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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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**MAGIC
MAX!**



**HAMILTON'S MEXICAN SAVE MAKES
HIM THE GREATEST F1 BRIT EVER**

CHAMPIONS!

**OGIER AND
M-SPORT
ON TOP OF
THE WORLD
IN WALES**



EMPHATIC EVANS DOMINATES



MOTORSPORT NEWS ISSUE **MJ3102** NOVEMBER 1 2017

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Battling Brit does enough to wrap up



Hamilton clinched his fourth crown in Mexico

By Stephen Lickorish

British Formula 1 champion Nigel Mansell believes Lewis Hamilton can now beat Michael Schumacher's record of seven world championships after the Mercedes driver became the most successful British racer in F1 history by securing a fourth title.

Hamilton was previously tied with Sir Jackie Stewart on three crowns, but his latest triumph means he has become the first Briton to take four titles.

Hamilton has joined Sebastian Vettel and Alain Prost on four championship wins with only Schumacher and Juan Manuel Fangio having claimed more.

It was a record-breaking season for Hamilton as he broke Schumacher's tally for the most number of pole positions for any driver in F1 history.

And Mansell believes that Hamilton will be able to break more records in the coming years.

"Lewis is one of the greats," Mansell told TalkSPORT radio. "I forecasted it a few years ago, that I think Lewis can beat all the records, he's that good. He can be the best of the best of the best - I think he can go on to win eight world titles.

"Lewis is a breath of fresh air. He crosses so many boundaries, he's a nice lad and he's misunderstood at times. Now he should be revered in every way he can be."

Toughest win
Hamilton described his latest title

"I hated every bit of that race"

Toto Wolff



victory as his toughest after spending much of the season trailing Vettel in the points, only wresting the advantage after triumphing in the Italian Grand Prix in September.

However, his route to the title in Mexico - with two races of the 2017 season remaining - was far from straightforward as a first-lap collision with Vettel caused a puncture, leaving Hamilton to fight through the field.

He struggled to make much progress and eventually finished ninth, which was still enough for him to seal the crown.

"It was a horrible way to do it, to be honest," said Hamilton. "But... what can I do? I told you I wasn't going to go easy at Turn 1. And I don't think I was too aggressive or anything like that, I placed my car in the perfect position.

"I definitely think this has been [the hardest championship to win]. They have all been different in their own way.

"[His first title in] 2008 was tough, 2007 [when he narrowly missed

HEADLINE NEWS

Photos: LAT

record-breaking fourth crown

MANSELL: HAMILTON CAN BE GREATEST OF ALL



Hamilton struggled with puncture



Mansell believes Hamilton can beat Schumacher's records



out] was difficult. The following years have just been different.

"This year, being in a position to really lead the team and help drive, motivate and direct the car exactly where I want it to go in its development, alongside a great team-mate and fighting against a great team in Ferrari with the highest decorated driver was a massive challenge I was looking forward to.

"It's great to have two teams fighting. We need more of that. It pushes us all more to the limit, it pushes the cars more to the limit and that's ultimately what has got us excited for the sport."

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff added: "I hated every bit of that race. It was really bad, and too long, and everything. I think we were rattled after the beginning, after the crash.

"It's like you have this massive gap in points and people say 'it's done'. But it's not. It's motor racing. Then you have this incident and Sebastian could have won, we could have DNFed,

and then what's next?"

Hamilton's former boss at Mercedes, Paddy Lowe, paid tribute to the Briton's consistency.

"From the outside it looked to me like his best season ever," said Lowe, who is now technical chief at Williams. "He drove really well every race, whether good day or bad day, and he was always in there getting the points.

"I have been saying it for a while, but I think he passed a number of waypoints on records this year, and with a fourth championship he is not done yet: he is one of the sport's all-time greats."



Hamilton topped the standings for the first time in September

A silver future

Hamilton is now set to begin contract talks with Mercedes. His current contract runs out at the end of next season, but Hamilton has previously said that he plans to stay at the team beyond 2018.

"We spoke a few weeks ago back at the factory and said that we would be sitting down," said Hamilton. "It is quite an easy process for us. We already have something great in place and it is really just about extending it and enhancing it and working on what more I can do for them and vice versa. But I am pretty sure

within the next month or so we would have time to have sat down.

"I'm enjoying driving more than ever. Whether it's a few, a couple, or one [year left in F1], I'm still going to be here next year and I hope for a little time beyond that.

"There is a long life after Formula 1 and I don't want to make it any longer than it's going to have to be because this is the best period of time in my life. There are still great things beyond my Formula 1 career which I'm working on right now, but I'm enjoying driving more than ever."

He has also ruled out following his former team-mate Nico Rosberg's example and announcing a shock decision to retire from racing days after sealing the crown.

"I'm definitely going to be here next year!" he said. "I'm not going to walk away as I could on my high horse. I'm going to come back give it another chance and try to take it again."

LEWIS HAMILTON IN NUMBERS



A title winner in 2014



First Merc win in 2013

3501
LAPS LED

2580
POINTS

116
PODIUMS



British win: '08

112
RACES LED

206 STARTS

72 POLE POSITIONS

FASTEST LAPS 38

62 WINS



First win: Canada '07

4 TITLES

MEXICAN GP REPORT



BY STUART
CODLING

Verstappen steals the show on Lewis's greatest day

MAX SHINES ON HAMILTON'S DAY



Verstappen was stunning at the start

Max Verstappen took a third career victory in the Mexican Grand Prix as Lewis Hamilton joined the select club of four-time world champions – but not in the way he would have wanted. After a dramatic opening-lap clash both Hamilton and his title rival Sebastian Vettel had to battle their way through from the back of the pack, and while Vettel was at his very best, he fell two positions short of the second place he needed to stay in contention for the championship.

Hamilton ultimately finished ninth, making this the first time since 2012, when Vettel finished sixth in the Brazilian Grand Prix, that a world champion has been crowned without finishing on the podium.

Qualifying

Mercedes have been on pole in Mexico every time since the race returned to the Formula 1 calendar, but in 2017 the W08 didn't quite have the ammunition to enable Hamilton to start from the front. Vettel and Verstappen provided the fireworks in the closing moments of the session, but it was Vettel, desperate to keep his flickering championship hopes alive, who delivered the goods.

This being the tail end of the season, engine-related penalties dictated the complexion of the back of the grid, for while Marcus Ericsson, Pascal Wehrlein, Kevin Magnussen, Romain Grosjean and Pierre Gasly were eliminated in Q1 – Gasly didn't even run after suffering an engine failure in practice – a raft of demotions shuffled all but Gasly forwards. As a consequence, Ericsson, who just failed to make the cut for Q2 at Lance Stroll's

expense with his final quick lap after the Williams rookie also improved, would ultimately start the race from 12th on the grid.

Arguably the real star of Q1, though, was Fernando Alonso, who posted the fifth fastest time in his McLaren as well as being quickest of all through the second sector. But it was more for honour than anything else, for both he and team-mate Stoffel Vandoorne were facing double-digit grid penalties (20 and 35 respectively) for engine-component changes. His Q1 time would have been good enough for seventh in Q2 had he been able to repeat it, but neither McLaren driver set a flying lap, ending the second session 14th and 15th but destined for 18th and 19th on the grid.

Penalties therefore made Q2 at least a partial nonsense, with only 12 cars genuinely in play for the top 10. The session was briefly interrupted by double-waved yellows covering Brendon Hartley's stranded Toro Rosso, his new engine having gone the way of team-mate Gasly's. This caused Verstappen to abort what could have been the fastest lap so far, but upon resumption of business he rocketed to the top of the timesheets.

Of those seriously looking to make Q3, it was the Williams pairing of Felipe Massa and Lance Stroll who blew their chance. Scruffy final Q2 laps left them out of the final shoot-out.

Verstappen went fastest of all in the first runs of Q3 with a sizzling 1m16.574s lap, having had a close call with Valtteri Bottas in the stadium shortly before he embarked on it. Bottas locked up and aborted his first run as a result of that encounter, but much to the Mercedes team's chagrin the stewards found Verstappen innocent of impeding.

Hamilton, clearly struggling to switch on the ultrasoft-compound tyres, was third quickest after the first Q3 runs

and then failed to improve in his second, running very wide at the entry to the stadium section. But Verstappen, crucially, also fell short on his second run, reporting that he felt down on speed on the straight – a factor the team put down to the influence of the wind – enabling Vettel to snatch pole with a 1m16.488s final effort, 0.086s faster than Verstappen's best.

While Verstappen described himself as "super annoyed" at missing out on a first career pole, team-mate Daniel Ricciardo was "frustrated, annoyed, helpless" after a slower second run that meant he slumped from fourth to seventh as Bottas, Kimi Raikkonen and Esteban Ocon leapfrogged ahead.

Nico Hulkenberg won the internecine battle at Renault with a flying second run that put him eighth at the expense of Carlos Sainz. Home hero Sergio Perez had been eighth quickest after the opening runs, but an improvement of three tenths on his second run wasn't quite enough and he lined up 10th.

Post-qualifying, Red Bull elected to fit a new engine to Ricciardo's car which dropped him to 16th on the grid, slotting in behind Grosjean – the driver who set the slowest timed lap in qualifying, now starting 15th – but at the head of the five-car train of other drivers who had collected engine-related grid penalties. Between them Ricciardo, Hartley, Alonso, Vandoorne and Gasly had accrued a drop of 115 places; perhaps they should have started the race in Acapulco.

Race

The outcome of the 2017 drivers' championship was all but settled within seconds of the lights going out as the top three made similarly clean getaways, but Hamilton came on strongly with a surge that took him almost alongside Verstappen and Vettel as they bore down on the first corner. He wisely



Vettel had to fight back



More points for Ocon

hung back as the front-row duo got stuck into each other, and waited for an opportunity to present itself – which it immediately did.

Vettel tried to run Verstappen wide at Turn 1, but Verstappen hung on and claimed the inside line for the left-handed Turn 2, seizing the initiative. Vettel lost momentum – and a portion of front-wing endplate against the Red Bull's right-rear wheel – then found Hamilton trying to follow Verstappen through. Hamilton got slightly ahead around the outside of the right-hander at Turn 3, but at the exit Vettel's already wounded front wing sliced into his right-rear tyre, puncturing it. Both

Vettel and Hamilton duly headed for the pits, though naturally Hamilton, nursing flailing remnants of rear tyre, was the slower of the two.

That set up a fascinatingly multi-faceted grand prix as Verstappen and Bottas stretched away in front (though it soon became clear that the Mercedes didn't have the race legs of the Red Bull), a multi-car battle erupted for the final podium spot, and the displaced Vettel and Hamilton tried to race through from the back of the field. Seldom has a largely one-stop race been this intriguing.

Pace-wise, the identity of the winner didn't seem in doubt as Verstappen

ROUND



Photos: LAT



Max took third career victory in F1

crisply pulled away from Bottas at two or three tenths per lap, but Ricciardo's retirement with engine failure on lap five – having got as high as P7 – will have preyed on minds in the Red Bull garage and provided some succour for Mercedes.

Behind the leading duo, Ocon held an increasingly distant third for Force India, ahead of Hulkenberg, Perez, Massa, Raikkonen (who had bogged down off the start after a clean initial clutch engagement) and Stroll. The second Renault of Sainz fell out of the equation on the second lap after a spin, along with Massa, who had a puncture, leaving a five-car tussle for third. In their wake followed an unlikely bunch of top-10 contenders led by Magnussen in eighth, shadowed by Ericsson, Vandoorne and Alonso.

Worried by the swift arrival of Raikkonen on Perez's tail, Force India pitted the home hero from fifth place on lap 18 and sent him out on soft-compound tyres, a clear statement of one-stop intent. It was enough to prompt Renault to respond by pitting Hulkenberg the following lap, fearing the undercut, but then Force India seemed to react to their own gamble by pitting Ocon a lap later, also sending him out on softs.

"You're damned if you do, damned if you don't," raved team COO Otmar Szafnauer later.

Raikkonen and Stroll, though, carried on – both on ultrasofts, new ones in Stroll's case since his Q2 elimination entitled him to a free choice. Plugging away in third and fourth, they showed no deterioration in pace. How far could they push Pirelli's softest rubber?

Hulkenberg fell out of the battle for third when he retired on lap 25, but it was a virtual safety car close to mid-distance, lap 32 of 71, that decisively effected the complexion of the placings

behind the top two, who by then were so far ahead that it didn't matter to them. It enabled Raikkonen to consolidate his hold on third place, not just emerging with a greater margin over Ocon but also running on faster (supersoft) rubber than the Force Indias. Stroll, too, secured an advantage, leapfrogging Perez to run in a net fifth place.

The VSC cemented the battle for eighth, too, for the McLarens had swapped places in a vain attempt to get past Ericsson while Magnussen scampers away, but Ericsson had pitted before the VSC so now found himself behind both McLarens and outside the top 10. Ultimately it mattered little, though, since his car caught fire on lap 57.

Vettel and Hamilton also pitted under the VSC, and indubitably Hamilton's need was greater. Both had swapped to soft-compound tyres during their early pitstops, but while Vettel had charged through to seventh place by lap 32 (passing Massa, Gasly, Grosjean, Hartley, Vandoorne and Alonso on-track, and benefiting from Sainz, Wehrlein and Ericsson pitting and Hulkenberg retiring), Hamilton found the tyres disagreeable and had struggled to make headway. When he broke for the pits on lap 31 he was 15th out of 17 cars still running.

Thereafter they resumed their efforts, Vettel on new ultrasofts, Hamilton on new supersofts (the only new sets still available to them). Each only lost one net position by stopping. Vettel got back on it immediately, passing Magnussen for seventh on lap 37, Perez for sixth on lap 50, Stroll for fifth on lap 54, and Ocon for fourth on lap 57. But by then, third-placed Raikkonen was over 20s up the road and there were only 14 laps to go; more than that, he needed to finish second to

stay in the title hunt. "Mama mia," was all he could say when the Ferrari pitwall apprised him of the gap.

On more favourable rubber than before, Hamilton was also making progress, passing Grosjean on lap 35, Wehrlein on lap 37, Gasly on lap 42, Ericsson (pre-retirement) on lap 45, Vandoorne on lap 52, Massa on lap 56, before the irresistible force met an immovable object in the form of ninth-placed Fernando Alonso.

For 11 tours of the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez the former team-mates squabbled over a position that by rights meant nothing to racers of their pedigree. Hamilton tried to go by Alonso at T1 on lap 65 but had the door slammed on him; he had another go two laps later and Alonso's defence was similarly robust. But the champion-elect wasn't to be denied, and went wheel-to-wheel around the outside at Turn 4 to stake his claim to ninth.

"He's a bugger to overtake," was Hamilton's verdict.

Verstappen punched in his fastest lap with six to go and crossed the line 19.67s ahead of Bottas, Raikkonen was a further 34s down the road, 16s ahead of his team-mate. The battle for the world championship was over, 333 points to 277 with just 50 left, but Vettel was magnanimous in defeat.

"Next year will be a different story," he said, "as we all start again, but right now, in these moments, you need to give credit to the best man and that is him this year. Overall he was the better man and did the better job, simple as that."

Hamilton described finishing ninth as a "horrible way to win" the world championship, but that he'd had no intention of just sitting back and taking the title by default.

"I had to give it everything," he said, "so that when I crossed the line I could be proud of myself."

RACE FACTS

Results © 2017 Formula One Administration Ltd

MEXICO GRAND PRIX

Circuit: Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez **Laps:** 71
Race distance: 189.75 miles **Lap:** 2.672 miles
Lap record: 1m 18.785s (Sebastian Vettel, 2017)
2016 winner: Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)

Track: 43 degrees celsius
Air: 25 degrees celsius **Weather:** Warm

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RESULTS

FIA Formula 1 World Championship, round 18/20

POS	DRIVERS	NAT	CAR-ENGINE	TIME
1	Max Verstappen	NED	Red Bull-Renault	1h36m26.552s
2	Valtteri Bottas	FIN	Mercedes	+19.678s
3	Kimi Raikkonen	FIN	Ferrari	+54.007s
4	Sebastian Vettel	GER	Ferrari	+1m10.078s
5	Esteban Ocon	FRA	Force India-Mercedes	-1 lap
6	Lance Stroll	CAN	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap
7	Sergio Perez	MEX	Force India-Mercedes	-1 lap
8	Kevin Magnussen	DEN	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap
9	Lewis Hamilton	GBR	Mercedes	-1 lap
10	Fernando Alonso	ESP	McLaren-Honda	-1 lap
11	Felipe Massa	BRA	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap
12	Stoffel Vandoorne	BEL	McLaren-Honda	-1 lap
13	Pierre Gasly	FRA	Toro Rosso-Renault	-1 lap
14	Pascal Wehrlein	GER	Sauber-Ferrari	-2 laps
15	Romain Grosjean	FRA	Haas-Ferrari	-2 laps
R	Carlos Sainz	ESP	Renault	L59/steering
R	Marcus Ericsson	SWE	Sauber-Ferrari	L55/suspension
R	Brendon Hartley	NZL	Toro Rosso-Renault	L30/power unit
R	Nico Hulkenberg	GER	Renault	L24/power unit
R	Daniel Ricciardo	AUS	Red Bull-Renault	L5/turbo

Winner's average speed 118.042mph Lap leaders: Verstappen 1-71

FASTEST LAP | SEBASTIAN VETTEL 1m.18.785s ON LAP 68 (AVERAGE SPEED: 122.21 mph)

QUALIFYING

POS	DRIVER	TIME	POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Vettel	1m16.488s	11	Stroll	1m19.159s
2	Verstappen	1m16.574s	12	Ericsson	1m19.176s
3	Hamilton	1m16.934s	13	Wehrlein	1m19.333s
4	Bottas	1m16.958s	14	Magnussen	1m19.443s
5	Raikkonen	1m17.238s	15	Grosjean	1m19.473s
6	Ocon	1m17.437s	16	Ricciardo	1m17.447s*
7	Hulkenberg	1m17.466s	17	Hartley	*
8	Sainz	1m17.794s	18	Alonso	*
9	Perez	1m17.807s	19	Vandoorne	**
10	Massa	1m18.099s	20	Gasly	*

* = 20-place grid penalty for additional power elements used ** = 35-place grid penalty for additional power elements used



Ninth life for Brit Lewis

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

DRIVERS			CONSTRUCTORS		
POS	DRIVER	PTS	POS	CONSTRUCTOR	PTS
1	Lewis Hamilton	333	1	Mercedes	595
2	Sebastian Vettel	277	2	Ferrari	455
3	Valtteri Bottas	262	3	Red Bull-TAG Heuer	340
4	Daniel Ricciardo	192	4	Force India-Mercedes	175
5	Kimi Raikkonen	178	5	Williams-Mercedes	76
6	Max Verstappen	148	6	Toro Rosso-Renault	53
7	Sergio Perez	92	7	Renault	48
8	Esteban Ocon	83	8	Haas-Ferrari	47
9	Carlos Sainz	54	9	McLaren-Honda	24
10	Lance Stroll	40	10	Sauber-Ferrari	5

NEXT RACE: BRAZILIAN GRAND PRIX, NOV 12

RACING NEWS

F1 ROUND-UP

Ricciardo grumpy

Red Bull driver Daniel Ricciardo reckons there is a "fundamental" issue with the Renault engine after all three of the teams powered by the French manufacturer suffered problems in the Mexico Grand Prix. Ricciardo was already on the back foot with an engine change penalty but retired early in the race. Renault's Nico Hulkenberg and Carlos Sainz and Toro Rosso's Brendon Hartley all also retired with engine woes. "Certainly something fundamental [is] going on," Ricciardo said. "We've been coming to Mexico the past few years so there shouldn't be any surprises. It's been a pretty grim weekend for a few of us, it's a shame to be out early again."

Ferrari hogwash

Ferrari has dismissed claims by Bernie Ecclestone that Mercedes and the FIA have helped the team with its engine. Ferrari president Sergio Marchionne said there had been no such help and described the comments as "unadulterated hogwash". He added: "I think Bernie should be very thankful that Ferrari was at the table, and helped him turn the sport into as financially lucrative a position as it ultimately materialised for [his] personal use. I like Bernie, a lot, but I think Ferrari has done as much [for F1]."

Honda ashamed

Honda has again apologised to McLaren drivers Fernando Alonso and Stoffel Vandoorne after both received more grid penalties for engine component changes. Alonso had declared his car "the best in the field", setting the fastest sector two time in Q2, but was unable to deliver on that potential with a 20-place penalty dropping him to the rear of the grid. Vandoorne was demoted 35 places. "We are very ashamed that we need to give another penalty to both drivers," said Honda F1 project leader Yusuke Hasegawa. "From the last couple of race results, we are not confident to last just one engine to finish another three races, so we thought this is the opportunity to introduce new engines."

Death threats

Force India driver Esteban Ocon has revealed that he received death threats via social media after colliding with team-mate Sergio Perez earlier in the year. Ocon was surprised by the welcome he received in Perez's home country of Mexico given the abuse he had previously suffered online. "I was expecting a bit of a tough welcome this week, looking at all the Twitter messages I received, which was crazy – and all the death messages as well," said Ocon.

F1 COULD ADOPT 4WD FROM 2021

Proposal has drawn mixed reaction from teams

By Matt James

Formula 1 chiefs have considered a proposal to introduce four-wheel-drive to the sport when the engine regulations are updated from 2021 onwards.

It is among the proposals, which also include simplifying the hybrid parts to bring down costs in the sport.

The move would make the cars similar to the system that Porsche uses in the World Endurance Championship, where energy is harvested from the front axle and then redeployed later in the lap, which makes the car four-wheel-drive at certain points.

The system has benefits in allowing cars to follow each other more closely

to aid overtaking, but it would also increase the base weight of the car.

Mercedes boss Toto Wolff is in favour of the plan. He said: "There are various possibilities and front motors is one.

"It's not that we are absolutely stuck on implementing front motors but we have to discuss all possible technologies that can compensate for the lack of power."

However, not all team heads were in favour of the move. Haas boss Gene Haas said: "It's the same trap F1 got itself into when it selected this [current] engine.

"It seemed like a simple idea but when you started doing the engineering it became very, very complex.

"We have to be very careful before we say 'let's just throw a four-wheel-drive car out there', because it could be another one of those ones where one team will probably hit a home-run and the rest of us will be struggling with trying to catch up with that."

Renault F1 managing director Cyril Abiteboul said: "Liberty will have to take a position and to accept maybe to make some people unhappy.

