

BAHRAIN GP F1 2010 ROARS INTO LIFE

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ALONSO TAKES FIRST BLOOD

Ex-champ bags debut Ferrari win
as spark plug hobbles Vettel



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- ➔ Mark Hughes on Red Bull's tech secret
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- ➔ Why Rosberg beat Schuey on superstar's return
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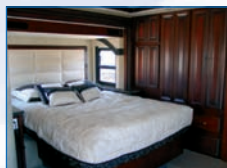
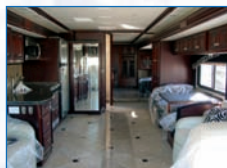
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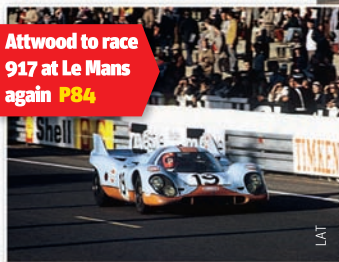
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Let's hope the slow start leads to rapid recovery



IT WAS hardly a classic was it? But while the Bahrain Grand Prix might have failed to live up to the stellar hype that surrounded it, compared with the previous six grands prix held on its Sakhir circuit, only one featured more overtaking than last weekend's parade.

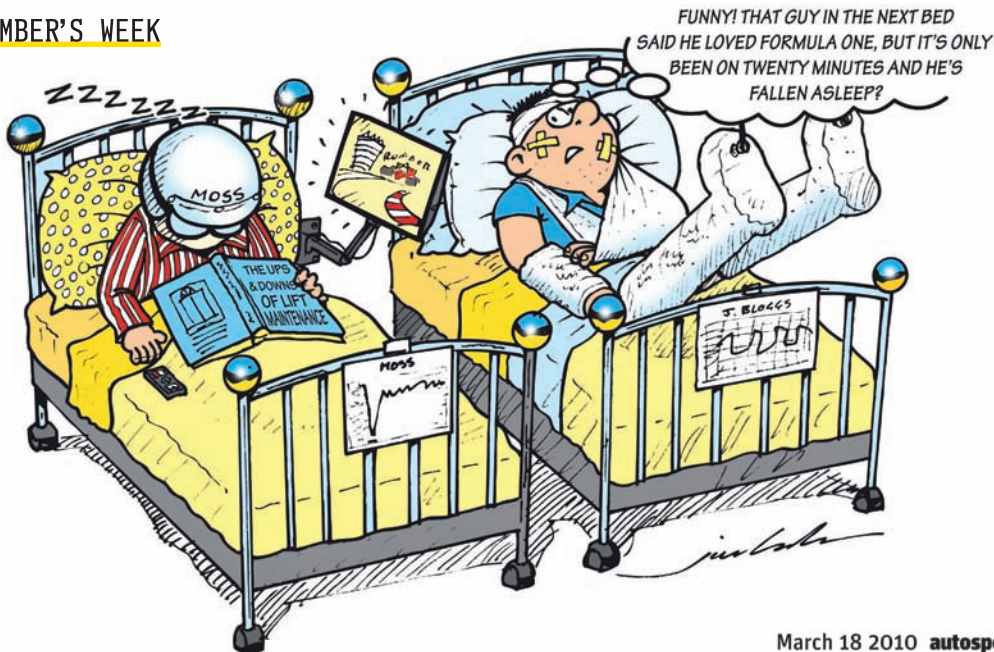
So, reasons to be cheerful? Plenty, especially if you're a fan of Ferrari or Red Bull or any of their drivers. Those two seem to have a clear advantage over the rest, although what would Lewis Hamilton have achieved had he not been bottled up behind Nico Rosberg in the early stages?

It was a key weekend for Rosberg, overshadowing the mighty Michael Schumacher on the great man's much-anticipated return. In fact, Rosberg's feat of beating Schumacher in every practice and qualifying session as well as the race, was only the second time in 249 races that a team-mate has trounced the seven-time champ so convincingly.

It might have been undersold on the TV coverage, but the 60th anniversary of F1 was a great spectacle too, and we celebrate it in style on page 40.

Andrew van de Burgt, editor

BAMBER'S WEEK



60 YEARS OF F1

Mansell makes Ferrari comeback in Bahrain

Not since finishing second in the Australian GP of 1990 had Nigel Mansell driven a Ferrari GP car in anger. That all changed during the 60 years of F1 celebration in Bahrain last weekend when 'Il Leone' hustled a 1950 125 GPC Thinwall Special around the Sakhir venue.

Photography: Dunbar/LAT





Bahrain sends F1 back to the drawing board

Processional season-opening GP raises questions over whether Bahrain was just a blip, or a sign that the regulations need to be reworked again. EDD STRAW reports



Bahrain GP was not a hotspot for overtaking

DUNBAR/LAT

Formula 1 must consider rule changes in both the short and long term to ensure that it capitalises on the unprecedented interest in the sport after a race that FOTA chairman Martin Whitmarsh described as a “reality check”.

There was widespread condemnation from drivers and team personnel of the predictability of a race in which there was little strategic variation between the frontrunners. The top 10 finishers were identical to those at the end of the first lap and other than those caused by Sebastian Vettel’s spark-plug problem, the only changes to the order were Lewis Hamilton and Jenson Button getting ahead of Nico Rosberg and Mark Webber respectively in the pits. All of the top 10 ran similar strategies, pitting from laps 15-20, with even Tomio Liuzzi, the only points-scorer to

start on the medium compound, able to complete 29 of the 49 laps on a super-soft tyre that some, unfairly, labelled too good.

This year’s regulations have made it no harder to overtake, however refuelling was a variable that shuffled the competitive order and at least mitigated the lack of on-track action.

The only realistic option for this season lies in the number of pitstops mandated. There were discussions pre-season about forcing each driver to stop at least twice, although not enough teams supported the idea.

“We have got to be open to everything to help the spectacle of the sport, but we don’t have the ability to make wholesale changes at the moment,” Whitmarsh told AUTOSPORT. “We can have two stops. Some people clearly thought that in a competitive situation they

would be able to one-stop better but, hopefully, now people have had a reality check and we can actually do the right thing for the sport.”

Another possibility could be to force the top-10 runners qualifying

“We don’t have the ability to make wholesale changes at the moment”

Martin Whitmarsh

on the softer tyre compound to make an extra pitstop, thereby creating a situation in which teams must balance their starting position against the quicker race strategy.

THE LONG TERM

There are calls for F1 to consider a more radical path, although paddock feeling stops short of seriously

considering the ‘shortcut’ idea suggested by Bernie Ecclestone.

If the sport decides that it must evaluate bigger steps, a more thorough analysis into how to improve the spectacle is required. The working group charged with coming up with the aerodynamic regulations for 2009 slashed downforce as a means to improve overtaking, but it had neither the remit nor the resources to examine thoroughly how downforce could be recovered. Downforce levels in 2010 are believed to be very close to those seen at the end of 2008.

AUTOSPORT believes that the responsibility for this lies with a unified tripartite approach involving the FIA, FOM and FOTA. Whitmarsh agrees.

“It’s an important cause and we have got to work together in the F1 community,” he said. “We are



Most of the teams ran similar pit strategies

working together now. We want exciting, fair races. F1 has got to be the pinnacle of the sport, but we've got to do what we can to make the spectacle better."

KNEE-JERK REACTION

There is an inevitable danger of a knee-jerk reaction to a single, processional race.

The excitement of Michael Schumacher's return and an unprecedented number of driver changes has made F1 very aware of the need to keep fans happy. With a change to the number of pitstops the only realistic fix for this season, it is hoped that the next few races will be more unpredictable.

"We mustn't have a knee-jerk reaction after one race on a circuit like this, so we will see," said Whitmarsh. "It's going to settle down in the next two or three

races, but I think that tyres are the best way we are going to find of solving this in the short-term."

If next weekend's Australian Grand Prix is a dramatic, incident-filled tyre shredder, Bahrain will be put down to over-reaction. If it isn't, the time is right for F1 to have a long, hard think about its future. But the full consequences of any changes must be analysed to ensure that F1's spectacle is improved without resorting to gimmicks.

 **P28**
Bahrain Grand Prix report

THE PADDOCK'S VIEW

Bahrain suggested that the refuelling ban failed to deliver in the excitement stakes. But was it a one-off?



WILLY RAMPF
Technical director, Sauber

“It's a concern I have that we will see similar strategies for the next races – a relatively early first stop and then try to finish the race. It's difficult to change anything – maybe if teams are forced to have two pitstops once the tyre compounds are defined it would help.”



NICK WIRTH
Technical director, Virgin

“It was always going to be a step back, because refuelling is such a variable. I have my opinions on what makes overtaking important and it's very clear that others have different opinions. The majority view seems to be if you can create a car that has similar downforce to the car in front, then everything will be okay. It will help, but there are much more important issues. The importance of making it a good spectacle has sunk in and has some very clever people thinking about it. I hope their second attempt will be more successful.”



MICHAEL SCHUMACHER
Mercedes GP

“Overtaking was impossible unless somebody made a mistake. That is the action we are going to have with this kind of race strategy.”



MIKE GASCOYNE
Chief tech officer, Lotus

“I think we have to give it a few races and see where it comes out. It's very easy to draw conclusions from one race, so let's see.”



CHRISTIAN HORNER
Team principal, Red Bull

“Certainly I would vote in favour of a compulsory two-stop race because it would move the strategy around a bit. You can't say they need to be passing each other every lap, but there needs to be the possibility to pass, so it should be given careful consideration.”



Schumacher needs time on new tyres

Seven-time champ's race pace is solid on his comeback, but he's struggling to get to grips with the demands of the narrower front Bridgestones in qualifying

Former F1 king was on form in the race

THOMPSON/GETTY

Seven-time world champion Michael Schumacher has admitted that he needs to extract more pace from his Mercedes in qualifying if he is to deliver on his Formula 1 return.

The 41-year-old produced strong lap times during the Bahrain Grand

Prix, his first Formula 1 race since October 2006, but had qualified a disappointing seventh, two places and 0.283s behind Mercedes team-mate Nico Rosberg.

Schumacher shrugged off suggestions that the deficit was due to his age and rustiness. He said that the understeer of the Mercedes on low fuel levels made it difficult to be committed into corners without sacrificing precision, and that he struggled to adopt Rosberg's more aggressive approach.

"With my driving style, I have to get the car to the point that I work better with this narrower front tyre," he said. "I want the car to move around the corner the way I think it should be."

During the race, there was nothing to choose between Schumacher and Rosberg, with the ex-Ferrari star holding his own in sixth place throughout.

Schumacher's lap times were similar to Rosberg's throughout the race. Although his race pace was

"I have to get the car to the point that I work better with the front tyre"

Michael Schumacher

moderated by the need to preserve tyres, he was able to outpace Rosberg on seven of the final 10 laps when his team-mate was pushing hard to chase down the

ailing Red Bull of Sebastian Vettel.

Schumacher reported no physical problems after the race, although he did admit that the need to manage tyre wear made it easier.

"With regards to the fitness, this race was not at all difficult for me and I was not exhausted at all," he said. "This is partly due to the fact that those tyres, in that heat, do not allow for more speed."

"I am very, very happy and proud about how it went, considering I was completely out for three years and did not have a lot of driving for preparation," he said. "It would be strange to assume that I would come in, sit in the car and drive circles around the others – I, for my part, did not assume that in any case."



Rosberg was lead Merc man

FERRARO/LAT

IN BRIEF

RESERVE TEAM SLOT FOR 2011

The FIA World Motor Sport Council agreed last week to initiate a new selection process to award the 13th team slot for Formula 1 in 2011. In addition to the 13th slot, the process will also appoint a reserve team. The slot has become available following US F1's failure to race in 2010.

GPDA DECISION DELAYED

The decision on who will replace Pedro de la Rosa as chairman of the Grand Prix Drivers' Association is set to be made in Australia next weekend after the drivers' meeting in Bahrain last week was brought to a premature end. Before a successor could be decided, the room had to be given up

for it to be prepared for a press conference!

HULKENBERG BEST ROOKIE

Five rookies made their F1 debuts in the Bahrain Grand Prix. Nico Hulkenberg, Bruno Senna, Karun Chandhok, Vitaly Petrov and Lucas di Grassi – all GP2 race winners – made their first starts, although Hulkenberg



(above) was the only one to finish, crossing the line in 14th place in his Williams.

FERRARO/LAT

Senna hails HRT 'miracle'

BRUNO SENNA, the nephew of triple world champion Ayrton, hailed HRT's debut in the Bahrain Grand Prix as "a miracle" after the Spanish squad won its race against time to be ready with its Dallara-built cars.

Although the Brazilian and team-mate Karun Chandhok retired after completing 17 laps between them in Sunday's race, Senna believes that the team did a remarkable job in getting both cars out of the garage for their debut grand prix.

"It was a miracle to get the cars running and I'm very proud of the team," said Senna. "We hope to be able to fight with the other new teams this season. It's hard to say because we are only on our first weekend."

Team-mate Chandhok's first laps in the car came in qualifying after hydraulic problems prevented the Indian from running during free practice. He expects May's Spanish Grand Prix at Barcelona, where the car will be upgraded, to be a key point in the team's progression.

"A lot depends on Barcelona," Chandhok told AUTOSPORT. "The first few races are going to be tough, but the team is as good as it could be in such a short space of time."

Lotus was best of the new teams, with Heikki Kovalainen finishing 15th. Virgin's Timo Glock was the fastest of the new boys in qualifying, in 19th.

GAPS BETWEEN POLE AND RECENT START-UPS ON DEBUT

The new teams might have been hanging off the back of the field in Bahrain, but their performance relative to pole position doesn't look too bad compared with some of the other start-ups of the past few years:

Australia 1999	BAR	P11 Villeneuve	102.682%
Australia 2002	Toyota	P14 Salo	103.916%
S Africa 1993	Sauber	P6 Lehto	103.921%
Australia 1997	Stewart	P11 Barrichello	104.147%
Bahrain 2010	Virgin	P19 Glock	104.924%
Bahrain 2010	Lotus	P20 Trulli	105.040%
Brazil 1994	Pacific	P25 Gachot	106.276%
Bahrain 2006	Super Aguri	P20 Sato	106.540%
Brazil 1994	Sintek	P26 Brabham	106.877%
Brazil 1995	Forti	P23 Moreno	107.727%
Bahrain 2010	HRT	P23 Senna	108.001%
Australia 1997	Lola	DNQ Sospiri	112.983%



Senna tried to keep out of the way in Bahrain

Mercedes plans reshuffle

MERCEDES GRAND PRIX is planning to appoint a new chief operating officer as part of an ongoing team reshuffle.

The COO will not come from within the team, and Mercedes has yet to decide on who will fill the operational role.

Chief executive officer Nick Fry told AUTOSPORT: "Twelve months ago we had to make a significant reduction in the headcount, so this restructuring is always something we planned to do."

Mercedes has already made changes on the technical side, with well-respected deputy technical director Gary Savage seemingly on his way out of the team, although he is still employed by the squad. Chief designer John Owen is stepping into the gap left by Savage with a brief to head up car performance, with chief engineer Russell Cooley tasked to fill a similar role on reliability.

"We are evaluating what Gary Savage does," said Fry. "He hasn't left the team."

P17 MARK HUGHES

Red Bull shrugs off tyre concerns



Webber's RB6 'fair dinkum' on tyres

RED BULL is still at a slight disadvantage to Ferrari on tyre degradation, even though Sebastian Vettel looked to be running away with last weekend's Bahrain Grand Prix.

Bridgestone director of motorsport tyre development Hirohide Hamashima believes that, although the top four teams are similar in their tyre usage, Ferrari has an edge.

"It's very close between Ferrari and Red Bull," Hamashima told AUTOSPORT.

"In terms of degradation, Ferrari's is a little better, but by a small margin. I think it will be the same in Melbourne [for the next race]."

Red Bull boss Christian Horner said that fears over tyre degradation were exaggerated.

"We saw that we have a fast car that is good on its tyres," said Horner. "We had Ferrari covered both in the race and qualifying, and hopefully we can be strong in the Australian Grand Prix."

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

EDD STRAW
F1 EDITOR

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No-one cheers the referee. At best, he is anonymous; at worst, a sporting pariah. Formula 1 stewards are no different. Whenever a contentious decision is made, whatever the rationale behind it, the F1 steward is characterised as a know-nothing, often doddering, idiot who has let the sport down. Look back at the 2008 Belgian Grand Prix to see textbook steward-slatting (even though the rules had been applied correctly).

That this perception is often grossly inaccurate and unfair doesn't matter. The stewards in Bahrain last weekend had no contentious decisions to make, although anyone glancing at the names of Paul Gutjahr, Enzo Spano and Mazen Al-Hilli would, had there been a contentious ruling, doubtless have written them off as know-nothings (they aren't – just take a look at their biogs on www.fia.com). But there was a fourth steward in Bahrain, one Alain Marie Pascal Prost, who gave the stewarding panel instant gravitas.

The addition of a respected former driver to the stewarding panel (Damon Hill will be the man on the spot in Monaco, for example) is one of the changes instigated by Jean Todt in his low-profile role as FIA president. It's still early days for the Todt administration, but he has made good on his promise to avoid the more autocratic style of the *ancien regime*, and even his sternest critics will grudgingly admit that he has made a good start.



Todt: good start as FIA president

ROLL OF HONOUR

Fernando Alonso became the fifth driver to win on his Ferrari debut in the Formula 1 World Championship with his victory in the Bahrain Grand Prix. He joins an illustrious list:

Juan Manuel Fangio (Argentina 1956) • Giancarlo Baghetti (France 1961) • Nigel Mansell (Brazil 1989) • Kimi Raikkonen (Australia 2007)



Mansell won for Ferrari at Jacarepagua in 1989

F1'S GREATEST-EVER GROUP SHOT OF CHAMPIONS

The Formula 1 world championship's 60th anniversary celebrations were launched in Bahrain with a gathering of almost all of the living world champions. Only Nelson Piquet and Kimi Raikkonen were absent. Back row, from left: Alain Prost, Alan Jones, Nigel Mansell, Mika Hakkinen, Jacques Villeneuve, Keke Rosberg, Jody

Scheckter, Michael Schumacher and Damon Hill. Front row, from left: Fernando Alonso, Jenson Button, Niki Lauda, (Bernie Ecclestone), Mario Andretti, (FIA president Jean Todt and wife Michelle Yeoh), Sir Jack Brabham, Sir Jackie Stewart, John Surtees, Emerson Fittipaldi and Lewis Hamilton



 P40 60 years of F1 celebrations

FERRARO/LAT

McLaren triggers aero war

Controversial 'f-duct' system sends rivals looking for other forms of driver-influenced aero gains

McLaren's controversial 'f-duct' aerodynamic system could pave the way for a number of driver-influenced aero designs.

The device allows the driver to neutralise the effect of the rear wing on straights to increase the car's top speed by covering a hole in tubing running through the cockpit.

Although the regulations prevent any moving parts on the car changing the aero performance, the principle of the driver being free to influence airflow indirectly is leading teams to consider more extreme ways of improving performance.

Williams technical director Sam Michael told AUTOSPORT: "There

are definitely other things that you can do. Teams will be thinking a bit more laterally about the driver."

AUTOSPORT understands that, as well as working on their own versions of McLaren's design, several teams are evaluating the possibility of more extreme concepts that could offer a performance edge. Teams could experiment with more aero parts on driver's helmets, although as these would be moveable it would be difficult to make them work. They could also encourage drivers to influence airflows through the cockpit to other parts of the car.

Although some teams have questioned the legality of the design, no protests were made in Bahrain after the FIA ruled the system legal, and the precedent has now been set. There was some suggestion that it

was prohibited by the so-called ban on "moveable aerodynamic devices" – article 3.15 of the technical regulations – but that does not apply (see box). James Allison, technical director of Renault, one of the teams that was unhappy with McLaren's concept, believes that there are other problem areas for the design in the current regulations.

"There are various paragraphs in there that are nothing to do with [article] 3.15 that make a device like that very difficult to implement and stay on the right side of the rules," Allison told AUTOSPORT. "But now it's pretty much accepted and we have been examining the same concept. If and when we get to a point where we can package it in our own car, we will do it. But it's a fair amount of engineering to do it."

McLaren used its new duct system in Bahrain

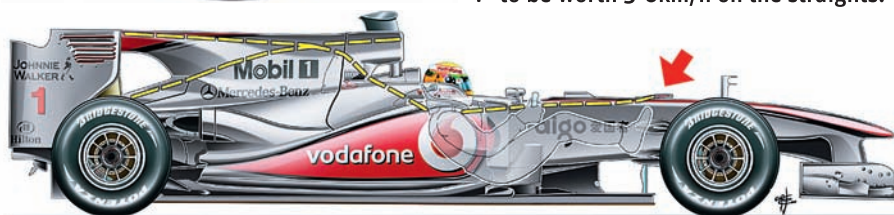


HOW McLAREN'S 'F-DUCT' WORKS



SECRET AIRFLOW EXPLAINED

The so-called 'f-duct' is placed on the top of the chassis forward of the driver to the left of the centre line. It takes in air, feeds it through tubing that runs through the cockpit area to the left of the driver, continues through a hatch at the back of the chassis, upwards to the top of the engine cover and then through the shark fin to the rear wing. A hole in the duct can be blocked by the driver on the straight to change the airflow across the rear wing and induce stall – a neutralising of the rear wing and reduction in drag. It is reckoned to be worth 5-6km/h on the straights.



WHAT THE REGULATIONS SAY

This is the article commonly referred to as banning "movable aerodynamic devices". However, it pertains to the car, which is clearly defined as being distinct from the driver. This regulation does not prevent a driver influencing the airflow on an aerodynamic device, such as the rear wing, with his movements.

Rule 3.15

Aerodynamic influence:

With the exception of the cover described in Article 6.5.2 (when used in the pitlane), the driver adjustable bodywork described in Article 3.18 and the ducts described in Article 11.4, any specific part of the car influencing its aerodynamic performance:

- must comply with the rules relating to bodywork;
- must be rigidly secured to the entirely sprung part of the car (rigidly secured means not having any degree of freedom);
- must remain immobile in relation to the sprung part of the car.

Any device or construction that is designed to bridge

the gap between the sprung part of the car and the ground is prohibited under all circumstances.

No part having an aerodynamic influence and no part of the bodywork, with the exception of the skid block in 3.13 above, may under any circumstances be located below the reference plane.

Q&A

SAM MICHAEL WILLIAMS TECHNICAL DIRECTOR

What's the timescale for teams to have their own versions of the McLaren 'f-duct' concept ready?

It's quite easy to stall the rear wing, but it's hard to stall it in a controlled manner. But even if you've got to have a tortuous path through the chassis with ducting it should still be no problem. Maybe two or three races?

Did you seek any clarification from the FIA on its legality?

If you looked at the regs there's nothing to say that you can't do that. The driver is involved, but why not? Hats off to McLaren – they thought about it before the rest.

So why are some teams adamant it's illegal? They are just trying to

wind the thing up – although maybe there's something in the regulations that we haven't thought of that makes it illegal.



THIS WEEK IN F1



MERCEDES The team was recognised for winning last year's drivers' and constructors' world championships at the prestigious Laureus Awards last week. Brawn GP won team of the year, with champion Jenson Button receiving the award for best breakthrough.



RED BULL Engine supplier Renault is still pushing for a performance break. Despite pressure to be allowed to make changes being resisted over the winter, Renault is still hoping to get a claimed 30bhp deficit addressed.



MCLAREN Jenson Button could swap cars with V8 Supercar champion Jamie Whincup in a Vodafone promotional event at Albert Park next week. Plans are afoot for each to sample the other's machinery in Melbourne next Tuesday.



FERRARI The Scuderia changed the engines in both Felipe Massa's and Fernando Alonso's cars before the Bahrain Grand Prix. The units, the first in each driver's eight-engine allocation, will be used only for practice from now on.



WILLIAMS Technical director Sam Michael expects the team to improve rapidly. "There are areas that are not optimised because of the lack of time," he said, adding that the team would bring updates to each of the next four races.



SAUBER The Swiss team has yet to nominate a reserve driver for the season. Former Formula BMW Europe champion Esteban Gutierrez is on the team's books, but not in a reserve role.



RENAULT Former team principal Flavio Briatore has harpooned any possibility of returning to F1. "I rule that out 100 per cent," he said. "It would have been fairer had I left it [F1] at the end of 2006, after Alonso's second title."



FORCE INDIA Reserve driver Paul di Resta will make his grand prix weekend debut in Australia. The Scot did not run in Bahrain because of the need to gather data on the new section of track with an experienced driver.



TORO ROSSO Sebastien Buemi is hopeful that aggressive strategies will pay off. "Maybe we will take a few more risks than a team fighting for the championship," he said.



LOTUS Team principal Tony Fernandes believes that the double-finish in Bahrain is the ideal platform for closing the gap. "We've always built the car for reliability because we knew we could find pace," Fernandes told AUTOSPORT.



HRT Former Red Bull technical director Geoff Willis is continuing to work with the team, although only on a consultancy basis for now.



VIRGIN An upgrade package planned for Australia is set to be held back until Malaysia to allow the team to focus on reliability for the next round. "We have a planned update for Melbourne, but we may delay it to focus on other areas," Nick Wirth told AUTOSPORT.

ALONSO ON THE UP AFTER F1 WIN

Ferrari star begins climb up the Castrol Rankings as 2010 action heats up



In his first race for Scuderia Ferrari, Fernando Alonso (left) climbed three places in the Castrol Rankings with victory at the opening grand prix of 2010, in Bahrain. A sign of things to come, perhaps, as the

2005 and 2006 world champion is up to 16th place. His Ferrari team-mate, Felipe Massa, marked his return to the cockpit following serious injury last year with a confident second-placed finish. The Brazilian jumped 18 places up the Castrol Rankings and now sits in 66th position.



Performer of the Month

March is a busy month in motorsport and there could be major changes in the Castrol Rankings. Who do you think will be named the **Castrol EDGE Performer of the Month**? Go online to make your prediction, and you could win signed BMW Motorsport merchandise.

ON THE MOVE

- Red Bull's **Sebastian Vettel**, who led in Bahrain before finishing fourth, may be on the verge of claiming the overall lead in the Castrol Rankings, with Melbourne an opportunity to take top spot
- All eyes were on **Michael Schumacher** at the opening race of 2010. The returning F1 legend entered the Castrol Rankings in 876th position
- GP2 Asia star **Luca Filippi** has rocketed up the Castrol Rankings (up 28 to 73rd) after providing a first ever GP2 win for Malaysia Qi-Meritus.com
- Reigning champ **Dario Franchitti** remains the top IndyCar Series driver in the Castrol Rankings, with pole position and seventh place in the season opener in Brazil
- **Will Power** (below) won the Indy race in rain-soaked São Paulo, lifting the title-hunting Penske driver into the Castrol Rankings top 100



Castrol Rankings CURRENT STANDINGS

1	↔	Jenson Button		F1	21,354
2	↔	Sebastian Vettel		F1	20,982
3	↔	Sébastien Loeb		WRC	18,871
4	↔	Rubens Barrichello		F1	18,383
5	↔	Mikko Hirvonen		WRC, IRC	18,343
6	↔	Jimmie Johnson		Sprint Cup, Grand Am	18,339
7	▲	Dario Franchitti		IndyCar, ALMS, Grand Am	17,500
8	▼	Mark Webber		F1	17,394
9	▲	Scott Dixon		IndyCar	17,101
10	▼	Ryan Briscoe		IndyCar	16,748

DATA CORRECT AS OF 15 MARCH 2010

The Castrol Rankings analyse 2,000+ drivers in 500+ races and rallies across five continents. Go online today to find out more

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MPH Mark Hughes

AUTOSPORT grand prix editor

Red Bull's rampage with Sebastian Vettel caught everyone on the hop in Bahrain – and wondering where the RB6's 'invisible' advantage came from

McLaren and Michael Schumacher each arrived in Bahrain quietly confident. All the evidence suggested they were going to be in the thick of the action, fighting out the destiny of the race, certain they were about to get their respective seasons off to a flying start, that it was all there waiting to be taken.

Yet, post-qualifying, both were left bewildered and bemused. "Where the hell did that come from?" one McLaren driver was overheard saying to the other, fresh from the cockpit, uncomprehending at how they could be over 1s away from pole. Michael – also well over 1s off the qualifying pace – sat in the Mercedes press conference

looking and sounding shellshocked, confounded and almost embarrassed.

The pace of the Red Bull – and to a lesser extent the Ferrari – had indeed come out of the blue. Practice on Friday and Saturday morning suggested a small edge for the Ferrari, but with Red Bull, Mercedes

and McLaren all in the ballpark. Mercedes' Nico Rosberg headed one session, the McLaren drivers hot on his tail, Schumacher's long-run times the equal of anyone's. Yet there it was, stark on the screen, on Saturday afternoon: McLaren and Mercedes each 1.1s adrift of Sebastian Vettel's pole.

Was there something they and the watching world weren't

understanding here? A vital missing piece of intelligence? Whatever could it be? A little clue: a Red Bull on a non-flying lap moved aside for a car on a flyer. Getting off line, it found some ripples in the asphalt and a plume of plank dust flew out of the back. If the car was grounding out on low fuel, how was it ever going to cope with being loaded with 160kg of fuel on Sunday, when the parc-ferme rules forbid ride heights being changed?

This set in motion a train of thought. What if the car had a mechanism, some sort of linkage, that opposed any increase in weight pressing down upon it, thereby keeping the ride height constant? A ratchet system maybe, working against the third spring of the suspension? It would achieve much the same thing as active ride had all those years ago, keeping the ride height low for devastating aerodynamic effect, but wouldn't be powered – as that is expressly forbidden in the regulations. With such a car it would not be necessary to run a high ride height in qualifying, because it would automatically compensate for the weight of the fuel the following day. That would give it a huge qualifying advantage over otherwise-similar conventional cars. It would tally that the car would be no quicker than the other frontrunners on a long run, as it would be running a similar ride height to them. The advantage would only show in qualifying.


If the Red Bull – or the Ferrari – were running such a system, it would have been cleared in advance by the FIA. There would be a

plausible reason why it was within the regulations, which suggests that for the other teams it would be just a matter of plugging into the right justification. Asking around, they didn't seem to think that technically it would be much of a challenge.

If some mechanical form of 'active' ride has indeed been devised, one of the real beauties of it would be that it's not obviously visible and no-one would be alerted to it – until the devastating qualifying lap, that is. Red Bull denies strenuously it has such a system, that the grounding out of its light-fuelled car was about nothing more than tyres not yet up to temperature and pressure. It's all part of the general paranoia of fiercely competitive entities.

McLaren had been at the centre of controversy, with its ingenious 'f-duct' system that allowed the aero to be stalled down the straights, reducing the drag. That little trick was doubtless part of the team's optimism. It was a simple, inexpensive bit of innovation that doubtless irritated those who hadn't thought of it. But it was very visible.

At Mercedes much of Schumacher's demeanour will have been about the 0.3s deficit to his team-mate, rather than the bigger gap between the Merc and the front row. This is new territory for him and he appeared genuinely shocked.

Watching these competitors regroup and react to the stark reality revealed by last Saturday's qualifying screen is going to be fascinating. 



Schumacher faced a deficit to his old team, Ferrari

 P28 BAHRAIN REPORT

“It would achieve the same thing as active ride had”



SPORTSCARS

UPDATED R15 BREAKS COVER

AUDI APPEARS to have opted for a low-drag set-up on the 2010 version of its R15 prototype. The first picture of the R15 plus, which begins its development programme in the US this month, reveals significant aerodynamic changes to the car that was beaten by Peugeot in last year's

Le Mans 24 Hours. Some of these are the result of rule changes that forced modifications to the controversial front-end aerodynamics of the original R15, but the limited details available from Audi talk of improving drag. One leading sportscar designer gave AUTOSPORT his assessment

of the revised R15: "Some of the changes could be the result of its splitter not working in the same way or it could be they are looking for lower drag. I would say it's likely to be the latter." The R15 will test at Sebring next week after the 12 Hours, and race at Paul Ricard on April 11.

FIA GT2

Ratel fears end of FIA GT2

Second GT class is heading towards a long-distance-only future as ACO and FIA fail to agree on car specifications

Attempts to relaunch an FIA GT2 series may not be successful, GT boss Stephane Ratel has warned.

Ratel reiterated his desire to run an FIA-sanctioned series for GT2 cars in Europe next season after confirmation of the postponement

of the 2010 FIA GT2 European Championship last week. But he said that the reasons for that postponement – the success of the GT3 category and the requirements of Le Mans organisers – may scupper his plans.

"The growth of GT3 has been amazing, but the problem is the cars are now as fast as GT2s, yet are 60 per cent of the cost," he said.

He explained that the FIA and the Automobile Club de l'Ouest at Le Mans had "different performance needs" for the GT2 class.

"It was agreed that GT2 cars should have about 500bhp, but now

the ACO is talking 420-430bhp," he said. "The manufacturers are saying that it would not be possible to build one car with two different levels of engine performance. That is why I could imagine a situation where there are FIA championships for GT1 and GT3 cars, while GT2 will be just for long-distance racing in series run to Le Mans rules."

Ratel's comments follow an ACO statement proclaiming GT2 to have a "wonderful future beckoning over the coming years". It appears to be an assertion of independence, despite an agreement that the FIA should be in charge of GT rules.

Ratel elaborated on his idea for the GT2 category to become a proving ground for new green technologies. Porsche has already committed to racing a hybrid 911 GT3-RSR in this year's Nurburgring 24 Hours.

"GT racing has always been about production cars, but maybe we have to accept laboratory cars," he said. "It is the wish of the new FIA President [Jean Todt] that we push in that direction."

Ratel said it would be impossible to introduce this idea for next season. He said his plan for GT2 in 2011 was for a "limited number of events".

GT2 will become a long-distance class



ALMS

Ganassi restricts Pruett's Jag deal

ULTRA-SUCCESSFUL US sportscar driver Scott Pruett will only contest two rounds of the American Le Mans Series with the factory-backed RSR Jaguar sportscar team this year.

Pruett, the winner of seven US sportscar titles over the past 25 years, had been scheduled to contest the seven ALMS races that do not clash with his Grand-Am commitments with the

Ganassi team. But team boss Chip Ganassi has now ruled that his lead driver is only available for the enduros.

RSR, a spin-off of Paul Gentilozzi's Rocketsports team, has opted to field only one of its Jaguar XKRS GTs in this weekend's Sebring 12 Hours. Marc Goossens, Ryan Dalziel and Gentilozzi, who are scheduled to do all the races, will now contest the ALMS opener.

