

FREE INSIDE! NATIONAL RALLY CALENDAR

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NATIONAL RALLY CALENDAR 2014
THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MOTORSPORT NEWS

| Event | Date | Location | Class |
|-------|----------------|----------|-------|
| WRC | 12-14 Feb | Sweden | WRC |
| WRC | 19-21 Feb | Spain | WRC |
| WRC | 26-28 Feb | France | WRC |
| WRC | 5-7 Mar | Italy | WRC |
| WRC | 12-14 Mar | Portugal | WRC |
| WRC | 19-21 Mar | Poland | WRC |
| WRC | 26-28 Mar | Germany | WRC |
| WRC | 2-4 Apr | UK | WRC |
| WRC | 9-11 Apr | France | WRC |
| WRC | 16-18 Apr | Spain | WRC |
| WRC | 23-25 Apr | Italy | WRC |
| WRC | 30 May - 1 Jun | France | WRC |
| WRC | 7-9 Jun | Spain | WRC |
| WRC | 14-16 Jun | Portugal | WRC |
| WRC | 21-23 Jun | Poland | WRC |
| WRC | 28-30 Jun | Germany | WRC |
| WRC | 5-7 Jul | UK | WRC |
| WRC | 12-14 Jul | France | WRC |
| WRC | 19-21 Jul | Spain | WRC |
| WRC | 26-28 Jul | Italy | WRC |
| WRC | 2-4 Aug | Portugal | WRC |
| WRC | 9-11 Aug | Poland | WRC |
| WRC | 16-18 Aug | Germany | WRC |
| WRC | 23-25 Aug | UK | WRC |
| WRC | 30 Sep - 2 Oct | France | WRC |
| WRC | 7-9 Oct | Spain | WRC |
| WRC | 14-16 Oct | Portugal | WRC |
| WRC | 21-23 Oct | Poland | WRC |
| WRC | 28-30 Oct | Germany | WRC |
| WRC | 4-6 Nov | UK | WRC |
| WRC | 11-13 Nov | France | WRC |
| WRC | 18-20 Nov | Spain | WRC |
| WRC | 25-27 Nov | Italy | WRC |
| WRC | 2-4 Dec | Portugal | WRC |
| WRC | 9-11 Dec | Poland | WRC |
| WRC | 16-18 Dec | Germany | WRC |
| WRC | 23-25 Dec | UK | WRC |
| WRC | 30 Dec - 1 Jan | France | WRC |

Flying Finn takes WRC points lead with Swedish win

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MOTORSPORT NEWS



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LATVALA I'M NOT AFRAID OF OGIER



WRC

By David Evans

Rally Sweden winner Jari-Matti Latvala says he has nothing to fear from team-mate and world champion Sébastien Ogier after beating him last week.

Latvala collected his third Swedish win in Karlstad to move to the top of the WRC table, while Ogier slid into a snowbank and could only fight back to sixth place.

Latvala's new approach, p2-3



Ogier struck a snowbank

PLUS EXCLUSIVE KRIS MEEKE COLUMN > P24

RALLY THE 1400 THRILLERS
BTRDA RALLY SERIES PREVIEW P20

RACING THE NEXT BRABHAM
THIRD GENERATION STAR PROFILED P18

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MOTORSPORT NEWS ISSUE **JA2911** FEBRUARY 12 2014

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Haymarket Publishing,
Teddington Studios,
Broom Road, Teddington,
Middlesex, TW11 9BE

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IN THIS ISSUE



"Red Bull will come back out fighting"

P4

INGRAM SEALS BTCC DEAL WITH SPEEDWORKS



P6



'MEEKE'S SNOW DEBUT BETTER THAN LOEB'S'

P12



BTRDA STARS OF THE 1400 SERIES PREPARE FOR BATTLE

P21

WHY GT4 IS SUDDENLY BOOMING



P19

| | | | |
|------------------------------------|----|---|-----------|
| Historic race and rally news | 11 | Rally reports | 28 |
| Profile: Sam Brabham | 18 | SUBSCRIBE TO MOTORSPORT NEWS | 28 |
| Insight: The growth of GT4 | 19 | Karting round-up | 30 |
| Preview: BTRDA Rally Series | 20 | Sporting Scene round-up | 31 |
| WRC report: Rally Sweden | 22 | Letters/Comment/What's On | 32 |
| Insight: Modernising the Metro 6R4 | 26 | Classifieds | 34 |
| Galway Rally report | 27 | Wanted: The WRC to count in the Winter Olympics. Cresta Special Stage anyone? | |



FOR MOTORSPORT NEWS STAFF CONTACT DETAILS PLEASE SEE P33

Finn says that psychological toughness



Latvala says that work on his mental approach is beginning to reap rewards with his win

By David Evans

World Rally Championship leader Jari-Matti Latvala says a new approach is already paying dividends – and he's getting stronger as the year progresses.

The 28-year-old has employed fellow Finn Marcus Grönholm's psychological coach in order to provide a harder edge to his performances this year and Latvala was quick to praise the work of Christoph Treier in his second victory for Volkswagen.