"It's going to be difficult to make fans, independent engine firms like Cosworth, teams that do not have a technology message like Red Bull, happy, but at the same time keep the manufacturers, the petrol companies and bring new manufacturers."

Ferrari's Sergio Marchionne has suggested he would not accept a simple engine. "The knowledge and technology of the Ferrari tradition can not be undone by the objective to reduce costs," he said.

Four-wheel-drive has not been used in F1 since 1971, when Lotus fielded a 56B in the Dutch and Italian Grands Prix, without success.

Similar system to Porsche's in WEC could be used in F1



Kvyat will be seeking a new home

Kvyat is a contender for a Williams drive after being dropped by Red Bull

Daniil Kvyat has emerged as a contender for a 2018 Williams Formula 1 drive after being dropped by Red Bull last week.

It was confirmed in Mexico that the Russian was no longer part of the Red Bull programme, meaning Pierre Gasly and Brendon Hartley are likely to complete the season – and possibly 2018 too – with Toro Rosso.

After being dumped, Kvyat is now targeting a seat alongside Lance Stroll at Williams.

"We'll consider all drivers that are not contracted," said Williams technical chief Paddy Lowe. "That is a fact. Kvyat is a very respectable driver, so he should be in the frame."

Toro Rosso boss Franz Tost said there had been a loss of confidence in Kvyat with him only managing five points in 2017, compared to the 48 of Carlos Sainz Jr.

"The season from Daniil this year was very unfortunate," said Tost. "There were a lot of technical

problems which were not in the hands of Daniil, he couldn't do anything. But he also made some driver errors.

"Both parties lost confidence in each other. We felt the confidence was not there anymore on the level you need if you are to work together successfully in the future."

But Tost described Kvyat as "very fast" and refused to rule out him making a return to the Red Bull fold in the future.

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'BTCC clamps down on bad driving'
Rule changes for 2018, p8



Photos: LAT

ALONSO TO RACE IN DAYTONA 24 HOURS

United Autosports has confirmed that McLaren Formula 1 driver will contest the Daytona 24 Hours in January with the team.

There had been speculation that the two-time F1 champion would make his sportscar debut in the event with the team – which is co-owned by McLaren boss Zak Brown – and it has now been confirmed he will partner McLaren junior Lando Norris and another Briton, Phil Hanson, in a Ligier LMP2 car.

Contesting the race is part of a plan for Alonso to attempt to win the Triple Crown (Monaco Grand Prix, Indy 500 and Le Mans 24 Hours) and Brown said the Spaniard asked if he could compete at Daytona “two minutes” after renewing his McLaren contract for next season.

“We were in Singapore, got our F1 deal done, and as soon as we mentally crossed the bridge of

F1 star will race LMP2 Ligier



getting that sealed, it wasn't two minutes later before he said, 'I wanna do Daytona,'" said Brown.

“Fernando and I now have this relationship where we are two guys who always think about racing, 24/7.”

“While a lot of people are out on Friday night, indulging in a variety of social activities, it seems Fernando and I are trading texts on race helmet designs, or sharing pictures of cool cars and races.”

Alonso added: “The Daytona 24 Hours is the most iconic US endurance race and one of the world's great races. Everyone knows it. It's not part of the Triple Crown [of Monaco GP, Indy 500 and Le Mans victories] but, as I have always said, my aim is to be a complete driver and this experience will help me to prepare for any other endurance race I might take part in.”

Paul di Resta will also take part in the race with United Autosports in a second car.



Alonso will make sportscar debut

F1 RACING EXECUTIVE EDITOR

STUART CODLING

“Speed bumps garlanded Mexico track”



As painful and persistent as Montezuma's Revenge and twice as tedious, the debate over the whys and wherefores of track limits – kicked off by Max Verstappen's sensational but ultimately disallowed pass on Kimi Raikkonen on the last lap of the US Grand Prix – rumbled on to Mexico.

Max had correctly pointed out that plenty of other drivers had strayed beyond the boundaries and gone unpunished, then unwisely suggested that *his* penalty arose from some unspecified personal grudge that a particular FIA steward holds against him.

Pressed on that matter, Max declined to name the steward in question, but he'd already said enough for anyone with access to past race records to jigsaw-identify the supposed culprit. The FIA, naturally, demanded an apology. Max refused.

I nursed a hope that some strong-arm tactics might come in to play, along the lines of Kevin Kline dangling John Cleese out of a window by his ankles in the classic comedy *A Fish Called Wanda*. But, alas, Max denied us this sight by abasing himself in a thoroughly modern way, via Instagram. If only this technology had been available in the 16th century, Henry VIII and the Pope might have been able to clear up their little misunderstanding.

Still the matter refused to lie, for if drivers can go off-track and rejoin without penalty – damage-wise or time-wise – or, worse still, gain an advantage, then surely they will. Sundry paddock wise owls offered their thoughts, including Niki Lauda, who ventured in the aftermath of Austin that one effective deterrent to corner-cutting would be to “build a wall there”. Walls being a sensitive subject in these parts, others chose their words more carefully...

Perhaps the FIA feared that the thin air at altitude in the Mexican capital would cause a collective rush of blood to the head, because for this year the first-corner complex at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez had been garlanded with speed bumps in a newly asphalted run-off area. This was where Lewis Hamilton went straight on at the start of last year's race and then rejoined in the lead, without penalty, whereas Verstappen was punished for taking a similar trajectory while defending against Sebastian Vettel late in the race.

“For safety reasons,” wrote FIA race director Charlie Whiting, “any driver who either passes to the left of or runs over the orange kerb sections on the driver's left between Turns 1 and 2, or who passes to the left of the bollard on the apex of Turn 2, must rejoin the track by driving around the end of the orange kerb sections on the driver's left between Turns 2 and 3.”

Given the alleged inability of men to ask for or listen to directions, I hope for everybody's sake that Charlie drew them a map. Where did the romance of motor racing go?

THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP



Dubai-based British driver Ed Jones will switch to the Chip Ganassi squad for next year's IndyCar season. Jones was IndyCar rookie of the year in 2017, finishing 14th in the points with Dale Coyne Racing, and has now secured a surprise switch to Chip Ganassi... Three-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner Andre Lotterer has said he could swap to a privateer LMP1 team for the World Endurance Championship next season following Porsche's exit. The German will compete with Techeetah in Formula E in 2017/18 but he still wants to continue racing in LMP1 if



Busch (1) won at Martinsville to secure NASCAR playoff place

there is parity between the privateers and manufacturers. Toyota has hinted that it could remain as the sole works team in the class next year...

Tom Chilton took victory in the opening World Touring Car Championship race at Motegi last weekend. In sudden conditions, Chilton grabbed the lead into the first corner and was

untroubled thereafter. Honda driver Norbert Michelisz won a rain-shortened race two that featured just four racing laps. The win means he is now the closest challenger to Volvo points leader Thed Bjork...

Kyle Busch secured his place in the NASCAR Cup final four after winning a chaotic race at Martinsville last

weekend. Busch inherited the win with three laps to go when Chase Elliott and Denny Hamlin collided. The other three drivers currently holding a playoff place are points leader Martin Truex Jr, Brad Keselowski and Kevin Harvick... **European Formula 3 racer Harrison Newey won on his Asian Le Mans Series debut in an ORECA-Nissan 05 LMP2 car for the Jota-run Jackie Chan DC Racing team last weekend. Newey won the season opener at Zhuhai with team-mates Thomas Laurent and Stephane Richelmi...** Sacha Fenestraz secured the Eurocup Formula Renault title at Barcelona last weekend, beating 2015 McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner Will Palmer, taking a win in the season finale. Third-placed Robert Shwartzman won the other two races while 2016 British Formula 4 champion Max Fewtrell secured the rookie class title and sixth overall...

New Alpine Europa Cup series to visit the UK

A new European series for Alpine's latest sportscar will visit the UK next season.

The Alpine Europa Cup is for the new Alpine A110 Cup car that has been developed by French manufacturer Alpine along with World Endurance Championship squad Signatech and Renault Sport Racing.

The car features a 270bhp 1.8-litre engine mated to an aluminium monocoque and the series aims to recreate the previous Europa Cup for the Alpine GTA V6 Turbo that was held between 1985 and 1988.

There will be six rounds across Europe next year, with the series visiting Silverstone on September

1-2 as part of the International GT Open meeting. Each round will have two 30-minute races and cars can be shared between two drivers.

The A110 Cup costs £90,000 excluding tax and only about 20 cars will be available for the inaugural season.

“The fact we have created the Alpine A110 Cup and a dedicated competition, the Alpine Europa Cup, is yet further evidence of our love of motor racing,” said Alpine deputy managing director Bernard Ollivier. “We wanted the A110 Cup to be a genuine race car, a particularly refined machine equipped with high-end features geared towards performance.”



Silverstone will play host to a round of new Alpine A110 series



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

RACING NEWS

IN BRIEF

New BRSCC chairman
British Racing and Sports Car Club chairman Bernard Cottrell has stepped down from his role after 13 years following ongoing health issues. "As I have my transplant next month I will be out of action for a couple of months at least and I think that now may be the time for me to step down as chairman and indeed from the board," he said. He will be replaced by vice-chairman Peter Daly.

Lemmer makes debut
The son of GT team boss Mark Lemmer made his car racing debut at Brands Hatch last weekend. Jack Lemmer, 16, contested the Allcomers races at Brands in a Peugeot 106 Rallye and took a best finish of 14th in the opening race. Lemmer Sr said: "He's never driven a road car yet, nor used an H-pattern gear change before." The Barwell boss has the Fun Cup or Citroen C1 series in mind as Jack's next step on the racing ladder.

Taylor wins Ginetta spot
Karter James Taylor has won the Ginetta Junior scholarship for 2018 after beating 64 other drivers during assessments at Blyton Park last week. The 15-year-old has been karting for seven years and will graduate to car racing after securing a fully-funded drive in Ginetta Junior, impressing with his driving, media and fitness.

TCR car races at Brands
Spectators at Brands Hatch had their first sighting of a TCR machine in action when novice racer Samuel de Haan recorded a podium finish in one of the MSVR Allcomers race. The Audi RS3 won its class in this year's Dubai 24 hours on its first track appearance but will be kept for endurance racing rather than the upcoming UK TCR series, according to team boss Mark Lemmer.

Brands Hatch return
Noel Roddy travelled from Ireland to race at Brands Hatch for the first time in more than 20 years, where he tried out an F3 Dallara with a view to a full Monoposto season in 2018. A three times Formula Ford Festival quarter finalist, Roddy last drove in Kent in a Formula Vauxhall in 1996. Racing a 2002 former Renault works F3 car on Saturday, he crashed in race one but got a podium in the second race.

AmDTuning.com team to stick with Audi S3s

The AmDTuning.com team has confirmed that it will return to the British Touring Car Championship next season with its brace of Audi S3 cars.

The Essex crew ran Ollie Jackson and Ant Whorton-Eales this season and was 14th in the teams' standings. Both drivers led a race, and the team is in talks with them about a seat next year, along with other potential entrants.

Team boss Shaun Hollamby said: "We made huge steps forward over the course of 2017 and thanks to Ollie and Ant, ended the season with our best points haul and the strongest package we have ever had in the series.

"It is important for us to now capitalise on the hard work that has gone into the Audi in order to maximise our chances of success on track during 2018.

"We are keen to strengthen the engineering side of the team to build on the progress we have made so far, and are already in discussions with drivers as we look to put together the strongest pairing we can to fight for the Independents' titles."

Photos: Jakob Ebrej



Driving standards was a hot topic in '17 BTCC

DRIVING STANDARDS CLAMPDOWN IN BTCC

New tougher penalties for bad driving are praised

By Matt James

The British Touring Car Championship will use a more robust driver penalty system next season in an effort to improve competitor discipline from 2018 onwards.

It is part of a series of tweaks to the sporting regulations, which also include the top 12 to be included in the reversed-grid draw and an alteration to the way that the boost levels are adjusted. From 2018, boost will only be altered at

the midpoint of the season instead of being assessed after every three rounds, as happened previously.

Changes to the driver discipline could result in a season-long ban if a driver transgresses on seven occasions throughout the year.

Three-time champion Gordon Shedden has backed the changes to the regulations.

"It is hard because we have had some drivers in places on the grid that they shouldn't be due to the boost situation, and that has contributed to some

of the problems we have had in 2017, but also there were cases where drivers were crashing into each other in a straight line, which really shouldn't happen," said Team Dynamics Honda Civic driver Shedden.

"I think anything to improve the standings will be welcomed, but there also needs to be a consistency in the penalties handed out. If the clerk can get that right, then the whole system will improve."

Team BMW racer Colin Turkington agreed. "It has

to be a step forward. The field was so close this year that there were incidents, and we saw some bigger crashes than we have had in recent seasons. Drivers need to be more aware, so these changes are good.

"In terms of the boost alterations, I think if they are right at the start of the season then there should be no reason to change them at all.

"We have success ballast as a balance-of-power leveller, and that is the only thing we need really."

CHANGES AT A GLANCE

■ Fines will be increased, with a significant additional championship fine applied on top of any MSA fine.

■ From next year a 'strike' will last for 12 months from the date applied, rather than just the same season. This then brings them into line with the 12-month penalty points system on MSA race licence.

■ Strikes gained during a 12-month period will result in the following penalties;

Third strike – back of the grid
Fourth strike – one-race ban
Fifth strike – two-race ban
Sixth strike – three-race ban
Seventh strike – banned from the championship for the rest of that season.

■ A relatively minor but straightforward on-track incident, involving and affecting only two cars, that can be simply rectified by swapping their finishing positions post-race (or which has already been fully redressed within one lap by the offending driver) will not necessarily constitute a 'strike'.

Handy team rebrands as HMS Racing for 2018

British Touring Car Championship team Handy Motorsport has officially rebranded as HMS Racing ahead of the squad's maiden campaign with an Alfa Romeo.

HMS Racing Ltd was formed back in 2011, when Handy Motorsport competed in the Legends Cars National Championship, but the team continued to trade under its more widely known Handy name.

With the switch from the team's Toyota Avensis to a newly constructed Alfa Romeo Giulietta for next year, the team has decided to alter its name.

Team principal Simon Belcher explained: "Next season marks a



Avensis and Handy name will go

big change for the team with the introduction of the Alfa Romeo so it really is the ideal time to make the rebrand to HMS Racing. HMS actually stands for Handy Motor Sport and when we founded the limited company in 2011 we shortened our name."

HMS Racing will officially unveil its Alfa Romeo Giulietta BTCC car at the annual Autosport International Show in January.

Shedden to race in TCR International

Three-time British Touring Car champion Gordon Shedden will contest the final round of the TCR International Series in Dubai later this month, and hopes that it could lead to more chances to race overseas.

Shedden, who races a Team Dynamics Honda Civic in the BTCC, will replace Rob Huff in the Leopard Racing Team WRT operation at the wheel of a Volkswagen Golf TCR.

The Scotsman will be partnered with Jean-Karl Vernay, who is gunning

for the crown at the November 18 event.

Shedden said: "I have driven a TCR car before, but only in a demo. I got a little feel for it, but racing one will be totally different. It is a new car and a new circuit for me, but I am looking forward to helping Jean-Karl out.

"This is only a one-off at the moment, but I would love to do more varied racing and that is certainly on my radar. Who knows where this could lead, but I would love to tackle all kinds of programmes.



BTCC champ to Dubai

"I will look out for all opportunities, but I will also remain firmly committed to Team Dynamics, Honda and the British Touring Car Championship."



Neil Brown Engineering will provide engine support to British F4

Teams welcome new British F4 engine support provider for 2018

British Formula 4 teams have welcomed the decision for Neil Brown Engineering to become the category's engine support provider from next season.

The renowned company will be responsible for balancing the F4 Ford EcoBoost engines as well as providing trackside support at all rounds and official tests.

Double R team boss Anthony Heatt has been critical of the engine support provided by Sodemo and the equality of the motors in the past – describing it as the "worst thing about the championship" – but he says the addition of Neil Brown

Engineering is very positive.

"It's a fantastic step in the right direction – it can only be a good thing," said Heatt. "It was a crazy decision in the first place for an MSA championship to go with a foreign engine tuner when we've got so many good ones in the UK. The championship will just become stronger now as people will have confidence in the engines."

Heatt added that, as a French-based company, Sodemo didn't have an easy task providing full support to the British series. Sodemo will remain as homologation partner.

Neil Brown has a long history of working with Ford and currently builds engines for a number of British Touring Car squads.

● Double R will expand into the Euroformula Open category for 2018, with the series for Dallara FIA F3-spec cars "gaining momentum". Heatt said: "I like racing against Trevor [Carlin] and teams like Fortec and there's some good foreign teams too. Nobody really knows what's happening in the future [with F3 merging with GP3] and for an independent team like us it's a good place to be."



Cane is a winner in BRDC British F3

Cane and Caroline to test Formula Renault 2.0

BRDC British F3 frontrunner Jordan Cane and British F4 champion Jamie Caroline both tested a Formula Renault Eurocup car at Barcelona earlier this week.

Cane has targeted a season in the category next year, and will test with two teams in upcoming tests before confirming his plans.

"The plan for us at the minute is to do Renault next year," said Cane. "We're testing with Fortec in Barcelona and then with Tech 1 Racing at Nurburgring. We're not sure yet who we'll test with at Spa, we'll see how we get with which team.

"There's 36 drivers on this test, a lot of second-year drivers so it should be good. It's scrutineered so no one is playing games.

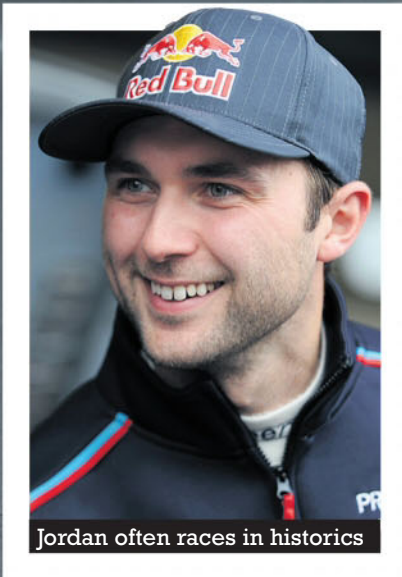
"Fortec in previous years have been pretty mega and Tech 1 have been the big dogs in the serious decision. We'll hopefully make a decision at Spa what our plans are and who we're with."

Caroline was invited by the series to test, and was with the Tech 1 Racing squad.

"I'm looking forward to comparing with all the others at the test," added Caroline. "I know I probably won't be quickest but I will try my hardest. It's a new team, new car, new track so a total refresh. It's something that I would be interested in doing [next year] with the Renault Academy making them one of the only teams that helps drivers through the ranks. It's a shame because I have to leave half way through the day to go to the Porsche Junior assessment so I will look at the progress I make."

One of Caroline's British F4 rivals, Oscar Piastrini, has also been invited to the test. He drove with Arden in the UK and will stick with the same squad for his Eurocup bow.

JORDAN TO BUILD AND RACE V8 TVR GRIFFITH



Jordan often races in historics



New JRT car will be similar to Whitaker's

Former British Touring Car champion Andrew Jordan is building a TVR Griffith to contest selected historic events next season.

The Jordan Racing Team, which entered the historic arena in 2015, has built a number of historic touring cars, including the Jordan

family's successful Austin A40.

Now Jordan plans to build a 'wide-body' V8-engined TVR, in conjunction with Nigel Reuben Racing, to share with his father and fellow BTCC race winner, Mike, in high-profile historic meetings for pre-1966 GT cars.

"We've got so many car builds on at

the moment, but this is for me and dad to do some racing in," said the 28-year-old, who confirmed JRT is also expanding its workshop. "We'd like to do the Oulton Park Gold Cup, Classic Daytona and, depending on dates, the Silverstone Classic or Donington Park. We want to cherry-pick some nice races.

"I think it will be really nice and I'm really excited about it."

Mike Whitaker, who shares his cars with Mike Jordan, has scored many successes in his similar Griffith, as well as the 'narrow-body' version that won at the Goodwood Members' Meeting in March.

Lanan tests karter Mason and Maini's younger brother ahead of F3 campaigns

Lanan Racing has tested two drivers which it intends to run next year in the BRDC British Formula 3 championship.

Kush Maini – an Italian Formula 4 driver whose brother, Arjun, finished second in the 2014 BRDC F4 championship with Lanan – and karter Joshua Mason have been running at Donington Park, Oulton Park and Snetterton in the last few weeks.

Mason has already signed a two-year deal with the team and Maini is expected

to be confirmed in the next few weeks.

Graham Johnson, Lanan Racing team principal, said: "Josh has been testing the old Formula 4 car, the one that we used to run, and next year he'll go into the F3 car but he'll miss the first race as he's not 16-years-old in time.

"Kush just loves it so much we're doing another two days testing at Snetterton this week.

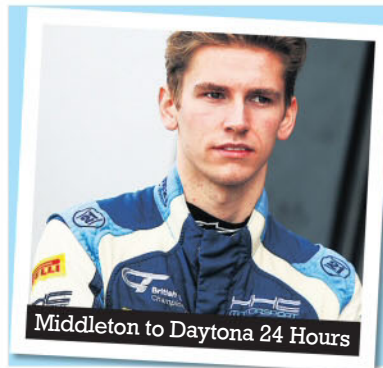
"His father called me and said we want

to have a look at British F3 and we're the only team that they would consider running with. What's interesting is he said that British F3 is not on the Italian F4 [drivers'] radar, but he said if they knew what the car was like they would be here."

Johnson confirmed British Formula 4 driver Alex Quinn, who raced with Lanan in the final round of 2017 at Donington, could be joining the squad for next season but is still trying to secure a budget.



Lanan has tested two new drivers



Middleton to Daytona 24 Hours

British GT4 champion Middleton secures Whelen Challenge prize drive at Daytona in Cadillac prototype

British GT4 champion Stuart Middleton will race at next January's Daytona 24 Hours after winning a fully funded seat in a Cadillac Daytona Prototype courtesy of Sunoco.

Middleton was crowned as the winner of this year's Sunoco Whelen Challenge contest last weekend, and will now receive a seat in an Action Express Racing Cadillac DPi VR for January's American endurance showpiece.

The prize is worth an estimated \$250,000 (£190,000).

Middleton will share his car with former F1 racer – and former Sunoco Challenge winner – Felipe Nasr, World Endurance Championship regular Mike Conway and 2016 IMSA champion Eric Curran.

