

MOTORSPORT NEWS

JUNE 13 2018 ■ EVERY WEDNESDAY £3.60

NEUVILLE LEAVES IT LATE



HYUNDAI'S LAST-GASP GLORY IN ITALY P24

MERCEDES ROCKED BY

“UNBELIEVABLE”

FERRARI



By Robert Ladbrook

Angry Mercedes chiefs have vowed to double their efforts in this year's Formula 1 World Championship fight after Ferrari and Sebastian Vettel took a dominant victory in Canada last weekend, and with it stole the points lead.

Mercedes lacked the outright pace of its Italian rival all weekend, with former points leader Lewis Hamilton struggling and finishing down in fifth.

The team has blamed a delayed upgrade and poor tyre choice for the slump, but has also conceded that Ferrari currently has the edge, with Niki Lauda saying: “the Ferrari package is unbelievable. We have to work really hard now.”

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THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT
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CREAM OF THE CROP

FARMER AND THIMM TAKE SILVERSTONE 500 P34



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Lacklustre Silver Arrows prompts concern

MER



By Robert Ladbrook

Mercedes bosses have issued a call for the team to double its efforts after it was trounced in Canada by Sebastian Vettel and his "unbelievable" Ferrari.

The Circuit Gilles-Villeneuve was due to be one of Mercedes' stronger venues, with a Silver Arrow having topped the order in each of the last three Canadian races during the V6 hybrid era. Lewis Hamilton was vying for a fourth victory in a row in Montreal – which would have equalled Michael Schumacher's record of seven wins in the event.

However, both Mercedes lacked pace against the rejuvenated Ferraris. While Valtteri Bottas qualified second, the Finn couldn't live with Vettel's race pace and faded, while the German-driven Ferrari led every lap on its way to a third win of the year and a 50th career victory for Vettel.

While Vettel scorched clear, Hamilton struggled with power and cooling issues and was limited

to fifth place, which meant he ceded the world championship lead to Vettel by a single point.

Mercedes' non-executive chairman Niki Lauda said the result came as a culture shock after the race.

"We have to say that the Ferrari is unbelievable," Lauda said. "The car is fantastic and the engine – and even on fuel consumption they have been going like hell all through the race. "I think we have to work really hard now."

Upgrade delay

Mercedes' cause wasn't helped when it was forced to abandon plans to run its upgraded engine on the eve of the event.

While Ferrari, Renault and Honda all brought upgraded power units, Mercedes announced on Wednesday night that it would delay the introduction of its 'PU2'-spec unit for both the works teams and its customer squads, citing a "quality issue".

The new unit is now set to be

introduced from the French Grand Prix onwards after undergoing further reliability work.

While Hamilton denied that his poor qualifying [fourth] was a result of the lack of upgrades, the age of his engine told in the race. The four-time world champion complained of a lack of power during the race, and had to make an early pit stop to open additional cooling vents when he began to suffer overheating.

Hamilton said he was relieved the unit didn't fail entirely during the race. "I'm just so happy that I actually finished," he said. "From the start I was down on power and

"This was a sh*t weekend"

Toto Wolff



in Canada

CEDES'

CANADIAN WAKE UP CALL



Merc will have to find answers



World champ says he struggled

Hamilton was left fuming after a tough performance

my engine was saying it was over temperature and I couldn't get it down. I thought it was going to fall. Every single lap I was kind of on the edge just waiting for the power to drop away and disappear. It kept dropping out and then coming back and then dropping again. This is the seventh race for that engine, so it saw its life and I could have actually lost a wholeload more points today."

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff called for a swift turnaround from his team after being angered by the result. As well as Hamilton's engine and the lack of an upgrade, Mercedes also suffered from a poor tyre choice that left it with limited sets of the fastest hypersoft tyres.

"It's a sh*t result for us," he said. "I have to put it like that. This is a strong track for us, but all weekend long we did little mistakes, from the beginning on. The only feeling I have is that we need to wake up.

"We fall behind in every aspect. This is a track where we should have maximised points. It was

not about performing damage limitation. We will look at this internally."

When asked about the upgrade delay, Wolff added: "You need to get the right balance between pushing development very hard and adding performance to the car and at the same time keeping reliability.

"The team has been extremely strong in the past at keeping reliability on a high level, so that is not a part that worries me, it is more we have seen today a Ferrari that is the stronger car - strong in qualifying, strong in the race and at no time today did we have a chance to fight for the win.

"We came to Montreal expecting the car to be really strong and we are leaving Montreal seeing that we haven't been where we should have been, where we thought we'd be. This is a major wake-up call.

"This is a three-way fight [with Red Bull, too]. Six cars can win races and you can't take anything for granted. You can't come to Montreal thinking this will be a

walk in the park. This is the kind of wake-up call you get if you do."

No panic

Hamilton was stoic after the race when asked about his thoughts on losing the world championship lead to Vettel.

With 14 races to go the pair of four-time world-beaters are separated by just one point. Hamilton, who overhauled a 25-point deficit to Vettel to win his 2017 crown, said he expected Ferrari to struggle at some point.

"There is no reason to lose control, we just keep doing what we're doing, keep our heads down, keep motivated and keep pushing because they [Ferrari] will falter," Hamilton told *Sky Sports F1*.

"We have to keep applying the pressure. We didn't this weekend, but I'm really going to make sure I come back stronger in the next race. "Ferrari ultimately have had the slightly better package. All round they've been doing a slightly better job, so we just have to do more."



Vettel: 50th win

Vettel took command from the start of the Canadian GP to score a vital race victory

CANADIAN GP REPORT

BY JAMES ROBERTS

Ferrari had a long wait for success in Canada, but Seb delivered

VETTEL BACK IN



Ferrari had the race under control



Ricciardo pushed hard but was beaten to the podium by Verstappen



Fernando Alonso's 300th grand prix ended in...mechanical failure

The 'Chant of the Italians' rang out over the Circuit Gilles-Villeneuve on Sunday afternoon as Sebastian Vettel gave Ferrari their first victory in Canada for 14 years. Appropriately, this year marked the 40th anniversary of Gilles Villeneuve's first grand prix victory, scored at the track that now bears his name.

As Vettel jumped out of his winning machine, he grabbed a giant Ferrari flag and leapt about with child-like joy, not only celebrating his 50th grand prix win but, perhaps more significantly, relishing his return to the top of the drivers' world championship – one point ahead of Lewis Hamilton.

It had been a celebration of the Prancing Horse throughout Sunday, as earlier in the morning, 1997 world champion Jacques Villeneuve drove his father's 312T3 1978 machine to the delight of the local supporters.

"Forty years after Gilles won his first GP here, it's great to show that Ferrari is still alive winning races," said a delighted Vettel. "This is something for all the Canadian tifosi to enjoy and I'm just extremely proud to become part of that story."

The German took a lights-to-flag victory at a warm Ile Notre Dame island circuit in a largely processional one-stop affair.

Vettel finished 7.3 seconds ahead of Mercedes's Valtteri Bottas and a further 0.9s in front of Max Verstappen, who didn't put a foot wrong in the wake of his misdemeanors in each of the first six races of the year.

Daniel Ricciardo was fourth ahead of Hamilton – the Brit never quite happy with the balance of his Mercedes throughout the weekend and suffering

with power unit problems in the race.

While the Canadian Grand Prix was scheduled to take 70 laps, the official result was classified at 68 laps with a countback, after the chequered flag was prematurely waved before the finish by a local celebrity. An error described by one F1 insider as "amateur."

Qualifying

When Vettel crossed the line to set the fastest time in qualifying, the roar from the crowd drowned out his 1.6-litre turbocharged engine. It was the first time since Michael Schumacher's achievement in 2001 that a Ferrari has taken pole position at the Circuit Gilles-Villeneuve.

In recent years Hamilton has dominated at this track, but scrappy laps in Q3 – including a lock-up at the hairpin on his final run – meant he could only qualify fourth. One place behind Verstappen and his team-mate Bottas.

As has been his habit this year, Kimi Raikkonen slipped up in Q3, running wide at Turn 2, putting himself out of contention for the top spot. He aborted his final lap, meaning the Finn started fifth in his Ferrari, one place ahead of Ricciardo. Rounding out the top 10 were the two Renaults and both Force Indias.

The only real drama of the hour-long session – held in glorious summer sunshine – came right at the start when Romain Grosjean's Haas blew its Ferrari engine as he headed down the pitlane. He was immediately eliminated in a cloud of white smoke, as was Sauber's Marcus Ericsson, who tapped the wall at the second chicane (Turn 9).

The most significant strategic element was the fact both the Mercedes and Ferrari runners set their best time on the purple ultrasoft tyre, meaning

they started the race on that rubber. But both of the Red Bulls opted for the pink hypersoft, offering up a mix of strategies for race day.

"I'm surprised both Red Bulls chose the hypersoft," said Vettel after qualifying. "It's not a good race tyre, but we'll see what happens tomorrow..."

Race

As the cars formed up on the grid, all eyes were on Verstappen to see whether he could avoid contact on the opening lap. Starting on his hypersofts, he was expected to get the best launch of the front runners and be right in the mix at the first corner. Red Bull team boss Christian Horner said to Max beforehand he should "go for it", not wanting to suppress his natural racing instinct, despite his recent poor form.

Once the five red lights went out, Verstappen was no threat to Vettel, who converted pole into an instant lead, but did get alongside Bottas in the first sequence of bends. Bottas was adept in repelling the threat and although the pair had the slightest of kisses, they raced wheel-to-wheel through Turns 1 and 2 and Bottas stayed ahead.

Further back, Ricciardo did manage to squeeze past Raikkonen for fifth, while Hamilton held onto fourth place. But less than half a lap into the race, the safety car had been deployed – for the one and only time in this grand prix – for a sizeable crash in the crowded mid-field.

Williams are at present in something of a nadir and heading into his home weekend, young Lance Stroll's body language gave the impression that he wasn't overly enthusiastic about his prospects of a strong result at his local track. That was borne out when he didn't make it past the sixth corner of the race.

While he managed to overtake the

'Perez called for a black flag'
Force India man's ire, below



ROUND 08

Photos: LAT

CONTROL



Vettel reflected on Gilles Villeneuve as he took the glory

two McLarens in front of him at the start, as he rounded the swift right-hander at Turn 5, Toro Rosso's Brendon Hartley attempted to pass the Williams around the outside. When Stroll's Williams got loose, he corrected the slide, but flicked across the track and forced Hartley straight into the barriers on the outside of the corner. Hartley's Toro Rosso became airborne and was thankfully avoided by the rest of the on-coming pack – finally coming to a wrecked heap alongside the battered Williams of Stroll. It took four laps under caution to clear the cars and remove all the debris from the circuit.

At the restart there was more drama as 10th placed Sergio Perez attempted to overtake Carlos Sainz under braking for Turn 1 and ended up running wide and losing four places in the process. On the team radio the Force India man was incensed, calling for a "black flag" to be issued to Renault's Sainz. But in the case of the Stroll/Hartley clash and this incident – the stewards declared that no further action would be taken.

A lap later Hamilton reported on the team radio that he was suffering with "drop outs of power" and his team decided to pit him earlier than scheduled to help deal with an overheating issue. That was on lap 16, the same time that Verstappen pitted to shed the hypersoft tyre.



Both Renaults scored points

one and only tyre stop one lap later and by setting the fastest sectors of the race up to that point – in addition to speedy work by his pitcrew – he was able to leapfrog Hamilton for fifth place.

After the early dramas, the race quickly settled down. Vettel running at the front with a comfortable lead over Bottas, who was ahead of Raikkonen and then the cars that had pitted: Verstappen, Ricciardo and Hamilton and then the two Renaults.

Grosjean, who had started from the back of the grid after his engine problem in qualifying, was the last to stop and had risen to ninth in the running order.

On lap 40 the race had its third retirement when Fernando Alonso lost power in his McLaren with an exhaust failure. It was a weekend where the Spaniard had celebrated his 300th grand prix, but this retirement once again typified his dismal run of bad luck in F1.

On Saturday afternoon, he left the track early, just as his McLaren bosses were being quizzed about his future and their plans to run an IndyCar team next year. It seems as if they are doing everything in their power to hold onto Alonso, but with the Le Mans 24 Hours in his sights this week, you can understand why his frustration with both McLaren and Formula 1 has become exasperating for the two-time champion.

While Alonso was unstrapping himself from his broken McLaren, there was still a race going on and interest lay in whether Raikkonen was far enough up the road (in third) to pit and emerge ahead of Hamilton (sixth). When the Ferrari man did pit on lap 32, he couldn't make it stick and emerged just behind the Mercedes.

Up front Vettel made his one and only pitstop on lap 37, one lap after second-placed Bottas had made his stop for fresh rubber. In the closing stages, the

Mercedes started to apply some pressure to the lead Ferrari, bringing the gap down to just under 3.5 seconds, but the fight was effectively over when he ran wide at Turn 2, in attempting to lap one of the Renaults.

With a few laps remaining, Hamilton was on Ricciardo's tail, while Verstappen was tucked up behind Bottas, but neither could find a way past on a day where overtaking was in short supply.

Then a lap before the finish, the chequered flag was flown prematurely and as per the regulations the race result was taken on a two-lap countback. After the race, the winner was asked about the error:

"Fortunately I had the lap count in my car and the pitboard was accurate, but then if you lose your team radio and the pitboard isn't there – then you would back off," said Vettel. "Then, as you are in the lead, you would hope all the others back off as well. I was worried and I said on the radio not to wave the flag, so as not to get people jumping on the track, waving flags and celebrating because we're going at full pace."

After the race, Red Bull's Horner was praising Ricciardo for setting the race's fastest lap on lap 70, when he was informed about the countback – the fastest lap going to Verstappen instead. While he made a joke about the error, laughing about wanting the procession to end early, someone asked what would have happened if Verstappen had passed Bottas for second instead. "Then," he said. "It wouldn't be a laughing matter...!"

Vettel was certainly joyous as he celebrated on the podium, as were the Canadian Ferrari fans who had good reason to cheer long into the night. As they headed back across the St Lawrence river and into the Montreal bars on Sunday evening, we suspect one of two of them raised their glasses and said: "This one's for Gilles."

RACE FACTS

Results © 2018 Formula One Administration Ltd

CANADA
Circuit: Circuit Gilles Villeneuve **Lap:** 2.709 miles
Race distance: 189.630 miles **Laps:** 70
Lap record: 1m 13.622s (Rubens Barrichello, 2004)
2017 winner: Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)

Date: June 10
Weather: overcast

TYRE CHOICE

Option HYPER SOFT

Option ULTRA SOFT

Prime SUPER SOFT

RESULTS

FIA Formula 1 World Championship, round 7/20

POS	DRIVERS	NAT	CAR-ENGINE	TIME
1	Sebastian Vettel	GER	Ferrari	1h28m31.377s
2	Valtteri Bottas	FIN	Mercedes	+7.376s
3	Max Verstappen	NED	Red Bull-Renault	+8.360s
4	Daniel Ricciardo	AUS	Red Bull-Renault	+20.892s
5	Lewis Hamilton	GBR	Mercedes	+21.559s
6	Kimi Raikkonen	FIN	Ferrari	+27.184s
7	Nico Hulkenberg	GER	Renault	-1 lap
8	Carlos Sainz	ESP	Renault	-1 lap
9	Esteban Ocon	FRA	Force India-Mercedes	-1 lap
10	Charles Leclerc	MON	Sauber-Ferrari	-1 lap
11	Pierre Gasly	FRA	Toro Rosso-Honda	-1 lap
12	Romain Grosjean	FRA	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap
13	Kevin Magnussen	DEN	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap
14	Sergio Perez	MEX	Force India-Mercedes	-1 lap
15	Marcus Ericsson	SWE	Sauber-Ferrari	-2 laps
16	Stoffel Vandoorne	BEL	McLaren-Renault	-2 laps
17	Sergey Sirotkin	RUS	Williams-Mercedes	-2 laps
R	Fernando Alonso	ESP	McLaren-Renault	L40/exhaust
R	Brendon Hartley	NZL	Toro Rosso-Honda	L0/collision
R	Lance Stroll	CAN	Williams-Mercedes	L0/collision

Winner's average speed 124.89mph Lap leaders: 1-68 (and a bit...) Vettel

FASTEST LAP | MAX VERSTAPPEN 1m.13.864s ON LAP 65 (AVERAGE SPEED: 132.07mph)

QUALIFYING

POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Vettel	1m10.764s	11	Magnussen	1m12.606s
2	Bottas	1m10.857s	12	Hartley	1m12.635s
3	Verstappen	1m10.937s	13	Leclerc	1m12.661s
4	Hamilton	1m10.996s	14	Alonso	1m12.856s
5	Raikkonen	1m11.095s	15	Vandoorne	1m12.865s
6	Ricciardo	1m11.116s	16	Stroll	1m13.590s
7	Hulkenberg	1m11.973s	17	Sirotkin	1m13.643s
8	Ocon	1m12.084s	18	Ericsson	1m14.593s
9	Sainz	1m12.168s	19	Gasly	1m13.047s*
10	Perez	1m12.671s	20	Grosjean	No time**

* Penalty for replacement parts ** Permitted to start



Hamilton was frustrated

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

DRIVERS			CONSTRUCTORS		
POS	DRIVER	PTS	POS	CONSTRUCTOR	PTS
1	Sebastian Vettel	121	1	Mercedes	206
2	Lewis Hamilton	120	2	Ferrari	189
3	Valtteri Bottas	86	3	Red Bull-TAG Heuer	134
4	Daniel Ricciardo	84	4	Renault	56
5	Kimi Raikkonen	68	5	McLaren-Renault	40
6	Max Verstappen	50	6	Force India-Mercedes	28
7	Fernando Alonso	32	7	Toro Rosso-Honda	19
8	Nico Hulkenberg	32	8	Haas-Ferrari	19
9	Carlos Sainz	24	9	Sauber-Ferrari	12
10	Kevin Magnussen	19	10	Williams-Mercedes	4

NEXT RACE: FRENCH GRAND PRIX, JUNE 24

RACING NEWS

F1 ROUND-UP

Hartley's crash
Brendon Hartley was taken to hospital for checks after his shunt with Lance Stroll on the opening lap in Canada. The Toro Rosso driver was sent into the barriers at Turn 5 after Stroll clipped him while saving an oversteer moment. Hartley's car was briefly airborne before spearing back into Stroll's Williams. Hartley was taken to hospital as a precaution and underwent two electrocardiogram tests, which the FIA said revealed no issues.

Engine swap

Daniel Ricciardo says that he struggled to get as much from Renault's upgraded power unit as his team-mate Max Verstappen. Renault brought a new-spec unit for all six of its cars in Canada, but Ricciardo trailed Verstappen in both qualifying and the race. He told Sky: "We had the upgrade and my car struggled more with the driveability, the calibration. It could have been better, let's say that. I was just struggling to keep the tyres under control with that driveability. I would say it explains some of the inconsistency. But also, Max was driving really well all weekend, so I won't take that away from him."

Force sale..?

The head of Rich Energy drinks last week confirmed that he's made an offer to buy Force India. William Storey claimed that a formal offer was made in April, and that a deal is close to being concluded with shareholders Vijay Mallya, Sahara Group and Michiel Mol. Storey told *The Daily Telegraph*: "Rich Energy made an offer to buy Force India Formula 1 team at the end of April and the offer was accepted in principle. We have deposited funds considerably in excess of the purchase price and will invest an additional eight-figure amount in the team."

... Not sure

Force India deputy team principal Bob Fernley played down any deal to sell the team, saying: "It's no secret they [Rich Energy] have been interested, but so have other people. Nothing's moved forward to my knowledge. Rumours go on and on and people talk. That's what the F1 paddock is all about."



Harlow wasn't to blame for flag mix-up

FLAG CONFUSION DOWN TO OFFICIALS' ERROR

'Celebrity flag waver' nothing to do with early chequered flag

By Robert Ladbrook

FIA race director Charlie Whiting has blamed a mix-up in communications between Formula 1 officials for the chequered flag being shown a lap early in the Canadian Grand Prix.

The official on the start/finish stand, who carries the title of 'starter', thought race leader Sebastian Vettel was on his 70th and final lap, and mistakenly asked model Winnie Harlow to wave the flag when Vettel was actually only completing his 69th tour.

Drivers continued to race, either by instruction or opting to believe the lap counter readouts on their dash in many cases, despite some marshals around the lap waving multiple flags in celebration, believing the race had finished.

The FIA treated the situation in the same way as a red flag, counting the result back a

lap, declaring a result at 68 laps, not 70. While no places within the top 10 changed, Daniel Ricciardo was stripped of the fastest lap of the race, which he set on that final tour. Instead his Red Bull team-mate Max Verstappen took the honour.

Whiting explained: "The flag was shown early because of a miscommunication with the guy that they call the starter here, who starts and finishes races. He thought it was the last lap, and asked race control to confirm it, they confirmed it, but they thought he was making a statement and not asking a question. He just showed it a lap early, or he told the flag waver to show it a lap early, so it had nothing to do with the fact a celebrity was waving the flag."

Whiting added that the TV graphics may have contributed to the mix-up. They show which lap the leader is on, rather than the number of laps completed.

"I think people who don't work in F1 are

sometimes confused by the graphic where it says 69 out of 70," he added. "That makes a casual observer think 'oh this is the last lap then'. It was just a simple miscommunication, and a very regrettable one of course."

Race winner Sebastian Vettel radioed his team to complain about the early flag, having noticed it was being waved on the big screens while completing his penultimate lap.

"Fortunately we had radio and the pit board was accurate," said Vettel. "I was just worried, I told them so people didn't jump onto the track waving flags and celebrating because we are still going at full pace. Some of the marshals were celebrating – they peaked too early."

Ricciardo was informed of his loss of the fastest lap live on Sky and said in open-mouthed shock: "I think it went to me! No..? Let's re-run this. That's wrong!"

Norris at the centre of Red Bull approach

McLaren made its determination to hold on to rising star Lando Norris clear last week when it blocked a proposed deal with Red Bull to bring the Briton into Formula 1 with Toro Rosso for the remainder of the season.

Red Bull reportedly approached Norris with an offer for him to replace the struggling Brendon Hartley in the Toro Rosso team from the French GP onwards.

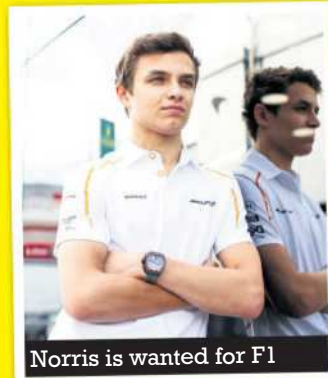
It is understood that Red Bull was also keen to take a longer-term interest in the 18-year-old, who is currently leading Formula 2 having lifted the European F3 title in his maiden season last year.

However, McLaren declined the approach, and has Norris under contract as its reserve driver, with an option to promote him should either Stoffel Vandoorne or Fernando Alonso go elsewhere for 2019.

A McLaren spokesperson said: "We are not surprised that other teams approach our drivers. They clearly believe they are as talented as we do."

Toro Rosso refused to comment, but Norris offered a brief insight, saying: "I'm flattered by the stories but I'm focused on F2 and committed to McLaren. I leave this sort of thing to my management."

Hartley crashed out of the Canadian GP after a first-lap tangle with Lance Stroll's Williams. The Kiwi said: "I think it's silly for me to comment on rumours, because that's all they are. I know what my contract says, and I'm very confident in the work I'm doing behind the scenes to develop the car. I know I have the ability to be here and do a good job in Formula 1."



Norris is wanted for F1

Renault threatens to walk away from Red Bull if the team delays its 2019 engine decision any further

Renault has warned that it could withdraw Red Bull's latest 2019 engine offer after the team's repeated stalling over a decision on its supplier.

Red Bull and Renault agreed to extend the original May deadline with the Milton Keynes team keen to see how Honda's

development is progressing with its junior Toro Rosso team before committing to an engine contract for 2019 onwards.

Red Bull wanted to use Canada and France to gather data for a back-to-back comparison between Renault and Honda's upgraded units. Last weekend

Red Bull insinuated it could wait until Austria in July to make a decision.

Renault F1's Cyril Abiteboul warned more delays wouldn't work, and wants a decision before the French GP.

"I guess they have all the information they need now," he said. "We extended the

deadline of May 15 on the back of 12 years of good collaboration. But past a certain point, the offer we made, and that they requested, will not stand. It was Montreal that they wanted to wait for; our new spec, Honda's new spec. I see no reason to delay any further."

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'Lundqvist extends championship lead'
British F3 report, p34



Photos: LAT, Porsche

DI GRASSI FINALLY WINS AGAIN

It was bound to happen eventually. Lucas di Grassi finally won a Formula E race for the first time in 2017/18, and long-time championship leader Jean-Eric Vergne ran out of luck.

Audi's di Grassi rose from fifth on the grid to win a race where several drivers – including polesitter Mitch Evans and Vergne – were hit with controversial penalties.

Evans made history with Jaguar's first FE pole, but couldn't escape the clutches of pursuers Andre Lotterer and Sam Bird in the early stages. When di Grassi began picking them off one-by-one, the writing appeared to be on the wall for the New Zealander – and so it proved to be.

"It maybe looked quite straight forward for Lucas but we didn't want to create complexity at that point," Jaguar's team director James Barclay said of di Grassi's move to take the lead from Evans on the run to Turn on lap 18 of 39.

After that, the race was characterised by a series

of penalties for full course yellow speeding infringements, which followed Felix Rosenqvist's lost front wing – he'd crashed into the Turn 1 barriers as Vergne, who started down in 17th place, fought him for eighth – meant the race needed to be suspended.

Lotterer, Evans, Jose Maria Lopez, Sebastien Buemi and Vergne were all pinged and hit with drive through penalties. After they'd served them, Bird was elevated to second ahead of Jerome D'Ambrosio.

Vergne's penalty, which followed his "nightmare" qualifying and a gear selection problem at his car swap, dropped him to 11th and although he charged back again, he only scored one point for 10th.

A delighted di Grassi won by 7.5s, with Lotterer fourth and Evans fading to seventh.

Heading the New York season finale – where Bird won both races in 2017 – the Briton has slashed Vergne's points lead to just 23.



First win in 2017/18



Di Grassi won title last season

F1 RACING ASSOCIATE EDITOR

JAMES ROBERTS

"Max's hard-nosed style got the better of him"



Coming into 2018, Max Verstappen felt invincible. He had the measure of his highly-rated team-mate Dan Ricciardo and had signed a new long-term deal with Red Bull, making the 20-year-old one of the highest earners in the sport. What could possibly go wrong?

At the Australian season-opener, Max's hard-nosed style got the better of him when he broke his diffuser over a kerb and spun a few laps later. A fortnight later in Bahrain he crashed in qualifying, after being too liberal with his right foot, then made contact with Lewis Hamilton during the race.

After the frustration of that move, he was too keen in his attempt to pass Hamilton at the next grand prix in China and also smashed into Vettel in his bid to make-up for his earlier misdemeanour. To compound matters, that mistake cost him a victory chance and he had the ignominy of watching his Ricciardo take the spoils.

And so began Verstappen's destructive cycle: the more frustrated he was to make amends, the harder he drove – leading to more mistakes. In the next three races he continued to make contact with either other drivers or the wall.

In Baku he famously clashed with his team-mate, hit the back of Lance Stroll in Spain and then crashed heavily in Monaco practice – forcing him to the back of the grid. In six races, Verstappen's had six incidents and the pressure was mounting. Following Monaco, Red Bull were starting to lose their patience with their highly-paid superstar. Team boss Christian Horner admitted that Verstappen was "trying too hard" and added that "when you get into a spiral, you need to hit the reset button".

When last Thursday in Canada, journalist Jonathan McEvoy from the *Daily Mail*, simply asked Verstappen: "Why have you had so many accidents?" His response gave an indication to his mindset.

"I don't know," he said. "And, like I said in the beginning of this press conference, I get really tired of all the questions, so... yeah... I think if I get a few more I'll head-butt someone."

There was the hint of a smile, but much of Verstappen's appeal is his no-nonsense approach to both his interviews and his racing. At the start of the Canadian GP last Sunday, Horner told his young charge to "go for it", so as not to suppress his natural talent and his racing instinct. It's a difficult balancing act and one Horner has to handle carefully. Verstappen's probably realised that he's not invincible, but this blip is all part of the learning curve for a racer who, remember, is only 20 years old. For his many fans, who love his attacking, aggressive style, they'll be hoping he doesn't rein it in too much.

QUICK LAPS THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP

Porsche will attempt to beat the long-standing lap record around the Nurburgring Nordschleife with its upgraded 919 Hybrid Evo LMP1 car this month. The lap record stands at a 6m11.13s recorded by Stefan Bellof in a Porsche 956 in qualifying for the 1983 Nurburgring 1000km... New rules for the top class of the World Endurance Championship have been given the green light and will be introduced in time for the 2020/21 season. The FIA World Motor Sport Council statement said that the target is for manufacturer budgets to be one

quarter of current levels in LMP1 and that there will be "freedom of design based on a hypercar concept"... **Ferrari has become the eighth manufacturer to sign up for the Suzuka 10 Hours round of the Intercontinental GT Challenge in August with a factory-supported entry. The Taiwanese HubAuto team has entered a second Ferrari 488 GT3 for works drivers Davide Rigon, Miguel Molina, and Matt Griffin...** Chip Ganassi Racing's Scott Dixon surged into the IndyCar championship lead after a controlled victory at Texas Motor

Speedway, taking advantage of Penske's woes. Penske had taken a 1-2-3 in qualifying with Josef Newgarden leading Simon Pagenaud and Will Power, but they struggled with tyre blistering and fuel economy during the race. Dixon survived several restarts to win convincingly and move 23 points ahead in the standings... **Clint Bowyer claimed a second NASCAR Cup Series win of 2018 by leading a Stewart-Haas Racing 1-2-3 in a Michigan race**

shortened by rain. Bowyer had run within the top 10 throughout the race and was third in the opening stage, and finished stage two in second place behind his SHR team-mate Kevin Harvick. Rain had initially delayed the start of the race by over two hours and with 67 laps of the 200 remaining, it returned prompting the race to be declared and full points awarded...



Nurburgring-bound Porsche



Aston are confident rules will be adjusted for Vantage New Aston could get Le Mans BoP boost

Aston Martin is confident of a Le Mans 24 Hours rules adjustment in its favour after its new Vantage GTE proved five seconds off the pace in testing.

