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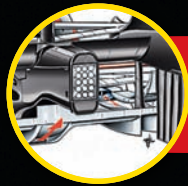
# AUTOSPORT

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**“Helio misjudged his braking point by about the length of a football field. It’s good for the fans but not me!”**

**MARCO ANDRETTI EXAGGERATES HIS RACE-ENDING ASSAULT BY HELIO CASTRONEVES AT ST PETERSBURG**

# 149

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## POLE POSITION

# DRS: rubbish jargon, but let's use it more anyway



IT'S UNLIKELY THAT anyone's going to be complaining that we had too much overtaking in the Australian Grand Prix. Pre-season fears that the DRS (what a terrible name) would create 'WWE racing' were overstated, to say the least.

Watching the drivers battle to control their cars as they pushed to open the wing at the earliest possible moment in practice and qualifying was thrilling.

It was therefore even more disappointing that they were restricted to using it purely in an FIA-mandated 'overtaking zone' in the race.

Given that it seems that Red Bull has a significant advantage over the rest, Formula 1 is going to need the fight for the other places to be as enthralling as possible. Opening up the option for the drivers to use the wing where they see fit once per lap (so long as they were within one second at the previous corner) would be a great way to do this.

We have a potentially very exciting development here, so why not exploit it to the maximum?

Andrew van de Burgt, editor

## BAMBER'S WEEK



JENKINS! THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO PROTEST ABOUT THE LACK OF OVERTAKING IN FORMULA ONE!



**BTCC**

## Tin-tops ready to get back into action

Britain's favourite four-wheeled racing series gets under way at Brands Hatch this weekend. The British Touring Car Championship boys were in action at the Silverstone Media Day last week, and our snapper got on board Tom Chilton's Ford Focus. Catch our full BTCC guide in this week's issue.

Picture: Gary Hawkins

**SNAPSHOT**  
PIT & PADDOCK



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# McLaren long way off top

Lewis Hamilton may have finished second in Australia, but deficit to Red Bull is huge. By EDD STRAW

**M**claren faces a battle to claw back its downforce deficit to Red Bull if Lewis Hamilton or Jenson Button are to have any hope of challenging for this season's world championship.

After struggling throughout pre-season testing, the team dropped its troublesome 'octopus' exhaust, which was understood to have multiple exits, for last weekend's season-opening Australian Grand Prix, catapulting Hamilton and Button towards the front of the field.

Hamilton qualified on the front row and finished second, while Button was sixth after a drive-through penalty.

But despite the improvements to the car, the McLaren MP4-26 was still three-quarters of a second away from the lap times of race winner Sebastian Vettel's Red Bull

— and that was with the RB7 not using its performance-boosting KERS (see panel, right).

The late changes due to the revised exhaust system mean that there is likely still performance to be unlocked from the McLaren, but it is doubtful that this will be enough to topple reigning world champions Vettel and Red Bull.

## STARTING POINT

McLaren team principal Martin Whitmarsh is confident that his team's performance in Melbourne gives it a firm foundation from which to attack Red Bull, emphasising that the car changes were a last-minute effort.

"For lead time, the things that we had to do would have put us beyond this race," said Whitmarsh. "So we had to devise ways to make the floor, the back of

the car and the exhausts.

"We have now got a basis from which to improve it from the next race. We seemed to be a bit lighter on the tyres than some of the cars around us, and that's something that may give us an advantage."

McLaren is expected to make the usual detail changes to its car for the upcoming races in Malaysia and China, with a bigger upgrade planned for Turkey.

## FLEXIBLE-BODYWORK CHALLENGE

One of Red Bull's major advantages over McLaren comes from its flexible bodywork — the RB7, like its predecessor, is clearly able to run with a front wing lower than the McLaren's, giving it a significant downforce advantage.

There are no suggestions that the Red Bull is illegal, and the car passes all of the most-stringent

load tests imposed upon it.

The Milton Keynes team has invested heavily in carbon-composite technology in recent years, and it is believed that the secret of its bodywork characteristics lies in the way its composites are structured.

McLaren will also be pouring resources into developing its own flexible-bodywork technology, but has a long battle to get back on a par with Red Bull. Such specialised designs must be developed in-house, meaning that there is no short-cut that will allow McLaren or others to close the gap.

Next week's Malaysian Grand Prix will probably give a clearer indication of the real deficit that McLaren faces, as the Sepang track is more representative of the majority of Formula 1 circuits than Albert Park.

**EXPERT VIEW**

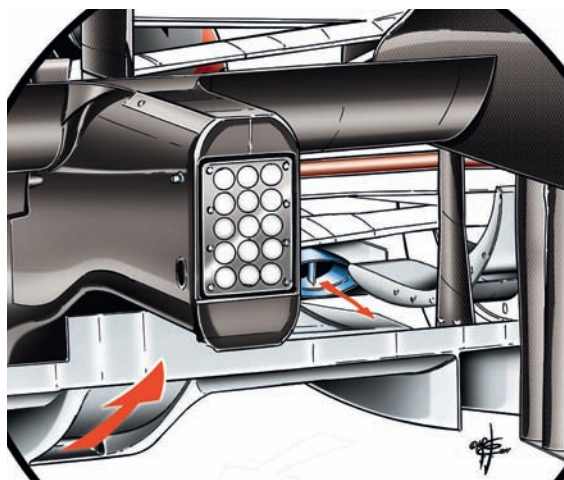
**GARY ANDERSON**  
TECHNICAL CONSULTANT



In an effort to overcome their testing problems, McLaren has more-or-less copied the Red Bull exhaust package.

The system McLaren had in pre-season was just too critical in both performance and operational complexity. With the revised system, having the exhaust pipe exit in this area helps the outer section of the diffuser work more efficiently. It also helps to control the airflow that has been displaced by the rear tyre as it rotates.

If this displaced airflow is allowed to be sucked under the diffuser, then it reduces its potential performance. Having the high-velocity exhaust flow in this area (in blue in the drawing below) reduces this negative effect.



Hamilton fought hard to second

**AUTOSPORT SAYS...**

**EDD STRAW**  
F1 EDITOR



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Putting on a new exhaust is all well and good for McLaren, especially when it then emerges as Red Bull's nearest challenger, but you have to question how the team got itself into such a mess pre-season in the first place. McLaren is peerless when it comes to turning around a bad car and deserves credit, but it has to shoulder the blame for getting into these holes in the first place.

Red Bull's success has unquestionably got under the skin of Martin Whitmarsh and his cohorts. It could be that desperation to beat the team, which is showing no signs of loosening its grip on pole position, sent McLaren down the blind alley of the octopus exhaust. The basic idea had merit, but it was known that the execution was horrendously difficult. Was it felt that throwing caution to the wind was the only way to catch the Milton Keynes upstarts?

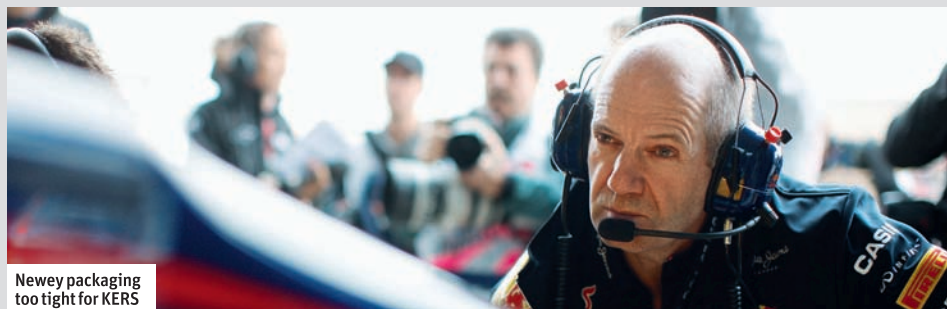
There are times when McLaren doesn't help itself. Anyone who saw Jenson Button take to the escape road for a short cut as he passed Felipe Massa knew that a penalty was inevitable, yet no-one took responsibility to tell him to drop back immediately. This rule has troubled McLaren before, and there's no excuse for not grasping how it is applied.

McLaren's pre-season plight was of its own making. If you signed up to Vodafone, the team's sponsor, and they spent six weeks struggling to make your phone work, how impressed would you be by them getting it up and running at the eleventh hour?

Hamilton: wonder what phone he has



**Red Bull KERS too tight for Melbourne**



Newey packaging too tight for KERS

**RED BULL'S KERS RELIABILITY** concerns have been caused by the packaging of its adapted Renault unit.

The team opted to disable its KERS for the Australian Grand Prix, which led to widespread rumours that it had developed a slimline system for use only at the start.

These suggestions proved wide of the mark, and Red Bull hopes to run its system in a fully-operational state at next

week's Malaysian Grand Prix after what team principal Christian Horner described as a "marginal" decision not to use it in Melbourne.

Although Red Bull has access to the same KERS used by Renault, the team has adapted the system to suit chief technical officer Adrian Newey's extreme packaging demands. As well as the extra weight of the system and accommodation of the control unit, battery pack

and motor-generator, KERS requires additional cooling. But Horner is confident that it will be a key part of the car's speed in future.

"In 2009, KERS did not earn its place on the car because of weight issues," said Horner. "Now that the weight limit has increased and the weight distribution is limited, it does. I'm confident that we have a good system and it should be reliable."

**Red Bull's warning shot**

Sebastian Vettel's advantage over Lewis Hamilton in qualifying for the Australian Grand Prix was 0.778s. Ominously, Red Bull's advantage over the best of the rest was only 0.229s at the same circuit last year, meaning the gap is up by...

**340%**

# Opinion divided over rules

The Australian Grand Prix did not produce the kind of racing that had been anticipated, with the Pirelli rubber not degrading anywhere near as quickly as it had during testing and the drag-reduction-system (DRS) wing producing few overtaking manoeuvres. Although most said that it was too early to judge

the effectiveness of the new rules package based on one race, Sunday allowed us to learn an enormous amount about both systems. It seems that what happened in Melbourne has not necessarily set the template for the 2011 season, not least because of the unusual circuit characteristics.

## PIRELLI TYRES

### THE EXPECTATION HEADING TO

Australia was for a cast-iron three-stop race. Yet from Friday practice it was clear that tyre degradation was nothing like as severe as it had been during winter testing.

Of the 15 cars that finished the race without unscheduled pitstops due to damage, only Felipe Massa, Fernando Alonso, Mark Webber and Jenson Button opted for three stops. Most made two, with Sergio Perez starting on the hard tyres and then completing the final 38 laps on his soft rubber for a surprise one-stopper. The Sauber was easiest on its tyres during testing and this, along with the decision to start on hards, made the one-stop possible.

Toro Rosso driver Sebastien Buemi told AUTOSPORT: "[The tyre wear] was quite impressive, but this is a very special circuit and there isn't so much load on the tyre. There isn't so much braking and acceleration and when we get to Malaysia we will get something more like Barcelona testing."

In addition to the reduced loads, the Albert Park track was starting to rubber in a little, unlike the tracks during pre-season testing, which further improved grip. Pirelli motorsport boss Paul Hembery believes that temperature played a major role.

"The difference to testing was hugely temperature-related," he said. "In testing the track could get up to 22C, but the ground underneath was very cold and damp, which acts as a cooling base. The tyres were fragile, which is why they were wearing quickly. In Melbourne, the track didn't get below 22C and that affects the way the tyre operates."

"There was a big jump in terms of track evolution [rubbering in] on Sunday because it didn't rain on Saturday night, so that was a new experience."

In Malaysia, track temperatures will be twice those in Melbourne. Pirelli admits a four-stop race is a possibility. Next weekend's race will tell us a lot more about how the tyres will work through the season.



## ADJUSTABLE REAR WING

Button made most passes with DRS



### THE DESIGNATED DRS OVERTAKING

zone was located on the main straight, setting up passes into Turn 1.

There were five significant moves made with the DRS activated during the race, the first being Fernando Alonso's pass on Nico Rosberg at the start of the fifth lap. Jenson Button used it to pass Sebastien Buemi (lap 23), Kamui Kobayashi (lap 25) and Felipe Massa (lap 49), with Massa also overtaking Buemi (lap 54).

Despite using it for two passes on significantly slower cars, Button showed the difficulty of making a move on a car of similar pace when he was battling with Massa. Several times he attacked on the start/finish straight, topping out at 305-307km/h, compared with Massa's 300km/h without the wing deployed. This was despite Button also using

KERS on several occasions.

So was it a success or a failure? By the terms of those that conceived it, it was a success – making the impossible overtake possible but far from easy. Whether that is what the fans want to see remains to be seen. Renault technical director James Allison believes that the DRS will be very much circuit specific and that Shanghai will give a clearer idea of its effectiveness under the current rules framework.

"There are tracks, and this is one of them, where it doesn't have a snowball's chance in hell of allowing an overtake and it was never promoted as doing so on tracks with short straights," he said. "All it will do here is allow you to sneak a little closer. You've got to get to tracks with longer straights – China will be plenty long enough to bring overtaking opportunities."

## Pirelli chooses di Grassi

**FORMER VIRGIN DRIVER LUCAS di Grassi** will take over as Pirelli test driver after Pedro de la Rosa completes his role in Turkey this weekend.

AUTOSPORT understands that the Brazilian, who is very highly-regarded for his developmental skills, has already had a seat fitting to drive the team's Toyota TF109 test hack

following de la Rosa's return to McLaren as a test driver.

Di Grassi will perform development mileage on the Pirelli 2012 tyres. An agreement with the teams and the FIA will allow Pirelli to supply two extra sets of tyres for use on GP weekends at their discretion. These will be separate from the 12-set driver allocation.





**KAMUI KOBAYASHI**

I tried the wing sometimes, but it is not too easy to overtake, especially at this track. I think in the future we need to be able to use it more.



**NIKI LAUDA**

I hate this wing business. Why does the FIA decide when somebody is going to pass? And it didn't work anyway.



**CHRISTIAN HORNER**

The tyres worked and added an extra element of strategy. The wing did not contribute too much but it's one of the shortest straights on the calendar so it's too early to judge.



**JAMES KEY**

The adjustable wing worked well in the race and wasn't particularly controversial. People could just about get past, which is exactly what the system was designed to do.



**MARTIN WHITMARSH**

Pirelli has really stepped into the game and I don't think anyone can be anything but full of praise for what they have done.



Button would eventually pass Massa using DRS

Schumacher takes to the grass in Melbourne



# No panic at Mercedes – yet

Team boss Brawn pledges that his team will look into problems rather than rush in more developments

**M**ercedes Grand Prix has declared that it will not repeat its mistake of last year in making immediate changes to an off-the-pace new car.

The team's MGP W02 qualified almost two seconds off pole for last weekend's season-opening Australian Grand Prix. Drivers Nico Rosberg and Michael Schumacher were disappointed with the handling of the car, especially in light of its performance in the final pre-season test at Barcelona.

Team principal Ross Brawn blamed KERS problems and aero instability for the car's lack of pace. He says that Mercedes must focus on understanding its car's problems before making sweeping changes.

"We learned a lesson last year – we didn't change much towards the end of the year and became a lot more competitive as we started to use what we had," said Brawn.

"We have the ingredients, but we've just got to use them together well. That's what we are going to



Rosberg found positives in Oz

focus on in the next few races. There will be upgrades coming for the Turkish Grand Prix and the Spanish [both in May], but we have got to get on top of what we already have."

## ROSBERG PRAISES TEAM PROGRESS

Rosberg qualified seventh in Melbourne and looked likely to score points before being taken out by Williams veteran Rubens Barrichello.

"Last year, when the team said it was going to put on a part that was worth six tenths, it would go on and

there would be problems," Rosberg told AUTOSPORT. "Then the problems would be solved, but it would only be worth four tenths.

"This year it goes on, there are no problems and it's worth six tenths. That's a big improvement and encouraging for the future. It's mainly about having the communication and efficiency in the factory to get the job done properly and it's a massive improvement."

## AERODYNAMIC STRUGGLES

Mercedes' aerodynamic problems in Australia started during Friday practice, when the rear wing provided inconsistent downforce.

This is most likely because, in order to give maximum speed when the drag-reduction system (DRS) was activated, the wing had to be run on the edge of stalling its downforce when in its normal state.

Mercedes produced the biggest straightline speed gain with the DRS active, worth around 12mph. It is thought that windy conditions

during Friday practice contributed to its problems, and the team was forced to add an extra groove to the wing as a short-term fix. A new rear wing will be introduced for next week's Malaysian Grand Prix.

"There was an extension groove added because we had some stability issues that we hadn't seen before," said Brawn. "We saw on Friday that we were getting [downforce] dropouts in the rear wing that we needed to fix. Hopefully, by Malaysia we will have a more elegant solution."

Brawn estimates that his team's real gap to pacesetter Red Bull is closer to one second. But even this pace would not be enough to challenge the top three teams.

"We thought that we were about seven or eight tenths off where we should be," said Brawn. "We are closer [than is apparent from lap times over the Australian GP weekend], but not close enough. From our analysis, we lost about three-quarters of a second on what we thought we could do."

# Virgin fights to qualify for races

## VIRGIN HAS TARGETED A BIG STEP

forward in competitiveness with a major aerodynamic upgrade that will be introduced for the Turkish Grand Prix on May 8.

There were doubts that the team would qualify for last weekend's Australian Grand Prix after drivers Timo Glock and Jerome d'Ambrosio failed to lap within the proscribed 107 per cent of the fastest car during free practice.

Although they both got within 107 per cent of Sebastian Vettel's fastest time in Q1, which is where the qualifying cut-off is made, they would not have qualified if the Red Bull star had set his Q3 time in the first segment of the session.

Virgin team principal John Booth told AUTOSPORT: "We need a leap now, not just a step. We qualified 2.6s off the midfield cars and have got to start closing that gap. But I am confident that we will qualify for the next two races [Malaysia and China]."

Technical director Nick Wirth missed the final two pre-season tests to work on the upgrade after the team realised how far off the pace the MVR-02 is. AUTOSPORT understands that the upgrade's target is to improve lap times by more than one second.

Lotus also struggled in Australia.

Jarno Trulli and Heikki Kovalainen struggled to get the Pirelli tyres into the correct temperature window, and reliability was also a weakness. New radiators are set to be brought in for the Malaysian GP because of a series of leaks attributed to the vibrations of the new-for-2011 Renault engine.



Virgin (and Lotus) at back

## Manufacturing error costs Sauber points

**A MANUFACTURING ERROR** is believed to be behind the illegal rear wings that caused Sauber's disqualification from seventh and eighth place in last weekend's Australian Grand Prix.

Sergio Perez and Kamui Kobayashi were thrown out of the race when the top flap of their rear wings was found to contravene the regulations, which stipulate a minimum radius of 100mm in the curvature of any part in the air stream. AUTOSPORT understands that the upper

surface of the wings was 3-4mm outside the limit.

Sauber technical chief James Key said: "We've checked all our wing designs, and they are legal. The working section of the wing is the underside, and whatever's on top is incidental. Even if the shape is incorrect it makes no difference. Maybe the tooling was wrong – we need to look into it."

The team lodged an intention to appeal on Sunday night, and had yet to decide whether to go through with it as AUTOSPORT closed for press.



Sauber upper-wing element was illegal



Liuzzi did a lot of standing round in Oz

## Liuzzi sure HRT can make race

### HRT DRIVER VITANTONIO LIUZZI

says that he is certain the team will qualify for next week's Malaysian Grand Prix, even though both its cars were outside the 107 per cent qualifying cut-off for last weekend's Australian opener.

Liuzzi and Narain Karthikeyan managed just seven laps between them before attempting to qualify the new F111, a car largely based on last year's F110. Liuzzi was 1.7 seconds away from qualifying in Melbourne, but believes that the team will take a major stride at Sepang.

"I'm sure that we will not face this situation in the future," the Italian told AUTOSPORT. "Qualifying in Malaysia is a question, because if you ask me which is the hardest track in the championship on which to perform, I would say there."

"But although it is the hardest track for us, I am confident we can compete with Virgin and perhaps even more."

## 60 SECONDS WITH

### PAUL DI RESTA

Force India



Paul di Resta became the fifth McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award winner to race in Formula 1 in Sunday's Australian Grand Prix. The Scot matched legendary compatriot Jackie Stewart by scoring a point on his grand prix debut...

**You made it to the finish of your first grand prix, just behind your more experienced teammate Adrian Sutil. Mission accomplished?**

I think it's quite good from the outside, but deep down there were a few areas where I have not done enough. I'm being very critical of myself this early because I want to be at the top of my game and I will continue to push to achieve that.

**Did your first experience of being a grand prix driver live up to your expectations?**

It did. It's a step up again and it's a different mentality. This race has given me a vast amount of experience, and it's a question of keeping it going.

**What do you learn from a grand prix race weekend that you don't from testing or racing in other categories?**

It's very busy. You see how much track improvement there is during the weekend and how much these guys have got experience when it comes to that. You need to be on the money every time, working away, dealing with the time the right way. I've got caught out by a few timing things this weekend – nothing that important, but if you want it all to flow it has got to be right. I will continue to take in everything I've learned and experienced and use that for the next race.

**Although the car is not where you and the team want it, given the testing performances are you reasonably happy with form in Australia?**

One hundred per cent yes. We have come here and understood the car, we've fixed some of the problems that we've got, and that was the key point. We were inconsistent in testing, but now we have a good foundation to build on that, and when the upgrades come we will know the relative performance of them and the gains that we're going to get.



Paul di Resta was talking to AUTOSPORT F1 editor **Edd Straw**



Di Resta leads Sutil during Australian GP

## TURN 8/9

● Tight chicane at the end of the back straight has been criticised, and is set for a revamp in a bid to improve overtaking chances

## TURN 11-14

● The biggest area set for changes is this four-corner section after the second of the track's long straights

## TURN 6/7

● Approach to the back straight, currently a chicane leading into a hairpin, will be changed



# Track changes for Abu Dhabi

Circuit bosses target three areas to improve the spectacle and safety in time for this year's penultimate F1 race

**T**he Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi will undergo changes designed to increase overtaking in time for its grand prix at the end of the season.

Track boss Richard Cregan revealed that plans are already in place after consultation with Formula 1 drivers and would be



Petrov found it easy to block Alonso

focused on three areas of the 3.45-mile circuit. He revealed that a desire to improve safety and the needs of MotoGP were additional motivations for the changes.

"We are always looking at ways of improving the facility and the show," Cregan told AUTOSPORT. "And you can never stop working on safety. There are plans in place and they will be carried through before the grand prix. This shows that we are serious about the business we are in."

Cregan explained that Abu Dhabi had launched a bid for a MotoGP race because "we think we have a great circuit for bikes".

"We thought that if we were modifying the circuit to make it

suitable for bikes, then we'd better ask ourselves what we could do to enhance the show for cars at the same time," he said.

Cregan, who said that the FIA had been "very supportive" of the plans, would not be drawn on the specifics of the changes ahead of an official announcement.

The F1 fraternity has criticised the Turn 8 and 9 chicane at the end of Yas Marina's 1100-metre back straight. McLaren and FOTA boss Martin Whitmarsh suggested that the straight should run into a "wide challenging corner, not a chicane that has got one line through it".

Vitaly Petrov, who derailed Fernando Alonso's championship

bid after halting his move up the leaderboard at last year's season finale in Abu Dhabi, said: "It is not a track for overtaking. Even if you have a car that is not as fast [as the one behind], you know that if you do not make mistakes, you'll stay ahead."

Drivers from Formula 1 and other categories have been consulted regarding the changes, according to Cregan.

"We thought that if we were modifying the circuit, it made sense to talk to the F1 drivers, as well as drivers from other series such as V8 Supercars. We have also been liaising closely with both the FIA and the FIM [the governing body of motorcycle racing]."

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# Yas Marina makes Bahrain offer

## ABU DHABI GRAND PRIX BOSSES

are open to moving their race into December in order to accommodate a rescheduled Bahrain event.

Richard Cregan, boss of the Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi, has revealed that the offer of a date switch with Bahrain has already been made. This would involve Bahrain taking the November 13 slot and Abu Dhabi becoming the season finale, after the Brazilian Grand Prix, on either the first or second weekend of December.

"We will do whatever we can to help Bahrain by facilitating a date change," Cregan told AUTOSPORT. "The FIA and FOM will ultimately decide and we will be very happy to follow what they say."

"The most important things are getting the logistics right and knowing the date as early as possible."

Extending the F1 season into December for the first time since 1963 (when the South African GP

took place on December 28) would be unpopular with the F1 teams. An alternative would be to move the Brazilian GP ahead of Abu Dhabi, and run the two Middle Eastern races back to back at the end of November.

The organisers of the Bahrain GP,

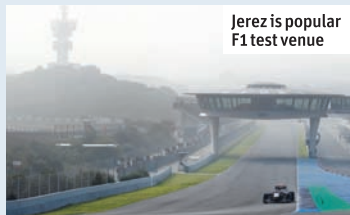
which was cancelled because of civil unrest in the country, have been given until May 1 to put forward their plans for running the race later in the year. This would be subject to the approval of the FIA, FOM boss Bernie Ecclestone and the teams.



Bahrain could happen this year

## Pressure on Jerez

Jerez is popular F1 test venue



**THE FUTURE OF THE JEREZ** circuit is under a cloud after track operators applied for court protection to prevent the facility from being seized by creditors.

The track, which last hosted a grand prix when it was the setting for the 1997 finale, has been mired in financial difficulties for several years. Circuit owner Cijjersa – a public company owned by the city of Jerez and the Andalusian regional government – is reportedly unable to honour

a debt of €18 million to two construction companies that carried out redevelopment at the track in 2005. Those companies have since filed a lawsuit to recover the money owed.

Hopes of turning Jerez into a leading test venue were undermined by increased test restrictions. The construction of the Algarve and Aragon circuits has also contributed to its problems, although it received a recent boost when its deal with MotoGP was extended to 2016.

# No rush to test new turbo engines

## RENAULT ENGINE BOSS ROB

White has claimed that the next-generation of Formula 1 engines will not need to be run in a car until late next year – just months before they are blooded in competition.

Renault is already working on its 1.6-litre four-cylinder turbo, but White believes that the concurrent change in chassis rules will mean that it is pointless to run the new powerplant in an updated 2012 car.

"There are many schools of thought," said White. "There's one that says you've got to get it in the car and go testing as soon as possible. There's another that says that a hybrid [updated] car is more trouble than it's worth and it burns energy.

"Running with something that is a distant relative of the car that will run six months later may not be good value. I'm more concerned about getting the power unit to a state on the test bed where it's ready to put in a car."

"I would guess now that, with the timing of the programme has

considering the scale of the change, testing in the summer or autumn of 2012 would be unrealistic. So I would not be lobbying for a change to testing rules. Projecting one step further, one session right at the end of 2012 may allow everybody to get their eye in."



Renault won't rush new motor

## THIS WEEK IN F1



**RED BULL** Mark Webber's poor performance during the Australian Grand Prix weekend has been put down to an unidentified car problem. "I was pushing as hard as I could but wasn't getting much back," said Webber.



**McLAREN** Team principal Martin Whitmarsh has blamed a lack of response from F1 race director Charlie Whiting for his team's decision not to order Jenson Button to let Felipe Massa back past in last weekend's Australian GP. He passed the Ferrari after using a short cut at Turn 12.



**FERRARI** Technical director Aldo Costa has blamed his cars' inability to heat up their tyres for the team's uncompetitive showing in Australia. "Felipe [Massa] is struggling more than Fernando [Alonso] and it is a problem that we saw in the past," he said.



**RENAULT** Nick Heidfeld's off-the-pace performance in the Australian GP was caused by heavy damage to the right side of his car. The majority of the sidepod bodywork was torn off after contact with another car on the first lap.



**WILLIAMS** Technical director Sam Michael has confirmed that the FW33 will feature a new exhaust design in April's Chinese Grand Prix. The modified configuration is expected to be similar to the version on the Red Bull RB7.



**FORCE INDIA** A series of aerodynamic tweaks solved the worst of the team's testing problems ahead of the Australian GP. The car's downforce had been inconsistent due to airflow separation.



**SAUBER** Technical director James Key has revealed that the team knew its car would be easy on its tyres before Sergio Perez went through the Australian GP with only one pitstop.



**TORO ROSSO** After a points-scoring debut, the STR6 will feature some minor upgrades in the next two races, with major upgrades for the Turkish GP in May and June's European GP.



**LOTUS** Heikki Kovalainen suffered an electronic problem that prevented him from using the adjustable rear wing during qualifying for the Australian Grand Prix.



**HRT** Hispania was forced to run during the Australian GP weekend with a 2010-specification nose. The planned new nosecone had yet to take an FIA crash test, but it is expected to be in use next week in Malaysia.



**VIRGIN** Team principal John Booth has not revised Virgin's targets for the season, despite the team being way off the pace in Australia. "We have got to start getting into Q2," he said. "We are some way off doing that at the moment, but that has to be our objective."



**PIRELLI** The colour markings used to designate Pirelli's tyre compounds are set to be evaluated by the Italian firm. The silver logo used on hard tyres could be changed to make it more visible.



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# MPH Mark Hughes

AUTOSPORT grand prix editor

Expectations were high in the season-opening Australian GP, thanks to new Pirellis, the return of KERS and the arrival of adjustable wings. The reality, however, fell short

**S**o what do we know now all the waiting is over, the months of speculation have been dismissed and we've finally got to see F1 2011 in reality?

There was a definite sense of 'Is that all?' post-race in Melbourne as the effects of new Pirellis, single diffusers, drag-reduction wings and the return of KERS combined to give a race not radically different to those of last year. In fact it was one of the least incident-filled Albert Park races of recent memory.

There were only three DRS-assisted passes on Sunday: Fernando Alonso on Nico Rosberg, Jenson Button on Felipe Massa and Massa on Sebastian Buemi. You might ordinarily expect to have

seen that many – or more – passes into turn one there even without the new overtaking generator.

Furthermore, the dominant car was not even using KERS – and the expected tyre drama as the Pirellis wore out just didn't happen; one guy even managed to make a one-stop strategy work! But let's just wait; many are expecting the picture in Malaysia to be very different, with its longer straight and a layout that puts a greater strain on the same two types of tyre.

It's very clear that, on a single-lap basis at least, the new tyres do not lack grip. Sebastian Vettel's 1m 23.529s pole – set without KERS – was 0.4s faster than he took the double diffuser RB6 round for pole last year. The new DRS wing is generically reckoned to be worth 0.8s, so that leaves the combination of the single-diffuser format and Pirelli tyre only 0.4s slower than double diffuser/Bridgestone. Similarly, McLaren qualified 0.4s quicker than it did last year. Teams are reporting that they have not yet clawed back all the downforce lost to the double diffuser and the inference must therefore be that the Pirelli is probably grippier than the Bridgestone.

But it generates its grip in a very different way. There's very little chemical bonding with the track and it seems instead to simply claw itself to the surface with mechanical grip that simply shreds the tread away. The track doesn't get significantly faster over the course of the weekend and there is little variation in grip between the left- and right-hand side grid slots. The reduction in grip as the tyre wears in

this way is pretty much linear – until you get down to the thin rubber-binding layer over the carcass, at which point the lap time increases dramatically. The lower cornering loads of Albert Park compared with Barcelona were giving the tyres a much easier time, with approximately a quarter of the degradation seen there.

The effectiveness of the DRS varied from car to car. Williams and McLaren, with their big rear wing flaps, were experiencing a greater change from DRS than the smaller-flapped Red Bull, for example. That said, the Mercedes seemed to be gaining the most – and that has a Red Bull-like small wing flap.

But perhaps the biggest intrigue of the weekend was the mythical 'mini KERS' on the Red Bull. The non-deployment of the RB7's KERS during qualifying led to speculation that Adrian Newey had overseen a demon system with a tiny battery capacity that could be packaged much more tightly than a conventional system and had enough storage capacity only to give you a boost at the startline – where it is most needed – but nowhere else. On the rest of the lap you'd be untroubled by the downsides of varying brake bias and it would give those delicate rear tyres an easier time, not to mention the greater aero performance you'd get from that tighter packaging.

It sounded entirely logical – but was totally false! The Red Bulls' KERS had simply been disconnected because of a possible reliability issue. "Trouble is," said Christian Horner, "Adrian now thinks it's a good idea!" Watch this space... ❧

PICTURE: TEE/LAT



This was the moment F1 2011 came alive

“There was a sense of ‘Is that all?’ after the race in Melbourne”

IN BRIEF



**HAMILTON BACK WITH D&R**

IndyCar veteran Davey Hamilton has sealed a drive at the Indy 500 with Dreyer & Reinbold Racing, and will also race on the Texas and Las Vegas ovals. Hamilton last raced with the team in 2009 (above).

**WICKENS ON TOP**

Canadian Robert Wickens led the field on both days of Formula Renault 3.5 testing at Paul Ricard last week. The Carlin driver's best lap was 0.230s quicker than Brendon Hartley (Gravity-Charouz), with Albert Costa (Epsilon Euskadi) third.

**ADDAX SIGNS CHAVES**

Spanish team Addax has made its first GP3 signing of the year in the form of 2009 Formula BMW Americas champion Gabby Chaves a race seat. The Colombian tested for the squad at Jerez last December.

**BRUNDLE TOPS F2 TEST**

Formula 2 returnee Alex Brundle topped official testing at Silverstone last week with a lap 0.293s quicker than GP3 convert Miki Monras. Mihai Marinescu, Ramon Pineiro and Mirko Bortolotti were next up.

**SPENGLER STICKS WITH MERC**

Bruno Spengler will remain with Mercedes for a seventh DTM season in 2011. The manufacturer would not confirm which team or what age of car he will drive.

**AUDIS RUN AT SEBRING**

Two Audi R18 TDI Le Mans contenders completed three days of testing at Sebring last week. The cars ran in 'Evolution 2' spec, resulting from "the findings from previous tests and wind-tunnel testing".

**KLIEN JOINS ASTON FOLD**

Ex-Peugeot driver Christian Klien (below) has joined Aston Martin for the Le Mans 24 Hours. Klien, a veteran of 49 grands prix, will share the lead AMR-One with Darren Turner and Stefan Mücke at Le Mans, Spa in May and other events.



**INDYCAR**  
**Kimi tempted by Vegas prize**

Former F1 world champion open to single-seater return at IndyCar's \$5m bounty in Las Vegas.  
By DAVID EVANS

Raikkonen has not ruled out Vegas

**E**x-Formula 1 world champion Kimi Raikkonen has admitted he could be up for fighting for the \$5 million prize money on offer for the final round of this year's IndyCar Series in Las Vegas.