Middleton, 18, won this year's prize after stand-out performances alongside Will Tregurtha in the HHC-run Ginetta

G55 GT4 as the pair took the British title. Middleton was put clear in the Sunoco points when Radical European Masters racer Stuart Moseley was unable to score enough points at Barcelona last weekend.

"I'm ecstatic, speechless to be honest," said Middleton. "This is such a huge prize and an incredible opportunity for me so early in my career. Being part of the Action Express team with Felipe,

Mike and Eric is just amazing... it hasn't quite sunk in yet.

"My first season in GT4 with my fantastic team-mate Will Tregurtha was just amazing, we couldn't believe how competitive we were right from the first round. To win the championship in our rookie year was more than we could have hoped for, and for me to now win the Sunoco Whelen Challenge is the icing on the cake."

Balfe and Bell among British drivers having successful Barcelona GT Open meetings

There was plenty of British success at Barcelona last weekend as Shaun Balfe and Rob Bell clinched the International GT Open Pro Am class after Balfe was runner-up last year.

The McLaren 650S duo had an eventful opener, colliding with Valentin Pierburg two corners from home but survived to take two third places in class.

"A fantastic year for us, we had our problems but it was a great team effort," said Balfe. "We had a lot of scary

moments going on around us, but we made it."

The second race was won by British pair Michael Meadows and Jordan Witt, who returned to the category in a Bentley Continental GT3. The pair were robustly passed by Bradley Ellis on the final lap but the positions were later reversed with Ellis penalised.

Elsewhere, Radical UK Challenge champion Oliver Barker made a successful Radical European Masters

debut, sharing John Harrison's SR8.

Harrison spun in race one dropping him to third behind Louis Hamilton-Smith but Barker chased him down, snatching second with a lap to go.

Another second followed in race two before the pair took a win in the finale.

Jack Manchester won the SR3 class in races one and two, but a first-lap off in race three secured the class spoils for Mark Crader/James Littlejohn. The SR3 title went to Jani Hjerpe.



Balfe and Bell secured GT Open Pro Am title in their McLaren 650S in Spain

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Walter Hayes went to Murray last year

MURRAY TO CONTEST 2017 WALTER HAYES

Former winner will look to make it two on the bounce

By Stefan Mackley

Niall Murray will return to Formula Ford action this weekend to try and defend his Walter Hayes Trophy triumph from 12 months ago.

The 22-year-old will contest the annual Silverstone event aboard a Van Diemen LA10 which he has already used to take the Northern Ireland Formula Ford championship this season.

"As the reigning winner of course

you want to go on and defend the crown," said Murray, who dominated last year's event in torrential rain.

"If I win it this year I would probably try and do it next year for the hat-trick.

"You need a lot of luck, with the amount of entries there's a big chance of something going wrong.

"If it goes wrong in the heats you've more or less got very little chance [of winning]. Just with the nature of Silverstone there's a big chance of drivers half-a-second off the pace,

they might be up there and cause an accident which has happened to me before and is frustrating."

Murray will headline a bumper entry of more than 100 cars, including James Raven – winner of the Formula Ford Festival in 2014 – who will drive the Ray GR09 used by Neil MacLennan this season.

"It's definitely unfinished business," said Raven. "Last year I got taken out in the heat and the year before we were at the front but we were taken out in the final

"Luck has always evaded me there. We've always been in the top three or top five at least in terms of times. You need luck at the big events."

Other high-profile names include 2014 National Formula Ford champion Stuart Gough – who will race a Kevin Mills Spectrum – and the 2017 Festival winner, Joey Foster.

The event will consist of six heats, a progression and last chance race and two semi-finals before the grand final on Silverstone's National layout.

NOTABLE DRIVERS IN HEATS

Heat 1

Matt Cowley	Van Diemen JL13
James Raven	Ray GR08/9
Rob Hall	Van Diemen JL12
James Roe	RF99
Matt Round-Garrido	Medina JL17

Heat 2

Luke Cooper	Swift SC16
Felix Fisher	Van Diemen RF02
Ross Martin	Ray GR17
Sebastian Melrose	Ray GR14
Callum Grant	Merlyn Mk20a

Heat 3

Joey Foster	Ray GR08
Jordan Dempsey	Spectrum 011
Richard Taring	Jamun T2
Josh Barnett	Reynard RF89
Jamie Chadwick	Ray GR14

Heat 4

Ed Moore	Van Diemen JL13
Jonathan Kotyk	Ray GR11
Niall Murray	Van Diemen LA10
Josh Smith	Van Diemen JL16
Keith Donegan	Van Diemen JL13

Heat 5

Luke Williams	Firman RFR16
Michael Moyers	Spectrum 011
Roger Orgee	Ray GR17
Aaron Jeansonne	Ray GR15
Ben Mitchell	Merlyn Mk11a

Heat 6

Oliver White	Van Diemen JL17
Stuart Gough	Spectrum 011
Robert Barrable	Van Diemen RF02
Josh Fisher	Van Diemen JL14
Jamie Thorburn	Ray GR15

Hayes debut for Thurston in Jamun

Historic Formula Ford frontrunner Ed Thurston will make his debut at the Walter Hayes Trophy this weekend aboard an uncommon Jamun M89.

Thurston, 18, campaigns a rare Elden Mk8 in the HSCC-organised Formula Ford championship, and through a link-up with friend Nigel Tye will race at one of the formula's showpiece events.

"We have a good friend Nigel Tye. We met him at Sywell Aerodrome last year. He was asking us what Formula Ford would be



A rare Jamun M89 will be driven by Ed Thurston

good to buy. He ended up buying the Jamun and I offered to test it and set it up.

"Since then we've become good friends and he helps me run my car."

Thurston is targeting a class win in the Pre-'90 category in the 1989 car.

"It's so different to drive," added Thurston. "It's so stable and you're arriving

at the end of the straight faster because of the aero development. It's completely different but really good fun.

"We'd like to win the Pre-'90 class, with the car being an '89 it's right at the end of that. It would be awesome to get to the final but I don't think that will happen being an '89 car."

Fiesta Six Hour win for LDH Motorsport at Mondello Park

Michael Devaney may have banged wheels with Nico Rosberg in German F3 in the past but these days he just races once a year – the Mondello Park Fiesta Six Hour race.

He showed no signs of rustiness, though, grabbing pole in the Murray Motorsport machine and gradually eased clear of the pack before an errant teammate turned in on him while being lapped, putting them both off. Liam Denning assumed

the lead and despite not having raced recently, held off the chasing pack with apparent ease for the opening stint.

Kevin O'Hara, having started on the front row, dropped back to the fringes of the top 10 in the early damp conditions but began to slice his way back towards the front. O'Hara's pace was matched by teammates Dan Polley and Ronan McHale and

once they assumed the lead, their pace was relentless until the flag.

Blackchurch Motors, winners in 2016, had climbed to second through strategy more than pace, with a strong recovery drive bringing Devaney's Murray Motorsport team to third.



The LDH Motorsport car

Bambino karting series a "possibility"

Kart races for drivers as young as seven could be introduced in the UK next season after a successful trial Bambino race has been held by the Motor Sports Association.

The 10-lap trial contest was held at Buckmore Park last month with 13 drivers taking part and the MSA is now evaluating whether to permit more races like it next year.

MSA Kart Executive Cheryl Lynch said: "The young drivers and their parents all seemed to enjoy a brilliant day at Buckmore Park. The racing was superb, the atmosphere was one of great camaraderie and we will now evaluate the possibility of introducing an MSA Bambino race championship for 2018."

Silverstone test for Swift's SEAT Leon TCR

Former Civic Cup champion Carl Swift has bought a SEAT Leon TCR car ahead of his planned move into TCR UK next season.

Swift, who won the 750 Motor Club's Civic Cup title in 2016, has bought the second-hand car to allow him to conduct a test programme over the winter in preparation for the season.

"They've been around for longer so the resale prices are lower with them," explained Swift. "I'm planning a couple of weeks familiarising myself with it and get out on a couple of trackdays and then get in some test runs.

"It should be interesting. The only data we have really got is the Silverstone GP circuit from Creventic [there was a TCR class that raced as part of the Silverstone 24 Hours earlier this year] so that's all everyone knows. I will probably get on the GP circuit so I can compare against those cars."

Mini step up for karter Goodman next season

EasyKart champion Toby Goodman will move into the Mini Challenge Cooper Class for his first season of car racing in 2018.

Goodman won the EasyKart (now re-titled BirelART UK) Junior class title in 2016, and also took a further three event wins during a part campaign this year.

He will now contest the Cooper Pro category with leading team Excelr8 Motorsport.

Goodman, who will turn 16 just before the start of the 2018 season, said: "I am so pleased to have secured a seat with Excelr8, the Cooper Pro really is an excellent race car and the Dunlop race tyres mean you get huge grip and consistency so you can set some surprisingly quick lap times.

"It's a great first step out of karting and I'm determined to pay back the faith Excelr8 have shown in me with solid progress."



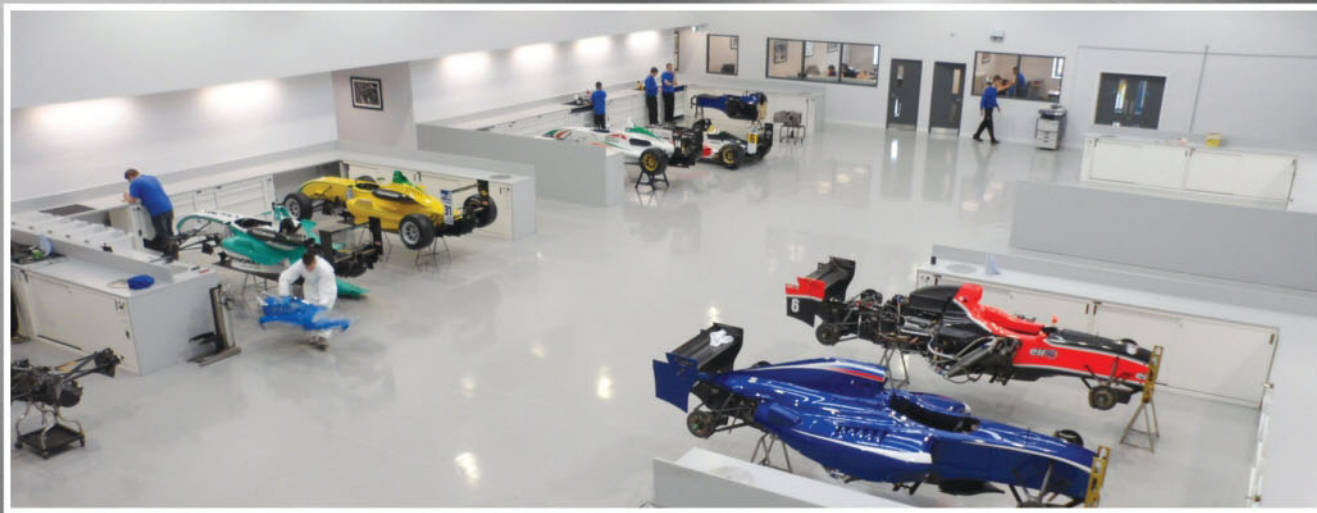
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HISTORICS

'Will Plant will carry number one'
Historic Road Sports, below



Photos: Paul Lawrence

DOWN THE PUB WITH

JOSH BROWNE

Age: 26 Lives: Sittingbourne
Historic rally newcomer

He followed dad Chris into rallying

"I grew up going rallying with dad and helping with the cars. I started competing at a young age in autotests and some karting and then saved up enough money to buy my own Ford Escort Mk2. I used dad's Mk1 a few times and then did a few track days just to get used to the car."

He's been rallying for 12 months

"I did my first forest event a year ago on the Malton Stages and that was horrible! It was too much in the BDA and I had to look after dad's car. I've done some events in Wales this year in my car and I've loved getting on the gravel, it is amazing. I wouldn't go back to asphalt now."

The car is strong

"My car is a Mk2 with an Alan Sherwood Pinto. It's Paul Barrett's old car and he did well in the BHRC with it last year. It's 100 per cent now and Graeme Standen looks after it. He does a brilliant job. Next up we're doing the Roger Albert Clark alongside dad and then hopefully we'll do the BHRC next year: as many rounds as I can."

Gravel is his surface of choice

"I thought I was going to be an asphalt boy, but gravel is the way forward for me. The pace is getting there and I'm doing my best. The car helps me a lot and it is a really good car. This has been my first year and hopefully in a couple of years we'll get there. I won't go rallying without dad as it makes me feel more comfortable when he's there."

He'll stay with historics

"I've grown up with historics and I love them to bits, so I want to stay there. Eventually I'd like to get a BDG engine for the Escort but for now, the Pinto is perfect. It is amazing for learning. Jane Edgington is co-driving for me and she has been brilliant. She's got good experience and we get on well, so we can have a laugh as well as go rallying. This is for fun."

He has a young daughter

"I work in construction with dad, managing jobs and running building sites and I do some of my own projects as well. I'm nearly married to Jane and we've got a little girl who is two-and-a-half."



Browne: a family tradition



Grant will be back in his Delta T78

GRANT TO BATTLE FOR FF2000 HONOURS

FF1600 fighter will step up again for a full 2018 campaign

By Paul Lawrence

Historic Formula Ford 1600 ace Callum Grant will return to Historic Formula Ford 2000 next season for a serious crack at the championship in what he says could be his last full season of racing for now.

Grant, 22, was HFF champion in 2012 and 2016 and narrowly

missed this year's title. Now, he plans a full season next year in his father Nigel's Delta T78 in the two-litre category.

"It's the same car as 2015 when I last raced it," said Grant. "I did three-quarters of the season in it but we couldn't get the car handling as we wanted. We did a bit of work and tested it last year and it seemed better. I think 2018 will be my last full year. We'll

keep the cars but just do two or three meetings a year. Everything comes to an end."

Nigel has owned the Delta for more than a decade but they have struggled with tyre costs when racing it. Now, tyre changes have reduced the cost and they are planning a full campaign next season.

"Dad has always wanted to put me out in the Delta for the

season," said Callum. "It's always been fast, we've just not had the reliability. Now we've rebuilt it and gone through everything."

His run in the Delta at the recent Silverstone Finals meeting netted a podium finish but Callum knows that he will face fierce opposition from drivers like reigning champion Andrew Park and Ian Pearson.



Gray: battle with husband

Husband and wife pairing to fight each other on the Roger Albert

Husband and wife Andy and Kim Gray will go head to head on the Roger Albert Clark Rally when they both drive on the four-day rally next week.

Kim, who starred on the 2014 rally as Kim Baker before her marriage to Andy, says that fielding two cars from

ordinary salaries is a massive commitment from them both.

"We're still looking for tyre support and we need about 10 more tyres," she said. "We try to use part worn tyres from the leading crews. We're just an ordinary working couple!" Kim works for the NHS and Andy is a

self-employed rally engineer.

"We are getting there on the budget and we've got to go for it. It's probable that both of us won't do it again and it is a big challenge," she said. While Kim will drive her 1600cc Ford Escort Mk2, Andy will be in his newly rebuilt Peugeot 205 GTI.

R.A.C. win hat-trick target for Bannister

Steve Bannister will bid for a record-breaking hat-trick of wins on the 2017 Roger Albert Clark Rally.

Bannister and co-driver Callum Atkinson will start the four-day rally as car five in their Ford Escort Mk2. They were the winners of a free entry for winning this year's Northern Historic

Rally Championship in a special award supported by fellow competitor Barry Jordan.

Bannister, winner in '07 and '13, will bid for a record third victory to add to three Open Rally victories he scored in the event's first three editions in 2004, '05 and '06. The only other driver with two wins to his credit is Gwyndaf Evans.

Smith is the master of the older racers

Historic Formula Ford racer Rob Smith has won the over 50s section of the HSCC championship by a single point from former Caterham racer Neil Shinner.

While the young guns in the championship battled for the overall title, the separate classification for drivers aged over 50 featured some equally close racing.

A total of 54 drivers scored points in the over 50s and the award was only decided in the

final race at Silverstone when Smith beat fellow Merlyn Mk20 racer Shinner by one place.

Following the success of the classification in the category's 50th anniversary season, it will be continued in 2018.



Smith lifted the over 50s honours



Seb Perez traded his Ginetta GT4 race car to contest Wales Rally GB National in a Ford Escort Mk2. The 18-year-old son of rally ace Steve used the event as a lead-in to tackling the Roger Albert Clark Rally and finished 22nd overall.

IN BRIEF

Allcomers bash

Nearly 40 cars will contest a pair of 20-lap HSCC Allcomers races on Saturday during the Walter Hayes Trophy meeting at Silverstone. The entry is split in half based on performance and is topped by Vic Nutter in a Lola T296 and Keith Butcher in his Super Touring Audi A4.

Busy in Killarney

The Killarney Historic Rally will feature over 70 stage miles when it runs on Saturday, December 2. The route will take in classic stages like Moll's Gap, Ballaghbeama and Caragh Lake with a sting in the tail featuring two runs over the Rockfield stage on Saturday evening, with the second run in the dark.

Plant is number one

Will Plant and Dick Coffey have been confirmed as joint champions in the Historic Road Sports Championship. After the final race of the season at Silverstone they could not be split even after a tie-break. Plant's Morgan +8 will run the coveted number one next season as Coffey has been champion twice before in his Turner Mk1.

Slaughter's return

Dick Slaughter has been tempted back to rallying by the new Rally 2WD format and plans to do some of the events next season in his Ford Escort Mk1 Pinto with Tim Sayer co-driving. He has not competed regularly since the changes were made to event running orders.

Eifel in July

The 2018 edition of the Eifel Rallye Festival has been confirmed for July 19-21. The rally show in the town of Daun and demonstration stages in the surrounding Vulkaneifel Mountains will stay with its well-proven concept, starting with a shakedown stage on Thursday. The route will cover around 80 miles of stages.

VSCC ends early

The VSCC Speed Championship concluded recently at Rockingham, rather than Goodwood as originally planned. The overall winner was David Furnell in his 1930 Austin Seven Special 'The Toy', who finished ahead of Gary Clare in his 1928 GN Special 'Grannie' and Graham Beckett's 1930 Austin Seven Special 'Simplicity'.

Brits in Masters

Keith Ahlers and Billy Bellinger have retained their overall title in the FIA Masters Historic Sports Car Championship. Ahlers' Cooper Monaco King Cobra sealed the crown in the final race of the season at Estoril in Portugal after winning the pre-'66 'Denny Hulme' class once more.

Smith in F3 step

Former Historic FF2000 champion Tom Smith made his Classic F3 debut at Silverstone recently when he was offered a run in the March 793 of Iain Rowley. Smith has done some engineering work with Rowley's team this season and jumped at the chance to race the F3 car. He claimed a podium finish in the second race.



Smith took a podium finish

RALLY NEWS

BRITISH SUCCESS AND ANOTHER CROWN FOR FRENCH SUPERSTAR

M-Sport and Ogier crowned as Evans lights up Wales



Welshman and Barritt lift the precious trophy

Elfn Evans was untouchable

By David Evans

Elfn Evans, M-Sport and British rallying celebrated a history rewriting Wales Rally GB last week – but Malcolm Wilson is now working harder than ever to keep his squad in the frame for more success next season.

Evans became the first ever Welsh winner of Britain's round of the World Rally Championship and the first Brit since Richard Burns in 2000. And M-Sport doubled its world title tally in one afternoon, by lifting both the manufacturers' and the drivers' championship with Sebastien Ogier.

M-Sport also becomes the first genuine privateer team to lift the world title, having developed and built the Fiesta WRC entirely at its Dovenby Hall base.

An emotional Wilson told *MN*: "It's starting to sink in now and I'm starting to understand that it can't get any better than this. You look back to when we won the two titles before, particularly the second one on Rally Ireland and it was messy. Marcus [Gronholm] crashed, we didn't win the rally, but we got the title and that was OK. This time, it was everything and it was so, so special.

"Ott [Tanak] crossed the line and that was the manufacturers', then Seb was next, that was the drivers' and then Elfn came and won our home round of the world championship. It couldn't get any

better than that. Everything was perfect, we got the triple crown on this one."

Wilson admitted, however, that there was the odd moment of doubt on the final day in Wales.

"There was this reality check when somebody mentioned: 'What if Elfn doesn't finish...' everything we'd celebrated, Seb, the championship, was based around Elfn finishing the rally. And then suddenly my head was going back to thinking about Poland [2009] and that last stage when Jari-Matti [Latvala] crashed and cost us the one-two. We were all banking on Elfn winning. He didn't let us down."

Gronholm helped seal Wilson's last success in 2007 and the Finn was quick to pay tribute to the Cumbrian's commitment.

"I want to say congratulations to Malcolm," said the two-time champion. "He deserves this. He has worked so hard for such a long time. I'm really happy for him."

Despite double title success, the identity of M-Sport's driver line-up remains a mystery for next season.

"We're getting there," said Wilson, when asked about who would be driving his Ford Fiesta WRCs next year. "Like I've told you before, Sebastien wants to know we can keep developing the car. We've had fantastic pace on every rally this year, we've been on the podium on every event and we're the only

manufacturer to have three drivers winning in our cars, but there have been some stages where we haven't been as quick as we should be. We need to find a way to continue to develop the car for next year and we will do that, but for now my priority and all my commitment is going towards keeping him."

Wilson wants news on Ogier's decision before he makes any further decisions, but Evans' position in the team is safe for next year. The Welshman will drive the full championship on Michelines. The future for the DMACK World Rally Team remains unclear.

Teemu Suninen will also form part of the M-Sport line-up, with the full extent of the Finn's programme only known once Ogier's decision is made. If Ogier does leave, he could contest the full series as partner to Evans.

Ogier admitted he was still deciding on his future, saying: "I'm sure some people have made the right guess or the right bet, but I'm not 100 per cent sure. I'm still thinking and still analysing. There's still one offer from my wife and she is pushing pretty hard to keep me home. But I know I still need some adrenaline. Let's see."

Ogier's fifth title makes him the second most successful driver in the history of the sport, he's also just the third driver to take world titles with more than one manufacturer, Walter Rohrl and Juha Kankkunen being the others.

The Frenchman was unusually emotional at the end of the event, wiping away tears to talk passionately about his achievements with M-Sport this season.

"I don't understand where this came from," Ogier told *MN*, "but the emotion was really strong in this moment.

