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Return from the wilderness

After two decades away, BMW is returning to the DTM in Audi and Mercedes. By JAMES O'LEARY

BMW's return to the DTM
The return of BMW to the DTM is a significant moment for the series. The Munich-based manufacturer has been absent from the top-level touring car racing for two decades. This year, BMW is competing in the DTM with Audi and Mercedes. The return is a result of a long-term partnership with the DTM, which was established in 2007. BMW's return is a testament to the series' growth and the manufacturer's commitment to motorsport.

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Mugello test pivotal in 2012 F1 title fight

Point at the top of the list of teams that need to make best use of final proper race test since 2008

THE STRATEGY
The Mugello test is a crucial moment for the F1 teams. It is the last test before the start of the season and is a key indicator of a team's performance. The test is held at Mugello, a track that is known for its challenging layout. The teams will be looking to gain valuable data from the test, which will be used to develop their cars for the season.

WHY MUGELLO?
Mugello is a track that is known for its challenging layout. It is a track that is used by many of the top teams in the world. The test is held at Mugello, a track that is known for its challenging layout. It is a track that is used by many of the top teams in the world. The test is held at Mugello, a track that is known for its challenging layout.

CATERHAM GETS RADICAL

After decades of racing with variants of the same design, Caterham has built its first prototype sports-racing car. By WALTER D'ARCA

CATERHAM GETS RADICAL
Caterham has built its first prototype sports-racing car, the SP300.R. The car is a radical departure from the traditional open-wheel racing cars. It is a car that is designed to be a fun and affordable racing car. The car is built by Caterham, a company that is known for its affordable and fun racing cars. The SP300.R is a car that is designed to be a fun and affordable racing car.



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POLE POSITION

Another classic encounter in a topsy-turvy season



WHATEVER THE RIGHTS AND WRONGS of staging last weekend's race in Bahrain, on-track it produced yet another cracker in what's shaping up to be a truly great season.

Few would have predicted that Red Bull and Lotus would be the teams to beat pre-weekend, yet the Renault-powered cars were the class of the field, and Sebastian Vettel had to be at his very best to stop Kimi Raikkonen from claiming a sensational win.

It was also a career-defining drive from Romain Grosjean, who gave the *drapeau tricolore* its first podium finish since 1998.

And what of Mercedes and McLaren, the pre-race favourites? They struggled to make the tricky Pirelli tyres work in the desert heat and, in McLaren's case, failed to get the job done in the pits.

Next week's Mugello test gives everyone a chance to improve their cars (and pitstop routines). It should offer every opportunity for even more twists in what's been a captivating season, albeit one that requires some serious soul-searching.

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AUTOSPORT
PODCAST

BAMBER'S WEEK



F1

Team Enstone secures double podium in Bahrain

Kimi Raikkonen and Romain Grosjean go toe-to-toe for Toleman/Benetton/Renault/Lotus (delete according to taste/age) during their charge to a two-three finish in the Bahrain GP. It was the first time two cars wearing Lotus badges finished in the top three since Carlos Reutemann and Mario Andretti took a two-three in the 1979 Spanish GP at Jarama. Full report, p28.

Pic: Dunbar/LAT



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F1 warned over Bahrain future

Former rally champion and ex-FIA presidential candidate Ari Vatanen says sport should be aware that 'history will judge'. By EDD STRAW



Former FIA presidential candidate Ari Vatanen has called on Formula 1 to consider the effect the Bahrain Grand Prix has on the situation in the Middle-East kingdom before it commits to a race in 2013.

Last weekend's Bahrain race was largely unaffected by civil unrest despite protests in the country, but 1981 world rally champion and ex-MEP Vatanen has warned the sport to scrutinise the wider ethical issues surrounding the race. If it fails to do so, it does so at the risk of damaging F1, he claims.

"This is a question for F1 to consider as a whole, and it's important not to target any individuals because I don't want to personalise it," Vatanen told AUTOSPORT. "But the focus has

been on the safety of the race and the mechanics and spectators, but that's not the point at all. You can always organise a safe race with enough manpower.

"Despite the arguments that sport and politics should not mix, F1 condones and accepts the

"What kind of image are we presenting? Do we only care about our safety for one weekend?"

Vatanen on 'selfish' perception

Todt and Ecclestone with track boss Zayed Alzayani



[political] situation by racing in Bahrain. And we know in our hearts that the current system is not sustainable. If we are deaf to the legitimate aspirations of people, and this is not just about 2013 but the longer term as well, then history will judge us for it. The question will be, did we contribute to the process of democratisation?"

Aside from the incident on the Wednesday night before the Bahrain GP, when a hire car containing four members of the Force India team narrowly escaped a petrol-bomb attack, there were few threats to F1 personnel.

But Vatanen has warned that F1 cannot afford to be blind to the plight of the Shia Bahrainis, who make up the majority of the indigenous population and are



The show went on at Sakhir circuit



People leave paddock in darkness



denied basic democratic rights. Last week at least one protester lost his life, with many more reported injured. According to the BBC, as many as 25 people have died in the latest wave of unrest in Bahrain.

"The question is, what kind of image are we presenting?" added Vatanen. "Do we only care about our safety for one weekend? If that is all that is important, that can be provided. But then what happens to the local people? If F1 is seen to be ignorant of this, it will backfire on the sport.

"The situation is not black and white and democratisation is a long process, but we cannot be seen to slow it down. Motorsport is already an easy target for its enemies with the money involved and the environmental criticism.



Vatanen speaks out on race

No smoke without fire? Cloudy situation in Bahrain

We cannot afford to be blinkered. Remember that F1 continued to race in South Africa under apartheid until 1985, long after other sports had stopped going."

Vatanen does accept that the race gave a platform to the protesters, and that the international coverage – especially in Europe – has led to renewed focus on the situation.

"Paradoxically, the fact that the race happened had a good effect PR-wise because it highlighted the plight of the people," said Vatanen. "Whatever reforms were promised there have not been carried out and if you push for these reforms, you risk being charged with conspiring to overthrow the government with a risk of a lifelong sentence. F1 cannot be detached from society and give a stamp of approval to such a miscarriage of justice.

"Maybe it's wishful thinking to say that F1 could do some good if the race is allowed to continue in the future only if independently verifiable changes have been made in the country. But if this was tied in with other international bodies – like the European Union – and other sports, it could have an influence. But what F1 can't do is pretend that sport and politics are not mixed."

The provisional F1 calendar for 2013 is likely to be made public in the middle of this year, with Bahrain keen to continue to stage a race despite the negative publicity that it has attracted.

60 SECONDS WITH

BOB FERNLEY

Force India.....



Force India skipped Friday afternoon practice in Bahrain after two team members went home following a close call with a Molotov cocktail on Wednesday night. Deputy team principal Bob Fernley explains why F1 was right to go to Bahrain.

Is there a debate that needs to happen over the future of this race?

It does need to be discussed. They need to look at everything that has gone on. They've almost got it right, but they haven't got it completely right. I'd say we're 80 per cent there, and it was the 20 per cent that caused problems for us.

What have you seen in Bahrain?

The problem is twofold. There was the incident on Wednesday night and there was the forecast of three days of rage. The media back home have been absolutely ruthless, so you have family members frightened to death about what's going on. I haven't seen anything. That's not to say that the actions we took on Friday weren't right.

Should there be more focus on the safety of people who aren't F1 personnel?

There are a lot of positives that will come out of this race. There have been very visible protests and the world's press has picked up on them. I don't think there's a lack of transparency and hats off to the Bahrainis to let it happen. They've taken a battering in the media and taken it well.

The racing has been secondary to the controversy. That's not good for F1, is it?

Absolutely. Bernie Ecclestone and Jean Todt took a very brave decision and had the strength to see it through. We should applaud them, not criticise them. As teams, we have commitments to F1 that we have to honour. Unfortunately, we got caught up in something, and because of the surrounding anxieties what happened to us was blown out of all proportion.



Bob Fernley was talking to AUTOSPORT F1 editor **Edd Straw**

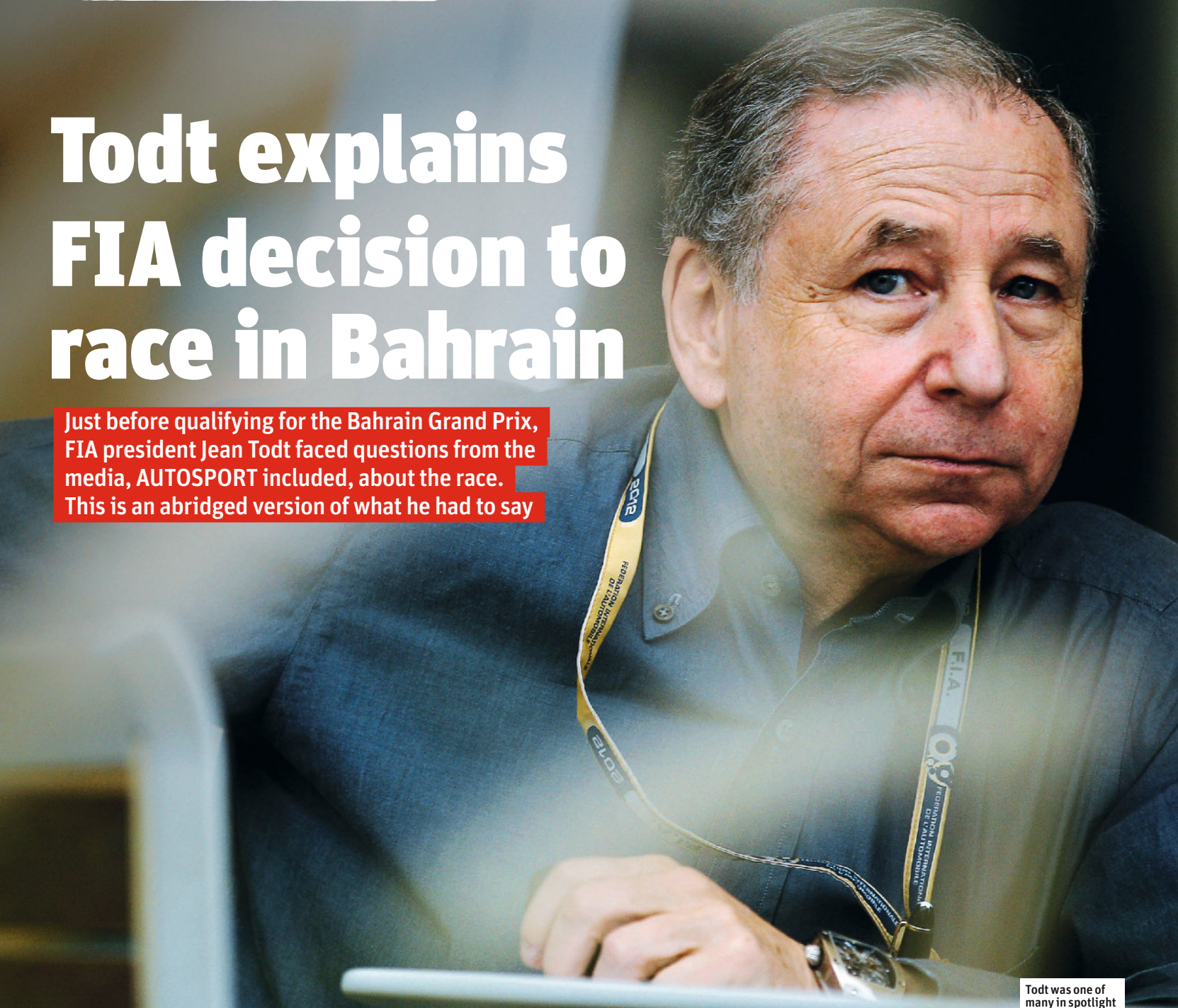


Force India got out during daylight hours

P12 TODT ON BAHRAIN

Todt explains FIA decision to race in Bahrain

Just before qualifying for the Bahrain Grand Prix, FIA president Jean Todt faced questions from the media, AUTOSPORT included, about the race. This is an abridged version of what he had to say



Todt was one of many in spotlight

Hype surrounded the race build-up



We've had worldwide media focus with condemnation of F1 being here and a team that did not take part in FP2 because of safety concerns. Are you comfortable with the decision for the race to take place?

Jean Todt: The commercial rights holder [CVC, represented by Bernie Ecclestone] proposed to the World Motor Sport Council the calendar of 20 grands prix last September. Bahrain was on it and the calendar was accepted. I came here after the Indian Grand Prix to assess the situation and I had discussions with the British, French, Italian and German ambassadors – and the authorities. Everyone was very

comfortable with the situation. We are not involved in politics, we are not involved in religion, we are only involved with the sport. Before coming here, all the recommendations were that it was absolutely no problem to be in Bahrain, so there was no reason to change our mind.

Are you concerned about lasting damage to F1's image because of the way the Bahrain GP has been portrayed around the world?

I am sorry about what has been reported. I am not sure that all that has been reported corresponds to the reality of what is happening in this country. I feel F1 is a very strong brand and all

Todt meets with the Crown Prince



AUTOSPORT on Facebook



What our readers think of the Bahrain situation

Tom Elliott

Whilst I believe sport and politics shouldn't mix, the FIA has a responsibility to protect its image and the rights of others. If that can't be guaranteed, there should be no race.

Ola Hansson

If it wasn't for the race, I wouldn't know anything at all about the problems in Bahrain. The critics of the regime should use the race to show the world what's happening.

Tyler Smith

As far as I'm concerned, that race should not happen anymore as long as the protests are taking place. A lot of F1 fans would be happy to see this place go away for good.

David-Joe Klotz

Bernie Ecclestone will assess the situation. If the numbers add up well and things are not materially different in a year's time, then the grand prix will go ahead. The race went ahead with all the dire warnings proving false. The undertakings of the organisers have credibility.

Flavio Galtieri

Of course the race shouldn't be held until reform in Bahrain is complete. This event discredits F1 and has tainted Bernie's precious "brand" worldwide. I accept the teams had no choice, but the FIA and FOM should hang their heads in shame.

the people among the teams to whom I have been speaking are very happy. I was told it would have been a mistake not to come by most of the team principals. Unfortunately, I did not see many of those quotes in the media.

If the protests had a direct impact on F1 or F1 personnel, how would you feel?

"I was told it would have been a mistake not to come by most team principals"

Jean Todt

A great view – but an accurate one?



Organisers put out a positive message

In any democratic country, protests are allowed. It allows people who want to protest to give their voice. What I have seen so far is a good security control on the roads. And very often, protest does mean damaging and hurting people – it is one possibility of expressing yourself. What is important is to be accurate and to assess properly what is happening. On Friday, if you look at the media, some talked about 4000 protesting, some had 10,000.

The way the story is being reported is as if Manama is on fire. Does it worry you that the perception of the situation in Bahrain is wrong?

It saddens me, because I don't think it is a good report of the information.

There are clearly people in Bahrain who do not want Formula 1. What do you say to these people?

I would be very annoyed if it was a majority of people. But, at the most, it would be 10 per cent of the people who would be anti [F1]. So do we have to penalise 80 or 90 per cent of the population because 10 per cent are against it? My answer is no. Unfortunately there is much more media attention on emphasising this minority.

P19 MARK HUGHES

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

EDD STRAW
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The Bahrain Grand Prix should never have been put on the 2012 calendar. But frankly, some of the news coverage of last weekend was disingenuous in the extreme. The narrative of "F1 under siege" and "Bahrain at war" was voyeuristic, misrepresentative news-as-entertainment.

There were protests, and rightly so, and the regime did come down hard on them. But that doesn't mean that it's acceptable to create a fictional warzone. Some terrible things happened: at least one protester died and many more were injured. The footage you saw was real. But Bahrain was not consumed and the vast majority of those working in F1 saw nothing of concern.

This is not a see-no-evil position. Clearly, there are things badly wrong in Bahrain and people are dying or being imprisoned in the pursuit of a just cause. That should have been enough of a story. But for some outlets, it wasn't. They needed mechanics ducking bombs, journalists dodging rubber bullets and drivers braving tear gas to make it a story worthy of top billing.

The fact is, parts of the western media couldn't give a damn about Bahrainis' human rights. All that mattered to them is that "their" (mainly European) people were in danger. Now that F1 has left, the sanctimonious, bandwagoning hypocrites who distorted the story can get back to not giving a damn about Bahrain.

That does Bahrainis who demand, and deserve, equal rights a terrible disservice.



Media scrutiny was huge last weekend

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"You guys love it. You want a good story and if there isn't a story you make it up as usual"



Bernie Ecclestone hits out at the media for its reporting of the Bahrain situation

Teams will spend three days in Italy



MAIN STRAIGHT

The straight is disproportionately long at 1121m. If you set the car gearing and downforce taking the straight into account, it might compromise your work in other areas. You could be seeing top speeds of up to 210mph here if you wanted to.

Mugello test pivotal in 2012 F1 title fight

Ferrari at the top of the list of teams that need to make best use of first proper in-season test since 2008

The three-day Mugello Formula 1 test, which kicks off on Tuesday, is set to play a decisive role in the destiny of the world championship.

For Ferrari in particular, Mugello will be crucial because the team will introduce a raft of upgrades designed to transform the F2012 from also-ran to contender. AUTOSPORT understands that it will not be until the Spanish Grand Prix weekend the following week that the full update package, which will include comprehensively revised exhausts, is run. The groundwork done at Mugello could decide whether the Ferrari will emerge as a regular contender for podium finishes.

When asked by AUTOSPORT about the upgrades, Fernando Alonso said: "The Mugello tests and the next races are an important point for us. Hopefully, we can start a different championship from that point on."

"Quite honestly, we don't really need this test and I'm not sure that it will survive [after] this year"

McLaren's Paddy Lowe

The Mugello test will be the first full in-season test since September 2008 (although last year's young-driver test was staged between the Abu Dhabi and Brazilian Grands Prix). It will give teams the chance to evaluate upgrades without the time pressures of Friday free-practice sessions on race weekends.

Williams, for example, will be trialling a sizeable aerodynamic

upgrade at Mugello. Whether it is able to maintain its strong start to the season could depend on the work done next week.

Williams chief operations engineer Mark Gillan said: "It is crucial because it is our only full in-season test. It's really important that we make the most out of it."

The vast majority of teams have opted to run their race drivers at

Mugello, although Lotus will run reserve pilot Jerome d'Ambrosio and Force India its third driver Jules Bianchi on the opening day. Williams reserve Valtteri Bottas will also run on day one, when the track is expected to require a lot of cleaning thanks to its lack of use. Also, most teams will lack contemporary data from Mugello so will need to use the early running to ensure that their

WHY MUGELLO? Track is not ideal for modern-day F1 test use, but Ferrari wanted it

The majority of teams favoured staging Formula 1's first in-season test since 2008 at the Circuit de Catalunya after the Spanish Grand Prix, but Ferrari pressure led to it being held at Mugello.

Ferrari was at the forefront of calls to reintroduce in-season

testing. It spearheaded the push to switch one of the pre-season tests to May, cutting winter running from 15 to 12 days, and lobbied heavily to run it at its Mugello facility.

The Formula One Teams' Association (FOTA) sporting working group had agreed to the Barcelona option, but

once it was discussed at a higher level, Ferrari's political leverage within the teams' body, which it was then a part of, led to the switch to Mugello.

When testing was relatively free, few regularly visited Mugello. Ferrari often used it, while customer team Sauber and Italy-based

Minardi sometimes ran there. The British based teams tended only to visit it when returning from the San Marino Grand Prix at Imola.

"It wouldn't be your first choice of track," admitted Williams chief operations engineer Mark Gillan. "But it is what we agreed to and we have to make the most of it."



PICS: HEATH/LAT

HOW GOOD IS MUGELLO FOR A FORMULA 1 TEST?

AUTOSPORT'S technical consultant GARY ANDERSON: If you want to go quick at Mugello, it will mean nothing to any other track in the world so that's not really a reference. You have to be looking at a few sections of it rather than the overall laptime and then it can be of use. But it will still be an important test as it's a rare chance to do intense running outside a race weekend.

URNS 1-5
This part of the track is of limited use. There's a lot of direction change and elevation change here. I wouldn't be focusing on this part of the circuit.

TURN 6
This is a mighty corner to look at, but it's downhill and not really relevant to anything else on the calendar. F1 cars will probably be flat-out through here now.

LAST SECTOR
From Turn 8 through to the start/finish line is reasonably representative. Ideally, you'd want a short version with just this section! You have long corners – both lefts and rights – so it really shows car characteristics.

Circuit length 3.259 miles
Test lap record 1m18.704s, Rubens Barrichello, Ferrari F2004

track information is up to date. McLaren is the only team not to use its race drivers, although Lewis Hamilton has expressed a desire to run in Italy in the aftermath of a difficult Bahrain Grand Prix. However, as AUTOSPORT went to press, McLaren was set to run test drivers Gary Paffett and Oliver Turvey for a day-and-a-half each. While some teams rate the Mugello test as critical, McLaren technical director Paddy Lowe has downplayed its significance. He also pointed out that it is a strain logistically, with many of those who attend the 20 race weekends also having to go to Mugello. "Quite honestly, we don't really need this test and I'm not sure that it will survive [after] this year," said

Lowe. "We got rid of all of the in-season testing in 2008 for good reasons. It was one of the biggest cost-saving measures because you no longer needed a full-time test team. It's a bit of a disruption and it's not necessary for us to go racing to have an in-season test. But it does give us an opportunity to take another step forward in development at a greater rate than before." McLaren's strength in using resources such as its simulator mean that it is less reliant on on-track tests than most of its rivals. But for many teams, it will be the best opportunity to get on top of car upgrades, particularly those planning tweaks to their exhaust set-ups. Among these teams are Force India, which plans a major package,

and Caterham, while Red Bull is also expected to use next week to fine-tune the exhaust set-up that it has been tweaking in recent races. Caterham technical director Mark Smith told AUTOSPORT: "People will be planning fairly big

updates for Europe so the Mugello test will be used massively in that respect. Any concerns that people may have from the first four races have the opportunity to look into things so it's quite significant. What we are looking at in Mugello is a bodywork development that will feature around the rear of the bodywork and will influence that area [the exhausts]."

TEST SCHEDULE Information correct as AUTOSPORT went to press			
	MAY 1	MAY 2	MAY 3
Red Bull	TBC	TBC	TBC
McLaren	Turvey/Paffett	Paffett	Turvey
Ferrari	Massa	Massa/Alonso	Alonso
Mercedes	Rosberg/Schumacher	Schumacher	Rosberg
Lotus	d'Ambrosio	Raikkonen	Grosjean
Force India	Bianchi	di Resta	Hulkkenberg
Sauber	Kobayashi	Kobayashi	Perez
Toro Rosso	Vergne	Vergne/Ricciardo	Ricciardo
Williams	Bottas	Maldonado	Senna
Caterham	Gonzalez	Petrov	Kovalainen
Marussia	Pic	Pic/Glock	Glock
HRT	NOT ATTENDING		

DTM

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THIS WEEK IN F1

HAMILTON'S PITSTOP FEARS

Lewis Hamilton has warned that a continuation of McLaren's pitstop blunders, which cost him a potential fourth place in last weekend's Bahrain Grand Prix, could cost him the world championship.

"We gave a lot of points away today, which championships are lost from," said Hamilton, who finished eighth. "We cannot afford to lose points like this and need to make sure that we work on our pitstops."

McLaren relieved its left-rear-wheel man, responsible for Hamilton's slow first two stops, before the third. The problem at the first stop was a failure to locate the wheel pegs correctly in the holes in the rim, with a cross-thread to blame in the second stop.

Mercedes-style wheelnuts, which are integrated into the rim, are among the options being evaluated by McLaren.



Everybody had to drive well below their car's limit to maintain the tyres. I question whether tyres should have such a big importance or whether they should last a bit longer so that you can drive at racing car speed and not cruise around like you're under the safety car

Rosberg escapes penalty

Chinese Grand Prix winner Nico Rosberg escaped censure after his aggressive blocking of Lewis Hamilton and Fernando Alonso during the Bahrain GP. The Mercedes driver's incidents were investigated by stewards after the race. Stewards also investigated whether Hamilton had overtaken by going off the circuit, but AUTOSPORT understands that he was deemed to have completed the move under braking for the next corner rather than while off the track.

HRT unlikely to test



HRT was planning to skip next week's three-day test at Mugello as AUTOSPORT closed for press. The team has no upgrades to trial, so does not feel the need to run at the Italian venue.



Mercedes' Michael Schumacher doesn't hold back with his feelings on the type of racing produced by the latest Pirelli rubber



MONACO TRACK MODIFICATIONS

Changes have been made to the chicane at Monte Carlo following Sergio Perez's accident there during qualifying for last year's Monaco Grand Prix (left). The track has been smoothed out after height variations of up to 20cm were found, while the barrier has been moved back by 14.6 metres.



Number of laps now led by Paul di Resta in F1 after heading lap 12 of the Bahrain Grand Prix. It was the first lap led for Force India since Giancarlo Fisichella at Spa in 2009.

Castrol EDGE GRAND PRIX PREDICTOR

Mack Olson topped the fourth round of the Castrol EDGE Grand Prix Predictor, with his tally boosted not only by bonus points for dropping previous race winner Nico Rosberg, but also by perfectly predicting Paul di Resta to finish sixth, Fernando Alonso to take seventh and Felipe Massa to end up ninth. Olson's prizes include a certificate signed by three-time grand prix winner Johnny Herbert.

To play visit predictor.autosport.com

FRENCH GP AGREED IN PRINCIPLE

The French Grand Prix has taken a stride closer to returning to the calendar next season at Paul Ricard (right). AUTOSPORT understands that a deal was agreed in principle with F1 commercial boss Bernie Ecclestone for a five-year contract, with the race to run every second year from 2013 to '21. Arrangements for accommodating the race, and filling the alternate years, are ongoing. The Belgian Grand Prix at Spa is the most likely to share the slot.



Ferrari snaps up aero man

Ex-McLaren, Benetton and Red Bull aero specialist Ben Agathangelou has joined Ferrari. He will focus on liaison between Ferrari's Maranello base and the Toyota windtunnel the team regularly uses. He most recently worked for HRT and Marussia.



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MARK HUGHES

GRAND PRIX EDITOR

The Bahrain Grand Prix took place without a hitch, but the media spotlight has been disastrously counter-productive for the Gulf state and done nothing for F1's public profile

So we went ahead and did it – Formula 1 made its provocative visit to a country in a state of internal turmoil and laid itself open to the hurricane of criticism that was always going to follow. It made the sport look arrogant, out-of-touch and even complicit in oppression.

Tightened security meant that with the unfortunate exception of the traumatised Force India crew on Wednesday evening, F1 personnel got to see very little of the skirmishes, the exchange of petrol bombs with tear gas that left the roads scarred and peppered.

But what was very obvious

account of riots and a picture of a burning car dramatically amplifying the picture, or b) a reasoned piece putting the protests in their actual perspective, what do you imagine a newspaper editor might go for? Which is the better story?

In just ploughing ahead with an event so closely associated with the rulers against which the protests are being made, F1 allowed itself to become a political football. As Damon Hill remarked a few weeks earlier: “Non-political doesn’t mean not saying anything. If you do that you open yourself to that silence being used by one side or the other and you’ve then become a political tool. Acknowledging the issue,

saying something that shows consideration has been given to all the difficulties and conflicts before arriving at a decision, presenting your thoughts while emphasising that F1 wants to share its benefits with all the different places it visits: that’s what is needed. If someone from the opposition now labels the race ‘a tool of the oppressor’ it’s very difficult to tear that label off.”

Ari Vatanen, as well as being a rally world champion, an ex-FIA presidential candidate and ex-European MEP, makes no bones about the starkness of the choice F1 faced. “Human rights cannot be just ignored as an inconvenience to a sporting event. Saying you are not political is just an excuse to do nothing. By definition if you hold a sporting event in a politically sensitive place you are involved in politics. I respect and like Jean Todt as well as [Automobile Federation of Bahrain president] Abdul Al Khalifa, but I think

they are wrong on this.”

But here’s an odd thing. The Bahraini authorities were insisting the race go ahead, that the event would act as a bridge in resolving the conflicts. They even quite naughtily incorporated the F1 logo into a ‘UniF1ed’ slogan for a race that was causing obvious division. The protesters, on the other hand, were asking the sport not to come.

Yet in considering the spotlight that F1 brought to Bahrain last weekend, and how mere skirmishes were presented to the watching world as something far bigger than that, it has surely been a negative for the authorities and a positive for the protesters. Completely unintentionally, of course.

If F1 had not been in Bahrain – if it had said, ‘We would love to return when you have resolved the difficulties you are facing, when you and your people are at peace, but until then we don’t think us being there is helpful for you or us’ – then the protesters’ demonstrations would have received only a tiny fraction of the international coverage they got. The portrayal of Bahrain as a place on the verge of revolution, no matter how false, is surely horribly counter-productive in trying to restore economic and social normality.

Insisting the grand prix was held has surely done the absolute opposite of what was intended – and in the process has further cast the sport in the public eye as greedy, crass and arrogantly uncaring. The event went ahead without a hitch and it was even a terrific race. But in the bigger picture, it was a disaster and an entirely predictable one. ❧

PIC: COATES/LAT



Bahrain's bigwigs embrace Formula 1 as a unifying, or rather 'unif1ying', influence

when you were there was that this was not a country on the brink of a breakdown or in the midst of revolution. These were skirmishes, nothing more. It was certainly nothing like as lurid as the media reports in the UK were suggesting.

But then, how predictable was that too? Given the choice of: a) an

“Formula 1 allowed itself to become a political football”



FRIJNS TOPS BARCELONA TEST

Robin Frijns topped the Formula Renault 3.5 test days at Aragon last week with Fortec Motorsport. Richie Stanaway (Lotus) and Jules Bianchi (Tech 1) were next

INDYCAR

IndyCar weighs up redesign

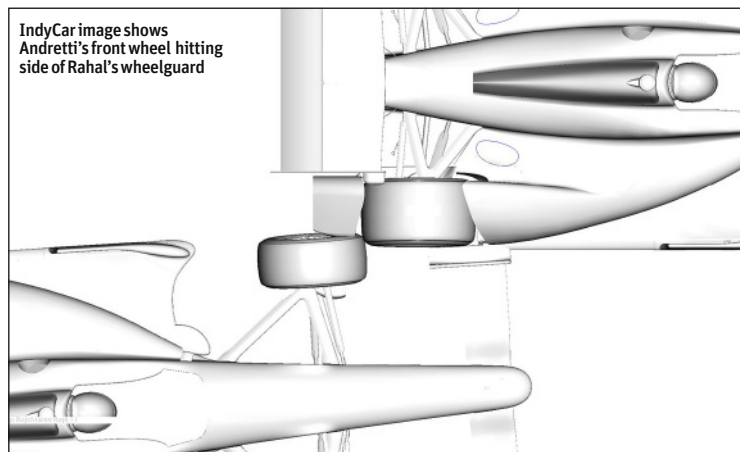
Rear wheelguards could change following Marco Andretti's Long Beach skyride. By MARK GLENDENNING

IndyCar will change the design of the DW12 chassis' distinctive rear wheelguards if the devices prove to be ineffective in preventing cars from becoming airborne in front-to-rear accidents.

Marco Andretti's car was launched into the air after catching the rear of Graham Rahal's machine at Long Beach two weeks ago, despite the presence of the wheelguards that were introduced specifically to minimise this type of crash.

IndyCar officials later released a statement saying that the guards did perform as intended, and claimed that the nature of Andretti's crash was due to the unusually acute angle of contact between the front of his car and the rear of Rahal's.

But IndyCar vice-president of technology Will Phillips told AUTOSPORT that the guards are still largely untested due to the difficulty of simulating rear-end crashes outside a racing environment. He said that the design could be changed if a better alternative is found.



IndyCar image shows Andretti's front wheel hitting side of Rahal's wheelguard

"We haven't yet had a hard front-to-rear impact to be sure of what the deformation is to help prevent a car being launched," said Phillips. "It's impossible to say it could stop cars launching completely – we know that's not possible. It's a matter of how good the prevention is. We just don't have a big enough database [of similar crashes] yet to know that if we chose to

change something, we wouldn't be changing it for the worse rather than the better.

"If we realise that the guard can be improved, and that we can improve it without making a retrograde step, we would be open to changing it. [But] more experience is required before we'd be in a position to make a change."

Phillips said that the guards had served their purpose during other

clashes in the race, but that the specific circumstances of the Andretti/Rahal incident, where the angle of impact resulted in Rahal's wheelguard being torn off, had not previously been encountered.

"There were incidents during the race where there are good on-board shots that show the front wings of various cars touching the rear wheelguards in front," he said. "And these directly prevent punctures or wheel-to-wheel contact."

"If you see the replay of the [Andretti and Rahal] cars coming together, you almost have Rahal moving in one direction and Marco in the other. The front wing and wheel of Marco's car moves Rahal's rear wheelguard diagonally inwards towards the gearbox. It wasn't able to absorb a rearward impact, because he came in from the side as opposed to the back."

"Normally you get a front-to-rear impact, or you get a side-by-side impact, where the wide underwing is intended to try to keep the cars from interlocking their wheels. In this case, it was right between the two."

INDYCAR

Talks planned over turbo row

INDYCAR OFFICIALS WERE SET

to meet representatives from the series' three engine suppliers today (Thursday) to discuss plans to break the deadlock over the decision to allow Honda an engine upgrade.

Honda, which uses a single-turbo layout, was granted permission to make the change ahead of the Long Beach round two weeks ago after a horsepower discrepancy was found between its engines and the twin-turbo units used by its rivals.

But protests from Chevrolet and Lotus resulted in the parts being removed before they could be raced.

The disagreement boils down to the question of whether allowances for parity should be made.

AUTOSPORT understands that a verbal undertaking was made by the series during the early discussions over the 2012 regulations, although this undertaking was not enshrined in the final rules.



Honda's cars were granted engine upgrades by IndyCar

IndyCar technical boss Will Phillips hinted that the series could deploy an independent mediator.

"There has been a decision as to how it's going to be dealt with, and we're going to try to make it independent of anyone in the decision-making process that we have here within IndyCar," he said. Honda committed to the

single-turbo layout – which gives installation advantages over its twin-turbo variant, but compromises the bellhousing – early in the 2012 planning process.

Early data provided to IndyCar by turbo supplier Borg Warner implied that the two layouts would be equal, although on-track running indicates that this is not the case.

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

MARK GLENDENNING
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Few racing cars have carried as much baggage as the Dallara DW12 seems to. Not only does it bear the initials of its first development driver, but some of its more extreme features are a response to the 'perfect storm' that resulted in Dan Wheldon's death in the first place.

Anyone who found its extreme lines tolerable only because they are meant to be safer would have been disturbed by the sight of Marco Andretti being launched skywards two weeks ago, but a perspective is needed. The wheelguards are trying to tackle a problem that hasn't really been addressed in single-seaters before – that of stopping cars going into the stratosphere when spinning wheel hits spinning wheel – and they're

going to take some refinement.

Stirling Moss used to say that early seatbelts in racing cars put drivers in more danger than not wearing anything, but without them we wouldn't have the harnesses of today. Cars won't stop going airborne overnight, but if fewer leave the ground it's progress.

The DW12 is a long way from revealing all its secrets, but IndyCar is doing a good job of keeping it tame in the meantime. Which is just as well, because with the manufacturers on the brink of war after just three races (see above left), the series has enough to keep itself occupied in the coming weeks.



Wheelguards are there for safety

AUTO GP

Coloni could build all-new Auto GP car

ITALIAN CONSTRUCTOR COLONI could build Auto GP's new-for-2013 car in-house.

Series boss Enzo Coloni announced earlier this month that a new machine will be introduced next year. He told AUTOSPORT that while the current Zytek engine and gearbox will be retained, both could be paired with either an updated Lola B05/52 monocoque and aero package or within a new Coloni design.