The Finn is now competing in the World Rally Championship, but says he still has ambitions in racing, including winning Le Mans and potentially bagging the cash on offer if a guest driver can win this year's IndyCar finale – but only if he can get a ride with a top team.

Raikkonen, who left Ferrari at the end of 2009, said: "I have read about this idea for the final round of Indy and, for sure, people will be interested because they're offering a lot of money."

Asked about his own interest in competing on the Las Vegas Motor Speedway oval, he said: "I'm not sure how. Are you going to get a good car? They always say you will get the best car! I don't know. It's completely different."

IndyCar CEO Randy Bernard expects the top teams in the series to provide the extra cars for the five guest drivers invited to the race. But legendary team boss Roger Penske is

**"For sure, people will be interested because they are offering a lot of money"**

**KIMI RAIKKONEN**



Penske isn't keen to run any ringers

not keen on adding one more Dallara to his three-car squad.

"I'd much rather win the championship than the \$5 million," said Penske. "I think there's other things we could do along the way to create more buzz. There might be some people that want to do it, and if they do, that's fine."

Bernard added: "It would be a big disappointment if [Penske] didn't do it. But he's a winner. If he could win \$5 million, I'm sure he'll take every

opportunity to do that."

While Raikkonen is undecided on an IndyCar debut, he said that he is definitely interested in winning the Le Mans 24 Hours. Both Raikkonen and seven-time World Rally champion Sebastien Loeb had been tipped earlier this year to take two slots in one of the factory Peugeot 908s for this year's French classic.

"I won't do it [Le Mans] this year," said Raikkonen. "But I want to do it one day. I want to do it in a good car, not in a year-old car. If you go there you want to give yourself the best chance of winning."

Raikkonen's pace in this year's World Rally Championship has improved with the arrival of the Citroen DS3 WRC, but his hopes of finishing well in last week's Rally of Portugal were spoiled by a puncture.

Raikkonen is not the only WRC driver weighing up the Vegas IndyCar race, as Citroen team-mate Petter Solberg is also keen on making his Stateside race debut (see AUTOSPORT, March 10).

**→ P54 INDYCAR ST PETERSBURG**

**AUTOSPORT SAYS...**

**GARY WATKINS**  
INTERNATIONAL  
EDITOR-AT-LARGE

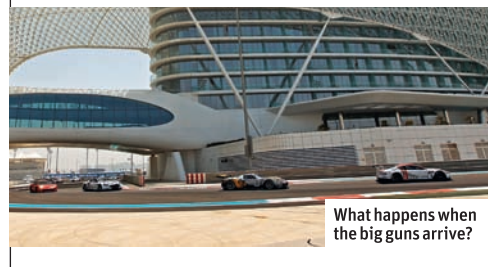


**D**oes it matter if the 2012 FIA GT1 World Championship is fought out by a disparate bunch of cars from a variety of classes (p20), all balanced by a man from the FIA armed with a blue shirt and a slide rule? Probably not. Will that matter in 2013 or '14 if, say, Audi, Mercedes and others are competing with thinly-veiled factory teams? That's another question.

The idea of performance balancing has, for good or for worse, taken root in our sport. The legacy of the Maserati MC12, now finally a museum piece, is not just a cabinet full of silverware. It proved that GT cars of different technologies could be balanced.

There appears to be an *entente cordiale* over the Balance of Performance in GT1 right now. No one is complaining too loudly for the good of a series still suffering growing pains.

But if the championship becomes the global marketing platform that series boss Stephane Ratel envisages, then the manufacturers are going to be queueing up to join in, ban on factory teams or not. That's when the shouting will get louder, especially if the series has moved towards an allcomers formula. Preventing the bickering that has torn the World Touring Car Championship apart will then be Ratel's task.



What happens when the big guns arrive?

**REMEMBER WHEN ...**



**MARCH 12 2001**  
...Kevin Harvick first won a NASCAR Cup race? Last weekend's win at Fontana came almost a decade to the day after Harvick's first. Promoted from the Busch Series after the death of Dale Earnhardt, he took his maiden win at Atlanta in just his third Cup start.



INDYCAR

**FALSE START**

Four-time Champ Car title winner Sebastien Bourdais's return to US single-seaters was short-lived at last weekend's St Petersburg IndyCar round. A warm-up crash followed by a lack of spares sidelined his Dale Coyne Racing car from the race

INDYCAR

**Blue Oval Indy hopes fading**

**INDYCAR CEO RANDY BERNARD** has ruled out Ford as a likely addition to the series' line-up of engine suppliers for 2013.



They'll stick to NASCAR

Honda, Lotus and Chevrolet are already committed to providing IndyCar engines from the start of the 2013 season.

While Bernard said that he did not expect Ford – which was sole engine supplier to former IndyCar rival Champ Car between 2003 and '08 – to join them, he remains optimistic that a European manufacturer could step in.

"I don't think Ford will come in, honestly," Bernard said. "But I think

there are other European manufacturers that are interested."

Meanwhile, Lotus has switched from its original plan of entering the series in a technical partnership with former Ford engine builder Cosworth, with speculation suggesting that it will have a tie-in with British specialist Judd instead.

Series bosses are optimistic that Cosworth will press on with its IndyCar programme with another manufacturer.

INDYCAR

**Wheldon bullish ahead of Indy**

**BRITISH INDYCAR STAR**

Dan Wheldon believes that his preparations for the Indianapolis 500 with Bryan Herta Autosport will not be compromised by his missing the opening four races of the season.

The Brit, who won the IndyCar title and the Indy 500 in 2005, announced a one-off deal with Herta's team last week. Although he is without a regular drive, Wheldon, 32, said that the fact that Indy is the first oval race of the season will make it possible for him to be competitive.

"I don't think we will be at a disadvantage having not raced in the first four races of the season because they are not on ovals; they are running on road and street courses," Wheldon said.

"At this point, I won't be a full-time IndyCar participant this season. But going into the month of May, I think we stand in a very



Wheldon ruled at Indy in 2005

good position. We will have plenty of preparation time at the speedway. I can't wait.

"Bryan has been a friend – and a team-mate – for a long time now and because of that I have the utmost confidence in him and his team to provide me with the tools to win my

second Indy 500."

Wheldon's deal is currently only for Indy, but it is understood that the team is working on adding more races.

Further details of the programme, including the sponsors, are expected to be announced next month.




**JUAN PABLO MONTOYA**  
**IN NASCAR CUP**  
**Starts: 150**  
**Wins: 2**  
**Top 5: 19**  
**Poles: 6**  
**Average finish: 19.6**  
**Highest points finish: 8th**  
**Prize money: \$23,530,998**

## 150 NOT OUT

Juan Pablo Montoya celebrated his 150th NASCAR Sprint Cup start by taking pole position for the Auto Club 400 at Fontana last weekend. The Colombian Chip Ganassi driver went on to finish the race in 10th place.

WORLD GT1

# GT1 series to adopt classes

World GT1 boss Stephane Ratel considers opening up series to modified GTE and GT3 cars to boost grids

**F**IA GT1 World Championship boss Stephane Ratel has floated a plan to welcome more cars into the sportscar series.

Ratel has suggested that modified GTE and GT3 machinery should be allowed to compete in the world championship from next year as he bids to reach his target of 10 manufacturers or 'brands'. He has made the proposal at a time when

he knows that two of his five models, the so-called grandfathered Chevrolet Corvette C6.R and the Aston Martin DBR9, will disappear from the grid at the end of this season.

"There are so many GT cars out there – we need to find a way to get them all on the grid," he said.

"Between GT1, GT2 [now known as GTE] and GT3 there are 15

models and manufacturers present in GT racing. It is time for compromise."

The Balance of Performance regulations devised to equalise the performance of the cars competing in the world series could allow the plan to come to fruition, according to Ratel.

"As long as the performance is the same, it doesn't matter where the cars come from," he said. "We could bring a GT3 car down to 1200kg [the base weight in GT1], add an air-restrictor and have GT1 aerodynamics."

The concept of allowing GTE cars to move up to GT1 with the addition of a kit of parts has already been accepted. It was part of the discussions when the existing regulations were being formulated in 2007-08.

Ratel would not be drawn on whether he believes GT stalwarts Ferrari and Porsche would support customers wanting to race their cars

in the world championship. His response to that question was: "Is Lamborghini supporting the championship? Is Ford supporting the championship? No."

Aston Martin Racing team principal George Howard-Chappell, who led the original drive for GT2 regulations to be adopted for the championship, said: "It would suit us if we could use our GTE product [the Vantage GT2]."

Ratel, who stressed that it is the FIA in charge of technical regulations, would need the unanimous support of the manufacturers already competing in the championship for his plan to work. FIA stability rules meant that new regulations announced this year could not come into force until 2013 without that support.

Some technical figures in the FIA are understood to favour Ratel's plan on the grounds of pragmatism. One source said the world championship could not "live on dreams".

GT1 cars may be joined by GTE and GT3 racers



**NASCAR**

# Hamlin admits to fears over engines

## NASCAR SPRINT CUP CHASE HOPEFUL

Denny Hamlin has admitted to concerns about the ongoing problems with Joe Gibbs Racing's engines following the latest of a string of failures this season.

Hamlin, who lost last year's title to Jimmie Johnson at the final race, was unable to capitalise on a front-row start at Fontana last weekend when an engine problem forced him to retire.

His was the sixth JGR engine failure this season, and Hamlin said that he was becoming increasingly worried about the situation.

"At this point, now it's starting to affect me so I'm worried a little bit more," Hamlin said. "Still, it's frustrating because you want to do the best you can each week. But it doesn't matter in the end if you can't finish."

Hamlin said that his concern was amplified by the fact that the root of the problems with the Toyota powerplants



Hamlin's Toyota has been plagued by engine problems

have thus far proved untraceable.

"Each one seems to be isolated and different," Hamlin said. "I can't really pinpoint whether it's one problem. If we knew exactly what it was, hopefully we'd get it fixed. Right now, we've got to go to work and do some inspecting on this

thing and see what we can do to finally finish the races.

"It's of the same nature, but not the same problem every single time and that's what's so questionable about it. What the heck is going on? We have our work cut out for us at this point."

## IN BRIEF



### NEATE CONFIRMED AT ARENA

Andy Neate (above) was confirmed as Arena Motorsport's second driver for the BTCC season last week. Team principal Mike Earle said that although three new-spec Ford Focuses have been entered for the series, only two will be present at Brands Hatch this weekend.

### ONE AUSTIN AUDI FOR BRANDS

Rob Austin Racing will field only one Audi A4 for David Pinkney at this weekend's BTCC opener at Brands Hatch, after taking over the build process of the NGTC machines from GPR Motorsport last week. Austin intends to run two cars from the second round at Donington onwards.

### WOOD OUT UNTIL OULTON

Lea Wood will miss the opening three rounds of the BTCC while his Team Wood Racing Honda Integra-R is prepared for action. He plans to appear from the Oulton Park round in June onwards.

### NEW GIG FOR BEAUCHAMP

Chris James' BTCC squad Team ES Racing has appointed Rhea Beauchamp as team manager. Beauchamp performed the role for Forster Motorsport last year alongside her role as championship co-ordinator of the Mini Challenge.

### AMR TESTING CONTINUES

Aston Martin continued testing the first AMR-One at Dijon on Tuesday as it headed to Paul Ricard for the car's debut this weekend in the opening round of the Le Mans Series. The car was also tested at Pembrey last week by Andy Meyrick.

### ICKX COMES UP SHORT

Fabien Giroix was called up to drive one of the Belgian Racing Ford GTs (below) with Antoine Leclerc at the Abu Dhabi FIA GT1 opener last weekend. The team could not accommodate original driver Vanina Ickx who, at 5ft11in, was too short to pair with 6ft3in Leclerc in the Ford's cockpit.



**BTCC**

# Gow: no tweaks yet

## BRITISH TOURING CAR BOSS ALAN

Gow has vowed not to change the regulations ahead of the season opener at Brands Hatch this weekend, despite the turbo-engined runners dominating the pre-season test at Silverstone's National circuit last week.

The TOCA turbo-engined Vauxhall Vectras of Andrew Jordan (Eurotech) and James Nash (Triple 8) topped the times, with Matt Neal's Neil Brown-prepared turbo Honda Civic third. Reigning champion Jason Plato's RML-run Chevrolet Cruze was the top S2000 runner, nearly 0.4 seconds behind Jordan in fourth.

The best turbos were also around 4-5mph quicker than the S2000 machines through the Club Straight speed trap. The four Chevrolet Cruzes were in the bottom five.

Eurotech boss Mike Jordan, who ran the TOCA unit last year, admits the

engine has made progress, but believes others have not shown their true pace.

"We've moved forward, but I'm sure there was a lot of nonsense going on at the test," he said. "You can't tell me the four Chevys are in the bottom five - I think there is some politicking going on."

"I think this year's a difficult one because there's so much variation. Looking at it objectively, the S2000 cars with the turbo engine are what you'd want, but while the Chevy may lack a little straightline speed, it'll be very good at looking after its tyres. The turbo cars won't be."

Gow confirmed he wanted to see some races before modifying the rules. "We have always stated that there should be performance parity between the two types of engine," he said.

**INSIDE BTCC PREVIEW**



Jordan's turbo Vectra was quick

**NASCAR**

Bayne may miss Charlotte All-Star



# Roush All-star hope for Bayne

## LEADING NASCAR SPRINT CUP TEAM

Roush Fenway Racing hopes Daytona 500 winner Trevor Bayne will race in May's All-Star event at Charlotte, but the team has ruled out fielding an extra car for its protege.

Roush Fenway runs Bayne full-time in the second tier Nationwide Series. Team president Steve Newmark said he would like to see the 20-year-old compete in the non-championship race, but it will only happen if Wood Brothers, which runs him in Sprint Cup, can find backing.

"[The All-Star race] is not anything we've had discussions about," Newmark said. "We're focused on having Trevor run in Nationwide and trying to win the championship. We're hopeful that the Wood Brothers will figure out a way to get Trevor in the All-Star race, but we haven't had any discussions about putting him in any of our vehicles."

# THIS WEEK...

## Flashback

July 20, 2002

### THE LAST TIME A TEAM'S CARS FAILED TO QUALIFY FOR A GP

Prior to HRT's early exit last weekend, the last time a team failed to qualify both of its cars for a race was the 2002 French GP. On that occasion the cash-strapped Arrows team ordered Heinz-Harald Frentzen and Enrique Bernoldi to complete just one lap each to fulfill the Concorde Agreement's requirements that it 'participate' in the event.



## ...NEXT WEEK



### MALYSIAN GP PREVIEW

Will the new rules shake things up at Sepang? Our experts, including David Coulthard, predict the form

### VETTEL IN THE SPOTLIGHT

The world champion is a mega-talent and not an F1 villain



## PLUS

British Touring Car Championship explodes into life at Brands Hatch; Paul Ricard Le Mans Series opener

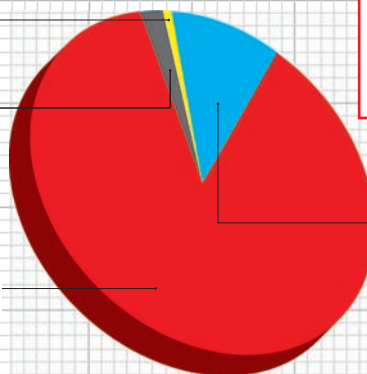
**ON SALE  
APR 7**

## Weekly poll: top rookies

PASTOR MALDONADO  
1%

JEROME D'AMBROSIO  
2%

SERGIO PEREZ  
87%

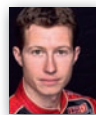


We asked AUTOSPORT forum users who they thought was the best rookie in the Australian GP

## top tweets



**@jimmiejohnson**  
I love banter with the F1 lovers. I'm a fan and I'm entitled to a opinion. Again, I'm glad we don't have movable wings and push to pass.



**@RyanBriscoe6**  
Wow, watching replays of the first corner accident yesterday... Don't know what the guys behind me were thinking! Really frustrating.



**@jpmontoya**  
nice to be spending the morning with the family, going to the warehouse to start the turbine on my mig 29!!!!



**@thomasscheckter**  
Cheesecake factory.



**@PippaMann**  
Pretty glad I only saw the cockroaches upon leaving the hotel rather than upon arriving.



**@SpeedyDanClarke**  
Post gym and groceries and the eggs just fell out the car. Time to use up the cracked ones for a protein shot. Rocky style...!

## LAST FIVE

Brits scoring on F1 debut

- DI RESTA (2011)**  
Promoted to 10th in Melbourne after both Saubers were disqualified.
- HAMILTON (2007)**  
Took a podium first time out for McLaren in Australian GP.
- IRVINE (1993)**  
The Irishman made his debut with Jordan in Japan and finished sixth.
- HERBERT (1989)**  
Essex-born driver was fourth across the line in Brazil at the wheel of his Benetton.
- BRUNDLE (1984)**  
Claimed a fifth on his debut in Brazil (below), but later lost the points when the Tyrrell team was disqualified from the season for fuel irregularities.





## Caring for over 40 years of motor racing history

Duncan Hamilton & Co.Ltd has recently assembled a unique collection of Gulf Team racing cars for a special client, 14 in total. Has there ever been a more iconic brand in racing? From the distinctive blue and orange livery, to the 1960s Le Mans winning Ford GT40s right up to the current Aston Martin Le Mans entry.

The priceless cars are meticulously restored and then raced at specialist events around the world. Adrian, son of the founder Duncan, said: "We use only the very best to protect and keep this collection in

show condition. That's why we use Autoglym car care products, exclusively."

Autoglym is British made and has provided its innovative products to the trade and discerning motorists for over 40 years.

Like Duncan Hamilton's stunning Gulf Team racing cars, your vehicle can have a shine with a winning pedigree. Autoglym offers expert advice on the use of their complete range, to find out more visit the website at [www.autoglym.com](http://www.autoglym.com)



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AUTOGLYM, LETCHWORTH, ENGLAND



BY APPOINTMENT TO  
H.R.H. THE PRINCE OF WALES  
SUPPLIER OF CAR CARE PRODUCTS  
AUTOGLYM, LETCHWORTH, ENGLAND



WRC

## PRODRIVE OK WITH MINI

### PRODRIVE TECHNICAL DIRECTOR DAVID

Lapworth says he is happy with the pace shown by the Mini Countryman S2000 on its Rally of Portugal debut last week.

While the two Minis failed to finish, Lapworth said the team was encouraged by the speed shown on the Algarve.

Armando Araujo's Mini was running seventh when he switched it off with an oil-related problem late on Saturday, while Daniel Oliveira suffered suspension damage on the final stage.

Lapworth said: "We're very happy with how Portugal went. There's no doubt it has helped us, but the gap between an S2000 car and a World Rally Car is too big to give us a precise judgment on where we are."

The World Rally Car Mini will appear in the hands of Kris Meeke and Dani Sordo for the first time on Rally d'Italia in May.



WRC

# Fears mount over Jordan safety

Political unrest and violence in neighbouring Syria may result in Jordan's third WRC qualifier being cancelled

**N**ext month's Jordan Rally hangs in the balance following violent demonstrations in the Middle East, with Citroen lobbying for the event to be cancelled.

While Jordan remains largely untroubled by the anti-authority clashes, neighbouring Syria has had travel restrictions put in place by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and there have been numerous deaths in the country. The trucks carrying the teams' spares (the rally cars are flown directly to Jordan) for the Dead Sea-based event will set off from Portugal via Syria on Friday.

Officials in the WRC are still considering an alternative route into Jordan, but this involves travelling through the Suez Canal which is more expensive and would only get the recce cars to the event the day before it started.

Seven-time champion Sebastien Loeb admitted he wasn't relishing the prospect of travelling to the Middle East.

"I haven't followed exactly what has happened, but it looks complicated and it's a difficult

decision," said the Frenchman. "We are not there to take some risks and maybe it's not the best time to go and drive our cars when there is this political unrest going on."

Ford driver Mikko Hirvonen shared Loeb's concerns adding: "My worry is that we go there, then things get worse and maybe the civil air traffic is stopped and we can't get out."

After departing Faro on Friday (tomorrow), the trucks drive to Venice where they are booked on a boat bound for Syria on Wednesday April 6. The boat is due to dock in Tartous on Saturday April 9. The rally begins on Thursday April 14.

Arriving in Syria, the truck drivers are then faced with a 250-mile journey through the country, travelling on a motorway that runs just six miles away from Deraa, the city where there are reports of 20 people having been killed in disturbances.

A WRC insider said: "The journey from Syria to Jordan can be done inside a day and, once over the border, it's not far up to the Dead Sea. The road past Deraa is

straightforward. You could drive past the city – and Damascus – without knowing they were there. It's a difficult decision to make, especially when things are changing so much."

The FIA had considered making an early decision, but is now waiting. In a statement the governing body said: "We're closely monitoring the situation but, as it

stands, we are looking to be in Jordan next month."

The organisers of the rally said they were doing all they could to ensure safety on the event.

"The safety and security of our visitors is of paramount importance to us and we, as organisers, are confident of hosting a very safe and enjoyable event," said clerk of the course Randa Nabulsi.

Jordan's third WRC qualifier is in doubt



WRC/IRC

# Monte Carlo WRC return mooted for '12



IRC cars could compete against WRCs in Monte

**THE MONTE CARLO Rally could be on the verge of a return to the World Rally Championship as early as next year – running alongside the Intercontinental**

**Rally Challenge round. The rally departed the WRC in 2008, citing a lack of freedom in the regulations as its reason for an alliance with IRC. A source at the Automobile Club de**

Monaco confirmed a meeting with WRC Commission president Jarmo Mahonen took place earlier this month and there's hope on both sides for a resolution that will allow the WRC back to the French Alps next January.

Ford driver and former Monte winner Mikko Hirvonen said: "For me, the WRC should always start with Monte and finish in Britain. I have a love-hate relationship with Monte. I love it when I'm not there, but it can be a real pain when you get there and the conditions are always changing."

There's increased potential for Britain to remain on the WRC calendar beyond this season, after Mahonen talked of a "new concept" to maintain Rally GB's presence. "It's a pity Rally GB isn't on the level we would like, but we have given them a chance to deliver what they can and asked them to come with a little bit of a different concept," Mahonen said. "I am confident they will be on the calendar. I hope they can get the deal right. The UK is absolutely needed – it's one of the key markets."

## AUTOSPORT SAYS...

**DAVID EVANS  
RALLIES EDITOR**

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**T**he question of whether or not we should be flying into Amman for round four of the WRC in a fortnight's time dominated round three in Portugal last week.

Poring over various news websites for the latest, I happened upon the following eyewitness account.

"I've never seen such a fast escalation of violence in my life. Everything just kicked off. I can't believe it."

This person was in the centre of what had been a peaceful anti-government protest, right in the heart of... Trafalgar Square.

I don't mean to be flippant, but we need to maintain perspective here: one person has died in Amman after clashing with the police during a demonstration in another capital city. OK, I wouldn't relish driving a truck through Syria next week, but there's an alternative route through the Suez Canal.

Maybe I'm being cynical here – it wouldn't be the first time – but you can't help but notice that car sales in that neck of the woods aren't huge and Jordan's not the best-attended round of the year. But this is a world championship. I just hope nobody would consider using the political unrest as a convenient way to avoid this event for the wrong reasons. The Jordan Rally came in back in 2008 and delivered a great Middle-Eastern option for the WRC when we needed it. Let's not turn our backs on them at the first sign of trouble.

Is the unrest an easy way out for the WRC?



## IN BRIEF



### SOLBERG CHANGES COLOUR

Henning Solberg's Ford Fiesta RS WRC ran in a new colour scheme on last week's Rally of Portugal. He is still in negotiation with long-time backer Expert – whose orange decals he has competed with since 2006 – and revealed the new livery (above) with funding from Norwegian mobile network Ludo.

### MIKKELSEN HEADS TO ITALY

Andreas Mikkelsen will contest the Italian Rally Championship as well as the IRC in 2011. The Norwegian's Skoda Fabia will be prepared by Skoda Rallysport Italia, the same firm which runs his Skoda UK Motorsport car.

### ROY SET FOR MINI ROLE

Colin McRae's former business partner Campbell Roy is being lined up as team manager of the Mini World Rally Team. The Scot has links to Mini driver Kris Meeke, having helped manage the Irishman when he was a McRae protege.

### HARD MICHELIN FOR JORDAN

As predicted in AUTOSPORT (March 10) Michelin will deliver a new construction of tyre for the next round of the WRC in Jordan. The

French firm endured more problems in Portugal – with Petter Solberg ruled out of contention after four punctures on the opening day.

### DMACK SWITCHES COMPOUND

WRC tyre supplier DMACK was forced to switch its compound of tyre after the opening day of last week's Rally of Portugal due to problems with the tread blocks falling off. Three PWRC runners were using the hard compound, but switched to the medium after dispensation from the FIA.

### KAUR IS TOP FIESTA MAN

Egon Kaur won the opening WRC Academy round in Portugal last week. The Estonian was the fastest of the 18 Ford Fiesta R2 cars that started the event.

### DATE CHANGE FOR SCOTLAND

This year's Rally of Scotland will run one week earlier than planned, taking place on October 7-9. The event will kick off with a Friday-night forest stage and finish with the winning driver being 'crowned' at Scone Palace on Sunday afternoon.

### WRC CREWS RESPECT JAPAN

Competitors on last week's Rally of Portugal gathered for a picture to remember the victims of the tsunami in Japan – many of the cars then ran with 'Remember Japan' or 'Pray for Japan' stickers on their cars.

WRC

# Citroen boss tells drivers: watch Ford



Citroen crews must focus on Ford, not each other

### CITROEN TEAM PRINCIPAL

Olivier Quesnel has urged his drivers to focus on the fight with Ford rather than their own rivalry.

Quesnel was delighted with Citroen's first one-two of 2011 in Portugal last weekend, but said the talk of the battle between Sebastien Loeb and Ogier on Rally Mexico earlier this month had distracted them from their objective of securing a fourth straight makes' crown.

"Everybody is talking about what is happening with boss Sebastien [Loeb] and Ogier," said Quesnel. "And look what happens in Mexico – Ford ends up with two places on the podium. It's not fair to forget those guys, that's dangerous."

Loeb admitted his decision to settle for second in Portugal last week was partly motivated by the desire to secure manufacturer points.

"In Mexico, we lost points for Citroen," said Loeb, referring to Ogier's final-day accident. "And now we had a one-two. It's easy when you don't make mistakes."

## BRC PREVIEW

**Event:** Bulldog International Rally  
**North Wales**  
**Round:** 2/7  
**Based:** Welshpool  
**Date:** April 2  
**Stages:** 10  
**Surface:** Gravel  
**2010 winner:** Keith Cronin (below)  
**Points leader:** David Bogie





## AUSTRALIAN GP

Melbourne

ROUND 1/19

LAPS 58

### WINNER

Sebastian Vettel  
1h29m30.259s



### POLE POSITION

Sebastian Vettel  
1m23.529s



### FASTEST LAP

Felipe Massa  
1m28.947s



### RACE RATING

★★★★★

Dull at the front,  
but there was always  
a battle going on.

### DRIVERS STANDINGS

Vettel	25pts
Hamilton	18pts
Petrov	15pts

### MILESTONES

- First podium for Petrov is the first for any Russian in Formula 1.
- Vettel's win means the first hat-trick since Button in May/June 2009.

# ADVANCE AUSTRALIA HERR

German superstar Sebastian Vettel carried on where he left off last year, with domination in Melbourne. MARK HUGHES reports



# QUALIFYING

## Red Bull looks supreme as Vettel moves ever further ahead of the field

Red Bull finally revealed its hand with Sebastian Vettel's stunning Q3 lap, and F1 gave a collective sigh. He was a tenth ahead of the pack in Q1, 0.5s clear in Q2 and 0.8s on the first of two Q3 runs. Almost all of that advantage came in the high-speed bends of sector three as the RB7's aerodynamic superiority was finally revealed after only being hinted at throughout the winter.

Vettel was in mighty form, breathtakingly confident in using every bit of grip even between the walls, and rivals were left even more distraught when they learned that the Red Bulls had not been using KERS during their qualifying laps. Why not? "Not fully charged," said Vettel, enigmatically, avoiding a direct answer. "For reasons we will keep in the team," answered Mark Webber.

There were rumours of a mini-system to give them a KERS boost off the grid, where it's most needed, but nowhere else, taking advantage of better packaging. It was nothing so exotic. It had simply been turned off after showing signs of unreliability on Friday. "KERS is worth half a second," said Lewis Hamilton dejectedly, "so that means they're 1.3s clear really."

Actually, Hamilton had a KERS issue of his own, and splitting Vettel and Webber to get the newly-revised MP4-26 onto the front row was a mighty effort. "I still had around 40 per cent of my charge left that I couldn't deploy," he said. A failure of the KERS battery liquid-cooling system had triggered the failsafe into shutting the system down part way through Hamilton's final Q3 run. He might have been discouraged at the deficit to the Red Bull, but realised it was still a huge leap in performance for McLaren from its testing form. The abandonment of the complex 'octopus' exhaust and its replacement here by a simpler Red Bull-like one had found the car around 1s per lap. "It's suddenly got a lot more rear downforce," said Lewis, "and that advantage just snowballs everywhere." The change also brought an improvement in engine performance and there was no



longer an issue with frying the underbody.

Webber was deeply disappointed, not only by the 0.866s deficit to his team-mate but also at being knocked off the front row of his home race. With such a rocketship beneath him, it was an uncharacteristically low-key performance to line up only third. "Yeah I just couldn't do the times today," he admitted. "I'm mystified at the gap [to Vettel] to be honest."

Jenson Button repeated his fourth-place starting slot from last year, around 0.4s adrift of team-mate Hamilton. Although Button had no KERS issue, his final lap had been compromised at the start by encountering a spinning Felipe Massa at Turn 1 and later on by Nico Rosberg's Mercedes. Nonetheless he was raving about the feel of his new car. "It feels just like a big kart when you push it," he raved. "That instability of last year's car when you pushed it has gone."

In contrast to McLaren's leap since the last winter test, Ferrari had slipped. It seemed to be tyre related. On Friday, Fernando Alonso had the car in pretty good shape, even if Massa was struggling

to get the tyres within 20 degrees of their necessary operating threshold, but into Saturday both cars were suffering. "We tried for a more aggressive set-up into FP3," said Alonso, "but we had to come back from that as it didn't work. The tyres were not getting up to temperatures as quickly as they had at Barcelona." So serious was the problem that they were forced to use the soft Pirelli as early as Q1, thereby leaving them with just one set each in Q3, where Alonso did a lap good for fifth, Massa back in eighth 0.7s slower, just as he was here last year.

By contrast, Renault and Vitaly Petrov accessed their potential well, the Russian earning praise from tech director James Allison for the methodical way he had fine-tuned his car through the sessions. He was quick and error-free all weekend, aggressive when necessary, and his single soft-tyred run in Q3 netted him sixth on the grid, albeit almost 1s away from Hamilton's McLaren. Team-mate Nick Heidfeld failed even to make it out of Q1, encountering a KERS problem on his first run and traffic on his second. But even in the practice sessions, Petrov had been the quicker Renault driver.

Mercedes was disappointed not to have found its car's sweet-spot. Team boss Ross Brawn suspected that, although the straight-line boost from its DRS wing was greater than for any other car, its design may be just a little too marginal in that when not in use there was some aero instability. Not at any stage did this look like the car that had created such a sensation in the last Barcelona test. Nico Rosberg was seventh after locking up into Turn 1, but Michael Schumacher failed to graduate to Q3 and lined up 11th. Both

cars had suffered KERS problems in practice, losing valuable set-up time, and in addition the problems continued on Schumacher's car into Q2.

Securing the last two Q3 places represented good efforts from Sauber's Kamui Kobayashi and Toro Rosso's Sebastian Buemi. They each had only a used set of softs left, having used up the remainder in getting through. They each eclipsed their respective team-mates, Jaime Alguersuari in 12th a couple of tenths away from Buemi in Q2, while Sergio Perez made a quietly impressive and composed debut, slotting in 13th, but believing he'd have made the Q3 cut had he not been baulked by Rosberg.

Rubens Barrichello had shown in practice that the Williams had potential Q3 speed, but unfortunately he crashed on his out-lap in Q2. It was as if he'd been distracted as he put his left-hand wheels on the grass on the approach to Turn 3. Pastor Maldonado was 15th in the sister car, having lost set-up time with a damaging practice off.

Adrian Sutil's Force India was also shaping up to be a Q3 contender before he spun 360-deg onto the pit straight, the lack of downforce from the triggered DRS not helping him as he got onto the Turn 16 exit kerb. This helped debutant team-mate Paul di Resta to outqualify him by two places in 14th.

Heidfeld was surprise casualty of Q1



**P38 RESULTS**  
All the stats  
from Albert Park





Great stuff from Buemi, Perez and Barrichello



**RACE CONDITIONS**

Track temperature in low 20s throughout, as ambient dropped to 21 by end.

**T**his was nothing like anyone was expecting – except, perhaps for the Red Bull victory. But there was anomaly even within that: with Sebastian Vettel dominant, Mark Webber struggled to fifth.

Going to Australia, no-one was expecting the Ferraris to struggle, the McLarens to be fast, the Pirellis to be respectably durable, or Vitaly Petrov to be on the podium. You would have got long odds on an Albert Park race not being interrupted by the safety car. And no-one, not even Pirelli itself, would have believed that an impressive rookie in a Sauber would be one of the stars of the show in coming home seventh, having pitted for only one change of tyres. Step forward, Sergio Perez.

The talk among the teams on Thursday, based on what had been seen in testing at Barcelona, was of a three or even four-stop race. Post-practice, this was being adjusted to a two/three-stop, as the soft tyre proved more durable than expected. The hard seemed good for 20-24 laps, the soft 12-18 – and that's how it was poised as they lined up in the low late afternoon sun.

That sun had the track temperature as high as 27-deg C, around 7-deg warmer than in practice. That potentially gave the

tyres an easier time, so possibly tilting the favoured strategy toward a two-stop. All the top 10 were obliged to start on the softs they'd qualified with, but most of the remainder chose to start on that tyre too. Some teams were even suggesting it might be the faster tyre over a stint.

There was a lot of unease within Red Bull about the start. With the KERS disconnected, they were highly vulnerable off the line, not that their rivals knew for sure about the situation. "We'd seen a potential small chance of a reliability problem with the KERS on Friday," said team boss Christian Horner, "and we chose to play safe by not running it – but we didn't want the world to know we didn't have it, obviously." Stories abounded on Saturday evening about a demon 'mini-KERS' devised by Adrian Newey that would have capacity enough only to give boost off the grid, but nowhere else. "That journalistic fantasy actually helped us," smiled Horner, "but now I'm worried that Adrian will think it's a good idea!"