That means Pruett will only race at the Laguna Seca and Road Atlanta ALMS enduros, as well as the Le Mans 24 Hours.

Gentilozzi said: "Unfortunately Chip has decided that Scott can only do the long races, so it made sense to put in drivers for Sebring who will be doing all the races."

Pruett will only race the Jag three times



P56 ALMS PREVIEW

WORLD GT1

Sumo signs Hughes and Campbell-Walter

BRITISH SPORTSCAR
stalwarts Warren Hughes and Jamie Campbell-Walter will race for the new Sumo Power Nissan team in this year's inaugural FIA GT1 World Championship.

Former MG factory driver Hughes and 2000

FIA GT Champion Campbell-Walter agreed terms with the start-up Sumo Power squad over the weekend. It follows a successful test at the new Motorland Aragon circuit in Spain with the British team at the end of February.

Sumo Power engineering manager Allen Orchard said: "We have been making such good progress that we have decided to pull out all the stops and put two professional [rather than paying] drivers in the second car. Now we have

got the complete package, we are hopeful that we can challenge for the championship."

Hughes, who notched up two GT2 class victories in the Le Mans Series with the LNT Panoz team in 2006, said: "The chance to test with Sumo Power came out of the blue, but it went really well, so I'm really pleased to get this drive. It's an exciting series that will be visiting a lot of good tracks."

Campbell-Walter, who has raced for the Creation prototype team since '05, said "I'm over the moon and really looking forward to be back in GTs. It will be good to get involved in the new championship at the beginning."



Brit pros will join all-new Sumo team

DPPI

IN BRIEF



BOBBI CHANGES MC12s

Former FIA GT Champion Matteo Bobbi is switching from Vitaphone Maserati to its new satellite team in the FIA GT1 World Championship. The Italian, who completed a partial FIA GT schedule with Vitaphone last year, will share one of the two Triple H Hegersport Maserati MC12s (above) with Bert Longin.

BLACK SWAN PULLS OUT

The Black Swan Racing team has scratched its entry from this weekend's Sebring 12 Hours. The Boston-based team, which is running an ex-Farnbacher Porsche 911 GT3-RSR on Dunlop tyres, is scheduled to compete with Jeroen Bleekemolen and team boss Tim Pappas at Long Beach next month.

CREATION TARGETS ALMS

The British Creation Autosportif team is aiming to join the American Le Mans Series at Laguna Seca in May with a reworked version of its CA07 LMP1 contender, now known as the CA10. Plans to complete

the full season were put on hold when a sponsor withdrew.

MAASSEN JOINS MAD CROC

Dutchman Xavier Maassen will drive the Mad Croc Racing Chevrolet Corvette C6.R run by DKR Engineering in the FIA GT1 World Championship this year. The team is searching for a team-mate for Maassen, who raced for the Belgian team on two occasions in last year's FIA GT series.

MEGANE CHAMP TO GT1

The final seat at the Hexis Aston Martin team for the FIA GT1 World Championship has gone to Jonathan Hirschi, runner-up in last year's Renault Megane Eurocup. The 24-year-old Swiss will share the team's second Aston DBR9 with former A1GP and GP2 racer Clivio Piccione.

AUDI TEAM TESTS R8s

The United Autosports Audi team shock down the pair of Audi R8 LMS GT3s with which it will contest this year's European series at the Algarve circuit last week (below).



ALMS

Mucke gets Aston call for Sebring



Mucke gets Aston chance at Sebring

STEFAN MUCKE has been drafted into the Aston Martin Racing line-up in this weekend's Sebring 12 Hours.

The German has been named alongside Adrian Fernandez and Harold Primat in AMR's solo Lola-Aston Martin entered for the American Le Mans Series opener. Mucke, one of AMR's 2009 championship-winning Le Mans Series line-up, takes the drive originally destined for Briton Chris Buncombe.

AMR team principal George Howard-Chappell gave no reasons for the omission of Buncombe, who was also absent from the official Le Mans Series test last week.

Buncombe, who raced for AMR in the final two LMS rounds last season, insisted on Monday that he was still part of AMR's plans. It is understood that his omission relates to one of the partners he introduced to the team.

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

GLENN FREEMAN
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Much like the suggestion of the five chassis manufacturers bidding for the 2012 IndyCar deal actually competing on track makes too much sense for it to ever happen, so does the idea of the DTM trying to join up with other international championships.

News that the DTM bosses have been talking to their counterparts at Grand-Am sounds pretty surprising to start with. But once you've read the story on page 20 and had a think about it, you can't help but see the sense in it.

The direction that the DTM goes in with its new cars will make or break the series, and it appears that the Grand-Am interest is simply part of a wider fact-finding mission that we know has already encompassed Super GT in Japan.

It's a sensible approach, and it's unlikely that it stops there. With V8 Supercars also preparing its 'Car of the Future', you'd feel confident putting some money down on someone in Germany racking up one hell of a phone bill.

BMW has been adamant that it would want to race in more than one series if it ever built a DTM car, and there must be other manufacturers out there that feel the same. Like I said, it just makes too much sense.



Aussie V8s meets DTM? Why not?

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“ I think Dan [Wheldon] is going to have some trouble getting out of here...”



Local favourite Tony Kanaan warned his former team-mate Dan Wheldon that the Sao Paulo crowd wouldn't let the Briton off for causing the Brazilian to crash on Sunday

DTM/GRAND-AM

DTM has talks with Grand-Am

German series bosses continue to evaluate international tie-ups by entering discussions with American series



DTM target BMW supplies Ganassi Grand-Am entry

Attempts to internationalise the DTM rulebook have encompassed discussions with the Grand-Am sportscar series in the US.

The ITR, which runs the German series, is known to have already been in talks with Super GT organisers in Japan about common regulations and the possibility of DTM and Japanese GT500 cars racing together. Now it has emerged that the same discussions have been going on with Grand-Am.

Grand-Am vice-president of competition Dave Spitzer acknowledged that a dialogue had been opened with the ITR.

"The DTM approached us to begin discussions regarding our rules and how we operate as a race

series," he said. "We were happy to enter into conversations, recognising the potential for learning and the importance of relationships in racing. Those conversations are still ongoing."

The ITR's attempts to forge a partnership with another series are primarily focused on luring BMW back into the category. BMW Motorsport boss Mario Theissen has repeatedly stated that the Munich marque has no interest in building a car that could only be raced in the DTM.

A link-up with Japan and the USA would be of interest to BMW. They are two of the top markets for its sporting M-Brand.

It is unclear how an alliance between the ITR and Grand-Am

might work. Grand-Am was founded on rules stability and its bosses have repeatedly stated that it has no plans for big changes.

The GT Association, which runs Super GT, has admitted publicly for the first time that it is open to the ITR's ideas.

GTA boss Masaaki Bandoh said: "I think we could have an

incredible fight, mixing its cars with our GT500s. We would like to somehow actualise joint events."

Bandoh expressed doubts that the drive towards common rules could be completed in time for 2012, when the current generation of DTM car is due to be replaced. He suggested that 2015 was more realistic.



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Sato will run this livery from St Pete

INDYCAR
Lotus to offer technical support to KV

BRITISH SPORTSCAR manufacturer Lotus is putting its engineering resources behind Takuma Sato's IndyCar Series campaign with KV Racing Technology this season.

Lotus has entered into what new Lotus Cars motorsport boss Claudio Berro is calling a "technology partnership"

with the KV team owned by Kevin Kalkhoven and Jimmy Vasser. The deal was signed just prior to last weekend's IndyCar opener in Sao Paulo and will result in Sato's car running in Lotus colours from round two at St Petersburg.

Berro said: "This is not about sponsorship, but

technical support. We will support the team with three engineers at each race, and there is some development in terms of suspension and aerodynamics that is allowed on the Dallara."

Berro said that the alliance with KV could be a precursor to a Lotus-badged engine

developed in conjunction with Cosworth, which is owned by Kalkhoven.

Berro said it was important that Lotus, which has licensed its name to the new Lotus Racing F1 team, has an involvement in top levels motorsport. He said the marque was also evaluating LMP1.

NASCAR

NASCAR steps up 'air' investigation

Keselowski's Dodge was heavily damaged



NASCAR BOSSES have vowed to increase their efforts to prevent Sprint Cup cars from getting airborne following the Brad Keselowski/Carl Edwards crash at Atlanta 11 days ago.

Keselowski's Penske Dodge was the latest car to take off when spun around at high speed. The incident caused alarm as it was the first of this type to occur on a non-restrictor-plate track.

NASCAR president Mike Helton said: "The car getting airborne is a very serious issue. We've not seen a car get airborne much on a mile-and-a-half racetrack and that's something that is very important to us. We're going to study it very closely and figure out things that we can do to quickly help prevent this."

Cup series director John Darby added that, as part of this latest investigation into airborne accidents, tests would take place in the next few weeks to see what can be changed on the cars.

"Our aero crew is going to run a whole series of tests to look for more information," said Darby. "We'll look to see if there are additions to the car that can improve what we have. We'll do everything we can to help keep cars on the ground, but the one thing that's very hard for us to deal with is the huge difference between a car being lifted off the ground by air and being knocked into the air by an impact."

NASCAR placed Edwards on probation for three races after he admitted that he deliberately crashed into Keselowski as a retaliation to an earlier clash.

NASCAR

Cup spoiler gets more testing

THE RETURN of a rear spoiler to NASCAR Sprint Cup cars remains on course following two tests of the new configuration in the past week.

A handful of cars ran the spoiler at a Goodyear tyre test at Darlington last week, while more than 20 cars were set to try it at Talladega as

AUTOSPORT closed for press on Tuesday.

Clint Bowyer, who was one of the drivers on track at Darlington, was pleased with the change.

"There's not a huge difference, but the car feels stable, looks good, and I think some of the characteristics are going to help us race even



Talladega has had its last race with wing

better," said the Childress Chevrolet driver.

Following Talladega, a further two-day test to

work extensively on the spoiler package has been scheduled for March 23-24 at Charlotte.



INDYCAR

BRAZIL HAILED A SUCCESS

THE FIRST IndyCar Series race to be held in Brazil was praised by drivers after overnight repairs made a huge difference to the Sao Paulo circuit.

Saturday's qualifying session was postponed until Sunday morning to enable track repairs to take place, after the majority of the field reported problems keeping their cars under control on the concrete start/finish straight.

While the surface remained bumpy for the race, the drivers were much happier with the street track.

Race winner Will Power said: "The improvements they made overnight were like night and day. It was a really good day for racing, because on this layout if you are fast you can pass people."

The race attracted a crowd of 46,000, after the organisers had only planned for 40,000.

Local hero Helio Castroneves said: "This is 10 times bigger than when CART ran in Rio. Even with all the circumstances and bad weather, none of the fans went home."

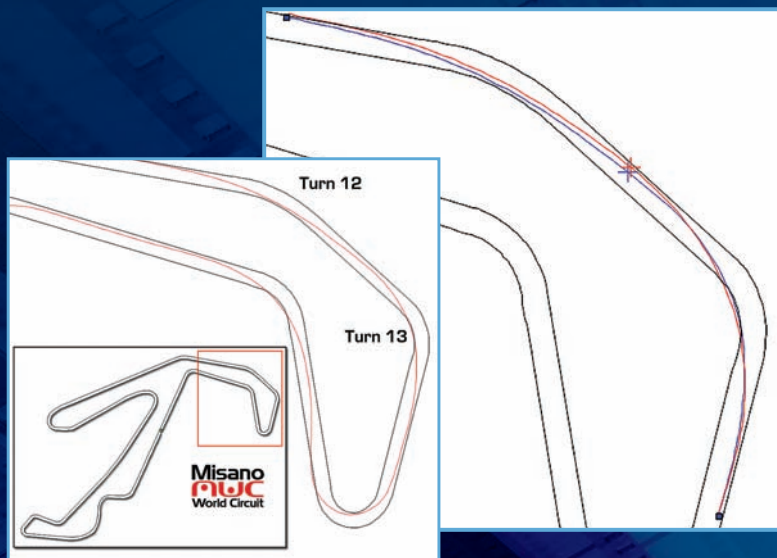
Why am I half a second off the pace?

Brain Power is the new Horse Power

With tightened budgets, restricted testing and stiffer competition, driver training has enjoyed a surge in popularity. In the first of a series of articles, we will be discussing technique with various professional driver coaches to try to help you extract every last ounce of performance from yourself as well as your car.

In this article we will be discussing **Compound Corners** which are common to almost every race circuit, with accomplished race driver and personal coach, **Nigel Greensall**.

Definition – Compound corners: a series of corners, close enough such that the car is always turning and never travelling in a straight line.



Nigel Greensall – "It is a common mistake to treat compound corners as two separate items, whereas they should be tackled as one section, with sacrifices being made in the first corner to gain maximum exit speed of the second corner. There are many examples, but let's take Misano Circuit, Turns 12 and 13."

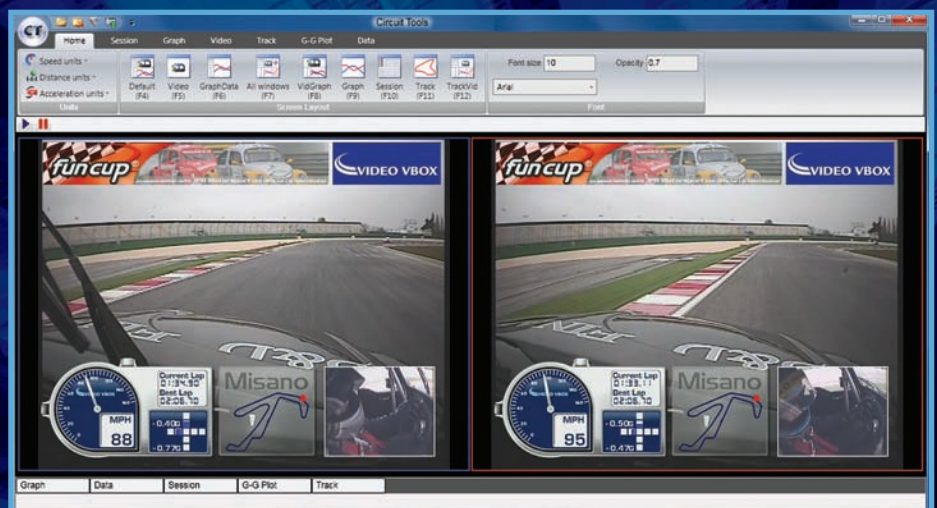
"There are many ways to take these corners, but I have found that the quickest is almost to ignore Turn 12 and set yourself up for a nice wide entry into Turn 13 (red line). That way you can carry as much speed as possible through Turn 13. If you treat Turn 12 as a conventional corner and clip the apex, you cannot get far enough across to use the whole width of the track into Turn 13 (blue line). It feels very odd to deliberately miss the apex, but it works!"

"Using screenshots from the in-car video, you can see just how much closer to the edge of the track I could go, whilst carrying 7mph more speed."

"The analysis software showed a gain of 0.67s, which was very simple to achieve, just by taking a slightly different line."

To read more examples from Nigel, including a fascinating line through some corners at Dubai Autodrome which will have you scratching your head, please visit the article on our website:

www.VideoVBOX.co.uk/as1



IN BRIEF



BTCC GOLF HITS THE TRACK

New BTCC squad AMD Technik ran its heavily-revised Volkswagen Golf at Brands Hatch on Tuesday (above). Shaun Hollamby drove the car, which now features a Super 2000-style aero package.

HAMILTON BACK IN THE CIVIC

Matt Hamilton will contest the full British Touring Car Championship this year. The ex-Formula Palmer Audi race winner made three appearances in a TH Motorsport Honda Civic-R last year and has re-signed with Trevor Humphrey's squad.

COLLARD TESTS WITH WSR

New WSR signing Rob Collard had his first run-out in one of the team's BMW 320si machines at Rockingham last Friday alongside his BTCC team-mate Andy Neate. Both drivers continued their testing programmes with two days of running at Oulton Park this week.

PINKNEY TRIES HIS VECTRA

David Pinkney gave his ex-works Vauxhall Vectra its maiden run as a Pinkney Motorsport machine at Brands Hatch last week. Meanwhile Martin Johnson and Lea Wood were at Silverstone in a Boulevard Vauxhall Astra Coupe and a Woods Honda Integra-R respectively.

FORTEC SIGNS RUSSIAN

Fortec Motorsport will run a third car in British F3 this season for Max Snegirev. The Russian, who raced for Team West-Tec in the British F3 National Class last season, will test one of Fortec's International-Class Dallara-Mercedes for the first time at next week's final pre-season test at Silverstone.

VERGNE SETS BRITISH F3 PACE

Red Bull-backed French racer Jean-Eric Vergne (below) set the fastest time at the penultimate British F3 pre-season test at Oulton Park last week. The Carlin driver's 1m27.444s best lap was 0.353 seconds clear of the next best lap by Raikkonen Robertson Racing's Carlos Huertas.



BRITISH F3

Triple 8 to join F3 grid

Top British touring car outfit Triple 8 Engineering will branch out into single-seaters this season after linking up with British F3 aspirant Teamcraft.

Both squads have run into trouble with their respective 2010 plans. Multiple BTCC title winner Triple 8 was due to run a fleet of Caparo T1000 supercars for the new Pro 1000 Series, but financial problems have delayed that programme (see Sports Extra, page 84).

Teamcraft has been looking to move into British F3 this season, following the downfall of A1GP. The squad acquired the ex-Nick Tandy JTR Mygale and began testing with 2009 McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award winner and Formula Renault UK champion Dean Smith before Christmas.

Teamcraft failed to find a driver with budget off the back of that outing and was forced to miss each of the opening three official pre-season tests.



Two more cars will boost British F3

Teamcraft Sporting Director Les Jones recently became managing director of Triple 8 and the squad has also purchased an F3 Dallara. Jones hopes pooling resources will allow Triple 8 to run dual programmes in touring cars and British F3. He confirmed both would be run under the Triple 8 banner with [previous Triple 8

chief] Ian Harrison running the touring car operation and Jones looking after the single-seater side. "By sharing resources we will try to expand both businesses," said Jones. "Triple 8 is one of the best touring car teams – we want to get a touring car programme going and launch the single-seater side off the back of that."

BTCC

Smith and Glew test Vectra

TRIPLE 8 has moved a step closer to remaining in the British Touring Car Championship this year after the former Vauxhall works team tested McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award winner Dean Smith and Renault Clio Cup champion Phil Glew at Rockingham last Friday.

Triple 8 team principal Ian Harrison said: "We never wanted to stop the BTCC. But with the economic situation being as it is, it's not easy for anyone." Smith and Glew shared one

of the team's ex-works Vauxhall Vectras in damp conditions during the day.

"I've got to decide what's best for my career," Smith said. "If I do Formula 2, then I'm potentially a year away from F1, but it's not every day you get the opportunity to do something with a team like Triple 8, so I've got a lot of thinking to do."

Glew, who is in talks with a number of BTCC teams, described Triple 8 as "an amazing team and good option".



Vauxhall team is hopeful of return

DTM

Paffett and di Resta to skip test

DTM FRONTRUNNERS Gary Paffett and Paul di Resta will miss the official pre-season test at Valencia later this month due to a clash with the Australian Grand Prix.

The four-day test runs from March 24-27, during

which time both Mercedes drivers will be in Australia fulfilling their third-driver roles with McLaren (Paffett) and Force India (di Resta).

The British pairing will instead get one day of testing elsewhere at the

end of this week, and neither expects the reduced running to affect their title chances.

"We've done some testing already and I'm happy with the car," said Paffett. "It's the same car as last year [because of the

development freeze] so I'm happy it's not going to affect us."

Di Resta added: "I know the car well, and hopefully Valencia won't be the hardest track to learn [when DTM races there]. It's not a problem."

FORMULA 2

Bratt targets F2 glory

WILL BRATT is confident that the experience he has gained racing in GP2 Asia will help him to challenge for the Formula 2 title this season.

The 21-year-old Briton won the Euroseries 3000 (now AutoGP) title in 2009 and contested the Asia Series with Coloni Motorsport as his prize. He has signed up for F2 this year and is targeting the Williams Formula 1 test prize for the champion.

"GP2 Asia was a lot tougher than I expected," Bratt told AUTOSPORT. "It would have prepared me better for GP2, but we didn't have enough money to do that with the team we wanted to go with.

"It certainly won't have done me any harm for F2, though. The idea is to win it and get the F1 test. Some drivers have one year extra experience [in F2], but I'm confident I can catch up quickly.

"I went and spoke to the guys at Bedford [F2 headquarters] and they were saying the aero grip was about the same as in 3000. This year that's increased by about 30 per cent, which is what I want - it'll help me develop."

Bratt wants to build on GP2



STALEY/GP

GP2 ASIA

Meritus plans European campaign

GP2 ASIA Series team Meritus is aiming to build upon its first-ever win at last weekend's Bahrain season finale with a step up to the main series in 2011.

The Malaysian team has contested the Asia Series since the first season in 2007-08, but had not scored a victory until Luca Filippi fought off new champion Davide Valsecchi in Saturday's feature race. An on-the-road win at Sentul two years ago, also with Filippi at the wheel, was taken away when the Italian was disqualified for using the wrong tyre allocation.

Meritus GP managing director and co-owner Firhat Mokhzani said that the win had given the team an extra boost with its ambitions to race in Europe.

"For us to get a victory at this level is

a great honour and testament to all the hard work the crew have put in," Mokhzani said. "This has given us more encouragement for our long-term plans, one of which is to move to the GP2 main championship in Europe next year."



Filippi scored breakthrough win

FERRARI/ALFA

P44 GP2 ASIA REPORT



BTCC

PLATO TRIES HIS CRUZE

British Touring Car Championship folk hero Jason Plato tested an RML Chevrolet Cruze for the first time at Oulton Park

on Tuesday. Alex MacDowall, his likely BTCC team-mate for 2010, was due to drive the car on Wednesday

LAWSON/PSF

GP2

First GP2 chassis retired from service

Series technical boss wants 26 museum pieces, not fun for hillclimb amateurs

The first-generation GP2 car was officially retired at last weekend's GP2 Asia Series finale, with series officials expressing hopes that the cars are maintained as display vehicles rather than adapted for other categories of racing.

The Dallara-built GP2/05 was used for the first three years of the GP2 main series between 2005 and '07, after which it was replaced by the current GP2/08 and put into service as the Asia Series car. GP2 technical director

Didier Perrin told AUTOSPORT that he would prefer not to see the cars used by private owners due to the maintenance requirements.

"I think it is better if they are retired," he said. "It would be a shame to see these cars doing hillclimbs or something like that. It is not the standard of that car."

But the cars are owned by the teams, and Perrin admitted that the series is powerless to dictate how the cars could be used.

"The cars belong to the teams, so it is their responsibility," he

said. "But we don't want to see them running. It's a powerful car, and to be safe it requires absolute top-level maintenance. We are not in favour of seeing these cars running without that standard of care. It's very difficult to maintain this car outside of a controlled series, and we discourage anybody from racing this car again."

The car will be replaced in the Asia Series by the GP2/08, which will be retired from Europe at the end of this year to make way for the GP2/11, again built by Dallara.

IN BRIEF

LLOYD LANDS COYNE SEAT

Former Indy Lights champion Alex Lloyd signed his first full-time deal for the IndyCar Series just in time for last weekend's season opener in Brazil. The Briton, a former Chip Ganassi Racing development driver, joined Dale Coyne Racing to partner Milka Duno.

RAHAL JOINS FISHER SQUAD

Graham Rahal has agreed a deal with Sarah Fisher Racing for two IndyCar races early in the season. The American will take over Fisher's car for the next two races on the street circuit in St Petersburg and the Barber Motorsports Park road course.

MORE DETAILS OF LOLA INDYCAR

Lola has released further details of its IndyCar 2012 proposal. The manufacturer

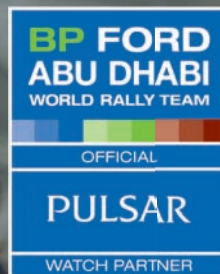


claims that its cars will be able to race closely because of the design of the underbody and rear-wing endplates in particular (above).

THIRD CAR FOR KV RACING

KV Racing added a third car to its 2010 IndyCar line-up last week when it retained Brazilian Mario Moraes for a second campaign. Briton James Rossiter had tested the car and was linked to the seat before last weekend's season opener in Sao Paulo.

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Al-Attiyah competes in S-WRC and IRC

MCKLEIN/DE

WRC/IRC

Todt eyes WRC/IRC merger

FIA president considers unification of two series in an attempt to create one strong world championship

FIA president Jean Todt is considering a merger between the World Rally Championship and the rival Intercontinental Rally Challenge.

Talk of a merger between the two has been rife ever since the IRC began in 2007 (having run as a four-round pilot series in 2006). World Rally Championship commission president Morrie Chandler remained sceptical about an alliance between the two series – but added that he had thought hard about it.

Chandler said: “I know Jean [Todt] is quite keen to see if we can’t find – my words – an ‘accommodation’ between the competing world events, in other

words IRC and North One [Sport, the WRC promoter]. I know there have been talks.”

Todt is currently considering many alternatives for the future of the WRC and he is known to have an appreciation of what IRC – and World Touring Car Championship – promoter Marcello Lotti has achieved with the Eurosport-backed series.

Chandler continued: “We’ve thought about [a merger] and looked at it a lot. The reality is, partly driven by the economy, that the sport’s not strong enough to have two strong divisions. To be fair to Jean, he’s asked the questions. He hasn’t jumped to conclusions, he is waiting. He

would like to see a greater homogenisation of our sport.”

Most recently, AUTOSPORT (February 25) revealed the potential for the two series to share the Monte Carlo Rally as their opening round. At the time, Lotti said he was prepared to discuss a potential event share, saying: “I am ready to sit at the table, but for me to say we are ready to share is far away.”

Chandler acknowledged one area where sharing would work could be in the division of rallies, which is already happening. Four rounds of this year’s IRC have run as WRC rallies in recent years.

Chandler concluded: “I think it’s [IRC] serving a role in our

sport [WRC] – not every event can be in the WRC.”

Increasingly, drivers are also competing in both series, with Nasser Al-Attiyah running in both the S-WRC and the IRC. The Qatar driver begins his IRC attack on Rally Argentina tomorrow (Friday).



Todt is aiming at homogenisation

COATES/LAT

WRC

Pirelli scheme may upgrade to WRC-spec cars

NEXT YEAR'S Pirelli Star Driver series could be switched to a World Rally Car-based programme, meaning an extra four factory cars running on selected rounds in 2011.

The FIA has contacted the teams currently involved in the WRC to ask for a price to run a car for a Pirelli Star

Driver next season. WRC Commission president Morrie Chandler sees the benefits as two-fold: increasing the number of top cars on the road and giving the drivers invaluable experience of a factory environment.

“We have seen how [Citroen driver and former Junior world champion]

Sebastien Ogier has benefitted from being in a works team,” said Chandler, “and we would like the PSDs integrated into a team where they rub shoulders with the leading drivers and team members. I’ve asked each of the teams to put a proposal to each have a Pirelli Star Driver in a car, paid for by us. One

thing the drivers are missing out on is that they’re not part of any family, they’re almost left as a separate entity. And that’s not what we want to do.”

Ford, Citroen, Petter Solberg World Rally Team and, when it arrives, the Prodrive Mini team, have been asked to price an extra car.

WRC Indecision delays 2011 calendar

A STAND-OFF between the FIA and the World Rally Championship promoter North One Sport looks increasingly likely after the World Motor Sport Council failed to discuss the proposed 2011 calendar.

The radical schedule of events put forward to last week's Bahrain meeting of the WMSC by North One Sport was handed back to the promoter, with a request from the FIA to have another look at it. The final calendar will be debated by FIA president Jean Todt, WRC Commission president Morrie Chandler and North One Sport, and a fax vote will decide the 2011 itinerary on April 16.

Sympathy for Jordan has sparked dissent



AUTOSPORT's sources have pinpointed the proposed Abu Dhabi Rally as the main point of the FIA's concern. Abu Dhabi will run a candidate event in December and is the proposed 2011 finale.

The source said: "There's a huge amount

of sympathy for Rally Jordan, which appears to have been cast aside in favour of a so-far untried event. Abu Dhabi has invested a lot of money in the sport, but that's not the concern of the FIA, is it?"

North One Sport CEO Simon Long admitted he

was disappointed that the calendar hadn't been ratified. He said: "I remain optimistic that the calendar can still be put together to meet the requirements of all concerned, there's time now to do that and I look forward to discussing it."

IN BRIEF



they'll drive on six WRC rounds during the year.

IRC PRIZE FOR EVO ACES

The winners of this year's three Mitsubishi Ralliart Evolution Challenges (in the UK, Ireland and Sweden) will be awarded a supported drive on the final round of this year's IRC, Rally Cyprus in November.

FLODIN WINS IN CHINA

P-WRC regular Patrik Flodin (Mitsubishi) won every stage on his way to victory on the opening round of this year's Chinese Championship, last weekend's Mohe Rally. Subaru driver Patrik Sandell was second with British brothers Mark and David Higgins third and fourth respectively in their Lancers.

ESCORT RUN FOR OSTBERG

World Rally Championship regular Mads Ostberg enjoyed his first taste of Ford's iconic Escort MkII (below) on last weekend's Mayo Stages Rally. The Norwegian ran as course car on the national event.



P-G TIPPED FOR FULL YEAR

Winner of the inaugural Super 2000 World Rally Championship round, P-G Andersson (above), looks to have clinched a deal to complete the S-WRC season in a Skoda Fabia S2000. The former Suzuki driver's next outing will be Rally Jordan, where he will be re-united with his former co-driver Jonas Andersson.

FARRAH LANDS HOME GIG

Jordanian driver Amjad Farrah has been handed a Production Car WRC entry for his home WRC round, next month's Rally Jordan. The Subaru Impreza driver finished fifth in Group N and 19th overall on the Dead Sea-based event last time out in 2008.

PSD TRAINING STARTS

This year's five Pirelli Star Drivers (Hayden Paddon, Alex Raschi, Ott Tanak, Peter Horsey and Nick Georgiou) began their programme with a training session in Edinburgh this week. The drivers will fly to Italy for their first taste of the Mitsubishi Lancer Evo Xs in which

WRC Loeb snubs Le Mans to see family



Loeb put his family ahead of Le Mans

SEBASTIEN LOEB has admitted he turned down the chance to race in the Le Mans 24 Hours this season in order to see more of his family.

Loeb, who says he still intends to return to the French endurance classic in the future, admitted a Le Mans entry with Peugeot this season would have been too much on top of his WRC programme and the development work on Citroen's new-for-2011 DS3 WRC.

"I had to choose between my family and the race," Loeb told AUTOSPORT. "If it had been just the race, it would have been okay. But there was so much testing – and the race at Sebring. One day, I was at a test and Citroen wanted to move one day of it to the next week. It would mean I couldn't go home for the next three weeks, meaning I would not see my daughter for five weeks."

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

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The World Rally Championship's current calendar debate was as inevitable as it is potentially harmful. Oh, to be a fly on the wall in the WRC powerbroker meetings before April 16, when the calendar will be confirmed.

As I outlined in my column on February 25, the problem is said to be Abu Dhabi's arrival with an untried event as the final round. The intriguing part of this issue is that FIA president Jean Todt's vice president, Mohammed Ben Sulayem, hails from the United Arab Emirates and is, understandably, championing the cause of Abu Dhabi. Todt, however, is coming under extreme pressure from parts of the Middle East – including the region's heaviest of heavy-hitters, Saudi Arabia – to back Jordan.

Todt has made plain his intention to sort out rallying during his four-year term, and his first decision of any magnitude will be the 2011 calendar. Is he going to roll over and let the WRC promoter have it all its own way? It's thought unlikely.

Let's face it, Jordan has done absolutely nothing wrong. Ironically, it won the Abu Dhabi Spirit of the Rally award for running a great event in 2008. I wonder what Prince Feisal has done with that particularly Abu Dhabi-branded gong...

As always, there's a commercial side to this scrap, however, and that's the 50-odd million Euros that Abu Dhabi is said to be investing in the WRC right now. And there's highly likely to be a 'no rally, no cash' clause in the contract somewhere. Watch this space.



Jordan won ironic Abu Dhabi award

IRC PREVIEW

Event	Rally Argentina
Round	3/12
Based	Villa Carlos Paz
Date	March 19-21
Stages	15
Surface	Gravel
Competitive miles	149
Previous winner	Loeb (WRC, 2009)
Most wins	Loeb (5)



Villagra will swap his WRC Focus for a Fiesta

SPANISH SLAYS WO



BAHRAIN GP

Sakhir

ROUND 1/19

LAPS 49

WINNER

Fernando Alonso
1h39m20.396s

POLE POSITION

Sebastian Vettel
1m54.101s

FASTEST LAP

Fernando Alonso
1m58.287s

RACE RATING

★★★★★

Let's bring back
KERS, refuelling,
traction control...

DRIVERS STANDINGS

Alonso	25pts
Massa	18pts
Hamilton	15pts

MILESTONES

- First Ferrari 1-2 since French GP in June 2008
- Biggest grid (24) in F1 since 1995



1™

MATADOR UNDEED BULL

New Prancing Horseman Fernando Alonso made a dream Ferrari debut to win, but only after Sebastian Vettel's Red Bull hit trouble.

By MARK HUGHES



QUALIFYING

Vettel creeps up and steals the thunder from the pre-season headline hoggers

It was the most eagerly-awaited qualifying day in recent memory, with a line-up that had put F1 at the centre of the sporting universe. Practice had just stoked the anticipation as the three teams with all the intrigue in their driver line-ups – Ferrari, McLaren and Mercedes – each took turns in the limelight. Yet, when it mattered, in the dying seconds of Q3, here came last year's pacesetter Sebastian Vettel for the team with the unchanged line-up. The Red Bull RB6 was edgy but quick through the slow stuff, and dynamite through the fast downhill flows of Turns 14 and 15.

That was just one of the challenges of Saturday. Your car needed to cope with a newly included loop – Turns 6 to 13 – that was dramatically bumpy, making for some great unfamiliar viewing of cars snaking and writhing, a violent brawl between downforce and rebound as the cars tried to simultaneously brake, change down, turn and traverse the big bump of T6.

Then you had to eke out your tyre life even over a single lap. With the rubbered-in track of Saturday, the supersoft was the quicker single-lap tyre by between 0.3-0.5s, so you had to use it. But that extra loop made for a long lap and its bumps used up a lot of the tyre's energy, as did the repeated second-gear acceleration zones and a track temperature in the high-40s C. So the rears tended to be overheating by the end of the lap. The degree to which this applied varied wildly from car to car and lap to lap – hence some much bigger gaps between cars than had been the case when they were all doing long runs in practice.

