintage racing for a few years and got into racing Triumphs. I raced a TR3 in the TR Challenge, which we had a huge amount of fun with."

He tried a Lola T70

"I then got the Parker GN that I'm still racing and an opportunity arose to buy a Lola T70 Mk3B and I bought the last factory continuation car just before Lola's demise. But I ended doing a lot of vintage racing and didn't race the Lola for a couple of years, so I sold it."

He also has a Cooper Monaco

"When I got a bit more time, I regretted that, so on a bit of an impulse at the Silverstone Classic in 2015 I bought a Cooper Monaco, which I've raced regularly since then. It's the ex-Ted Williams/Graeme Dodd car. Then last year I got back into Lola again and got a T70 Mk2, the AJ Foyt car, which I'm hoping to race at the Goodwood Revival, that is if I get an invite."

He loves the Parker GN

"In the meantime, the Parker GN is just such good value for money. It came out of the GN factory in 1922 and a bit later they thought it was a bit slow and had the great idea of fitting an aeroplane engine and that's the Cirrus Hermes 6.2-litre four-cylinder engine that is still in it today. It is still the same engine block but it's been rebuilt a few times. Maximum revs are 2,400."

It went to Romania

"It is road legal and I went to Romania in it last summer to drive the Trans-Fagarasan Pass, which is the best driving road in the world. Unfortunately I hit a large deer, which bent the front axle and broke the sump. It ran the main bearings so it had a complete rebuild over the winter."

He's taken it ice racing

"In February we went to Italy in it to go ice racing and had a fantastic time being even more sideways than normal, and you do not need a powerful car to go ice racing. It begs to be driven with the tail out and it's a great all-round car."



Maeers: variety in racing



AVENGER READY TO TAKE ON ESCORTS

BRM-powered Hillman can end the BHRC's Ford stranglehold

By Paul Lawrence

Welsh ace Ieuan Rowlands believes the BRM-powered Hillman Avenger can be a match for the leading Ford Escort Mk2s in this year's MSA British Historic Rally Championship.

Rowlands has been invited to drive the car owned and developed by Baz Jordan in a bid to show that the package

can rival the all-conquering Escorts. Jordan is now having the 16-valve twin-cam engine built again to the period design of the engine first used in the mid-1970s.

Rowlands and co-driver Emyr Hall gave the Avenger its BHRC debut on Rally North Wales last month, but were sidelined on the second stage by a distributor problem. Now they will head to the unfamiliar

Kielder stages for round two, the Pirelli Rally on April 28.

"I've always wanted to be in historics," said Rowlands, who is noted for his outstanding pace in non-historic Escorts. "Baz has given us this chance and I'm confident that the car can be up there and compete with the Escorts. We did the Cambrian Rally at the start of the year as a test and the car is still evolving."

Rowlands is not underestimating the task. "I know how quick people like Nick Elliott are," he said. "We're a bit under BDG power at the moment, but we hope to get there and it feels torquey. Big thanks are due to Baz Jordan and Jondel Engines, as well as to Jamie Gratton-Smith, who runs the car." The plan is to contest a full BHRC season.



Laffite in the Ligier JS11

Modern racer Ferrer switches codes with classic Ligier F1 outings

Former Formula Renault racer Matteo Ferrer is joining the Historic Formula One ranks this year with the ex-Jacques Laffite/Jacky Ickx/Patrick Depailler Ligier JS11/01, raced by Laffite to third in the 1980 French GP.

"I did one race in Danish F4 at the end of last year but haven't raced regularly since the ALPS Formula Renault Championship in 2015. I lost interest in modern cars and decided I wanted an Historic F1," said Ferrer.

He hopes to run the car in the support race to the French GP at Paul Ricard. "Hall & Hall prepared the car for me and the test at Donington last week was my first time in the car and it felt great," he said.

Langridge graduates to two-litre March F3

Andy Langridge has stepped up to a two-litre Formula 3 car this season after acquiring the March 803 taken to the Toyota F3 title in 1989 by Mark Bailey.

Langridge, who raced the ex-Ian Taylor 1600cc F3 March 733 last season, has had the later March restored to its 1990 Hewland livery by Dan Eagling at Lifetime Racing and had his first two races at Donington Park recently.

"I'm dead chuffed," said Langridge. "The car is so good and it is teaching me a lot," he added of the chassis that started life as an 803A chassis for Formula Super Vee.



The March has been restored

Pearson enters Archie Scott Brown Trophy

Leading historic racer Gary Pearson will contest the Archie Scott Brown Trophy at Snetterton in September.

Pearson will drive his Lister-Jaguar, BHL 118, with which he has scored numerous successes over the past three decades.

It will be Pearson's first appearance in the 1950s sportscar race, which first ran in 2015 and honours disabled Lister ace Scott Brown, who was killed in a race at



Pearson's Lister-Jag will run

Spa-Francorchamps 60 years ago.

"Archie was unreal – what a character," said Pearson. "My old man was friendly with Brian Lister, so we have a connection. Hopefully we'll get a nice grid."

BTCC star Rydell set for comeback aboard title-winning Volvo

Exactly 20 years after winning the BTCC title, Swedish touring car legend Rickard Rydell will be coming out of retirement for the Silverstone Classic to race the Volvo S40 that took him to the crown back in 1998.

The title-winning S40, originally built by the TWR team,

was subsequently raced in various Scandinavian series before being bought and restored by Jason Minshaw.

Now, however, Minshaw has stepped aside and invited Rydell to contest both Super Touring showdowns on the Silverstone Grand Prix Circuit (July 20-22).

"I'm really looking forward to it," said Rydell. "I retired from being a professional racer a few years ago but I'm always happy to do some more races for fun and this will be a very special occasion for me. We are hoping to get some of the 1998 TWR team back together for a reunion, too."



Rydell won his title in 1998

'The Lotus Elan was badly damaged by fire'
Davison's Road Sports return, below

Photos: Russ Otway, Paul Lawrence, Jakob Ebrey, Peter Scherer

Avenger has title-winning potential



IN BRIEF

Jonty Williamson
MN is sad to report the recent death of Jonty Williamson, a former British sprint champion and noted racer with the VSCC. Williamson won the 1971 sprint title in the ex-Martin Brain Cooper-Chrysler T81B. He was third the following season and runner-up in 1972 and also competed in the British Hillclimb Championship.

Devis gets an ATS

Belgian Marc Devis will race a rare ATS D4 grand prix car at the Monaco Historique in the car's first competitive outing for over 30 years. Raced in period by Jan Lammers and Marc Surer, the Williams FW07 lookalike was displayed in the ATS factory until 2014. Devis had a first test at Donington recently.

Davison back out

Barry Davison has returned to Historic Road Sports this season in his Lotus Elan, which was badly damaged in a fiery accident at Silverstone at the end of last season. Now back to immaculate, in October the Elan was hit by the Lotus 7 of Andy Shepherd after spinning at Becketts and suffered a major fire in the aftermath.

Gillies' record shot

Mark Gillies will try and win the Patrick Lindsay Trophy for a record 11th time at the VSCC Silverstone meeting this weekend. Gillies has dominated the race in recent times and has only missed three victories in the last 13 years at the wheel of the ex-Raymond Mays ERA R3A, now owned for a second time by Dick Skipworth.

Debut for Blakeney

Pat Blakeney finally got to race his Delta T81 in Historic Formula Ford 2000 at Donington after two years of problems. Blakeney, who raced in FF2000 in the 1980s, will now hand the car over to his son Scott for the Thruxton races in June. Blakeney senior is the circuit manager at Thruxton and will be busy during the venue's 50th anniversary event. Scott previously raced in FF1600 but has not raced for three seasons.

Ernst adds another

German race car collector Rudolf Ernst has added another Formula Junior to his stable and raced the ex-Paul Smeeth Lotus 22 at Donington Park for the first time earlier this month. The car has recently been raced by Benn Tilley, but has now gone back to its original colour scheme after being re-prepped by Andrew Hibberd.

Vintage opener

The VSCC season will start at Silverstone this weekend with the opening Formula Vintage event. A 19-race schedule includes two races for the Historic Grand Prix Cars Association with a 30-car field topped by Andy Middlehurst in the ex-Jim Clark Lotus 25. The Freddie Giles Memorial Race will run a 35-car field of Frazer Nashes.



Middlehurst in Clark's Lotus



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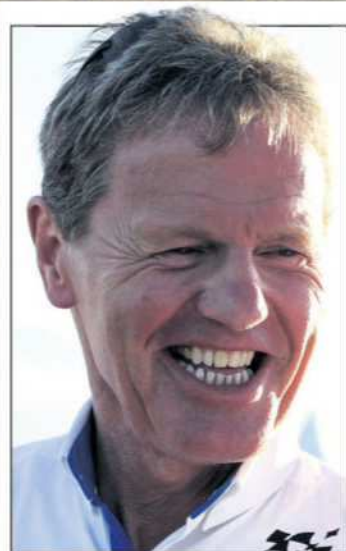
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WRC READY TO OUTLINE ITS FUTURE

Bosses meet to shape the way forward



Could the next-generation WRC cars be hybrids?



Wilson: working on electric car

By David Evans

World Rally Championship officials are meeting this week to discuss the future of World Rally Car regulations – with alternative energy and potential hybrid solutions on the agenda.

The Geneva meeting, scheduled for Tuesday, is seen as crucial for the next wave of WRC technical regulations, expected in 2022, which many feel must include some alternative to the internal combustion engine.

FIA rally director Yves Matton told *MN*: “We are working very closely with the manufacturers about the evolution of the WRC car, both in the medium and long term. It is too early to discuss any outcomes, but it is important their future marketing objectives are taken into consideration.”

Matton’s point about marketing

objectives is pertinent, given four-time World Rally champion Volkswagen’s decision not to return to a global motorsport programme unless it’s running with alternative energies.

The WRC is seen as lagging behind in the race to run green energy and that’s something FIA president Jean Todt is keen to see addressed.

He said: “I would be happy to see a new electric car, or maybe some hydrogen technology.”

“Today there is no manufacturer supplying a car which can drive 120 miles on rally roads at rally speeds, which can have a quick [electrical] recharge. At the moment, it’s completely excluded to think of having WRC with an electric car. It’s very important to have different categories with different ways of optimising new technologies. It’s clear we need to introduce more environmentally friendly technology in

WRC. Motor racing is not only a show, it needs to be a laboratory for new technology and safety. It would make the investment for manufacturers more justified than just for racing.

“We need to introduce some hybrid technology, clearly yes. The world is changing, motor industry is changing, racing is changing.”

The current World Rally Car regulation cycle began last season and while there’s a desire to see the series incorporating alternative energy and hybrid power, one team manager admitted there were alternatives with internal combustion. He said: “We all know we have to change things, but is there the need to rush to electric or hybrid? There are things we can do really quite quickly with the current regulations: cutting the number of cylinders used on liaison sections, that kind of thing. The meeting in Geneva

will be interesting and certainly it’s going to help shape a future.”

M-Sport managing director Malcolm Wilson confirmed to *MN* earlier this year that it has already started working on an electric rally car, which will be capable of competing for a day on a single charge.

Prodrive is another firm with great rally heritage that has already completed work on alternative energies.

Technical director David Lapworth told *MN*: “Our first hybrid electric project was in 2004 with road car stuff. On the other side of the [locked] door we’ve got an electronic team, we’ve developed our own DC-to-DC converter, we’ve got our own software guys; we’ve just done a development for Ford on a hybrid commercial vehicle.

“We haven’t done an out-and-out racing project, but we have the expertise to take us in that direction.”

Chile’s hopes of a future within the World Rally Championship hinge on a successful candidate event in Concepcion this weekend

Eighteen years of development has led Chilean rallying to this weekend, as the nation runs its first ever World Rally Championship candidate event.

Based in Concepcion, the gravel rally will include seven stages on Saturday and a further five on Sunday.

The event will be observed by both the FIA and the WRC Promoter for both suitability and potential inclusion on the 2019 calendar.

Motorsport News understands that the contract would stretch to a three-year deal to allow the event to grow within

the World championship schedule.

Sebastian Etcheverry, of event promoter Rally Mobil, said: “We are experiencing joy and excitement in Chile. We arrive here after 18 years of development and sustained growth, so we consider the chance to receive a date

on the calendar is recognition of the great effort.

“We know we have the strength and the conditions to make the big jump to the WRC.”

Should Chile be successful in its bid, it would raise pressure on incumbent

rounds of the series with the manufacturers keen not to raise the current number of rallies. Chile, along with potential events in Japan and Kenya, would be expected to make a significant contribution towards the WRC’s logistical costs.

EDWARDS STRIDES TO RALLYNUTS GLORY

PAGE 18



The Strength of Experience

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'Edwards takes a big win in the BTRDA'
Rallynuts Stages report, p18



FINLAND RETHINK DOWN TO NEW WRC RULES

Average speeds are in question



Rally Finland clerk of the course Kai Tarkiainen has talked of his frustration at current World Rally Car regulations, which he says have forced his team into its latest route rethink.

The Jyväskylä-based event has ditched some of the faster sections of its route – including one of the world's most famous stages in Ouninpohja – to comply with the FIA's guidance on lowering average speeds.

Finland was comfortably the quickest round of the series last season, with Esapekka Lappi averaging 78.39mph, compared with the 72.40mph Thierry Neuville managed for Rally Poland, the second-fastest round of the year.

Tarkiainen told *MN*: "As much as I like the new [World Rally] car, as the regulation framework seems to create a very equal playing field for all teams and makes things really interesting from the fan point of view, I don't like the way the car has been given too much freedom in aerodynamics and suspension, to add so much to cornering speed in relation to the old version. Without this, we would not need to discuss speeds at all."

Tarkiainen questioned – as have fellow WRC organisers around the world – the correlation between a lower average speed and a supposedly safer event. "We don't have anything against the speed

discussion, as long as everyone understands," said Tarkiainen. "Average speed itself is not a very good measure for anything in rallying. Also, after speaking with the drivers, they do not seem to be worried about it either. I think it is more important to make our spectators understand the risks involved [in spectating] and do our utmost to keep them in designated areas."

"Average speed, as such, did not impact our route selection. But obviously we need to listen to the FIA and having had many discussions with Michele Mouton [WRC manager], it is clear that they [the FIA] hope we could find stages where the

speeds would not be as high as in the past."

Tarkiainen's team was criticised for the use of chicanes to slow the cars – and lower the average speed – last season. He said chicanes won't be in place this year, instead the organisers will use Y-junctions where possible at the July 26-29 event.

Tarkiainen is confident his team has produced a challenging route within the FIA constraints – especially with the use of Ruuhimäki for the powerstage.

He added: "We have a new bit at the start which is really technical, so it will give a different kind of challenge. And just wait until you see the flying finish – it will be exactly that!"



Ostberg in his Escort RS

Mads Ostberg on the verge of expanded Citroën WRC agreement

Mads Ostberg is expected to announce plans to return to a third factory Citroën C3 WRC.

The Norwegian, who was driving a Ford Escort RS1800 for the first time at last weekend's Rally Otago, has been working on an agreement with Citroën since he returned to the team and finished sixth on Rally Sweden.

Ostberg said at the time he wanted to do more WRC events, but it was a matter of pulling a deal together. It's understood that Ostberg could be back out in a C3 as early as Portugal – the scene of his only WRC win to date. Sardinia, Finland and GB are all events favoured by both parties to field a third car.

Ostberg's New Zealand outing was delayed by suspension failure – which was fixed stage-side by a steel post and a welding machine.

"We managed to find a farmer and fix the suspension," said Ostberg, who then set fastest time on the remaining four stages. "I've enjoyed the event, but now we look to the rest of the season."

Suspension test key for Citroën

This week could be pivotal to Citroën's WRC challenge as the firm tests revised suspension parts on its C3.

New suspension geometry is part of an ongoing process of development and finding a sweet spot with the new set-up would offer Kris Meeke and Craig Breen hope at next week's Rally Argentina, an event where they were both forced off the road because of the car set-up last year.

