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FEBRUARY 7 2019

F1 2019 THE **BIG** QUESTIONS

Karun Chandhok
takes on the
key issues

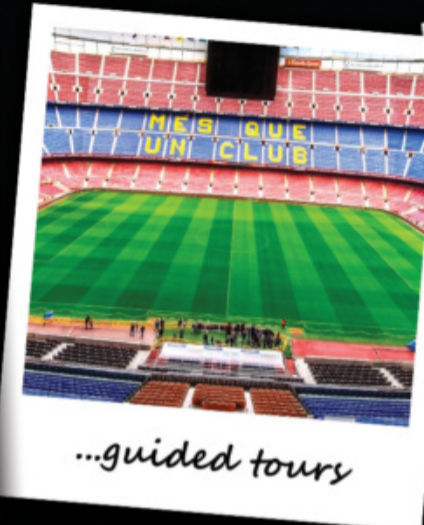
- Will the new
aero rules work?
- Can Leclerc
defeat Vettel?
- Could Red Bull-
Honda win?



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THE THINGS WE WANT TO KNOW ABOUT F1 2019

Formula 1 launch season is fast approaching and there are plenty of unknowns ahead of the new season. With that in mind, we've asked former grand prix driver-turned-television pundit Karun Chandhok the big questions of 2019 in this week's cover piece on page 16.

Arguably the two most intriguing things we want to find out, aside from whether the new aero rules will work, are: can Red Bull and Honda put together a championship fight in their first year together?; how will Sebastian Vettel cope with the arrival of rising star Charles Leclerc at Ferrari after that tricky end to 2018?

Whatever the answers to those questions are, we all hope that there will be someone to challenge Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes, the combination that has provided such a high bar in recent years.

The news that Alfa Romeo is increasing its involvement in F1 this year (p6) is to be welcomed, but spare a thought for Sauber. The team started by Peter Sauber has been an F1 stalwart for a quarter of a century – and has a heritage that goes back even further, including success at the Le Mans 24 Hours. Fortunately, many of those who helped make Sauber the team it was will remain at Alfa Romeo and most fans will be hoping the squad can maintain the momentum it gained during the last campaign.

Alfa Romeo was the team to beat in 1950, when the F1 world championship began, and took the first drivers' crown with Giuseppe Farina. But that title could have gone to a Frenchman now largely forgotten, so this week we also recall the career of the remarkable Jean-Pierre Wimille (p30).

- Next week we will cover the first F1 launches of the year, print the results of our Greatest Eras poll, and look ahead to the Daytona 500.



KEVIN TURNER
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DAVENPORT; MAUGER



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PERFORMANCE SUPPLEMENT



Our expert panel looks at the key things a rookie must focus on, and Damien Faulkner is your Mondello Park guide.

Sahara desert is on itinerary for Extreme E. It was also a staple of the Dakar Rally, here in 2004



EXTREME E: RACING, BUT

EXTREME E

“Welcome to what I think will be the biggest adventure of our time.”

That was how ABB FIA Formula E Championship CEO Alejandro Agag last week launched his latest project: Extreme E, an off-road electric SUV racing series designed to test the emerging technology and highlight climate change damage.

The idea was conceived nearly two years ago when Agag had a breakfast meeting with two-time Indianapolis 500 winner and current McLaren Formula 1 sporting director and Extreme E chairman Gil de Ferran. It’s come on quite a bit since then.

XE will hold events in five remote areas of the world – the Arctic, the Himalayas, the Sahara desert, the Amazon rainforest and islands in the Indian Ocean. The championship will be based on a floating paddock – the soon-to-be refitted Royal Mail Ship St Helena. The ship’s 174 beds – on top of 50 for the crew – will be occupied by everyone an international championship needs, but on a tiny scale. The first event – each one formed of a round-robin group stage of head-to-head races leading to a knockout tournament – is slated to take place in January 2021. It would then run to August, but the championship’s intended non-live ‘docu-sport’ broadcast premise would mean the overall winner would not be revealed until episodes covering each event

were subsequently screened that autumn.

The central idea is to test electric racing technology in the toughest conditions on the planet, using 500kW spec-chassis machines filled with FE-inspired parts (with two motors open for technology developments) covered by silhouette bodykits inspired by the road-going SUVs produced by competing manufacturers.

But XE and Agag have a secondary aim – to “showcase the huge challenges that our planet faces”. That’s why the five initial areas for racing have been identified and Agag intends XE to race on land that has already been damaged by climate change and human intervention.

In doing so, with as little infrastructure as possible and the typical motorsport branding exercises completed using virtual imagery, the aim is for the series to not cause additional damage. The ‘docu-sport’ broadcasts are intended to complement this by explaining how the areas were marred in the first place, with Academy Award winning film-maker Fisher Stevens acting as XE’s artistic director and producing the coverage. This is where

“FOCUS ON AREAS DAMAGED BY CLIMATE CHANGE SHOULD BE ON RESTORATION”

F1 owners slated by promoters

FORMULA 1

Formula 1 owner Liberty Media has been criticised in a group statement by grand prix promoters.

Amid ongoing uncertainty about the fate of five races – with the British, Italian, Spanish, German and Mexican GP contracts expiring this year – there has been a growing unity among the race organisers about the need for things to change.

Prominent among the worries at last week's meeting of the Formula One Promoters' Association are that F1's move to more pay-TV will slash the number of viewers, and therefore those interested in buying tickets, plus questions about why some events were being offered better financial terms.

In a statement issued by FOPA, the body said that there were three key issues for 16 of its members: it is not in the long-term interest of the sport that fans lose free access to content and broadcasting; there is lack of clarity on new initiatives in F1 and a lack of engagement with promoters on their implementation; new races should not be introduced to the detriment of existing events, although the association is encouraged by the alternative business models being offered to prospective venues.

The statement about alternative business models is understood to reference efforts to pull off a Miami street race, where promoters had been offered a profit-share partnership, rather than pay tens of millions of dollars for the right to hold the event.

Silverstone MD Stuart Pringle warned in *The Daily Mail*: "If this continues, Formula 1 will be racing on second-rate circuits, if any at all. Everyone is disgruntled. We have all been compliant and quiet hitherto, but we have great concerns about the future health of the sport under the people who run it now."

JONATHAN NOBLE

➔ P14 OPINION



MITSUBISHI

NOT AS WE KNOW IT

the first of many questions about XE's premise and eventual execution arises.

Mike Childs, head of research at environmental campaign group Friends of the Earth, hailed XE's intention to continue FE's aim of advancing electric technology through motorsport developments – "Bringing electric cars into racing is a way of fast-forwarding the much-needed innovation to cut carbon emissions from private transport," he said – but he questioned the wisdom of taking motorsport to XE's intended destinations.

"The focus of effort on areas damaged by climate change and other environmental damage should be on restoration," he said. "We wouldn't want to dismiss this idea out of hand as a stunt, but – and it's a big but – the organisers need to explain how the event will not exacerbate the damage already caused and how the profits will be used to restore these environments and support local people."

Given the early stages of XE's development – there was a major sense of the unknown when the series was launched from the St Helena on the River Thames in central London last week – this is an area Agag must address in due course. But the championship's 'chief explorer', British explorer and environmentalist David de Rothschild, insisted to Autosport that the project's environmental aim is "not a green-washing exercise".

There are many other questions

surrounding XE. How the equipment from a ship-based paddock reaches the Himalayas is one, while stage length – set to be approximately five miles – is another. Surely Dakar-like marathon runs would test the technology further? But hour-long episodes and the need to avoid environmental damage likely prevents this.

The 'docu-sport' concept is intriguing – and its appeal to streaming platforms obvious – but gaining coverage from traditional media and appealing to their audiences will be very difficult without a live element. When asked how, for example, Autosport could cover XE, Agag said it was a question he has "no answer for at this point". Given interest levels in FE are still well off other more-established series, XE's organisers need to seriously consider how they appeal to the motorsport fans Agag said he wants "to be involved".

XE needs manufacturers on board too. Agag reckons he could launch the series with just independent teams but, like FE, manufacturer support would take it to another level entirely. Personnel from nine OEMs were at XE's concept launch, with three companies said to have expressed major interest in entering.

Ultimately, XE is a bold, and very complex, new step for motorsport that needs all the questions surrounding it to be properly addressed. But if anyone can pull it off, it's Agag.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Sauber becomes Alfa Romeo for 2019

FORMULA 1

The Sauber name will disappear from the Formula 1 grid in 2019 after the team struck a deal to allow Alfa Romeo to take over the full name of the team and its chassis.

Alfa has successfully requested to take over the chassis name from Sauber as well as the team's entry. It cements the Italian manufacturer's first fully badged F1 entry since 1985 as an extension of the partnership that began with Sauber last year.

Sauber Motorsport AG, which remains independent of Alfa Romeo's investment in the team, is still the company behind the entry. An entrant's company, team and chassis names can all be changed after the original entry list is published. An F1 Commission vote was necessary because of the commercial agreements between F1 and the teams, which Alfa Romeo needs to honour in order to keep the prize money the entry earned under the Sauber name.

Alfa's return comes at the cost of one of grand prix racing's longest-running and most popular independent names. Peter Sauber's eponymous company started in sportscars, peaking with a deal to operate Mercedes' works Group C effort that led to a Le Mans 24 Hours win and two world titles.

That relationship sparked the first time Sauber can claim to have competed in F1 as a 'manufacturer' team of sorts. It was briefly the beneficiary of Mercedes' works engines in 1994, then more than a decade later it had four years as the fully fledged BMW entry.

Sauber also had exclusive use of Ford engines in 1995, although a small but crucial difference is that this alliance was more of a works partnership and not to the same degree as that with Mercedes.

In its first two decades Sauber never finished lower than eighth in the championship, establishing itself as a regular scorer despite F1 only awarding points to the top six finishers until 2003 and the top eight until 2009. But Alfa takes on the task of continuing a

rebuilding project Sauber has needed since a sudden slump in performance in 2014.

Sauber failed to score points in a season for the first and only time that year, but applying the current points system to its historical results under less-rewarding structures casts its 2014-17 nadir in an even harsher light. Its average tally from 1993-2013 based on the current system is 108.9 points. Sauber scored two points in 2016 and five in 2017. Even its brief reprieve in 2015, when it scored 36 points and leapt back to eighth in the table, resulted in fewer points than its adjusted next-worst tally.

The revival can be traced to its mid-2016 takeover by Pascal Picci and Felipe Nasr's result in the Brazilian Grand Prix that lifted the team above Manor and secured vital F1 prize money. This was furthered one year later when Monisha Kaltenborn left and Frederic Vasseur was named team principal.

Armed with vital fresh funding, Vasseur cancelled a planned Honda customer engine deal and Sauber negotiated a new Ferrari arrangement to use up-to-date engines. That was the first step towards aligning itself with Ferrari and the wider Fiat Chrysler group, with the announcement of Alfa title sponsorship following later in 2017.

Closer Ferrari ties enabled Sauber to field Charles Leclerc last season and secure Antonio Giovinazzi for 2019. It has also made major staffing hires, including Ferrari's Simone Resta as technical director and Audi aerodynamicist Jan Monchaux, while continuing a wider recruitment drive. Those efforts were rewarded with eighth position in the constructors' championship last year and regular top-10 qualifying and race results.

Re-signing 2007 world champion Kimi Raikkonen represents the extent of the turnaround from the team's all-time low. Being able to preserve the foundation that Peter Sauber built makes losing his name and badging the team as Alfa Romeo a price worth paying.

SCOTT MITCHELL

ALFA ROMEO THROUGH THE YEARS



1924 CAMPARI



1935 NUVOLARI



1950 FARINA



1951 FANGIO



1980 GIACOMELLI



1984 PATRESE



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Ferrari ups its budget as it bids to dislodge Mercedes

FORMULA 1

Ferrari plans to increase its Formula 1 budget this season to try to end its long championship win drought.

The Italian squad has not won a title since its constructors' success in 2008, with Kimi Raikkonen claiming its last drivers' crown to date the year before.

"While our performance last year was the best one since we won the constructors' championship in 2008, we fell short of our ambition to raise the winners' cup," Ferrari chairman and CEO Louis Camilleri told investors in a conference call last week.

"Our objective going forward remains the

same as it has always been: to win. In 2019 we project an increase in spending which partially reflects this ambition, but also includes the development expenditures required to address the new tactical regulations that will form part of the envisaged Concorde Agreement that should come into force in 2021."

It is not clear what Camilleri meant by his reference to development work around F1's planned 2021 overhaul given there are still no confirmed technical regulations. But a broad concept of evolving the current engine specification has been publicly outlined.

Ferrari, Red Bull and Mercedes have reservations over how F1 owner Liberty

Media's 2021 revolution will work, particularly in the practical application of cost-capping elements such as limiting team spending. But Camilleri had already softened Ferrari's stance from the quit threats made by his predecessor, the late Sergio Marchionne. The confirmation that it is preparing a bigger spend in 2019, with one eye on the 2021 changes, is a further shuffle away from an F1 exit.

It also furthers Ferrari's commitment to change in pursuit of short-term ambitions. It parted company with Maurizio Arrivabene ahead of the 2019 season and named Mattia Binotto its new team principal.

SCOTT MITCHELL

Hartley back in F1 – in Maranello sim

FORMULA 1

Toro Rosso refugee Brendon Hartley has landed a Ferrari simulator role for 2019.

Le Mans 24 Hours winner and World Endurance champion Hartley was axed by Red Bull after just one full season in F1, but has now been confirmed as part of Ferrari's development team.

Ferrari needed to replace two key simulator drivers, after Antonio Giovinazzi

and Daniil Kvyat used their roles to land full-time seats at Sauber and Toro Rosso.

Hartley will be part of a four-driver simulator line-up at Ferrari, three of whom are new to the programme. Pascal Wehrlein has been confirmed, after Autosport revealed he was set to join alongside his Mahindra Formula E campaign, as has Formula 2 race winner Antonio Fuoco. They join experienced

development driver and WEC ace Davide Rigon.

New Ferrari boss Mattia Binotto said: "Our team has taken on four undoubtedly talented drivers, who possess innate feeling, with a strong understanding of race cars and tracks. These are exactly the qualities required in the skilful role of driving in a simulator, one of the vital pieces of equipment in the Formula 1 of today."

SCOTT MITCHELL





Todt plots cross-border future for global expansion

WRC

World Rally Championship fans could be getting two countries for the price of one in the future. That's if FIA president Jean Todt gets his wish.

The WRC's calendar is currently hugely oversubscribed with countries from the world's four corners vying for one of 14 slots, while next year we're likely to lose two European rounds to allow Japan and Kenya a seat at the table. The teams don't want any more rallies – although they probably would stomach one more – but WRC Promoter does. Which is why Todt is encouraging more countries to follow the lead of rounds one and two, with the Monte Carlo Rally working with France, and Rally Sweden using Norwegian stages.

"I want a global championship and so I want rallies in Europe where the history of rallying started – but I want to go to every part of the world: Latin America, Asia," said Todt. "I feel bad we don't have a rally in China. [And there's] India, Indonesia, Thailand. It's just a question of time before we go to Japan. It's great that we have a Korean company like Hyundai, but I want some Chinese manufacturers. I want to go back to Africa and we're working on

that and the Middle East.

"That's what we want to achieve but we cannot host 20 rallies, we need to find criteria. I wanted to have multi-country rallies: I thought one rally could use two countries.

"What I wish does not always happen, but I feel we should have some sort of creativity with rallies covering more than one country – this could have helped settle this question of the European calendar. I've been individually talking with some countries, suggesting this."

WRC Promoter managing director Oliver Ciesla can see the sense in such a plan, but he's encouraging the service park to look further down the road – and not focus on what he sees as a Euro-centric issue.

"What we need to see in the long term is what's best for the championship," said Ciesla.

"We are talking about the wrong things. The right question is: why is it so difficult to get into the Chinese market? What can we do to raise it in the US? How long does this take? Sponsors tell me for years, 'What is going on in China?' Long-term, this is more bad news for the series than not being on one European event. Long-term, losing one European round is not a threat to the championship."

DAVID EVANS

BMW unsure of staying in WEC

WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

The BMW M8 GTE may end up having a very short lifespan. The German manufacturer has stated that its programmes with the car will be reviewed after the end of its current assaults on the World Endurance and IMSA SportsCar championships.

BMW was responding to speculation that it could quit the WEC after only one campaign at the end of 2018-19 superseason. But its motorsport boss, Jens Marquardt, insisted that no decisions had been made. "There are still a lot of things we have to look into in the WEC; we definitely haven't extracted the maximum performance from our package," he said. "That's what we'll focus on with the remaining races. Once we've wrapped up everything, we're going to sit down and assess and see where we go in the future."

The M8 has endured a difficult first season in the WEC with the MTEK team. So far it has notched up a single podium in the GTE Pro class.

Over in North America, the Rahal squad has been more successful. A GT Le Mans class victory at last month's Daytona 24 Hours IMSA opener followed two wins at the end of last season. BMW has a long-standing presence in Stateside sportscar racing stretching back to the mid-1990s, predominantly in the GT ranks. But Marquardt said that its participation would be reviewed at the end of the season and admitted to interest in the Daytona Prototype international class.

The GTE Pro WEC ranks will again be bolstered at the Sebring 1000 Miles next month by a solo Chevrolet Corvette C7.R. The factory Corvette Racing squad will reprise its Shanghai WEC entry of last November, with the car driven this time by Jan Magnussen, Antonio Garcia and Mike Rockenfeller.

- Risi Competizione is planning to return to the Le Mans 24 Hours under its own name for the first time since 2017. The two-time GT2 class winner at the French enduro has revealed that it has put in an entry for the race in the GTE Pro category and is hoping to have some Ferrari factory drivers in its line-up.

GARY WATKINS



NEW
CAR

FORMULA RENAULT Teams in the Formula Renault Eurocup got their hands on the series' brand new car at the Cremona test track in Italy last week, with eight squads getting some wet running in. The chassis is the Tatuus Regional F3 product, powered by a 1.8-litre turbocharged Megane engine. Among those behind the wheel were 2018 series frontrunners Lorenzo Colombo (MP Motorsport) and Oscar Piastrri (R-ace GP), and sometime BTCC racer Ricky Collard with Toyota Racing Series-dominating, new-to-Europe Belgo-Kiwi squad M2 Competition. **Photograph by Renault Sport**

Le Mans winner presses Goh button again

SUPER GT

Le Mans 24 Hours winner Team Goh will end a 10-year absence from the race tracks in 2019. This season it will mount a domestic campaign with the McLaren 720S GT3, but team owner Kazumichi Goh has long-term aspirations to return to the big race in France that it won with Audi in 2004.

Goh is reviving the relationship with McLaren – and the colour scheme – that yielded the 1996 Japanese GT title with the F1 GTR (right, below). The team will run the car in the GT300 class of the Super GT Series and in Super Taikyu this year.

The team's international aspirations will manifest themselves in an attack on the Suzuka 10 Hours Intercontinental GT Challenge round in August. A full IGTC campaign will follow in 2020.

"I do have the aim to return to Le Mans somewhere down the line and we're looking at all options," said Goh, whose last motorsport programme was a one-off at the French enduro in 2009 with a Porsche RS Spyder. "We'd like to challenge for the overall win again, but we're not ruling out P2."

Goh explained that the new hypercar concept class, due to come on stream for the 2020-21 World Endurance Championship, was on his radar. "I've put a couple of guys on watching the regulations," he said. "We believe that the estimated budget is sustainable for a privateer."

A continuation of its relationship with McLaren is a "potential route", said Goh, should the organisation give the green light to its tentative plans to build a hypercar.

Goh is re-establishing his team alongside the Servus operation started by his staff after its 2004 Le Mans win. It has acted as a subcontractor for a number of Japanese entrants, including Team Mugen.

The revived Team Goh will field single-car entries in Super GT and Super Taikyu, with both cars coming together for the Suzuka 10 Hours. Seiji Ara, who won Le Mans in 2004, will drive the Super GT car along with Formula 3 graduate Alex Palou. Palou is also on the squad for Super Taikyu. Drivers for the IGTC assault haven't been confirmed, but Goh is promising some big names from the IMSA SportsCar ranks.

GARY WATKINS





Villeneuve

to race

Ferrari #27

GALLOWAY
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ITALIAN GT

Jacques Villeneuve comebacks come along about as frequently as Ferrari changes its Formula 1 team principals. But this one is different – he’s going to be representing the Prancing Horse, and driving with the #27.

The number that passed into lore with the Ferrari heroics of Villeneuve’s father Gilles will adorn the 488 GT3 that the 47-year-old Canadian will race in the Italian GT Championship. To be fair, #27 is already

synonymous in Italian GT circles with the team he will be racing for – the successful Scuderia Baldini 27.

The team of Fabio Baldini is no stranger to ambitious driver line-ups. Last year the squad ran Giancarlo Fisichella alongside Stefano Gai in its lead car, and Gai only narrowly missed out on the title (Fisichella couldn’t win it, as he missed a round). The team is hopeful of concluding a deal with Fisichella to stay on for 2019, the first year in which Italian GT has been divided Blancpain-

style into Sprint and Endurance mini-series.

Villeneuve, who started his car racing career in Italian tin-tops and then Formula 3, will race in the four-round Endurance leg of the championship, which kicks off at Monza on April 6-7. But he has already announced plans to compete in the NASCAR Euro Series this season, so will have to deal with a clash with the Italian GT Endurance finale at Mugello on October 5-6. The other races are at Misano on May 18-19 and Vallelunga on September 14-15.

Pulcini joins Vips in strong Hitech line-up



MOTORSPORT IMAGES/PORTLOCK

FORMULA 3

Leonardo Pulcini has become the second leading talent on board at Hitech GP for the inaugural FIA Formula 3 Championship.

The 20-year-old Roman (right) finished fourth in the final season of the GP3 Series, which FIA F3 replaces, and joins new Red Bull junior Juri Vips at the Silverstone-based squad. While the new F3 car is

similar to the GP3 machine, and Hitech didn’t compete in that series, Pulcini’s pace with underdog team Campos Racing means he will likely form a strong partnership with F3 European Championship star Vips.

“We have set the goal to win the championship because I am very confident in my third year, I know how the championship works,” Pulcini told Autosport. “I think with Hitech and the

possibilities they have, we’ll be at the top of the championship. Juri is a fast guy with a lot of talent. It will be nice to work together and push each other.”

Meanwhile, Campos Racing has snapped up Australian Alex Peroni, a race winner in the Formula Renault Eurocup during the past two seasons, to join Venezuelan Euro F3 graduate Sebastian Fernandez.

JACK BENYON



Berger expects 16-18 cars

FORMULA 3

DTM chief Gerhard Berger is confident of attracting 16-18 cars for Formula European Masters, the continuation series for cars from the old FIA Formula 3 European Championship.

Formel 3 Vermarktungs, the subsidiary of the DTM-promoting ITR that organised European F3 and is running FEM, has taken on long-time F3 mover-and-shaker Peter Dahlmanns in a bid to boost entries. Dahlmanns was the right-hand man of Bertram Schafer in the German F3 Cup, which ran from 2003-14.

"When we finally decided to do it [run the FEM series], we've been not positioned

to do it [try to attract teams]," explained Berger. "Before, the work was split between FIA, us and whoever. Now it's different, it's just us, and we were looking for a leading personality who knows the teams, who has the network, and who has good F3 knowledge. He was a quick fix and the right choice because he has the right experience. He's doing already a very good job."

With even the FIA F3 Championship struggling so far to fill more than half its seats, FEM has been very slow to attract drivers. "The momentum is always in February, March," said Berger (below left). "I am not so deep into it because it's up to Wally Mertes [F3V CEO] and Peter Dahlmanns, but I believe it's going to be OK. I know there are more drivers who are really in the championship [but yet to be announced]. At the moment I think 16 to 18 cars and we are filling it with drivers."

In order to help teams, FEM has delayed the start of the traditional testing restrictions until March 24, the eve of the first pre-season official test. From that point on, the traditional six 'joker' days of private running will be allowed outside the official sessions.

Meanwhile, in the rival Spanish-run Euroformula Open, three British teams have been confirmed by the organisers among a total of eight squads. As expected, Carlin continues, with Double R Racing entering, while North Wales-based ex-British F3 squad CF Racing is a surprise addition. Fortec Motorsport is leaving the series to focus on FEM, where it expects to field three cars.

MARCUS SIMMONS



IN THE HEADLINES

MERC & RED BULL DATES

Mercedes and Red Bull have firmed up the launch dates of their Formula 1 challengers for 2019 since we ran last week's update. Both teams have chosen February 13. Haas has stolen in front of the others with an ersatz launch today (Thursday), but that's only the livery, not the actual VF-19.

BRABHAM ACES BATHURST

The new Brabham BT62 supercar set the quickest time ever recorded for a closed car around the famous Mount Panorama circuit last week during the build-up to the Bathurst 12 Hour race. Luke Youlden, winner of the 2017 Bathurst 1000, recorded a 1m58.68s, and felt a high 1m56s was possible. Project chief David Brabham plans to enter the car in selected GT races this year.

BUTTON'S GT 'F1' LAP

Reigning Super GT champion Jenson Button topped the times in the series' test last week at Okayama. Remarkably, the lap he recorded in the Team Kunimitsu Honda NSX he shares with Naoki Yamamoto would have qualified him 16th for the 1995 Pacific Grand Prix, 2.7s off pole and sandwiched between the Sauber of Jean-Christophe Boullion and the Minardi of Luca Badoer.

LAND IN HOT WATER

The Land Motorsport Audi R8 LMS has lost its second position in the GTD class from the recent Daytona 24 Hours for a drive-time infringement. Ricky Feller did not meet the minimum time behind the wheel for a bronze or silver-rated driver, meaning he, Dries Vanthoor, Christopher Mies and Daniel Morad have been dumped to the back of the field. The #12 AIM Vasser Sullivan Lexus is elevated to second and the WRT Audi to third.

DALY'S YEARLY 500 RUN

IndyCar part-timer Conor Daly has landed a drive with Andretti Autosport for this year's Indy 500. It will be the sixth start in the race for ex-GP2 racer Daly, who pilots an extra car beyond Andretti's regular four-strong line-up. "I've never had the chance to be on a team with multiple 500 winners so I am beyond excited to learn from them and ready to get to work," he said.

MAINI AT LE MANS

Formula 2 graduate Arjun Maini has switched career direction and will compete this season in the Le Mans 24 Hours and European Le Mans Series. The 21-year-old Indian has joined RLR MSport to pilot its ORECA 07 in the ELMS with Bruno Senna and John Farano. RLR is promising a big-name Le Mans replacement for Senna, who will be on duty with the Rebellion LMP1 squad.



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THE IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

Most teams and drivers have less than a snowball's chance in hell of actually winning a grand prix. It's in Liberty's hands to help change that situation

EDD STRAW

It's not the winning, it's the taking part that counts. That Corinthian spirit has long since been abandoned by professional sport, and for good reason, given that simply turning up shouldn't be enough at the very top level.

But in Formula 1, it remains alive and well.

That's a good thing, right? Many pine for the days of amateur sport when winning wasn't everything, before the ruthless pursuit of success polluted the purity of the sport. That's something of an idealised past but, when it comes to the sporting side of grand prix racing, participation has become enough not just for some, but for the majority. And that's not through any lack of ambition – it's cold, hard, financial reality.

The 2019 GP cars are on the cusp of being launched, but we can already predict with confidence that the vast majority will not win a race. Based on the past two seasons, six won't even take a podium finish. Launch season is exciting for enthusiasts because of the possibilities it offers, the days when you cannot just hope, but be utterly convinced that the latest machine from your team of choice will propel your favourite driver to victory. But other than the most absurdly optimistic, it will only feel like that this year for fans of

“AS USUAL, THE INEQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF REVENUE IS AT THE HEART OF THE ISSUE”

Mercedes, Ferrari, perhaps Red Bull and, at a real push, Renault.

It's telling that a team like Renault, which is manufacturer-owned, well-resourced, populated by high-quality people and with a strong driver line-up, will have had a good season if it repeats last year's fourth place in the constructors' championship and simply cuts the gap to the front. There is a chance it could pull something remarkable out of the bag and, if one of the big three has a disaster, Renault could do better, but it's unlikely. Given the glacial rate of progress towards the front in F1, the objective for Renault is 2021 and the major rule changes.

If it's that tough for a manufacturer team, just think how hard it is for McLaren or Williams. Both have endured six seasons in the winless wilderness, but an exceptional step forward, the most miraculous new-car leap, would move them into the dust-up at the front of the midfield. A brilliant job would be rewarded with a plethora of minor top-10 finishes. Hardly stirring stuff, yet

probably better than what reality will offer.

So imagine you're Carlos Sainz Jr, George Russell, Kevin Magnussen or Sergio Perez waiting to see your new car for the first time. Twenty years ago they might have dared to hope, but for all of them the most outrageous dream is nicking a fortuitous podium, and some may even struggle to score points. They know their new steeds won't make them winners without the kind of freak result that's now vanishingly rare.

Given that every driver on the grid made their names by winning constantly in karting and the junior categories, this is incredibly difficult to get used to. With the exception of Robert Kubica, whose last victory in car racing was the 2008 Canadian GP, the driver suffering the longest drought is Sergio Perez.

Despite his knack for picking up unlikely podium finishes, Perez's last time on the top step was in GP2 on November 13 2010. Since that Abu Dhabi victory, he's started 156 races – all but one of those in F1. That's statistically the F1 career of a journeyman, but that term sells him short. Performing midfield heroics is all well and good, but racing drivers crave victories.

Nico Hulkenberg would have the longest win drought of all, but for his 2015 Le Mans 24 Hours victory. His last single-seater success was in the final feature race of the 2009 GP2 season, before his step up to Williams. A driver with a hefty haul of F1 podiums, Romain Grosjean, is in a similar boat, last winning in GP2 in 2011.

Anything unusual that happens now has to be so bizarre that it's almost impossible thanks to the chasm between the big teams and the rest. Their pace is so good that the impact of random factors can be weathered, while reliability is so strong that you no longer see races where several teams fail to get both cars to the finish.

And it's not just drivers. Teams ostensibly exist to win, yet many rarely do. Haas, a three-year-old operation that has done a remarkable job in grand prix racing, has nonetheless not got anywhere near winning a race. What is currently called Racing Point (formerly Force India, Spyker, Midland and Jordan) hasn't won for 16 years. The newly renamed Alfa Romeo Racing team, as Sauber, hasn't won since 2008. It's a slightly longer drought than Toro Rosso, which won that year's Italian GP.

F1 is not the only sport with this kind of problem but, while it's easy to describe, it's not easy to solve. As is usually the case in F1, the inequitable distribution of revenue is at the heart of the issue. Whether that will ever really change is up to Liberty Media.

But what really matters is that teams and drivers must have a chance to do what should define them – win. Doing that in F1 has always been difficult, and it should always be that way. But there's a difference between that and impossibility. There needs to be more hope in F1 for teams, drivers and fans. That would only be a good thing for grand prix racing as a whole. ✎



WILL THE BRIT GP BE LOST?

Silverstone and Liberty Media are engaged in a game of brinksmanship, and the future of the British Grand Prix depends on the outcome

ADAM COOPER

After all the posturing by Bernie Ecclestone in his battles with the British Racing Drivers' Club down the decades, will the British Grand Prix finally be lost from the Formula 1 calendar on Liberty Media's watch? Nobody wants that to happen, but it remains a possible scenario.

This will be a critical year for F1's management as it engages in battles on several fronts. And all this with the clock counting down to 2021 and a new era for the sport.

Along with the painful progress towards a new Concorde Agreement, the calendar is the biggest challenge that Chase Carey and his colleagues face. By a coincidence of timing the contracts of several significant races expire around the same time, including Silverstone, Monza, Barcelona, Mexico City and Hockenheim – and none has been renewed thus far.

Liberty has always said that it wants to protect the classic European events because of their importance to F1 as a brand. We will learn this year whether it can fulfil that promise.

F1's bosses also have to secure the delayed Miami GP for 2020 or 2021, or risk losing a lot of credibility, having made such a big public commitment to making the Florida street race happen.

“THE TANTALISING PROSPECT OF AN ALTERNATIVE VENUE IN LONDON REMAINS IN LIMBO”

And that commitment has been costly. By basing Miami on a unique risk-sharing arrangement, without the traditional high upfront sanction fee, Liberty set an unfortunate precedent. Naturally other promoters, each paying tens of millions of dollars for the privilege of hosting a race, wanted to know what was so special about Miami – and why couldn't they get a similar deal?

In public they were coy about expressing an opinion, in private less so. Then, last week came the bombshell statement from the hitherto low-profile Formula One Promoters' Association, which included an unsubtle reference to Miami: “New races should not be introduced to the detriment of existing events although the association is encouraged by the alternative business models being offered to prospective venues.”

FOPA's chairman is Silverstone boss Stuart Pringle. As a private entity, his venue receives no public subsidies, and is competing in a market where pretty much everybody else does to some degree,

even if in some cases it's a relatively modest amount of local government support. Even circuits arguably closest to Silverstone's business model, such as Suzuka and Hockenheim, receive strong backing from Honda and Mercedes respectively, while Circuit of The Americas – a privately owned venue – is in the enviable position of having its sanction fee paid by Texas state funding.

Realising that the sums wouldn't add up in the long term, as the escalator clause built into its contract inflated the sanctioning fee, Silverstone triggered a break clause last July. This cancelled the 2020-24 part of its contract and – in theory – opened the way for fresh negotiations with Liberty.

“Of course we're going to have commercial differences,” Pringle noted a few months after that bold decision. “He wants more money, we want to pay less money. I have total empathy with their requirement to deliver value for their shareholders, but I'm under pressure to deliver financial returns as well. He needs to understand us, and we absolutely need to understand him.”

But no deal has been concluded – and Liberty's deadline for publishing the 2020 schedule suddenly doesn't seem far away.

The Miami deal has changed the landscape. Until now Pringle has been diplomatic, understandably not wanting to jeopardise any delicate negotiations with Liberty. The fact that he was the spokesman for last week's FOPA statement was a clear indication that frustration is setting in. It looked like a last roll of the dice by an organisation that has tried every other tactic.

“You can't blame Silverstone,” says Ecclestone. “Because they obviously tried to do things in a much more peaceful way to get a deal. That's obviously what they tried to do. It didn't succeed.”