These conflicting and varying demands dramatically messed with the competitive order. The Red Bull was suddenly the best car over a lap, so it seemed, better even than the Ferrari, which appeared the most consistently fast. But the Mercedes didn't react well to qualifying's set of demands and the McLaren hated them. From being Ferrari-quick on the long runs of practice, the Merc was suddenly an understeering beast, the McLaren a stiffly suspended bucking bronco with not enough downforce, albeit fast down the straights.

Within that backdrop Vettel strung together a beauty of a lap, his cockpit countdown telling him he was getting progressively closer to not improving as those tyres got hot. But he'd judged it perfectly. Mark Webber in the sister car got in too deep into Turn 16, costing him 1s and dropping him to sixth.

Fernando Alonso made a similar but smaller mistake and, in that instant, ensured he would be eclipsed by Ferrari team-mate Felipe Massa, second fastest to Alonso's third for a truly impressive comeback. Lewis Hamilton danced the



Vettel beat combined Latin might of Ferrari

FERRARI/LAT

Qually was Chandhok's first time in HRT car



TEE/LAT

wayward McLaren through the bumps like you'd expect him to, flattering it with fourth-fastest time, albeit a second off pole. Jenson Button – nip and tuck as fast as Hamilton when they were running with higher fuel loads and the car was much better behaved – was 0.4s slower and back in eighth. He'd felt the car 'go strange' through one of the faster corners, the result, it later turned out, of the wind having changed direction by 90 degrees. It dented his confidence for the rest of the lap. Hamilton had felt nothing.

Nico Rosberg, the quicker Mercedes driver throughout the weekend, couldn't get the tyres to hang on no matter what he tried, and wound up a disappointed fifth in

a session where he had been reckoning to be fighting for pole. Michael Schumacher was 0.3s slower, seventh fastest, not adapting to the understeer as well as Nico. "I'm not yet finding the best in myself or the car in a one-lap qualifying situation," admitted a very reflective Schumacher. "I'm not getting into the rhythm and fine-tuning necessary. The handling of the car at the moment does not suit my driving style and that's something we need to develop. How quickly we can do this will determine how quickly I can improve."

Robert Kubica comfortably got the Renault R30 through to Q3 and proceeded to qualify ninth, this including a major snap-oversteer moment at Turn 16 –

an encouraging beginning for the new partnership. Force India's Adrian Sutil was the only one of the top 10 not to opt for the supersoft and he lined up 10th. He'd outqualified team-mate Tonio Liuzzi by over 0.6s in Q2, the Italian mired in 12th complaining of traction problems and sandwiched by the two Williams men. Rubens Barrichello was 0.5s quicker than new boy Nico Hulkenberg, a somewhat disappointing start for the team, though at least it was ahead of Sauber, whose testing form had evaporated, leaving Pedro de la Rosa and Kamui Kobayashi 14th and 16th, sandwiching Sebastien Buemi's Toro Rosso. Rookie Vitaly Petrov was generally within around 0.5s of Renault team-mate Kubica, but didn't produce the lap when it mattered and languished 17th.

The six cars of the new teams accounted for all but one of the seven-car cut-off in Q1. At around 5s off the front, the Virgins proved slightly quicker than the Lotuses. HRT did well just to get both cars out, even though Karun Chandhok's first-ever drive of the car was in Q1. Given that, he did a great job to get within 1.7s of Bruno Senna.



P38 RESULTS
All the stats from
the desert kingdom





GLHAM/GETTY

Webber's fake 'blow-up' caused midfield trouble



RACE CONDITIONS

Sunny throughout the race, with the ambient around 34 degrees and the track temperature dropping from 47 to 41 degrees during the 49-lapper.

It's a very different sort of racing that the new rules have brought us, and in Bahrain they didn't serve up a great show.

Ferrari and Fernando Alonso were too elated to worry about that. The new signing led a team one-two, but only after following Sebastian Vettel until the Red Bull suffered an electrical malfunction. Vettel therefore maybe had reason to feel down afterwards, but in fact he was remarkably sanguine when he said: "It's not a very exciting form of racing. We have lost the element of fighting against your own limits for 20 laps, pitting, then doing it again. Instead it's an endurance, the challenge is now about controlling yourself – you have to be always aware of how easy it is to burn out your tyres by asking too much from them too soon. There was a lot in hand; we could control [the Ferraris] – it wasn't a problem."

That's the way it had looked for 33 of the 49 laps. There was a first stint during which he built up a gap that allowed him the luxury of reacting to Alonso's lap-16 stop,

then just driving metronomically, eeking out the tyres' energy, not being perturbed about the shadow in the mirrors – because it couldn't pass. Virtually no-one could, and this at one of the better tracks on the calendar for passing. Compounding that, the expected variation in strategies to mix things up simply didn't unfold and what we had was a train, carriages in the same order every time. Intensely aware of the focus and expectation upon it, Formula 1 was reassessing itself after this race.

If you were planning on overtaking, you needed to do it on the first lap.

That's exactly what Alonso did, using the superior grip of the clean side of the grid, dummied from behind team-mate Felipe Massa and driving clean around his outside – which becomes the inside for the interlinked second turn. They each got their elbows out as the corner loomed, but the move had already been made; Alonso was through. It all played further into Vettel's hands, the Red Bull unchallenged in the lead.

This wasn't great news for Ferrari. More even than the other cars, the F10 really needed clear air, not the hot, turbulent wake of another car. The Ferrari's is an engine that requires more cooling than most, but the radiator sizes required for that are aerodynamically costly – and so the cooling was marginal for this

desert heat. This was why both cars had their motors changed before the race, small anomalies spotted in the Saturday data on raceday morning triggering both sets of mechanics into frantic action.

Massa had his hands full on the run to Turn 4, Lewis Hamilton running the McLaren's left-hand wheels off the track to get a run around the outside. Braking super-late, he succeeded in getting ahead of the Ferrari for a few metres, but had to run wide on the exit, the checking of his momentum not only allowing Massa back ahead but making him easy meat for Nico Rosberg too. Hamilton would remain there for the rest of the stint, the meat in a Mercedes sandwich, even the McLaren's straightline speed advantage not enough to allow him to put on a move on the

significantly slower car.

The other McLaren was in worse trouble. Jenson Button had got a terrible start from the dirty side and was out-accelerated by Michael Schumacher, but thankfully was alongside Mark Webber through Turn 2 rather than behind him when the Red Bull's engine belched out a huge cloud of blinding smoke, causing the RB6 to briefly stutter as it swallowed a load of excess oil.

Webber's smoke cloud cleared itself, but it had triggered an incident behind as Robert Kubica jinked his Renault sharp left, unable to see where the Red Bull was. Adrian Sutil failed to anticipate Kubica's move, they tangled and were way down the field by the time they restarted. So we never got to see how Force India's tyre strategy would have played out in a straight



Kubica showed speed for 'reborn' Renault

ETHERINGTON/LAT



DUNBAR/LAT

Rosberg outpaced Schuey all weekend



Liuzzi took his first points since 2007

COATES/LAT



ETHERINGTON/LAT

DRIVER BY DRIVER by Edd Straw

1  **6/10**
Race rating

Jenson BUTTON
McLaren-Mercedes MP4-25-03
Start: 8th. Finish: 7th
COMPLAINED THAT the car "felt wrong" in qualifying and struggled with locking front brakes, ending 0.5s and four places behind team-mate Hamilton on the grid. Ran eighth, got out ahead of Webber when they both pitted on lap 16, but couldn't challenge Schuey.

2  **9/10**
Race rating

Lewis HAMILTON
McLaren-Mercedes MP4-25-02
Start: 4th. Finish: 3rd
HARD TO see he could have done any better in qualifying. Tried to pass Massa on lap one, failed and handed fourth to Rosberg, who proceeded to hold him up for 15 laps. Got back ahead of the Merc when they pitted, and later seized third from the ailing Vettel.

3  **7/10**
Race rating

Michael SCHUMACHER
Mercedes MGP W01-03
Start: 7th. Finish: 6th
LOOKED SHELLSHOCKED to be outqualified by team-mate Rosberg, and with Mercedes being over a second off the pace. Matched Rosberg in the race, absorbed pressure from Button and held sixth for most of the distance in his first GP since 2006.

4  **9/10**
Race rating

Nico ROSBERG
Mercedes MGP W01-02
Start: 5th. Finish: 5th
CAME WITHIN thousandths of outqualifying Hamilton's quicker McLaren, and passed him on the first lap. Pitted a lap after Hamilton and re-emerged behind him. Looked odds-on to pass the struggling Vettel, but the Red Bull driver had enough speed to hold him off.

5  **10/10**
Race rating

Sebastian VETTEL
Red Bull-Renault RB6-3
Start: 1st. Finish: 4th
WASN'T COMPLETELY satisfied with progress in practice, but had speed when it counted to take pole. Led at the start and was around 2s ahead of Alonso when he lost power with an electrical problem. Pushed hard in hobbled car to salvage an unlikely fourth.

6  **6/10**
Race rating

Mark WEBBER
Red Bull-Renault RB6-2
Start: 6th. Finish: 8th
LOCKED THE rears in sector two on his qualifying lap, then made a second mistake trying to make up for it and ended up down in eighth. Two puffs of smoke on lap one were down to an oil overflow. He ran seventh early on, but a troubled pitstop let Button slip ahead of him.



Senna name returned to F1 – but it was brief



Ferraris home in on hobbled leader Vettel

◀ contest. Sutil was the only one of the top 10 qualifiers to have done his lap on the harder prime tyre, giving him a theoretically better combination of prime/option for the two stints of the race. It was the same choice made by the majority of those outside the top 10.

There were no takers for a two-stop strategy up front, even though computer simulations had it theoretically slightly quicker. Such was the high degree of tyre degradation, in theory you would more than buy the extra 22-23s an extra stop would cost you. But in practice, that advantage was going to be wiped away by the traffic you'd find yourself in by getting

“ I TRIED EVERY LINE EVER INVENTED, BUT WORLD-CLASS DRIVERS DON'T NORMALLY MAKE MISTAKES”
Mark Webber

out-of-synch with the pack.

So as Vettel's Red Bull screamed over the start-finish line at 171mph, 2s ahead of Alonso – with Massa, Rosberg, Hamilton, Schumacher, Webber and Button following – the order of the train was now established until the pitstops.

NO RACING (EXCEPT AT THE BACK)

Alonso: “On the soft tyres in the first stint, Vettel was very quick and I couldn't follow him at all.” Vettel didn't do it all at once, just stretched it gradually, put in a fast one now and again until he had the gap out to 5.5s on the eve of the stops. It was all relative though – these ‘fast laps’ were around 9s slower than those of qualifying! Not all of that was the effect of carrying 160kg of fuel; there was also the matter of having to treat the tyres carefully.

Massa took a few laps to settle into Alonso-matching times, but once he'd done so he generally kept within a couple of seconds of him. There was no pressure from behind,

Rosberg's understeering Mercedes dropping ever-further back. Hamilton was tucked tight up behind, just as Webber was tucked tight behind Schumacher. “Yeah, I was following gearboxes all afternoon,” said Webber. “I tried every line ever invented trying to find a way through, but the world-class drivers I was following don't normally make mistakes.” That qualifying error of the day before was proving costly.

Actually there was some racing: Heikki Kovalainen's Lotus and Timo Glock's Virgin were going at it back in 17th/18th for the honour of leading the new teams, with Glock having just got ahead when

he lost fourth gear. Why could these cars race when the frontrunning ones just ran in tandem? One look at an in-car shot from one of the new cars told you the answer: they so lacked

downforce their drivers were roughly 10 times as busy on their steering wheels, more variation, more errors. The recovering Kubica was actually overtaking cars, albeit slower ones, although he would later put a beautiful move on Pedro de la Rosa's Sauber.

On the 12th lap, Kubica had elected to pit for his harder tyres rather than be held up by Sebastien Buemi's Toro Rosso. Upon rejoining, the Renault set the fastest sector-one time yet seen. It seemed that this might trigger the frontrunners into stopping, but the concern was whether even the harder tyre could withstand 35-plus laps on still-heavy fuel loads and a scorching track temperature. First to try risking it was McLaren with Hamilton, on lap 15. Mercedes reacted, and Schumacher followed the McLaren down the pitlane.

In this new era of no refuelling, it's generally advantageous to stop before the car you're racing against, and Hamilton's exit on fresh rubber ▶

7  **8/10**
Race rating

Felipe MASSA
Ferrari F10-281
Start: 2nd. Finish: 2nd
TORPEDOED DOUBTS
about fitness on his first GP weekend since July 2009 by outqualifying Alonso, then following him. Lost out on shot at victory by slipping behind the Spaniard at the start, and ended the race 16 seconds adrift after taking it easy in the closing stages.

8  **9/10**
Race rating

Fernando ALONSO
Ferrari F10-283
Start: 3rd. Finish: 1st
HAD THE EDGE on Massa in practice, but a small error on his qualifying lap left him behind the Brazilian on the grid. Jumped to second at the first corner, and was trading times with Vettel at the front when the German lost power. Took the lead with ease on lap 34.

9  **7/10**
Race rating

Rubens BARRICHELLO
Williams-Cosworth FW32-03
Start: 11th. Finish: 10th
RECKONED THAT qualifying on the fringes of the top 10 was about par for Williams, and set his sights on a points finish in the race. Was 10th at the end of lap one – avoiding getting involved in the Kubica/Sutil incident – and was still there at the end of an uneventful race.

10  **6/10**
Race rating

Nico HULKENBERG
Williams-Cosworth FW32-01
Start: 13th. Finish: 14th
REIGNING GP2 champion was disappointed with qualifying. Settled into 13th place after lifting to avoid Kubica/Sutil incident, but lost the back end on his third lap and spun. Had some fun passing the new-team cars, but was a lapped 14th on his debut.

11  **8/10**
Race rating

Robert KUBICA
Renault R30-003
Start: 9th. Finish: 11th
ON STRONG form as he cruised into Q3, but sideways moment at the hairpin on his final lap cost him a couple of places. Spun after lap-one contact with Sutil, partly caused by Webber's smoke, but stuck to his task and ended up within 7s of the final points-scoring place.

12  **6/10**
Race rating

Vitaly PETROV
Renault R30-001
Start: 17th. Retired
ACQUITTED HIMSELF well on debut after limited dry running during pre-season testing. Qualified 1.2s off Kubica and ran 11th after keeping out of trouble at start. Rattled a kerb at Turn 12, damaging suspension and forcing him out of the race after a visit to the pits.

◀ would leapfrog him ahead of Rosberg, who pitted the following lap, along with Alonso, Webber and Button. Rosberg was further disadvantaged by being held at his pit to avoid collision with Webber, who was just arriving as the Merc's tyre changes were completed. Webber then suffered his own delay with a sticking front wheel, and this was enough for Button to motor past him. McLaren had therefore jumped both its cars one place, with Hamilton now finally in free air in fourth from Rosberg, Schumacher, Button and Webber.

The McLaren's pace was finally revealed as significantly better than that of the Mercedes. On a heavier

“IT'S JUST GREAT BEING HERE AT ALL, THANKS TO GOD, AND IN ADDITION TO THAT I'M IN A FAST CAR”
Felipe Massa

fuel load it was much more manageable through the bumps of the middle sector than in qualifying, without the oscillating rolling motion through Turns 6-8. But it was only Hamilton who could show this, as Button remained stuck in the wake of a Mercedes.

Vettel's 5s lead allowed Red Bull to bring him in the lap after Alonso without losing the place, even though it did reduce the lead. Massa was brought in on the same lap as Vettel and now the two Ferraris closed up. On the harder, medium tyre, the Ferrari appeared to be more competitive with the Red Bull than had been the case on the supersoft, and Alonso had brought the gap down to just over 2s 10 laps into the stint. But it never got much closer. "I was thinking of winning the race at this stage," said Alonso, "but I knew it was going to be difficult to overtake. I knew that our car manages the tyres in a very good way; we saw this in the winter testing. So I was

just waiting, conserving them and waiting for maybe the last 10 laps to attack."

A STING IN THE TAIL

Massa initially went with Alonso, but soon enough he was being asked to back off as there were alarming engine temperature numbers coming up. He needed to be out of Alonso's slipstream and was also instructed to richen the fuel mixture to help with cooling. This meant having to back off on the revs to compensate, so as to avoid running dry before the end.

At one point a shift in the car's aero balance was seen in the data, and engineer Rob Smedley was seen peering intently at the car as it passed the pits, looking for any damage to bargeboard or wing. Massa reported everything to be okay, though he did briefly get sideways under braking. All was still well he insisted, and the team got back to concerning itself with the engine.

The team was also concerned about Alonso's temperatures, and it was clear the Ferraris really were marginal in this heat. Hamilton was by now lapping as fast as the Ferraris and Vettel, albeit 15s behind after his stint stuck behind Rosberg. Was he about to get a double bonus from those over-hot Ferraris?

With 17 laps remaining Alonso backed right off, dropped over 1s, in order to get out of the Red Bull's hot, dirty air. But two laps later it wasn't the Ferrari that faltered, it was the Red Bull. Vettel felt a sudden and big reduction in power and came down the pit straight with the engine sounding extremely rough – a spark plug had failed, though at the time it was falsely believed to be an exhaust problem.

The Ferraris were catching him hand over fist and he was easy meat, first for Alonso at the end of lap 34, then Massa into the next



GILHAM/GETTY

Three champs: Surtees, Fittipaldi, Hamilton



DRIVER BY DRIVER by Edd Straw

14  **6/10**
Race rating

Adrian SUTIL
Force India-Merc VJM03-03
Start: 10th. Finish: 12th
COMFORTABLY OUTPACED
Barrichello to take the final Q3 place, and was only Q3 man to go for prime tyres. Made contact with Kubica on lap one and dropped to the back as both tried to avoid Webber's smoke-billowing Red Bull. Great chance for points down drain.

15  **8/10**
Race rating

Vitantonio LIUZZI
Force India-Merc VJM03-01
Start: 12th. Finish: 9th
BLAMED A lack of grip in Q2 for his failure to make it into the top 10, over 0.6s off team-mate Sutil. Made amends for it in the race, climbing to ninth on the first lap and staying there for the whole race. This earned him and Force India best of the rest behind 'big four' teams.

16  **6/10**
Race rating

Sebastien BUEMI
Toro Rosso-Ferrari STR5-01
Start: 15th. Finish: 16th
DID WELL to qualify as high as 15th, ahead of Kobayashi and Petrov. Ran to just over half-distance on the prime tyres, although even then only climbed to ninth, and was classified 16th after failing to make the finish when an electrical problem struck on lap 47.

17  **5/10**
Race rating

Jaime ALGUERSUARI
Toro Rosso-Ferrari STR5-03
Start: 18th. Finish: 13th
SUFFERED IGNOMINY
of being only driver from established teams to fall in Q1 after a mistake on his best lap. Had he replicated his P3 pace, he would have condemned Kobayashi to that fate. Finished a minute and a half behind in the race after two-stopping.

18  **8/10**
Race rating

Jarno TRULLI
Lotus-Cosworth T127-3
Start: 20th. Finish: 17th
MADE STEADY progress in free practice, but missed out on new-team 'pole' to Glock. Slipped behind team-mate Kovalainen at the start, but got back ahead later, only for a hydraulic problem to hit on lap 39. Managed to nurse the car to complete 46 laps and be classified.

19  **7/10**
Race rating

Heikki KOVALAINEN
Lotus-Cosworth T127-1
Start: 21st. Finish: 15th
OVER 0.7S off Trulli in qualifying after untidy lap, the Finn made up for it at the start by leaping to the front of the new-teams 'class'. Passed by Glock on lap 13, but got back ahead almost immediately when German hit gearbox trouble. Ended up a twice-lapped 15th.



Alonso in 'getting-on-with-team-mate' shock

Virgin soldiers Glock and di Grassi went out



corner. All the Ferraris had to do was keep going for another 15 laps.

Vettel soldiered on but was literally powerless to prevent Hamilton breezing by on the pit straight on the 38th lap. Vettel was in intense discussion with the team. The misfire lessened when he set the mix on full lean, and he found that jiggling the car from side to side on the straight also seemed to help. He then concentrated on pushing through the twisty middle sector as hard as he could; his lap times improved and he was able to defend his fourth place from the closing Rosberg. Remarkably, with the car in this state he set his best sector—two time of the whole race.

Five laps from the end, Alonso let rip with a monster of a lap, 1.2s faster than anything he'd done up to this point and 1.1s faster than anyone else's best. Did that mean he could have beaten Vettel even without the Red Bull's problem? Vettel didn't think so: "No, I had a big amount in hand. I could have done a similar time to that, I'm sure. I was just looking after the tyres. We should have won today."

That honour went instead to

Alonso. Massa completed the anxious team's joy with second and, far from showing disappointment at finishing behind his team-mate, put it into perspective: "It's just great being here at all, thanks to God, and in addition to that I'm in a fast car. The race today was lost at the start, but the car was great. Actually this is my best-ever start to a season."

Hamilton took a superb third, relentlessly on it once clear of Rosberg. The two Mercedes drivers in fifth and sixth were very evenly matched, but their pace left Button bottled up behind, with Webber snapping at the McLaren's ankles relentlessly but in vain. Tonio Liuzzi took a couple of points under the new system for ninth, seeing off a challenge from Rubens Barrichello's Williams. Two laps down, in 15th, Kovalainen's Lotus was the sole new-team car running at the end, a great achievement in itself.

Alonso and Ferrari may not have had any misgivings, but as a sporting spectacle this first race of the new era left many pondering on whether a wrong turn had been taken and what could be done to improve things. ❧



Schuey looks at quicker Merc-engined racer



Kovalainen leads Glock in 'Class B' struggle



20  **8/10**
Race rating

Karun CHANDHOK
HRT-Cosworth F110-01
Start: 24th. Retired
THROWN INTO the deep end in qualifying after hydraulic problems robbed him of practice. Reeled off seven laps in Q3—the first mileage his car had ever done—and did well to be within 1.7s of Senna. Race ended on lap two when he hit a bump and was pitched into the wall.

21  **8/10**
Race rating

Bruno SENNA
HRT-Cosworth F110-02
Start: 23rd. Retired
BENEFITED FROM being the only HRT driver with a working car during practice, chipping away at the new car's massive performance deficit. Remarkably went further in the race than both Virgins, completing 17 laps on debut before his radiator dumped its water.

22  **6/10**
Race rating

Pedro DE LA ROSA
Sauber-Ferrari C29.03
Start: 14th. Retired
GAVE AWAY two tenths with an error in Q2, but that was less than the gap from the Spaniard to Hulkenberg, the next man ahead. Ran 12th early on, but was on course to finish a couple of paces below that when he retired after 28 laps with a hydraulic problem.

23  **5/10**
Race rating

Kamui KOBAYASHI
Sauber-Ferrari C29.02
Start: 16th. Retired
LIKE HIS team-mate, the Japanese Toyota refugee was unable to recapture team's testing pace from winter. Struggled with the car over the bumps and was running 13th, after being passed by team-mate de la Rosa, when he retired with a hydraulic problem.

24  **8/10**
Race rating

Timo GLOCK
Virgin-Cosworth VR-01
Start: 19th. Retired
NEVER HAD a clear run during free practice, doing only 21 laps, but shaded Trulli to qualify best of the 'newby' teams. Gearbox gremlins manifested themselves in the race because of the high temperatures and forced his retirement after 16 laps.

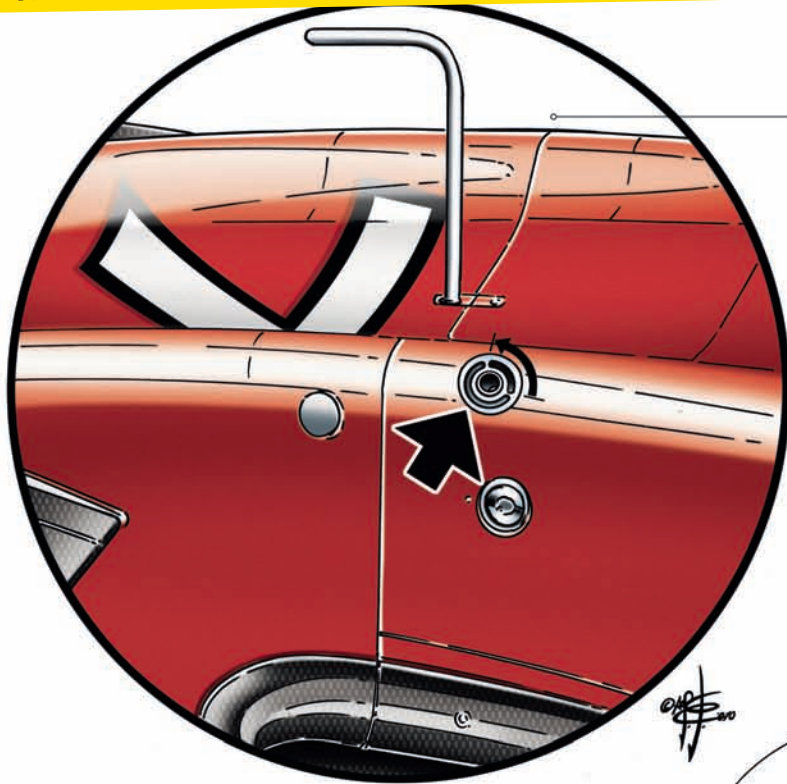
25  **6/10**
Race rating

Lucas DI GRASSI
Virgin-Cosworth VR-01
Start: 22nd. Retired
MANAGED ONLY 25 laps in free practice after a litany of technical problems so it was no surprise that he qualified 0.8s behind team-mate Glock for his debut. Retired from the race with a hydraulic fitting problem—not the first of the weekend—on his third lap.

Drawing board



Gary Anderson, Mark Hughes and Giorgio Piola shed some light on the new-season technical tweaks that appeared in Bahrain



FERRARI RIDE HEIGHT CONTROL

→ Ferrari devised a quicker system of ride-height adjustment, given that it cannot be changed between qualifying and the race yet must accommodate very different fuel loads. Any adjustment must be done at the pitstop.

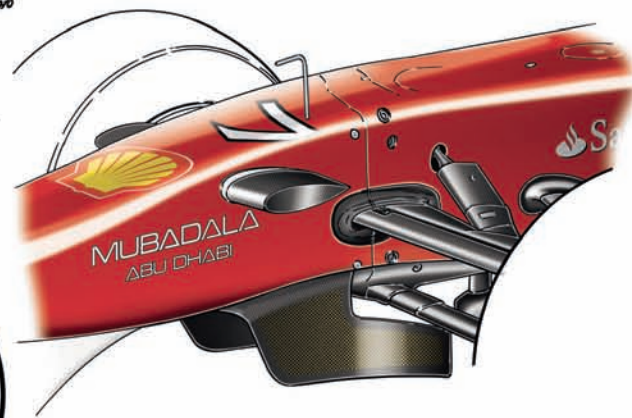
GARY ANDERSON: With the cars starting the race with around 160kg of fuel on board and ending it with more or less nothing, this will have an effect on the physical ride height of the car. I would expect that this difference in weight would alter the ride height by about 2mm on the front and 4mm on the rear. The rear is not such a big problem but if you have a car that is aerodynamically

optimised with this change on the front, you could lose in the region of three to four per cent of the overall downforce, equating to around 0.3 to 0.4s per lap. Ferrari has created this pitstop ride-height adjuster to allow it to compensate for this change. The front suspension of these cars has a torsion bar spring, one end of it is rotated by the pushrod working on a rocker and the other end has a reaction arm with an anchor point. This adjuster will allow the anchor point of this reaction arm to be adjusted moving the front of the car up and down – and all that in less than three seconds. Expect to see plenty of pitlane action during the season.

FERRARI TURNING VANES

→ This new Ferrari turning vane (far right) is very like that seen on last year's Toyota, possibly a reflection of the recruitment by Ferrari of a former Toyota aerodynamicist.

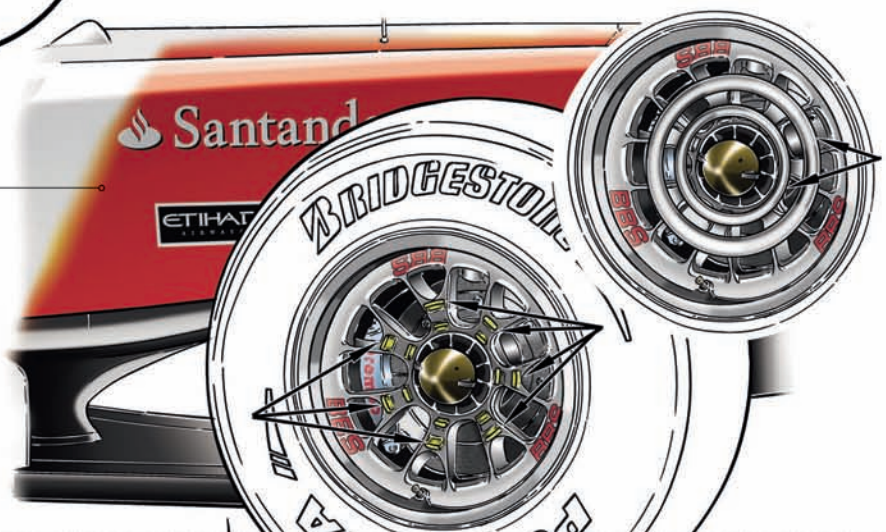
GARY ANDERSON: Teams will now start to optimise all the small parts that make up the complete aerodynamic package. It's always difficult to get the best from each individual item when aiming for the best complete package. Ferrari will have found a better overall aerodynamic performance by increasing the size, closing of the gap to the nose (compared to its previous version used in testing, inset) and putting a small amount of extra curvature into this turning vane.

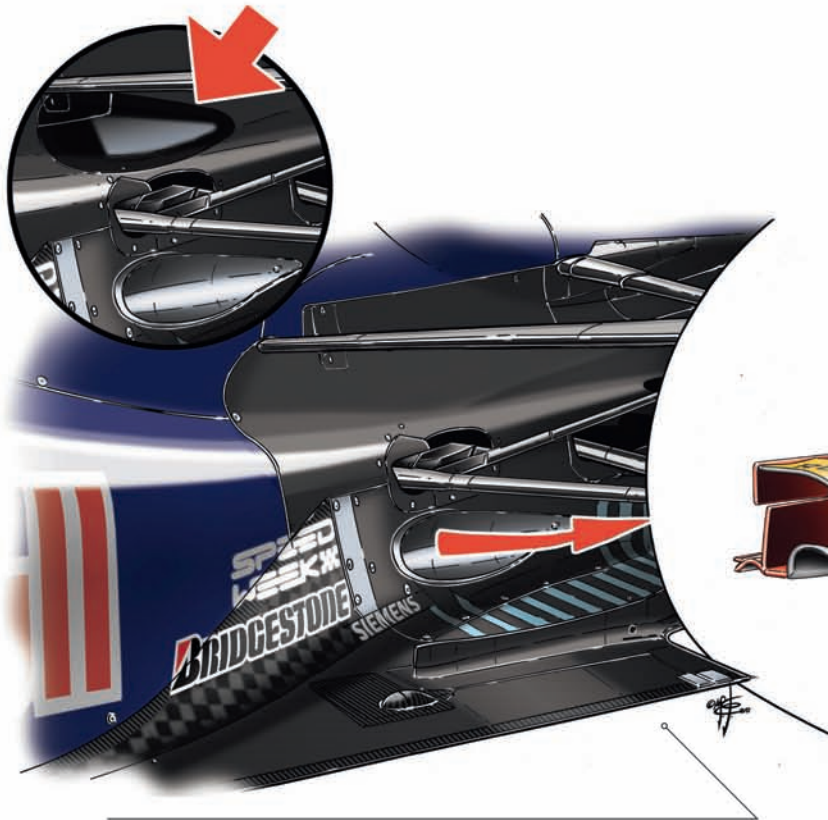


FERRARI WHEEL

→ Ferrari's trick new wheel rims allow for quicker pitstops now that the stop time is no longer determined by refuelling.

GARY ANDERSON: With no refuelling this year the teams will potentially be doing pitstops in less than three seconds. To achieve this, the axle, wheel nut and socket arrangement will be crucial. The regulations for the wheel-nut locking mechanism has changed from being a system that the mechanic changing had to operate with a separate action to an automatic system. On the Ferrari it is two spring-loaded toggles – when the socket is pushed onto the end of the axle it pushes these toggles down allowing the nut to be removed over the top of them. When the nut is refitted and the socket is retracted these toggles spring back into position, hopefully stopping the wheel nut from coming loose.



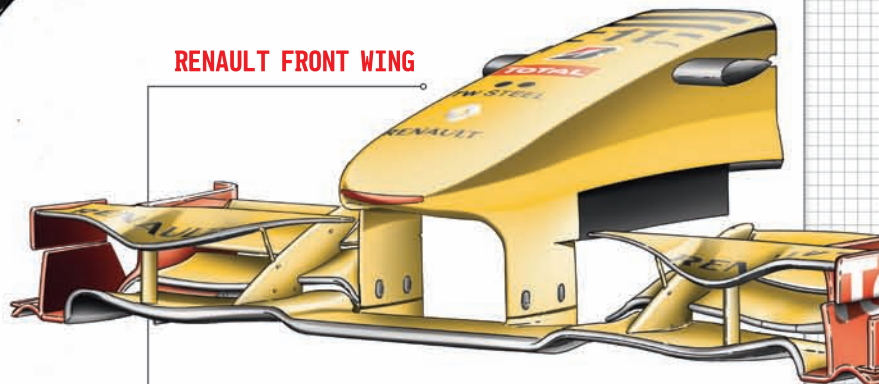


RED BULL EXHAUSTS

→ Red Bull has moved its exhaust exit from between the wishbones (top inset) to beneath the lower wishbone.

GARY ANDERSON: With the driver being off the throttle during braking and corner entry and on the throttle mid-corner to exit, the change on the airflow going to the lower beam wing and even the double diffuser will mean that these components will only be able to be optimised in one of these conditions. Moving the exhausts lower will help reduce the effect the hot and turbulent air flow has on these components, allowing them to produce more consistent downforce. Everything comes at a price and that will be rear-brake cooling and rear-tyre inner-shoulder temperature. The rear-brake problem can be handled but the tyre problem could be a difficult one – only time will tell.

RENAULT FRONT WING



→ The Renault featured a much modified front wing to that seen in testing. It's a reflection of the team's much-enhanced CFD capability.

