ASTON MARTIN GUNS FOR LE MANS

British sportscar legend targets outright victory



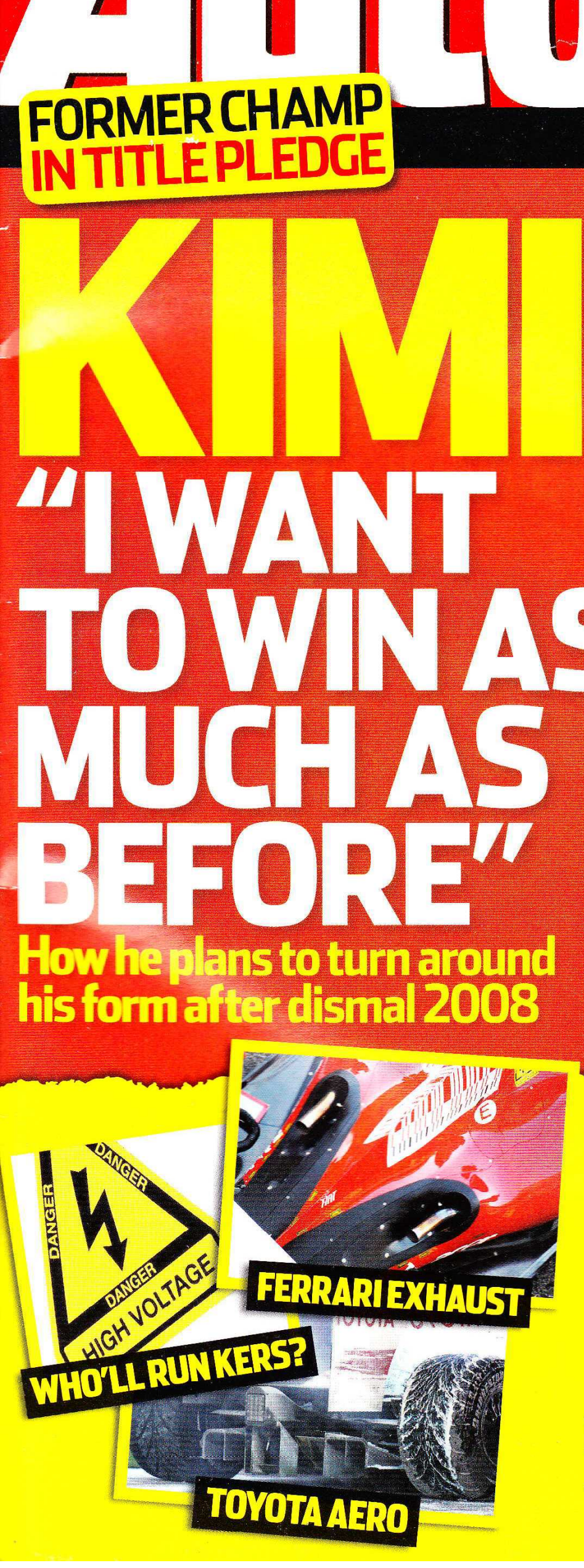
autosport.com £3.00 **January 29 2009**

Autosport

FORMER CHAMP IN TITLE PLEDGE

KIMI "I WANT TO WIN AS MUCH AS BEFORE"

How he plans to turn around his form after dismal 2008



FERRARI EXHAUST

WHO'LL RUN KERS?

TOYOTA AERO

TECH ROW ROCKS F1

F1 2009 secrets emerge – but are new parts legal?

haymarket

05>
9 770269 946197
C$8.50

0.167 SECONDS

The 2009 Rolex 24 at Daytona will go down in history as the closest finish of a major 24 hour race.

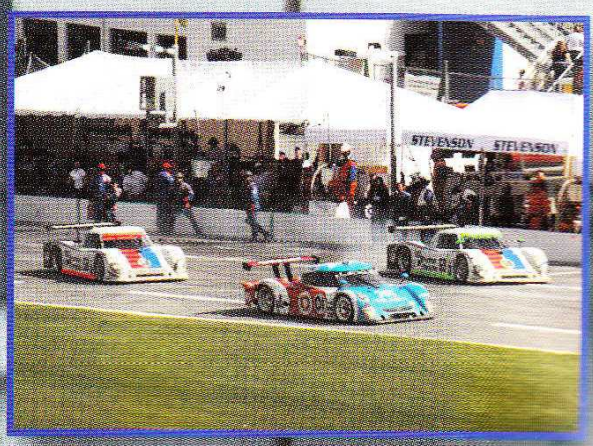
Winner: *No. 58 Brumos Racing/Porsche Riley Racing*

2nd +0.167 secs: *No. 01 Chip Ganassi Racing with Felix Sabates/Lexus Riley*

3rd +5.504 secs: *No. 59 Brumos Racing/Porsche Riley*

The Rolex 24 at Daytona was a sprint race from start to finish – absolutely awesome!

Congratulations to Daytona Prototype class winner – No. 58 Brumos Racing/Porsche Riley driven by: David Donohue, Darren Law, Buddy Rice and Antonio Garcia



GT class winner and 9th overall

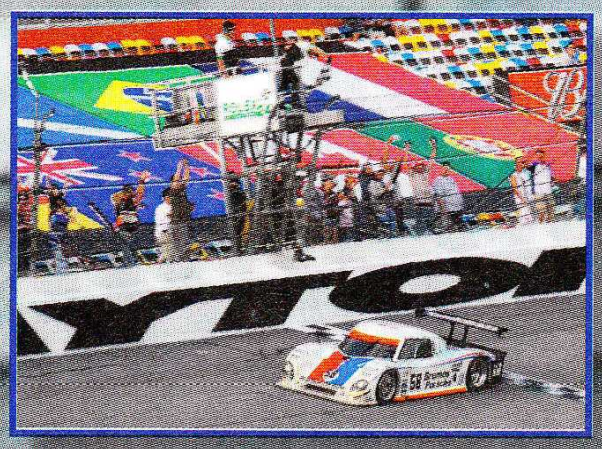
No 67 TRG / Porsche GT3 driven by: Bergmeister, Lally, Long, Marks and Valentine

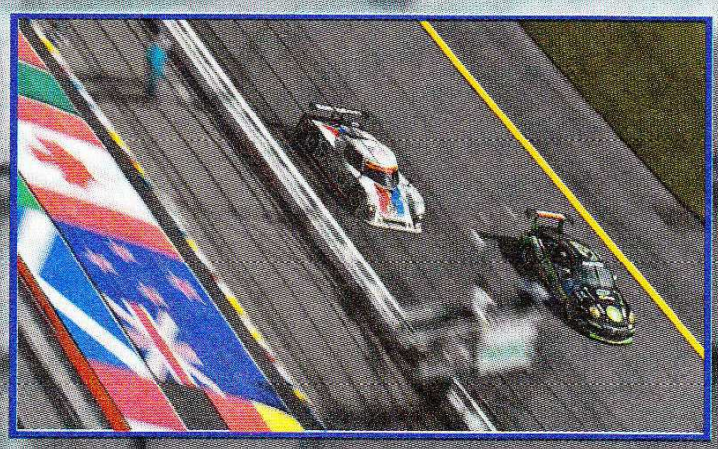
SUNOCO RACE FUELS

We fuel the winners!

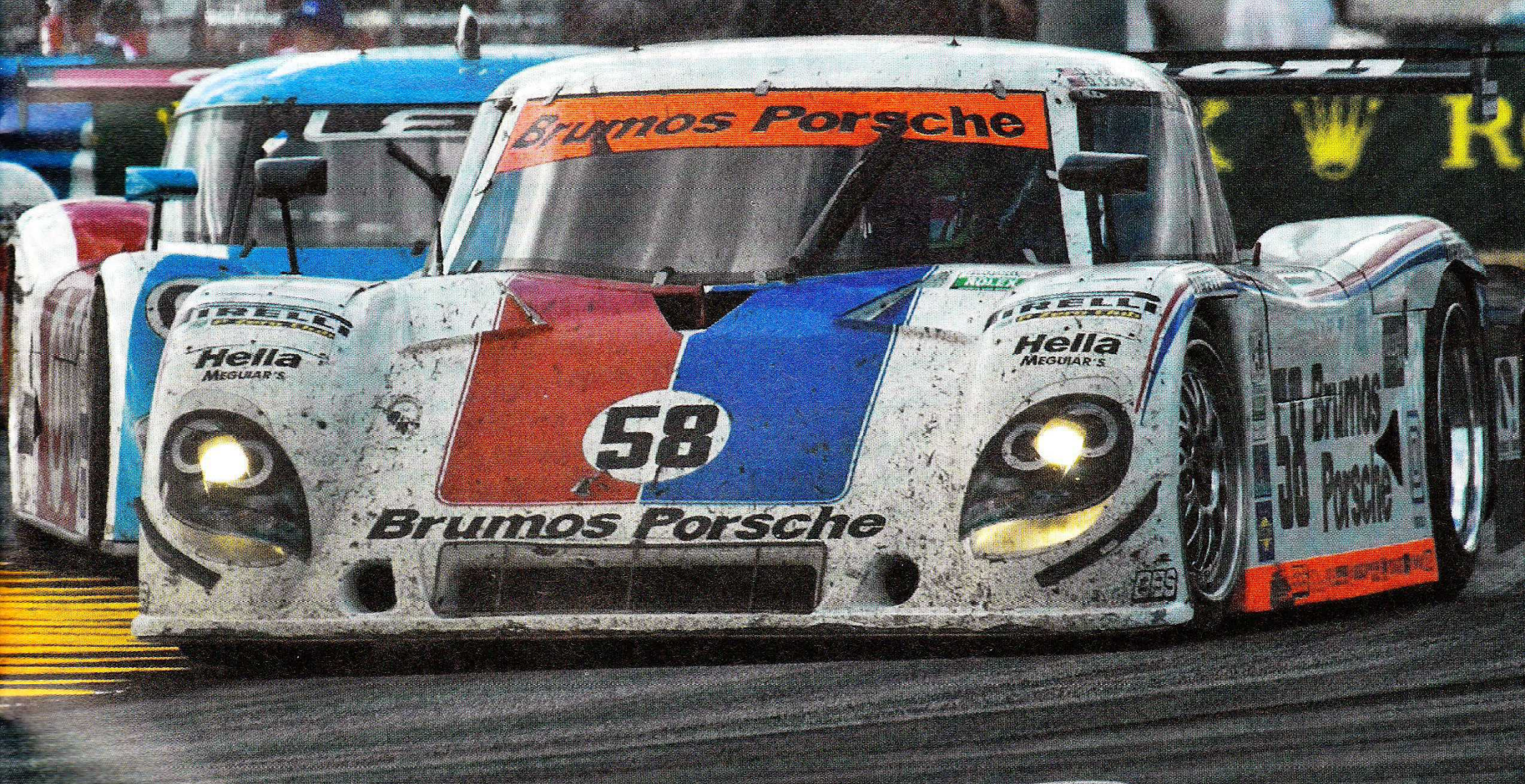
For more information and technical advice on Sunoco Race Fuels call: Anglo American Oil Company Ltd Tel +44 (0)1929 551557 • Fax +44 (0)1929 551567 • racing@aaoil.co.uk • www.sunoco.co.uk

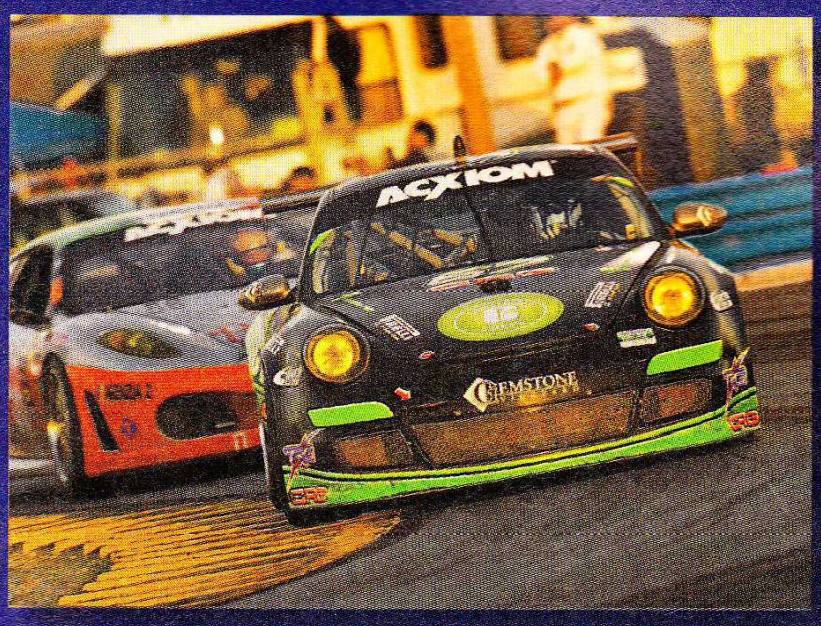
Design by Paradisi. Photos by LAT











ROLEX 24 AT DAYTONA.

DRIVER CHALLENGE

PRESENTED BY SUNOCO

Win a drive in the 2010 Rolex 24 at Daytona

Compete in any of the nominated Sunoco race series during the 2009 season and you can put yourself in pole position for a chance to win the 2010 Rolex 24 in a fully sponsored drive in a Daytona prototype. For more information see www.sunoco.co.uk

Autosport
THE WORLD'S FASTEST MAGAZINE

EVERYTHING TO LOOK FORWARD TO



CRISPJANUARY mornings are good for the soul. And whether it's at the start of another day of Formula 1 testing or the beginning of the first stage of the World Rally Championship in Ireland this weekend, the voyage of motorsport discovery stretches out before us. Points have been zero-ed; engineers have made their final tweaks – it's all to play for.

For ex-world champion Kimi Raikkonen, it's a chance to blast away his memories of last year. Ed Gorman has delved into the Raikkonen psyche (p28) to gauge whether his old form can be rediscovered, or if his lacklustre "twin brother" (as Luca di Montezemolo describes the Raikkonen of 2008) has stuck around. Kimi says he wants to win races as badly as ever; but does the fire still burn as brightly?

For rally colossus Sebastien Loeb it could be another record-setting season. As he readies himself for this weekend's opening WRC round in Ireland, what will he make of Max Mosley's comments (p40) in our exclusive interview with the FIA president?

And what of the new pretender to Loeb's throne, Sebastien Ogier? The 'new Seb' was sensational en route to Monte Carlo victory last weekend – his first start in a Super 2000-spec Peugeot. This weekend, Ogier and Loeb go head-to-head in Ireland...

Exciting times on the stages, and on the test tracks too. F1's technical intricacies have been reinvigorated by new aero rules that have teams pushing the envelope further. As the boundaries of legality are probed (see Top Story, p6), Mark Hughes sums it up perfectly on p23: "F1 exactly how it should be." Amen!

● Talking of legality, a worrying decision in the law courts on Monday has left Croft's future in the balance. The situation is outlined on p83 – I'll let you make up your own mind whether the law is an ass in this case.

CHARLES BRADLEY
DEPUTY EDITOR



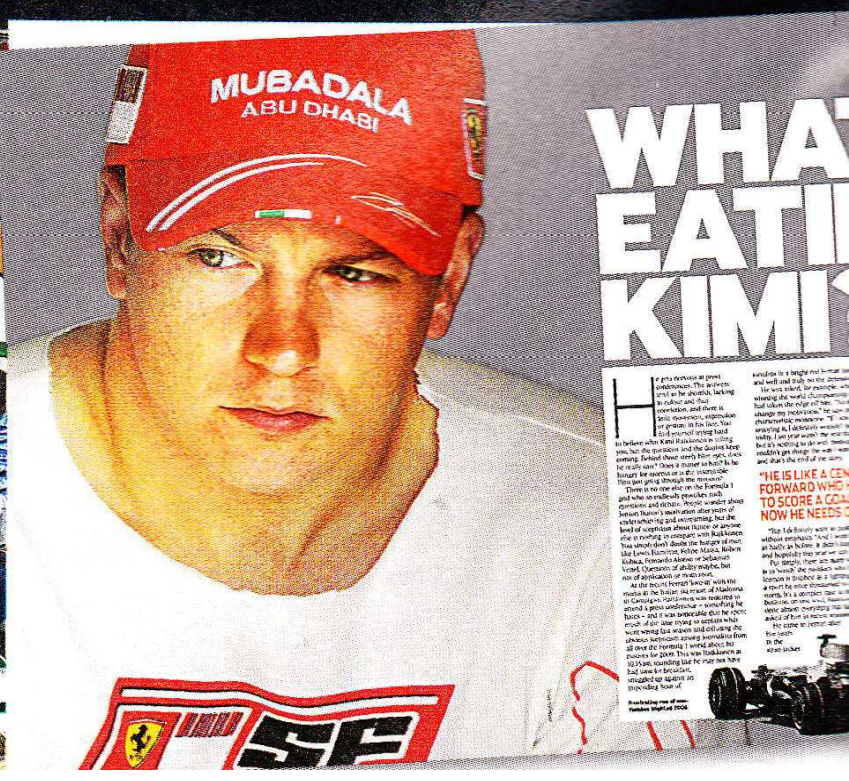
© McKLEIN/DE

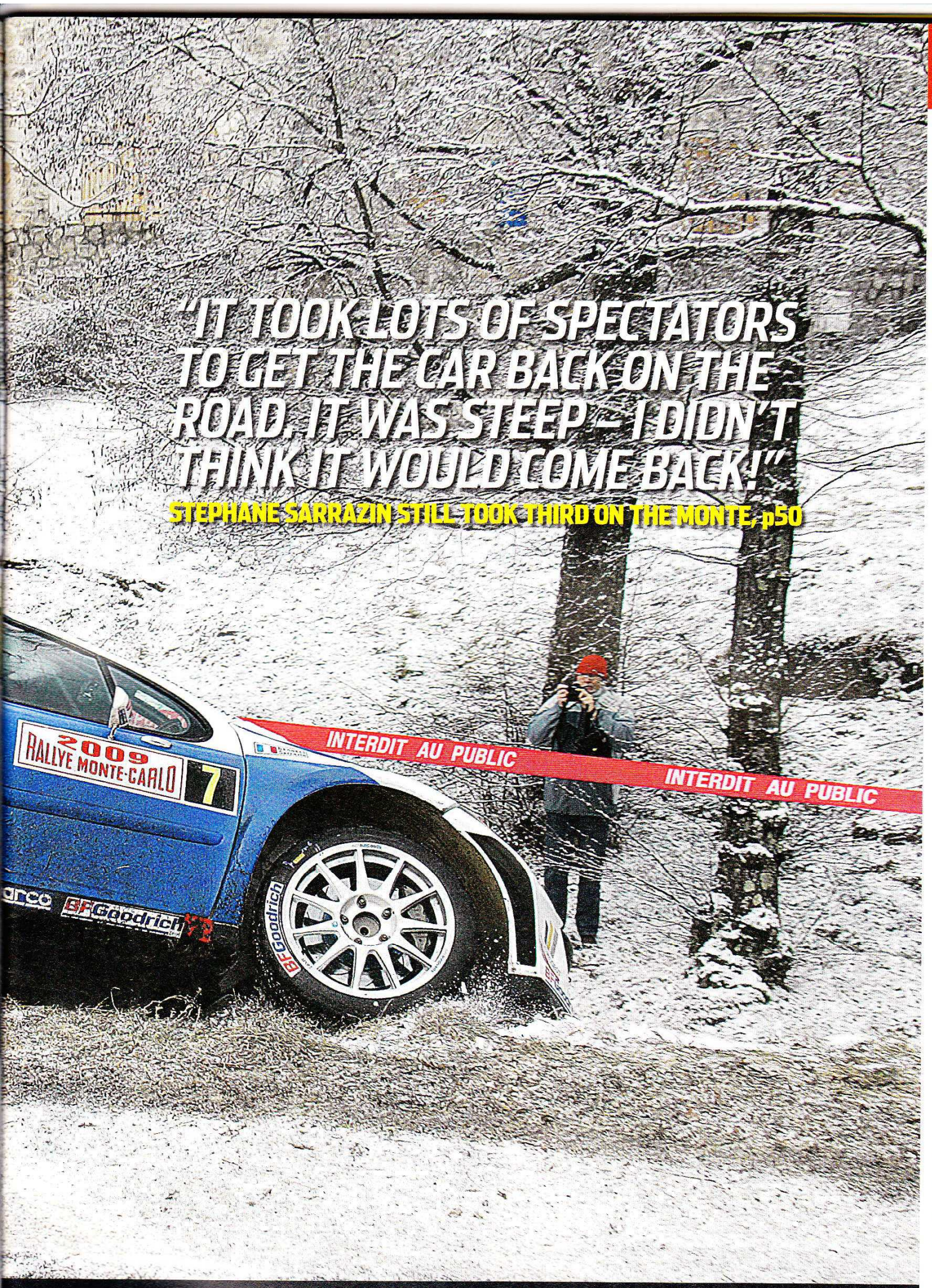
THIS WEEK

56 DAYTONA 24 HOURS
Legendary US sportscar team Brumos denies Ganassi squad a fourth straight win in closest ever finish to Florida enduro



28 RAIKKONEN ON THE ROPES
The 2007 world champion put up a disma defence of his crown last year. Is he ready to recapture that Finnish fever?





January 29 2009

COVER IMAGE WRI2.NET
INSET FERRARI S.P.A; XPB.CC; DUNBAR/LAT

recycle
When you have finished with this magazine please recycle it.

VOL 195 NO 5



Teams expecting delays for KERS F1 debut, p8



Acura unveils LMP1 challenger at Sebring test, p13

NEWS / COMMENT

6 **TOP STORY** Questions raised over legality of Williams and Toyota diffusers

8 **NEWS** F1 teams doubtful over KERS debut; Renault confident despite difficult first test with R29; Aston Martin aims for Le Mans giant-killing with LMP1; A1GP series closes on financial rescue package; Volvo working on factory BTCC project; Thompson tries Tempus BTCC Chevrolet Lacetti

18 **SPECIAL STAGE** Mosley wants one-make feeder

23 **MARK HUGHES** How F1 teams interpret new rules

24 **ON TRACK, ON SCREEN**

26 **LETTERS & STAFF COMMENT**

54 **SUBSCRIBE** and get a free Logic 3 i-station speaker

90 **PHOTO FINISH** Piero Liatti, Monte Carlo Rally 1997

FEATURES / REPORTS

28 **KIMI RAIKKONEN** Is the Finn fired up for F1 again?

32 **F1 2009** Which cars will win? And which will spin?

40 **WRC: THE FUTURE** Max Mosley in the spotlight

44 **WRC: 2009 PREVIEW** David Evans's form guide

46 **WRC: TEAM BY TEAM** All the '09 cars and drivers

50 **MONTE CARLO RALLY** Ogier wins on IRC debut

56 **DAYTONA 24 HOURS** Brumos by a whisker

60 **A1GP TAUPO** Carroll and Jani share the NZ spoils

64 **WORLD OF SPORT** GP2 Asia; Speedcar

66 **KTM X-BOW** We try Austrian firm's four-wheeled bike

AUTOSPORT NATIONAL

83 **NEWS** Crisis at Croft after noise appeal fails

88 **NATIONAL FOCUS** Where does SPEED prototype series fit on national ladder?

50 **MONTE CARLO RALLY**
Junior world champ Sebastien Ogier takes historic debut win in new-look Monte Carlo Rally

66 **X-BOW CROSSED UP**
Autosport ed Andrew van de Burgt samples KTM's lairy, and very orange, road-racer in Italy



FOR AUTOSPORT STAFF CONTACT DETAILS PLEASE SEE PAGE 26

GET THE NEWS AS SOON AS IT HAPPENS
FREE ACCESS TO AUTOSPORT.COM WORTH £30
With your subscription to Autosport magazine

RULES ROW ROCKS F1

Questions have been asked over the diffusers of Toyota and Williams. By EDD STRAW

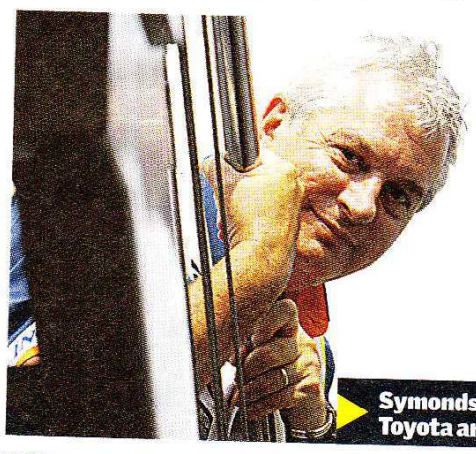
FORMULA 1 has been hit by the first rules row of the 2009 aero regulations, with Toyota and Williams facing questions from rival teams over the design of their rear diffusers.

Autosport understands that a number of teams suspect both Toyota-powered machines of exploiting a loophole in the regulations, whereby they are running a larger diffuser than they believe is legal. Now they plan to raise the issue with the FIA.

Renault executive director of engineering Pat Symonds told Autosport: "They are certainly interesting, although I don't think I can comment on their legality.

"That's something for the FIA to comment on. We will be asking the FIA about it, but we haven't yet."

Both Williams and Toyota declined to comment on their diffuser designs, but are confident that they are within the rules governing rear-bodywork height.



LAT

Symonds: Williams and Toyota are "interesting"

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

It is standard practice for teams to seek clarification from FIA technical expert Charlie Whiting on the legality of design concepts they are pursuing. Autosport understands that several teams asked Whiting last year whether it was possible to go with a variation on the types of designs that Williams and Toyota have produced, but were advised not to do so. But the way that the questions are phrased when put to the FIA can be crucial in determining the response.

It is thought that Williams and Toyota could be using the top section of the diffuser as part of the rear crash structure (see expert view, below).

Should Whiting reject imminent clarification requests from rival teams that the diffuser design is in breach of the regulations, McLaren, Ferrari, BMW and Renault will be forced to redesign the rear of the their cars to capitalise on the extra downforce provided by the diffuser, which will be particularly beneficial in lower-speed corners.

OZ GP CONTROVERSY COULD BE ON CARDS

If Whiting advises the rival teams that the Williams and Toyota are illegal, then those two squads would face the choice either of modifying their cars or risking an



GARY ANDERSON

EXPERT VIEW

AUTOSPORT TECHNICAL CORRESPONDENT

It's difficult to make an exact assessment working from photographs and the naked eye without access to the design drawings, but there is room for doubt as to whether the Toyota and Williams diffusers are legal according to my reading of the rules. Unless they have found a loophole, such as using the rear crash structure, to justify it.

Looking at the regulations dictating the rear bodywork, it seems that both the Toyota and the Williams have the centre sections of their diffusers extended above the maximum height of 175mm stipulated by the regulations.

Looking at the Williams and working off a scale in comparison to the rear wing, it appears to be 170mm high in the side section and 224mm high in the centre section – 49mm higher than allowed in the regulations.

With the Toyota, it's very difficult to get a reference measurement, but it looks to be even higher in the centre section than the Williams if you take the height of the side section as the maximum allowable. This means the centre of the diffuser is approximately 246mm, or 71mm higher than allowable.

The benefits of extending the diffuser are obvious. With the new narrow rear wings, the extra downforce allowed can make a major performance difference



Is trouble looming for the Williams-Toyota?

eligibility challenge at the Australian Grand Prix.

Ferrari must also make changes. A number of teams raised questions over the legality of the exhaust on the F60 following its launch on January 12.

But Ferrari has explained that the car was fitted with an old exhaust design for its early running, and that there was no question of the team attempting to race with an exhaust that it knew was illegal.


MARK HUGHES' VIEW, p23



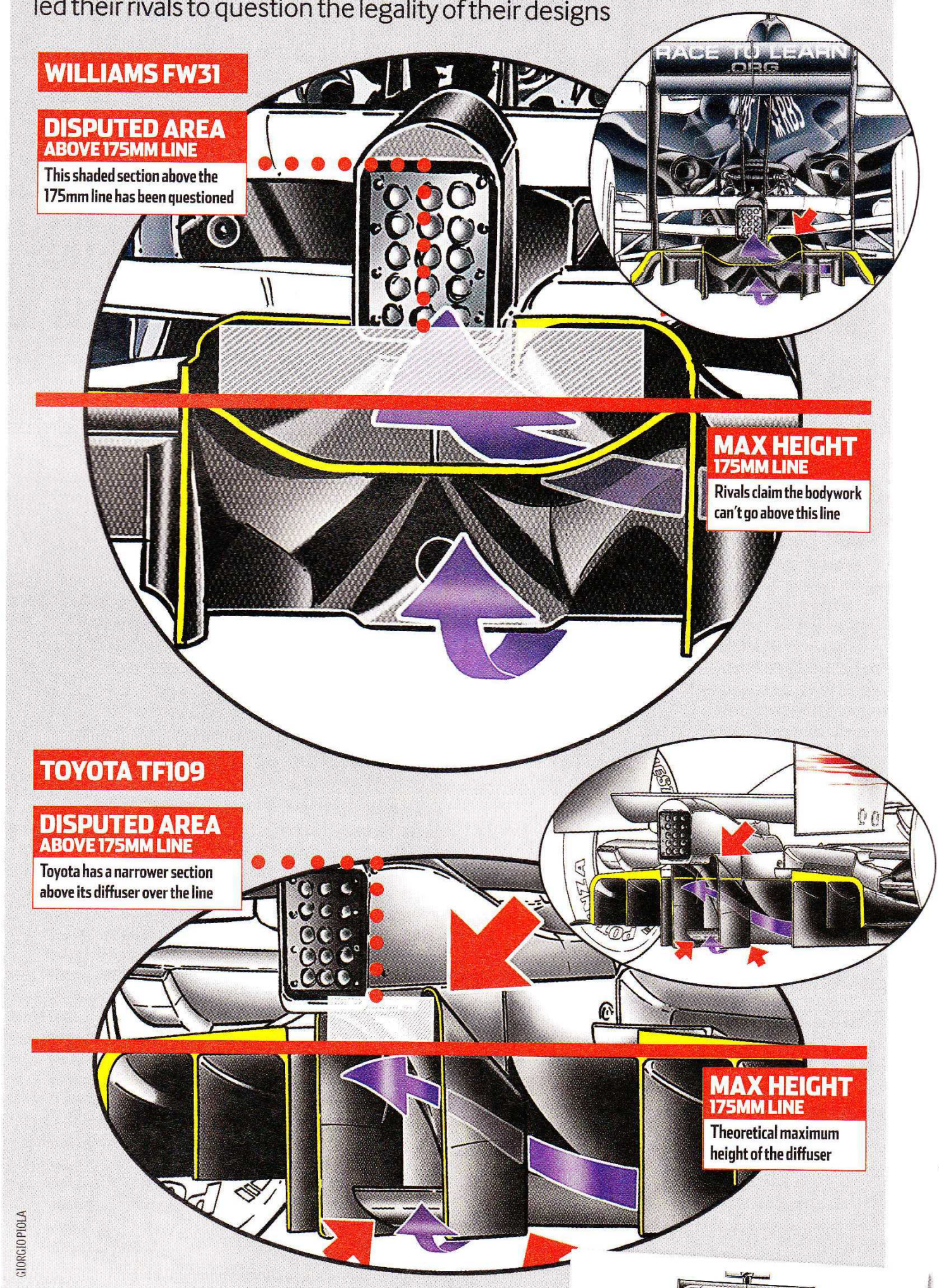
Toyota's diffuser could come under fire

in terms of grip and tyre usage.

If Williams and Toyota are allowed to run with this diffuser, the rest are going to have to follow suit to catch up. But if it is ruled as illegal, it could lead to some hasty re-designing for both teams.

AERO SECRETS REVEALED

A look at the diffusers on the Williams and Toyota, and what exactly has led their rivals to question the legality of their designs



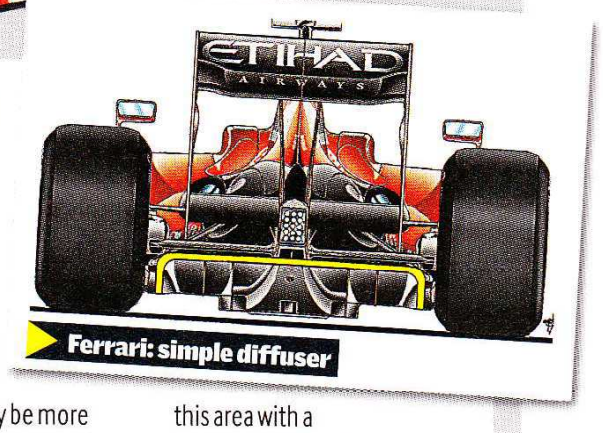
WHAT THE REGULATIONS SAY

Article 3.5 of the 2009 Formula 1 World Championship technical regulations states that:

- The width of bodywork behind the rear wheel centre line and less than 200 millimetres above the reference plane must not exceed 1000mm.
- The width of bodywork behind the rear wheel centre line and more than 200mm above the reference plane must not exceed 750mm.

Article 3.12.7 applies to bodywork facing the ground

- No bodywork which is visible from beneath the car and which lies between the rear wheel centre line and a point 350mm rearward of it may be more than 175mm above the reference plane. Any intersection of the surfaces in this area with a lateral or longitudinal vertical plane should form one continuous line which is visible



Ferrari: simple diffuser

F1 TEAMS TO MAKE KERS DECISION AT THE LAST MINUTE

Not one Formula 1 team is completely confident of having its KERS technology ready for the start of the 2009 season. By EDD STRAW

FORMULA 1 teams will wait until the eve of the season before deciding whether to race their cars equipped with kinetic energy recovery systems (KERS) amid continued uncertainty over the performance benefits of the regenerative energy units.

The five manufacturer teams, plus Williams, are continuing to develop KERS but are non-committal on whether they will be ready to race with it in the Australian Grand Prix on March 29. Even BMW Sauber, whose team boss Mario Theissen has been a staunch supporter of the system, cannot give an answer as to when its device will be race-ready.

With the use of KERS not mandatory for 2009, teams must decide whether they are confident not only that their system is reliable, but also that it will deliver a tangible performance advantage over teams not running the unit in the first part of the season.

PERFORMANCE BOOST

The 60kW KERS motor delivers a maximum of 400kJ per lap, giving a theoretical maximum of 6.67 seconds of boost at 80.46bhp. Teams could opt to discharge a lower level of power for longer, albeit still restrained by the 400kJ limit. Although the extra power is clearly a benefit in itself, this must be balanced against the disadvantages of running a KERS unit weighing approximately 25kg. While this is unlikely to push anyone over the minimum weight limit (605kg including driver), it will significantly reduce the amount of ballast that teams can run, thereby reducing the effectiveness of a critical set-up tool. This is why a number of drivers, including Renault's Fernando Alonso, have been asked to lose weight over the winte

FLASHBACK
A BMW mechanic suffered a KERS shock at Jerez on July 22 last year



"Our estimation is that KERS would be detrimental on almost all of the circuits in its current status becaus of the weight," said Toyota chassis boss Pascal Vasselo "Of course, that is something that will change accordi to the level of development in the season."

SAFETY ISSUES

There are still concerns over the safety of KERS. Last July, a BMW Sauber mechanic was injured by an electric shock during testing at Jerez, and teams have equipped personnel with insulating gloves for working on a car with an active KERS. Although the accident led to a full investigation, with BMW Saube reporting its findings to the FIA and rival teams, som still fear the consequences of a fully-charged KERS being involved in a major crash. The FIA and the teams are compiling a safety document to circulate to all race organisers on KERS safety.

Formula 1 race director Charlie Whiting said: "The teams are taking this very responsibly for their own safety, of course. They're also looking at how the marshals will respond to broken-down cars.

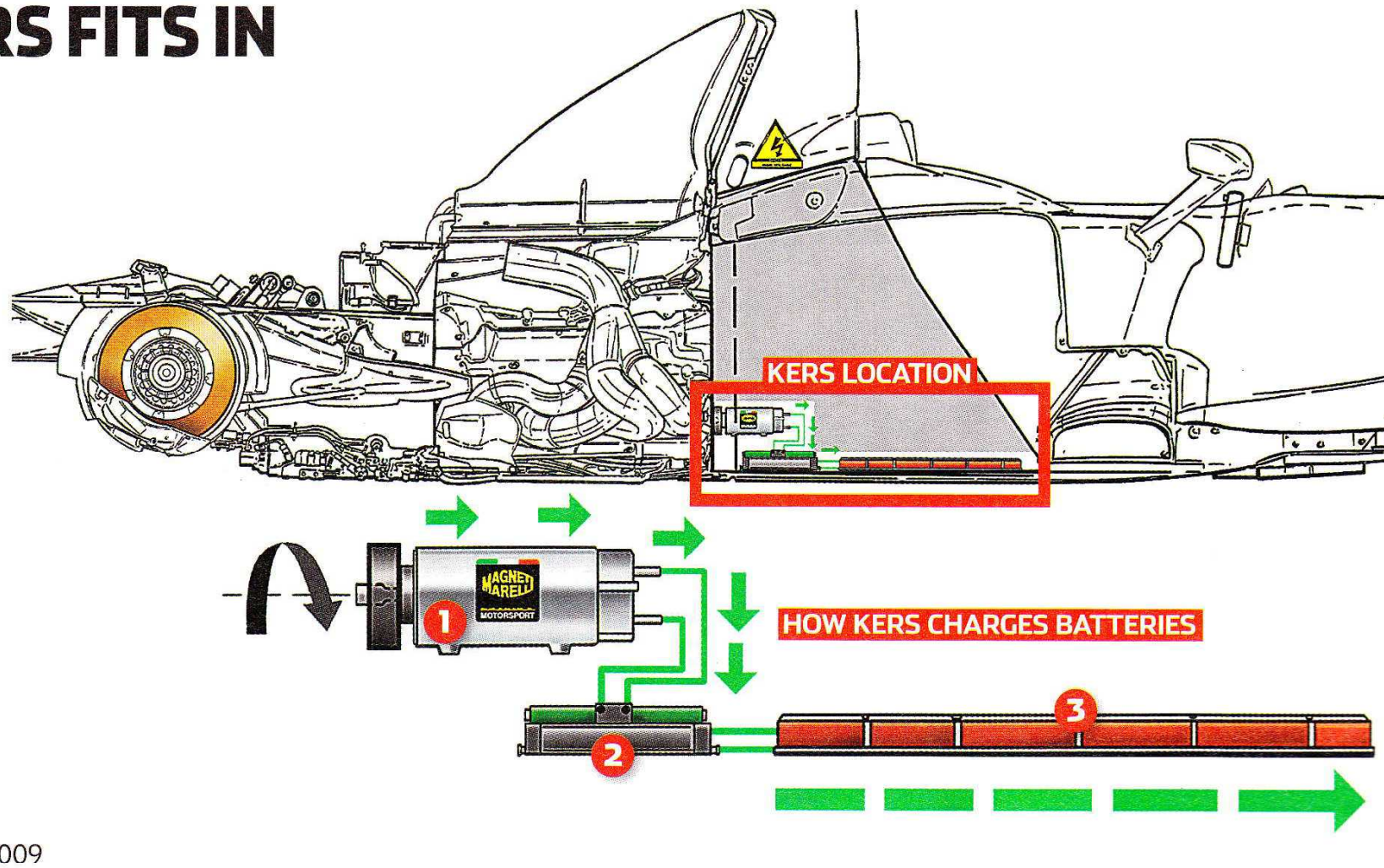
"Marshals are going to be educated by the documentation we'll provide."

WHERE KERS FITS IN

1 KERS MOTOR
The motor generator converts mechanical energy from braking to electrical energy for storage and back again if the boost button is hit

2 KERS ECU
The ECU will control the operation of the KERS, including managing the energy stored in the batteries and triggering its deployment

3 BATTERIES
Up to 400kJ will be stored in the batteries as used in the majority of F1 systems. It will be charged with energy generated from braking





Rubber gloves are now mandatory pitcrew kit

HOW RELIABLE WILL KERS BE?

With KERS such a high-profile showcase for the mainstream manufacturer teams, it is understood that the likes of Mercedes, Toyota, BMW and Renault are determined to make it reliable. But a new system inevitably means that there will be reliability problems to overcome, with cooling a particular issue.

There is also the knock-on effect on the cooling of the whole car. With the ban on aerodynamic flick-ups, cars' overall cooling efficiency has been reduced. This has made cooling KERS equipment, particularly battery or super capacitor technology, critical. The BMW Sauber F1.09, for example, features thick-set sidepods partly through the need to air-cool its KERS.

LITTLE TIME TO TEST

The ban on in-season testing, as well as the cut in winter running, means that it will be difficult for teams to track-prove KERS outside of competition after the first race of the season. Although this means that they will only be able to test KERS on the Fridays of grands prix, off-track development means that teams could bring the units to a race once the season has started.

Williams technical director Sam Michael told Autosport: "In terms of where our programme is for testing it and bringing it to a grand prix, I can't really say because we don't know. But if we're not on the track, it doesn't mean we're not working on KERS because we have dynos in our factory and dynos in [engine supplier] Toyota's factory."

OVERTAKING OPPORTUNITIES

Overtaking is the most commonly cited way to employ the power of KERS, although with drivers unlikely to be in a position to attempt a passing move on every lap of a race, its strategic usage must also be taken into consideration. There is also the challenge for the driver of monitoring his available KERS boost, as this cannot be controlled by the teams.

McLaren head of vehicle engineering Mark Williams said: "It's a significant gain and the drivers can feel it. But it depends when you deploy it. If you deploy it on the straight, you want to deploy it at the start. We can work out the optimum for the improving time over a lap, but the driver has to work out how to follow that level."

Strategically, teams could also utilise the available KERS power to save on fuel usage and engine wear – critical now that the eight-engines-per-driver rule has been introduced.

UPDATE: WHO IS WHERE WITH KERS

McLaren-Mercedes
"So far I have a good impression," said Norbert Haug about the Mercedes KERS system. However, no date has been set for its debut.

BMW Sauber
Has been testing KERS since the middle of last year. Despite being in front of many of its rivals, a Melbourne debut is not definite



Ferrari
Has reported good progress with its system, developed in association with Magneti Marelli, , but cannot commit for Australia.

Renault
Team says it's "likely" to run KERS in Australia after making good progress in the last month

Toyota
Won't introduce the system until



later in the year, but has been track-testing it.

Scuderia Toro Rosso
Set to use Ferrari KERS as part of customer engine deal.

Red Bull
Has set aside development of its in-house system. Team principal Christian Horner said: "We will await the outcome of Renault's initial running before activating our identical system.

Williams
Is developing a flywheel-based KERS, but technical director Sam Michael admitted that it would be "very difficult" to have it ready for the early stages of the season.

Force India
Will use Mercedes KERS.

Q&A SAM MICHAEL, WILLIAMS TECH BOSS



■ How do you test without KERS – do you run with ballast where it would be or place the weight elsewhere?
We have been doing both. We have run the car in both configurations during the winter and will keep doing that.

■ Do you know when you will run with KERS fully active for the first time?
We won't run KERS at Jerez next week because we want to clock up mileage on the standard car. When you start such a new concept, it's very difficult to plan the end point. We don't know when we are going to race it because it's one of those projects where you don't know what form it is going to take.

■ Will the strategic uses of KERS increase when the power level is increased?
Yes, but that's a couple of years away. If you have a system with, say, up to 300kW of charge and 200kW of discharge, there's no way you would win races without one. Instead of being worth two-and-a-half tenths, it will be worth nine tenths or a second. Long-term, it should be increased to where you need it to win.



ROSBERG FLIES IN THE ALGARVE
The Williams FW31 was fastest of the 2009-spec cars in the Algarve test courtesy of Nico Rosberg's pace on the only dry day. Sebastien Buemi was quickest overall in an '08 STR

WHO'S BUILT THE BEST CAR FOR NEW RULES? p32

RENAULT UPBEAT AFTER SLOW START

New R29 off the pace in first test, but there's more to come. By EDD STRAW

RENAULT IS confident that there is more to come from the new R29, despite being "disappointed" by last week's first test.

The Renault was the slowest of the four new machines in last week's Algarve test, with a fastest lap two seconds off Williams driver Nico Rosberg's best 2009-specification time. Despite this, its executive director of engineering Pat Symonds believes that changes scheduled for the next four tests will improve matters.

Symonds told Autosport: "I was disappointed. It wasn't a great test. We didn't really have everything the way we wanted it on the little bit of dry running we did.

"At the moment the Williams is probably quicker than us, but I don't think it's two seconds."

CHANGES TO COME

Renault's development plans for the R29 include a raft of aero tweaks that the team hopes will improve speed.

"There are a lot of revisions," said Symonds. "I was in the windtunnel on Sunday and the car looked different."

"The trouble is, we are so far from our race-one car that it's hard to do these comparisons at the moment. Most people found that the back end of the car needed the most work because that's the way the tyres are.

"But in terms of performance, it's difficult to tell. The difference between our launch car and our race car in terms of overall downforce is significantly higher this year than normal because it's a massive learning process."

UNDERSTANDING THE CAR

Symonds also admitted that the team hadn't focused enough attention on the set-up demands of the new regulations, something that could be down in part to it not running an interim car in November and December.

"The aerodynamic map of this car is really different and maybe we hadn't taken enough notice of that in the set-up," Symonds said. "We can do better, which will make the car easier to drive. But this year, more than ever, it will be those last couple of tests that are the indicator."



The R29 will soon look very different

HIGH HOPES FOR KERS

Symonds is hopeful that Renault will be one of the teams that will run with a Kinetic Energy Recovery System (KERS) from the start of the season after making rapid progress over the past month.

The team conducted track tests with the regenerative energy system in the Algarve test, and Symonds is cautiously optimistic that it will be ready to be used at the first grand prix of the season in Australia at the end of March.

"Before Christmas, I was really concerned about how we were going to get KERS even working in its basic form," said Symonds. "But we made good progress over Christmas and I'm much more confident we'll get that on the car for Melbourne. There's no guarantees on that, but I'd now say it's likely."

ALGARVE TEAMS HOPE FOR DRY TIME

THE TEAMS that ran in last week's rain-hit Algarve test are hopeful that the lack of dry running will not set back car development.

McLaren, Williams, Renault and Toyota all suffered from the heavy rain that led to the fourth day of the test being abandoned. Ferrari, which was testing at Mugello, also suffered with bad weather, while BMW Sauber suffered only from high winds during its four-day private test in Valencia. The German marque completed over 1500 miles, almost three times more than any of the teams running at the Algarve.

Williams technical director Sam Michael is confident that the loss of dry running will not be a major problem.

"We only really lost out to BMW as Ferrari had just as much rain as us in Italy," Michael told Autosport on Monday. "We've got plenty of time to catch up."

Toyota, Ferrari and BMW Sauber will skip the Jerez test that starts on February 10 in favour of running in Bahrain. Toyota chassis boss Pascal Vasselon believes that what happened in the Algarve backs up the decision of the teams that will go there.

"This is a perfect illustration of how important it is to go to Bahrain," said Vasselon. "For us, it is the best value for money. There is a risk in Europe in winter of spending time in irrelevant conditions."


Wet weather badly affected Algarve test

ALGARVE F1 TEST, JANUARY 19-22

	Driver	Car	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
1	Sebastien Buemi	Toro Rosso-Ferrari STR3*	1m41.528s	1m34.429s	**1m27.987s**	no time
2	Nico Rosberg	Williams-Toyota FW31	–	1m51.580s	**1m29.729s**	–
3	Lewis Hamilton	McLaren-Mercedes MP4-24	–	–	**1m30.242s**	–
4	Timo Glock	Toyota TF109	–	–	**1m30.878s**	no time
5	Fernando Alonso	Renault R29	–	–	**1m31.743s**	no time
6	Pedro de la Rosa	McLaren-Mercedes MP4-24	1m46.076s	**1m37.512s**	–	–
7	Jarno Trulli	Toyota TF109	–	**1m42.339s**	–	–
8	Nelson Piquet	Renault R29	1m48.907s	**1m45.860s**	–	–
9	Nico Hulkenberg	Williams-Toyota FW31	**1m46.335s**	–	–	–
10	Kamui Kobayashi	Toyota TF109	**1m50.989s**	–	–	–
11	Heikki Kovalainen	McLaren-Mercedes MP4-24	–	–	–	**no time**
12	Kazuki Nakajima	Williams-Toyota FW31	–	–	–	**no time**

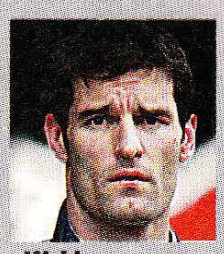
*2008-specification car

WEBBER NOT 100% FOR OZ

RED BULL's Mark Webber has admitted that he will not be fully fit for the start of the season despite having no doubt he will be on the grid for the Australian Grand Prix.

Webber broke his right leg in a mountain bike crash in Australia on November 22, but is confident that his ability to drive a Formula 1 car will not be affected when he returns to the cockpit to test at Jerez on February 11.

Webber told Autosport: "This is a four to five-month injury, so I'm not going to be 100 per cent for a while. But I will definitely be able to do my job very well.


Webber: unsure

"Obviously I couldn't jump in and drive an F1 car at the moment. I'm very confident that in a few weeks I'll be able to."

Webber believes that he will have no problems with getting back into an F1 car for the first time since last year's Brazilian Grand Prix.

"You're always tentative about getting back in a car when you've had three or four months out, even without an injury, but I know after five laps it will be fine," he said. "The good thing is it's all new for everyone—the cars are all new so this is probably the best year to have done it.

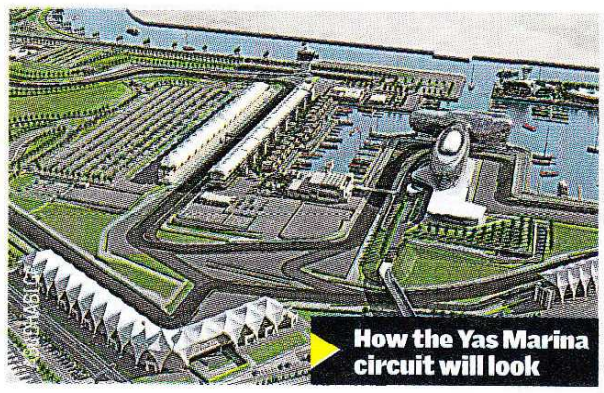
"The plan between now and the first race is to gain as much strength in the leg as I can. I'm working each week on reconditioning the leg but taking it as it comes. I'm not focusing on Melbourne as such, I'm focusing on Jerez."