Pringle went from the Liberty discussions to a board meeting of the BRDC, which owns Silverstone. One thing is clear – the numbers have to make commercial sense for the circuit.

“We are 100% sanguine that one of the outcomes of our action is that maybe there is no British GP,” he noted of the break clause in 2017. “And there is nobody who will be more disappointed than me.”

“But if that is the outcome, I will also sleep extremely soundly. Because I know that what we have done is the right thing for Silverstone, and the right thing for the BRDC. It's not going to help anybody if we go bust.”

The tantalising prospect of an alternative venue in or around central London remains in limbo, and Ecclestone – who tried hard to make that happen – is adamant that it would be impossible. The former F1 supremo is watching events with some interest.

“I think they've been dealing with each other so they know what they want,” says Bernie. “If our friends at Silverstone are prepared to say we'll go along with what Chase wants to give them, or Chase wants to give them what they're talking about – I have no idea. People negotiate in very funny ways these days...” ❄️

YOUR SAY

When will common sense ever prevail in the world of motorsport? When it comes to creating new championships, all common sense seems to go AWOL

MICHAEL SKEET

Waiting for an outbreak of common sense

When will common sense ever prevail in the world of motorsport? The fact that you have to even ask this question in an industry full of seemingly highly intelligent people seems rather ridiculous. But when it comes to creating new championships all common sense seems to go AWOL.

Last week's Club Autosport Opinion and the story about Peter Auto plotting to rival the Masters Endurance Legends championship point to the heart of what is wrong with motorsport in general – too many championships for the same types of cars.

Historic motorsport seems to be getting more and more popular as the years pass, both for drivers and spectators, and the introduction of more up to date cars into the historic scene is a great way to grow this branch of motorsport.

To then have two championships vying for the same type of cars smacks of utter stupidity, and it's the fans who miss out with thin grids to watch.

Creating new types of championship should always be welcome to keep things fresh, but please make sure it is for cars that either do not have a home already, or for new types of cars that are completely different to what is already out there.

Common sense – I won't hold my breath.

Michael Skeet

Lordswood, Southampton

Schumacher debate rumbles on

Yes, I agree with you Joe (Padgett) that Michael Schumacher moved many facets of motorsport onwards – particularly fitness levels (Letters, January 31). However, many drivers have built teams around themselves, and he found a Ferrari team desperate to win again and willing to be moulded, but, yes, it was a huge achievement.

There are several reasons for his unsuccessful swansong at Mercedes – they were still to find their competitive edge, he didn't have his bespoke Bridgestone tyres and Mercedes was not playing the 'number one' driver game; he looked ordinary.



But please read what I said – it was his driving 'antics' and team orders that rankle. Also, I never intimated Lewis Hamilton was blameless, but the fact that you have to go back seven years in order to find criticism I rather think proves my point.

All the best and hoping for a cracking championship, whosoever wins.

Derrick Holden

By email

Memories of Kyalami 1974

Your picture (From the archive, January 31) brought back some fantastic memories of Kyalami and a time when access to the pits was unrestricted. I remember this driver briefing well, as my father took an almost identical photo. It's now displayed at home among all my F1 memorabilia, and at a personal level captures me as a 14-year-old standing among the legends at Ronnie Peterson's left shoulder.

Donald Shaw


By email

We appreciate the excuse to run a picture from that same event: Dave Charlton's Lucky Strike-liveried McLaren M23, nicely sideways – ed

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INSIGHT

BIG QUESTIONS OF F1 2019 • AUTOSPORT'S BEST OF THE DECADE • F1'S LOST CHAMPION

F1
2019

THE BIG QUESTIONS OF 2019

Will there be more overtaking? How will Red Bull get on with Honda? And what about the rookies?

Can Ferrari find more ways to mess up?

The Sky pundit gives his verdict

KARUN CHANDHOK

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES



MAUGER

WHAT IMPACT WILL THE NEW AERO REGULATIONS HAVE?

It has become increasingly clear that one of the biggest changes everyone wants to see from Formula 1 is for cars that can follow each other and race more closely.

As time has passed, the whole tone about the rule changes seems to have gone from 'it's going to make a significant improvement to overtaking' to be more about 'well, it may not make much of a difference but if we didn't do it, then things would be worse next year'. While I understand that logic, it still begs the question of why it's being rushed through at a significant cost to the teams when there's a major rule change coming in 2021 anyway. Red Bull's Helmut Marko, for example, has talked about a €15million increase in the budget as a result of the new rules. The positive

impact on overtaking seems quite small when compared to the cost.

Rather than being on the front foot and talking about how great the racing is going to be, Liberty and the FIA now seem to be on the defensive with these changes, talking about how it gives them direction for what to do in 2021, when we can expect some bigger changes. I hope that comes true and we do get some radical changes in two years' time.

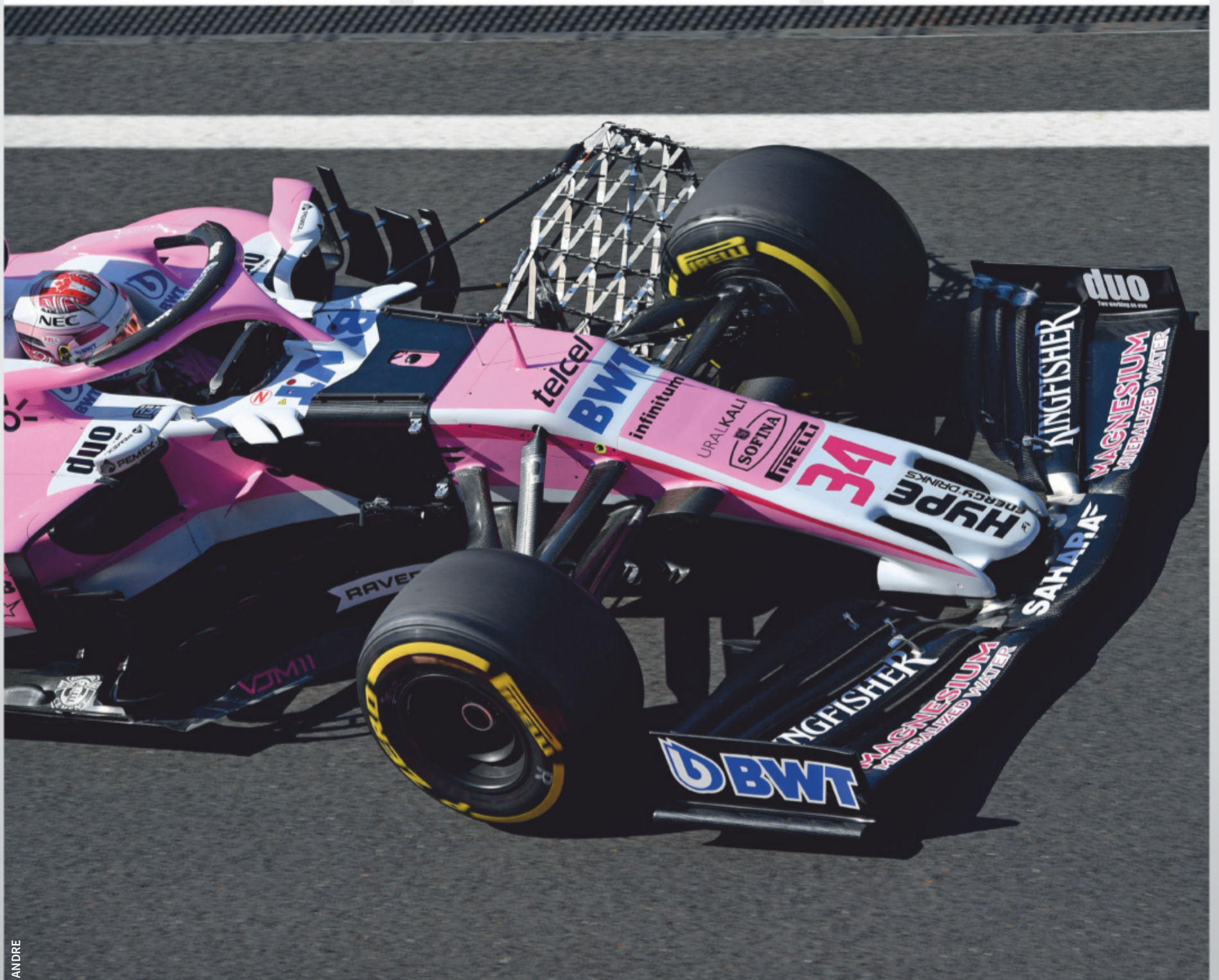
I was never a fan of the 2017 rules. They seemed to be pushed into place because some quarters were saying that F1 had become too slow. Yes, the race pace in particular was (and still is) pretty slow, with drivers trundling

“RATHER THAN TALKING ABOUT HOW GREAT THE RACING IS GOING TO BE, LIBERTY AND THE FIA NOW SEEM TO BE ON THE DEFENSIVE WITH THESE CHANGES”

around to a target pace, miles off their full potential and fearing degradation from the tyres. But this issue has come up because of the tyres – adding aero is just masking the issue.

More downforce and bigger tyres for 2017 meant that the lap times became significantly faster over one lap, but in reality the race pace really didn't improve as much, and the ability to follow other cars and overtake became much worse. Now, following someone in a third-gear corner became a pain – never mind a high-speed corner.

To quantify it, the average difference between pole position and the fastest lap of the winning driver (and therefore someone on a normal strategy, not chasing their fastest lap bonus money) in the last year of the Bridgestone tyres in 2010 was 3.06 seconds. In 2016, before the rule changes, it shot up to 5.2s, and in 2018 it was still 4.7s. So we didn't really have a huge gain in race pace and the effect on racing was a big negative with the faster cars.



WHICH DRIVERS ARE UNDER THE MOST PRESSURE THIS SEASON?

I would say that Sebastian Vettel and Valtteri Bottas are the two drivers heading into 2019 under the most pressure.

Vettel's second half of the 2018 season really did a disservice to a driver of his calibre. He's a seriously talented four-time world champion who has had a wobbly period, a bit like 2014. He looked like a man who really needed to mentally take a break before coming back in 2019.

The Ferrari man is fully capable of bouncing back, of course, but I do think that he will benefit from stronger management – like he had at Red Bull with his engineer Guillaume Rocquelin, along with Helmut Marko and Christian Horner. He's no longer the golden child at Ferrari who arrived in 2015 to drag them back to world championship success, but he should have the tools to redeem himself after last year. A confident young Monegasque in the other car may create a new problem, but more on that later.

For Bottas, it's a much bigger challenge I think. At Mercedes he's up against the best driver of his generation, who seems to be getting mentally stronger with every year that goes by. It must

“VETTEL IS NO LONGER THE GOLDEN CHILD AT FERRARI, BUT HE SHOULD HAVE THE TOOLS TO REDEEM HIMSELF”



DUNBAR

hurt when every time he thinks, 'Lewis is off getting distracted on a fashion ramp somewhere while I'm pounding the streets of Monaco training for the next race,' he then gets outqualified at the next race.

Throw in the bad luck he had in 2018 and you really have to feel for Bottas. He should have won three races last year (arguably Bahrain too) and actually would have been ahead of Hamilton in the championship early on in the season if he'd had the rub of the green. But in the end, looking at a table where your team-mate has won 11 times and the world title, while you're fifth in the points, can't be much fun.

The Esteban Ocon factor is going to be hard for Valtteri too. As a reserve, Ocon will be very quick to keep pointing out why he deserves that top Mercedes seat for 2020.

Bottas needs to hit the ground running in Melbourne and show that he can be the 'alternative winner' to Lewis on a day when the five-time champion ace has an issue. Mercedes doesn't need him to be a rival to Hamilton in a way that Nico Rosberg was, but equally it does need someone who will be there right behind his team leader.



CAN FERRARI FINALLY BEAT MERCEDES?

There's no doubt that Ferrari had a car that was fast enough to win the world championship last year. Several driving errors and some mismanagement from the team cost Sebastian Vettel the title. Not getting Kimi Raikkonen to play the proper team game at Hockenheim or Monza was silly. Sacking Kimi on race day morning at Monza, when he could have helped Seb, was just bizarre.

As Vettel fell further and further away in the points and the car updates didn't deliver, the more desperate the overtaking lunges became and, in the end, the whole challenge unravelled. Frankly, you could even make a good argument



HONE

for Ferrari having a car fast enough to win the title in 2017 if you only add the points lost in Singapore, Malaysia and Japan that year.

What's going to be interesting now is to see how they restructure with the well-respected Mattia Binotto in charge. Unquestionably, as a technical leader Binotto has done a good job to drag Ferrari from the mediocrity of 2014 into a team that has been a genuine championship contender now for the past two years.

But being the technical boss of a team is a 24/7 job, and being team principal is also a 24/7 job. With only 24 hours in a day, he will have to give up some of his technical responsibilities and therefore put in the right people to keep the momentum going.

There aren't really very many



technical leaders of teams in F1. A quick scan of the dominant eras in the past 40 years tells you that the team principals are often fighting the political and commercial battles, but with a good technical mind as their partner in crime. Think of Frank Williams and Patrick Head, Ron Dennis and John Barnard, Jean Todt and Ross Brawn, Christian Horner and Adrian Newey, or Toto Wolff and Paddy Lowe or James Allison.

With a huge budget, great facilities, a fast car and good drivers, Ferrari is beginning to risk getting the reputation as being F1's underachiever, having not won a drivers' world championship now in 11 years (2007, above). F1 needs Ferrari to be winning and I hope that it can once again produce a car capable of taking the fight to Mercedes, so we get a great battle.

COULD RED BULL-HONDA CHALLENGE THE TOP TWO?

This, for me, is the biggest and most important question for 2019. On the odd occasion last year where the power sensitivity was low, Red Bull showed that it had lost none of its ability to produce a quick car. I would even argue that Max Verstappen's win in Mexico was one of the most dominant drives of the season.

For everyone watching, having three teams in the fight for the world championship is exactly what we want. When it's only two, they just tend to cover each other off in terms of strategy and, on the occasional weekend where one has a weakness, the other one romps off into the distance. Think back to Brazil, where we genuinely had all the top six

**"RED BULL SHOWED
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contenders battling it out and it was brilliant.

Speaking privately to people at Red Bull and Honda, they're very optimistic. Toro Rosso will have a closer alliance to the big team now, and to have four cars running collaboratively will be of huge benefit to Honda. As far back as Sochi last September, I was told that in their early simulation work together they had already found more beneficial ways of using the ERS deployment and recovery than the strategies that were put in place during the McLaren-Honda era just gone.

Despite a less competitive package, Max outscored both Ferrari drivers in the second half of the season and started to discover a level of maturity that he needs to be a team leader. He comprehensively outperformed Daniel Ricciardo from Canada onwards, and races like Singapore and Mexico underlined that he is going to be a title contender if the car is capable of it. Red Bull showed in races like the Chinese GP that it is still operationally very sharp and strategically excellent, so if Honda can carry on the steps forward that we saw with the 'Version 3' engine, then it could be game on for RBR.



WILL McLAREN SINK OR SWIM WITHOUT ALONSO?

When you look at the qualifying averages across last season, McLaren had the ninth fastest car, yet finished sixth in the world championship. The mercurial Fernando Alonso was as brilliant as always, with a 21-0 clean sweep over Stoffel Vandoorne in qualifying and scoring more than four times the number of points that Vandoorne did. So unquestionably the team will miss having him as the reference.

I'll admit to being a bit biased towards Carlos Sainz because I think that he's a very good driver who was unfortunate with his timing not to get the Red Bull graduation he deserved. But he goes to McLaren as a very young team leader who hasn't yet scored an F1 podium, alongside Lando Norris – another very good talent without a proven F1 record. Having two hungry and motivated drivers is good for the team; not having continuity and a reference isn't.

McLaren of course is one of F1's great teams and, much like Ferrari and Williams, I think it's good for the sport for the squad to be at the sharp end. There was very little sympathy for its struggles last year, largely because McLaren

seemed to lack humility in the tough Honda years, often claiming to have one of the best chassis on the grid.

Using the same power units as the works Renault and Red Bull teams left McLaren with nowhere to hide, but I was pleasantly surprised to see that the humility had kicked in, and that Jonathan Neale and Zak Brown were prepared to put their hands up and admit that the team hadn't done a good enough job with the car. Throw in some very odd tyre choices at a couple of the late-season races and the whole season seemed messy.

McLaren shifted its focus early to 2019 and has also been proactive to try to restructure behind the scenes. Tim Goss left after 28 years with the team, as well as Matt Morris, with former McLaren and Ferrari man Pat Fry making a return, along with James Key who has yet to actually arrive. The team has recently recruited Andreas Seidl from Porsche, and he comes with a very good reputation.

The problem with modern F1 is that with the lead times involved in designing a car, effecting change isn't something that happens instantaneously. McLaren will be looking to rebuild and re-establish itself in the midfield with regular Q3 appearances, and finishing at least as an equal to the works Renault squad.



**"HAVING TWO HUNGRY
AND MOTIVATED DRIVERS
IS GOOD FOR THE TEAM;
NOT HAVING CONTINUITY
AND A REFERENCE ISN'T"**

S BLOXHAM



PORTLOCK



MAUGER



SUTTON

WILL LECLERC REPAY FERRARI'S FAITH IN HIM?

Charles Leclerc is absolutely the real deal. I first met him when he was racing in Formula 3, and already he had this air of someone who knew that they were good but without a hint of arrogance. I do hope that Ferrari allows him to continue being that open, friendly, down-to-earth person rather than turning him into a prima donna.

I was very impressed with how he turned his season around after a shaky start. It takes a lot of mental strength for a young rookie to deal with three disappointing races at the start of their F1 career and turn it around into a brilliant run of qualifying and races to establish themselves as one of the stars of the future.

Until Kimi Raikkonen's retirement in Abu Dhabi, it looked like Sebastian Vettel was going to be outscored by the Sauber-bound Finn in the second half of the season. That probably led

to Ferrari believing that it needed to get Leclerc in there as an understudy, so he can be groomed to be the team leader in the near future. He's already very well-liked and respected by the Maranello squad and is very much a part of the furniture there.

I do believe that he's going to be a real thorn in Vettel's side. When Red Bull recruited a young hotshot in 2014 (Daniel Ricciardo) it didn't work out well for Sebastian, and watching how their dynamic plays out will be fascinating.



WHICH ROOKIE WILL MAKE THE BIGGEST IMPRESSION?

I really rate all four of the rookies coming in this year. All of them have done a very good job in the junior formulas and deserve their place on the grid. I don't personally know Lando Norris and Antonio Giovinazzi very well, but both George Russell and Alex Albon are very level-headed guys who have their feet firmly planted on the ground.

Their objectives and the impressions they want to leave are all a bit different I think. George is trying to put himself on the

"MICK SCHUMACHER BEING SIGNED TO THE FERRARI PROGRAMME WILL CERTAINLY RAMP UP THE PRESSURE ON GIOVINAZZI"

Mercedes map and leapfrog Esteban Ocon in the queue; Alex is trying to establish himself as a driver who genuinely deserves an F1 seat and isn't there only because Red Bull had nobody else; Lando seems to be committed to McLaren for the long term and therefore he's there to learn and help the team rebuild; while Giovinazzi wants to make himself the first reserve for the day when Sebastian Vettel finally leaves Ferrari. Mick Schumacher being signed to the Ferrari driver programme will certainly ramp up the pressure on the Italian.

Rookies in F1 will always be judged against their team-mates. For George and Alex, that judgement will be slightly tricky to make because they're up against drivers (Robert Kubica and Daniil Kvyat) who are returning after a sabbatical and are therefore slight unknowns themselves. For Lando and Antonio, they will have very good references with Carlos Sainz and Kimi Raikkonen, and therefore we should be able to see just how good they are.

CAN RICCIARDO AND RENAULT SPRING A SURPRISE?

It depends on what you consider a surprise, I guess! I think it would be a tall order for Daniel Ricciardo and Renault to beat Red Bull this year, unless Honda takes a step backwards. On average last season, Red Bull was 0.65% off pole position, while Renault was 2.05% away, which is a not-insignificant margin.

As the relationship between Red Bull and Renault fell apart, both Christian Horner and Helmut Marko took pleasure in pointing out that Max Verstappen lapped the Renaults twice in Mexico, publicly highlighting what the gap was between the teams. I have no doubt that this point was tossed in Daniel's direction in a half-joking way!

If Renault can halve the deficit

"THIS YEAR'S CAR SHOULD START TO SHOW THE RESULTS OF THE EXPANDED FACTORY ON THE CHASSIS SIDE"

to Red Bull and move clear of the other midfield teams to be a firm fourth best, and sneak in a couple of podiums, then that would be a good step forward, I think. At the end of the day, it's a manufacturer team and therefore should be ahead of the independents or 'B teams'. Renault has been on a big recruitment drive through 2016 and 2017, and this year's car should start to show the results of that expanded factory on the chassis side.

On the power unit front, it's become very complicated to make exact numerical comparisons like in the old days, because you now have the internal combustion engine and the electric power to consider, but the gossip among paddock sages was that the Renault was overtaken by the 'Version 3' Honda introduced in Japan. Red Bull would be the only team able to answer that question with the data from Toro Rosso and the big team, but obviously it's going to be a bit biased!

If Renault is going to become a championship contender again, then it needs to make massive strides forward both with the chassis and power unit. It's nice to see a driver take a risk with his career and spice up the driver market, which is what Daniel has done. Now the team has to reward his risk-taking with some good steps forward.

COULD THE CHASM BETWEEN THE BIG TEAMS AND THE MIDFIELD GET SMALLER?

Rule changes do offer an opportunity to mix things up, but they also mean that the big teams can throw more resources at it and move ahead. The 2017 rule changes certainly created a very clear gap between the top three and the rest and, while the 2019 changes are smaller, they still won't help that problem.

I guess the only one who could and should close the gap to the top three is potentially Renault for all the reasons mentioned on the left.

The only way this gap is going to really get smaller is if the technical rules are simplified so that, for



"THE ONLY WAY THIS GAP IS GOING TO REALLY GET SMALLER IS IF THE TECHNICAL RULES ARE SIMPLIFIED"

HONE

example, the difference between spending €80million or €10m on aero is a few tenths rather than a few seconds. Yes, that will stem the creativity of people like Adrian Newey and could cost jobs, but eventually it will become a self-policing budget cap because even



SUTTON



GALLOWAY



the richest teams will one day say, 'Why are we spending all this money for not much gain in performance?' That may then encourage new teams into F1, and therefore a place for people from the existing teams whose jobs are sacrificed there.

WILL KUBICA SHOW WILLIAMS WAS RIGHT?

I would dearly love for Robert Kubica to come back with a bang. To say he was nearly killed in that rally crash is not an exaggeration, and to see him back racing in F1 is a brilliant human story.

In his first F1 career Robert was unquestionably one of the brightest talents around in an era of very bright talents. He pushes the team very hard with some brutally honest truths, which can sometimes be uncomfortable, but it's motivated by a feeling of wanting to be constructively critical. Williams and George Russell will benefit from his experience and hard work.

In terms of his speed and ability in the cockpit, only he

can truly answer whether his physical limitations are costing him performance and if so, how much. It's true that at the tests at the end of 2017, he wasn't able to unlock the one-lap peak performance that he wanted to, but a year later he's had a bit more mileage in the car as well as plenty of simulator time, so should be more prepared.

Robert wants to be judged as a racing driver, the same as the other 19 on the grid, and not as someone with physical limitations. Ultimately, the stopwatch never lies, and when we get to qualifying in Melbourne we'll know just where he sits.

"HE PUSHES THE TEAM VERY HARD WITH SOME BRUTALLY HONEST TRUTHS, WHICH CAN SOMETIMES BE UNCOMFORTABLE"



MAUGER



AUTOSPORT'S TOP F1 DRIVERS OF THE DECADE

We've now been running our Formula 1 driver ratings for 10 years. Time for a bit of statistical analysis to see how the scores stack up...

KEVIN TURNER

Additional stats compilation by Graham Keilloh and Elliot Wood

PHOTOGRAPHY



Rating the performances of Formula 1 drivers is one of the most entertaining – and controversial – topics for fans and journalists.

Weighing up how well a driver has done given their circumstances, machinery and experience is a complicated task and there is always scope for disagreement. The readers' 2018 poll agreed with Autosport's driver rater Edd Straw that Lewis Hamilton was the top performer of the season, but after that there were some key discrepancies.

Although Autosport sporadically did driver ratings before, it has only consistently done so since 2009. That means we now have 10 full seasons of data, so now is the time to see which drivers our numbers say have performed best over the past decade.

F1'S LEADING LIGHTS

Data is more reliable when there is more of it. There are 15 drivers who have contested five or more seasons during those 10 years, so can be compared fairly. For a season to be included, the driver must have started at least half the races.

The table below shows the average annual ratings of those 15 drivers, along with the number of 10/10s each was awarded. The final column indicates the average number of 10/10s they scored each season. >>

AVERAGE ANNUAL RATINGS

DRIVER	AVERAGE SCORE	10/10s	10/10s PER YEAR
Lewis Hamilton	8.18	39	3.90
Fernando Alonso	8.05	24	2.40
Sebastian Vettel	7.97	31	3.10
Daniel Ricciardo	7.49	12	1.50
Nico Rosberg	7.48	12	1.50
Jenson Button	7.36	10	1.25
Valtteri Bottas	7.36	3	0.50
Nico Hulkenberg	7.34	10	1.25
Mark Webber	7.18	7	1.40
Sergio Perez	7.04	5	0.63
Kimi Raikkonen	6.95	2	0.25
Romain Grosjean	6.86	7	1.00
Felipe Massa	6.71	3	0.33
Adrian Sutil	6.46	2	0.40
Marcus Ericsson	6.44	0	0

DRIVERS OF THE DECADE

Unsurprisingly, multiple champions Hamilton, Fernando Alonso and Sebastian Vettel top the list, with a significant gap to the rest. It's worth noting that neither of Alonso's titles is covered by our period, indicating the high level that the Spaniard maintained subsequently despite worsening machinery.

Hamilton and Alonso were on almost identical scores until the start of 2017. While Alonso's scores remained reasonably high, Hamilton's fine performances in the face of an improving Ferrari/Vettel challenge have lifted him clear.

Five drivers have topped the seasonal average during the decade. Hamilton has done so six times, sharing 2017 honours with Max Verstappen (see below). Vettel has been the top scorer twice (2011 and 2013), while Jenson Button (2009) and Alonso (2012) took single successes.

The single highest averages scored across a season are 8.79 (Vettel in 2011 and Hamilton 2014) and 8.76 (Hamilton 2018). Vettel and Alonso share the record for the most 10/10s scored in a single season – seven.

Daniel Ricciardo is the top non-champion, with stats very similar to Nico Rosberg's. The 2016 champion's under-pressure replacement at Mercedes, Valtteri Bottas, has figures very close to one-time title winner Button, though his peaks so far have been lower.

Many have long argued that Nico Hulkenberg is worthy of a top seat in F1 and the average ratings support that view. He is comfortably the top non-winner, sits eighth overall and is surely capable of more than just the unofficial 'Class B' crown he won in 2018. His problem, apart from taking on Ricciardo at Renault in 2019, could be the scores of some of F1's newcomers (see right).

Kimi Raikkonen fans will be disappointed by the Finn's position, but the 6.95 average reflects his broadly underwhelming performances since his F1 return in 2012, particularly at Ferrari. Had Autosport's ratings existed throughout his pomp in the early seasons of the millennium, his average would surely

improve, probably rising to the mid to high-7s.

Felipe Massa's score similarly misses the Brazilian's best years. It is surely not a coincidence that his highest average comes from his half-season in 2009, prior to his serious accident in qualifying at the Hungaroring.

Romain Grosjean's figures also support the general view of the Haas driver. His average is relatively poor, but he has more peaks (seven 10/10s) than those around him in the list. When the Frenchman is on it, he's on it, but he needs fewer bad days.

THE 'NEWCOMERS'

Looking at the drivers who will be on the grid in 2019 but have completed fewer than five seasons so far is also illuminating, though the top performer is not a surprise. For comparison purposes, the outgoing Esteban Ocon and Stoffel Vandoorne are included at the bottom of the list.

AVERAGE ANNUAL RATINGS

DRIVER	AVERAGE SCORE	10/10s	10/10s PER YEAR
Max Verstappen	8.02	13	3.25
Charles Leclerc	7.86	2	2.00
Pierre Gasly	7.67	2	2.00
Carlos Sainz	7.37	3	0.75
Robert Kubica	7.08	6	3.00
Kevin Magnussen	6.99	3	0.75
Daniil Kvyat	6.73	0	0
Lance Stroll	6.24	0	0
Esteban Ocon	7.58	1	1.00
Stoffel Vandoorne	6.56	2	1.00

Verstappen and Leclerc already have scores that put them near the top





Kubica was a star performer during 2010

Despite his poor start to 2018, Verstappen's numbers are clearly in the realms of F1's elite. His average would put him third on the main list, just behind Alonso and ahead of Vettel. If he can smooth off his rough edges, he could challenge Hamilton's tally.

Although we only have one season to go in each case, Ferrari's new signing Charles Leclerc and Verstappen's 2019 Red Bull team-mate Pierre Gasly averaged scores in their rookie campaigns that indicate both deserve shots in top cars. It seems that, by and large, the right drivers end up in the right seats.

Ocon fans might take exception to that, given he is out of a race drive in 2019, but everyone's expectation is that we will see him back soon. His 7.58 average puts him firmly in the Rosberg/Ricciardo zone, so that makes sense.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Robert Kubica's score is above that of fellow returnee Daniil Kvyat. The Pole's figure is boosted by his superb 8.11 average in his final pre-rally-accident campaign in 2010.

BOTTOM OF THE POPS

Apart from the mediocre averages of Adrian Sutil and Marcus Ericsson in the main table, a couple of other drivers come out badly from the decade of scoring.

The worst season average for a driver who completed an entire campaign was Kazuki Nakajima, who scored just 4.8 across 2009. Having racked up nine points in his rookie F1 season the year before, Nakajima failed to get into the top eight (for which points were then awarded) in a Williams that Rosberg used to finish seventh in the drivers' table with 34.5 points.

But the lowest individual scores belong to Luca Badoer for his two Ferrari outings in 2009 following Massa's accident. He scored 0.5 in the European GP in Valencia, where he was 1.5 seconds off the back of the field in Q1 and finished 17th, more than a lap behind team-mate Raikkonen.

He doubled his score next time out at the Belgian GP, in which he was 14th and last having started at the back – in a race won by Raikkonen. Even taking into account the tricky nature of the F60 and lack of running, Badoer's two outings were woeful and nowhere near the level he would have been at during the main part of his career from 1993 to 1999.



Badoer recorded the lowest score so far in 2009

"THE FIGURES BROADLY SHOW THAT THE BEST DRIVERS NORMALLY END UP IN THE TOP CARS"

STATS LIMITATIONS

Of course, no method of comparing drivers can be definitive and our ratings have their limitations. Firstly, it is worth pointing out that the ratings from each grand prix are awarded by a single journalist present. Edd Straw (2009-14 and 2017 to date) and Ben Anderson (2015-16) have performed that role over the past decade.

Secondly, some drivers on the list, most notably Raikkonen and Massa, suffer from not having the best period of their careers covered. Would Alonso creep back ahead of Hamilton if the ratings for the period before 2009 were retrospectively created?

Finally, due to deadline pressures, occasionally more information comes to light after the ratings have been published that would affect a driver's score, such as hidden car damage. This also helps to explain why Autosport's Top 10 F1 drivers at the end of each year is not necessarily the same as the top 10 in the average ratings.

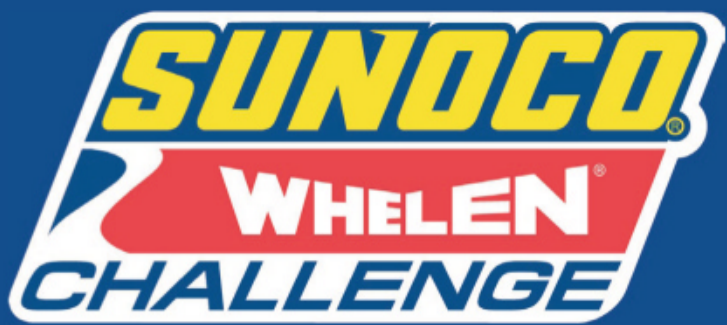
Nevertheless, the aim is always to score the drivers objectively, using information and insights gleaned from teams and the drivers themselves. The results from the past decade tally with the wider perception and other statistics, such as titles won. It's hard to argue that Hamilton, Alonso and Vettel have not been the top performers, or that Verstappen and Leclerc aren't the drivers most likely to join them.

While the figures do broadly show that the best drivers normally end up in the top cars, at least for parts of their careers, they also highlight the exceptions. Hulkenberg's status as the best non-winner – after 156 GP starts – is probably the clearest example.

The interesting thing now will be to see if Vettel can raise his game to challenge Hamilton for the title and move back towards him in our ratings in 2019. And just how high Verstappen and Leclerc can climb in the coming seasons. ✨



Who will top Straw's ratings this season?



Lundqvist and Rei as Challenge cele

"It's an incredible journey and to be able to stand here at 19 and say I've done my first Rolex 24 At Daytona is pretty amazing."

Linus Lundqvist, Sunoco Whelen Challenge Winner
Number 47 Precision Performance Motorsport Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO

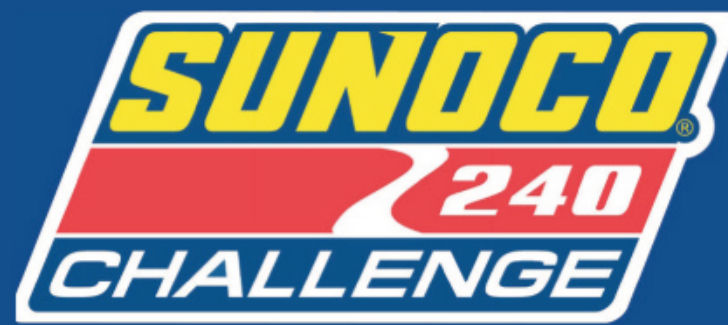


Congratulations to 2012 Sunoco Whelen Challenge winner Felipe Nasr and the Number 31 Whelen Cadillac DPi on another Rolex 24 podium.