Team principal Pierre Budar said: "We will do some tests to know if we go with some improvements in Argentina. This should be quite a big step, it's supposed to be. We have expectation from this test, we hope it will work because it could be quite important. The new geometry should give us some more possibility with the car."

Stability from the rear of the C3 WRC has been an issue since the car's arrival at the start of last season. Work on the torque splitter and the addition of Ohlins dampers have already gone some way to curing some of those ills.

Paddon stuns with record NZ rally win

Hayden Paddon put his World Rally Championship absence to the back of his mind to deliver a record-breaking win at last week's Rally Otago.

Driving his own i20 AP4+ rally car, Paddon and co-driver John Kennard not only won every one of the 17 stages on New Zealand's South Island, but they set new records for all 17 as well. The Kiwi pair won the event by 8m27.7s.

"The win is great for the car and great for Hyundai," said Paddon. "I'm back in the rally groove, making pacenotes, listening to pacenotes, preparation, and all that side of things. It doesn't matter if it's WRC or NZRC, the



Hayden Paddon obliterated all stage records in his latest outing

way you prepare is very similar and it's important to be doing it on a regular basis. The whole purpose of the NZRC campaign is to keep my eye in and to further develop the New Zealand Hyundai AP4+ car. Regardless of what any other competitors are doing, our priority this weekend was to focus on our

own stages and I know when I've done a good or a bad stage."

Paddon's next rally will be Whangarei, New Zealand's Asia Pacific Rally Championship round, on May 5/6. After that, Paddon heads north to Europe for Rally of Portugal, his return to WRC duty.



Dani Sordo rounded off a busy week – in which he finished the Tour de Corse and tested his Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC for Rally Argentina – by popping in to see his old rally mate Petter Solberg at the opening World RX round of the season in Barcelona. Solberg finished fifth after a collision.

GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

DAVID EVANS

"Neuville just hates being beaten by Ogier"



Turns out Colin Clark might be right. It's not unheard of for my fellow *Motorsport News* columnist and I to disagree about the reading of a rally. Reading his words from the Tour de Corse, I simply couldn't see

the source of his praise for Thierry Neuville.

I dug deeper, dropped a morning on his onboard from the French island and grudgingly agreed with the all-seeing Scot. Neuville put it on the line in Corsica. He earned his third and so, with hindsight, I'll add an extra couple of points to his mark out of 10.

He's now officially on an eight.

Trouble is with Thierry, he can be difficult to read. He sees himself as Sebastien Ogier's absolute equal and the man most likely to end the Frenchman's run towards a sixth title. And he hates being beaten by him.

Neuville has a world champion attitude and approach, which means his primary interest is in himself. Not the team. Is that wrong? From the team's perspective, almost certainly. But let's be honest, beyond Dani Sordo, I'm not sure there's a genuine team player in the World Rally Championship.

Hyundai's i20 Coupe WRC was a world away from where it should have been at round four. There was no stability or consistency in the car. If a driver wanted a result, they were going to have to earn it. Only Neuville was willing to risk everything in pursuit of that result. Sordo's reluctance to push in compromised machinery is well documented, but a by-product of that is finishing in the points on 111 of his 155 starts in the World Rally Championship.

Andreas Mikkelsen went down the same road as Sordo in Corsica. But this wasn't uncharted territory for the similarly likeable Norwegian. Remember Poland last year?

When it comes to driving around a problem, Neuville definitely has the edge over his team-mates. And it could be that – and the speed he showed to win Sweden earlier this season – that keeps him in the race for this year's title.

But, any 2018 title hope needs to be underpinned by far more consistency and reliability from the Korean manufacturer. Don't forget, Neuville's Tour de Corse started in the worst possible fashion; brake problems on a modern day World Rally Car are a bit of an issue wherever they come, but in Corsica, they're a flat-out nightmare. Even worse when they come in a confidence-shattering first loop on the first day. Neuville demonstrated exceptional self-confidence and complimentary conviction in the team to climb aboard the i20 and put it on the door handles first time out in the afternoon.

Bravo Thierry. Good spot Colly boy.

Now, a clarification is needed. Apparently. Some people read my driver-by-driver report on Elfyn Evans as being overly critical of Phil Mills. I was mistakenly interpreted as blaming Mills for Evans missing out on his chance to challenge Ogier. That simply wasn't the case. As anybody who knows this sport is aware, Corsica is an event which commands 100 per cent confidence and familiarity in every aspect of the car-crew combination. Not having Dan Barritt alongside him compromised Evans' effort. That was my point. Mills' ability, as a world champion and Tour de Corse winner, is beyond question. And he's to be absolutely admired for stepping back into the seat at the last minute.



AGREE/DISAGREE?
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RALLY NEWS

IN BRIEF

Llewellyn wins gold

Ford Escort Mk2 driver and world-class clay pigeon shooter Ben Llewellyn, son of double British Rally champion David Llewellyn, has won a silver medal in the Men's Skeet Shooting at the Commonwealth Games at the Gold Coast, Australia. The 23-year old is ranked fifth in the world in the shotgun discipline.

Rally cancelled

Due to run last Saturday, the Memorial Gardens Stages had to be cancelled. Organised by Condor Motor Sports Club, the RM Condor Memorial Garden Stages Rally was a victim of poor weather conditions which affected the country a month ago. Some sections of the Tarmac perimeter roads suffered badly from frosts to the extent that the organisers thought they could be car damaging. The event was due to be the third round of the Scottish Tarmac Rally Championship.

New Epynt event

A new event for naturally aspirated two-wheel-drive cars will run over Epynt on July 7. The Griffin Motor Club has inaugurated the event, which has already received a number of high-profile entries, including multiple Epynt winner Damian Cole in his Ford Escort Mk2. The event will feature 10 stages over the military ranges in a compact route. Regulations and more details are available via griffinmotorclub.co.uk.

Straker to rally EcoBoost Darrian

Multiple national rally winner Mark Straker will return from a two-year hiatus as his new-build revolutionary Darrian is ready for Rally Tendring and Clacton.

Straker, who has won events such as the Wexford Stages in Ireland and the Epynt-based Harry Flatters Rally, has swapped the Millington power in his T90 for a 1.6-litre Ford EcoBoost unit with a 34mm restrictor.

"It's the same car and the same chassis," explained Straker. "But the only thing remaining is the gearbox and the tub. It's a ground-breaking build."

"This will be the proof of whether torque is what you want in rallying. The EcoBoost has a lot more torque but less power than the Millington."

The car – built in conjunction with SBD Motorsport – has a new ECU, which allows Straker to change boost levels and vary torque delivery based on the amount of available grip.

Because the engine has standard internals, it is unlikely to need rebuilding often. The only change is the dry sump and a different turbo and direct fuel injection.

Straker won't test the machine before the Tendring event.

TENDRING EVENT A 'LANDMARK'

First event under new legislation runs on Sunday

Evans heads the field in Clacton

By Jack Benyon

New Motor Sports Association chairman David Richards has described this weekend's Rally Tendring and Clacton as a "landmark" event, the first to run under new closed-road legislation.

In April 2017 a law was passed which places the authority to grant a closed-road permit to the MSA – the sport's governing body in the UK – and the local government authority related to the event.

The Chelmsford Motor Club will be the first event to run under the new

legislation, with a 45-mile asphalt rally on the roads of the Tendring peninsula in the south-east of the UK.

"This weekend's Corbeau Seats Rally Tendring & Clacton will be a landmark event for UK motorsport," said Richards. "After years of campaigning, the MSA and event organisers can now take motorsport to the people, engaging with new audiences and delivering a real boost to local communities."

"We must give credit to Chelmsford MC for leading the way and getting this initiative off the ground just a year after the new legislation was passed."

The event takes place on Sunday April 22, and features stages which will 'surprise' competitors, according to event director Tony Clements, a regular competitor in his own right.

"They are nice, flowing stages. They're challenging in their own way," said Clements. "I think the competitors will be pleasantly surprised at how challenging the stages are."

"The stage along the estuary will be more difficult than people are expecting." Car number one for the event is Melvyn Evans, who will drive the Subaru Impreza S12B WRC which has won the Donegal

Rally for the past two years, and claimed the recent Tour of Epynt Rally. Multiple MSA Asphalt Rally champion Damian Cole, regular event winner Kevin Procter and Manx regular Hugh Hunter follow in a trio of Ford Fiestas. Newly-crowned MN Circuit Rally champion Chris West rounds out the top 10 in his Peugeot 306 Maxi.

Spectators are welcome at the event, but there are only two spectator areas where fans are allowed. For more information on where those spectator points are, visit corbeauseatsrally.co.uk/spectators-2.

ENTRY LIST

Rally Tendring and Clacton, April 22, Clacton

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR
1	Melvyn Evans/Sean Hayde	Subaru Impreza S12B WRC
2	Damian Cole/Jamie Edwards	Ford Fiesta RS WRC
3	Kevin Procter/Andrew Roughead	Ford Fiesta S2000 Turbo
4	Hugh Hunter/Rob Fagg	Ford Fiesta RS WRC
5	Thomas Preston/Carl Williamson	Skoda Fabia R5
6	Meirion Evans/Jonathan Jackson	Ford Fiesta R5
7	Jamie Jukes/James Morgan	Mitsubishi Mirage
8	Mark Straker/Michael Coady	Darrian T90 GT
9	Michael O'Brien/Mark Glennerster	Ford Fiesta
10	Chris West/Keith Hounslow	Peugeot 306 Maxi



Evans heads the field in Clacton

Pearson and Armstrong return to battle in Scottish Championship

Jock Armstrong and Garry Pearson will rekindle their Scottish Rally Championship title battle from 2016 this weekend on the Speyside Stages.

Both drivers' title hopes have been boosted by the cancellation of the previous round, the Border Counties Rally. Both would have missed the event and dropped points to competitors.

Armstrong returns after a six-month ban for exposing his backside to a competitor on the Solway Coast Rally in 2017 while marshalling.

"Even if the Border Counties was still in it would have been a tight race to the end anyway," said Armstrong, who won the title in 2015 and 2016 against Pearson. "He [Pearson] was testing down

in Wales so he's obviously committing himself to it.

"If you have a good test your confidence is high."

"There's been support from the community and from in rallying about what happened [the ban] and what should have happened in hindsight, at the end of the day it's happened."

"It's been a while and I don't want to make any predictions but hopefully we'll be on the pace."

Pearson broke his left leg in two places in January, and while he acknowledges he won't be at his best in Elgin, he's hoping to bank some points. He didn't compete in a full season of SRC for budget reasons in 2017.

"I'm hoping I'll be 90-95 per cent competitive compared to normal,"

said Pearson, who usually left-foot brakes. "I'm making progress week on week. The biggest thing is the muscles and tendons haven't been used for three months."

"Pushing on the brake pedal, I'm not getting enough power through it. I can use it for light braking but if I'm hard braking I have to use my right foot."

Pearson looked set to win the 2016 title but retired on the penultimate stage of the final round of the SRC when he had an exhaust problem.

Both drivers face a struggle for outright victory on the event, as the event's most successful driver returns for a shot at his ninth win. Five-time SRC champion David Bogie has the number one on his car and is the favourite for top honours.



Armstrong was banned



Pearson broke his leg

SEEDS ENTRY LIST

Speyside Stages, Scottish Rally Championship, April 21, Elgin

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR
1	David Bogie/John Rowan	Skoda Fabia R5
2	Jock Armstrong/Cameron Fair	Subaru Impreza
3	Garry Pearson/Paula Swinscoe	Ford Fiesta R5
4	Andrew Gallacher/Jane Nicol	Ford Focus WRC
5	Rhys Yates/Alex Lee	Skoda Fabia R5
6	Bruce McCombie/Michael Coultts	Mitsubishi Lancer E9
7	Mark McCullough/Michael Henry	Ford Fiesta R5
8	Donnie MacDonald/Andrew Falconer	Mitsubishi Lancer E9
9	Freddie Milne/Patrick Walsh	Subaru Impreza WRC
10	Steven Clark/Paul Gribben	Mitsubishi Lancer E5

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'Kristoffersson avoids the chaos in Spain'
World Rallycross report, p28



Photos: SMJ Photography, Jakob Ebrey



Rallycross convert Scott



Fiesta is on the way to Caribbean

SCOTT GETS FIESTA R5 AND WILL START IN BARBADOS

Rallycross regular Andy Scott has purchased a Ford Fiesta R5, and will debut the car in Barbados.

The 61-year-old ended a rally hiatus of over 15 years by competing on last year's Rally Barbados, which had over 40 competitors from the UK and Ireland in 2017.

After driving a Ford Escort Mk1, Scott wanted a step up in machinery for his return.

"We enjoyed the whole event and the spectators are unbelievable, I'm looking forward to getting back and competing there again," said Scott. "Last year when we were having electrical trouble, a spectator gave us the battery out of his car on the side of the road. They really do get behind you, it's a great atmosphere and the chance for a holiday at the same time."

Scott was persuaded to rally by rallycross friend Kevin Procter, who is a regular rally competitor and has been competing in Barbados for over a decade.

For his first event, Scott will compete in the Carter's Pit Stop Stages on April 22 as a warm-up for the Caribbean's biggest event, Rally Barbados on June 1-3.

"There's a possibility we'll leave the car there [in Barbados]

as there's a rally later in the year on Martinique we might go and do, or we may bring the car home and do something at home with it," he added.

Scott owns the Albatec rallycross team which runs a Peugeot 208 for Mark Higgins in the British Rallycross Championship. Higgins won the second round of the championship earlier this month.

New Michelin tyre for two-wheel drives

Off the back of development in the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship, Michelin has created a 15-inch tyre specifically for Ford Escort Mk2s in the UK and Ireland.

Ian Woodhouse – who drove a Ford Escort Mk2 to the 2016/17 Motorsport News Championship – carried out some testing work for the tyre manufacturer last year. Off the back of that, the French firm has introduced a tyre with the same FIA tread pattern as it uses in the World Rally Championship.

The move will benefit Escort competitors in the Michelin Cup which runs as part of the MN Circuit Rally Championship, the winner of which is awarded 12 tyres and a free entry to the season opener of the following year's championship.

The tyres are 15 inches in



Woodhouse has tested tyres

diameter. Michelin's Motorsport manager for the UK and Ireland Tim Hoare said: "It's a tyre [size] we stopped doing because demand had faded, but now Escort tyres are in demand from everywhere from Australia to Barbados.

"It's a completely new tyre which uses the FIA tread pattern and construction, it's a slightly bigger version of the R2 tyre. It's road legal as well."

Greer sticks with Fiesta for Pirelli

Jonny Greer will stick with a Ford Fiesta R5 for the Pirelli International Rally, despite his Citroen DS 3 R5 being ready.

Outings in the DS 3 were delayed due to difficulty obtaining parts, but after two rallies in the Fiesta, Greer and co-driver Kirsty Riddick will give it a run on gravel before possibly returning to the French machine for the Rally of the Lakes the weekend following. "The Citroen's finished now, it had its first shakedown last Friday," said Greer. "We're sticking with the Fiesta for the Pirelli, we think the Fiesta will be the stronger package on gravel. "We want to see where the



Greer switches from DS 3

car is at on gravel as well. Killarney the weekend after, we'll probably be back in the Citroen if everything is ready."

Greer is still hoping to switch to a Citroen C3 R5 when the new car becomes available. It debuted on the Tour de Corse earlier this month.

The Pirelli, on April 28, has attracted 11 R5s so far.

Shackleton Rally event gets organiser support despite lower than expected entry level

Organisers behind this weekend's all-new Shackleton Rally insist the clubman event will take place despite total entries being lower than expected.

In the past few seasons it has managed to attract high-profile drivers such as five-time West Cork Rally winner Donagh Kelly, and Irish Tarmac

Championship regular Desi Henry, to the event.

At the time of going to press, little more than 30 crews had registered their interest in the rally, which is moving from St Colum's Park in Londonderry to Shackleton in Ballykelly.

These include Paul Rowley, who will debut his new R5-spec Ford Fiesta, Seamus Morris

in a Darran GTR, Marty McKenna in a Ford Fiesta World Rally Car, and the returning PJ McDermott, who will drive a Subaru Impreza World Rally Car.