FERRARI COMPLETES FIRST MAJOR F60 TEST

Ferrari opted to run for four days at Mugello in Italy for the first full test of its new F60. Felipe Massa and Kimi Raikkonen (pictured) both completed two days in the car and made good progress. "It gets the thumbs-up without a doubt," said Massa of his '09 racer


KIMI: READY TO FIGHT BACK IN 2009, p28 →

IN BRIEF


How the Yas Marina circuit will look

ABU DHABI ON TIME

Organisers of the Abu Dhabi GP, which will hold the final race of 2009 on November 1, are confident that track construction work is on time. "Everything is going to be finished well ahead of the race," said John Bullough, the CEO of the company that is building the track.

SAFETY CAR CHANGES

The FIA has confirmed that Formula 1's Safety Car rules will change this year. The pits will no longer be closed at the start of a caution period. Instead, drivers will be informed of a minimum-time to get back to the pits to avoid the dangers caused by them rushing back for tyres and fuel.

FRENCH GP APPROVAL

The French senate has approved plans for a new Formula 1 track to be built in the Yvelines region of Paris with a view to the French Grand Prix returning to the calendar in 2011. The project, dubbed "la valee de l'automobile", had run into some opposition from environmentalists.

ING MAKES CUTBACKS

Renault sponsor ING will reduce its F1 spend this year. Although the amount received by Renault won't be cut, the Dutch financial institution will spend less on hospitality and sponsorship "activation".

SUPERLICENCE ROW

The row over F1 driver superlicence fees has restarted, with the Grand Prix Drivers' Association telling its members not to sign the documents for the next three weeks. Drivers are angry that costs have risen again by €400 to €10,444, and by €100 to €2100 per point.

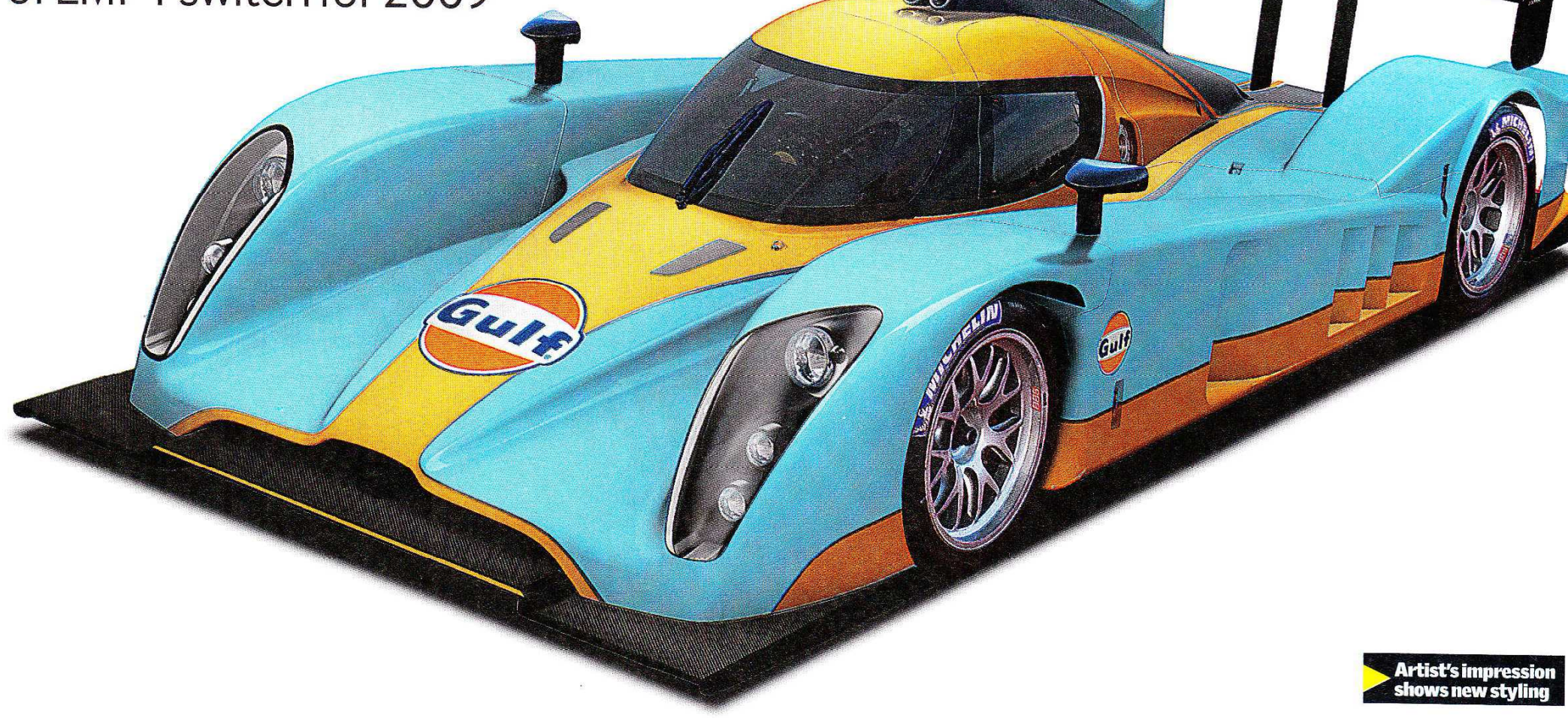
PRESIDENT REUTEMANN?

Twelve-time grand prix winner Carlos Reutemann is being tipped to run for the presidency of Argentina in 2011. Although the senator has not yet declared his candidacy, he said: "This time, I'd think about the possibility of being a candidate."


Reutemann may run for president

ASTON TAKES ON THE LE MANS BIG GUNS

Modified Lola coupe forms basis of LMP1 switch for 2009



Artist's impression shows new styling

ASTON MARTIN believes it can go to this year's Le Mans 24 Hours with a chance of producing a giant-killing performance against the Audi and Peugeot turbodiesels with its new Gulf-backed LMP1 prototypes.

Chairman David Richards, whose Prodrive company runs Aston Martin Racing, described this year's race as a "potential David-and-Goliath situation" at the launch of the new V12-engined car this week.

"We are going in the belief that there is a chance of winning, although we are also going with a strong sense of reality," he said. "We are outsiders, yet if ever there is a fairy story, then it has to be Aston Martin winning Le Mans 50 years on from our 1959 victory."

AMR team principal George Howard-Chappell explained that his team would know more about its chances after the new car – which has yet to be given a type number – runs for the first time in March.

"We are going to have to see what happens, but we are going to do our best," he said. "Every now and again upsets happen at Le Mans and that is what we are aiming to do."

Richards explained that the project, which will include an assault on the five-race Le Mans Series, had been drawn together without financial backing from Aston Martin.

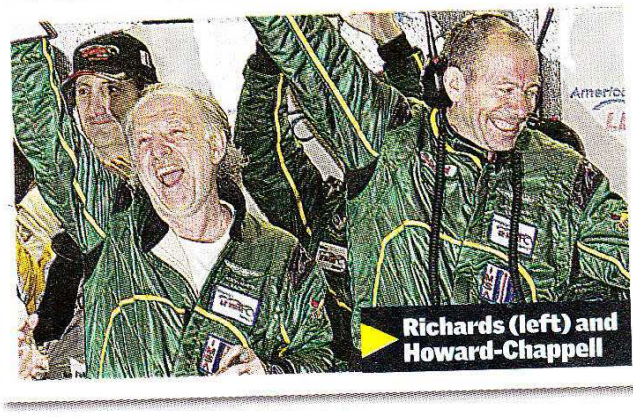
"At this time Aston Martin can't spend money on motor racing," Richards added. "It has been up to AMR to secure the necessary funding."

Gulf Oil, which backed AMR's successful 2008 Le Mans GT1 campaign with the DBR9, Czech entrant Toni Charouz and Harold Primat, who will drive one of the cars, are understood to be the principal backers of the programme.

The project builds on the success of Prodrive's single-car campaign at Le Mans and in the Le Mans Series last year with a Charouz-entered Lola-Aston B08/60. The major change for 2009 is all-new bodywork.

Howard-Chappell added: "You can see that the car doesn't look very much like a Lola. We've done our own aero package, which has been a joint effort between Aston Martin styling and Aston Martin Racing. You can rest assured, however, that we haven't done anything that will slow the car down."

AMR has announced five drivers so far. Stefan Mucke and Jan Charouz, the regular drivers of the Lola-Aston last year, will return along with Tomas Enge, who has strong links with both the Czech entrant and Prodrive. Darren Turner, part of last year's GT1-winning line-up at Le Mans, moves up to the prototype programme, while Primat switches camps from Pescarolo.



Richards (left) and Howard-Chappell

Q&A DARREN TURNER



■ Is this the opportunity you have been waiting for after so long in GT1?
I'm looking forward to it because it's a new challenge and it will be nice to be able to fight for outright wins, but I can't say whether it will be more fun or rewarding because my experience of prototypes is so limited. I loved GT1 because, as a driver, the more you put into the car, the more you got out.

■ Will this be your first time in a Le Mans-style prototype?
No, don't forget I was going to drive one of the Veloqx Audis in 2004 and I did about 50 laps at Paul Ricard in the R8. I also tested the Mercedes CLR in 1999, which was more or less a prototype. I was the reserve driver for Le Mans and I also got to do a 24-hour test at Magny-Cours.

■ What are you hopes for this project?
Until it hits the track, it will be difficult to know what the performance will be, but it would be lovely to think that we have a chance of winning Le Mans.



ACURA LAUNCHES LMP1 CHARGER

ACURA HAS developed what it claims is "the most nimble and agile LMP1 ever built" in its attempt to get the better of the Peugeot and Audi whenever it goes up against them in 2009.

The ARX-02a LMP1 prototype is "a non-compromise car", according to Nick Wirth, whose eponymous company has designed and built the car in Britain.

"We knew that if we were going to have any chance to beat the diesels, we were going to have to push every boundary," he said at the launch of the ARX-02a at Sebring during the American Le Mans Series winter test at the Florida circuit. "Every single item we could review and improve upon, we did so."


Wirth: pushing

The major innovation is the use of rear wheels and tyres on the front of the car, which Wirth believes is a first for a modern Le Mans prototype.

"That gives us seven per cent more contact-patch area," he explained. "That is quite a significant advantage."

"The problem is that big wheels up front are terrible for the aero. That means we have had to come up with several innovative solutions to the problem."

The ARX-02a is built around a four-litre version of the V8 that powered the Acura LMP2s in 2007-08. The possibility of building a turbodiesel was discounted because Acura does not sell diesels in the US.

The Highcroft Racing and De Ferran Motorsports ARX-02as, which will fly the flag for Acura in LMP1 this year, were testing in public for the first time at Sebring at the beginning of this week. De Ferran driver Simon Pagenaud set a best time of 1m45.053s on the first day of the test.



David Brabham tests new Highcroft Acura

LEVITT/LAT

AUDI TAKES THREE

AUDI looks certain to run three R15 TDI prototypes in this year's Le Mans 24 Hours, despite only taking up two of four guaranteed entries for the big race.

Audi Sport boss Wolfgang Ullrich said that this was not a statement of intent on the number of cars the German manufacturer will run in the big race in June. He pointed out that Audi still had the possibility to bid for another spot in the open selection process, for which entries closed last week.

Ullrich would not elaborate further on his plans for the 24 Hours, but it appears that he decided against the idea of running two out of three cars under the banner of Audi Sport North America (which had three guaranteed spots) and will instead bid for another entry as Audi Sport Team Joest.

Ullrich explained that it is Audi's intention to field two R15s in the Sebring 12 Hours, its traditional Le Mans warm-up in March.

GOH BUYS SPYDER

TWO PORSCHE RS Spyder LMP2 cars should be on the grid for the Le Mans 24 Hours in June.

The guaranteed entry won by Team Essex for finishing second in the Le Mans Series last year has been taken up a new group, which has taken control of the Danish team and its car. Porsche has confirmed that a second car has been entered by 2004 Le Mans-winning entrant Kazumichi Goh, who has purchased the Van Merksteijn car.

The Danish consortium involves touring car driver Kristian Poulsen and Essex regular Casper Elgaard, who would not comment on the plans.

No comment was available from Team Goh, but Porsche motorsport boss Hartmut Kristen said there is an intention to contest the 24 Hours and a Le Mans Series race before it.



LEVITT/LAT

RAHAL GETS HIS NEW M3 ON TRACK
Rahal Letterman Racing got its hands on the new BMW M3 GT contender at Sebring on Monday. It built up the first of the definitive M3 racers from a kit of parts supplied by BMW Motorsport

IN BRIEF



New Panoz in action at Sebring

FARNBACHER IN A PANOZ...
Dominik Farnbacher, a GT2 class winner in the American Le Mans Series last year, tried out for the PTG Panoz team at Sebring this week. Former PTG BMW driver Ian James also drove the latest Esperante GTLM.

...AND A FERRARI
Farnbacher has confirmed that he will race for his father Horst's eponymous team in the Le Mans Series this year. The German will share a Ferrari 430 GT with former Tafel Racing ALMS team-mate Pierre Ehret.

ACURA'S GANASSI STARS
IndyCar drivers Dario Franchitti and Scott Dixon will return to Acura's sportscar squad for the Sebring and Petit Le Mans enduros this year. They respectively drive the Highcroft and De Ferran ARX-02a LMP2 cars.

ZONTA OUT OF PEUGEOT
Brazilian Ricardo Zonta has followed his ex-Formula 1 team-mate Jacques Villeneuve in declaring himself out of Peugeot's Le Mans line-up. The ex-Formula 1 driver explained that his Grand-Am and Brazilian Stock Car programmes prevented him for undertaking the amount of testing Peugeot wanted him to do.

DEVLIN TO DYSON
British sportscar regular Ben Devlin has joined Dyson Racing to drive one of its Lola-Mazda LMP2s at the Sebring and Petit Le Mans enduros. The 26-year-old moves over to Dyson from the Mazda-backed B-K Motorsports LMP2 programme.

LATEST 911 ON TRACK
The 2009-spec Porsche 911 GT3-RSR broke cover at Sebring this week when the Flying Lizard, Farnbacher Loles and VICI teams put cars through their paces for the first time. The major performance gain on the car has come courtesy of new front-end aerodynamics.



Front end is different on new Porsche 911

LEVITT/LAT

CLARKE BACK ON TRACK WITH GBR

Dan Clarke made his A1GP debut for Team GBR at Taupo last weekend. The former Champ Car driver took a best finish of 12th while standing in for lead driver Danny Watts



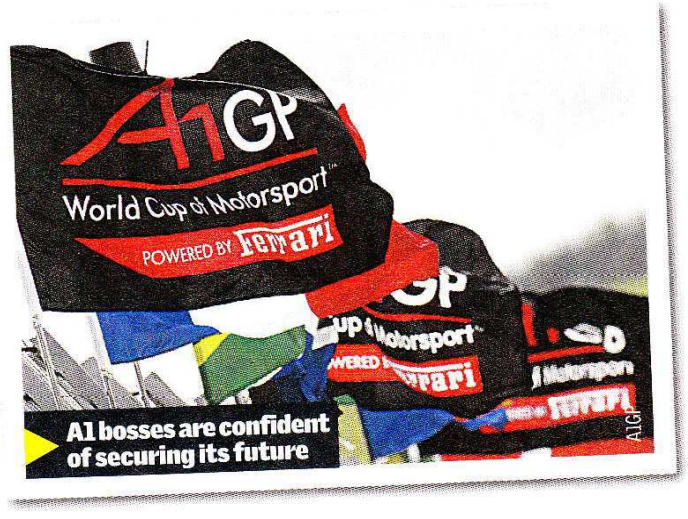
A1GP TAUPO REPORT, p60 →

A1GP CLOSING IN ON NEW INVESTORS

World Cup of Motorsport set to land financial lifeline

THE LONG-TERM future of A1GP is close to being secured as talks progress between series bosses and potential investors.

The championship has endured a rocky start to its fourth season, with races being cancelled and problems getting all of the new 'Powered by Ferrari' cars ready for each team. Team New Zealand seat holder Colin Giltrap admitted last weekend that he had been concerned for A1GP's future in recent weeks, but claimed that a deal with an investor had been secured.



A1 bosses are confident of securing its future

A1GP's CEO Pete da Silva told Autosport that statement was slightly premature, but he shares Giltrap's optimism: "Do we need cash? Yes. But I'd like to have intelligent cash right now," said da Silva.

"We are talking to three or four parties. It could be three parties coming in with smaller stakes, it could be one with an individual chunk. I'm expecting something to break, but it's not imminent. It could be eight or 10 weeks away in terms of announcing anything."

Da Silva added that the series would be able to get money faster if it was in desperate need of it.

"If we were looking for cash, I could find it a lot faster," he added. "While I am looking for it, I'm also looking for a secure footing. I have the luxury of delaying a pure cash investment to wait for a strategic investment."

Some of the recent uncertainty was caused by the late cancellation of the Lippo Village street race in Indonesia, which was meant to be the next round of the season. Da Silva said that monsoon rain had delayed the building of the circuit, and added that it would definitely appear early next season.

"Lippo will have a few more months to get the circuit ready, and we will slot it in for season five, in this calendar year," he said. "We race on FIA Grade 2 tracks and, in terms of safety, it wasn't ready."

SCHEDULE SHUFFLE

THE EUROPEAN rounds of A1GP's fifth season will all take place towards the end of the season, as the calendar is set to be reshuffled for 2009-10.

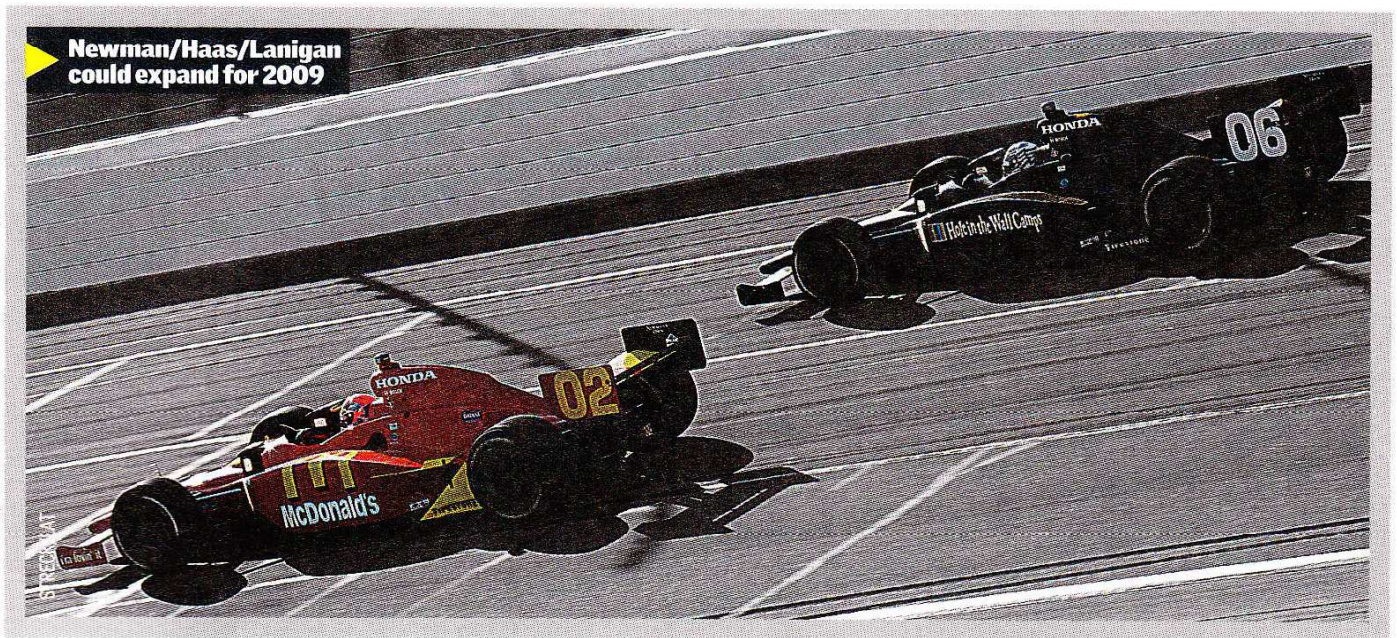
All four A1GP seasons have started with European races, but the confirmation of Surfers Paradise in October of this year means that the series will start with races closer to Australia, and travel to Europe for the final leg of the season.



Da Silva: changes

A1GP CEO Pete da Silva told Autosport: "We will start off, most probably, with fly-away races. What I don't want to do is start in Europe then rush down to Australia. I'd rather start in China, for example, go down to Australia, go to New Zealand, go to Indonesia, go to Malaysia, go to Africa/Middle East, go to South America through North America, and finally terminate in Europe. That makes logistical sense."

The shuffle means that the series will not visit Zandvoort during 2009, meaning that the track can host the Masters of Formula 3 again (see p15).


Newman/Haas/Lanigan could expand for 2009

MASTERS BACK TO ZANDVOORT

ZANDVOORT WILL be able to host the Masters of Formula 3 again this year for the first time since 2006 following a change in the A1 GP calendar.

The Dutch A1 race will move to the end of the 2009-10 calendar (see separate story), which frees up some of the 'noise days' that it is limited to by the government. The limit currently only allows it to host two big events per year, which have been A1 GP and DTM for the past two seasons.

While the calendar shuffle only guarantees the return of the race from Zolder for one year at the moment, circuit officials are confident that their application for more noise days from 2010 onwards will be resolved before the end of this year.

Circuit boss Erik Weijers said: "This event was founded here in 1991 and everyone agrees—Zandvoort is the home of the F3 Masters."

N/H/L CONSIDERS THREE-CAR TEAM

INDYCAR SERIES race-winning outfit Newman/Haas/Lanigan is considering running three cars this season.

The team currently only has Graham Rahal confirmed for this year, and before Christmas it told Justin Wilson that he was free to look for a drive elsewhere as the team struggled for sponsors.

Several drivers, including four-time Champ Car champion Sebastien Bourdais and Robert Doornbos, have been linked to the team in recent weeks.

A team spokesperson told Autosport: "I've seen the rumours, but all I can say is that we are talking to more than one driver about racing for the team this year. It could be either two or three cars. We're still evaluating all the possible scenarios."

SAME BATTLE, DIFFERENT CARS AND CONTINENT

Formula 3 Euroseries title rivals Nico Hulkenberg and Edoardo Mortara shone on their GP2 Asia debuts in Bahrain last weekend. Hulkenberg (2) took pole for race one; Mortara (4) finished on the podium


FERRARI/GP2

BAHRAIN REPORT, p64 →

CONWAY PLOTS LONG US CAREER

FORMER BRITISH Formula 3 champion Mike Conway is planning a long career in America after confirming his switch from GP2 to the IndyCar Series for this year.

The 25-year-old, who starred in a test at Sears Point for Panther Racing last year, will race for Dreyer & Reinbold this year.

"We had a couple of years in GP2 and didn't get the results that we wanted," Conway told Autosport. "We wanted to see what was available to us, and the IRL seemed like the best option. I think it's a good switch. I see a future in America, and we're out there for the long haul."

Conway added that Honda's withdrawal from Formula 1 had played a factor in the decision, as he had been contracted to the team as a test driver. But he expects IndyCar to keep improving over the next few years.

"The IRL is very strong now following the merger with Champ Car, so I see it as a good place to be," he added. "I haven't driven on an oval yet, but I'm looking forward to that and everything else that comes with racing in America."

Dreyer & Reinbold has not confirmed any team-mates for Conway yet, but the Briton is optimistic of getting someone experienced brought in.

"It will be good to learn from all the experienced guys here," he said.


Conway will swap Europe for America

FERRARI/GP2

IN BRIEF


Patrick will get more help from Andretti

DANICA GETS MICHAEL

Andretti Green Racing team boss Michael Andretti will become Danica Patrick's race strategist in the IndyCar Series this year. The 46-year-old replaces Kyle Moyer, who will move to Marco Andretti's car for 2009.

GP2 ACTS TO CUT COSTS

GP2 organisers have announced cost cuts in the series for this season. Dallara has reduced its prices, teams will be limited to 13 people on race weekends, and the traditional mid-season test has been cancelled.

QATAR NIGHT RACE IS ON

GP2 Asia's first ever night race in Qatar has been confirmed. The event had been placed into a doubt due to a deal not being signed by Speedcar officials until recently, and the race has been put back a week from its original date of February 6-7 to February 13-14.

CARLIN'S GRADUATES

British Formula 3 champion Jaime Alguersuari will graduate to Formula Renault 3.5 this season with Carlin Motorsport. Oliver Turvey, who was runner-up to him last season, will be his team-mate. Comtec, meanwhile, has confirmed Alex Marsoin will partner Anton Nebylitskiy.

SANCHEZ FOR F2

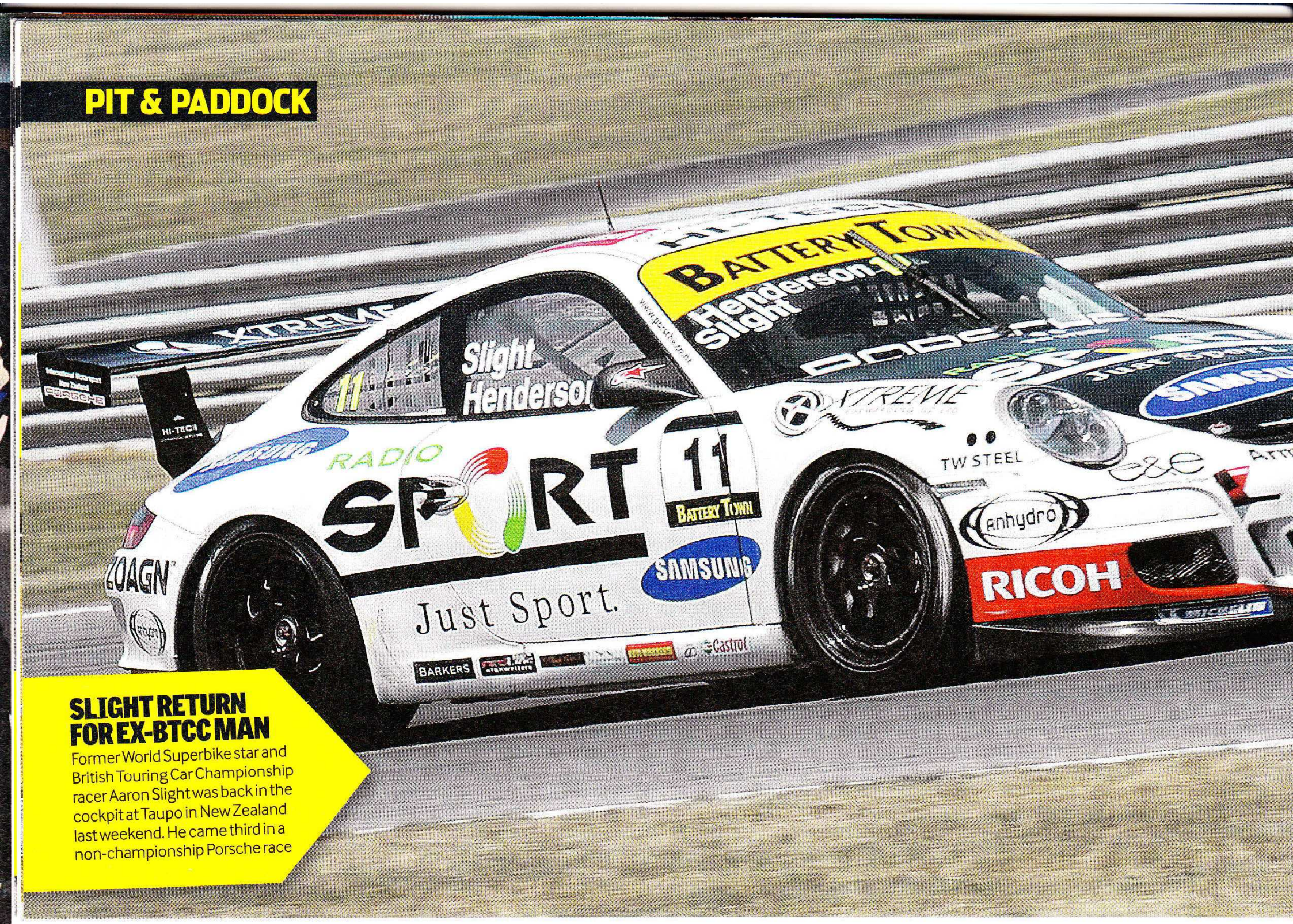
Spanish Formula 3 champion German Sanchez is the latest driver to have signed up for Formula 2 this year. The 19-year-old is the third Spanish F3 frontrunner to sign up to the series, along with Natacha Gachnang and Nicola De Marco.

LANCASTER TO SG

Jon Lancaster will spearhead SG Formula's assault on the F3 Euroseries after switching to the team from fellow French squad ART. The Briton will be joined by Formula Renault graduate Andrea Caldarelli and Henkie Waldschmidt, who stays with SG for a second season.



Lancaster will stay in F3 for another year



SLIGHT RETURN FOR EX-BTCC MAN

Former World Superbike star and British Touring Car Championship racer Aaron Slight was back in the cockpit at Taupo in New Zealand last weekend. He came third in a non-championship Porsche race

VOLVO EVALUATES BTCC COMEBACK

Swedish manufacturer wants a factory programme in Britain, but time is tight

VOLVO IS planning to re-enter the British Touring Car Championship this year as a full manufacturer team with a pair of bioethanol-fuelled C30s.

The Swedish manufacturer, which last competed in the BTCC 10 years ago, was a race-winner in its domestic series last year in the maiden season of competition for the C30. A British series attack, according to Volvo's director of motorsport Derek Crabb, is next on the agenda.



C30 model could become a BTCC regular

Crabb said: "After the success we've had in Sweden with the C30, a couple of series became interested in us. Britain is a market I'd really like to get into.

"It has to be a sponsor-led project and those sponsors need to fit in with our green image. Getting those in line is very important. I don't just want deals that will get us through a year. I want a three-year deal from sponsors and we're nearly there."

Crabb admitted that Volvo is running out of time to be on the grid in time for the Brands Hatch season-opener on April 5, but he did not rule out the possibility of joining the series late, or even postponing the entry until 2010.

"There are a number of options available to us," he added. "But what I'm not prepared to do though is to go to the first round and do badly because we're not ready. It would only give Volvo a bad name."

No drivers have yet been confirmed, although 2001 BTCC champion Jason Plato has been linked to one of the seats. Crabb would not confirm this, but did say: "We're looking at the very best drivers that are available to us."

Volvo first entered a works team in the BTCC in 1994 and the TWR-run squad achieved 21 wins in five years, guiding Rickard Rydell to the 1998 title along the way.

Q&A DEREK CRABB, VOLVO



■ Why come back to BTCC?
It would be a good chance to re-establish Volvo as a sporty brand, like it was when we last had a big presence in touring cars. We had five poles and two wins in Sweden with the biofuel C30 and ran very well in the WTCC at Brands Hatch, and that got other markets interested.

■ Will the cars be run in-house or by a third party?
In Sweden we contract out the running to Polestar Racing – who do a very good job, and it would be the same in Britain. We began with a list of four possible teams to run the programme and we now have to decide between two, each with BTCC experience.

■ What about drivers?
We want to do this right, so we're looking at the very best drivers that are available to us. They must be able to bring the car on a step and represent the Volvo name in an appropriate way.



THOMPSON TESTS TEMPUS CHEVROLET

JAMES THOMPSON tested for British Touring Car Championship newcomers Tempus Sport in Portugal last week.

The 2002 and 2004 BTCC Champion drove one of the team's 2008-spec Chevrolet Lacettis alongside Harry Vaulkhard at Estoril. Thompson enjoyed his run, despite bad weather interrupting proceedings.

Thompson, whose priority for the season is to find a drive in either the BTCC or WTCC, said: "It's nice to be asked to drive another car and I enjoyed mixing with the team and seeing how they work. It's a very good car and I think they can do very well."

While Tempus boss Richard Coleman admitted to having "serious discussions" with the Yorkshireman about a drive, Thompson reiterated that he is still a free agent and has yet to sign a deal.



Thompson tried the Lacetti at Estoril



WORLD CHAMPS TEST FOR ORECA
Reigning World Touring Car champion Yvan Muller (r) and former World Rally champion Petter Solberg (l) tried an ORECA prototype this week

MERCEDES TRIES MORE YOUNG GUNS

MERCEDES CARRIED out further driver evaluations for its 2009 DTM line-up at Estoril this week.

Single-seater racers Earl Bamber, Markus Niemela and Renger van der Zande were all in action at the Portuguese circuit, but Mercedes motorsport boss Norbert Haug says that there is no rush to finalise its drivers for the new season.

"The whole line-up is not decided," he told Autosport. "We will have nine drivers, with four '09 cars and five '08 cars. The season only starts on May 17, so there is still some time left. In the next three to four weeks we will know more."

Haug added that a decision on the future of Paul di Resta and Ralf Schumacher – one of which will land a 2009 car – should be made in the next fortnight.

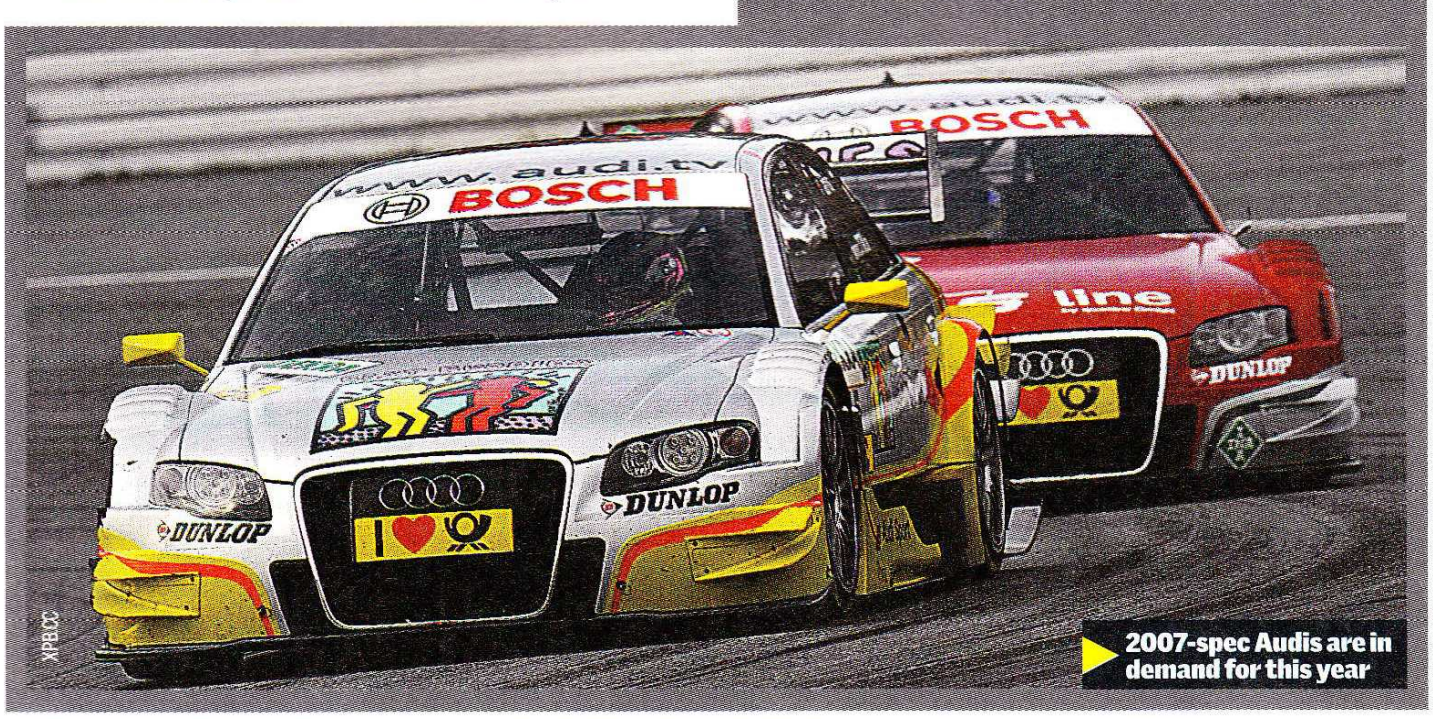
AUDI LIKELY TO KEEP TWO-YEAR-OLD CARS

AUDIIS set to go back on its plans to stop fielding two-year-old cars in the DTM, following interest from teams eyeing privateer projects.

The manufacturer was set to follow Mercedes' lead from last year by scrapping the two-year-old cars in favour of an extra one-year-old machine, but Audi Sport boss Wolfgang Ullrich says that some 2007-spec A4s could appear on the grid.

"We have been approached by a team that wants to buy '07 cars," he told Autosport. "If it works out we might have to have a reorganisation."

Colin Kolles, who has run the two-year-old Audis in the DTM for the past three years, is favourite to keep the job of running the privateer A4s.



2007-spec Audis are in demand for this year

IN BRIEF



Jones remains in BTCC for 2009

JONES GETS A DEAL

Adam Jones has completed Clyde Valley Racing's BTCC line-up after joining as team-mate to Dan Eaves. Jones, who finished third in last year's Independents standings, will race a biofuel SEAT Leon under the Cartridge World Carbon Zero Racing banner.

ROUSH MUST CUT BACK

NASCAR officials have reiterated their stance that Roush Fenway Racing will have to reduce its Sprint Cup team from five cars to four in 2010. One of the cars is likely to move to another Ford squad, with Roush retaining some sort of input.

RIGGS TO NEW TEAM

Scott Riggs has joined the new Tommy Baldwin Racing team to drive a Toyota in NASCAR's Sprint Cup for 2009. Riggs lost his drive with Haas CNC when the team was bought into by Tony Stewart at the end of last season and turned into Stewart Haas Racing.

EXTRA HENDRICK CAR

NASCAR Sprint Cup champion team Hendrick Motorsports will field a Chevrolet for Brad Keselowski in seven races this year ahead of a full rookie campaign in 2010. Keselowski will again spearhead the team's Nationwide Series campaign after finishing third overall last year.

WALLACE ENTERS 500

Veteran Mike Wallace will attempt to make the field for the Daytona 500 after joining The Racer's Group for the NASCAR Sprint Cup season-opener. Wallace, who has three Daytona wins from NASCAR's lower tier races at the oval, will drive a Chevrolet.

DTM TESTS CONFIRMED

DTM organisers have confirmed that this year's two official pre-season tests will take place at Dijon and Hockenheim. The French track will host a three-day test on April 14-16, with Hockenheim taking over on April 27-30.



DTM cars will take to Dijon pre-season



FORD READY FOR RALLY IRELAND

Ford drivers Mikko Hirvonen and Jari-Matti Latvala tested the Focus RS WRC 08 in Monaghan last week. After scoring his first WRC podium on Rally Ireland in 2007, Latvala's committed approach looks set to continue into this week's rally...

WHO CAN BEAT LOEB IN THE WRC? p44

MOSLEY: WRC NEEDS F2-STYLE FORMULA

FIA president wants low-budget, one-make rallying a reality as early as next year

FIA PRESIDENT Max Mosley wants to see a rallying equivalent of the new single-make Formula 2 race series integrated into the World Rally Championship as soon as possible.

In an exclusive interview with Autosport, Mosley admitted he liked the idea of a WRC one-make series sketched out recently by Pirelli's motorsport director Paul Hembery.

LOW-COST FORMULA POSSIBLE FOR 2010

While formal plans for the series have yet to be discussed, Mosley still feels it would be possible to implement it in time for next year.

"We only started talking about Formula 2 in the Spring," said Mosley. "We shouldn't exclude 2010. This is an excellent idea and one I've put forward on previous occasions. If it works in racing, I'm very confident it will work in rallying. If we can find any way of offering people the opportunity to take part at the top level for less money than they currently spend, we should do it.

"And, the awful truth is, unless you have not only a single-make car, but combine that with central maintenance, the costs will just go through the roof."

Cutting costs remains high on Mosley's agenda. He stated that a Super 2000-only WRC formula is still possible and that he wants to investigate the potential for running one set of tyres for a whole rally.

WINTER CALENDAR HERE FOR GOOD

Mosley also talked at length about the way the WRC calendar would work in the future, confirming that bi-annual event rotation remains – with no exceptions – as do plans for the winter calendar, starting from 2010.

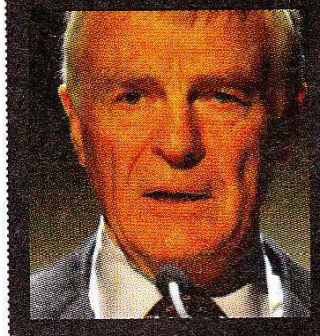
"I like the idea [of the winter calendar]," he said. "Rallies are more interesting if the conditions are more difficult and more real. It's good to see genuine snow rallies; gravel rallies are better in the rain and asphalt [rallies] are 100 per cent better. A winter calendar would also fit better among racing and other sports."

He added that he hadn't been impressed with what he'd seen on last year's Rally GB, with stages being cancelled and shortened due to the icy conditions,

"For me, that's pure nonsense," he said. "Rallying is all about driving on icy roads."

MAX MOSLEY EXCLUSIVE, p40

Q&A MAX MOSLEY



■ This year we have two WRC manufacturers. Don't you need four for a world championship?
Yes. We'll have to ask the World Council for a waiver. We wouldn't normally, but we have to take into account the current situation. The whole car industry is in dire straits.

■ What's the latest on the deal for ISC to become the WRC's global promoter?
The deal is agreed, or as near as agreed. They've been appointed and they're going through the contract. ISC's existing contract runs out in 2010 and the new contract will take effect immediately.

■ There's been talk of WRC commission president Morrie Chandler being replaced. Is this true?
Nobody has spoken to me about Morrie being replaced. He's a rally man through and through and he does an excellent job.


ROY DEMPSTER


IRC's Monte Carlo opener was a big hit

MONTE CARLO MAY STAY ON IRC BILL

THE MONTE Carlo Rally may not return to the World Rally Championship as expected next season, with the organisers preferring to remain with the IRC.

The Monaco-based event ran to high acclaim as the IRC opener last week and a spokesman from the Automobile Club de Monaco said a WRC return in 2010 was only a possibility.

"We have to decide by April whether we want to run in WRC or IRC," he said. "We just don't know. This has been a fantastic rally for us this year. Normally, we go back in the WRC, but next year, we don't know. In WRC we are in and out every year, but here [IRC] we can stay forever. And we can organise the rally the way we want.

"We have freedom in IRC and we have great television. You see a big means from Eurosport and fantastic television as a result."

Eurosport Events managing director Geraldine Filiol admitted she wanted to see a long-term agreement between the IRC and ACM.

"That would be fantastic," said Filiol. "The Monte Carlo is a legendary event that we would love to have on our calendar. We will talk about a possible agreement, but right now we're going to enjoy the success of this first time for the partnership."

MONTE REPORT, p50

'ICEMAN' RAIKKONEN ENJOYS SUB-ZERO ARCTIC RALLY DEBUT

Ferrari Formula 1 driver Kimi Raikkonen finished 13th in a Abarth Grande Punto on last weekend's Arctic Rally. The 2007 world champion tested for 30 miles before the event with his car set-up by WRC Tommi Makinen. Raikkonen said: "It was great fun"



KIMI RAIKKONEN

CITROEN GREEN LIGHT FOR S2000

CITROEN TEAM principal Olivier Quesnel has confirmed that work on the manufacturer's Super 2000 car will start soon, after the budget for its development was signed off this month.

While Quesnel continues to deny a decision has been made about which car will be used, he confirmed it will not be the C4. It is expected to be the C3. He also denied this development tied the French firm to a WRC programme beyond this season.

"Yes, I have the budget to do the new Super 2000 car now," he said. "But if we don't sell [road] cars then we stop in WRC [at the end of the year]. At the moment, it's this simple, of course it is. We want to carry on and we will start working on the new car very soon now I have the money, but there are still details to be sorted out."

SOLBERG LOOKING FOR BUSY SEASON

PETTER SOLBERG says he wants to do as many WRC rounds as possible in the private Citroen Xsara WRC that has been purchased on his behalf.

Solberg chose the Xsara after testing the car and a Ford Focus RS WRC in Norway last week. He will drive it for the first time on Rally Norway next month.

Solberg said: "This car is out of production, so I'm still a free agent. I will analyse things after Norway, but I want to do as many rallies as I can. It's exciting in Norway. There's Ford, Citroen and me in the middle. People can't say I don't do things for the sport. It's not my money, it's bought for me."

Solberg's car will run with active transmission.

IN BRIEF


Meeke ran as high as second before crashing

MEEKE NOT WORRIED

Kris Meeke insists his accident on the Monte Carlo Rally will not affect his chances of lifting the IRC crown. He aims to bounce back with a win in Brazil in March: "We count seven of nine rallies. This doesn't affect 2009, but it was the first time I've been scared in a rally car." Meeke will drive Ogier's Monte-winning 207 in Brazil, as Kronos does not have time to fix his.

TV BOOST FOR SCOTLAND

Eurosport has confirmed it will repeat its major Monte Carlo Rally live television commitment on the final round in Scotland in November. The Safari Rally, however, looks like it will be scratched from the 2009 IRC schedule.

SARRAZIN WANTS MORE

Stephane Sarrazin is hoping to contest further rounds of the IRC this season for Team Peugeot Total. After finishing third in Monte Carlo last week, he said: "I want to do more. I have done a lot of testing with them. Maybe I can do some asphalt rounds."

JONES SCRATCHES ENTRY

Gareth Jones has scratched his entry from this week's Rally Ireland. It's now feared that fewer than 40 cars will start the opening round of the WRC in Sligo this week.

MITSUBISHI QUITS BRC

Mitsubishi has withdrawn its factory team from this year's British Rally Championship. Guy Wilks used the firm's Lancer to win the last two BRC titles. Mitsubishi says it aims to return to the BRC in 2010.

STARS TO DRIVE ESCORTS

Ford World Rally Team principal Malcolm Wilson and his number one driver Mikko Hirvonen are likely to contest rounds of this year's British Historic Championship in a brace of Ford Escort MkIIs. Wilson won last year's RAC Rally in his own Escort, but Hirvonen's car is still being built by Ford expert Mark Solloway.

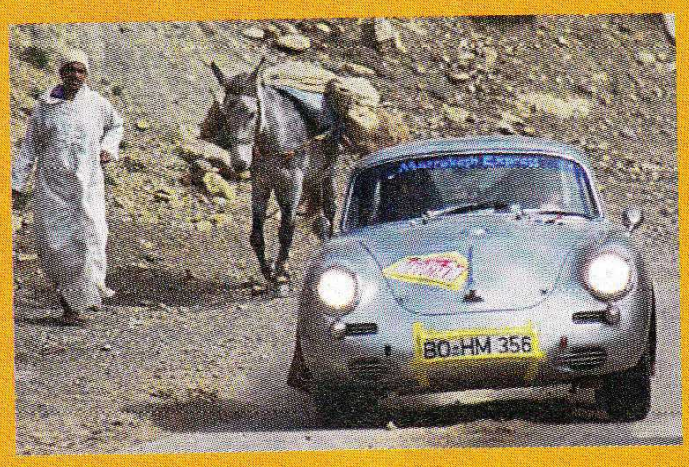


Hirvonen's Escort MkII is currently being built
GARETH JONES



Come and join us on the longest hill-clim

If you have stormed up the Alpine Giants like Mont Ventoux, Izoard, Turini, and Stelvio, then its time you tackled something even more awesome... hairpin after hairpin up the suitably named Tizi-n'-Test near Marrakesh in the Atlas Mountains.



We are driving London to Morocco, ten days with no single day the same, crossing France and Spain, from Tangier to Fez, onto the high plateau of the Atlas Mountains, down remote gorges where you can almost touch the walls of canyons with outstretched arms... Indiana Jones galloped his horse here, Lawrence of Arabia led a charging fleet of camels... Spartacus and Gladiators duelled out in the sun... Morocco is a magic land that stirs the imagination. It's also a great place to rally a vintage or classic car.

Here you get a real reminder of what open-road motoring is meant to be all about – you can drive for hours and not see a soul.

Ferries, good hotels, meals with lik minded enthusiasts, the back up o an experienced team with the pas experience of more than 60 major events, with a Rally Doctor, and mechanics in a mobile workshop t help nail on the bits that rattle lo here then is ten wonderful days o unforgettable, competitive road-rallying. All from the team that organised the first Historic Rally t enter Morocco in 1983, and founded the first international rally for classic cars back in 1988 – a ideal shake down perhaps for longer epics to come our Peking to Paris.

Come and join us on the challenging road to Moroc leaving London on November 7th out of Brooklands and finishing in Casablanca on November 16th 200

2009 1 2009
CASABLANCA Challenge

ERA
Endurance Rall Association

www.endurorally.com

Email: admin@endurorally.com

Tel: +44 (0)1235 831

A Philip Young e

RALLY IRELAND PREVIEW



Loeb won on the Irish lanes in '07 for Citroen

WWW.MCKLEIN.DE

WRC RUNNERS AND RIDERS, p46

IRISH RISKY FOR STARTERS

WRC 2009 begins on the Irish asphalt and it's a tricky one to call, says DAVID EVANS

IT'S JANUARY and it's the west coast of Ireland. Fancy calling the weather? Thought not. If anybody out there believed the World Rally Championship was in for an easy ride after Sligo replaced Monte Carlo as the season opener, think again. The lanes around the border towns of Ireland might not have the fresh-air falls of the French Alps, but there are plenty of other hazards ready to catch out the world's best rally drivers.

Frenchman Sebastien Loeb will be first off the line in the year's first WRC stage – as he has been every year since 2005 – but the world champion well remembers his first trip to this all-asphalt event and he doesn't expect anything different this time around.

"The conditions were... rather delicate," he said. "But everything went well for us then and my objective hasn't changed now."

While Loeb wants another Rally Ireland win this week, he's wary of the fact that the competition will be even tougher, despite the withdrawals of Subaru and Suzuki. In addition to the factory Fords and his fellow factory Citroen driver Dani Sordo, Loeb also has his eyes firmly fixed on a new C4 driver, Subaru refugee Chris Atkinson.

"He can be quick," said Loeb. "He doesn't know the car as well as the Subaru, but we saw last year that he could be fast. We have to watch him, and the others."

After just one day of testing in the car, Atkinson admits he's going to use tomorrow's opening leg as an extended test in his C4 WRC, before pushing harder on Saturday.