The British manufacturer believes that the official test day for the 24 Hours, which takes place this weekend, provided conclusive proof that the second-generation Vantage GTE needs a helping hand under the Balance of Performance in the World Endurance Championship's GTE Pro class. It claimed that the

speed trap figures from both the test and the opening round of the WEC at Spa last month proved that new car needed a revised BoP to boost its straight-line speed.

Aston Martin Racing managing director John Gaw said: "The Automobile Club de l'Ouest and the FIA know we are missing top speed, because it was the same as at Spa.

"They clearly wanted to see it again with the car in Le Mans configuration, so we are confident that there will be a change in time."

Simpson: 'I have worked out I deserve to be here'

British Touring Car Championship race winner Matt Simpson says work done away from the race circuit has helped him to break his victory duck in the series.

The Eurotech Racing Honda Civic Type R driver took his career first pole position at Oulton Park last weekend and raced to an untroubled win in the opener.

The victory has pushed Simpson to 16th in the points, and he believes that the success will spur him on for the remainder of the campaign.

"I really enjoy the circuit at Oulton Park," said Simpson. "I like tracks

that reward bravery, and I was in a very good place coming here. This win is a credit to the lads who work at the team – they have given me a superb car – and I have worked hard on myself away from the circuit. I have done a lot of work on my mental strength, and I have worked out that I deserve to be here, rather than question whether I am good enough or not.

"There has been so much going on away from the racetrack itself, and all of that has helped me to get to the place where I am now."



Simpson took win

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

RACING NEWS

Photos: Jakob Ebrej



Hankey had to step in for Barnicoat at Track Club

BARNICOAT FORCED ONTO SIDELINES AFTER MIX-UP

British GT driver was testing with McLaren at Silverstone last week

By Robert Ladbrook

Euan Hankey made a surprise return to British GT with the Track Club McLaren team after its regular driver Ben Barnicoat was substituted out for last weekend's Silverstone 500 event following a rules mix-up.

Hankey stepped in to share Adam Balon's McLaren 570S GT4 for the three-hour outing after Barnicoat fell foul of the series' testing rules.

Motorsport News understands that Barnicoat's employer, McLaren, used him for a development test for the GT4 machine at Silverstone recently, breaching British GT rules which

bar drivers from testing at a race venue prior to an event. Had Barnicoat raced, the car would have had to start last in GT4. As a result both Track Club and McLaren opted to instead switch drivers.

"It was a bit of a late call after a mix-up, but it's good to be back," said Hankey, who was forced to retire

the car after two punctures and an electrical issue.

"Racing a GT4 is very different to the GT3 or GTE cars I've been racing recently. You have less aero and grip, so you can't carry as much speed into corners. Ben will be back on regular duty for the rest of the season, so it's likely a one-off for me."

IN BRIEF

Newsham out

Dave Newsham was denied his first race outing since retiring from British touring cars by an engine failure at Silverstone last weekend. Newsham was due to take part in the Mini Challenge JCW races in the Dunlop-backed guest car, but an engine issue on Friday curtailed his testing and he postponed his outing. With Dave also busy running his son, Callum's, JCW he elected to postpone his guest outing.

Mini delay

The start of the second Mini JCW race at Silverstone was delayed after Ollie Pidgley and Jac Maybin collided with each other on the formation lap at the exit of The Loop. Maybin stopped his car at Luffield, which needed to be recovered, and he was later fined and issued three penalty points on his race licence.

Hibbert's plans

Tom Hibbert plans to make his return to the Ginetta GT4 Supercup in the season-ending meeting at Brands Hatch in September. Hibbert, a three-time Supercup winner, took part in the opening three races of 2018 at Brands Hatch but was hindered by car problems throughout. The completion of a new G55 is now in progress.

Shepherd uncertain

Adam Shepherd looks set to miss the coming Ginetta GT4 Supercup meetings due to a lack of budget. The reigning M3 Cup champion took a brace of podium finishes at Oulton Park. "That result may be our last of the season," he said. "Fingers crossed these results will help because we need more sponsors to be able to carry on."

Jewiss caution

British Formula 4 points leader Kiern Jewiss admits he may think again before pulling off any late overtaking moves after being penalised at Oulton Park. He grabbed the lead on the penultimate lap, colliding with Dennis Hauger at the hairpin in the process and was relegated to second post-race. "If you don't go for those gaps, then you're not a racing driver," said Jewiss. "It'll not change me, although I might think more about how far back I am."

Ratcliffe illness sends British GT champion Morris into late rush to partner Parfitt at Silverstone

Reigning British GT champions Rick Parfitt and Seb Morris were reunited at Silverstone last weekend, after Morris made a late dash to the track to deputise for Ryan Ratcliffe.

Parfitt and Ratcliffe had qualified the number one Bentley a season-best sixth, but a bout of food poisoning on Saturday ruled Ratcliffe out of driving after a medical inspection on Sunday morning.

Following Ratcliffe's withdrawal, Parfitt put a call into his 2017 team-mate Morris, who is now racing a similar Team Parker-run Continental in the Blancpain Sprint Series.

Morris made the 164-mile dash from his home in Chester to the Northamptonshire track, arriving five minutes before he was due to take over the car

from Parfitt an hour into the race.

"I'd got up, been for a run and was in the shower when Rick called," said Morris. "I immediately jumped in the car at 1130hrs and managed to get to the track just after 1400hrs, then I had to blag my way in without a pass, run to scrutineering, chuck my lid on and get in the car. It was an experience to say the least."

Morris and Parfitt finished

fourth on the road, but were pinged back to sixth post-race for a yellow flag infringement.

"I'm a genuine Pro driver now, so it's not hard jumping in and out of cars," added Morris. "The British car is set up a bit differently to the one I race in Blancpain, so it took a few laps to get into it, but then I was bang on the pace again and didn't feel like I'd been away."



The championship-winning Bentley crew reunited

Browning to appeal to National Court after losing Ginetta win

Ginetta Junior title contender Luke Browning is set to appeal to the National Court after being stripped of race one victory at Oulton Park.

The Richardson Racing driver led throughout the opening Oulton race but was excluded from the contest after failing post-race scrutineering as there was not enough oil left in his differential.

Browning kept race-two win



But he and the team intend to appeal the decision to the National Court.

"I went over a kerb and cracked the differential – then oil started to come out," Browning explained.

Despite taking a victory in race two, he is 31 points behind leader Adam Smalley, despite having entered the meeting 12 behind. If the appeal is successful he would retake top spot.

Team boss of leading Clio Cup squad Pyro banned from Oulton paddock

Leading Renault UK Clio Cup team boss Mark Hunt was banned from the Oulton Park paddock last weekend after reckless behaviour.

MN understands Hunt – boss of the Pyro squad that has fielded the eventual Clio champion in eight of the last

Hunt was banned



10 years – was banned after a number of incidents on Saturday night, including spraying a fire extinguisher on various cars while Pyro mechanics were still working.

The stewards took the decision to ban Hunt from the paddock on Sunday, as well as handing the Pyro team a suspended ban from the category.

Pyro has been fielding five drivers in this year's championship, including title contender Max Coates – who took victory in Sunday's race at Oulton, Pyro's first since the opening weekend of the year at Brands Hatch. The squad tops the teams' standings.

Clio Cup championship manager Will Fewkes has refused to comment on the situation.

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RACING NEWS



Polley took a best result of just ninth

Polley's title bid hit by engine woe at Rockingham

Clio 182 Championship contender Ryan Polley's title hopes were hit in the Rockingham meeting when multiple problems meant two engine changes and him missing the first of the three races.

Polley was also forced to start race two from the back of the grid as the order was based on the fastest laps in the previous race.

"Friday was a bad day – I blew an engine in testing," Polley explained. "The engine that went on Friday was the one I used last year; the spare I put in for Saturday was the original that came with the car."

"I went out in qualifying and then did a head gasket and missed race one because of that. I was trying to work out what to do and then I found another engine that someone offered me, so I went and picked that up, put it in last [Saturday] night."

From the back Polley was able to finish 10th in the second race and he then finished ninth in the final race.

Championship leader Patrick Fletcher, who entered the weekend eight points ahead of Polley, made hay at Rockingham with two wins and a second place.

● MR2 racer Josh Brooks has admitted he is considering his racing future after being nudged out of the lead of the second race at Rockingham by Paul Cook. "I've got a lot of thinking to do," Brooks said.

OBITUARY

Martin Birrane 1935-2018

Martin Birrane, owner of Mondello Park, died suddenly at the age of 82.



The Irishman had a 50-year involvement in motorsport that spanned his own exploits behind the wheel, team ownership, the rescue of the Mondello Park circuit and then British racing car constructor Lola.

A successful property tycoon, he bought Lola Cars out of administration in 1997, renamed it Lola Cars International and remained at the helm until 2012.

In that time it produced the first-generation A1 Grand Prix one-make racer and a line of successful LMP prototypes, including the factory MG LMP675 racers of 2001-02, as well as diversifying into the automotive sector and aerospace.

The Lola name lived on under his direction after the company stopped manufacturing racing cars and offered technical services that included one of the most advanced windtunnels in Europe.

Birrane started racing in 1967 at the wheel of a Ford Anglia and went on to compete in the British Touring Car Championship, Formula 5000 and in sportscars, where he achieved the most success.

He competed at Le Mans 10 times between 1973 and '88, winning his class at the wheel of a BMW M1 in 1985, and continued to race historic cars into his 70s.

Birrane bought Mondello in 1986, extended the circuit and brought the BTCC and the FIA Sportscar Championship to the venue. He briefly owned a NASCAR team in the early 1990s and even held the Irish Land Speed Record.

750MC REARRANGES ABANDONED MEETING

Snowed-off season opener replaced by extra Anglesey date



Donington event was hit by snow



Club Enduro will return to Anglesey

The 750 Motor Club has added a completely new fixture at Anglesey this September in an effort to rearrange the majority of the races lost in its March meeting, which was abandoned due to snow.

The Donington Park season-opening meeting scheduled for March 17/18 was abandoned shortly after lunch on the opening day in sporadic blizzard-like conditions, and with weather forecasts suggesting more on the way. No races had been completed.

The club has been able to replace many of these lost rounds by slotting them into three meetings scheduled for

September. Hot Hatch and Bikesports races have been added to the already-existing 750MC Donington National Circuit meeting on September 1/2, RGB Sports 1000 and Club Enduro – including a three-hour Enduro race – will run in an entirely new meeting at Anglesey on September 8, while extra MR2 races will be added to the Grand Finals Race Day event at Castle Combe on September 15.

This was done even though the 750MC was not obliged to replace the lost running as qualifying sessions had been completed during the original, abandoned meeting.

"We're trying our best to rearrange as many of the races as possible, but it's obviously quite a challenge as finding circuits with track time available at such late notice is quite difficult," 750MC competitions secretary Giles Groombridge said.

"And with championship races we need the consent of all the registered drivers in order to make the required change to the calendar, which isn't always possible. All in all it's been a difficult situation but we've done quite well in managing the fallout from it."

Competitors from the abandoned meeting will not be charged extra for the

rearranged running of their rounds.

"Drivers in races which we've not been able to reschedule have received credit which they can use with us in future races," Groombridge added.

Reigning MR2 champion Shaun Traynor was delighted with the move. "They didn't have to [do it]," he said, "it's part and parcel of the terms and regs that we signed up to that we've done qualifying so that means our money's gone. So for them to give us a chance to rearrange it [was] really good of them. I know they [750MC] lost a lot of money at Donington, especially with rearranging this."



Mini Se7en driver Budd rolled on Woodham Hill at Thruxton earlier this month

Budd plots return after Mini roll

Mini Se7en racer Daniel Budd has vowed to get back behind the wheel of a racing car as soon as possible following his horrendous crash at Thruxton recently.

The 36-year-old was competing at the Hampshire track's 50th anniversary meeting earlier this month when his car was launched into a high-speed series of rolls along Woodham Hill.

His Mini spiralled over the barrier and collided with a marshals' post. Miraculously, neither Budd nor any marshals were injured.

"I don't know how many rolls we did but it came to rest facing the wrong way on the other side of the barrier," recalled Budd, who is competing in his first full season of the Mini Se7en Championship.

"When I got out a marshal said 'you hit a marshals' post' so I was worried that there was going to be people underneath the car."

"The accident was horrendous, the back and passenger side of the car were crushed and there were two holes in the roof. "It has split and bent the cage, but the car was very



Budd's damaged car

well built and it did what it needed to do.

"It did scare me when it happened, I was genuinely upset looking at my car afterwards."

Budd now plans to compete in the next round of the Mini Se7en Championship at Zandvoort on July 8 using brother Charlie's spare car.

Castle Combe to run Open Single-Seater contest at final CCRC meeting of the season

The Castle Combe Racing Club is set to run an allcomers Open Single-Seater race for the first time at the end of the 2018 season.

The race will form part of the CCRC Finals meeting on September 15 and will be run over 15 minutes with the grid

set by a qualifying session of the same length.

The entrants will be split into four separate classes based purely on engine capacity. The competition is open to any single-seater machinery, with tyres also being unrestricted.

"The idea of the race is to include as many of the Combe Formula Fords with the Monoposto Racing Club cars that are running on the same day," said club competitions director Steve Weston. "We hope to attract a decent number of entries."

"The mixed grid should make it an interesting opportunity for all the drivers to challenge people they may not usually race against for the final race of the year. It is a no pressure, fun event and all single-seater drivers and owners will be welcome to compete."



FFords will feature in new race



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HISTORICS

'Squires will head to New Zealand'
Rally man's adventure, below



Photos: Paul Lawrence

DOWN THE PUB WITH

BILL COOMBS

Thruxton circuit director
Age: 57 Lives: Ringwood

He headed Thruxton's 50th event

"The Thruxton 50th anniversary meeting was superb. We opened the new Thruxton Centre, we had Formula 1 cars from Williams and some great racing. It was absolutely fantastic."

The circuit is viable

"The Thruxton Centre is the culmination of a six-year recovery plan for the circuit. Everyone knows that because of the planning restrictions on the circuit it has been very difficult to make the track work commercially. But we've managed to turn it round and we are now profitable and consequently able to invest substantial sums as you see with the new building."

Planning restrictions are tight

"It's not just race meetings and getting better quality content, it's about the mid-week days and we need to make those days work for us. We can't do track days in the normal sense due to the noise restrictions and we only have four test days a year. So we have to make the 90 quiet days work really well for us and manufacturer days are the key. It is the mid-week use that will help pay for the racing we all love."

There are more plans

"The old Thruxton Suite will go over the winter which will allow all of that area to be surfaced, which will give us a much longer pit lane. It also gives the opportunity to put some more garages up."

The layout won't change

"Myself and our operations manager Pat Blakeney are old school racing people and we would be gutted to have to change the circuit and we've always said it won't change on our watch. We want to keep the same layout and we're not under any pressure from anyone to change it."

The 50th was a hit

"We'll now debrief after the 50th anniversary meeting and see how we can move forwards with an annual classic and historic event. This year worked very, very well and there was a really nice vibe about the weekend. Thanks to Andy Langridge, I drove Ian Taylor's March 733 in the demonstration on Saturday and that was very special. I was very close to Ian and we were working together at the school when he died at Spa."



Coombs: Thruxton boss



Pryce used the Mk2 on Rally North Wales

PRYCE SET FOR RED KITE CHALLENGE

WRC hopeful to revert to his Ford Escort Mk2 for Welsh event

By Paul Lawrence

Osian Pryce will return to a Ford Escort Mk2 for the Red Kite Stages and says that the seldom-used forests of South Wales should provide a level playing field.

WRC aspirant Pryce will contest the June 24 event in the same historic specification car he used to finish third on Rally

North Wales in March, despite a late puncture. The Red Kite is round four of the Fuchs MSA British Historic Rally Championship.

The last time Pryce rallied in the Vale of Neath was on the final day of his FIA World Rally Championship debut on the 2010 Wales Rally GB.

Now, he'll tackle the classic stages of Rheola and Resolven in the 1978 Escort prepared

and tended by Suffolk-based RallyXtreme.

Pryce said: "I'm looking forward to rallying somewhere I don't know, as it adds to the challenge. I think some of my main rivals might have rallied there in 2013, but as the stages on this year's Red Kite aren't used very often, it's a bit more of a level playing field for everyone. Fresh rallies always make you

prepare that little bit harder, and you really have to focus and get stuck in right from the word go.

"Rally North Wales showed that we can be competitive in an Escort Mk2, so we're going to give it another good go on the Red Kite. A top three finish would be good and a win would be great! We'll be trying hard and having a lot of fun, that's for sure."



White will relinquish role

White to step down from his role with Historic Sports Car Club

Grahame White will retire as chief executive officer of the Historic Sports Car Club at the end of the year to take a new consultancy role with the Club.

White has been CEO for over 20 years and will now switch to a new position to ensure that the HSCC continues to benefit from

his experience and expertise.

Club chairman Frank Lyons said: "Over the last two decades, Grahame has gained huge respect in the wider field of motorsport and has done an outstanding job to build the club into one of Europe's leading organisers of historic racing.

I am delighted that the club will continue to benefit from his close involvement into 2019 and beyond."

White said: "It has been a privilege to work for the HSCC and all the members and I will continue to help in planning its future."

Perez Jr to tackle the Ypres Historic clash

Seb Perez will switch Porsches for the Ypres Historic Rally in Belgium on June 20-23, trading his regular 911 GT3 Cup from the Porsche Carrera Cup GB race series for a three-litre 911 RS rally car.

Perez will join his father Steve for the high-profile event, with Perez Sr competing in his

crowd-pleasing Lancia Stratos. Both cars will run under the Amigos banner as Seb rallies a three-litre historic Porsche for the first time.

Harri Toivonen and local ace Stefaan Stouf will use Ford Sierra RS Cosworth 4x4s while Jari Latvala, father of WRC star Jari-Matti, is in a Toyota Celica GT4.

Squires returns for Silver Fern challenge

British rallying stalwart Phil Squires will tackle the Silver Fern Rally in New Zealand for the third time this November.

Squires initially went to the biennial event in 2014 as a one-off 50th birthday present to himself, but fell in love with the rally and went back in 2016. Now, he will contest the eight-day marathon for

third time. "The route is all on North Island this year, so that will all be new to me," said Squires, who will ship his Ford Escort Mk2 in late August or early September.

"The event is over 800 stage miles which is longer than ever and will mean at least 12 hours of competitive driving."

Last-minute stand-in saves Carlisle event for Ford Escort Mk1 battler Philliskirk

Warren Philliskirk came within five minutes of missing the Carlisle Stages at the weekend when his planned co-driver was taken ill.

However, just as the Yorkshireman was going to

scrub his entry, Mark Casey stepped in. With overall, helmet and a HANS device borrowed from Baz Jordan and a set of safety notes delivered to the start control,

Casey guided the Ford Escort Mk1 to second in Category 2 and ninth overall historic.

"I had 20 minutes to prepare," said Casey, who co-ordinates

the Northern Historic Rally Championship. "I thought I was going to have to go home," said Philliskirk after pleas on social media failed to find a replacement. "Mark was absolutely spot on."



Mounseys took a rally finish

IN BRIEF

Bean is gone

Bob Bean and Miles Cartwright suffered the first retirement of the Carlisle Stages when they failed to get to the first stage on Friday night. Their Lotus Cortina suffered engine issues on the run out to Kielder and returned to Carlisle on a tow rope for further investigation. The Category 1 crew had been set to run fourth on the road under the new running order arrangements.

FF2000 boom time

One of the biggest fields of Classic Formula Ford 2000s for several seasons will tackle the Silverstone GP circuit this weekend. An encouraging total of 15 URS Classic FF2000 cars will share two races with the HSCC Classic F3 Championship field. Nine Van Diemen RF82s pack out the field.

David Latchford

MN was sad to learn of the death of David Latchford, a graduate from the 500cc F3 era of the 1950s and the driver of the Halseylec sports-racing car. He was the first international participant in a British-built Formula Junior, driving the Halson he built with Eugene Hall at Monaco and other circuits in 1959. He later raced the Dolphin chassis.

Tough for Ginns

Tony Ginns and newcomer co-driver Matt Cooper had a torrid start to their season when they put their Escort Mk1 into a Kielder ditch barely a mile into the Carlisle Stages on Friday night. After being rescued by 15 spectators, they rejoined on Saturday after an overnight clutch change. Cooper has followed his father Pat into co-driving.

Silverstone rumbles

Three Can-Am cars feature in the entry for the opening Pre '80 Endurance race of the season at Silverstone this weekend. Race car preparer Dean Forward has entered a McLaren M8F while Richard Dodkins is taking the vast March 717 and Anthony Taylor will field his McLaren M6B. Leo Voyazides heads the entry for two 30-minute races in his DFV-powered Lola T282.

Brooklands sprint

The VSCC Brooklands Sprint, the third round of the club's speed championship, will take place on Saturday as part of the venue's Double Twelve Motorsport Festival. The action for around 100 cars will take place on the Mercedes Benz track at the famous Surrey venue.

Brothers in a car

Brothers Malcolm and Ronald Mounsey finished their first rally since making a comeback when they took their Sunbeam Talbot to a D2 class win on the Carlisle Stages. They started the car build last April but were not ready in time for the Roger Albert Clark Rally last November.

RALLY NEWS WRC DRIVER MARKET SPECIAL

OGIER HOLDS THE KEY TO THE 2018 TOP FLIGHT LINE-UPS

Shake-up at Citroen mixes up the potential for next season



Ogier's next move will dictate everyone else

By David Evans

Kris Meeke's departure from Citroen has kick-started the World Rally Championship's driver market, with all four teams in fresh negotiations for next season.

Of the 12 factory seats potentially available, only Toyota's Ott Tanak and Hyundai man Andreas Mikkelsen are tied down for the 2019 season, and both remain with their current employer.

As has been the case for the last two years, the market will pivot around world champion Sebastien Ogier. In the second of two single-season deals with M-Sport Ford World Rally Team, the Frenchman admitted it would take a lot to get him out of the Ford Fiesta WRC.

"I'm happy with where I am at, I always said that," Ogier told MN. "Everything is

going in the direction I want it to at M-Sport. We are progressing and when it's like this you could say there is no reason to change. Let's say this: I would really need a very convincing offer to move, because I'm happy where I am."

Ogier did, however, caution against automatically including him in next year's driver market, adding: "Who knows if I am here next year? That's another question; I said sometimes already that this [retirement] is an option."

Ogier's team principal Malcolm Wilson said he would be doing all he could to keep his champion in the same seat for 2019.

"There's going to be interest in Sebastien from the other teams, we know that," said Wilson, "but if we can give him what he wants, I see no reason [why he'd leave]. I think he's happy here, he's quite keen to stay and as long as we

can make it work, we should be OK."

Hyundai team manager Alain Penasse agreed that Ogier was the main player, with no team making a move until they knew which way the Gap star would jump.

"Sebastien holds the keys to this, of course he does," said Penasse. "Will we be talking to him? I cannot say we are not thinking about Sebastien Ogier. If you want to win the championship then you have to consider him as an option."

"Maybe we can expect movement in the market – only one driver [Ogier] has to move and the others are obliged to move."

"But if one will chose the same thing then it can be a bit boring again. If Sebastien Ogier goes to Citroen then a lot will move. If he stays, I think the others will stay also."

M-Sport Ford World Rally Team

Current drivers: Sebastien Ogier, Elfyn Evans, Teemu Suninen

After five years of corporate comfort with Volkswagen, it was hard for some to see Sebastien Ogier fitting in quite so well at M-Sport's family oriented and largely private operation. In reality, Ogier is just as happy – if not happier – than he's ever been.

Recently married, and with his two-year-old son, being away from home is harder than ever for Ogier and not having the usual manufacturer PR commitments makes it easier for the champion to arrive at a WRC round on a Monday night and fly out immediately after the finish on Sunday. A move to a brand like Hyundai, Citroen or Toyota would mean an unwanted move back

to a rather more onerous PR schedule.

On top of that, he's got a car which works for him and a team which is moulded completely around him.

If Malcolm Wilson can pull the required millions out of the hat, it's hard to see Ogier going anywhere.

Wilson has an option on both Evans and Suninen for next season.

"If those two guys keep progressing then I really wouldn't see the need to change anything and we can have a strong team for next season," said Wilson. "The target for next year is the same as this year, I would like to keep everything as it is – there's a lot to be said for continuity. But, like I said, we need to see progression from Elfyn and Teemu."

The plan would be to run Suninen in a factory Fiesta WRC on all rounds next year.

LIFE GOES ON WITHOUT MEEKE, NEUVILLE WINS IN SARDINIA

PAGE 24



The Strength of Experience

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'Ogier gets 8/10, and the wooden spoon'
WRC Italy report, p26-27

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Neuville is a hot property right now

Hyundai Motorsport

Current drivers: Thierry Neuville, Andreas Mikkelsen, Hayden Paddon, Dani Sordo
 Behind Ogier, championship frontrunner Neuville is the man of most interest to the teams. The Belgian told *MN* his focus remained on the rest of this season, but added his future would become clear if he finished Rally Australia at the top of the table.

He said: "My priority is first to win the championship with Hyundai and obviously from there on we have to look. But what is pretty sure is that, if we are able to achieve our goal this year with Hyundai, I think everything is becoming clear..."

Paddon is determined to return to a full-time programme next season and demand for him

will be defined by the second half of 2018 – which is where most of his events fall. Sordo was linked to a move to rallycross earlier in the season, but he made it clear to *MN* that he wanted to remain in rallying. Of Sordo and Paddon, the Spaniard would likely be the more content with a repeat of the split programme in 2019 – something Hyundai has already admitted could happen.

Hyundai is one of the squads which has expressed an interest in talking to Kris Meeke since his departure from Citroen, along with Toyota. Team head Penasse told *MN*: "He's a guy who will win two rallies every season, so he has to be on the list. Whether you take him from the list is another question..."



Paddon needs full-time seat, so could look elsewhere

Toyota Gazoo Racing

Current drivers: Jari-Matti Latvala, Ott Tanak, Esapekka Lappi

Both Finns in this Finnish-based team are understood to be under pressure to keep their seats next season. After a solid start to his time with Toyota last year, Latvala has struggled since the arrival of Tanak this year, but he remains determined to maintain his full-time professional presence in the WRC for a 13th consecutive season.

"I am happy now since the start of this programme," Latvala said. "I always love to drive in this team, with the heritage and everything. And the car is fast, normally it takes time to build this speed, if you look at Hyundai then you can see that they have taken four years to become so competitive – this is only our second

year. There's so much potential with this team and I would really like to stay, but first we need to get some results.

"It's going to be interesting to see what happens [with the driver market], there's now a position open at Citroen; I'm sure Mads is already negotiating with them and then there's the question about will they run three cars next season? But for me, I want to stay."

The response was similar from Lappi, who added: "Why would I change? If I can continue here, for sure I would like to. It's early in the season, but you need to think about these things. You never know what's coming. I think I still have to learn. Maybe Mr Loeb was a little bit different, but normally the drivers develop step-by-step and maybe I'm a work in progress."



Latvala is under real pressure to perform

Citroen Racing

Current drivers: Craig Breen, Mads Ostberg, Sebastien Loeb, Khalid Al Qassimi

Citroen is the team with the most pressing need to source a new driver following Meeke's exit.

The obvious answer would be to keep Ostberg in the car for the remainder of the year. He's a former employee who knows the engineers and, after three events this year, knows the C3 WRC too.

Looking into next season, Ogier is likely to get a call from Budar sooner rather than latter.

Budar said: "Everybody is interested in Sebastien Ogier and we would be very pleased to see him in Citroen with us again. He started with us, his career in rallying and it would be very nice to see him here. He is French, we are a French team, it could be a nice story also – but this is not the only consideration we have."

Overlooked by Citroen for the last two seasons, Ogier is understandably sore with his former employer – particularly after PSA CEO Carlos Tavares told the world the five-time

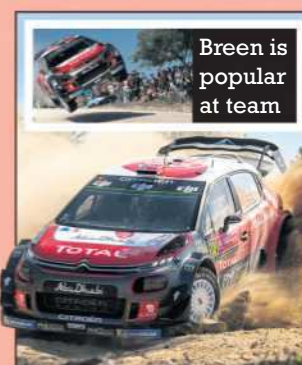
champion wasn't needed by Citroen at the start of this year.

As Ogier said, it would take a significant offer to tempt him back.

Breen's stock is high with the team and especially with Budar, with whom he has forged a close and strong working relationship since Budar replaced Yves Matton at the start of the season.

"My focus is on doing the best job I can for this year," Breen told *MN*. "That's all I can do."

Al Qassimi returns for a limited programme later in the year, with the Abu Dhabi backing he brings.



Ostberg is the temporary fix

Breen is popular at team

VOICE OF RALLY

COLIN CLARK

"Malcolm could be Meeke's WRC saviour"



So, what are we supposed to do with those folk in society who just won't conform? The ones who break the rules, who won't listen to, or accept authority. Who, despite repeated warnings continue, through sheer bloody mindedness, to lurch from one crisis to the next.

Do we just give up on them and condemn them to the festering and fetid scrap heap of life? Do we heck. We support them. And encourage them. And we hope that, with the help of those who supposedly know better, somewhere in the future redemption and salvation await.

So, with that in mind, why have we all-but written Kris Meeke off?

I'll tell you why: because it's easy to do so. He's the *enfant terrible* of the World Rally Championship; he's the wild child, the revolutionary who knows his way is the only way. And I'll put my cards on the table and say this is exactly why so many of us love him so much.

But it's also why it's so easy to write him off. I don't believe all that clap-trap suggesting Meeke is beyond saviour.

More often than not, the lost soul is rescued by a guiding light, someone who understands the demons and, more importantly, understands how to exorcise those demons. This is the person Meeke now needs to seek out. And he really doesn't have to look too hard to find him.

One man in the service park is renowned for his unerring ability to recognise and nurture talent. His reputation is built on his ability to take mediocre drivers and turn them into great drivers. But this one is a bit different. We already have a great, but flawed driver who needs turning into a champion. Step forward Mr Malcolm Wilson and work your magic one more time.

OK, so there's history there, but Mr Wilson is nothing if not driven by his relentless pursuit of success for his beloved M-Sport. And it's very possible that Wilson and M-Sport will need the services of a proven winner in 2019. Should Ogier head back across the channel for one last swansong with the red team then Wilson has a very big issue to resolve. With Elfyn Evans enduring a very up-and-down 2018 and Teemu Suninen still a fair way off being the finished product, who wins rallies for the Cumbrian chargers? It's easy, Kris Meeke does.