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**“It’s an amazing experience,
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the grand children about.”**

Kyle Reid, Sunoco 240 Challenge Winner
Number 26 Fast Track Racing BMW M4 GT4



F1'S FORGOTTEN LOST CHAMPION

He was arguably the best driver in the world, but Jean-Pierre Wimille died just a year before the world championship was held for the first time

PAUL FEARNLEY

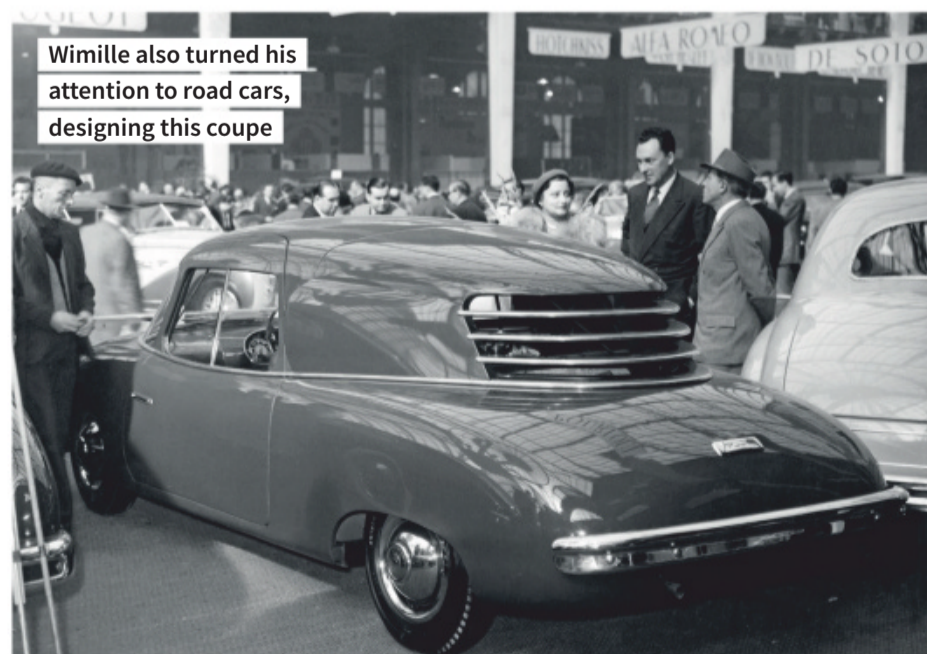
PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES

Paris sophisticate Jean-Pierre Wimille was the man and driver whom Juan Manuel Fangio from backwater Balcarce aspired to be: graceful within the cockpit, gracious without. Separated by three years and an ocean of experience, they were Gordini team-mates briefly during Argentina's Formule Libre Temporada series of 1948 when the Frenchman dispensed a harsh lesson before singing the defeated local man's praises as a future ace. Fangio in turn treasured a photograph of them together, grinning, united in speed.

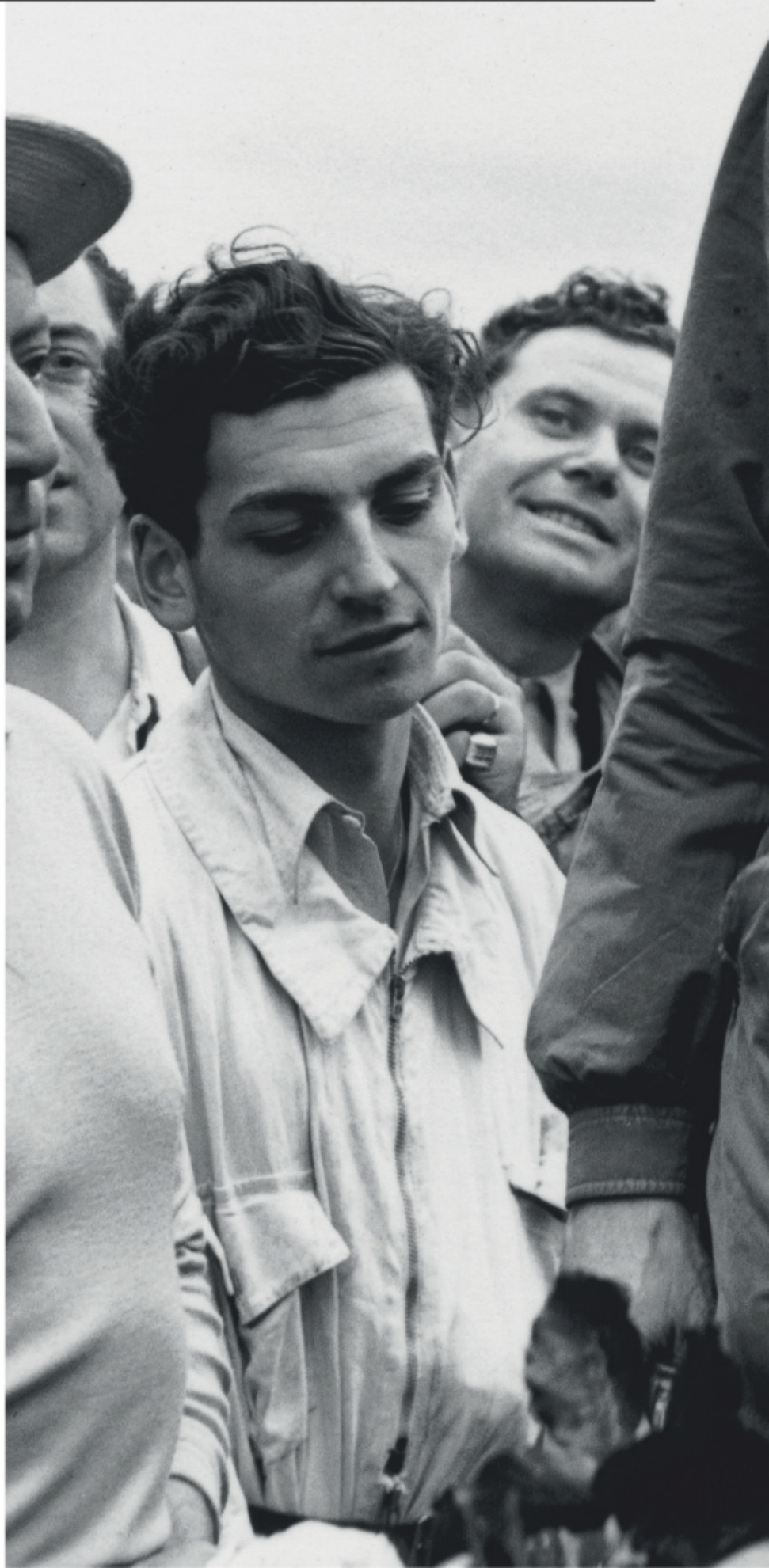
Wimille was embarking on the season that would cement his place as the world's best driver – an accolade not then accorded official status. As the only non-Italian at Alfa Corse – and a *Resistance* man at that – he won two of the Big Three *Grandes Epreuves* of 1948 in France and Italy, and only missed out on the Swiss by 0.2 seconds, taking pole and fastest lap for all three. He also won upon Monza's reopening.

Having competed assiduously to compensate for time and friends lost to the Second World War, it seemed he might now throttle back. For not only was Alfa Romeo planning a sabbatical by way of preparation for the inaugural World Drivers' Championship of 1950, but also he had in February 1948 signed a deal with Ford of France to produce his futuristic road car: a mid-engined, aerodynamic three-seat coupe with central driving position and independent suspension.

This polymath son of an aviation/motoring journalist was steeped in fast cars – “I adore the song of an engine” – and did not lack for ambition, an attribute that would lead to accusations of aloofness (Fangio reckoned him quiet and self-effacing). National Service during the Rif War against the Berber tribes of mountainous North Africa had toughened him and sharpened his driving skills and thus Wimille >>



Wimille also turned his attention to road cars, designing this coupe



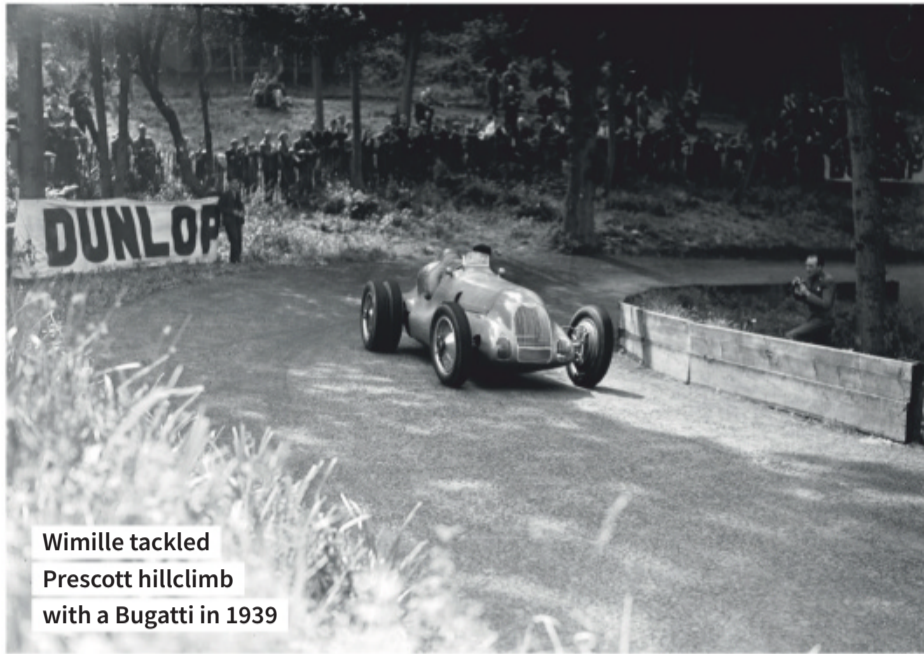


THE CHAMPIONS WHO NEVER WERE

Four full seasons of racing for (mainly) single-seaters were completed between the cessation of the Second World War and the inauguration of a World Drivers' Championship.

These became increasingly comprehensive and regulated as Europe's economies and infrastructure recovered: Formula A, implemented in 1946, was known as Formula 1 by 1948.

The points system used throughout the 1950s – 8-6-4-3-2 plus one point for fastest lap, with drivers permitted (until 1957) to share cars and points – has been adopted for this article. On the occasions when organisers opted for heats and a final, points have been allocated for the final only. >>



Wimille tackled Prescott hillclimb with a Bugatti in 1939

aimed high for his maiden race in September 1930: the French Grand Prix at Pau (a road course, not the street circuit); his voiturette Bugatti Type 37A retired after two laps because of a supercharging problem.

In 1931 he co-drove a 2.3-litre twin-cam GP Bugatti T51 for fellow Parisian Jean Gaupillat, 17 years his senior. Good results were difficult to come by in the gruelling 10-hour GPs of the newly constituted European Championship (for drivers), but the press-on style that had brought Wimille second place in January's Monte Carlo Rally (in a Lorraine-Dietrich Coupe) caught the eye, between retirements.

This promise earned him the benefaction for 1932 of Marguerite Mareuse, part of the first female crew to start and complete a Le Mans 24 Hours. So bestowed with an ex-works T51 and a 4.9-litre T54, Wimille clocked the first of three FTDs at the prestigious La Turbie hillclimb in March and won the Oran GP in French Algeria in April. After switching to an Alfa Romeo 8C Monza, painted blue, Wimille promptly won the Lorraine GP at Seichamps, near Nancy, and retired while dicing for the lead at Dieppe when a carburettor fire forced him to leap clear.

Two more frights in quick succession caused a self-reassessment. A cloudburst had sent Bugatti's Rene Dreyfus crashing from the lead of the Comminges GP and so Wimille, forced to swerve around his prostrate rival, had less excuse when he did the same on the last lap. A month later he rolled from the lead at Antibes and suffered more facial injuries. From then on he strove to be more like icy Achille Varzi than fiery Tazio Nuvolari.

Another season with the Alfa, which gained two red stripes to indicate a cooperative with like-minded rival Raymond Sommer, brought him second places in the Marne GP at Reims (a half-wheel behind the sister Monza of 'Phi-Phi' Etancelin) and at Comminges, plus a third in the

“AT THE SPANISH GP HE MIXED IT WITH THE SUPERIOR AND MORE POWERFUL MERCEDES”

Czech GP and a fifth in the Spanish GP. The coming man had arrived.

The honour of signing with Bugatti for 1934 was great but its timing was poor. The new 750kg Formula triggered a resetting of the parameters of GP racing and the T59, for all its feline grace, was dogged by cart-sprung axles and cable-operated brakes. Not even Nuvolari could overcome its shortcomings – even in extended 3.3-litre form – and it was left to Wimille to make the best of it. At the Spanish GPs of 1934 and 1935, he mixed it with the superior and more powerful (by 100bhp) Mercedes-Benz for far longer than could have been expected: his eventual sixth (after carburetion troubles) and fourth places downplay epic drives.

He finished second, despite almost being decapitated when the bonnet blew off, to Auto Union debutant Varzi in the 1935 Tunis GP and also, in the absence of the German teams, in the 1936 Vanderbilt Cup at Long Island's rough-tough Roosevelt Raceway, aboard the 4.7-litre T59/50B single-seater. And in myriad races of the second rank, he took >>



Second Le Mans success with Bugatti came with Veyron in 1939



Wimille also starred in Gordinis, as here in the 1948 Monaco GP



1946

War-damaged Alfa Romeo set the tone and sent its 158 Alfettas to four races. The first, held in the Paris suburb of St Cloud, highlighted its unpreparedness when clutch problems halted Giuseppe Farina and Jean-Pierre Wimille before 20 laps were completed. Wimille had been leading at the time.

This duo set the pace at Geneva's Nations GP too, winning their heats. Wimille was menacing in second place in the final, despite his 158 being a less-powerful version, when a lapped Tazio Nuvolari spun him down to third.

Once Farina broke a driveshaft at the start in Turin's Valentino Park, Wimille was clearly fastest but stood aside for an Achille Varzi victory. Despite this, no room could be found for him in a four-car squad at Milan's Sempione Park.

	1	2	3	4	PTS
1 Achille Varzi	-	7th	1st (8)	2nd FL* (6.5)	14.5
2 Count Felice Trossi	-	2nd (6)	6th	1st (8)	14
= Raymond Sommer	1st (8)	8th	3rd (4)	5th (2)	14
4 Jean-Pierre Wimille	R	3rd FL (5)	2nd FL (7)	-	12
5 Giuseppe Farina	R FL (1)	1st (8)	R	R FL* (0.5)	9.5

Rds 1 St Cloud; 2 Nations GP; 3 Circuit of Turin; 4 Circuit of Milan
Key () points; * point/s shared

1947



Wimille set the tone when he won his heat at the Swiss GP by more than two minutes from Consalvo Sanesi, and beat Varzi in the final by almost 45s. His victory in the Belgian GP (above) was by almost two laps – and controversial. His dicing with Varzi, who lost nine minutes because of braking issues, was contrary to team orders. Would Wimille have complied eventually?

Certainly he was deemed surplus to requirements for Milan's Italian GP – unlike promoted and overmatched head mechanic/driver Alessandro Gaboardi; Trossi pipped Varzi to victory.

	1	2	3	4	PTS
1 Jean-Pierre Wimille	1st FL (9)	1st FL (9)	-	-	18
= Achille Varzi	2nd (6)	2nd (6)	2nd (6)	-	18
3 Count Felice Trossi	3rd (4)	3rd* (2)	1st FL (9)	-	15
4 Louis Chiron	13th	R	R	1st (8)	8
5 Consalvo Sanesi	5th (2)	NC	3rd (4)	-	6
= Henri Louveau	12th	R	6th	2nd (6)	6

Rds 1 Swiss GP; 2 Belgian GP; 3 Italian GP; 4 French GP
Key () points; * point/s shared



the fight to the Alfa Tipo Bs of Scuderia Ferrari; outnumbered rather than outgunned on such occasions, he beat them to win the 1934 Algerian GP.

It was France that gave up this increasingly unequal struggle by switching mainly to sportscar racing from mid-1936. Wimille's subsequent wins in the 1000km French GP (co-driven by Sommer) at Montlhery and the Marne GP, both in a T57G (a genuine two-seater sporting dramatic enveloping bodywork and nicknamed somewhat harshly 'Tank'), were uncontroversial. But the fraternity and equality did not last long. His success at Comminges in what was basically a GP T59, fitted with the unsupercharged 3.3-litre from T57G, was deemed a diabolical liberty by rivals.

Sprouting cycle wings, this combo set the pace in the inaugural 1937 French Drivers' Championship too, winning in Pau and at Reims. But a last-lap retirement, out of fuel, from the lead of Carthage's Tunisian GP and a withdrawal prior to the French GP stymied Wimille's title bid.

Approaching his thirties, he had by now become complete: a regular winner in competitive equipment and an overachieving solid finisher in mid-grid machinery. "There is a whole school up to 125mph," he once told Fangio. "After that there is a black hole." Yet rarely was he anything other than apparently effortless: head still like a hovering hawk's and with arms outstretched, a style he pioneered.

Precise, consistent, fast, his Le Mans victory of 1937 (with the 57G co-driven by inspiration, friend, sometime team manager and business partner Robert Benoist) was a rare one for a rookie, yet he was the epitome of calm common sense amid thunderstorms, in a car with impressive mph:mpg. His two-from-two win of 1939 (long-wheelbase, supercharged T57C Tank co-driven by Pierre Veyron) was the result of refusing to panic after a delay because of a broken wheel and the maintenance of sufficient pressure as faster cars fell by the wayside.

It was admirable loyalty – to fading France and financially straitened Bugatti – that was holding him back. His threatened country mobilising already by 1938, chances of a deal with increasingly nationalistic Auto Union and Mercedes-Benz were very slim – both teams already had their significant outsider in Nuvolari and Richard Seaman respectively. And so, after the embarrassment of his Bugatti's failure on the opening lap of his home GP, Wimille agreed to drive for the reconstituted, government-controlled Alfa Corse for the remainder of 1938. A kidney ailment forced him to hand his Tipo 312 to Clemente Biondetti during Livorno's Coppa Ciano – they finished third – and, though impressive during practice at Bremgarten, he appeared uneasy in a rain-hit Swiss GP and finished seventh. He would be back with Bugatti before war broke out and soon mourning the loss of 30-year-old friend Jean Bugatti, the company's future – if it had one – while testing the T57C on public roads.

Denied the opportunity and material to fight as a flight lieutenant of L'Armée de l'Air, Wimille spent the early part of the war designing

"FANGIO FOLLOWED TO STUDY 'HIS EXCEPTIONAL SKILL AND NICETY IN HANDLING THE WHEEL'"

prototype road cars. Also he married skiing star Christiane 'Cric' de la Fressange in December 1940 – but didn't hesitate when SOE operative Benoist asked for help. His escape from the Nazis in 1944, jumping through a window and lying hidden, submerged in a stream, was cold comfort: Benoist was arrested, tortured and killed.

It was entirely apt, therefore, that Wimille, given leave by the Air Ministry, should win, despite starting from the back having missed practice, the Coupe des Prisonniers in the Bois de Boulogne on September 9 1945. He would also win the Paris parkland venue's Coupe de la Resistance of 1946 as well as 1947's Robert Benoist Cup at Nimes. These results were achieved in the Bugatti T59/50B Monoplace, pre-war GP Alfa Romeo 308 and a nimble new-breed single-seater designed and built by a blue-collar – and similarly Italian-born – 'Ettore Bugatti' called Amedee Gordini; but though Wimille's bond with Le Sorcier was strong, there was no time for a French fixation this time. He was nearly 40.

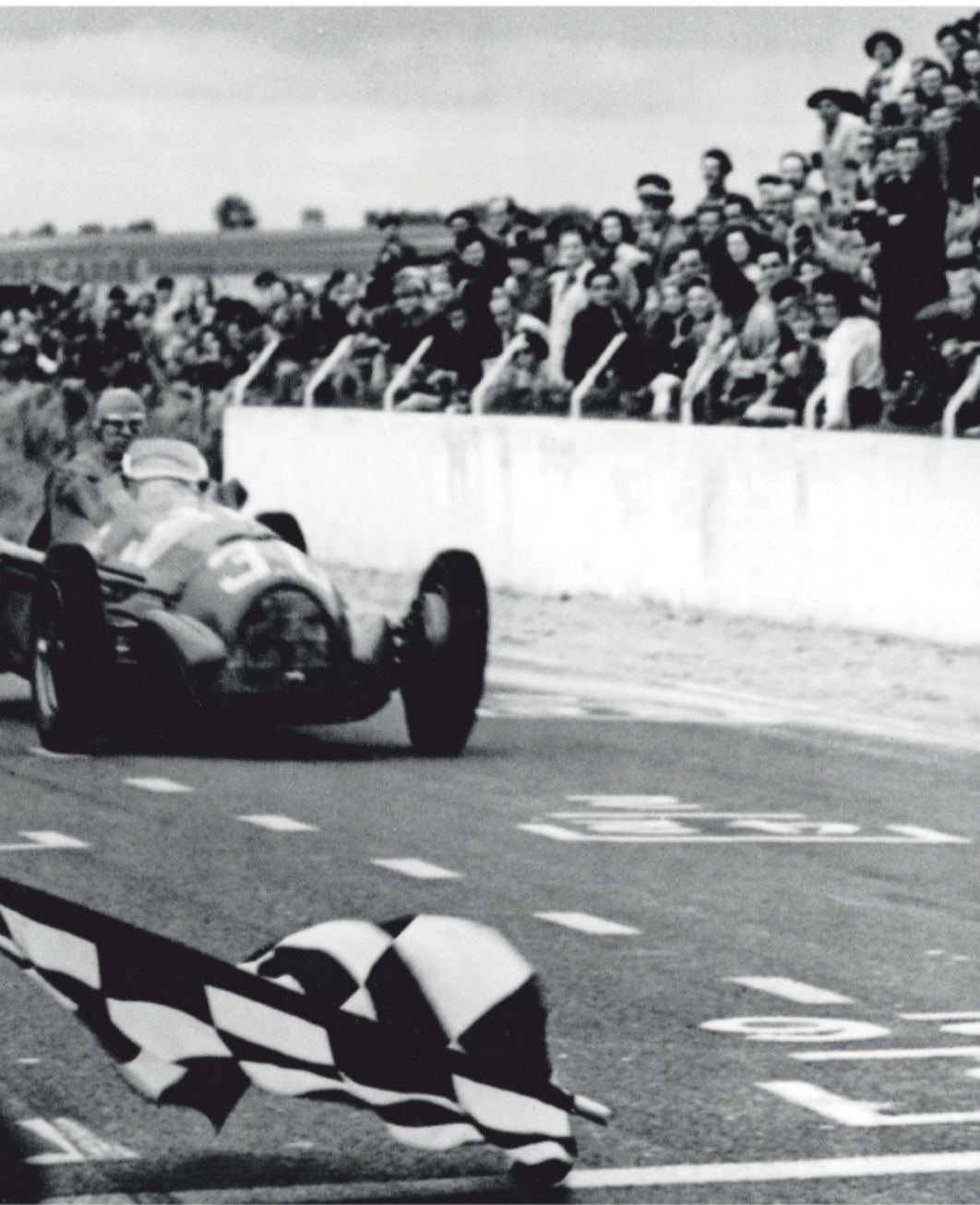


Wimille takes the flag to win the French GP in 1948, a season in which he would have been champion

Alfa Romeo was where it was at – once its 158 Alfettas had been busted from a hiding place in a cheese factory – and Wimille was at last where he deserved to be: with the best. His team-mates were: Nuvolari protege and firebrand Giuseppe Farina; Achille Varzi, recovered from a pre-war morphine addiction; urbane Count Felice Trossi, a natural previously lacking focus; and Consalvo Sanesi, the youngest at 35 and most vocal in support of the Gallic interloper. Farina matched Wimille for single-lap speed – and was given more opportunities in 1946 – but the Frenchman was the more composed, in and out of the cockpit; Farina's petulant abandoning of a sound car in Milan prefaced his walking rather than play second fiddle in 1947, whereas Wimille had been and would be (generally) willing to follow orders. That this team was willing to be led by a foreigner is a powerful indicator of Wimille's skill and standing, and by 1948 he was world champion in all but name (see right).

So Fangio, mourning friend and adviser Varzi, killed during practice for the 1948 Swiss GP, was buoyed that Wimille was among the European contingent contesting the 1949 Temporada. They shook hands warmly as Wimille conceded that Fangio's supercharged 1.5-litre Maserati would be too hot for his Gordini to handle at the Palermo Park circuit in Buenos Aires, before promising, "But we'll be seeing each other at Rosario", a winding venue with an emphasis on skill rather than power.

Wimille was alluding to their lead battle there in 1948. Fangio had been the quicker – by 1.5 seconds – in practice but was slow away. Having recovered, he decided to follow rather than overtake Wimille in order to study "his exceptional mastery and nicety in handling the wheel". But only when he took the lead – some reports suggest that Wimille waved him through, "with a shadow of a smile on his face" – did "the lesson begin for the impertinent student". Wimille's 1.2-litre was the newer Gordini Type 15 compared to Fangio's Type 11 – and also he was aware of Fangio's inadequately repaired cylinder block; gradually, passing and repassing, he increased the pressure in suffocating heat until, with eight laps to go, it cracked. But Fangio knew that this wasn't



the whole story: he had realised that Wimille was often holding a higher gear and that his own methods were “brutal” in comparison.

Friday practice for the 1949 Buenos Aires GP in Palermo Park began at dawn. Forty-five minutes had passed before Wimille ventured out. After sighter laps, he pitted and, to much surprise, replaced the cloth skull cap that had kept him “safe” since 1930 with a crash helmet borrowed from Reg Parnell. He would be dead within minutes.

Why he lost control amid a sweeping, tightening left-hander – the car rolling several times before striking a tree – is a mystery. Did the crowd encroach? Did a spectator cross the track? Did a policeman’s horse kick up dust that hung in the low sun? Skull fractured, chest crushed, Wimille’s reported last words were: “What happened?” Pronounced dead on arrival at Fernandez Hospital, he had not yet turned 41.

Fangio would join fellow pallbearers Alberto Ascari, Farina, Oscar Galvez and Luigi Villorosi in a low-key ceremony at ACA HQ in Buenos Aires. He would also pay his respects, as did 70 other drivers, as Wimille lay in state at Saint-Philippe-du-Roule church in Paris; a photograph showing Fangio knelt in prayer has the Duke and Duchess of Windsor in its foreground – Wimille moved in high circles. And on April 18 1949, after a minute’s silence, Fangio would win the Pau GP.

Wimille’s prediction of Fangio’s performing miracles was coming true and soon all of Europe would come to understand what he had known from their first meeting. But would there have been room for both at Alfa Corse in 1950? And if so, what then?

Farina edged Fangio in the title race that year and there’s no reason to suggest that Wimille could not have done the same. But whereas the speed-happy Italian raced long beyond his prime, it’s more likely that Wimille would have stepped aside once Fangio had asserted beyond doubt his supremacy in equal equipment in 1951.

Wimille was buried with state honours – having been posthumously awarded a Legion d’Honneur – in Passy Cemetery, final resting place of Claude Debussy, Gabriel Faure and Edouard Manet: fellow artists all. ❁

1948

Neither the Monaco nor British GPs – both won by Maseratis – were included in Alfa’s programme; rebuilt Monza’s Autodromo GP was deemed more important – and Wimille won that too.

In a season marred by Varzi’s death, Wimille confirmed his status as Alfa’s number one and would have won all four races he contested with it but for an unscheduled stop for water during the Swiss GP. His hunting down of Trossi fell fractions short.

The presence of feisty new team-mate Alberto Ascari – a replacement for Trossi, showing signs of the illness that would kill him in 1949 – stirred things up for Wimille in the French GP, as did unplanned pitstops. There could be no doubting that his win on this occasion relied on team orders and nationality, but his pure speed advantage was just as clear. His performance in a wet Italian GP at Turin’s Valentino Park was imperious.

	1	2	3	4	5	PTS
1 Jean-Pierre Wimille	-	2nd FL (7)	1st FL (9)	1st FL (9)	-	25
2 Luigi Villorosi	5th* (1)	3rd (4)	7th	2nd (6)	1st FL (9)	20
3 Alberto Ascari	5th* (1)	5th (2)	3rd (4)	4th (3)	2nd (6)	16
4 Giuseppe Farina	1st FL (9)	R	-	R	-	9
= Consalvo Sanesi	-	4th (3)	2nd (6)	R	-	9

Rds 1 Monaco GP; 2 Swiss GP; 3 French GP; 4 Italian GP; 5 British GP
Key () points; * point/s shared

1949



Wimille’s death and Alfa Romeo’s voluntary absence saw Enzo’s new number one Ascari (above) assert his talent as Ferrari moved ahead of local rival Maserati as the best of the rest. Fangio was doing the same as Ascari, albeit in less prestigious races.

Meanwhile, France’s unsupercharged Talbot-Lago made up for a lack of outright speed with impressive reliability and fewer refuelling stops, thereby sowing the seed of the overstretched Alfetta’s eventual defeat in 1951 at the hands of Ferrari.

	1	2	3	4	5	PTS
1 Alberto Ascari	-	3rd (4)	1st (8)	DNS	1st FL (9)	21
2 Louis Rosier	3rd (4)	1st (8)	6th	4th (3)	R	15
3 Prince Bira	R FL (1)	-	5th (2)	2nd (6)	3rd (4)	13
4 Luigi Villorosi	R	2nd (6)	2nd (6)	R	R	12
5 Emmanuel de Graffenried	1st (8)	-	7th	DNS	4th (3)	11
= Philippe Etancelin	5th (2)	R	4th (3)	R	2nd (6)	11

Rds 1 British GP; 2 Belgian GP; 3 Swiss GP; 4 French GP; 5 Italian GP
Key () points; * point/s shared



Ageing 991-generation car claimed historic win after stunning late passes

PORSCHE

Porsche bags Indian summer enduro win

**BATHURST 12 HOUR
MOUNT PANORAMA (AUS)
FEBRUARY 3
INTERCONTINENTAL GT
CHALLENGE, ROUND 1/5**

As seven cars were in contention until the final 20 minutes of the race, it was always going to take something special to decide the 2019 Bathurst 12 Hour.

In the end it was Matt Campbell that provided the necessary spark, a trio of ruthless passes in the closing stages setting the #912 Earl Bamber Motorsport Porsche 911 GT3 R up for a remarkable farewell win.

Unusually for the brutal Mount Panorama circuit, it wasn't a race of attrition. Rather it

was the greenest race ever, just eight safety cars in total and a record-breaking 312 laps completed by the seven cars that battled it out until the end.

That's not to say there weren't casualties along the way. In terms of genuine contenders, the first to bow out was the #27 Ferrari – Nick Percat tangling with a backmarker right on the two-hour mark.

Audi's day began to head south a couple of hours later, when Garth Tander sent the #22 R8 LMS careering into the back of Pro-Am contender Team Nineteen Black Falcon's Mercedes, with Christina Nielsen at the wheel, at The Cutting. Both cars were effectively out of contention on the spot. A power-steering problem for the sister #2

entry right after the half-way mark then meant both outright-contending Audis were out of the running.

By that point the #35 KC Motorgroup Nissan GT-R was out of contention as well after stopping on track, the same thing happening to the #77 Craft-Bamboo Black Falcon Mercedes – which had controlled the first three hours of the race – on lap 187.

And so it was the two EBM Porsches that rose to the top. Superior fuel economy had the 911s off-sync with the rest of the field, but looked to be coming good at the right point – at least until the #911 entry dropped out with power-steering issues on lap 234. The net result was seven cars on the lead tour heading into the final stint, but the #912 911 was the only one trying to stretch its way home on one stop, not two.

With 75 minutes to go the Porsche made its final stop, grabbing a new set of rubber and replacing Dennis Olsen with Campbell. The rest all pitted around the hour-mark, Jake Dennis in the #62 Aston Martin leading Raffaele Marciello in the #999 Mercedes and Chaz Mostert in the #42 BMW – double-stinting tyres the preferred option.

Campbell's charge began by hunting down Mostert, the M6 proving hard to clear. He finally got it done with a hip-and-shoulder at The Chase with half an hour to go, the move investigated but cleared post-race.

He was then given a boost by a final caution moments later, which put the top



Olsen, Campbell and Werner celebrate dramatic late victory

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Aston was muscled aside into second place

MOTORSPORT IMAGES/TRIENITZ



Battle for victory raged well into the final hour

MOTORSPORT IMAGES/TRIENITZ



Soucek twice hit the kill switch to doom Bentley

two – who were on older rubber – within sight. With 22 minutes to go the race went green, Campbell passing Marciello with a perfectly executed pass into Hell Corner.

He then went after Dennis, surprising the Aston driver by charging down the inside at Forrest's Elbow. The wall-scraping move stuck by a matter of millimetres, Campbell able to charge on to a memorable win.

Dennis brought the Aston home second, while Marciello held on to third by just two tenths over a hard-charging Shane van Gisbergen, who grabbed new tyres for the #888 Mercedes during that late safety car.

Missing from the final scrap for victory was the Bentley Continental, Andy Soucek twice mixing the car's pit-limiter button up with its kill switch.

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN

RESULTS

1 Dirk Werner/Dennis Olsen/Matt Campbell (Porsche 911 GT3 R) 312 laps in 12h02m08.407s; **2 Jake Dennis/Matthieu Vaxiviere/Marvin Kirchhofer (Aston Martin Vantage GT3)** +3.441s; **3 Maximilian Buhk/Raffaele Marciello/Maximilian Gotz (Mercedes-AMG GT3)**; **4 Craig Lowndes/Jamie Whincup/Shane van Gisbergen (Mercedes)**; **5 Augusto Farfus/Chaz Mostert/Martin Tomczyk (BMW M6 GT3)**; **6 Andy Soucek/Maxime Soulet/Vincent Abril (Bentley Continental GT3)**; **7 Alexandre Imperatori/Oliver Jarvis/Edoardo Liberati (Nissan GT-R NISMO GT3)**; **8 Steven Kane/Jules Gounon/Jordan Pepper (Bentley)**; **9 Paul Dalla Lana/Pedro Lamy/Mathias Lauda (Ferrari 488 GT3)**; **10 Todd Hazelwood/Roger Lago/David Russell (Audi R8 LMS).**



COWPLAND/ALPHAPIX

Broken mounting bolt slashed Armstrong's haul ahead of finale

Suspension failure costs Armstrong vital points

**TOYOTA RACING SERIES
TAUPO (NZL)
FEBRUARY 2-3
ROUND 4/5**

Marcus Armstrong won the headline Denny Hulme Memorial Trophy at Taupo, but a suspension failure earlier in the weekend wrecked two races for the Ferrari junior and means that fellow Kiwi Liam Lawson takes a narrow points lead into this weekend's finale – the New Zealand Grand Prix at Manfeild.