"I'll be taking a cautious approach to try to learn more about everything on day one," said the Australian. "I wouldn't expect me to start on the pace. It'll be hard to match [Dani] Sordo or Seb [Loeb] on asphalt. That said, I'm a driver who should be able to drive fast. If I turn up and the car feels good, I should be fast. This is not me being over-confident, it's just an assessment of my situation after four years. I can drive the Citroen at 95 per cent and that's enough for decent stage times – it's the last five per cent I want."

After his test in France, Atkinson said he immediately felt comfortable with the C4 as it neared the limit. He added: "The car is nice to drive and the more you push it, the more you get from it. If you don't push, you don't get the reward. This all comes down to the last few per cent. I found a feeling [at the test] where I could push more and it really responded. The car works better the more you push it.

"I don't know what the stage times will be like, as I wasn't at the test to set a time, but it responds well to committed driving and that's what I like to do. What matters for me now is leg two of this rally. That's where we're going to start to make things happen."

A podium spot on last year's season opener in Monte Carlo demonstrates that Atkinson has the ability to run well in mixed conditions and now he's got the same machinery as Loeb, we'll see just how quick he really is.

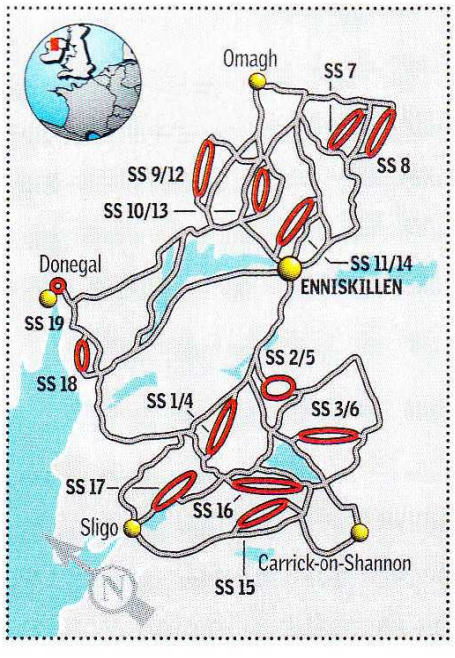


ILLUSTRATION ALAN ELDRIDGE

RALLY IRELAND ENTRY LIST

Pos	Driver	Team
1	Sebastien Loeb/Daniel Elena	Citroen C4 WRC
2	Dani Sordo/Marc Marti	Citroen C4 WRC
3	Mikko Hirvonen/Jarmo Lehtinen	Ford Focus RS WRC 08
4	Jari-Matti Latvala/Miika Antilla	Ford Focus RS WRC 08
5	Urmo Aava/Kuldar Sikk	Ford Focus RS WRC 08
6	Henning Solberg/Cato Menkerud	Ford Focus RS WRC 08
7	Chris Atkinson/Stephane Prevot	Citroen C4 WRC
8	Conrad Rautenbach/Daniel Barritt	Citroen C4 WRC
9	Khalid Al Qassimi/Michael Orr	Ford Focus RS WRC 08
11	Sebastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia	Citroen C4 WRC
16	Matthew Wilson/Scott Martin	Ford Focus RS WRC 08
17	Eamonn Boland/Damien Morrissey	Subaru Impreza WRC
18	Gareth MacHale/Brian Murphy	Ford Focus RS WRC 08
19	Tim McNulty/Eugene O'Donnell	Subaru Impreza WRC
20	Aaron MacHale/Killian Duffy	Ford Focus RS WRC
22	Austin MacHale/TBA	Ford Focus RS WRC
23	Ray Breen/Martin Brady	Ford Focus RS WRC
24	Michael Barrable/Dermot O'Gorman	Ford Focus RS WRC
25	Stephen Murphy/Michael Morrissey	Subaru Impreza WRC
31	Aaron Burkart/Michael Kolback	Suzuki Swift S1600



MIS
MOTORSPORT
INSURANCE
SERVICES



STOP PAYING OVER THE ODDS FOR YOUR MOTORSPORT INSURANCE IN 2009!!



WIN £10,000
IN OUR FREE DRAW

Motorsport Insurance Services would like to give you the opportunity in securing a place in our free draw to win up to £10,000.

Our rates have been finalised with Insurers for 2009 and we "Guarantee to beat any reasonable quotation offered by our competitors."

How this all works - The first 40 clients to take out an Annual On Track / On Event policy with Insurers in 2009 will be entered into our free draw. The first 40 policyholders will be allocated a random number from 1 to 40. This represents the number of the horse running for them in the "Grand National at Aintree on 4th April 2009." The winner will receive a full refund of their premium up to a maximum of £10,000.

Terms and Conditions apply - visit our website.

Simply provide details of the events you will be participating in to receive a competitive quote for the 2009 season and take out an annual policy to enter.

GET A QUOTE NOW!

MIS MOTORSPORT INSURANCE SERVICES

www.raceinsurance.co.uk
www.rallyinsurance.co.uk

Tel: +44 (0)1943 884555
Fax: +44 (0)1943 877400

info@raceinsurance.co.uk
info@rallyinsurance.co.uk

Authorised and regulated by the Financial Services Authority



Toyota: where does diffuser end, and crash structure begin?



MPH
Autosport grand prix editor Mark Hughes

F1's sharpest brains have been engaged in creative interpretation of the new rulebook. Long may that continue

Blind spots and loopholes

NOW MOST of the new cars have broken cover, so the arguments begin. As each team has had the chance of looking at how its rivals have interpreted the 2009 aero rules, so they discover loopholes that they themselves either a) overlooked or b) considered, but ruled out as illegal. So heated discussions are breaking out on all manner of interpretations, and FIA technical delegate Charlie Whiting is likely to be particularly harassed.

This hasn't happened in recent years because the regulations were so well defined, with all the wrinkles ironed out. The new ones are by definition a little more fuzzy, and the teams are challenging the new boundaries in their attempts to steal slivers of lap time.

Ferrari's vertical turning vane ahead of the sidepods has already raised eyebrows, but there was never any question of its legality. Expect to see similar components on the others before long. But that's not the end of it. Everywhere you look, there are components subject to new discussion and disagreement.

EXHAUSTS AND HOT AIR

"Ferrari's exhausts are illegal," said a Toyota team member at the Algarve circuit last week, a view that had members of other teams nodding vigorously in agreement. Ferrari, like almost everyone else, has lengthened its exhausts to give a flow that helps scavenge the spent gases from the engine more effectively now that they're limited to 18,000 instead of 19,000rpm. But, unlike everyone else's, Ferrari's are out in the open and not shrouded by bodywork bulges.

When the technical working group, comprising key team personnel, considered the matter last year, there was a concern that teams would try to shape their exhaust exits into complex, aerodynamically-friendly shapes – something that would open a lot of expensive research. So they stopped that in its tracks by insisting the exhausts had to be of a uniform shape, with a specified radius.

A later addition to this was that the exhaust exits were not exempt from the new bodywork regulations that prohibit any openings on the upper surfaces – a rule that was introduced to banish bodywork slats that formed an exit for hot radiator air, but which increased the turbulence of the car's wake, making it trickier to overtake. The Ferrari's exhausts, as shown at the F60's launch, clearly contravene that requirement. This is not a problem so long as Ferrari is merely testing the car, but it can be taken as read that it will not be allowed to race in this format. Putting a bodywork bulge over the exhausts so that there is no opening on the upper surface, only at the rear, will almost certainly adversely affect the airflow to the rear wing, and have implications on the shaping of the car's sidepod. If Ferrari has not planned for this, it could be a real pain, necessitating a lot of extra work when it can least afford it.

"Like lab rats, they climb onto their speed wheels"

WHO'LL DEFUSE THE DIFFUSER CLASH?

But it's not only Ferrari. "Look at Toyota's diffuser," said another team member. "That is clearly not one continuous line, like it's supposed to be. They've used the underside of the crash structure to give a separate upsweep. That's surely not legal." This seems to hinge upon an interpretation of the wording about the rear crash-structure component. Williams is another team to have taken advantage of this wording, and both teams are confident they have come up with a fully legal solution. Meanwhile, Ferrari, McLaren, BMW and Renault are left asking what the ultimate interpretation is going to be, and whether they will have to redo the whole rear end aero of their cars.

Remember, also, that the Red Bull/Toro Rosso – sure to have been subject to Adrian Newey's imagination and competitive desire – has not been shown yet. Just what concepts and trick interpretations might that design have; what arguments might it trigger?

This is all part of a cycle. Every now and then the technical people convene and agree to new restraints upon their ingenuity, but it never does limit their ingenuity; how could it? All it does is redirect it to ever-smaller areas.

So, like lab rats, they climb onto their speed wheels and work even harder to find a fraction of a tenth. Splitters on the underside to make up for the loss of bargeboards; finding a blind spot in the dimensional regs; and – what do you know? – a trick new vertical vane? This is classic F1 – and exactly how it should be.

COATES/LAT

Autosport TV

DON'T MISS

The latest action on our broadband TV channel

ON TRACK, ON SCREEN

January 29-February 4

Events

INTERNATIONAL ACTION

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP
Rd 1/12
Rally Ireland
Sligo, Ireland
January 30-February 1
www.wrc.com

ANDROS TROPHY
Rd 7/7
Clermont/Superbesse, France
January 31
www.tropheeandros.com



Rally Ireland: 'go on, go on'

BEST TV OF THE WEEK

✪ WRC – IRELAND
Sunday 1800-1900
Dave

The winter is over (in terms of motorsport anyway) and, hot on the heels of last weekend's IRC opener in Monte Carlo, the World Rally Championship begins on Dave with the asphalt stages of Ireland. Sebastien Loeb is the hot favourite, while a strong local contingent led by the MacHale family and Eamonn Boland will be out for points too. Dave has a full review show on Sunday, while Eurosport is the place for the preview on Wednesday and Thursday at 2200.

✪ ANDROS TROPHY – SUPERBESSE
Wednesday 1730-1830
Motors TV

Well, winter's not quite over in the French Alps, where the world's premier ice-racing series draws to a close. Four-time F1 World Champion Alain Prost is the big draw, and fellow ex-grand prix drivers Olivier Panis and Franck Lagorce know how to work the crowds too. But all three are being left behind by GT racer Jean-Philippe Dayraut and his Skoda Fabia, who needs just a consistent run to land his first title.



The show in the snow

GOmotorsport.net

TV/Radio

CHANNEL KEY: ■ **E** EUROSPORT GB ■ **E2** EUROSPORT 2 ■ **NASN** NORTH AMERICAN SPORTS NETWOR ■ **SS1** SKY SPORTS 1 ■ **SS2** SKY SPORTS 2 ■ **SS3** SKY SPORTS 3 ■ **SSX** SKY SPORTS EXTRA ■ **M&M** MEN & MOTORS ■ **DAVE** DAVE ■ **SET1** SETANTA SPORTS 1 ■ **SET2** SETANTA SPORTS 2

TERRESTRIAL/DIGITAL	MOTORS TV	SKY SPORTS	OTHER SATELLITE
THU JAN 29			
0140-0300 V8 Supercars (Five) **0720-0735** Roary the Racing Car (Five)	**0420-0605** Wembley 24-Hour Endurance Karting **1100-1200** Aussie Racing Car **1200-1400, 1800-2000** ARCA	**0245-0300** Licence to Le Mans (SS3) **1000-1030** Licence to Le Mans (SS1)	**1100-1200** DTM 2008 Season Rev (SET2) **1400-1500** V8 Supercars 2008 Sea Review (SET2) **1500-1600** World Series by Renaul Barcelona (SET2) **2200-2230** World Rally Championship (E)
FRI JAN 30			
0720-0735 Roary the Racing Car (Five)	**0420-0700, 1500-1800** Asian Festival of Speed **1400-1500** British Rallycross Open **1800-2000** Wembley 24 Hour Endurance Karting **2200-2300** Trophee Andros		**0730-0800, 1000-1030** World Ra Championship (E) **1400-1500** Superleague Formula: Vallelunga (SET2)
SAT JAN 31			
0900-1000, 1400-1500 World Rally preview (Dave)	**0610-0700** Aussie Racing Cars **1100-1400** Asian Festival of Speed **1400-1530** Roger Albert Clark Rally **2100-2300** ARCA **2300-0000** British Rallycross Open		**0000-0030, 0730-0800, 2300-23** World Rally Championship (E) **1230-1300** GP Racing on Track (SE **1400-1500** Superleague Formula: Je (SET2) **1730-1800** GP Racing on Track (SE
SUN FEB 1			
0800-0900 World Rally preview (Dave) **1800-1900** World Rally: Ireland 2009 (Dave)	**0030-0200, 0355-0515** Roger Albert Clark Rally **0515-0700** ARCA **1800-1900** British Rallycross Open		**0000-0030, 0730-0800, 2215-22** World Rally Championship (E) **1000-1030** GP Racing on Track (SE **1030-1100** GP Racing on Track (SE **1030-1125** Superleague Formula: Je (SET2)
MON FEB 2			
0420-0510 Rolex Grand-Am (Five) **0730-0745** Roary the Racing Car (Five) **1900-2000** World Rally: Ireland 2009 (Dave)	**0230-0515** Asian Festival of Speed **1600-1800** ARCA **1800-2100** Asian Festival of Speed	**1800-1830** UAE Motor Racing (SS2) **1830-1900, 2330-0000** Licence to Le Mans (SS2)	**0000-0030, 0730-0800** World Rall Championship (E) **0600-0630** GP Racing on Track (SE
TUE FEB 3			
0150-0240 A1 Grand Prix (Five) **0330-0355** Race and Rally UK (Five) **0355-0420** Motorsport Mundial (Five) **0730-0745** Roary the Racing Car (Five)	**1000-1100** British Rallycross Open **1400-1500** V8 Lites **1500-1600** Aussie Racing Cars **2100-0000** Asian Festival of Speed	**0600-0700, 1430-1530** NASCAR Now (NASN) **2200-2300** World Rally Championship (E)	
WED FEB 4			
0730-0745 Roary the Racing Car (Five)	**0000-0100** V8 Lites **0100-0200** Aussie Racing Cars **0230-0415** ARCA **0510-0630, 1030-1200** Roger Albert Clark Rally **1200-1500** Asian Festival of Speed **1730-1830** Trophee Andros **2100-2200** V8 Lites **2200-2300** Aussie Racing Cars	**1830-1900** Licence to Le Mans (SS3) **2100-2130** Licence to Le Mans (SSX)	**0000-0030, 0800-0830** NASCAR No (NASN) **0800-0900** World Rally Championship **1730-1830** World Rally Championship

NEXT WEEK

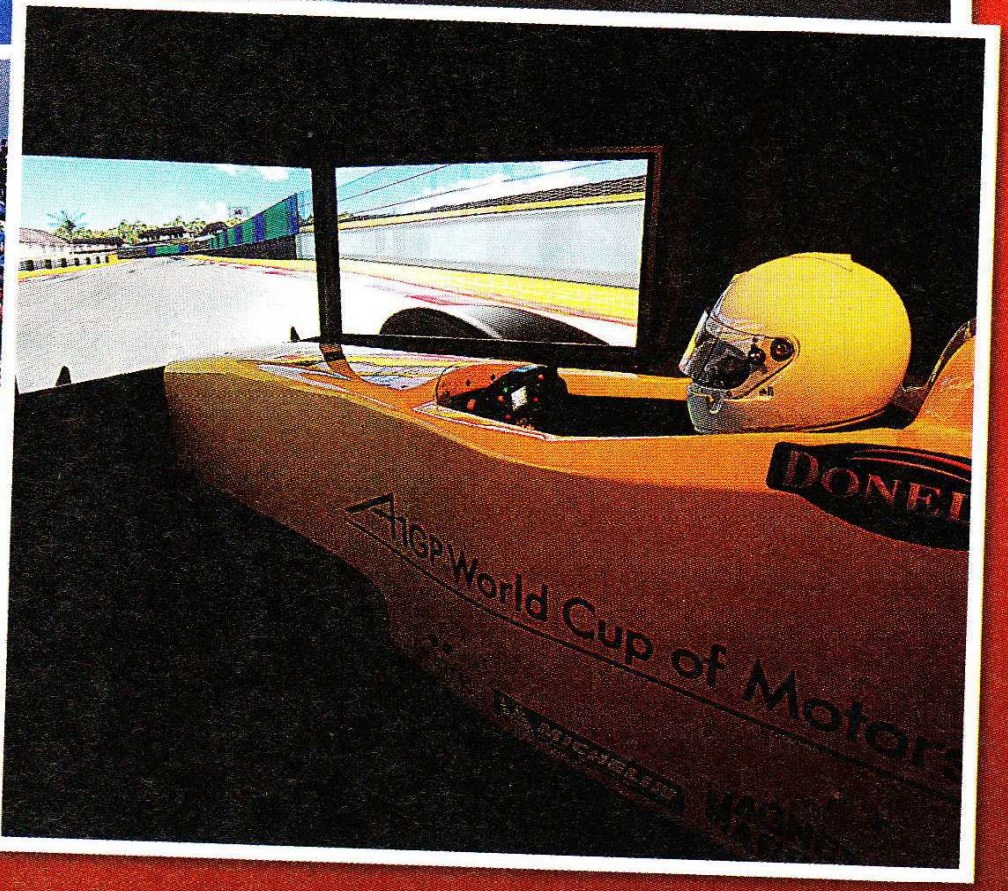
CAN LEWIS GO BACK-TO-BACK?

We ask those who've done it if Hamilton can repeat world title glory

ON SALE THURSDAY FEB 5







FULL RALLY IRELAND REPORT

The World Rally Championship kicks off in Sligo. Will Loeb keep up his run of titles, or can Ford stop him?

VIRTUALLY FLAT-OUT

We test A1GP's simulator to find out if it feels like the real thing at 170mph

LETTERS

Send your letters – including your full name and address – to The Editor, Autosport, Teddington Studios, Broom Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 9BE or email: autosport.letters@haynet.com. We reserve the right to edit letters for length where required.

LETTER OF THE WEEK

YORKSHIRE BITTER

Unless you live in close proximity to a racing circuit, it is hard to understand the problems that noise can bring to an everyday existence for a non-motorsport fan.

I live in Little Budworth, a stone's throw from Oulton Park, and can vouch that on certain days, when the wind comes from the south-west and the bikes are racing, the noise can be irritating.

"I have the utmost sympathy for Croft in its current plight"

However, the circuit has been promoting races since 1953, and so new arrivals will have been aware of what they were buying into when they moved in.

I have no sympathy for the 'noise-pollution' lobbyists and freedom-killing do-gooders, especially as Dr Jonathan Palmer ensures that there is always a good entente between MSV, which owns Oulton Park, and the local council.

I have the utmost sympathy for Croft in its current plight. It would be interesting to know if the 'three pairs of ears' moved to Croft-on-Tees after 1964. If they did, all I can say to them is either shut up, put up or sell up!

Dr Mike Rushton
Little Budworth

See National News (p83) and Humble Pye (p85) for the Court of Appeal verdict on Croft, and who own the 'three pairs of ears'.

WIN



ROAD ANGEL Navigator 9000

This week's star letter will receive a Road Angel Navigator 9000 Connected – combining the UK's number-one safety camera alert system with the latest satellite navigation technology. For further information on Road Angel products please visit www.roadangelgroup.com

Please ensure that your full address is included on all correspondence

ARISE SIR RON OF WOKING!

So Ron Dennis has decided to hand over the reins to his number two Martin Whitmarsh then. All of us true motor racing fans should wish Ron all the best of luck for the future and think ourselves lucky to have had such a man not only guiding McLaren to the forefront of F1, but the sport in general.

It is not about time that he is made 'Sir Ron?' After all, Ron is our very own English version of Enzo Ferrari.

Jeremy Thornton-Smith
Littlehampton

IRC STRONGER THAN EVER

I can now add a new series to my huge list of motorsport loves: the IRC.

I am obsessed with all forms of motorsport, but have never fully immersed myself in rallying, especially during the last few years. But, having watched the odd highlight, I thought I would give this year's Monte Carlo Rally a full viewing. So I watched the IRC boys tackle the Col de Turini after seeing the whole event unfold. And I can safely say I am already a fan. The cars look brilliant, they sound great, the drivers are supremely talented and the calendar looks fantastic too.

So, if a complete non-rally fan like myself can be converted by such an event, it surely says a huge amount. Well done IRC – and take note the World Rally Championship.

Tim Corbin
Weymouth

"I can understand a flat fee for a superlicence, but why penalise successful drivers?"

DON'T PENALISE DRIVERS

Can somebody explain why F1 drivers are charged for the number of points they score, with the sum going towards their superlicence fee?

I can understand a flat fee for the licence, and admittedly this is a sore subject at the moment with the cost being increased, but why penalise success?

Under the current climate this may seem a little odd and goes against the FIA's stance on trying to spice up the fight for first on the circuit. You can imagine the interview with a driver being berated for not trying to win: "Why didn't you try to pass when you had the faster car and ample opportunity to get past?" "Well, if I'd passed him it would have cost me €4200."

This seems to be another ploy to extrapolate money from the teams and drivers under the cloak of a success or wealth tax.

Martin Roberts
Warrington

IRISH MISS DOUBLE MEASURE

Well done A1 Team Ireland – a fantastic performance yet again in New Zealand! Adam Carroll drove brilliantly: a double pole position and then another great win. It would surely have been the double there too if it were not for the unfortunate problem while leaving the pits.

I can only hope the F1 season gives us the same sort of exciting racing we enjoy from A1GP.

Kim Wilson
Gravesend

autosport.com FROM THE FORUM

Piquet: Renault's number two driver

molive

Pat Symonds said last week that Piquet will have to support Alonso whenever possible. Kudos to them for saying it loud and clear. As if McLaren would ever be so honest, despite clearly favouring Lewis all the way.

Nonesuch

Nothing sinister. Just saying that in this day and age it makes sense to favour one driver over another, especially if one's a double world champion and one's only in his second year.

Tinkerbell

That old 'equal number one' thing didn't work for Ferrari last year. Symonds is right.

If not Max than who for the FIA presidency?

mursuka80

Ari Vatanen. Great driver in his day and a man you just have to respect. He also has experience of the EU parliament, so politically savvy too.

Mark Bennett

I second that. If Max really does go then Ari would be excellent. You wouldn't get any scandals from him.

Altreiu

Damon Hill or Jackie Stewart.

Buttoneer

Ron Dennis says it shouldn't be an ex-principal, so following that logic it has to be Schumi.

primer

Nick Fry. It can't be any worse than the current regime.

Autosport Teddington Studios, Broom Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 9BE, UK
Tel: +44 (0) 20 8267 5804 Fax: +44 (0) 20 8267 5922
E-mail: autosport.editorial@haynet.com

EDITOR Andrew van de Burgt, andrew.vandeburgt@haymarket.com ext.5974
AUTOSPORT.COM EDITOR Simon Strang, simon.strang@haymarket.com ext.5093
DEPUTY EDITOR Charles Bradley, charles.bradley@haymarket.com ext.5889
GROUP F1 EDITOR Jonathan Noble, jonathan.noble@haymarket.com ext.5810
F1 EDITOR Edd Straw, edd.straw@haymarket.com ext.5887
DEPUTY F1 EDITOR Mark Glendenning, mark.glendenning@haymarket.com ext.5801
NEWS EDITOR Glenn Freeman, glenn.freeman@haymarket.com ext.5309
AUTOSPORT.COM NEWS EDITOR Steven English, steven.english@haymarket.com ext.5952
MANAGING EDITOR Peter Hodges, peter.hodges@haymarket.com ext.8617
WEB MANAGING EDITOR Pablo Elizalde
GRAND PRIX EDITOR Mark Hughes, autosport.editorial@haynet.com

RALLIES EDITOR David Evans, david.evans@haymarket.com
F1 CONSULTANT EDITOR Tony Dodgins
INTERNATIONAL EDITOR Jamie O'Leary, jamie.oleary@haymarket.com ext.5811
INTERNATIONAL EDITOR-AT-LARGE Gary Watkins
AUTOSPORT TV EDITOR Henry Hope-Frost, henry.hope-frost@haymarket.com ext.5835
NATIONAL EDITOR Kevin Turner, kevin.turner@haymarket.com ext.5432
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT Ben Anderson, ben.anderson@haymarket.com ext.5425
NATIONAL EDITOR-AT-LARGE Marcus Pye
ART EDITOR (EDITOR'S PA) Amar Hussain, amar.hussain@haymarket.com ext.5914
DESIGNER Tom Chase
DESIGNER Tom Plumstead
CHIEF SUB-EDITOR Marcus Simmons, marcus.simmons@haymarket.com ext.5807

PICTURE EDITORS Peter Mills, peter.mills@haymarket.com ext.5918; Ross Stonefeld
SECRETARY Joanne Carroll, joanne.carroll@haymarket.com ext.5804
PHOTOGRAPHS LAT Photographic
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT Adam Cooper
TECHNICAL CORRESPONDENT Gary Anderson
TECHNICAL EDITOR Giorgio Piola
NEWS GRAPHICS Alan Eldridge
CARTOONIST Jim Bamber

CORRESPONDENTS
ARGENTINA Tony Watson, Neil Perkins
AUSTRALIA Phil Branagan
AUSTRIA Gerhard Kuntschik
BELGIUM Gordon McKay
BRAZIL Lito Cavalcanti
FINLAND Esa Illoinen
GERMANY Rene de Boer
HOLLAND Willem Staat
ITALY Roberto Chinchero
JAPAN Jiro Takahashi, Len Clarke
NEW ZEALAND Bernard Carpinter
PORTUGAL Nuno Costa
RUSSIA Gregory Golyshev
SOUTH AFRICA Richard Asher
SPAIN Raimon Duran
SWEDEN Tege Tornvall
UK & EIRE Tim Baggs, Dud Candler, Jonathan Crawford, Kerry Dunlop, Leanne Fahy, Ian Harden, Andrew Hughes, Paul Jurd, Linda Keen, Neil Kennett, Paul Lawrence, Beverley Morgan, Marc Orme, Graham Read, Jake Schembri, Peter Scherer, Ian Sowman, Oliver Timson, Tim Whittington, Richard Wright, Richard Young
USA Jonathan Ingram, Bruce Martin, David Phillips, Diego Mejia, Robin Miller, Jeff Olson, Jeremy Shaw

SUBSCRIPTIONS Tel: +44 (0) 8456 777817 E-mail: autosport.subs@qss-uk.com
BACK ISSUES Tel: +44 (0) 8456 777817
DIRECT MARKETING EXECUTIVE Emily Pidgeon

ADVERTISING Tel: +44 (0) 20 8267 5858 Fax: +44 (0) 20 8267 5850 E-mail: Autosport.ads@haymarket.com
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR Matthew Witham
PRINT/ONLINE SALES MANAGER Pierre Clements
SENIOR SALES EXECUTIVES Tina Vyas, Kavita Brown, Nyan Amer, Karen McCarthy
SENIOR ONLINE SALES EXECUTIVES Michael Gooch, Liz Denin
CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING Jonathan Whitehead, Marcus Jopp, Fiona Bain
SPECIAL PROJECTS DIRECTOR Derek Redfern
LICENSING DIRECTOR Tim Bulley

AD PRODUCTION Tel: +44 (0) 20 8267 5641 Fax: +44 (0) 20 8267 5320
PRODUCTION MANAGER Lisa Harris
ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER Aileen McKaig
DISPLAY PRODUCTION CONTROLLER Saba Shariat
CLASSIFIED PRODUCTION ASSISTANT Giuseppe Messina

MANAGEMENT
PUBLISHING DIRECTOR Peter Higham
PUBLISHER Rob Aherne
PUBLISHING MANAGER Samantha Jempson
WEBSITE PUBLISHING MANAGER David Harris
SPECIAL EVENTS MANAGER Laura Coppin

© Haymarket Consumer Media. Publishing, trade and further subscription details on www.autosport.com While due care is taken to ensure the contents of Autosport are accurate, the publishers and printers cannot accept liability for errors and omissions. Advertisements are accepted for publication in Autosport only upon Haymarket Consumer Media's Standard Terms of Acceptance of Advertising, copies of which are available from the Advertising Sales Department of Autosport.

CIRCULATION TRADE ENQUIRIES Frontline Ltd, Park House, 117 Park Road Peterborough, Cambs, PE21 2TS. Tel: +44 (0) 1733 555161.
Printed in England by Wyndeham Heron Ltd. Cover and centre sections printed by CSM Impact, Basingstoke. Colour origination: Colour Systems, 90-92 Pentonville Road, London N1 9HS (editorial and advertising). ISSN 0269-946X. Autosport, incorporating Autoclassic, is published weekly by Haymarket Consumer Media. Teddington Studios, Broom Road, Teddington, TW11 9BE, UK

GROUP EDITORIAL DIRECTOR Mel Nichols
GROUP DESIGN DIRECTOR Paul Harpin
MANAGING DIRECTOR Kevin Costello
GROUP CHAIRMAN Eric Verdon-Roe

haymarket
Haymarket is certified by BSI to environmental standard ISO14001

PEFC
PEFC/16-33-197

COMMENT

THE INSIDE LINE Gary Watkins, international editor-at-large



POLITICS, remarked Otto von Bismarck, is the art of the possible. Which is why I leave my rose-tinted spectacles at home when I travel to the Daytona 24 Hours each January. I'd love to see Le Mans-style prototypes high up on the famous Florida banking, taking part in some kind of World Sportscar Championship, but it would be unlikely to happen even if a latter-day 'Iron Chancellor' were to set his mind to unifying American sportscar racing.

My dream is just not possible, not any time in the near, or perhaps even distant, future. It's not that the American Le Mans Series and Grand-Am are irreconcilable enemies, witness ALMS boss Scott Atherton wandering around the paddock at Daytona at the weekend. Rather, they happily co-exist. The civil war in US endurance racing is just that: civil.

That's because the two series are coming from entirely different directions. To put it another way, in promoter-speak, their business models are diametrically opposed. The ALMS is about manufacturers and high technology, Grand-Am about teams going about the business of racing in a cost-effective way, which means low technology.

The Daytona Prototype is the result of Grand-Am's philosophy. It's easy to criticise the things on any number of fronts. DPs are ugly, they are slow and they are built around technology that went out with the ark, but does that matter?

I would argue not, but then I've just had the good fortune to witness four DPs racing hard right through the final 60 minutes of a 24-hour race that everyone still wants to win.

Yes, I'd rather watch the brand new Acura ARX-02a in full flight than a Riley-Ford MkXX driven to its limit. But, on the other hand, I'd much rather witness a quartet of Daytona Prototypes trading places, and a bit of paintwork besides, than a pair of LMP1s from the same manufacturer squabbling among themselves to win an ALMS race.

I do sometimes think wistfully about the days when I would travel to Daytona and see at least a smattering of the cars that would be racing at Le Mans. But it was only a smattering and, even if there were a few thrilling climaxes along the way, I never witnessed anything that could hold a candle to Sunday's grandstand finish.

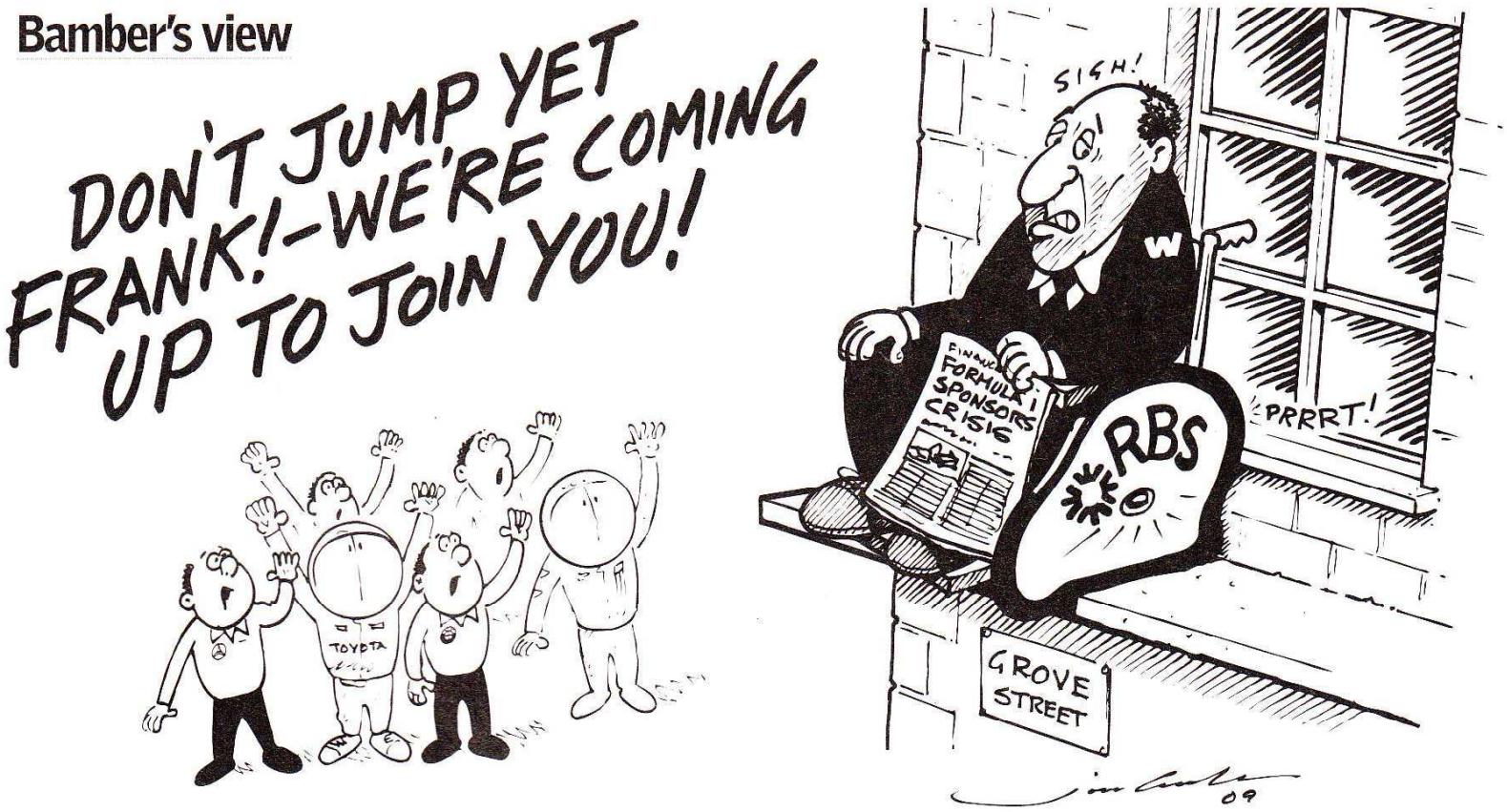
Racing as close as that can't be guaranteed every year but, so long as the Daytona 24 Hours continues to attract teams of the calibre of Ganassi and Penske, and top-line drivers from all areas of our sport, then I'll be there. No matter who is running the race, or the shape or size of the cars.

"Grand-Am and the ALMS happily co-exist because the series' business models are diametrically opposed"

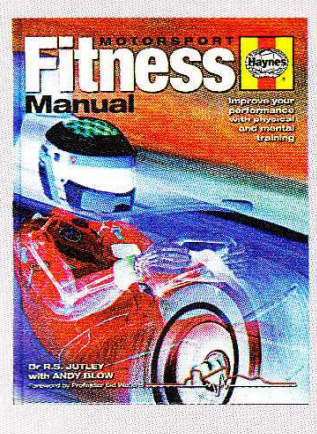
CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

It is the policy of Autosport to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please note the issue date and page number when contacting us on autosport.editorial@haynet.com

Bamber's view



ARMCHAIR ENTHUSIAST



BOOK

MOTORSPORT FITNESS MANUAL

By Dr RS Jutley with Andy Blow

(www.haynes.co.uk) £17.99

ISBN: 978-1-84425-543-6

THIS IS essentially an updated version of Doctor RS Jutley's *Fit for Motor Sport* of five years ago, now with Porsche fitness guru Andy Blow and a host of experts included to offer insight on improving yourself outside the car so you can better yourself in it.

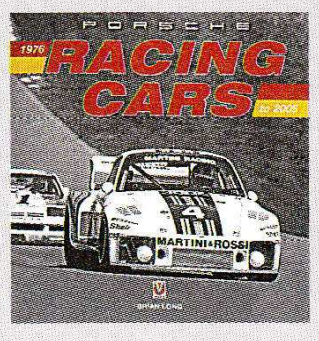
This new version is chunkier than its predecessor, but doesn't feature much departure from the original material, which is not a bad thing.

The 13 core chapters remain, featuring facts and advice on everything from strength and speed training to pre-event preparation, to taking care of injured drivers in an emergency.

Each, though, has been expanded with more info, exercises, and advice from a greater range of athletes. There is also a new section on nutrition.

If you own the previous incarnation, then it's not worth you parting with your 18 quid for the update. But, if you've just cottoned on to how beneficial a proper fitness regime could be to your race career, this book is a great place to get going.

BA



BOOK

PORSCHE RACING CARS 1976-2005

By Brian Long

www.veloce.co.uk

£45.00

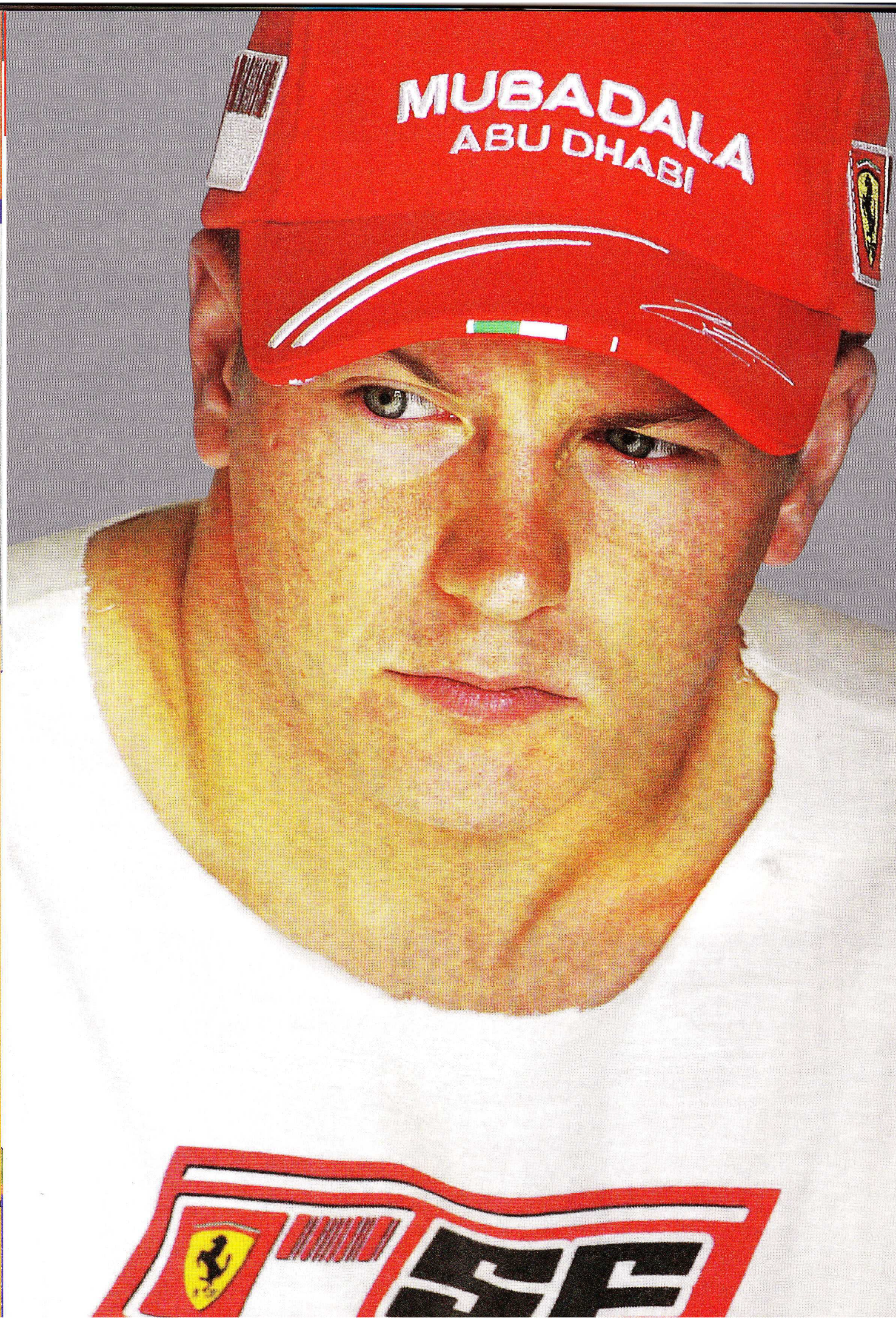
ISBN: 978-1-9047-8845-4

IT SEEMS fitting that, in the week when the Brumos team took an enthralling Daytona 24 Hours victory with a Porsche powerplant in the back of its Riley prototype, Brian Long's labour of love should find its way into the Autosport office.

The natural successor to his 1953-1975 book about the same company, this one again mixes wonderful pictures from some golden periods of sportscar racing (including the glorious Martini 936) with the story of the company's success-laden years in Group 6, Group C and even the shock Daytona win of 2003 by the GT-class 911 run by The Racer's Group.

The latter years of Group C, in which the 962s were outclassed by rivals, are brushed over when an analysis would have provided an interesting insight to Porsche's mentality. And the effect that the deaths of Manfred Winkelhock and Stefan Bellof in 1985 had on the manufacturer is also largely ignored. For all that's good about it, you have to question if it's worth £45.

JOL


MUBADALA
ABU DHABI

WHAT'S EATING KIMI?

The 2007 world champion claims he's still motivated. Others aren't sure, reports ED GORMAN

He gets nervous at press conferences. The answers tend to be shortish, lacking in colour and thus conviction, and there is little movement, expression or gesture in his face. You find yourself trying hard to believe what Kimi Raikkonen is telling you, but the questions and the doubts keep coming. Behind those steely blue eyes, does he really care? Does it matter to him? Is he hungry for success or is the inscrutable Finn just going through the motions?

There is no one else on the Formula 1 grid who so endlessly provokes such questions and debate. People wonder about Jenson Button's motivation after years of underachieving and overearning, but the level of scepticism about Button or anyone else is nothing to compare with Raikkonen. You simply don't doubt the hunger of men like Lewis Hamilton, Felipe Massa, Robert Kubica, Fernando Alonso or Sebastian Vettel. Questions of ability maybe, but not of application or motivation.

At the recent Ferrari 'love-in' with the media at the Italian ski resort of Madonna di Campiglio, Raikkonen was required to attend a press conference – something he hates – and it was noticeable that he spent much of the time trying to explain what went wrong last season and diffusing the obvious scepticism among journalists from all over the Formula 1 world about his motives for 2009. This was Raikkonen at 10.15am, sounding like he may not have had time for breakfast, snuggled up against an impending bout of tonsilitis in a bright-red Ferrari jumper, and well and truly on the defensive.

He was asked, for example, whether winning the world championship in 2007 had taken the edge off him. "No it doesn't change my motivation," he says in his characteristic monotone. "If I was not enjoying it, I definitely wouldn't be here today. Last year wasn't the year that I wanted but it's nothing to do with motivation. I just couldn't get things the way I wanted them and that's the end of the story.

"HE IS LIKE A CENTRE-FORWARD WHO HAS TO SCORE A GOAL, AND NOW HE NEEDS ONE"

"But I definitely want to push," he adds without emphasis. "And I want to win races as badly as before. It didn't happen last year and hopefully this year we can change it."

Put simply, there are many whose job it is to 'watch' the paddock who believe the Iceman is finished as a fighting force in a sport he once threatened to take by storm. It's a complex case to make because, on one level, Raikkonen has done almost everything that has been asked of him in recent seasons.

He came to Ferrari after five years in the strait-jacket at McLaren-Mercedes, a team that most definitely did not suit his laid-back style, and he delivered. Disproving the naysayers who predicted he would not be able to settle down in the warm embrace of the Scuderia, and could not possibly fill the void left by Michael Schumacher, he went and won the world championship, albeit by the skin of his teeth.

Raikkonen's first few races of 2008 were strong, before he encountered bad luck at key moments. And it emerged that the F2008 did not suit his driving technique, specifically its tendency to understeer, something that helped Massa but not the then reigning world champion.

Result: Raikkonen, perfectly understandably, slipped out of contention and found himself playing tail-gunner to his Brazilian team-mate, a state of affairs few predicted would ever come to pass when the duo paired up two years ago.

This season Raikkonen will bounce back. That's what he says. That's what Ferrari president Luca di Montezemolo says, and that's what team principal Stefano Domenicali says. Di Montezemolo appears to have no doubts on this score. "Kimi is like a centre-forward who has to score a goal, so he needs to score one goal and start again," he says. "We have spoken recently and I think he's very, very determined... He will be back for sure."

Domenicali talks of a new beginning for the Iceman. "Kimi is one who can't wait to go back in the car. He wants to put last year behind him. Kimi is Kimi – his desire, his will, is to get back and I am sure, from the start of the season, he is going to show his qualities," he says.

But there are plenty out



Frustrating run of non-finishes blighted 2008

ADRENALMEDIA/GETTY

there who do not buy this, and wonder why Ferrari is prepared to indulge a driver who is believed to be costing anywhere from £25-30 million per year and at the same time makes very little effort to be a part of the team. The view of the doubters is that Raikkonen has displayed the classic signs of a sportsman who has achieved his dream and has lost his edge as a result.

Far from being a football striker who needs to score, he is thought of as a footballer who has lost half a yard of pace, and there is no way back from there. Where Ferrari appears to have accepted the argument about the shortcomings of last year's car, the doubters beg to differ.

"It's all nonsense," was how one veteran paddock insider put it. "A good racing driver will drive a bad car well – Ayrton Senna drove a bad car fast. Kimi Raikkonen is just looking for excuses."

Another questioned why a man of such sublime ability was not able to change his driving style to adapt to the F2008's needs, in the way that his predecessor Schumacher might have done. "Schumacher changed his driving style very radically in his years at Ferrari," he said. "I can't believe they could not modify either the car or his driving, and that's why I believe this is a psychological rather than a technical problem."

Raikkonen wearily addressed this point during his press conference in the Dolomites: "We wanted some things slightly different in some areas last season, but of course it's difficult to make big changes during the year. We tried many things and we were talking about stuff that we would like to try [for this year] and at least see how it is."

Domenicali backed him up in remarks that suggested, to some, that the new machine for 2009, the F60, is likely to be more of a 'Kimi car' than one built around the needs of Massa: "Kimi suffered an instability in the front of the car in 2008 – he had high sensitivity entering corners. We hope we have solved this with the new car. We'll see how we've got on in the near future."

The strangest part of the Raikkonen conundrum is his determined isolation. It is quite clear that the Finn is prepared to accept being part of a team only up to a certain point. You sense, watching him at races and elsewhere, that he remains something of an outsider within Ferrari, a team that revels, perhaps more than any other, in its family ethic.

"KIMI LIVES ON A DIFFERENT PLANET. THE PRESSURE HE FEELS COMES FROM WITHIN"

Unlike Schumacher, Raikkonen has made no attempt to build the team around him and has singularly failed to impose himself over Massa in an era under Domenicali when Ferrari is content to let its drivers fight on an equal footing. What's more, Raikkonen will do things his way or not at all and Ferrari appears to have taken this to heart, letting him lead the life he wants to and requiring a relatively light level of commitment from him in return.

Thus Domenicali is prepared openly to jest that the real Raikkonen is not of this earth: "Kimi has always had, apart from the second part of last season, a great capacity to isolate himself from his surroundings and this has always been his strength. He lives on a different planet. The pressure he feels comes from within. He never suffers from outside pressure or from the media."

Whether this accommodating, even indulgent, approach is the right way for Ferrari to go, or whether these characteristics are strengths or weaknesses in Raikkonen's make-up as a grand prix driver, are moot points. For example, the Finn is a keen drinker and his passion in this area – which many see as incompatible with his ambitions to remain at the pinnacle of modern sport – has not been curtailed, merely hidden during his time at Maranello. But would Ferrari not be better off imposing a more disciplined routine on an individual whose extracurricular activities are unarguably damaging to his skills in a car?

Whereas Raikkonen remains outside the Ferrari fold, his team-mate is the opposite. Where the Iceman turns his back, Massa embraces, and there can be little doubt that the Brazilian's success last year was, in part, due to the way he galvanised the team around him.

Much was made during the last campaign of the strength of the partnership between Massa and his 'Italianised' race engineer, Rob Smedley, who drove the Brazilian to new heights and so nearly took him to the title. On the other side of the garage, Raikkonen was struggling. One interpretation – still current among Italian journalists – was that the Finn was not gelling well with his Australian race engineer Chris Dyer after their success together in 2007. Ferrari deny there was any problem, as does Raikkonen, but some believe the partnership was unable to produce the best out of Raikkonen technically, even if the pair got on perfectly well on a personal level.

So this season Raikkonen will work with a new race engineer in Andrea Stella, previously the Finn's performance engineer, while Dyer moves up to a new role overseeing the entire engineering department. It's hard to tell whether this change will make much of an impact, especially with Raikkonen and Ferrari both determined to play it down, but it seems more than a coincidence that Raikkonen's side of the garage has been reworked while Massa's has been left untouched.

Here is Raikkonen's view: "I have been working with Andrea for two years, like with Chris. It's nothing strange. People want to have some new challenges and we had a



Some suggest Kimi's drinking affects form



Backslap from Ferrari chief di Montezemolo

Finn needs to reassert himself over Massa...

good time with Chris. Of course we won in the first year and didn't win last year. But it's nothing to do with that, or that we could not work together, as some people have said.

"We have a very good relationship and people want to try something different. I know Andrea well. We did the [post-'08 season] test together and seemed to be okay, so I'm expecting to have a good year."

The word is that the 2007 world champion has been training hard during this winter in his native Finland; he has lost some weight, even if that is not particularly visible, and is ready to reclaim his place at the top of the motor racing world.

Along the way he will have to beat potent challengers in Massa, Hamilton and maybe Kubica, and he will have to show that he can keep Alonso away from Ferrari at least until 2011, when the Finn may retire (he has said that he expects Ferrari to be his last team in the sport). If he makes it back to the top of the pile this year, he will have done it his own way and he will have confounded a largely disbelieving press corps.

At Madonna, Raikkonen was asked if he was prepared to promise to Ferrari fans that a second world championship was in the offing. "I always try to win and hopefully we can win the championship this year," he responded. "We are going to try to do the best we can and hopefully be up there and back in the top podium positions.