Mr Wilson relishes nothing more than a challenge. He thrives on succeeding where others have told him it's impossible to do so. It may turn out that Meeke is the greatest challenge of Wilson's career, but I firmly believe he has the wherewithal to tackle and tame the demons that torment Meeke. I believe he has the wherewithal to turn Kris into a champion.

Meeke certainly needs Malcolm a lot more than Malcolm needs Meeke. But Meeke could well turn out to be the greatest endorsement of Wilson's genius that we've ever had the pleasure of witnessing.

Go on Malcom, prove everyone wrong, take on the untamable and make us all proud again.

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

RALLY NEWS

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

HYUNDAI: NEUVILLE'S DRIVE 'SPECIAL'

Nandan credits Belgian's Rally Italy drive



Neuville won Rally Italy on last stage

By David Evans

Hyundai team principal Michel Nandan has heralded Thierry Neuville's Rally Italy performance as the best he has seen in his time in the championship.

Nandan – who has guided Peugeot (2000s) and Toyota (1990s) to success in the World Rally Championship – admitted he was stunned by what he saw from the series leader.

"This was special," said Nandan. "Really, this one is the best. To have it decided in the last stage like it was and to win like this, in a proper way is fantastic. I am really happy for the team and for him."

Nandan added that the closeness of the fight, Neuville won by 0.7s, highlights the success of the championship. He said: "Last year was good, but this season is even better – this event shows the championship is really open and how close the competition is."

Neuville was pretty chuffed with his third win of the season – a success which carries him into a 27-point advantage at the top of the table.

"I can't believe it," Neuville told *MN*. "Winning against Sebastien is one of the hardest things and the way we did this one was so tough. We gave this absolutely everything and to come away with a victory like this... this is really precious for me and Nico [Gilsoul, co-driver]."

Neuville's former team principal, M-Sport's Malcolm Wilson, praised both the Belgian and his own driver Ogier.

"They've both been superb," said Wilson. "I think we lost the rally on Saturday when Seb dropped that time in the next stage. But OK, this one's been absolutely unforgettable. Rally fans will remember this one for a lifetime – to have two guys pushing so hard and so close is something very special."

"I've always known this was in Thierry; don't forget when he was with us five years ago he was second on virtually every event in the second half of the season and he finished second to Seb in the championship. It's taken him

five years, but he's got one over the champion today. But don't worry, we'll be back."

Ogier is now 27 points behind Neuville, and has never been this far behind at the halfway point of a season where he has gone on to win the title. Ogier underlined the importance of finishing in Sardinia.

"I wasn't prepared to risk everything like he was," he said. "If I made no points here then the championship would have looked very tough."

"We could see [the Hyundai] was working well in the rough sections, so we still have some work to do, but this is halfway in the championship. This gives me something to aim for in the second half of the year."



Nandan full of Neuville praise



Sardinia has hosted Rally Italy event each year since 2004

Teams unite against Rally Sardinia, although it looks set to remain on WRC calendar

Rally Italy's World Rally Championship future was – once again – cast into doubt last weekend after one of the teams tried to garner support for a collective letter informing FIA president Jean Todt they wouldn't be returning to Sardinia.

Ultimately, *Motorsport News* understands, the letter won't be sent to Todt, but there is major dissatisfaction with both the costs of competing in Italy and the lack of fans or general public attending the event.

Toyota team principal Tommi Makinen was among those most vocal about the lack of support.

The Finn told *MN*: "In my opinion we should be on the mainland where naturally people are. The population here is too small and there are other things for the people to do. As well as that, did you find an easy connection to be here? The flights and logistics are too complicated."

Italy's round of the WRC moved from its traditional Sanremo mainland base in 2004 after the promoter made it clear asphalt rallies were of limited appeal.

The Sardinian infrastructure was already in place, with the famous Costa Smeralda Rally running out of Olbia. The

industrial port town never found favour with fans or teams and the event was eventually shifted to the other side of the island in Alghero in 2014.

Nobody from the event was willing to comment on its future, but a high-level source with the Italian governing body of motorsport told *MN*: "We know we are on the calendar for next year, we stay here [Alghero] in 2019 and we move to the mainland in 2020."

Next year, however, the organisers are pushing for a shift back in the calendar with a September date the preferred

option. The source added: "When we ran in October [2004 and 2012], everything was easier. The flights are less crowded, there are more options and we have more people – this is a good solution."

MN understands there's similar pressure on the Tour de Corse for next season, with the French island event equally unpopular among the teams. The benefit Sardinia has over its Mediterranean neighbour is a population of 1.6 million compared with the 330,000 residing on Corsica.

The calendar for next year's WRC is expected in September.

Ogier calls for rally organisers to think about jumps after airborne Italy nightmare

World champion Sebastien Ogier has urged rally organisers to think more about the way jumps in stages are built – the Frenchman labelled Rally Italy's Monte Baranta leap as "stupid" last week.

The jump was built into a long straight in the final stage of the Friday morning loop. Ott Tanak retired from third place as a result of damage sustained from it, as did triple Asia Pacific Rally

champion Gaurav Gill.

Ogier told *MN* the drivers were as one on this subject.

"We all agreed as drivers, it's not clever to build these artificial, short, kicking jumps in the middle of a long straight," said Ogier. "I have nothing against jumps, I love it and they can make as many jumps as they want, but make them progressive and not the ramp so sharp and short. We come in sixth gear and it's stupid. It's

bad for the World Rally Car, but I really would not want to do this jump in an R5 car."

The front of both Tanak and Gills' cars were destroyed and required engine-out all-nighters from Toyota and M-Sport respectively to put them right for the weekend.

Toyota team principal Tommi Makinen agreed with Ogier and directed organisers towards the jump he had built on the

Ouinipohja stage of Rally Finland to entertain corporate guests.

"You can go really flat over that jump [in Finland], it looks good and it's easy on the car because we made it without a short [ramp]. There's no point to make something unnatural, which is only breaking things. For Ott, the suspension had no chance – he didn't land on the wheels, he landed on the front bumper!"



Makinen says his Ouinipohja jump is a model to follow

'Morrison takes Scottish Tarmac victory'
Crail Summer Stages report, p30



Photos: Songasport, Jakob Ebrey

JIM CLARK AND MULL COULD RETURN WITH NEW LAW

The likes of the Jim Clark and Mull rallies could return in 2019 as the Scottish government has committed to a public discussion about a new law that would permit closed-road motorsport in Scotland.

After consulting with the Motor Sports Association, which has successfully campaigned for similar legislation in England and Wales, a working group will be initiated "this summer" – followed by a consultation – in a bid to influence legislation that could be put to parliament.

A meeting last week between the MSA, Scottish Motor Sports and the minister for Transport, Humza Yousaf, was believed to be successful.

"We remain absolutely committed to our long-standing goal of achieving closed-road motorsport across mainland Britain and we're pleased that Transport Scotland has started the journey towards new legislation," said MSA chairman David Richards.

"This would be a wonderful opportunity not only to revive famous events such as the Jim Clark and Mull Rallies but also to welcome new closed-road fixtures onto the Scottish motorsport calendar in years to come."

The Mull Rally was unable to run last year because of insurance difficulties, while if new legislation is passed that problem will no longer exist.

The Jim Clark Rally hasn't run since 2014, when three people were killed in a crash. Investigations concluded last year. Mull bosses are in discussions to run a Targa rally again this year, as they did in 2017.



Mull last ran in 2016, MacCrone



Stone loves Jim Clark event (below)

COMPETITOR REACTION

Calum Duffy

Nine-time Mull winner

"The format is so challenging with night stages, then day and night stages again. I've done Donegal and it doesn't compare to the challenge you enjoy on the Mull Rally. It's a driver's dream. The stages are on par with any stage I've done. It's a big loss to the community. It's left a hole in that time of year. I hope it returns."

Osian Pryce

Second on 2014 Jim Clark

"The Jim Clark Rally is a classic event, the stages and the rally are unique. It's so different to any other event and to have that on the mainland was awesome. The competition was always high. Some of the stages took years to learn and that was part of the unique challenge of the place too. It would be good to see it back on the schedule."

John Stone

Jim Clark National perennial frontrunner

"We'll clear the decks and we're all in on the Jim Clark Rally. The atmosphere is great, certainly the first spectator stage on the Friday night was special for us. The sooner that's back, the better. On a personal note I'm really excited that the North West Stages is bubbling up nicely and there will be news coming on that shortly, so anything that gets closed road rallying back, I'm happy."

Kelly heads blockbuster Donegal entry list

Winners for the last two years, Manus Kelly and Donall Barrett will head the field in Donegal this weekend for the International Rally, based in Letterkenny.

Kelly scored a surprise win in 2016, his first time on the event in a WRC car, and followed that up with another win last year. He's looking to match the feats of Cathal Curley, Billy Coleman and Andrew Nesbitt in taking three overall wins in consecutive years.

Local man Donagh Kelly has won a number of high profile events in Ireland apart from his home international, and

he'll be looking to land his first in Donegal. Declan Boyle, who usually drives a 2016-spec Ford Fiesta, could also be swapping to a Focus for the event. Garry Jennings, the 2013 winner, and Darren Gass, the 2012 Irish Tarmac champion, round out the top five seeds.

The Irish Tarmac Championship is awarded to R5 cars and reigning champion Sam Moffett is the first on the entry list.

Last year's event class winner Alastair Fisher is yet to contest an ITRC event and won't start despite appearing on an early draft entry.

SEEDED ENTRY LIST

Donegal International Rally, June 15-17, Letterkenny

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR
1	Manus Kelly/Donall Barrett	Subaru Impreza S12B WRC
2	Donagh Kelly/Conor Foley	Ford Focus WRC
3	Declan Boyle/James O'Reilly	Ford Fiesta WRC
4	Garry Jennings/Rory Kennedy	Subaru Impreza S12B WRC
5	Darren Gass/Enda Sherry	Subaru Impreza WRC
7	Sam Moffett/Karl Atkinson	Ford Fiesta R5
8	Robert Barrable/Damien Connolly	Ford Fiesta R5
9	Josh Moffett/Andy Hayes	MonaghanFord Fiesta R5
10	Desi Henry/Liam Moynihan	Ford Fiesta R5
12	Joseph McGonigle/Ciaran Geaney	Mini John Cooper Works WRC

Instead, Robert Barrable – a winner in Killarney last time out – along with Josh Moffett and Desi Henry make up the R5 favourites.

For what will likely be the most hotly contested

Modified class contest on the 2018 Irish calendar, Kevin Eves will look to overcome last year's crash and he is car one in that field with a host of possible Ford Escort threats to his Toyota Corolla.

GROUP NATIONAL EDITOR

JACK BENYON

"Scotland's first positive step in a while"



"Yeah well they said that last year, and there is nothing for this year, and they have been saying it for the last two years and it will never happen."

I came across that on Facebook, and it's a pretty common and prevailing view of the Jim Clark Rally.

Up to now, efforts to resurrect the event have been unsuccessful. But, although I'm happy to see it return, I'm glad proper time was taken to investigate the deaths that occurred on the event in 2017. I think rally fans can quickly forget that this is people's lives we're talking about and their families deserve a thorough investigation into the circumstances.

But now, that investigation and Fatal Accident Inquiry is over. So what does this news mean?

The Scottish Government has committed to talking about new closed-road legislation, similar to what has been passed in England (2017) and Wales (2018).

If the effects of the deaths on the Jim Clark Rally (and the Snowman in 2013) meant the Scottish Government's doors were closed to rallying, they wouldn't have committed to a consultation, so signs are encouraging.

That's not me saying 'these events will return'. But it's acknowledgement in Scotland that they are willing to discuss a new law, and that's progress.

Multiple complaints to MPs could still derail the process of the new law being drafted or implemented, so it's not a foregone conclusion. And anyone who has followed any kind of legislation on its journey through a government will know that it can be a timely process, which means 2019 could be potentially a bit optimistic.

But, for Mull and the Jim Clark to run again, the new legislation is needed. Patience is a difficult thing to ask for in any situation, especially when the economy of an island like Mull is dependent on the rally, and needs it back. But patience is what is required.

What can you do to help the event return? Get involved. Contact your local MP if you're a Scottish resident or in the vicinity of the Jim Clark Rally. Let them know how welcome the events will be to return and how crucial they are to the local economy. That's the kind of thing political folk will struggle to avoid, and can build campaigns around.

This is the first toe in the water for the Scottish Government, and instead of unproductive criticism of the events or governing body, which have both been working tirelessly behind the scenes for both events, positivity and encouragement is the order of the day to see this legislation passed and the Mull and Jim Clark rallies back.

And who knows, with it, more events have the potential to run. We've had the Tendring and Clacton Rally in Essex, what's to say Scotland can't have another closed-road event or two? The first step has been made. And it needs a holding hand of support.



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

RALLY NEWS

Photos: Whittle Photographic

NEW SEEDING DEBUTS IN CUMBRIA FOR BTRDA

Running order change is tested for the first time on Carlisle Stages



Tommi Meadows praised changes

By Jack Benyon

Last weekend's Carlisle Stages Rally was the first to run under new seeding rules, which have allowed lower-powered cars to return to the front of the running order for the first time since 2015.

The Motor Sports Association and its chairman David Richards implemented the change to allow events to split into two groups, with the ability to reverse the running order or seed by class, to combat the falling number of historic and two-wheel-drive entries in gravel rallying.

Before the change, lower-powered cars were running at the back of the field, in ruts created by the more powerful cars further forward. This meant they received rough roads with rocks often pulled onto them, causing damage to the cars.

The Carlisle Stages was the first round of the BTRDA Rally Series to benefit from the new rule, and it ran 1400 and Rally First cars at the front.

The British Historic Rally Championship ran as a separate event, and put the oldest cars first with Paul Mankin's Ford Lotus Cortina seeded first. The Historic event started on Friday night, whereas the BTRDA event ran exclusively on Saturday.

The event did feature tricky weather conditions after a midday downpour, and competitors reported some of the stages being rough in places. But the 1400 competitors relished the opportunity to run first.

"It's great to be running at the front as it is a lot smoother on the car," said 1400 overall winner Tommi Meadows. "It's a good thing for our finances.

Our cars aren't as strong as the main guys and if we hit a big rock, then we have to fork out the money to repair the damage from it. That could mean missing the next round."

It wasn't just the 1400 and Rally First competitors praising the changes. Any alteration to running order is likely to be met with discontent from whichever group of cars it disadvantages the most, but there was a support and willingness to back the change for the good of the health of entries.

"Going first will be good for them because they don't have to deal with stages that are being cut up," said Ford Fiesta R5 driver Sacha Kakad. "The bigger cars throw a lot of rocks onto the line and that doesn't help the smaller ones, which aren't as strongly built."

The event did yield a disappointing number of 1400 and RF entries – with 10 and one respectively – although the event had to announce its change of seeding just over a month before it went ahead.

Neil Cross, chairman of the BTRDA forest rally committee, believes patience is needed and an instant fix is not realistic.

"It's going to take a bit of time to filter through," he said. "On the Nicky Grist we have four or five [entries], which is obviously not as good as it's been in the past, but a good number. The timing of the announcement didn't help as the event didn't have time to put its media machine behind it.

"I thought it worked really well. I know some of the competitors were moaning, some of them were happy, you'll never please everybody."

Additional reporting by Stephen Brunson and Paul Lawrence

COMPETITOR REACTION

Stuart Cariss

Ford Escort Mk1

"It's marvellous what has happened [with new seeding rules]. Last year I thought rallying was finished but now it is on the up again. We would have probably packed up without these changes."

Rikki Proffitt

Porsche 911

"The roads on the Carlisle Stages were absolutely brilliant. This will bring me back to stage rallying as well as a lot more Category 1 cars. I was going to do Ypres but now I'm looking at doing the Red Kite [gravel] instead."

Malcolm Rich

Ford Anglia

"I'm very happy with the changes. We've had a dream event [won class B3 in British Historic Championship] in one of the oldest and smallest cars. Now we need lots of Category 1 cars to come back out."

Chris Bush

Vauxhall Corsa

"It's good for us being first on the road as it means we get some of the best road conditions. I think being at the front will also entice more drivers to join the championship, as it gives you a lot more exposure as competitors."

Tommi Meadows

Ford Ka

"It's great to be running at the front as it is a lot smoother on the car. We've not got a clean line but that also means that the cars get to slide around a lot more which is really good fun."



Proffitt enjoyed the conditions in Cumbria and took Class B5 victory



BTRDA R2 Rallye Cup points leader George Lepley moved up to an incredible fifth overall in the championship points last weekend with another strong run. The Ford Fiesta R2 driver – co-driven by Tom Woodburn – has won his class on all four events this year, and sits two points behind reigning champion Stephen Petch in his Fiesta RSWRC. He also heads Group N championship leader Pat Taylor in the overall order.

Binnie: BTRDA podium proves pace relative to Scottish Championship

Michael Binnie believes his BTRDA podium on the Carlisle Stages last weekend shows the strength of the Scottish Rally Championship.

Binnie has not finished higher than seventh on an SRC event and is 12th in the standings, and is six events into competing with a new Mitsubishi Lancer E9, having previously driven a Lancer E5.

He went equal fastest on the last stage in Cumbria to seal his podium.

"Beating some of the R5s was unbelievable," said Binnie. "It's a credit to how competitive the SRC is right now and to be able to show that in a major British championship gives me a lot of confidence ahead of the Argyle Stages. I'm very proud of that performance."

It was also Binnie's first competitive rally with his new co-driver Richard Simmons, having previously worked with Claire Mole.

While the result was aided by crashes for frontrunners Luke Francis, Stephen Petch and Charlie Payne, Binnie asserted himself well against established R5 and BTRDA regulars.

Yates targets Ypres top five and BRC win

Rhys Yates is hoping to challenge for a victory in the British Rally Championship at the Ypres Rally, after a dominant Rally van Wervik victory.

Yates took victory by 41.1s over a host of drivers using the event as a warm-up for Ypres.

"The target is to win the BRC section now, and now we're hoping to be pushing for a top-five finish overall after Wervik," said Yates. "There's still a lot more in me and

it's not forced at the moment, it's not like we're taking massive risks out there."

Yates has switched to a Skoda Fabia R5, now run by CA1 Sport, and added Elliott Edmondson as his co-driver for this year. He believes that combination, allied to improved notes, is yielding his step forward in pace, after also taking second on the Pirelli Rally which opened the BRC season.

"It's a combination of things,"



Yates has upped his pace

he added. "Definitely my notes are improving, I feel like I can commit to them. The delivery from Elliott is always spot on too."

Yates justified the permission of his grandmother, June, to miss her birthday to compete on the event.

FEATURE

Photos: Gary Hawkins, Writtle Photographic

European Formula 3 leader Enaam Ahmed took to gravel in a bid to sharpen his racecraft. By **Matt Kew**

DRIVING A RALLY CAR: THE WAY TO IMPROVE IN FORMULA 3



It was Ahmed's first rallying experience



Ahmed won in Hungary in June

There's an imaginary line for some, that precludes a rally fan from liking circuit racing and vice versa. But one significant European title 'roundy-roundy' hopeful is intent on stomping across that line in a bid to improve his craft.

Earlier this month, Enaam Ahmed took two victories in European Formula 3, the series which has launched most of the Formula 1 grid onto the world stage, and he now leads the championship.

But unlike those future stars, Ahmed recently swapped slicks, wings and smooth Tarmac for a battle-scarred Ford Escort Mk2 rally car at the Bill Gwynne International Rallyschool in

Northamptonshire, before his circuit racing season started. It was the longest period of time Ahmed has ever spent in a gravel trap...

But clearly it worked after two race wins and the points lead with his Hitech team.

"My coach recommended I do it," Ahmed says of how the day came together. "He's wanted me to do rally driving for a while because it's something I needed for F3 as that's how the driving style is [the F3 cars drift slightly through corners]."

"I wanted to learn, not so much for car control, but getting the flow right while sliding a car. It's not hard to get car control, but it's hard to drift well and smoothly."

Over 100,000 people have taken to the rally school's gravel proving ground since it opened in 1982. And with McLaren Autosport BRDC Award finalist Ahmed having scored



Hill, Ahmed and Paul Gwynne

a record 13 wins on his way to British F3 honours last year, first-rate tuition was called upon in order to maximise the day's results.

First to sit alongside Ahmed was British Rallycross driver Steve Hill, swapping his Mitsubishi Lancer E10 Supercar for the 125bhp 1600cc Escort. Then school founder and *Motoring News* Road Rally champion Gwynne joined for the afternoon.

"Some people might say, 'what's the

point?' But it's great for wet weather driving," says Hill. "It's great for recovery when you do get off-line. It gives you a lot more insight of where to go and what you can do with a car."

Limited modifications to the Escort include Bilstein suspension and a limited-slip differential. But Paul Gwynne, son of Bill, reckons it's the perfect tool for the job.

"They're the only car that allows you to learn the rear-wheel-drive technique comfortably," he says. "You don't have to make it slide, you can steer it on the throttle and it rewards you if you do it well but it doesn't spit you off [if you get it wrong]."

The Escort is tame by any comparison to the 235bhp, sub-550kg European F3 car. It's also shod in standard road tyres, a deliberate decision that allows the car to slide at lower speeds.

But Ahmed assures that the

transfer of skills is not diminished as a result.

"It is old school because it's a bit more clunky," he explains. "It's actually very easy to drive, much more than some modern cars. Because there's no electronics it's very direct."

"The principles are still the same no matter what car you drive. I'm learning something about having a flow, it's more about the discipline with rallying. There's no grip so you can't over-push into the corners. You have to keep the speed high so it's about getting the apexes right."

Testament to Ahmed's competitive nature, during the debrief after his first run he was already asking for the stopwatch to record his progress. And while his focus is now firmly on his European F3 campaign, taking to the stages of a forest is something he's already sounding out having "loved" his first day rallying. ■

RALLY REPORT

YATES IS FIRST BRIT TO WIN IN WERVIK

First multi-venue win for Chesterfield driver. By **Paul Evans**



Yates and Edmondson led from start to finish

RESULTS

Rally van Wervik, Belgium, MSA Asphalt, round 3/6, June 9-10

POS	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Rhys Yates/Elliott Edmondson	Skoda Fabia R5	50mins 15.9s
2	David Bogie/John Rowan	Skoda Fabia R5	+1m 28.3s
3	Daniel Harper/Chris Campbell	Mini JCW WRC	+2m 39.6s
4	Barry Groundwater/Neil Shanks	Mitsubishi Lancer E10	+2m 46.6s
5	Wayne Sisson/Max Freeman	Mitsubishi Lancer E10	+2m 50.4s
6	Adrian Spencer/Matt Daniels	Subaru Impreza WRC	+6m 14.9s
7	Ed Fossey/Yan Griffiths	Peugeot 208 R2	+7m 39.4s
8	Ross Brusby/Hannah McKillop	Ford Escort Mk2	+8m 12.0s
9	Steve Retchless/Sasha Heriot	Ford Escort Mk2	+11m 00.7s
10	Richard Egger/Pat Egger	Vauxhall Nova	+13m 35.3s

Class winners: Yates/Edmondson; Groundwater/Shanks; Fossey/Griffiths; Egger/Egger
Points: 1 Wayne Sisson 76; 2 Jason Pritchard 58; 3 Daniel Harper 55; 4 Barry Groundwater 52; 5 Adrian Spencer 50; 6 Phil Turner 46.



Bogie was seventh

Rhys Yates became the first British driver to win the Rally van Wervik in its history after he and co-driver Elliott Edmondson clinched outright victory on round three of the MSA Asphalt Rally Championship in their Skoda Fabia R5.

Yates, who contested the event as part of his preparations for the Ypres Rally in the British Rally Championship, led the compact 60 stage mile event, which contained four loops of three stages, from the start – setting four fastest times to finish 41.1 seconds ahead of Guillaume de Mevius/Martijn Wydaeghe (Peugeot 208 T16).

The fastest driver was Kevin Demaerschalk in his Citroen DS3 WRC, but a mistake on the loop stage by co-driver Lara Vanneste was met with a hefty time penalty, which put them out of contention.

"We didn't expect to win, not at all," said Yates of his first multi-venue rally win, in his fifth season of rallying. "After the first stage Elliott and I were laughing that we'd taken the stage win, because we really couldn't believe it – and it just went on from there."

"We were here to get better in Belgium, so each stage I just wanted to drive better and be more

comfortable. We didn't have any moments, it all felt comfortable from start to finish, and that's good for my confidence going forward."

Yates' CA1 Sport stable-mate David Bogie took second-placed Asphalt Rally Championship points in seventh overall, as second to sixth were occupied by locals.

The 2011 British Rally champion lost time early on, and he and co-driver John Rowan were soon back on the pace in their Fabia R5.

Wayne Sisson/Max Freeman have taken the lead of the Asphalt Championship after three good scores from three rallies in their Mitsubishi Lancer E10 – after several of their title rivals suffered disastrous trips to Belgium.

Jason Pritchard led the series going into Wervik, but he and co-driver Phil Clarke were soon out after clutch failure in their Ford Fiesta S2000.

Beating them to the cross-Channel ferry home were Damian Cole/Jamie Edwards, however, after their Fiesta RS WRC picked up an incurable misfire on the first loop of stages.

Phil Turner/Ian Meakin were a magnificent third overall in the table, but a suspected broken track-control arm meant their Escort Mk2 understeered off the road and into a ditch on SS2, ripping the front-right wheel off.

There was a very close battle for the final Asphalt Championship



Sisson leads the points

podium position, with just 10.8 seconds separating third from fifth. Daniel Harper did just enough to recover from a bad start, which involved a major overshoot at a junction and a messy U-turn, to bag third and 12th overall in his Mini John Cooper Works WRC.

A very impressive Belgian rally debut for Barry Groundwater/Neil Shanks yielded fourth, just seven seconds behind in 13th, in their Lancer E10, while Sisson was a mere 3.8 seconds behind them in fifth in the Asphalt points and 14th overall.

Adrian Spencer's Subaru Impreza WRC had undergone a major rebuild since the Manx and was now back on song. He and co-driver Matt Daniels took sixth, but only after spectators helped them out of a ditch, which cost them a minute. Just behind were William Creighton/Liam Regan, another crew using the event as an Ypres warm up in their Peugeot 208 and scored 29th overall. Top MSA Asphalt R2 was Jerseyman Ed Fossey in 39th.

Round four of the Asphalt Championship is the Down Rally on July 21.

OULTON PARK BTCC REPORT



BY MATT JAMES

Northern Irishman has crept into the championship lead

TURKINGTON'S RESCUE MISSION



Turkington was the standout racer



No one could touch Simpson in the opening race of the weekend



Collard bagged his first 2018 win, and his first BTCC victory at Oulton



There was chaos at the start of the final race, with many cars damaged

Following the second meeting of the season at Donington Park, Colin Turkington was in despair. He'd amassed just six points over three races in a weekend that was plagued by electrical problems.

As he stepped from the podium after race three at Oulton Park, he was smiling. His third place in the finale came after a win in race two and sixth in race one. He left the track 12 points clear of the rest – and the next stop for the WSR racer is Croft, a BMW haven.

The weekend had begun with a superb maiden win for Matt Simpson in the Simpson Racing Honda Civic following a dominant performance, and it ended with a WSR lock-out of the race three rostrum with Rob Collard and Andrew Jordan joining Turkington. But it was the man on the bottom step with the most to celebrate.

Race one

"I knew if I could reach Knickerbrook still in front on lap one, then that would be most of the hard work done," said Matt Simpson.

The polesitter had turned heads with his pace on Saturday, dominating free practice and then the shootout for grid positions. The Eurotech-run Honda Civic Type R, with the latest-spec Honda motor, is a potent weapon this season as Simpson's championship-chasing team-mate Jack Goff has proved. Simpson came to Cheshire free of success ballast, and the ingredients were right for him to shine.

And he did. From pole, he made a beautifully controlled start to head the pack – which was led by Tom Chilton's Motorbase Performance Ford Focus – into Old Hall. While Chilton was forced to look to his mirrors to fend off first his team-mate Sam Tordoff and later the

flying WSR BMW 125i M Sport of Jordan, Simpson was able to make good his escape.

His run to his maiden victory was not without its concerns though. Firstly, puffs of smoke started to emanate from the front-left corner of his hatchback from the half-distance point. Simpson was aware, but had asked the team to tell him nothing on the radio.

"I didn't want to know anything – not even how many laps were left," said Simpson. "I could see the smoke, but I was putting everything to the back of my mind just to get home.

"Over the closing laps, the brakes were going slightly. I was having to be very careful because, after all that good work, I didn't want to ruin anything."

He didn't and crossed the line just over 0.2s clear. Chilton put on a late charge on his medium tyres, whereas Simpson had taken the softer ones. Chilton was grip-limited over the latter stages but still tried to outfox his rival into Lodge on the last lap, but it failed to work.

Jordan was pleased to return to the rostrum, but felt that he could have had even more. The rear-wheel-drive runner had been expected to gain places off the line, but was thwarted immediately.

"I don't know what happened – the car just bogged down," said Jordan. "Maybe I had too much heat in the rear tyres. After that, the car was really fast, but there was just nothing I could do about Tom Chilton. He was placing his car well and slowing it down at the right points on the circuit.

"I got alongside him coming out of the Island hairpin on one lap, but he had too much traction for me."

Matt Neal claimed an excellent fifth place in the Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R. Coming to the meeting with 33kg on his hatchback meant that he expected to struggle to reach the podium.

In the end, qualifying fifth was an excellent effort and he finished in

that spot too, with Turkington's WSR BMW 125i M Sport in his wheeltracks. Turkington had been the main benefactor of overtaking in the race, passing the Eurotech cars of Brett Smith and Goff, before despatching James Cole (Motorbase Performance Ford Focus) on the exit of the Island hairpin with a well-planned move on lap 14.

Goff hauled his 48kg of extra lead home in eighth spot behind Cole and narrowly held off Collard (WSR BMW 125i M Sport) and Rob Austin (HMS Racing Alfa Romeo).

Championship leader coming into the race, Adam Morgan, had 75kg of success ballast fitted to his Ciceley Motorsport Mercedes-Benz at a track that is tough on cars with extra weight. He could only qualify 19th and rose to 18th after a difficult race. The only silver lining on his cloud was that title rivals Tom Ingram (Speedworks Toyota Avensis) and Josh Cook (Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra) were both in a similar boat with 57kg and 66kg respectively. Only Ingram would be able to register a championship point with 15th place.