"The run to the first corner isn't so long," countered Vettel defensively when asked if he was worried about it. But he needn't have worried. His start was perfect while, alongside, Lewis Hamilton's McLaren bogged down in wheelspin. "I'd been asked to make an adjustment on the clutch after the dummy start," Hamilton explained. "I don't know if it was that or my input, but if I hadn't had the KERS to rescue me I'd have lost a place to Mark and maybe Jenson too."

As Vettel sprinted away, Hamilton's slow start delayed team-mate Button behind him, enabling Webber to get ahead and sweep hard right across Jenson's bows despite his lack of KERS, and leaving him free to jockey with Hamilton into Turn 1. Webber decided judgement was the better part of valour, confident that if he could just track Hamilton initially an opportunity to pass would come, even if it was around the stops.

Behind them, Button moved to the left as Fernando Alonso's Ferrari screamed to the left of him. These two clashed here last year and came mighty close to repeating it on Sunday as they each tried to outbrake the other, until eventually the track funneled Alonso over towards the grass and he was forced to back out of it. This outbraking competition allowed the duelling Felipe Massa's Ferrari and Petrov's Renault down their inside, Petrov barely believing his luck as fourth place opened out in front of him. "I

saw Fernando and Jenson there and thought I must brake early, but then as they went out wide I just released the brake and passed them both."

Both Massa and the Mercedes of Nico Rosberg squeezed past Alonso, as did the Sauber of Kamui Kobayashi, and as they all headed up to Turn 3 Massa tried to put a move on Petrov, but the Renault driver was having none of it.

As Massa got out of line, so Button began to get a run on him, this continuing all the way through the two chicanes and the long, fast curving link approaching the fifth-gear Turn 11. Jenson was all over the Ferrari and looking to pass on the outside, but Felipe swept across his bows to keep the place. It was just the beginning of many laps of Button pressure upon Massa, a frustration for Jenson as the others escaped while Felipe, though slow, defended perfectly. This allowed Vettel, Hamilton, Webber and Petrov to escape, the foundation of a great drive by the Renault man. He ▶



Webber was dejected after off-the-pace fifth



Massa did a sterling job to hold Button



Schumacher takes the scenic route at Turn 1



Sutil and di Resta inherited Force India points finishes

## DRIVER BY DRIVER by Edd Straw

**1**  **9/10**  
Event rating

**SEBASTIAN VETTEL**  
Red Bull-Renault RB7-3  
Start: 1st. Finish: 1st  
Would carrying number 1 on his nosecone prove a burden? Would his disastrous record in Australia continue? Utterly dominant, even without KERS, and passed Button when he needed to after his first stop to ensure Hamilton couldn't threaten his lead.

**2**  **4/10**  
Event rating

**MARK WEBBER**  
Red Bull-Renault RB7-2  
Start: 3rd. Finish: 5th  
The curse of home ground struck again, with Webber and the team baffled by the lack of pace in his car. A raft of changes on Saturday night – including the front wing/nose – didn't improve matters and a slow second stint on primes dropped him behind Petrov and Alonso.

**3**  **9/10**  
Event rating

**LEWIS HAMILTON**  
McLaren-Mercedes MP4-26-03  
Start: 2nd. Finish: 2nd  
Revitalised by last-gasp changes that transformed McLaren from midfielder to Red Bull's nearest challenger. Trouble was, closest didn't equal close. Dealt well with floor damage to keep out of Petrov's range. Also proved wrong those who doubted his ability to manage tyres.

**4**  **6/10**  
Event rating

**JENSON BUTTON**  
McLaren-Mercedes MP4-26-04  
Start: 4th. Finish: 6th  
Race ruined by McLaren's inability to look at a TV screen and realise a penalty was imminent, apparently relying on the frustrated Button's estimate that he was ahead of Massa when he took his short cut. Recovered well to sixth but didn't quite have Hamilton's pace.

**5**  **7/10**  
Event rating

**FERNANDO ALONSO**  
Ferrari 150° Italia-288  
Start: 5th. Finish: 4th  
Struggled all weekend to get his tyres up to temperature, which prevented him taking up his anticipated role as Vettel's nearest challenger. Getting hung out to dry on the outside at Turn 1 cost him, and fourth was a decent recovery running less-than-ideal three-stop strategy.

**6**  **5/10**  
Event rating

**FELIPE MASSA**  
Ferrari 150° Italia-289  
Start: 8th. Finish: 7th  
New tyres, new year but same old Massa, as he again proved unable to match Alonso for pace and suffered an embarrassing spin on his outlap in Q3. Made a great start, making his Ferrari incredibly wide to keep Button at bay, but his three-stopper didn't work.



Hamilton repassed Webber at first bend

◀ couldn't keep pace with the lead trio, but was running significantly faster than Massa, who thereby effectively shielded him from the faster Button and Alonso.

Vettel was up and gone, 2.4s ahead at the end of the opening lap. He kept the margin over Hamilton at about 3s from the second lap onwards, just pacing himself at the necessary level to eke out the tyre life. The loose plan at Red Bull was for a three-stop but, the further into the stint Seb went, with the rear tyres still holding on, so a two-stop came onto the radar. It was a similar

**"It's not normal that I can't keep a rhythm with these guys. I hope when we strip the car we'll find something"**

**Mark Webber**

story at McLaren, and up and down the pitlane teams were realising that actually the Pirellis were hanging on longer than even practice had suggested. There was still no black line of rubber going down onto the track surface – these tyres seem to derive their grip from tearing off their tread rather than bonding with the track – but the track was cleaning up on the line. There was plenty of rubber debris offline, but drivers were finding that this didn't make much difference as far as grip was concerned.

The DRS (drag reduction system) was not making a night-and-day difference to overtaking, the relatively short pit straight here perhaps limiting its effectiveness, but it was Alonso who made the first DRS-assisted successful pass. On the second lap he had nipped around the outside of Kobayashi at Turn 11 and had quickly tracked

down Rosberg. Onto the pit straight at the end of the fourth lap, Fernando was already correcting an oversteer slide over the exit kerb as he simultaneously pressed his KERS button and opened the slot of his wing, controlled in the Ferrari by a foot pedal. It looked a risky bit of timing, given what had happened to Adrian Sutil here the day before, but Alonso was not up for hanging around and got cleanly alongside the Mercedes for seventh into Turn 1. Next in his sights were the duelling Massa/Button, but despite the benefit of a double tow Fernando could not get close enough to put a move on Button, the McLaren very quick down the straight.

This left Button free to continue his assault on Massa around the rest of the lap, Jenson getting irritated now at how much he was being held up, putting the McLaren's wheels inches from the Ferrari's at all sorts of unusual places, such as through the kink of Turn 5 between the two chicanes, all to no avail as Massa held his nerve. It was slowing them both, particularly as Massa's front brakes began getting too hot and he was advised by his race engineer to move the bias rearwards.

On the 11th lap Button yet again went through the long, flat-out kink between 10 and 11 side-by-side with Massa, marginally ahead now but on the outside as they approached 11. This was ballsy stuff as he turned in alongside at 155mph in fifth. Still Massa refused to yield, and held Button to the outside, giving Jenson no option but to take to the escape road on the right that cuts out Turn 12. The McLaren came out ahead and it would probably have been wise at this point for Button to have immediately surrendered the place back to Massa. Instead, he insisted over the radio – for the benefit of the race director – 'I had position and he forced me off'

"We contacted race control," said team boss Martin Whitmarsh, "and asked to be advised. They told us they would get back to us."

Massa had lost momentum in the dicing and Alonso stayed hard on it, gaining hand-over-fist as they approached Turn 13, allowing him to use his superior exit speed to nip by his team mate on the inside between 13 and 14. This complicated matters considerably for Button, for if he were instructed to give the place back to Massa now, he would have to first allow Alonso by too.

Meanwhile, Webber's race had not been going well. He'd been dismayed to find that, far from being able to track Hamilton, he couldn't keep pace with him. His car was burning through its rear tyres at a rapid rate and as early as lap eight, now 6s behind Hamilton, he was radioing in 'the rears have gone', and suddenly dropped 0.3s from his already compromised pace. "It's not normal that I can't keep a rhythm with these guys," he said afterwards, "and not only that, but I was killing the tyres. I'm just hoping that when we strip the car down we find something." He was brought in at the end of lap 11, and switched to a new set of hard tyres.

Alonso followed him in on the next lap, Massa the lap after that – which was potentially bad news for Button. Race control had already advised his incident with Massa was under investigation and, with the Ferraris now pitted, the only penalty left open to the stewards, if they decided to impose one, was a drive-through. This was duly awarded on the 14th lap, just as Vettel pitted from the lead. Here came a potential turning point in the destiny of the race: Vettel had been forced to pit at this point as his rear tyres had now worn out, and Hamilton had wiped out much of the Red Bull's advantage. "I could ▶

**7**  **5/10**  
Event rating

**MICHAEL SCHUMACHER**  
Mercedes MGP W02-01  
Start: 11th. DNF  
Had air of a man revitalised after his difficult comeback season. Then he hit the track, struggled with KERS and aero problems, and his car was under-par in Q2. Clashed with Alguersuari on lap one, lost a lap, then plodded around before retiring with floor damage.

**8**  **6/10**  
Event rating

**NICO ROSBERG**  
Mercedes MGP W02-03  
Start: 7th. DNF  
Very upbeat before the on-track action started but two seconds off the pace in qualifying. Was running fifth early on but inevitably slipped behind Alonso in the first DRS overtaking move. Retired with damage after being assaulted by Barrichello on lap 23.

**9**  **1/10**  
Event rating

**NICK HEIDFELD**  
Renault R31-01  
Start: 18th. Finish: 12th  
Couldn't match team-mate Petrov throughout practice and got Q1 badly wrong – went off at Turn 6 on his first run, lost a lap having to reset some KERS settings, and then hit traffic on his final shot. Limped home with a hole in the side of his car after a first-lap assault.

**10**  **10/10**  
Event rating

**VITALY PETROV**  
Renault R31-03  
Start: 6th. Finish: 3rd  
Those inside the team talk about the Russian being a new man, in approach as well as performance. Qualified sixth and arguably had the speed to get onto the second row. Made a good start and resisted race-long pressure to take his country's first F1 podium.

**11**  **3/10**  
Event rating

**RUBENS BARRICHELLO**  
Williams-Cosworth FW33-03  
Start: 17th. DNF  
A poor weekend, binning the Williams in Q2 after straying onto the grass under braking for Turn 3, then clobbering Rosberg at the same corner in the race. He did make a brilliant move on Kobayashi as they lapped Schumacher, and Williams seems to have underlying pace.

**12**  **6/10**  
Event rating

**PASTOR MALDONADO**  
Williams-Cosworth FW33-02  
Start: 15th. DNF  
Qualified solid 15th for F1 debut. Passed Kovalainen and Perez during his short outing, but ground to a halt while running 15th on lap nine after suffering a transmission failure. In his own favourite words, "very constant" on his first appearance.

◀ not really have done more laps,” said Seb, “as we had reached the point where the tyres are about to go off a cliff.” It was the strategically smart thing to do to stop now, and his crew quickly turned him around after fitting a part-worn set of softs. But he exited behind Button, who still had another two laps before having to serve his drive-through. There was obviously scope for some McLaren tactical play here.

Regardless of that, why hadn't McLaren brought Hamilton in as he was catching Vettel? The wear rate of these tyres means that fresh ones are invariably 1.5s or more faster, thereby favouring the guy that stops first in the overlap. Not only did the team not bring him in when Red Bull pitted Vettel, but he was even

**“The broken floor was losing me a load of downforce. When that happens it just stalls the underneath”**

### Lewis Hamilton

left out for a lap after that, thereby apparently guaranteeing that Lewis could not leapfrog Seb.

The answer is that McLaren, having been expecting to three-stop, was now looking to convert to a two-stop and was thereby nervous about committing to too many laps for the second and third sets of tyres, particularly as one of those stints would have to be done on soft tyres that had already done five laps in qualifying. The thinking was that if Hamilton was brought in on lap 16 – two laps after Vettel – his pace was still good, so he wouldn't be losing too much time to Seb's fresh set and he would be in yet better shape as they came up to the second stops, where he could then

hopefully leapfrog the Red Bull.

McLaren's hope that Button might be able to delay Vettel was thwarted, as Seb put an aggressive move on him almost immediately, going around the outside of Turn 4 at the beginning of his first flying lap after pitting. In doing this Vettel had put the Red Bull's outer wheels beyond the nominal exit kerb there, something that Whitmarsh felt made it not a legitimate passing move. The stewards did not agree with him.

When Hamilton did eventually pit and rejoin, he was 6.5s behind the leader, having been less than 2s adrift before the stops. It's doubtful that even if Button had managed to keep Vettel at bay for the two laps before serving his drive-through, that he could have delayed him by as much as the necessary 6.5s.

Hamilton's victory hopes now rested upon repeating his first-stint trick of keeping the tyres together for longer than Vettel, closing him down again but this time stopping before him. But that was to assume that Vettel wouldn't have the pace to maintain his gap – because if he could, there was ample time for Red Bull to respond to any Hamilton stop and still maintain the lead. Given Vettel's pace with the RB7 in qualifying, it seemed likely that he'd had plenty of pace in hand all day, and that all he was doing was eking out his rear tyres, especially now that it was clear he would need to commit to a two-stop in the assumption that Hamilton was doing likewise. It was a matter of using that 6.5s cushion from the earlier stop to buy himself the luxury of not using all of his pace.

Hamilton could make little impact upon the Red Bull's middle-stint lead, and any remaining slim chance of keeping it under pressure dissolved when a floor stay broke on the McLaren. These take a pounding around the bumps and kerbs of



Alonso scored strong points with fourth

## DRIVER BY DRIVER by Edd Straw

**14**  **7/10**  
Event rating

### ADRIAN SUTIL

Force India-Merc VJM04-04  
Start: 16th. Finish: 9th

Already feeling the pressure from new team-mate di Resta, Sutil opened his DRS a fraction of a second early exiting the final corner in Q2, emerging unscathed from a lurid spin. Finished ahead of his team-mate, who twice let him past for strategic reasons.

**15**  **9/10**  
Event rating

### PAUL DI RESTA

Force India-Merc VJM04-02  
Start: 14th. Finish: 10th

Conducted himself more like a veteran than a debutant. His form pressured Sutil into a mistake in Q2, then he leaped to 10th early on and battled all race with the German. Ended up behind after twice letting him by for strategy reasons.

**16**  **7/10**  
Event rating

### KAMUI KOBAYASHI

Sauber-Ferrari C30-03  
Start: 9th. DSQ

Given a stable Sauber, his maximum-attack driving carried him into Q3. Burned all of his softs getting there, so had to run on used rubber, so there was no chance of one-stopping. Mixed it in the points all race, jumping the three-stopping Massa and finishing eighth on the road.

**17**  **10/10**  
Event rating

### SERGIO PEREZ

Sauber-Ferrari C30-01  
Start: 13th. DSQ

Impressive all weekend, but was delayed by traffic in Q2. Missing Q3 played to his advantage, allowing him to start on hard tyres, and complete an amazing 38 laps on softs for a unique one-stopper. Disqualification for a wing infringement was poor reward.

**18**  **8/10**  
Event rating

### SEBASTIEN BUEMI

Toro Rosso-Ferrari STR6-02  
Start: 10th. Finish: 8th

Fighting for his F1 future, the Swiss got his season off to the perfect start. Made Q3, but had no soft rubber left to improve on 10th. Never looked like missing the points, passing Heidfeld, di Resta and Sutil and almost holding off Massa late on his way to eighth.

**19**  **6/10**  
Event rating

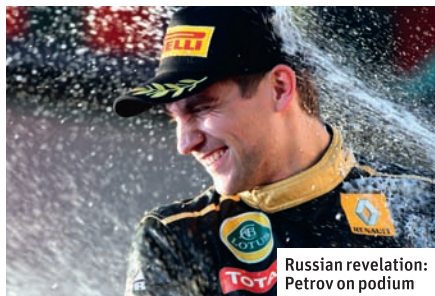
### JAIIME ALGUERSUARI

Toro Rosso-Ferrari STR6-04  
Start: 12th. Finish: 11th

Couldn't pull a top-10 lap out of the bag in qualifying. Schumacher clipped his front wing on first lap, forcing a stop for a new nose. Went on the attack, and after passing tail-enders had closed up onto the back of the Force Indias come the finish.



We suspect this won't be the last such shot



Russian revelation: Petrov on podium



Hamilton and McLaren had a strong weekend

Albert Park, but as Whitmarsh commented: "It should be able to deal with that." The floor began coming adrift in the second half of this middle stint, causing Lewis to slide straight on at Turn 1 and bounce over the grass. "It was losing me a load of downforce," he pointed out. "When that happens it just stalls the underneath of the car. I was having oversteer moments, some [aero] stalling through high-speed corners and under braking the car was a little bit unstable. I had to wind the braking rearwards quite a bit after I'd had that moment at Turn 1." From this point onwards Hamilton's plucky challenge on Vettel's win was essentially over and it was a case of nursing the car home.

Hamilton's task was eased by having no real threat from behind. Webber's Red Bull continued to eat its tyres and he was in again as early as lap 26 for his third set – softs this time – committing him to a three-stop and meaning that the two-stopping Petrov had effectively leapfrogged him for third. Vitaly's pace was strong and consistent throughout, the Renault giving its tyres a relatively easy time.

But not as easy as the Saubers were. While Kobayashi had been slugging it out with Alonso in the early laps, team-mate Perez had circulated unobtrusively in 14th, one of the few to start on hard tyres and driving well within himself on his grand prix debut. He had gradually moved up as everyone made their first stops. He was last to stop, on lap 23, switching to a pre-used set of softs. At this point, the plan was to make a late two-stop. But the further he went on, the more remarkably his pace was holding up compared to those around him. He again jumped many places as everyone made their second stops and he kept going – and going. Among those he leapfrogged at this time was

Kobayashi, who was now one place behind after starting four ahead. Perez was even lapping as quickly as the leaders at one point, on tyres that should by now have been totally worn out. "If any of the cars was capable of doing that," said Pirelli's Paul Hembery, "it was the Sauber. We saw in winter testing it's got some very interesting qualities. But even I had to go and check to see if he really had done just one stop."

Vettel, Hamilton and Petrov now apparently had the podium sewn up, but the struggle for fourth was interesting. Webber nominally held it, but now had his hands full fending off Alonso, on a similar three-stop strategy. Behind them, Button had clawed his way back to the tail of Massa, who was supposed to be two-stopping. Helped by a sticking right-front at Webber's third stop, Alonso leapfrogged the Red Bull. With Webber now on the faster soft tyre and Alonso the hard, he was for a time able to pressure the Ferrari before his tyres faded away yet again.

Button finally put a DRS-assisted pass for sixth on Massa, who needed a third stop as his tyres were finished. This dropped him to 10th and required him to put a DRS pass on Sebastien Buemi's Toro Rosso for ninth. He would make no impression on the Saubers though.

Elsewhere, both Mercs were taken out by assaults from others but showed no great pace, while Paul di Resta made his debut by battling Force India team-mate Sutil for much of the distance, eventually finishing behind, in 12th. The later exclusions of the Saubers promoted him to a championship point.

"I don't like the word dominant," said Vettel, disappointed to find there was no kangaroo on the trophy. "Let's just wait and see." Yeah, let's wait and see how fast the Red Bulls are when they actually have their KERS connected... ❧

**20**  **6/10**  
Event rating

**HEIKKI KOVALAINEN**

Lotus-Renault T128-01  
Start: 19th. DNF

Confidence that the Lotus would be reliable proved to be ill-placed. Suffered a misfire on Friday and then an electrical problem that kept his adjustable wing shut during qualifying. Was ahead of team-mate Trulli when he retired with a water leak in the radiator.

**21**  **6/10**  
Event rating

**JARNO TRULLI**

Lotus-Renault T128-03  
Start: 20th. Finish: 13th

Not impressed to sit on the sidelines in FP1 merely to let Karun Chandhok crash. Like Kovalainen, struggled for tyre temperature all weekend but at least showed slightly stronger pace in the race – although nothing like enough to have any chance of getting into the midfield.

**22**  **N/A**  
Event rating

**NARAIN KARTHIKEYAN**  
HRT-Cosworth F111-03  
DNQ

The NASCAR truck he raced last year would have given him a better chance of qualifying. After just five laps during FP3 and sitting out all of Friday, he was, through no fault of his own, doomed to be a non-qualifying mobile chicane in Q1. Money well spent?

**23**  **6/10**  
Event rating

**VITANTONIO LUZZI**  
HRT-Cosworth F111-02  
DNQ

Completed two installation laps before qualifying in what might more accurately be termed an F110.5, then hauled it round to within 1.8s of making the cut in Q1. But arguably his biggest achievement was remaining cheery, even when relegated to spectator status.

**24**  **7/10**  
Event rating

**TIMO GLOCK**

Virgin-Cosworth MVR-02-02  
Start: 21st. Finish: NC

Put in a good qualifying lap, but could do little more than try and keep the Lotuses in sight in the race. Had to crawl back to the pits after his first stop with a loose left-front, then stayed there for five laps while the team fought damaged drive pegs. Was unclassified.

**25**  **7/10**  
Event rating

**JEROME D'AMBROSIO**

Virgin-Cosworth MVR-02-01  
Start: 22nd. Finish: 14th

Was closer to Glock than 1s qualifying deficit suggested. Admitted to mismanaging traffic in Q1, but stayed calm to dip under the 107 per cent qualifying cut-off. Race was solid, if unspectacular, which was all that you could ask of an F1 debutant in a car 5s off the pace.

# Wing and a prayer

The drag-reducing adjustable rear wing was the talk of Albert Park. And its effect on cars' aerodynamic performance varied dramatically

**FREEZE  
FRAME**

## McLAREN: OPEN AND SHUT CASE

● Lewis Hamilton, revelling in the increased rear downforce of the updated McLaren, rides the Turn-16 exit kerbs where his former F3 team-mate Adrian Sutil came to grief in qualifying. Note Lewis still has his drag-reduction-system (DRS) wing closed in this practice shot. Later, Sutil would have his open as he clambered the Force India over the kerb, triggering his huge 360-degree Q2 spin.

Williams technical director Sam Michael explains the difference in aero balance when the DRS is activated: "When you press it, it puts an 200kg balance-shift towards the front of the car. That's a huge shift, obviously." And something with which Sutil would probably concur.



DUNBAR/LAT

# Drawing board

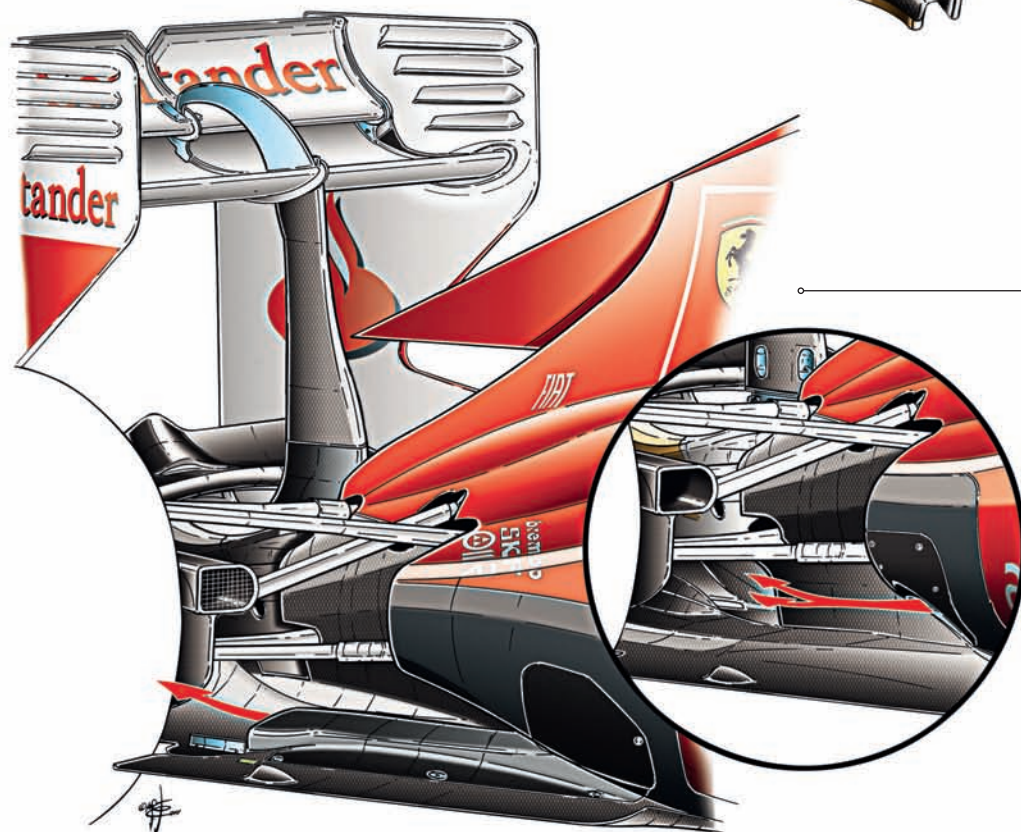
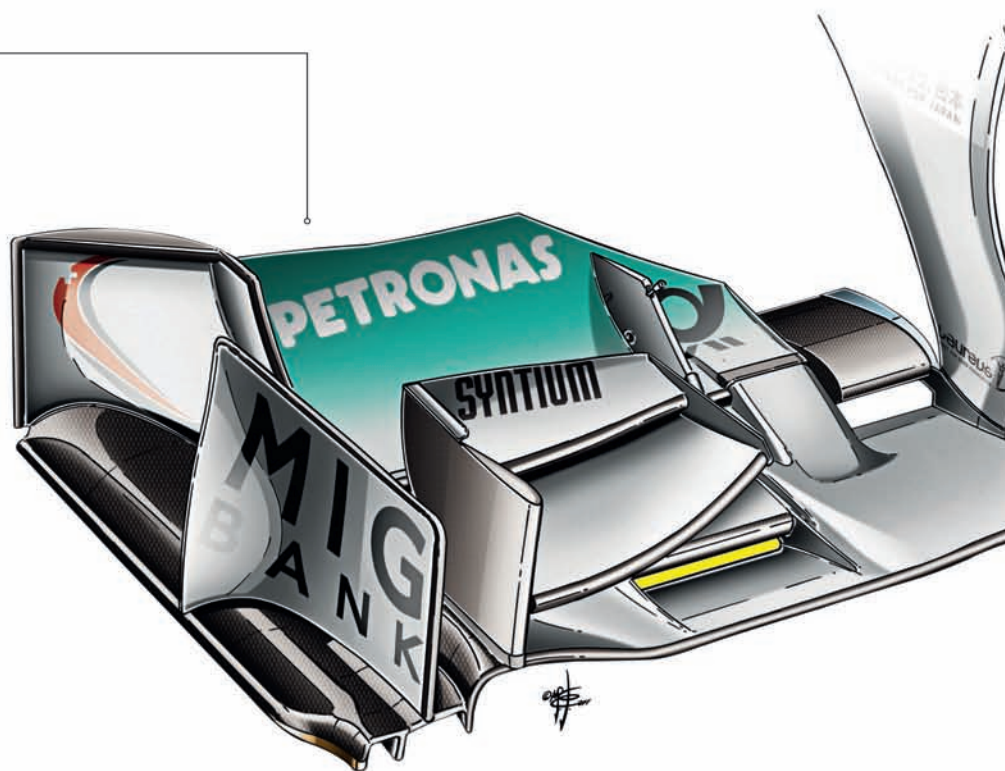


Melbourne gave the teams their first opportunity to fine-tune their race packages. Analysis by Gary Anderson, Mark Hughes and Giorgio Piola

## MERCEDES FRONT WING

→ The Mercedes update that appeared in the last week of Barcelona testing included a revised sidepod/exhaust layout and this new front wing.

**GARY ANDERSON:** I have been very critical of the two-piece front wing and its characteristics regarding air flow separation and the percentage of downforce loss when this happens. To help this situation, Mercedes has introduced a small section with a three-element area. This, without doubt, will help to maintain decent air flow between the chassis and the inside of the front tyre – which will help the underfloor of the car. However, I think the MGP W02s will suffer from transverse air flow when they do have any separation problems. This will affect the bargeboard and under-floor area, again leading to inconsistency in aerodynamic performance of these components. Perhaps Mercedes should take a walk up to the front of the grid and have a look at what the others are doing to optimise this area.



## FERRARI EXHAUSTS

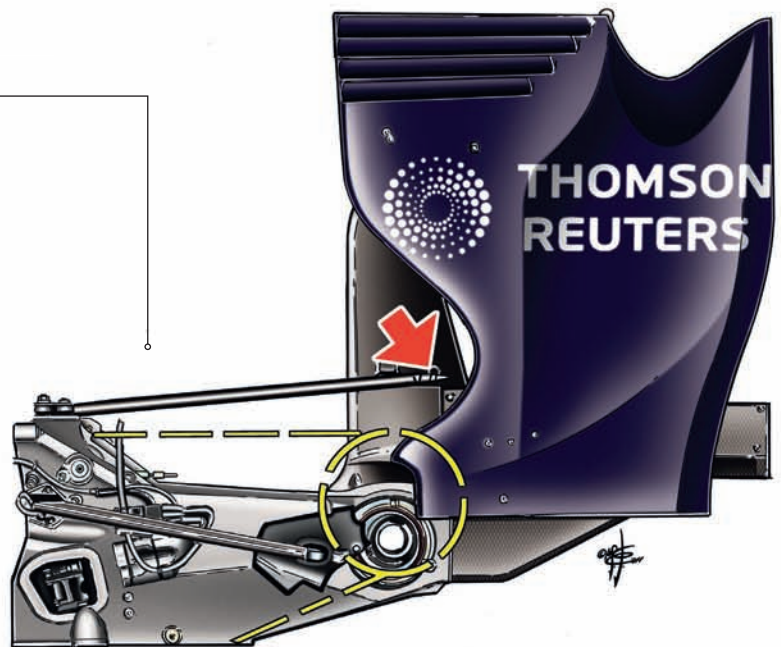
→ Ferrari's final pre-season upgrade package included this revised exhaust layout.

**GARY ANDERSON:** Ferrari's exhaust exit location is – surprise, surprise – more or less the same as Red Bull's. It is just on the diffuser inner surface inside of the rear tyre. The high-energy air flow travels along the outer surface of the diffuser's vertical wall, helping to scavenge this outer section of the diffuser. By using the combination of this high-velocity air flow and the low-pressure area behind the rear tyre, they both help to increase the exit area of the diffuser, thereby increasing its performance.

### WILLIAMS GEARBOX

➔ An indication of the space created for the benefit of air flow by Williams' radical lowline transmission can be had from the outline showing where a traditional gearbox would sit. The full potential gains are not yet being fully accessed as the engine-cover dimensions needed for the Cosworth form some blockage.

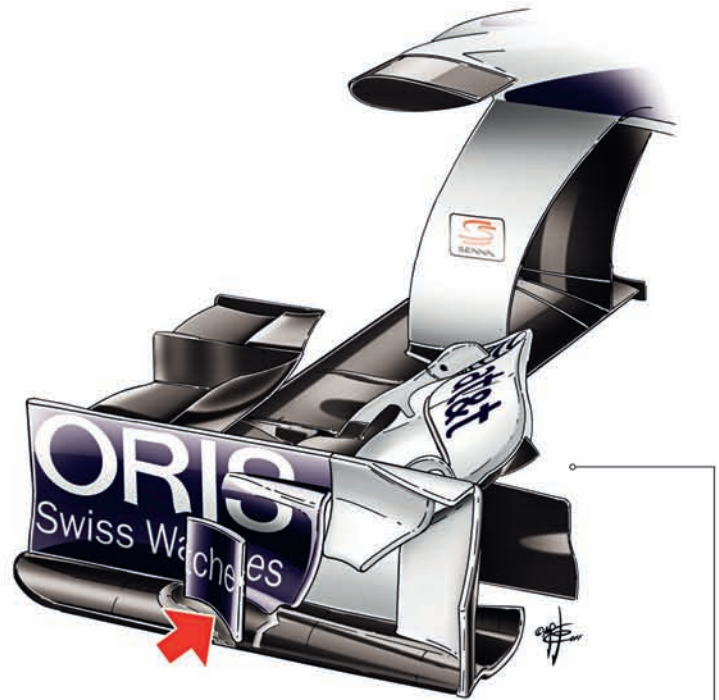
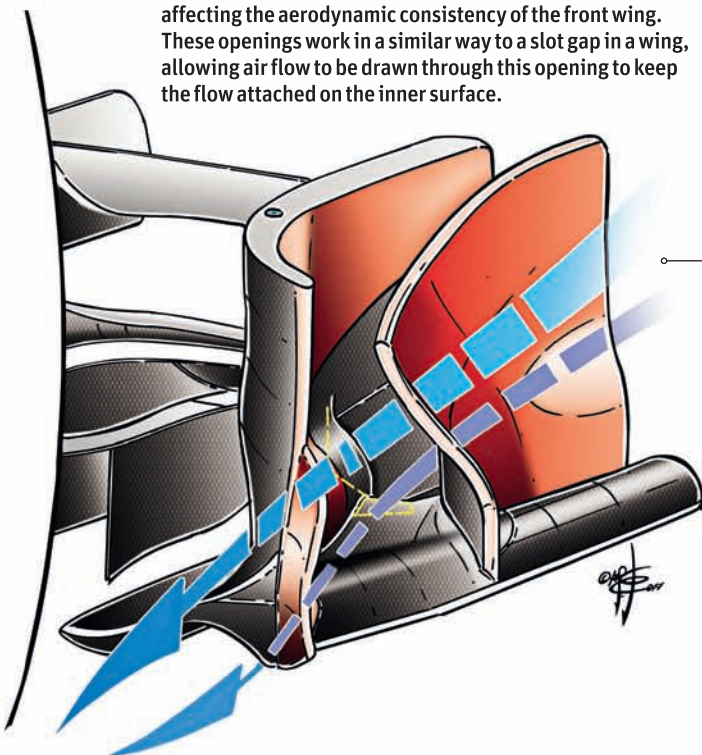
**GARY ANDERSON:** The Williams gearbox is more suited to a motorcycle than an F1 car. It's a very compact unit with the differential mounted very low requiring a lot of angle on the driveshafts. The yellow outline shows roughly a standard layout and the space reduction above the gearbox will allow better air flow to the lower beam wing and diffuser upper-trailing edge. Better air flow in this area will help the performance of the diffuser. The lowering of the centre of gravity of this complete unit will also have a significant effect on the height of the centre of gravity of the whole car which, again although small, should offer a reduction in lap time.