"It was, for these minutes, it's hard to explain and I don't know why, but this was the strongest I have felt in this sport. Of course, not in my life, the birth of my son was even more special, but I was so happy that I am able to take this kind of feeling from this sport still. I feel so proud and so happy for what we have achieved with Malcolm and with M-Sport.

"At the start of this year, we had to take this bet, we had to make this challenge with ourselves, but we did it and we succeeded. The guys at M-Sport worked so hard, they did so much with the smaller budget than the manufacturers. What we achieved this year is amazing."

Ogier also paid tribute to his rivals in the sport, rivals he says who have contributed to making this the most competitive season in his career.

"This has been the most competitive year I ever drove," he said. "It's been good to see so many winners, to have every team winning a minimum of two races, it's so good. And it's also been nice and really fun to be part of a series with these new cars, the fastest World Rally Cars ever. It's incredibly enjoyable."

Evans to use victory as a springboard

Elfn Evans says he will use his maiden World Rally Championship win as a springboard into a fight for next year's drivers' title.

The Welshman dominated last week's Wales Rally GB, leading from the first forest stage to the last, to clinch a comfortable win aboard his Ford Fiesta WRC. That success meant Evans became Britain's first home winner since 2000. But one win's not going to be enough for the 28-year-old. "I've got a taste for this now," he said. "I want more."

Evans wouldn't be drawn on his deal for next season, but *MN* has been assured he will be remaining in a Fiesta, but running Michelin tyres.

Evans continued: "The performances we've had where we've been competitive this year, we need to aim to do that on every rally. All these experiences this year, we need to take them on board and work on where we've not been quite so strong. You certainly have to aim to be coming back to this rally next year in a position where we are fighting for the championship."

PODIUM FINISHER TOM CAVE STARS IN WRC2 OUTING

PAGE 24



The Strength of Experience

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'Plenty of drama on
Wales Rally GB'

Full report from WRGB, p20

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Wilson and Ogier
celebrate the title



Julien Ingrassia (l) and new champion



Third place secured
Ogier's fifth title

GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

DAVID EVANS

"The WRC needs
to understand how
to get to fans"



It will come as no surprise to you that I thought last week's Wales Rally GB was quite good. Quite good is, in fact, something of an understatement. It was superb.

What bothered me a little bit was the disquiet about the route and the inclusion of elements such as Chester and Cholmondeley Castle. I can sympathise with the crews, coming out of Hafren just before 1600hrs on Friday and then having three hours to drive back to Chester (a journey of 87 miles) isn't the most stimulating of afternoons. To follow that with 20 minutes standing waving, smiling and signing in the city simply served to wind them up more.

It was more of the same on Saturday: out of Dyfi at lunchtime then nothing before a dash across Lord Cholmondeley's lawn while the family sat down to a late afternoon tea. Service, two stages and then back to Deeside and bed around midnight. It was a good 19 or 20-hour stint, but the competitive mileage didn't reflect the time on the road.

Because it can't. Nobody wants to put more stages and more competition on than Rally GB co-ordinator Andrew Kellitt and nobody has more tricks up his sleeve to do that than him. That it wasn't done means it couldn't be done.

But what could be done and should be done is Chester and Cholmondeley. It's remarkable how many of the folk who bemoan the lack of coverage of this sensational sport were the same ones carping on about what a waste of time Friday night and Saturday afternoon were. They weren't. They were about future-proofing the event and series.

Rewind a couple of decades and you'll remember the opening day of the RAC Rally was a tour of stately homes such as Cholmondeley. It was a day-long PR operation that infuriated the crews and spawned a whole new use for Mickey Mouse. But those days also coincided with a time when the event was back page news for Fleet Street.

I can see the crew's point, I understand that they would rather be between the trees than sitting waiting outside Cholmondeley for half an hour. What really disappoints me is the number of drivers – including, astonishingly Jari-Matti Latvala – who preferred to sit in their cars rather than go in and make dreams come true by signing a few autographs for the thousands of folk who were waiting for them.

What didn't help matters was a breakdown in communications between rally control and Cholmondeley, which meant Sebastien Ogier was turned away and not allowed in to see his people.

Put simply, without Cholmondeley and Chester, rallying will remain very much in the minority. We can't and shouldn't try to emulate Formulas 1 or E by spending a weekend in the city, but it's vital we recognise the need to spoon-feed the masses.

Talking of tired, it is worth a shout out for the marshals in Aberhirnant and Dyfnant. Up hours before the sun on Saturday for the first run, they were on their toes again for the nationals and then back on their game well after dark for the second run of the world cars. Once the sweeper car was through, they'd been up and at it for 23 hours.

Thank you.

DAN BARRITT

It's 17 years since your first Rally GB, Richard Burns won that one, what were you doing?

"I was in a Volkswagen Polo, seeded at car 147 or something, with a guy called David Bateson. We retired in Resolfen, the stage was about 40 miles long or something like that, we got lost in there for three days or something! That's that memory, but I grew up watching the RAC since

I was four or five, watching the Group B cars come through Grizedale; I've lived it all my life. Today's quite a day."

When did you think you could win a rally?

"Only this year really. We saw in Argentina that, if the conditions were right, we could do it. Elfyn's come on so much in the last few years, you really felt this was possible."

What was the plan?

"We just took it one stage at a time. But yesterday morning was really good and then the last stage before service, we had to manage the tyres and it would have been easy to lose a chunk of time and slip back into the fight."

Has it sunk in?

"No, not really. It was special to have my family at the end of the stage

and so many people there, it was amazing."

Did you feel that home support?

"Yeah. I'm not Welsh, but I've felt like everybody's taken me in and cheered us on here – it's been amazing. I had a quick look up at Elfyn's Corner and saw a lot of people, but there were a lot of people everywhere to be honest."

Q&A

AGREE/DISAGREE?
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RALLY NEWS

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

RALLY GB SUCCESS LEADS TO SPECTATOR RETHINK

Bosses to revamp arrangements after thousands flood to Wales for UK's showpiece

By David Evans

Unparalleled ticket sales for last week's Rally GB are likely to force the event into rethinking its spectator strategy after thousands of fans poured into Wales and filled car parks up and down the event.

Event managing director Ben Taylor was delighted with the success of the Deeside-based event, reporting advance sales 30 per cent higher than before. He added, however, that the team needed to work harder to find places for the fans next season.

Cars were abandoned at the side of the road as spectators walked miles into stages to watch Britain's round of the world championship.

Taylor told *MN*: "It's been simply incredible. We've had an exceptional rally with a home winner, huge crowds, fantastic cars and brilliant



Attendance was high



Parking will be addressed

sunshine. We simply can't ask for more than this.

"We've seen this coming in ticket sales and all the other measurable in recent years. Yes, we are benefitting from the regulation changes which has given us the most exciting World Rally Cars ever and yes, Volkswagen's departure spiced up the driver market and left us with incredible unpredictable rallies. Previously we would have been using that as our story, but now that's a bonus on top of the story of our rally. We're in a position to take advantage of the strength of the championship."

Taylor said he would be paying special attention to the ticketing policy in the coming months. "We know the car parks were full and we know this is a problem," he said. "We have to factor this into our planning. We've sold twice as many World Rally Passes this year and the issue we have with that is that these tickets have access to every car park and we just can't predict where those people will be going. We looked at so many different iterations of the route to make sure we could accommodate as many people as possible. We will be doing more of this next year."



Fans flocked to Wales Rally GB

Turkey secures slot on '18 WRC

Turkey was confirmed as a 13th round of the 2018 World Rally Championship last week following the successful running of its candidate event late last month.

The FIA and WRC Promoter confirmed Turkey's first return to the WRC since 2010 last week.

WRC promoter managing director Oliver Ciesla said: "We wanted to observe a rally that is fit to take its place at the WRC's top table."

"The organising team at TOSFED delivered that and my congratulations go to them for securing a place in the calendar for next year."

M-Sport's Rich Millener was present in Marmaris for the event. He told *MN*: "It won't be quite as rough or slow as Acropolis or Cyprus, but there will be some very interesting roads. The sporting side was well organised and that's what I was there to see."

Marmaris Rally Turkey returns to the WRC on September 13 next year.



Former World Rally champion Gronholm sampled Proton Iriz R5

Gronholm gets to grips with new MEM Proton

Two-time World Rally champion Marcus Gronholm tested Proton's all-new Iriz R5 car in Wales earlier this week.

The Finn was evaluating the British-built Proton with a view to a possible involvement in a development programme next season. Gronholm drove the car for the day in mid-Wales on Tuesday and was impressed with what he found from the MEM squad.

He told *Motorsport News*: "It was a private test, but it was nice. For the future, I don't have anything more to say."

Gronholm's ability as a test and development driver is well known – he was the man charged with much of the early running of VW's 2017-specification Polo R WRC before the German manufacturer pulled out of the WRC. Gronholm also tested

Skoda's Fabia R5 earlier this year.

MEM team principal Chris Mellors said: "He drove the car all day and could only find a couple of areas he wants us to work on. We want to work with Marcus moving forward and he seems really keen."

George Donaldson, a sporting advisor to MEM, has worked with Gronholm previously and attended the test. "Marcus isn't the kind of driver who gets out a car in raptures, even if he's over the moon. So when he got out and smiled and said: 'This is a good car', we took that to be positive."

MEM is looking for the Iriz to make its international debut early next year. The car runs Xtrac transmission, Reigier dampers, Cosworth electronics, Bremo brakes and the Proton Inspira engine which is also used in an Mitsubishi Lancer E1.

Hyundai in a squeeze over 2018 line-up

Hyundai team principal Michel Nandan says his 2018 driver line-up remains open and the team's three factory i20 Coupe WRCs will be shared on merit – despite the expectation that Thierry Neuville and Andreas Mikkelsen will start all 13 events.

Hayden Paddon and Dani Sordo were contracted for every rally this season, but both will miss one before the end of the year. That possibility remains for all four i20 drivers next season.

"Yes, Thierry [Neuville] and Andreas [Mikkelsen] have the contract which says they do all the rallies," Nandan said, "but everybody has this contract. We could not run four cars next year because of the budget, but maybe on a few events. So, it's sure with our four drivers we will have to share one car with two drivers."

Paddon returned to the series after being dropped for the last round in Spain and the Kiwi ended a "challenging" event in eighth place. Asked if he felt Paddon's struggle in Wales was linked to being benched for the previous event, Nandan replied: "Some other drivers were not doing all the rallies and we can find thousands of excuses, but it was more confidence he was missing."

Paddon said: "It's been a tough weekend, but we'll reset and go to the event closest to home and go again. I struggled with following everybody else's set-up on the first day, but once we had the car as we liked it on Saturday and Sunday, the confidence was better."

Rovanpera 'will learn' from Rally GB

Seventeen-year-old Kalle Rovanpera admitted the complexity of last week's Wales Rally GB took him by surprise.

Making his WRC debut on Deeside, Rovanpera slid off the road on the second run of Myherin, filling the radiator with dirt which sent the engine temperature up. He retired after that stage, but returned on Saturday and Sunday in an effort to find a rhythm on roads with constantly changing grip levels.

Rovanpera told *MN*: "The rally was quite difficult, but also this car and these tyres were all quite new for me as well. It was getting better, but the first time through it was quite hard

to see the places where the grip is. I have to take this experience and use it for next season."

M-Sport team principal Malcolm Wilson wondered if Rovanpera had suffered from the pressure of the pre-event hype. "There was so much talk about him before the rally," said Wilson. "But then again it was a great story, so you could understand that. But he's learned a lot."

Rovanpera starts Rally Australia later this month in an M-Sport Fiesta, but there is still no decision about where he will drive next season. There was speculation in Wales that he has signed for Skoda to replace Pontus Tidemand in 2018.



Rovanpera Jr returned for experience after an off

'Brits impressed in WRC undercard'
Wales Rally GB supports, p24



Photos: Writtle Photographic, LAT, mcklein-imagedatabase.com, Jakob Ebrey



Tom, son of David, will drive Suzuki



Llewellyn is already rallycross champ

SENIOR RALLY DEBUT FOR TOM LLEWELLIN

Tom Llewellyn, youngest son of double British Rally champion David, will make his senior rally debut next season in the Swift Shining Stars series for the one-make Suzuki hatchback. Llewellyn has won the Junior British Rallycross Championship this season in a Peter Gwynne Motorsport Swift, and will step up to the rally championship also run by PGM. He'll also contest the British Rallycross Championship again, in the same car he will rally. Llewellyn has been mixing his rallycross with rounds of

the Junior Formula 1000 Championship, a rally series for 14-17-year-olds in one-litre cars such as the Nissan Micra and Citroen C1. "I'm most looking forward to getting into the forests, my home Welsh forests," said Llewellyn. "It's a step up from going round and round the airfields. They're OK for juniors while you're learning but I'm looking forward to the next challenge." The 16-year-old has picked out learning pacenotes as one of his toughest tests for next year, but he believes the familiarity he has

with the Swift from rallycross will help with the transition. "Getting used to pacenotes will take time," he added. "I've started trying to make my own notes on B-roads with dad, I have done a recce too just to try and get used to it." "The car is one less thing to think about, as a lot will be new next year. We'll be learning how to use pacenotes, driving on gravel, so that will be one thing I know already." The youngster will draw attention thanks to his father's achievements, but Tom believes

it's only a positive. "Dad definitely helps out and gives me a lot of advice," he added. "He's very supportive and helps me all the time. There's no pressure." Llewellyn will return to the Peter Gwynne Motorsport garage over the winter to strip and rebuild his Swift ready for next season. "He wants to know how the car works and to help him when he's out on the rally," said Sarah Watson of PGM. "When you're out on the stages, you're on your own."

AUTOSPORT ACADEMY

STEPHEN BRUNSDON

"Service crews have to be more precise in 2017"



The seasoned rallying follower will no doubt recall what things used to be like before the grand luxurious service parks to which we are now so accustomed.

The days of crews spending tiresome hours at the side of B-roads replacing gearboxes and engines where required were what really differentiated rallying from almost every other form of motorsport.

Alas, rallying has modernised, but that isn't to say it has lost its roots. No, it has merely become vastly more demanding to reflect the professional age. Last weekend, I was privileged enough to be immersed with the Abu Dhabi Total Citroen World Rally Team to see how today's service differs from those of yesteryear.

Contrasting old service and new, you will see some similarities. Previously, crews had far more opportunities to operate on their cars wherever they saw fit – more often than not, at the side of public roads. The problem? Lack of resources. They were seldom able to carry enough spares in times of real mechanical emergency, often needing to make do with what little tools they had. Then there's the safety aspect of changing parts on the side of a road at night...

Fast forward to today, Citroen boast copious amounts of spares between their four industrial-size trucks. Two of everything – from dampers to an eye-watering £10,500 to body composites to each tyre compound – for all three cars. The problem? Lack of time.

WRC regulations limit all teams to just 45 minutes of service at the end of each leg – with the clock ticking as soon as the car hits the first control point. If the car is held up in traffic on the road section, "tant pis pour eux" (so much for them) as they say.

I marvelled at Citroen's level of surgical precision and meticulous preparation in the aftermath of Craig Breen reporting a left-front puncture on the first full-day was eye-opening. Sensor chips in the Michelin tyres alerted Breen via the dashboard with the message relayed to Dominic, Citroen's tyre guru in the truck at service.

From then, Dominic studiously analysed the data of when the tyre failed, where and the status of the other three simultaneously.

By the time Breen returned to service – having also slid into a ditch and entering Rally2 – the team had everything in place, ready to go; the mechanics astutely aware that, on this occasion, time is not their friend.

Yes it would be great to see crews fix cars old-school style at the side of the roads like they used to and maybe professionalism has eroded some of that nostalgia.

But watching Citroen get to work was like witnessing an F1 pitstop right before my eyes. It was awe-inspiring. No questions asked, everyone knew their role. They just got on with it and it was brilliant.



Smith: Gravel return in R5

Le Mans winner Smith in gravel return in Yorkshire and Proton debuts

A pair of intriguing R5 crews punctuate this weekend's Malton Forest Rally entry list, including the first competitive appearance of a new car and a Le Mans winner in the field. The Proton Iriz R5 will make its competition debut after Marcus Gronholm tested it last week (see rally news page 16) in the hands of Ollie Mellors, while 2003 Le Mans winner Guy Smith will make a

first gravel appearance since the 2012 R.A.C. Rally when he drove a Ford Escort Mk2. He'll switch to a Ford Fiesta R5 this weekend. "I did a very quick test at Langdale around a month ago just to try out the R5 on gravel," said Smith. "It's a small rally and it should be a lot of fun. I'm not expecting to do anything special, I don't have a lot of experience on gravel."

Smith will be co-driven by British Rally Championship frontrunner Matt Edwards. Last year's winner Charlie Payne will lead the field away in his Fiesta RS WRC, the outgoing BTRDA champion will be followed by incoming BTRDA champion Stephen Petch, who is the second car away in his similar machine. The 40-mile contest is a one-day event on Sunday.

Huttunen to be run by Sarrazin in 2018

Jari Huttunen will begin his Hyundai Motorsport development programme in Sweden next season – where he will drive a Sarrazin Motorsport-run i20 R5. Stephane Sarrazin's squad was named to run what's expected to be an eight-event schedule for the Finn last week. Sarrazin said: "This is a fantastic opportunity for us as a team. We tried to develop our

team with a professional approach, based on what we learned in the past working with manufacturers, while maintaining a family atmosphere. It's a great environment to prepare Jari for his HMDP campaign." Huttunen privately funded his own i20 R5 outing in Wales last week, but was frustrated to retire with an engine problem on the opening day.



Huttunen retired from Wales Rally GB but returns in 2018



'Group' prizes will be ditched for 2018 JWRC, R5 for winner JWRC winner will get Fiesta R5 for 2019 WRC2

Next year's Junior World Rally champion will be awarded an M-Sport Ford Fiesta R5 car, free fuel and a "generous tyre package" to run it in the 2019 WRC2 series. The £250,000 prize replaces this year's complicated structure, which offered three pairs of two 2018 WRC rounds in an R5 to the crew securing the most points on a pair of qualifying rounds this season. The JWRC will continue with

the Fiesta R2T and will run to five rather than six events (Sweden, Corsica, Portugal, Finland and Turkey). Entry fees will be set at £122,700, almost £30,000 less than this year's £150,000 fee. JWRC manager Maciej Woda said: "We want the winner to be in a position to continue their career in WRC2 to the best of their ability and, with their own car, they will be able to do the additional testing required to learn the car and prepare for the events."

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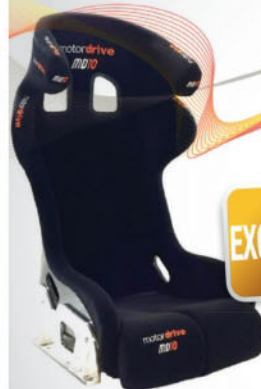
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RALLY NEWS

Photos:SMJ Photography,ERC Media

NEIL HOWARD STAGES CHANGE WATERSPLASH

Organisers alter feature to protect cars and crews for MN opener



There will be less water at Oulton

By Jack Benyon

The Bolton le-Moors Car Club has made the infamous watersplash on the Neil Howard Stages shallower for the opening round of the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship this weekend.

The Oulton Park-based event features the watersplash just in front of the Foggarty Moss Centre, to the right of Cascades on the race circuit.

Last year it caused damage to cars and some competitors believed the feature

was too deep. The organising team have reduced the depth by three inches to combat the problem.

"I don't want people blowing up engines because of a feature on one of the stages," said Neil Howard Stages organiser Darren Spann. "It's a crowd entertainer and it's something a bit different. It's got to be a challenge, but something that doesn't cause unnecessary damage. The intention when it went in was that the water didn't reach the sumpguard, so that's why we're altering it. It needs to stay for the

joy of the fans and entrants, but it needs to be safe for the cars and crews."

Last year's winner Kevin Procter will lead the cars away in his Ford Fiesta, while 2015 winner Stephen Simpson switches to a Ford Fiesta R5 from his Subaru Impreza S12B and is second away. The first two-wheel-drive entry on the road is reigning champion crew Ian Woodhouse and Paul Rowland in their Class D1 Ford Escort Mk2.

Mike English and Andy Robinson are likely to be frontrunners in Class C while 2015/16 Class A champions Joe

Cunningham/Marc Fowler return. Chris Platt and Mick Robinson will be the first Class B car away.

Tickets are available for the event – which features a fireworks display included in the entry – via the circuit website: oultonpark.co.uk.

● Entries for the Knockhill Stages Rally (December 3), joining the MN Circuit Rally Championship for the first time in 2017-18, are now open via the championship website msnrallychamp.co.uk. The second round, the Cadwell Stages Rally, has six reserves already.

MOTORSPORT NEWS CIRCUIT RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP IN ASSOCIATION WITH MSVR

SEEDDED ENTRY LIST

Neil Howard Stages, November 4, Oulton Park

NO	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR
1	Kevin Procter/Derek Fawcett	Ford Fiesta
2	Steve Simpson/Patrick Walsh	Ford Fiesta R5
3	Graham Coffey/Victoria Myers	Ford Fiesta RS WRC
4	John Stone/Sarah Hughes	Ford Fiesta S2500
5	Ian Woodhouse/Paul Rowland	Ford Escort Mk2
6	Paul Swift/Cat Lund	Ford Escort
7	Chris West/Keith Hounslow	Peugeot 306 Maxi
8	Tom Preston/Carl Williamson	Skoda Fabia R5
9	Adrian Spencer/Mark Hewitt	Subaru Impreza WRC
10	David Turnbull/Simon John Rogers	Ford Fiesta S2000

Motorsport Ireland reveals insurance levy

Motorsport Ireland has revealed the amount of insurance levy to be paid by competitors per event and in acquiring their licence for the 2018 season.

Despite a low number of claims over the past two seasons, Motorsport Ireland has struggled to keep the costs of insurance for events down, leading to levies being implemented for 2017.

In 2018, the levy per competitor on top of the entry fee itself will be similar to last year. It is £262 (€295) for a two-three day stage rally, with a one-day stage rally £150 (€170).

As well as the entry fee levy, drivers will have to pay £89 (€100) charge for their stage rally licence.

A letter to clubs from Motorsport Ireland president Martin McKenna explained that a plan to restrict stage rallies has been deferred in favour of gleaming more levy payments.

It read: "Given a fair wind and continued emphasis on safety, I believe the sport will be in a better place 12 months from now when hopefully, we can look forward to reduced insurance premiums."