"But I am not going to promise anything or put my hand on my heart because, maybe, it's not going to happen."



Relaxing at Ferrari Madonna 'love-in'

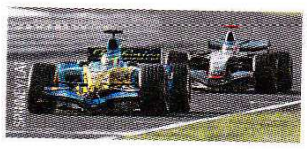
KIMI: MR MOTIVATED



Spa, 2004
Stunning win from 10th on grid after narrow escape when Massa attacks him at Turn 1

Nurburgring, 2005
Went for win despite failing tyre that eventually caused high-speed suspension failure





Suzuka, 2005
Won from 17th on grid, grabbing lead from Renault's Fisichella with stunning pass on final lap

Bahrain, 2006
Started 22nd after qualifying suspension failure, but surged through to finish on podium

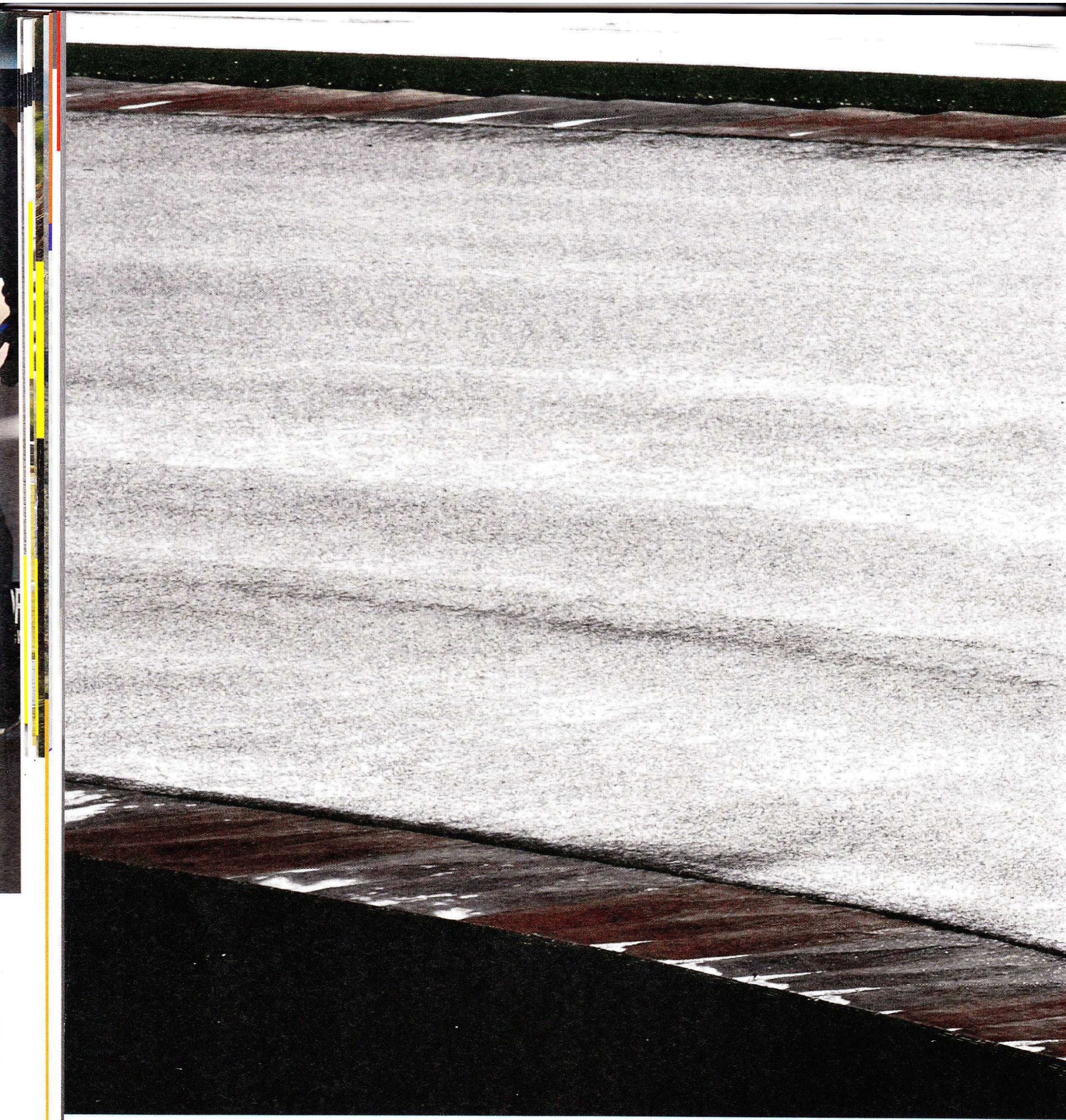




Raikkonen exploring the limits of new F60

Race engineer Dyer has been replaced

...or there'll be more scenes like this in 2009



CHASING SHADOWS

McLAREN MERCEDES MP4-24

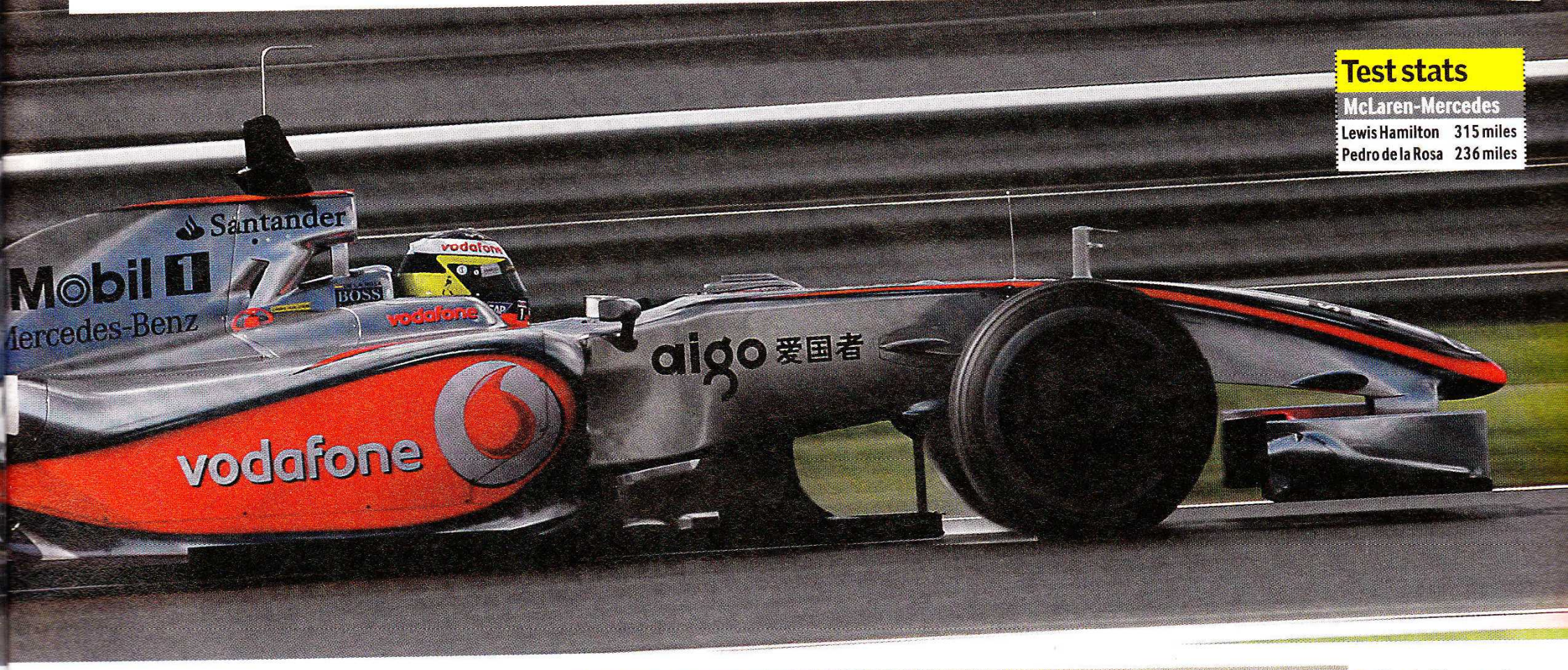
Another-long wheelbase car (longer than last year's), a development that seems counter-intuitive to the anticipated need to bring weight distribution forward to suit the new tyres. But McLaren's cutting-edge tyre-modelling software should have given it a head start and, if that is the route it has chosen, it can only be a worry to those who've pursued a different path.

The car – which is gorgeous, definitely the best aesthetically – takes up some the team's traditional aerodynamic themes such as a multi-planed front wing with maximum plan area. But McLaren has adopted a very different approach to its sidepod design, with short-but-wide radiator inlets bulging from the top of the undercut shape and a very different profile to every other team. Whereas other sidepods begin high and drop down dramatically towards the back, the McLaren's stay high. It implies less downforce creation from the pods themselves, but creates more room for KERS batteries and may also give lower drag, enabling downforce to be reclaimed with wing angle. Certainly, the rear-wing-endplate treatment looks more sophisticated than anyone else's in minimising drag.

During wet testing in Portugal the team was using its 2008 rear wing in order to give more stability – obviously not an option it can take once the season has started – and it begs the question of whether there is an underlying rear-stability issue with the car.

Mercedes – along with BMW – seems to be heading progress with KERS, all adding to the feeling of a very thoroughly prepared team.


Hamilton makes mid-lap tyre-temp check



Test stats

McLaren-Mercedes	
Lewis Hamilton	315 miles
Pedro de la Rosa	236 miles

BMW SAUBER F1.09

The BMW has been longer in gestation than every car with the possible exception of the new Williams. It was also out testing the 2009 wing package before anyone else, giving the F1.09 a head start on development.

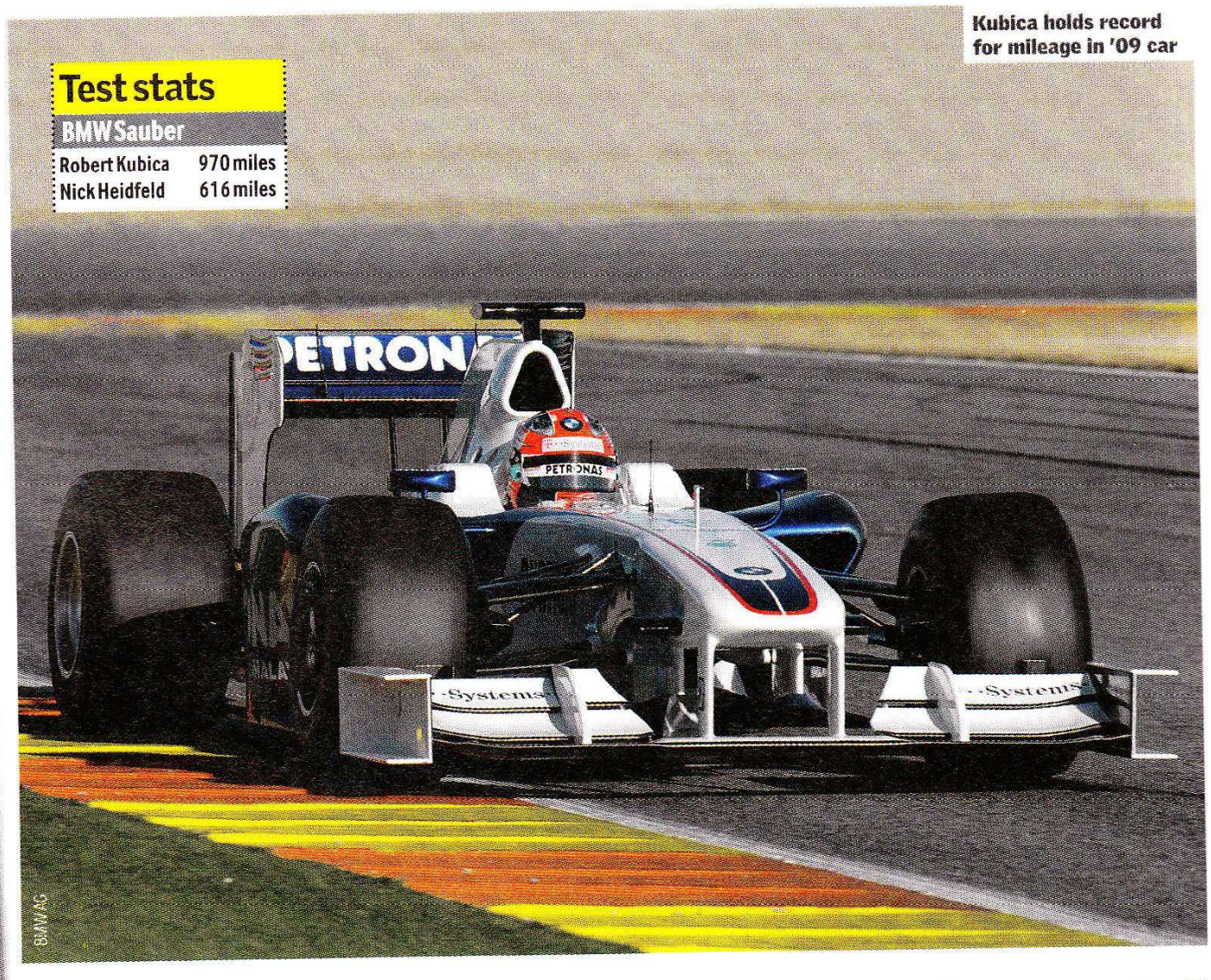
The new car is long in wheelbase, but with a short, stubby nose and a McLaren-like two-piece front-wing flap. The nose is noticeably higher than those on the McLaren and Williams, this possibly driven by the much wider sidepods, which are probably the most unusual part of the car. Only part of the sidepod width is devoted to radiator-inlet area; inboard of those openings are box sections that are presumably devoted to KERS-related components. It implies that the designers have opted to make a wide-but-short fuel cell, something that would be effective in bringing the weight distribution forward.

If true, that all suggests a highly integrated design, as befitting its very long lead time. The KERS itself seems to be progressing well too. Could that integration and long development be the key to a world-beater?


KERS weight may give edge to little Heidfeld

Test stats

BMW Sauber	
Robert Kubica	970 miles
Nick Heidfeld	616 miles



Kubica holds record for mileage in '09 car

Real World
INTERNATIONAL

Radisson Resort & Spa | Portimao, Portugal
Autodromo Internacional do Algarve



160 luxury fully furnished apartments on the New FIA Approved F1 Race Circuit in Portimao, Portugal.



The Best Deal in 2009:

- ✔ New FIA Approved F1 Race Circuit
- ✔ Fully Furnished Track Apartments from €310,000
- ✔ €21,700 Annual Income for 3 Years
- ✔ 20 Year Radisson Hotel Rental Agreement
- ✔ Own with 10% Deposit/Finance Available
- ✔ Estimated 260% ROI over 5 Years

Radisson SAS RESORT, PORTIMAO

autódromo internacional algarve

www.realworldinternational.com ■ info@realworldinternational.com tel: +44(0)20 7936 9013

ANDY PRIAULX
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Engineering the Driver

TRANSFORM YOUR PERFORMANCE FOR 2009!

To be a champion you need to optimise your performance in all of the areas that effect your on-track results, these are just a few of the areas that we work on with our drivers:

- **Driving in the peak performance zone**
- **Performance monitoring and self analysis**
- **Mind management and conditioning**
- **Technique**
- **Planning and preparation**
- **Career management**

If you are serious about winning in 2009 contact us through the website below.



VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE

Log on for free access to your own Driver Development Programme, plus take Andy's Driving Analysis Test and also receive regular motivational quotes

www.appm.co.uk

RENAULT R29

It's no beauty, especially when seen from head-on, but there's a lot about it that suggests the team could have found a fruitful concept.

The long slab-like nose ends up lower than anyone else's, with a beautifully clean-looking flow area beneath it. A lower nose should bring the centre-of-gravity height down and make for a better front-suspension geometry that should work the front tyres better. It has very narrow sidepods, with severe undercuts, and which in profile are extreme in the way their height drops away to nothing towards the rear of the car. This will be extremely effective in generating downforce in its own right, by inducing pressure in all the right places to speed up the airflow to the rear, and is the opposite in concept to McLaren's.


COATES/LAT
Alonso: not a KERS fan

That sidepod shape, along with the extended floor splitter reaching forward from the cockpit, implies Renault has opted to site its KERS batteries in a different place to most others. This – together with a wheelbase that appears shorter than most – suggests it can achieve a very forward-biased weight distribution, something that is expected to suit the characteristics of the new slick tyres. But it can bring its own problems, and the suggestions from testing in Portugal were of a traction shortfall.

In common with fellow Magneti Marelli customers Ferrari and Toyota, Renault seems at quite an early stage with its KERS development, with Fernando Alonso suggesting he'd maybe prefer not to run it all season if it's not race-ready by the end of the tests.

Renault is very bullish about the numbers it has seen in the windtunnel for the R29. If the tyres do indeed respond best to a forward weight distribution, it may just turn out to be a spectacular performer.

Test stats

Renault	
Fernando Alonso	248 miles
Nelson Piquet	122 miles



DUNBAR/LAT
Piquet needs strong Renault for his career

TOYOTA TF109

Similar in general layout to the BMW, with long wheelbase (longer than the TF108's) and short nose, the TF109 is quite distinctive upon closer examination. It has a more cockpit-forward stance than any other car, suggesting the fuel tank has been moved up to get a more-forward weight distribution, even within a longer car – or that its KERS batteries are more up front for the same reason. It also has what appears to be by far the most aggressive interpretation of the new diffuser rules.

Within the single-flap front wing, the endplate design appears sophisticated, especially compared to the brutal straight lines of those on the BMW. It implies an airflow that will be quite low-drag and relatively immune from downforce deterioration as the front wheels are steered. Because of the lower power of the 2009 generation of front wings, the proportional reduction in downforce in conditions of steering and yaw will be greater than before. As such, details such as this that give stability and consistency should pay back spectacularly.

If the ride height can be kept within a small window, the multi-element diffuser should be more powerful than anyone else's. But it still needs to be fed with good airflow otherwise such power is wasted. Furthermore, if it's not practical to limit the ride height so tightly, it could be prone to stalling. A lot therefore hangs on how well windtunnel simulations translate to the track.

Toyota's KERS is far from ready. The team's simulations suggest its weight, and weight-distribution implications, cost more in lap time than its extra power brings. As such, the TF109 is a design less committed to using the technology than, say, the BMW. It should therefore achieve a much better weight distribution without KERS than a design more integrated with the technology. If KERS does not advance significantly from where it is now, Toyota could be very well placed.

Test stats

Toyota	
Timo Glock	187 miles
Kamui Kobayashi	154 miles
Jarno Trulli	88 miles



We'll guess they call this 'teething troubles'

DUNBAR/LAT
Will non-KERS path benefit Trulli/Toyota?

stingray RV

europe's leader in luxury motorhome rental & sales



Fleetwood Revolution

The Finest Motorhome for rent in the UK

Stingray RV is dedicated to supplying luxurious American motorhomes to a varied range of clients for any event, anywhere in Europe.

It doesn't matter if you need a motorhome for a 2 day race weekend at Silverstone, a week at Le Mans or an entire season, we have the right package for you.

We are currently taking bookings for all British and European Motorsport events for 2009.

For more information or to hire a 'home from home' visit **www.stingrayRV.com**, call **0870 241 5614** or email **simon@stingray.co.uk**

WE ALSO HAVE NUMEROUS OTHER MOTORHOMES FOR SALE ON OUR WEBSITE

FOR SALE **FINANCE AVAILABLE**



As New 2008 Four Winds Fun Mover 31D
RRP **£80,000** 10' garage, 5 Berth, full awning,
Cream leather, Air Con/Heating, LCD TVs.
£49,000 + VAT

FOR SALE **FINANCE AVAILABLE**



2008 40' Gulfstream Bounty Hunter. As new, sleeps 7 in 5 beds, long range water & fuel tanks, 5,000 miles, 12' garage, Sony TVs & sound system, in-motion SAT TV. **£65,000** plus VAT

www.stingrayRV.com



Rosberg at work in elegant Williams

GIBSON/LAT

Test stats

Williams-Toyota

Nico Rosberg	507 miles
Nico Hulkenberg	82 miles
Kazuki Nakajima	3 miles

WILLIAMS-TOYOTA FW31

This is a beautifully elegant design, from its long, shapely nose to its neatly-waisted sidepods. Like the BMW, it has been a very long time in gestation. Unlike that car, it adopts a totally different philosophy of KERS, with a flywheel-based system.

The benefits of such a KERS system would be expected to become more apparent when – as is planned for future seasons – the permitted storage and power capacities are increased. But in the meantime there should be no competitive disadvantages, though the team is currently as uncertain as anyone over whether it will race its system from the start of the year.

The undercut of the sidepods and their extreme downward sweep suggest great aero qualities, and the distinctive diffuser design looks like it would be very sympathetic to a wide variety of operating conditions. It all points to an aero concept that has been honed over a long period. With the enhanced importance of aero consistency this year, that could be the FW31's greatest assct. In its limited testing so far, it has also looked at a better stage of development than cars from some bigger teams. Is Williams about to resurrect itself?



Alert snapper gets sole Nakajima lap

GIBSON/LAT

CONCLUSIONS SO FAR

Only one of the four days in the test at the Algarve last week was dry, so it was especially frustrating for McLaren and Toyota that they lost most of that day with respectively an engine problem and an oil-leak-related fire. The biggest beneficiary was Williams, underlining its preparation. Renault's R29 was running in basic format, without several of the components that will be on it by now.

By opting to head for Valencia after the Portugal tests, BMW leapt into the lead of the running mileage league with two dry days of running, during which it continued running its KERS device and left Nick Heidfeld pretty optimistic.

Ferrari abandoned Portugal without running there, opting instead for Mugello, where for a time it was barely better. But reliability seems to be improving.

All that we really know after the first week of testing is that those two teams that concentrated most heavily on their 2009 cars last season – BMW and Williams – looked the most advanced. We should have a much more realistic idea of the relative pace of the cars after the Bahrain tests next month, scheduled to be attended by Ferrari, Toyota and BMW.

F1 TEAMS: TESTING MILES

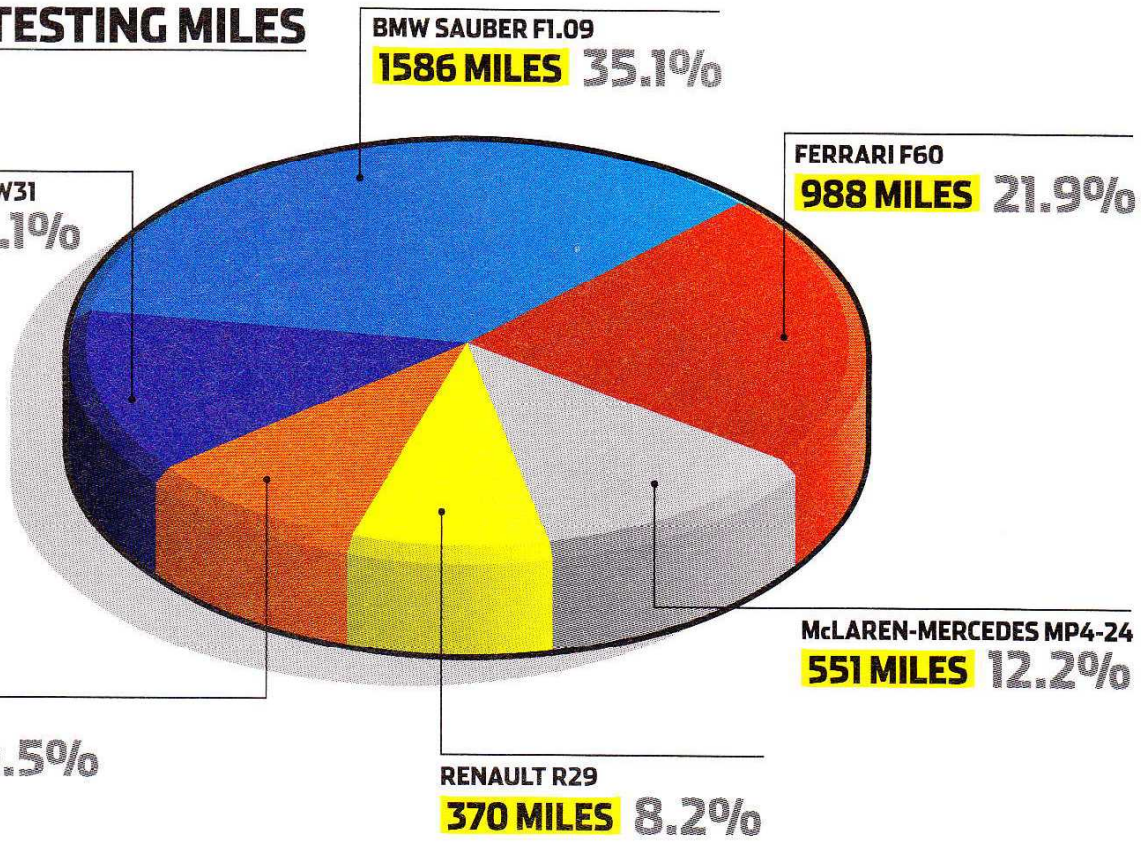
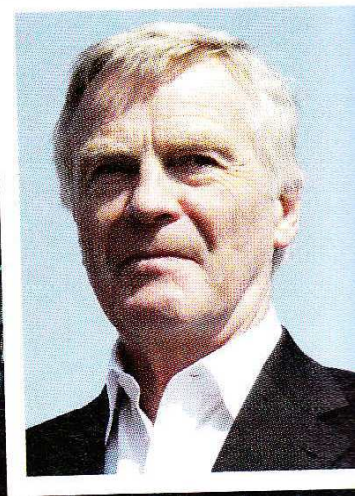


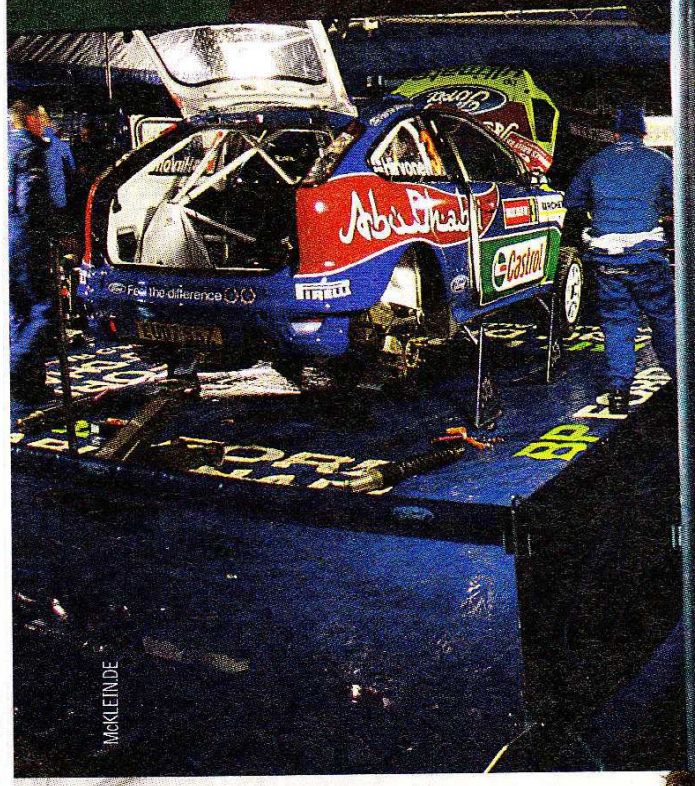
ILLUSTRATION ALAN ELDRIDGE

THE FUTURE OF WRC

BY MAX MOSLEY

On the eve of the 2009 WRC, DAVID EVANS sat dow with the FIA president to discuss the sport's directi





McKLEIN.DE



Ford (top) and Citroen are the WRC's only manufacturers

More mainstream than minutiae, FIA president Max Mosley could be forgiven for taking the road more regularly travelled when it comes to questions on the World Rally Championship. Not a bit of it. Not today, anyway. On the eve of the start of the 2009 WRC in Ireland, he's talking exclusively to Autosport. And he's talking exclusively about rallying. And we like the answers we're getting. We like one answer in particular.

The question I pose surrounds last year's Rally GB and the decision not to run the Hafren stage because of the icy conditions. Mosley edges forward in his seat and answers immediately with trademark coherence. Through a fog of politically correct mumbojumbo, Mosley's response strikes a chord with rally fans – and those of common sense – the world over.

"Nonsense," he replies directly. "For me that was pure nonsense. Rallying, to me, is all about driving on icy roads. Even I drive on icy roads. I'm very careful, but I do. This is what rally drivers do. These are the best drivers in the world. If he [Sebastien Loeb] can't handle driving on ice, you'd have to say there should be a law against driving on icy roads.

"In my opinion, the only possible excuse for cancelling the stage would be if you physically couldn't drive up the road. It's happened, I think, to all of us from time to time: you're trying to get up to a resort in the Alps and there's black ice and you simply can't get the car up, it's sliding back on you with the wheels turning. Under those conditions, you can't hold a stage. But if it's driveable in the sense that you can drive a car down it, it should run. It's absurd."

What's even more refreshing is that he's unconcerned at criticising a decision in which the FIA's own safety delegate took such a leading role. Mr Mosley, the floor – complete with WRC-bedecked soapbox – is yours.

FORMULATING THE FUTURE

That rational approach is a common theme through Mosley's views on the World Rally Championship. For him, the way forward is simple: cut costs. Yes, costs have been cut. But they can be cut some more. And then some more. While Mosley might not be a nuts-and-bolts WRC man, he has plenty of experience to contextualise a problem. Noting the resistance to change from those inside the sport, those more than familiar with the nuts and bolts, Mosley goes back to those glorious – yet unsustainable days – of riotous spending in the sport.

"I remember," he says, "when we wanted to stop the teams servicing when they came off every stage. In those days, to do the Acropolis Rally, you needed 32 vehicles, three helicopters and an aeroplane for two [rally] cars. And we stopped that. When we did that, it was the end of the world as far as rallying concerned. Now, if we wanted to go back to that, nobody would be interested. It may be that we have to go further."

The "going further" he's talking about is the technical regulations for 2010. After 18 months of debate, the precise specification for the cars that will start round one a year from now have still to be cast in stone. Just as well, as Mosley's coming down in favour of another rewrite.

Depending on who you talk to, running a straight Super 2000 car as the next World Rally Car would not so much represent selling the family silver, but more likely opening the door and handing it out to passers-by. Such a move is unthinkable to many. Well, the message from on high is to think again.

Mosley says: "There was a major discussion in World Council about whether the kit for the Super 2000 car should be available or whether everybody should just run in Super 2000. The majority felt the kit should be available. Now, though, that may come into question. Clearly, however they do it [the kit] is an added expense for the manufacturer and it's also clearly an expense for the private entrant. There was a specific



Ice and easy: Mosley believes tough conditions *are* the WRC

"WE OUGHT TO LOOK AT THE IRC TO SEE IF WE'RE DOING ANYTHING WRONG IN WRC"

decision not to go that route in December, but it may be that because of what's happened since [Subaru and Suzuki departing the WRC], people might like to revise their opinion. It might be that we now need to take a different look at it."

SAFEGUARDING THE SPECTACLE

Five-time world champion Sebastien Loeb has made his feelings patently clear about a Super 2000 future for the WRC. He'll walk. Mosley can't see the Frenchman's point.

"There's an argument that S2000 is not sufficiently spectacular" he says. "My personal point of view is that what makes the car spectacular is one, the driver and two, the conditions. Giving it a bolt-on wing and a few more horsepower does not make any difference at all."

Mosley sees the potential of running the kit of parts on the S2000 car as the potentially thin end of the technological wedge.

"There's a tendency," he says, "for the engineers to get together. Engineers like engineering and that's very expensive. This is a major problem in Formula 1, but also in rallies. In rallies the argument against this over-engineering is very strong. All it means is that the cars are completely overhauled every time they come to service. Well, arguably, that shouldn't have to happen. If the cars were made stronger, with less servicing and fewer parts and fewer people, they would be less expensive. And if they're [running like this] then they're closer to the road cars that they're developing. The rally people don't like that."

RESPECT TO THE RIVALS

Mosley's last point depends largely on which rally people you talk to. Those involved with the Intercontinental Rally Challenge (IRC) are clearly believers in S2000 as it forms the mainstay of the series. The growth of the IRC into a truly global, 12-round championship with three manufacturers is not lost on Mosley. He is, he admits, an admirer of the IRC and Marcello Lotti, one of the driving forces behind Eurosport's investment in rallying.

"I think it's very good," he says. "I think we ought to look at the reasons [for the IRC's growth] to see if



The WRC is spectacular, but the IRC can be too

FORMULA MASTER

LIVE ON EUROSPORT

WORLDWIDE TV COVERAG
IN 78 COUNTRIES



2009 CALENDAR

10 OFFICIAL TESTING DAYS

1-2 MARCH **VALENCIA** (E)

18-19 MARCH **IMOLA** (I)

25-26 MARCH **SPA** (B)

21-22 APRIL **BRNO** (CZ)

27-28 APRIL **HUNGARORING** (H)

8 EVENTS - 16 RACES

16-17 MAY **PAU** (F)
WITH FIA WTCC

30-31 MAY **VALENCIA** (E)
WITH FIA WTCC

20-21 JUNE **BRNO** (CZ)
WITH FIA WTCC

18-19 JULY **BRANDS HATCH** (UK)
WITH FIA WTCC

25-26 JULY **HUNGARORING** (H)
WITH FORMULA 1

29-30 AUGUST **SPA** (B)
WITH FORMULA 1

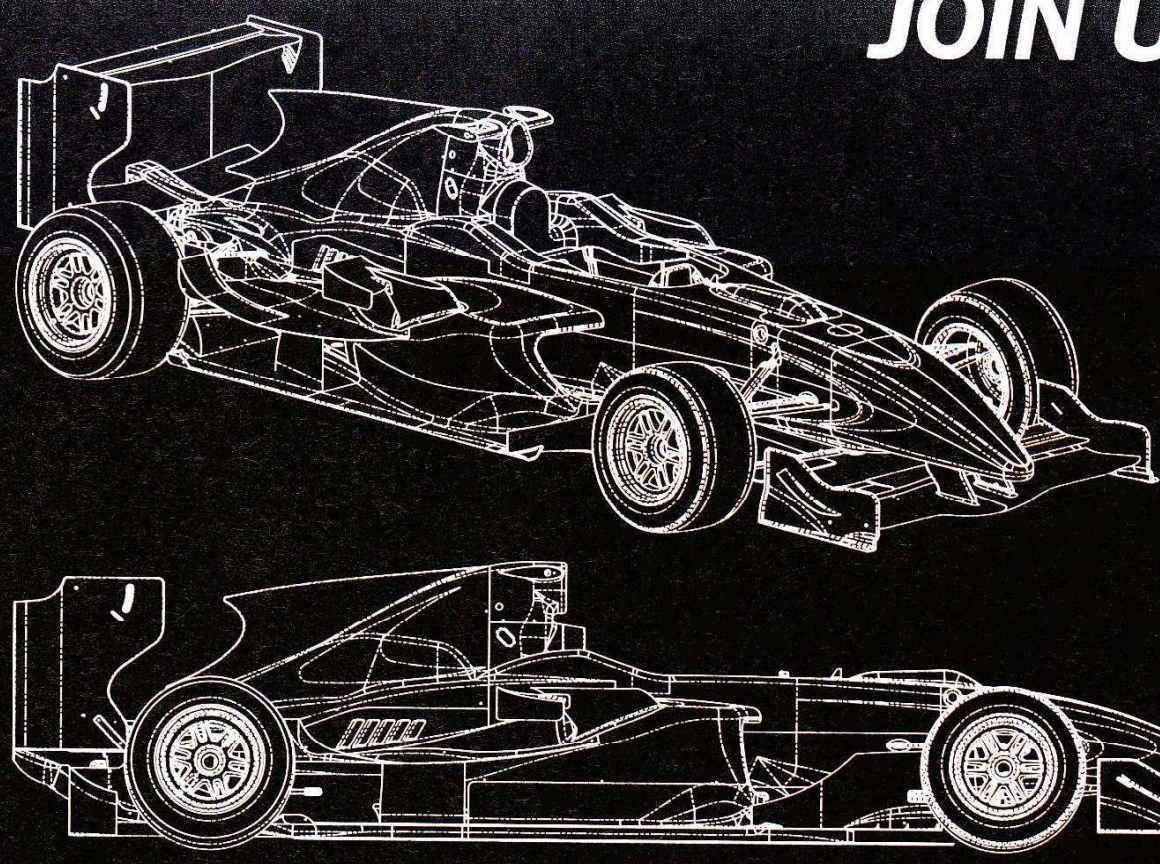
5-6 SEPTEMBER **OSCHERSLEBEN** (D)
WITH FIA WTCC

19-20 SEPTEMBER **IMOLA** (I)
WITH FIA WTCC

WTCC FIA World Touring Car Championship

F1 Formula 1

FORMULA TO SUCCESS, JOIN US



A UNIQUE COST-EFFECTIVE RACING PACKAGE:

- THE FASTEST 2.0 LITRE SINGLE-SEATER
- ALL EVENTS PARTNERING FORMULA 1 / FIA WTCC
- ALL LIVE ON EUROSPORT

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH:

YOKOHAMA

MAGNETI MARELLI

CONTACT:

www.formulamaster.ne

info@formulamaster.ne



Mosley and the Safari are not easy bedfellows

we're doing anything wrong in the WRC. For us, it means there's a good, credible series for our [event] organisers in their off year, if they want it. I've got a lot of time for Marcello Lotti and he does an excellent job for our [Eurosport-promoted] World Touring Car Championship. He's a rallying Bernie [Ecclestone]. He'll make a success of that [the IRC]."

WHAT GOES AROUND...

With S2000 dealt with, we move onto the next hotbed of contention in the WRC: the return of rotation. For many, a WRC season starting anywhere other than Monte Carlo is sacrilege. And that's just for starters. Ditching – whatever the circumstances – classics such as, for example, Finland, Corsica and Britain is impiety in the extreme. With a degree of detachment, that's not how Mosley sees it. The bigger picture, according to the president, reveals that the exception does not work as well as the rule.

"Everybody wants their rally every year," he says. "Everybody thinks there should be special cases and almost everybody thinks their rally is the special case. Without making it every other year, you can't bring in the new rallies that are the ones that will make it really interesting."

That's fair enough, but on a more practical level, there are serious concerns that the WRC will be able to find and sustain 24 competent rallies to run every two years. Given the boldness and, in many cases, unpopularity of his stance, he must have a great deal of confidence in the incoming rallies.

"I'd say I'm hopeful rather than confident," he says. "There are a lot of very good rallies that want to be in the WRC. It's a question of whether they can meet the standard. If we want a credible world championship, we need the new rallies."

This year's new and returning rallies are expected to make the grade, but there are major question marks


Peugeot runs in IRC – a series Mosley respects

IRC.COM


The FIA president waved cars away in Jordan '08

DPPI

over Bulgaria and Russia for next year. Russia, for example, will run from Novorosslysk, a Black Sea resort offering yet another hot, dusty and rocky rally out of the same mould as Cyprus, Turkey, Acropolis and some stages in Sardinia. And those roads are being touted in favour of a base in a place of pre-eminent Russian-ness like St Petersburg.

Mosley patiently takes this point on board – one gets the feeling not for the first time – before closing his argument on a decisive point: "I'd far rather have an event on the Black Sea than not at all."

Moving the WRC into expanding economies is vital for the future of the WRC, as far as Mosley can see. And, if that means courting condemnation by elbowing out some of the world's favoured stages, then so be it. India and a return to China are next on his list.

Manoeuvring the argument back to Finland and the loss of multi-million-pound investment in new facilities due to the rally not running every season won't wash with Mosley.

"I'm not convinced by that," he says. "The Olympics come [to a country] once every 50 or 100 years. Look at the investment the British government is making. If an event is important, they'll make the investment. The real reason they shelved the investment is that the rally's not that big."

JOINING THE CYBERSPACE RACE

One country that is notably absent from Mosley's wish list is Kenya. This is partly due to the specific nature of the Safari Rally, which he feels would be better suited to the Cross Country Championship, and partly because of his insistence that a sustainable future for the WRC lies within cyberspace. Mosley doesn't appear to be the tub-thumping-type, but if he was WRC on the internet would be his theme. Bemused by rallying's consistent and persistent struggle to make television work, Mosley wants ISC – in its impending role as the WRC's global promoter – to broker the deal between the world wide web and what he sees as potentially its finest sporting offering.

"Rallying," he says, "is hopeless for television; you can't have three days' non-stop television with long gaps in between. But rallies would work brilliantly on the internet. The ISC people absolutely share that view and once the [global promoter] deal's in place we'll see a revolution."

That's more like it. That's what the WRC needs. No more talk of downturns or economic doom and gloom. Gather the troops, let's talk about the revolution...

NOT LOST IN TRANSITION

With fewer events and fewer marques, is the WRC stymied? No, says DAVID EVANS, boomtime is just around the corner

We're told by those in the know that 2009 will be a year of transition for the World Rally Championship. However, while this will be a season of technical, commercial and sporting evolution on Planet WRC, it's also going to be a ripper of a year on the stages.

WHY LESS IS MORE

Who needs Subaru? In terms of the overall championship battle, the Japanese manufacturer meant little. Of course, in the eyes of some, Subaru blue was to WRC what the Scuderia Ferrari scarlet is to Formula 1. Be that as it may, the flat-four has gone because it couldn't stop losing. This year, the collective hairs won't stand to attention on the backs of necks when the factory Imprezas are fired up. Equally, the service park won't squirm at the sight of over-emotional drivers in their latest stand-off with team management.

Halving the number of marques in the sport is, obviously, not good news, but it doesn't necessarily mean half the number of cars being driven by the world's finest rally drivers. Pay attention now, because that's the good news...

NEW SEASON, NEW QUESTIONS

Finally, we'll see just how good Chris Atkinson is and we'll also see whether 2003 king Petter Solberg has another world title in him.

Since his arrival in 2005, Atkinson has only ever been able to measure himself against one man in an underperforming car. Well, no more. This week, he will have his chance to step his career up a gear. Gone is the car that hadn't won in 50-odd starts, replaced by one that won the majority of them. A Citroen C4 WRC beckons for Atkinson. And, fear not, he will be out in the car more often than not this year.

And the same goes for Solberg. Although without as clear-cut a gig as his former colleague, the Norwegian should be seen in a Citroen (or even a Ford) on numerous occasions this year. While Solberg shifts his focus to a full-time return for 2010, a handful of rallies this year will be enough to tell us just how much damage his prolonged stay away from the top

"THIS WILL BE A SEASON OF TECHNICAL, COMMERCIAL AND SPORTING EVOLUTION ON PLANET WRC"

step of the podium has done.

The perceived wisdom of the service park is that he'll be back and winning sooner rather than later. Fact is, the WRC fan faces a much better chance of seeing Solberg dancing atop his car this year than we did last year. Another reason to be cheerful.

WHEN TWO BECOME SEVEN

Two manufacturers there might be, but there's still going to be seven teams in the championship. Regular readers of Autosport will be well aware of my concerns of these manufacturer teams (Munchi's Ford Citroen Junior Team and Adapta Subaru) being used to paper over the cracks created by the absence of actual car makers. Well, my worries are no more. The number of car firms ready to run 2010 WRC programmes is sufficient to stem any concerns over the year ahead. Don't forget: it's a year of transition.

And, for this season, those manufacturer teams are not filled with talentless, fat-walleted pedallers, either. They're full of some of the brightest drivers for the future and some genuinely talented podium chasers. The Citroen Junior Team is a case in point. Sebastien Ogier is a French rally fan's dream come true – that's if a French rally fan has any unfulfilled dreams remaining, of course...

The reigning junior world rally champion led last

Once the dust settles, WRC will be big again

year's Rally GB on his first outing in a World Rally Car. And this year I'd bet on him hitting the podium before mid-year and possibly even better in the second six rallies of 2009. And then there's Evgeny Novikov, an 18-year-old from Russia. Those two settled in alongside Atkinson and Citroen regular Conrad Rautenbach make for a fascinating season ahead.

DON'T FORGET THE WORKS TEAMS

See, it's a mark of how good this year's going to be that you've read all of those words before any mention of the Citroen and Ford factory teams. Driver-wise, it's more of the same aboard the official C4 WRCs and Focus RS WRCs, but Sebastien Loeb knows he's in for more of a fight than ever before. And that fight won't come from Ford men Mikko Hirvonen and Jari-Matti Latvala alone. Loeb's own team-mate, Dani Sordo, knows he has to deliver. If Sordo doesn't get in and rattle the five-time champion's cage, there's a whole Citroen Junior Team's worth of drivers ready to get in and do the job for him.

At Ford, the two drivers need to trade some of their individual strengths. Hirvonen could do with a smidgen of Latvala's staggering speed, while the younger Finn could do with a dose of Hirvonen's ability to bring the car home in the points. If Ford's mathematicians manage that complicated equation, then the Blue Oval will be more than capable of capturing a third makes' title in four years – and either driver could stand in the way of Loeb's sixth title.

IS THIS THE DREAM DOZEN?

The calendar has been slashed from 15 to 12 rallies for this year – and it starts later and finishes earlier. WRC fans won't see the Christmas lights of Cardiff. Within the confines of the calendar, there have also been some significant changes. Monte Carlo, Sweden, Mexico, Jordan, Turkey, Germany, New Zealand, Corsica and Japan are gone, while Ireland, Norway, Cyprus, Portugal, Poland and Australia are back.



Ford is one of only two factory marques still in

THE SUPPORTING CAST

Both Junior and Production Car World Rally Championship entries have been hit by the world's financial woes. The PWRC has 19 registrations, with plenty of stars including Martin Prokop, Toshi Arai, Bernardo Sousa, Patrik Sandell and Pirelli Star Driver Martin Semerad. The J-WRC is looking like it might struggle a little. With the loss of Citroen's one-make series and diminishing support from the French manufacturer, numbers are looking a little lean. Series runner-up (to Ogier) Aaron Burkart is the first of nine entries. Burkart forms part of the Suzuki Junior team this season, along with Michal Kosciuszko. Yoann Bonato is one of the more interesting registrations, with the Frenchman likely to set the pace this season.

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

We've been in this kind of position before; 1987 and the post-Group B dip is the obvious comparison. But just as Group A delivered an almighty WRC a few years later, with Ford, Lancia, Mazda, Mitsubishi, Subaru and Toyota fighting it out, so the new Super 2000-based tech regs will post-2010. A year of transition this might be, but, if we get everything right with the technical regulations and ISC gets the commercial commitment it needs, wants and deserves, this season should mark the start of the WRC's new dawn.

WRC PREVIEW

TEAMS & DRIVERS

Which cars and drivers are set to do battle in the 12 rounds of WRC 2009? Let DAVID EVANS be your guide...

Car: Citroen C4 WRC

The C4 is no slouch on any surface of the WRC. Not the easiest of cars to step into and drive on the limit, which means some of the Citroen Junior drivers may struggle to make the impression they would like in the early rounds. The efficiency with which it uses its tyres is one of the most impressive factors of a car that is a very well tested package. Citroen is not about to break new ground with the latest homologation for the coming season.

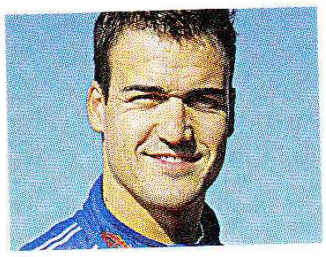


CITROEN TOTAL WRT



Sebastien Loeb (F)
Age: 34
First WRC start: Catalunya 1999
WRC wins: 47
Co-driver: Daniel Elena
Car: Citroen C4 WRC

Odds-on for a sixth straight world title. Having collected 11 wins from 15 starts last season it's not like he's going to have forgotten how to do it in the 84 days between the final Sunday in Cardiff last December and the opening day of the 2009 season in Ireland.



Daniel Sordo (E)
Age: 25
First WRC start: Catalunya 2003
WRC wins: 0
Co-driver: Marc Marti
Car: Citroen C4 WRC

Big pressure on the 2005 Junior champion, who is now in his third season with Citroen. Failure to win a rally in '09 will likely cost him his seat in the C4. His best chance comes on asphalt, but he's got to beat Loeb (and the rest) with his head as well as his right foot.

CITROEN JUNIOR TEAM



Conrad Rautenbach (ZW)
Age: 24
First WRC start: Monte Carlo 2004
WRC wins: 0
Co-driver: Daniel Barritt
Car: Citroen C4 WRC

The most experienced member of Citroen's Junior Team. The highlight of '08 was fourth in Argentina in his second outing in a C4 WRC. Spent the rest of the year finding his feet. This year could be his big chance.



Sebastien Ogier (F)
Age: 25
First WRC start: Mexico 2008
WRC wins: 0
Co-driver: Julien Ingrassia
Car: Citroen C4 WRC

This time last year, the WRC hadn't heard of this fella – because he'd never even started a WRC round. Now he's junior world champ and he led GB '08 on his first time in a WRC. Super-quick and ballsy, Ogier has a very big future.



Chris Atkinson (AUS)
Age: 29
First WRC start: New Zealand 2004
WRC wins: 0
Co-driver: Stephane Prevot
Car: Citroen C4 WRC

How good is Atkinson? We're about to find out. After three years in a pig of a Subaru, he's now in rallying nirvana – a Citroen C4. His speed is beyond doubt, but a lack of patience and precision on technical events can be his undoing.



Evgeny Novikov (RUS
Age: 18
First WRC start: Rally GB 2007
WRC wins: 0
Co-driver: Dale Mosca
Car: Citroen C4 WRC

Showed the occasional flash of speed in last year' PWRC, notably in Japan, where he almost won, bu he doesn't have much for besides. What he does ha is youth on his side. His WRC debut, when he wa just 17, came nine years earlier than Loeb's.

WRC 2009: ROUND BY ROUND

ROUND 1
Ireland (Sligo)
Date: Jan 30-Feb 1
Surface: asphalt

Back on the calendar after a year off. Gales, sunshine, pouring rain, snow and ice – probably all in the same day – are on the cards.



ROUND 2
Norway (Hamar)
Date: Feb 13-15
Surface: snow

Sitting on the favourable side of the Scandinavian mountains, the town of Hamar and its local stages are generally accepted to be more snow-sure than those found on the Swedish Rally, which stands down in favour of Norway this season.