GARY ANDERSON: Renault's new front wing is the first part of its car that I would call a well-packaged, three-dimensional component. The three-element main front wing is a bit more swoopy than its predecessor but still has the main plane a little higher than other teams. This will reduce pitch sensitivity but also reduce potential overall performance. The second flap neatly continues the

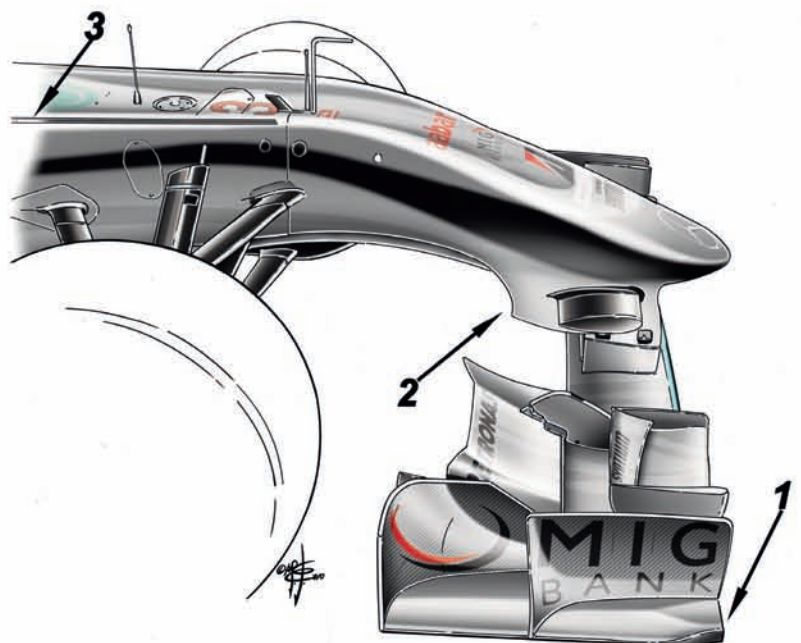
slot gap vertically where it joins the foot of the endplate, allowing airflow into the junction of the second flap and endplate. This is an area that suffers from airflow separation because of the expansion created by the endplate turning outwards to reduce the effect the tyre has on the flow. The upper forward wing is a single-piece component and is twisted through its length. This twist helps produce as much as possible in the area ahead of the brake duct without affecting the airflow in other areas – allowing better under-body airflow.

MERCEDES NOSE

→ As well as a more sculpted endplate (1) the nose of the Mercedes featured a new wing support with much more of an S-shape (2) than the straight original, and shallow splitters on top (3).

GARY ANDERSON: The nose mounts on the Mercedes have a slightly increased 'S'-shape to the trailing edge. This component acts as a turning vane to help alter the direction of the airflow going under the nose section. Helping this flow to turn outwards as early as possible means the airflow will retain more of its

energy as it reaches the leading edge of the sidepods. The under-floor and diffuser can therefore produce more downforce. The splitters on the top outer corner of the chassis reduce the amount of airflow spillage that comes off the top of the chassis. If this flow is allowed to spill into the low-pressure area in front of the sidepods it creates lift on top of the chassis and also reduces the scavenging affect that the barge boards have on the underneath. Both would have the effect of robbing the car of overall downforce.



BAHRAIN GP RESULTS



PRACTICE 1 - Friday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	SUTIL	1m56.583s
2	ALONSO	1m56.766s
3	KUBICA	1m57.041s
4	MASSA	1m57.055s
5	BUTTON	1m57.068s
6	HAMILTON	1m57.163s
7	LIUZZI	1m57.194s
8	ROSBERG	1m57.199s
9	WEBBER	1m57.255s
10	SCHUMACHER	1m57.662s
11	ALGUERSUARI	1m57.722s
12	HULKENBERG	1m57.894s
13	VETTEL	1m57.943s
14	BUEMI	1m58.399s
15	BARRICHELLO	1m58.782s
16	PETROV	1m58.880s
17	DE LA ROSA	2m00.250s
18	KOBAYASHI	2m01.388s
19	GLOCK	2m03.680s
20	KOVALAINEN	2m03.848s
21	TRULLI	2m03.970s
22	DI GRASSI	no time
23	SENNA	no time
24	CHANDHOK	no time

Weather: hot and sunny

PRACTICE 2 - Friday

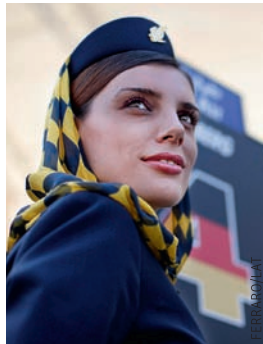
POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	ROSBERG	1m55.409s
2	HAMILTON	1m55.854s
3	SCHUMACHER	1m55.903s
4	BUTTON	1m56.076s
5	VETTEL	1m56.459s
6	HULKENBERG	1m56.501s
7	MASSA	1m56.555s
8	PETROV	1m56.750s
9	ALONSO	1m57.140s
10	DE LA ROSA	1m57.255s
11	KOBAYASHI	1m57.352s
12	SUTIL	1m57.361s
13	BARRICHELLO	1m57.452s
14	LIUZZI	1m57.833s
15	KUBICA	1m58.155s
16	ALGUERSUARI	1m59.799s
17	WEBBER	2m00.444s
18	KOVALAINEN	2m00.873s
19	TRULLI	2m00.990s
20	GLOCK	2m02.037s
21	DI GRASSI	2m02.188s
22	SENNA	2m06.968s
23	BUEMI	no time
24	CHANDHOK	no time

Weather: hot and sunny

PRACTICE 3 - Saturday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	ALONSO	1m54.099s
2	ROSBERG	1m54.368s
3	WEBBER	1m54.500s
4	SCHUMACHER	1m54.533s
5	VETTEL	1m54.646s
6	MASSA	1m54.739s
7	BUTTON	1m55.000s
8	KUBICA	1m55.331s
9	LIUZZI	1m55.432s
10	HULKENBERG	1m55.461s
11	SUTIL	1m55.521s
12	HAMILTON	1m55.860s
13	DE LA ROSA	1m56.063s
14	BARRICHELLO	1m56.259s
15	BUEMI	1m56.295s
16	ALGUERSUARI	1m56.504s
17	KOBAYASHI	1m56.530s
18	PETROV	1m56.811s
19	GLOCK	1m59.173s
20	KOVALAINEN	1m59.789s
21	TRULLI	2m01.259s
22	SENNA	2m04.001s
23	DI GRASSI	no time
24	CHANDHOK	no time

Weather: hot and sunny



QUALIFYING

POS	DRIVER	QUALIFYING 1	QUALIFYING 2	QUALIFYING 3
1	VETTEL	1m55.029s	1m53.883s	1m54.101s
2	MASSA	1m55.313s	1m54.331s	1m54.242s
3	ALONSO	1m54.612s	1m54.172s	1m54.608s
4	HAMILTON	1m55.341s	1m54.707s	1m55.217s
5	ROSBERG	1m55.463s	1m54.682s	1m55.241s
6	WEBBER	1m55.298s	1m54.318s	1m55.284s
7	SCHUMACHER	1m55.593s	1m55.105s	1m55.524s
8	BUTTON	1m55.715s	1m55.168s	1m55.672s
9	KUBICA	1m55.511s	1m54.963s	1m55.885s
10	SUTIL	1m55.213s	1m54.996s	1m56.309s
11	BARRICHELLO	1m55.969s	1m55.330s	-
12	LIUZZI	1m55.628s	1m55.653s	-
13	HULKENBERG	1m56.375s	1m55.857s	-
14	DE LA ROSA	1m56.428s	1m56.237s	-
15	BUEMI	1m56.189s	1m56.265s	-
16	KOBAYASHI	1m56.541s	1m56.270s	-
17	PETROV	1m56.167s	1m56.619s	-
18	ALGUERSUARI	1m57.071s	-	-
19	GLOCK	1m59.728s	-	-
20	TRULLI	1m59.852s	-	-
21	KOVALAINEN	2m00.313s	-	-
22	DI GRASSI	2m00.587s	-	-
23	SENNA	2m03.240s	-	-
24	CHANDHOK	2m04.904s	-	-

Weather: hot and sunny

QUALIFYING

Head to head		
BUTTON	0	HAMILTON
SCHUMACHER	0	ROSBERG
VETTEL	1	WEBBER
MASSA	1	ALONSO
BARRICHELLO	1	HULKENBERG
KUBICA	1	PETROV
SUTIL	1	LIUZZI
BUEMI	1	ALGUERSUARI
TRULLI	1	KOVALAINEN
CHANDHOK	0	SENNA
DE LA ROSA	1	KOBAYASHI
GLOCK	1	DI GRASSI



P40 DESERT KINGS

Legends of the past return to celebrate 60 years of F1 at Bahrain Grand Prix

THE GRID

1 VETTEL RED BULL 1m54.101s supersoft	2 MASSA FERRARI 1m54.242s supersoft
3 ALONSO FERRARI 1m54.608s supersoft	4 HAMILTON McLAREN 1m55.217s supersoft
5 ROSBERG MERCEDES 1m55.241s supersoft	6 WEBBER RED BULL 1m55.284s supersoft
7 SCHUMACHER MERCEDES 1m55.524s supersoft	8 BUTTON McLAREN 1m55.672s supersoft
9 KUBICA RENAULT 1m55.885s supersoft	10 SUTIL FORCE INDIA 1m56.309s medium
11 BARRICHELLO WILLIAMS 1m55.330s medium	12 LIUZZI FORCE INDIA 1m55.653s medium
13 HULKENBERG WILLIAMS 1m55.857s supersoft	14 DE LA ROSA SAUBER 1m56.237s supersoft
15 BUEMI TORO ROSSO 1m56.265s medium	16 KOBAYASHI SAUBER 1m56.270s medium
17 PETROV RENAULT 1m56.619s medium	18 ALGUERSUARI TORO ROSSO 1m57.071s medium
19 GLOCK VIRGIN 1m59.728s medium	20 TRULLI LOTUS 1m59.852s medium
21 KOVALAINEN LOTUS 2m00.313s medium	22 DI GRASSI VIRGIN 2m00.587s medium
23 SENNA HRT 2m03.240s* supersoft	24 CHANDHOK HRT 2m04.904s* supersoft

* started from pitlane

THE RACE: 49 LAPS, 191.786 MILES

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	LAPS	TOTAL TIME	FASTEST LAP	PITSTOP	FASTEST STOP
1	ALONSO	Ferrari	49	1h39m20.396s	1m58.287s	1	23.15s
2	MASSA	Ferrari	49	+16.099s	1m59.732s	1	23.04s
3	HAMILTON	McLaren-Mercedes	49	+23.182s	1m59.560s	1	23.20s
4	VETTEL	Red Bull-Renault	49	+38.799s	2m00.218s	1	22.26s
5	ROSBERG	Mercedes	49	+40.213s	2m00.236s	1	24.29s
6	SCHUMACHER	Mercedes	49	+44.163s	2m00.204s	1	23.16s
7	BUTTON	McLaren-Mercedes	49	+45.280s	1m59.970s	1	23.53s
8	WEBBER	Red Bull-Renault	49	+46.360s	1m59.487s	1	25.19s
9	LIUZZI	Force India-Mercedes	49	+53.008s	1m59.906s	1	23.93s
10	BARRICHELLO	Williams-Cosworth	49	+1m02.489s	1m59.833s	1	23.67s
11	KUBICA	Renault	49	+1m09.093s	2m00.474s	1	23.16s
12	SUTIL	Force India-Mercedes	49	+1m22.958s	1m59.393s	1	23.46s
13	ALGUERSUARI	Toro Rosso-Ferrari	49	+1m32.656s	1m59.964s	1	23.33s
14	HULKENBERG	Williams-Cosworth	48	-1 lap	2m01.401s	2	25.73s
15	KOVALAINEN	Lotus-Cosworth	47	-2 laps	2m02.701s	1	26.39s
16	BUEMI	Toro Rosso-Ferrari	46	electrical	2m00.080s	1	27.50s
17	TRULLI	Lotus-Cosworth	46	hydraulics	2m02.930s	1	32.82s
R	DE LA ROSA	Sauber-Ferrari	28	hydraulics	2m01.650s	1	22.90s
R	SENNA	HRT-Cosworth	17	engine	2m09.127s	0	-
R	GLOCK	Virgin-Cosworth	16	gearbox	2m07.062s	0	-
R	PETROV	Renault	13	suspension	2m04.307s	0	-
R	KOBAYASHI	Sauber-Ferrari	11	hydraulics	2m05.044s	0	-
R	DI GRASSI	Virgin-Cosworth	2	hydraulics	2m09.361s	0	-
R	CHANDHOK	HRT-Cosworth	1	accident	-	0	-

Weather: Hot and sunny. Fastest Lap Fernando ALONSO 1m58.287s (119.126mph) on Lap 45.

Lap Leaders: 1-33 Vettel; 34-49 Alonso

TYRE CHOICE

STINT 1	STINT 2	STINT 3
S-soft	Medium	
S-soft	Medium	
S-soft	Medium	
S-soft	Medium	
S-soft	Medium	
S-soft	Medium	
S-soft	Medium	
S-soft	Medium	
Medium	S-soft	
Medium	S-soft	
Medium	S-soft	Medium
S-soft	Medium	S-soft
Medium	S-soft	
Medium	S-soft	
Medium	S-soft	
S-soft	Medium	
S-soft	S-soft	dnf
Medium	dnf	
Medium	dnf	
Medium	dnf	
Medium	dnf	
S-soft		

Option tyre in bold

TRACKSIDE VIEW

Mark Hughes
Grand prix editor



Two Lotuses pounding around; it's not Rindt and Hill or Fittipaldi and Peterson, but there are two green cars, yellow wheels bright in the desert morning sun, getting in the miles while everyone else is in the pits either waiting with practised calm for the track to rubber in or working like crazy, with not enough people, applying the final touches of preparation.

For the first time in 16 years a Lotus is running in anger during a grand prix weekend, Heikki Kovalainen (below) well into a long run, building feel by the lap, all those sensations feeding into his brain and subconsciously filtered for significance.

Then out comes Lewis Hamilton's McLaren to provide some perspective, and there's visibly half a formula's difference – or a car from Lotus's future, not only faster but smoother, easier, more 'placeable'.

Up at what used to be Turn 12 but which is now 20 –

“Lotus and Michael are back, but aren't yet what they were”

because of the new loop – it's sixth gear, uphill, with a blind exit. The McLaren, Ferrari and Red Bull are totally planted, engine notes not even wavering. But here comes Michael Schumacher in the Mercedes and even before you hear the reduction in engine revs, you see the front wheels sliding wide. It doesn't want to turn in, but Michael's reluctant to apply too much lock, as if he knows the tyre's grip will fall off dramatically once past a certain degree of turn. So instead he lifts – or on one occasion misses the apex entirely and goes clattering over the exit kerbs. He's struggling.

Nico Rosberg, by contrast, just turns the wheel and the car responds, engine note constant. Lotuses and Michael; they're back but as yet they aren't what they were. Time, time, time – is all we've got.

SEASON SO FAR - Points and positions

POS	DRIVER	PTS	BRN	AUS	MAL	PRC	E	MC	TR	CDN	EU	GB	D	H	B	T	SGP	J	ROK	BR	UAE	
1	ALONSO	25	1 st																			
2	MASSA	18	2 nd																			
3	HAMILTON	15	3 rd																			
4	VETTEL	12	4 th																			
5	ROSBERG	10	5 th																			
6	SCHUMACHER	8	6 th																			
7	BUTTON	6	7 th																			
8	WEBBER	4	8 th																			
9	LIUZZI	2	9 th																			
10	BARRICHELLO	1	10 th																			
11	KUBICA	0	11 th																			
12	SUTIL	0	12 th																			
13	ALGUERSUARI	0	13 th																			
14	HULKENBERG	0	14 th																			
15	KOVALAINEN	0	15 th																			
16	BUEMI	0	16 th																			
17	TRULLI	0	17 th																			
-	DE LA ROSA	0	ret																			
-	SENNA	0	ret																			
-	GLOCK	0	ret																			
-	PETROV	0	ret																			
-	KOBAYASHI	0	ret																			
-	DI GRASSI	0	ret																			
-	CHANDHOK	0	ret																			



SEASON SO FAR - Points and positions

POS	TEAM	PTS	BRN	AUS	MAL	PRC	E	MC	TR	CAN	EU	GB	D	H	B	I	SGP	J	KOR	BR	UAE	
1	FERRARI	43	43																			
2	McLAREN	21	21																			
3	MERCEDES	18	18																			
4	RED BULL	16	16																			
5	FORCE INDIA	2	2																			
6	WILLIAMS	1	1																			
7	RENAULT	0	0																			
8	TORO ROSSO	0	0																			
9	LOTUS	0	0																			
-	SAUBER	0	0																			
-	HRT	0	0																			
-	VIRGIN	0	0																			



TALES BETWEEN THEIR LEGS

To commemorate 60 years of F1, numerous former world champions and their cars were reunited in Bahrain for a special parade.

ADAM COOPER watched in wonderment

Keke Rosberg has never been one for looking back, and when I bumped into him on Saturday morning in Bahrain he was underwhelmed about the prospect of getting behind the wheel of an F1 car after a break of more than two decades. “When you’re an opera singer and you lose your voice,” he deadpanned, “You shouldn’t go back on the stage anymore...”

A couple of hours later, after a brief run round in his main Williams race chassis from 1982, he was a different man. For Keke and the other world champions present at Sakhir, driving F1 cars is in their blood – it’s what they always did best. Even a handful of relaxed demo laps began to get their juices flowing, and brought back memories of how it used to be.

And it did the same for everyone watching. While it was great to see the fabulous array of title-winning cars on view, many were driven by their owners or restorers. But seven had their original occupants on board, with their familiar helmet designs, and that’s what really set the heart racing.

Some of these car and driver combinations have been in action before, at events like Goodwood’s Festival of Speed, but we’ve never seen a line-up like this in one place before – and chances are we will never see it again. Here are the recollections of the seven legendary champions.



**JOHN SURTEES
FERRARI 1512**

OWNER: BERNIE ECCLESTONE

I drove this car partly in 1964, and in 1965 on one or two occasions, including the very last race I did in the 1.5-litre formula at Monza. It was in modified form, because at last the factory had woken up to do a little work on it and then I thought it was the most competitive car I'd ever driven! But unfortunately the clutch went on the line so that was it. After that I had my accident in Canada and I wasn't able to drive it in Mexico. I used to own this car before it ended up with Bernie, and it hasn't been out for a long time. Unfortunately I missed Saturday because of an alternator problem. It was very hot out there on Sunday! This is a grand prix in, shall we say, the new world of F1, where you have an ultra-modern facility. I think it's very good to bring the past and present together. It was interesting to see the circuit, and the old cars, and it's been great to meet old friends.



Surtees was reunited with 1960s Ferrari



JACKIE STEWART | MATRA MS80 AND TYRRELL 006 OWNERS: STEWART FAMILY

Unfortunately the Matra engine wouldn't run above 4500rpm. It has the same seat and everything, and I had the same overalls on. I was snug as a bug! Because it wouldn't rev properly I couldn't get it to move, but the 006 was fine.

To be on the track with everybody that you were racing against is just fantastic. Bahrain's done such a great job bringing everything together – this has never happened before in the history of motor racing.



Familiar tartan band and Tyrrell blue

EMERSON FITTIPALDI
LOTUS 72 OWNER:
CLASSIC TEAM LOTUS

That car is fantastic, and it has so much history for me. It's like going back in my office. The car was great, everything worked perfectly. On lap three I started feeling good, and then I had to stop. I didn't want to, but they waved me in! At first I was learning the track, and it's very technical. Then I had to adapt to the track and to driving again, and it's a big challenge. To have all these champions together is unique, incredible and I'm very glad I'm here.



Fittipaldi revelled in reunion with 72

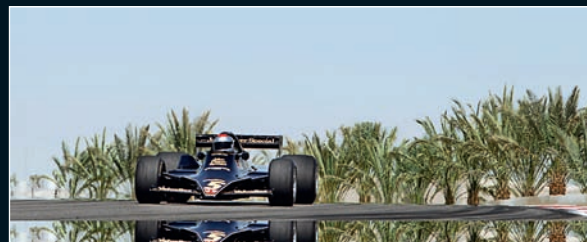


Andretti offers up some sort of thanks

MARIO ANDRETTI | **LOTUS 79**
OWNER: CLASSIC TEAM LOTUS

I drove another one of these at Laguna Seca and Watkins Glen, but this is the works car. I wish I knew the circuit better, because everything was a surprise. I didn't know if it was a quick corner or not. The seat's not the same, and I couldn't really reach

the pedals very well, so I had to be careful. I had to push myself forward to reach them. But coming back in, I knew exactly what I wanted to change! It was a wonderful opportunity to drive this car, and I enjoyed all the camaraderie with these guys.



JODY SCHECKTER
FERRARI 312T4
OWNER: JODY SCHECKTER

I bought this car in 1980 – I suppose I thought that winning the championship in it I had to have the car. It feels all right, but it's so undergeared that you're flat out in fifth between the little bends, so it must have Monaco ratios in or something like that. It's my engine so I don't rev it up! This is not really where I'm at at the moment, because I'm in another world. But it's been fun.



Scheckter and T4: it could be 1979 again



Jody bought the car he won the title in



KEKE ROSBERG | WILLIAMS FW08
OWNER: WILLIAMS F1

It was a walk down memory lane. I didn't think much about it in advance, but once you're in the car after two laps you feel like you've never been away. Everything is in its place. You don't see anything from the helmet, but you just feel everything is there. When

I first drove out I thought the pedals are so narrow, there's no way I'm going to be able to drive this thing! But it all fell into place. It's very strange. I thought it would be very scary and all that, and if I'd known the track I would probably have driven to my maximum!

Rosberg thought he'd be scared. Pah!



Hill and Williams took the 1996 title

DAMON HILL | WILLIAMS FW18
OWNER: WILLIAMS F1

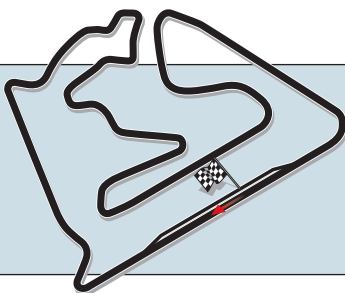
It was tremendous, really exciting. I drove it at Goodwood last year and that was the first time since I got out of it at Suzuka [in '96], so I'm still refamiliarising myself with the old girl. On a circuit it's different, because you can actually start to drive it. There are lots of corners here, and the trouble is that as you get older you can't remember them, as there are too many! The danger is that in your befuddled state you start to think you can be young again, and you can't. Honestly, these things are so physical to drive. At proper speeds my neck would last about half a lap and the thought of going back in the gym and getting back to fitness... It's best to let it rest!



Damon: same suit, slightly greyer hair

SAKHIR

Bahrain
March 12-14
GP2 Asia
Round 4/4



AT A GLANCE

- Race 1 Luca Filippi
- Race 2 Giacomo Ricci
- Pole position Filippi
- Fastest laps Filippi/Bianchi



Valsecchi, Filippi, Ricci: total of 196 GP2 starts!



FERRARO/GP2

Filippi: his third GP2 win; Meritus's first

Veterans' days

Luca Filippi has been in GP2 for years, and Giacomo Ricci's been on the scene for a while too. Their persistence paid off in Bahrain

When Luca Filippi first entered GP2, Jaime Alguersuari was about to embark upon his first full season of racing cars.

Four seasons and 99 races on, the Italian produced a flawless drive to sign off from the category in the most fitting way. From pole position he made a perfect start and drove away from the field.

Even a late safety car period failed to knock Filippi off his stride, and he ran home a comfortable winner, handing Meritus its first GP2 Asia triumph in the process.

Series champ Davide Valsecchi had denied Filippi and Meritus in the closing stages of the previous round – held on the old version of Bahrain's GP circuit – and it was the iSport driver who again took the fight to his fellow Italian.

Valsecchi scythed between Charles Pic and Alvaro Parente into the first corner. While Filippi initially opened up a comfortable lead, as the race entered its final third Valsecchi started to reel him in. The gap was down to just over a second when Christian Vietoris totally misjudged a lapping move on Plamen Kralev

at the hairpin, spearing the Bulgarian into a spin and leaving the two cars interlocked on the racing line.

Filippi produced an awesome restart, setting the fastest lap of the race as he left the field in his dust.

Valsecchi had no answer, although second was his sixth podium finish in seven GP2 Asia starts.

Pic continued Arden's renaissance with a steady drive to third, while Coloni celebrated the arrival of ex-ART and DAMS man

Bruno Corbet as technical director with Parente claiming fourth. The Portuguese driver's run was helped by Oliver Turvey failing to take up his place ahead of him on the grid after the engine died in his iSport car as the field set off for the installation lap.

Giacomo Ricci brought his DPR car home in fifth, after gaining a hatful of places following the safety car-induced restart. Jules Bianchi and Javier Villa banged wheels as they dived for position, creating an opening for Sam Bird to get involved. As all three fought over the same bit of track,

Ricci took long-awaited win for DPR



FERRARO/GP2

RACE RATING

★★★★★

Not much dicing at the head of the field, but plenty of wheel-to-wheel battles in the pack to entertain

Ricci snuck by all of them!

Bird held on to sixth, while Villa dropped back to seventh. Euro F3 king Bianchi, who's not enjoyed the best of luck in GP2 Asia, plummeted to 10th.

Edoardo Piscopo picked up the final point for eighth, but he wasn't able to take up his pole position for the reversed-grid sprint race when the right-rear wheel fell off his DAMS car as he made his way onto the grid!

With Piscopo out of the picture, the scene seemed set for Villa to bag his first GP2 win since his move

with his first podium, while Parente showed his class with another strong drive to third.

Valsecchi wasn't a factor, although once again he charged in the early stages to get himself into fourth. He had to work hard to fend off the feisty Alex Rossi thereafter, the Meritus man having battled his way past Villa and team-mate Filippi in an impressive run to fifth. Villa scored the final point, while a brakeless Filippi lost seventh to Yelmer Buurman on the line.

Abdullah Al-Burj

Victoris and Kralov dispute lapping etiquette



FERRARI/GP2

Bird hatched his first GP2 podium finish



STALEY/GP2

to Arden, but the Spaniard made a tardy start and it was Ricci who shot off the line and led into the first corner.

DPR is the most improved team of the series, and the black-and-yellow car strolled away at the front of the field, leaving ART Grand Prix man Bird behind at an impressive rate.

By the end of the 20 laps, Ricci was over five seconds clear, as DPR celebrated its first win since Olivier Pla's victory at Hockenheim in July 2005 (although all that remains of the team from that era is the name).

Bird wrapped up his maiden GP2 campaign

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Luca Filippi, 29 laps in 1h06m15.383s; 2 Davide Valsecchi, +2.058s; 3 Charles Pic; 4 Alvaro Parente; 5 Giacomo Ricci; 6 Sam Bird; 7 Javier Villa; 8 Edoardo Piscopo; 9 Oliver Turvey; 10 Jules Bianchi. **Fastest lap** Filippi, 2m09.823s, 108.535mph.

Race 2 1 Ricci, 20 laps in 43m47.744s; 2 Bird, +5.369s; 3 Parente; 4 Valsecchi; 5 Alexander Rossi; 6 Villa; 7 Yelmer Buurman; 8 Filippi; 9 Vladimir Arabadzhev; 10 Josef Kral. **Fastest lap** Bianchi, 2m09.787s, 108.566mph.

Points 1 Valsecchi, 56; 2 Filippi, 29; 3 Ricci, 29; 4 Villa, 19; 5 Pic, 18; 6 Turvey, 17; 7 Bird, 12; 8 Parente, 12; 9 Rossi, 12; 10 Christian Victoris, 9.



March 12-14

Porsche Supercup
Round 1/9

RACE RATING

★★★★★

Bigger field opened up scope for excitement, but they weren't thrillers

REPORT BAHRAIN GP SUPPORTS

Rast carries on where he left off with double

German Rene Rast was the form man of the 2009 late-season, and was unbeatable in Bahrain

Rene Rast won both of the opening rounds of the Porsche Supercup in Bahrain, beating reigning champion and Lechner Racing team-mate Jeroen Bleekemolen in the process.

This year the series features a new and faster car that has different aero, a wider track and wider wheels, although it doesn't yet have the wider tyres that Porsche intends to use.

Rast took pole for the first race ahead of British Formula 3 hero Nick Tandy, who is doing his first full Supercup season with Konrad Motorsport after racing in Abu Dhabi last year. Stefan Rosina was third, ahead of Bleekemolen and Jan Seyffarth.

Rast held onto his advantage at the start, but Tandy got away badly when he had too much wheelspin and lost out to Rosina.

The Slovakian pressured Rast all the way, but was unable to get by.

Tandy held third for most of the race, but his tyres went off and Seyffarth was able to claim the final podium spot. Tandy held on for fourth, ahead of Bleekemolen, Christian Engelhart, Sascha Maassen and Sean Edwards. Last year's top rookie Matt Halliday went out early.

The front row was the same for Sunday's second race, with Rast ahead of Tandy, followed by Bleekemolen and Rosina. Once again the Brit got away badly, admitting he didn't quite get the clutch release right. He lost two places and tumbled down to fourth. Rast already had a 1.4s lead at the end of the first lap, and Bleekemolen

Rast marked his card with Supercup double



seemed content to save his tyres. When he pushed a little harder he couldn't challenge Rast and had to settle for second.

Behind them it was the reverse of the first race, as Tandy did a better job of preserving his tyres and moved past Rosina to claim third.

"We learned a lot with the car on Saturday," said Tandy. "We'd only got the cars a couple of weeks ago and had never done a long run. We're only going to get faster. Everyone else has been in it, and they're not going to develop at the speed that I and we as a team can. It would be nice to do some practice starts! But we're leading the rookie championship."


Norbert Siedler took fifth place, ahead of Halliday and

Alex Zampedri. Having finished 11th in the first race, Carrera Cup GB champion Tim Bridgman was a promising eighth in his Schnabl/Parker entry. *Adam Cooper*

RESULTS

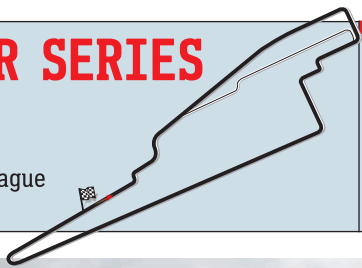
Race 1 1 Rene Rast, 10 laps in 25m52.419s; 2 Stefan Rosina, +0.331s; 3 Jan Seyffarth; 4 Nick Tandy; 5 Jeroen Bleekemolen; 6 Christian Engelhart; 7 Sascha Maassen; 8 Sean Edwards; 9 Alex Zampedri; 10 Robert Lukas. **Fastest lap** Norbert Siedler, 2m32.658s, 92.300mph. **Race 2 1 Rast**, 10 laps in 25m51.077s; 2 J Bleekemolen, +2.171s; 3 Tandy; 4 Rosina; 5 Siedler; 6 Matt Halliday; 7 Zampedri; 8 Tim Bridgman; 9 Maassen; 10 Sebastian Bleekemolen. **Fastest lap** Rast, 2m33.928s, 91.539mph. **Points** 1 Rast, 44; 2 Rosina, 32; 3 J Bleekemolen, 30; 4 Tandy, 30; 5 Seyffarth, 21; 6 Maassen, 16.

INDYCAR SERIES

 Sao Paulo

March 14-15

Indy Racing League
Round 1/17



AT A GLANCE

- Pole position **Dario Franchitti**
- Winner **Will Power**
- Most laps led **Franchitti**
- Lead changes **7 among 5 drivers**



Power, Hunter-Reay and Meira on podium



Power made a winning return to Penske squad

LAT SOUTH

Hunter-Reay can't switch off Power

Will Power marked his return to the series after an injury-induced lay-off with an opportunistic move on leader Ryan Hunter-Reay that secured victory

QUALIFYING

Franchitti: the mark of champion

Thanks to the track issues (see panel), qualifying took place on raceday for the first time in IRL history. Despite struggling on Saturday, Dario Franchitti was fastest when it mattered to take pole, 0.0322s ahead of surprise fellow front-row man Alex Tagliani with his new FAZZT outfit. Justin Wilson was third, followed by Ryan Hunter-Reay, Will Power and Tony Kanaan. Saturday pacesetter Scott Dixon and Ryan Briscoe missed the top-six shootout when they failed to improve their times following Simona de Silvestro's crash.



Franchitti secured the first pole slot of the year

Will Power won on his first start as a full-time Team Penske driver in the IndyCar Series' inaugural Sao Paulo Indy 300 street race on Sunday, an event that was often thrilling and sometimes bonkers. Power outbraked leader Ryan Hunter-Reay with just minutes remaining to snatch a victory that had been heading to Penske team-mate Ryan Briscoe, until he stuffed his car into a tyrewall.

The Indy Racing League battled against the track conditions, which delayed

qualifying, and the elements, as a deluge of biblical proportions halted the race mid-way through for 35-minutes. That meant it was run to a timed limit, so with 36mins remaining on the clock Dario Franchitti restarted ahead of Ganassi Racing team-mate Scott Dixon, with Dreyer & Reinbold duo Mike Conway and Justin Wilson in tow.

But, in reality, this quartet had missed the boat, as they were still running on wets on a fast-drying track. Hunter-Reay, who had earlier wrested the lead from longtime leader Franchitti on lap 27, cleverly

pitted for slicks at the first opportunity before the green flag, along with Power, Briscoe and Dan Wheldon. This dropped them all to the lower reaches of the top 10, but they quickly rose to the front as those still on wets were forced to pit under green.

With half an hour remaining, Hunter-Reay held a 6sec lead over Briscoe but was being told to save fuel, which allowed his pursuer to close rapidly. Power took third from the impressive Raphael Matos, on the first start for the Luczo Dragon/de Ferran Motorsports partnership,

RACE RATING

★★★★★

Great racing at the front with loads of overtaking and random events to spice things up



We're going to take this lemon and make lemonade from it"

Helio Castroneves vows to bounce back in St Petersburg after a troubled opening round

REPORT
IRL SAO PAULO



GETTY

Poleman Franchitti leads the pack off rolling start



Hunter-Reay starred on his debut with Andretti

ABBOTT/LAT



Dixon (behind) would pass Franchitti for sixth

GETTY

KEY MOMENTS

Lap 35 Rainstorm floods the track causing race to be red-flagged

Lap 42 Franchitti and Dixon pit under green for slicks

Lap 53 Leader Briscoe locks up and crashes into tyrewall

but as the clock ticked down all attention was turned to the leading duo.

