

Phil Hill 1927-2008
Tributes to the 1961 world champion



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F1's hottest story

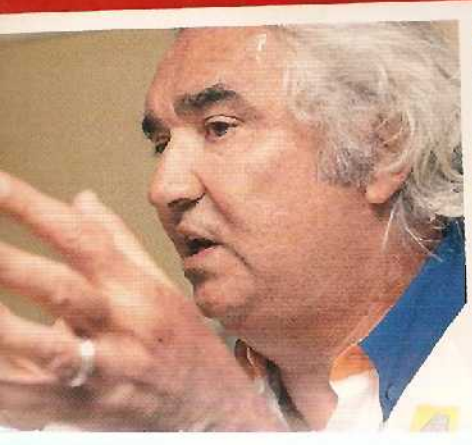
DOES FERRARI NEED ALONSO?

Or would Kubica be a better choice?





BELGIAN GP PREVIEW
Your essential guide to Spa



PLUS
FLAVIO BRIATORE'S CALL TO ARMS
"Everybody must take a step back and make sure F1 has a future"

haymarket



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Model shown is the Passat CC GT V6 FSI 4MOTION 300 PS £31,610 rrp including optional metallic paint (£365) and optional 18-inch
in mpg (litres/100km): urban 18.7 (15.1) – 37.7 (7.5); extra urban 38.7 (7.3) – 58.9 (4.8); combined 28.0 (10.1) – 48.7 (5.8). CO_2 emissions

Das Auto.

'Daytona' alloys (£100). *Adaptive Chassis Control as standard on the GT model. Official fuel consumption for the Passat CC range 153 – 242g/km.

Autosport
THE WORLD'S FASTEST MAGAZINE

ALONSO: WILL HE OR WON'T HE?



THERE'S A fascinating question being asked in the hushed corners of press rooms these days: will Fernando Alonso ever win another grand prix?

No one doubts his ability behind the wheel, it's more a question of whether he'll ever find himself in a car equal to his abilities. In a way, the question could be rephrased as: is Alonso the new Fittipaldi/Villeneuve (Jacques)?

The reason I'm posing this question now is that should he have his dreams fulfilled and bag a Ferrari drive for 2010, then the answer is an emphatic yes (and probably another title or two). But should he miss out on that prize drive, his options look limited, at least in terms of finding a guaranteed race-winner.

While it may be too early to write off Renault's chances of rediscovering its title-winning form of 2005/06, it's obvious that the team has a very long way to go to reach the level of McLaren and Ferrari. Of course, should Robert Kubica pip Alonso to the Ferrari drive, that would create a vacancy at BMW Sauber, but that's a team with just one win to its name, and which operates on a smaller budget than F1's giant two. Elsewhere, Honda, Red Bull or Toyota could potentially put together a competitive package, but this requires the stars aligning in a way they haven't looked like doing so far.

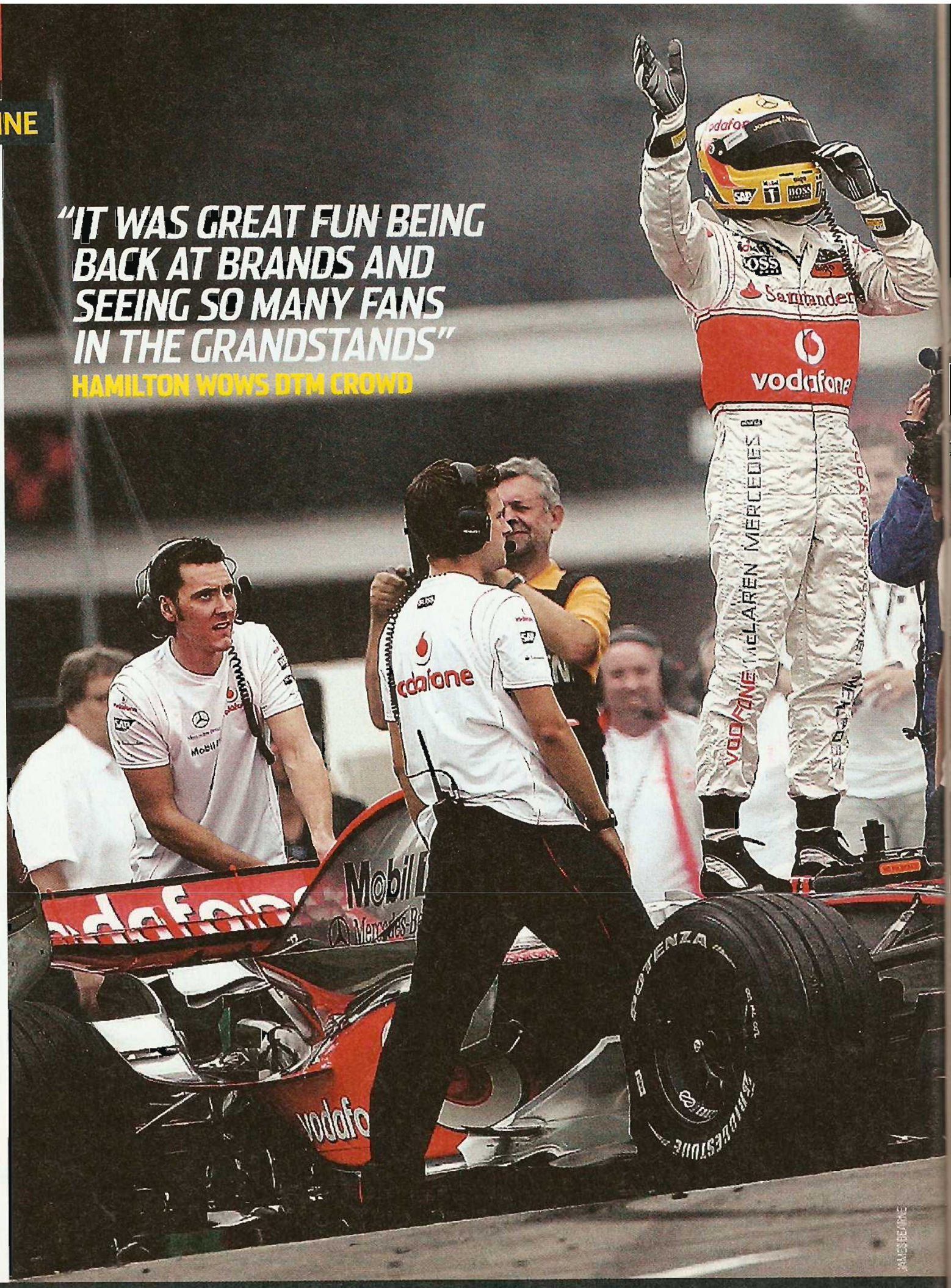
It's because of this that Alonso *needs* that Ferrari drive. But while his speed at the wheel makes him an obvious candidate, the darker side of his character that was exposed at McLaren may come to haunt him. It was by ending the overt political infighting that brought Ferrari its greatest success – would hiring Alonso risk a return to the bad old days?

Without a seat at Ferrari, the answer to the opening question is at best maybe.

ANDREW VAN DE BURGT
EDITOR

"IT WAS GREAT FUN BEING BACK AT BRANDS AND SEEING SO MANY FANS IN THE GRANDSTANDS"

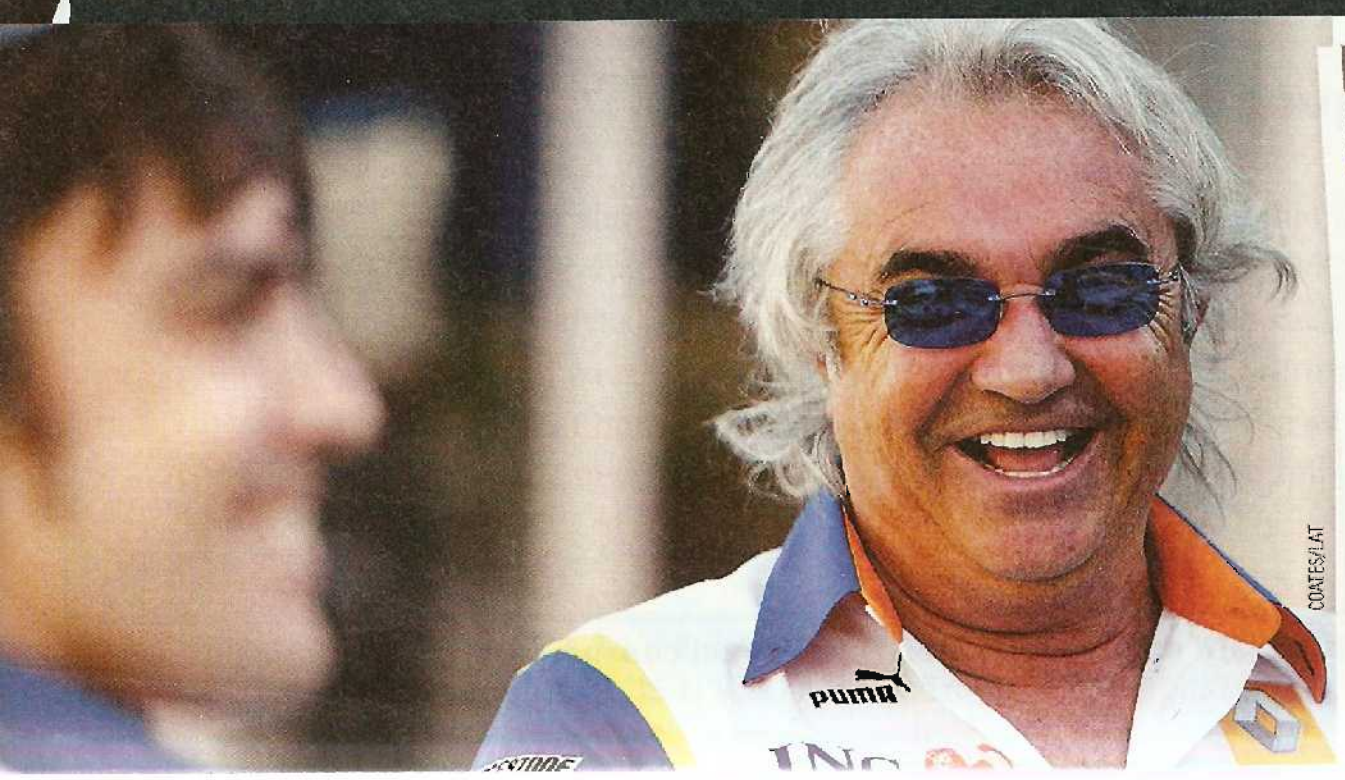
HAMILTON WOWS DTM CROWD



THIS WEEK

30 BRIATORE: LISTEN TO ME
The always outspoken Renault boss explains why Formula 1 must get a grip on finance and entertainment to prevent itself imploding

36 GP GOLD: BELGIAN GP 1968
Forty years ago McLaren scored its maiden world championship grand prix success at Spa, courtesy of founder Bruce McLaren



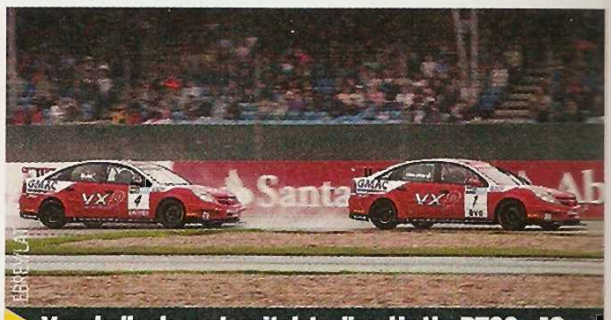


September 4 2008

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VOL 193 NO 10



Vauxhall rules out switch to diesel in the BTCC, p19



Wilson scoops maiden Indycar win in Detroit, p16

NEWS / COMMENT

6 **TOP STORY** Is Alonso the man for Ferrari?

8 **NEWS** Belgian GP preview; Phil Hill tributes; Penske hits out at Indycar officials after lost win; first Superleague races deemed a success; De Ferran and Highcroft to lead Acura LMP1 push; WTCC to look at ballast improvements

22 **SPECIAL STAGE** Is Gronholm ready to unretire?

24 **ON TRACK, ON SCREEN**

26 **LETTERS & STAFF COMMENT**

29 **MARK HUGHES** Remembering '61 champ Phil Hill

76 **SUBSCRIBE** and try six issues of Autosport for just £6

102 **PHOTO FINISH** Jason Plato, British F3 1992

FEATURES / REPORTS

30 **FLAVIO BRIATORE** Renault boss on F1's future

36 **GRAND PRIX GOLD** Belgian GP 1968

42 **WRC NEW ZEALAND** Ford falters, Loeb lucks in

48 **BTCC SILVERSTONE** Giovanardi closes on title

56 **DTM BRANDS HATCH** Scheider cleans up for Audi

60 **EURO F3 BRANDS** Hulkenberg/Mailleux victorious

62 **WTCC OSCHERSLEBEN** BMW does the double

64 **RENAULT 3.5 'RING** Wins for Carbone and Molina

66 **SUPERLEAGUE DONINGTON PARK** Rigon and Garcia take the spoils in first Formula Footie event

68 **INDYCAR DETROIT** Wilson handed maiden win

70 **ALMS DETROIT** First for Montagny/Rossiter Acura

72 **WORLD OF SPORT** NASCAR; Grand-Am; FNippon; Japanese F3; FMaster

AUTOSPORT NATIONAL

91 **NEWS** SEAT Cupra title heads for the courtroom

96 **NATIONAL REPORTS** Silverstone TOCA; Brands Hatch MSVR; Donington Park Superleague/BARC; Croft BARC; Kirkistown 500MRCI; Cadwell Park VSCC; Magny-Cours Masters

FOR AUTOSPORT STAFF CONTACT DETAILS PLEASE SEE PAGE 26



42 **WRC NEW ZEALAND**
Hirvonen and Latvala had a Ford one-two in the bag —until it all went wrong

56 **DTM BRANDS HATCH**
No, Hamilton and McLaren didn't race—it was just a demo. And the crowd loved it!



IS ALONSO RIGH

Fernando Alonso been linked with a switch to the Scuderia ever since his relationship with McLaren broke down, but the questions of whether the team really needs a new driver and who it should be are still to be answered.

Although it seems certain that Kimi Raikkonen will stay on for 2009, there is a strong possibility that there will be a seat available in 2010, whether the Finn wants to continue racing or not. But with Robert Kubica also out of contract at the end of next year, the Spaniard isn't the only top-liner on the market. EDD STRAW asks if Alonso is the man for Ferrari...

YES

REVITALISING FORCE

With Raikkonen under pressure after his recent run of lacklustre performances – he's been on the podium only twice in the eight races since his Spanish Grand Prix victory – Ferrari needs a focused driver with a proven record of leading a team. Alonso, who took Renault to back-to-back titles in 2005 and '06, is the only driver out there who has done that successfully over a long period of time.

"Fernando Alonso is a forceful personality and Ferrari needs someone like that," 1996 world champion Damon Hill told Autosport. "Massa's good, but Kimi seems to be undecided and that's mystifying. It's not motivating for the team to have someone who's inconsistent like that. I'd like to see Alonso in a Ferrari – he's a very dynamic, fighting driver and a team likes to have a driver who's giving it his best shot."

STARVED OF SUCCESS EQUALS HUNGER

If Alonso joins Ferrari in 2010, or even in 2009 in the unlikely event that Raikkonen opts to retire imminently, he will do so as a driver who hasn't had a winning grand prix car in some time. That could make him doubly determined to make the most of being team leader in the most successful team in the history of the Formula 1 world championship.

"I failed to win at McLaren and this year there is no possibility of victory, but that is only two years," said Alonso a month ago. "Hopefully next year I will be a title contender again. I have plenty of time and my ambition is to win more world championships."

RAIKKONEN'S HEIR

Massa's superb form has led Ferrari to admit that it could start favouring him for the title battle, if Raikkonen doesn't start firing on all cylinders. But despite this there is a feeling within the team that it needs a new star. As the only other active driver with a world title to his name, Alonso is the obvious successor.

"It's a little bit early to be thinking about hanging up your helmet," said Hill of Raikkonen. "But I hear all those comments about him not being sure about carrying on. You can't do that to a team. I was 39 in my last year and Kimi is 28! It's possible for him to turn it around. It's a very demanding profession. You need to feel that it's what you want to be doing more than anything else. If there's something else, maybe you should go away for a year and think about it. But it's very difficult to come back and still be sharp."

NO

FADED GLORY

Some believe that, if Alonso stays with Renault until the end of 2009, his spending two years in uncompetitive cars will blunt his ability to run at the front when he returns to a top team.

"The big mistake with this kind of thinking is that things are changing quickly," three-time world champion Niki Lauda told Autosport. "Even a top driver, if you are not in a competitive car, won't do himself any good. Sure, Alonso is the best today, handicapped by a Renault that cannot win races. But you can't live off your past forever. You can really get caught out.

"Alonso is doing a good job for himself, but he's not going to be keeping his money and image up. Whenever the decision is taken, Ferrari will evaluate Alonso with all the other drivers that are available."

POLITICAL ANIMAL

The effect that Alonso's turbulent and ultimately doomed spell with McLaren in 2007 has on his market value cannot be underestimated, as Ferrari is a team that has thrived on creating a relatively happy ship.

Michael Schumacher always gelled with his lieutenants – Eddie Irvine, Rubens Barrichello and Felipe Massa. Now Massa and Kimi Raikkonen also have a good relationship. Alonso's track record of criticising his team – at both McLaren and Renault – could count against him, as could his potential concern at having the ever-more-accomplished Massa as his team-mate.

HE'S NOT THE ONLY ONE

Alonso is not the only driver on Ferrari's radar. The team is known to be keen on BMW Sauber's Robert Kubica, who has proved to be quick, consistent and a genuine team leader this season. What's more, the Pole has refused to sign for BMW Sauber beyond the end of next season – is he keeping his Ferrari options open? – and he's not the only young driver whose stock is rising rapidly.

"What happens if Sebastian Vettel in the Toro Rosso performs from now like he did in Valencia?" said Lauda. "Then, if I was Ferrari, I would take Vettel. For example, there is Kubica too. This is the competition that drivers have. And don't underestimate the numbers – if you compare an Alonso salary with a Vettel salary, if they both do the same job who would you take? That's what a team manager will think about."



AP PHOTO/PAUL WHITE

T FOR FERRARI?

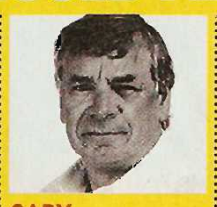
PUNDITS' CORNER

WHO SHOULD FERRARI CHOOSE FOR 2010?



ANDREW VAN DE BURGT
Autosport editor

ALONSO & MASSA
Question marks about his behaviour, but Alonso is still the best all-round driver. Massa is perfect number two and knows the team inside out



GARY ANDERSON
Technical editor

KUBICA & MASSA
Kubica outdrives his equipment and can deliver the title. Massa keeps getting better and offers continuity. But I'd be looking at Vettel for 2011



TONY DODGINS
GP consultant editor

KUBICA & WEBBER
Kubica has speed and desire of someone who hasn't yet done it. And if Webber trumps Vettel at Red Bull I'd want him in a title-contending car



EDD STRAW
F1 editor

ALONSO & MASSA
Nothing to chose between Alonso and Kubica, but Ferrari needs someone who has been there and done it. Massa offers continuity



MARK GLENDENNING
Deputy F1 editor

KUBICA & MASSA
Kubica's quick, psychologically bombproof and rarely has off days, while Massa and engineer Rob Smedley click perfectly



JONATHAN NOBLE
Group F1 editor

KUBICA & MASSA
Supremely fast Kubica gives 100 percent, with no political baggage. Two number ones won't work, so Massa gets the nod

WHAT ALONSO WOULD BRING TO FERRARI

Age: 27
Formula 1 world champion 2005 & 2006

STARTS	115
WINS	19
POLES	17
FASTEST LAPS	11
POINTS	508



Does that envelope have a 2010 contract in it?

BELGIUM PREVIEW

Edited by GLENN FREEMAN



QUICK NICK ON TOP

BMW SAUBER'S Nick Heidfeld topped last week's Monza test as the Formula 1 teams spent three days fine-tuning their low-downforce set-ups for the Italian Grand Prix next weekend.

Both Heidfeld and Robert Kubica have hinted that Italy is the team's best chance of taking the fight to Ferrari and McLaren in the second half of the season

BMW Sauber technical director Willy Rampf told Autosport: "The Monza package is a low-downforce because you need the speed. But this includes not only the front and rear wing – this includes about 15 parts in total on the aerodynamic side.

"We have gone well at Monza in the past and hopefully it will be the same this year."

Nico Rosberg set the second fastest time for Williams, while Lewis Hamilton was third fastest after topping day three of the test.

The next test will be held at Jerez on September 17-19, with Scuderia Toro Rosso confirming that both Takuma Sato and Sebastien Buemi will test for the team as an evaluation for 2009 as revealed in Autosport last week.

● Toyota team manager Richard Cregan is to leave the team at the end of the season. Cregan, who is leaving to pursue an as-yet undisclosed role elsewhere in motorsport, joined Toyota 24 years ago as a rally team mechanic. He will be replaced by engine specialist Jens Marquardt.

MONZA FORMULA 1 TEST, AUGUST 27-29

	Driver	Car	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
1	Nick HEIDFELD	BMW Sauber F1.08	1m24.075s	**1m22.621s**	-
2	Nico ROSBERG	Williams-Toyota FW30	1m23.461s	**1m22.879s**	-
3	Lewis HAMILTON	McLaren-Mercedes MP4-23	-	-	**1m22.967s**
4	Heikki KOVALAINEN	McLaren-Mercedes MP4-23	1m23.439s	**1m23.341s**	-
5	Kimi RAIKKONEN	Ferrari F2008	-	-	**1m23.371s**
6	Sebastian VETTEL	Toro Rosso-Ferrari STR3	1m23.691s	**1m23.424s**	-
7	Felipe MASSA	Ferrari F2008	**1m23.428s**	1m23.445s	-
8	Fernando ALONSO	Renault R28	-	**1m23.606s**	1m23.820s
9	Giancarlo FISICHELLA	Force India-Ferrari VJM01	-	-	**1m23.632s**
10	Kazuki NAKAJIMA	Williams-Toyota FW30	-	-	**1m23.634s**
11	David COULTHARD	Red Bull-Renault RB4	-	-	**1m23.737s**
12	Rubens BARRICHELLO	Honda RA108	**1m23.827s**	1m24.695s	-
13	Adrian SUTIL	Force India-Ferrari VJM01	-	**1m23.828s**	-
14	Sebastien BOURDAIS	Toro Rosso-Ferrari STR3	-	1m24.311s	**1m23.865s**
15	Timo GLOCK	Toyota TF108	-	-	**1m23.897s**
16	Mark WEBBER	Red Bull-Renault RB4	1m24.005s	**1m23.936s**	-
17	Robert KUBICA	BMW Sauber F1.08	-	-	**1m24.089s**
18	Jarno TRULLI	Toyota TF108	1m24.510s	**1m24.158s**	-
19	Vitantonio LIUZZI	Force India-Ferrari VJM01	**1m24.239s**	-	
20	Jenson BUTTON	Honda RA108	-	1m25.058s	**1m24.321s**
21	Nelson PIQUET	Renault R28	**1m24.546s**	-	-

EAU ROUGE: STILL F1'S ULTIMATE TEST

EAU ROUGE is the trademark corner of Spa – and arguably the most recognisable in Formula 1 – and it still remains a favourite with the drivers despite it being considered little more than a straight in contemporary terms.

Since it was created in 1939 to increase the average speed of the track in place of the previous slow left-right-left complex, Eau Rouge has largely remained unchanged, despite the increased run-off.

Honda's Rubens Barrichello, who has raced in F1 at Spa since 1993, told Autosport: "It's easy to go through flat, but it's still a fantastic corner – it's about the feel and the compression. But the cars with V8 power are much slower and it's now easier to go flat."

Grand Prix Drivers' Association director Mark Webber believes that the safety improvements do not spoil the corner.

He said: "It's still a corner that we massively respect.

"We like the adrenalin and the danger, that's why we drive these cars, but we should never move barriers back in to make it more dangerous because no-one likes to see guys airlifted to hospital.

"It's a great thing to take an F1 car through there even if the challenge is not what it used to be with V10s."

The most obvious change made to the corner over the years came in 1994 in the wake of the fatal accidents of Roland Ratzenberger and Ayrton Senna. For that year, a second-gear chicane was added at the bottom of Eau Rouge. And it was universally hated by the drivers and scrapped for the 1995 race.

Barrichello, who claimed his maiden F1 pole that weekend for Jordan, said: "That was pure frustration! There was no pleasure in that chicane. The sensation was horrible."



It may be "easy flat", but Eau Rouge is still exhilarating in F1

THE BIG QUESTIONS

The talking points ahead of this weekend's Belgian GP



XPBCC

Heidfeld set the quickest time in the Monza F1 test



Ferrari finished first and second at Spa last year

RACE ODDS

Lewis Hamilton	Evens	Sebastian Vettel	125/1
Kimi Raikkonen	2/1	Nico Rosberg	125/1
Felipe Massa	2/1	Nelson Piquet	150/1
Heikki Kovalainen	12/1	Sebastien Bourdais	200/1
Robert Kubica	16/1	Kazuki Nakajima	200/1
Nick Heidfeld	33/1	Jenson Button	200/1
Fernando Alonso	33/1	David Coulthard	200/1
Timo Glock	66/1	Rubens Barrichello	250/1
Jarno Trulli	66/1	Giancarlo Fisichella	500/1
Mark Webber	100/1	Adrian Sutil	500/1

KIMI RAIKKONEN has won at Spa three times in four years, last year from pole, so is a good bet for a win. If there's anywhere the Finn is going to return to form it's here, so perhaps even a win/pole double is on?

ODDS SUPPLIED BY WILLIAM HILL

TV, WEB AND RADIO

FRI SEPTEMBER 5
0855-1035 Free practice 1 (FIVE LIVE SPORTS EXTRA) LIVE
1255-1435 Free practice 2 (FIVE LIVE SPORTS EXTRA) LIVE

SAT SEPTEMBER 6
0955-1105 Free practice 3 (FIVE LIVE SPORTS EXTRA) LIVE
1210-1435 F1 qualifying (ITV1) LIVE
1255-1430 F1 qualifying (FIVE LIVE SPORTS EXTRA) LIVE

SUN SEPTEMBER 7
1030-1200 Qualifying replay (ITV4)
1200-1500 Belgian Grand Prix (ITV1) LIVE
1255-1430 Belgian Grand Prix (BBC RADIO FIVE LIVE) LIVE
2215-2315 Belgian Grand Prix highlights (ITV1)

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Keep up to date with all the latest news from Spa on the Autosport website



MARK HUGHES
GRAND PRIX EDITOR



GARY ANDERSON
TECHNICAL CONSULTANT

Will Ferrari dominate again as it did in 2007?

The Ferrari's high-speed aero is probably still slightly better than the McLaren's, but if Spa doesn't give the temperatures to get the red cars' tyres working, then the team could still struggle during qualifying.

McLaren has closed the gap on this type of circuit but has it closed it enough? Ferrari, and especially Felipe Massa, will have the upper hand after his pole and victory in Valencia and he'll be out to repeat it.

Is Spa the last chance for Kimi to reignite his title challenge?

Realistically, yes. But Kimi's form has been wildly inconsistent and even if he won, there'd still be real doubts about maintaining that performance. There's a growing feeling that Massa is their man.

It might also be his last chance to reignite his F1 career. Ferrari cannot watch the man it brought in to replace Michael Schumacher self destruct and become a midfield driver.

Will STR be even stronger at a track that should suit its car?

Yes. Its car is a bit weak on traction but that's not a big deal here. It should get good payback for efficient aero and plenty of grunt. Vettel should be able to cause quite a stir. Monza should be even better.

The car should suit Spa better than it did Valencia, which bodes well. The engineers have really got a handle on the car so the team should come away with a decent points haul.

What kind of set-up does the track require?

High-speed aero performance but not at the expense of straightline speed. There needs to be plenty of compliance for the Bus Stop and Les Combes, so it's a tricky compromise.

Good high-speed aerodynamic stability for the faster corners but not maximum downforce as there are two long straights. The low-speed sections require decent mechanical grip.

Is Spa still the great driving challenge that it once was?

It's a mighty challenge, even though the run-off at Eau Rouge was increased a few years ago. The middle sector with its fast downhill, blind exit bends is pure adrenalin and big balls – and hugely demanding of the car. It's still a majestic place.

Any track with high-speed corners is challenging and Spa typifies this with Eau Rouge and Blanchimont. Looking at Eau Rouge coming down the hill from La Source you can't even see the exit – so you need big balls and total commitment.

BELGIUM PREVIEW

CIRCUIT GUIDE



By Sebastien Bourdais
Scuderia Toro Rosso

"To me, Spa is the most beautiful track in Europe, if not the world. It's such a big part of the season, and to put a lap together there you need to be a real complete driver, because it's got pretty much everything – fast corners, slow corners, blind corners, chicanes, and a lot of elevation changes. And it is a very, very long track, too. So you need a bit of everything to put together a good qualifying lap around there."

SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS

Lap length	4.352 miles
Number of laps	44
Lap record: Kimi Raikkonen, McLaren 2004	1m45.108s

LES COMBES

Key Corner: POUHON

"For me, in terms of excitement and the feeling in the car, the best part of the track is Pouhon. It's one of those corners that is close to being flat, but it's definitely not. Last year when I tried the car it was bloody impressive so you can imagine what it will be like on low fuel. People will approach it differently – some guys will be flat but do a little touch on the brakes to stabilise the car, but it all depends what kind of balance you have. But it's a very ballsy moment of the track."