### FERRARI FRONT WING

➔ Ferrari produced a detail refinement to its standard front-wing endplate.

**GARY ANDERSON:** The Ferrari front-wing endplates now follow the trend set by most other teams in that they have openings to allow air flow through from the outer surface of the endplate to the inner surface. Because of the curvature of the vertical section of the endplate, when the steering is turned the blockage behind the endplate is altered. This inner surface is susceptible to air-flow separation, affecting the aerodynamic consistency of the front wing. These openings work in a similar way to a slot gap in a wing, allowing air flow to be drawn through this opening to keep the flow attached on the inner surface.



### WILLIAMS FRONT WING

➔ The sophisticated detailing available with CFD is very evident in the design of the latest Williams front wing.

**GARY ANDERSON:** Williams' new front-wing and endplate is more of a three-dimensional package than before. The slot gap of the main plane and both flaps continues vertically down until it meets up with the foot plate of the endplate, which is slightly detached from the end of the wing and

more of a vertical turning vane helping the airflow turn out around the outside of the front tyre. The objective of this is to reduce the blockage created by the front tyre as this blockage will affect the performance of the front wing dramatically. And the air flow spillage that would go inside the front wheel will reduce the potential performance of the under floor, both having a negative effect on the overall downforce that the car can produce.

# AUSTRALIAN GP RESULTS



## PRACTICE 1 - Friday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	WEBBER	1m26.831s
2	VETTEL	1m27.158s
3	ALONSO	1m27.749s
4	ROSBERG	1m28.152s
5	BARRICHELLO	1m28.430s
6	BUTTON	1m28.440s
7	HAMILTON	1m28.483s
8	SCHUMACHER	1m28.690s
9	KOBAYASHI	1m28.725s
10	PETROV	1m28.765s
11	MASSA	1m28.842s
12	HEIDFELD	1m28.928s
13	SUTIL	1m29.314s
14	BUEMI	1m29.328s
15	MALDONADO	1m29.403s
16	RICCIARDO	1m29.468s
17	PEREZ	1m29.643s
18	HULKENBERG	1m31.002s
19	KOVALAINEN	1m32.428s
20	D'AMBROSIO	1m35.282s
21	GLOCK	1m35.289s
22	CHANDHOK	no time
23	LIUZZI	no time
24	KARTHIKEYAN	no time

Weather: dry

## PRACTICE 2 - Friday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	BUTTON	1m25.854s
2	HAMILTON	1m25.986s
3	ALONSO	1m26.001s
4	VETTEL	1m26.014s
5	WEBBER	1m26.283s
6	SCHUMACHER	1m26.590s
7	MASSA	1m26.789s
8	PEREZ	1m27.101s
9	BARRICHELLO	1m27.280s
10	ROSBERG	1m27.448s
11	ALGUERSUARI	1m27.525s
12	PETROV	1m27.528s
13	HEIDFELD	1m27.536s
14	BUEMI	1m27.697s
15	KOBAYASHI	1m28.095s
16	DI RESTA	1m28.376s
17	SUTIL	1m28.583s
18	MALDONADO	1m29.386s
19	KOVALAINEN	1m30.829s
20	TRULLI	1m30.912s
21	D'AMBROSIO	1m32.106s
22	GLOCK	1m32.135s
23	LIUZZI	no time
24	KARTHIKEYAN	no time

Weather: very brief shower

## PRACTICE 3 - Saturday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	VETTEL	1m24.507s
2	WEBBER	1m25.364s
3	HAMILTON	1m25.553s
4	BUTTON	1m25.567s
5	PETROV	1m25.906s
6	ALONSO	1m26.121s
7	KOBAYASHI	1m26.417s
8	ROSBERG	1m26.520s
9	HEIDFELD	1m26.746s
10	SCHUMACHER	1m26.856s
11	BUEMI	1m27.008s
12	MASSA	1m27.011s
13	ALGUERSUARI	1m27.066s
14	DI RESTA	1m27.087s
15	SUTIL	1m27.180s
16	BARRICHELLO	1m28.068s
17	PEREZ	1m28.077s
18	KOVALAINEN	1m29.772s
19	TRULLI	1m30.003s
20	GLOCK	1m30.261s
21	MALDONADO	1m30.496s
22	D'AMBROSIO	1m30.704s
23	KARTHIKEYAN	1m41.554s
24	LIUZZI	no time

Weather: dry



## QUALIFYING

POS	DRIVER	QUALIFYING 1	QUALIFYING 2	QUALIFYING 3
1	VETTEL	1m25.296s	1m24.090s	1m23.529s
2	HAMILTON	1m25.384s	1m25.595s	1m24.307s
3	WEBBER	1m25.900s	1m24.658s	1m24.395s
4	BUTTON	1m25.866s	1m24.957s	1m24.886s
5	ALONSO	1m25.707s	1m25.242s	1m24.974s
6	PETROV	1m25.543s	1m25.582s	1m25.247s
7	ROSBERG	1m25.856s	1m25.606s	1m25.421s
8	MASSA	1m26.031s	1m25.611s	1m25.599s
9	KOBAYASHI	1m25.717s	1m25.405s	1m25.626s
10	BUEMI	1m26.232s	1m25.882s	1m27.006s
11	SCHUMACHER	1m25.962s	1m25.971s	-
12	ALGUERSUARI	1m26.620s	1m26.103s	-
13	PEREZ	1m25.812s	1m26.108s	-
14	DI RESTA	1m27.229s	1m26.739s	-
15	MALDONADO	1m26.298s	1m26.768s	-
16	SUTIL	1m26.245s	1m31.407s	-
17	BARRICHELLO	1m26.270s	no time	-
18	HEIDFELD	1m27.239s	-	-
19	KOVALAINEN	1m29.254s	-	-
20	TRULLI	1m29.342s	-	-
21	GLOCK	1m29.858s	-	-
22	D'AMBROSIO	1m30.822s	-	-
23	LIUZZI	1m32.978s*	-	-
24	KARTHIKEYAN	1m34.293s*	-	-

Weather: dry \*DNQ time outside of 107 per cent rule

## QUALIFYING

Head to head			
VETTEL	1	0	WEBBER
HAMILTON	1	0	BUTTON
ALONSO	1	0	MASSA
SCHUMACHER	0	1	ROSBERG
HEIDFELD	0	1	PETROV
BARRICHELLO	0	1	MALDONADO
SUTIL	0	1	DI RESTA
KOBAYASHI	1	0	PEREZ
BUEMI	1	0	ALGUERSUARI
KOVALAINEN	1	0	TRULLI
KARTHIKEYAN	0	1	LIUZZI
GLOCK	1	0	D'AMBROSIO



## THE GRID

1 <b>VETTEL</b> RED BULL 1m23.529s Soft	2 <b>HAMILTON</b> McLAREN 1m24.307s Soft
3 <b>WEBBER</b> RED BULL 1m24.395s Soft	4 <b>BUTTON</b> McLAREN 1m24.779s Soft
5 <b>ALONSO</b> FERRARI 1m24.974s Soft	6 <b>PETROV</b> RENAULT 1m25.247s Soft
7 <b>ROSBERG</b> MERCEDES 1m25.421s Soft	8 <b>MASSA</b> FERRARI 1m25.599s Soft
9 <b>KOBAYASHI</b> SAUBER 1m25.626s Soft	10 <b>BUEMI</b> TORO ROSSO 1m27.066s Soft
11 <b>SCHUMACHER</b> MERCEDES 1m25.971s Soft	12 <b>ALGUERSUARI</b> TORO ROSSO 1m26.103s Soft
13 <b>PEREZ</b> SAUBER 1m26.108s Hard	14 <b>DI RESTA</b> FORCE INDIA 1m26.739s Soft
15 <b>MALDONADO</b> WILLIAMS 1m26.768s Soft	16 <b>SUTIL</b> FORCE INDIA 1m31.407s Soft
17 <b>BARRICHELLO</b> WILLIAMS no time Soft	18 <b>HEIDFELD</b> RENAULT 1m27.239s Soft
19 <b>KOVALAINEN</b> LOTUS 1m29.254s Soft	20 <b>TRULLI</b> LOTUS 1m29.342s Hard
21 <b>GLOCK</b> VIRGIN 1m29.858s Soft	22 <b>D'AMBROSIO</b> VIRGIN 1m30.822s Soft

## THE RACE: 58 LAPS, 191.126 MILES

		TYRE CHOICE									
POS	DRIVER	TEAM	LAPS	TOTAL TIME	FASTEST LAP	PITSTOP	FASTEST STOP	STINT 1	STINT 2	STINT 3	STINT 4
1	VETTEL	RED BULL-RENAULT	58	1h29m30.259s	1m29.844s	2	22.60s	Soft	Soft	Hard	
2	HAMILTON	McLAREN-MERCEDES	58	+22.297s	1m30.314s	2	23.20s	Soft	Soft	Hard	
3	PETROV	RENAULT	58	+30.560s	1m30.064s	2	24.54s	Soft	Soft	Hard	
4	ALONSO	FERRARI	58	+31.772s	1m29.487s	3	23.25s	Soft	Soft	Soft	Hard
5	WEBBER	RED BULL-RENAULT	58	+38.171s	1m29.600s	3	22.52s	Soft	Hard	Soft	Soft
6	BUTTON	McLAREN-MERCEDES	58	+54.304s	1m29.883s	2	22.68s	Soft	Soft	Hard	
DQ	PEREZ	SAUBER-FERRARI	58	+1m05.845s	1m29.962s	1	23.44s	Hard	Soft		
DQ	KOBAYASHI	SAUBER-FERRARI	58	+1m16.872s	1m30.384s	2	24.06s	Soft	Soft	Hard	
7	MASSA	FERRARI	58	+1m25.186s	1m28.947s	3	23.84s	Soft	Soft	Hard	Soft
8	BUEMI	TORO ROSSO-FERRARI	57	-1 lap	1m30.836s	2	23.10s	Soft	Soft	Hard	
9	SUTIL	FORCE INDIA-MERCEDES	57	-1 lap	1m31.526s	2	23.87s	Soft	Hard	Hard	
10	DI RESTA	FORCE INDIA-MERCEDES	57	-1 lap	1m31.941s	2	24.33s	Soft	Soft	Hard	
11	ALGUERSUARI	TORO ROSSO-FERRARI	57	-1 lap	1m30.467s	3	24.46s	Soft	Soft	Hard	Hard
12	HEIDFELD	RENAULT	57	-1 lap	1m32.377s	2	22.99s	Soft	Soft	Hard	
13	TRULLI	LOTUS-RENAULT	56	-2 laps	1m32.550s	2	24.85s	Hard	Soft		
14	D'AMBROSIO	VIRGIN-COSWORTH	54	-4 laps	1m34.523s	2	25.26s	Soft	Hard	Hard	
NC	GLOCK	VIRGIN-COSWORTH	49	running	1m35.789s	2	23.79s	Soft	Soft	Hard	
R	BARRICHELLO	WILLIAMS-COSWORTH	48	transmission	1m31.404s	3	23.64s	Soft	Soft	Soft	Hard
R	ROSBERG	MERCEDES	22	acc damage	1m33.503s	1	23.72s	Soft	Hard	DNF	
R	KOVALAINEN	LOTUS-RENAULT	19	water leak	1m34.918s	1	24.87s	Soft	Soft	DNF	
R	SCHUMACHER	MERCEDES	19	acc damage	1m35.319s	1	25.02s	Soft	Hard	DNF	
R	MALDONADO	WILLIAMS-COSWORTH	9	transmission	1m34.102s	0	-	Soft	DNF		
NQ	LIUZZI	HRT-COSWORTH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NQ	KARTHIKEYAN	HRT-COSWORTH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Weather: Hot and sunny. Fastest lap: Felipe Massa 1m28.947s (133.568mph) on lap 55  
Lap leaders: 1-13 Vettel; 14-16 Hamilton; 17-58 Vettel

## SEASON SO FAR - Points and positions

POS	DRIVER	PTS	AUS	MAL	PRC	TR	E	MC	CDN	EU	GB	D	H	B	I	SGP	J	ROK	IND	UAE	BR	
1	VETTEL	25	1 <sup>st</sup>																			
2	HAMILTON	18	2 <sup>nd</sup>																			
3	PETROV	15	3 <sup>rd</sup>																			
4	ALONSO	12	4 <sup>th</sup>																			
5	WEBBER	10	5 <sup>th</sup>																			
6	BUTTON	8	6 <sup>th</sup>																			
7	MASSA	6	7 <sup>th</sup>																			
8	BUEMI	4	8 <sup>th</sup>																			
9	SUTIL	2	9 <sup>th</sup>																			
10	DI RESTA	1	10 <sup>th</sup>																			
11	ALGUERSUARI	0	11 <sup>th</sup>																			
12	HEIDFELD	0	12 <sup>th</sup>																			
13	TRULLI	0	13 <sup>th</sup>																			
14	D'AMBROSIO	0	14 <sup>th</sup>																			
-	GLOCK	0	NC																			
-	PEREZ	0	DQ																			
-	KOBAYASHI	0	DQ																			
-	BARRICHELLO	0	RET																			
-	ROSBERG	0	RET																			
-	KOVALAINEN	0	RET																			
-	SCHUMACHER	0	RET																			
-	MALDONADO	0	RET																			
-	KARTHIKEYAN	0	DNQ																			
-	LIUZZI	0	DNQ																			



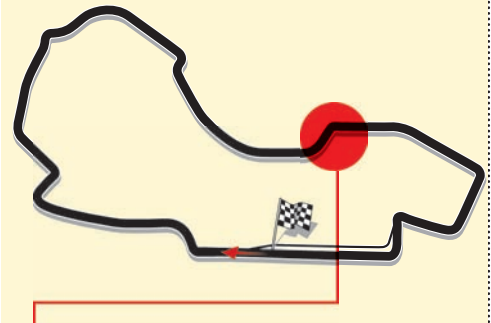
## SEASON SO FAR - Points and positions

POS	TEAM	PTS	AUS	MAL	PRC	TR	E	MC	CDN	EU	GB	D	H	B	I	SGP	J	ROK	IND	UAE	BR	
1	RED BULL	35	35																			
2	McLAREN	26	26																			
3	FERRARI	18	18																			
4	LOTUS	15	15																			
5	TORO ROSSO	4	4																			
6	FORCE INDIA	3	3																			
7	LOTUS	0	0																			
8	VIRGIN	0	0																			
-	SAUBER	0	0																			
-	WILLIAMS	0	0																			
-	MERCEDES	0	0																			



## TRACKSIDE VIEW

Mark Hughes  
Grand Prix editor



These opening laps carry so many soon-to-be-bashed hopes. Before reality bites, they head out for the season's first session around a blustery Albert Park, the lake reflecting a dull-grey sky, the transmission flutter of part-throttle changes carried on the breeze. Lewis Hamilton and Michael Schumacher are driving immediately with the ring of confidence around their cars' body language, Felipe Massa raggedly on but soon enough exploring the gravel, just the first of many times. But if any of these guys were to see the Red Bull and what it can do, they'd realise with a sinking feeling the scale of the challenge they are facing. Through the Jones chicane Mark Webber has got visibly more lateral grip on his car than anyone thus far and he's about to hit the exit kerb. Does the car get all upset and out of line? No, it simply climbs the kerb and steps back off it with barely a crack in its composure, Mark's foot buried deep now into the bulkhead and headed towards

**“Vettel is perfectly at ease with a flash of fifth-gear oversteer”**

the oblivion of Turns 11-12. Up there Sebastian Vettel is showing he's perfectly at ease with a brief flash of around 10-degrees of fifth-gear oversteer as he insists the RB7 doesn't get too far over to the right as he exits 11. Seb holds it to the middle of the track as it yearns to stretch over to the other side – which would put him hopelessly off line for the approach to 11 – and it's as if it's irritated at being brought into line and gives a wilful little snap. But Vettel just loves it, gathers it up and hustles it through 12 before it's even realised what he's done. Other cars either have to be guided into 11 early in order to come out shallow enough to get on line for 12 – or if they do go late into 11, they have to surrender a lot of speed in the no-man's land between the turns. The RB7 is letting Seb have his cake while eating it.



# Button's Bathurst blast

Thanks to mutual sponsor Vodafone, McLaren F1 ace Jenson Button and V8 Supercar star Craig Lowndes swapped cars at the legendary Bathurst track. And Jenson went first. *PHIL BRANAGAN* was there



**B**ATHURST is one of those racetracks that you need to see to believe. Jenson Button flew half-way around the world to see it, and believe it. OK, he actually flew half-way around the world to race in the opening grand prix of the season at Albert Park, but while he was in the neighbourhood a 500-mile detour from Melbourne, to drive a V8 Supercar – and a McLaren-Mercedes F1 car – around the famed 3.8-mile Mount Panorama circuit must have seemed like too good an opportunity to pass up.

Mount Panorama is not like any other circuit. Its legendary Bathurst 1000 is one of the classic events in the sport, and the track – which is actually a tourist road for almost all of the year – is talked about in the same hushed tones as the Nurburgring Nordschleife, Spa or Road America. In fact, Roland Dane, the Team Vodafone V8 Supercar team owner who has watched his drivers win four of the past five 1000s, does not call it Bathurst; he refers to it simply as ‘Mecca’.

Button shook down the McLaren MP4-23 from 2008, which five-time Bathurst winner Craig Lowndes would drive later in the day, then hopped aboard the Holden Commodore V8 Supercar. The saloon was not totally foreign to him (he did a similar car swap with Lowndes’ team-mate, Jamie Whincup, at Albert Park a year ago) but the track was. Not that you would have known it, much. A V8 Supercar has about 640bhp and he put most of that to use just after leaving the pitlane.

The 2009 world champion did a good job. On a dirty track, which had been rained on in the morning, and in what is actually a Ride Car (V8 teams are not allowed to test their ‘real’ cars

more than is absolutely necessary) in two laps, he was within 6s of Lowndes and, clearly, enjoying himself.

“It’s not so much which car you’re driving, it’s driving it around this great circuit,” Button said. “I’ve wanted to do it for a number of years and it’s been a great experience.

“The V8 was really good fun. There was a lot more grip than I expected, especially up the top section, in the slow-speed corners. Down the straights it’s nice and easy to drive, but the F1 car was just moving around all the time on the bumps. It was really nice to drive both cars and my reactions are really in tune for the grand prix in Melbourne.”

“It took me a while to get used to it. I haven’t hammered a car over kerbs like that for 12 years so it was a new experience for me, and something I’ve missed.”

Button intimated a year ago that racing a V8 Supercar was something that he wanted to try – presumably, some time after the end of his F1 career. Having finally made it, literally, to the top of the Mountain, he was impressed by the idea of racing around the circuit for more than six hours.

“While I’m racing anything else, it would be tricky,” he admitted.

**“I haven’t hammered a car over kerbs like that for 12 years - it was something I’ve missed. I’d like to do a race and this is, obviously, the circuit you’d do it on”**

**Jenson Button**

“I’ve been racing nothing but Formula 1 cars for a good few years, so it would be some time yet. But I would like to do a race one day and this is, obviously, the circuit you would like to race on.

“I was holding on tight all the way. It takes everything out of you. It was the experience I’ve wanted to have for many years and I’ve finally done it. In a way it’s probably not a good thing because it’s made me more hungry to come back.”

Button had made some adjustments to his style to accommodate the big Holden. Apart from the weight and the high centre of gravity, a V8 Supercar has a sequential shifter which, as it turns out, he has never used before. When he left Formula 3 at the end of 1999, the cars still had H-pattern gearboxes, and since then he has been in the paddle-shift world of GP racing. Likewise, F1 drivers are universally left-foot brakiers, while only a couple of the 28 full-time V8 Supercar pilots do that. Lowndes, for instance, was a little worried about braking with his left foot in the McLaren but after his first hard stop, he reported that not only did it work, “it feels like a go-kart”.

Button’s speed was good but, like most racing drivers, he was not satisfied to be six seconds slower than Lowndes in the same car on the same day. Considering that Lowndes has spent 15 years making the track his own, it was a commendable effort.

Car swaps are nothing new. Later this year, it will be NASCAR ace and former IndyCar champion Tony Stewart’s turn in a McLaren, while Lewis Hamilton will try Stewart’s Chevrolet Impala stockcar. The target has been set: Lewis, anything less than 6s slower than ‘Smoke’ around Watkins Glen will equal a fail... ❌



Button made first F1 laps of Mount Panorama...



...then got a few V8 tips from Craig Lowndes

**➔ P42 CRAIG LOWNDES IN A McLAREN F1 CAR**



Lowndes' V8

# Supercar SWAP

Multiple Bathurst 1000 winner Craig Lowndes has realised a teenage ambition by driving an F1 car. And he did it at his beloved Mount Panorama. *EDD STRAW* spoke to him afterwards



Lowndes and Button swapped V8s for the day



Lowndes' 1997 F3000 assault was not a success

On October 2 1994, an Australian racing superstar was born. Craig Lowndes, then a 19-year-old Formula 1 aspirant, found himself bringing home the #015 Holden Racing Team Commodore in the Bathurst 1000. Chasing 1989 racewinner John Bowe, he stunned fans by going around the outside of the Ford man at Griffins Bend. No matter that he was soon repassed – or that the move was a missed braking point – this was his race and the start of a love affair with Mount Panorama.

During the intervening 17 years, Lowndes has won The Great Race five times and bagged three domestic tin-top crowns. He remains the most popular driver in V8 Supercars.

On the Tuesday before the Australian Grand Prix, he realised a dream by driving a 2008 McLaren MP4-23 around Bathurst. Okay, it was only on a promotional day for Vodafone, but it was a great moment for the effusive 36-year-old – who was sceptical that it would ever happen when first mooted.

“I didn’t believe it to begin with,” says Lowndes. “I didn’t think that an F1 car could possibly get around the track, but it wasn’t much of a problem in the end. We had one of our biggest races of the year the weekend before, the Clipsal 500 in Adelaide and I was trying not to think about what was going to happen on Tuesday but it was hard not to!”

It was down to Jenson Button to decide whether it would be practical to take the McLaren around the track. Having never driven an F1 car before,

and not so much as turned a wheel in a single-seater since his one season in European F3000 in 1997, Lowndes was soon unleashed.

“Because it’s a main road, there’s a lot of crown on it. Jenson said that he couldn’t run up the middle of the track where we would in the V8s because it was bottoming out. McLaren raised the car another 4mm for me, so a lot of the areas where he had a problem, I probably didn’t. But the car was still hitting down Conrod Straight – there was enough downforce to get the plank on the ground.

“The braking was sensational, because I’d never used carbon brakes before. It was the braking, the downforce and the acceleration that stood out. Turn 2 [where Lowndes pulled off his career-making passing move] starts your climb up the hill and when you have the F1 horsepower behind you, it just rockets up the hill.

“I was able to lean on the car. On my last lap I was flat down Conrod Straight into The Chase. The car was geared for Melbourne and I topped out at 310kph [193mph], but McLaren’s simulations suggested about 360kph [224mph] was possible with the right gearing. I jumped on the brakes and the front-left was just starting to lock up. I was on the edge of the braking capacity, although I wasn’t as deep as I could go.”

Lowndes posted a best time in the 1m49s bracket on his five-lap run, about a second off what Button managed. They agreed that a well set-up car on a serious test day would get well into the 1m30s.

“We were about a second apart, but with another go we could have gone faster! Coming out of The Cutting – Turn 4 – up to Skyline it would have been completely flat. You could quite easily get down to a 1m40s and into the 30s by spending some time there, getting the right gear ratios, tweaking the aero and getting the car set up.”

Lowndes’ first taste of an F1 car inevitably made him reflect on his own stalled F1 career. He came to Europe in 1997 to race for RSM Marko in F3000 as team-mate to Juan Pablo Montoya. But after what was originally hoped to be a learning season, during which he scored points only once with a fourth place at Monza, the funds dried up. While the results were unimpressive, there’s little doubt that given a few more years in Europe he could have made a big impression.

“My path to F1 didn’t go as I would have liked, but I have no regrets,” says Lowndes. “It might be 14 years too late, but to have had a chance to drive the car gives me better appreciation of how they go about their business.

“Originally, my understanding was that F3000 would be a two-year programme, but it was too difficult to do the second year. You want to spend the first 12 months learning everything and

**“I didn’t think an F1 car could get around the track, but it wasn’t a problem. I was able to lean on it and topped out at 193mph!”**

**Craig Lowndes**

you need the year two to do the job.”

Despite that F1 dream coming to nought, the Bathurst dream did come true. After his three flying laps, he returned to the pits having left an indelible mark on Mt Panorama and the 20,000 or so spectators who turned up.

“Bathurst is one of the best three or four tracks in the world,” says Lowndes. “To drive an F1 car here is very special. From the outside, it’s frighteningly quick, but once you sit in it you just want to keep going faster and faster!”

After a half-joking request to do another 10 laps, Lowndes’ first – maybe only – taste of F1 was over. But he had added another chapter to the Lowndes Bathurst legend. ❧



“Crikey JB, there isn’t much room in here mate!”

## MELBOURNE

 AUS  
March 24-27  
V8 Supercars  
Non-championship



### AT A GLANCE

- **Winners** Whincup x2/Tander
- **Pole** Lowndes
- **Fastest laps** Lowndes/  
R Kelly/Whincup



Jamie Whincup won the first and third races

# Whincup is streets ahead in Albert Park

Two wins for Triple 8 Holden ace Jamie Whincup gave him the overall plaudits in Melbourne

**RACING DRIVERS SOMETIMES** get it right, and Garth Tander did just that – almost – in the V8 Supercar support races at Albert Park.

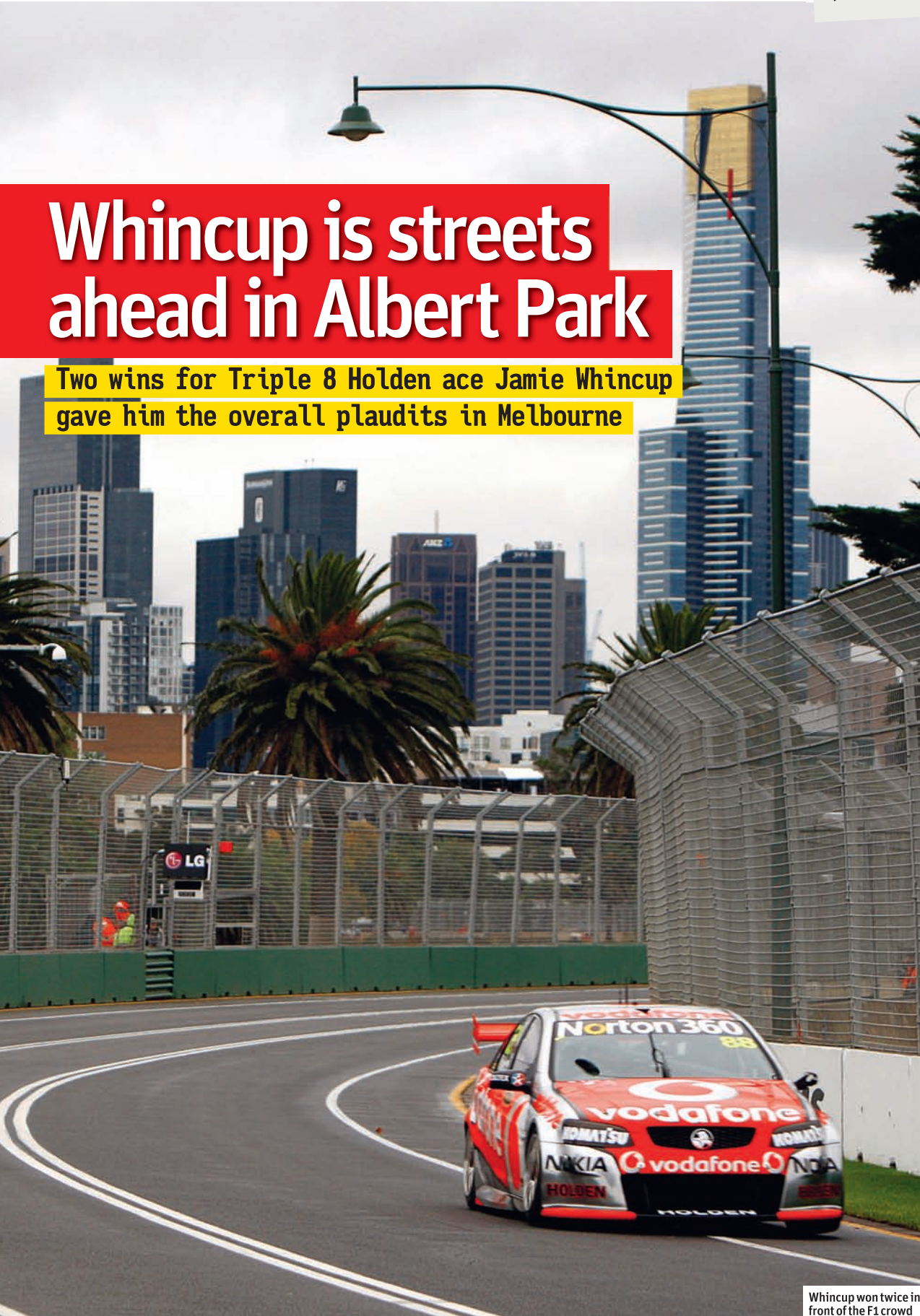
Tander won the second of the three non-championship races in Melbourne, and that was no huge surprise. But even in victory, he knew the weekend was not about him. He knew – everyone knew – this weekend was about Jason Richards. The Team BOC Holden Commodore driver was diagnosed with a particularly virulent form of cancer last November but interrupted his treatment to make a return to his V8 Supercar seat.

A week after winning in a one-off drive in the second-tier Fujitsu Series race in Adelaide, Richards drove his heart out, and sixth and second in the first two races were his best results for over a year.

Unfortunately, the third race did not work out so well, the Kiwi running off at the first turn and retiring with broken drive pegs shortly after.

“We complain about understeer and oversteer and the battle we have, but that’s nothing. I think today’s story was Jason, there’s no more to it,” Tander said after victory in Saturday’s race.

“Don’t get me wrong, I wasn’t going to give him the win and he would have kicked my arse if I had. We



Whincup won twice in front of the F1 crowd



## RACE RATING

★★★★☆

Plenty of argy-bargy as you'd expect from V8s, with a feel-good Jason Richards factor

## MILESTONE

Two races of 150km and one of 100km created an all-new V8 Supercar support format for the Australian Grand Prix

# REPORT V8s MELBOURNE

PHIL BRANAGAN  
reports



Todd Kelly under attack from Fabien Coulthard



Lowndes took pole but lucked out in race one



Two P3s were strong results for Alex Davison

all know why he is here racing this weekend and know why he is doing it. In saying that, I don't think he would want us to give him the win."

An interesting theory – but one completely untested. For the record, Tander has 48 V8 Supercar wins, Richards none.

The first race on Friday was all Jamie Whincup's, once he'd moved past Craig Lowndes. The two Team Vodafone team-mates were on different strategies, with Whincup's softer 'sprint' tyres giving him the edge

early in the race. We never got to see whether Lowndes would have been able to reverse the dose later in the race, after he suffered damage in a collision with Shane van Gisbergen. Lowndes pitted and returned to finished 27th, his only consolation being a new lap record. For his role in the incident, van Gisbergen was issued with a 40-second time penalty, dropping him to 12th.

The most improved driver of race one was Tander, who moved from 14th to second, ahead of van Gisbergen.

Alex Davison took third, showing the speed of Stone Brothers Racing's Fords, which might have scored a double result, had Tim Slade's car not had a slow pitstop after a crossed thread on a hub delayed him.

On Saturday, things changed completely. Davison and Richards cleared out early on soft tyres, while Whincup had to fight his way through traffic – on hard tyres – to regain the ground he lost after making his fourth bad start in four races. Inevitably, the tide turned and Tander, who had started on harder control rubber, came through to pass Davison. After stalking Richards for a number of laps, he made a clean move, took the lead and scurried away to win.

The third race was much different. Lowndes and Rick Kelly got into a shoving match early on which, shortly thereafter, involved a wall and three other cars. It ended badly, allowed most of the surviving cars to pit under the safety car for fresh tyres and resume somewhere near the lead.

With some predictability, Whincup won from Greg Murphy, who made great

ground to take his first podium performance in some time, and Tander. Van Gisbergen gave a glimpse of what might have been with fourth place.

"I'm disappointed, in a micro way," said Richards. "Spearing off at Turn 1 was not ideal but I got out of the weekend what I came here to get; I got more out of it. I got the energy that I wanted and my fan base is growing from all the supporters here this weekend. It's broken down all the barriers between Ford and Holden and I have to thank everyone for their support. It's been unreal.

"I've had a fantastic weekend, it's been amazing."

Overall winner was Whincup but, with no points on offer, it didn't mean much. In the context of the Richards story, it meant even less, even if there was a much-promoted prize fund of half a million Australian dollars. In a business in which money usually does the lion's share of the talking, Richards' performances overshadowed even that.

