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MAY 24 2018

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- Why it keeps going wrong
- How it plans to fight back

**'We were
in denial'**

ZAK BROWN

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McLAREN'S ROAD BACK IS LONGER THAN IT THOUGHT

Back in February we said that McLaren had no more excuses, that this season was the time when it had to fight back following its troubled Honda era. After five 2018 grands prix, the team in orange is fifth in the Formula 1 constructors' championship – an improvement over last year's ninth – but the MCL33 has fallen short of expectations.

Not only is McLaren a long way behind Red Bull, with the same engine, but it is currently behind the works Renault team too. And it's often near the bottom of the speed traps, indicating that it has problems in the crucial aerodynamic department.

As McLaren Racing CEO Zak Brown tells Edd Straw in our cover piece (page 16), the realisation has now dawned that McLaren's problems go far deeper than an underpowered engine. Internal changes are happening in the hope things can be rectified.

But even if the right structures and people are put in place, it seems unlikely that McLaren will be worrying Mercedes, Ferrari and Red Bull at the head of the field until the new rules arrive in 2021. Will Fernando Alonso – arguably McLaren's most potent weapon – wait until then? He'll turn 40 that season so it would be a surprise if he hadn't gone elsewhere by then.

Another sleeping giant has finally started to deliver in Formula E. Audi had been tipped to sweep all before it prior to the 2017-18 campaign, only for a catalogue of issues to hold it back. But the team's domination of last weekend's Berlin event (p40) showed what it's capable of. It sets things up nicely for a fascinating contest when BMW, Mercedes and Porsche join the fight with the exciting-looking Gen2 machine next season.



Kevin Turner

KEVIN TURNER
EDITOR

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COVER IMAGES

S Bloxham/LAT Images, Jayson Fong

PIT+PADDOCK

- 4 Vettel: Pirelli not behind Spanish woe
- 6 Carpenter takes Indy 500 pole again
- 8 Formula E to race in Saudi Arabia
- 11 Monaco GP preview
- 13 In the paddock: Edd Straw
- 15 Feedback: your letters

INSIGHT

- 16 **COVER STORY**
McLaren's false dawn
- 24 Chandhok tries Rosberg's Williams
- 28 Indianapolis 500 preview
- 32 Silverstone World Rallycross preview

RACE CENTRE

- 34 Neuville avoids the WRC chaos
- 40 Audi dominates Formula E in Germany
- 46 Neal takes win for BTCC old guard
- 52 World of Sport: MotoGP; Blancpain Endurance; Formula Renault Eurocup; DTM; Australian Supercars; WTCR; Super GT

CLUB AUTOSPORT

- 70 Rowe escapes fiery Cadwell crash
- 72 Clio Cup looks at Thruxton withdrawal
- 75 Pilot race for Formula Atlantics
- 77 Club column: Jack Benyon
- 78 National reports: Thruxton; Cadwell Park; Oulton Park; Brands Hatch

FINISHING STRAIGHT

- 86 What's on this week
- 88 From the archive: 1949 Italian GP
- 90 Pit your wits against our quiz

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VISIT
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VETTEL DEBUNKS PIRELLI

FORMULA 1

Sebastian Vettel has torpedoed his and Ferrari's suggestions that their relatively lacklustre Spanish Grand Prix performance was down to Pirelli reducing the tyre-tread depth by 0.4mm.

On the first day of last week's two-day post-race test at Barcelona, Vettel used the regular tyres and experienced exactly the same blistering Pirelli had attempted to combat with its revised Spanish GP rubber. He admitted it would have been even worse for Ferrari had Pirelli not made the change.

"Normally you don't get the chance to revisit these kind of decisions that are made," said Vettel after setting the third-fastest time on day one. "But we did, and I think the result is that, if we had the normal tyres on Sunday, we'd probably even be worse off. So I think it was the correct call, and it was our fault not to have the same tyre wear or life as other people."

There was significant frustration inside Pirelli over the suggestion the change worked against Ferrari, and that it fuelled a conspiracy theory that the reduction in tread was made solely at the behest of – and to the benefit of – Mercedes. The change was made after consulting all the Formula 1 teams. Ferrari was among those that also suffered problems pre-season thanks to the combination of the new track surface and the increase in pace this year, which has significantly increased loads on the tyres.

"I cannot hide that I am very happy," said Pirelli's Mario Isola regarding Vettel's comments. "The behaviour of the tyre

over the race weekend was in line with our expectations. In high temperatures it was avoiding blisters – that is the information we have from the weekend. Now it's important to have feedback also on the feeling, the behaviour, this kind of stuff. I am happy to know that Sebastian said that."

The reduction in tyre tread also applies to next month's French Grand Prix at Paul Ricard and July's British Grand Prix, which are both being held at tracks that have been resurfaced in a similar manner. Pirelli does not expect to revise its decision given the confirmation during the Barcelona test that blistering would be a problem.

Valtteri Bottas set the fastest time of the test overall on Wednesday, using supersoft-compound Pirellis on his Mercedes. This was after trading fastest times with Ferrari test driver Antonio Giovinazzi shortly before lunch, the Italian one of the few to run on both days, having driven for Sauber on Tuesday.

The test also gave teams the chance to reacquaint themselves with the new hypersoft compound, last used during pre-season testing, which will make its race debut in Monaco this weekend. Giovinazzi used the tyre for his Wednesday time, with Red Bull's Max Verstappen fastest on day one on the hypersoft. Verstappen's

**"IF WE'D HAD THE
NORMAL TYRES,
WE'D PROBABLY BE
EVEN WORSE OFF"**



ANDRE/SUTTON IMAGES

Q & A

OLIVER ROWLAND WILLIAMS TESTER



The Williams isn't the easiest to drive. How did you find it compared to expectations?

Actually I found it not that bad. There are

issues the drivers have spoken about, and it seems if you go slightly over the limit you get them, but if you drive just below it there's not too much of a problem. I actually felt quite comfortable in the car and got the times down pretty quickly. I'm happy.

Do you think you've proved you should have another test?

I hope so – I've done everything they asked and consistently did the laps, and was pretty quick at the same time. I don't see any reason why not.

You've tried a few tyre compounds. Did you feel you were able to lean on it?

It was quite interesting between a lot of the compounds – some of them you don't go any faster and some you go quite a lot. Even the harder ones aren't too bad. We ran through quite a lot of stuff on new and old tyres. It was interesting to get a feel for everything. I think I've tested just about every compound there is.

Does the Williams match what you've heard from the other drivers?

It's definitely there, what they say. I can't risk crashing, so I didn't really, really wring the neck out of it. I think that's when the problems start to become worse. There were some times I had some entry instability, which is what they struggle with, but in general I was quite comfortable.

What are you happiest about?

I'm just happy I managed to get a go, and go through all the test programme with the team. I'm quite 'old' now. I'm 25, I bring a mature approach and didn't want to do anything stupid. I've done everything they asked and I'm just happy to do a day in a proper Formula 1 car on track with Lewis and Vettel and Max. It was quite a big day for me as well.

EDD STRAW

CONSPIRACY THEORY

time was good enough to stand as the third fastest overall of the test.

Renault attempted to solve the fuel-pick-up problem it suffered under load in the long Turn 3 right-hander during the race, but it's understood this was not definitively fixed during the test. The team also gave Formula 2 race winner and reserve driver Jack Aitken his first serious F1 test. The 22-year old had previously driven a 2012-spec Lotus.

Aitken was among a number of test and reserve drivers who ran, with Nicholas Latifi making his 2018 F1 test debut driving for Force India. He drove on both days of the test, switching to the second Force India that was conducting Pirelli tyre testing for day two while Nikita Mazepin drove the other car. Lando Norris also had two days of running, the first in the Pirelli test McLaren running to pre-Spanish GP spec, and the second in McLaren's regular car, which featured its updated nose.

Oliver Rowland made his Williams testing debut on the first day of running before handing over to regular test driver Robert Kubica. Williams focused on trying to gather data on its car problems, which include the rear diffuser stalling.

George Russell made an appearance for Force India on Tuesday, with Oliver Turvey having his first run of the year in the Pirelli McLaren that afternoon. Toro Rosso ran Sean Gelael for a day and a half before he handed over to race driver Pierre Gasly. Meanwhile, Jake Dennis made an unexpected appearance for Red Bull to complement his simulator work.

EDD STRAW

BARCELONA TEST TIMES, MAY 15-16

POS	DRIVER (CAR)	TIME
DAY 1		
1	Max Verstappen (Red Bull)	1m17.528s
2	Carlos Sainz Jr (Renault)	1m17.562s
3	Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari)	1m17.659s
4	Romain Grosjean (Haas)	1m18.449s
5	Nicholas Latifi (Force India)	1m18.530s
6	Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)	1m18.543s
7	Stoffel Vandoorne (McLaren)	1m18.981s
8	Antonio Giovinazzi (Sauber)	1m19.693s
9	Oliver Rowland (Williams)	1m20.009s
10	Lando Norris (McLaren)	1m20.997s
11	George Russell (Force India)	1m21.478s
12	Sean Gelael (Toro Rosso)	1m21.935s
13	Oliver Turvey (McLaren)	1m23.070s
DAY 2		
1	Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes)	1m16.904s
2	Antonio Giovinazzi (Ferrari)	1m16.972s
3	Lando Norris (McLaren)	1m18.039s
4	Kevin Magnussen (Haas)	1m18.274s
5	Nikita Mazepin (Force India)	1m18.344s
6	Jack Aitken (Renault)	1m18.942s
7	Charles Leclerc (Sauber)	1m18.993s
8	Robert Kubica (Williams)	1m19.253s
9	Pierre Gasly (Toro Rosso)	1m19.410s
10	Stoffel Vandoorne (McLaren)	1m19.914s
11	Jake Dennis (Red Bull)	1m20.440s
12	Sean Gelael (Toro Rosso)	1m20.763s
13	Nicholas Latifi (Force India)	1m21.412s



Carpenter in cheesy polewinner pose

Carpenter chisels his way to third pole

INDIANAPOLIS 500

There was genuine drama in Indianapolis 500 qualifying this year, and the stakes are higher now that the 2018 aerokit doesn't allow cars to pass with impunity (see page 28). After three solid days of race-trim running at 1.3-bar turbo boost, teams had their Chevrolets and Hondas ratcheted up to 1.4-bar for Fast Friday, and then sought clean air around the track, desperately trying not to get in a misleading tow.

But few could have expected a former Indy 500 winner to end up on the back row, one of the series' most popular full-timers to not make the race at all, or that Chevrolet would have such a clear edge that the Honda-powered Andretti Autosport cars were all locked out of the Fast Nine session and that Danica Patrick's Ed Carpenter Racing car (Chevrolet) outqualified Scott Dixon's Chip Ganassi Racing machine (Honda). In fact, only two Hondas — those of Sebastien Bourdais (Dale Coyne Racing) and Dixon — made it to the shootout, and they were not really in the hunt for pole position.

In truth, only one man was. Team owner/driver Ed Carpenter is from Illinois but has been an Indianapolis resident since the age of eight and he is adored by the Speedway

faithful. When he took his third 500 pole in six years, the crowd — such as it was — erupted, just as they had when he turned the only 230mph lap of the shootout. Throughout practice, he had looked the most likely candidate to break up the Team Penske domination, but the Penske drivers were surprised by the size of their deficit in qualifying. Will Power, despite regretting a late set-up change that hurt his pace and consigned him to the outside of the front row, wasn't too annoyed afterwards. Even if he'd found the extra 0.1mph to beat team-mate Simon Pagenaud, he admitted there's no way he could have bridged the full 1mph chasm to Carpenter's four-lap average.

Seeing his two full-time drivers Tony Kanaan and Matheus Leist outqualify all the Andretti cars gave Mario's old rival AJ Foyt a chuckle, while new and nearly-new IndyCar teams — all powered by Chevys, incidentally — also had a chance to shine. The Carlin pair of Charlie Kimball and Max Chilton line up 15th and 20th, and between them will be Kyle Kaiser, making his Indy 500 debut with Juncos Racing.

But that was all decided on Sunday; the real drama happened the day before, Bump Day, when the 35 entrants were trimmed to 33. James Hinchcliffe's first qualifying run,

which came right after a 2h20m delay for rain, resulted in a four-lap average of 224.784mph, which by the end of everyone's initial runs saw him pushed down the order. Conor Daly, who had been knocked out of the top 33, then bumped his way in and knocked out Dale Coyne Racing team-mate Pippa Mann. When Oriol Servia finally made a complete run in his Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing with Scuderia Corsa entry, he knocked Daly out again, but Daly's third run was enough to get him back in and this time depose Hinchcliffe. When the Canadian went to make a second run, a loose tyre-pressure sensor gave him a major vibration, and he ran out of time to make a third attempt as others lined up ahead to improve their times.

Hinchcliffe's dignified stoicism may have come from the thought that team owners Sam Schmidt and Ric Peterson could surely find a team owner or driver willing to sell a ride from one of the qualified drivers. But the likely candidates all have full-timers battling him in the IndyCar Series, so it's in their best interests to keep him out of a double-points race. As this magazine went to press, a resolution had not been found.

DAVID MALSHER

➔ P28 INDY 500 PREVIEW



INDY 500 GRID

POS	DRIVER (TEAM)	SPEED
1	Ed Carpenter (Carpenter)	229.618mph
2	Simon Pagenaud (Penske)	228.761mph
3	Will Power (Penske)	228.607mph
4	Josef Newgarden (Penske)	228.405mph
5	Sebastien Bourdais (Coyne)	228.142mph
6	Spencer Pigot (Carpenter)	228.107mph
7	Danica Patrick (Carpenter)	228.090mph
8	Helio Castroneves (Penske)	227.859mph
9	Scott Dixon (Ganassi)	227.262mph
10	Tony Kanaan (Foyt)	227.664mph
11	Matheus Leist (Foyt)	227.571mph
12	Marco Andretti (Andretti)	227.288mph
13	Zach Claman DeMelo (Coyne)	226.999mph
14	Ryan Hunter-Reay (Andretti)	226.788mph
15	Charlie Kimball (Carlin)	226.657mph
16	Takuma Sato (RLLR)	226.557mph
17	Kyle Kaiser (Juncos)	226.398mph
18	Robert Wickens (SPM)	226.296mph
19	James Davison (Foyt)	226.255mph
20	Max Chilton (Carlin)	226.212mph
21	Carlos Munoz (Andretti)	226.048mph
22	Gabby Chaves (Harding)	226.007mph
23	Stefan Wilson (Andretti)	225.863mph
24	Sage Karam (D&RR)	225.823mph
25	Zach Veatch (Andretti)	225.748mph
26	Oriol Servia (RLLR)	225.699mph
27	JR Hildebrand (D&RR)	225.418mph
28	Jay Howard (SPM)	225.388mph
29	Ed Jones (Ganassi)	225.362mph
30	Graham Rahal (RLLR)	225.327mph
31	Jack Harvey (SPM/Shank)	225.254mph
32	Alexander Rossi (Andretti)	224.935mph
33	Conor Daly (Coyne)	224.429mph



Acrimony as appeal fails

WRC

Bonhomie and back-slapping have been replaced with bitterness and backbiting after an acrimonious week among the World Rally Championship teams.

The announcement that M-Sport's appeal against Sebastien Ogier's loss of four Rally Mexico powerstage points had failed fuelled a service-park debate that culminated in Hyundai team principal Michel Nandan seething and sure that cooperation among the teams is over.

Autosport understands that M-Sport is sure Hyundai directed the stewards towards Ogier's Mexican indiscretion, in which his Ford hit tyre barriers, while Hyundai is now equally adamant that the British team was at the heart of Dani Sordo's 10-second penalty for breaking the same rule in Portugal last weekend.

What nobody is sure about is who talked to the stewards about Toyota's Esapekka Lappi doing the same as Sordo – the Finn was hit with a 10s penalty, which dropped him from fourth to fifth behind the Spaniard at the finish.

Asked if he would have protested against another driver doing what Sordo did, Nandan told Autosport: "My answer is no, I would not – but that is the difference between me and them [M-Sport]. It's really a shame because we had a really nice cooperation between everybody, but now it's different. Now we know what is the game."

Sources at Hyundai insist that Ogier's Mexican penalty is different to Sordo's in Portugal. Those sources also point out that M-Sport was the

architect of its own downfall after team coordinator Iain Tullie emailed Rally Mexico organisers seeking clarification of what would happen if anybody hit the chicane on the Las Minas powerstage. Tullie did this because Hyundai driver Thierry Neuville had clattered all three elements of the same chicane on the first run of the stage.

The organisers confirmed that hitting the chicane would result in a stewards' investigation. Ogier hit the chicane, was investigated, and copped a 10s penalty, which dropped him from second to seventh, costing him the four points.

M-Sport's evidence to the FIA's International Court of Appeal demonstrates four unpunished drivers hitting the same chicane. It also questioned why Neuville wasn't penalised when the same rules govern every stage, and why there were no markings on the road to enable the repositioning of the barriers in the chicane every time they were moved. Photographic evidence shows Toyota's Ott Tanak enjoying a more open angle into the first element of the chicane than Ogier, after the barriers have been moved and not replaced in the same position.

The appeal court accepted that other drivers hit the barrier in Mexico, but insisted Ogier's collision with the first barrier was the most heinous because "...the first set of elements of a chicane has the most important impact when it comes to: (i) adapting the car's path, (ii) reducing the car's speed and (iii) meeting the safety objectives of a chicane".

DAVID EVANS



Should Formula E *really* be in bed with an oil-rich country?

FORMULA E

The announcement that Formula E will race in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia, for this December's season opener of the electric championship's first campaign with its Gen2 cars made for uncomfortable reading.

Taking a major sporting event to a country with a controversial reputation stemming from issues concerning human rights, its treatment of women, minorities and migrant workers, its oil wealth and dependency, and other major geopolitical dramas is fraught with risk for FE.

This is because such problems are starkly at odds with the message FE and its CEO Alejandro Agag have always espoused: that the series is forward-thinking, green, aimed at young motorsport fans – and therefore takes a non-traditional approach to racing.

The Riyadh deal, which is understood to be significant in financial terms and is firmly in line with FE's preferred policy of having promoters pay to host events, is for 10 years. The race will take place in Ad Diriyah – the 'Old City' district in the outskirts. It won't be a double-header and is unlikely to be a night race in 2018.

FE has taken encouragement from Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 plan – the kingdom's attempt to reform, socially as well as economically, to diversify its revenue streams and reduce its

reliance on money from oil exports. Women will finally be allowed to drive next month, although it has been reported that several activists who campaigned for this right have recently been detained.

"We have the same vision," said Agag. "I think Vision 2030 is great, really future-looking. So, that goes exactly the same as FE and that is why I think this partnership is so good."

"[People] can say whatever they want," Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Faisal Al Saud, Le Mans racer and vice-chair of the GSA, said when the accusation of sportwashing the country's image was presented. "We were always criticised for not doing anything, and when we do it they say ['you're doing something for the wrong reason']."

Yes, if Saudi Arabia is trying to modernise and reform it should not be discouraged – viewpoints are rarely changed from being shouted down.

But FE and Agag need to offer much firmer reassurances that this development is a positive step that won't cause problems down the line. This goes for those working in the paddock – manufacturers concerned about images being tarnished, and, much more importantly, those worried about working in a country where they could face problems just for being who they are – as well as for people watching from the outside.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Red Bull plots to close the gap

FORMULA 1

Red Bull is pulling out the stops to compete with Mercedes and Ferrari at the top of the tree in Formula 1, and a new bargeboard package was viewed as key when it was introduced at Barcelona for the recent Spanish Grand Prix.

Last year the rules were opened up in this area and, looking at the Red Bull example – with the multitude of turning vanes, vertical, horizontal and anywhere in between – it's no wonder that this current breed of F1 cars is useless in turbulent airflow, or even in a crosswind.

Developing all these components to work hand in hand is difficult enough when you are just using straight-ahead airflow, but throw a bit of turbulence or crosswind in and basically anything can happen.

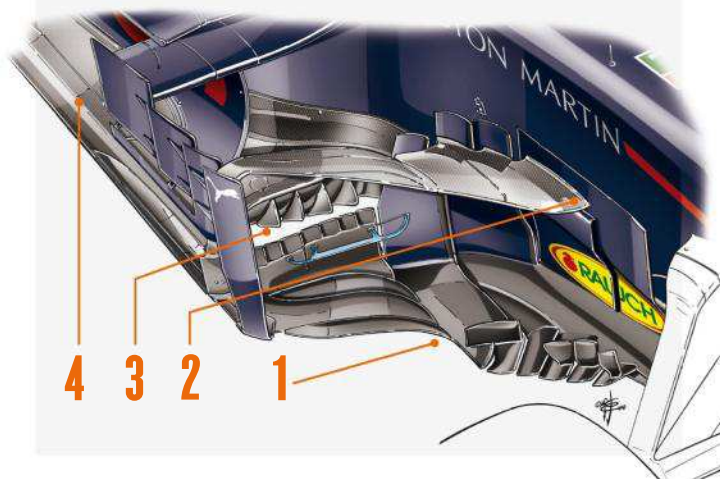
The lower section (1) is used like a leading-edge slat to help prepare the airflow that's going to the leading edge of the floor. The part at (2) is a delta-shaped wing section that comes out from the side of the chassis. It picks up the airflow coming off the trailing edge of the front wing and redirects it into the sidepod. It varies in angle of attack as it comes out from the chassis to optimise the airflow in each area. Its outer end mounts the forward vertical tyre-wake control vane.

On the leading edge of the floor itself there are five vanes (3). Each of these will set up vortices that will travel under the flat section of the underfloor, energising this airflow. This will help reduce the risk of airflow separation.

On the outer edge, Red Bull has a slot (4) similar to that pioneered by Renault. This helps to seal the underfloor from the effect of the airflow that would normally be pulled under the floor here.

• MotoGP champion Marc Marquez will get his first taste of F1 machinery when he tests a Red Bull next month. Marquez's Honda MotoGP team-mate Dani Pedrosa and nine-time motocross world champion Tony Cairoli will also take part in the test at the Red Bull Ring on June 5-6.

GARY ANDERSON





BEROUD/NSA

Bentley boy Smith quits

BLANCPAIN GT

Le Mans 24 Hours winner Guy Smith has stepped down from Bentley's factory campaign with M-Sport following last weekend's Blancpain GT Series race on home ground. But he won't be ending a relationship with a manufacturer that stretches back to 2001.

Smith, who claimed Bentley's comeback victory at Le Mans in 2003 (below) with Tom Kristensen and Rinaldo Capello, has decided that the time is right to call time on his career as a factory racing driver at the age of 43. He says new business interests mean he is struggling to devote the time necessary to compete at the highest level.

"I've started a sports partnerships agency called Greenlight and it's taking up more and more of my time," explained Smith. "My team-mates are living and breathing our racing programme, but when they call me to talk about something I'm always in meetings. I'm finding it harder and harder to give over time that the Bentley programme demands. I'm 43, so now seemed the right time to stop."

Smith had suggested to Bentley that he end his stint as a factory driver over the winter, but he was persuaded to stay on beyond the debut of the second-generation Continental GT3 at Monza last month. And stopping after competing on home ground at Silverstone, he said, "seemed to make sense".

Smith's place alongside Steven Kane and Jules Gounon in the remaining BGTS enduros as well as the Suzuka and Laguna Seca rounds of the Intercontinental GT Challenge will be taken by South African Jordan Pepper, who raced for the Abt Bentley team in 2016 and '17. Smith will continue as a test and development driver with Bentley, as well as continuing as an ambassador for the brand, a role he fulfilled in the years between its Le Mans victory in 2003 and its return to motorsport with the Continental GT3 in '13.

Smith isn't hanging up his helmet, however. He sees himself racing at a lower level in the future: "I could imagine doing something in an environment where there's a bit less pressure, something like British GTs."

GARY WATKINS



LAT IMAGES

IN THE HEADLINES

MASSA'S FORMULA E RIDE

Multiple grand prix race winner Felipe Massa is to compete in Formula E from next season. The Brazilian has joined Venturi on a three-year deal, and is expected to test shortly.

HOCKENHEIM THREAT

Hockenheim has threatened to pull itself off the Formula 1 calendar after this year's German Grand Prix unless it can agree a new 'risk-free' deal with F1 owner Liberty. The track has suggested a form of revenue sharing, either with no sanctioning fee or a much reduced one. This follows news that the projected Miami race will be held for no fee and with risk sharing with Liberty.

LATIFI'S McLAREN STAKE

Michael Latifi, the father of Formula 2 racer and Force India protege Nicholas, has become the McLaren Group's first new shareholder since the departure of Ron Dennis. Iranian-born Latifi's British Virgin Island-based Nidala Limited has invested over £200million in the company.

FERRUCCI IN INDYCAR

F2 racer Santino Ferrucci is to make his IndyCar debut with Dale Coyne Racing in next week's Detroit Belle Isle double-header. The American is filling in as a one-off following the injuries suffered in the Spa 6 Hours by Pietro Fittipaldi. This has prompted a rejig of the DCR 'ride-share' programme between Fittipaldi and Zachary Claman DeMelo.

STONEMAN DROPPED

Ginetta has dropped Dean Stoneman from its line-up for next month's Le Mans 24 Hours and replaced him with the marque's test driver Mike Simpson. Stoneman said he is "still trying to get to the bottom of the move", which places Simpson in the #5 Manor-run LMP1 Ginetta G60-LT-P1.

WURZ FOR WRX DEBUT

Ex-F1 racer and two-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner Alexander Wurz is to make his World Rallycross debut in next month's Norwegian round at Hell. Wurz, whose father Franz is a three-time European Rallycross champion, will drive a Ford Fiesta supercar for the MJP Racing Team Austria squad.

HYUNDAIS HAMMERED

All four Hyundai WTCR drivers failed to score a point last weekend at Zandvoort after drastic changes to the i30 N's Balance of Performance. Five of the first nine races were won by Hyundais, but a 14th place for Thed Bjork was the best result in Holland for the car after its minimum rideheight was increased to 100mm and maximum power level reduced to 97.5%.



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F1 MONACO GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



UK START TIMES

THURSDAY

FP1 1000 FP2 1400

SATURDAY

FP3 1100 QUALIFYING 1400

SUNDAY

RACE 1410

LIVE ON SKY SPORTS F1 & CHANNEL 4

BBC RADIO 5 LIVE 1400

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP AND CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP SO FAR

1	Lewis Hamilton	95	1	Mercedes	153
2	Sebastian Vettel	78	2	Ferrari	126
3	Valtteri Bottas	58	3	Red Bull	80
4	Kimi Raikkonen	48	4	Renault	41
5	Daniel Ricciardo	47	5	McLaren	40

TYRE ALLOCATION



TRACK STATS

LENGTH 2.074 miles

NUMBER OF LAPS 78

2017 POLE POSITION

Kimi Raikkonen 1m12.178s

POLE LAP RECORD

Kimi Raikkonen 1m12.178s (2017)

RACE LAP RECORD

Sergio Perez 1m14.820s (2017)

PREVIOUS WINNERS

2017	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari
2016	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes
2015	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2014	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2013	Nico Rosberg	Mercedes
2012	Mark Webber	Red Bull
2011	Sebastian Vettel	Red Bull
2010	Mark Webber	Red Bull
2009	Jenson Button	Brawn
2008	Lewis Hamilton	McLaren



Four drivers have taken their only world championship GP wins in Monaco: Trintignant (1955 and '58); Beltoise ('72); Panis ('96, pictured); and Trulli (2004)

THEMES TO WATCH

MERCEDES VULNERABLE

Monaco doesn't suit the long-wheelbase Mercedes, and its struggles on the softest-compound Pirellis could yet return. It was defeated comprehensively by Ferrari in Monaco last year and only beat Red Bull the year before through luck rather than judgement. No wonder Mercedes boss Toto Wolff is "bloody worried".

RED BULLS CHARGING

Daniel Ricciardo is already a polesitter in the principality and Max Verstappen is on a high after his first podium of the season heading to a happy hunting ground for his team. Its Renault engine may not be on a par with Mercedes and Ferrari, but Monaco will show how good the Red Bull chassis is.

QUALIFYING 'MADNESS' ON HYPERSOFT PIRELLI

Pirelli's softest-ever F1 tyre, the hypersoft, is ready for its race-weekend debut. What can we expect from the high-grip rubber? "Absolute madness," says Renault driver Carlos Sainz Jr, who predicts "something special" in qualifying.

World Rallycross on UK TV

Silverstone makes its debut as a World RX venue, and now you can watch live with FreeSports

FreeSports



With a groundbreaking weekend approaching as the World Rallycross championship makes its debut at Silverstone, fans will be able to watch the action on free-to-air television as part of FreeSports' growing portfolio.

The channel revealed last week it will show live coverage of the DTM along with Thursday highlight packages after each round, and has followed it up by revealing its World RX intentions for 2018.

The championship has gone from strength to strength since starting in 2014, and the short races and spectacular action as cars are pitched sideways across gravel and asphalt has proven a real hit with manufacturers and fans alike.

The series has attracted backing from Volkswagen, Peugeot and Audi, and Ford, Renault and Hyundai cars are also used.

The series is also gearing up for an electric revolution in the future. The use of electric technology makes the series a strong proposition for input from manufacturers and sponsors, with many known to be investigating the championship and what it intends to do when it comes to electrification in the future.