"There are two options," said Coloni. "The first is to change the monocoque and the bodywork, the other is to keep the Lola monocoque and change

the bodywork to look similar to current F1 cars."

Cost concerns for teams are understood to be the key factor in determining which proposal is accepted.

"The technical drawings will be finished by May 30. After that we will make a decision which option we go with, considering cost and time," added Coloni. "But I'm sure the car will change. By early October we would need to have a new chassis finished."

The new car is likely to be paired with a calendar revamp. Events in Russia and Japan are under consideration.



Dallara keeps options open

INDYCAR

Dallara aero U-turn on cards

DALLARA IS RECONSIDERING ITS

decision not to build an IndyCar aero kit under its own name for 2013, although its priority is still to design bodywork under contract for another organisation.

The Italian company, which built the current DW12 chassis, had said that it would not design an aero kit to fit the opened-up regulations planned for 2013 unless asked by a third party (AUTOSPORT, March 22). But Dallara's Andrea Toso told AUTOSPORT that the experience from developing the current car could make a bodykit project feasible.

"If a company like Pepsi or Kraft asks us to develop a kit, we will do it for sure," he said. "This is our priority. But if no company asks, [a self-branded kit] seems more and more feasible, because we already have the windtunnel model, CFD model, CAD data, aero data, and above all we have the full experience of designing the [2012] car. We know what works and what doesn't."



Current Lola will be phased out in 2013

REMEMBER WHEN ...



SEPTEMBER 4 1999

...Coloni last made a single-seater? Coloni created a single-seater for Formula Nissan 2000 in 1998. Here Fernando Alonso wins at Donington Park on his way to the following year's crown in a CN1 machine.



How a GT3 version of the Supersports could look

SPORTSCARS

Bentley closes on GT entry

Le Mans-winning designer recruited to weigh up car maker's comeback options. By GARY WATKINS

Bentley has recruited the designer of the 1999 Le Mans 24 Hours-winning BMW as it moves closer to a motorsport return in the GT ranks.

The British luxury car maker has hired Graham Humphrys, who was responsible for the design of the BMW V12 LMR at Williams Motorsport, as a consultant to undertake a feasibility study into the options open to it. His recruitment

follows Bentley's pronouncements last year (AUTOSPORT, September 8) that it intended to return to racing for the first time since winning Le Mans with the SPEED 8 in 2003.

Bentley chassis and powertrain director Brian Gush, whose responsibilities include motorsport, said: "Graham is helping us out with the feasibility work; he has a lot of experience in GT and prototypes."

Humphrys has extensive sportscar

experience dating back more than 30 years. He undertook the mechanical design of the March 82G Group C car, was chief designer at Spice from 1985-91 and worked at Aston Martin for nearly 10 years as its chief motorsport engineer.

Gush reiterated his previous comments that Bentley is still weighing up various options.

"We are looking at a number of things, quite a few in GT classes and in other classes as well," he said, "but no decisions have been made."

Gush put forward his desire to return to the prototype ranks last September, but he has now suggested that the complexity of the 2014 rulebook, which has been released to teams and manufacturers in draft form, would militate against that.

Bentley boss Wolfgang Durheimer, who also heads up motorsport for the entire Volkswagen group, is known to favour a Bentley return in GT. He has raised the idea of Bentley selling racing cars to customers.

AUTOSPORT sources suggest that the most likely route for Bentley's

return to the track is via GT3. This would be the best fit for its existing model range, which does not include a car suitable to take on Ferrari, Porsche and Chevrolet in GTE.

It is understood that Humphrys is evaluating the suitability of the planned Supersports version of the latest Continental GT, which is now available with a V8 as well as a W12 powerplant, for GT3. The loose rules for this category could allow Bentley to produce a competitive car around the basis of the Continental, which weighs 2295kg in road trim.

Other options include waiting for an all-new Continental, which is likely to be based on the second-generation Porsche Panamera, or producing what Gush called last September "a racing sportscar with a derivative for the road".

These routes could all allow Bentley to go back to Le Mans. The GT3 option would not.

Gush said that no timescale had been set for Bentley's racing return. He said that would depend on what route the company decides upon.

Humphrys has Le Mans-winning pedigree



WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Bernhard could miss Le Mans

AUDI DRIVER TIMO BERNHARD MAY NOT be fit to race in the Le Mans 24 Hours in the wake of his accident in testing at Sebring last month.

Former Peugeot driver Marc Gené – a Le Mans winner in 2009 – has been brought in by Audi to take Bernhard's place in the #3 non-hybrid R18 ultra alongside Romain Dumas and Loic Duval at the Spa round of the FIA World Endurance

Championship on May 5. The Spaniard will also be on call for Le Mans should Bernhard not be ready to drive.

Bernhard told AUTOSPORT that it remains unclear whether his recovery from the back injury he sustained on the Monday after the 12 Hours at Sebring would allow him to take part at Le Mans.

"I want to be back in the car as soon as possible, but I can't say whether I will do

the race [Le Mans]," he said. "It's too early to say, but all I know is that I'm doing everything I can in rehab."

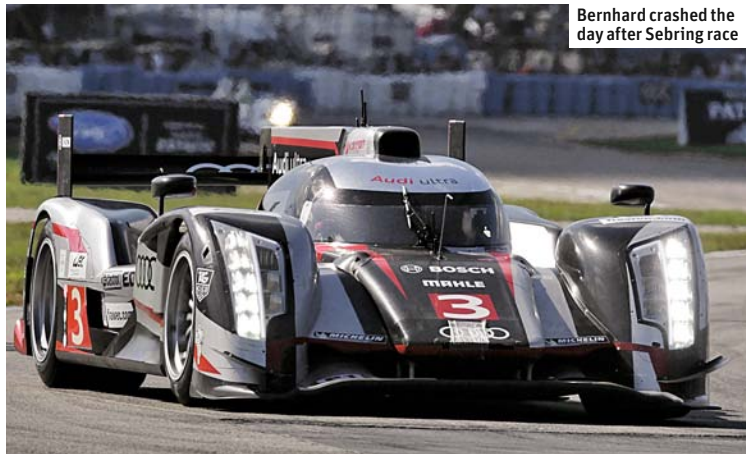
The 31-year-old German, who won Le Mans in 2010 with Dumas and Mike Rockenfeller, explained that the evidence suggests that he will make a full recovery.

"Everything is signalling that I will get back to 100 per cent," he said. "We just don't know when that will be."

Bernhard sustained a fracture of the C4 vertebra in his neck in the impact with the barriers at Sebring's Turn 17. He spent a night in a local hospital under observation and was then transferred to a more specialist facility in Tampa for a further two nights.

The injury did not require surgery, but Bernhard has been wearing a neck brace as part of the recovery process. It was decided that he would not fly back to Europe immediately and instead he started his rehabilitation in the US.

Head of Audi Sport Wolfgang Ullrich said of Gené's signing: "I immediately had the impression that Marc will blend well with our sportscar squad. We quickly reached an agreement."



Bernhard crashed the day after Sebring race

IN BRIEF

WEC for van der Zande



VAN DER ZANDE JOINS LOTUS

DTM refugee Renger van der Zande has joined the Kodewa-run Lotus LMP2 squad for six races in the FIA World Endurance Championship. He tested a Lola-Lotus B12/80 at Paul Ricard last week. The Dutchman also made his Porsche Supercup debut in Bahrain last weekend.

NO NEW PESCAROLO AT SPA

Pescarolo Team has withdrawn its new 2012 LMP1 prototype from the Spa 6 Hours. The squad has cited a lack of time to sufficiently test its new O3, based on the Aston Martin AMR-One monocoque.

BELGIANS AT OAK FOR LE MANS

Belgians Maxime Martin and Bas Leinders will join OAK Racing for the Le Mans 24 Hours. They will share the French team's second Judd-powered Morgan P2 with Dane David Heinemeier Hansson.

ELMS ACCEPTS GT3 MACHINES

The European Le Mans Series has been opened up to GT3 machinery as it searches for additional entries ahead of the Donington Park round on July 15. The GT3s will race in the GTC class.

KOREAN GT1 RACE SET FOR AXE

The FIA GT1 World Championship race scheduled for Yeongam on September 16 is set to be axed as the result of scheduling problems. Series boss Stephane Ratel wants to maintain a 10-round calendar.

CUNNINGHAM'S INDY DEAL ON...

AJ Foyt Racing will field a second car for IndyCar irregular Wade Cunningham at the Indianapolis 500. Sarah Fisher Hartman Racing has recruited USAC Sprint Car racer Bryan Clauson in an extra car.

...WHILE FILIPPI'S IS OFF

Ex-Champ Car racer Michel Jourdain Jr was set to be confirmed with Rahal Letterman Lanigan for the Indy 500 as AUTOSPORT closed for press. The seat had originally been set for GP2 veteran Luca Filippi.



Filippi looks elsewhere

WORLD GT1

Ratel to put GT3+ upgrades on hold until 2014



Ratel set to postpone changes

PLANS TO UPGRADE CARS RACING IN the FIA GT1 World Championship next season look certain to be put on hold.

Series boss Stephane Ratel said that he wants the GT3 cars that now contest the series to evolve into what he called GT3+ machinery next year (AUTOSPORT, March 15). Now, after consultation with his teams, he has admitted that it may be better to wait until 2014.

"I'm the first one to say, 'Let's not run before we can walk,'" he said. "The idea

is to evolve, but we have to wait until the teams are ready."

The majority of teams appear against the idea of a rapid move away from pure GT3 rules on grounds of cost.

The teams are likely to accept the banning of anti-lock brakes and traction control for 2013, because they would incur only minimal costs as a result.

P44 WORLD GT1 ZOLDER

BRITISH F3

Norising move spurred by Brit F3 teams

THE BRITISH FORMULA 3

International Series' trade-in of its Paul Ricard date in favour of joining the FIA European series at the Norising was instigated by the UK teams.

AUTOSPORT understands that the British squads worked in conjunction with FIA Single-Seater Commission president Gerhard Berger to secure the slot on the German street track. One team had already decided to skip Ricard in favour of Norising.

But this still meant that series

promoter SRO had to clear numerous logistical issues, including British F3 swapping its Cooper tyres for the Hankooks used in the Euro Series for

F3 is a Norising tradition



the June 30-July 1 event.

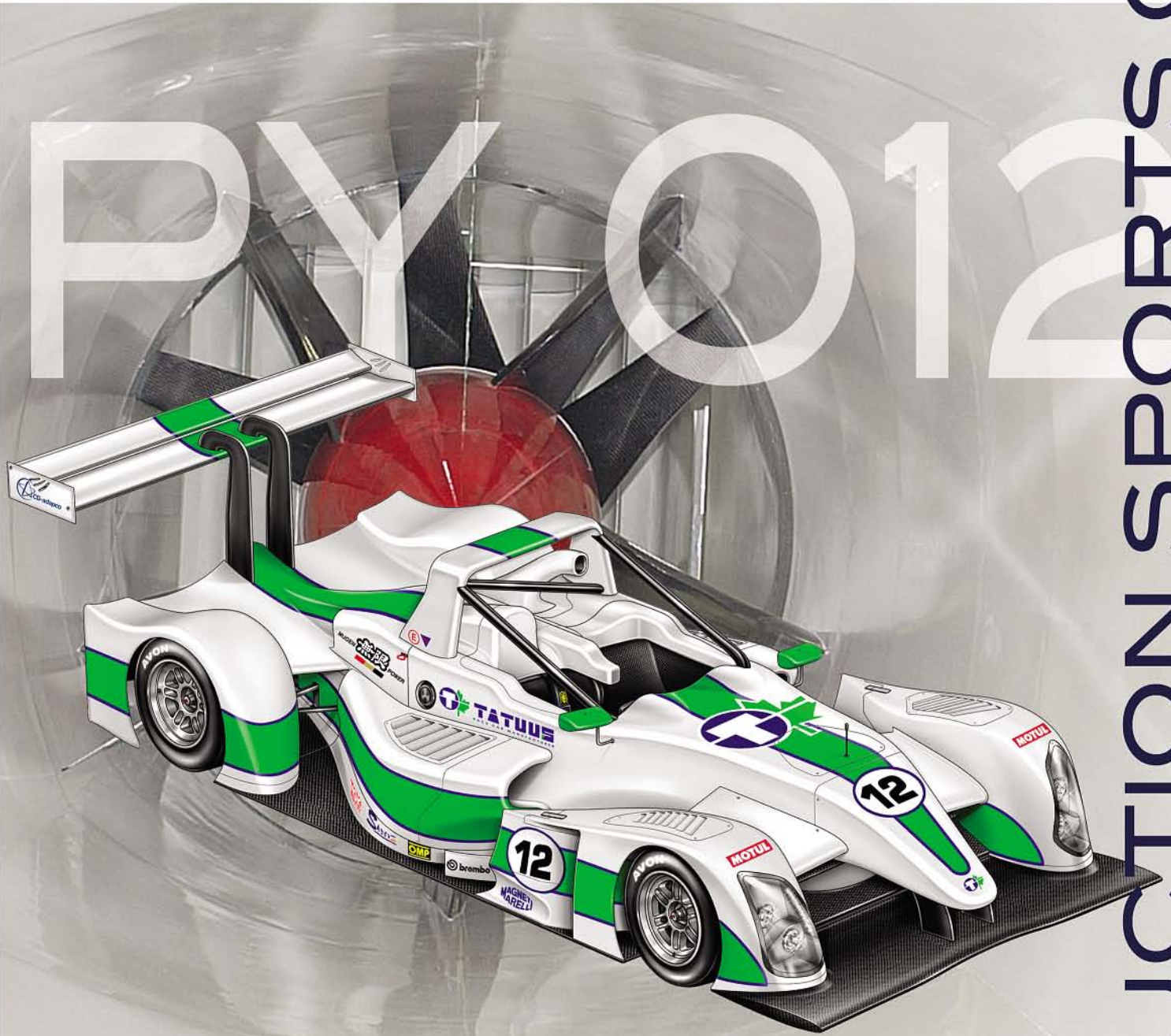
Leading team boss Trevor Carlin said: "It's great to see people working together for the common good – a rare occurrence in modern motorsport. We'll have fantastic racing there."

The teams have mixed feelings about losing Ricard, a likely future F1 circuit. But Peter Briggs, head of British F3 teams body FOTA, said: "Stephane [Ratel, SRO boss] realised we should be doing it. This shows we aren't against working with the Europeans."



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Green (l) and Paffett (r) with Mercedes boss Norbert Haug

IN BRIEF



Tagliani misses Brazil

BHA TO SKIP SAO PAULO

Bryan Herta Autosport will miss this weekend's IndyCar race at Sao Paulo, having fallen outside the top 20 in the points and losing its right to subsidised travel. It plans to return for the Indy 500.

HARTLEY MAKES GP2 RETURN

Brendon Hartley was a last-minute replacement for the cash-strapped Jon Lancaster at last weekend's Sakhir GP2 round. Addax had replaced Josef Kral with HRT F1 tester Dani Clos earlier in the week.

BLOMQUIST FOR EURO SERIES

Tom Blomqvist will race in the F3 Euro Series and European Championship with ma-con Motorsport. He will partner fellow McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award finalist Emil Bernstorff in the VW-supported team.

FORTEC RACING AT HOCKENHEIM

British F3 team Fortec will make a one-off Euro Series appearance at Hockenheim this weekend with Alex Lynn, Hannes van Asseldonk and Felix Serralles. Carlin has added a third car for Harry Tincknell.

AUTO GP DRIVERS JOIN F2

Auto GP racers Max Snegirev and Victor Guerin will take part in this weekend's Formula 2 round at the Algarve. Snegirev will complete the rest of the season.

THORNEY MISSES THRUXTON

Thorney Motorsport will miss this weekend's Thruxton British Touring Car round to address handling and engine problems with its Vauxhall Insignia VX-R.



No Insignia at Thruxton

DTM
Mercedes Brits eyeing title

Jamie Green and Gary Paffett eye DTM title push for Mercedes. By JAMIE O'LEARY

Jamie Green believes that this season could provide his best chance yet to become DTM champion.

The Mercedes driver, who begins his eighth DTM campaign at Hockenheim this weekend, finished last year with a dominant win at the same circuit. Despite sweeping technical rule changes that should make the patterns set in 2011 redundant, the Briton is hopeful of a renewed title charge this season.

"It's possibly one of the best chances," Green told AUTOSPORT. "I think I've had some good opportunities, particularly in 2005-06 when the car was very strong and maybe the best package, but I was quite low on experience and made some rookie errors.

"Now I have the experience and if the car is as competitive as it looks then I'm well-placed to make the most of it."

His HWA team-mate Gary Paffett, the 2005 DTM champion, endured the worst season of his DTM career last year as he finished



Paffett remains with HWA for another season

only seventh in the points and failed to get on the podium.

Paffett believes that with Bruno Spengler – the highest-placed Mercedes driver in the 2011 points – having left for BMW, the battle to be his manufacturer's main title protagonist will be between him and his British compatriot.

"With Bruno gone, it's me and Jamie who have the most experience [at HWA] and have had the most success, and we'll both be looking to lead the push for the championship," he said.

"I've had good seasons every year except last year and there wasn't a specific reason for it. Certainly I feel more comfortable in the new

C-Coupe than last year's car, and I feel like I can get more out of it by pushing, which wasn't the case in 2011."

Neither Green nor Paffett expect series newcomer BMW to compete at the sharp end during the early stages of the season, despite the presence of defending champion Martin Tomczyk and long-time series frontrunner Bruno Spengler within its line-up.

Fellow Briton Andy Priaulx, who switches to the DTM with the RBM BMW outfit after a year racing GTs for the manufacturer, said that the Munich firm's expectations were being kept modest.

"I am really proud of what we've achieved so far," the three-time world touring car champion said. "But we have to remain realistic. BMW is new to the DTM and we have less experience than our rivals, so we just have to work to improve and develop at every race."

P52 DTM PREVIEW

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Argentina will be the longest rally since '96

Argentina heralds a return to endurance-style rallying

This week's Rally Argentina will offer crews the highest WRC mileage for 16 years, as DAVID EVANS explains

This week's Rally Argentina will be the toughest round of the World Rally Championship in more than a decade, according to the sport's leading figures.

When FIA president Jean Todt came to power in 2009 he made clear his intention to return an endurance aspect to the WRC

and the organisers of the fifth round of the series have responded to that call. While falling short of the revolutionary, multi-country route discussed 12 months ago, the 19-stage event, which starts from Villa Carlos Paz today (Thursday), is still a significant challenge at 312 competitive miles.

SHORT-CHANGED

Having purchased the commercial rights to the WRC from Bernie Ecclestone in 2000, David Richards attempted to make the WRC easier to film and broadcast by introducing a cloverleaf format of stages based around a central service park. Events were encouraged to slash competitive distances to around 200 miles and run to largely predetermined timetables, delivering a homogenous series with predictable and more easily packaged itineraries for television.

Shocked at the way the sport had changed, Todt immediately implemented a directive for, where possible, longer and more challenging rallies.

Events began that process last season, but it is Rally Argentina that has forged ahead to produce the longest conventional stage event since the same South American event 16 years ago.

LONG ROAD AHEAD

The 1996 Rally Argentina might have had six more competitive miles than the 2012 version, but this year's event will be the tougher of the two. The '96 rally included 28 stages, which meant only a handful of really long tests, while the non-competitive road mileage was 286 shorter than on this year's route.

This week, the crews will contest 19 stages, seven of which are 23 miles or more in length. To put this into context, the shortest event in the modern era of the World Rally Championship – the 2010 Rally Japan – didn't include a single stage longer than 20 miles.

The biggest challenge this week will come tomorrow (Friday) on the opening leg of the rally. The first car leaves service at 0600 and returns 13 hours and almost 130 competitive miles later. The first two stages of the rally, La Pampa (23.30 miles) and Ascochinga (32.23 miles), will be



2012's longest rally is no Safari

repeated in the afternoon with the 12-mile Cosquin test closing the first day. The organisers of the event have also been granted a waiver to run slightly longer loops. WRC rules state tyres should be changed after 50 miles, but Argentina can run up to 62 miles in a loop.

SOLBERG SAYS

Ford driver Petter Solberg is the second-most-experienced driver in WRC history behind Carlos Sainz, and the 2003 world champion expects this to be one of the hardest weeks of his career.

“Of course, you have to forget the Safari,” he said. “This was something different and incredibly tough. But there’s no denying this will be a very tough rally as well. When you look at the route, it looks like there

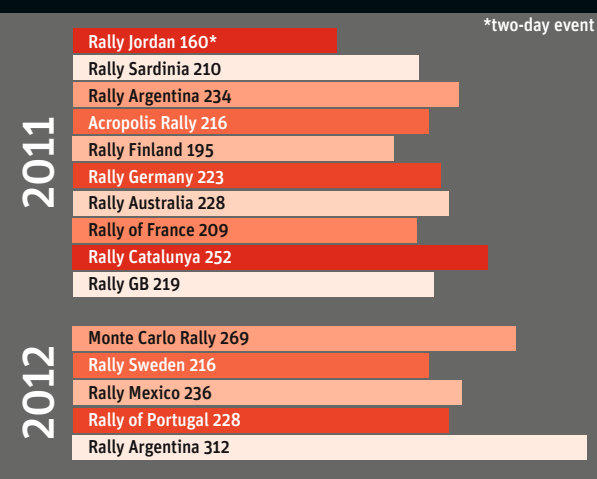
“This is not going to be a rally where you go flat-out all the way - we will have to think about it more”

Petter Solberg

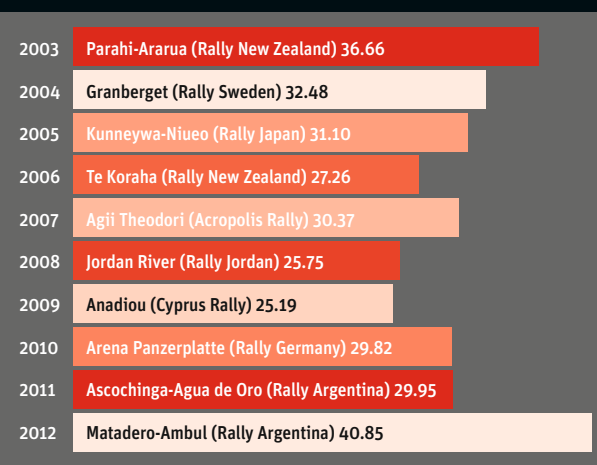
are only 30 or so more kilometres each day, which isn’t so bad. But then look at the first day and the 65-kilometre [41-mile] stage on Sunday morning. This is not going to be a rally where you go flat-out all the way – this is a rally we will have to think about and plan more than the others.

“And it’s not just a longer route, either – as always in Argentina we have to think about the weather. It was 30 degrees a couple of days ago, but today it’s cold and maybe it rains or even snows in Condor on Sunday. And if it rains, we have thick fog here. Like I said, it’ll be a tough one.”

RALLY MILEAGE FOR THE PAST 15 WRC ROUNDS



LONGEST STAGE OF THE SEASON (MILES)



That 41-mile road from Matadero to Ambul in the Traslasierra Mountains has never been used before, placing greater emphasis than ever on the recce for the event. The recce for this event was one day longer than usual, to cater for the longer route.

Longest WRC round:
3696 miles, 1977
Safari Rally

Shortest WRC round:
151 miles, 1974
Press on Regardless Rally (USA)

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

DAVID EVANS
RALLIES EDITOR

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Does distance matter? Well, more than 37,000 people seemed to think so on the streets of London on Sunday.

There are athletics meetings up and down the country, week-in, week-out, with five and 10,000-metre races regularly on the bill. Not one of them, no matter how high profile, would pull in 37,000 runners. Why not?

Because a marathon is the ultimate test for an athlete. Why run just over six miles when you can run just over 26?

People want to be tested and they want to see what can be achieved under the harshest and most demanding of conditions.

And that’s why we need events like this week’s Rally Argentina. And, if anything, we need to make it tougher. I’m not saying we need to make it longer, just tougher.

Friday is a long day in Argentina, but it finishes at 7pm. Why not bring Saturday forward and restart the event at 0100 on Saturday morning? Then just bolt Sunday onto the end and we’re done by Saturday night.

Forty hours, four hours’ sleep and 312 miles of competition: now that would be a challenge.

When I walked out of the media centre just after midnight after the first loop of Rally Portugal’s stages last month, the excitement was everywhere. It was dark, the rain

had come, the buzz was huge. But then we went to bed. What we should have done was pushed on until dawn.

Maybe this week we’re getting the Great North Run. We should keep pushing for the London Marathon.

Night stages were a hit in Portugal



IN BRIEF



Dumas will ‘climb’ in 911
Sports car star Romain Dumas will contest the Pikes Peak International Hillclimb in July. The Audi Le Mans 24 Hours racer will drive a Porsche 911 GT3-R car in the 90th running of the event in Colorado on July 8.

FORD BOYS FREE TO RACE

Ford team director Malcolm Wilson says there will be no team orders to favour Petter Solberg over Jari-Matti Latvala’s

stand-in Dani Sordo in Rally Argentina this week. The Spaniard drove the Ford Fiesta RS WRC for a day in Cumbria last week and says he won’t set himself any targets until the event gets started.

LIGATO GETS LOCAL LEG-UP

Marcos Ligato will uphold local honour on his home WRC round in Argentina this week after securing a wild-card entry. He will be chasing PWRC success in a Subaru Impreza WRX.

CAVE FACING BRC PULL-OUT

British Rally Championship leader Tom Cave may can his 2012 Citroen DS3 R3 effort after losing his sponsor. Cave will contest this week’s Pirelli International, but doubts he will continue afterwards.

CARLISLE READY FOR PIRELLI

The Pirelli International Rally, round three of the British Rally Championship starts from Carlisle city centre tomorrow (Friday) night. Crews will face two stages in the dark in Kielder before a full day on Saturday. The 95-mile, 12-stage event is based out of central service at Carlisle Racecourse and finishes at 1900 on Saturday evening.

FLODIN FOR CAMARO CUP

In a bid to gain asphalt experience, Patrik Flodin will contest this year’s Chevrolet Camaro Cup in Sweden. Five of the seven IRC rallies in his 2012 programme – run by Petter Solberg Engineering – are on asphalt, starting with next month’s Tour de Corse.

WRC PREVIEW

Event:	Rally Argentina
Round:	5/13
Based:	Villa Carlos Paz
Date:	April 26-29
Stages:	19
Mileage:	312
Surface:	gravel
Last year’s winner:	Sebastien Loeb
Championship leader:	Sebastien Loeb





BAHRAIN GP Sakhir,
April 22

ROUND 4/20

LAPS 57

WINNER

Sebastian Vettel
1h35m10.990s

POLE POSITION

Sebastian Vettel
1m32.422s

FASTEST LAP

Sebastian Vettel
1m36.379s

RACE RATING

★★★★★

Plenty of good racing,
even if it fizzled out
right at the end

DRIVERS STANDINGS

Vettel	53pts
Hamilton	49pts
Webber	48pts

MILESTONES

- First time since 1983 four different constructors have won first four races
- First Renault-engined 1-2-3-4 since 1997 Luxembourg GP



VETTEL REOPENS THE GULF

The world champion and Red Bull were back on form in the Middle East, with only Raikkonen and Lotus offering a serious challenge. By MARK HUGHES



QUALIFYING

It was just like 2011: Vettel took pole, then exercised old Mr Peter Pointer

➤ The Mercedes had looked the form car all weekend up until this point. Just as in China, the team was using the DRS to load the car up with wing, allowing it to be very quick through the twists of the middle sector while retaining respectable straight-line speed. On Friday afternoon Nico Rosberg went around in a time that had the McLaren and Red Bull drivers shaking their heads, saying that time was just not in their cars, and Michael Schumacher had aborted a lap that was even quicker in the first sector. They looked shoo-ins for the front row. Yet they qualified fifth and 18th, and slotting into the space they'd vacated bounced a rejuvenated Sebastian Vettel in an improved Red Bull.

Schumacher's DRS flap failed in Q1 as he came out of Turn 13, costing him around 0.5s. As it was going to be a 45-minute fix, the decision was made to run the rest of qualifying without DRS. It was judged that he didn't need to use up another set of medium tyres to graduate out of Q1 – but that was to reckon without the track's grip ramping up enough for a well-driven Caterham on the much faster soft tyre to bump him out, Heikki Kovalainen doing the honours. Scratch one Mercedes. Just one of those things – and there was still Rosberg, who breezed through Q2. But working backwards from the expected tyre carnage of Sunday, Mercedes opted to make just one run in Q3. With the Red Bulls and McLarens each doing two each, it was a high-pressure task for Rosberg – but he had taken pole with a similar strategy in China.

This time a tricky combination tripped him up. He ran a little wide at Turn 10, and this left him with a lot to do. That combination comprised a heavy downhill braking zone, a dusty and windy track and a car that, thanks to its double DRS and its front wing that takes a few milliseconds to uninstall itself, has a tricky braking characteristic whereby you don't initially have all the front downforce that otherwise enables you to brake hard without locking up – but then you do. It's what caught Rosberg out in Q3 at the opening two races too. Even with the lock-up, he was still in



That's 10 fewer fingers than needed in China

contention for pole but simply took too much speed into the final turn, got off line and had to get off the throttle. It all left him 0.4s adrift of pole, back in fifth, but with a fresh set of soft tyres for the race.

With the Mercs' problems and a McLaren that was proving stubbornly reluctant to be dialled into the circuit's demands, the improved Red Bull RB8 was good enough to get Sebastian Vettel's 2012 pole tally off the ground. It wasn't a perfect lap, but it was good enough. The changes to the rear of the car (see page 37) seemed to have brought a more stable rear end into the slow corners. After adopting a set-up that Mark Webber had developed, Vettel was able to squeeze a couple of tenths more from it than Webber, who put himself third. Splitting the Red Bulls was Lewis

Hamilton's McLaren. Both MP4-27s appeared to be getting agitated by the surface frequencies under braking into the slower corners, bouncing on their front tyres and setting up a seesawing motion through the whole car. Through practice they were off the pace through the tight middle sector, but before qualifying a set-up rethink had the cars working better.

Hamilton failed to match Vettel by just 0.1s and reckoned that his Q3 laps were the best he'd driven this year. Jenson Button was still unhappy with the general balance of the car and locked up badly into the downhill approach to the hairpin on his final Q3 lap, leading him to abandon it. His first Q3 effort put him fourth, a couple of tenths off Hamilton. As well as using different brake materials (Button the more progressive Brembos, Hamilton the more powerful Carbones), they had slightly different front wings too, Button opting for the more-powerful, less-efficient one introduced in China.

Of the five remaining Q3 qualifiers, only Daniel Ricciardo and Romain Grosjean had a set of soft tyres left and they duly qualified sixth and seventh for Toro Rosso and Lotus respectively. This was a particularly fine effort from Ricciardo, whose single run was within 0.5s of pole. Grosjean made a Turn 13 error that probably dropped him a place. Sergio

Perez did a used-tyre lap in the Sauber that put him eighth, while Fernando Alonso's Ferrari and Paul di Resta's Force India remained in their garages, the better to save tyre life.

Lotus was keen to save Kimi Raikkonen's tyres and, after a single run in Q2, he sat and hoped he'd done enough to graduate into Q3, but was ultimately squeezed out and lined up 11th. Both cars had the upgrades on that had been removed in China.

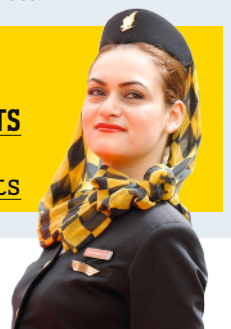
Kamui Kobayashi's Sauber, Nico Hulkenberg's Force India, Felipe Massa's Ferrari and Bruno Senna's Williams filled out the mid-grid, all four making various crucial small errors on their best laps that cost them any chance of Q3 qualification.

Williams's Pastor Maldonado took no part in the Q2 session for which he'd qualified, because of a KERS failure. He was also taking a five-place penalty for a gearbox change, as did Schumacher. Meanwhile, Jean-Eric Vergne failed to get his Toro Rosso into Q2 for the third successive race.

Ricciardo made it two Aussies in the top six



P38 RESULTS
All those vital stats





Aufwiedersehen! Vettel instantly opens a gap



RACE CONDITIONS

Overcast with very occasional light rain at the start of the race. Track temperature was up to 34C.

Nothing was as it seemed. Bahrain was not a country on the point of meltdown, much as it may have looked from the reportage. The Mercedes had looked much the fastest car in practice, but was never a factor in qualifying or race. On Thursday Sebastian Vettel said he believed the Red Bull RB8 was not yet ready to win, but on Sunday he led virtually start to finish from pole, like this was 2011. The McLaren appeared to be very quick indeed on Saturday, but even without its pitstop delays would have finished around 40 seconds adrift of Kimi Raikkonen's second-placed Lotus.

It's clear that the combination of this year's Pirellis and the closeness of the cars has made the competitive order very volatile. "I don't understand where our pace

went," said a bewildered Jenson Button after a puncture denied him even the thin pickings he'd looked set to pick up, well behind the Red Bulls and Lotuses. "We were suddenly 1-1.5s off the pace. These tyres are so difficult to understand."

Heat degradation of the tyres is always fairly extreme around this track, with its multiple low-gear acceleration zones, and Pirelli's choice of soft/medium was quite an aggressive one. The tyres don't wear out here; they would quite comfortably do a full race distance. It's simply that they become saturated by the energy fed through them and overheat into uselessness. Heat degradation is not a new phenomenon, but what is different this year is that if the car is at all out of balance the tyres degrade at an accelerating rate and the process spirals out of control. Furthermore, the car balance can change drastically with just a small change in track temperature.

The McLarens seemed to be edging in and out of that threshold of balance over the weekend, while the Lotuses and Red Bulls were nicely poised within that narrow window. The Mercedes? They looked by far the fastest on Friday,



Grosjean puts an easy pass on Hamilton

but partly that was to do with the timing of their runs, before the wind had suddenly changed direction, giving the others a downforce-robbing tailwind through most of sector two. Even though that flattered the car, it was still good enough to have been fighting Vettel for pole, but Rosberg's crucial error into the final turn had left him starting fifth.

There was a brief flurry of light showers in the desert about an hour before the race and, even though the

rain had gone by the 3pm start time, it was still quite overcast and the track temperature of 32 degrees was around eight cooler than expected. An official 28,000 crowd had made its way through the heavy security checks. They watched as the lights went out and Vettel vaulted into an immediate lead, with apparently way more traction than Lewis Hamilton's McLaren, which was left fending off the other Red Bull of Mark Webber. From seventh, Romain Grosjean made a superb ▶

◀ start and followed that with a beautifully judged shimmy of his Lotus between Button and Rosberg to go fourth. Fernando Alonso's Ferrari also muscled past Button and Rosberg, as Daniel Ricciardo's Toro Rosso fell like a stone from its sixth-place starting slot, wing damage against another car dropping him yet further back. Ricciardo, one of the stars of Saturday, would complete the opening lap 16th, two places behind a team-mate who had started 11 places back.

Up at Turn 4, Rosberg was forced out wide on the exit kerb by Raikkonen's Lotus, the Merc's acceleration blunted as the rear wheels found the heavy serrations. In an instant he was zapped by not only Raikkonen but also the Ferrari of Felipe Massa. The Merc that might have been on pole and leading was now ninth as Nico's Saturday error snowballed.

Vettel was sprinting away at an outrageous rate, 2.2s ahead of Hamilton at the end of the opening lap, almost 3s as DRS was enabled to begin the third lap. A slightly lighter fuel load than the McLaren, slightly lower tyre pressures perhaps? Maybe both those things, but the effect was magnified by a McLaren with no rear grip. Not that Webber was able to take much advantage – he had no KERS for the first couple of laps but still no great pace when it came in thereafter. With the same car as Vettel, running away up front, Webber was struggling. "It didn't feel that bad," he said afterwards, mystified, "it's just the others were pulling away." Some floor damage was found afterwards that would have accounted for some of the shortfall, but it seems Mark was just that little bit heavier on the tyres than Seb, who surely felt in familiar territory up front.