The V8 Supercar Championship resumes in New Zealand next month,

without Richards, who will be in the USA seeking an experimental treatment. With title points to be had, the racing may be better on the streets of Hamilton but, whoever wins, it seems scarcely possible that the story will be. ❧

### RESULTS

**Race 1 1 Jamie Whincup (Holden Commodore VEII)** 25 laps in 50m32.34s; 2 Garth Tander (Holden) +7.99s; 3 Alex Davison (Ford Falcon FG); 4 Rick Kelly (Holden); 5 Lee Holdsworth (Holden); 6 Jason Richards (Holden); 7 Mark Winterbottom (Ford); 8 Jonathon Webb (Ford); 9 Jason Bright (Holden); 10 Will Davison (Ford). **Fastest lap** Craig Lowndes (Holden), 1m55.96s (Record)

**Race 2 1 Tander** 25 laps in 50m31.91s; 2 Richards +6.36s; 3 A Davison; 4 Whincup; 5 Kelly; 6 Lowndes; 7 Tim Slade (Ford); 8 Fabien Coulthard (Holden); 9 Bright; 10 Shane van Gisbergen (Ford). **Fastest lap** Kelly, 1m56.27s

**Race 3 1 Whincup** 18 laps in 47m01.92s; 2 Greg Murphy (Holden) +10.99s; 3 Tander; 4 van Gisbergen; 5 Todd Kelly (Holden); 6 Michael Caruso (Holden); 7 Slade; 8 Coulthard; 9 James Courtney (Holden); 10 Bright. **Fastest lap** Whincup, 1m57.41s



Tander leads Davison and Richards off the line

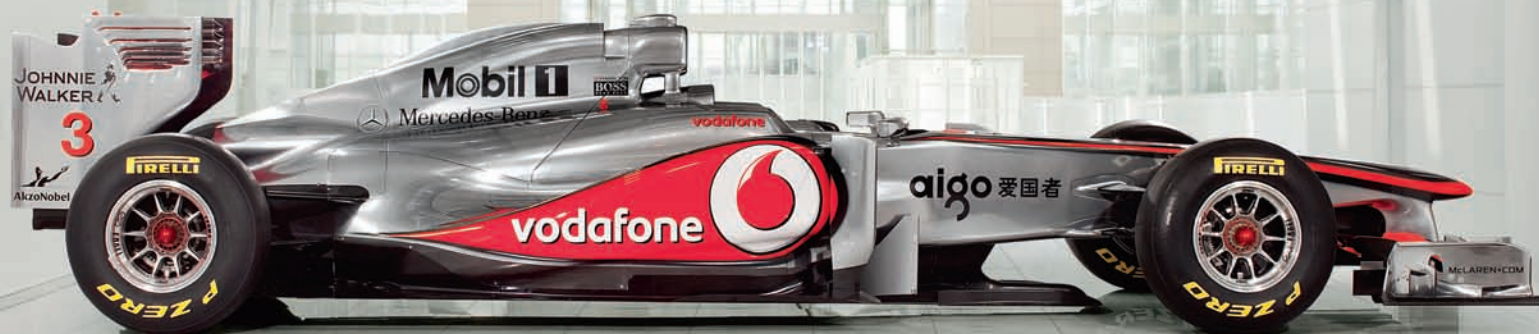


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- Winner **Kevin Harvick**
- Pole **Juan Pablo Montoya**
- Most laps led **Kyle Busch**



Thrilling end to what had been a processional race up to that point



Harvick's first win of the year came in dramatic style

**NASCAR SPRINT CUP CALIFORNIA SPEEDWAY (USA), MARCH 27, RD 5/36**

## Harvick is the Busch whacker at the flag

**KEVIN HARVICK** led just one lap of the 400-miler at Fontana, but it was the lap that counted.

The Richard Childress Racing Chevy driver prevailed in a fantastic three-way fight to the flag, beating Jimmie Johnson to the line by just a few feet, while Kyle Busch, who had

dominated the race up to that point, was shuffled back to third.

In his Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota, Busch had led over three-quarters of the 200 laps in California, but was unable to hold on in a nine-lap dash to the flag. A late caution created a quandary for the leaders:

to pit or not to pit? The top seven stayed out. From second, Johnson went on the offensive immediately, making the move stick on Busch two laps later.

Harvick quickly followed him and was right on Johnson's tail. Running down the back straight he had his nose on the bumper of Johnson's Hendrick Chevy, which forced the reigning champion to take a more defensive line into the final turn. This allowed Harvick to get the run around the outside and win

the race to the line.

"We had them all beat last year here and I gave it all away," he said. "When I saw those guys pit at the end I thought we could be in deep trouble but our car kept going. What a great day!"

Last year's winner Johnson admitted he simply lacked the pace to hold on: "If I could have passed the 18 [Busch] a lap earlier, maybe I could have held him off. But with those tyres, man – I was sideways all day."

Roush Ford driver Matt Kenseth was the highest placed of the late stoppers (fourth), as polesitter Juan Pablo Montoya brought his Ganassi Chevy home 10th.

● Connell Sanders Jr

**RESULTS**

- 1 **Kevin Harvick (Chevrolet Impala)**, 200 laps in 2h39m06s;
- 2 Jimmie Johnson (Chevy), +0.144s;
- 3 Kyle Busch (Toyota Camry);
- 4 Matt Kenseth (Ford Fusion);
- 5 Ryan Newman (Chevy);
- 6 Carl Edwards (Ford);
- 7 Clint Bowyer (Chevy);
- 8 Brian Vickers (Toyota);
- 9 Kasey Kahne (Toyota);
- 10 Juan Pablo Montoya (Chevy). **Points**
- 1 Edwards, 187; 2 Newman, 178;
- 3 Kurt Busch, 177; 4 Kyle Busch, 176;
- 5 Johnson, 173; 6 Tony Stewart, 170.

**IN BRIEF**



**NASCAR NATIONWIDE**

Kyle Busch (above) made it three wins for the season at California Speedway after a late gamble to change only two tyres on his Joe Gibbs Toyota at his final stop. Early leaders Carl Edwards and Kevin Harvick followed him, with fourth-placed Ricky Stenhouse Jr taking the series lead.

**STAR MAZDA**

Connor de Phillippi won the season opener at St Petersburg, powering past polesitter Martin Scuncio at the start and pulling clear. Scuncio and ex-Palmer Audi frontrunner Tristan Vautier completed the podium, with Irishman Patrick McKenna fourth.

**US FORMULA 2000**

Petri Suvanto became the fourth different winner in as many races at St Petersburg. The Finn fought off huge pressure from first-race winner Spencer Pigot to take the series lead. Ex-British F3 race winner Wayne Boyd took his first podium in race two.

**SUD-AM FORMULA 3**

Guilherme Silva scored a treble with Hitech Racing's Brazilian arm at Velopark. Fabiano Machado, class B champion Fernando Rezende and Bruno Bonifacio each took a second.

**FORMULA RENAULT ALPS**

Italian Federico Gibbin and France's Yann Zimmer shared the wins at Monza – first time out for their Viola and ARTA teams with the new-spec car. Double poleman Javier Tarancon was delayed with engine woes (race one) and a string of incidents.

**INDY LIGHTS ST PETERSBURG (USA), MARCH 27, RD 1/13**

## New bloom for Newgarden

**ON HIS** Indy Lights debut, 2009 British Formula Ford runner-up Josef Newgarden drove to an easy win in the season opener.

The Tennessee native, who had a tough time in GP3 last season, passed Irishman Peter Dempsey for the lead on the 12th lap. Driving for Sam Schmidt Motorsports, Newgarden then defeated reigning Star Mazda champion Conor Daly – whose main focus this

year is on GP3 with Carlin – by 0.8 seconds.

Moral Formula Renault 3.5 champion Esteban Guerrieri took pole on his debut and ran second for much of the way before being edged wide on a restart. The Argentinian, a team-mate of Newgarden's, finally finished sixth.

"I got a good start and Esteban gave me plenty of room," Newgarden said. "It was a nice easy pass and



Like JK Vernay one year ago, Newgarden (11) won on debut

Dempsey actually got by me as well, but I just thought if you stay cool and pressure him he will make a mistake and I could capitalise. That's exactly what happened. This is a dream come true!"

● Bruce Martin

**RESULTS**

- 1 **Josef Newgarden**, 45 laps in 56m11.004s;
- 2 Conor Daly, +0.8552s;
- 3 Peter Dempsey;
- 4 David Ostella;
- 5 Anders Krohn;
- 6 Esteban Guerrieri. **Points**
- 1 Newgarden, 52;
- 2 Daly, 40;
- 3 Dempsey, 35;
- 4 Ostella, 32;
- 5 Krohn, 30;
- 6 Guerrieri, 29.



CURRENT STANDINGS

- 1 **Sebastian Vettel** <> 24,621
- 2 **Mark Webber** <> 22,237
- 3 **Sebastien Loeb** <> 20,354
- 4 **Fernando Alonso** <> 19,836
- 5 **Lewis Hamilton** <> 19,454

Ranking the world's best drivers

**WHAT HAPPENED THIS WEEK**

Jimmie Johnson's (9) failure to win at Fontana causes him to drop a spot behind IndyCar champion Dario Franchitti (8). A debut Indy Lights win for Josef Newgarden (394) lifts him 53 spots, while Esteban Guerrieri gains nine and sits at an all-time-high 103rd.

To see the full list, visit [castroldriverrankings.com](http://castroldriverrankings.com)

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## RALLY OF PORTUGAL

Faro

ROUND 3/13

### WINNER

Sebastien Ogier  
4h10m53.4s

### RACE RATING

★★★★★

Citroen steers clear of punctures to repeat one-two from last year.

### DRIVERS' STANDINGS

Hirvonen 58pts  
Loeb 58pts  
Latvala 48pts

### POWERSTAGE WINNER

Loeb

### MILESTONES

WRC return for the Mini – albeit in S2000 form. Portugal's WRC round returned to Lisbon for the first time in 37 years.

DAVID EVANS  
reports



# Citroen elated as Ford is left deflated

Factory Citroen DS3 pair Sebastien Ogier and Sebastien Loeb avoided Portuguese punctures to leave their Ford Fiesta rivals trailing



IT HAD BEEN BILLED AS the first real test of the new cars, running at sea level rather than the snows of Sweden or the elevation of Mexico. In the end, the story was a familiar one with two Sebastiens and Citroen at the front. Ford's Finns were close, but punctures and transmission trouble meant Jari-Matti Latvala and Mikko Hirvonen could only manage P3 and P4 respectively. The French reigned in Portugal once again and, like last year, it was Ogier who beat Loeb after the seven-time champion quite literally lost his way on Saturday.

### LEG ONE (82.27 miles)

OVERCAST THEN CLEAR – AMBIENT TEMP

RANGE ON STAGES 13-20C

The recce had given Mikko Hirvonen hope. But he'd

been here before and, in his own words, he didn't want to look stupid on Friday night. There wasn't quite as much loose gravel around for the championship-leading road sweeper, so surely he was up for a positive prediction...

"No way," he smiled, thinly, "just in case I end up a minute down again..."

Forced on by that very fear, Hirvonen rocked the streets of Lisbon to set fastest time around the city-centre superspecial watched by 40,000 fans on Thursday night.

Much to everybody's surprise, he almost did the same on the first stage on Friday morning, where only Petter Solberg beat him. Loeb was clearly surprised at the leader's gravel pace.

"I wasn't happy with the

car," grumbled Loeb, before returning to his magnanimous best. "But I didn't do a bad stage – he [Hirvonen] was very fast."

Both Loeb and Ogier were pretty glum at the finish of Santa Clara 1. While Loeb talked of an understeering and imprecise DS3, Ogier didn't talk much at all.

The duo got their spanners out and rattled around their suspension and were soon smiling after Loeb went fastest in SS3 and Ogier in SS4.

They arrived at Faro service one-two, with Ogier leading the seven-time champion by 2.8s.

Discussing his post-SS2 changes, Ogier said: "I'm not sure there was anything with the car. Sometimes it's just in the mind. And I don't think I was

completely awake!"

Hirvonen was the top Ford at the mid-way point in the day, despite chastising himself for a couple of errors.

"It's not the instinct to drive the car yet," he said. "I missed a couple of gears and things like that. Nothing too major, but it's not perfect yet – but it is a lot of fun."

The Finn had made the most of the better-than-expected conditions, but he added that the fun would stop tomorrow.

"There's much more gravel around tomorrow," he said. "And there's nothing I can do to stop them [the Citroen drivers' tactics]."

The predicted tactical approach came from Ogier

Latvala got his Ford Fiesta onto the podium



PICS: WWW.MCKLEIN.DE



Loeb had no answer for the younger Seb

It was two out of two for Ogier in the Algarve

and Loeb in the day's final test, with both slowing down to end the day fourth and third respectively. Latvala also took a tactical approach, but the thinking behind his afternoon was much more straightforward and much more Latvala: maximum attack.

While the DS3s slowed, Latvala got on the gas and hit the top of the table to lead from Hirvonen by 11.5s after fastest times on all three afternoon stages.

"Was it the right decision? Of course it was!" he said at the end of the day. "Now I have taken the decision, I cannot doubt myself. It is not impossible to win from this position, Ogier did it last year and we can do it this time."

Deviating momentarily from Ford's script, Hirvonen

pointed out that, running one-two on the road on Saturday, he and his team-mate would be lambs to Citroen's slaughter at the end of day two as well. Then he remembered the script.

"Oh, no, we won't," he said, "because we're going to be half a minute ahead this time tomorrow!"

The Finns' boss, Malcolm Wilson, was smiling. He knew there was nothing to be done and he was mighty pleased with his boys.

"This is more than I expected from the first day," said Wilson. "The cars have been fantastic and we're right on the pace – and it's great to see Mikko smiling again."

But who would be smiling on Saturday night – and, crucially Sunday afternoon? Loeb is never comfortable

after he's taken a tactical approach to the afternoon and he laughed off talk that this rally could turn out to be an all-French fight. The Fords, he insisted, were still very much in there. Asked if his third on the road was perfect, he smiled a thin smile and said: "You want the perfect place? It's there."

He nodded at Ogier's car.

Ogier admitted he was where he wanted to be, but pointed out that to control proceedings ahead of the final day required him to be on his mettle through a tough second day.

The driver who'd endured the toughest first day was undoubtedly Petter Solberg. The Norwegian suffered four punctures on his DS3 and retired with no useable rubber to return him to Faro for final service.

As he had on the last round in Mexico, Matthew Wilson made a solid start to this event, only to fall foul of a mapping problem on his Fiesta, which left the car slightly lethargic on the uphill. And there were a lot of uphill...

"But we're coming down the other side like a couple of lunatics!" smiled Wilson.

The Englishman generally had the better of Henning Solberg, but his problems left him trailing Solberg by 4.7s at the end of day one.

Kimi Raikkonen had been on the fringes of that fight until a fifth-stage puncture spoiled what had been an encouraging first gravel outing in the DS3 for the Finn. He went to bed in ninth place. Making the most of the early troubles for the crews ahead – and driving superbly himself – Armindo Araujo ensured Mini would enjoy its share of the limelight. The Portuguese was seventh overall, despite driving his S2000-spec car with plenty in reserve.

**POSITIONS AFTER DAY ONE**

1 LATVALA/ANTTILA	1h23m31.4s
2 HIRVONEN/LEHTINEN	+11.5s
3 LOEB/ELENA	+13.7s
4 OGIER/INGRASSIA	+16.7s
5 SOLBERG/MINOR	+2m06.5s
6 WILSON/MARTIN	+2m11.2s

**LEG TWO (92.02 miles)**

OVERCAST – AMBIENT TEMP RANGE ON STAGES 12-18C

Briefly, a moment of concern flickered across Ogier's face when it was put to him that the overnight drizzle could turn into something more substantial through Saturday. The man who had handed first place and a handful of

seconds to Latvala the night before knew that rain would help the Finn far more.

"It'll be good," he said, trying to convince himself.

Then the sun came out and he put his regulation shades on and smiled.

And the sun certainly was shining on him through the morning. Latvala's 11-second overnight lead was slashed through the day's opener, but it was Loeb who closed right up to the back of the Fiesta.

Loeb was pleased to be so close to a Finnish Ford after SS8. That was not the case one stage later.

Running directly ahead of him, Hirvonen collected a puncture five miles into SS9 and knew immediately he would have to stop and change it. He did that and was back in the car and away just before Loeb arrived on the scene. Like just before Loeb arrived.

Plunged into Hirvonen's dust, Loeb was lost. He stopped his DS3 in the stage for fear of going off the road. Totally blinded, he reached for the radio and told his team to get on to Ford to inform them of his presence. The team did so, but was met with a simple response: Hirvonen was back to full speed so he would not be pulling over to let Loeb through.

Loeb dropped more than half a minute and was livid at the end of the stage, driving his Citroen into the back of Hirvonen's Ford to make his point.

"He's going to be mad," said Hirvonen, "but what could I do? I looked and he wasn't there, so I went."

Hirvonen was right ▶

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Matt Wilson drove well to fifth place

**REPORT**  
WRC PORTUGAL



P4 for Hirvonen kept Ford in the points lead

## STAGE TIMES

### SS1 SSS LISBOA (2.03 MILES)

Fastest: Hirvonen 2m49.6s  
Leader: Hirvonen

### SS2 SANTA CLARA 1 (14.28 MILES)

Fastest: P Solberg 14m03.5s  
Leader: Hirvonen

### SS3 OURIQUE 1 (20.27 MILES)

Fastest: Loeb 12m53.9s  
Leader: Hirvonen

### SS4 FELIZES 1 (13.24 MILES)

Fastest: Ogier 13m25.4s  
Leader: Ogier

### SS5 SANTA CLARA 2 (14.28 MILES)

Fastest: Latvala 13m50.9s  
Leader: Ogier

### SS6 OURIQUE 2 (20.27 MILES)

Fastest: Latvala 12m45.2s  
Leader: Ogier

### SS7 FELIZES 2 (13.24 MILES)

Fastest: Latvala 13m27.1s  
Leader: Latvala

### SS8 ALMODOVAR 1 (6.31 MILES)

Fastest: Loeb 16m12.8s  
Leader: Latvala

### SS9 VASCAO 1 (15.69 MILES)

Fastest: P Solberg 16m25.9s  
Leader: Latvala

### SS10 LOULE 1 (22.56 MILES)

Fastest: Ogier 15m31.6s  
Leader: Ogier

### SS11 ALMODOVAR 2 (6.31 MILES)

Fastest: Ogier 15m59.6s  
Leader: Ogier

### SS12 VASCAO 2 (15.69 MILES)

Fastest: P Solberg 16m11.2s  
Leader: Ogier

### SS13 LOULE 2 (22.56 MILES)

Fastest: P Solberg 15m13.6s  
Leader: Ogier

### SS14 SILVES 1 (13.29 MILES)

Fastest: Hirvonen 12m13.1s  
Leader: Ogier

### SS15 SANTANA DA SERRA 1 (19.28 MILES)

Fastest: P Solberg 22m52.2s  
Leader: Ogier

### SS16 SILVES 2 (13.29 MILES)

Fastest: P Solberg 12m12.5s  
Leader: Ogier

### SS17 SANTANA DA SERRA 2 (19.28 MILES)

Fastest: Loeb 22m35.9s  
Leader: Ogier

◀ about the mad bit. "He has destroyed my rally," fumed Loeb. Loeb's too much of a decent bloke to bear a grudge for too long and at the start of the next stage, he got out and apologised to Hirvonen. Having cooled off, Loeb said: "Mikko didn't know if I was coming or not. I couldn't expect him to wait for me, but I am frustrated that Ford didn't tell him to let me pass. It was Mikko's puncture, not mine, but it has left me playing for third place."

To add insult to injury, Ogier went fastest in the morning's final test, adding to the lead he'd established in the previous stage.

Hirvonen insisted he would keep on it through the afternoon as punctures were becoming an increasingly regular occurrence and, over the rougher re-run stages, further deflations were near-certain.

How right he was. Unfortunately for the Finn, it was his team-mate Latvala who suffered.

Latvala stopped in the day's final test to change a slow puncture, but his afternoon had already been scuppered by a front-right driveshaft failure in Vascao. "I heard a noise earlier in the stage," said Latvala.

"Then we lost drive nearer the end. I worked on the car to increase the pre-load in the diffs to make it easier to drive for the last stage today. Because I did this, I

didn't have time to check the tyres and I didn't notice we had a slow puncture. We had to stop and change it."

That final stage of the day was a nightmare for Ford. Hirvonen passed Latvala while the latter changed his tyre, only for Latvala to re-pass Hirvonen when his rear suspension broke.

"Unbelievable," was all Malcolm Wilson could manage emerging from Ford's command centre with a shell-shocked shake of the head.

Latvala would be third overnight, albeit four minutes off the lead, while Hirvonen was fifth, five seconds behind Wilson Jr.

Up front, the Citroens sailed serenely on. Loeb caught the dust of both the failing Fords in SS13, but Hirvonen pulled over immediately this time and Latvala was far enough ahead not to cause Loeb too much concern.

With 37 seconds between himself and leader Ogier, Loeb pointed out that his moment had pretty much passed, anyway...

Both Ogier and Loeb drove perfect days, but fortune favoured the younger Seb on day two.

"It looks nice for tomorrow," he said with a shrug and a smile in Faro for the final time on Saturday.

There wasn't much that looked nice from Ford's perspective, apart from the potential for points, providing the Finns could keep their Michelins fully

inflated during the final day.

Wilson Jr was pleased to be splitting the two factory cars in fourth place, but he was disappointed another puncture for Henning Solberg had spoiled his scrap with his team-mate.

"It was looking really good with Henning," said Wilson, "we were enjoying that – and getting the better of him."

Wilson's Fiesta was still not running perfectly and he hoped an overnight change of intercooler would return it to the boil for the final day. Henning Solberg remained sixth, but Raikkonen was up to seventh, despite getting caught in Araujo's dust. Payback for the 2007 F1 champion was moving into the local hero's slot when he was instructed to switch off the Mini's engine.

### POSITIONS AFTER DAY TWO

1	OGIER/INGRASSIA	2h59m30.2s
2	LOEB/ELENA	+37.6s
3	LATVALA/ANTTILA	+4m14.6s
4	WILSON/MARTIN	+5m26.8s
5	HIRVONEN/LEHTINEN	+5m32.5s
6	SOLBERG/MINOR	+7m46.4s

### LEG THREE (65.16 miles)

CLEAR - AMBIENT TEMP RANGE ON STAGES

10-19C

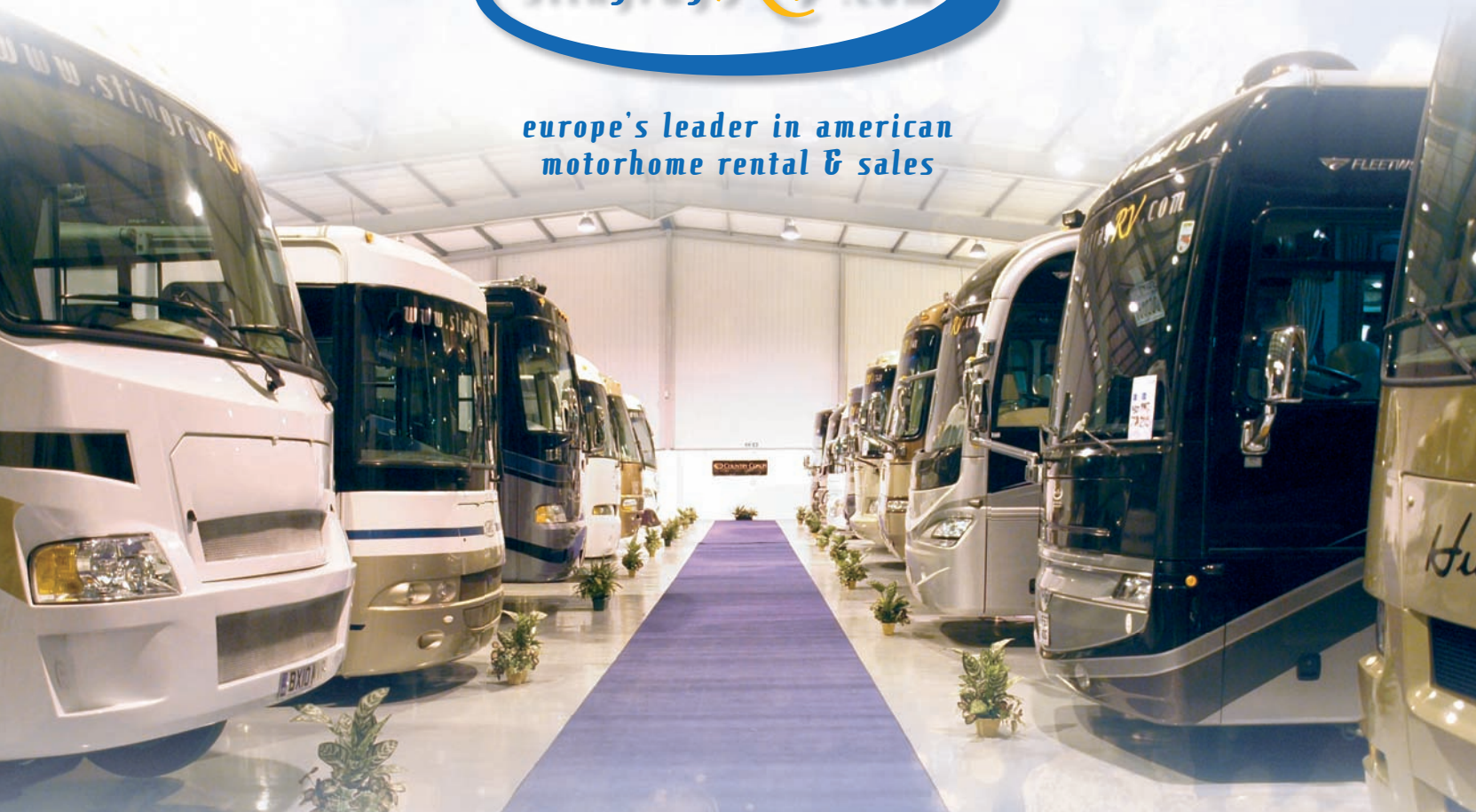
Missing an extra hour in bed had done little to improve Loeb's Sunday morning mood. The only thing that made him laugh was the suggestion that he might be able to make up the half-minute-plus gap on his team-mate. And that laugh was steeped in irony. ▶



Araujo flew on Mini S2000's first event



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Ostberg lost a wheel during Superspecial

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**PWRC**

## Paddon's easy PWRC win; Kaur is the top Academic

**↑** KIWI HAYDEN Paddon couldn't believe it. He kept looking back at the times just to make sure. It was right. Half way through the event, he was *three minutes* ahead.

He couldn't decide how he felt about it. There was elation at being in the strongest position mid-event in the history of PWRC, but there was also trepidation at nursing his Subaru through the second half of the event.

"It's a great position," he said, "but it's also a bit rubbish – it's tough to drive the way we're going to have to now."

He survived a late scare on the final morning when he bent a rear suspension arm, but the former Pirelli Star Driver wasn't overly concerned: the back of his Impreza resembled the spares department of a Subaru dealer and changing an arm was no problem for him.

"We carried about another 40kg in spares," he said. "But it didn't matter – we just had to get to the finish."

He did. With the small matter of eight minutes separating him from second-placed man Jukka Ketomaki's Mitsubishi. The Finn had moved up the order after Paddon's Subaru colleagues Patrik Flodin and Anders Grondal fell by the wayside. Both Flodin and Grondal rolled out of contention after

fighting for the lead early on. Another driver who looked out of contention on day one was Martin Semerad. The Czech driver's Mitsubishi ran the hard-compound DMACK tyre, which was wrecked in the cool conditions. Semerad and the Chinese tyre firm pleaded with the FIA and with the other PWRC runners to allow them to switch to the medium compound, which they did. Semerad then began his fightback through the points – a fightback that left him on the podium after Mexican Benito Guerra suffered turbo failure on the final morning to drop to P4.

**WRC ACADEMY**

Egon Kaur won the opening round of the WRC Academy. The 18 Ford Fiesta R2s ran on the first two days of the Faro-based event and the Estonian took a 15-second win over from Victor Henriksson. Kaur moved to the front after early pace-setters Craig Breen and Alastair Fisher both crashed out of the lead. Fisher recovered from his "two-mile-per-hour accident" to take P5. Both drivers could take some comfort from the fact that they collected extra points for the fastest times they scored.

Henriksson drove much of day two with loose steering. German Christian Riedemann drove well on his first gravel WRC round to claim third.

◀ This time last year, Loeb had gone out and put his C4 on its doorhandles in an effort to wrest the win from Ogier and failed – and that was with a gap roughly half the size of Sunday's.

"No," said Loeb. "For me, it's not so interesting. For me, it's just second [place]. The Powerstage is interesting, though..."

With three points on offer for fastest through the event-ending 19-miler, any attack would be saved for that. Ogier was untroubled through day three.

Hirvonen's hopes of salvaging three points on that all-important second run through Santana de Serra were ruined by a driveshaft problem on the first attempt at the test. Not

only did his three-wheel-drive Ford slip back behind Wilson's Fiesta, he was then forced to switch to his spare rear differential to cure the transmission trouble; the revised set-up left him with too much understeer to hustle the leaders. He did, however, return to fourth.

Latvala was one place ahead, relieved to make the end of what had been a tough event but disappointed at just missing out on a Powerstage win.

Loeb won the Powerstage, using the three points to jointly take the lead of the points with Hirvonen.

Wilson remained fifth at the end of the event, with the other Solberg – Petter not Henning – sixth. Henning suffered a turbo

problem on the final stage and dropped to ninth. Raikkonen was seventh and Federico Villagra eighth.

Up front, Ogier was delighted to repeat his 2010 Portugal win, not least to help erase the memory of Mexico, where he crashed out on the final day. This time, he held it all together to play his part in Citroen's first one-two of the year. Ford endured a forgettable event, but showed character and grit to emerge with its championship lead intact.

Having run way above sea level and at sea level, we now head below sea level for next month's Jordan Rally, with pressure building on the Fiesta men to match and beat Citroen's DS3 drivers in the desert. ☒

## RESULTS

Rally Portugal, March 24-27, round 3 of 13

17 SPECIAL STAGES, 239.46 MILES				
POS	NO	DRIVER/NAVIGATOR	CAR	TIME
1	2	Sebastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia	Citroen DS3 WRC	4h10m53.4s
2	1	Sebastien Loeb/Daniel Elena	Citroen DS3 WRC	+31.8s
3	4	Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+3m22.1s
4	3	Mikko Hirvonen/Jarmo Lehtinen	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+6m16.3s
5	15	Matthew Wilson/Scott Martin	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+7m48.5s
6	11	Petter Solberg/Chris Patterson	Citroen DS3 WRC	+10m17.4s
7	8	Kimi Raikkonen/Kaj Lindstrom	Citroen DS3 WRC	+10m54.1s
8	7	Federico Villagra/Jorge Perez Companc	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+11m38.8s
9	5	Henning Solberg/Ilka Minor	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	+14m16.4s
10	9	Dennis Kuipers/Frederic Miclotte	Ford Fiesta S2000	+17m54.6s
OTHERS				
R	17	Armando Araujo/Miguel Ramalho	Mini Countryman S2000	SS13-engine
DNS	43	Ken Block/Alex Gelsomino	Ford Fiesta RS WRC	s/down acc

**CLASS WINNERS** A1 Ogier/Ingrassia; PWRC: H Paddon/J Kennard (Subaru Impreza STi); WRC Academy: E Kaur/M Laidvee (Ford Fiesta R2). Starters/finishers: 52/38; Leaders: SS1-3 Hirvonen; SS4-6 Ogier; SS7-9 Latvala; SS10-17 Ogier

CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE		
POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Mikko Hirvonen	58
2	Sebastien Loeb	58
3	Jari-Matti Latvala	48
4	Sebastien Ogier	41
5	Petter Solberg	31
6	Mads Ostberg	28
7	Matthew Wilson	12
8	Henning Solberg	10
9	Kimi Raikkonen	10
10	Martin Prokop	6
MANUFACTURERS' POINTS		
1	Ford Abu Dhabi WRT	100
2	Citroen Total WRT	90
3	Stobart Ford	40

**RALLY SUMMARY** The event returned to capital city Lisbon for the first time in 37 years, with a city-centre superspecial. It was based in the Algarve Stadium, but there were no stages inside it. Otherwise, the route remained in the Serra do Caldeirao hills above the Algarve coast.



Paddon thrashed rivals for PWRC win

**PWRC - Round 2 of 7**

POS	DRIVER/NAVIGATOR	CAR	TIME
1	Hayden Paddon/John Kennard	Subaru Impreza STi	4h33m33.4s
2	Jukka Ketomaki/Kai Risberg	Mitsubishi Lancer EX	+7m39.9s
3	Martin Semerad/Michał Ernst	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	+9m12.6s

PICS: WWW.MCKLEIN.DE



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## ST PETERSBURG

USA

MARCH 27

IndyCar Series  
Round 1/17



### AT A GLANCE

- Winner **Dario Franchitti**
- Pole **Will Power**
- Most laps led **Franchitti**
- Fastest lap **Castroneves**



A perfect title-defence start for Dario Franchitti

# When two (-wide) into (turn) one doesn't go

Controversial new restart procedure causes first-corner grief in season-opening race



Two-wide restarts caused big trouble



Andretti flies over Dixon (9) and Conway

AS SOON AS INDYCAR SERIES officials revealed that NASCAR-style, two-wide restarts would become the norm in 2011, alarm bells started to ring. The wisdom of the move was called into question, and that was answered straight off the bat with a multi-car pile-up at Turn 1 in St Petersburg.

And we were warned, as Dario Franchitti said before the start: "Will there be more cars in pieces than usual? Yeah."

With the cars approaching the startline two-wide in a tightly-packed 70mph bunch before gunning their way on the long drag to Turn 1, the feared concertina collision happened just seconds after the green flag waved to open the season. Helio Castroneves locked his rear wheels, and pushed Marco Andretti into Scott Dixon. Andretti's car rode over Dixon's rear end and clipped team-mate Mike Conway before flipping onto its rollhoop. Castroneves then collected Penske team-mate Ryan Briscoe, who also tagged Conway. All sustained damage that would either put them out or many laps down.

"We have to assess what we saw today and how we attack that first corner after restarts," said Franchitti. "I don't know what happened on that first one. Maybe next time we'll be – what's the word? – more circumspect about it..."

Andretti was livid. His world champion grandfather watched the drama unfold from the pitlane, and once he saw Marco extracted unharmed, Mario shook his head and walked away.

"That's what happens when you try to imitate NASCAR," complained Marco. "Our cars have too much power to start right nose-to-tail, you know, we're so close together at the start. It creates disasters."

"Helio misjudged his braking point by about the length of a football field. I had a good run going on the inside of Briscoe, it's just so unfortunate what happened next. It's good for the fans, but not good for me today."

Castroneves was apologetic for his mistake: "I thought someone might have hit me from behind, but I guess the rears locked over the painted lines [Turn 1 is at the end of a regional airport runway]. I wasn't trying to pass anyone, I was just trying to get it stopped. It's such a shame."

Conway summed it up best: "It's just silly really – no need for it. And if you can't get the first one right, what chance have you got with the others?" Perhaps Dixon, who lost four laps while repairs were made to his Ganassi machine, was being punished for his gung-ho pre-race assessment: "If I'm sat on the couch with a beer, two-wide restarts is exactly what I'd want to watch."

With no less than four full-course yellows in the first 15 laps, the race threatened to descend into farce. Another victim of a restart-related shunt was Ryan Hunter-Reay, who was the third Andretti Autosport car to be removed from a top position when he was on the wrong end of a collision between Raphael Matos and Alex Tagliani.