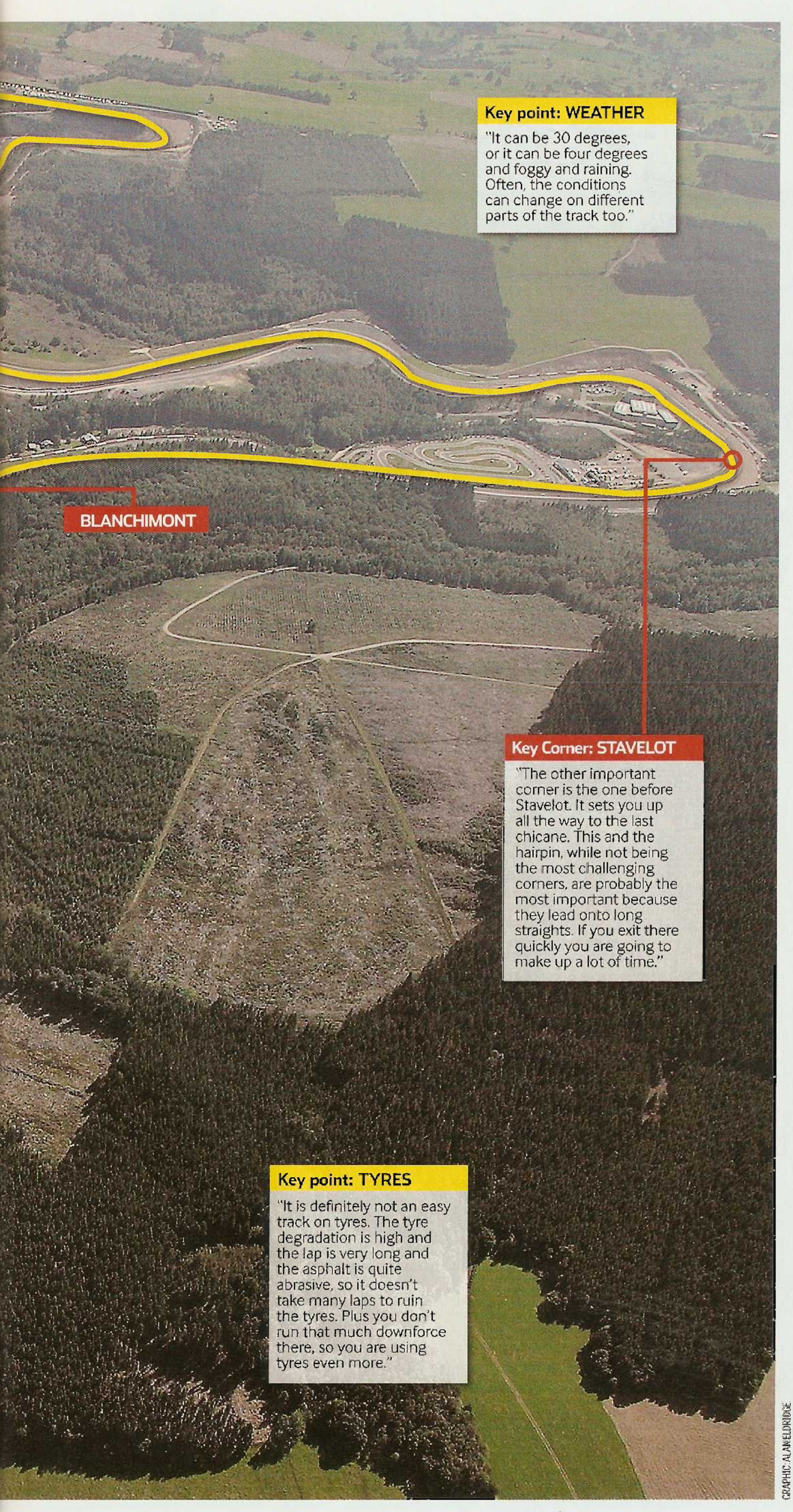
EAU ROUGE

PIT LANE

START/ FINISH

Key Corner: LA SOURCE

"That hairpin makes a big difference, especially because Eau Rouge is flat now. You are going to carry the speed that you exit that hairpin with all the way to the upper chicane, which is a hell of a long time. If you get that one right it's the start of a pretty good lap."



Key point: WEATHER

"It can be 30 degrees, or it can be four degrees and foggy and raining. Often, the conditions can change on different parts of the track too."

Key Corner: STAVELOT

"The other important corner is the one before Stavelot. It sets you up all the way to the last chicane. This and the hairpin, while not being the most challenging corners, are probably the most important because they lead onto long straights. If you exit there quickly you are going to make up a lot of time."

Key point: TYRES

"It is definitely not an easy track on tyres. The tyre degradation is high and the lap is very long and the asphalt is quite abrasive, so it doesn't take many laps to ruin the tyres. Plus you don't run that much downforce there, so you are using tyres even more."

GRAPHIC: ALAN ELDRIDGE

BELGIAN GP RECENT RESULTS

2007

POS	DRIVER	TEAM
1st	Kimi Raikkonen	Ferrari
2nd	Felipe Massa	Ferrari
3rd	Fernando Alonso	McLaren-Mercedes
4th	Lewis Hamilton	McLaren-Mercedes
5th	Nick Heidfeld	BMW Sauber
6th	Nico Rosberg	Williams-Toyota
7th	Mark Webber	Red Bull-Renault
8th	Heikki Kovalainen	Renault

POLE Kimi Raikkonen Ferrari 1m45.994s

2005

POS	DRIVER	TEAM
1st	Kimi Raikkonen	McLaren-Mercedes
2nd	Fernando Alonso	Renault
3rd	Jenson Button	BAR-Honda
4th	Mark Webber	Williams-BMW
5th	Rubens Barrichello	Ferrari
6th	Jacques Villeneuve	Sauber-Petronas
7th	Ralf Schumacher	Toyota
8th	Tiago Monteiro	Jordan-Toyota

POLE Juan Pablo Montoya McLaren 1m46.391s

2004

POS	DRIVER	TEAM
1st	Kimi Raikkonen	McLaren-Mercedes
2nd	Michael Schumacher	Ferrari
3rd	Rubens Barrichello	Ferrari
4th	Felipe Massa	Sauber-Petronas
5th	Giancarlo Fisichella	Sauber-Petronas
6th	Christian Klien	Jaguar-Cosworth
7th	David Coulthard	McLaren-Mercedes
8th	Olivier Panis	Toyota

POLE Jarno Trulli Renault 1m56.232s

2002

POS	DRIVER	TEAM
1st	Michael Schumacher	Ferrari
2nd	Rubens Barrichello	Ferrari
3rd	Juan Pablo Montoya	Williams-BMW
4th	David Coulthard	McLaren-Mercedes
5th	Ralf Schumacher	Williams-BMW
6th	Eddie Irvine	Jaguar-Cosworth
7th	Mika Salo	Toyota
8th	Jacques Villeneuve	BAR-Honda

POLE Michael Schumacher Ferrari 1m43.726s

2001

POS	DRIVER	TEAM
1st	Michael Schumacher	Ferrari
2nd	David Coulthard	McLaren-Mercedes
3rd	Giancarlo Fisichella	Benetton-Renault
4th	Mika Hakkinen	McLaren-Mercedes
5th	Rubens Barrichello	Ferrari
6th	Jean Alesi	Jordan-Honda
7th	Ralf Schumacher	Williams-BMW
8th	Jacques Villeneuve	BAR-Honda

POLE Juan Pablo Montoya Williams 1m52.072s

TYRE CHOICE

HARD/MEDIUM

WEATHER FORECAST





Just after winning the world championship, Monza 1961

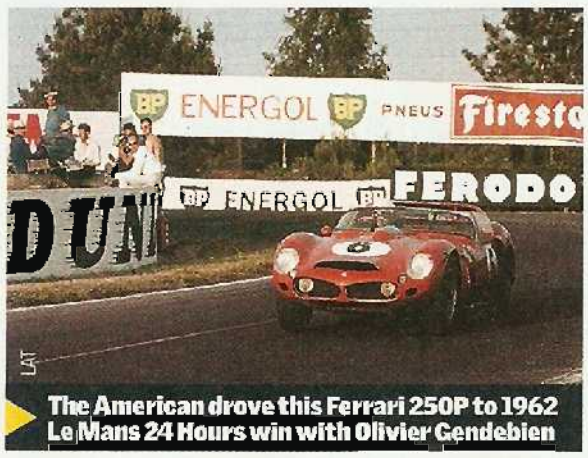
GETTY IMAGES

PHIL HILL 1927-2008

THE ONLY American-born Formula 1 world champion never contested the Indianapolis 500, not even when it was part of that said championship. He was much better known in the UK and on the Continent – as 'Feel Heel', works Ferrari driver.

Miami-born Phil Toll Hill Jr never sought the limelight. A confirmed Anglophile – he was a voracious reader of *Autocar* and *Motor* as a child growing up in California – the glitz/glamour/schmaltz of Gasoline Alley was not for him. He was more suited to the understated European scene, preferably at the wheel of a big-banger sportscar or, failing that, under its bonnet. Even on the occasions when mass adulation appeared unavoidable – and not necessarily unwelcome – fate intervened.

Hill clinched his 1961 world title with a measured, polished performance on Monza's punishing road-circuit/banked-oval combination. But the moment, if not the honour, had been taken away by the death of Wolfgang von Trips, Hill's Ferrari team-mate and championship rival, in a lap-two tangle that also killed 14 spectators. Any potential salve of a hero's homecoming was, too, denied him when Enzo decided not to send his 'Sharknoses' to the final round at Watkins Glen.



The American drove this Ferrari 250P to 1962 Le Mans 24 Hours win with Olivier Gendebien

It's not surprising therefore that Hill would never match the US public personae of AJ Foyt, Mario Andretti or Dan Gurney – which is a shame because, of them all, he would have made the best President. For although you could make an effective argument for him being the least-fast world champion, you'd be on a much firmer footing putting the case for his world champion 'mosts': intelligent, knowledgeable, self-effacing, classy, polymathic, engaging... And, of the 29 F1 world champions, he was probably the best sportscar driver.

That's how Enzo Ferrari saw him: fast enough, accurate, mechanically sympathetic – the perfect long-distance ticket. And you would have to say that he had a point: three Le Mans wins (1958, '61 and '62), three Sebring 12 Hours ('58, '59 and '61), two Buenos Aires 1000Km ('58 and '60), one Nurburgring 1000Km ('62), one Swedish GP ('56), one Messina Five Hours (also '56) and one Venezuelan GP (the '57 title-clincher) – all came Hill's way aboard works Ferrari sportscars.

But the man himself didn't always see it like that. Frustrated by his dearth of single-seater opportunities, in a rare act of self-promotion Hill hired a Maserati 250F from Jo Bonnier for the 1958 French GP at Reims. He would qualify it mid-grid and finish a lapped seventh – but it was the fatal accident in that race of Luigi Musso that would mean his promotion to the Scuderia's grand prix squad at the Nurburgring. There he would drive Ferrari's F2 Dino to ninth – and there Peter Collins, Hill's recently victorious co-driver at Caracas, Buenos Aires and Sebring, would crash to his death.

It's no wonder that Phil was a 'hill of nerves' before races. Keyed up, he could be uncharacteristically abrupt to the unwary. There were a number of occasions during his career when he considered retirement, and throughout it all he wrestled with racing's deadly allure. An opera buff, a collector and restorer of antique musical instruments, a fan of steam locos, a detailer, a hoarder, a recorder, Hill was an unusual motor-racing fit. It was something he was deeply aware of. Occasionally it confused him. Mostly it amused him.

But none of this showed when he was finally given his big F1 break. He finished third and set fastest lap on his debut in a works car, at Monza, and he performed to such a high level in the Moroccan finale that he was in a position to coolly wave team leader Mike Hawthorn through into second place and a world title.

In 1959 Hill proved an able lieutenant to new team-mate Tony Brooks. He finished on the podium three times and wound up fourth in the points. By 1960, however, the British rear-engined revolution had stormed the town hall, and it was left to Hill to append the front-engined full stop – a dominant yet hollow win, at Monza, in the absence of the boycotting Brits.

The Prancing Horse was behind the cart by 1961, of course, and Hill was able to showcase his adaptability, consistency and speed. Only once – a spin on melting tar at Reims – in seven races was he off the podium, and twice he was atop it, at Spa and Monza (his only wins in a small-engined single-seater). He set five consecutive poles – including the first sub-nine-minute lap of the 'Ring – and two fastest laps. The nerves were still there, but it was von Trips who seemed the agitated one of the two. As the title showdown loomed, Hill feared for his friend...

Ferrari was an unhappier place in 1962: riven by politics – external and internal – and off the pace. Re-empowered by Climax's V8, the Brits were again behind the desk, and although Hill fought manfully – third, second and third in the first three GPs – he was an also-ran thereafter and wanted out, on every level. So desperate was he, the disaffected breakaway Ferrari personnel were able to persuade him to join them at ATS. It was a disastrous decision. Not only was its car uncompetitive, but also Hill had lost his Ferrari sportscar gig. He never regained the momentum lost, in F1 at least.

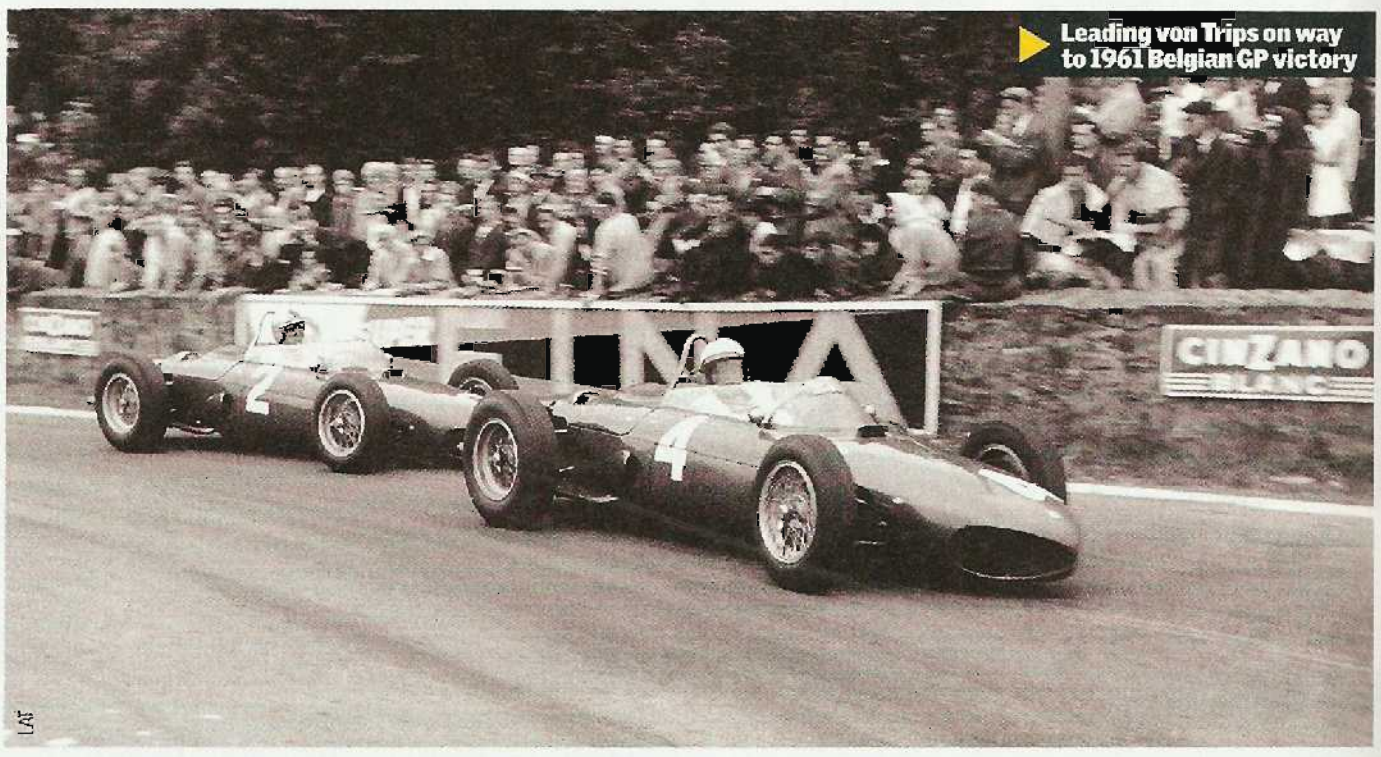
A disappointing 1964 at Cooper, where he replaced America's most recent young gun, the late Timmy Mayer, embarrassingly included being stood down for a race – Monza! – after two crashes in the Austrian GP. This was followed by a steady Tasman campaign in a Bruce McLaren Cooper, a season's sabbatical and, in 1966, two 'starts' in John Frankenheimer's *Grand Prix* camera car and a DNQ – at Monza! – at the wheel of Gurney's spare Eagle-Climax.

Sportscars, as you might expect, treated him somewhat better. He was Ford's go-to man during its GT40's troubled first year, 1964, and in 1966-67 Chaparral provided him with an Indian summer. Hill loved cars, from the SU carb on his Blower Bentley to the driver-adjustable wing high above the tail of Jim Hall's Chaparral 2E and 2F – he revelled in the Texan genius's hi-tech machines. In 1966 he shared a memorable Nurburgring 1000Km win with Jo Bonnier in 2D – leaning out perilously to wipe rain from its windscreen with a hand! – and in a 2E he scored Chaparral's only(!) Can-Am victory, at Laguna Seca. In 1967, paired with Mike Spence, their pearl-white 2F scythed a swathe of poles and fastest laps, all of which led to a retirement – until, on July 30, they won the BOAC 500 at Brands Hatch.

This was Hill's last drive as a pro. Classy. In the 20 years since he had hustled his MG TC to a second place at the Palos Verdes Time Trials, he had won a heap of races, gained a host of friends and fans and never broken a bone or spilt a drop of his blood. Classier. But there was to be no fanfare, no fuss: he simply returned to the Santa Monica home he had lived in since he was a kid, back to his player pianos and successful classic-car restoration business, back to the quiet admiration – respectfully given, charmingly accepted – that his performances and character deserved.

Phil Hill the racing driver pales against Phil Hill the man. That's saying a lot, because he was a superb racing driver.

Paul Fearnley



Leading von Trips on way to 1961 Belgian GP victory

PHIL HILL
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LONG-DISTANCE LEGEND
Hill won both the Le Mans 24 Hours and Sebring 12 Hours three times. Here he celebrates his 1961 win at La Sarthe with Olivier Gendebien (left)

THE FINAL HURRAH
Hill's last victory came in the BOAC 500 at Brands Hatch in 1967, sharing a Chevrolet-engined Chaparral 2F with Mike Spence

TRIBUTES TO HILL



"It's a sad day. Phil was an excellent race car driver with a real feel for the car"
Carroll Shelby

"Along with all employees of Ferrari, I am extremely saddened by the news of the passing of Phil Hill, a man and a champion who gave so much to Ferrari. Phil and I have always kept in touch throughout the years and I know I will miss his passion and love for Ferrari very much"
Ferrari president Luca di Montezemolo

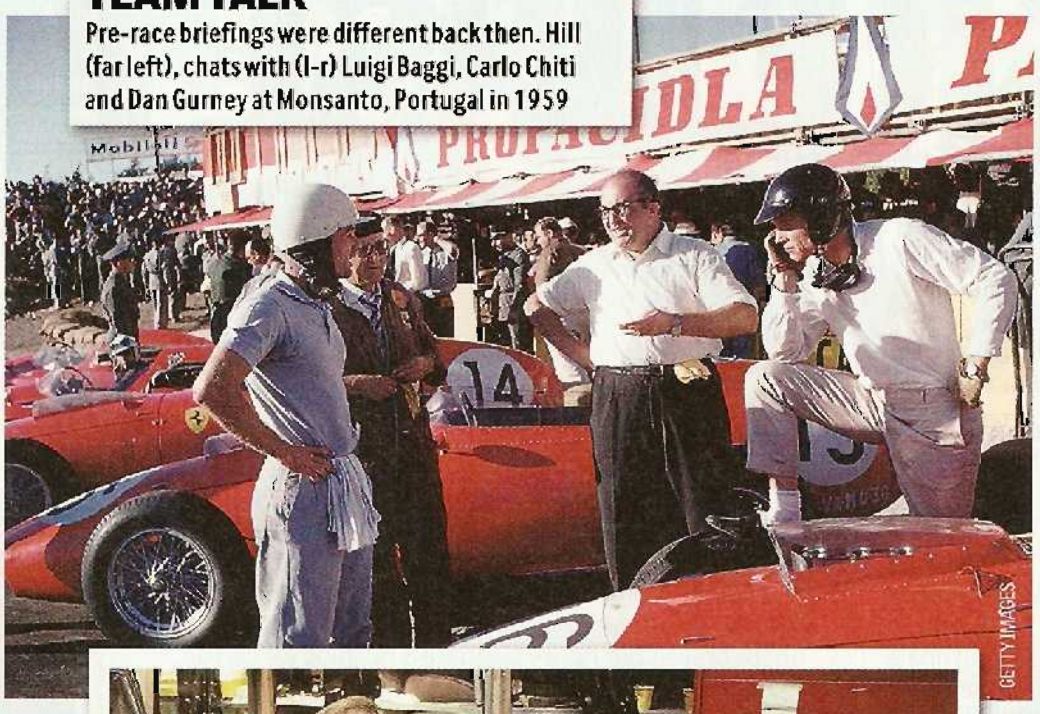
"The record books will remember Phil Hill as the only Formula 1 world champion to have been born in the USA, but for all who knew him he will forever be cherished as a perfect gentleman and a man who embodied the true sporting values of motor racing"
McLaren boss Ron Dennis

"When I was starting my racing career, I watched him with a mixture of envy and admiration – dreaming that I would someday have half the command of a race car that he did. He was at the top of his game. What I cherish most is that we became friends. I really consider my career richer by the fact that I raced against him, particularly my most vivid memory of him at Sebring in 1967. How sweet it is that I have that memory. I doubt there will be another like Phil Hill. It is such a great loss for the sport of motor racing because he was an inspiration to so many of us"
US racing legend and fellow world champion Mario Andretti

ON TOP OF THE WORLD
Hill's 1961 title came in the iconic Ferrari 156 'Sharknose', seen here at Zandvoort. Wins in Belgium and Italy helped him to lift the crown

KLEMANTASKI/BETTY

TEAM TALK
Pre-race briefings were different back then. Hill (far left), chats with (l-r) Luigi Baggi, Carlo Chiti and Dan Gurney at Monsanto, Portugal in 1959



GETTY IMAGES

PLENTY TO KEEP HIM BUSY
After retiring, Hill concentrated on his award-winning car restoration business with Ken Vaughan. Here, fellow US F1 ace and friend Mario Andretti has a look around



BERNARD ASSET

LAT


Wilson excelled on the streets of Detroit

SEROTA/GETTY IMAGES

WILSON OFF THE MARK IN INDYCAR

Justin Wilson scored his maiden IndyCar Series victory in his 17th career start at Detroit on Sunday. The win was also the Brit's first since joining Newman/Haas/Lanigan Racing at the start of this season

PENSKE UPSET WITH INDYCAR OFFICIALS

Team calls for consistency from decision makers after Detroit IndyCar controversy

HELIO CASTRONEVES and his Penske Racing team have called for changes to the IndyCar Series rules after a controversial decision by officials damaged his title hopes.

The Brazilian goes into this weekend's season finale at Chicagoland 30 points adrift of Scott Dixon with 53 available, but it was set to be 20 points before he was ordered to let Justin Wilson through for the lead after blocking the Brit's previous attempt to get past.

PENSKE'S VIEW

Castroneves felt that IndyCar's competition president Brian Barnhart, who made the decision with 15 laps to go, didn't follow his usual system of giving a warning about blocking first.

INDYCAR POINTS

1 Scott Dixon	606
2 Helio Castroneves	576

"Consistency is the only thing I ask for," said the two-time Indianapolis 500 winner. "I've been in this series since 2002 and we've never had a situation like this. We always had a warning first. I didn't get any warning, it was just 'move over'. With two races to go in the championship, it was uncalled for, and if it's personal, I wish he'd come to talk to me about it and not retaliate on the racetrack."

Team boss Roger Penske added: "Someone has to live with that call long-term. There was no warning and that's too bad. We'll have a discussion with Brian when cooler heads prevail, but right now there is nothing we can do."

INDYCAR'S VIEW

Barnhart was adamant that Castroneves was in the wrong when he moved across to the right of the track to block Wilson's path, and he added that the championship situation had no influence on his decisions.

"We talk about blocking every week and tell the drivers what they can and can't do," he said. "Castroneves clearly moved his car to impede the progress of a following car. You can't officiate based on points, you have to do it out of fairness. We made the same decision earlier in the race with Darren Manning and Bruno Junqueira, and unfortunately you have to call it like you see it."

Castroneves has brought Dixon's lead down from 78 points to 30 in the last two races.

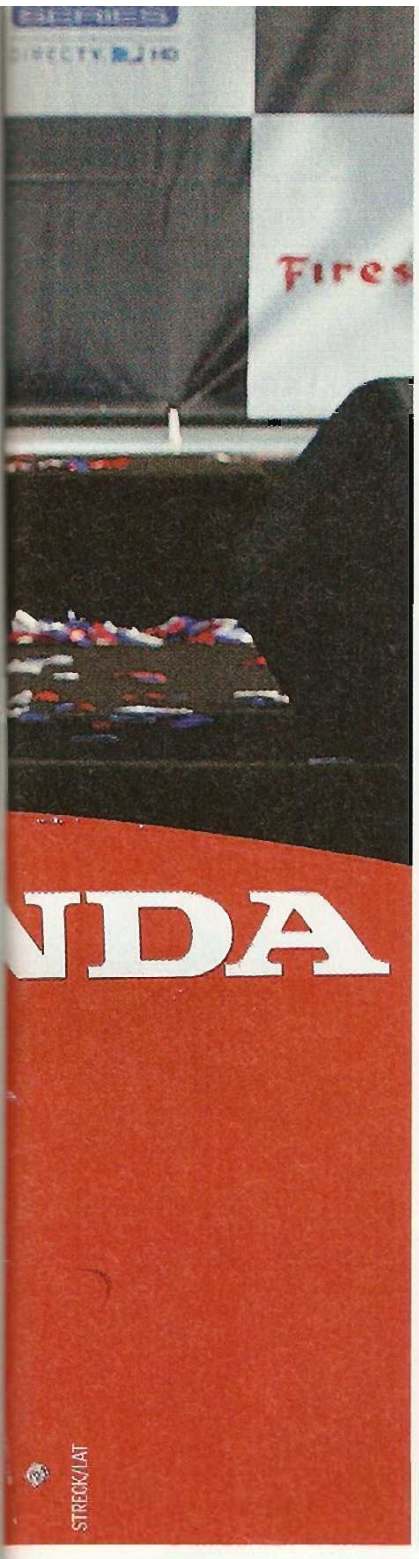

INDYCAR DETROIT, p68

REMEMBER WHEN...


Glock was on course for a maiden Champ Car win

LAVILLA/3

Last weekend was not the first time that a driver had been ordered to give up the lead late in a race by officials. In 2005, Timo Glock was forced to move over in the closing stages of the Montreal Champ Car race. The German was battling Oriol Servia for the lead, but had cut a chicane to keep his place.



STRECK/LAT



Duran's celebrations didn't last very long

DURAN LOSES 3.5 WIN IN GERMANY

SALVADOR Duran was disqualified from his Formula Renault 3.5 victory in the feature race at the Nurburgring, after his Interwetten car was found to be running a wrong gear ratio.


Duran

The win would have boosted Duran to within two points of Julien Jousse's second position in the standings, but the Mexican heads to Le Mans this weekend fifth overall.

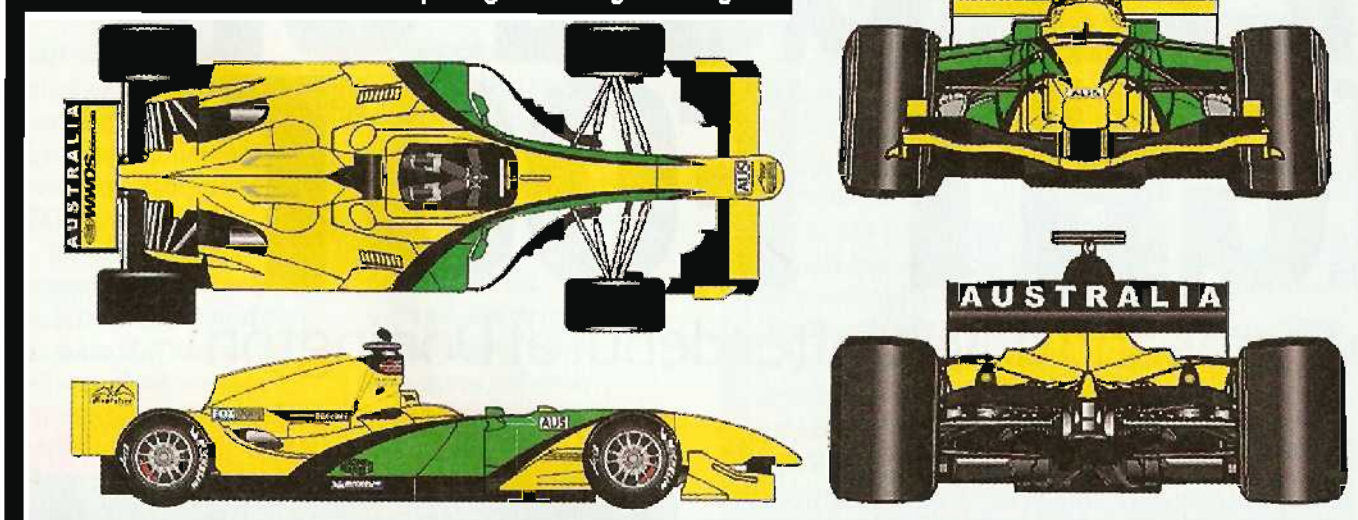
"It seems that the first gear that we were using was allowed in 2007, but not this year," said Duran. "The team have recognised their error, and I still support them. It gave no advantage, apart from at Monaco you don't use first gear. It is clear in the rules, though, and we are not going to appeal. We can still have a good finish in the championship."

Prema Powerteam's Miguel Molina inherited the laurels for his first win of the year. Duran was the second podium finisher to fall foul of the post-race technical inspection, after Fortec's Fairuz Fauzy was excluded from second place in race one for a missing spacer in the rear upright.

3.5 REPORT, p64 →

IT'S ALL OVER DOWN UNDER

Team Australia has revealed its new livery for the fourth season of A1GP. The car retains the Australian sporting colours of green and gold



"CARELESS" HULK GETS POINTS BACK

F3 EUROSERIES leader Nico Hulkenberg has been branded by rivals as "extremely lucky" after regaining 10 points for his Zandvoort victory in July.

The fire extinguisher of Hulkenberg's ART car had gone off mid-race, and the team successfully claimed it would have made the 540kg weight limit by 0.4kg.

But the real point of conjecture was that he continued in the race knowing the extinguisher had gone off. The Dutch court ruling said Hulkenberg had "acted extremely carelessly by not ending his race prematurely, which is considered unacceptable". Hulkenberg now leads the series by 13 points from Edoardo Mortara.

F3 REPORT, p60 →

PALMER SUBMITS FORMULA 2 TENDER

JONATHAN PALMER submitted his tender for Formula 2 to the FIA at the weekend, with cars that would feature design input from the Williams F1 team.

The deadline for tenders to be submitted was Sunday night, and the former grand prix driver is optimistic of a quick response from the FIA.

"We have put in a tender for the FIA Formula 2 championship," Palmer told Autosport. "I'm sure there'll be a number of people putting in tenders. The FIA might give an indication in a week as to the preferred tenderer."

Palmer has experience of the centrally-run format that F2 is expected to use, from running the Formula Palmer Audi series.

IN BRIEF


Tagliani was fast at Detroit before problems

TAGLIANI'S CALL-UP

Former Champ Car racer Alex Tagliani made an unexpected IRL debut at Detroit last weekend. The Canadian, who was called up by Conquest Racing to stand in for the injured Enrique Bernoldi, is expected to remain with the team for Chicagoland.