Massa got a run on Raikkonen's

seventh place around the first sequence of turns going into the third lap and it was a couple of laps before Kimi could retaliate, the Ferrari too deep onto the brakes into Turn 4, the Lotus squeezing past in wheel-shaving manner as they accelerated between there and T5, the turn that begins the fast downhill sweeps. In the lap between these moves Grosjean had put a DRS pass onto Webber for third and was now closing upon Hamilton at the rate of 0.5s per lap.

Both Lotuses were flying, both McLarens struggling. "I had massive oversteer after four laps," complained Button, next in Raikkonen's sights. Into the seventh lap Grosjean made a fairly easy-looking DRS-assisted pass on Hamilton, and three corners later Raikkonen was up the inside of Button. Grosjean was less than 5s adrift of Vettel and lapping at a very similar pace, while Raikkonen was soon all over Alonso like a rash.

Button, Massa and Rosberg all trailed into the pits for new tyres at the end of the eighth lap. Mercedes turned its car around 1.3s faster than Ferrari, getting Nico out ahead of Felipe. These stops triggered Hamilton, Webber and Alonso in next time through, and it was clear this was set to be a three-stop race for most. Hamilton's stop was disastrous, the car delayed by around 5s as the left-rear wheelman encountered a problem with the wheelnut pegs not engaging properly. This lost Lewis places to Webber, Alonso, Raikkonen, Button and Rosberg.

Hamilton exited on the tail of the Mercedes, locked onto its rear wing through the first three turns, then moved smartly right to get the inside line for Turn 4. At this point Nico moved sharp right too, trying to block the move – and just kept coming. Keeping his foot in,

Di Resta fended off Alonso for superb sixth



Maldonado and Vergne do battle



Massa reflects on a better job done this week

DRIVER BY DRIVER by Edd Straw

<p>1 10/10 Event rating</p> <p>SEBASTIAN VETTEL Red Bull-Renault RB8-01 Start: 1st. Finish: 1st Did absolutely everything right. Whether it was his qualifying lap, his start, his opening lap, making his used set of soft tyres last a few laps longer than expected in stint three or edging away from Raikkonen in the final part of the race, Vettel nailed it every time. Simply faultless.</p>	<p>2 7/10 Event rating</p> <p>MARK WEBBER Red Bull-Renault RB8-02 Start: 3rd. Finish: 4th The Australian's pace in the race wasn't great, but floor damage that was discovered later played its part in that. Quick in qualifying, albeit shy of Vettel by a few tenths, his race was quiet after some dicing early on. Even without damage, would've struggled to match his team-mate.</p>	<p>3 7/10 Event rating</p> <p>JENSON BUTTON McLaren-Mercedes MP4-27-04 Start: 4th. Finish: 18th Qualified a couple of tenths off Hamilton – a decent effort. Stuck at it in the race despite oversteer, with set-up tweaks at pitstops getting his McLaren into a state where he could have finished fifth had an exhaust problem, then puncture, then diff problem, not struck.</p>	<p>4 8/10 Event rating</p> <p>LEWIS HAMILTON McLaren-Mercedes MP4-27-03 Start: 2nd. Finish: 8th You can't blame Hamilton for the two pitstop blunders. Subtract the time lost in the pits from his race time and he'd be fifth. Taking traffic into account, that could well have been fourth, which would have been about the limit of the McLaren given the pace of Vettel and Lotus.</p>	<p>5 8/10 Event rating</p> <p>FERNANDO ALONSO Ferrari F2012-295 Start: 9th. Finish: 7th As usual, made it through to Q3 despite the shortcomings of the F2012. His race was good, but perhaps not perfect as it wouldn't have taken much to beat di Resta or even Rosberg. Then again, given his car, to bank solid points was all that could be expected.</p>	<p>6 8/10 Event rating</p> <p>FELIPE MASSA Ferrari F2012-293 Start: 14th. Finish: 9th After qualifying 0.5sec off Alonso, he seemed set for another lacklustre race. But the Brazilian was excellent, matching Alonso's pace and showing a hard edge in battle that added up to his first points finish of the season. A good performance under severe pressure.</p>
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Hamilton just about to lose hard-won places



Schumacher had work to do from back of the grid

Hamilton drove past the circuit boundary and onto the dusty Tarmac beyond, angrily cutting back ahead of the Merc as he rejoined the track. The stewards later investigated the incident but took no action.

Grosjean was in on the 10th lap, Vettel and Raikkonen on the 11th, Kimi taking a 0.3s chunk out of the 11s by which he trailed the Red Bull and having a new set of the soft tyres fitted. This was a choice unavailable to the cars around him, all of which had used up their softs in Q3 the day before. This was where Lotus's Saturday choice began to pay off for Kimi.

At this point Paul di Resta led, Force India trying to get him through on two stops, as was Sauber with Kamui Kobayashi in a temporary fourth.

“Both Lotuses were flying, both McLarens struggling. I had massive oversteer,’ complained Button”

Vettel used his DRS to pass di Resta and reassume his place at the front of the field. Grosjean had just got himself past the Scot out of the final turn as Paul made his way pitwards for his first stop, the Lotus now trailing the Red Bull by 5s.

Meanwhile, Raikkonen's pace between Alonso's stop and his own had leapfrogged him past the Ferrari. While Kimi's next target was Webber, who he passed using the DRS, Alonso dropped further places to the McLarens of Button and Hamilton as they scythed down his inside into Turn 4.

Raikkonen was now third, 8s back from Grosjean but catching fast on the softer tyres. For the

next few laps he lit up the timing screens as he greedily ate into Grosjean's advantage, the Frenchman in turn not allowing Vettel to pull away. It was a great performance from the Lotuses, albeit flattered by the difficulties of the McLarens and Webber.

By the 20th lap Raikkonen was within 1s of Grosjean and clearly being held up. But there were no team orders and Kimi had to use the undercut effect of pitting before his team mate, on lap 24, to get ahead. Vettel and Grosjean pitted together a lap later. That earlier stop bought Raikkonen another chunk of Vettel's advantage and, as they began their third stints, Kimi was just a couple of seconds behind Seb and on a new set of mediums, with Vettel on used softs. Still the gap came down and the pair pulled steadily away from Grosjean.

A long way distant of the lead trio, Webber was under no real threat from the oversteering Button. Hamilton in his second stint had got himself onto Jenson's tail and pulled clear of the closely matched Alonso, Rosberg and Massa. Button, Rosberg and Massa were in on the 22nd lap, Webber, Hamilton and Alonso a lap later. This put the group behind the out-of-sequence di Resta again.

Agonisingly, Hamilton had suffered another delay with the left-rear, this time a cross-threaded nut. It lost him around 7s and he came out at the back of the group.

Rosberg's undercut to Alonso allowed him to use his warmer tyres to get past the Ferrari on its out-lap. But a lap later Alonso was looking to get the place back, at the same place where Hamilton had earlier had his skirmish with the Merc. Moving to Rosberg's right as they entered that straight, just as Hamilton had done, Rosberg ▶

7

8/10
Event rating

MICHAEL SCHUMACHER

Mercedes F1 W03-05

Start: 22nd. Finish: 10th

Qualifying was a disaster, but he raced superbly despite only picking up four places on the opening lap. Far more convincing than in China, when his lack of pace relative to Rosberg belied his lofty position. Kept it clean too, which hasn't always been the case in the past.

8

7/10
Event rating

NICO ROSBERG

Mercedes F1 W03-03

Start: 5th. Finish: 5th

A lock-up in qualifying cost him, but in the race he probably got all that could be expected out of the Merc. Then again, had a poor first lap, and alarming defending should have earned him some kind of tangible penalty. Has to be marked down for that recklessness.

9

9/10
Event rating

KIMI RAIKKONEN

Lotus-Renault E20-03

Start: 11th. Finish: 2nd

Early-race charge was spectacular and he certainly had the speed to win the race after starting 11th. Misses 10/10 for two reasons: should have nailed a Q3 lap on his single run in Q2; and *could* have pulled off a pass for the lead on Vettel after closing down the Red Bull.

10

9/10
Event rating

ROMAIN GROSGJEAN

Lotus-Renault E20-01

Start: 7th. Finish: 3rd

Delivered a good qualifying performance again and a stellar first few laps to climb to third. Couldn't quite match Raikkonen for sheer speed, but didn't miss a beat once established in third and looked like a seasoned veteran as he claimed his maiden podium in F1.

11

10/10
Event rating

PAUL DI RESTA

Force India-Merc VJM05-02

Start: 10th. Finish: 6th

One of the stars of qualifying, if anything he surpassed himself in the race. On an "impossible" two-stopper, he eked out just enough tyre life to pull it off, defending stoutly when needed, pulling a good pass on Maldonado and remaining clam under pressure. Can't fault him.

12

5/10
Event rating

NICO HULKENBERG

Force India-Merc VJM05-03

Start: 13th. Finish: 12th

Funnily enough, had same turn of pace as di Resta. It's just that his mistake in Q2 meant he was unable to show it when it mattered. A clutch problem at the start didn't help and he spent the race mired in the midfield. A harsh penalty for a small error, but his time will come.

◀ reacted in exactly the same way, forcing Alonso off the track. Unlike Lewis, Fernando did not make the pass, but complained angrily over the radio.

Meanwhile, Raikkonen was hunting Vettel down. By the 34th lap he was within DRS range. Two laps later he was being sucked into the Red Bull's slipstream as they raced down the pit straight, Seb looking in his mirrors and hugging the middle line, waiting for Kimi to choose a side. The Lotus dived for the inside, Vettel moved across to block. It was a marginal manoeuvre by Vettel that could have been construed as more than one move, given that he had started from the middle of the track, but no complaints were made. "I chose the wrong side," said Kimi simply. "That was my one chance to make the move. After that my tyres dropped off a bit. It had taken us too long to get up with him."

All was not yet lost though. It now became a game of nerve between Red Bull and Lotus as to who would pit first. Lotus could potentially steal this win yet by pitting a lap earlier for the final stops, using the fresh-tyres undercut to jump ahead. But the complication with that was how many laps it left you doing on your final set of tyres – it could potentially leave you a sitting duck at the end of the race, just as Raikkonen had been in China the previous weekend.

There was a complication for Red Bull too: stopping Vettel would bring him out on roughly the same bit of track as team-mate Webber, around 20s back in a lonely fourth place.

Further back, Mercedes brought in Rosberg from sixth, a couple of seconds behind Button, on the 36th lap, forcing McLaren to respond next lap. The combination of

Rosberg's fresh-tyre speed and a Mercedes pitstop that was 0.8s faster than McLaren's brought Timo out ahead of Jenson, but with both of them now around 3s behind the two-stopping di Resta. Behind them after the final stops lay Alonso, the two-stopping and soon-to-fade Kobayashi and then Hamilton, who had succeeded in finding a way by Massa.

But how would this tense tactical battle up front play out? "I was reluctant to bring him in too early," said Lotus trackside chief Alan Permane, "because of what had happened in China. Also, I knew that they would realise when we were stopping as we got the mechanics ready and would

"I chose the wrong side," said Kimi simply. "That was my one chance to make the move. After that my tyres dropped off"

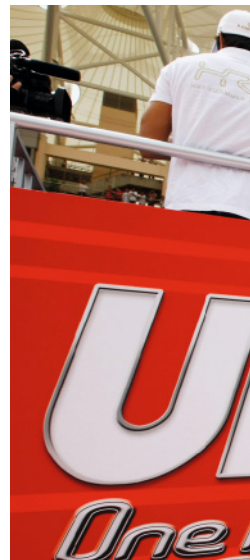
respond. I was trying to avoid a pitstop race with them."

The decision was made to bring Raikkonen in at the end of lap 39, the lap after Vettel had broken free of DRS range. Just as Permane had feared, Red Bull was able to respond in time – and Vettel and Raikkonen headed down the pitlane together. The Red Bull was stationary for just 3.6s, the Lotus for 4.3s. Further clearing the way for Vettel, Webber was brought in on the same lap, giving the Red Bull boys a demanding 'double-shuffle' stop.

With Vettel also now on a brand-new set of mediums, his speed was at least a match for Raikkonen's and he actually began to eke out a small gap, setting what would stand as the race's fastest lap



Stewart has known a few French F1 stars over the years



DRIVER BY DRIVER by Edd Straw

14  **5/10**
Event rating

KAMI KOBAYASHI
Sauber-Ferrari C31-01
Start: 12th. Finish: 13th
Couldn't put in a lap when it counted during Q2 and paid the price in the race, which he spent in the depths of the midfield – despite an attempt to make his opening-stint mediums last long enough to two-stop. In fairness, the Sauber wasn't at its most competitive.

15  **7/10**
Event rating

SERGIO PEREZ
Sauber-Ferrari C31-03
Start: 8th. Finish: 11th
Flattered the Sauber in qualifying, but would have needed a fair wind to score points thanks to the C31 not being one of the handier cars in Bahrain. Fought hard, but couldn't do anything about the Ferraris or Schumacher, and 11th place was a decent return in the circumstances.

16  **5/10**
Event rating

DANIEL RICCIARDO
Toro Rosso-Ferrari STR7-01
Start: 6th. Finish: 15th
The Australian's qualifying performance was quite brilliant, coaxing a time out of the car that he didn't think was in it and earning a slot on the third row. It was always going to be tough from there, but a disastrous start and first lap set the tone for very unspectacular race.

17  **5/10**
Event rating

JEAN-ERIC VERGNE
Toro Rosso-Ferrari STR7-03
Start: 17th. Finish: 14th
Qualifying was dismal, for the third time falling in Q1 after finding the car lacking in grip compared to the morning. Others zeroed in on the fact that he appeared to be overdriving, something that was borne out by the fact that the Frenchman was stronger in the race.

18  **5/10**
Event rating

PASTOR MALDONADO
Williams-Renault FW34-02
Start: 21st. DNF
Gearbox penalty and KERS problem blew the wind out of Maldonado's sails from the off and left him way down the grid. A great first lap got him into a position where he could have pushed for a points finish, but a puncture damaged his suspension and forced him out.

19  **6/10**
Event rating

BRUNO SENNA
Williams-Renault FW34-03
Start: 15th. Finish: 22nd
His qualifying effort seemed in the ballpark, although it was hard to judge the ultimate one-lap potential of the car. Didn't make a great impression during the race and eventually retired with increasing vibration in his brake pedal while running deep in the pack.



a wheel-locking move down the inside into Turn 1. He'd given himself a flat-spot but he was through. Button sensed a couple of easy pickings. His exhaust – just like Rosberg's – was cracked, but the engine was perfectly healthy. Button had just pressed his DRS out of the final corner for a run on di Resta when he saw his right-front rise into the air, signifying a left-rear puncture. He switched to the pits, had a new set fitted but immediately pulled back in to retire, the diff having been damaged by the unequal rotations of the rear wheels because of the puncture.

Di Resta was off the hook, his tyres absolutely gone on the final lap, but a great sixth place was his, ahead of Alonso, Hamilton, Massa – and Michael Schumacher's Mercedes. Starting from near the back, Schumacher had not enjoyed the necessary tyre nursing on a day when he needed to be attacking. "Everyone had to drive well below drivers' and particular car limits to maintain the tyres, and I just question whether the tyres should play such a big importance or whether they should last a bit longer so that you can drive at normal racing car speed, not cruise around like we have a safety car," he said. "You could say it's up to us to deal with it, but basically everybody with maybe one or two exceptions has this problem."

Two of those who dealt with the challenge perfectly were Vettel and Raikkonen. "I knew that every single corner would be critical," said the winner, "and with Kimi behind no mistakes were allowed."

As a further indicator of just how hard Raikkonen and Lotus had pressed Vettel, Red Bull instructed him not to complete an in-lap – otherwise there would have been no fuel in the tank for the FIA sample. ❄



as he did so. The Lotuses were turned down for the last few laps of the final stint, Grosjean consolidating what would be his first podium, while Webber's fourth some distance back would complete a Renault engine 1-2-3-4.

But the fight for fifth was only just beginning to get interesting. Di Resta was still hanging on with tyres that would be 24 laps old by the race's end. Rosberg was pressuring him, and Button – who had taken out a lot of front-wing angle at his final stop and adjusted the brake bias and diff accordingly, all in the search of less oversteer – finally had a semblance of a balance in the McLaren and was catching them both.

With five laps to go, Rosberg put

And they said it was nothing about politics...

20  **7/10**
Event rating

HEIKKI KOVALAINEN
Caterham-Renault CT01-01
Start: 16th. Finish: 17th
Delivered a great lap under pressure to make it into Q2 for the first time this season. Opted to save tyres from there, but suffered a puncture after contact with Kobayashi on the opening lap. Recovered well, finishing only 11 seconds behind team-mate Petrov.

21  **6/10**
Event rating

VITALY PETROV
Caterham-Renault CT01-02
Start: 18th. Finish: 16th
Qualifying was disappointing as the Russian found the car's balance on soft rubber far less satisfying than it was on mediums. But in the race his pace compared well to Kovalainen, and he kept close enough to the Toro Rossos to pick up the pieces if they hit trouble.

22  **7/10**
Event rating

PEDRO DE LA ROSA
HRT-Cosworth F112-02
Start: 20th. Finish: 20th
A superb qualifying effort hauled the HRT to just a couple of tenths off the lead Marussia, which was a remarkable performance. Finished only 30 seconds behind Glock, which wasn't bad, although came close to losing out to Karthikeyan late on.

23  **7/10**
Event rating

NARAIN KARTHIKEYAN
HRT-Cosworth F112-01
Start: 24th. Finish: 21st
Qualifying remains a problem, with a combination of a mistake and a misfire leaving him half a second off de la Rosa. But on an aggressive four-stopper, Karthikeyan reeled the Spaniard in during the final stint and would have passed given another few corners.

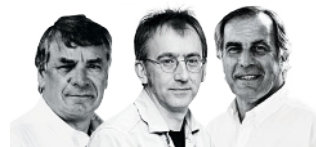
24  **5/10**
Event rating

TIMO GLOCK
Marussia-Cosworth MR01-02
Start: 23rd. Finish: 19th
A troubled weekend for Glock, who had to qualify with 10kg of extra fuel thanks to a pick-up problem and then struggled with the brakes during the race. Realistically, had no chance to show what he could do and was therefore pretty anonymous.

25  **6/10**
Event rating

CHARLES PIC
Marussia-Cosworth MR01-01
Start: 19th. DNF
Outqualified Glock, but was only a couple of tenths up the road of the lead HRT, which suggests that there was more to come from the car. Drove well in the race, and once more outpaced Glock, until an engine problem forced him to retire.

Drawing board

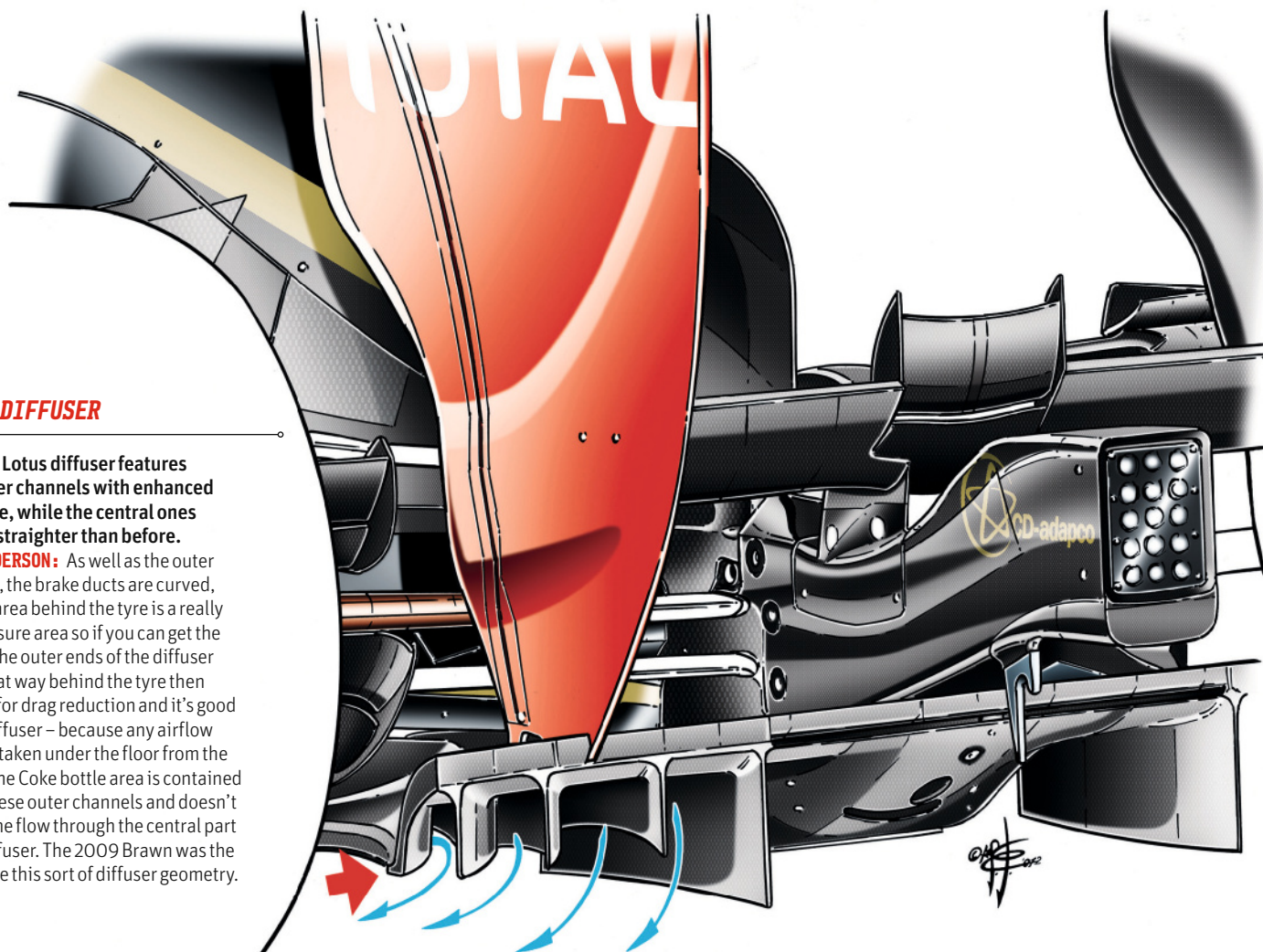


Gary Anderson, Mark Hughes and Giorgio Piola analyse some of the improvements to aerodynamic set-up introduced by Ferrari, Lotus and Red Bull in Bahrain

LOTUS DIFFUSER

→ The Lotus diffuser features outer channels with enhanced curvature, while the central ones are now straighter than before.

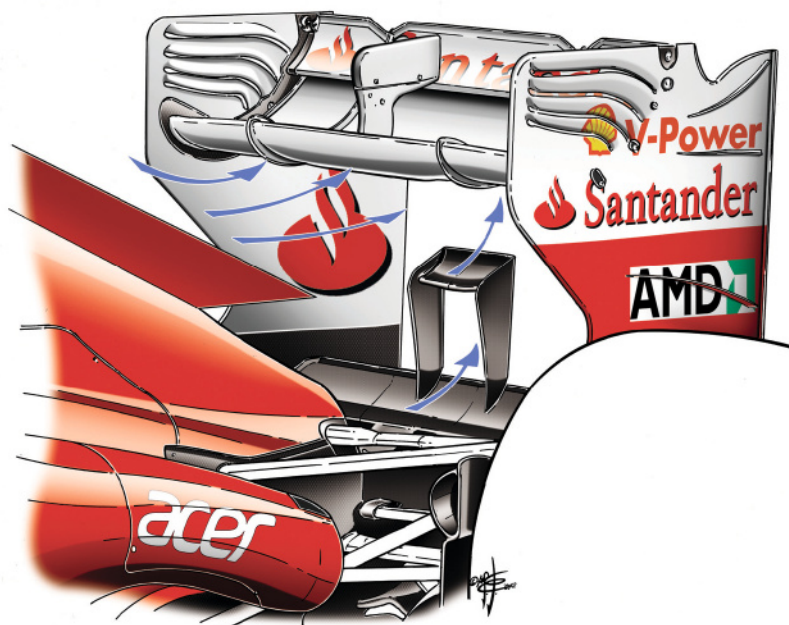
GARY ANDERSON: As well as the outer channels, the brake ducts are curved, too. The area behind the tyre is a really low-pressure area so if you can get the air from the outer ends of the diffuser to curl that way behind the tyre then it's good for drag reduction and it's good for the diffuser – because any airflow that gets taken under the floor from the sides in the Coke bottle area is contained within these outer channels and doesn't disrupt the flow through the central part of the diffuser. The 2009 Brawn was the first to use this sort of diffuser geometry.

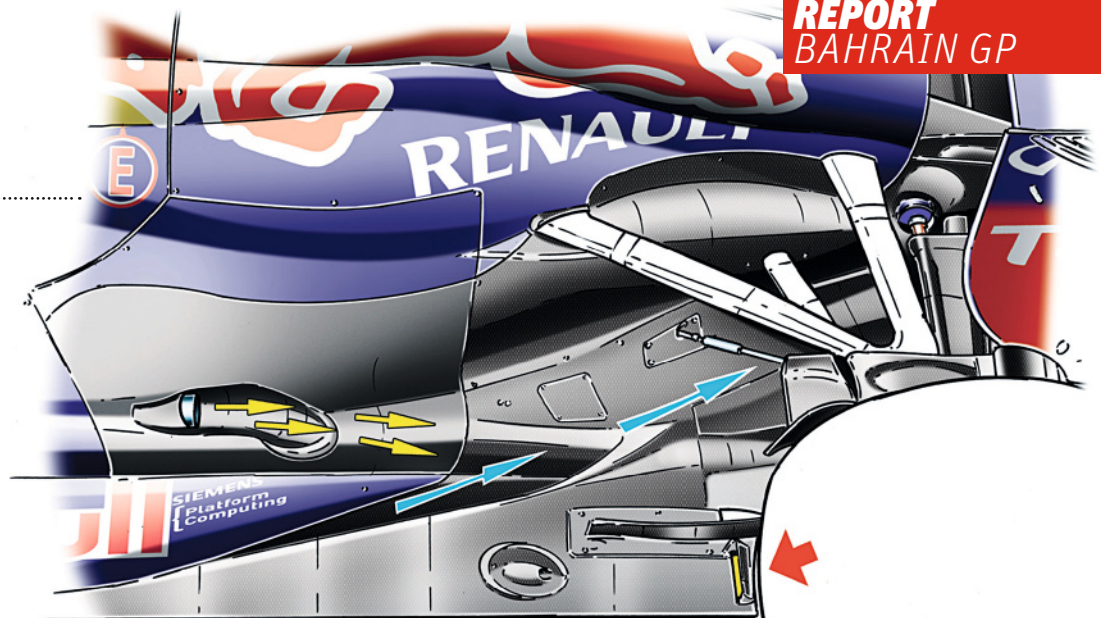


FERRARI REAR WING

→ The F2012's central rear winglet was higher than its predecessor.

GARY ANDERSON: This higher winglet is Ferrari's attempt to get the airflow connected up a bit more between the diffuser and rear wing. The airflow inside the endplates will be following the contours of the wing towards the top, but as it comes further down the endplates, so the curvature will begin to fall off. This winglet re-energises the flow. It will also help to reduce the stall of the diffuser, pulling the air over the top of it better.

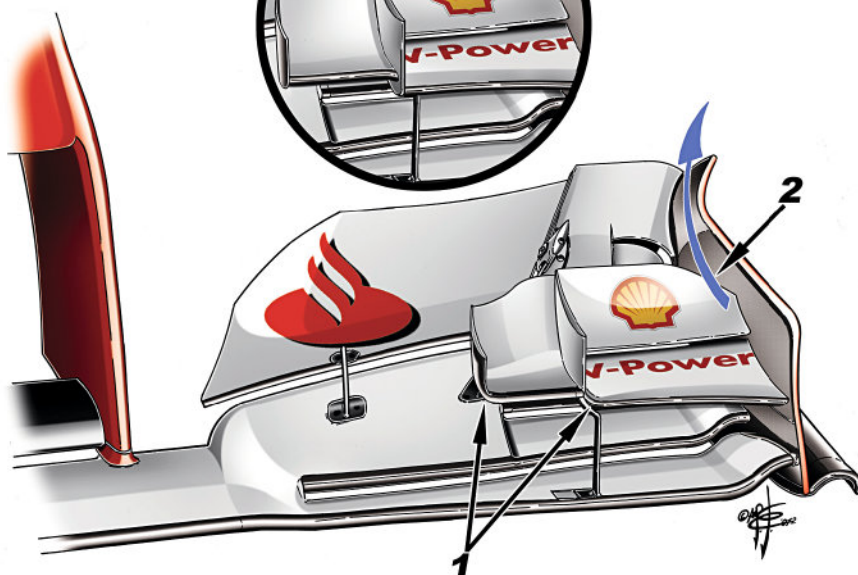
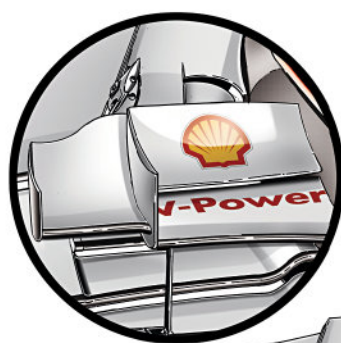
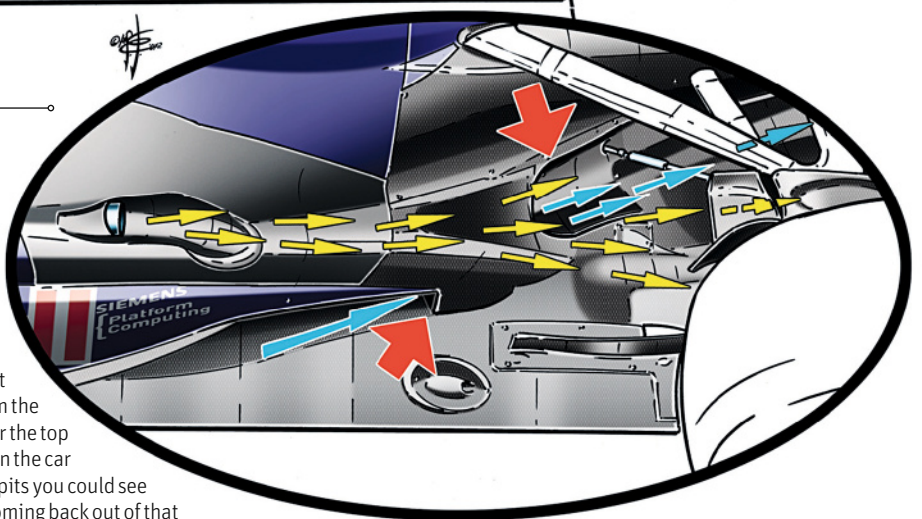




RED BULL REAR BODYWORK

→ Red Bull standardised its exhaust and rear bodywork and got rid of the unique tunnel inlets. The exhaust on both cars was as used by Mark Webber since the start of the season, but the bodywork package around that layout was fundamentally different to that used in previous events. The tunnel taking airflow from the bottom of the sidepod and over the diffuser was deleted (see inset picture, with tunnel flow denoted by the blue arrows and exhaust flow by the yellow arrows) and that whole body surface made solid. This makes the RB8's exhaust/rear bodywork layout now much like Sauber's. The Red Bull mechanics worked long hours through the weekend to convert both cars to this

specification and it appeared to improve the car's braking and slow-corner stability. **GARY ANDERSON:** In China Red Bull ran flow-viz around the second inlet hole that was meant to take the flow from the lower sidepods over the top of the diffuser. When the car came back into the pits you could see that the flow was coming back out of that hole – which I'm sure surprised the team as much as it did me. It clearly wasn't working as intended: to stop the flow from the sidepod leaking under the floor.



FERRARI FRONT WING

→ Ferrari further modified its front wing, with a different transition between the outer flap and the inner (1) and an upper flap with a reduced plan area (2).

GARY ANDERSON: RADIUSING the corner of the lower flap distributes the various conflicting pressures more evenly – with the result that there is less vortex going down and disturbing the car further back. The wake from the upper flap should be connecting up to the tyre so the low-pressure area behind the tyre should be making the wing work harder. This change will be to give more of a progressive change as the drivers make steering inputs.