The action kicked off with a rescheduled race from the gale-force-wind-marred Teretonga weekend. Lawson led all the way, while Armstrong held second until Mercedes DTM refugee Lucas Auer pulled off a great move at one-third distance to move into the runner-up spot. Armstrong then had to focus on keeping ahead of Artem Petrov,

the Russian completing a 1-2-3-4 for the M2 Competition squad.

Auer took his first win of the campaign in the next race, which proved disastrous for Armstrong. In Turn 1 Armstrong pulled off a brave move, with two wheels on the grass, to grab second from Lawson, but on the fourth lap a mounting bolt on the left-front suspension broke under braking, sending Armstrong into the gravel and then to the pits. He resumed after losing five laps, but did not complete enough distance to be classified, costing him what could prove to be five vital points that he would have earned for finishing 16th.

Lawson settled for a safe second place, comfortably clear of Anglo-South African Raoul Hyman, who completed the podium in his Giles Motorsport machine.

With that race forming the grid for race three – with the top six reversed – Armstrong had to start this one from the back. Belgo-German French Formula 4 graduate Esteban Muth converted his pole to a win in his M2 car while under serious pressure from Brendon Leitch, with Lawson taking third and Armstrong charging through to eighth place.

Armstrong finally got his weekend back on track in the climax. Auer grabbed pole, but a superb start from Armstrong put him in front and he pulled away, while Muth soaked up Lawson's attacks on his third place. Lawson finally made it by on a late restart, meaning he holds a five-point lead going into the final round.

WEEKEND WINNERS

**TOYOTA RACING SERIES
TAUPO**

Race 1 Liam Lawson
M2 Competition

Race 2 Lucas Auer
M2 Competition

Race 3 Esteban Muth
M2 Competition

Race 4 Marcus Armstrong
M2 Competition

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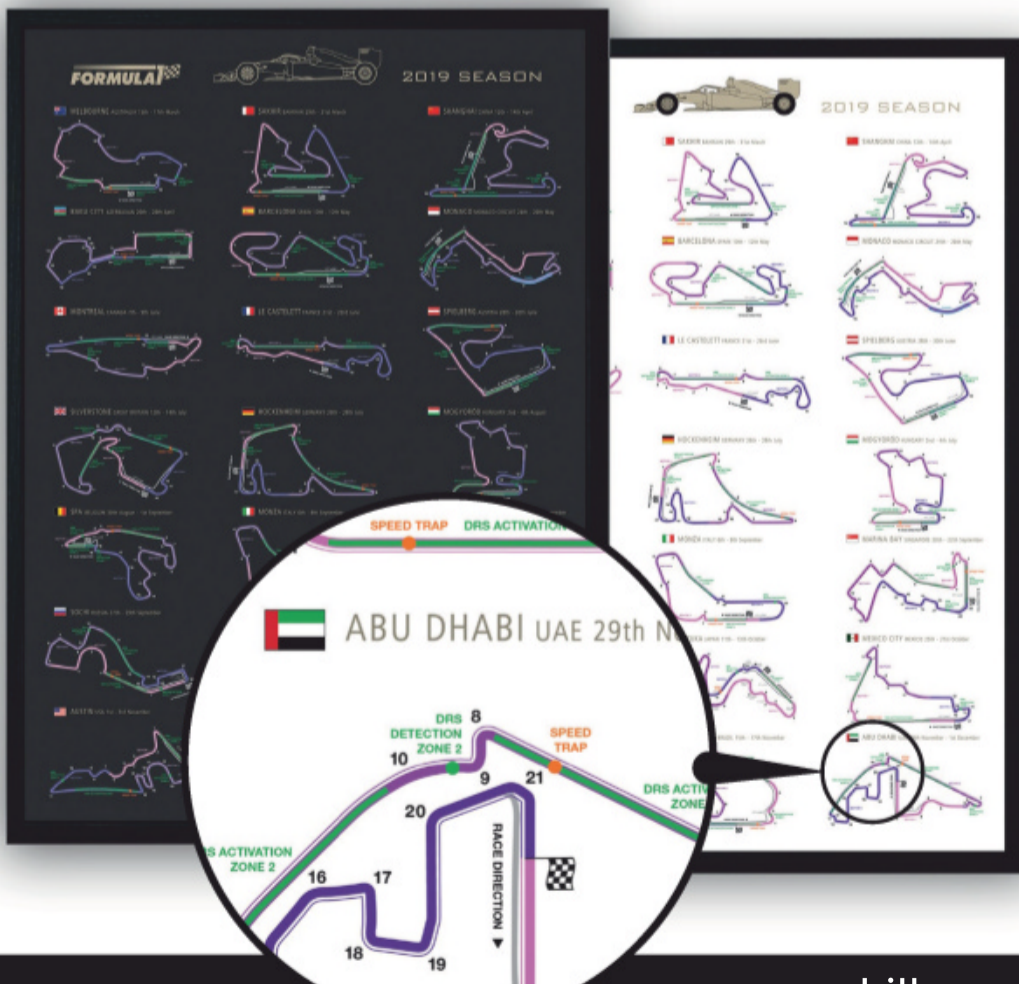
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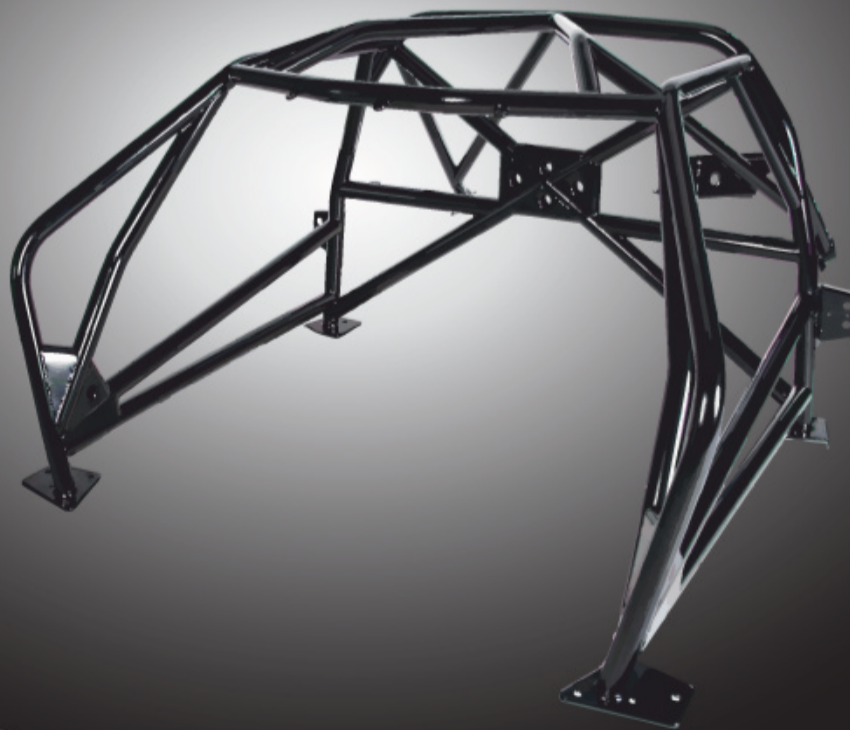
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BELL TO RACE NEW McLAREN 720S GT3 IN BRITISH GT

BRITISH GT

Balfe Motorsport will be the first team to run the new McLaren 720S GT3 in the UK this year in the British GT Championship.

The Lincolnshire squad, which has already confirmed a return to GT4 with

a 570S for Michael O'Brien and Graham Johnson, will enter the new car for team co-owner Shaun Balfe and McLaren Automotive factory driver Rob Bell.

Balfe and Bell won the 2017 International GT Open Pro-Am championship together and combined

BMW GT4 aces in shootout

BRITISH GT

Reigning British GT4 champion Jack Mitchell and runner-up Ben Tuck have been invited by BMW Motorsport to compete for the chance to join the marque's junior programme.

In an evaluation process that started in Munich on Monday and was due to finish yesterday (Wednesday), the Century Motorsport team-mates were pitched against a group of 20 drivers who had raced with BMW customer teams in 2018.

Observed by BMW factory ace Philipp Eng, the group was due to be whittled down to four after a series of mental and physical tests, with a simulator shootout deciding the winner.

On offer is a full-season drive for the works-affiliated ROAL Motorsport team in the Italian GT championship.

Century Motorsport boss Nathan Freke said: "We work incredibly hard to help develop young drivers and make them into a factory-ready product.

"To have this pathway and direct links to one of the automotive giants should be a very attractive prospect for any young aspiring pro drivers looking to make a career out of driving. It'll be an amazing experience for Ben and Jack, and I really believe they both have what it takes to come away with the prize."

• Angus Fender and Andrew Gordon-Colebrooke will step up from Century's Ginetta GT4 Supercup roster to drive one of its M4 GT4s in British GT this season. Both drivers were new to the British Touring Car Championship-support series last year.

JAMES NEWBOLD



Balfe and Bell will race the new GT3 in British GT

for a part-season British GT effort last year in the previous-generation McLaren 650S GT3, which was interrupted by a big crash for Balfe at Rockingham.

Bell has been instrumental in developing the 720S GT3 together with Joe Osborne and Ben Barnicoat, but missed out on the car's race debut at the Gulf 12 Hours in December due to the birth of his second child.

He says McLaren is "happy with what we've done so far" on the new car, with a focus on improving the driveability over the 650S, but admits racing it in British GT will be "uncharted territory".

"It's a new product and there will be some quirks to it that we don't know

about yet when we go racing. That will be difficult for us, but that's something that I enjoy because you've got to graft for your performance and that's something we all thrive on," he said.

Having won at the Donington Park British GT finale in 2016, Bell said he is looking forward to making two visits to the venue this season and starting afresh after a frustrating 2018 campaign.

"I've had a really good run with Balfe over the past couple of years, so we'll take the challenge on," he said.

Autosport understands Balfe will receive staffing support from McLaren Automotive to help the team get up to speed with the new product.

Spanish squad Teo Martin Motorsport, a regular in GT Open, and Le Mans-winning outfit Team Goh, which plans to enter the car in the Super GT GT300 class, are the only other teams confirmed to run the new McLaren car so far.

- Another British GT pairing announced for 2019 is Michael Broadhurst and Mike Murfitt. The duo will remain with Fox Motorsport for a second season aboard the team's Mercedes-AMG GT4. The team's livery will be decided by a fan vote on the Fox Facebook page, with one voter who chooses the most popular design set to win tickets for the opening round.

JAMES NEWBOLD



BERNIE'S SPORTS RACING & V8s

Marcus Bicknell's 2001 Ford Fusion ASCAR V8 stock car is ready for the 2019 season having been reliveried in 2018 NASCAR champion Joey Logano's colours. The car will race in the newly merged Bernie's Sports Racing & V8s promoted by the 750MC. The ASCAR previously raced at Rockingham and in the USA in the hands of Legends and European SCSA champion John Mickel, and is prepped by Duane Kidd. It is not the first car of Bicknell's to feature the Logano colours – he has previously competed in the category in a Ford Mustang Mach 1.



plan and people won't take it as seriously – it will be overshadowed by it being the last year.”

Pyro will now move into European competition with a campaign in TCR Germany and is in talks with drivers. The team ran Honda Civics for Ollie Taylor and Finlay Crocker in TCR UK last year – they were second and seventh in the points respectively – and has not ruled out remaining in the British series if there is sufficient interest.

“The reason for looking at Germany is because it has a very strong grid and you can progress from there to TCR Europe,” Hunt explained. “The TCR manufacturers look at the German series.

“We've gone from Clios in the middle to a higher-level championship [TCR Germany] and a lower-level championship [SR1 Cup] to cater for other drivers' needs.”

Pyro is hoping to run two-car teams in both series. The squad's first SR1 Cup signing is Andrew Wilkins, who has previously competed in the Michelin Clio Series.

“It's less than a quarter of the cost of Clios and it's faster,” Hunt added. “Radical are very helpful and have done a great job with the series. It's also nice for drivers that it's only on Fridays and Saturdays, so they don't have to spend the whole weekend away.”

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Pyro leaves Clios for TCR Germany and Radicals

RENAULT UK CLIO CUP

Leading Renault UK Clio Cup squad Team Pyro will not compete in the final season of the category this year as it instead focuses on new programmes in TCR Germany and the Radical SR1 Cup.

Pyro drivers have won the Clio title – which Renault has decided to axe at the end of this season – eight times since it first

entered the category in 2005, while Max Coates narrowly missed out on becoming another Pyro champion last season.

“It's a shame to leave because we've been around the series for a long time, but things have to change,” said team boss Mark Hunt. “With it being the last year, I don't see the benefit of continuing. If we get someone new in, it's for only one year when it should be a two-year

FF1600 ace Foster joins Arden for F4

BRITISH F4

Formula Ford 1600 race winner Tommy Foster will compete in British F4 this season with Arden.

Foster contested a handful of FF1600 events at the end of last year in a bid to secure signatures to upgrade his licence, winning one of the races at the BRSCC's Anglesey winter meeting.

He tested a variety of machinery, including

BRDC British F3, before choosing F4.

“It's been a struggle but now we can get our heads down and focus on the season,” said Foster. “We had lots of meetings [to decide what to do] – the Formula Ford was a good little car but we really need to get my name out there and, looking at the media side of things, F4 has the best coverage.

“We had offers from other teams but our hearts

really do lie with Arden and I feel really happy there. It's now about getting used to the F4 car.

“We have had a lot of time on the simulator and analysed the data and the team really believes I'm a title contender.”

Foster and his Arden team-mates Bart Horsten and Alex Connor have begun testing since the winter ban came to a close at the end of last month.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



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GT5 grid almost full already

GINETTA GT5 CHALLENGE

The popular Ginetta GT5 Challenge has already attracted a 36-car entry, despite there being almost three months until the season starts.

The category for G40 cars features on the British Touring Car and British GT packages and this year also has an away round at Zandvoort.

“The grid was predominantly full [last year] and that leads to people not wanting to miss out and entering early,” said Ginetta motorsport manager Ash Gallagher.

The maximum capacity for the Oulton Park season opener at the end of April is 38 cars, so there are only two full-season spaces available, but other circuits such as Silverstone

Grand Prix can accommodate many more additional entries.

Among the new drivers for this year is 2017 Mini Se7en champion Charlie Budd, who will be competing as a privateer alongside his brother Daniel.

Budd said: “All my circuit racing so far has been in front-wheel-drive Minis, so the key for us this year will be seat time to learn the new car.”

Ginetta Junior graduates Conner Garlick and Abbi Pulling are also new for this season.

Of the drivers continuing in the series, 2017 Ginetta Junior podium finisher Scott McKenna was the highest in the 2018 standings. He has switched to the Xentek squad, looking to improve on his seventh place last year.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Revolution nears debut

SPORTS PROTOTYPE CUP

Revolution Race Cars has finalised the specification of the manufacturer's first prototype.

The Ford V6-engined car will compete in the new-for-2019 UK Sports Prototype Cup series, in which Revolutions will race alongside the BARC Radical SR3 Trophy (open to RSX, RS and SuperSport models).

“There's so much you don't know until you build one, but we've taken 30kg out of the tub, a similar amount

from the body, now simplified from 53 components to 23, and made a carbonfibre crash box,” said Revolution's Roger Green.

“The muletta [test car] has covered several thousand miles. We're aiming for 12 cars on the grid at Silverstone [on April 27]. We have deposits on 10 cars.”

Sports Prototype Cup promoter James Bailey has appointed long-time Radical Sportscars championship manager Amanda Abbott as the series coordinator.

MARCUS PYE

IN THE HEADLINES

BWRDC CHAMPION

Karter and Ginetta Junior racer Abbi Pulling was announced as the British Women Racing Drivers' Club champion last Saturday. Pulling, 15, received the Mary Wheeler Memorial Embassy Trophy in recognition of her second Super One National Junior TKM title. She was also the winner of the club's Kart Trophy and the Barbara E Bird Memorial Shield for the Junior champion. Other BWRDC trophy winners included rally driver Nabila Tejpar and sportscar racer Fiona James.

C1 WHEEL CHANGES

The Citroen C1 Challenge will use new, stronger alloy wheel rims this year after several failures last season, but drivers will still be allowed to opt for steel rims if they choose. New Hankook tyres, moulded with a four-and-a-half-millimetre tread, will also be used in the series, which will mean that they no longer need to be shaved.

BERNIE'S V8s MERGER

The Sports Racing and GT Challenge is planning a formal merger with Bernie's V8s to reduce confusion for entrants. They currently run a combined grid on the 750MC billing, but with no formal partnership. Organiser Cheng Lim said: “We're trying to combine them properly for 2019. At the moment, we have two registration forms and all sort of things like that. It just gets too confusing. The name will change slightly too. SRTG doesn't really mean anything anymore.”

THAI STAYS IN BRITISH F3

Sasakorn Chaimongkol (below) will remain in BRDC British Formula 3 this year with Hillspeed. The Thai driver finished ninth in the standings and took two podiums during the 2018 season. Team principal Richard Ollerenshaw said: “He's become an integral part of the Hillspeed family over the past few years, since first beginning a testing programme with us in 2016, and his progression has been outstanding.”



BTCC ace Jordan to race Mini

SILVERSTONE CLASSIC

Andrew Jordan, the 2013 British Touring Car champion, will race a pre-1966 Mini Cooper in selected events this year.

The Jordan Racing Team is currently preparing the Appendix K machine previously raced by Dan Wheeler.

Jordan hopes to share the car with his father – fellow BTCC race winner Mike Jordan – in Historic Racing Drivers Club events in 2019, and contest The Mini Celebration Trophy at July’s Silverstone Classic, celebrating 60 years of Alec Issigonis’s famous front-wheel-drive design.

“My first racing car – in Junior Rallycross – was a Mini and I’ve got a Mini road car,” said Jordan Jr. “We looked at building a new one, then saw this in an



auction. It’s got a lot of the right bits on it, so we’re just refurbishing it and putting in a new engine. It should be good.

“We didn’t do much racing in 2018 and we want to do a bit more. It’s another car we can enjoy driving. That’s why we got into historics.”

Jordan believes that the racing should be competitive, with many rapid Mini drivers likely to enter the two Silverstone Classic contests. “They look good fun to drive and you’re always going to have

someone to race,” said Jordan, who has shared a later Mini 1275 GT with Nick Swift at Goodwood. “There are lots of good drivers so you won’t break the tow.”

Jordan has also bought back his 2013 BTCC title-winning Honda Civic, the car Jeff Smith crashed heavily in 2017. Smith’s team Eurotech has sold most of its assets to AmD Tuning, but Jordan received the wrecked car. “We’ll put it back exactly how it was in 2013,” he said.

KEVIN TURNER

BMW series braces for capacity field

BMW CAR CLUB

The boss of BMW Car Club Racing believes a 42-car capacity grid is possible for the season-opening round at Donington Park and is “worried” about turning competitors away.

The club had considerable success attracting competitors in its inaugural season last year, even though several BMW racing series already existed, with 21 competing in its inaugural Castle Combe round and 31 in May’s Silverstone event.

Series coordinator Neil McDonald has told Autosport that interest in the category is continuing to grow for 2019, to the point that entries may exceed the 42-car circuit capacity for the Donington GP season opener taking place on April 22.

“We’ve got so much

interest we’re worried about having too many drivers, but hopefully that won’t be an issue,” said McDonald.

“We’ve got a big capacity because we’re doing the Grand Prix circuit so it should be fine, but we don’t know until people register at the end of the day with any of these things.

“Let’s hope we don’t have to turn anyone away.”

Drivers who plan to race during the season include two-time Kumho BMW champion and ex-BTCC driver Rick Kerry, ex-Kumho and BMW Cup champion Kevin Denwood, and two-time Northern Saloons champion Mike Cutt.

The forthcoming 2019 eight-round season will also be BMW Car Club Racing’s first as a points-paying championship, as it was just a series in 2018.

GRAHAM KEILLOH

WREN JOINS FIESTA GRID AS ORGANISER BACKS SERIES’ FUTURE

FIESTA JUNIOR

Junior Saloon Car Championship runner-up Joel Wren will switch to the Fiesta Junior Championship this year, driving a newly built car run by his family team.

Wren was a seven-time race winner in his debut season in cars, and the 15-year-old hopes to continue that form in more powerful machinery.

“My dad and I have always liked the look of Fiestas, and they’re a bit quicker as well,” said Wren. “I just thought I’ve learnt what I can [in the JSCC]. I knew I was capable. The only reason I didn’t win the

championship was because of one DNF I had.”

Another newcomer to Fiesta Junior will be 14-year-old Nathan Burns, younger brother of Clio Cup racer Bradley.

The BRSCC insists it is committed to Fiesta Junior despite the category struggling for numbers last year.

The series, which has often had small grids, particularly struggled during 2018, with its largest entry being 10 cars.

The club has decided to reduce the length of the races in a bid to help improve driving standards and attract more entries.

MARK PAULSON



New stars for Goodwood

MEMBERS' MEETING

Goodwood has revealed the first high-profile drivers who will compete in the 2019 Members' Meeting, featuring 11 overall and class winners of the Le Mans 24 Hours.

Five decades of Le Mans success and 24 outright wins will be represented. Most notably, Guy Smith, Dieter Quester, Neel Jani, Alex Wurz and Hans-Joachim Stuck will all make their Goodwood racing debuts on April 6-7.

Double Le Mans victor Romain Dumas is a new entry for the Members' Meeting, having made his Motor Circuit debut in the 2012 Revival.

GOODWOOD HIGH-PROFILE DRIVERS
Richard Attwood
Romain Dumas
Neel Jani
Tom Kristensen
Jochen Mass
Emanuele Pirro
Dieter Quester
Guy Smith
Hans-Joachim Stuck
Darren Turner
Alex Wurz

They will be joined by regular Goodwood faces Darren Turner, Jochen Mass, Emanuele Pirro, Tom Kristensen and Richard Attwood.

Smith, who will compete in the flagship Gerry Marshall Trophy race, said: "I am still a relative novice on the Goodwood Circuit as while I've done a few manufacturer trackdays, I still have a lot to learn. It's a real old-school circuit with some fantastic sweeping, fast corners that always provides amazing racing. I have also never done any historic racing before, but I have done some historic rallying."

MATT KEW



J BLOXHAM
motorsport
IMAGES

Dumas (26) made his
Goodwood debut in 2012

IN THE HEADLINES

HRDC SPLITS WITH BRSCC

The Historic Racing Drivers' Club has added a new HRDC Race Festival at Lydden Hill on Monday, May 27. The HRDC has moved away from running events within BRSCC race meetings, and will now support the Vintage Sports-Car Club at Silverstone and Donington Park, the Donington Historic Festival, the Thruxton Motorsport Celebration and Castle Combe Autumn Classic in a six-event calendar.

SENNA'S RF81 ON SHOW

The Formula Ford 1600 Van Diemen RF81 raced by the late Ayrton Senna in his first season out of karts will return to public view at Race Retro on February 22-24. Following a total restoration by Van Diemen boss Ralph Firman, chassis 528 will feature in the Hall of Fame. The event will also display a number of Le Mans cars, including the Audi R8C.

NEW GINETTA TEAM

Ginetta regular Declan Jones has set up his own team to run cars in the GT4 Supercup and GT5 Challenge categories this year. Jones has competed in both series in recent years and was runner-up in the GT4 class of British GT in 2013 driving a Ginetta.

COLLINS ENDS WIN RUN

Michael Collins brought Ken Smith's unbeaten run in the F5000 Tasman Cup Revival series to an end at the Mike Pero Motorsport Park-based Skope Classic in New Zealand last weekend. Quicker out of the blocks in all three encounters, Collins withstood immense pressure from 77-year-old Lola T332 driver Smith to land a sensational clean sweep in his McRae GM1.

MURPHY'S LAW

Four-time Bathurst 1000 winner Greg Murphy steered an ex-Johnny Cecotto BMW M3 E30 to two victories at last weekend's Skope Classic. "That car is mega," enthused the Hastings native, who narrowly lost out to Christchurch car dealer Bruce Miles (ex-Prince Leopold von Bayern 320i E36 Super Tourer) and Brett Stevens (GpA Ford Sierra RS500) in the other two encounters.



Murphy (r) at
the double

Britcar field to top 30

BRITCAR

Organisers of the Britcar Endurance Championship are expecting a grid of more than 30 cars for its opening round of the season at Silverstone in March.

A number of regulars have already confirmed their entries, including David Mason and Ross Wylie – who finished fourth in the 2018 Sprint championship – in a new Ferrari 488 Challenge. Last year's Endurance champion and W Series hopeful Sarah Moore has also entered, alongside rookie Moh Ritson in a Ginetta G50.

Britcar and GT Cup class champion

Paul Bailey will return to the series for the first time in five years aboard a 488 Challenge with Lucky Khera, while Lee Frost shares a Radical RXC Coupe.

Britcar managing director Claire Hedley believes a new format for 2019, which now includes two one-hour races over a single day, has helped attract more drivers.

"We came away from the Autosport International show with 23 people [signed up] and we're looking at over 30 for the opening round – normally we come away with 10 or 15 from the show," said Hedley.

STEFAN MACKLEY



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CLUB RACING FOR THE PROS

*Last weekend an experienced Le Mans driver took part in a Formula Ford race.
He helped prove why club racing is as important and valuable as ever*

JACK BENYON

Having made a journey of more than 10,000 miles, 2018 Le Mans 24 Hours podium finisher Mathias Beche could be forgiven for wanting as much rest as possible before the gargantuan task of taking on the Bathurst 12 Hour for the first time, in a new car.

Instead the 2012 European Le Mans Series champion, who's been competing for well over 15 years, jumped at the chance to drive an Ellery Motorsport Spectrum 010 initially intended for UK racer Michael Eastwell, who'd been taken ill, in the support races for last weekend's Australian enduro.

"We were in a restaurant having dinner the day before we did the seat fit [for the GT4 car] with the guy who brought me here, Dean Koutsoumidis," said Beche. "One guy came up to him and said, 'We have a driver that is not coming for the race, so do you want to do it?'"

"He said he didn't, but maybe one of my guys wants to drive it to discover the track. I was like, 'Oh yeah, let's do that!'"

In an age dominated by simulators, it's refreshing to see

**"A REAL RACE DRIVER CAN
JUMP FROM AN F1 CAR TO
A GT CAR TO A RALLY CAR"**

a driver go for the old-school route of taking in a practice race to get used to a track. Despite their accuracy, no simulator can prepare you completely for the curves, bumps, undulations and camber.

While simulators can be a cost-effective way of preparing for racing – especially at a time when the price of test days in club competition is rocketing – they can never be a panacea for learning a track. Especially at a venue like Bathurst.

The added benefit of using club racing as a preparation tool is the quality of competition. Of course, standards vary around the globe, but there are plenty of club races out there – like the 45-strong grid for the Bathurst 12 Hour support races in which Beche took a pair of second places – that provide almost professional quality at a fraction of the cost.

"People are a bit surprised sometimes when I drive a low category," said Beche. "I drive LMP1, but a few years ago I drove

a Clio in Dubai. I'm just a racer. If there is competition, even if the cars aren't fast, it's still a challenge. You will be surprised there are always good guys [in club racing] and you have to adapt quickly. I think that's the beauty of the sport.

"For me a real race driver is someone who can jump from a Formula 1 car to a GT car to a rally car and manage it. That's what I want to be. I'm trying to be competitive in every formula."

Beche was certainly competitive with his Formula Ford runner-up spots, having been 10 seconds off the pace after five practice laps. But the fact that he didn't win shows that the standard is not poor, even if he was a little disadvantaged.

"For me it was a big challenge, because I'd only driven a Formula Ford once, 15 years ago, and never driven an H-pattern gearbox on a race track," he said. "I've never right-foot braked apart from in a road car. I had to heel-and-toe and discover the track."

And 'discover the track' he did. If Beche needed any reward for his admirable and frankly uber-cool Kent appearance, it was the GT4-class track record in the Bathurst 12 Hour.

This issue of Autosport is full of similar people. On page 56 you can read about Historic Formula Ford 1600 champion Cameron Jackson, who hasn't quite reached the heights of Beche, but continues with a similar philosophy: "I'd love to drive as many different cars as possible."

His brother Dominik did reach lofty heights, partnering Sebastian Vettel in junior single-seaters (p59), and he's certainly capable of competing in a series with a higher profile than the Radical Challenge – and that's by no means a slur on that series.

And then there's Andrew Jordan. You can't help but love the Jordan attitude of racing anything and everything on any given week – the Mini that Andrew and father Mike will race this year joins myriad machinery as varied as Austin A40s and Ford GT40s.

While club racing around the world faces many challenges, particularly in the UK where encouraging participation and too many championships thinning grids are crucial issues, we can be proud of the standard of competition. The fact that a British Touring Car champion actively seeks out the chance to take part in lower formulas, just as Beche did, shows there's much to be learned from competing against grassroots racers.

And how cool is that Goodwood entry? The clashes with the BTCC for the Members' Meeting and the Revival raised eyebrows, given the numbers of tin-top stars who usually take part. But it appears Goodwood was prepared and has brought some real heavy hitters to the fray. Any chance Goodwood can tell us what they are driving? ❄



BRITAIN'S BEST CLUB RACER

Cameron Jackson won Autosport's club driver of the year accolade in 2018. But his journey to the top of the grassroots field hasn't always been straightforward, and a crash almost ended his racing career

JACK BENYON



“ I went onto the grass and straight into a wall and the car stopped immediately – the car was a write-off. It was a rapid deceleration, there was a bank with some truck tyres in it. I went underneath the tyres and one of them hit my head and pinned me between the headrest and the tyre.”

That’s Cameron Jackson, talking about the pivotal moment of his racing career. Last year he won the Historic Formula Ford 1600 Championship and a second Formula Junior class title, following on from his 2016 success. But it was the crash that cost him his short-term memory at Croft in 2005 during a Formula Renault BARC campaign that set him on course for where he is today.

“We went to Croft for a test and it was raining, and I’d been quicker than everybody all day,” he explains. “I was pushing out of the back section, the left-right, and made a mistake.

“I had short-term memory loss. I’d forgotten I’d done my A-levels and Dom [Jackson’s brother, and a rapid racer in his

own right] took the piss out of me. ‘You haven’t done your exams yet so this might be a bit of a write-off’ kind of thing. I believed every word because I didn’t know what was going on.”

Pace had perhaps come more naturally to Dominik than Cameron in their early careers. Both competed at a high level in karting, but Dom had the bragging rights. The step up to Formula Renault – after a year in Zip Formula – came in the series’ older-spec Tatuus car, and Cameron was always quick in the wet. But eventually he stepped over the boundary of what was possible.

“That was a bit scary,” he says of the Croft crash and its consequences. “At that point I was interested in music and other things, and wasn’t quite at the level of Dom and the commitment level that you need to be at to forge a career. That was the last [contemporary] formula racing I did.”

While Dom Jackson carried on up the single-seater ladder, having raced against the likes of Sebastian Vettel in Formula BMW (see page 59), Cameron set his sights on becoming a drummer. >>

“ I HAD SHORT-TERM MEMORY LOSS. I’D FORGOTTEN I’D DONE MY A-LEVELS ”



The interest in racing came from their father, Simon Jackson, who successfully races a Formula 3 Chevron to this day, having competed in myriad machinery throughout his life.

“I’ve been around race tracks since I was born,” Cameron explains. “My dad used to race a Ray in club-level Formula Ford, but he had Thundersaloons in the early days, and in the early 1990s he had a Caterham Vauxhall. We always used to go to the races and I remember we would ride our bikes around the paddock, getting stickers off teams and we put them up in our rooms. I’ve always been around circuits.”

Well, not quite always. After the Formula Renault crash, Jackson was out for 10 years, returning with his now-trusty Brabham BT2 Formula Junior at the back end of 2015. It took extensive development work and a full rebuild, but in 2016 he was soon setting fastest lap times and winning races. He took the E1 class championship that year and his comeback was almost instantly successful.

Mentally, he’d surmounted a tough obstacle after that big accident and a decade out of action. “As soon as you start thinking about that [the crash while competing], you’re done with really, aren’t you?” he says, posing the question almost rhetorically. “I understand it’s dangerous and things can happen. I don’t think it affects me. I was probably more nervous getting in a car when I was younger than now, for some weird reason. I really enjoy racing and I don’t want to put myself off by overthinking things.”

The enjoyment reached a high in 2017, when Jackson decided that Historic Formula Ford 1600 was worth a try after consulting rapid driver and ace engineer Neil Fowler. He raced a Merlyn Mk20 to fourth at the Donington season opener in 2017, and then lined up a Lola T200 for the massive 50th anniversary of Formula Ford weekend at Brands Hatch in July. Some of the discipline’s

“I EXPERIENCED HOW CLOSE THE RACING IS BUT ALSO HOW FAIR EVERYTHING IS AS WELL”



Jackson crashed during promising Formula Renault BARC season

heavy-hitters united for a knuckle-grazing sparring match in which the winner could rightly stake their claim to be the greatest Fford exponent at its most important anniversary event so far.

“We did a couple of races with Neil in 2017 to prepare [for more Formula Ford in 2018],” he adds. “The 50th Anniversary is when I really got the bug for Historic Formula Ford. I experienced how close the racing is but also how fair everything is as well.”

Jackson, a relative unknown to the paddock, had a DNF while leading in an otherwise impressive race one at Brands. But that was nothing. In the second race of the weekend, which fell 50 years to the day from the first race of the formula, he was unstoppable. In a race flagged off by HSCC legend Grahame White – as he had done for the first race at the same circuit – Jackson came through from 13th to win. He was an unknown no more.

“That was a really fairytale weekend,” he reflects. “The championship in 2018 was more of a slog in that it’s drawn out, and also you’re focusing on the end result, not each race. Within that, the latter part of the season when the title fight was so intense... that felt amazing too.”

‘Slog’ is the right word. The 2017 champion Richard Tarling had returned, as did double champion Callum Grant, with Ben Mitchell also in the field. Mitchell would be the main rival, after Grant had some bad luck and Tarling missed some rounds. Jackson in turn had to miss the third-last round of the season at Oulton Park for the birth of his son Ozzie, which meant his seemingly insurmountable hold at the top of the standings looked within reach for Mitchell.