ROUND 3
Cyprus (Limassol)
Date: Mar 13-15
Surface: gravel/asphalt

Back in the WRC after a troubled couple of years. The in-fighting that has dogged the event is a thing of the past. A ploy? Who knows, but this year's rally will be the first to run as a mixed-surface event in the modern WRC. Should bring a new dimension.

ROUND 4
Portugal (Vilamoura)
Date: Apr 3-5
Surface: gravel

Along with Argentina, this event is one of the best supported in the WRC. Back after a year away, so there will probably be even more people out watching. The event moves from Faro to Vilamoura, but it remains anchored in the Algarve football stadium.



ROUND 5
Argentina (Villa C Paz)
Date: Apr 24-26
Surface: gravel

The sole trans-Atlantic trip this season, Argentina is an astonishing event run against one of the best backdrops of the year.

ROUND 6
Italy (Olbia)
Date: May 22-24
Surface: gravel

The rocky Sardinian roa make for a fascinating h gravel event, even if the rally doesn't have the sa fever as the old Sanrem



BP FORD ABU DHABI WRT



Mikko Hirvonen (FIN)
Age: 28
First WRC start: Finland 2002
WRC wins: 7
Co-driver: Jarmo Lehtinen
Car: Ford Focus RS WRC 2008

Has the speed to win rallies and the title, but just needs a bit more, er, grr. He did Loeb on pace on occasion in '08. This time around it's about picking his fights (fast gravel) and kicking Loeb into touch. Not easy!



Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN)
Age: 23
First WRC start: Rally GB 2002
WRC wins: 1
Co-driver: Miikka Anttila
Car: Ford Focus RS WRC 2008

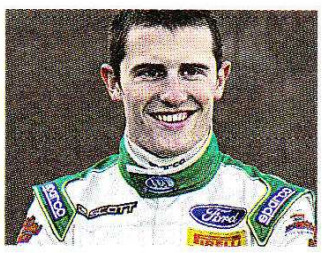
Not many 23-year-olds have done 67 WRC rallies. And it's time for him to put that experience to good use. When everything's going his way, there's nobody faster, but too often his exuberance can spoil it.



Khalid Al Qassimi (UAE)
Age: 36
First WRC start: Acropolis, 2004
WRC wins: 0
Co-driver: Michael Orr
Car: Ford Focus RS WRC 2008

Limited experience of the varied conditions on the WRC make it tough for Al Qassimi to pose a title threat. Has learned a lot since joining Ford in 2007 and continues to improve as he gains more mileage.

STOBART VK M-SPORT FORD WRT



Matthew Wilson (GB)
Age: 22
First WRC start: Rally GB 2004
WRC wins: 0
Co-driver: Scott Martin
Car: Ford Focus RS WRC 2008

Starting his fourth full season, Wilson needs to put his experience to good use this year. He needs to put a lack of testing to the back of his mind and get on with driving the car. He has the speed to spend the season in the points.



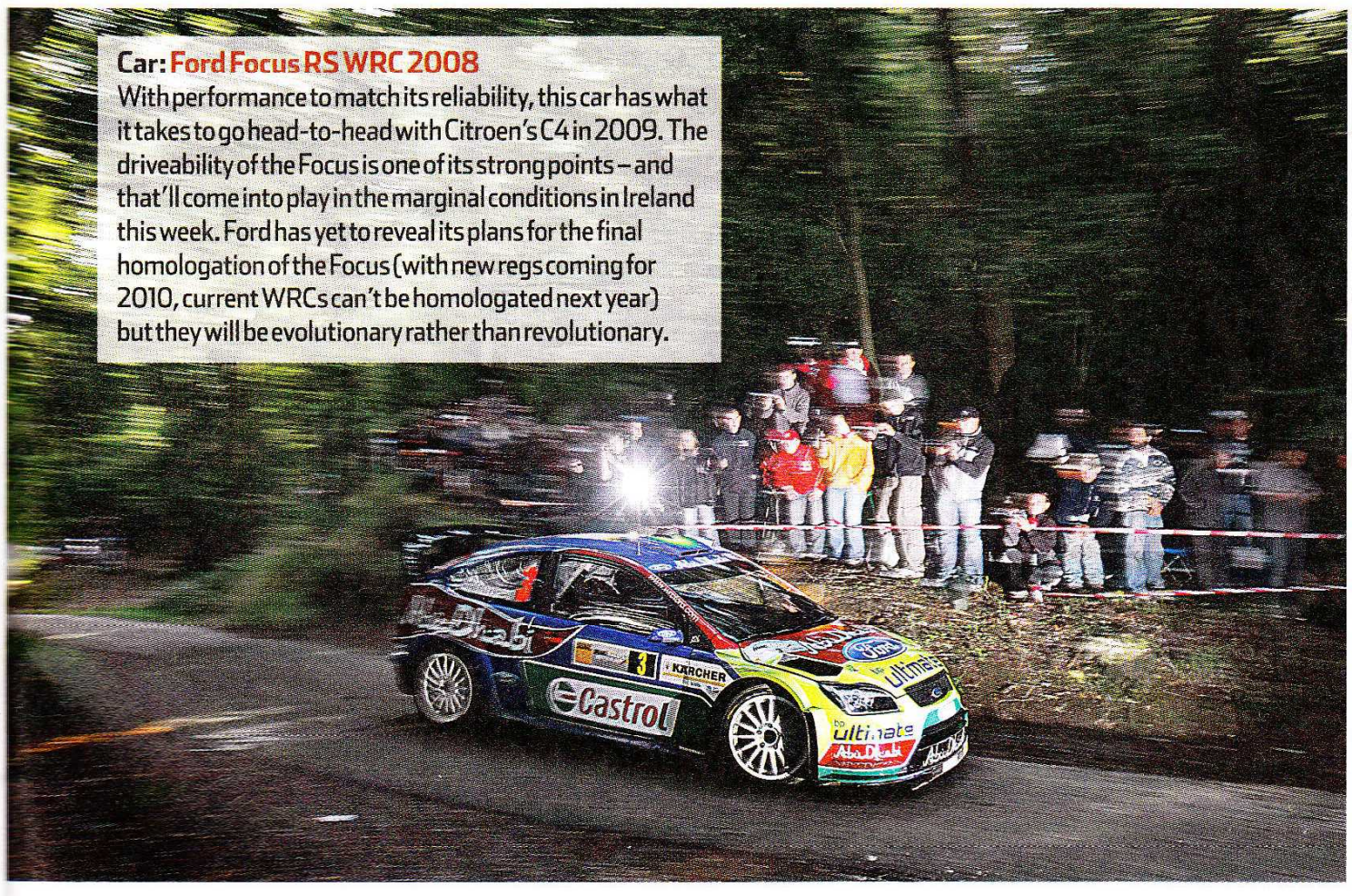
Urmo Aava (EST)
Age: 29
First WRC start: Finland 2002
WRC wins: 0
Co-driver: Kuldar Sikk
Car: Ford Focus RS WRC 2008

Switch from Citroen to Ford could be a canny move for the Estonian – the Focus is more likely to suit his style. Aava should be looking to better his previous best result (fourth on Acropolis) and look for his biggest result to date in Finland.



Henning Solberg (N)
Age: 36
First WRC start: Sweden 1998
WRC wins: 0
Co-driver: Cato Menkerud
Car: Ford Focus RS WRC 2008

Forget asphalt, he can't get his head around it. Snow and gravel are another matter. Expect him to fight in Norway after a subdued start in Ireland this week. At his best in the fast stuff, he can do technical stuff too.



Car: Ford Focus RS WRC 2008
With performance to match its reliability, this car has what it takes to go head-to-head with Citroen's C4 in 2009. The driveability of the Focus is one of its strong points – and that'll come into play in the marginal conditions in Ireland this week. Ford has yet to reveal its plans for the final homologation of the Focus (with new regs coming for 2010, current WRCs can't be homologated next year) but they will be evolutionary rather than revolutionary.

MUNCHI'S FORD



Federico Villagra (RA)
Age: 39
First WRC start: Argentina 2000
WRC wins: 0
Co-driver: Jorge Perez Companc
Car: Ford Focus RS WRC 2008

With seven national titles, Villagra can be relied upon to bring the Munchi's Ford to the finish. Consistency is bound to bring good points this season, particularly on rallies where he has more experience and can push.

ADAPTA SUBARU



Mads Ostberg (N)
Age: 21
First WRC start: Sweden 2006
WRC wins: 0
Co-driver: Ole Unnerud
Car: Subaru Impreza WRC2008

Now he's had his eyes seen to and can see properly, he's crashing less and is even quicker than before. A real star of the future if he can curb his lead-footed enthusiasm. Jostling for the Rally GB lead last year showed what he can do.

ROUND 7
Acropolis (Loutraki)
Date: Jun 12-14
Surface: gravel

Another rally HQ switch for the Greek event. This time it's a big move west from Athens to Loutraki. This means less traffic grief and more classic stages like the Bauxites. The Acropolis is still the daddy of rough rallies – particularly in the middle of the summer.

ROUND 8
Poland (Mikolajki)
Date: Jun 26-28
Surface: gravel

Poland is back in the WRC for the first time since '73! Moving this former European Championship round out of Krakow and into Mikolajki was the key to its return. The stages, which thread their way between the lakes, are super-fast in places.

ROUND 9
Finland (Jyvaskyla)
Date: Jul 31-Aug 2
Surface: gravel

If it ain't broke don't fix it. Despite the odd tweak here and there, this one remains fearsomely fast and not for the faint-hearted.





ROUND 10
Australia (Kingscliff)
Date: Sep 4-6
Surface: gravel

Back after two years out, the event moves to the Gold Coast. The roads are wider and faster than those in previous home Perth.

ROUND 11
Catalunya (Lloret de Mar)
Date: Oct 2-4
Surface: asphalt

Catalunya is among the fastest of sealed-surface events, but it can be a nightmare if the October rains arrive unexpectedly.



ROUND 12
Great Britain (Cardiff)
Date: Oct 23-25
Surface: gravel

Still the season closer, but six weeks earlier. The weather is an integral part of this rally and, running in late October, the Welsh hills may still be shrouded in mist and rain. We may not get the ice-induced competition no-show in mid-Wales this time.

stingray RV

europe's leader in luxury motorhome rental & sales



Airstream Skydeck

The Ultimate Motorhome & Hospitality Unit



Fleetwood Revolution

The Finest Motorhome for rent in the UK

Stingray RV is Europe's number one supplier of luxury American motorhomes for motorsport events. Our services include:

Luxury American motorhome rental for a weekend or an entire season
American motorhome sales & servicing • 'Rent Back' system where we rent your motorhome for you Motorhome support & delivery service • Motorhome maintenance & storage
F1 style hospitality facility rental & sales

We now have a base in Central Europe to reduce the cost of rentals at all European circuits.

For more information or to hire a 'home from home'
visit **www.stingrayRV.com**, call **0870 241 5614**
or email **simon@stingray.co.uk**

WE ALSO HAVE NUMEROUS OTHER MOTORHOMES FOR SALE ON OUR WEBSITE

FOR SALE **FINANCE AVAILABLE**



2008 36' Four Winds Hurricane. Triple slide, cream leather. Sleeps 8 in 3 double beds.
£65,000 plus VAT

FOR SALE **FINANCE AVAILABLE**

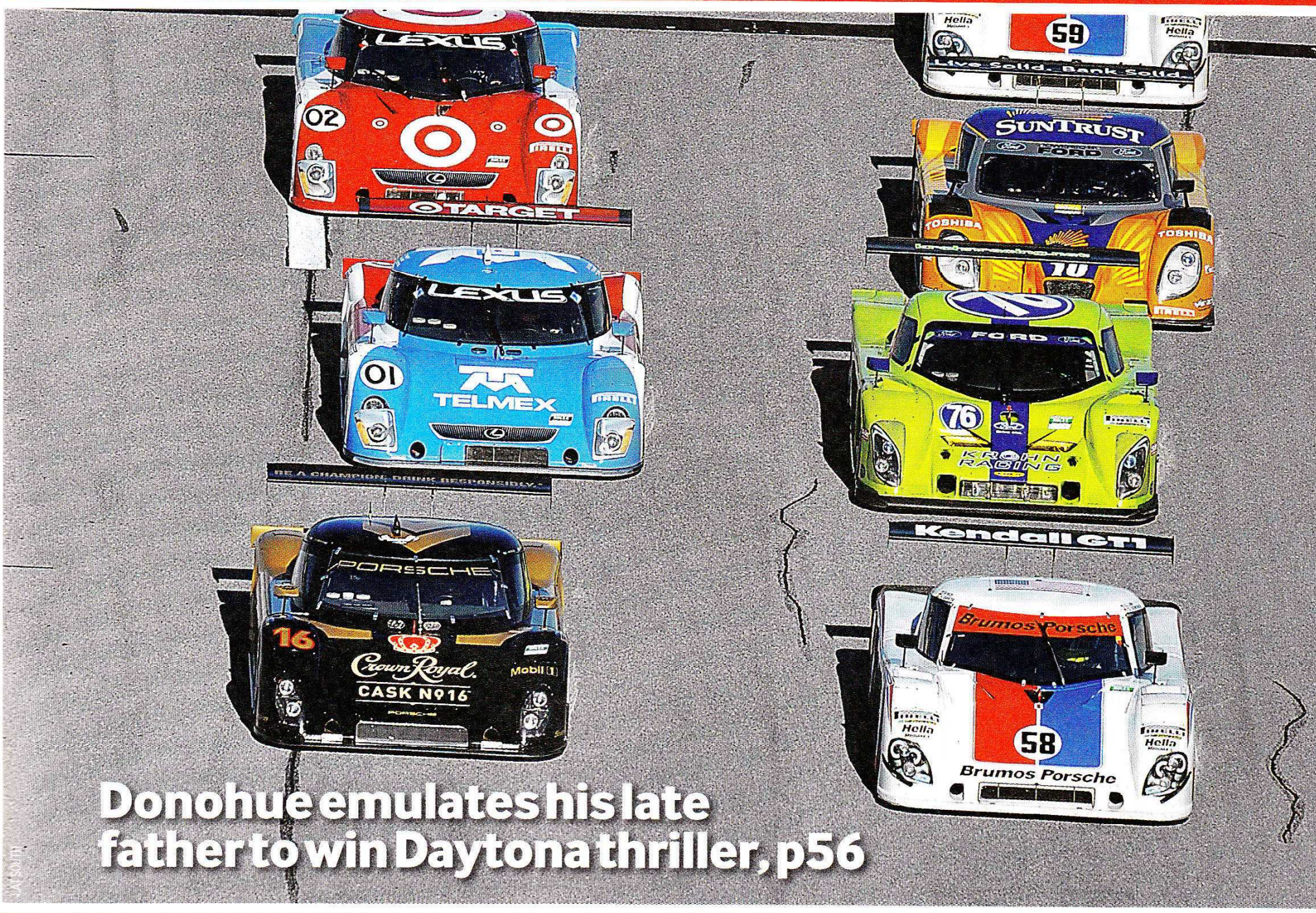


2005 Fleetwood Discovery.
Quad Slide, Cream Leather, Sleeps 6 in 3 beds
£75,000 plus VAT

www.stingrayRV.com

REPORTS

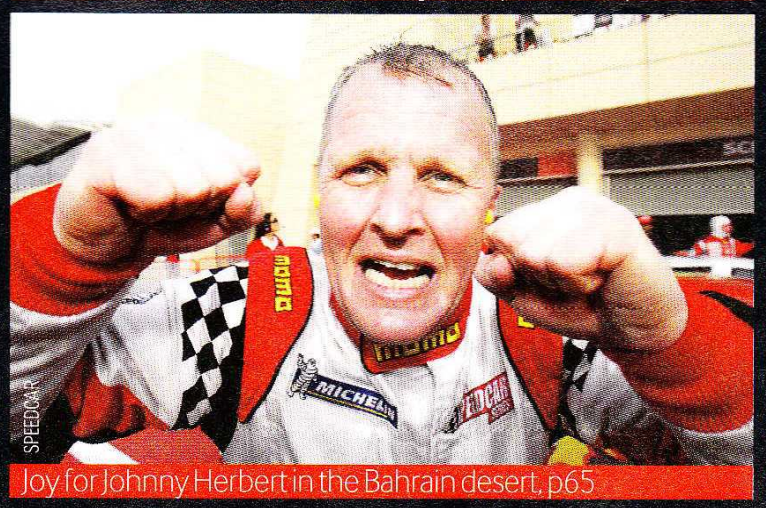
A WHOLE HOST OF INTERNATIONAL ACTION – AND IT'S STILL JANUARY



Donohue emulates his late father to win Daytona thriller, p56



Win means Carroll and Ireland stay on top in A1GP, p60



Joy for Johnny Herbert in the Bahrain desert, p65

ANALYSIS • *RESULTS* • COMMENT

- **Monte Carlo Rally** *Ogier is the giant* **p50**
- **Daytona 24 Hours** *Special Brumos* **p56**
- **A1GP Taupo** *Jani and Carroll share it* **p60**
- **GP2 Asia Sakhir** *Quality from Kobayashi* **p64**
- **Speedcar Sakhir** *Ex-Sauber buddies win* **p65**

MONTE CARLO

IRC

ANALYSIS
21-24.1.09

Round 1/12

DREAM DEBUT FO

The junior world champion won on his first outing in



The 'other Sebastien' scored stunning win on his first Monte

R OGIER

S2000 car. DAVID EVANS reports

You simply couldn't have made this up. You wouldn't have dared. After years of mediocre Montes, last week's – the first ever to qualify for the IRC rather than the WRC – was an absolute stunner. It was exceptional from start to finish. And the result? Well, this being the Monte, it had to be a win for Sebastien. And it was. For Loeb, read Ogier. His BFGoodrich Drivers' Team Peugeot 207 S2000 didn't miss a beat for the duration of the rally and the reigning junior world rally champion looked as though he'd spent years driving Super 2000 machinery on those roads. He hasn't, by the way, last week was his first time in the car. And his first time on the event. Awesome. With Ogier not registered for IRC points, runner-up Freddy Loix bagged a maximum score.

LEG ONE 48.73 MILES COLD/DRY/SNOW LATER -6 TO 7 DEGREES

Standing next to the harbour in Monte Carlo on a typically mild pre-dawn Mediterranean morning, Kris Meeke looked skywards. The time had come to make a decision on what rubber to run. The darkness shrouding the surrounding mountains ensured no secrets were given away; if Meeke was looking beyond the Alpine peaks for inspiration, he wasn't alone.

The trouble was, the roads for which the drivers were picking their tyres were a world away from the tranquil milieu of Monaco. Snow, ice and the associated chaos didn't happen alongside the polished pavements of the principality – that was reserved for the twists and turns that lay ahead on the road out of Tourette du Chateau.

"It's a lottery," grinned Meeke, nervously. "What do you do? If we take the slick, we're risking more than if we take the winter tyre. The slick won't work on ice, but the winter tyre will be okay on the dry asphalt."

That dilemma was being played out 65-fold by each and every one of the crews about to embark on one of the wintriest Montes in years.

In the end, it was Nicolas Vouilloz's choice of a half-studded tyre that worked the best. The defending champion's Peugeot 207 S2000 stopped the clocks 2.3 seconds up on Juho Hanninen's all-new Skoda Fabia S2000. There had been plenty of ice on the road between Tourette and St Antonin, but the prediction that the perfect tyre did not exist was borne out by the fact that Hanninen's covers were stud-free.

The Skoda team's delight at Hanninen's second place was tempered by the loss of power steering aboard the sister Fabia of Jan Kopecky. The Czech Republic driver hadn't made it a mile into the stage before he lost assistance. He dropped more than four minutes in the twists and turns of the 15-mile opener.

Despite the event only being one stage old, two of the rally's biggest names would play no further part in proceedings. Didier Auriol (Peugeot 207 S2000) and Luca Rossetti (Abarth Grande Punto) dropped their slick-shod machinery at the same corner and both headed for an early bath. Not being part of the World Rally Championship – and determined to strike a chord with the old school – this year's Monte Carlo Rally would not be welcoming crews back under the SupeRally regulations.

Fellow slick-runner Stephane Sarrazin made it through SS1 and exploited the dry asphalt on offer in the next test to the max, bagging fastest time and moving from eighth to second overall.

"I am very happy now," said the relieved Frenchman. "In the first stage, I was nearly off twice very soon and I was thinking I had got it very badly wrong. Okay, this is a nice place now."

Sarrazin's gain was Vouilloz's loss. His studded BFGoodrich boots started to overheat, dropping him to third, with a slow puncture not helping matters. Hanninen's middle of the road choice was good enough to promote him to P1.

While there was no service between the day's three stages, the crews were given the chance to change tyres ahead of SS3. Rain and/or snow was talked about for St Jean en Royans, but it was anybody's guess if, and or when, it would come.

Happy that his choice of stud-less winter tyres had seen him through the morning, Hanninen plumped for them again for the longest stage of the day. They worked a treat. The rain arrived at the start of the stage, but as the road climbed towards the halfway point on the peak of Col de la Portette it had turned to snow – and that snow would fall harder and harder as time passed.

Running second on the road, Hanninen scrabbled through before the worst of the white

stuff descended. His lead intact, he would start day two 11.9sec ahead of Sarrazin. Fortune had smiled on Skoda's leader, however. A damaged left-rear rim bore testament to that.

"I was leaning on the bank a little bit," he said. "There was a bit of a vibration for the stage. The snow was coming really heavily in the end, but my gravel crew did a fantastic job for me. I had such good confidence in them. Even where the snow was really thick on the road, I knew where the grip would be thanks to the notes."

Behind Sarrazin and Vouilloz, fellow Kronos Peugeot runners Sebastien Ogier, Freddy Loix and Meeke were separated by just 12 seconds in their fight for fourth. Ogier's first day in a Super 2000 car had failed to match his first day in a World Rally Car, when he led Rally GB in a Citroen C4 last month, but he was still very much in touch going into day two. His only gripe had been a flat front-right for the last five miles of SS3. Loix and Meeke were both running without any problems, the Brit ending his day on a high with fastest time in the final stage.

A minute off the lead at the end of day one on most European rallies would have been a disaster. Not here. That deficit could be overturned in one tyre choice.

Abarth's first day of the new season was something of a disaster. Anton Alen led the Italian firm's charge in fourth after SS1, belying the fact that he was running a year-old Punto. Unfortunately for the Finn, he dropped three minutes with a puncture in SS2 and even more time when his intermediates offered no grip in stage three. Giandomenico Basso was top Grande Punto, seventh after more spins than he cared to remember.

POSITIONS AT THE END OF LEG ONE

1 Hanninen/Markkula	56m32.8s
2 Sarrazin/Renucci	+11.9s
3 Vouilloz/Klinger	+33.9s
4 Ogier/Ingrassia	+49.3s
5 Loix/Smets	+54.6s
6 Meeke/Nagle	+1m01.3s

LEG TWO 90.58 MILES RAIN/SNOW -7 TO 5 DEGREES

The event's only full day started well for leader Hanninen with fastest time on SS4, but even better for Meeke. The Peugeot UK driver climbed from sixth to second in the 15-mile test, with the icy conditions worsening as the test climbed to the finish at 2500 meters.

Meeke's elevation up the leaderboard came partly on merit; he deposed Ogier and Loix on speed, while Vouilloz and Sarrazin hit trouble. Vouilloz collected a front-right puncture and lost one minute, while second-placed Sarrazin went off for five minutes.

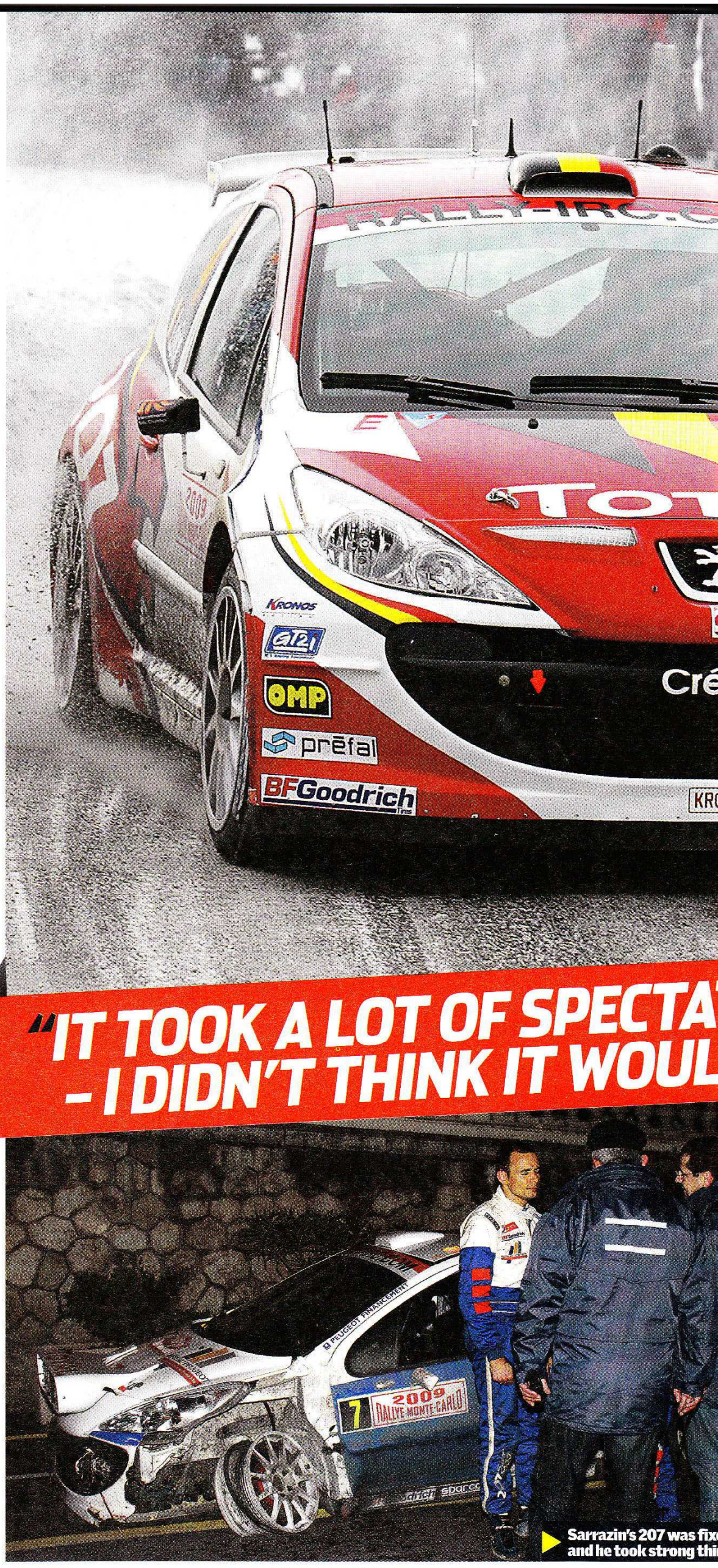
"It took a lot of spectators to get the car back on the road," said Sarrazin. "It was steep. I didn't think it would come back."

Vouilloz's puncture had repercussions as the morning progressed. Like the rest of the field, the number one 207 had departed Valence on studded tyres. He was carrying a brace of stud-less winter tyres in the boot, figuring that the rising temperatures would melt the snow on the third and final test before lunch. His deflation forced him to bolt on a cover without any studs to the front-right – and worse still he'd damaged the brake line and was left with no stopping power on that corner of the car.

The lead 24 hours earlier had become sixth position and close to a three-minute deficit by mid-day Thursday. He wouldn't be the only Peugeot runner suffering a puncture, either. Meeke's grip on second was shot to bits when he dropped a rear wheel into a drain halfway through SS6. He thought he'd got away with his minor indiscretion, but a mile later the tyre went down leaving him seven miles to drive on the flat. Loix and Ogier both went back past.

The rerun loop of morning stages might have been devoid of the overnight dusting of snow that had caused the odd moment first time around, but the roads were in a terrible mess after the entire field had been through and cut the slushy corners. Vouilloz was the first to fall foul of this, going off in stage seven and breaking the steering on his 207. After his horrid morning, he'd probably thought his afternoon couldn't get any worse. Then it did.

Ahead of him, Ogier arrived at the start of the day's



"IT TOOK A LOT OF SPECTA – I DIDN'T THINK IT WOUL

Sarrazin's 207 was fix and he took strong thi

STAGE BY STAGE

SS1 TOURETTE DU CHATEAU-ST ANTONIN (15.13 miles)
LEADER: **Vouilloz**
1 **Vouilloz** 22m22.9s; 2 **Hanninen** +2.3s; 3 **Gardemeister** +16.3s
Auriol and Rossetti both off. Slick runners struggle on the ice

SS2 LA MOTTE CHALANCON-ST NAZAIRE LE DESERT (8.15 miles)
1 **Sarrazin** 14m28.2s; 2 **Basso** +13.3s; 3 **Kopecky** +36.8s
LEADER: **Hanninen**
Hanninen takes lead. Alen drops from fourth to 10th with puncture

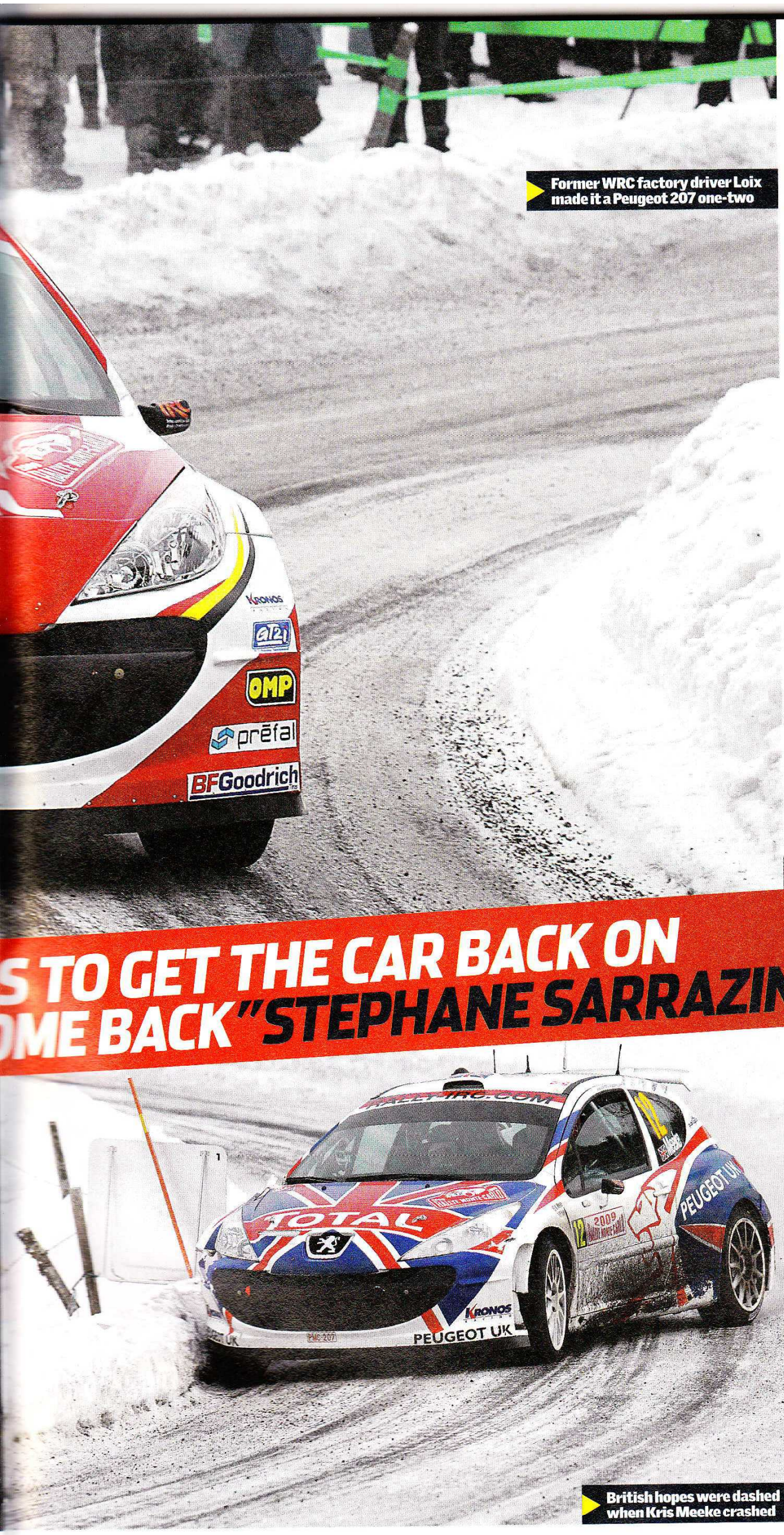
SS3 ST JEAN EN ROYANS-COL DE GAUDISSART (20.68 miles)
LEADER: **Hanninen**
1 **Meeke** 18m56.6s; 2 **Sarrazin** +0.7s; 3 **Loix** +4.9s
Meeke sets his first IRC fastest time. Gamble on studs works as heavy snow falls from mid-stage

SS4 LABATIE D'ANDAURE (15.62 miles)
LEADER: **Hanninen**
1 **Hanninen** 18m21.5s; 2 **Meeke** +8.5s; 3 **Gardemeister** +13.2s
Puncture for Vouilloz; Sarrazin off the road for five minutes

SS5 ST BONNET LE FROID (15.95 miles)
LEADER: **Hanninen**
1 **Hanninen** 17m01.3s; 2 **Alen** +5.5s; 3 **Ogier** +16.5s
Puncture for Ogier loses him 15sec. Vouilloz brake trouble after puncture in previous stage

SS6 LAMASTRE-ALBOUSSIERE (13.62 miles)
LEADER: **Hanninen**
1 **Kopecky** 15m11.0s; 2 **Gardemeister** +22.9s; 3 **Sarrazin** +24.0s
Puncture for Meeke costs him two places on the leaderboard

SS7 LABATIE D'ANDAU (15.72 miles)
LEADER: **Hanninen**
1 **Sarrazin** 16m19.6s; 2 (+11.2s; 3 **Loix** +12.6s
Vouilloz crashes off the ro and into retirement with damaged suspension



Former WRC factory driver Loix made it a Peugeot 207 one-two

S TO GET THE CAR BACK ON OME BACK" STEPHANE SARRAZIN

British hopes were dashed when Kris Meeke crashed



Kopecky was best non-Peugeot; he took fourth in his Skoda Fabia

penultimate test and admitted his hopes of victory were all-but gone. With more than 1m30s between him and Hanninen, the runner-up was entirely focused on retaining his own position – particularly as he'd come under heavy fire from Loix in SS7. The Belgian whipped seven seconds out of the difference between third and second places.

After a uniform approach to tyre selection in the morning, Ogier had taken a soft wet in the afternoon. Loix was on a winter tyre, which had been expected to work better on the final stage of the day. In the end, it was the opposite. Loix's overworked winter tyre couldn't cope with the damp ninth test. Ogier ended the stage 30sec to the good – and in the lead of the rally.

A puncture near the start of the stage had cost Hanninen two minutes. The Skoda driver couldn't believe it. "I didn't see anything," he said. "But it went down. We decided to drive on, but it was difficult."

Almost a minute down in third, Hanninen was not done yet. "I will push tomorrow," he promised. "I want the lead back, and anything is still possible with this event."

Fourth-placed Meeke was just 59.2sec off Ogier's lead, while Toni Gardemeister's Astra-run Grande Punto was fifth at the end of the day, the Finn finding life as a privateer tough again. His car's kart-like handling was doing nothing to inspire confidence and even less to provide grip between tyre and track.

Gardemeister's only crumb of comfort was that he had two minutes on his nearest rival, the fast-recovering Sarrazin. Kopecky was another driver in recovery mode, placing his Skoda seventh while Basso remained the leading factory Abarth in an uninspired eighth.

POSITIONS AT THE END OF LEG TWO

1 Ogier/Ingrassia	2h35m09.8s
2 Loix/Smets	+32.4s
3 Hanninen/Markkula	+54.8s
4 Meeke/Nagle	+59.2s
5 Gardemeister/Tuominen	+1m40.7s
6 Sarrazin/Renucci	+3m42.6s

LEG THREE 83.76 MILES RAIN/SNOW -7 TO 3 DEGREES

The inclusion of the Friday morning run over the top of Col de Perty, just north of Chateau Arnoux was supposed to be simply a way of breaking up the humdrum drive from Valence back down to Monaco before the main event of the rally – a brace of night-time runs over Turini and down the hill to Luceram. In the end, stage 10 was much more than a loosener. Overnight snow turned it into a stage that won't be forgotten by Hanninen and Meeke for a long time.

Determined to push to try to get back to the front, where he'd spent much of the event, Hanninen rolled his Skoda on the first corner. Two minutes before that, Meeke had been two gears higher when he did a more ➔

SS8 ST BONNET LE FROID (15.95 miles)
LEADER: **Hanninen**
1 **Hanninen** 14m31.2s; 2 **Kopecky** +2.3s; 3 **Loix** +5.2s
Sarrazin passes Basso to move into sixth, while Hanninen's fastest time secures his lead

SS9 LAMASTRE-ALBOUSSIERE (13.62 miles)
LEADER: **Ogier**
1 **Sarrazin** 14m42.3s; 2 **Ogier** +9.7s; 3 **Meeke** +17.4s
Puncture for Hanninen costs him 2m30s and the lead. Steering problem for Gardemeister

SS10 MONTAUBAN SUR OUVEZE-EYGALAYES (18.90m)
LEADER: **Ogier**
1 **Ogier** 28m00.4s; 2 **G'meister** +9.8s; 3 **Sarrazin** +17.0s
Hanninen and Meeke both crash out of the event near the start of the stage

SS11 COL DE BRAUS-LA BOLLENE (20.54 miles)
LEADER **Ogier**
1 **Loix** 30m38.1s; 2 **G'meister** +11.1s; 3 **Alen** +16.7s
Kopecky power steering failure. Gardemeister looks to be safe in second in his private Punto...

SS12 LANTOSQUE-LUCERAM (11.88 miles)
LEADER **Ogier**
1 **Basso** 17m16.0s; 2 **Arzeno** +17.7s; 3 **Kopecky** +30.2s
Alternator failure forces Gardemeister into retirement before the start of the stage

SS13 COL DE BRAUS-LA BOLLENE (20.54 miles)
LEADER **Ogier**
1 **Sarrazin** 29m51.7s; 2 **Kop'ky** +29.9s; 3 **Basso** +39.9s
Sarrazin's fastest to go clear of Kopecky for third place. Alen has to work on engine prior to start

SS14 LANTOSQUE-LUCERAM (11.88 miles)
LEADER **Ogier**
1 **Sarrazin** 16m42.6s; 2 **Basso** +11.0s; 3 **Loix** +16.5s
Ogier seals incredible maiden Monte Carlo Rally win. Alen retires on way back to Monaco

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

FREE LOGIC 3 I-STATION TRAVELLER SPEAKERS

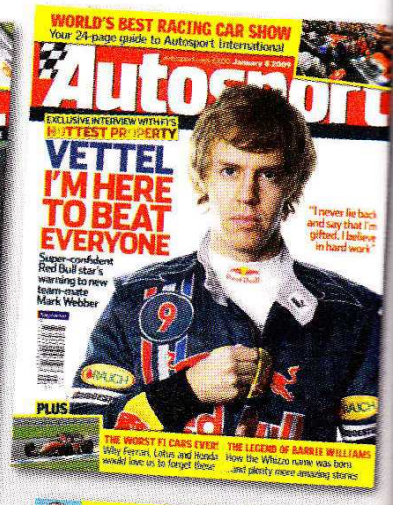
PLUS SAVE 15% ON THE SHOP PRICE WHEN YOU SUBSCRIBE TO AUTOSPORT

WORTH £30

SPEAKER DOCK COMPATIBLE WITH ALL MP3 PLAYERS



COMPLETE WITH SOFT CASE, BATTERIES AND AC ADAPTOR



FIVE GREAT REASONS TO SUBSCRIBE:

- FREE Logic 3 i-station traveller speakers
- **Then SAVE 15% on the shop price of Autosport**
- EASY, manageable payments – pay just £33.20 every 13 issues
- **FREE delivery direct to your door**
- NEVER MISS an issue





CALL OUR HOTLINE NOW ON 08456 777817 OR VISIT WWW.THEMAGAZINESHOP.COM/ASTSPEAKERS

Please have your Direct Debit details ready and quote the code M019P

YES Please start my subscription to Autosport with Direct Debit payments of £33.20 every 13 issues, and send me my FREE Logic 3 i-station speaker

YOUR DETAILS – must be completed (BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Title: Name:

Surname:

Address:

Postcode:

Telephone:

To receive great offers, news and product and service information from Haymarket Media Group, publisher of Autosport, please include your email address and mobile number below.

Email:

Mobile:

DIRECT DEBIT PAYMENT (UK ONLY)

DIRECT Debit
Originators' ID No. 850699

To the manager, bank name:

Address:

Postcode:

Name of account holder(s):

Bank sort code

Bank/building society account number

Reference no. (for office use only)

Please pay **Haymarket Media Group** Direct Debits from the account detailed on this instruction subject to the standards assured by the Direct Debit Guarantee. I understand that this instruction may remain with Haymarket Media Group and, if so, details will be passed electronically to my bank/building society.

Signature(s):

Date:

Please return this form to:

Autosport,
FREEPOST SEA14717,
Haywards Heath
RH16 3BR

Terms and conditions: This is a Direct Debit offer and is open to readers in the UK only. Direct Debit prices are valid for one year, after which they are subject to change. Details of the Direct Debit fee are available on request. Should prices change you will be informed in writing. Overseas rates are available by calling +44 (0) 208 4954621. Offer closes on February 5, 2009. Only one free gift per subscriber.

☐ Haymarket Media Group may contact you by post or phone from time to time, with special offers and product information. Please tick this box if you would prefer not to receive this information.

☐ Occasionally we may pass your details to carefully selected partners whose products we think would be of interest to you. Please tick this box if you would prefer not to receive this information.

M019P



Ogier reaches for his trophy on the podium back in Monte Carlo

comprehensive job on his 207.

He lost the Peugeot on a fast stretch and rolled five times. The crews from both cars were unharmed, but their cars were going no further. Everybody behind leaders Ogier and Loix prepared to move up one place, but Gardemeister went one better by making the most of a demon tyre choice and a puncture for Loix to steal second.

Having been nowhere for most of the event, Gardemeister would now go into the final night second, albeit close to two minutes down on Ogier. The gaps through the leading pack would have been large enough for the top runners to relax, but it was snowing again. As the snowploughs were deployed on the 1607-metre summit of Turini, the drivers fretted back down in Monaco. Suddenly, no gap would be big enough.

After half an hour of driving on the edge, Loix collected fastest time over Turini. Opening the door at the end, the Belgian admitted: "That was the most difficult stage I've ever done."

He knew, however, that he had to push if he was to stand any chance of beating Gardemeister to second. His SS11 efforts were rewarded with 11 seconds. On the way into the next stage, Loix was gifted second when Gardemeister's Punto stopped with a transmission and electrical fault on the road section.

With two minutes in hand over Sarrazin and the same to Ogier ahead, Loix throttled back. For a while, it looked as though Sarrazin might be able to overturn the gap. His wets, useless in the first stage, came into their own on the downhill SS12. All the former F1 driver and Peugeot Le Mans star's good work was undone when he clouted a wall near the end of the stage, dropping a minute and slipping into the grasp of Kopecky's chasing Skoda.

The Fabia was only two seconds behind Sarrazin's 207 going into the final loop, but the Skoda team had made it clear: it wanted a finish. A brace of fastest times in the middle of the night were enough for Sarrazin to cement third, with Loix and Ogier enjoying trouble-free, if fairly steady, runs to the end.

Basso was fifth behind Kopecky, while Alen had recovered to a fine sixth after yet more mechanical woes on the final night – only for a broken clutch to leave him stranded at the roadside on the way back to the ceremonial finish in Monaco.

But the night belonged to Ogier. He'd driven an astonishingly accomplished event and ended it with a lead the other Sebastien would have been proud of. And his driving wasn't all that was reminiscent of Loeb. Arriving at the finish line, the celebrations were muted. But the broad grin that broke out when he'd shut the door on the cameras told another story. He'd just won the Monte Carlo Rally at his first attempt. And that's a record not even the other one can beat.

FINAL STANDINGS Monte Carlo Rally, January 21-24, round 1 of 12

Pos	No.	Driver/co-driver	Car	Time
1	9	*Sebastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia	Peugeot 207 S2000	4h40m45.7s
2	4	Freddy Loix/Isidoor Smets	Peugeot 207 S2000	+1m43.6s
3	7	Stephane Sarrazin/Jacques Renucci	Peugeot 207 S2000	+2m21.6s
4	6	Jan Kopecky/Petr Stary	Skoda Fabia S2000	+3m17.3s
5	2	Giandomenico Basso/Mitia Dotta	Abarth Grande Punto	+4m28.0s
6	21	Frederic Romeyer/Thomas Fourmel	Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 9	+20m30.3s
7	15	Olivier Burri/Fabrice Gordon	Abarth Grande Punto	+21m23.0s
8	38	*Luca Betti/Giovanni Agnese	Renault Clio	+24m04.8s
9	20	Patrick Artru/Patrice Virieux	Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 9	+25m50.7s
10	36	*Damien Damaus/Christophe Jaussaud	Renault Clio	+27m59.8s
Retirements				Stage/reason
R	11	Anton Alen/Timo Alanne	Abarth Grande Punto	After SS14, clutch
R	12	Kris Meeke/Paul Nagle	Peugeot 207 S2000	SS10, accident
R	3	Juho Hanninen/Mikko Markkula	Skoda Fabia WRC	SS10, accident
R	1	Nicolas Vouilloz/Nicolas Klinger	Peugeot 207 S2000	SS7, accident
R	8	Didier Auriol/Denis Giraudet	Peugeot 207 S2000	SS1, accident

Starters/finishers 65/29 **Rally leaders** SS1 Vouilloz; SS2-8 Hanninen; SS9-14 Ogier
*Not eligible for Intercontinental Rally Championship points

Driver table

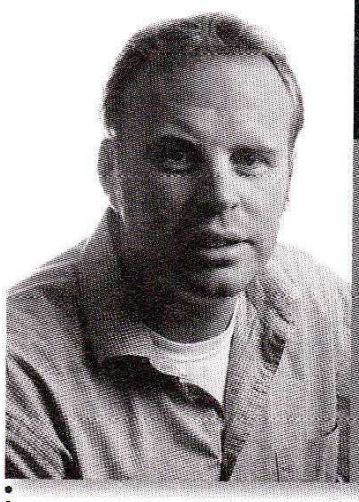
Pos	Driver	Pts
1	Freddy Loix (B)	10
2	Stephane Sarrazin (F)	8
3	Jan Kopecky (CZ)	6
4	Giandomenico Basso (I)	5
5	Frederic Romeyer (F)	4
6	Olivier Burri (CH)	3
7	Patrick Artru (F)	2
8	Tobia Cavallini (I)	1

Manufacturer table

1	Peugeot	18
2	Abarth	6
3	Skoda	5
4	Mitsubishi	4

Next round Rally Internacional de Curitiba (Brazil), March 5-7

ALL PICS: IRCSERIES.COM



DAVID EVANS
FLYING FINISH

AND NOW for the tough bit; the second round of the IRC is going to have one heck of a job trying to top last week's season opener in Monte Carlo. Everything went right for the rally and for the Eurosport-backed series. Okay, not even IRC chief Marcello Lotti and his crew could fix the weather, but they probably had a go.

A new route taking in the best of the Ardeche and the Alpes Maritimes, heavy snow, loads of ice, a smidge of dry asphalt, a brace of midnight stages in the frozen mountains and some of the best-sounding rally cars anywhere in the world. Is there a better way to start the season? In short, no.

In the week prior to Monte Carlo, I'd been told by FIA president Max Mosley that rallying on television did not work. I'm sorry Max, but you're wrong. Eurosport's coverage – including seven live stages – of the Monte Carlo Rally was awesome. I realise it's loads easier when you have a dedicated channel (or two) and you can schedule the programmes when you want, but the technical production was superb.

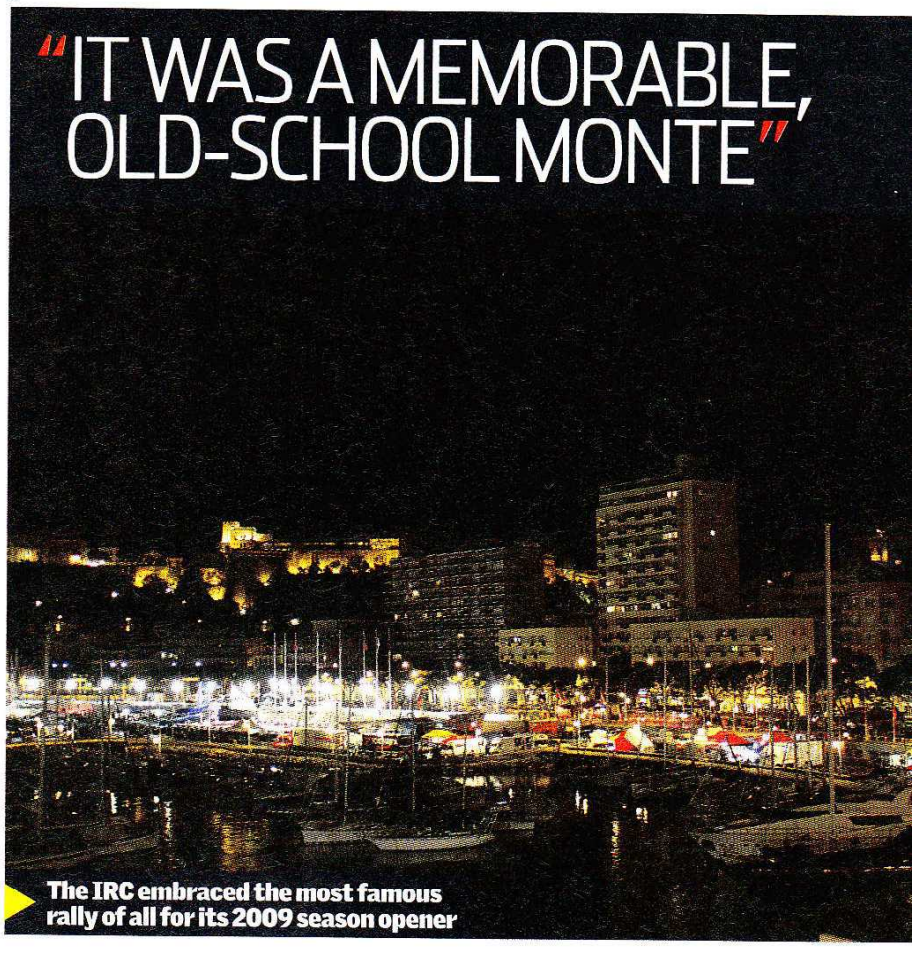
The thing that struck me about everything that the Automobile Club de Monaco and IRC did last week was the simplicity. Nothing was over-complicated. This was a rally in its purest form. There were no split times, no SupeRally, no virtual spectator, no jiggery-pokery trying to turn a rally into a race. Heck, there wasn't even a superspecial. Just a memorable, old-school Monte.