PCM SITS OUT AGAIN

Mario Dominguez and the Pacific Coast Motorsport team were absent from the IndyCar Series paddock at Detroit. The former Champ Car squad is also doubtful for this weekend's season finale at Chicagoland.

MONACO JOINS A1GP

Monaco has become the latest team to join A1GP in the weeks leading up to the start of its fourth season. Clivio Piccione will drive for the team, and the former GP2 racer is a joint seat holder of the team, alongside Swiss businessman and historic Formula 1 racer Hubertus Bahlsen.

JAKARTA CONFIRMED

Plans have been revealed for the new Jakarta street circuit that will host A1GP's return to Indonesia this season. The race, scheduled for February 6-8, will be held in the area of Lippo Village, just outside the Indonesian capital.

ROOKIE CHANGES FOR A1

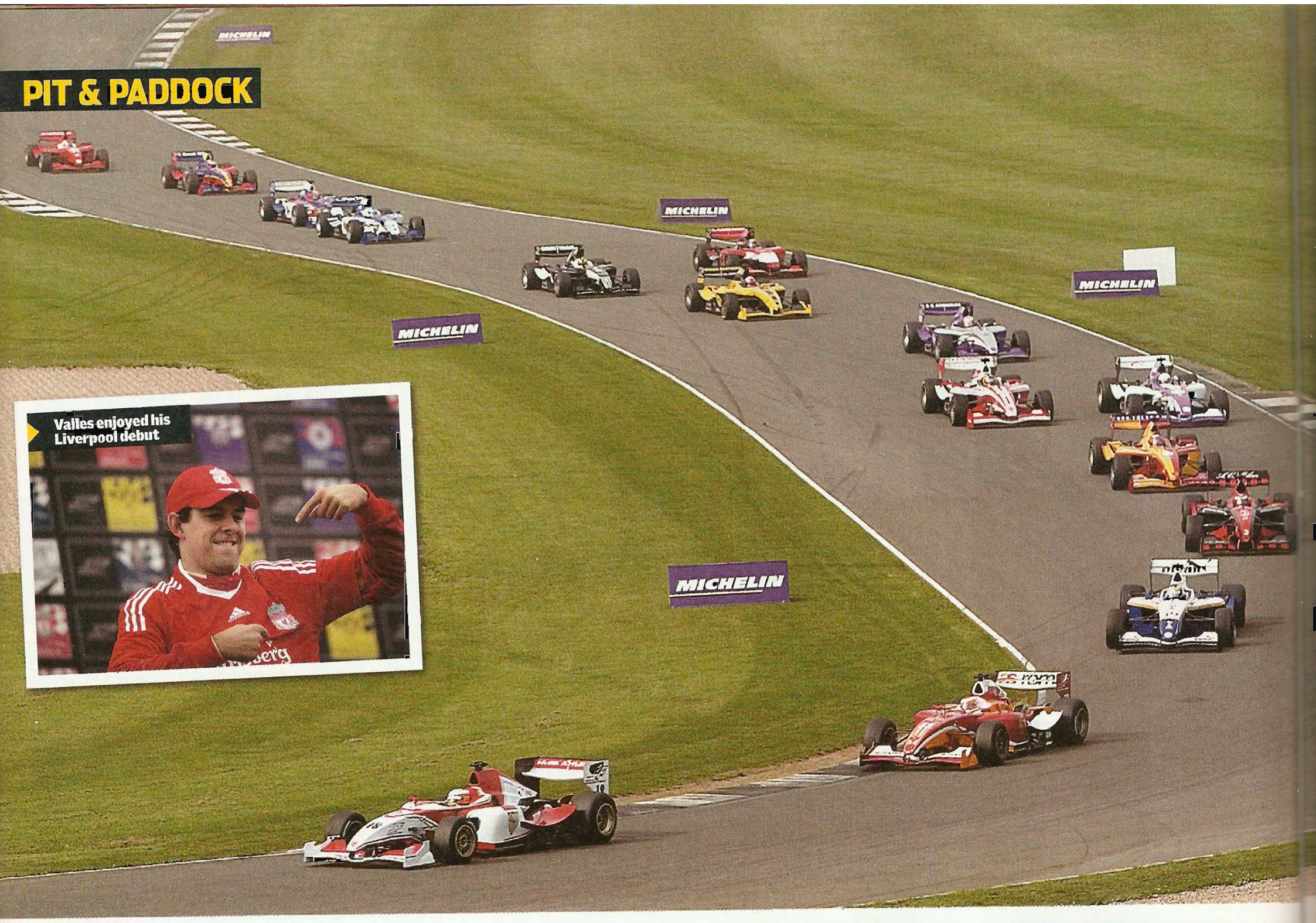
A1GP has revised the eligibility rules for drivers during rookie sessions. Upper age limits have been scrapped, but drivers with prior experience in Formula 1, GP2, Champ Car, IndyCar or Formula Nippon will no longer be permitted to take part in the sessions.

LYONS BACK IN NIPPON

Former champion Richard Lyons raced a Formula Nippon car for the first time since 2005 at Fuji last weekend. The 2004 champion, who was standing in for the injured Kohei Hirate, qualified sixth for the first race, but ended the weekend with two 13th-place finishes.



Lyons was back in Formula Nippon action



Valles enjoyed his Liverpool debut

SUPERLEAGUE ON THE RIGHT FOOT

Series gets thumbs-up from teams and drivers after debut at Donington

SUPERLEAGUEFORMULA has been well received by teams and drivers after the inaugural event at Donington Park.

Although there was a low spectator turn-out and many teams suffered technical issues with the new Panoz DP09B chassis—chiefly concerning engine sensors, oil systems and transmissions—the event was deemed a success.



Rolling starts were used to reduce the risk of problems

Hitech Racing boss David Hayle, whose team ran the Liverpool car to two top-five finishes with Adrian Valles, said: "To get a new series this far with the minimum of failure has been good. It's about understanding the car and getting a fast diagnosis. It's taken a while, but as people get more used to it the problems will get solved a lot faster."

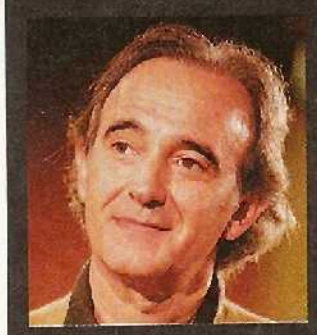
Anderlecht's Craig Dolby was one of the worst affected by the problems, and failed to finish both races. Even so, the British driver believes that the signs for the future are positive. "It's the first race so you expect these problems," he said. "Everyone's learning and the organisers are taking notes, which is good. I think the championship will be great."

Superleague president Alex Andreu confirmed that some changes will be made where they are deemed necessary. At Donington, rolling starts were used to reduce the strain on the cars, a move that may become a regular feature of the series.

"Obviously we have to fix some things," said Andreu. "But with a bit more time I think we won't have any problems at all. It's gone extremely well."

With little time for the teams to prepare before Donington, mandatory pitstops were also abandoned, but they will feature for the next round at the Nurburgring.

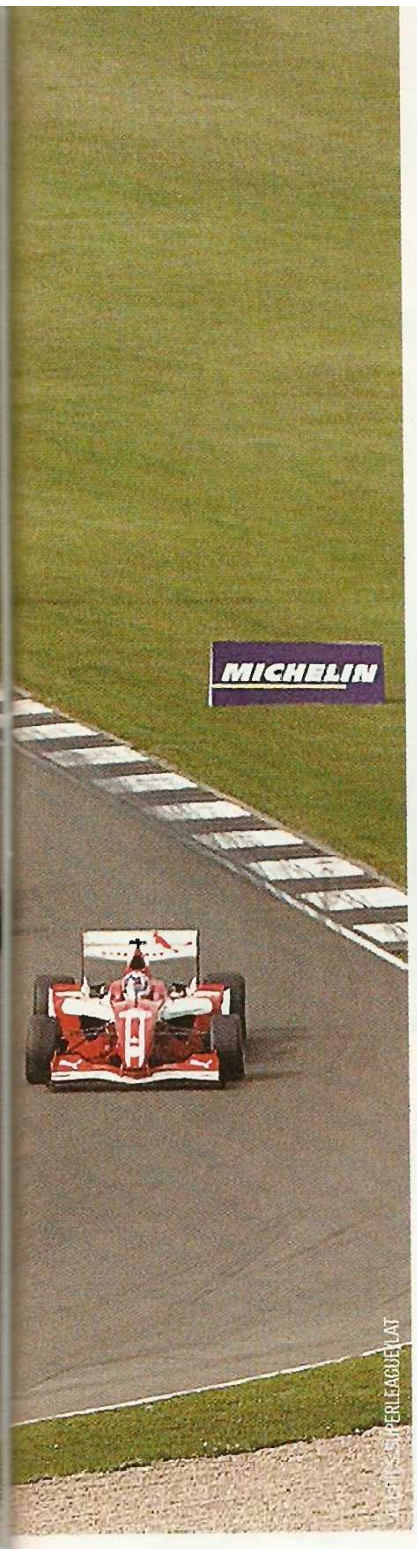
Q&A ALEX ANDREU



How well do you feel the weekend went?
After five years planning we were all very nervous and of course we had our fears, but it's gone extremely well. We had a few technical problems, but I think that's normal when some of the cars were only assembled two or three weeks ago.

Did the knock-out qualifying system work as well as you hoped?
It adds a completely different approach and is hard for the drivers. Having two cars in a match race adds a lot and the [random] draw groups people differently, which is important. Today we've had six different clubs, of various nationalities, on the podium. That's great.

Were you disappointed with the spectator turn-out?
We were not expecting a big crowd. We knew few people would turn up—there were a few other big events in Britain this weekend.



WTCC SET TO KICK OUT WEIGHT BREAKS

THE WORLD TOURING Car Championship is considering plans to abolish the controversial weight-break system for next season in favour of a more standard parity process.


Ashman

The WTCC issues discretionary weight waivers to individual manufacturers in an attempt to keep the field on an even keel, but the system has been criticised for being both opaque and unpredictable.

Under the new proposal, the new handicap system would be written into the regulations rather than left to the discretion of the World Touring Car Bureau.

Adjustments would be based on the performance of the fastest two cars from each manufacturer over three rounds. This means that teams could anticipate when a waiver would be issued, and how much it would be.

FIA Touring Car Commission president Jonathan Ashman said: "We'd be taking 18 calculations [three manufacturers; six races] into account to work out the average. The Bureau will only be involved during the homologation process."

The new system should be approved later this year.

BMW WINS, p62 →

BRANDS HATCH KEEPS THE DTM

Brands Hatch has agreed a deal to host the British round of the DTM for another three years. Last weekend's crowd of more than 28,000 people was substantially better than 2006 and 2007



VAUXHALL RULES OUT BTCC DIESELS

VAUXHALL HAS ruled out switching to diesels for next year's British Touring Car Championship, despite the recent dominance of the SEAT Leon TDI diesels.

The manufacturers' champion has taken only one win in the second half of the season to SEAT's seven, but will nevertheless remain faithful to petrol-powered Vectras in 2009.

Vauxhall motorsport chief Mike Nicholson said: "The number of people buying diesels for the road is falling all the time. There's no point in spending a million pounds on technology we have no need to promote."

Vauxhall wrapped up the manufacturers' title at Silverstone on Sunday.

BTCC ACTION, p48 →

THOMPSON LOOKING FOR ALTERNATIVES

JAMES THOMPSON is weighing up his options for 2009 while he waits for his N. Technology team to finalise its World Touring Car Championship plans.

Thompson signed a three-year contract extension with the team last year, but progress with the Honda Accord has been stunted by a lack of resources.

The two-time British Touring Car champion said that, while he is committed to remaining on board for as long as the team runs a car, the uncertainty is forcing him to seek alternatives.

"If this programme continues then I will see it through. I'm not a quitter," he told Autosport. "But I am talking to other people in the event of it not happening. I'd be foolish not to."



Thompson could move elsewhere in 2009

IN BRIEF


Orido will drive a fourth Chevrolet

FOURTH CHEV FOR ORIDO

Chevrolet will enter a fourth works Lacetti for the last three rounds of the WTCC. Japanese driver Manabu 'Max' Orido will drive a Chevrolet Motorsport Sweden-run car, with the team hoping to draw upon the 39-year-old's knowledge of Okayama when the WTCC visits the track for the first time in October.

CORONEL ENTERS DAKAR

Tom Coronel is planning an attempt on next year's Dakar Rally with his twin-brother Tim. The pair will drive a Bowler Nemesis car prepared by Dakarsport on the event, which will be held in Argentina and Chile in January.

TURNER JOINS STRAKKA

Darren Turner has joined Strakka Racing for the Le Mans Series finale, the Autosport 1000Km at Silverstone, on September 14. Turner, a GT1 class-winner at Le Mans for the past two years, will join Strakka's regular pairing of Peter Hardman and Nick Leventis in the team's Aston Martin DBR9.

PETER JOPP 1928-2008

Peter Jopp, a regular in racing and rallying between the 1950s and 1970s, has died. He earned a Le Mans class win in an 1100cc Lotus 11 with Reg Bicknell in 1956 and made six more appearances at the endurance classic, along with entries in such rallies as the Monte Carlo.

PETER BOLTON 1919-2008

Seasoned sportscar racer Peter Bolton has died. He made 10 consecutive Le Mans starts between 1956 and 1965, and picked up a class win in '63 with Ninian Sanderson in a works AC Cobra.

TIELEMANS TO STAY

WTCC team Wiechers-Sport plans to run Olivier Tielemans, who returned to the team at Oschersleben, for the rest of the season. Duncan Huisman, who raced alongside him in a second BMW 320si in Germany, is unlikely to return.



Tielemans will remain with Wiechers-Sport

SPEEDCAR READY FOR SECOND SEASON

The Speedcar Series, which features several ex-grand prix drivers, has released the calendar for its second season. The series will visit the Dubai Autodrome (pictured) three times, with races in Bahrain and Malaysia

2008-09 CALENDAR

Date	Venue
December 5-6	Dubai (UAE)
January 23-24	Sakhir (BRN)
February 27-28	Dubai (UAE)
April 4-5	Sepang (MAL)
April 18-19	Sakhir (BRN)
April 24-25	Dubai (UAE)

FERRARO/LAT

ACURA NAMES ITS TEAMS FOR LMP1

De Ferran and Highcroft to run a car each; all-new racer could be a coupe

THE DEFERRAN Motorsports and Highcroft Racing teams have been chosen by Honda to graduate to LMP1 with the Acura brand for next year's American Le Mans Series.

It was announced that the teams will each field a solo Acura LMP1 in the full ALMS next season when Honda confirmed last week that it is expanding out of LMP2. The announcement, made at the Detroit ALMS race, means Acura has stuck to the schedule it laid down three years ago for entering the premier prototype class.



De Ferran is new to the ALMS for this year

LAT

Erik Berkman, who masterminds the Acura project from Honda Performance Development, said: "When selecting the two teams to make this move, we considered many things. Having a strong desire, strong capability and resources necessary to make this step forward were all determining factors."

Gil de Ferran, boss of the eponymous team set up this year, said: "I came into the ALMS and sportscar racing to be the best possible partner for Acura. We had an understanding from day one that I was there for them."

Honda revealed no further details of the programme, except that the ARX-02a designed by Wirth Research in the UK will be all-new. Berkman confirmed that there are no plans to go to the Le Mans 24 Hours "next year or any other year", but that it remains "a dream and an aspiration" to compete in the big race.

The Acura LMP2 programme will continue next year. Fernandez Racing has already been confirmed for one car, while Andretti Green Racing is "70 per cent certain" to remain in the ALMS, according to boss Michael Andretti.



ACURAS CLEAN UP IN DETROIT, p70

WHAT WE KNOW	WHAT WE DON'T KNOW
THE TEAMS De Ferran and Highcroft will each run one ARX-02a. Expect both to field an unchanged driver line-up in 2009	**WILL IT HAVE A ROOF?** Speculation that the "clean-sheet-of-paper design" is a coupe rather than open-top is gathering pace
THE FIRST TEST A shakedown is scheduled for late November. Circuit bookings have already been made for US tracks in December	**THE ENGINE** There has been no confirmation of any details, but the smart money is on a petrol-powered V8
THE RACE DEBUT Acura's LMP1 effort will kick off at Sebring in March ahead of a full campaign in the American Le Mans Series	**LE MANS PLANS** The French enduro remains one of Acura's targets, but a Le Mans attack appears to hinge on the global expansion of the brand

DRIVERS FIGHTING FOR CHASE SPOTS

SEVEN DRIVERS head into this weekend's critical NASCAR Sprint Cup race at Richmond fighting over the five remaining places in this year's Chase for the Cup.

The main battle in this race, the cut-off point for the Chase, will be over the 12th and final slot: Clint Bowyer has a 17-point advantage over David Ragan, with Kasey Kahne just 48 points adrift.

"It's going to be a battle to the end, and I knew it would be," said Bowyer, who won at Richmond in May. "We need to race as hard as we can."

Two-time champion Jimmie Johnson, Dale Earnhardt Jr and Jeff Burton all locked themselves into the Chase at Fontana last weekend, while Greg Biffle and Kevin Harvick will get in by starting at Richmond.

Above the three drivers battling for 12th, Tony Stewart, Matt Kenseth, Jeff Gordon and Denny Hamlin are not yet safe.

POINTS TABLE

8 Tony Stewart	3110
9 Matt Kenseth	3081
10 Jeff Gordon	3074
11 Denny Hamlin	3065
12 Clint Bowyer	2989
13 David Ragan	2972
14 Kasey Kahne	2941

NASCAR, p72 →



NEW TRACK WELL RECEIVED
The new Thunderbolt Raceway at New Jersey Motorsports Park got the seal of approval from Grand-Am drivers last weekend, with one driver going as far as saying the track "had it all"

MAASSEN SET FOR PENSKE FAREWELL

SASCHA MAASSEN appears to have driven his last race for the Penske team in the American Le Mans Series.

The German sportscar veteran was replaced by former team-mate Ryan Briscoe alongside Patrick Long at last weekend's Detroit round. Porsche is refusing to confirm that he will compete in the Petit Le Mans enduro at Road Atlanta next month or in the Laguna Seca ALMS finale in October.

A Porsche North America spokesman said that there were "multiple reasons" why Penske IndyCar Series regular Briscoe doubled up in the ALMS at Detroit. He confirmed that one of the reasons was that Briscoe is quicker than Maassen.

Briscoe's return comes at a time when Porsche is under pressure from Acura in the ALMS LMP2 title race.

MELO LINED UP FOR VIRGO LMS DRIVE

FERRARI FACTORY driver Jaime Melo is set to be drafted into the Virgo Motorsport line-up for the Autosport 1000Km at Silverstone this month.

Virgo needs to replace Gianmaria Bruni for the Le Mans Series finale on September 14 because the Italian will be on FIA GT Championship duty with the AF Corse team at Brno.

Autosport understands that Ferrari will place Melo alongside Rob Bell to bolster Virgo's chances of retaining its GT2 title, but the team was unavailable for comment.

● Dirk Muller will return to the CR Scuderia Ferrari team at Brno. The German, who drove for CRS in the Spa 24 Hours, replaces Bell alongside Andrew Kirkaldy.

FAMILIAR NAME; DIFFERENT CLASS
The race version of Audi's R8 supercar has already hit the test track in the hands of Frank Biela. The R8 GT3, which was confirmed last week, will be available to customers in the autumn of next year



IN BRIEF


Luhr is a champion in his first season with the R10

LUHR/WERNER CROWNED
Lucas Luhr and Marco Werner sealed the American Le Mans Series LMP1 drivers' title at Detroit last weekend, despite not finishing. They took the title when team-mates Emanuele Pirro and Marcel Fassler were disqualified from first in class and third overall because their car was 2.5kg underweight.

CORVETTE'S TON
Corvette Racing celebrated its 100th start in the Detroit ALMS race on Saturday. The race tally for the Pratt & Miller-built Chevrolet Corvettes includes the ALMS, Le Mans 24 Hours, Grand-Am and the defunct United States Road Racing Championship.

GANASSI IS GRAND
Chip Ganassi Racing drivers Scott Pruett and Memo Rojas bounced back from a car-destroying accident in pre-race testing at the new Thunderbolt Raceway to seal the Grand-Am Daytona Prototype title.

SHOOTOUT CHANGES
NASCAR has announced changes to the pre-season Bud Shootout race at Daytona. Rather than featuring polesitters from the previous year, the grid will be made up of the top six cars in owner points from each manufacturer.

LOGANO SET FOR DEBUT
Teenager Joey Logano is set to enter five NASCAR Sprint Cup races this year with Hall of Fame Racing. The Nationwide Series race winner will attempt to make his debut in a Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota in this weekend's race at Richmond before driving the No.96 HoF car in later races.

SORENSON MOVES ON
Reed Sorenson has signed a multi-year deal to join the Gillett Evernham Dodge team in the NASCAR Sprint Cup from 2009. The move ends a five-year relationship between Sorenson and the Chip Ganassi team.


LAT SOUTH
Sorenson will move to a different Dodge team



PHOTO 4/IRC

GRONHOLM SET TO MAKE COMEBACK

WRC legend is considering return. By DAVID EVANS

DOUBLE WORLD rally champion Marcus Gronholm is considering a full-time return to rallying next season, after leading teams in the sport contacted him to discuss a deal.

Gronholm spoke to Autosport about the potential for a comeback last week, but declined to say anything had been confirmed.

WHERE WOULD GRONHOLM FIT IN?

Gronholm retired from full-time competition at the end of last year, but has competed in rallycross events this year, as well as working with up-and-coming Norwegian driver Andreas Mikkelsen. It's thought a big money offer could bring the Finn out of retirement though.

"What can I say?" said Gronholm. "Who has been talking to you? It's difficult. Maybe, that's the only thing I will tell you. For the moment I don't know."

Gronholm is believed to have had discussions with Citroen and Subaru, but both teams have denied it.

The two teams have contracted drivers for next year, but as a source within Subaru pointed out: "Anything is possible if people want it badly enough."

There have been continued rumours of Subaru lead driver Petter Solberg parting company from the team with which he won the 2003 title, but that looks increasingly less likely as the end of the season nears.

Officially, Subaru team principal David Richards said: "Marcus Gronholm is a superb driver, who wouldn't want him in their team, but he's not really interested in driving and we would want a motivated driver."

NO INTEREST IN TACTICAL GAMEPLAY

One of Gronholm's chief concerns with a return to the sport would be the tactical approach being taken to the sport by teams at the top. Watching last week's Rally New Zealand from home, the 40-year-old, who scored 30 wins in his WRC career, said: "I don't like those tactics. They're stupid. When you look at the results, it's stupid and driving like Sunday driving. These rules absolutely have to be changed for next year. The drivers are not fighting now, they're just playing. It's a question of who is the cleverest, not who is the fastest driver in the stages."

NO ROOM AT FORMER TEAM FORD

Ford team principal Malcolm Wilson admitted he would like to see his former driver back, but added that there wasn't enough room for him in his team.

Wilson said: "I think the sport has missed Marcus – there aren't too many like him. It would be good to have him back in the sport, but equally I think we've seen a pretty exciting season so far without him."

Other drivers to confirm their plans for next year include Henning Solberg, with the Stobart driver stating that he will remain with the team next year.

SUBARU BOSS: McRAE WANTED TO REJOIN TEAM

ON THE weekend where 1300 Subaru Impreza road cars lined up to pay tribute to former world champion Colin McRae, it has been revealed that the Scot was planning a full-time return to the World Rally Championship with Subaru this season.

Subaru team principal David Richards admitted a deal had been agreed with McRae for the final two rallies of last season, with a view to him returning to the team with which he won his 1995 world title.

Richards said: "Once Colin saw how he fitted in [on Rally Ireland and Rally Great Britain last season], and how it was going, the plan was for him to do the whole of this year."

Richards added that McRae had been in discussions with David Lapworth, Subaru's technical director, the day before the helicopter crash which claimed the life of McRae, his son Johnny and two family friends last September.

Richards added: "He was talking to David about what he wanted from the car. We'd all sat down and talked and he was keen."

McRae hadn't driven full time since 2003, but his last WRC outing came with Citroen, when he stood-in for Sebastien Loeb and tackled Rally Turkey when the Frenchman had broken his shoulder. McRae retired from the event.

Last weekend's McRae Gathering was heralded as a major success by all involved. The Subaru convoy traveled from Lanark to Prodrive in Banbury on Saturday, before gathering at Prodrive's test track in Warwick to spell McRae's name out using the cars.



WRC icons: McRae and Subaru took 1995 title

WILSON UPBEAT AFTER NZ

FORD TEAM principal Malcolm Wilson has praised his son Matthew's Rally New Zealand drive last week—saying it was the 21-year-old's best ever drive.

Wilson was forced to retire from the opening day of the event with a gearbox fault, but he blasted back on Saturday to set fastest sector times.

Wilson Sr said: "This was an event Matthew had targeted and he's done a great job. He ended one stage with a split time 1.7 seconds faster than anybody. Saturday was definitely his best day in the car. It's good for his confidence, it's good to go forward into next year from here. The target for next year now has to be a podium finish, maybe not early in the season but definitely at some point."

Wilson Jr was delighted with his performance, adding: "It was disappointing to retire on Friday, but I was absolutely determined on Saturday. I love those stages and I'd always said to myself that I would be having a go in there. We did that and had a ball. It was absolutely brilliant and the best I've ever I've driven."



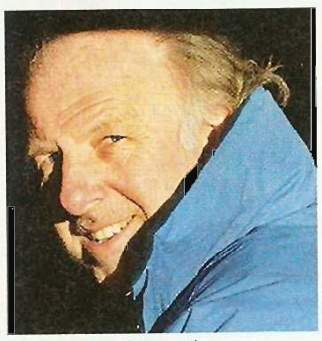
Wilson was very quick during Rally New Zealand

PRESSURE ON SUBARU

SUBARU TEAM principal David Richards has instigated a full review of every aspect of the Impreza WRC2008 after the team struggled for pace in New Zealand last week.

Subaru believed Petter Solberg or Chris Atkinson could win the rally but Atkinson rolled out of fifth and Solberg finished fourth, three minutes behind the winner.

Richards said: "We experimented with some set-ups in New Zealand and they gave some extraordinary results which have left us, frankly, confused. The results are completely at odds with what we expected. We will have a complete debrief after this event and I will sit down with [technical director] David Lapworth."


Richards

RALLY AUSTRALIA SET FOR NSW ROUTE

NEXT YEAR'S Rally Australia will visit Sydney in some capacity—with a ceremonial start and superspecial believed to be in the pipeline.

While there remain no specific details for the 2009 event, Rally Australia officials were present in Hamilton for last week's Rally New Zealand.

After a prolonged silence from the event's organisers, representative Michelle Gatton confirmed the rally would run, adding that an announcement about the route, which will run wholly in New South Wales, would be out this month.

Gatton said: "Sydney is 620 miles from the event and a ceremonial start is something to consider —but not in the first year."

Australia will replace NZ next year.

SOME COMEBACK, HENNING

After dropping three minutes with hydraulic problems on SS1 of last week's Rally NZ, Henning Solberg set fastest time on five of Saturday's six stages and two on Sunday, finishing ninth





A VW Scirocco raced at the Nurburgring 24 hours

VW EYES WRC 2010

FURTHER DETAILS of Volkswagen's entry to the World Rally Championship have emerged.

Despite the presence of the Polo S2000 car, VW's focus will be on a Scirocco World Rally Car. This had been in doubt prior to the WRC Commission meeting last month, which agreed a change of regulation concerning the width of future WRC machines.

A source close to VW said: "The regulation did say the width had to be 1800mm. The Scirocco is 1810. The regs will read 1820, which is good for the car [Scirocco]."

VW was present at a recent WRC manufacturers' meeting and pushed for a bigger manufacturer input into the direction of the sport, something WRC commission president Morrie Chandler has agreed to look into.

Sources have indicated that VW is considering entering the WRC in 2010.

IN BRIEF



Suzuki collected seven points with double finish

SUZUKI'S BEST YET

Suzuki celebrated its best ever result on the World Rally Championship, collecting seven manufacturer points when Per-Gunnar Andersson and Toni Gardemeister finished sixth and seventh respectively on last week's Rally New Zealand. The result came despite the continued absence of team principal Nobuhiro 'Monster' Tajima.

INDONESIA'S HOPES FADE

Indonesia's round of the 2010 World Rally Championship is looking doubtful, following an initial survey of the event. The lack of infrastructure is thought likely to end the nation's hopes of a return to the WRC calendar.

IRC FINALE PUT BACK

The final round of the IRC, the China Rally, has been forced to shift its date back, which means it will now clash with Rally GB. The event now runs from December 5-7 instead of November 7-9. The venue has also shifted from Longyou to Shaouwu to improve transport logistics in and out of the event.

McRAE TARGETS TARGA

Alister McRae will return to competition today (Thursday) when he starts the Targa West Rally in his now native Perth, Western Australia. McRae is driving a 1974 Porsche 911 on the three-day asphalt event.

STORMONT GETS NOD

Rally Ireland organisers have confirmed that the launch of the WRC will take place at Stormont, on Saturday January 24, the weekend before the Sligo-based event opens the 2009 WRC series. Precise details of the event, which starts on January 29, have yet to be agreed, but international celebrities will compete with works drivers. Rally Ireland has also revealed the 19-stage route, which includes a live television spectator stage in Donegal town (in place of the Mullaghmore stage) on the final day.