But a double win for Jackson and a non-finish for Mitchell in the penultimate round at Brands – when he was boosted by avoiding a penalty after being accused of passing a backmarker under yellow flags – put him in prime position for the title.

“That was the pivotal weekend, to go from being behind to winning both races and Ben had a DNF,” says Jackson. “It completely changed the whole dynamic going into the finale. We’d won two races at Croft earlier on and it felt like we were on a roll.”

The title-winning finale came at Silverstone, where just 0.031s separated Jackson, Tarling and Mitchell in the last race of the season: “I never expected to get pole and win both races in the final because it’s such a gamble with the tow. A lot of people turn up and Richard Tarling was there. That was a fairytale end to it.”

Jackson followed that up with the FJunior title the next day, in what easily marked him out as the Autosport club driver of the year – some recompense for having to turn his attentions to moving house. His eight wins and five second places from the 17-race Historic FF1600 campaign is an outstanding record given the closeness of the racing – and he was a cut above in the rear-engined Formula Juniors too.

A dream year then, but what next for the 31-year-old Lincolnshire man? “I’d love to drive as many different cars as possible,” he says. “There are some brilliant cars and championships out there, from professional-level drivers like at Goodwood and the Silverstone



Brands 50th Anniversary race launched Jackson onto the FF1600 scene



Formula Junior titles in 2016 and 2018 boosted Jackson's comeback



Van Diemen project has proven difficult

Classic right the way through to some really talented amateurs. I see myself being part of that long term, it's what I love doing and I love the atmosphere at the events and in the paddocks. I don't have ideas of grandeur. I want to enjoy my racing in historics and classics."

You'll have to keep an eye on the pages of Autosport in the coming weeks for the spectacular plans he has for his Historic Formula Ford title defence. Three or four rounds of Formula Junior are likely, alongside further development of a so-far-troublesome 2007 Van Diemen FF1600, and Jackson intends to match the pace of the current crop of national Kent racers at the big end-of-season events. "We're trying to find something to get out at Goodwood for the Revival as well, I would absolutely love that," he adds.

"Fingers crossed I'll be out in an F2 or F3 car at Silverstone Classic. Nothing is confirmed for those two, but it's definitely something I'm pushing to try and do."

If there's any worthy ticket to racing at the Classic and Goodwood, it's having lots of cash and a well-stocked garage. But the next best thing is being one of the quickest historic racers out there, and Jackson's FF1600 title surely has to go some way to demonstrating that's the case. Drivers such as Chris Ward have forged careers out of being quick in historics, and there's no reason why Jackson can't follow a similar path.

In the meantime, he will surely be a big part of the future of historic racing in the UK, and who could rule out further afield? ❧

VETTEL'S TEAM-MATE: A JACKSON DYNASTY

In case you weren't aware, Sebastian Vettel has a new team-mate in 2019. All eyes are on young Charles Leclerc to see if he can get the upper hand at Ferrari, and if he does so on a few occasions he will be deemed a success.

It wouldn't be the first time an underdog team-mate has given Vettel a scare. In 2004, in his native Germany, Vettel contested the Formula BMW ADAC series on the DTM undercard, and little-known Brit Dominik Jackson joined him at the Mücke Motorsport squad. OK, Vettel bossed the year, but Jackson did beat him on a couple of occasions.

Fast-forward 14 years and, while brother Cameron was busy earning Autosport's club driver of the year title, Dom didn't do too badly himself, taking seven wins and seven more



Jackson (l) and Vettel (r)

MOTORSPORTIMAGES

podiums in 17 races on his way to the Radical Challenge title. "It's taken me longer to learn the car after being away from racing for so long, but it's all come together now," says Dominik.

The Jackson brothers competed at a similar time in karting, and it was Dom who proved the more

impressive in junior single-seaters. After a season in Zip Formula, he took seventh in his rookie Formula BMW ADAC attempt before finishing fifth as Vettel's team-mate the following year. At the time it was one of the best junior categories out there.

After a few seasons in the States, a Formula Palmer

Audi effort in 2007 and an outing in the Tottenham Hotspur Superleague Formula car, Jackson's racing career petered out. Like younger brother Cameron, he took almost a decade out, returning in 2017 before his Radical Challenge title last year.

But when is Dominik going to be persuaded into Historic Formula Ford, or any formula where the brothers can do battle? He was a back-up at the Goodwood Revival last year in case Cameron's son came early, and even got to test the Formula Junior. But he's yet to steer a historic car in anger against his younger brother.

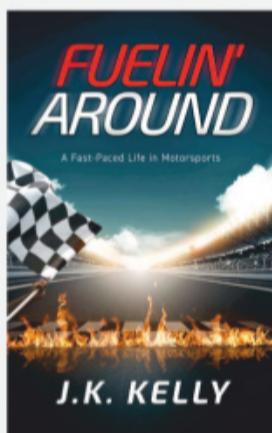
"We've not yet raced against each other yet but I quite fancy having a go at some historic stuff: it's a really nice paddock," he says. "I don't think there's a lot in it between us."



Dominik was rapid on his return to racing in Radicals

READ

A STORY FUELLED BY PASSION



BOOK REVIEW FUELIN' AROUND RRP £9.99

“Just imagine a family headed to Grandma’s house for Sunday dinner, creeping along at 5mph thanks to the race traffic letting out, and you see

about 10 men wearing uniforms, their backs to the traffic, standing in a row, urinating at the side of the road.”

So goes one of many tales told by Jim Kelly in his latest work, *Fuelin' Around*. Not your typical motorsport-related biography, the book charts his career with a fuel company, regaling the reader with anecdotes from 30-plus years in the industry.

After starting out working in the family funeral business, Kelly tells a particularly harrowing story of comforting a mother

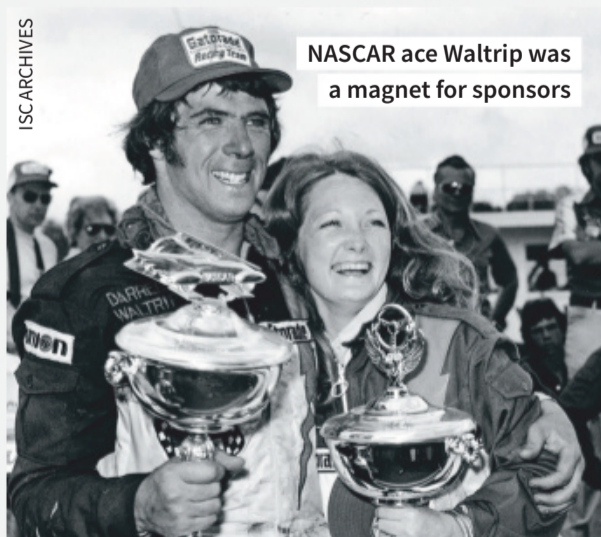
on the loss of her child, while placing their body in a small coffin. To cope with the emotional pressures of the job he heads south to Florida every March to watch NHRA drag racing with high school friends.

Quickly getting the motorsport bug, Kelly begins to help out a local team (“In all honesty I was tasked with keeping that beauty clean,” he admits) and also begins taking photographs on his travels, getting a few pictures published. Sadly, a failed eye exam means he has to shelve plans to join the FBI, but this leads to a change of college courses to journalism, setting the ball rolling on his future career.

A missed interview with an editor for a writing job leads to a lucky break with the DiGard Racing Team in NASCAR, and he ends up working as the operation’s press officer. Here he has to undertake jobs as diverse as fighting to keep the title sponsor’s hats on driver Darrell Waltrip’s head in Victory Lane when other brands are trying to get their logos in front of the camera, and handing his driver a cup of water in the midst of a particularly hot race, but managing instead to spill it over him.

When things begin to unravel at the team and Waltrip wants to move on, Kelly makes the tough decision to leave Charlotte and move back home to Philadelphia. He gains his qualification as a funeral director, believing he’s left motorsport for good.

Not quite. While Kelly is getting back to life outside of motorsport, a friend is working with a new company, distributing race fuels and starting to challenge the big companies on the market. After his parents die, Kelly sells the family business and casts his eyes back to motorsport, joining his



NASCAR ace Waltrip was a magnet for sponsors

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ISCARCHIVES

DiGard Racing
enjoyed success with
Waltrip in the late 1970s



LUCIANO BURTI
FERRARI, F1 AND FRIGHTENING SHUNTS

Luciano Burti is best known for his stint as a Ferrari test driver during the Michael Schumacher era, and two massive accidents in 2001. He joins renowned Brazilian sports journalist Lito Cavalcanti and Autosport's Edd Straw to reveal all about life at Ferrari, his career and the effects of what happened to him at Spa in 2001.

Go to <https://www.autosport.com/podcast>



Kelly was no stranger
to the NHRA dragstrip,
as well as ovals

motorsport
IMAGES

“THIS IS A LABOUR OF LOVE FOR SOMEONE WHO HAS SPENT MOST OF HIS LIFE DOING A JOB HE ADORES”

friend's firm in its new regional office in Pennsylvania. Just getting to work is quite the adventure, as he recalls: “Don't stop too close to the car in front. Never allow yourself to get boxed in. Always leave enough room to get out of there if shots rang out.”

From there on Kelly relates a variety of stories of working in the industry –

being locked out of a US circuit that was loyal to a rival brand, being pulled over by the military in Israel because he had an Arab taxi driver, and his host in Dubai following singer Jackson Browne into the toilets in order to persuade him to sit at Kelly and his colleagues' table.

This book is clearly a labour of love for someone who has spent most of his life doing a job he adores, despite the long-term effect it had on his family and relationships.

As Kelly himself says: “Whatever it is about racing, about motorsports and travel and the challenge of taking on the goliaths, I wanted and needed to be in it. I was perfect for the job and it was for me.”

JAMIE HOWLETT

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February 9-10

MRF Challenge

Round 3/3
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MY FIRST MOTORSPORT MEMORY

MCKLEIN

1985 RAC RALLY

Enamoured by Group B wastegate noise on a Welsh special stage

DAVID EVANS

I've dodged this column for long enough and now I'm just going to have to level with you. My first motorsport memory?

Well, I've, er... forgotten it.

My mother despairs of my inability to remember pivotal life events; for ages I passed off a first living memory of a grandparent throwing a sweet out of a hospital window to my sister. Turns out that was my sister's first memory. I was an hour old at the time...

In the desire for meaningful copy for this page, I've wracked my brains and come up with a definitive answer: Donington Park, SS5 of the 1979 RAC Rally. Two things happened that day, one I recall distinctly and the other I've been passed second-hand.

My memory is of a white Ford Escort RS2000 crashing into a tree in front of us. It was by no means a big shunt, more a pretty poor effort brought on by the driver's inability to employ the handbrake to counter some mud-induced understeer. Woeful.

I did, however, manage to pick some pieces of paint out of the tree after the remainder of the cars had gone through an hour or so later.

Apparently – here's the second-hand bit – Markku Alen's Lancia Stratos made me cry. Objectively, there's no evidence of this. Hearsay at best.

Agreed, it's not much a memory. So, I've decided to tweak the thinking behind this column and, for one week only, it's going to be: my first motorsport memory that I can definitely remember.

That's simple: Henri Toivonen, Lancia Delta S4 in Trawscoed on his way to winning the 1985 RAC Rally. This was a particularly memorable moment as it was the first time I was allowed to skip school in favour of something infinitely cooler. And important (sorry, Mr Harris).

My father and I walked for miles into the stage and, with my mother's warning about keeping me safe at the forefront of his mind, he picked a spot behind several trees with the cars just about visible. I saw enough.

Into view through a square right, the course cars pointed and squirted through the corner and down the straight. Then the wait. It felt interminable and just as I was utterly convinced I'd never feel my toes again, that noise came up the valley: a racy bark backed by the fizz and whistle of forced induction, accompanied by the clatter of stones on the underside.

Toivonen came into view, right-rear first. A spike of revs helped pivot the car perfectly into the square right. Once at the apex, the throttle was opened and this beautiful Martini-liveried monster picked up and flew down the road before us.

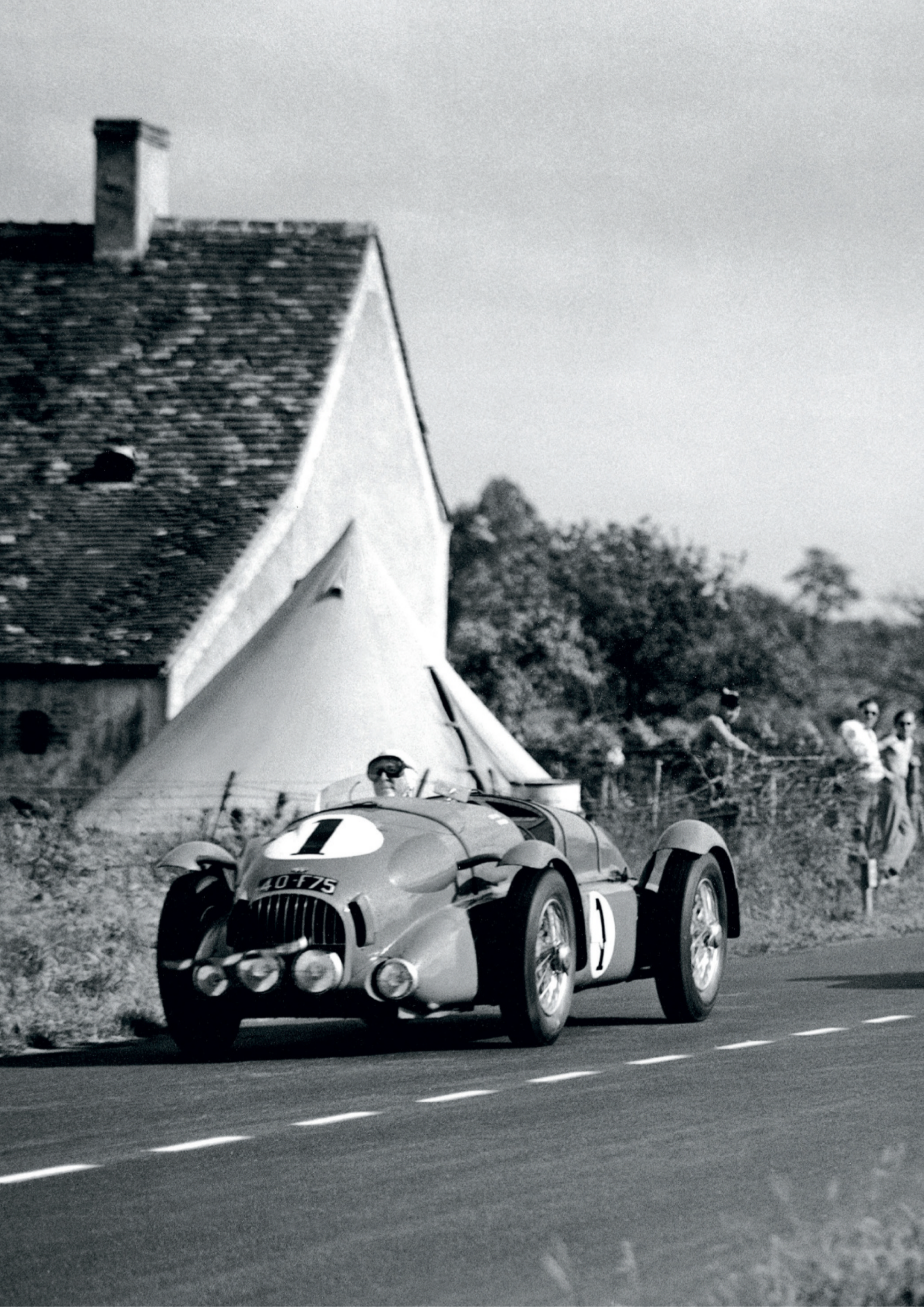
Who could forget a memory like that? 🍷



"THIS BEAUTIFUL MARTINI-LIVERIED MONSTER FLEW DOWN THE ROAD BEFORE US"



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FINISHING STRAIGHT

FROM THE ARCHIVE

The extraordinary MAP Diesel shared by Frenchmen Pierre Veyron and Fernand Lacour dwarfs the dainty Gordini T15S of Juan Manuel Fangio and Jose Froilan Gonzalez during the early stages of the 1950 Le Mans 24 Hours. The leviathan carrying the #1, from the curiously named Manufacture d'Armes de Paris (one-time builder of small arms, typewriters and tractors), was the first car to race at the legendary enduro with a mid-mounted engine – in this instance a supercharged five-litre flat-four oil-burner. Overheating put paid to its challenge after 39 laps. The Argentinian duo, both Le Mans debutants, clocked up 95 laps before their 1491cc supercharged Simca four cried enough.



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WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN?



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WHO IS THIS?

This dark knight made his name in the sport in a way that will probably never be equalled.

He flew in at the smallest level but was soon good enough to ply his trade further afield. When they rolled out the barrel he found a home from home, and revelled in their back-to-front approach.

But when they became set in their ways he was forced to go it alone, which he did to great success. His wings were spread far and wide and from bottom to top.

Despite his burgeoning empire he kept it up behind the wheel, showing the bright young things a trick or two, even if there was a Princely mistake along the way.

When the time came to call it a day he returned to his roots. But his name carried on creating an enduring legacy that still harbours great ambition.

ON THIS DAY

1 Jack Fairman died on this day in 2002. He has two unique distinctions in world championship F1 racing. What are they?

2 Today is Christian Klien's birthday. At which grand prix did he qualify fourth?

3 Today is the anniversary of Ferrari F1 racer Cliff Allison's only world championship podium – in which race?

4 Today is John Bintlcliffe's birthday. How many BTCC wins did he score?

5 John Nielsen was born on this day in 1956. Who did he share with when he won the 1990 Le Mans 24 Hours?

NAME THE HELMET



LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

Who, what, where, when Pablo Donoso, Dallara-Nissan World Series Lights, Lausitzring, July 20 2003.

Who is this? Eliseo Salazar. **On this day** 1) Dallara BMS 191. 2) Zandvoort. 3) Yannick Dalmas, Hurley Haywood.

4) Prost AP04. 5) Giedo van der Garde. **Name the helmet** Nelson Piquet.

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE



F1 LAUNCH
SEASON STARTS

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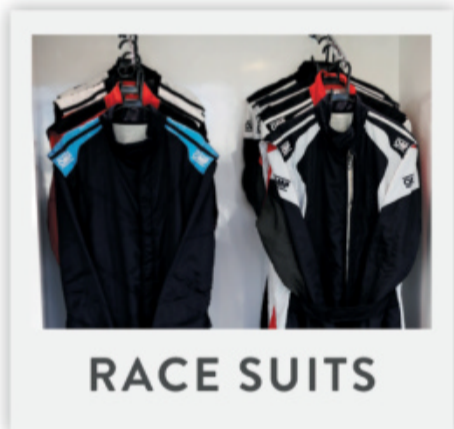
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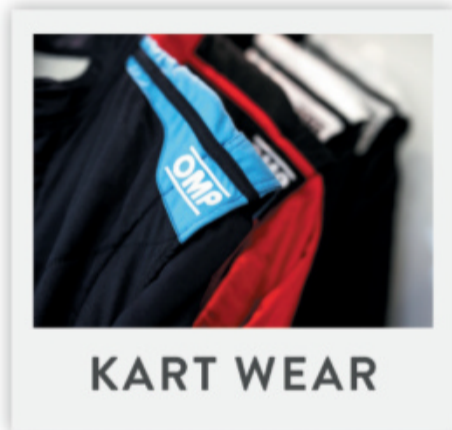
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WANT TO MAKE A GOOD IMPRESSION IN 2019?

When Juan Pablo Montoya's Williams lunged down the inside of Michael Schumacher at Turn 1 and muscled the Ferrari wide on lap three of the 2001 Brazilian Grand Prix, it heralded the arrival of one of the most exciting Formula 1 talents for a generation. Or so it seemed.

Arriving from IndyCar with a swashbuckling urgency, speed to spare and a strong head on his shoulders, Montoya seemed as close to the full package as any rookie might hope to be, although the Columbian was ultimately eclipsed in the record books by fellow 2001 alumni Fernando Alonso and Kimi Raikkonen after his acrimonious exit from McLaren – and F1 – in 2006.

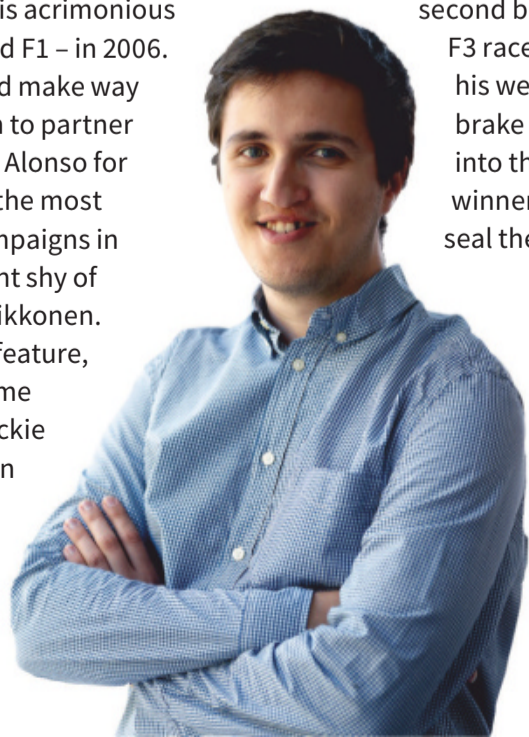
Ironically, that would make way for one Lewis Hamilton to partner the already-confirmed Alonso for 2007 and enjoy one of the most spectacular rookie campaigns in history, falling one point shy of eventual champion Raikkonen.

In this issue's cover feature, Montoya joins three-time world champion Sir Jackie Stewart, Gary Anderson and Ralph Firman – whose sole F1 campaign with

Jordan in 2003 didn't quite go to plan – as part of our expert panel digging into the key facets that rookies need to prioritise. Five key elements are analysed and scored out of 10, and – spoiler alert! – speed isn't everything...

AJ Allmendinger, who joined Montoya as a NASCAR rookie in 2007 after leaving Champ Car, gives his take on what's needed to make a good impression as a rookie in his Driver's Eye column (page 7), and don't miss Stefan Mackley's equipment guide (page 32), with all the tips you need to get yourself kitted out for 2019.

Firman of course knows all about the importance of well-maintained kit. Running second behind Warren Hughes in a British F3 race at Snetterton in 1995, the lip of his well-worn boot got stuck behind the brake pedal and caused Firman to pile into the unsuspecting Hughes. That day's winner, chief title rival Oliver Gavin, would seal the crown by just eight points...



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MASTERCLASS

WITH ROB WILSON

OUR EXPERT COACH LOOKS BACK ON HIS CAREER, AND PICKS OUT SOME COMMON MISTAKES TO AVOID



Wilson, in the Ralt RT1, leads Tiff Needell at Brands Hatch during 1978 F3 season

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There are so many things in my career that I would do differently if I had a second bite of the cherry. I have always been, and still am, independent, although I'm a more benign independent now and have a broader view of things. For starters, I might have had a shorter haircut! Although my career started over 40 years ago, there are some general principles that young drivers today can and should learn from.

Motorsport is a village

In my day, there were very few teams in Formula Ford and even Formula 3. Instead we had different chassis, although the current trend for junior motorsport is to have one chassis operated by different teams. It goes without saying that, budget permitting, you should always try to have the very best team around you, but there will inevitably be times when you end up running equipment that isn't the best where it will be

difficult to win, no matter how well you drive. Teams have a limited number of spaces, chassis suppliers can only meet so much demand for the first race, and there will be occasions when you can't be sure what is going to be the best team – for example, Prema won the GP2 teams' title at its first attempt in 2016.

But there are lessons you can learn when you are not in the best equipment, which I perhaps didn't appreciate at first. In 1976, I drove a Tiga in Formula Ford for Howden Ganley and Tim Schenken, both excellent drivers with a strong engineering background – particularly in Howden's case – who had come through racing the hard way and had developed a lot of good relationships in the racing industry. Howden had raced with Frank Williams, March and BRM and various other people, and had I spent more time working with and listening to him in those early days he could have done a lot for me. But it was their first season building racing cars, and it wasn't a winning situation, so I left to drive a Reynard – in which I subsequently won!

But if you're not in a winning situation, understand that racing is a village and everyone knows everyone. There's a conundrum there. Do you stay and learn in that practical way, or do you chase results? Ultimately, it's probably better



Showing faith in Tauranac (left, with Tim Schenken) yielded an F1 superlicence

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Wilson passed up top F2 seat for Tyrrell F1 drive that went to Alboreto

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Could a haircut have helped get a McLaren drive?

“For want of a few hundred pounds, we could have had a lot more success”

Learn to listen

I was a very good gear-ratio changer and would do all the testing myself; there was no such thing as ‘engineers’ then, so I didn’t always take advice onboard. I think I did listen to everyone, but I didn’t necessarily hear it! As in life, you only assimilate it a decade later and start acting on it a decade further on.

There are some opportunities that you just let go. Robin Herd offered me the factory March-BMW drive in Formula 2 for 1981 if I could come up with £20,000. It was the top team in F2 then and the Gordon Coppuck chassis was very good – Thierry Boutsen was on pole five times that year and finished second in the points – but I didn’t even think about taking it because I had my F1 superlicence and I thought I would get the Tyrrell drive. But I hadn’t reckoned on Michele Alboreto and his backer Count Vittorio Zanon...

I was told by the guys at McLaren at the end of 1978 that it had come down to a choice between Patrick Tambay or me for a seat and they took Tambay because I’d ‘never get a haircut’. Gilles Villeneuve and his long hair didn’t quite fit with the Marlboro image and they wanted someone more suave and clean-cut. I can’t be sure, but I might have got a haircut for a McLaren drive!

The small things can tip the scales. Holding your counsel can be a wise course of action sometimes. I’ve often regretted my speeches, but never my silence!

to chase the result because the further up the field you are, the more friends you’ve got! It was Howden who told me that in 1976 – but it’s important to make the most of the experience of the people you’re working with as well, even if the product you’re working with isn’t the fastest.

In Formula 3, I started to develop a good relationship with Ron Tauranac and spent 1978 in his Ralt RT1, which I used to win at Mallory Park in the wet. Then in 1979 it all went wrong for him when he introduced the RT3. It wasn’t a great success and Ralt was abandoned by everyone in F3. But I knew how good Ron was, so I decided to show faith in it.

We missed the first five rounds in 1980 because they were still building the next version of the RT3, and it still wasn’t very good when we got going. But after a few races of working very closely, we developed it and ended up having the best car on the grid. Of course, everyone switched to it and Stefan Johansson won the title with a massive budget from Project Four, but if the championship had started when we started we might have won. Having faith in Ron when it wasn’t going well was a lesson I learned from my time with Howden, and that earned me my Formula 1 superlicence for finishing fifth in the championship.

Fight the good fight

Something else I learned in 1980 was that for the want of a few hundred pounds, we could have had a lot more success. I would do two or even three race meetings on the same set of tyres. We would qualify on the front row, but it was a bit tough to stay there in the races as they became increasingly worn.

We really did not have the money to do it, but looking back I would have begged and borrowed just to put a new set of tyres on the car for each race meeting and the wins would have come easily, instead of sitting half a second behind Stefan Johansson at the end of a race.

So, know what to fight for, pick your battles, concede the right things. The difference now is tyres are allocated and you have limited numbers of sets per weekend, but that doesn’t mean there can’t be some gain in finding budget to spend elsewhere, or do an extra test or commit to an engine swap mid-season, which I did during my Ford 2000 season in 1977 and when I moved to the Novamotor-built F3 engine in 1978. Those things are more difficult to do now because a team is committed to Mercedes or Volkswagen as suppliers, but drivers still have the power to switch teams – Dean Stoneman did it in GP3 in 2014 and it helped him to finish second that year.

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INSIDE LINE

AJ ALLMENDINGER

THE NASCAR AND DAYTONA 24 VETERAN EXPLAINS WHY THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT IS CRUCIAL FOR SUCCESS



CAREER highlights

- 2019** Daytona 24 Hours (Michael Shank Racing)
- 2018** 22nd in NASCAR Cup (JTG Daugherty Racing), 1 podium; 2nd in Daytona 24 GTD (MSR)
- 2014-17** NASCAR Cup (JTG Daugherty), 1 win, 2 podiums
- 2013** 18 races in NASCAR Cup (Phoenix Racing, JTG), 2 races in NASCAR Nationwide (Team Penske), 2 wins; 6 races in IndyCar (Penske), 3rd in Daytona 24 (MSR)
- 2012** Winner of Daytona 24 (MSR); 21 races in NASCAR Cup (Penske and Phoenix)
- 2009-11** NASCAR Cup (Richard Petty Motorsports), 1 podium
- 2007-08** NASCAR Cup (Red Bull Racing, Michael Waltrip Racing, Gillett Evernham Motorsports)
- 2006** 3rd in Champ Car (Forsythe Racing, RuSPORT), 5 wins, 7 podiums; 2nd in Daytona 24 (MSR); NASCAR Cup (Red Bull)
- 2005** 5th in Champ Car (RuSPORT), 5 podiums
- 2004** 6th (Rookie of the Year) in Champ Car (RuSPORT), 2 podiums
- 2003** Champion in Toyota Atlantic (RuSPORT), 7 wins, 8 podiums



The people you have around you make a huge difference to how you feel when you get thrust into the spotlight in a new series, and for the most part I've been very

fortunate in my career. It doesn't get any better than having Roger Penske to call your first Indy 500, does it? And not only Roger, but having Rick Mears to talk to and Helio Castroneves and Will Power as my team-mates, I had great people around me.

When I did the Daytona 24 for the first time in 2006 with Michael Shank, I had no idea what to expect, but as a young driver you're always eager to prove yourself. Fortunately doing it with guys that I trusted – I had known Ozz Negri for five or six years from the Skip Barber instruction team and Justin Wilson was my team-mate in Champ Car – made it easier for me to see we were in it together. As it happened, I finished the race on a minimum of 13 Red Bulls and we ended up second.

Unfortunately, going to NASCAR in 2007 was the total opposite situation. I went in with a brand new team, Red Bull, and I felt I suffered because of it. I knew we weren't going to come in right away and light the world on fire, but I wasn't ready for the

got to get used to the speed, but there's nothing that can get you ready for the transition from an open-wheel car to NASCAR except just running laps. It was almost like learning how to walk again.

I never in my wildest dreams imagined how hard those cars were to drive. In an open-wheel car or even a sports car, if it was a fifth-place car, I felt I could find an extra tenth or two and make it a podium car. But trying to turn a 25th-place stock car into a 20th-place car will make it a 30th-place car.

I was having great success in Champ Car and I know people thought 'it's all money-based' but it really wasn't like that. There was a lot of uncertainty about the series and whether it was going to merge with the IRL, but I didn't want to race open-wheel cars consistently on ovals – anybody that watched it would have seen Kenny Brack [Texas 2003] and Ryan Briscoe [Chicago 2005] have violent, scary wrecks. I had to make a decision and the chance was there. I did consider going back, but I wanted to prove that I at least could be competitive. Until I ran out of all options, I didn't want to feel like a quitter.

The other dimension is the people you have around you that shape you as a person. I was raised by my parents to always be hard on myself and if

“I knew we weren't going to come in and set the world on fire, but I wasn't ready for the heartache”

heartache. There were some dark times during the first few years just trying to survive – I was still feeling like a rookie until the middle of 2009. Honestly, I wasn't shocked by missing the Daytona 500 that first year because I only had maybe 150 laps in a Cup car in testing. The first year, Brian Vickers and I both missed half the races – and that meant losing basically 500 miles of practice, so you would have to wait until the next week to do it all again.

When you step up into cars that are similar, say from an Atlantic car into a Champ Car, you've just

I made a mistake, they would call me out on it. How can you learn from something if you don't believe it's your fault? I don't care if it's racing or playing golf or sim racing, I wear my emotions on my sleeve and every year I continually learn and try to be better.

There's a lot of pressure because there aren't many quality rides out there, so I think drivers are nervous that if they say 'that's my fault' or 'I've done this wrong' then people will write them off. Young guys don't want to get put in that position, so it's just easier to put a defence mechanism up. But as long as at some point you admit it and you learn from it, you can only get better from it.

It's a lesson I'm still learning, but it's also really important to enjoy it and there have been times when I haven't enjoyed it as much as I should. That doesn't mean you have to be happy when you make mistakes or don't win, but it will quickly be over before you know it and if you haven't enjoyed it then you'll have missed out. Especially when you get to do it with a good group of people, it's really special.

WHAT KIND OF ROOKIE SHOULD YOU BE?

THIS YEAR'S ROOKIES WILL BE SEEKING TO MAKE AN IMPRESSION IN F1, BUT WHAT KEY TRAITS SHOULD THEY PRIORITISE? **JAMES NEWBOLD** EXPLAINS WHY OUTRIGHT SPEED ISN'T AS IMPORTANT AS YOU MIGHT EXPECT

After a stellar first season in Formula 1, Charles Leclerc earned a promotion to Ferrari. And the 2019 grid is set to feature the most exciting rookie crop since Kimi Raikkonen, Fernando Alonso and Juan Pablo Montoya all arrived in 2001.

The top three finishers in the 2018 Formula 2 championship, George Russell (Williams), Lando Norris (McLaren) and Alex Albon (Toro Rosso), plus 2016 runner-up Antonio Giovinazzi (Sauber), will get their chance to shine and hope to show the same mix of speed, rapid rate of progression and maturity that helped Leclerc gain his Ferrari shot.

But no matter how good the machinery at their disposal – both Jacques Villeneuve and Lewis Hamilton launched credible title challenges as rookies in 1996 and 2007 – no first-year driver can reasonably expect to be operating at 100% in all areas straight away. Leclerc admitted to finding F1 “overwhelming” at first and had a patchy opening three races before a change in his driving style reaped rewards with sixth

in Baku. He still needs to work on extracting the last bit of qualifying pace.

While there is no harm in aiming to be the best one can be, it makes sense for rookies to prioritise certain key criteria. But what should that amount to? Is mind management more important than outright speed? How important is it to build a good rapport with the team? And what value should be placed on technical competence or the ability to learn quickly?

