F1 gets new winner in dramatic Italian GP

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10 SEPTEMBER 2020

F1 SHOCK

How Gasly spiced up F1 with sensational Monza victory



Hamilton gets penalty after breaking qualifying speed record

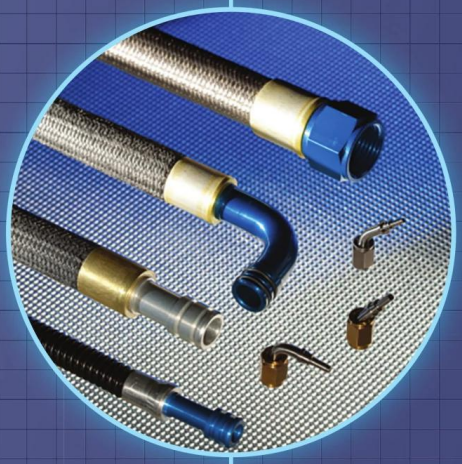
PLUS

Sainz on why he still doesn't regret Ferrari move

Tanak wins at home as WRC battle reignites



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Gasly and Sainz provide a breath of fresh air for Formula 1

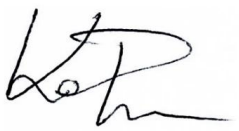
Genuine shocks are rare in modern Formula 1. The cars and teams are normally too reliable for all the usual frontrunners to hit trouble, which is one reason why Pierre Gasly's Italian Grand Prix victory has been so warmly received. Unpredictability *can* still happen.

As Alex Kalinauckas points out in our report on page 18, Gasly's victory wasn't just about luck. Yes, it took a blunder from Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes and fortuitous safety car timing, but Gasly still had to make the most of his opportunity. He didn't crack as a very motivated and feisty Carlos Sainz Jr closed him down, no mean achievement given what he's been through over the past year (p13).

Gasly's win represented several milestones. It was the first by a French driver since Olivier Panis's 1996 Monaco GP success, the first victory outside of the 'big three' of Mercedes, Ferrari and Red Bull since 2013, and the podium of Gasly/Sainz/Lance Stroll is the third youngest in F1 championship history (to the 2019 Brazilian and 2008 Italian GPs). Gasly is the 109th driver to win a world championship race.

Logic and the law of averages dictate that another surprise result this weekend is unlikely, but the first GP at Mugello is a step into the unknown – and Ferrari will celebrate its 1000th start.





Kevin Turner
Editor
kevin.turner@autosport.com

NEXT WEEK
17 SEPTEMBER
We bring you all the action from Mugello and look ahead to Le Mans with our free guide



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Mark Thompson/Getty Images/Red Bull Content Pool; Charles Coates/Motorsport Images

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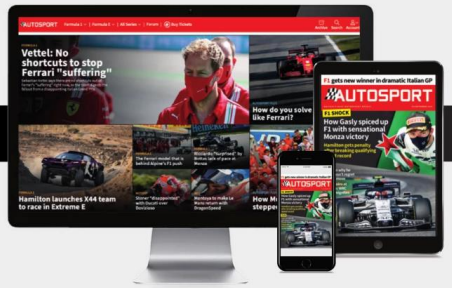
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Claire Williams (inset) was two years old when Regazzoni won at Silverstone in 1979

SUTTON

WILLIAMS FAMILY STANDS DOWN

FORMULA 1

The Williams family bowed out of Formula 1 after last Sunday's Italian Grand Prix as team founder Sir Frank Williams and his daughter Claire stepped down from their roles at the squad.

The Williams team was rescued from the financial uncertainty it faced when it announced ahead of last month's Belgian Grand Prix that it had been bought by American investment fund Dorilton Capital. Deputy team principal Claire Williams said at the time that her role remain unchanged in the short term, but confirmed on the Thursday ahead of the Monza event that she would be stepping down after the weekend. Team principal Sir Frank Williams also ended his association with the organisation he formed back in 1977.

"With the future of the team now secured, this feels like the appropriate time for us to step away from the sport," said Claire Williams. "As a family, we have always prioritised Williams. We have demonstrated that by our recent actions with the strategic review process, and we believe now is the right time to hand over the reins and give the new owners the opportunity to take the team into the future."

Williams revealed that she had been offered the chance to stay on with the team by Dorilton, which she said was keen for the family to retain some involvement.

"Dorilton, I'd like to make it clear, wanted me to stay," she said. "This was my decision. I felt it was the right choice for me to step away. There will be a period of transition. This is obviously going to be my last race weekend, but I am going to be working a few days per week over the course of the next few weeks in order to talk to Dorilton about the team, the inner workings of the team, and the expertise they need to come in."

An interim team principal is expected to be named ahead of this weekend's Tuscan Grand Prix at Mugello to oversee the day-to-day running of the team before a permanent appointment is made ahead of the 2021 season.

A new board of directors has been formed in the wake of the takeover, featuring two of the senior figures at Dorilton Capital: Matthew Savage (chairman) and Darren Fultz (CEO). The third member of the board is James Matthews, who is the CEO of the Eden Rock Group investment fund. He is a former racing driver, winning the Formula Renault UK and Formula Renault

"IT'S A SAD DAY FOR US. FRANK AND CLAIRE GAVE ME MY OPPORTUNITY IN F1"

Eurocup titles in 1994 and racing in British Formula 3 in 1995-96 before starting a career as a city trader. Matthews also has links to British royalty as the brother-in-law of the Duchess of Cambridge after marrying her sister Pippa Middleton in 2017.

Williams Grand Prix Engineering was formed in 1977 and took its first win at the 1979 British Grand Prix with Clay Regazzoni (above). It has won 114 points-paying races, seven drivers' championships and nine constructors' titles, with the most recent coming in 1997, when Jacques Villeneuve won the drivers' crown.

News of the Williams family's exit led to an array of touching tributes throughout the F1 paddock, led by six-time world champion Lewis Hamilton.



FROM F1

"I'm a big fan of Sir Frank, and his incredible contribution to the sport," Hamilton said. "He was always so positive to me, he was one of the people I respect the most here, and was one of the most honest, if not the most honest person in Formula 1. I'm definitely sad to see them go. It's the end of a chapter. I think their legacy will continue."

Current Williams drivers George Russell and Nicholas Latifi were informed of the news on Thursday morning shortly before the announcement.

"It's a sad day for us," said Russell. "Frank and Claire gave me my opportunity in Formula 1. It's something I am very thankful and grateful for, having the opportunity to drive for such an amazing and prestigious team for the two years I've been here so far. I am definitely at ease with the situation, knowing that if Claire and the Williams family are happy with it, then they're only doing it for the best interests of the team."

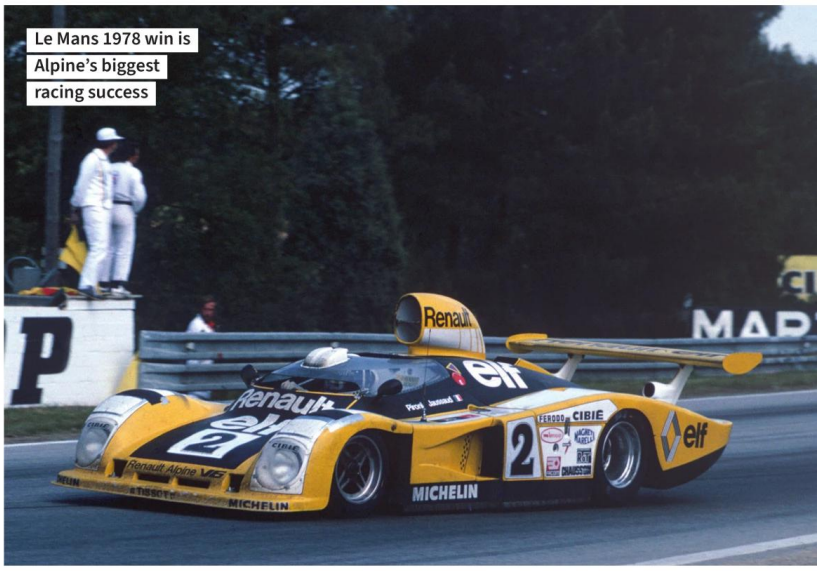
Latifi added: "I was definitely a bit shocked at the news. It's always going to be special that where I started out was here with Williams. The culture that has been cultivated here is going to remain the same. That is something that will not go just because Claire and the family are stepping aside."

The Williams family came close to signing off with a point at Monza as Latifi finished 11th, having risen up the order via the red-flag stoppage.

But Claire Williams did depart with a more tangible goodbye gift as she was presented with a front wing and nosecone of a recent car that had been signed with messages from all team members.

LUKE SMITH

P18 ITALIAN GP ACTION



Le Mans 1978 win is Alpine's biggest racing success

Renault attaches Alpine name to its team for 2021

FORMULA 1

Renault's Formula 1 team will be rebranded under the Alpine name for the 2021 season.

The team will race in blue, representing the colours of France and running with the national tricolore, and will retain Renault branding through its engine supply. It marks the latest iteration of the team from Enstone, which has previously raced as Lotus, Benetton and Toleman, under which it entered F1 in 1981.

Alpine has a tradition in rallying and sportscars, and has most recently been present in the FIA World Endurance Championship in the LMP2 class, using a chassis from ORECA for its Signatech Alpine. The move comes as part of an ongoing review of the Renault Group's properties by new CEO Luca de Meo, who said he wanted Alpine to be in the "middle of the motorsport business".

Although Alpine currently produces just one road-car model, de Meo wants to use the F1 platform as the centrepiece for a push to enhance and expand what the company can offer.

"It's a big change because Renault has been around [in F1] for 43 years *[not continually though – ed]*," said de Meo. "It will stay on the car but as an engine provider, so it will be visible. We will use F1 as a platform to market a brand that we want to develop in the house. Even if Renault is a glorious brand, the fit of Alpine in the F1 world will be even better."

"This change comes at a key moment in the trajectory of the team and the sport," said Renault F1 team boss Cyril Abiteboul. "Alpine brings a new meaning, new values and colours to the paddock with the spirit of competition from other worlds and French creative agility. Alpine has its place in Formula 1 and can challenge for victory."

De Meo insisted the return of the Alpine name was not intended to try to revive past glories for the brand, which took victory at Le Mans in 1978 with Didier Pironi and Jean-Pierre Jaussaud.

"When I entered the company, I saw Alpine as a brand as a very nostalgic thing," he said. "Nostalgia is OK, but I think we need to look at the future. So we need to think in a different way, and use Alpine to build the future: not looking at 60 years ago or 50 years ago. If there is a fit, if there is a business opportunity because that's what we're trying to do right now, then it is to kind of change a little bit the approach to the [Alpine] story."

Alpine F1 Team will be represented by incumbent Renault driver Esteban Ocon and the Regie's returning two-time world champion Fernando Alonso in 2021.

LUKE SMITH AND JONATHAN NOBLE



Racing Point brakes saga ends as appeals dropped

FORMULA 1

The saga surrounding Racing Point's Formula 1 brake ducts has come to an end after the final teams protesting the FIA's ruling withdrew their appeals.

Racing Point was hit with a 15-point Formula 1 constructors' championship penalty and a €400,000 fine after it was judged to have used an illegal design process for its 2020 rear brake ducts. The team maintained its innocence throughout the case, claiming it had not illegally used information from Mercedes on its 2019 brake ducts, which its 2020 part was judged to have been a copy of.

Racing Point began the process to appeal the ruling through the FIA's International Court of Appeal in a bid to get the rules clarified and have its penalty overturned.

It was joined in the appeal process by rivals Williams, Renault, Ferrari and McLaren, all of which were pushing for rule clarifications and a harsher sanction. Williams and McLaren were quick to withdraw their appeals after receiving assurances from the FIA, with Renault following suit last week.

Both Racing Point and Ferrari announced last Sunday that they would also be withdrawing their appeals after talks between the teams and the FIA led to clarifications on the rules on car copying from 2021.

"The stewards and all parties involved in the appeals process recognise that there was a lack of clarity in the regulations and that we did not deliberately break them," Racing Point said in a statement. "Now that the ambiguity around the regulations has been settled, we have decided to withdraw our appeal in the wider interests of the sport.

"This issue has been a distraction for us and the other teams, but now we and everyone else can get back to focusing solely on what we're all here to do: racing hard and providing excitement and entertainment for the millions of F1 fans around the world."

Ferrari said that the FIA had clarified "the responsibilities of each championship participant in the design of the components of a single-seater and implement specific monitoring procedures to ensure that both the letter and the spirit of the regulations are fully respected".

It means the appeal process has come to a complete end and that there will be no court action, marking a resolution long predicted by Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff.

The 15-point penalty against Racing Point in the constructors' championship is also upheld, meaning it stays fourth in the standings on 82 points, 16 behind McLaren.

The FIA informed teams last month that it would be taking firm action to prevent copycat car designs, such as that of Racing Point's RP20, which was based on last year's title-winning Mercedes W10. Teams have been told that the 2021 regulations will "expressly prevent teams from using photography or other reverse engineering techniques to copy large parts of other teams' cars".

LUKE SMITH

Brands back on GT schedule

GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE

Brands Hatch is back on the GT World Challenge Europe calendar for 2021, but it remains unclear whether it will be joined by Silverstone as part of the now-traditional British double-header in May.

The Brands Sprint Cup event (below) and the Silverstone round of the Endurance Cup were casualties of the coronavirus pandemic this year. Brands has been reinstalled on the calendar with a 2 May date next season, while Silverstone could fill a TBA the following week.

Series boss Stephane Ratel explained that Silverstone is one of two options for the second race in May on the 10-date GTWCE schedule. "We need a bit more time to make a decision on which is the best for us," he said.

He explained that he needed greater visibility on the implications of Britain's withdrawal from the European Union. He explained that the customs agreement resulting from Brexit could have a more significant effect on Silverstone than Brands: the Stephane Ratel Organisation brings almost double the number of cars to an enduro than one of the short-format events and also supplies the full support programme.

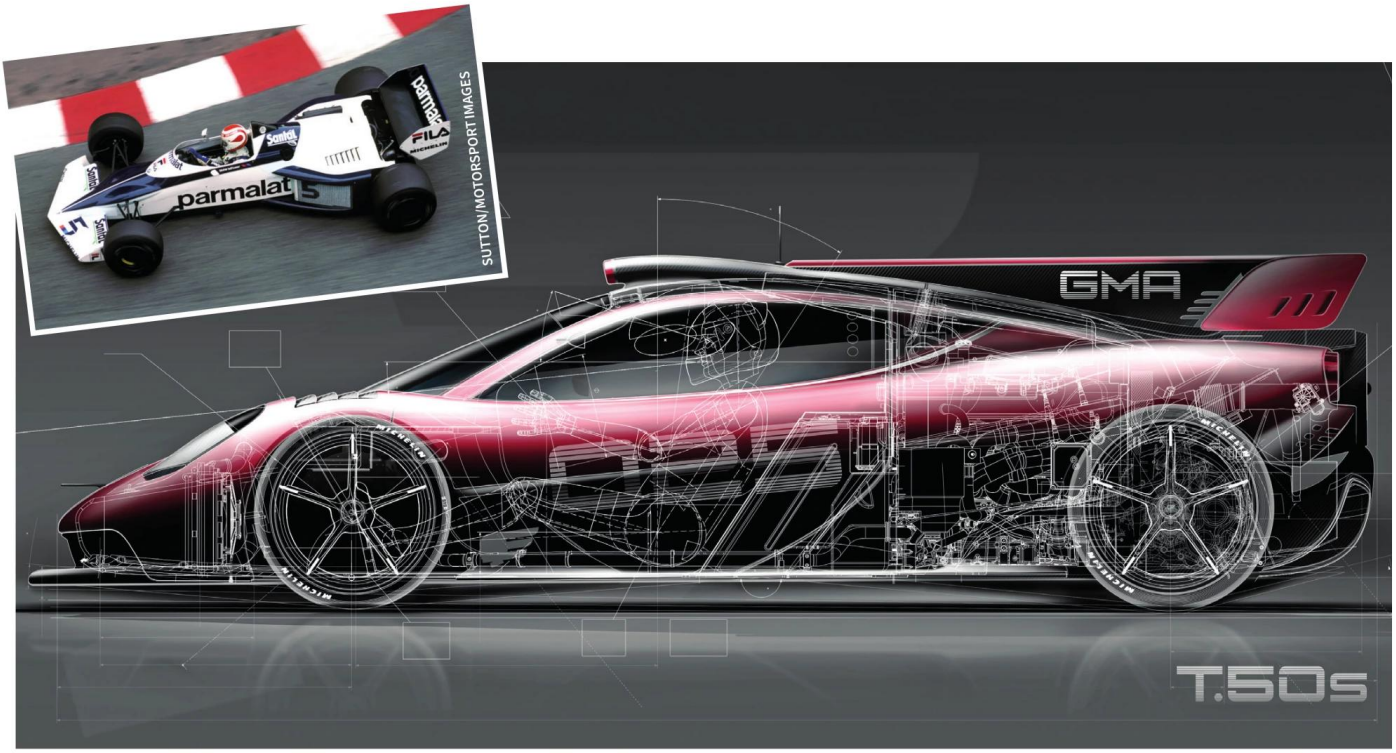
Ratel said he was happy with a 2021 calendar that he described as having "a familiar look". "At the start of the year we had 54 full-season entries for Endurance and 34 for Sprint, so we don't need to change anything," he said.

The GTWCE will begin at Monza in April as it has every season since the season was inaugurated as the Blancpain Endurance Series in 2011. The double-points Spa 24 Hours round remains the centrepiece, while Paul Ricard and the Nurburgring maintain their slots.

The final Sprint round also remains a TBA alongside the regular fixtures at Brands, Zandvoort, Misano and Barcelona.

GARY WATKINS





SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

GORDON MURRAY AUTOMOTIVE has released the first image of the trackday version of its T.50 supercar. The T.50s incorporates a delta-shaped rear wing inspired by the front-end aerodynamics of Murray's 1983 Formula 1 title-winning Brabham-BMW BT52 (inset) and is more powerful and lighter than its road-going cousin. GMA is in talks with prolific worldwide GT racing promoter Stephane Ratel about the car joining his GT1 Sports Club track events, which are set to grow into a race series before deliveries of the T.50s begin in 2023.

Bentley goes for title despite axeing works team

INTERCONTINENTAL GT CHALLENGE



KALTSZ

Bentley will defend its Intercontinental GT Challenge points lead, despite axeing its factory programme with M-Sport. Bathurst 12 Hours winners Jules Gounon, Maxime Soulet and Jordan Pepper (right and below) will share two different customer Continental GT3s in the final three races.

The trio of factory drivers, who claimed the Australian series opener with M-Sport in February, will race together in a car run by the K-PAX team when the IGTC resumes with the new Indianapolis 8 Hours fixture on 4 October and again at the rescheduled Spa 24 Hours round later in the month. They will then switch to a car fielded on a customer basis by M-Sport for the series finale, the Kyalami 9 Hours on 22 November.

"We had various proposals and, after a lot of toing and froing, we've managed to put a customer programme together that allows us to keep racing in the IGTC with a team of works drivers," said Bentley Motorsport boss Paul Williams. "We support teams like K-PAX with factory drivers and it will be a similar situation with M-Sport – this is nothing like a full factory programme.



PECKS/VIER

"K-PAX has always been keen to compete in the IGTC, but not against a factory Bentley team. At the same time M-Sport was saying to us that for them not to go racing this year was a problem."

The Flying Lizards-run K-PAX squad is rejigging its GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup driver line-up for Spa on 24-25 October to allow the winning Bathurst crew to be reunited. Pepper, who is normally teamed with Alvaro Parente and Andy Soucek, will swap seats with Rodrigo Baptista.

Five Continentals – the pair of K-PAX entries, two from the French CMR squad and Team Parker Racing's Bentley junior programme car – will be registered to score IGTC points at Spa.

M-Sport will also field a second car at the Kyalami IGTC finale with an as-yet-unnamed line-up. The factory Bentley campaign with M-Sport was put on hold as a result of the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic. It opted to focus its resources on its customer programmes.

GARY WATKINS



Cupra set for BTCC as Onslow-Cole returns

BTCC

SEAT's Cupra sub-marque will take its bow in the British Touring Car Championship next season thanks to a new project being started by series fan favourite Team Hard.

The Kent squad has also recruited seven-time BTCC race winner Tom Onslow-Cole for the next three rounds to drive one of its ageing Volkswagen CC warhorses, which will make way for the Cupra Leon for the 2021 season.

Hard's private Cupra project came as the result of studies during the coronavirus pandemic into which model could carry the team forward and replace the VW, which first appeared in 2013. That year it netted three podium finishes with Onslow-Cole at the controls before he ventured into a career in international GT racing.

"We have done a lot of research and we believe that the dimensions and overall shape of the Cupra Leon will work perfectly with the current NGTC regulations that are in the BTCC," said Hard boss Tony Gilham. "A lot of hard work and countless hours lie ahead, but we are confident that we can turn this new car into a competitive beast that will be mixing it at the front from the get-go next season."

Hard team leader Jack Goff added: "Unfortunately, we've been lacking in qualifying – we need something more and the Volkswagen CC's capabilities have reached their peak. It's going to be a busy winter, but for now I'm fully focused on giving the CC the best send-off I can!"

Onslow-Cole will replace Ollie Brown, who injured his ribs in an Oulton Park shunt with team-mate Nicolas Hamilton last month, starting from next week's Thruxton round.

MARCUS SIMMONS

Clio graduate Edwards gets one-off in Vauxhall

BTCC

Former Renault Clio Cup UK contender Jade Edwards is to make her British Touring Car Championship debut with a one-off outing at Silverstone this month.

The 29-year-old will race for the Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra team in the seat occupied by Mike Bushell in the most recent two rounds at Oulton Park and Knockhill, and has described the outing as "living my childhood dream for one weekend".

Edwards (right) is the daughter of Jim Edwards Jr, a class winner in the BTCC's Production class in 2001 at the wheel of a Honda.

Before Edwards's turn at Silverstone on 27 September, Autosport understands that Bushell will likely race the Astra at Thruxton next week. He sustained a dislocated shoulder and damage to ligaments in a wrist in a hefty shunt at Knockhill, but is racing to be fit to return to the cockpit.

Power Maxed also gave a test last week to W Series racer Jessica Hawkins at Snetterton. The 25-year-old has raced tin-tops before in the Volkswagen Racing Cup and Jaguar eTrophy, and speculation suggests that she could make a BTCC debut.

MARCUS SIMMONS



Jon Dooley 1946-2020

OBITUARY



MOTORSPORT IMAGES

As *Alfisti* go, Jon Dooley who died last week, aged 74, was among the greatest. The British racer, rally driver and speed eventer's contribution to the Alfa Romeo marque's history is equal to that of many Italian disciples, and resulted in three times finishing third in what is now the British Touring Car Championship. Many thought his blood ran green as well as red and white.

As Cambridge University Automobile Club chairman, Dooley promoted slaloms and sprints at Snetterton. His first event was very wet, won by Gerry Marshall driving a TVR Griffith in wellingtons! Jon and rollcage pioneer John Aley subsequently organised (and CUAC marshalled) the circuit's European Touring Car Championship round.

An ardent Alfa Romeo Owners' Club member alongside father Alfred, Jon edited its magazine and competed in Giulia Ti and Giulietta models, even an exotic TZ coupe. Later, as financial controller of Alfa GB – headed by enthusiast Carlo Cattaneo – he had access to cars, including a Montreal he drove in the 750MC's Birkett Six Hour Relay until its brakes fried!

In late 1975, with Michael Lindsay and Leo Bertorelli, he formed the Alfa Romeo Dealer Team, which became a fixture in the British Saloon Car Championship, synonymous with loyal sponsors Napolina tomatoes and John West salmon. Having finished second in the Avon Tour of Britain in 1975, Dooley raced his Alfasud Ti in 1976. After switching to an Alfetta GTV, he went back to the faithful Sud for 1981 (above), winning the 1300cc class title.

A GTV6 netted him another class title in 1984 before the new 75 came on stream, initially V6-engined, then with a 1.8-litre turbocharged four until 1987. There was little help from the factory's Autodelta competition department. The small team developed its own cars, achieving 19 BSCC class victories due to Dooley's tireless graft with top engine man Brian Rouse, ace technician Bob Dove and team-mate Rob Kirby.

In subsequent years Dooley went historic racing, forging links with the factory-blessed Scuderia del Portello and preparing Alfas at his Brookside Garage in Wrestlingworth, near Cambridge.

An erudite, generous and hugely knowledgeable man, Dooley continued to write fascinating features for the AROC magazine until recently. He is survived by his wife Meg and brother James.

MARCUS PYE


RENAULT SPORT

ART brings domination to FRenault

FORMULA RENAULT

It took three rounds to do it, but junior single-seater leviathan ART Grand Prix has kicked into gear in the Formula Renault Eurocup. The team's Victor Martins utterly dominated last weekend at the Nurburgring, taking pole, victory and fastest lap in each of the two races.

Martins, who split with the Renault F1 Junior programme for 2020 and is managed by ART boss Sebastien Philippe, led home a 1-2-3 for the team in the second race, ahead of Mercedes F1 protege Paul Aron and Gregoire Saucy.

Only Lorenzo Colombo, who like Martins (left) is in his third Eurocup season, could keep the flying Frenchman in sight in the opening race. The Bhaitech driver took second ahead of JD Motorsport's David Vidales, the star of the previous round at Imola on his debut.

Martins, who leapfrogged from sixth in the standings pre-weekend to replace Caio Collet at the top, said: "I am taking all the races one by one: we work, we analyse, we progress and we perform."

ART made its name in the French FRenault ranks in the 1990s under Fred Vasseur in its old guise of ASM.

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Hamilton sets up off-road team

EXTREME E

Lewis Hamilton has adopted a plant-based diet and reduced personal travel significantly to offset his carbon footprint. He's now taken a wider-reaching step, by founding his own X44 team to compete in the inaugural Extreme E season.

This marks Hamilton's first role in team ownership and represents a major coup for the all-electric off-road SUV racing championship, founded and led by Alejandro Agag. The squad's name references the #44 race number the Mercedes grand prix driver has carried in Formula 1 since 2014. An initial livery render suggests the purple design Hamilton introduced to his crash helmet for the 2020 season will be carried over.

Six-time F1 champion Hamilton will not race for his own team, with X44's driver pairing – one female and one male, as mandated by XE's rules – yet to be announced.

"It's an exciting new project and it will be fun to have a different role from being the team driver," said Hamilton. "What is most appealing, though, is that the Extreme E championship will be not only raising awareness of some of the most critical environmental issues facing our planet, but also doing something about it through working with local charitable organisations to leave behind no trace and a long-lasting legacy of change.

"Every single one of us has the power to make a difference, and it means so much to me that I can use my love of racing, together with my love for our planet, to have a positive impact. I'm looking forward to the team taking part in this new series and I think it's incredible that we can do so whilst raising awareness about the climate crisis."

X44 is currently not thought to be backed by a manufacturer, but the bodywork of the 550bhp ODYSSEY 21 E-SUVs can be customised to resemble road models. This could lead to Hamilton's team adapting its machine to resemble the Mercedes EQC – the marque's first all-electric car.

The news overshadows the recent entry of Techeetah. Led by team principal Mark Preston, who has overseen DS Techeetah's run to two successive teams' and three drivers' titles in Formula E in the past three seasons, it will replace Venturi. The Monaco-based squad has withdrawn to focus on FE and "an innovative programme around space travel".

MATT KEW

IN THE HEADLINES

STOP PRESS: MONTOYA FOR LE MANS 24 HOURS

Juan Pablo Montoya will make a return to the Le Mans 24 Hours this month with the DragonSpeed LMP2 squad, it emerged as we were going to press. The two-time Indy 500 winner, who made his solo start in the French enduro with United Autosports in 2018, will take the place of Pipo Derani in the #21 DragonSpeed ORECA-Gibson 07 alongside Memo Rojas and Timothe Buret.

YOUNG YOUNGEST IN WTCR

Reigning Renault UK Clio Cup champion Jack Young is to become the youngest full-time competitor in World Touring Car history this year. The 18-year-old sticks with the Regie to drive a Megane RS TCR for Swiss team Vukovic Motorsport in the World Touring Car Cup, which kicks off this weekend at Zolder. He has already raced the car, scoring a pair of fourth places in the TCR Europe round at Barcelona last year. He will be partnered at Zolder only by TCR Australia race winner Dylan O'Keeffe.

BARRICHELLO WINS AT INDY!

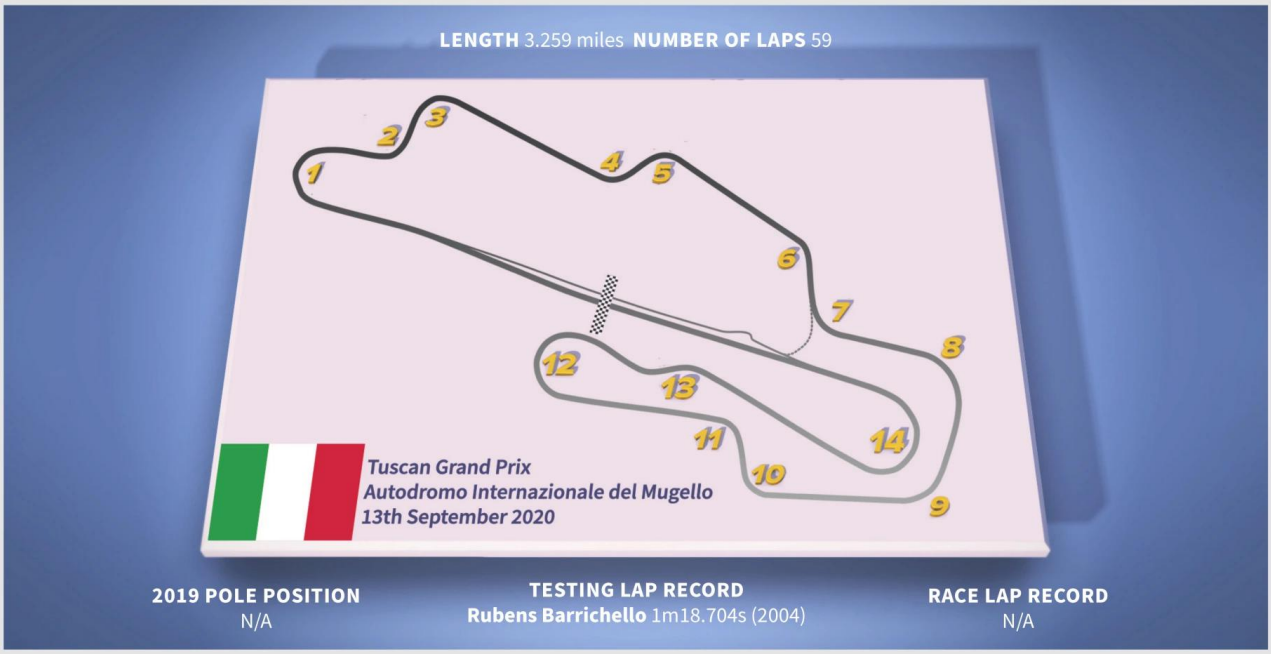
The 18-year-old son of Rubens Barrichello took his first win in the USF2000 series at Indianapolis last weekend, and followed it up with a second. Eduardo Barrichello got the better of a terrific battle with fellow Brazilian Kiko Porto and Reece Gold in race one to take victory on the track where his father won the 2002 United States GP, then led all the way in race two. Gold won the finale as Barrichello slipped to fifth.

STONEMAN ON TOP AGAIN

Versatile British racer Dean Stoneman took his second Lamborghini Super Trofeo win in a row at the Nurburgring last weekend. Rather than driving solo as he did on his debut at Misano, he teamed up with Italian Kikko Galbiati. The pair were fifth in race two, which was won by Alberto di Folco and Kevin Rossel.