Stormont will host WRC '09 opening extravaganza

Autosport ITV

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ON TRACK, ON SCREEN

September 4-10

Events

INTERNATIONAL ACTION

FORMULA 1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
Rd 13/18
Belgian Grand Prix
Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium
September 7
www.formula1.com

INDYCAR SERIES
Rd 18/18
Chicagoland, USA
September 7
www.indycar.com

NASCAR SPRINT CUP
Rd 26/36
Richmond, USA
September 6
www.nascar.com

GP2 SERIES
Rd 9/10
Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium
September 6-7
www.gp2series.com

INDY LIGHTS
Rd 12/12
Chicagoland, USA
September 7
www.indycar.com/indylights

FORMULA RENAULT 3.5
Rd 7/9
Le Mans, France
September 7
www.renault-sport.com

PORSCHE SUPERCUP
Rd 10/11
Spa-Francorchamps, Belgium
September 7
www.porsche.com/motor-sport

GERMAN F3 CUP
Rd 7/9
Lausitzring, Germany
September 6-7
www.formel3.de

FORMULA RENAULT EUROCUP
Rd 5/7
Le Mans, France
September 6-7
www.renault-sport.com

NATIONAL ACTION

MALLORY PARK
BARC
September 7
Ginetta Festival
Admission £12
Tel: 01455 842931

LYDDEN
BARC
September 6
Admission £12
Tel: 01304 830557

OULTON PARK
750 MC
September 6
Admission £12
Tel: 01829 760301

ANGLESEY
BRSCC
September 6-7
Admission £12
Tel: 01407 811400

CADWELL PARK
CSCC
September 6-7
Admission £12
Tel: 01507 343248

PEMBREY
BRSCC
September 6-7
Admission £10
Tel: 01554 891042

BRANDS HATCH
SEMSEC
September 6
Admission £12
Tel: 01474 872331

BRANDS HATCH
MGCC
September 7
Admission £12
Tel: 01474 872331

THRUXTON
BARC
September 7
Admission £12
Tel: 01264 882200

PRESCOTT
British Hillclimb
September 6-7
www.thetop12runoff.com

TV/Radio

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

TERRESTRIAL/DIGITAL	MOTORS TV	SKY SPORTS	OTHER SATELLITE
THU SEP 4			
0715-0730 Roary the Racing Car (C5)	0000-0200 ALMS 1100-1200 Scottish Motor Racing 1330-1400 Time Attack 1430-1500 IRC 1500-1600 FIA GT 1830-2000 DTM 2030-2100 FPA	0330-0430 Rally Fever (SS2) 0430-0500 Touring Car Diaries (SS3) 1800-1900 Race World (SS3) 2130-2200 Suzuki Swift Cup (SS2)	0000-0130 NASN2: NASCAR Now (SET1) 0300-0430 NASCAR Now (NASN) 0800-0830 NASCAR Now (NASN) 0900-1000 WRC (E2) 1300-1400 WRC (E2) 2030-2130 Rally (E) 2130-2230 WTCC (E) 2230-2320 Int. Formula Masters 2300-2330 NASCAR Now (NASN)
FRI SEP 5			
0115-0140 Motorsport UK (ITV1) 0715-0730 Roary the Racing Car (C5) 0855-1035 F1: Belgian GP Practice LIVE (Sports Xtra) 1255-1435 F1: Belgian GP Practice LIVE (Sports Xtra)	0300-0400 Scottish Motor Racing 0400-0500,2000-2100 British GT 0500-0700 ALMS 1130-1330 F3 Euroseries 1330-1400,1830-1900,2330-0000 Inside GP 1400-1430,1800-1830 FPA 1500-1530 Time Attack 1900-2000 British F3 2100-2200 Race & Rally UK	0400-0430 Suzuki Swift Cup (SSX) 0430-0530 Race World (SS3) 0600-0630 Suzuki Swift Cup (SS3) 1030-1130 Race World (SS2) 1300-1330 Touring Car Diaries (SSX)	0130-0200 NASN2: NASCAR Now (SET1) 0400-0430 NASCAR Now (NASN) 0800-0830 NASCAR Now (NASN) 0900-0930 WTCC (E) 1700-1730 NASCAR Now (NASN) 1800-1830 Motorsport UK (M&M) 2200-2300 Rally (E)
SAT SEP 6			
0345-0410 FIA GT (C4) 0955-1105 F1: Belgian GP Practice LIVE (Sports Xtra) 1030-1130 BTCC Highlights (ITV4) 1100-1200 WRC (Dave) 1130-1200 WTCC Highlights (ITV4) 1210-1435 F1: Belgian GP Qualifying LIVE (ITV1) 1255-1430 F1: Belgian GP Qualifying LIVE (Sports Xtra) 1445-1630 GP2: Belgium LIVE (ITV4) 1630-1700 Motorsport UK (ITV4)	0200-0300,1400-1500 Race & Rally UK 0530-0600 FPA 1530-1600 Belgian GT 1730-1800 Inside GP 2000-2100 Powernights 2008 2100-2200 Indy Lights	1030-1130 Rally Fever (SS3) 1700-1730 Suzuki Swift Cup (SS2)	0000-0030 NASCAR Now (NASN) 0030-0330 NASCAR: Tennessee LIVE (NASN) 0900-1200 NASCAR (NASN) 1230-0135 Racing's Great Escapes (M&M) 1605-1710 Racing's Great Escapes (M&M)
SUN SEP 7			
0730-0755 British F3 (C4) 0925-1030 GP2: Belgium LIVE (ITV4) 1030-1200 Belgian GP Qualifying Highlights (ITV4) 1200-1500 Belgian GP LIVE (ITV1) 1255-1430 Belgian GP LIVE (Radio 5 Live) 1800-1900 WRC (Dave) 2215-2315 Belgian GP Highlights (ITV1)	0400-0500 Scottish Motor Racing 0500-0700 ALMS 1300-1400 Indy Lights 1600-1700 Powernights 2008 1730-1900 DTM	0030-0430 NASCAR: Richmond LIVE (SS2) 0700-0800 Rally Fever (SSX) 0930-1200 NASCAR (SS2) 2030-2300 IndyCar: Illinois LIVE (SSX)	1730-1800 GP Racing On Track (SET2)
MON SEP 8			
0715-0730 Roary the Racing Car (C5) 1800-1900 Belgian GP Highlights (ITV4) 1900-2000 WRC (Dave)	0100-0200 On the Dakar Track 0200-0300 Scottish Motor Racing 1000-1100,1600-1700 Race & Rally UK 1800-1830 FPA	0830-1100 IndyCar (SSX) 2230-0100 World Motor Sport (SSX)	0015-0030 Motorsports Weekend (E) 0100-0200 Superleague Formula (E2) 0400-0600 NASCAR (NASN) 0730-0745 Motorsports Weekend (E) 1830-1845 Motorsports Weekend (E2)
TUE SEP 9			
0715-0730 Roary the Racing Car (C5) 1355-1425 Motorsport UK (ITV4)	0000-0100,2000-2100 Indy Lights 0400-0500,1000-1100,1700-1800 Powernights 2008 1100-1200,1600-1700 Scottish Motor Racing 1230-1300 Belgian GT 1400-1600 ALMS 1930-2000 Inside GP	0300-0430 World Motor Sport (SS2) 1000-1230 World Motor Sport (SS2) 1430-1700 World Motor Sport (SS2) 1800-1830 HGTCC (SSX) 1830-2000 Great & British (SSX) 2200-2330 Great & British (SSX) 2330-0000 HGTCC (SSX)	0400-0500 NASCAR Now (NASN) 0600-0700 Superleague Formula (SET1) 0730-0830 NASCAR Now (NASN) 0915-1000 Porsche Supercup (E2) 1630-2000 NASCAR Now (NASN) 1800-1830 ALMS (E2)
WED SEP 10			
0250-0340 British GT (C4) 0250-0340 NASCAR (C5) 0715-0730 Roary the Racing Car (C5)	0000-0100 Powernights 2008 1030-1100 FPA 1100-1130 Inside GP 1845-1900 French Porsche Carrera Cup 1900-2000 French GT	0100-0230 Great & British (SS3) 0230-0300 HGTCC (SS3) 0300-0530 World Motor Sport (SS1) 0630-0800 Great & British (SS3) 0930-1000 HGTCC (SS1) 1300-1430 Great & British (SSX) 1430-1500 HGTCC (SSX) 1730-1800 HGTCC (SS1) 2300-0000 World Motor Sport (SS3)	0400-0430 NASCAR Now (NASN) 0800-0830 NASCAR Now (NASN)

ALL PICS: ETHERINGTON/LAT, EBSE/LAT, TEE/LAT, MILLER/LAT, DOLE/LAT

BEST TV OF THE WEEK

✪ F1 – BELGIAN GRAND PRIX

Sunday 1200-1500

ITV1 LIVE

Just six races remain and Lewis Hamilton is still in command of the world championship, but Felipe Massa's crushing victory in Valencia and near-miss in Hungary may just have sparked a Ferrari revival after a period of relative McLaren domination. Last year the Italian team finished first and second, and will be looking for a repeat this year in order to close the six and 13-point deficits currently being endured by Massa and Kimi Raikkonen – who has not been beaten at Spa since 2003.

✪ NASCAR SPRINT CUP – RICHMOND

Sunday 0030-0430

Sky Sports 2 LIVE

The Virginia oval hosts the final race before the top 12 have their points reset for 'The Chase'. The top nine are assured, more or less, of their places, but Matt Kenseth, Denny Hamlin and Clint Bowyer – who won here earlier this year – had better beware because David Ragan and Kasey Kahne are right on their case. This one should be well worth staying up for.



NATIONAL RACING PICKS OF THE WEEK

✪ MALLORY PARK BARC

September 7

It's been a supremely successful season for Ginetta in 2008 – Championship glory in British GT, almost certain championship status for the G50 Cup for '09 and a renewed deal for Ginetta Juniors to support the BTCC next year. To celebrate, Mallory Park hosts the second Ginetta Festival this weekend, with the full range of one-marque championships and the first-ever Ginetta Heritage race.

✪ CADWELL PARK CSCC

September 6-7

Cadwell Park has to be the most feversome circuit the UK has to offer, and the Classic Sports Car Club's two-day meeting this weekend has an enormous programme of eclectic racing to offer those prepared to make the trek to Louth. Everything from vintage Formula Fords and modern day Formula Jedis, to classic Jaguars will be slugging it out through the Gooseneck and getting airborne over the Mountain – well worth a look.



GOmotorsport.net

NEXT WEEK

BACK-TO-BACK CLASSIC F1 RACES

TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE: MUST-READ SPA RACE REPORT UNMISSABLE MONZA PREVIEW

ON SALE THURSDAY SEP 11





CRUNCH TIME FOR INDYCARS

CASTRONEVES GUNS FOR DIXON IN CHICAGOLAND FINALE TITLE SHOOTOUT

FULL PREVIEW OF AUTOSPORT 1000

THE MAGIC OF LE MANS COMES TO SILVERSTONE AS AUDI AND PEUGEOT FACE OFF



LETTERS

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

LETTER OF THE WEEK

BAN 'GO SLOW' TACTICS

Having just watched the Rally New Zealand and seen another demonstration of Citroen and Ford drivers 'driving slowly' on day one and two of the rally, it is time the FIA introduced regulations to stop this silly tactical driving of 'going slow' to avoid being the 'sweeper' on the following day.

"WE NEED A RULE TO PUT AND END TO THIS SLOW DRIVING"

This isn't a new problem. Casting my mind back 10 years or so, I remember the likes of Colin McRae, Richard Burns and Carlos Sainz faced with a similar issue, again on gravel rallies. At the time a very simple rule was introduced to stop this – reversing the top eight for the following day's running order. Any chance this can be brought back?

Ian Keyworth
West Yorkshire

WIN



ROAD ANGEL Navigator 9000

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

Please ensure that your full address is included on all correspondence

DON'T FORGET JV, RON

I was interested to read on autosport.com of Ron Dennis's doubts that there had been a driver before Lewis Hamilton to have won eight of his first 29 races. Mr Dennis has obviously forgotten a certain Jacques Villeneuve, whose victory at the Hungaroring in 1997 was his ninth victory in 27 starts – the same number it took Hamilton to achieve his eighth victory, at Hockenheim last month. Looking further back, Alberto Ascari's thirteenth and final victory came in his 24th grand prix start.

I do not wish to downplay Lewis's achievement, but let us not forget the facts when putting that achievement into historical context.

James Watson
Cambridge

"How can Valencia be better for F1 than Silverstone?"

THINK OF THE FANS

We attended the Valencia GP for a new experience and great racing. What a disappointment awaited us.

On arrival there was very little information about any events taking place around the circuit and there were no roaming tickets for the Friday that are available for all other GPs.

The stands were poor – we paid €480 to be on the pit straight and could only see scaffolding on a bridge.

There were no officials to contact on site to discuss the poor view and, despite several unsold seats, no ability to change the allocation either, so we would have had three days of watching next to nothing were it not for Kangaroo TV.

Never have I attended a race where 30 minutes after the finish you were ushered out of your seats and told to leave. And to top it all, after sitting in blistering heat for hours when forced to leave the seats, all toilet facilities were closed immediately.

It appears to me that all that the event was interested in was the sponsors and hospitality and not the true fans. If they do not want empty seats on TV, they really need to start looking at what is provided for the travelling fans. It surely is not difficult.

How, for example, can Valencia be better than Silverstone or Hockenheim? I will never know – they have far better facilities, atmosphere and racing than Valencia.

Michelle Newman
Swindon

GET TOUGH ON DIESELS

When will the MSA do something about the ridiculous advantage the diesels have in the BTCC. It is destroying the competition to see cars with a massive power advantage, parking on the apex and then pulling 20 metres ahead on every straight!

There needs to be a weight, or air-restrictor penalty applied NOW. Otherwise this series will be a total farce!

Andy Duncan
By email

autosport.com FROM THE FORUM

Is Kimi Raikkonen still a title contender?

Enkei
You're only as good as your last race. People forget that Kimi brought Ferrari the world title last year. Every driver can have an off period. Give the guy some time...

undersquare
He really needs a good weekend at Spa. That race is make or break for him for sure. It's his dominant track – if he finishes behind Felipe on pace then it's number two status for sure, and Kimi is nobody's number two. He'll lose motivation and that will be the end – he'll be off in 2009 to party on his own terms, as ever, somewhere else. If he finishes ahead then it's game on still.

raceday
I read somewhere recently that this year's Ferrari has a general tendency to understeer. couldn't be an important reason why Kimi's relative strength has decreased this year? He prefers oversteer as I understand it.

Bb
Yeah, that McLaren in 2005 was an oversteery car and he did great.

petri
Kimi is always at his best when the situation is tight. He'll be forced to take more risks at Spa anyway.

Arion
Don't think KR care what the media says. He will bounce back. Massa had a catastrophic start to the season, and he's now favourite to win the title. Things change very quickly in F1 – he won't be asked to support Massa until he's mathematically out of it.

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COMMENT

THE INSIDE LINE Kevin Turner, National Editor



I MUST confess to being rather cynical about Superleague Formula before last weekend's inaugural meeting at Donington Park. Are football and motor racing really compatible? Will fans transfer? And do we really need another one-make single-seater series?

While the answer to the last question is still almost certainly no, it's fair to say that Superleague does offer something a bit different. The two-by-two qualifying worked well and the cars looked good. Okay, so not many people turned up, but that was expected. As well as facing the cynicism, Superleague also had to contend with the BTCC just down the road at Silverstone, and Brands Hatch's DTM event – complete with Lewis Hamilton demo mania!

Of those that did turn up, a surprising number appeared in their football team's colours and the cheers from the media after the press conferences suggests it's not just the motorsport world that is taking an interest.

There's even something for the racing purist. Despite the gimmicks, which include the push-to-pass button, the cars give a good impression. They sound right, move around a bit, and overtaking seems possible. At least until the teams get on top of the set-up (if ever there was an argument to ban testing in F1 this is it – having teams and drivers turn up with cars only just finished made for an interesting weekend).

As is to be expected, a few tweaks would help. There are far too many red/white and red/black cars. Though I suspect the fans of each football club will know instantly which car is theirs, for the rest of us looking on, the use of a few away kits might be useful.

The reliability of the cars will surely improve too, hopefully reducing the likelihood of somebody having another weekend like poor AC Milan's Robert Doornbos. Blowing up on the first lap and failing to start the second was a disappointing way for the ex-F1 driver to start his Superleague career, but he – like many of the teams and drivers – seemed to accept that a few problems were inevitable on a first run. And besides, the unpredictability of unreliability is a factor that many people miss from other branches of the sport!

The supporting cast of Caterhams and EuroBOSS (from which the fastest runner got within a third of a second of the best Superleague time) made for an odd mix, but the package will change anyway.

So, yes, I would get rid of some single-seater series. But on last weekend's evidence Superleague is some way down the list of those to which I'd give the chop.

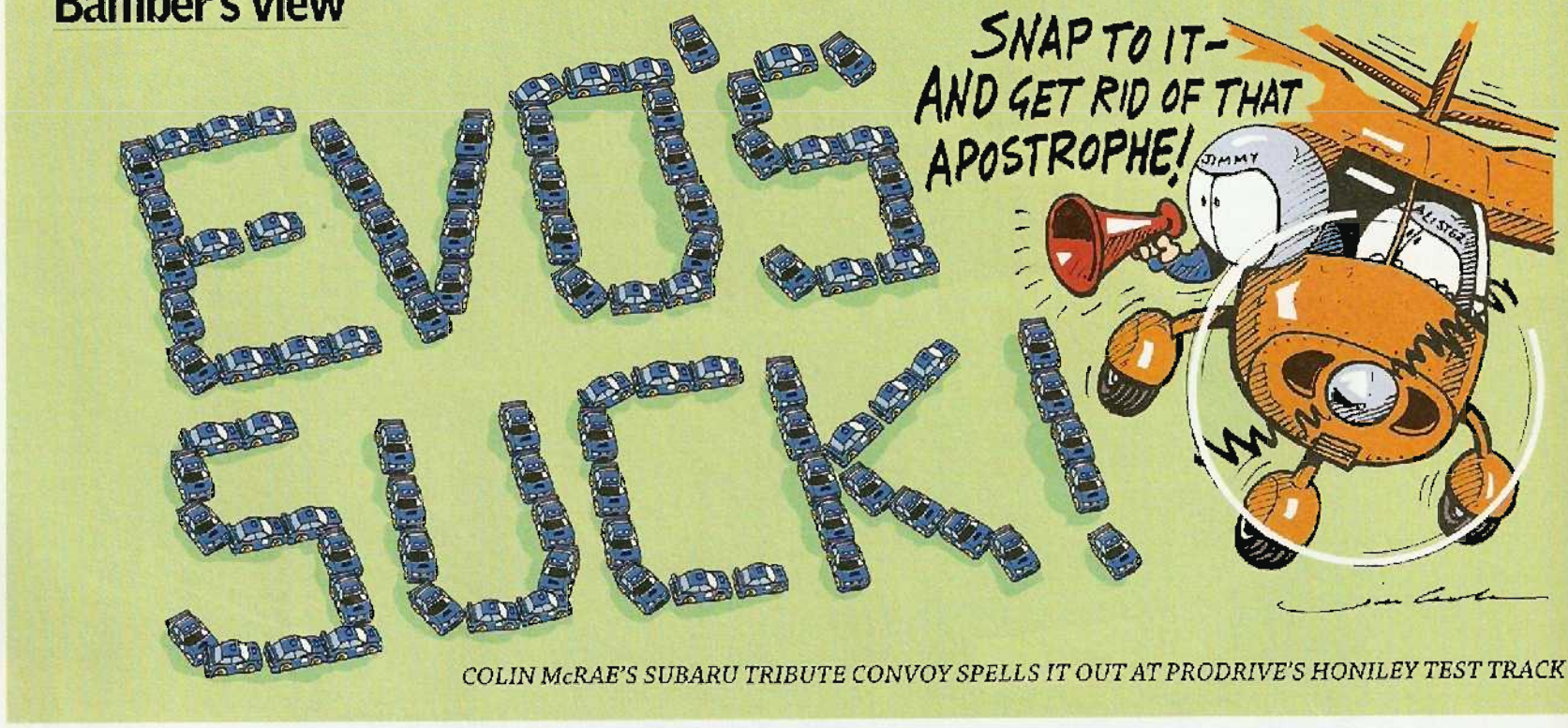
"If ever there was an argument to ban F1 testing, Superleague was it. Unreliability made for extra drama"

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

■ In our Max Mosley story in the July 31 issue, we wrote that Eddie Jordan said the FIA president could not continue in his role following the sex scandal revelations. Jordan in fact stated that should Mosley have been found guilty of the Nazi allegations, then his position would have been untenable.

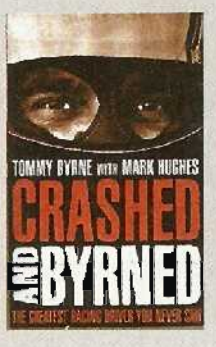
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Bamber's view



COLIN McRAE'S SUBARU TRIBUTE CONVOY SPELLS IT OUT AT PRODRIVE'S HONILEY TEST TRACK

ARMCHAIR ENTHUSIAST



BOOK

CRASHED AND BYRNED: THE GREATEST RACING DRIVER YOU NEVER SAW
By Tommy Byrne with Mark Hughes (www.iconbooks.co.uk)
£10.99
ISBN: 978-184831-002-5

WHEN TOMMY BYRNE had a sensational McLaren F1 test in the autumn of 1982, it was just four years since he'd been living his youth on the breadline in rural Ireland, where life was governed by the Catholic Church and the pub opening times. Within hours of that test, he knew he'd blown his dream of becoming a grand prix legend.

Byrne's autobiography, ghosted by his friend, Autosport Grand Prix Editor Mark Hughes, is a compelling page-turner. It documents the life of a 'knacker from Dundalk' who finds it hard to fit into a snobby world of motorsport, but who even so earns the respect of most for his phenomenal talent. His rapid rise to prominence is astonishing, his freefall into drink and drugs even more so.

That's what makes this book such a fantastic read and, if anything, the anecdotes become yet more outlandish once he abandons his European career and heads for the States and – catastrophically – Mexico.

Moreover, the tales are recounted by someone with a Muhammad Ali-style belief of 'I'm the greatest' that leads to some entertaining criticisms of many who crossed his path. Byrne arguably could have been the best; did Ayrton Senna really plot his junior career so that he would avoid taking him on?

The book's sub-title – The greatest racing driver you never saw – indicates that Byrne and Hughes are attempting to widen the appeal from the diehard motorsport audience. And there's definitely a *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* element, especially when Tommy's dodging the bullets from a crazed, suicidal Mexican who has just aimed at a gaggle of prostitutes.

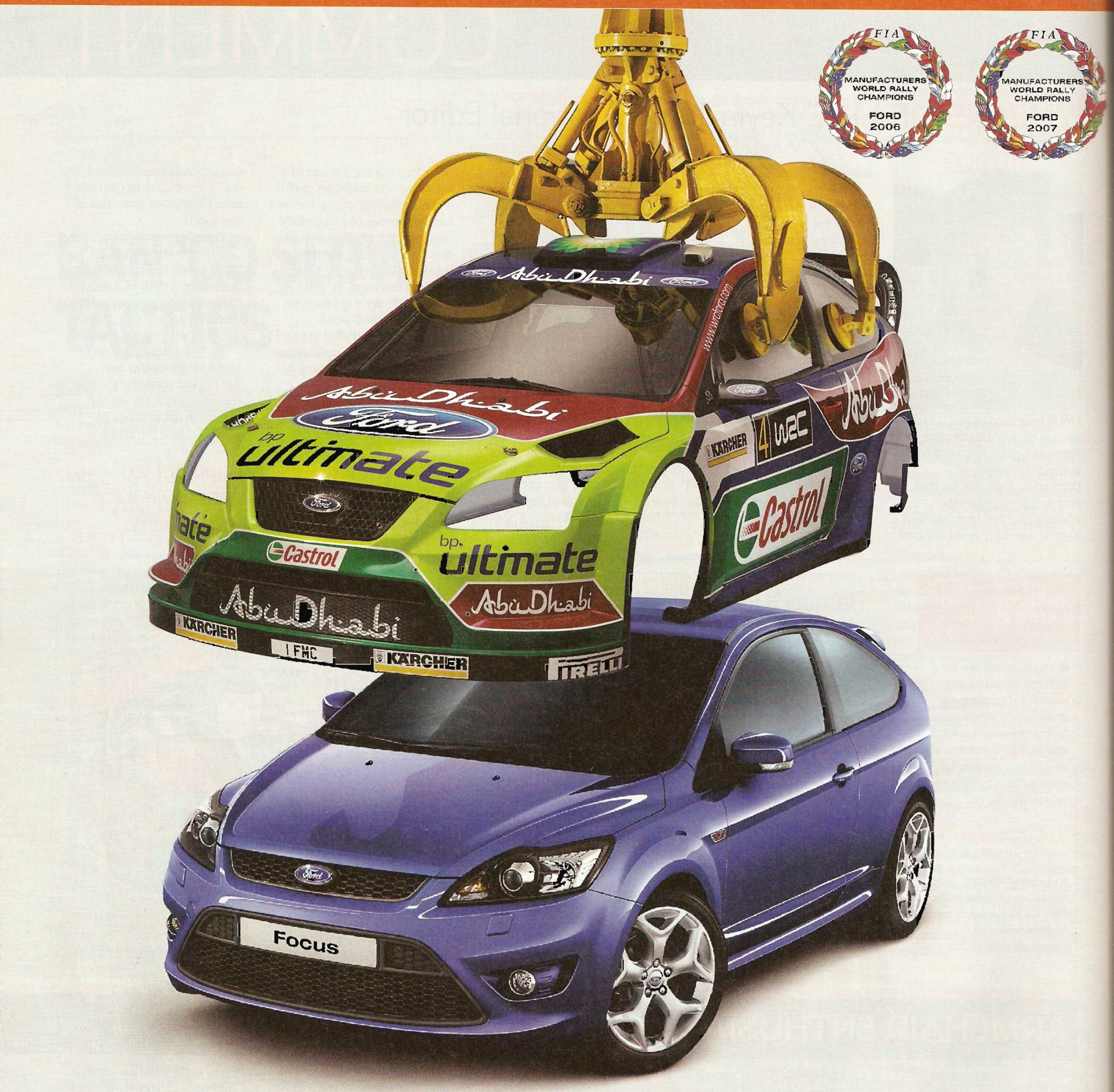
Whether the book manages to cross over is debateable. Some of the juicy tales demand knowledge of the motorsport industry and the characters within it – fine for an Autosport reader, but it may put off others.

You feel, for instance, that his recovery from a depression fuelled by drink and drugs could have been expanded upon without losing any of the racing stories. After all, this book is short – fast readers will get through it in a few hours – and, bearing in mind there are no pictures either, it's a tad dear.

Byrne has clearly undertaken this project as part of his healing process, and comes across as a likeable, colourful character. You may think we're biased because Hughes is an Autosport guy, but this is one of the best racing books you'll read this decade. Just a shame it's not longer.

MS

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Autosport GP editor **Mark Hughes**

HILL SHOWED US THE SOUL OF F1

WITH PHIL HILL'S death last Thursday, motor racing lost one of its most intelligent analysts. Very few people fully 'get' the many-faceted nature of the sport, understand the importance of the psychology, the engineering, the physics, the gladiatorial combat, the human relations, the competitive drive, the romance and the nuances of mood and feel that combine whenever a motor race is held. Hill did so. Even more so once he'd retired from the cockpit. A lot of people, fans and participants alike, 'get' only one or two elements and therefore miss out on a whole chunk of the majesty of this sport. Hill, a former adrenaline junkie, a fine mind, a free spirit, an engineering buff, a physically and mentally sensitive soul and a huge car enthusiast, understood all this perhaps better than any other successful driver.

THE HUMAN TOLL

Talking to him a few years ago, he gave a great insight into the conflicts within him during his 1961 world title season; not just the obvious emotional conflict of clinching the crown as his team-mate and championship rival Wolfgang von Trips was killed, but also that of getting the right F1 car just as his own competitive juices were beginning to dry up. Altogether, his concerns for himself and von Trips gave Phil an uncomfortable season.

"In my early days of racing I think I may have been playing the bravado game of 'let's see if I can't get myself killed', you know, proving something to myself, foolishly trying to impress – although I'd have gone crazy with you if you'd suggested it to me at the time. But that was knocked out of me pretty quick by the human toll. More and more guys were getting killed around me. At first you rationalise to yourself why it was him and not you, the things that he did that you wouldn't do. But then another would be killed and that didn't apply to him. So you had to keep rewriting the script in your head as to why it wasn't you. But eventually – and this point had come to me around '61 – you realise it's nothing more than plain, dumb luck. You start to identify more and more with the guys who've died until, eventually, it's a real struggle to believe it was their inadequacies that were doing them in rather than fate. I feel my peak as a driver was 1960 – I was flying then, but the car wasn't competitive.

"For '61 we got the sharknose and it was the fastest thing around. It was obvious the title would be fought out between us Ferrari guys. For me, it definitely came one year too late because I was by this time having real difficulty in giving everything of myself. That problem was compounded by Trips – because he hadn't reached that stage yet. He was full of desire. That combined with what I saw as a difficulty he had in accurately drawing the line of where the limit was to make him a worry. Over his career he was involved in way too many incidents at a time when that was really bad news. There wasn't anything cold or calculated about it; he believed intensely in the honour of the sport and relished the man-to-man challenge. But he worried me because his feel for the limit seemed kinda fuzzy at times. In '61, with a good car at last, he seemed so freaked out about the possibility of becoming world champion that he was trying extra hard. He was just way more turned on by it all than I was then, and that was helping him have a real strong season."

AN UNDERRATED CHAMPION

It always seemed to me that Phil Hill was underrated; whenever discussions about least worthy world champions come up, he's invariably proposed as a candidate. Sure, he wasn't as good as Stirling Moss, but at his best he was as good as any of his contemporaries. This was the man who on his first grand prix for Ferrari – only his second grand prix of any sort – was running ahead of his world champion elect team-mate Mike Hawthorn and who, indeed, waved Mike through in aid of his title quest.

His speed advantage over von Trips in '61 was pretty resounding, too – five poles for Hill, one for von Trips. But, as explained, by then that competitive intensity was difficult for him to sustain over a race distance. He eventually just plain ran out of competitive desire. To the point where he simply 'forgot' to renew his international competition licence for '68 – surely a sub-conscious act of self-sabotage – and so retired.

Hill was just as eloquent talking about the difference in driving technique between the front- and rear-engine F1 cars, or about the engineering strengths and limitations of the 'sharknose' 156 in which he won the title, or about how it 'felt' compared with, say, a Dino 246. He'd talk about the noise of their engines, the feel of the gearshifts. You got the feeling he enjoyed his career a whole lot more once he could look back on it.

ECHOES OF '61 FOR KIMI?

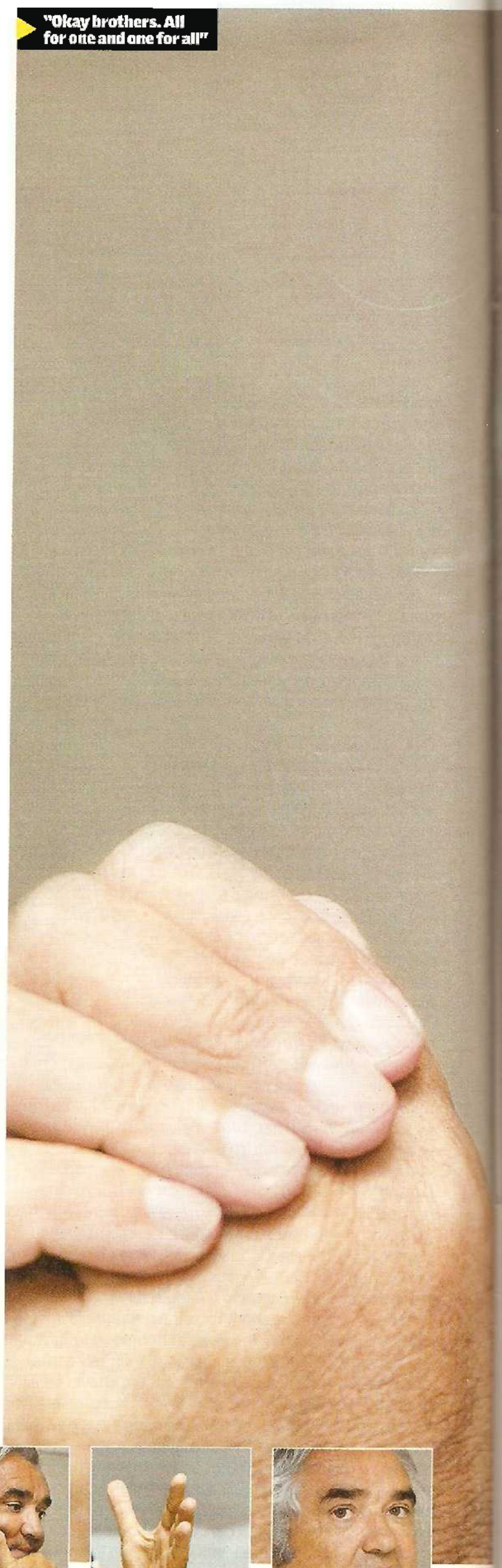
Now a distant descendant of Hill's in the line of Ferrari aces, Kimi Raikkonen, approaches a critical grand prix in the midst of an apparent motivation crisis while fighting for a world title. Because of the night-and-day difference in safety levels then and now, it's unlikely his desire is being sucked out of him for the same reasons. But something seems to be going wrong. Spa gives him a perfect opportunity of allowing his immense gift simply do the job for him; it's that type of circuit. But then what? Are the root reasons psychological or technical? Or based on his relationship with the team? Is the fact that team-mate Felipe Massa seems 'way more turned on' as Hill put it, about winning the title a significant factor? Is the team beginning to feel this and subtly changing its focus as a result? These questions and their answers are a perfect illustration of why the multiple layers of this sport are at the root of its greatness, and why we should always open our minds to all of its facets. Just as Phil Hill always did.