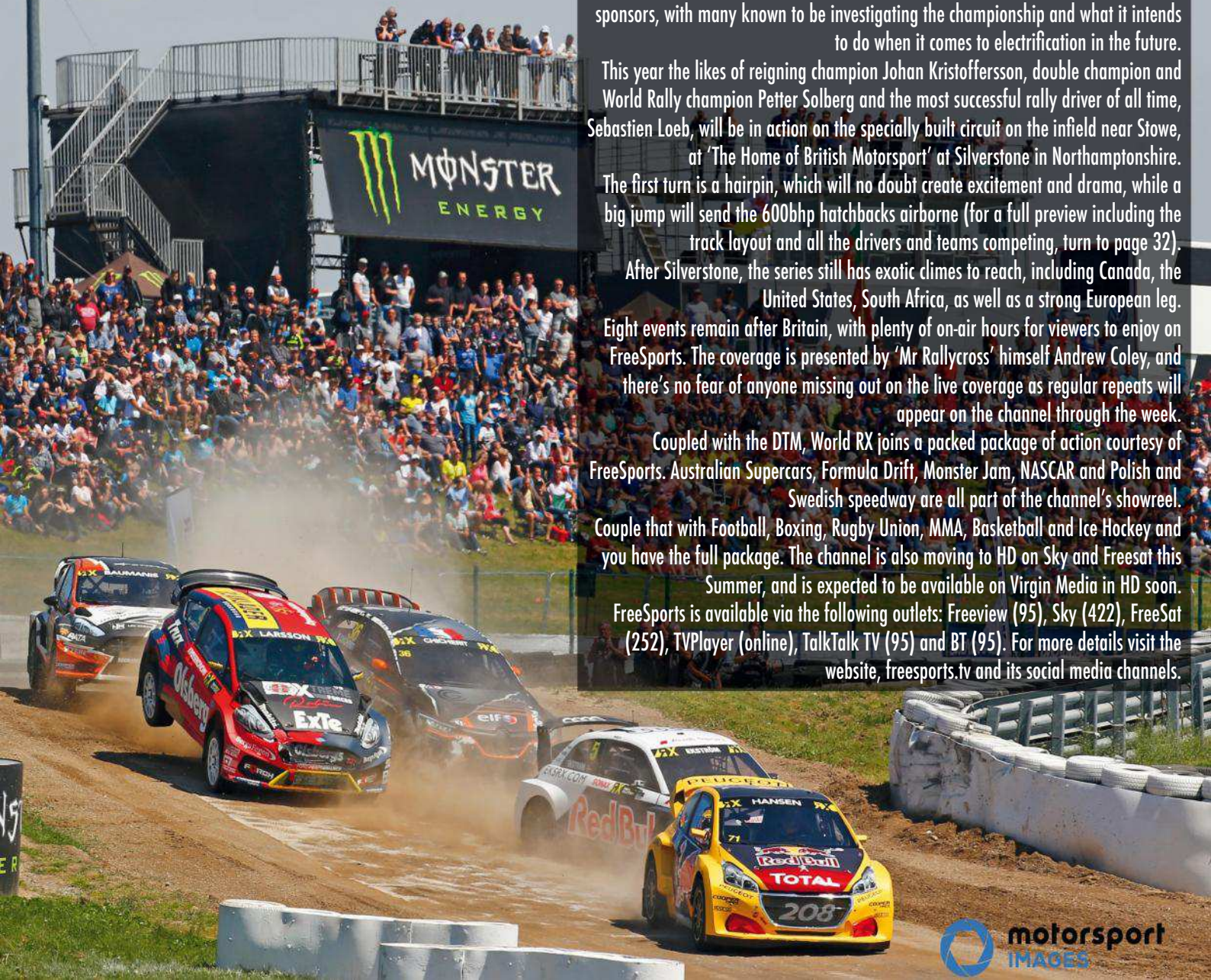
This year the likes of reigning champion Johan Kristoffersson, double champion and World Rally champion Petter Solberg and the most successful rally driver of all time, Sebastien Loeb, will be in action on the specially built circuit on the infield near Stowe, at 'The Home of British Motorsport' at Silverstone in Northamptonshire. The first turn is a hairpin, which will no doubt create excitement and drama, while a big jump will send the 600bhp hatchbacks airborne (for a full preview including the track layout and all the drivers and teams competing, turn to page 32).

After Silverstone, the series still has exotic climes to reach, including Canada, the United States, South Africa, as well as a strong European leg. Eight events remain after Britain, with plenty of on-air hours for viewers to enjoy on FreeSports. The coverage is presented by 'Mr Rallycross' himself Andrew Coley, and there's no fear of anyone missing out on the live coverage as regular repeats will appear on the channel through the week.

Coupled with the DTM, World RX joins a packed package of action courtesy of FreeSports. Australian Supercars, Formula Drift, Monster Jam, NASCAR and Polish and Swedish speedway are all part of the channel's showreel.

Couple that with Football, Boxing, Rugby Union, MMA, Basketball and Ice Hockey and you have the full package. The channel is also moving to HD on Sky and Freesat this Summer, and is expected to be available on Virgin Media in HD soon.

FreeSports is available via the following outlets: Freeview (95), Sky (422), FreeSat (252), TVPlayer (online), TalkTalk TV (95) and BT (95). For more details visit the website, freesports.tv and its social media channels.





WHY YOU NEED TO THINK AGAIN ABOUT MONACO

The Monaco Grand Prix inevitably attracts criticism for lack of overtaking, but that outlook misses the point of what makes this venue great

EDD STRAW

Formula 1 returns to Monaco this weekend, but despite it offering a unique challenge to the drivers, who must thread the needle for lap after lap within millimetres of the barriers, there will be endless criticism of the race for the lack of overtaking. This is because there is a dichotomy implicit in circuit design that what represents a great driver challenge does not necessarily create a spectacular race.

That tracks must be demanding for drivers is one of the few statements sure to gain unanimous support from the fans, but plenty among their number will criticise Monaco as a track grand prix racing has long since outgrown. Yet it showcases the skills of racing drivers in a way no other circuit on the calendar can.

The problem is this is not always conveyed from the trackside cameras, for even though the onboard cameras do give a good feel for what the drivers have to do, things are still a little lost in translation. Watching from trackside at Monaco is a mindblowing experience that exhibits the precision, consistency and brilliance

"MONACO SHOWCASES THE SKILLS OF RACING DRIVERS IN A WAY NO OTHER CIRCUIT CAN"

of grand prix drivers. Watch the early laps of the race from the exit of the fast left/right sweep into Swimming Pool and you are left in no doubt of the almost superhuman qualities of the drivers, even the so-called 'bad' ones.

From close range, the eye picks up what the television cameras don't. Back in 2014, on the first racing lap through this section Daniel Ricciardo clouted the inside kerb and kicked the rear of his Red Bull out. In the fraction of a second it took to register this and that he might be headed for the barrier, he had gathered it up and continued on his way.

Laps at Monaco are full of these kinds of moments for the quickest drivers at a track requiring supreme confidence, technical skill and precision – as well as the ability to correct when things go awry. Watching Robert Kubica on track in the Renault in 2010, the year he went on to finish third behind the Red Bulls of Mark Webber and Sebastian Vettel, is unforgettable.

It's the images of the way he drove through the right-hander at Casino Square that cannot be shaken. He carried enormous speed, maximising the rear-end grip of the car while the left-rear was visibly teetering on the tightrope between adhesion and breaking away. No other driver could match that.

The same year offered a reminder of how badly things can go wrong, even for the best. Seen from the outside of Massenet, the left-hander that leads to Casino, Fernando Alonso's commitment in the Ferrari was breathtaking as he squeezed the car onto the right line after coming over the crest that unsettled the car. But on Saturday morning, he crossed the line and piled into the barrier, the result being a damaged chassis and a starting position at the back of the grid.

Tabac, the brisk, narrow left-hander between the chicane and the Swimming Pool, is not often talked about, yet it can bite. Ralf Schumacher's shunt there in 2005 reveals just how fine the line between triumph and disaster can be. This is a corner where the best can point the car just inside the apex and know the understeer will allow the front end to slide just past the edge of the barrier. Back then, Schumacher tried that and a fractional misjudgement meant he hit the barrier with the front-left wheel. Monaco is full of such corners.

Then, of course, there is the part of the track that has bitten so many times – the chicane. Karl Wendlinger's crash here in 1994 is the most infamous in the modern era, but since then we have seen so many similar crashes – those of Sergio Perez and Jenson Button stand out in the years since. Even with work being done to smooth out the bump that has triggered so many offs, it's still a daunting challenge.

Does any of that sound boring? Is this a dull track that F1 would be better off without? Of course not. It is the kind of unique configuration that asks things of grand prix drivers other tracks cannot and will not. If every track were Monaco, it would be dull. But it is unique.

There may not be much overtaking, but anyone who fails to appreciate the skill and courage of the drivers who must hurl the fastest racing machines in the world around the narrow and completely unsuitable streets is missing the point.

This is a pure, unadulterated celebration of driving. Forget about all the glitz and glamour that is always talked about at Monaco – at its heart this race is about pure driving virtuosity. Appreciate it, because grand prix racing would be so much poorer without it. And if you really think it's easy, perhaps you need to take a closer look. 🏁



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YOUR SAY

Although the series is fairly informal and friendly, it is highly professional in all aspects – design, manufacture, preparation, driving and organisation

MARTIN OGILVIE

Verstappen is a real racer

Max Verstappen is a real racer who likes to be in front, but after qualifying he has, like Daniel Ricciardo, to overtake drivers to be there.

The Merc and Ferrari drivers don't like that, they want to drive around and around to the finish without any problems. So there will be contact and mistakes, that is called racing.

J van Gelderen
The Netherlands

Hillclimb reports are much missed

I am greatly disappointed that you no longer consider the British Hillclimb Championship worthy of reporting.

Although the series is fairly informal and friendly, it is highly professional in all aspects – design, manufacture, preparation, driving, marshalling and organisation, with many talented individuals fiercely competing for class and championship podiums, with the top classes containing modern, high-tech cars made by small firms and individuals to a high standard.

You report on just about every little circuit event, no matter how trivial, so the omission of this variant of motorsport seems a gross oversight, and can only make it more obscure to the potential spectator and competitor, resulting in the inevitable decline of this most creative and attractive area of motorsport with a rich heritage.

Martin Ogilvie
By email

We fully accept the BHC has many strengths and plan to run longer articles on it later in the year. Our sister publication Motorsport News continues to run event reports – ed

Will Grosjean crash at Monaco?

Haas driver Romain Grosjean has been handed a three-place grid penalty for the Monaco Grand Prix.



So he will start further down the middle part of the grid behind slower cars. Brilliant! My money is on a safety car on lap two!

John Barker
By email

Who wants to take photographs of a fence?

What a major disappointment to see the spectator viewing areas on the Brands Hatch GP circuit ruined by formidable new catch-fencing. What in the past was an ideal area for taking photographs is now completely spoiled. After 40 years of viewing at Brands Hatch, I shall probably give up now. How sad.

Peter Womersley
By email

Racing's return to Birmingham

Regarding Birmingham Formula E, it's ironic that Brum is mooted for an FE race with cars that don't go brum!

Patrick Palmer
By email

HAVE YOUR SAY, GET IN TOUCH

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INSIGHT

McLAREN'S TROUBLES • WILLIAMS FW08C DRIVEN • INDY 500 PREVIEW • WRX PREVIEW



CAN McLAREN REALLY GET BACK TO THE FRONT?

It's now clear the once-great team's problems in recent years go further than the troubled Honda engine. McLaren boss Zak Brown tells Autosport what he thinks has gone wrong – and what's being done to change things

EDD STRAW



M

CLAREN NEEDED A WAKE-UP CALL, and the 2018 season has delivered one with the clarity of a foghorn at point-blank range. The belief that all of McLaren's woes lay at Honda's door has been painfully debunked, and far from getting near

the big three, it is struggling to keep its head above water in the midfield battle. As a result, McLaren has launched "a review of its technical operations" known to include long-time chassis chief technical officer Tim Goss being removed from that role.

The switch to Renault engines was supposed to deliver so much more than McLaren's current fifth in the constructors' championship, a position that is largely down to Fernando Alonso's prowess behind the wheel and the race team making the most of a limited car that is, on average, only the seventh fastest of 2018.

Instead, it has exposed the extent of the rebuilding process McLaren must go through to again be considered one of Formula 1's top teams. So why has it gone so badly wrong?

First and foremost, the expectations for this season were overblown – and that's the team's fault. Last year, the performance of its chassis was regularly talked up, implying it was up there with the best of them, so bolting a Renault engine package into a car that built on the 2017 machine should have been more than a handy midfielder. It isn't.

"One of the mistakes we've made is we got caught up in our enthusiasm to get back to the front and therefore set expectations in the public domain that were probably too high," says Zak Brown, appointed the F1 team's CEO last month as part of an operational restructure. "If we had contained our enthusiasm and looked at the facts you'd say 'big step forward'. We probably set expectations too high internally and externally."

Brown is justified in pointing to McLaren's climb from a desultory ninth last year to its current fifth, and still being in the hunt for best of the rest at the front of a very congested midfield as a credible step forward. Those revelling in the schadenfreude of jilted engine partner Honda powering Toro Rosso to fourth place in Bahrain on a weekend when the extent of McLaren's troubles laid itself bare and patience ran out with the current technical regime, can't rewrite history. Honda was a big weakness for McLaren from 2015-17; it's just that the team allowed itself to believe Honda was almost exclusively to blame.

"In hindsight, having the power unit issue that we had in the past few years meant we didn't look as hard at ourselves as we should have done," concedes Brown. "You end up having such big problems that you are not quite sure where to look anymore."

"It wasn't an intentional thing, I just think that over three years watching Fernando getting passed halfway down a straight, it's natural people would start to let their guard down. Then you bolt the new

"WE PROBABLY SET EXPECTATIONS TOO HIGH INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY"



STAT

5TH

Since its last race-winning season in 2012, McLaren's best finish in the constructors' table is fifth, scored in '13 and '14

McLaren can challenge Mercedes but has 'lost its way' since 2013

engine in, get complacent and think that's going to fix all the issues and realise you've got others to deal with. We didn't react quickly enough, we were kind of in denial."

McLaren was sincere in its expectations and believed it was on for a much stronger season until the reality hit home during the Bahrain Grand Prix weekend. While Honda still had a majority share in its 2015-17 troubles, having the same engine as Red Bull has exposed McLaren. While it was always too optimistic to expect to match Red Bull on the first season of adapting to a different engine-package installation, the average deficit of 1.6 seconds in qualifying is too big.

It's when you ask the question of what the problems are, rather than why McLaren missed them, that you get to the heart of the matter.

The origins of McLaren's malaise stretch beyond the start of the Honda era. It has only won one world championship in the 21st century – Lewis Hamilton's drivers' title in 2008 – and then lost several cornerstones in subsequent years. First, Mercedes got rid of its stake in the team in favour of acquiring the Brawn squad to create the current Silver Arrows.

Hamilton's departure followed at the end of 2012, a season in which McLaren produced a car plenty quick enough to win the title but threw away too many points through operational and reliability weaknesses. The curious decision to change the philosophy of its car for '13, in the final year before a massive change of regulations, backfired. Despite confidence that this could unlock performance others would not be able to access, it had a fundamental problem with the underbody aero stalling that limited the usable rideheight range.

During that period, Goss took over from Mercedes-bound Paddy Lowe as technical director, although it should be stressed that it was not under his leadership that this path was set. But even then there were mutterings of a technical department compromised by politics and with a culture of not allowing accepted wisdom to be challenged. Seemingly there's a weakness in communication and collaboration.

The structure, rooted in the 'matrix' system introduced in Ron Dennis's time by former CEO Martin Whitmarsh, appears to be the problem. It became more flat at the top when Lowe left, and until recently comprised three key figures at the pinnacle – Goss,



THE ALONSO CONUNDRUM



Where would McLaren be without Fernando Alonso, whose quintet of fifth-to-eighth places has delivered 80% of McLaren's face-saving points? Publicly, the 36-year-old has been saying all the right things and talking up McLaren's ability to close on the top three, but he must be concerned.

"Everything he's saying publicly is what he's saying privately," says Zak Brown. "He loves the McLaren environment, how we are working, the freedom we give him and how we go racing together. The conversations are 'let's see how we get on through this year'."

McLaren has bent over backwards to accommodate Alonso, putting together the deal for him to contest last year's Indianapolis 500 (below), then allowing him to drive for Toyota in the World Endurance Championship. Given McLaren is still a long way off winning races, it might need to get creative to keep him in the fold by offering other opportunities while it works its way back towards the front.

"He's a bit discouraged by what F1 has become," says Brown. "He wants to race and I would like him to finish his career at McLaren, not just F1 because we are reviewing other forms of motorsport as part of our larger portfolio of racing activities. In the next few races it will become clear in his own mind what he wants to do."

That review includes redoubling efforts to establish a permanent presence in IndyCar, something that could appeal to Alonso given his determination to pursue motorsport's triple crown. Success outside F1 appeals more to him than mediocrity in F1, and if he can tick those boxes while McLaren gets its act together then come back to a title-contending car, he would. The curveball is if one of F1's big three teams came in with an offer – a long shot.

"If I was Fernando Alonso and got an offer to drive a Mercedes, I'd be pretty damned interested and I couldn't blame him," says Brown. "There's not one driver on the grid who wouldn't want to be in Lewis Hamilton's or Valtteri Bottas's seat. I understand that, but I also don't think those seats are going to become available."

"THERE IS NOT ONE DRIVER WHO WOULDN'T WANT TO BE IN A MERC"
ZAK BROWN

Peter Prodromou (chief technical officer – aero) and Matt Morris (chief engineering officer).

Brown says: "2013 and '14 weren't great years, so I think it's fair to say the performance decline started in '13. It may have spiked in '15-'17, but that was the start of it. It's a combination of people, processes, tools and accountability. We're undertaking a complete review of who, how, what, why and where."

"I've challenged the technical leadership team and am playing a role in asking why isn't this working, why is it taking us so long to identify an issue, why are we having an issue? The frustrating thing is that as fast as F1 moves in some aspects, it's slower in others. Just because you've identified something, sometimes it takes time to identify the fix."

"This is now a rebuilding process. Rome wasn't built in a day. What I'm convinced of is we have a world championship team with world championship people with world championship equipment that has just lost its way. We need to get it back on course. I have the ultimate accountability to make that happen."

Brown has yet to finalise the longer-term technical structure, but talk of accountability suggests the need for a single technical chief sitting above the rest. But unless this is an appointment from within – and there are question marks over the roles of Prodromou and Morris – it's not yet clear who this could be. If a new hire needs to come in, with the way contracts are set up with non-compete clauses, it could take a minimum of a year, and very likely more, before they step through the door at Woking. Creating the structure is one thing, populating it is another, even if much of the restructure can be covered by shifting quality personnel around.

"I've not landed on a final conclusion of exactly what's needed, but clearly as you go up the food chain there needs to be increased responsibility and accountability and decision-making," says Brown. "There needs to be a point where people have the authority to make a decision. You need to create a system whereby when debate happens you have someone with the ability to say, 'I've listened to all of you, this is what we're doing'."

The upshot of what has to be regarded as questionable decision- ➤

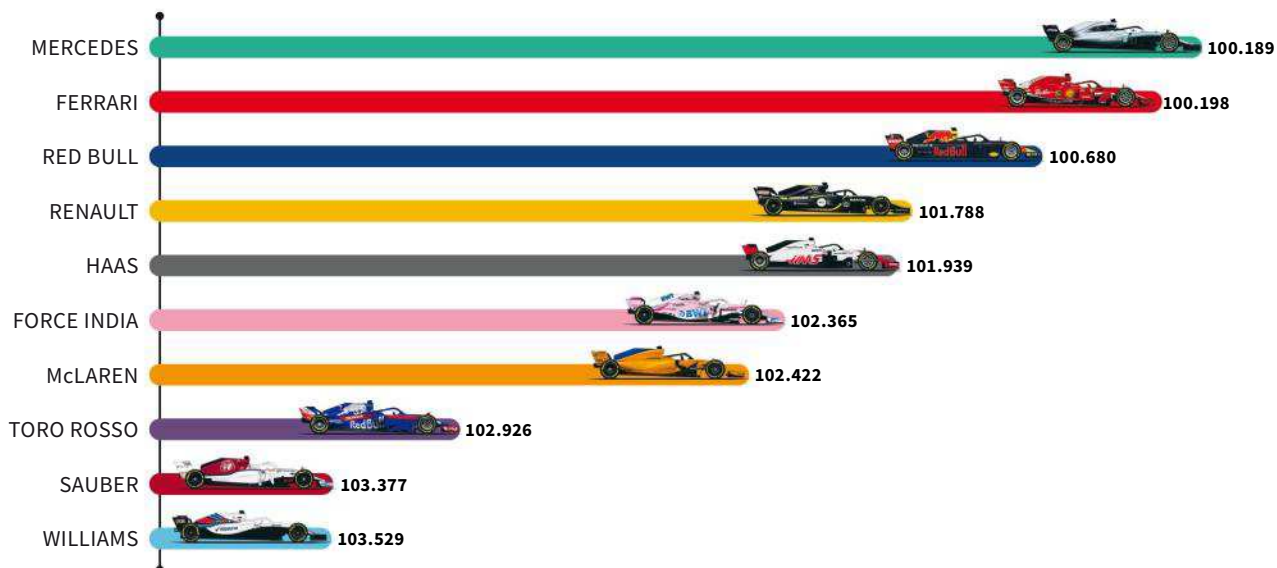




2018 SUPERTIMES

McLAREN STILL PLAYING CATCH-UP

Supertimes are calculated by taking each team's fastest lap of each weekend, expressing them as a percentage of the outright fastest and then taking the average over the first five GPs of 2018.



making on the technical side is a car that isn't bad, but isn't great. During testing there were too many minor reliability problems that restricted McLaren to fewer laps than any other team. The management backed the technical department to the hilt, but once the car became reliable it was clear it wasn't going as quickly as expected. This problem was accentuated by struggles to get parts signed off and produced in time, leading to some of the parts scheduled for the season-opening Australian GP not appearing until the recent Spanish GP.

The car doesn't have enough downforce, even though the problems of the past when McLaren seemed to privilege peak downforce figures over consistency have been eliminated. But the car is a little unstable, with Stoffel Vandoorne citing the turn-in phase as the most problematic.

The Spanish GP upgrade, including a striking new nose, tweaks to the diffuser and a new leading deflector in the bargeboards, did offer a step forward, but the car still looks a little nervous at times. On the plus side, McLaren was significantly closer to Red Bull's pace in Spain than at any other race, although it remains to be seen if that is track-specific.

There are other question marks over the drag levels carried. On top of the technical decision-making, facilities will also need to be reviewed given the vast sums spent at factories by the big three in recent years.

The upshot of all of this is that McLaren is now a midfield team trying to return to the ranks of the big teams. And the focus now has to be on the rules reset in 2021 as the first realistic moment McLaren has a shot at re-emerging as a world championship-winning force.

"In many ways it is 2021 now when it comes to recruiting people because of the lead time required," agrees Brown. "I don't think anyone other than Ferrari and Mercedes, with a small chance of Red Bull, can win the championship until the new F1. So what we need to do is put ourselves in the position of getting better and better and then, when the playing field is level, we're ready to strike."

"It's not that we're not going to be on it in 2019 and '20, but when we have similar-sized baseball bats to play with we'll be ready. But to say we're going to compete for the world championship in '19

and '20 would be setting expectations too high again."

So, will McLaren be able to turn things around? It's impossible to say, but we can no longer consider it as one of F1's big teams fallen on hard times. It's a great team that has slipped back and needs to re-establish itself among F1's grandees.

The McLaren brand remains strong, bolstered by the automotive business that also helps the group financially, and has a legion of followers eclipsed only by Ferrari. Even if it's not performing as a big team at the moment, it still has the air of an F1 grandee. That's a double-edged sword, because it means McLaren gets far more criticism for being fifth than Williams, another once-great team, has for falling from that position to the back. But that helps when it comes to securing much-needed commercial partners.

The race team itself has, under racing director Eric Boullier, become vastly more effective than the one that threw away so many points six years ago – this year's results reflect that. The question now is whether the restructure Brown is overseeing on the technical side can ensure the race team has a car that can run near the front.

"The team is doing great, but we've not created a car yet that's fast enough" says Brown. "We're doing a damned good job with the car we've created, so make no mistake McLaren is not in crisis."

"McLaren has a lot of pressure, we feel that pressure but this team's going to respond to that pressure. We are resilient, we're not head down in the garage, we're going to power through this. It's not going to be easy, we're going to have good days and bad days, but we believe we're going to have more good days than bad days. Those who believe in us are going to be rewarded and those that don't are going to be proved wrong eventually."

It's rousing rhetoric, but what matters now is what McLaren does on the track. It's a long road back, but at least the team is confronting underlying weaknesses that the even bigger problems of the Honda era allowed it to paper over. The question now is whether it can do so effectively. That is what will decide whether it can come out of the wilderness still as an F1 powerhouse, or if the damage is permanent. **✎**

P22 GARY ANDERSON'S VIEW

STAT

2ND

McLaren is still second on the F1 world championship teams' winners list. Its figure of 182 victories is only bettered by Ferrari's 231

Spanish GP upgrade has moved McLaren closer to Red Bull, but is no panacea



GARY ANDERSON'S VIEW**NOW THAT HONDA'S GONE, McLAREN MUST CURE ITS OWN ILLS**

During the Honda years everyone at McLaren seemed to believe that all its problems were down to the engine and that once it had changed to Renault things would be different. But it was clear from 2015-17 that there were also problems on the chassis side, and now that change has been made it's become very obvious that shortcomings remain.

Some asked why I was so critical of McLaren during that period, and that's the reason – after all, it's a team I worked for during my career so I want to see it perform as it should.

The car is a better

package than it was, but again McLaren has its problems and is still not quick enough on the straights. You have to ask if it's making a mistake in not balancing the demands of the chassis with those of the engine. This raises some questions about the decision-making and the objectives set technically because there is nowhere to hide when running the same power-unit package as Red Bull and the Renault works team. And it is clear this has led the team to take a long, hard look at itself this year.

Zak Brown, who recently became the F1 team's CEO,

talks about the need for accountability in the technical department. This can't fail to improve its development path, and if there wasn't already accountability in all departments then the company is not very well-run. McLaren has long believed that a 'flat' structure, with Tim Goss, Peter Prodromou and Matt Morris at the top, is better than a pyramid structure. But that will never work.

You do need someone to steer the ship, to be accountable and to ensure all the resources – both financial and human – are used to the maximum.

And they need to be strong enough to make the decisions that ensure the company has that direction. More importantly, they need to be strong enough to hold up their hands if they are going in the wrong direction and the development path needs to be altered.

It's positive that McLaren seems to be moving in this direction, even if it has taken too long. But getting a new structure in place is no easy task. There are few people out there with the vision, the skills and the experience to qualify as a technical director or a chief technical officer. Yes, there are new people coming up who

might be able to do that, but McLaren cannot afford to take a risk on an unknown in the situation it's in.

This means it could take a while to get the right person in, which is a problem given that McLaren still wants to close on the frontrunners even while going through this process.

Another thing that's holding back McLaren is that its equipment is not quite as state-of-the-art as it was a decade ago. The McLaren Technology Centre was built around its windtunnel, which is now a bit outdated. That's why McLaren uses the Toyota Motorsport windtunnel in Germany.



MARK SUTTON/SUTTON IMAGES

Update package
was introduced
for Spanish GP...



ANDRE/SUTTON IMAGES

These cars have very high levels of downforce, and with the outwash front-wing endplates it's vital that the windtunnel's internal cross-section is big enough not to influence the airflow. If you are trying to make small developments of these components that are trying to influence the airflow outside of the tyres, it will be impossible.

The driver-in-the-loop simulator is good, but it's just not as cutting-edge as some of its rivals, even though McLaren was once the pioneer in this area. These things can lead you down the wrong path very easily.

McLaren is fortunate in that it has some very wealthy shareholders,

but they didn't get rich by not knowing how to look after their cash. The pockets are only so deep, so business plans must be in place to show there is a road to recovery, otherwise enthusiasm may just diminish. Especially given the financial implications of the split with Honda and taking on Renault engines.

With a major change in the technical regulations due for 2021, perhaps it does make sense for McLaren to prioritise

investing time into getting its structure in place in preparation for that challenge. Given that the aerodynamic rules are being modified a little next year in an attempt to improve overtaking, the team of people researching that change needs to be in place very soon.

But you don't create and hone a new car out of a block of modelling foam; you start from a concept and that concept needs to have the development

potential built into it and instil confidence that research time will bring rewards in terms of lap time.

McLaren is not the ground-breaking, standard-setting team it once was. It has to be considered just another team and it has no God-given right to success. You have to work on it, and take a few punches on the chin. But most teams go through this kind of challenge at one time or another and it's how you handle those blows that

makes the difference.

Change for change's sake is not positive. It's like a dam with a hole in it – you don't knock it down completely and start again because your new one will probably have a hole somewhere else. So it's about plugging the holes until you fix the leak – that way you will move forward.

It's positive that McLaren has realised there were weaknesses beyond Honda and that it's addressing them. What matters now is that the decisions made on the technical structure are the right ones. If they are, then McLaren can start making progress towards the front again. If not, it could end up going round in circles. ❧

"IT'S POSITIVE THAT McLAREN HAS REALISED IT HAS WEAKNESSES BEYOND HONDA AND IS ADDRESSING THEM"



...but McLaren is no longer the technical force it once was



CHANDHOK TRIES ON KEKE ROSBERG'S SHOES... ...AND FINDS THE GOING TOUGH

Racer and TV pundit Karun Chandhok jumped at the chance to drive a Williams FW08C at Monaco, and came away with a new appreciation for F1's older generation

KARUN CHANDHOK

PHOTOGRAPHY JAYSON FONG

The phone rang a few months ago and it was Williams Heritage boss Jonathan Williams asking, "How do you fancy doing a demo at the Monaco Historique in the FW08C?" Drive at one of my top-three favourite circuits, in a car that took one of the most memorable Monaco Grand Prix victories? "Yes please!"