Latvala told *MN*: "Christoph has taught me to keep the focus and if I'm losing the focus, how to bring it back. I am too excited before the event and now he tries to keep me relaxed. I don't want to go into the details, but we do relaxation and concentration methods before the rally."

Treier's work came to the fore at the end of the second day, when Latvala's nearest rival – fellow Polo R WRC driver Andreas Mikkelsen – closed the gap from ten to three seconds going into the final day.

Latvala explained: "When I was having a problem in the Hagfors Sprint, when I lost time because my tyres were bad, I was upset and angry and I started to doubt myself and bringing back the feeling was a very important role from Christoph. It's true. In the old days, when I was not doing well then I would just increase the throttle and end up in a snowbank!"

Confidence is coming

While Latvala accepts that he has yet to beat Ogier in a straight fight – his Acropolis win last year came after the Frenchman suffered an electrical fault – he feels his confidence is coming and he's adamant that Ogier holds no fear for him.

"He is a strong driver mentally and all the elements he has, he is very difficult to beat," said Latvala. "But the first thing is that you should never be afraid – if you are afraid then you can't achieve anything. You need to have the respect, but you need not to be afraid."

"After this rally he will be even stronger coming to Mexico – he has a big passion for winning, but overall it's important to

think about things and if there's a rally where I can't beat him then I back off and wait for the next one. Even when you are driving against the best driver, you can still win with tactics."

Ogier stunned with awesome speed as he raced back through the field to sixth place, having spent more than four minutes in a snowbank on the Lesjefors stage on Friday morning. Latvala admitted that, without Ogier's accident, his victory would have been a lot harder.

"There's no doubt," said Latvala, "without that mistake, he would have been very difficult to beat. He was good at saving his tyres in the places where the gravel was coming through and this was something I was struggling with."

As soon as he was back on the road, Ogier made it clear he had one objective. "We will go for it," he said at lunchtime on Friday.

Latvala added that not being part of the lead battle made Ogier's job more straightforward. He added: "When you are out, you have less pressure and you can push even harder because you don't need to worry about making a mistake any more. He was very, very fast."

Ogier's error

Ogier rued a missed opportunity. He said: "It was my stupid mistake. I had done the hard part – driving first on the road on the first day was the difficult part – and then I made this stupid mistake by losing concentration a little bit. After that I had fun going as fast as I could."

Latvala is now desperate to make the most of his best ever start to the season.

He added: "I have had difficult starts to the season so many times and not done so good starts. And when you are at a low point in the start, it's so difficult – halfway in the year you have already lost your championship. I wanted to concentrate to get a good start for the season – I got fifth in the Monte and I knew it would be important to get a good position over here to keep the title interesting. I've done that now. What is important for me is that I have won a fast rally – this was where I was struggling last season. It's a good position for me now."

Latvala – one of the sport's keenest historians – was also quick to point out how special his third Sweden win was.

"This is," he said, "a very special moment winning three times – but there are also some legendary drivers who have won more than two times here."

"It's great to be among drivers like Stig Blomqvist, Bjorn Waldegård, Tommi Mäkinen and Marcus Grönholm."



Latvala's first Swedish win in 2008

HEADLINE NEWS

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com and Volkswagen

will help him to up his game

LATVALA

I HAVE THE MENTAL STRENGTH TO WIN TITLE

WRC STANDINGS

After two of 13 rounds

| POS | DRIVER | POINTS |
|-----|--------------------|--------|
| 1 | Jari-Matti Latvala | 40 |
| 2 | Sébastien Ogier | 35 |
| 3 | Mads Østberg | 30 |
| 4 | Andreas Mikkelsen | 24 |
| 5 | Bryan Bouffier | 18 |
| 6 | Kris Meeke | 17 |



Latvala is excited by his strong start to the season

BY NUMBERS

5

Stage wins by Latvala

10

Stage wins by Ogier

3

Rally Sweden wins for Latvala (2008, 2012, 2014)

9

Career WRC wins for Latvala

4m 30.5s

Time lost by Sébastien Ogier with his SS8 off

4m 29.9s

Time gap between Latvala and Ogier at the end of the rally

Capito says Mikkelsen exceeded expectations with battling performance at the front on Rally Sweden

Volkswagen team boss Jost Capito has praised the speed shown by Andreas Mikkelsen on the Norwegian's first visit to the World Rally Championship podium in Sweden last week.

The former Skoda Motorsport UK driver was always in contention for his first win in Sweden and Capito says he has no doubt he will be back at the front again later this season.

Capito praised the team's junior driver saying: "Last year was the learning year for Andreas. Sébastien

[Ogier] had 6000 miles of testing in 2012 and 2013, so he was by far in the best position and then Jari-Matti had quite a lot of tests when he joined, but Andreas had the minimum testing and – you know – there are not a lot of test days allowed each year.

"He did a fantastic job last year and this year we said that where he is confident and he has done the rally a couple of times then he can fight for the podium. Sweden was the first of these and I think he has done

a fantastic job, not just fighting for the podium, but also for the victory.

"What's impressive is that this is not a result which was given to him by failure or mistakes of others, he was fighting from the beginning – setting the fast time in the first stage – and then he was in the top all of the weekend. That was more than we have thought [possible] and we have expected a lot of him this weekend, but it was much more [that he delivered]. Everybody in the team has been impressed."