While competitors have bore the brunt when it comes to paying the levy, the governing body has also paid out six figure sums to supplement that.

INSURANCE LEVY

DESCRIPTION	LEVY
One-day stage rally	€170
Mini stage rally	€150
Forest rally	€60
Stage rally licence	€100



Harkness has Ford Escort Mk2

Harkness gets Escort for Builth

Pirelli rally manager Steve Harkness will debut a newly-bought Ford Escort Mk2 on this weekend's Builth Stages in a rare outing.

Harkness has previously rallied a Ford Sierra RS Cosworth, Toyota Corolla and BMW 325i E30, but will return to a Ford Escort, which has previously been campaigned by Richard Upton, and will run by Alwyn Bickham at Zackham Engineering.

"I don't get many opportunities to drive a car given my job," said Harkness. "The Escort is better for me for the single venues and club stuff so I'm looking forward to blowing off some steam. It fits in the calendar nicely and it's a good little fun rally. There's good camaraderie too."

The event is held around the Builth Wells Showground, with over 35 miles around the complex on offer. The last two stages will run in the dark, and last year's winners John Perrott and Keaton Williams will lead the field away.

Cox makes rally return with a big step up to S2000

Amy Cox will return to rallying after a year out by stepping up to bigger machinery on Saturday.

Cox, 24, will drive the same Skoda Fabia S2000 that Marty McCormack campaigned on rounds of last year's British Rally Championship. She previously drove a Ford Fiesta R2. The Omagh native will be co-driven by McCormack's niece on the Tour of the Sperrins Rally.

Cox said: "Bobby Willis is the man that brought this together, so a massive thanks to him as well as Marty and Greg for having faith in me. This is a once in a

lifetime opportunity for me and I intend to make the most of it at the start of November.

"This is a one-off drive for now, but who knows what the future will hold? My goal is to compete in a series in 2018."

The event is the concluding round of the Northern Ireland Rally Championship. Champion Derek McGarrity must win and hope title rival Jonny Greer finishes third or lower to retain the title.

A second place finish will give Greer the title. The event takes place at two venues; Nutts Corner Circuit and Superdrive Motorsports Centre.



Ex-Marty McCormack S2000 will be used by Cox for Tour of Sperrins event

Photo: John Fife



Isle of Man TT motorcycle ace Michael Dunlop was caught in action in the service park on Wales Rally GB, servicing for Stephen Benton on his first run in a Den Motorsport Ford Escort Mk2. Den Motorsport is run by Barry McKenna (seen in the car) who also runs Dunlop on his occasional rally outings on asphalt in his Escort. Dunlop was over to take a look at GB for the first time with McKenna.

WALES RALLY GB



BY DAVID EVANS

Eflyn delighted the home fans with an unstoppable display in the forests

Not since Sunday September 16, 2012 had a driver other than Sebastien Ogier led Wales Rally GB. Not since Friday November 22, 2001 had a Brit led their home round of the World Rally Championship.

Myherin, mid-morning last Friday and Elfyn Evans changed those records.

But what about the big one? What about the fact a Brit hadn't sprayed the Sunday afternoon champagne on this rally since Richard Burns did 17 years ago?

History rewritten. Job done.

In world rallying's equivalent of Super Saturday, M-Sport enjoyed its own golden hour last Sunday. When Ott Tanak crossed the finish line on SS21 at 1250hrs, the Cumbrians ruled the world for the first time in 10 years. Thirteen minutes later, team-mate Ogier followed him and became only the second man in history to lift five world titles.

Ten minutes after that Evans rounded-off the most incredible Sunday lunchtime in British rallying history.

The fairytale was complete. The dream delivered. The delight etched into Evans face was hard to reconcile with the fella who was watching on the sidelines on this rally just 12 months ago.

A year ago, Elfyn didn't know if he had a job. There was the chance of something. Or nothing. Now? National hero. Let's have a look at the four days that changed everything for Elfyn Evans and Dan Barritt.

Wales last weekend? Full.

No room at the inns and even less in the stages. Car parks? Forget it. Only the hardcore, the car sleepers, were guaranteed a place. The verges lining the road sections were the only option. But they were fraught with risk, the risk that is of losing your car for the rest of the day. Alun Davies didn't care. His mother's SEAT Ibiza would be sacrificed if necessary. This hardest of hardcore rally fans from Newcastle Emlyn in south-west Wales was following the event four-up, complete with sleeping bags, a camping stove and a boot-load of Tesco value sausages.

His dedication was matched only by his determination not to be denied his chance to see one man.

"Elfyn," he said. "That's why I'm here. He's the boy, isn't he..."

His voice trailed away, almost daring me to contradict him. Daring me to point to the fight for this year's World Rally Championship or the most spectacular and fastest rally cars in the sport's history.

I didn't dare.

"Actually, I came last year as well," he added, referencing the fact that he doesn't just come to follow Evans. "I've not missed one of these for years. I'm from down south [Wales], so don't be telling everybody this, but this rally's

much better up here in the north."

Don't worry Alun. Your secret's safe. He wasn't keen to be deterred, partly because he didn't want to miss Elfyn and partly because he didn't want to be around if the police arrived.

"They can have the car," he said, pointing at the muddied, tired-looking SEAT parked neatly between one sign declaring the car parks full and another one outlining this as a "Tow-away zone."

"I'm off. I'm not going to miss this. I'll deal with my ma and tell her what's happened to her car later."

M-Sport cap pulled low, he was away, across the A470 and running towards the village of Aberangell. Heading for the hills, up through the woods and, miles later, a super-quick entry followed by a big drift through the following downhill right-hander that was junction three of Dyfi.

Not long after he'd gone, the police did arrive.

What, I asked, would they do about the cars?

"Not much we can do is there," said the policeman with a smile. "There's not enough tow trucks in Wales to deal with this!"

Davies' story was typical of thousands last week. Tens of thousands. Whether it was the cars, the championship or the boy from just up the road in Dinas Mawddwy, they came back in their droves.

And Evans delivered for them. His wasn't always the most spectacular World Rally Car out there, but it was the fastest. And the one accompanied by the loudest cheers.

Elfyn's Corner on that first stage in Myherin was a case in point. The corner itself was just an average second-gear right hander. Nothing special. The approach out of the windfarm half-a-mile back up the road was a gazillion times more spectacular (Kris Meeke and Esapekka Lappi on the lock stops and the limiter in fifth is a sight that will remain with me for a very long time), but this one wasn't all about the spectacle. It was about the sight and the sound. And when their boy came into view, it was like Shane Williams picking the ball up in his own 22, dropping the shoulder and dancing his way down the wing to another score. Who would have thought that roof-closed Millennium Stadium roar could be recreated on the side of a sunny Welsh hillside, well north of Cardiff?

It was last Friday.

"What was it like?" Elfyn asked later that day.

I explained. He grinned. Had he seen anything? Like the 30-foot banner revealing that this particular corner of Myherin would be forever Elfyn?

"No," he said. "I said I didn't know where it was before the stage, but I did really. It's so quick coming down into there, you're so focused on what you're doing, getting the car slowed into that section... there's not a second to think about anything else."

But clearly, Evans had put a huge amount of thought into this rally.

"I knew we had an advantage with the tyre," he said, "but at the same time I knew I had to be careful how I drove. Two years ago, I came here, went like hell and it just didn't work."

"This time I knew I had to do something different. I knew I had to drive neater, keep the car straighter, cleaner and not push. The minute you start to bounce the thing off the banks then you're losing time. You just can't over-drive this rally."

Evans' co-driver Dan Barritt remembers two years ago as well.

"We would be coming to the end of

EVANS REWROTE HISTORY IN WALES



Evans was brave with tyre choice to take win

stages and we'd pushed like hell," he said, "and then we saw the times and it just wasn't happening. You have to be patient with this event and he's got that."

And to go with that patience, Elfyn needed DMACK's specially cooked DMG+22 tyres. The Cumbrian firm played its joker to bring a new, softer, more open treaded tyre for the last three rounds of the championship.

When it melted in Spain earlier in October there were sniggers from some of those less well-informed in the service park. But those in the know knew full-well what a potent force Elfyn's new boots would be on a wet Welsh stage.

And so it transpired. The softer rubber offered more compound grip, while the blocks – the ones which had wobbled and wilted on Terra Alta – shifted the mud and clawed at forests beneath.

By the end of the Myherin, the first

stage proper, Evans was in charge and in control. And only once through the three days did I see that waiver.

At the end of Myherin second time through, he'd done the radio and the TV, talked the positive talk, but as a leaned into the car a flicker of doubt came across his face.

"It's drying like hell..." he said.

Hafren was Friday's sole remaining big test for his DMACKs. And fortunately, Friday's longest road remained largely hidden beneath the trees, shaded from the sun, shielded from the wind. It was still damp enough.

Just before 0600hrs on Saturday and legendary tyre engineer Fiorenzo Brivio is deep in conversation with Evans. Brivio masterminded countless wins and titles for Pirelli before switching to DMACK two years ago. This moment, that morning was right up there with the best of them.

Could his covers cope with almost 70

miles of flat-out motoring? That was the question. The only question. There was cloud cover and talk of drizzle. But the temperatures were a little higher than expected and... 70 miles.

Which do you chose? A hard or soft option?

The conservative choice would be to mix them up, stick two hards at the front or even cross them diagonally. But that would immediately compromise feel for the car.

Prior to the start of this rally, one man had won Britain's round of the world championship more than any other, Petter Solberg. I asked the five-time winner what he needed most from the car in Wales.

"Confidence," was the answer.

"Yes, you need speed and the dampers working well; you need the chassis soft for the traction, but still firm enough to give you the turn-in at high speed; you need all of that. But what you need most from the car is confidence. If you don't



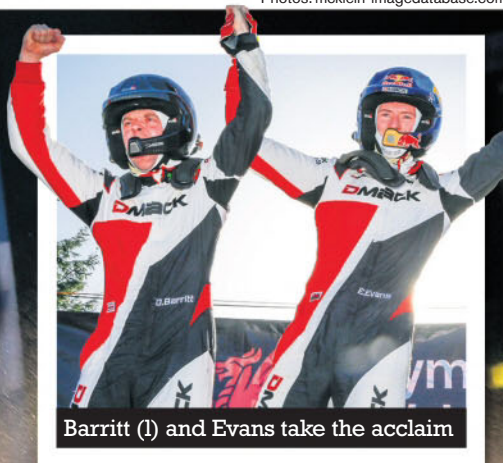
A circumspect Ogier lifted the title

'Sordo and inconsistency were inseparable'
 MN rates the leading drivers, p23

ROUND



WRITES WALES



Barritt (l) and Evans take the acclaim

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com



your car in Wales, you are here. When I won, I put everything that car. I knew, when I wanted it to turn at 100mph in the mud, it would turn."

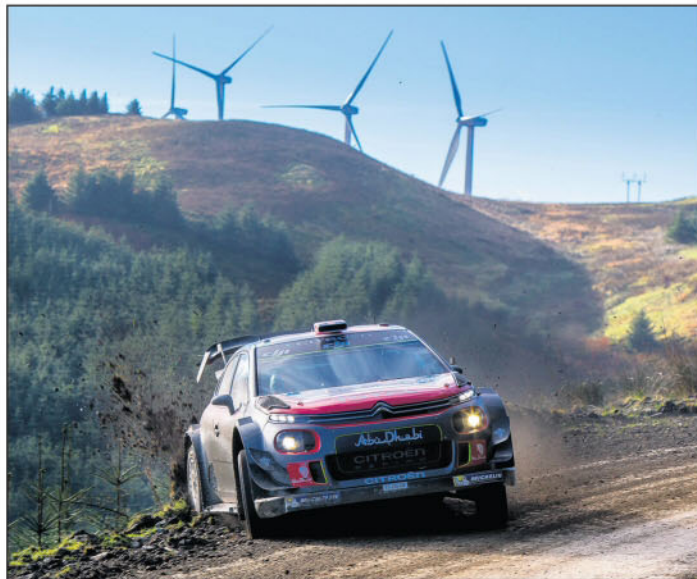
different grip levels from different surfaces of the car would undermine immediately.

Evans had complete confidence in the car and complete confidence in Brivio. The car went soft. It worked a treat.

"It was a brave choice," said the Italian. "It was courageous because there was more temperature. When I came through these stages on Monday they were like a racetrack, then the rain came on Tuesday. It made up happy."

Phillips was pretty chuffed too. Howard Davies is always a welcome sight; Gwyndaf Evans' former co-driver is now a presenter of Welsh television's Ralio show. And he remains as entertaining as ever.

Continued on page 22



Kris Meeke had a tough run, but finished in the points in eighth

STAGE TIMES



Evans was stunning

- **SS1 Visit Conwy Tir Prince (0.93 miles)**
Fastest: Ogier 1m09.7s **Leader:** Ogier **Second:** Latvala +0.4s
- **SS2 Myherin 1 (12.60 miles)**
Fastest: Evans 11m01.6s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Ogier +3.1s
- **SS3 Sweet Lamb 1 (2.63 miles)**
Fastest: Tanak 2m44.4s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Ogier +2.2s
- **SS4 Hafren 1 (21.83 miles)**
Fastest: Evans 20m25.3s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Tanak +6.7s
- **SS5 Myherin 2 (12.60 miles)**
Fastest: Evans 10m52.3s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Tanak +15.1s
- **SS6 Sweet Lamb 2 (2.63 miles)**
Fastest: Ogier 2m41.6s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Tanak +16.1s
- **SS7 Hafren 2 (21.83 miles)**
Fastest: Neuville 20m22.3s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Tanak +24.6s
- **SS8 Aberhiraant 1 (8.64 miles)**
Fastest: Evans 7m30.2s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Tanak +30.0s
- **SS9 Dyfnant 1 (11.13 miles)**
Fastest: Evans 10m15.5s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Tanak +36.1s
- **SS10 Gartheiniog 1 (7.84 miles)**
Fastest: Evans 7m30.5s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Tanak +39.8s
- **SS11 Dyfi 1 (16.07 miles)**
Fastest: Evans 15m02.6s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Tanak +50.5s
- **SS12 Gartheiniog 2 (7.84 miles)**
Fastest: Evans 7m35.1s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Neuville +54.3s
- **SS13 Dyfi 2 (16.07 miles)**
Fastest: Neuville 15m21.2s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Neuville +51.6s
- **SS14 Cholmondeley Castle (1.12 miles)**
Fastest: Neuville 1m07.5s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Neuville +50.0s
- **SS15 Aberhiraant 2 (8.64 miles)**
Fastest: Latvala 7m58.0s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Ogier +49.8s
- **SS16 Dyfnant 2 (11.13 miles)**
Fastest: Evans 10m26.1s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Ogier +53.1s
- **SS17 Alwen 1 (0.88 miles)**
Fastest: Tanak 5m32.2s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Neuville +52.4s
- **SS18 Brenig 1 (4.00 miles)**
Fastest: Mikkelsen 4m04.0s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Neuville +46.3s
- **SS19 Gwydir (4.65 miles)**
Fastest: Neuville 4m51.1s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Neuville +43.4s
- **SS20 Alwen 2 (6.47 miles)**
Fastest: Mikkelsen 5m34.5s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Neuville +43.1s
- **SS21 Brenig 2 [Power Stage] (4.00 miles)**
Fastest: Neuville 4m01.2s **Leader:** Evans **Second:** Neuville +37.3s

COLIN CLARK

"Elfyn is a totally changed character this season"



My goodness me, what a difference 24 months make.

This time two years ago, Elfyn Evans left Wales Rally GB very quietly, way too quietly for the liking of some us. In what was billed as the battle of the M-Sport young guns, he'd faced Ott Tanak on his home event in a do-or-die fight for the DMACK seat in 2016. And he lost big time.

I remember reporting it at the time as a capitulation, and I stand by that. He appeared to be a little boy lost, not able to find the inner resolve to throw caution to the wind and show us the fighting spirit required to remain part of rallying's elite. Apparently, in the wake of that disastrous week, he was being lined up for a return to the family business as workshop manager.

Well look at him now. Standing on top of that M-Sport Fiesta on the banks of Llyn Brenig on Sunday there were no traces of the boy who slinked away from Rally GB two years ago. We were watching a man, a champion, a leader and a driver completely in control of his own destiny.

So how do we explain this transformation? Well it's not so difficult. Evans was a boy two years ago doing the bidding of other men. Now he's very much a man, making his own decisions and in control of his own destiny.

But it would be entirely unfair of me to at all criticise the process and the schooling that young Evans has been put through. Two men have directed that and deserve enormous credit. Elfyn's dad Gwyndaf is by all accounts a hard task master. But all of that tough love that drove young Elfyn on in the early years was delivered with the utmost loyalty, sincerity and dedication. Elfyn had the perfect role model, and always knew that whatever happened, his father would have his back.

And then there is Malcolm Wilson. There is no better man at spotting and developing young talent in rallying. He has his own style and his own way, but it works. Just look at the current crop. Tanak and Evans were both demoted and made to work hard to repay Wilson's faith and investment. There are big parallels in the rise of these two boys not just as drivers but as men. Wilson knows when he wants completely subservience, and he knows when it's time to allow the boy to emerge as the man, a free thinking, responsible and determined challenger fully prepared to deliver.

What a transformation, what a drive, what a win and what a prospect. Roll on 2018, for the first time in the best part of two decades, British rally fans will have the joy of watching two home grown drivers battling it out for the drivers' title.

WALES RALLY GB

BY DAVID EVANS

Continued from page 21

Deep in the depths of Dyfi, big Howie is entertaining Mr Phillips.

"You should meet this man," Howard tells me. So I do.

Keith Phillips was Elfyn's tutor at Coleg Meirion-Dwyfor.

Having checked my spelling of Dolgellau's finest educational establishment, Mr Phillips set about some stories of a 16-year-old Evans.

"He arrived with a string of A grades at GCSE," he said. "He was clearly a very bright young man and came to study advanced engineering. I remember some of his design and technology work was very, very good. He was a clever student..."

Phillips' voice quietened as he looked back towards the stage.

"... but his motivation was elsewhere."

His motivation was internal combustion. My tales provided a welcome distraction on Sunday morning and Aberangell sparked a particular memory of his own.

"I got done there when I was 15," he said. "A few of us used to go up into Dyfi every Sunday morning on the motorcross bikes. One morning we came down towards the junction in Aberangell and there was a policeman there waiting. Riding on the road didn't go down well!"

Last weekend, the same constabulary would happily have delivered an escort of outriders singing Land of our Fathers if Evans had so desired.

What was doubly refreshing was the reverence for Evans' efforts. Yes, the DMACKs were mentioned, but Ogier challenged anybody to question the commitment his team-mate was putting in.

"He is still driving the car," said the Frenchman, "and he is driving without putting a foot out of place. And this is Wales, and to do that in the fog last night was simply incredible. It was horrible in there."

And Ogier would know. He'd gone off the road in a pea-souper of a run through Aberhirnant on Saturday night, clattering the left-front of his Fiesta causing a flurry of excitement at M-Sport. Coming out of the stage high above Bala lake, there's zero phone coverage at the best of times, but with the fog down in the pitch black, there was genuine panic back at base.

Ogier got out his torch, got on his hands and knees in the rain and mud, stripped the brake disc off that corner, bled the brakes, got back in the car and set a time just 3.3s down on Evans through Dyfnant two. With only three functioning anchors on his Red Bull-liveried motor.

Those two Saturday night stages were another fascinating facet of this year's route. The fog shook up the leaderboard, costing Tanak and Thierry Neuville most dearly. Interestingly, Thierry talked with some confidence about him and Ott obviously having the worst of the



Yazid Al Rajhi's exit came on Sweet Lamb



Mikkelsen learned well on his first gravel rally for Hyundai with fourth



Tanak was in contention, but caught the worst of the fog to drop time

conditions... But there were some who gambled and gained. Haydon Paddon, for example, had an event to forget, but a run through the murk to remember as he swallowed a brave pill and tuned in to Seb Marshall like never before.

After the event, Ogier's co-driver Julien Ingrassia talked about the feeling inside the car in the dark and the fog. "When you have a stage like this, you realise that you live something unique," he said

The view from outside the car was almost as special. Tracing the lights as they arc through the night sky, hearing the anti-lag bouncing off the trees as you wait, watch, senses heightened. Saturday night was alright for rally fans. And Sunday morning was easy for Elfyn.

"I wasn't sure what was going on with myself during the day," he said. "I'd talked myself into believing this was just another rally, that I was actually believing it and I wasn't actually that bothered! But the feeling definitely changed once we crossed that line."

Out of the car, there was the obligatory step onto the roof of the car, before a classic interview with a proud-as-punch father Gwyndaf standing alongside.

"Bloody hell," he said, "there were a lot of people around there. I don't think Brenig's ever seen so many folk! And I've got to say, what a lift they've given Dan and I this week. I've never had support like this and I've really never seen as many people on the stages. It's

been unreal, but it's really helped."

But the loudest cheer was the one which boomed out of M-Sport's corner of the service park when Britain's 17-year wait for another win was done. Howard Davies wasn't far from the noise.

He grinned: "This is massive, massive this is for Britain. But for this area, for this place... it's huge news."

With so much focus on M-Sport's success, it was easy to forget Neuville's pacy if turbulent run to second or Andreas Mikkelsen's impressive fourth first time out on a full gravel rally in the i20.

Such was the ferocity of the battle, fifth-placed Jari-Matti Latvala was only five seconds off a podium spot in

his Toyota. But had he switched places with the man who stood on the bottom step, the story wouldn't have been the same. Ogier was a thoroughly deserving and unusually emotional world champion by the close of play.

But this week's story was two steps up.

With the dust starting to settle, I looked to move the story on, thinking next year, championship? What next, Elf?

"Home," he said quietly. "Bit of a celebration tonight, but then back down those roads to Dolgellau tomorrow. There won't be quite so many folk waving this time though..."

Understated, always. Underrated? Not any more.



A Friday spin delayed Breen

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com, LAT



DRIVER ANALYSIS

BY DAVID EVANS



SEBASTIEN OGIER

M-SPORT FORD FIESTA

Struggled to focus on the task in hand for the first couple of days, went off in the fog, but once he had that championship in his sights, nothing and nobody could stop him.



7/10

OTT TANAK

M-SPORT FORD FIESTA

Struggled like mad in the fog then sounded like a fish wife when he got to the finish and was asked to describe the experience. Won M-Sport a world title though, so he's forgiven.