The circuit at Monaco is a bit divisive when it comes to drivers' opinions. Nelson Piquet hated it while others absolutely loved it. I'm very firmly in that second camp. I've been very fortunate to race at Monaco in World Series by Renault, GP2 and Formula 1 and, along with Suzuka and Le Mans, the circuit holds a special place in my heart. Every corner is unique and the streets of the Principality are steeped in history. Ste Devote, Casino Square, Mirabeau, Portier, Tabac and La Rascasse all mean something special to any true fan of the sport.

I've had plenty of highs and lows there myself. Finishing on

the podium in GP2 in 2008 remains one of my most treasured memories, while having the driveshaft fail when I was leading comfortably a year later with just eight laps to go still hurts. I suppose narrowly avoiding being decapitated by Jarno Trulli in '10 is probably not something I want to remember too often either!

The FW08C is a very special car for two reasons. Firstly, Keke Rosberg drove it to Monaco GP victory in spectacular style in 1983. Secondly, a young Brazilian called Ayrton Senna da Silva had his first Formula 1 test in this car. I've been lucky to have driven the FW08C on a few occasions and the short-wheelbase car with the very user-friendly Cosworth DFV engine was always great fun to drive. Driving it at Monaco though was going to be very special.

The organisers gave us two slots over the weekend to demonstrate the car with some others from McLaren and Lotus. For me to share a circuit with drivers such as Mika Hakkinen, Riccardo Patrese and Eddie Irvine, who were winning grands >>



'83 Williams is agile
and compliant, but still
requires a very firm hand

prix when I was still a teenaged schoolkid in India, was pretty damn cool on its own.

The best way I can explain the difference between a modern GP car and one from the early 1980s is that it's like going back from a digital world to an analogue one. You really have to *drive* the cars from the past. There are no electronics to help you – no fly-by-wire throttle pedals, no trick engine maps to help your power delivery, no brake-by-wire systems to control the wheel locking and balance the brake pressure, no power-steering, no electronic differentials to assist the balance of the car at every phase of the corner. Oh, and of course no paddleshift gear-selection system to help you keep both hands on the wheel, which is especially useful at a circuit like Monte Carlo!

As I climb into Keke's seat, the first thought I have is just how bloody uncomfortable it is. This is a generic fibreglass seat made out of a fixed mould and means that you're sitting pretty much bolt upright. Nowadays, the drivers spend days making seats that are millimetre-perfect to ensure that they're as comfortable in the car as they would be on their sofa. How on earth these guys drove around the bumpy streets of Monaco for two hours like that I have no idea. Hard as nails was Keke.

The next thing that becomes immediately apparent is just how far forward in the car I'm sitting. I really don't want to miss that braking point going into Mirabeau as it will certainly mean a trip to the Princess Grace Hospital with my ankles not feeling great! When the guys at Williams Heritage stripped the car down and weighed the 'monocoque', it was only 27kg. Basically, I was sitting in a big tin can held together by some rivets.

The engine fires up and, as I head out onto the track, all those thoughts go away. No longer am I thinking about the fact that this is a highly valuable – and potentially dangerous – piece of F1 history that's been wheeled out of a museum for me. Suddenly that familiar sight of the climb towards the Hotel de Paris takes



Driver's right hand spends a lot of time off the wheel

over and I floor the throttle. I haven't raced in Monaco for seven years, but the human brain's ability to retain information and delve deep into those reserves when it needs to is amazing. Immediately my reference points of drains, barriers, pedestrian crossings and kerbs all come back.

Now, I've never raced around Monaco with a manual-gearbox car. The FW08C has a six-speed 'box and this means that you spend an awful lot of the lap with one hand on the lever. These days we take for granted just how little attention we need to pay to gear ratios to make it easy for the drivers. I think back to my days in Formula 3, when we would often tweak ratios so we didn't have to change gear mid-corner and give ourselves a bit more comfort.

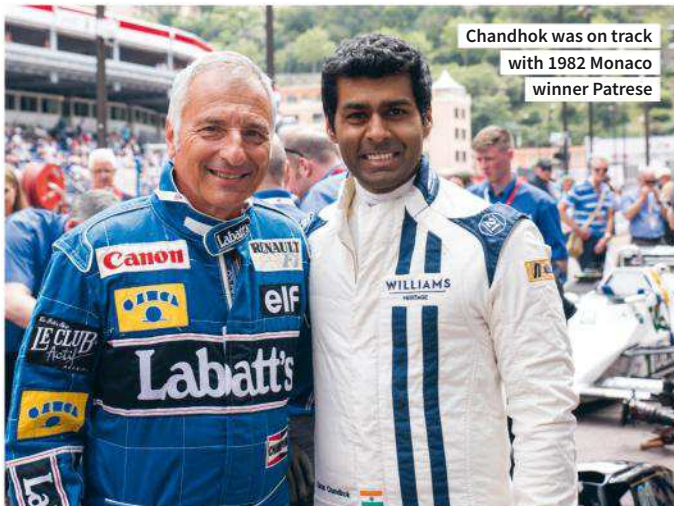
The demonstration organised for us only has nine cars on track,



5TH

Reigning world champion Keke Rosberg finished fifth in the 1983 standings, scoring all but two of his 27 points in a Williams FW08C

Rosberg won in 1983 from fifth place on the grid



Chandhok was on track
with 1982 Monaco
winner Patrese



Big rear tyres
deliver bags of
grip and traction

which means that unlike every other session I've ever done here in Monaco, we actually have space to play around! As the tyre temperatures build up and I start to lean on it, I realise just how much time is spent thinking about choosing the right gear. Suddenly, powering from Tabac and attacking the entry of the Swimming Pool complex isn't as easy, as you need to take a hand off the wheel to hook fourth gear.

As I come out of Casino Square and accelerate down to Mirabeau, I have this distinct memory of seeing Keke powersliding on slicks in the damp, the back of the car dancing around as he played with the throttle. The part you don't see on the video is how, while doing that, he needed to be brave enough to take one hand off the wheel and change gear while the car tracks the various camber changes and bumps on the road going downhill. Oh, and do that in the damp, on slicks, for 76 laps.

The DFV is one of the sport's great icons. Back in 1983, F1 was firmly into the first turbo era and the Williams, with its normally aspirated engine, had no chance on big-power circuits like Silverstone or Paul Ricard (the team switched to Honda turbo power before the end of the season). But on a twisty track like Monaco, especially in the damp, the linear torque curve made the engine very user-friendly, while the drivers trying to manage the mighty turbos struggled to put the power down as they went in and out of the lag zone. Rosberg started fifth on the grid that day and led the race by the end of the first lap – in the 35 years since, nobody has done that from outside the top two rows of the grid!

The engine feels beautifully predictable to drive and, with a car

"I HAVE THIS DISTINCT MEMORY OF SEEING KEKE POWERSLIDING ON SLICKS IN THE DAMP"

weighing just over 500kg, the 520bhp gives it plenty of grunt, especially when you consider the lack of downforce and drag in comparison to a modern car. When you come out of Portier and hammer the throttle for the blast through the tunnel, the traction offered by the huge rear tyres is immense and you really do punch out of the corners.

Thankfully for someone like me who has raced with a paddleshift car for the past 12 years, the six-speed gearbox is very user-friendly and is a reminder of what a design genius Sir Patrick Head was. Bearing in mind this was designed 35 years ago with a fraction of the design tools and machining equipment available today, plus no simulation software, every gearshift feels

like a positive 'click' into position, and in fact even going down to first gear for corners like Rascasse isn't a problem.

If I think about what the car is like in terms of the chassis, I'd say it was almost designed to excel at circuits like Monaco. The short wheelbase makes it very agile. Monaco is a circuit where you need a good front end and have the confidence to get the front of the car turned in quickly while also having the confidence that the rear stays gripped-up.

The big rear tyres offer that rear-end grip, but the small front tyres actually make the steering quite light in the fast corners, which isn't particularly confidence-inspiring through the tunnel or the quick Swimming Pool chicane. I'm sure that with more laps it's something I would get used to, but this light front end is also a reminder of just how much aerodynamic load goes through the front end of a modern car relative to something from 35 years ago. The drivers back then didn't have the training regimes that we have today and the tracks were much bumpier than the modern circuits, so I'm sure they were thankful that the steering wasn't any heavier.

The 1983 season was the first after the ground-effects era in Formula 1 where the cars were set up to be ultra-stiff and they rattled the drivers' bones to the core. The lap times in '83 were slower than the year before because the skirts were now gone, but it made driving the cars a much more pleasant experience.

Over the crests, bumps and kerbs, the car is actually very compliant, which again underlines why it was a user-friendly car for a track like Monaco. The track today is a lot smoother than it used to be – in fact I remember coming here in GP2 in 2008 and running pretty much the same springs, rollbars, packers and rideheight as Magny-Cours a month later. In a way this is a bit of a shame as I think bumpy tracks such as Sebring or Macau have so much more character, and the bumps are a part of the challenge for the drivers.

Driving the FW08C at Monaco has made me respect Keke Rosberg and his peers more than ever. The cars of that era needed the driver to be completely on top of them. You really have to grab it by the scruff of the neck and hustle it to get it to respond in the way you want it to. They had no electronics or, for that matter, the level of refined downforce to help them.

I don't want to come across as one of those people who looks at the past as being infinitely better than the present, because that's not 100% true. The modern cars are brilliant pieces of engineering and the technology involved with the power units and the sheer grip from the downforce is something immense. I was lucky to drive a 2017 F1 car last year and the grip in the high-speed corners and under braking blew my mind. The top guys like Lewis Hamilton, Sebastian Vettel and Fernando Alonso still extract that extra bit of performance and the cream still rises to the top. The early 1980s was just a different time, with some very special drivers and very special cars. 🏁

HOW WILL THE NEW CAR CHANGE THE INDY 500?

*A significant change to the IndyCar aerodynamic philosophy this year
will have an equally profound effect on overtaking at Indianapolis*

DAVID MALSHER





“I

t’s so hard to pass” became a refrain we all got used to hearing from drivers and race engineers over the course of practice for the 102nd running of the Indianapolis 500, which will take place this weekend. Some even modified it to: “It’s too hard to pass.”

You’ll be astonished, I’m sure, to hear that most complaints came from those who didn’t feel their cars were quick enough.

“Good,” was the unequivocal response of one engineer who happens to be working on one of the faster entries. “Now you can’t have a slow car but just sit in the slipstream of a fast car, save fuel, and then draft past whenever you feel like it. There’s actually some reason to do what we do — make the car good over a long stint.”

So if you’re looking for constant slipstreaming battles where there are 20 possible winners and the cars are so planted that the tyres barely go off from the start to the end of a stint, then this year’s Indianapolis 500 may not be for you. If you appreciate the skill and judgement of 33 racers driving that fine line between adhesion and collision with a SAFER barrier, while also wrestling with each other, then this is going to be a classic 500.

The new superspeedway aerokit produces less downforce than its much-derided predecessor but also more drag. Yes, despite looking so much prettier, so much more svelte, the ‘new car’ — with no rear wheelguards — is actually more blunt when cutting through the air. Consequently the draft has changed too, and the outcome is that the lead car now creates a much bigger tow for those running in its wake than before. Whereas once the motto was,

**“THE PASSES ARE COMING AT THE
END OF THE STRAIGHTS, WHERE
YOU COME UP THE INSIDE”**

“If you can see another car ahead, he’s helping you,” that effect has doubled according to some.

But the reason that some people were moaning is that the shape of the draft has changed too. Dale Coyne, whose lead driver Sebastien Bourdais has qualified fifth for the race, described the tow as “more intense, but narrower, so you tow up real fast — faster than with the last car — but when you move out to pass, you just don’t pull past at a great rate of knots. The passes you have seen are coming at the end of the straights, where you come up the inside and just steal the line of the guy on the outside.”

As they’ve lapped in packs, during practice we have been seeing passes without the aid of the driver in front feathering the throttle on the straights, but it’s generally only going on at the head of the pack. Further back, things get sketchy, as JR Hildebrand >>

discovered on day three of practice when his Dreyer & Reinbold Racing Dallara-Chevrolet squirmed out of shape while running at the tail of an eight-car convoy and slapped the Turn 3 wall.

Later, Graham Rahal empathised, saying: "I can't tell you how many times I thought I was going to be in that scenario today where the right-front tyre is so overworked, you have so much slip angle in it, that it just gives up. When it gives up, it's like driving on ice and then, bang, you hit a kerb... That's exactly what it feels like.

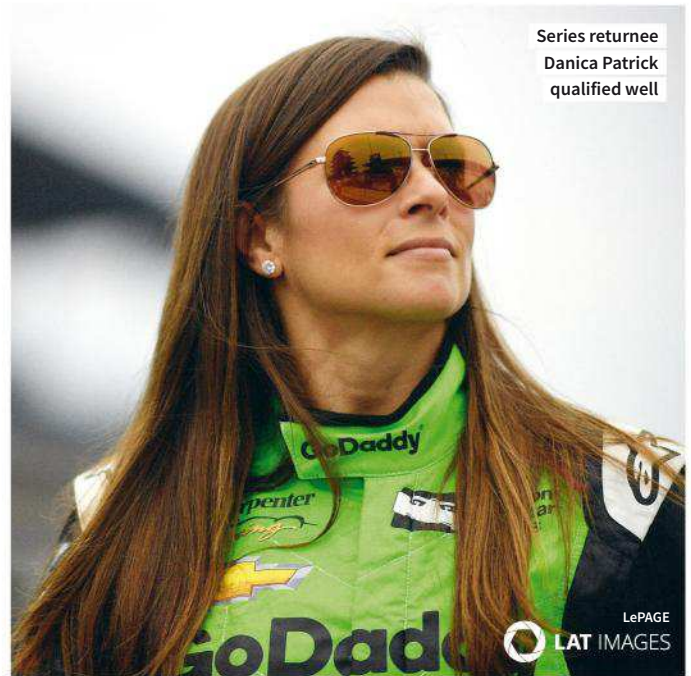
"It's difficult because you don't know what a fine line it is. Sometimes it's slide, slide, slide, then OK. Other times it never comes back. I just think the further back you are, you have to hang on. These cars, you've got to drive the you-know-what out of them. The rear is sliding around, the front is pushing.

"A lot of it is trying to understand the way that it wiggles. We're used to the old car. This car is a different animal. Fortunately, with this car when it does tend to go, the front is what gives up. In the old car, the rear would tend to go. This is much better."

So, as most of the more prominent drivers hoped, track position is more important this year and the guy or girl behind can't pass with impunity. Jay Frye, IndyCar's president of competition and operations, was not about to be bullied into slapping on extra downforce as a last-minute reprieve for those who hadn't yet got their cars dialled in.

"No, absolutely not," he says. "We monitor every practice, every day, get around and talk to everyone we can and there's not a consensus about what's happening. We've talked to some people who say they couldn't be happier with the cars and others who are struggling a bit... and that's racing. That's why we do what we do. There are teams still trying to find their sweet spots."

As a result of this unfamiliarity with the superspeedway aerokits, and because it's a 500-mile marathon, teams naturally spent the first three days of practice focused on race set-ups. There is not a huge range of adjustments available to teams for trimming out these cars for qualifying. "That rear wing does nothing," chuckles Coyne. "It looks nice, but it's just the world's most expensive decal holder."



Series returnee
Danica Patrick
qualified well

And yet for the first time since 2011, it seems that track position will be essential to the outcome, and therefore qualifying took on renewed importance. Popular pole-winner for the third time, Ed Carpenter, agrees: "I think this new car does race a little different than the old cars, and clean air maybe is a little more important than it has been in the past. So I definitely feel fortunate to be in this position for next week."

Not surprisingly, Team Penske seemed to get a handle on making passes work, and third-placed qualifier Will Power agrees with Rahal that action at the head of a line of cars will remain strong.

WHAT TO EXPECT FROM JOSEF NEWGARDEN

He's the reigning champion, and he's leading the 2018 championship, but just how good is Josef Newgarden around Indianapolis, given his difficulties last year?

'Impressive' is the short answer. It would be strange to nominate one particular circuit where he seems to excel – although having

scored three wins in four years at Barber Motorsports Park, there's an obvious candidate – but his sheer chutzpah and speed have always seemed to surface at the Brickyard. Cast your mind back seven years, and you'll recall he won the Freedom 100 in Indy Lights for Sam Schmidt

Motorsports (as it was named then). As a raw IndyCar rookie one year later, he put the hand-to-mouth Sarah Fisher Hartman Racing team into the Fast Nine for qualifying (he started seventh) but retired after three quarters of the race with a mechanical issue.

He and the team lost their way in 2013, but Newgarden was back into the Fast Nine the following year although he shunted, and again qualified ninth in 2015 for what was by then CFH Racing – Ed Carpenter in charge – and finished ninth. A year after that, he raced to third – top Chevrolet finisher, on a day when Chevy was outgunned on horsepower and economy.

Last year he got caught up in the shunt triggered by James Davison, capping an awful Month of May – he'd also been frustrated by mechanical issues in the Indy road-course race. But now, well, he looks Penske perfect. He will start on the second row behind two of his team-mates, but his

natural aggression means he's likely to be a threat at the start and on every restart. Plus he has team president Tim Cindric calling the shots...

"We still need a little work in race conditions," said Newgarden after practice last Thursday. "I think Chevy has done a great job, the car seemed quick. We just need to get a little more out of it in race trim."

He's the reigning champion, he drives for Penske, and even before that he showed promise. Plus his engineer is Brian Campe, who engineered Juan Pablo Montoya to glory here in 2015. Newgarden is one of the major contenders for victory this Memorial Day Weekend.



Newgarden had a
nightmare Indy
month in 2017



"I think it'll be good racing at the front," says Power, who was Indy runner-up by 0.1046 seconds in 2015. "The top three will be switching positions constantly. If it's a really hot day, I think you'll see people spread out a bit more, but you can't help that. But at the front, there's such a big draft, no-one is ever going to drive away. There will be the switching of the lead like there always is."

One of the other major changes for this year has been the rise of Chevrolet. The past two years, Honda has had an advantage at Indianapolis Motor Speedway and there was disagreement over whether it was because of superior horsepower or, as 2016 Indy 500

winner Alexander Rossi believes, a superior manufacturer aerokit for that track. Whatever the case, with everyone running a spec kit in 2018, Chevy has looked strong, particularly once the boost was turned up from 1.3bar to 1.4 for Fast Friday, Bump Day and Pole Day.

The result is that nine of the top 11 qualifiers are Chevrolet powered, Bourdais and Chip Ganassi Racing's Scott Dixon being the only HPD-powered interlopers in the first third of the field. Without wishing to take anything away from the teams involved, Chevy's edge helps explain why the two full-time AJ Foyt Racing cars of 2013 Indy winner Tony Kanaan and rookie Matheus Leist are ahead of all the cars from Andretti Autosport; why Juncos Racing (making its second Indy start) is 17th with rookie Kyle Kaiser; why Carlin will start its first Indy 500 from 15th (Charlie Kimball) and 20th (Max Chilton), why Honda-powered James Hinchcliffe didn't make the show, and why Ed Carpenter Racing had all three of its drivers in the Fast Nine — even series returnee Danica Patrick.

The hype machine around the diminutive 36-year-old, as witnessed at her first test back at the Speedway in April, cooled off through the practice days. Patrick had clearly got herself back to a very competent standard at her 'old job', despite seven years away from open-wheel race cars, although she was one of many who sounded uncertain about running in traffic with these cars. Then when the boost went up for Bump Day and the team worked its magic, she joined her team owner and ECR's full-time driver Spencer Pigot in the Fast Nine. Come the fight for the front, she ended up outqualifying Helio Castroneves and Scott Dixon.

Is she a contender for the win? You'd still put more money on those ahead of her and some of those behind her. But could she do it? Absolutely, and the media coverage that followed would dwarf that of Castroneves joining AJ Foyt, Al Unser and Rick Mears in the four-time Indy winners' club, although — or perhaps, *because* — that occurrence is far more likely. The Brazilian has looked pretty much on par with his team-mates throughout practice, although Power seemed to have the edge over all of them until Bump Day.

Frankly, one wouldn't bet a cent against any of the Penske drivers, nor against Dixon — if the track gets hot and slick, skills in the cockpit will take precedence over horsepower, even assuming Chevy has a slight advantage. That being the case, you'd be a fool to rule out Marco Andretti, Ryan Hunter-Reay or Bourdais. But this writer is calling it for Power, given his speed this past week, the slickness of the #12 Penske crew's pitstops, and the fact that he and engineer David Faustino have worked to come up with a car that is good in all types of track condition. ❧





GET READY FOR THE SPEED MACHINES

The World Rallycross Championship hits Silverstone this weekend, headlining the Speedmachine festival. But who will be on form?

HAL RIDGE



Each of the three manufacturers either supporting or running teams in the World Rallycross Championship has won a final over the opening three rounds of the year. So it's incredibly tough to predict who will triumph in the hugely anticipated first Silverstone WRX event this weekend.

The fact that Audi man Mattias Ekstrom was stripped of victory in the Spanish season opener for first-corner contact that eliminated Petter Solberg and promoted reigning champion Johan Kristoffersson onto the top step of the podium is largely irrelevant in this instance. While Solberg's PSRX Volkswagen squad took the lion's share of success last term, 2018 has been fiercely competitive.

Kristoffersson currently leads the points. After his Spanish win, he capitalised when EKS Audi Sport drivers Ekstrom and Andreas Bakkerud tripped over one another at the start of the semi-finals in Portugal to grab pole for the final and claim another victory.

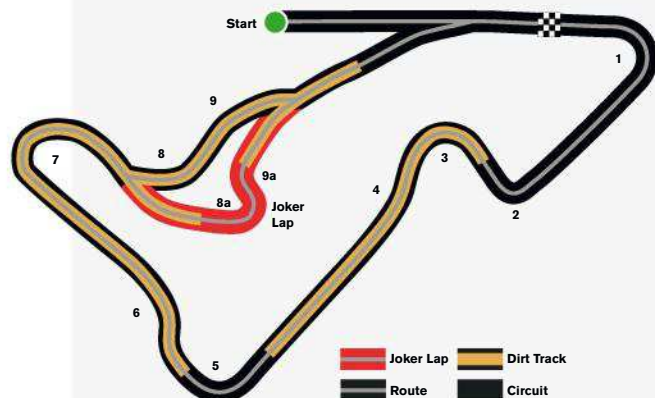
Peugeot's Sebastian Loeb finished second in the opening two rounds before winning round three in Belgium, while Kristoffersson could only manage fifth. That triumph has moved Loeb up to

second in the standings, but he's not had the smoothest of rides this season: he only made the semi-finals in Spain after Peugeot withdrew former MSA Junior Rallycross champion Kevin Hansen to allow Loeb to progress.

Kevin's team-mate and brother Timmy Hansen has also been on impressive form. He dominated semi-final two at Barcelona until an electrical problem brought his Peugeot 208 to a halt, hit a barrier at Montalegre while fighting for a podium, and was then spun at the start of his semi-final at Mettet. That Belgian incident was a precursor to one of the greatest fightbacks in WRX history, with Hansen making it into the final and finishing on the podium.

While VW has undeniable pace, the EKS Audis have the greatest number of fastest qualifying times (five) of any team so far this season, and Peugeot is on a roll. Any one of at least six drivers could potentially claim the top step of the podium at Silverstone this weekend, while the battle to make the semi-finals will be even tougher between the permanent privateer teams (such as GCK, GRX and Olsbergs MSE) and wildcard entries from MJP Racing, Marklund Motorsport and Albatec Racing. *✎*

TRACK GUIDE



Although the Silverstone rallycross circuit is new to the World Rallycross Championship, almost all of the permanent competitors have at least tested there, while some raced in the opening round of British RX in March, an event won by Sebastien Loeb from Timmy Hansen and Andreas Bakkerud. Autosport caught up with some of the leading drivers to find out what they think of WRX's newest circuit.

TURN 1: THE OPENING HAIRPIN

Andreas Bakkerud: "The grip is very high in Silverstone; that's a big challenge for everyone. Even if we have 600 horsepower it's high grip and hard to get a good start. Turn 1 is a basic tight right hairpin – it's good to be on pole position but outside will be very hard if you don't have a good start."

TURNS 2/3/4: CHICANE ON LOOSE

Kevin Hansen: "There's a short straight before braking quite hard and right, entering the gravel. It's very easy to do a mistake and then you're rotating to the left on the gravel, in the second slowest corner on the track. Then we accelerate towards the jump. There's a small right that doesn't really have any effect."

JUMP

Sebastien Loeb: "The jump is quite a good one. You have to slow down for the corner a bit before but it's technical; you need to find the right measure of the jump, to be able to brake just after to turn. It's not easy to have the right speed."

TURN 5: CORNER AFTER JUMP

Mattias Ekstrom: "We take a lot of air and it's a hard landing. Then the right-hander was very slippery when we tested here."

TURN 7: TIGHT RIGHT

Hansen: "It's hard braking for the hairpin. I think that's a good place to overtake because it's a left beforehand, and you need to stay on the left for the braking. Then you're throwing it in and really powersliding through [to the right], exiting towards the joker. The joker entry is quite far on the right and very long."

TURNS 8A/9A: JOKER LAP

Bakkerud: "The joker is very tight. You go in braking on gravel and it's very slippery on the Tarmac because of all the dirt you bring in. So it's slippery in the beginning, but in the middle it's high grip, so if you're not ready to kick the clutch then you can suffer a big time loss."

TURNS 8/9: RUN TO THE LINE

Ekstrom: "On the normal track you go between the tyre walls and over the small jump up to the start-finish. That's a pretty cool part of the track. I think the coolest places [for overtaking] will be the joker merge and over the finish line."

OVERTAKING OPPORTUNITIES

Johan Kristoffersson: "It's easy to say that it's a tricky track to overtake on, but to be honest in rallycross it's always very difficult to overtake because there is only one line anyway. In circuit racing there are racing lines and you have debris on the side [of the racing line], but in rallycross you always have dust and a lot of gravel. It doesn't matter how wide the track is. You just have to stay close and the overtaking opportunity is up to the one in front who makes a mistake, and when he makes it I will overtake him – it doesn't matter where it is!"



WRX SILVERSTONE ENTRY LIST

	DRIVER	TEAM	CAR
1	Johan Kristoffersson (S)	PSRX Volkswagen Sweden	Volkswagen Polo R
2	Ollie O'Donovan (IRL)	Ford Fiesta	Audi S1
4	Robin Larsson (S)	Olsbergs MSE	Ford Fiesta
5	Mattias Ekstrom (S)	EKSAudi Sport	Audi S1
6	Janis Baumanis (LV)	Team STARD	Ford Fiesta
7	Timur Timerzyanov (RUS)	GRX Taneco Team	Hyundai i20
9	Sebastien Loeb (F)	Team Peugeot Total	Peugeot 208
11	Petter Solberg (N)	PSRX Volkswagen Sweden	Volkswagen Polo R
13	Andreas Bakkerud (N)	EKSAudi Sport	Audi S1
21	Timmy Hansen (S)	Team Peugeot Total	Peugeot 208
24	Tommy Rustad (N)	Marklund-HTB Racing	Volkswagen Polo
36	Guerlain Chicherit (F)	GC Competition	Renault Megane RS
42	Oliver Bennett (GB)	Xite Racing	BMW Mini Cooper
57	Toomas Heikkinen (FIN)	MJP Racing Team Austria	Ford Fiesta
58	Ma Qing Hua (PRC)	Team STARD	Ford Fiesta
66	Gregoire Demoustier (B)	Sebastien Loeb Racing	Peugeot 208
68	Niclas Gronholm (FIN)	GRX Taneco Team	Hyundai i20
71	Kevin Hansen (S)	Team Peugeot Total	Peugeot 208
74	Jerome Grosset-Janin (F)	GC Competition	Renault Megane RS
84	Herve Lemonnier (F)	Herve Lemonnier	Citroen DS3
92	Anton Marklund (S)	Marklund Motorsport	Volkswagen Polo
96	Kevin Eriksson (S)	Olsbergs MSE	Ford Fiesta
102	Tamas Karai (H)	Karai Motorsport Egyesulet	Audi A1
134	Mark Higgins (GB)	Albatec	Peugeot 208
177	Andrew Jordan (GB)	MJP Racing Team Austria	Ford Fiesta

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Neuville emerges from the chaos

There were some big crashes on Rally Portugal, but the Hyundai star kept his head — and took the championship lead

DAVID EVANS

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY MCKLEIN

Some people... According to a few folk around the worldwide web, Rally Portugal must be struck from the calendar. The World Rally Championship must not be allowed back to mainland Europe's westernmost stages. They are, you see, too rough. Too dangerous. And too likely to make the cars crash. I kid you not.

Nonsense. Granted, there was a bit more bent metal coming out of round six than anywhere else this season, but we're warming up now. It's mid-year, the stakes and the speeds are rising. But two men showed that it was entirely possible to get from start to finish without marking the machinery. Step forward Thierry Neuville and Nicolas Gilsoul.

Frantic Friday's early casualties

Ott Tänak started Rally Portugal in pursuit of back-to-back wins, but just hours later was on a plane home. The first three miles of the event had been a continuation of Rally Argentina as he went quicker than any of his rivals. But then he came through a left-hander and found the road full of rocks.

Tänak was utterly committed to his line and with nowhere to go. The underside of the Toyota slammed into the boulders and sent the car skywards. Unsurprisingly, the radiator was mortally wounded.

Initial suspicions of foul play were immediately dismissed — the rocks had been dislodged into his path by Tänak's title rivals Neuville and Sebastien Ogier running ahead of him.

"I had a good feeling here," said Tänak. "I think we had the speed to win."

Toyota's bad morning went further south one stage later when Jari-Matti Latvala broke the front suspension on the sister car. Unlike in Argentina last month, the damage was contained to the suspension, allowing J-M to continue with the rest of the event.