Mikkelsen admitted he had struggled to sleep on Friday night, when he was just three seconds off the lead with one day to go. Hitting a snow bank in the final day's second stage cost him the chance of victory. From then on, it was about his first podium – but as he closed on that, the nerves returned again.

"In the last section of the last stage, the ski slope area, it's one of the most tricky places," said Mikkelsen, "my legs were shaking! It's an incredible feeling."



Mikkelsen: career best

RACING NEWS

F1 ROUND UP



Honda to open

Honda chiefs say that their new F1 facility in Milton Keynes will open in June. The Japanese manufacturer is moving the test and development of its 2015 F1 engine to the UK. The UK plant will handle the dyno testing and assembly of the new engines and will work alongside the main plant in Sakura City, Japan.

Sutil expects step

Adrian Sutil has predicted that his Sauber team will make a big step forward in testing next week after a disappointing first run at Jerez. Sauber struggled for grip in Spain and is already rushing through a raft of aerodynamic upgrades for Bahrain. Sutil said: "The test was more like a rollout for us because we didn't have all of the parts on the car and it was very different from how it will be in Bahrain."

David Robertson

Formula One manager David Robertson has passed away at the age of 70. Robertson worked as a driver manager alongside his son Steve and made a name for himself by helping young drivers break into F1. After helping Jenson Button into a seat with Williams in 2000 he brokered Kimi Räikkönen's Sauber deal. Robertson had looked after Räikkönen's career ever since and also helped establish top F3 squad Double R Racing.

F1's TV drop

Formula One TV audiences fell by an average of ten per cent last year. The official global media report for 2013 shows that F1's worldwide audience fell to 450 million, down from more than half a billion in 2012. The UK bucked the trend with 29 million viewers, a two per cent increase on 2012. Bernie Ecclestone put some of the blame down to the dominance of four-time world champion Sebastian Vettel and his Red Bull Racing team. He said: "The less than competitive nature of the final few rounds had a predictable impact on reach. But the effect is exaggerated when you consider there was one less race last season."

Heikki's form

Caterham head Tony Fernandes has confessed that Heikki Kovalainen's disappointing end of season form last term was a factor in the Finn not landing a full-time seat with the team this year. Kovalainen was heavily tipped to return to F1 with Caterham this season, but he struggled and failed to score a point with Lotus when he stepped in to deputise for the injured Kimi Räikkönen for the last two races of last season. Fernandes said: "We would be lying if we said it [Kovalainen's form] didn't play a part in our decision. In any decision there are pros and cons."



Mercedes looked strong during first F1 test runs

MERCEDES PLAYS DOWN TEST FORM

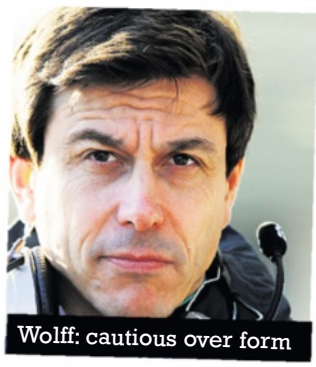
Team chief: it's too early to name squad title favourites

By Rob Ladbrook

Mercedes AMG F1 Team head Toto Wolff has played down talk that his squad is favourite to win the opening race of the year in Australia next month.

Mercedes shone during the opening test of the year at Jerez in Spain recently, with the factory team clocking up the most miles of any squad across the four days. All four Mercedes-engined teams also enjoyed unrivalled reliability during the test, with its engines covering more than twice the mileage of closest rival Ferrari. While neither Lewis Hamilton nor Nico Rosberg topped any of the days in their Silver Arrows, their times were consistent enough to land the team the tag of pre-season favourite.

Wolff said it would be wrong to read into the pecking order after one test. "In past seasons, the favourites after the first few days of testing are not always in the same position at the first race," he said.



Wolff: cautious over form

"I think we have to have a certain degree of caution, especially at this early stage. A few different teams have looked strong so far and in different ways. But we won't know the full story for a while yet; not even after the first few races I wouldn't say.

"In terms of mileage I'd say we're ahead of schedule, while in terms of the bits and pieces we have struggled with and with the challenges ahead I think we're where we expected to be at this

stage. We're some way from the full potential and there's a few things that aren't functioning as we'd like them to. However we're proud of the car and the team we have produced."

Wolff also said that he still feared Red Bull, despite the Milton Keynes team enduring a torrid first test in Spain (see sidebar).

"At this stage our engine has an advantage, yes, but certainly for the long term I would say no we don't have an advantage," added Wolff. "Red Bull and Renault have had a big handicap having not driven much at Jerez, but it is too early to start talking about overturning hierarchies. It's not good for F1 that a manufacturer is in trouble, but I am sure they, both Renault and Red Bull, will come back strongly. They have an outstanding driver [in Sebastian Vettel] and they have a strong group of people that works very well. Lastly they have the resources so there is no reason Red Bull won't again be the benchmark."