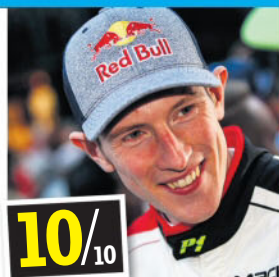


6/10

ELFYN EVANS

M-SPORT FORD FIESTA

When he took a second a mile off everybody at shakedown, there was a sense that something special could be on the cards. The Welshman delivered special in spades in Wales. Brilliant. And brilliant-squared, too.



10/10

THIERRY NEUVILLE

HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT HYUNDAI i20

Event started badly when his car wouldn't start before SS1 (prompting arguably the biggest sulk in WRC history), then his co-driver lost his voice on Friday. Other than that the pair enjoyed their hiding to nothing.



7/10

HAYDEN PADDON

HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT HYUNDAI i20

Elected to take his teammate's set-up on day one and regretted it immediately. Dialed his own settings in on Saturday and was quicker and more consistent straight away. Still needed more pace though.



5/10

DANI SORDO

HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT HYUNDAI i20

The words 'grip' and 'inconsistent' featured quite heavily for Dani last week. He departed the final stage with a promise of coming back stronger next season. The locals didn't look convinced...



4/10

KRIS MEEKE

TOTAL ABU DHABI CITROEN C3 WRC

A French test for a Welsh rally can now officially be recognised as a rubbish idea. Encouragingly, Meeke kept his head and showed great speed through the first day, but throttled back after losing momentum with a Dyfi spin.



7/10

CRAIG BREEN

TOTAL ABU DHABI CITROEN C3 WRC

Fourth quickest in Myherin was an indicator of what he was capable of, before he dropped the front wheels into a Hafren hole after a spin. Running three miles to fetch a tow-rope wins him an extra point here.



5/10



Ogier: secured the number one

TOYOTA YARIS WRC

JARI-MATTI LATVALA

6/10

All at sea for the first half of the event as he battled against persistent understeer and tried to understand what the Toyota was telling him. Eventually saw the light – especially in the fog in Aberhiant, where he was heroic.

TOYOTA YARIS WRC

JUHO HANNINEN

1/10

Whacking a tree in the spectator friendly Cholmondeley was a sorry end to his career in the frontline of the WRC. Prior to that, he'd hardly been setting the world alight on the fringes of the top 10.

HYUNDAI i20

ANDREAS MIKKELSEN

8/10

Impressive effort to come to an event as difficult to read and translate in terms of grip levels in a new car and be right in the thick of the fight for podium finish. He didn't make the top three, but didn't make any mistakes either.

TOYOTA YARIS WRC

ESAPEKKA LAPPI

5/10

All at sea for all of the event as he battled against persistent understeer and oversteer. Simply couldn't make the thing work at all in Wales and struggled. Massive frustration for the Rally Finland winner.

MOTORSPORT NEWS STAR DRIVER



ELFYN EVANS

Elfyn Evans has been very, very impressive this year. When the tyres have permitted, he's been bang on the money. Second in Finland, robbed of a win in Argentina, but last week in Wales was a step up from there. He was sure-footed and faster than the fastest drivers in the world. Brilliant.

MOTORSPORT NEWS WOODEN SPOON



JUHO HANNINEN

Is this a bit harsh? Probably. Everybody loves Juho, but ending your career as a factory Toyota driver in the World Rally Championship in Lord Cholmondeley's back garden is really not on.

RESULTS

Round 12/13, 73. Dayinsure Wales Rally GB 2017, October 26-29

POS	DRIVER/ CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Elfyn Evans (GBR)/Daniel Barritt (GBR)	Ford Fiesta WRC	2h57m00.6s
2	Thierry Neuville (BEL)/Nicolas Gilsoul (BEL)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+37.3s
3	Sebastien Ogier (FRA)/Julien Ingrassia (FRA)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+45.2s
4	Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR)/Chris Jager (NOR)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+49.8s
5	Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN)/Miikka Anttila (FIN)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+50.3s
6	Ott Tanak (EST)/Martin Jarveoja (EST)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+1m02.3s
7	Kris Meeke (GBR)/Paul Nagle (IRL)	Citroen C3 WRC	+1m20.5s
8	Hayden Paddon (NZL)/Sebastian Marshall (GBR)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+2m16.3s
9	Esapekka Lappi (FIN)/Janne Ferm (FIN)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+2m46.5s
10	Dani Sordo (ESP)/Marc Marti (ESP)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+3m50.5s
15	Craig Breen (IRL)/Scott Martin (GBR)	Citroen C3 WRC	+12m58.7s
22	Khalid Al-Qassimi (UAE)/Chris Patterson (GBR)	Citroen C3 WRC	+18m08.2s
32	Charles Payne (GBR)/Carl Williamson (GBR)	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+30m19.3s
38	Mads Ostberg (NOR)/Emil Axelsson (SWE)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+37m51.9s
42	Jourdan Serderidis (GRE)/Frederic Miclotte (BEL)	Citroen DS 3 WRC	+44m43.9s
R	Juho Hanninen (FIN)/Kaj Lindstrom (FIN)	Toyota Yaris WRC	SS14/crash
R	Yazeed Al-Rajhi (KSA)/Michael Orr (GBR)	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	SS6/crash

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

DRIVERS

POS	DRIVERS	PTS
1	Sebastien Ogier	215
2	Thierry Neuville	183
3	Ott Tanak	169
4	Jari-Matti Latvala	136
5	Elfyn Evans	118
6	Dani Sordo	95
7	Juho Hanninen	71
8	Kris Meeke	70
9	Craig Breen	64
10	Hayden Paddon	59

MANUFACTURERS

POS	TEAMS	PTS
1	M-Sport WRT	398
2	Hyundai Motorsport	305
3	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRC	241
4	Citroen Total	210

NEXT RALLY

Can Elfyn Evans repeat his form Down Under?

RALLY AUSTRALIA NOVEMBER 17-19

RALLY GB SUPPORTS AND NATIONAL

Brits star again in the support categories as Tidemand dominates. By Jack Benyon

WRC2

In a weekend which was obviously brilliant for the Brits, the WRC2 category was no different as two Welshmen and a Scotsman stole fastest times in front of an adoring crowd. But there was no stopping runaway winner Pontus Tidemand.

Cave was the star of the show in the home ranks and, despite switching from a Hyundai to a Ford Fiesta R5 for the event, there was no sign of any rustiness. He engaged in a blow-by-blow battle British compatriot Anthony Joshua would have been proud of – only Cave's opponent was Frenchman Eric Camilli.

The battle was frantic, and looked to be decided in Cave's favour after a brace of epic times on the Saturday afternoon. He said that was "part of the plan" as he didn't want to be battling with Camilli going into the dark stages. Cave eased off the gas and dropped time to Camilli, but still had 7.1s in hand to start favoured Sunday stages. A slight set-up tweak and, job done.

But changing the car backfired. A spin on the third stage of Sunday, Gwydir, cost him dearly.

"We changed the gearbox, the 'diff settings weren't allowing me to get on the power and drive the corner," said Cave of his Sunday changes. "I tried to push through Gwydir because Eric was taking time out of us, and just got caught out. We got wedged in the road. We had to try. The goal was a podium and we've achieved that."

The spin solved the battle in Camilli's favour, who took 13.9s out of Cave in the fog in spectacular fashion, given they aren't typical conditions of his native southern France. His reward was second in the WRC2 championship, and a rueful smile when asked if his

CAVE PUTS ON A SHOW AT HOME

RESULTS

Wales Rally GB WRC2, October 28-30

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Pontus Tidemand/Jonas Andersson	Skoda Fabia R5	+3h07m12.2s
2	Eric Camilli/Benjamin Veillas	Ford Fiesta R5	+1m54.4s
3	Tom Cave/James Morgan	Ford Fiesta R5	+2m03.3s
4	David Bogie/Kevin Rae	Skoda Fabia R5	+2m36.1s
5	Juuso Nordgren/Tapio Suominen	Skoda Fabia R5	+4m04.0s
6	Gus Greensmith/Craig Parry	Ford Fiesta R5	+4m32.1s
7	Matt Edwards/Patrick Walsh	Ford Fiesta R5	+4m59.8s
8	Pierre-Louis Loubet/Vincent Landais	Ford Fiesta R5	+5m33.6s
9	Lukasz Pieniazek/Przemyslaw Mazur	Skoda Fabia R5	+9m00.0s
10	Fabio Andolfi/Simone Scattolin	Hyundai i20 R5	+9m57.1s



Cave: second podium in successive WRC2 events

future in the WRC was safe before answering "we will see".

Scot David Bogie was another Brit to take a fastest time and sealed fourth in a sensible drive which netted him a first WRC2 finish proper. He'd been shy of Cave's pace by a fraction, but could match him when he pushed. His closest challenger had been Eyvind Brynildsen, returning to WRC2 from the ultra-competitive Norwegian championship, but blue smoke from his car on Sunday spelled the end of his impressive run.

Young Finn Kalle Rovannerpa slid off the road on SS5 and blocked his radiator, putting him out for the day. He had a better day on Sunday but struggled to adapt to his new mount, the Fiesta R5.

"We are learning all the time," said the 17-year-old. "We had understeer a lot because my driving style [isn't working] with this car. My style is really clean. With this car it's different, you have to throw it around."

Brits Gus Greensmith and Matt

Edwards, M-Sport team-mates, finished sixth and seventh just behind Skoda works youngster Juuso Nordgren. Greensmith had the wrong 'diff set-up for the weekend and was told to bring the car home, while Edwards' WRC debut was meant for learning. The fastest time on Brenig was a bonus.

Without doubt the fastest man was Tidemand, and he romped to a win that signals he's ready for a proper WRC car after his WRC2 title winning campaign. There's no doubt he'll be heavily involved in 2018 silly season.

The only drivers really on his pace while he was pushing was team-mate Ole Christian Veiby, who suffered a puncture on Friday, and M-Sport man Teemu Suninen who had a puncture and a whole day of powersteering issues on Saturday.

Mull Rally winner and Scot John MacCrone would have scored a top 10 in WRC2 had he registered but took an excellent 21st overall in his first 2017 event after skipping Scottish action.

But the performance of the event

Tidemand was on another level



was reserved for Callum Devine. The Prestone Motorsport News Junior BRC champion had never driven an R5 car before the event and his Fiesta had been bought from China and had no upgrades. With some help from CA1 Sport, not only did it reach the end, it did so in 25th overall and just half a minute outside of the WRC2 top 10.



Rovannerpa struggled with Fiesta

WRC3/RC4



Ingram was unstoppable in his bid to demoralise R2 competition

Ingram destroys R2 competition while British Championship regulars impress

Chris Ingram's biggest complaint at Wales Rally GB was his lack of competition, which isn't a bad problem to have on an event of this stature. Bringing a proper works Opel Adam to a UK forest for the first time, he excelled to finish 36th overall, and a whopping 12m24.5s ahead of the next car in the RC4 class, Raphael Astier.

The crowning glory of Ingram's charge was his time in Aberhrrnant, where visibility was anywhere from 10 to five metres depending on where the drivers ran in the darkness and fog. On that stage alone he took 57s out of Astier. He was 30th quickest through, faster than a tonne of R5 and even WRC cars, all with the benefit of

four-wheel-drive to Ingram's two. It's not difficult to see why the Manchester driver tied up the European Junior Championship this year and he's deserved of the R5 drives it will net him next year. Ross Whittock co-drove.

Astier was second in RC4 ahead of Italian Enrico Brazzoli, who was 18m behind Ingram. Astier and Brazzoli were the only others in WRC3.

After getting his downhill mountain biking season finished, World Cup winner Gee Atherton switched back to four wheels and took fourth in RC4 ahead of Fiesta R2T newcomer Tom Williams, godson of Richard Burns. He was second until he bent his Ford Fiesta and had to Rally2 on Sunday.

Atherton enjoyed the Saturday and Sunday stages much more to continue his learning curve in a proper R2 Fiesta with turbo power.

In seventh, James McDiarmid/Max Haines-Messenger capped off a brilliant first year of rallying for Harper Adams University, having also competed in the BRC.

Junior BRC runners-up William Creighton/Liam Regan went off on SS2 but returned to set strong times, while series rival and fellow Peugeot 208 driver Marty Gallagher hit a rock and had to Rally2. BRC regulars Alex Waterman and Nabila Tejjar, Fiesta R2 team-mates, both broke shafts but managed to finish the event.

Moss is the top of the list for non-homologated cars on the International

It's been a nightmare year for Dan Moss, but a switch to bright pink overalls for he and navigator Sam Allen appeared to bring luck as they were the highest finishing non-homologated car in the International field.

Previously if a car wasn't homologated by the FIA it had to be entered in the National Rally, but a rule change for this year meant non-homologated cars could enter the full three-day International, of which 10 started, mixing it with the

WRC's stars on the same itinerary.

BTRDA frontrunner Sacha Kakad was the biggest loss, with clutch problems on his Mitsubishi Lancer E10. His times when that was sorted were strong but the damage was done. Moss' other likely rival, Wug Utting, also hit trouble, although he managed to finish second in class. He lost nine minutes in a ditch on SS2 Myherin and three consecutive punctures in SS15-17 also hurt his charge.

His bad luck this year meant Moss earned the win, but he drove

sensibly and rapidly to deserve it.

Third national car home was South African Geoff Bell, ably navigated by Irishman Gary McElhinney. The BDA-engined Ford Escort Mk2 didn't skip a beat and a puncture was the only problem for the crew. Ian Graham and Scott Partridge rounded out the top five, the latter after having his gloves stolen at a set of traffic lights by some teenagers. Co-driver Keegan Rees was understandably dumbfounded. Guy Butler, Saleh Hijazi and Ron Hall also finished.



Moss/Allen drove well after a torrid year to secure top national honours

NATIONAL



Preston (x) and Roughead (l) were dominant



Preston shone in to take GB national win

PRESTON'S FIRST RALLY WIN

Lancashire local spins and wins as new format hurts Mitsubishi's



Duckworth's Impreza was popular with fans



Last year suited McCombie better

Wales Rally GB National Rally

By Jack Benyon

Organiser: Wales Rally GB When: October 28/29 Where: Deeside, Flintshire Starters: 74 Stages: 8.

In what went down as a mixed reaction to a newly formatted Wales Rally GB National Rally, Tom Preston took his first overall rally win with Andrew Roughead navigating the CA1 Sport Skoda Fabia R5 to victory.

For 2017 the event had switched back to a two-day format, with Saturday and Sunday's stages in the offing for crews.

What that did do is have a huge effect on the outcome. The national rally has been won by Mitsubishi Lancer E9s in each of the last three seasons, but this year it was the year of the R5. Bruce McCombie, last year's winner and Lancer E9 driver, explains: "It was more slippery than I expected. There's not enough fast stuff for us, there's too many hairpins. We need the longer stuff through the windmills. The Friday suited us."

In recent years the national event has taken in the more flowing stages on the Friday, where the Lancer's top speed and momentum through the quick corners comes into play. The R5s benefit in the twistier sections where its better handling puts it ahead. It made a huge difference.

Preston got off to a brilliant start. The Lancashire driver went fastest by 10.9s in the first proper gravel stage, after he'd also topped the event opening spectator stage at Cholmondeley Castle. His closest charger initially was Dylan Davies, in

a new ex-Peter Smith R4-spec Subaru Impreza.

But one stage later, Preston almost threw it away. It was oh-so close. "I went too quick into a left hander, it dug in and I spun and stalled," he said. "We had to turn around."

That meant the top four was separated by 7.9s with Davies heading Roger Duckworth and McCombie. Duckworth was into his first gravel rally since this event last year in his Subaru Impreza WRC car. More importantly it was co-driver Mark Broomfield's first event since he was airlifted to hospital on the Get It Sideways Stages in 2016.

Their challenge would ultimately become unstuck with a multitude of problems. The 'diff' was making such a loud noise, Broomfield described it as "wanting to fire itself out of the side of the car".

The problem dropped them out of second and into third overnight. Preston had pulled away since his issues and led by 25.1s overnight ahead of McCombie.

Duckworth went quickest on the second stage of Sunday and proved the 'diff' problem wasn't hampering performance too much. Adapting to shifting when the light on the dash told him to helped Duckworth cope with the problem. He couldn't hear the engine to change gear!

Ultimately though, the damage was done and Duckworth wouldn't reclaim second from McCombie and Michael Coutts. Neither would the latter overcome the dominant Preston, who didn't set a fastest time on the final day, but he didn't

RESULTS

Wales Rally GB National Rally, October 28/29

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Tom Preston/Andrew Roughead	Skoda Fabia R5	1h04m14.4s
2	Bruce McCombie/Michael Coutts	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	+23.2s
3	Roger Duckworth/Mark Broomfield	Subaru Impreza WRC	+47.5s
4	Dylan Davies/Llion Williams	Subaru Impreza	+59.7s
5	John Wink/John Forrest	Hyundai i20 R5	+1m04.1s
6	Keith Parry/Eryl Evans	Subaru Impreza	+2m26.6s
7	Ieuan Rowlands/Emyr Hall	Ford Escort Mk2	+2m36.7s
8	Alasdair Graham/Laura Stuart	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	+4m35s
9	John Rowlands/Glenn Latham	Ford Escort Mk2	+5m11.3s
10	Ashley Davies/Sam Fordham	Ford Escort Mk2	+5m32.7s

11 Simon Hay/Callum Jaffray (Lancer E9); 12 Craig Jones/Jonathan Hawkins (Lancer E4); 13 Shawn Rayner/Declan Dear (Escort Mk2); 14 Hywel Davies/Clive Jones (Escort Mk2); 15 Richard Sykes/Simon Taylor (Citroen DS 3 R3T); 16 Alasdair Currie/Steven Brown (Ford Fiesta R2); 17 Alun Horn/Ian Beamond (Impreza); 18 Darren Martin/Martin Steele (Lancer E9); 19 Dave Lewis/Brian Stubbs (Escort Mk2); 20 Neil Andrew/Dom Adams (Escort Mk2).
Class winners: Brian Ferreday/Jordan Joines (VW Beetle); Rikki Proffitt/David Alcock (Datsun 240Z); Rayner/Dear; Gary Wright/Chris Pattison (MG ZR); Currie/Brown; J Rowlands/Latham; Preston/Roughead

need to such was his overnight lead.

The star of Sunday was John Wink with two fastest times in his Hyundai i20 R5. He took fifth overall ahead of Keith Parry's Impreza.

All in all, the event ran well, and in contrast to recent years, no stages were lost thanks to the dropping of the Friday stages where the tests were particularly tight. The competitors did lament the 90 plus miles of road section for 16 miles of stages on the Sunday, and the loss of the popular Sweet Lamb, Hafren and Myherin stages on the Friday.

"I miss Friday," said Peugeot 306 driver Alan Desbois. "It started as a two-day event in 2010 but I feel it's gone backwards now. Previously, we were missing stages on the Friday, but I think there's other ways around it [than not running Friday's stages]. It's now a BTRDA event plus 15 miles.

The overheads were the same as we had to travel up Thursday."

Another competitor added: "There's no doubt the event is still brilliant, but I think most people would prefer to do at least most of the Friday stages than the Sunday. The road mileage to stage miles isn't enough on the Sunday. I think some of that will sound like a slant on the organisers but it isn't. The event was great, but it could have been that bit better."

So all in all the new national ran well. If it could incorporate some instead of none of Friday's stages, it could be even better. Unsurprisingly, there was no complaints at the stage end from Preston and Roughead. Job done. There was plenty of talk about Welshman winning the event, but Preston joins Dan Barritt, the overall winning co-driver, as proud Lancashire men.

IN BRIEF



Rowlands/Latham: Class B3

Local Rowlands shines
John Rowlands and Glenn Latham survived an overshoot on Saturday to head home the B3 class contingent and take ninth overall aboard their Ford Escort Mk2. It capped off a season of class wins on all three rallies finished for the crew, in their return to the event for the first time since the 2013 season. Hywel Davies and Clive Jones were second, just over two minutes behind. Dave Lewis and Brian Stubbs rounded off the podium while Ginetta Supercup racer Seb Perez was fourth to cap a quintet of Escorts.

Currie's epic debut

All the way from Mull, Alasdair Currie/Steven Brown rounded off a first event in an R2 car with a glorious class victory and 16th overall. The ST Trophy Championship runner-up won the chance to drive that car for his finishing position in the ST contest and only had a quick test before starting the event. A puncture was his only problem as he headed home newly crowned Suzuki Swift Shining Stars champion Zak Hughes (co-driven by Chris Evans) who has impressed in the bog standard Japanese car all year. Scottish Junior champion won Max Redpath won an entry for the event and took third in class with Callum Redpath on the notes.

1400s full of attrition

Only two cars finished in the B1 class as Gary Wright/Chris Pattison headed Callum Jones/Tom Hughes. Wright hadn't finished the event in 2015 and 2014. Having not competed in 2016, it made his class win all the more impressive. Jones finished 60th in 2016 and improved to 53rd this year, with more starters in the event. Joe Evett had been the expected pacesetter but the lack of a clutch was a huge issue. All three cars were MG ZRs.

Rayner leads historics

Irish Tarmac expertise and Rally GB don't really go together. But Shawn Rayner was the first historic runner on the event in an unbelievable 13th overall in his beautifully turned-out Ford Escort Mk2. He reported no issues and wore a huge smile at the end of the event. Rikki Proffitt steered another cracking car, the Datsun 240Z, to the H2 class win with a puncture and reports of rough stages the only complaints at the end. Ken Davies made the finish after a gearbox change on Saturday night in his Volvo Amazon to win H1. Brian Ferreday's VW Beetle also finished.



Rayner topped Historic entries

RACING REPORTS

SILVERSTONE: 750MC BY IAN SOWMAN
OCTOBER 28

Photos: Steve Jones

RAF TEAM SOARS TO BIRKETT GLORY



McKean was part of RAF team that took third win

For the third time in 10 years, a team from the RAF Motorsports Association won the Birkett Six Hour Relay race at Silverstone as Armed Forces Race Challenge (AFRC) organiser Chris Slator led his squad to handicap honours.

While none of the five drivers that combined to claim the prize for RAFMSA this season were involved in 2008, Slator and Darren Howe were part of the 2011 winning team, with their Peugeot and Volkswagen Golf this year joined by Dan Smith's Ford Fiesta and BMWs for Scott Lawson and Ed McKean, who saw them home. He picked up the baton in a strong position, with the team leading from two-thirds distance, although they had languished in 27th after two hours. Maintaining a consistent pace is key in the AFRC – in which all five drivers regularly compete – which stood them in good stead for the Birkett.