While the team has still to run its analysis, the initial feeling is that the car should have taken this one. Whether it broke or was broken, the result was the same: two Toyotas sidelined in as many stages — little wonder sporting director Kaj Lindström went for a one-word description of Friday morning: "Disaster."

Up front, the intensity of the competition was astonishing. For the first seven stages the lead was swapped between five drivers, with returning Hyundai star Hayden Paddon leading after SS2, dropping to third, then racing back to first after the second stage of the afternoon loop.

Citroën's Kris Meeke was another driver in the lead, then dropping back before retaking the advantage again.

By the end of the day, both Paddon and Meeke were out of the running. The Kiwi landed himself in hospital after registering 15g when his i20 Coupe WRC stopped abruptly up against a culvert second time through Ponte de Lima.

Meeke made it through the afternoon, but in anything but straightforward fashion. Hindsight's a wonderful thing, and there's little doubt that taking two spare tyres for an afternoon on what would become the season's roughest roads yet would have been a good idea. But the extra 20kg was calculated at a cost of around 10 seconds for the loop. Meeke went with one spare, and punctured on stage six. And stage seven.

What now? The regulations are quite clear. Cars must have four rotating wheels with inflated tyres. That's on the road section. And the stages? That's fair game. So at the end of SS7 Meeke whipped the rubber-less rim off the car and bolted a delaminated Michelin into its place. He then set off on the 60-mile run down the motorway to Porto.

"We were doing 65km/h [40mph] all the way," he said. "It's a good job Michelin makes such strong tyres..." >>

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Tanak flew, but
his rally did
not last long

Arriving at Porto's town stage, Meeke put the damaged rim back on and looped the streets twice, sending sparks flying to a backdrop of astonished appreciation from a slightly bemused crowd lining the stage.

Hours earlier, Meeke had sat down to lunch 4.6s behind leader Dani Sordo's Hyundai. By the end of the afternoon, he'd slipped to seventh, 1m18.7s off the front. He had done an exceptional job to contain the time loss, but he showed little or no interest in discussing his work.

Meeke's consternation was compounded by the knowledge that he'd failed to capitalise on the closest thing the WRC will have to an open goal. In the middle of what was fast becoming the season's most bonkers Friday, Sebastien Ogier crashed. He was out on stage five in what looked an entirely innocuous incident – until you found out that the problems had started one corner beforehand.

"There was a bank on the inside of a corner," explained Ogier. "I thought it was just a bank with gravel on. I had 'don't cut' in my notes, but I was a bit too early [turning in] and I decided to stay on the throttle and keep the speed because there was a small straight afterwards.

"Unfortunately it wasn't just some gravel – there was a stump. We had a sharp impact when I braked for the next corner, the [steering] arm came out and I could do nothing."

One stage later Andreas Mikkelsen's Hyundai was slowed by power-steering failure; on the next stage he retired with no oil pressure. Throw in a stage-seven puncture for Craig Breen, dropping him from third to eighth, and you've got day one covered. No wonder Meeke was miffed.

Neuville makes the most of the madness

Ninth after the first gravel stage of the day, it's a fair assumption that Neuville wasn't clearing his diary for the end-of-leg press

conference for the top-three crews. Yet there he was, sitting up on stage being asked about his Friday. And, what's more, he was the man in the middle. He was leading.

"Crazy day," he murmured, as though he was still struggling to comprehend what was going on. There's no doubt he'd benefited from the issues of those ahead – but only four of those places had come his way by default. He'd earned the other four by changing his i20's set-up to one he was more comfortable with for the afternoon. He then rolled the dice with six soft tyres on roads swept clean of sand to uncover a more abrasive base. And, just for good measure, the sun continued to shine, the rain stayed away and temperatures inched from the mid to upper-twenties.

Nursing his covers through SS5, he was passed by team-mate Mikkelsen as fifth became sixth.

Enough was enough. Joint fastest with Breen in stage six, Neuville was quickest of all on the rerun Ponte de Lima.

"I thought my decision was quite brave for the tyres when we were leaving service," Neuville said. "It was. After the first stage, they were 75% gone. But then I took >>

IN THE GRIP OF McRAE-WORSHIP

I genuinely thought the man was going to kiss me. Instead, he just took my hand and refused to let go. For quite a long time.

Breakfast in a cafe just north of Braga last Friday. The place was teeming with rally fans. A couple of them noticed the Rally of Portugal road book sitting on the side of my table and asked for times from SS2. The realisation that I was British brought a new energy to the conversation.

They had just one word for me: 'Colin'. McRae adoration is never far away wherever we go in the World Rally Championship, but it's incredibly strong in Portugal's far north.

"We love Colin like he was ours," said my new-found friend. Playing devil's advocate, I asked why – let's not forget the Scot 'only' won in Portugal twice. Markku Alen, another driver with mass fan appeal, took this event five times.

"Colin had the heart," I was told. "He had the heart and he drove with the heart. It was like he was one of us, like first he was the fan and then he was the driver. We love people who have the heart like this."

It was impossible to argue. Why would I? It's still surprising, though, 23 years after Colin won the title and 11 years after his death, he remains the only driver to have their national flag painted on a road. And a rock (below).

Engaged in conversation in the cafe, I told a couple of the best McRae stories; the sort that cement his god-like status. The knowledge that I had spoken to the Scot, that I had been privileged enough to know him, apparently made my hand worth holding. It was, as it always is, a humbling experience.

DAVID EVANS





Meeke's trying event
ended with a huge accident

another decision and decided to push. I didn't care for the tyres, I just drove flat-out and we made the fastest time. I really didn't expect this position, but we have it and now I have to keep it."

There was more surprise from the man in second, 17.7s behind him. Elfyn Evans had cut a lonely and troubled figure after shakedown on Thursday. Running the set-up he'd honed at his pre-event test, the Welshman simply couldn't get the Ford Fiesta anywhere near where it should be. In a stage just over a couple of miles long, he was near enough four seconds off the pace.

Like Neuville, he was brave — but Evans's bravery took the form of sticking to his guns in terms of set-up. Unwilling to forget what he'd learned in two days of testing in pursuit of a psychological boost from a solid shakedown time, he set off on Friday

morning hunting a longer-term gain.

Second fastest on the first gravel test, he'd hooked the Fiesta up, only to drop it on SS3. A spin cost him nine seconds and he then felt the car was moving around too much towards the end of the next stage.

The afternoon got better and better and ended with second quickest in Ponte de Lima and a rise through the ranks that was bettered only by the Belgian Hyundai star in front of him.

"After shakedown I didn't know what to do," he said. "I was so far away and I couldn't get a time close [to quickest]. I was a bit lost, to be honest. That was hard, especially as that's a shakedown where I've gone pretty well in the past. But I stuck to the set-up. We found something in the test that worked and I trusted it."

Question was, did he trust it enough to

challenge a driver on top of his game right now? Saturday's opener was inconclusive — Neuville won by 0.9s. The second stage was very much more encouraging from the Brit's perspective, with Evans cutting the difference by 5.9s. Game on?

Game off. Going into Amarante, the final morning stage, the leader pulled his belts tighter, adjusted his glasses and offered an unruffled wink. Neuville then progressed 17.2s faster than Evans over the following 23 miles, and sat down to lunch with his lead out to 29.9s.

Job done. Almost. The job description changed through the second half of the rally as Neuville moved into control mode, pushing where he felt comfortable, but elsewhere saving everything for the powerstage.

Evans secured second but, typically hard on himself, had wanted to find more time — especially in Amarante.

"I was a bit disappointed in there," he said. "I rely quite a lot on the front of the car and I was struggling a little bit when I was down on grip. It's the same for Seb [Ogier], but he's Sebastien Ogier... We're getting there, and this has been positive."

The stewards, a Spaniard and two Finns

The fight for the bottom step of the podium was spiced up by a 10s penalty added to Sordo's time after clipping the bales in the Porto street stage. Instead of going into Sunday a handful of seconds up in third, he was fourth. And then fifth after he was passed by a charging Esapekka Lappi.

Ultimately, Sordo couldn't match the



Suninen had to
fight hard for his
spot on the podium

northern Europeans for commitment or speed on the final day. The battle between Teemu Suninen's Fiesta and Lappi's Yaris was a cracker.

As Suninen prepared to depart service for the final time, M-Sport deputy team principal Rich Millener (#1 Malcolm Wilson had flown out of Porto first thing, bound for Bentley and Silverstone's Blancpain round) arrived at the side of the car. Sensing apprehension, he gave Suninen a reassuring slap on the back. Everything, Millener said, would be fine.

Lappi's impossible to read and was giving nothing away at the end of the first Sunday test. He was fastest, but the smile was thin as he looked at the time board. "Nice drive," he said of his own efforts, "but one second is not enough. We need more."

It wasn't even a second. It was six tenths. Then it was 0.3s, then 1.2s. Lappi was still nine seconds short of his rival.

And then a Suninen breakthrough. He took 1.7s back. "I have been driving efficiently," he said, "and now I've been driving quickly." Even with a 10.4s advantage and just the seven-mile powerstage to run, Suninen wasn't sure. "I'm not going to think about the podium," he said.

One stage later, he was on the podium, just 7.3s off team-mate and runner-up Evans. Across the day, Lappi was 3.7s faster, but it mattered little. Fourth place beckoned.

Ultimately, Sordo lost his podium on pace, not due to the penalty. He couldn't match Suninen, but he would have kept his nose ahead of Lappi had the stewards not decided otherwise. The irony was, the stewards then intervened in favour of Sordo by hitting Lappi with 10s of his own for a similar offence. Finally, Sordo was fourth and the Finn fifth.

All the talk about penalties soured Hyundai's success slightly, but its event was nothing like as tough as Citroen's. Mads Ostberg and Breen were sixth and seventh. The Norwegian was warming up for the next round in Sardinia, while the Irishman was robbed of a result by a puncture and forced to run as roadsweeper at the front of the field.

And Meeke? He had a monster accident that ruled him out of the event.

Neuville may have won by miles in Portugal, but success is measured in inches. And on Friday those inches were the ones between the same rocks that ruined Tanak's rally and the radiator on Neuville's car. Triumph was that close to disaster.

But Neuville and Hyundai earned this one. They showed supreme speed when it was needed and then dialled that back to the sort of consistency that kept the Wallonian clear of the problems that befell those around him.

In short, he drove the drive of a champion. Six down and seven to go, he's got himself a useful points lead. Now we'll see if he can keep it. *W*

RESULTS ROUND 6/13, RALLY PORTUGAL, MAY 17-20

POS	DRIVER / CO-DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Thierry Neuville (B) Nicolas Gilsoul (B)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	3h49m46.6s
2	Elfyn Evans (GB) Daniel Barritt (GB)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+40.0s
3	Teemu Suninen (FIN) Mikko Markkula (FIN)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+47.3s
4	Dani Sordo (E) Carlos del Barrio (E)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+1m00.9s
5	Esapekka Lappi (FIN) Janne Ferm (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	+1m04.7s
6	Mads Ostberg (N) Torstein Eriksen (N)	Citroen Total / Citroen C3 WRC	+3m33.5s
7	Craig Breen (IRL) Scott Martin (GB)	Citroen Total / Citroen C3 WRC	+5m23.0s
8	Pontus Tidemand (S) Jonas Andersson (S)	Skoda Motorsport / Skoda Fabia R5	+14m10.8s
9	Lukasz Pieniazek (PL) Przemyslaw Mazur (PL)	Printsport Oy / Skoda Fabia R5	+16m17.3s
10	Stephane Lefebvre (F) Gabin Moreau (F)	Citroen Total Rallye Team / Citroen C3 R5	+16m34.3s

OTHERS

16	Andreas Mikkelsen (N) Anders Jager (N)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+24m44.4s
21	Sebastien Ogier (F) Julien Ingrassia (F)	M-Sport Ford WRT / Ford Fiesta WRC	+35m28.3s
25	Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN) Miikka Anttila (FIN)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	+48m50.3s
R	Kris Meeke (GB) Paul Nagle (IRL)	Citroen Total / Citroen C3 WRC	SS12-accident
R	Hayden Paddon (NZ) Sebastian Marshall (GB)	Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT / Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	SS7-accident
R	Ott Tanak (EST) Martin Jarveoja (EST)	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT / Toyota Yaris WRC	SS2-radiator damage

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 **Neuville** 119; 2 **Ogier** 100; 3 **Tanak** 72; 4 **Sordo** 60; 5 **Lappi** 55; 6 **Mikkelsen** 54; 7 **Evans** 45; 8 **Meeke** 43; 9 **Latvala** 31; 10 **Breen** 26.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1 **Hyundai Shell Mobis WRT** 175; 2 **M-Sport Ford WRT** 162; 3 **Toyota Gazoo Racing WRT** 140; 4 **Citroen Total** 111.



STAGE TIMES

STAGE	FASTEST	LEADER	SECOND
SS1 Lousada (2.09 miles)	Tanak 2m34.3s	Tanak	Ogier +0.4s
SS2 Viana do Castelo 1 (16.61 miles)	Paddon 15m29.3s	Paddon	Evans +1.5s
SS3 Caminha 1 (11.25 miles)	Meeke 10m35.1s	Meeke	Paddon +1.6s
SS4 Ponte de Lima 1 (17.11 miles)	Sordo 19m15.5s	Sordo	Meeke +4.6s
SS5 Viana do Castelo 2 (16.61 miles)	Meeke 15m31.4s	Meeke	Sordo +1.9s
SS6 Caminha 2 (11.25 miles)	Neuville & Breen 10m35.5s	Paddon	Sordo +3.2s
SS7 Ponte de Lima 2 (17.11 miles)	Neuville 19m24.7s	Neuville	Evans +7.3s
SS8 Porto Street Stage 1 (1.21 miles)	Neuville 1m48.7s	Neuville	Evans +13.2s
SS9 Porto Street Stage 2 (1.21 miles)	Neuville 1m46.8s	Neuville	Evans +17.7s
SS10 Vieira do Minho 1 (10.87 miles)	Latvala 10m52.2s	Neuville	Evans +18.6s
SS11 Cabeceiras de Basto 1 (13.81 miles)	Evans 13m35.0s	Neuville	Evans +12.7s
SS12 Amarante 1 (23.36 miles)	Neuville 24m56.8s	Neuville	Evans +29.9s
SS13 Vieira do Minho 2 (10.87 miles)	Evans 10m48.6s	Neuville	Evans +23.6s
SS14 Cabeceiras de Basto 2 (13.81 miles)	Latvala 13m41.3s	Neuville	Evans +28.0s
SS15 Amarante 2 (23.36 miles)	Ogier 24m47.7s	Neuville	Evans +39.8s
SS16 Montim 1 (5.37 miles)	Lappi 5m47.4s	Neuville	Evans +39.0s
SS17 Fafe 1 (6.95 miles)	Ogier 6m40.7s	Neuville	Evans +39.3s
SS18 Luilhas (7.39 miles)	Latvala 8m09.2s	Neuville	Evans +41.2s
SS19 Montim 2 (5.37 miles)	Suninen 5m41.3s	Neuville	Evans +37.5s
SS20 Fafe 2 (Power Stage) (6.95 miles)	Lappi 6m33.2s	Neuville	Evans +40.0s

Abt comes of age in Berlin

Audi returned to winning ways at its home (and BMW-sponsored) race

ALEX KALINAUKAS

Things were very different when Formula E visited Berlin in 2017.

Felix Rosenqvist scored a breakthrough win for Mahindra Racing, and would have taken a weekend double at the Tempelhof Airport track were it not for a time penalty due to an unsafe release. Sebastien Buemi, the beneficiary of Rosenqvist's demotion in the second event last year, had taken five wins from the first six races of that campaign and held a 32-point standings lead over title rival Lucas di Grassi – before everything unravelled for the Renault e.dams driver come the championship's climax. The Techeetah team scored a best finish of sixth, with Jean-Eric Vergne, from four Berlin starts, while Daniel Abt finished off the podium in both races.

Everything got turned around in 2018. This time, Abt was the absolute star of the show in front of his home crowd. In what was arguably his finest FE display, Audi's Abt took pole, won the race and led every single lap of the 45-tour event, and set the fastest lap. A full house of 29 points.

"I was a bit worried in the morning in all honesty, when I saw the first practice [in which Abt was 10th fastest] and that performance," said Audi team boss Allan McNish. "But I think as the day evolved, we got better."

Audi certainly did. Abt explained that it made "the right calls" after practice and he then had to negotiate the opening group of

qualifying running, which was the usual unenviable task for the drivers, since those first on track feel they are at a disadvantage compared with those in later groups.

Abt, and fellow group one qualifier Oliver Turvey, did progress to the second phase of qualifying – although Abt was immediately placed under investigation when it was detected that his car was in its 200kW mode too early before his first flying lap (see page 43). Then, come the superpole effort, "the lap I did – there was not much more in it, it was really spot on", Abt later reflected.

While he held the top spot, Vergne slotted into third place behind Turvey, before it was di Grassi's turn to return to qualifying action. The Brazilian almost matched his team-mate in the first sector but was already fading away even before he locked up heavily at the Turn 9 hairpin and ran wide, losing 0.8 seconds, and he was forced to settle for fifth on the grid while Abt took a second career FE pole.

"From Daniel's point of view, being in group one was less of a negative here because the circuit evolution is totally different," said McNish. "It wasn't as if it was dusty, dirty normal road. So, on that side of things, that definitely helped and then he was able to execute from there."

Di Grassi had another theory. Because Abt had gone out in group one, the lengthy wait for the rest of the groups to complete their running meant that his tyres cooled significantly, which proved to be very helpful owing to the unusual and highly abrasive concrete-and-asphalt track surface at Tempelhof. The track characteristics made tyre management challenging, since grip diminished sharply beyond a critical temperature, and di Grassi blamed that factor for his qualifying struggles.

"Daniel's car stayed [at the Audi garage] for 40 minutes – my car stayed for about seven," said the reigning champion, who ➤

"Being in group one was less of a negative because circuit evolution is totally different"







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B FERRARI

C PORSCHE

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Di Grassi had to settle for second

ran in group four. “So I went out and my first sector was good but then the car started to slide and the best I could do was maybe third or fourth – even if I finished the lap without [the hairpin] mistake. The two guys that were first and second were from group one – Turvey and Daniel.”

The race took place in the hot evening sun, for its start had been moved to a slot that placed it between the female and male national football cup finals, which were also taking place in Germany last Saturday. And so it was in dazzling golden sun that Abt, di Grassi and Audi went to work.

Abt comfortably led away from pole, while Turvey made what he called a “good start from the dirty side of the grid” – but the NIO driver still had to defend hard from Vergne on the run to the near-circular opening complex of Turns 1-2. Jerome d’Ambrosio – the other (surprise) superpole qualifier – made a bold move around the outside of di Grassi and Vergne that catapulted him into third, but that was as good as it got for the Dragon driver. As Abt eased clear of Turvey in the opening laps, d’Ambrosio – the inaugural winner of FE’s first Tempelhof event back in season one after di Grassi was stripped of the win owing to a modified front wing and front wheel fairing – was shuffled down the pack and ultimately ended up 19th after “difficulties with the race energy management” and not having “the full regen in my second car”.

Turvey was already beginning to use more energy than Abt as he dropped back throughout the first stint, eventually

prompting his team to switch strategy and bring him in for an early stop. On lap 22, one tour after Turvey had come in to change cars, Abt led the pack into the pits with a healthy 3.7s advantage. But that was undone when his mechanics had to hold him as Buemi entered the adjacent pits, which meant Abt emerged still in the lead, but with di Grassi right on his tail.

Di Grassi had dispatched d’Ambrosio with a dive down the inside of the Turn 9 hairpin on lap three, and he then passed Vergne with an opportunistic move on the championship leader at the tight Turn 6 left-hander. Buemi followed him through at the hairpin a few corners later.

The laps immediately after the pitstops were tense for Abt. “I didn’t feel very good,” he later explained. “I was sliding quite a lot. Of course, you don’t want to give [anything] away and of course I tried to push, then all of a sudden the car just felt really good and I felt very confident and I just increased the gap.”

From there, after setting the fastest lap on tour 26, Abt once again looked in total control. He came home 6.8s ahead of his team-mate, and went on to celebrate his second FE career win until 4.45 the following morning, when, kebab in hand, he encountered his team principal, who described their encounter on Twitter, leaving their hotel to travel home.

“We just nailed it and in the race we were really dominant,” Abt said, beer in hand at the Audi garage following a lengthy round of interviews, debriefs and team photographs. “I’m very proud.”

McNish reckons Abt has now come of age. “He grew up at the end of last year, into a strong, consistent and mature driver,” he said. “And I think that was extended today. Especially after the pitstop because he had a big gap, then it was eradicated.”

Abt feels he is driving “at the top of my game at the moment” – and his Berlin race performance supports that assessment. “I hope I could convince people after this weekend to sign me for next year,” he said in the post-race press conference, later >>



Abt leads from pole as Turvey gets away well from the dirty side

IN THE HEADLINES



GEN2 BREAKS COVER

Formula E’s Gen2 car was given its first public outing by 2016 Formula 1 world champion – and series investor – Nico Rosberg, who completed a handful of laps between qualifying and the race. Rosberg got perilously close to the wall at the Turn 9 hairpin early on during his run after previously driving the car around well-known Berlin locations including the Brandenburg Gate (above). FE CEO Alejandro Agag gave the I-PACE eTrophy car its public debut shortly before Rosberg’s run.

LOTTERER LEAPS TO 9TH

Andre Lotterer charged from last to ninth in Berlin, despite having to serve a 10-second penalty in the race since he could only drop two places of the 10 that he was supposed to for causing the collision with Sam Bird at the end of the Paris race. Luca Filippi, replaced at NIO by Ma Qing Hua in France, could only climb one spot from 18th in the race. Stephane Sarrazin, in for Tom Blomqvist at Andretti, crashed in FP1 and finished last.

ABT REPRIMANDED

Daniel Abt was reprimanded for inadvertently being in the 200kW power mode too early before his first flying lap in group qualifying. FE drivers are only allowed to activate their full power setting in the final sector before their flying lap. Audi couldn’t explain why Abt’s car was intermittently at 200kW over a distance of about 350 metres before the last sector, but the stewards deemed he had not gained from it.

BIGWIGS ON PARADE

Senior representatives from incoming Formula E manufacturers Mercedes, BMW and Porsche watched the action at Tempelhof over the weekend. Toto and Susie Wolff attended the event in the German capital, while a number of BMW bigwigs also visited the paddock – as did Andreas Seidl, who headed up Porsche’s LMP1 team project.

AUDI'S STATEMENT HOME WIN



Home win was a landmark moment

Audi might not have been the very first Formula E team to claim a one-two finish in the electric championship – that honour went to the Techeetah squad at this season's Santiago round – but the manner of its triumph on home ground in Berlin sent out a stark message.

In front of an adoring crowd on the baking concrete expanse at Tempelhof Airport, the Ingolstadt-based marque finally delivered on the promise it has shown since pre-season testing for the 2017/18 campaign. A technical passport error, a litany of inverter problems, and qualifying woes had limited Audi to just Daniel Abt's breakthrough win in Mexico ahead of last's weekend race. The team's struggles against the clock in Punta del Este, Rome and Paris militated against it taking to the top step of the podium again, despite its car advantage.

But, in front of many big names from incoming German manufacturer rivals (see page 43) and the high-profile

advertising logos of race sponsor BMW, Audi finally brought it all together and the result was a dominant one-two.

"The fact it's here in Berlin is a big thing because obviously it's a German team, a German race, a German driver winning – it ticked all the boxes really," said Audi team principal Allan McNish.

The team respectfully – and understandably – played down the significance of the win in front of its compatriots and soon-to-be rivals, and Abt's "it was important to shine on home ground," was about as strong as it got. But when BMW, Mercedes and Porsche arrive they will find an Audi squad with plenty of success, experience and nous – and possibly yet the 2017/18 teams' champion prize – in what can be a tricky category.

Indeed, Audi's struggles earlier in season four should act as a warning to its incoming foes – FE is tough, no matter how much history or engineering might a factory squad can command.



Audi feels that Abt has "grown up"



Vergne edged closer to the crown with third place

adding that "I don't see a reason why I shouldn't be here next season".

Di Grassi – who has taken four second places at the last four rounds – initially blamed a steering problem for his inability to challenge Abt in the second stint, but Audi was still to determine the exact cause of his issue as the team packed up.

Vergne completed the podium after a bruising second encounter with Buemi. The pair clashed at Turns 1-2 just before the pitstops as Vergne barged his way through. Each blamed the other for the minor collision, but the 2015/16 champion emerged from the pits back ahead of his rival. Vergne therefore had to battle his way back through after the pair passed Turvey thanks to Buemi's late lunge at the final corner on lap 33 – "good racing" according to the Briton.

Vergne's third place – followed home by Buemi and Turvey – combined with nearest championship challenger Sam Bird's subdued run to seventh, means the Techeetah driver's lead is now 40 points. Virgin Racing were not expecting much from Berlin; indeed, seventh was "the maximum" according to Bird, since "this circuit has long radius corners, which doesn't suit our car with the extra weight. We're better at 90-degree stuff."

Techeetah had improved across the weekend in Berlin in 2017, and team boss Mark Preston felt that the work it had put in with the tyres then aided its quest to make further progress on the rubber/track surface conundrum this time around.

"Knowing what we didn't know [before] allowed us to get more prepared and so we were for this weekend," he said.



“Di Grassi blamed a steering problem for his inability to challenge Abt in the second stint”

The title battle is now all but a two-horse race, with Vergne way out in front. This is a result of Felix Rosenqvist being even bolder than d'Ambrosio at Turn 1, getting onto the marbles in a risky attempt to force his way into the higher points-paying positions from sixth on the grid, and only just avoiding spinning into the wall. He scrapped his way back from 15th, but ended up 11th despite a late scrum for the minor places among his team-mate Nick Heidfeld, Nelson Piquet Jr, Jose Maria Lopez and others, which allowed the charging Andre Lotterer (see page 43) to benefit greatly.

“I thought, ‘This is my moment to try to get a good result, I need a good result today,’” Rosenqvist rued afterwards. “[But] it didn’t work out. I braked a bit too late and just made a mistake. The car hasn’t been as balanced [compared with 2017]. I don’t think it’s a powertrain matter, it’s more [that] I don’t feel the car underneath me and that’s costing a lot of energy and a lot of lap time. It’s just been a different car.”

What a difference a year makes. Vergne now stands on the brink of his first FE title. If he has a 59-point advantage after the next race in Zurich, he will become FE’s fourth different title winner. ❄

RESULTS ROUND 8/10, TEMPELHOF (D), MAY 19 (45 LAPS – 66.409 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Daniel Abt (D)	Audi Sport Abt / Audi e-tron FE04	55m35.546s
2	Lucas di Grassi (BR)	Audi Sport Abt / Audi e-tron FE04	+6.758s
3	Jean-Eric Vergne (F)	Techeetah / Renault Z.E.17	+12.894s
4	Sebastien Buemi (CH)	Renault e.dams / Renault Z.E.17	+17.282s
5	Oliver Turvey (GB)	NIO / NextEV NIO 003	+19.620s
6	Mitch Evans (NZ)	Jaguar / Jaguar I-type 2	+24.586s
7	Sam Bird (GB)	DS Virgin Racing / DS Virgin DSV-03	+34.610s
8	Maro Engel (D)	Venturi / Venturi VM200-FE-03	+37.814s
9	Andre Lotterer (D)	Techeetah / Renault Z.E.17	+44.359s
10	Nick Heidfeld (D)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M4ELECTRO	+45.931s
11	Felix Rosenqvist (S)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M4ELECTRO	+46.381s
12	Nelson Piquet Jr (BR)	Jaguar / Jaguar I-type 2	+49.087s
13	Tom Dillmann (F)	Venturi / Venturi VM200-FE-03	+50.150s
14	Nicolas Prost (F)	Renault e.dams / Renault Z.E.17	+50.381s
15	Antonio Felix da Costa (P)	Andretti / Andretti ATEC-03	+52.715s
16	Alex Lynn (GB)	DS Virgin Racing / DS Virgin DSV-03	+53.000s
17	Luca Filippi (I)	NIO / NextEV NIO 003	+53.302s
18	Jose Maria Lopez (RA)	Dragon Racing / Penske EV-2	+53.611s
19	Jerome d'Ambrosio (B)	Dragon Racing / Penske EV-2	+54.289s
20	Stephane Sarrazin (F)	Andretti / Andretti ATEC-03	+1m06.954s

Winner's average speed 71.674mph. Fastest lap Abt 1m12.409s, 73.371mph.

SUPERPOLE 1 Abt 1m09.472s; 2 Turvey 1m09.735s; 3 Vergne 1m09.991s; 4 d'Ambrosio 1m10.054s; 5 di Grassi 1m10.498s.

QUALIFYING 1 di Grassi 1m09.620s; 2 Vergne 1m09.765s; 3 Abt 1m09.774s; 4 d'Ambrosio 1m09.938s; 5 Turvey 1m09.943s; 6 Rosenqvist 1m09.951s; 7 Buemi 1m09.994s; 8 Lynn 1m10.002s; 9 Evans 1m10.087s; 10 Bird 1m10.087s; 11 Lopez 1m10.105s; 12 Dillmann 1m10.214s; 13 Engel 1m10.248s; 14 Heidfeld 1m10.264s; 15 Piquet 1m10.270s; 16 Sarrazin 1m10.315s; 17 da Costa 1m10.417s; 18 Lotterer 1m10.598s; 19 Filippi 1m10.601s; 20 Prost 1m10.618s.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Vergne 162; 2 Bird 122; 3 Rosenqvist 86; 4 Abt 85; 5 Buemi 82; 6 di Grassi 76; 7 Evans 51; 8 Piquet 45; 9 Turvey 44; 10 Lotterer 43.