If there was one criticism, it's that the ACM didn't go far enough with the changes. Fourteen stages weren't enough. Sisteron for one, went begging. Next time, let's have double the stages and double the mileage in the French Alps. Don't forget, France – the nation where this event runs – is the birth place of Dakar, an event that laughs in the face of health and safety and then tells its competitors to get on with another flat-out 500 miles.

Soon enough, it will be decision time and the ACM will have to chose between the *world* championship and the freedom that goes with the IRC for its 2010 event. If this event did one thing, it highlighted the claustrophobia of the WRC.

Rallies need to be allowed to use their imagination every once in a while. The WRC remains the best rally championship in the world, but it needs to be ready to instigate and accept change, as well as accepting criticism. Otherwise, the Monte Carlo Rally might just become a thing of its past.

"IT WAS A MEMORABLE, OLD-SCHOOL MONTE"

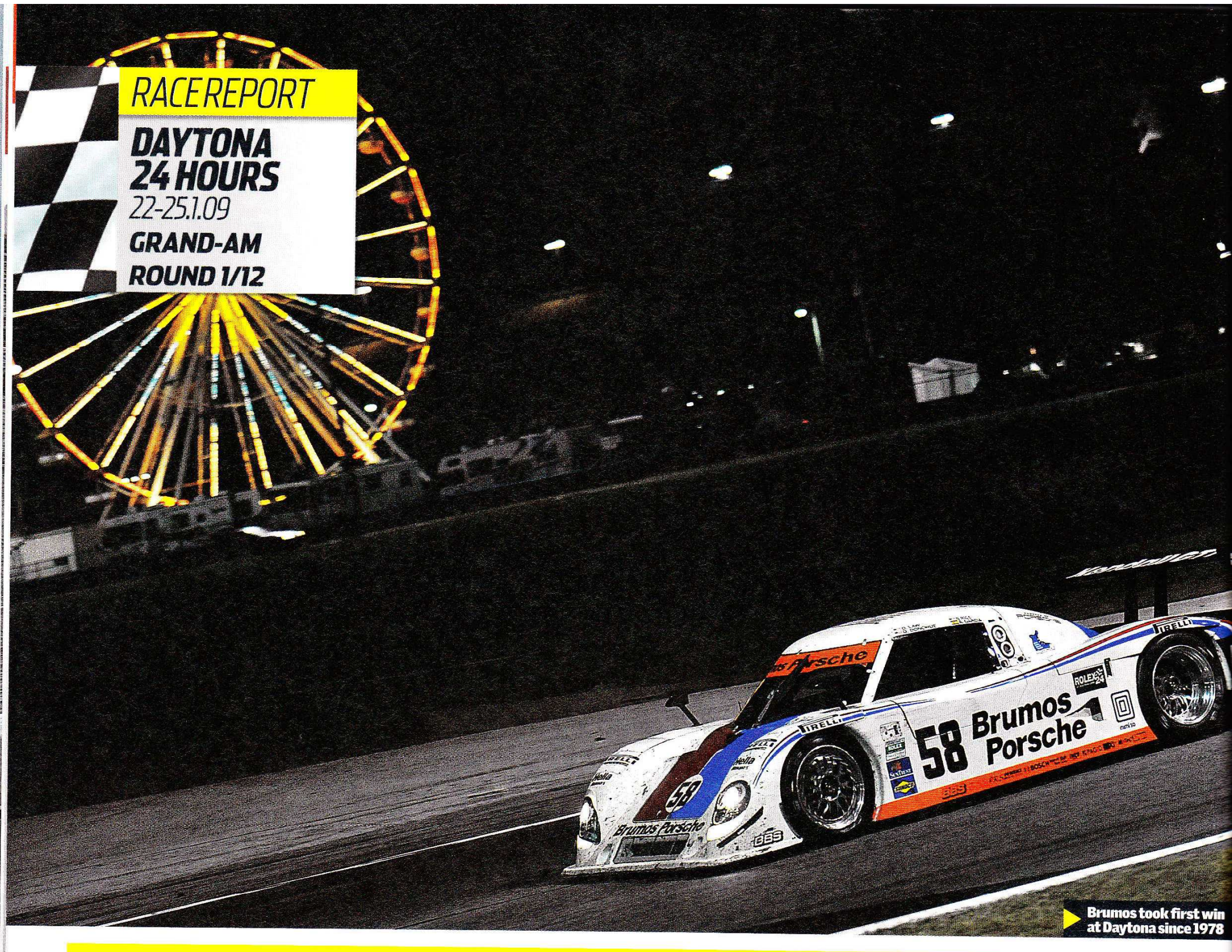

The IRC embraced the most famous rally of all for its 2009 season opener

RACEREPORT

DAYTONA 24 HOURS

22-25.1.09

GRAND-AM ROUND 1/12



Brumos took first win at Daytona since 1978

Brumos beats 'em by a whisker

Veteran US sportscar squad Brumos Racing took its first Daytona win for 31 years after a nail-biting climax to the Florida enduro. By GARY WATKINS

THERE'S NO need for superlatives and no need for hyperbole. A trio of facts reveal pretty much the whole story of the 2009 Daytona 24 Hours. Six cars remained on the lead lap at half distance, four cars were covered by a second and a half with an hour to go and the margin of victory at the finish was just 0.167sec. This one was close...and close all the way.

So much so that last weekend's US endurance classic boiled down into a one-hour or, more accurately, a 53-minute sprint to the flag between that quartet of cars. David Donohue ultimately came out on top in the Brumos Riley-Porsche he shared with Darren Law, Buddy Rice and Antonio Garcia, but the result wasn't settled until the cars sped up the famous Daytona International Speedway banking for the final time.

Donohue was on fire over the final laps after taking over the lead Brumos Riley MkXI at the final round of pitstops. He'd claimed pole position for the Grand-Am opener on Thursday, 38 years after his father, Mark, did the same, and now he was looking to emulate his dad's 1969 victory.

The crew of the lead Brumos car produced a massive effort when the leaders came in line astern for one final pitstop during a caution period almost bang on the 23-hour mark. Uniquely among the four protagonists, the crew had to change driver and yet they still leapfrogged Donohue ahead of team-mate Joao Barbosa, who shared with Terry Borcheller, Hurley Haywood and JC France. What's more, he came within a whisker of taking the lead from Juan Pablo Montoya in the Chip Ganassi Racing Riley-Lexus MkXI/XX.

It was hard to believe that what happened next was being played out in the closing stages of a 24-hour race. Time after time Donohue tried to find away past Montoya, either out of the Bus Stop chicane on the back straight or up onto the banking from Turn 7. One lap, he'd try the outside into the first corner, the next lap he'd be on the inside.

It was all the more thrilling because Barbosa and Max Angelelli in the Wayne Taylor Racing Dallara-Ford were right in their slipstream, waiting to capitalise on any error. Anyone of these four cars could genuinely have won this race.

Montoya later admitted that he'd believed it "was just a matter of time" before the Brumos car found a way past to deprive him, Scott Pruett and Memo Rojas of another Daytona victory. The inevitable happened when the Colombian NASCAR star was baulked exiting the Bus Stop and was powerless to prevent Donohue passing on the banking.

Just as remarkable was ex-F1 winner Montoya's pursuit of the new leader.

1500 HOUR 1

Bernhard takes lead for Penske on lap two, stays in front until early pitstop. 2008 GT-winning Speedsource Mazda behind the wall with fuel leak

1600 HOUR 2

Bernhard back in lead as his rivals stop, but can't pull out more than six seconds on Donohue. Speedsource Mazda returns to track 41 laps down

1700 HOUR 3

Dumas hunts down Law, retaking lead for Penske. First safety car called after two hours 50 minutes. Quick Farnbacher Porsche leads GT class

1800 HOUR 4

Law past Franchitti two laps after second caution. Dumas loses positions to Borcheller and Montoya in traffic. Law pulls out 11-sec lead

1900 HOUR 5

Allmendinger grinds to halt in best of the Shank Rileys. Doran Dallara moves to top of leaderboard after foregoing stop under yellows

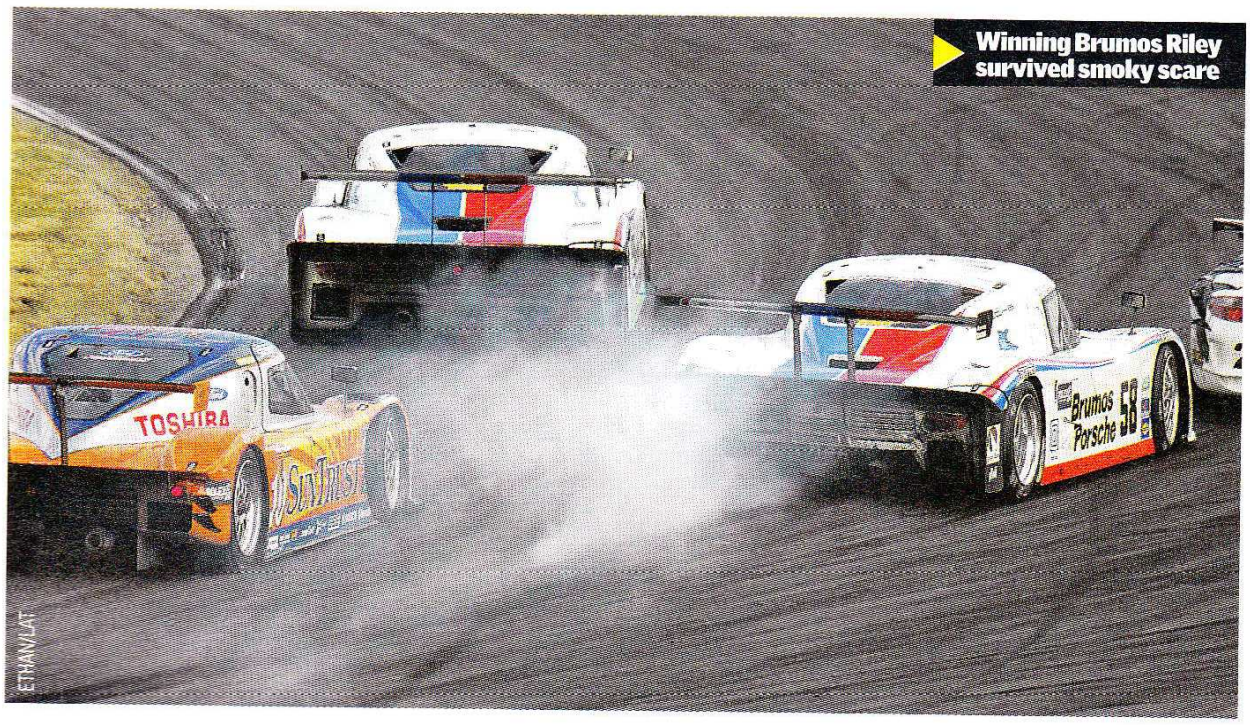
2000 HOUR 6

Turner's retirement mirrors Allmendinger's. Rojas stops for repairs after Montoya's contact—two laps lost. Magnussen Pontiac leads



WILLIAMS/LAT

It really was this close! Top four ran together



ETHAN/LAT

Winning Brumos Riley survived smoky scare



WILLIAMS/LAT

Garcia (left) had to join in with US flag waving



LAT SOUTH

Ganassi came within 0.2sec of fourth win

"I was surprised I could stay with him," said Montoya, whose pursuit of Donohue over the final 35 minutes was aided by first Angelelli and then Barbosa losing contact and having to settle for fourth and third respectively. "I drove my butt off in the hope that they would make a mistake."

Montoya was just six tenths behind starting the final lap and only backed off out of the Bus Stop for the final time. The Brumos/Ganassi battle wasn't over, however. The on-track battle turned into a war of words off it.

Pruett and Montoya let it be known in no uncertain terms that, to their mind, the latest 3.99-litre Porsche engine had a significant advantage at Daytona last weekend, despite Grand-Am giving Daytona Prototypes running the flat-six powerplant two performance penalties over the winter.

"We gave it 110 percent," said veteran Pruett. "Congratulations to Brumos, but it is frustrating, because when guys just drive past you, it doesn't seem right."

Montoya suggested that a repass of Donohue was never really on the cards.

"We could get alongside, but they'd still get the run on us," he explained. "Hopefully Grand-Am will do something about this."

Donohue wasn't impressed by his rivals' comments, suggesting that the closest finish ever in the history of the 24 Hours at Daytona indicated that the rulemakers had got it right.

"We got them on the straight because we were trimmed out," he said. "Did you notice how they closed up in the turns? I didn't just drive past; I really had to plan it and seize the opportunity."

Wayne Taylor, who shared his car with Angelelli, Brian ➔

2100 HOUR 7

Dixon edges away from Briscoe in the battle of the Antipodean IndyCar racers. Garcia closes on Dixon in closing minutes of stint

2200 HOUR 8

Werner stops with driveshaft failure on quickest of Farnbacher Porsches. Garcia tags barriers on new tyres and loses three laps

2300 HOUR 9

Second best TRG Porsche crew (including Collard and Lietz) moves into GT lead. Second Shank Riley is retired with crank sensor problem

2400 HOUR 10

Ganassi briefly runs one-two. Ducote crashes Alegra's Riley-BMW—car is retired. Farnbacher retakes lead with second best car

0100 HOUR 11

AIM Riley, which briefly led, is brought in with Ford engine glitch. Car is retired after attempt at repairs. Dallara leads for first time

0200 HOUR 12

GAINSCO changes complete rear end after contact with another Daytona Prototype. Debris causes 11th caution of the race

Frisselle and Pedro Lamy, added his own ha'penny to the argument: "Those Porsche-powered cars are just too quick. You can see it under acceleration and on the banking."

The other Porsche-powered contender, the Penske Riley driven by factory drivers Romain Dumas and Timo Bernhard, and Ryan Briscoe, was definitely the fastest car in the race. This trio had the pace to overtake the other leading contenders almost at will, something they were required to do early on courtesy of a fuel pick-up problem that reduced the length of their stints for the first third of the race. What they weren't able to do was to eke out any breathing space.

"With so many yellows it is impossible to make a break," offered a disappointed Dumas. "Now I understand that this event is more like a NASCAR race than Le Mans, Spa or the Nurburgring [the other 24-hour classics]. There are so many safety cars."

Penske remained in the hunt until the 18th hour, when the team was required to change the rear end after a driveshaft exploded. The team traced the problem to a split CV boot on the gearbox side of the halfshaft.

It was an unlikely problem, but one that cost Penske 15 laps and left the car in sixth place. That's where it finished, despite another delay after Briscoe damaged the splitter when the nose dug in a hole in the dirt on the wrong side of the kerb at the Bus Stop.

The Penske Riley was one of the cars on the lead lap at half distance. The sixth was the second Ganassi Riley, in which 2008 Daytona winner Dario Franchitti was joined by Scott Dixon and Alex Lloyd.

This car remained in the hunt until Franchitti encountered a braking problem in hour 17. It forced him straight on at the Bus Stop and then into the pits, where a brake line was replaced.

Franchitti and his team-mates remained a couple of laps off the lead until Dixon lost his front bodywork a couple of hours later. A longer delay meant there was no way back from fifth position.

The Penske Riley and the second Ganassi car, along with the second Brumos entry, had remained on the lead lap throughout the first half of the race. The other three had all encountered minor delays, yet still been able to claw their way back courtesy of the yellows.

The winning car lost time when Garcia went off on cold tyres at Turn 3 on an out-lap. Montoya damaged the nose on the Ganassi Riley against a backmarker, while the SunTrust-sponsored Dallara had to fight its way back onto the lead lap no few than three times.

Its first delay came when the team decided to change a damaged exhaust, which was causing the gearbox to overheat. Team boss Taylor had to make an unscheduled stop in the night when tyre debris caught fire in the front right wheelarch and then the team endured a delay changing the front brakes on Sunday morning.

"Each time we were able to gain the lap back," explained Taylor, who only drove one double stint during the night, "and most of that was down to Max."

Fourth place was a decent, even surprising, result for the Dallara DP01, which was making its 24-hour debut. Taylor's team had been waiting for an engine problem that afflicted all its Ford runners to raise its head for the best part of the race.

"It has been mentioned to u but we've decided to race on a hard as possible," said Taylor. "We've got to be positive."

The gremlin on the Roush/Yates Ford V8s resulted in the retirement of the two Michael Shank Racing Rileys, the Dorar team's Dallara, the two Krohn Lolas and the AIM Autosport R The problem was traced to the crankshaft trigger wheel work loose and was believed to be t result of a faulty batch of parts

> *"THIS ONE IS FOR THE BRUMOS GUYS WHO'VE TURNED THIS TEAM AROUND"* **DAVID DONOHUE**



Porsche prevails in GT power stakes

TRG 911 GT3 uses stealth rather than speed to score GT class victory

THE RACER'S Group didn't have the fastest 911s at the weekend, but it did have the most reliable cars in the GT field. And that's why it came out on top in the battle of the Porsche superteams ahead of arch-rival Farnbacher Loles.

The best of the five TRG-run 911 GT3 Cup cars driven by factory drivers Jorg Bergmeister and Patrick Long, and Justin Marks, Andy Lally and RJ Valentine ran faultlessly throughout the 24 Hours to take the Californian team's first victory at Daytona since its shock outright win in 2003. Farnbacher had to make do with a fifth in class after a spate of driveshaft problems.

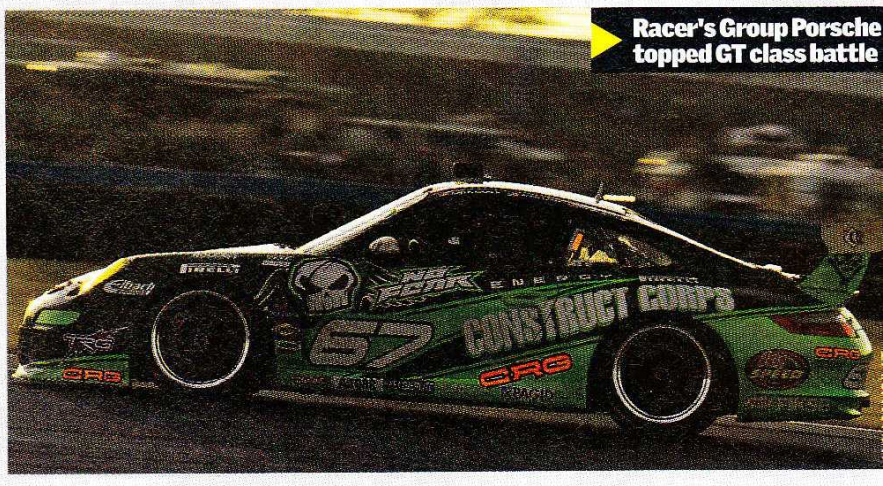
"There's no such thing as a free lunch," said TRG boss Kevin Buckler later. "We knew we could run quicker if we set them up lower and had them scraping along the ground, but this is a 24-hour race."

Porsche sources revealed that the lower ride height on the Farnbacher cars was to the detriment of driveshaft life. One by one, the German-American team's cars succumbed to failures.

The quickest of the team's entries, which included Wolf Henzler, Dirk Werner and Richard Westbrook on its driving strength, lost ground in the eighth hour. The Farnbacher flag was then flown by Dominik Farnbacher, Kevin Roush, Matthew Marsh and Eric Lux, which looked favourite for GT honours until it ran into driveshaft problems in the 20th hour.

TRG had already agreed that its best two cars would hold station if the Farnbacher Porsche hit problems. That ensured the win for Bergmeister and co, but the team's decision turned out to be academic when the second-placed car in which Porsche factory drivers Emmanuel Collard and Richard Lietz were joined by Spencer Pumpelly, Tim George and Ted Ballou lost a couple of laps with a rear suspension problem.

Third place went to the Wright Motorsports Porsche driven by Sascha Maassen, Patrick Pilet, BJ Zacharias an Phillip Martien. Its only issue was throttle problem that afflicted it throughout the ra



0300
HOUR 13
Top six separated by 12sec. GAINSCO Riley back on track, now 23 laps behind leaders. Farnbacher continues to lead GT class

0400
HOUR 14
Second Krohn Lola-Ford retired with engine problem. Dixon and Briscoe are battling again

0500
HOUR 15
Another caution means top six are separated by just two seconds at the top of the hour

0600
HOUR 16
Penske leads winning Brumos car by eight second at end of the hour

0700
HOUR 17
Franchitti straight-lines the Bus Stop. A lap is lost attending to the right-front brake. Angelelli and France hit each other

0800
HOUR 1
Dumas stops with driveshaft Car is pushed back to its garag losing 15 laps

AJ Allmendinger retired the best of the MSR Rileys from the lead in the sixth hour, while its sister car, whose roster of drivers included Oswaldo Negri and Ryan Hunter-Reay, was sitting pretty on the lead lap when it went out just before one-third distance. The best of the Krohn Lolas, in which Darren Turner joined Ricardo Zonta and Nic Jonsson, was getting faster and faster when it conked out just 10 minutes after Allmendinger.

The Doran Dallara, which was running an older-spec engine, lasted longer and had already been delayed with a steering problem when it retired on Sunday morning. The car, shared by Memo Gidley, Brad Jaeger, Fabrizio Gollin and Matteo Bobbi, was running seventh when it went out in the 17th hour.

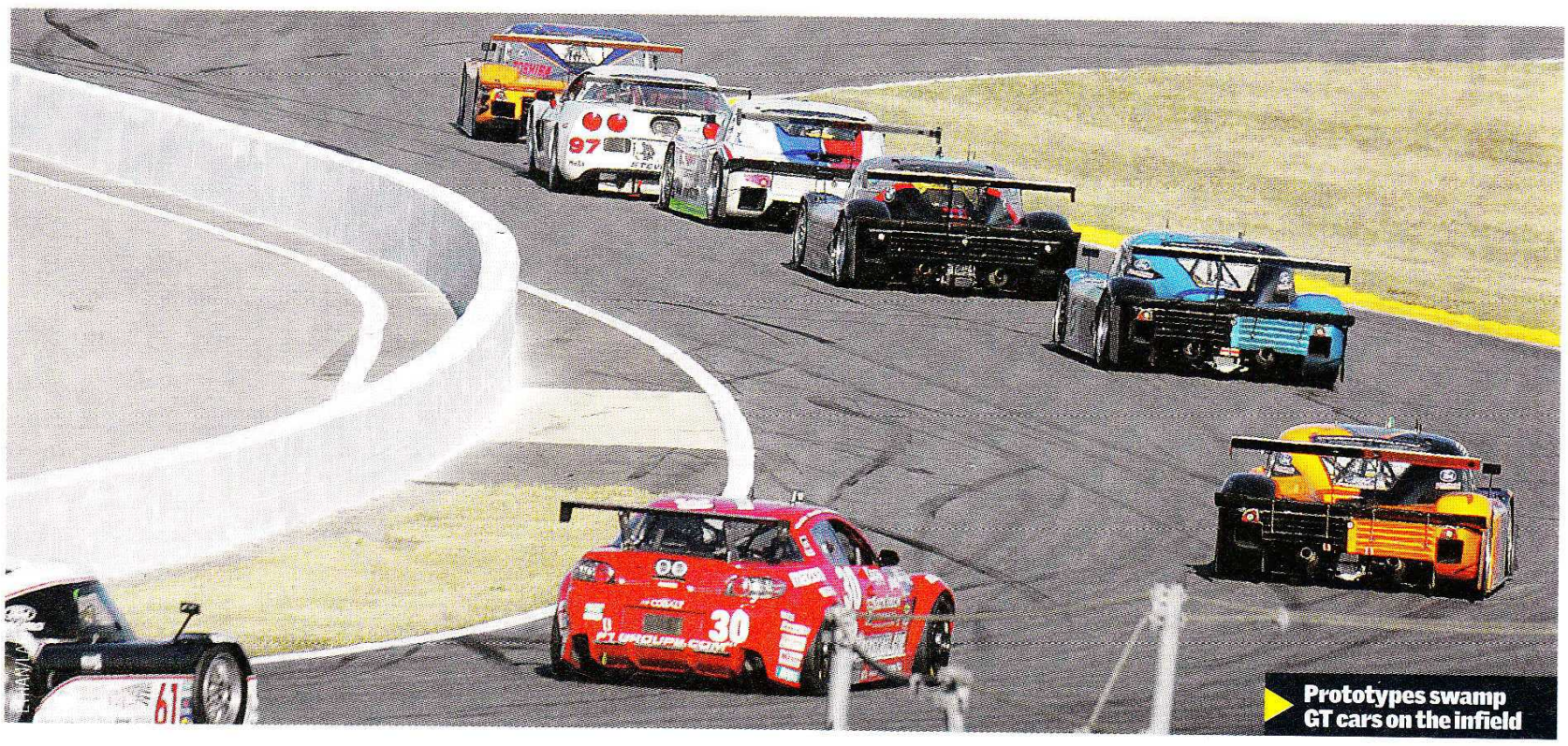
Its retirement allowed the GAINSCO Riley driven by Alex Gurney, Jon Fogarty, Jimmie Johnson and Jimmy Vasser to take seventh. The Pontiac-powered car, which Gurney reckoned was "hopeless on the straights", wouldn't have been a contender even without two long stops.

The Childress-Howard Crawford was the first of the second-string DPs home in eighth place. The Pontiac-engined DP03 driven by Andy Wallace, Rob Finlay, Danica Patrick and Casey Mears lost 20 laps early on trying to solve multiple electrical problems that plagued the car to the end of the race.

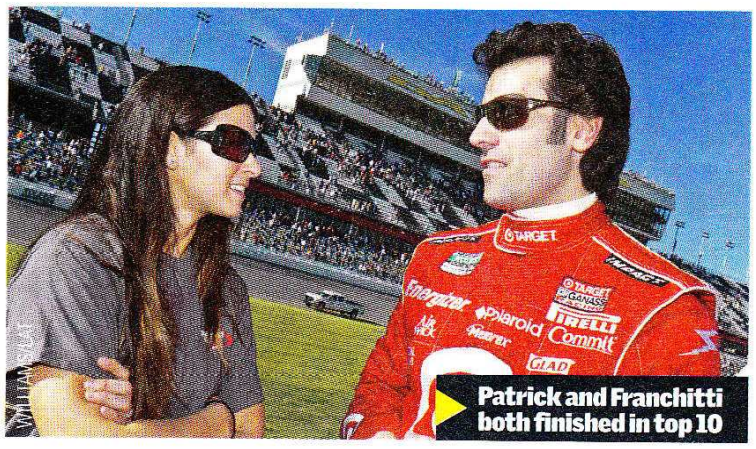
"We've got alarms going off all over the place," said former Daytona winner Wallace. "We've fixed one short circuit, but we think there's another one. We daren't try to fix it, because we might not get it started again."

Wallace has won all the big enduros, but for Donohue this was the first for the son of an American road racing legend. He tried to play down the significance of his triumph, coming as it did 40 years after his father shared victory with Chuck Parsons in a Penske-run Lola T70.

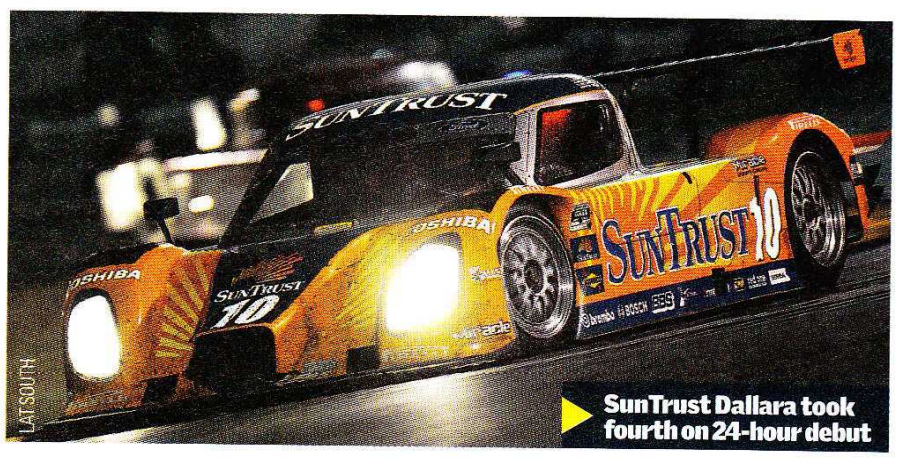
"I'm certainly very proud of my father and his achievements, but it really is a coincidence that I've managed to nail this race on the 40th anniversary," he said. "He's been dead quite some time and this one is really for the Brumos guys who have put all the effort in to turn this team around."



Prototypes swamp GT cars on the infield



Patrick and Franchitti both finished in top 10



SunTrust Dallara took fourth on 24-hour debut

RESULTS January 22-25, Daytona 24 Hours, Daytona (USA), Grand-Am round 1/12

24 HOURS, 735 LAPS, 2616.60 MILES

Pos	Drivers (Nat)	Team	Car	Result	Qual	Grid
1	**David Donohue** (USA)/**Antonio Garcia** (E)/**Darren Law** (USA)/**Buddy Rice** (USA)	Brumos Racing	Riley-Porsche MkXI	24h00m26.465s	1m40.540s	1
2	**Scott Pruett** (USA)/**Juan Pablo Montoya** (CO)/**Memo Rojas** (MEX)	Ganassi with Sabates	Riley-Lexus MkXI/XX	+0.167s	1m41.016s	4
3	**Joao Barbosa** (P)/**Terry Borcheller** (USA)/**JC France** (USA)/**Hurley Haywood** (USA)	Brumos Racing	Riley-Porsche MkXI	+31.969s	1m41.375s	7
4	**Max Angelelli** (I)/**Pedro Lamy** (P)/**Brian Frisselle** (USA)/**Wayne Taylor** (USA)	SunTrust Racing (Taylor)	Dallara-Ford DP01	+37.054s	1m41.311s	5
5	**Scott Dixon** (NZ)/**Dario Franchitti** (GB)/**Alex Lloyd** (GB)	Ganassi with Sabates	Riley-Lexus MkXI	-4 laps	1m41.316s	6
6	**Timo Bernhard** (D)/**Romain Dumas** (F)/**Ryan Briscoe** (AUS)	Penske Racing	Riley-Porsche MkXX	-18 laps	1m40.541s	2
7	**Alex Gurney** (USA)/**Jon Fogarty** (USA)/**Jimmie Johnson** (USA)/**Jimmy Vasser** (USA)	GAINSCO/Stallings	Riley-Pontiac MkXI/XX	-21 laps	1m41.666s	9
8	**Andy Wallace** (GB)/**Rob Finlay** (USA)/**Casey Mears** (USA)/**Danica Patrick** (USA)	Childress-Howard M'sports	Crawford-Pontiac DP03	-33 laps	1m45.070s	18
9	**Andy Lally** (USA)/**Jorg Bergmeister** (D)/**Patrick Long** (USA)/**Justin Marks** (USA)/**RJ Valentine** (USA)	TRG	Porsche GT3 Cup (GT)	-40 laps	1m49.540s	21
10	**Spencer Pumpelly** (USA)/**Emmanuel Collard** (F)/**Richard Lietz** (A)/**Ted Ballou** (USA)/**Tim George Jr** (USA)	TRG	Porsche GT3 Cup (GT)	-41 laps	1m50.109s	26
11	**Sascha Maassen** (D)/**Patrick Pilet** (F)/**BJ Zacharias** (USA)/**Phillip Martien** (USA)	Wright Motorsports	Porsche GT3 Cup (GT)	-44 laps	1m50.517s	30
12	**Paul Edwards** (USA)/**Jan Magnussen** (DK)/**Kelly Collins** (USA)	Banner Racing	Pontiac GXP.R (GT)	-46 laps	1m51.236s	34
13	**Dominik Farnbacher** (D)/**Eric Lux** (USA)/**Matthew Marsh** (GB)/**Kevin Roush** (USA)	Farnbacher Loles Racing	Porsche GT3 Cup (GT)	-47 laps	1m50.234s	28
14	**Robin Liddell** (GB)/**Jeff Bucknum** (USA)/**Andrew Davis** (USA)	Stevenson Motorsports	Pontiac GXP.R (GT)	-51 laps	1m51.481s	38
15	**Richard Westbrook** (GB)/**Steve Johnson** (USA)/**Dave Lacey** (CDN)/**Robert Nearn** (GB)/**James Sofronas** (USA)	Farnbacher Loles Racing	Porsche GT3 Cup (GT)	-55 laps	1m51.376s	37
16	**Dirk Werner** (D)/**Wolf Henzler** (D)/**Leh Keen** (USA)/**Dominik Farnbacher** (D)/**Richard Westbrook** (GB)	Farnbacher Loles Racing	Porsche GT3 Cup (GT)	-59 laps	1m49.946s	25
17	**Jeff Segal** (USA)/**Emil Assentato** (USA)/**Nick Longhi** (USA)/**Matt Plumb** (USA)	SpeedSource	Mazda RX-8 (GT)	-60 laps	1m49.822s	23
18	**Randy Pobst** (USA)/**Shane Lewis** (USA)/**Gerardo Bonilla** (PR)/**Jerome Jacalone** (USA)/**Joe Jacalone** (USA)	Gotham Competition	Porsche GT3 Cup (GT)	-60 laps	1m50.206s	27
19	**Christophe Bouchut** (F)/**Raphael Matos** (BR)/**Scott Tucker** (USA)/**Ed Zabinski** (USA)	Level 5 Motorsports	Riley-BMW MkXX	-70 laps	1m41.569s	8
20	**Ricky Taylor** (USA)/**Jared Beyer** (USA)/**David Martinez** (MEX)/**Jordan Taylor** (USA)	Beyer Racing	Riley-Pontiac MkXI	-73 laps	1m42.058s	11
23	**Guy Cosmo** (USA)/**Jason Pridmore** (USA)/**Scott Russell** (USA)/**Jeff Ward** (USA)	Spirit of Daytona Racing	Coyote-Porsche CC/08/01	-86 laps	1m42.475s	13
26	**Pierre Kaffer** (D)/**Allan Simonsen** (DK)/**Giacomo Petrobelli** (I)/**Gabrio Rosa** (I)/**Giorgio Rosa** (I)	Farnbacher Loles Racing	Porsche GT3 Cup (GT)	-113 laps	1m51.254s	35
28	**Sylvain Tremblay** (USA)/**Jonathan Bomarito** (USA)/**Nick Ham** (GB)/**David Haskell** (USA)	SpeedSource	Mazda RX-8 (GT)	-144 laps	1m49.445s	20
31	**Memo Gidley** (USA)/**Matteo Bobbi** (I)/**Fabrizio Gollin** (I)/**Brad Jaeger** (USA)	Doran Racing	Dallara-Ford DP01	504 laps - engine	1m42.740s	14
34	**Tracy Krohn** (USA)/**Oliver Gavin** (GB)/**Eric van de Poele** (B)	Krohn Racing	Lola-Ford B08/70	374 laps - engine	1m44.041s	15
36	**Nathan Swartzbaugh** (USA)/**Max Papis** (I)/**Luca Drudi** (I)/**Cesar Campanico** (P)/**Jay Wilton** (USA)	Mastercar - Coast 2 Costa	Ferrari 430 Challenge (GT)	324 laps - electrical	1m52.402s	45
38	**Burt Frisselle** (USA)/**David Empringham** (CDN)/**John Farano** (CDN)/**Alex Figge** (USA)/**Mark Wilkins** (CDN)	AIM Autosport	Riley-Ford MkXI/XX	301 laps - engine	1m42.086s	12
39	**Ryan Dalziel** (GB)/**Tomas Enge** (CZ)/**Carlos de Quesada** (USA)/**Chapman Ducote** (USA)/**Jean-Francois Dumoulin** (CDN)	Alegra Motorsports	Riley-BMW MkXI	292 laps - acc damage	1m40.915s	19*
41	**Oswaldo Negri** (BR)/**Colin Braun** (USA)/**Ryan Hunter-Reay** (USA)/**Mark Patterson** (ZA)	Michael Shank Racing	Riley-Ford MkXI/XX	262 laps - engine	1m41.796s	10
44	**Leo Hindery** (USA)/**Darren Manning** (GB)/**Bill Lester** (USA)/**Kyle Petty** (USA)	Orbit Racing	Riley-BMW MkXI	216 laps - engine	1m52.108s	16
45	**Johannes van Overbeek** (USA)/**Jim Lowe** (USA)/**Jim Pace** (USA)/**Tim Sugden** (GB)	JLowe Racing (Farnbacher Loles)	Porsche GT3 Cup (GT)	201 laps - driveshaft	1m50.573s	31
46	**Ricardo Zonta** (BR)/**Nic Jonsson** (S)/**Darren Turner** (GB)	Krohn Racing	Lola-Ford B08/70	159 laps - engine	1m40.892s	3
47	**Michael Valiante** (CDN)/**AJ Allmendinger** (USA)/**Ian James** (GB)/**John Pew** (USA)	Michael Shank Racing	Riley-Ford MkXX	153 laps - engine	1m40.651s	17*

Starters 49. **Winner's average speed** 108.992mph. **Fastest lap** **Dumas**, 1m41.537s, 126.220mph. In each car, first-named driver set qualifying time and started the race. *Grid penalty.

NEXT ROUND Virginia International Raceway (USA), April 25

0900 HOUR 19
Law executes quick spin on cold tyres as he takes to the banking at Turn 7. Almost immediately Dixon loses nose and has to pit for repairs

1000 HOUR 20
GT leader Roush in Farnbacher car hits driveshaft problems and has to pit for repairs. TRG Porsches now run one-two in GT

1100 HOUR 21
Spirit of Daytona Coyote catches fire in pits as a result of fuel leak. Car is able to continue after repairs

1200 HOUR 22
Lead Brumos car leads best Ganassi Riley at top of the hour

1300 HOUR 23
Final caution period: four leaders with Montoya at front of queue separated by just a second and a half

1400 HOUR 24
Donohue beats Barbosa out of pits, harries Montoya and finally takes lead with 25 laps to go. Crosses line 0.167sec ahead

RACEREPORT

A1GP
Taupo
23-25.1.09
ROUND 4/9



Jani gets points for the Swiss

Reigning champions Neel Jani and Team Switzerland ended up on top in NZ after a day battling Ireland's Adam Carroll. MARK GLENDENNING reports

IT TOOK a small mechanical glitch to slow Adam Carroll's fortification of A1 Team Ireland's points lead at Taupo last weekend. Switzerland's Neel Jani was able to take advantage of the green car's pitlane problem to claim the feature-race win.

Carroll had been on target for a clean sweep of the round, having already taken pole for both races and won the sprint earlier in the day, but his progress was interrupted just after his team completed the second compulsory pitstop.

Ireland and Switzerland had pitted on the same lap, and Carroll's one-second lead just prior to pitting should have been enough to ensure that he'd keep his advantage when the pair rejoined. His stop went as planned but, moments after Carroll pulled back into pitlane, his car stalled – coincidentally, right next to the Swiss team, which was just preparing to send Jani on his way.

"Everything was going well until the pitstop," Carroll said. "I don't really know what happened, other than the anti-stall came in, and then the engine stalled, and then I got going again."

By then, Jani was already underway. "I saw Adam next to me and I heard his engine revving on the limiter, so I thought there must be a problem," he said. "I kept on my side and took him like that."

Carroll's life was made more difficult by the fact that Jani managed to feed back onto the circuit just ahead of a gaggle of midfielders, which the Ireland car landed squarely in the middle of. By the time Carroll had cleared them Jani was 2.6sec up the road. With the pair so evenly matched for pace, there wasn't much Carroll could do about the gap.

A late flicker of hope for Ireland came when Satrio Hermanto tried taking one of the corners backwards and ended up beaching the Indonesian entry, prompting a brief spell behind the safety car. But Jani made a perfect restart and victory was secured a few laps later. It was a good result for the Swiss driver, not least because he'd been so ill at the start of the previous week that doctors suspected meningitis.

"It must be the weather in New Zealand," he joked. "I think all the fresh and clean air helped me."

Pitstop dramas aside, most of the interesting moments of the race took place on the first lap, and indeed it was then that Jani laid the foundations for the win that was to follow with a brilliant start from fifth on the grid. His progress was helped by Robert Doornbos bogging the Netherlands car down slightly from third, and then spending the run to the first corner trying unsuccessfully to stop Australia's John Martin from getting past.

Portugal's Filipe Albuquerque



Jani returned to number one with feature win



Carroll chased Jani home after late-race safety car



Van der Drift adrift: not a good home race for NZ

was also quick off the line and went into Turn 1 clamped to Carroll's diffuser, meaning that when Jani came sailing down on the outside he had no option but to stay there. As a result, Jani came out of Turn 2 virtually side-by-side with the Ireland car before conceding the lead on the way to Turn 3.

With Ireland, Switzerland and Portugal all running to such a similar pace, the Portuguese team opted to call Albuquerque in for his first stop four laps later than Carroll and Jani. One lap earlier and the strategy might have worked, but Albuquerque lost a tiny bit of time on his in-lap, and found himself staring at the back of the Swiss car again when he rejoined. Third was still a good result, although Albuquerque still felt that a better position was on the cards.



Doornbos and Albuquerque both picked up a third place

ALL PICS: A1GP

"The speed was really there this weekend," he said. "It was just a matter of track position, and being in front."

Behind them, Team Australia never looked like threatening the podium finishers, but fourth was still a good outcome from a team that's showing signs of getting to grips with the second-generation A1GP car. Martin equalled the nation's best-ever A1 qualifying position when he put the car fourth on the grid, and enjoyed a relatively peaceful run to the flag. There was a touch of redemption in the result too; Martin had thrown away a points-scoring finish in the sprint race when he clouted a tyre stack at the chicane and broke his suspension.

Doornbos, meanwhile, was disappointed with fifth, but the Netherlands car was certainly entertaining to watch. The Dutchman dropped to fifth at the start, and then lost some time during the first pitstop and fell behind Loic Duval of Team France. Despite Doornbos's best efforts, sixth looked to be where he was destined to stay, but then he and Duval found themselves immediately behind the Indonesia car when it spun off. Duval was momentarily unsettled, and Doornbos took the opportunity to duck up the inside.

There were the usual tales of woe elsewhere among the field. Unfortunately for the home crowd, one of those came from the garage of Team New Zealand. Chris van der Drift was already disappointed at only managing to qualify 10th for the feature race, but the situation quickly worsened when he suffered an anti-stall problem at the start and fell to the back of the field. He was trying to make up lost ground on the first lap when his left-rear touched Team Lebanon's front wing, forcing Daniel Morad to retire and sending van der Drift back into the garage for puncture repairs. He rejoined a lap down, effectively ending his interest in the afternoon.

It was an equally frustrating weekend for Dan Clarke, who was making his first appearance in a race car for more than a year with Team Great Britain. After blowing out the

Arai HELMET

AT SILVERSTONE !

Speedsport are now official Arai dealers at Silverstone Circuit.

Full range of Arai helmets, visors and accessories in stock. Speedsport are also stockists of Momo products and racewear, and official motorsport distributors of tesa tapes.

tesa · Arai HELMET there is a difference · momo ITALY

speedsport promotions

SpeedSport Promotions, Unit 43 Silverstone Circuit,
Nr Towcester, NORTHANTS. NN12 8TN
www.speedsport.co.uk
Telephone: 01327 858 167
Email: info@speedsport.co.uk



The Biggest Race Car Auction in the UK

Sponsored by www.CRASH.NET

SIMON CHARLES Auctioneers & Valuers

18th / 19th February 2009
Auction Centre Manchester

Sale of **Race Cars**, **Rally Cars**, **Motorhomes**
Transporters, Trailers and **Memorabilia**

A great opportunity for the
Competitor, Collector or **Enthusiast**

Simon Charles Auctioneers and Valuers are holding the biggest race and rally car auction in the UK on 18th and 19th February

Cars will include single seaters, sports cars saloons, ranging from historic to present day examples



Visit our website for more information

To view auction lots or
for more information
please visit our website
www.racecarauction.co.uk

Sales Hotline:
01625 874290
www.RaceCarAuction.co.uk

CLUB100

The highest level of 'arrive & drive'
CHAMPIONSHIP KART RACING
in the UK and Europe!



telephone **01992 470002** or go to:

www.club100.co.uk

Clarke fills in for Watts

Champ Car refugee up against it for Britain

A YEAR out of the saddle has done little to dampen Dan Clarke's sense of humour. "Shhh..." he says, staring at a blowfly that appears to have passed out on a table in the hospitality area. "You'll wake it. We should put a medical call out – severely dehydrated fly; possible sunstroke."

Ex-Champ Car racer Clarke, who was standing in for new father Danny Watts, was somewhat disappointed with his comeback race meeting, particularly the spin in the feature. "Everybody put in 110 per cent this weekend," he said. "But, given the way the weekend went down, I think collectively we've done a great job."

It sounds like standard driver-speak, but Team GBR was very much up against it in Taupo, with one team member out with a broken pelvis and another having to skip the race for personal reasons. The shortfall made for some drastic reshuffling – chief engineer James Goodfield took charge of the tyres, leaving team principal Katie Clements to step into the engineer's role on the radio, while rookie driver James Winslow was put on front-jack duty for the pitstops.

"I wore my race helmet!" Winslow grinned. "It was all right, actually – I like being hands-on anyway."

Clements is hoping to have the team back to full strength in South Africa, but said that the first priority was catching up on some sleep. "It was all hands on deck," she said. "It was pretty tough, with the late nights, although the boys are used to that after the all-nighter at Chengdu."


Jani checks the vintage as Carroll downs his



Clarke in car; Winslow on jack; Watts on nappy duty

cobwebs in practice and qualifying, Clarke was battling Team USA's Marco Andretti in the sprint race and got past just as the yellows came out for China's spinning Franky Cheng, forcing Clarke to give the position back. Better things were on the cards in the feature, but this time it was Clarke who spun. While he was able to continue, the error cost the team a probable points finish.

The stewards were also kept busy, with Cheng being dealt a drive-through penalty for leaving the pits with the rear jack still attached. Andretti was eighth across the line on the track, but later dropped to 11th when he received a 25sec post-race penalty for a fairly blatant breach of the rule that forbids crossing the white line on the pit exit. Team Brazil's Felipe Guimaraes was similarly penalised for clumsily turning in on Team Monaco's Clivio Piccione, damaging both cars.

Earlier in the day, Carroll enjoyed a relatively uneventful pole-to-flag win in the sprint race, with Jani taking Switzerland's first-ever New Zealand podium for second and Doornbos finishing third. For the first time in A1GP history the sprint race had a standing start – the one-off change was been introduced in an effort to avoid problems of previous years caused by the short run from the startline to the first corner. It worked, and everyone made a reasonably good getaway except van der Drift, who locked up on the way into Turn 1 and was consequently two positions worse off on the way out the next corner.

Out of luck were Doornbos and Albuquerque, both of whom had the speed to win but were each delayed in the tight pitlane.

Last weekend might have been A1GP's last visit to the picturesque little Taupo circuit, with the new track at Hampton Downs, just south of Auckland, tipped to step in next season. Taupo's slightly pokey track layout may not be missed, and nor will the dust, but the setting and the welcome are second-to-none. Hampton Downs will have some big 'jandles' to fill in season five.

RESULTS A1GP, Taupo (NZ), January 23-25, round 4 of 9

SPRINT RACE – 15 LAPS, 30.953 MILES

Pos	Country	Driver	Result	Qual	Grid
1	Ireland	Adam Carroll	19m40.271s	1m14.507s	1
2	Switzerland	Neel Jani	+1.488s	1m15.202s	4
3	Netherlands	Robert Doornbos	+3.559s	1m14.772s	2
4	France	Loic Duval	+8.594s	1m15.360s	5
5	New Zealand	Chris van der Drift	+11.666s	1m15.457s	6
6	Portugal	Filipe Albuquerque	+12.665s	1m14.788s	3
7	Italy	Edoardo Piscopo	+14.959s	1m15.614s	8
8	Malaysia	Fairuz Fauzy	+15.797s	1m15.710s	9
9	India	Narain Karthikeyan	+20.973s	1m16.146s	14
10	South Africa	Adrian Zaugg	+22.030s	1m15.917s	11
11	Monaco	Clivio Piccione	+24.281s	1m16.424s	16
12	USA	Marco Andretti	+30.565s	1m16.791s	17
13	Great Britain	Dan Clarke	+31.005s	1m16.347s	15
14	Indonesia	Satrio Hermanto	+32.361s	1m17.266s	19
15	Brazil	Felipe Guimaraes	+33.134s	1m16.074s	13
16	Mexico	Salvador Duran	+40.601s	1m15.972s	12
R	China	Franky Cheng	11 laps – spin	1m16.885s	18
R	Lebanon	Daniel Morad	8 laps – suspension	1m15.839s	10
R	Australia	John Martin	5 laps – suspension	1m15.504s	7

Winner's average speed 94.39mph. Fastest lap **Jani**, 1m15.021s, 99.05mph.

FEATURE RACE – 50 LAPS, 103.178 MILES

Pos	Country	Driver	Result	Qual	Grid
1	Switzerland	Jani	1h06m19.574s	1m15.053s	5
2	Ireland	Carroll	+1.047s	1m14.411s	1
3	Portugal	Albuquerque	+2.379s	1m14.843s	3
4	Australia	Martin	+10.593s	1m14.976s	4
5	Netherlands	Doornbos	+14.402s	1m14.676s	2
6	France	Duval	+17.423s	1m15.423s	7
7	India	Karthikeyan	+20.215s	1m15.699s	11
8	Italy	Piscopo	+23.156s	1m15.942s	15
9	South Africa	Zaugg	+23.347s	1m16.164s	16
10	Malaysia	Fauzy	+26.832s	1m15.246s	6
11	USA	Andretti	+45.799s*	1m15.527s	8
12	Great Britain	Clarke	-1 lap	1m15.902s	14
13	New Zealand	van der Drift	-1 lap	1m15.622s	10
14	China	Cheng	-1 lap	1m17.184s	19
15	Brazil	Guimaraes	-1 lap*	1m15.812s	12
R	Mexico	Duran	43 laps – puncture	1m15.892s	13
R	Indonesia	Hermanto	42 laps – spin	1m16.783s	18
R	Monaco	Piccione	33 laps – spin	1m16.735s	17
R	Lebanon	Morad	1 lap – accident	1m15.587s	9

Winner's average speed 93.33mph. Fastest lap **Albuquerque**, 1m14.898s, 99.17mph. *Post-race time penalty. Championship points: in sprint race 10-8-6-5-4-3-2-1 for top 8 finishers, plus 1 for fastest lap; in feature race, 15-12-10-8-6-5-4-3-2-1 for top 10 finishers, plus 1 for fastest lap. All drivers in A1GP-Ferrari.

CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE

Pos	Country	Points
1	Ireland	65
2	Switzerland	52
3	Portugal	49
4	France	41
5	Netherlands	38
6	New Zealand	35
7	Malaysia	31
8	Australia	30
9	South Africa	17
10=	USA	16
10=	Great Britain	16
12=	Italy	9
12=	Monaco	9
14	India	5
15=	Brazil	4
15=	Korea	4
15=	China	4
18	Lebanon	3

NEXT ROUND Kyalami (ZA), February 22



Perez led Valsecchi and the rest all the way

GP2 ASIA SERIES

Sakhir (BRN), Rd 3/6, January 23-24

PEREZ CELEBRATES, BUT KOBAYASHI IN CONTROL

SERGIO PEREZ scooped his maiden GP2 Asia victory with a controlled display of aggression in the Sakhir sprint race last weekend. But the big winner in the Middle East was Japanese ace Kamui Kobayashi, who took victory in the longer feature race to increase his championship lead from three points to 10 over Davide Valsecchi.

All three were put in the shade in qualifying by GP2 debutant Nico Hulkenberg. The Formula 3 Euroseries champion put his ART car on an impressive pole position, and he converted that into a first-corner lead at the start of Friday's feature race. He and the fast-starting Kobayashi – who beat his front-row-starting DAMS team-mate Jerome d'Ambrosio into second by Turn 1 – swiftly pulled away from the rest of the field to build a five-second lead by lap 10.

Kobayashi, who was running a higher-downforce set-up than Hulkenberg, was far quicker over the course of a lap and frequently pressured the German into locking up his inside-front wheel into the braking zones, but he lacked the straightline speed necessary to pass him.

After 13 laps of climbing all over Hulkenberg's tail, the Toyota F1 test driver finally grabbed the top spot with a daring outbraking move at Turn 1 from a long way back.

As Kobayashi pulled away, d'Ambrosio – who had passed another GP2 debutant, Edoardo Mortara, on lap five – closed right onto Hulkenberg's tail as the mandatory pitstops loomed.

Hulkenberg probably wishes that pitstops were not a feature of GP2 racing, as his ART crew struggled to change his right-rear wheel and tyre, costing him five seconds and dropping him behind the Arden car of Mortara.

The pair fought over third for the remainder of the race, but could do nothing about either Kobayashi or d'Ambrosio, who gave DAMS a 1-2 finish at this level for the first time since Allan McNish and Erik Comas did likewise in Formula 3000 at Silverstone 19 years ago. It was also the first 1-2 for any team in GP2 Asia.

"It was a really great race for me," said Kobayashi, "especially to pass Nico. Before the straight there is a corner where we need a lot of downforce. It's not easy to follow the car [closely] after that. That's why it took me so long to overtake him. The one time I really tried to pass him was the good one."

Shanghai sprint-race winner Valsecchi drove well after qualifying his Durango car back in 10th. He was up to seventh by the end of the stops and then passed Renault World Series champion Giedo van der Garde's iSport machine and the Piquet GP entry of Roldan Rodriguez within the final seven laps of the race to end it in fifth.

Campos driver Perez, who came home eighth, inherited pole position for the reverse-grid sprint race. The Mexican sped away at the start to open up an instant 1.5-second lead, while fellow front-row starter van der Garde had to start from the pitlane after encountering gear-selection problems on the grid.

British F3 graduate Perez held that advantage for most of the race, but came under pressure from Valsecchi late on, who narrowed the gap to just half a second with two laps left. The Italian never quite got close enough to the back of Perez's car and had to settle for second on what was his 22nd birthday.

D'Ambrosio was again fighting his way towards the front, after starting seventh. Earl Bamber (Meritus) and Kobayashi were the first to be dispatched. Spanish duo Rodriguez and Javier Villa (Super Nova) – who got up to second with a super-late-braking move at the first corner, only to run wide and drop back – soon went the same way to leave the Belgian in a comfortable fourth spot.

But d'Ambrosio was not quite done. Hulkenberg braked too late for the downhill left-hander leading onto the back straight and was powerless to stop the DAMS machine getting alongside him between Turns 8 and 9, and then nosing inside to make it two podiums in as many days.

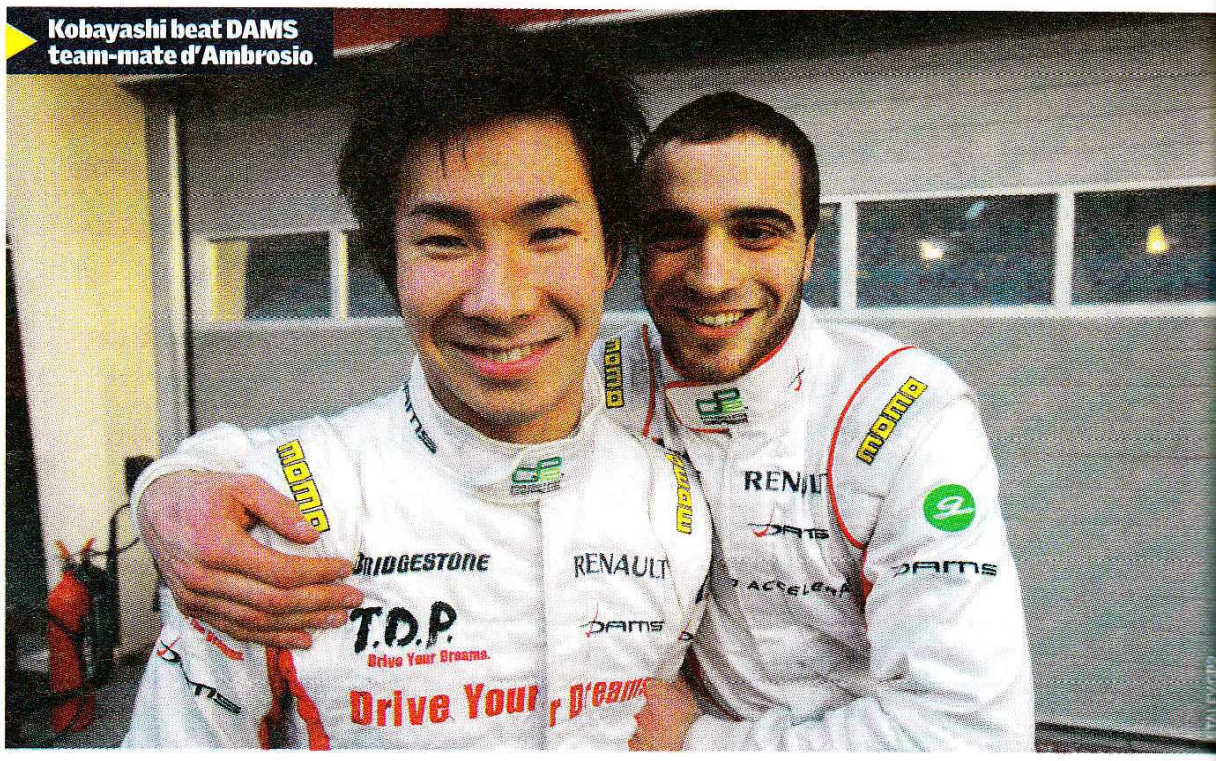
Hulkenberg took another fourth, with Villa and Kobayashi completing the points scorers.

Rodriguez had been among them too until being forced to back off late on due to excessiv brake wear. He spun off on the penultimate lap, dropping to third in the points in the proces

Britain's James Jakes spun ou in race two after running over a kerb and losing control on the slippery run-off asphalt.

■ **Jamal Al Lariyah**

RESULTS **Race 1** 1 Kamui Kobayashi, 34 lap 1h00m10.318s; 2 Jerome d'Ambrosio, +5.89 3 Edoardo Mortara; 4 Nico Hulkenberg; 5 Dav Valsecchi; 6 Roldan Rodriguez; 7 Giedo van der Ga 8 Sergio Perez; 9 Javier Villa; 10 Vitaly Petrov. **Fast lap** Kobayashi, 1m43.604s (116.851mph). **Rac** 1 Perez, 23 laps in 40m14.642s; 2 Valsecchi, +0.74 3 d'Ambrosio; 4 Hulkenberg; 5 Villa; 6 Kobaya 7 Earl Bamber; 8 Mortara; 9 Luiz Razia; 10 Ma Bonanomi. **Fastest lap** Diego Nunes, 1m43.91 (116.504mph). **Points** 1 Kobayashi, 34; 2 Valsec 24; 3 Rodriguez, 22; 4 d'Ambrosio, 17; 5 Villa, 6 Perez, 10; 7 Hulkenberg, 10; 8 Bamber, 8; 9 Petro 10 Sakon Yamamoto, 7.



Kobayashi beat DAMS team-mate d'Ambrosio



CAMERONPHOTO

Cunningham was in control of TRS races

SPEEDCAR SERIES

Sakhir (BRN), Rd 2/6, January 23-24

HERBERT DIPS PAST FOR WIN

JOHNNY HERBERT claimed a thrilling last-lap Speedcar victory at Sakhir, taking advantage of an error under pressure from long-time leader Gianni Morbidelli to secure his first win of the season.

Starting from sixth on the grid, Herbert (JMB Racing) quickly latched onto the tail of the Italian and disputed the lead for much of the race. But midway through the final tour Palm Beach team driver Morbidelli, watching his mirrors rather than the track ahead of him, missed his apex and slid wide and onto the dusty run-off area at the side of the track. He did recover to finish second, still comfortably ahead of two-time FIA GT champion Thomas Biagi, who was making his series debut.

"I made a mistake and I paid for it," Morbidelli said. "What was good though was that we had a great fight for much of the race and it was clean all the way, so I very much enjoyed that."

Another 1990s F1 star, Jean Alesi, won the first race on Friday from Team Lavaggi's Heinz-Harald Frentzen. The German started from pole position but made a bad start and allowed Alesi, who added a sixth place in race two, to run and hide.

Frentzen recovered well, outbraking both Morbidelli and Herbert to finish second. A fourth place in race two puts him level on points with defending champion Herbert at the top of the standings, but with no victories for the German that puts him second on countback.

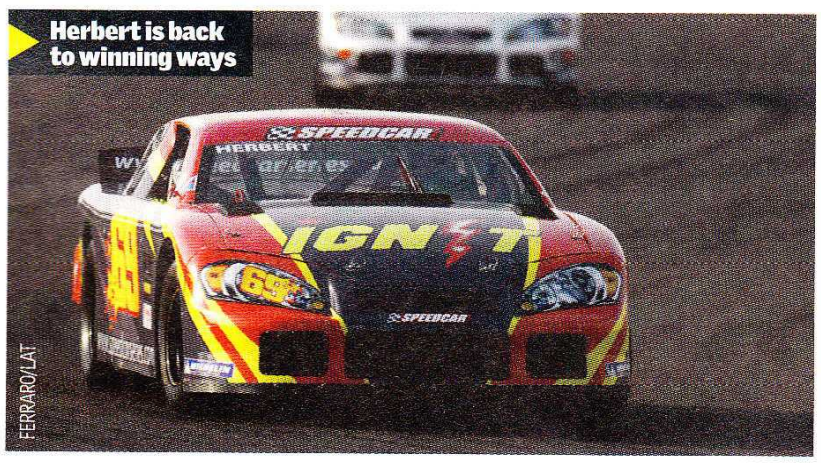
It was a disappointing weekend for Italian Vitantonio Liuzzi, who arrived in Bahrain leading the championship after his victory in Dubai.

He retired from race one after a collision with Chinese racer Marchy Lee punctured a tyre and, following a pitstop to change it, the Force India test driver suffered an engine fire.

British sportscar regular Chris Buncombe, making his Speedcar debut, collected a pair of ninth places for Team Lavaggi, finishing on the tail of team boss Giovanni Lavaggi in race one before beating the ex-Minardi F1 driver to the flag in race two.

■ **Jamal Al Lariyah**

RESULTS **Race 1** 1 Jean Alesi, 19 laps in 40m37.701s; 2 Heinz-Harald Frentzen, +1.409s; 3 Johnny Herbert; 4 Gianni Morbidelli; 5 Hasher Al Maktoum; 6 Thomas Biagi; 7 Damien Pasini; 8 Giovanni Lavaggi; 9 Chris Buncombe; 10 Jacques Villeneuve. **Race 2** 1 Herbert, 19 laps in 40m36.124s; 2 Morbidelli, +2.560s; 3 Biagi; 4 Frentzen; 5 Pasini; 6 Alesi; 7 Al Maktoum; 8 Vitantonio Liuzzi; 9 Buncombe; 10 Lavaggi. **Points** 1 Herbert, 21; 2 Frentzen, 21; 3 Morbidelli, 19; 4 Alesi, 13; 5 Liuzzi, 11; 6 Al Maktoum, 10; 7 Biagi, 9; 8 Pasini, 7; 9 Villeneuve, 3; 10 Marchy Lee, 2.



Herbert is back to winning ways

FERRARO/LAT

TOYOTA RACING SERIES

Taupo (NZ), Rd 4/7, January 24-25

CUNNINGHAM AHEAD AT HOME

INDY LIGHTS racer Mitch Cunningham swept the Taupo round of the Toyota Racing Series, increasing his series lead while also clinching the three-round International Cup that runs within the main championship.

Australian Scott Pye ended the mini-series second, and 16-year-old English karting star Will Stevens was third.

Kiwi Cunningham's recent form has been a revelation to local fans, as he has been significantly faster and more consistent than he was last year.

"Last season was all about learning the car and the tracks, this one about using that information to win the title," the Giles Motorsport driver said after winning all three A1 GP support races, including the 20-lap Denny Hulme Memorial Trophy.

The inexperienced Pye had surprised with his pace in the previous two rounds, but he struggled with set-up at Taupo – there was only 20 minutes' practice before qualifying – and lost a lot of points with a spin in race one.

Stevens was second overall for the round, with a fifth and two second places. Fellow Briton William Buller had the same problem as Pye and could not repeat his fine form from earlier in the series, posting two fourths and an 11th after spinning. That left him fourth equal in the series.

But the Giles Motorsport pair said the quickfire series – three rounds in three weekends – had gone well for them.

"It's all good experience: nine races, and you learn something in every race," Stevens said. "The competition's really good and it's definitely been challenging."

Buller said that overall he'd had a good series: "I won races at the first two meetings and I learnt a lot for my Formula BMW racing in 2009," he said.

Kiwi Sam MacNeill looked set for his first TRS victory in race one, but on the final lap he pushed too hard at the sweeper before the main straight, ran a little wide and Cunningham pounced. He finished equal with Buller in the International Series.

■ **Bernard Carpinter**

RESULTS **Race 1** 1 Mitch Cunningham, 10 laps in 15m00.451s; 2 Sam MacNeill, +0.625s; 3 Michael Burdett; 4 William Buller; 5 Will Stevens; 6 Alastair Wootten. **Race 2** 1 Cunningham, 10 laps in 14m45.318s; 2 Stevens, +1.008s; 3 Burdett; 4 MacNeill; 5 Andrew Waite; 6 Scott Pye. **Race 3** 1 Cunningham 20 laps in 28m59.745s; 2 Stevens, +2.274s; 3 Burdett; 4 Buller; 5 Daniel Jilesen; 6 Pye. **Points** 1 Cunningham, 803; 2 Pye, 646; 3 MacNeill, 629; 4 Burdett, 570; 5 Jilesen, 543; 6 Stevens, 491.

IN BRIEF



Halliday and Lester were in fine form

CAMERONPHOTO

NEW ZEALAND PORSCHE GT3 CUP

DISCARDED A1 GP duo Matt Halliday and Jonny Reid headed the non-championship round at Taupo. Halliday partnered Jono Lester to win both the 50-minute races, which featured a mandatory driver change, with Reid and Jody Vincent second each time and former World Superbike and BTCC racer Aaron Slight – sharing with Darryn Henderson – in third place. Australian V8 Supercar series racer Shane van Gisbergen won the shorter solo race.

GRAND-AM KONI CHALLENGE

BILL AUBERLEN and Matt Bell kicked off the Grand-Am Challenge season with a fine victory in their Turner Motorsports BMW M3 at Daytona. Auberlen lost the lead to the Ford Mustangs of Ken Wilden/Dean Martin and Hugh Plumb/Matt Plumb with 25 laps to go, but was able to slip by both as they suffered a coming together shortly afterwards, and held off the more powerful car of the Plumbs to win with an excellent display of driving on the infield section. Wilden/Martin came home third.

ANDROS TROPHY

JEAN-PHILIPPE DAYRAUT continued his domination of the 2009 series with yet another double race win at Serre Chevalier in France. The Skoda Fabia driver was quickest in qualifying for both the Friday and Saturday rounds too but, due to the quirky points system, still only has a 29-point lead over Toyota's Alain Prost with only this weekend's Clermont/Superbesse round remaining. Prost had a second and a fourth, while the opening race featured season's best results for both Gregoire Demoustier (Toyota) and Pierre Llorach (BMW) in second and third. Franck Lagorce, third in the second race with his Renault Clio, is also third in the points, but is now 51 behind Dayraut.

MIDDLE EAST RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

NASSER AL-ATTIYAH got over his Dakar disappointment of a fortnight ago by winning the Qatar International Rally for the seventh year in a row and taking an early lead in the FIA Middle East Championship. The home hero drove his Mitsubishi Lancer Evo X to a 2m25s victory over the Peugeot 207 of Saudi Arabia's Yazeed Al-Rajhi, with the Subaru Impreza of Khalid Al-Qassimi and British co-driver Michael Orr in third. Al-Attiyah's co-driver Tina Thorner became the first woman to win a round of the series.

ORANGE CRUSH

KTM made waves in its initial season of GT4 racing with the X-Bow. ANDREW VAN DE BURGT finds out why

Dallara stickers give away KTM racer's influence

Arnold Schwarzenegger's alien foe 'The Predator', if it drove a car, would undoubtedly choose the KTM X-Bow.

The sci-fi looks of the X-Bow (it's pronounced 'crossbow', but it's hard to read it that way) portray a beast of a car, the bright-orange paintjob making it glow against the dull, grey winter skies of northern Italy. But is this a sheep in wolf's clothing? A drive around Varano, the de facto Dallara test track, will reveal all.

It's no Nordschleife, that's for sure. In fact, it's more of an overgrown kart track. But it's just a stone's throw from Dallara's Parma headquarters, where the aero work on bike maker KTM's first-ever road car, and it's GT4-class racing sibling, was completed.

The fruits of the windtunnel time aren't clear to see when the Sports Light version of the X-Bow is lined up next to the road-going version. At first glance they appear pretty similar. The X-Bow's already stripped down to the bare minimum – no frills here, not even a windscreen. But a closer look reveals some not-so-subtle tweaks.

At the back, the twin exhausts have been repackaged into a single, compact tailpipe, while a small spoiler channels the aero flow from the back of the reptilian bodywork. Further forward, turning vanes spring up from the floor, conditioning the turbulent air coming off the exposed front wheels.

It's a cold, wintry day in northern Italy, but at least it's dry. KTM has flown a group of hacks out for the launch of the X-Bow Cup – a series of one-make championships to run within existing series across Europe – and to get a feel for what the well-heeled gentlemen drivers who are being targeted will get for their €80,000.

For starters, they'll need to be at least slightly sprightly to get into the thing. Neither version has any doors, and there's an exposed carbonfibre floor to traverse before you can even attempt to step into the driving seat. I'm told the floor can take 100kg and, as I've only had a light breakfast, I'm confident enough to step onto it before striding into the car and slipping down into the snug driving position.

There's no adjustment for the seat; instead there's a lever that alters the pedal position. I quickly find a ➡



Varano circuit is about to be lit up by KTM

comfortable solution, so all that remains is to pop the quick-release steering wheel back on and fire her up.

The engine is basically a warmed-up version of the 2.0-litre, straight-four, turbo unit found in the Volkswagen Golf GTi. Yet, despite these humble roots, the racing exhaust gives it a surprisingly menacing roar befitting the car's ungodly looks.

X-BOW HITS ITS TARGET

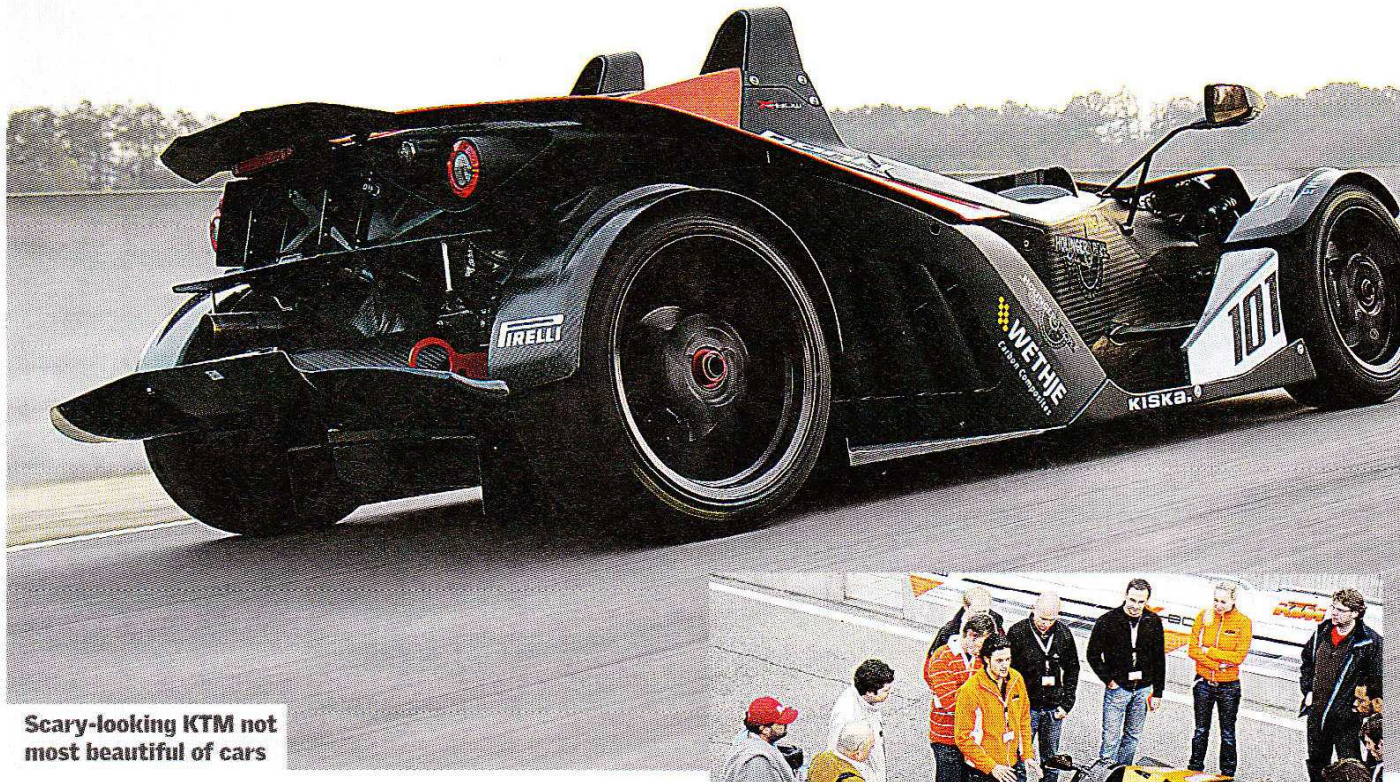
After a series of reconnaissance laps in the road-spec version, I know which way the track twists and turns. But, ominously, my chance to get behind the wheel of the racer is delayed as the car develops a problem with its brakes. It turns out to be a minor installation issue, and pretty soon I'm ambling down the pitlane, diligently observing the 10kph limit, before nailing it, lighting up the rears briefly as I pass orange marker cones.

Despite a host of minor differences between the GT4 and standard versions, the racer initially feels almost identical, aside from the shorter pedal travel of the heavier clutch. It's only as I start to relax and bond with the car that the quicker gearchange and ever-so-slightly stiffer suspension become perceptible. Everything is just more toned and begs to be pushed harder, to have its limits tested.

The chassis is nicely balanced and doesn't punish overeagerness or stupidity as harshly as I was expecting. Coming out of the penultimate corner, a tight, third-gear right-hander, I get a bit heavy with the right foot and the rear end makes for an escape, but with a dab of oppo it's all collected up and, with my confidence boosted, I start another lap.

As my pace increases and I lean on the car more, it becomes clear that under heavy braking the rear gets very light. It's disconcerting at first, as there's virtually no feel or sensation of what it's doing, but it never seems to get worse than just squirming about. My feelings are confirmed later when regular X-Bow racer Catharina Felser gives me a demo run and the car behaves exactly the same.

While it may be a bit nervous on the anchors, it's predictable and dependable through the corners. There's a general tendency to understeer, so there are armfuls of lock required through the twists of Varano. There's only one quick turn, a fourth-gear flik-flak chicane, and here you get the sensation that the aero parts are coming into play as the car feel squashed into the ground and reassuringly secure.



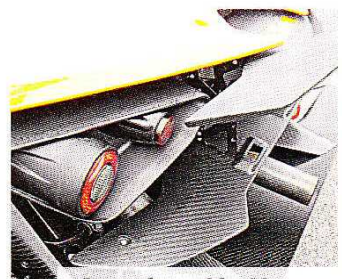
Scary-looking KTM not most beautiful of cars

There's plenty of torque from the turbocharged engine, so much so that in our pre-drive briefing Dutch racer Dennis Retera explains that there's nothing to be gained from dropping to second through the slow stuff. He advocates keeping it in third instead, and letting the torque drag it out of the bends.

This great dollop of low-down power, combined with a mean set of semi-slick Pirelli tyres, means the X-Bow was the star of its class in the wet during its first season of racing in GT4 in 2008 (although with the open top, it can't have been the most enjoyable experience for the drivers). And that's the point really with this type of car. While the racing is obviously taken seriously, the events are there so that the owners of these cars can have a bit of fun. And that's ultimately how the X-Bow should be judged.

It's an entertaining car to drive, but one that should hold no fears for the inexperienced. It's quick enough in road-car terms, but not intimidating at all, which should make for a great arrive-and-drive proposition. And that's exactly what KTM is offering: the chance to have the car centrally prepared and run by Reiter Engineering, leaving the owner/driver free to concentrate on his race preparation and nailing his braking points and racing lines.

"And don't crash it!" Pre-run briefing for all


Aero shaped by Varano neighbour Dallara



You have to step on the floor; avoid mini-wing!


Racing exhaust emits stirring racing noise

GT4 SUPERSPORT THE RIVALS



MAKE KTM
MODEL X-Bow GT
PRICE €82,700
POWER 236bhp
TORQUE 229lb ft
ENGINE VW/Audi 1984cc in-line four with turbo
0-62MPH 3.9sec
TOP SPEED 137mph
WEIGHT 825kg

GREAT TRACTION, solid handling but lack of top speed has hampered the X-Bow to date. Central preparation makes it a great way in to GT racing for the enthusiastic amateur.



MAKE Ginetta
MODEL G50 GT4
PRICE £47,200
POWER 300bhp
TORQUE 250lb ft
ENGINE Ford 3500cc V6
0-62MPH 3.9sec
TOP SPEED 154mph
WEIGHT 950kg

NOW GRANTED permission to compete in international GT4 events, the G50 was unbeatable in the British GT Championship throughout its first year in competition.



MAKE Lotus
MODEL 2-eleven GT4
PRICE £78,255
POWER 270bhp
TORQUE 181lb ft
ENGINE Toyota 1796cc in-line four with supercharger
0-62MPH 3.7sec
TOP SPEED 150mph
WEIGHT 900kg

THE RETURN of an iconic brand to the race track is reason enough to be cheerful. Based on the rave reviews that the road-going version received, this should be one to beat.



MAKE IFR
MODEL Aspid Sport GT4
PRICE €95,000
POWER 270bhp
TORQUE 225lb ft
ENGINE Honda 1997cc in-line four
0-62MPH 3.7sec
TOP SPEED 155mph
WEIGHT 900kg

DRAMATIC-LOOKING Spanish creation designed to function as a road and race car. Supercharged version too powerful for GT4, so it'll be the atmo machine that takes to the racetracks.



MAKE Donkervoort
MODEL D8GT
PRICE €99,000
POWER 210bhp
TORQUE 236lb ft
ENGINE Audi 1781cc in-line four with turbocharger
0-62MPH 4.5sec
TOP SPEED 150mph
WEIGHT 750kg

OFF-THE-WALL Dutch construction is as wild-looking as the X-Bow and just as fast. Will play a key part in making GT4 Supersport one of the most diverse categories in racing.

NATIONAL

ALL THE NATIONAL & CLUB RACE, RALLY AND HISTORIC NEWS.



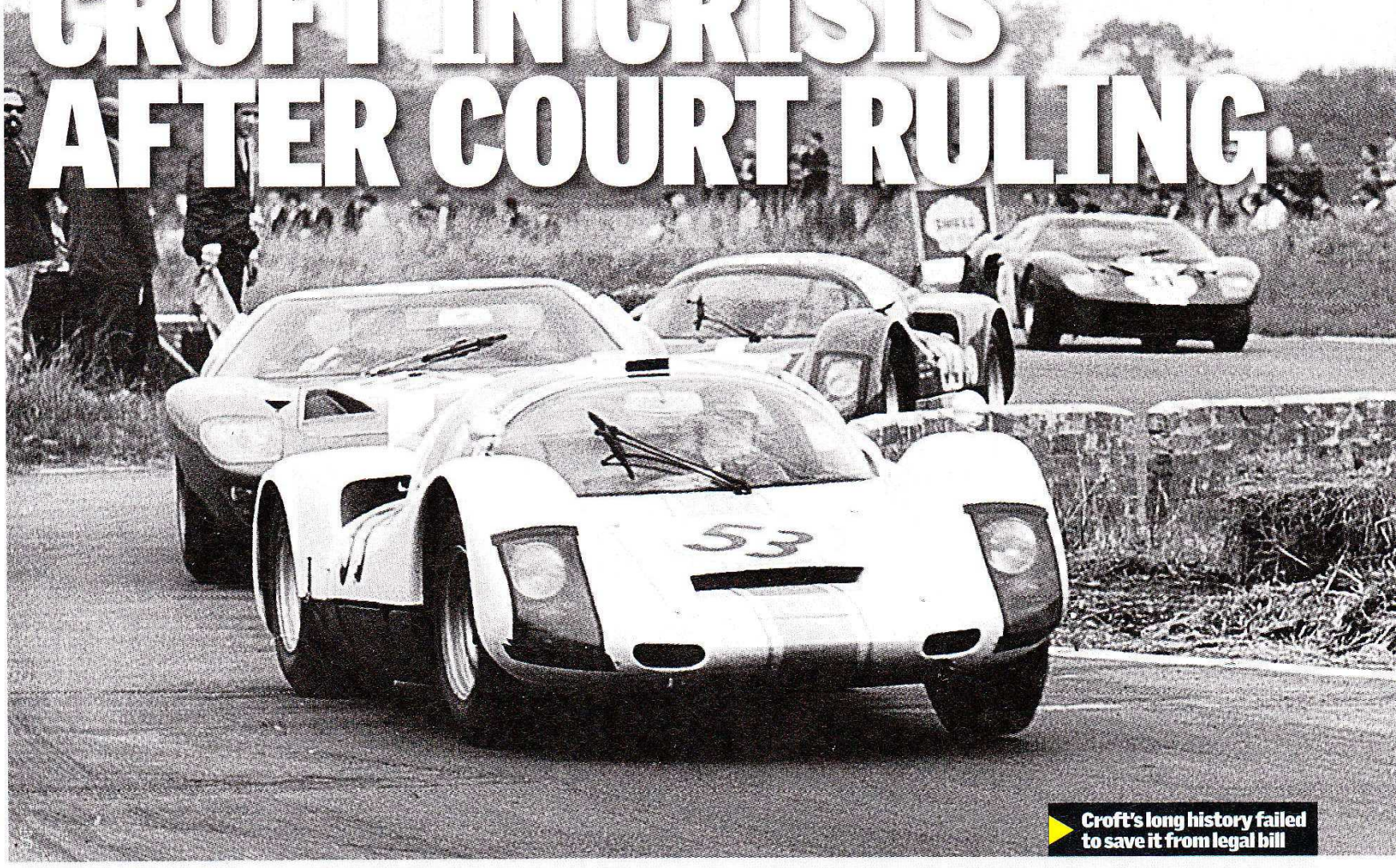
HARVEY JOINS RACING STEPS, p84



KEVIN TURNER
NATIONAL EDITOR

kevin.turner@haymarket.com

CROFT IN CRISIS AFTER COURT RULING



Croft's long history failed to save it from legal bill

IT SEEMS remarkable that at a time when motorsport faces some of the most important issues of the 21st century – the environment and the need to move away from fossil fuels – it is the simple sound of the internal combustion engine that attracts the trouble.

Much will be written about Croft's situation in the coming weeks, but the fact is it's under threat because of a type of sound we all hear regularly – and that is drowned out by any aircraft within miles (as regular visitors to Donington will attest).

One issue that has not been raised is: has the number of track days increased since the complainants moved in? If so, then that could explain the apparently bizarre decision made by the judges this week.

Nevertheless, it's hard to get past the feeling that a family feud – Jill Wilson is the ex-wife of former Croft prime mover Jimmy Wilson – has been allowed to put a national motorsport venue in jeopardy.

Although many have predicted doom and gloom for other circuits there may be a ray of hope. Despite its occasional rallycross activities in the 1980s, Croft does not have a continuous circuit racing history in the way that most other tracks do. Common sense – should that still exist – suggests that moving next to, say, Brands Hatch or Silverstone would provide less scope for a whinge, sorry, noise complaint.

Like the majority of the motorsport industry, we wish Croft well. Here's hoping that someone, or something, steps in to secure the future of one of the gems of national racing.

EXTRA CONTACT DETAILS
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT – Ben Anderson
ben.anderson@haymarket.com

CROFT CIRCUIT has been plunged into crisis after it lost an appeal against a High Court order to pay compensation for causing noise nuisance.

The circuit must pay almost £150,000 in damages to Derek and Julia Watson, and their daughter Jill Wilson, who live within 300 metres of the track in Dalton-on-Tees.

Croft will also have to pick up the family's £700,000 legal bill and has been hit with an injunction limiting on-track activity to 40 days per year.

High Court judge Mr Justice Simon originally ruled last April that all three residents had been victims of "noise nuisance", largely due to testing and track days, and ordered Croft Promo-Sport, which runs the circuit, to pay damages.

THE DAMAGE IS DONE

In an Appeal Court hearing on Monday judge Sir Andrew Morritt failed to find any legal flaw in the original judgement and, along with Lord Justice Richards and Lady Justice Hallett, said it would be "illogical" to deny the injunction, despite the circuit's long history and status within the local economy.

Croft Promo-Sport was denied permission to appeal the decision further and ordered to pay more than £120,000 in legal costs immediately.

Croft Promo-Sport director Dennis Carter said in a statement: "We are extremely disappointed with the Court of Appeal's decision in this matter, which has serious implications for the circuit and the motor racing industry generally. We are reviewing the position carefully."

Apart from the severe financial implications of the court's decision, which could jeopardise the future of racing at the North Yorkshire venue, circuit chiefs fear the order could expose Croft to further claims from other nearby residents.

They also worry this decision could set a precedent for residents elsewhere in Britain to sue their local circuit on noise pollution grounds.

MSA PLEDGES SUPPORT

The Motor Sports Association has echoed Croft's concerns, but has pledged full support to the circuit in its efforts to overturn the ruling.

MSA chief executive Colin Hilton said: "The potential of the ruling, were it to stand, could have disastrous consequences not just for Croft, but also for motorsport venues across the country.

"The sport and the associated industry support some 4000 companies and 38,000 jobs and, at a time when we are all making great efforts to come to terms with the effects of the economic downturn, this kind of additional issue can only make matters worse.

"I understand that the circuit is currently considering its options and I have assured them of the MSA's unequivocal support in the fight to overturn this ruling."



The ruling has sparked fears of claims from other residents

FERRY-AT

FOCUS

p88 SPEED SERIES ANALYSED

IN BRIEF



FORMER BRITISH F3 National Class racer Craig Reiff tested for Formula Renault UK returnee Hitech Junior last week (above). The 17-year-old German joined the team's new signings Tamas Kiss, Marlon Stockinger and Nick Yelloly at Silverstone.

REIGNING BRITISH Formula Ford champion Wayne Boyd has won two more awards. He was made *Belfast Telegraph* Young Player of the Year last week, and was also announced as the Association of Northern Ireland Car Clubs Driver of the Year.

KAZEEM MANZUR will stay with leading Formula BMW Europe team Josef Kaufmann Racing for a second season. The Briton, who finished 18th in last year's series, will be partnered by Spaniard Facundo Regalia and Belgian karting ace Robin Frijns.

DOUBLE PORSCHE Carrera Cup Pro-am 1 champion Nigel Rice will not return to the series to defend his title this season. The 51-year-old racer will instead take a sabbatical to focus on his business ahead of a possible return to the grid in 2010.

THE NEW BRSCC-run Open Sportscar Series will be open to sportscars with any engine type. Recent speculation had cast doubt over the regulations, but organisers have confirmed that the series will be open to all sports-racers.

THE VW FUN CUP will introduce a one-way radio system this year to enable the clerk of the course to contact drivers and pitcrew during races. Series bosses hope the device will improve safety by bettering communication of safety-car deployment, pitstop windows and stop-go penalties during events.

BRAZILIAN RACER Henrique Baptista tested for Formula Renault UK race winner Alpine Motorsport at Silverstone last week (below). Dean Stoneman's family-run outfit is still searching for two drivers to partner Stoneman and FRenault BARC graduate Isa Yousif in 2009.





Harvey has won kart titles both at home and abroad

Harvey will race in Formula BMW Europe after joining RSF scheme

RACING STEPS SIGNS UK KART SENSATION

THE RACING STEPS Foundation will fund a third driver in 2009 after deciding to back multiple karting champion Jack Harvey's graduation to the grand prix-supporting Formula BMW Europe series with British team Fortec Motorsport.

RSF had planned to fund a season in Formula Renault UK for reigning British Formula Ford champion Wayne Boyd, but pulled the plug during the second round of the Formula Renault Winter Cup as Boyd turned his attentions to securing a British Formula 3 deal (see Autosport, November 13). The foundation also reassessed reigning Ginetta Junior champion Dino Zamparelli during an Iberian winter series campaign with Fortec, but decided not to back him.

After a series of encouraging tests, Harvey will now receive RSF backing, alongside Formula Renault UK contender James Calado and British F3 runner-up Oliver Turvey, who will race for Carlin in Formula Renault 3.5.

Harvey, 15, is the reigning Asia-Pacific and former European and British karting champion. He has already tested with Fortec at Rockingham, Brands Hatch and Snetterton.

RSF coordinator Derek Walters said: "We had seen Jack's results in karting over the last couple of years, and after he had his initial test in the Formula BMW car he continued to impress us with his professionalism and pace.

"We agreed that BMW was the right place for him to be and we're excited about him being part of the programme. He's very focused and it would be nice to see him win the rookie title."

Fortec boss Richard Dutton added: "I've known about Jack for quite a while and had my eye on him. His results in karts show he has plenty of potential and his early testing pace has been very good."

Harvey said: "I'm looking at 2009 as a learning year. I'm not going to expect to turn up each weekend and put it on pole, but I still want to win races and the rookie title is my target."



New tie-up will run two Lambos

FOOTBALL TEAM TO BRITISH GT

EX-ENGLAND FOOTBALL international Luther Blissett's team48 squad has joined forces with Team Modena to contest this year's British GT Championship.

Team48, which had an aborted BTCC effort with Alfa Romeo 156s last year, will supply the drivers as part of a three-year plan with Modena, which will again run two Lamborghini Gallardos. The goal is to take team48 to the Le Mans 24 Hours.

Former British GT champion Calum Lockie heads team48's pool of drivers, which also includes Blissett, fellow ex-international Les Ferdinand, Kevin Haggarthy, Darelle Wilson and Matthew Gore. From these six, four will be chosen to race in British GT.

Modena's Graham Schultz said: "We've been talking to team48 for some months now and we are looking forward to working with them."

Blissett believes Modena's Le Mans experience—it ran an Aston Martin in the 24 Hours last year—will be invaluable: "We are not expecting to be instantly winning; we have to build up and get experience.

"To be involved with a team that will push us is just something we have to do."

TEAM PYRO STEPS UP AFTER ASCARI DEAL

LEADING RENAULT CLIO Cup squad Team Pyro will expand into British GT this year after signing a deal with ex-BTCC racer Mike Jordan.

The Ascari KZ1R of David and Godfrey Jones has been run in British GT for the past two years by Jordan's Eurotech equipe, now renamed JordanSport.co.uk. But BTCC commitments have forced JordanSport to hand over the running of the Ascari to Pyro, which took the Clio Cup drivers' title with Ben Winrow last year.

Pyro boss Mark Hunt, who ran Jordan's son Andrew in the Clio Cup in 2007, said: "We have been looking to expand into GT racing for some time, and our strong links with Mike make this the perfect opportunity."

Jordan, who will still work with Pyro on car development, said: "Given the date clashes with the BTCC and some of the driver coaching that my son Andrew and I are doing, it would make it difficult for me to successfully run a British GT programme, so having Pyro take over is perfect."



PAUL LAWRENCE

Former BTCC ace Jordan Sr will return to GTs in this car

JORDAN IN BRITCAR MUSTANG

BRITISH TOURING CAR Championship race winner Mike Jordan will drive a GT4-spec Ford Mustang in the 2009 Britcar Production Championship.

Jordan, who raced extensively in GT events prior to his move to touring cars, will share the JordanSport.co.uk-run car with experienced GT driver Stuart Scott. Steve Wood will join the line-up for longer races.

Jordan is looking forward to a return to endurance racing. "When I called time on the BTCC [last year], I was always hoping that this opportunity would come along," he said. "I like the look of the Mustang and it's a car with more power than grip, so it's right up my street."

Scott believes working with Jordan, who took his sole BTCC victory at Mondello Park in 2006, will help him improve. "The most productive time I ever spent was at a Snetterton test with just the two of us," he said.

"I learnt so much from Mike and to have him racing with me will be brilliant."

The testing programme with the car is due to start next month. The Mustang model carried Belgian Eric de Doncker to the European GT4 title in 2008.

CLIO CHAMPS TO CARRERA CUP

MULTIPLE RENAULT CLIO Cup champion squad Jamie Hunter Racing will run dual programmes in the Clio Cup and Porsche Carrera Cup for the coming season.

Former Scottish Legends champion Derek Pierce, who ran the latter part of his 2008 Clio Cup campaign with the team, will step up to the Carrera Cup as JHR's first signing in a potential multi-car assault.

The move will be JHR's return to racing Porsches seven years after the late Jamie Hunter, in whose memory the team was formed, drove in the Porsche Supercup.

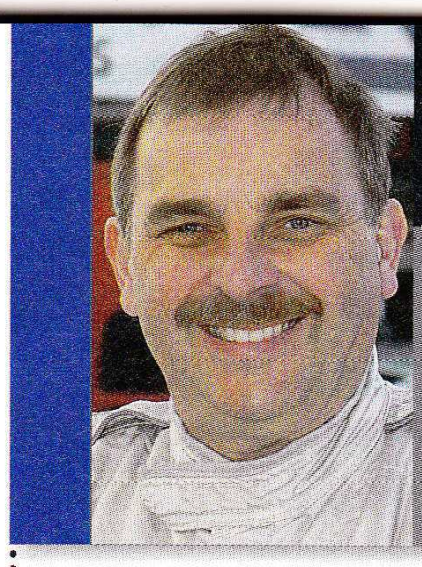
Team boss Steven Hunter, Jamie's brother, said: "Our aim has always been to get the team to the level where Jamie was racing.

"We're going in with our feet on the ground because the Carrera Cup GB is a very professional series. We want to show our abilities in the Carrera Cup, with the Supercup as our longer-term aim."



Pierce will step up to the Carrera Cup with JHR

JAKOB EBREY PHOTOGRAPHY



HUMBLE PYE
MARCUS PYE

MONDAY'S DECISION of London's Court of Appeal to limit the number of so-called 'noisy days' at Croft Circuit to 40 per annum does not financially ruin the venue, situated at Dalton-on-Tees, outside Darlington. But the demand that operator Croft Promo-Sport Ltd must pay more than £120,000 in legal fees with immediate effect may well drive nails irreversibly into its coffin. Which may, despite claims, appease some complainants.

This double imposition is a devastating blow to an organisation that has run a much-needed facility in the North East – plugging the geographical gap between Cadwell Park in Lincolnshire and Knockhill in Scotland – since 1997. With the installation of sound-deadening earth banks, it has endeavoured to bring the unavoidable noise associated with driving/riding activity within levels believed to be acceptable.

The three proponents of the legal case (one the former wife of Jimmy Wilson, who in 1994 was instrumental in forming management company Croft Classic and Historic Motorsports Ltd, with landowner Kate Norris and her husband Trevor Chaytor, with the aim of bringing racing back to the venue), maintain that their concern is not with the public race meetings at Croft, but with associated test and track days. Specifically because they claim that the noise nuisance blights the value of their properties.

Historically, racing first took place on what we know as Croft (then RAF Neasham) in 1948. The Autodrome hosted regular events for 18 seasons from 1964-81 – including a round of the Interserie Championship, the European equivalent of Can-Am, in 1971. In fact, competition there has been continuous since '64, for it was rallycross's northern home between 1982 and 1997.

Anybody could argue (they doubtless have in this case) the wisdom of buying a home on the fringes of a motorsport centre that has, for an unbroken 46-year period, hosted activities to which fundamental objections could be raised. The nimby phenomenon is not new around racetracks, or airfields, but it is a worrying one when the law lords side with the complainants.

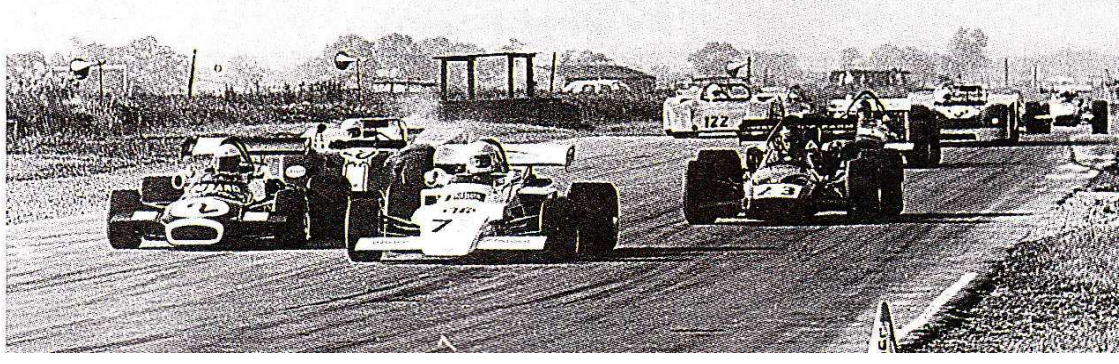
The loss of vital revenue-making spin-offs will certainly impinge on Croft's ability to meet requisite standards for Motor Sports Association competition permits, and the meetings – topped by the British Touring Car Championship circus's annual visit and the British Superbike event – may not generate sufficient profit for racing and rallycross to stand alone. It's a vicious circle and, without the opposite side of the revenue stream, let alone perhaps another £1 million of legal liabilities, the future looks bleak.

The MSA has been quick to voice its support for Croft, but – with the court heading off the possibility of going higher to the House of Lords, at any price – it is difficult to see the situation being resolved happily. While racing may continue for now, there are widespread fears that a dangerous legal precedent has been set.

I attended the 'last' Croft meeting of the previous era in October 1981 and feared, with locals, that it was gone forever. But it's not only Croft that is under the cosh. At the opposite quarter of the country, Thruxton and Castle Combe have operated under restrictive planning regimes for many years, while other venues are under constant scrutiny from noise meters, no matter how infrequently they are used. Clearly, when ranged against the minority feelings of latecomers, prior use – like sport or employment – counts for nothing these days.

"A BLOW TO A MUCH-NEEDED FACILITY"

Will racing at Croft become a thing of the distant past?



IN BRIEF



EX-FORMULA 1 World Champion Damon Hill (in Jaguar D-type, above) was among those who turned out to the Parish Church of St Andrew in Farnham last Sunday to commemorate the death of Britain's first world champion, Mike Hawthorn, 50 years ago.

THE FORD FIESTA Championship will introduce the Ford Dealer Cup competition this season. Ford dealerships will be invited to enter the competition and will have their brand name on selected Ford Fiesta racers over the three classes.

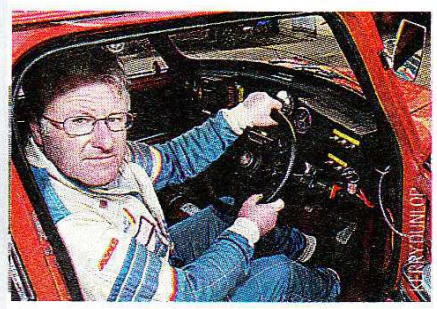
LEADING Castle Combe Saloon squad Ajec Racing has entered a BMW M3 for Sam Hare in Class B and a Peugeot 106 Rallye for Guy Higgs in Class D this year. The championship is already fully subscribed.

ABSOLUTE RACING'S Chris Hodgen is to return to the cockpit in the 750 Motor Club's Formula 4 Championship this year, having concentrated on running cars for the past couple of seasons. The Lancastrian's title-winning team has rebuilt his Van Diemen-Zetec RF99.

ALFA ROMEO specialist Alfashop will sponsor the British Racing & Sports Car Club Alfa Romeo Championship for a fourth year in 2009.