Race two

Simpson's joy at winning race one was very soon squashed. As the Eurotech team investigated the smoke from race one, they quickly established it was as a result of an engine problem which would require a change – that ruled him out of race two. Subsequent problems installing the new unit meant he was out



Jordan was the second-highest scorer

'Finally things came good'

Chilton showed pace, p20



ROUNDS

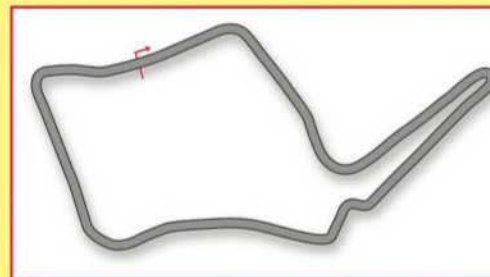


Photos: Jakob Ebrex



WSR locked out the podium in the weekend's final event

RACE FACTS



OULTON PARK

Where: Cheshire
First BTCC round: 1960
Lap length: 2.23 miles
Qualifying lap record: Jason Plato (VW CC) 1m25.484s (2015)
Race lap record: Andy Priaulx (BMW 125i M Sport) 1m 26.404s ('15)

RESULTS

Round: 10 Laps: 15

Weather: warm and dry

POS	Q	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	1	Matt Simpson	Eurotech Racing Honda Civic Type R (S)	22m00.318s
2	3	Tom Chilton	Motorbase Performance Ford Focus RS	+0.265s
3	4	Andrew Jordan	WSR BMW 125i M Sport (S)	+0.630s
4	2	Sam Tordoff	Motorbase Performance Ford Focus RS (S)	+1.630s
5	5	Matt Neal	Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R ⁶	+2.828s
6	9	Colin Turkington	WSR BMW 125i M Sport (S) ⁵	+3.165s
7	8	James Cole	Motorbase Performance Ford Focus RS	+5.127s
8	6	Jack Goff	Eurotech Racing Honda Civic Type R ⁴	+6.587s
9	12	Rob Collard	WSR BMW 125i M Sport	+7.125s
10	11	Rob Austin	HMS Racing Alfa Romeo Giulietta (S)	+7.485s

11 (7) Brett Smith (Eurotech Racing Honda Civic Type R) (S) +16.644s; 12 (13) Chris Smiley (BTC Norlin Honda Civic Type R) (9kg) +16.831s; 13 (14) Dan Cammish (Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R) (21kg) +17.035s; 14 (18) Ollie Jackson (AmD Tuning Audi S3 Saloon) +17.375s; 15 (17) Tom Ingram (Speedworks Toyota Avensis) (57kg) +17.423s; 16 (16) Aiden Moffat (Laser Tools Racing Mercedes-Benz A-Class) +17.545s; 17 (20) Josh Cook (Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra) (66kg) +18.138s; 18 (19) Adam Morgan (Ciceley Motorsport Mercedes-Benz A-Class) (75kg) +18.884s; 19 (24) Mike Bushell (Team Hard Volkswagen CC) +19.618s; 20 (10) Tom Oliphant (Ciceley Motorsport Mercedes-Benz A-Class) +20.197s; 21 (15) Ash Sutton (Team BMR Subaru Levorg) (15kg) +20.554s; 22 (27) Stephen Jelley (Team Parker Racing BMW 125i M Sport) +20.633s; 23 (21) Jake Hill (Team Hard Volkswagen CC) +22.934s; 24 (30) Tom Boardman (AmD Tuning MG6) (S) +27.475s; 25 (22) Daniel Lloyd (BTC Norlin Honda Civic Type R) +27.937s; 26 (28) Bobby Thompson (Team Hard Volkswagen CC) +28.173s; 27 (23) Rory Butcher (AmD Tuning MG6) +28.342s; 28 (26) Senna Proctor (Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra) (S) +28.777s; 29 (25) Michael Caine (Team Hard Volkswagen CC) +32.235s; 30 (29) Jason Plato (Team BMR Subaru Levorg) +32.779s; 31 (31) Sam Smelt (AmD Tuning Audi S3 Saloon) +33.643s; R (32) Josh Price (Team BMR Subaru Levorg) 8 laps/overheating.
Pole position: Simpson 1m25.750s (93.45mph). **Winner's average speed:** 91.04mph. **Fastest lap:** Simpson 1m26.458s (92.69mph). **Lap leaders:** Simpson 1-15. (S) = soft tyre.

Round: 11 Laps: 15

Weather: very warm and dry

POS	Q	DRIVER	TIME
1	6	Turkington ⁶	22m04.333s
2	5	Neal (S) ⁵	+5.372s
3	2	Chilton 2 (S) ²	+7.800s
4	3	Jordan ³	+8.598s
5	7	Cole (S) ⁷	+13.121s
6	9	Collard ⁹	+13.347s
7	10	Austin ¹⁰	+15.304s
8	8	Goff (S) ⁸	+18.205s
9	14	Jackson (S)	+18.308s
10	15	Ingram (S)	+18.493s

11 (18) Morgan +18.582s; 12 (13) Cammish (S) +18.922s; 13 (20) Oliphant +19.497s; 14 (27) Butcher (S) +19.798s; 15 (19) Bushell +21.984s; 16 (28) Proctor +22.438s; 17 (25) Lloyd (S) +23.292s; 18 (12) Smiley +24.115s; 19 (11) Smith +24.959s; 20 (30) Plato (S) +25.854s; 21 (23) Hill +27.549s; 22 (29) Caine +30.056s; 23 (21) Sutton (S) +34.586s; 24 (32) Price (S) +38.931s; 25 (24) Boardman +39.965s; 26 (17) Cook -2 laps; R (26) Thompson 13 laps/damage; R (31) Smelt (S) 12 laps/damage; R (4) Tordoff 10 laps/fire; R (22) Jelley (S) 2 laps/damage; R (16) Moffat 1 lap/damage; NS (1) Simpson (75kg) 0 laps/engine. **Winner's average speed:** 90.77mph. **Fastest lap:** Ingram 1m26.996s (92.11mph). **Lap leaders:** Chilton 1-4; Turkington 5-15. (S) = soft tyre.

Round: 12 Laps: 12

Weather: warm and dry

POS	Q	DRIVER	TIME
1	2	Collard (S) ⁶	17m38.471s
2	4	Jordan ⁴	+3.881s
3	7	Turkington ¹	+7.647s
4	8	Goff ⁸	+9.333s
5	11	Morgan (S)	+13.385s
6	10	Ingram ¹⁰	+15.374s
7	5	Chilton ³	+16.360s
8	15	Bushell (S)	+16.786s
9	3	Cole ⁵	+18.153s
10	21	Hill (S)	+18.403s

11 (26) Cook (S) +18.910s; 12 (16) Proctor +18.974s; 13 (23) Sutton +19.206s; 14 (6) Neal (66kg) +19.559s; 15 (25) Boardman +21.584s; 16 (30) Jelley +21.944s; 17 (28) Smelt +25.031s; 18 (19) Smith +26.111s; 19 (22) Caine (S) +41.924s; 20 (31) Moffat (S) +42.622s; 21 (9) Jackson (15kg) +1m21.197s; 22 (12) Cammish -1 lap; R (24) Price 9 laps/engine; R (1) Austin (27kg) 9 laps/gearbox; R (20) Plato 4 laps/engine; R (13) Oliphant (S) 0 laps/crash; R (14) Butcher 0 laps/crash; R (17) Lloyd 0 laps/crash; R (18) Smiley (S) 0 laps/crash; NS (27) Thompson (S) 0 laps/damaged car; NS (29) Tordoff 0 laps/burnt electrics; NS (32) Simpson 0 laps/engine. **Winner's average speed:** 90.85mph. **Fastest lap:** Smith 1m27.012s (92.10mph). **Lap leaders:** Collard 1-12. (S) = soft tyre.

RACE SUCCESS BALLAST

75kg ¹	66kg ²	57kg ³	48kg ⁴	39kg ⁵
33kg ⁶	27kg ⁷	21kg ⁸	15kg ⁹	9kg ¹⁰

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

DRIVERS

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Colin Turkington	124
2	Adam Morgan	112
3	Jack Goff	112
4	Tom Ingram	103
5	Josh Cook	100
6	Matt Neal	98
7	Andrew Jordan	93
8	Tom Chilton	90
9	Rob Collard	71
10	Dan Cammish	69

11 Senna Proctor 66; 12 Sam Tordoff 60; 13 Ash Sutton 58; 14 Chris Smiley 56; 15 James Cole 54; 16 Matt Simpson 53; 17 Rob Austin 50; 18 Aiden Moffat 47; 19 Brett Smith 34; 20 Rory Butcher 34; 21 Jake Hill 30; 22 Ollie Jackson 30; 23 Mike Bushell 29; 24 Tom Boardman 14; 25 Tom Oliphant 14; 26 James Nash 6.

INDEPENDENTS

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Goff	147
2	Morgan	145
3	Ingram	141
4	Chilton	127
5	Smiley	96
6	Austin	94
7	Moffat	92
8	Tordoff	88
9	Cole	82
10	Simpson	75

11 Jackson 67; 12 Smith 66; 13 Butcher 66; 14 Hill 64; 15 Bushell 51; 16 Oliphant 48; 17 Boardman 47; 18 Nash 26; 19 Stephen Jelley 18; 20 Bobby Thompson 11; 21 Michael Caine 9; 22 Sam Smelt 6; 23 Daniel Lloyd 5.

JACK SEARS TROPHY

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Cammish	161
2	Smiley	150
3	Hill	135
4	Jackson	128
5	Butcher	128
6	Simpson	123
7	Smith	114
8	Bushell	112
9	Oliphant	98
10	Caine	73

11 Thompson 71; 12 Smelt 65; 13 Josh Price 53; 14 Lloyd 17.



Goff maintained his championship bid

for race three as well.

Chilton inherited pole and had 66kg of ballast on board but he had the BMW of Jordan alongside. Despite that, the Ford managed to maintain his advantage on the run to Old Hall from Jordan – but the bubble would eventually burst.

When the attack came, it came from an unlikely source: Turkington. The Northern Irishman had run fourth initially, but knew he had a decent chance.

“Within a couple of laps, I knew that I had a car capable of winning underneath me, and I had to strike,” said Turkington.

He certainly did. Third-placed Tordoff was his first victim on lap one going into Old Hall, and then he went inside team-mate Jordan at Lodge on lap four. Two laps later, the lead was his with a neat move down the inside on Chilton into Lodge.

“I didn’t want to fight too hard,” said Chilton. “I knew I had weight, and I figured that if I battled too hard, I would push us all back into the pack. I decided to play the wise game and I was desperate to bank another podium.”

He did that, but he had also had to cede second to Neal before the end. The Honda man was on the softer tyres and had 39kg of ballast, but while he could slice through the mid-order with ease, it took him until lap seven to finally overhaul Chilton, which he did with a superb move down the inside into Old Hall.

“I tried to keep the pressure on Colin, but he was simply too good,” said Neal. “I figured if I could try to keep the heat on because it is possible that the BMWs can chew their rear tyres if they push too hard, but Colin was too good for that.”

Jordan held on to fourth place ahead of Cole, who had been involved in an early battle with team-mate Tordoff. However, Tordoff’s run was cut short when a fuel pipe split and set the engine

bay on fire. It would destroy the electrics on the car and rule him out for race three.

That gifted sixth to Collard ahead of Austin, and the latter was drawn on reversed-grid pole for the finale.

The win lifted Turkington to the summit of the points table, and that was due, in part, to the struggles of those further back. While Ingram battled manfully to 10th just ahead of Morgan, Cook was the one in the wars. He was caught up in a lap-one skirmish on the way to Cascades which ultimately sent him into the pits.

Race three

From his position on the front row of the grid for race three, Collard was looking like a strong bet for the finale. He nailed his start and as Austin tried to rein in too much wheelspin, the BMW was away.

It was for naught, though, as the red flags flew. Mid-grid contact between Mike Bushell (Team Hard VW CC), Tom Oliphant (Ciceley Motorsport Mercedes-Benz A-Class) and Rory Butcher (AmDTuning.com MG) caused chaos, which also involved both BTC Norlin Honda Civics of Dan Lloyd and Chris Smiley. The race was stopped.

“My heart sank,” said Collard. “I knew it would be all about the start, and I had done a great one. Then I had to do it all over again.”

It wasn’t a problem, and he nailed Austin into Old Hall again. Jordan moved into third place ahead of Cole, and Chilton while Turkington and Goff followed.

Collard was on the softer tyres and only had 33kg – the race was his to lose. “I knew I had to concentrate and I just got my head down,” said the winner. “It was the perfect race.”

It was far from perfect for Austin. He kept Collard honest over the opening period of the race but on lap nine, the Alfa Romeo trailed into the pits with a

broken gearbox. Its driver was truly heartbroken.

That allowed Jordan into second place and Turkington, who had performed two strong overtakes on both Chilton and Cole, into a remarkable podium spot.

Goff’s fourth place was opportunistic, as he had followed Turkington through on a couple of his moves to climb the order, but he was lucky to cross the line at all as he had a tyre deflating rapidly over the final tour.

“If it had been another lap longer, I wouldn’t have finished,” said Goff. “I had to run on the grass when I came across Austin’s car going slowly, and I am not sure if that caused something, but we were very very lucky.”

That was the top order sorted, but a lot of eyes were on two of the championship’s major players: Morgan and Ingram. Morgan was immediately into the top 10 and on the bootlid of Ingram, but the Mercedes man was in the right place on lap eight when Ingram tried to capitalise on Neal’s tardy getaway from Knickerbrook. The cars went side-by-side into Lodge and made contact, which was the only invitation Morgan needed to nip down the inside of both of them on the exit of the corner and in to eighth.

As the Motorbase Performance cars chewed their rubber with their heavier ballast weights, Morgan was able to leapfrog both of them as well to land fifth – a remarkable feature given that his weekend had started with 18th spot in the opener.

Ingram had performed a similar recovery job for sixth ahead of Chilton. Bushell and Jake Hill (Team Hard VW CCs) hauled themselves into eighth and ninth, while Cole dropped to 10th at the flag after being assaulted by Hill at Cascades on the final tour. The officials took a dim view and switched the positions between Hill and Cole back after the flag.

BTCC REPORT: OULTON PARK



MOTORSPORT NEWS STAR DRIVER

COLIN TURKINGTON

It was a tough weekend for the Northern Irishman just days after his mother Mavis passed away. However, he picked himself up and put in the kind of performance which marks him out as the champion that he is. Needed a big score to get himself back into the title chase and did exactly that in a weekend that included his maiden win of the campaign.

MOTORSPORT NEWS WOODEN SPOON

SAM TORDOFF'S CAR

He might not have had the pace to have won a race outright, but Sam Tordoff was on the pace at Oulton Park and qualified on the front row. Would have been well able to finish in the top five for the second race to add to his points from race one, but a barbecue erupted under the bonnet of his Motorbase Performance car, curtailing his hopes for the weekend.




DRIVER ANALYSIS BY MATT JAMES

MATT NEAL **7/10**

Dynamics Honda Civic

Neal knew that this would be a weekend to get through, and so he was delighted to have dragged his 33kg of ballast to fifth on the grid. Fifth in race one left him with weight, but he took advantage of soft tyres in race two to climb to second place. A wild ride after contact in R3 left him in 14th.



ROB COLLARD **7/10**

WSR BMW 125i M Sport


Admitted to really getting his mojo back at Oulton Park and that was enough for him to take his first BTCC win at the parkland venue. Qualified 12th and converted that into ninth in race one and then rose to sixth in race two. A front-row start for the finale was all he needed to give him the chance of a win.



TOM INGRAM **6/10**

Speedworks Toyota

There wasn't a lot more that Ingram could have asked for from last weekend. Carrying 57kg was always likely to destroy his qualifying, and he could only manage 17th. It was about what he could manage in R3. Tenth in race two gave him a springboard for a strong sixth place in the final race.



COLIN TURKINGTON **9/10**

WSR BMW 125i M Sport

Coming to the track with 39kg wasn't ideal but he shrugged that off with a fifth-row start. He was the only one with his overtaking boots on in race one with a climb to sixth place. He kept the aggression into race two to climb to the top with some exceptional passes. Race three third was a great way to sign off.



JACK GOFF **7/10**

Eurotech Honda Civic


Unsung hero of the weekend. Qualifying sixth with 48kg on the car was superb and that set up a healthy points haul. Two eighth places might not sound much from the opening two races, but they were plenty as a number of his title rivals struggled. Fourth in race three was fortunate as his tyre was deflating.



ANDREW JORDAN **8/10**

WSR BMW 125i M Sport

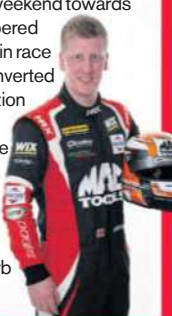
After leaving the last round in an ambulance, anything would have been an improvement. Fourth on the grid was followed by a solid third and a fourth in the opening two races. Didn't quite have the ultimate pace but took his chances with a fortunate second place in race three. Was the second-highest points scorer of the weekend.



ADAM MORGAN **6/10**

Ciceley Mercedes-Benz

Like Ingram, he had reverse engineered his weekend towards race three. Lumbered his 75kg to 18th in race one and then converted that to 11th position in race two. Said the car came alive in race three as he battled up the order – and ahead of Ingram – to grab a superb fifth spot.



TOM CHILTON **7/10**

Motorbase Ford Focus


Chilton was able to unlock some real pace from the Ford, which shone. Overtook team-mate Sam Tordoff at the start of race one and finished on the bootlid of winner Matt Simpson, and then used his head when he had the softer tyres to retain third in race two. Seventh with weight in race three was good too.



JAMES COLE **7/10**

Motorbase Ford Focus

Excellent weekend for Cole on a track where he usually shines. Took his ballast-free Ford Focus to a strong eighth position in qualifying and converted that into a competitive seventh spot in race one, and then enjoyed the softer tyres to land fifth in race two. Was ninth in race three after being punted down the order but a solid weekend.



MATT SIMPSON **8/10**

Simpson Honda Civic

What a weekend for Simpson: a stunning qualifying run put him two tenths clear of the pack and he converted that into a controlled drive in race one for his maiden British Touring Car Championship victory, despite smoke coming from his car. That smoke proved terminal for the engine, however, and that was the end of his weekend.



SAM TORDOFF **3/10**

Motorbase Ford Focus

Fourth in race one after having started second was a disappointment but things got worse when a fuel line worked loose in race two and caused a fire. He pulled out of his top six position, but the damage was terminal.

DAN CAMMISH **4/10**

Dynamics Honda Civic

Sure, he was carrying weight, but it was a track he hadn't tested the car at and he seemed to struggle to click with the Honda at Oulton. Nipping at the heels of the top 10 until a wild ride in race two and a puncture in race three.

JOSH COOK **4/10**

Power Maxed Vauxhall

Cook had bad luck at Oulton. Was prepared for a damage-limitation exercise, but was fired into the gravel at the start of race two, which really stymied his charge and put him to the back for race three. Recovered for 11th in race three.

ASH SUTTON **4/10**

Team BMR Subaru Levorg

Sutton can be relied upon to drag results from the reluctant Subaru, but even he looked thoroughly fed up at Oulton with a lack of straight-line speed from the Team BMR car. Only salvaged points with 13th in race three.

ROB AUSTIN **5/10**

HMS Alfa Romeo Giulietta

Should have grabbed a podium after running in second place in the final race until a differential problem ruled him out. Had built gradually up to that point with two solid top 10s only to then suffer a kick in the teeth. Needs some luck soon.

SUPPORTS

'Coates ends Dorlin's winning streak'
Renault UK Clio Cup, below



Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Wrigley and Harper take maiden wins

Porsche Carrera Cup GB
By Stephen Lickorish

For the past five years, no more than five different drivers have won races in a season in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB. That run is now over after Tom Wrigley and Dan Harper joined the winner's circle at Oulton Park to make it six different victors from the opening eight races.

Wrigley claimed his maiden win in the opener after getting a good getaway from pole, with the looming Lewis Plato the only threat to his supremacy.

Race two was a similar story as again poleman Harper made a good start, an area he has been focusing on after difficulties earlier in the year, and had to defend from Plato. He was able to stay ahead throughout with even Fraser Robertson's spun car at the chicane not stopping his charge to the win.

"It was great to break my duck," enthused Porsche Junior Harper. "I was just trying my best to avoid it [Robertson's car] – it wasn't the nicest end to the race!"

While Wrigley and Harper were celebrating, erstwhile points' leader Dino Zamparelli was reeling. An errant marker post piercing his radiator cost him third in race one and then a spin on the opening lap of race two – following contact from Shamus Jennings – restricted him to 10th and allowed Tio Ellinas to claim the points lead.

Aggressive Jewiss steals F4 points lead

British F4

By Dan Mason

Dennis Hauger's wait for a British Formula 4 victory ended at Oulton Park, while Kiern Jewiss came away with the championship lead.

Hauger's maiden triumph came after a penalty for Jewiss in the first of three races after a race-long battle between the pair.

'Clutch biting point' eagerness meant Jewiss stuttered and surrendered his pole advantage, the fast-starting Hauger defending grimly until Jewiss made his lunge at Island hairpin on the penultimate lap. Contact was made, and the result was later reversed in the Norwegian's favour.

Ayrton Simmons struggled for qualifying pace and lost his points lead despite a hard-fought race two victory ahead of Thruxton winner Jack Doohan – who picked up a troublesome chicane marker post – and a charging Jewiss, who dived inside Paavo Tonteri at Old Hall to complete the podium.

Jewiss picked up the pieces by dominating race three from pole. Arden's Patrik Pasma tailed him to add to his third place in race one, while Simmons' win was sandwiched by results of sixth and eighth.

BROWNING ON A CHARGE TO OULTON PARK GLORY

Two very different Junior races in Cheshire



Browning soon pulled away from chasing pack

Ginetta Junior

By Stephen Lickorish

The only similarity between the two Ginetta Junior contests was that Luke Browning won both on the road. But in one race he was stripped of the victory, the other he won by a mammoth 11 seconds. And while one race was a snoozefest, the other was a chaotic thriller.

The opening race was the dull one. Browning resisted title rival Adam Smalley's attempts to grab the lead at the start and that was how it stayed to the finish. Except that Browning's Richardson Racing car failed post-race scrutineering (see *Racing News*) and Smalley was handed the win from Elite Motorsport team-mates Fin Green and Louis Foster.

Race two was different. There was more action in the opening half a lap than in the

whole of the earlier encounter.

Smalley jumped front-row starter James Hedley into Old Hall but this proved to be a bad move as by the hairpin he was facing the wrong way – the victim after contact with James Taylor sent an out-of-control Hedley clattering into him. This dropped Smalley and Hedley out of contention.

The next lap it was Taylor – who had earlier missed out on third in race one after jumping the start – and Patrick Kibble's turn to tangle at Old Hall as they fought for second. This dropped Kibble out of the lead fight.

On lap four it was Taylor, Ruben Del Sarte and Green's turn to collide at the chicane. This dropped Taylor and Green out of contention.

With a host of cars out of contention, Browning scampered into the distance and by the flag was over 11s clear.

When asked if that makes up for the race

one disappointment, he smiled: "Yeah it does. To win by that margin was something on my bucket list."

Behind were those tiny number of cars that had stayed out of trouble. And a move at Lodge on Greg Johnson with three of the eight laps to go sealed second for Foster. Despite starting all the way down in 11th place.

"I was disappointed with qualifying after taking a pole and fastest lap at Thruxton," admitted Foster. "Finishing third yesterday was good but finishing second today was great – the race was just manic, there was a lot happening! I had nothing to lose but was surprised to take second."

Johnson held on for third from Del Sarte, Jonny Wilkinson and a recovering Smalley after a frenetic contest.

After the uneventful opener it was further proof that calm is definitely not the Ginetta Junior norm.

Coates brings Dorlin's five-race winning streak to an end after great getaway

Renault UK Clio Cup

By Stephen Lickorish

James Dorlin was unable to equal the record for most consecutive Clio Cup wins after Max Coates denied him a sixth-straight victory.

When Westbourne driver Dorlin qualified on pole for both races by a quarter of a second it looked like he had a

good chance to make history, especially with Oulton being a tough circuit to overtake on.

But a great getaway from Coates allowed him to snatch the lead off the line in race two – which was then paused after Jade Edwards rolled out of Cascades following contact with Sam Osborne.

Once the safety car pitted, Dorlin was all over the back of Coates but a failed

move at Lodge allowed Paul Rivett to sneak ahead across the line. Dorlin then had to turn his attention to keeping Bradley Burns behind and that was how it stayed to the flag.

Earlier, Dorlin had scampered to victory in a very dull opener as Rivett in second kept a queue of seven cars, headed by Coates, behind him throughout the race.

Two more victories for Ladell extend his Ginetta GT4 Supercup points lead

Ginetta GT4 Supercup

By Dan Mason

Charlie Ladell's championship advantage grew further in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup thanks to a confident brace of victories at Oulton Park.

The Rob Boston Racing man's cause was helped further by a mixed weekend of fortunes for many of his closest rivals, Harry King losing out most of all after a meeting plagued by car troubles.

Not even a 'perfect' lap from Andrew Gordon-Colebrooke could stop Ladell from going one better to claim pole and victory in race one, the former making a crucial mistake at Old Hall on the second lap that removed him from his best qualifying result of second on the grid.

"You don't get many races like that," said Ladell after a commanding win over his nearest title contender, Carl Boardley. "We got it really hooked up from qualifying and felt comfortable."

Ladell doubled up with another lights-to-flag performance the following day to make it five wins from the opening eight races, opening up a 25-point cushion over the consistent Boardley who finished second for the sixth time in 2018.

Ladell's cash-strapped team-mate Adam Shepherd shook off budget concerns to round out the podium in both contests.

Tom Roche produced a fine comeback in the third of the Rob Boston Racing cars meanwhile, after being bumped to seventh on the grid for disrespecting track limits in qualifying.

Roche took evasive action from Gordon-Colebrooke's recovering car in race one, forced to pit to remove grass from the car's front splitter. What followed was a fine charge from ninth to fourth place, a late dive to the inside of Reece Somerfield's G55 heading into the high-speed Druids right-hander proving the showpiece of his recovery.

"A great race," he said. "It's hard to overtake here but I went for it!"

Limited to three laps in qualifying with suspension issues, a broken toe-link removed King from second place in the closing laps of the opening race. Starting 10th for race two, the Elite Motorsport man's misery was compounded by a brief power failure which limited him to a lowly 10th.

RESULTS

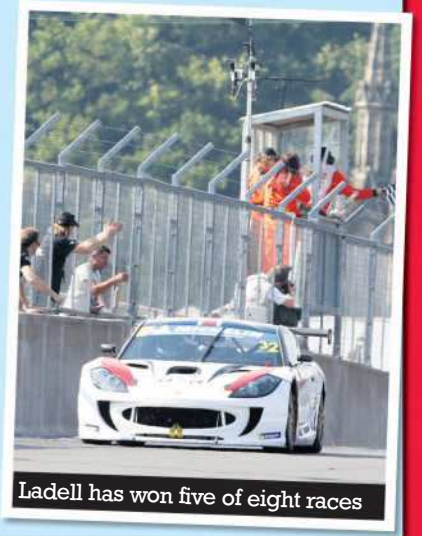
Ginetta Junior (8 laps) 1 Adam Smalley (Elite Motorsport); 2 Fin Green (Elite) +6.624s; 3 Louis Foster (Elite); 4 Ruben del Sarte (TCR); 5 James Hedley (Elite); 6 Patrick Kibble (TCR). FL Smalley 1m44.893s (76.40mph). P Luke Browning. S 17. **Race 2 (8 laps)** 1 Browning (Richardson Racing); 2 Foster +11.353s; 3 Greg Johnson (Elite); 4 James Taylor (Richardson Racing); 5 Jonny Wilkinson (TCR); 6 Smalley. FL Smalley 1m45.394s (76.03mph). P Browning. S 17. **Points (after 9/26 rounds)** 1 Smalley 241; 2 Foster 232; 3 Browning 210; 4 del Sarte 187; 5 Kibble 161; 6 Johnson 152.

Porsche Carrera Cup GB (18 laps) 1 Tom Wrigley (JTR); 2 Lewis Plato (JTR) +0.584s; 3 Tio Ellinas (Slidesports); 4 Daniel Harper (JTR); 5 George Gamble (Parker); 6 Seb Perez (Parker). FL Plato 1m22.769s (96.82mph). P Wrigley. S 22. **Race 2 (18 laps)** 1 Harper; 2 Plato +0.967s; 3 Ellinas; 4 Wrigley; 5 Gamble; 6 Dan Vaughan (Motorbase). FL Harper 1m23.181s (96.34mph). P Harper. S 22. **Points (after 8/16 rounds)** 1 Ellinas 64; 2 Dino Zamparelli 58; 3 Wrigley 54; 4 Plato 49; 5 Gamble 39; 6 Harper 27.

British Formula 4 (15 laps) 1 Dennis Hauger (Arden); 2 Kiern Jewiss (Double R) +0.791s; 3 Patrik Pasma (Arden); 4 Paavo Tonteri (Double R); 5 Jack Doohan (Arden); 6 Ayrton Simmons (JHR Developments). FL Jewiss 1m22.939s (96.62mph). P Jewiss. S 14. **Race 2 (15 laps)** 1 Simmons; 2 Doohan +0.382s; 3 Jewiss; 4 Tonteri; 5 Pasma; 6 Hauger. FL Doohan 1m24.516s (94.82mph). P Simmons. S 14. **Race 3 (15 laps)** 1 Jewiss; 2 Pasma +7.776s; 3 Tonteri; 4 Hampus Ericsson (Fortec); 5 Hauger; 6 Doohan. FL Jewiss 1m24.191s (95.18mph). P Jewiss. S 14. **Points (after 12/30 rounds)** 1 Jewiss 206; 2 Simmons 190; 3 Doohan 137; 4 Hauger 117; 5 Tonteri 107; 6 Pasma 105.