BAHRAIN GP RESULTS



PRACTICE 1: Friday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	HAMILTON	1m33.572s
2	VETTEL	1m33.877s
3	DI RESTA	1m34.150s
4	ROSBERG	1m34.249s
5	BUTTON	1m34.277s
6	HULKENBERG	1m34.344s
7	SCHUMACHER	1m34.483s
8	WEBBER	1m34.552s
9	RAIKKONEN	1m34.609s
10	GROSJEAN	1m34.847s
11	PEREZ	1m35.024s
12	MALDONADO	1m35.268s
13	ALONSO	1m35.436s
14	BOTTAS	1m35.497s
15	MASSA	1m35.719s
16	KOBAYASHI	1m35.929s
17	VERGNE	1m36.195s
18	KOVALAINEN	1m36.330s
19	PETROV	1m36.484s
20	RICCIARDO	1m36.591s
21	PIC	1m37.467s
22	GLOCK	1m38.006s
23	DE LA ROSA	1m38.877s
24	KARTHIKEYAN	1m39.996s

Weather: dry

PRACTICE 2: Friday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	ROSBERG	1m32.816s
2	WEBBER	1m33.262s
3	VETTEL	1m33.525s
4	HAMILTON	1m33.747s
5	SCHUMACHER	1m33.862s
6	BUTTON	1m34.246s
7	KOBAYASHI	1m34.411s
8	ALONSO	1m34.449s
9	GROSJEAN	1m34.615s
10	PEREZ	1m34.893s
11	RICCIARDO	1m34.895s
12	MASSA	1m34.941s
13	RAIKKONEN	1m35.183s
14	VERGNE	1m35.229s
15	MALDONADO	1m35.459s
16	PETROV	1m35.913s
17	KOVALAINEN	1m35.968s
18	SENNA	1m36.169s
19	GLOCK	1m36.587s
20	PIC	1m37.803s
21	DE LA ROSA	1m37.812s
22	KARTHIKEYAN	1m39.649s
23	DI RESTA	no time
24	HULKENBERG	no time

Weather: dry

PRACTICE 3: Saturday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	ROSBERG	1m33.254s
2	VETTEL	1m33.401s
3	WEBBER	1m33.663s
4	HAMILTON	1m33.782s
5	SCHUMACHER	1m33.796s
6	BUTTON	1m33.899s
7	RAIKKONEN	1m33.976s
8	RICCIARDO	1m34.197s
9	GROSJEAN	1m34.401s
10	ALONSO	1m34.895s
11	MALDONADO	1m34.918s
12	VERGNE	1m34.977s
13	PEREZ	1m35.067s
14	KOBAYASHI	1m35.128s
15	DI RESTA	1m35.336s
16	MASSA	1m35.536s
17	SENNA	1m35.623s
18	KOVALAINEN	1m35.694s
19	HULKENBERG	1m35.773s
20	PETROV	1m36.532s
21	PIC	1m37.267s
22	GLOCK	1m37.654s
23	DE LA ROSA	1m38.973s
24	KARTHIKEYAN	1m39.221s

Weather: dry

QUALIFYING TIMES

POS	DRIVER	QUALIFYING 1	QUALIFYING 2	QUALIFYING 3
1	VETTEL	1m34.308s (6)	1m33.527s (9)	1m32.422s
2	HAMILTON	1m34.813s (16)	1m33.209s (1)	1m32.520s
3	WEBBER	1m34.015s (3)	1m33.311s (4)	1m32.637s
4	BUTTON	1m34.792s (15)	1m33.416s (6)	1m32.711s
5	ROSBERG	1m34.588s (10)	1m33.219s (2)	1m32.821s
6	RICCIARDO	1m33.988s (2)	1m33.556s (10)	1m32.912s
7	GROSJEAN	1m34.041s (4)	1m33.246s (3)	1m33.008s
8	PEREZ	1m33.814s (1)	1m33.660s (8)	1m33.394s
9	ALONSO	1m34.760s (14)	1m33.403s (5)	no time
10	DI RESTA	1m34.624s (12)	1m33.510s (7)	no time
11	RAIKKONEN	1m34.552s (9)	1m33.789s	-
12	KOBAYASHI	1m34.131s (5)	1m33.806s	-
13	HULKENBERG	1m34.601s (11)	1m33.807s	-
14	MASSA	1m34.372s (7)	1m33.912s	-
15	SENNA	1m34.466s (8)	1m34.017s	-
16	KOVALAINEN	1m34.852s (17)	1m36.132s	-
17	MALDONADO	1m34.639s (13)	no time	-
18	SCHUMACHER	1m34.865s	-	-
19	VERGNE	1m35.014s	-	-
20	PETROV	1m35.823s	-	-
21	PIC	1m37.683s	-	-
22	DE LA ROSA	1m37.883s	-	-
23	GLOCK	1m37.905s	-	-
24	KARTHIKEYAN	1m38.314s	-	-

Weather: dry

FRIDAY TESTER



1 VALTTERI BOTTAS
WILLIAMS 1m35.497s



QUALIFYING STATISTICS

	HEAD TO HEAD		
	1	3	WEBBER
VETTEL	1	3	WEBBER
BUTTON	0	4	HAMILTON
ALONSO	4	0	MASSA
SCHUMACHER	2	2	ROSBERG
RAIKKONEN	2	2	GROSJEAN
DI RESTA	3	1	HULKENBERG
KOBAYASHI	2	2	PEREZ
RICCIARDO	4	0	VERGNE
MALDONADO	3	1	SENNA
KOVALAINEN	4	0	PETROV
DE LA ROSA	4	0	KARTHIKEYAN
GLOCK	3	1	PIC



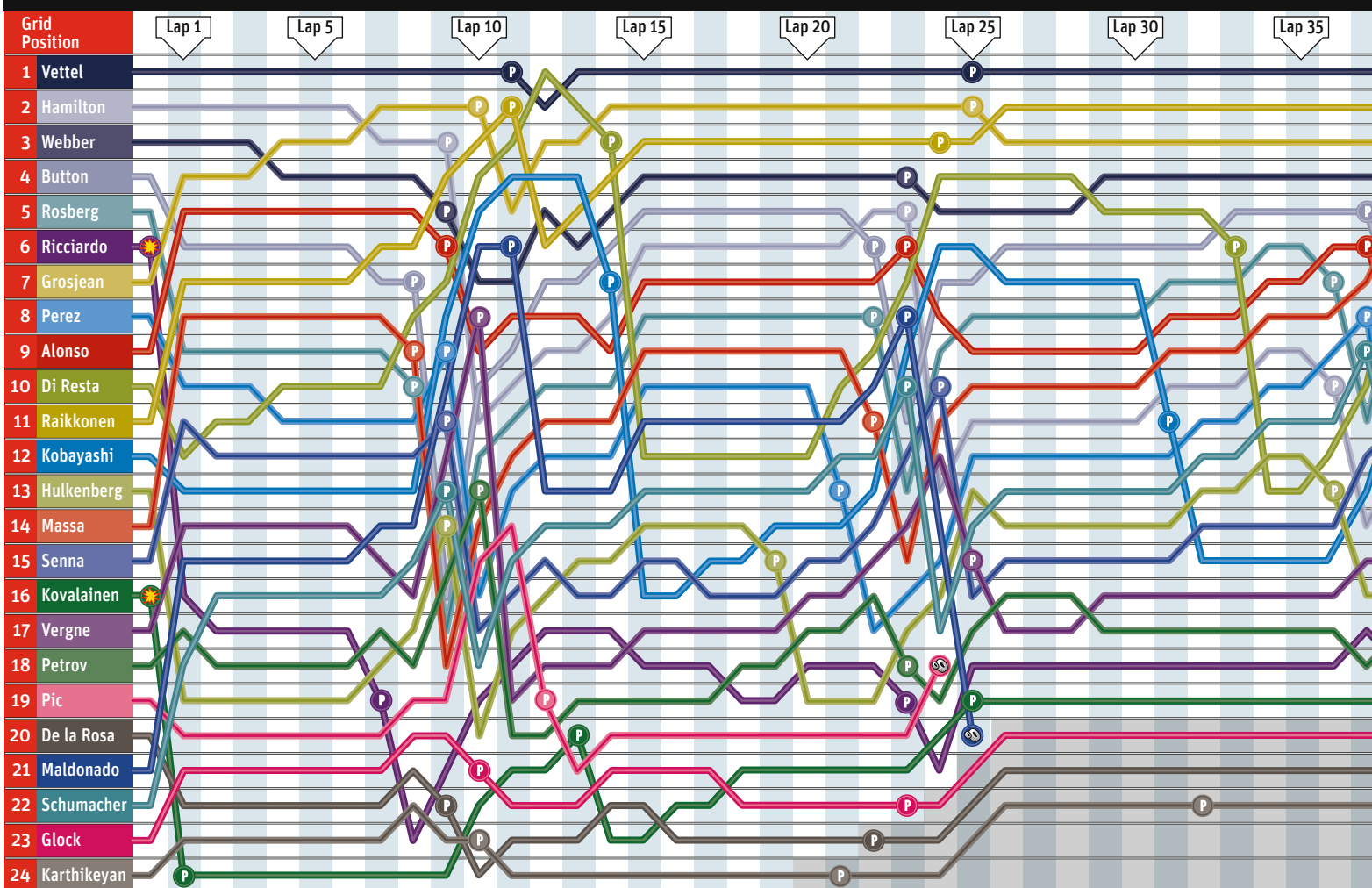
THE GRID

1 VETTEL RED BULL 1m32.422s Soft	2 HAMILTON McLAREN 1m32.520s Soft
3 WEBBER RED BULL 1m32.637s Soft	4 BUTTON McLAREN 1m32.711s Soft
5 ROSBERG MERCEDES 1m32.821s Soft	6 RICCIARDO TORO ROSSO 1m32.912s Soft
7 GROSJEAN LOTUS 1m33.008s Soft	8 PEREZ SAUBER 1m33.394s Soft
9 ALONSO FERRARI no time Soft	10 DI RESTA FORCE INDIA no time Soft
11 RAIKKONEN LOTUS 1m33.789s Soft	12 KOBAYASHI SAUBER 1m33.806s Medium
13 HULKENBERG FORCE INDIA 1m33.807s Soft	14 MASSA FERRARI 1m33.912s Soft
15 SENNA WILLIAMS 1m34.017s Soft	16 KOVALAINEN CATERHAM 1m36.132s Soft
17 VERGNE TORO ROSSO 1m35.014s Soft	18 PETROV CATERHAM 1m35.823s Soft
19 PIC MARRUSSIA 1m37.683s Soft	20 DE LA ROSA HRT 1m37.883s Soft
21 MALDONADO WILLIAMS no time* Soft	22 SCHUMACHER MERCEDES 1m34.865s* Soft
23 GLOCK MARRUSSIA 1m37.905s Soft	24 KARTHIKEYAN HRT 1m38.314s Soft

*Five-place penalty

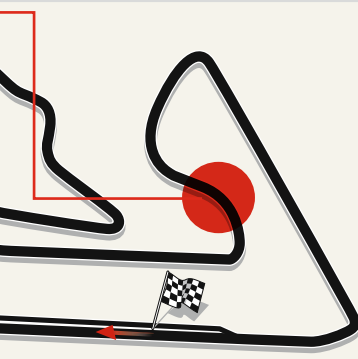
BAHRAIN GP THE FINAL WORDS

THE RACE: LAP BY LAP




TRACKSIDE VIEW **MARK HUGHES** GRAND PRIX EDITOR

Put the money in the slot and out they come to perform. It's the first practice of the weekend and here they are, running against the tide, public opinion washing over them just like the dry, hot air over their wings. A dust cloud trails in the wake of the early lappers as they scream loud and proud around in their circle, sealed from the outside world, and overlooked by the military and oil installations that form the unsaid crucial backdrop to everything about this sad spectacle. Standing out even among such a rude crowd, Felipe Massa's Ferrari is covered in its now habitual flo-viz, its colour neatly matching Felipe's helmet. The temperature rises steadily from hot to sweltering and towards the end of the session at the uphill third-gear test that is turn 11, the cars have made an angry, black rubbered-in line and the grip has



risen in line with the temperature. Lewis Hamilton, on his two-lap run, is hugely aggressive with both his entry speed and the boldness with which he uses the throttle, right-rear nudging right up to the white line that edges the kerb. Many are completing the session with a long-run sequence, and the difference between this and the shorter runs is most notable with the two Mercedes drivers. Their lines and throttle use are totally different to just a few minutes earlier as they wait for both the turn and the throttle. Waiting to see if they can anticipate the trouble.

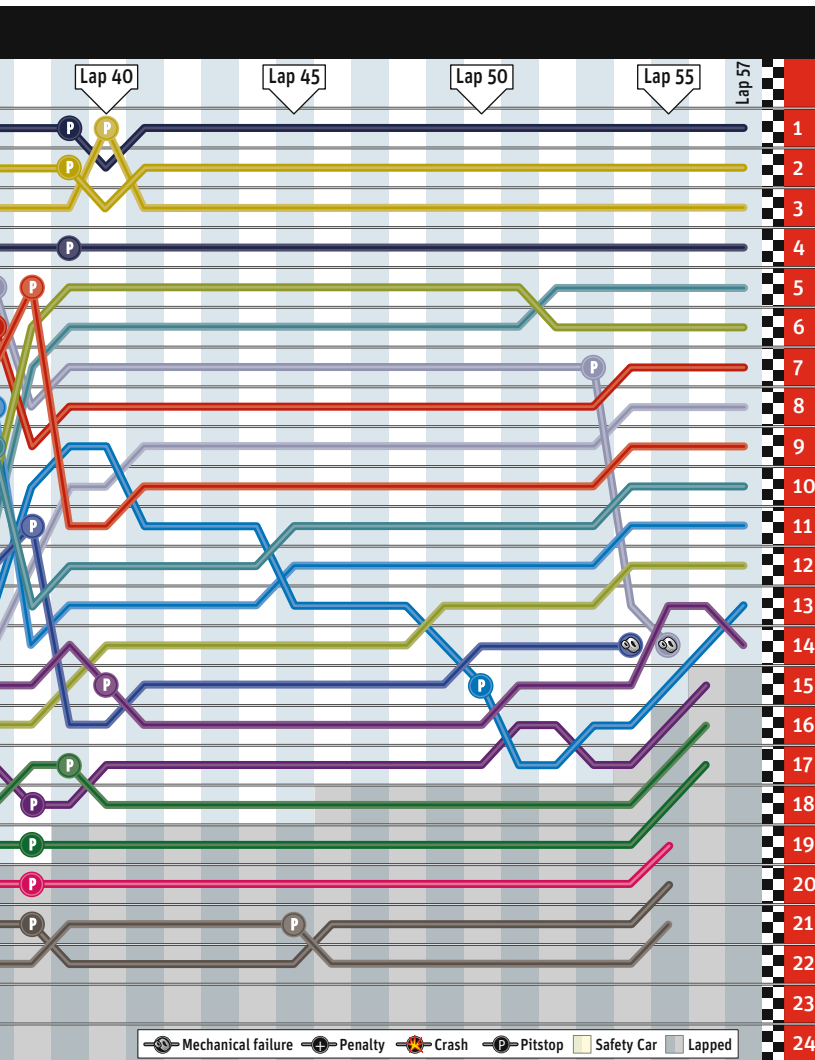
THURSDAY

- 0930** Stories emerge of a Force India team member leaving following an incident the night before.
- 1048** Force India deputy team principal Bob Fernley insists that "all the proper security measures are in place". 
- 1130** Former member of the Bahraini opposition backs the race, saying, "I see this as a sporting and economic event, rather than a political event".
- 1209** Narain Karthikeyan tells **AUTOSPORT** that Martin Whitmarsh's idea that the situation in Bahrain is comparable to that on Indian roads is "completely different".
- 1212** GPDA chairman Pedro de la Rosa tells **AUTOSPORT** that driver safety in Bahrain is "not a concern".
- 1330** Nico Hulkenberg says that "it is obviously not right" that his team was endangered by being caught up in a protest.
- 1512** Felipe Massa insists off-track events aren't distracting him. "We came here for the sport, that's the best thing to do," he said.
- 1532** Rubens Barrichello hits out at Bahrain and Brazil safety comparisons.
- 1655** Norbert Haug tells **AUTOSPORT** that "we have the chance to learn if we understand the car in the right way" over the Bahrain GP weekend.
- 2030** Minibus containing 12 Sauber mechanics has run-in with masked men on the motorway. The driver takes evasive action to escape.



GRAND PRIX DIGEST

The weekend in a nutshell - on-track incidents, team radio and tweets that you might have missed...



SATURDAY

0849 FIA confirms that Pastor Maldonado has changed his gearbox, triggering a five-place grid penalty.

1347 Jean Todt defends the decision to race as protesters are in the minority. "At the most, it would be 10 per cent of the people who would be anti," he claims.

1445 Felipe Massa again fails to make Q3, lapping half-a-second off Alonso.

1500 Twitter storm explodes over the lack of coverage of Force India during qualifying.

1533 A Force India source tells **AUTOSPORT** that the lack of TV airtime is "payback" for skipping Friday afternoon practice.

1509 @BSenna: Didn't seem to have much more in the car today. was not bad, but very close grid! Hope for a better race tomorrow!

1529 Jean-Eric Vergne reprimanded for missing weighbridge at end of Q1.

1710 The Frenchman then tells **AUTOSPORT** that he has no idea why his car lacked grip and was so slow. "Maybe I had something bad for lunch," he said.

1713 @therealTimoGlock: Not a great day for me! Again problem from Friday to Saturday car didn't feel same. Fuel system problem as well so had to take 12kg more fuel.

1530 Bernie Ecclestone denies claims that Force India was deliberately omitted from the coverage. "They were concentrating on who was going to be on pole," he said.



SUNDAY

0935 @therealdcf1 "Tricky first corner, no amount of simulation, strategy or practice can prepare the drivers for a tight right after long start straight"

1030 It emerges that Michael Schumacher will have a five-place grid penalty for a gearbox change.

1315 Brief rainfall at the track, but not enough to change track conditions.

1515 @alex_wurz Lewis's car looks a bit nervous. That forces him into a defensive race (until more rubber goes on track and fuel burns off.)

1518 @NickHeidfeld Looks a bit to easy with drs to overtake. Probably because F1 not in Bahrain last year...

1521 Stewards announce investigation into Rosberg v Hamilton battle.

1535 Paul di Resta says via radio: "He's weaving all over the place". Referring to Pastor Maldonado.

1537 Stewards confirm Rosberg v Hamilton will be investigated post-race. There will be no penalty.

1550 Stewards to investigate Rosberg v Alonso after the race. No penalty.

1619 Mark Slade to Raikkonen: "Vettel has worse deg. We'll catch him."

1827 @alo-oficial "...you are going to have fun in future races! You can defend as you want and overtake outside the track! Enjoy! ;)))



FRIDAY

1125 Marussia driver Timo Glock spins late in P1 at Turn 1.

1130 It emerges that Force India is considering missing all or part of P2 to allow team personnel to leave before dark for safety reasons.

1248 Force India's Bob Fernley says F1 made the right decision to come to Bahrain.



1337 Bernie Ecclestone says: "If Force India wanted to work until 1am I'm happy to travel with them in the same car."

1350 Sauber confirms that one of its minibuses had a run-in with a group of masked men running towards them.

1400 P2 starts as Force India confirms it will not take part.

1503 @MikeGascoyne: huge degradation on the rear on a full fuel load with both cars.

1523 Schumacher slams the door on Vettel in P2 despite running wide and losing time at the previous corner.

1610 Norbert Haug denies rumours that Aabar is considering pulling out of Daimler. "I just hear the speculation," he says.

1645 Ferrari head of trackside operations Diego Ioverno hosts media session.

1512 @alo-oficial: Curious facts of the practices; temperatures; Ambient 33* Track 46* Body temp 39* Max tires 126* Brakes at 1st corner 870*



SAKHIR

BAHRAIN
 April 20-22
 GP2 Series
 Round 2/12

**AT A GLANCE**

- Race 1 **Daide Valsecchi**
- Race 2 **Valsecchi**
- Pole position **Valsecchi**
- Fastest laps **Valsecchi/VD Garde**



Gutierrez (l) and Calado joined Valsecchi on R2 podium



Double delight for DAMS's Davide

Valsecchi overcame pre-start nerves to take his first 2012 win, then did it again to complete the seventh weekend double in GP2 history

Valsecchi completes his perfect win double

"REMEMBER, TOMORROW WE want calm, calm, calm..." DAMS engineer Remi Decorzert was smiling as he spoke, but had good cause.

Daide Valsecchi had just comfortably won the first GP2 race at Sakhir, but the team was slightly concerned about his fastest lap, almost a second quicker than anybody else's. "I was being calm," the Italian said.

Having fluffed a pole start at Sepang last month, Valsecchi admitted to slight nerves this time. He got away well, though, and controlled the race to the end. He made his mandatory tyre stop on lap 13 of 32, switching from medium Pirellis to hards, and was more than 12s clear when the safety car interrupted his rhythm.

The cause? A turn-four

clash between Johnny Cecotto Jr (Addax) and Felipe Nasr (DAMS) over sixth. Cecotto had the inside, with the stewards deciding the corner was his. Nasr turned in though, putting both cars out and earning a five-place grid penalty for Sunday's sprint.

When the race restarted at the end of lap 19, Valsecchi pulled away once more. And that fastest lap? "Second changed a few times," he said. "I noticed [Luiz] Razia was following me and the gap had closed, so I was just responding."

Razia got the message and settled for runner-up.

Traffic had condemned the Brazilian to eighth on the grid (helped by Marcus Ericsson's 10-position penalty, a hangover from a clash with Valsecchi in

Malaysia), but he stayed at the circuit until 10pm on Friday, helping Arden's engineers evolve a set-up that would blend speed with tyre life. Their deliberations paid off.

He was fifth by the opening lap's end, behind Valsecchi, Esteban Gutierrez, Cecotto and Nasr, but passed the Brazilian on the track and the other two in the pits – Gutierrez became easy prey when his right-rear wheel jammed, costing him 6s and almost as many positions.

Razia was third when the race was neutralised, because Gutierrez's Lotus team-mate James Calado vaulted everybody by making an early stop that dropped him into clear air and prompted a couple of laps in the low 1m45s – faster than anybody else at that stage. Calado was second when the race resumed, but by then his rears were finished. "I had wheelspin everywhere," he said, "even in third gear."

Stubborn resistance kept Razia at bay for a while, but

Calado had to move off line when the Brazilian dived through, and dirt on worn rubber further affected his defence. Max Chilton (a quick pitstop by Carlin, which changed rear tyres only), and the recovering Gutierrez soon demoted Calado, but he repelled the impressive Tom Dillmann, up from 14th on the grid.

With Chilton's front tyres shot, Gutierrez was able to take third on the final lap to complete a fightback that was part patience and part improvisation – at one point he deployed rallycross technique, putting all four wheels on the dirt to pass the Nasr/Cecotto duel.

Fabio Leimer took seventh ahead of Fabio Onidi, Rio Haryanto and Brendon Hartley. Recruited late by Ocean to replace

Calado grabbed race-two lead at the start



RACE RATING

★★★★★

Top marks for the racing but zero for the location. Sport and politics don't mix

MILESTONE

First double win since Nico Hulkenberg at the Nurburgring in 2009



REPORT GP2 SAKHIR

SIMON ARRON
reports



Jon Lancaster, who was sidelined by sponsorship complications, Hartley started last (partly the result of a five-place penalty for causing an accident during qualifying, partly because he hadn't so much as walked the circuit) but recovered with great verve to complete the top 10. Jolyon Palmer qualified 12th for iSport and felt he had a shot at points, but an electrical problem stopped him on the formation lap.

Sunday's start was aborted after Nasr stalled en route to the grid – with Dillmann copying him on the second formation lap. Calado sprinted through from the second row to seize the lead from Onidi, but had an imbalance – “The car was brilliant in left-handers, but horrible in rights,” – and knew his lead wouldn't last.

He ceded to Leimer and Gutierrez on lap six.

Leimer had it in the bag, but was given a drivethrough for failing to slow adequately under waved yellows during the early stages. That handed the initiative to Gutierrez, but Valsecchi was looming. “I looked after my tyres – my car was relatively strong,” he said.

On laps 14 and 15 Valsecchi made identical moves to dispense with Chilton and Calado into Turn 1 and at the start of the final lap sliced past Gutierrez – who lost a bit of front wing against team-mate Calado early on – to complete the double.

Calado came home third, from Razia, Chilton and unsung heroes Nasr and Palmer, who stormed from the back to take points. Splendid drives, both. ☼



Razia carved through to P2 in the first race

Rast & Siedler take a win apiece

Lechner Racing team-mates Rene Rast and Norbert Siedler shared the honours as the Porsche Supercup kicked off at Sakhir with a double-header last weekend.

Most of the regular frontrunners are back this year, with ex-Red Bull junior driver Michael Ammermuller the most interesting name among the newcomers in a third Lechner entry.

Siedler, second in the 2011 points, was on pole for the opener ahead of Rast, the champion of the past two seasons, and new Konrad signing Sean Edwards. Rast grabbed the lead at the start and was never under serious threat as he kicked off his title defence in style.

Siedler lost second to a charging Edwards at the start of the third lap, while GP2 race winner Ammermuller showed that he could be a force this season by moving up to fourth from seventh on the grid. Konrad driver Christian Engelhart and Sebastiaan Bleekemolen (Team Bleekemolen) completed the top six.

Siedler and Rast again formed the front row for race two on Sunday, and this time Siedler made no mistake off the start. Instead it was Rast who failed to get away well, and was outdragged by Engelhart. The Konrad driver – a winner in the Supercup last year – chased Siedler to the flag, finishing just 0.6s behind as the leader's tyres went off towards the end.

Rast took third while Attempto Racing's Kevin Estre moved up from seventh on the grid to claim fourth, ahead of Verva Racing's Kuba Giermaziak and rookie Nicki Thiim (Attempto), son of former DTM champion Kurt. Edwards was classified 14th

after pitting for a new tyre thanks to a valve being damaged in contact, while Ammermuller was also well down the field after he had to stop to have a loose item of bodywork removed.

● Adam Cooper

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Rene Rast, 10 laps in 21m01.673s; 2 Sean Edwards, +2.496s; 3 Norbert Siedler; 4 Michael Ammermuller;

5 Christian Engelhart; 6 Sebastiaan Bleekemolen. **Race 2** 1 Siedler, 10 laps in 20m55.702s; 2 Engelhart, +0.654s; 3 Rast; 4 Kevin Estre;

5 Kuba Giermaziak; 6 Nicki Thiim. **Points** 1 Siedler, 40; 2 Rast, 36; 3 Engelhart, 30; 4 Edwards, 21; 5 Estre, 21; 6 Giermaziak, 20.



Rast leads poleman Siedler to R1 victory

RESULTS

GP2 Series, round 2 of 12, Sakhir (BRN), April 20-22

RACE 1 GRID

1 VALSECCHI 1:41.200	2 GUTIERREZ 1:41.479
3 NASR 1:41.785	4 LEIMER 1:41.798
5 CECOTTO 1:41.858	6 RICHELMI 1:41.862
7 CALADO 1:41.939	8 RAZIA 1:41.962
9 CHILTON 1:41.980	10 HARYANTO 1:42.097
11 VD GARDE 1:42.139	12 PALMER 1:42.156
13 CLOS 1:42.158	14 DILLMANN 1:42.190
15 ONIDI 1:42.374	16 GONZALEZ 1:42.409
17 ERICSSON 1:41.933*	18 BERTHON 1:42.427
19 LEAL 1:42.456	20 CRESTANI 1:42.706
21 COLETTI 1:42.853	22 MELKER 1:42.895
23 TRUMMER 1:43.014	24 SERENELLI 1:43.907
25 TEIXEIRA 1:44.078	26 HARTLEY 1:42.782**

RACE 1 - 32 LAPS, 107.458 MILES

POS	NAME	TEAM	TIME	GRID
1	Davide Valsecchi (I)	DAMS	59m31.115s	1
2	Luiz Razia (BR)	Arden International	+7.770s	8
3	Esteban Gutierrez (MEX)	Lotus GP (ART)	+13.528s	2
4	Max Chilton (GB)	Carlin	+14.088s	9
5	James Calado (GB)	Lotus GP (ART)	+16.278s	7
6	Tom Dillmann (F)	Rapax	+16.559s	14
7	Fabio Leimer (CH)	Racing Engineering	+17.243s	4
8	Fabio Onidi (I)	Scuderia Coloni	+28.109s	15
9	Rio Haryanto (RI)	Carlin	+32.846s	10
10	Brendon Hartley (NZ)	Ocean Racing Technology	+36.093s	26**
11	Stephane Richelmi (MC)	Trident Racing	+37.377s	6
12	Julian Leal (CO)	Trident Racing	+38.677s	19
13	Marcus Ericsson (S)	iSport International	+40.627s	17*
14	Fabrizio Crestani (I)	Venezuela GP Lazarus	+41.009s	20
15	Rodolfo Gonzalez (YV)	Caterham Racing	+44.028s	16
16	Simon Trummer (CH)	Arden International	+44.552s	23
17	Ricardo Teixeira (AO)	Rapax	+47.776s	25
18	Giancarlo Serenelli (YV)	Venezuela GP Lazarus	+52.464s	24
19	Dani Clos (E)	Addax Team	30 laps-DNF	13
20	Nigel Melker (NL)	Ocean Racing Technology	30 laps-DNF	22
21	Nathanael Berthon (F)	Racing Engineering	29 laps-DNF	18
R	Johnny Cecotto Jr (YV)	Addax Team	16 laps-accident	5
R	Felipe Nasr (BR)	DAMS	16 laps-accident	3
R	Giedo van der Garde (NL)	Caterham Racing	16 laps-handling	11
R	Stefano Coletti (MC)	Scuderia Coloni	2 laps-accident	21
NS	Jolyon Palmer (GB)	iSport International	electrics	12

RACE 2 - 22 LAPS, 73.830 MILES

POS	DRIVER	TIME/REASON	GRID
1	Valsecchi	39m22.363s	8
2	Gutierrez	+0.399s	6
3	Calado	+10.617s	4
4	Razia	+12.463s	7
5	Chilton	+13.573s	5
6	Nasr	+15.414s	26**
7	Palmer	+22.950s	25
8	Trummer	+30.425s	16
9	van der Garde	+31.976s	23
10	Dillmann	+32.545s	3
11	Clos	+32.632s	19
12	Leimer	+32.856s	2
13	Teixeira	+36.275s	17
14	Onidi	+36.477s	1
15	Haryanto	+39.988s	9
16	Ericsson	+40.386s	13
17	Leal	+47.410s	12
18	Melker	+56.196s	20
19	Crestani	+59.488s	14
20	Serenelli	+1m53.295s	18
21	Gonzalez	+2m12.968s***	15
22	Cecotto	21 laps-DNF	22
23	Coletti	20 laps-DNF	24
R	Berthon	15 laps-wheel	21
R	Hartley	2 laps-suspension	10
R	Richelmi	0 laps-spin	11

CHAMPIONSHIP TABLES

POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Valsecchi	70
2	Razia	57
3	Gutierrez	45
4	Calado	39
5	Chilton	35
6	Nasr	22
7	Leimer	22
8	van der Garde	12
9	Coletti	10
10	Dillmann	8
1	DAMS	92
2	Lotus	84
3	Arden	58
4	Carlin	39
5	Racing Engineering	23
6	Coloni	14

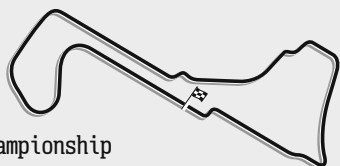
All in Dallara-Mecachrome GP2/11.
*10-place penalty; **5-place penalty; ***20s penalty.
Race 1 Winner's average speed: 108.327mph. Fastest lap: Valsecchi, 1m44.380s, 115.982mph. **Race 2** Winner's average speed: 112.509mph. Fastest lap: van der Garde, 1m45.650s, 114.588mph.

ZOLDER

BELGIUM

April 21-22

FIA GT1 World Championship
Round 2/10



AT A GLANCE

- Winners Parisy/Halliday
- Qual race Buurman/Bartels
- Pole Matt Halliday



Kox jumped start to lead beginning of qualifier

Porsche duo times it to perfection

Kiwi Matt Halliday and Frenchman Mike Parisy were spot on with their switch from wets to slicks to give the German marque its first GT1 win



Parisy and Halliday controlled things

TIMING IS EVERYTHING ON a drying track. The Muehner Motorsport-run Exim Bank Team China Porsche squad called the change from wets to slicks spot-on in the full-points FIA GT1 World Championship race at Zolder last Sunday to claim victory with Matt Halliday and Mike Parisy. The Porsche 911 GT3-R might have been the fastest car in Belgium, but Muehner and its drivers also produced a near-faultless performance.

The Muehner Porsche ran third through the first half of the race, with Halliday stuck behind the All-Inkl Munnich Motorsport Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG driven by Thomas Jager. Yet when the pitstop sequence was done and dusted, Parisy was out in front with a handy seven-second lead.

Halliday was the first of the leaders to pit, the Kiwi coming in almost immediately when the pitstop window opened as the 25-minute mark was hit. Jager didn't bring in the Mercedes to swap to Nicky Pastorelli for another two laps and runaway race leader Maxime Martin waited one more to pit in the Valmon Racing Team Russia Aston

Martin DBRS9.

The Mercedes and the Hexis Racing McLaren MP4-12C - which Frederic Makowiecki had just handed over to Stef Dusseldorp - emerged from the pits in front of Parisy, but the Porsche's tyres were already up to working temperature, allowing the Frenchman to sweep past and drive away. He then did the tardy Alexei

Vasiliev, who had taken over the DBRS9 from Martin, and moved into the lead when the last cars stopped.

That early stop won Muehner the race, but then you might expect a team that has 20 class wins at the Nurburgring 24 Hours to have a certain expertise in calling such conditions. Team boss Bernhard Muehner wasn't so sure, pointing out that he was merely following a simple rule of thumb employed by his squad.

"We have a saying in our team when we are racing on the Nurburgring Nordschliefe: 'If you are not sure what to do, go for slicks,'" he said. "Of course, if it had started raining again before the others stopped, it would have been water for us and not champagne."

Just to prove that the early stop was the way to go, the best of the Vita4One Racing BMW Z4s ended up a close second in the hands of Yelmer Buurman, despite a difficult first stint when Michael Bartels was at the wheel. The Bimmer, for the moment, doesn't look after its tyres on a drying track, which explained why the team boss pitted nearly 20s in arrears of the Porsche.

Buurman was able to close down the deficit to the inexperienced Parisy, who was neither as quick nor as consistent as Halliday last weekend. The Dutchman was challenging the Porsche for the final six laps, but the combination of the Porsche's excellent traction and good top speed, plus a narrow Zolder circuit that was still damp off line,



Weather changes went against AF Corse Ferrari

RACE RATING

★★★★☆

Two wet/dry races made for a pair of thrilling encounters

MILESTONE

Porsche's first world championship race win since Dijon World Sportscars in 1989



REPORT WORLD GT1 ZOLDER

GARY WATKINS
reports



Vita4One BMW crew won qualifying race

made it almost impossible to overtake.

If Muhlner gambled to come in early, it played it safe at the beginning of the race. The drying line around the 2.49-mile former Belgian Grand Prix venue was whispering slicks at the teams, but the dark clouds above screamed wets. Everyone at the front, or maybe that should be everyone with something to lose, went for the grooved Pirelli control tyre.

Further back, some went for slicks, the gamble very nearly paying off. There was light drizzle as the cars left the track, but it was a quick shower on lap two that did for the victory hopes of Toni Vilander in AF Corse

Ferrari 458 Italia and the two WRT-run Audi R8 LMS ultras.

Vilander leapfrogged from 13th on the grid to sixth in the space of two laps, dropped down to ninth and was then back to fifth by the time the pitstops started. His co-driver Filip Salaquarda did a workmanlike job in holding onto third position.

If it had rained for one more lap, Vilander and Salaquarda would have been nowhere on Sunday. Perhaps a few spots less, and they could probably have won.

Zolder was all about making "the right decisions at the right time," said Halliday. "And that's what we did today." ❄️

WRT makes pitstop tyre blunder

➤ If Muhlner got its tyre strategy bang-on in the championship event, then WRT got it spectacularly wrong in Saturday's qualifying race. Oliver Jarvis and Frank Stippler looked clear favourites for victory when the local team made an inexplicable tyre choice in the pits.

Jarvis led on a drying track into the pitstop window. A dry line was appearing, the times were tumbling and slicks appeared the obvious choice, yet Stippler left the pitlane on another set of wets.

It was an unfathomable decision by a team that had done everything to perfection on the way to a double one-two finish at the season opener at Nogaro.

WRT sporting director Pierre Dieudonne acknowledged that the team had made a mistake. "The team as a whole got it wrong," he said. "The main reason for that was communication."

But Jarvis insisted that he had made it clear in no uncertain terms that slicks were the order of the day: "I passed on the information that there was a dry line, so I

was surprised when Frank was sent out on wets."

Stippler's return to the pits promoted Markus Winkelhock into the lead in the best of the All-Inkl / Munnich Mercedes. Bartels was closing in the Vita4One Z4 when the throttle return spring broke on the SLS AMG, dropping him to sixth at the finish.

The BMW, which was a much more competitive proposition at Zolder thanks to a significant restrictor break, held on to the victory by just half a second from Thomas Jager.