Marko: Red Bull will regain form

Red Bull Racing advisor Dr Helmut Marko has told German media that the team's early issues can be fixed in time for next week's Bahrain test. The new RB10 completed just 21 laps at Jerez due to a litany of overheating and technical issues before a mechanical failure ended the team's test early on the final day. Speaking to *Auto Bild* last week, Marko explained that the new RB10 would require a redesign of the rear end, but pointed to the

team's previous form in recovering from early teething issues.

Marko said: "We do need to redesign certain things to fix the problems. It's very annoying, but I keep remembering 2010 [Sebastian Vettel's first championship-winning year], we also did not test then for the first week.

"Adrian's [Newey, technical chief] concept with the RB10 is good in principle – I think our car is very elegant, and beautiful cars are usually also fast."

Marko says RB10 needs a redesign



Formula One chiefs to discuss qualifying changes in a bid to force cars to take to the track rather than save tyres

The FIA and Formula One teams will meet in Bahrain next week to discuss a host of changes to the qualifying format for this year.

According to reports, the governing body will sit down

with teams to evaluate changes to the current format in an attempt to spice up the appeal of Saturdays to fans. Last year qualifying was heavily criticised after many drivers opted not to run in the final part of

qualifying in order to save tyres for the race.

A number of options will be tabled, including the provision of dedicated sets of tyres for qualifying from Pirelli. Teams will also look at extending the

length of the final phase to allow extra time for flying laps and a tweak to the rules mandating that teams start the race on the set of tyres they used in Q2 instead of the Q3 set. That would allow drivers to push flat-out for

the best time without compromising race strategy.

The meeting will take place on February 21 and any changes are expected to be rushed into place ahead of the first race of the season on March 14-16.

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"It's basically a road car for the track"

The rise of the GT4 class, p19



Photos:Nathan Wong/Bathurst12Hours

LOWNDES CONQUERS BATHURST 12 HOURS



The winning Ferrari crew celebrates victory

Maranello Motorsport car held off a strong late threat

The Maranello Motorsport Ferrari crew triumphed in the closest ever finish of the Bathurst 12 Hours, taking the flag just 0.4s clear of the rival HTP Motorsport Mercedes Benz squad.

Maranello's team of V8 Supercar ace Craig Lowndes, Peter Edwards, John Bowe and Mika Salo held off a final lap charge from the Mercedes SLS AMG GT3 of Harold Primat, Thomas Jäger and Maximilian Buhk after a late safety car closed up the pack.

With just 20 minutes remaining, the caution period eroded Lowndes' advantage over Buhk, who had fought back from two laps down after a brake issue. The pair duelled side-by-side through Quarry with just five minutes left.

Lowndes, who has won the Bathurst 1000 V8 Supercar race five times, held on to clinch his first 12 hour trophy.

The team dedicated their victory to Danish star Allan Simonsen, who had raced with Maranello in previous years and established the circuit GT3 lap record in one of its Ferraris. Simonsen was killed at last year's Le Mans 24 Hours.

"The Mercedes was closing the gap to us really fast before the safety car even came out so we were hanging on," said Lowndes. "I knew the Merc would be fast in a straight line, but the team were telling me all week that we had a speed advantage over the top section of the track, which I really enjoy. I had to push to get any gap at all, just to get a car and a half as a buffer, but I never knew if it would be enough.

"With two or three laps to go I was running on the inside line, trying to make him go the long way round. We didn't change the brakes late on and they were fading so I'm really thankful time

ran out because I'm not sure I could have done another lap at that pace."

Will Davison, Greg Crick and ex-Formula Ford racer Jack LeBrocq finished third in their Mercedes SLS AMG GT3.

It was a tough event for the Brits. Rob Huff was forced out of the event after four hours when his Rotek Racing Audi R8 LMS developed an engine fault. The team were on class pole but retired with a damaged valve spring before Huff got a stint.

Former British touring car champion Gordon Shedden also had his event cut short after his Motionsport Lotus Exige suffered mechanical woe before an alternator problem sidelined the car after 68 laps. Ex-Carrera Cup GB star Ben Barker restored some British cheer, helping the Grove Group Porsche 997 GT3 Cup crew to victory in Class B and eighth overall with Earl Bamber and Stephen Grove.

THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP



Former Citroën World Rally Team boss Olivier Quesnel has been tipped to join Formula One this year and take the vacant team principal role at Lotus. French media has said that

Quesnel, who also headed up Peugeot's Le Mans programme, could replace Eric Boullier, who has switched to McLaren... Ex-F1 racer Vitantonio Liuzzi will race in the Super Formula series in Japan this season. He has joined Honda squad Team Real to contest the single-seater class in a 550bhp Dallara. The Italian will also race for Autobacs Racing Team Aguri in Super GT, sharing a Honda with Kosuke Matsuura... Alexandre Prémat has been signed by Volvo to race in three V8 Supercar endurance events this season. The ex-Audi sportscar driver will share one of the S60s at Sandown, Bathurst and Gold Coast...

Tincknell in sportscar switch with Jota Sport

Formula Three frontrunner Harry Tincknell will contest his maiden sportscar campaign this year after joining up with the Jota Sport team.

British driver Tincknell has been drafted in to share the squad's Zytek-Nissan Z11SN alongside regular racer Simon Dolan. Tincknell, 22, is likely to contest the full European Le Mans Series and the Le Mans 24 Hours. A third driver for the team is yet to be announced.