Neal scores for the old guard in a new car

The 62-time BTCC race-winner knew the Thruxton circuit would play to the 2018 Honda Civic's strengths — and he duly delivered

MATT JAMES

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY

LAT IMAGES/JEP



Before the 2018 British Touring Car Championship had even begun, Matt Neal knew that Thruxton was going to be a happy hunting ground. The high-speed nature of the track has always been a boon for the Honda Civic Type R, and the new FK8-shaped version that's been brought in for this year only accentuated the positives the hatchback has at the super-fast Hampshire venue.

The car is slightly longer, which gives it greater prowess in the fast corners. There are plenty of them at Thruxton, which Neal lapped up in race one.

Josh Cook took his second win in as many events in the Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra with a superb burn through the pack in race two, while Adam Morgan controlled race three from pole position in his Ciceley Racing Mercedes-Benz A-Class. But the writing was on the wall last weekend: the old boys are back in the frame.

The learning process with the new factory-backed Type R – which was completed relatively late before the start of the season – has been done over the opening races, and it hasn't been without problems for Team Dynamics. Neal and team-mate Dan Cammish were gradually adding to the knowledge bank. And last weekend the Civic showed the first signs of what it is truly capable of. Neal left the track with a huge 45-point haul from the three races, which included the car's maiden win.

He grabbed pole at a record-breaking pace and then made a peach of a getaway to keep Colin Turkington's WSR BMW 125i M Sport at arm's length throughout. Even when he had 75kg of success ballast in race two, Neal was on the podium. He signed off with eighth in the reversed-grid encounter after being stuck in traffic, but was, on the whole, delighted. >>



L-r: Tordoff, Cammish, Neal and Turkington on race-one podium

“We are just learning about the new car all the time,” said the 62-time BTCC race winner. “I didn’t expect the qualifying pace that we had and it was lovely to follow that up with the race-one win – which I’m dedicating to [the late broadcaster and journalist] Henry Hope-Frost.

“Looking ahead, we’re now not going to be super-heavy for qualifying at Oulton Park in two weeks’ time [due to his lowly sixth place in the points], which is good. The thing for this car is that we’re only going to get better the further we go with it. We’re learning the weaknesses as well as the strengths, and that’s just as crucial in the learning process.”

Despite the fact that he is nearly 30 points away from new table-topper Morgan, Neal has his sights on the big prize at the end of the campaign. “[Former team-mate] Gordon Shedden was ninth and 50 points off at the halfway stage in 2016, wasn’t he, and he managed to pull it off, didn’t he? There’s a long way to go yet,” said Neal.

“You’re constantly waiting on someone coming flying through with a lighter car”

Cammish’s third in race one backed up his team-mate superbly, but a slip at Church Corner in race two ruined his charge and he could only claw back to 13th in race three.

Despite the optimism at Honda, it was Turkington who left Hampshire as the biggest points collector. The pace of the BMW was perhaps one of the biggest surprises at Thruxton. It’s a track that hasn’t traditionally been kind to the rear-wheel-drive machines, with the front-wheel-drive rivals better able to drag themselves through the fast sweepers and more comfortable over the bumps. The larger Dunlop tyres introduced in

2017 seem to have taken away some of the BMW’s deficiencies, and Turkington made hay. The Northern Irishman needed it too – electrical problems last time out at Donington had restricted him to just six points.

Two second places and a fifth were more than Turkington could have dreamed of. “I would have bitten your arm off for two seconds and a fifth,” he agreed. “Going to any track, that’s a really strong points haul and I really needed it to get a bit of momentum going and get the confidence back. I felt like I was hanging on to things by my fingernails after Donington Park. You can be too many points back to recover, so

to throw points like this in the bag early in the season is important. We’ve had a fast car at Brands and Donington, but things have got in the way. Here we could show it.

“It feels good to be back on the podium. It’s a confidence game and it’s nice to be racing at the sharp end and to keep the confidence going.”

He was another to point out that the cars running with no weight are likely to prove a thorn in the side this season. “You’re constantly waiting on someone coming flying through with a lighter car,” said Turkington. “Race wins are getting harder to achieve so it’s not going to be easy this year. It gets harder each year – that’s not a bad thing – but I just need to be a clever fox to make sure I stay near the front.”

While his side of the garage was happy, team-mates Rob Collard and Andrew Jordan were far from it. Collard was pleased to qualify 13th, but could not find the right set-ups to extract the most from the car. He struggled in races one and two and only really found an answer in race three but, by then, 10th was the best he could muster.

There was far worse for Jordan. A gastro virus left him weak and really suffering, and it was only adrenalin that dragged him through races one and two. Scoring a sixth and a fifth place was remarkable given his woes. But he collapsed in the team’s truck after race two with dehydration and exhaustion and was taken to hospital,



Cook stormed through from ninth on the grid to win race two



Two seconds and a fifth gave Turkington biggest points haul

ruling him out of race three.

Cook didn't celebrate his maiden career win at Donington Park much, saying he was already looking ahead to Thruxton. That homework paid off with a stunning race-two win from ninth on the grid.

He had gone in slightly the wrong direction on set-up for qualifying, but battled into the top 10 in race one. He'd come to the track with 57kg of ballast, but once that was slashed to 15kg for race two he was flying. His climb through the pack wasn't without controversy – a side-by-side moment at the chicane when he went to overtake Jordan for fourth at the end of lap four ended with the Vauxhall cutting the left-handed element of the Club chicane. He was reprimanded, but remained defiant that he had only done it to avoid an accident with the BMW.

"After qualifying, we went back to what we knew with the car and things went well, and then as soon as the weight was gone in race two we were really on it," said Cook. "It was a bit loose but it was fast, so I was pleased with that."

He backed that up with a solid sixth place in a rather tame finale, while teammate Senna Proctor was further up the road in third place. Proctor had a competitive weekend but was racing under a shadow, knowing that one more rap on the knuckles this season will mean a one-race ban. Despite that, third in race three was a >>

INGRAM'S SILVER LINING

Tom Ingram knows all about the rollercoaster ride that a season in the BTCC can provide. After topping the standings following the first three rounds last year, he then went on a run of six races that provided just nine points. That lean spell effectively ended his overall title hopes.

Coming to Thruxton, he was top of the points pile, but suffered his first non-finish of the season when his alternator failed on lap five of the opening race.

Ingram battled back to a 12th and a seventh in the final two races, but his attitude was vastly different from the dark cloud that hung over him last season when the bad times came – even though he dropped to third in the standings.

He'd already been in the spotlight when a post-qualifying track-limits penalty robbed him of his sixth-place starting position and he was booted down to row five.

"Losing my lap time in qualifying was a blow and then having the problem we had in race one was a disappointment, but that means we are going to Oulton Park with less weight [success ballast] on the car," he said, grasping for a silver lining. "The positive is that – and the weight crippled us there last year. While race one might not have looked ideal, that has happened for a reason."

"I was and wasn't heartbroken after race one. We weren't in a fantastic position. It would have been nice to have had a finish, but if this is going to be our worst weekend then it's not catastrophic. And look at race one: none of the guys at the top of the championship scored big points. It could have been a hell of a lot worse

in terms of a points-losing exercise."

Ingram was certainly putting a brave face on things. He will go to the next round in Cheshire in two weeks' time with 57kg of success ballast on his Toyota rather than the 75kg he would have carried had he maintained his points advantage.

While that doesn't sound like much, it could make the crucial difference and means that he and the bosses at Speedworks Motorsport will be able to change their approach when the BTCC regroups in the north.

"There will be a different mindset now," said Ingram. "We can attack the weekend because we're going there with less weight on the car, rather than playing a different strategy game where we look to shed all of the weight in the early race and then attack race two and three to try to regain ground."

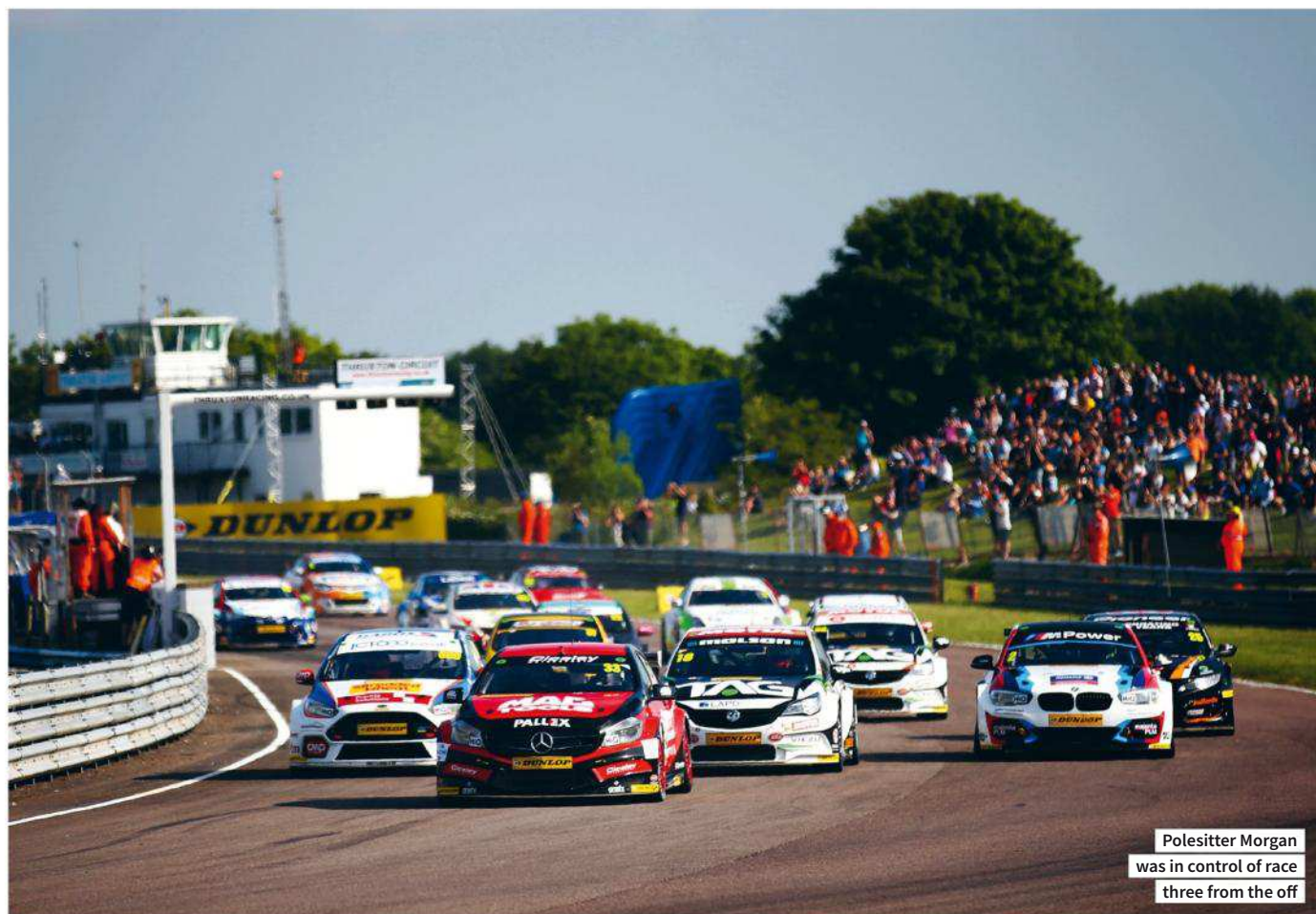
What was ominous at Thruxton was the big points scores from some of the championship's grandees like Matt Neal and Colin Turkington. While that meant that the points were shared around by drivers who haven't been at the front so far, rivals with that level of experience will be hunting Ingram down from now on.

"Anyone is foolish to discount any of those guys: a lot of them are world class, so you have to give them the respect they deserve," said Ingram. "Whether it's Matt Neal or Colin Turkington or whoever, it will come good for them. The cream will rise to the top, as always happens in this championship."

"I'm looking in the mirror, I'm wary of them, but at the same time I'm not concerning myself with what they're up to – so long as I'm looking for them in my rear-view mirror, I'll be happy."



Ingram lost points lead, but goes into battle next time out with a lighter car



strong finish to underscore Cook's triumph, and Proctor was the fifth-highest points scorer of the weekend.

Cook's silverware means he's only one point away from new leader Morgan. Morgan had come to the round second in the points (behind Tom Ingram's Speedworks Toyota) and with 66kg of success ballast. That hampered him in qualifying and he was just outside the top 10, and looked like he'd blown it with a dreadful getaway and 14th-place finish.

That lowly result meant he was ballast-free for race two, and he was on a mission to climb to seventh spot on a track where he has won twice previously. He made that three after he was picked for pole in the reversed-grid finale and delivered a beautifully controlled drive.

"I knew if I could get away, that race could be mine," he said. "Once I had nailed the start and got to the Complex first, I put my head down and tried to do a string of qualifying-style laps. I was looking in my mirror and I could see Jack Goff flying up through the order, but I still had enough in hand to back off slightly at the end."

Goff had a head-scratching weekend in his Eurotech Racing Honda Civic Type R. A man who expects to be fighting for the championship this year was hugely frustrated after qualifying 14th and then limping to 13th in race one.

"If you look back at the previous couple

"Once I had nailed the start, I put my head down and tried to do a string of qualifying-style laps"

of meetings, we've been very low down in the speed traps, and that's not the engine – the other two cars in our team have been around the top 10 in the traps," said Goff. "We knew it was a problem that wasn't just down to ballast."

There was serious work going on from the team to get to the bottom of the issues, and Goff had his input too. It reaped rewards.

"We went a little way in a direction with the car and it was a fraction better in race one than it had been in qualifying, and that's a testament to the work done by everyone at Eurotech Racing," said Goff. "In race two we made a bigger step and the car came alive, and in race three the car came alive even more."

After finishing eighth in race two, he stormed through the pack to second in race three to sign off in style – but it was a snapshot of a frustrating season.

"The annoying thing is that we keep having good races – but that's it," said

Goff. "Every meeting that we've been to so far, we have had podiums but we've yet to put a weekend together. Even three fifths would be good. Things have been out of our control, but we still haven't maximised things ourselves."

"We're still there or thereabouts, though. We're still in hunting distance."

A man who is desperate to launch himself into the hunt is Sam Tordoff, who finally got some luck and managed three fourth-place finishes in a weekend where he was on the pace but not setting it. His smooth style, however, meant he was able to extract more life from his Dunlops than Motorbase Ford team-mates Tom Chilton and James Cole.

Thruxton marked a nadir for Team BMR and its Subaru Levorg cars. The estate-shaped racers are fitted with new Swindon-tuned motors, but in order to preserve them the squad is limited on the amount of boost it can use. Team boss Warren Scott estimated they were 40bhp down on where they should be. Reigning champion Ash Sutton can be relied upon to extract the most from the car, but even he could only manage a best of 11th place in race two. Worse befell his team-mate Jason Plato, who retired from races one and two over concerns about reliability, then opted to sit out race three because of fears that the motor could not last. ❧

RESULTS ROUND 3/10, THRUXTON (GB), MAY 20, RACE 1 (16 LAPS – 37.696 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Matt Neal (GB)	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R	20m54.608s
2	Colin Turkington (GB)	WSR / BMW 125i M Sport (9kg)	+0.860s
3	Dan Cammish (GB)	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R (27kg)	+3.699s
4	Sam Tordoff (GB)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus RS	+4.040s
5	Tom Chilton (GB)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus RS	+5.290s
6	Andrew Jordan (GB)	WSR / BMW 125i M Sport	+8.922s
7	Senna Proctor (GB)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra	+9.361s
8	Brett Smith (GB)	Eurotech Racing / Honda Civic Type R	+9.725s
9	Josh Cook (GB)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra (57kg)	+14.929s
10	Chris Smiley (GB)	BTC Norlin Racing / Honda Civic Type R (21kg)	+15.436s
11	Rob Collard (GB)	WSR / BMW 125i M Sport	+15.591s
12	Matt Simpson (GB)	Eurotech Racing / Honda Civic Type R	+16.260s
13	Jack Goff (GB)	Eurotech Racing / Honda Civic Type R (48kg)	+16.780s
14	Adam Morgan (GB)	Ciceley Motorsport / Mercedes A-Class (66kg)	+17.787s
15	Ash Sutton (GB)	Team BMR / Subaru Levorg (39kg)	+18.096s
16	Rob Austin (GB)	HMS Racing / Alfa Romeo Giulietta (15kg)	+18.526s
17	Tom Oliphant (GB)	Ciceley Motorsport / Mercedes A-Class	+19.922s
18	Aiden Moffat (GB)	Laser Tools Racing / Mercedes A-Class (33kg)	+21.773s
19	James Cole (GB)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus RS	+23.602s
20	Jake Hill (GB)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	+24.888s
21	Mike Bushell (GB)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	+26.893s
22	Josh Price (GB)	Team BMR / Subaru Levorg	+27.155s
23	James Nash (GB)	BTC Norlin Racing / Honda Civic Type R	+27.766s
24	Rory Butcher (GB)	AmD Tuning / MG6	+28.022s
25	Ollie Jackson (GB)	AmD Tuning / Audi S3 Saloon	+30.185s
26	Bobby Thompson (GB)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	+38.299s
27	Stephen Jelley (GB)	Team Parker Racing / BMW 125i M Sport	+38.648s
28	Sam Smelt (GB)	AmD Tuning / Audi S3 Saloon	+38.965s
R	Jason Plato (GB)	Team BMR / Subaru Levorg	13 laps-engine
R	Tom Boardman (GB)	AmD Tuning / MG6	13 laps-accident damage
R	Michael Caine (GB)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	12 laps-accident damage
R	Tom Ingram (GB)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Avensis (75kg)	5 laps-alternator

Winner's average speed 108.16mph. **Fastest lap** Turkington 1m17.243s, 109.80mph.

QUALIFYING

1 Neal 1m15.612s; 2 Turkington 1m15.847s; 3 Smith 1m16.047s; 4 Cammish 1m16.089s; 5 Proctor 1m16.145s; 6 Tordoff 1m16.221s; 7 Chilton 1m16.256s; 8 Jordan 1m16.318s; 9 Smiley 1m16.395s; 10 Ingram 1m16.407s; 11 Simpson 1m16.457s; 12 Morgan 1m16.513s; 13 Collard 1m16.523s; 14 Goff 1m16.538s; 15 Cook 1m16.603s; 16 Oliphant 1m16.632s; 17 Austin 1m16.641s; 18 Sutton 1m16.690s; 19 Bushell 1m16.766s; 20 Cole 1m16.779s; 21 Moffat 1m16.805s; 22 Nash 1m16.827s; 23 Price 1m16.894s; 24 Plato 1m16.918s; 25 Hill 1m16.937s; 26 Butcher 1m17.083s; 27 Jelley 1m17.334s; 28 Caine 1m17.570s; 29 Jackson 1m17.668s; 30 Thompson 1m17.773s; 31 Boardman 1m18.113s; 32 Smelt 1m18.271s.



Morgan now heads the points table

**RACE 2** (16 LAPS – 37.696 MILES)

1 Cook (15kg) 21m00.610s; 2 Turkington (66kg) +1.325s; 3 Neal (75kg) +5.285s; 4 Tordoff (48kg) +6.287s; 5 Jordan (33kg) +6.595s; 6 Proctor (27kg) +7.005s; 7 Morgan +7.419s; 8 Goff +7.816s; 9 Chilton (39kg) +9.114s; 10 Smiley (9kg) +10.203s; 11 Sutton +11.049s; 12 Ingram +12.177s; 13 Austin +14.844s; 14 Simpson +15.289s; 15 Moffat +15.741s; 16 Collard +16.154s; 17 Jackson +21.203s; 18 Hill +22.390s; 19 Butcher +25.204s; 20 Thompson +29.488s; 21 Nash +30.606s; 22 Boardman +30.914s; 23 Price +35.311s; 24 Smelt +38.749s; 25 Jelley +41.190s; 26 Cammish (57kg) +1m15.410s; R Caine 14 laps-accident damage; R Smith (21kg) 14 laps-accident damage; R Bushell 13 laps-driveshaft; R Cole 3 laps-damage; R Plato 3 laps-engine; R Oliphant 2 laps-accident damage.
Winner's average speed 107.65mph.
Fastest lap Cook 1m17.611s, 109.28mph.

GRID RACE 2

Decided by result of Race 1.

RACE 3 (16 LAPS – 37.696 MILES)

1 Morgan (27kg) 20m55.978s; 2 Goff (21kg) +2.433s; 3 Proctor (33kg) +3.147s; 4 Tordoff (48kg) +5.045s; 5 Turkington (66kg) +5.994s; 6 Cook (75kg) +6.544s; 7 Ingram +6.922s; 8 Neal (57kg) +7.722s; 9 Smiley (9kg) +12.985s; 10 Collard +13.205s; 11 Chilton (15kg) +15.230s; 12 Simpson +16.601s; 13 Cammish +16.809s; 14 Butcher +17.120s; 15 Moffat +17.350s; 16 Austin +17.830s; 17 Hill +21.896s; 18 Boardman +24.707s; 19 Oliphant +25.488s; 20 Sutton +26.026s; 21 Jelley +26.399s; 22 Thompson +26.805s; 23 Nash +27.100s; 24 Cole +27.368s; 25 Caine +27.587s; 26 Smelt +34.620s; 27 Bushell -1 lap; R Price 10 laps-engine; R Jackson 9 laps-accident damage; R Smith 3 laps-accident damage; NS Jordan (39kg) unwell; NS Plato engine.
Winner's average speed 108.04mph.
Fastest lap Ingram 1m17.060s, 110.06mph.

GRID RACE 3

Decided by result of Race 2, top seven reversed.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Morgan 96; 2 Cook 95; 3 Ingram 85; 4 Goff 83; 5 Turkington 78; 6 Neal 68; 7 Proctor 62; 8 Cammish 62; 9 Sutton 55; 10 Smiley 52.

WORLD OF SPORT

GOLD AND GOOSE
LAT IMAGES

Marquez storms ahead as rivals falter

MOTOGP
LE MANS (F)
MAY 20
ROUND 5/19

It may seem peculiar and premature to declare the MotoGP title race virtually over just five rounds into the season. But after Marc Marquez waltzed to a third successive victory on a day when two of his strongest rivals crashed out, it's hard to draw any other conclusion.

Andrea Dovizioso and poleman Johann Zarco were left to count the cost of their errors, forced to watch on from the sidelines

as Marquez stretched his championship lead to an ominous 36 points — and at a track where Honda has traditionally fared badly.

Indeed, Honda has made such a step with its RC213V bike this year that it doesn't really seem to have weak venues any more. Without Marquez's lapses of judgement in Argentina, he would be on four wins from five, and he wasn't far off winning the Qatar opener either.

An inspired record-breaking lap in qualifying by home favourite Zarco suggested things could have been different. Ahead of the race there was a sense of anticipation that this could finally be

the day for the Tech3-run Frenchman to score his maiden premier-class win.

It wasn't to be. Zarco's Yamaha losing the lead at the start of the race was not in the script for the 100,000-odd fans who turned up on race day to urge on their man, as Ducati's Jorge Lorenzo swept ahead with a rapid getaway from sixth on the grid.

On the third lap of 27, Zarco conceded another position to Dovizioso's Ducati, while Marquez — who had to recover from a lacklustre opening lap — was sitting in fourth, right on the tails of the leading trio.

At this stage it looked like Dovizioso could be the danger man, and he moved ahead of his Ducati team-mate at the start of the fifth lap, only to crash at La Chapelle moments later and record a second consecutive non-finish.

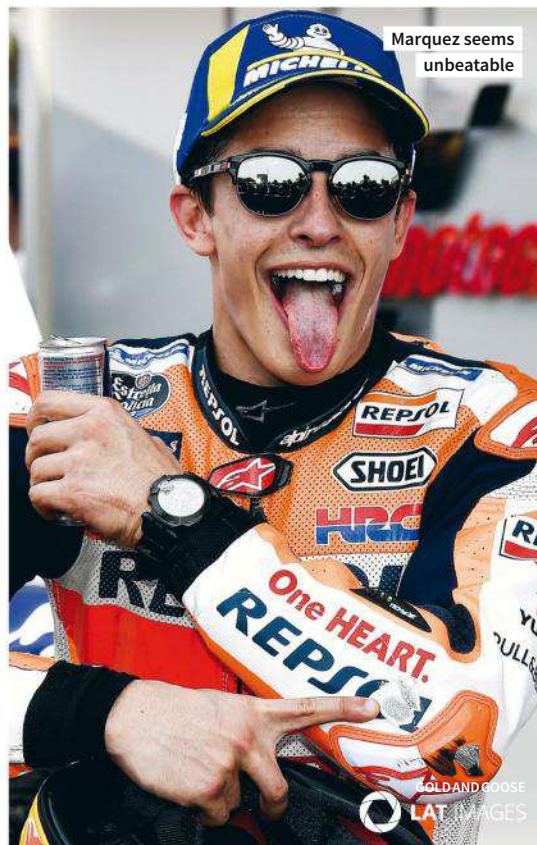
That left Lorenzo leading Zarco and Marquez, but in his desperation to regain the lead Zarco lost the front end of his Tech3 Yamaha at Garage Vert and slid out of contention. From that point on, there was to be no denying Marquez. Lorenzo held on for two more laps before the inevitable pass for the lead happened at La Chapelle on lap 10, the start of a painful descent down the order for Lorenzo.

Daniilo Petrucci, one of the leading contenders to replace Lorenzo if he decides to quit Ducati in favour of Suzuki next year, moved into second on his Pramac Ducati one lap after Marquez had taken the lead.



Home hero Zarco took pole
but the race did not go to plan

GOLD AND GOOSE
LAT IMAGES



Marquez seems unbeatable

Two laps after that, Yamaha's Valentino Rossi moved by into third place. That was how the podium order remained, as Lorenzo lost further places to Jack Miller on the second Pramac bike and Marquez's team-mate Dani Pedrosa before the finish.

Maverick Vinales was a distant seventh on the second of the works Yamahas — after topping a session during a MotoGP race weekend for the first time since last September in Saturday morning's free practice — but thanks to everyone else's inconsistency he has emerged as Marquez's closest challenger in the points.

Eighth may seem like an ordinary result for Cal Crutchlow, but in fact the Briton put on a heroic display after being hospitalised by a nasty high-side crash in qualifying. He was lucky to escape serious injury when he was flung into the air by his LCR Honda at Garage Vert, and remained under observation overnight before being released just in the nick of time to take part in the Sunday morning warm-up and then the race.

Had he been fully fit, Crutchlow felt he could have been second, but eighth was still remarkable for a rider who confessed to having difficulty breathing during the race.

Still, even fully fit he would have had no answer to Marquez, because right now it seems nobody does. A 38th MotoGP win puts the reigning champion level with Casey Stoner in joint-fifth on the all-time winners' list, and seemingly en route to a fifth title in sixth years.

JAMIE KLEIN

RESULTS ROUND 5/19, LE MANS (F), MAY 20 (27 LAPS – 70.212 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	Marc Marquez (E)	Honda	41m49.773s
2	Danilo Petrucci (I)	Pramac Ducati	+2.310s
3	Valentino Rossi (I)	Yamaha	+5.350s
4	Jack Miller (AUS)	Pramac Ducati	+6.314s
5	Dani Pedrosa (E)	Honda	+7.419s
6	Jorge Lorenzo (E)	Ducati	+10.355s
7	Maverick Vinales (E)	Yamaha	+23.758s
8	Cal Crutchlow (GB)	LCR Honda	+25.795s
9	Aleix Espargaro (E)	Aprilia	+26.206s
10	Alex Rins (E)	Suzuki	+27.937s
11	Pol Espargaro (E)	KTM	+32.304s
12	Hafizh Syahrin (MAL)	Tech3 Yamaha	+34.962s
13	Franco Morbidelli (I)	MarcVDS Honda	+37.881s
14	Bradley Smith (GB)	KTM	+38.299s
15	Takaaki Nakagami (J)	LCR Honda	+41.986s
16	Thomas Luthi (CH)	MarcVDS Honda	+45.260s
17	Karel Abraham (CZ)	Aspar Ducati	+56.872s
18	Xavier Simeon (B)	Avintia Ducati	+1m12.117s
R	Scott Redding (GB)	Aprilia	10laps-accident
R	Tito Rabat (E)	Avintia Ducati	10laps-accident
R	Johann Zarco (F)	Tech3 Yamaha	8laps-accident
R	Andrea Dovizioso (I)	Ducati	4laps-accident
R	Alvaro Bautista (E)	Aspar Ducati	1lap-accident
R	Andrea Iannone (I)	Suzuki	0laps-accident

WEEKEND WINNERS

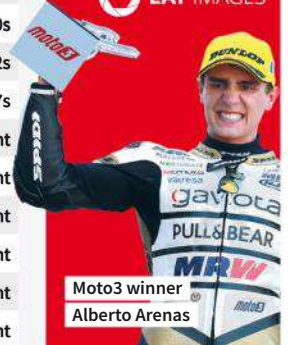
MOTO2 LE MANS

- 1 Francesco Bagnaia
Kalex
- 2 Alex Marquez
Kalex
- 3 Joan Mir
Kalex

MOTO3 LE MANS

- 1 Alberto Arenas
KTM
- 2 Andrea Migno
KTM
- 3 Marcos Ramirez
KTM

GOLD AND GOOSE
LAT IMAGES



Moto3 winner
Alberto Arenas

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 100.711mph. **FASTEST LAP** Marquez 1m32.312s, 101.412mph.

QUALIFYING 2 1 Zarco 1m31.185s; 2 Marquez 1m31.293s; 3 Petrucci 1m31.381s; 4 Iannone 1m31.454s; 5 Dovizioso 1m31.553s; 6 Lorenzo 1m31.590s; 7 Miller 1m31.683s; 8 Vinales 1m31.784s; 9 Rossi 1m31.900s; 10 Pedrosa 1m32.024s; 11 Rabat 1m32.049s; 12 A Espargaro 1m32.455s.