Renault UK Clio Cup (12 laps) 1 James Dorlin (Westbourne Motorsport); 2 Paul Rivett (WDE Motorsport) +4.962s; 3 Max Coates (Team Pyro); 4 Lee Pattison (WDE); 5 James Colburn (Westbourne); 6 Dan Zelos (WDE). FL Dorlin 1m34.589s (84.72mph). P Dorlin. S 18. **Race 2 (15 laps)** 1 Coates; 2 Rivett +0.281s; 3 Dorlin; 4 Bradley Burns (Team Pyro); 5 Colburn; 6 Michael Epps (Matrix Motorsport). FL Pattison 1m35.244s (84.14mph). P Dorlin. S 17. **Points (after 8/18 rounds)** 1 Dorlin 164; 2 Coates 160; 3 Rivett 152; 4 Daniel Rowbottom (Pyro) 102; 5 Jack McCarthy (Pyro) 100; 6 Burns 94.

Ginetta GT4 Supercup (15 laps) 1 Charles Ladell (Rob Boston Racing); 2 Carl Boardley (Team Hard) +4.530s; 3 Adam Shepherd (Team Hard); 4 Reece Somerfield (Privateer); 5 Angus Fender (Century Motorsport); 6 Jac Constable (Fix Auto Racing). FL Ladell 1m25.959s (93.22mph). P Ladell. S 17. **Race 2 (15 laps)** 1 Ladell; 2 Boardley +2.070s; 3 Shepherd; 4 Tom Roche (Rob Boston Racing); 5 Carl Shield (AK Automotive); 6 Somerfield. FL Ladell 1m26.791s (92.33mph). P Ladell. S 17. **Points (after 8/23 rounds)** 1 Ladell 264; 2 Boardley 239; 3 Harry King 159; 4 Roche 150; 5 Shield 136; 6 Constable 136.



Ladell has won five of eight races

BTRDA CARLISLE STAGES

A win has thrust the Ford Focus driver into contention. By **Stephen Brunson**



Bird/Morton won on gravel return

BIRD TAKES CARLISLE VICTORY



Power steering trouble caused Edwards issues



Naylor took NR4 class after battle

Lepley wins R2 Cup, again

George Lepley came out on top in an entertaining rally-long battle with Mat Smith to remain unbeaten in the R2 Rallye Cup this season.

The Newark driver didn't have things all his own way over the course of the day however, having trailed Smith by 12 seconds on the opening stage at Florida.

Lepley, co-driven by Tom Woodburn, was then held up on Newcastleton after catching a car in front of him and spent several frustrating miles losing time.

But that was not nearly as much time as Smith, who coughed up nearly 15 seconds and the rally lead after a similar situation. He suffered all day with a stone caught between the brake calliper. Lepley lent Smith a spare wheel after Smith broke three, to enable him to continue on what was a prize drive in a Fiesta R2, awarded by Pete Smith of Swift Caravans.

Smith remained within striking distance ahead of service as Lepley extended his margin by another second, but Kershope was where Lepley broke clear once and for all.

"There was so much water in the tracks. We needed to just get through and survive so it's a great result," said Lepley.

He doubled his lead and took it easier on Ash Park to finish a comfortable 30 seconds in front. Bob Vardy's Fiesta R2 completed the podium in third behind Smith, despite sustaining a puncture on the final stage.

With just one stage win and an ill-handling car unsuited to the tight confines of the Kielder Forest, few would have predicted Paul Bird taking victory on the BTRDA Carlisle Stages last weekend.

But in doing just that, the Cumbrian's title chances were given a shot in the arm with a second triumph of the year as rivals Stephen Petch and Matt Edwards hit trouble.

Bird's victory margin of 21 seconds over Edwards at the finish relied more on patience and care in variable conditions than outright pace. However, it was this prudent tactic which allowed the local man to extend his points lead over Welshman Edwards.

"It's been some day: a real battle of attrition," said Bird. "I knew I was under some pressure being at home, because I genuinely struggle doing a gravel rally after back-to-back Tarmac events [in Barbados]."

Bird's path to victory began inconspicuously as he struggled to wrestle his cumbersome Ford Focus WRC07 through the stages. Bemoaning an "undriveable" and "awful" car, Bird

also lamented his decision to run reinforced Pirelli K4 tyres instead of the harder K6s throughout the morning after lacking grip.

A switch to the latter and a win on the first test after Service on Kershope (SS4) was the step Bird needed, especially after rally-long leader Petch's hopes were dashed on the 14.88-mile stage.

Defending champion Petch made the trip westward from Bishop Auckland knowing a first win of the season was required if he was to stand any realistic chance of retaining his title.

The day began brightly for Petch who was just one second behind Edwards after SS2 (Newcastleton) before hitting the front when the Welshman's power steering failed at the start of SS3 (Ash Park 1).

Alongside co-driver Michael Wilkinson, Petch built a 15-second margin over Bird ahead of service but got caught out as torrential rain hit SS4, a mistake sinking his Ford Fiesta RS WRC into a ditch.

"It was about 10 miles into the stage and I thought I'd got enough speed off for a five-right hairpin left but as I turned in, I knew I wasn't going to get round the corner," he said.

"We hit a tree stump on Michael's side which stopped us suddenly and tipped us a bit. I don't know how the spectators

got us out but they did, but realistically the championship is now gone."

Charlie Payne also fell victim to the conditions and ended what had been a promising rally in the same ditch as Petch.

The 2016 champion Payne enjoyed a positive start to the event and ran solidly inside the top four heading into Kershope. Just 13 seconds behind eventual winner Bird and eager to make up time on the wet roads, Payne arrived too quickly at the scene of Petch's slip-up and pitched his Fiesta into a roll on the opposite side of the road. He and co-driver Dale Bowen emerged unscathed but out of the running.

While Edwards avoided the perilous ditches, his rally was no less eventful. A loss of power steering on two separate occasions forced the British Rally Championship points leader to work much harder to bring his Ford Fiesta home a distant second, with co-driver Darren Garrod resorting to changing gear and using the handbrake while Edwards wrestled the R5.

Following back-to-back victories on Rallynuts and Plains, Edwards kicked off proceedings in much the same fashion by edging Luke Francis' Ford Fiesta by three seconds on Florida – the de facto SS1 following three stages from the Historics on Friday evening.

He looked set to repeat his performance at Newcastleton before losing "approximately 30s" while the power steering was reset.

Amid the plumes of hanging dust produced by Edwards' car, Francis then crashed into retirement after losing visibility a handful of miles from stage end.

"We caught up with Matt, who had a problem and got blinded in his dust. Then I basically just turned into a corner that wasn't there," Francis explained.

"We made a mess of trying to get the car back onto the road which is frustrating as Matt was only two seconds off the fastest time."

Despite a new arm being fitted at service, Edwards' steering failed again, leaving the Colwyn Bay driver wondering what might have been.

"The win was there but we can take a lot of positives from a work ethic point of view today," Edwards reflected.

"We had no power steering from the third stage so we were driving it to keep it on the road and try not lose too much time."

The surprise package of the day was undoubtedly Scottish Rally Championship regular Michael Binnie, who set a stunning time on the final stage to claim the bottom step of the podium in third.



IN ASSOCIATION WITH

Photos: Writtle Photographic

1400

STAGE WINNERS

SS4 Florida (3.14 miles) Matt Edwards/Darren Garrod (Ford Fiesta R5) 3m08s

SS5 Newcastleton (14.25 miles) Stephen Petch/Michael Wilkinson (Fiesta RS WRC) 15m00s

SS6 Ash Park (5.91 miles) Petch/Wilkinson 5m41s

SS7 Kershope (14.88 miles) Paul Bird/Jack Morton (Ford Focus WRC07) 15m32s

SS8 Ash Park 2 (5.91 miles) Peter Stephenson/Patrick Walsh (Focus WRC07); Michael Binnie/Richard Simmons (Mitsubishi Lancer E9) 5m46s



Coughtrie: H4



B11: Davison

CLASSWINNERS



Ian Joel's evergreen Escort Cosworth won B13 class

- Gold Star:** Paul Bird/Jack Morton (Ford Focus WRC07)
- Silver Star:** George Lepley/Tom Woodburn (Ford Fiesta R2)
- Production Cup:** Pat Naylor/Ian Lawrence (Mitsubishi Lancer E9)
- Historic Cup:** Ernie Graham/Robin Kellard (Ford Escort Mk2)
- Junior driver:** Lepley
- Junior co-driver:** Tom Murphy (Talbot Sunbeam VXR)
- Seniors:** Ian Joel/Graeme Wood (Ford Escort RS Cosworth)
- Fiesta ST Trophy:** Ewan Tindall/Paul Hudson
- Rallye R2 Cup:** Lepley/Woodburn
- 1400 overall:** Tommi Meadows/Emma Morrison (Ford Ka)
- B14:** Bird/Morton
- B13:** Joel/Wood
- B12:** Tim Phelps/Elwyn Manuel (Ford Escort Mk2)
- B11:** Andy Davison/Tom Murphy (Talbot Sunbeam VXR)
- B10:** Lepley/Woodburn
- NR4:** Naylor/Lawrence
- N3:** Tindall/Hudson
- H4:** Tom Coughtrie (Mitsubishi Gallant VRS)
- H3:** Graham/Kellard
- 1400S:** Meadows/Morrison

Meadows makes most of early road position for victory

Tommi Meadows was the class of the field in the 1400 class as he stroked his Ford Ka to victory over Steve Black's Suzuki Swift by over 40 seconds. But as the rain hit the Kielder vicinity on the penultimate stage, Meadows's rally very nearly unravelled.

Partnered by co-driver Emma Morrison, Meadows had been trying to keep it clean on a treacherous penultimate test but was pitched onto two wheels on the fast 14.88-mile Kershope stage which nearly spelt disaster for the pair.

"It's definitely not been an easy day," Meadows said post-event. "We used all of our luck today, especially in that one [SS5]. It was horizontal

rain, it was like an ice rink. We caught two cars, one car went off in front and we nearly followed them on our roof to be honest. We're lucky to get to the finish."

Aside from this heart-stopping moment, it was a dominant performance from Meadows. After SS1 winner Chris Powell pulled up on Newcastleton with mechanical woes, Meadows built a 15-second lead over Black on SS2 before doubling it on SS3 (Ash Park).

Black – the infamous car preparer best known for his association with the F2 era – remained Meadows' nearest rival and was comfortably ahead of Pete Gorst's Vauxhall Nova.

Gorst made a superb recovery after losing 40 seconds in the opening two stages, having to drive a reduced speed due to hanging dust impacting visibility.

Wesley Gilford and co-driver Sam Colman were the only entrants in Rally First. The pair, driving a Fiesta ST in the RF2.0 class, crashed into a ditch on Kershope and failed to complete the final pass through Ash Park.

The best of the BTRDA registered Histories were Ernie Graham and Robin Kellard in their Ford Escort Mk2, beating fellow H3 competitors Peter Smith and John Millington (Fiat 131) by over three minutes.



Ernie Graham was the top BTRDA historic entry



Meadows avoided late trouble for 1400 overall win

RESULTS

BTRDA Rally Series, round 5/7, June 9, Carlisle

POS	DRIVER /CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Paul Bird/Jack Morton	Ford Focus 07 WRC	45m42s
2	Matt Edwards/Darren Garrod	Ford Fiesta R5	+21s
3	Michael Binnie/Richard Simmons	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	+53s
4	Pat Naylor/Ian Lawrence	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	+55s
5	Sacha Kakad/James Aldridge	Ford Fiesta	+58s
6	Ian Joel/Graeme Wood	Ford Escort Cosworth	+1m05s
7	Peter M Stephenson/Patrick Walsh	Ford Focus WRC06	+1m35s
8	Stephen Simpson/Andrew Roughead	Ford Fiesta S2000	+1m57s
9	Russ Thompson/Andy Murphy	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	+2m01s
10	Ian Bainbridge/Daniel May	Subaru Impreza	+2m06s

11 Matthew Hirst/Declan Dear (Lancer E9); 12 Ian Baumgart/Dave Robson (Impreza); 13 Martin Cairns/Gary McElhinney (Fiesta); 14 George Lepley/Tom Woodburn (Fiesta R2); 15 Conor McCourt/Caolan McKenna (Lancer E9); 16 Mat Smith/Giles Dykes (Ford Fiesta R2); 17 Brian Bell/Paul Spooner (Ford Focus WRC07); 18 Daniel Hiorns/Chris Purvis (Impreza); 19 Bob Vardy/Keaton Williams (Fiesta R2); 20 Ernie Graham/Robin Kellard (Ford Escort).
Points: 1 Bird 114; 2 Thompson 96; 3 Edwards 90; 4 Stephen Petch 80; 5 Lepley 78; 6 Naylor 76.

The 25-year-old from Berwickshire recovered from a minor excursion five miles into SS2 to run sixth for much of the event. Alongside new co-driver Richard Simmons, Binnie emerged from Kershope unscathed despite fitting their Mitsubishi Lancer E9 with the softer Pirelli K4s, to usurp Pat Naylor and Sacha Kakad with the joint-fastest time on the final stage.

"I surprised myself with that one," beamed an ecstatic Binnie.

"We had a couple of moments in Kershope but we just tried to keep it clean and not do anything silly."

Binnie ultimately prevailed in a closely fought battle for the podium which could have been taken by any of four drivers.

The most unfortunate of that quartet was arguably Russ Thompson, whose stellar effort to jump from eighth to third in Kershope was undone on the second run through Ash Park after dropping seven minutes. He had hit a stump which broke a hub, and the car crabbed to the end.

That allowed Naylor to easily secure N4 honours with a calmly taken fourth overall ahead of Kakad's Fiesta.

Kakad's rally was another case of missed opportunities after losing more than 40 seconds due to an engine cut out on SS2. He and co-driver James Aldridge produced a stirring fightback before being forced to tread carefully on an "obscenely rough" SS6 and losing a possible podium finish.

Behind Kakad, Ian Joel brought home the older Ford Escort RS in a respectable sixth place after struggling with grip and the hanging dust early on in the event. The veteran enjoyed a clean run through the opening stage but lost a couple of seconds due to an overshoot and being on harder MRF tyres. Nevertheless, Joel produced more consistent times following service to finish one place ahead of Peter Stephenson.

In his first event since the Grizedale Stages in December, Stephenson spent much of the morning loop getting reacquainted with his Ford Focus. Although his gear selector lights failed him in SS2 and SS3, he eventually finished seventh ahead of Stephen Simpson (Fiesta), the luckless Thompson and Ian Bainbridge (Subaru Impreza).

Keeping out of trouble amid the chaos though was Bird, whose victory on home turf was a significant one.

"I've got superbikes commitments and my son's [Frank] racing and I think some rounds clash. But it's looking more likely I'll have to concentrate on myself to win the title," Bird said.

Edwards remains Bird's closest points rival with his third podium in succession but will have to rely on bulletproof reliability if he is to mount any sort of defiance next time out on the Nicky Grist Stages (July 14).

STAR OF THE RALLY



Until getting stuck in a ditch on SS7 (Kershope), Stephen Petch had the rally in the bag. He was dominant once he assumed the lead from Edwards on SS3 but his off allowed Michael Binnie to sneak under the radar and claim a sensational podium finish. Binnie still had to do the hard work himself and he did so superbly by taking the joint-fastest time on the final stage to jump three places into third.

Tindall belies his years with mature ST drive

Ewan Tindall claimed victory in the ST Trophy in just his second ever forest rally, but was made to sweat post-event following a notional time confusion.

Officials had initially handed Zak Hughes the win after the penultimate stage (Kershope) was cancelled due to a blocked road.

Both Tindall, who had built a lead of over a minute, and second-placed Mathew Tordoff received notional times that dropped the pair behind Hughes.

Upon close inspection, officials recalculated the times and Tindall was rewarded with victory ahead of Tordoff and Hughes.

Alongside Paul 'Rocky' Hudson, Tindall was largely dominant throughout, having taken the fastest time in every stage before Kershope. The pair ended up 25 seconds clear of Tordoff despite suffering two left punctures on a severely rutted final stage.

"We wanted to just take it easy on Ash Park, but we picked up a puncture on the front and rear



Tindall was hard to see in the dust, and rivals only saw him from a distance

left. But we only lost about 30 seconds on that one fortunately," Tindall said.

Tordoff also had a puncture in the final test but the High Wycombe driver took solace in a reduced margin between himself and points leaders James

Giddings and Calvin Green, who both endured problematic rallies.

Cambrian Rally winner Hughes put to bed back-to-back retirements on Rallynuts and Plains, getting back on the podium for the second time in 2018.

RALLY ITALY



BY DAVID EVANS

Hyundai's man beat the champion in an epic showdown

This was sport at its absolute best. Two teams, two crews and two cars absolutely going at it. With 190.46 miles down and 4.32 to go, they were separated by 0.8 seconds. Ahead was one more stage, but that was Sunday in the sun. Let's rewind to Friday and the rain.

The intensity of the stare was incredible. Barely blinking, Sebastien Ogier stared straight ahead, drinking in the detail of the road before him. Such was the focus on stage six, he almost missed his mouth with a spoonful of fruit salad.

The Frenchman is old school and very French when it comes to lunchtime. It's for lunch. Not watching telly. But on Friday (and Saturday) a toe-to-toe battle with Thierry Neuville forced a rethink. It was time to get the laptop out.

Last week's Rally Italy wasn't just about who could win round seven of this year's World Rally Championship. It went deeper than that. There's a needle between these two. Ogier's ruled this world for the past five years and nobody wants the king's crown more than Neuville. And there's a needle between these two teams in the tit-for-tat quarrel over penalties and appeals.

Of the two drivers, it's usually Ogier who makes it more overtly personal. When asked if he wanted to talk about Neuville running at the front of the field in Sardinia, he said: "We saw when he was first on the road before, he was nowhere."

Thierry let his times do the talking in Portugal last month and then prayed for rain ahead of the flight out to the Mediterranean island of Sardinia for Rally Italy. As the race progressed, as the rally neared, the threats of rain grew stronger and stronger until Friday morning arrived and the downpours began. Right on cue.

"I have been doing a rain dance all week," Neuville grinned, letting that line loose every time his rival was within range.

"He's clearly better at dancing for the rain than I am," said Ogier. "I have been doing this for a long time when I have been running at the front, but I have never been so lucky."

As already outlined, last week's Alghero-based event was about more than the potential 30 points on offer. It was the latest chapter in a thriller of a championship story, and one that is running under two working titles right now: 'Six and counting' or 'The Belgian won'.

It's no exaggeration to describe Rally Italy as potentially career-defining for both. Ogier's coming to the autumn of another season, wondering whether he has the motivation for another season-long campaign. Neuville's drive and determination has never been higher as he nears the ultimate goal. But what was closer to the forefront of both minds was the next six weeks.

Both knew a win would make for a far, far better summer holiday than the alternative.

The top two elevated themselves above and beyond the chasing pack by late afternoon Friday. Even in the rain, the cream, it seems, still rises.

The accepted thinking on gravel rallies is that when it rains being at the front of the field is the best place. Put simply, the moisture binds the stones together to offer better grip for the first cars through. Even when it stopped raining, the heat of the Sardinian summer sun baked a hard crust onto the surface, once again delivering more traction for the first Michels through. Further back, the roads rutted and made muddy puddles.

Other than the top two, Andreas Mikkelsen deserves a mention for Friday morning. His time through SS2 was quite extraordinary. Running fifth on the road, he took 14.2s out of a problem-free Esapekka Lappi, the man directly ahead.

Finally, it looked like the Hyundai driver might be emerging from beneath the cloud – his i20 Coupe WRC was turning in and the rear was holding the line.

Neatness can be a trademark of the Norwegian when the ducks are in a row. They were neatly aligned first time through Tula. Same story through the ensuing Castelsardo test. The margin might have been smaller, but still he eased his way to a 15.5s lead over his nearest rival Neuville.

Another two stages and it was back to Alghero for lunch and a look at the clouds. Mikkelsen was 14s to the good from his team-mate, with Ogier fifth, 23s down and not best pleased.

But first stage out of service and Mikkelsen's gearbox began to give him trouble, locking itself in reverse in the next test. He was out. Those black clouds also returned, but they didn't sit solely over the number four i20. Instead they wrung themselves out over the top of Tula.

Ahead of the start, the drivers had identified Tula as the trickiest of the lot. The first part's not too bad, but then up on top of the mountain among the windmills it becomes a real maze as you pick your way through.

Trouble is, this section has been used so many times there's a chance familiarity could breed contempt.

And then there's the final downhill dash to the finish – extended a bit for this season. Seb Marshall described this as Corsica on gravel. It's corner, corner, short straight, corner.

Except on Friday afternoon, it was Corsica on mud. And the fog had finished any chance of familiarity. Rather unkindly, the service park echoed to Welsh analogies...

The conditions were pretty awful, but Neuville flicked the wipers up a speed, selected stage mode and dived in. 'Diving in' was about right. Used to service the surrounding fields, tractors had rutted the Tula tracks and those ruts were now full of water. The Hyundai skipped and aquaplaned its way through, with its driver knowing full well he was handing something of an advantage to the man behind. In the three minutes between him and Ogier, the rain would gather again, but not to the same extent that he had experienced.

This gravel stage had provided a different kind of poisoned chalice for the championship leader.

Ogier was masterful. The first hint we were onto something special came at split two; six miles down and Ogier

NEUVILLE HOLDS HIS NERVE FOR VICTORY



Even a stage nine wobble could not derail Neuville

was four seconds up. A couple more miles and the margin was 15.5s to Neuville. By stage end, the Belgian was smashed to the tune of 17.5s.

First through, Neuville was away by the time Seb finished, so his reaction to the champ's time was kept between himself and co-driver Nicolas Gilsoul. Next to the stop line and first to react to Ogier's time, the look on Tanak's face was a fair reflection of what had probably gone on inside the i20.

He was stunned. Nobody saw that coming. Not even Ogier. In the fog, the rain and the mist, trying to gauge your own speed is hard enough, let alone thinking about what your rivals could be doing.

"It's the sort of stage where somebody could have told me I'd dropped 20 seconds and I would say: 'Yes, maybe...' It's so hard to know where you are, the visibility was so

tough," said Ogier. "I tried so hard to drive clean, but the grip was changing all the time. I saw some of Thierry's line going wide and going into the bank. I managed to be cleaner than him, no mistakes.

"I watched the onboard for this stage a little bit at lunchtime, Andreas showed this morning that it was possible to make a difference."

It worked. In just under 14 miles Ogier had leap-frogged four cars to go from fifth and 23s down to a 3.5s lead.

The rest of the afternoon was classic Ogier. He built and built the advantage to come back to service in the evening 18.9s ahead.

Neuville, by his own admission, had gone backwards. Backwards to 2015. His approach to Monte Baranta was wild to the point of irresponsible.

Sliding wide on a fast right approaching a tighter left, the rear of the i20 disappeared into the bushes,

reappearing without the rear wing. Unknowingly shorn of downforce, Thierry went harder still, flying spectacularly across a late-in-the-stage jump.

Coming to the finish slightly flustered he talked of fitting a new front-right and left-rear and the way that might have upset the balance.

An hour or so later and looking slightly bashful, he admitted to an alternative possibility. "That was the Thierry of three years ago," he grinned, "maybe it was a bit wild in places. I had driven for three stages with the same tyres and then I had the great idea to cross my two new tyres for the last stage in the loop. It was difficult, the car was undriveable with the diffs spinning."

With the sun coming to make for more consistent conditions through the weekend, it was difficult to see Ogier dropping this one. Neuville



Mikkelsen showed strong pace

'Nothing seemed to go right for Breen' WRC drivers rated, p27

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com



ROUND 08

FACTORY STORY



Neuville boosted his confidence with a victory

STAGE TIMES

- **SS1 Ittiri Arena Show (1.24 miles)**
Fastest Ogier 2m02.7s **Leader**
Ogier **Second** Mikkelsen +0.1s
- **SS2 Tula 1 (13.87 miles)**
Fastest Mikkelsen 18m28.1s
Leader Mikkelsen
Second Ostberg +10.9s
- **SS3 Castelsardo 1 (9.04 miles)**
Fastest Mikkelsen 10m43.3s
Leader Mikkelsen
Second Neuville +15.5s
- **SS4 Tergu-Osilo 1 (8.79 miles)**
Fastest Tanak 8m58.4s **Leader**
Mikkelsen **Second** Tanak +14.2s
- **SS5 Monte Baranta 1 (6.88 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 8m12.8s **Leader**
Mikkelsen **Second** Neuville +14.0s
- **SS6 Tula 2 (13.87 miles)**
Fastest Ogier 19m24.0s **Leader**
Ogier **Second** Mikkelsen +3.5s
- **SS7 Castelsardo 2 (9.04 miles)**
Fastest Suninen 10m34.8s **Leader**
Ogier **Second** Neuville +10.9s
- **SS8 Tergu-Osilo 2 (8.79 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 8m53.5s **Leader**
Ogier **Second** Neuville +10.5s
- **SS9 Monte Baranta 2 (6.88 miles)**
Fastest Latvala 8m07.2s **Leader**
Ogier **Second** Neuville +18.9s
- **SS10 Monte Lerno 1 (13.42 miles)**
Fastest Tanak 7m51.4s **Leader**
Ogier **Second** Neuville +17.7s
- **SS11 Monti di Ala 1 (23.18 miles)**
Fastest Ogier 16m38.9s **Leader**
Ogier **Second** Neuville +19.5s
- **SS12 Coiluna-Loelle 1 (9.29 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 17m59.1s **Leader**
Ogier **Second** Neuville +4.9s
- **SS13 Ittiri Arena (0.87 miles)**
Fastest Lappi 1m29.0s **Leader**
Ogier **Second** Neuville +2.9s
- **SS14 Coiluna-Loelle 2 (9.29 miles)**
Fastest Ogier 7m42.8s **Leader**
Ogier **Second** Neuville +6.8s
- **SS15 Monte Lerno 2 (13.42 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 16m27.3s **Leader**
Ogier **Second** Neuville +4.3s
- **SS16 Monti di Ala 2 (23.18 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 17m49.1s **Leader**
Ogier **Second** Neuville +3.9s
- **SS17 Cala Flumini 1 (8.74 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 8m40.7s **Leader**
Ogier **Second** Neuville +3.1s
- **SS18 Sassari-Argentiera 1 (4.32 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 4m55.4s **Leader**
Ogier **Second** Neuville +1.3s
- **SS19 Cala Flumini 2 (8.74 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 8m28.9s **Leader**
Ogier **Second** Neuville +0.8s
- **SS20 Sassari-Argentiera 2 (Powerstage) (4.32 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 4m52.9s **Leader**
Neuville **Second** Ogier +0.7s

DAVID EVANS

"Are we returning to a penalty culture?"



Enough now. Enough. I'd got so much to write about in this column. These words were supposed to be about M-Sport's Ross Sutherland leading his team in the overnight resurrection of Gaurav Gill's Ford Fiesta R5, which had hit the deck so hard in Monte Baranta it broke the eight-millimetre steel sumpguard into three pieces; a first for a Ford Fiesta R5.

Then there was the whole Sardinia 'should we stay or should we go' debate and the glaringly obvious topic of Citroen's first start without Kris Meeke as an employee.

There was no shortage of opinion on that particular point, but it was Saturday's press release from the French firm that brought the absence of Meeke into sharp focus.

'Mads Ostberg now in contention for fourth place' was the way into the description of a mediocre performance. Never with Meeke onboard would such tedium have landed in inboxes around the world.

But no. I'm not going to be talking about any of that. Instead, we're back on the whole protest-appeal-protest-counter-protest thing.

First it was Hyundai on M-Sport in Mexico, then it was the other way around in Portugal and last Sunday the Cumbrians found themselves back in the stewards' room after an honest mistake on behalf of Julien Ingrassia was dealt with by the letter of the law.

Now, I'm in no way suggesting Hyundai had a hand in directing or encouraging the Rally Italy organisers to take a look at the rulebook before they hauled the defending champions before them, but there's bad blood in the service park right now. As a brief aside, I'm a bit mystified by the stewards' decision which doesn't appear to reveal precisely which rule was broken at the cost of €10,000 (£8,790) and the suspended loss of points. Another brief aside: that wasn't a bad event for the FIA with Hyundai hit with a similar fine for a steering rack and subframe anomaly on Nicolas Ciamin's i20 R5.

The recent penalties have centred on drivers hitting barriers after they'd been told not to. Ingrassia's mistake couldn't be more human. Personally, I don't think he deserved even a wrap over the knuckles. What concerns me is the potential for a movement back towards a penalty-searching culture. Remember the bad old days? Remember Subaru being taken to task for not having mud flaps?

Let's not go there. Then I won't have to go here and I'll be able to talk about other stuff.

While I am here and just before I'm done with this, I'd like to say I found the promotion and parading of Ingrassia's mistake live on television all rather distasteful. Getting the marshal to hold the timecard up in front of the camera and then tweeting a screenshot... really? I am – and always will be – a news man, always ready and willing to dig down and find the story. This one was a bit salacious. In the heat of the second fiercest battle of his entire career, Julien forgot something. Admittedly, it was something quite important. But he forgot something.

And from here on in, the message is quite clear: if one of your rivals drops a timecard, pencil, handkerchief or cough sweet, whatever you do, don't pick it up and return it. Clear case of outside assistance there, my friend.

Nonsense. Stop it.

led 1.4s out of that lead first thing Friday, but when Ogier hit back on first of the morning's two longer stages, the M-Sport driver looked to control. Then came Monte Lerno. Starting 600 metres down the road from finish of the previous test, the stages similar in nature, so more of a game from Ogier could be expected. It was anything but. From the start, he was shipping to Neuville. By the finish, Neuville had slashed into that lead, bringing it to 4.9s. Ogier had no explanation. "Wrong time... lost the rear a little bit..." Right there, on the road north towards the town of Oschiri, Neuville in flight. Momentum moved. If the half of the rally had been all about Ogier's demon Tula 2 time, the second half was all Thierry.