"Entries have been unusually slow," said clerk of the course, Declan McCay, "particularly as there have been two other events before ours, and a

relatively large national event in the shape of the Monaghan Stages Rally is taking place the day after."

After the Dog Leap Stages and the end-of-season Turkey Run, the Shackleton Rally becomes the third competition promoted by Maiden City Motor Club to run out of the former RAF base.

THE STRAIGHT-TALKING SCOT

JOHN FIFE

"A lack of marshals is a real problem"



There is currently much whispering amongst the trees about the imminent demise of special stage rallying as we know it. If it happens, it won't simply be down to a matter of cost, or lack of competitors, or even the lack of knowledgeable organising teams.

It might be much simpler than that. Not enough marshals. Or to be more accurate, not enough accredited marshals.

Unlike single-venue events, such as motor racing and rallycross, the use of multi-venue events creates huge logistical problems for competition organisers. Strict rules and regulations have to be observed when planning rally routes and engaging the appropriate number of marshals for each section.

That was bad enough, now the pressure is on to deploy trained and accredited marshals. The trouble is there aren't yet enough of them.

We have to accept that we now live in a litigious society, so in order to protect themselves sports governing bodies (not just motorsports) and insurance companies are seeking ways to 'lessen the risk' hence the idea of registration and training.

Rallying has to accept that this will happen and on that basis must prepare for it if it is to survive.

Up here in the far north, we had to endure the long and painful process of a Fatal Accident Inquiry last year out of which came a list of recommendations and requests. This has been incorporated into current event planning.

God forbid there should be another such happening. There will be certain sectors of public life and protest groups keen to exploit any shortcomings in the organisation and the manning of such an event.

Hence the requirement for 'qualified' marshals, it's not just a question of numbers. We need to attract, enthuse, retain and train more dedicated volunteers than ever before.

The Scottish Association of Motor Sport Clubs already has an MSA supported training scheme with a full calendar of events, but there appears to be a reluctance, or apathy, amongst clubs and individuals to sign up to it, hence the need for a concerted nation-wide push.

The MSA needs to take the lead. Although the MSA back 'Volunteers in Motorsport' initiative is a great resource, it needs to be more proactive. Social media is vital these days but amateur clubs need guidance and support. Also, clubs and events would benefit from financial assistance to spread the message amongst spectators and bystanders.

The current MSA scheme provides marshals with a worthwhile 'pack' when they sign up. Good idea. But that should only be the start. We need to make them feel they belong and encourage them to progress. Even if that means offering them a contribution towards travel costs and perhaps help with hi-viz weather proof clothing – and maybe even an allowance for midge/mosquito repellent!

Such an extensive training scheme will be costly, but what's the answer – professional marshals?



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RALLY REPORTS

Photo: SMJ Photography, Martin Walsh

TITANIC BATTLE ENDS WITH FIRST MN WIN FOR EDWARDS

SMC Stages Rally

Organiser: Stockport 061 MC **When:** April 15 **Where:** Ty Croes, Anglesey Circuit Championships: Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship **Stages:** 8 **Starters:** 61.

The SMC Stages signals the end of the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship, but with the overall title decided the battle for victory was no less fraught. Victory went the way of Bruce Edwards from new MN series champion Chris West.

West had sealed the championship on the previous weekend's Alan Healy Memorial Stages at Cadwell Park, but the 27-year-old was out to prove that it wouldn't have mattered if he'd needed the final round to take the championship or not.

And the Anglesey spectators couldn't have been treated to a more committed display of driving than West and Scotsman Edwards, who steers his Darrian with flair on any event he competes in.

His last event was at Snetterton in 2017, which he should have won had he not checked into a stage late with mechanical trouble. With his car rebuilt and refettled, he was out to prove that – should he choose to – he'll be a candidate for next year's championship crown.

He proved as much with his performance through the day. The pair were never separated by more than four seconds on any stage, and both won three stages. Having tied on SS5, West then took three seconds out of Edwards on the penultimate test to lead by a solitary second heading into the decider. It was tense.

West lamented his worn tyres – he'd scraped, begged, borrowed and pleaded to even get to the Anglesey round – and dropped four seconds handing Edwards a first win in the championship.

Neither were fastest on the last stage though. That honour went to Pete Smith in his ex-Mexican reservoir/Ott Tanak Ford Fiesta RS WRC. A chunk out of the bumper signified Smith's level of enthusiasm.

In an epic battle for fourth and for second in the championship overall, perennial

Ford Escort Mk2 battlers Mark Kelly – who has been one of the pleasant surprises in his first season in the series, winning at Brands Hatch – fought with outgoing champion Ian Woodhouse in a similar car. Despite playing with suspension settings, once they were correct Kelly looked the better package to take the position and second in the championship. The evergreen Bob Fowden and previous Anglesey winner Wil Owen sealed the top seven.

With the last round of the championship, there were prizes to be won. Class A went to the Ford Ka of Aaron Rix, after taking 35th overall on the event. Class B went to the likeable Paul Sheard at the third year of trying in his rare Mazda MX-5 Mk1, and Class C went to Escort Mk2 driver Dane Walker. He also won the Protire Challenge, earning four tyres, and finished second to Woodhouse in the Michelin Cup. That brings his total up to 12 tyres for the year.

Ciro Caramante – who wins MN's award for the most eclectic year in machinery, switching from a 40-year-old BMW 3 Series to a Porsche Cayman, wins Class D1 courtesy of the top three class winners claiming overall honours.

D2 went to John Stone and the Legend Fires Rally team, although he didn't compete in the final round after damage from Cadwell Park.

Competitors praised the event, which joined the calendar with just a few weeks preparation time. As the championship's reserve event, it slotted in to replace Donington, which was cancelled in March due to bad weather. Championship co-ordinator Darren Spann commented: "Considering we drafted it in late, Stockport 061 Motor Club did a fantastic job."

Results

1 Bruce Edwards/Jim Smith (Darrian T90 GTR) 44m29s; 2 Chris West/Keith Hounslow (Peugeot 306 Maxi) +3s; 3 Peter Smith/John Millington (Ford Fiesta RS WRC); 4 Mark Kelly/Andy Baker (Ford Escort Mk2); 5 Ian Woodhouse/Jason Leaf (Escort Mk2); 6 Bob Fowden/Paul Fowden (Subaru Impreza S11 WRC); 7 Wil Owen/Paul Maund (Escort Mk2); 8 Eric Roberts/Merlyn Williams (Escort Mk2); 9 Mike Taylor/Cat Lund (Talbot Sunbeam Lotus); 10 Michael Jewell/Dan Johnson (Subaru Impreza). **Class winners:** David McMullan/Marc Melhuish (Vauxhall Nova); Malcolm/Rhys Jones (Peugeot 207); Roberts/Williams; Edwards/Smith; Smith/Millington.



West was second ahead of Smith

MOTORSPORT NEWS CIRCUIT RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS

Class A: Aaron Rix (Ford Ka)
Class B: Paul Sheard (Mazda MX-5)
Class C: Dane Walker (Ford Escort Mk2)
Class D1: Ciro Caramante (Porsche Cayman)
Class D2: John Stone (Ford Fiesta S2500 Millington)
Overall: Chris West/Keith Hounslow (Peugeot 306 Maxi)
Michelin Cup: Ian Woodhouse (Ford Escort Mk2)
Protire Challenge: Dane Walker



Bruce Edwards returned to MN series

McCormack wins in County Cork

Moonraker Forest Rally

By Martin Walsh

Organiser: Munster CC **When:** April 14 **Where:** Ballyourney, County Cork **Championships:** Irish Forest Rally Championship; South-East Championship **Stages:** 8 **Starters:** 84.

On a short opening stage, a two-second margin covered a quartet of drivers and offered the prospect of a thrilling battle in the Moonraker Forest Rally, round three of the Irish Forest Rally Championship.

However, within one further stage, Marty McCormack and co-driver David Moynihan were 28.9 seconds ahead in their Skoda Fabia R5, and went on to win as their three rivals all hit trouble on the second test.

McCormack/Moynihan finished 25.3s in front of new IFRC series leaders, New York-based Barry McKenna (Ford Fiesta R5) and co-driver Leon Jordan. Josh Moffett (Fiesta R5) and co-driver Ger Conway were 46.3s further behind in third.

As McCormack powered ahead early on, Moffett lost four-wheel drive, and pre-event series leader Andrew Purcell (Fiesta R5) lost over a minute with a problematic steering rack and differential problems, later retiring. McKenna spun and his Fiesta cut out on two separate occasions.

On a British Rally Championship shakedown for the Pirelli at the end of the month, McCormack signed off in style with two fastest stage times. McKenna impressed in second ahead of Moffett.

Gerard Lucey (Mitsubishi) edged out Stephen McCann (Fiesta S2000) on the final stage for fourth. Having lost time with a puncture on SS4, Connor McCloskey (Fiesta R5+) withdrew prior to the final stage.

EOIGHAN ROGERS (Mitsubishi) won GpN, while Shane McGirr took two-wheel-drive honours. Derek Mackarel (Vauxhall Nova) was the top Junior and for the third time this season, Mayo's Jason Murphy (Peugeot 107) won the Junior 1000s.



Marty McCormack beat strong opposition in County Cork

Results

1 Marty McCormack/David Moynihan (Skoda Fabia R5) 41m27.4s; 2 Barry McKenna/Leon Jordan (Ford Fiesta R5) +25.3s; 3 Josh Moffett/Ger Conway (Ford Fiesta R5); 4 Gerard Lucey/JJ Cremin (Mitsubishi Lancer E8); 5 Stephen McCann/Kaine Treanor (Fiesta S2000); 6 Eoighan Rogers/Paddy McCrudden (Lancer E9); 7 Donall Sweeney/Stephen O'Hanlon (Lancer E8); 8 Michael Carbin/Conor Mohan (Lancer E4); 9 David Guest/Jonathan McGrath (Lancer E9); 10 Enda McCormack/Colin Fitzgerald (Fiesta R5). **Class winners:** Barry Hennessy/Steven Scallan (Honda

Civic); Rogers/McCruden (Lancer E9); McCormack/Moynihan; McCann/Treanor (Fiesta S2000); Dean Humphrey/Nigel Brennan (Vauxhall Corsa); Mike Garahy/Iarla McCarthy (Escort Mk2); Ruairi Maguire/Grace O'Brien (Corsa); James Dunphy/Shane Gazely (Toyota Corolla); Emmet Cronin/Seamus McTigue (Escort Mk2); Shane McGirr/Eamonn Hayes (Toyota Starlet); Mickey Canlon/Ciaran McPhillips (Escort Mk2); Niall Turley/Andrew Wedlock (Subaru Impreza); Derek Mackarel/Muireann Hayes (Vauxhall Nova); Lucey/Cremin; Jason Murphy/Matthew Murphy (Peugeot 107).

ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

Andy Pullan took his third straight win on his home club's **Ilkley Jubilee Rally**, on this occasion he was partnering Paul Crosby.

The pair had been in third place after the opening two regularities, but charged into a lead they weren't to lose. They finished over half-a-minute clear of the field.

Paul Hernaman and Ian Crammond/Matthew Vokes both led at certain points during the opening road sections but fell back later in the day. John Abel/Mark Appleton finished second having closed the gap slightly to the leaders towards the end of the rally.

The **Rally of Derbyshire** was won by the Subaru Impreza of Guy Robinson and Max Freeman. The rally was run in Staffordshire for the first time in its 44-year history. Just one second separated Jon Bossen/Shawn Hughes in second place from Richard

Hill/Sasha Heriot.
Ian Mills

Results

Ilkley Jubilee Rally
Organiser: Ilkley & District Motor Club
When: April 15 **Where:** Yorkshire
Route: 145 miles and 10 tests **Starters:** 62
 1 Paul Crosby/Andy Pullan (Porsche 911) 3m13s; 2 John Abel/Mark Appleton (Sunbeam Tiger) +37s; 3 Darrell Staniforth/Nicky Staniforth (Mini Cooper S); 4 John Haygarth/David Taylor (Opel Kadett Rallye); 5 Dave Leadbetter/Cath Woodman (BMW 2002); 6 Clive Martin/Anji Martin (Ford Escort).
Class winners: John Wolstenhulme/Alistair Wolstenhulme (Porsche 911); Martin/Martin.

Rally of Derbyshire

Organiser: Matlock Motor Club
When: April 14/15 **Where:** Staffordshire
Championships: ANCC, ANWCC & ANEMMC **Route:** 120 miles **Starters:** 48
 1 Guy Robinson/Max Freeman (Subaru Impreza) 8m19s; 2 Jon Bossen/Shawn Hughes (Ford Escort) +1m13s; 3 Richard Hill/Sasha Heriot (Peugeot 106); 4 Matt Flynn/Rob Bryn Jones (Proton Satria); 5 Bevan Blacker/Niall Frost (Peugeot 106); 6 Matthew Jones/Richard Morris (Vauxhall Astra).
Class winners: David Pedley/Grace Pedley (Mazda MX-5); Ian Houston/Craig Hardman (Suzuki Swift).

BTRDA RALLYNUTS STAGES

Edwards' crushing pace continues in Wales. By **Simon Gronow**

EDWARDS GOES RALLYNUTS FOR FIRST BTRDA WIN



Francis is adapting to Fiesta

Edwards has won all but two stages in 2018 BTRDA

Edwards takes Welsh win

The top two in the main event outright, Matt Edwards and Luke Francis, earned the same honours in the Welsh Stage Rally Championship as it held its second round of the season.

Hugh Hunter, who took third on the Cambrian, repeated that feat but was the highest of the Cambrian drivers on this event, usurping Julian Reynolds, who had beaten Hunter on the last event.

Cave finished fifth ahead of the Englands, while seventh was Dylan Davies.

Group N runners Tom Naughton/Will Rogers were slowed early on with a damaged catalytic converter. Recovering, they won the class ahead of Wug Utting/Bob Stokoe, who felt their Subaru Impreza's new engine wasn't as powerful as the previous one.

Paul Davy/Roger Allan had been leading the class before retiring their Impreza on SS5 when they went off following a tyre blowout.

Max Utting/Mike Ainsworth led the two-wheel-drive runners home, while behind them there was a good fight for second.

Owen McMackin/Lee Taylor lost second after a decision to change to softer tyres for the last three stages proved disastrous for their Ford Escort Mk2. They were overtaken by Rob Dennis/Andy Boswell. Their Escort's alternator was held in place with a block of wood when the bracket failed on the car.

After failing to take a good result on the first round of the BTRDA series due to a crash on the Cambrian rally, Matt Edwards and Darren Garrod made amends in the best possible manner by winning the Rallynuts Stages in their Ford Fiesta R5.

The pair were fastest on each of the seven special stages, taking their first BTRDA win in the process, having won 12 of the 14 stages over the first two rallies of the year.

On only their second event in a Fiesta RS WRC, Luke Francis/John Roberts were pleased to finish in second place, as Paul Bird/Jack Morton rounded off the top three in their Ford Focus WRC.

Surprisingly, given the amount of rain in the preceding week, the stages were far drier than expected, which caught out many when it came to tyre choice.

Edwards certainly didn't get it wrong, doing exactly the same as he did on the Cambrian. He took over a second per mile out of his nearest challenger, emerging from the opening test in Crychan with a 12-second lead.

He followed this up with fastest times in the shorter Cefn and Gwibedog tests to arrive at first service with a useful 19s lead.

"There's nothing I want to change, the car's all good," the leader said. His issues, he said, were more of his making, citing fluency errors.

"I'm missing braking points, or braking too early and reacting to things rather than being proactive," he confessed. Fastest time on the following Radnor test indicated he was being harsh on himself.

Also content with their position were second-placed Francis/Roberts. The pair are still adapting to their new car having switched from a Mitsubishi Lancer E9, finding it very loose at the rear, and they lost time at some of the junctions.

"I'm not sure if it's the car or me, I think I'm being too aggressive, it's a massive difference to the Mitsubishi," admitted Francis.

"Braking earlier and being neater seems to be working better." Constant second fastest times indicated that he was getting the hang of things.