We formed an expert panel comprising seven-time grand prix winner Montoya, three-time world champion and ex-team boss Jackie Stewart, former Jordan and Stewart technical director Gary Anderson and one-season wonder Ralph Firman Jr to explain the most important traits rookies need to show in their first season of F1. Each is given a score out of 10 and ranked. Prepare for a few surprises... ▶



Gary Anderson



Ralph Firman



Juan Pablo Montoya



Jackie Stewart

THE PANEL



TECHNICAL COMPETENCE

5 One of the key factors behind Toro Rosso granting Brendon Hartley a surprise F1 debut at Austin 2017 was his experience developing the hybrid system in Porsche's all-conquering 919 Hybrid LMP1. To that end, he delivered, as the Kiwi's precise feedback proved a major asset to Honda in its push for performance and reliability. But while a useful complement to other skills, technical competence is perhaps not as essential as it was for rookies in the pre-data age. It wasn't enough for Hartley to keep his drive in 2019, and it was the same for Firman at Jordan in 2003.

"Back in the 1980s, you needed much more technical competence because they didn't have the computers," says Firman, the son of legendary Van Diemen constructor and engineer Ralph Sr. "It was much more down to the drivers telling the engineers exactly what was going on."

Firman's preparation for F1 was unorthodox, but six years in Japan following his 1996 British F3 and Macau GP double, racking up the testing miles in Formula Nippon and Super GT, had given him a strong understanding of tyre compounds and constructions.

All of that was great in theory, but of little use in practice. The 2003 Jordan EJ13 was an



Firman's battling drive to eighth in Spain was rare high in 2003

HOW OUR EXPERTS RATED TECHNICAL COMPETENCE

PANELIST	PTS
Gary Anderson	9
Ralph Firman	9
Juan Pablo Montoya	7
Jackie Stewart	6

aerodynamically limited machine and its Bridgestone tyres were no match for the Michelins. Firman struggled against experienced team-mate Giancarlo Fisichella in the one-lap qualifying format, never managing higher than 14th at the Nurburgring and, with limited team funds to introduce upgrades, could not turn the tide. A single point for eighth at Barcelona was his scant reward.

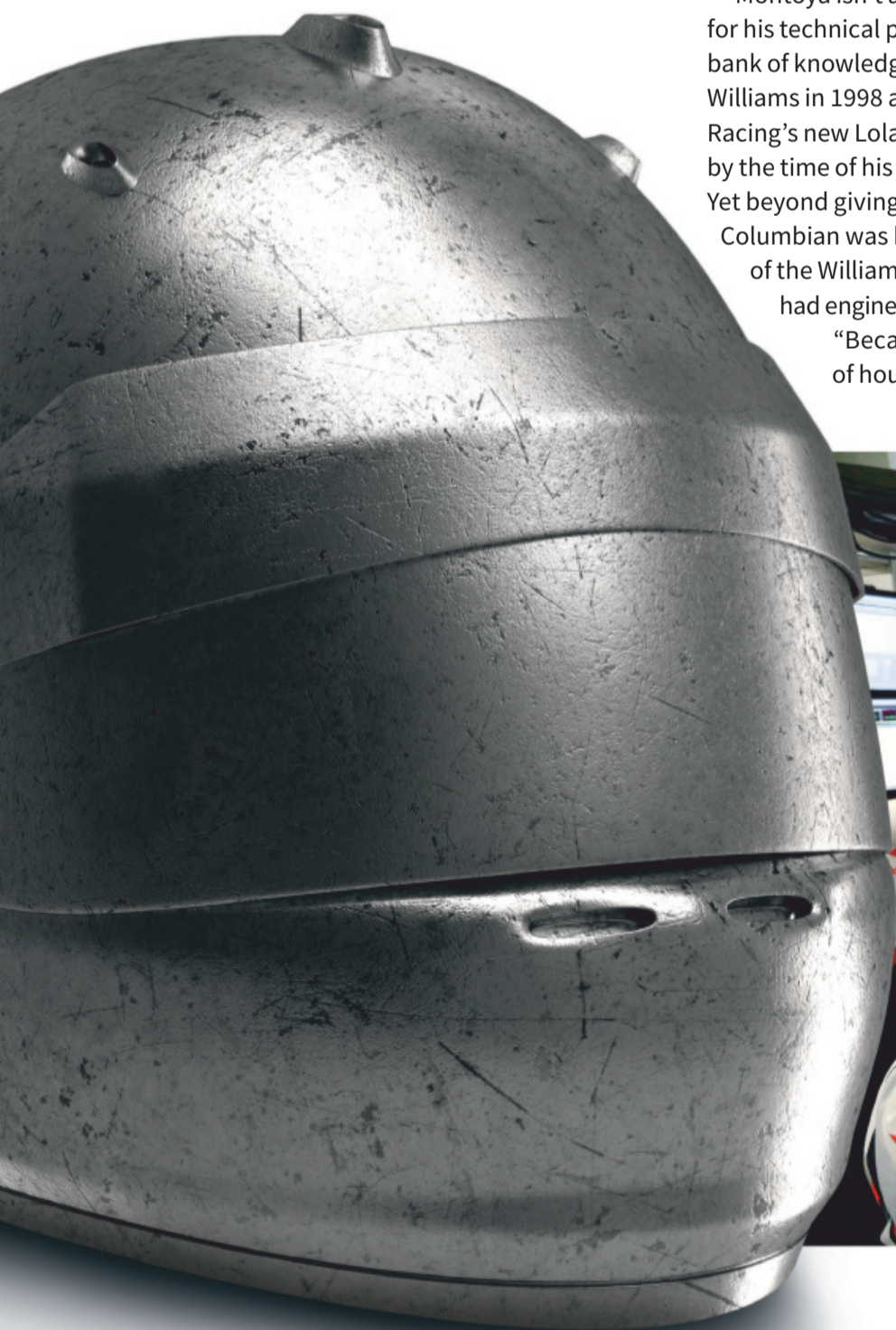
Montoya isn't a driver commonly credited for his technical prowess, but he had a good bank of knowledge from his time testing for Williams in 1998 and developing Chip Ganassi Racing's new Lola-Toyota package in CART by the time of his grand prix debut in 2001. Yet beyond giving his initial feedback, the Columbian was happy to leave the fine-tuning of the Williams FW23 to Tim Preston, who had engineered Damon Hill to the 1996 title.

"Because I don't spend the amount of hours that some other people

spend on it, some people think I'm not as good or I don't care, but I just don't overthink anything," Montoya says. "For me, things are never complicated. If it understeers, it understeers, what other thing do you need to fix? If I'm good on the entrance and put the power down good and it doesn't turn in the middle, you need to fix the middle. That's why they're called engineers..."

Montoya's attitude may be considered dismissive, but it reflects his stance that engineering knowledge should be considered a bonus part of the package for rookies, rather than an absolute necessity.

"The slower you are, the better technically you need to be," he says. "If you're quick, everything else you can compensate. If you're not quick, you have to be very strong mentally, very good technically and very good at everything."



Porsche experience wasn't enough for Hartley to retain F1 race seat, but has secured Ferrari sim role



MOTORSPORT IMAGES/SUTTON

CHARLES LECLERC

SPEAKING AT THE JAPANESE GP IN 2018, CHARLES LECLERC LOOKED BACK ON HIS YEAR WITH SCOTT MITCHELL

WHY ARE YOU SO GOOD AS A ROOKIE?

I think it's a mix of things. F2 is an amazing preparation, 95% of the race is tyre management. This has helped me massively for this season to be on it straight away. You need to be confident you can do it, as for any driver, but you also have to be very humble and accept that at times you just need to listen to people who have been in the sport a long time. I'm always open-minded to any kind of tips or things I need to change on track where I can get better. This helps a lot. Probably the biggest thing is to listen.

VAN AMERSFOORT RACING HAD INSTABILITY IN EURO F3 WHEN ENGINEER RIK VERNOOIJ TOOK SOME TIME OUT AND YOU SLUMPED, SO HOW BIG A ROLE DOES THE TEAM PLAY?

I think it was a bit of a different situation. The race engineer has a huge part, he's everything, but he had to leave in the middle of the year. When you lose this person, it's a big disadvantage. Obviously, this year there have been some changes but the key people of the factory were still there. The team has managed it extremely well to not lose the focus and to still be on it. As drivers, the stability felt the same. The people at the track were the same people.

WHAT WAS THE BEST ADVICE YOU RECEIVED?

I've had it from different people, to keep your feet on the ground and always work. This is extremely important. It's easy in F1 to think, 'I've done it'. This is not the right mentality.



Montoya got to grips with tyres after this Austria altercation

COATES motorsport IMAGES

ABILITY TO LEARN QUICKLY

4 Montoya's 2001 season was a rollercoaster that typified his F1 career, but also showed an ability to identify weaknesses and learn from them that is fundamentally important for rookie drivers.

"At the beginning the testing was hard," he recalls. "I remember my first few tests at Jerez, Ralf [Schumacher] was so quick at the beginning, he made my life miserable."

It didn't get much better in his first two races; after a messy opening lap, Montoya retired in Australia when his BMW engine went pop, then aquaplaned off in monsoon conditions in Malaysia. But he was in position to win on only his third start in Brazil until he was rear-ended by Jos Verstappen's lapped Arrows, and picked up a first podium with a measured drive to second in Spain before taking another backwards step, this time attracting the ire of Michael Schumacher in Austria when his refusal to concede the lead on wilted Michelins resulted in both cars taking a trip through the gravel.

Under pressure following consecutive race-ending shunts in Monaco and Montreal, Montoya finished second again at the Nurburgring, which proved to be a turning point. Thereafter, he increasingly understood how to get the best out of his equipment and put in dominant drives at Hockenheim and Monza, only missing out on victory in Germany when a refuelling problem caused his engine to overheat.

Having won CART as a rookie in 1999 – and won three times on ovals he had never seen before – Montoya maintains he was confident of quickly learning the ropes in F1. But even with testing mileage that today's rookie crop could only dream of, he points out that the lack of simulation meant

he was still confronted with unfamiliar situations, so had to learn on the hoof.

"Especially with such limited running, you've got to be able to get up to speed quick, you've got to understand how far you can go everywhere before you even get there," says Montoya. "That's why Monaco the first year I crashed – as I was going through the weekend, I was still trying to figure out what I needed to do."

"It's crazy because when a kid goes to a track nowadays, he's done maybe 400 laps around the place [in a simulator] before he turns a wheel. That makes a big difference."

Yet Stewart, one of Montoya's early mentors in Formula Vauxhall, declined to score the importance of learning quickly. In his view, the opposite is true. F1 looked very different when the Scot made his debut for BRM in 1965, when safety considerations were very limited and the machinery was more "technically vulnerable". That required a more cautious approach for drivers bedding into F1 than Stewart perceives to be the case today, with drivers taking more liberties than were possible in years past to accelerate their rate of progression.

"I think you give yourself a whole season – you can't learn everything in your first grand prix, your second grand prix or your third grand prix," he says. "If you push it, you'll go off the road, have a collision, you'll not get the best out of the car. And tell your team that it's the case – 'I want to do well but I don't want to overdrive or push too hard, I've got to learn how to do this'. Be very honest."

"You cannot start off being Senna or Schumacher and you shouldn't think you should. Knowledge only comes from experience."

Stewart led only his second grand prix, at Monaco, but was lucky to continue unscathed after spinning on oil. It was a lesson learned.

"I wasn't paying enough attention to see the oil," he admits. "In later years that wouldn't have happened, because my consumption of information would have been greater."

"When I started, there were three parts to a corner – entry, apex and exit – and when I finished, there were eight parts to the corner. It took me a while to get to know that." ▶



Stewart learned a lesson from Monaco '65 slip-up

MOTORSPORT IMAGES

HOW OUR EXPERTS RATED ABILITY TO LEARN QUICKLY

PANELIST	PTS
Gary Anderson	9
Juan Pablo Montoya	9
Ralph Firman	8
Jackie Stewart	N/A

SPEED

3 Raw pace is a prerequisite for drivers to reach F1 in the first place, but for Anderson it's not the most crucial ingredient for rookies to show straight away.

There's a school of thought that it's better to find the limit and occasionally overstep it than never find it at all, but Anderson counters that speed over a race stint – and especially over a single lap – is the result of a combination of factors, from technical prowess to a good working relationship between team and driver, and the driver having the right mindset to focus on the job.

"Unless they've got a big bank balance, they will have shown their talent and ability to see the bigger picture in the lower formulas," he says. "I don't think you don't have to show your speed in F1 from day one, you need to show all of this other stuff – that you've got enough mental capacity to take in what's going on around you as opposed to just white-knuckling the car and driving the wheels off it."

A common rookie mistake is to presume that commitment equates to speed. While Takuma Sato could never be accused of lacking commitment in his debut season with Jordan in 2002, the Honda protege's impatience to find the limit meant he could often be found exploring the

gravel traps rather than using practice to build up to the

ultimate pace. Compared to Rubens Barrichello, who Anderson engineered as a rookie in 1993, the difference was telling.

"Takuma didn't have as much experience by any means, but he was always making mistakes because he would go out and try to be faster than his team-mate," he says. "He wasn't willing to wait, whereas Rubens would know that, at the end of that session, he could put all the bits together and make it happen. It's the little things – driving a road car around a track with Rubens, it was a finger-tip job. He was relaxed in what he was doing. He had mental capacity to spare."

For Stewart, speed is a matter of sensitivity and smooth introductions "to make it feel you're going slowly". Applying this philosophy, he was a revelation in 1965, finishing third in the world championship behind Jim Clark and Graham Hill, with a victory at Monza to his credit.

"I was driven not to overdrive," he says. "I was well-lectured by [BRM bosses] Tony Rudd and Raymond Mays because I was a young puppy in their minds coming from Formula 3.

"I thought that I was doing the right thing by driving what I thought to be within my cautious limits. To get an F1 drive in those days in such a short period of time from F3 to F1 was almost unreal from a driver's point of view and I was very conscious of my responsibilities.

"If you're too fast, then you're not going to be able to do it consistently and you've taken more out of the car and the tyres. Overdriving is the biggest thing of all to avoid."

WORKING WITH THE TEAM

2 One of the most common misconceptions in motorsport is that a truly special driver can transcend the capabilities of their car, when in reality all they can do is extract the limit from the package. To do that, a close working relationship with mechanics and engineers is crucial. Lewis Hamilton and before him Michael Schumacher have made it a key feature of their multiple title-winning campaigns with Mercedes and Ferrari respectively, but that's not to say it's any less important for rookies.

"Your mechanics are the ones who are sweating it out every night while you have other engagements to do," says Firman, explaining his maximum score. "They are the ones putting the hard work in to make sure the car is perfect for you to drive the next day. It's a team effort right down to the people at the factory."

Stewart founded the Grand Prix Trust as a reflection of the high esteem he held for the people who worked on his cars, and agrees that building a rapport is a crucial short-cut for a driver bedding in.

HOW OUR EXPERTS RATED SPEED

PANELIST	PTS
Ralph Firman	10
Juan Pablo Montoya	10
Jackie Stewart	9
Gary Anderson	8



MOTORSPORT IMAGES/SBLOXHAM

MASSA'S FRESH START

After 15 seasons in Formula 1, Felipe Massa is discovering that 269 grand prix starts counts for very little in Formula E. With a calendar packed full of street circuits he's never seen before, limited track time for practice, not to mention reduced downforce and factors that make the car unpredictable on the brakes,

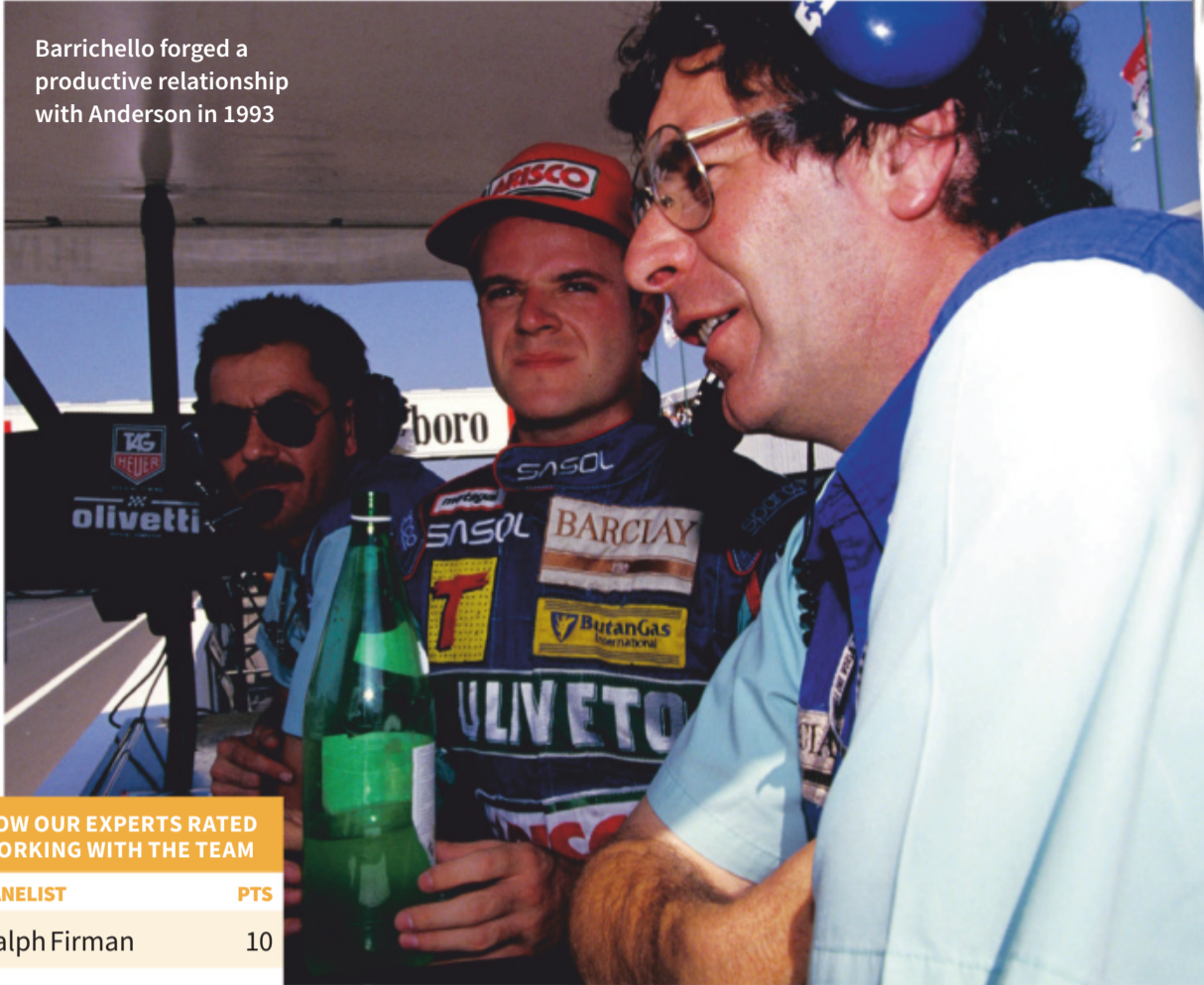
Massa has had a tough start with Venturi and is sitting at the bottom of the standings, having yet to score in the opening three rounds.

It's easy to forget that the Brazilian was considered something of a wild child when he burst onto the scene with Sauber in 2002 and received F1's first ever 10-place grid penalty for chopping

across Pedro de la Rosa's Jaguar at Monza, before his career was given a fresh lease of life as Ferrari's tester in 2003.

Now 37 and one of the sport's elder statesmen, Massa looks on his F1 rookie year with new perspective – "Back then I was a young guy and had in my mind that every lap is like a qualifying lap, so

Barrichello forged a productive relationship with Anderson in 1993



HOW OUR EXPERTS RATED WORKING WITH THE TEAM

PANELIST	PTS
Ralph Firman	10
Juan Pablo Montoya	10
Gary Anderson	9
Jackie Stewart	9

“Your life is in their hands, your performance is in their hands,” he says. “For a young driver coming in, he’s got to build relationships within the team as early as he can to have the mechanics or engineers want him to do well, because he’s such a nice guy and he likes talking to us and building a relationship.”

“Those relationships you cannot buy, because those mechanics or engineers in a lot of cases have seen a lot of new drivers coming through, some they’ve enjoyed and some they haven’t. They are going to be more helpful if they feel they’re being well-respected.”

Working with the team is a two-way street. Montoya points out that the theoretical quickest set-up presented by the engineers won’t always be suited to the driver’s needs and that the driver has to take responsibility for ensuring they are comfortable, but a willingness to discuss options can go a long way to building a productive relationship.

Where Ralf Schumacher and Sato were opposed to compromise, Anderson found Barrichello prepared to listen to suggestions, which motivated him further to find solutions.

“I liked working with Ralf, but he was initially very hard on the car,” reflects Anderson. “There was no dividing line with Ralf, he would just get in the car and drive it flat-out, the way he wanted to drive it. You couldn’t say to him, ‘Have you tried that?’, whereas with Rubens you could say that and he’d listen.”

“He’d come into the pits and say, ‘I haven’t got very good traction, the rear is snapping’ or whatever and by the time he stopped in the garage, if I didn’t have a set-up change to present to him I felt inadequate. You would present it to him and he would say, ‘Yep, OK’ or, ‘No, I think we need it stiffer on the front or softer there’, and that’s the relationship you build up.” ▶

the shunts and mistakes were a lot higher at that time” – but concedes there is some similarity in his mental approach to FE.

“The feeling you have in your head is similar because everything is new for you,” he says. “My experience definitely helps to learn things in the right way, so I’ll never feel like a rookie in this way, but I really feel like having your feet on the ground helps you to learn

things in a quicker way.

“Now, with experience, all of the procedures you have in this category you understand in a better way”.

Massa accepts that the tight time constraints afforded by FE’s single-day format means errors have more serious consequences than in F1, but maintains that “mistakes in the right way are always important to have”.

“You have to find the limit,” he says. “And without mistakes, it’s difficult to find the proper limit. For sure, you have not much time for mistakes, because they can take you away from your perfect direction in qualifying because you didn’t do so many laps, or you destroyed the car, but mistakes are important in the right way.”



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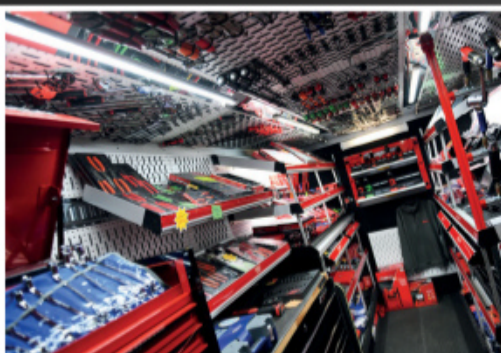
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Stewart tracked Clark to second at Spa in 1965

PHIPPS
motorsport
IMAGES

MIND MANAGEMENT

1 Stewart is unequivocal that mind management is “the single-most important thing” to master for young drivers entering F1, which is reflected by his only maximum score.

A top-class skeet-shooter in his youth, Stewart’s ability to remove emotion and drive in a calculated fashion was a key strength throughout his career, not least in foul conditions at the Nurburgring in 1968, but was especially evident on his first visit to Spa in 1965 when he finished second behind Clark.

“It was torrential rain, as bad as it can get,” he says. “As soon as we got on the podium, Jimmy said to me, ‘Are you OK?’ During the race, he was frightened because I was not too far behind him. He kept thinking I was over my early abilities. We lapped the whole field, the two of us.”

Mind management can make or break rookies in F1. Having smashed Ayrton Senna’s win record in British F3 with Paul Stewart Racing in 1994, Jan Magnussen (below) was a natural choice to partner Barrichello when Stewart GP was launched in 1997, but never produced the results his talent merited and was replaced by Jos Verstappen during 1998. While a lack of testing mileage with the unreliable new car hampered the Dane, Stewart puts Magnussen’s struggles down to poor mind management.



HOW OUR EXPERTS RATED MIND MANAGEMENT

PANELIST	PTS
Ralph Firman	10
Juan Pablo Montoya	10
Jackie Stewart	10
Gary Anderson	9

“His mind just dropped out,” says Stewart. “There was no mind-management at the beginning of a race. After the first third of a race, he was as good as anyone in the field, but he had been so wound up in the beginning that he overdrove. Ironically Verstappen was the same.

“Their driving skills were absolutely first class after they got over the period of their head not working correctly. If they had wanted to have counsel on that, they should have sat down with me and talked about it.”

By contrast, an ability not to be fazed by anybody had long been one of Montoya’s key strengths. He had effectively ended Tom Walkinshaw protege Craig Lowndes’ aspirations of reaching F1 when they were paired at RSM Marko in Formula 3000 in 1997, and wasted no time in ruffling feathers in 2001 with his bold pass on Michael Schumacher at Interlagos.

But it was his pole lap in damp conditions at Spa – nine tenths up on Williams team-mate Ralf Schumacher in second – that showed the lengths he was willing to go to. His efforts ultimately came to naught – he stalled on the grid, then suffered his fourth engine failure of the year in the race – but he had already proved his point.

“Every corner I would think what Ralf could do and try to go more than that,” he says. “Ralf was the guy that if you could beat him on his ‘A day’, then you had him covered. Everyone can have a good and a bad weekend, but if you bring your best game and someone can top you, you’ve got to figure out what you need to do and that’s where the mind is very important.

“I do remember two or three places where in my mind it was like, ‘I need to take it easy here’, but I said, ‘Don’t! Don’t take it easy!’ It was always that mental argument of, ‘How far you are willing to push it? How badly do you want to make it

happen?’ I always thought if someone can do it, you can do it. If they tell you, ‘Michael went flat through there’, next thing you know, you’ve got to try it flat.

“The mental thing is the most important of everything. If people think you’re better than you actually are, it makes your life easier. If you can get in people’s heads, 90% of the job is done.” ■

SUMMARY

MIND MANAGEMENT

1 AVERAGE SCORE 9.75
With a lowest score of nine from our sample set, mind management comes out on top.

WORKING WITH THE TEAM

2 AVERAGE SCORE 9.5
A close second, the key differentiator being Stewart’s reluctance to hand out 10s.

SPEED

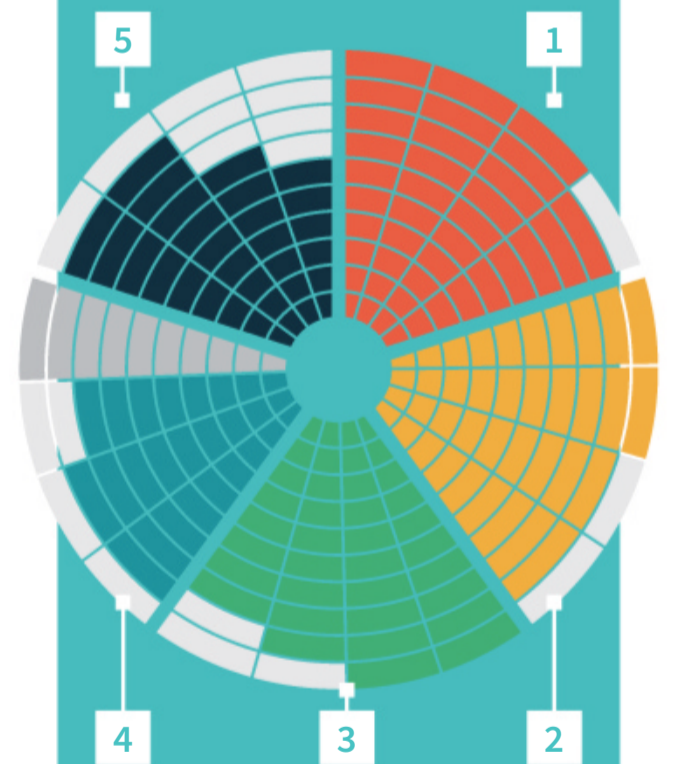
3 AVERAGE SCORE 9.25
Anderson’s score of eight drags the average down. Speed isn’t everything.

ABILITY TO LEARN QUICKLY

4 AVERAGE SCORE 8.67
Skewed somewhat by Stewart’s abstention, this will give the 2019 crop hope

TECHNICAL COMPETENCE

5 AVERAGE SCORE 7.75
The complexity of F1 can be overwhelming, but this can be learned with time



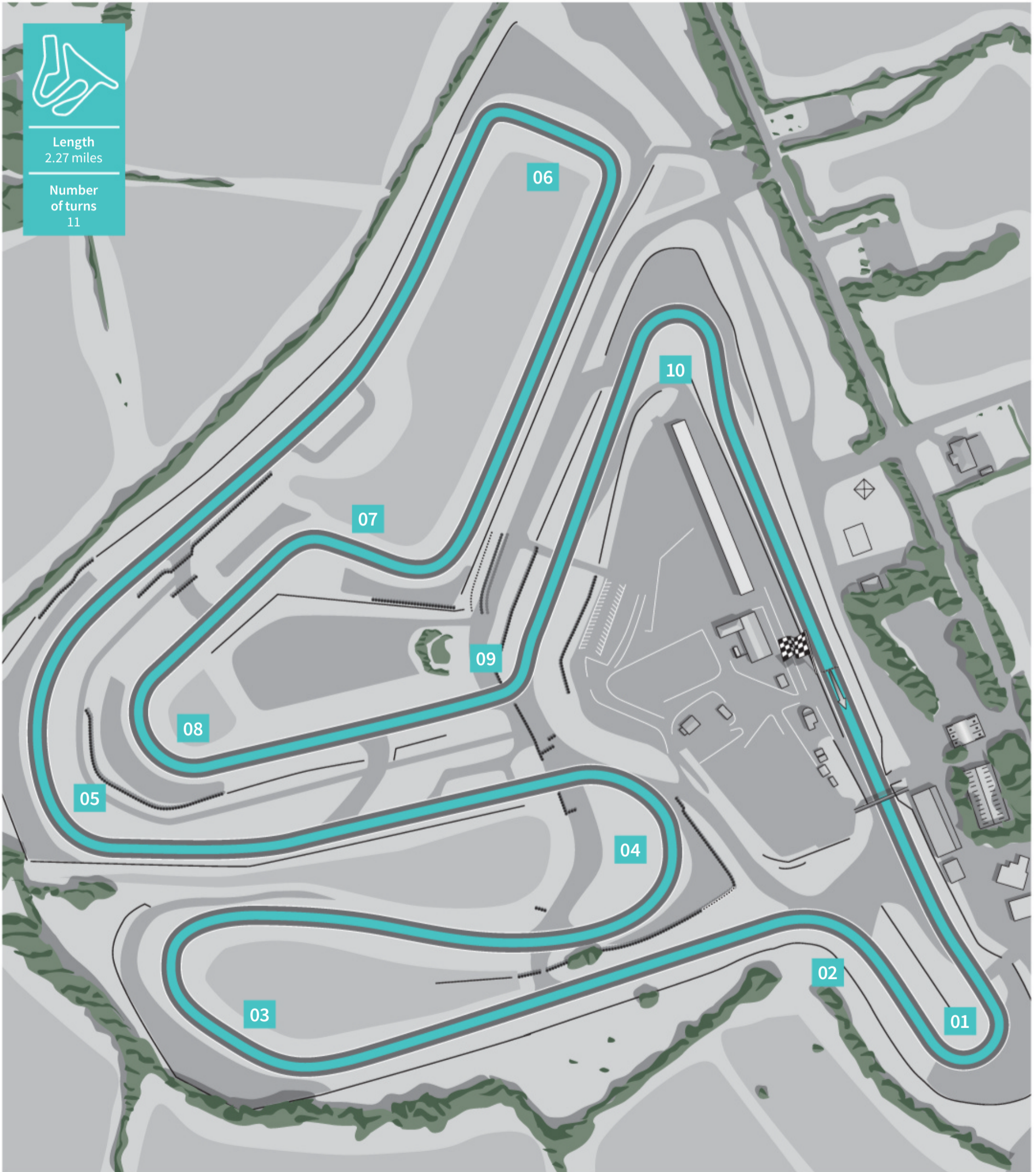
Come December in Abu Dhabi, we’ll have a better idea of where this year’s rookie crop will stand. Everything that has gone before will be set aside as the quartet prepare for the biggest test of their careers to date. Now’s the time for each to ask themselves what kind of rookie they want to be.



MONDELLO PARK

DAMIEN FAULKNER

THE TWO-TIME CARRERA CUP GB CHAMPION EXPLAINS HIS TIPS FOR A QUICK LAP AT IRELAND'S HAIRPIN CITY



01 MOBIL 1
Turn 1

As you come out of the last corner, you're looking to take advantage of the steeper incline downhill towards the first corner, so you'll typically see the train of cars sweeping in from the outside of the last corner in towards the pitwall where it falls away quite sharply. Midway down the pitwall or thereabouts, you then start to come back across the road heading for the outside of the track under the bridge to end up parallel to the grass verge. It's a second-gear corner and it's all about compromise, because it's not a typical V-shape hairpin where you can brake as late as possible. It's basically a U-shape and cambers in from your turn-in point, so you come down into the corner a bit. Typically you're holding the apex and then trying to squeeze the throttle on as quickly as you can to get a nice, smooth exit. But since Turn 1 is a really technical corner, sometimes it's better to concentrate on car placement to get a higher minimum corner speed through there and onto the back straight, even if that's to the detriment of exit speed from Turn 1.



MOTORSPORT IMAGES/GRIFFITHS

02 TURN 2
Turn 2

Turn 2 is one of my favourites at Mondello. It's interesting because it has the impression of falling away on entry, but then goes uphill through the apex to the exit. I remember in Formula Ford being told to turn in to the corner and at the same time lift off the throttle to get the back end to slide before getting back on the throttle again. Doing it that way helps to alleviate the problem that you've got no downforce and the front end won't bite, so you get on the throttle much earlier than if you endured the understeer. You don't use the brakes – it's the same in a Porsche, where it would take too long for the front end to grip. It's an increasing-speed corner, which you take in third gear. In fact, you may have to even short-shift depending on gear ratios.