QUALIFYING 1 1 Petrucci 1m31.818s; 2 Pedrosa 1m32.061s; 3 Crutchlow 1m32.315s; 4 Syahrin 1m32.397s; 5 Rins 1m32.401s; 6 Morbidelli 1m32.770s; 7 Smith 1m32.795s; 8 P Espargaro 1m32.988s; 9 Nakagami 1m33.062s; 10 Bautista 1m33.324s; 11 Luthi 1m33.439s; 12 Redding 1m33.676s; 13 Simeon 1m33.802s; 14 Abraham 1m33.839s.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Marquez 95; 2 Vinales 59; 3 Zarco 58; 4 Rossi 56; 5 Petrucci 54; 6 Miller 49; 7 Iannone 47; 8 Crutchlow 46; 9 Dovizioso 46; 10 Pedrosa 29; 11 Rabat 24; 12 Rins 22; 13 P Espargaro 18; 14 Lorenzo 16; 15 Morbidelli 16; 16 A Espargaro 13; 17 Syahrin 13; 18 Bautista 12; 19 Nakagami 10; 20 Mika Kallio 6; 21 Redding 5; 22 Smith 5; 23 Abraham 1; 24 Luthi 0; 25 Simeon 0.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Honda 120; 2 Yamaha 92; 3 Ducati 82; 4 Suzuki 61; 5 KTM 19; 6 Aprilia 18.



Bagnaia won Moto2
and now leads by
25 points

GOLD AND GOOSE
LAT IMAGES

Vantage points still insecure



R-Motorsport Aston was on form and won with Thiim, Vaxiviere and Dennis

BLANCPAIN ENDURANCE SILVERSTONE (GB) MAY 20 ROUND 2/5

Aston Martin claimed a first Blancpain GT Series victory in five years at Silverstone last Sunday. And the best of the R-Motorsport V12 Vantages shared by Matthieu Vaxiviere, Jake Dennis and Nicki Thiim ended the drought in dominant style.

Vaxiviere, Dennis and Thiim led all but a handful of laps on the way to 10.9-second victory at the end of the three-hour Endurance Cup round, though the win could still be taken away from the British marque – the victorious Aston raced under appeal after being excluded from qualifying.

The Aston, run by a combination of the British Arden and Jota teams, had claimed pole position by just over a tenth, only for the car's series data-logger to be found to contain no data. The rules demanded that the car lose its time and start from the back of the grid, but R-Motorsport opted to contest the decision and take up its spot at the front of the 50-car grid.

Vaxiviere converted the pole into the lead of the race around the newly resurfaced 3.6-mile Silverstone Grand Prix Circuit. He built up a lead of two and a half seconds before Adam Christodoulou in the second-placed Auto Sport Promotion Mercedes-AMG GT3 came back at him in the closing stages of the opening hour.

Neither of the top two had clean pitstops,

and nor did the cars in third and fourth positions. That explained why the Aston and the Merc were still at the front of the pack when the cycle of stops was complete, only now the Merc was out ahead with Tristan Vautier at the wheel.

Dennis didn't take long to put the Aston back in front with a great move at Luffield. He had a look at the outside through Brooklands, forced the Merc driver to take a defensive line into the following right-hander, and was then able to get his nose in front in the second half of the corner and power ahead through Woodcote. "It was all planned from the Loop," said Dennis. "When he hugged the inside going into Luffield, I thought he was going to run wide."

Dennis disappeared up the road from Vautier once he got into clean air. The Vantage was a more competitive proposition at Silverstone, scene of its last victory in this fixture in 2013, than it had been at Monza last month, and the R-Motorsport squad reckoned that it was now more on top of its mount than in the series opener.

Vautier admitted that he didn't have anything for Dennis: "I struggled to get into a rhythm in the traffic to be honest. We were probably just about as quick on a clear lap, but the Aston was faster in a straight line and could deal with the traffic better."

The Aston was 16s up the road when the second round of stops began. This time it gained in the pits, Thiim emerging with a bigger advantage over Raffaele Marciello, which he then extended to over 20s before easing his way to victory over



Unlike the winning car, the second-placed Merc had no scrutineering dramas

**BLANCPAIN
ENDURANCE CUP
SILVERSTONE**
Matthieu Vaxiviere/
Jake Dennis/Nicki Thiim
R-Motorsport Aston
Martin Vantage GT3

**FORMULA
RENAULT EURO CUP
SILVERSTONE**
Race 1 Max Fewtrell
R-ace GP
Race 2 Charles Milesi
R-ace GP



Fewtrell leads
Sargeant to
first-race win

Back to the Fewtrell with win at Silverstone

**FORMULA RENAULT
EURO CUP
SILVERSTONE (GB)
MAY 19-20
ROUND 3/10**

Max Fewtrell had been thinking that the misfortune that limited him to one championship point in last month's Formula Renault Eurocup round at Monza was behind him. The R-ace GP driver returned to winning ways with a dominant performance in race one at Silverstone last Saturday, only for the poor luck to return for the Briton multiple times on Sunday.

Renault Sport Academy prospect Fewtrell qualified on pole position on Saturday and was never headed over the course of the 16 laps. Second-placed Logan Sargeant briefly edged closer to his team-mate, but Fewtrell made a point when he banged in fastest lap of the race on his final time around the Silverstone Grand Prix Circuit.

"This is a good way to bounce back from Monza," said the 18-year old. "It's also a bit special winning at home."

Winning on Sunday was always going to be tougher. Fewtrell was in the first group of Tatuus FRenaults out on circuit for qualifying, rather than in the second group when track conditions were likely to be more favourable. But he didn't even get a chance to go for a front-row grid spot, all-essential at a circuit not conducive to overtaking, when a gear-selection issue struck.

Starting 14th, he was involved in an incident on the opening lap, which relegated him to outside the top 20. Another incident ultimately resulted in Fewtrell's retirement, though once again he showed his pace.

Sargeant, who had qualified second for race one, wasn't able to follow that up with pole on Sunday. A red flag in what should have been the quicker qualifying period allowed Charles Milesi's first-session best to take the top spot in another of R-ace's flotilla of FRenaults.

The French Formula 4 graduate converted pole into the lead and, like Fewtrell the day before, barely came under pressure from Sargeant on his way to a first Formula Renault victory of his rookie season. Yifei Ye qualified third for both races and that's where he finished each time for Josef Kaufmann Racing. That more or less summed up the racing last weekend.

The results from the weekend remain provisional after the gearboxes of the top two in race one were sealed pending further checks.

GARY WATKINS

the remaining half-hour.

The Merc might have been able to put up more of a fight but for two mistakes in the pits. Both Vautier and Marciello stalled, but the team's estimation of 6s lost wouldn't have changed the outcome of the race.

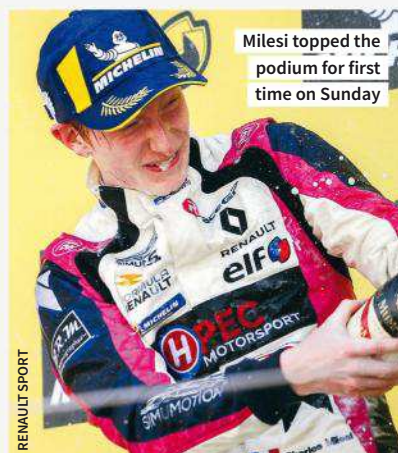
The Silverstone event was all about the top two. Lexus driver Norbert Siedler had briefly looked like he might present some kind of challenge to the ASP Merc early in the final hour, but ended up fighting a rear-guard action to hang onto the Japanese manufacturer's first BGTS podium for the Swiss Emil Frey squad.

The Lexus had gone into the first stops in sixth position in the hands of Stephane Ortelli, where it gained one place, before Markus Palttala moved the Lexus ahead of the Black Falcon Merc driven by Luca Stolz and then passed Alex Brundle's Aston when Brundle put two wheels on the grass in the Becketts complex.

Siedler had to fight off the advances of Dries Vanthoor in the best of the WRT Audi R8 LMS GT3s he shared with Christopher Mies and Alex Riberas, and hung on by a scant half a second. The Audi wasn't at its most competitive at Silverstone, but another faultless race from the Belgian squad allowed it to collect fourth-place points.

The Black Falcon Mercedes, in which Stolz was joined by Maro Engel and Yelmer Buurman, looked set to take fifth until a charging Maxime Martin in the R-Motorsport Aston he shared with Brundle and Marvin Kirchhofer nipped past on the final lap.

GARY WATKINS



Milesi topped the
podium for first
time on Sunday

STANDINGS

1	Timo Glock (BMW)	72
2	Gary Paffett (Mercedes)	71
3	Pascal Wehrlein (Mercedes)	39

For more info: autosport.com/dtm

Mercurial from Paffett

Paffett bounced back
to win on Sunday
at the Lausitzring

DTM
LAUSITZRING (D)
MAY 19-20
ROUND 2/10

Fourteenth. That's not where your normal Autosport race report begins, but it's where Gary Paffett started race one last weekend at the Lausitzring, and the fact that the British Mercedes veteran turned things around to dominate the second race on Sunday shows how competitive the DTM is in its new spec.

With reduced downforce, simpler suspension and more spec parts, the cars have been made cheaper, and a thrilling pair of races at the Hockenheim opener had proved that they're closer too. It was no different as the championship visited the former East Germany.

In the end, Paffett's qualifying banker lap on Saturday wasn't great as he, like many others, struggled to get temperature into

his tyres. Instead, the story of Saturday morning was Philipp Eng, the BMW DTM rookie, who missed out on pole by just 0.007 seconds to Mercedes' early-2017 championship pacesetter Lucas Auer.

But as soon as the race got under way, it was the Audis that became the focus. As they had on day one at Hockenheim, the RS5s struggled to show any pace. The marque's best starter was Nico Muller, in ninth, but he stalled. From 17th on the grid, Jamie Green shadowed Rene Rast (15th) off the line and, as the Briton emerged from the reigning champion's shadow, he piled unsighted into the back of Muller's machine. Both cars were scrap but, more importantly, both drivers were OK.

Almost as soon as the race restarted, Rast suffered one of the biggest crashes in recent DTM memory, when he was tapped onto the grass in contact with Loic Duval and barrel-rolled, the roof and windscreen

disintegrating into what looked like a ball of bent metal. Rast was taken to hospital and was OK, but missed Sunday's race.

With only a 20-minute sprint to conclude the race, a number of drivers pitted almost immediately, including race leader Auer. But that proved the wrong choice.

After the stops Auer was attacked by BMW's series leader Timo Glock and Eng. Rookie Eng jumped the pair of them before Glock followed Eng through into second. But the later-stopping Edoardo Mortara was lurking. The Mercedes' race pace was supreme all weekend and, on fresher tyres, the Swiss-Italian – from seventh on the grid – made a series of passes with lunges at Turn 1 to head home Glock, Eng and Auer.

Mortara started a spot better for Sunday's race in sixth, but two moves deemed to have pushed BMW newboy Joel Eriksson off the track led to a furious tirade from the Merc man. "I cannot understand the decision, and with decisions like this you kill the championship," he raged.

Instead it was Paffett, starting from third on the grid, who stepped forward to make it a Mercedes double. As team-mate Pascal Wehrlein attempted to pass polesitter Eng, Paffett struck and relieved Wehrlein of his position, before passing Eng a few laps later.

While Eng fell back, BMW's two-time champion Marco Wittmann finally banished his Hockenheim set-up issues to put a decent race together. He passed Wehrlein for what was now the lead, as Paffett had just pitted. This was a brave strategy, as the opposite had worked the day before, but expert tyre management from Paffett to protect his Hankooks after the stop was key.



Mortara took victory
in crash-delayed
Saturday opener

DTM

LAUSITZRING

Race 1 Edoardo Mortara

HWA Mercedes C63 DTM

Race 2 Gary Paffett

HWA Mercedes C63 DTM

GERMAN FORMULA 4

LAUSITZRING

Race 1 Liam Lawson

Van Amersfoort Racing

Race 2 Lirim Zendeli

US Racing

Race 3 Liam Lawson

Van Amersfoort Racing

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS

WINTON

Race 1 Rick Kelly

Kelly Racing Nissan Altima L33

Race 2 Fabian Coulthard

DJR Team Penske Ford Falcon FG X

NASCAR TRUCKS

CHARLOTTE

Johnny Sauter

GMS Racing Chevrolet Silverado

BRAZILIAN STOCK CARS

SANTA CRUZ DO SOL

Race 1 Marcos Gomes

Cimed Racing

Race 2 Atila Abreu

TMG Motorsport

SUPER TC2000

POTRERO DE LOS FUNES

Bernardo Llaver

Pro Racing Chevrolet Cruze

He built a strong lead over Wittmann, but with 10 laps to go it began to reduce. The BMW got to 1.5s adrift, but Paffett kept Wittmann at arm's length.

Wehrlein secured third ahead of Paul di Resta (Mercedes) and Glock, who scythed through the top 10 after a later pitstop to save his series lead, which he then labelled: "Not so important. As long as I'm battling with these guys this early, I'm happy."

For Paffett, who was ninth in race one, it was a strong weekend that keeps him just a point off Glock, but Mercedes must take advantage while it has dominant race pace. BMW looks threatening, especially with Glock, but doesn't appear to be on the same level in the races, while Audi's form only improved slightly from Hockenheim.

The Ingolstadt struggle appears to be in straightline speed, with none of its drivers scoring points on Saturday and Green taking a weekend-best of sixth on Sunday. Fixing its issues with such little track time appears to be an uphill struggle for the upcoming round at the Hungaroring. If Audi can close the gap, it will join the closest DTM racing we've enjoyed for years.

JACK BENYON



Kelly leads the way from team-mate Caruso

Nissan cherry on the cake as Kelly ends jinx

AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS
WINTON (AUS)
MAY 19-20
ROUND 6/16

Rick Kelly and Fabian Coulthard both took drought-breaking Supercars race wins at Winton, as a pair of mistakes proved costly for points leader Scott McLaughlin.

Saturday's encounter provided a sensational win for Kelly and the Nissan Motorsport squad – run by the family's Kelly Racing operation – just days after the brand announced its impending withdrawal from Supercars. It wasn't an undeserved win, but it did require a little bit of good luck in the form of a well-timed safety car and an error from runaway leader McLaughlin.

The Kiwi dominated the first 33 laps of the 120-kilometre race, only to have his advantage wiped out when Tim Blanchard ended up beached at Turn 4 and the safety car was brought out. The cool conditions then made the restart tricky for the leading DJR Penske Ford,

a little bobble through Turns 1 and 2 as the race went green again enough to let Kelly get his nose up the inside into Turn 3.

That was all the invitation that the Nissan driver needed, Kelly holding off Scott Pye and Shane van Gisbergen – who were both on fresher rubber having gone for an overcut strategy with a late stop – to take his first win since 2011, as well as his first win in an Altima.

McLaughlin, meanwhile, was left licking his wounds after being shuffled back to fifth behind team-mate Coulthard on that restart lap.

The DJR Penske Ford squad hit back on Sunday, but once again a mistake proved costly for McLaughlin. This time it was a very poor getaway from pole position, with McLaughlin dumped back to eighth on lap one as Coulthard bolted into the lead from the outside of the front row.

With track position and plenty of pace, Coulthard was able to run a standard two-stopper to take his first race win since August 2017.

Van Gisbergen cleverly used the overcut for a second day running to charge his Red Bull/Triple Eight Holden into second late in the race, while McLaughlin recovered to third thanks to an early first stop that gave him fresh air that turned into track position.

McLaughlin still comfortably leads the championship, with 131 points over van Gisbergen. Tough weekends for Jamie Whincup and David Reynolds mean they are both now more than a round worth of points behind the DJR Penske Ford driver.

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN



Coulthard won the second race



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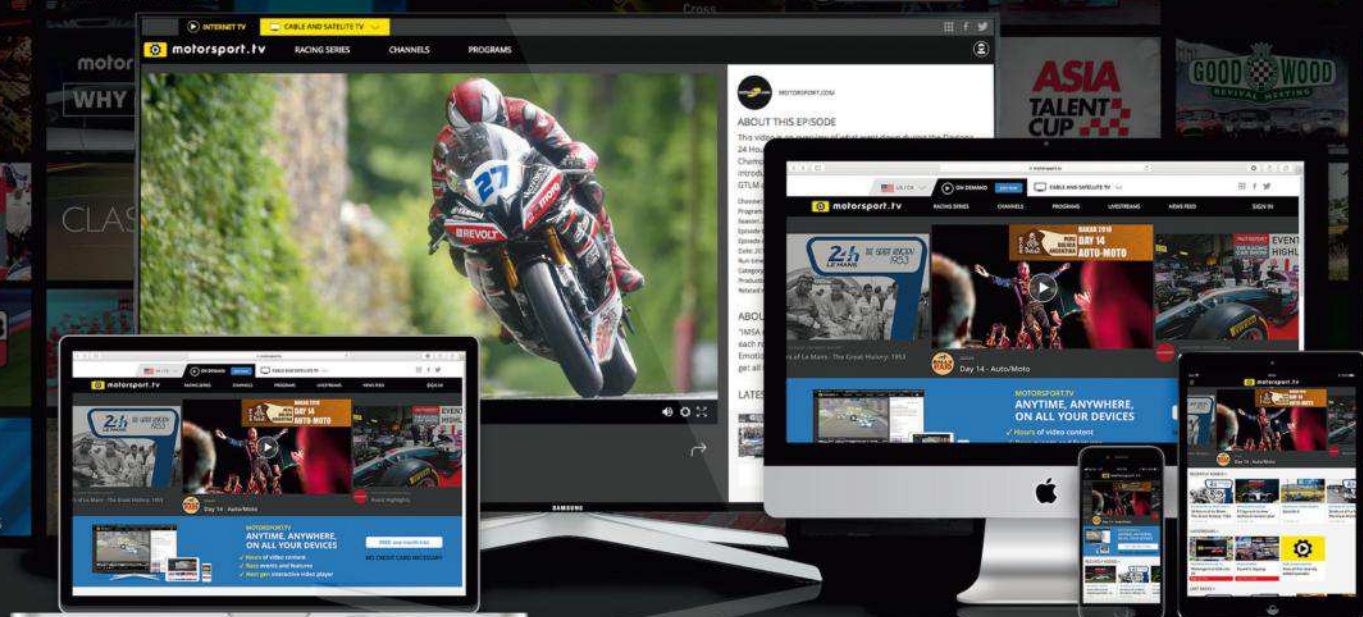
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Ehrlacher takes over from uncle

WORLD TOURING CAR CUP
ZANDVOORT (NL)
MAY 20-21
ROUND 4/10

Aside from the admittedly notable absence of any Hyundais from anywhere near the front of the field at Zandvoort, the fourth round of the World Touring Car Cup was the most competitive yet. Drivers from five manufacturers occupied places in the top six in the second race, while the top 16 in the first part of Monday morning's qualifying session were covered by one second.

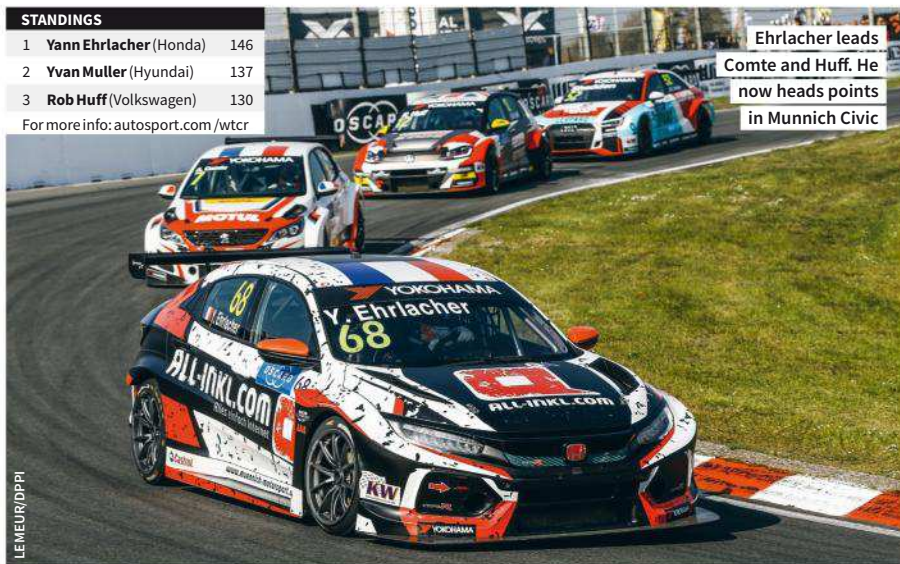
The fact, then, that Yann Ehrlacher was able to stand out above all else on World Touring Cars' first visit to the circuit in 11 years gave credit to the theory that the nephew of four-time champion Yvan Muller could be the series' next big star.

Like uncle Yvan a week earlier at the Nurburgring, Ehrlacher only won one of the weekend's three races, but the capabilities he displayed in his Munnich Motorsport Honda Civic suggest the 21-year old has developed into a genuine title contender.

Ehrlacher started Sunday's opening race second but, when the swarm of Audis and

STANDINGS		
1	Yann Ehrlacher (Honda)	146
2	Yvan Muller (Hyundai)	137
3	Rob Huff (Volkswagen)	130

For more info: autosport.com/wtcr



Ehrlacher leads
Comte and Huff. He
now heads points
in Munnich Civic

Volkswagens around him encountered troubles when the starting lights were held, he raced ahead. He later needed to have his wits about him to keep the fast restarting Peugeot 308 TCR of Aurelien Comte behind him after two safety cars, but always had pace in hand.

Second in the reversed-grid race came harder, with Ehrlacher getting his elbows out to pass the Cupra of Pepe Oriola, but that calculated manoeuvre – the right side of forceful – was rewarded in the final laps when team-mate James Thompson moved over to hand the Frenchman the runner-up spot. Sixth in the finale – won impressively by the

WRT Audi of Jean-Karl Vernay – was enough to oust his kinsman (who appeared more occupied by Balance of Performance complaints and left Zandvoort pointless) from the championship lead.

Ehrlacher stole the headlines, but it would be unjust to avoid mentioning another of the weekend's high-flyers. The Peugeot hadn't shown much in the way of frontrunning pace at the opening three rounds, so Comte's efforts to hold off Rob Huff and Gordon Shedden in race one after a demon start, then to grab and establish a lead in race two for the make's first WTCC success, were not to be sold short.

JACK COZENS

Button leads points but it's the Aguri NSX on top

SUPER GT
SUZUKA (J)
MAY 20
ROUND 3/8

Jenson Button and Naoki Yamamoto have moved into the series lead, but couldn't beat fellow Honda men Tomoki Nojiri and Takuya Izawa in the Team Aguri NSX.

Nojiri qualified on pole from the Team Kunimitsu Honda of Yamamoto, in which Button had easily progressed to the



NSX one-two, as
Aguri beat Kunimitsu

top-eight shootout by taking third in Q1.

Izawa built a massive 10-second lead over Button in the first 10 laps, only for a safety car to emerge after Heikki Kovalainen crashed the SARD Lexus at Degner. On the restart, Nick Cassidy in the TOM'S Lexus passed Button – who complained of tyre warm-up issues – for second, and when Yamamoto took over softer rubber was fitted for his stint.

Yamamoto showed good pace to catch Ryo Hirakawa, who had taken over the TOM'S car from Cassidy, and retook second. He closed the gap to Nojiri to 0.6 seconds, but as his tyres picked up marbles he settled for second.

Jann Mardenborough and Daiki Sasaki took the Impul Nissan to fourth, while ex-series leaders Ronnie Quintarelli and Tsugio Matsuda – heavily hit with success ballast – were sixth in the NISMO Nissan.

JIRO TAKAHASHI

WEEKEND WINNERS

WTCC

ZANDVOORT

Race 1 Yann Ehrlacher
Munnich Motorsport
Honda Civic Type R TCR

Race 2 Aurelien Comte
DG Sport Competition Peugeot 308 TCR

Race 3 Jean-Karl Vernay
WRT Audi RS3 LMS TCR

TCR EUROPE

ZANDVOORT

Race 1 Mikel Azcona
PCR Sport SEAT Cupra Leon TCR

Race 2 Josh Files
KCMG Honda Civic Type R TCR

SUPER GT

SUZUKA

Tomoki Nojiri/Takuya Izawa
Team Aguri Honda NSX-GT

JAPANESE F4

SUZUKA

Race 1 Yuki Tsunoda
Kochira Racing (HFDP)

Race 2 Yuki Tsunoda
Kochira Racing (HFDP)

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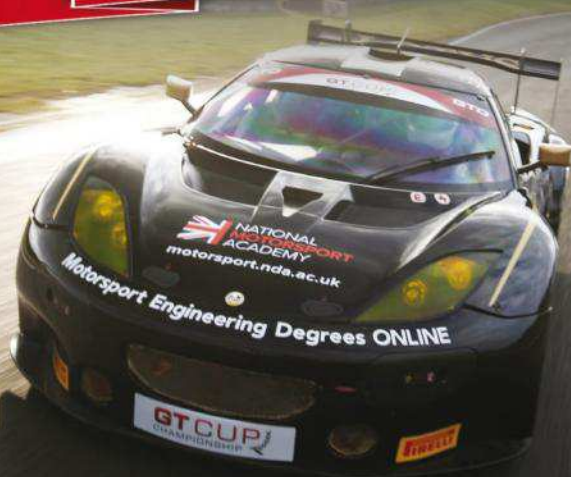


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ROWE SAVED FROM FIERY

HISTORIC FORMULA FORD

The bravery of a fellow competitor and two spectators may have saved the life of Historic Formula Ford racer Nelson Rowe, whose car rolled and caught fire at Cadwell Park.

Double champion of the Historic Sports Car Club series, Rowe – winner of Saturday's race – was disputing the lead with Cameron Jackson when the pair collided at Charlie's corner on lap three during last Sunday's race.

Jackson missed a gear and slowed, giving Rowe minimal time to react. His Crossle was launched off Jackson's Lola and landed upside down on the grass, whereupon its engine

bay erupted into flames.

Callum Grant, having seen the start of the incident, stopped his Merlyn beyond the scene and ran back when he saw the car on fire.

"The first thing I did was look under the car to see whether the driver was still in it," said Grant. "Nelson's eyes were closed but he was shouting, 'Get me out!'"

"I wasn't strong enough to lift [a 400kg

**"NELSON'S EYES
WERE CLOSED BUT
HE WAS SHOUTING,
'GET ME OUT!'"**



CADWELL PARK CRASH

car] off him but I have so much admiration for the spectators [who climbed over the fence]. They were in T-shirts. As we lifted the car up, one of them undid Nelson's belts and pulled him out. One also went back for a fire extinguisher."

"I was awake for all of it," recalled Rowe. "I couldn't see the flames but could smell petrol and felt something wet on my leg. That was from the [in-car] extinguisher, triggered when the roll-hoop moved."

"I could see Callum's blue overalls alongside the car and was relieved to be out. My helmet was cracked and my overalls singed. I'm stiff but fine, a lot better than expected."

Grant, still in shock, drove back to the grid, where long-time racer Don

Hardman sat him down under the trees and comforted him while competitors waited.

"I wanted to go on because it was the Rob Fowler [Memorial] Trophy race," added Grant.

"Rob was a great friend and I wanted to do it for him."

Jackson went on to win the race, with Grant an emotional third.

"I'm relieved that Nelson's OK," said Jackson afterwards.

"I couldn't believe that Nelson was sitting there calmly having tea with his wife and young daughter," Grant added. "That was brilliant, but I hope I never find myself in that situation again."

MARCUS PYE



Palmer, MSV 'studying' Rowe crash

MOTORSPORT VISION

MotorSport Vision owner Jonathan Palmer has praised the spectators who helped rescue Nelson Rowe from his burning car, and confirmed that an investigation of the incident would take place.

The ex-Formula 1 driver, whose MSV concern operates the Cadwell Park circuit, believes marshals and officials did everything required of them after the car came to rest upside down between two marshals' posts.

He said: "We do locate two fire extinguishers behind the barrier in between these posts, so marshals getting there don't need to run with one."

"The marshals were beaten to the scene by two spectators who jumped over the fence and helped put the car back on its wheels, after which the driver got out himself."

"It was an unusual situation and prompt action from those spectators, but what I would say is for obvious reasons we can't encourage other spectators to do this."

"It certainly could have helped and we're grateful for their quick thinking."

"It would be wrong of us not to look into all incidents, and we are already studying this one to see if anything can be learned."

"It's no criticism of the race control, marshals and rescue unit personnel who all did as they should, and are trained and equipped to safely deal with such situations. We believe all those involved acted professionally."

"Had the accident happened 50 or 75 metres either way, it would have been close to a marshals' post, but clearly we can't have a marshal at every point along the circuit."

"WE'RE
GRATEFUL FOR
THEIR QUICK
THINKING"

STEFAN MACKLEY



Drivers suffer tyre problems at 'unique' Thruxton circuit

RENAULT UK CLIO CUP

The Renault UK Clio Cup is set to evaluate whether to compete at Thruxton next year after last weekend's round was blighted by tyre problems.

The races were reduced from 12 laps to nine amid concerns over whether the tyres would last the full distance.

Series tyre supplier Michelin introduced

a new, softer compound for this season, but a number of drivers suffered dangerously worn left-front tyres in qualifying. A combination of the new compound, high track temperatures, the abrasive Thruxton surface and the demanding, high-speed nature of the circuit led to the problems. After discussions with Michelin, all Clio Cup teams eventually agreed to run less camber and reduce the race distance.