"They were good stages, I'm happy enough for now, a top-three finish is the aim today," Bird advised when he and

Morton returned to service. The Ford Focus WRC07 crew were in third having been among the top four on each stage. He followed this up with third-fastest time in Radnor, which he felt in places was "too fast – it's scary stuff. The car's good, but there's plenty of time left in the driver!"

Off to a good start was Hugh Hunter/Rob Fagg with a quick time on SS1, although running wide on a hairpin in his Fiesta RS WRC in Cefn had cost a bit of time. Hunter was even happier following Radnor.

"I loved every minute of that, it was everything a forest stage should be," he enthused. He was glad to be in the mix in fourth place, 9s down on Bird, although he felt he was "going to have to go some to catch him".

For his first outing this year, Tom Cave dusted off his Subaru Impreza and with his friend Dale Bowen alongside for the first time, Cave's aim was "to muscle our way between the WRCs". A good start meant the pair were lying seventh and planning changes to the Impreza's set-up to find more traction, as Cave promised "a good push" in Radnor. True to his word, Cave set fourth-fastest time, moving up to fifth in the process.

Embroiled in a good battle with Cave were Julian Reynolds and Patrick Walsh, who were swapping times with the Subaru driver, the pair within a handful of seconds of each other on each test.

"It's alright, a bit too steady, I can't seem to get my braking right, I don't spend enough time in the car," was Reynolds' appraisal of his morning.

Reigning BTRDA champions Stephen Petch/Michael Wilkinson were surprised by the conditions. "It's a lot drier than I expected, I had the wrong tyres on, and things didn't flow," said Petch. Like Bird, he joked Radnor was "too fast in places".

"I lost time either braking too early, or feathering the throttle – there's no lines to follow." A change of tyre was planned for his Fiesta WRC for the final stages as he sought to improve his sixth position.

After the infamous Radnor, three more tests awaited, with Gwibedog and Crychan running for a second time. Edwards took another 14s out of Francis on the trio of stages, to seal the first BTRDA win in style, while fending off many more powerful cars in the process.

"That will do, a good way to take my first BTRDA win," said a happy



Photos: Writtle Photographic

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

1400

STAGE WINNERS

SS1 Crychan 1 (10.72 miles)
Matt Edwards/Darren Garrod 10m40s

SS2 Cefn (3.51 miles)
Edwards/Garrod 3m39s

SS3 Gwibedog 1 (3.8 miles)
Edwards/Garrod 3m42s

SS4 Radnor (10.66 miles)
Edwards/Garrod 9m29s

SS5 Crychan 2 (9.49 miles)
Edwards/Garrod 9m05s

SS6 Cefn Llwydyd (2.4 miles)
Edwards/Garrod 2m17s

SS7 Gwibedog 2 (3.8 miles)
Edwards/Garrod 3m39s



Tom Cave's Scooby

CLASSWINNERS



Wheatley topped the Rally First runners in Ford Puma

Gold Star: Matt Edwards/Darren Garrod (Ford Fiesta R5)
Silver Star: Robert Dennis/Andrew Boswell (Ford Escort Mk2)
Production Cup: Russ Thompson/Andy Murphy (Mitsubishi Lancer E9)
Historic Cup: Ernie Graham/Robin Kellard (Escort RS1600)
Rally First driver: Andrew Wheatley (Ford Puma) and Bart Lang (Nissan Micra)
Rally First co-driver: Rhodri Williams (Nissan Micra) and Sinclair Young (Nissan Micra)
Juniors: Owen McConochie/Rhodri Williams (Micra)
Senior driver: Dave Brick (Corsa)
Senior co-driver: Graeme Wood (Ford Escort Cosworth)
Fiesta ST Trophy: James Giddings/Sion Cunniff
Rallye R2 Cup: George Lepley/Tom Woodburn (Ford Fiesta R2)
1400 overall: Dave/Toby Brick (Vauxhall Corsa)
B14: Matt Edwards/Darren Garrod (Ford Fiesta R5)
B13: Dylan Davies/Llion Williams (Subaru Impreza)
B12: Owen McMakin/Lee Taylor (Ford Escort Mk2)
B11: Robert Dennis/Andrew Boswell (Ford Escort Mk2)
B10: George Lepley/Tom Woodburn (Ford Fiesta R2)
NR4: Russ Thompson/Andy Murphy (Mitsubishi Lancer E9)
N3: James Giddings/Sion Cunniff (Ford Fiesta ST)
H4: Tom Coughtrie (Mitsubishi Gallant VR4)
H3: Ernie Graham/Robin Kellard (Ford Escort Mk2)
1400C driver: Perry Gardener (Vauxhall Nova)
1400C co-driver: Jane Wright (Ford Ka)
1400S: Dave/Toby Brick (Vauxhall Corsa)
RF2.0 driver: Matt Baddeley (Toyota Corolla)
RF2.0 co-driver: Calvin Hauldsworth (Toyota Corolla)
RF1.4: Bart Lang/Sinclair Young (Nissan Micra)

Brick takes the 1400 class honours as Powell retires

When 1400 Championship pacesetter Chris Powell retired his Talbot sunbeam in Radnor, it was his 2017 rival Dave Brick – driving his son's Vauxhall Corsa rather than his usual Nova – who moved into the category lead.

He and son Toby didn't get off to a great start, hitting a bank near the end of SS1, and they were forced to limp out with a damaged driveshaft.

With repairs completed though, the rest of the day was problem-free and they finished the event over three minutes and 30 places ahead of their nearest rivals.

On his first outing for some time, Kieran Darrington, who was partnered by Simon Jones for the first time, was concerned by an oil

leak on his similar Corsa. Once this was sorted, the rest of the day went well and they finished in a confidence-boosting second in class 1400S.

Making it a Vauxhall Corsa podium lockout in both class and overall 1400 category were Stuart Spyer/Peter Williams following a trouble-free run.

After a good opening loop, Perry Gardener/Steve Link were frustrated when their Vauxhall Nova's engine suffered a misfire on the long Radnor stage. Efforts to solve the problem failed, but despite this the pair held on to win the 1400C class. A slipping clutch didn't prevent Ross Clements/Charlie Mason from taking second in their

MGZR, as Alex Holliday/Jane Wright finished in their Ford Ka.

In the battle for RF1.4 honours reigning champions Bart Lang/Sinclair Young held the early lead in their Nissan Micra, before losing time on SS4 when they caught another car. As a result they dropped behind Andrew Wheatley/Ian Nichols, who went on to win the class after a clean run in their Ford Puma. Lang was then slowed with a loose gearbox but held on for second place.

Max Utting would have won Silver Star but isn't BTRDA-registered. Rob Dennis/Andrew Boswell sealed the win aboard their Ford Escort Mk2. They held off the similar car of Owen McMakin, who was nine seconds behind at the finish.



Brick switched to a Corsa, but was still rapid



Perry Gardener took 1400C honours in his Vauxhall

RESULTS

BTRDA Rally Series, round 2/8, Rallynuts Stages, Builth Wells

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Matt Edwards/Darren Garrod	Ford Fiesta R5	42m31s
2	Luke Francis/John H Roberts	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+40s
3	Paul Bird/Jack Morton	Ford Focus WRC07	+1m10s
4	Hugh Hunter/Rob Fagg	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+1m17s
5	Stephen Petch/Michael Wilkinson	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+1m18s
6	Julian Reynolds/Patrick Walsh	Ford Fiesta R5	+1m22s
7	Tom Cave/Dale Bowen	Subaru Impreza	+1m24s
8	Charlie Payne/Carl Williamson	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+2m12s
9	Martyn England/Dawn England	Ford Fiesta R5+	+2m49s
10	Dylan Davies/Llion Williams	Subaru Impreza	+2m55s

11 Russ Thompson/Andy Murphy (Mitsubishi Lancer E9); 12 Ian Joel/Graeme Wood (Ford Escort Cosworth); 13 Lawrence Whyte/James Morgan (Fiesta R5); 14 Tom Naughton/Will Rogers (Lancer E9); 15 Keith Parry/Eryl Evans (Impreza); 16 Wug Utting/Bob Stokoe (Impreza N12b); 17 Scott Faulkner/Gareth Parry (Lancer E9); 18 Graham Coffey/Alex Kihurani (Fiesta RS WRC); 19 Dan Moss/Sam Allen (Lancer E9); 20 Max Utting/Mike Ainsworth (Fiesta ST MAX).
Gold Star points: 1 Bird, 57; 2 Petch, 53; 3 Hunter, 51; 4 Reynolds, 50; 5 Payne, 47; 6 Davies, 46.k

Edwards as he returned to Builth. "The car has been perfect all day, I'm glad to get the monkey off my back with the first win," as he and Garrod celebrated their success.

Equally happy was Francis, who had been second fastest on two of the three stages in the loop.

"I'm chuffed to bits," he said. "I was worried beforehand, but everything has gone well, and gives me confidence for the next event. I was able to back off on the last few with buffer to third."

Achieving his aim of a top-three finish was Bird, despite a couple of mistakes. A provisional third, together with maximum points from the first round, has put Bird in a good championship position.

A change of tyres for the final stages worked out well for Hunter, who finished fourth. He said: "It's been a brilliant day, the car was good, the tyres were brilliant and the stages were good. I'm really happy with fourth on such a good entry."

Behind Hunter there was a three-way battle for fifth with Petch and Reynolds intent on wresting the position from Cave. For Petch a change of tyre compounds reaped dividends, the Fiesta driver setting third-fastest time through Crychan 2 and only beaten by Edwards on the final test to take fifth at the finish. "It's been better this

afternoon, times are much improved. While it's not the result I wanted, I really enjoyed the event," he said.

Also moving ahead of Cave was Reynolds, who was "trying harder this afternoon, although the times aren't as good as I would like".

Although he had dropped a couple of places, Cave wasn't too despondent. "I'm very happy with my pace, there wasn't much left without taking big risks," and taking the B13 class was a bonus.

A disappointed Charlie Payne/Carl Williamson finished in eighth, feeling their Fiesta RS WRC may be down on power. The following Martyn and Dawn England were happy with ninth in their Fiesta R5, finishing just ahead of Dylan Davies/Llion Williams in their Subaru.

For the second event running, Russ Thompson/Andy Murphy took the NR4 category in their Mitsubishi Lancer E9, finishing 11th. Next best in class was Tom Naughton, who took 14th.

The event results were initially provisional due to drugs testing being carried out at the finish. The event classification was made final on Monday, but MN understands that there is an outstanding matter related to the testing process, and the matter is being dealt with by UK Anti-Doping (UKAD).

STAR OF THE RALLY



On a day of few retirements among the leading crews, to finish in the top 20 was some achievement, let alone doing so in a two-wheel-drive car. But this is what Max Utting managed in his Ford Fiesta ST Max. After slowing on the first stage with front-wheel bearing issues, the rest of the day was problem-free as he took the Class B11 win and maximum Welsh Championship class points, finishing 20th overall against faster machinery.

Giddings capitalises on Hughes ST Trophy woe

With four stages completed, things were looking good for Cambrian class winners Zak Hughes/Tom Wood as they held a 15-second ST Trophy lead, despite being beaten by James Giddings/Sion Cunniff on the first test when their intercom failed.

Fastest times on the next three tests enabled them to overtake Giddings before their good work was spoilt on stage five, when their car was reported as stopped with a log through the radiator.

As a result Giddings took the lead, and after setting fastest times on all of the remaining stages he won the class comfortably.

Kalvin Green/Osian Owen, who enjoyed the flowing stages, had a late scare when they hit a bump heavily in Crychan, resulting in a damaged a ball joint, but they managed to bring the car back in the runner-up spot.

Jon Ambler/Doug Chivers had a "brilliant day," finishing third, one place ahead of Mathew and Tim Tordoff, who were glad to make the



James Giddings scored an impressive win on second gravel event in ST

finish after a short run on the Cambrian. On their first run in the ST series, and driving a left-hand-drive car for the first time, Neil Fewlass/Stephen Varey were

getting the hang of things by the end of the day, finishing fifth, one place ahead of Martin Laverty/Phil Kenny, who had to stop and change a puncture on the first stage.

BILLY MONGER

Monger made a sensational return to racing less than a year after a double leg amputation. By Stefan

“YOU COULDN'T WRITE A SCRIPT LIKE THIS”



Monger had to race in dry and wet



Learning to drive again:
Monger uses hand-controls

I'm a little bit in disbelief – if you had said last year that race one of this season I'd be position three in British F3 I would have told you you were lying.”

Billy Monger wasn't the only one in disbelief when the chequered flag fell on the opening round of the BRDC British Formula 3 Championship at Oulton Park last month.

There was joy and tears from his family, friends and mechanics. Plus a more than slight sense of disbelief from many onlookers. Less than a year after his horrific British Formula 4 crash at Donington Park and resultant double leg amputation, Monger had finished on the podium in his first single-seater race back.

“It's a bit overwhelming, especially to see all the support standing on the podium, to look around and see all the faces that I know had put in the hours and worked hard,” said Monger after the race. “It's not only me that's had to put in the work, it's all the guys from Carlin and everyone that has been part of the journey: family, friends, to have them all here with me when I've had this amazing result is awesome.”

The 18-year-old would go on to record a ninth-place finish in the fully-reversed grid race two, setting the race's fastest lap on a wet track, before finishing the third race in eighth after a small spin.

The results meant he left the opening round of the championship tied for fifth

place in the standings. By all accounts, it was a remarkable weekend for a young driver who has essentially had to learn how to drive again in the space of just two months.

“Throughout testing I was getting quicker and I knew my team-mates were competitive. Top 10 was my goal, so to be on the podium was higher than I expected,” says Monger.

“My other goal was to have three solid races and not to have a crash. I had a half-spin at the end of race three, but conditions were really tricky.”

Monger uses his left hand to operate a throttle paddle on his steering wheel, while using his right hand to change up and down gear, and then his right prosthetic leg to use the brakes.

“The controls I have make it more difficult in the wet because of the [hand] throttle – I have to be careful how I bring the power in,” says Monger. “It's not that the controls aren't as good, it's just that I'm not as used to it yet.”

Monger's assessment in pre-season testing was “I have driven a certain way for 10 or 11 years and for people to expect me to get to the same level with the control system I used before, I feel like we are doing ourselves justice” is a justified one.

While some might also point to fortuitous circumstances at the Oulton Park opener, the results weren't a fluke.

He did benefit from his team-mate and polesitter Clement Novalak colliding with Double R's Krish Mahadik on the opening lap in race one to move into

MONGER'S OULTON PARK RESULTS

Race 1

Started: 5th Finished: 3rd

Race 2 (full reverse grid)

Started: 14th Finished: 9th (FL)

Race 3

Started: 4th Finished: 8th

third. But his pace was there all weekend, demonstrated by him getting fastest lap in race two and having qualified for the opening race in fifth.

Prior to the meeting, the unknown was whether Monger could race competitively again. That question, just like whether he could ever even drive again, has now been emphatically answered. The question now, and perhaps the most interesting one yet, is what next for Monger?

Both he and Carlin have made no secret that they wish to complete a full season in British F3 this year. So far Monger's deal only stretches as far as that opening round. Ex-Formula 1 driver Jonathan Palmer's company, MotorSport Vision – which operates the British F3 Championship – has even given Carlin special permission to run a fourth car for Monger in the series when the rules only permit three entries per team, so there's no roadblock as far as that is concerned.

It's believed a multi-year sponsorship deal is being sought by Monger and

Photos: Jakob Ebrej

Mackley

RITEA

!



Podium: Monger took third place in first race back

"I would love to have a shot at the title," says Monger

Carlin – hence the delay – but it's surely only a matter of time until a full campaign is confirmed, especially with the next round at Rockingham taking place next weekend.

For those wondering about the £840,000 raised through a fundraising page in the wake of his accident, that money won't be used for funding his racing exploits, instead going to fund his rehabilitation.

But surely if any young driver can secure sponsorship it will be Monger, even more so now after his sensational return?

"Getting the podium opened people's eyes and exceeded people's expectations," says Monger. "It's helpful in terms of getting sponsors on board."

Team manager Trevor Carlin said: "There's a limit to the resources we have got, so far we have done this [funding] ourselves."