Briscoe grabbed the lead at Turn 11, but Hunter-Reay snatched it back on the following start/finish

straight as they took it in turns to use their push-to-pass boost. Briscoe got him again on the following lap in the same place, but this time Hunter-Reay was powerless (well, boost-less)

to fight back as his PTP system was on a 'time-out' as he'd used it trying to defend his lead.

The scrap allowed Power to close up, and now it was a three-way battle for the win. Well, it was until Briscoe locked-up and understeered haplessly into the Turn 5 tyrewall.

This brought out the final caution of the day, and Hunter-Reay would restart with Power, Matos, Vitor Meira — on his first start since breaking his back at Indianapolis last year — Wheldon, Dixon, Conway

and Franchitti. Although Hunter-Reay made an initial jump away from Power, the Aussie was not to be denied: "Before the yellow I was trying to save fuel, and had a number to get. But then they told me 'Forget it, run full rich and go for it!'"

Power picked off Hunter-Reay with a decisive move under braking for Turn 11 and pulled away to a 1.858s victory. His only concern now was keeping his focus in the remaining three laps through the pain of badly-blistered hands, but he wasn't to be denied victory in his first start since breaking his back at Sears Point last year.

"I was really hurting," he admitted. "My hands felt so bad under the yellow, but as soon as I knew the win was there to be had, I went for it. I feel great now. It's been tough to recover from the back injury, and I did wonder, lying in hospital, would I get well enough or be fast again? I was crying on the slow-down lap; I'm really appreciative of the chance I've been given. The hands are nasty, though."

Hunter-Reay was gutted

to have missed out on victory: "I was saving fuel, which let him catch me, and then I had a time-out on the push-to-pass, so he got me when I had none. I was sliding too much to catch him up again."

Third place was a tremendous result from Meira, the other comeback kid. He had pitted for slicks a lap later than Power and co, losing track position, but he raced his way back, passing Matos late on.

"Can you believe it? I cannot," he said. "After 10 months not driving, here I am on the podium in my first race. It gives me goosebumps to think about it. I kept my nose clean and things played our way. I'm not going to say we had the third-best car, but with the rain and everything it came our way."

Matos also drove well to finish fourth, ahead of Wheldon. Dan broke his front wing in a clash with early frontrunner Alex Tagliani, which sent him clattering into Tony Kanaan.

"I have to apologise for taking Tag and TK out of the race," said Wheldon.

"Tag had a bit of a bobble ▶

THE INSIDE LINE

Track repairs are dust the job



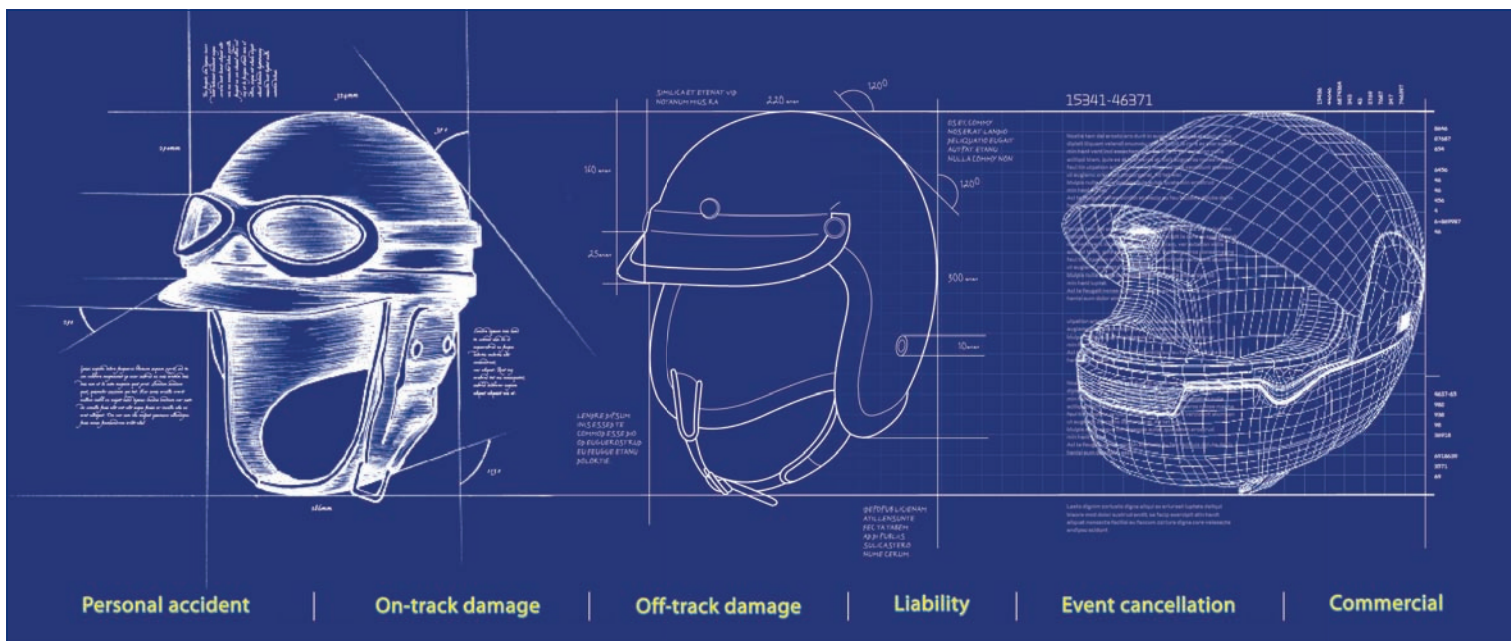
The 'Sambadrome of Anhembi' might sound like where Chewbacca goes to pull female wookies, but is in fact a parade area for Brazilian dancing schools to strut their stuff. This usually painted strip of Sao Paulo real estate caused consternation for the IndyCar Series, as they

found the surface too tricky to handle, causing many cars to spin, sometimes in fifth gear, in practice.

Removing the paint hadn't worked, so Saturday qualifying was postponed to allow the straight to be ground-down overnight. A 15-minute session on Sunday morning confirmed the desired result.

"It was impossible with that surface on Saturday," said Dario Franchitti. "But today it's great."

The only downside on raceday was the huge amount of dust that cutting tiny grooves had created, and despite numerous hosing downs — not least when it rained in the race — the cars were covered in it.



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FAST FACT

A record four females took the start in Sao Paulo; rookie Simona de Silvestro led for four laps after pitting out of sequence



It was impossible on slicks in the rain. I was on half-throttle on the straight when the car took off”

Alex Lloyd

KV disaster: Sato (5) out; Moraes attacks Andretti...



“coming onto the straight and I got a really good run. When I braked I hit a really big bump and it just lifted my front wheels off the ground. When that happens you can’t stop.”

Tagliani railed: “It’s an incident that could have been avoided. I’m a little bit bummed out.”

Dixon and Franchitti trailed in sixth and seventh, leaving Ganassi to rue not at least splitting their strategies when it came to switching to slick tyres.

“If I had my crystal ball it would have been easier,” said Franchitti. “We get it right quite often at Team Target but had a lot of unknowns with the weather.”

For Dixon, the race was almost an amazing rebound story after he was caught up in a Takuma Sato-inspired melee at the first corner of



the race. The Japanese debutant lost control and caused Dixon to collide with Helio Castroneves, who went on to finish ninth ahead of Kanaan after pitting for a new nose.

Behind this schmozzle, a secondary – and much scarier – shunt occurred when Mario Moraes almost flipped over the rear of

Marco Andretti, and although he stayed right-side up, he landed atop Andretti’s cockpit. Marco walked away unhurt after the errant KV machine was lifted off his bonce.

“The start was very dusty and drivers in front of me were braking early,” said Moraes, who also wiped out Andretti at Indy last year.

“By the time I realised it was about 500 metres from the corner, and when I applied the brakes I lost the rear and hit [Andretti].”

Andretti snapped back: “It’s obviously dusty. If you have any common sense, you’re not going to stay flat out if you can’t see the car ahead of you.”

Of the other Brits,

Conway finished eighth, Wilson slumped to 11th and Alex Lloyd crashed when his Dale Coyne-run car “became a boat” on slicks in the rain.

On a day when Power almost missed qualifying when his car became jammed in reverse, his IndyCar career appears to have hit top gear. 🏆

RESULTS

IndyCar Series, Sao Paulo (BR), March 13-14, round 1 of 17

GRID		61 LAPS, 154.696 MILES					CHAMPIONSHIP TABLE		
POS	DRIVER (NATIONALITY)	TEAM	CAR	TIME	GRID	POS	DRIVER	PTS	
1	FRANCHITTI 2 TAGLIANI 1:27.7354 1:27.7676	Team Penske	Dallara-Honda	2h00m57.7112s	5	1	Power	50	
2	WILSON 4 HUNTER-REAY 1:27.8183 1:27.8756	Andretti Autosport	Dallara-Honda	+1.8581s	4	2	Hunter-Reay	40	
3	5 POWER 6 KANAAN 1:28.0156 1:28.6946	AJ Foyt Racing	Dallara-Honda	+9.7094s	16	3	Meira	35	
4	7 DIXON 8 BRISCOE 1:28.0104 1:28.1176	Luczo Dragon Racing	Dallara-Honda	+10.4235s	12	4	Matos	32	
5	9 CASTRONEVES 10 SATO 1:28.1200 1:28.2679	Panther Racing	Dallara-Honda	+10.8883s	18	5	Wheldon	30	
6	11 SILVESTRO 12 MATOS 1:28.8691 1:29.0994	Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara-Honda	+11.3473s	7	6	Franchitti	29	
7	13 PATRICK 14 WUOH 1:30.1253 1:28.4659	Chip Ganassi Racing	Dallara-Honda	+12.0579s	1	7	Dixon	28	
8	15 LLOYD 16 MEIRA 1:30.4641 1:29.1131	Dreyer & Reinbold Racing	Dallara-Honda	+12.1654s	19	8	Conway	24	
9	17 VISO 18 WHELDDON 1:30.4947 1:29.1960	Team Penske	Dallara-Honda	+12.7411s	9	9	Castroneves	22	
10	19 CONWAY 20 ROMANCINI 1:30.7584 1:30.8838	Andretti Autosport	Dallara-Honda	+13.4850s	6	10	Kanaan	20	
11	21 ANDRETTI 22 BEATRIZ 1:39.6813 1:32.4161	Dreyer & Reinbold Racing	Dallara-Honda	+13.9193s	3	Winner's average: 76.733mph. Fastest lap: Power, 1m28.1892s, 103.523mph.			
12	23 MORAES no time	Andretti Autosport	Dallara-Honda	+16.9039s	17	Qualifying: field divided into two groups for qualifying. The fastest six from each move into a 12-car second round. The fastest six from this move into the Firestone Fast Six poleshootout.			
13		HVM Racing	Dallara-Honda	+1m14.9191s	8				
14		Team Penske	Dallara-Honda	-1 lap	13				
15		Andretti Autosport	Dallara-Honda	-3 laps	11				
16		Dallara-Honda	Dallara-Honda	46 laps-accident	20				
17		Dale Coyne Racing	Dallara-Honda	30 laps-accident	15				
18		FAZZT Race Team	Dallara-Honda	28 laps-accident	2				
19		Dallara-Honda	Dallara-Honda	27 laps-accident	14				
20		Dallara-Honda	Dallara-Honda	20 laps-accident	24				
21		Dallara-Honda	Dallara-Honda	0 laps-accident	10				
22		Andretti Autosport	Dallara-Honda	0 laps-accident	21				
23		KV Racing Technology	Dallara-Honda	0 laps-accident	23				
24		Andretti Autosport	Dallara-Honda	0 laps-accident	21				
25		KV Racing Technology	Dallara-Honda	0 laps-accident	23				



Winterbottom, Tander and Courtney on the podium

V8 SUPERCARS ADELAIDE (AUS), MARCH 13-14, RD 3/15

Tander gives HRT double win

Garth Tander has ended Jamie Whincup's V8 Supercars winning streak, and may have started one of his own with two emphatic wins on the streets of Adelaide.

The Holden Racing Team ace was at the sharp end all weekend and, as others ebbed and flowed, he kept his cool in hot conditions to take his first wins on the classic street track. In doing so, Tander is now the only man eligible to lift V8 Supercars' \$AUS2 million (£1.2m) bounty, should he win at Bathurst, on the Gold Coast and the season-

ending races in Sydney.

For Whincup, it was a case of what might have been. Fuel-consumption woes dropped his Triple 8 Holden from first to fourth in Saturday's race, and on Sunday he was all the way back in 18th after receiving a contentious black-flag penalty. Whincup had a rear panel knocked askew after contact from James Courtney. Before he could return to the pits, the panel fell off – but he still had to visit the pits...

Courtney and fellow Ford pilot Mark Winterbottom were the other men to

contend on the streets, Sunday's drive from both particularly meritorious after they had their best qualifying times cancelled for excessive kerb-hopping. Winterbottom's Saturday was ruined by a tangle with the unusually clumsy Craig Lowndes, who was also penalised on Sunday after contact.

Lee Holdsworth was the best of the 'other' Holden drivers with a third for Garry Rogers Motorsport. Will Davison suffered a series of set-up and braking problems, and Greg Murphy's disasters with his new Triple 8-built Holden continued with a dropped cylinder and a broken Watts linkage early in the respective races.

One notable performer was Tony d'Alberto. The privateer, in a single-car family-run team, was in the top 10 in almost all sessions and both races, humbling better-funded squads.

While Whincup rued his loss of points, Winterbottom was clearly relieved at his comeback –

and therein lies some indication of how the series might pan out. Both men scored 171 points on the streets, so the margin between them remains unchanged before they take to another street track, Hamilton in New Zealand, next month.

In the meantime, both have Albert Park's non-championship races to think about, and Winterbottom will be hoping that his rival's upcoming test in a McLaren Formula 1 car knocks him off his game.

● Phil Branagan

RESULTS Race 1 Garth Tander (Holden Commodore), 78 laps in 1h59m06.5574s; 2 James Courtney (Ford Falcon), +4.200s; 3 Lee Holdsworth (Holden); 4 Jamie Whincup (Holden); 5 Paul Dumbrell (Ford); 6 Jason Bright (Holden).

Race 2 Tander, 78 laps in 1h58m01.9244s, 2 Courtney, +0.976s; 3 Mark Winterbottom (Ford); 4 Shane van Gisbergen (Ford); 5 Dumbrell; 6 Rick Kelly (Holden). **Points** 1 Whincup, 771; 2 Winterbottom, 714; 3 Courtney, 696; 4 van Gisbergen, 630; 5 Holdsworth, 573; 6 Craig Lowndes, 552.

James Courtney took two runner-up spots



DE KLERK/GETTY

IN BRIEF

V8 FUJITSU SERIES

Steve Owen looked untroubled in winning both Fujitsu V8 Supercar races in Adelaide. Owen's Holden cleared out from Ford drivers James Moffat and John McIntyre in race one, while David Russell took McIntyre's place in race two when the New Zealander hit a wall.

SOUTH AFRICAN V8s

Brandon Auby's Jaguar scored a double win in Killarney's South African V8 races. Auby defeated his dad Deon Auby (Holden) in both races. Franco di Matteo (Jaguar) and Larry Wilford (Opel) took third in the first and second races respectively.

SA PRODUCTION CARS

Local favourite Johan Fourie (Audi A4) led all the way in the South African Production Car Championship feature race at Killarney in Cape Town. Melville Priest (BMW 335i) and Marco da Cunha (Nissan 350Z) took a win each in the earlier sprint races.

FORMULA VOLKSWAGEN

Wesleigh Orr won the first of two Formula Volkswagen races at Killarney, defeating Simon Moss. An incident spoiled Orr's second race and Moss took the spoils ahead of Tasmin Pepper.

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Britcar



Brands Hatch Indy 13th March report
2009 champions Witt Gamski & Keith Robinson stormed to victory in the action packed Britcar GT race in their new Ferrari 430 GTC. In the Britcar Production it was Mike Jordan & Steve Wood who set the winning pace in their Ford Mustang FR5000

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Britcar GT

- Class 1 Gamski / Robinson – Ferrari 430 GTC
- Class 2 Scott / Ruhan / Williams – Ferrari 430 GT3
- Class 3 Jordan / Jordan – Ginetta G50 GT

Britcar Production

- Class 1 Jordan / Wood – Ford Mustang FR5000
- Class 2 Piers Johnson – Volvo S60 T5



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“My season was perfect from the beginning. Right from the start of testing I felt really good with the car and the team”



GIBSON/GP2

Four Abu Dhabi races yielded two victories

MY SEASON Davide Valsecchi

The Italian reflects on his dominant GP2 Asia championship success for iSport

VALSECCHI CV



Name Davide Valsecchi
Born January 24, 1987
2010 GP2 Asia Series (champion, 3 wins)
2009 GP2 Series (17th); GP2 Asia (4th)
2008 GP2 Series (15th, 1 win); GP2 Asia (8th)
2007 Formula Renault 3.5 (16th, 1 win)
2006 Formula Renault 3.5 (10th); Le Mans Series (15th)
2005 Italian F3 (7th)
2004 Formula Renault 2.0 Italia (14th); Formula Renault Eurocup 2.0 (31st)
2003 F Renault 2.0 Italia (15th)

My GP2 Asia Series season was perfect from the beginning. From the first day of testing in Abu Dhabi I felt really good with the car and with the team, so we started in the right way there and did a good job to be prepared for the first race.

So we were really confident going into the first round in Abu Dhabi, because our car worked really well, and in the first part of the season I was the best driver.

The first race in Abu Dhabi was amazing, because it was my first-ever pole position. I am not so strong in qualifying – usually if there is a driver who loses pole position on the last lap, it is Valsecchi! But I made that step in my head, psychologically, and after that it was a lot better. And the car helped a lot, because it is incredibly fast. So once I got through qualifying I was calm, because I knew we were fast and that we had the performance to win.

It was a new situation for me, because I have never really had such a dominant car. iSport won the [main series] championship with Timo Glock with this car, so it was already competitive before I came. But we were incredibly strong during testing, and

Valsecchi took the title in Bahrain last month



STALEY/GP2

from that we had the confidence that we could be on top every time we went to the track. And right through the season, we've been among the top five. It's a good feeling, because as you become stronger you become more confident and get stronger in your head, and I just know every time that it is possible for me to get competitive.

At the end of the second weekend I had two wins and two second places, and a chance to take the title at the third weekend in Bahrain. To be honest I was a bit scared, because I put a lot of

pressure on myself to win the championship with a round to spare, but when the race came I took the victory. It felt incredible, winning the race and winning the championship.

After that I was able to relax a bit for the final round, but I still tried to push. I chased Luca Filippi hard in the feature race and finished second, and then went from seventh to fourth in the last race. I am really comfortable with iSport – we'll have to see what happens in the main series, but I am confident because the team knows how to win. ☘

SPORTSCAR RACING'S

The five-way manufacturer fight for the title in the renamed GT class is set to provide



The Lizards are out to keep their class title

PORSCHE

911 GT3-RSR

Porsche defends the title won by Flying Lizards drivers Jorg Bergmeister and Pat Long in 2009 with a largely-unchanged 911 GT3-RSR. This season is, after all, set to be the last for the current-generation GT2 challenger.

Ferrari, on the other hand, has pulled out all the development stops. Long is not too worried though, even though the Risi Ferrari topped the new-one class GT times at last month's official pre-season test at Sebring.

"I don't think there's cause for alarm just yet," he says. "They didn't blow us away at the pre-season test, but we do suspect that they've a few development bits to come."

Long knows it's going to be harder this year than last, and not just because of Ferrari. Class newboys Chevrolet and BMW are now ready for a championship challenge.

"The Lizards team has always been so strong in terms of consistency, reliability and strategy," he says. "Quite often it has been those strengths that have made the difference rather than outright pace.

"The Lizards have always set the standard there, but now we have a rival. The Pratt & Miller team is so strong strategically and always flawless in the pits."

Long is relishing the challenge ahead.

"You might be a couple of tenths off the pole and be in seventh on the grid. It is absolutely brilliant," he says. "Love the fact that we have some great competition."

FLYING LIZARD MOTORSPORTS

45 Jorg Bergmeister (D)/Pat Long (USA)/Marc Lieb (D)

WE SAY Has Porsche done enough to maintain its supremacy in this increasingly-competitive class? Porsche's other problem is its having to rely on one top-line car.

THEY SAY "The Chevrolets are definitely going to be the cars to beat the way things are shaping up." PAT LONG

17 TEAM FALKEN TIRES (LANDMARK)

Bryan Sellers (USA)/Wolf Henzler (D)/Patrick Pilet (F)



The Landmark Porsche could trouble Flying Lizard

WE SAY The team that ran a limited programme last year has shown its intent by bringing in factory driver Henzler and ex-Fernandez engineer John Ward.

THEY SAY "We're not setting our expectations too high, but our aim is for at least one podium." WOLF HENZLER

THE REST

The Lizards again field a second Porsche for Darren Law and team boss Seth Neiman, and in the long races Richard Lietz. Increased competition means it will be little more than a bit-part player in the regular races. Black Swan Racing, which fielded a Ford GT in 2008, returns to the ALMS with a Porsche. Two-time Supercup champ Jeroen Bleekemolen is aiming to shine on Dunlop tyres.

SHOWROOM SHOWDOWN

the best racing in this year's ALMS. GARY WATKINS assesses the main candidates



Development to the 430 makes it the favourite

FERRARI

430 GT

Ferrari is pulling out all the stops to try to regain the American Le Mans Series title it last won with Risi Competizione back in 2007. It's brought together the best two 430 drivers in the world, Jaime Melo and Gianmaria Bruni, in a dream team that's arguably the strongest in the renamed GT class. Ferrari and development partner Michelotto have produced a heavily-revised car that should rectify the shortcomings of the earlier 430.

Ferrari has taken a leaf out of Porsche's book and opted to run at the heavier 1250kg weight limit, which comes with the benefits of more power, courtesy of a larger-diameter air restrictor, and wider tyres.

Melo believes the new-spec car, which made a successful debut in the Paul Ricard FIA GT Championship race last October, is going to make all the difference.

"Last year, we were slow in a straight line and on the limit all the time to try to keep up," says the Brazilian. "If we started behind the Porsche, there was no way to pass. Now we seem to be closer to the Porsches on the straights and the extra weight doesn't seem to hurt in the corners."

The wider tyres offer greater consistency over a stint, the other area in which the Ferrari fell short in 2009.

That could be enough to leapfrog Risi over the Flying Lizards Porsche team, but bar may be raised even higher courtesy of Corvette Racing and BMW.

RISI COMPETIZIONE

62 Jaime Melo (BR)/Gianmaria Bruni (I)/Pierre Kaffer (D)

WE SAY Risi, as ever, carries Ferrari's hopes in the ALMS. A driver line-up that is second to none and an improved car mean it must start among the favourites.

THEY SAY "We are the favourites, but I don't think we've seen the full potential of some of our rivals." JAIME MELO

EXTREME SPEED MOTORSPORTS

01 Scott Sharp (USA)/Johannes van Overbeek (USA)/Dominik Farnbacher (D)



Sharp switches from Acura LMP1 car to GT Ferrari

WE SAY New team set-up by reigning LMP1 champ Sharp has big ambitions, but he and van Overbeek will struggle to keep pace with Melo and Bruni.

THEY SAY "We're not doing this to run fifth. We have a lot to learn, but we are aiming to become increasingly competitive through the season." SCOTT SHARP

THE SUPPORTING CAST

Extreme squad fields a second 430 for Patron boss Ed Brown, Guy Cosmo and, in the enduros, Joao Barbosa. Risi again fields a second car under the Krohn Racing banner for Nic Jonsson, Eric van de Poele and Tracy Krohn at Sebring and the Petit Le Mans.



CHEVROLET



Can Chevy bring GT1 expertise to GT attack?

CHEVROLET

CORVETTE C6.R

"It was almost as if they were there all along; there was no acclimatisation period." Those are the words of one rival team boss on the arrival of the Pratt & Miller-run Chevrolet Corvettes in the GT2 class last year. But then you would nothing less from a full-factory team that dominated the GT1 class for so long.

The new GT2 'Vette C6.R hit the ground running at Mid-Ohio in August. It notched up a podium on debut and then took a maiden win in its third start at Mosport.

Many are making Chevrolet pre-season favourite for the new-one class GT division. But exactly where the 2010 version of the C6.R stands in relation to its rivals isn't clear. Pratt & Miller, as normal, opted to run alone at Sebring rather than attending the official winter test.

The big change for this season is the switch from the six-litre, GT1-based direct-injection engine Corvette Racing was given dispensation to use last year to the 5.5-litre production-based unit.

"The new engine feels a little different," says Oliver Gavin, who again teams up with Olivier Beretta, "but the engine guys are making gains all the time."

Corvette Racing is relishing the challenge after more or less racing against itself since 2006, according to Gavin.

"It's going to be so close," he admits, "and we can't wait to get started."

CORVETTE RACING

3 Jan Magnussen (DK)/Johnny O'Connell (USA)/Antonio Garcia (E)
4 Oliver Gavin (GB)/Olivier Beretta (MC)/Emmanuel Collard (F)

WE SAY Pratt & Miller's record speaks for itself. Don't bet against its GT1 domination transferring to the new arena.

THEY SAY "From what I've seen, Ferrari just has its nose in front. If I had to put my money on anyone, I'd put it on Melo and Bruni." OLIVER GAVIN

Rivals fear this may be their only view of C6.R





Rahal expects big things from his team in year two

BMW

M3

BMW was a race winner in its first season back in the American Le Mans Series with the Rahal Letterman Racing factory squad, and this season it intends to challenge for victory every time out in the sophomore season for the V8-engined M3 GT2 contender.

"That's our hope and that's our intent," says team boss Bobby Rahal. "We'd be disappointed if that's not the case.

"We are much better prepared than in year one: the car is better and so are our Dunlop tyres. We believe we'll be competitive at every track, which wasn't the case in '09."

Rahal admits that "everything depends on the rules"; a reference to the twin performance breaks (a power hike and a weight reduction) that helped the car win last year. Those breaks remain in force for the start of the season.

The M3 has proven as controversial as its factory predecessor, the M3 GTR of 2001, and is known by its critics at Porsche as "a waiver car", courtesy of the technical freedom granted to BMW. The debate over the M3 has yet to reach a conclusion, though for this year at least it will run in the US without the changes (to the rear axle) demanded for its entry into the Le Mans 24 Hours.

The team has switched its driver pairings, Joey Hand joining Dirk Muller and Tommy Milner joining Bill Auberlen. The reason, says Rahal, is an attempt to "get the drivers to push themselves even harder".

BMW RAHAL LETTERMAN RACING TEAM

90 Dirk Muller (D)/Joey Hand (USA)/Andy Priaulx (GB)

92 Bill Auberlen (USA)/Tommy Milner (USA)/Dirk Werner (D)

WE SAY The car was on the pace in pre-season Sebring testing, but the jury is out on whether Rahal and BMW can live up to its promise to be competitive every time out.

THEY SAY "I hope someone is saying that BMW is the favourite. It looks like we are so close to everyone else." DIRK MULLER



Will technical freedom bring joy to BMW's M3?

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M0310P



New Jaguar XKRS was off the pace in Sebring test

JAGUAR

XKRS

Jaguar returns to international sportscar racing with its first factory programme at this level since TWR's involvement with the British manufacturer in 1993. Paul Gentilozzi's RSR team, a spin-off of his Rocketsports organisation, has taken up the challenge of developing the all-aluminium XKRS.

It's a bold venture that has been viewed with a lot of cynicism in the ALMS paddock. So far the XKRS, as this GT2-spec car is known, has yet to show any form. It was off the pace on its debut at Laguna Seca last October and again in the official pre-season test at Sebring last month.

Electrical gremlins held back the Yokohama-shod car at Sebring, which has resulted in, says Gentilozzi, "changes to all our electronic strategies" for this weekend. A heavily-revised version of the Jag V8 powerplant ran on the dyno for the first time last week.

The team stayed on at Sebring after the official test and "made significant strides in all departments" according to Gentilozzi. Even so, the team boss/driver is setting modest targets for the first half of the year.

RSR will field one car at Sebring. A B-spec XKRS ran at the test, while the second car has yet to be updated.

Gentilozzi will share driving duties with Marc Goossens and Ryan Dalziel. Scott Pruett will bolster the line-up at Laguna and Road Atlanta, as well as at Le Mans.

JAGUAR RSR

75 Marc Goossens (B)/Ryan Dalziel (GB)/Paul Gentilozzi (USA)

WE SAY: The RSR faces a big challenge to make the XKR competitive in this arena.

THEY SAY: "If we can get within 2.5sec of the pace at Sebring and gain half a second a race we'll be challenging for podiums by the end of the season." PAUL GENTILOZZI



Late-season podiums are a target for XKRS

➔ P62 PROTOTYPES ON PARADE

PROTOTYPE CAST



The Brabham/Pagenaud HPD will star in LMP class

The ALMS prototype classes have been merged for 2010, except at the book-end events at Sebring and Road Atlanta. Confused? Let *GARY WATKINS* explain

Highcroft Racing is the best team in the American Le Mans Series, in David Brabham and Simon Pagenaud it has easily the best driver line-up and the HPD (nee Acura) ARX-01C is at least a match for anything on the grid. That makes Duncan Dayton's squad a clear favourite to retain its title in the new one-class prototype division.

Brabham doesn't disagree with that, but he does make one proviso. Much could depend, he insists, on attempts to equate the performance of LMP1 and LMP2 machinery.

The P1 and P2 cars run in separate classes this weekend at Sebring and at the Road Atlanta finale, but for the rest of the season rule tweaks designed to peg back the LMP1s are in force. Air-restrictor diameter for P1s has been cut by five per cent and, crucially, the performance break that teams such as Intersport and Drayson got last year for running E85 biofuel has been removed.

"They might need to do a bit more than that," says Brabham. "With the way the yellows play out, it's going to

CHALLENGE CLASS



The new LMP Challenge category may be an entry-level prototype class, but it's attracted a strong line-up of drivers, including Le Mans winners Andy Wallace and Christophe Bouchut, and Indy Lights star JR Hildebrand

be tough to keep someone like [Drayson Lola driver] Jonny Cocker behind in a decent P1 car when the race goes green."

Another unknown is the arrival of the grid-boosting LMP Challenge cars, the ORECA-built prototypes that raced in the Formula Le Mans one-make series in Europe last year.

"We were struggling at the test to get past the LMPC cars on the straight," Brabham explains. "But the P1 cars can nip past them easily."

The major opposition to Highcroft over the nine-round ALMS is going to come from Dyson Racing, the only other full-season entrant with an all-pro driving squad.

Dyson returns with, for the moment at least, a downsized programme with a solo Lola-Mazda coupe powered by the biobutanol fuel it trialled at the end of last season. New for this year is Andy Meyrick, who joins Guy Smith and Chris Dyson for the long races, and Dunlop tyres.

"We're 95 per cent certain all our engine problems from last year will be fixed," says Smith. "We should be

competitive with Highcroft: there'll be some tracks that favour them, like Sebring, and others like Mosport and Road America, that suit us."

Best of the rest should be the CytoSport Porsche RS Spyder in which Klaus Graf and team owner Greg Pickett are joined by Sascha Maassen for the enduros. ALMS stalwart Intersport Racing returns with its Lola-AER Bo6/10 for father and son Jon and Clint Field and the Drayson team's Lola-Judd B10/60 driven by Cocker, Paul Drayson and, for the long-distance events, five-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner Emanuele Pirro.

Audi, of course, returns for Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta in October, but it won't go head-to-head with Peugeot or Aston Martin Racing in the ALMS this year. The French marque is only racing at Sebring this year, its British rival in Florida and round two at Long Beach.

Brabham knows that beating the Peugeot turbodiesels this weekend is not a possibility.

"We won't be racing the Peugeots," he says. "Our aim is to walk away from Sebring with a bunch of points." ❧

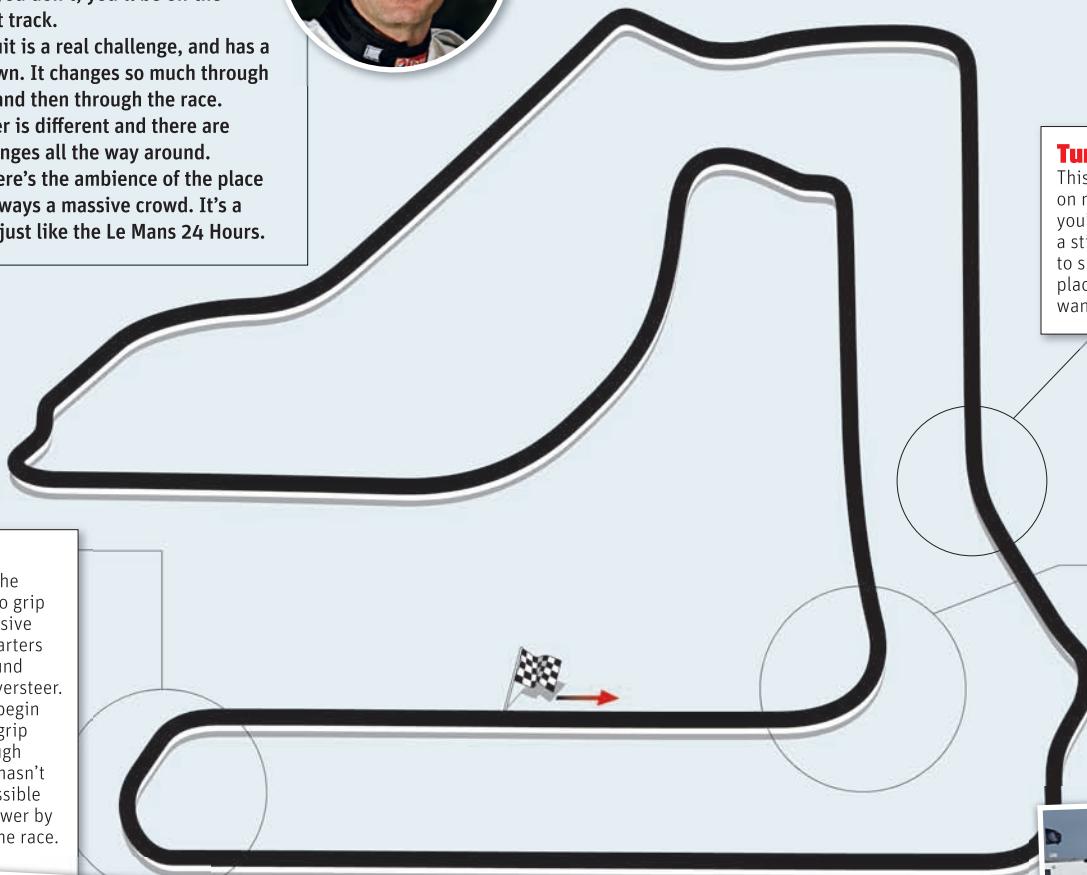
Nicolas Minassian, Peugeot driver

WHY I LOVE SEBRING

THE SEBRING 12 Hours is one of my favourite races. It comes at the start of the season and it makes you push hard, because if you don't, you'll be off the pace at that track.