Championship manager Will Fewkes said: "Rest assured Renault Sport Racing and Michelin UK are not taking the situation lightly. Once Renault Sport Racing was aware, each competitor was provided with a new left-front tyre for each race for free. Michelin has a vast reputation in top-level motorsport and will be doing everything within their power to resolve this issue moving forward."

"I think it's important to stress that this isn't a new topic for a tyre manufacturer when visiting Thruxton, it's pretty historic. Maybe it's time to assess the validity of visiting the venue when we formulate our 2019 Renault UK Clio Cup calendar."

Michelin motorsport manager Tim Hoare pointed out that other TOCA categories already do not compete at Thruxton.

"Around here it's very, very aggressive on tyres," he said. "This tyre has been two years in the making and we've tested it all over Europe with Renault, but Thruxton is a unique challenge."

WDE Motorsport boss Wayne Eason was most critical of the situation and reluctant for his drivers to compete in race two.

"I would like to have a tyre that we can use," said Eason. "It's not the car's fault and it's not the championship's fault. But I think we shouldn't come here unless the track is resurfaced. And I love this place – when I race my truck it's my favourite one."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

No Balfe McLaren GT3 car at Snetterton

BRITISH GT

Balfe Motorsport has withdrawn its British GT entry for this weekend's Snetterton round, but will return to the grid in time for the series' showcase event at Silverstone.

The McLaren 650S GT3 is still being repaired after heavy damage was sustained when Shaun Balfe crashed into the retaining wall at Rockingham in the

previous round.

Balfe, who shares the car with McLaren factory ace Rob Bell, said: "The crash at Rockingham was unlucky in terms of achieving a potential podium, but also the impact itself was quite heavy on the car."

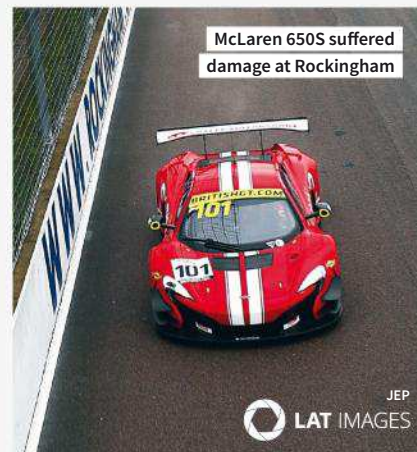
"Both the team and McLaren have been brilliant with the rebuild and it would have been ready to race at Snetterton, but we have decided to

prepare for Silverstone."

Former GT Cup champion Jordan Witt will be on the Snetterton grid, having replaced Devon Modell in the RJN Motorsport Nissan GT3 entry.

Witt will share the GT-R GT3 with regular driver Struan Moore for the two races after Modell opted to step back from the programme to concentrate on business commitments.

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Moffat pulls out of TCR UK

TCR UK

Aiden Moffat has pulled out of TCR UK, with his Laser Tools Racing team “losing confidence” in the organisation of the British Racing & Sports Car Club series.

During qualifying at Knockhill earlier this month, British Touring Car Championship race winner Moffat appeared to have pole after four cars were deemed underweight. But after the WestCoast Racing team appealed, the cars were reinstated and Moffat’s Alfa Romeo Giulietta dropped back behind Daniel Lloyd. Moffat did not finish the first race and then did not start the second.

“We have decided to leave TCR UK as incidents at both Knockhill races plus the previous meeting at Silverstone have left us both frustrated and perplexed,”

said team principal Bob Moffat, Aiden’s father. “Certain decisions and actions have made us completely lose confidence in the series, and after a lot of thought and discussion we have decided to call it a day.

“However, we feel the format has a lot of potential and we offer our best wishes to the series and its competitors.”

Moffat finished second in the first race of the opening weekend at Silverstone, but ran out of fuel in race two. After Knockhill he lies 129 points behind Lloyd, who took a perfect score at the first two meetings of the year.

The series attracted only 11 cars at Knockhill, and in a statement said: “We would like to thank the team for its participation in the series and wish Aiden success in the future.”

JACK BENYON



Record low LMP3 entry

LMP3 CUP

United Autosports has not ruled out running cars in the remainder of the LMP3 Cup Championship after the field hit a record low at Brands Hatch last weekend.

The championship had just four cars for the two one-hour races on the Kent venue’s Grand Prix circuit. This was reduced to three for race two when the Speedworks Ligier of Dominic Paul and Jack Butel crashed in qualifying.

The round marked the first event in the series’ two-year history not

to feature United Autosports, which is the UK’s Ligier agent.

A statement from the team said: “Our plan for the second year was to provide support to customers, it was never our intention to race as a team — we always said we would never race against our customers if we could help it. We entered one car at Donington [in April] and the new JSP4 car as a test for Ligier.

“It is likely that we could enter another round later in the year, but we haven’t entered the full season as that was never our intention.”

ROB LADBROOK

IN THE HEADLINES

CLIO TRIBUTE TO FEWKES

The Renault UK Clio Cup cars were adorned with stickers at Thruxton last weekend remembering Roy Fewkes, who died earlier this month. He was originally an engine builder in the 1970s, achieving success with a variety of cars, before becoming the technical commissioner for a number of Renault championships, including the Clio Cup.

DYRDAL ON A CHARGE

Will Dyrdal completed a storming drive from 25th on the grid to fifth in the second Ginetta GT5 Challenge race at Thruxton last weekend. Contact with Morgan Quinn at Club in the first race caused him to retire and start from the lowly position in race two. “We knew we had to go for it from the start,” said the 2017 Junior Saloon Car champion, who was with W2R Motorsport for the first time.

WELLER’S MINI STEP UP

Mini Challenge Cooper Class frontrunner Sam Weller will step up to the JCW Championship at Snetterton this weekend, driving the Dunlop-backed guest car. Weller finished third overall in the naturally aspirated Cooper Class Championship last year. “I’ve only done one test in the JCW in the wet and, while it’s a relatable car to the Cooper, you do drive it differently,” said Weller. “The aim is to do a couple of rounds this year and then buy a car and join the series full-time in 2019.”

GT5 NEGATIVE SCORE

James Townsend’s difficult start to the Ginetta GT5 Challenge season has resulted in a points tally of -19. He picked up his second points loss of the year at Thruxton last weekend when he was deducted 10 points for overtaking under yellow flags in the opening race. Matt Maxted also picked up the same penalty and is on zero points.

CLARIFICATION

Autosport would like to clarify points raised in Matt Kew’s column (May 10), concerning the recent safety measures at Brands Hatch. We questioned why debris fencing was not installed at the exit of Hawthorns, and circuit operator MotorSport Vision has pointed out that this is not an area to which spectators have access. In providing new fencing in areas that were considered to need additional protection, MSV also adopted current FIA specifications, but states that existing fencing continues to provide appropriate protection. New specifications are inevitably adopted on a rolling basis in this way.

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As many as 15
Formula Atlantic
cars could race



Atlantic revival at Brands

FORMULA ATLANTIC

The Formula Atlantic single-seater category from the 1970s is set for a revival, starting at the Legends of Brands Hatch meeting on June 30-July 1.

The Historic Sports Car Club will run a dedicated Formula Atlantic class for the cars within the Derek Bell Trophy races at the Kent circuit as the category heads towards its 50th anniversary in 2021.

Prime movers of the idea are Iain Rowley and Alan Morgan, the originators of Historic Formula Ford 2000, and they are targeting 15 cars to race alongside the Formula 5000 and Formula 2 machinery at Brands.

Rowley and Morgan are keen to get more Atlantic cars back to racing and already have a database of around 40 cars.

"I've always thought a Formula Atlantic was a proper racing car," said Rowley. "We'd like to get as many as 15 cars on the grid as well as a display of non-running cars in the paddock."

Morgan added: "If things go well at Brands Hatch then we'd like some stand-alone races next year. But we will work with the HSCC Historic F2 series as that also has classes for Formula Atlantics."

Formula Atlantic grew out of the US Formula B category and started in the UK in 1971 for 1600cc single-seater racing cars powered by production-based twin-cam engines. The class gained considerable support and was a support race to the British Grand Prix, but faded in the mid-1970s under the threat from Formula 3.

PAUL LAWRENCE

IN THE HEADLINES

FROM GT TO JUNIORS

British GT contender Michael O'Brien made his Formula Junior debut at Cadwell Park in the ex-Alastair Pike Lotus 20 from the Silverstone-based Speedsport team. "The car is still a work in progress," said O'Brien, who claimed two second places in Lincolnshire to friend and former team-mate Cameron Jackson.

CHARADE FF2000 MEET

More than 20 UK-based Historic FF2000s will head to the former Clermont Ferrand track of Charade in France this weekend for a pair of races. Of the 28 cars that raced at Cadwell Park last weekend, only three are also going to France, including that of race winner Benn Simms.

WATERCRESS WINNER

Julian Barter raced the Datsun 240Z of his father Charles in the '70s Road Sports race at Cadwell Park last Sunday. Barter Sr took a win in the first of the weekend's two races, but had to miss Sunday's due to his role in organising the Alresford Watercress Festival. "Alresford is the watercress capital of the world," he said.

REVIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

Seventy years of the Jaguar XK120 and a return of Pre '66 Touring Cars will be features at the 20th-anniversary edition of the Goodwood Revival race meeting (September 7-9). For the first time since Tom Kristensen's victory in the mighty Ford Fairlane Thunderbolt in 2015, the St Mary's Trophy will run for pre '66 touring cars and will include many tin-top stars.

DODD GINETTA RETURNS

Graeme Dodd plans to mark 50 years of the Ginetta G16 sports-racing car by competing in his example (below) in the Guards Trophy race at Thruxton's 50th-anniversary meeting (June 2-3). "It's been in the garage for about four years, and as it's 50 this year we decided to race it again," said Dodd. "I've had a lot of fun in the Ginetta."



Incident-packed meet cut

MALLORY PARK

Last Sunday's 750 Motor Club meeting was abandoned with one race to go due to a shortage of ambulances after a number of incidents during the day.

The second 750 Formula race was canned, while the final MR2 Championship encounter was red-flagged early to allow an ambulance to take Sport Specials racer Sylvia Mutch to hospital after she crashed her MEV MX150R on the Stebbe Straight.

Earlier, Sport Specials frontrunner Clive Hudson had been released from hospital after he had rolled his Eclipse at Gerard's Bend.

MR2 racer David Shead made heavy contact with the pitwall after a startline incident in the second of the category's three races, suffering back injuries, as

two drivers took their maiden wins.

Oxfordshire driver Paul Cook won the opener after taking the initiative from points leader Ben Rowe four laps from the end, but Rowe hit back with victory in the shortened finale to extend his championship advantage. Tim Heron took a lights-to-flag win over reigning champion Shaun Traynor in the restarted race two.

Former Locost and Compact Cup protagonist Martin Gambling claimed his first Sport Specials win, outbraking Rob Johnston's Cyana Mk2 – which went on to win the second race – at the hairpin.

Having installed a new engine in his Fiesta XR2i, Marcus Ward was surprised to do the double in Classic Stock Hatch. Ed Pither (750 Formula) and Ben Myall (Historic 750 Formula) also won.

IAN SOWMAN

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THE TRUE SPIRIT OF CLUB RACING

It's taken a dramatic incident to remind us all that at its core national motorsport has a heartwarming sense of community

JACK BENYON

I have spent the best part of 17 years regretting the decision to watch the Sylvester Stallone film *Driven*. It's full of factual inaccuracies, and a scene with two of the main protagonists driving CART Indycars through the street must have had even the most casual motorsport fan crying 'bullshit!' at the screen.

Where am I going with this? In a melodramatic moment from the film, a driver crashes upside down in a lake and two other competitors – in the heat of the championship battle, no less – stop to help. They abandon self-interest to save another person's life.

I'd always thought it the most overdramatic of scenes, as the crashed car went flying through the air, over the barriers and into the water. But last weekend at Cadwell Park we got our own real-life homage to motorsport's worst film.

Nelson Rowe's life was spared after his fiery Formula Ford crash thanks to the help of fellow competitor Callum Grant – not involved in the shunt – and a pair of selfless spectators.

"SOMETIMES IN LIFE THINGS HAPPEN THAT FORCE AN EXTRAORDINARY REACTION"

Thank goodness for the quick reactions of those involved.

Sometimes in life things happen that force an extraordinary reaction. Spectators know that it isn't acceptable to run onto a live racetrack, but in this case they saved a life by doing so.

I commend circuit boss Jonathan Palmer for his sensible comments (page 70). This incident should not lead to calls to make all racetracks non-spectator; it shouldn't be met with an overreaction based on overegged health and safety. I hope we never have a repeat of spectators running onto a live track, as much as I hope a crash like this never happens again. But it has to be considered what their actions have meant for Rowe's life.

For years I've listened to people telling me that motorsport was 'better back then'. And in some cases they're right. But one of the things that has remained with club racing throughout its history is a sense of community. Win or lose, sportsmanship

has always been present, even if there are a few blots on the sport's copybook left by cheats and fools.

The community spirit is strong in the UK and Ireland. There have always been problems, worries and dramatic fears of the next thing that will 'end' club motorsport. But this is the perfect week to show that the spirit is alive.

Grant's actions aren't the only example. I recently had the pleasure of speaking to James Poulton and Greg Graham from the Citroen C1 Challenge. Never have I heard such universal praise and witnessed such immediate popularity for a club-racing category as this one. The 24-hour race at Rockingham earlier this month was so oversubscribed that organisers put on a three-hour overspill race!

Graham labelled on-track rival Poulton as "completely selfless" after he pushed Graham's car back to the pits when it ran out of fuel. Graham's Team Safety Devices car battled with Poulton's DDCW squad for more than eight hours, but while he was ahead Graham's tank ran dry. He got out of the car "in tears", thinking that he'd thrown the race away. Graham had been told to pit by his team, but he gambled in order to stay ahead of DDCW.

"James stopped and pushed me without knowing whether his team would be penalised or disqualified, and that's the amazing part for me," says Graham. "I can't thank him enough." "To be brutally honest I'd have gladly taken any penalty to help them out," says Poulton. "We had mutual respect and I felt it was the right thing to do."

Poulton was given two points on his licence but allowed to keep his eighth place, while Team Safety Devices limped to 11th.

Another feelgood story involves Mini Libre racer Peter Hills, whose car was badly damaged in a crash at Agostini at Snetterton earlier this month.

Hills, a long-serving member of a British Automobile Racing Club safety unit at Pembrey, was overcome as the paddock united around him, helping with repairs and parts. And it now looks like he'll be able to compete again this year.

"It's quite emotional, and I don't know how I could ever repay everybody," says Hills. "It's saved my season as it's a good few thousands of pounds' worth of work. It's times like this that make you feel so lucky to be involved in the sport and the Mini Se7en Racing Club."

Yet another reason to get down to a local track. Club motorsport's community spirit is alive and well, and heartwarming to say the least. 🌟

TOCA SUPPORTS THRUXTON MAY 19-20

Simmons stays on top as maiden winner Doohan stars

BRITISH FORMULA 4

Thruxton is a synonym for 'frenetic' when it comes to British Formula 4 races. The Hampshire F4 contests are always action-packed and that was no different in 2018, but after all the drama the only change at the top of the standings was Ayrton Simmons extending his lead over Kiern Jewiss by a solitary point.

Simmons started the weekend very

much on the back foot. He had a 10-place grid penalty for the opener, a legacy of a collision with Hampus Ericsson at Donington Park. But the JHR driver was up to sixth by the end of the first lap and worked his way to third over the next few tours.

Up front, Dennis Hauger and Jewiss battled for the lead. Jewiss spent lap after lap right behind his rival, ready to pounce. When he did on the final lap, it ended in disaster as the pair made contact on the

approach to the Club chicane, and Hauger speared into the barriers, gifting Jewiss the win from Simmons.

"I had overtaken him and then he tried to move into a piece of track that wasn't there," explained Jewiss, as the contact was deemed a racing incident. "He hit the brakes and went over the top of my car. I was staying calm and looking after the tyres for the end."

Jewiss inherited the race-two win on the final lap too. Jack Doohan was set for his maiden car-racing victory after passing Arden team-mate Patrik Pasma at Church following the first of two safety-car periods. He was never headed after that point until he slowed on the final tour with a cracked exhaust.

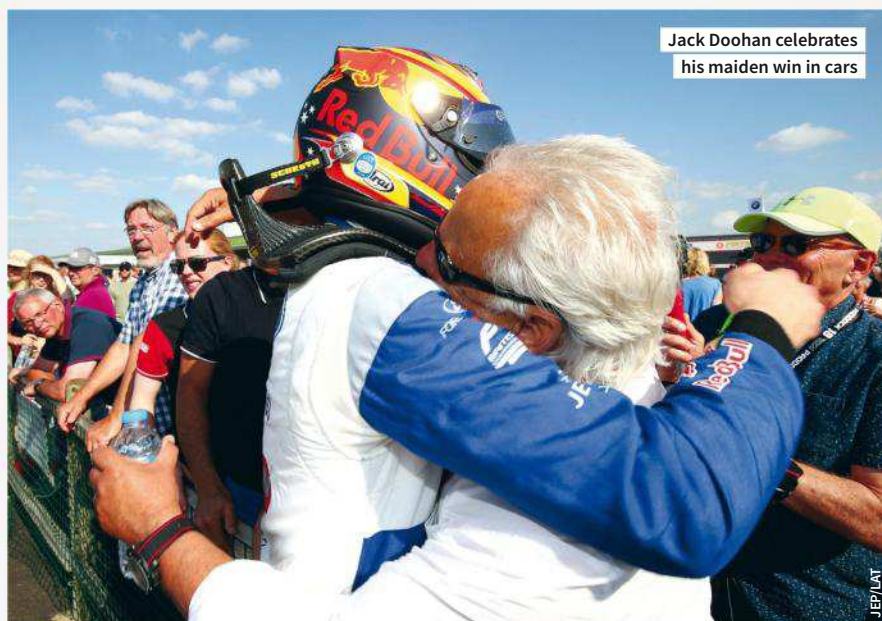
Jewiss was again the beneficiary, winning from Double R stablemate Paavo Tonteri and Simmons, who had fought back after colliding with Pasma.

That meant Jewiss was seeking to emulate reigning champion Jamie Caroline by winning all three Thruxton races in a weekend. But the star of race three proved to be Doohan. The Australian passed Hauger into Allard on lap six of 16 and built a gargantuan lead as the pack squabbled furiously behind.

Simmons, Hauger, Pasma and Jewiss were inseparable throughout, but in the end it was Simmons who finished almost seven seconds behind Doohan, with Hauger third from Pasma and Jewiss.

"I just did the same thing every lap and pulled away," said a delighted Doohan. "It [first win] got taken away from me in race two, but to bounce back like this is great."

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Jack Doohan celebrates his maiden win in cars

Kibble's first victory, Smalley bounces back

GINETTA JUNIOR

A decision by race control is not the way any driver wants to mark their first win, but for Patrick Kibble in Ginetta Junior it was no problem.

The rookie was the surprise challenger to Adam Smalley in the latter stages of the first Thruxton race, when he muscled his way into third at Club on the penultimate lap, with Smalley cutting the last part of the chicane to keep it together.

Louis Foster had been at the front, but a challenge from championship leader Luke Browning ended in tears when a touch at the exit of the complex pushed Foster off and Browning down to third. Smalley crossed the line first ahead of Kibble and Browning, but a half-second penalty for straight-lining the chicane had been issued to Smalley, handing Kibble the win.



Kibble didn't win on the road, but did take race-one spoils

Smalley had his work cut out in race two when Kibble and Foster squeezed him at the start, resulting in Foster spinning into the pitlane exit.

James Hedley staked his claim to make it two rookies taking the top honours as he cut Smalley's 1.1-second lead to just 0.3s. But a



Smalley reclaimed the points lead after race-two victory

defensive drive from Smalley ensured he held onto the lead and as a result regained the championship lead.

If Smalley was in contention for drive of the race, his team-mate Foster made his own bid, recovering from that opening spin to finish third.

JASON NOBLE

Dorlin seizes Clio title lead

RENAULT UK CLIO CUP

James Dorlin is unstoppable at the moment. The Westbourne Motorsport driver has now taken four Clio Cup wins on the bounce and claimed the points lead.

Dan Rowbottom appeared in the box seat in race one, as he passed early leader Max Coates at Club on lap two. He then began to edge away, but it wasn't enough as Dorlin reeled him in and got ahead by going round the outside of Noble and taking the place into Goodwood.

"It's frustrating," admitted Rowbottom. "I had started to pull away a little bit but

even with the gap, the tow is so powerful."

In race two Dorlin grabbed the lead at the start as he beat poleman Paul Rivett off the line. But there was controversy on the first lap as he skipped the chicane and then pulled away. Rivett closed back in, but with two laps to go the race was red-flagged after Lee Pattison and Zak Fulk had a nasty crash out of Allard, denying Rivett the opportunity to reclaim the lead.

Dorlin was handed a 0.6-second post-race penalty for skipping the chicane and lost his fastest lap, but was still able to keep the win.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



BRITISH F4

Race 1 (16 laps) 1 Kiern Jewiss; 2 Ayrton Simmons +1.049s; 3 Paavo Tonteri; 4 Jack Doohan; 5 Patrik Pasma; 6 Johnathan Hoggard.

Fastest lap Doohan 1m13.854s (114.84mph).

Pole Dennis Hauger. **Starters** 14.

Race 2 (14 laps) 1 Jewiss; 2 Tonteri +3.842s; 3 Simmons; 4 Manuel Sulaiman; 5 Josh Skelton; 6 Hauger. **FL** Doohan 1m14.098s (114.46mph). **P** Pasma. **S** 14.

Race 3 (16 laps) 1 Doohan; 2 Simmons +6.733s; 3 Hauger; 4 Pasma; 5 Jewiss; 6 Seb Priaulx. **FL** Jewiss 1m14.382s (114.02mph). **P** Hauger. **S** 14.

Points 1 Simmons 153; 2 Jewiss 148; 3 Doohan 101; 4 Priaulx 100; 5 Hoggard 86; 6 Hauger 74.

RENAULT UK CLIO CUP

Race 1 (9 laps) 1 James Dorlin; 2 Max Coates +0.323s; 3 Daniel Rowbottom; 4 Paul Rivett; 5 Lee Pattison; 6 Jack McCarthy. **FL** Dorlin 1m23.029s (102.15mph). **P** Coates. **S** 19.

Race 2 (8 laps) 1 Dorlin; 2 Rivett +0.105s; 3 Coates; 4 Rowbottom; 5 Michael Epps; 6 McCarthy. **FL** Rivett 1m23.084s (102.08mph). **P** Rivett. **S** 19.

Points 1 Dorlin 118; 2 Coates 114; 3 Rivett 106; 4 Rowbottom 92; 5 McCarthy 92; 6 Epps 71.

GINETTA JUNIOR

Race 1 (12 laps) 1 Patrick Kibble; 2 Adam Smalley +0.163s; 3 Luke Browning; 4 Ruben del Sarte; 5 Greg Johnson; 6 James Hedley. **FL** Fin Green 1m31.539s (92.65mph). **P** Smalley. **S** 18.

Race 2 (13 laps) 1 Smalley; 2 Hedley +0.337s; 3 Louis Foster; 4 del Sarte; 5 Kibble; 6 Green. **FL** Hedley 1m31.683s (92.51mph). **P** Foster. **S** 18.

Points 1 Smalley 186; 2 Foster 176; 3 Browning 174; 4 del Sarte 165; 5 Kibble 136; 6 Hedley 115.

GINETTA GT5 CHALLENGE

Race 1 (14 laps) 1 Geri Nicosia; 2 James Kellett +0.377s; 3 Alex Toth-Jones; 4 Connor O'Brien; 5 Katie Milner; 6 Ashley Marshall. **FL** Nicosia 1m24.685s (100.15mph). **P** Toth-Jones. **S** 30.

Race 2 (16 laps) 1 Max Bird; 2 Nicosia +0.091s; 3 Kellett; 4 Toth-Jones; 5 Will Dyrda; 6 Shane Stoney. **FL** Dyrda 1m24.903s (99.89mph). **P** Nicosia. **S** 29.

Points 1 Kellett 219; 2 Nicosia 170; 3 Stoney 169; 4 Toth-Jones 143; 5 Bird 114; 6 O'Brien 109.



Nicosia steals 66-point haul

GINETTA GT5 CHALLENGE

Geri Nicosia left Thruxton as the happiest of the Ginetta GT5 Challenge contingent, with a win and a second place earning him a massive 66-point haul.

He showed speed early on despite the disruption of a red-flagged start following three messy clashes elsewhere on track.

Alex Toth-Jones started well from pole, but Shane Stoney and Nicosia were soon hounding his rear wing. A clean move on lap eight allowed Nicosia to ease up the inside of Toth-Jones on the pit straight to claim the lead, before

defending from James Kellett for victory.

The momentum continued in the second race as Nicosia held the lead off the start. But two fresh tyres on the left side of the car meant he was vulnerable from those who were rubbered in, most evident when Max Bird was able to quietly catch the leaders, using his grippier tyres at Goodwood and then Woodham Hill to move past Nicosia into the lead on the penultimate lap.

"You are always a bit disappointed when you don't win when you are leading," Nicosia said. "It was a tough race, but it wouldn't be racing if it wasn't hard."

JASON NOBLE





Jackson treble makes him King of the Wolds

CADWELL PARK
HSCC
MAY 19-20

Cameron Jackson had only raced a SsangYong pickup on his local circuit prior to the Historic Sports Car Club's annual Wolds Trophy event, but a straightforward Formula Junior double presaged Sunday's Historic FF1600 victory that put him top of the table as the fourth winner in as many rounds.

That was extremely fortuitous, as Jackson missed a gear while leading at Charlie's on lap three and Saturday winner Nelson Rowe, trying to pass, was launched into a roll. Rowe's Crossle ended up inverted, its engine bay on fire, but he escaped serious injury (see p70).

Jackson, his Lola's suspension tweaked, and Callum Grant, who had bravely stopped

to help, took the restart and finished a subdued one-two. Richard Tarling, third behind Rowe and Grant on Saturday, retired when his Jamun's throttle jammed open.

Ed Thurston, 18, sidelined by driveshaft UJ failure on day one, won Sunday's qualifying heat from 12th on the grid, then came through from net 14th to a superb third in his Elden Mk8. Ben Mitchell, joint points leader with Tarling after Donington, spun from third almost to the back at Park on lap one, but recovered to fourth, carving his way back onto Thurston's tail at the flag.

Saturday's heat featured period Formula Fordsters Glenn Eagling and Tim Brise, plus Stuart Kestenbaum, a class devotee since the early 1980s, at its sharp end. Following a full-course caution, Brian Morris ambushed Eagling to score a precious first win.

With clutch issues hampering FJ debutant Michael O'Brien, Cameron Jackson dominated the 10th Barry Westmoreland Trophy rear-engined races in his Tulip Stable Brabham BT2. Champion Peter de la Roche chased them on day one in Pat Barford's drum-braked Lola Mk3, but clutch failure stopped it on Sunday, letting in Jonathan Fyda.

Cadwell lover Jonathan Lewis blitzed Saturday's Historic Touring Car race from pole in his Snetterton Speed Shop Cooper S.

Having chased the Mini the previous day, Rick Belcher was uncatchable on Sunday, but a 10-second jump-start penalty dropped the two-litre Lotus Cortina to fifth, handing victory to the overjoyed Roger Stanford.

Defending champion John Davison was hurtling to a Historic Road Sports double when a broken throttle cable halted his Lotus Elan on the last lap. Morgan +8 stalwart Richard Plant thus claimed Sunday victory in the model's 50th anniversary year. Kevin Kivlochan growled his sister car from the back to second, its glovebox having fallen out on Saturday, breaking the fuel pump lead connector. After arriving level atop the table with Davison and Kivlochan, Dick Coffey (Turner) moved ahead with a perfect class score.

When Jonathon Hughes missed a gear, buzzing his Merlyn's engine while disputing the lead on Saturday, Jon Milicevic repeated 2017's Justin Haler Trophy Historic F3 double in his pristine Brabham B21B. Paul Waine brought his ex-Claudio Francisci de Sanctis home second ahead of Swiss returnee Christoph Widmer, who dug deep for second ahead of Mike Scott on Sunday.

Back where Historic FF2000 debuted in 2007, a superb Pinto pack demonstrated the top-value class's strength. Following



70s ROAD SPORTS

Race 1 Charles Barter (Datsun 240Z)
Race 2 Will Leverett (Lotus Europa)

CLASSIC CLUBMANS

Race 1 Mark Charteris (Mallock Mk20)
Race 2 Mark Charteris (Mallock Mk20)

HISTORIC FORMULA 3

Race 1 Jon Milicevic (Brabham BT21B)
Race 2 Jon Milicevic (Brabham BT21B)

HISTORIC FORMULA FORD 1600

Saturday Final Nelson Rowe (Crosle 20F)
Heat Brian Morris (Lola T202)
Sunday Final Cameron Jackson (Lola T200)
Heat Ed Thurston (Elden Mk8)

HISTORIC FF2000

Race 1 Benn Simms (Reynard SF77)
Race 2 Benn Simms (Reynard SF77)

HISTORIC FORMULA JUNIOR, FRONT-ENGINE

Race 1 Ray Mallock (U2 Mk2)
Race 2 Stuart Roach (Condor S2)

HISTORIC FORMULA JUNIOR, REAR-ENGINE

Race 1 Cameron Jackson (Brabham BT2)
Race 2 Cameron Jackson (Brabham BT2)

HISTORIC ROAD SPORTS

Race 1 John Davison (Lotus Elan S1)
Race 2 Richard Plant (Morgan +8)

HISTORIC TOURING CARS

Race 1 Jonathan Lewis (Austin Cooper S)
Race 2 Roger Stanford (Ford Lotus Cortina)

SPRITE MIDGET CHALLENGE

Race 1 Steve Collier (MG Midget)
Race 2 Steve Collier (MG Midget)

For full results visit:
www.mstworld.com/results/hssc

a disastrous Donington, Benn Simms dominated in the absence of double champion Andy Park, twice beating Ian Pearson. The unrelated Stuart Pearson and Dave Margetts shared early class honours.