"We have done it because we hope a few other people come in and help us and Billy. The aim is for him to become a professional racing driver but the next step is looking for long-term support."

"He repays us every time he comes into the workshop with his smile."

If Monger does compete in a full season there is no reason to suggest he wouldn't challenge for wins, perhaps even the title.

Carlin team-mate Nicolai Kjaergaard is touted to be one of the favourites for the crown this season, having already spent a year in British F3 with Fortec Motorsports last year and

he currently leads the standings.

The fact that Monger was able to match his pace throughout most of the weekend – qualifying only 0.189s shy of him for race one – is a sign that Monger isn't lacking in raw speed.

The teenager himself believes that he is getting quicker every time he drives the car as he becomes more accustomed to his new driving system and the general characteristics of the Tatuus-Cosworth car – a step up from the Mygale-Ford that he drove in F4.

"I had been hoping to start in the top 10, then challenge for podiums and wins later in the year," says Monger.

"Now I've had the first round and I'm fifth in the championship, and I only see us getting stronger. I'm still learning the car, so I want to finish at least where we are. But I'm a racing driver and I want to win."

It's an ominous show of intent from Monger, who is being ambitious about his prospects while at the same time keeping his – and everyone else's – expectations in check. But his comeback is truly one of the feel-good stories of the year already, and nobody should be surprised if race wins come his way before long.

As Carlin said: "It's quite remarkable, you couldn't write a script like this."

"We've just done it [support] because of Billy and what a great kid and inspiration he is."

"We didn't expect anything back but what he's given us back is a great result and feeling." ■

"It's just like working with any other driver"

One person not surprised by Monger's sensational return is the man who perhaps works more closely with the teenager than anyone else at Carlin. Neil Hoddinott has been promoted to Monger's race engineer in 2018, having been the team's data engineer last year.

Hoddinott spent the winter months with Monger ensuring he was comfortable and as up to speed as possible with the hand-control system in the Tatuus-Cosworth. Hoddinott says he believes things have gone well so far.

"We're getting on very well: my first involvement with him was last year when he came to us and we did some simulator work looking at the potential for maybe doing a racing programme," he said.

"And at that point I got involved just to help with some of the simulation work and very quickly we went from working on how to adapt a car and get a system that he could drive to just developing his pace, and very quickly it was like working with any other driver trying to find pace."

"So for me it's been quite easy making the step into race engineering alongside him because as far as me working with him, it's just like working with any other driver."



Neil Hoddinott (l) with Carlin British F3 team manager Sam Waple

Hoddinott is quick to point out how Monger has adapted to the hand-control system in a short time.

"Very quickly we had an idea of how we wanted to approach the problem," he said. "Of course it wasn't until we actually went out on track that we sorted out the teething problems. But we had an idea of how we wanted to develop it and with the stuff we did on the simulator we were able to test the ideas that we had to make sure that what we were going to do worked."

"So when we went for our first actual test in the car it was quite a smooth transition."

Getting on top of the new system has meant both Monger and Hoddinott could work on pace, something Monger didn't lack during his return weekend.

"I've been very pleased actually," said Hoddinott after qualifying, "he still reckons he can go quicker than he has been. In qualifying he knows he could have done better which is a very positive sign."

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FORMULA E: ROME

Alex Kalinauckas watched heartbreak for Felix Rosenqvist in Rome

BIRD GRABS AN UNLIKELY WIN IN THE ETERNAL CITY



Briton has closed the gap at the top of the championship



Bird grabbed a fortunate win

POINTS

After 7/12 rounds

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Vergne	119
2	Bird	101
3	Rosenqvist	82
4	Buemi	60
5	Abt	50
6	Piquet	45

RESULTS

Event 7/10 Where: Rome (ITA) When: April 14
Laps: 33 Miles: 59.235

POS	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Sam Bird (GBR)	DS Virgin Racing	58m20.656s
2	Lucas di Grassi (BRA)	Audi Sport Abt	+0.970s
3	Andre Lotterer (GER)	Techeetah	+9.518s
4	Daniel Abt (GER)	Audi Sport Abt	+10.167s
5	Jean-Eric Vergne (FRA)	Techeetah	+17.444s
6	Sebastien Buemi (SUI)	Renault e.dams	+19.835s
7	Jerome d'Ambrosio (BEL)	Dragon Racing	+24.379s
8	Maro Engel (GER)	Venturi	+26.350s
9	Mitch Evans (NZL)	Jaguar	+37.709s
10	Edoardo Mortara (ITA)	Venturi	+40.739s
11	Antonio Felix da Costa (POR)	Andretti	+42.680s
12	Oliver Turvey (GBR)	NIO	+48.833s
13	Luca Filippi (ITA)	NIO	+49.331s
14	Nicolas Prost (FRA)	Renault e.dams	+1m13.880s
15	Tom Blomqvist (GBR)	Andretti	+1m31.832s
16	Nick Heidfeld (GER)	Mahindra Racing	+1m44.774s
17	Jose Maria Lopez (ARG)	Dragon Racing	-4 laps
R	Felix Rosenqvist (SWE)	Mahindra Racing	22 laps/suspension
R	Nelson Piquet Jr (BRA)	Jaguar	18 laps/seatbelts
R	Alex Lynn (GBR)	DS Virgin Racing	15 laps/technical

Pole: Rosenqvist 1m36.311s. Winner's average speed 60.916mph.
Fastest lap Abt 1m37.910s (65.342mph).

Heading to Rome for Formula E's first visit to the Eternal City, Techeetah driver Jean-Eric Vergne enjoyed a 30-point lead over Mahindra Racing's Felix Rosenqvist, while Sam Bird (Virgin Racing) sat a further three adrift in third.

Rosenqvist was undoubtedly the driver to beat around the Circuito Cittadino Dell'EUR – an all-new 1.76-mile track set in Rome's residential and business EUR district.

The Swede set the fastest time across the two practice sessions and then claimed pole with a mighty lap to head fellow front-row starter Bird by a massive 0.676 seconds.

When the race got underway, Rosenqvist looked like he would simply run away with it. For lap after lap he edged away from Bird, with the leading duo on the same strategy to run until lap 16 of the 33-tour race.

At one point, Rosenqvist's

advantage was up to 3.3s before Bird reeled him again as they approached their pitstops. It seemed for a moment as if they would continue their escape/chase routine across the second stint in the second half, but then all hell broke loose.

First the race had to be neutralised with a full course yellow following Alex Lynn retiring at Turn 10, and when it resumed, Bird was all over the rear of Rosenqvist's car. He mounted an attack heading into the bumpy uphill left-hander of Turn 9 but could not get by.

Then on lap 22, for the second time in three races, the TV coverage cut to Rosenqvist retiring from the lead. His left-rear wheel sat at an odd angle – the result of a sudden suspension failure. In the immediate aftermath, Rosenqvist was at a loss to explain the problem. A kerb strike at Turn 18 was thought to be the most likely cause, but the 26-year-old insisted he had not done anything differently on the lap in question.

"It's not really the one you hit a lot," he said. "I would say there are other

kerbs on the track that have a bigger impact, so for me it was quite strange to have [it] happen there."

Rosenqvist's loss was Bird's big gain, as the Briton inherited the lead and a comfortable advantage over the chasing pack. But there was more drama to come thanks to the variety of energy management strategies on display.

The alternate approach taken by the rest of the frontrunners outside Rosenqvist, Bird and Sebastien Buemi (who had run sixth in the first stint before rising to third thanks to the early stop tactic), was to go one lap further and then attack in the second half. This was the strategy of Jaguar's Mitch Evans, Techeetah driver Andre Lotterer and Audi pair Lucas di Grassi and Daniel Abt. Armed with an energy advantage, Evans and di Grassi – who had fought his way past Lotterer and then Buemi with a pair of bold passes – were coming back at Rosenqvist and Bird when the former retired.

Rosenqvist stopping helped Bird twice because a second FCY was

needed to recover his car. This allowed Bird to save energy and "completely destroyed" Evans.

"Because I had used a lot to catch up to him [Bird] and then the second one completely saved him," the New Zealander later explained.

Evans had "one opportunity to pass" Bird, which came at Turn 9 and then on the run to 10 on lap 29, but he could not pull it off and fell into the clutches of di Grassi – giving Bird crucial breathing space.

"I used way too much energy on that lap and it was a downward spiral from there," said Evans, as di Grassi seized second two laps later with a successful attack over the Turn 9 bumps. Di Grassi chased after Bird but ended up 0.970s adrift.

"I honestly didn't think I'd be sitting here [with the win] today," Bird said afterwards. "When I saw the pace of Felix I thought the best I could hope for was second place."

Evans' race concluded spectacularly, and not in a positive way despite his shining performance in Rome. He forcefully rebuffed

Lotterer's attacks at Turns 9 and 10 on laps 31 and 32 but could not respond on the final tour and had to "creep" back to finish ninth at the line with barely any energy left.

Lotterer headed Abt in fourth, with Buemi fading to sixth after having a "not normal" energy problem, according to Renault e.dams team boss Jean-Paul Driot.

For Vergne, the Rome race was a subdued one. After missing superpole he started eighth and survived being hit hard up the rear by Lynn on the opening lap. Although Vergne was more attacking in the second half of the race, he would still have only finished seventh had Rosenqvist and Evans not had their issues.

"I was very slow today," the Frenchman said. "I need to understand why and I need to work to maintain the car better for [the next round in] Paris."

The result means Vergne's lead is now 18 points over Bird, with Rosenqvist down to third – 19 points further back.



Rosenqvist should have won, but suspension failure put him out



Mitch Evans (left) battles with Sebastien Buemi on what was a quiet weekend for the 2015-'16 champ

RACING REPORTS

ROCKINGHAM: BARC BY MARK LIBBETER
APRIL 14/15

Photos: Steve Jones

Polley (centre) was in the thick of Mini drama



MINIS PROVIDE SOME MIGHTY EXCITEMENT

Reigning Super Mighty Mini champion Scott Kendall continued his solid start to the new season with a commanding race one win on Saturday at Rockingham, while Neven Kirkpatrick narrowly denied Jo Polley the victory spoils in a thrilling second encounter on Sunday.

Despite being beaten off the line by the fast-starting Dave Rees, Kendall was able to snatch the lead around the outside of Tarzan on the opening lap, romping clear to a comfortable victory. "On a circuit like Rockingham, it's easier to win if you are lucky enough to break the tow," Kendall said afterwards.

Both Kirkpatrick and Connor O'Brien passed Rees to take the remaining podium positions, with Silverstone race two winner Polley recovering from a sluggish start to claim fifth.

Polley made no such error in race two, heading the chasing pack into Deene at the start. A fabulous six-car battle for the lead followed, with Polley superbly withstanding challenges, predominantly from Kendall and Kirkpatrick, to hold her advantage heading into the final lap.

Kirkpatrick would not be denied though. With Polley momentarily slowed by traffic, he seized his opportunity, diving inside her at Deene to take a lead he would not relinquish. Polley held on to second ahead of O'Brien and Kendall.

In the **Mighty Mini** class, Stuart Coombs emerged victorious in a three-way tussle with Damien Harrington and Silverstone double winner Lee Poolman to win race one. Harrington was able to

turn the tide in his favour with success in the second event.

In the opening two-hour **Britcar Endurance** race of the year, Luke Williams and Andreas Demetriou secured a memorable win in their Ginetta G55 GT4. But it was far from straightforward. Reigning Formula Ford 1600 champion Williams had built up a sizeable lead during his stint, but Demetriou had to survive a collision with Ashley Woodman's SEAT Cupra at Tarzan, and a rapidly closing KTM X-Bow of Sean Cooper, to claim the spoils. Cooper, co-driving with Mike McCollum, closed a lap deficit to just 3.4 seconds at the flag. Simon Rudd and Tom Barley took third place in their Ginetta G55, aided by the similar car of Jayde Kruger and Chris Papageorgiou suffering an engine fire.

Reigning Endurance class champion Ross Wylie and David Mason led the initial stages of the opening 50-minute Sprint race in their Ferrari 458 GT3. But Richard Neary was able to overhaul them post-pitstops to claim the win in his Mercedes-AMG GT3. Neary also won the second Sprint contest, run in tandem with the two-hour Endurance event, despite having to make two unscheduled pitstops due to time penalties. John Seale steered his Ferrari 488 to second in class ahead of Wylie and Mason.

Ben Palmer's push for a second successive **Michelin Clio Cup Series** title showed no sign of fading as he maintained his unbeaten start to the season with two race victories. Ronan Pearson claimed second in race one ahead of Ben Colburn; the latter having



Reigning champion Palmer remains undefeated in Michelin Clios this season

got the better of Simon Freeman with a fine outbraking move at the Tarzan hairpin on lap two.

Colburn made a lightning getaway to briefly lead the second event before being usurped by Palmer. This left Colburn to successfully fend off the attentions of Freeman, Pearson and Tyler Lidsey.

Daniel Rose was another driver to enjoy double success, steering his Golf TFSI Mk5 to glory in both **Classic VW Cup** encounters. On each occasion he was never given time to relax by veteran Ken Lark in his trusty Corrado. The margin of victory in race two was just 0.1s. Mark Shepherd's Golf shook off the challenge of Alex Kite's Vento VR6 to take third in the opener. Brad Kaylor claimed the final podium spot in race two in his SEAT Leon Supercopa as a

challenge from Nicholas Bosch's Toledo model faded.

Contrasting weather conditions greeted the drivers in the pair of **VTEC Challenge/BARC Saloons** races, but it did little to stop Rob Burkinshaw cantering to victory in his Honda Integra. Phil Wright finished a distant second in his Honda Accord in the dry of race one, brought to a premature end when Richard Chipchase's Civic got beached on the edge of Gracelands.

In a damp second race, Wright overhauled Andrew Mizzi to claim another second position.

The **Clio Cup Junior** double-header was hindered by a poor entry list, with only four cars taking the start of each race. Gus Burton won both races, with Louis Doyle and Lorcan Hanafin taking a second place apiece.

WINNERS

BARC Saloons & VTEC Challenge
Race 1: Rob Burkinshaw (Honda Integra)
Race 2: Rob Burkinshaw (Honda Integra)

Britcar
Sprint Race: Richard Neary (Mercedes-AMG GT3)
Endurance Race: Luke Williams/Andreas Demetriou (Ginetta G55 GT4)

Classic VW Cup
Race 1: Daniel Rose (Golf TFSI Mk5)
Race 2: Daniel Rose (Golf TFSI Mk5)

Junior Saloon Car Championship
Race 1: Joel Wren
Race 2: Ben Kasperczak

MG Owners Club Championship
Race 1: Lee Sullivan (ZR 160)
Race 2: Lee Sullivan (ZR 160)

Michelin Clio Cup Series
Race 1: Ben Palmer
Race 2: Ben Palmer

Mighty Mini Championship
Race 1: Scott Kendall (Super Mighty Mini)
Race 2: Neven Kirkpatrick (Super Mighty Mini)

Renault UK Clio Cup Junior
Race 1: Gus Burton
Race 2: Gus Burton

Wren flies to defeat Kasperczak

Joel Wren took advantage of a tardy start by series pacesetter Ben Kasperczak to take victory in the opening Junior Saloon Car Championship contest.

Kasperczak then enhanced his position as the driver to beat in the category so far this season with a stylish lights-to-flag win in the second event; his third in four starts.

With poleman Kasperczak's poor getaway relegating him to fourth, Wren led the field through Deene on the first lap with Scott McIntyre and Steven Chandler heading the chasing pack.

At the same corner a lap later though, both Chandler and the recovering Kasperczak powered ahead of Scholarship winner McIntyre and led the pursuit of Wren.

Kasperczak and Chandler swapped positions at Turn 1 soon after, enabling Kasperczak to home in on the leader. A succession of rapid laps closed the gap to less than a second as the race neared its conclusion, but Wren kept his composure to record his first win of the season. Behind Kasperczak, Chandler consolidated third ahead of McIntyre and Frankie Taylor.