Phil Hill understood and brought to life the many facets of F1

WHY F1 MUST HEED FLAV'S WAKE-UP CALL

Renault F1 team principal Flavio Briatore wears many hats, but the Italian's hardest job is to persuade his peers to listen to his calls for a self-preservation society, as JONATHAN NOBLE finds out


"Okay brothers. All for one and one for all"

Can he keep Fernando Alonso? Can he make Renault win again? Does he want to stay on in Formula 1 himself for a third decade? Or does he want to walk away from it all to football and his latest passion, Queen's Park Rangers?

Renault boss Flavio Briatore has quite a few important matters on his to-do list at the moment. So you could forgive him if he was a bit self-centred in his current thoughts. But, instead, the focus is not on himself or his vested interests.

Although not quite wanting his fellow F1 team bosses to embrace total free love, he is desperate for them to start looking after each other a bit more.

For years now, Briatore has banged the drum about the need to cut costs, increase the excitement and make F1 more accessible for fans. And for years, the selfish interest of teams desperate not to give away anything that could harm their own competitive advantage has meant Briatore's calls have fallen on deaf ears.

Now, however, F1 has reached the tipping point. A looming worldwide recession against the backdrop of spiralling costs has become a spur that something needs to be done – and finally Briatore's calls for action are being heeded.

"We need to really have everybody wanting to keep F1 going, this is the most important thing," he says, waving his hands around as we chat in his office inside the Renault motorhome. "For many years I have said we are going to arrive at a point where something needs to be done – and now I believe we have arrived at that point. We must work together for the future of F1 – to make sure F1 has a future."

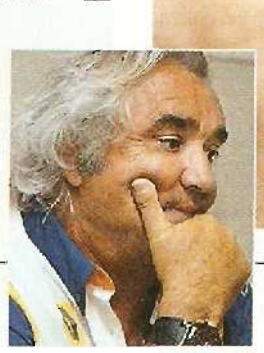
There is a reason why Briatore is suddenly enthused by this. The formation of the new Formula One Teams Association (FOTA), which aims to give the teams a common voice in shaping the sport and dealing with Bernie Ecclestone and Max Mosley, has hinted at a team unity unseen before.

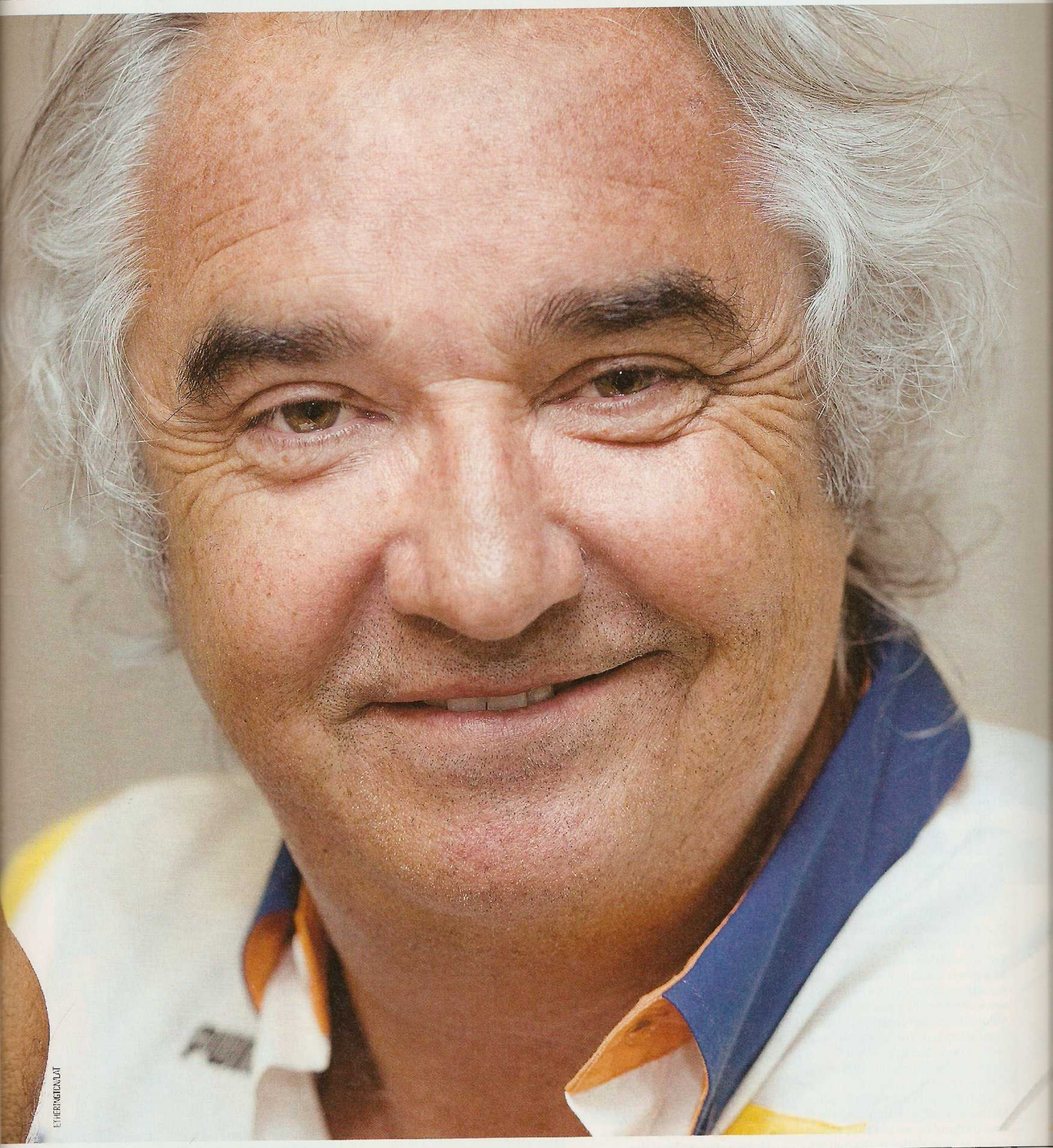
So keen is Briatore to prioritise securing F1's future that all his personal plans have been pretty much put on hold until he knows where the sport is heading. So there will be no answer about whether he will extend his contract with Renault until he knows that F1 is serious about getting its house in order.

"I don't know," he says when asked if he will pass a landmark 20 years' involvement in the sport. "First I need to see about this association. At the moment, you need to build the foundations for that – and after that everything is possible.

"My future is quite simple – I will enjoy it especially if we move a little bit to make sure that F1 is safe.







EITHER/NEGATIVE

"We were the only team to make 90 people redundant. The others worked on the little windows that were open"

We need to make sure every team is part of this game and surviving; we need to make sure that in F1 you have the technical side and also the sport side; we need more excitement in the races. It is very possible."

One key factor that Briatore believes can open up the sport to getting the changes it requires is that the need for unanimous agreement, which held F1 together during the 1980s but has been a barrier to change in recent years, has been ditched. Now, a majority of seven teams out of 10 is enough.

"The problem with F1 was that any time you wanted to change something you needed unanimous agreement. Unanimous? We are not managing a condominium! Can you imagine managing a billion-dollar business with unanimous agreement? Forget it! There was always somebody who had a different interest. Or somebody who thought too much about the past and didn't want to look to the future – saying we didn't do this for 20 years, we don't need it now.

"I believe now, if this team association goes through, we have the tool to change a lot in F1. But the teams need to change, you know?"

The change in the teams that Briatore talks about refers to the fact that competitive instincts of team bosses to always improve their own team, at the expense of others, have been costly to the sport. He wants them all to start thinking solely about what's best for F1 as a whole.

Take the engine freeze, for example. Briatore was one of the pioneers of the concept, and in the end all teams agreed to an idea that would allow them a big reduction in costs.

Renault duly cut back its engine programme, laying off staff at its engine base in Viry-Chatillon. Yet other teams continued pushing to develop the parts of the engine and powertrain that were not frozen – and even perhaps making modifications to improve reliability to frozen parts, with added performance benefits.

Estimates suggest that the policy adopted by Renault has left its engines 30bhp down on rivals Ferrari and Mercedes-Benz – and Briatore is unimpressed.

"The direction was decided by the FIA, and for me it was stopping development. After that, you see somebody going on with developing and in the end you are penalised. I believe we need to have more transparency and somebody to take care of it.

"It is a very important role for the federation to check this happens. We were the only team to make redundant 80 or 90 people, while everybody else worked on the little windows that were still open to give them an advantage."

But the team's engine woes are not the only reason for Renault's fall from form. It's no secret that the team was caught out by the switch to Bridgestone tyres last year, having moulded a car and concept that was so perfectly suited to Michelin. Matters were not helped either by windtunnel-calibration issues.

"I think our competitiveness is not only the engine. What we need to look at is the moment when Michelin decided to stop F1. We still had one year to go and we were very unprepared, as we were fighting just until the last race with Ferrari [for the 2006 world championship title]. Because we were unprepared to change the tyre manufacturer, we took the wrong direction in the windtunnel. And I believe as well, with all this change, the windtunnel did not tell us true figures, and then we did not react quickly. I mean, it is a large amount of stuff that happened. And we missed Fernando as well, absolutely.

"We knew this at the time, and after that I believe this year we have come to a normal Renault performance, in the way we have improved the car from the first race until today. We improved the car a lot, and Fernando was a big help in that, and I hope Nelson Piquet as well, because the car, in the last two or three races, is better. Sure, the points we have are not proportional to the performance we have, because we have had accidents and some bad luck.

"At the end of the season, if you are good then you need to finish in the first four, but it is important the team is in the right direction now. It is difficult when you go down and you are used to staying up... we've seen it before with other teams. Let's not forget, in the last 10 years it was only Ferrari and Renault winning the world championship and nobody else. It is not so easy. We need to fight. We need to get back to the top."


Alonso's return has lifted spirits at Renault

Saying it is one thing; achieving it is another. Unlike some other team bosses in times of crisis, Briatore is not the kind of man who shoots his lieutenants when things don't work; his style is very much to get the right people into the right senior jobs and then leave them to do what they do best, allowing them to make the decisions to move things forward. That's why Briatore has built up around him a loyal army focused on getting the team on the up, and not on apportioning blame for what's happened.

"You need to give the confidence to the people, the responsibility to a department to make sure

MILAN, ADELAIDE, LOFTUS ROAD

FLAVIO BRIATORE was introduced to F1 at the 1988 Australian Grand Prix in Adelaide, when he attended as a guest of team owner Luciano Benetton, for whom he had worked since they met at the Milan Stock Exchange in 1974.

He soon saw the opportunities and became Benetton F1's commercial director in 1989, and team principal in '91.

That season he snapped up Michael Schumacher, laying the foundations for an era that would result in world titles in '94 and '95.

When Schuey left for Ferrari, Briatore quit Benetton to help establish Supertec Sport, which supplied V10 engines to Benetton and three other teams.

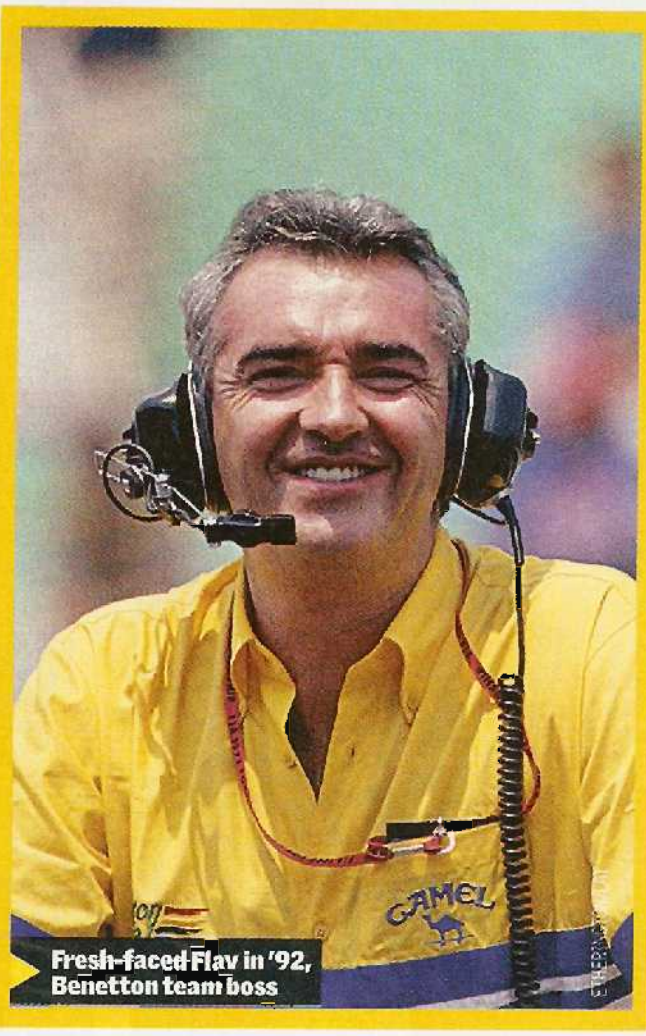
In 2000, when Renault chose to return to F1 by purchasing Benetton, Briatore was called upon to lead the squad. He once again set about restructuring, and in 2003 gave a race chance to Fernando Alonso, who took the team to titles in 2005 and '06.

Briatore is not just devoted to F1 though. He has an exclusive beach club in Tuscany, and a Kenyan luxury hotel and spa.

He has also created the Billionaire brand, which started in 1998 with the launch of the Billionaire Club in Sardinia. It has now branched out into clothing.

Most recently Briatore played a part in buying the Queen's Park Rangers football club, although he is adamant that his efforts there will not divert attention away from F1.

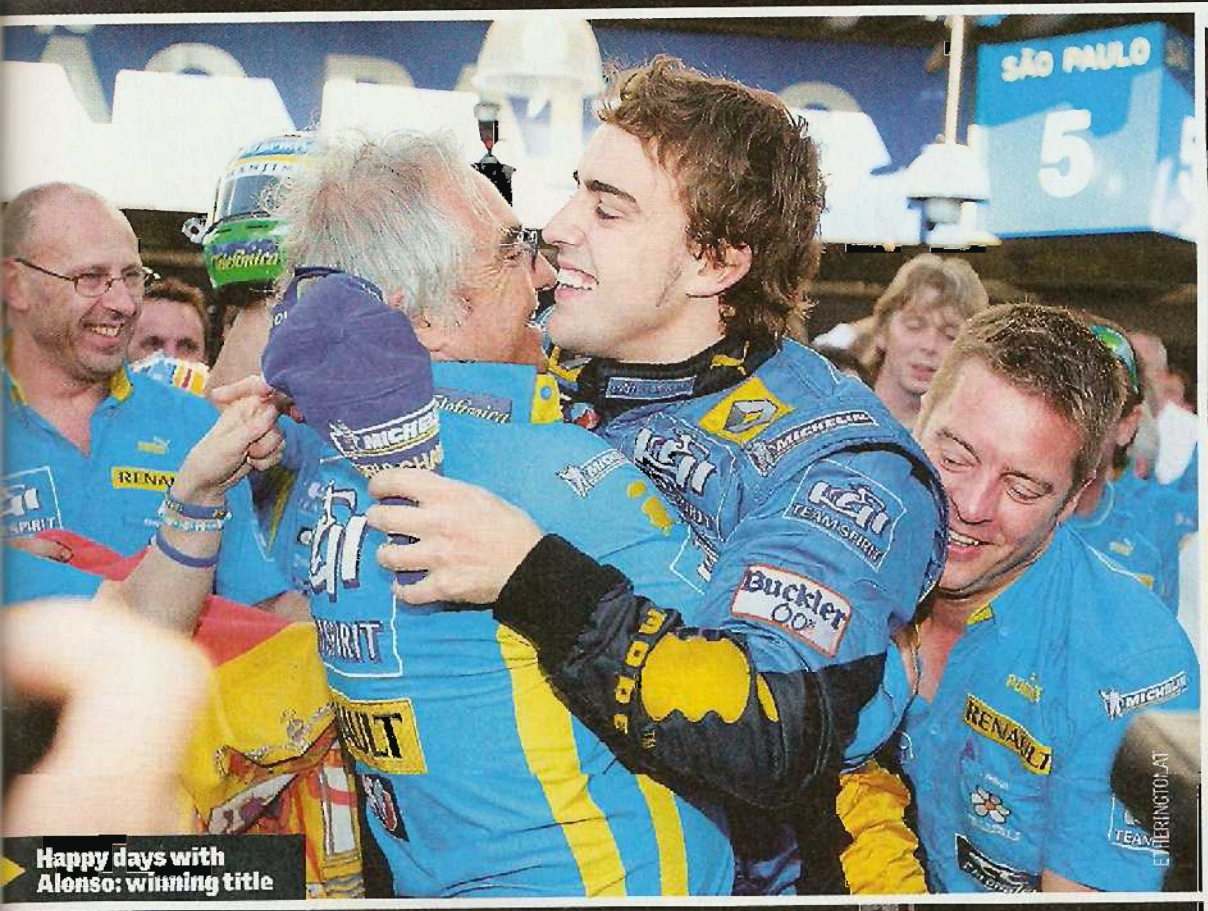
"I believe I spend around 40 to 50 minutes per day, maybe an hour, instead of a lunch," he says of his commitments to QPR. "It is one hour per day maximum. This is the maximum now the management is in place. I hope in the future I can spend less time on QPR, because you need to give the responsibility to the management."



Fresh-faced Flav in '92, Benetton team boss



ETHERINGTON/LAT



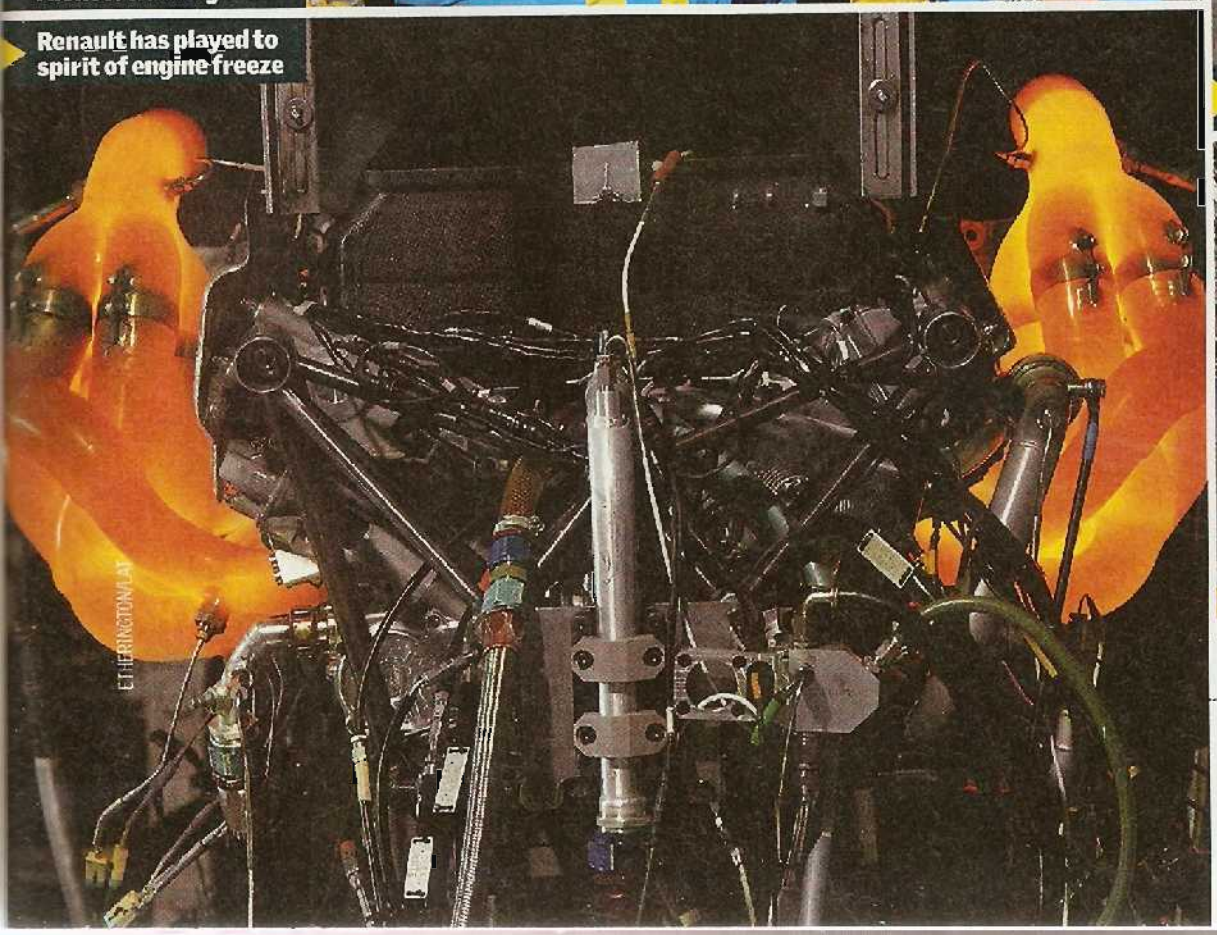
Happy days with Alonso: winning title

ETHERINGTON/LAT



Unhappy days with Alonso: any time in '08

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Renault has played to spirit of engine freeze

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"Come on ref. You musta be jokin'!"

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"In F1 I believe the contract is something people put together if they have a short memory"

It's been a struggle in '08, but Flav is hopeful

everything is working. The moment it is not working it becomes your job and you need to change. Unfortunately, we are fighting with the best people in the world, and what you need to do always is make sure your people in charge have the motivation, the focus and the target, and if you achieve the target then for me it is fine. If you don't achieve the target then you need to change. It is part of life.



F1 team unity brings additional benefits

"Like everything, we try to make changes as quick as possible, but the process is not so fast, and now we are starting to have the results of the changes we did at the beginning of the season. If we keep the escalation like this, then I think next year we can expect to fight for the world championship."

That self-belief, as well as the concrete results, will be critical to Renault's chances of retaining Alonso for 2009. The Spaniard has made no secret of the fact that he wants to be able to win races next year – and Renault and Honda are now locked in a fight to prove they have the best chance.

Briatore knows that if the team position improves, then the Alonso situation will take care of itself; a failure to improve will leave Alonso with little option but to seek pastures new. But the hint of the championship challenge that Briatore talks about will almost certainly be enough to convince him to stay.

"I don't know," says Briatore when asked if he can keep hold of Alonso. "You never know. In F1 I believe the contract is only something that people put together if they have a short memory.

"I believe if you want to stay together then you stay together if there is a contract or not. We hope to work with him next year and we hope to give him a winning car, because if you see the technical progression we have done this year I am very confident for next year."

Briatore does not shy away from how important a factor Alonso is in motivating his staff.

"Fernando, we have known for many, many years. With the team he is super. He fits with us. The moment Fernando arrived back at Renault, he gave a lot of motivation to everybody.

"Everybody again believes that if they do a good car then we have the possibility to win. This is more important for the engineers and mechanics... for people doing a lot of overtime. What we have done to improve the car in the last three months is part of this motivation that comes from having Fernando with us."

But is there a worry that Honda's chances of luring Alonso could be boosted by the Japanese manufacturer throwing all its efforts into 2009 so early and getting a head start over the opposition?

A smile breaks out over Briatore's face. "Everybody is different, but I am always sure if you are competitive then it is much easier to do a better car than if you are not competitive at all. We did it like that as well [switching plans early because of an uncompetitive season in 2007] and it was a disaster!"

Yet, as has been the theme throughout this conversation, talk quickly returns to the wider aspect of getting F1 in order. It's all Briatore seems to be thinking about at the moment.

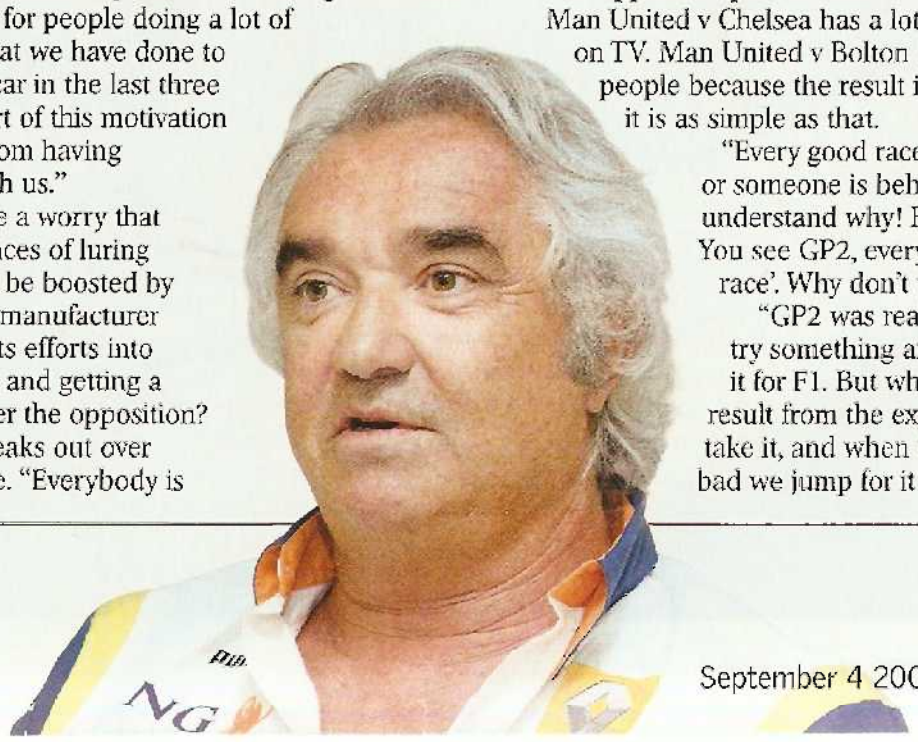
"We need to give a future to F1. And when you talk about the future of F1, I am talking about the future of all F1, the independent teams and the not-independent teams. Everybody believes the manufacturers are there forever. They think that maybe the world will collapse, but F1 will stay on top – and it is not like that. We need to be very careful with Max, Bernie and the teams.

"Everybody needs to take one step back to make sure F1 has a future. Maybe we won't keep the jobs for everyone in F1, but at least the sport will go ahead.

"F1 is too predictable and the show is not fantastic. We need it less predictable in the races. And, more important, we need to be much closer to the people – we need more stars, more developing of sponsors together, we need more of everyone. The appeal of sport is that it is not predictable. Man United v Chelsea has a lot of people watching on TV. Man United v Bolton or QPR has much fewer people because the result is quite predictable – it is as simple as that.

"Every good race is because it is raining or someone is behind. And we still don't understand why! For me, it is amazing. You see GP2, everybody tells me 'fantastic race'. Why don't we do the same?

"GP2 was really an experiment to try something and then after to adopt it for F1. But when there is a good result from the experiment we never take it, and when there is something bad we jump for it immediately!"



GRAND PRIX GOLD

RELIVING THE GREAT RACES OF THE PAST





McLaren celebrates his first GP win as a constructor

BRUCE'S BELGIAN GP

McLaren wins at Spa after Stewart's Matra runs out of fuel in closing stages – Amon, Surtees, Hulme all lead but retire – Rodriguez (BRM) and Ickx (Ferrari) second and third. By PATRICK McNALLY

No one was more surprised than Bruce McLaren when he suddenly found himself winner of the Belgian Grand Prix at Spa, having set a new record race speed in his McLaren-Ford M7A. It was another race of disappointed leaders: first Chris Amon, then John Surtees, Denny Hulme, and finally Jackie Stewart with the cruellest luck of all – running out of fuel on the penultimate lap, Ken Tyrrell having calculated on 7mpg and the consumption turning out to be 6.6.

One of the highlights of the race was the near race-long scrap between McLaren, Pedro Rodriguez, Piers Courage and, in the early stages, Jo Siffert. Surtees at one time looked sure of victory but instead had to be content with the fastest lap and a new lap record. BRM, as at Monaco, were once again the bridesmaids, Rodriguez driving a very level-headed race. The only nasty incident to occur concerned Brian Redman, whose Cooper-BRM left the road after a suspension breakage and caught fire. Redman was lucky to escape with a broken arm, but a marshal struck by the car was very badly hurt.

THE RACE

After a deputation of the entrants, the organisers sensibly decided on a special starting procedure should it rain. If conditions were bad at 3.30pm, the start could be delayed. It would then be at the discretion of Monsieur Herion, director of the course, to start the race at any time in the subsequent hour, either in grid formation or individually at 10-second intervals. Throughout the day dark clouds sculled through the sky, but somehow the rain kept off. The drivers, after being paraded around the circuit in open cars, then did one warming-up lap before taking their places on the grid. Amon plumped for Ferrari 0007, with aerofoil.