A squad of Mk5 Golfs – the Production

GTi Gentlemen being Luke Schlewitz, Andy Baylie, Rob Sadler, James Howlison and Peter Cross – finished within a minute of RAFMSA, the gap between the leading duo barely changing in the final hour. Locost squad Team Sellars Racing had been well-placed going into the final phase, but slipped from third to eighth in the end. Earlier, team boss Stuart Sellars enjoyed a memorable battle with the huge Mercedes 600 SEL of Chris Harris, part of a *Top Gear* team that also included Matt LeBlanc in a Bentley Continental and Rory Reid in a Rolls Royce Silver Shadow, as well as the inevitable Dacia Sandero. They finished second from bottom in both scratch and handicap standings.

With the demise of TSR, BMW squad Team Osman – family members Yusuf, Senna and Cemal, and Jody Halse – completed the podium. Rogue's Troopers salvaged fourth in spite of two cars

blowing up in qualifying. Stuart Nicholls hopped from his Toyota MR2 to one of two Toyota GT86s, alongside Giles Groombridge, Martin Farrelly and Cam Walton, who was driving with a strapped-up wrist that he injured in a shunt at Thruxton in August.

Caterham outfits Six Sevens and Gradsports completed the top six, although the former fielded only four drivers.

The **Scratch** race was disputed by three Radical squads. Last year's winners had rebadged themselves as Breakell's Nightmare in response to James Breakell selecting an eponymous Racing Heroes team. Both were beaten, however, by SR3 RSX triumvirate John and Brian Macleod as well as Tom Harvey, collectively known as Dobbers. "I was a bit nervous but I kept it on the circuit," said Tom after completing the final stint. "We had two laps in hand so I didn't want to do anything silly."

It was an almost perfectly executed plan, whereas their rivals both had problems. Racing Hero Joe Stables popped a 'diff on his PR6 after just a couple of laps of his stint, four hours in, effectively dropping them out of contention. The team had led by a lap at the two-hour mark, thanks to the efforts of Bikesports champion Stefano Leaney, but Julian Caldwell's car broke down at Woodcote and had to be pushed back to the pits in the third hour, losing the team the lead. Joe's father Richard and Charles Graham completed that team, which finished second.

Among the difficulties for the third-placed Nightmare team was confusion over a stop-go penalty, which caused Aaron Bailey to make multiple pit visits before it was eventually served by Simon Garmiston. Saker squad JPR Motorsport was a distant fourth, hampered by a fuel pressure issue on Paul Rose's car.

RESULTS

67th Birkett Six-Hour Relay – Handicap (155 laps) 1 RAF MSA – Chris Slator (Peugeot 306), Darren Howe (VW Golf), Scott Lawson (BMW Compact), Ed McKean (BMW 325i), Dan Smith (Ford Fiesta); 2 Production GTi Gentlemen – Luke Schlewitz, Andy Baylie, Rob Sadler, James Howlison, Peter Cross (VW Golf Mk5s) +57.61s; 3 Team Osman – Yusuf Osman, Senna Osman (BMW 320is), Jody Halse, Cemal Osman (BMW M3s); 4 Rogue's Troopers – Martin Farrelly, Cam Walton, Stuart Nicholls, Giles Groombridge (Toyota GT86s); 5 Six Sevens – Michael Downing, Chris Buckley, Barry White (Caterham Supersports), Peter Marsh (Caterham Sigma); 6 Gradsports – Alex Gurr, Tristan Judge, Zoltan Csabai, Jason Gale, Scott Lawrence (Caterham Graduates). Class winners Rogue's Troopers; Civic Cup – Ben Sharpe, David Vincent, James Griffith, Paul Bancroft (Honda Civic Type Rs); Brackley Motor Workers – James Gunn-Carter, David Mennie (BMW Compacts), Robin Ward (Ford Falcon), Ashley Bird, Ed Platt (BMW M3s).

Scratch (149 laps) 1 Dobbers – Brian Harvey, John Macleod, Thomas Harvey (Radical SR3 RSXs); 2 Breakell Racing Heroes – Richard Stables, Stefano Leaney, Joe Stables (Radical PR6), Charles Graham (Radical SR3 RS), Julian Caldwell (Radical SR3 RSX); 3 Breakell's Nightmare – Aaron Bailey, Lee Bailey (Radical SR3 RSX), Doug Carter (Radical PR6), Simon Garmiston, Brian Murphy (Radical SR3); 4 JPR Motorsport – Paul Rose, Steve Harris, Graham Roberts (Saker RapX S1s); 5 M3 Amigos – Piers Reid, Rory Hinde, Matthew Evens, Owen Fitzgerald (BMW M3s); 6 Hart Attacks – Barry Webb (Mallouk Mk16BW), Peter Richings (Mallouk Mk30PR), Howard Payne, Clive Wood (Mallouk Mk20Bs), Michelle Hayward (Mallouk Mk27). CW M3 Amigos; Hart Attacks; Three Hares and a Tortoise – Mike Evans, Rob Watts, Paul Thacker (Caterham 420Rs), Gavin Crawford (Caterham Supersport). Fastest lap Leaney 2m04.15s (105.54mph). Pole Dobbers. Starters 70.



Dobbers won scratch race

OULTON PARK: MSVR BY JAKE JONES
OCTOBER 28

SEBASTIANI SECURES F3 CUP TITLE IN STYLE AT OULTON

CF Racing's Jacopo Sebastiani sealed the **F3 Cup** championship at Oulton Park with yet another convincing display; a second place and victory in the season finale confirming him as champion, 34 points ahead of runner-up Shane Kelly.

A strong weekend at Brands Hatch last time out meant the Italian's intention to not play the numbers game was evident from the start as he took pole position for race one. But it was the impressive Cian Carey that won the opening race to secure his first win of the season, hooking up the start brilliantly to storm into second by Old Hall Corner. He inherited the lead at the end of the opening lap after Wade Eastwood pulled into the pits to retire with an engine issue. Sebastiani had made an uncharacteristically poor getaway and slipped back to third which then became second after Eastwood's retirement.

With drizzle falling and the pack electing to stay on slicks save for two runners, conditions were now treacherous and the title was wrapped up midway through when Shane Kelly could not avoid Robbie Watts' sideways moment at Cascades and spun into retirement. The order up front remained unchanged with Sebastiani finishing behind Carey in second, safe in the knowledge that the position

would be enough to give him the title.

Consistent all season and only finishing off the podium four times in 18 races, the F3 Cup champion was determined to finish on a high in race two; he pulled clear from pole to secure a lights-to-flag victory with Carey and Kelly completing the podium.

Both **VAG Trophy** outings were affected by yellow and red flags as Simon Walton took the honours in race one. Starting from pole, the Audi driver pushed the fast-starting Paul Taylor wide at the first corner and controlled the pace superbly to win despite the emergence of the safety car midway through, courtesy of Callum Jenkins crashing around the back of the circuit while battling with Matthew Wilson and Kenan Dole for third.

A red flag in race two could not stop Brayden Fletcher winning from pole. Richard Morgan got sideways at Old Hall Corner collecting Matthew Evans and the chaos descended into Cascades with Jenkins and Peter Davies also unable to avoid the melee. Fletcher nailed the restarted race and was untouchable until the flag. Owen Walton and Wilson completed the podium after a race-long battle with Dole, Ben Wallace, Kyle Owen-Bradshaw and Simon Walton; the six drivers covered by two seconds at the



Sebastiani took a second place and a victory as he wrapped up the title

finish after numerous collisions with each other.

Callum McDoughall and Ben Simonds (Caterham Supersport) won the **MSVT Trackday Championship** with a fourth place finish and a retirement for Class S champion Darren Goes. Eventual winners David Gardner and Chris Mills had surrendered the lead in their BMW M3 to Goes in the early stages but the result for McDoughall and Simonds was confirmed when

SEAT Leon driver Goes suffered a delaminated tyre and crashed into the barriers at Cascades midway through.

John Lyne inherited the **MSVT Trackday Trophy** win after Dean Hyde crashed at Cascades late on while leading, causing a red flag stoppage. Lawrence Davey and Toby Hotston had started from pole, but surrendered the lead to Hyde after the stops, the latter pulling clear until the error that gifted the win to Lyne in his Volkswagen Golf.

RESULTS

F3 Cup (12 laps) 1 Cian Carey (Dallara F311); 2 Jacopo Sebastiani (Dallara F311) +2.595s; 3 Stuart Wiltshire (Dallara F308); 4 Robbie Watts (Dallara F308); 5 Tony Bishop (Dallara F312); 6 George Line (Dallara F308). Fastest lap Watts 1m32.548s (104.71mph). Pole Sebastiani. Starters 10. **Race 2 (14 laps)** 1 Sebastiani; 2 Carey +10.180s; 3 Kelly; 4 Wade Eastwood (Dallara F311); 5 Wiltshire; 6 Line. FL Sebastiani 1m29.433s (108.36mph). P Sebastiani. S 8.

VAG Trophy (8 laps) 1 Simon Walton (Audi TT); 2 Paul Taylor (VW Golf) +0.505s; 3 Matthew Wilson (VW Golf); 4 Owen Walton (Audi TT); 5 Ben Wallace (VW Golf); 6 Alex Dziurzynski (VW Scirocco). Class winner Martyn Culley (SEAT Leon). FL Taylor 1m53.056s (85.72mph). P S Walton. S 21. **Race 2 (11 laps)** 1 Brayden Fletcher (VW Golf); 2 Walton +8.689s; 3 Wilson; 4 Kenan Dole (VW Golf); 5 Wallace; 6 Kyle Owen-Bradshaw (VW Golf). CW Culley. FL Dole 1m53.295s (85.54mph). P Fletcher. S 14.

MSVT Trackday Championship (22 laps) 1 David Gardner/Chris Mills (BMW M3); 2 Mark Flower (BMW M3) +9.955s; 3 Steve Gales (BMW 235i); 4 Callum McDoughall/Ben Simonds (Caterham Supersport); 5 Gary Burstow (BMW 328i); 6 Warren Allen (Ginetta G27R). CW McDoughall/Simonds; Burstow; John Lyne (VW Golf); Russell Danzey/Jack Wood (Renault Clio). FL Darren Goes (SEAT Leon) 1m55.932s (83.59mph). P Gardner/Mills. S 21.

MSVT Trackday Trophy (18 laps) 1 John Lyne (VW Golf); 2 Alex Tait/Jay Finlay (Renault Clio) +15.453s; 3 Jonathan Evans/Darren Meadows (Honda Civic); 4 Cameron McLean (Renault Clio); 5 Ray Worley (Mazda MX-5); 6 Guy Colclough/Tony Jones (SEAT Leon). CW McLean; Ronan Quinn (Ford Fiesta ST); Tom Murphy (Ford Puma); Martin Davies/Steve Sleath (Peugeot 205 GTi). FL Lyne 2m00.272s (80.57mph). P Lawrence Davey/Toby Hotston (Mini JCW). S 36.



Walton leads VAG Trophy

BRANDS HATCH: MSVR BY BRIAN PHILLIPS

OCTOBER 28/29

Photos: Gary Hawkins



Melrose chases Rivett down at Brands Hatch

RIVETT AND MELROSE SHARE VICTORIES

Matt Rivett became the only driver in 2017 with two Champion of Brands Formula Ford 1600 wins when he triumphed in the season's final round.

Saturday's pair of races produced tense tussles between Rivett (Ray GR10) and Sebastian Melrose, who dominated a seven-car entry – which was small even by CoB standards but perhaps not surprising at an event falling between the Festival and the Walter Hayes.

Melrose's long trip from Scotland was rewarded in race one despite wheelspin at the start. A lunge four laps from home at Clearways, just ahead of yellow flags protecting a stranded car, took him to the front. In race two it was Rivett's turn to chase before taking the lead. Melrose spun his Ray GR14 after contact between them at Druids, which left him third behind Keith Wood (Swift SC93).

Formula Vee champion Ben

Miloudi added the 10th Vee Festival to his winning record despite retiring before the first corner in race one with fuel feed problems in his Storm GKBM.

The three-race contest ended in disappointment for a dominant John Hughes, who was flagged off for allegedly spraying fuel in the finale after winning both earlier races.

Hughes strayed through the Clark Curve gravel while leading race two, but a superb passing move at Paddock Hill lifted him from third back to first in a single move. Miloudi grabbed third behind Ian Jordan as the top four, completed by Peter Belsey, finished together.

The decider ended in anticlimax when Hughes was called into the pits after a place-swapping duel with Miloudi. Jordan couldn't stay with the duo, but finished second with spinner Belsey third.

Hughes snatched fifth on the final lap after a brief stop for his Scarab.

Subaru racer Dale Gent scored two race wins and a second in a quartet of Allcomers' outings.

Success came the hard way on Saturday after duelling with Colin Watson's Caterham. A passing bid at Druids near the end of race two went wrong when Gent didn't spot the diminutive Caterham. Watson still finished second despite the near miss.

Gent met his match on Sunday in the form of Graham Hill's Radical PR6, but overcame Simon Smith's Caterham for second. The Subaru was a no-show for the final race, allowing Hill to win by more than a lap.

The opening Single Seater Allcomers' race lost Noel Roddy's Dallara F3 at the first corner. Kevan McLurg's Dallara retired after leading, and Mike Hatton survived a touch with Dave Wheel's Jedi to win from Chris Kite. A dreadful race two start left Kite (Dallara 393) well down the order, but he

overhauled Roddy and Hatton for victory.

Three Ssangyong Challenge races were dominated by Michael O'Brien and James Gornall. Contact at Paddock Hill left O'Brien with a flapping door but didn't stop him winning race one.

Quick starting Gornall fended off O'Brien throughout race two and Lewis Grant stayed with them to complete the podium. The race three grid put Gornall on row two, helping O'Brien to build a lead which he held to the end.

The Victor Meldrew Trophy also celebrated its 10th anniversary at the weekend. A bumper entry contested two handicap races which were won by Robert Taylor (Saxo) and Kieron Lehane (Fiesta). Nobody was more surprised than BMW M3 driver Jody Halse, eighth and seventh in the two races, when he was declared the official recipient of the coveted trophy for the third time.

RESULTS

Champion of Brands (18 laps) 1 Sebastian Melrose (Ray GR14); 2 Matt Rivett (Ray GR10) +0.165s; 3 Keith Wood (Swift SC93); 4 Ben Tinkler (Reynard 89FF); 5 Adam Fathers (Ray); 6 Michelangelo Amendola (Mygale). Fastest lap Melrose 50.976s (85.30mph). Pole Melrose. Starters 7. **Race 2 (18 laps)** 1 Rivett; 2 Wood +9.726s; 3 Melrose; 4 Tinkler; 5 Fathers; 6 Amendola. FL Melrose 51.257s (84.83mph). P Melrose. S 6.

Formula Vee Festival (17 laps) 1 John Hughes (Scarab); 2 Ian Jordan (Sheane) +7.963s; 3 Peter Belsey (Spyder Mk2); 4 Christian Goller (AHS Challenger); 5 John Stapleton (Hawke FV); 6 Mark Lawton (Scarab Mk2). FL Hughes 53.310s (81.57mph). P Ben Miloudi (Storm GKBM). S 15. **Race 2 (14 laps)** 1 Hughes; 2 Jordan +0.558s; 3 Miloudi; 4 Belsey; 5 Paul Taylor (GAC); 6 Goller. FL Hughes 52.875s (82.24mph). P Jason Chatten (GAC). S 15. **Race 3 (17 laps)** 1 Miloudi; 2 Jordan +5.216s; 3 Belsey; 4 Taylor; 5 Hughes; 6 Goller. FL Hughes 53.050s (81.97mph). P Hughes. S 12.

Allcomers (21 laps) 1 Dale Gent (Subaru Impreza); 2 Colin Watson (Caterham C400) +2.307s; 3 Samuel de Haan (Audi RS3 TCR); 4 Mark Rusted (TVR Cerbera); 5 Tim Davis (C400); 6 Colin Whitmore (BMW M3). FL Gent 48.813s (89.08mph). P Watson. S 17. **Race 2 (24 laps)** 1 Gent; 2 Watson +3.195s; 3 Davis; 4 Richard Green (C400); 5 De Haan; 6 Andrew Wilson (Holden Monaro). FL Gent 49.322s (88.16mph). P Gent. S 15. **Race 3 (25 laps)** 1 Graham Hill (Radical PR6); 2 Gent +28.493s; 3 Simon Smith (Caterham CSR); 4 Ian McDonald (Radical SR1); 5 Green; 6 Nicholas Wall (Renault Clio). FL Hill 47.494s (91.56mph). P Hill. S 15. **Race 4 (25 laps)** 1 Hill; 2 Green +1 lap; 3 Smith; 4 Wall;

5 David Cowan (BMW E46 M3); 6 Rusted. FL Hill 48.063s (90.47mph). P Hill. S 13.

Single Seater Allcomers (17 laps) 1 Mike Hatton (Dallara); 2 Chris Kite (Dallara 393) +0.689s; 3 Julian Hoskins (Vector TF932); 4 George Fowler (Reynard SF84); 5 Alan Gape (Royale RP27); 6 Phil Slate (Reynard F3). FL Kite 48.467s (89.72mph). P Kevan McLurg (Dallara 397). S 10. **Race 2 (18 laps)** 1 Kite; 2 Hatton +6.438s; 3 Noel Roddy (Dallara F3); 4 Hoskins; 5 Fowler; 6 Gape. FL Kite 48.332s (89.97mph). P Hatton. S 8.

Ssangyong Challenge (15 laps) 1 Michael O'Brien; 2 James Gornall +0.261s; 3 Nik Johnson; 4 John Hindhaugh; 5 Matt Smith; 6 Gavin Pell. FL Gornall 59.953s (72.53mph). P O'Brien. S 11. **Race 2 (15 laps)** 1 Gornall; O'Brien +0.158s; 3 Lewis Grant; 4 Johnson; 5 Smith; 6 Pell. FL O'Brien 1m00.206s (72.22mph). P Gornall. S 11. **Race 3 (15 laps)** 1 O'Brien; 2 Gornall +3.873s; 3 Grant; 4 Luke Warr; 5 Smith; 6 Pell. FL O'Brien 59.914s (72.58mph). P O'Brien. S 11.

Victor Meldrew Trophy (15 laps) 1 Robert Taylor (Citroen Saxo); 2 James Hebditch (Austin Healey Sprite) +0.657s; 3 Julian Newman (Lexus); 4 John Willcocks (BMW E30); 5 Martin Gadd (Honda Civic); 6 Glen Rossiter (BMW Mini). FL Jody Halse (BMW M3) 54.769s (79.39mph). P Michael Kirk (Mazda MX-5). S 26. **Race 2 (15 laps)** 1 Kieron Lehane (Ford Fiesta ST150); 2 Oliver Davies (Toyota Starlet Turbo) +5.462s; 3 Eliot Dunmore (BMW Mini); 4 Cem Osman (BMW M3); 5 Pete Osborne (Vauxhall Astra VXR); 6 Karl Graves (BMW 120d). FL Craig Jamieson (Ford Sierra Cosworth) 53.336s (81.53mph). P Gadd. S 26.



Jody Halse slides his way through in the Victor Meldrew Trophy



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The paper copy of MN will continue unaltered, with the website simply providing a new outlet for us to create

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INSIGHT: HANSEN v LOEB

Photos: fiaworldrallycross.com

Hansen and the old master



HOW TIMMY HANSEN HAS KEPT LOEB HONEST IN WORLD RALLYCROSS



Timmy and Kevin Hansen and Loeb

Hal Ridge looks at how Peugeot's pairing have been closely matched this season

The first measure of performance for any driver in motorsport is against their team-mate.

In February 2016, Team Peugeot-Hansen announced that the most successful rally driver of all time, Sebastien Loeb, would line up alongside former circuit racer Timmy Hansen in the squad's Peugeot 208 WRX Supercars.

While Hansen had switched to rallycross for 2013 and had three full campaigns under his belt (with four World RX wins to his name) by the time Loeb arrived, the Frenchman's status as one of the world's best drivers meant he was labelled as a title favourite in his first year, before he had even raced the 208 WRX.

Twenty-three events on, as the pair reach the conclusion of their second full World RX assault as team-mates, there has been little to choose between them.

Hansen admits that despite having talented and competitive colleagues prior to 2016, there was always the pondering question of what would happen if the one of the world's best was inserted into his car, to see what they could do.

"It's surprisingly normal to have Sebastien as my team-mate," he says. "I sort of expected the world to turn upside down, but he is just a driver, if I can say that, and he is very fast. But, he has no secret, he is just very good. Of course I had some thoughts about how fast could this car go if the best driver would drive it [before Loeb switched disciplines to rallycross]. Sebastien is a very good benchmark."

Despite his family heritage in the sport [his father Kenneth is a 14-time European Rallycross champion], Hansen initially made his name in circuit racing, up to Eurocup Formula Renault 2.0 level. He now considers

himself a rallycross driver through and through, and has spent the last two years being measured against legend Loeb.

It's widely accepted that, over an elongated period, statistics don't lie. Loeb and Hansen may have only scored a win apiece in the last two terms ahead of the 2017 series finale in South Africa next week, but they have been one of the strongest and most equal pairings in the championship. Loeb leads Hansen in total podiums 10 to nine; both have four second places to their name while Loeb has five thirds to Hansen's four.

What is arguably most impressive of all however, aside from Hansen regularly matching Loeb for outright pace, is the young driver's consistency. Hansen is only one fastest qualifying time behind Loeb's benchmark of five, and while Loeb has been in 13 finals so far in World RX, Hansen has qualified for 16 since the start of 2016. This year, only once has the number 21 driver not made the last race of a weekend.

The 25-year-old feels that he has raised his game and been closer to Loeb's potential in 2017. Coming from his circuit-racing background, Hansen has had to learn loose-surface driving in rallycross, and is renowned for his super tidy style.

"There were more differences between us last year, I would say. This year we are more equal, around a lap in every corner there is never more than a tenth here or a tenth there to anyone's advantage," he says.

"I like the car to be a little bit understeering and he likes it to be a little bit oversteering, so we have our basic difference to give him a little bit more front and me a little bit more rear grip, but apart from that we always do the same changes, have the same updates and developments on the cars. It's just the fine tuning, the personal preference that we have different. In that way I can be proud of my own development. I've worked really hard. I'm still young and I have to work harder than Seb if I want to



Timmy Hansen took his breakthrough WRX victory in Italy back in 2014

compete with him. He has the experience; he's been doing this for many years and I've got to catch that in as little time as possible."