Tyre call cost Jarvis/Stippler lots of time

RESULTS

GT1 World Championship, round 2 of 10, Zolder (B), April 21-22

36 LAPS, 89.567 MILES

POS	DRIVERS	TEAM	CAR	TIME
1	Matt Halliday (NZ)/Mike Parisy (F)	Exim Bank China (Muhlner)	Porsche 911 GT3-R	1h00m32.983s
2	Michael Bartels (D)/Yeimer Buurman (NL)	Vita4One Racing Team	BMW Z4 GT3	+1.030s
3	Toni Vilander (FIN)/Filip Salaquarda (CZ)	AF Corse	Ferrari 458 Italia GT3	+17.256s
4	Thomas Jager (D)/Nicky Pastorelli (NL)	All-inkl.com Munnich	Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG GT3	+29.070s
5	Frederic Makowiecki (F)/Stef Dusseldorp (NL)	Hexis Racing	McLaren MP4-12C GT3	+29.580s
6	Laurens Vanthoor (B)/Stephane Ortelli (MC)	WRT	Audi R8 LMS ultra	+29.900s
7	Gregoire Demoustier (F)/Alvaro Parente (P)	Hexis Racing	McLaren MP4-12C GT3	+32.167s
8	Albert von Thurn und Taxis (D)/Tomas Engle (CZ)	Reiter Engineering	Lamborghini Gallardo LP560	+37.156s
9	Markus Winkelhock (D)/Marc Basseng (D)	All-inkl.com Munnich	Mercedes-Benz SLS AMG GT3	+38.456s
10	Frank Stippler (D)/Oliver Jarvis (GB)	WRT	Audi R8 LMS ultra	+38.885s
11	Enzo Ide (B)/Francesco Castellacci (I)	AF Corse	Ferrari 458 Italia GT3	+47.053s
12	Maxime Martin (B)/Alexey Vasiliev (RUS)	Valmon Team Russia (LMP/AMR)	Aston Martin DBRS9	+1m25.273s
13	Darryl O'Young (PRC)/Peter Kox (NL)	Reiter Engineering	Lamborghini Gallardo LP560	-1 lap
14	Nikolaus Mayr-Melnhof (A)/Mathias Lauda (A)	Vita4One Racing Team	BMW Z4 GT3	-1 lap
15	Andreas Zuber (A)/Sergei Afanasiev (RUS)	Valmon Team Russia (LMP/AMR)	Aston Martin DBRS9	-1 lap
16	Milos Pavlovic (SRB)/Matteo Cressoni (I)	SUNRED	Ford GT	-2 laps
17	Benjamin Lariche (F)/Ren Wei (PRC)	Exim Bank China (Muhlner)	Porsche 911 GT3-R	-4 laps

GRID

1 STIPLER 1:33.704	2 O'YOUNG 1:33.936
3 HALLIDAY 1:33.568*	4 JAGER 1:34.004
5 VANTHOOR 1:34.034	6 BARTELS 1:34.145
7 WINKELHOCK 1:34.384	8 TAXIS 1:39.132
9 SALAQUARDA 1:41.489	10 DUSSELDORP 1:41.623
11 LAUDA 1:41.796	12 CASTELLACCI 1:42.017
13 VASTILIEV 1:43.449	14 WET 1:48.196
15 PAVLOVIC 1:46.490	16 DEMOUSTIER 1:53.099
17 ZUBER no time	

QUAL RACE: 36 LAPS, 89.567 MILES

POS	DRIVERS	TIME
1	Buurman/Bartels	1h00m41.928s
2	Pastorelli/Jager	+0.567s
3	Parisy/Halliday	+20.578s
4	Dusseldorp/Makowiecki	+21.119s
5	Lauda/Mayr-Melnhof	+21.462s
6	Basseng/Winkelhock	+25.785s
7	Castellacci/Ide	+41.336s
8	Kox/O'Young	+49.829s
9	Vasiliev/Martin	+1m03.752s
10	Parente/Demoustier	+1m09.961s
11	Jarvis/Stippler	+1m10.255s
12	Ortelli/Vanthoor	+1m39.328s
13	Salaquarda/Vilander	-1 lap
R	Afanasiev/Zuber	18 laps-wheel off
R	Engel/von Thurn und Taxis	9 laps-gearbox
R	Wei/Lariche	7 laps-accident
NS	Cressoni/Pavlovic	brakes

CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE

POS	DRIVERS	PTS	POS	DRIVER	PTS
1	Ortelli/Vanthoor	41	6	Vilander/Salaquarda	25
2	Parisy/Halliday	31	7	Winkelhock/Basseng	19
3	Pastorelli/Jager	30	8	Makowiecki/Dusseldorp	13
4	Bartels/Buurman	27	9	Engel/Thurn und Taxis	12
5	Stippler/Jarvis	25	10	Ide/Castellacci	10

*Two-place grid penalty
Winners' average: 88.75mph. Fastest lap: Jarvis, 1m31.573s, 97.81mph.
Qualification race winners' average: 88.54mph. Fastest lap: Vilander, 1m31.166s, 98.25mph.
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.

NASCAR SPRINT CUP KANSAS SPEEDWAY (USA), APRIL 22, RD 8/36

Sun comes out for Hamlin to deny Truex



Hamlin (11) passed Truex late for win

FOR LAP AFTER LAP UNDER cool grey skies, Martin Truex Jr led at Kansas Speedway. At one stage the Michael Waltrip Racing Toyota driver had almost 10 seconds in hand as he looked like ending a five-year losing streak. But with just 33 laps remaining the sun broke

through. Suddenly Truex was unable to lap as quickly and his once-impressive lead disappeared. Looming large in his mirrors was the Camry of Joe Gibbs Racing's Denny Hamlin. Truex didn't go down without a fight, but despite his best efforts he could not deny Hamlin his 19th Cup

win. "I don't think it was the sun," said Truex. "It was that last set of tyres. After we put those on we were just bad loose." Celebrating Earth Day in an unusual pale green Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet, Jimmie Johnson was a distant third. He'd been a contender during the middle third of the race, but couldn't sustain the challenge and did well to hold off the Roush Ford of Matt Kenseth in the end. Kenseth's team-mate Greg Biffle continued his stellar start to the 2012 season with a solid run to fifth. The race featured a high number of engine problems. Among the casualties was poleman AJ Allmendinger, who led the opening 44 laps in his Penske Dodge before the motor fell sick.

Also out of luck were Hendrick's Jeff Gordon and Waltrip drivers Clint Bowyer and Mark Martin. With only three cautions – a track-record low – the race was the fastest Cup event ever held at Kansas Speedway, with an average speed of over 140mph. ● Connell Sanders Jr

RESULTS
1 Denny Hamlin (Toyota Camry), 267 laps in 2h46m44s; 2 Martin Truex Jr (Toyota), +0.700s; 3 Jimmie Johnson (Chevrolet Impala); 4 Matt Kenseth (Ford Fusion); 5 Greg Biffle (Ford); 6 Kevin Harvick (Chevy); 7 Dale Earnhardt Jr (Chevy); 8 Kasey Kahne (Chevy); 9 Carl Edwards (Ford); 10 Kyle Busch (Toyota). **Points** 1 Biffle, 312; 2 Truex, 297; 3 Kenseth, 295; 4 Earnhardt, 291; 5 Hamlin, 289; 6 Harvick, 287; 7 Johnson, 275; 8 Tony Stewart, 265; 9 Edwards, 251; 10 Ryan Newman, 249.

IN BRIEF



Buescher leads Keselowski

NASCAR TRUCKS

James Buescher (Turner Chevy) took his maiden win in Kansas, beating points leader Timothy Peters and Brad Keselowski.

NZ V8 TOURING CARS

Jason Bargwanna claimed the Jason Richards Memorial Trophy as New Zealand's indigenous tin-tops supported the Aussie headlines at Hamilton. 'Bargs' won twice, while Andrew Anderson took the other race.

SUPER TC2000

Toyota's Mariano Werner won at a wet Rosario from Nestor Girolami's Peugeot and Matias Rossi's Toyota to increase his series lead in Argentina.

ERC

Giandomenico Basso took the first win for a Ford Fiesta RRC on the Mille Miglia Rally. Peugeot's Paolo Andreucci was second with Juhro Hanninen (Skoda) third.

SUPERSTARS GT SPRINT

Andrea Palma won both races at Imola in his Black Team Ferrari. Mario Cordini (Ombra Ferrari) and Lorenzo Bontempelli (Kessel Ferrari) each had a second.



Palma did the double

V8 SUPERCARS HAMILTON (NZ), APRIL 21-22, RD 3/15

Ford Performance brings Hamilton wins

THE TOP STEP OF THE 2012 V8 Supercars podium remains the domain of Ford Performance Racing and Triple Eight after last weekend's Hamilton round. FPR's Will Davison and Mark Winterbottom shared the wins, while reigning champion Jamie Whincup took two second places. Davison won the opening race from pole, aided by Whincup stalling during a

pitstop, while Winterbottom was the class of the field in race two, just holding out Whincup with Holden Racing Team's Garth Tander third. There was plenty of incident; Winterbottom suffered a bent steering arm on Saturday and Shane van Gisbergen (Stone Brothers Ford) a broken splitter. Several drivers were penalised for kerb hopping at the double chicane, the

worst affected being Alexandre Premat, who had four drivethroughs for 24 infringements. James Courtney copped a post-race penalty, dropping him outside the top 20. ● Phil Branagan

RESULTS
Race 1 1 Will Davison (Ford Falcon FG), 59 laps in 1h28m43.769s; 2 Jamie

Whincup (Holden Commodore VEII), +2.528s; 3 Garth Tander (Holden); 4 Craig Lowndes (Holden); 5 Rick Kelly (Holden); 6 Steve Owen (Ford). **Race 2 1 Mark Winterbottom (Ford)**, 59 laps in 1h26m13.990s; 2 Whincup, +0.725s; 3 Davison; 4 Lowndes; 5 Fabian Coulthard (Holden); 6 Lee Holdsworth (Ford). **Points** 1 Davison, 846; 2 Whincup, 825; 3 Winterbottom, 657; 4 Lowndes, 557; 5 Holdsworth, 555; 6 Shane van Gisbergen, 549.



Winterbottom (1) takes race two lead



CURRENT STANDINGS

- 1 Sebastian Vettel <> 29,045
- 2 Mark Webber <> 21,225
- 3 Jenson Button <> 19,708
- 4 Lewis Hamilton <> 19,465
- 5 Fernando Alonso <> 18,660

Ranking the world's best drivers.....

WHAT HAPPENED THIS WEEK

Denny Hamlin and Martin Truex Jr both gain ground after finishing first and second in Kansas. Hamlin rises three spots to 20th, while Truex climbs four places to an all-time high of 30th. Jimmie Johnson, however, slips three spots to 15th, despite finishing third.

To see the full list, visit castrolriverrankings.com

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at Silverstone



Mercedes-Benz



Challenge



Ivan Bellarosa from the SPEED EuroSeries and former Italian F3 racer remains at the top of the Challenge standings. However one slip up at the next round could cost him dearly.

Driver standings – average per race*

1	Ivan Bellarosa	Avelon SPEED	140.00
2	Darren Burke	Team Excool SPEED	85.00
3	Duncan Williams	Team Excool SPEED	85.00
4	Rowland Kinch	G-Cat Racing SPEED	60.00
5	Guglielmo Belotti	Avelon SPEED	60.00

Sunoco Daytona Challenge

Chaotic weather proved to be a big feature this weekend. The Britcar Endurance race at Donington was affected by changeable weather throughout but the Optimum Motorsport strategy helped to hand George Murrels and Lee Mowle top points towards the Sunoco Daytona Challenge. Ivan Bellarosa from the SPEED EuroSeries still leads but unless he has another perfect weekend this could be all change very shortly!



Next race:

**SPEED EuroSeries, Spa,
May 5th/6th**



Former BTCC driver Mike Jordan leads the Challenge however after great race weekends Gary Duckman and Lawrence Davey are on the charge. Sunoco driver of the day from

Britcar this weekend, Harry Cockill, is now in fourth place climbing fast.

Driver standings – average per race*

1	Mike Jordan	Britcar Production	112.00
2	Gary Duckman	Dunlop PTC	107.80
3	Lawrence Davey	Legends	104.17
4	Harry Cockill	Britcar Production	98.00
5	Craig Davies	Britcar Production	97.50

Sunoco Grand-Am Challenge

A perfect weekend for Gary Duckman in the Dunlop Production Touring Cars saw him shoot up the Sunoco GRAND-AM 200 Challenge standings by a massive 21 positions – going from 23rd to 2nd! Legends racers also got their first chance to score points this weekend in their opening round at Brands Hatch. Laurence Davey in Legends was on top form and established himself as a real contender for the prize drive going straight into third place in the overall standings.



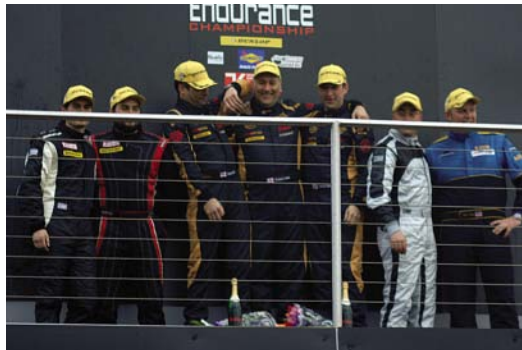
Next race:

**GT Cup/F3 Cup, Donington Park,
28th/29th April**

* points correct at time of print

update

e



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INTERNATIONAL SUPERSTARS SERIES IMOLA (I), APRIL 22, RD 2/9

Kristoffersson triumphs over aggressive Morbidelli



The rookie Swede took a double win

TWO WINS AND A POLE position may make it sound like Johan Kristoffersson had a straightforward weekend at Imola, but in reality it was anything but. While the series rookie came away with maximum points, taking his first two Superstars wins along the

way, both races were close. In the first outing, Swede Kristoffersson and Audi Sport Italia team-mate Gianni Morbidelli found themselves in a physical scrap for the lead lasting the second half of the race. With Kristoffersson's RS5 already missing its rear

bumper thanks to contact from Morbidelli, the battle between the two came to a head in the final corners when the F1 veteran tried to force his way into the lead. Light contact was enough to rupture an oil line on Morbidelli's car, sparking a spectacular engine fire that

left Kristoffersson free to take his first win. Andrea Larini (Romeo Ferraris Mercedes) and local hero Thomas Biagi (Dinamic BMW) benefited to take second and third spots respectively.

Kristoffersson was again the pacesetter in race two, and with five minutes left it seemed like his second win would be little more than a formality. That was until an oil leak developed with just a lap and a half left, and smoke billowed from the back of the Audi. Kristoffersson elected to stay on track, surviving to take the win from Biagi and poleman Andrea Boffo's Roma Mercedes.

"It was just a fantastic weekend," the winner said. "The problem in the second race looked worse than it was because the oil is on the exhaust. But it was very

nice to get to the finish." For Vitantonio Liuzzi it was an up and down weekend. Laden with success ballast after his Monza win, he took sixth in the CAAL Racing Mercedes in race one, but retired with a gearbox problem later on. ● Andrew van Leeuwen

RESULTS
Race 1 Johan Kristoffersson (Audi RS5), 15 laps in 27m39.500s; 2 Andrea Larini (Mercedes C63 AMG), +8.039s; 3 Thomas Biagi (BMW M3); 4 Francesco Sini (Chevrolet Lumina); 5 Christian Fittipaldi (Maserati Quattroporte) 6 Vitantonio Liuzzi (Mercedes).
Race 2 Kristoffersson, 15 laps in 28m01.915s; 2 Biagi, +3.317s; 3 Andrea Boffo (Mercedes); 4 Fittipaldi; 5 Thomas Schoffler (Audi); 6 Stefano Gabellini (BMW).
Points 1 Kristoffersson, 53; 2 Biagi, 51; 3= Max Pigoli, Liuzzi & Larini, 42; 6 Sini, 27.

FIA EUROPEAN GT3 CHAMPIONSHIP ZOLDER (B), APRIL 21-22, RD 2/6

Ferrari men win both from behind

AF CORSE FERRARI DUO Giuseppe Ciro and Gaetano Ardagna Perez won twice at Zolder. The 11-car entry was modest, but the racing was thrilling, courtesy of changeable conditions. Ciro came from almost a minute behind on slick tyres to overhaul Rhino's Leipert Lamborghini driver David Mengesdorf – on wets – with five minutes left to win race one. Michael Lyons (AF Corse Ferrari), also on wets, had been caught and passed by Mengesdorf earlier in the stint, but came back at him and finished only 0.3s behind. The pattern was repeated in race two. Dino Lunardi led the opening stint in the best of the Santeloc Audis, only for

Jerome Demay to be sent back out on wets. Ardagna Perez was 26s behind after the stops, but closed the deficit in just three laps on the way to a 12s victory as Demay fell to sixth. ● Gary Watkins

RESULTS
Race 1 Gaetano Ardagna Perez/Giuseppe Ciro (Ferrari 458 Italia), 35 laps in 1h01m11.441s; 2 Hari Proczyk/David Mengesdorf (Lamborghini Gallardo), +12.387s; 3 Stefano Gai/Michael Lyons (Ferrari);

4 Mika Vahamaki/Max Nilsson (Mercedes AMG SLS); 5 Dominik Baumann/Maximilian Buhk (Mercedes) 6 Ni Amorim/Cesar Campanico (Audi R8 LMS).
Race 2 Perez/Ciro, 35 laps in 1h01m19.030s; 2 Proczyk/Mengesdorf, +12.909s; 3 Baumann/Buhk; 4 Vyacheslav Maleev/Kirill Ladygin (Ferrari); 5 Gai/Lyons; 6 Jerome Demay/Dino Lunardi (Audi). **Points** 1 Ciro/Perez, 69; 2 Baumann/Buhk, 65; 3 Gai/Lyons, 58; 4 Gregory Guilvert/Marc Sourd, 44; 5 Mengesdorf/Proczyk, 36; 6 Nilsson/Vahamaki, 32.



Perez and Ciro (r) did Zolder double

FERRARI CHALLENGE IMOLA (I), APRIL 21-22, RD 2/8

Balzan and Cadei split the wins at sunny Imola



Balzan won race one

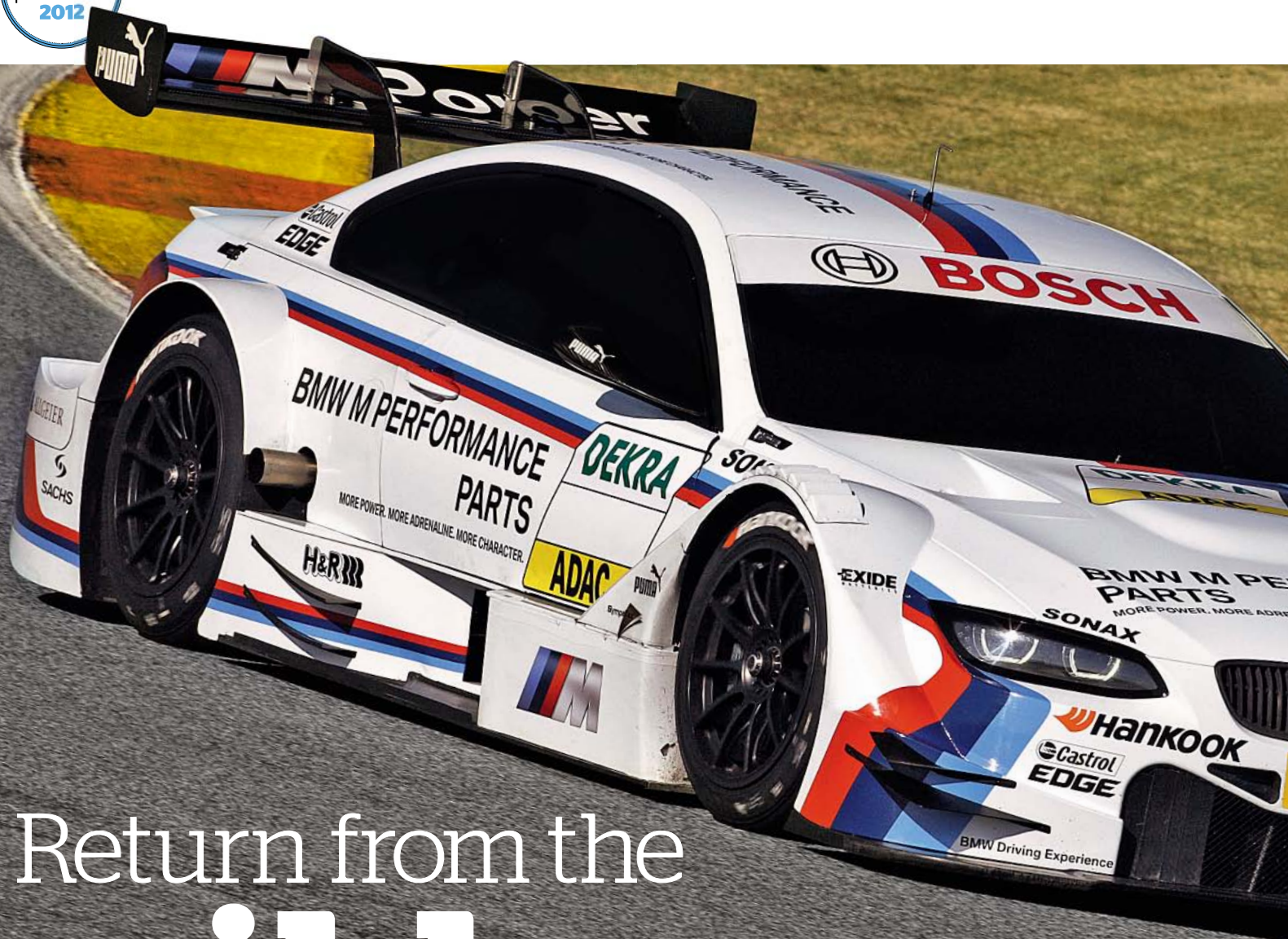
But Cadei fought back in race two, finally taking his first win of 2012 after four straight front-row starts. Balzan finished second, while Ferrari Ukraina's Andrii Kruglyk held off Grossmann for third.

ALESSANDRO BALZAN AND Niki Cadei shared the spoils at Imola last weekend. Balzan began the meeting well, the Ferrari Moscow man easily gapping the field to take pole position for both races in the two qualifying sessions.

The Italian carried that pace over into race one, leading for the entire 17 laps to record a comfortable win from Cadei (Motor/Piacenza) and round one winner Bjorn Grossmann (Ferrari Moscow).

In the Coppa Shell, Daniele di Amato and Raffaele Giannoni split the wins. ● Andrew van Leeuwen

RESULTS
Race 1 Alessandro Balzan, 17 laps in 30m20.281s; 2 Niki Cadei, +1.419s; 3 Bjorn Grossman; 4 Lorenzo Case; 5 Max Blancardi; 6 Alexandr Skryabin. **Race 2** Cadei, 17 laps in 30m27.725s; 2 Balzan, +9.246s; 3 Andrii Kruglyk; 4 Grossman; 5 Skryabin; 6 Dario Caso. **Points** 1= Grossman & Cadei, 67; 3 Balzan, 39; 4 Kruglyk, 35; 5 Skryabin, 34; 6 Stefano Gai, 24.



Return from the wilderness

After two decades away, BMW is returning to the DTM to take on Audi and Mercedes. *By JAMIE O'LEARY*

It's hard to believe that almost 20 years have elapsed since BMW last raced in the DTM, and memories of Roberto Ravaglia's double victory in the E30-style M3 at Hockenheim on October 11, 1992 linger strong in the minds of those who still work for the Munich manufacturer two decades on.

Now, however, BMW is back. And it means business too, as is obvious from the sheer level of resources that have been put into the design, build and testing programmes of the all-new M3 DTM over the past 24 months.

It's not just the car either, for alongside the long-expected movements of three-time World Touring Car title winner Andy Priaulx and Augusto Farfus from its GT project to the DTM, BMW has acquired the signatures of reigning champion Martin Tomczyk (a shock

and regular front-runner Bruno Spengler (less of a shock) from rivals Audi and Mercedes to front a six-car line-up.

As motorsport director Jens Marquardt explains, the championship's all-new technical regulations for this year, aimed at improving driver safety and cutting costs by way of over 50 spec parts, including the chassis and ECU, meant it was a case of "now or never" for BMW to return.

"Entering with the old regulations would not have been an option," says Marquardt, who took over his role in 2011 from Mario Theissen – the man who signed BMW's return deal.

"It was a decision at board level when we left Formula 1 [at the end of '09] that we needed to focus on a new strategy, one that strengthened our commitment to close-to-production racing. The DTM, with its premium surroundings



"We're the rookies with the lofty ambitions"

BMW motorsport director Jens Marquardt

BMW DTM CHAMPIONS

Volker Strycek
(1984)

Eric van de Poele
(1987)

Roberto Ravaglia
(1989)

and direct brand competitors, is the ideal place. Plus there is international potential, which can be developed."

That last comment is interesting. Seven of the 10 DTM races this year take place in German-speaking countries and the other three are still in Europe. Talks have been ongoing by organising body the ITR with both Grand-Am and Super GT in recent years about standardising the technical rules platform in all three championships in a bid to attract new manufacturers. Nothing has come of



Bruno Spengler moves over from Mercedes



BMW's all-new M3 will join Audi and Mercedes

the campaign, but in a surprise move it has also added start-up team Reinhold Motor Group. That it has placed new recruit Tomczyk and GT convert Joey Hand with RMG shows that there are no worries over its performance initially.

Flying the flag for Britain is Priaulx, who begins his 10th season at BMW with what he describes as his biggest challenge since joining for the European Touring Car Championship in 2003.

"There was pressure then because I knew that if I didn't have a strong year, then I could be out of a job," he says. "But now it's a different kind of pressure. You know how much has been invested in this programme and how high the level of competition is; higher than what I've done before. And you also know that if Martin and Bruno are fighting for wins, and you're not, then people are going to start asking, 'Why not?'"

Now, as then, Priaulx is driving for RBM, with his GT and WTCC team-mate Farfus partnering him. Having team familiarity will help him with the crossover into a series that he himself rates as "an altogether higher level", compared with his recent exploits in the Intercontinental Le Mans Cup and S2000 tin-tops.

So what about expectations, then? Earlier this month head of Audi Sport Wolfgang Ullrich said that he expects "to meet with a strong rival from Hockenheim onwards".

While Marquardt is predictably playing up to the expectation that a 'rookie' can't set the pace from the off, you get the feeling he'd love to prove his opposite number 100 per cent correct.

"It won't be a failure if we don't win a race this year," says Marquardt. "The difference between winning and losing can be down to something incredibly small. So as long as we push ourselves to the limit of our abilities, we'll be happy with that."

"We just want to be competitive as quickly as possible, so we don't want to make any predictions before Hockenheim. Clearly the other two [Audi and Mercedes] are the favourites and we, well, we're the rookies, but the rookies with the lofty ambitions." ❧

BMW'S SUPER SIX

TEAM RMG

1. MARTIN TOMCZYK (D)
2. JOEY HAND (USA)



Reinhold Motor Group was only established last year and eyebrows were raised when BMW announced that it was entrusting a pair of M3 DTMs to a start-up squad. But a team littered with ex-BMW Sauber F1 personnel (boss Stefan Reinhold himself has F1 experience) should bring experience of quick pitstops, something that will give new recruit Martin Tomczyk – last year's DTM champion for Audi – and GT convert Joey Hand a good platform to build on.



SCHNITZER MOTORSPORT

7. BRUNO SPENGLER (CDN)
8. DIRK WERNER (D)



The BMW touring car team of the past 40 years incredibly won the DTM title in its first year in the series as Roberto Ravaglia took the 1989 crown. After a multitude of tin-top titles since then, it returns to the series after two years running BMW's GT programme. Mercedes hotshot Bruno Spengler should be the benchmark, but Dirk Werner is handy too and has been used more than anyone else in testing.



RBM

15. ANDY PRIAULX (GB)
16. AUGUSTO FARFUS (BR)



Bart Mampaey's team established itself as a heavyweight in European Touring Cars when Andy Priaulx won the 2004 title without a team-mate. Things got even better as the Brit then clinched the next three World Championships as well. Now, the Belgian squad brings Priaulx into the DTM, as well as his long-time WTCC and GT team-mate Augusto Farfus. A lack of series experience on the driving front may be a concern, but both have proved they can learn quickly and deliver consistent wins.



those talks yet, leaving the marketplace still potentially limited.

But with BMW's level of financial commitment to Prodrive's Mini WRC effort being a key factor in the scaling-back of the relationship between the two earlier this year, and the marque also turning down the chance to compete in the World Endurance Championship and its centrepiece, the Le Mans 24 Hours (as a factory entrant), it's clear how much is being invested in the DTM.

Indeed, Marquardt agrees that this is the company's number-one motorsport programme for the next couple of years at least, and it's utilised the expertise of plenty of ex-BMW Sauber F1 staffers (Marquardt himself worked in F1 for Ilmor and Toyota) along the way.

Predictably, BMW has chosen two of its most established partner squads – Schnitzer and RBM – to spearhead

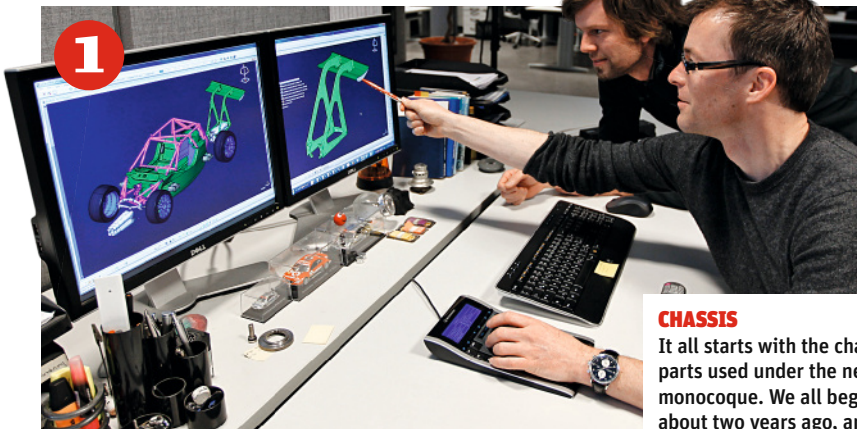
SPECIAL BMW MOTORSPORT 'ZOOM IN' THIS WEEK ON
AUTOSPORT.COM PLUS



British BMW hopes rest with Andy Priaulx

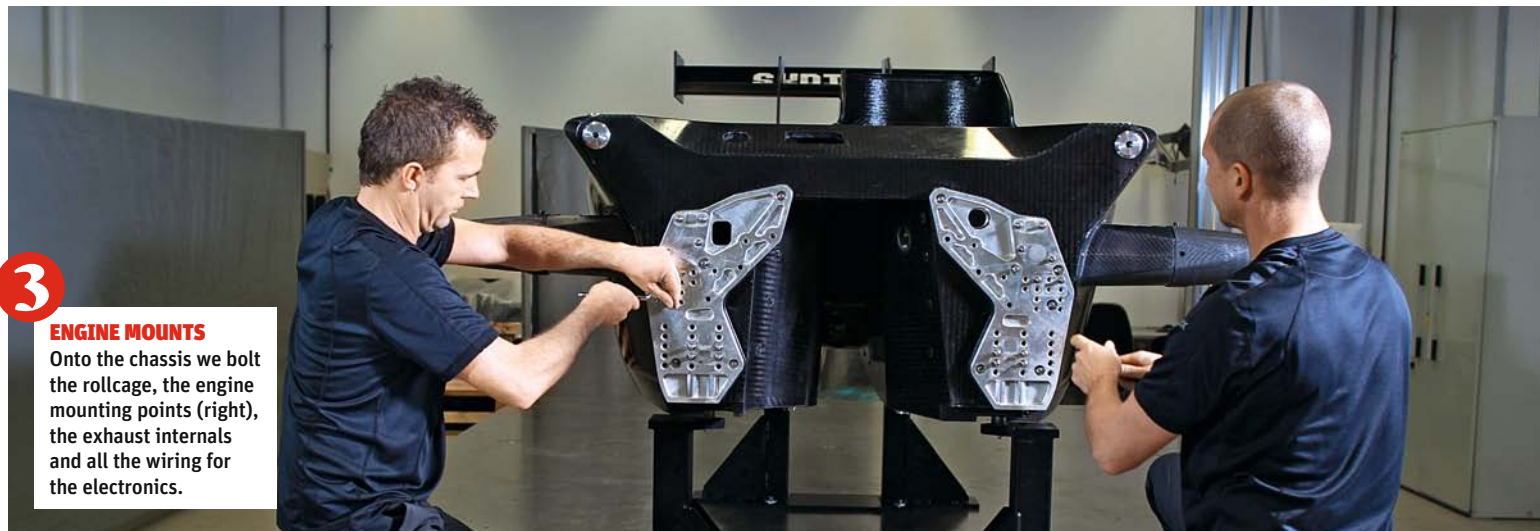
BUILDING MERC'S **NEW** DTM RACER

There's a radical DTM rules revamp for 2012, with driver safety and a cost reduction the prime aims. *GERHARD UNGAR*, managing director of Mercedes' HWA squad, guides you through how the C-coupe gets from screen to racetrack



1 CHASSIS

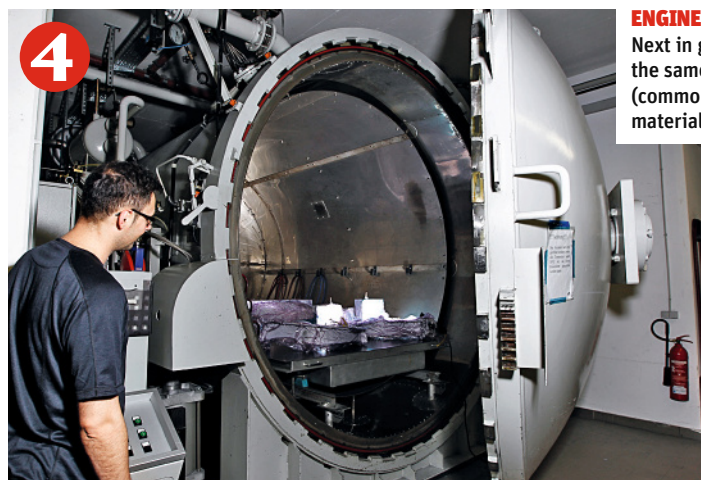
It all starts with the chassis, which is one of 57 common parts used under the new rules. It's a carbonfibre monocoque. We all began a joint design programme about two years ago, and it's been built by GERG Gruppe.



3

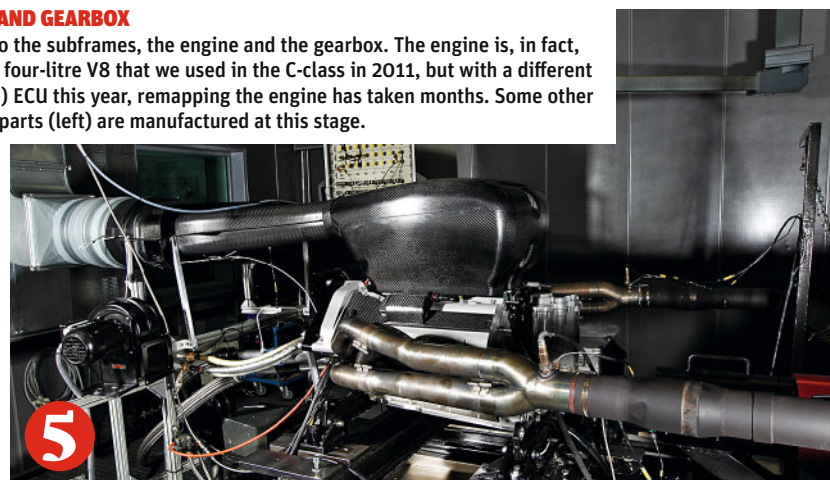
ENGINE MOUNTS

Onto the chassis we bolt the rollcage, the engine mounting points (right), the exhaust internals and all the wiring for the electronics.



4 ENGINE AND GEARBOX

Next in go the subframes, the engine and the gearbox. The engine is, in fact, the same four-litre V8 that we used in the C-class in 2011, but with a different (common) ECU this year, remapping the engine has taken months. Some other material parts (left) are manufactured at this stage.



5

6

STEERING WHEEL AND PADDLESHIFT

Now that we have a paddleshift gearbox – new for this year – there’s more engineering that has to go into the steering wheel. They’re quite complex and are something you can only really perfect in testing.



7

COOLING, WINGS AND BODY

Once the engine is installed, it’s the front-end cooling that takes up most of the next step. After that, it’s just the rear wing, body panels, wheels and tyres.

8

FINISHED CAR GOES TESTING

We had our first roll-out in early September last year and then tested at Lausitz on the 12th and 13th of that month. Since then we’ve done more than 25,000km on track, initially focusing on reliability and adapting the car to the drivers, and then looking for performance.