F1 TUSCAN GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



UK START TIMES

Friday 11 September
FP1 1000
FP2 1400

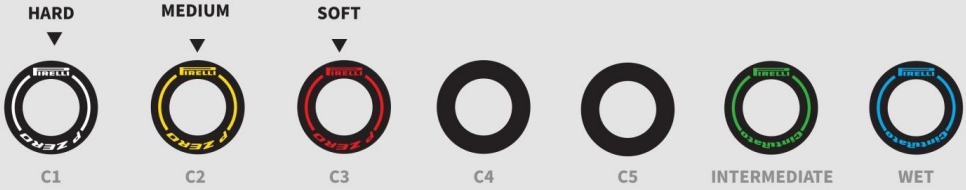
Saturday 12 September
FP3 1100
QUALIFYING 1400

Sunday 13 September
RACE 1410

CATCH THE RACE LIVE
SKY SPORTS F1

HIGHLIGHTS
CHANNEL 4 1830

TYRE ALLOCATION



CHAMPIONSHIP

DRIVERS		
1	Hamilton	164
2	Bottas	117
3	Verstappen	110
4	Stroll	57
5	Norris	57

CONSTRUCTORS		
1	Mercedes	281
2	Red Bull	158
3	McLaren	98
4	Racing Point	82
5	Renault	71



RACE STATS



BEST RESULTS AT MUGELLO OF CURRENT F1 DRIVERS

Romain Grosjean	2007 F3 Euro Series	1st
Daniil Kvyat	2012 FRenault ALPS	1st
Lance Stroll	2014 Italian F4	1st
Charles Leclerc	2014 FRenault ALPS	2nd
Pierre Gasly	2013 FRenault ALPS	3rd
Daniel Ricciardo	2007 Italian FRenault	4th
George Russell	2014 FRenault ALPS	5th
Lando Norris	2015 Italian F4	7th
Nicholas Latifi	2012 Italian F3	8th
Alexander Albon	2012 FRenault ALPS	9th

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Should Gasly return to Red Bull?

Formula 1's newest race winner says he's ready to be reunited with the senior squad. It's the obvious next step, but that doesn't mean it's necessarily the right one

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

He's just completed the greatest achievement of his career so far. He's embraced his mechanics, been congratulated by his peers, lifted the trophy and sprayed the champagne. But he won't leave – not yet. He can't. He doesn't know if he will ever return to such a stage.

Pierre Gasly sitting alone on the Monza podium was the defining image of the 2020 Italian Grand Prix. His win for AlphaTauri will go down as one of the most unexpected, brilliant and satisfying in Formula 1 history. And that's not some tiresome era-comparing cliche, it's because Gasly's story over the past 13 months has been fascinating.

Demotion, tragedy, redemption. He, and F1 fans, had a lot to ponder on Sunday night. "I didn't want to leave, because these kind of moments... you never know how many times you are going to be able to enjoy these times," Gasly reflected. Wise words, which speak of the 24-year-old's clarity and presence of mind on what was a frantic afternoon and evening in Italy.

In the third week of August 2019, Red Bull dropped the bombshell announcement that Gasly would be relegated back to Toro Rosso, with Alex Albon coming the other way, after 12 races for the senior squad. He'd had a series of tough results, going up against one of F1's fiercest competitors as a team-mate: Max Verstappen. At the following grand prix, his close friend Anthoine Hubert was killed in the Formula 2 feature race at Spa.

> **"Red Bull and AlphaTauri are far from the only teams in F1 should Gasly want a change"**

Over the rest of that season, Gasly impressed back at his first F1 squad, capping the year with second place behind Verstappen in the wild Brazilian GP, pipping online gaming mate Lewis Hamilton on the run to the line. He stayed on into this year with the Faenza team, rebranded as AlphaTauri. It marked the first time in his single-seater career that he had stayed with the same squad over an off-season. But it seems that the sense of calm he exuded at the start of the year wasn't coming from an acceptance that his dream was over now that he was back in F1's midfield.

"I worked very hard with the team and I knew that with them I had everything in my hands to show my potential," he said.

Even before Gasly had turned a wheel at the Italian GP, those efforts had led to starring drives at the season opener in Austria, the British GP and in Belgium. He has made it through to Q3 five times in what is always going to be a battle for AlphaTauri, given F1's crowded midfield.

As a result of his win, he now tops Autosport's driver ratings averages with 9.0, while Verstappen and Hamilton are 0.1 and 0.2 adrift respectively (see page 33). He doesn't have a title battle or an inherently tricky car to tackle, as Hamilton and Verstappen do respectively, but that's still seriously impressive stuff. And given how much he has been through to reach this point in such a short space of time, no wonder he wanted to gather his thoughts in the best place an F1 driver can be – the top step of the podium.

His victory oozed with feel-good factor. In fact, emotions ran through the Monza race. Behind Gasly came Carlos Sainz Jr and his clinical determination, never reaching desperation. There was a slight crackle in his voice on the in-lap, perhaps realising he may never get the chance to take such a win again, but also delighted at his first proper F1 podium visit with a McLaren team where he has thrived, and from which he will soon depart.

Inevitably, Gasly was asked about a possible return to Red Bull, which had a shocker of a race last Sunday – Christian Horner's media Zoom call was abruptly cancelled. "*I* think I'm ready but it's not up to me to make that call," was Gasly's reply.

But the simple question is whether Red Bull really is the best place for him. The Verstappen factor remains – he is a relentless force as a team-mate. Plus, the RB16 is clearly a difficult car to tame. Albon is far from a bad driver, but has struggled. And, right now, Gasly is clearly happy at AlphaTauri.

It should be stressed that a Red Bull deal is not to be sniffed at. The focus on its ruthlessness with junior drivers overlooks its contribution to so many careers. And as a very successful squad it has earned the right to do whatever it takes to stay as one of F1's top teams, even if that means making driver decisions that vex the outside world.

But Red Bull and AlphaTauri are far from the only teams in F1, should Gasly decide, when the time comes, that he wants a change.

The Alpine rebranding for 2021 hints at a long-term F1 future for the Renault group. And growing a French brand would be enhanced by the presence of a home-grown hero. It already has that in Esteban Ocon, but it serves to highlight that there is an alternative reality within F1 for Gasly, should he want to embrace it.

Should that hypothetical scenario come to pass then he would come up against an even tougher team-mate than Verstappen – Fernando Alonso. But if there is anything the past 13 months have taught F1 and Gasly himself, it's that you can throw the worst at him and he will find a way to show his resilience and worth.

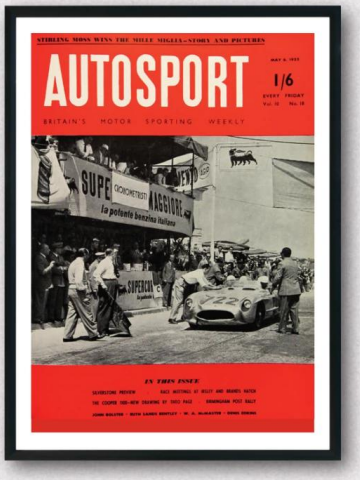
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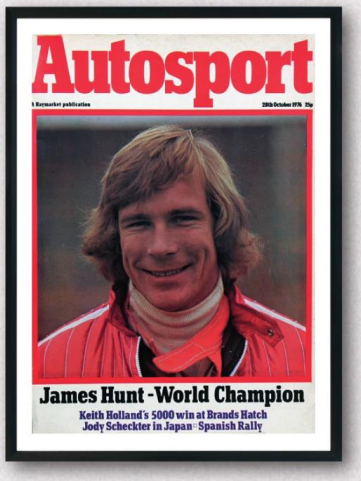
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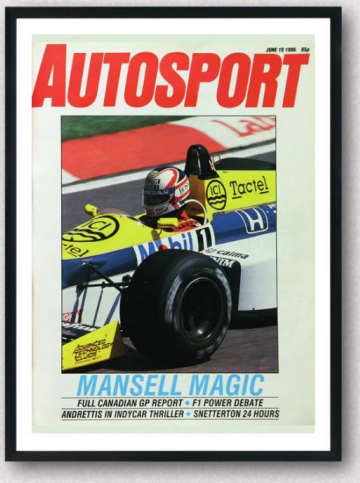
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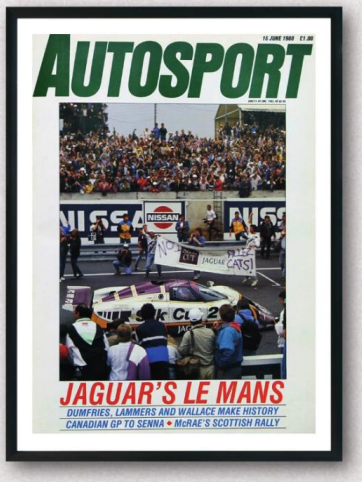
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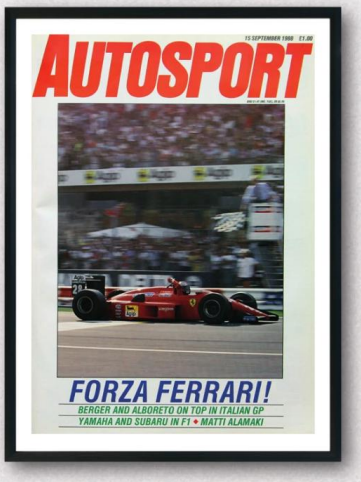
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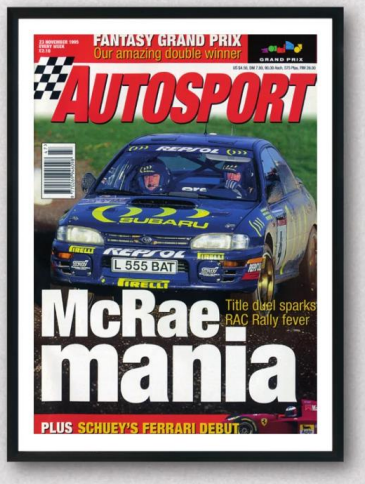














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F1 rulemakers versus F1 speed

Notable exceptions aside, regulatory changes throughout the history of motor racing have attempted to keep speeds in check. But lap records are there to be broken...

KEVIN TURNER

Lewis Hamilton's 164.3mph lap to take pole position at last weekend's Italian Grand Prix was the latest example of Formula 1's internal battle: the competitors' search for speed and the rulemakers' attempts at keeping them in check.

To be fair to F1, the 2017 regulations were unusual in that they were designed to create faster cars, following criticism of the 2014-16 machines. They are now the fastest F1 cars ever, as shown by the various lap records that have fallen since then.

But more common is for the rules to change in order to keep speeds down, usually by reducing power or, in the case of both the interim 2021 regulations and full-fat 2022 changes, by cutting downforce. Which means Hamilton's pole record at Monza will probably stand for a while. History shows, however, that it will likely come under threat at some point in the future.

When Giuseppe Farina won the first F1 world championship race at Silverstone he averaged just under 91mph, having taken pole at 94mph. The anomalous inclusion of the Indy 500 as part of the world championship in the first 11 seasons meant that the Indycar event held both race and pole average speed records for most of the 1950s. But the German GP's move to Avus in 1959 changed that. Tony Brooks, in the front-engined Ferrari Dino, took pole at 149.1mph. He then won the event, run over two heats around what was essentially two stretches of dual-carriageway joined at one end by a hairpin and at the other by a banked curve, at 143.3mph.

"History shows that Hamilton's pole record will probably come under threat at some point"

The world championship never returned to the venue, so the record survived the switch from 2.5-litre engines to 1.5 litres and then the first season of the three-litre rules in 1966. But more powerful cars and ever-improving chassis meant speeds at the old Spa and pre-chicane Monza increased. When Dan Gurney won in his Eagle at the 1967 Belgian GP at Spa he did so at a whisker under 146mph, while Jim Clark's pole in the game-changing Cosworth DFV-engined Lotus 49 had moved the qualifying mark to 151.6mph.

Both records were increased at Spa over the next three years as wings and rudimentary downforce arrived, but Pedro Rodriguez's 149.9mph victory for BRM in 1970 was the final GP on the old 8.8-mile circuit. That left Monza and the 1971 Italian GP to become the first world championship race to go through the 150mph barrier, BRM's Peter Gethin winning at 150.8mph in a race more famous for the fact that 0.61 seconds covered the top five finishers.

This was the last hurrah for the pre-chicane Monza that encouraged slipstreaming. Gethin's mark and Chris Amon's 156.1mph pole for Matra remained untouched through the 1970s, the arrival of ground-effects and the early days of turbocharging.

But Monza, Silverstone, pre-facelifted Hockenheim and the Osterreichring remained fast, and speeds climbed through the 140mph region in the first half of the 1980s, at least in qualifying, when special tyres and cranked up boost levels could do their work.

Finally, Keke Rosberg smashed the 160mph barrier at Silverstone as he took pole for the 1985 British GP in his Williams-Honda. Thanks to the fuel restrictions of the era, the race record remained.

It was Brands Hatch's (final) turn to hold the British GP in 1986 and, by the time F1 returned to Silverstone, Woodcote had been tweaked and steps had been made to limit the turbos' power. By 1989 they were gone and, though the cars were soon lapping most circuits quicker, the high-speed records remained out of reach.

When Silverstone was heavily revised for 1991, Monza once again became F1's fastest circuit. Even with the Williams FW14B and Nigel Mansell on top form, the British GP pole was 'only' 148mph in 1992, but Mansell's Monza mark was nearly 158mph.

All the gizmos, such as traction control and active suspension, were banned for 1994, and engine size was cut from 3.5 to 3.0 litres. Further restrictions in the wake of the deaths of Roland Ratzenberger and Ayrton Senna meant it took until the turn of the millennium for performance to get back to its 1992-93 levels.

But the agile and powerful cars of the V10 era in the early 2000s finally brought the records back within reach, at least at Monza. Juan Pablo Montoya broke Rosberg's pole record with his 161.4mph lap for Williams-BMW in 2002 and pushed that to 162.9mph two years later. In between, Michael Schumacher finally broke Gethin's race record in the 2003 Italian GP, averaging 153.8mph.

More rule changes in the second half of the decade meant both benchmarks looked safe until the arrival of the wider, slick-shod turbo-hybrids in 2017. Kimi Raikkonen broke Montoya's pole record in 2018 with a 163.8mph lap, which has now been usurped by Hamilton. Schumacher's race record, though, remains — Charles Leclerc's 2019 win is the fastest in recent times at 151.2mph.

Expanding our analysis to before F1, it's perhaps sobering to point out that Mercedes driver Hermann Lang averaged 162.6mph at the 1937 Avusrennen, while Luigi Musso qualified on pole with a *three-lap* average of 174.5mph at the 1958 Race of Two Worlds on the Monza banking. The speeds F1 cars now reach have been seen before, but the ways they reach them — on slower circuits and with greater restrictions — are new territory. Which is perhaps what you'd expect in a sport that's constantly pushing the boundaries.

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YOUR SAY

How good it is to see a new driver on the top step of the podium, especially one who has shown he has the talent to be there

GAV STONE

Feel-good story of first-time win

How good it is to see a new driver on the top step of the podium, especially one who has shown he has the talent to be there. It may have taken three years or so to get there, but Robin Frijns (right) has long-deserved his maiden DTM win and I am certain it's the first of many, now he has broken his duck (see World of Sport, page 47).

If fate (and £££) had dealt him a different hand over the years, I'm sure we would be seeing him pushing another weekend first-time winner, Pierre Gasly, in Formula 1. He's one of those who have 'got away' from the top table, sadly.

Gav Stone
Norfolk

Human side of Formula 1

Congratulations to Pierre Gasly (who was three months old when Olivier Panis was the last Frenchman to win a grand prix!), and also to George Russell and Nicholas Latifi for their moving and very heartfelt thanks to Williams. All in all the human side of Formula 1 was shown at its best. Lastly, Charles Leclerc who congratulated his friend on his win after his own traumatic race.

Stuart Balmer
By email

The spirit of Gerry Marshall

Two great wins for Joss Ronchetti in the Open Sports and Saloons races at Mallory Park (Club Autosport, 3 September), but your report forgot to mention that in race one he lapped the field at least once, and for race two instead of taking up his pole position, he chose to start last from the pitlane. Reminded me of Gerry Marshall playing with the opposition!

Simon Bill
By email

Senior drivers deserve their place

Re the letter from Mark Bennett complaining about older drivers in Formula 1 'blocking' the careers of the younger



potential stars (3 September), I may be wrong, but I have always understood that F1 is the pinnacle of single-seater racing, enabling the very best to display their skills at the ultimate level.

I certainly don't believe it's a case of Buggins' turn in gaining entry to F1, it surely has to be based on merit and not a driver's ability to raise sufficient finance in order to gain a seat. I would hope that any of the senior drivers remain in F1 until such time as they can't cut it anymore.

Neil Davey
Newport, South Wales

Hit hard by inflation

I must protest! Between launch in August 1950 and July 1953 the price of your periodical increased from 3.75p to 7.5p, exactly 100%: how can you justify such an outrageous inflationary increase in so a short time?

Graeme Innes-Johnstone (age 59 and 3/4)
Elland, West Yorks

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DUNBAR

GASLY TAKES HIS CHANCE AS MERCEDES FUMBLES

The AlphaTauri star seized the opportunities presented by the Italian Grand Prix's twists of fate to record an outstanding maiden victory

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES



Where the Belgian Grand Prix had been generally lifeless, the 2020 Italian GP that followed sizzled with action and emotion throughout. Where Mercedes was faultless at Spa, three errors cost it dearly at Monza. And where Pierre Gasly was a touch undone by race circumstances outside his control in the Ardennes, in Lombardy they – alongside his brilliant driving – set up a famous triumph.

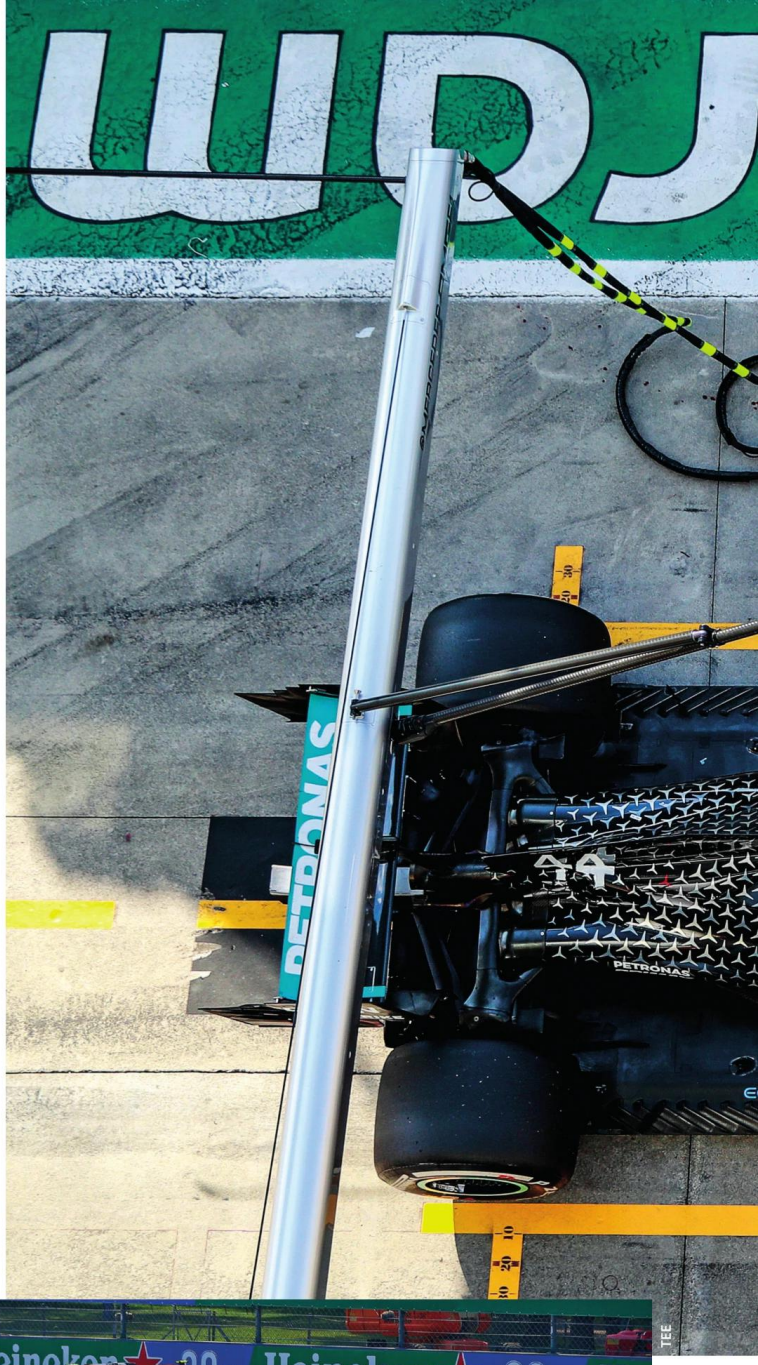
The opening 18 laps of the Italian race did bear an unmistakeable similarity to those of seven days before, as polesitter Lewis Hamilton initially dominated, but the rest were action-packed. There wasn't a dull moment from the very second when Mercedes realised its error in pitting Hamilton when the pitlane was closed, which created a chaotic and brilliantly enjoyable Formula 1 spectacle.

But there were several other pivotal reasons why it was Gasly – giving the former Minardi squad, now AlphaTauri, its second magic Monza moment 12 years after Sebastian Vettel did so when it was Toro Rosso – who emerged victorious and not the other contenders.

BOTTAS BLOWS HIS BIG CHANCE

When Valtteri Bottas made the first costly Mercedes mistake, he wouldn't have known quite how much it would go on to harm his team's result, and ultimately boost Gasly. The Finn had qualified a close second to F1's fastest-ever pole lap as Mercedes swept to its customary grid spots. But Bottas's start was a shocker.

"I feel like there's been some disturbance sometimes at the actual starts and it's not fully been representative," he explained. "I can't go much more into detail from my side, [but] again I nearly went [before] the lights – but luckily not as much as the other race I did it [Hungary]. And then for the actual start I was a bit late."



TEE



Bottas's poor start gave both McLarens an opportunity they weren't going to let pass by

HONE



Hamilton's 10-second stop/go penalty dropped him to 17th and last place

This meant Bottas was swamped by orange on the run to the Rettifilo chicane, with Carlos Sainz Jr blasting by, and Lando Norris getting in on the action. Norris and Bottas clashed lightly before the second apex, and then Norris audaciously and brilliantly barged by on the outside in the first part of the Della Roggia chicane. They touched harder here, wheel to wheel, but Norris was through and Bottas left scrambling, then falling to sixth as he ran wide at the second Lesmo and lost momentum on the run to the Ascari chicane, suspecting he had a puncture.

This was a key factor in Gasly's triumph because it effectively removed Bottas from the lead fight from then on, despite all that was to come, as he struggled with a Mercedes tight on cooling, which meant he had lift-and-coast more on a day where passing was also extra tough.

MAGNUSSEN AND THE MARSHALS INTERVENE

Hamilton had roared clear of Sainz, ending the first lap 1.378 seconds to the good. Over the next 17 tours he set a blistering pace that the McLaren driver couldn't touch in the 1m24s, going clear by 0.656s per lap. But on lap 18 of 53, Hamilton's race – for it really was his to lose last Sunday – was changed. Kevin Magnussen, who had pitted on the first lap after being caught between Antonio Giovinazzi and Romain Grosjean at the first chicane and sustained wing damage that required a replacement, ground to a halt as he ran out of the Parabolica. He pulled over shy of the pits, where the barrier was not wide enough to allow the marshals to quickly get the car removed, and they had to push the VF-20 to the pitlane.

This was covered by the intervention of the safety car, which

"AGAIN I NEARLY WENT BEFORE THE LIGHTS. AND THEN FOR THE ACTUAL START I WAS A BIT LATE"

was called as Hamilton was just over 200 metres from Parabolica. Mercedes immediately decided to pit the world champion, and it was here that the mighty squad's second and third errors were made.

First, Hamilton, who admittedly only had a few seconds' notice, missed the marker boards warning that the pitlane was closed because the removal of Magnussen's car had not yet been started. Just before he passed them he was calling for hard tyres at the stop (Mercedes had prepared mediums, which were fitted). The two boards displaying red crosses were situated on the left-hand side of Parabolica's super-fast exit, of which Hamilton later observed "if you're going through a right, you're not looking left".

But Mercedes had managed to miss the message that the pitlane was closed, only noticing when a strategy engineer back at the team's Brackley base radioed urgently to sound the alarm. It was too late – Hamilton was in to take on mediums.

"There was confusion, because you prepare yourself for the pitstop to make it good," said Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff. "Everybody on the pitlane, including myself, we were looking at this situation – nobody looks at page four [of the FIA timing data] »



Stroll finished on the podium, but muffed restart cost him a shot at the top step

that the pitlane is closed. We can't see the signs, and this is just a sequence of events that screwed Lewis's race."

It certainly did. Hamilton and the Alfa Romeo of Giovinazzi – who came in even as those far ahead of him stayed out – were quickly placed under investigation and were later handed 10s stop/go penalties.

But while Mercedes' pitlane errors ultimately boosted Gasly to victory, the timing of the safety car initially looked to have cost him – just as it had at Spa, where he couldn't pit when it appeared without utterly ruining his contra-strategy. The Frenchman had started 10th after another strong showing in qualifying, and had already had an eventful race to this point.

First, Gasly and Alex Albon had come to blows at the first corner, with the Red Bull knocked wide after a hefty second clash that was declared a racing incident. From there Gasly had chased Esteban Ocon hard for ninth before fading slightly as his soft tyres began to wane. This put him under pressure from Daniil Kvyat, who had tracked his team-mate closely in the opening phase on his hard starting tyres – the two AlphaTauris matched each other at an average of 1m26.248s per lap on the tours up to Gasly's stop on lap 19, moments before the safety car was called.

Gasly dropped to 15th after taking on the hard tyres under green conditions. So when the safety car was called, he initially felt "we just pitted exactly at the worst time possible". But then the pitlane closure meant he could close up to the pack. He jumped to third when everyone else bar Lance Stroll, the two Alfas, Charles Leclerc and Nicholas Latifi pitted when the pitlane eventually reopened two laps after Hamilton's catastrophic call-in. "In the end it turned out to be a very lucky move," Gasly said of his early stop.

The race restarted on lap 24, before Hamilton's penalty was confirmed, but with Mercedes already suspecting that he would be punished. The return to full speed only lasted one more lap, however, as the next critical moment of the race took place when Leclerc, who had nipped past the Alfas at the restart, crashed heavily at Parabolica.

Not only did the impact smash the SF1000 to bits, but it damaged the safety and tyre barriers, and the conveyor – which then "needed to be prepared to ensure that the circuit was back to the same safety condition", according to FIA race director Michael Masi – and so the race had to be stopped, with the cars brought back to the pits. Hamilton headed the queue, his penalty soon confirmed, ahead of Stroll, Gasly, Kimi Raikkonen – who had also stopped just before the safety-car period – and Giovinazzi.

Sainz and Norris were suddenly sixth and seventh, with the former "angry and I had rage" about this sudden change of fortune. All of these drivers had fitted medium tyres during the red flag (only Gasly and Stroll had new ones), except the Alfas, which had to take softs as they had already been running their respective remaining mediums. The red-walled rubber gave them grip at the start, but they faded quickly thereafter, coming home 13th (Raikkonen) and 16th (Giovinazzi).

Hamilton climbed from his car and opened an investigation with the Mercedes team members who had reached his W11, at the opposite end of the pitlane to the squad's garage. He then scooted down to the pitwall to discuss things in more detail with the strategists and Wolff. Next, in what was a delay of more than 25 minutes, he went to see the stewards who "quickly showed me the onboard, and there were two signs that had an X on it", he explained.

When the drivers returned to their cockpits, they got to experience another piece of F1 history. They left the pits at the start of lap 27, which was conducted as a second formation lap, and reformed the grid for another standing start.

STROLL BLOWS HIS BIG CHANCE

And it was here that the next crucial piece of the puzzle fell into place for Gasly, as Stroll made it two bad getaways for the second-placed starter. Like Bottas over an hour earlier, Stroll was sluggish away as he "had a ton of wheelspin". Gasly was ahead by the first corner and following Hamilton, who came in at the end of the second 'first' lap



Hamilton leads at the restart, but would soon take his penalty

HONE



Gasly's defence was as dogged and determined as Sainz's attack

COATES

– actually the 28th tour – to serve his penalty. He rejoined 17th and last, half a minute off the lead that had for so long been his.

Stroll's restart got worse when he locked his right-front heavily and shot across the runoff at the Della Roggia chicane, and had to stay behind the two Alfas that had passed him on the run to Turn 1. At the start of the next lap, Sainz blasted past to demote him further at Turn 1. His "amazing opportunity" to take his first F1 win was gone.

And so it fell to two other drivers chasing a maiden F1 triumph to play out a battle for the ages, and that surely isn't putting too fine a point on things. It was a tense and thrilling chase to the finish – with 19 laps still to go.

GASLY SOAKS UP THE PRESSURE

Once he'd inherited the lead, Gasly never lost it. But it wasn't that simple. By lap 34, when Sainz was finally back to the second place that he more than likely would have taken on merit even if Hamilton had waltzed to yet another victory, Gasly was clear in the lead.

Sainz had had to battle ahead of Raikkonen – with Giovinazzi serving his penalty two laps after Hamilton and therefore dropping to the back in turn – and it took him four laps before he got past with a steamy lunge to the outside into the Rettifilo chicane, plus a firm shove to claim the second apex. That scrap had added 3.308s to Gasly's lead, which now stood at 4.344s.

Over the remaining distance, Sainz whittled Gasly's advantage back. The two leaders generally ran in the low-to-mid 1m24s, with Sainz occasionally dipping into the 1m23s. Over this period, Sainz was an average of 0.178s per lap faster than his rival.

"I knew the closer Carlos was getting, the more slipstream he would get," said Gasly, who tried weaving to disrupt the tow in the final laps. "I tried to push as hard as I could in the corners on the tyres, which obviously means you have more degradation, but it was my only way to make lap time. The last few laps I had big moments through the Lesmos, through Ascari, just trying to give everything because I could see him becoming bigger and bigger in my mirrors." »

QUALIFYING



Lewis Hamilton has already made a lot of history and he's got some massive milestones coming up. But in qualifying at Monza last weekend, he took another accolade – he has now set Formula 1's fastest ever pole lap.

Kimi Raikkonen had held that record for two years, since he broke Juan Pablo Montoya's long-standing average Monza speed of 162.9mph from 2004 in taking pole for Ferrari in 2018 at 163.8mph. Ferrari could not repeat that feat last year, when the farcical scenes at the end of Q3 meant Charles Leclerc's pole lap came in at 163.4mph – with surely at least a few tenths left unclaimed as the drivers, bar McLaren's Carlos Sainz Jr, missed a second chance to improve.

In 2020, thanks to Mercedes, the only Parabolica traffic jam occurred in Q1. This cost Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel dearly, as he was dumped out in 17th with an abandoned final run following Esteban Ocon, Kimi Raikkonen and Nicholas Latifi tripping over each other. Things didn't go much better for Leclerc, who made it to 13th and Q2, but no further, 0.966 seconds slower over a lap than his 2019 record-missing pole time.

Mercedes eschewed the tow all the other squads wanted so badly. This meant Valtteri Bottas ran clear on both Q3 runs, while Lewis Hamilton effectively towed the rest of the pack – not that that hindered him. In fact, Mercedes sent its cars out with well over five minutes remaining in Q3, which meant the final laps were over long before the chequered flag was scheduled to come out. This spread the pack out slightly, and there was little jostling behind the Black Arrows.

"I NEARLY LOST IT AND SINCE THEN I'M ACTUALLY SHAKING A BIT, I HAD TO REALLY GO FOR IT"

Bottas had to find 0.053s on his final run but, although he improved, Hamilton went faster still – party mode or not ("I don't ever think we had a party mode," he mused afterwards).

The record now stands at 164.3mph and, given that the FIA has moved to cut the downforce levels of the current cars even as they soldier on into next year, and the 2022 redesigns will slash downforce, it may be there for a long time to come.

Sainz put in the session's other standout performance, the McLaren driver shooting to third, ahead of Sergio Perez, while Max Verstappen's "subscription" to P3 finally expired as he qualified fifth.

"The last lap I nearly messed up," said Sainz. "I had a big moment in Lesmo one and I nearly lost it and since then I had to drive like this [hands-shaking gesture]. I'm actually shaking a bit, because in Parabolica and Ascari I had to really go for it."



TRACKSIDE VIEW



As it's the Monza weekend, many eyes – of those who are allowed into the track, at least – are on Ferrari given its shocking showing at Spa. And for the start of FP1, this includes Autosport.