Continued on page 26



Ogier was beaten, but pushed hard to regain his title momentum

NOW TURN OVER TO READ MN'S DRIVER RATINGS

RALLY ITALY



BY DAVID EVANS

RALLY ESSENTIALS

Day one: 78.40 miles; 9 stages

Weather: rain/overcast 16-23 celsius

- Andreas Mikkelsen hits the front with a stunning time through the event's opening gravel test. The Norwegian leads all the way through the morning before he's slowed in SS6 by gearbox issues – a problem which rules him out a stage later.
- Mikkelsen's Hyundai team-mate Thierry Neuville is never far behind the Norwegian, but it's Sebastien Ogier who will rocket from fifth to first after making the most of a soaking wet and muddy re-run Tula test. Neuville is second to Seb on Friday night but will drop more valuable time when he loses the rear wing in the last stage of the day.
- Ott Tanak is the leading Toyota for much of the day, until the Estonian damages the radiator on his Yaris after a heavy landing on the final Friday test. Fourth-placed Teemu Suninen should be the chief beneficiary, but he too fails to finish Monte Baranta after putting his Ford Fiesta WRC off the road.
- Timo Suninen's isn't the only damaged factory Fiesta on Friday. Elfyn Evans has overcooked it into a second-stage corner, hitting the rock face with some lock on breaks the steering arm. Evans fits a replacement steering arm in the stage at a cost of 13 minutes.
- Tanak's team-mates Jari-Matti Latvala and Esapekka Lappi find themselves third and fourth after a pair of largely unremarkable days – just 4.4s separate the Finns ahead of the weekend.
- Unremarkable would be a good way of describing Citroen's day; Mads Ostberg is in fifth place with Craig Breen seventh (Hayden Paddon provides the meat in the French sandwich).

End of day one:

1 Ogier/Ingrassia 1h35m56.9s; 2 Neuville/Gilsoul +18.9s; 3 Latvala/Anttila +37.2s; 4 Lappi/Ferm +41.6s; 5 Ostberg/Eriksen +58.3s; 6 Paddon/Marshall +1m01.5s.

Day two: 90.81 miles; 7 stages

Weather: sunshine 18-25 celsius

- Ogier and Neuville remain out front, comfortably clear of the chasing pack.
- A thrilling Toyota battle is decided in Lappi's favour after Latvala suffers an electrical failure on the way back to Alghero on Saturday night.
- Paddon will start the day with his sights firmly set on Ostberg's fifth place. He catches and passes the Norwegian's C3 in Monte Lerno and moves up to fourth following the J-ML's departure.
- Firmly in no-man's land, Breen stays seventh before moving up to sixth when the fire goes out on the Finnish Yaris. On the plus side, Breen finds positives to talk about in the development of the C3 from the wayward motor it was 12 months ago.

End of day two:

1 Ogier/Ingrassia 3h02m16.9s; 2 Neuville/Gilsoul +3.9s; 3 Lappi/Ferm +54.2s; 4 Paddon/Marshall +2m01.8s; 5 Ostberg/Eriksen +2m03.9s; 6 Breen/Martin +3m13.6s.

Day three: 26.31 miles; 4 stages

Weather: sunny 17-28 celsius

- Neuville takes final-stage thriller from Ogier to win and move further ahead in the championship.
- Lappi cruises through Sunday, missing his running mate while doing enough to stay ahead of fourth-placed Paddon. By the Finn's own admission, he does enjoy the seaside view at the end of the powerstage.
- There's more holding of position for Ostberg and Breen as the Citroens head home an unremarkable fifth and sixth.
- Latvala will recover to take seventh place, while WRC2 winner Jan Kopecky's overall result is boosted by one place after Tanak elects to take a penalty to drop a point, putting his team-mate Lappi ahead of him on the road next time out in Finland.

Continued from page 25

Stalling on the line of a fairly meaningless superspecial cost Ogier another 2.3s. He fought back to win Coiluna, rebuilding the buffer to 6.8s. But that would be his last stage win of the rally.

Neuville had punctured the front-right, the tyre knocked off the rim a couple of miles before the finish. He was furious. And now he'd got no spare for the next two stages. Would he measure his approach? "No!"

Instead, he was sensational, a paragon of controlled aggression. The very antithesis of his panel-beating self 24 hours earlier.

One day, four stages and 3.9s was what stood between Neuville and a third win of the year. His Sunday morning words: "We can do this."

Ogier's: "We're going to push." The prospect of a 19-point deficit mushrooming to 49 points if he made a mistake was certainly not far from the front of Ogier's mind, but he simply struggled to get on the wave Neuville rode so beautifully through Sunday.

The complication of the number one Fiesta leaving the penultimate stop line without Julien Ingrassia's timecard was indicative of the Ogier mindset. He looked and probably felt like a man under siege.

His door remained shut. He had



Ostberg was unremarkable...



Tanak was thwarted by a heavy landing

nothing to say to the world after another Neuville stage win.

All this time, Thierry's grin got wider and wider. He talked of making a couple of mistakes here and there, he couldn't get the car into the ruts, sliding wide on the loose on top instead. Still he smiled.

Leading by 0.8s, Ogier offered a wave to the camera at the start of the powerstage. The impetus was, however, elsewhere.

Or was it? With 1.22 of the 4.32 miles done, Ogier's advantage was 1.5s. Neuville had already stuck his car on two wheels at a left-hander on the descent towards the beach. Was that the beginnings of a sigh of

relief coming out of M-Sport?

Best not speak too early. And it would have been too early. Ogier dropped 0.9s in the next split, then halved the following one. With 990 metres to go, it was Ogier's by six tenths.

Across the line, Neuville had turned that into the joint third-closest win in the history of the WRC: victory by seven-tenths.

Hyundai went bananas. Neuville appeared to standing-jump the roof of his i20, where he and Nicolas Gilsoul turned the moves they'd learned rain dancing a week earlier.

Back at the service park the team hadn't stopped cheering, dancing and throwing each other in the air. Team

principal Michel Nandan paused only to offer four words: "This is the best." He then returned to delirium. It was that sort of result.

"We had to decide at the start of the last stage, what do we do?" said Neuville. "We didn't have the best tyres, but we said we would go for it. We did. There was a small mistake when I came out of the ruts and the car went onto two wheels, but it was OK. This is incredible. What a fight."

Unfortunately, due to Ogier's timecard issue, some then decamped to the stewards' room. But forget that, forget the politics, focus on the best battle since Argentina last year. Neuville won that one as well...

Kopecky sparks title hope

Finally, a breakthrough. Notoriously secretive when it comes to information, Jan Kopecky's third win of the season was enough to persuade the Czech star he's worthy of a tilt at this year's title.

That shot is hard-earned and well deserved – especially on the back of a three-minute win over his Skoda team-mate Ole Christian Veiby.

It was Veiby who made the most of the early running, topping the timesheets until the second run through Tula. The Norwegian damaged the front-right suspension aboard his Fabia R5, dropping him down the order. Worse was to come – he had to disconnect the driveshaft from the front-right wheel to keep what became a three-wheel drive Fabia R5 rolling. Predictably, the time loss was huge and first became eighth.

He battled back to the runner-up spot – his fine driving was helped by a variety of issues for his rivals – but nobody cared at Skoda. The Czech squad departed the season's toughest and roughest roads with a 1-2.

Kopecky was over the moon.

"We had one moment in the ruts," he said. "We nearly rolled, but we got away with it and the weekend was OK. Friday was a difficult, difficult day, we had to make some work on the set-up for Saturday, but then the car really worked."

"This result is fantastic for me and I'm very pleased to say the team will give me the same number of rallies [in WRC2] as Pontus [Tidemand, Skoda team-mate], so we can fight for the championship."

In the more immediate, Kopecky had been expecting a fight with Stephane Lefebvre's Citroen C3 R5.

When Veiby slipped up, it was the Frenchman who made the most of his rival's misfortune.

That news, the story coming out of Versailles between rounds six and seven – you might have heard about it – would have been of significant interest to Lefebvre. Citroen's junior driver is, for many, a shoo-in solution to replace Kris Meeke for the remainder of the season.

What he needed most in Sardinia was a strong result and a maiden WRC2 win for his employer's C3 R5 would provide



Kopecky hopes win can ignite a charge for the WRC2 crown

a compelling case for his return to the World Rally Car.

Unfortunately, hopes of success went south when he retired from the WRC2 lead with suspension damage in Monti di Ala. Privateer Nicolas Ciamin offered some reason for French cheer by placing his C3 R5 on the podium's bottom step.

WRC3 success went to Ford Fiesta R2T driver Jean-Baptiste Franceschi who collected a two-minute win over Taiko Lario's Peugeot. Third in class went to Briton Louise Cook, whose 208 crossed the ramp 26 minutes down on the winner.

Franceschi had driven a masterful event through conditions which, as he pointed out, tested the strength of a World Rally Car, let alone his two-wheel drive Fiesta. Having spent two days avoiding the deepest puddles and the biggest rocks, he almost came unstuck on the final morning when he damaged the steering with two stages to go.

"It was really hard to manage this," he said, "but we got there. We got to the finish and I'm so happy – now I can't wait to go to the next JWRC round, where we will discover Rally Finland."

SUPPORTS

ROUND 08

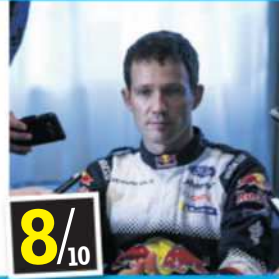
DRIVER ANALYSIS BY DAVID EVANS



SEBASTIEN OGIER

M-SPORT FORD FIESTA

Brilliant, utterly brilliant in the Tula mud on Friday. Bafflingly mediocre on the first run at Monte Lerno a day later; if he'd kept the fire alight at the start of Saturday's Ittiri superspecial he'd have won the event.



ELFYN EVANS

M-SPORT FORD FIESTA

Paid a high price for braking fractionally too late in the first stage proper. Biffing the rock face broke the steering arm, but he won some brownie points for a very rapid repair. A strong run in Finland is needed now.



TEEMU SUNINEN

M-SPORT FORD FIESTA

Superb early in the event, running comfortably in fourth place before sliding off the road in what looked to be a pretty soft shunt. The Finn's very definitely getting there though – Finland can't come soon enough for him.



THIERRY NEUVILLE

HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT HYUNDAI i20

Recovered from some sort of breakdown in stage nine to hit a rich vein of form through the weekend. The Belgian showed himself to be unbeatable as his confidence and speed rose. The drive of a champion? You bet.



ANDREAS MIKKELSEN

HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT HYUNDAI i20

Definitely a 10 for those first couple of stages on Friday morning when the old Andreas was back. Old Andreas? Is that a bit harsh? Maybe. OK, the Andreas that's got a compliant (and working) car beneath him.



HAYDEN PADDON

HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT HYUNDAI i20

Back in the car just 19 days after emerging from hospital with back injuries from a Rally of Portugal crash, this wasn't the most comfortable event for the Kiwi, who drove a solid rally to bring the car home fourth.



MADS OSTBERG

TOTAL ABU DHABI CITROEN C3 WRC

Given his lack of time in the car this season, you could probably argue for a seven for the Norwegian – but the big charge he'd promised never really materialised and he made the same tyre mistake (twice) as Breen.



CRAIG BREEN

TOTAL ABU DHABI CITROEN C3 WRC

Nothing seemed to work for Breen here. Like Paddon, he relished the chance to race down a swept road on Friday, only to find it full of mud and puddles. Called the tyres wrong twice on day one and was then in no-man's land.



JARI-MATTI LATVALA

TOYOTA YARIS WRC

Was going to be a seven until his slightly lame stall on the powerstage. Otherwise he drove well and within himself, courtesy of starting on the back of three zeros. That Saturday night electrical problem was harsh.



ESAPEKKA LAPPI

TOYOTA YARIS WRC

Welcome to the podium. Engaged in fascinating fight with team-mate Latvala for the first two days and was genuinely gutted when the other Finnish Yaris died. Undramatic run to the finish followed.



OTT TANAK

TOYOTA YARIS WRC

For the second event in succession we all held our breath and waited for the return of that epic Rally Argentina pace, but for the second event he was disappointed – this time for nosediving the Yaris on Friday.



JAN KOPECKY

SKODA FABIA R5

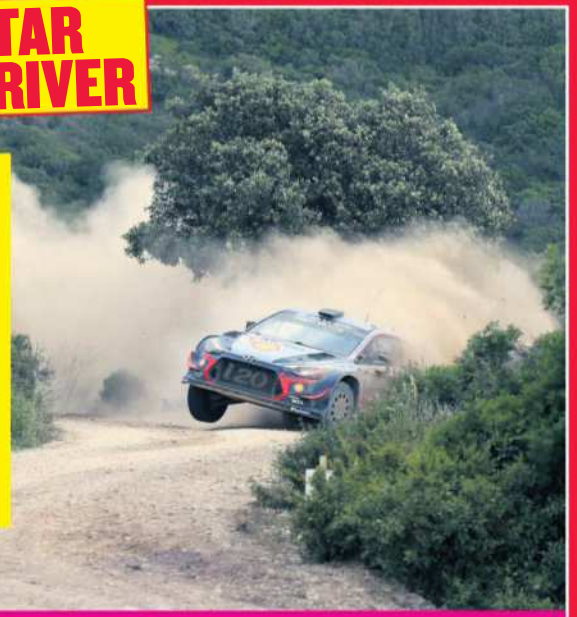
Struggled to get the Skoda working in the wet, but once the sunshine came, he was bang on it. Shame his rivals fell by the wayside, would have been fascinating to see him race them all the way.



MOTORSPORT NEWS STAR DRIVER

THIERRY NEUVILLE

No doubt. The Belgian's weekend will be hard to top this season. Composed and classy, he edged the five-time world champion at the point it mattered most. Rarely has a stage win been so well and worthily celebrated.



MOTORSPORT NEWS WOODEN SPOON



SEBASTIEN OGIER

What the hell was he doing on the first run through Monte Lerno? The hero's hero through Tula the second time on Friday, he was completely lost on what was a much more straightforward stage on Saturday. He paid the price.

RESULTS

FIA World Rally Championship, round 7/13, June 7-10

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Thierry Neuville (BEL)/Nicolas Gilsoul (BEL)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	3h29m18.7s
2	Sebastien Ogier (FRA)/Julien Ingrassia (FRA)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+0.7s
3	Esapekka Lappi (FIN)/Janne Ferm (FIN)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+1m56.3s
4	Hayden Paddon (NZL)/Sebastian Marshall (GBR)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+2m55.2s
5	Mads Ostberg (NOR)/Torstein Eriksen (NOR)	Citroen C3 WRC	+3m10.9s
6	Craig Breen (IRL)/Scott Martin (GBR)	Citroen C3 WRC	+4m31.7s
7	Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN)/Miikka Anttila (FIN)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+11m22.1s
8	Jan Kopecky (CZE)/Pavel Dresler (CZE)	Skoda Fabia R5	+13m14.6s
9	Ott Tanak (EST)/Martin Jarveoja (EST)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+13m18.2s
10	Teemu Suninen (FIN)/Mikko Markkula (FIN)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+15m30.4s
11	Martin Prokop (CZE)/Jan Tomanek (CZE)	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+15m53.4s
14	Elfyn Evans (GBR)/Daniel Barritt (GBR)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+17m56.5s
18	Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR)/Anders Jager (NOR)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+25m48.3s
33	Piano (FRA)/Jean-Francois Pergola (FRA)	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+2h24m36.0s
R	Yazeed Al-Rajhi (KSA)/Michael Orr (GBR)	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	SS15/engine

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

DRIVERS

POS	DRIVERS	PTS
1	Thierry Neuville	149
2	Sebastien Ogier	122
3	Ott Tanak	79
4	Esapekka Lappi	70
5	Dani Sordo	60
6	Andreas Mikkelsen	56
7	Elfyn Evans	46
8	Kris Meeke	43
9	Jari-Matti Latvala	37
10	Craig Breen	34

MANUFACTURERS

POS	TEAMS	PTS
1	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT	212
2	M-Sport Ford WRT	184
3	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT	161
4	Citroen Total	129

JULY 26-29 RALLY FINLAND

NEXT RALLY

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BHRC: CARLISLE STAGES

Photos: Whittle Photographic

ROUND-UP

Anglia pair fly

As usual, Malcolm Rich and Arwel Blainey drove the doors of their Ford Anglia to win class B3 as well as chase the Porsche 911 of Rikki Proffitt and Graham Wild for Category 1. The final margin was 22s after both crews reported clear runs at the head of the field.

Cortina bad luck

The two Lotus Cortinas had bad luck. Bob Bean and Miles Cartwright didn't get to the start of the first stage as engine issues sidelined them. First on the road Paul Mankin and Desmond Bell, fell victim to a Kielder ditch in the long Newcastleton stage.

Class 2 winners

The 1600cc historics also ran at the head of the rally and it was Robin Shuttleworth and Ronnie Roughead (Ford Escort Mk1) who took a clear class C2 win over husband and wife pairing Stuart and Linda Cariss. Shuttleworth battled the Hillman Avenger of Ken Graham/Rory McCann until a detached brake pipe put Graham out on the penultimate stage.

No stopping Carr

After two disastrous non-finishes on the opening two BHRC rounds, Josh Carr and Ben Hall (Ford Escort Mk1) were delighted to finally finish a rally and duly won class C3. However, it was still not a trouble-free run as they lost the brakes half way through the long Newcastleton stage.

Fuelling success

Malcolm and Ronald Mounsey (Talbot Sunbeam) overcame fuel dramas on Friday to get their Sunbeam Lotus to the finish and took class D2 honours in the process. It was a first finish for the recently completed car.

Mighty Manta

David Dobson and Mick Johnson claimed the modern M3 class in their wonderful Opel Manta, running in the two-wheel-drive event alongside the historic rally. With a freshened front end after being pebble-dashed on the Pirelli Rally, the Manta was a real crowd pleaser.

Burton in a ditch

In class M4 for the most powerful non-historic 2WDs, Phil Burton and Mal Capstick set a blistering early pace to go fastest of all through the opening Tommy's Fell stage on Friday evening. Sadly their potent Escort Mk2 went little further and ended its rally in a ditch in stage two, just across the Scottish border in Thwatergill Head.

Hutchinson rapid

Phil Burton's retirement allowed David Hutchinson and Peter Johnson (Escort Mk2) to do a deal on tyres for Saturday as they took Burton's. After going for too soft a compound on Friday, Hutchinson found the fresh rubber worked well and he claimed the class at the expense of Mike Wolff/Mark Twiname (BMW E30). Having no intercom for Newcastleton did not help Wolff's progress.

ROBINSON GETS OVERDUE WIN

Popular driver scores maiden BHRC victory. By Paul Lawrence



Robinson kept it clean in Kielder

After five years of coming close, Matthew Robinson and Sam Collis finally scooped an overall win in the MSA British Historic Rally Championship on the Carlisle Stages.

On an event where dust and the Kielder ditches took no prisoners, Robinson went ahead when overnight leader Ieuan Rowlands slid his BRM-engined Hillman Avenger into a ditch part-way through the 14-mile Newcastleton stage.

"About time," said Robinson. "We've been close so many times, so it makes a change. But the man of the rally was Ieuan Rowlands."

Into a sensational second place went the Pinto-powered Escort Mk2 of Stuart Egglestone and Brian Hodgson.

As the Category 1 cars returned to their rightful place at the head of the field, Rikki Proffitt and Graham Wild won the division in their Porsche 911 and Mark Holmes and Craig Simkiss topped Category 2 with another fine performance in their Escort Mk1.

Three stages on Friday evening made up half of the historic rally and it was Rowlands and Emyr Hall who attacked from the start. On only his second rally in Kielder, and his first taste of the Kershope and Newcastleton block of stages, Rowlands set a fierce pace to take a five-second lead from Paul Barrett/Dai Roberts. Unfortunately, birthday boy Barrett was soon out with an engine fire at the start of the second stage.

As the sun started to set, the dust and midges got even worse and the survivors were glad to make it back to Carlisle at the end of the leg. Robinson responded in

stage two as the route crossed the border into Scotland but Rowlands grabbed another five seconds in the second run of Tommy's Fell to end the day five up.

"We decided to go for it and we didn't have much left over," said Rowlands on Saturday morning after putting the BRM-Avenger project firmly on the map. "The dust was a bit scary and we don't know these stages. The team has told me to go for it today and the 14-miler in Newcastleton will be the decider."

His words were to prove prophetically accurate. After the short test in Florida came the big one and the Avenger did not reach the end of the Newcastleton test. Robinson, meanwhile, set the pace to add to his advantage. "I just tried to be neat and fast, but we had to drive fairly carefully," said Robinson. A safe run through the final Ash Park stage sent Robinson and Collis back to Carlisle for an overdue and well deserved victory.

"It was a shame it didn't go to the end," added Robinson of the battle with Rowlands. But the Avenger will be back stronger than ever and Rowlands's pace next time out on the Red Kite will be a major talking point in 10 days' time.

No less praiseworthy was the class D3-winning second overall for Egglestone and Hodgson. With ever-increasing confidence in the Escort Mk2, the local driver leapt to the head of the BHRC points with a masterful run. "I got my head into gear for the long stage and kept it neat and tidy," said the former British Junior Rally champion.

It was nip and tuck for second between Egglestone and Rudi Lancaster/Guy Weaver and Egglestone's four-second profit in Newcastleton set him up for a margin of just three seconds at the finish. "I'm really pleased with that," said Lancaster after



Egglestone took a strong second

RESULTS

BHRC, Carlisle Stages, round 3/7, Carlisle, June 8/9

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Matthew Robinson/Sam Collis	Ford Escort Mk2	47m55s
2	Stuart Egglestone/Brian Hodgson	Ford Escort Mk2	+42s
3	Rudi Lancaster/Guy Weaver	Ford Escort Mk2	+45s
4	Simon Webster/Jez Rogers	Ford Escort Mk2	+56s
5	Steve Bennett/Osian Owen	Ford Escort Mk2	+1m01s
6	Tim Freeman/Paul Williams	Ford Escort Mk2	+1m33s
7	Ben Friend/Cliffy Simmons	Ford Escort Mk2	+1m52s
8	Mark Holmes/Craig Simkiss	Ford Escort Mk1	+2m03s
9	David Hutchinson/Peter Johnson	Ford Escort Mk2	+2m26s
10	Warren Philliskirk/Mark Casey	Ford Escort Mk1	+2m36s

Class winners: Malcolm Rich/Arwel Blainey (Ford Anglia); Rikki Proffitt/Graham Wild (Porsche 911); Robin Shuttleworth/Ronnie Roughead (Escort Mk1); Josh Carr/Ben Hall (Escort Mk1); Holmes/Simkiss; Malcolm Mounsey/Ronald Mounsey (Talbot Sunbeam); Egglestone/Hodgson; Robinson/Collis; Lancaster/Weaver; David Dobson/Mick Johnson (Opel Manta); Hutchinson/Johnson.

his best result of the season to date.

A few seconds back, another tight contest settled fourth place in favour of Simon Webster/Jez Rogers who had only five seconds in hand over Steve Bennett/Osian Owen. Bennett was a superb second fastest in Newcastleton to claw back 21s, but was still just short of regaining time lost on Friday evening.

"It just didn't click last night but it was much better today," said Bennett.

After rolling out of the Pirelli Rally six weeks earlier, Webster was pleased with fourth. "We ran out of rubber on the long stage and we had fuel vaporisation off the stage starts,

but we've had a good event," he said.

Tim Freeman and Paul Williams were a decent sixth despite losing time to several cars off in Newcastleton, while Ben Friend/Cliffy Simmons led the class chase of Egglestone in seventh overall. An overnight change back to a four-speed 'box set Friend right for Saturday, while Holmes/Simkiss took Category 2 by half a minute from Warren Philliskirk/Mark Casey who were a last-minute pairing after illness struck Philliskirk's planned co-driver. Ahead of Philliskirk in ninth overall was the Escort Mk2 of top non-historic 2WD runners David Hutchinson and Peter Johnson.

RALLY REPORTS

Morrison and MacPherson were forced to battle hard



Photo: John Fife, pro-rally.co.uk

MORRISON HAMMERS TARMACK OPPOSITION

Crail Summer Stages Rally

By John Fife

Organiser: Glenrothes MSC **When:** June 9 **Where:** Crail **Championships:** Scottish Tarmac Championship, Junior 1000 Ecosse **Challenge Stages:** 5 **Starters:** 67

Gordon Morrison and Calum MacPherson won the aptly named Summer Stages Rally at Crail. As thunderstorms swept across other parts of the country, competitors in this latest round of the Scottish Tarmac Championship's only concern was tyre wear in the hot conditions.

Morrison's Subaru Impreza set fastest time on each of the day's five Special Stages, but he had a fight on his hands. Rarely more than two seconds slower on each stage was the Fiesta RX of John Rintoul and Ross Hynd, until

the final stage that is. Morrison confirmed his domination with a final stage time some 17 seconds quicker than Rintoul.

As Morrison's co-driver, MacPherson stated: "I think that was one of the best stage drives of his career," and Rintoul was left wondering: "Where did that come from?"

The battle for third place between the Ford Escort Mk1 of Alan Gardiner and the Mk2 version of Colin Gemmell was resolved in Gardiner's favour by just seven seconds.

In fifth place was slightly puzzled Metro driver, Tom Morris: "I use the same tyres at Crail, year on year, but they just went off!"

Rounding off the top six was the Escort Mk2 of Tom Blackwood although the normally immaculate machine was

looking pretty tattered down the driver's flanks courtesy of some over exuberance at the chicanes.

Third-placed finisher last time out at the Granite Stages, Ian Paterson was an early casualty. His Subaru Impreza snapped a driveshaft just 50 yards into the opening test of the day. Ross Auld missed out too, but was happy with a finish having blown his engine at the previous round, running it in on the road the night before the rally.

The championship now has a new points leader. Class 3 winner Ross McCallum finished eighth overall in his Honda-powered MG Maestro and assumed the overall points lead when Class 1 leader Martyn Douglas suffered a broken gearbox in his VW Polo.

Also failing to capitalise was Class 2 leader Michael Harbour who parked his Citroen C2 on its roof after an argument

with a lorry tyre course marker.

Earlier in the day, the 14-17 year olds participated in the latest round of the Junior 1000 series contested over four stages. Once again, Johnnie Mackay and Lewis Haining scrapped over the lead finishing the day just two seconds apart in the Suzuki Alto driver's favour. Andrew Blackwood finished third, his Citroen C1 losing out on the faster stretches around the old airfield.

Results

1 Gordon Morrison/Calum MacPherson (Subaru Impreza) 46m10s; 2 John Rintoul/Ross Hynd (Ford Fiesta RX) +30s; 3 Alan Gardiner/Robin Nicolson (Ford Escort Mk1); 4 Colin Gemmell/Derek Keir (Escort Mk2); 5 Tom Morris/Colin Harkness (Metro 6R4); 6 Tom Blackwood/Gordon Winning (Escort Mk2); 7 Sean Will/Kieran Will (Mitsubishi Lancer E5); 8 Ross McCallum/James Ralph (MG Maestro); 9 Alan Wallace/Darren Robertson (Lancer E6); 10 Willie Beattie/Steven Beattie (Escort Mk2). **Class winners:** Stephen Bethwaite/Ann Forster (Vauxhall Nova Sport); Donald Cameron/Martin MacCabe (Honda Civic); McCallum/Ralph; Gemmell/Kerr; Morris/Harkness; Johnnie Mackay/Gordon Reid (Suzuki Alto).

Mighty McGarrity takes Mourne win

Mourne Rally

By William Neill

Organiser: Newry and District MC **When:** June 9 **Where:** Newry, County Down **Championship:** Northern Ireland Rally Championship **Starters:** 44 **Stages:** 8

Derek McGarrity and Paddy Robinson led from start to finish to win by over a minute in the Subaru Impreza S14 WRC Darren Gass will use on this weekend's Donegal International Rally.

"The guys in the Ford Escorts drive very fast and it's not ideal to race them with a WRC," said McGarrity after going 5s quicker than Damian Toner/Denver Rafferty on the two-mile Camlough opener. "But we had a job to do."

Toner and Rafferty measured the two-wheel-drive pace and, as at the recent St Angelo Stages, a lone WRC headed the pair - this time by 1m4s.

Third was decided by a mere 0.1s, with Camillus Bradley taking the spot despite being down on power earlier in the day. He closed in on the podium on the last stage, demoting David Armstrong.

John Devlin/John McCarthy made it four Escorts in the top five with his Mk2.

Results

1 Derek McGarrity/Paddy Robinson (Subaru Impreza S14 WRC) 31m33s; 2 Damian Toner/Denver Rafferty (Ford Escort Mk2) +1m4s; 3 Camillus Bradley/Crawford Henderson (Escort Mk2); 4 David Armstrong/Paul Mulholland (Escort Mk2); 5 John Devlin/John McCarthy (Escort Mk2); 6 Paul Britton/John McElhinney (Subaru Impreza N12B); 7 James Lavery/Emmett Sherry (Impreza N12B); 8 James Kennedy/Heather Kennedy (Escort Mk2); 9 Peter Bennett/Arthur Kierans (Mitsubishi Lancer E5); 10 Fintan McGrady/Ray Fitzpatrick (Escort Mk2). **Class winners:** Mark Robinson/James Holland (Honda Civic); Britton/McElhinney; Colin Price/Connor Dunlop (Vauxhall Corsa); Daryl McCann/Cathain Colton (Corsa); Chris Simms/John McCammon (Escort Mk2); Devlin/McCarthy; Toner/Rafferty; Bennett/Kierans; McGarrity/Robinson; Alastair Cochrane/Hannah Johnston (Escort Mk2).

Jasper sees off four-wheel-drive competition for Weeton win

Keith Frecker Memorial Weeton Stages Rally

By Phil James

Organiser: Blackpool South Shore MC & Preston MC **When:** June 10 **Where:** Weeton Camp, nr Blackpool **Championships:** ANWCC; F1000; SD34; Junior 1000 Rally Championship (Juniors only) **Stages:** 10 **Starters:** 57 (43 seniors and 14 juniors).

Once Mark Jasper and Don Whyatt edged their Ford Escort Mk2 into the lead after stage two they were never headed, finishing almost a minute clear of the Mitsubishi Lancer E4 of Darren Meadows and Lauren Hewitt on the Keith Frecker Memorial Stages.

Meadows, who had been quickest through the opening stage, finished a comfortable runner-up after a trio of rivals were forced into retirement. Martin Farrar and Andrew Ward's Subaru Impreza suffered a ball joint failure, Nigel and Tim Hobson's Lancer E9 succumbed to gearbox selector issues and

Andrew Varley and Craig Marshall crashed out in their Escort Cosworth.

David Longfellow and Vaughan Graham claimed the final podium place in their Impreza ahead of the Escort Mk2 of Jack Ives and Dave Read. Julian Hope and Mark Townsend completed the top five in their Lancer E7 after running with the heater on in an attempt to keep the engine temperature down.