Jota Sport boss Sam Hignett explained: "Harry is a hungry young driver with bags of experience and I'm sure that will translate through into sportscar racing.

"There's a wealth of talented guys emerging from single-



Tincknell: set to join Jota

seaters and we feel that, in Harry, we've landed one of the best."

Tincknell tested with Jota in Spain last year and has also worked with the Strakka Racing team. He finished fifth in the FIA European F3 Championship last term.

Force India grows with GP2 development arm

Force India will expand to run in the GP2 Series this season after linking up with the Hilmer Motorsport squad.

Hilmer's cars will run in the colours of Vijay Mallya's F1 squad as Force India looks to expand its young driver development programme. The team will field second-year driver Daniel Abt and GP3 frontrunner Facu Regalia this season.

Force India runs a 'One in a

Billion' talent search in India that funnels promising drivers through karting. Mallya said the GP2 deal allowed the team to add an extra rung to its ladder: "We've always placed an emphasis on young drivers, so the GP2 deal is great," he said. "Having a presence in GP2 moves us closer to having a holistic development programme from grassroots karting up to the higher echelons of the sport."



Honda shook down its new generation Civic World Touring Car Championship challenger at Motorland Aragón in Spain last week. The car will be driven by Gabriele Tarquini and Tiago Monteiro in the works team, while two others will be run by customer squads

MN'S EYES IN THE F1 PADDOCK

TONY DODGINS

"Robertson had always been a sharp cookie"



Very sad to see the passing of Dave Robertson, Kimi Räikkönen's manager, who succumbed to cancer last week in his early seventies.

I first met him in '85, covering FF1600, in which son Steve was racing. He phoned up one day: would I go up to his offices for a chat?

It turned out he wanted to help Steve build a profile with a bit of PR but didn't want him to know. Didn't want to be seen to be interfering. Bit of a tall order without him knowing, I said, but agreed to do some stuff in the local press.

He was a self-made wheeler-dealer, that much was obvious – cars, security, window etching, early mobile phones, under the Midas name.

Later that same year I was organising a magazine feature that involved a couple of Formula Fords being driven at Brands Hatch for half a day. It was just before the Festival and Dave had hired the circuit exclusively, then sub-let to the quick teams, so they could do some meaningful testing without too many rabbits in the way.

"It'll be £125 for your guys to join in," he said.

"Fine," I said, knowing the magazine didn't have a budget for it but reckoning I could wing it. After the test I presented him with a cheque.

"But that's a personal cheque not a company one?" he queried, looking puzzled.

"Worried it's rubber?" I laughed. "Tell you what, we'll have a game of squash for it – double or quits!"

He went for it and I relaxed. It had been a couple of years but I used to play almost every day and he was giving me 20 years. There was no way...

He was due in London the next week but insisted I go back up to his offices to play, where he had his own court. Which is when I should have smelled a rat.

The first game was no problem – 9-2. Then I broke a string. He lent me a spare racquet that played like it'd been strung with spaghetti. Everything I hit to the corners came out mid-court and on the 'T' he was more obstructive than Fran Cotton (apologies if you're not a certain age...).

He won 3-1, loved it and I handed over a cheque for £250. "Know what you're dealing with, Tone!" he hooted, as he made a big play of handing it to a gorgeous secretary and telling her not to bank it. "The court..." I said, "the angles seemed a bit odd?"

"Eighteen inches narrower than standard!" he replied, laughing even harder. "Like I say, know what you're dealing with!"

A month later, there was the £250 on my bank statement. I knew what I'd been dealing with. In later years I often wondered whether Peter Sauber, Ron Dennis and Luca di Montezemolo did! The Kimster is a very rich man...



AGREE/DISAGREE?
mn.letters@haymarket.com

RACING NEWS

IN BRIEF

Jordan goes alone
Reigning champion Andrew Jordan's Pirtek Racing team will be without the full-time support of engineer Adam Hardy this year. Hardy, who is Jordan's brother-in-law, has tied up a deal to work in the DTM this season. He will still have input into the engineering of Jordan's machine and will be involved behind-the-scenes with development.

Champion on track

Jordan hit the track for the first time this year when he tested the Pirtek Racing Honda Civic at Brands Hatch last week. Jordan, who claimed his maiden BTCC crown at the Kent venue last season, said he was working through refinements to the two-litre turbocharged car and was also working on some aspects of his driving technique. "It's nice to come back here with less pressure," he quipped. He was joined on track at the test by his new-for-2014 team-mate, championship returnee Martin Depper.

Moffat's Laser deal
Laser Tools has confirmed that it will back Aiden Moffat's first full season in the British Touring Car Championship. The 17-year-old Scot will race the ex-IP Tech Chevrolet Cruze, which was handled by Andy Neate and Mike Bushell last season, under the new Laser Tools Racing banner.

Water woe for eBay

The eBay Motors British Touring Car Championship team was forced into dramatic measures to halt the threat of flooding at its Sunbury-on-Thames base. The team, along with adjoining businesses at its riverside base, were forced to buy one ton of sand bags to protect the workshops against the rising water on Monday. "It is the last thing we need as we prepare for the new season," said team boss Dick Bennetts.