## RACE RATING

★★★★☆

Crash-crazy opening and Franchitti domination, but de Silvestro livened it up



## MILESTONE

Dario Franchitti's win was his 27th in Indy racing, putting him equal 10th with Johnny Rutherford on the all-time list

# REPORT INDYCAR ST PETERSBURG

**CHUCK BRADBURY JR**  
reports

"Racing with guys like Dario, Tony [Kanaan] and Will [Power] is fine, but it's all the others not using their heads," said Hunter-Reay, who had been running strongly in fourth. "Double-wide restarts are fine on ovals with NASCAR where they're slow to accelerate and brake, but these cars will go from 200[mph] to 30 just like that, and it's going to cause big problems.

"It's ridiculous. You can be running fourth, which puts you on the outside, so you're at the mercy of the..." He never did finish the sentence as too many profanities appeared to be circulating around his brain for him to continue.

Thankfully for race dominator Franchitti, there was only one more restart to contend with, after satellite team-mate Charlie Kimball had smacked the wall at

Turn 3 on cold tyres moments after making a pitstop. That restart did allow Tony Kanaan to make his crucial pass on Simona de Silvestro at Turn 1 for third place, with a great move around the outside.

But, in the final reckoning, it was a double-file restart that allowed Franchitti his chance to pass Power in the first place — after the first yellow.

"I knew if I could pull alongside him at Turn 1 I would have the apex in the next turn," said Franchitti, who braved it out around the outside of the opening right-hand hairpin. "Once I got a gap I could control the race from the front."

Maybe this inelegant move to spice up the racing will play into the hands of the series' cleverest racers after all — if you can survive the first corner. ☞

Kanaan pipped de Silvestro for third



Franchitti (far right) got ahead and stayed ahead

## FEISTY FRANCHITTI FIRES WARNING

When Dario Franchitti stormed past Will Power through Turn 2 at the restart following the first corner pile-up that had eliminated so many of their rivals, he laid the foundations for a dominant victory. Ninety-four laps in the lead later, the three-time champ sent out his message for 2011: I'm as strong as ever.

"Anyone who doubts this team's motivation, our will to win, can see what we did today," Franchitti said. "We're not going to win this championship by sitting back."

Power's car was damaged slightly in one of the restart

skirmishes, and after the race he told Franchitti: "I just couldn't hang with you." To which Dario quipped: "It's been a while since that happened!"

The best battle of the race was for third, between Tony Kanaan and Simona de Silvestro. Kanaan, whose deal with KV-Lotus was only confirmed at the last minute, overtook the feisty Swiss lady racer just before half distance, but he had to run the last stint on the harder tyre. De Silvestro hunted him down, and badgered him until the finish, but was unable to snatch a top-three finish.

"She drove a great race," said Kanaan, who had ironically poached de Silvestro's race engineer Michael Cannon. "It's only my third day at the job — I'm afraid I've risen the bar too high already!"

De Silvestro — who surged from 17th on the grid to run second by lap 17 — said: "It would have taken a big risk to pass TK, but I tried a couple of times." She ended the race with 13 push-to-pass activations to spare; Kanaan used his last one on the final lap to stay ahead. Like de Silvestro, Takuma Sato recorded his best-ever IndyCar finish with fifth.

## RESULTS

IndyCar Series, St Petersburg (USA), March 25-27, round 1 of 17

GRID	
2 FRANCHITTI 1:02.2953	1 POWER 1:01.9625
4 CONWAY 1:02.5306	3 DIXON 1:02.3975
6 WILSON 1:02.7729	5 BRISCOE 1:02.5744
8 KANAAN 1:02.7818	7 ANDRETTI 1:02.6312
10 TAGLIANI 1:02.8225	9 CASTRONEVES 1:02.8204
12 RAHAL 1:03.0640	11 SATO 1:02.9312
14 H-REAY 1:03.1778	13 METRA 1:03.1315
16 MATOS 1:03.2594	15 SERVIA 1:03.2434
18 BOURDAIS 1:03.3188	17 SILVESTRO 1:03.2724
20 BEATRIZ 1:03.8036	19 PATRICK 1:03.3764
22 JAKES 1:03.8854	21 VISO 1:03.4065
24 SAAVEDRA 1:03.9696	23 KIMBALL 1:03.5162
	25 HILDEBRAND 1:03.8256

100 LAPS, 180 MILES					
POS	DRIVER (NATIONALITY)	TEAM	CAR	TIME	GRID
1	Dario Franchitti (GB)	Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara-Honda	2h00m59.6886s	2
2	Will Power (AUS)	Team Penske	Dallara-Honda	+7.1612s	1
3	Tony Kanaan (BR)	KV Racing Technology-Lotus	Dallara-Honda	+16.1045s	8
4	Simona de Silvestro (CH)	HVM Racing	Dallara-Honda	+16.5616s	17
5	Takuma Sato (J)	KV Racing Technology-Lotus	Dallara-Honda	+29.9435s	11
6	Alex Tagliani (CDN)	Sam Schmidt Motorsports	Dallara-Honda	+30.4655s	10
7	Raphael Matos (BR)	AFS Racing	Dallara-Honda	+31.5227s	16
8	Vitor Meira (BR)	AJ Foyt Enterprises	Dallara-Honda	+35.7291s	13
9	Oriol Servia (E)	Newman/Haas Racing	Dallara-Honda	+49.1432s	15
10	Justin Wilson (GB)	Dreyer & Reinbold Racing	Dallara-Honda	+56.8025s	6
11	JR Hildebrand (USA)	Panther Racing	Dallara-Honda	+1m02.9747s	24
12	Danica Patrick (USA)	Andretti Autosport	Dallara-Honda	+1m02.9748s*	19
13	Sebastian Saavedra (CO)	Conquest Racing	Dallara-Honda	-2 laps	25
14	Ana Beatriz (BR)	Dreyer & Reinbold Racing	Dallara-Honda	-2 laps	20
15	James Jakes (GB)	Dale Coyne Racing	Dallara-Honda	-3 laps	22
16	Scott Dixon (NZ)	Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara-Honda	-4 laps	3
17	Graham Rahal (USA)	Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara-Honda	-4 laps	12
18	Ryan Briscoe (AUS)	Team Penske	Dallara-Honda	-5 laps	5
19	EJ Viso (YV)	KV Racing Technology-Lotus	Dallara-Honda	-6 laps	21
20	Helio Castroneves (BR)	Team Penske	Dallara-Honda	-15 laps	9
21	Ryan Hunter-Reay (USA)	Andretti Autosport	Dallara-Honda	58 laps-accident damage	14
22	Charlie Kimball (USA)	Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara-Honda	38 laps-accident	23
23	Mike Conway (GB)	Andretti Autosport	Dallara-Honda	1 lap-accident	4
24	Marco Andretti (USA)	Andretti Autosport	Dallara-Honda	0 laps-accident	7
NS	Sebastien Bourdais (F)	Dale Coyne Racing	Dallara-Honda	accident damage	18

CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE		
POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Franchitti	52
2	Power	41
3	Kanaan	35
4	de Silvestro	32
5	Sato	30
6	Tagliani	28
7	Matos	26
8	Meira	24
9	Servia	22
10	Wilson	20

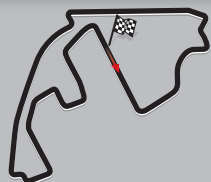
Winner's average: 89.260mph. Fastest lap: Castroneves, 1m03.8683s, 101.459mph. Qualifying: field divided into two groups for qualifying. The fastest six from each move into a 12-car second round. The fastest six from this move into the pole shootout. \*Time includes post-race penalty

## YAS MARINA

ABU DHABI

March 25/26

FIA GT1 World Championship  
Round 1/10



### AT A GLANCE

- **Winners Clivio Piccione/ Stef Dusseldorp**
- **Qual race Makowiecki/Martin**
- **Pole position Pastorelli**



Martin/Makowiecki Ford won qualify race



# Hexis Aston steals it away

The French team stole a march on pit strategy after Clivio Piccione's stint, then Stef Dusseldorp defended superbly

Hexis DBR9 leapt to front at stops

**THE ARRIVAL OF THE NISSAN** 'super-team' and a reworked version of the GT-R. A favourable aero tweak for the Aston Martin. The amazing speed of the best of the All-Inkl Lambos. A new-construction Michelin tyre. These were the hot topics of discussion through the opening weekend of the GT1 World Championship in Abu Dhabi. Until, that is, Hexis Aston drivers Clivio Piccione and Stef Dusseldorp scored a shock victory in the full-points race on Saturday evening.

That's when the tittle-tattle over the regulations and the ever-controversial Balance of Performance had to stop. The best of the Hexis Aston Martin DBR9s won the Championship Race around the Yas Marina Circuit's 2.94-mile short (or Corkscrew) layout, not

because it was the fastest car – it wasn't on the pace of the Young Driver Astons last weekend – but because it spent less time than anyone else stationary in the pits.

Piccione and Dusseldorp didn't overtake a car for position on track in either the Qualifying Race or the main event. The Hexis crew did the work, and the drivers were happy to admit it.

"A big thank you to the team," said Piccione. "They made this win possible with an amazing pitstop."

That sounds like a platitude you might hear at the end of any motor race, but this time it was true. The Hexis mechanics were responsible for every place gain by the winning Aston.

Dusseldorp started the Qualifying Race from 11th on the grid and moved up to ninth after two cars ahead of

him went out at the start, and that's where he stayed until the mandatory pitstops. The first of two super-fast stops of the day got Piccione out in fifth place. Again, that's where the Hexis Aston stayed, giving it fifth place on the grid for the second race.

Piccione maintained that position through his stint and, crucially, was less than three seconds behind the leader when the pitstop sequence began. What happened next caught out anyone who hadn't been paying attention in the Qualifying Race – and that included Richard Westbrook and the JR Motorsports Nissan team.

Team-mate Peter Dumbreck had finished his stint in third, and JR knew its GT-R had leapfrogged the sister Sumo Power Nissan

driven by Enrique Bernoldi and Ricardo Zonta and the Marc VDS Ford GT shared by Maxime Martin and Frederic Makowiecki even before these two cars collided in the pitlane. What the team didn't realise was that it had been leapfrogged, and then some, by Hexis.

"Peter did a really good in-lap, which is why we got out ahead of the Ford," said Westbrook. "When I read P2 on the board and couldn't even see the car ahead, I thought it must have been

someone who hadn't pitted. When I realised what was happening I said a few choice words down the radio."

No doubt similar words were uttered on the pitwall, and perhaps back at NISMO motorsport headquarters back in Japan. Nissan and team owner James Rumsey, who has expanded his operation to run the JR squad alongside Sumo Power, have been the big spenders of the winter, yet an expensive development programme counts for nothing if a rival



British-driven Nissan close to win

## RACE RATING

★★★★☆

An amazing chase and then a solid rearguard action made this one exciting all the way to the end

## MILESTONE

F3 graduate Stef Dusseldorp emulated rival David Brabham by scoring a world championship race win on his sportscar debut



## REPORT GT1 YAS MARINA

GARY WATKINS  
reports



can gain six seconds on everyone in the pits.

That's the rough amount the winning Hexis car gained on all its rivals, including the team's sister car driven by Andrea Piccini and Christian Hohenadel. How the French squad did it, and did it twice over, isn't exactly clear.

"All I can say is that we don't try to do better than we can," said team boss Philippe Dumas. That slightly cryptic comment probably translates as "more haste, less speed".

Practice is also key, reckons Makowiecki, who was a race winner in last year's world championship with Hexis. "If they have a secret, I don't know it," he

said. "All I know is that they practice two or three days a week. Whenever they have some spare time, they practice, practice, practice."

All-Inkl team manager Marc Basseng, who notched up the squad's first FIA GT1 podium in the main race, could only marvel at the Hexis performance in the pits: "They move like robots."

The rest of the grid knows it will have to try to emulate the Hexis pit performance.

"We'll have to analyse what really happened," said Nigel Stepney, who oversees the four-car Nissan attack and acts as team manager for JR at the races, "but it's clear that we are going to have to improve." ❧



Piccione (left) and Dusseldorp triumph



Audacious start by Winkelhock Lambo

## THE FASTER CARS THAT FAILED

The Hexis AMR team's amazing pitstop didn't just get Stef Dusseldorp out at the head of the pack, it propelled the Aston Martin DBR9 he shared with Clivio Piccione into a six-second lead. That might have appeared insurmountable, but the Hexis/Aston package wasn't the quickest combination around Yas Marina, and Richard Westbrook in the JR Motorsports Nissan GT-R whittled away that deficit within 10 laps.

With eight minutes of the one-hour race left to run, the best overtaker in last year's

FIA GT1 World Championship looked odds-on to secure victory together with Peter Dumbreck. Yet Dusseldorp, racing a car with a roof for the first time, fought an amazing rearguard action to hang on for a narrow victory.

Westbrook paid tribute to Dusseldorp afterwards: "If I'd had another 20 laps, I wouldn't have got past him. He didn't put a foot wrong."

Dumbreck had run second to the fast-starting Sumo Nissan driven by Enrique Bernoldi until Maxime Martin in the Marc VDS Ford GT nipped past right at the

end of the stint. Dumbreck stayed out a lap longer, before Westbrook vaulted the Ford in the pits.

The Sumo Nissan was already effectively out, after Martin's team-mate, Frederic Makowiecki, turned hard left into Ricardo Zonta in his haste to get out of the pits in front. The GT-R sustained a puncture in the clash, while the Ford driver was subsequently penalised.

That allowed Marc Basseng to claim third in the All-Inkl.com Lamborghini Murcielago R-SV he shared with Markus Winkelhock.

## RESULTS

GT1 World Championship, Yas Marina (UAE), March 25-26, round 1 of 10

31 LAPS, 91.111 MILES				
POS	DRIVERS	TEAM	CAR	TIME
1	Clivio Piccione (MC)/Stef Dusseldorp (NL)	Hexis AMR	Aston Martin DBR9	1h00m02.053s
2	Peter Dumbreck (GB)/Richard Westbrook (GB)	JR Motorsports (JRM Group)	Nissan GT-R	+0.474s
3	Markus Winkelhock (D)/Marc Basseng (D)	All-Inkl.com Munich	Lamborghini Murcielago R-SV	+14.539s
4	Christian Hohenadel (D)/Andrea Piccini (I)	Hexis AMR	Aston Martin DBR9	+15.296s
5	Stefan Mucke (D)/Darren Turner (GB)	Young Driver AMR (Fischer)	Aston Martin DBR9	+15.934s
6	Alex Muller (D)/Tomas Enge (CZ)	Young Driver AMR (Fischer)	Aston Martin DBR9	+16.713s
7	Karl Wendlinger (A)/Peter Kox (NL)	Swiss Racing Team	Lamborghini Murcielago R-SV	+17.277s
8	Maxime Martin (B)/Frederic Makowiecki (F)	Marc VDS Racing Team	Ford GT	+22.053s
9	David Brabham (AUS)/Jamie Campbell-Walter (GB)	Sumo Power GT (JRM Group)	Nissan GT-R	+32.952s
10	Mike Hezemans (NL)/Nicky Catsburg (NL)	Exim Bank China (SeLesLagh)	Chevrolet Corvette C6.R	+39.805s
11	Nicky Pastorelli (NL)/Dominik Schwager (D)	All-Inkl.com Munich	Lamborghini Murcielago R-SV	+46.478s
12	Martin Matzke (CZ)/Milos Pavlovic (SRB)	Belgian Racing (Marc VDS)	Ford GT	+1m23.319s
13	Michael Rossi (F)/Jaime Camara (BR)	DKR Engineering	Chevrolet Corvette C6.R	+1m38.366s
14	Lucas Luhr (D)/Michael Krumm (D)	JR Motorsports (JRM Group)	Nissan GT-R	-1 lap
R	Max Nilsson (S)/Jiri Janak (CZ)	Swiss Racing Team	Lamborghini Murcielago R-SV	24 laps-puncture
R	Enrique Bernoldi (BR)/Ricardo Zonta (BR)	Sumo Power GT (JRM Group)	Nissan GT-R	21 laps-withdrawn
R	Antoine Leclerc (F)/Fabien Giroix (F)	Belgian Racing (Marc VDS)	Ford GT	16 laps-gearbox
NS	Marc Hennerici (D)/Bas Leinders (B)	Marc VDS Racing Team	Ford GT	engine

GRID					
1	MUCKE	1:52.113	2	MARTIN	1:52.197
3	MULLER	1:52.547	4	HEZEMANS	1:52.750
5	DUMBRECK	1:52.866	6	PASTORELLI	1:51.668*
7	BERNOLDI	1:53.191	8	LUHR	1:53.336
9	C-WALTER	1:52.804	10	KOX	1:52.907
11	DUSSELDORP	1:52.914	12	CAMARA	1:55.549
13	BASSENG	no t.time	14	HOENADEL	1:54.178
15	MATZKE	1:54.274	16	LECLERC	1:54.564
17	LEINDERS	1:53.159*	18	NILSSON	1:54.570

QUAL RACE: 31 LAPS, 91.111 MILES		
POS	DRIVERS	TIME
1	Makowiecki/Martin	1h00m11.256s
2	Westbrook/Dumbreck	+1.476s
3	Krumm/Luhr	+18.069s
4	Zonta/Bernoldi	+21.514s
5	Dusseldorp/Piccione	+22.460s
6	Basseng/Winkelhock	+23.049s
7	Catsburg/Hezemans	+37.828s
8	Campbell-Walter/Brabham	+43.637s
9	Piccini/Hohenadel	+48.575s
10	Kox/Wendlinger	+49.454s
11	Leinders/Hennerici	+55.779s
12	Pavlovic/Matzke	+1m07.877s
13	Janak/Nilsson	+1m08.866s
14	Giroix/Leclerc	+1m49.703s
R	Turner/Mucke	15 laps-wheel/brakes
R	Enge/Muller	1 lap-acc damage
R	Schwager/Pastorelli	0 laps-accident
R	Camara/Rossi	0 laps-accident

### CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE

POS	DRIVER	PTS	POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Piccione/Dusseldorp	27	6	Mucke/Turner	10
2	Dumbreck/Westbrook	24	7	Enge/Muller	8
3	Winkelhock/Basseng	16	8	Kox/Wendlinger	6
4	Martin/Makowiecki	12	9	Krumm/Luhr	4
5	Piccini/Hohenadel	12	10	Zonta/Bernoldi	3

R=Retired; NS=Non-Starter. \*grid penalty.

Winners' average: 91.06mph. Fastest lap: Martin, 1m52.431s, 94.11mph.

Qualification race winners' average: 90.83mph. Fastest lap: Martin, 1m53.666s, 93.09mph.

Driver listed on grid set qualifying time. First-named driver in each car in table started the race.

Finishing order of qualification race determined grid for main race. Brabham/Campbell-Walter were given five-place grid penalty for main race.



# HOOORAY FOR HENRI

Sportscar legend Henri Pescarolo's team is back in the LMS and, as the boss explains to *GARY WATKINS*, it's bidding for a third LMP1 title

**H**enri Pescarolo admits that it would have been easier to walk away and go fishing. Yet this legend of sportscar racing couldn't turn his back on the team that bears his name to pursue his other great passion. The same resolve that made his squad the top privateer at the Le Mans 24 Hours through the noughties has now brought the operation back to life as Pescarolo Team.

There are any number of reasons why Pescarolo, who turns 70 next year, will be donning the headphones once

Pescarolo returns to run his 'rescued' team



more, starting this weekend at Paul Ricard for the opening round of the Le Mans Series. There's his passion for endurance racing, and then there's the circumstances of the demise of the original team, Pescarolo Sport.

"When I stop," he says, "it will be because I have decided to stop."

Pescarolo had to cede ownership of his team to the Sora composites group over the winter of 2008/09; it was that or watch it go out of business. Yet that's what he had to do a year later after Sora boss Jean Py decided against investing any more funds into the squad. Hence the reason Pescarolo Sport missed the 24 Hours last year.

Pescarolo himself was going to miss the race he won four times as a driver, almost by way of protest, but he was eventually persuaded to attend in a journalistic capacity. It was while at Le Mans that the seeds of his return were sown.

"When I was in Le Mans working for TV and *L'Equipe*, so many people were asking when the team was coming back," says Pescarolo. "That's when I decided to start again."

The route back to the LMS grid has,

he says, "been a long journey, one that I thought would never end. The financial situation was so bad for Pescarolo Sport, with so many creditors, that I thought it would be very difficult to bring the team back to life."

So bad, in fact, that Gravity Sport Management, the owners of the Renault Formula 1 team, had opted against a buy-out earlier in 2010.

The first leg of Pescarolo's journey back to team ownership came courtesy of an extraordinary act of generosity last October. The assets of the team were bought out of administration by two collectors: Joel Riviere, who runs an upmarket track-day club, and OAK Racing owner Jacques Nicolet. They purchased the two Pescarolo chassis and all the team's equipment, and promptly handed it over to its former owner on an open-ended loan.

Pescarolo is thankful to his benefactors: Riviere for coming up with the plans and Nicolet because "he could have bought everything and made my team disappear". OAK, of course, runs Pescarolo chassis and holds the rights to the final version of its o1 design.



It's a new look for the Pescarolo-Judd



Pescarolo Sport won the LMS title in 2005 and '06



**LMS CALENDAR**

- April 3  
Paul Ricard (F)
- May 7  
Spa (B)\*
- July 3  
Imola (I)\*
- September 11  
Silverstone (GB)\*
- September 25  
Estoril (P)

\*also ILMC rounds

“They started everything, but when they handed the equipment over to me they told me that I was on my own,” explains Pescarolo. “I still had to find the sponsorship to go racing and after one month I really thought I would have to stop. That’s when I met Pascal Karras from Autovision [a chain of the French equivalent of MOT test centres] and we did a deal straightaway.”

Pescarolo opted for an LMS assault over a more expensive campaign in the Intercontinental Le Mans Cup because “we can’t do anything against the Peugeot and Audi factories”. There was also the lure of notching up a third LMS title after its successes in 2005 and '06.

To that end, Pescarolo has brought back old hands Emmanuel Collard and Christophe Tinseau. They will share the team’s solo Judd-powered car with up-and-comer Julien Jousse in both the LMS and at Le Mans.

The 2011 season, according to Pescarolo, is about “proving we are back”. Next on the agenda is a move up to the ILMC in 2012 and a promise that the team will once again be the scourge of the factory teams. ❧

**THE LMS RIVALRIES**

Rebellion will use new Toyota engine



**PESCAROLO v REBELLION**

The former LMS kings will slug it out with the team that’s desperate for title honours. The revived Pescarolo Team stands in the way of Rebellion Racing’s ambitions to win LMP1. The two-time champions may have to rely on stealth and reliability, because the rules do not favour old-style engines like Pescarolo’s Judd V10. The well-funded Rebellion team has forged a new relationship with Toyota and bolstered its engineering set-up.

**THE OUTSIDER** The Portuguese ASM squad’s P1-spec Zytek will be quick in Olivier Pla’s hands but its pro-am driver line-up must militate against a title challenge.



Champion RML has switched to an HPD

**HPD v HPD**

THE RML team beat the Strakka Racing squad to the LMP2 title in 2010, but has opted to join them. RML has replaced its Lola coupe with an HPD ARX-01 (the chassis raced by Andretti-Green in the ALMS) and converted it to the same d-specification as Strakka’s ex-Fernandez car. RML was all too aware of the clear performance advantage that took Strakka to five LMS poles and three victories (including one outright) last year.

**THE OUTSIDER** The French TDS squad, champions in the Renault Megane Eurocup, moves up to the international sportscar arena with a Nissan-powered ORECA.



Porsche must fend off new Ferrari 458

**PORSCHE v FERRARI**

Ferrari had the edge in '10, but Porsche took the GT2 title with Proton Felbermayr drivers Marc Lieb and Richard Lietz. Reliability was key to Porsche’s win and will have to be again. The German marque, represented by Proton, Imsa and ProSpeed, will run an updated 911 GT3-RSR in the renamed GTE class, while Ferrari has the new 458 Italia. The Sebring 12 Hours suggested that the Italian cars, entered by AF Corse and JMW, should have the advantage.

**THE OUTSIDER** Jota’s Aston Martin Vantage GT2 has a bigger fuel tank now so it’s up to the team to make amends for 2010.



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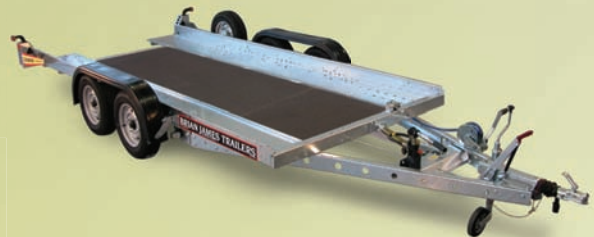


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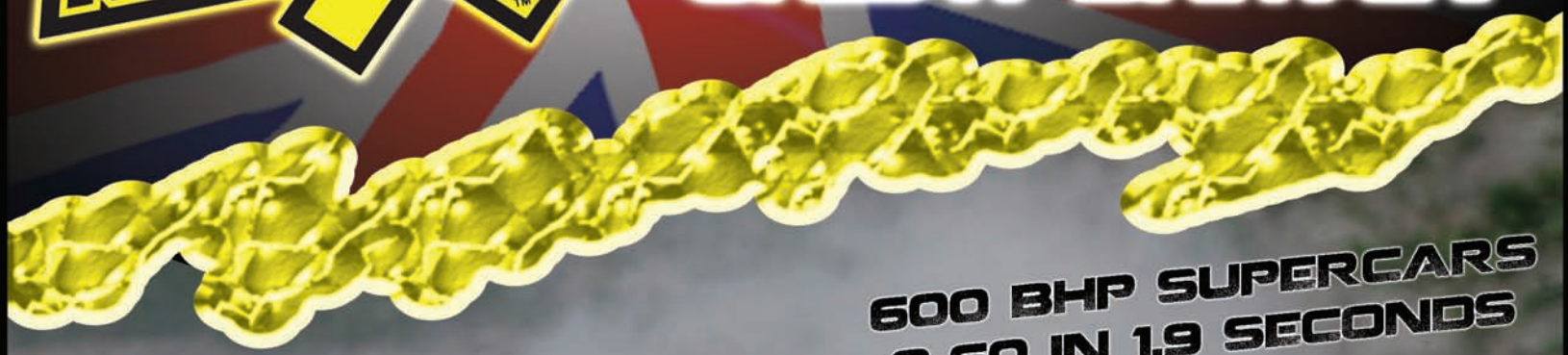


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**Doran suffers massive crash in Rallycross opener, p77**



# Sports Extra

NATIONAL RACING • HISTORICS • CLUB • RALLY • RALLYCROSS • HILLCLIMB



## Jelley returns with Parker as top BTCC teams miss out

**Dynamics and Triple 8 seats go unfilled as Carrera Cup prepares for kick-off**

» **PORSCHE CARRERA** Cup GB race winner Stephen Jelley is to return to the series in a last-ditch deal this season – but British Touring Car Championship powerhouses Triple 8 and Team Dynamics have failed to land a single driver.

Jelley will once again drive for Team Parker Racing, taking the squad to six cars for this weekend's opening round at Brands Hatch. RedLine Racing and Motorbase Performance – the other two teams in the Carrera Cup's leading trio – are also running multi-car squads, and this has left Dynamics unhappy.

Team principal Steve Neal said that teams were attracted to the series, which is switching to the latest-spec Carrera Cup car this year, because organisers were going to limit the number of cars teams could run. "The original rules said that

teams would be restricted to two cars, but now we have teams with six," he said.

Triple 8 boss Ian Harrison, who has also struggled to find drivers for his Ginetta GT Supercup and Carrera Cup efforts, added: "There aren't enough people with budgets, and if we can't get the budgets we're not going to do it. I think we'd have done a good job and we'd still like to do it, but you can't on fresh air."

Series boss Marion Barnaby said: "The two-car rule was the criterion, but unfortunately those guys were not able to fill their seats. At this stage we don't want cars sitting there not racing. I can't say, 'you must go there' to drivers."

### **PARKER'S LMS DELAY**

Former British Touring Car race winner Jelley was forced back into the Carrera Cup due to Team Parker Racing's Le Mans

Series plans being delayed, possibly until later this season.

"Unforeseen circumstances meant that it wasn't going to happen," he said. "I'm very much part of Team Parker now and we want to move into international racing. But there's no point me being a racing driver without a car!"

"This is a weight off my shoulders. The Carrera Cup is a great championship and I'm really excited about racing [in the Porsche World Cup event] on the Nurburgring Nordschleife."

With no previous mileage in the new-spec car, Jelley was hoping to have his first taste of it at a Brands test earlier this week.

### **SUTTON TOPS TEST**

James Sutton, the 2007 Carrera Cup champion, topped the times in last week's test at the Snetterton media day, edging out RedLine team-mate Michael Meadows (see box). Clio Cup graduate Sam Tordoff shaded reigning Carrera Cup champion Tim Harvey to be third.

SNETTERTON 300 TESTING TIMES	
POS	DRIVER (TEAM) TIME
1	James Sutton (RedLine) 1m50.245s
2	Michael Meadows (RedLine) 1m50.409s
3	Sam Tordoff (Parker) 1m50.627s
4	Tim Harvey (Motorbase) 1m50.815s
5	Michael Caine (Motorbase) 1m50.877s
6	Richard Plant (Parker) 1m50.948s

Jelley (70) won final two races of 2010

Drivers have stuck with the established outfits

### **AUTOSPORT SAYS...**

**KEVIN TURNER**  
NATIONAL EDITOR

kevin.turner@haymarket.com



**IT'S A GREAT** shame that Triple 8 and Team Dynamics are unlikely to be on the Carrera Cup grid this year.

While it's understandable that the championship doesn't want to try to dictate which teams drivers go to, why was the two-car limit mooted in the first place?

Both would undoubtedly do a good job, but could take a little while to get up to speed. Drivers have gone for established teams who know the series, even though the new car has levelled the playing field slightly.

Nevertheless, the Carrera Cup is in fine health. The entry is as big as ever, and we have the likes of James Sutton and Stephen Jelley returning to challenge experienced hands Tim Harvey and Michael Caine.

The only thing it could do with is some more fresh young talent. Where is the next Richard Westbrook or Damien Faulkner? Porsche is trying, with its scholarship, but it is a blow that one of the two current winners – Kieran Vernon – hasn't been able to raise a 2011 budget.

It will be interesting to see if the other winner, former Ginetta G50 frontrunner Benji Hetherington, can become the first Porsche scholar to take a Carrera Cup victory.

There are a few others who could challenge – ex-Formula Palmer Audi champion Richard Plant, fellow single-seater convert Rory Butcher, Renault Clio Cup graduate Sam Tordoff, and ex-scholarship winner Michael Meadows – but it's likely the champion will be a member of the established group of Porsche racers.

### **Extra contact details**

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FRENAULT UK



# Rivett targets third Clio crown

Double champion rejoins Stancombe Engineering for first full season since 2008

Rivett has enjoyed much Clio Cup success

**TWO-TIME Renault Clio Cup** champion Paul Rivett is returning to the series for his first full-time campaign since 2008.

Rivett, champion in 2002 and '04, will rejoin Stancombe Vehicle Engineering at the behest of business executive and team backer Matthew Munson, who is scaling back his racing due to work commitments.

Team boss Colin Stancombe said: "It's been a long struggle to sort this out but we're delirious about it."

Rivett added: "It's going to be tough competition this year, but I'm determined to win a championship for Colin. We proved last year [when Rivett won on some guest outings] what a competitive package he has."

Irishman Aron Smith, a race winner in 2009, is returning from a season in the Italian Clio Cup to spearhead Team Pyro's attack. Jack Goff stays on at the squad, while fellow Pyro driver, Ginetta Junior graduate Adam Bonham, took fastest time in last week's Rockingham test.

Other potential frontrunners include 2010 race winner James Dixon (Total

Control Racing), podium finishers James Colburn (Westbourne Motorsport) and Jake Packun (with his own team), BTCC refugee Matt Allison (Scuderia Vittoria), single-seater convert Luke Wright (Vittoria) and Ginetta Junior race winner Chris Swanwick (Pyro). Last year's runner-up Lee Pattison also hopes to return with JHR Developments.

## SPEED EuroSeries

### Burke joins Juno SPEED attack

#### HISTORIC FF1600 CHAMPION

Darren Burke will drive a works Juno in the SPEED EuroSeries this season.

Burke won every race in a PA Motorsport-run Macon MR8 on his way to his 2010 crown, and had been hoping to step up into a BTCC-support series. Now he has signed a deal to share a new Juno CN2011 with ex-Caterham racer Sarah Reader in the Le Mans Series-supporting sportscar category.

"I'd still love to have a crack at the Porsche Carrera Cup, but the way things are going I think I'll be aiming for Le Mans," said Burke, who tested the car at Oulton Park last week ahead of the championship opener at Paul Ricard this weekend.

"The testing we've had has been

awesome - it's quicker, lighter and more nimble than the old car, but it's a steep learning curve.

"If we get a half-decent finish this weekend that'll be good and we'll be pushing for podiums later in the year."

Juno boss Ewan Baldry, who has tested Burke in his Duratec Formula Ford, said: "Last year I was always

trying to get him in the car.

"We had tried to get Tom Bradshaw, but when that didn't work out Darren was top of the list."

● Carlin British Formula 3 racer Jazeman Jaafar is a late entrant for the Ricard event. The Malaysian will share a Lanar Racing Ligier with his French mentor Bruce Jouanny.



Burke tested new Juno at Oulton

## Kirkistown Roadsports

### Crash puts Irish racer in hospital

#### ROADSPORTS RACER BRIAN

McGoldrick was critically injured in a crash at Kirkistown last weekend.

McGoldrick's Locost was running in midfield at the Northern Irish venue when MK Indy driver Andy Parkinson suffered a suspected brake failure approaching the Hairpin. He spun across the infield and T-boned McGoldrick.

The meeting was delayed for three hours while medical personnel treated the drivers and both were removed to hospital.

Parkinson was later released, but McGoldrick was still in intensive care with head injuries as AUTOSPORT closed for press.

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**Ginetta GT Supercup/British GT**

## Hill and Wakefield land drives in Ginetta Supercup and British GT

**GINETTA JUNIOR RUNNER-UP**

Jake Hill will contest this weekend's Ginetta GT Supercup opener at Brands Hatch in a one-off race deal.