IMPORTANCE OF RHYTHM

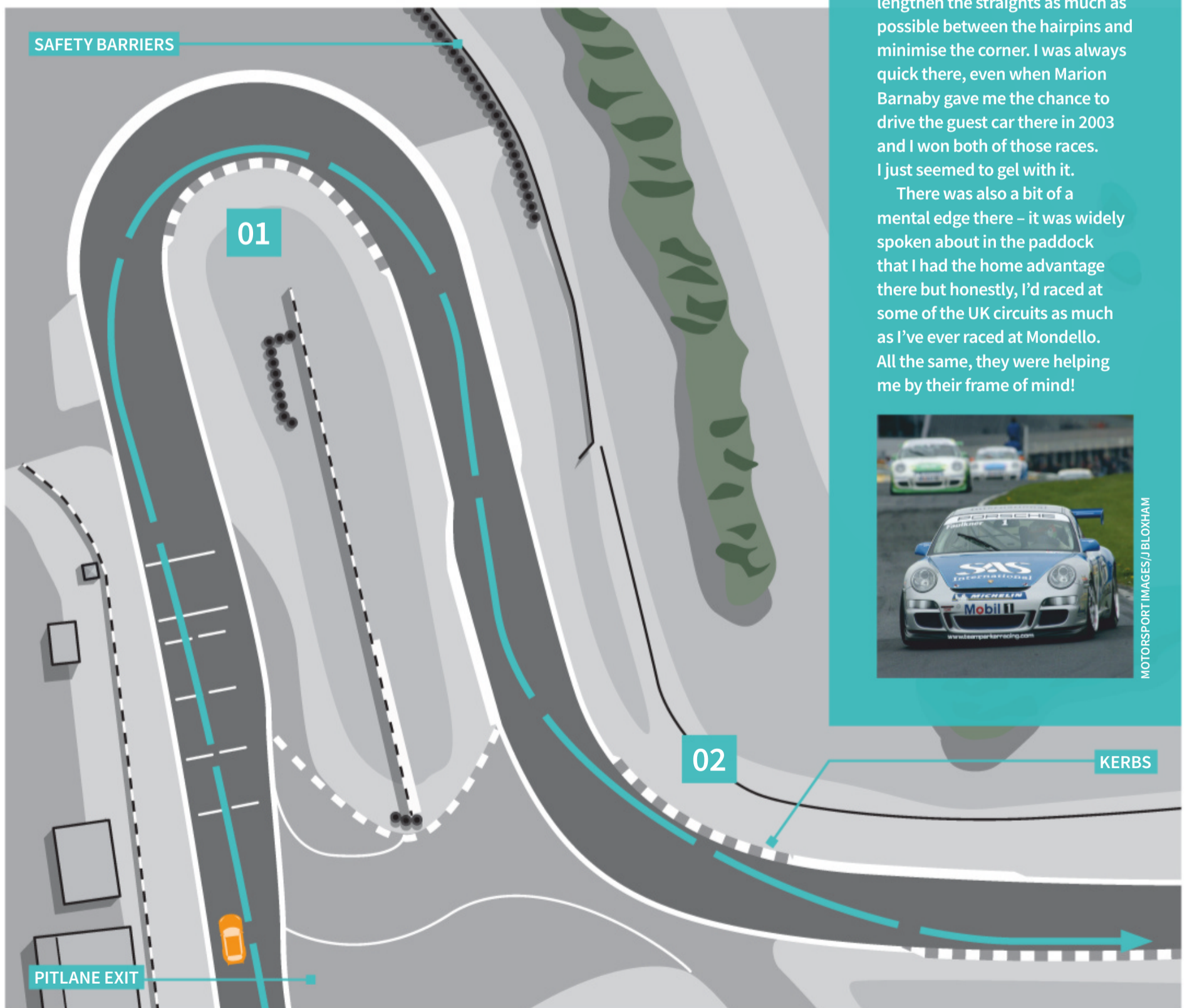
Mondello is ostensibly a hairpin city, but what it lacks in medium or high-speed corners it makes up for in the technical challenge. Because hairpins are slow corners, typically you're in them for a long time, so the potential to lose time is greater than in a medium to high-speed corner. When you add up all the second-gear corners at Mondello, there is a lot of time to potentially lose if you're not on top of the technical challenge.

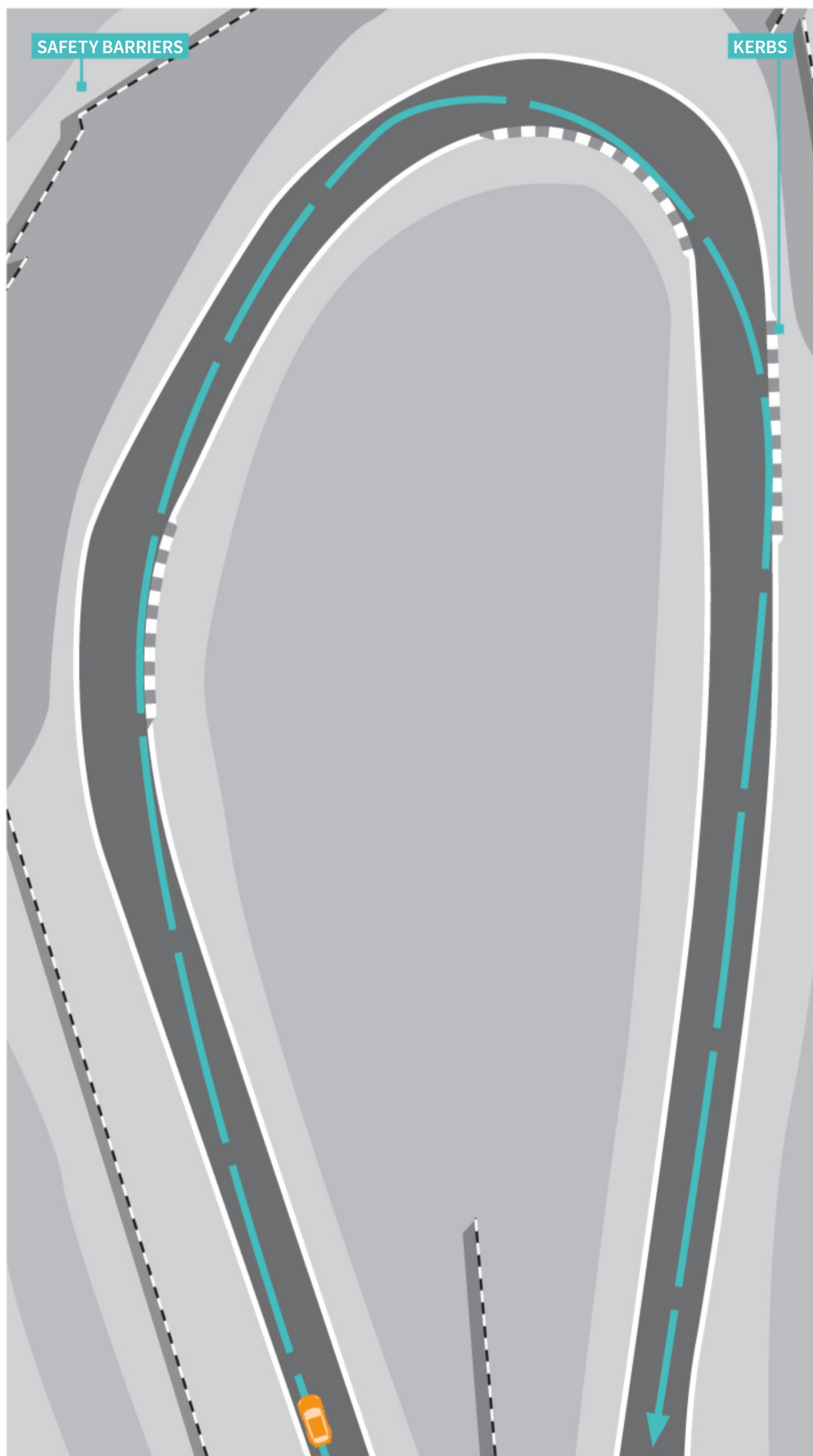
It's almost a track designed for Porsches because it emulates the techniques you need to use its strengths – it's got great traction out of the hairpins and pretty good brakes, so you're looking to lengthen the straights as much as possible between the hairpins and minimise the corner. I was always quick there, even when Marion Barnaby gave me the chance to drive the guest car there in 2003 and I won both of those races. I just seemed to gel with it.

There was also a bit of a mental edge there – it was widely spoken about in the paddock that I had the home advantage there but honestly, I'd raced at some of the UK circuits as much as I've ever raced at Mondello. All the same, they were helping me by their frame of mind!



MOTORSPORT IMAGES/JBLOXHAM

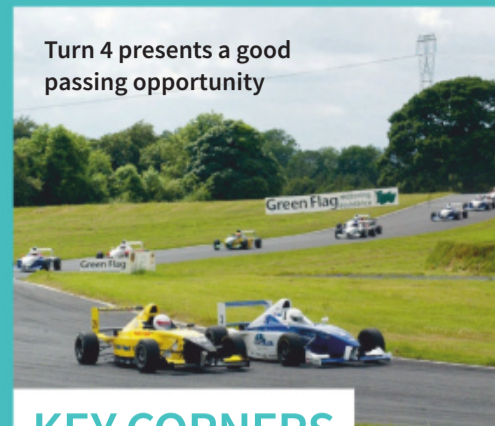




03 CALOR
Turn 3

You're trying to carry as much speed as you can into the first part of Turn 3, maybe even taking it down to third gear to aid the braking into the second part. You're really using the brakes as steering to help move the roll-centre forward and put a bit more grip on the nose. The grip is right in at the apex of the second part. At the same time, it also goes uphill, which gives

what I call 'free grip' because suddenly there is more weight in the chassis which allows you to get on the throttle really early. But also the exit is blind, so car placement is really important because it's quite tight at the top there. You can run out on the exit kerb, but you obviously don't want to have to lift off at that point to keep yourself on the track, otherwise you're losing time.



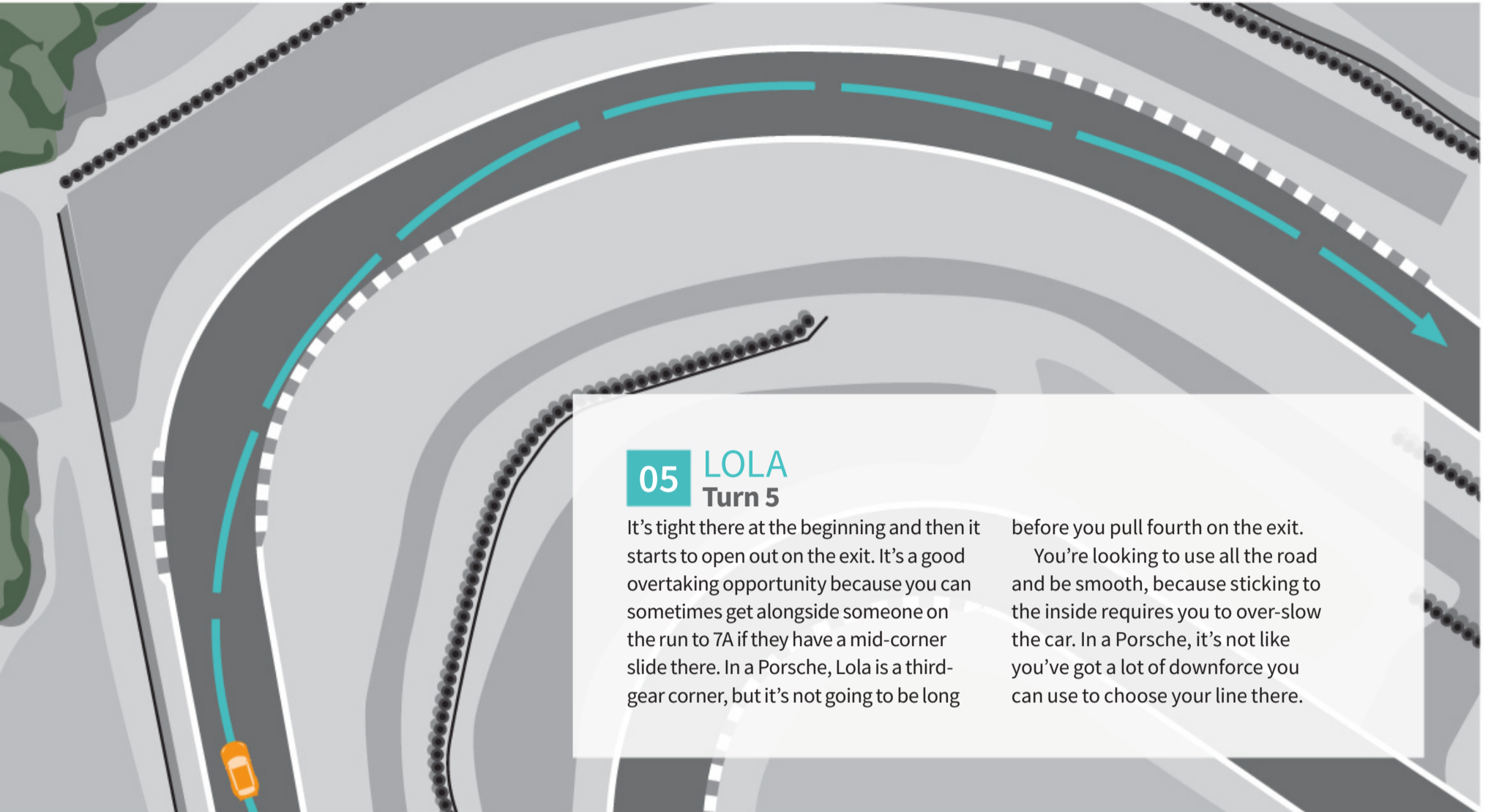
Turn 4 presents a good passing opportunity

MOTORSPORT IMAGES/PAUL

KEY CORNERS

04 BRIDGESTONE
Turn 4

Turn 4 is probably my favourite corner on the circuit – I've made a few good moves there. Like so many corners at Mondello, it's off-camber and there is no entry kerb when you're braking on the way in. There's all sorts of different lines you can use, but I tend to stick to the centre of the road on entry and aim for the first apex kerb, which comes really late so it's like you're threading a needle. Everything closes up in front of you very fast, there's a clay bank on the outside that feels very close because there's very little run-off, so it's daunting and very difficult to get right – definitely one of the more challenging corners on the circuit. It's a long hairpin and then you've got that long straight immediately after it, so you've got to get the exit right. The most important thing is to get the car rotated, then back on the power once and once only.

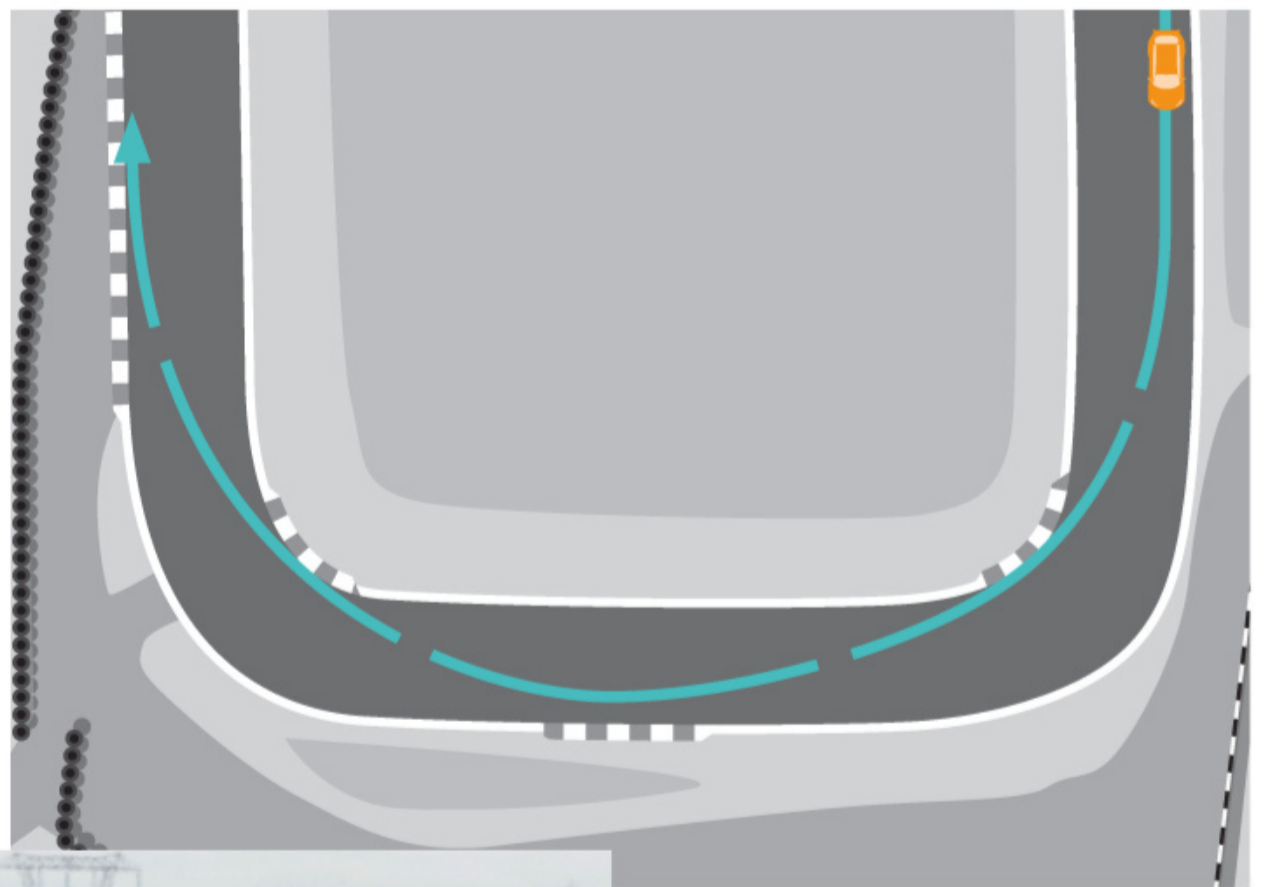


05 LOLA
Turn 5

It's tight there at the beginning and then it starts to open out on the exit. It's a good overtaking opportunity because you can sometimes get alongside someone on the run to 7A if they have a mid-corner slide there. In a Porsche, Lola is a third-gear corner, but it's not going to be long

before you pull fourth on the exit.

You're looking to use all the road and be smooth, because sticking to the inside requires you to over-slow the car. In a Porsche, it's not like you've got a lot of downforce you can use to choose your line there.

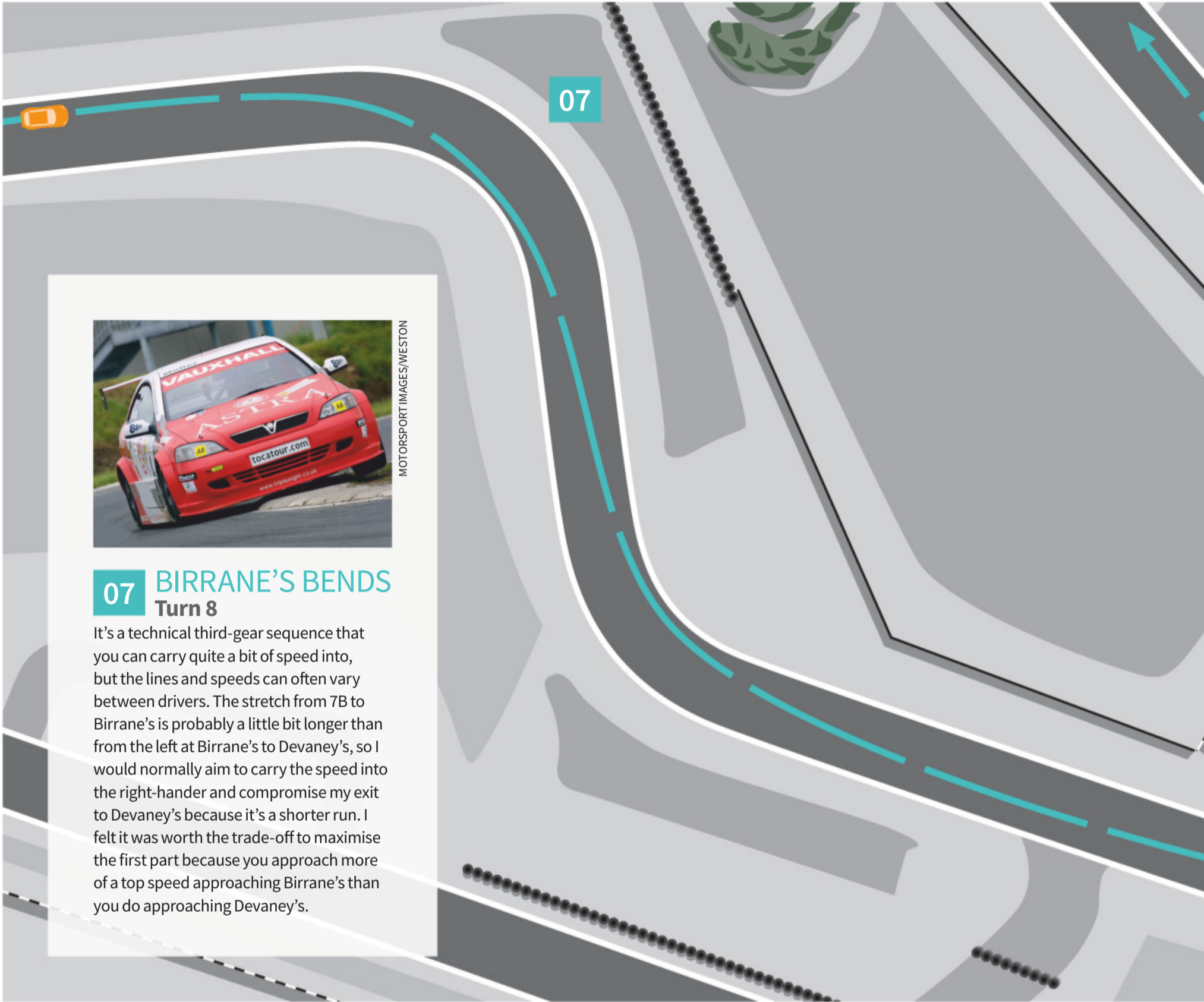


Mike Jordan holds off the BTCC pack in 2006



06 TURN 7A & 7B
Turn 7

You're approaching it downhill from the left-hand side of the road following Daly's Drift in top gear, then braking down to second for the first apex. You take both parts of the corner as one sweep, trying to be really smooth so that you don't upset the roll-centre. Out of the second apex, you're coming up the hill again so it's important to get the front to bite and have the front where you want it to get on the power as quickly as possible. Kerbs at Mondello are normally a little bit on the rough side, so how much you use depends on your set-up; but if you're going to use one, it would be at the second apex.



MOTORSPORT IMAGES/WESTON

07 BIRRANE'S BENDS
Turn 8

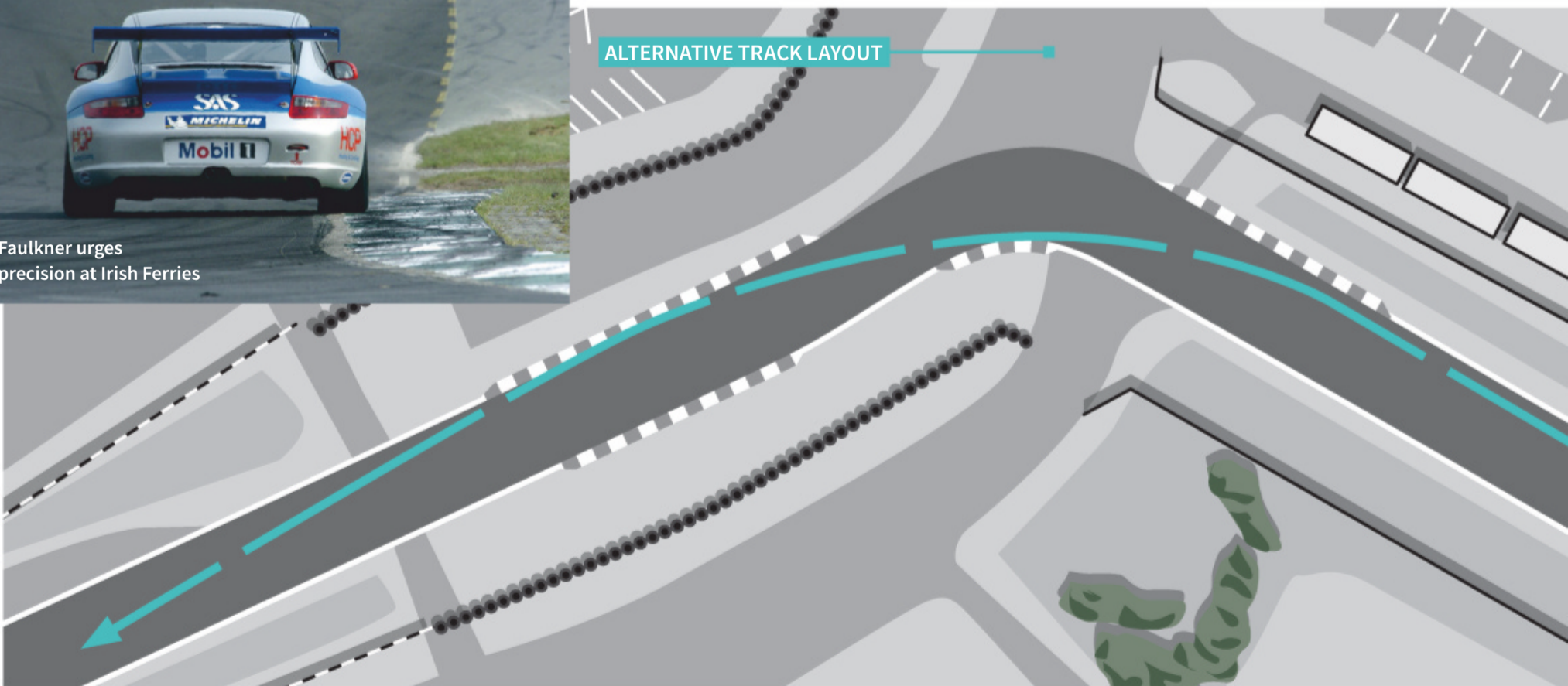
It's a technical third-gear sequence that you can carry quite a bit of speed into, but the lines and speeds can often vary between drivers. The stretch from 7B to Birrane's is probably a little bit longer than from the left at Birrane's to Devaney's, so I would normally aim to carry the speed into the right-hander and compromise my exit to Devaney's because it's a shorter run. I felt it was worth the trade-off to maximise the first part because you approach more of a top speed approaching Birrane's than you do approaching Devaney's.



MOTORSPORT IMAGES/J BLOXHAM

Faulkner urges precision at Irish Ferries

ALTERNATIVE TRACK LAYOUT



08 DEVANEY'S
Turn 9

It's a fairly short chute from Devaney's to Irish Ferries, but you want to ensure your minimum corner speed there is as high as possible to set yourself up for an overtake at the final corner. That means the exit from Devaney's is crucial – it's a classical V where you pick up two apexes, get it rotated in the middle and get on the power early.



Bruno Senna won on British F3's last Mondello visit in 2006

KEY CORNERS

10 SOUTHSIDE MOTOR FACTORS
Turn 11

You're braking down to second gear there to set up for the start of the lap, but also have to keep an eye on your mirrors for cars looking to throw one up the inside. It's a great corner because it's so undulating; it's also blind on the entry, which prevents people braking really late. You come up over the crest and the road drops away into the apex, so you lose grip and the chassis goes

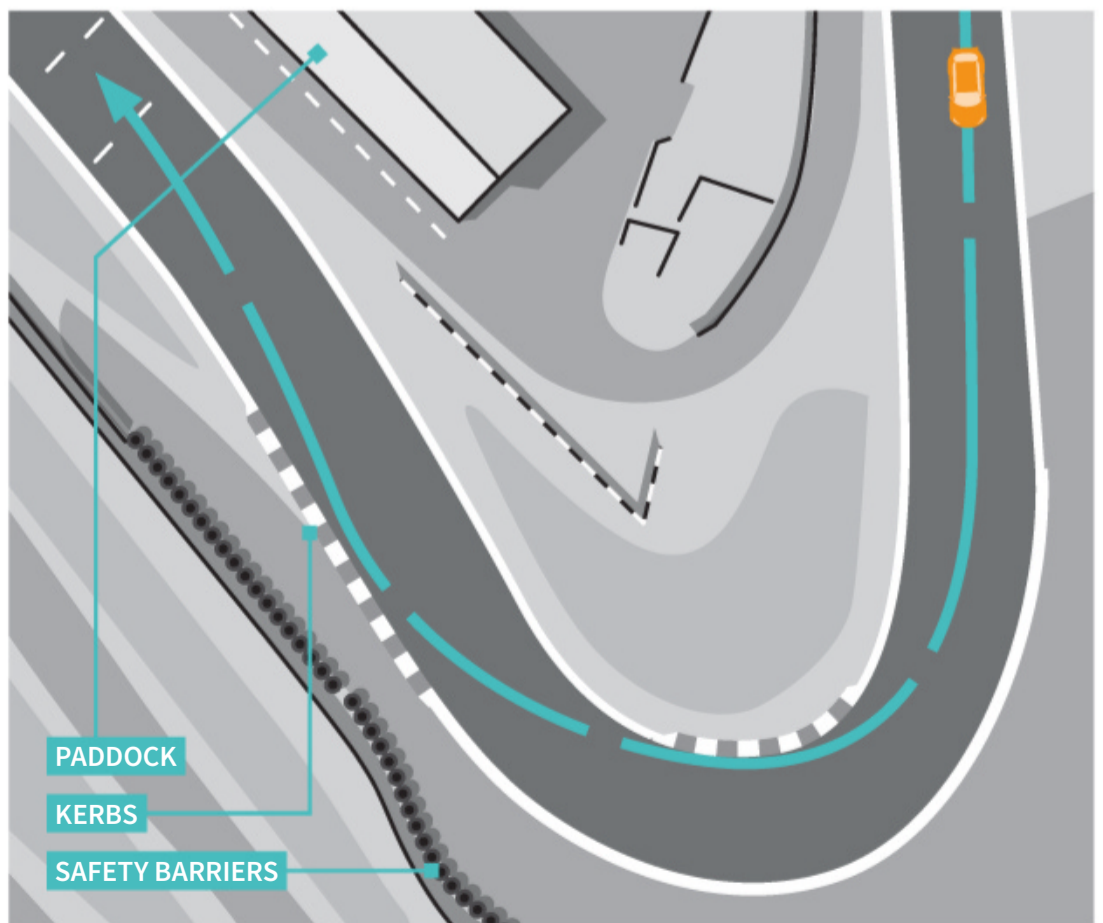
light, which can make it easy to lock a brake and run wide. A lot of people are fearful of it, because if you get it wrong in a race situation you can make yourself vulnerable down the straight into Turn 1, but equally you can make up time there if you're confident and know exactly how the car is going to react. Car placement is really important and also your feel on the brakes.

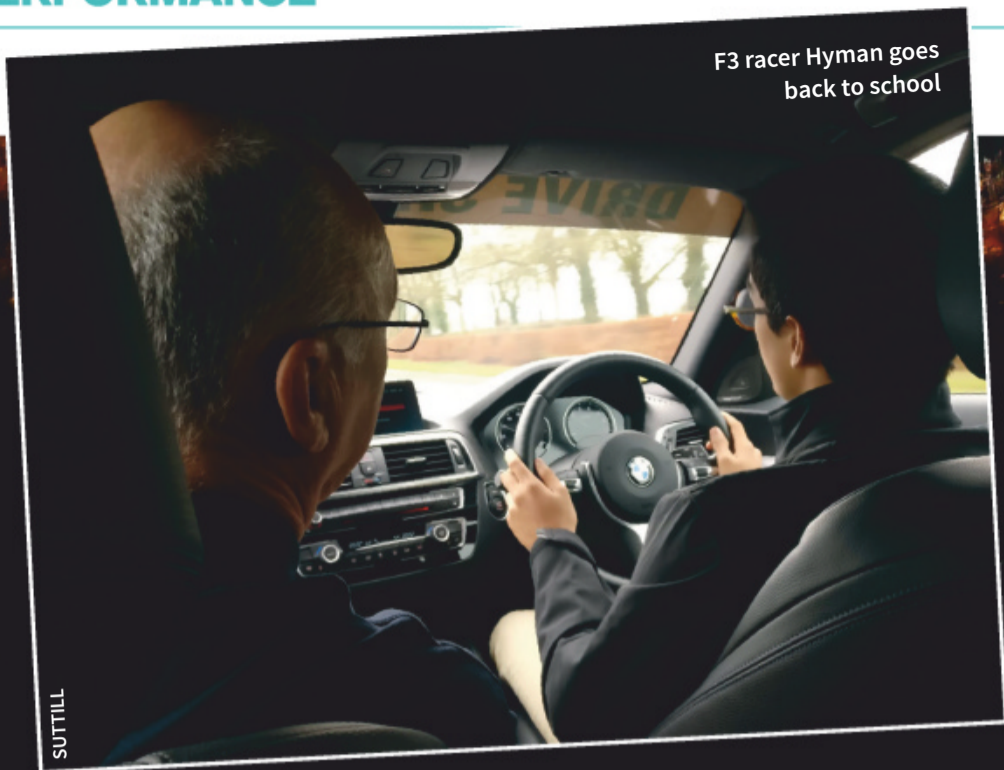
09 IRISH FERRIES
Turn 10

This is where I spun on oil on the last lap in 2006 while I was leading and on course to make it four wins in a row at Mondello. By the time I got things sorted out, Tim Harvey was past and I finished second – I couldn't believe it! It's not a really fast kink, which is typical of Mondello, but you want to have the least amount of braking scrub and carry as much speed and kerb through there as you can get away with to not upset the chassis.

Precision is key there. You don't use the entry kerb as it tends to suck the car out to the right. Once you get up to speed, you can't suddenly find another 6-7mph – you get to a minimum corner speed and that's pretty much it. There's only one line and once out of 10 times you'll get it wrong and lose 3mph.

It's an awkward one that can expose you if the car isn't doing what you want it to. If you've got understeer then you need to allow for that on the exit, and if it's oversteering then you're not going to approach it with 100% confidence.





LEARNING TO DRIVE SMART

SOME OF BRITAIN'S TOP YOUNG MOTORSPORT TALENTS WERE INVITED TO A NEW ROAD-DRIVING SCHEME SUPPORTED BY THE BRDC. AUTOSPORT'S **JOSH SUTTILL** JOINED IN THE FUN – AND HONED HIS OWN FLEDGLING SKILLS

Young racing drivers may not be the most orthodox ambassadors for safe road driving, but the IAM RoadSmart programme knows that a new approach is needed if a positive change in road safety is to occur.