Airwaves gets close

The Airwaves Racing team, which confirmed former champion Fabrizio Giovanardi as its lead driver last week, it closing in on a deal to announce its second driver within the next two weeks. The team, which runs the Next Generation Touring Car Ford Focus, will also run a third car under a separate banner.

Webber's honour

Ex-F1 racer Mark Webber was named as the recipient of the John Nicol Trophy at the British Racing and Sports Car Club awards evening in Stratford-upon-Avon on Saturday night. The accolade is given annually to those who have done the most to promote the sport. Webber's trophy was collected by his close friend Wendy Jennings. All the other BRSCC championship winners were also crowned at the event.

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

INGRAM IN DREAM BTCC GRADUATION

Multiple Ginetta champ signs to race a Speedworks Toyota this term

By Matt James

Rising star Tom Ingram will graduate to the British Touring Car Championship with the Speedworks Toyota team this season.

Ingram, the reigning Ginetta GT Supercup champion, has been working hard on a deal over the winter months and finally put pen to paper on an agreement last week.

The 20-year-old was part of the KX Akademy for the last two seasons and has been mentored by Jason Plato, but he will strike out on his own this year.

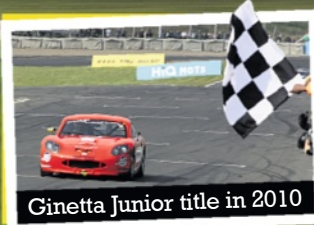
Ingram said: "To finally join the BTCC is a dream come true for me. When I started out in karting more than 12 years ago, not for one second did I ever believe that I would get to make it this far.

"It's been a long winter trying to put everything together. The BTCC is a colossal leap financially – pretty much the cost of four years' Ginetta racing all rolled into one! We had sponsorship leads that looked promising only to then fall through and there were times when I genuinely didn't think it was going to happen, which was heart-breaking.

"It will be a tremendous challenge and we need to



Ingram will handle a Speedworks Avensis



Ginetta Junior title in 2010

CV

Tom Ingram

Age: 20 **From:** High Wycombe

2014: BTCC with Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Avensis

2013: Ginetta GT Supercup, G55 Class winner, 11 wins

2012: Ginetta GT Supercup,

G55 Class third, six wins

2011: Ginetta GT Supercup, G50 Class winner, ten class wins

2010: Ginetta Junior Championship, winner, five wins

2009: Ginetta Junior Championship, 12th

2001-2008: Karting

remain realistic – it's shaping up to be the toughest season in BTCC history, I'll be up against a lot of seriously accomplished guys. Looking at the calibre of the field, simply getting into the points will be an achievement."

Speedworks boss Christian Dick said that he was aiming to help Ingram learn. This will be Ingram's first full season in a front-wheel-drive car, although he made a guest appearance in an MG ZR last season.

"Tom has stood out as one of the brightest young talents

rising up through the ranks for a few years now," said Dick. "He's won the title in every car racing championship he's entered, and off the track, he is extremely professional and always presents himself very well. We will give him as much assistance as we can and everything he needs to feel relaxed and comfortable and get up to speed as quickly as possible.

"We are being sensible and won't be putting Tom under any pressure to go out there and deliver immediate results."



Ingram is a rising star



Turkington was in the hunt for the title until the final '13 meeting

Turkington to lead eBay Motors' title push

Team boss Dick Bennetts says the eBay Motors squad can challenge for championship honours this season by using the continuity of its driver line-up.

The 2009 champion Colin Turkington will spearhead the team's challenge in its 1 Series BMWs. He will once again be joined by Rob Collard and Nick Foster. Turkington, 31, was in the title fight until the final meeting last season despite it being his first year in a new-spec Next Generation Touring Car.

Bennetts said the team had worked hard on the rear-wheel-drive car over the closed season, and the team was in the wind tunnel again on Monday this

week to check winter tweaks.

Bennetts said: "We were late getting the project together last year, but now we have had time to learn from the things we discovered in 2013 and develop the car. Having consistency will help us, because we will be able to work on the same type of feedback as we had last year. Colin was in the title hunt in a car that was brand new, so with extra time and thinking behind it, we will be able to push forwards."

Turkington becomes the seventh champion on the grid, alongside Fabrizio Giovanardi, Alain Menu, Jason Plato, Matt Neal, Gordon Shedden and Andrew Jordan.

Austin says new Audi will be a star

British Touring Car Championship race winner Rob Austin says improvements to his Audi A4 will turn it in to a regular winner this season.

The 33-year-old, who recently conducted a test session at Silverstone, said tweaks to the set-up of the car have reaped rewards. Austin's A4 is the only seat left on the BTCC grid for this year after the confirmation of the line-ups at eBay Motors and Speedworks Motorsport.

"We are better prepared than ever before," said Austin. "We proved last year that we can run at the front. This year the car is lighter and faster; my boys have done a stunning job on this year's build of [the team's second car] 'Sherman' and for the first time we have consistency in the rear-wheel-drive regulations."

Austin said that he was in talks with drivers about the second car. Austin added: "I can neither confirm or deny any rumours that we are in discussions with [former Audi BTCC champion] Frank Biela about making a return."