Hill, 17, who won half of last season's 20 Ginetta Junior races, will drive a G50 for Optimum Motorsport.

"The team has won championships before and I know will give me a really good car," he said.

"Most of the other drivers have driven their cars several times before so will be up to speed already, but I'm

confident I can get a solid result at my home track - my favourite track."

The field for the inaugural Supercup race is split evenly between seven older G50s and seven new, more powerful G55 models. Hill hopes to do well enough on his series debut to secure further backing to complete the season.

Former one-make touring car driver Josh Wakefield will also race a G50 this season after signing a deal with crack Ginetta squad Century Motorsport for British GT. No co-driver has yet been confirmed, but Wakefield has already tested the GT4 machine.

Team boss Nathan Freke said: "The other drivers we are speaking to are quick, we've got the data, and we know Josh is good, so we'll be shooting for the title."



Hill drove G50 at Silverstone

**Ferrari Open**

## Virgo to develop UK Ferrari 458

**FORMER TOP LE MANS**

Series GT2 squad Virgo Motorsport will team up with saloon racer Geoff Finlay to run a new Ferrari 458 in the Ferrari Open this season.

The car will be raced under the Evolution 2 Motorsport banner and Virgo is developing an aero kit for the model.

Virgo founder Chris Warne, who ran Rob Bell to the 2007 and '08 LMS GT2 crowns in a Ferrari 430, said: "I have known Geoff for many years, and we have worked together on a number of

projects. Following our success with the 430, I am confident the 458 will be a cracker, and the team is really looking forward to the first shakedown at

Silverstone in April."

Warne believes there will be "at least four, possibly five" 458s in the Ferrari Open in 2011. He did not rule out taking Virgo into British GT.



Virgo 458 will head to Ferrari Open

**British Formula Ford**

## Cook to drive fifth Jamun Mygale

**LEADING BRITISH FORMULA**

Ford squad Jamun Racing will run a fifth Mygale at the Silverstone opener next month for Jake Cook.

Jamun has already recruited Australians Nick McBride and Richard Goddard, former Ray ace Scott Malvern and 2010 team regular Jeroen Slaghekke for full seasons, but has now added a fifth car with a view to running Cook throughout 2011.

Team boss James Mundy said: "He's been out doing some testing with us

at Snetterton and Oulton Park. He's a bit behind the others because they've had more seat time, but we had the car and I think he'll be up at the front."

Cook, 17, who drive a Getem Racing Mygale to 10th in the series last year, said: "I will be in for the first round but then I need to find some more funding for the rest of the season."

Ex-Formula Academy ace Cavan Corcoran, 17, will drive Getem's Mygale in the Scholarship Class of the 2011 championship.

MARCUS PYE

# HUMBLE PYE

The voice of club motor racing



'Fiddle brakes' are crucial to finding grip

The diversity of motorsport is among its strengths, for it does not end at circuits or rallying. As drag racing, rallycross, trialling, autotests, short-oval, autograss, speed hillclimbing and off-road disciplines demonstrate, there is something for everybody - and their pocket.

Quaint and quintessentially British, sporting trials remains one of our pastime's most intriguing branches. Bouncing your way up a tortuous and slippery course, where traction and technique are kings, looks impossible. But, under the scrutiny of reigning MSA champion Ian Wright, it's addictive.

Coming clean, I did contest a Woolbridge MC trial - more a Production Car event - in my youth, but a blast up an apparently vertical section of the Jacobean Trial, alongside ace driver Julian Fack in his ingenious X-Factor in the '90s, showed the difference between club and state-of-the-art cars.

As in all motoring arenas, success in trials demands artistry. It's more a rustic brown-and-green art than a black one, but it hooks folk in - if only for a few weekends each winter. Among current top-liners is Richard Robarts, briefly a Brabham Formula 1 driver in 1974.

It was veteran triallist Martin Halliday (who, conversely, now races a Lotus 23B in the HSCC's Guards Trophy series!) who organised for party of us to sample sporting trials on a farm near

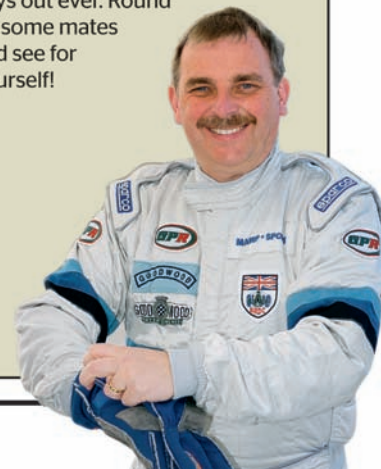
Maidstone. Michael Schryver - owner of a classic Cannon - his son Will and mutual mate Simon Hadfield eagerly joined the throng at The Wright Organisation's base.

Top weapons in the trials driver's armoury are the fiddle brakes, wicked devices by which the spin of each of the car's rear wheels can be limited independently in the quest for grip, while twirling the steering. It's difficult to accomplish, but improvement on the fiddles soon enables you to 'hang' the car across a cambered traverse, barge its side bars round trees to optimise lines, and scale ridiculous inclines.

Initially we newbies were clueless. "Watching guys who are comfortable sliding racing cars at well over 100mph on track struggling at 3mph in the woods is hilarious," said Wright, who grew up in the sport. His team also builds Honda-engined Sherpa cars, fitted with automatic gearboxes for school use.

Under his guidance, and that of Monty Peters, we all made progress, and could occasionally 'clean' trickier hills - ie. get to the top! The satisfaction at the summit was enormous and, while former 750MC champion Halliday's experience won the impromptu 'run-off', we were all converted. Verdict: one of the best motoring days out ever. Round up some mates and see for yourself!

“Quintessentially British, sporting trials remains one of our pastime's most intriguing branches”



# Unstoppable!



[www.sunocodaytonachallenge.com](http://www.sunocodaytonachallenge.com)



Fantastic start of the Sunoco Daytona Challenge for Javier Morcillo claiming pole, fastest lap and second to Keith Robinson who won the race. Class 3 top points were awarded to Jay Shepherd for his pole and race win.

**Driver standings – average per race\***

1	J Morcillo	Azteca/Britcar Class 1&2	115
2	J Shepherd	Hawthorns/Britcar class 3	108
3	K Robinson	MJC/Britcar Class 1&2	100
4	J Persson	Hawthorns/Britcar class 3	90
4	R Barrett	Hawthorns/Britcar class 3	90



Great start to the season for 2010 Britcar champs! Witt Gamski and Keith Robinson claimed overall victory in the MSA Britcar Endurance Championship 3 hrs race at Silverstone – who can stop them? In Britcar Production GTN a fierce battle saw the Cunninghams claim overall victory over Guglielmi/Mileham.



Intersteps were dominated by talented Jake Dennis who proved unbeatable – be rest assured that the rest of the youngsters are making plans to catch up for next round.



Adrian Churchill in the Dunlop Production Touring Car Trophy was on song claiming 2 poles, 2 fastest laps and won the first race of the season.



Sunoco is the official fuel of



Morcillo leads with 115 points

## Sunoco GRAND-AM 200 Challenge



Second weekend of the Sunoco GRAND-AM Challenge and already it is getting very exciting. Mark and Peter Cunningham came out on top but has yet to catch MSV F3 Cup top dog Aaron Steele.

**Driver standings – average per race\***

1	A Steele	MSV F3	140
2	M Cunningham	Britcar Production	100
2	P Cunningham	Britcar Production	100
4	A Churchill	Dunlop PTC	90
5	C Needham	MSV F3	75

[www.grand-am.com](http://www.grand-am.com)

\* points correct at time of print

# Anglo American Oil Company

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**IN BRIEF**

**BRITISH GT** squad Speedworks Motorsport tested its new Chevrolet Corvette for the first time at Hockenheim last week (left). Piers and Ron Johnson will race the car this year.



**BOLIVIAN KARTER** Pedro Calbimonte was set for an evaluation by Fortec Motorsport's Formula Renault UK team this week. He could contest the whole season, or appear later in the year.

**THE FIRST** Holden V8 Ute planned for James Tucker's latest initiative tested for the first time at Silverstone last weekend, in the hands of Tucker and Dave Hornsey (below). Club racer Hornsey will develop the car this year ahead of the new series' scheduled 2012 launch.



**CRAIG WILKINS** and Aaron Scott have appealed their exclusion from the British Endurance Championship season opener at Silverstone last weekend. Their GT3 Racing Dodge Viper finished third, but was excluded due to a data-logging issue.

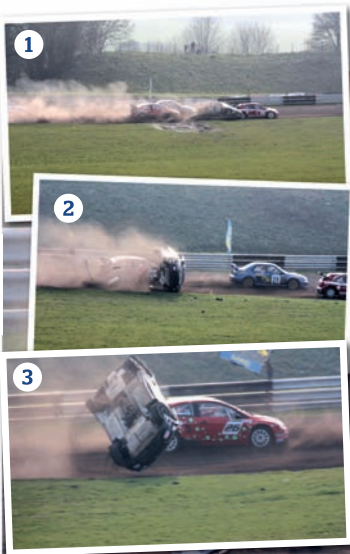
**MAZDA'S MX-5 GT** dropped into the Britcar Production GTN championship, from its original Britcar GT entry, for its debut at Silverstone. Owen Mildenhall and Mark Ticehurst shared the car, which was delayed by diff issues. Mildenhall said: "We changed after qualifying when we realised the error."

**THREE RARE** Elva Mk8 sportscars of the mid-1960s were reunited at Goodwood's Madgwick Cup test day last Thursday. Only 12 were made, followed by nine Mk8S evolutions and Roger Willis' recent US import (left, 18), joined its sisters owned by Gabriel and Dion Kremer (red), and Paul Knapfield (blue) respectively.



**REIGNING CLASSIC** Clubmans champion Mark Charteris drove his elderly Mallock Mk 20/21 to victory in both BARC Clubmans Cup races at Brands Hatch last weekend, on his series debut. Charteris used the outing as a warm-up for a defence of his Classic title.

**MAZDA MX5** racers Kazuo Takahashi and Craig Johns were both injured in an accident at Silverstone, which caused the final three races to be abandoned. Johns spun at the new-profile Abbey and was collected by the unsighted Japanese driver at over 100mph. Johns re-opened an old leg fracture in the impact, while Takahashi, whose helmet came off in the crash, suffered a chipped vertebra.



**British Rallycross**

**Doran hospitalised after Citroen shunt**

**BRITISH RALLYCROSS STAR LIAM** Doran was hospitalised after a crash at Lydden Hill last weekend.

The 24-year-old, who won the event last year, was driving his Citroen C4 as

a warm-up for his European Rallycross campaign. He touched Jochen Coox's Skoda at the first corner of the Supercar A final, went sideways and rolled multiple times.

Doran was taken to William Harvey A&E, but was discharged with bruises. "The worst part of is trying to get the spare C4 ready in time for the European round here in April," he said.

4

Doran started his year with this Lydden crash



5

6



**Group C/GTP**

**Spice in race return**

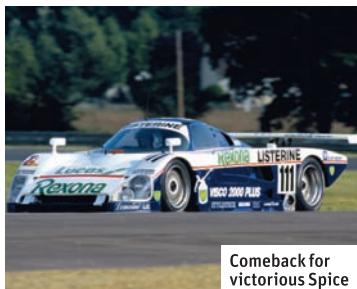
**Le Mans-winning C2 car will race again this year**

**A SPICE GROUP C CAR THAT** finished on the podium at the Le Mans 24 Hours three years in succession is returning to the track after 18 years.

The Cosworth-powered SE88C, chassis 003, has been purchased by sometime British Formula 3 driver Michael Donovan to race in five of the six Group C/GTP Racing rounds and selected Masters events. Peter Chambers Automotive will run the Spice, which last raced in Interserie sportscar events in 1992.

Donovan, who returned to racing after a 20-year break with a Porsche 911 GT3 Cup in 2007, said: "I've always loved these cars and have been looking for the right one for 18 months."

The Spice claimed Le Mans C2 honours with the factory team in 1988.



Comeback for victorious Spice

The British Mako squad run by long-time sportscar team manager John McNeil took second and third in class in the 24 Hours in 1989 and '90.

Group C/GTP series co-ordinator Zoe Copas said: "Entries are up 50 per cent on last year, because people like Mike are bringing new cars into the series."

**British Truck Racing**

**Police caution truck saboteur**

**POLICE CAUTIONED BRITISH** truck racer Elton Boocock for criminal damage after an incident at Brands Hatch last weekend.

Boocock, 37, was arrested after Carl Brookfield suffered brake issues in Sunday morning's BTRA qualification race.

Brookfield's ERF E14 failed to get away from the grid for the warm-up lap, its rear brakes having locked on. Brookfield eventually moved off with rear wheels dragging. An inspection revealed a brake line had been cut, so not allowing pressure in the system to be released.

The police were called and High Wycombe man Boocock, who was not competing at the event, was arrested and cautioned.

**Global Rallycross**

**Gronholm triumphs in first global rallycross event**



Gronholm was top dog in LA

**FORMER DOUBLE WORLD RALLY** champion Marcus Gronholm won the inaugural Global RallyCross event at Irwindale Speedway near Los Angeles last weekend.

The 43-year-old Finn took his Ford Fiesta to victory in the head-to-head SuperRally contest and the multi-car RallyCross event the following day.

"The competition was good, with many drivers," said Gronholm. "I want to come back and race here again."

The gravel and asphalt course featured a 70-foot jump and X-Games star Tanner Foust took second in Saturday's six-car final. Foust said: "When I saw Gronholm's car right over my head on the jump, I knew he had it."



Ferrari 430 won comfortably

BRITISH ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP SILVERSTONE GP, MARCH 26

## Britcar's usual suspects chase a brand-new title

**KEITH ROBINSON AND** Witt Gamski returned to the site of their 2010 Silverstone 24 Hours victory to become victors once more in the inaugural round of Britcar's new British Endurance Championship era.

After Craig Wilkins and his Dodge Viper had led the early laps, Javier Morcillo's polesitting Mosler took charge. Despite two safety car interruptions, he was able to build a 10-second lead after the first hour. Wilkins had made an early stop, which gave Adam Wilcox second place in Jonathan MacGregor's Ultima.

The lead continued to grow, and remarkably Morcillo didn't make his first stop until half-distance in the three-hour race. "I didn't realise we had gone so long, but the economy

was helped behind the safety car, and we have a standard engine, not a big racer," he said.

Wilkins and MTECH boss Mike Edmonds's Ferrari 430 then swapped the lead before pitting. After Gamski had handed his 430 to Robinson for the final stint, it was never headed.

"He did an excellent job as always; I think I might let him keep the drive," Gamski joked after the race. Robinson added: "It wasn't that easy, as my radio only worked through Woodcote, so there were only seconds to relay messages."

Morcillo picked off the Wilkins/Aaron Scott Viper for second after taking over from Manuel Cintrano, and managed to close the gap slightly to Robinson, but still finished over 90s down at the flag. Although third on the road, Wilkins/



Viper challenges Mosler at Copse

Scott were later excluded on eligibility.

Wilcox/MacGregor fell from contention early on after gear-lever problems, which left Edmonds/John Dhillon to move up to third after the Viper's exclusion. They had Simon Atkinson/Glenn McMenamin's Lamborghini closing in on them at the finish.

Rod Barrett/Jay Persson/Jay Shepherd (Porsche 997) and Owen O'Neill/Henry Fletcher (Marcos Mantis) completed the top six, while down in ninth Andy Schulz did the whole race solo in Paul Bailey's Ferrari 430.

● Peter Scherer

**RESULTS (73 LAPS)** 1 Witt Gamski/Keith Robinson (Ferrari F430 GT);

2 Javier Morcillo/Manuel Cintrano (Mosler MT900) +1m38.159s; 3 John Dhillon/Mike Edmonds (Ferrari 430); 4 Simon Atkinson/Glenn McMenamin (Lamborghini Gallardo); 5 Rod Barrett/Jay Persson/Jay Shepherd (Porsche 997); 6 Owen O'Neill/Henry Fletcher (Marcos Mantis). **Class winners** Dhillon/Edmonds; Barrett/Persson/Shepherd. **Fastest lap** Morcillo 2m07.358s (103.47mph).



Henderson chases Gore into Stowe

Gore was back ahead into Maggotts on the second lap and, although Henderson stayed close, Gore retained the upper hand. The chasing group reeled Short in, and both Sam Hill and Matthew Davies picked him off on consecutive laps, before setting off after the leaders.

They were still over 15 seconds adrift at the flag.

Gore was leading the third race when it was red-flagged after Kazuo Takahashi and Craig Johns collided on the second lap. Time ran out for a restart and the race was abandoned, along with the fourth and final outings.

● Peter Scherer

**RESULTS (ALL 7 LAPS) – RACE 1**

1 Tom Roche; 2 Wayne Le Montais +4.903s; 3 Brian Chandler; 4 Paul Sheard; 5 Andy Coombs; 6 Andrew Wright. **FL** Roche 2m42.807s (80.94mph).

**RACE 2** 1 Adam Gore; 2 Alan Henderson +0.133s; 3 Sam Hill; 4 Matthew Davies; 5 Kevin Dengate; 6 Ben Short. **FL** Henderson 2m42.787s (80.95mph).

MINI MIGLIA/MINI SE7EN SILVERSTONE GP, MARCH 26

## Owens wriggles free

**ENDAF OWENS AND** Kane Astin embroiled themselves in a race-long duel for supremacy as both old-style Mini categories came together on the new Silverstone GP circuit.

Owens had Astin inches from his bootlid through Copse on the opening lap. Meanwhile, Colin Peacock battled ahead of Dave Drew and Sarah Munns before setting about the battling duo ahead of him.

Astin threw everything at Welshman Owens, and finally nosed ahead at Copse with a lap to go, with Peacock following him through.

Owens soon retook second, and made it into the lead decisively coming out of Copse for the final time. At the flag,

Astin was only 0.166 seconds down, with Munns, Aaron Smith and Paul Thompson rounding out the top six.

Behind the Mini Miglia brigade up front, it was similarly close further back in the Se7ens, but Max Hunter just held on as Paul Spark gave his all. Graeme Davis was a distant third.

● Peter Scherer

**RESULTS**

**MINI MIGLIA (6 LAPS)** 1 Endaf Owens; 2 Kane Astin +0.166s; 3 Colin Peacock; 4 Sarah Munns; 5 Aaron Smith; 6 Paul Thompson. **FL** Peacock 2m34.163s (85.47mph).

**MINI SE7EN (6 LAPS)** 1 Max Hunter; 2 Paul Spark +0.210s; 3 Graeme Davis; 4 Darren Thomas; 5 Gareth Hunt; 6 Tristen Knight. **FL** Andrew Deviny 2m48.459s (78.22mph).

MA5DA NX5 SILVERSTONE GP, MARCH 27

## Roche and Gore take wins before time runs out

**TOM ROCHE AND ADAM** Gore took a win apiece in the Ma5da MX5s, which were unusually subdued on the vastness of the Silverstone GP circuit despite grids of over 40.

Roche led the first race from the start and within a couple of laps it looked decisive. Wayne Le Montais was second throughout, but came under threat later in the race, when Paul Sheard and Brian Chandler started

to duel. Their battle allowed Le Montais to hold his place, while Chandler got the measure of veteran Sheard for third.

It was a straight fight between Gore and Alan Henderson at the start of race two. Gore led into Copse, but Henderson won the drag down the Wellington Straight, as both pulled out a sizeable lead over third-placed Ben Short on the opening lap.

BRITISH RALLYCROSS LYDDEN, MARCH 26-27

## Scott lays demons to rest as rival Doran rolls

ANDY SCOTT LAID THE ghost of a past Lydden victory lost to rest, thanks to a demonstration drive to victory in the first round of the British Rallycross Championship.

“That makes up for losing in August last year,” said the Ford Focus driver.

“I should have won then, but hit a kerb and got a puncture. This event was about learning the new car and I could not have had a better start.”

Unlike his rival, ERC ace Liam Doran, who rolled his Citroen C4 and caused the A final to be restarted.



Scott avenged '10 defeat at Lydden

Doran had qualified on pole, thanks to a tidy run in the wet second heat on Saturday afternoon, followed by fastest time in Sunday's sunny third heat.

Belgian Jochen Coox had topped the first heat, unexpectedly whipping Doran in the process.

The cross-channel Skoda driver was given his own wake-up call later on the first day. David Binks made probably the pass of the event by storming out of the Joker Lap section and zapping Coox, even though the Skoda had thrown dirt all over the screen of his Fiesta.

“I got a great run but then the screen went black,” said Binks. “I stayed on the throttle and when the wiper came up again I was ahead!”

These three formed the front row for the final, with Coox forging ahead at the first turn, where Doran's car snapped sideways and then rolled. At the restart, Scott had a gap on the grid ahead of him and, with a great launch, gave the pack the

slip and never looked back.

Reigning champion Pat Doran made it to the A final by winning the B. When Steve Hill's Lancer E10 broke its driveline coming to the grid, Andy Grant was also promoted to the main event.

When Binks, Coox and Belgian championship leader Patrick van Mechelen all suffered punctures, Doran and Grant climbed the order.

Grant's Ford Focus then stole second place from Doran on the last lap.

Julian Godfrey's debut in the class was strong, but came to an end after he slid wide at Chessons and broke the rear suspension of his Fiesta on the third lap of the A final.

● Tim Whittington

### RESULTS

#### SUPERCAR A FINAL (4 LAPS)

1 Andy Scott (Ford Focus ST ERC); +4.4s; 2 Pat Doran (Ford Focus ERC); 4 Patrick van Mechelen (Subaru Impreza); 5 Jochen Coox (Skoda Fabia ERC); 6 David Binks (Ford Fiesta ST ERC).

## SILVERSTONE IN BRIEF



### PRODUCTION GTN

The spoils went to the SEAT Leon Supercopa of Mark and Peter Cunningham (above), which beat Jeff Mileham/Steve Guglielmi's Lotus Elise by a lap. The BMW M3 of David Cuff/Mark Smith led early on, but retired.

### PRODUCTION TOURERS

Once he had seen off Josh Cook's Megane and Ryan Bensley (Astra), Adrian Churchill took charge of the opener in his Astra. Tom Carnaby took second from Bensley and led race two, but Cook wrested the spoils from the SEATs of Garry Duckman and Dan Malone. Roger Evans (GTV) won the Alfa Romeo event that ran with race two.

### CATERHAM SUPERSPORTS

There was non-stop action in both races, before Jamie Orton and Lee Wiggins took the victories. Ian Payne won both of the concurrent Roadsports A rounds at a canter.

### MA5DA MX5 CUP

The new MX5 Cup (for Mk3 cars) had its 22-car field upped to a circuit-record 57 by older MK1s. Luke Herbert set the pace in both races, before Rob Boston took charge and consolidated in the closing laps. Jim Edwards Jr and Tom Roche were the other podium finishers.

### INTERSTEPS

Jake Dennis (below) won twice as 10 Formula BMW cars made a UK comeback in the revamped series. The Racing Steps-backed under-18 world karting champ led both races throughout, and was followed home twice by Fortec team-mate Alex Walker.



CATERHAM ROADSPORT B SILVERSTONE GP, MARCH 27

## Academy champs show they've learned their lesson

REIGNING CATERHAM Academy champions Wesley Fox and Kurt Brady once again proved their worth by sharing victory spoils on their Roadsports B debuts at Silverstone.

In the first race there was little between them throughout. But with Mike Hart, James Needham and Jonathan Mortimer in the

mix too, nothing was settled until the last lap.

Brady led after Fox ran wide at Village on the first lap, before Hart took up the chase as Fox fell to fifth. Recovery was swift and Fox led again at half-distance as Brady joined him in an attempted break. Hart rejoined them a lap later and made it three abreast into

Copse, while the squabbling allowed Joel Wymer to latch onto Hart's tail too.

Brady led into Becketts for the final time, but Hart was there as well. From Brooklands through to Luffield there was nothing to separate them. At the flag it was Fox from Brady and Hart, as Mortimer and Needham slipped back to

fourth and fifth. “I prefer it not to be that exciting,” said Fox after his win.

Brady lost out initially at the start of the second race, as Fox took the initiative from Hart. As Brady made his recovery, Fox began to slip down the order, while Mortimer, Needham and Hart all had a share of time at the front.

There was an eight-car train for the lead by lap five, but it was Brady's race this time, from Mortimer and Hart, with Fox coming back to fourth.

● Peter Scherer

### RESULTS (ALL 8 LAPS) – RACE 1

1 Wesley Fox; 2 Kurt Brady +0.223s; 3 Mike Hart; 4 Jonathan Mortimer; 5 James Needham; 6 Andrew West. FL Brady 2m36.839s (84.02mph).

RACE 2 1 Brady; 2 Mortimer +0.100s; 3 Hart; 4 Fox; 5 Aaron Head; 6 Matthew Whate. FL Fox 2m36.358s (84.27mph).

Brady (99) won on Roadsport debut



**QUICK RESULTS**

→ Pickup R1 winner **Dance**  
 → Pickup R2 winner **Dance**

**“No, I didn’t grin. I’d much rather be racing”**

Steve Dance rues his rival’s broken gearbox



Grindrod suffered late failure

**IN BRIEF**



**FF1600 & FF2000**

Fastest in qualifying, seasoned campaigner Stuart Kestenbaum (Van Diemen RF79, above) dominated both Classic FF1600 races at Brands. A wet-shod Jon Finch (RF82) won the FF2000 event in tricky conditions.

**DUNLOP/MN SALOONS**

Darren Bly (Nissan Skyline) took both encounters at Brands after surviving a recalcitrant engine and yellow-flag misdemeanours in Sunday’s race. Rod Birley, who retired on Saturday when his engine shut down, was second.

**2CVs**

Two barnstorming finishes typified the 2CV double-header at Oulton Park last Saturday. In the opener, Phil Myatt held off Sammie Fritchley in the dash to the line, while a quarter of a second covered four cars in the second race as Ainslie Bousfield won by 0.177s from Simon Turner.

**CLASSIC THUNDER**

While Joss Ronchetti battled his Talbot Sunbeam Lotus from the back to fourth, Dan Stringfellow bagged a clear victory in his BMW M3 at Oulton. Neil Philpotts kept his Mitsubishi Starion ahead of the M3 of Garrie Whittaker for second.

**IRISH FF1600**

Ivor McCullough recovered from an early mistake to win the FF1600 race at Kirkistown last weekend in his Van Diemen.

**IRISH SALOONS/GT**

Two starts resulted in two wins for Lotus Elise pilot Pat McBennett (below) in the Irish Saloons/GT races at Kirkistown. Craig Davidson (Mazda) and Paul Sheridan (Ford Escort) shared saloon honours.



**PICKUPS BRANDS HATCH INDY, MARCH 26-27**

**Dance takes right steps as Grindrod has ‘box drama**

**REIGNING PICKUP**

champion Steve Dance got his title defence off to a dream start at Brands Hatch last Sunday, winning both races. But he was the first to admit that he’d been lucky as rival Nic Grindrod’s gearbox broke when he was seemingly set to avenge his narrow race-one defeat.

In that first encounter, a fasting-starting Dance pressured polesitter Damien Carr until hitting the front going up to Druids on lap three. Once ahead, Dance quickly opened up what then looked to be a race-winning advantage.

At this stage, Grindrod (drawn on row five) was still only fifth but, circulating at lap-record pace, he picked off his rivals one by one and then proceeded to reel in Dance.

For seven glorious laps,

they circulated as one, Grindrod’s final-lap thrust taking them side-by-side, with some panel rubbing at Graham Hill Bend.

Dance held on by just 0.2 seconds, while Michael Smith was a detached third. He was clear of Simon Carr, who had demoted brother and erstwhile leader Damien.

The safety-car-interrupted race two was led by Grindrod for much of the way. Then, exiting Druids with less than four laps to go, he suddenly slowed, his gearbox jammed in first. Dance sailed past the stricken machine, followed at a respectful distance by Carl Boardley, Smith, Lee Rogers and Damien Carr.

Grindrod crawled around to make sure he finished to pick up some points, an eventual ninth (one lap adrift) being ill-reward for



Dance kicked off 2011 with a double

his efforts. As Dance headed to a maximum score, so Boardley kept Smith at arm’s length to fill the podium spots.

It was even closer for the next three places, with a horse blanket covering Rogers, D Carr and David Longhurst. Having got his ARDS licence only a few days earlier, Irish hot rod racer David O’Regan had a much better run than earlier to annex eighth.

Meanwhile, Simon Carr endured a race to forget,

eventually finishing 11th after being spun out of third spot and then suffering further troubles.

● Dud Candler

**RESULTS**

**RACE 1 (18 LAPS) 1 Steve Dance;** 2 Nic Grindrod +0.205s; 3 Michael Smith; 4 Simon Carr; 5 Damien Carr; 6 David Longhurst. **Fastest lap** Grindrod 52.276s (82.54mph) **record.**

**RACE 2 (20 LAPS) 1 Dance;** 2 Carl Boardley +4.230s; 3 Smith; 4 Lee Rogers; 5 D Carr; 6 Longhurst. **FL** Dance 52.465s (82.24mph).

**LEGENDS BRANDS HATCH INDY, MARCH 26-27**

**Legends share the opening spoils**

**SIX LEGENDS** races produced not only their share of thrills and spills but also five different winners, only Stephen Treherne treading the top step of the podium more than once. Perhaps more surprisingly, on his home circuit reigning champion Lawrence Davey had to wait until the curtain-closer on Sunday to show his number-one status.

Davey’s car was one of those in an opening-lap melee that brought red flags on Saturday. Peter Morton took the re-run, with less than two seconds covering the top eight. Treherne’s winning margin of 1.45s in heat two seemed positively dominant!

Davey looked on course to win the Saturday Final, but John Mickel’s late thrust earned him the

spoils by less than a Legend’s length.

Davey’s pre-event comment – “It’s going to be tough to defend my title” – proved spot-on in heat one on Sunday, as race-long threat Dean Brace edged him off the top step on the final lap. Treherne easily took the honours in heat two, in which a little over one second blanketed the

next six cars.

Sunday’s finale was a nailbiter, with Davey bump-drafting Brace and himself past erstwhile leader Ben Power in one move! Leading at half-distance, Davey tenaciously clung on to win from Simon Belcher and Brace in a thriller.

● Dud Candler

**RESULTS**

**HEAT 1 (8 LAPS) 1 Peter Morton;** 2 Stephen Treherne +0.470s; 3 Eliot Bunn; 4 Richard Pocklington. **FL** Dean Brace 57.398s (75.17mph).

**HEAT 2 (8 LAPS) 1 Treherne;** 2 Simon Belcher +1.453s; 3 John Mickel; 4 Brace. **FL** Morton 56.522s (76.34mph).

**FINAL (12 LAPS) 1 Mickel;** 2 Lawrence Davey +0.058s; 3 Ben Power; 4 Brace. **FL** Belcher 57.430s (75.13mph). **HEAT 1 (8 LAPS) 1 Brace;** 2 Davey +0.060s;

3 Mickel; 4 Treherne. **FL** Treherne 56.973s (75.97mph). **HEAT 2 (8 LAPS) 1 Treherne;** 2 Mickel +3.708s; 3 Belcher; 4 Bunn. **FL** Belcher 56.192s (76.97mph).

**FINAL (12 LAPS) 1 Davey;** 2 Belcher +0.369s; 3 Brace; 4 Mickel. **FL** Morton 56.638s (76.18mph).



Nick Brace (left) and Treherne in front

CNC SPORTS/SALOONS OULTON PARK, MARCH 26

## Double win for Spencer despite set-up slip-up

**ROBERT SPENCER** made himself the most successful racer of the opening month of the new season by moving his 2011 tally to four with a double win in the first two rounds of the CNC Heads Sports/Saloon Championship.

Spencer made the opening win hard for himself by fiddling with the set-up of his Stuart Taylor Locosaki, but changed it back in time to take a more decisive win later in the day. “I put the car back to normal and it was better,” admitted the Leicester driver, who added to his double win from the Anglesey season opener two weeks earlier.

The first race was halted just before mid-distance when Graham Saul got into a tankslapper and parked his Ford Fiesta on its roof

at Island. That negated Spencer’s five-second lead and, over a seven-lap sprint, he had to deal with a stern challenge from the Westfield of Cam Forbes.

Forbes attacked all round the lap but, as they crested Clay Hill for the penultimate lap, the Westfield snapped into a spin and went round four times. “I was dizzy,” said Forbes, who was busy bump-starting the engine when Danny Keenan nipped by in his MK Indy. Forbes managed to retake second on the final tour from Keenan, as Simon Allaway rumbled his V8 Lotus Esprit to fourth after starting in the pitlane due to throttle concerns.

Spencer made it all look rather easier later in the afternoon, making good his escape as Forbes, Keenan,



Spencer took two wins in his Locosaki

Peter Davies and Brian Dean battled over second. Keenan led the quartet initially, but a misfire set in and he dropped out of contention. Dean fell away in fourth, so it was Forbes against the Caterham of Davies for second and Forbes got the place by less than half a second.

Defending champ Paul Dobson was best of the GT cars in fifth with his Mazda. ● Paul Lawrence

### RESULTS

**RACE 1 (7 LAPS)** 1 Robert Spencer (Locosaki); 2 Cam Forbes (Westfield) +10.531s; 3 Danny Keenan (MK Indy Busa); 4 Simon Allaway (Lotus Esprit V8); 5 Paul

Dobson (Mazda RX7); 6 Brian Dean (Westfield). **CW** Forbes; Allaway; Dobson; Michael Ellis (Ford Fiesta); Paul Ingram (Ford Fiesta). **FL** Spencer 1m29.050s (89.98mph). **RACE 2 (14 LAPS)**: 1 Spencer; 2 Forbes +16.585s; 3 Peter Davies (Caterham R400); 4 Dean; 5 Dobson; 6 Allaway. **CW** Forbes; Allaway; Dobson; Ellis; Ingram. **FL** Davies 1m30.154s (88.88mph).



Vee honours fell to Downey's Leastone

FORMULA VEE KIRKISTOWN, MARCH 26

## Downey returns to win Formula Vee thriller

**FORMULA VEE** returnee John Downey took a well-judged victory in yet another Kirkistown thriller last weekend, heading an eight-car bunch over the line at the finish.

Downey, who ran in Libre last year, had no difficulty adapting back to (low) Vee power and, armed with a new Leastone, was in the thick of the action from the start. But with the lead

changing several times a lap it was the run from the Hairpin to the line that decided the outcome, and Downey’s black machine was ahead when it mattered.