As the opening session of track action again begins with a lifeless first 15 minutes (apart from the early installation laps), we remain at our workstation, just above the Red Bull garage and with a good view of the red home team's pitwall.

At this stage, Mattia Binotto is yet to make his way across the pitlane. A small crowd of scarlet-clothed mechanics and engineers has gathered in front of the garage, and heads turn as Alex Albon heads out from beneath Autosport's perch after nearly 20 minutes have gone by – there are arms folded aplenty. But a few moments later the crew springs into action, space clears, it's time for the drivers to head out for the first meaningful running. Charles Leclerc rolls away on the hard tyres, Sebastian Vettel on the mediums, the Mercedes duo departing at the same time.

Now Binotto is on the pitwall, arms folded. He remains this way for some time, only uncurling as he turns to watch his squad's pitstop drill when Vettel returns. Then it's back to the timing and data screens, which will surely be already showing that, although things are better for Ferrari than in Belgium, it's going to be another tough weekend.

Red Bull's preparations for its own pitstop practice are interrupted when Max Verstappen goes off as he flies through Ascari – the two mechanics removing wheelguns from their pouches turn to peer back into the garage to see what's happened. He limps home for a nose change and a reset under the red flags.

"BINOTTO'S ARMS ARE FOLDED. THE TIMING SCREENS WILL SURELY BE SHOWING THAT IT'LL BE A TOUGH WEEKEND"

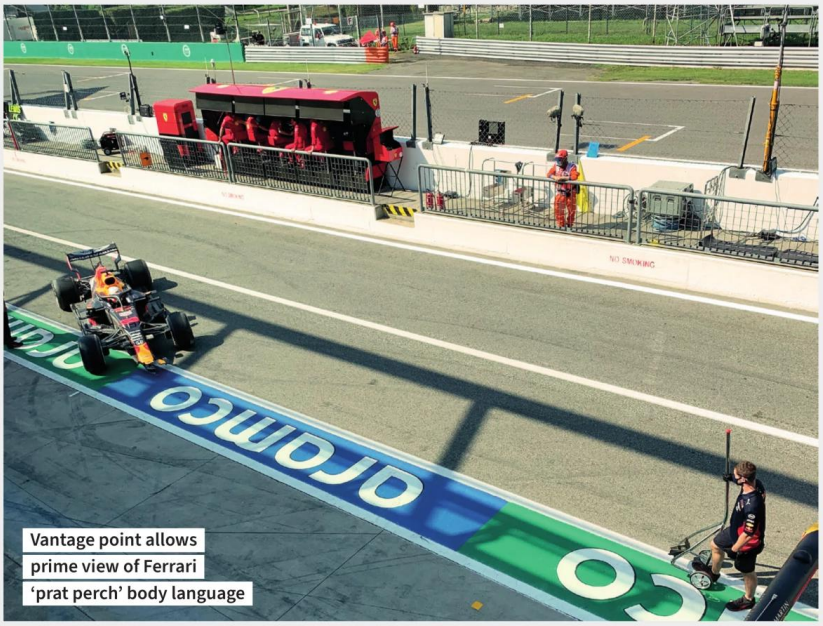
That stoppage gives Autosport the chance to head outside and see where we can get under the COVID-secure protocols. We pass the test centre and saunter up to Ascari. Our view takes in the braking zone on the left and the sequence unfolds in front, with the cars heading off down to the Parabolica in the distance.

We gratefully climb onto a pair of tree stumps to get a better view through the fences – the nearby grandstands are necessarily fenced off. We can see just how planted the Mercedes cars are, set up to sacrifice straightline speed for cornering supremacy. The drivers must take care not to clatter the kerbs on the left apex to avoid unsettling the cars as they sweep to the right.

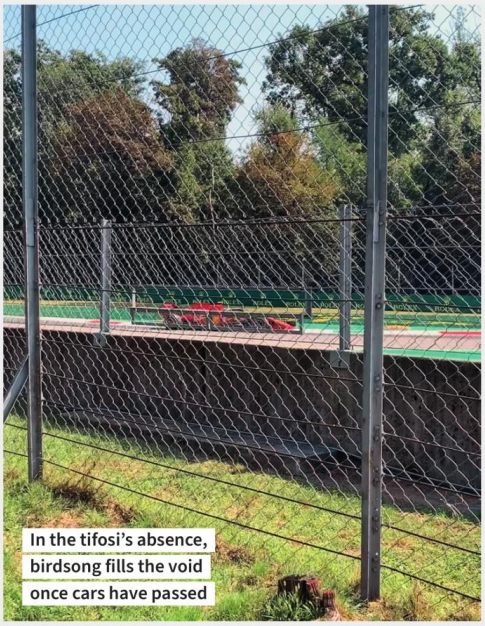
It's hot, with little breeze to cool us, or unsettle the cars. When the session ends we return to our post, pondering the sounds of the park.

This Autosport reporter took the same walk on a visit to the TCR International meeting at Monza in 2015, where we marvelled at the history and atmosphere the track naturally exudes. "It must be buzzing on a grand prix weekend," we had thought. The absence of the tifosi means we return in near-silence, but for the sounds of birds. Monza minus Formula 1 fans is distinctly unnatural.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS



Vantage point allows prime view of Ferrari 'prat perch' body language



In the tifosi's absence, birdsong fills the void once cars have passed



French hero Gasly feels the emotion at the playing of *La Marseillaise*

SUTTON

DIRTY AIR DOES FOR SAINZ

The tow effect around Monza is part of its magic – and has been throughout its history. Across the weekend, before the race, the drivers had been getting in each other's way in their desperation to sit in the optimum three-to-four-second gap, which raised their top speed without giving up corner handling. Q1 was blighted, thankfully Q3 wasn't – for a second year in a row.

Sainz surfed this effect well as he relentlessly closed in on Gasly but, as he finally really reached the AlphaTauri's rear, the air suddenly became a problem. "We've been very strong here on the straights this weekend," he explained. "The only thing I haven't done this weekend is get a tow – because I know that our car doesn't work very well in the tow, we are very affected by the dirty air. So, as soon as I got to within 1.5s I started feeling that dirty air, I started feeling the car was a lot more loose, a lot more difficult to get the lap time and the grip in the corners. I was trying to maximise the tow, maximise everything I could, but the car was starting to struggle a bit behind Pierre."

And that finalised the result. Only on the last lap was Sainz finally able to get into DRS range, but he could not reap its benefit, rueing that the race was not just one lap longer. Gasly was home, 0.415s ahead of Sainz, the recovering Stroll 3.358s back in third.



Gasly's career redemption hits an emphatic high

DUNBAR

Hamilton recovered to seventh. He set a string of fastest laps once he'd emerged from his penalty pitlane trip, but once he caught the back of the pack he could not cut his way to the top places. He still made eight passes – and finished 13s closer to Gasly than he had been at the start of the chase – but that was as far as he got.

"[The new engine mode rule was] why I wasn't overtaking a huge amount, or at a fast pace," he explained. "When I came out, I saw that I had a massive gap, and it wasn't really closing anywhere near as fast as I would like. And also I was running out of laps. I was sure I was going to catch them at some stage, but then I got caught up and I couldn't get by – so it didn't feel great, that's for sure. I had to use up a lot of my tyres to even catch the back of the train. But I did the best I could."

GASLY'S RETURN TO JOY

It was 13 months ago that Gasly found out he was being demoted from Red Bull back to Toro Rosso, and motorsport has just marked one year since his close friend – F2 frontrunner Anthoine Hubert – was killed at Spa. He impressed over his nine races back at Red Bull's 'B-team' in 2019, capping his season with that tremendous run to second in Brazil. He explained, after going one better last weekend, that he had focused on improving himself and simply enjoying the atmosphere at AlphaTauri, where he clearly thrives. His race performances in 2020 even before arriving at his team's home race have been outstanding.

"I've got no words," he said once he'd climbed from his car and leaped for joy. "This team have done so much for me. They gave me my first podium and now they are giving me my first win. It's crazy, honestly, it's just crazy and I'm so happy."

NEXT F1 REPORT

TUSCAN GRAND PRIX
17 SEPTEMBER ISSUE

Dare we hope that F1 can deliver another new winner on the first visit to the challenging, high-speed Mugello circuit?

Bottas misses his chance



Valtteri Bottas endured a poor race at Monza, managing only to take fifth and squandering an opportunity to close in on Lewis Hamilton in the drivers' standings.

Bottas started from the front row, but was swallowed by the chasing pack after a lacklustre getaway, where his issues with Mercedes' start system resurfaced. He was quickly usurped by Carlos Sainz Jr off the line, and got passed by the other McLaren of Lando Norris at the second chicane. The Finn asked Mercedes to check the pressures of his tyres, amid fears of a puncture while dicing with Norris in close quarters and sliding wide out of the second Lesmo, but was given the all-clear to continue. By then, Sergio Perez and Daniel Ricciardo had relegated Bottas to sixth by the end of lap one.

After the mid-race madness, Bottas was shuffled down to eighth at the red flag. Mercedes worked on his car during the stoppage, and Bottas took the restart with a chance to capitalise on Hamilton's stop/go penalty. But he could make no inroads, barely bothering the McLarens as he made little progress, and passing only Kimi Raikkonen's Alfa Romeo. Hamilton, even after his penalty, finished 10s behind.





Hamilton's race-losing penalty explained

The 2020 Italian Grand Prix contained several big slices of good fortune for several drivers, including the race winner, but the main one was handed to them by Mercedes. Both Lewis Hamilton and his team missed the warning signs that the pitlane was closed while Kevin Magnussen's Haas was recovered, costing Formula 1's dominant squad another victory.

The pitlane had been closed because the gap in the barriers close to where Magnussen pulled off was not wide enough to push the car through, as evidenced by the orange marking designating it as a marshal post and not a track exit. So the FIA had no choice but to tell the marshals to push it to the pitlane and close this area of the circuit.

Since the 2016 Brazilian GP – the last time a pitlane was shut during a race – the punishment for pitting during such a hiatus has been a 10-second stop/go penalty. The FIA had clarified and agreed on the punishment with Formula 1's 10 team sporting directors, as there was a sense that Daniel Ricciardo's five-second penalty for pitting when the pitlane was closed at Interlagos was too lenient. So the stewards had no choice when it came to Hamilton and Antonio Giovinazzi being given their identical punishments.

The marker boards that Hamilton passed are clearly labelled in the race director's pre-event briefing notes, which are distributed to the teams ahead of each event. Hamilton was also free to make his visit to the stewards during the red flag because "there's nothing stopping it", according to F1 race director Michael Masi.

"The stewards, like everyone, have very much an open-door policy," he added. "If someone has got a question, they can ask."

Hamilton said of his visit to the stewards: "I just wanted to see what had been missed, because I could have sworn on the entry to the pitlane there was no red light. They just quickly showed me the onboard, and there were two signs that had an 'X' on it.

"I actually didn't see them, because I was looking elsewhere. Then there was not really much more for me to do, so I just left, went back, got changed."

BIG NUMBER

2012

(HUNGARY)

The last time an F1 podium did not feature at least one driver from the Mercedes, Ferrari or Red Bull squads.



Double DNF on home turf as Ferrari woes continue

The red flag that further shook up the Italian Grand Prix was sparked by a huge accident for Charles Leclerc, which brought Ferrari's home race to an early end.

Leclerc crashed at high speed on the exit of Parabolica on lap 24, losing the rear of his car mid-corner and ploughing into the barrier. He swiftly reported that he was unharmed and managed to get out of his car unassisted. He was required to have a check-up due to the severity of the crash, but was soon released from the medical centre.

Sebastian Vettel (below) had retired from the race after just six laps due to a brake failure that left him going straight on at the Rettifilo chicane before crawling back to the pits.





Verstappen and Red Bull in the wars

Red Bull had not enjoyed a particularly good qualifying, where Max Verstappen missed making the first two rows and Alex Albon barely got into Q3. And any hopes of a better race faded on lap one, as Verstappen lost two spots at the start and Albon was embroiled in a first-corner tangle with Pierre Gasly, picking up damage and haemorrhaging track positions.

A lap later, Albon was involved in a scuffle with Haas's Romain Grosjean, earning a five-second penalty for squeezing the French driver off the road. Verstappen briefly lost another place to Lance Stroll, although repaid the favour a lap later to get onto Valtteri Bottas's tail, but the red flag mid-race shuffled the duo well down the order. Verstappen took the restart in 14th, with Albon 17th and last.

Verstappen then lost further ground. An investigation into potentially "crowding" Sergio Perez at the Rettifilo was treated with no further action, but he still slid wide. Then his power unit gave up the ghost and handed the Dutchman a terminal failure.

Albon spent the rest of his race wrestling with damage and could make no real progress, although he provided stern opposition after Lewis Hamilton had served his penalty, and prevented the championship leader from making a bigger impact on the late stages of the race.



Q&A

DANIEL RICCIARDO
RENAULT DRIVER



What did you make of the race having two starts?
I've been involved in some red-flag ones – I remember Melbourne 2016. But I don't recall having two standing starts. I actually liked it, I thought it was good. It's tough because Turn 1 in Monza is so tight, you kind of just hang on for the start. We got through the first race start very clean and strong, so it was like, 'I have to survive another one?' But it was good fun.

Were you frustrated not to have been one of those to benefit from the chaos?
I certainly enjoyed the race, I felt I put myself in the best position at most given times, but the circumstances weren't with us. I wasn't the only one, so I don't want to jump up and down and cry, but sure I was one of them who suffered a bit with the safety car and red flag. So it's one of those ones – like maybe [a case of] what could have been, but then at the end of the day this is racing, and we can't dwell on that and have our heads down.

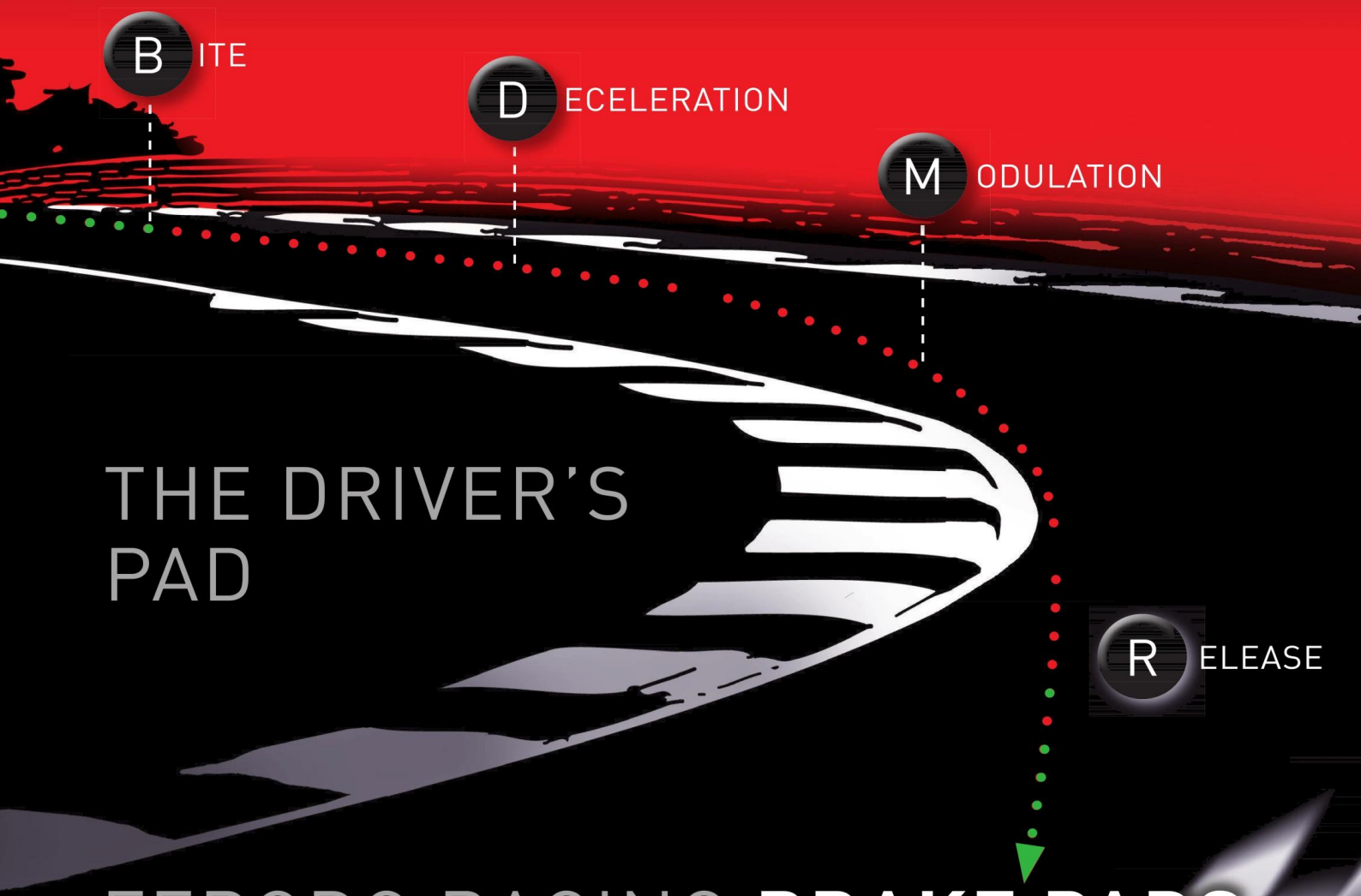
How do you evaluate a weekend where you had such high hopes coming in?
Obviously we were still there [in the points], but didn't have that extra bit that we kind of surprised ourselves with [in the Belgian GP]. I feel we were able to make a lower-downforce car work at Spa. So, I would say we ran less wing than pretty much everyone else with bigger gains in [Spa's] sector one and three, and not a massive loss in sector two, where [at Monza] everyone runs low downforce, so our gain in the straights was significantly smaller. Then naturally the cars with more downforce are able to carry a bit more through the medium and high-speed.

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DISMAL FERRARI'S LOW-DRAG PACKAGE

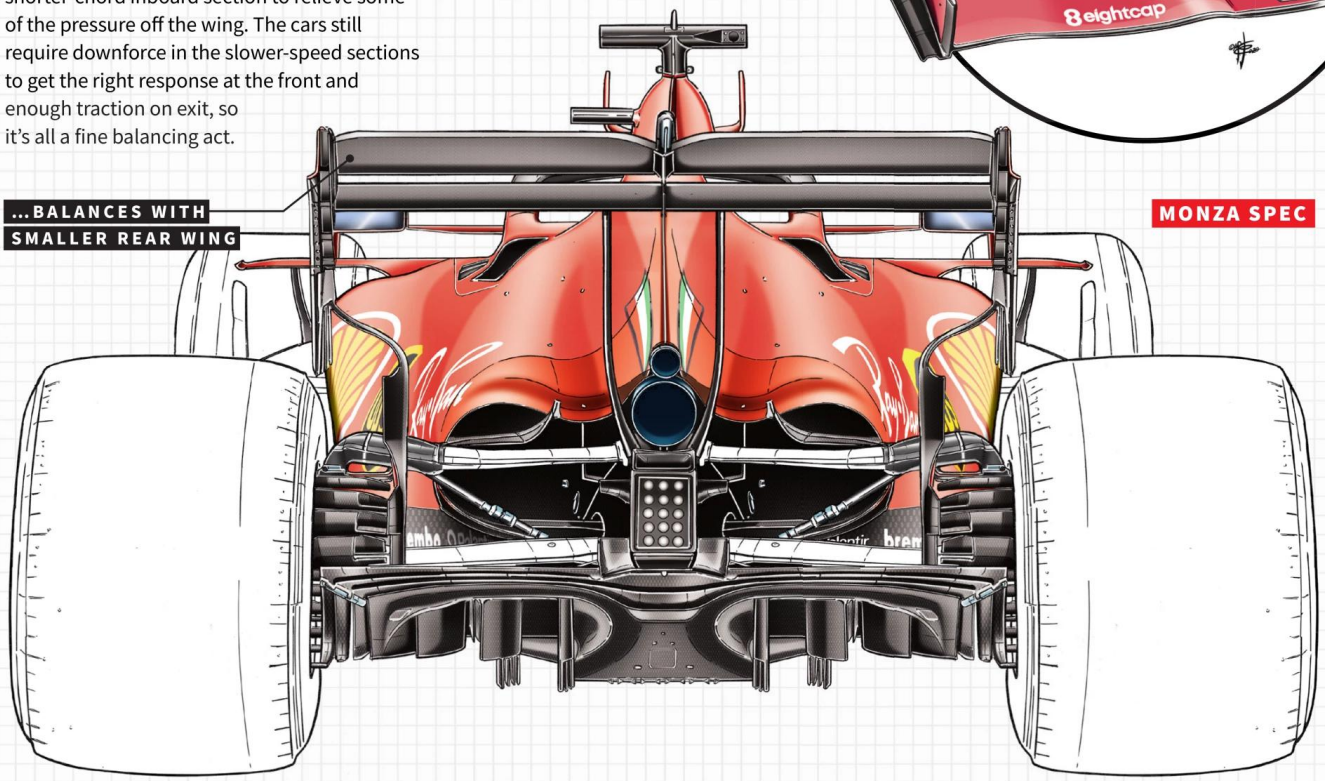
Since the Monza circuit is so unlike anything else on the calendar, with three long straights and two sharp chicanes, teams often like to take bespoke aero kits to the Italian Grand Prix to cut as much drag as possible. Ferrari, with a particularly flawed power unit in 2020, had to really dial back the drag to compensate for the lack of power last weekend.

The top flap of the front wing was seriously trimmed out to tackle Monza, featuring a much shorter-chord inboard section to relieve some of the pressure off the wing. The cars still require downforce in the slower-speed sections to get the right response at the front and enough traction on exit, so it's all a fine balancing act.

Trimming out the front wing balances out with the much smaller rear wing, which appeared to be the same specification trialled in practice at Spa last month. Instead of reducing the angle of attack of the DRS-activated top flap as they did at Spa, it was considerably shorter in chord to limit the drag produced, and paired with a low-camber mainplane mounted further up.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE





ALPHATAURI FASHIONS MONZA-SPEC WING

AlphaTauri's approach to a Monza front wing was arguably the reverse of Ferrari's – and, outwardly, looked very similar to the wing that the team ran as Toro Rosso last season. Instead of trimming the inboard section, the team instead flattened out the outboard portion of the wing and ran a more heavily cambered, curved inboard portion to give it more control over the tip vortices produced by the upper two elements. The outboard section, particularly the top flap, was also shortened in chord length to limit the drag building as a result of the airflow staying attached over the combined elements.

Although the AT01 seemed to have a good turn of pace, Honda perhaps lost out in qualifying's new engine-mode restrictions as neither AlphaTauri nor Red Bull made it onto the front two rows. Pierre Gasly and Daniil Kvyat factored frequently in the top five during Friday practice, but not even that could have prepared the AlphaTauri team for Sunday's events. The new wing was first across the line as Gasly claimed a famous victory from McLaren's Carlos Sainz Jr, having had enough grip in the corners to counter Sainz's straightline speed advantage. Fortunate, yes, but had AlphaTauri's low-drag spec not been up to scratch, Gasly would have fallen prey to the pursuing Sainz.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE





FREE PRACTICE 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m20.703s
2	Hamilton	1m20.948s
3	Albon	1m21.500s
4	Kvyat	1m21.555s
5	Verstappen	1m21.641s
6	Gasly	1m21.667s
7	Perez	1m21.747s
8	Norris	1m21.747s
9	Ricciardo	1m21.789s
10	Sainz	1m21.821s
11	Leclerc	1m21.904s
12	Ocon	1m21.984s
13	Stroll	1m22.131s
14	Grosjean	1m22.409s
15	Magnussen	1m22.422s
16	Giovinazzi	1m22.552s
17	Raikkonen	1m22.619s
18	Nissany	1m22.826s
19	Vettel	1m22.988s
20	Latifi	1m23.120s

WEATHER Sunny, air 23-26C track 32-39C

FREE PRACTICE 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m20.192s
2	Bottas	1m20.454s
3	Norris	1m21.089s
4	Gasly	1m21.121s
5	Verstappen	1m21.228s
6	Sainz	1m21.313s
7	Kvyat	1m21.376s
8	Stroll	1m21.389s
9	Leclerc	1m21.503s
10	Perez	1m21.594s
11	Ocon	1m21.697s
12	Vettel	1m21.733s
13	Giovinazzi	1m21.786s
14	Albon	1m21.883s
15	Ricciardo	1m22.080s
16	Magnussen	1m22.088s
17	Raikkonen	1m22.147s
18	Grosjean	1m22.254s
19	Latifi	1m22.825s
20	Russell	1m22.927s

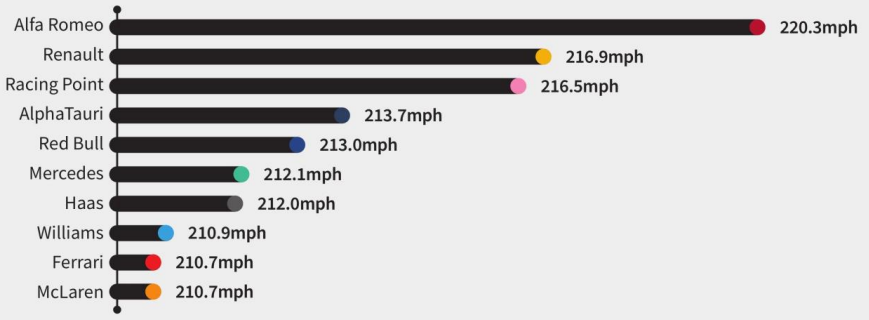
WEATHER Sunny, air 27-29C track 38-45C

FREE PRACTICE 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m20.089s
2	Sainz	1m20.318s
3	Norris	1m20.412s
4	Ricciardo	1m20.419s
5	Hamilton	1m20.439s
6	Verstappen	1m20.456s
7	Albon	1m20.563s
8	Ocon	1m20.693s
9	Stroll	1m20.804s
10	Perez	1m20.897s
11	Leclerc	1m20.917s
12	Gasly	1m20.936s
13	Kvyat	1m20.953s
14	Grosjean	1m21.205s
15	Vettel	1m21.263s
16	Magnussen	1m21.436s
17	Raikkonen	1m21.459s
18	Russell	1m21.677s
19	Latifi	1m21.764s
20	Giovinazzi	1m22.090s

WEATHER Sunny, air 26C track 36C

SPEED TRAP (QUALIFYING)



QUALIFYING 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m19.514s
2	Bottas	1m19.786s
3	Perez	1m20.048s
4	Sainz	1m20.099s
5	Gasly	1m20.145s
6	Verstappen	1m20.193s
7	Kvyat	1m20.307s
8	Norris	1m20.344s
9	Stroll	1m20.400s
10	Leclerc	1m20.443s
11	Ricciardo	1m20.548s
12	Ocon	1m20.747s
13	Magnussen	1m20.869s
14	Raikkonen	1m21.010s
15	Albon	1m21.104s
16	Grosjean	1m21.139s
17	Vettel	1m21.151s
18	Giovinazzi	1m21.206s
19	Russell	1m21.587s
20	Latifi	1m21.717s

QUALIFYING 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m18.952s
2	Hamilton	1m19.092s
3	Sainz	1m19.705s
4	Perez	1m19.718s
5	Verstappen	1m19.780s
6	Gasly	1m19.909s
7	Stroll	1m19.924s
8	Norris	1m19.962s
9	Ricciardo	1m20.031s
10	Albon	1m20.064s
11	Kvyat	1m20.169s
12	Ocon	1m20.234s
13	Leclerc	1m20.273s
14	Raikkonen	1m20.926s
15	Magnussen	1m21.573s

QUALIFYING 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m18.887s
2	Bottas	1m18.956s
3	Sainz	1m19.695s
4	Perez	1m19.720s
5	Verstappen	1m19.795s
6	Norris	1m19.820s
7	Ricciardo	1m19.864s
8	Stroll	1m20.049s
9	Albon	1m20.090s
10	Gasly	1m20.177s

WEATHER Sunny, air 28-30C track 44-47C



SEASON STATS

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

		PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1	Hamilton	164	1	1
2	Bottas	117	1	1
3	Verstappen	110	1	2
4	Stroll	57	3	3
5	Norris	57	3	4
6	Albon	48	4	5
7	Leclerc	45	2	4
8	Gasly	43	1	7
9	Sainz	41	2	3
10	Ricciardo	41	4	4
11	Perez	34	5	4
12	Ocon	30	5	5
13	Vettel	16	6	5
14	Hulkenberg	6	7	3
15	Kvyat	4	9	11
16	Giovinazzi	2	9	17
17	Magnussen	1	10	15
18	Latifi	0	11	15
19	Raikkonen	0	11	14
20	Grosjean	0	12	14
21	Russell	0	12	12

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1	Mercedes	281
2	Red Bull	158
3	McLaren	98
4	Racing Point	82
5	Renault	71
6	Ferrari	61
7	AlphaTauri	47
8	Alfa Romeo	2
9	Haas	1
10	Williams	0

QUALIFYING BATTLE

Hamilton	**6**	2	Bottas
Vettel	2	**6**	**Leclerc**
Albon	0	**8**	**Verstappen**
Norris	**4**	**4**	**Sainz**
Ricciardo	**7**	1	Ocon
Gasly	**7**	1	Kvyat
Perez	**4**	2	Stroll
Stroll	**1**	**1**	**Hulkenberg**
Raikkonen	**4**	**4**	**Giovinazzi**
Grosjean	3	**5**	**Magnussen**
Latifi	0	**8**	**Russell**

Scores ignore sessions if a driver didn't participate in qualifying or had a serious technical problem

WINS

Hamilton	5
Bottas	1
Gasly	1
Verstappen	1

POLE POSITIONS

Hamilton	6
Bottas	2

FASTEST LAPS

Hamilton	3
Bottas	1
Norris	1
Ricciardo	1
Sainz	1
Verstappen	1

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STARTING GRID

10 Gasly #10 *1m20.177s*	**9 Albon** #23 *1m20.090s*	**8 Stroll** #18 *1m20.049s*	**7 Ricciardo** #3 *1m19.864s*	**6 Norris** #4 *1m19.820s*	**5 Verstappen** #33 *1m19.795s*	**4 Perez** #11 *1m19.720s*	**3 Sainz** #55 *1m19.695s*	**2 Bottas** #77 *1m18.956s*	**1 Hamilton** #44 *1m18.887s*

RACE RESULTS ROUND 8 (53 LAPS – 190.60 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISH TIME	LED	TYRES
1	**Pierre Gasly** (FRA)	AlphaTauri-Honda	1h47m06.056s	26	Su, Hn, Mn
2	**Carlos Sainz Jr** (ESP)	McLaren-Renault	+0.415s	1	Su, Mn, Mu
3	**Lance Stroll** (CAN)	Racing Point-Mercedes	+3.358s		Su, Mn
4	**Lando Norris** (GBR)	McLaren-Renault	+6.000s		Su, Mn, Mu
5	**Valtteri Bottas** (FIN)	Mercedes	+7.108s		Su, Mn, Mu
6	**Daniel Ricciardo** (AUS)	Renault	+8.391s		Su, Mn, Mu
7	**Lewis Hamilton** (GBR)	Mercedes	+17.245s	26	Su, Mn, Hn
8	**Esteban Ocon** (FRA)	Renault	+18.691s		Sn, Mn, Su
9	**Daniil Kvyat** (RUS)	AlphaTauri-Honda	+22.208s		Hn, Mn, Mu
10	**Sergio Perez** (MEX)	Racing Point-Mercedes	+23.224s		Su, Mn, Mu
11	**Nicholas Latifi** (CAN)	Williams-Mercedes	+32.876s		Mn, Hn, Mn
12	**Romain Grosjean** (FRA)	Haas-Ferrari	+35.164s		Mn, Hn, Hu
13	**Kimi Raikkonen** (FIN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	+36.312s		Mn, Hn, Sn
14	**George Russell** (GBR)	Williams-Mercedes	+36.593s		Mn, Hn, Mn
15	**Alexander Albon** (THA)	Red Bull-Honda	+37.533s		Su, Mn, Hn
16	**Antonio Giovinazzi** (ITA)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	+55.199s		Mn, Hn, Sn
R	**Max Verstappen** (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda	30 laps-engine		Su, Mn, Mu
R	**Charles Leclerc** (MCO)	Ferrari	23 laps-accident		Sn, Hn
R	**Kevin Magnussen** (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	17 laps-engine		Mn, Hn
R	**Sebastian Vettel** (DEU)	Ferrari	6 laps-brakes		Hn