THE ANNUAL Masters Series Racing awards were presented in a ceremony held earlier this month. John Young won the Top Hat Saloons award, while Andrew Smith won the World Sports Masters prize. Wren Classics Ltd took the Race Preparer gong and Mark and Andrew Owen scooped the award for Sports Racing Masters.

SALOON CAR champion and Mini guru Bill Richards will contest the Rally Monte Carlo Historique this weekend in a replica works Mini Cooper (below). The car is owned by Seattle-based Professor John Morrow, who will navigate.



NATIONAL NEWS



SMITH SUCCESS STEAMS ON
Kenny Smith's Lola T430 (leading) won two of the three F5000 Tasman Cup series races at Pukekohe last weekend. Jay Esterer (McRae) took the other

LYDDEN TAKES OVER BRITISH RALLYCROSS

LYDDEN CIRCUIT has taken over the running of the British Rallycross Championship from the British Rallycross Drivers Association in a move designed to improve the category's infrastructure.

The BRDA, which is now in the final year of its second contract term as championship promoter, has appointed Lydden to manage the series. Lydden's recently appointed competition director Tony Watts will play a leading role in the running of the championship, together with circuit managing director Amy Doran, who will focus on marketing and promotion.

The arrangement has been brokered by the BRDA's outgoing chairman John Horton: "BRDA as a team of part-timers has done a fantastic job of re-establishing and running the BRC over the last six years, but the series needs full-time attention to continue its progress," he said.

"Amy Doran has demonstrated her abilities clearly over the last year at Lydden and Tony Watts has been on the BRC organising team for some time, so his involvement should make for a seamless transition."

Doran said: "I want to promote the championship as much as I can, to bring in more sponsorship and make it better for competitors, circuits and officials.

"Obviously Lydden has an interest in making the championship better because we have two rounds here, but that also means we understand what a circuit needs and wants."

The BRC was suspended between 1997 and 2002 before the BRDA successfully lobbied for its return.

● After four years at the helm of the BRDA, John Horton retired as the organisation's chairman at Saturday's AGM. Experienced competitor and clerk of the course Andy Stevens has taken over the role.

JUNO SPLITS WITH HILLSPEED

BRITISH CONSTRUCTOR Juno will run a full factory assault on the British Formula Ford Championship after parting company with Hillspeed.

The company's first single-seater, the JA08, was going to be run by Formula Renault team Hillspeed (see Autosport, February 7 2008). But the squad is now expected to focus on its Formula Renault campaign.

Juno boss Ewan Baldry, who will run the FFord team, said: "We thought it made sense to maintain a level of control over the new car.

"There are also only two clashes between Formula Ford and French VdeV [in which Juno runs sportscars], so that helps us."

No drivers have yet been confirmed for the two-car team, but Baldry added that the first Kent-engined Juno is currently being built for former VdeV racer Nicola Bernans. She will contest selected FF1600 events in the car, which is expected to be ready in April.



Juno will run its own British Formula Ford programme

RAY SPORTS 2000 GAINS SUPPORT

LEGENDARY FORMULA FORD constructor Ray has reported strong interest in its first-ever sportscar design.

Boss Gavin Ray has linked up with Sports 2000 team Steve Mole Motorsport, BTS Mouldings and an unnamed backer to form Ray Sportscar Developments Limited. Two Sports 2000 Duratec chassis are already in build and an initial batch of five is planned.

Ray said: "We had a few people ask us to build cars—that's why we decided to do it.

"Interest seems to be high. It's potentially a big market."

Ray did not rule out moving up to the SPEED category (formerly VdeV UK). "There's not too much difference between the series, and the car's got an adaptor ring so you can put in whatever engine you like," he said.

SMM will run at least one works car in the Sports 2000 Duratec Championship, although no drivers have yet been confirmed.

● Ray also plans to run two or three cars in British Formula Ford this year.

ONE-OFF McLAREN TO HIT TRACK IN F1 RACES FOR '09

THE UNIQUE McLaren M25 is being reconverted to Formula 1 specification from its original Chevrolet-engined F5000 configuration.

Owner Abba Kogan has commissioned Liaz Jakhara's Zul Racing concern to rebuild the chassis with a Cosworth DFV engine, and the specialist monocoque work is underway.

The plan is to race the car, which will appear in the Centro Asegurador livery in which Emilio de Villota failed to qualify it for the 1978 Spanish Grand Prix at Jarama, in Grand Prix Masters events.

The M25 only raced twice in F5000 form, in the 1976 ShellSport International Group 8 Championship. Bob Evans finishing second on its debut at Brands Hatch.

Thereafter it became a clone of the ex-James Hunt M23/6, and Villota used both for ShellSport and Aurora British F1 seasons in a team run by Giuseppe Risi.



De Villota failed to qualify M25 for '78 Spanish GP

TEST PRIZES FOR F4 CHAMPS

TWO CHAMPIONS in the 750 Motor Club's Formula 4 series will win test drives in Formula Renault UK and British Formula Ford machines.

The top runner in Class A, which is for post-1994 Formula 3 and Vauxhall Lotus-derived cars, will receive a Renault test with Hitech Junior. The champion in the Formula Ford Zetec category, Class C, will win a run in a works Duratec-engined Juno Formula Ford.

Long-time F4 supporter and competitor Chris Hodgen believes the move will help boost the championship. "I think people will start to look at F4 as a series with a strong future," he said.

"With money being tight, our plans are to create a championship like the old Formula Ford 2000 days, where the racing was close and the cars equal, but with no silly budget like you are seeing elsewhere."

● Reigning Formula 4 champion Jeremy Walker is unlikely to defend his title after selling his Van Diemen to category newcomer Robbie Watts.

DE ZILLE STEPS UP TO FFORD

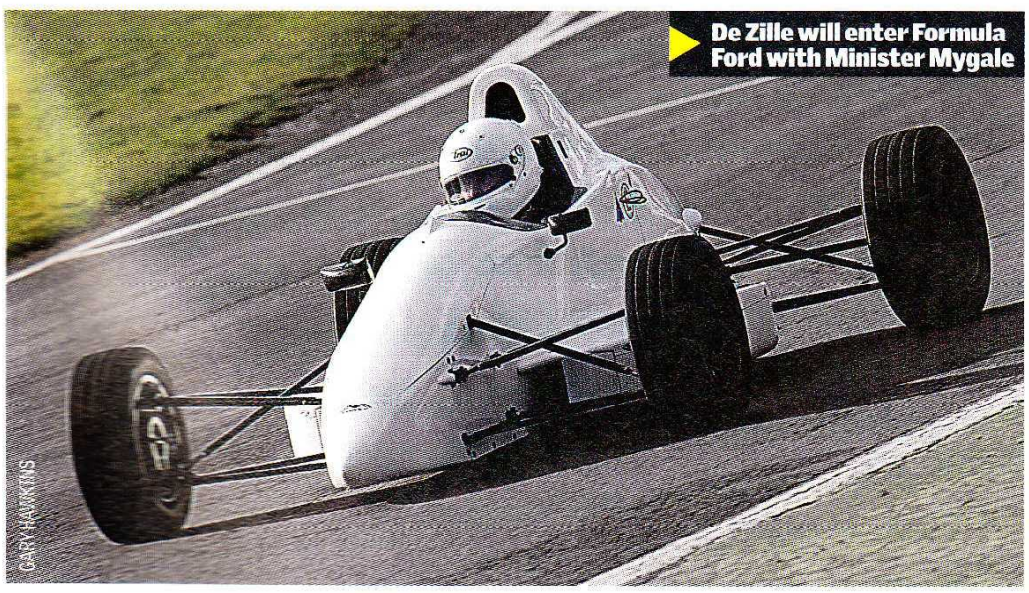
DAN DE ZILLE, cousin of British GT race winner Ben de Zille Butler, will race in British Formula Ford this season.

De Zille will drive a Mygale SJ08 in the Scholarship Class run by Duratec newcomer Minister International, which makes a comeback to the category's top level after running budding stars such as Pedro de la Rosa and Jordi Gene during the Kent era.

The 22-year-old, who has no karting background, began racing at the end of last year in a Caterham. He started testing the Mygale at Brands Hatch this week.

"I want to be realistic, but I am aiming to run at the front of the Scholarship class," he said.

Ben de Zille Butler, who won British GT races with an Aston Martin in 2007, is hoping to continue in the category, but has yet to confirm a deal.


GARY HAWKINS
De Zille will enter Formula Ford with Minister Mygale

RULE CHANGES FOR FF1600

THE FORMULA FORD 1600 community has received a boost after Ford Motor Company agreed to allow new American crankshafts into the category.

Due to crank failures and the expense of parts for the Kent engine in recent seasons, the call for the American SCAT crank has gathered momentum. Last week Ford approved the use of the part, which has been used abroad for many years, for FF1600.

SCAT cranks must be obtained through Don Hilton's FFI concern and will carry a unique identity.

BRSCC Club FF1600 championship manager Kevin Shortis said: "We've listened to our competitors and, with Ford, have implemented the change.

"The SCAT is more durable and cost-effective than the old units. It will give the category an extended lease of life."

Successful FF1600 runner Cliff Dempsey, who believes the move will be adopted in Ireland, said: "I do think the SCAT crank is a good move. Anything that saves money is better."

Alternative conrod bolts and the fitment of shim to allow adjustments for tappet are also now legal.

HANCOCK AND JOTA LAUNCH LIGIER SPORTSCAR ASSAULT

PORSCHE CARRERA Cup race winner and sometime LMP2 racer Sam Hancock will compete in selected rounds of the European VdeV and British SPEED series in an ex-If Motorsport Ligier JS49 this season.

Hancock will team up with Jota Sport co-owner Simon Dolan, who is stepping up to VdeV and SPEED after racing a Radical SR3 in the UK Cup series last season.

The pair tested the car, in which If Motorsport owner Bryce Wilson and Ally McKever raced sporadically during 2008, for the first time at Brands Hatch on Monday last week.

Hancock also confirmed that Jota Sport plans to return to the Carrera Cup this season to build on the second place it earned in the teams' championship last year.

SPEED FOCUS, p88


GARY HAWKINS
Hancock tested Ligier at Brands Hatch

CROYDON TO RACE NEW ADR

FORMER VdeV champion and British GT racer Rob Croydon gave the new ADR3 CN car its first proper run at Snetterton last week ahead of a dual challenge in 2009.

Croydon and fellow works driver Steve Barber will race one of two works ADR cars in the European VdeV and UK SPEED series.

The pair suffered an intermittent engine misfire and a bearing failure in the rear suspension during a day of running last week in mixed conditions, but are confident the car will be competitive.

Croydon said: "Obviously we have a new car and team for both series so it's a very steep learning curve, but the basics are there for a very quick package. I'm confident we can realistically achieve top-six finishes in the first races."



GARY HAWKINS
New ADR hit the track at Snetterton last week

FREKE TARGETS GINETTA CUP

FORMER BRITISH Formula Ford champion Nathan Freke will switch to sportscars this season in the Ginetta G50 Cup.

Freke, who briefly raced in Indy Lights in 2008, last completed a full season of racing when he won the Ford title with a Jamun Racing-run Mygale in 2006. He will now contest the G50 Cup, which joins the TOCA package for its second season, with his own Century Motorsport outfit.

"I'm just pleased to be back racing again," said the 25-year-old, whose last race came at Silverstone's Walter Hayes Trophy last November.

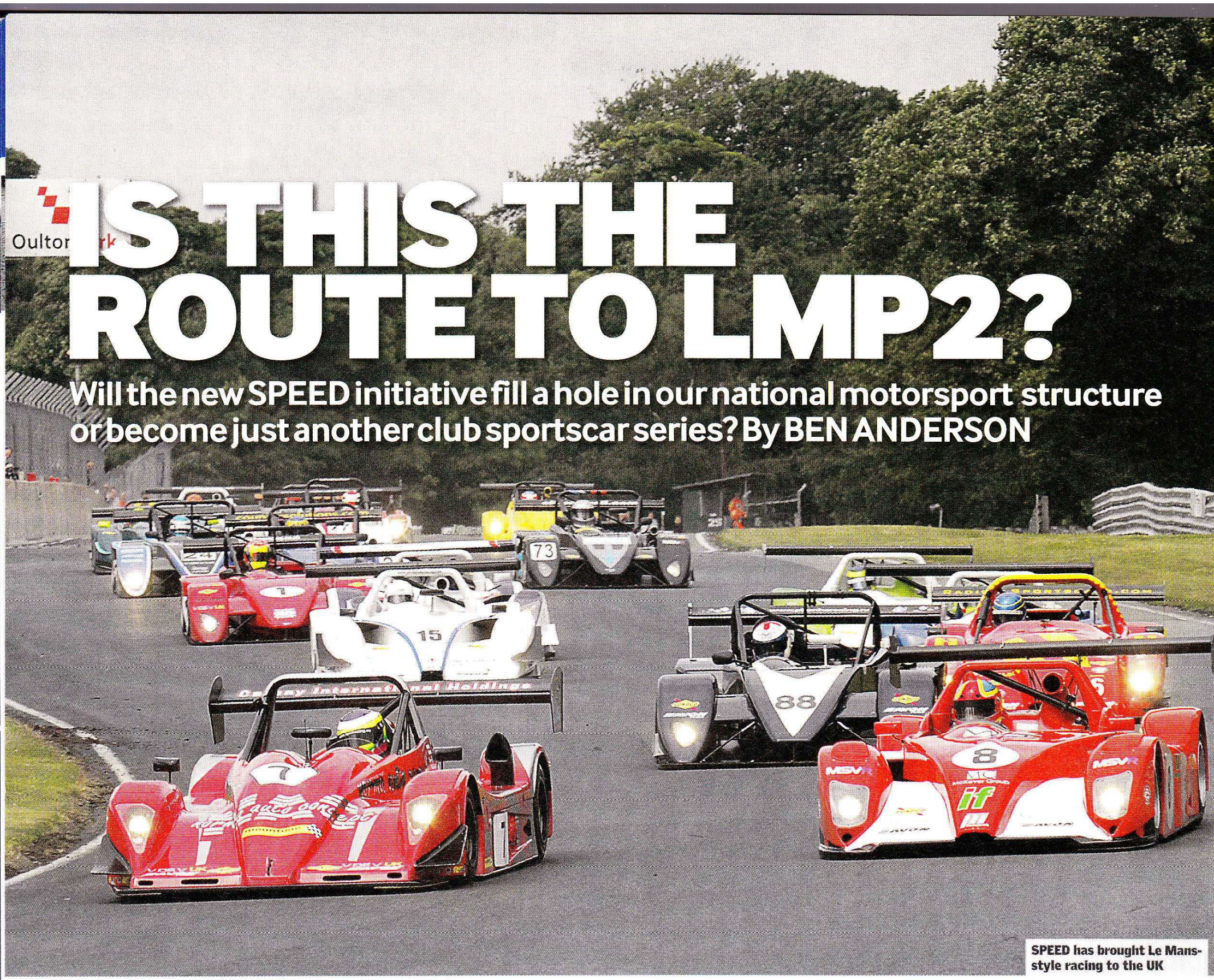
"The biggest thing will be getting the set-up to work. But because it's only been around for a year hopefully no team will have got the car absolutely right yet.

"The aim is to be a championship contender."

Freke hopes to start testing the car this weekend. He has not ruled out running the car in endurance events, if a co-driver with a budget can be found.

IS THIS THE ROUTE TO LMP2?

Will the new SPEED initiative fill a hole in our national motorsport structure or become just another club sportscar series? By BEN ANDERSON



SPEED has brought Le Mans-style racing to the UK

History shows that Britain and sportscar racing tend to make perfect partners. Take the world's greatest endurance race, the Le Mans 24 Hours. No nation has produced more winners of this sportscar spectacular than Britain. In the years since Frank Clement became the first Brit to win the event, aboard a Bentley three-litre in 1924, no fewer than 31 others have gone on to repeat the feat.

For any international endurance racing out there, the chances are that Britain has at some stage stolen the show. Whether it be the World Sportscar Championship in the 1980s and early '90s, or the two-litre European Sportscar Championship of the early '70s, the story is the same – UK cars, drivers and teams towering above the rest in triumph.

Derek Bell's British record of five Le Mans wins, spanning 1975 to 1987, and Allan McNish's two wins punctuated by a decade, are etched firmly on the memory of any UK sportscar fanatic. But, despite our country's long and decorated history of producing endurance racing maestros, we've long lacked a national-level series to discover and mould this talent.

In the period between Derek Warwick winning the last-ever World Sportscar Championship in 1992 and the formation of the American Le Mans Series in 1999 and LMS in 2004, there was virtually no training ground. In the main, our Le Mans stars have switched disciplines towards the twilight of high-level single-seater careers or come through via GT racing.

Many of our young racing talents, who are either too large or too cash-strapped to realistically carve out single-seater careers, are turning to sportscars ever earlier, with the ultimate aim of one day winning the world's greatest sportscar race.

But opportunities to learn the craft required to compete in this great event, let alone win it, are few and far between on the domestic scene.

Sure, Britain has had plenty of disparate national sports racing series over the years (see panel, right), but none of them have come close to recreating proper Le Mans-style endurance racing.

Then, in 2007, along came VdeV UK – a British version of the French VdeV series, launched by Eric van de Vyver in 1992. That series runs endurance races of between three and eight hours for two-litre sports prototypes, and essentially provided the template by which original VdeV UK organiser Gary Ward could export the category to British shores.

THE STORY SO FAR

VdeV UK kicked off with 13 cars contesting a one-hour 45-minute enduro at Brands Hatch on June 23 2007, won by Adrian Mardlin and Rob Croydon aboard their Juno SSE.



Juno has won both of the first two VdeV UK series

There were further races at Snetterton and Anglesey that year, before the calendar expanded to eight events for the first full season in 2008, with each enduro running to a minimum of three hours.

Over 20 cars, spread across seven manufacturers, turned out for the first race of last year and, even though numbers shrank to 14 by the time Autosport got to sample the series first-hand at Silverstone last October, manufacturer interest remained high. A number of drivers (such as ex-BTCC racer Gareth Howell and Porsche Carrera Cup ace Phil Quaife) were also interested in using the series as a springboard to future Le Mans stardom. Things looked positive as 2007 Radical SR3 champion and '08 VdeV UK competitor Barry Gates stepped in to take over running the series in the autumn.

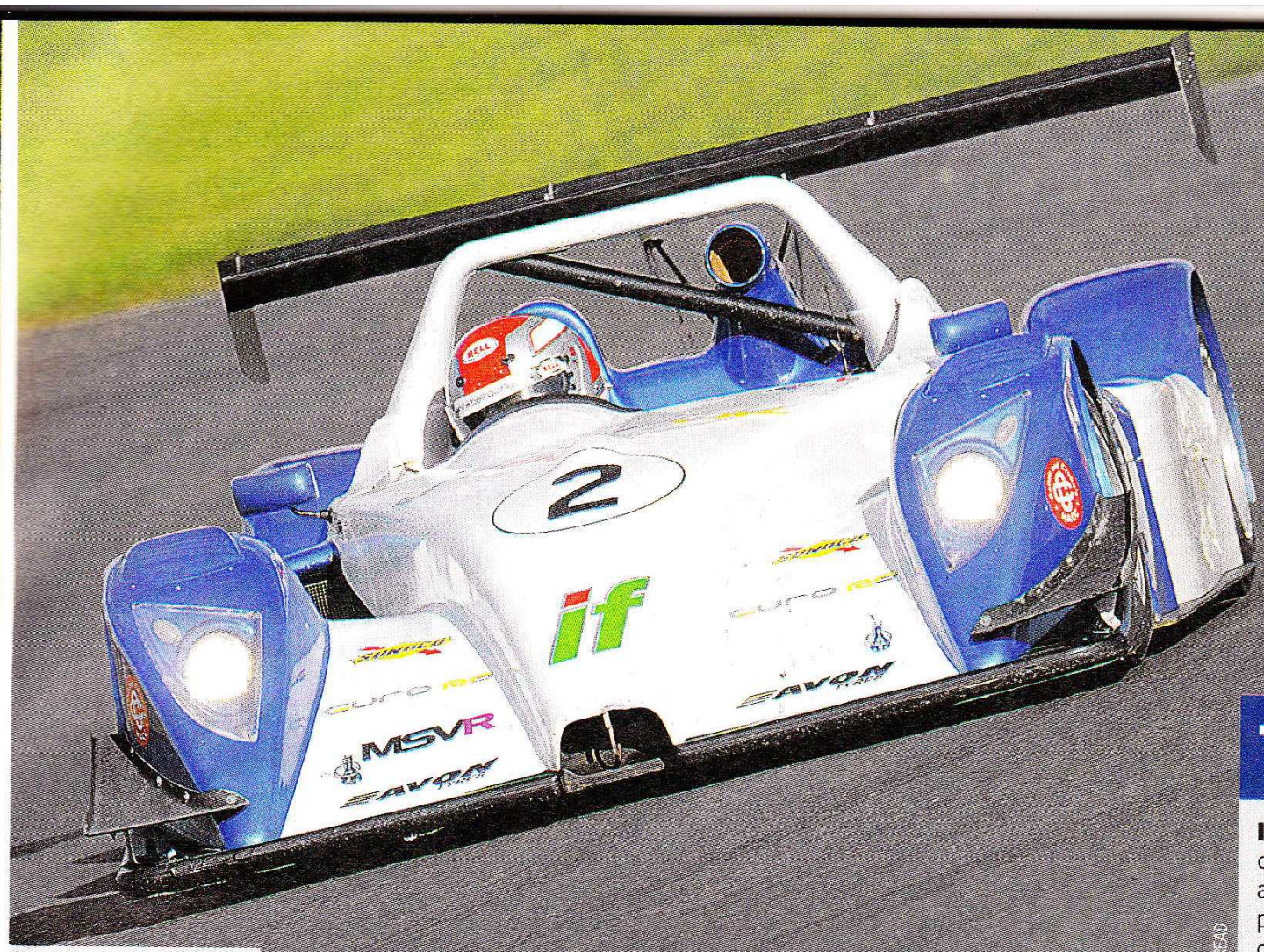
"I feel there is a place in British motorsport for proper endurance racing and this series can fill the space," says Gates.

"The cars are fabulous and our CN class is the nearest this country's aspiring McNishes can get to an LMP2 car without stepping into one."

But the series has struggled to maintain those initial numbers and, perhaps mindful of the spectre of the defunct Britsports series, Gates has decided to shake things up for '09 with the addition of a 'budget' CN2 class, which will feature CN cars running control parts to limit cost.

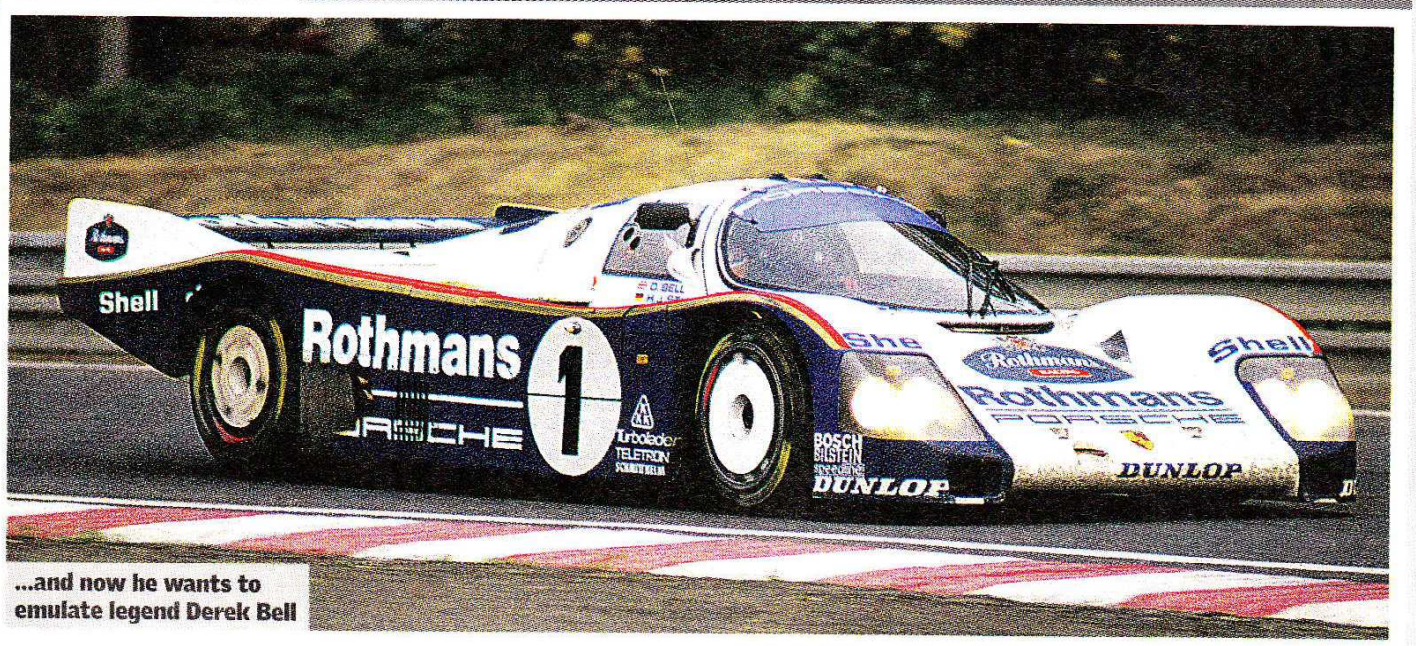
"The biggest problem we've had with the series, as it's been run up until now, is the cost of the CN1 cars and the number of pro drivers pairing up in the same car," adds Gates.

"We realise it isn't the easiest area to regulate, but we want to stop pro drivers pairing up because it puts



Autosport's Anderson in If Motorsport Ligier...

OLIVER READ



...and now he wants to emulate legend Derek Bell

TECH SPEC
LIGIER-HONDA JS49

ENGINE Honda Civic Type R, 2000cc
POWER 240bhp
WEIGHT 540kg
GEARBOX six-speed sequential
LENGTH 4265mm (minus rear wing)
WIDTH 1800mm

THE ALTERNATIVES

IF YOU'RE a British club racer who wants to dabble in prototype sportscar racing, your options are myriad. But if it's proper Le Mans-style prototype endurance racing you're after, the options are somewhat scarce.

The 750 Motor Club has two sportscar series on its programme (750 Formula and Bikesports), while the BARC administers the Clubmans and Radical series. Even the BRSCC is getting in on the act this year by running the newly-formed Bike Engined Sports Car Racing and Open Sportscar series.

Then there's the successfully self-administered Sports 2000 range and the plethora of open sports racing categories elsewhere around the British Isles.

Essentially, all these categories are scrabbling over the same ground in the national motorsport structure by each offering a variation on low to medium-cost sportscar sprint racing.

With its vast array of various-spec sportscars, developed over the past 14 years, the range of Radical series is the sole exception. The marque is one of the most successful in the UK, has branched out with a series in Europe and even has a factory Le Mans LMP2 programme.

With a potential ladder to Le Mans firmly established, it would seem Radical offers a great opportunity to young aspiring sportscar stars on the national scene.

The drawback is that all its series are one-make, offering no opportunity for manufacturers to fight for supremacy with design innovation. Also, none of its races last longer than 75 minutes, so Radicals is hardly endurance racing in the truest sense. But there are plans to try out a longer race format at some stage this season.

The defunct Britsports category was the closest thing to Le Mans-style endurance racing we've had on the domestic scene, but that suffered from poor grids and the initial popularity of VdeV UK, so Britcar boss James Tucker binned the series last March after just two seasons.

If Barry Gates and company can make the right calls, it would seem VdeV UK/SPEED has a golden opportunity to carve out a unique space for itself within our national sportscar racing structure.



Former Radical champion Gates is now SPEED boss

OLIVER READ

off gentlemen drivers – the ones who pay to race – because they feel they can't compete."

The creation of the CN2 'budget' class for 2009 seems like the perfect opportunity to rectify this problem, massaging the fragile egos of gentlemen endurance racers without compromising the purity and potential of the series to develop future stars.

"We are looking at exactly how the CN1 class needs to be regulated," says Gates.

"Most gentlemen drivers are quite competent and don't want to turn up and be blown away, so it's quite clear that CN2 will be for gentlemen drivers and is designed for two to share a car on a reasonable budget and be competitive doing Le Mans-style racing."

With an extra low-budget class and increased manufacturer interest (Berkshire-based ADR Engineering will join the series this year with a new car), plus increased promotion from Stuart McCrudden (who has rebranded the category SPEED: Sports Prototype Endurance Event Driving, and secured extra prizes and TV coverage), Gates is confident grids will swell to 30 in 2009 and allow the series to pitch for championship status.

TAKING SPEED A STEP FURTHER

Gates also plans to run a C3 class for other types of sportscar to further bolster the grids. This will open the door to Radicals and Sports 2000 cars to join the established CN machines – in line with the series' French father, which runs a similar class for older cars.

This looks like a step too far for the series. The low numbers in Britsports are a recent memory, but VdeV UK/SPEED is still new and, with such strong manufacturer interest, surely shouldn't be pushing the grid-sizes panic button just yet.

Former Williams F1 design engineer Ewan Baldry, whose Juno concern has won both of the first two VdeV UK Series with its SSE model, isn't so sure.

"A lot of the moves they're making are out of necessity," says Baldry. "The lifeblood of the French series is a wealthy gentleman driver, with a quicker driver alongside.

"Possibly what damaged VdeV UK a bit last year was it wasn't strong enough to have two superstar drivers together – that kept some of the gentlemen away. They know they can't compete.

"I think it's great to have a gentleman and a hero – I don't see how two stars can be funded. We're certainly not in a position to give free drives. Opening up to other cars is a bit of a shame, but for credibility they've got to get cars on the grid."

Running an invitation class alongside the CN categories would certainly act as extra insurance against continued low grids, but would also appear to compromise a perfect opportunity to create a proper national Le Mans feeder series, for which there is a definite gap in the British motorsport structure – a sentiment Gates himself seems to support.

Furthermore, C3 also stands for everything that caused Gates to leave Radicals, which he describes as a "rag-tag" where everyone's a potential winner.

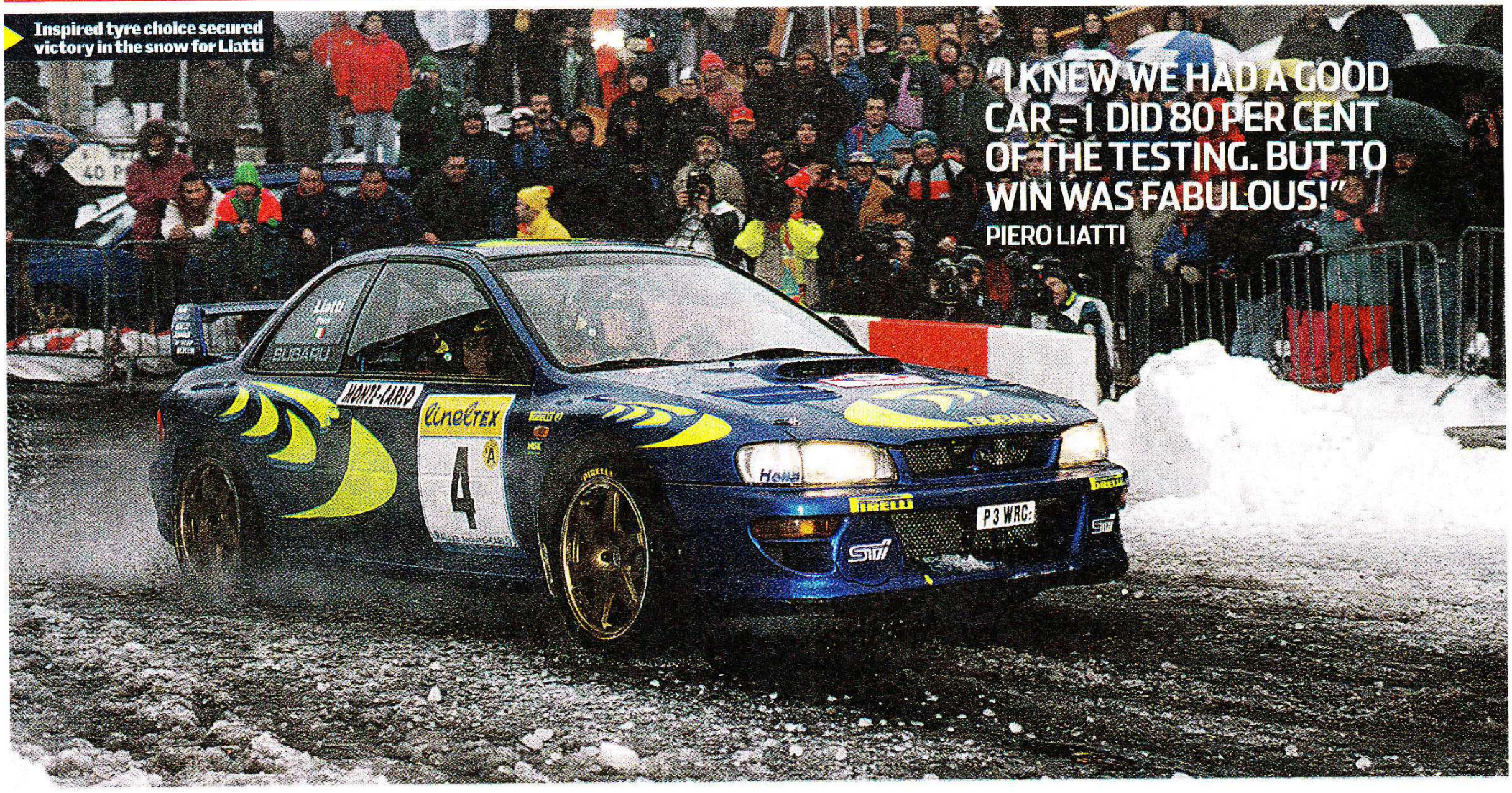
Regardless, surely increased manufacturer interest, coupled with improved promotion and TV coverage, would be enough to establish the category without this extra class. Only time will tell, but currently it seems that SPEED doesn't really know what it wants to be – another club sportscar series, or a training ground for aspiring Le Mans racers. Until it decides one way or the other, or gets the balance right, Britain may have to wait for its next truly homegrown Le Mans star.

PHOTO FINISH

THE STORY BEHIND THE PICTURE

REMEMBER WHEN...

■ **WHO**
PIERO LIATTI
■ **LOCATION**
MONTE CARLO RALLY
■ **YEAR**
1997



Inspired tyre choice secured victory in the snow for Liatti

"I KNEW WE HAD A GOOD CAR – I DID 80 PER CENT OF THE TESTING. BUT TO WIN WAS FABULOUS!"
PIERO LIATTI

WWW.MCKLEIN.DE

THE ADVENT of the Monte Carlo Rally as a round of the Intercontinental Rally Championship brought a new breed of rally cars to the asphalt stages above the principality for the first time in 12 years. Back in 1997 though, it was all-new WRC machines that appeared, rather than Super 2000 cars. The victor, to the surprise of the establishment, was Subaru driver Piero Liatti.

"I knew we had a very good car," remembers Liatti, who was co-driven by Fabrizia Pons on the event. "I did 80 per cent of the testing, so I had a very good idea. The thing with Monte Carlo, though, is that the car is not so important, and you don't have to be the fastest on the stage. You push where you can, but it is so easy to lose the car on the ice. You have to hold back something in other places."

Losing the car on the ice was exactly what happened to Liatti's team-mate Colin McRae on the opening day, leaving the Italian, taking part in the rally for only the second time, as the sole remaining Subaru driver in third place overall, behind Tommi Makinen's Mitsubishi Lancer and Carlos Sainz in Ford's new Escort WRC.

Everything was to change on the rally's toughest stage, the 40-minute blast through Sisteron. New rules meant that tyre changes outside the service park were now outlawed and, with snow falling on some stages, it was up to drivers and teams to choose the correct rubber.

Liatti opted for full wet Pirellis with extra grooves cut into them to help clear out the expected snow. With the harder-compound Michelins used by both Makinen and Sainz proving more difficult to warm up in the conditions, Liatti's choice proved to be inspired. He blitzed the stage, turning a 24-second deficit into a 12-second lead!

"My recce crew perfectly explained the road conditions and the Pirelli guys suggested that the wets would be the right balance. It was me who made the call though," Liatti recalls. "We were the third car onto the stage, so I saw the lines that others made. That helped, but I had no idea how fast I was. It was flat-out, but we didn't have the splits in the car back then, so I had no idea what the time was. It was amazing to find we were ahead at the end of the stage."

Liatti increased his lead to 55 seconds over the final five stages and duly celebrated his first WRC win with Pons, who in turn was standing on the top step of a WRC podium for the fifth time.

"Good feelings," says now 46-year-old Liatti. "To win your first rally is special, but to win Monte was fabulous."

Liatti took four further podiums for Subaru in 1997/8 but Monte Carlo would remain his only WRC victory.

ANNIVERSARIES

JAN 29
First grand prix in Rio de Janeiro (1978)
Jody Scheckter (b 1950)
Patrick Snijers (b 1958)
Kunimitsu Takahashi (b 1940)
Paul Warwick (b 1969, d Jul 21 1991)
Matthew Wilson (b 1987)

JAN 30
Rudolf Caracciola (b 1901, d Sep 28 1959)
Bernard Dudot (b 1939)
Paul Frere (b 1917, d Feb 23 2008)
Mathias Lauda (b 1981)
Ferdinand Porsche (d 1951)

JAN 31
Mauro Baldi (b 1954)
Jo Bonnier (b 1930, d Jun 11 1972)
Tino Brambilla (b 1934)
Robbie Groff (b 1966)
JJ Lehto (b 1966)
Costas Los (b 1955)
Alan van der Merwe (b 1981)

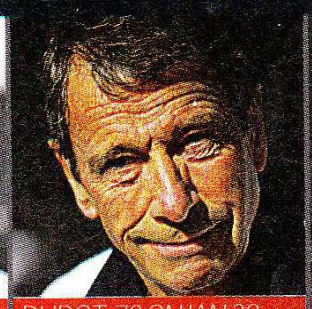
FEB 1
Urmo Aava (b 1979)
Rob Austin (b 1981)
John Coombs (b 1922)
Christian Geistdorfer (b 1953)
Jim Pace (b 1961)
Bjorn Skogstad (b 1961)

FEB 2
Billy Boat (b 1966)
Parsons/Donohue Lola wins Daytona 24 Hours (1969)

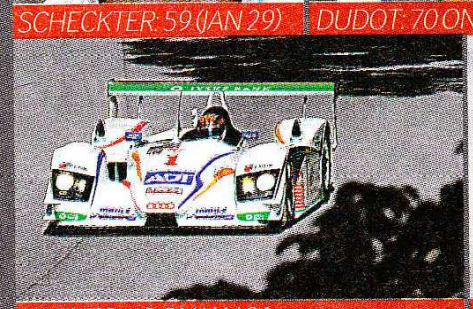
FEB 3
Johnny Claes (d 1956)
Paul Emery (d 1993)
Tony Gaze (b 1920)
Martyn Koene (b 1969)
Chico Serra (b 1957)

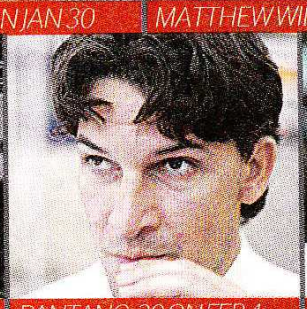
FEB 4
Ralph Bellamy (b 1938)
Maxi Gotz (b 1986)
Charles Morgan (b 1943)
Giorgio Pantano (b 1979)
Edoardo Piscopo (b 1988)
Dick Seaman (b 1913, d Jun 25 1939)
Roger Williamson (b 1949, d Jul 29 1973)


SCHECKTER: 59 (JAN 29)


DUDOT: 70 ON JAN 30


MATTHEW WILSON: 22 ON JAN 29


JJ LEHTO: 43 ON JAN 31


PANTANO: 30 ON FEB 4


WILLIAMSON: BORN IN '49

Mille Miglia Rally

ENGLAND to ITALY

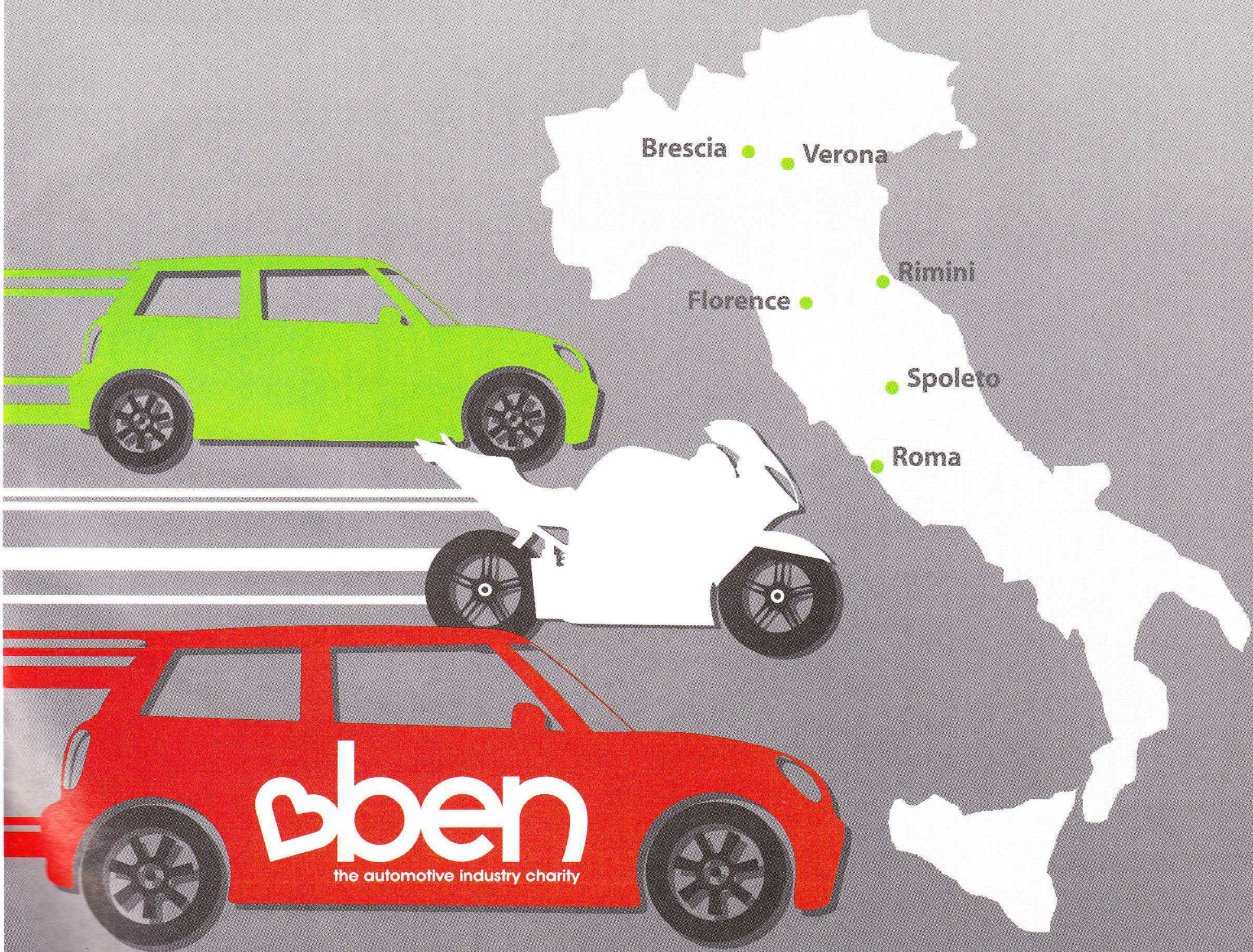
20th - 29th June 2009

Are you looking for an exciting challenge?

Join **BEN** as we travel from England to Italy and complete our very own Mille Miglia Rally

If you would like more information about this rally or you would like to book your space please contact the **BEN** Events department on 01344 294 722 or email eventsteam@ben.org.uk

BOOK NOW PLACES ARE LIMITED FOR THIS POPULAR EVENT

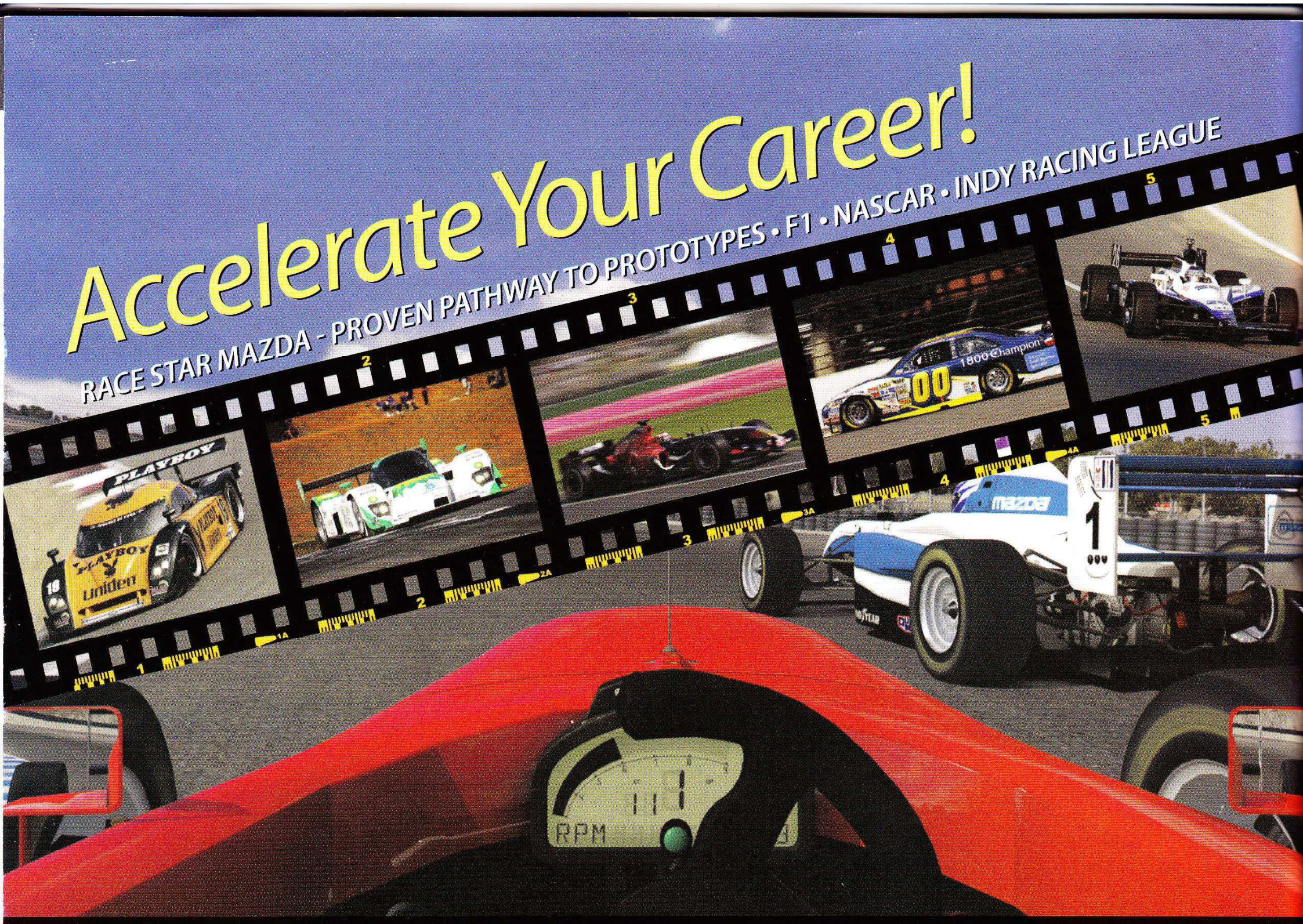


BEN - Motor and Allied Trades Benevolent Fund
Registered Office: Lynwood • Sunninghill • Ascot • Berkshire • SL5 0AJ
Tel • 01344 620191 • Fax • 01344 622042
Website • www.ben.org.uk

A company limited by guarantee in England and Wales. Registered Company No: 2163894
Registered Social Landlord No: LH3766 - Registered Charity: 297877

Accelerate Your Career!

RACE STAR MAZDA - PROVEN PATHWAY TO PROTOTYPES • F1 • NASCAR • INDY RACING LEAGUE



Star Mazda graduates include: Marco Andretti - Indy Car, Gerardo Bonilla - Prototypes, Colin Braun - Prototypes/NASCAR, Guy Cosmo - Prototypes, Brad Jaeger - Prototypes, Raphael Matos - Indy Lights/Prototypes, Michael McDowell - Indy Car/Prototypes / NASCAR, Graham Rahal - Indy Car, Scott Speed - Formula One

Why the Star Mazda Championship?

- Prize funds total more than 1.5 million U.S.
- Two races in Canada (Trois Rivieres and Mosport)
- 2009 Star Mazda champion wins full-season sponsorship for 2010 Atlantic Championship
- All races on TV in U.S., Canada, U.K. and South America
- 13-race, 11-weekend schedule with ALMS, Grand-Am and NASCAR
- Variety of tracks, road courses, street circuits, ovals
- Singe-marque series showcases driving talent over big budgets
- Unrestricted testing promotes rapid driver development
- Lap times within 2-4 seconds of Atlantic at a fraction of the cost
- Racers 16 and older welcome

For further information, visit www.StarMazda.com/newdriver or contact the Star Mazda Championship at 818 686 3350

Star Mazda Championship presented by Goodyear 2009 Schedule

March 20 / Sebring, FL / ALMS
April 25 / VIR / Grand-Am
May 16 / Miller / ALMS
June 13-14 / New Jersey / Feature Race
June 20 / Milwaukee Mile / NASCAR
July 10 / Iowa / ARCA RE/MAX
July 25 – 26 / Autobahn / Feature Race
August 16 / Trois Rivieres / Feature Race
August 29 / Mosport / ALMS
September 25 / Road Atlanta / ALMS
October 10 / Mazda Raceway Laguna Seca / ALMS

STAR MAZDA CHAMPIONSHIP
mazda
PRESENTED BY GOODYEAR

Visit StarMazda.com/newdriver for a virtual test drive courtesy of iRacing.com

iRacing.com
MOTORSPORT SIMULATIONS

The Official Simulation Service of Star Mazda

Visit StarMazda.com/newdriver for a virtual test drive courtesy of iRacing.com