Kasperczak made no mistake with his start in the second encounter, powering into an immediate lead from pole ahead of Wren, McIntyre and Chandler. As the race progressed and the top two gradually eased clear, the battle for third between McIntyre and Chandler became the main focus of attention.

Initially, Chandler pressurised McIntyre in the hope of forcing his way through, but the latter eventually pulled clear to cement the position behind the impressive Wren and winner Kasperczak.



Kasperczak won race two

Sullivan takes a double win after two tense MG Owners' Club contests

Lee Sullivan twice overcame the challenge of fellow ZR driver David Mellor to record a double victory in a pair of tense races at the second meeting of the season for the MG Owners' Club Championship at Rockingham.

At the beginning of race one, the MGFs of Stuart Plotnek and current series champion Simon Kendrick appeared to get the jump on front-row men Sullivan and Mellor off the line. By Deene, however, Sullivan had grabbed the advantage with Mellor moving into second by the end of lap one.

The top two then broke away from the chasing pack as Oulton Park winner Mellor tried to hound Sullivan into an error. All eyes were fixed on the tussle throughout the 12-lap contest, but Sullivan stood firm to emerge victorious.

Behind the leading duo, the battle for third proved just as close with Kendrick and Plotnek being pressurised by fellow MGF runner Martin Wills.

Having passed Plotnek, Wills then got ahead of Kendrick at Deene to take third place, with Plotnek inheriting fourth when Kendrick

was forced into retirement.

Mellor led Sullivan in race two as track conditions deteriorated in the drizzle, but Sullivan would not be denied his double success.

After several attempts, he made a decisive move past Mellor at Turn 1 late in the race to claim his second triumph.

Kendrick enjoyed better luck in the second outing following his earlier disappointment, coming out on top of another close battle with Wills and Steve Darbey's ZR to seal the final podium spot.



Sullivan (r) had close battle with Mellor (l) in both MGOC races

MONDELLO PARK: IMRC BY LEO NULTY

APRIL 14/15

Photos: Michael Chester

Polesitter Des Bruton dominated the opening Irish Stryker race in difficult conditions, but the interest was centred on Nicole Drought's charge from 14th on the grid to cross the line in fourth.

In race two, Bruton led early on but was deposed by the charging Andy Dalton, with Greg Kelly also easing by in the closing laps. In their wake, Bill Griffin came out on top of a cracking battle with Stephen Ross and Roger Welaratne to take fourth.

Mark Johnston took his debut **Fiesta Zetec** win in the first of three races, winning from Owen Purcell. William Kellett came home third, despite a down-on-power engine. Purcell completed a Fiesta double on Sunday, working his way from sixth on the grid in a thrilling final race of the weekend, and taking a hard-earned series lead.

Seasoned saloon exponent Michael Cullen won the first **Fiesta ST** race, just pipping 2017 champion Dave Maguire to the line. John Denning came home third, making it a Murray Motorsport podium lockout.

Denning held off the race-long attentions of Cullen to take race two, with early leader Kellett beating Barry-John McHenry for third. Impressive debutant Paul Swords, crossing over from Superbike racing, came home fifth. In the third race, poleman Maguire was never headed. A delighted McHenry took second despite the best efforts of Kellett, with Cullen next up.

Jack Byrne took the **Formula Vee** B/C race, but only just from Gavin Buckley with Shane McBride in close attention.

In the A race, leaders Lee Newsome and reigning series champion Colm Blackburn tangled at Turn 1. The officials judged Blackburn to be at fault, awarding Newsome the win, with Anthony Cross and Byrne completing the podium.

Jackie Cochrane's rumbling V8 Tiger returned to the **HRCA** grids after a sabbatical and predictably took two wins, despite a typically spectacular performance from the evergreen Stephen Griffin in his Modsport MG Midget.

BRUTON STRIKES FIRST AS THE MONDELLO PARK SEASON BEGINS



Two wins and podium for Purcell in Fiesta STs



Bruton won the Stryker opener

Gary Corcoran initially led the opening **Supercar** race in damp conditions. An inspired move by series debutant Cameron Fenton, around the outside into the Esses, took him ahead and he eased away for an impressive win. In race two, Corcoran again led with Fenton in the wars behind, and being bundled back to fourth.

Another inspired drive helped the **Ginetta Junior** graduate charge to second and close the gap to Corcoran with a series of fastest laps, crossing the line right with the leader.

In the concurrently run **ITCC** races,

Martin Duffy took the opener in his BMW M3, holding off the VW Golf of Philip Burdock. In race two, Gareth Jennings got the jump on everyone off the line and hung on for his first **ITCC** win. Pa Hudson was a distant second in a similar Honda Integra, but Duffy failed to finish. Burdock crossed the line fourth after a succession of dramas.

Megan Campbell took a popular debut **Ginetta Junior** win in race one from Rob Parks and Chris Grimes. Series leader Parks returned to the top step in race two, from Se Og Martin and Grimes.

Peter Dwyer beat **BOSS Ireland** poleman Fergus Faherty off the line in the opening race, as Faherty subsequently came under attack from hillclimb expert Paul O'Connell, both driving Dallara F3 machines. When the two made contact, Sylvie Mullins snatched second in his Formula Renault and began to close down the leading Lola-Nissan of Dwyer. As he was about to challenge though, the leader headed toward the pits, leaving Mullins unchallenged.

In race two, no doubt buoyed by his earlier success, Mullins outbraked the

F3 pair into Turn 1 and grabbed the lead. Faherty closed him down but spun on a greasy track at Turn 1 as he was about to challenge. A strong recovery meant he closed the gap, but Mullins held on for a surprise double, against some far more potent opposition.

Timmy Duggan's defence of his lead in the **Future Classics** opener could best be described as robust. He continually came under attack from Brian Sexton and Adrian Dunne, with a few others watching the action from close quarters. Duggan held on for the win, with Dunne pipping Sexton for second at the flag.

WINNERS

BOSS Ireland
Race 1: Sylvie Mullins (Formula Renault)
Race 2: Sylvie Mullins (Formula Renault)

Fiesta ST
Race 1: Michael Cullen
Race 2: John Denning
Race 3: Dave Maguire

Fiesta Zetec
Race 1: Mark Johnston
Race 2: Owen Purcell
Race 3: Owen Purcell

Formula Vee
B/C Race: Jack Byrne (Sheane)
A Race: Lee Newsome (Sheane)

Future Classics
Timothy Duggan (SEAT Ibiza)

Ginetta Junior Ireland
Race 1: Megan Campbell
Race 2: Rob Parks Jr

HRCA
Race 1: Jackie Cochrane (Sunbeam Tiger)
Race 2: Jackie Cochrane (Sunbeam Tiger)

Irish Strykers
Race 1: Des Bruton (RAW Stryker)
Race 2: Andy Dalton (RAW Stryker)

Irish Supercars
Race 1: Cameron Fenton
Race 2: Gary Corcoran

Irish Touring Cars
Race 1: Martin Duffy (BMW M3)
Race 2: Gareth Jennings (Honda Integra)

DONINGTON PARK: MSVR BY DAN MASON

APRIL 14/15

DENMAN TAKES SECOND HAT-TRICK OF WINS IN LOTUS CUP

The **Lotus Cup** built up to a thrilling climax at Donington Park as Craig Denman continued his fine form by completing a dominant second hat-trick in succession.

Starting 10th after two faultless lights-to-flag efforts, Denman made steady progress and passed Joe Taylor's Exige as rain fell in race three. Taylor climbed six spots from eighth with a lightning getaway but could only add a second to his brace of third-place finishes following two close tussles with Alex Ball.

Kyle Reid's superlative streak stretched to five meanwhile with two **Mini Challenge Pro** wins.

Having swept the Scottish championship's Knockhill visit a week earlier, Reid grabbed pole position and romped to victory in the Pro class of both Cooper races. "I feel awesome," said Reid,

who is unable to partake in a full season pending work commitments.

The Scot's party piece was his race two charge from fifth to first in just two laps, stating "I was at full lock overtaking" as he edged Ethan Pitt. His lights-to-flag opening victory was more routine, leading home a chasing Simon Walton and Pitt.

Privateer Alex Nevill grabbed both **Am** wins, while engine failure denied Jono Davies **Cooper S** honours in favour of rookie Will Fairclough. Rob Austin fought from eighth to third behind Stuart Lane, but made no mistakes for race two success.

Ben Cater's **Monoposto F3** stranglehold began with a treble victory. Fuel pump scares in race two forced the Dallara driver to do it the hard way, squeezing inside Tony Bishop exiting Coppice. In the final contest he fended off Jason Timms. "Fuel pressure was low, so I tried the second fuel pump switch and suddenly it came back to life," said Cater.

Timms recovered from a sluggish first race for a double podium. Bishop's weekend ended in the gravel having retired from second in race one. Subbing for son Alex during A-levels, Richard Fores fought to second from the pits on his debut after a shunt in qualifying.



A second hat-trick of wins for Craig Denman in the Lotus Cup at Donington

A startline crash ended his final race ignominiously, as confusion at the start also cost Dean Warren in **Moto 1000**. Distracted by a green flag during the race two start light sequence, the 10s jump-start penalty incurred gifted a hard-chasing Mark Reade victory. Nigel Davers clinched a wet third race. Gearbox gremlins removed Tom Rawlings from the weekend, costing him race one to Warren by 0.4s.

Stephen Pearson and Nigel Innes shared **Racing Saloons** spoils, but poor starts cost Karl Cattliff on his series return. "I get one good start a year; I like to make it hard," he joked.

Roger Kneebone inherited the lead from an Innes mistake and defended from a recovering Cattliff, until oil dropped at the chicane left both slithering wide. Sliding

through to victory came Pearson's E36, carrying a modified cereal box aiding front-end airflow. Innes trailed, but avenged later by slotting inside Pearson at Redgate to win another four-BMW squabble from Cattliff.

Trust prevailed in a tense **Production BMW Championship** battle between David Graves and double winner William Davison. Braking issues stymied the former's race one attack and Davison pounced for the lead at McLeans, leaving Graves unable to overturn his rival in the second race also.

A sluggish start frustrated Mark Sumpter in the opening **Porsche Club Championship** race, but he swiftly made amends to share wins with Craig Wilkins, with Pete Morris twice a podium finisher in his new 997.

Photos: Mick Walker

WINNERS

Lotus Cup
Race 1: Craig Denman (Elise)
Race 2: Craig Denman (Elise)
Race 3: Craig Denman (Elise)

Mini Challenge Cooper Pro
Race 1: Kyle Reid
Race 2: Kyle Reid

Mini Challenge Cooper S
Race 1: Will Fairclough
Race 2: Rob Austin

Monoposto F3
Race 1: Ben Cater (Dallara F306)
Race 2: Ben Cater (Dallara F306)
Race 3: Ben Cater (Dallara F306)

Monoposto Classic
Race 1: Dean Warren (Speads RM04A)
Race 2: Mark Reade (Leystone 1000)
Race 3: Nigel Davers (Jedi Mk 6)

Racing Saloons
Race 1: Stephen Pearson (BMW E36 M3)
Race 2: Nigel Innes (BMW E36 M3)

Production BMW
Race 1: William Davison (E30)
Race 2: William Davison (E30)

Porsche Club Championship
Race 1: Craig Wilkins (996)
Race 2: Mark Sumpter (996)

Trackday Trophy
Robin Welsh/Paul McErlean (BMW 330 Clubsport)

Track Team Trophy
Race 1: Jamie Gibbs/Ryan Gibbs (BMW M3)
Race 2: James Britton (BMW E36 M3)



Cater took treble in Monoposto F3



Congratulations

MCAC wishes to congratulate Chris West and Keith Hounslow in their achievement of Winning the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship 2018

Keeping up the winning tradition, Middlesex County Automobile Club was founded in 1905 and has a proud tradition in competitive club motorsport



Forthcoming events, ACE Cafe Saturday 2nd June, Uxbridge Autoshow Sunday 15th July, Rockingham Rally Weekend 1st / 2nd December, Autosolo's and Autotests.

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Congratulations to Max Utting & Mike Ainsworth for finishing 20th overall and first two-wheel-drive car on the Rallynuts Stages, in their home-built Ford Fiesta ST MAX.

Max & Mike would like to thank Geoff Jones Motorsport for servicing and Wug and Sam for their role in the superb result.



UTTING ESTATES

RACING REPORTS

OULTON PARK: 750MC BY MARCUS PYE
APRIL 14/15

Photos: Steve Jones

COLCLOUGH DEFEATS THE BMW M3 HORDE

WINNERS
Armed Forces Race Challenge
 Race 1: Darren Berris (Westfield V8)
 Race 2: Darren Berris (Westfield V8)

Bikesports
 Race 1: Phil Cooper (Radical PR6)
 Race 2: Joe Stables (Radical SR3)

BMW M3 Cup/330i Challenge
 Race 1: Sam Carrington-Yates (E46 M3)
 Race 2: Sam Carrington-Yates (E46 M3)

Clio 182 Cup
 Race 1: Patrick Fletcher
 Race 2: Jack Kingsbury

Club Enduro
 Guy Colclough (SEAT TCR)


Colclough's SEAT TCR powered to victory

Six bewinged BMW E46 M3s in the top 10 in qualifying for the wonderfully diverse 43-car Club Enduro on nearby Aintree's Grand National day would have got punters long odds on rivals for the postponed 750MC season-opener at Oulton Park.

The Bavarian behemoths fell in an extraordinary two-hour International Circuit race, however, leaving super consistent Guy Colclough a deserving winner in his spectacular SEAT TCR.

Andy Marston and Luke Sedzikowski made the early running, with Colclough (soloing, with team-mate Tony Rodgers unwell) chasing the M3s. All pitted together during a safety car interlude – during which Rob Meredith's M3 was tugged out of the Knickerbrook gravel bed – whereupon Porsche pair Steve Cheetham (Boxster) and Matt Faizey (968) took up the cudgels.

Essex ace Adam Shepherd tore past them in Sedzikowski's new Tegiwa M3 and seemed set for gold when its engine misfired, then died. Shepherd parked it disconsolately at Knickerbrook beside the Louis Wall/Matt Cherrington Z3, which had caught fire. Colclough sailed past to victory over disbelieving class B winner Faizey and Andy Baylie/Luke Schlewitz (M3), who salvaged some BMW honour after the Chris Hoey/Paul Ivens VW Scirocco pitted a lap from the chequer, ceding third.

Drive of the race came from P2 qualifier Martin James, who lost two laps in the pits, then hurtled his Area Motorsport Honda Civic back to fifth ahead of Phil Dryburgh/John Brown's M3. Steve Hewson/Matt Nossiter (BMW E36 M3) claimed class C, having overhauled Josh Orr/Andrew Winchester's Compact.

Renault Clio 182 title hat-trick aspirant Patrick Fletcher started strongly, beating Ryan Polley and Jack Kingsbury in a tight race after which

Mark Balmer was flicked from second to fourth for contact. Gridded by R1's fastest laps – Jack's a record – the second bout was fought to Kingsbury rules! He staved off Fletcher and Tibbs for a memorable first win despite "a bit of an issue with the clutch sticking down. I hooked it back with my foot," he grinned. When Tibbs was excluded for nerfing Balmer, Matt Digby was elevated to third, having pipped Polley.

Impressive Bikesports debutant Lee Torrie (Radical SR3 RSX) snared pole and led the programme opener until local grasstrack ace Phil Cooper (PR6) breached his defences. Cooper outranked himself at Hislop's in the sequel, whereupon teenager Joe Stables (SR3), who had gone second when Torrie snaked onto the grass mid-chicane there, pounced for victory.

RAF pilot Darren Berris won both Armed Forces Challenge skirmishes in his flame-spitting Westfield V8, but the championship will be decided on a consistency index. Second qualifier Will Ashmore somehow kept his Honda Civic out of the Old Hall barriers at the start, then screamed back to fourth behind Mark Inman (Vauxhall VX220) and Mike Nash (SEAT Supercopa) who duelled throughout. Ashmore chased, indeed gained on, Berris before retiring from race two, promoting Inman. Matty Taylor was overjoyed with third in his hairy M3-engined BMW Compact.