Rob Wilson earned the Junior Formula 1000 victory aboard his Peugeot 107.

Results

1 Mark Jasper/Don Whyatt (Ford Escort Mk2) 1hr02m39s; 2 Darren Meadows/Lauren Hewitt (Mitsubishi Lancer E4) +58s; 3 David Longfellow/Vaughan Graham (Subaru Impreza); 4 Jack Ives/Dave Read (Escort Mk2); 5 Julian Hope/Mark Townsend (Lancer E7); 6 Nick Stamper/Charley Sayer-Payne (Impreza); 7 Dave Hornbrook/Phil Hewson (Lancer E4); 8 Gethin Jones/Tomas Williams (Vauxhall Nova); 9 James Swallow/Neil Bye (BMW 328 Compact); 10 Andy Evans/Neville Boulds (Peugeot 205GT). **Class winners:** Robert Kennedy/Catrin Jones (Nissan Micra); Jones/Williams; Evans/Boulds; Ives/Read; Hope/Townsend; Rob Wilson/Martin Hagggett (Peugeot 107).



Escort Mk2 pairing Jasper and Whyatt were strong

ROAD RALLY ROUND-UP

The **Midsummer Rally** at Caerwent started 48 cars, and Jim Munden and co-driver Jon Leigh Tavern won by over a minute.

The second placed Darrian of David Morgan and Richard Suter topped the second stage but, after that, Munden tore away into the distance.

Carl O'Grady was a further minute and a half behind, but was a popular sight on the stages in his Nissan Sunny F2 kitcar.

William Mains and Aled Edwards were the stars of the top 10, taking eighth in their plucky Vauxhall Nova.

Car one Phil Turner was among the retirements with a broken turbo.

In the **Laois Heartlands Mini Stages**, Jonathan Pringle sealed victory by 4.1s over a tight fight for second place.

Jack Newman and Andrew Browne had kept Pringle at arm's length but fell back two spots in the heat of the battle on the penultimate stage. Enda O'Brien moved into the runners-up spot, with Alan Smyth/Mac Kierans third. Smyth set a fastest time earlier in the event, impressing in his Mitsubishi.

Results

Midsummer Caerwent Rally
Organiser: Foresters CC **When:** June 10; **Where:** Caerwent Training Area, Monmouthshire **Championships:** Welsh National Tarmacadarn; Brian Dennis Motorsport Historic Rally Championship; **Stages:** 6 **Starters:** 48.
1 Jim Munden/Jon Leigh Tavern (Subaru Impreza) 1h16m29s; 2 David Morgan/Richard Suter (Darrian T90 GT) +1m08s; 3 Carl O'Grady/Sophie King (Nissan Sunny F2 Kitcar); 4 Thomas Cooper/Ian Davis (Mitsubishi Lancer E5); 5 Kenny Brown/Alan Brown (Lancer E6); 6 Martin Evans/Dan Saunders (Ford Escort Mk2). **Class winners:** Munden/Tavern; Morgan/Suter; O'Grady/King; Mick Jowers/Ben Jowers (Escort); William Mains/Aled Edwards (Vauxhall Nova); David Williams/Hugh Evans (Honda Civic).
Laois Heartlands Mini Stages
Organiser: Laois Motorsport Club **When:** June 10 **Where:** Portlaois, County Laois **Championship:** Midland East **Stages:** 6 **Starters:** 63
1 Jonathan Pringle/Paul Sheridan (Ford Escort Mk2) 50m17.2s; 2 Enda O'Brien/John Butler (Escort Mk2) +4.1s; 3 Alan Smyth/Mac Kierans (Mitsubishi E10); 4 David Condel/George Condel (Escort Mk2); 5 Chris Armstrong/Keith Moriarty (Escort Mk2); 6 Leon Galvin/Ger Foley (Escort Mk2). **Class winners:** Pringle/Sheridan; Smyth/Kierans; Galvin/Foley; Brian O'Keeffe/Sean Hayde (Lancer E9); Eamonn McGuigan/Michael Moran (Escort); Lloyd Hutchinson/Willie Fitzpatrick (Austin Mini Cooper S); John Kelly/Paul Kelly (Peugeot 106); Aaron Martley/Leona Martley (Toyota Corolla Twincam); Paul Manton/Adam Coffey (Citroen DS 3 R3); George Cullen/Thomas Hayes (Escort Mk2); Martin Freestone/Misha Freestone (Escort); Des Lyons/Des Sherlock (Honda Civic EK4); Michael Turnulty/Jay Walker (Peugeot 106 Cup Car); Mark Ashton/Tony Kelly (Civic EK4); Joe Moffitt/Eddie Moffitt (Civic).

WORLD RALLYCROSS: NORWAY

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

KRISTOFFERSSON AVOIDS PITFALLS FOR ANOTHER WIN

Hal Ridge saw the champion miss the chaos in Norway



Serial winner Kristofferson was at it again



Timmy Hansen spun at the start of the final in Hell

The Lankebanen circuit cut into the hillside above the village of Hell has got Petter Solberg written all over it, and not just because it's the home round of the World Rallycross Championship for Norway's most decorated motorsport star.

The undulations, daunting kerbs and high commitment gravel corners provide the kind of environment that should suit the triple FIA world champion down to the ground, but fortune has never favoured the Volkswagen driver in his homeland. To an extent, that formbook changed at the fifth round of the series last weekend as Solber battled his way to a podium finish in third. But, he could do nothing to stop PSRX Volkswagen Sweden team-mate Johan Kristofferson from producing the most dominant performance of his rallycross career so far to win his fourth event of the year and move into an increasingly commanding championship lead.

Following a successful test in Sweden in the week leading into the Norwegian round, Kristofferson claimed to finally be comfortable in Volkswagen Motorsport's Polo R Supercar, quite a statement for a driver who had seen the chequered flag first in three-quarters of the 2018 events prior to the Norwegian stop-off.

Fastest from the opening free practice session on Friday evening, held in damp conditions, Kristofferson overcame starting from fourth on the grid in his first qualifying race to take the lead at Turn 1. From that point on, the Swede didn't see another car's rear bumper for the rest of the weekend.

Fortune was on Kristofferson's side too. Contact to the rear of his Polo Supercar at Turn 1 in Q1 pushed bodywork onto his rear tyre. On another occasion that may have punctured the rubber, but it didn't. Likewise, in the final when Peugeot driver Timmy Hansen was spun across the front of Andreas Bakkerud's Audi S1 and over the vicious first corner kerbs, the 208 Supercar missed the rear

RESULTS
FIA World Rallycross Championship round 5/12
When: June 9/10 Where: Hell, Norway Starters: 84

POS	DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Johan Kristofferson	Volkswagen Polo	3m54.906s
2	Mattias Ekstrom	Audi S1	+0.788s
3	Petter Solberg	Volkswagen Polo	+2.516s
4	Kevin Hansen	Peugeot 208	+3.665s
5	Timmy Hansen	Peugeot 208	+9.302s
6	Andreas Bakkerud	Audi S1	+11.257s

RX2 (6 laps) 1 Guillaume De Ridder 4m13.244s; 2 Oliver Eriksson +0.734s; 3 Henrik Krogstad; 4 Sondre Evjen; 5 Vasily Gryazin; 6 William Nilsson. **Euro RX Super1600 (6 laps)** 1 Jesse Kallio (Renault Twingo) 4m26.254s; 2 Aydar Nuriev (Skoda Fabia) +0.446s; 3 Rokas Baciуска (Audi A1); 4 Artis Baumanis (Skoda Fabia); 5 Gergely Marton (Skoda Fabia); 6 Janno Ligor (Skoda Fabia). **Euro RX TouringCar (6 laps)** 1 Daniel Holten (Ford Fiesta) 4m29.354s; 2 Jan Emil Wilsberg (Citroen DS3) +3.469s; 3 Steve Volders (Ford Fiesta); 4 Fredrik Magnussen (Ford Fiesta); 5 Sivert Svardal (Mazda RX-8); 6 Anders Braten (Ford Fiesta). **World RX Drivers' Championship (after 5/12 rounds):** 1 Kristofferson 135; 2 Loeb 104; 3 Solberg 102; 4 Bakkerud 101; 5 Ekstrom 97; 6 Timmy Hansen 94.

of Kristofferson's machine. The same scenario on another day could have spelt trouble for the reigning champion, but it didn't.

What wasn't luck though was the way in which Kristofferson won the final. Having made it into the semi-finals by the skin of his teeth, a five-second penalty for pushing Solberg at the joker lap entry in Q3 followed by a technical problem that didn't allow him to leave the start line in Q4, Mattias Ekstrom lined up on the second row in the final. He took his joker on the first lap, and with Timmy Hansen and Bakkerud out of the equation, set about hunting down Kristofferson and Solberg up front.

The Swede matched Kristofferson for pace until the end of lap four, when the race leader pulled out a few tenths' buffer so that when he took his own joker on the final tour, he was able to remain in the lead. A lap earlier, Ekstrom's pace had allowed him to pass Solberg for second, at the venue where his EKS team made it's World RX debut in 2014, but he could do little about Kristofferson.

Former MSA Junior Rallycross champion Kevin Hansen equalled his personal-best World RX result in fourth and finished ahead of his older brother Timmy, who had to fight back from the Turn 1 incident where contact with first Ekstrom and then Bakkerud sent his Peugeot into a spin, which ended with a stalled engine and Bakkerud's Audi stuck into the side of his car.

When Hansen finally got going, even with a slow puncture from the

incident, he was able match Kristofferson's lap times, but for the fifth time in as many races he was arguably the least lucky driver in the event. Bakkerud finished sixth.

The only man other than Kristofferson to win a round so far this season, Sebastien Loeb, failed to make the final after his spotter neglected to tell the Frenchman to take his joker in Q3, dropping him to the foot of the session's standings. He could only manage fourth in semi-final one, while Niclas Gronholm again impressed in his father Marcus' GRX team and finished fourth in semi-final two.

Alex Wurz followed in his triple-European Rallycross champion father Franz's footsteps by making his rallycross debut in the MJP Racing Team Austria Ford Fiesta Supercar that Andrew Jordan had raced at Silverstone two weeks earlier, but struggled to get on top of the car on the loose surfaces on the opening day, in part due to only having completed 12 miles of testing pre-event. He improved throughout and will make a further appearance with the team later in the campaign.

The headlines were again reserved for Kristofferson, however. In his maiden world title winning season last year, the successful circuit-racer rewrote the World RX history books, claiming seven wins and 10 podiums. With seven rounds still to run of the 2018 campaign, those history books could be set for another refresh and the next round takes place at the Swede's favourite venue, Holjes.

Comeback class kings win big in Norway

The three supporting categories at the Norwegian World RX round each had a comeback tale to tell come the end of the finals on Sunday afternoon.

Having switched teams for 2018 from JC Raceteknik to OlsbergsMSE, Guillaume De Ridder experienced a torrid pair of opening rounds in the RX2 International Series, twice failing to finish the semi-finals.

But, in Hell, he took the lead of the final when team-mate and race leader Oliver Eriksson took his joker on lap four, then held onto the advantage after he took his own extra route on the final lap to score his first victory in the single-make category.

In Super1600, reigning RX Academy champion Jesse Kallio

fought back from an engine failure in round one and an overheating issue in round two to qualify second in the Intermediate Classification in Norway with a string of second-fastest times.

He then won his semi-final and took a first-lap joker in the final.

He gained a decisive advantage in the main event when the leading trio, all driving Volland Racing machines, took their jokers on the final lap.

It meant he scored his first international rallycross win aboard Set Promotion's Renault Twingo.

Former Supercar racer Daniel Holten won the second round of the TouringCar category, having been spun out of contention at round one in Belgium.



De Ridder (centre) managed to overcome his bad luck to win

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RACING REPORTS

BRANDS HATCH: MSVR BY MARK LIBBETER
JUNE 9/10

Photos: Gary Hawkins

Victory spoils in the headlining NASCAR Whelen Euro Series Elite 1 double-header were shared between France's Frederic Gabillon and Italian Gianmarco Ercoli as thousands of fans descended on Brands Hatch for its sixth American SpeedFest.

Gabillon got the jump on the pack from pole in the opener, but hopes of building up an advantage were promptly slowed due to the intervention of the safety car.

When racing resumed, Alon Day attempted to dive inside third-placed Ercoli. At the same time, former Formula Ford Festival winner Marc Goossens tried to outbrake both as the trio thundered into Paddock Hill. Contact was made, dropping Day down the order and leaving Ercoli's car beached in the gravel. Goossens' role in the incident did not go unnoticed by the officials and after finishing a close second to the victorious Gabillon, the frustrated Belgian was later handed a 30-second penalty. Dutchman Loris Hezemans inherited the runner-up spot ahead of Francesco Sini.

A three-car pile-up marred the start of race two as Stienes Longin was pitched into a spin along Cooper Straight and was collected by Julien Schell, who in turn was hit by Longin's father, Bert. A fire ignited in Schell's car in the aftermath, contributing to a race stoppage. Ercoli led the restarted event from start-to-finish, despite the close attentions of Day. The latter almost made a decisive pass at Graham Hill bend on the final tour, but was forced wide by Ercoli before being pushed back to third by the opportunistic Goossens.

Guillaume Deflandre took a lights-to-flag victory in the opening Elite 2 race, despite driveshaft problems requiring frantic repairs in the pits just seconds before he was due to lead the field onto the starting grid. In the duel for second, Florian Venturi appeared to have timed his move to perfection when he dived inside Felipe Rabello at Clearways on the final lap, but Rabello snatched the position back on the drag to the line. Venturi won race two after forcing his way past Guillaume Dumarey at Druids at half-distance.

AMERICAN DREAM AT BRANDS HATCH



Ercoli leads the NASCAR Whelen Euro field at start

Multiple **Champion of Brands** winner Oliver White added two more wins to his tally in his Medina Sport JL17 in a pair of races where backmarkers played an inadvertent, but crucial, role in the final outcome. White usurped early leader Michael Eastwell in the opener when Eastwell's Spectrum 011C was boxed in by battling traffic at Druids on lap 12 of 18.

A tangle with Nico Gruber's Ray GR dropped Eastwell out of contention in race two, leaving Luke Cooper to take the fight to White. The tussle lasted for much of the race until Cooper's Swift SC16 was baulked by a slower car at Clearways, offering White decisive breathing space.

John Mickel and Steve Whitelegg were at the centre of the drama in the six

Legends races staged. Both drivers won two races each but not without an element of controversy. In Saturday's final, winner Mickel was adjudged to have gained an unfair advantage when he pushed leader Whitelegg wide at Clearways on the last lap. A time penalty for the three-time champion reversed the positions post-race.

Michael Lyons dominated both 'Anglo American' **Formula 5000** contests in his Lola T400. Neil Glover staved off race-long pressure from the Surtees TS11 of Greg Thornton to claim second in race one. Thornton was denied the spot again by Steve Farthing in the second race after Glover's Chevron B37 was sidelined by a split hose.



White (94) won Champion of Brands races

WINNERS

Anglo American Formula 5000s
Race 1: Michael Lyons (Lola T400)
Race 2: Michael Lyons (Lola T400)

Bernie's V8s
Race 1: Darren Dowling (TVR Sagaris)
Race 2: Darren Dowling (TVR Sagaris)
Race 3: Darren Dowling (TVR Sagaris)

Champion of Brands
Race 1: Oliver White (Medina Sport JL17)
Race 2: Oliver White (Medina Sport JL17)

Legends

Saturday

Heat 1: Jack Parker
Heat 2: John Mickel
Final: Steve Whitelegg

Sunday

Heat 1: Miles Rudmon
Heat 2: John Mickel
Final: Steve Whitelegg

NASCAR Whelen Euro Series (Elite 1)
Race 1: Frederic Gabillon (Toyota Camry)
Race 2: Gianmarco Ercoli (Ford Mustang)

NASCAR Whelen Euro Series (Elite 2)
Race 1: Guillaume Deflandre (Chevrolet SS)
Race 2: Florian Venturi (Ford Mustang)

SpeedFest Saloons

Race 1: Alex Sidwell (Holden Commodore)
Race 2: Alex Sidwell (Holden Commodore)

ROCKINGHAM: 750MC BY GRAHAM KEILLOH
JUNE 9/10

CHAMPIONSHIP CHARGE FOR TRAYNOR AFTER MR2 BRACE

Shaun Traynor took both MR2 wins from a controversial Rockingham meeting to reignite his championship chances.

Victory in race one went to Traynor after leader Josh Brooks – under pressure from Traynor – slid off at Deene hairpin on the last lap following a brake pad breakage. Traynor then inherited the race two win after finishing second on the road when first-to-the-flag Paul Cook was disqualified for nudging early leader Brooks into a spin on lap two.

"The handling is what got me where I was today, the power's not quite there," said Traynor.

When asked if this would start a championship tilt for him Traynor replied: "That's what my plan is. I think there could be four or five that could get a charge. Out of

three rounds there's five different drivers who have won; I've been in the championship four years and I've never seen that diversity."

Championship leader Ben Rowe finished 10th in race one after getting "punted off" then but salvaged second place from race two.

Andy Marston/Brett Evans in their BMW E46 M3 took **Roadsports** victory, again after the winner on the road was disqualified – this time Guy Colclough and Stewart Lines for Colclough passing just after an early race safety car period commenced.

Colclough disputed this but did not have evidence due to the memory of his in-car camera being full.

The Colclough/Lines pair's three-hour **Club Enduro** race was also frustrating, with repeated tyre problems causing them to pull out after an hour. Andy Baylie and Luke Schlewitz won in their BMW E46 M3 after the gearbox broke on long-time leader Martin James's Honda Civic with 40 minutes left.

Joe Stables took a clean sweep of three **Bikesports** wins in his Radical SR3. Class B championship leader Stables passed Class A leader Lee Torrie on the final lap of the opener, overtook early leader Phil Cooper at



MR2 wins went to Traynor (27) at Rockingham after problems for his rivals

half distance to win the second race and led lights-to-flag in the third. Torrie took all of the Class A wins.

Patrick Fletcher extended his **Clio 182** championship lead with two wins as well as second place behind Mark Balmer in the opening race of the three.

Fletcher's closest title rival Ryan Polley missed the first race with engine problems, then finished 10th in the second race after starting from the back and ninth in the final race after getting caught up in a late incident triggered by David Hitchin. Other championship contender Jack Kingsbury took two fourth places then slid out in the final race.

Ed Pither rose from the second row to ease to both **750 Formula** wins – his fourth

victory from five this season. In the first race he touched wheels with championship leader Bill Cowley when taking the lead, the latter spinning but not blaming Pither. Cowley recovered to finish third in that race and second in race two.

Mark Inman in a Vauxhall VX220 took both **Armed Forces Race Challenge** victories, the first leading all the way and the second climbing from fourth after running wide at Deene first time through.

Matthew Booth in his MK Indy RR won both **Sport Specials** races from Darren Berris's Westfield V8, his third win from four rounds he's entered this year. Berris got the compensation of winning a special race for Army entries – not part of the Armed Forces Race Challenge series.

Photos: Steve Jones

WINNERS

750 Formula
Race 1: Ed Pither (PRS 1b)
Race 2: Ed Pither (PRS 1b)

Armed Forces Race Challenge
Race 1: Mark Inman (Vauxhall VX220)
Race 2: Mark Inman (Vauxhall VX220)

Armed Forces Race Challenge (BAMA)
Darren Berris (Westfield V8)

Bikesports

Race 1: Joe Stables (Radical SR3)
Race 2: Joe Stables (Radical SR3)
Race 3: Joe Stables (Radical SR3)

Clio 182

Race 1: Mark Balmer
Race 2: Patrick Fletcher
Race 3: Patrick Fletcher

Club Enduro

Andy Baylie/Luke Schlewitz (BMW E46 M3)

Roadsports

Andy Marston/Brett Evans (BMW E46 M3)

Sport Specials

Race 1: Matthew Booth (MK Indy RR)
Race 2: Matthew Booth (MK Indy RR)

Toyota MR2

Race 1: Shaun Traynor
Race 2: Shaun Traynor



Stables took Bikesports hat-trick

BRITISH GT: SILVERSTONE

The Aston Martin pair have entered the title picture. By **Robert Ladbrook**

TF MAKES IT THREE FARMER, THIIM FIGHT BACK FOR VICTORY



RJN Nissan headed the field away

Mark Farmer smiled slyly when he said: “Yeah, our championship pretty much starts now.

Never mind the first two rounds...” Those words came after the first win for himself and team-mate Nicki Thiim earlier this month at Snetterton. If the seeds of the revival were sown in Norfolk, the pair’s title hopes bloomed in Northamptonshire with victory in the Silverstone 500 showpiece.

Farmer and Thiim’s second win from three races – and TF Sport’s third on the trot – was hard earned, after so nearly being lost in the first stint when Farmer found himself facing backwards at Becketts after a thump from Graham Davidson’s Aston Martin Vantage.

“I thought that was it – game over,” said Farmer. “I genuinely thought that had blown our chance. I was fuming. But credit to the team, the strategy still played out and things went our way. What a boost this is to our championship hopes!”

Farmer/Thiim’s car didn’t start the season well, with a litany of issues robbing them of the chance to prove their pace. Those were ironed out by Snetterton, when pole, a win and a podium represented a strong points haul.

Having dominated in Norfolk, the Astons weren’t the fastest marque on the grid this time. All of the Vantages were handed an extra 5kg of ballast. In contrast its biggest title challenger, the Lamborghini Huracan – ballasted to the max last time out – had 15kg taken off, leading to a 20kg swing

toward the Italian cars. However, it didn’t help Barwell in qualifying, as lead drivers Jon Minshaw and Phil Keen struggled with a balance issue eventually traced to a problem with the differential. The understeering Lambo would only start a lowly 13th.

Instead the title of Aston-beater went to the RJN Nissan GT-R of Struan Moore and guest entry Ricardo Sanchez. The GT-R’s biggest weakness is that it has more grunt than grip and can suffer badly from traction issues. But, with Silverstone recently resurfaced, that problem was alleviated by the more abrasive surface.

“Around the high-speed stuff the car is amazing and we can finally drive off the slower corners too,” said Moore after the car took pole ahead of Farmer/Thiim’s combined effort.

Being a silver-graded driver within an

amateur field, it was little surprise that Sanchez bolted away at the start, leaving Farmer to defend from Davidson, Ian Loggie’s Bentley and Richard Neary’s Mercedes.

Davidson started his car on a lighter fuel load than the longer-running Farmer, and caught him before trying to pass into Becketts, only to whack Farmer’s rear and spin him out. That earned Davidson’s car a 10-second stop-go, and an extra stop to replace the steering arm, which put it out of contention.

At that point the sister TF car came into play. Derek Johnston was one of the first GT3 runners to stop, handing over to Marco Sorensen, whose long and swift stint brought the car into play.

When the leading Nissan stopped after the hour-mark, disaster struck. “I pulled away and the seat hadn’t clicked

into place on the runners, so it slid right back when the car moved,” said Moore, who lost significant time to the charging Sorensen, ceded the lead and was then forced into a short stint after admitting: “I could hardly reach the pedals, let alone brake properly!”

Barwell changed the gearbox and differential on the Minshaw/Keen car overnight, and both drivers reported an improvement and raced far better than they qualified. By mid-distance, when the true order emerged, the car was well in play and running second thanks to a great first stint from Keen and trouble for their rivals.

As well as the Nissan’s issues, Loggie/Callum MacLeod’s Bentley lost time after a tangle with a GT4 runner, while Neary/Adam Christodoulou’s Mercedes suffered suspension damage and retired.

ROUND-UP

Linus Lundqvist once again proved the man to beat in **BRDC British F3** at Silverstone, not putting a wheel wrong all weekend and extending his lead in the standings.

The Swede, in his words, had “the perfect Saturday”, taking his first outright pole position and holding off Kush Maini for the duration of the 10-lap race on the Grand Prix layout to claim his fourth win of the year.

He cruised through from 17th on the full-reverse grid second race to sixth by the flag on Sunday, and enjoyed runner-up spot in the final race to hold a 56-point lead over Carlin’s Nicolai Kjaergaard at the halfway stage of the season.

“It’s been a very solid weekend, I’m still really happy with getting my first pole position,” said a delighted Lundqvist.

“It’s always good to have that [points] buffer [in the standings] but there’s still so long to go.

“I can’t start playing safe for the

championship, I still need to win races.”

If Lundqvist left Silverstone the most satisfied British F3 driver, Lanar Racing’s Kush Maini was perhaps the most frustrated. The Indian was pipped to pole by just 0.051s for race one and shadowed Lundqvist throughout but never had enough of a chance to overtake. He was knocked into a spin on the opening lap of race two by Douglas Motorsport’s Jamie Chadwick and recovered to 14th, but had secured a fast enough lap to start from pole in race three. Boggling down off the line allowed fellow front-row starter Tom Gamble to lead into Copse, though, and an attempt to repass the Fortec driver into Maggots and Becketts put Maini on the kerb and he lost another spot to Lundqvist – eventually finishing a frustrated third.

“I came out of Copse in second and I think he underestimated how quick he [Gamble] could go into the corner [Maggots], I was bouncing all over the place [on the kerb],”

said Maini, who sits third in the standings now 97 points adrift of Lundqvist.

“It’s motorsport and it can do that to you [bad results] and there’s still half the championship left but I’m definitely not happy.”

Kjaergaard also had a weekend to forget, scoring two fourth place finishes and a sixth as all four Carlin cars struggled through the high-speed corners.

Double R secured its second win of the weekend courtesy of Pavan Ravishankar, who made the most of the reverse-grid second race to take his maiden British F3 win. The Singaporean put in a faultless drive to beat Carlin’s Sun Yue Yang, while Gamble took third before going on to win the final race of the weekend – a change of engine after race one rectifying a lack of straight-line speed.

A notable absentee from the British F3 grid were any Chris Dittmann Racing cars, as its two drivers – Briton Harry Webb and

Malaysian Chia Wing Hoong – were unable to secure sponsorship to compete.

The high-speed nature of the Silverstone layout lent itself to the other one-make series on show and produced some titanic slipstreaming battles.

Danny Winstanley extended his lead at the top of the **Caterham Seven 420R** standings after winning both races but had to fight all the way for them. Up to 12 cars battled for the lead at one stage in the first race, with multiple overtakes for top spot almost every lap. Winstanley was unable to break away but used his experience to beat Sean Byrne and Jack Brown. In race two, front-row starters Winstanley and Byrne worked together to pull away from the rest of the field and the drag to the line went in favour of Winstanley – but only by the small margin of 0.008s.

A misjudgement when lapping a backmarker on the final lap into Village cost Shane Stoney victory in race one of the **GT5**

Challenge. James Kellett, who’d kept polesitter Stoney honest throughout, pounced up the inside into the right-hander to take the lead and victory.

Stoney made no mistake in the second race, pulling a gap to the gaggle of Ginettas behind to win, while Tom Golding dominated both **G40 Cup** outings which were held in conjunction with the GT5s.

Jordan Collard took his maiden victory in the first **Mini Challenge** race, passing long-time leader Ant Whorton-Eales into Copse with three laps to go.

Only one racing lap was completed in the second race following a delayed start (see *Racing News*) and safety car period to recover several cars from the scenery – most notably front-row starter Jack Davidson, who spun at Becketts.

Rob Smith took his first Mini win this year from Whorton-Eales and Nathan Harrison in the dash to the flag.

Stefan Mackley



Thiim and Farmer (centre) have zeroed in on the points lead



Seb Morris was reunited with Rick Parfitt. They finished in sixth

RESULTS

BRDC British F3 Race 1 (all 10 laps) 1 Linus Lundqvist (Double R); 2 Kush Maini (Lanan) +0.392s; 3 Jordan Cane (Douglas); 4 Clement Novalak (Carlin); 5 Jamie Chadwick (Douglas); 6 Nicolai Kjaergaard (Carlin). Fastest lap Maini 1m56.921s (112.70mph). **Race 2** 1 Pavan Ravishankar (Double R); 2 Sun Yue Yang (Carlin) +3.461s; 3 Tom Gamble (Fortec); 4 Kjaergaard; 5 Tristan Charpentier (Fortec); 6 Lundqvist. FL Gamble 1m56.936s (112.69mph). P Ravishankar. S 17. **Race 3** 1 Gamble; 2 Lundqvist +2.503s; 3 Maini; 4 Kjaergaard; 5 Cane; 6 Novalak. FL Gamble 1m56.845s (112.78mph). P Maini. S 17. **Points (after 12/24 rounds)** 1 Lundqvist 324; 2 Kjaergaard 268; Maini 227; 4 Gamble 203; 5 Cane 159; 6 Krish Mahadik (Double R).

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

Ginetta GT5 Challenge/G40 Cup
Race 1: James Kelleit
Race 2: Shane Stony

Ginetta Racing Drivers' Club
Race 1: James Crawshaw (Ginetta G40)
Race 2: James Crawshaw (Ginetta G40)

Mini Challenge
Race 1: Jordan Collard
Race 2: Rob Smith

With just an hour to go, the fight for glory boiled down to just four cars – and would be decided by the pitstop success penalties each one carried over from the last race. Johnston/Sorensen had to serve an extra 20s stationery on their third and final mandatory stop, which dropped them to fifth, behind the recovering Nissan. Farmer/Thiim had to serve 10s, but Farmer managed to craft enough of a gap over Minshaw in the penultimate stint that Thiim managed to bring the car back into the fray in the lead, just 0.5s ahead of Keen after the two cars pitted together for a pitstop showdown.

Thiim held the lead to the flag as the Lambo came under intense pressure from Adam in the Optimum Aston he shares with Flick Haigh for the final 11 laps.

“Those were the longest 11 laps I think

I’ve ever had,” said an exhausted Keen. “This is a power track and doesn’t suit the Lambo brilliantly. But credit to the team for believing we had a problem with the car and staying up late fixing it.”

One of the stories of the race came from the number one Bentley, where the reigning champions made a surprise return.

After his late call to action (see *Racing News*) Seb Morris slotted back in alongside Rick Parfitt Jr brilliantly.

The car was dumped to the back of the grid after the Sunday morning driver switch, but Parfitt drove a great first hour-long stint to bring it back into contention, despite a spin at Luffield. Morris then jumped straight in and kept pace with the regulars to help the crew to fourth. They were put back to sixth post-race for a yellow flag infringement.