“In testing we’ve done more than 25,000km on track”

Gerhard Ungar



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PAST FIVE CHAMPIONS

2011	Martin Tomczyk Audi A4
2010	Paul di Resta Mercedes C-class
2009	Timo Scheider Audi A4
2008	Timo Scheider Audi A4
2007	Mattias Ekstrom Audi A4



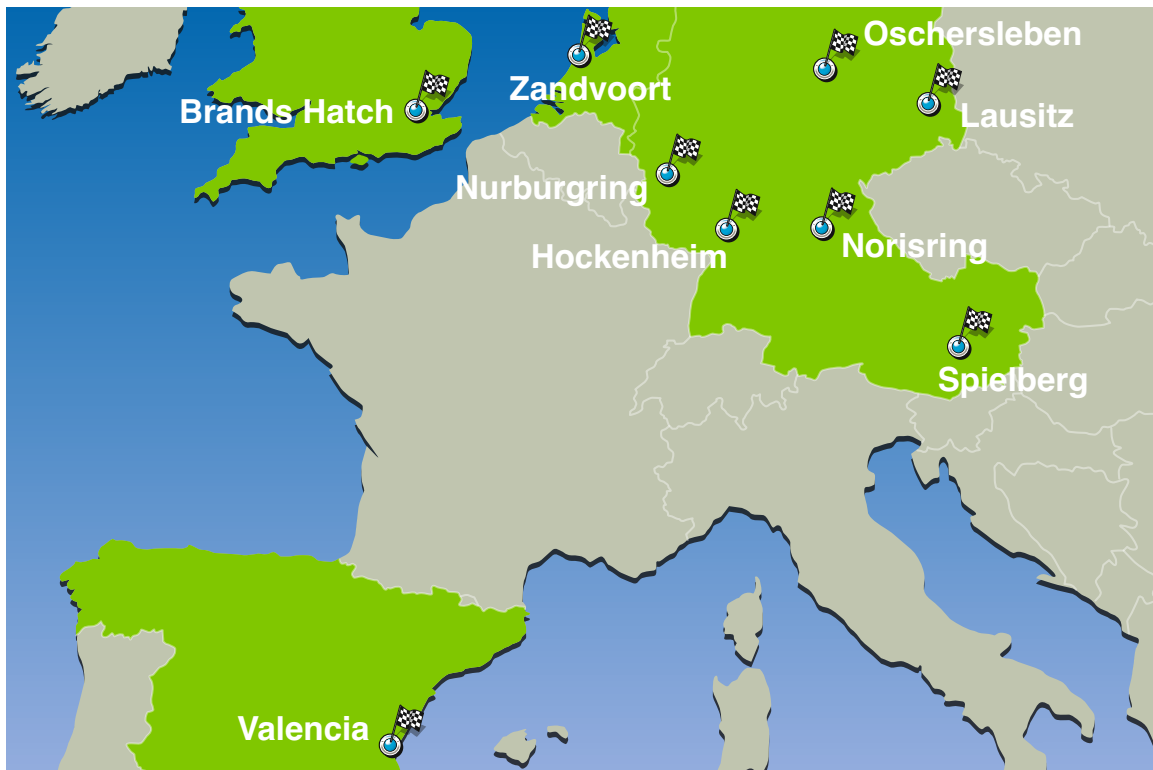
Wickens joins Mücke

BMW brings Farfus to DTM



WHERE TO WATCH ON TV

ESPN will show live or delayed coverage of every race. Highlights on ITV4 the following weekend.



DTM 2012 CALENDAR

April 29	Hockenheim, Germany
May 6	Lausitz, Germany
May 20	Brands Hatch, Great Britain
June 3	Spielberg, Austria
July 1	Norisring, Germany
August 19	Nurburgring, Germany
August 26	Zandvoort, Netherlands
September 16	Oschersleben, Germany
September 30	Valencia, Spain
October 21	Hockenheim, Germany

**A non-championship 'Show' event takes place at Munich's Olympic Stadium on July 15*

OTHERS TO WATCH



Gary Paffett (HWA Mercedes C-coupe)

The 2005 champion had an awful 2011 that failed to yield a podium; typified by a steering failure that put him in the Norisring wall when on course for second. Will be a title contender if his Mercedes is up to it.



Jamie Green (HWA Mercedes C-coupe)

With Spengler gone, the battle is on between the Brits to head the Merc charge. Green got the better of Paffett last year, but needs to make better starts if his excellent qualifying pace is to count for something.



Mattias Ekstrom (Abt Sportsline Audi A5)

The Swede has two titles to his name and was the form driver during the second half of 2011, collecting three wins on his way to the runner-up spot. If he is not Audi's main title protagonist, then it will be a surprise.



Edoardo Mortara (Team Rosberg Audi A5)

Last year's star rookie looks like returning Italy to the limelight for the first time since the glory days of the Larini/Nannini Alfa Romeos 155s. Much will depend on how Audi chooses to focus its considerable resources.



Roberto Merhi (Persson Motorsport Mercedes C-coupe)

Reigning F3 Euro Series champion turned down a GP2 drive to join Mercedes, and has shown devastating speed in single-seaters. May need to tone down his startline aggression though – DTM drivers don't get intimidated.

Paffett: time for title number two



Rockenfeller takes Tomczyk's old seat

KESELOWSKI THE MAKING OF A NASCAR SUPERSTAR

NASCAR's top racers earn tens of millions of dollars per year, but what does it take to get into that upper echelon? 'Kes' tells *ANDREW VAN DE BURGT* his six-step guide

As Kurt Busch was effing and blinding his way out of a seat with Penske's NASCAR Sprint Cup team, his junior team-mate Brad Keselowski was letting his driving do the talking. Six top-three finishes over the second half of the 2011 season gave team boss Roger Penske the confidence to make the 28-year-old his team leader for 2012.

In years to come the straight-talking Michigan-born racer's career will make a great movie — from the stresses of establishing himself to riding high in the 2012 points with 'The Blue Deuce'. But for now, in his own words, here are the key moments in the making of the driver who carries the hopes of 'The Captain' in his quest for the Cup.

1 The birthday bash

For his 22nd birthday Keselowski was given a Robert Yates Ford engine by his parents. He hoped it would be the ticket to Truck success at the biggest race of the year, the 2006 season opener at Daytona...

"My family had spent every last dime and then some. If we ran well enough, we could pay the bills and maybe go to the next week's race, which was at that time in California.

"Come race time I was so nervous — we had a sponsor that we'd picked up and you could just see it in the guy's eyes that we needed to run good for him to want to do anything more. I knew it was going to be a wreckfest so I rode a little bit in the back, trying to save my equipment and they wrecked in front of me and destroyed the Truck. That moment was the most pressure I've ever felt in my life, because I knew we didn't have the money to pay the bills.

"My idea was to sell the owners points that I had accrued the previous year — at that time those were probably worth about 200 grand... Then NASCAR told me we couldn't sell them until after California. We didn't have a truck, so we scraped something together that somebody had laying in a corner. We stopped halfway there in a truck stop in Tennessee and met a guy who had an engine. When I look back on it, it makes a lot of what I go through today seem like nothing at all."

2 A spot of luck

With no money to go racing, Keselowski tried to keep close to the sport by working as a spotter. It ended up giving him a way back in...

"I was spotting for this girl by the name of Kelly Sutton. She wasn't the most talented driver, I'm not going to lie about that, but I was able to help her as much as I could, so we got along well.

"But when she was wrecked at this race in Kansas that scared the shit out of her. It was a really bad accident but she had a sponsor and they had to run all the races. So they said, 'Oh it's a natural fit, why don't you drive the truck' and I got in their truck and it was fast! I got to run the next week in Memphis and it was even faster there. I'd never been in fast equipment before — my own family's equipment admittedly was backmarker stuff. I didn't know that at the time as a driver. I always placed it on myself for not being more successful."



When Kelly Sutton did this, BK got second chance

3 Friends in high places

When Dale Earnhardt Jr ran out of patience with Nationwide driver Shane Huffman, Keselowski got his big break, and some sage advice.

"I got a call from Dale Jr to drive his Nationwide car. He said to me some cryptic words... 'Don't fucking wreck it!' So I went to Chicago to run his car and he signed me up for a three-race deal. That race set a record that still holds to this day of most amount of Cup driver entries [in a Nationwide race]. 'Go on Brad, run around and don't wreck! We're going to push you against the best Nationwide field ever!' That was a career-defining moment.

"From there I had a steady rise over the next year, until the fall of 2008. Rick



High fives before the Daytona 500

Hendrick called me; he'd partnered with Dale Jr on the Nationwide team and he said, 'Hey, I think you're doing really good in that Nationwide car, I'd like you to drive my Cup car. Before I come over, we're going to put Mark Martin in this car and see how things go'"

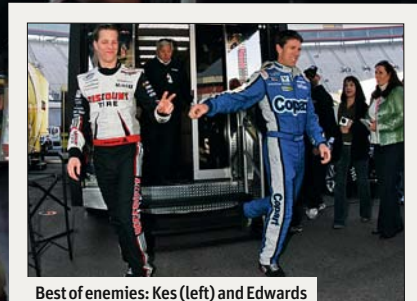


Dale Earnhardt Jr (left) played huge role





Keselowski's first 2012 win at Bristol



Best of enemies: Kes (left) and Edwards

4 A "Marked" man Told by JR Motorsport that he'd be sacked if he wrecked more than two cars in a year, Keselowski was given a painful lesson at Las Vegas.

"Somehow, I fell ass backwards into leading with 13 laps to go. At the restart, Mark Martin behind me was way faster, and Carl Edwards behind him was only a little bit faster. I left them a lane to run around me and they wrecked me. So that relationship with Mark got off to not a great start.

"Come 2009, Mark wins at Phoenix [in the Sprint Cup] and I knew what that meant – I wasn't going to get that Hendrick ride. I knew Mark's character, he was going to go back on his deal and decide to stay [rather than retire]."

5 The school of hard knocks With a frontrunning Nationwide car and at a Memphis track he knew well, Keselowski was again set to record a breakthrough result when Edwards came calling again...

"I set the track record, fastest qualifying time by a lot and then the race came along. I led the majority of it and with a few to go started to fade and the second-place guy [Edwards] caught me and ran me over and wrecked me.

"While that was going along, a lot of people looked at me to expect me to be very upset. But I wasn't, because I was thinking to myself that I was lucky to finally drive something competitive and be able to take advantage of it." ▶

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6 Talladega frights

For 2009, NASCAR's new Cup car changed the nature of superspeedway racing, with two-car 'tandems' the fastest way to race. Keselowski hooked up with old sparring partner Carl Edwards for one night in Alabama...

"We have a restart with about four or five to go and I pull up Casey Mears, I start to execute this move with him and this guy chickens out, pulls up to the side. That was my move! So I catch up to Carl Edwards and I think, 'I'll pick him'. Now, this is a point that could be interpreted in many different ways. When I found Carl and started to execute this move, I felt like it was my move. Does this make sense? I'd done the research about how to do it and he was certainly a part of making the plan work, but certainly wasn't like it was

his idea. I found him and started pushing him and he just held out. So I felt mildly responsible for the success because we were running 13th or 14th.

"The race came down to the last lap and I knew I was in the pound seat because of the way the sidedraft works – the guy in second place can just time the sidedraft. I knew Carl's personality well enough to know that he was going to block me. I decided to go high first, kind of like in football when you do a dummy, so that he would go up and I'd sneak underneath. So I got underneath him in an established position and I saw him turn down and at that point there was a culmination of thoughts in my mind. You talk about pressure, but this was my moment to win a race. I've executed this move that nobody else has done before, found my way to the front, and I'm in a position to

capitalise on it. Knowing how those moments stacked up earlier in my career here's my opportunity. This is my moment and I can see him turn down and I know exactly what he's doing – he's going to block me.

"I had to make a split-second decision and I said to myself, 'Fuck you. I've carried your ass from 13th to what is going to be a second-place day, I'm giving you the opportunity to block me once, which he did, without wrecking you! I thought that would be low. Those guys were trying to push me out of the sport and not allow me to have a seat at the table.

"That was a point pressure, to me that was the biggest career-defining moment I will probably ever have. That is an example of your life experiences and it can all add up into one powerful moment that defines who you are." ❧

Talladega '09: Contact as Edwards blocks Keselowski



Edwards flips and also hits Newman (39)

Newman hits wall as Edwards heads for the fencing



PICS: MARKLAND/GETTY



Earnhardt (88) sails past the wrecked cars, while Keselowski has already escaped to take first Sprint Cup win



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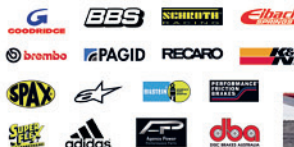


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Sports Extra

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

JMH Nissan to GT Cup

Hetherington brothers to race GT3 car at selected 2012 events



Nissan managed two top-10 finishes in British GT opener

BRITISH GT OUTFIT JMH Automotive will return to the GT Cup for this weekend's season opener at Donington Park with its new Nissan GT-R GT3 racer.

Former Porsche Carrera Cup GB scholar Benji Hetherington and his brother Freddie plan to contest selected rounds of the GT Cup this season, alongside their British GT programme with the Nissan.

The pair recorded two top-10 finishes in the British GT opener at Oulton Park earlier this month and will use this weekend's Donington outing to put more miles on the car ahead of British GT's

visit to the Nurburgring next month.

Freddie Hetherington said: "The aim this weekend is to learn more about the new car. We have benchmark lap times and hopefully we will be able to challenge for some race wins.

"The GT Cup is a great championship. The variety of cars is probably one of the best in the UK. Any championship with such a diverse grid is always going to be a challenge to race in."

Nissan will be one of 10 marques represented on this weekend's Donington grid, after the GT Cup opened up its rules to allow current GT3 cars over the winter. Reigning British GT champion Jim

Geddie is expected to debut his new McLaren MP4-12C, while series regular Mike Saunders will drive an upgraded 'GT3' version of his TVR Cerbera GT in the top class of the championship.

Series boss Marc Haynes is not concerned the arrival of newer cars and more experienced drivers will scare series regulars away from the grid.

Haynes said: "JMH, Jim Geddie and the Hetheringtons have been involved with the GT Cup on a long standing basis. Jim won our first-ever race in 2007 and JMH ran Andy Ruhan's championship-winning car last season. We are delighted to welcome JMH back to the GT Cup – the Hetherington's are clearly quick drivers and the Nissan is a very exciting car to have on the grid.

"We are open to all entries where the driver is unpaid and considers themselves to be a sportsman driver. The MSA has required that we do not accept National B license holders since becoming a championship, so all of our drivers are experienced – the key is that they are racing for sport.

"The sharp end of our grid has always been very competitive but is still obtainable by someone pursuing their racing as a leisure activity. We are aiming for 20 cars on the grid for this weekend, 25 for Silverstone [on May 12] and looking towards 30 for mid-season."

Updated TVR Cerbera will take on Nissan and McLaren



PICS: EBREY/LAT

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

BEN ANDERSON
NATIONAL EDITOR

ben.anderson@haymarket.com



THERE'S BEEN A LOT OF TALK

about the parlous state of certain parts of UK motorsport recently, but look deeper and you will see many branches of the sport are thriving.

Historic motorsport is often labelled 'recession proof' so it's no real surprise to find the HSCC and VSCC once again filling grids, but that's not to disparage two excellent organisers who managed to attract scores of cars to Cadwell Park and Silverstone respectively last weekend.

Elsewhere, club racing is still going strong despite the world staggering in and out of recession. The Project 8 Racing Saloons and Production BMWs combined to produce a monster 58-car field for MSVR's F2 support races on the Silverstone GP circuit recently.

The Classic Sports Club has got some massive grids at the moment too – Bernie Chodosh's new HVRA V8 initiative bought 27 cars to a Snetterton paddock that already included Future Classics (38), Magnificent Sevens (40) and Swinging Sixties (45). Fun Cup and the BRSCC's Ma5da MX5s are as strong as ever, while the 750 Motor Club will ape Ma5da's group racing format for Locost, which has swelled to 43 cars for Brands this weekend.

It's not all a bed of roses, but even fledgling series such as the Smart 4two Cup and BMW Compact Cup are proving it's possible to grow in a tough economic climate.

Extra contact details

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Formula Renault NEC

Dennis wins on NEC debut

Former world karting champ takes Formula Renault points lead in Germany

Dennis (left) was straight on the pace

REIGNING INTERSTEPS champion Jake Dennis leads the Formula Renault North European Cup standings after scoring a win and two further podiums on his series debut at Hockenheim last weekend.

The Racing Steps Foundation-backed 16-year-old joined the series with Fortec Motorsports team-mates Josh Hill, Dan de Zille and Shahaan Engineer, after FR UK was cancelled on the eve of the 2012 season.

Dennis was disappointed to qualify ninth for the first race in Germany, but climbed to third in a safety-car-interrupted opener behind winner Stoffel Vandoorne (Josef Kaufmann Racing) and Formula Renault UK graduate Jordan King (Manor MP Motorsport).

Dennis took a clear victory in race two after jumping poleman Vandoorne at the first corner. Belgian Vandoorne, who was fifth in last year's Eurocup, was 19th after a spin. Andrea

Pizzitola was second, ahead of Hill.

Dennis went on to claim an early lead in the title race by finishing second to Vandoorne in a rain-interrupted finale.

Two further fifth-place finishes were enough for King to leave Germany fourth in the standings, while ex-British Formula Ford Championship race winner Jeroen Slaghekke took a best of sixth in race one with Van Amersfoort Racing.

Contact in race one and a technical

problem before the restart in race three meant Hill's podium in race two was his best result of the weekend, while Fortec team-mate Engineer qualified third for the second race and recorded two top-10 finishes.

Fortec boss Richard Dutton said: "With 39 entries, the NEC is really tough. You want to be up against the toughest competition and Vandoorne is a great benchmark because everyone knows he's top-three material in the Eurocup."

British Formula Ford

Findlay in line for Sinter race debut

FORMER BRITISH FORMULA FORD frontrunner Garry Findlay could return to the category to give the new Sinter EcoBoost machine its race debut.

Southern International and Fluid Motorsport boss Lindsay Allen, who currently has three EcoBoost Formula Ford Sinters in build, ran Findlay to third in the category in 2009 in a Van Diemen. He hopes to use Findlay and fellow ex-Fluid race winner Jay Bridger to test the Sinter.

"Garry always gives us good feedback and there's a good possibility he'll do a race," said Allen, who is targeting the Brands Hatch DTM round next month for the



New Sinter will soon join rival Mygale on track

car's competition debut.

Allen confirmed that although interest in the car has been strong, he does not want to run the Sinter before it is fully ready. "Brands is the target, but it depends how close we get because we want to test properly," he added. "We've got this far and we're not going to rush it."

"The car's close - 85 per cent of the parts are finished - but we want to hit the ground running."

Monaco Historique

GT race winner tests F1 March

BRITISH GT RACE WINNER

Alasdair McCaig and Ecurie Ecosse BMW Z4 team-mate Joe Twymann gave New Zealander Roger Wills's ex-Chris Amon/Derek Bell March 701-1 and Tyrrell P34 pre-Monaco systems checks during last Friday's HGPCA test day at Silverstone.

Fuel-metering-unit and fuel-pump failures had thwarted the respective cars' shakedown with GP2 racer Brendon Hartley at Pembrey the previous week, but both WDK Motorsport-run machines are now set to go to Monaco's GP Historique next month.

The March - in which Amon finished second in the 1970

Belgian GP, setting a new lap record for the long Spa-Francorchamps circuit - has not raced since the 1971 Argentinian GP.

The late Tom Wheatcroft subsequently hung it on the wall at his Donington Collection.



Ex-Amon March is nearly ready for Monaco

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British Endurance Championship

Toyota ace impresses on British Endurance Championship bow

FORMER TOYOTA MR2 MK1 AND Sports 2000 Pinto race winner David Pittard completed a late deal to race in the second round of the British Endurance Championship at Donington Park last weekend.

Despite no testing before the event, the 20-year-old claimed eighth overall and second in Class 4 in a Strata Motorsport Porsche 996 GT3 shared with Adam Sharpe and Tom Jones.

Pittard, who had not driven since a

Porsche Carrera Cup GB test over the winter, said: "It was awesome to get back into the Porsche again after such a long time out of the seat.

"Once I got comfortable with the car [in qualifying] I managed to put in a time good enough for second in class, just 0.1 seconds off pole. It was a really positive start."

The trio briefly led the class during Sharpe's opening stint, before finishing 34 seconds behind the class-winning Lotus Elise of Steve Guglielmi and Michael Caine.

"When I started my stint it was very wet, so it was a case of keeping calm," added Pittard, who plans to contest the full season. "We had a good race and weren't too far behind. It's a great result to build on."

Pittard went well in Porsche 996



Mazda's challenge to Lotus and Ginetta hits the track

Mark Ticehurst gave Mazda's revised MX5 British GT4 contender a test run at Brands Hatch last week. Now running with a roof, the machine is scheduled to start its 2012 campaign at the Nurburgring round in May.



British Rallycross

Knockhill night event canned

THE SECOND ROUND OF THE British Rallycross Championship at Knockhill will now be run in daylight hours after championship organiser Lydden Hill Motorsport Club was forced to reassess plans for a night race.

Financial concerns are behind the decision to revert to a conventional schedule for the May 12 event.

Clerk of the course Willie Woods said: "We've run the night-race event very successfully at Blyton

over the past two years, but the move to Knockhill involved more equipment because the track is longer. We're faced with taking a £10,000 loss if we press ahead with the night race or breaking even if we run it in daylight.

"To run at Knockhill needs 60 lighting towers [compared to 32 at Blyton]. It has become clear that we cannot secure enough lighting without paying full commercial rates, and that means the event is not viable as a night race."

MARCUS PYE

HUMBLE PYE

The voice of club motor racing

Pye gets away and heads into fierce scrap



The spectacular malaise within British junior single-seater racing struck a chord with many last week, so I'd like to further illustrate it by revisiting the 1982 Dunlop-AUTOSPORT 'Star of Tomorrow' Formula Ford 1600 Championship opener. And pay a 30-year-overdue apology to a legend, now as then.

The event attracted 60 entries, justifying three heats and a final on the brilliant Brands Hatch Grand Prix circuit. Willie Hourie lugged his Crossle 32F 760 miles from the Orkney Isles, and might have won it but for a spin. I was among the combatants, armed with Alan Holloway's spare Van Diemen RF81 and honoured with number 1, as champion Phil Kempe had graduated to Formula 3.

Ronnie Woods (who lost his life in a Modsports Ginetta G15 at Silverstone in 1986) and Ian Blackman of Auriga Racing (killed in a motorcycle accident near Thruxton in 2006), bless them, ran me. I'm still not sure how I bagged pole for heat one, but their smiles were priceless. After typical early scrapes I won it too, wresting the lead from Oulton Park local David Mellor (Crossle 45F) into Paddock Hill Bend on the last lap and j-u-s-t hanging on!

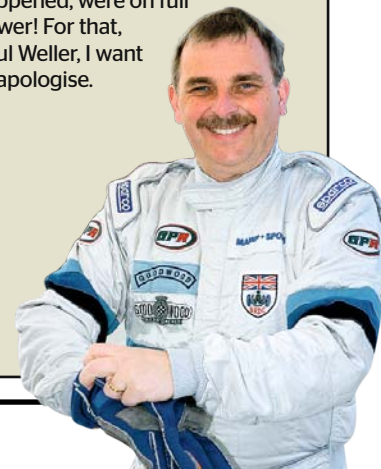
The final was mega, for I slithered off the cambered pole and into a

racelong scrap with future F1 fringer Perry McCarthy (RF81). We were flat-out down Pilgrims Drop, works Auriga and Minister engines courting 7000rpm in unison, when Royale RP26-mounted Steve Kempton (recovering from a half-spin) barrelled past us like we were standing still. Without humouring us by slipstreaming.

Kempton - the single-event 1987 European Cup F3 winner in a Reynard-Alfa Romeo - won from Kevin Haddock (Spartan, built by future F3000 team boss Paul Jackson) and fast-rising Andy Middlehurst (whose FF1600 champion son Chris is now in FRenault BARC). Seven seconds behind Kempton at the chequer, 'Pel' pipped me for fourth by 0.3s.

Elated, for I would not improve on a transitory fifth in a pukka championship (I had no budget to continue), my day was yet young. After a celebratory ale in the Kentagon my brother and I shot south to Brighton where he had tickets for a gig by The Jam. Mentally wrecked, I endured inconsequential female band the Belle Stars but - an 'accolade' I still cannot believe - fell asleep while the legends, in their final year as it happened, were on full power! For that, Paul Weller, I want to apologise.

"I slithered off pole and into a racelong scrap with future F1 fringer Perry McCarthy"



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IN BRIEF

Volvo C30 now racing in Prod Touring Cars



FORMER MINI CHALLENGE RACER

Keith Issatt debuted his ExcelR8-run Volvo C30 in the Production Touring Car Trophy at Donington Park last weekend. His best finish was fourth in the first race. "We had inconsistent power, but the car showed a lot of potential," he said.

McLAREN AUTOSPORT BRDC

Award winner Oliver Rowland set the pace in Formula Renault Eurocup testing at the Motorland Aragon circuit in Spain last week. The 2011 FR UK runner-up lapped just under a tenth faster than Spaniard Alex Riberas.

EX-INTERSTEPS FRONTRUNNER

Patryk Szczerbinski made his Porsche Supercup debut supporting the Bahrain Grand Prix last weekend. The 18-year-old qualified 10th, ahead of series race winner Stefan Rosina and DTM refugee Renger van der Zande, and finished in the top 10 in both races.

THE START OF THE BRITISH

Endurance race at Donington Park was delayed when ex-British GT racer Jamie Smyth put the MAC G Racing Ultima into the wall at Schwantz Curve on the green flag lap. The car was extensively damaged. "We don't know if something broke first, but Jamie seems to think it did," said co-driver Jonathan MacGregor.

HISTORIC SPORTSCAR RACER

Andrew Jackson died from cancer last Friday, aged 55. Buckinghamshire-based Jackson raced a Morgan and ex-Digby Martland Chevron-BMW B6. He also drove the ex-works B26 'Chocolate Drop' in International Supersports events.

CLUBMANS CUP RACE WINNER

Marcus Bicknell will contest this year's Clubmans Proto series in the ex-Adrian Lester Mallock Mk35, now fitted with a 237bhp Honda S2000 engine. His team-mate Steve Everson is building up a Mallock Mk28 for the Proto class, while 22-year-old Jason Money will campaign Bicknell's Mallock Mk26 with a Rover K-series 1600 engine in the Cup class.

Bicknell in Mk35



Monoposto

Spires to Mono with Tatuus

Former Saxmax racer targets dual campaign



Spires was 12th at Silverstone last year

FORMER SAXMAX AND AUTOSPORT

Young Guns frontrunner Anton Spires will dovetail part-seasons in Monoposto and Formula Renault BARC, driving a Tatuus FR2000 in both series.

Spires contested the final round of last year's Formula Renault BARC championship at Silverstone and recorded 12th- and 13th-placed finishes with KG Motorsport, but couldn't raise the budget to graduate full-time in 2012.

The 19-year-old Buckingham racer hopes to secure enough backing to return to FR BARC for the Thruxton, Donington and Silverstone rounds

this year, and will use Monoposto track time to gain more experience and develop the set-up on his car.

Spires believes the mixed programme will give him the maximum amount of racing within his budget.

"We felt it was important to enter as many races [as possible] with the budget raised over the winter," he said. "It's a considerable amount more racing than last year, however a little part of me is disappointed I couldn't be on the Snetterton grid [for the FR BARC opener] or afford the full BARC season."

Spires was due to test at Mallory Park

this week before taking to the grid at Donington Park for the second round of the Monoposto Championship this weekend. He will then race in the third Monoposto round at Silverstone in May, before turning his attention to Formula Renault BARC.

Despite the limited campaign he still believes he can be competitive in both categories. "This year I want to get on the podium in both championships," Spires added. "Obviously I can't win a championship, but race wins and podiums will help our sponsors and prospects for next year."

HGPCA

Ex-Moss Lotus returns to racing



Bond was third in class in Lotus 18

SIR STIRLING MOSS'S 1961 Monaco Grand Prix-winning Lotus 18 raced for the first time since the '60s at Silverstone last Saturday.

New owner Stephen Bond was third in class in a Vintage Sports-Car Club race promoted by the HGPCA, of which Moss is president.

Following a rebuild by Ian Nuthall's IN Racing team, the iconic Lotus - which spent over 40 years in the Wheatcroft family's Donington Collection - will return to Monte Carlo for the ACM's GP Historique in two weeks' time.

Silverstone marked Maserati, Lister-Bristol and Lotus Elan racer Bond's open-wheeled debut.

"What a fabulous experience," he said. "I regret I left it [single-seaters] far too late, but now I'm really looking forward to Monaco and the rest of the season."

Another experienced sportscar man to switch codes at Silverstone, in a Rob Walker Racing car, was Lister-Jaguar racer Chris Lunn, who enjoyed his first HGPCA outing in Maurice Trintignant's '58 Monaco-winning Cooper.

Masters

Cobras clean up at Barcelona

THE AC COBRA'S 50TH BIRTHDAY celebrations kicked off with a 1-2-3 in the Gentlemen Drivers Pre-'66 GT enduro, highlight of the second Masters Catalunya Classic Festival last weekend.

Leo Voyazides and Simon Hadfield topped the podium, from David Hart/Hans Hugenoltz and father and son Andre and Thomas Bailly.

Voyazides drove his Ford Falcon Sprint solo to Pre-'66 Touring Car victory, but shared his Lola T70 Mk3B with Hadfield for World Sportscar glory. Jose Beltramelli (Lotus Cortina) beat Martin Melling/Jason Minshaw (Falcon) to second in the tin-tops. Steve Tandy (T70 Mk3B/C) and Phil Hall (T212) completed a Lola clean sweep in WSM.

Both GP Masters races fell to Joaquin Folch (Brabham BT49C), from Bill Coombs (Tyrrell 009) and Christophe d'Ansembourg (Williams FW07).



Cobras dominated in Spain



HSCC CADWELL PARK, APRIL 21-22

Barters trade the lead as son beats his father



GHASTLY WEATHER made the HSCC’s annual visit to Cadwell Park a challenge for officials and competitors alike, but when the weather Gods permitted there was some fine racing to enjoy.

The 70s Roadsports counters were cases in point, with father-and-son Charles and Julian Barter arguing over the lead.

Having been just a hundredth of a second apart in qualifying, the two disputed top spot in the 20-minute opener. Barter Jr’s TVR 3000M led race-long, despite his father’s efforts to dislodge him with his Datsun 240Z.

As well as Charles’s efforts, Julian had to cope with a misted windscreen – and Sunday’s race was an even tougher task.

Barter Jr led away but dad squeezed past at Park on lap four. From then on the two traded the lead, Park being the place to pass, and the pace of the race upped as the Barter family

slugged it out. Julian was ahead at the flag, Charles pointing out that his son is “no respecter of his elders”.

Jamie Brashaw (March 793) was a double winner in Classic F3, his first coming in appalling weather on Saturday, despite a front tyre that went flat on lap two!

Brashaw fended off Adrian Holeý (Chevron B38) and David Clark (Argo JM6), although Clark nipped up to second approaching the line and Holeý aquaplaned into the barriers as he took the flag.

That put Holeý out of race two, which was held on a damp track that dried over the 15-minute duration. Brashaw started on rain tyres and struggled to make the rubber last, as Hugh Price’s slick-shod Chevron B38 chased him hard. Clark was third, his wet tyres well past their best and affected by a slow puncture.

Dan Cox took two Historic Touring Car

Championship wins, his sideways Lotus Cortina defeating Kiwi Warren Briggs (Ford Mustang) in both races for the big cars. Neil Brown (Lotus Cortina) bagged a brace of thirds.

A great battle in race two between Robyn Slater (Ford Anglia), Richard Dutton (Lotus Cortina) and Jon Wolfe (Ford Falcon) was eventually resolved in favour of F3 team boss Dutton, who last raced (and won) at Cadwell in a Formula Libre race in 1979.

David Heale’s Hillman Imp took sixth in the second race, having earlier won a standalone 1300cc touring car event from Roger Phillips, who was in the Austin Cooper S he bought new in 1964.

Frenchman Francois Derossi (Chevron B17) was the man to beat in the Historic F3 races, a bumper field of one-litre cars looking resplendent around the Lincolnshire circuit.

Derossi bolted away from the pack in the opener,

chased by David Methley (Merlyn Mk14A), but the British driver fell off at Park and slipped to 13th.

Having recovered to sixth after a second spin, Methley then headed for the pits...

His dramas allowed a charging Dean Forward (Brabham BT21B) up to second from 14th on the grid, while third fell to Cadwell newcomer Ferdinand Gustafson’s ex-Ronnie Peterson Brabham BT18. Having arrived late for qualifying, Roland Fischer fought his

Tecno up to sixth from 22nd on the grid, but he ran second to Derossi in the second race, admitting that the Frenchman was “too quick today”.

After Gustafson’s fabulous Brabham expired, Ian Bankhurst bagged third in his Alexis Mk8.

Bankhurst was lucky to be in the races at all after he’d whacked the Alexis against the barriers in a wet Classic Racing Cars event on Saturday. In this race Ian Jones (Lotus 59) splashed his way to the win, his task eased after a chasing

Cox’s Cortina doubled up in Historic tourers





Brashaw splashed to Classic F3 wins



Steve Jones was on top in 500cc F3



Derossi's Chevron B17 topped Historic F3



Julian Barter held off father Charles to win

Michael Scott aquaplaned his Brabham BT28 into the barriers. This allowed teenager Sam Mitchell (Merlyn Mk20) to take second in just his fourth race.

In a dry thrash on Sunday Jones was equally unstoppable, his double victory prompting him to

confess Cadwell Park was now his favourite circuit!

Anthony Ross's Lotus 59 was a distant second from James Claridge (Lola Mk5A), who spent the early laps defending from club chairman Chris Sharples (Palliser WDF1).

David Methley and his Brabham BT6 pulled a stunning move on Denis Welch's Lotus 20/22 around the outside at Coppice to take the rear-engined Formula Junior win. James Murray usurped Jonathan Hughes on the last lap for second, while Stuart Roach's Alexis Mk2 was a runaway winner of the front-engined race.

Early front-engined leader Ray Mallock (U2 Mk2) defended stoically from Jack Woodhouse's Elva Mk2 to secure second.

After polesitter John Turner hit mechanical dramas with his Cooper Mk9, Steve Jones powered his Mk10 to victory in the 500cc F3 race.

Nelson Rowe bagged two Historic FF2000 wins in his Reynard SF79. His second came after battling past early leader Andy Huxtable (Lola T580) at Mansfield on lap three.

Paul Tooms's Lotus Elan was dominant in the Historic Roadsports double-header, while a late-race surge gave reigning Classic Clubmans champion Mark Charteris (Mallock Mk20) another win after battling ahead of 1700cc Clubmans newcomer Spencer McCarthy (Mallock Mk20) a lap from home.

● David Addison

HISTORIC FORMULA FORD CADWELL PARK, APRIL 21-22

Fortunate first win for Toyne in Formula Ford

SIMON TOYNE AND Callum Grant triumphed in two hectic Historic Formula Ford races, Toyne's win being his first outright success.

Westie Mitchell (Merlyn Mk20) led away on a wet road on Saturday as poleman Grant made a sluggish getaway in his similar car. That allowed David Wild's Lola T200 into second. Wild chased after Mitchell, with Grant third from the Lola of Toyne. Wild made his bid for the lead at Park on lap four and Mitchell went off the road, allowing Wild to lead from Grant and Toyne.

Grant closed onto the tail of the Lola and made a challenge at Coppice as the rain fell harder on lap seven. Grant stayed ahead but Wild attacked again on the last lap and squeezed by at Park.

Grant nipped back up

the inside but the two touched at Chris Curve and spun, allowing Toyne to lurch into the victory.

Wild led race two until he made an error on the final lap, allowing Grant to take a second win of the season. A chastened Wild recovered for second ahead of Derek Rodgers (Merlyn Mk11A), Toyne having earlier spun down to fifth.