Aside from pushing himself as a driver, Hansen says he has learnt as much outside of the car as in it since he became team-mates with Loeb. "He's used to working in big teams and I think maybe the thing that I've learnt the most is that he really lets everyone do their job and he does his job as good as he can," he says. "I have often tried to fix all the problems myself, but if there is an issue with the car that we need to solve he is very good at explaining that and he is very clear that the engineers need to work on that and mechanics too, and he is the driver. That's when you achieve results as he did in WRC."

Outwardly, Loeb can give the impression that he is not as dedicated to the overall cause as he perhaps once was, but Hansen says the Frenchman is as professional as ever, and his ability to switch off from 'work' has helped Hansen raise his level too.

"Sebastien is very good at doing his job and he is very professional with his driving, the debriefs and all of the analysing, but in his spare time he likes to go back to his camper or hotel and relax," he says, acknowledging that

down time hasn't come naturally to him. "There is the time to work and there is the time to think about it and then there is the time to try to forget it, because when you forget about it and you have a good night's sleep, that's when it really settles in and you can use it the day after. At the moment I'm trying to get better at that; when I'm working, I'm really working, but when I'm at home I should stop working, so I shouldn't take my laptop and watch onboard, stuff that I love doing! I'm still learning that, but I'm working really hard on everything."

Peugeot Sport has already confirmed its continuation in World RX for 2018 with brand ambassador Loeb, but there is yet to be any official word on if the Team Peugeot-Hansen set-up will remain, or if Hansen will continue to drive for the French marque.

Whatever unfolds in the next few months, Hansen can be assured that he has taken on and not only matched but often beaten one of the world's most decorated drivers. While Hansen is often overlooked because his personality isn't as loud and outgoing as others in the World RX paddock, the Swede's experience, consistency, pace and professionalism should put him high on the list of candidates for any team in the series with world title ambitions. ■

LOEB v HANSEN

Events: 23

2016 Drivers' Championship

Loeb fifth, 209 points
Hansen sixth, 178 points

2017 Drivers' Championship

Loeb fourth, 204 points
Hansen sixth, 175 points

Podiums

Loeb 10
Hansen 9

Wins

Loeb 1 (Latvia, 2016)
Hansen 1 (Canada, 2016)

Seconds

Loeb 4
Hansen 4

Thirds

Loeb 5
Hansen 4

Qualified for final

Loeb 13
Hansen 16

Qualified for semi-finals

Loeb 22
Hansen 21

Fastest qualifying times

Loeb 5
Hansen 4



Loeb: Latvian win in '16

SPORTING SCENE

OBITUARY

Jordan Bowes
1998-2017

Retro Rallycross racer Jordan Bowes, 19, died last Wednesday (October 25) in a road accident near his home in Stokesley, just outside Middlesbrough.

Bowes made his rallycross debut in the opening round of the BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross Championship on March 8, 2015 at Blyton Park, driving his father Stewart's Mini Clubman and starred.

He won the SuperModified C final and then led the B final on the opening lap but broke a driveshaft. Subsequently he made selected appearances in his father's car in the Retro Rallycross Championship, while also building and racing his own turbocharged VW Golf Mk1.

He had planned to compete in the final round of the Retro RX series at Croft two weeks ago, but an engine problem in pre-event testing forced him to withdraw.

Bowes had been planning to race the car in 2018. Friends and colleagues have set up a JustGiving page to fund getting the Golf on track in his memory. *Motorsport News* extends its sympathies to father Stewart, mother Janet, brother Jason and his many family and friends.



Bowes: a rising rallycross star

Female offspring to
make Croft RX debuts

Daughters of two British Rallycross Championship regulars will make their Junior Rallycross debuts in the BTRDA Clubmans Championship finale this weekend at Croft Circuit.

Eleanor Corner, daughter of Supernational podium finisher Guy Corner and Matilda Procter, youngest daughter of Supercar racer Kevin Procter will both drive Suzuki Swifts for the first time at their local circuit. "I'm really looking forward to it, but I'm also very nervous," said 15-year-old Procter Jr. "This is something that I've pestered my dad about but with his work commitments and racing himself there wasn't much time. Now his season has finished he is able to dedicate some more of his time to helping me. I just want to see if I like it. To finish the event would be great for me."

Not only does Procter's father race in Supercar, her uncle Dave Bellerby is a multiple rallycross champion while cousins Paige and Drew Bellerby race in the British RX series. "I have a lot to live up to but I know I'll get lots of advice, support and encouragement from all of them. If I enjoy it then I would love to do more," she said.



Bennett was third in BRX

BENNETT FRONTS NEW
RX TEAM FOR 2018 BID

British Supercar racer has ambitious plans for expansion next season

By Hal Ridge

British Rallycross Supercar racer Oliver Bennett will create a new team called GBRX for the 2018 season that will produce a brand new car for a campaign of British, European and World Championship events.

Former motocross rider Bennett made his rallycross

debut in 2017 and finished on the podium seven times in nine events on his way to third overall in the British RX Supercar series.

His squad is working on a totally new car to rallycross, following the successful maiden campaign with an OlsbergsMSE-built Ford Fiesta.

"This is by far the best motorsport I have been involved

in. This season has surpassed any expectations, taking the highest championship points score and with dropped scores, third overall," said Bennett. "The season has been mostly highs for me without any mechanical issues. The only issue is that it makes next year much tougher to keep the momentum going. We are currently building a car to compete in European and World

RX events, created with British components for GBRX."

Bennett's Xite Racing squad released a teaser video about the new car on Sunday, but is yet to give any more details.

"We're building a new car and collaborating with a British university to develop our technology and build an electric rallycross car in the future," he said.



Bennett has big plans



Kew has joined the Ginetta ranks with his new G40R

Kew prepares Ginetta for National Hot Rod campaign next year

National Hot Rod racer Jason Kew has taken delivery of a Ginetta G40R but might wait to give the new machine its race debut.

Kew picked up the car from the recent meeting at Ipswich although he was banned from the meeting for a tyre infringement picked up at Northampton. He will return to the trail at Hednesford this

weekend but might stick with his regular Vauxhall Tigra instead.

Kew said: "I have had the Vauxhall for a long time, and I have had plenty of runners-up positions in it – so maybe the Ginetta can be the last step that I need."

"Also, when you tell someone you are a racer and they you say that you drive a Vauxhall,

it doesn't sound so cool. When you say it is a Ginetta, there is a much better reaction!"

"After the ban, I am 21st in the points so it is going to be a big effort to qualify for the World Final next July. I will prepare the Ginetta over the winter break and test with it, but I think that I might stick with the Tigra for the short term because it is a proven product."

BRISCA F1

Green's Tarmac win helps his F1 shootout charge

BriSCA F1: Northampton

By Colin Casserley

Organiser: Incarace Where: Northampton International Raceway When: October 28 Starters: 38.

Nigel Green kept his hopes of adding the National Series title to his World and British crowns with a heat and final double at Northampton on Saturday.

With one round of the series remaining at Belle Vue on November 12, Green trails Stuart Smith Jr in the points standings by 119 markers. With a possible 154 available in the final round, the battle for the title is far from over. However, it would mean that Green needs to replicate his Northampton form in Manchester to snatch the title away from Smith. Green will also have to look behind him and both Lee Fairhurst and Frankie Wainman Jr are less than 30 points from the second position.

Karl Hawkins rolled his machine in the early stages of the final, calling for a complete

restart. Mark Adkins led the early stages before a yellow flag bunched up the field.

On the restart Tristan Jackson moved into the lead with Todd Jones in pursuit. Further back Green passed Smith and began to march towards the front of the pack. Jones was unable to hold off Green but crossed the line in second with Smith in third.

"A heat and final double: that will do," said Green.

Jones explained: "I haven't traced as much as I would have wanted to this season, my intention was to do every Tarmac meeting but work commitments meant I could only do a few this year. It's good when the car goes well, makes up for all the bad luck I seem to have had this season when I have raced."

Result

1 Nigel Green; 2 Todd Jones; 3 Stuart Smith Jr; 4 Luke Davidson; 5 Tristan Jackson; 6 Mat Newson; 7 Chris Fort; 8 Paul Hines; 9 Lee Fairhurst; 10 George Etwell.

World
champ
Green:
victory



BRISCA F1

Harrison shows what
has been missing

BriSCA F1: Birmingham

By Colin Casserley

Organiser: Incarace Where: Birmingham Wheels When: October 27 Starters: 48

Ryan Harrison hasn't competed in every round of the National Series Shootout, but if he had, there is every chance he would be in the running for the series title. On Saturday night at Birmingham he clicked off his second consecutive Tarmac final win.

Mark Adkins led the early stages of the race in his first outing of the season following his switch to BriSCA F1s after a stint in the F2 series. However, following a yellow flag that bunched the field up, he lost the lead to Mark Sargent.

Further back, Harrison had began to make his move and passed 10 cars in the opening five laps. As the race entered the closing stages, Harrison barged his way into the lead. However, a backmarker momentarily slowed him and that allowed Sargent to close back in on the race leader but he couldn't get near



Harrison: survived inquiry to prevail

enough to take advantage. Sargent held off a late-race charge from Nigel Green to claim second.

After a steward's inquiry, Harrison was deemed not to have jumped the early-race restart and was confirmed the winner.

Harrison said: "I don't think I did anything wrong, I went when everyone else did so I knew I hadn't jumped the start. The car is handling great at the moment, we have worked on it all season and although we have had some wins all year, you always have to be trying things to make a car go better."

Result

1 Ryan Harrison; 2 Mark Sargent; 3 Nigel Green; 4 Todd Jones; 5 Alex Wass; 6 Tristan Jackson; 7 Stuart Smith Jr; 8 Mat Newson; 9 Lee Fairhurst; 10 Frankie Wainman Jr.

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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

MN SAYS...

Champions crowned, records broken

As Lewis Hamilton and Sebastien Ogier prevailed, the next generation is coming...

There was an inevitability about the championship trophies to be picked up by both Lewis Hamilton and Sebastien Ogier last weekend, and both would have more chances to lock away their silverware. However, it is appropriate that they both did it on the same weekend. The sport is witnessing some true icons performing at the very top of their respective games right now.

But there were some terrific subplots, and the victories by Max Verstappen and Elyn Evans are shedding light on the future fights, the people who are at the front of the queue to take a pop at the new champs. Both Ogier and Hamilton are the established benchmarks, and both have to fend off their established rivals but also a new wave of talent.

Max has already shown that he has what it takes to land a world crown, but the performance of Evans last weekend was the breakthrough that he needed. Hopefully this will take him to the next level and give the home fans even more to shout about in years to come. This could be the start of something big.

Matt James, Editor (Twitter: @MattJMNews)



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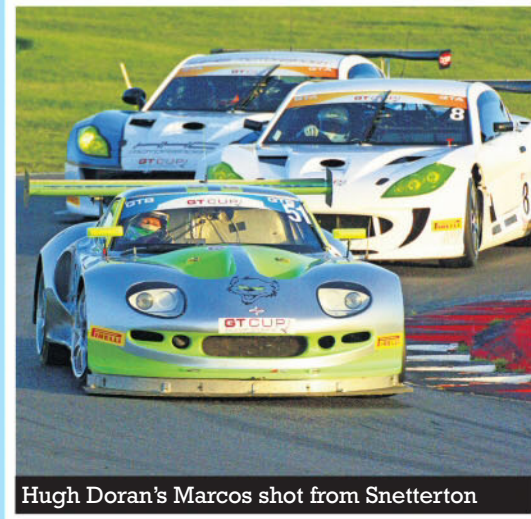
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ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!



Every which way but forwards! Photographer Gary Hill captured this BMW melee from Paddock Hill Bend at Brands Hatch



Hugh Doran's Marcos shot from Snetterton



GB winner Elyn Evans presses hard, as captured by Rob Lees



Rich Cranston caught this classic Ford Escort Mk1



RAF Typhoon Rally Team, by Louise Hepburn



Ian Sprott stood back when Esapekka Lappi was flying through Wales Rally GB



Festival ace Joey Foster, by Gary Hill



BRX showdown at Croft, taken by Rich Cranston

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TV GUIDE

The latest episode in **Johnny Mowlem's Racing Travels** series sees him head to Snetterton to drive Red River Sports' brand new Ligier LMP3 car and race a Ferrari 488 GT3 at Silverstone with Ivor Dunbar, as well as compete in the Britcar

Endurance series with Bon Grimes. Take a trip down memory lane with **Classic F1** to the 1993 Brazilian Grand Prix (Saturday, 2100-2145hrs), Sky Sports F1, where legend Ayrton Senna took his final home win with a superb drive

in very tricky conditions. And for those who missed all the action through the Welsh countryside and woods, the **Wales Rally GB review** (Sunday, 2200-2305hrs, Motorsport.tv) is perfect for you as Sebastian Ogier and M-Sport aim for the titles.



Senna and Schumacher battled in Brazil 1993, which was won by the home hero

motorsport.tv

WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP: SHANGHAI Sunday, 0245-0920hrs



Toyota and Porsche are still fighting for the title heading to China

LIVE TV

World Endurance Championship: Shanghai

■ **Race:** Sunday, 0730-0945hrs, Eurosport 2

NASCAR Cup: Texas

■ **Race:** Sunday, 1830hrs, Premier Sports



NASCAR will next race in Texas

LISTINGS

Photo: SMJ Photography, LAT, Jakob Ebrey



First MN Circuit Rally of year is at Oulton

RACING SATURDAY/SUNDAY

■ **Silverstone, Northants**
Walter Hayes Trophy: FF1600, Allcomers, HSCC Allcomers, BWRDC Ladies Race, Britcar **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1145hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 0900hrs **Admission** £12 **Web** silverstone.co.uk **Contact** 08704 588260

■ **Brands Hatch, Kent**
BARC meeting: Trucks, Pickups, Legends, Modified Saloons, Tin Tops, Intermarque **Starts** Saturday, racing from 1040hrs (qualifying from 0900hrs) Sunday, racing from 1020hrs (qualifying from 1000hrs) **Admission** adult £25, under 13 free **Web** msv.com **Contact** 0843 453 9000

RALLYING SATURDAY

■ **Oulton Park, Cheshire**
Neil Howard Stages in association with Graham Coffey Solicitors **Starts** 0900hrs **Admission** online £10, on the gate £15. **Web** nhstages.blmcc.co.uk
 ■ **Builth Wells, Powys**
Humfrys & Symonds Solicitors Builth Showground Stages **Starts** 0900hrs **Admission** free **Web** herefordshiremotorclub.co.uk
 ■ **Malton, North Yorkshire**
Mellors Elliott Motorsport Malton Forest Rally **Starts** 0831hrs **Admission** free **Web** maltonmc.co.uk/malton-forest-rally

■ **Crumlin, County Antrim**
McGeehan Motorsport Sunset Rally **Starts** 0950hrs **Admission** free **Web** anicc.org.uk

SPORTING SCENE SUNDAY

■ **Hednesford Hills, Staffordshire**
National Hot Rods **Starts** 1500hrs **Admission** TBA **Web** spedeworth.co.uk

■ **Croft, North Yorkshire**
BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross **Starts** TBA **Admission** adults £9, children aged 15 and under free **Web** btrda.com

Details correct at time of press but check before travelling

NEXT WEEK

OUT WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8

R.A.C. RALLY PREVIEW

MN LOOKS AHEAD TO THE RETURN OF THE MAMMOTH ROGER ALBERT CLARK RALLY



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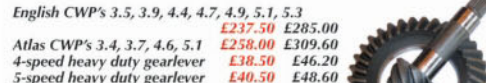
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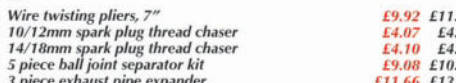
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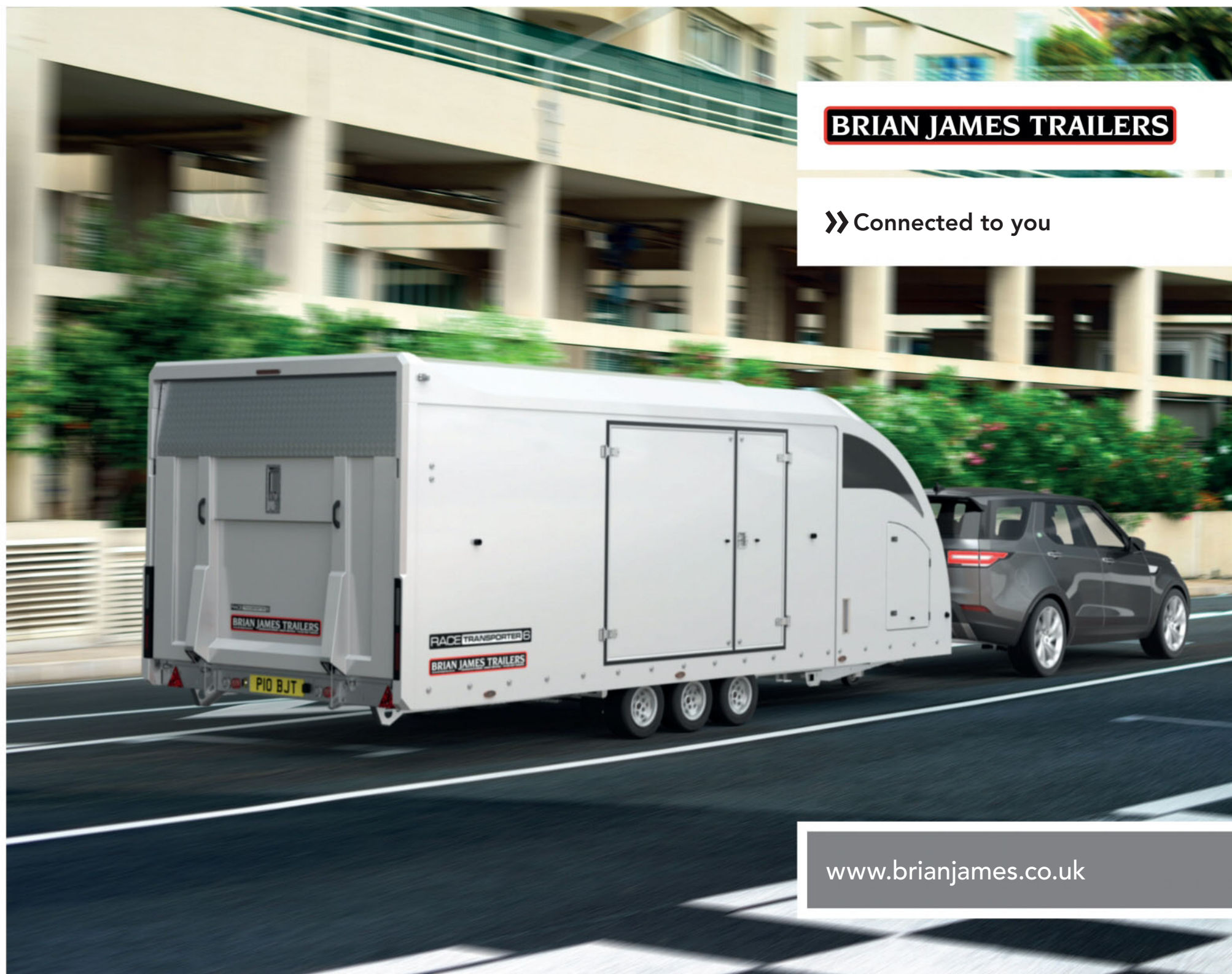
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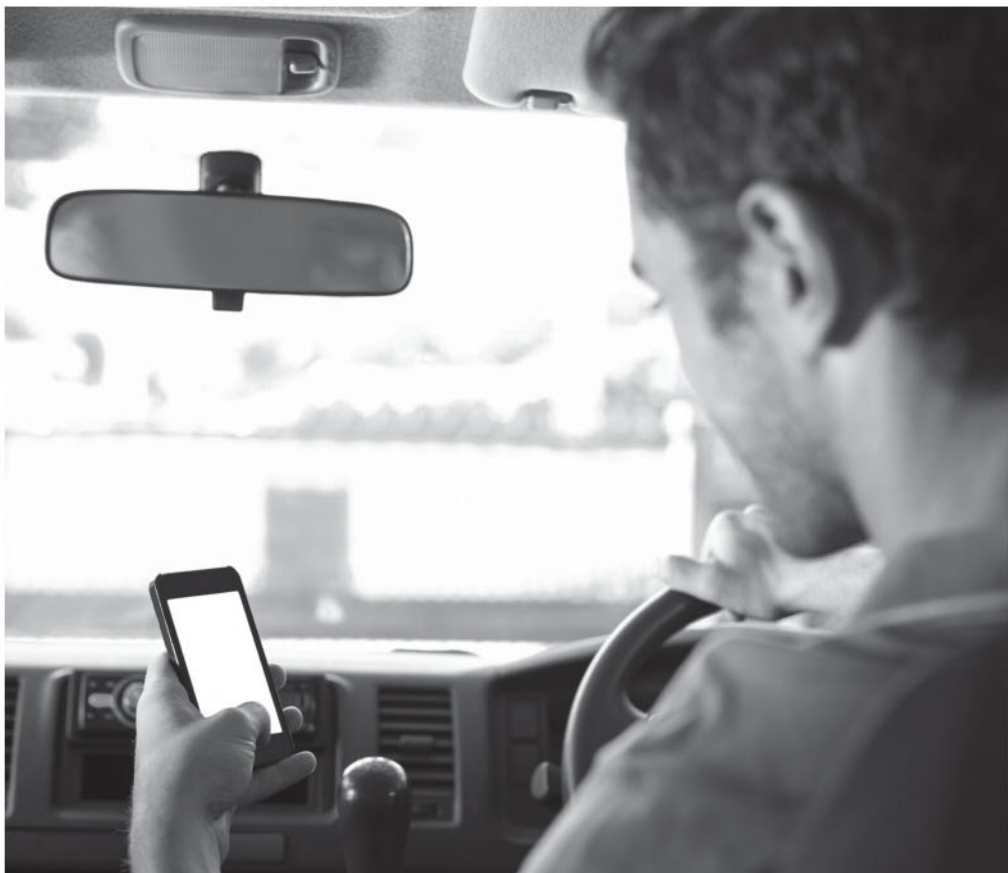


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