Linus Lunqvist extended his points lead with a win in the opening race



GT4

BMW prevailed again in GT4 ranks

MITCHELL AND SCHJERPEN LUCK IN

Century Motorsport celebrated its second British GT4 win in succession, with Jack Mitchell and Aleksander Schjerpén capitalising on heartbreak for the Equipe Verschuur team of Finlay Hutchison and Daniel McKay.

Hutchison and McKay looked untouchable around the fast sweeps of Silverstone as they found “the perfect balance” in their McLaren 570S GT4 – a car that has notably been difficult to set-up to find the operative tyre window.

But the pair nailed it, taking pole on Saturday and also looking unbeatable for the first two hours on Sunday, and then things took a turn for the worst.

Hutchison admitted to “messing up the start... really, really badly” and slipped back to fourth as the fast-starting Lewis Proctor shot his Tolman McLaren into the lead from seventh on the grid in the first lap.

Undeterred, Hutchison fought back to secure the lead again shortly before handing to McKay, who consolidated the advantage to the best part of 20 seconds. Hutchison then took over again and continued to romp clear. That was until his front-right suspension gave way, robbing the crew of a 35-second lead and a sure victory.

With the long-term leaders out, a frantic battle played out for the podium places. Ben Tuck/Ben Green led the way in the sister Century BMW M4, but slipped back to third after serving their 20-second success penalty after their win last time out.



The Equipe Verschuur crew lost out on a near-certain win

That handed the lead to Mitchell/Schjerpén, who had kept things clean to climb up the order having lost time with a radio glitch early on.

“We did qualifying laps for the best part of two-and-a-half hours, but it feels mega to win,” said Mitchell. “We didn’t have the qualifying pace [they started ninth] but the car was so consistent in the race that we could tick the laps off.”

Jordan Albert brought the McLaren he shares with Proctor home in second, defying its 15-seconds extra in the pits to replicate its result from the last race.

The fight for third was a thriller. Tuck held on gamely on worn tyres

but succumbed to both Matt Nicoll-Jones/Will Moore’s Academy Aston Martin and the HHC Ginetta of Callum Pointon/Patrik Matthiesen in the closing laps.

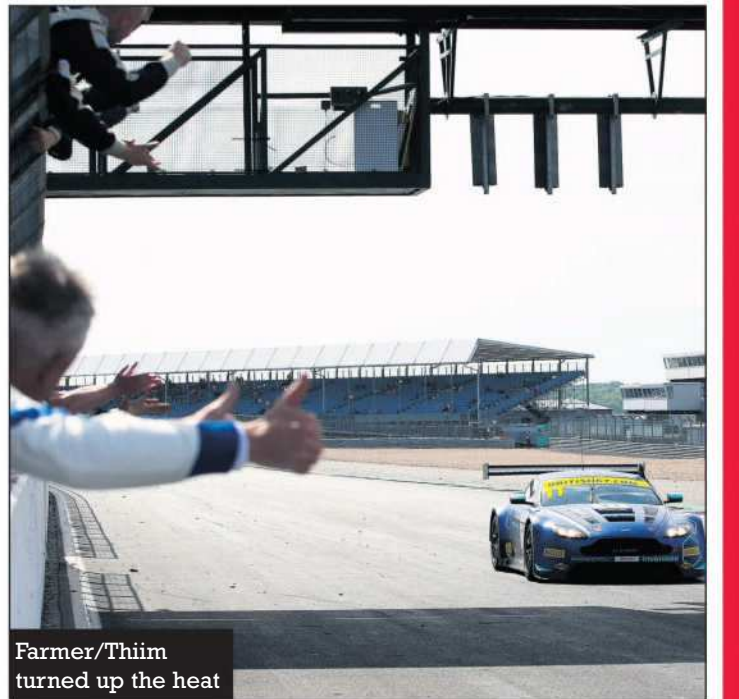
Matthiesen then launched an audacious lunge up the inside of Nicoll-Jones as the pair ran into Woodcote for the last time and got the place on the road, only to have the positions reversed after contact.

Kelvin Fletcher/Martin Plowman recovered from a time penalty for contact with Charlie Fagg’s McLaren to finish sixth and win the Pro-Am division after what Plowman labelled “the best stint of my life” in the RJN Nissan 370Z.

RESULTS

British GT Championship (85 laps) 1 Mark Farmer/Nicki Thiim (TF Sport Aston Martin Vantage); 2 Jon Minshaw/Phil Keen (Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini Huracan) +3.533s; 3 Flick Haigh/Jonny Adam (Optimum Motorsport Aston Martin Vantage); 4 Ricardo Sanchez/Struan Moore (RJN Nissan GT-R NISMO); 5 Derek Johnston/Marco Sorensen (TF Sport Aston Martin Vantage); 6 Rick Parfitt Jr/Seb Morris (Team Parker Racing Bentley Continental). Fastest lap Sorensen 1m59.725s (110.06mph). Pole Sanchez/Moore 3m59.849s (combined time). Starters 14. **Points (After 6/9 rounds)** 1 Minshaw/Keen 101pts; 2 Farmer/Thiim 98.5; 3 Lee Mowle/Yelmer Buurman (ERC Sport Mercedes-AMG) 80; 4 Haigh/Adam 79.5; 5 Johnston/Sorensen 79; 6 Andrew Howard/Darren Turner (Beechdean AMR Aston Martin Vantage) 69.5.

GT4 (77 laps) 1 Aleksander Schjerpén/Jack Mitchell (Century Motorsport BMW M4); 2 Lewis Proctor/Jordan Albert (Tolman Motorsport McLaren 570S) +27.584s; 3 Will Moore/Matt Nicoll-Jones (Academy Motorsport Aston Martin Vantage); 4 Callum Pointon/Patrik Matthiesen (HHC Motorsport Ginetta G55); 5 Ben Tuck/Ben Green (Century BMW M4); 6 Kelvin Fletcher/Martin Plowman (UltraTek Racing Team RJN Nissan 370Z). FL Mitchell 2m12.263s (99.63mph). P Finlay Hutchison/Dan McKay (Equipe Verschuur McLaren 570S) 4m23.258s (combined time). Class winner: Fletcher/Plowman. S 22. **Points:** 1 Pointon/Matthiesen 83.5pts; 2 Moore/Nicoll-Jones 75; 3 Mitchell 71.5; 4 Michael O’Brien/Charlie Fagg (Tolman McLaren 570S) 65; 5 Tuck/Green 63; 6 Proctor/Albert 59.



Farmer/Thiim turned up the heat

RACING REPORTS

MALLORY PARK: 360MRC BY JASON NOBLE

JUNE 10

BARTER PROVIDES CLASSIC RACING AT MALLORY FESTIVAL

The Historic Sports Car Club's pair of 70s Road Sport races was the highlight of Mallory's Classic and Modern Motorsport Festival thanks to two close encounters. Charles Barter won from pole with his Datsun 240Z – but a poor start and traffic left him with work to do first time out.

Barter's very slow getaway from the grid, as a result of being unfamiliar with his new gearbox, handed Mark Leverett the lead in his 1974 Lotus Elan, while Leverett's son, Will, spun off at Gerard's from third and dropped to 19th.

A fine dive on lap six at Gerard's enabled Barter to retake the lead, but he lost it

again at the same spot just three laps later when backmarkers emerged in the way.

But the Dorchester driver used his car's superior speed to lunge late on the brakes through the John Cooper Esses to take a lead he wouldn't relinquish.

Further back, Will Leverett made a strong recovery to seventh.

Leverett Jr then played a starring role in the second race with a superb move through traffic at the Devil's Elbow to pass Jeremy Clark (Lotus Elan S4) before taking second from John Williams (Porsche 911SC) one lap later.

But Leverett's race came undone when an oil leak on track turned into an engine blow up on the Stebbe Straight, parking his car for the afternoon and allowing Barter to win untroubled.

John Davison did well to put his 1963 Lotus Elan S1 on pole among the mighty Morgan +8s for the first of the HSCC's Historic Road Sports encounters but, despite having an excellent start, wasn't able to hold off the +8 pace of Kevin Kivlochan.

It emerged that on the second lap Davison lost drive on the left-rear wheel, prompting a hasty lunch spent replacing it from the Lotus Elan S3 racer of dad Barry. "I was in fourth gear everywhere



Photos: Mick Walker

A new gearbox hampered Barter off the line in race one leaving him with plenty of work to do to claim victory

except second gear in the hairpin," the former Olympic and world championship-level shooter said. "I was very, very pleased to see the finish – when it happened out of Gerard's I didn't think it would make it to the end."

Having cannibalised his father Barry's Elan S3 for parts to start the second race, he made Davison Sr's sacrifice worthwhile with a storming start. Despite the quick getaway, he couldn't make a move on Kivlochan thanks to the Morgan's stronger straight-line speed.

Oulton Park winner Darrell Woods eased his 1953 Staride Mk3 to a straightforward lights-to-flag win in the first of the 500 Owners' Association races, cruising to a comfortable nine-second victory over Mike Fowler.

Woods looked comfortable throughout the second race until a carburetor failure at the end of the penultimate lap forced him to pull off and back into the paddock.

Squabbling for second throughout were the Cooper Mk5s of Richard De La Roche and Fowler – that battle settling in favour of Fowler for the win after Woods' retirement.

Ryan Edmonds may have cruised his Ariel Atom to a 7.2s win in the first Motorsports School Sports Saloon Challenge, but it was Tim Foxlow who provided the heroics to get the second step of the podium in his Ford Escort among the other Atoms.

Foxlow had been dicing with Darren Edmonds throughout, but held on at the end when it counted.

WINNERS

5000A Racing Championship
Race 1: Darrell Woods (Staride Mk3)
Race 2: Mike Fowler (Cooper Mk5)

British Thoroughbreds & Classic Challenge
Kevin Doyle (Jaguar XJ12 Coupe)

HSCC 70s Road Sport Championship
Race 1: Charles Barter (Datsun 240Z)
Race 2: Charles Barter (Datsun 240Z)

HSCC Historic Road Sports Championship
Race 1: Kevin Kivlochan (Morgan +8)
Race 2: Kevin Kivlochan (Morgan +8)

Motorsport School Sports Saloon Challenge
Ryan Edmonds (Ariel Atom)

Motorsport School Sports Saloon Challenge/ British Thoroughbreds & Classic Challenge combined
Darren Edmonds (Ariel Atom)



Woods won 500cc F3 in his Staride

MONDELLO PARK: MEC BY LEO NULTY

JUNE 9/10

Photos: Michael Chester

There was a new challenge for the Mondello Park racers last weekend as the meeting was run in the anti-clockwise direction for the first time in over 20 years.

But the new layout did not stop Michael Cullen taking another Fiesta ST win in the opener, despite a late-race challenge from Darragh McMullen, with reigning champion Dave Maguire in third. On the opening lap of race two, Barry-John McHenry got out of shape while trying to wrest the lead from Graham McDonnell, setting off a chain reaction behind, eliminating Maguire and dropping Cullen well back. McDonnell made no mistakes to take a fine win, with McHenry second and Cullen entertaining with a charge to fourth.

Once early leader Pat McBennett dropped out of the Open Endurance Series' debut Mondello appearance, the SEAT Leon of Eoin and Niall Murray was unchallenged. Rod McGovern gradually tracked down Shane Murphy, annexing second in the final stages, both also SEAT-mounted.

Owen Purcell dominated proceedings in the Fiesta Zetec opener despite a heroic challenge from newbie Colin Murray in the opening laps. In the second race, the top six were reversed but Purcell fought through for the double, with early leader William Kellett shadowing him home.

Gavin Buckley took the honours in the Vee B/C race, once Luke O'Faolain retired with a broken throttle cable, before O'Faolain dominated second time round. In the first final, polesitter Lee Newsome and reigning champion Colm Blackburn battled mightily until Blackburn retired with a few laps to run, handing second to Jimmy Furlong.

At the second time of asking, Newsome stalled on the grid, dropping to the back. Blackburn took the win, but Anthony Cross kept him honest, as Newsome scythed back through the grid to cross the line in fourth, taking fastest lap in the process.

Steve Griffin was the early HRCA leader, until Jackie Cochrane's rumbling Tiger was up to temperature and he blasted by the Modsport Midget.

MONDELLO IN REVERSE GIVES DRIVERS A NEW CHALLENGE



Supercars head away anti-clockwise



Cullen won race one before recovery drive

In race two, it was much of the same, with Michael Doyle third in both contests in his BDG-engined Lotus Elan.

Cameron Fenton dominated the first Irish Supercar race, crossing the line well ahead of John Cardoo and Alan Watkins. In race two, Fenton once again led away, while a run around the outside at Turn 1 sent Charlie Linnane onto the

grass meaning the podium finishers were the same as in race one.

Rob Savage (Honda Integra) took the first Irish Touring Car race on his class return. Eric Carroll drove superbly to climb from fourth and challenged the leader strongly in the latter stages. In race two, Savage once again came out tops, with fellow returnee Gareth

Hayden second and Carroll third.

Series leader Greg Kelly won the first Stryker race by a significant margin with Andy Dalton second and Bill Griffin third. A gearbox problem in qualifying meant Nicole Drought could not take up her front-row spot, but with a new 'box fitted she just made it to the grid for race two. Kelly did the double, with Drought

chasing Griffin down in the closing stages to complete the podium.

David Parks took Formula Sheane race one with apparent ease, multiple champion Brian Hearty next up with Richard Kearney third. Race two was remarkably similar, save for the fact that Kearney was closer to Hearty, with Parks well clear once again.

WINNERS

BOSS Ireland
Race 1: Sylvie Mullins (Dallara)
Race 2: Sylvie Mullins (Dallara)

Fiesta ST
Race 1: Michael Cullen
Race 2: Graham McDonnell

Fiesta Zetec
Race 1: Owen Purcell
Race 2: Owen Purcell

Formula Sheane
Race 1: David Parks
Race 2: David Parks

Formula Vee B/C
Race 1: Gavin Buckley
Race 2: Luke O'Faolain

Formula Vee A
Race 1: Lee Newsome
Race 2: Colm Blackburn

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

Irish Strykers
Race 1: Greg Kelly
Race 2: Greg Kelly

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

Open Endurance Race
Niall Murray/Eoin Murray (SEAT Leon)

SPORTING SCENE

ROUND-UP

Philip Buckle won the **Wyre Forest Car Trial** in a borrowed Citroen Saxo as his new engine still isn't complete.

Neil Mackay pushed Buckle initially but total electrical failure in his ageing Citroen AX after lunch ended his challenge. Similarly, Ray Jacobs' gearbox failure halted him, enabling Buckle to clean up ahead of British champion and class rival Rupert North.

Mark Hoppe took yet another BTRDA Spoon and the MSA bonus point with least errors in the rear-wheel-drive class in second overall with brother-in-law Shawn Franklin coming from behind in the last round of eight hills to win the new-car class with a stunning round. Barrie Parker and Henry Kitching led the class during the day with a huge class battle between all three.

In the rear-wheel-drive class, the leading four were covered by just five points.

John Charles nearly surprised all but for a costly six points just before lunch hindered him to third. Dick Glossop dropped a costly seven during the first round resulting in fourth in class with Steve Courts upholding Imp honours with second in class three behind Hoppe.

Duncan Stephens

Results

Wyre Forest Car Trial

Organiser: Kidderminster Motor Club Where: Wyre Forest, Worcestershire Starters: 23.

1 Philip Buckle (Citroen Saxo) 74 per cent; 2 Mark Hoppe (Dutton Melos) 80.7 per cent; 3 Shawn Franklin (Citroen Saxo); 4 Barrie Parker (Fiat 600); 5 Henry Kitching (Vauxhall Corsa); 6 Rupert North (Rover Mini); 7 Steve Courts (Hillman Imp); 8 John Charles (Liege); 9 Dick Glossop (Liege); 10 Trevor Moffatt (Vauxhall Corsa).

ELECTRIC FUTURE CONFIRMED FOR WRX

FIA rubber stamps switch for 2020 competition

By Hal Ridge

Plans for the World Rallycross Championship to switch to electric cars for 2020 were approved by the World Motor Sport Council at a meeting in the Philippines last week.

Motorsport News first revealed plans of the switch last August. In addition to manufacturer entries, privateers will be eligible to take part, the WMSC having announced that privateer entrants will be able to homologate their own cars using the same common single-make battery and chassis that every constructor in the series will use.

However, instead of using an existing road car body, privateers will design their own body work using a "generic car model" from the FIA. Invitations to tender for the common chassis and battery were issued in February.

Williams Advanced Engineering has been designated battery supplier, while French firm ORECA will develop and

supply the carbon monocoque chassis.

Manufacturers and privateers will install their own powertrain into the four-wheel-drive chassis, based on regulations "derived from those applicable for Formula E cars, with some restrictions aimed at controlling costs and development," said a WMSC statement.

As expected, cars will use a pair of motors, one on each axle, producing 500kW. Entries into the series will be restricted to two-car teams, eligible to compete for drivers' and manufacturers' World Championships.

The "four best results among cars from each manufacturer per event to count towards the Manufacturers' Championship classification," states the WMSC, suggesting a team structure similar to DTM could be used, where a manufacturer runs multiple cars through separate two-car outfits. Privateers will be eligible for a Team Trophy.

The closing date for manufacturers to sign up for the new series is July 30.



STARD has built an electric prototype

NATIONAL HOT RODS

Gomm's final, but it's Wood's points crown

National Hot Rods: Aldershot

By Graham Brown

Organiser: Spedeworth When: June 10 Where: Aldershot Starters: 16.

As has almost become customary the National Hot Rod season came to a finish at Aldershot and with a somewhat depleted entry as only those with something still to vie for at either end of the points table mostly came out to play.

While it was Paul Gomm who raced to a brace of wins, it was Billy Wood who finally saw off the challenge from Chris Haird and lifted the trophy for wrapping up victory in the points championship.

And as is also almost becoming customary, this was another meeting run in hot sunshine on a bone-dry track.

Jason Kew had his beautifully turned out new Ginetta on hand as he tried to assess which of his two cars will be the one which goes to the World Final grid. Carl Waller-Barrett on the other hand, had a seemingly incurable misfire with his still unusual Ford Duratec motor and missed the first race altogether.

It was Gomm who set off in a determined manner from the front row of the grid in heat one but it wasn't long before fellow white graders Lewis Shelley and Colin Hitch were hard after him. The two of them stuck with the leader for a long time, with Shelley following in Gomm's tyre tracks for many laps without being able to make even a half chance appear for himself.

Haird was really the man to watch here. Although still well back in the pack, his constant attempts to pass down the outside (making up places fast was the only way he stood a chance of



Wood (305) took the points honours

thwarting Wood's championship ambitions) were the most entertaining feature of the race, even if all they eventually achieved was to actually lose some positions instead.

Gomm stayed out front from flag to flag, with Shelley still shadowing him at the end, Ivan Grayson eventually rising to third after Hitch was forced out nearing the finish.

The second encounter began much the same way, although this time with Hitch getting away fast into the lead, leaving Shelley to try and fend off Gomm for a bit. But it was Shelley who forged to the front taking Hitch along the inside of the back straight as Gomm also followed him through.

Now it was Shelley's turn to simply sit implacably out front despite Gomm's best efforts to unseat him, but this time it wasn't Hitch who was sticking with them but Danny Smith, who was forging on towards the sharp end. It was still to be Shelley and Gomm who decided the eventual fate of the race though, both men diving into a thorny knot of backmarkers which looked as though it might just give Gomm a last

lap passing shot, but it wasn't to be.

It was no big surprise that Gomm (pole) and Shelley had locked up the front row for the final but by this time, the title race was all over and Wood had done enough to secure victory.

It was Gomm who leapt away on the opening lap, although row two man Danny Smith was stuck to the leader's back bumper like a limpet, giving third man Shelley no chance of pulling off any surprise ambushes, particularly as Wood went past him to set off after the frontrunners.

Wood eventually made his way through to second but never with any real chance to upset Gomm's trouble-free run to win number two.

Results

Heat one: 1 Paul Gomm (Vauxhall Tigra); 2 Lewis Shelley (Vauxhall Tigra); 3 Ivan Grayson (Vauxhall Tigra); 4 Chris Crane (Vauxhall Tigra); 5 Danny Smith (Vauxhall Tigra); 6 Billy Wood (Vauxhall Tigra); 7 Aaron Dew (Ginetta G40R); 8 Jason Kew (Ginetta G40R). Heat two: 1 Shelley; 2 Gomm; 3 D Smith; 4 Colin Hitch (Peugeot 206); 5 Lee Pepper (Peugeot 206cc); 6 Chris Haird (Vauxhall Tigra); 7 Dew; 8 Wood. Final: 1 Gomm; 2 Wood; 3 D Smith; 4 Shelley; 5 Pepper; 6 Haird; 7 Kew; 8 Dew; 9 Colin Smith (Vauxhall Tigra); 10 Paul Frost (Ginetta G40R). Points (after 12/12 rounds): 1 Wood 456; 2 Haird 426; 3 Carl Waller-Barrett (Vauxhall Tigra) 414; 4 Gavin Murray (Vauxhall Tigra) 365; 5 D Smith 332; 6 Dew 326.

BRITISH HILLCLIMB CHAMPIONSHIP

Menzies and Mourant share Loton Park triumphs

A dramatic day for Wallace Menzies, when he topped the times in the first run off and then spun in the second, was followed by a Jason Mourant victory in the second showdown at Loton Park to keep the heat on at the head of the British Hillclimb Championship after the two rounds last weekend.

Only one point covered the two points leaders coming to the event, with Trevor Willis (OMS 28) heading Will Hall in his Force WH-Xtec. Those two were denied a chance to slug it out, though, because technical issues in qualifying left Hall unable to make the latter stages.

That gave Menzies impetus, and he took his Gould GR59 to a faultless fastest time in the opening run. He clocked a 44.15s, which was enough for him to edge out

Willis with Mourant in third spot just a whisker behind.

In the second runs, in the much hotter temperatures of the afternoon, it was Willis who erred. He just caught the grass entering Keeper's Corner and that put him off line entering that section. He spun and narrowly avoided the tyre wall, ending his day.

Mourant took advantage with the fastest time in the second runs, stopping the clocks with a 44.23s outing. He was ahead of Robert Kenrick in his GWR Raptor, while third place went to Dave Uren in his Gould GR55.

Willis now has a seven-point lead over Will Hall, while both Menzies and Mourant share third place with 83 points each. The series moves onto Doune in Stirling, Scotland, in 10 days' time.



Channel Islander Jason Mourant kept the pressure on with a round victory



Menzies was the first to shine with the top time in the opening run-off

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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

MN SAYS...

Mercedes on the back foot for a change

It will be interesting to see how the Silver Arrows bosses react to fresh threat

Looking at the bare statistics, it would have been hard to back against Lewis Hamilton strutting his stuff in Montreal last weekend. He has had so many superb performances at Circuit Gilles Villeneuve that he looked irresistible. How wrong we were.

Toto Wolff has pressed the panic button, describing it as "a sh*t weekend" for the team - even though Valtteri Bottas managed to collect second place behind the Ferrari of Sebastian Vettel. We could be about to see a new side to the team, the outfit which has been the benchmark for so long. Now the pressure is on, and it has been ramped up to such a degree that it is not something that the team has experienced in recent times.

The true identity of teams can be seen in how they react to defeat, and not how they bask in glory when they win. The chips are down for Mercedes now, and how it performs from here on in will be very interesting to see. Lewis Hamilton has hinted that he thinks Ferrari will crack as the season reaches its summit. That might be true but if it doesn't, then the next few months will be very interesting ones for those employed at Merc's Brackley HQ.

Matt James, Editor (Twitter: @MattJMNews)



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

ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!



A Ford GT40 pushing on in testing at Donington Park, photo by Rich Cranston



Ford Escort at Brands, by Peter Atkins



Richard Salisbury's pic from Silverstone



Mark Owens caught Alex Morgan's car



Will Jones captured autograss drama



FF1600s at Brands, by James Styles



Nathan Heathcote, by Richard Salisbury



Neil Kirby was in the right place (Oulton Park) at the right time for this snap



Mike Griffin braved the weather at Harewood Hillclimb recently for this photograph

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TV GUIDE



Get in the mood for Le Mans this weekend with perhaps one of the greatest editions of the event from 1999 with the **Great History of the 24 Hours of Le Mans** series (Thursday, 2200-2300hrs). A plethora of manufacturers in the shape of Mercedes, Toyota, Nissan and BMW competed against each other for the top prize in a race full of drama. Witness Peter Dumbreck survive a terrifying airborne crash aboard his Mercedes while Toyota missed out on another potential maiden win in the endurance race.



BMW was one of the leading brands at Le Mans during 1999

There's action from the fourth round of the **British GT Championship** at Silverstone (Saturday, 2045-2145hrs), as Lee

Mowle and Yelmer Buurman held a slender lead in the GT3 standings ahead of Jon Mishaw and Phil Keen prior to the race. While in GT4, Callum Pointon and Patrik Matthiesen led by just half a point from Michael O'Brien and Charlie Fagg.

And start the week off by travelling to Spa-Francorchamps for the latest round of the **GT Cup Championship** (Monday, 1130-1230hrs) and **LMP3 Cup** (Monday 1230-1300hrs), as the two series combined grids.

TV GUIDE



Mansell took his final F1 win at the Australian GP in 1994

Take a trip down memory lane thanks to **Classic F1** on Sky Sports F1 and relive the 1994 Australian Grand Prix (Wednesday, 2100-2145hrs). The final round of the season, Benetton's Michael Schumacher led Williams' Damon Hill by a point in the standings with the pair infamously colliding. It would also be the final F1 race win for 1992 champion Nigel Mansell.

And the latest round of the **IndyCar Series** comes from the Texas Motor Speedway (Thursday, 1730-1830hrs, BT Sport ESPN), as Will Power continues to hold a small lead over Scott Dixon in the standings.

LIVE TV

World Endurance Championship: Le Mans 24 Hours

- **First qualifying:** Wednesday, 2045-2310hrs, Eurosport 1
- **Second qualifying:** Thursday, 1745-2310hrs, Eurosport 1
- **Warm-up:** Saturday, 0800-0900hrs, Eurosport 1
- **Coverage of all 24 hours** beginning Saturday, 1300hrs, Eurosport 1



Toyota is aiming for its maiden win at the Le Mans 24 Hours

NEXT WEEK

LE MANS 24 HOURS 2018 REPORT

WHO WILL WIN THE GREATEST MOTORSPORT RACE?



LISTINGS



Deutsche Fest returns to Brands Hatch in 2018 for more action

RACING SATURDAY

■ **Oulton Park, Cheshire**
BRSCC meeting: FF1600, Mazda MX-5, Civic Cup **Starts** racing from 1055hrs (qualifying from 0830hrs) **Admission** adult £16, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

■ **Rockingham, Northants**
BARC meeting: Pickups, Clubmans, Junior Saloons, Intermarque, Pre '66 Touring Cars, Pre '83 Group 1 Touring Cars, Pre '93 Touring Cars, Pre '03 Touring Cars, Pre '05 Touring Cars, Blue Oval Saloons, Classic and Historic Thunder Saloons **Starts** racing from 1155hrs (qualifying from 0915hrs) **Admission** £16, under 15 free **Web** rockingham.co.uk **Contact** 0870 1660438

SATURDAY/SUNDAY

■ **Silverstone, Northants**
HSCC International Trophy: Formula 2, Pre-1980 Endurance, Derek Bell Trophy, Classic Formula 3/Classic FF2000, Historic Formula 3, Historic FF1600, Historic Touring Cars, GT and Sports Car Cup **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1335hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1020hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) **Admission** £15, under 15 free **Web** silverstone.co.uk **Contact** 08704 588260

■ **Knockhill, Fife**
KMSC meeting: Northern Sports/Saloons **Starts** Saturday, racing from TBC (qualifying from 0830hrs) Sunday, racing from TBC **Admission** adult £15, under 12 free **Web** knockhill.co.uk **Contact** 01383 723337

SUNDAY

■ **Brands Hatch, Kent**
Deutsche Fest: VW Racing Cup, Production BMW, Racing Saloons, BMW 330/M3 Cup **Starts** racing from 1200hrs (qualifying from 1000hrs) **Admission** adult £16, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

RALLY FRIDAY-SUNDAY

■ **Joule Donegal International Rally**
Starts 1115hrs **Admission** free **Web** donegalrally.ie

SUNDAY

■ **Acorn Travel Midsummer Caerwent**
Starts 0915 **Admission** TBC **Web** forrestersclub.co.uk

SPORTING SCENE SATURDAY

■ **Cowdenbeath, Fife**
BrisCAFI
Starts 1700hrs **Admission** TBC **Web** brisca.com

SUNDAY

■ **Lochgelly, Fife**
BrisCAFI
Starts 1230hrs **Admission** TBC **Web** brisca.com

■ **Blyton, Linc**
BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross
Starts TBC **Admission** TBC **Web** btrda.com

Details correct at time of press but please check before travelling

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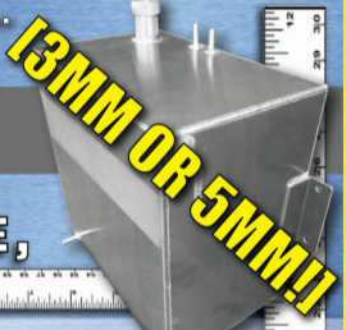
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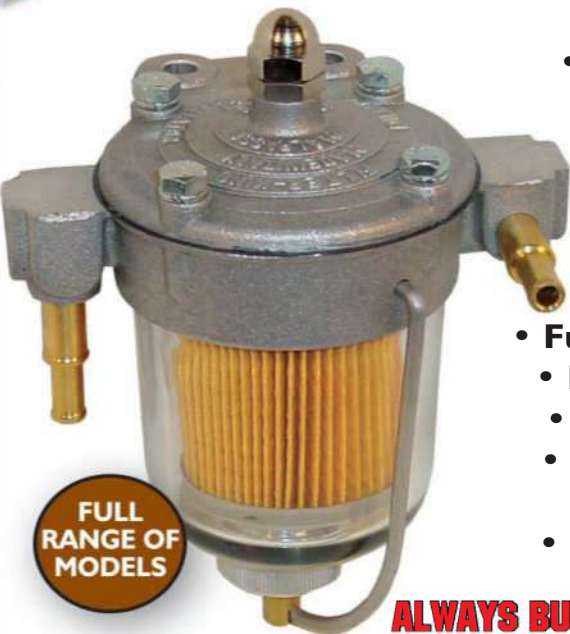
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