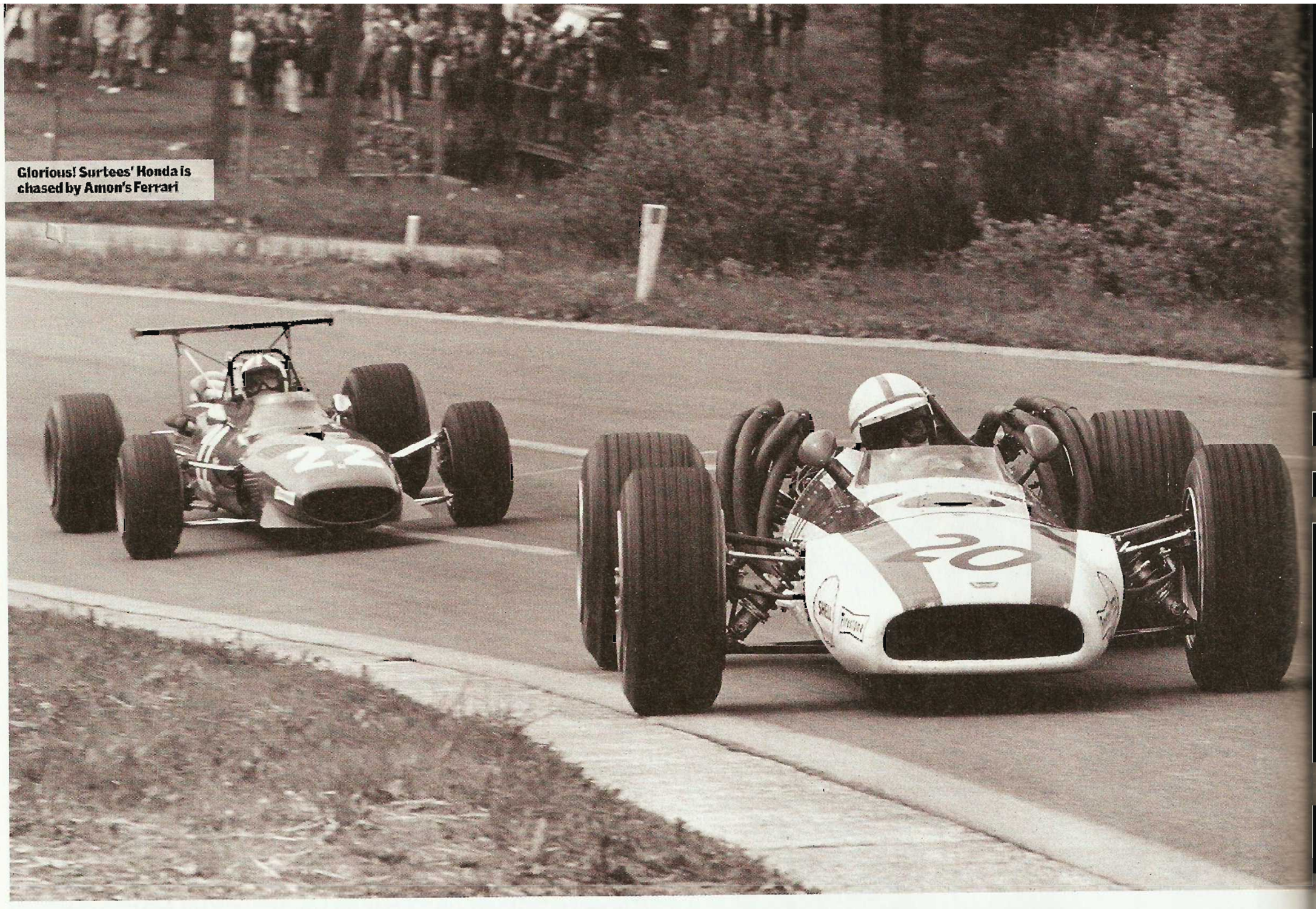
Exactly at 3.30, Herion dropped the flag and Amon out-accelerated the rest into Eau Rouge. Team-mate Jacky Ickx in the second Ferrari was close behind, with Surtees in the Honda and Hulme in the McLaren leading the rest of the pack. With both Jack Brabham (after travelling back to England for a new engine during qualifying) and the Lotuses at the rear of the grid, the first lap was not without excitement. Jochen Rindt had made a terrific start and was already moving up the field.

Jo Bonnier was looking very unhappy: the mechanics had changed his wheels at the last minute and had failed to insert a necessary spacer, causing a wheel stud to shear on the line. Jo limped round in the McLaren-BRM to stop at his pits after one lap and retire.

After their magnificent start the two Ferraris led the field until Stavelot, when Surtees moved past Ickx into second place. As the cars screamed past the pits to complete their first lap Amon, Surtees and Ickx were virtually nose to tail; behind them Hulme led Stewart in the Matra, closely followed by Rodriguez in the leading BRM. Courage in the Parnell BRM was just ahead of Siffert in the Rob Walker Lotus, which was being closely pressed by Rindt – who had just moved his Brabham up eight places in the opening lap. Graham Hill's Lotus was not going too well, but nevertheless was leading McLaren and Redman in the first of the Cooper-BRMs.

Coming into Stavelot the leading cars found Bonnier's crippled McLaren limping round and Amon in the leading Ferrari had to brake, giving Surtees the advantage on the exit of the corner, so when they came past on the second lap the Honda was in front, with the two Ferraris in furious pursuit. Hulme still led Stewart, but Courage had swooped past Rodriguez for sixth place. Siffert was maintaining his advantage over McLaren, who had passed Hill's Lotus.

McLaren came out on top of a superb battle with Rodriguez



Glorious! Surtees' Honda is chased by Amon's Ferrari

Rindt had fallen right back: a plug had come out of the cooling system, causing him to lose all his water. The Austrian pulled into his pit and the hole was plugged, but not before he had lost two laps. Beltoise was another in trouble, the V12 Matra engine lacking the necessary urge, and he was right at the tail of the field behind Richard Attwood's BRM, Jackie Oliver's Lotus 49B and Lucien Bianchi's Cooper-BRM.

Surtees set a new lap record on the third lap with a time of 3m31s as he strove to stay ahead of the Ferrari twins. Stewart was having a real go in the Tyrrell Matra, filling Denny's rear-view mirror the whole time. Behind this battling duo came a fighting foursome consisting of Rodriguez, Siffert, Courage and McLaren, Siffert having moved up a place. Then came Hill, now being pressed by Brabham who was slowly moving up the charts, having displaced Brian Redman and Attwood.

Amon was far from content with second place, and as they came past the pits on their fourth lap he had chipped 0.2 seconds off Surtees' record and was trying to pass Big John as they went into Eau Rouge. But Ickx was in trouble in the second Italian car; the V12 was only running on 10 cylinders, but he was still well ahead of Hulme and Stewart, who in turn were separated by a long gap from the next group which was now led by Siffert's Lotus. The rest of the field held stations for the moment.

Ten cylinders were not enough to keep Ickx in third place and the following lap he was passed by Stewart, who slipped ahead of Hulme at the same time. But on lap six Hulme, after slipstreaming down the Masta Straight, passed the Matra into Stavelot to regain third place. Further back Courage was once again ahead of Rodriguez and his similar BRM V12, while behind them McLaren now led Redman's Cooper-BRM. Championship leader Hill's race came to an end when he stopped at post nine with the left-hand onboard UJ broken, leaving him with a long walk back to the pits.

Hill wasn't the only retirement. Brabham came into the pits with a jamming throttle slide, which proved irreplaceable, putting him out. On the very same lap Attwood too pulled into the pits; the water hose that runs under the belly of the BRM had been torn adrift when Attwood was forced onto the rough of La Source. The lack of coolant reduced the V12 BRM to a smoking wreck.

Despite constant pressure from Amon's Ferrari, the Honda continued to lead, with Hulme barely holding Stewart off in third place. Ickx's sick-sounding Ferrari was valiantly holding fifth not far ahead of Courage, who now led the group consisting of Siffert, Rodriguez and McLaren, all having the most fantastic scrap.

Oliver was now 10th, for poor Redman had left the circuit at Les Combes when a front bottom wishbone broke and the Cooper went straight on out of control. The car smashed into a concrete safety barrier and slid along for several yards, tearing off its wheels as it plunged through the safety barrier, into some parked cars. The cars caught fire but were extinguished by prompt marshals (who were smoking cigarettes); one brave marshal suffered a burned arm and Redman had minor hand burns as well as a broken right arm. Unfortunately a marshal standing behind the barrier was much more seriously hurt and both the injured were quickly removed by helicopter to Liege hospital.

Then on lap eight Amon was nowhere to be seen as the Honda tore past the pits in the lead. Poor Chris, who is jinxed when he starts in pole position at a GP, had his usual bad luck when a stone thrown by one of Surtees' rear tyres smashed through his oil radiator. The first Amon knew about it was when he found himself all sideways because of oil drenching his rear tyres. The New Zealander slowly came up to the pits, where Mauro Forghieri took one look and the car was pushed away, while a dejected Amon watched the rest of the race from the pits. The ever-alert Stewart, who had closed up on Amon in close company with Hulme, was quick to grab the advantage and gun past the McLaren to grab second place.

With a third of the race completed, Surtees in the Honda was a full 18 seconds ahead of Stewart and Hulme. Somehow Ickx still held fourth, but McLaren had passed Siffert, Rodriguez and Courage to claim fifth. Siffert was being slowed by a slipping clutch and an engine which would not rev much over 8000rpm. There were now only 11 cars still in the race, the tail-enders consisting of Oliver ahead of Bianchi and Beltoise.



Ickx plugged away to third – first podium for a V10 Ferrari!

UNDERSTANDABLY UNCONTROLLABLE

Just when Surtees seemed to have the race well under control, instead of the Honda, Hulme's McLaren came past in the lead. The Honda's rear bottom wishbone has pulled out of the chassis and the car was understandably uncontrollable through the corners. When John eventually got to the pits he was still as affable as ever, despite having a grand prix victory slip through his fingers.

Ickx, try as he might, could not hold off McLaren, who moved up into third place on lap 11, leaving the young Belgian trying to fend off Courage and Rodriguez, who were snapping at his heels. Siffert was now detached from this group, falling back on every successive lap, yet still well ahead of Oliver in the sole surviving Lotus 49B.

With the Honda and Amon's Ferrari both out of

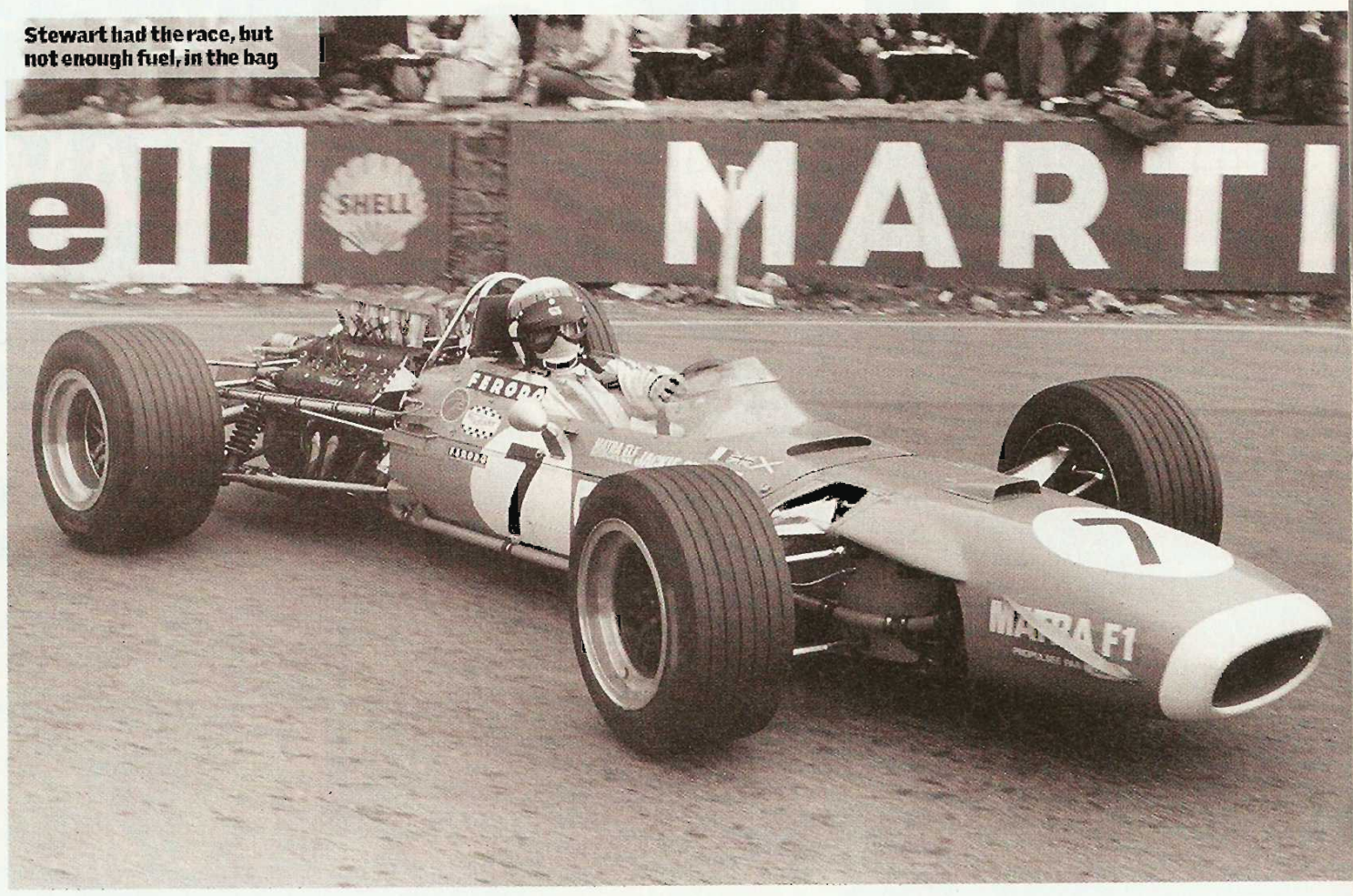
the race the battle was now between Hulme's McLaren and Stewart's Matra-Ford – and what a dice it was. Hulme tried every way of passing Stewart, but the Matra held him off until half-distance, when a superb piece of driving saw the McLaren emerge as the leader as they completed their 15th lap; but Denny did not lead for long, because on the very next lap Stewart got past again.

The order at half-distance was Hulme, Stewart, Rodriguez, McLaren, Courage, Ickx, Siffert and Oliver, with Bianchi and Beltoise a lap behind. As can be seen, the battle for third place was on in earnest, Courage, McLaren and Rodriguez all taking it in turn to be in front. A gasp came up from the crowd as Stewart and Hulme came up to lap Oliver at La Source, Hulme going wide, which gave Stewart the lead. Further back Bruce McLaren was far from content with fourth place and, after three laps behind Rodriguez, slipped by him again to reclaim third, 34.8 seconds behind the leaders.

Then, with only 10 laps to go, Hulme suddenly went missing, and Bruce found himself in second place behind the Matra. After all the field had gone by, the world champion came slowly into his pit with a broken pin in the Detroit joint, the same driveshaft failure that had put him out at Monaco. The McLaren pit must have been glad they changed to BRD shafts on Bruce's car.

"Then, to the utter disbelief of the crowd, on the very last lap Stewart arrived at his pit out of fuel. When wee Jackie tried to restart the car the battery was found to be flat"

Out in the lead Stewart had it all his own way, but Bruce McLaren in second place was having to fight with Rodriguez and Courage every inch of the way. Ickx's Ferrari had found another pot from somewhere and was now on 11 cylinders, and he too was very much in the running. A couple of laps later Pedro passed McLaren to claim second place, but he only held it for two laps before Bruce retook him. The unlucky Courage, after driving a magnificent race, was forced out only six laps from the end when a cracked liner mixed oil with water, seriously damaging the BRM engine.



Stewart had the race, but not enough fuel, in the bag

It looked as if at last Tyrrell had it in the bag, for Stewart, with only four more laps to do, had a 29.5 second lead, and although McLaren was narrowing the gap it looked as if Stewart was sure of victory. Then, to the utter disbelief of the crowd, on the very last lap Stewart arrived at his pit out of fuel: a couple of gallons were hastily added, by which time McLaren, Rodriguez and Ickx had shot by. When wee Jackie tried to restart the car the battery was found to be flat, although it had adequate current to operate the fuel pump: eventually the Matra was started and Stewart completed his final lap, only to have it disallowed for exceeding the double time of the fastest lap. For such a brilliant drive to come to such an end was cruel luck indeed. Apparently Ken Tyrrell had expected the Matra to consume fuel at 7mpg, and it had averaged near 6.6.

Siffert was another to fall out close to the finish, his Lotus stopping at Stavelot with virtually no oil pressure and very high water temperature.

In the end Bruce took the flag 12.1 seconds ahead of Rodriguez, whose BRM had suffered from fuel starvation on the last lap, causing the Mexican to drop back. Ickx's application was rewarded with third place, while Stewart's performance still earned him fourth place plus valuable championship points. Oliver, after a very consistent drive, was holding a secure fifth place after Siffert's retirement when he too ran out of fuel with one lap to go. The Lotus boys soon topped him up but, as the car left the pits, they noticed his driveshaft was smoking. Sure enough Oliver did not make the final lap, abandoning out on the circuit with a broken UJ.

When McLaren was congratulated on his fine victory, he said: "No, I just finished second." His pit had not dared to tell him on his last lap that he was in the lead! With Rodriguez in second place Goodyear found themselves with an unexpected 1-2.

RESULTS

Pos	No	Driver	Car	Laps	Time
1	5	B.McLaren	McLaren-Ford	28	1h40m02.1s
2	11	P.Rodriguez	BRM	28	1h40m14.2s
3	23	J.Ickx	Ferrari	28	1h40m41.7s
4	7	J.Stewart	Matra-Ford	27	
5	2	J.Oliver	Lotus-Ford	26	
6	15	L.Bianchi	Cooper-BRM	26	
7	10	J-P.Beltoise	Matra	26	

RETIREMENTS

No.	Driver	Car	Lap	Reason
3	J.Siffert	Lotus-Ford	26	Oil pressure
14	P.Courage	BRM	23	Engine liner
6	D.Hulme	McLaren-Ford	19	Driveshaft
20	J.Surtees	Honda	12	Suspension
22	C.Amon	Ferrari	9	Holed radiator
12	R.Attwood	BRM	7	Engine
18	J.Brabham	Repco Brabham	7	Throttle
16	B.Redman	Cooper-BRM	7	Accident
19	J.Rindt	Repco Brabham	6	Engine
1	G.Hill	Lotus-Ford	6	Driveshaft
17	J.Bonnier	McLaren-BRM	2	Wheelnut

ALL PICS: LAT

STARTING GRID

Amon Ferrari 3m28.6s	Stewart Matra-Ford 3m 32.3s	Ickx Ferrari 3m 34.3s
Surtees Honda 3m35.0s	Hulme McLaren-Ford 3m35.4s	
McLaren McLaren-Ford 3m37.1s	Courage BRM 3m37.2s	Rodriguez BRM 3m37.8s
Siffert Lotus-Ford 3m39.0s	Redman Cooper-BRM 3m41.4s	
Attwood BRM 3m45.2s	Bianchi Cooper-BRM 3m45.9s	Beltoise Matra-Ford 3m52.9s
Hill Lotus-Ford 4m06.1s	Oliver Lotus-Ford 4m30.8s	
Bonnier McLaren-BRM 4m34.3s	Rindt Repco Brabham 4m46.7s	Brabham Repco Brabham No Time

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REPORTS

ALL THE WEEKEND ACTION: FROM BRANDS TO NEW ZEALAND VIA DETROIT AND OSCHERSLEBEN



SCHEIDER EXTENDS DTM LEAD AT BRANDS, p56



LOEB SNATCHES NZ WIN AFTER FORD FALTERS, p42



SUPERLEAGUE FORMULA KICKS OFF AT DONINGTON, p66



DIAL M FOR MEGA: WILSON TAKES MAIDEN IRL WIN, p68

ANALYSIS • *RESULTS* • COMMENT

- **WRC NEW ZEALAND** *LOEB LUCKS IN* **p42**
- **BTCC SILVERSTONE** *FAB CLOSES ON TITLE* **p48**
- **DTM BRANDS HATCH** *SCHEIDER'S DAY* **p56**
- **EURO F3 BRANDS HATCH** *HULK ON TARGET* **p60**
- **WTCC OSCHERSLEBEN** *BMW BUOYANT* **p62**
- **RENAULT 3.5 'RING** *PAIN FOR DURAN* **p64**
- **SLF DONINGTON** *FORMULA FOOTIE IS GO!* **p66**
- **INDYCAR DETROIT** *WILSON WINS IT* **p68**
- **ALMS DETROIT** *FIRST FOR AGR ACURA* **p70**
- **WORLD OF SPORT** *NASCAR; GRAND-AM; FNIPPON; JAPANESE F3; FMASTER* **p72**

NEW ZEALAND

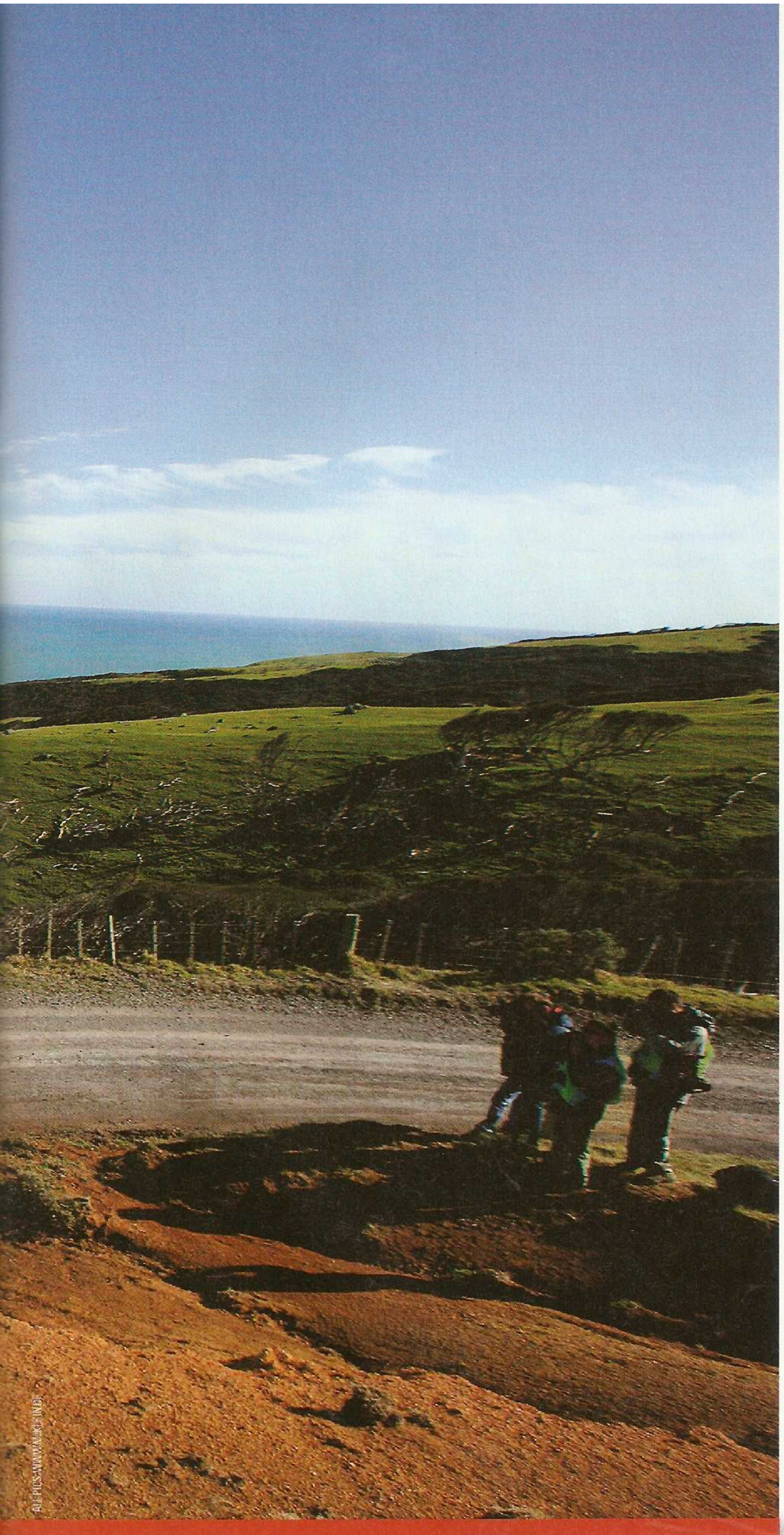
WRC

ANALYSIS
29-31.8.08

Round 11/15

FORD SPINS, CITR

Mikko Hirvonen was in control until a spin handed Sebas



OEN WINS

en Loeb victory. By DAVID EVANS

Whaanga Coast is one corner of New Zealand coastline that will forever be embedded in the memory of Mikko Hirvonen. Disaster doesn't come close. With this year's Rally New Zealand in the palm of his hand, the Finn spun his Ford Focus, letting Sebastien Loeb and Citroen through to collect yet another win. Hirvonen will have nightmares about that stage for a long time. As for Loeb, he knows he was bailed out of jail on the side of the Tasman. But who cares? They all count and it's on such luck that championships are built. Number five for the Frenchman looks to have been sealed last week.

LEG ONE (99.21 MILES) **WEATHER** SUNNY – AMBIENT TEMPERATURE RANGE ON STAGES 13-19C

Loeb was rattled. Massively rattled. Shaken, almost. He'd come within an ace of rolling his C4 WRC mid-way through the opening stage. Twenty-four hours earlier, the Frenchman had been busy extolling the virtues of finishing every one of the five remaining rallies this season. No wonder he looked so worried.

"I was really lucky," he said. "So lucky. Lucky not to roll. We didn't actually lose much time, but the car was like this..." He paused, tipping his hand to one side. "We were on two wheels. There were some big stones, I had to swerve to the left. It was almost on its side."

After drawing a long breath, Loeb expanded his explanation and talked about the wider issue.

"It's the tyres," he said. "The car is undriveable on these tyres without any cuts in them when the gravel is as deep as this."

The selection of a hard compound Pirelli tyre had not been to everybody's taste but, it being a control tyre, it was the same for everybody in Hamilton. And it could have been a lot worse. Had the heavy rain of the week prior to the WRC's arrival on the North Island continued, the hard Pirellis would have offered considerably less resistance.

That came as little consolation to Loeb, who was back in his role of road sweeper on the gravel-strewn roads.

Fifth on the road, Jari-Matti Latvala was taking advantage of the line swept clean by the four men ahead. He was fastest in SS1, but only by 1.2 seconds from his team-mate Hirvonen.

Hirvonen hit back on the next test, taking the lead from his younger countryman. Latvala felt he had been too sideways in the split Waitomo test – and the damage at the front and rear of his Focus bore testament to the commitment shown from the Swedish Rally winner.

Hirvonen, though, was into the groove and sounding like a man ready to win another rally.

"I've never had such a good rhythm," said Hirvonen when he arrived back in Hamilton after the morning loop with a 5.3sec lead from Latvala. His advantage over Loeb was growing towards 10sec, but re-run stages are usually meat and drink to the Frenchman.

Last Friday was no different for Loeb. The record will show he was fastest on each of the three tests through Friday afternoon, but it was what happened ahead of the penultimate stage, the second half of Waitomo, that caused not a little controversy.

Having narrowed the gap to Hirvonen to just 0.7sec, that penultimate stage was where Ford was expected to play its tactical card. After the perfect display of WRC jiggery-pokery in Turkey, it went all wrong for Ford in NZ on day one. Third-placed Latvala was 0.4sec short of being behind Sordo, where he wanted to be, but it was what had happened up front that caused most consternation at Ford.

When Loeb came to fire the Citroen up for the stage, the car refused to start. He pushed the starter, but nothing. Loeb lifted the bonnet and looked for a moment or two before realising their was no easy fix. He then jumped in the C4 and bumped it in reverse gear.

Three minutes passed while Loeb was doing that. Three minutes was just enough to drop him behind leader Hirvonen, putting the Citroen man in pole position to control the event.

Loeb laughed off an accusation of tactics. "The car wouldn't start," he said firmly. "Do you really think I'd give away that much time?"

Half a minute is a big lead for Hirvonen, but you'd probably

STAGE BY STAGE

SS1 PIRONGIA WEST 1 (15.05 miles)
1 **Latvala** 17m08.1s; 2 **Hirvonen** +1.2s; 3 **Loeb** +5.1s
LEADER **Latvala**
P WRC favourites Aigner and Hanninen both crash and suffer punctures.

SS2.1 WAITOMO 1 (16.03 miles)
1 **Hirvonen** 15m12.5s; 2 **Sordo** +0.1s; 3 **Loeb** +1.4s
LEADER **Hirvonen**
H Solberg suffers power steering and gear shift problems.

SS2.2 WAITOMO 1 (10.78 miles)
1 **Hirvonen** 14m13.5s; 2 **Latvala** +0.3s; 3 **Sordo** +3.5s
LEADER **Hirvonen**
P Solberg drops 20sec, suffering from no confidence in the car.

still get decent odds on Loeb overturning that on a trouble-free Saturday. Loeb's Citroen boss Olivier Quesnel was particularly affronted at the allegations being levelled in Citroen's direction.

"This was a technical problem," he said. "The starter motor didn't work. This was nothing to do with tactics. If it was, do you think Sordo would still be behind Loeb. I'm just glad they made it back to service."

Ford team principal Malcolm Wilson laughed, saying: "Maybe they [Citroen] should get a Ford starter motor – it would probably start a bit quicker then."

Faced with running first on each of tomorrow's five stages, none of which would be re-run, Hirvonen was in determined mood. "I'll have to go like f***," he said. "That's all there is for it. Flat out for me. I don't know if he had a problem or not. If it was tactics, they made a mess of it. I don't know. What we do know was that Sebastien found some speed through the afternoon."

Hirvonen's mechanics weren't worried. "We've got to find a copy of *Days of Thunder* tonight," one of them said. "If he watches that, he'll be fine!"

Latvala slowed in the stage, but not enough – a tenth of a second more and he would have been behind Sordo. The Spaniard admitted he'd enjoyed his day, until he saw Loeb's final-test time.

"I thought it was okay for me," he said. "But look at Sebastien. It's incredible what he can do."

Sordo moved back past Latvala in the final spectator-friendly test at Mystery Creek, but the running order for day two was decided at the end of the previous stage.

Francois Duval ended the day almost a minute behind Latvala. The Belgian's only trouble was the loss of front brakes for the final two stages.

"I'm not so confident here," the Belgian said, "which us why I'm using the left foot on the brake so much. And, don't forget, I didn't drive the car on these tyres before the start of the rally."

Given the green light to fight, Subaru's Chris Atkinson held a fine fifth early doors, just 34.9sec off the lead. Clipping a bump on the inside of a left-hander flipped the car, landing it heavily on the bonnet, which damaged the oil cooler and put him out with engine damage.

POSITIONS AFTER LEG ONE

1 Hirvonen/Lehtinen	1h34m44.3s
2 Loeb/Elena	+27.8s
3 Sordo/Marti	+30.0s
4 Latvala/Anttila	+30.1s
5 Duval/Pivato	+1m27.9s
6 Aava/Sikk	+2m01.3s

LEG TWO (101.33 MILES) **WEATHER**
OVERCAST – AMBIENT TEMPERATURE RANGE ON STAGES 9-15C

Hirvonen was enormously encouraged when he opened the curtains of his hotel room on Saturday morning. Clouds. Good for him. On the drive out of Hamilton they delivered rain. Even better for him. Climbing over the top of the mountains and dropping down towards the coast, the roads were bone dry. Not so good.