David O’Brien, Robbie Allen and Lee Newsome led the pursuing horde, with O’Brien just 0.1s behind Downey at the flag.

For Allen and fifth-placed David Kelly it was the race of a lifetime. Both had

started from the back row after a transponder problem removed them from the results of the qualifying race, but their progress through the field was impressive and, had there been another few laps, the result might have been different.

The qualifier was equally hectic and went to Adam Macauley from William Callaghan, with Allen third on the road. The final podium place, however, fell officially to Philip Devlin. The race was shortened by one lap when Morgan McCourt and Mick Sammon clashed on the main straight after one zigged when a zag might have been better.

● Richard Young

### RESULTS (10 LAPS)

1 John Downey (Leastone JH004); 2 David O’Brien (Sheane FV98) +0.094s; 3 Robbie Allen (Sheane FV03); 4 Lee Newsome (Sheane FV); 5 David Kelly (Sheane FV02); 6 Ian Campbell (Sheane FV02). **FL** Newsome 1m06.338s (82.050mph).

PRE-1993 TOURERS OULTON PARK, MARCH 26

## Old BMW takes victory

**FOR MUCH** of the Pre-1993 Touring Car contest, the three-way lead battle between the BMW M3s of brothers Andy and Allan Davies and Roger Stanford made a fine spectacle.

The local brothers set the pace as Andy’s newer E36 M3 headed his elder brother and Stanford in their classic E30s early on. But by mid-race all was not well in the leading car as its handling started to fade.

Andy soon had a far bigger concern as his brake pedal went very soft at Island. He just kept it on the track as brother Allan dived through into the lead.

“He went wide and I made it stick,” said Allan, never hesitating to take advantage of his brother’s misfortune.

While Allan made good his escape, Andy had his hands full of Stanford and there was just a third of a second between them as they dashed over the line after 20 minutes of flat-out racing.

● Paul Lawrence

### RESULTS (12 LAPS)

1 Allan Davies (BMW M3); 2 Andy Davies (BMW M3) +5.035s; 3 Roger Stanford (BMW M3); 4 Jim McLoughlin (Ford Capri); 5 Stuart Tranter (Rover 220 Turbo); 6 David Scriven (Toyota Supra). **CW** Andy Davies; Scriven; Daniel Smoughton (BMW 320i). **FL** Allan Davies 1m37.005s (82.61mph).

Allan's E30 won



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# Small but perfectly formed

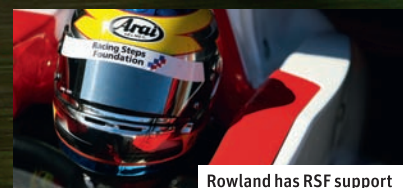
The 2011 Formula Renault UK grid is small, but the quality is high, says **MARCUS SIMMONS**



Manor's Millroy has tested a car loaned from CRS



Hill steps up with Manor



Rowland has RSF support

**E**leven drivers have formed the backbone of Formula Renault UK's eight days of pre-season testing, and it appears that those 11 will be the bedrock of this year's championship, which kicks off at Brands Hatch this weekend.

The reasons for that paucity of entries have already been covered in this magazine, but it's not all gloom: among the select few are at least half a dozen drivers who have the potential to become strong professionals, and it's tough to call who will be the 2011 champion.

Reigning Winter Cup champion Alex Lynn has carried that form through to this year, via a useful campaign in New Zealand's Toyota Racing Series. Lynn, the son of Le Mans Series GT racer Shaun, returns with Fortec Motorsport and has only once been outside the top two over the eight test days, including the fastest time in the final outing at Rockingham. But the 17-year-old from Essex is not getting carried away.

Spurring Lynn on is team-mate Oliver Rowland. The Racing Steps Foundation-backed McLaren protege had a difficult Winter Cup (although he won once, after making the right tyre choice in wet-dry conditions). He has been in the top three four times in testing, but as with any rookie there are adaptations still to be made – as RSF's James Calado found at the same

level in 2008. Fortec's restructure has installed ex-Formula BMW team chief Russell Dixon as team manager, and the former Star of Mallory FF1600 ace will also engineer Lynn and Rowland. Australian Mitchell Gilbert is also in the team and is knocking on the door of the top six – except when he rolled while avoiding a pheasant at Croft! – while Bolivian Pedro Calbimonte could be a late addition.

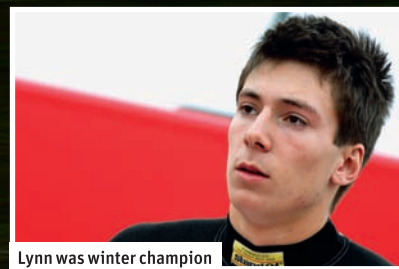
Fortec's big rival Manor Competition has 2010 race winner Ollie Millroy spearheading its attack. The Surrey man, who has been driving a car hired from CRS Racing, has surprisingly only topped testing once, but no one is ruling him out.

Manor team chief Tony Shaw has high hopes that newcomer Jordan King, who has been progressing well, can rival Rowland in the rookie stakes. Formula Ford graduate Josh Hill shot to the top of the times at Oulton Park, a circuit that, compared with other venues, rewards a driver's improvisational skill and bravery more than his still-developing precise aero-driving technique. Manor's other driver, Alice Powell, had her early form hidden by a straightline speed problem caused by an electric glitch, but bounced back into the top five at Oulton and Rockingham.

Dark horse is Hill's old Formula Ford rival Tio Ellinas. The Cypriot has adapted superbly to Renault and has

twice topped the times with Atech Reid; driver coach Kelvin Burt rates him very highly. Joining him is karter Oscar King, who is really up against it and is the least experienced of all the drivers. King has been racing a BMW 320 and Mazda MX-5 to gain licence signatures. Incidentally, his father Andy was a strong rival of Hill's old man in mid-1980s FF1600. While Damon Hill went on to superstardom, King Sr became TWR marketing chief.

Two single-car teams complete the line-up (although Fortec Eurocup drivers Will Stevens and Felix Serralles are having a run-out at Brands to boost the grid). Mark Burdett Motorsport's Jack Hawksworth was the pole-position king in the Winter Cup, but a couple of hefty shunts in testing at Brands and Croft hit his confidence and he's just getting back into his rhythm. Antel Motorsport's Dan Wells is up against it, but team and driver have determination in spades – and a lot to prove. ☘



Lynn was winter champion

## ENTRY LIST

**Ollie Millroy** (GB)  
Manor Competition

**Josh Hill** (GB)  
Manor Competition

**Alice Powell** (GB)  
Manor Competition

**Jordan King** (GB)  
Manor Competition

**Oscar King** (GB)  
Atech Reid GP

**Tio Ellinas** (CY)  
Atech Reid GP

**Dan Wells** (GB)  
Antel Motorsport

**Jack Hawksworth** (GB)  
Mark Burdett Motorsport

**Mitchell Gilbert** (AUS)  
Fortec Motorsport

**Alex Lynn** (GB)  
Fortec Motorsport

**Oliver Rowland** (GB)  
Fortec Motorsport

**Possible: Pedro Calbimonte** (BOL)  
Fortec Motorsport



Ellinas has adapted strongly

# FINAL DRIVE

LETTERS ■ GEAR ■ ON-TRACK ■ ON-SCREEN ■ PICS ■ TECH ■ ARCHIVE

## YOUR SAY

What you think of the motorsport news of the past week



It's been a long wait...

## Welcome back to business as usual

Don't you just feel better now? Five months of graft, thousands of man hours, the accumulated effort of the finest collection of automotive brains in the world, countless millions of dollars and a bunch of new acronyms combined to produce a race that was absorbing, entertaining, surprising – and one which could have been played out in any season since the championship began.

All the tinkering and tampering with the rules and juggling strategies in the world won't stop the cream rising to the top.

**Quin Haigh** Muswell Hill

EDITORIAL CONTACT [mail@autosport.com](mailto:mail@autosport.com)

**I'm pleased** to see the new rear wing system had a successful outing in its first competitive race at the Australian Grand Prix.

David Coulthard summed it up nicely when Martin Brundle asked him what he thought of the new system and he said: "It's just about using the technology at your disposal."

Too true, David – technology like this needs to be embraced and not ignored. More please!

**Keith Spicer**

Bishops Stortford, Hertfordshire

**I'm 14**, so I missed the legendary Murray Walker era. When he retired in 2001, F1 audiences probably hoped for a new commentary golden age.

A lead commentator must be entertaining and capture the essence of the sport. This might be *Revved Up's* territory, but I think that after 10 wilderness years, Martin Brundle could be the man to take on the mantle after a promising showing in Oz. I wonder if he's next to join Murray in that exclusive F1 commentary hall of fame...

**Oscar Mustard**

By email

**I read with** horror the suggestion that the WTCC wants to go to the Nurburgring, "if the circuit can be upgraded to meet FIA requirements".

We already know what the FIA thinks an approved circuit looks like – it's called the Nurburgring Grand Prix circuit.

If GT3-spec Audis and Porsches can race successfully around the Nurburgring for 24 hours, in a field of 200-plus cars, then why does the circuit need to be modified for 20 touring cars?

**Ian Haynes-Bowers**

By email

**If politics** is to be introduced to AUTOSPORT by Behram Kapadia (March 24), then it is important to give a balanced view.

For 40 years, Bahrain has been the most open of the Gulf States. Significant reforms have been introduced – they should go further, but it's too easy to be simplistic: Bahrain is the perfect example of a country where 'one man (or woman), one vote' would not signal democracy, but create a new oppressed minority instead.

**Duncan Rabagliati**

Wimbledon

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## TOP FIVE ON OUR WEBSITE

1. **BUTTON TOPS SECOND AUSTRALIA PRACTICE**
2. **HAMILTON, SCHUMACHER GET WARNINGS**
3. **RED BULL COY ON START-ONLY KERS TALK**
4. **SAUBER DUO DISQUALIFIED FROM AUSTRALIA**
5. **BRAWN TO LEAVE MERCEDES BOARD**

AUTOSPORT.COM PLUS

## TOP STORY ONLINE

**GARY ANDERSON: EXHAUST SYSTEMS EXPLAINED**

To read this exclusive feature and many others like it, log on to [autosport.com/plus](http://autosport.com/plus) and choose which package you'd like. A month will cost £5.50, a year £46. Includes access to Forix – the ultimate stats website.

## WIN!



### ROAD ANGEL VANTAGE

This week's star letter will receive a Road Angel Vantage – a dedicated safety camera and blackspot locator that displays the legal speed limit of every road you drive, automatically and wirelessly updating its database every few minutes as you drive. For more details on Road Angel visit [www.roadangelgroup.com](http://www.roadangelgroup.com) Please ensure that your full address is included on all correspondence.

### CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

- Last week's testing graphic (p18-19) failed to include Mark Webber; he should be seventh, on 101.655 per cent.
- Snapshot (p6-7) last week featured a 2008 McLaren MP4-23, not 2010's MP4-25.
- A picture of David Croft appeared twice on our expert panel (p38), instead of David Brabham.

It is the policy of AUTOSPORT to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please note the issue date and page number when contacting us on [autosport.editorial@haynet.com](mailto:autosport.editorial@haynet.com)

# THE LATEST GEAR

The most desirable new releases for motor racing fans: books, DVDs, models, art and gifts

**BUILD A 1:8 McLAREN PARTWORK**

£7.99 per issue (issue one £1.99)  
buildmclaren.com (0845 1489251)

Partwork king DeAgostini has teamed up with McLaren to create this fantastically detailed 1:8-scale replica of MP4-23, the car steered to the 2008 world championship by Lewis Hamilton.

Each weekly issue comes with a selection of parts to complete the build process (part one allows you to create the intricate front-wing assembly), and a full-colour magazine with features on F1 personalities, technology, history and, of course, step-by-step instructions for your build.

Subscribe in advance to the partwork – scheduled to run to 85 weeks – and get four free gifts during the first 10 weeks.

Check out the dedicated website for more information and details of how to get your 60cm-long McLaren underway.



## HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

**YOUTUBE: BUTTON/LOWNDES SWAP AT BATHURST**



**SEARCH FOR:** Bathurst Vodafone Driver Swap 2011 (5:20)  
Before the Australian GP, Jenson Button tried Holden Commodore V8 at Mount Panorama, Bathurst, while five-time 'great race' winner Craig Lowndes tried a 2008 McLaren F1 car. Read what happened on page 40.

**'WHO WORKS' MEDIA GUIDES**

£56.50  
whoworksin.com

Now in its 22nd year, the 'Who works in F1' guide is a definitive directory of key players employed at the sport's top level. Drivers, team bosses, engineers, organisers, PRs, journos and snappers are listed in the 600-page hardback, with team details, car tech specs, circuit maps, and sponsors as a complement.

**DAMN FEW DIED IN BED BOOK**

\$39.95 (09766683-3-5)  
T Saal (racemaker.com)

Compelling stories from the memory of legendary mechanic and crew chief Andy Dunlop who spent four decades at the heart of US dirt-track racing. Dunlop's power of recall to author Thomas Saal is eerie – and the title offers a chilling snapshot of just how hazardous a pastime this was.

**FERRARI 312T MODEL KIT**

£42.50  
grandprixmodels.com

Hasegawa's plastic kit of the 1976 Ferrari 312T used by Niki Lauda to win the Brazilian GP will have modellers rushing for their enamels, sprue cutters and poly cement. The kit has 199 parts that combine – if you do it properly – to create a 1:20-scale replica of the flat-12, fat-slicked '70s machine.

# WHAT'S ON...

Your guide to the best events taking place in the UK and around the world this week – plus TV and online

## BRANDS HATCH

TOCA

April 2-3

Admission £12 Saturday, £30 Sunday (on the gate, or £25 online),  
£30 weekend ticket (online purchase only)

Tel: 01474 872331

The British Touring Car season gets underway in the Kent amphitheatre this weekend with a record entry, thanks to an influx of new teams and drivers attracted by series boss Alan Gow's new (and cheaper) Next Generation Touring Car formula. Expect the combination of reigning champion Jason Plato and the factory RML Chevrolet Cruze to be the ones to beat. Formula Renault UK, Clio Cup, Ginetta Juniors, the new Ginetta GT Supercup and the Porsche Carrera Cup provide support.



Let the bumper-shredding begin

750 Motor Club heads to Mallory



## MALLORY PARK

750MC

April 3

Admission £13 on the gate,  
£11 advance purchase

Tel: 01455 842931

The 750 Motor Club's 2011 calendar kicks off with a quickfire single-day meet on Mallory's newly resurfaced, high-speed, oval-style (albeit with a hairpin tacked on) layout. RGB, Formula Vee, Kit Car/SR & GT, Stock Hatch, 750 Trophy, a handicapped Allcomers race and guesting Formula Junior racers will all feature on the 10-race bill.

## DONINGTON PARK

MSVR

April 2-3

Admission £14 on the gate

Tel: 01332 810048

Production BMW, Radical Clubmans Cup (Saturday only), VAG Trophy (Saturday only), Monoposto, GT Trophy, Project 8 Saloons, MSV F3 Cup, and Mk2 Golf GTI (Sunday only).

## SILVERSTONE

BARC

April 2-3

Admission £10 each day on the gate, or £15 weekend ticket

Tel: 0844 3728 200

Caterham Graduates, 250 Superkarts, Open Sportscars, Kumho BMW, Austin Healey, and Honda V-TEC Challenge.

## OULTON PARK

BRSCC

April 2

Admission £13 on the gate,  
£10 online. Tel: 01829 760301

## LE MANS SERIES

Rd 1/5

Paul Ricard, France

April 3

[www.lemans-series.com](http://www.lemans-series.com)

There are no factory LMP1 entries for the season opener in France this weekend – Peugeot and Audi are keeping their powder dry for the Intercontinental Le Mans Cup, of which this is not a round. In their absence, expect Henri Pescarolo's eponymous squad to take the fight to the two Rebellion Racing Lola-Toyotas, which should be favourites for outright victory. It should be a classic Ferrari-versus-Porsche tussle in the GT section, but don't rule out World GT1 squad Young Driver AMR and its Aston Martin Vantage driven by Tomas Engle and Alex Muller.



Ricard hosts LMS season opener

Roberto Merhi is among Euro F3 field



## F3 EURO SERIES

Rd 1/9

Paul Ricard, France

April 2-3

[www.f3euroseries.com](http://www.f3euroseries.com)

## SPEED EUROSERIES

Rd 1/6

Paul Ricard, France

April 2-3

[www.speedeuroseries.com](http://www.speedeuroseries.com)

## NASCAR TRUCK SERIES

Rd 4/25

Martinsville, Virginia, USA, April 2

[www.nascar.com/series/truck](http://www.nascar.com/series/truck)

## NASCAR SPRINT CUP

Rd 6/36

Martinsville, Virginia, USA

April 3

[www.nascar.com](http://www.nascar.com)

## BRAZILIAN V8 STOCK CARS

Rd 2/12

Interlagos

April 3

<http://stockcar.globo.com>

## Television

### THURSDAY MARCH 31

1445-1650 **Motors TV**  
V8 Supercars: Adelaide  
1615-1645 **ESPN**  
Planet Speed  
1720-1925 **Motors TV**  
British Rallycross highlights  
2205-2235 **Motors TV**  
The Grid

### FRIDAY APRIL 1

0115-0315, 1415-1620, 2235-0040  
**Motors TV**  
British Rallycross highlights  
0340-0435 **Motors TV**  
British Historic Rally  
0430-0530 **Sky Sports 3**  
Racemax  
1130-1230 **ESPN Classic**  
Formula 1 Retro: 1976  
James Hunt wins his only world title.  
1825-2030 **Motors TV**  
V8 Supercars: Adelaide  
2000-2030 **Sky Sports 4**  
British Rallyzone  
2315-2345 **ESPN**  
WRC: Access All Areas  
A look back at Rally Portugal.

### SATURDAY APRIL 2

0300-0400 **Sky Sports 2 & 0500-0600**  
**Sky Sports 4**  
Racemax  
0315-0505, 0900-1105 **Motors TV**  
British Rallycross highlights  
0445-0510 **Five**  
Motorsport Mundial  
0630-0730 **ESPN**

WRC: Access All Areas  
0730-0800 **Channel 4**  
The Grid  
1300-1400 **Bloomberg**  
FIA GT1: Abu Dhabi highlights  
1515-1720 **Motors TV**  
GP2 Asia: Imola  
1720-1925 **Motors TV**  
V8 Supercars: Adelaide  
2100-2205 **Motors TV**  
Superstars  
2305-0010 **Motors TV**  
British Historic Rally  
2330-2345 **Eurosport**  
Abu Dhabi Desert Challenge

### SUNDAY APRIL 3

0110-0315 **Motors TV**  
British Rallycross highlights  
0600-0700 **Sky Sports 2**  
Racemax  
0700-0730 **Sky Sports 4**  
British Rallyzone  
0915-0945, 1720-1825 **Motors TV**  
Superstars previews  
1045-1720 **Motors TV LIVE**  
LMS: Paul Ricard  
Season opener from ex-French GP venue.  
1100-1800 **ITV4 LIVE**  
BTCC: Brands Hatch  
The season kicks off in Kent with Jason Plato defending his title in an RML Chevy Cruze.  
1300-1400 **Bloomberg**  
FIA GT1: Abu Dhabi highlights  
2000-2100 **Motors TV**  
WRC: Rally Portugal highlights  
2100-2130 **Motors TV**  
The Grid

## Online

# AUTOSPORT.COM

Coming up on the web this week

### MOTO GP: JEREZ

MotoGP moves to Jerez for its annual pilgrimage to Spanish motorcycle racing's Mecca. There we will likely get a true form guide. Is Casey Stoner a dead-on favourite or will world champ Jorge Lorenzo show Yamaha's true pace? Find out all the answers on AUTOSPORT.com. We'll also bring you news from the opening round of the British Touring Car Championship at Brands Hatch, and the Le Mans Series at Paul Ricard.



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The AUTOSPORT app is now available on iTunes. Dial up AUTOSPORT.com on your iPhone for instant access to news, feature articles, image galleries and live text race commentary for a one-off fee of only £2.99 (there is no renewal cost). For more info, visit [www.autosport.com/app](http://www.autosport.com/app)

## REVVED UP OVER WHAT'S ON THE BOX

We cast a critical eye over the best and worst of this week's TV coverage



IT WAS ALL "GO! GO! GO!" with Murray Walker. "It's coming. It's coming. It's coming. It's here!" James Allen once amusingly said. "And we're underway!" shouted Jonathan Legard in one of his longer, unsoftened sentences.

But they're all history now, condemned to fleeting YouTube appearances (before the FOM heavies have them taken down), or fading video tapes that gather dust and annoy the missus. Now, in the new HD world (that's aitch dee, not haitch dee), there's a new MC calling the starts – Martin Brundle.

So what did he say at the beginning of the

Australian Grand Prix? Well, there was a bit of a pause, followed by "and it's a good start from Vettel". Understated, unexcitable and inoffensive. It set the tone for the rest of the race.

Together with new sidekick David Coulthard, they set about reading the race, adding insight where they could, informing throughout. In fact, they ended up fading into the background, as if they were part of the furniture – and always had been.

Of course, there were a couple of small errors, a few cars misidentified during the maelstrom of the opening laps. But they were soon rectified.

Delving into the over-reactive world of internet forums is generally best avoided, but in the interest of research I gave it a go – and it seems the MB/DC team split opinion. Some lamented the absence of a pants-on-fire style. Some people were wrong.

What they should have been doing was praising the eagle eyes of DC in spotting Lewis's floor was broken *before* he went off, and saluting Brundle for saying it as he saw it when

he criticised McLaren's failure to instantly instruct Button to let Massa repass.

The one area ripe for improvement is the 'tactics truck'. They need to take a lead from football coverage here. Get Brundle a magic pen so he can highlight the key areas without having to point at the screen, blocking half the interesting stuff from view. And they need to get the key clips cued up well in advance. But overall, it was a good start.

*Revved Up*

"The forums should have praised the eagle eyes of DC in spotting Lewis's floor was broken *before* he went off"

# THE WEEK IN PICTURES

The lensmen pounding the beat on four different continents



## LOCALS ON THE LIMIT

Ivo Nogueira tries his hardest on the Rally Portugal stage on Lisbon's Belem riverside



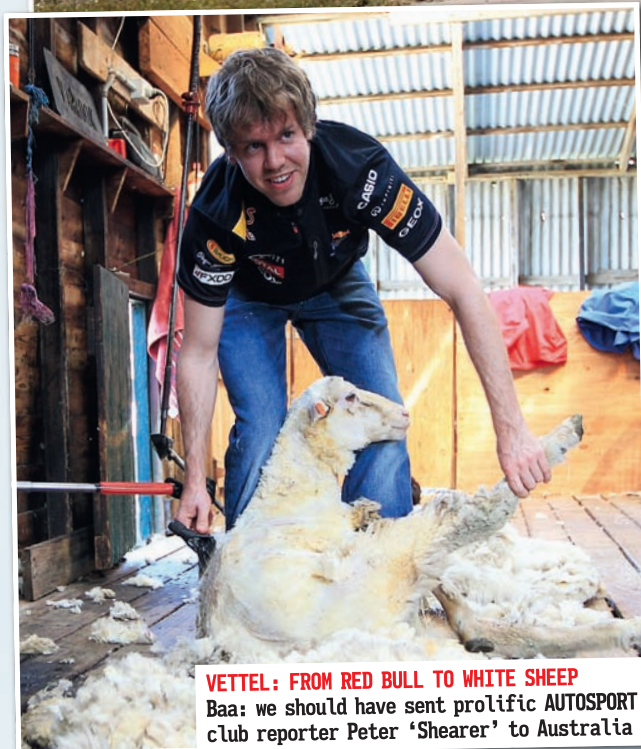
## DEREK BELL IN A 72 AT KYALAMI

'Dinger' got back in a Lotus single-seater after a 44-year gap. "Like going out with an old girlfriend," said the 69-year-old!



## ST PAUL OR ST PETER? MAKES NO DIFFERENCE

Marco Andretti and IndyCar season first corners don't mix. After his 2010 shunt in Sao Paulo, here he turns turtle in St Petersburg



## VETTEL: FROM RED BULL TO WHITE SHEEP

Baa: we should have sent prolific AUTOSPORT club reporter Peter 'Shearer' to Australia



## MERC F1 PRAYS FOR JAPAN

Just one illustration that the motorsport world is thinking of the people of Japan

# FROM THE ARCHIVE

Will Hoy, BTCC, Silverstone, 1991

**“It proves that a fantastically run private team can take on the works teams, which is tremendous for new entrants”**



Hoy dominated 1991 BTCC opener

**“WINNING A CHAMPIONSHIP** is all about getting a good start and then maintaining the momentum, which is exactly what we did. I think it’s easier to lead from the front because you can afford to take seconds and thirds. You don’t have to get desperate for wins.”

These are the words of the late Will Hoy, after he clinched the 1991 British Touring Car title. That desired start, which all the drivers on the 2011 BTCC grid will be trying to emulate this weekend, began 20 years ago tomorrow (Friday) when the Vic Lee Motorsport BMW M3 driver won the first race of the new two-litre era.

Thanks to a disagreement between organisers the RAC, MSA and Brands Hatch over TV rights, the 1991 season did not kick off at Oulton Park as planned. Instead, the revised Silverstone National circuit hosted the first round and Hoy set the pace in testing.

After losing out to works BMW Prodrive ace Steve Soper in qualifying, Hoy got away well to lead into Copse. Aided by the fast-starting John Cleland’s Vauxhall Cavalier holding up Soper, and a first-lap clash involving Andy Rouse’s new Toyota, Hoy pulled inexorably away.

Soper made it into second at the end of the Club Straight on lap four, but almost immediately slowed with

his M3 stuck in third gear. That left Hoy unopposed. Even a late fuel pick-up problem couldn’t stop him taking the first of his nine BTCC wins by almost 10 seconds.

It wasn’t perhaps the most exciting race to start the post-Ford Sierra Cosworth era, but things would get a whole lot better. Rouse, who fought back to fifth, says: “There was a crisis of credibility – after the RS500s, the two-litres didn’t seem special, but they were soon as quick because of better braking and cornering ability. That gave it more credibility, and the racing was hard.”

Tim Harvey, who would go on to succeed Hoy as BTCC champion, qualified only 11th and finished 10th in his VLM M3 after various incidents. He recalls Hoy’s fine 1991 start, which was followed up by victory in round two at Snetterton. “Maybe Will adapted to the car better initially and he had the focus of the team to start with,” he says. “He made full use of the car and team.”

Last word to Hoy, who understandably became a fan of the BTCC’s new direction, which would soon attract more manufacturers: “It proves that a fantastically run private team can take on the works teams, which is tremendous for new entrants. I think it will get better and better and the public will love it.”

## THIS WEEK IN...



**APRIL 4, 1969**

**JOCHEN RINDT** flings his Lotus 49B through Becketts in pursuit of Jack Brabham at Silverstone (above).

Triple F1 world champion Brabham won his first race for over a year in the Daily Express Trophy event. The Aussie led from start to finish in his Ford-powered Brabham BT26A. Rindt was delayed by a sick engine in the early laps, but charged through the field in wet conditions and finished just 2.2 seconds in arrears as Brabham ran short of fuel on the final lap.

Rolf Stommelen set the pace as the new Porsche 917 stole headlines at the official Le Mans 24 Hours test (below).

According to John Bolster’s report, “With well over 500bhp on tap, the big Porsches were the fastest cars present, but they obviously had immense torque in the middle ranges too, which gave them the sort of acceleration that we used to see in the days of the six-litre Auto Unions.”



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# DICK JOHNSON

■ Lakeside Australian Touring Cars ■ June 21, 1981 ■ Ford Falcon XD ■ Race-long scrap with Brock for the title



**THE ONE THAT** gave me the biggest buzz – and was certainly one of the biggest hassles – was 1981 at Lakeside, my home track, the final round of the Australian Touring Car Championship.

After what had happened the year before with the rock at Bathurst, we'd built a new car and had a full shot at the championship – before we'd only done events here and there.

Peter Brock and I were one point apart going into the race, and whoever beat who was going to win the championship. I qualified on pole and he was next to me. The place was just heaving – they'd never seen a crowd like that before at Lakeside and they've never seen one since! There were 40-odd thousand and it's only a small circuit – just a mile-and-a-half around, and still today next to Bathurst it's the most challenging circuit in the country.

As the race started I beat Brocky into the first corner and from there on we were hammer and tongs. On lap three my car broke a front sway bar. The linkarm was hanging down as it had broken the link. The flaggies radioed in to say part of the

**"Brocky and I were never more than a car length apart, and we never swapped paint. I was using the road, and everything else I could get my wheels on. The crowd went ballistic - it was one of those unforgettable moments"**

car was hanging down. They asked the clerk of the course if they should black flag me and he told them to look out of the window! With 40,000-odd people there he said, 'If you're game, I'm not'.

The car was a bit of an old fly-swat after that, very, very taily

– as I'm sure you can imagine. It turned in good, but that was about it. We had crossply tyres then and they didn't last long either. But Brocky and I kept that fight up for the entire race. We were never more than a car length apart, and I'm sure there were any number

of times that he could have punted me, but we never once swapped paint, and that says everything about him as a sportsman.

I was using the road, and everything else I could get my wheels on, and at the end of the race the crowd went ballistic – the screen of Brocky's car was practically shattered it had had so many rocks thrown up at it! It was just one of those unforgettable moments.

That was the start of something. It was a bit of a relief after what people had donated in order for me to keep going because I was just a privateer at the time. And it continued when we went to Bathurst and won there too, and things blossomed from there. *Dick Johnson was talking to Andrew van de Burgt*

## IN PROFILE



**DICK JOHNSON** is an Australian touring car legend, with five national championship victories, three Bathurst 1000 triumphs and 22 top flight race wins on his illustrious tin-top CV. He began racing a Holden saloon in the 1960s, but it was as a self-run Ford driver in the 1970s and '80s that he made his name. He even made a brief foray into NASCAR in 1989-90, with Ford of course. He retired from driving in 1999, but his eponymous Dick Johnson Racing squad continues to be one of the top V8 Supercar teams, winning the 2010 title with James Courtney.

**NEXT  
WEEK**  
**Chris  
AMON**





## Porsche Carrera Cup GB

Rounds 1 and 2, Brands Hatch, April 2-3

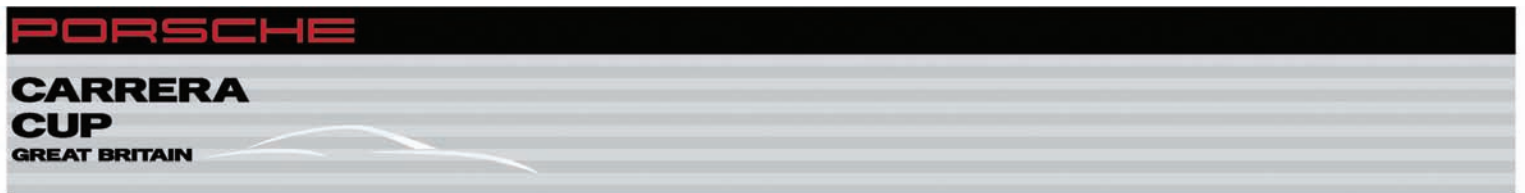
There is much that is new about the Porsche Carrera Cup GB for 2011. A new fleet of 450bhp cars and a raft of new drivers should make 2011 the best-ever season for the championship.

Already, there are clear signs that Tim Harvey and Michael Caine, the two dominant drivers of 2010, will have major new opposition for the coming season. Leading the challenge to defending champion Harvey will be 2007 champion James Sutton and his team mate Michael Meadows, who set the pace in the major pre-season test at Snetterton.

New to the championship, and sure to be strong contenders from the very start of the season, are rising young stars like Sam Tordoff, Richard Plant and Carrera Cup Scholar Ben Hetherington.

But the Carrera Cup is not just about the contest for overall victory, as the battles in Pro-Am1 and Pro-Am2 will be every bit as hard fought. In Pro-Am1, leading racers include Ahmad Al Harthy, Jonas Gelzinis and Rory Butcher, while in Pro-Am2 the early pacesetters should include George Brewster, Keith Webster and Steve Parish.

For more information on the Porsche Carrera Cup GB visit [www.porsche.com](http://www.porsche.com)

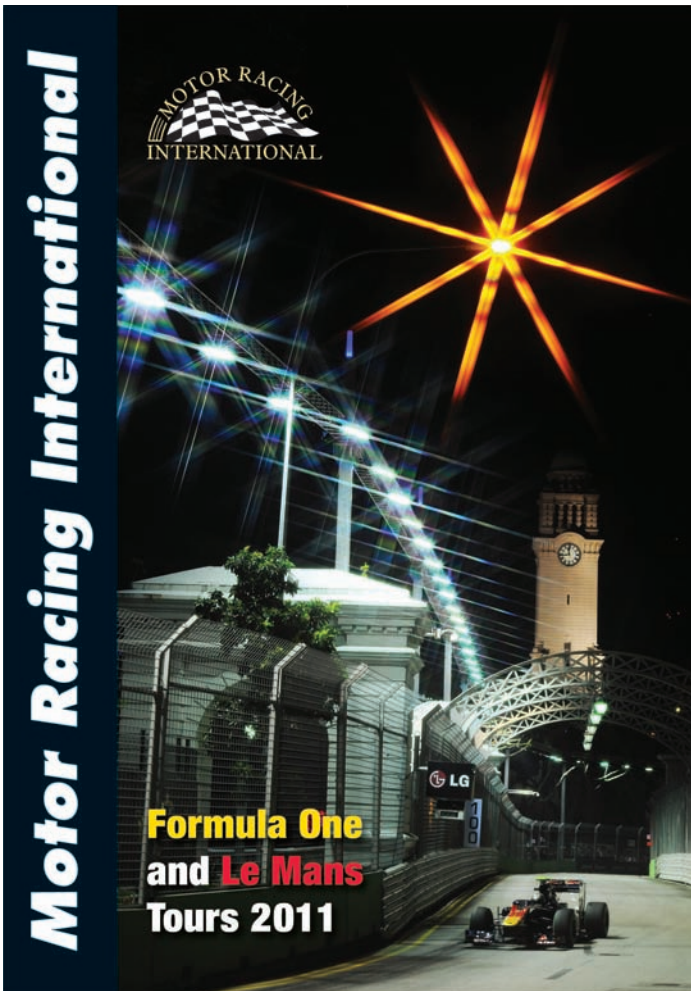


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**HUNGARIAN GRAND PRIX**  
**Budapest - 31 July**  
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 2-Centre Holiday £925\*

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