RESULTS - RACE 1 (11 LAPS)

1 Simon Toyne (Lola T200); 2 Callum Grant (Merlyn Mk20A) +6.574s; 3 David Wild (Lola T200); 4 Derek Rodgers (Merlyn Mk11A/17); 5 Westie Mitchell (Merlyn Mk20); 6 Alistair Littlewood (Merlyn Mk20A). CW Julian Pierce (Macon MR8). FL Grant 1m53.880s (69.13mph).

RACE 2 (9 LAPS) 1 Grant; 2 Wild +12.536s; 3 Rodgers; 4 Pertti Kiiveri (Kvantti Mk1); 5 Toyne; 6 Stuart Baird (Merlyn Mk11A). CW Pierce. FL Grant 1m45.070s (74.93mph).



Toyne took his chance in FFord

70s ROADSPORTS (10 LAPS)

1 Julian Barter (TVR 3000M); 2 Charles Barter (Datsun 240Z) +0.457s; 3 Paul Conway (Morgan +8); 4 Luke Clark-Bagnall (Triumph GT6); 5 John Thomason (GT6); 6 Chris Alford (MG Midget). **Class winners** Conway, Clark-Bagnall, Alford, Allan Jones (3000M). **Fastest lap** C Barter 1m59.610s (65.82mph). **RACE 2 (9 LAPS)** 1 J Barter; 2 C Barter +1.213s; 3 Conway; 4 Clark-Bagnall; 5 Thomason; 6 Oliver Ford (Lotus Europa). CW Conway, Clark-Bagnall, Ford, Alford; Jones. FL C Barter 1m46.420s (73.98mph). **CLASSIC F3 (11 LAPS)** 1 Jamie Brashaw (March 793); 2 David Clark (Argo JM6) +1.214s; 3 Adrian Holey (Chevron B38); 4 Hugh Price (Chevron B38); 5 Mike Jones (Brabham BT38C); 6 Chris Drake (March 743). CW Jones. FL Brashaw 1m47.147s (73.48mph). **RACE 2 (10 LAPS)** 1 Brashaw; 2 Price +7.451s; 3 Clark; 4 Drake; 5 Jones; 6 Mike Catlow (March 803). CW Jones. FL Brashaw 1m35.691s (82.27mph). **HISTORIC TOURING CARS UP TO 1300cc (6 LAPS)** 1 David Heale (Hillman Imp); 2 Roger Phillips (Austin Cooper S) +0.845s; 3 Marc Earnshaw (Cooper S);

4 Simon Benoy (Hillman Imp); 5 Andy Jones (Singer Chamois); 6 Peter Crewes (Cooper S). CW Roger Godfrey (Cooper S); Phillips, John Barber (Abarth 850 TC). FL Phillips 2m10.490s (60.33mph). **OVER 1300cc (8 LAPS)** 1 Dan Cox (Lotus Cortina); 2 Warren Briggs (Ford Mustang) +12.512s; 3 Neil Brown (Cortina); 4 Robyn Slater (Ford Anglia); 5 Jon Wolfe (Ford Falcon); 6 Brian Webb (Anglia). CW Slater, Briggs, Brown. FL Cox 1m48.623s (72.48mph). **COMBINED RACE (9 LAPS)** 1 Cox; 2 Briggs +9.607s; 3 Brown; 4 Richard Dutton (Cortina); 5 Wolfe; 6 Heale. CW David Lloyd (Mustang); Brian Webb (Anglia); Godfrey; Heale, Briggs, Brown; Phillips. FL Cox 1m47.938s (72.94mph). **HISTORIC F3 (8 LAPS)** 1 Francois Derossi (Chevron B17); 2 Dean Forward (Brabham BT21B) +15.126s; 3 Ferdinand Gustafson (Brabham BT18); 4 Stuart Tizzard (Chevron B15C); 5 Roland Fischer (Tecno); 6 Peter Thompson (Brabham BT21). CW Nigel Winchester (Mallock U2). FL Fischer 1m54.939s (68.49mph). **RACE 2 (9 LAPS)** 1 Derossi; 2 Fischer

+17.979s; 3 Ian Bankhurst (Alexis Mk8); 4 Nigel Bancroft (Chevron B17); 5 Christoph Widmer (Brabham BT18A); 6 Thompson. CW Winchester. FL Derossi 1m45.494s (74.63mph). **CLASSIC RACING CARS (10 LAPS)** 1 Ian Jones (Lotus 59); 2 Sam Mitchell (Merlyn Mk20) +4.556s; 3 James Claridge (Lola Mk5A); 4 George Cooper (Cooper T59); 5 Anthony Ross (Lotus 59); 6 Chris Sharples (Palliser WDF1). CW Mitchell; Claridge, Nigel Winchester (Mallock U2). FL Sharples 1m59.851s (65.59mph). **RACE 2 (10 LAPS)** 1 Jones; 2 Ross +22.386s; 3 Claridge; 4 Michael Scott (Brabham BT28); 5 Leif Bosson (Brabham BT28); 6 Martin Anslow (Brabham BT21). CW Claridge; Scott; Bosson; Mitchell. FL Jones 1m36.832s (81.30mph). **REAR-ENGINEED FORMULA JUNIOR (9 LAPS)** 1 David Methley (Brabham BT6); 2 James Murray (Lola Mk5A) +5.319s; 3 Jonathan Hughes (Brabham BT6); 4 Denis Welch (Lotus 20/22); 5 Mark Woodhouse (Lotus 20/22); 6 Chris Drake (Elva 300). CW Drake; Robert Barrie (Lotus 18); Malcolm Wishart (Cooper T65).

FL Murray 1m37.798s (80.50mph). **FRONT-ENGINEED (9 LAPS)** 1 Stuart Roach (Alexis Mk2); 2 Ray Mallock (U2 Mk2) +10.649s; 3 Jack Woodhouse (Elva 100); 4 Andrew Tart (Bond FJ); 5 Justin Fleming (Elva 100); 6 Stephen Barlow (BMC Mk1). CW Gil Duffy (Bond FJ); Gordon Wright (Stanguellini). FL Roach 1m43.752s (75.88mph). **500cc F3 (8 LAPS)** 1 Steve Jones (Cooper Mk10); 2 Mike Fowler (Cooper Mk1) +13.808s; 3 Darrell Woods (Cooper Mk8); 4 Roy Hunt (Martin 500); 5 Rod Delves (Kieft CK52); 6 Richard Bishop-Miller (Revis 500). CW Hunt. FL Jones 1m56.879s (67.36mph). **HISTORIC FF2000 (6 LAPS)** 1 Nelson Rowe (Reynard SF79); 2 John Hayes-Harlow (Royale RP30) +7.236s; 3 Andy Huxtable (Lola T580); 4 David Wild (Reynard SF79); 5 Simon Toyne (Reynard SF79); 6 Dale Spruce (Reynard SF79). CW Martyn Donn (Supernova BH3); David Clark (Dulon MP21). FL Rowe 1m46.331s (74.04mph). **RACE 2 (9 LAPS)** 1 Rowe; 2 Huxtable +9.521s; 3 Wild; 4 Andrew Park

(Reynard SF81); 5 Toyne; 6 Spruce. CW Donn; Jonny Dimsdale (Van Diemen RF78). FL Rowe 1m43.902s (75.77mph). **HISTORIC ROADSPORTS (10 LAPS)** 1 Paul Tooms (Lotus Elan); 2 Jim Grant (Elan) +30.996s; 3 Larry Kennedy (Elan); 4 Bill Smith (Marcos 1600GT); 5 John Shaw (Porsche 911); 6 Justin Murphy (Ginetta G4). CW Shaw; Colin Sharp (Triumph TR5); Tony Davis (Austin Healey Sprite); Richard Owen (Triumph TR2). FL Tooms 2m02.708s (64.16mph). **RACE 2 (8 LAPS)** 1 Tooms; 2 Grant +26.872s; 3 Kennedy; 4 Smith; 5 Andy Shepherd (Lotus 7); 6 Bob Rowe (Elan). CW Shaw; Dick Coffey (Turner Mk1); Owen; Peter Thompson (Marcos 1800GT). FL Tooms 1m59.549s (65.85mph). **CLASSIC CLUBMANS (12 LAPS)** 1 Mark Charteris (Mallock Mk20B); 2 Spencer McCarthy (Mallock Mk20B) +6.004s; 3 John Harrison (Mallock Mk21); 4 Tom Brown (Mallock Mk29); 5 Steve Chaplin (Phantom P79); 6 David Childs (Gryphon). CW Paul Marshall (Mallock Mk18B); Brown. FL Charteris 1m41.628s (77.47mph).



Owen's Bugatti was a winner

VSCC SILVERSTONE, APRIL 21

Alfa man defeats squabbling pack

THE VINTAGE RACING

season began in style on Saturday as the VSCC's Spring Start meeting delivered huge grids and close racing between some iconic historic cars. Even the anticipated rain only stayed briefly.

The Fox and Nicholl Trophy event kicked off the racing in fantastic fashion. Second-fastest qualifier Neil Twyman made a slow getaway in his Alfa Romeo 8C but quickly recovered to take the lead from poleman John Guyatt's Talbot Lago on lap two. He stayed ahead but behind him the battle raged.

First, Brian Maile's Alvis passed Guyatt at Brooklands, before Richard Iliffe and David Pryke also got by. Maile looked like challenging Twyman but dropped back to third on the final lap.

“I was just having a nibble at the Alfa but then a backmarker got in the way,” said Maile. “I went the wrong way and Richard went the right way and passed me!”

Equally exciting was the Amschel Rothschild Trophy race as poleman Philip Walker made a poor start in his Lotus 16 and dropped to fifth. However, he soon recovered and by lap four was back at the front, where he stayed until the end. Tony Smith came second in his exquisite Ferrari 246 Dino, from Rod Jolley's Lister Jaguar.

Walker's victory came after his mechanic spent all night rebuilding the gearbox. “I had some gearbox issues, which are synonymous with the Lotus 16,” said Walker, who had to race sans first gear.

Fourth-placed Mark Gillies (ERA) won the Patrick Lindsay Memorial Trophy (for the first pre-war car) for an impressive seventh

time in eight years.

Geraint Owen won the GP Itala Trophy for the fourth time in his Bugatti after making a great start from second in what was a lights-to-flag win. His cause was made all the easier after polesitter and Mercedes GP man Robin Tuluie failed to start after suffering a broken clutch.

The battle for second between Gary Caroline (Morgan) and Tony Lees (AC/GN) was slightly disrupted when backmarker Steven Pryke spun and got stuck in the middle of Brooklands on lap seven of 10. The pair got through, but on the next lap Lees overtook Caroline.

Fourth fell to Alexander Boswell in his Bequet Delage, which also took the Lanchester Trophy. A word must also go to Christopher Williams, in his massive 24-litre Napier Bentley, who stormed through from last to finish seventh.

Mark Piercy made a terrific start in the first HGPCA race of the season for Pre-1966 GP cars from third on the grid, although there was a slight hint of him jumping the lights. Nonetheless, poleman Peter Horsman's Lotus maintained the lead, something he managed



Twyman took Alfa to victory



Mazjub's Sadler topped 1950s sportscar thrash

to do for the entire race. Piercy lost second to John Harper's Brabham on lap eight of 12 but finished comfortably ahead of John Chisholm's Lotus.

Andrew Mitchell's HRG was able to lead from start to finish in the Standard and Modified Pre-War Sports Car race, despite starting fourth on the grid. However, Frederic Wakeman was just 0.86

seconds behind at the flag after a great battle with fellow front-row starter William Mahany.

The 1950s Sports Racing Cars encounter featured a tremendous dice between Graeme Dodd and Julian Mazjub. In the end, the Sadler's straightline speed advantage over the Cooper Monaco allowed Mazjub to win. Last year's victor, Tony Bianchi, finished

third. The three continued their battle for an extra lap, after the chequered flag was waved late!

Holly Mason-Franchitti again won the Regularity Trial after completing her allotted laps and changing a spark plug in the quickest time overall. The Scratch race spoils went to Gillies' ERA and the Fiat AC of Andrew Kellock.

● Stephen Lickorish

SILVERSTONE AND FOX & NICHOLL TROPHIES (8 LAPS)
1 Neil Twyman (Alfa Romeo 8C); **2** Richard Iliffe (Riley Kestrel 12/4 Special) +1.03s; **3** Brian Maile (Alvis Speed 25 Sports); **4** David Pryke (Riley 12/4 TT Sprite Rep.); **5** John Guyatt (Talbot Lago T150C); **6** Dudley Sterry (HRS Sports). **Class winner** Iliffe. **Fastest lap** Pryke 1m20.61s (73.20mph).

AMSCHEL ROTHSCHILD AND PATRICK LINDSAY MEMORIAL TROPHIES (12 LAPS)
1 Philip Walker (Lotus 16); **2** Tony Smith (Ferrari 246 Dino) +2.83s; **3** Rod Jolley (Lister Jaguar Monza); **4** Mark Gillies (ERA R3A); **5** Eddie McGuire (Lotus 16); **6** Michael Steele (Connaught C Type). **CW** Gillies. **FL** Walker 1m06.91s (88.18mph).
GP ITALIA AND LANCHESTER

TROPHIES (10 LAPS)
1 Geraint Owen (Bugatti T35B); **2** Tony Lees (AC/GN Cognac) +4.99s; **3** Gary Caroline (Morgan Super Aero); **4** Alexander Boswell (Bequet Delage 2 Str GP); **5** Chris Hudson (Bugatti T35B); **6** Duncan Wood (Morgan Super Aero). **CW** Boswell. **FL** Owen 1m16.14s (77.49mph).

HGPCA RACE FOR PRE-1966 GP CARS (12 LAPS)
1 Peter Horsman (Lotus 18/21); **2** John Harper (Brabham BT4) +4.86s; **3** Mark Piercy (Lola Mk4); **4** John Chisholm (Lotus 18); **5** John Clark (Cooper T51); **6** Miles Griffiths (Cooper T45). **CW** Piercy; Chisholm; Griffiths; Eddy Perk (Heron F1); Eddie McGuire (Cooper Bristol MkD). **FL** Horsman 1m03.81s (92.47mph).
STANDARD AND MODIFIED PRE-WAR SPORTS CARS

(8 LAPS)
1 Andrew Mitchell (HRG 1½ litre); **2** Frederic Wakeman (Frazer Nash Super Sports) +0.86s; **3** William Mahany (HRG Le Mans Model); **4** Douglas Monro (Frazer Nash Super Sports); **5** David Ozanne (Aston Martin Speed Ulster); **6** David Cottingham (BMW 328 Sport). **FL** Wakeman 1m19.03s (74.66mph).

1950s SPORTS RACING CARS (10 LAPS)
1 Julian Mazjub (Sadler MkIII); **2** Graeme Dodd (Cooper Monaco) +0.82s; **3** Tony Bianchi (Farrellac Allard Sports Racing); **4** Paul Woolley (Cooper Monaco); **5** Christopher Keen (Kurtis 500 S); **6** Peter Rutt (Lola MkD). **CW** Keen. **FL** Bianchi 1m06.68s (88.49mph).
REGULARITY TRIAL FOR PRE-WAR SPORTS CARS
1 Holly Mason-Franchitti (Aston Martin Ulster LMI7); **2** Chloe

Mason (Aston Martin Ulster LMI8); **3** Robert Beebee (Frazer Nash TT Rep); **4** Andrew Mitchell (HRG 1½ litre); **5** David Furnell (Riley Brooklands); **6** Simon Blakeney-Edwards. **CW** Furnell; Blakeney-Edwards; David Birnage (Austin 7 Ulster); Nicholas Hine (Lagonda LG45). **FL** Mitchell 1m20.52s (73.28mph).

SCRATCH PRE-WAR SPORTS CARS (BOTH 5 LAPS)
1 Mark Gillies (ERA R3A); **2** Paul Mullins (ERA R7B) +1.592s; **3** Pete Candy (Riley Super Rat); **4** Terry Crabb (ERA R12C); **5** Tony Lees (AC/GN Cognac); **6** Stephen Shoosmith (Bugatti T51). **CW** Candy; Shoosmith; William Mahany (HRG Le Mans Model); Jeffrey Edwards (Alvis Sports Special). **FL** Gillies 1m10.35s (83.87mph).
RACE 2
1 Andrew Kellock (Fiat AC); **2** Douglas Monro (Frazer

Nash Super Sports) +2.41s; **3** Trevor Swete (Invicta S Type); **4** Alistair Pugh (Frazer Nash/BMW 328); **5** Andrew Mortimer (Morgan Super Aero); **6** Stuart Morley (Bentley 3/4½ Litre). **CW** Swete; David Seber (Wolsley Hornet Special); Hugh Birley (Austin 7 Ulster). **FL** Morley 1m22.20s (71.78mph).

HANDICAP PRE-WAR SPORTS CARS (BOTH 5 LAPS)
1 Malcolm Underwood (Delahaye 135); **2** Ron Turner (Wolsley Hornet Special) +4.45s; **3** Norman Pemberton (Talbot 95/105 Sports SPL); **4** David Seber (Hornet Special). **FL** Marcus Black (Talbot Lago T23) 1m23.74s (70.46mph).
RACE 2
1 John Reeve (Riley 12/4); **2** Pugh +1.67s; **3** Swete; **4** Martin Overington (Bentley 4½ Litre). **FL** Stanley Mann (Bentley 3/8 Spl) 1m22.51s (71.51mph).



BRITISH ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP DONINGTON PARK, APRIL 21

Works Ginetta tops frantic enduro

LAWRENCE TOMLINSON and Michael Simpson took the development works Ginetta G55 to a comfortable victory in an incident-packed race.

Early pacesetter Andy Schulz's Ferrari 430 had battled with Michael Millard's Rapier and the Molser of Javier Morcillo before establishing himself at the front for the first 20 laps. Morcillo thought he had a puncture and slowed for a while, but once in front he dominated until his handover.

When, after 90 minutes, Manuel Cintrano lost the Mosler's advantage exiting Goddards, Ian Heward stormed ahead until the Rapier died on him with

a faulty ECU, allowing Simpson to charge ahead into Redgate.

Cintrano then spun at the Craner Curves, but took the lead when Simpson pitted again. But with the safety car out, Simpson lost little time and soon restored his lead, which he built up to three laps for a while.

Lee Mowle/George Murrells established their Ginetta G55 in a solid second, while Paul White completed the final stint in the Mosler to secure third.

Owen O'Neill/Neil Huggins's Class 2-winning Marcos Mantis was able to consolidate fourth after Millard's recovery ended with a spin into retirement at Schwantz Curve, while



Race gets under way as winning G55 lurks in fourth

Steve Guglielmi/Michael Caine's Lotus Elise won Class 4 with fifth overall.

David Green/Martin Byford/Richard Adams completed the top six and took the Class 3 spoils, after James and Tim Webb's BMW M3 GTR was given a late drivethrough penalty.

● Peter Scherer

Simpson (Ginetta G55):

2 Lee Mowle/George Murrells (Ginetta G55) +25.854s; 3 Javier Morcillo/Manuel Cintrano/Paul White (Mosler MT900R); 4 Owen O'Neill/Neil Huggins (Marcos Mantis); 5 Steve Guglielmi/Michael Caine (Lotus Elise); 6 David Green/Martin Byford/Richard Adams (Lotus Evora). **CW** Mowle/Murrells; O'Neill/Huggins; Guglielmi/Caine; Green/Byford/Adams. **FL** Mike Millard/Ian Heward (Rapier SR2) 1m06.609s (108.96mph).

RESULTS (119 LAPS)

1 Lawrence Tomlinson/Michael



Ford snatched a last-gasp victory

SUPER MIGHTY MINIS DONINGTON PARK, APRIL 22

Ford gets revenge with late Super Mighty Mini victory

FOLLOWING HIS LATE retirement from a challenging position at Oulton Park, Patrick Ford was in celebratory mood at Donington Park after taking a late victory in the Super Mighty Minis.

After an initial skirmish with Elliot Stafford and Ford, Neven Kirkpatrick took second into Goddards on the opening lap and led as they headed into Redgate. The lead soon grew as the battle behind continued, with both Ford and Stafford falling back as Chris Morgan

made up for a poor start.

Then Kirkpatrick slowed and ground to halt with just two laps to go. Morgan surged ahead at Goddards, only for Ford to nose in front and claim his win into Coppice on the final lap.

David Kirkpatrick completed the podium, with Stafford fourth.

● Peter Scherer

RESULTS (12 LAPS)

1 Patrick Ford; 2 Chris Morgan +0.360s; 3 David Kirkpatrick; 4 Elliot Stafford; 5 Neil Stark; 6 Bob Bennetts. **FL** Ford 1m40.926s (70.59mph).

INTERSTEPS DONINGTON PARK, APRIL 21-22

Parry and Aitken win

JAMES AITKEN SCORED his maiden victory in the third and final InterSteps race of the weekend, after Matt Parry had dominated the earlier action.

Although Lassi Halminen made the best getaway in the first race, poleman Parry surged back ahead as they plunged down the Craner Curves for the first time.

The lead soon grew and after a mistake from Halminen into Goddards on lap three, Oulton Park double winner Matt Mason darted into second place. "I lost the clutch at the start and then the alternator went and I was losing power," said Mason.

Parry secured a safe win, with the ailing Mason just holding on to second.

It was closer at the finish, but still a lights-to-flag win for Parry in race two, with Mason a racelong second. After Jan Schwitter had lost third to Aitken following a safety car intervention, the young Swiss grabbed the place back into Goddards

on the last lap.

Aitken made amends by picking up victory in the finale after a brave move on Mason into Redgate. Mason kept the pressure on and forced Aitken over the gravel-trap at Goddards before settling for second. Parry was third after a jump-start drivethrough penalty.

● Peter Scherer

RESULTS (17 LAPS)

1 Matt Parry; 2 Matt Mason +17.566s; 3 Lassi Halminen; 4 Jack Aitken; 5 James Fletcher; 6 Jan Schwitter. **FL** Parry 1m10.393s (101.21mph). **RACE 2 (14 LAPS)** 1 Parry; 2 Mason +1.506s; 3 Schwitter; 4 Aitken; 5 Fletcher; 6 Franco Aragones. **FL** Mason 1m13.129s (97.42mph). **RACE 3 (15 LAPS)** 1 Aitken; 2 Mason +1.662s; 3 Parry; 4 Halminen; 5 Schwitter; 6 Fletcher. **FL** Parry 1m16.752s (92.82mph).

Aitken won third InterSteps encounter



IN BRIEF



SEATs dominated Production Cup

BRITCAR PRODUCTION CUP

Craig Davies and Adam Jones' SEAT Supercopa was in the pitlane with a puncture when the flag came out at the end of the Donington race. But they still took the win over the similar car of Stefan Hodgetts who led most of the race before a handover to Bernard Hogarth.

PRODUCTION TOURING CUP

Gary Duckman's SEAT Leon won all three Production Touring Car Trophy races at Donington. He led the first from the start, with Joe Girling's Astra second after Stewart Calder spun off. Girling led the second until he lost ABS and power steering, and both Luke Cudde and the third before a race of the bird made Duckman took charge.

SMART 4TWO CUP

Two fairly processional races at Donington were won by David Moore. His sister Sarah was a clear second in the opener from Maiken Rasmussen, but Jake Jackson split the Moores later on.

MINI SE7EN

With a huge scrap for second, Andrew Deviny escaped to win the first Mini Se7en race at Donington, from James Coulson and Gareth Hunt. Hunt just edged Spark in the second, with Deviny back in third.

MIGHTY MINIS

There was barely a car length between David Marcussen and Adrian Tuckley at Donington. Marcussen held on for a first win.

MINI MIGLIA

Peter Baldwin came out of retirement to show the rest the way home in the first Donington race. David Edgecombe snatched second on the last lap from Dave Drew and Paul Thompson. Aaron Smith claimed victory in race two from Baldwin and Drew.



Baldwin won on return



LEGENDS BRANDS HATCH, APRIL 21-22

Davey’s Brands double is the stuff of Legends

FIRST4VANS-SPONSORED Lawrence Davey should be nicknamed First4Legends after he raced past his rivals to win a thrilling final last Saturday.

At the start of the big race Martin Lucas, one of four Belgians to grace the giant grid, burst through from the third row to lead Matthew Pape, Nathan Anthony and Nick Brace into Paddock.

Brace then hit the front to lead from Lucas, Anthony and Eliot Bunn, who was really making progress before the safety car was deployed because David Jones’s stranded car had blocked the exit of Graham Hill Bend.

The entire field telescoped into a tight,

seething mass as Davey looked for a way through.

Soon after racing resumed the safety car was out again: John Mickel had spun at the apex of Druids and collected Nick Brace’s son Dean.

As soon as it peeled off into the pits Davey charged through to the front, chased by Bunn. These two fought all the way to the flag but at the finish Davey was still just in front.

James Holman moved up to finish third ahead of Ben Power and ‘Faster Guy’ Guy Fastres.

On Sunday Davey went even better when he started the final from the 10th row of the grid – and yet by the end of the second lap he was through to the lead.



Davey was top Legend at Brands

Once in front he pulled away on a very wet track and went on to win by 10 seconds from Nick Brace, with Power third.

● Kerry Dunlop

RESULTS – SATURDAY FINAL

(14 LAPS) 1 Lawrence Davey; 2 Eliot Bunn +0.161s; 3 James Holman; 4 Ben Power; 5 Guy Fastres; 6 Nick

Brace. **Fastest lap** Bunn 56.190s (77.39mph). **HEAT 1 (4 LAPS) 1 Davey;** 2 Richard Pocklington +0.045s; 3 Fastres; 4 Holman; 5 Stephen Whitelegg; 6 John Mickel. **FL Pocklington 56.222s (77.34mph).** **HEAT 2 (10 LAPS) 1 Mickel;** 2 Bunn +0.040s; 3 Davey; 4 Holman; 5 Power; 6 Dean Brace. **FL Davey 56.174s (77.41mph).** **SUNDAY FINAL (12 LAPS) 1 Davey;** 2 N Brace

+10.254s; 3 Power; 4 D Brace; 5 Jean-Michel Poncelet; 6 Holman. **FL N Brace 1m05.181s (66.71mph).** **HEAT 1 (10 LAPS) 1 Mickel;** 2 Davey +0.051s; 3 Bunn; 4 Holman; 5 D Brace; 6 N Brace. **FL Bunn 56.274s (77.27mph).** **HEAT 2 (10 LAPS) 1 Pocklington;** 2 Davey +0.763s; 3 D Brace; 4 Holman; 5 Whitelegg; 6 Fastres. **FL Davey 55.946s (77.72mph).**



Peugeot 306 leads Ford Sierra Cossie

SE SALOONS BRANDS HATCH, APRIL 21-22

Two wins for Hargreaves as disaster strikes Wise

MALCOLM WISE WAS quickest in qualifying by a clear half-second from closest rival Ashley Hargreaves. So at the end of race one’s first lap it was a surprise to see Wise’s Escort Cosworth trailing the Peugeot 306 of Hargreaves, Colin Tester (Sierra Cosworth) and Gavin Thompson (Peugeot 205).

These four stayed in formation until half-distance, when Wise zapped Thompson down the top straight and homed in on

Tester. Then on the next lap Wise seized the lead with an identical move. Meanwhile, Thompson fell back with piston failure and Bill Richards’s Mini pulled up with a blown gearbox.

Wise lost his nearside-front wheel on the last lap, leaving Hargreaves to win from Tester. Paul Eve moved up to third, ahead of Alan Phillips and Peter Taylor.

“I knew I had to [try to] make the break at the start,” said Hargreaves. “The Fords are a lot quicker.”

On Sunday Tester seized the lead, but on lap two his Sierra got out of shape at Clark Curve and Hargreaves slipped past.

Then the race was red-flagged. Wise, who’d started from the back, tangled with Peter Taylor and spun into the Cooper Straight barriers.

Tester swooped past Hargreaves to lead after the restart, but excessive wheelspin consigned him to second. Eve was third again, ahead of Jordan Batts.

● Kerry Dunlop

RESULTS (17 LAPS) 1 Ashley Hargreaves (Peugeot 306);

2 Colin Tester (Ford Sierra Cosworth) +1.931s; 3 Paul Eve (Ford Sierra Cosworth); 4 Alan Phillips (Ford Sierra Sapphire); 5 Peter Taylor (Ford Sierra Cosworth); 6 Jordan Batts (SEAT Leon). **Class winners** Eve; Graham Bahr (BMW E30); Andy Woods-Dean (Renault Megane); Nick Proudlock (Ford Escort Mk1). **FL Malcolm Wise (Ford Escort Cosworth) 51.726s (84.06mph).**

RACE 2 (13 LAPS) 1 Hargreaves; 2 Tester +0.940s; 3 Eve; 4 Phillips; 5 Batts; 6 Woods-Dean. **CW** Eve; Woods-Dean; Tony Skelton (Renault Clio); Proudlock. **FL Tester 52.726s (82.47mph).**

PICKUPS BRANDS HATCH, APRIL 21-22

Old hands pick up wins

THE FIRST PICKUPS race was fantastic, with five different cars fighting at the front.

Dave Briggs led initially, but then Nic Grindrod took over from three champion chasers: Carl Boardley, Steve Dance and Phil White.

Boardley slid wide and fell back into the grasp of Dance, but on the penultimate lap Grindrod suddenly slowed. Dance jinked around him and went on to take a narrow victory over Boardley, while Grindrod salvaged third place despite being stuck in third gear.

The second race had to be restarted due to heavy rain.

Dance worked his way through to the front but took to the grass at Surtees, so Grindrod held on for a narrow win over Anthony Hawkins.

● Kerry Dunlop

RESULTS (18 LAPS) 1 Steve Dance; 2 Carl Boardley +0.485s; 3 Nic Grindrod; 4 David O’Regan; 5 Anthony Hawkins; 6 Phil White. **FL Dance 52.656s (82.58mph).** **RACE 2 (12 LAPS) 1 Grindrod;** 2 Hawkins +0.823s; 3 Paul Tompkins; 4 Dave Briggs; 5 O’Regan; 6 Pete Stevens. **FL Hawkins 56.407s (77.09mph).**



Grindrod leads tight truck field



Briant (left) pipped Benson in Caterham Super Graduates

CATERHAM R300 SUPERLIGHTS OULTON PARK, APRIL 21

Wilson and Shaw share Caterham R300 spoils for DPR



Shaw leads R300 pack into Lodge

DPR TEAM-MATES PAUL Wilson and Mark Shaw battled fierce competition and changing conditions at Oulton Park last Saturday to each score Caterham Superlight R300 victories.

An unrivalled start from Wilson at the first attempt left the field playing catch-up as he romped

towards the winner's circle.

Competition ignited behind between Shaw and Ian Payne, as the pair traded places early on. Shaw recorded a new lap record as he eventually claimed a comfortable second, while Payne consolidated third.

The second race was

shortened due to time restraints and Wilson led from another front-row start. But Shaw soon blunted his bid for victory.

After briefly leading mid-race, Shaw took full control with four laps to go and the pair crossed the line inches apart.

"It was a fair battle and

great race," said Shaw.

"It was a bit interesting when the rain came down partway through," added third-placed Peter Ratcliff.

James Sharrock suffered first-corner issues in race one, before a commendable drive through the field to fifth second time out.

Jonny Leroux, director of series sponsor BookaTrack.com, was forced onto the sidelines by illness on his return to racing, after a strong start in race one.

● Leanne Fahy

RESULTS (17 LAPS) 1 Paul Wilson; 2 Mark Shaw +3.058s; 3 Ian Payne; 4 Peter Ratcliff; 5 Reece Somerfield; 6 Trevor Carvey. **FL Shaw** 1m49.873s (88.20mph).

RACE 2 (14 LAPS) 1 Shaw; 2 Wilson +0.201s; 3 Ratcliff; 4 Payne; 5 James Sharrock; 6 Somerfield. **FL Shaw** 1m50.049s (88.06mph).

IN BRIEF



Butler dominated Tin Top encounters

CANNONS TIN TOPS

Ian Butler was a clear winner of both Tin Tops rounds at Brands. Chris Whiteman's retirement from race one meant that he had to start the second race from the back, but he fought through the field to finish a strong second.

CATERHAM SUPER GRADS

Edward Benson scored a narrow win over Toby Briant in the first race at Brands, but it was even closer in the next one when Briant pipped Benson on the line. Jon Wolfe and Dylan Stanley fought hard close behind each time.

CATERHAM CLASSIC GRADS

David Pearson held on to win both close-fought races by a narrow margin at Brands. James Russell was a worthy runner-up first time out, but he was demoted to third in race two by Justin Cox, who also set fastest lap.

SIGMA & CLASSIC GRADS

Paul Allen held on to beat Myles Packman by a nose in race one and went on to notch up a double at Brands. Nick Frost was the best of the rest, while Ian Anderson won the Sigma class twice.

CATERHAM ROADSPORTS

A jumped start by poleman Brad Smith at Oulton left the way clear for first time winner Alex MacIndoe. Elliott Norris claimed victory in race two with MacIndoe second, as Robert Smith outpaced namesake Brad for third.

NORTHERN FF1600

Stuart Jones converted Pre-1990 pole to victory at Oulton, as main challenger Barry Linley crawled home after losing gears at the last corner. John Murphy came out on top in the Post-'89 outing, after polesitter James Hammond jumped the start.

Murphy won Post-89 FF1600



CATERHAM TRACKSPORTS OULTON PARK, APRIL 21

Langley and Robinson light up Tracksport thrillers

VICTORIES FELL TO Terry Langley and David Robinson in two thrilling Caterham Tracksport races, which featured numerous lead changes.

Jonathan Mortimer's quick race-one getaway guided him to the front, as Langley temporarily slotted into second. Determination eventually enabled Langley to muscle ahead after a race-long tussle.

Langley finished just three hundredths ahead of Mortimer, while James Needham wrestled to a determined third.

Robinson proved the man to beat in race two. Langley, Mortimer and Robinson each had a turn leading the field, eventually finishing millimetres apart.

● Leanne Fahy

RESULTS (15 LAPS) 1 Terry Langley; 2 Jonathan Mortimer +0.030s; 3 James Needham; 4 David Robinson; 5 Richard Pursglove; 6 Kurt Brady. **FL Langley** 1m57.820s (82.25mph).

RACE 2 (13 LAPS) 1 Robinson; 2 Langley +0.041s; 3 Mortimer; 4 Tim Mashman; 5 Needham; 6 Adam White. **FL Needham** 1m57.792s (82.27mph).



Langley (73) recorded a win and a narrow defeat



Head dominated the first Supersport race

CATERHAM SUPERSPORTS OULTON PARK, APRIL 21

McMillan and Head win

AARON HEAD AND Andrew McMillan divided honours from an eventful Caterham Supersport double-header.

An early appearance from the safety car to recover the spinning Richard Potter from Old Hall on lap one meant polesitter Head had the rest of the 28-car field breathing down his neck.

After briefly losing out to McMillan, Head fought back to develop a big lead. After a fierce fight with Lee Wiggins, McMillan just held on for second.

The usual suspects came to the fore again in race two, this time with McMillan top-scoring.

Head kept McMillan honest, while Wiggins narrowly took third from hard charger Craig Currie.

● Leanne Fahy

RESULTS (14 LAPS) 1 Aaron Head; 2 Andrew McMillan +14.884s; 3 Lee Wiggins; 4 John Saunders; 5 Sean Byrne; 6 Jeremy Webb. **FL Head** 1m58.336s (81.89mph).

RACE 2 (16 LAPS) 1 McMillan; 2 Head +0.039s; 3 Wiggins; 4 Craig Currie; 5 Saunders; 6 Byrne. **FL Head** 1m54.622s (84.55mph).