FASTEST LAPS

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	**Hamilton**	1m22.746s	-	34
2	**Sainz**	1m23.882s	+1.136s	40
3	**Stroll**	1m23.897s	+1.151s	42
4	**Ricciardo**	1m23.898s	+1.152s	38
5	**Bottas**	1m23.961s	+1.215s	51
6	**Gasly**	1m24.037s	+1.291s	34
7	**Norris**	1m24.232s	+1.486s	50
8	**Perez**	1m24.336s	+1.590s	50
9	**Russell**	1m24.421s	+1.675s	39
10	**Kvyat**	1m24.479s	+1.733s	44
11	**Ocon**	1m24.490s	+1.744s	52
12	**Grosjean**	1m24.785s	+2.039s	48
13	**Raikkonen**	1m24.835s	+2.089s	29
14	**Giovinazzi**	1m24.856s	+2.110s	43
15	**Albon**	1m24.926s	+2.180s	48
16	**Latifi**	1m24.999s	+2.253s	39
17	**Verstappen**	1m25.539s	+2.793s	10
18	**Magnussen**	1m25.787s	+3.041s	10
19	**Leclerc**	1m26.026s	+3.280s	19
20	**Vettel**	1m27.107s	+4.361s	4

WEATHER Sunny, air 28-29C track 36-46C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 106.78mph **FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED** 156.61mph

TYRES

KEY: H - Hard M - Medium S - Soft I - Intermediate W - Wet n - New set u - Used set



RACE BRIEFING

FP1

ROY NISSANY replaced **RUSSELL** at Williams

RACE PENALTIES

ALBON Five-second penalty and two licence points for not leaving a car's width

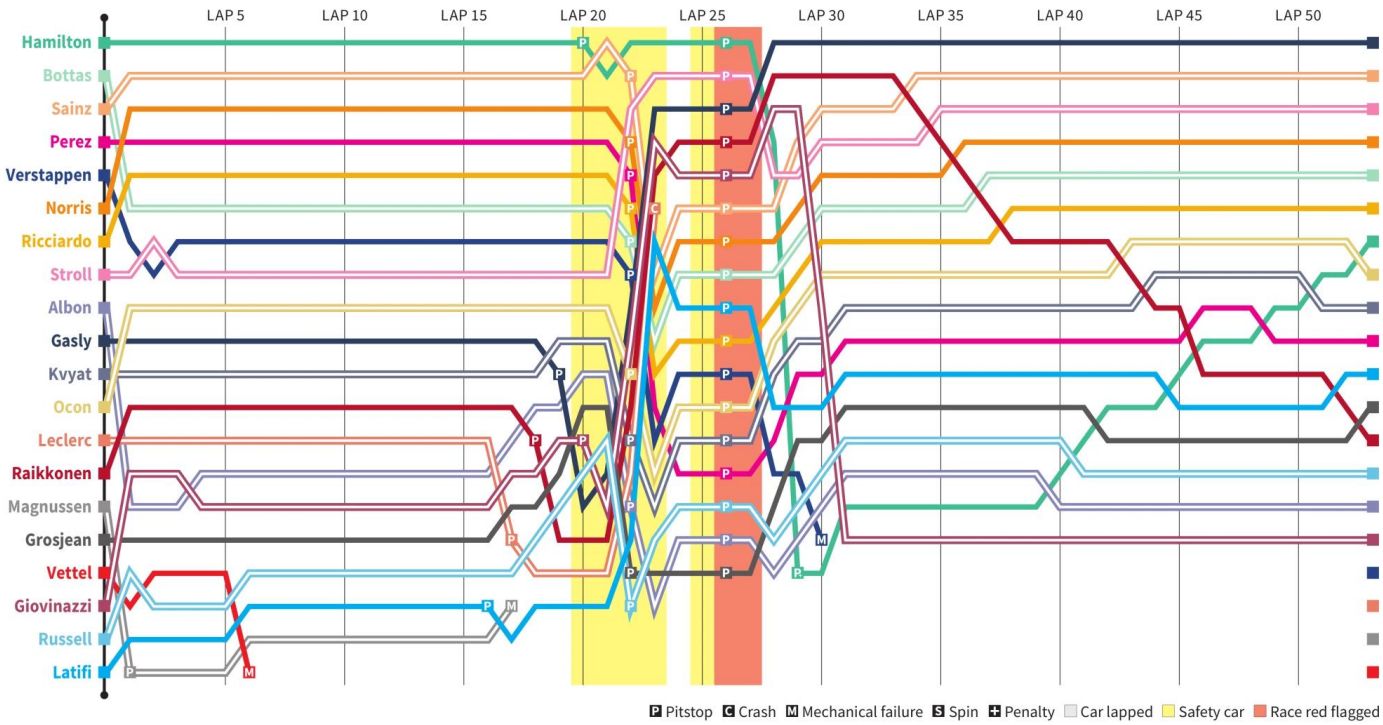
HAMILTON and **GIOVINAZZI** 10-second stop/go penalty and two licence points each for entering the pitlane when it was closed

STAT

109

Gasly is the 109th driver to win a world championship race

LAP CHART What happened, when



IT'S FULL MARKS FOR GASLY AND SAINZ AT MONZA

Two of Formula 1's most exciting young talents took full advantage of the race's shaken-up circumstances — and thrilled with their fight to the flag

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

7 Can't score higher because of the definition of our rules – missing the pitlane closure boards meant he committed a major error. Was sublime in qualifying and was set to dominate from pole before the safety car, but at least charged well from the back to again show what he can do in battle.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

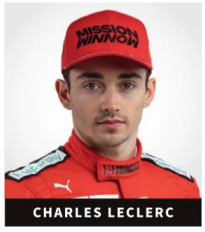
5 Another bad start proved costly, but this was way worse than in Hungary. He suspects something in the start system is hampering him, but on a day when Hamilton also erred he *had* to capitalise and he didn't. Was hurt by Mercedes' marginal cooling, but still failed to make progress.

FERRARI



SEBASTIAN VETTEL

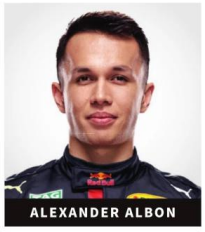
6 Vettel is basically judged solely on his qualifying performance as his brakes failed on lap five. Was in danger of elimination in Q1 as his initial run left him two spots from safety after giving Leclerc a tow. He then got caught up in the late traffic chaos and that cost him when the car had the pace for Q2.



CHARLES LECLERC

6 Is marked down because his mistake to lose the rear at Parabolica was so damaging. Put the Ferrari at its maximum in qualifying, but struggled for grip on softs and had to stop early. Said his balance was off all race, but at least delighted with his double pass on the Alfas before his crash.

RED BULL



ALEXANDER ALBON

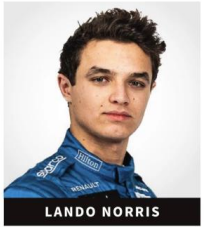
5 Was closer to Verstappen (three tenths) than appeared with three cars between them in qualifying, but that gap still cost him those grid spots. Picked up damage in the Turn 1 collision with Gasly, but was careless to drift left into Grosjean on the next lap, which earned a time penalty.



MAX VERSTAPPEN

6 An unusually sub-par weekend even before his retirement. Qualified behind two slower cars, then lost two places on the run to the first corner. Chased Bottas fruitlessly, and made a slight error after passing Perez at the restart, which pushed the Mexican into the gravel.

McLAREN



LANDO NORRIS

9 Took home a great result for McLaren, even as his team-mate got the glory. Might have had a maximum score but for his qualifying defeat. Earns an extra mark for his pass on Bottas and for defying him over 25 laps. Was cleared of driving too slowly as he came into the pits under the safety car.



CARLOS SAINZ JR

10 The other outstanding star of qualifying after Hamilton. Drove brilliantly in the race and comes away with huge credit – for that and for magnanimous acceptance of defeat. Chased Gasly well after several bold moves. Stunning, even as he rued what might have been.

RENAULT



DANIEL RICCIARDO

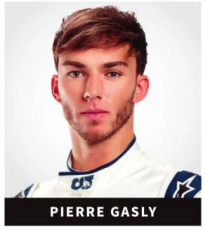
8 Probably a disappointing result given his Spa pace and 2019 Monza form, but felt he "couldn't have done any more" given the pitlane closure and the red flag neutering the situation for so many. Doesn't score higher because he didn't shine as much as expected in qualifying.



ESTEBAN OCON

7 Is marked down compared to Ricciardo because he was dumped out in Q2, but performed well in the race. Claimed Renault did not have mediums ready at the restart and so had to take the softs, which degraded and he felt stymied his chances, leading to a fractious cooldown-lap radio exchange.

ALPHATAURI



PIERRE GASLY

10 Simply outstanding. Reached Q3 for the fifth time in 2020, and in the race he really did all he could. A slip at the second chicane on lap one is not enough to cost him a mark given his later heroics. Pitlane closure and red flag helped him, but the way he resisted Sainz was majestic.



DANIIL KVYAT

8 Given that ninth is usually a very good result for an AlphaTauri, we've given him back a mark. Was just 0.105s from making it into Q3, and then the race's bizarre circumstances didn't fall his way, where they did so well for his team-mate. Not a bad weekend's work.



Gasly delivered an extraordinary result for AlphaTauri

RACING POINT



SERGIO PEREZ

6 Loses a mark thanks to his poor start after doing well in qualifying. Like Bottas, it's possible to track most of his woe from there, as he was forced to follow Norris early on and into the pits. At the restart, he was forced off at Turn 2 by Verstappen's slide and claimed his car was damaged there.



LANCE STROLL

7 Marked down because he let a golden opportunity for victory disappear after he was the net leader at the second start. A podium is a good result, but the win was there if he'd aced things. Also fell off battling Giovinazzi at the second start and was adrift of Perez in qualifying.

ALFA ROMEO



KIMI RAIKKONEN

7 It's not clear what else he could have done. Was immediately fast enough to benefit from the Q1 chaos, with his slipstreaming of Ocon practice for his eventful race. Boosted by a pre-safety car stop, he was aggressive at the second start and ran out of life on the softs he was forced to take under the red flag.



ANTONIO GIOVINAZZI

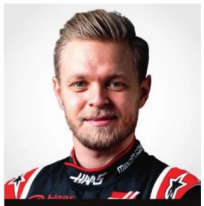
5 Loses two marks compared to his team-mate. The first reason for this was his Q1 exit, where he paid for not doing better on his first run. Was blameless in the Magnussen Turn 2 clash, but loses a mark as Hamilton does for not obeying the pitlane closure signs, and so finished last after serving his penalty.

HAAS



ROMAIN GROSJEAN

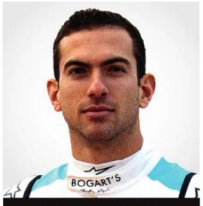
6 Loses a mark because his team-mate made it out of Q1 and he didn't. Was solid in the race, enjoying a battle with Russell, which he just edged at the flag with Raikkonen between them. Wasn't to blame for the accidental touch with Magnussen at the start.



KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

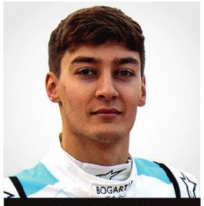
6 Might have had one more point but for his off on his final Q2 run, as he had the pace to beat Raikkonen to 14th on the grid. Could do nothing about the unfortunate Turn 1 squeeze that broke his wing and meant a lap-one stop, and was running in 18th when a suspected power-unit issue struck.

WILLIAMS



NICHOLAS LATIFI

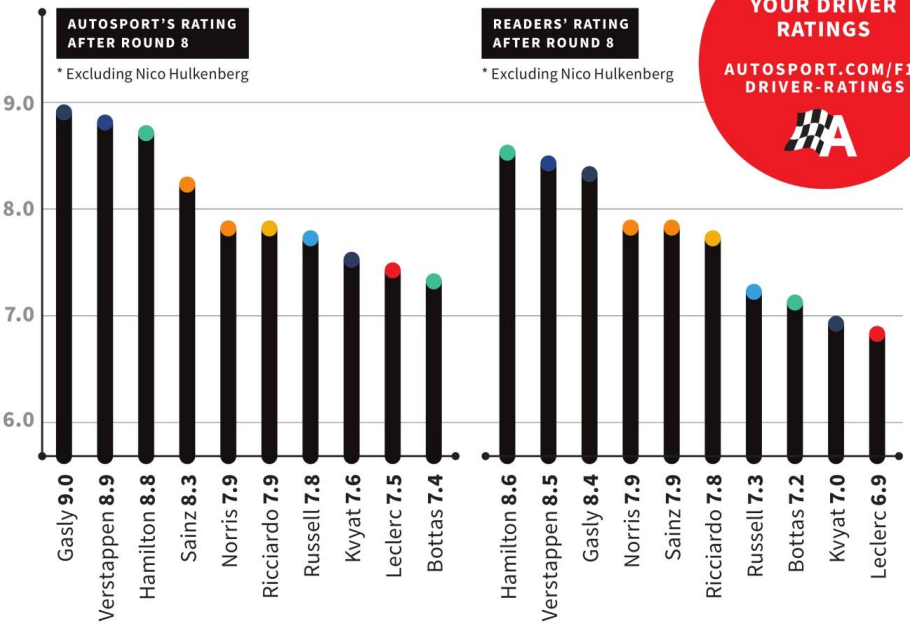
7 Did well to come home as the top 'Class C' runner, but his result was helped by pitting just before the safety car. Still, as his car is difficult to handle on opening laps thanks to an ingrained characteristic, he battled well even as he slid out of the points (he was ninth at the red flag).



GEORGE RUSSELL

7 Gets the same mark as Latifi because he maintained his artificially high second-start position where he might previously have faded further. Was frustrated to be knocked out in Q1. His race was tough, and in contrast to his team-mate he lost out by not pitting before the safety car.

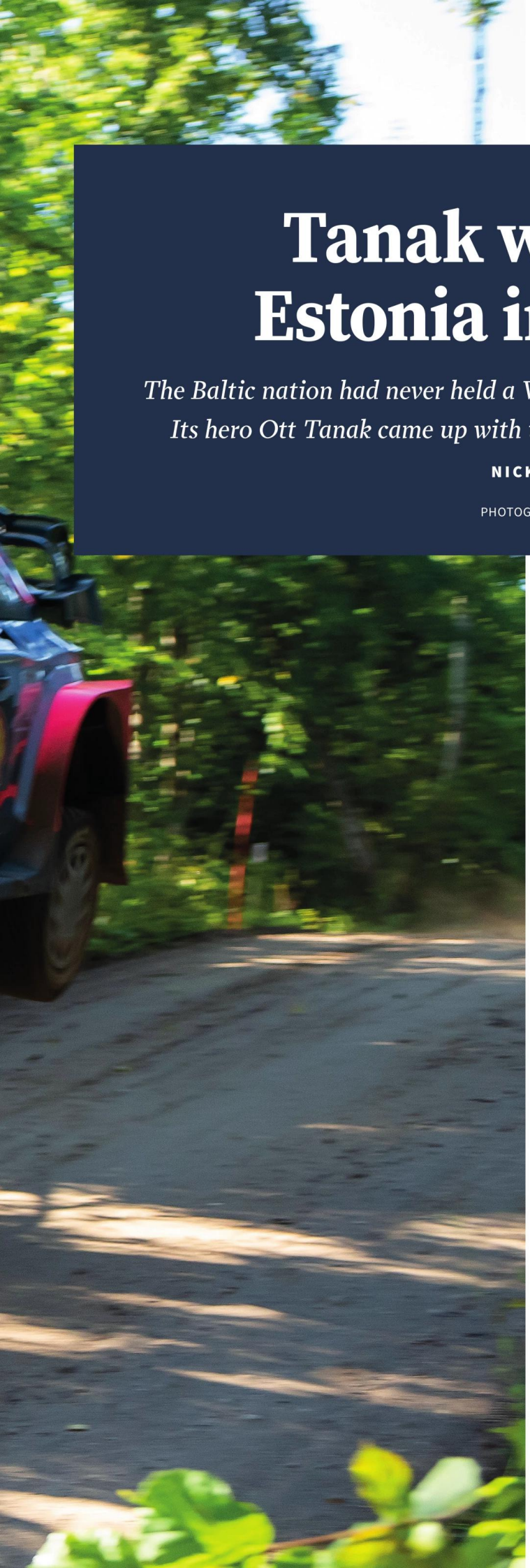
TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS



GIVE YOUR DRIVER RATINGS

AUTOSPORT.COM/F1/DRIVER-RATINGS


HYUNDAI
AsahiKASEI
hanon
SYSTEMS
MICHELIN



Tanak win leaves Estonia in raptures

The Baltic nation had never held a World Rally Championship round before. Its hero Ott Tanak came up with the goods for his first Hyundai victory

NICK GARTON

PHOTOGRAPHY **McKLEIN**

As the dust settled on Rally Estonia, the fourth round of this year's FIA World Rally Championship, reigning champion Ott Tanak and co-driver Martin Jarveoja received a rapturous reception after claiming their 13th WRC career victory and their first for Hyundai in front of an adoring, impassioned crowd of fellow countrymen and women.

The scenes were also joyous for rally fans around the world who had been starved of their sport for almost six months and were treated to an event worth savouring. The local heroes put on a masterful display, while Rally Estonia felt as though it had been on the calendar for years. Pieced together in just two months from a standing start, the fact that Rally Estonia happened at all is testament to the collaborative skills of its event organisers, the FIA and the local authorities. In return they got a day and a half's scintillating entertainment and a result that raised the rafters.

The WRC was due to mark its 600th points-scoring event back in April, until Rally Chile was cancelled due to political unrest and the next contender, Rally Argentina, was wiped out in the pandemic. Thus this towering landmark was achieved 20 weeks later than planned, on a different continent and in a country that the series had never visited before. All of these tribulations were swiftly forgotten, however, during a safe, successful and incredibly meaningful weekend as Estonia became the 33rd nation to host the WRC.

With only four rounds remaining (including this one) on the dramatically changed schedule in 2020, every point won and lost has grown in magnitude. Arriving in Estonia, three drivers had each won one of the three pre-COVID rounds — Hyundai's Thierry Neuville on the Monte Carlo Rally, and Toyota men Elfyn Evans in Sweden and Sebastien Ogier in Mexico — all of which meant that the title fight remained wide open between the works teams when they regrouped in Tartu.

On Friday evening the ceremonial start was held within the bubble of the service area before crews drove to the parkland outside the perimeter for a 1.2km spectator stage. A total of 16,000 tickets had been sold for the entire event and it felt like a packed house as points leader Ogier ended six months of silence and launched himself and co-driver Julien Ingrassia into the WRC's 'new normal'.

The Frenchman appeared relatively tentative in his approach but, as the rest of the field threw down their markers, it became clear that his speed had been there in abundance. Among the frontrunners, only Neuville really attacked the tortuous little stage, spending most of his time peering through the side windows and dropping 1.5 seconds in the process.

In the end, only one driver would match Ogier's time and that was M-Sport's Esapekka Lappi, who shared the overnight lead. It »

would prove to be the solitary highlight of the Finn's weekend.

Saturday provided the first and only full day's running, which resulted in a 10-stage marathon that began before most of the rally fans had gone to bed from the previous night. On the 13-mile opening test, Toyota's teenage rookie Kalle Rovanpera thundered up to the top of the leaderboard as the works cars all crowded Lappi's M-Sport Ford Fiesta out of the top six.

Rovanpera's morning glory was short-lived, however, as he suffered a puncture on the following stage that not only required a new wheel, but also saw flailing rubber carve some valuable aero equipment off the right-rear corner of his Yaris WRC. It was to be the first of many such issues that would affect the field as they got to grips with Estonia, which may look very much like neighbouring Finland, but where the terrain would spring many unwelcome surprises upon the unwary.

Tanak knows all the foibles of the event like nobody else, and

"We managed to get to the end of the stage but we knew this would be the end"

arrived as the only three-time winner in its 10-year history. His knowledge and experience was combined with that of team-mate Craig Breen, who had competed on the event four times, and this gave Hyundai a significant advantage that was swiftly capitalised upon. The massed ranks of Hyundai i20 Coupes duly swept to the top of the leaderboard on SS3, with Tanak leading super-sub Breen, while Neuville slotted into third after four stages.

The quartet of Toyotas were in formation behind them. Championship leader Ogier's road-sweeping position worked in his favour for once, as he was able to skim over the ruts and rocks that became very evident with each set of tyre tracks on the stages. Evans looked deeply uncomfortable but hung on to Ogier's times gamely as they pulled clear of Toyota's protege and former F3 racer Takamoto Katsuta in sixth and the recovering Rovanpera in seventh.

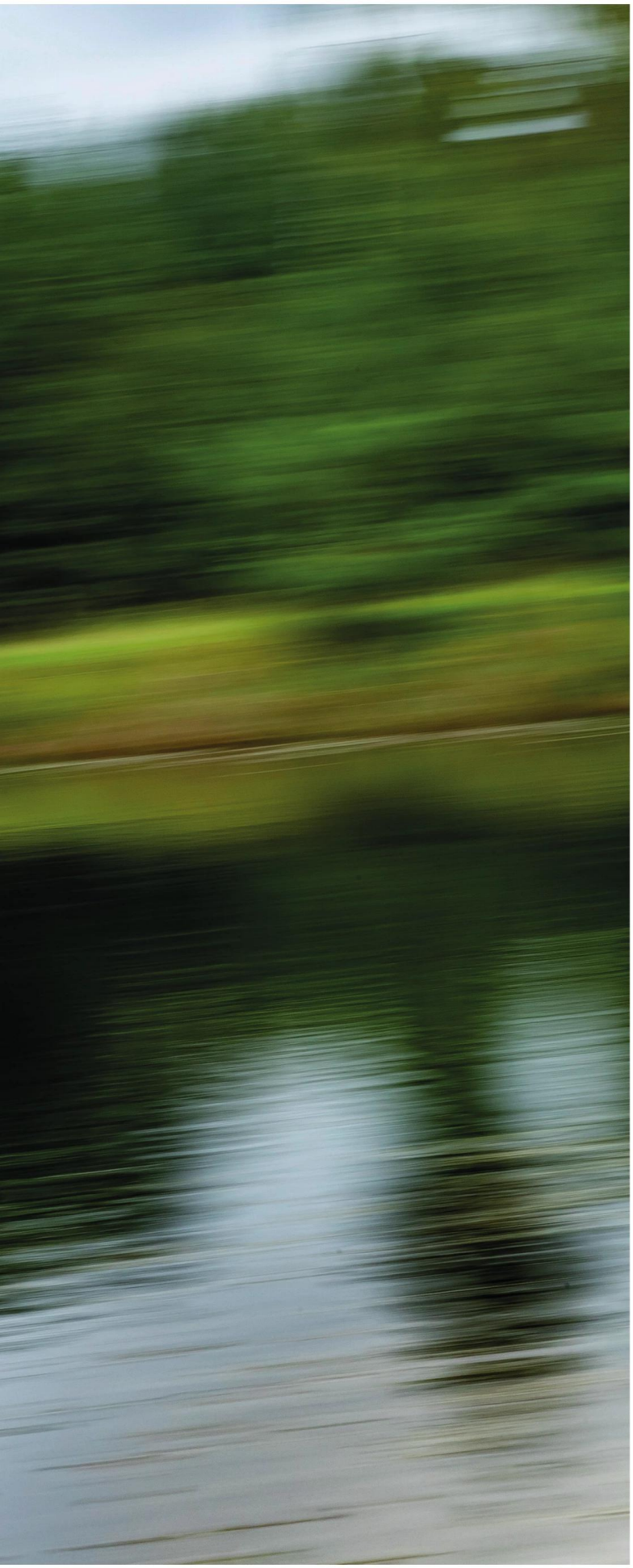
Ogier went so far as to win a stage from first on the road, but soon his road-sweeping duties were done as the order was switched after the midday halt. Although he added another stage win on SS7, the Frenchman's challenge was blunted by tyre problems, compounded by a mysterious lack of traction out of slow corners. All the Toyotas struggled with similar issues, while Neuville won the last of the morning's stages and began to make gentle progress towards Breen in second place. The Belgian never expected to match Tanak's pace on home soil, but was keen to take points from Ogier and Evans if possible, which may have meant using part-time team-mate Breen as a buffer.

On the second run through the Prangli stage, however, it became apparent that the road surface had been royally churned up by the massed ranks of WRC and R5 machinery. Neuville's Hyundai was thrown off-line in a fast left-hander, the right-rear of his car emerging from the long grass dragging its wheel and suspension assembly behind it. "I tried to recover it and unfortunately there was something on the outside which damaged the wheel," Neuville dejectedly reported. "We managed to get to the end of the stage but we knew this would be the end." The fact that Ogier won the stage on which Neuville went out doubtless added salt to his wounds.

Tanak won SS8, and then it was Breen's time to shine for Hyundai. Freed from the spectre of having to take one for the team if Neuville had still been running, he celebrated his emancipation by claiming the fastest time through both SS9 and SS10. "It's so much fun driving the car and I'm trying not to think about it!" he fizzed, going so far as to describe feeling 'like a superhero' while flying over the jumps. With the steady, encouraging sound of Paul Nagle's note-reading in his earpiece, Breen savoured every second of this renaissance and clearly relished every moment of hurtling along at 200km/h between the brooding pines. »



Ogier was the leading Toyota driver, in third



OSTBERG IS CLASS ACT IN WRC2



The Norwegian veteran took his Citroen to victory

Mads Ostberg returned to action in WRC2 at the wheel of his semi-works Citroen C3 R5 after sitting out Rally Mexico in the comfort of the commentary booth, having notched up two wins from two starts in Monte Carlo and Sweden. He won the class on an event where he took outright victory in 2011 and 2012, but it was a tougher task than it should have been.

Ostberg made the early running, but lost half a minute to a disintegrating tyre. Fellow Norwegian Ole Christian Veiby then went out after damaging his Hyundai's engine on one of the jumps and then suffering a double puncture, while Nikolay Gryazin was delayed by several spins in his Hyundai.

All this drama handed the initiative to the sponsorless Skoda of Pontus Tidemand, who had been uncertain whether he could afford to continue in the series six months earlier and for whom the COVID hiatus had therefore offered a lifeline. Despite taking this unexpected lead, Tidemand continued to drive very carefully in order to avoid damaging his precious Fabia, with the result that the leader's baton was soon snatched by the M-Sport Fiesta of Adrien Fourmaux.

It did not take long for Ostberg to get back on terms and, once the Citroen was back in front, no other challengers were forthcoming, the veteran building a 37-second cushion by the end of Saturday's running. Despite his own dramas, Gryazin seemed be poised to claim second place until the last few kilometres when he suffered yet another puncture very soon after the start of the powerstage.

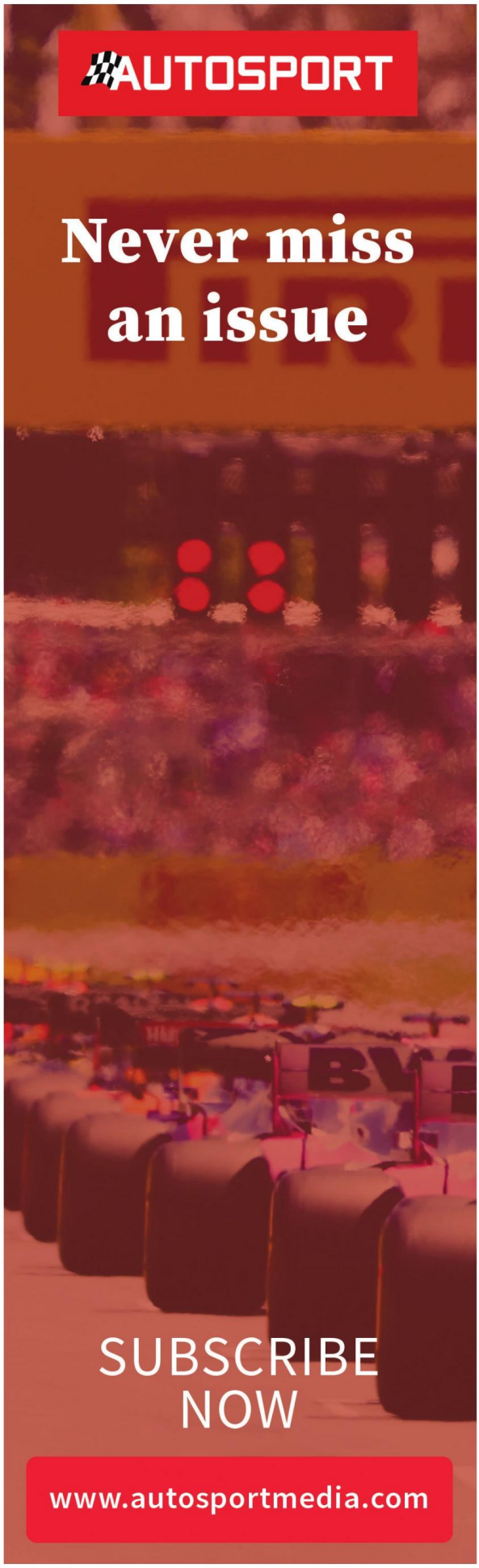
Rather than stop and change the wheel, the Russian pressed on and was soon riding on a bare rim, losing second to Fourmaux and third to Tidemand in the process.

"Tidemand had been uncertain whether he could afford to continue in the series six months earlier"

WRC3 brought out the cream of local competition in some considerable numbers, but it was the ebullient youngster Oliver Solberg, son of 2003 world champion Petter, who became the fourth driver to win in four events. Such was the pace of Solberg's Volkswagen Polo that he ended up in ninth overall, the fastest non-WRC car and 40 seconds ahead of Ostberg.

Also present in Estonia were the Junior WRC runners, or at least half of them. The depleted field lacked either Catie Munnings or Jon Armstrong, leaving Ruairi Bell to uphold British honours. The young Londoner would go on to finish fourth among the eight identical Ford Fiestas, coming home five minutes behind Austrian winner Martins Sesks.

NICK GARTON





Breen used his familiarity with Estonia to take second

As Breen cheerfully rode shotgun, rally leader Tanak clearly felt the momentum in the team moving behind him after Neuville's exit. It is no great exaggeration to suggest that Rally Estonia could prove to have been the watershed moment in Tanak's time at Hyundai. He assertied himself early on, and was rewarded by the end of the first full day with a teasing glimpse of the 2020 title.

"I've been pushing for a couple of stages, you know, just to make some gap but this afternoon, especially the middle stages, got really rough so I know I can't risk anything," he said. "I need to definitely come through it if I want to win – or to fight for – the championship," he added, perhaps correcting a slight Freudian slip.

That was to be the only remaining slip among the top six runners on Saturday, but behind the Hyundais and Toyotas there was plenty going on at M-Sport. The British squad had predicted that its Fiesta WRCs would be some way off the pace, and neither of its Finnish drivers, Teemu Suninen or Lappi, was able to mask his frustration at being in a race of their own.