The circuit is a real challenge, and has a life of its own. It changes so much through race week and then through the race. Every corner is different and there are surface changes all the way around.

Then, there's the ambience of the place – there's always a massive crowd. It's a real event, just like the Le Mans 24 Hours.



Turn 11

This left kink is flat-out on new tyres, but once you're halfway through a stint, the car begins to slide. It's not a place where you want to lose it.

Turn 1

You have to hold the car very close to the inside wall to be quick. This corner gets faster and faster through the race as the rubber goes down. You can pick up as much as 10km/h in mid-corner speed. You have to be hard on the power over that massive bump on the exit. If you're playing with the throttle, it's going to throw you off.

Turn 17

At the start of the week, there's no grip here and a massive bump three quarters of the way around creates snap oversteer. You can really begin to push as the grip increases through the event. If it hasn't rained, it is possible to be on full power by the middle of the race.



2010 AMERICAN LE MANS SERIES

March 20	Sebring 12 Hours
April 17	Long Beach (100 minutes)
May 22	Laguna Seca (6 hours)
July 11	Miller Motorsports Park (2hr45m)
July 24	Lime Rock (2hr45m)
August 7	Mid-Ohio (2hr45m)
August 22	Road America (2hr45m)
August 29	Mosport (2hr45m)
October 2	PLM, Road Atlanta (1000 miles)



CytoSport-run Porsche may trouble frontrunners

SEBRING 12 HOURS TIMETABLE

Thursday, March 18	
1030-1130	Practice (all classes)
1405-1505	Practice (all classes)
1915-2100	Practice (all classes)
Friday, March 19	
0940-1040	Practice (all classes)
1350-1415	Qualifying (GT/GTC)
1425-1450	Qualifying (LMP1/LMP2/LMPC)
Saturday, March 20	
0800-0825	Warm-up (all classes)
1030	Sebring 12 Hours
* All local time (+5 hours GMT)	

SEBRING ON TV

Motors TV Saturday, March 20	
1330	ALMS preview
1400-0245	Live race coverage
* All GMT	

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DAYTONA

HOME OF NASCAR'S RISE AND SHRINE

CHARLES BRADLEY tells the story of how Daytona went from beach-front road course to NASCAR Mecca



Daytona International Speedway is American stock car racing's Taj Mahal, Colosseum and Egyptian Pyramids steamrolled into one cathedral of speed. The National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing sanctioning body was founded in a hotel at the beach resort that gives the 2.5-mile tri-oval its name, and its annual 500-mile race, which starts the season each February, has become its Superbowl.

Speak to a Daytona 500 winner, and you quickly establish a common theme about how revered this speedway is. "It's a masterpiece as far as racing is concerned," says Junior Johnson, who has won it as both driver and car owner.

"One thing that will never change is how a driver feels when he pops out of that tunnel, sees the racetrack stretch out ahead of him," says 1980 winner Buddy Baker. Darrell Waltrip, victor in '89, agrees: "It's like you've entered the gates of heaven. And when you roll onto that track, if you don't get goosebumps, you ain't a racer."

Dale Jarrett, who won the 500 on three occasions, adds: "Winning here is so difficult, yet so gratifying. You need everything to line up over 500 miles on a very difficult racetrack, or you've got to wait another 364 days to try it again."

"You have a lot of races in between that, including the July race here, but

none of them are the Daytona 500."

To regard Daytona, completed in 1959, as *just* a NASCAR track is to do it a disservice – its history runs much deeper. The 24-hour sportscar event, run on its hybrid oval/road course layout, has become one of the showpiece long distance races on the planet, second only to Le Mans.

Looking further back, the reason this now multi-million-dollar venue came to be built in an otherwise sleepy stretch of eastern Florida coastline goes way back to decades of land-speed record attempts and a beach-racing culture that sprouted. It's this fascination with speed that fuelled the construction of the self-declared 'World Center of Racing'.

ORIGINS OF SPEED

The first recorded motorised events in the area happened as early as 1903 at nearby Ormond Beach, where speed trials took place. Ransom Olds, whose family name would go on to be synonymous with the automobile industry, was clocked at over 50mph. Louis Chevrolet would soon follow in his footsteps.

Further along the hard-packed sands, in Daytona Beach itself, many world land-speed records were set between 1905 and '35, featuring Brits Sir Malcolm Campbell and Sir Henry Segrave, as well as Indycar stars Ralph

INTO THE LIGHT



A MUSCO floodlighting system was added in 1988 to allow the July NASCAR race to run at night. This is one of the giant mirrors on the infield that reflects the light onto the track.

DePalma, Ray Keech and Frank Lockhart (who was killed immediately after a 198mph run in 1928).

Since the 1930s, a road course (firstly comprising three miles, latterly two) – run half on closed public highway, half on the beach – was the precursor to the building of DIS. In 1938 William Henry Getty France, a mechanic from Washington DC, took charge of events run there. France had witnessed Campbell's 275mph record set at Daytona in '35, and saw such feats of speed as his family's way out of the Great Depression of the era.

Events weren't making money, as the large nature of the beachside track meant fans could spectate on scrubland without paying their dollars to get in. One trick France employed was to place signs, exhorting 'BEWARE: RATTLESNAKES!' along these areas to force them through the gates and raise revenues.

In 1947, as racing recommenced following World War II, France presided over a meeting at Daytona's Streamline Hotel, and NASCAR was born a year later. This brought sense to an otherwise untamed sport, whose leading lights ran moonshine (corn whiskey) and were often shot at while evading the cops. The cars used for these illicit deeds were the same that they raced, but even their well-honed skills were tested on Daytona's tricky ▶



LEVIT/LAT



◀ rutted hairpin bends.

“When you turned off the highway and hit the dirt, you didn’t feel you were on the same racetrack,” says Johnson, who served time in prison in the mid-50s for his involvement in illegal alcohol production. “It was a combination of things that didn’t work together – dirt and asphalt and vice-versa. When we came to race out here [at the current track], it was so awesome we couldn’t believe it.”

Although NASCAR was formed in the 1940s, it would be another decade before ‘Big Bill’s’ dream of a 2.5-mile, steeply-banked superspeedway would emerge from the swampland a few miles inland from the original Daytona Beach Road Course, near the city’s airport. New permanent speedway ovals had sprung up throughout the ’50s, but France’s vision was that Daytona was going to be the daddy of them all, where star names such as Johnson, Lee Petty, Fireball Roberts, Cotton Owens, Buck Baker, Banjo Matthews and Johnny Beauchamp could perform in front of tens of thousands of fans, who would drive to the tracks in their Fords, Pontiacs and Chevys – looking just like the race cars – to cheer their heroes on.

BUILDING THE OVAL

France founded International Speedway Corporation in 1953, and construction began on the speedway in November ’57. The soil for its steep, 31-degree bankings (18-degrees in the tri-oval) was extracted from the infield of the circuit, creating what is now known as Lake Lloyd. In ’58, as France ran short of funding to complete the project, he met with Coca-Cola executives to plug his \$30,000 financial hole. They refused, so he went straight to rival Pepsi, who signed a cheque on the spot – the association would continue for 50 years. Until 2008, Coke had never been sold there.

The triangular shape of the track was reputedly designed to improve sightlines for fans in the frontstretch grandstands, but was also because of the adjacent dog track that lies outside of Turn 1. The bankings were as steep as 1950s asphalt-laying technology would allow. It was completed in February 1959, and France himself was one of the first to lap the track – at 114mph – in a Pontiac Catalina. The oval’s track is 40 feet wide, with a 12-to-30-foot apron, and its four turns add up to 3000 feet of aging asphalt.

The stars of the day genuinely feared the bankings. “There have been other tracks that separated the men from the boys,” said driver Jimmy Thompson after that first practice session. “This is the track that will separate the brave from the weak after the boys are gone.”

Even today, Junior Johnson admits: “You never did get real comfortable with it; you can’t comprehend what it’s like to drive around this racetrack. The banking’s so steep, if you went real slow you’d turn over and land on the infield!”

Amazingly, that first Daytona 500 was caution-free. A photo finish between Lee Petty and Beauchamp took three days for France to decide who the winner was.

INDYCAR CARNAGE

It’s a fact that Indycars and Daytona don’t mix. The track’s July event, now a NASCAR night race and Grand-Am meeting, was originally designed to play host to a 300-mile race for USAC open-wheel racers. The history books show that Jim Rathmann, who would go on to win the Indianapolis 500 the following year, won the only two single-seater events ever to be run on the fearsome oval, in April 1959.

He won the first 100-miler in little over half an hour, at an average speed of 170.261mph, and a curtailed 50-miler later that day. Tragically, poleman George Amick was killed on the final lap of that first race, slamming the wall and flipping over. Marshall Teague had already perished testing a hybrid single-seater ‘streamliner’ there in February. USAC blamed the 175mph lap speeds, coupled with 20mph crosswinds, as the reason for the crashes, and the high-powered racers have never competed there since.

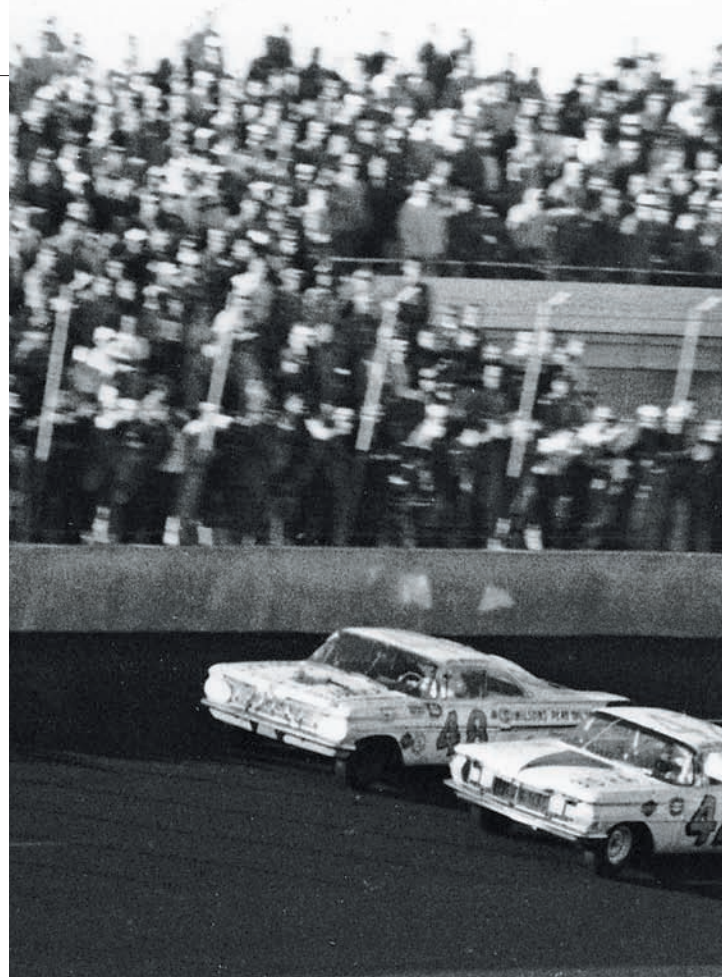
A RICH SPORTSCAR HISTORY

In 1962 the track hosted its first sportscar event on its purpose-built 3.56-mile infield road course. The Daytona Continental was won by road-racing great Dan Gurney, driving a Coventry Climax-powered Lotus 19 run by Frank Arciero.

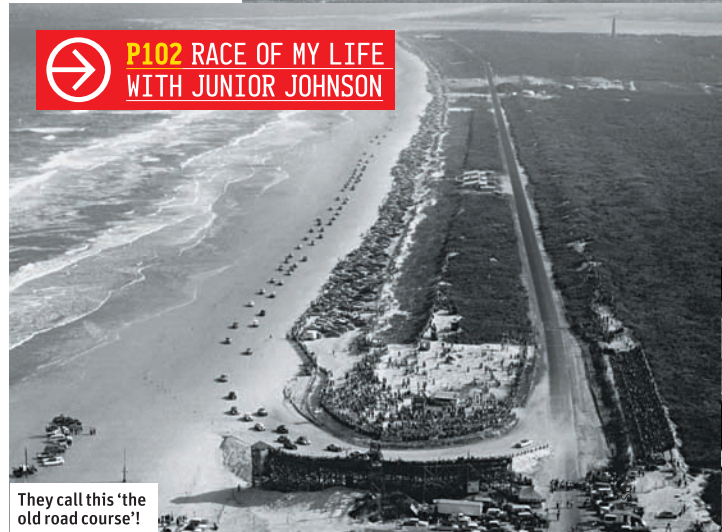
The race was notable because of the manner in which Gurney finished – his engine began to fail in the last few minutes of the three-hour race. With a substantial lead, Gurney parked his Lotus at the top of the banking just before the start/finish line and switched it off. He then waited for the three hours to elapse, cranked the starter button and turned left to use gravity to help him across the line!

In 1964, the event was expanded to 2000km, and two years later the first Daytona 24 Hours was run, won by Ken Miles and Lloyd Ruby in a Ford GT40. The only interruption since was the fuel crisis of the early ’70s, which led to its length being reduced to six hours in ’72 and cancelled completely two years later.

Porsche has claimed victory on 22 occasions, with Ferrari (five) and Ford (four) next up. The event has switched between counting towards the World



1959: Beauchamp (73) gets a run on Petty (42) to the line



P102 RACE OF MY LIFE WITH JUNIOR JOHNSON

They call this ‘the old road course’!

BIGGEST PILE-UP



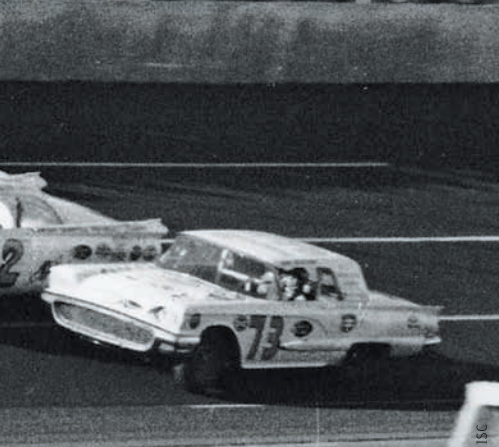
In the 1960 Modified-Sportsman race supporting the 500, no less than 37 cars crashed on the opening lap. Check it out here... [youtube.com/watch?v=5Eb3Sf6Kf1I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Eb3Sf6Kf1I)

Sportscar Championship, IMSA GT series, United States Road Racing Club and Grand-Am throughout its history.

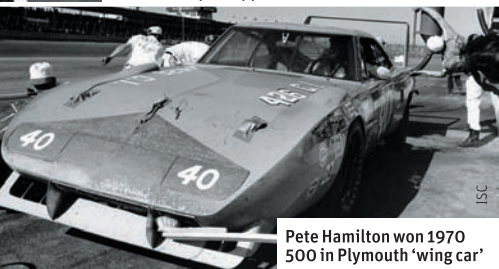
GREATEST AND DARKEST DAYS

From Bob Welborn running 140.121mph to take the first Daytona 500 pole, NASCAR speeds at Daytona escalated up to the 1987 event, where Bill Elliott lapped at a staggering 210.364mph. Since then, NASCAR mandated restrictor plates to strangle the output of the engines, bringing speeds back to about 185mph. In the ’70s it was also forced to ban a generation of ‘wing cars’, as aerodynamics played an increasing role in stock car racing.

“They had to do those things, because we had some very close calls with cars getting into the grandstands,”



Ill-fated Indycar appearance in '59 was first, and last



Pete Hamilton won 1970 500 in Plymouth 'wing car'

THE PETTY LEGACY

When Lee Petty flipped into the car park, son Richard became the man in NASCAR, and was hailed by Reagan

When it comes to the Daytona 500, one man is 'The King'. Richard Petty won the Daytona 500 seven times – his first in 1964, his last in '81. His victory in the 1984 Firecracker 400 – his 200th top-level NASCAR win – was witnessed by president Ronald Reagan, who flew in to Daytona's international airport during the race in Air Force One.

"Daytona holds great memories for me," says Petty. "That day we got the president of the United States on the sports page and the president of the United States got us on front page. It was a pretty good trade-off."

The Petty name also won the first-ever Daytona 500, but it was Richard's father Lee – cheered on from the pits by his son, who'd retired early on – who triumphed

in a photo finish over Johnny Beauchamp that famously took Bill France Sr three days to decide the outcome.

Speaking about the challenge of the track, Petty Sr said: "It scared the hell out of me. We'd been running quarter-mile, half-mile and mile tracks. Then we looked up and saw this monster."

Lee's career would effectively end at Daytona in 1961, after a terrifying accident in a qualifying race for the 500 in which his car burst through the Turn 4 barriers and landed in the car park, leaving him in a coma. He retired to concentrate on building cars for Richard.

Among The King's seven 500

wins – he also led the race in 13 additional years – was an inherited success in '79, when Cale Yarborough and Donnie Allison crashed out on the last lap and had their famous fist-fight. But he'd lost the '76 race in last-gasp fashion, when he and David Pearson collided within sight of the finish. Pearson urged his car over the line on the grass, with Petty stranded on the infield.

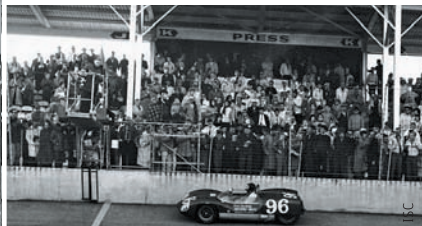
Like his father, Petty also escaped his own dramatic Daytona wreck in the '88 500, when his car somersaulted on the frontstretch and tore down the catchfencing.



Richard Petty was legend...



...as were iconic STP livery and #43

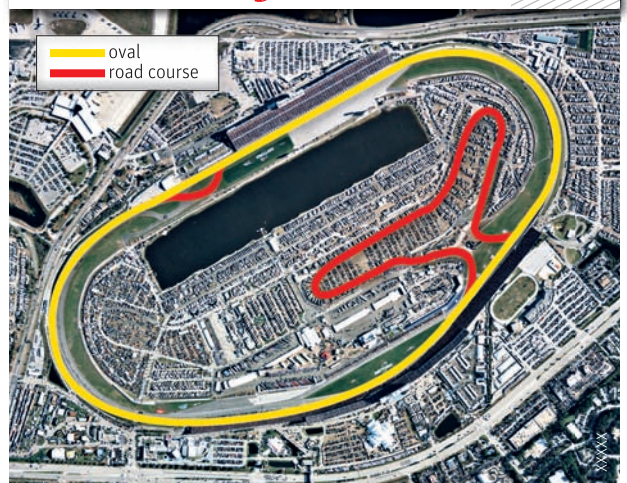


Gurney waits at line in '62 Daytona Continental



NASCAR boom time led to full stands in the mid-1980s

DAYTONA (2.5-MILE OVAL)



says Baker, who won the fastest-ever 500. "Now the fans can buy a ticket knowing they won't have to duck!"

Statistically, the track is in the top five of the most dangerous in the world in terms of fatalities, but amazingly there has only been one death in its flagship 500-mile event. When you realise that man was Dale Earnhardt, regarded by many as NASCAR's Elvis, it makes the stat even more poignant.

Earnhardt had a love/hate relationship with Daytona, winning no less than 34 races there, but it took him 20 attempts to win the 500. He achieved that in 1998, prompting every member of rival crews to line the pitlane, high-fiving 'The Intimidator' after he finally broke his 500 hoodoo.

Earnhardt died at Turn 4 in the 2001

running of the race, fracturing his skull when he was pushed into the wall attempting to protect a 1-2 finish for his own team cars of Michael Waltrip and son Dale Jr. His death prompted NASCAR's Car of Tomorrow programme, the use of HANS systems and improved cockpit safety.

The cars might have changed from a safety standpoint, but Daytona itself has changed little. The France family continues to rule it under the auspices of ISC (Bill Sr died in 1992 – it is run today by Lesa France Kennedy), which is a separate entity from NASCAR. Apart from resurfacing in 1978, and concrete walls replacing the original Armco barriers, the challenge remains similar to that faced over 50 years ago.

"It's the same old nasty, bumpy,

interesting racetrack," says Baker. "Thank goodness they didn't change that. If they made it mirror-smooth then it would let everybody be competitive. Our sport is all about driving, and if anybody in the grandstand can get in a car, because it's so stable, then that's not drivin' – that's ridin'."

"We used to run a one-inch spoiler, and we'd lay it flat for more straight-line speed. Let me tell you, around this place, that was like trying to fly a kite without a tail!"

*** Special thanks to Alana France, International Speedway Corporation and its archive for their help**

WEB DIRECTORY

AWNINGS

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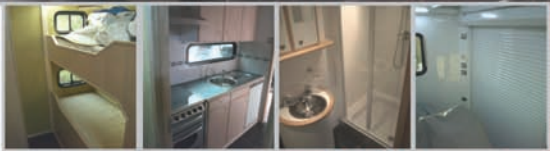
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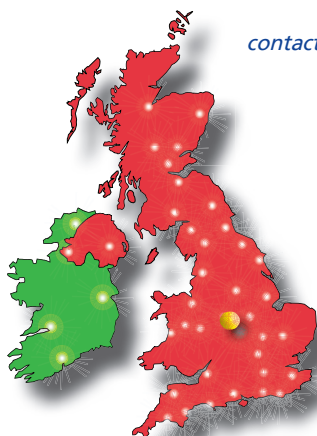
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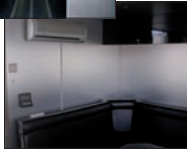


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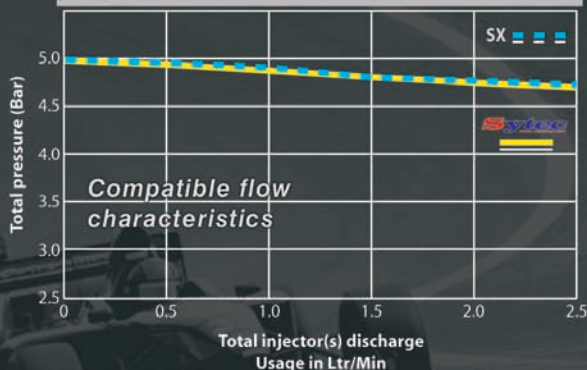
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Top Formula Ford squad completes 2010 line-up, p82



Formula Renault is a thriving class in Sweden

MEDIA EMPIRE

AUTOSPORT SAYS...

KEVIN TURNER
NATIONAL EDITOR

kevin.turner@haymarket.com



AS ANY fan will know, not having Porsche on your GT or sportscar grid just isn't right. The German marque has more Le Mans wins than anyone else, and the 911 has formed the backbone of many a series.

That's why it's great that the Stuttgart firm is returning to British GT this season (page 82).

The ongoing controversy surrounding performance balancing - which the series will try to address next week - led to Trackspeed taking its Porsche off to continental Europe in 2008. Now it's back, hopefully with a competitive new derivative, assuming everything is 'balanced'.

Without wanting to wear those rose-tinted spectacles too firmly, back in the 1970s things were much simpler. If you built a slower car than your rivals, tough. You had to work hard to find an advantage.

Porsche was pretty good at that, and its 917 moved the goalposts out of the park in both World Sportscars and Can-Am in the early '70s.

The car also gave Porsche its first Le Mans victory, courtesy of Richard Attwood and Hans Herrmann in 1970. Now Attwood will return to La Sarthe in a 917 (p84) for the Le Mans Classic. That might just be enough to encourage me to make a first visit...

● AUTOSPORT was busy behind the wheel this week. Our bumper track-test feature (p90) involves Marcus Pye trying four Formula Ford 2000s, while Ben Anderson delivered on his pre-season "hype and expectation" to grab the lead of the Formula Vee Championship at Snetterton (p86).

Extra contact details

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ben.anderson@haymarket.com

Fittipaldi and Herbert to race Formula Renaults

Grand prix winners part of Legends line-up for Anderstorp celebration

» **DOUBLE WORLD** champion Emerson Fittipaldi and three-time grand prix winner Johnny Herbert are among a clutch of Formula 1 legends who have signed up to compete in a one-off Formula Renault race in Sweden this season.

The pair will join a cast including Jacques Laffite, who won six grands prix for Ligier between 1977 and '81, five-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner Emanuele Pirro and local hero Stefan Johansson.

These drivers will headline the Race Legends event at Anderstorp on August 13-15, racing Formula Renault 2.0 Tatuus cars during a summer festival that will also include a full programme of Superkart, GT and historic races, track and stunt demos, and a series of concerts.

The drivers will only practice on

Friday, while on Saturday they will appear for a morning warm-up, free practice and a qualifying session. There will be a further warm-up on Sunday before the big race takes place in the afternoon.

The organisers (a Swedish corporation that operates under the Racing Legends banner) will award a \$250,000 prize to the winner of the main event. They hope to create a race meeting that entertains "audiences of all ages" and raises money for charity, according to a statement on their website. Seven ex-F1 drivers have signed up for the race so far.

The event will mark the first time former Le Mans winner Herbert, who raced for seven teams during an 11-year F1 career, has competed in a single-seater since racing for Jaguar during his F1 swansong in 2000.

"It just came up at the end of last year and it seems like a good idea," said Herbert. "I've never been to Anderstorp before, and it seems like a good challenge. Maybe I'm losing out a bit because Emmo and Jacques have experience of the track, albeit from the late seventies, but it's not changed much.

"Of course we're all getting on a bit, but they're a bit older than me. I'll be hoping to use youth to my advantage, and it's been a long time since I've been able to say that!"

Herbert, whose most recent outings have come in tin-tops, believes the event should provide good racing. "It will be nice to get back in a single-seater, and with the long straight at Anderstorp I think there will be a good bit of overtaking too," he said.

"Most of the guys are still racing, so of course the competitive streak is going to come through with everyone. I'm looking forward to it."



1995 British GP winner will return to single-seaters

THE STUFF OF LEGENDS

Drivers who have signed up so far

NAME	F1 starts	wins	podiums
Emerson Fittipaldi	144	14	35
Johnny Herbert	160	3	7
Stefan Johansson	79	0	12
Jacques Laffite	176	6	32
Emanuele Pirro	37	0	0
Marc Surer	82	0	0
Reine Wisell	22	0	1

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p90 TRACK TEST FF2000

Pye joins Jamun and sets pace

Australian commits to UK's top FFord team, and tops Oulton test



OULTON PARK TESTING TIMES		
POS	DRIVER (TEAM & CAR)	TIME
1	Scott Pye (Jamun Mygale)	1m40.002s
2	Scott Malvern (CDR Ray)	1m40.379s
3	Daniel Cammish (KMR Spectrum)	1m40.627s
4	Jesse Anttila (Fluid Van Diemen)	1m41.015s
5	Jesper Egebart (Egebart Ray)	1m41.066s
6	Josh Hill (Jamun Mygale)	1m41.069s

AUSTRALIAN SCOTT PYE set the pace in official British Formula Ford testing at Oulton Park last week after signing to race with top squad Jamun Racing this season. Pye, who finished third in both Australian Formula Ford and the New Zealand Toyota Racing Series last season, topped the test with a 1m40.002s time, more than half a second under Wayne Boyd's lap record. It was the 20-year-old's

first run at the Cheshire venue. Jamun boss Tony Mundy has now confirmed Pye and Danish karting graduate Emil Bernstorff have joined the squad, alongside series returnee Josh Hill and Dutchman Jeroen Slaghekke. "Scott was pretty impressive for a first visit to Oulton," said Mundy. "Emil will be good, but perhaps it will take a bit of time to get up to speed, so I expect Josh and Scott to fight for the title."

Scott Malvern, driving a Cliff Dempsey Racing Ray, was second in the test, despite his pre-season preparation being affected by a hand injury. Reigning Scholarship champion Daniel Cammish (Kevin Mills Racing Spectrum) and Jesse Anttila (Fluid Motorsport Van Diemen) made it four different constructors in the top four. Juno was also present at the test. Jake Green, who drove a JTR Mygale at the end of 2009, was 12th fastest of 20

runners in the Century Motorsport-run works JA 2010 and has now been confirmed with the team. Green, 17, said: "The car is great. With all the other Ford teams there, the car felt very promising and any set-up changes that we made gave a good response. "I have very good people around me and there is the positive attitude from us all to succeed. I do believe we will be fighting for wins."

British GT Porsche returns to British GT

PORSCHE WILL return to the British GT Championship this season, thanks to GT3 squad Trackspeed. No Porsches appeared in the series last season after the loss of the GT Cup class, and Trackspeed's withdrawal in 2008 due to the squad's unhappiness over performance equalisation. Now Trackspeed will return with a car for team boss David Ashburn. Team manager Rick Martino said: "The intention is to do the season with

David and a quick driver, and we hope to run a second car. We've got the new 997 GT3-R so we'll see how it goes." ● British GT promoter SRO will run a two-day Balance of Performance test at Silverstone this month. Official FIA GT3 tester Kurt Mollekens will drive Ascari, Audi, Ferrari, and Mosler machinery.



Trackspeed last raced in British GT3 in 2008

Legends Mickel in Legends 2010 comeback

FORMER LEGENDS champion John Mickel will return to the series this season. The 2001 UK and World Legends title winner has been looking to return to NASCAR's Truck Series as part of a grand plan to reach the top-tier Sprint Cup. Now he will drive one of three five-eighths scale Legends racers run by his own new Mickel Motorsport team, and plans to race his famed number 4. "I see my long-term future very

much in America, but who could resist the chance to have some fun on home ground in a series that delivers the best racing in the UK?" said Mickel. "With the strength and depth of the series this year, along with a great television and media package, I just couldn't stay away."



Mickel will return

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Ginetta Junior

Rollcentre to enter junior series with a pair of new Ginetta G40s

TOP GT squad Rollcentre Racing is the latest team to commit to a Ginetta Junior campaign this season.

Rollcentre, which has scored successes in European GT racing and at Le Mans, has bought two new Ginetta G40s. It is likely to miss the opening rounds of the season, but has already confirmed 14-year-old Irish karter Eric Morris as one of its drivers.

Rollcentre boss Martin Short, who

also runs Mosler's European arm, said: "Eric's father Karl has driven a Mosler and wanted to know if we'd be interested in running Eric.

"I thought it was really interesting: I'd like to help some young drivers and give them the benefit of my experience.

"I also like the way Lawrence [Tomlinson, Ginetta boss] does things."

Rollcentre is expecting to take delivery of its two G40s in the next two weeks and will begin testing in April.

● Short also confirmed the works Mosler MT900 will return to British GT this season, following the decision to allow the car back into the series (see AUTOSPORT, February 11), even if Rollcentre fails to sign a customer driver.



Rollcentre will run two G40s in 2010

JAKOB EBREY

Formula Renault UK

Kiss goes quickest at Silverstone

HUNGARIAN RACER Tamas Pal Kiss topped the times as the Formula Renault UK teams tested on the Silverstone National circuit last week. Kiss, 18, showed flashes of promise in his rookie season last year, but the ex-rallycrosser is now turning into a leading contender with the Atech GP team (nee Hitech Junior).

Team boss David Hayle said: "Turning his unbelievable car control into a fast time on new tyres has been something to work on, but now he's getting it together.

"Something clicked in

last month's test at Thruxton and since then he's kept the momentum going. He likes this new car and says it's much easier to drive. He had to rag a lap time from the old one."

Teams moved to Rockingham early this week,

with CRS Racing's Harry Tincknell the fastest on the first of two days of running as AUTOSPORT went to press.

SILVERSTONE TESTING TIMES

POS	DRIVER (TEAM)	TIME
1	Tamas Pal Kiss (Atech)	53.374s
2	Lewis Williamson (Manor)	53.401s
3	Will Stevens (Manor)	53.432s
4	Harry Tincknell (CRS)	53.627s
5	Ollie Millroy (Portec)	53.895s
6	Nick Yelloly (Atech)	53.914s



The others were all chasing Kiss

JAKOB EBREY

Porsche Carrera Cup

Bradshaw swaps Porsche squads

INAUGURAL PORSCHE Carrera Cup scholarship winner Tom Bradshaw will return to the series for a second year.

The former single-seater ace, who finished as runner-up in the 2008 Formula Palmer Audi championship, has switched from Team Parker Racing to lead the JHR squad.

Bradshaw, 21, finished eighth in the

Carrera Cup last season. "The aim is to win some races and be at the sharp end of the championship," he said. "I want to build on last year's experience and improve my consistency."

Pro driver Bradshaw joins ex-Clio Cup men Derek Pierce and Mark Hazell at JHR. Pierce and Hazell will race in Pro-am 1 and Pro-am 2 respectively.

MARCUS PYE

HUMBLE PYE

The voice of club motor racing



Duckhams Special appeared at RaceRetro

JEFF BLOXHAM

As a paid-up member of the Monster Racing [Sa]Loony party - don't confuse with the late Screaming Lord Sutch's quasi-political efforts under a similar name - the depth of affection still there for Supersaloons of the 1970s gratifies me.

Judging by a conversation at RaceRetro with my old pal Tony Hazlewood - of Cortina Mk1 V8, DAF-Oldsmobile 55 Coupe and Jaguar-Chevrolet XJ8 fame - from the pioneering days, and Dave Taylor, a period bit player with a Cortina Mk3 V8, there is scope for a dedicated appreciation society.

A contemporary Supersaloon Association would have to take the form of a wide-reaching Nostalgia Forum, rather than a trade union to negotiate race fixtures and prize money, but enthusiasm for the crowd-pleasing DAF (rebuilt and co-owned by Hazlewood) and Taylor's Mick Hill-built VW Beetle-Chevrolet at Stoneleigh was palpable.

Former Chevron fabricator Taylor and his pals have made a fabulous job of restoring the Beetle, onto which 'Mr Super Saloon' Hill and Charlie Harris grafted Trojan T102 Formula 5000 running gear in superceding his all-conquering Ford Capri V8s of the Tricentrol series days. Neither the VeeDub nor the DAF looked out of place at Goodwood last year, where even NASCAR legends admired them.