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7	19th August	PF International, Lincs	Extended Circuit
8	16th September	Daytona Milton Keynes	International
9	21st October	Rye House, Herts	Raceway Circuit
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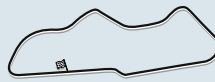


SPORTS EXTRA RESULTS ROUND-UP

David Marcussen just defeated Adrian Tuckley in Mighty Minis



Donington Park GP



Donington Park National



Brands Hatch Indy



Oulton Park International

FL Marcussen 1m37.060s (73.40mph).
MINI MIGLIA (BOTH 10 LAPS)
1 Peter Baldwin. 2 David Edgecombe +7.202s; 3 Dave Drew; 4 Paul Thompson; 5 Tony LeMay; 6 Colin Peacock.
FL Richard Casey 1m22.068s (86.81mph).
RACE 21 Aaron Smith. 2 Baldwin +3.927s; 3 Drew; 4 Casey; 5 Edgecombe; 6 Thompson. **FL** Drew 1m23.365s (85.46mph).

BRANDS HATCH BARC, APRIL 21-22

CANNONS TIN TOPS (17 LAPS) 1 Ian Butler (Ford Focus). 2 Stephen Cassar (Proton Coupe) +22.968s; 3 Steve Rothery (Renault Clio); 4 Graham Richardson (Vauxhall Nova); 5 Rod Birley (Renault Megane); 6 Scott Brooker (BMW Mini Cooper). **CW** Cassar; Brooker; Richard Johnson (Honda Civic); Peter Osborne (Renault Clio); Robert Farndon (VW Golf GTI). **FL** Butler 54.622s (79.61mph).
RACE 2 (16 LAPS) 1 Butler. 2 Chris Whiteman (Honda Civic) +3.251s; 3 Richardson; 4 Rothery; 5 Cassar; 6 Brooker. **CW** Whiteman; Brooker; Johnson; David Clark (Renault 5 Turbo);

Ricky Davies (BMW Mini Cooper); Osborne; Farndon. **FL** Butler 54.909s (79.19mph).

CATERHAM SUPER GRADUATES (23 LAPS) 1 Edward Benson. 2 Toby Briant +2.979s; 3 Jon Wolfe; 4 Dylan Stanley; 5 Charles Elliott; 6 Sean Mighall. **FL** Stanley 54.308s (80.07mph).

RACE 2 (18 LAPS) 1 Briant. 2 Benson +0.024s; 3 Stanley; 4 Luke Tzourou; 5 Wolfe; 6 Mighall. **FL** Tzourou 54.235s (80.18mph).

CLASSIC GRADUATES (22 LAPS) 1 David Pearson. 2 James Russell +0.368s; 3 Stuart Higgins; 4 Justin Cox; 5 Graeme Smith; 6 Stuart Thompson. **FL** Smith 57.370s (75.79mph). **RACE 2 (22 LAPS) 1 Pearson.** 2 Cox +0.441s; 3 Russell; 4 Amanda Black; 5 Higgins; 6 Trevor Harber. **FL** Cox 58.099s (74.84mph).

MEGA & SIGMA GRADUATES (23 LAPS) 1 Paul Allen. 2 Myles Packman +0.012s; 3 Nick Frost; 4 Brett Ray; 5 Nicholas Haryett; 6 Ian Noble. **CW** Ian Anderson. **FL** Packman 53.794s (80.83mph). **RACE 2 (20 LAPS) 1 Allen.** 2 Frost +0.616s; 3 Haryett; 4 Packman; 5 Adrian Russell; 6 Peter Frith. **CW** Anderson. **FL** Packman 1m03.360s (68.63mph).

OULTON PARK BRSCC, APRIL 21

CATERHAM ROADSPORT (10 LAPS) 1 Alex MacIndoe. 2 Elliott Norris +0.444s; 3 Achille Corbellati; 4 Jake Bradshaw; 5 Robert Smith; 6 Robert Chappell. **FL** Paul Thacker 2m00.205s (80.62mph).

RACE 2 (10 LAPS) 1 Norris. 2 MacIndoe +0.619s; 3 R Smith; 4 Brad Smith; 5 Chappell; 6 Thacker. **FL** B Smith 1m58.991s (81.44mph).

NORTHERN FF1600 - PRE-1990 (10 LAPS) 1 Stuart Jones (Reynard SF89). 2 Barry Linley (Van Diemen RF86) +8.315s; 3 Nigel Dolan (Van Diemen RF86); 4 Andrew Thomas (Reynard SF87); 5 Ian Ellis (Reynard FF89); 6 Christopher Stones (Van Diemen RF88). **CW** Linley; Stuart Dix (Cooper Chinook). **FL** Jones 1m51.275s (87.09mph).

NORTHERN FF1600 - POST-1989 (11 LAPS) 1 John Murphy (Van Diemen RF90). 2 Neil Winn (Van Diemen LA10) +2.159s; 3 Douglas Crosbie (Van Diemen RFOO); 4 Martin Short (Van Diemen JL012K); 5 Jamie Jardine (Ray GR11); 6 James Hammond (Mygale SJOO). **CW** Winn. **FL** Winn 1m49.773s (88.28mph).

DONINGTON PARK BRITCAR/BARC, APRIL 21-22

BRITCAR PRODUCTION CUP (61 LAPS of GP circuit) 1 Craig Davies/Adam Jones (SEAT Leon Supercopa). 2 Bernard Hogarth/Stefan Hodggets (Leon Supercopa) +33.612s; 3 Guy Povey/Graham Coomes (BMW M3 CSL); 4 Mark Cunningham/Peter Cunningham (Leon Supercopa); 5 Michael Symons/Keith Webster (BMW M3); 6 Adam Hayes/Mark Radcliffe (BMW M3). **Class winners** Hogarth/Hodgets; Nigel Ainge/Mike Jordan (Honda Integra); Edward Cockill/Harry Cockill (Honda Civic Type R). **Fastest lap** Mark Poole/Richard Abra 1m12.151s (98.74mph).

PRODUCTION TOURING CAR CUP (15 LAPS of National) 1 Gary Duckman (SEAT Leon). 2 Joseph Girling (Vauxhall Astra VXR) +4.180s; 3 Luke Caudle (Leon); 4 Keith Issatt (Volvo C30); 5 Steve Johnson (Astra VXR); 6 John Robins (Leon). **CW** Sarah Franklin (Fiat Abarth). **FL** Duckman 1m18.024s (91.31mph). **RACE 2 (16 LAPS) 1 Duckman.** 2 Caudle +11.220s; 3 Maurice Hayden (Renault Megane); 4 Stewart Calder (Astra VXR); 5 Robins; 6 Johnson. **CW** Franklin. **FL** Duckman 1m16.764s (92.81mph). **RACE 3 (16 LAPS) 1 Duckman.** 2 Caudle +0.350s; 3 Girling; 4 Hayden; 5 Calder; 6 Robins. **CW** Franklin. **FL** Duckman 1m17.365s (92.09mph). **SMART 4TWO CUP (11 LAPS) 1 David Moore.** 2 Sarah Moore +4.234s; 3 Maiken Rasmussen; 4 Silvano Cairra;

5 Tom Knight; 6 David Nash. **CW** Rasmussen; David Etienne. **FL** D Moore 1m45.171s (67.74mph). **RACE 2 (13 LAPS) 1 D Moore.** 2 Jake Jackson +6.259s; 3 S Moore; 4 Knight; 5 Rasmussen; 6 David de Coster. **CW** Rasmussen; Gregory Cosse. **FL** D Moore 1m31.826s (77.58mph). **MINI SEVEN (BOTH 10 LAPS) 1 Andrew Deviny.** 2 James Coulson +10.687s; 3 Gareth Hunt; 4 Ian Deviny; 5 Damon Astin; 6 Tristen Knight. **FL** A Deviny 1m30.555s (78.67mph). **RACE 2 1 Hunt.** 2 Paul Spark +2.845s; 3 A Deviny; 4 Knight; 5 Leon Wightman; 6 I Deviny. **FL** Hunt 1m41.215s (70.39mph). **MIGHTY MINI (13 LAPS) 1 David Marcussen.** 2 Adrian Tuckley +0.249s; 3 Dan Palmer; 4 Gregory Jenkins; 5 Kelvin Fletcher; 6 Michael Dryden.

Mini Se7en race gets underway at Donington



Rod Birley raced Renault Megane in Cannons Tin Tops



The crowds were out in force at an overcast Brands Hatch





CATERHAM GETS RADICAL

After decades of racing with variants of the same design, Caterham has built its first prototype sports-racing car. *BEN ANDERSON* went to Rockingham to try it out

Until Tony Fernandes came along, splashed his cash, and rebranded his Formula 1 team, the name Caterham meant one thing to motorsport: the Seven.

Various iterations of Colin Chapman's original, lightweight Lotus design have been embarrassing bigger sportscars since the late 1950s, and Caterham has continued running with Chapman's baton since the 1970s. Examine the current R300 Superlight (which first hit UK race tracks in 2009) and you'll still find Lotus 7 lineage coursing through its tubular chassis.

That's why the new SP/300.R is such a shock to the system. It's a prototype sports-racing car that seems to bear no resemblance to anything that's previously come out of Caterham (or Dartford – where the manufacturer has been based since 1987). Not even the Caterham 21 roadster of the late-1990s was as radical a departure as this.

That's because it's supposed to be that way. According to Caterham motorsport manager Simon Lambert, the SP/300.R is designed to be a moving advert for the entire organisation – a top-of-the-range posterboy to attract drivers that otherwise wouldn't know their Caterham Sevens from their Westfield Sports. It's also Caterham's way of trying to keep its racing drivers

'in the family', rather than see them run off to Radicals or GTs once they've had enough of Caterham's established range of Seven-based classes.

"One of the problems with the Seven is that unless you sit in it you won't understand it," says Lambert. "That's always been an issue for us – especially overseas. We also lose people off the top of our ladder – to Ginetta G55s, Ferraris and Radicals. To an extent, we accept that, but it also suggests there's demand for more if we produce it. There's only so much to come out of the Seven design, so we thought, 'Why not do a sports-prototype?'"

Caterham freely admits that sports-prototypes are not its forte. That's why it entered into a partnership with renowned UK sportscar manufacturer Lola, which provided design input and technical expertise. However, Lambert is keen to stress that the SP/300.R is not merely a Lola with a Caterham body.

"We decided the car had to be fun to drive and a bit over-powered, it needed to look fantastic and be good value," explains Lambert. "Cars have all been designed by engineers and I don't know how many have had a proper stylist involved. We didn't know anything about sports-prototypes so we started looking for a partner and number-one on the list was Lola.

"Everyone believes our car is a Bo8/90 with a body on it, but what we took from that car originally was the suspension hard points and geometry. The only thing it shares with it now is wheelnuts.

"We took the Bo8/90 apart and looked at it but it became clear quite quickly that we were going to need our own chassis. It's fair to say the SP/300.R shares some of the Bo8/90's lineage, but it's aggravating to hear 'it's a rebadged Lola'. If it was, it would have been out 18 months ago!"

Lambert points out that Caterham led the design process, but utilised Lola's expertise to make sure it didn't stray too far from acceptable norms. In the main, this meant compromises on aerodynamics and performance for the sake of looks – and attempting to create a driving experience that isn't so far



Anderson heads out on track in SP/300.R



TECH SPEC

CHASSIS

Lola-developed aluminium honeycomb monocoque

ENGINE

Supercharged Ford Duratec, 1999cc

POWER

300bhp

GEARBOX

Hewland FTR six-speed sequential with paddleshift

TYRES

Cooper F3 slicks on ATS F3 wheels

PRICE

£67,500+VAT

Caterham's SP/300.R is firm's first sports-racer



Intimidating to look at, great to drive



Office view smacks of proper race car



Ford Duratec motor produces 300bhp



Lambert shows Anderson the ropes

removed from the Seven to be totally alien to those who might graduate from one to the other.

Caterham has spent the past 12 months (and six figures in dosh) developing a 300bhp, supercharged Ford Duratec-engined sports-racer that will form the basis of a new single-make (probably pan-European) race series. The plan is to give the SP/300.R its race debut in an open sportscar category at some point during 2012 and build 25 per year. Before that Caterham wants to start shouting about its new toy, so it decided to let AUTOSPORT loose in one of its completed cars at Rockingham.

It's fair to say that the SP/300.R looks, at first glance, like an intimidating prospect, but in reality it's a sheep in wolf's clothing. It gives the outward impression of being a proper, mean, downforce car – with its Formula 3 wheels and slick tyres – but it's actually quite pliable. You can't carry enormous speed into the fast downhill left-hander at Gracelands (where high-downforce single-seaters really shine) and it's possible to get the car sideways in a fluid and forgiving motion. It also has a soft and compliant ride over the bumps and kerbs that you wouldn't expect if the chassis was designed to withstand high cornerloads.

The SP/300.R may not be a high-

downforce beast, but it's well-balanced and deceptively fast. The supercharger makes the engine feel quite docile because it's not peaky in its power delivery – giving a false impression of being underpowered – but that illusion is quickly shattered as you blat flat-out through the banked Turn 1 and pull sixth gear on the exit, before bearing down on the Deene hairpin.

The SP/300.R is designed to sit neatly between Radical's ultra-popular SR8 and SR3 models, but closer to the SR3, and it appears Caterham has achieved its aim. Its longer wheelbase makes it less wieldy through the twisting infield of a circuit like Rockingham, but it's expected to trump the SR3 at faster circuits such as Silverstone and Spa.

"It's comparable with an SR3," confirms Lambert. "We didn't set out to compete with Radical, but everyone told us we would end up there. The advantage for us will be significantly lower running costs – especially in terms of engine rebuilds."

Whether the SP/300.R can eat into the share of a racing market that Radical has utterly dominated over the past decade remains to be seen, but Caterham's first sports-racer certainly looks the part and should provide a perfect next step for those Seven loyalists who've decided it's time for a change of scenery. ☘

YOUR SAY

What you think of the motorsport news of the past week



A great race, but good for the sport?

GP was right for Bahrain and F1

Contrary to popular opinion, I believe the Bahrain Grand Prix has had a positive effect on both F1 and Bahrain. If it weren't for the GP, the wider political issues of a country in turmoil would not have been publicised as well as they have been. I don't believe the people who run F1 are particularly philanthropic and they certainly aren't due credit for any sort of altruism or benevolence. The fact remains, however, that sport is a unifier and a force for good.

Hopefully now the GP has concluded, the media spotlight can remain on Bahrain and international influence can help ease the troubles.

Peter JB Green, Saffron Walden, Essex

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2. **MONACO ANNOUNCES TRACK CHANGES**
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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 Please ensure that your full address is included on all correspondence.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

● Readers Ludwig Eller and Edward Rockett have pointed out that Kamui Kobayashi's fastest lap in China was the third such feat by a Japanese driver, not the second (April 19, p14), citing Masahiro Hasemi's achievement in the 1976 Japanese Grand Prix. The statistic remains in the record books, although some motorsport historians have refuted this, saying that the race organisers later disallowed the time, awarding fastest lap to Jacques Laffite.

EDITORIAL CONTACT mail@autosport.com

Much has been made of the damage being done to F1 by the decision to race in Bahrain. My view is that the greatest damage to the image of F1 has been caused by Bernie Ecclestone.

He dismissed serious questions with patronising answers and his assertion that things were fine, when clearly they are not, is just insulting. **Richard Bartholomew** Redditch, Worcestershire

Last week's editorial hit the nail on the head: the sport is being used for

political purposes.

F1 was damned if it did and damned if it didn't race in Bahrain. Global sport is just that, global, and in the ever-increasing race to maximise income, it will go to places that raise political and ethical issues.

Andrew Groves Shrewsbury, Shropshire

I understand Nico Rosberg is not to be punished for his swooping, late dives from one side of the track to the other while in front of messrs Hamilton and Alonso. Technically,

'one move' I guess.

Thus a driving standard becomes enshrined, not just for F1 but for countless junior drivers.

The consequences of a similar incident, mistimed by a fraction of a second at, say, Singapore, is worrying.

Equally worrying is that young drivers will see this as acceptable. Drivers have to show more respect for the faster car and/or recognise when they have been legitimately outfumbled.

Mike Gardener Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

In reply to Chris John's

letter (April 19), much as I understand his argument that Scottish drivers deserve recognition as Scots, they are still British and, as such, should be grouped with other British champions.

I would be just as happy to see Paul di Resta as a winner this year as I would for Lewis Hamilton or Jenson Button.

Even better would be to witness him win at the *English* Grand Prix at Silverstone! It can work both ways, remember.

Mick Harris Ashted, Surrey

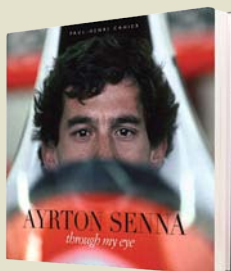
THE LATEST GEAR

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From £26.99 (autosport.com/shop)

Perfect timing: Lotus takes a superb double podium finish in last weekend's Bahrain Grand Prix, courtesy of Kimi Raikkonen and Romain Grosjean, and here's a selection of the team's official merchandise. Time to get on that bandwagon! The range includes caps (£26.99) and T-shirts (£31.99) in Team and Raikkonen livery, as well as Polos (£44.99 for Kimi spec; £54.99 for Team) and rain jackets (£109.99). Check the website for the full selection.



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Top Model has produced a range of 1:18-scale driver figures to complement those large-scale diecasts. Choose from modern racers Alonso or Schumacher, or heroes of old like Clark, Rindt, Lauda, Villeneuve (above right) or Mansell (above left). Choose carefully, though, as some are better than others...

Available from Porsche's official website and in some stores, the Martini Racing Collection harks back to the successful tie-up between the classic Italian drinks firm's stripes and the German sportscar marque. There's plenty to choose from if you fancy recreating a bit of Ickx/Mass/935 magic.

This 176-page hardback tome features some of the most eye-catching imagery yet seen of Ayrton Senna. The Brazilian is captured – on- and off-track – by celebrated F1 snapper Paul-Henri Cahier, whose hand-picked favourites make this book an essential addition to the library of any Senna fan.

HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YOUTUBE: DC EXPLAINS CHANGES TO DTM CARS FOR 2012



SEARCH FOR: David Coulthard: 2012 DTM AMG Mercedes C-Coupe (3:32)
Europe's most spectacular touring-car series kicks off at Hockenheim this weekend, with BMW rejoining old adversaries Audi and Mercedes. Here's Merc man David Coulthard to explain what's happened to the cars for 2012.

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 750MC

April 28-29

Admission: £13 each day

Tel: 01474 872331

The 750 Motor Club features a packed schedule. Races include the 750 Trophy, Formula 4, Formula Vee, Sport Specials/SR>, Locost, RGB, Stock Hatch, Classic Stock Hatch, 750 Formula, Saxmax, Bike-Sports, Toyota MR2 and the BMW Compact Cup.

GTS, 50s Sports Cars, Ferrari Classic and Ferrari Open.

KIRKISTOWN 500MRCI

April 28

Tel: 02842 771325

A strong entry of more than 20 cars for the new FF1600 SuperSeries tops the bill at Kirkistown, supported by Formula Libre, Roadsports, Saloons/GTs, Ford Fiestas and Irish Ginetta Junior.

DONINGTON PARK MSVR

April 28-29

Admission: £15 each day

Tel: 01332 810048

GT Cup, F3 Cup, Radical Clubmans Cup, Monoposto, Golf GTI, VAG Trophy and the Club MSV Team Trophy.

CROFT BARC

April 28-29

Admission: £12 each day

Tel: 01325 721815

SNETTERTON BRSCC

April 28-29

Admission: £13 each day

Tel: 01953 887303

SILVERSTONE AMOC

April 28

Admission: £9

Tel: 0844 3728200

Aston Martin Racing GT4 Challenge, Intermarque, Equipe

PRESCOTT HILLCLIMB

April 28-29

Admission: £12 (Saturday);

£15 (Sunday)

Tel: 01242 662914

THRUXTON TOCA

April 28-29

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Jason Plato leads the British Touring Car Championship despite crashing in race two and being penalised in race three at Donington last time out. The

MG driver will defend his slender points advantage from 2011 champion Matt Neal, with Andrew Jordan and Rob Collard not far behind. The touring cars will be supported by Ginetta Juniors (who also had an eventful Donington) and GT Supercup, the Renault Clio Cup and the Porsche Carrera Cup GB.



Dramatic BTCC season heads to Thruxton

DTM

Rd 1/10

Hockenheim, Germany

April 29

dtm.com

The BMW newboys will take on Audi and Mercedes for the first time in 2012 as Deutsche Tourenwagen Masters kick off at Hockenheim. Mercedes has won the past five DTM races on the 2.8-mile circuit.



DTM 2012 kicks off at Hockenheim

RALLY ARGENTINA

World Rally Championship
Rd 5/13, Villa Carlos Paz,
Argentina

April 27-29

wrc.com

INDYCAR SERIES

Rd 4/16

Sao Paulo, Brazil

April 29

indycar.com

GP2 SERIES

Rd 3/12

Sakhir, Bahrain

April 27-28

gp2series.com

NASCAR SPRINT CUP

Rd 9/36

Richmond, Virginia, USA

April 28, nascar.com

FIA EUROPEAN FORMULA 3/ F3 EURO SERIES

Rd 1/10 and Rd 1/8

Hockenheim, Germany

April 28-29

f3euroseries.com

FIA WORLD TOURING CARS

Rd 4/12

Slovakia Ring, Slovakia

April 29, wtcc.com

GRAND-AM SERIES

Rd 3/13

Homestead, Florida, USA

April 29, grand-am.com

FIA FORMULA 2

Rd 2/8

Algarve, Portugal

April 28-29

formulatwo.com

INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN

Rd 1/8

Algarve, Portugal

April 29, gtopen.net



International GT Open gets going

Television

THURSDAY APRIL 26

0330-0530 **ESPN**
FIA GT1 and GT3: Zolder Highlights
2235-2305 **Motors TV**
WRC: Rally Argentina Preview

FRIDAY APRIL 27

0730-0830 **Eurosport**
WTCC: Marrakech Highlights
0900-0935, 1310-1340, 1620-1650
Motors TV
WRC: Rally Argentina Preview
0925-1005 **Sky Sports F1**
GP2: Bahrain Qualifying
1355-1520 **Sky Sports F1**
GP2: Bahrain Race 1
1615-1715 **Premier Sports**
NASCAR Sprint Cup:
Kansas Highlights
1925-2030 **Motors TV**
Formula 2: Silverstone Highlights

SATURDAY APRIL 28

0030-0130, 0600-0700 **ESPN**
ALMS: Long Beach Highlights
0705-0730 **Channel 4**
British F3: Monza Highlights
0900-0935, 1830-1900 **Motors TV**
WRC: Rally Argentina Day 1
1155-1300 **Sky Sports F1**
GP2: Bahrain Race 2
1335-1445 **Motors TV LIVE**
Formula 2: Algarve Race 1
1445-1630 **Motors TV LIVE**
International GT Open: Race 1
2105-2205 **Motors TV**
British F3: Monza Highlights

SUNDAY APRIL 29

0030-0430 **Premier Sports LIVE**
NASCAR Sprint Cup: Richmond
0730-0820 **Eurosport LIVE**
WTCC: Slovakia Warm-Up
0900-0935, 1730-1800, 2100-2130
Motors TV
WRC: Rally Argentina Day 2
1100-1800 **ITV4 LIVE**
BTCC: Thruxton
1230-1400 **BBC2 LIVE**
MotoGP: Jerez
1300-1500 **Eurosport LIVE**
WTCC: Slovakia Races
1630-1730 **Eurosport 2**
WTCC: Slovakia Highlights
1730-2000 **Sky Sports 2 LIVE**
IndyCar: Sao Paulo
2230-0015 **ESPN**
DTM: Hockenheim Highlights
2250-2345 **Motors TV**
Formula 2: Algarve Race 2

MONDAY APRIL 30

0100-0300, 1200-1400 **Sky Sports 4**
IndyCar: Sao Paulo Highlights
0745-0845, 1015-1115 **Eurosport 2**
WTCC: Slovakia Highlights
0900-0935, 1135-1210, 1445-1515,
2130-2205 **Motors TV**
WRC: Rally Argentina Day 3
1830-1930 **Sky Sports 2**
NASCAR Sprint Cup: Richmond
1925-2130 **Motors TV**
Formula 2: Algarve Highlights
2015-2200 **ESPN**
DTM: Hockenheim Highlights

Online

AUTOSPORT.COM PLUS

Coming up in our premium web content this week



DTM PREVIEW

To mark BMW's return to the DTM this weekend after 20 years away, AUTOSPORT Plus has a special Zoom In to mark the manufacturer's achievements in motorsport over the past 75 years. Plus, find out who's driving what and how Phoenix Racing intends to fight for another title after losing the services of champion driver Martin Tomczyk.



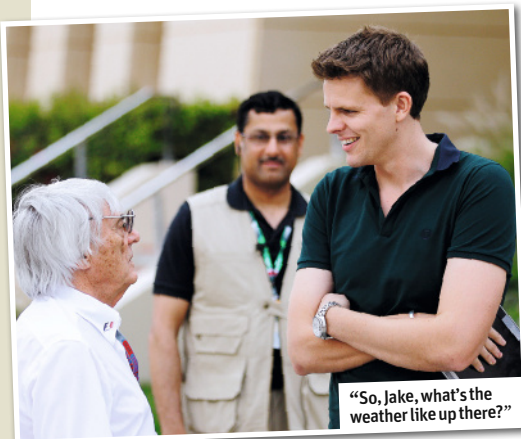
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REVVED UP OVER WHAT'S ON THE BOX

We cast a critical eye over the best and worst of this week's TV coverage



"So, Jake, what's the weather like up there?"

ANCHORS. ESSENTIAL for keeping boats from drifting listlessly, and also for ensuring that sports programmes have a means of exposition from one element of analysis to another.

There was a time when they would be experienced broadcasters with a journalistic background; men such as Steve Rider or Jim Rosenthal, there not only because of their ability to read from an autocue while someone barks orders through an earpiece, but because of their knowledge and enthusiasm for the sport.

Those were the old days. Now primetime sports telly is a young

man's game, with your ability to provide eye candy for the ladies as important as knowledge.

Jake Humphrey set the tone when the BBC promoted him from children's telly to be the lynchpin of its F1 coverage. And while his faintly smug and aloof style can be an affront, there's no denying there's a chemistry between him, EJ and DC that made the Beeb's post-race Bahrain show fairly breeze by.

Over on Sky, things aren't going quite so smoothly for Simon Lazenby. If his initial reluctance to grab a quote from a passing star was understandable,

it's the way he's yet to gel with the post-race analysis that's the issue.

In a parody of his career, it takes Damon Hill a while to get going when giving an answer, but eventually he (usually) ends up delivering. And yet despite telling us that there was over an hour of post-race show to come, Lazenby seemed on tenterhooks to move it along, butting in as Hill or Martin Brundle tried to get their thoughts across.

It's not all Lazenby's

fault. The Sky Pad is a real asset for the show, but criminally underused. Why wasn't it deployed to dissect Rosberg's outrageous defence from Hamilton and Alonso, rather than relying on Lazenby to coax Damon off the fence?

There was a time when Murray Walker would introduce the show, call the race and do the interviews afterwards. That wouldn't do now, although I've no idea why. *Revved Up*

"Why wasn't Sky Pad deployed to dissect Rosberg's outrageous defence from Hamilton and Alonso?"

THE WEEK IN PICTURES

Our lensmen pounding the beat from Donington to NZ, via some tight trousers in Belgium



IN A LAND FAR AWAY FROM BAHRAIN..
Great Mighty Mini action at Donington, as Gregory Jenkins (right) pips Emmerdale actor Kelvin Fletcher to fourth - by 0.011 seconds!

HAMILTON EXUBERANCE IN V8 SUPERCARS
Aussie factory Ford men Mark Winterbottom and Will Davison give the kerbs a hammering in New Zealand



THE POPULARITY OF F1 IN BAHRAIN
They never fail to draw a crowd - a small one, we mean. Wonder if they're keeping up with those terrible foreign media reports...

NO BUM NOTES AT ZOLDER WORLD GT1
AF Corse took the tight trousers with its Ferraris - and scored a podium



NEXT WEEK GILLES VILLENEUVE THIRTY YEARS SINCE WE LOST F1'S BEST-LOVED STAR **DON'T MISS IT!**

PICS: CIANFLONE, THOMPSON/GETTY, BERNIS/SRO, OLIVER READ

FROM THE ARCHIVE

1983: the last time four different constructors won the opening four F1 races



Tambay with Arnoux and Prost: Imola 1983

“The Brabham of Patrese passed Tambay a few laps from the end. It lasted 30 seconds: the Italian slid off into the tyre wall”

SO, IT HASN'T ALL BEEN WILD OPTIMISM: 2012 REALLY could be a classic year for Formula 1. As Sebastian Vettel held off Kimi Raikkonen for his maiden victory of the season, he not only moved into the lead of the drivers' championship but became the fourth different driver – from a fourth different constructor – to win in the season's opening four races.

To find a similar situation we have to go back to 1983, when Nelson Piquet claimed victory for Brabham in the season opener in Brazil. John Watson (McLaren), Alain Prost (Renault) and Patrick Tambay (Ferrari) were victorious at the next three races.

In many ways the sequence was as unlikely as this year's has been. Piquet, for example, began the season in blistering form, crushing the opposition at the Jacarepagua circuit in his native Brazil.

A winning margin of over 50s suggested Brabham would be the class of the field, even if it was flattered to some extent by Keke Rosberg's exclusion – the Williams man disqualified for a push-started after a pitlane fire.

Brabham's domination did not last long, as McLaren picked up its first win in the following race at Long Beach. Watson staged a superb recovery from 22nd on the grid, his cause aided by Patrick Tambay, Rosberg and Jean-

Pierre Jarier clashing and by Riccardo Patrese running wide while trying to pass the tyre-troubled Jacques Laffite, which handed the Northern Irishman the initiative.

France and Paul Ricard was the turn of Prost, with home soil proving the panacea to Renault's suspect reliability. The Frenchman qualified on pole by more than two seconds and was similarly dominant in the race as the RE40, so lamentable in the US, thrived in its native air.

Home soil again proved an advantage a fortnight later at Imola, as Ferrari collected an emotional victory 12 months after Gilles Villeneuve's last, controversial race at the track.

Tambay was the man who delivered victory, but he had been under threat as the faster Brabham of Patrese closed and then passed him for the lead a few laps from the end. It lasted all of 30 seconds: the Italian lost concentration and slid off into the tyre wall at some speed, leaving Tambay to collect the win. Out of fuel on the slow-down lap, he was carried aloft by the jubilant tifosi.

The run would continue for one more race – Rosberg and Williams imperious in mixed conditions in Monaco – before Prost took his second win of the year at Spa. The Frenchman moved into the championship lead as a result and held it until the final grand prix, when Piquet wrested the title from his grasp at Kyalami. ❧

THIS WEEK IN...



APRIL 25 1958

THE AINTREE 200 CAME DOWN TO A

remarkable photo finish this week in 1958, as Stirling Moss and Jack Brabham finished just two tenths of a second apart after 67 laps.

Moss, who had led from the start in his Rob Walker Cooper-Climax, appeared to be sailing to an easy victory over his works Cooper adversary, Australian Brabham having been delayed for nearly a minute to fill up with water.

But in the closing stages Brabham – aiming for his first world championship win – was gaining ground and, with the finish line almost in sight, was able to slip by Moss and into the lead. But the Briton managed to get a run through the final right-hander of Tatts Corner and outdragged Brabham on the run to the chequered flag – much to the delight of the Aintree crowd.



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RICARDO ZONTA

■ World GT1, Spa-Francorchamps ■ Lamborghini Murcielago R-SV ■ July 31, 2010 ■ Surprise win at great track



The Zonta/Kechele Lambo powers out of Eau Rouge

I THINK THAT EVERY RACE

I have had good results in is fantastic for me, you know?

There are so many, I can't remember. From Formula 3000 to GT1s – all the ones that I have won are special. So many races in different places, where different things happened. I would say over my whole career I've won quite a lot of races.

But there is one race that I do remember well. In 2010, when I drove for Reiter Lamborghini in the World GT1 championship, I think one of the victories I had was very, very nice – and that was at Spa with Frank Kechele. That one was very special because Spa is a great track and the Lamborghini was also a fantastic car to drive and I enjoyed it a lot.

We had a Murcielago R-SV, but we were not so quick. We had qualified second, but I was a bit worried that in the race we wouldn't be able to match the pace of the [polesitting] Mad-Croc Chevrolet Corvette of [Xavier] Maassen and [Jos] Menten.

"I lined up a move for the lead, which started with a great run through Eau Rouge and ended up with a pass into Les Combes. To win was a great effort"

The Lamborghini was a really nice car to drive and it was quite easy to push hard in it. The Nissan GT-R I drove the year after was much more difficult to take to the limit. And Spa is such a nice track.

Of course I've had good moments there, and I've had bad moments also. And then there was the 2000 Belgian GP with Michael Schumacher and Mika Hakkinen that people remember!

IN PROFILE



BRAZILIAN RICARDO ZONTA

graduated from his native karting to single-seaters, soon winning his domestic F3 series. A move to F3000 in '96 yielded two wins, with the title coming in '97. A stop-gap year led to the FIA GT title with Mercedes in '98, before a BAR F1 call-up started his three-year spell at the top. After two races with Jordan in 2001 he dropped out of F1, only to return for five races in '04 with Toyota. Since then, the 36-year-old has raced in tin-tops and sportscars.

Every time I go there I have a good feeling. It's got fast corners and very nice flowing corners – especially in the middle section. It's a really nice circuit for a driver.

When it came to the second GT1 race we were able to keep the pace with the Corvette [that had beaten them in the qualifying race], which was a surprise. And I lined up a move for the lead, which started with a great run through Eau Rouge and ended up with a pass into Les Combes. To win that race was a great effort for me and for the team too.

The result didn't mean anything for me career-wise. At that stage there was not much point in trying to get results to help me with finding jobs. It is a pleasure for me. I don't race for anything else – it's just for pleasure. Every time I try to be part of a team, I try to be with a team where I can have the pleasure to drive, and to win also. And that day all of those things came together for me. ✎ Ricardo Zonta was talking to Andrew van de Burgt

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** 17.1% of drink drive accidents are between hours of 5am and 1pm (Source: Dept. for Transport, Road Accidents and Safety Annual Report 2010)
 * 4 Pints of Abbot Reserve contain 14.8 units of alcohol (Source: Greene King) and each unit takes 1 hour to leave the body (Source: NHS). Therefore 14.8 hours after 9pm the alcohol will have passed from the body.



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NEW

VA12604
Ford Escort MkII, RS1800, 1975 Manx Rally Winner Roger Clark AVAILABLE DECEMBER

Did you know?

In late 1974 Clark's longtime partner Esso withdrew their motorsport sponsorship. Promised a works Ford drive if he could find a personal sponsor Clark turned to Reckitt and Colman, a company he'd previously had links with. The result was the distinctive red 'Cossack men's hair spray' liveried series of Escorts, a brilliant TV ad (for which Clark took much ribbing in the rallying community) and a whole hatful of wins.



NEW

VA13101
Vauxhall Cavalier Mk3 GSI 1992, 2.0-litre super-touring John Cleland AVAILABLE NOVEMBER

SPECIAL EDITION

VA12702
Peugeot 205 1.9 GTI Miami blue, as featured on Top Gear AVAILABLE SEPTEMBER

VA12801
McRae DJM R4 Testing and Launch Livery AVAILABLE AUGUST



NEW TOOLING

Did you know?

Owner and ex BTCC driver Jim Pocklington bought the car in 2001, racing it in Formula Saloons until 2004. Restoration to full 1992 specification began in 2007. It was verified as a Mk3 Cavalier BTCC 'Chassis 1' as it still wore its rear-diff mounting brackets having originally been a rear-wheel-drive prototype. Jim used as many original parts as possible, including the 285bhp Swindon built engine, roll cage and suspension. He has successfully raced the car in invitation classic events and reunited it with original driver John Cleland.



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