Rovanpera won the first proper stage, but hit a delay

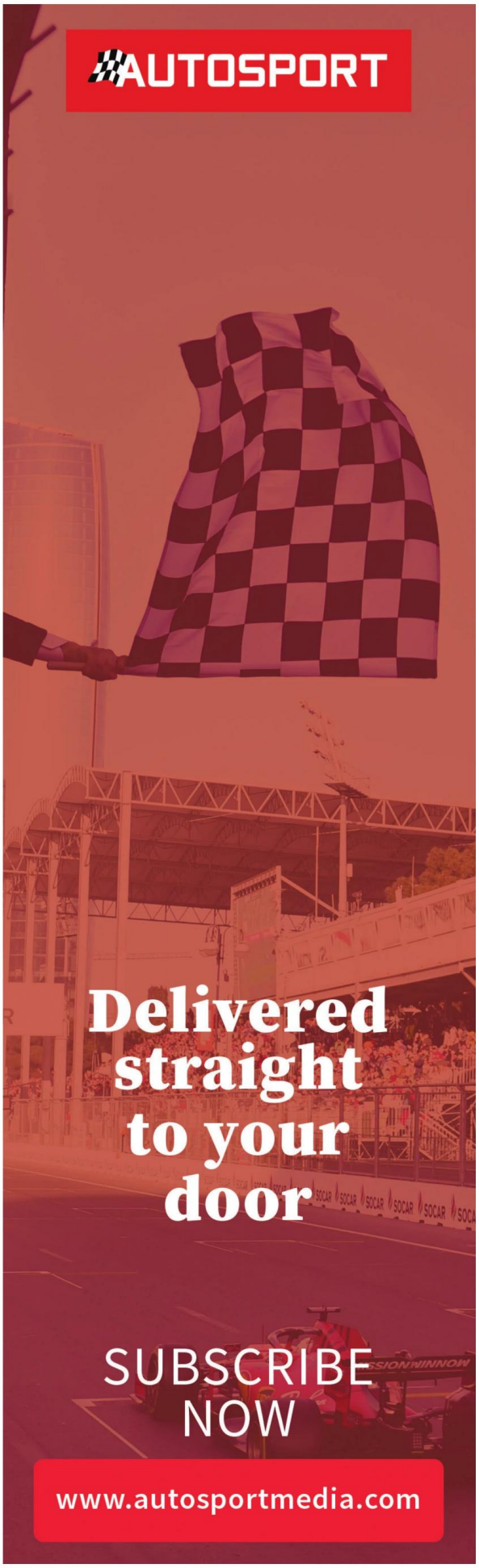


"I have no ideas – I try to change something for this stage but it's going in the wrong direction"

So it was that a hare-and-tortoise battle developed between them in which Lappi threw caution to the wind and went so far beyond the Fiesta's natural pace that half the time he was hanging onto it all by his toenails. This meant that in some sectors Lappi was as quick as the Toyotas ahead of him, but in others he was waylaid by punctures, by going off line or even by missing the occasional junction entirely. "I have no ideas – I try to change something for this stage but it's going in the wrong direction so I can't find any more performance," he said glumly.

By contrast, the more reserved Suninen simply surrendered to the form of his car and focused on getting it to the finish. On stages when Lappi held it all together, Suninen would lose a few seconds to his team-mate, but any deficit was quickly made up when the other Fiesta was forced into an unplanned diversion. "Of course, it's been a long break between rallying so there is some room to improve my driving so let's focus on that step first," he said early on, but as the rally progressed he became less self-effacing. "I tried – but I needed to bring the car home. A difficult feeling," he concluded.

The third Fiesta in M-Sport's awning was occupied by Britain's Gus Greensmith, who ran the gamut of what Estonia had to throw at the crews including a spin, some radiator damage and the seemingly inevitable tyre troubles. Compounding his struggle was the presence of reigning WRC2 champion Pierre-Louis Loubet in a 2019-spec Hyundai. While Greensmith painstakingly gathers experience with every outing in 2020, the fact that he was dropping four to five seconds per stage to an asphalt specialist in his first appearance at the wheel of a pukka WRC car clearly rankled. »



Ultimately, Loubet's rally would end with steering failure early on Sunday morning and leave Greensmith a clear path to eighth place and some valuable points. "We knew it wouldn't be an easy weekend but we have made improvements as things went along," he said at the finish. "I know everyone at M-Sport has done everything they can to help me improve this weekend, so a big thanks to them for their patience."

Another team making big improvements from Saturday to Sunday was Toyota, whose drivers monopolised all six stage wins on the final day. Evans, adrift and at a loss to pinpoint why they were not closer to the Hyundais for much of Saturday, immediately won the first stage of the final loop. Ogier also won two of the last day's stages, which left Rovanpera to claim three stage wins, including a mighty effort on the powerstage that kept too many bonus points heading towards the Hyundai camp.

"We learned that we did our preparation test in too fast

"It's nice to see a man winning at home, no? I think it's really important for him to win here"

condition," Toyota team principal Tommi Makinen admitted, after an overnight change in the damping of the Yarises almost instantly saw them outpacing the Hyundais. "We had no realistic condition [to compare against]. That's the answer why our car was not absolutely perfect all over."

Neuville rejoined the fray on Sunday morning in a repaired Hyundai i20. His strategy was to trundle gently through the first five stages of the day in the hope of keeping his tyres fresh for a run at the bonuses awarded on the final 12-mile powerstage. As it turned out, even this plan was doomed. Just before Neuville went into the powerstage his engine developed an electrical fault that forced him to limp out of tight corners rather than sprint gamely through on his well-preserved rubber. "We didn't deserve this, to be honest," he lamented at the end of the event. "We were following our plan and yesterday we got kicked out of the line and paid for it immediately but, yeah... next time it's going to be better."

None of the other potential title contenders suffered terminal difficulties on the rally, but a plucky performance from Katsuta was poorly rewarded when he rolled the fourth Yaris out of sixth place on Sunday morning. Despite Katsuta's disappointment, Toyota came away from Estonia with its leads in both the drivers' and manufacturers' championships intact. Once dialled in to Estonia's unique surface, the fleet of Yarises had pace enough to suggest that if the rally had gone on for a few more stages a very different result may have transpired – which will not have gone unnoticed by Hyundai's gimlet-eyed supremo, Andrea Adamo.

The Italian's focus is fixed squarely upon the job he was brought in to do; namely sealing the elusive WRC manufacturers' title for his employer. Even so, he could not fail to be moved by the scenes of jubilation around him as Estonia went into party mode.

"It's nice to see a man winning at home, no?" he said. "I think it's really important for him to win here and I think it's important for Craig to have shown that if he has the proper tool he can be at the same pace of the others, honestly."

Adamo's eyes were not the only ones smiling for the runner-up, and perhaps they even shared a slight tingling sensation around the lashes with Breen as he celebrated with, and paid tribute to, his co-driver Nagle and the rest of his team. "This man beside me has done an incredible job in building me up," he enthused. "The car has just given me so much confidence this weekend. I feel like I've started my career all over again. I haven't forgotten how to do it and I can't wait to do it more and more!"

For the huge crowds in the stage and across the country, meanwhile, this was a moment for clutching flags and singing the national anthem as Tanak climbed onto the roof of his car and beat the living daylights out of it with joy. This unusually demonstrative display was followed by a podium leap worthy of Michael Schumacher in his prime. No doubt Schuey would also have been impressed as Tanak used the ceremony to speak to the team.

"We have been working so, so hard – I mean the team has been working so, so hard, I've just been at home sitting on the sofa!" he joked. "But still great job guys, we keep pushing and I'm sure we can do it. It's great. Of course we have some previous knowhow and if you race at home, even if you don't know some roads, still you feel the support which you get from the people around, so it's amazing. It's a great feeling."





Suninen said he was driving for a finish. Hmm...



The leading three crews mask up for podium celebration



End of the road for Neuville's Estonia challenge



RESULTS ROUND 4/7, RALLY ESTONIA (EST), 4-6 SEPTEMBER

POS	DRIVER / CO-DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	**Ott Tanak** (EST)/**Martin Jarveoja** (EST)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	1h59m53.6s
2	**Craig Breen** (IRL)/**Paul Nagle** (IRL)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+22.2s
3	**Sebastien Ogier** (FRA)/**Julien Ingrassia** (FRA)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	+26.9s
4	**Elfyn Evans** (GBR)/**Scott Martin** (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	+41.9s
5	**Kalle Rovanpera** (FIN)/**Jonne Halttunen** (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	+1m18.7s
6	**Teemu Suninen** (FIN)/**Jarmo Lehtinen** (FIN)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+2m39.6s
7	**Esapekka Lappi** (FIN)/**Janne Ferm** (FIN)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+2m52.0s
8	**Gus Greensmith** (GBR)/**Elliott Edmondson** (GBR)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+4m53.8s
9	**Oliver Solberg** (SWE)/**Aaron Johnston** (GBR) /	Volkswagen Polo GTI R5	+7m38.6s
10	**Mads Ostberg** (NOR)/**Torstein Eriksen** (NOR)	PH Sport / Citroen C3 R5	+8m17.3s
OTHERS			
25	**Kimmo Kurkela** (FIN)/**Reeta Hamalainen** (FIN)	Janpro / Ford Fiesta WRC	+15m42.1s
R	**Thierry Neuville** (BEL)/**Nicolas Gilsoul** (BEL)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	SS17-electrical
R	**Pierre-Louis Loubet** (FRA)/**Vincent Landais** (FRA)	Hyundai 2C Competition / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	SS13-steering
R	**Takamoto Katsuta** (JPN)/**Daniel Barritt** (GBR)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	SS13-accident
R	**Georg Gross** (EST)/**Raigo Molder** (EST)	OT Racing / Ford Fiesta WRC	SS2-accident

STAGE TIMES

STAGE	FASTEST	LEADER	SECOND
SD **Shakedown** (3.87 miles)			
SS1 **Tartu** (0.80 miles)	Lappi and Ogier 1m17.0s	**Lappi and Ogier**	
SS2 **Prangli 1** (13.01 miles)	Rovanpera 9m52.1s	**Rovanpera**	Breen +0.3s
SS3 **Kanepi 1** (10.49 miles)	Tanak 8m16.6s	**Tanak**	Breen +4.4s
SS4 **Otepaa 1** (5.78 miles)	Tanak 5m04.5s	**Tanak**	Breen +4.5s
SS5 **Maekula 1** (9.17 miles)	Ogier 7m46.2s	**Tanak**	Breen +6.4s
SS6 **Elva 1** (7.28 miles)	Neuville 6m05.1s	**Tanak**	Breen +6.8s
SS7 **Prangli 2** (13.01 miles)	Ogier 9m45.3s	**Tanak**	Breen +10.3s
SS8 **Kanepi 2** (10.49 miles)	Tanak 8m10.6s	**Tanak**	Breen +14.6s
SS9 **Otepaa 2** (5.78 miles)	Breen 5m00.4s	**Tanak**	Breen +13.8s
SS10 **Maekula 2** (9.17 miles)	Breen 7m40.1s	**Tanak**	Breen +9.8s
SS11 **Elva 2** (7.28 miles)	Rovanpera 5m58.0s	**Tanak**	Breen +11.7s
SS12 **Arula 1** (4.33 miles)	Evans 3m15.3s	**Tanak**	Breen +13.1s
SS13 **Kaagvere 1** (9.61 miles)	Rovanpera 8m42.5s	**Tanak**	Breen +13.2s
SS14 **Kambja 1** (12.45 miles)	Ogier 10m26.9s	**Tanak**	Breen +12.5s
SS15 **Arula 2** (4.33 miles)	Ogier 3m14.7s	**Tanak**	Breen +12.7s
SS16 **Kaagvere** 2 (9.61 miles)	Rovanpera 8m34.1s	**Tanak**	Breen +13.2s
SS17 **Kambja 2** (powerstage) (12.45 miles)	Rovanpera 10m12.4s	**Tanak**	Breen +22.2s

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Ogier 79; 2 **Evans** 70; 3 **Tanak** 66; 4 **Rovanpera** 55; 5 **Neuville** 42; 6 **Suninen** 34; 7 **Lappi** 30; 8 **Breen** 25; 9 **Pontus Tidemand** 8; 10 **Sebastien Loeb** 8.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT 137;
2 **Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT** 114;
3 **M-Sport Ford WRT** 83.

NEXT EVENT

RALLY TURKEY
24 SEPTEMBER ISSUE

Ogier leads the points, but this is one of the toughest and most unpredictable rounds of the championship, so expect the unexpected.



Schumacher banishes bad luck to launch into title contention

FIA FORMULA 2
MONZA (ITA)
5-6 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 8/12

Mick Schumacher propelled himself firmly into FIA Formula 2 title contention with a dominant maiden feature-race victory at Monza. Schumacher's second F2 season had delivered six podiums but he was yet to stand on the top step prior to Italy. He's suffered from several near-misses, losing out to the far faster alternative strategy in Hungary, and clumsily colliding with his Prema team-mate Robert Shwartzman in the second sprint race at Silverstone while they were fighting for the win. He also slid out of second in the season opener and then lost a podium a week later when debris set off the fire extinguisher in his cockpit.

Monza initially appeared to be another missed opportunity when he beached his car in the gravel on the exit of the Ascari chicane in qualifying, after leading the first half of the session. This consigned him to seventh on the grid, but he made the most impressive race start of the year to move into second by the exit of the first chicane. He tucked in behind fellow Ferrari junior Callum Ilott – who'd secured his fourth pole of 2020 – and built a healthy advantage over the cars behind.

Ilott came into the pits on lap 11 of 30 but stalled when exiting his pit box, handing the net lead of the race to Schumacher, who stopped a lap later. Ilott dropped to 21st in the 22-car field, admitting that he doesn't "understand what to do differently" after "releasing the clutch as normal".

Ilott began charging back through the pack as Schumacher cemented his advantage out front, avoiding the major errors or pace drop-offs that had previously cost him victories. It was instead second-placed Christian Lundgaard who struggled with his Pirelli rubber at the end of the race, and he lost his position to F2 veteran Luca Ghiotto at the first chicane with three laps to go. Schumacher faced no such woes and took his second F2 victory, having previously won last year's sprint race in Hungary from reversed-grid pole position.

"Obviously it feels great, also being part of the driver academy for Ferrari, he said. "It is a great honour to win here and drive at this track. To do it in an Italian team [Prema] is even more special. The boys did an amazing job getting the car ready after yesterday's [qualifying] incident and, therefore, this win goes to them."

Second-placed Ghiotto's result represented his first feature-race podium of the year for Hitech GP, while ART man Lundgaard returned to form in third. Ilott was able to recover to sixth behind his Virtuosi Racing team-mate Guanyu Zhou, who made an impressive charge of his own



Ilott is chased down by Schumacher before feature-race pitstops


Ghiotto snared first feature-race podium of the season

SUTTON


Ilott (4) chases Deletraz (11) in the sprint race; Schumacher locks up

SUTTON

RESULTS ROUND 8/12, MONZA (ITA), 5-6 SEPTEMBER RACE 1 (30 LAPS – 107.796 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TIME
1	**Mick Schumacher** (DEU)	Prema Racing	48m24.641s
2	**Luca Ghiotto** (ITA)	Hitech Grand Prix	+3.185s
3	**Christian Lundgaard** (DNK)	ART Grand Prix	+7.321s
4	**Yuki Tsunoda** (JPN)	Carlin	+9.279s
5	**Guanyu Zhou** (CHN)	Virtuosi Racing	+12.553s
6	**Callum Ilott** (GBR)	Virtuosi Racing	+15.145s
7	**Dan Ticktum** (GBR)	DAMS	+15.291s
8	**Louis Deletraz** (CHE)	Charouz Racing System	+17.561s
9	**Robert Shwartzman** (RUS)	Prema Racing	+18.238s
10	**Jehan Daruvala** (IND)	Carlin	+21.154s
11	**Juri Vips** (EST)	DAMS	+23.947s
12	**Pedro Piquet** (BRA)	Charouz Racing System	+25.004s
13	**Jack Aitken** (GBR)	Campos Racing	+27.859s
14	**Marcus Armstrong** (NZL)	ART Grand Prix	+28.379s
15	**Nobuharu Matsushita** (JPN)	MP Motorsport	+28.666s
16	**Felipe Drugovich** (BRA)	MP Motorsport	+29.257s
17	**Artem Markelov** (RUS)	HWA Racelab	+29.927s
18	**Giuliano Alesi** (FRA)	HWA Racelab	+30.343s
19	**Roy Nissany** (ISR)	Trident	+33.081s
20	**Marino Sato** (JPN)	Trident	+51.408s
21	**Guilherme Samaia** (BRA)	Campos Racing	+52.406s
NC	**Nikita Mazepin** (RUS)	Hitech Grand Prix	24 laps

Winner's average speed 133.602mph. **Fastest lap** **Ghiotto** 1m34.181s, 137.592mph.

from 17th on the grid to fifth, and Red Bull and Honda protege Yuki Tsunoda in fourth.

DAMS racer Dan Ticktum dominated proceedings in the reversed-grid sprint race after dispatching polesitting Haas Formula 1 reserve Louis Deletraz on the run to the first chicane on the opening lap. But Ticktum ground to a halt on his way back to parc ferme and, with just 0.05kg of the required 0.8kg fuel sample taken, Ticktum was stripped of his second sprint-race win of the season and disqualified from the race.

DAMS team principal Francois Sicard told Autosport it was down to a leaky fuel tank, an issue – along with consistent engine woes – that has plagued the French squad and many of its rivals this season.

"We [serviced the tank] three races ago and we still have some issues, and I don't know why, but it's too many issues at the moment," he said. "When it's not the fuel tank, it's the engine. It's simply unacceptable. Every team on the grid has had far too many problems out of their control since the beginning of the season."

Ticktum's loss was fellow Briton Ilott's gain as he inherited victory to reclaim the series lead, with fellow Ferrari proteges Schumacher and Shwartzman making it a Ferrari lock-out of the top three in the points. Lundgaard took his second podium of the weekend ahead of Schumacher, who earned his fifth consecutive top-three finish, despite nursing flat-spotted tyres.

JOSH SUTTILL

QUALIFYING **1 Ilott 1m31.929s**; 2 **Tsunoda** 1m31.959s; 3 **Ghiotto** 1m32.127s; 4 **Lundgaard** 1m32.200s; 5 **Nissany** 1m32.226s; 6 **Mazepin** 1m32.267s; 7 **Schumacher** 1m32.277s; 8 **Daruvala** 1m32.308s; 9 **Deletraz** 1m32.342s; 10 **Ticktum** 1m32.373s; 11 **Vips** 1m32.381s; 12 **Drugovich** 1m32.412s; 13 **Sato** 1m32.534s; 14 **Armstrong** 1m32.592s; 15 **Shwartzman** 1m32.597s; 16 **Matsushita** 1m32.420s*; 17 **Zhou** 1m32.602s; 18 **Piquet** 1m32.610s; 19 **Aitken** 1m32.623s; 20 **Alesi** 1m32.626s; 21 **Markelov** 1m33.311s; 22 **Samaia** 1m33.501s.
*three-place penalty for causing a collision in previous race at Spa

RACE 2 (21 LAPS – 75.400 MILES)
GRID FOR RACE 2 Decided by result of Race 1, with top eight finishers reversed.
1 **Ilott** 34m12.598s; 2 **Lundgaard** +0.636s; 3 **Schumacher** +1.952s; 4 **Deletraz** +2.409s; 5 **Shwartzman** +2.675s; 6 **Daruvala** +6.326s; 7 **Aitken** +12.299s; 8 **Mazepin** +14.119s; 9 **Vips** +15.022s; 10 **Nissany** +26.181s; 11 **Matsushita** +26.416s; 12 **Alesi** +27.668s; 13 **Sato** +28.449s; 14 **Samaia** +37.103s; 15 **Ghiotto** +55.391s; 16 **Markelov** -1 lap; 17 **Piquet** -1 lap; 18 **Armstrong** -1 lap; EX **Ticktum** -4.663s-inadequate fuel sample; R **Drugovich** 16 laps-accident; NC **Tsunoda** 15 laps; NC **Zhou** 13 laps.
Winner's average speed 132.241mph. **Fastest lap** **Tsunoda** 1m34.194s, 137.573mph.

CHAMPIONSHIP **1 Ilott 149**; 2 **Schumacher** 143; 3 **Shwartzman** 140; 4 **Tsunoda** 123; 5 **Lundgaard** 116; 6 **Mazepin** 102; 7 **Zhou** 102; 8 **Deletraz** 93; 9 **Ticktum** 77; 10 **Ghiotto** 71.


Ticktum celebrates too soon after failing to provide a sufficient fuel sample

SUTTON

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Vesti (2) scored second win of rookie FIA F3 campaign

Vesti, Hughes win Monza thrillers

FIA FORMULA 3
MONZA (ITA)
5-6 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 8/9

The penultimate round of the FIA Formula 3 season at Monza was a rollercoaster of thrilling racing and high drama that had major ramifications for the destination of the drivers' crown as Oscar Piastri replaced Logan Sargeant at the top of the table.

The first twist came several hours after qualifying, with nine drivers penalised for impeding another's qualifying lap – although that was an improvement on the 17 penalised at the circuit last year.

Among them was Piastri, who picked up a three-place grid penalty that dropped him to 15th. His Prema team-mate and points leader Sargeant started 10 places in front in fifth. But Sargeant was gradually shuffled back towards Piastri, and by the start of lap five was battling with the Renault junior over 11th. Up at the front of the field, ART Grand Prix's Theo Pourchaire passed polesitter and fellow outside title hopeful Liam Lawson to take the lead at the first chicane.

Lawson was demoted from second place by F3 veteran Jake Hughes, and lost third to Frederik Vesti, who bounced across the kerbs at the second chicane and claimed the position. The move was deemed legal and the four-second gap to the two drivers ahead was reduced to nothing when Sebastian Fernandez beached his machine in the gravel on the exit of the Ascari chicane.

Vesti immediately vaulted past Hughes on the restart, while Prema team-mate Sargeant was mercilessly spun around by Clement Novalak at the second chicane and dropped to 26th. Vesti then passed Pourchaire for the lead with just three laps to go, and Piastri nicked the final place on the podium on the penultimate lap. It was Vesti's second win of a mixed rookie FIA F3 season, and allowed Piastri to leapfrog Sargeant in the table, with the American starting race two down in 26th. Prema also sewed up the teams' title.

That second race was expertly managed and won by Hughes, and it turned out to be similarly dramatic with incidents for all three of the Prema drivers. Firstly Piastri – on course to double his points advantage over Sargeant – was tipped into the gravel by reigning BRDC British F3 champion Novalak just before half-distance.

This seemingly cleared the path for Sargeant to reclaim his points lead and turn the tables on Piastri. But, having charged from the back to fourth, with four laps to go Sargeant collided with team-mate Vesti on the entry to Ascari and both were out. Sargeant was deemed at fault for squeezing Vesti and was slapped with a three-place grid penalty for the final round at Mugello.

New points leader Piastri will drop five places for forcing David Beckmann off the track and ending his 15-race points streak. Lawson finished second, but a post-race penalty demoted him to seventh. Pourchaire instead claimed second and sits 24 points adrift of the championship lead.

With Piastri and Sargeant both taking grid drops at a track not known for its overtaking, Pourchaire will be ready to pounce this weekend if the Prema boys face a repeat of their Monza drama.

JOSH SUTTILL



Novalak (26) and new points leader Piastri collide in sprint race

SUTTON

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WEEKEND WINNERS

FIA FORMULA 3
MONZA (ITA)
Race 1 Frederik Vesti
Prema Racing
Race 2 Jake Hughes (below)
HWA Racelab



HONE

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Dinamic 911 overcame four full-course yellows and an extra pitstop to win

ALL PICS: SRO / PATRICK HECQ PHOTOGRAPHY

Porsche on top in Spa 24 warm-up act

GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE ENDURANCE CUP
NURBURGRING (DEU)
6 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 2/4

Nothing, it seemed, could stop the Dinamic Motorsport trio of Christian Engelhart, Matteo Cairoli and Sven Muller from taking a dominant GT World Challenge Europe victory at the Nurburgring.

Four full-course-yellow periods as well as an extra trip through the pitlane to ensure their driving stints met the required limit failed to stop the Porsche juggernaut. If there was a racing equivalent of a stroll in the park, this was most certainly it.

Although few would readily admit it, the weekend also served as something of a precursor to next month's Spa 24 Hours; the Nurburgring's twisty corners and fast section, alongside the capricious climate of the Eifel region, offered a strong litmus test.

It was therefore apt that the Porsches came out of the blocks fast, with the GPX Racing entry of Romain Dumas, Thomas Preining and Dennis Olsen claiming pole in Saturday evening's qualifying session. But their efforts come race day were immediately dashed following contact with the Emil Frey Racing Lamborghini of Albert Costa at Turn 1 on the first lap. Steering woes resulting from the incident ended Costa's race, while Olsen and the Attempto Racing Audi of Kim Luis Schramm were heavily delayed.

During the hectic opening hour, the AKKA ASP Mercedes of Felipe Fraga and WRT Audi of Charles Weerts engaged in an epic first-stint battle over second place as Engelhart leapt clear.

There was a brief moment when Dinamic's grip on the lead appeared to loosen. Engelhart brought the 911 GT3-R into the pits for the second time in as many laps, having taken over from team-mate Cairoli during the second full-course yellow, courtesy of Mikkel Pederson slamming into the side of Pro-Am leader Rob Collard's Barwell Lamborghini.

That dropped Engelhart to second behind Timur Boguslavskiy, who had replaced Fraga in the Merc, but the German did not have to wait long to get back ahead, seizing the lead at the second corner following the restart.

Behind, the action was fierce. The star of the show, until an overzealous move on Boguslavskiy sent him spinning at Turn 2, was undoubtedly Dorian Boccolacci in the Sainteloc Racing Audi R8. The ex-single-seater driver produced a number of superb overtaking moves and benefited from quick pit work to jump from seventh to fourth. A forceful move on Boguslavskiy meant he had to cede second but, in resuming his attack immediately, Boccolacci was soon facing the wrong way.

Where Boguslavskiy had been unsuccessful in keeping up with the leading Porsche, Dries Vanthoor – in the Audi started by Weerts – looked the only likely threat in the closing hour and a half. But those hopes all but evaporated following a drivethrough penalty for an unsafe release during the penultimate round of stops.

Cue Boguslavskiy, Fraga and lead driver Raffaele Marcello picking up the place as the Mercedes ended up second, 15 seconds adrift, and ahead of the HRT Merc of Maro Engel, Luca Stolz and Vincent Abril.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON



L-r: Muller, Cairoli and Engelhart

motorsport.tv
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Home hero Frijns finally toasts success

DTM
ASSEN (NLD)
5-6 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 4/9



ALL PICS: HOCH ZWEI/THOMAS SUER

Nico Muller and Rene Rast may have been the standout performers in the opening three rounds of the DTM season, but fellow Audi driver Robin Frijns was continuously making his presence felt with a string of podium finishes in the second Abt-run car. Frijns arguably had the edge over the other two when it came to one-lap pace, taking four pole positions in six qualifying sessions, but he almost always ended up slipping behind the two in the races.

Carrying the momentum of his best start to a DTM campaign, it was only a matter of time before the Dutch driver stood on the top step of the podium. He finally delivered that result in front of a limited home crowd in the first race at Assen.

After qualifying second, Frijns bided his time behind polesitter Loic Duval's Audi in the opening stint, but upped his pace after the mandatory pitstop to pass his rival into Turn 8. Duval and Muller closed onto the tail of Frijns in the dying stages of the 36-lap contest, but he did enough to score a maiden victory by 0.505s and assert his position as a bona fide title contender.

Frijns arguably should also have won the second race in wet conditions on Sunday, having passed second-starting Duval and slow polesitter Rast early on to establish a 10s lead. But a strategic masterstroke by BMW Team RBM to pit Sheldon van der Linde on lap 10 of 31 allowed him to leapfrog Frijns and take a shock win from 14th on the 16-car grid.

There was a degree of luck involved in van der Linde's victory, as the 3s gap he had over Frijns would likely have been bridged by the Abt driver on fresh wet tyres. But a massive accident for the WRT Audi of Fabio Scherer and a second bout of rain brought out a red flag, gifting everyone a free tyre change and negating van der Linde's disadvantage.

While fortune played its role, that shouldn't take away anything from the achievement of the South African, who has shown impressive form in his second season in the DTM, even scoring BMW's first podium of the year with a second place on the Lausitzring's sprint layout.

While Muller managed to score a pair of third positions during a weekend when Frijns was the quickest driver in the field, Rast failed to finish on the podium in either race. That has dropped the reigning champion 44 points behind series leader Muller, with Frijns 26 points down on his team-mate in second.

There was some consolation for Formula 1 convert Robert Kubica after a nightmare start to the season as he bagged a 10th in the opener with his ART-run BMW. He was also quick on Sunday, when he ran ninth, but felt that wrong tyre pressures in the rain deprived him of another points finish as he fell to 14th.

RACHIT THUKRAL

WEEKEND WINNERS

GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE ENDURANCE CUP
NURBURGRING (DEU)
Matteo Cairoli/Christian Engelhart/
Sven Muller
Dinamic Motorsport (Porsche 911 GT3-R)

DTM
ASSEN (NLD)
Race 1 Robin Frijns
Team Abt (Audi RS5 DTM)
Race 2 Sheldon van der Linde (below)
Team RBM (BMW M4 DTM)



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Van der Linde won from 14th on the grid in soaked second race at Assen



Kubica was 10th in opener but tyre woes dropped him to 14th on Sunday

Acura scores second IMSA win in a row

IMSA SPORTSCAR
ROAD ATLANTA (USA)
5 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 6/11



LEVITT

Team Penske squad leads as one of two LMP2 entries spins

Despite the most unpromising of beginnings for the Acura Team Penske squad, Helio Castroneves and Ricky Taylor nailed the team's second consecutive win of the IMSA SportsCar Championship at Road Atlanta last Saturday.

Castroneves beat the Action Express Racing Cadillac DPi-V.R to pole, and made the best start. But when team-mate Dane Cameron tried to follow Castroneves through, he was squeezed onto the inside kerb by Felipe Nasr, half-spun, recovered and remarkably didn't get nailed by the Prototype and GT hordes. However, a collision between the JDC Miller Cadillac of Matheus Leist and an LMP2 car put the field under caution, and Nasr would soon be penalised for the startline incident.

Another caution around the 25-minute mark was caused by Harry Tincknell's Mazda knocking off a BMW M8's wing mirror and the debris landing on the racing line. This led the DPi cars to dive for the pits. Castroneves got a drivethrough penalty for speeding and then another for running a red light – he dropped off the lead lap.

That left Wayne Taylor Racing's Cadillac up front but Ryan Briscoe was called to pit with a deflating tyre, forcing the team to go off strategy. Briscoe and partner Renger van der Zande then withstood the pressure from Cameron/Juan Pablo Montoya and the #77 Mazda of the impressive Tristan Nunez, Oliver Jarvis and Olivier Pla.

Past the halfway mark, however, it was this latter machine that was in front and pulling away before suffering severe braking issues that caused a long stop. Acura moved into first and second, Cameron ahead until Taylor grabbed the lead as they hit traffic.

Later, Montoya would appear to brake-test Briscoe as they entered the pits in tandem for their final stops, and it was the WTR driver who got the blame and the penalty. However, Montoya was knocked off the track by an out-of-control GTD car, ending the Acura driver's race on the spot.

The other Acura won convincingly over the second Mazda of Tincknell, Jonathan Bomarito and Ryan Hunter-Reay, with Nasr/Pipo Derani/Filipe Albuquerque third.

In GT Le Mans, the BMW M8s of Bruno Spengler/Connor De Phillippi and Jesse Krohn/John Edwards remained on the Porsche pace throughout. When the Weissach cars hit trouble, Spengler and De Phillippi took to the front, holding off the Tommy Milner/Oliver Gavin Corvette.

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

Powerhouses' tempers flare

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
TOWNSVILLE (AUS)
5-6 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 8/11

Tempers flared between powerhouse squads Triple Eight and DJR Team Penske after a tense conclusion to the second of two Townsville Australian Supercars rounds.

There was little in the way of controversy on Saturday, points leader Scott McLaughlin cruising to victory ahead of Cam Waters. His chief title rival Jamie Whincup was just fourth, while Shane van Gisbergen didn't finish courtesy of a power steering failure.



KLYNSMITH

Van Gisbergen leads team-mate Whincup and Penske rival McLaughlin

Sunday was a different story. In the first of two races, van Gisbergen executed a brilliant recovery. It started with a bold move around the outside of McLaughlin into Turn 2 on the first tour. Then he overcame polesitter Nick Percat on lap seven. From there he took his first win of the season, and a record-setting 200th victory for Triple Eight. McLaughlin was second and Whincup third.

It was in Sunday's finale that things started to heat up, McLaughlin using an undercut strategy to get track advantage, while van Gisbergen ran longer to have better tyre condition at the end. When a late safety car fell Triple Eight's way, Whincup moved over to give van Gisbergen a crack at McLaughlin.

Van Gisbergen didn't just pass McLaughlin, he ran him wide enough for Whincup to follow through into second. McLaughlin labelled the move "average" and said it was too early for Triple Eight to be playing "silly games". Van Gisbergen's response? A veiled reference to Bathurst last year: "I don't know about this stuff. We don't need to bring up 'debris' and stuff like that..."