Supersaloons were popular in Scotland too, where they raced at the long-defunct Ingliston course

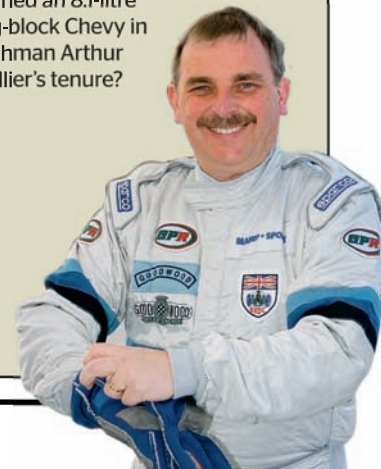
on Edinburgh's Royal Highland Showground. Knockhill holds the torch north of the border now, and Taylor has been invited to take the Beetle to its Scottish Speedfair & Classic Festival on June 27-28, where Doug Niven - who bought the car from Hill to replace his Ford 'Bossco't' V8 - will demo it.

True Superlooon aficionados would have recognised the footprint of a third great car in the Duckhams Special around the corner at RaceRetro. Colin Hawker's legendary Toleman Group DFVW (successor to his Capri DFV) was based on the Duckhams Special Le Mans car Gordon Murray penned for Alain de Cadenet.

The original tub must have gone west in either Hawker's '75 shunt or a subsequent one, the F1 Brabham corners were sold, and the barchetta bodies - one of three it ran in successive French marathons - were remade from scratch by Ryan Hodges in the '90s. Like grandad's axe 'the car' was there, resplendent post-restoration by Yvan Mahe's team.

"Funny how times change," said Taylor, "but some people would now prefer their Chevron to be rebodied as a Skoda." Talking of which, what became of John Turner's wondrous S110R coupe, which gave an unloved F5000 Leda some purpose in '74, then gained an 8.1-litre big-block Chevy in Irishman Arthur Collier's tenure?

“Like grandad's axe 'the car' was there, resplendent post-restoration by Yvan Mahe's team”



Britcar GT

Christodoulou tries Britcar GT Ginetta

EX-FORMULA Renault UK champion Adam Christodoulou was a surprise late entry in the Britcar GT season opener at Brands Hatch last Saturday.

The 20-year-old drove a Ginetta G50 GT with British GT racer Craig Wilkins. The car was run by Wilkins's freshly formed GT3 Racing outfit.

"Craig is an old friend who, through his machining company business (KJ & TG), very kindly supported me during my Formula Renault title-winning season in 2008," said the former McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC

Award finalist. "He invited me to drive after regular partner Aaron Scott signed for another outfit. Very few non-paying drivers have ever got in Craig's cars and I'm extremely proud to be offered the drive."

Having qualified quickest in class, a troubled race relegated the Ginetta pair to 11th overall and the runner-up class spot.

Christodoulou, the reigning Star Mazda champion, hasn't ruled out further outings if time permits. He is driving a Mazda in the American Grand-Am series this season.



Christodoulou drove G50 at Brands Hatch

GARY HAWKINS



Le Mans Classic

Attwood and Muller took 917-026 to second in '71

Attwood and 917 reunite

Porsche legend to share iconic 1970s sports-racer at Le Mans Classic



FORTY YEARS after he scored Porsche's first win at Le Mans, with Hans Herrmann in a 917, Richard Attwood will mark the anniversary by racing one of the German machines in the Le Mans Classic retrospective on July 9-11.

Attwood, who led the 1969 event in one of the original long-tailed 917s before his 1970 success in a 917K, will be reunited with the Gulf-backed JW Automotive 917K chassis 026 in which he finished second in 1971, partnered by the late Herbert Muller.

The 69-year-old will share the car – entered by The Duncan Hamilton Collection – with Australian Vern Schuppan, who won the 1983 24 Hours in a Group C Porsche 956 with Hurley Haywood and Al Holbert.

Porsche's 917, which won two Le Mans and World Sportscar titles before dominating Can-Am, has proved

to be a frontrunner at recent Le Mans Classics in the 1966-71 split, in various hands.

Attwood also plans to contest May's Grand Prix Historique at Monaco in Brabham-Ford BT26-4, in which Jacky Ickx triumphed in the 1969 German GP.

Former GP racer Attwood, who scored his breakthrough win in the 1963 Formula Junior race on the streets of Monte Carlo, finished second in the '68 Formula 1 race there for BRM and fourth for Team Lotus in '69, both times as a late substitute.

He is also expected to be in action in several cars at July's Goodwood Festival of Speed and September's Revival Meeting. His record at the latter is strong, including victories in two RAC Tourist Trophy features, plus several Lavant Trophy and Richmond and Gordon Trophy single-seater events.

Irish Touring Car Challenge

New Irish series gathers pace

OVER 20 CARS are expected for the first race of the new Irish Touring Car Challenge at Mondello Park in April.

The initiative is the brainchild of Irish club drivers Barry Rabbitt, Brian Sexton and Philip Burdock, who will all race in the series. It caters for production-based saloons, hatchbacks and coupes.

Rabbitt said: "Having competed in the Irish Saloon Libre class in 2008 and seen its demise due to the arrival of spaceframe chassis and sportscars, we decided to start our own series."

Any production-based racecar that was originally designed with four seats

is eligible to take part, and the engine must be from the same manufacturer as the car. Two-wheel-drive cars will be allowed to run on racing slick tyres, while four-wheel-drive entrants must use road-legal tyres.

The series has generated significant interest, with former Dunlop Supercar champion Johnny Whelan already confirmed. Honda, Mini, Volkswagen, Mazda, Ford, Peugeot, Mitsubishi, Rover and Fiat models are all expected.

"The response so far has been exceptional," said Rabbitt. "We knew there was a demand for this type of

series, but the uptake has blown us away. Around 75 per cent of our grid is made up of first-time licence holders."

As well as five visits to Mondello, the series also includes trips to Phoenix Park and Kirkistown. Championship status is a target for 2011.



New Irish series has attracted a good mix

Pro1000

Money problems delay series

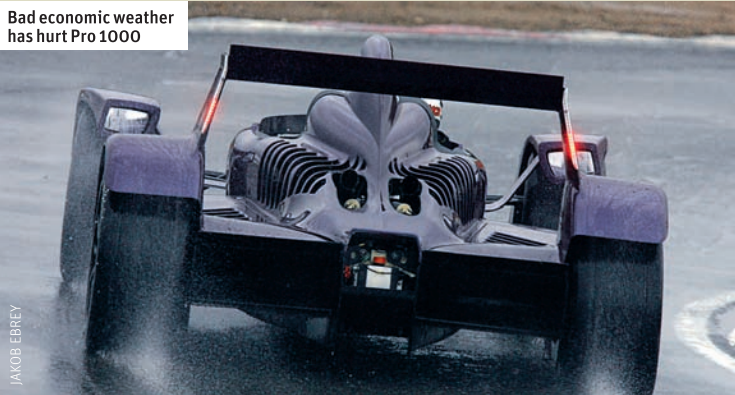
THE START of the inaugural Pro 1000 Series has been delayed until September because of problems finding finance to build the full fleet of Caparo T1000 racecars.

The series had been due to kick off next month, with cars run by multiple BTCC champion team Triple 8 on the BARC's Great and British package, but the delays cost Pro 1000 that slot.

Organisers are now working to secure investment from abroad to build the cars in time for an autumn debut. Series boss Nigel Rees said: "A1GP going down didn't help us – it made investors nervous."

"With time moving on, our credibility is going down. We still intend to proceed and have to look at every option to make it happen."

Bad economic weather has hurt Pro 1000



JAKOB EBREY

IN BRIEF



AUSTRALIAN HOTSHOE Jordan Skinner will contest Formula Ford 1600 races in the UK this season. Skinner, who finished seventh in last year's Walter Hayes Trophy, tested Don Hardman's Ray at Mallory Park last week (above).

FINNISH RACER Jesse Laine has switched from Formula Renault NEC to the UK series for this season. Laine will line up alongside Fabio Gamberini at Mark Burdett Motorsport.

MOTAWORLD RACING has signed 17-year-old Finnish karter Leopold Ringbom for its inaugural AUTOSPORT Young Guns campaign.

STOCK HATCH ace Ryan Bensley, 25, is graduating to the Dunlop Sport Maxx Cup this season with a Class-A Vauxhall Astra. The 2008 750MC champion has won Dunlop Sport Academy backing and will race a car built by father Steve.

NISSAN PLAYSTATION GT Academy winners Luca Lorenzini, 26, and Jordan

Tresson, 21, made their race debuts at Snetterton last weekend. The pair (left) both drove RJN Motorsport-prepared 370Zs in the 750MC Allcomers event.



POST HISTORIC Touring Car champion Stephen Primett will not defend his title this year. He plans to race his Ford Escort MK1 in the Racing Saloon series.

FORMER GINETTA Junior racer Jake Rattenbury's graduation to Formula Renault BARC took a blow when he crashed heavily at Gerards during his first test at Mallory Park last week. "I felt I was gaining confidence with the aero package and then hit a bit of dirt and lost the back end," he said.

THE THIRD generation of the Raby family - all called Ian - will take up motor racing after a trial at Lydden last Saturday. The original Ian Raby started three grands prix in the 1960s and his son raced in Formula Vee. Now Ian III, will share a Van Diemen RF98 with his father.

FORMER RENAULT Clio racer Thomas Carnaby qualified his MG second and finished seventh on his Britcar Production debut at Brands Hatch last Saturday (left).



Formula Academy

Academy series switches to Zetecs and offers prize drive

THE NEW Formula Academy series will offer a season in the British Formula Ford Scholarship Class in 2011, despite being forced to switch to older cars.

Formula Academy boss Ken Bowes had hoped to use a new modified Van Diemen Formula Ford chassis for the initiative, which was called Junior Formula Ford when it was launched last year (see AUTOSPORT, October 1). But Bowes has now decided to use the Zetec-engined Van Diemen RF97s that formed the basis of his BRDC Single Seater series between 2000 and 2005.

"The original plan was to have a fleet of chassis built to the draft 2011 Formula Ford technical regulations, but nobody can give me an assurance they won't change," he said. "Given the time involved in building a grid of new cars, we simply couldn't wait for the 2011 regs, and car designs that are likely to take until the middle of the year.

"The old Van Diemens are ideal for this and are a cheaper way of doing it."

The cost of a season, which includes 10 tests and 16 races across seven race weekends, has fallen from £45,000 to

£40,000. A fleet of 16 cars, for 14 drivers, will be available.

Bowes, who hopes the series will bring people into the sport on their way to established single-seater categories, also confirmed that the top 2010 driver will be helped into British Formula Ford. The top three runners will go to a shoot-out at the end of the year and the winner will get to use a Van Diemen,

with a Premier Power engine, in 2011. "We'll cover test fees, race entry fees and tyre costs," said Bowes. "The ultimate aim is to cover all costs - we want to offer a whole season in the [main] Championship Class."

Bowes hopes to bring in a new car for Formula Academy in 2011 and also admitted he may run a team in British Formula Ford in the longer term.

The season kicks off at Snetterton in May and includes visits to Zandvoort and the Snetterton F3/GT meeting. There will be a launch at Mallory Park this Saturday.



BRDC Van Diemens will return in 2010

GT Cup

BMW man in GT Cup switch

BRITCAR PRODUCTION race winner Keith Webster plans to switch to the GT Cup this season.

Webster won the Britcar Production opener at Brands Hatch last weekend in his Geoff Steel-prepared BMW E36 M3. It was only his third race in the series and his eighth car race.

The 43-year-old former motorcycle racer now plans to switch series. "Geoff has done a superb job with my car and he's also given me invaluable help," he said. "The car won't be competitive [in GT Cup], but it'll be good experience."

British Rallycross

Open champ ends quit threat

REIGNING RALLYCROSS Open champion Andy Grant will switch to the British series this season.

Grant, 49, who has campaigned a Ford Escort Cosworth for the past 14 years, has acquired the G-Tech Ford Focus previously campaigned by BTCC ace Andrew Jordan and retired double British champ and 1992 European title winner Will Gollop.

Grant considered quitting motorsport after winning the ROC last year, but decided to continue and seek a fresh challenge. Gollop will assist Grant during his debut event at Lydden on Easter Monday.

Ex-Jordan Focus is proven winner



"I decided that I can't watch TV, can't play golf and can't sit still long enough to go fishing," said Grant.

"The Focus has a good history and although the power of it and my Escort is about the same, the suspension and transmission is far superior. I'm hoping I'll be faster in a newer, better car."

Britcar GT
Engine woes hamper Production pair's GT debut



BMW engine went bang at Brands

BARRY AMBROSE

REIGNING BRITCAR Production champions Kevin Clarke and Wayne Gibson made a troubled graduation to the Britcar GT championship at Brands Hatch last weekend.

With only limited testing in his new BMW M3 E92, the first such car to appear in UK club racing, Intersport Racing team boss Clarke has elected to run last year's six-cylinder engine rather than the model's V8 unit.

"The chassis is radically different to the E46," said Clarke, who has paired with Gibson to win the past two Production titles. "As the weather restricted our testing, we decided to use last year's engine and concentrate on set-up."

Despite the change, Clarke's engine blew up at Brands, which could force a swap back to the newer unit sooner than anticipated.



Big Ben chimes for maiden Vee victory

Anderson, Farmer and Belsey put on great Formula Vee show

RICHARD STYLES

REGULAR AUTOSPORT track testing duties have sharpened Ben Anderson's driving. A cracking maiden Formula Vee victory at Snetterton on Saturday and second place – by 0.02 seconds to Martin Farmer – in an even tougher Sunday race means he leads the 750 Motor Club's championship.

The result was a family triumph. Anderson qualified his GAC – engineered by dad Phil and racer sister Jenny – on pole, but had to repass Jake Oliveira (Storm) and repel

Peter Belsey (Spyder) before Farmer jostled his GAC through the pack and past Anderson to lead.

After several changes, a brush of wheels as Anderson (on the inside) and Farmer entered the Esses abreast decided the outcome. As Farmer gyrated and was tapped by Belsey, Anderson sprinted to victory over equally ecstatic former Locost king Declan McDonnell (GAC).

Sunday's replay was a classic that should make sensational viewing on Motors TV, under the club's new initiative.

Farmer – with his steering wheel skew-whiff and worried about a wheezing engine – Belsey, Anderson, McDonnell and Paul Smith (Dominator) set off fighting, and karting graduate Ashley Sutton (Storm) got among them as battle intensified.

No square centimetre of track was untouched as the air-cooled VW-powered cars slipstreamed, ducked and dived, their order constantly changing. Again Farmer and Anderson entered the Esses side-by-side at the critical moment, but this time Farmer held

on round the outside.

"If I crashed, I crashed. I had to win this one," grinned the 2007 runner-up, who took the chequer a short nose clear with Anderson gaining, and McDonnell completing a GAC clean sweep with Belsey and Smith in tow.

Saxmax returnees Scott Moakes and Anthony Whorton-Eales scored their maiden victories in the category, which looks likely to be more open this term. Chris Warburton, second past the flag on Sunday, has appealed his subsequent exclusion for bodywork irregularities.

An inspired wet-tyre call while all around him committed to slicks enabled Martin Byford to win the Formula 4 race outright in Gateshead College's Van Diemen RF87 – the first time a Formula Ford has beaten the winged cars. Conditions were marginal, but a shower as they lined up played into the former circuit FF1600 and British F3 National class champion's hands. He duly saw off Andrew

Minnett and Malcolm Scott to the joy of students who prepare the car.

BDN ace Derek Jones planted Paul Rogers' Contour on pole for the RGB round, his 1m12.82s charge 1.19 seconds inside his own record, but rain precluded the former champion from making it official come the race. The combo dominated nonetheless, finishing a country mile ahead of Jon Cutmore's new Spire, with Tim Hoverd's Fisher Fury leading the front-engined contingent in third.

Two massive Toyota MR2 grids provided fine sport, although some drivers complained of poor etiquette. After two cautious getaways, Zac Chapman controversially used the pit exit road for overtaking en route to a double win, while early leader Andrei Bgatov's car was wrecked in the slippery second stanza after a moment with John Wilson.

Defending champion Mark Jessop's engine seized second time out, but his old adversary Steve



Byford scored remarkable F4 win

STEVE JONES

Donnan leads Hobbs in Crossle battle



RICHARD STYLES

Lumley starred, charging from 34th to eighth and third respectively having managed one qualifying lap. "I've won a few races, but that was my best drive – total focus," he said.

Nobody would have backed the Crossle 9Ss of Roger Donnan and Mark Hobbs for a one-two as three AC Cobra clones made the ground shake in Saturday's Kit Car & SRGT Challenge pick 'n' mix. The Chevrolet V8-powered snakes of Cheng Lim and polesitter Clinton Dorrell were soon out, however, with broken steering and rear suspension respectively, but John Dickson blasted his Ford-powered RAM version from the back – following ignition dramas in qualifying – to lead by lap two. He held position until the electrics died again starting the final

tour, forcing him to park at Riches.

That left the duelling Crossles ahead, while Matt Lewis won the Kit split in his Rover V8-motivated MNR Vortx after the Ford Zetec in challenger Guy Hussey's RAW Striker popped its head gasket.

Ken Culverwell's Mamba was the only SRGT left on Sunday, when Lewis, John Moore (Sylva Phoenix) and triple Kit champ Andy Hiley's smoky new Taydec disputed the lead splendidly. Hiley momentarily nosed into the lead, but spun as Moore dived past for second into Sear. "All my own fault," said Hiley, although third and a class lap record in a car finished on Saturday was more than he'd dared hope for. Lewis beat Moore to the win.

Nathaniel Cooper enjoyed a brief moment of glory, leading the wet 750

Formula opener for half a lap in his Davis T7 until the Centaur of poleman Roger Rowe sailed past and drew away to victory.

Defending champion Dave Robson's SDAR skated off at the Esses amid spins aplenty, but retired Royal Naval commander Paul Morris shook off the Sheppard brothers for a career-best third, and even threatened runner-up Cooper.

The MR2 Super GT class's debut came too early for most preparing hotter Toyota hybrids, but nobody could match novice Simon Phillips's neat Mk3 Roadster turbocar in the double-header.

Former AUTOSPORT Golden Helmet winner Jonathan Wright unwrapped his new Radical PR6 and annihilated the Allcomers field.

■ By Marcus Pye

SNETTERTON STOCK HATCH March 13-14



Cook's season has started well

Josh cooks up a Stock Hatch double

JOSH COOK underlined his aspirations to win the 750 Motor Club's 13th Stock Hatch title with impressively confident defeats of defending champion Jeff Humphries in both Snetterton rounds, and a heat win to boot!

Fifth last year, with three wins from four starts mid-season, the 18-year-old Saxmax graduate's campaign only lost momentum when he bent his Saxo. Having finished the year in Maurice Hayden's Citroen C2, Josh has his own C2 nearing completion, but the modern car will make its debut heavier still with 40kg of success ballast garnered here in the rebuilt Saxo.

Cook qualified quickest of the 55 competitors, half a second clear of Peugeot Humphries. Track conditions improved markedly during their session, thus Saturday's final would be composed of the top 19 from each heat.

Terry Roughton and Craig Bell headed the opener, although two stoppages led to its abandonment with finalists promoted on their order at one lap. Humphries beat Cook in the other, sharing a new lap record.

Cook and Humphries were up front in both points-paying finals. Cook's bold second-lap pass into the Esses and consistent pace thereafter secured Saturday's win. Not wishing to risk his 'Pug', Humphries kept Joe Ferguson and Matt Digby comfortably behind.

Patrick Fletcher found pace in Sunday's heats and, belying the battered appearance of his ex-Nick Carter Saxo, forged past here in the rebuilt Saxo. Cook led the final. They hung him out to dry at the Bomb Hole though, and another banzai run into the Esses sowed the seeds of Cook's victory, with Humphries and Fletcher – who walloped the record by 0.44s to get back with them – in line astern.

FORMULA VEE (11 LAPS)

1 Ben Anderson (GAC 01). 2 Declan McDonnell (GAC 03) +477s; 3 Peter Belsey (Spyder Mk2); 4 Paul Smith (AHS Dominator 09); 5 Jake Oliveira (Storm DCO7); 6 Ashley Sutton (Sheane 07). **Class winner** Peter Studer (Sheane). **Fastest lap** Martin Farmer (GAC) 1m19.07s (88.87mph). **RACE TWO (11 LAPS)** 1 Farmer; 2 Anderson +0.02s; 3 McDonnell; 4 Belsey; 5 Smith; 6 Sutton. **CW** Ian Jordan (Sheane). **FL** Anderson 1m19.63s (88.25mph).

SAXMAX (10 LAPS)

1 Scott Moakes; 2 Jordan Willson +1.03s; 3 Chris Warburton; 4 Shaun Clay; 5 Shane Stoney; 6 Anthony Whorton-Eales. **FL** Warburton 1m28.73s (79.20mph).

RACE TWO (10 LAPS)

1 Whorton-Eales; 2 Moakes +0.87s; 3 Aaron Trigwell; 4 Willson; 5 Stoney; 6 Ashley Dibden. **FL** Moakes & Trigwell 1m29.75s (78.10mph).

FORMULA 4 (8 LAPS)

1 Martin Byford (Van Diemen RF97); 2 Andrew Minnett (Van Diemen RF99) +5.65s; 3 Malcolm Scott (Van Diemen RF00); 4 Oliver Sirrell (Van Diemen); 5 Erwin Smiech (Van Diemen RF06); 6 Chris Kite (Dallara 393). **CW** Minnett; Paul Young (Revelation). **FL** Minnett 1m25.03s (82.64mph).

RGB (14 LAPS)

1 Derek Jones (Contour RGB09b); 2 John Cutmore (Spire GTR) +32.91s; 3 Tim Hovord (Fisher Fury); 4 David Wale (BDN S2); 5 Doug Carter (Genesis Evo); 6 James Johnson (Fisher Fury). **CW** Hovord; Colin Chapman (Fisher Fury). **FL** Jones 1m18.73s (89.26mph).

MR2 (11 LAPS)

1 Zac Chapman; 2 Andrei Bgatov +0.74s; 3 John Wilson; 4 Guy Hefford; 5 David Bryant; 6 George Robinson. **CW** Jonathan Grimes. **FL** Chapman 1m24.59s (83.07mph).

RACE TWO (14 LAPS)

1 Chapman; 2 Paul Hinson +17.50s; 3 Steve Lumley; 4 Robert Barnett; 5 Alexander Lennon; 6 Wilson. **CW** Grimes. **FL** Chapman 1m24.43s (83.23mph) record.

KIT CAR & SRGT (15 LAPS)

1 Roger Donnan (Crossle 9S); 2 Mark Hobbs (Crossle 9S) +6.30s; 3 Matthew Lewis (MNR Vortx); 4 John Moore (Sylva Phoenix); 5 David Caldecourt (Sylva Phoenix); 6 Ian Kempson (MK Indy). **CW** Lewis; Caldecourt. **FL** John Dickson (RAM SC Cobra) 1m15.70s (92.83mph) record.

RACE TWO (11 LAPS)

1 Lewis; 2 Moore +1.13s; 3 Andy Hiley (Taydec Mk2); 3 Guy Hussey (RAW Striker); 5 Caldecourt; 6 Nigel Brown (Sylva Phoenix). **CW** Hussey. **FL** Hiley 1m17.60s (90.56mph) record.

750 FORMULA (9 LAPS)

1 Roger Rowe (Centaur Mk20MC); 2 Nathaniel Cooper

(Davis T7) +24.20s; 3 Paul Morris (Darvi Mk5); 4 Max Sheppard (Sheppard MS750/01); 5 Guy Sheppard (ADR 3GS); 6 Rod Hill (Mystic T4/2). **CW** Morris. **FL** Rowe 1m37.04s (72.42mph).

MR2 SUPER GT (11 LAPS)

1 Simon Phillips (Roadster); 2 Patrick Mortell (Mk2) +21.69s; 3 Rob Horsfield (Mk2); 4 John Wilson (Mk2); 5 Alexander Lennon (Mk2); 6 Matthew March (Mk2). **CW** Wilson. **FL** Phillips 1m20.46s (87.34mph).

RACE TWO (11 LAPS)

1 Phillips; 2 Horsfield +42.29s; 3 Wilson; 4 Lennon; 5 Marsh; 6 Simon Topp (Mk2). **FL** Phillips 1m19.79s (88.07mph) establishes record.

ALLCOMERS (12 LAPS)

1 Jonathan Wright (Radical PR6); 2 David Wale (BDN S2) +1m07.94s; 3 Tim Hovord (Fisher Fury); 4 Doug Carter (Genesis Evo); 5 Matthew Green (Spire GTR); 6 Russell Hennessy (Shelsley GTR). **FL** Wright 1m10.36s (99.86mph).

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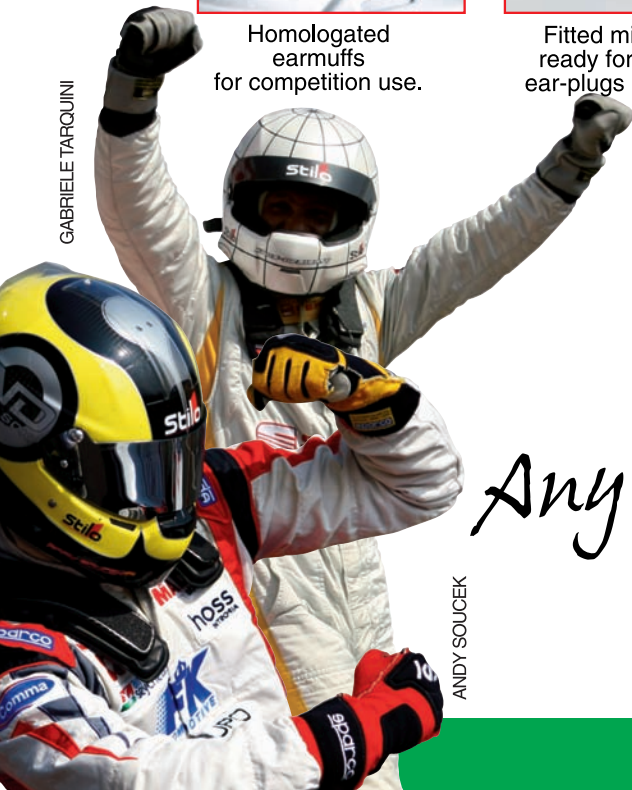
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BRANDS HATCH BRITCAR March 13
Ferrari beats Mosler; solo Webster wins Production



Gamski/Robinson
Ferrari beat Mosler

Ferrari duo fight back to take Britcar opener

IN WHAT was a highly tactical affair, reigning Britcar GT champions Witt Gamski and Keith Robinson beat father-and-son pairing Michael and Sean McInerney to get their title defence off to a dream start at Brands Hatch last Saturday.

With limited testing, car owner Gamski and his driving partner had to learn their Ferrari 430 in qualifying and the race. After two spins by Gamski (one of which wasn't his fault), the irrepressible Robinson drove a fine race.

The McInerneys' Mosler MT900 had led Gamski, but the first spin cost the Ferrari man dear, and a tap while being lapped by the Mosler lost the Ferrari even more time. By the time Gamski pitted, he was down to fifth, with Sean McInerney now almost a lap ahead of the field.

Focus turned to the battle between the Ginetta

G50 of Mike and Andrew Jordan and the Azteca Motorsport Porsche of Spanish pairing Javier Morcillo and Manuel Cintrano, a scrap that entertained for many laps. Time and again one would get past, only for the other to dive back through.

Even after its pitstop, the Mosler (with Michael McInerney now at the wheel) led, but a fired-up Robinson began to hit back.

The lapped Robinson harried McInerney Sr and, when the leader again doubled the Ginetta and Porsche, so Robinson passed them as well, jumping from fourth to second in one fell swoop.

Just after half-distance, Robinson passed McInerney to unlap himself, but still had plenty to do. The lead switched back and forth as further pitstops were made, and the Ferrari camp began to hatch race-winning plans.

Tyres and fuel would

play a crucial part, and Gamski called it correctly by opting to leave Robinson in the car, fuel it up and gamble on changing only the left-side wheels.

With around 30 laps left to run, the pendulum swung decisively back in favour of the Ferrari-mounted pairing.

Almost unnoticed, the Duncan Cameron/Mike Edmonds Ferrari F430 completed the podium, some five laps adrift of the leaders, while the Jordan family Ginetta finally bagged fourth at the expense of the Spanish Porsche pairing.

Former BTCC racer Mike Jordan also played a leading role in the Production race but, despite having led (start driver Steve Wood set a relentless pace), his Ford Mustang squad came out second best.

The revelation of the race was inexperienced solo driver Keith Webster who, having earlier run second



Jordan/Wood Mustang led, but wouldn't win

in his orange BMW, went ahead at the pitstops and proceeded to hold a gap over a chasing Jordan.

The gap shrunk, but Webster refused to be panicked and responded by upping his own pace. With Jordan seemingly accepting the situation in the closing stages, Webster went on to record his maiden victory.

The Cunninghams, Mark and Peter, rescued what looked a lost cause with a superb recovery to third. Start driver Mark was forced to pull off early on to reset the SEAT Leon's electrics, after contact had caused the paddleshift gearbox to adopt a 'ghost' neutral. He lost two laps in the process, resuming stone last and prompting a fine comeback charge.

Chris Milner and Ron Johnson shared the spoils as the non-championship

Britsports series (unlike the original format, now exclusively for Caterhams of varying specifications) got underway.

Aside from a brief spell, polesitter Milner (Cosworth Masters) led the first race from lights to flag. Second-row starter Johnson (R400) chased him down but, once pitstops were done and dusted, Milner reasserted himself.

Johnson gained his revenge in the later race, in which Milner blew his hopes with an early off at Druids. He lost two laps in the process, so to end up just half a minute shy of the winner was a fine achievement.

Nick Starkey, third in race one, dropped out early on, leaving R300 driver Jonathan Walker to take the final podium spot.

■ **By Dud Candler**

BRITCAR GT (81 LAPS)
1 Witt Gamski/Keith Robinson (Ferrari 430GT3). 2 Michael & Sean McInerney (Mosler MT900R) -1 lap. 3 Duncan Cameron/Mike Edmonds (Ferrari F430 GT3). 4 Andrew & Mike Jordan (Ginetta G50 GT4). 5 Javier Morcillo/Manuel Cintrano (Porsche 996GT3). 6 Aaron Scott/Andy Ruhan/Arwyn Williams (Ferrari 430 GT3). **Class**

winner Cameron/Edmonds; Jordan/Jordan; Scott/Ruhan/Williams; Colin & Sam Mowle/Benjamin Harvey (KTM X-Bow). **Fastest lap** Robinson 46.252s (93.29mph). **BRITCAR PRODUCTION (103 LAPS)** 1 Keith Webster (BMW M3 E36). 2 Steve Wood/

Mike Jordan (Ford Mustang FR500 GT4) +8.325s; 3 Mark & Peter Cunningham (SEAT Leon Supacopa); 4 Gino Ussi

(BMW M3 E46); 5 Angus Dawe/Mike Wilds (BMW M3 E36); 6 Piers Johnson (Volvo S60 T5). **CW** Wood/Jordan; Johnson. **FL** Jordan 50.496s (85.45mph). **BRITSPORTS (44 LAPS)** **ALL CATERHAMS** 1 Chris Milner (Cosworth Masters); 2 Ron Johnson (R400) +5.528s; 3 Nick Starkey (Superlight R); 4 Jonathan Walker (R300); 5 Mark Shaw (R300); 6 Jon



Milner leads Caterham-based Britsports away

PINTO-SIZED SLICKERS

Formula Ford 2000 celebrates its 35th birthday this month. **MARCUS PYE** looks back, and tries four different cars for size



The naissance of Formula Ford 2000 was all about progression in a wonderfully uncomplicated 1970s single-seater world, one yet to be sullied by the plethora of parallel one-make categories that enable today's professionals to avoid their peers *en route* to the 'holy grail' of Formula 1. Affordable and accessible, the new slicks-and-wings class channelled ability down a common route for more than a decade.

With Formula Ford (the 'Kent' pushrod-powered training class didn't need the '1600' suffix then) in its eighth year, and multiple championships requiring heats and finals to sort aces from also-rans, perceived wisdom was that many top names needed somewhere to graduate to.

That's how arch-promoter John Webb of Motor Circuit Developments (then operator of Brands Hatch, Mallory Park, Oulton Park and Snetterton) saw it. His inexpensive

FF business model had worked superbly and, with treadless tyres and downforce-generating wings *de rigueur* across racing's highest echelons, the paddock mood – if not, perhaps, the economic climate – was ripe for another golden opportunity.

Webb's announcement, in mid-1974, that FF2000 would be on the agenda from '75 was also a timely response to the FIA's realignment of its 'secondary-level' *monoposto* classes. Following road-car trends, Formula 2 had grown from 1600cc to become a two-litre competition in '73, and F3 followed suit a year later. Just three terms after the one-litre 'screamers' had been usurped by cars motivated by air-strangled 1600cc units, which lapped little quicker until the restrictors were opened, F3 had upped the ante beyond the means of too many Fordsters.

'Webby's' FF2000 niche filled the gap perfectly, both for young go-getters tired of FF mayhem and more mature rivals with businesses and family commitments, some returning from successful – but expensive – F3



Where it all began: Mallory Park, March '75



Pye makes himself comfortable in Delta

“The promise of a well-publicised division, interesting cars and good winnings appealed to drivers and sponsors alike”

campaigns. The promise of a well-publicised senior division, interesting cars and good ‘winnings’ to help balance the books appealed to drivers and sponsors alike. ‘SuperFord’, as some dubbed it, was a goer...

Proven in the ‘hot’ Escort RS2000, Ford’s Cologne-built 1993cc Pinto workhorse – boasting such niceties as a belt-driven overhead camshaft – was the ideal candidate to power the newcomer. It may have developed only 110bhp in the road car but, with 125bhp (later 130bhp) in ‘blueprinted’ form (with every component optimised to Ford’s original spec as tolerances in pre-CNC days were wide), would propel the spaceframe racers, weighing 440kg, past 140mph.

Chassis manufacturers quickly espoused the FF2000 regulations, particularly since it was possible to amortise the cost of tooling and common parts over an FF1600 base model as well. The four-speed Hewland Mk9 transaxle (usually with its final-drive ratio the only change, from 9/31 to 10/31) and running gear

would be the same, leaving only the bodywork changes, wings and wider (13in x 6in front, 13in x 8in rear) wheels, with slick and rain tyres (supplied initially by Dunlop) and possible hub upgrades – to match increased cornering forces – to worry about. Deals varied, but some cars were on track for less than £4000.

RACING GETS UNDERWAY

It’s 35 years since the first FF2000 race, the opening round of the Allied Polymer Group-sponsored MCD championship at Mallory Park. March 9 1975 was not a particularly auspicious date for the fledgling series, but a good crowd turned out to watch the headlining Formula Atlantic and Saloon series and, undeterred by heavy rain, 10 pioneers splashed round.