BTCC racer Wrathall jailed for road crash

British touring car racer Frank Wrathall has been jailed for 21 months after a road traffic accident last year.

Wrathall's van was involved in a fatal collision with a cyclist on the A5 in Lancashire in May 2013. Wrathall pleaded guilty to a charge of careless driving and was sentenced last week. He was also disqualified from driving for four years after the hearing at Liverpool Crown Court.

Wrathall was the Ginetta G50 champion in 2010 before entering into the BTCC with his family run Dynojet team. He was tenth in the standings in the 2012 campaign with a victory in the final meeting of the season at Brands Hatch in his Toyota Avensis.

The team's assets have been sold to United Autosports, which will have its maiden campaign in the category this year with James Cole and Glynn Geddie driving.



Wrathall will serve 21 months

WHY A SINGLE-SEATER STAR IS SWITCHING TO RADICALS

PAGE 9

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"I put more pressure on myself than others do"

Sam Brabham's racing hopes, p18



Photos: Jakob Ebrey



Kruger: new JTR star

JTR driver Cammish dominated last year

SOUTH AFRICAN KRUGER TO HEAD JTR'S FORD PUSH

Top MSA Formula Ford Championship of Great Britain squad JTR will run three cars in this year's championship.

The Bedford team captured its first British Ford title when it ran Daniel Cammish to a dominant 21 race victories in last season's championship. JTR has signed South African racer Jayde Kruger to drive the team's first Mountune-powered Mygale and is close to sealing deals with two other drivers.

Kruger, 25, contested a part-campaign of Formula Ford last season and took a single race win on his way to sixth in the championship with Jamun Racing.

"It's quite simple, we want to win the championship again this season," said team head and Porsche factory racer Nick Tandy. "Jayde came to us because that's his target and he's fully capable of winning races. He has the experience and the racecraft to succeed and we have great

amounts of data from Dan's car last season that can help him run at the front. We feel this is a great deal."

Tandy also dismissed earlier speculation that his team would leave Ford this year to concentrate on other programmes, such as Formula Renault: "It was always in our plans to do Formula Ford. It's a great championship and we want to support it. Having three drivers in our team shows our commitment."

North American duo join Irish Renault team

Cliff Dempsey Racing will return to the Protyre Formula Renault Championship this season running a brace of North American drivers.

The Irish squad will field cars for Travis Jordan Fischer and Patrick Dussault. The deal marks the team's return to the grid after a year's absence.

Fischer, 20, from California, is a triple single-seater champion in the USA having won the Formula Car Challenge National and regional Western Conference titles, as well as the SCCA Majors Western Championship. All feature Mazda-powered single-seaters.

Dussault, 22, from Quebec, Canada, graduates to slicks-and-wings racing having found his feet in the Skip Barber Summer Series.



Fischer: California kid

Team head Cliff Dempsey said: "TJ wants to move into Pro Mazda next season so Renault is the best championship to prepare him for that.

"I don't know how fast they will learn and the British championship is always very competitive.

"We'll start testing both guys early next month."

GT4 champion steps back to learn about GT3

Reigning British GT4 champion Ryan Ratcliffe will contest a part-season with Triple Eight Race Engineering in GT3 this year.

The Welshman captured last year's British GT class title driving alongside Rick Parfitt Jr in an Optimum Motorsport Ginetta G50 GT4. He had planned to step up to the top flight GT3 category this term, but has instead opted to join the leading 888 Optimum team for a slimmed down programme that will incorporate more test mileage.

"I want to be the full package when I go into GT3," said Ratcliffe. "I have pace, but you need more than that to be a winner in GT3. I will make some race appearances in the BMW Z4 GT3, but I want to settle into the formula before going up against Richard Westbrook or Nick Tandy."

Ratcliffe is likely to contest two races in the Z4 in GT Cup or Britcar. The BMWs will be crewed in British GT by Joe Osborne/Lee Mowle and Derek Johnston/Luke Hines.



Kaminsky will handle a Double R Dallara

Double R snaps up Arizona racer for F3

American racer Camren Kaminsky will graduate into British F3 this season with Double R Racing.

The 19-year-old from Scottsdale, Arizona, is the team's second signing alongside 'Andy' Chang Wing Chung. The pair will race Mercedes-powered Dallaras.

Kaminsky contested the MSA Formula Ford Championship of Great

Britain last season with the JTR team. He scored four podium finishes and took his single win at Silverstone.

"Camren is a fantastic prospect," said Double R boss Anthony 'Boyo' Hieatt.

"The step up to F3 from Ford is still a tough one, even with Ford now running wings.

"Camren has a lot to learn but he's made an impact in the junior levels."

VW Cup poised for big grids after early rush

The Volkswagen Racing Cup is set for a capacity grid after 30 drivers signed up for the championship.

The series, which supports the British GT Championship, will feature two overseas races at Spa-Francorchamps in July.

"We have never experienced such levels of interest this early in the season," said championship manager Matt Walker. "We have 30 paid-up registrations with half a dozen more on their way. We had

a very strong 2013 and with better policing, regulations and scrutineering we upped our game. The quality of the grid has been proven with high profile drivers such as Ross Wylie and Martin Depper making the step to British GT and touring cars.