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN

WEEKEND WINNERS

IMSA SPORTSCAR
ROAD ATLANTA (USA)

DPi	Helio Castroneves/Ricky Taylor Team Penske (Acura ARX-05)
LMP2	Patrick Kelly/Simon Trummer/ Scott Huffaker PR1/Mathiasen Motorsports (ORECA-Gibson 07)
GTLM	Bruno Spengler/Connor De Phillippi Team RLL (BMW M8 GTE)
GTD	Mario Farnbacher/Matt McMurry/ Shinya Michimi Meyer Shank Racing (Acura NSX GT3 Evo)

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
TOWNSVILLE (AUS)

Race 1	Scott McLaughlin DJR Team Penske (Ford Mustang)
Races 2 and 3	Shane van Gisbergen Triple Eight (Holden Commodore ZB)

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Ten Voorde masters Monza to dethrone Lechner's drivers

PORSCHE SUPERCUP
MONZA (ITA)
6 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 8/8

Dylan Pereira arrived at Monza for the final round of the Porsche Supercup season with a small four-point cushion at the top of the standings in his quest to ensure that a Lechner Racing driver was crowned champion for the fifth year in succession.

His nearest title rival Larry ten Voorde, however, had achieved two pole positions to Pereira's one, so he couldn't lift off the throttle too soon. But not only did ten Voorde top Italian qualifying by a whisker – 0.022s – for Team GP Elite, but Pereira would line up for the race only fourth.



Dominant win from pole earned ten Voorde the Porsche championship

Ten Voorde launched well to hold the lead into the first chicane, but second-starting Florian Latorre – fresh from scoring debutant team CLRT its first podium in Spa – missed the second apex. He clattered over the kerbs, but an effective shortcut handed him first. Ten Voorde reclaimed the place on the long drag through the Biassono curve as Pereira settled in third.

Two safety car restarts – triggered by Philipp Sager's startline shunt and Hugo Nerman careering into a tyre wall – were expertly managed by ten Voorde and he pulled clear to a 1.9s triumph. When Pereira's car began to ail in the closing stages, it allowed Leon Kohler back into his original third spot.

Ten Voorde's "dream came true" and he was duly crowned champion with his third success of the campaign. At least for the pink cars, with Jaxon Evans ranking fifth, it ensured Lechner scored its seventh teams' title on the trot.

WEEKEND WINNERS

PORSCHE SUPERCUP
MONZA (ITA)
Larry ten Voorde
Team GP Elite

NASCAR CUP
DARLINGTON (USA)
Kevin Harvick
Stewart-Haas Racing (Ford Mustang)

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES
DARLINGTON (USA)
Brandon Jones
Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota Supra)

NASCAR TRUCK SERIES
DARLINGTON (USA)
Ben Rhodes (below)
ThorSport Racing (Ford F-150)



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Harvick wins, playoff star Truex in strife

NASCAR CUP
DARLINGTON (USA)
6 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 27/36



Harvick celebrates fortuitous eighth win of the season

Prior to last weekend, Martin Truex Jr had won the opening playoff round in three of the past four NASCAR Cup seasons. For much of the Darlington race, it looked as if he would indeed make it four from five until a tyre gave up the ghost. That promoted a star of 2020 to the top of the order.

Kevin Harvick picked up his eighth win of the season in his Stewart-Haas Ford after Truex suffered a puncture while battling Chase Elliott. Until this point, Joe Gibbs pilot Truex had led most of the race, while an alternate strategy took Elliott back to the top for stage three after an anonymous second leg.

The pair were battling for position when both made contact with the outside wall and fell back with damage. Harvick inherited the lead but was kept under pressure by a recovering Austin Dillon's Chevrolet.

Dillon was one of a handful of playoff drivers who started on the backfoot. A flat tyre dropped him to the rear, though he was quick to make up positions and was again in the top 10 by the end of the second stage.

The Richard Childress Racing driver entered the race 10th in the championship but was pushing the points leader hard in the closing stages of the race. Dillon couldn't force a mistake, though, and Harvick took victory by 0.343 seconds.

Also fighting to come back from a poor position was Ryan Blaney, who failed a pre-race inspection and was sent to the back of the grid. His usual Penske crew chief was also removed for the race and he was docked 10 points. With only one way to go, Blaney moved forwards early on. However, his climb slowed in the second half of the race and he finished 24th.

Harvick's title rival Denny Hamlin looked set for a strong result, running third after the final caution period, but contact from Jimmie Johnson's Chevrolet Camaro behind meant he missed the pit entry and he was forced to run a lap longer than planned. He finished 13th.

BETHONIE WARING

INSIGHT

CARLOS SAINZ JR AT FERRARI • FORMULA E SEASON REVIEW



WHY SAINZ FEELS

He's trading in his happy place at McLaren for a move to the less-competitive



PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

NO FEAR JOINING FERRARI

and politicised Ferrari.

Carlos Sainz Jr sits down with Autosport to explain why that's not a problem

LUKE SMITH

As Carlos Sainz Jr sat in the McLaren garage following his failure to start the Belgian Grand Prix and watched the race unfold, a part of him must have been thinking ahead to 2021. He had a rare opportunity to watch a Formula 1 race in full without taking part himself, after being sidelined by a power-unit issue that caused an exhaust failure en route to the grid.

But the race did not make for very pretty watching. Not from a McLaren perspective, of course. Lando Norris recovered from an off-track moment at the start to finish seventh, helping lift the team to third place in the constructors' championship. Instead it was Sainz's future team, Ferrari, whose display made for grim viewing. Amid an already difficult 2020, Spa marked a new low as it spent a total of five laps running with a car in the points. Sebastian Vettel led home Charles Leclerc in 13th and 14th, leaving the team facing questions about the crisis.

Ferrari itself says there is no "crisis", but instead a "storm". Yet the storm is one that will continue to batter and howl at the Prancing Horse for the foreseeable future, given that the flawed SF1000 will race again next year.

As questions continue to be asked of Ferrari, a few are also starting to be put Sainz's way. He's leaving the team with which he has just scored his second F1 podium, one that has been on an upward trajectory since his arrival, for the team in sixth that has suffered a mighty fall. Even F1 bigwig and former Ferrari technical chief Ross Brawn said after the race in Belgium that he thought Sainz may be feeling "nervous" about his move. So is there reason for Sainz to fear he has made a mistake?

"No, there's no fear whatsoever on the future for me," he says. "I find Ferrari a great opportunity to do another move in my career which allows me to drive for a great team. I have a two-year contract signed with them, which also gives me the opportunity to build on a year and on the experience. It's going to be a great challenge. And we still don't know where Ferrari is going to be in 2021."

Sainz is correct: we don't know for certain where Ferrari will be next year. Engine development is frozen until the end of this season, after which point it has an opportunity to try to claw back some of the deficit with its current power unit. But the limited scope for development on the chassis means it is unlikely to do much more than fight for top midfield honours next year, without accounting for any advances made by the teams it now finds itself battling.

Yet Sainz is looking longer-term. As he mentioned, his two-year deal ensures he will be at Maranello when the new technical regulations come into play in 2022. "Everyone sees that as an opportunity to change the Formula 1 that we have seen since 2014," Sainz says. "It's the last

"THERE WAS THIS HUGE BATTLE BETWEEN McLAREN AND FERRARI IN 2007 AND 2008. IT'S MY GOLDEN ERA"

eight years, we've seen Mercedes domination. Everyone sees 2022 as a big opportunity, and I'm sure Ferrari sees the same."

The rise of Sainz has been one of the feel-good stories in F1. A little over two years ago, he wasn't the first-choice driver for Red Bull, Renault or even McLaren. But his performances with the British team were enough to convince Ferrari that it was not even worth talking to four-time world champion Vettel about a new deal, snapping Sainz up instead. Many drivers are subject to interest from Ferrari, but only a few get to don the famous red overalls. It's a significant career moment for any driver.

But the move also provides a narrative that no other driver currently in F1 can match, as Sainz will have driven in consecutive years for the two teams that defined the sport for him in his formative years: McLaren and Ferrari. "You need to remember that when I was growing up, there was this huge battle between McLaren and Ferrari in 2007 and 2008," he reflects. "I think it's the golden era, the years that I've enjoyed the most watching Formula 1. For me to have the opportunity to drive for those »

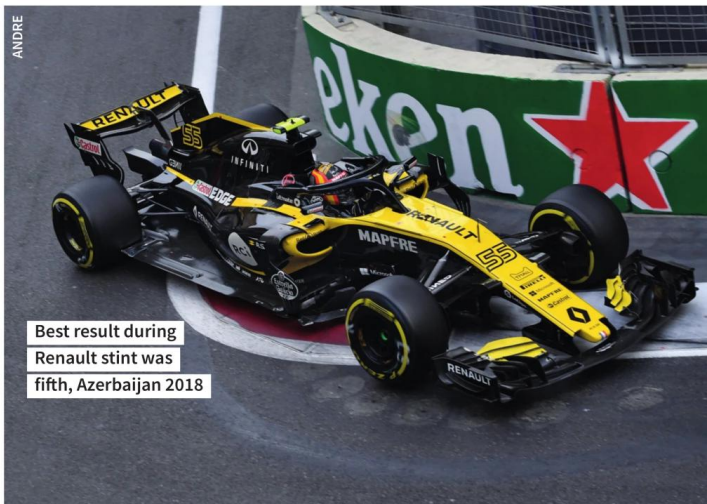


Sainz's career has blossomed in tandem with McLaren's revival



Formula 1 race debut with Toro Rosso at 2015 Australian Grand Prix

COATES



Best result during Renault stint was fifth, Azerbaijan 2018

ANDRE


SUTTON


TEE

First Formula 1 podium at last year's Brazilian Grand Prix


SUTTON

Racing with the four-time champion he's replacing at Ferrari


TEE

THE INTRIGUE OVER RICCIARDO AND NORRIS

Just as it's a surprise to see McLaren leading Ferrari in the constructors' championship, few would have expected Lando Norris to be the team's top points scorer through the opening eight races. Carlos Sainz Jr has been hit by a huge amount of bad luck so far this year, skewing the picture that currently shows Norris sitting on 57 points to his team-mate's 41.

But that should do nothing to discredit how Norris has impressed in his second F1 season. His 'Scenario 7' charge in the dying moments of the Austrian Grand Prix snagged him a maiden F1 podium, before another series of late overtakes got him fifth one week later at the Styrian GP. The 20-year-old has already eclipsed his points total from last year (49) with not even half the season complete, and is a real contender to top F1's 'Class B' drivers' championship this year.

The signing of Daniel Ricciardo as Sainz's replacement for 2021 may point to a more experienced head coming in to lead the team, yet Norris has proven himself to be more than capable of spearheading McLaren's efforts next year. It bodes well for a hugely competitive and balanced line-up, something seven-time grand prix winner Ricciardo himself recognises, refusing to underestimate Norris.

"IT'S GOING TO BE NOT ONLY COMPETITIVE BUT ALSO A LOT OF FUN"

"It's going to be not only competitive but also a lot of fun," Ricciardo says. "It looks like from the outside his performances this year – not stating the obvious with the podium, but with his qualifying and that – he's certainly improving in his second year in F1. That's cool to see. I think there's certainly going to be a good atmosphere, so I'm looking forward to it."

The opportunity to go up against such an established name as Ricciardo can do a huge amount for Norris's rising stock. He's proven to be a match for Sainz through their season and a half together, but to take on and potentially defeat a grand prix winner would only further prove Norris's star status.


COATES

Ricciardo brings GP-winning experience to McLaren's driver line-up

teams in the next two years, it's just something very special. The opportunity to drive for those two teams that were so successful in those years where I was such a big fan of Formula 1 makes me very, very proud."

There's also the matter of driving for F1's most famous team, something Sainz acknowledges played a role in his decision. "The move to Ferrari is not only performance-driven," he says. "It's obviously the spirit. Being a Ferrari driver is a target in every racing driver's mind, and I'm going to achieve that next year. I am not worried about it. It's still something super-special."

One of the leading figures through Sainz's "golden era" was Fernando Alonso. Images of Sainz as a kid first meeting Alonso – his racing hero – have been shared widely over the years, especially in the wake of his move to McLaren, when he took over the seat of the two-time world champion. Sainz's McLaren story has been significantly more positive than Alonso's, but there are some more fitting comparisons between the pair. Both started their F1 careers at Faenza – Alonso at Minardi, Sainz at Toro Rosso – before joining Renault. They each moved on to McLaren, before joining Ferrari, albeit after a second Renault stint for Alonso.

Things did not work out for Alonso during his five seasons with Ferrari as he fell short of the title and fell out with the team. But he is yet to share any pearls of wisdom with Sainz about what to expect from life at Maranello – although Sainz has also not opened up about Renault, where he raced from late 2017 until the end of 2018. "I haven't talked to him yet," says Sainz. "I shared a message just to welcome him back into F1, but I haven't really got in touch to talk about Ferrari or to talk about Renault. I'm sure he would also be interested to know my experience with Renault. What we need is some sort of dinner together or to see each other again – we haven't seen each other for more than half a year."

Sainz will be seeing a lot of Alonso next year when the 39-year-old makes his F1 comeback with Renault, perhaps even scrapping for the same bit of track. It provides a welcome boost for Spanish interest in F1. The grand prix was saved at the last minute for 2020, provisionally on a one-year deal before the COVID-19 pandemic that now means it's likely to stay on the calendar in 2021. But with two Spanish drivers in major teams, Sainz thinks the future looks "great" for F1 in his country.

"You have Fernando in the team where he became a two-time world champion, you have me at Ferrari – I think for Spain it's going to be huge



Sainz hopes to catch up with Alonso to swap inside info on Renault and Ferrari

SUTTON

"MY BRAIN IS NOT THINKING ABOUT FERRARI. I'M FOCUSED ON McLAREN AND HOW TO MAKE THIS CAR FASTER"



Future Ferrari team-mates already have a good relationship

SUTTON

THE END OF F1'S BEST TEAM-MATE BROMANCE

The end of Carlos Sainz Jr's time at McLaren will also represent the conclusion of one of the most entertaining and friendliest team-mate partnerships in Formula 1 history. Matching Renault exile Sainz with Formula 2 runner-up Lando Norris for 2019 marked a fresh start for McLaren, free of ego and the pressure that a big name in a team often brings.

It paid huge dividends. The atmosphere at Woking has been nothing but positive for the past 18 months, itself aided by McLaren's improved fortunes on-track, but also contributing to that success. A lot of that has been down to the relationship between Sainz and Norris. They have acted more like brothers in a comedy double act than F1 drivers at times, engaging in all kinds of banter and high jinks – all while still delivering on track for the squad.



Norris and Sainz's friendship has lifted the whole team

TEE

"It helps building the team, having this great atmosphere," says team principal Andreas Seidl. "The way they work together is a big asset to us, to me as a team boss, for the entire atmosphere and motivation in the garage, in the office, here at the track, and back home in the factory."

Will Norris miss Sainz? It's a question that, predictably, does not get a very serious answer. "Ah…" says Norris, looking over at Sainz, who turns in his chair and grins at his team-mate. "Not that much, in all honesty. I'll still see him around. When I'm passing him on the race track, I can wave at him." It's a cheeky dig that prompts a "hmmm…" from Sainz.

"GO ON. SAY IT: 'YES, YOU'RE GOING TO MISS ME'. SAY IT. SAY IT NOW"

"Going into 2019, I never spoke to Carlos ever, we didn't know each other," Norris reveals. "We went into the first team meeting, and that's how it all started. I think it's been good for me, learning from a guy with such experience. Very skilled."

The compliment isn't enough for Sainz. "Go on," he urges. "Say it: 'Yes, you're going to miss me'. Say it. Say it now."

"No!" laughs Norris. "You can't force me to say it!"

They may not admit it, but it's a friendship that will surely last beyond their time together at McLaren.

next year in Formula 1," Sainz says. "Hopefully that can get everything back in the right route to keep the Spanish Grand Prix. I'm a big fan of that circuit and the fans there. We just hope that we can keep making Formula 1 bigger and bigger in Spain."

As seen with the 'Alonsomania' boom in Spain through the mid-2000s, the easiest way to stimulate interest is via a driver's success. Fighting for wins and championships will be the natural aspiration for Sainz upon joining Ferrari, and the team will have its own high expectations. But would that ambition give Sainz the opportunity to be team leader and fight for wins and championships? Or does he risk becoming a number two at Ferrari, playing second fiddle to Leclerc?

Designating team roles is something Ferrari has traditionally done, most successfully with Michael Schumacher and Rubens Barrichello in the early 2000s. The challenges posed by its drivers competing with each other burned Ferrari last year, most notably in Brazil, when Leclerc and Vettel crashed out together, and may have played a part in the decision to part company with the German.

Sainz has always made it clear that he's not viewing the move to Ferrari as one where he will take up a wingman role to Leclerc. He will be joining the team as the more experienced head, entering his seventh season in F1, and gets on with Leclerc. "Even before this Ferrari thing happened, I already had an excellent relationship with him, and I'm looking forward to keep building on it," he points out. "We're near in age, we're near in hobbies and in the way we get on with each other. We get on very well."

It has the makings of a harmonious partnership, but will take some work to reach the levels of bromance enjoyed between Sainz and current McLaren team-mate Lando Norris. Even Sainz acknowledges his relationship with Norris is "pretty special", but adds: "Hopefully I will not miss Lando too much, because Charles is a good bloke."

Questions about his move and what role he will play in the team with Leclerc have become bread-and-butter for Sainz since it was announced. But he finds it hard to properly put his mind to what 2021 will be like, such is his focus on his final season with McLaren. "I seriously don't have any problem answering Ferrari questions," Sainz reflects. "I've answered them a lot now, and I think you know my answers by now and what I'm constantly saying! The more you ask me, it's not like I'm going to change my answer much.

"My brain is not thinking about Ferrari. I'm thinking about how can I do a good qualifying tomorrow, whether it rains, whether it's dry – my brain is fully focused on McLaren and how to make this car faster. I want to get podiums, I want to get the best results possible with McLaren. When you ask me about Ferrari, I need to really think about it, because I'm actually not thinking about that for a while."

The relentless interrogation Sainz faces is perhaps a taste of things to come. The Italian media is hardly known for its subtlety when it comes to all things Ferrari, especially in times of difficulty. With greater scrutiny on the cards next year, is there reason for Sainz to be worried? "No, I'm not scared," he says. "I'm Latin. Spanish people have the Latin spirit, and we are very driven sometimes. It's something that I really don't worry about. Journalists, interviews, it's something that I've been doing for six years in Formula 1, and it's nothing that worries me."



Sainz remains fully committed to pushing McLaren forward

COATES

Sainz is eager to maintain some of the tried-and-tested approach that made his move to McLaren in 2019 such a success. He upped sticks from Spain and moved to Weybridge in Surrey – even though he already had a place in Chelsea – so he could be as close as possible to the McLaren factory. He's already working on plans to move near Maranello in the hope of fostering a similarly close connection to his new team. "It's very likely I will move there," he says. "It has worked really well for me at McLaren and has allowed me, especially in the first year at a team with new engineers, mechanics, team-mate, to get engagement very quickly with the team and build relationships very quickly."

It's those relationships that will ultimately determine how much of a success Sainz is at Ferrari, evidenced by the strong partnerships he's made at McLaren. Even putting the friendship with Norris to one side, the way Sainz interacts with his engineers, his PRs, all those working around him has been positive to see.

And it extends to senior management. From the moment Ferrari got in touch over the winter about the possibility of a drive for 2021, Sainz felt comfortable enough to talk to McLaren bosses Andreas Seidl and Zak Brown about it. They were aware of the situation throughout – a rare level of openness between driver and team. That's continued even since Sainz's departure was announced. The carryover of the 2020 cars into next year means there is less of a need to freeze a driver out of meetings and keep plans secret, but at no point has he felt isolated or excluded because of his decision to move on.

"They've told me pretty much everything," he says. "I've even been in the simulator a couple of times doing tests for the end of the year, even tests that could correlate for 2021 on the car, and I've been helping the team as much as I can. I think we both benefit from that. I have a contract with McLaren until the end of the year, and I'm very happy to help. They know that, and so far the behaviour from both parts has been excellent. In the same way it was excellent during the contract negotiations, it's been excellent now. I really want to see this team moving forward still."

Sainz may be leaving McLaren before the team can truly say its rebuild has been completed, but he still hopes to see it back fighting at the front, thanks in part to his contribution.

"I'd be the first one to be happy to see McLaren fighting at the top in the future," says Sainz. "Obviously I want to see Ferrari also at the top, but I wouldn't mind fighting for wins or for championships against McLaren in the next two or three years. I believe there are incredible people here at McLaren. They are doing a great job in building the team forward, and building a great atmosphere that is helping every single team member to feel important and a great part of this family."

To see how Sainz fares in the often-politicised Ferrari environment will be one of the big storylines in 2021. He's one of just three drivers on the F1 grid to have made it out of the Red Bull junior programme unscathed, and has helped turn around a team from sluggish backmarkers to midfield leaders in no time. His path from Faenza to Maranello may have been an arduous one at times, but it's all good preparation for the opportunity that will likely define his F1 career.

SEASON REVIEW

THE CROWNING OF FORMULA E'S CUCKOO

Antonio Felix da Costa landed at DS Techeetah as team-mate to a double champion, but he soon knocked Jean-Eric Vergne off his perch

MATT KEW

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

When Jean-Eric Vergne rocked up for the 2019 edition of the Le Mans 24 Hours, he was on the brink of becoming Formula E's first double champion and guiding the DS Techeetah squad to its maiden teams' title. But there was a looming issue: Andre Lotterer, his electric team-mate of the past two seasons, was about to move to new arrival Porsche and leave a vacancy.

That led Vergne to sit down for a coffee in La Sarthe with his good friend Antonio Felix da Costa to court his services and tempt him away from BMW Andretti. The Portuguese had been associated with the German manufacturer since a 2014 debut in the DTM – his consolation prize from Helmut Marko for missing out on the Toro Rosso Formula 1 seat to GP3 champion Daniil Kvyat.

Vergne has been more than just a driver for DS Techeetah since joining in 2016, when the Team Aguri squad was bought and renamed by Chinese sports management firm SECA. He was entrusted to tempt first Lotterer and then da Costa to join the team; it was his nest and one that he had taken to the top of the FE tree.

But rather than da Costa coming in and settling as a number two driver to Vergne, he outperformed and ultimately dethroned his team-mate to be crowned the 2019-20 champion. Like a cuckoo flying in, da Costa built his success by mimicking what had worked so well for Vergne in the previous two campaigns.

As DS Techeetah team principal Mark Preston explains: "[Vergne's] championships were defined on the weekends when he got out of group one [qualifying] to superpole, was then on pole and won the race. Antonio basically did the same thing." »



Da Costa's brace of Berlin wins helped secure maiden FE title

S.BLOXHAM



S.BLOXHAM


DS AUTOMOBILES
TECHEETAH
TOTAL
MOËT & CHANDON
IMPERIAL
MICHELIN

But da Costa's eventual one-lap supremacy – he ended the season with an unmatched three poles – took its time coming to fruition. A late contractual departure from BMW Andretti meant three days of pre-season testing at the Ricardo Tormo Circuit in Valencia weren't enough to adapt to the new car, software and crew at DS Techeetah. Combined with both drivers struggling with the E-Tense FE20's brakes, that resulted in 21st spot on the grid for the curtain-raiser in Saudi Arabia.

And as Sam Bird claimed his ninth FE triumph and headed major FE converts Porsche (Lotterer) and Mercedes (Stoffel Vandoorne) on the podium, a tangle with Daniel Abt kept da Costa down in 14th, as Vergne retired with a steering issue. Although da Costa made it through to the superpole shootout the following day for the second race of the double-header, two big slides and a wall tap meant he was only fifth on the grid.

While the qualifying laps let him down initially, at least the car proved itself to have blistering race pace. In the third round in Chile, where he lined up 10th, da Costa looked odds-on for victory. Jaguar's Mitch Evans activated his two attack-mode boosts early to lead comfortably until a software glitch erased all speed. That left da Costa's BMW Andretti replacement Maximilian Guenther to ward off the advances of the black-and-gold machine for the win. A clumsy and heavy-handed pass at the hairpin looked to have given da Costa first place, until critical battery temperature issues dropped him to runner-up.

Here, a result of da Costa's late arrival was exposed. Despite reuniting with race engineer David Ladouche – they worked together in the World Endurance Championship to develop BMW's M8 GTE racer – their communication was awry. Da Costa complained that he'd been fed "incomplete or wrong" information regarding his battery condition. On the cool-down lap, driver blasted team.

"We didn't get along well purely in terms of communication," da Costa reflects. "We love each other, but the way we were working together was not efficient; it was not correct. I was getting angry, then he was getting angry. It's not my style at all to yell on the radio.

"David was always super nice, and this is why we made the difference. We could be self-critical and that's the quickest way to improve. I talked to myself as well because I knew I would only help him if I remained calmer."

There were further issues for da Costa. As friendly as they were off track, the relationship with Vergne proved rocky when helmets were donned. That was seen most notably in Chile again, when Vergne tried to shed a damaged fairing by tapping the wall. As he pulled across the track to knock it off, he was close to colliding with his team-mate. "This is not how a factory driver works... what are


Bird leads Vandoorne and Lotterer in first Saudi race
S.BLOXHAM


BMW Andretti young gun Guenther scored his first FE win in Santiago
GALLOWAY


Virus-stricken Vergne is exhausted and emotional on Marrakech podium
ROMNEY


BATHIE

ROUND BY ROUND

Diriyah 1
1 Bird
2 Lotterer
3 Vandoorne
Bird makes early and excellent use of attack mode to rise from fifth on the grid and chase down leaders Sims and Vandoorne. The closing Virgin Audi car prompts Vandoorne to lunge on polesitter Sims if he is to win, which forces both wide and allows Bird through to keep up his record of taking a win in every FE season to date.

Diriyah 2
1 Sims
2 di Grassi
3 Vandoorne
Sims scores his third pole in a row and dominates the opening phase. A safety car erases his advantage but, as team-mate Guenther jumps up the order after the restart, he plays rear gunner and allows Sims to win. Guenther is later penalised for having made his passes before the safety-car line, costing BMW its 1-2.

Santiago
1 Guenther
2 da Costa
3 Evans
Polesitter Evans bolts into a clear lead thanks to two early attack-mode boosts, but a software glitch saps power. That allows Guenther into first, although he faces late pressure from da Costa, who barges his way past at the hairpin. But temperature issues force da Costa to cede the win, with Guenther scoring his maiden victory.

Mexico City
1 Evans
2 da Costa
3 Buemi
Jaguar addresses its Chilean issues, allowing Evans to leapfrog Lotterer – who has scored Porsche's first FE pole – on the run to Turn 1. Attention turns to da Costa, who is eventually released from behind his DS team-mate Vergne to pass Buemi but still finishes 4.3s behind Evans, who backs off in the closing stages.

Marrakech
1 da Costa
2 Guenther
3 Vergne
After an initial stint in the lead, da Costa drops behind Guenther in an effort to conserve energy. The tactics pay dividends and da Costa repasses for an 11.4s win. Guenther is then squeezed against the pitwall by Vergne but fights back for second with a final-lap move. COVID-19 puts the season on hold for 158 days.

Berlin 1
1 da Costa
2 Lotterer
3 Bird
There is no sign of rustiness for da Costa after the coronavirus break, as he beats Vergne to pole by 0.3s and then barely breaks a sweat to win. Vergne blasts his stablemate for supposedly ignoring team orders to manage pace, and the reigning champion parks in the pits with late tyre and energy woes.



Evans celebrates superb Mexico win, which gave him the points lead

we doing?" was da Costa's brusque response.

The pair went skiing in France after the race, but the partnership wasn't slick in Mexico either. Again the team was sluggish to swap its cars around. When da Costa was released late on from behind Vergne, he could streak clear and pass a slow Sebastien Buemi for second place, while Vergne missed out on a likely podium with fourth. Race pace was evident, but procedurally and in qualifying the title credentials were lacking. That was, until Marrakech.

Da Costa came out fighting, topping the group one runners and then snaring pole. What's more, he likely wasn't going to be duelling for position with Vergne, as the reigning champion lined up only 11th. But that was no meagre effort, considering he was recovering from a virus that forced him to miss first practice.

The qualifying issues had been amended, leaving it up to da Costa and his race engineer to master strategy. They did so emphatically,

"IT WAS CLEARLY A SIGN I WAS FINALLY IN FULL SYNC WITH THE CAR. A MASSIVE STEP FORWARD"

with da Costa confident enough to relinquish his lead to Guenther and drop behind to conserve energy. That allowed him to pounce back with 14 laps to go and streak to an astonishing 11.4s triumph.

"The way we executed the race was very good," says da Costa. "It was clearly a sign for me that I was finally in full sync with the car, the systems, the software, the team, the communication. It was a massive step forward. We had shown speed before, but I wasn't really mastering the car in Chile or Mexico. Marrakech, I was so solid with everything, I knew exactly what I wanted, what I could take from the car. To put it on pole was a big relief because everyone was saying, 'OK, you can race well, but you're not qualifying well.'

"Our answer was not only a decent qualifying but a pole position, so I was very happy with that. The way we executed the race, I knew what could go wrong from the year before [when he collided with team-mate Alexander Sims seven laps from home at the expense of a BMW Andretti 1-2], we had the maturity and I had the plan discussed with my engineer and crew. We knew that falling behind could be a possibility and we worked through the scenario and it worked out. That was very pleasurable." »

Berlin 2
1 da Costa
2 Buemi
3 di Grassi

Two late uses of attack mode plus fanboost afford polesitter da Costa plenty of breathing space up front over Buemi – leading a revitalised Nissan e.dams. Da Costa checks out for a 3s victory, the title in his sights. Evans is down in 12th as Jaguar's early-season pace goes awry. Late tyre wear drops Vergne down to 10th.

Berlin 3
1 Guenther
2 Frijns
3 Vergne

A 0.1-bar drop in tyre pressure hurts da Costa the most ahead of his title coronation. He qualifies eighth as Vergne snares pole. But a regen paddle error hurts Vergne's energy usage, so Guenther and Frijns can pass. Frijns is the quicker driver in the closing laps but misses out by just 0.128s in the closest finish in FE history.

Berlin 4
1 Vergne
2 da Costa
3 Buemi

Leader Vergne is ordered to drop behind da Costa to guard against Buemi. But the DS pair assert their control, allowing for a second swap to give Vergne the only win of his title defence. Second place is still easily enough for da Costa to wrap up the crown with two races to go – the earliest it's ever been won.

Berlin 5
1 Rowland
2 Frijns
3 Rast

A qualifying farce drops the four active champions to the back as Rowland clinches pole. He expertly manages events over Frijns to score his first FE win, while newcomer Rast bumps his way past Lotterer for a late podium. Da Costa retires when a chunk of rubber hits the car's reset switch and causes a total shutdown.

Berlin 6
1 Vandoorne
2 de Vries
3 Buemi

Mercedes rounds out its debut FE season with a 1-2 finish. Vandoorne leads de Vries to secure second place in the final standings. Buemi's expected challenge from second on the grid never comes to pass after he is forced to save energy, leaving him to round out the podium. Massa departs Venturi immediately.



DID COVID PLAY INTO DA COSTA'S HANDS?



A face mask could barely conceal da Costa's smile

S BLOXHAM

News that the 2020 Geneva motor show had been cancelled amid the coronavirus outbreak (as it was back in February) broke minutes before three Formula E team principals sat down for their press conference on the eve of the Marrakech E-Prix. The subdued media session went ahead with an unspoken acceptance that motorsport was about to be put on ice, but not before Antonio Felix da Costa claimed his first win of the campaign in Morocco.

The supreme 11.4s triumph boosted him to the top of the standings, with no clear sign of when or even if the season would resume. Naturally, the Portuguese didn't want his maiden FE crown to come on those diminished terms after only five races, telling Autosport: "If the championship is over now, I wouldn't even be considered a champion, and actually I'm glad for that."

No fewer than 158 days later, the paddock did reconvene, and da Costa came flying out of the blocks in Berlin: two poles, two wins and another podium. With that, he sewed up the title. But after an eventual 11 races, rather than five, should da Costa be considered a worthy champion in the bizarre circumstances? Or does the fact that over half the races took place at one venue remove the shine?

First off, despite the calendar being ripped apart by COVID-19, the 2019-20 term was not the shortest in FE's brief history. It featured 11 events compared to the 10 of 2015-16, and that season's winner Lucas di Grassi doesn't have *his* crown called into question. The resumption also meant FE satisfied the sporting regulation to hold at least six events to qualify as a proper championship season in the FIA's eyes.