The late Ian Taylor (previously FF champion, BARC Forward Trust British F3 champion of ’73 and future king of FF2000’s charismatic Sports 2000 offshoot) won that inaugural race, having returned to the Didcot-based Maxperenco Products fold of his

FF1600 days to drive its Dulon MP16 chassis. Taylor’s strong loyalties extended to the engine developed by Holbay, the master F3 Lotus twin-cam tuner that had powered his March 733.

The results that day make fascinating reading, for behind the bubbly-haired Taylor (then 28) came F5000 returnee Damien Magee (Palliser-Minister P742), Derek Lawrence (Crossle-Titan 31F), Scot Donald MacLeod (Van Diemen-Scholar RF75), young buck Jeremy Rossiter (Reynard-Piper 75SF) and Roger Orgee (Royale-Vegantune RP22). Six different cars and six engine tuners in the top six. No dream start perhaps, but the promise was there.

The first race of any new category inevitably comes just a few days too soon for those who jump onto the bandwagon late, experience delays in pulling their logistics together or simply don’t get their cars on time. By round two at Brands Hatch there were 16 machines running in practice, of which 14 started.

Lawrence went on to win the APG championship from Taylor (his career was sadly blighted by lack of finance thereafter), but ex-JPS F3 man Bernard Vermilio (Merlyn Mk28), hard charger Tiff Needell (Hawke DL14), Syd Fox (Palliser) and Rossiter – whose season cost less than £3000, after setting winnings against capital costs – all tasted victories. While an economic recession exacerbated an element of caution in year one, the new baby was running hard the following season.

Taylor (in a three-car team put together with Uriah Heep keyboard player and guitarist Ken Hensley) added the MCD crown to his CV in ’76, ►



Delta is owned by category reviver Iain Rowley

◀ after which Thruxton-based BARC launched a second series. South African Rad Dougall won both titles in '77, at the wheel of the high-flying Toleman Group's Royale RP25, a complex machine that required all designer Rory Byrne's engineering talents – and a bottomless pit of front tyres – to keep sharp.

For '78 the Toleman steamroller was gone, onwards and upwards, and the champions could not have been more different. Another South African, the prodigiously gifted but painfully shy Mike White, won the BARC's title race (backed by Rupert Keegan's father Mike's British Air Ferries concern) in a works Delta, originally designed by the brilliant Patrick Head, by then with his feet planted under the drawing board at Williams GP Engineering. MCD's champ was the 'perennial veteran' Syd Fox, his Palliser – penned by ex-Brabham man Len Whithurst – reworked into a (deliberately?) ratty device known as 'The Old Nail'.

With the category established in continental Europe (massive in Holland, strong in Scandinavia, and Germany's Golden Lion competition leading to the formalisation of the EFDA Euroseries), the British showcases continued to boom.

The late David Leslie and Richard Trott worked diligently to earn championship doubles in 1979 and '80 respectively. Leslie was one of comparatively few to pedal two-litre Van Diemens to this point – so preoccupied with global FF1600 dominance was Ralph Firman's marque that it would be '81 before it started

courting FF2000 success – but switched to a works-supported Reynard in what was a 'red-letter' year for Adrian's eponymous concern.

With his family's successful Imediaprint Multicopy business in London demanding his time, Trott worked all hours to pay for his racing but did a fantastic job, landing the MCD and BARC gongs in a Pat Symonds-designed Royale RP27. The series merged thereafter, at the dawn of a new era of racing, and of FF2000.

Adrian Reynard, in particular, has fond memories of the class that, as the fabled Eleven sports-racer of the 1950s did for Lotus, established his marque and set it on course for Indycar success. "FF2000 is very close to my heart," says Adrian, "probably the most

important set of cars I did in my life. That [early] period funded the company and shaped the skills we needed to move to the next levels.

"Looking back, our customers' successes were hugely satisfying, but at 28 I don't know how I found the energy to run a staff of 20, a new factory, a four-car works team – and win the EFDA Euroseries [as a driver]! [Top engineer] Geoff Wyatt and I did that on our own, taking a Mercedes van and my Canadian Club car to Europe.

"By then, though, I was too old – and involved – to move on to racing in F3, where we took Reynard in '85, but we continued to make FF2000s until '88, by which time Formula Vauxhall/ Opel Lotus [another Reynard design] had finished the class."

Reynard was an FF2000 pacesetter in late 1970s



OLDIES RETURN

After 1980, Van Diemen and Reynard moved things on but, sooner or later, given the number of chassis built by more than 30 constructors before the natural technological cut-off point, some bright sparks were going to promote Historic Formula Ford 2000. Long-time pals and ex-F4 racers Iain Rowley and Alan Morgan were the men to do it, under the wing of the HSCC. Rowley, who had flown the Delta flag for many years (providing parts and service for owners everywhere) fittingly won an extraordinary first pilot race – which about a quarter of the field led – at Cadwell Park in 2007, and the Association has never looked back.

The Pre-'81 catchment area for 'HFF2' (although the later Royale RP30 is invited, and the Reynard 81SF and Delta T81 are 'grandfathered' in as updates of old designs) reflects the fact that the bar effectively fell on the 'old-school' cars then. Thereafter, Van Diemen's legendary designer David Baldwin, who penned F1 Ensigns for Mo Nunn in the '70s, then Adrian Reynard applied their considerable expertise to moving the game along.

To demonstrate that the Historic series – championship status is likely for 2011 – is wide open, Morgan and Rowley rounded up a few friends with cars at Brands Hatch in mid-December for AUTOSPORT's benefit.

If conditions at the very first FF2000 race were grim, this day ran it close. With ambient temperatures hardly threatening zero degrees C, it barely got light. And intermittent snow showers made the going interesting. With snapper Hawkins in situ, and hardy owners willing and eager for me to saddle their steeds, could I refuse?

DELTA

I've always loved Ford 2000s (I tested Roy Goff's Richard Dutton Racing Royale RP27 and the works Delta T81 at Goodwood for AUTOSPORT in period, and years later bought David Jacklin's Pine City Racing Lola T580 after a run there), so I wasn't setting out into the unknown, although I was concerned about the single Weber 32/36 DGV carburetors icing.

The Pinto engines feel a bit agricultural by today's ultra-smooth road-car standards, and you have to work them quite hard to release their potential. Peak torque is around 5500rpm, but they pull pretty strongly from 4000-6500rpm, and are generally super-reliable provided they are oiled and watered, and operators don't miss gears. "They should go a couple of full seasons between rebuilds," says Rowley, who services them.

Rowley's Delta – a T79, with T80 bodywork, one of several he runs, and believed to have been driven by Mike

White during his reign – is typical of the marque's survivors. The Delta story is an intriguing one, for Patrick Head (who had left his mark at Lola, and designed the Scott F2 car for Richard Scott) had already penned the Starfire FF2000 for Gavin Hooper, which morphed into the Sark under Richard Piper's patronage. Unsurprisingly, therefore, the first Deltas Head did for ex-F3 racer and F4 champion Nick Crossley's concern, which debuted at Thruxton at the end of '76, bore some resemblance to their forebears.

The stout frame, which flares outwards along its comparatively short wheelbase, served the marque superbly for five full seasons. Strong and serviceable, it also has an excellent, quite upright, driving position that enables the car to be placed accurately. In common with most of its rivals, its suspension follows conventional outboard spring/damper thinking, a double-wishbone front end and wishbone/top-link/radius-arm rear.

"Roberto Moreno debuted the prototype, which was well received, and when FF2000 racer Richard Dutton [now head of Fortec Motorsport] switched his team's allegiance from Reynard – he took eight of the 20 cars – we didn't look back."

Even in poor conditions, with snow flurries making seeing the damp track a challenge, it was not difficult to see



Our test cars had to deal with awful Brands weather



Royale RP27 (right) inspired confidence

Bodywork changed every year though, to the ultimate T80/81 guise with a March-like wide nose, which flicked the air over the front wheels and endowed the Delta with particularly good straightline speed.

ROYALE

Having dipped its toes into the FF2000 water from day one with the one-off RP22 – subsequently converted back to RP21 FF1600 guise – and rebounded with Rory Byrne's tightly-packaged inboard-front-suspended RP25 (four made), Alan Cornock of Royale Racing was in no hurry to return. "I only agreed to Pat Symonds doing the RP27 on the basis that it was an upgrade of the [successful] RP26 FF1600 and that it was fully productionised," he said.

why Richard Trott excelled in his RP27 and emerged on top of a class pack. The wide-tracked chassis feels very taut and rides well with its inboard rocker-operated front suspension. Over the camber out of Clearways the traction of Alan Gape's example inspired more confidence than I had expected – FF2000s do not run limited-slip differentials – and I had fun going round Rowley into Paddock (for which he later got his revenge)!

REYNARD

The Reynard was another chassis that evolved steadily from the first pair in 1975 (for Rossiter and Adrian himself, and still based on Reynard's first FF1600 car of '73). Peter Denham's car has been updated from '78 ▶

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◀ specification, and is a demon piece of kit at his home circuit, where use of a shorter 9/31 CWP in the gearbox may help it. The engine pulled well as a result, which did not hinder lap times on the Indy circuit, where it's agility and good brakes allowed me to throw it around in traffic.

After conquering all in '79, and taking its FF2000 output to 62 cars and counting, the Reynard challenge was abruptly blunted by an attempt to run a podded 'wing-car' version of the theme the following season. As Martin Brundle will attest, the 80SF was an unmitigated disaster. Reynard recalls: "It was a hard lesson learned about aerodynamics, when we didn't have money to go in a wind-tunnel. That car was full of drag."

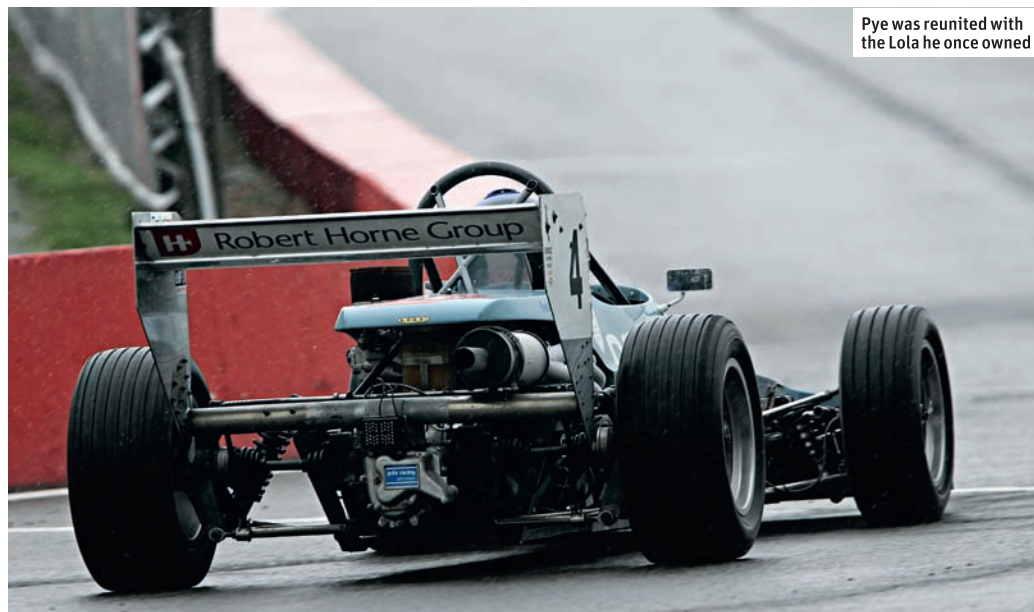
Reynard's stock plummeted as a result. Only by reverting to a 79SF facelift for '81 did he ride it out.

LOLA

Eric Bradley's Lola design, which period T580 racer Peter Morgan recalls being honed by Tony Gillard during '79, was robust and conservative, based on the T540 FF1600 chassis in which Morgan had won the BRDC's Silverstone-centred '78 Esso title. "Formula Ford 2000 was the obvious choice for those of us who couldn't afford to go F3 and I still believe the Lola was the best car," says seasoned engineer Morgan, who chased champion Leslie home despite his slim budget being torpedoed by two major accidents, the second at Snetterton.

Seventeen of the sleek T580s were built to late 1980, and one carried Dutchman Maarten Henneman to the Benelux crown.

Long-time owner Seamus Doyle was still battling the roads *en route* to our photoshoot, but arrived, unloaded and sent me out in the afternoon session. I was delighted to find that his Lola was



Pye was reunited with the Lola he once owned

"Formula Ford 2000 was the obvious choice for those of us who couldn't afford F3 and the Lola was the best"

Peter Morgan

originally Rob Cooper's, the very car I'd owned 25 years previously, when my mother unkindly described it as "a red Hoover!" Whether it was this inspiration, or a minor change in circuit conditions I don't know, but the T580 proved wonderfully controllable as I powered it through Clearways on opposite lock and hard on the power with snowflakes still descending. A magical moment.

We may have learned nothing about the ultimate pace of Historic FF2000 cars on control Avon tyres – and I was amazed by the grip of slicks, even when

horribly damp – but what the light-curtailed day did tell me was that they are tremendous fun, top value for money (fully rebuilt, the best must be worth £14k, or three times the cost of one in '75). It also underlined that there is still little to choose between chassis from the major period players.

Rowley and Morgan, who lead expeditions to Europe and also welcome early air-cooled Formula Super Vees to their growing initiative, are delighted with the progress of HFF2 to date. "It's already mushroomed beyond my wildest dreams, but while it's generally the later cars that run out front, we didn't set it up as a Reynard v Delta v Royale v Lola series," said Rowley. "Our focus now is to encourage some of the earlier ones – Crossles, Dulons, Eldens, Hawkes and Pallisers among others – back onto the tracks."

This year's series kicks off with the HSCC at Silverstone on March 28. Full details from www.historicff2000.co.uk. ☒

MORE OF AN '80s FAN? TRY CLASSIC FF2000

FORMULA FORD 2000 fanatics who wish to lap a chunk quicker than their 'Historic' buddies should look at the BARC-run Classic FF2000 championship, which centres on cars from the next era: 1981-83.

These were Van Diemen-dominated years, thus it is no

surprise that the super-stiff all-inboard-suspended RF82s – sisters to the car immortalised by Ayrton Senna – and their RF81 forebears with inboard front ends still dominate numerically and on track. Ian Pearson took one to last year's title.

The wide-tracked Reynard 83SF

'flexi-flyers' that provided a quantum leap forward in performance through phenomenal roadholding are excluded from the series for anti-competitive reasons (are there any left?), but nothing else stepped forward to dethrone David Baldwin's Van Diemens that they outmoded in RF83 'Vanwall' guise.

Now in its 24th successive year of backing from Ken Thorogood's Norfolk-based Universal Racing Services – a business evolved from his Hub of the Universe Racing team of the 1970s – it not only represents fine value but also promotes Ken's

renowned 'one-stop' parts service, restoration and raceprep facility for early Van Diemen and Reynard cars.

Class B, for Pre-'81 chassis, brings greater inter-marque competition, but has inevitably been eroded by the rise and rise of Historic FF2000, although stalwarts like '09 divisional champ Colin Wright still do both.

Given that a well-driven RF82 is capable of period F3 lap times at some circuits, it would be interesting – perhaps with an eye to the future – to pitch the front-running Van Diemens against Pre-'81 Classic F3 cars. Match race anyone?



Classic FF2000 caters for later racers

STEVE JONES

YOUR SAY

What you think of the motorsport news of the past week



Lights go out... and we switch off

Sometime between the red lights going out and the chequered flag falling in Bahrain I was reminded of a '70s TV comedy sketch – was it Benny Hill or Dick Emery? Either way it involved two rival undertakers 'racing', with dignity and decorum, for the last plot in a graveyard. Such was the tedium of the 2010 F1 season-opener.

Let's hope Sunday was an aberration.

Brendan MacNeill Edinburgh

EDITORIAL CONTACT mail@autosport.com

The most exciting season in years has started – no refuelling, narrower tyres, Michael Schumacher and three other champions, and the promise of a lot more overtaking. So what happened? Thank goodness for the teams further down the grid – they produced all the real on-track passing.

Martin Whitmarsh recommends two mandatory pitstops, but would that give us on-track overtaking? He does say action should be taken quickly; yes, we all agree.

N Reason
By email

Right Bernie, take a few moments away from your air-conditioned hospitality suite and watch what the Bahrain GP looked like on TV. Words that spring to mind are: boring, a disappointment and characterless.

I'm a true motorsport fan and even I moaned all the way through. I've then come into work to hear casual viewers discussing how awful it was. These are the people Bernie wants to attract, and after that showing I doubt they will watch another race.

Nick Parrott
By email

Having nearly fallen asleep during the Bahrain Grand Prix, I am glad I stayed awake for the IRL season opener in Sao Paulo. IndyCar might run antediluvian cars and a few suspect drivers, but at least we got tons of overtaking, plenty of lead changes, three-abreast racing, a few bumps and scrapes and a rain shower to spice it up even further.

F1 seriously needs to do something about overtaking rather than just talk about it for another year.

Jeremy Elliott
London SW4

Maybe if Bernie wants to reduce the number of people on the grid he could stop the idiot celebrities from wandering around. This would not only reduce the numbers, but also mean we avoid the cringe-worthy interviews where we find out how little they know about the cars they're standing next to.

Matt Larner
Solihull

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TOP FIVE ON OUR WEBSITE

1. **ROSBERG QUICKEST IN SECOND PRACTICE**
2. **TYRE ADVANTAGE BOOSTS SAUBER'S HOPES**
3. **RIVALS RESIGNED TO COPY McLAREN DESIGN**
4. **NEW MOVIE SET TO HIT SCREENS IN 2011**
5. **MOSS INJURED IN LIFT ACCIDENT**

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CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

● In last week's F1 preview (p21), Kimi Raikkonen was erroneously listed as driving for Ferrari in the 2006 Bahrain Grand Prix instead of McLaren.

● The WRC drivers' championship points were wrong in the Mexican Rally report (March 11, p49). The lower reaches of the top 10 should have read: 7th Sordo 12; 8th= Wilson/Villagra 6; 10th= Ostberg/Pons 4.

It is the policy of AUTOSPORT to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please note the issue date and page number when contacting us on autosport.editorial@haynet.com

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The most desirable new releases for motor racing fans: books, DVDs, models, art and gifts

BLACK & GOLD PAINTING

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We were amazed when details of this superb acrylic-on-canvas depiction of Ayrton Senna's 1986 Lotus-Renault 98T dropped into our inboxes – the artist, Josh Boyall, is just 17.

Measuring 100cm x 70cm and limited to just 100 prints, 'Black and gold' was commissioned by the car's owner and features chassis 004, which first appeared in Senna's hands in the final British Grand Prix at Brands Hatch in '86.

All 100 prints are signed and numbered. Check out the website for further details and to contact Josh, who'll be happy to discuss any commissions.

We're already looking forward to his next undertaking – if this is the sort of standard produced by a schoolboy, he'll go far.



F1 POCKET COMPANION
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This 100-page, pocket-sized guide to the new season is packed with facts and figures, plus accurate driver and team bios – yes, HRT is in there!

Additional sections in this A6 companion include track maps, flag details, driver safety and charts to fill in during the season.

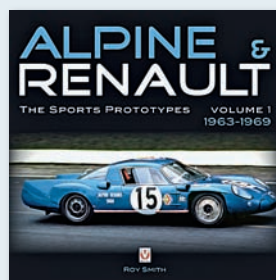
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ALPINE SPORTS PROTOTYPE
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R Smith (veloce.co.uk)

The first of marque loyalist Roy Smith's very thorough, two-volume history of the Alpine and Renault prototypes. This one charts the early-1960s development, testing and success of the slippery French-blue M3 endurance car and its successors up to the end of the decade.

Volume 2 next week...

HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YOUTUBE: BUTTON: RACING DRIVER TURNED CABBIE



SEARCH: Jenson & Walkers make Sandwich more exciting (3:06)
Sad news, Jenson fans: the world champion has jacked it all in and become a black-cab driver. Don't believe us? Check out his first day on the job in the Kent seaside town of Sandwich.

WHAT'S ON...

Your guide to the best events taking place around the world this week – plus TV and online

AMERICAN LE MANS SERIES

Rd 1/9
Sebring 12 Hours, Florida, USA
March 20
www.americanlemans.com



INTERCONTINENTAL RALLY CHALLENGE

Rd 3/12
Rally Argentina
March 19-21
www.ircseries.com



NASCAR SPRINT CUP

Rd 5/36
Bristol, Tennessee, USA
March 21
www.nascar.com



NEW ZEALAND V8s

Rd 6/6
Taupo, New Zealand
March 21
www.nzv8s.co.nz

Uruguay

March 21
www.tc2000.com.ar

SUPER GT

Rd 1/8
Suzuka, Japan
March 21
supergt.net/en

SUD-AM F3

Rd 1/9
Brasilia, Brazil
March 21

TC2000

Rd 1/12
Punta del Este,



FULL THROTTLE

What's grinding our gears this week

WHAT A TRAVESTY that the Bahrain Grand Prix was so boring. After all, remember how much more exciting Formula 1 was in the glory days of refuelling? Er, wait a minute...

In this week's 'Cover Story' AUTOSPORT has taken a close look at the circumstances that led to the widespread outcry about how boring 2010-look F1 appeared at its curtain raiser. If anything, most of the reaction confirms just how blinkered the Formula 1 paddock really is.

People have slated the lack of overtaking as if this is a new problem for the sport, and they are up in arms that, aside from the first lap and Sebastian Vettel's spark-plug related incident, the only changes of position in the top places came during the

pitstops. Again, how is this any different from before?

And where did this theory come from that everyone ran radical strategies during the golden era of refuelling? Maybe we used to get a few one-stop versus two-stop races, but since race-fuel qualifying came in there was hardly any difference in the positions that mattered.

So it seems that the F1 paddock is now crying out for two pitstops to be mandatory, to create variation in strategy. They clearly haven't watched any DTM races in recent years. The German tin-top series has this exact rule, and it hardly did it any favours when I had to give each race a rating out of five for the reports last year. When the quality of the teams is of a



Button couldn't pass Schumacher in Bahrain

certain level, they all work out the ideal strategy pretty quickly. Unless you have extremely marginal tyres...

Jacques Villeneuve hit the nail on the head after the race on Sunday when he blamed aerodynamics. Here we are debating what can be done to make race strategy more important, having spent the past 15 years lamenting the fact that fuel stops

deterred drivers from racing each other on track. The racing hasn't been great for a long time, and the main reason for that is the dependence on aerodynamics. If we had cars that could race each other closely (the original GP2 and A1GP cars, for instance), then this wouldn't have been an issue in the first place. *Glenn Freeman*

Television

THURSDAY MARCH 18

1030-1100 [ESPN America](#)

NASCAR Now

1800-1900 [Sky Sports 3](#)

Race World

2045-2115 [Motors TV](#)

ALMS Preview

FRIDAY MARCH 19

1230-1300 [ESPN America](#)

NASCAR Now

1330-1430 [Motors TV](#)

Wydean Forest Rally

SATURDAY MARCH 20

0405-0430 [Five](#)

Motorsport Mundial

1230-1300 [ESPN America](#)

NASCAR Now

1400-0305 [Motors TV LIVE](#)

ALMS

Full coverage of the 58th Sebring 12 Hours from the classic Florida sportscar venue.

2300-2330 [Eurosport](#)

IRC

Action from round three as Curitiba victor Kris Meeke looks to make it two South American wins in a row in Argentina.

SUNDAY MARCH 21

0810-0840 [Channel 4](#)

Mobil1 The Grid

An interview with 2008 Formula 1 world champion Lewis Hamilton and behind the scenes at the first round of the WTCC in Brazil.

1600-2030 [Open Access 3 LIVE](#)

NASCAR Sprint Cup

Live coverage of the Ford City 500 at the mighty Bristol Motor Speedway.

1730-1940 [Motors TV](#)

V8 Supercars

Action from the third round of the series from the former home of the Australian GP, Adelaide.

2115-2150 [Motors TV](#)

Rally World

2300-2330 [Eurosport](#)

IRC

A round-up of Rally Argentina.

MONDAY MARCH 22

1900-2000 [Sky Sports 3](#)

NASCAR Sprint Cup

Highlights from Bristol.



Adelaide action is on Motors TV

Online

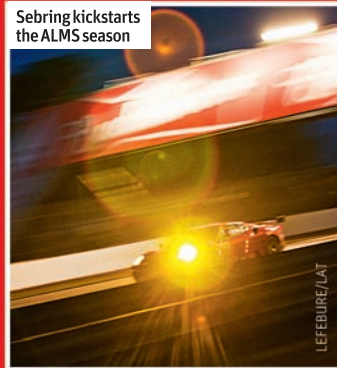
AUTOSPORT.COM

Coming up on the web this week

SEBRING 12 HOURS

The sportscar season kicks off this weekend with the American Le Mans Series' biggest event, the Sebring 12 Hours (right). There might be no Audi, but Peugeot is going with two cars to take on America's finest. Elsewhere in the world, NASCAR is back after a week off and sure to produce mayhem at Bristol, while the IRC heads for the second leg of its South American tour in Argentina.

Sebring kickstarts the ALMS season



LEFFEBURE/LAT



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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



DC and EJ bask in ice-white disco slack illuminator... Lewis is dazzled

COMPTON/LAT

SWITCHING ON the BBC's Bahrain GP coverage was like putting on a pair of old shoes. It felt oh-so-familiar, but there remains a couple of stains that stubbornly refuse to be scrubbed out.

Jonathan Legard still commentates in soundbites and is angrier than ever; Martin Brundle single-handedly crusades against Spanish reporters on his grid walk; and nonsense continues to spill out of Eddie Jordan's mouth. Actually, EJ registered a rare triumph over Jake Humphrey when he correctly placed Middlesbrough in Yorkshire, but Jake telling him he needed geography

lessons added some levity to a strangely stifled post-race show.

One element that really hit the (red) button was the post-race forum. Jensen Button and Lewis Hamilton talked through their opening laps from the on-board camera revealing previously-unseen aspects, such as Schuey hanging Mark Webber out to dry at Turn 2 in typical 'what-a-bastard' style, and how close Hamilton and Felipe Massa came to banging wheels early on. But who were the Heineken-gugging hangers-on in the background? I thought product placement wasn't allowed on the BBC?

Ted Kravitz let the show down with his revelation that the reason for Sebastian Vettel's dramatic loss of pace was due to a hole its broken exhaust had burned through the side of his car. This transpired to be total horseshit, unless the broken spark plug had worked free from inside the engine and set fire to it. It was a classic emperor's new clothes moment: "And now over to Ted for his exclusive report on the true majesty of the invisible garments."

If you don't know, Ted, don't guess.

What I needed to know was Ted's opinion of EJ's and DC's matching ice-white disco slacks. With the flashing lights on the palm trees ever more apparent as darkness descended in the Bahrain paddock, and with a copious supply of party juice on hand, I'd like to think it turned into a drunken, debauched rave.

Wonder which button I needed to press to watch that? *Revved Up*

"Button and Hamilton talked through the opening laps from the on-board revealing previously unseen aspects"

THE WEEK IN PICTURES

The lensmen pounding the beat, from Sao Paulo to Sebring



WHERE DO YOU PUT YOUR KNEE TO COVER THAT VENT THEN?
Sebastian Vettel gets himself acquainted with McLaren's trick bits in parc ferme after qualifying for the Bahrain Grand Prix

A DIFFERENT KIND OF FANCY FOOTWORK IN BRAZIL
The start/finish straight of the Sao Paulo Indy 300 is usually a massive dancefloor for its carnival parade



FIELD OF, ERM, NIGHTMARES
Jon Field crawled away from the wreckage of his Intersport Racing Lola after this huge crash in testing ahead of this weekend's Sebring 12 Hours

Engineering debrief – NASCAR spoiler v rear wing



SPOILER
Should eradicate the mid-corner 'push' that blights CoT racer

REAR WING
Endplates have negative effect on the side-draft capability in races

WHEN NASCAR introduced its Car of Tomorrow in 2007, it replaced the traditional flat-blade rear spoiler with a one-piece wing. Since then, the wing has been blamed for an adverse effect on the racing – fans also voiced their hatred of its aesthetics – so NASCAR is to switch back to a spoiler.

NASCAR has targeted replicating the same level of downforce and drag as before, but the spoiler will change the aero balance of the car, moving

it towards the front end to make the cars more 'pointy' in corners. It should also be more efficient in dirty air.

The wing's endplates have restricted side-drafting on the oval speedways, but have helped drivers recover from sideways moments due to offering extra rearward grip.

The final specification of the spoiler has yet to be defined, but the device tested so far sits four inches high from the deck lid at the centreline. The spoiler

is 64.5 inches wide, with no contour, and must be a single piece fabricated from 3/16-inch thick aluminium and fixed at 70 degrees to the horizontal.

In the initial track tests in 2006 (pictured left) both solutions were tested back to back, and drivers preferred the wing. They are now satisfied that the spoiler is the way forward.

The return of the spoiler is pencilled in for the Martinsville Sprint Cup round on March 28.
Charles Bradley

Got an engineering question you'd like answered? Send it to mark.glendenning@haymarket.com

FROM THE ARCHIVE

Mark Blundell, Rio Indycar, 1996



“The doctors said whoever let me fly home should be shot. I was lucky the blood clot on my brain hadn’t exploded and killed me”

Blundell climbs from his Reynard wreck



INDYCAR RACING returned to Brazil for the first time in a decade last weekend, as the 2010 IRL season got underway with a thrash through the streets of Sao Paulo.

Back in the 1990s it was the rival CART series that raced in Brazil – at the Rio Jacarepagua venue on a bumpy, unbanked oval.

The maiden Rio 400, in '96, will forever be remembered fondly by Andre Ribeiro, who sent the 80,000-strong crowd into raptures by winning on home soil. But the event only conjures terrifying memories for British racer Mark Blundell, who had a monstrous shunt in only his second Indycar race.

The ex-F1 driver speared head-on into the Turn 4 wall at close to 200mph, after his PacWest Racing Reynard suffered brake failure at the end of the back straight.

“I remember all of it,” says Blundell, who shattered four toes in his right foot, ripped the cartilage from his sternum, and suffered a blood clot on his brain following an enormous 122g impact. I went for the brakes and the pedal went to the floor – the disc bell had exploded. I knew

if I hit that wall I was in major trouble, so I took the car down to the apron, across the grass, and aimed myself at my team-mate [Mauricio Gugelmin], who was the next guy in front of me.”

Blundell narrowly missed Gugelmin and struck the concrete wall at an 11-degree angle. He smashed his head on the steering wheel and wall, but amazingly remained conscious throughout: “I’ve always said I should have been a boxer – even if Mike Tyson would’ve hit me I wouldn’t have been knocked out!”

Blundell spent two days in hospital, but only discovered the brain haemorrhage after flying home to Britain. “The doctors said whoever let me fly home should have been shot, because I had a blood clot on the brain and was fortunate it hadn’t exploded and killed me,” he recalls.

“The thing that really sticks in my mind though is the feeling and noise of that 198mph impact – it was indescribable.

“I’ve still got what remains of the car at home. I had it sent over from America as a reminder. It’s the only time I’ve felt I was going to die in a racing car.”

THIS WEEK IN...



MARCH 18 2004

FANS UNITED against Formula 1’s revised single-car, one-lap, qualifying system ahead of the second grand prix of the season in Malaysia (above). Bernie Ecclestone shared their view but, with teams failing to agree unanimously on a new format, the unpopular system remained in place.

Lotus’s Hethel test track was the scene of the initial secret shakedown of the brand-new Lola-Zytek A1GP car. Series chief Sheikh Maktoum Hasher Maktoum Al Maktoum drove (below).

Markko Martin drew level with Sebastien Loeb at the top of the World Rally Championship after leading Ford team-mate Francois Duval in a one-two finish in Mexico.

Double-champion team RML quit the Days of Thunder series, which was set to decline, to focus on its BTCC programme with SEAT.



NEXT WEEK



The first of this year’s sportscar classics:

SEBRING

Peugeot versus the rest in the 12 Hours *On sale Mar 25*

PLUS

Indy legend Rick Mears; Davidson’s life at Peugeot; on ice with the Prosts

JUNIOR JOHNSON

■ Daytona 500 ■ February 14, 1960 ■ '59 Chevrolet ■ Discovered drafting to win the 500



Johnson's crew check the Chevy during a pitstop

IT WAS luck. I didn't have a fast car, and was way off the guys running up at the front like Jack Smith and Cotton Owens in high-powered Pontiacs. My Chevrolet didn't have a race motor design — it was a 348 cubic inch engine that you'd put in a truck or somethin'!

But I had Ray Fox on my team, and he's a great motor builder, so it lasted like it 'sposed to, but it just wasn't up to speed. The key to winning that race was I was drafting all day long. I didn't really know what I was doing — I didn't know what 'the draft' was! I just knew that when I ran close behind somebody, I could keep up with them, even though my engine was much less powerful.

The moment I realized this was in practice. Cotton Owens came by, maybe 20-30mph faster than me, but in half a lap I was runnin' right with him. I could even bump him if I wanted to! I didn't know what it was, but I knew it was somethin' that I could take into the race and

"After the race nobody believed I'd won. It was just so awesome that a car as slow as I had was in Victory Lane"

do something good with. Nobody else had really figured out what I was doing.

Lo and behold, after doing it all day long, it put me in a position to win the race near the end. Bobby Johns was the only competitor I

had to beat for the win, and he spun out when his back glass blew right out because of a gust of wind. I went on to win the race.

Would I have won without that happening? I don't think so. I couldn't draft up to him, so I

couldn't keep up with him, never mind pass him. Basically I stole the race. I didn't win it.

After the race, nobody believed that I'd won! It was just so awesome that a car as slow as I had was in Victory Lane. Drafting was somethin' that was discovered that day, and it's still somethin' that is key to winning races today. It's helped a lot of people win a lot of races.

Watching the guys today with their bump-drafting is pretty hairy. Sometimes they get by with it... sometimes they don't. *Junior Johnson was talking to Charles Bradley*

IN PROFILE



ROBERT GLENN Johnson Jr learned to drive hauling illegal moonshine for his father on the mountain roads of North Carolina. He won 50 top-level NASCAR races before retiring in 1966, and went on to run cars for such as Cale Yarborough, Darrell Waltrip, Terry Labonte and Bill Elliott. He never won a Cup title as a driver, but won six as an owner. He served 11 months of a two-year prison term in 1956 and was granted a presidential pardon by Ronald Reagan. These days he runs a cattle farm in Yadkin County, NC.

NEXT WEEK

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