The charity (formerly called the Institute of Advanced Motorists), which counts 1992 world champion Nigel Mansell as honorary president, has been the UK's leading road safety advocate since it was founded in 1956. It sets out to improve road users' skills with a national network of expert volunteers, offering training for riders and drivers in more than 200 local groups.

In December, 15 top racing talents from the British Racing Drivers' Club's Rising Stars and SuperStars programmes – plus one Autosport journalist – were invited to take part in IAM RoadSmart's new Formula Drive Smart event, which is a condensed version of its advanced driving course.

As BRDC club operations director Luke Evans explains, the link-up is intended to raise the

profile of road safety for young men under 25, the demographic involved in more serious road incidents than any other.

"Formula Drive Smart started in the spring [of last year]. BRDC president Paddy Hopkirk got us all together to see how we can best push out a message of road safety among young drivers," says Evans. "We have two highly credible driver schemes in the BRDC and there is a natural crossover of interest between racing and driving on a road, so it made sense to use our stars to help promote this important message.

"Silverstone is a very safe environment to compete at, but you don't have those luxuries on a road – it's an ever-changing landscape and [the drivers] are having to travel to and from racing circuits at unsocial hours. This course might just give them something that protects them and their family and friends too.

"We wanted to demonstrate to the public that even the most talented racing drivers still know to how to treat the public roads with respect and to drive safely."



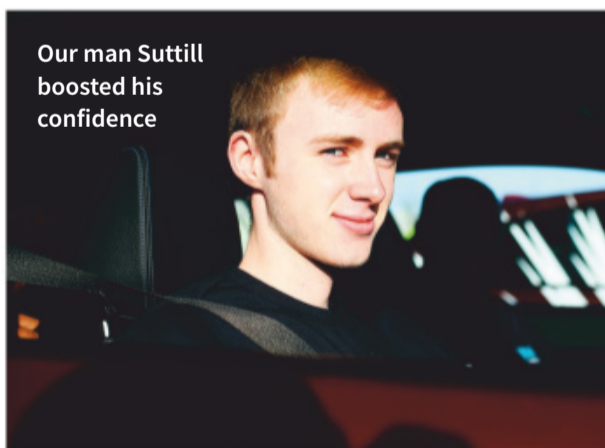
Back to basics

The BRDC clubhouse is our base for the two-day event, which begins at 8am on a frosty and dull Monday. I'm offered a warm welcome by the club and, although my own racing achievements are limited to Mario Kart, the BRDC members with Formula 3, touring car and GT pedigree greet me as one of their own.

After an introductory talk from the IAM RoadSmart team and Hopkirk, we're divided



ALL PICS: HOVER/JEP



Our man Suttill boosted his confidence

into eight pairs, with inaugural FIA Asian F3 champion Raoul Hyman drawing the short straw as my co-driver. We'll take it in turns to receive tuition from Chris Parker, one of IAM RoadSmart's instruction team.

The three of us sit in a BMW 1 Series ready to begin the course, but not before I disclose that I haven't driven on the road since passing my driving test the previous April. Naturally, I'm anxious after only 20 total hours of previous

“There is a natural crossover between racing and driving on the road”

driving experience, but I soon feel at ease behind the wheel and, by the end, Parker has helped turn my driving from nervous and rusty to so smooth it literally puts Hyman to sleep in the back of the car.

Having experienced the transformation first-hand, the 22-year-old South African racer believes my progress highlights what the charity can do in a short space of time.

“It was a pretty steep learning curve, but it was good that you had to learn driving again in an environment where you were taught correct techniques,” says Hyman. “You did a really good job. From the morning of the first day to the afternoon of the second day, you were two different drivers on the road. The IAM RoadSmart team are really good at helping new

drivers as well as experienced drivers.”

Hyman is the ideal driver to share the experience with. Having six years of national and international single-seater experience under his belt, it's interesting to observe him ironing out the racing habits that have crept into his road driving.

Afterwards, Hyman explains that there are certain racing traits that can help when learning to become an advanced driver on the road.

“I've been driving on the road for about six months, so not that long,” he says. “The challenge we faced was learning how to apply your racing skill to road driving. Not in regards to going fast, but more using skills that you've learned on-track that you can apply on the road to be safer. ▶



Young drivers traded times in a Caterham

WHAT MAKES THE BRDC YOUNG DRIVER PROGRAMMES SPECIAL?

As British Touring Car Championship racer Bobby Thompson jokes, the young drivers in the BRDC Rising Stars and SuperStars programmes are all very different individuals, who probably wouldn't be friends in the outside world.

But as all share a common passion for racing, there's always plenty to discuss whenever they get together – whether it be shared racing memories, plans for the future or talk of the current state of Formula 1.

"They represent us every week so well; they wear the club badge with pride and rightly so," says BRDC club operations director Luke Evans.

"They have been scouted by a panel of experts in motorsport, and we hope that, in the future, they will become full members of the BRDC. We always want to do something to support them paternally, as well as their driving careers."

For Raoul Hyman, the BRDC Rising

Stars has been a major help in the formative stages of his career.

"The BRDC is one of the most prestigious clubs in motorsport," he says. "When you walk around their hospitality on a British Grand Prix weekend and see the calibre of people, it's very impressive – so it's a real privilege to be a part of it."

"Since I joined in 2014, they have been a huge support"

"Since I joined in 2014, they have been a huge support to my racing career. I don't come from a racing background – my parents never did any professional racing. So when we make big decisions about where to race, we always get advice from the guys at the BRDC."

Alex Reed, who joined the programme at the end of 2016, has also benefited from its support.

"They offer a home for any race weekend with their clubhouse," Reed explains. "You can bring your sponsors there, and they can use the facilities, which have been really good over the past couple of years."

"It's a real community. We do a lot of networking, and all really help each other to progress and develop as racing drivers. Some of the more experienced or retired drivers are always happy to talk about racing and offer advice and help. That's what the BRDC is all about."



"Looking around the corner in good time, anticipating traffic ahead and looking at what other drivers are doing on the road are all things that you would do at the start of a race that are outside your control and you have to anticipate. You're trying to control as many factors as possible so that you get through the first lap safely and make up positions. On the road, when you're looking at traffic, it's a case of making sure you're at a safe distance and not stopping and starting too much – meaning you're a more economical driver too."

"It was interesting to see the techniques that the demonstrators showed us – they do align quite a bit with techniques that you learn or use on the circuit, which I didn't realise until I'd sat down with one of the IAM RoadSmart team."

We spend the majority of Monday on the road, with scattered breaks for Parker to impart advice to Hyman and me, then Tuesday begins with an opportunity to get behind the wheel of a Caterham track toy on the Silverstone infield to demonstrate the drivers' (and my lack of) car control. We take it in turns to step into one of two machines, and gathered by the start of the makeshift coned circuit there's plenty of friendly jeering as we each attempt to set the fastest time without sending the cones flying.

Although it's just a fun exercise, the competitive nature of the drivers shines through, with Renault UK Clio Cup frontrunner Max Coates leading F4 race winner Sennan Fielding and British GT4 champion Jack Mitchell at the top of the times. Surprisingly, I'm not the slowest, although this is more due to faster drivers dislodging cones and picking up subsequent penalties.

Attention soon returns to the advanced driving course, with the racing drivers immediately switching from ruthlessly competitive mode to safe road users.

The final assessments take place on Tuesday afternoon and all 15 BRDC talents





ALL PICS: HOYER/JEP

Coates collects his prize, cheered by Hopkirk (right)

PARTICIPANTS

DRIVER	2018 RACING CATEGORY
Jordan Albert	British GT
Max Coates	Renault UK Clio Cup
James Dorlin	Renault UK Clio Cup
Sennan Fielding	British GT
Raoul Hyman	FIA Formula 3 Asian Championship
Stuart Middleton	GT4 European Championship
Jack Mitchell	British GT
Sandy Mitchell	Blancpain GT Series Endurance Cup
Seb Morris	Blancpain GT Series
Alex Reed	British GT
Toby Sowery	International GT Open
Jordan Stilp	British GT4
Bobby Thompson	British Touring Car Championship
William Tregurtha	GT4 European Championship
Ant Whorton-Eales	Mini Challenge Championship

pass with flying colours. Hopkirk, an IAM RoadSmart mature driving ambassador, hopes that their performances will inspire fellow young drivers to do the same.

“It is so important that all young people make themselves more skilled on the road so that they don’t become another tragic statistic,” he says. “If these young racing drivers can acknowledge that they could be better drivers on the road, then everyone else of that age should too.”

What the drivers learned

It’s clear from speaking to the drivers that one concept in particular takes time to adapt to. The technique, dubbed IPSGA (information, position, speed, gear and acceleration), advises that on approach to a roundabout or bend, you should attempt to finish all of your braking

and be at the right speed before selecting the appropriate gear.

When this gearchange occurs, it should be a block change – for example, directly from fourth to second – rather than going down the gears, as is done in most race situations.

“There were a couple of surprises, the main one being that block changing is the thing to do on the road,” says British GT racer Alex Reed. “In racing, you’re told never to block change, so that was something I had to get used to because I’d never done that before in my life.

“Before, when I was going down the gears one at a time, it could get hectic approaching a roundabout, but that’s now a lot smoother with the block change – and also not changing gear while braking, which is something we do as racing drivers.”

Reflecting on his experience, 20-year-old Reed says he will recommend the course to others. “Each road user has their own little bad habits,” he says. “It’s good to bring some thinking into people’s minds and hopefully make the roads a lot safer.”

Hyman echoes Reed’s verdict. “I can definitely recommend doing the course,” he says. “They have a lot of techniques where drivers who are not that confident at the moment have the framework for driving on the road safely and confidently.

“It’s an advanced driving course, you’re not being taught to drive slowly. It’s helped me become more aware of things going on on the road, even things that I didn’t realise before.

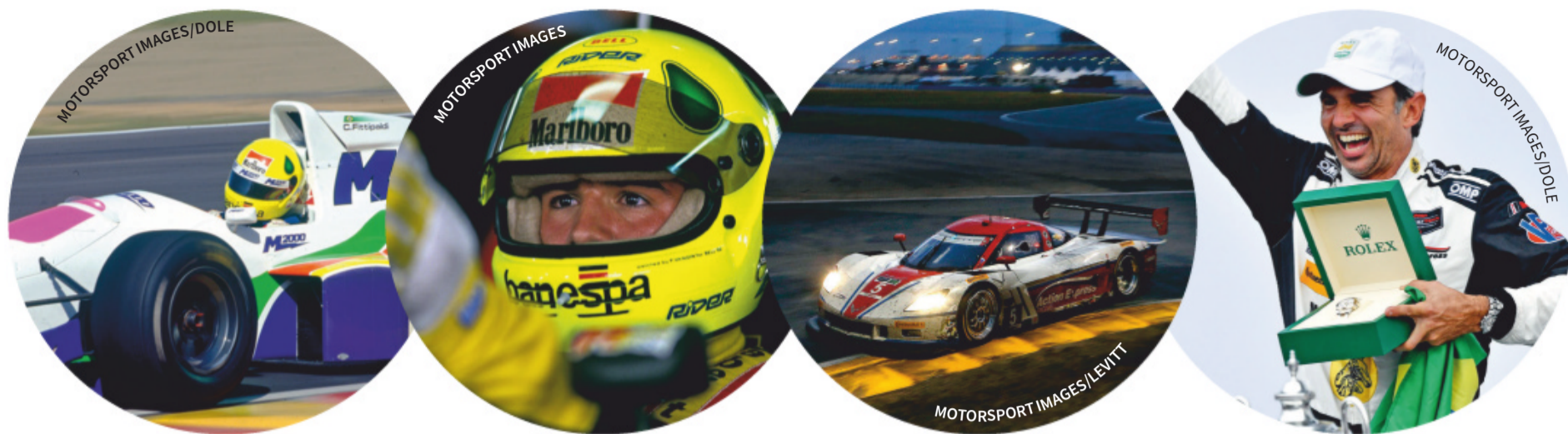
“If everyone did this course, we’d have much safer roads.” ■



BRDC tie-up is designed to raise awareness



Drivers agreed the course can benefit all road users



BIDDING FAREWELL TO A MOTORSPORT SURVIVOR

CHRISTIAN FITTIPALDI HAS RACKED UP STARTS IN ALMOST EVERY DISCIPLINE OF MOTOR RACING DURING A 30-YEAR CAREER THAT CAME TO AN END AT THE DAYTONA 24 HOURS LAST MONTH. HE LOOKS BACK WITH JAMES NEWBOLD AT THE WINS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS – AND THE MANY INJURIES

When the black-and-gold #5 Action Express Racing Cadillac DPi-V.R peeled off the banking and into the pits at 11.04am on Sunday in last month's Daytona 24 Hours, its 48-year-old driver hopped out of the cockpit and removed his familiar yellow Bell Racing helmet adorned with green drops for the final time.

After a quick debrief with engineer Iain Watt, the second-generation Brazilian racer headed to the media room to answer questions from the assembled press. When he had finished, he received a standing ovation from the floor in honour of a professional driving career spanning 30 years and traversing everything from Formula 1 to NASCAR, truck racing to touring cars. Along the way he took multiple championships in IMSA, 24-hour race wins at Daytona and Spa, and two victories in CART's late-1990s golden era.

An early electrical fault that caused the rear brake lights to malfunction and cost 15 laps to fix meant that Christian Fittipaldi's last hurrah was destined to be an exercise in damage limitation, rather than a fairytale fourth Daytona 24 Hours win that would have put him level with sportscar legends Pedro Rodriguez, Peter Gregg, Rolf Stommelen and Bob Wollek.

But the underwhelming end did nothing to mask Fittipaldi's weight of achievement. That the 1991 Formula 3000 champion is only retiring now – he is two months older than David Coulthard, who last raced in 2012 – and stopping on his own terms after several career dead ends that required the capacity for reinvention is especially telling.

Fittipaldi, the son of ex-F1 racer Wilson and nephew of double world champion Emerson, is

a survivor. And not just in terms of his remarkable longevity, but because a spate of concussions in CART – missing at least one race through injury in four consecutive seasons from 1997 to 2000 – could have had far more serious consequences.

"If I look back on my racing career and count all the accidents, I had not a huge number but for one reason or another I always seemed to hurt myself," he says. "That didn't make things any easier for me. If you lose that momentum, or if you don't have that momentum for one reason or another, it's very hard to get it back."

Fittipaldi was second on his only Indianapolis 500 start – in 1995 in a Walker Racing Reynard-

Ford – when uncle Emerson and Al Unser Jr both failed to qualify for Penske. At the wheel of a Newman/Haas Racing Lola-Ford in 1996, he was five laps away from a maiden CART World Series IndyCar win, only for an engine failure to strike. He was raring to go in 1997, but that optimism was soon shattered in a leg-breaking crash at Surfers Paradise that forced him to miss six races.

He missed Milwaukee through concussion in 1998, but in 1999 he was enjoying his best CART season – avenging 1996 by breaking his duck at Road America – and in the thick of the title fight when a testing accident in his Newman/Haas Swift on the Gateway oval resulted in a subdural

hematoma that ruled him out for another five races. Although he finally broke his oval racing duck in the final race of 2000 at Fontana, his future lay away from open-wheel racing.

"In 2000 I had a hit in Chicago, another concussion. I remember talking to Dr Olvey [CART medical official] and he said, 'The number of concussions are escalating, be careful'. I got alerted, let's put it this way."

By 2011, his career looked to be coming to a natural end. After losing his drive with Michael Andretti's LMP2 squad in the American Le Mans Series midway through 2008 and spending a year on the sidelines, there seemed to be no

"I had not a huge number of accidents but I always seemed to hurt myself"

way back following a miserable season in the Brazilian Stock Car Championship in 2010 that yielded just two points.

But a call-up from Watt to join Action Express for Daytona in 2011 at the age of 40 prompted an Indian summer to his career and a successful evolution to a respected sportscar hand when he joined the team full-time for 2013, 10 years after his switch to NASCAR had hit the rocks.

"A lot of people would have written me off," Fittipaldi concedes. "But I think that comes in your mind. When you're positive that you can still get the job done and you are given the right opportunity and the right tools, ►



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Clockwise from top left: Fittipaldi rates his drive to fifth in Monaco 1993 for Minardi as the greatest of his career; receiving counsel from father Wilson (left) and double world champion uncle Emerson; long overdue oval win in CART came at Fontana in 2000 in all-Brazilian podium

then it's going to work out."

Fittipaldi fully subscribed to AXR's motto of 'expect to win'. After teaming up with Joao Barbosa to score back-to-back IMSA titles in 2014 and 2015, and monopolising the North American Endurance Cup (comprising Daytona, Sebring, Watkins Glen and Petit Le Mans) from 2014-17, he stepped back to an endurance-only role for 2018 and took on the job of AXR sporting director, but the successes kept on coming.

Having been punted out of the lead with two laps to go the previous year, Fittipaldi went some way to making up for it by claiming a third Daytona win in 2018, alongside Barbosa and Filipe Albuquerque. Getting that monkey off his back would prove the tipping point, and Fittipaldi is now at peace with his decision to hang up the helmet – even if he admits that being an ex-racing driver will take some getting used to.

"I bumped into David Brabham at Road Atlanta and he said, 'Get ready because it's going to be different,'" he chuckles. "It's something I've done since I was 11 years old – your mind has to be really at peace. I'm closing a chapter to open another chapter in my life and I love the fact that I'm closing it this way. I decided to do it and I'm doing it to give me another opportunity."

Inevitably given his famous surname, expectation weighed heavy from the start. He was engineered by father Wilson in the formative years of his career through karting, Formula Ford and Formula 3, collecting titles in Brazilian F3 in 1989 and SudAm F3 in 1990. That same year he finished fourth in British F3 and best of the first-year drivers in a West Surrey Racing Ralt-Mugen that was very different to the Reynard-Alfa he was used to back home.

While the media focus lay on the fierce rivalry between title protagonists Mika Hakkinen and Mika Salo, Fittipaldi quietly improved as the year went on and won at Donington, before stepping up to Formula 3000 with Keith Wiggins's Pacific Racing team for 1991. Alex Zanardi was usually the quickest, but had several incidents and retired four times, opening the door for the more consistent Fittipaldi to seal the title with victory

in the winner-takes-all decider at Nogaro. He had viewed F3000 as a two-year project, but now the only way was up.

"If you ask me, 'What would I do if I started my F1 career all over again', I wish I had been a bit older," he says. "Maybe it's different nowadays with all the simulator work that you do and the kids that are extremely young starting in F1, but in that time I was considered extremely young. The first time I drove a Formula 1 car I was still 20 years old."

Fittipaldi's F1 career is best remembered for his spectacular backflip over the finish line after contact with Minardi team-mate Pierluigi Martini at Monza in 1993, but he also showed flashes of real promise. In the glorious Lamborghini V12-powered Minardi, he rebounded from fracturing a vertebra in qualifying for the 1992 French Grand Prix by chasing Jean Alesi's Ferrari home to sixth at Suzuka, and passed three cars on track to finish fifth in Monaco in 1993, which he recalls as his best-ever race.

After joining Footwork for 1994, he took fourth in the second round at Aida and was on course for a podium in Monaco before the gearbox failed. But the sweeping legislation changes imposed from the FIA after the Monaco GP, aimed at reducing downforce, hit the cash-strapped squad harder than most and

the rest of his season was effectively a write-off.

When a possible drive at Tyrrell fell through and a test role at McLaren that had zero prospect of translating into a race seat proved his only F1 lifeline, Fittipaldi cut his losses and followed his uncle to the States – and CART.

"It's so important in F1 to be with the right people at the right time because you only get one chance," he says. "It's very few drivers that have gotten a second chance and made it – you probably can name them on one hand."

"I enjoyed it sometimes but there were a bunch of other times when I didn't enjoy it at all. It's a very harsh environment. I made it to F1, but I really don't think I got a fair shot at it. I ran some very strong races in the Minardi and even with Arrows [Footwork], the first four races that we did in '94 they were setting the trend for an extremely strong season, but for a bunch of different reasons it didn't go that way."

It was a similar story in NASCAR. A three-year deal with Petty Enterprises, starting with a mixed programme in the premier-league Cup and the second-tier Busch Series before stepping up to Cup full-time in 2004, quickly turned into a "downward spiral" as the legendary squad struggled for sponsorship. It was far from the ideal environment for a driver learning a completely new discipline. ▶



Fittipaldi (33) made sole Daytona 500 start in 2003



Temporary chicane at Barcelona 1994 was controversial

UPHOLDING SAFETY STANDARDS

Given the Fittipaldi family's strong track record on safety – Emerson had led calls for a drivers' strike at the ill-fated 1975 Spanish Grand Prix in which Rolf Stommelen's accident led to the deaths of five spectators – it should come as little surprise that Christian Fittipaldi found himself in the eye of the storm as F1 grappled with the losses of Ayrton Senna and Roland Ratzenberger at Imola in 1994.

Named a representative of the revived Grand Prix Drivers' Association (GPDA) alongside Gerhard Berger and Michael Schumacher, Fittipaldi was involved in the controversial decision to install a

“No one is out to get killed, we're not going to war”

temporary chicane at the Circuit de Catalunya that year.

“In hindsight I don't think it was the brightest thing we have ever done,” he says. “But at the same time there was an extremely dangerous, quick chicane there which wasn't addressed and could have been addressed. Everyone was under extreme pressure because of what had

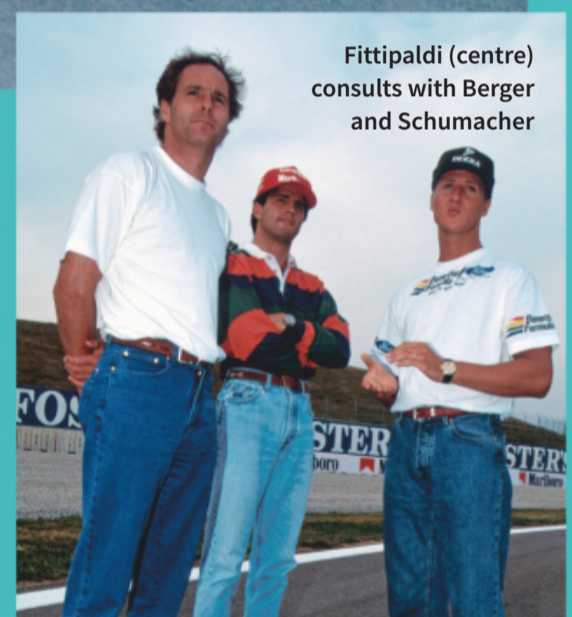
happened to Ayrton and Roland; there were a lot of things added together and thrown on top of us in a very short period of time.

“You have to try and cope with your responsibilities the best way possible and we were there to try and make a better sport. No one is out there to get killed; we're not going to war. There is the risk factor involved, but we tried to minimise that and make it as safe as possible.”

Matters came to a head again at Texas Motor Speedway in 2001, when drivers reported vertigo-like symptoms after 10-lap stints in qualifying for the CART IndyCar round. Against the wishes of team owner Carl Haas, Fittipaldi was among the drivers lobbying for the race to be cancelled, having felt “extremely uncomfortable” in a racing car for the first time.

“It was pretty obvious that we couldn't race there – we didn't get enough blood going to our heads!” he says. “It started happening with one driver, another driver, and when it happened to the fourth or fifth driver we got together and said, ‘We have a problem here’. I looked at [Newman-Haas team-mate, Cristiano] da Matta and I said, ‘I'm not going to run tomorrow’. I wasn't going to do it under those conditions, and I didn't do it. They cancelled the race.”

Fittipaldi's focus on safety also applies to equipment, having maintained the relationship with Bell Racing helmets worn by his father and uncle.



Fittipaldi (centre) consults with Berger and Schumacher

MOTORSPORT IMAGES/SUTTON

Having used a predominantly green lid inspired by his father to win the Daytona 24 Hours for a second time in 2014, Fittipaldi kept the design the same until his final race, where he reverted to yellow and added two thin black stripes along the bottom in a livery reminiscent of his first karting helmet in 1981.

Since then, helmet technology has evolved in line with other safety developments, with Fittipaldi particularly impressed by the improvements in visor fit.

“The biggest improvement was the visor material and the way they fit the shell, which is so different to what we had before,” he says. “We needed to run foam around the eye-ports so air didn't come in! Now the way that the visors are built, they have a perfect fit to the helmet – they really stepped up their game. I never had a problem with the fit or with the safety; I would rate them as the very best product out there.”



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Fittipaldi and Barbosa prepare to kiss the bricks after Indy United SportsCar win in 2014



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WORKING WITH FITTIPALDI

A key factor in Christian Fittipaldi's longevity has been his popular standing with all his teams, from Formula 3 to the present day.

Aside from Action Express Racing, for which he has raced on and off since 2011, the Brazilian's longest spell at one team was seven years at Newman-Haas Racing between 1996 and 2002, where he worked with ex-Tyrrell engineer Brian Lises before Lises was promoted to general manager.

Lises believes Fittipaldi was every bit a match for team-mate Michael Andretti on speed, but was "maybe not as robust".

"I always remember him with a big smile on his face," says Lises. "In fact, I remember him much more as a man than I do as a driver to be honest. I still see Christian every now and again and thank God, as best I can tell, the concussions have not affected him as he's gotten older. He still seems just as bright and happy as he always was. A lovely chap."

Dick Bennetts looks back fondly on his time engineering Fittipaldi at West Surrey Racing in 1990, where the newcomer



Fittipaldi impressed WSR boss Bennetts

helped to bring the best out of second-year driver Mika Hakkinen in British F3.

"He was a great young kid, very honest, a good laugh, and him and Mika got on great together," recalls Bennetts. "We had some laughs because Christian would come in and tell us what they got up to on a weekend together not racing and Mika would deny all knowledge of it. I loved Christian for that side of it – you could have good fun with him but when he was in the racing car he would be serious."

"He lacked a bit of confidence because he felt he was under Mika's shadow. But considering he was new in and had to learn the circuits, it wasn't easy for him. That's why I rate him so highly."



Fittipaldi spent seven years at Newman-Haas

"After a year and a half I was pretty much getting paid to stay at home," says Fittipaldi. "I went to them and I said, 'It's not working, we need to go our separate ways'. A few years later, the whole team shut down."

He recovered momentum by moving to sportscars, winning Daytona for the first time in 2004 in the Bell Motorsports Doran-Pontiac and racking up three starts at the Le Mans 24 Hours in GT machinery, but that wasn't his first experience of endurance racing. Following an invitation from Fittipaldi family friend Max Welti, he had twice contested the Spa 24 Hours and won it in 1993 in a Porsche 911 Carrera RSR, when overnight news of the death of Belgium's King Baudouin brought the race to a premature end.

Asked how he wants to be remembered, Fittipaldi is remarkably perceptive. "Throughout my racing career, I've never set the world on fire, but I always got the job done," he says. "I remember when Jos Verstappen tested the Footwork at Estoril with us [in 1993], he had come from F3 and within five laps he was already on the pace. I was never one of those guys, but I always built up to the challenge or to where I had to perform and then, once I got it, I stayed there."

If all goes to plan, Fittipaldi's impact on AXR will still be felt for years to come. His latest assignment out of the cockpit may be his biggest career shift yet, but he is relishing the challenge of contributing outside the car. "For 38 years I was always the guy complaining about understeer and oversteer, but I never saw how it looked, or how I could express myself in a better way," he says. "Looking from the outside, you see problems in all the cars, you even see driving styles differ, and it's definitely something that can help the team. Now I can see from the outside what the AXR cars are doing compared to the Penskes, the Mazdas. It gives you a completely different perspective."

He won't stop learning and evolving, as is his way. Christian Fittipaldi is a survivor. ■

Grand Prix
Racewear



RACE SUIT (£225-£1250)

CHESHIRE SAYS "All the race suits reach the same FIA standard, so it's the comfort, the quality and the design element that differentiates the prices. The suit is definitely a place where you can save some of your budget, and OMP has worked really hard at that end of the market. The price entry points are very good, the quality of the product is exceptional and the design is really smart."

THE GEAR YOU NEED FOR 2019

FINDING OUT WHAT EQUIPMENT YOU NEED WHEN STARTING OUT IN MOTORSPORT CAN BE A MINEFIELD. STEFAN MACKLEY SPOKE TO GRAND PRIX RACEWEAR BOSS ANTHONY CHESHIRE TO GET SOME CLARITY

You've passed your ARDS test, got your new machine ready for your first race and, after months of waiting, you're almost ready to hit the track. But before you do there remains one daunting, but necessary, final hurdle – buy your racing equipment.

With various top-name brands on the market such as Alpinestars, OMP and Sparco, plus helmet manufacturers including Bell, Schubert and Arai offering a plethora of items at a range of prices, it can be difficult to know exactly what you need. So what does an enthusiastic amateur starting out need to go club racing, and how do you make sure you get the best equipment for your budget?

National governing body Motorsport UK dictates that all drivers competing in one of its sanctioned events must have an approved helmet, frontal head restraint (FHR), overalls, underwear, boots and gloves. All must have been certified by the FIA, motorsport's governing body, having been put through rigorous safety tests and met specific criteria, whether it be an impact test for a crash helmet or how fire retardant a set of overalls are.

Anthony Cheshire, founder of trackday and car preparation specialist FF Corse, has recently acquired Grand Prix Racewear, which supplies motorsport equipment from its base at Silverstone. With 25 years' experience in the industry, Cheshire is well placed to offer expert advice on the key things to consider when buying safety equipment.

"Everything adheres to the FIA safety standards – that's the important thing to understand," explains Cheshire. "If you're buying it from a reputable source and it is an FIA standard approved for motorsport, then that standard will protect in the requirements needed to go racing. Providing you're doing that, then it comes down to adjusting your product range to your budget and working it through from there."

Before parting with your money, Cheshire advises doing extensive research and speaking directly to experts in-store to ensure the equipment is right for you.



HELMET (£370-£3500)

CHESHIRE SAYS "If you don't intend to race at an FIA-level championship, 8859-standard helmets are still certified to an FIA requirement and have all the fireproof lining, protective visors and a shell that's capable of withstanding certain impacts in an accident. There is absolutely nothing wrong with using that helmet for racing, but what you have to consider is if you are looking to step up to FIA-standard racing after six months or a year, do you want to buy another helmet?"

"Motorsport is a significant investment whichever way you look at it, so why would you not do your research? Why would you not come and talk to people?" he says. "Where is best to spend the money? Is it best to spend it on a new paint job on your car or is it best to spend it on a helmet that might just save your life?"

"In terms of prioritising what you would spend your budget on, you've only got one head and it's the most important part of your body, so we would suggest that you focus the budget on protecting your head as a priority."

There are two different specifications of FIA approved helmets, 8859 and 8860, with the latter – updated last year – intended predominantly for drivers looking to take part in international racing or FIA-accredited championships. Made primarily from carbon, they are lighter and ▶



stronger than entry-level helmets but cost far more – in excess of £1500.

The FIA 8859-standard helmets vary between lighter carbonfibre and composite helmets, which are heavier, but will still have passed multiple safety tests, with some models also homologated to the Snell SA2015 standard.

Regardless of which helmet you choose, it's imperative that your first step should be to try on a selection.

"It's really important to see what fits best because the different helmets really fit people differently," says Cheshire. "I know that sounds an odd thing to say – you'd say a helmet is a helmet – but until you have tried on the various helmet brands and the different sizes, you can't really tell what it's going to be like."

It's not only helmets that Cheshire insists customers should try before buying, as wearing a piece of equipment can give drivers a vital understanding of how comfortable – or not – any prospective purchase is and allow them to weigh up the merits of spending more.

It's also important to consider the car being raced and format of the event when making these decisions, as endurance races – especially in hotter conditions – will have different requirements from the short, sharp burst of a hillclimb. While lighter, more breathable overalls might cost more, they could prove a crucial investment in the middle of a two-hour stint.

A common misconception from would-be drivers is that buying the most expensive item means it will naturally be the best, which is not always the case.

BOOTS (£80-£350)

CHESHIRE SAYS "If you spend a little bit more, you move away from the suede entry-level boots into a leather boot. In my opinion, it's worth spending that little bit more on your boots because entry-level suede is fine on a dry day, but it's very difficult to dry it when it gets wet, whereas leather tends to be more protective. Spending that extra £50-£100 to upgrade to leather is probably a good consideration."

ALL PICS: JEP

Gloves and boots are a testament to this. Although the higher-end items may offer more performance by being lighter or offering a better feel of the pedals or steering wheel, gloves with external seams are often more fragile, while the thinner sole means that high-end boots won't necessarily be the most comfortable when walking around the paddock and also more prone to wear if not maintained.

Even at a club level, racing is not cheap and a participant will need to spend thousands of pounds, from getting their licence to building or hiring a car and then running it. It can be all too easy to look for shortcuts when buying safety equipment, but that lead down the path to unsuitable or counterfeit products.

Not only will this cost more money in the long run – forcing customers to spend

more of their cash on legitimate items – but it puts their safety at risk.

"If you're prepared to take that risk of buying products outside reputable suppliers you could be buying something that's not fit for purpose, and it's so easily done," says Cheshire. "Karting products look almost identical to the racing product, but aren't fire retardant – racing equipment has to pass stringent fire safety tests.

"If you buy counterfeit goods, they're not going to be of that FIA standard and you're not going to have that fire protection in a racing car. And there's no worse time to find out than in the event of an accident or a fire."

Choosing the right equipment can be daunting, but spend a bit of time and effort and it's possible to get value for money and still be properly protected. ■



GLOVES (£55-£180)

CHESHIRE SAYS "Again, you can certainly save some money on gloves – entry-level options are very good quality. In terms of the price bracket, it almost follows the same format as the boots where the more you're paying generally means you're perhaps sacrificing useability for more feel and sometimes more comfort. The entry-level gloves tend to have internal seams. External-seam gloves are much more comfortable to wear, but by their nature the seams are more delicate."



FRONTAL HEAD RESTRAINT (FHR) (£250-£960)

CHESHIRE SAYS "There are a lot of different options from the basic entry club model right up to the high-level super-lightweight carbonfibre version as favoured by Formula 1 drivers. Entry level tends to be a plastic injection set-up, so very strong but heavier than the top-end carbonfibre versions. It comes down to your budget and the type of racing you're taking part in. For endurance racing, it might be appropriate to have a lighter version but, if you're just intending to do sprint-type racing at club level, it's not going to make a huge difference."



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