"THE ABRASIVE CONCRETE SURFACE DID PLAY INTO THE HANDS OF DA COSTA"

And what of the Berlin mini-series? The main carryover between reversed, conventional and extended circuits was the abrasive concrete surface. This did play into da Costa's hands somewhat, as he managed the rear all-weather Michelin tyres expertly in the first two races to control events from the front.

This trait was exclusive to da Costa in the DS Techeetah team for the first brace of bouts, with stablemate Jean-Eric Vergne losing a combined 20 places – albeit hobbled by an energy issue and a spin with di Grassi in the first race.

When a 0.1-bar tyre-pressure drop was introduced for race three, team principal Mark Preston reckoned it'd hurt da Costa the most as he qualified eighth. That he recovered to fourth and then won the title with a second place the next day showed he'd adapted quicker than the other drivers, who all had access to the same bank of data.

Ultimately, da Costa was close to fault-free in the German capital, no mean feat given the gruelling and compact nine-day schedule.

Granted, Berlin was the site where da Costa did most of the heavy lifting for his eventual title win, but it was born in Marrakech. He was the best driver in the circumstances, winning the crown with two races to spare – an unmatched success in the six seasons of FE.

But that momentum wouldn't be allowed to carry over. When laptops were shut and people filed out of the media centre and paddock in Marrakech, the departing message wasn't the usual, 'See you for the next race'. It was more a case of, 'Well, I hope to see you again, whenever that might be. Probably not for some time, though' as the coronavirus threat morphed into a pandemic.

All the cars were freighted to Valencia and locked up in the hope that a make-do race might be held at the testing venue. But as the "unprecedented" conditions grew ever worse, the FE season was officially suspended for three months as the Sanya, Rome, Paris, inaugural Seoul and Jakarta, Berlin, New York and London double-header races were all cancelled. The eventual solution came courtesy of six E-Prixs held over just nine days and on three different circuit layouts all behind closed doors and exclusively at the Tempelhof Airport site in Berlin. FE would resume, but after a five-month wait.

"I HATE TO LOSE AND LOVE TO WIN, SO THE NICE GUY CHANGES WHEN THE HELMET GOES ON"

"It's never good to have a break when you're on a roll," says da Costa. "These moments in your life, as an athlete, they come and go. I've had them before: in 2012 I could do no wrong in World Series by Renault, I won Macau, I got to GP3 and I would win. When I was told that the season was being postponed because of the pandemic, then it was obviously like, 'I need to find a way that once we go back, we try to stay on top' because we just put a massive target on our back."

TEAMS' CHAMPIONSHIP

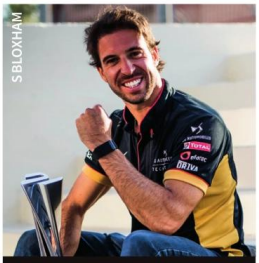
POS	TEAM	PTS
1	DS Techeetah	244
2	Nissan e.dams	167
3	Mercedes	147
4	Envision Virgin Racing	121
5	BMW Andretti	118
6	Audi	114
7	Jaguar Racing	81
8	Porsche	79
9	Mahindra Racing	49
10	Venturi Racing	44
11	Dragon Racing	2
12	NIO 333	0

All his rivals could do, though, was keep staring at that target. Guenther's inconsistency carried through, as he scored a win in race three but no other points in the German capital. Meanwhile, brilliant Mexico victor Evans was saddled to a Jaguar that had lost so much of its early-season promise, largely down to lack of balance. Evans, the closest challenger to da Costa in the points heading into those final races – thanks in part to a stunning recovery in Marrakech from last to sixth after his team sent him out too late in qualifying and he failed to set a lap – was at a loss. That permitted da Costa to lead from the front in Germany. In the first double-header on the reversed circuit, he was a dominant polesitter (by 0.3s and 0.4s) and unflappable in the races. With a fourth and a second in races three and four, da Costa earned his coronation with two rounds to spare.

The cuckoo had arrived at DS Techeetah, copied the success of his champion team-mate and taken over the nest. But the avian analogy only stretches so far, for a cuckoo is a parasite – loaded with negative meaning. By contrast, da Costa is one of the most amiable faces in FE, proving that nice guys don't have to finish last.

"I'm seen as a very nice person but I think I also have a bit of a reputation of being quite aggressive. In my days in DTM, I always came back with a bit of damage to the car. I hate to lose and I love to win, and that [nice-guy mentality] changes when the helmet goes on." Da Costa is talking to Autosport on his drive back from the office of the president of Portugal, having been awarded the Commander of the Order of Merit for his sporting success.

AUTOSPORT'S TOP 10 DRIVERS



ANTONIO FELIX DA COSTA

1 Took his time to adjust to the DS car after a late team switch, but once he adapted da Costa was the qualifying king (three poles) and just as effective in the races. As his nearest title rivals struggled in Berlin, da Costa was utterly supreme. The deserved champion.



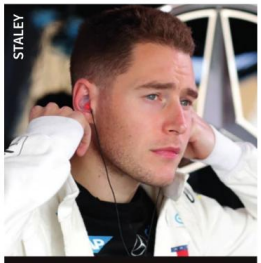
MITCH EVANS

2 Ignore his seventh in the points. For his part, he was almost without fault, capped by a peerless victory in Mexico. But a car software glitch (Santiago), a team qualifying strategy error (Marrakech) and stark loss of pace in Berlin stymied his genuine title credentials.



SEBASTIEN BUEMI

3 A lacklustre first three E-Prixs came as Nissan had to change its powertrain philosophy. But, apeing his form of last season, Buemi was ace in the final Berlin rounds. A detrimental set-up change prevented him from winning, but he was still first-rate.



STOFFEL VANDOORNE

4 A touch lucky to finish second in the points, especially after a crash in Mexico and a day in Marrakech when he wasn't at the races. But two podiums in Saudi Arabia and an end-of-season win show that when Mercedes has its mojo, so does Vandoorne.



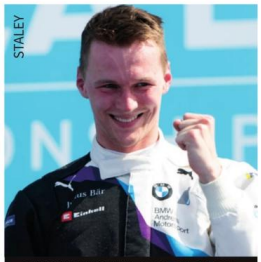
NYCK DE VRIES

5 Nine places behind his team-mate in the table, but de Vries was a rookie sensation. Overly aggressive under braking to defend position, but otherwise his racecraft and one-lap pace are superb. Reliability and team errors explain much of the points gap to Vandoorne.



JEAN-ERIC VERGNE

6 With four races to go, it looked like a paltry title defence as Vergne sat 12th. But a podium and a win earned him third. Battling a virus to score a podium in Marrakech was a highlight; nearly running into da Costa – who outclassed him all season – in Chile wasn't.



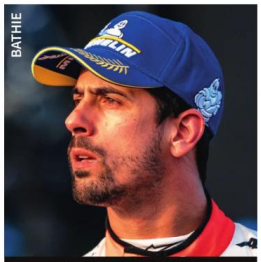
MAXIMILIAN GUENTHER

7 Two wins signify a breakout campaign for Guenther. On his and BMW's day, there was pace to consistently worry DS and Jaguar. What the young German needs to work on is his consistency. If he didn't win or finish second, he didn't score a point all year.



ANDRE LOTTERER

8 Flew the Porsche flag as partner Jani struggled. Moving to a new team means the wait for a win goes on, but pole in Mexico was stellar. In the race, he risked glory over consolidating points, to his detriment. Still, a classy on-track operator; good for two podiums.



LUCAS DI GRASSI

9 Spent the first five races flying under the radar, consistently scoring points in now trademark di Grassi fashion to mask Audi's drop in performance as he clocked a first winless season. Too many clashes in Berlin, several very similar in nature, mark him down too.



SAM BIRD

10 Just squeezes in at the expense of team-mate Frijns. After kicking off the season with a win, Bird would only visit the podium once more. Hurt by the Audi powertrain's lack of pace in the first few races, Bird recorded his lowest ever FE points tally.

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	PTS
1	**Antonio Felix da Costa** (PRT)	DS Techeetah / DS E-Tense FE20	14	10	2	2	**1**	**1**	**1**	4	2	R	9	158
2	**Stoffel Vandoorne** (BEL)	Mercedes-Benz EQ Formula E Team / Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 01	3	3	6	NC	15	6	5	R	12	9	**1**	87
3	**Jean-Eric Vergne** (FRA)	DS Techeetah / DS E-Tense FE20	R	8	R	4	3	NC	10	3	**1**	18	7	86
4	**Sebastien Buemi** (CHE)	Nissan e.dams / Nissan IM02	R	12	13	3	4	7	2	11	3	10	3	84
5	**Oliver Rowland** (GBR)	Nissan e.dams / Nissan IM02	4	5	17	7	9	14	7	6	5	**1**	R	83
6	**Lucas di Grassi** (BRA)	Audi Sport Abt Schaeffler / Audi e-tron FE06	13	2	7	6	7	8	3	8	6	21	6	77
7	**Mitch Evans** (NZL)	Panasonic Jaguar Racing / Jaguar I-TYPE 4	10	18	3	**1**	6	13	12	9	7	7	11	71
8	**Andre Lotterer** (DEU)	TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team / Porsche 99X Electric	2	14	EX	R	8	2	9	5	8	4	14	71
9	**Maximilian Guenther** (DEU)	BMW i Andretti Motorsport / BMW iFE.20	18	11	**1**	11	2	EX	R	**1**	R	NC	12	69
10	**Sam Bird** (GBR)	Envision Virgin Racing / Audi e-tron FE06	**1**	R	10	R	10	3	6	13	11	20	5	63

11 **Nyck de Vries** (Mercedes-Benz EQ Formula E Team Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 01) 60; 12 **Robin Frijns** (Envision Virgin Racing Audi e-tron FE06) 58; 13 **Alexander Sims** (BMW i Andretti Motorsport BMW iFE.20) 49; 14 **Edoardo Mortara** (ROKiT Venturi Racing Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 01) 41; 15 **Rene Rast** (Audi Sport Abt Schaeffler Audi e-tron FE06) 29; 16 **Jerome d'Ambrosio** (Mahindra Racing Mahindra M6Electro) 19; 17 **Alex Lynn** (Mahindra Racing Mahindra M6Electro) 16; 18 **Pascal Wehrlein** (Mahindra Racing Mahindra M6Electro) 14; 19 **James Calado** (Panasonic Jaguar Racing Jaguar I-TYPE 4) 10; 20 **Neel Jani** (TAG Heuer Porsche Formula E Team Porsche 99X Electric) 8; 21 **Daniel Abt** (Audi Sport Abt Schaeffler Audi e-tron FE06/NIO 333 FE Team NIO FE-005) 8; 22 **Felipe Massa** (ROKiT Venturi Racing Mercedes EQ Silver Arrow 01) 3; 23 **Brendon Hartley** (Geox Dragon Penske EV-4) 2; 24 **Oliver Turvey** (NIO 333 FE Team NIO FE-005) 0; 25 **Nico Muller** (Geox Dragon Penske EV-4) 0; 26 **Ma Qinghua** (NIO 333 FE Team NIO FE-005) 0; 27 **Tom Blomqvist** (Panasonic Jaguar Racing Jaguar I-TYPE 4) 0; 28 **Sergio Sette Camara** (Geox Dragon Penske EV-4) 0.



From Hamilton to Quartararo to

Malaysian energy company PETRONAS has become one of the most recognisable brands in world motorsport, and 2020 has been a banner year so far.

Fabio Quartararo and the PETRONAS Sepang Racing Team lead the MotoGP standings, after the 21-year-old Frenchman scored two victories in the first two races, while Lewis Hamilton is well on course to add a seventh drivers'/constructors' double to PETRONAS-backed Mercedes in Formula 1 this season – the first team to achieve this milestone in the sport's history.

PETRONAS's presence in motorsport has expanded vastly since it first got involved with Sauber back in the 1990s. Riders and drivers across the globe have found success with PETRONAS products, including in the Moto2 and Moto3 World Championships, where PETRONAS is the control fuel supplier.

All of this has transferred across to the consumer market. But, as PETRONAS fuel technology principal Chan Ming Yau explains, the company's motorsport success is also a result of what it has learned from its customers.



ETHERINGTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES;COLOMBO/MOTORSPORT IMAGES;GOLDANDGOOSE/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

How has PETRONAS's development of its products been boosted by the Sepang Racing Team's successful MotoGP exploits since it stepped up to the premier class in 2019?

Chan Ming Yau SRT's impressive run in its maiden MotoGP season has definitely boosted the PETRONAS brand and product awareness globally. In the area of fuel particularly, PETRONAS completed fuel requirement discussions with IRTA (International Race Team Association) and spoke to select teams to test Primax fuel in Moto2 Triumph engines and Moto3 KTM and Honda engines. We did all this followed by FIM approval and we were able to deliver power, responsiveness and efficiency to the teams. Beyond that, we also started delivering customised fuel to private events, private tests and we've also had requests from racing enthusiasts in Japan for example – and we are hoping for more in the future. All this success is a great testimonial to our product.

How has PETRONAS managed the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic?

CMY Well, we managed all this, I suppose not very much differently from how the world is managing. First of all, I'm at home – we're basically working from home until further notice. But by doing so, we have been very flexible. The good thing about delivering Moto2 and Moto3 fuel is it comes in drums and there is a lot of flexibility to deliver this, as opposed to maybe some other more usual retail work we do where you have to come in shifts and things like that. But did it impact us? Yes, it did. Obviously they have cancelled races, we have sent fuel to races that got cancelled. So, it's impacting us definitely. But our job has been moved to working at home to meet the needs.

PETRONAS obviously has a big involvement in other areas of motorsport. How much has PETRONAS been able to apply its Formula 1 knowledge to its two-wheeled projects, and vice versa?

CMY First of all, in my view, I see Primax for Moto2 and Moto3 fuels kind of like sitting in between our premium fuel offering available at our forecourts in Malaysia and South Africa and the F1 fuel offering. And the good thing is we have one fuel technology





Right: PETRONAS's involvement with Formula 1 started back in the 1990s with Sauber; left and below: PETRONAS-backed teams lead both the F1 and MotoGP points standings

the road



team that helps to answer the customer's painpoints. I didn't know this when I started, but there's cross-learning from the track as well as the road. So, I'd rather use the term 'track and road', rather than 'track to road' as you always hear it, because we learn stuff both ways. Some of the customised chemistries come from the road, and this cross-learning is very important for us. The other thing to say, we are bounded by regulations. As you know the FIA regulates F1, FIM regulates MotoGP/Moto2/Moto3 and then the road is subject to respective national legislations. Back in the 1990s when we first started with Sauber in F1 and Foggy PETRONAS in Superbikes, the FIA and FIM regulations were about the same, so transfer of knowledge was much easier. But today, the FIA regulations are more open, whereas FIM regulations have not changed much. We are doing our best to use what we can learn, but in the end we are expected to work within the parameters of the regulations.

What is PETRONAS having to do to meet the growing push for sustainability amid climate change, and what is it wanting to do with its future technologies?

CMY PETRONAS group-wide is actively looking into sustainability across the entire energy value chain. But for us in the mobility-related area, we can maybe slice what we are doing with sustainability currently into three segments. First is efficiency. We have put in a lot of emphasis on efficiency for the fluids we develop. Whether it's the Primax fuel, lubricants or the function of fluids, the concept is to extract maximum efficiency because that's what the customer wants. The second segment is circular economy sustainability initiatives, and these are feasibility studies in areas like bio-petrol race fuel. In fact, Moto2, Moto3 – like our Formula 1 fuel – carries five-plus per cent bio content. We also retail bio-diesel fuel and are also researching how we can make base oil more sustainable. And then the third segment is facility. We have a lot of rooftop solar photovoltaic panels and projects, whether it's on our retail stations – there's quite a growing number now – or a factory car park. Looking further ahead particularly in the sustainability space, I believe FIM can benefit by reviewing the MotoGP regulations to be more open. We in turn can help come up with more innovation to solve problems. With these three segments, we try to do our best in the sustainability space.

PETRONAS has had such a big impact on motorsport, and this year in particular has been huge because a PETRONAS-backed team and rider/driver leads the MotoGP and Formula 1 standings. How much of a source of pride is that?

CMY It's very humbling to see how far PETRONAS has come in motorsports and we are very proud of these achievements. For me even more so as I started my career working on fuel for Sauber and Foggy PETRONAS in the 1990s. More important is the fact that we have also learned from our customers. To me, they are the real winners because they get to experience products inspired by our success in motorsports, be it John McPhee in Moto3 or Lewis Hamilton in F1. ■

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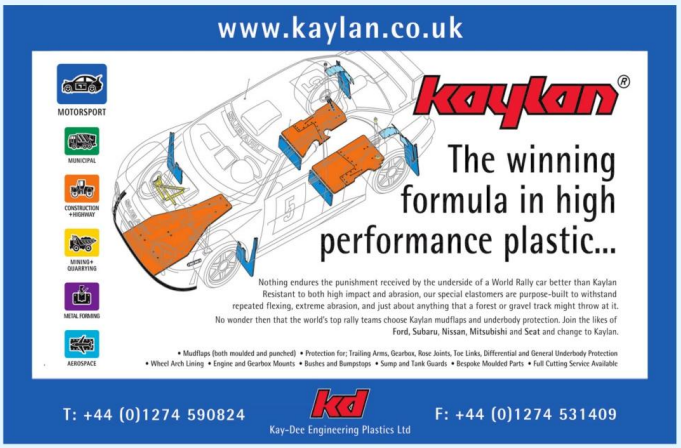
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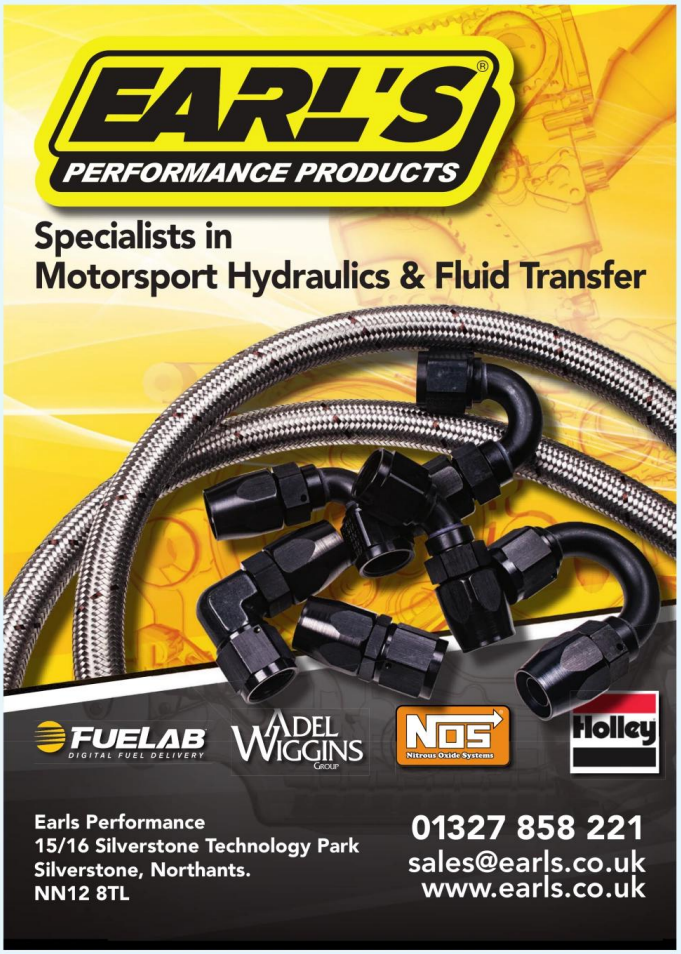


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JAGUAR E-TYPE TO HAVE 60TH CELEBRATION RACE

JAGUAR E-TYPES

The 60th anniversary of the Jaguar E-type will be celebrated with a one-hour race on the Silverstone Grand Prix circuit next May.

Widely regarded as one of the finest sportscars ever produced, the classic 1960s design has been raced across six decades, and the Historic Sports Car Club plans to attract a big grid of E-types, in both standard and period developed trim.

In April 1961 two E-types made the model's race debut at Oulton Park in the hands of Graham Hill and Roy Salvadori, with Hill going on to win the race and begin the E-type's motoring success story.

The E-type was developed as a replacement for the XK150 and more than 70,000 examples were produced between 1961 and 1974, with Enzo Ferrari once describing it as the most beautiful car ever made. In March 2008, the E-type was rated first in the *Daily Telegraph*'s list of the 100 most beautiful cars of all time.

The HSCC has set an ambitious target of attracting 60 drivers for the 60-minute race. "The E-type is truly an iconic road and race car, and we wanted to continue our long association with Jaguars by celebrating a landmark year for this timeless classic," said the club's Andy Dee-Crowne. "A field of 35 to 40 cars would make a magnificent spectacle at our annual International Trophy meeting next May."



The first race in the history of the HSCC, run in May 1966, was won by Neil Corner's Jaguar D-type, and in 2011 the HSCC organised the E-type Challenge to mark the model's 50th birthday.

The E-type Challenge was held for three consecutive years from 2011-13, and was won by Jon Minshaw, Alex Buncombe and John Pearson.

Renowned historic preparer and racer Gary Pearson said of the planned 60th anniversary race: "It's a great idea. The cars are there and it is the right event at the right venue. There are plenty of good E-types out there and so there should be good support for the race. We'll field five or six cars for our customers and my brother John and I each have a car, so we could share one or both do it as a solo driver."

PAUL LAWRENCE

Spa Six Hours cancelled over COVID fallout

HISTORICS


Popular event won't take place until 2021

Historic racing has been dealt another blow with the news that the Spa Classic Six Hours race weekend has been cancelled due to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic.

The Belgian Roadbook Organisation confirmed that both the Classic Six-Hour on 25-27 September and its Hat-Trick event on 10-11 October have been cancelled, as quarantine restrictions continue to be put in place across Europe.

The Classic Six-Hour is one of the most significant dates on the European historic racing calendar, attracting more than 100 cars for the six-hour race alone and several hundred UK competitors.

The line-up was due to include grids from Masters Historic Racing and Motor Racing Legends, while the Hat-Trick event was set to feature the final Historic Formula 2 races of the season.

"The disappointment is huge for Roadbook Organisation, who did everything possible until the last minute to maintain their events," said the organisers.

"The 2020 overview is very simple: four events cancelled in as many planned meetings. After the cancellation of the Spa Open Pitlane in March and the Spa Summer Classic in June, it's, first of all, the new Spa Hat-Trick which was cancelled.

"Soon the flagship event of Belgian and historic motorsport, the Spa Six Hours, would unfortunately follow."

The statement added: "Due to the complications linked to international travel, the majority of the teams and structures also preferred to give up the trip to Belgium regarding the very restrictive regulations, including a possible quarantine between Belgium and other countries."

PAUL LAWRENCE

P81 OPINION


Track record at Goodwood could be under threat from VW ID.R

JEP motorsport IMAGES

VW ID.R to electrify Goodwood

GOODWOOD

The record-breaking fully electric Volkswagen ID.R will appear at Goodwood SpeedWeek next month.

With the coronavirus pandemic forcing the cancellation of the Goodwood Festival of Speed (FoS) and the Revival, organisers have instead launched the new event, which will be held across three days behind closed doors on 16-18 October at Goodwood Motor Circuit.

The ID.R has already appeared at the past two editions of the FoS, setting a new course record at last year's edition with a time of 39.9 seconds with Romain Dumas at the wheel.

The car will now be aiming for Nick Padmore's track lap record of 1m18.217s, which he set in 2018 driving a Lola T70 Spyder.

"For decades, Goodwood has been a real attraction for motorsport enthusiasts all over the world, and we are delighted that the organisers have launched SpeedWeek in these very challenging times," said Volkswagen motorsport director Sven Smeets.

VW will also launch its ID.31 and ID.42, the company's first two fully electric production models, at the event.

CLASSIC RALLYING MAKES UK RETURN AFTER LOCKDOWN

RALLYING

Classic rallying in the UK restarted over the weekend when the Historic Endurance Rally Organisation ran the first major event since lockdown began in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although much of special stage rallying remains halted due to rules on the number of people permitted within forests, classic rallying has successfully resumed and 94 competitors took part in the Bicester Challenge 2 event, which started and finished at the Bicester Heritage site on Saturday.

Among those watching was David Richards, chairman of Motorsport UK, who visited the lunch break at Gaydon Motor Heritage Centre.

"In the current environment I think the team at Motorsport UK has done an incredible job, putting lots of things in place – well ahead of other sports I hasten to add – to allow our licence holders and competitors to take part in events like this," he said.

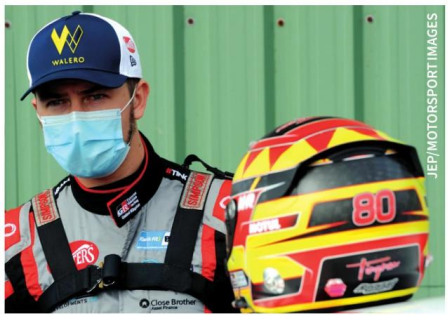
The HERO made many changes to normal procedures in the running of the rally, which followed the well-established format of timed special tests on private land, and low-speed regularity sections on public roads. The 150-mile route took in special tests at Bicester Heritage and the rally school venue at Turweston.

Online signing-on and revisions to scrutineering and marshalling practices were some of the changes to make the event COVID-19 compliant, and there was no awards ceremony.

Darren Everitt and Susan Dixon won the hotly contested event in their 1965 Triumph 2000 (below).

PAUL LAWRENCE


LAWRENCE


JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES


Supra GT4 is raced in British GT by Sam Smelt and James Kell

JEP motorsport IMAGES

Ingram to race Speedworks Supra GT4

GT CUP

British Touring Car Championship racer Tom Ingram will contest this weekend's GT Cup round at Donington Park in a Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Supra GT4 alongside seasoned GT racer Ron Johnson.

Speedworks boss Christian Dick explained that Johnson, who has previously raced with the team in the Ginetta G50 Cup and British GT in a Chevrolet Corvette GT3 in 2011-12, had been "down to potentially race a second Supra for selected British GT rounds this year" until those plans were shelved by the coronavirus pandemic.

The new-for-2020 car has managed a best finish of third in GT4 so far this season, also at Donington, with drivers Sam Smelt and James Kell.

"Ron has done plenty with us over the years and this is a way for him to get out and test the car," Dick explained. "He's good friends with Tom, so we wanted to put him in the car and he was happy to oblige."

Ingram, who lies sixth in the BTCC standings in Speedworks' Toyota Corolla, has previous GT experience from racing a Speedworks-entered Aston Martin Vantage GT4 in Creventic's 24H Series, at the Circuit of The Americas in 2017.

"Our number-one priority is to make sure that Ron enjoys the weekend and has good fun, so there's no real target as such," Dick added. "Getting more miles on a new car is always good, so there's not really any downsides from that point of view, and if we can learn something along the way that's great."

JAMES NEWBOLD

New Porsche 911 series in the pipeline for 2021

PORSCHES

A new race series for air-cooled Porsche 911 models built before 1989 is planned to start in 2021, and had a preview at Sunday's Brands Hatch Porsche Club event.

Fourteen cars took part in unofficial practice sessions that doubled up as a photo opportunity to attract more interest. The driving force behind the idea is Chris Pruden, who has been organising events for Porsche Club Great Britain for more than 30 years and plans to have races running in time for the club's 60th anniversary next year.

Races are scheduled to run for an hour each to encourage car and cost-sharing, and there will be three classes. No points will be awarded, and the series is designed to be as cost-effective as possible. Draft regulations should be available by the end of this month.


Fourteen cars took part in unofficial practice

HAWKINS

Every event should take place on the same programme as Porsche Club championship races. This would include the high-profile Porsche Festival, which should have taken place at Brands Hatch but was scaled down for this year because of COVID-19 restrictions.

"If you've got a Porsche and want to race, you will always be among like-minded people in this new series," said Pruden. "There's been a great deal of interest and I'm very excited about it."

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Fores to make British F3 debut at Donington Park with CDR

BRITISH F3

F3 Cup points leader Alex Fores will make his debut in the BRDC British F3 Championship later this month when he contests the Donington Park round.

The 20-year-old races with Chris Dittmann Racing in F3 Cup, and the squad also competes in British F3, taking two wins at the most recent round at Brands Hatch with Ayrton Simmons.

CDR has a spare seat available for the 19-20 September Donington event, so Fores – who holds a 13-point lead in the F3 Cup standings at the wheel of an ex-Valtteri Bottas Dallara-Mercedes – will make his debut in the category.

"Obviously it has always been in our minds that running with Chris [in F3 Cup] there was the potential of progressing into British F3," said Fores. "I've got four days to basically learn the car, with two days' testing, so we'll see where we are at the end of the first couple of sessions and take it from there.

"I know it's really competitive so we'll try and get points and make the most of the opportunity. None of this would be possible without Chris and my sponsor Dave Bromfield."

Fores says that there may be scope for a further outing this season at one of the remaining three rounds, and that a full-time move into British F3 is a possibility for 2021.

STEFAN MACKLEY



CDR took two wins at last British F3 round at Brands

Trundley targets class honours

BRITCAR

BMW 116 Trophy race winner Bobby Trundley is targeting class wins in the remainder of the Britcar Endurance season in the Team BRIT Aston Martin he shares with former Compact Cup racer Aaron Morgan.

Trundley, who has autism, impressed during his maiden season of car racing last year, taking four wins in the 116 series, and was also chosen as 'driver of the day' for his performance in helping the pair take third in Class 4 in the second Britcar race at Brands Hatch last month.

"That weekend will go down as one of the best weekends I've had," said Trundley. "I got to race a car I never thought I would in my second year of car racing."

"If we can get a few more podiums, that would be great, but if other teams have a bad day and we have a good strategy, we could win."

Morgan, who is paralysed from the waist down after a motocross accident as a teenager, added that the weekend was a "rollercoaster of emotions" as a qualifying incident for Trundley left a race against time to get the car repaired.

Morgan was originally due to just drive the Aston at Brands and Oulton Park this weekend, but has now got funding in place for Silverstone and is targeting the Snetterton finale too.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

IN THE HEADLINES

SMRC TWEAKS FORMAT

The Scottish Motor Racing Club's first round this Saturday at Knockhill will feature a tweaked format to fall in line with government guidelines on mass gatherings. In accordance with recent Scottish Government guidance for outdoor events in the wake of COVID-19, there will be an on-site attendance cap of 200 people. A maximum of 66 cars has been accepted for Saturday's meeting. The Legends championship will form part of the Super Lap Scotland (SLS) bill which takes place on Sunday.

LYDDEN WELCOMES HISTORICS

The success of last May's Historics on the Hill event at Lydden Hill, co-promoted by Julius Thurgood's Historic Racing Drivers Club, should be built upon this Sunday when the circus returns for a meeting postponed from its July date. Three grids – Jack Sears Trophy Touring Cars 1958-66, Allstars Pre'66 Sports, GT and TC and Classic Alfas – will each race twice on the one-mile circuit.

PATRICK QUINIOU

French historic event organiser Patrick Quiniou died last weekend. He rose to become president of the Association Sportive Automobile des Vehicules d'Epoque (ASAVE), an influential body in the French car movement, and was the friendly face behind major historic events at the Dijon-Prenois circuit, most notably the summer's Grand Prix de l'Age d'Or festival. Autosport offers sincere condolences to Patrick's family.

BEAGLE BACK ON THE HILLS

Jim Yardley's ex-British F3 Beagle MkV (below), raced by David Morgan in 1986 and Yardley himself, was back in action at Shenstone and DCC's Curborough Sprint over the weekend. It's no longer Toyota-powered, as Yardley has fitted a 1600 Honda VTec engine and runs it on methanol. Novice driver Oliver Sammons set the third fastest time behind the Jedis of winner Stuart Bickley and Steven Potter.


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Cantillon a double winner in Williams FW07C

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Dex stormed to victory in Endurance Legends

MASTERS/SENTEN

Cantillon masters new layout at Zandvoort GP

HISTORICS

Formula 1 cars raced on the remodelled Zandvoort for the first time last weekend, but it was the FIA Masters Historic three-litre cars that kicked-off a new era at the annual Historic Grand Prix event.