The sonorous E46s of the BMW M3 Cup championship and 330i Challenge series ran concurrently with an even split. Circuit neighbour Sam Carrington-Yates ruled the roost, narrowly beating David Whitmore and Tom Coller in the respective races. Whitmore spun off at Dentons while trying to pass fast starter Nick Williamson in the finale, forcing a stoppage. David Drinkwater twice bested Matt Maxted among the 330is as Lewis Carter struggled with his engine limping.

SNETTERTON: BRSCC BY MARK PAULSON
APRIL 14/15

Photos: Richard Styles

RED FLAGS DENY A 420R DOUBLE FOR WINSTANLEY

Caterham 420R champion Danny Winstanley began his title defence with a win from ninth on the grid at Snetterton, but he quickly overcame the lowly grid slot, blamed on poor tactics, carving his way into the lead by the fourth lap.

Winstanley then traded places with Jack Brown, winning by only 0.05 seconds as Brown ducked out of his slipstream. Third in the opener, Sean Byrne won the second race, but Winstanley could count himself unfortunate. The champion had drafted past Byrne on the final lap, only for red flags – caused by a roll for fellow frontrunner John Byrne following contact with William Smith at Nelson – to necessitate a countback.

Christian Szaruta was similarly denied a double in the Caterham 310Rs after two race-long battles with Gordon Sawyer. Szaruta claimed his first win in three years with a decisive outside move at Brundle on race one's final lap. He appeared to be planning a similar attack in race two, having rested his tyres mid-race, but red flags intervened. Chris Hutchinson and Chris Rankin completed the podiums.

Jay McCormack avenged a narrow defeat at the same venue last year as he held off Pete Walters to win the opening

Caterham 270R race by 0.024s. Walters had to settle for second again in race two, this time behind Jamie Falvey, while Gary Smith claimed third from 12th on the grid after contact in the first race.

Oliver Allwood scooped a hat-trick of wins in the Mazda MX-5 Championship. Opening round treble winner Will Blackwell-Chambers was second in race one, finding himself unable to keep Allwood behind on the long straights.

Blackwell-Chambers might have repeated that in race two, but when Brian Trott – third in the opener – missed a gear on the final run out of Murray's, Blackwell-Chambers was boxed in, allowing Mike Comber and Jason Greatrex to slip past.

Greatrex almost out-dragged Allwood on the run to the line in race three, missing out by just 0.003s in a photo finish. Trott was again third after earlier contact with Blackwell-Chambers dropped the champion down the order.

F1000 champion Michael Watton continued his fine form by comfortably winning the first race, despite a poor start. But his engine dumped its coolant and lost oil in the reversed-grid race, ending his weekend. Dan Clowes took the win from returnee Rob Sayell, while Elliot Mitchell secured a maiden podium – it would have been a win but for a 10s



Winstanley (on the inside) was a man on the move in the first race, winning from ninth on the grid



Jackson scored Super Series treble

penalty for moving at the start. Sayell went one place better in the curtain-closer, winning from Clowes and Alok Iyengar.

A maiden win for Matt Parkes denied champion Steven Dailly a BMW Compact Cup double. A slight mistake

from Dailly mid-race allowed Parkes to slip inside at Agostini. Ian Jones and Owen Hunter also pounced, but Dailly recovered to second at the flag. Dailly won race two, benefiting from an improved rear-end set-up, passing Parkes at Agostini on the penultimate

lap, with Jones following through.

In the Mazda MX-5 Super Series, there was a hat-trick for Josh Jackson. His closest challenger was Jake Bailey, who threw away the lead of race two by outranking himself and running very wide at Agostini.

WINNERS
BMW Compact Cup
 Race 1: Matt Parkes
 Race 2: Steven Dailly

Caterham Roadsport
 Race 1: James Murphy
 Race 2: James Murphy

Caterham Seven 270R
 Race 1: Jay McCormack
 Race 2: Jamie Falvey

Caterham Seven 310R
 Race 1: Christian Szaruta
 Race 2: Gordon Sawyer

Caterham Seven 420R
 Race 1: Danny Winstanley
 Race 2: Sean Byrne

F1000
 Race 1: Michael Watton
 Race 2: Dan Clowes
 Race 3: Rob Sayell

Mazda MX-5 Championship
 Race 1A: Oliver Allwood
 Race 2A: Oliver Allwood
 Race 3A: Oliver Allwood
 Race 1B: Sam Gendy
 Race 2B: Sam Smith
 Race 3B: John Langridge

Mazda MX-5 Super Series
 Race 1: Josh Jackson
 Race 2: Josh Jackson
 Race 3: Josh Jackson

WORLD RALLYCROSS: SPAIN

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

Rally legend Sebastien Loeb has seen it all. He had nearly a decade of domination in the World Rally Championship and won races in World Touring Cars. He has smashed the Pikes Peak International Hillclimb record and led the Dakar rally on multiple occasions. He has raced at Le Mans and tested F1 cars. There are few drivers on the planet that have had his range of experiences.

But, even so, at the opening round of the season at Barcelona in Spain last weekend, the Frenchman was astonished by the rollercoaster of emotions experienced across a World RX event.

He said: "It's terrible how many emotions you can have in a rallycross weekend. In the first heat I was OK but my team-mate Timmy Hansen was really down, but in the second and third heat he was good and I was off each time with broken rear suspension. I was really low and I didn't expect to reach the semi-final.

"I tried in Q4 but the road was still cleaning so it was not amazing, but finally the decision went that I still went in the semi-final, and from that point everything went well.

"I had a little bit of luck with me and it was just amazing how the emotions are going up and down during all the weekend. It's not easy!"

Having not made the semi-final cut, the works Peugeot squad withdrew young Swede Kevin Hansen, who had qualified 12th, to allow Loeb into semi-final two. Loeb then went on to make it into the final, in part thanks to the retirement of team-mate Timmy Hansen from the lead with an electrical problem.

In the final, Loeb finished third on the road to net a podium finish, only to be later elevated to second when on-track winner Mattias Ekstrom was disqualified for a first-corner move on Petter Solberg.

Emotions were running high throughout the field in the opening round, a weekend of two halves with torrential rain on day one being replaced by dry conditions on day two.

Ekstrom struck first with the fastest time in Q1, but it was PSRX team owner and driver Solberg who set the best times in Q2 and Q3 to move to the top of the Intermediate Classification. The Norwegian maintained the position despite being beaten to the finish line in the last race of Q4 by Timmy Hansen. By contrast, Solberg's team-mate, champion Johan Kristoffersson had a difficult qualifying, starting each race towards the outside of the grid and, by his own high standards, struggled to make significant progress up the order. Regardless, he qualified third and joined Solberg on the front of the grid for semi-final one. Both progressed to the final, as Ekstrom passed second semi-final leader Hansen when the Peugeot ran into trouble.

That put Ekstrom onto the front row of the final grid with Solberg, the only two drivers to have previously won at the Spanish venue.

As the lights went green, the pair made equal getaways, Ekstrom nosing slightly ahead and forcing Solberg to the inside and into a tyre wall, spinning his Polo out of contention. That left Ekstrom up front, chased by Kristoffersson and Ekstrom's EKS team-mate Andreas Bakkerud. The leading pair edged clear, making it a two-way fight for victory. Ekstrom ducked into the joker first on lap five, Kristoffersson getting the hammer

KRISTOFFERSSON HEADS LOEB AS WRX BLASTS INTO LIFE

Hal Ridge reports on the champion inheriting a final triumph



Loeb rose to claim second spot



Kristoffersson powers past stricken team-mate Solberg

RESULTS

FIA World Rallycross Championship round 1/12
When: April 14/15 Where: Barcelona, Spain Starters: 67

POS	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Johan Kristoffersson	Volkswagen Polo	4m36.568s
2	Sebastien Loeb	Peugeot 208	+1.215s
3	Andreas Bakkerud	Volkswagen Polo	+2.389s
4	Niclas Gronholm	Hyundai i20	+7.099s
5	Petter Solberg	Volkswagen Polo	+11.264s
6	Mattias Ekstrom	Audi S1	DSQ

Euro RX Supercar (6 laps) 1 Reinis Nitiss (Ford Fiesta); 2 Anton Marklund (Volkswagen Polo) +3.562s; 3 Jean-Baptiste Dubourg (Renault Clio); 4 Philip Gehrman (Volkswagen Beetle); 5 Ulrik Linnemann (Volkswagen Polo); 6 Peter Hedstrom (Volkswagen Polo).

Super1600 (6 laps) 1 Artis Baumanis (Skoda Fabia); 2 Jimmy Terpereau (Citroen C2) +1.873s; 3 Gergely Marton (Skoda Fabia); 4 Rokas Baciуска (Skoda Fabia); 5 Ondrej Smetana (Ford Fiesta); 6 Espen Isaksætre (Peugeot 208).

World RX Drivers' Championship (after 1/12 rounds): 1 Kristoffersson 27; 2 Solberg 24; 3 Bakkerud 20; 4 Ekstrom 19; 5 Gronholm 18; 6 Timmy Hansen (Peugeot 208) 16.

down for the next tour in a bid to leapfrog his compatriot, but returned to the main circuit after his own joker just behind. That's how it would finish, with Loeb having passed Bakkerud with an early joker tactic for the final podium place.

Just over 90 minutes after the final had begun, the stewards decided to disqualify Ekstrom for the first corner move. The decision gifted victory to Kristoffersson, while Loeb had gone from 13th to second in a matter of two six-lap races, with a little help from his team-mate. Bakkerud's debut for the EKS team resulted in a podium in third, while Niclas Gronholm gave his father's GRX team much to cheer about as he finished fourth in the final classification on the debut of the squad's Hyundai i20 Supercar.

Loeb's emotions had been through the mill, but Solberg's had too, in the opposing direction. The 2003 WRC champion was on the kind of form that

should have resulted in a first World RX win in almost 11 months for the Norwegian, but instead his challenge ended in a tyre stack. Likewise Timmy Hansen dominated his semi-final in a Peugeot not expected to have the pace of the VW or Audi at round one, and may also have challenged for victory. His delighted beam after setting the best time in Q4 changing to a hollow frown as he walked away from his stricken car in the semis.

And then there was the GCK squad, debuting its Prodrive-built Renault Megane R.S. RX Supercars.

Both cars made the semis, but turned into disappointment when Jerome Grosset-Janin failed to make the final having run second in semi two in an impressive maiden performance. With all six full-time World RX teams having shown solid pace in the season-opener, the rollercoaster of emotions can be expected to continue at round two next week in Portugal.

Nitiss: One step back for two forwards

Latvian hero Reinis Nitiss began his rallycross Supercar career in the inaugural running of the World Rallycross Championship in 2014.

Driving one of the best cars in the field, he beat Petter Solberg hands down to win the third ever World RX event, in Norway.

It was the kind of performance that had netted him the European Rallycross Super1600 crown with the SET Promotion team the previous year. But since, certainly since the latter stages of 2015, Nitiss had arguably lost a bit of that panache and killer instinct.

Driving for the EKS squad last season, he only made a single final. Without the budget for a full World RX campaign in 2018, Nitiss struck a deal with SET Promotion to drive an M-Sport built Ford Fiesta Supercar in Euro RX, and in the opening round in Barcelona

dominated with his form reminiscent of 2013.

Pushed off at the first corner of Q1, Nitiss was then fastest every time he went on track and led the final throughout to score victory and take the points lead.

Reigning champion Anton Marklund, driving a brand new Volkswagen Polo, stalled on the grid of the final and had to fight back from last position to finish second, while triple Andros Trophy champion Jean-Baptiste Dubourg completed the podium.

Super1600 graduate Ulrik Linnemann initially finished fourth but dropped to fifth with a post-race five-second penalty, elevating Eklund Motorsport Volkswagen Beetle driver Philip Gehrman to fifth.

Irish campaigner Derek Tohill finished the event ninth overall.



Nitiss made a winning start to his European Rallycross campaign

SPORTING SCENE



Changing conditions didn't help

Bennett comes through tough Mini WRX debut

British driver Oliver Bennett drove the Xite Racing team's brand new Mini Cooper SX1 Supercar to 15th overall on its debut in the opening round of World RX in Barcelona last weekend.

With just a short pre-event test completed in Spain en route to the event, the mixed conditions proved a challenge for British RX frontrunner Bennett to get used to the car on only his second World RX outing, following his debut in his home round of the series at Lydden Hill last season.

"The conditions were really difficult, especially when they changed from wet to dry, which made it tricky for us to know where we are really," said Bennett. "I'm still learning the car and it's very different to the [Ford] Fiesta I raced last year. It feels amazing. We went to Barcelona as a test really because the car was built in three months, but the performance of it out of the box was amazing and once we can work more on the set-up we can improve a lot too."

Bennett, who was out at the Intermediate Classification stage in Spain, will race in the next round of the series in Portugal next week, but plans to skip round three in Belgium in order to prepare for his home round at Silverstone next month.

ROUND-UP

Parker swaps and wins

Barrie Parker debuted a Fiat 600 and sprung a surprise at the **Ivinghoe Car Trial** by winning overall, having not competed in a front-wheel-drive car for four years.

A capacity entry of 50 had dry conditions but rain during the last round transformed the sections, allowing Parker to take 11 points off a disappointed Shawn Franklin on one hill alone to win the class by 10, leaving Franklin third overall.

Round one winner Neil Mackay convincingly won the front-wheel-drive class in second overall from Derek Hunnisett.

The class battle of the day was in the rear-wheel drives. Mark Hoppe returned with a new engine in his Melos to take the initiative on the first round, then tied with Steve Courts at lunch. During the fourth round, Dick Glossop overhauled all of his rivals from fourth in class with a fabulous round to win the class.

Courts and Hoppe tied with Courts taking it on countback.

Reigning British champion Rupert North borrowed a Liege as his Mini still isn't painted. He showed his all-round skill to finish fifth in class having not driven rear-wheel drive before. Barry Redmayne won the well-supported clubman class.

Results

Ivinghoe Car Trial

Organiser: Falcon Motor Club Where: Dunstable, Bedfordshire When: April 14 Starters: 50
1 Barrie Parker (Fiat 600) 58.3%; 2 Neil Mackay (Citroen AX) 69.2; 3 Shawn Franklin (Citroen Saxo VTS); 4 Dick Glossop (Liege); 5 Trevor Moffatt (Vauxhall Corsa); 6 Steve Courts (Hillman Imp); 7 Mark Hoppe (Dutton Melos); 8 Dave Oliver (Hillman Imp); 9 Derek Hunnisett (Ford Ka); 10 Nick Pollitt (Suzuki Swift). Clubman: Barry Redmayne (Liege).

OLSBERGS BRINGS FORD BACK

New Mk8 Fiesta STs keep the Blue Oval on the World Rallycross grid

By Hal Ridge

The Ford name has returned to the World Rallycross Championship with the OlsbergsMSE team revealing a newly homologated Ford Fiesta ST Mk8 on the eve of the season-opener in Barcelona last week.

Although not an official programme, Ford Performance's involvement with Andreas Eriksson's team has facilitated the new car, despite Ford withdrawing from its World RX venture with Ken Block's Hoonigan Racing Division team at the end of 2017.

The new Mk8 Fiestas have been built fully in-house at OMSE's Nynashamn workshops near Stockholm in Sweden, but the Blue Oval brand has assisted with technical development for the project and the cars sport Ford Performance branding.