Mark Charteris repeated his Classic Clubmans victory over David Wale and debutant Adrian Holey (in Mallock Racing's hire car) despite his fire extinguisher discharging in race two. Having shadowed B-sport rival Barry Webb throughout Sunday's opener, Clive Wood had given his old rival the slip in the sequel when a broken exhaust burned his plug leads.

Former Haggispeed Clubmans and Classic F3 racer Steve Collier won both Sprite Midget races, making it four on the trot, with David Weston close behind after challenger David Morrison's engine failed in the opener. Drama unfolded in Class E standout Pippa Cow's wake at the start of the event finale when Ian Burgin tagged series sponsor Robin Lackford and ricocheted into Bruce Carter's car, sending it into a 720-degree spin. Ed Easton, unsighted, hit it.

MARCUS PYE

Formula Junior cranks up the action at Cadwell



CADWELL PARK FJHRA FORMULA JUNIOR MAY 19-20

Following two excellent front-engined FJHRA Formula Junior championship-openers at Donington last month, the ante was upped at Cadwell.

The arrival of 2014 FIA Lurani Trophy winner Jonathon Hughes and past master Stuart Roach promised much, while Alex Morton was on form in his Condor S2.

Driveshaft failure in Friday testing thwarted Hughes's plan to debut another ex-Brian Hart Terrier, so he wheeled out his 2016 Monaco-winning Lola Mk2 and netted pole, despite suffering a differential failure.

Its replacement broke in Saturday's race, as Ray Mallock's U2

Mk2 beat Chris Drake's misfiring Terrier. Roach was third in a Condor he had not raced in seven years.

Drake, Mallock, Roach and Morton duked it out on Sunday in the race of the weekend. Drake led Mallock initially, before Roach somehow rounded him at Mansfield corner. Drake struck back before a carburation glitch restricted him to 7800rpm, whereupon Mallock hounded Roach down and Morton threatened Drake.

Overpowered out of Charlie's onto Park Straight, Roach only held off Mallock by sheer tenacity on the brakes and bravado onto the Mountain. Roach prevailed by 0.838 seconds as 1.639s blanketed the quartet. Period Formula Junior racer and 1970s F1 driver Howden Ganley presented the tankards, compounding Roach's joy.

Barter and Leverett win

CADWELL PARK 70s ROAD SPORTS MAY 19-20

The popularity of 70s Road Sports was proven by another 10-marque grid at Cadwell, where reigning champion Charles Barter and Will Leverett tasted victory.

Bouncing back from clutch failure at Snetterton, poleman Barter began Saturday's race cautiously, his Datsun 240Z arriving at Coppice sixth. Leverett (Lotus Europa), Jez Clark (Lotus Elan) and John Williams (Porsche 911SC) set the pace before Barter forged ahead at mid-distance.

After Clark spun out of second in the Hall Bends, and struggled to restart with a broken dynamo, Leverett, Williams, Mark Leverett (Elan) and Jim Dean (Europa) chased Barter.

With Charles at Sunday's Alresford Watercross Festival, son Julian took over the Datsun, in which he had not competed since his race debut at Mallory Park in 2002. Unsure of the clutch he started from the back, but hurtled through to fourth in Leverett Sr's slipstream. Mark had chased son Will initially, then drove well to harass Clark, who had started eighth and shot past on lap five, while Leverett Jr won by 12.8s.

A different kind of royalty takes over Oulton

OULTON PARK
VSCC
MAY 19

With much of the globe consumed by royal-wedding fever over the weekend, you might have thought that round two of the Vintage Sports-Car Club Formula Vintage would have been a safe haven from any mention of royal nuptials.

But royalty of a very different kind was being celebrated some 200 miles north of Windsor at Oulton Park.

Adorned in the legendary azure and navy livery made famous by the tale of the Bugatti Queen, Christopher Mann's show-stealing Alfa Romeo Monza took victory in the Standard & Modified Pre-war Sports Cars – in the process becoming the 2018 winner of the Bill Phillips Trophy.

On a grid of almost 30 cars from one of motor racing's golden eras, including Frazer Nashes, Rileys, Talbots and many more – all with their own histories and stories to tell – it was Mann's race-winning Alfa that had the most poignant background.

The Bugatti Queen colours were in homage to Helle Nice, the early 20th-century French grand prix racer who was among the first female drivers



to compete in the sport.

She drove the same model of Alfa that was on the Oulton Park grid and, despite never winning, held her own against the greats of her time until her near-fatal crash in the 1936 Sao Paolo Grand Prix.

It was perhaps the spirit of the French driver that willed Mann's Alfa past second-place finisher Edward Williams on the line to steal the race win right at the last. Williams's Frazer Nash had

looked comfortable out in front for much of the race.

Boasting a racing pedigree dating back to the early 1930s, the TT Replica was the second model produced in 1932, had raced and finished second at Brooklands, participated in the inaugural race at Donington Park, and even formed part of the 1934 South African Grand Prix grid.

According to owner Charles Gillett, who also owns the Cooper famously



pushed over the line by Jack Brabham in the 1959 United States Grand Prix, all major components are original, but it couldn't quite fight to the end as Mann's Alfa rushed by to win by 0.42s.

Williams admitted afterwards that he did nothing wrong, but joked that the Alfa seemed to have had a sudden burst of an extra 100bhp.

"I always prefer being the chaser rather than being the chased," said Mann. "I think he [Williams] was trying to put me off, but I managed to stay close enough, despite the backmarkers, and fought to the end."

"This is what it's all about, showing these cars in all their worth and having a great time doing it."

Mann seemed to be having such a great time that he didn't even get a chance to celebrate on the podium, instead driving straight through the paddock to join the following race for Vintage & Pre-1961 racing cars. He finished seventh, while Gillett won in a Cooper.

Following the racing, it became a rather more prosaic affair as Mann faced the small matter of negotiating 2018's traffic on his drive home in the pre-war car. But if the public behaved as they had for royalty that day, it would have been a breeze for the Alfa and its regal Bugatti Queen livery.

DOM D'ANGELILLO



FROM SCREEN TO TRACK Alan House's 1959 Morgan 4/4 once made a brief appearance in a mid-1980s episode of *Miss Marple*. Used for a chase sequence, the car was crashed during filming, forcing it to undergo drastic repairs before House got his hands on it only four years ago.



SPIRIT OF THE MEETING Assembled in 1990, Jamie Quartermaine's car might not have been the oldest on the grid, but its DNA comes from some of Vauxhall's earliest vehicles. Parts from a Vauxhall 30-98 and 23-60 form what is lovingly called 'Hannibal the Cannibal'.



LUCKY DISCOVERY When this car was found in a barn in the mid-1970s and bought for £200, little did Mark Brett's father know what he'd stumbled upon. The V8 Ford was one of the first cars to split the front axle into twin swing arms, and to this day all parts except for the engine and wheels are original.

OULTON PARK WEEKEND WINNERS

FERRARI CLASSIC FORMULA SERIES

Race 1 Wayne Marrs (Ferrari F355 Challenge)

Race 2 Wayne Marrs (Ferrari F355 Challenge)

500cc FORMULA 3

Darrell Woods (Staride Mk3)

HANDICAP RACE FOR PRE-WAR CARS

Anthony Fenwick-Wilson (Railton LS Tourer)

MORGAN CHALLENGE

Andrew Thompson (ARV6)

SCRATCH FOR PRE-WAR CARS

Julian Grimwade (Frazer Nash Single Seater)

SPECIAL PRE-WAR SPORTS CARS

Dougal Cawley (GN/Ford Piglet)

STANDARD & MODIFIED PRE-WAR SPORTS CARS

Race 1 Christopher Mann (Alfa Romeo Monza)

Race 2 Tim Kneller (Riley TT Sprite)

VINTAGE RACING CARS & PRE-1961 RACING CARS

Charles Gillett (Cooper T43)

For full results visit:
www.vsc.co.uk



Frenetic F3 Cup races head MSVR meeting

BRANDS HATCH
MSVR
MAY 19-20

Stuart Wiltshire and Cian Carey shared the victory spoils in two hard-fought F3 Cup encounters at Brands Hatch.

At the start of race one Wiltshire and Carey were side by side through Paddock Hill Bend, before Wiltshire led out of Druids and reigning champion Jacopo Sebastiani snatched second at Pilgrims Drop. Sebastiani closed in on the lead but could not breach Wiltshire's defence, while Carey had to fend off a determined Shane Kelly to retain third.

Carey led race two from the start. When Sebastiani spun exiting Paddock on the opening lap, he was collected by Kelly, putting them both out of the race and handing second place to Wiltshire.

As Carey's lead grew, Wiltshire came under pressure from Tony Bishop before all three held station.

Former champion Steve Burgess was a treble winner in the Radical Challenge, after duelling for much of the weekend with team-mate Dominik Jackson.

In race one Jerome de Sadeleer joined them in an early break, before Burgess managed to escape and leave his rivals fighting it out for second. Jackson held on, but de Sadeleer had nosed ahead on the outside into Clearways, only for a touch to leave him in the tyre wall.

Marcello Marateotto inherited a solitary third, with Kristian Jeffrey securing fourth after passing Brian Murphy into Surtees.

Jackson got his revenge on Burgess in race two, but a jump-start penalty robbed him of a lights-to-flag victory and dropped him to third behind Burgess and Marateotto.

Jackson led initially again in the third race but ran wide at Dingle Dell, allowing Burgess to lead out of Stirlings before the stops and go on to dominate the second half of the contest.

Brian Caudwell ran strongly after the stops, retaining second from Richard Baxter and Jeffrey. Baxter was then penalised, handing third to Jeffrey, with Jackson finally settling in fourth.

Ollie Wilkinson's Audi R8 GT3 cruised to three dominant wins in the GT Cup. Nigel Hudson (Aston Martin) and Chris Froggatt (Ferrari 488 Challenge) duelled for second in race one, before it was settled in Hudson's favour, before the McLaren 650S of Paul Gibson closed on Froggatt.

Gibson was through into Druids on lap 12 and closing on Hudson, but he was caught out by a backmarker, crashing out at Surtees and bringing out the red flags.

Froggatt therefore reclaimed third from John Dhillon (Ferrari), Paul Cripps (Aston Martin) and Paul Bailey (Ferrari).

While Wilkinson romped clear from the start of race two, Hudson quickly settled in second after an initial skirmish with John Sawbridge's Ferrari.

Wilkinson secured his hat-trick with Bradley Ellis sharing the Audi in the second half of race three, while Hudson/Adam Wilcox and Froggatt/Sawbridge completed the podium in a fairly predictable race.

Both Racing Saloons races were led from



BRANDS HATCH WEEKEND WINNERS

F3 CUP

Race 1 Stuart Wiltshire (Dallara F308)

Race 2 Cian Carey (Dallara F308)

GT CUP

Race 1 Ollie Wilkinson (Audi R8 GT3)

Race 2 Ollie Wilkinson (Audi R8 GT3)

Race 3 Ollie Wilkinson/Bradley Ellis (Audi R8 GT3)

LMP3 CUP

Race 1 Colin Noble Jr/Tony Wells

(Ligier JSP3)

Race 2 Colin Noble Jr/Tony Wells

(Ligier JSP3)

LOTUS CUP UK & ELISE TROPHY

Race 1 Craig Denman (Lotus Elise S Cup R)

Race 2 Joe Taylor (Lotus Exige S2)

PRODUCTION BMW

Race 1 David Graves (320i)

Race 2 Sam Strong (E30)

RACING SALOONS

Race 1 Nigel Innes (BMW M3 E36)

Race 2 Nigel Innes (BMW M3 E36)

RADICAL CHALLENGE

Race 1 Steve Burgess (SR3 RSX)

Race 2 Steve Burgess (SR3 RSX)

Race 3 Steve Burgess (SR3 RSX)

For full results visit:

www.tsl-timing.com

start to finish by Nigel Innes's BMW E36 M3. The similar cars of Stephen Pearson, Darren Stamp and Karl Cattliff followed in a red-flag-shortened race one, having settled on the opening lap.

It was a four-car break again in race two. While Innes and Pearson started to escape, Cattliff and Stamp battled before Cattliff took charge again exiting Graham Hill Bend on the sixth lap.

Alex Ball had led the Lotus Cup UK & Elise Trophy from the start, breaking clear with Craig Denman and Joe Taylor. But Ball got sideways at Surtees on lap 12 and Denman made the decisive move, leaving Ball fighting off Taylor's challenge – until contact a lap later sent Taylor spinning and promoted John Lamaster to third.

Taylor led race two from the opening lap, with Denman and Ball completing the podium places in the closing laps.

David Graves came out on top of a race-long fight with David Strong to win the first Production BMW race. With Graves out of race two at the first corner, Strong won by 0.078 seconds after a third-lap battle with Will Davison.

Colin Noble Jr/Tony Wells won both LMP3 Cup races, which hit an all-time low: four starters in the first race was reduced to three for the second when Dominic Paul crashed in qualifying.

PETER SCHERER

NATIONAL REPORTS CLUB AUTOSPORT

HOOGERWERFF LETS 'BEAST' LOOSE AT BRANDS

To call Dutchman Johan Hoogerwerff a Volvo fanatic is a bit of an understatement as he currently owns three of the Swedish cars in various guises.

He elected to bring his 'Beast' to Brands Hatch for the Racing Saloons contests. Originally built as an S60 Challenge car for a Swedish-based series in 2001, it had remained fairly idle since Hoogerwerff bought it in 2009.

"I used to race a BMW E30 from 2005-07 but had become inspired by Rickard Rydell, watching him racing the Volvo Super Tourers," he explained. "I then bought a Rydell-lookalike 850 saloon, which I raced for two years until I crashed it at Zandvoort."

He replaced the saloon with another Rydell replica, but this time the estate version, which he has regularly raced in the Dutch Super Touring Car Championship over the past few years. "It has always drawn a lot of interest wherever I take the car, even though I am racing against BMWs etc that cost twice as much," he added.

"We then decided to work on the S60 to lighten it and then put the 2.3 engine from the wrecked 850 saloon into it, so we have spent about two years on the project so far."

Hoogerwerff tries to regularly visit Brands Hatch, and elected to bring his aptly named S60 Beast this year. "I wasn't able to come last season due to clashes with my other race dates, but raced the

estate here two years ago," he said. "We don't get a lot of racing in Holland so it's good to come to the UK, and it's only six hours from home to Brands Hatch.

"Each time we come out in this car we improve it. This is our development car to use the knowledge we have gained from the other cars. Eventually we think it will be quicker than the Super Tourers."

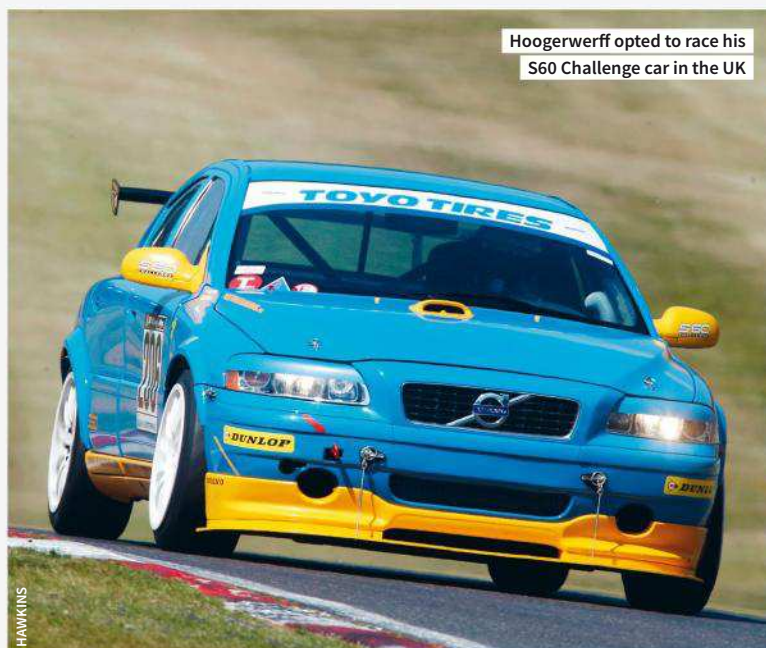
Having qualified seventh on the huge 34-car Racing Saloons grid, Hoogerwerff missed the start of the first race when the alternator failed, then had to start from the back of the grid in the second race. He was closing in on the top 10 when he was forced to drop out on lap six.

It may have been a disappointing weekend for the travelling Dutchman, but he has this weekend's Super Touring Car race to look forward to at Spa-Francorchamps. "We are back out with the estate again. Overall I suppose it's probably been my favourite of the cars I have owned and raced," he said.

"But my wife wants to know why I need three race cars, when I can only race one at a time!"

Although there are no plans for Hoogerwerff to compete in the UK again this year, he is already looking forward to his next visit: "I love the Brands Hatch GP circuit – it's so challenging, it's got history and it's fairly close and not too expensive for us to travel here."

PETER SCHERER



Hoogerwerff opted to race his S60 Challenge car in the UK



INSIDE FORMULA 1'S FAN

It's an inescapable truth that, eventually, even the mightiest empire will fall. But what is usually much less certain is the exact shape of what comes next.

Formula 1's own emperor, Bernie Ecclestone, was taken rather by surprise shortly after Liberty Media bought the series in late 2016, kicking him upstairs to the role of 'chairman emeritus'. Fortunately for the immediate future of F1, this was more of a palace coup than a case of barbarians at the gates.

Ecclestone's reluctance to embrace new ideas to attract younger viewers to F1 was well known. But under the fresh stewardship of Liberty, the Formula One Group has started to experiment with new ways of "demystifying" the sport, in the words of Dean Locke, F1 head of broadcast and media. Locke's team, which travels to every grand prix, has pinpointed the ways in which the younger F1 fan wants to communicate in "everyday life" and has made changes to the world feed to reflect this.

"It's been a huge ethos for us this season and we really looked at what we had graphically," explains Locke. "People are using icons in everyday life now, and we are trying to use the universal language of icons to tell the story of a complicated sport."

One of the biggest factors in deciding the outcome of any grand prix is the tyres. And with seven slick Pirelli compounds available this season, Locke's team had a "huge conversation" about the "really key" tyre information they needed to convey.

"Last year there was a lot of getting people into a room and asking them if there was anything on the screen that they didn't understand," he says. "They were saying, 'What is that yellow SS and what is SS?'"

It was clear that a balance needed to be struck, without "taking up too much real estate on screen".

The solution devised by the graphics department includes a pop-up box, where the key information is displayed, giving the expected wear and life of that compound.



New pop-up graphic follows the contours of the car's halo



REVOLUTION

But whenever you simplify or explain something fundamental, you run the risk of upsetting more diehard fans. Locke's colleague Justin Laurie, F1 technical producer, was wary of oversimplifying it.

"It's a fine balance," admits Laurie. "It is a complicated sport and you want to be able to tell that story in a really simple way. But the challenge is finding the balance between the expert aficionado who understands all the data, and then the casual fan who might not know where to look if you put something too complicated up."

The team introduced a new pop-up graphic for the Azerbaijan Grand Prix, giving a visual representation of engine

"YOU WANT TO TELL THE STORY IN A SIMPLE WAY"

revs and throttle and brake application, and shaped so that it overlaid the halo as viewed through the in-car camera. This is just the latest in a long line of improvements.

For several years the race order was displayed in a running ticker along the bottom of the screen. This actually wasn't that useful; the current arrangement, a stack on the left of the screen, is much better.

"Obviously the goal is to engage with new fans and excite people a bit more this year and make all the graphics easier to understand," says Locke. "The good thing is that it keeps evolving."

It's the people who should be the main beneficiaries of a revolution, and F1's TV overhaul is aimed squarely at them.

JAKE NICHOL

HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK

GRAND PRIX – THE PAST COMES ALIVE

Watch iconic machines from motorsport's glory days back on track where they belong in this hour-and-20-minute Duke Video production showing some of the best action from Historic Grand Prix Cars Association and FIA Historic Formula One Championship events in 2010. Go to <http://bit.ly/pastcomesalive>

THIS WEEKEND'S EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Monaco GP

Formula 1 World Championship

Rd 6/21

Monte Carlo, Monaco

May 27

TV Live Channel 4, Sunday 1300.
Sky Sports F1, Sunday 1230.
Radio BBC
Radio 5 Live, Sunday 1400.

TV Highlights

Sky Sports F1, Sunday 2030

DON'T MISS

Formula 2

Rd 4/12

Monte Carlo, Monaco

May 25-26

TV Live Sky Sports F1, Friday 1025, Saturday 1600

Formula Renault Eurocup

Rd 4/10

Monte Carlo, Monaco

May 26-27

TV Live BT Sport 1, Saturday 0845. BT Sport 2, Sunday 1015

Porsche Supercup

Rd 2/9

Monte Carlo, Monaco

May 27

TV Live Eurosport 2, Sunday 0915.
Sky Sports F1, Sunday 0925

Indianapolis 500

IndyCar Series

Rd 6/16

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

May 27

TV Live BT Sport 1, Sunday 1530

Indy Lights

Rd 4/10

Indianapolis, Indiana, USA

May 25

Super Formula

Rd 3/7

Sugo, Japan

May 27

Japanese F3

Rd 2/8

Sugo, Japan

May 26-27

NASCAR Cup

Rd 13/36

Charlotte, North Carolina, USA

May 27

TV Live Premier Sports, Sunday 2230

24 Hour Series

Rd 4/8

Imola 12 Hours, Italy

May 25-26

UK MOTORSPORT

Silverstone BARC

May 25-27

World Rallycross, RX2, Americas Rallycross

Kirkistown 500MRCI

May 26

Saloon Enduro, Road Sports, Ford Fiesta Zetec, FF1600, Saloon/GTs, Supercars

Snetterton BRSCC

May 26-27

British GT, BRDC British F3, Ginetta G40s, VW Cup, Ginetta RDC, Mini Challenge, Northern Saloons & Sportscars

Brands Hatch MSVR

May 26-27

Masters Historic Festival: Historic F1, Historic F2, Historic Sports, Gentleman Drivers, Endurance Legends, Pre 66 Touring Cars, Young Timers

Croft 750MC

May 26-27

BMW 330s, BMW Car Club, Formula Vee, Locost, RGB Sports 1000, Roadsports, Hot Hatch, 5Club MX-5s, M3 Cup

Anglesey BARC

May 26-27

MaX5, CNC Sports/ Saloons, Legends, Scottish Mini Coopers, Scottish Fiesta and Hot Hatch/Scottish BMWs, Scottish Legends

Mallory Park BARC

May 28

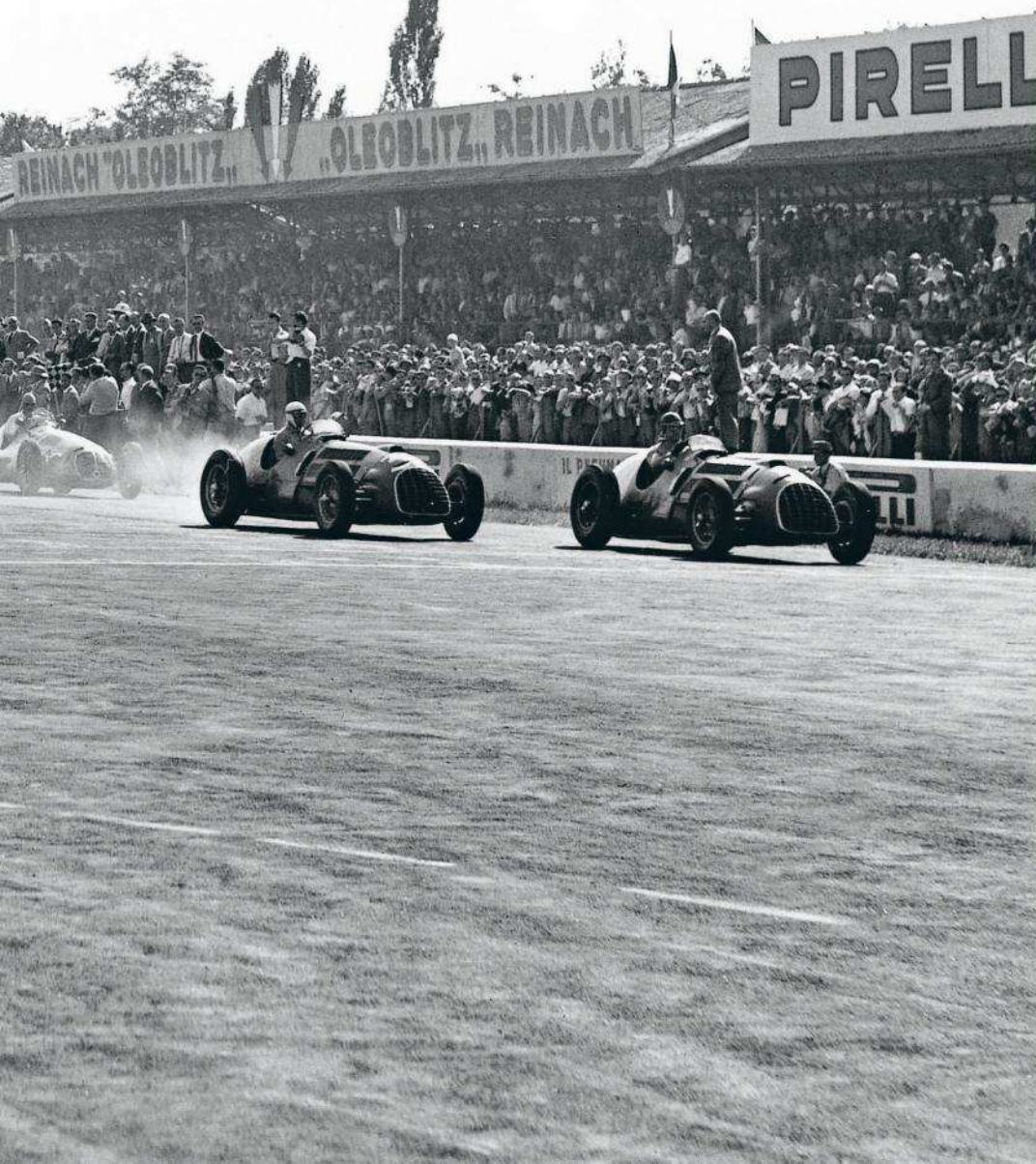
Hyundai Coupes, Pre '66 Touring Cars, Pre '83 Group 1 Touring Cars, Pre '93 Touring Cars, Pre '03 Touring Cars, Pre '05 Touring Cars, Blue Oval Saloons, Classic and Historic Thunder Saloons

Castle Combe CCRC

May 28

FF1600, Caterham Graduates, GTs, Saloons, Hot Hatches





FROM THE ARCHIVE

The Ferrari 125s of polesitter Alberto Ascari and Luigi Villorresi lead the field away at the start of the 1949 Italian Grand Prix at Monza. Ascari won the 80-lap race in a time of 2h58m53.6s, one lap ahead of Philippe Etancelin's Talbot-Lago T26C. Villorresi was forced to retire with gearbox problems after 26 laps.



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TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

QUIZ

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN?



WHO IS THIS?

This village-town native took an offbeat route to the top before helping pave the way for many more to follow in his wheeltracks.

He trailed around in circles before making his name as the most serious rival to a future legend in the nation's top feeder series.

With the help of a trucking magnate he was given his big break, and at a Kent amphitheatre he produced a gladiatorial performance. An entente cordiale promised much but failed to deliver, so he was forced to work all around the clock for his kicks.

Tragedy gave him a way back in and he was all of a quiver for a long stretch, briefly interrupted by a spell with a fallen idol. The king of the jungle ensured he stood on top of the world, but a return to domestic bliss ended in disappointment. His effervescent charm made him the ideal lynchpin for an old boys' club; he performed the role with aplomb before stepping down with dignity.

ON THIS DAY

1 Today is Ivan Capelli's birthday. He came close to winning the 1990 French GP, but he also led one other grand prix. Which was it?

2 Which legendary F1 constructor scored its first pole position on this day in 1964?

3 Who did Al Unser Jr beat by 0.043s on this day in 1992 in the closest Indy 500 ever?

4 It's Hannu Mikkola's birthday. How many times did he win the 1000 Lakes Rally?

5 Pedro Lamy broke his leg on this day in 1994 in F1 testing with Lotus. He returned with Minardi and scored a point, but where and when?

NAME THE HELMET

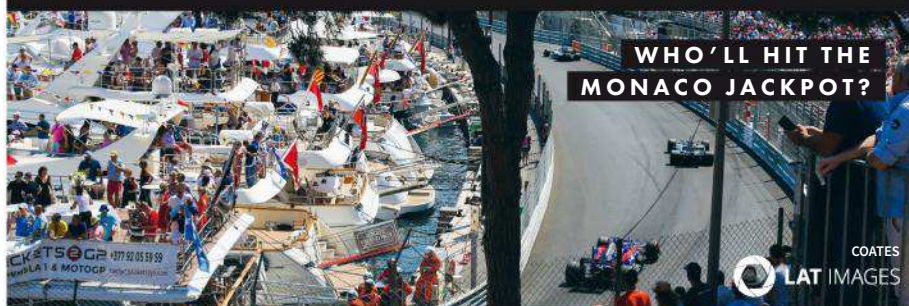


LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

Who, what, where, when Jean Alesi, Fan Force United Dallara-Lotus, Indy 500, May 27 2012. **Who is this?**

Alberto Ascari. **On this day** 1) Nigel Mansell. 2) 8. 3) 3. 4) Oliver Jarvis. 5) 32. **Name the helmet** Clay Regazzoni.

IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE



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