Those dry conditions translated into the loss of seven seconds to Loeb on the first test. The Frenchman took another three in the next stage and 10 more on the morning's final test. Having been so concerned about the difference last night, suddenly there were those who were wondering what Loeb had been worried about – he'd hacked the gap down to 6.8sec in a couple of hours on Saturday morning.

What now, though? It was the afternoon that everybody was interested in. What was enough for Loeb? He'd talked of wanting a 20-second lead going into the third and final day.

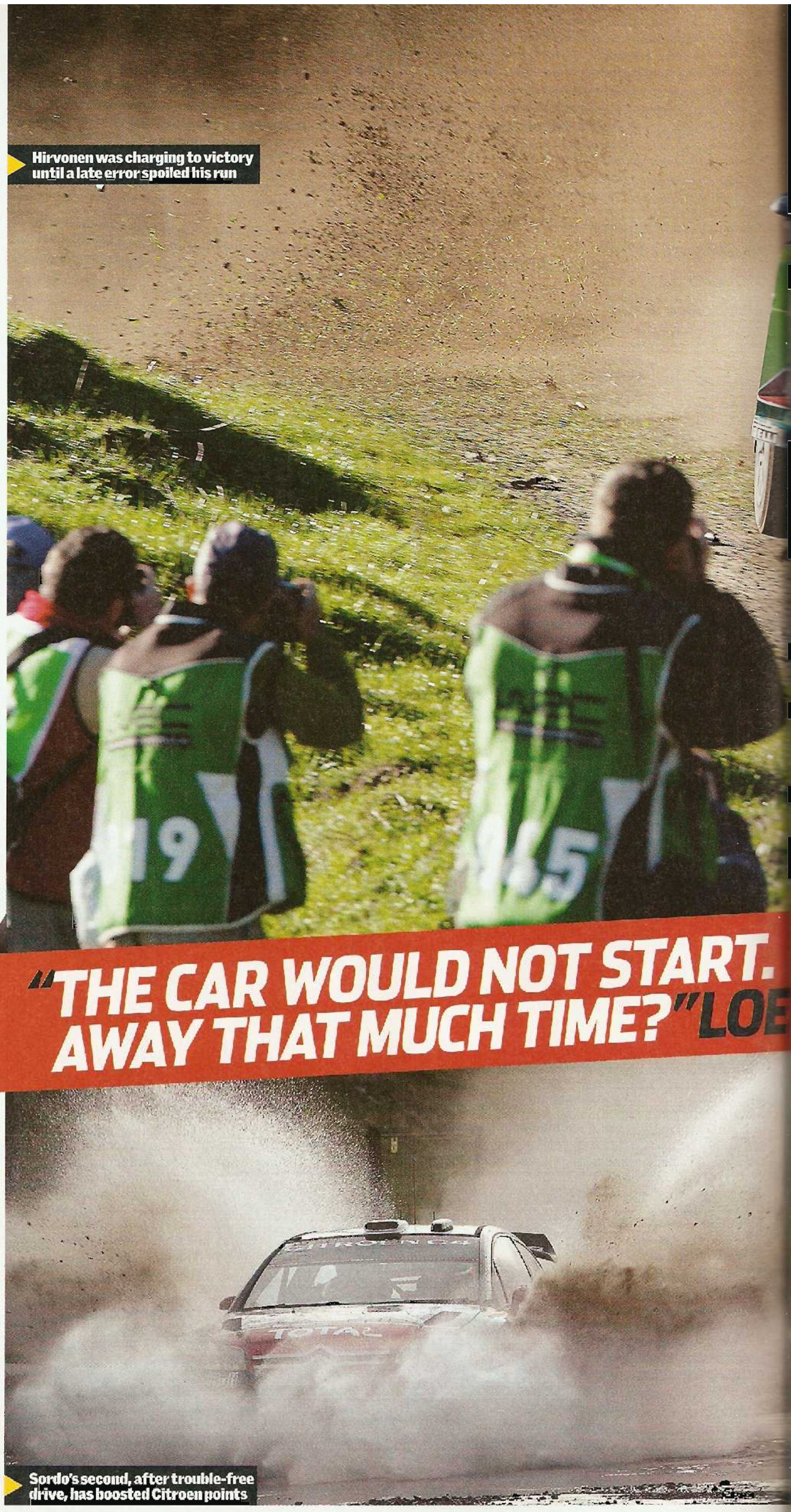
"Maybe that would be enough," he ventured. "I don't know. We have to see. This morning has been perfect. I want to win this rally, that's why we are here. Whether we do this with tactics or not, I don't know. It seems tactics are part of the game now."

Hirvonen's mood, predictably, mirrored the grey clouds above.

"So, he wants 20 seconds does he?" said the leader. "Well he's not having them."

Into the afternoon and the super-quick Te Akau stages, where it was thought the depth of gravel wouldn't make quite such a difference. Loeb was quicker again and, for the first time this year, he hit the front of the field to lead the rally.

Going into the final stage of the day, Loeb was 4.2sec up on Hirvonen. If he wanted his 20sec, he was going to have to push like mad through the last stage of the day. At the penultimate split,



Hirvonen was charging to victory until a late error spoiled his run

"THE CAR WOULD NOT START. AWAY THAT MUCH TIME?" LOE

Sordo's second, after trouble-free drive, has boosted Citroen points

STAGE BY STAGE

SS3 PIRONGIA WEST 2 (15.05 miles)
1 **Loeb** 16m35.8s; 2 **Hirvonen** +1.8s; 3 **Latvala** +5.6s
LEADER **Hirvonen**
Atkinson rolls in the stage. He continues but stops with engine trouble near the end.

SS4.1 WAITOMO 2 (16.03 miles)
1 **Loeb** 14m39.6s; 2 **Hirvonen** +6.9s; 3 **Sordo** +12.2s
LEADER **Hirvonen**
Wilson retires with gearbox trouble. Duval and H Solberg run out of front brakes.

SS4.2 WAITOMO 2 (10.78 miles)
1 **Loeb** 13m37.8s; 2 **Hirvonen** +3.3s; 3 **Sordo** +9.2s
LEADER **Hirvonen**
Starter motor trouble for Loeb – he drops 30sec with road penalties for being late at start.

SS5 MYSTERY CREEK (1.95 miles)
1 **Hirvonen** 3m03.8s; 2 **Sordo** +0.2s; 3 **Loeb** +0.4s
LEADER **Hirvonen**
Rautenbach goes backwards through a gate.

SS6 PORT WAIKATO (10.70 miles)
1 **H Solberg** 10m02.2s; 2 **Loeb** +4.4s; 3 **Latvala** +4.5s
LEADER **Hirvonen**
H Solberg: "I had to do this [fastest time] – my mechanics told me I was third in Group N..."

SS7 POSSUM (8.56 miles)
1 **Loeb** 10m39.2s; 2 **Hirvonen** +3.1s; 3 **Latvala** +5.6s
LEADER **Hirvonen**
Less gravel on the road makes it harder for Loeb to take time out of Hirvonen.

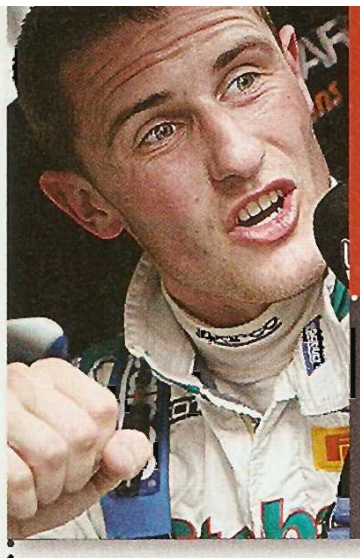
SS8 FRANKLIN (19.62 miles)
1 **Latvala** 22m02.7s; 2 **Loeb** +0.8s; 3 **Sordo** +8.1s
LEADER **Hirvonen**
Aava damages front of the car after sliding wide and knocking tyre off rim.



DO YOU REALLY THINK I'D GIVE B DENIES TACTIC ACCUSATIONS



Latvala was part of Ford one-two until he bent his Focus



MY RALLY...

MATTHEW WILSON

STOBART FORD WRC DRIVER

I REALLY enjoy this rally. I first came to New Zealand in 1997, when I was 10 years old. I thought it was great then, but after last weekend I think it's even better now!

I'd always fancied a good run on this event, the stages seem to suit me. I was a bit concerned during the recce, though. We went through three Volvo recce cars with four-wheel-drive problems. But nothing was going to stop me making a good start.

And the start was good – it just didn't stay as good as I'd hoped. Our Friday afternoon was cut short when we had a gearbox problem in Pirongia. We only had third and fourth gears for the final three miles of the stage. When I got to the stop line, I looked at the time and was quite surprised. I know how much time we'd lost with the problem, but still we were only half a minute down on the leader. I know I've said how much I love these stages, but maybe Pirongia is the exception. I retired in there the first year I came, went through a fence last year and then had this problem last week. I might bribe the organisers to get rid of that stage next time!

Coming back on Saturday and Sunday, all of my disappointments were blown away. The stages were just awesome and I was pushing as hard as I could. We set some fastest sector times and I was just loving it. Scott [Martin, co-driver] and I were completely on it, pushing as hard as we could. Second quickest in Te Hutewai was a mega start to Sunday morning. It's all ifs and buts, but if you take away the 15 minutes we'd dropped with SupeRally, we would have finished in fourth place at the finish.

I'd say this was the best ever event for me. Okay, there's the retirement, but the confidence we have taken from this rally is great. I feel everything is coming together nicely this year. We've been kind of building, then consolidating and then going up another level. I feel we went up another level last weekend. Now we have to build on this and go forward from here into the final part of the season, particularly in Japan and at home on Rally GB.

"WE WENT UP YET ANOTHER LEVEL HERE LAST WEEKEND"



Wilson reckons his stock went up down under after some fast times

SS9 MYSTERY CREEK 2
(1.95 miles)
1 **H Solberg** 2m58.0s; 2 **Loeb** +1.7s; 3 **Hirvonen** +3.2s
LEADER **Hirvonen**
H Solberg's second fastest time on Saturday. Loeb narrows the gap to Hirvonen to 5.3sec.

SS10 TEAKAU SOUTH
(19.83 miles)
1 **H Solberg** 18m37.0s; 2 **Sordo** +6.5s; 3 **Loeb** +8.0s
LEADER **Loeb**
Loeb moves into the lead. PWRC leader Mirco Baldacci off the road and out.

SS11 TEAKAU SOUTH
(20.10 miles)
1 **H Solberg** 17m29.7s; 2 **Latvala** +3.4s; 3 **Atkinson** +5.3s
LEADER **Latvala**
Loeb and Hirvonen slow down, forcing Latvala into the lead and first on the road for next day.

SS12 TE HUTEWAI 1
(6.97 miles)
1 **H Solberg** 8m03.0s; 2 **Wilson/Atkinson** +1.8s
LEADER **Latvala**
Loeb spins and loses 10sec to Hirvonen.

SS13 WHAANGA COAST 1
(18.46 miles)
1 **H Solberg** 21m26.4s; 2 **Hirvonen** +8.6s; 3 **P Solberg** +10.2s
LEADER **Hirvonen**
Hirvonen back to the front as Latvala struggles in the gravel.

SS14 TE HUTEWAI 2
(6.97 miles)
1 **Loeb** 7m47.5s; 2 **Hirvonen** +2.4s; 3 **Latvala** +5.0s
LEADER **Hirvonen**
Loeb's first fastest time of the day, but he admits he can't win at the end of the stage.

SS15 WHAANGA COAST 2
(18.46 miles)
1 **Loeb** 20m47.0s; 2 **H Solberg** +14.7s; 3 **P Solberg** +16.5s
LEADER **Loeb**
Ford disaster as first Latvala then Hirvonen go off the road. Loeb moves back in front.



Petter Solberg was relieved to be fourth behind Citroen/Ford scrap

"TO KNOW I HAD HIM [LOEB] BEATEN HERE MAKES IT WORSE" HIRVONEN SPINS AWAY HIS BIG LEAD

Loeb had pulled another 7.6sec out of Hirvonen. Now it was decision time, but it had to be a quick decision as Loeb was bearing down on the stage finish.

Loeb slowed and dropped 8.2sec. He would go into the final day third after Ford sacrificed Latvala to help second-placed Hirvonen.

Loeb said: "I had a target for myself. When I didn't make this target, I knew what I had to do. It's not so nice for a driver. When I finished the stage, I went to Mikko to say sorry, for a driver this is not what you want to do."

Having lived by the sword in Turkey, Hirvonen was well aware of the principle that should follow. But he wasn't about to lie down and accept his fight.

"Everything is still open tomorrow," he said. "There's only about 30 kilometres worth of cleaning to be done, after that it's pretty level. It's going to be a big fight, that's for sure. Fair play to [Citroen], at least they had the balls to come out and do it this time. And don't forget Jari-Matti is still right in there as well."

Leader Latvala was more than ready to play his part in the final showdown, particularly given that he'd found his form through the afternoon's quicker stages.

"I was feeling a bit stiff mentally, after my accidents in Finland and Germany," he said. "I was thinking, 'What will happen if I push here? Will it be okay?' But then later today I felt good. I could say I want rain tomorrow, but it won't come. I'll just drive at the same speed as this afternoon and we'll see what happens."

As if a three-way fight for the lead wasn't enough, Sordo's stunning pace through Te Akau South – 1.5sec faster than Loeb – had ensured he was right in the mix as well.

Duval remained fifth after a largely trouble-free day in the Stobart Ford. His only gripe was running out of brakes again, but he readily admitted that was partly due to a heavy left-foot on the pedal in too many corners.

Petter Solberg switched to Finland-spec dampers on his Impreza in the hope he could make up the three seconds on Aava for sixth. It was another grim day for the Norwegian.

POSITIONS AFTER LEG TWO

1 **Latvala**/Anttila	2h57m29.0s
2 **Hirvonen**/Lehtinen	+9.3s
3 **Loeb**/Elena	+13.3s
4 **Sordo**/Marti	+15.7s
5 **Duval**/Pivato	+1m40.9s
6 **Aava**/Sikk	+2m49.8s

STAGE BY STAGE

SS16 MYSTERY CREEK 3 (1.95 miles)
1 **H Solberg** 3m00.6s; 2 **P Solberg** +2.7s; 3 **Hirvonen** +3.2s
LEADER **Loeb**
Citroen clinches amazing one-two for Loeb and Sordo after Ford problems.

LEG THREE (32.43 MILES) **WEATHER** OVERCAST – AMBIENT TEMPERATURE RANGE ON STAGES 10-14C

Even Loeb was surprised. Having spun in the opening stage of the day, he relayed the tale to the waiting media. "The car was sideways and it got away from me," he said. "I was surprised. It didn't stop sliding."

Ten seconds had gone the Ford's way. Having handed 11 seconds to Hirvonen the night before, nobody needed to remind Loeb of the potential for egg on his face if the tactics went wrong.

By the end of the first run through Whaanga Coast, that egg looked firmly in place. He'd dropped time to Hirvonen, who had passed Latvala for the lead.

"I can't catch him now," said Loeb, looking at the 17-second gap between his fourth place and the Ford out front.

With all the road sweeping done, Ford was sitting pretty with Latvala second. Sordo was third and ready to fall on his sword for the team leader should the need arise. When that situation remained ahead of the final long stage of the event, the second run through Whaanga, things looked fantastic for Ford and decidedly bleak for Citroen.

Then all hell broke loose. Latvala first. He binned the Ford not far into the stage, spinning and smacking the bank. And then, just as the Ford team was recovering from that bombshell, Hirvonen slide wide and hit a bank with the right-rear.

"We got a puncture and, with nine kilometres to go, the tyre was empty," Hirvonen admitted. "I was still pushing hard, but to try to beat him [Loeb] on three wheels is not possible. To know I had him beaten here makes it all



Subaru to Chris Atkinson: "Should polish out mate!"



Duval binned his Stobart Focus after struggling with brake woes

the worse for me."

The distraught Hirvonen had gone from first to third along one of the most picturesque stretches of WRC scenery of the season. Loeb and Citroen couldn't believe their luck. Out of nowhere, a one-two beckoned.

Loeb said: "It did go through my mind that I might end up with fourth place here," he said. "I had to work hard to get that out of my mind, so I could push. Defending a lead of 15 seconds is never easy. I had to push hard and it worked."

Sordo deserved as much praise as Loeb. While his team leader had made two mistakes on the event, the Spaniard made none and drove a perfect event.

There was more woe to follow for Ford as Duval crashed out of fifth place, moving Petter Solberg up to fourth and Urmo Aava up to fifth. Suzuki was delighted with its best ever WRC showing: sixth and seventh for SX4 pair Per-Gunnar Andersson and Toni Gardemeister.



Andersson headed Suzuki six-seven – its best of 2008

Last year Hamilton hosted the WRC's closest-ever finish, when Marcus Gronholm beat Loeb by three tenths of a second. Astonishingly, this year's event matched that drama, but with the universal deployment of tactics there was a feeling that the 11th round of the 2008 WRC had all been slightly stage managed. Loeb's co-driver, Daniel Elena, certainly felt that way.

"Tactics?" he said. "They're shit. I prefer last year's result."

Ford probably did, too.

FINAL STANDINGS Rally New Zealand, Aug 29-31, round 11 of 15

Pos	No.	Driver/navigator	Car	Time
1	1	**Sebastien Loeb**/Daniel Elena	Citroen C4 WRC	3h58m48.9s
2	2	**Dani Sordo**/Marc Marti	Citroen C4 WRC	3h59m36.4s
3	3	**Mikko Hirvonen**/Jarmo Lehtinen	Ford Focus RS WRC08	4h00m00.4
4	5	**Petter Solberg**/Phil Mills	Subaru Impreza WRC08	4h02m07.8s
5	14	**Urmo Aava**/Kuldar Sikk	Citroen C4 WRC	4h02m49.6s
6	12	**P-G Andersson**/Jonas Andersson	Suzuki SX4 WRC	4h06m56.3s
7	11	**Toni Gardemeister**/Tomi Tuominen	Suzuki SX4 WRC	4h07m13.8s
8	9	**Federico Villagra**/J Perez Companc	Ford Focus RS WRC07	4h07m53.9s
9	10	**Henning Solberg**/Cato Menkerud	Ford Focus RS WRC07	4h08m34.1s
10	33	**Martin Prokop**/Jan Tomanek	Mitsubishi Lancer Evo 9	4h13m07.9s
Other finishers				Time
17	8	**Matthew Wilson**/Scott Martin	Ford Focus RS WRC07	4h16m34.0s
R	4	**Jari-Matti Latvala**/Miika Anttila	Ford Focus RS WRC08	SS15, acc damage
R	6	**Chris Atkinson**/Stephane Prevot	Subaru Impreza WRC08	SS3, engine

Class winners **A8** Loeb/Elena; **N4** Prokop/Tomanek; **N3** Brendon Reeves/Rhianon Smyth (Ford Fiesta ST), 4h45m37.9s **Starters/finishers** 57/34 **Rally leaders** SS1 Latvala; SS2-9 Hirvonen; SS10 Loeb; SS11 Latvala; SS12-14 Hirvonen; SS15-16 Loeb

Driver table		
Pos	Driver	Pts
1	**Sebastien Loeb** (F)	86
2	**Mikko Hirvonen** (FIN)	78
3	**Dani Sordo** (E)	51
4	**Chris Atkinson** (AUS)	40
5	**Jari-Matti Latvala** (FIN)	34
6	**Petter Solberg** (N)	32
7	**Henning Solberg** (N)	22
8	**Gianluigi Galli** (I)	17
9	**Matthew Wilson** (GB)	12
10	**Francois Duval** (F)	11
Manufacturer table		
1	**Citroen Total WRT**	141
2	**BP Ford WRT**	121
3	**Subaru WRT**	74
4	**Stobart VK M-Sport**	51
5	**Munchi's Ford**	22
6	**Suzuki WRT**	20

Rally summary The route for this year's Hamilton-based event was largely similar to '07 until heavy rain forced the organisers into a day-one rethink. Landslides on the Waitomo stage meant the original 43.98km test had to be split into two, hence the bizarrely-numbered SS2.1 and SS2.2 Waitomo stages.

ALL PICS: WWW.MEKLEIN.DE



DAVID EVANS
FLYING FINISH

THE PIRONGIA Craft Fair took place last weekend. It appeared, given the number of signs out for it, to be the biggest thing in that part of the Waikato region.

It wasn't the World Rally Championship. For that, there were no signs.

Hamilton, New Zealand's fourth-largest city with a population of 150,000, is not overwhelmed with global events, but last week it was the centre of the world for those following the WRC. Yet you could have driven through the town and not known the rally was there, save for a handful of flags – which were soon overwhelmed in the build up to Waikato's vital rugby clash with Auckland in the National Provincial Championship.

Provincial was right.

New Zealand is one of my favourite rallies and countries of the season, so it pains me to say it, but last week's offering was shoddy and complacent.

We might well be moving towards replacing 15 rallies per season with 24 rallies every two years – which leaves the likes of NZ deep in the comfort zone – but that's no excuse for letting standards drop. New Zealand's place on the calendar might be all-but guaranteed, but you have to question the benefits of travelling this far south.

The WRC calendar is a constant equation, balancing commercial reality with sporting excellence. The roads around Hamilton are awesome, but the limited car market balances the wickedly cambered corners. It costs huge money to allow the drivers to enjoy those roads, but TV coverage regularly rivets viewers.

Three years ago, the event moved south from Auckland to Hamilton. It was, we were told, because WRC was lost in the nation's biggest city – a place of four million people.

What does it say about the marketing of Rally NZ when it's lost – apart from at the ceremonial start – in a city of 150,000 people?

Having said all that, the allure of the event remains. The drive out towards the Tasman from Hamilton to the Waitomo test is just superb. And the spectating on offer blows you away. The drivers wrestle cars through a fast left-hander, with tyres offering scant resistance on the ball-bearing surface beneath them. Resistance is low, but commitment is very high.

The time, however, has come for this rally to go back to Auckland – a place where you're less likely to hear Axel-F still being used as a ring tone and a world away from the Pirongia Craft Fair. The city of sails is a dynamic and invigorating place – the natural home for the most exciting sport on the planet.

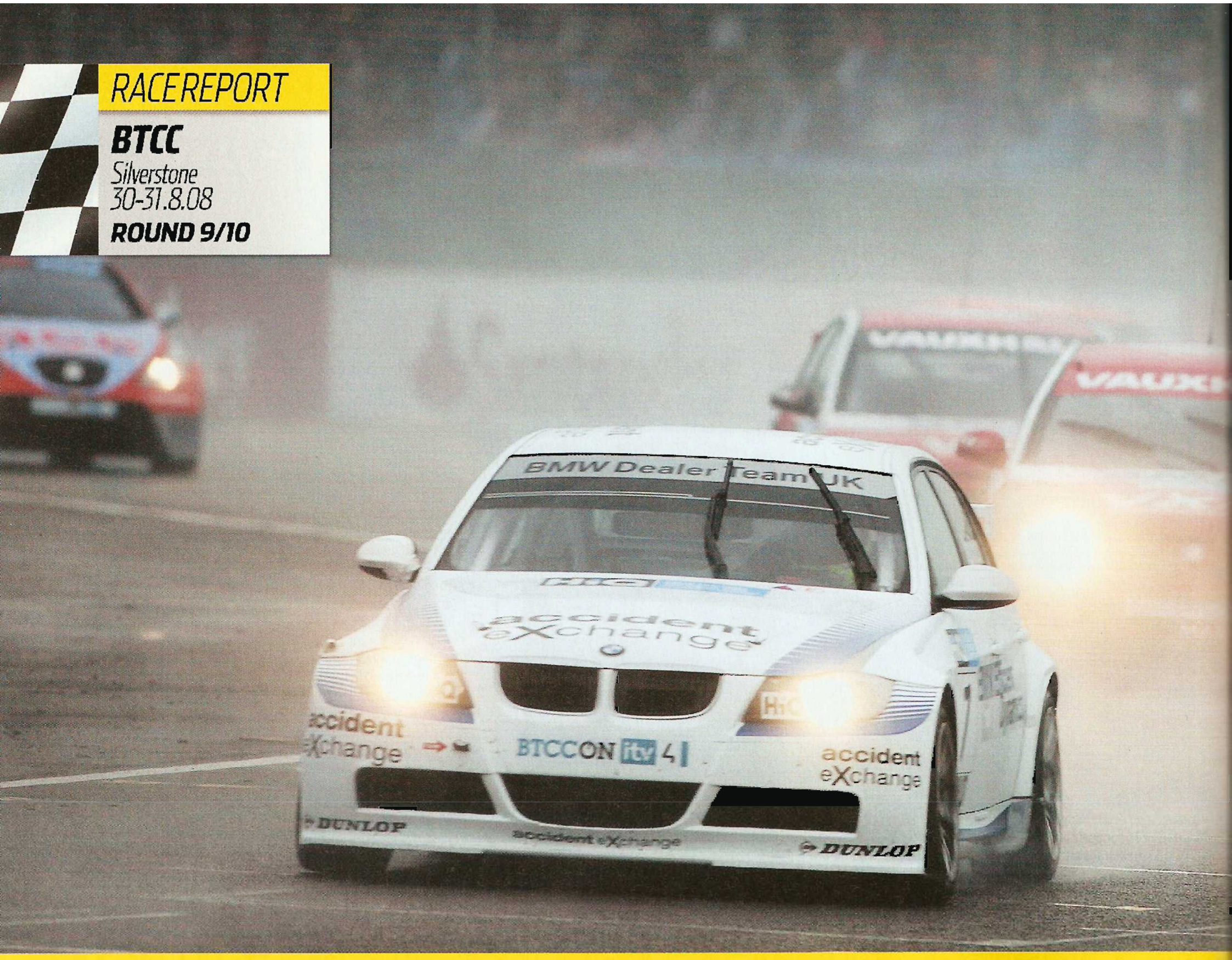
And if the organisers can't a) deal with the traffic or b) make our sport the city's highlight for one week a year, then we shouldn't bother going back to have our light hidden under their bushel.

"THE TIME HAS COME TO GO BACK TO AUCKLAND"



NZ's stages are stunning, but the event needs promoting

BTCC
Silverstone
30-31.8.08
ROUND 9/10



HEAVY WEATHER FO

Silverstone's soaking track caused plenty of incidents. Title fighters Fabrizio Giovanardi and Jason Plato took a win each, but Mat Jackson stole the show. By JAMIE O'LEARY

THREE WET races at Silverstone produced three different winners, but after title protagonists Jason Plato and Fabrizio Giovanardi took their eighth and fifth wins of the season respectively, it was Mat Jackson's star which shone brightest. The BMW Dealer Team UK driver put in a quite stunning race three performance to win from way down in 13th on the grid.

Giovanardi and Plato maintained their consistent points-scoring form, and despite the Vauxhall driver increasing his championship lead to 44 points, both will go to Brands Hatch with a shot at becoming champion for the second time.

JACKSON ON THE MONEY

To say that Jackson looked ready to take the fight to the works Vauxhalls and SEATs after qualifying would be a huge overstatement. After his typical struggle in the half-hour timed session on Saturday (he has not been higher than the fourth row since his pole position at the Brands Hatch season-opener), the white BMW 320si lined up only 14th for the opening race of the day.

Much to the Warwickshire driver's delight though, the rain that many teams predicted would play a factor in Sunday's proceedings began to fall just 10 minutes before the start of race one – prompting some late tyre changes in the pitlane and on the grid.

"It was a gift that it started to rain – we knew we'd be quick in the wet – and then we made a good start," said Jackson. He wasn't kidding.

Sixth was his position as he crossed the line for the first time behind Jason Plato and the polesitter's SEAT team-mate Darren Turner, Steven Kane, who made a rocket start up from sixth on the grid, Matt Neal, Colin Turkington and Fabrizio Giovanardi.

After that it was a simple case of picking off his rivals one by one. Kane was the first to go, the Motorbase BMW driver ending up in the gravel at Woodcote as a result of a fraught battle with Neal's Vauxhall. Passing Giovanardi and Turkington was relatively easy, although Neal required two attempts, the first at Copse on lap 10 and then, after the two-time champion re-took his place at Becketts, at Woodcote.

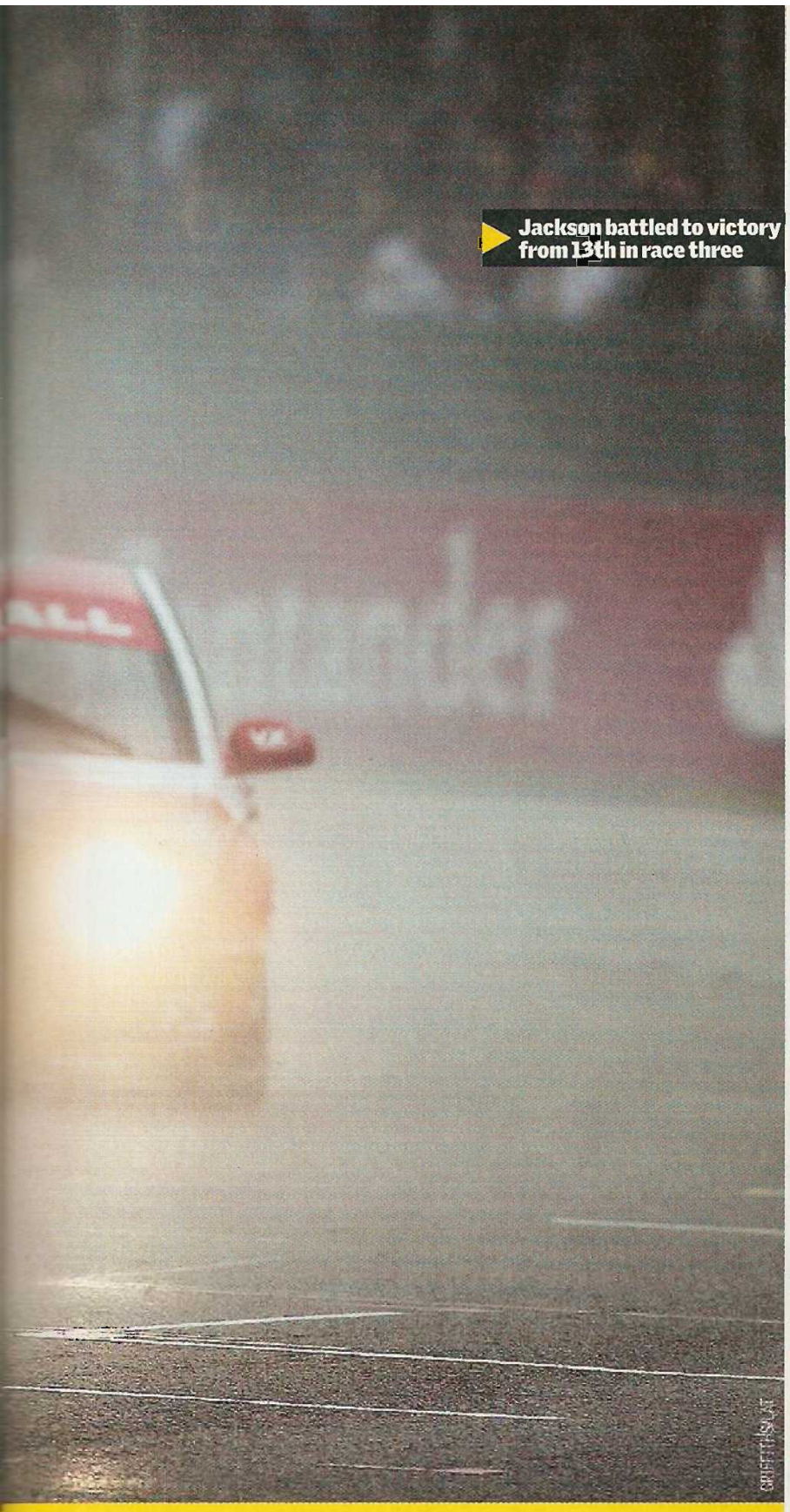
Turner's SEAT was far more difficult, the torque of its turbodiesel engine making it a rocket down the straights, but Jackson made his move stick at Copse on lap 19.