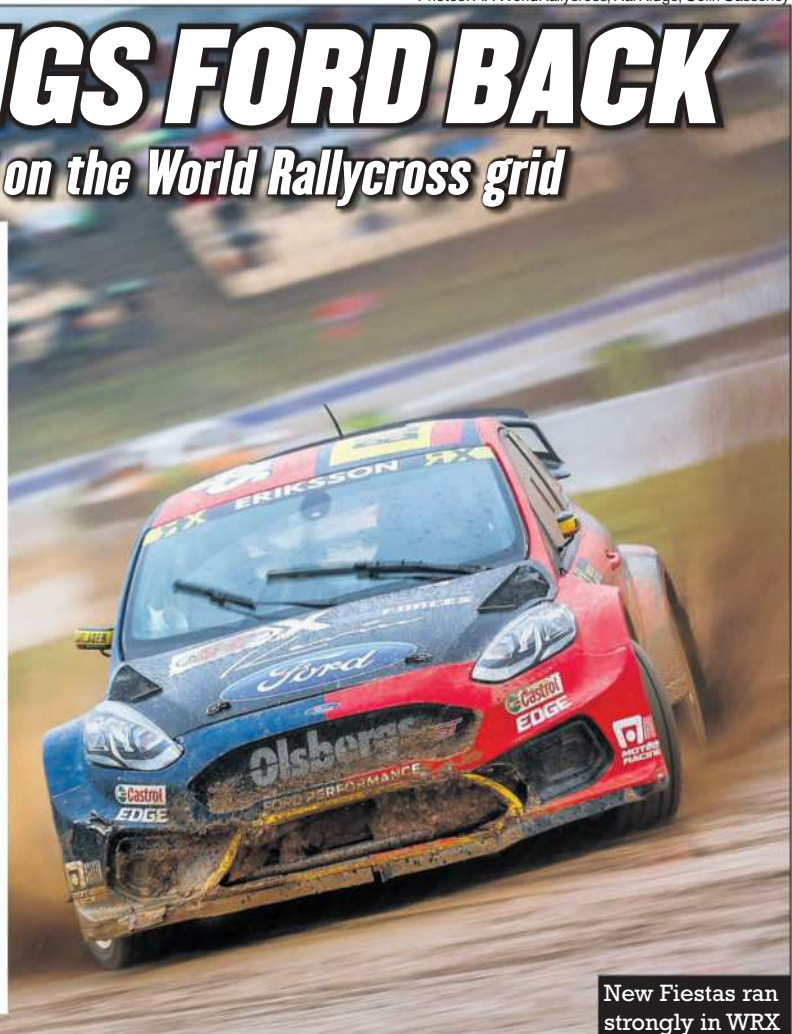
"It's not formally a contract right now: it's just that they want to see OMSE in the new cars, the development we are doing together is more about making sure I have all the new bodies. If I didn't have their help, there wouldn't be any Mk8 here," team principal Eriksson told *Motorsport News*.

"For me it's very important, Ford want to keep themselves involved in rallycross in some way, even if it's not a full factory programme. It's a brand that should be in rallycross."

Eriksson's outfit was previously supported by Ford in official capacity from 2009 until the end of the 2015 season. Together they won the first World RX Teams' Championship in 2014, and this year the team will field a brace of new Fiestas for Swedish drivers Kevin Eriksson and Robin Larsson.

"Everything has been confirmed. Everything we have built is confirmed by Mark Rushbrook, [Ford Performance Motorsports global director] and he likes it, because this is the first Fiesta ST Mk8 [homologated] in the world," said Eriksson.

M-Sport's WRC car is based on a different Mk8 Fiesta bodyshell. Aside from a different bodyshell, the 2018 Fiesta Supercar features in-board suspension, used by OMSE previously in its GRC Honda Civic concept. It also joins Volkswagen Motorsport in running a front-mounted engine cooling package. Larsson finished the car's debut highest of the pair in Barcelona, ninth overall.



New Fiestas ran strongly in WRX



Godfrey leads the points in Mirage

Godfrey sticks with Mitsubishi Mirage RX for next round of British Championship

British Rallycross Championship points leader Julian Godfrey will continue to drive the Spencer Sport-run Mitsubishi Mirage RX Supercar in round three at Croft next month.

Godfrey swapped his regular Fiesta Mk6 for the Mirage RX in the days leading up to round one of the season, and he took top

points behind the guest World RX entries that were racing in the British RX opener.

Godfrey finished second to Mark Higgins in round two at Lydden Hill and continues to lead the points, but he doesn't know yet if he will complete the year with the Mirage.

"The car's going well and we made some

good changes to the set-up at Lydden Hill," he said. "The Mirage feels really good, but at the moment we have only talked about doing Croft."

"I'm also driving the car to show what it is capable of because it uses my engine. If someone wants to hire it then I can drive my Ford Fiesta again."

BriSCA F1: BIRMINGHAM



England (346) took win

England benefits from Sargent's late misery...

BriSCA F1 : Birmingham

By Colin Casserley

Organiser: Incarace Where: Birmingham Wheels When: April 14 Starters: 50.

Mark Sargent was on course for his second final win of the year until mechanical failure robbed him of victory within sight of the finish line. That helped third-generation driver Ashley England to claim his first F1 final victory.

Sam Wass took the lead of the race from the green flag, but he was overhauled by Sargent just before the halfway point with England in close pursuit. As Sargent went into the final turn he slowed, England dived to the inside to lead the final 100 metres.

England said: "I didn't know where to go when Sargent slowed, I wasn't expecting it. I just turned to the inside of the track and hoped I would avoid him. I feel sorry for him, but I will take a

win anyway it comes. I've lost a few like that. The car was handling great and was going anywhere I wanted it to."

Despite the disappointment, Sargent still had a smile on his face. "The differential blew as I was going into the corner. I had no warning and I just had to coast to the line," he said. "I'm gutted but that's racing. I still got fourth place and I would have settled for that at the start of the night. It's the first time I have driven the car as well, so I should be happy."

Lee Fairhurst came home third.

Wass, who held onto a top 10 finish in the final, went on to score his maiden F1 win in the Grand National. "This makes up for all the bad luck and disappointment," said Wass as he punched the air.

Result

1 Ashley England; 2 Lee Fairhurst; 3 Dan Johnson; 4 Mark Sargent; 5 Frankie Wainman Jr; 6 Chris Fort; 7 Drew Lammas; 8 Luke Davidson; 9 Mickey Randall; 10 Sam Wass.

BriSCA F1: HEDNESFORD

...And then doubles up with Hednesford victory

BriSCA F1

By Colin Casserley

Organiser: Incarace Where: Hednesford Hills Raceway When: April 15 Starters: 42.

After winning the previous night at Birmingham Ashley England repeated the feat at Hednesford on Sunday. Just like the previous night he battled with Mark Sargent for the race win.

Finn Sargent, Mark's son, led the early stages of the race before a multi-car pile-up brought out a yellow flag and halted the race. Shortly after the restart, the elder Sargent powered his way into the top spot. England soon followed into second with Luke Davidson making his way through the pack into third.

With five laps remaining, the leader encountered heavy traffic, Mark Sargent got baulked by a slower car forcing him to the outside of the track, England made his move and cut to the inside to take the lead. Davidson moved into second before being punted wide by Sargent as the leading trio took the one lap to go signal.

Going into the final turn, Sargent tried a kamikaze lunge to oust England from the lead but instead slammed into the Armco. That allowed Davidson to reclaim second.



England made it two wins from two

"Mark Sargent was probably the quicker car today," said England. "I got some damage to my rear wheel when I clipped a parked car in that pile-up on about the second or third lap. But it didn't slow me down too much. The lapped cars helped me."

Davidson said: "I was hoping that Sargent was going to take them both out on the final turn and let me through to win it."

Mark Sargent added: "I had to give it a go on the final turn, but it just wasn't meant to be. Racing with my son, and trying to catch him in what is only his third meeting, is what the sport is really all about for me."

Result

1 Ashley England; 2 Luke Davidson; 3 Mark Sargent; 4 Frankie Wainman Jr; 5 Stuart Shevill; 6 Karl Hawkins; 7 Mat Newson; 8 Lee Fairhurst; 9 Danny Wainman; 10 Bradley Harrison.

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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

MN SAYS...

Ricciardo shows how it should be done

Cute tactics from Red Bull help the Australian to climb to the top of the rostrum

Daniel Ricciardo proved in Shanghai that nice guys can win. The Australian's triumph was emphatic as his Red Bull team-mate Max Verstappen caused chaos behind. It was a triumph for smart strategy from the team's bosses, and it was executed in an exemplary manner both in the pitlane and on the track.

It is hard not to like Ricciardo and there is one simple reason: more than any other driver, he is clearly enjoying winning. He is famous for the mile-wide smile, but there is hardly ever a moan from the pits-to-car radio. He is rarely in the firing line of his rivals, which is even more remarkable given some of his last-minute late braking moves that seem to populate most of his victories.

Compare that to some of his rivals: the moody Lewis Hamilton, and ever-complaining Sebastian Vettel. Then there are the monosyllabic Finns and the petulant Verstappen. In that respect, Ricciardo is head and shoulders above the rest.

Matt James, Editor (Twitter: @MattJMNews)



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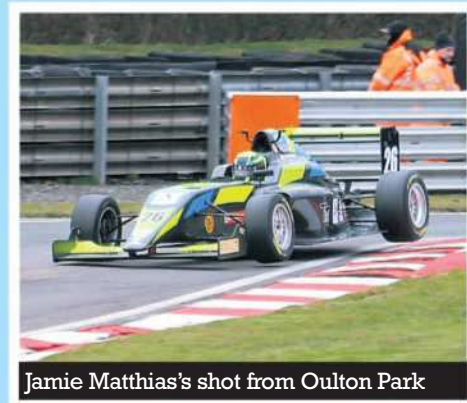


ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S
FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!

Lewis Clarke-Bull, aged 10, caught this drama from Paddock Hill Bend at Brands Hatch



Snetterton drama from Hannah Doran



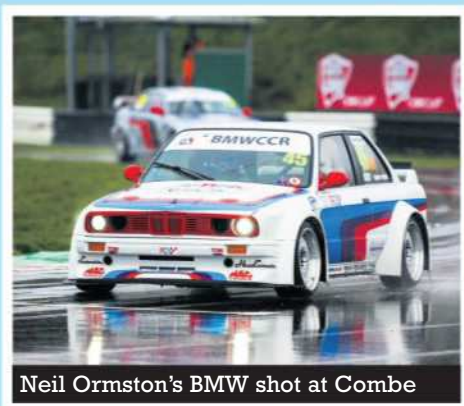
Jamie Matthias's shot from Oulton Park



A Tyrrell testing, taken by Rich Cranston



Ben Forrester got wet at Oulton's GT race



Neil Ormston's BMW shot at Combe



Gary Hill caught these big rigs colliding



Peter Atkins caught this Jack Goff spill



Another F1 test shot from Rich Cranston



Alex Ireland got this photo at the opening meeting of the season at Knockhill recently

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TCR UK first races

The inaugural races of **TCR UK** from Silverstone are aired (Thursday, 1130-1200hrs) as the popular worldwide series attempts to make a home for itself in the UK, featuring cars from manufacturers such as Hyundai, VW and Alfa Romeo. There's plenty of Mazda MX-5 action on Friday as there are highlights from the British Racing and Sports Car Club's **Mazda MX-5 Championship Class A** (0900-0930hrs), followed by Class B (0930-1000hrs) and the new-for-2018 SuperSeries (1000-1030hrs). On Friday evening (2030-2100hrs) you can catch up with the first round of the **Volkswagen Racing Cup UK** from Silverstone, where VWs of all shapes and sizes took to the track. And the latest instalment of **The Great History of the 24 Hours of Le Mans** features the 1994 event where Porsche fought Toyota (Saturday, 1400-1500hrs).

LIVE TV



NASCAR: Richmond
 ■ Race: Saturday, 2300-0330hrs, Premier Sports

FRenault Euro: Monza
 ■ Race 1: Saturday, 1245-1400hrs, BT Sport ESPN
 ■ Race 2: Sunday, 1215-1330hrs, BT Sport 2




Blancpain Endurance Cup: Monza
 ■ Race: Sunday, 1345-1715hrs

IndyCar: Barber
 ■ Race: Sunday, 2000-2300hrs, BT Sport ESPN

TV GUIDE

Take a trip back in time with Sky Sports' **Classic F1** and the 1985 Portuguese Grand Prix (Thursday, 2100-2145hrs, Sky Sports F1). Run in torrential rain, the race marked the first of 41 wins for the legendary Ayrton Senna as he dominated the event, almost a lap clear. Catch highlights from the latest round of the **Formula E** season on the streets of Rome (Thursday, 2230-2330hrs, BT Sport 3). Jean-Eric Vergne will again attempt to extend his lead in the standings after an impressive win last time out in Uruguay, but Sweden's Felix Rosenqvist and Britain's Sam Bird will be hunting him down. And there's a chance to see the best bits from round three of the **IndyCar Series** from Long Beach (Sunday, 1900-2000hrs, BT Sport ESPN), as reigning champion Josef Newgarden looks to take another win following his victory in Phoenix. Rookie Robert Wickens meanwhile will attempt to take his first win having impressed in the series so far.



Senna took his first win in the rain, Portugal 1985

LISTINGS

RACING SATURDAY

■ **Snetterton, Norfolk**
HSCC meeting: Guards Trophy, 70s Road Sports, Historic Road Sports, Historic Touring Cars, Classic Clubmans **Starts** racing from 1125hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Admission** adult £16, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

■ **Kirkistown, N Ireland**
500MRCI meeting: Road Sports, Ford Fiesta Zetec, FF1600, Ireland Saloon/GT, Formula Sheane, Legends **Starts** racing from 1300hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Admission** adult £15 child free **Web** kirkistown.com

SATURDAY/SUNDAY

■ **Silverstone, Northants**
VSCC meeting: Vintage and Pre-War races, HGPCA, Morgans, FISCAR **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1200hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1235hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Admission** £20 **Web** silverstone.co.uk **Contact** 08704 588260

■ **Brands Hatch, Kent**
750MC meeting: Formula Vee, Locost, Toyota MR2, RGB Sports 1000, Roadsports, 750 Formula, Historic 750 Formula, Sport Specials, Classic Stock Hatch, Hot Hatch, MX-5 Cup **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1210hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1110hrs (qualifying from 1000hrs) **Admission** adult £16, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

■ **Pembrey, SWales**
BARC meeting: Trucks, Track Attack, Mini Se7en, Mini Miglia, Hyundai Coupe, MaX5, Welsh Sports/Saloons **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1235hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1000hrs (qualifying from 0930hrs) **Admission** adult £15, child free **Web** barc.net **Contact** 01264 882200

■ **Donington Park, Leics**
MSVR meeting: LMP3 Cup, F3 Cup, GT Cup, Heritage Formula Ford, Radical Challenge, 7 Challenge, Sports 2000 Enduro **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1305hrs (qualifying from 0905hrs) Sunday, racing from 0925hrs (qualifying from 0905hrs) **Admission** adult £16, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

■ **Croft, NYorks**
BARC meeting: Legends, Pickups, Northern Sports/Saloons, Pre '66 Touring Cars, Pre '83 Group 1 Touring Cars, Pre '93 Touring Cars, Pre '03 Touring Cars, Pre '05 Touring Cars, Blue Oval Saloons, Classic and Historic Thunder Saloons **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1205hrs (qualifying from 0930hrs) Sunday, racing from 1230hrs (qualifying from 1200hrs) **Admission** adult £15, child free **Web** croftcircuit.co.uk **Contact** 01325 721815

RALLY SATURDAY

■ **Shackleton, Ballykelly**
Lark in the Park Rally **Starts** 1000hrs **Admission** TBC **Web** maidencitymotorclub.com

■ **Elgin, Moray**
McDonald & Munro Speyside Stages Rally **Starts** 0858hrs **Admission** free **Web** speyside-stages.co.uk

SUNDAY

■ **Clacton, Tendring Peninsula**
Rally Tendring and Clacton **Starts** 0830hrs **Admission** free (visit website for spectator areas) **Web** corbeauseatsrally.co.uk

■ **Coolshannagh, County Monaghan**
Four Seasons Hotel Stages Rally **Starts** 1000hrs **Admission** free **Web** monaghanmotorclub.net

■ **Kames Motorsport Complex, Muirkirk**
Kames Spring Rally **Starts** TBC **Admission** TBC **Web** eastayrshirecc.co.uk

SPORTING SCENE SATURDAY/SUNDAY

■ **Lochgelly, Scotland**
National Hot Rods: European Championships **Starts** 1700hrs/1300hrs **Admission** TBC **Web** nationalhotrod.com

SUNDAY

■ **Sheffield, SYorkshire**
BriSCA F1 **Starts** 1230hrs **Admission** TBC **Web** brisca.com

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