Irishman Michael Cantillon mastered the newly banked Arie Luyendijkbocht to score a fine feature double in his CGA Motorsport Engineering-run Williams FW07C.

Audi's three-time Le Mans victor Marco Werner (Lotus 77) was Cantillon's most consistent rival in Saturday's opening leg, but the German couldn't shake off Steve Brooks (Lotus 81) and Mark Hazell (Williams FW08). Jamie Constable (Shadow DN8) and Andrew Beaumont (Lotus 76) were fifth and sixth.

The top four were reversed on Sunday's grid, but within three laps Cantillon had burst through into a decisive lead. Brooks spun under braking for Tarzan on lap 10, gifting second and third to Werner and Hazell. Brooks, Constable and Georg Hallau (Theodore N183) completed the top six.

Dutch big-hitter David Hart's DHG team enjoyed a trio of successes on the programme, scaled back due to COVID-19 travel restrictions with the third FIA F3 European competition, Historic Sports Car Club's Historic F2 and the HGPCA forced to cancel their grids.

Hart and Nicky Pastorelli won the Masters Sportscar race in a Lola T70 Mk3B and the second Aston Martin Endurance Legends race in a Maserati MC12 GT1. In a thrilling finish, Pastorelli drafted past the ORECA-Nissan 03 of Philippe Papin – started by Karl Pedrazza – on the sprint to the line.

Top qualifier Jack Dex had stormed his BR01-Nissan to victory in the opening Endurance Legends bout, beating Hart/Pastorelli by a lap. Pedrazza/Papin led the chase, before a three-minute stop/go penalty for an unsafe pit release stopped Dex from doubling up.

Hart and son Olivier won the thin Gentlemen Drivers Pre-'65 GT race in a Bizzarrini 5300GT. Michiel van Duijvendijk/Pascal Pandelaar (Porsche 904/6 GTS) and Sander van Gils (Lotus Elan) finished second and third in a Dutch demonstration after a slow pitstop torpedoed early leader Nigel Greensall and Mark Martin's AC Cobra Daytona Coupe aspirations.

MARCUS PYE



DANCING IN THE RAIN
Steve Dickens (leading) mastered two rain-affected Clubmans Sports Prototype races at the Darlington & District Motor Club's visit to Croft last weekend in his Mallock MK29. Clive Wood (Mallock Mk23) won the opening dry race. Michelle Hayward took three CSP2 class victories, while CSP3 honours were shared between Martin Walker, Barry Webb and Phil Hart. **Photography by Joy Batchelor, words by Pete Richings**





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The difficult decision that was sadly inevitable

The cancellation of the Spa Six Hours is a massive blow for historic racing, but it can come back even stronger in 2021

MARCUS PYE

Nobody wanted the 28th running of the Spa Six Hours to be postponed for a year, but Roadbook's decision to cancel the 2020 event – scheduled for 26 September, preceded by two days of testing – was inevitable. I could almost hear the groans echoing around Europe when crestfallen promoter Vincent Collard announced the decision last Friday and his customers digested hard facts. The world's greatest endurance race for Pre-1965 cars had fallen.

The question that faced Collard and his loyal band in Liege was that of international travel logistics as the latest chapters of the coronavirus pandemic unravelled. Was Belgium on the list of countries from which returnees to the United Kingdom (or indeed nearby nations not separated by a swathe of sea) would have to quarantine or self-isolate for a period of 14 days?

Regardless of whether it was or wasn't, there was no guarantee that the situation wouldn't change either way before the event. At some point the invidious call had to be made and, with circuit staff to deploy, marshals to confirm and catering to be ordered for the reduced number of attendees, D-Day was looming. It wasn't even a case of damned if you cancel, damned if you don't. As disappointed as competitors and their preparation/support teams were, they understood totally, and empathised with Collard. After all, it was he who placed himself on the line financially as the rock of the event since its inspirational co-founder Alain Defalle's health declined several years back and he could play no further part.

"There was no guarantee the situation wouldn't change. The invidious call had to be made"

Having now seen the programme decimation that hit last weekend's Zandvoort Historic GP event in neighbouring Holland – which, with Germany on the opposite flank, provides the largest contingent of Spa competitors after the UK – the Six Hours would have been a shadow of its former self. The event was already due to be run without spectators or merchandise sellers' trade village in the lower paddock, thus it would have been decidedly devoid of buzz or atmosphere. Cruelly incongruous against the majestically steep backdrop of the trademark Eau Rouge and Raidillon corners.

Clearly many of the 100 or so teams of up to three drivers – who habitually commit to entries for the following year's race as they collect results sheets, say their goodbyes and head home from another exhilarating weekend in the Ardennes – were not going to be able to make it this year. Others on the waiting list for start slots had their hopes raised by late call-ups, only to have their aspirations of a first shot at the hallowed enduro dashed almost immediately. Those in the support races were sceptical too, some still on the fence awaiting latest government travel guidelines before committing or pulling the plug. For them the call was made.

No matter what loopholes were flagged up, some erroneously, as potential ways round getting UK-based personnel to Belgium – including mandatory COVID-19 tests within 48 hours of landing back at a channel port or airport – the exemptions for elite sportspeople weren't going to apply to several hundred amateurs racing classic cars of any denomination. Nobody I've spoken to had convinced me that they understand how Formula 1 teams can decamp from race to race, with transporters traversing borders and operating in so-called 'bubbles,' other than members do not socially mix, are block-booked into designated hotels at each destination and tested for the virus very regularly.

So the Spa Six Hours, my favourite event on the motorsport calendar, one which I've not missed since I competed in 1997, has gone for this wretched year. Like hundreds of others, I will miss it terribly, but we all cling to the hope that 2020's sacrifice of a meeting that would doubtless have lost the promoter a fortune through force majeure will lead to it bouncing back stronger.

If another year's wait sharpens the anticipation of those who adore the unique challenge, and scientists are successful in their quest to develop vaccines towards achieving a climate in which everybody can operate more safely, that hunger will be assuaged by a bigger, better event next September or October.

Looking ahead, with the subsequent Spa Historic 'Hat-Trick' meeting also off and difficulties facing UK licence holders keen to race at Dijon's Motors Cup event over the first weekend in October, will anything benefit? Potentially yes, for the Portuguese festivals at Estoril in October and the Autodromo Internacional Algarve in November are currently on and widely accessible and egressible.

Owners of sports, GT and Touring Cars of the 1950s and '60s, plus Formula Juniors, would otherwise surely enjoy the relaxed atmosphere of the renowned Castle Combe Autumn Classic, with its easier commute and no travel snarl-ups, on 3-4 October. Celebrating the circuit's 70th anniversary, this is one 'staycation' not to miss.



Neaves won both races, maintaining his 100% record in 2020

STYLES

Unstoppable Neaves keeps to his winning ways

SNETTERTON
MGCC
5-6 SEPTEMBER

The MG Car Club arrived at Snetterton for its second event of the truncated 2020 season on a high after a successful outing at Donington Park in July, and with a bumper schedule to get through the racing did not disappoint on the 300 layout.

The BCV8 series raced solely on the Saturday and in race one Ollie Neaves led from start to finish, but behind him some of the drives were just as remarkable. Following mechanical issues in qualifying Neil Fowler started at the back of the grid in 26th, but after a stunning first lap found himself in fifth place, which became third by the end of lap three.

Before Fowler could challenge the leaders, Ronald Watt tangled with Paul Linfield through Coram and into Murrays. Watt hit the inside kerb at the final corner and was launched into a mid-air roll, eventually coming to a stop at the exit of Murrays.

Watt was unhurt and later confirmed that the accident was caused by a mistake on his part, but recovery of his machine meant that the safety car was out for most of the 20-minute race, leaving a one-lap shootout at the end to decide the result. Neaves kept his nerve and took his third win of the season ahead of Russell McCarthy and the charging Fowler.

Race two did not go as well for Fowler, despite once again making a great start from the back of the grid, as he was caught out by the concertina effect into the Wilson hairpin and ran into the back of another car, forcing him to retire immediately.

Neaves again took the victory, keeping his 100% record for the 2020 season as McCarthy followed him home in second place once again, with Ian Prior third. Although Watt's MGB Roadster looked surprisingly intact after his race-one wreck, there was significant bodywork damage and he was unable to take part in race two.

Saturday's race of the day surely had to go to the weekend's first Equipe GTS bout, where there was an epic battle for the lead between Mark Ashworth in a TVR Grantura and Allan Ross-Jones in a Triumph TR4. Lee Atkins had qualified his Grantura on pole, but lost the lead to Ashworth's TVR. Although Atkins got himself back into the lead into Riches on lap two, he retired just two laps later.

Ross-Jones then took the lead from Ashworth on the same lap and remained ahead until lap 10 when Ashworth again regained the position, only to run wide at Agostini, Ross-Jones taking the spot back. They swapped positions again at the Bomb Hole, and from there Ashworth went on to win by just 0.8 seconds from Ross-Jones, with Mark Holme's MGB third.

Race two on Sunday left a feeling of what could have been. Ashworth started on pole and kept the lead from Holme, with Ross-Jones in third, but it did not take long for Saturday's runner-up to take the lead. Instead of getting a much-anticipated repeat of the previous day's race, Ross-Jones's TR4 developed a mechanical problem and Ashworth was able to close the gap rapidly, taking the lead around the outside of Riches on lap eight.

Ross-Jones then dropped back behind Holme before eventually retiring on the penultimate lap, as Ashworth doubled up



Ashworth won both Equipe GTS races, with the action frantic

STYLES

SNETTERTON WEEKEND WINNERS

MGCC BCV8s
Races 1 & 2 Ollie Neaves (MGB GTV8)

EQUIPE GTS
Races 1 & 2 Mark Ashworth (TVR Grantura)

MORGAN CHALLENGE
Races 1 & 2 Andrew Thompson (Morgan ARV6, below)

MGCC COCKSHOOT CUP
Races 1 & 2 Keith Egar (MG Midget)

MG CUP
Race 1 Mike Williams (Rover Metro GTi)
Race 2 Jack Ashton (Rover Metro GTi)

MG TROPHY
Race 1 Adam Jackson (MG ZR 170)
Race 2 Fred Burgess (MG ZR 190)

MG METRO CUP
Races 1 & 2 Mark Eales (Rover Metro GTi)

MG MIDGET AND SPRITE CHALLENGE
Races 1 & 2 Richard Wildman (MG Midget)

EQUIPE PRE-'63/PRE-'50
Race 1 Mark Holme (Austin-Healey 3000 Mk2)
Race 2 Bernardo Hartogs (Lotus XV)

EQUIPE LIBRE
Robin Ellis (Lotus Elite)



For full results visit: www.tsl-timing.com

from Holme and Harry Willmott in his MGB. Further down there was a hectic battle between a number of drivers in the lower reaches of the top 10, with Paul Mortimer, Mark Gordon, Mike Lillywhite, Colin Kingsnorth and Rob Cobden squabbling over the final few laps – all five were separated by just over two and a half seconds at the chequered flag.

The Aero Racing Morgan Challenge witnessed the most dominant performances of the weekend from Andrew Thompson, driving a Morgan ARV6, who controlled both encounters with ease and lapped almost half the field in the process. Both times he finished ahead of Simon Orebi Gann, also in a Morgan ARV6.

The final MGCC event of 2020 is scheduled to take place at Oulton Park on 3 October.

ALEX HUNT



FIRST WIN IN 55 YEARS The Cockshoot Cup visited Snetterton for the first time in 20 years, and the novelty theme was maintained by Keith Egar in his Midget. He had never won before and never been to Snetterton, yet he came away with two outright race victories! "The first two or three laps [at Snetterton] felt very alien but I soon got into it," said Egar. "It's taken me 55 years to get one race win and I get two in the same day!" **Graham Keilloh**



ASHTON COMES OUT ON TOP There was finally a straight battle for MG Cup victory between Metro runners Mike Williams and Jack Ashton at Snetterton. Oil-seal problems kept Ashton out of race one, but the race-two face-off lived up to the anticipation, with the lead being swapped several times. The tyre-hamstrung Ashton was awarded the win after Williams got a track-limits penalty. "It doesn't matter because the race we had was just immense," Williams beamed. **Graham Keilloh**



DAD, CAN I BORROW YOUR CAR? Fred Burgess got to grips with his dad Jason's MG ZR 190, after his own 170 broke after one lap of testing in the previous Donington Park round, by taking victory at Snetterton in the MG Trophy. His driveshaft failed heading to the grid in race one, but in race two he converted pole into victory, despite nursing a "horrible" front-left tyre vibration as he held off an attacking Ross Makar late on. **Graham Keilloh**



JONES

Larkin took second on the road before Edgar was penalised

Larkin claims first Clio 182 win

OULTON PARK
750MC
5 SEPTEMBER

The Clio 182 Championship provided plenty of excitement at Oulton Park, with Josh Larkin initially losing out in a photo-finish for victory, but then being given the win when on-the-road winner Scott Edgar was penalised.

The contest came alive after leader Ryan Polley, who had won the opening race, lost drive exiting Shell Oil corner and retired. This left Simon Freeman at the head of a three-car battle for victory, but contact between him and Edgar sent Freeman across the grass and down to fifth. Edgar was just ahead of Larkin at the finish, but was demoted to fifth with a time penalty for his contact with Freeman.

In the first race, polesitter Polley briefly dropped back at the start, leaving Edgar with the lead until the 2019 champion and Oliver Waind both got past at Old Hall in one move. So began a duel for second between Waind and Edgar that was eventually ended by a trip through the grass for the under-pressure Waind, giving Edgar the chance to come out on top as they followed Polley home.

Dan Clowes had pole for the first F1000 Championship race, but second-on-the-grid Lee Morgan remained on his tail, eventually passing him at Lodge on the final lap and taking the chequered flag less than a second ahead.

The second race was a masterclass from Morgan, who went from eighth to first in little more than a lap. From there he pulled away from the rest of the pack while Clowes was slower to make progress, eventually finishing a distant third. The race featured another strong showing from second-placed youngster Jack Tomalin in his first season of F1000.

An early red flag in the Club Enduro race, due to the overturned SEAT Leon Eurocup of Ade Wootton and Ryan Hooker at Cascades, threw pitstop strategy into disarray. Alan Henderson's Lotus Elise S2 emerged as the victor after chasing down the Leon Eurocup of Carl Swift and Robert Baker, passing when Baker was delayed by traffic.

With the top three in the Bikesports Championship missing from the opening race due to mechanical issues, Charles Hall took advantage of his rivals' absence to take his first victory of the season in his Spire. Joe Stables was the closest pursuer and crossed the line in second place, but then his Radical PR6 was found to be underweight, and his disqualification promoted Class B winner Leon Morrell (Radical SR3) to second overall.

Another good start later in the day from Hall propelled him into the lead, and Stables quickly climbed from his grid position of eighth to third. Josh Smith, his Radical PR6 now repaired after missing the opening race, defended second place valiantly from Stables for lap after lap, but Stables ultimately prevailed to take the runner-up spot.

The BMW Car Club Racing Championship was full of drama, with Michael Cutt attempting to make up six seconds in the first race on leader Michael Pensavalle after a bad start. He caught the E46 M3 after Pensavalle went wide in the closing stages of the race and got past. But Cutt was denied the double later in the day when his car came to a stop at Cascades on the final lap while negotiating his way through lapped traffic, leaving Pensavalle the winner.

ANNA DUXBURY


Red flag came out in Club Enduro after this crash for Wootton/Hooker's SEAT

JONES

WEEKEND WINNERS

CLIO 182s
Race 1 Ryan Polley
Race 2 Josh Larkin

F1000
Races 1 & 2 Lee Morgan

CLUB ENDURO
Alan Henderson (Lotus Elise S2)

BIKESPORTS
Races 1 & 2 Charles Hall (Spire GT3, below)

BMW CAR CLUB RACING
Race 1 Michael Cutt (BMW E36 M3)
Race 2 Michael Pensavalle (BMW E46 M3)


JONES

For full results visit: 750mc.co.uk

Rivals Morris and Yarrow share spoils

ANGLESEY
750MC
6 SEPTEMBER

Sports 1000 title rivals Richard Morris and Ryan Yarrow took a win each at Anglesey to set up a fascinating decider at Snetterton, but Yarrow has little room for manoeuvre after suffering a non-finish in race one.

Morris knew that getting ahead of poleman Yarrow – who has found considerable pace since 2019 – would be vital, but instead the Spire GT320S driver slipped back to fourth position.

He passed the Mittell MC-53 of Michael Roots at the Banking on lap five of 17, and eventually put a move on the similar car of Danny Andrew seven laps later only for the vanquished machine to immediately expire.

Moments later Yarrow's hopes went up in smoke due a pushrod failure in his Spire GT3S, with a grateful Morris streaking to his third win of the year.


Yarrow won the second race after Morris (2) took victory in the opener

JONES

Yarrow was back out for race two and, although he didn't amass the big lead he had earlier, he was always in control. Morris dropped from pole to third at the start, and made no progress upon the restart required after Tom Johnston fell off at the Corkscrew.

Both Historic 750 Formula contests were lively for the first half before settling down. Newcomer Graham Wilson started slowly from pole in his Time 3B, then a spin at Rocket halted his recovery.

Martin Depper's Centaur Mk14 emerged from an early skirmish with Lyndon Thruston's DNC to win the opener, while later Trefor Slatter (Centaur Mk11) moved decisively ahead of Depper at Target on lap seven of 11 to win race two.

Ryan Morgan (Ford Fiesta XR2) and Pip Hammond (Vauxhall Nova GTE) split the Classic Stock Hatch honours to pull clear of the rest in the championship fight.

IAN SOWMAN

Clark and McAleer continue battle in Porsche Championship

BRANDS HATCH
MSVR
6 SEPTEMBER

Simon Clark edged clear of Mark McAleer in their duel at the top of the Porsche Club championship standings at Brands Hatch, taking a win and a second place to his rival's second and third.

McAleer qualified fastest, but Kevin Harrison had the advantage from lap one of race one, and a late safety car to rescue a beached Boxster dampened hopes of a final heroic effort by those behind.


Clark leads McAleer in Porsche Club action

HAWKINS

Immediately into the lead of race two, Clark resisted massive pressure from McAleer as the dominant duo moved clear of Harrison.

The Porsche Sprint Challenge lost Archie Hamilton's car after a fire during practice, as the points advantage moved from James Dorlin to Tom Jackson in race one and back to Dorlin in race two.

Jackson commanded race one, while 16-year-old Theo Edgerton fended off teenage rival Ethan Hawkey and Dorlin lost touch in fourth.

Race two was a different story. Dorlin, his Donington win reinstated after a track-limits penalty was removed, put in some forceful moves to take the lead from Jackson by lap five. Behind, Alex Toth-Jones split Edgerton and Hawkey in fourth.

Best Am class qualifier Ambrogio Perfetti crashed out as the cars headed to Paddock Hill Bend in race one, promoting Ian Humphries to the win. But Humphries collided with Nigel Rice at Druids after losing the class lead in race two, which gave John Westbrook a surprise win.

BRIAN PHILLIPS

WEEKEND WINNERS

ANGLESEY
SPORTS 1000
Race 1 Richard Morris (Spire GT320S)
Race 2 Ryan Yarrow (Spire GT3S)

HISTORIC 750 FORMULA
Race 1 Martin Depper (Centaur Mk14)
Race 2 Trefor Slatter (Centaur Mk11)

CLASSIC STOCK HATCH
Race 1 Ryan Morgan (Ford Fiesta XR2)
Race 2 Pip Hammond (Vauxhall Nova GTE)

BRANDS HATCH
PORSCHE CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP
Race 1 Kevin Harrison (996 C2)
Race 2 Simon Clark (Cayman S)

PORSCHE SPRINT CHALLENGE
Race 1 Tom Jackson (below)
Race 2 James Dorlin


HAWKINS

For full results visit:
750mc.co.uk/tsl-timing.com



New game features the full 2020 WRC calendar as it was intended before COVID-19 struck

RICH, DETAILED RALLYING



VIDEOGAME REVIEW
WRC 9
RRP £39.99

As the World Rally Championship roared back to life in Estonia last weekend, Parisian game developer Kylotonn released *WRC 9*, the latest instalment in the officially licensed WRC game franchise. The game features the originally intended 13-round calendar prior to its coronavirus-induced overhaul. This means fans can experience the rallies in Japan, Kenya and New Zealand before they make their belated return to the WRC schedule.

These three new additions perfectly showcase the rich and detailed environments featured in the game, with the unique real-world personality of each rally beautifully reflected in the virtual sphere. The debut of an improved handling model allows you to feel a much greater connection between the car and the surface of the road. It also makes the driving experience one of sheer joy – once you overcome the learning curve of taming the latest-generation WRC beasts.

There's a flow to the driving that's been missing from Kylotonn's previous titles and it helps mark *WRC 9* out as a serious rival to Codemasters' market-leading *DiRT Rally 2.0*. Sweeping through the Finnish forests at high speed or snaking through the snowy Swedish roads has never felt better. Graphically, it's still behind *DiRT Rally 2.0*, but improved lighting aspects have helped to bridge the gap.

The online and Esports elements of the game have also been boosted with the addition of the 'Clubs' mode, where you can create your own private championships. An ambitious co-driver mode will be arriving in a future update, which will invite gamers to take up occupancy in the passenger seat. Your notes will help (or hinder) a friend through a stage. The latest WRC Esports season will start in January next year, which should give the game plenty of longevity.

In career mode, you have the option of starting in Junior WRC or moving straight into an R5 machine in WRC3 from the off. In between rallies, you will compete in additional challenges – usually short time-trial events – in order to boost your reputation with manufacturers. One of these challenge types features historic cars. *WRC 9* includes nine classics as well as three bonus cars, with the Citroen C3 WRC and the Proton Iriz R5 among them. It's hardly the most extensive list, but the handling of the historic machines is far better in this year's title.

There are also objectives for each rally such as avoiding the use of the hard tyres. Unfortunately, passing or failing objectives like these do more to increase or decrease your reputation than crashing out of or dominating a rally. There's a difficulty slider for the AI, but it feels inconsistent from rally to rally, resulting in a need for constant tweaking. Moreover, on the side-by-side super-special stages, you'll sometimes record the fastest time by over 10 seconds despite seeing another driver beat you to the line.

This may well be fixed in one of the numerous patches coming to the game before the end of this year. One of these will add the content required for the new FIA Rally Star initiative. The talent-scouting competition will use a mixture of real-world slalom-style driving with a virtual competition on *WRC 9*, and the four winners will receive a drive in Junior WRC. If any of them can win the Junior WRC title within their first two seasons in the series, they'll win a seat in WRC3 for a full season.

The faith placed in *WRC 9* by the FIA to assist in the search for future rally stars is testament to the quality of the simulation that the latest WRC game possesses.

JOSH SUTTILL

YouTube youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom



The departure of Frank and Claire Williams from the team that bears their name is a sad moment for Formula 1. But how did we get here? And what does it mean for the Williams F1 team? Autosport assesses how the story unfolded. **Go to bit.ly/WilliamsFamilyF1**

autosport.com/podcast



Autosport has launched a new series of podcasts to celebrate our 70th birthday. In each episode, we will select the greatest competition cars from each of the major international categories. First up, our panel picks the best sportscar of all time… no easy task.

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Tuscan Grand Prix
Formula 1 World Championship
Round 9/17
Mugello, Italy
13 September
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sun 1405
TV **Highlights** Channel 4, Sun 1830, Sky Sports F1, Sun 2330

FIA Formula 2
Round 9/12
Mugello, Italy
12-13 September
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sat 1535, Sun 1045

FIA Formula 3
Round 9/9
Mugello, Italy
12-13 September
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sat 0920, Sun 0920

IndyCar Series
Round 7/9
Mid-Ohio, USA
12-13 September
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sat 2130, Sun 1800

Formula Regional European
Round 3/8
Red Bull Ring, Austria
12-13 September
Livestream on Motorsport.tv, Sat 1230, Sun 1030



SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

GT World Challenge Europe Sprint Cup
Round 2/4
Magny-Cours, France
12-13 September

Super GT
Round 4/8
Motegi, Japan
13 September

World Touring Car Cup
Round 1/6
Zolder, Belgium
13 September
TV **Live** Eurosport 2, Sun 0915, 1300

TCR Europe
Round 2/6
Zolder, Belgium
12-13 September
Livestream on Motorsport.tv, Sat 1225, Sun 1110

DTM
Round 5/9
Nurburgring, Germany
12-13 September
TV **Live** BT Sport ESPN, Sat 1215, Sun 1215

Ferrari Challenge Europe
Round 5/7
Spa, Belgium
12-13 September
Livestream on Motorsport.tv, Sat 1405, 1605

NASCAR Cup
Round 28/36
Richmond, USA
12 September
TV **Live** Premier Sports 1, Sun 0000

MotoGP
Round 6/14
Misano, Italy
13 September
TV **Live** BT Sport 2, Sun 1230
TV **Highlights** BT Sport 2, Sun 1900

UK MOTORSPORT

Brands Hatch MSVR
12 September
Production BMWs, Toyo Tires Saloons, Mini Challenge, Elise Trophy, Champion of Brands, MSV SuperCup, Track Attack

Oulton Park BARC
12 September
Britcar, Caterham Graduates, CNC Heads Sports/Saloons, Kumho BMWs

Knockhill SMRC
12 September
Citroen C1s, Classic Sports and Saloons, Minis, Hot Hatch, Legends

Silverstone BRSCC*
12-13 September
MX-5s, MX-5 Supercup, Fun Cup, VW Cup, Civic Cup, CityCar Cup, Fiestas, Fiesta Juniors, Touring Car Trophy, TCR UK, ST-XR Challenge, ClubSport Trophy

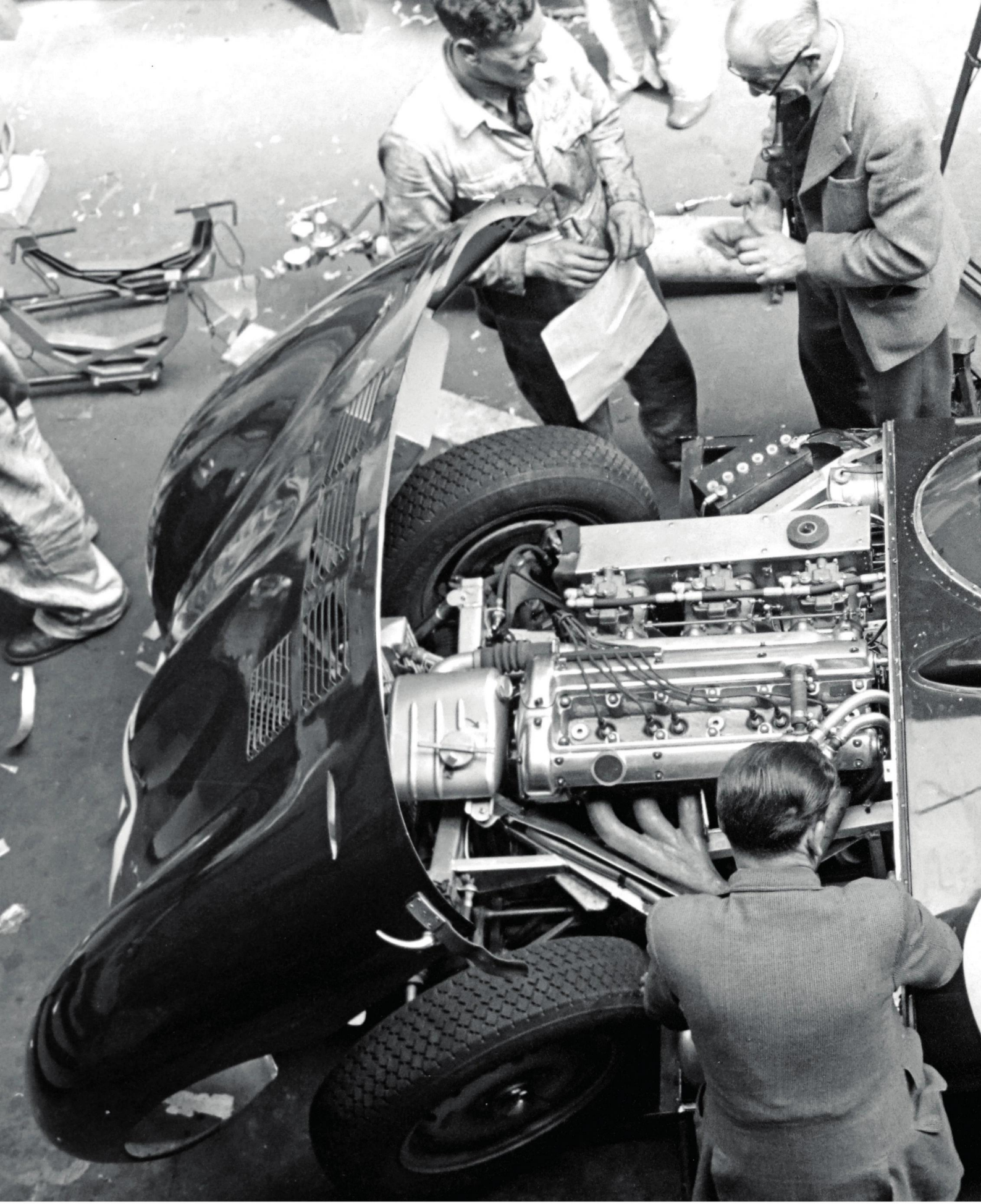
Donington Park MSVR
12-13 September
GT Cup, F3 Cup, Radical Challenge, 7 Race Series, MSVR All-Comers

Mondello Park LMC
12-13 September
Formula Vee, Formula BOSS, Strykers, ITCC, Fiestas, Historics, Future Classics, Legends, Ginettas

Snetterton 750MC
13 September
116 Trophy, Alfa Romeos, Formula Vee, Ma7das, MR2s, Sport Specials

Santa Pod Drag Racing
11-13 September
Dragsters, Funny Cars, Modifieds

*** Behind closed doors**



FROM THE ARCHIVE

The Jaguar D-type shared by Duncan Hamilton and Tony Rolt receives a painstaking prep ahead of the 1954 Le Mans 24 Hours. The French enduro was won by the Ferrari 375 Plus of Jose Froilan Gonzalez and Maurice Trintignant, chased to the end through torrential rain in an epic pursuit by the #14 Jaguar.

Autosport debates the greatest sports-racing car of all time in the second of our special series of podcasts to celebrate our 70th birthday. Go to bit.ly/Greatestsportscar

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Autosport marks the loss of a Formula 1 great

10 September 1970

'Rindt's death overshadows Ferrari Monza'. Fifty years ago today (10 September), Autosport reported the loss of Lotus star Jochen Rindt at the Italian Grand Prix.

Thanks to five victories, Rindt had arrived in Italy with a 20-point lead in the standings, at a time when a victory yielded nine. With just four rounds to go, he was the clear title favourite.

But during practice, he crashed under braking for Parabolica. The exact causes of the accident are still debated, but the Lotus 72 veered sharp left and hit the barriers, the nose going under the guard rail. Rindt disliked crutch straps and did not have them done up. The force of the impact forced him under the seat belts and he suffered fatal aorta and thorax injuries.

Autosport described the 28-year-old as the "fastest racing driver of his era". Editor Simon Taylor wrote: "Some will argue that Jochen's speed was not complemented by the professional maturity of Jackie Stewart – though this year Jochen had proved these critics wrong. Anyone who saw Rindt hurling the old Lotus 49 round Monaco in his pursuit of Jack Brabham, fairly flinging the car between the walls and kerbs, will be in no doubt that Rindt was currently the world's fastest driver."

Team Lotus withdrew from the race, which was won by the Ferrari of Clay Regazzoni in just his fifth world championship F1 start. Despite a late charge from Ferrari's Jacky Ickx, who would win two of the last four races, Rindt's total of 45 points could not be surpassed and he became F1's first – and so far only – posthumous champion.

David Tremayne's excellent* Jochen Rindt: Uncrowned King of Formula 1 *has just been republished in paperback form, RRP £14.99. Visit evropublishing.com



AUTOSPORT

Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG
Tel +44 (0) 20 3405 8100 **Email** autosport@autosport.com
Individual email firstname.surname@motorsport.com
Website www.autosport.com **Twitter** @autosport

SUBSCRIPTIONS
UK +44 (0) 344 848 8817 **Overseas** +44 (0) 1604 251451
Email help@asm.secureorder.co.uk **Back issues** 0344 8488817

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