Plato was another matter. He, after all, had a title to battle for and a 41-point deficit to Giovanardi to overhaul.

Jackson closed in on the SEAT, but once he was within a second, Plato summoned up an extra bit of pace he seemed to have in reserve just to keep his rival at arms' length.

Nevertheless, second was still a great result, and gave Mat a front-row start for race two. Things did not work out quite as expected for him, however: "I was coming round Luffield and then I got a tap from Fabrizio and I was in the gravel," he said. "I'd rather he hadn't, but in those conditions keeping control of the car is difficult, so that kind of thing just happens."

Fabrizio's response? He said: "That corner is very strange in a front-wheel-drive car. You try to make the line as short as possible by keeping inside, but



Jackson battled to victory from 13th in race three

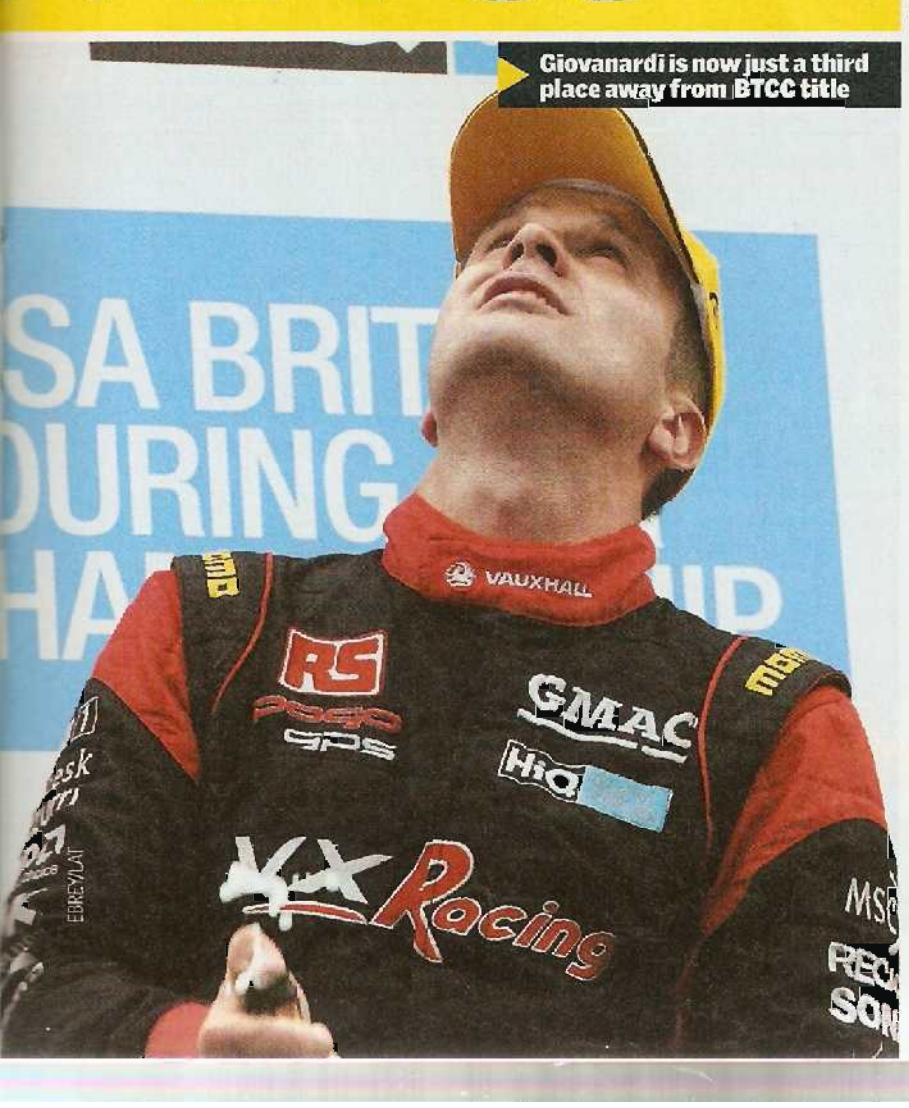
R BTCC



Plato won first, but poor grip caused his slip down the ranks



Jones' excellent second place kept Independents battle alive



Giovanardi is now just a third place away from BTCC title

the front end just slides. It's unfortunate, but I spoke to Mat and we are okay."

That nudge dropped Jackson from second to fifth, and a similarly light touch from Adam Jones at the same corner a lap later sent him spinning right onto the racing line. The unsighted Tom Chilton, having pulled out from behind his Team Halfords team-mate Gordon Shedden's slipstream just a split second earlier, was left with nowhere to go but into the nose of the BMW. The contact was hard enough to end the Honda driver's race and plummet Jackson down to 13th by the flag.

Thirteenth on the grid, then, for race three. He had finished second in the opening encounter, could he go one better on a track that was not being rained on, but had not exactly dried out?

The answer became clear on lap 16 as he passed Plato for the lead around the outside at Becketts, having devoured everyone else impressively beforehand. From there, his third win of the year and fifth overall, was a formality.

"We just made a few changes to the car and they worked," he said. "Plus, I was fired up after race two. We've had some good results and I'm right on Colin's tail in the main championship, even if I've lost ground in the Independents' points."

PLATO'S PROBLEMS

All looked rosy for Plato after qualifying. He had taken his third pole position of the year and headed team-mate Turner as SEAT locked out the front row for the fourth weekend in a row. The 2001 champion was in imperious form though and, even when pressured by Jackson, never looked like being beaten in race one.

Sure enough, he wasn't, despite his Leon TDI being set up for the dry (the rain came too close to the start to alter things), and his eighth win of the year helped him close the gap to Giovanardi to 30 points.

His pursuit of the Italian did not last though. After making yet another good start and moving into a commanding lead in race two, his lap times suddenly began to drop off by half a second a lap or so at the halfway point.

"After running a dry set-up in race one, we changed to wet settings for race two," said Plato. "And although it was great to start with, it came to a point where the car lost all its front grip, wouldn't turn and



Jackson's pirouette on the racing line left Chilton nowhere to go

wouldn't work as well, so that was frustrating."

The first man to take advantage of Plato's dramas was the last man he'd have wanted to. Giovanardi seized the lead at Becketts with eight laps to go and then drove away to a three-second win from Independent battlers Turkington and Adam Jones – who was the best of the SEATs in races two and three in his Team Air-Cool machine.

Plato finished down in seventh, not helped by a bent steering arm sustained when old adversary Neal made contact with him while coming by at Becketts near the end.

That put him fourth on the grid for the last race, but he easily dispatched early pace-setters Tom Onslow-Cole and Shedden by lap seven to lead.

Plato was absolutely flying early on, but, once more, that mysterious lack of grip bit him.

"We reverted back to a dry set-up for race three and it was pretty great for first two thirds and then the same thing happened again. It's like when you overheat your tyres and have no grip, but the tyres were fine. Something strange is going on and we need to understand it."

GIOVANARDI BACK ON TOP

"In the first race it was very difficult, so I knew I had to try and manage my tyres, so I did that in race two and had the result. It's nice to win again."

That was the Italian's summation of his day's work after he increased his lead over Plato from 41 to 44 points to leave himself a single third place away from his second BTCC title.

The win was doubly significant as it allowed Vauxhall to add the manufacturers' crown to the teams' title won by the Triple 8-run VX Racing squad at Knockhill. There was a shred of controversy, though. After the race, stewards launched an investigation into an opening lap incident in which Giovanardi banged door panels with Turner exiting Luffield, sending the SEAT off the track and down the field (his race would end when he slid into the gravel at Brooklands a few laps later and hit the already stationary Michael Doyle).

Away from Giovanardi, Plato and Jackson, Turkington had by far the most consistent weekend, placing fourth, second and fourth again, and his Team RAC team-mate Stephen Jelley was on the right track too – the ex-GP2 Asia driver having by far his best weekend in the BTCC with seventh on the grid becoming seventh in the race one results and a solid drive in race three netting him 10th from 22nd.

Steven Kane drove brilliantly from 23rd to fifth in race two, the result the silver lining in a weekend when he qualified a career-best sixth, and Doyle took his best ever BTCC result with a fine eighth in race three.

Jones added a fine second place in the final race to his third in the middle one, keeping the battle for the Independents' title a three-way contest.

FAST-CHANCE SALOONS

SEAR, ROUSE AND HILL JOIN TRIPLE CELEBRATION

27,000 DIE-HARD fans braved the wet weather to head to Silverstone, and they were in for a treat – even when the current crop of BTCC drivers were not doing battle on the track.

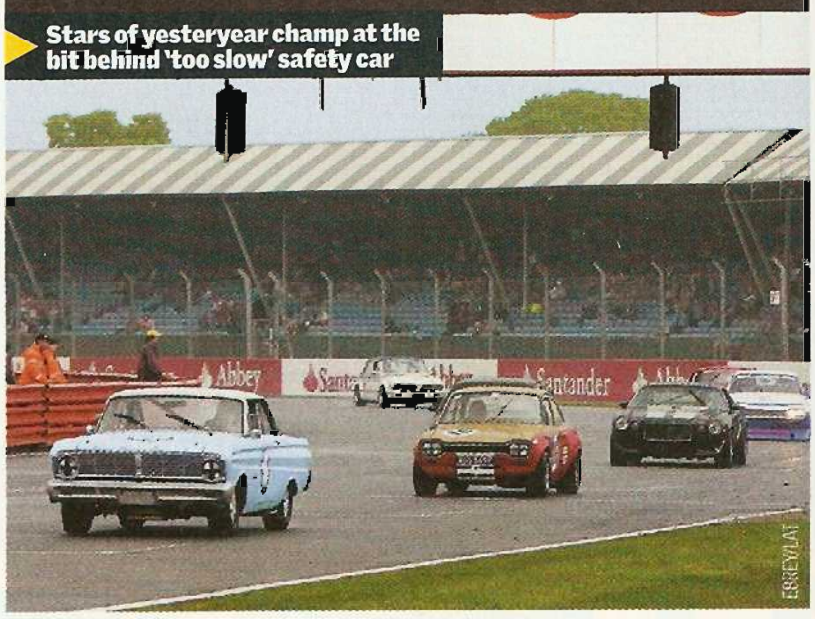
Some 20 legends of championships past had gathered for a triple celebration of 50 years of the BTCC, 60 years of Silverstone and 80 of the circuit's owners the British Racing Drivers' Club.

Among the drivers, who took to the circuit while conditions were at their worst during the early afternoon, were former champions Jack Sears, who, just as he did in 1958, tucked his tie into his shirt and laid his sports jacket on the back seat of the Austin Westminster in which he won the inaugural BTCC crown. Sir John Whitmore, Roy Pierpoint, Alec Poole, Bill McGovern, Richard Longman, four-time series winner Andy Rouse in his iconic Ford Sierra RS500 and Chris Hodgetts also drove.

The pack was restricted to a few laps behind a safety car, which was probably just as well given the value of classic Ford Falcons, Chevrolet Camaros and the Riley 1.5 'shootout car' in the capable hands of BRDC president Damon Hill.

"To be honest, I think the man in the pace car was driving far too slowly," said Gordon Spice, winner of 27 BTCC races, who was driving a Group 1 Ford Capri similar to many he raced so successfully. "In the wet I think it would have been quite a lot of fun to be let loose."

Stars of yesteryear champ at the bit behind 'too slow' safety car



RESULTS HiQ MSA British Touring Car Championship, Silverstone (GB), August 30-31, round 9 of 10

RACE 1 – 25 LAPS, 40.975 MILES

Pos	Driver	Team	Car	Result	Qual	Grid
1	Jason Plato (GB)	SEAT Sport UK	SEAT Leon TDI	30m29.829s	1m00.327s	1
2	Mat Jackson (GB)	BMW Dealer Team UK	BMW 320si	+0.545s	1m01.361s	14
3	Darren Turner (GB)	SEAT Sport UK	SEAT Leon TDI	+6.194s	1m00.471s	2
4	Colin Turkington (GB)	Team RAC (WSR)	BMW 320si	+6.327s	1m00.613s	3
5	Fabrizio Giovanardi (I)	VX Racing (Triple 8)	Vauxhall Vectra	+7.739s	1m01.200s	11
6	Matt Neal (GB)	VX Racing (Triple 8)	Vauxhall Vectra	+8.202s	1m00.843s	5
7	Stephen Jelley (GB)	Team RAC (WSR)	BMW 320si	+9.328s	1m01.007s	7
8	Adam Jones (GB)	Team Air-Cool (GR-Asia)	SEAT Leon TFSi	+13.619s	1m01.280s	12
9	Andrew Jordan (GB)	Eurotech-John Guest	Honda Integra-R	+15.228s	1m01.158s	10
10	Harry Vaulkhard (GB)	Robertshaw Racing	Chevrolet Lacetti	+22.558s	1m01.039s	8
11	Tom Onslow-Cole (GB)	VX Racing (Triple 8)	Vauxhall Vectra	+23.248s	1m00.695s	4
12	Tom Chilton (GB)	Team Halfords (Dynamics)	Honda Civic	+25.286s	1m01.135s	9
13	Gordon Shedden (GB)	Team Halfords (Dynamics)	Honda Civic	+27.684s	1m01.378s	15
14	Jason Hughes (GB)	Team KWR	MG ZS	+31.950s	1m02.016s	19
15	Michael Doyle (GB)	In-Tune Racing	Honda Civic-R	+34.039s	1m02.011s	18
16	Rob Collard (GB)	Motorbase Performance	BMW 320si	+44.359s	1m01.389s	16
17	Martyn Bell (GB)	Arkas Racing	Vauxhall Astra Sport Hatch	+47.408s	1m02.436s	21
18	Erkut Kizilirmak (TR)	Arkas Racing	Vauxhall Astra Sport Hatch	-2 laps	1m02.460s	22
19	John George (GB)	TH Motorsport	Honda Integra-R	-2 laps	1m01.826s	17
R	Chris Stockton (GB)	BTC Racing	SEAT Toledo	22 laps-acc damage	1m02.135s	20
R	Mike Jordan (GB)	Eurotech-John Guest	Honda Integra-R	17 laps-acc damage	1m01.354s	13
R	Alan Taylor (GB)	Robertshaw Racing	Honda Integra-R	13 laps-driveshaft	1m03.378s	23
R	Steven Kane (GB)	Motorbase Performance	BMW 320si	1 lap-accident	1m01.000s	6

Winner's average speed 80.61mph. Fastest lap **Jackson** 1m08.144s (86.10mph).

RACE 2 – 25 LAPS, 40.975 MILES

Pos	Driver	Result	Grid
1	Giovanardi	30m59.002s	5
2	Turkington	+2.768s	4
3	Jones	+3.806s	8
4	Neal	+4.285s	6
5	Kane	+7.385s	23
6	Onslow-Cole	+8.760s	11
7	Plato	+9.658s	1
8	Shedden	+11.953s	13
9	Collard	+14.853s	16
10	M Jordan	+25.264s	21
11	Hughes	+40.043s	14
12	Vaulkhard	+40.574s	10
13	Jackson	+44.512s	2
14	Bell	+46.259s	17
15	George	+1m07.632s	19
R	Chilton	9 laps-accident	12
R	Doyle	2 laps-accident	15
R	Turner	2 laps-accident	3
R	Jelley	1 lap-accident	7
R	A Jordan	1 lap-wheelbearing	9
NS	Taylor	electrical	22
NS	Kizilirmak	electrical	18
NS	Stockton	chassis damage	20

Winner's average speed 79.34mph. Fastest lap **Giovanardi**, 1m08.659s (85.67mph).

RACE 3 – 22 LAPS, 36.058 MILES

Pos	Driver	Result	Grid
1	Jackson	26m03.875s	13
2	Jones	+3.254s	8
3	Giovanardi	+4.303s	10
4	Turkington	+6.481s	9
5	Plato	+7.768s	4
6	Onslow-Cole	+8.721s	5
7	Collard	+13.640s	2
8	Doyle	+15.111s	17
9	Chilton	+18.093s	16
10	Jelley	+27.638s	19
11	Shedden	+29.372s	3
12	Kane	+29.881s	6
13	Vaulkhard	+31.305s	12
14	George	+53.757s	15
15	Neal	+56.262s	7
16	Taylor	+1m02.895s	21
17	Kizilirmak	-1 lap	22
18	Bell	-1 lap	14
19	Turner	-1 lap	18
20	A Jordan	-1 lap	20
R	M Jordan	19 laps-radiator	1
R	Hughes	16 laps-gearbox	11
NS	Stockton	chassis damage	

Winner's average speed 83.00mph. Fastest lap **Plato**, 1m09.464s, (84.94mph).

CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE

Pos	Driver	Points
1	Giovanardi	261
2	Plato	217
3	Turkington	188
4	Jackson	185
5	Neal	165
6	Onslow-Cole	155
7	Shedden	140
8	Turner	129
9	Jones	119
10	Chilton	83

Team standings

1	Triple 8	502
2	SEAT Sport UK	315
3	Team Halfords	214
4	Team RAC	203
5	BMW Dealer UK	179

KEY R=Retired; NS=Non-starter

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS 15-12-10-8-6-5-4-3-2-1 for first 10 finishers; pole: 1; leading a lap: 1; fastest lap: 1

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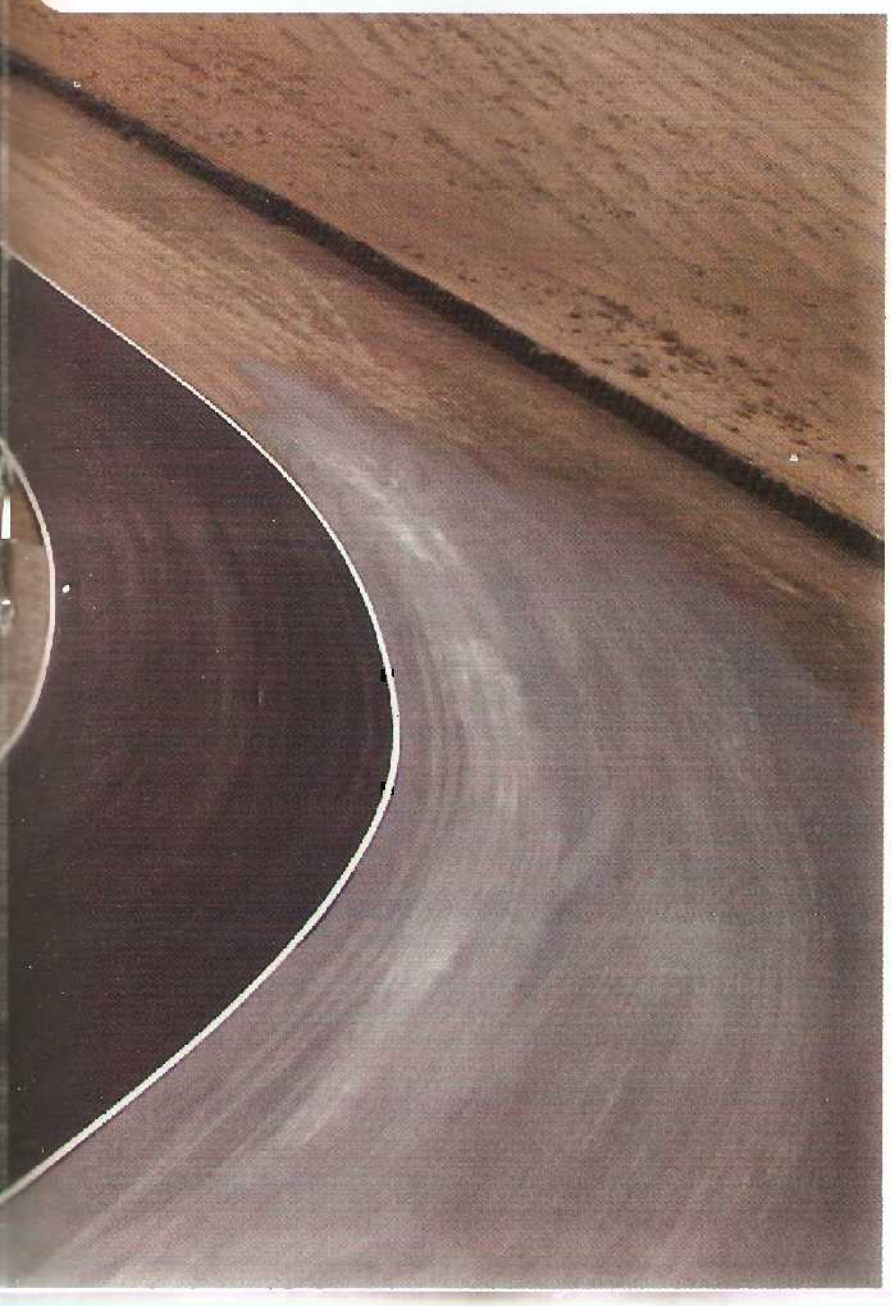
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Pictures clockwise from top left. Jos Verstappens Porsche RS Spyder Equipe Verschuur Feb 08. Martin Sretton Racing with Matra 670B Le Mans cars an incredible sound! March 08. Mc Laren GTR LM of Paul Knapfield binging back so many fond memories for me March 08. A1GP the new 08 Ferrari engine car establishing a new outright lap record 1min 2 secs! driver Patric Friesucher July 08.

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CARLO VAN DAM

Just like Kubica, he got dropped by Renault. Now Toyota's F3 team loves him



Dutchman van Dam is the latest European to win in Japanese F3

Van Dam: GP2 or Nippon next season

NOT MANY drivers can boast two Formula 3 titles in as many years, but Carlo van Dam can. The Dutchman, who has just wrapped up the Japanese title for the TOM'S Toyota team, looks set for big things.

GROOMED FOR SUCCESS

He certainly was, even from karting. Landing the European Formula A title by his mid-teens brought him to the attention of the Renault Formula 1 squad.

"That was 2001," van Dam says. "Jarno Trulli rang me up and told me that he wanted me to race for his Trullikart team in Formula Super A, and that Renault were looking for promising young drivers, so they invited me to come on their Driver Development Programme (along with the older Robert Kubica and Heikki Kovalainen), but I was still too young to race cars, so we did another two years of karting."

He was second in Italian Super A and fourth in the world championship, but a switch to Tonykart in 2003 proved less successful. His fourth placing in Italy and sixth in Europe (back in Formula A) did not find favour with Renault, resulting in his departure from the scheme.

STEPPING UP

Ironically, given his separation from the RDD, Formula Renault was his next stop and, after finding his feet in the Dutch and German championships, he then got to within a whisker of winning the prestigious Eurocup title while driving for SG Formula in 2006.

"I still can't believe I didn't win that," he remembers. "I was leading into the final race weekend at Barcelona, and then I got a 30-second penalty for something with a yellow flag, so [Filipe] Albuquerque got the championship instead."

F3 STARDOM

Without the budget for a competitive Euroseries drive, Carlo joined Van Amersfoot Racing for the German F3 Cup and dominated the 2007 season. It was a season that changed everything.

"German F3 was great. I won a lot of races and it got me a drive in Macau with HBR. It was their first time there and mine, and we did all right, and then TOM'S, who won that race, let me know they wanted me for Japanese F3 this year. It was a big honour to be chosen by them – they're the best team in Japan – and I think the season has gone pretty well. The second half of the season has gone very well and I've done a bit of A1GP driving too, so it's been a good year."

SO WHERE NEXT?

Adrian Sutil, the last European driver to take the Japanese F3 crown (in 2006), headed straight into Formula 1 in 2007. Does van Dam, who has already branched out into GT racing with a podium finish in August's Suzuka 1000km, think he can do the same?

"I don't know about that," he says. "I guess GP2 would be the right way to go, but again you need to have a good car to make it worth it. GP2 or Formula Nippon is what I hope to be in next year."

CV

NAME: CARLO VAN DAM
BORN: FEBRUARY 27, 1986
LIVES: GOTEMBA, JAPAN

2008 Japanese F3, champion, 7 wins

2007 German F3, champion, 9 wins; F3 Euroseries, 2 races; Macau F3, 15th

2006 FRenault Eurocup, 3rd, 1 win; French FRenault, 4 races

2005 FRenault Eurocup, 4th; Dutch FRenault, 7th

2004 Dutch FRenault, 5th; German FRenault, 4 races

ALL PICS: LAT

RACEREPORT

DTM
Brands Hatch
29-31.8.08
ROUND 8/11

Scheider celebrates pole, victory and fastest lap

SCHEIDER SCALES NEW DTM HEIGHTS

Championship leader Timo Scheider was imperious for Audi at Brands Hatch, writes GLENN FREEMAN

THIS SUMMED up the kind of season Timo Scheider is having in the DTM this year. At a track where he admitted he had struggled for the past two years, the championship leader was unstoppable. As if the clean sweep of pole position, race win and fastest lap wasn't enough, the German now has a pretty handy points advantage over his rivals to defend for the final three races as well.

Scheider's performance on Sunday also belied the fact that, before this weekend, he had only ever won one DTM race. Paul di Resta was never more than two seconds behind the Audi but, as the Scot would attest, Scheider didn't make a single mistake. That's not bad going over 82 laps of the Brands Hatch Indy circuit.

"Considering how much I have struggled here for the past two years, to come here and win is amazing," said Scheider, who is now nine points clear in the title race. "I didn't make a single mistake today, and that was the key in the end. Paul gave me a hard time, he was always there, pushing like hell, but that helped me concentrate."

Few drivers would be quite so comfortable with race-long pressure, but the 2008-spec Timo Scheider is perfectly happy to be pushed all the way.

"It was nice to have him [di Resta] on my back – it made me forget about the final few laps," he added, before admitting that he was caught by surprise when his team was shouting on the radio as the chequered flag flew.

Before this weekend, Scheider had three poles and just one win. In a close title battle (which is what we had prior to this race), it would be easy to look at missed opportunities, so adding to that maiden success at Oschersleben was a welcome boost ahead of the final races.

"This gives me some confidence for the final races," he said. "Now is the time to start looking at the championship, and the nine-point lead makes me feel better than getting the second victory does. The pressure is on now, but I just have to keep treating every race like it is the first one."

In the two races where Scheider hasn't converted his pole positions into wins, it's been his Audi team-mate Mattias Ekstrom who has spoiled the party. That could have been the case again last weekend, were it not for a gearbox problem that hindered the reigning champion in crucial third qualifying.

"We were fast all weekend," said Ekstrom, who had been trading blows with Scheider throughout practice. "The only session that didn't go to plan was Q3, and it's typical that it was like that, and not in the warm-up or any other session. To expect to win from P7 is too much, but it looks like we could have done it."

As Scheider and di Resta remained nip and tuck at the front, Ekstrom put in a charge in the second half of the race, after not making his first pitstop until past half distance. The Abt Sportsline team put Ekstrom on his alternative strategy in the hope that those ahead would pit early to give him clear track, but the threat of rain meant nobody gambled on an early stop. Add to that a first stint where the top two cruised away from a struggling Bruno Spengler, and Ekstrom knew he was aiming for third.

"The first stint determined the maximum that was possible," Ekstrom added. "When I saw the leaders pulling away, I knew it wouldn't happen. But I was flat out once I had clear track, and everything was really good then."

Remarkably, Ekstrom chopped the gap down from more than 10 seconds to just three in the final stint of the race, but time was never on his side in the closing stages. His only chance would be if the top two were delayed in traffic, but there was only one major delay for Scheider, and ironically it was Audi drivers who got in his way.

"When I caught the three Audis that was the hardest part of my race," he said of closing on a scrap between Oliver Jarvis, Alexandre Premat and Markus Winkelhock. "At some points I had them all around me, and I was scared about damaging my car."

Even if Scheider's car did remain in one piece, di Resta had the gap down to 0.3 seconds and, were it not for a blatant whack in di Resta's side from Winkelhock, Scheider could have been in more bother.

"Most of the traffic was quite good, but Winkelhock hit me," said di Resta. "I don't know what he was thinking. I was alongside him and he just turned into me, and he tried to have another go at the next corner. It's mad to do that when he's one lap down. Credit to Timo though, we were waiting on him to make a mistake, but he didn't. I'm happy though – we were probably a little bit quicker than him, and that was with a heavier car."

While the lapped Audis were not popular with the leaders, Scheider in particular was full of praise for the Mercedes drivers he had to pass while one of his chief title rivals was breathing down his neck.

"I would like to thank Mercedes for playing fair when I was lapping their cars," he said. "Especially Bernd Schneider, who was in a battle for a point, but he pulled over and got out of my way."

The race leader could have been forgiven for having being apprehensive when he caught Schneider, who was frantically trying to find a way past another Mercedes in the form of Gary Paffett's one-year-old car to grab eighth position. The battle between the two former champions was a no-holds-barred affair, but both resisted the chance to help di Resta's cause by holding up the race leader. Schneider's 2008 Mercedes had already dealt with Paffett earlier in the race, but a drive-through penalty for speeding in the pitlane dropped him back down the order. His pursuit of Paffett was a determined one though, with plenty of contact, and the Brit took great satisfaction from snatching a point in his older car.

"Eighth is a great result for us, because we didn't expect to get any points here," said Paffett. "It's great to beat all of the 2007 cars, and the fight with Bernd was a good one. It was fun."

Along with Paffett, Oliver Jarvis had been one of the stars of qualifying on Saturday, as both had got their 2007 cars into the top-eight shootout for pole. But while Paffett turned that



Jamie Green missed out on third thanks to Ekstrom's late pace

HONE/XPBCC/LAT



Tomczyk (right) passed Spengler at Paddock – around the outside

HONE/XPBCC



Paffett's elder Merc held off Schneider for the final point

HONE/XPBCC/LAT

LAPBYLAP

1	**Engel spins after contact with Albers**
2	Green and Ekstrom pass Jarvis
23	**Schneider passes Paffett in the pits**
35	Green goes off at Paddock Hill Bend, Tomczyk gets ahead
41	**Green re-passes Tomczyk in the pits**
44	Spengler passes Tomczyk for fourth
47	**Schneider gets a drive-through penalty**
56	Tomczyk passes Spengler on the outside at Paddock Hill

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Di Resta was happy with second after changing set-up

into a good result on Sunday, [illegible]

had another disappointing

"Obviously I'm disappointed,