"Not all of the registrations are for every round but I suspect capacity grids at some tracks. Places will be available on a first come, first served basis."

THE VOICE OF NATIONAL RACING

MATT JAMES

"The BRSCC is working hard to recruit officials"



It was time to don the black tie again on Saturday and head to Stratford-upon-Avon for the British Racing and Sports Car Club's awards ceremony. The annual prize-giving season just seems to get longer and longer...

It's always a cause for celebration when champions get together to mark the achievements of the past season – but there was much more to the message on Saturday night than just the action that had taken place on the race track over the last 12 months.

It was a good time to reflect of the landmarks that the organising club has managed to chalk up in the previous season, and the message from the BRSCC is a refreshingly positive one amid the tough landscape. The club is on a steady footing and it has some stand out championships that are delivering just what the racers want.

It has been possible thanks to the efforts of the crew at headquarters, led by Drew Furlong, and due to the stewardship of chairman Bernard Cottrell. It seems that there are some very careful hands on the tiller of the Kent club.

One of the BRSCC's flagship initiatives over the past couple of seasons has been the recruitment drive for volunteer clerk of the courses and officials who will go on to staff race control at club race meetings.

While much work is done throughout various national campaigns to spread the appeal of trackside marshalling, the work that goes on inside race control can often remain shrouded in mystery. It is of equal importance, and the declining numbers of those who are qualified to head up a race meeting meant the BRSCC decided to take action.

Cottrell, who is also the chairman of the Motor Sport Association's volunteer officials advisory panel, said on Saturday night that he was going to prevail upon the governing body to extend its involvement in this kind of recruitment drive with financial backing, which is a very positive idea.

Not only will this kind of background work benefit the BRSCC, it will be a boost to the whole of the national scene as qualified clerks can easily swap between organising clubs.

There are all kinds of championships springing up to attract new – and ever younger – competitors in to the sport. There isn't the same zeal to attract the volunteers who will help provide the backbone for the meetings into which this influx of budding competitors want to take part.

It is all very well having a grid full of cars but if there is no one to operate the meetings, it will be a completely pointless exercise.

The Motor Sports Association is very proactive when it comes to initiatives for marshals – after all, last year was the Year of the Volunteer – but there is always more that can be done.

By working with the BRSCC and building on the groundwork that is already done, hopefully the MSA and sport as a whole can take another step towards galvanising the future generation of officials, who are as important as the future generation of racing drivers.



AGREE/DISAGREE?
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RACING NEWS

Big entries prompt Kumho BMW growth

Kumho BMW Championship chiefs say last season's oversubscribed meetings have forced it to split its grids for this season.

The series averaged 30-car grids last season including sold out rounds and reserve lists at Oulton Park and Brands Hatch. Championship boss Trevor Ford has taken the step of splitting the quicker Class A cars from the rest of the field and running them in a separate race in order to provide better racing for competitors.

"We've had lots of Class A interest for this season," said Ford. "I'm aiming for a dedicated 25-car grid. The cars are too quick compared to the Class B machines but that also allows a better form of racing for the other classes. They don't have to worry about keeping an eye out for the Class A cars behind them and can enjoy racing on a grid which is still packed. It's already attracted drivers back to the championship."

Easykart champion to race Ginetta GT5

Former World and British Easykart champion Luca Hirst will graduate into the Ginetta GT5 Challenge this season.

The 19-year-old claimed the World title at Castelletto in Italy in 2011 and took the British title the following year. He moved into the popular Super One KGP Championship last season.

The Leeds-based racer is the first karter to enter car racing through a partnership between Ginetta and the Easykart and Formula KGP championships. Ginetta boss Lawrence Tomlinson is aiming to develop drivers to eventually represent the marque in its future assault on the Le Mans 24 Hours.

"We are delighted to have Luca on board for 2014," Tomlinson said. "He has shown tremendous talent in karting and has been on the Ginetta radar for a while."

Hirst said: "My goal is to finish all the races I start and gain as much experience as possible."

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

NEW SERIES GET LIVE TV SPOTS

Protyre Formula Renault among new additions to MotorsTV events



Protyre Formula Renault will star at Snetterton

By Rob Ladbrook

The MotorsTV Live Raceday series will return with a new format for this season.

This year the satellite channel will screen three five-hour live programmes covering the cream of British club motorsport. For the first time all the race meetings will be two-day events, with the Saturday given over to the live broadcast of races (see sidebar).

Snetterton will host an event for the first time, with races for the Protyre Formula Renault Championship leading the schedule.

The race days have recorded solid viewing figures. Last May's event from Castle Combe had more than 11,000 viewers, more than MotorsTV's coverage of the American Le Mans Series, NASCAR Nationwide Series, V8 Supercars and British GT that month.

Series producer Magnus Laird said: "We've hit a



MotorsTV will show three live club meetings this year

milestone this year as we've now done ten programmes and aired more than 50 hours of the best British club racing and the results show that there's a real appetite for this type of coverage. There were times last year when our viewer figures spiked above those for the World Rally Championship on MotorsTV, which shows the level of interest.

"We're excited about the schedule for this year as we have two new circuits, and higher profile series.

"Silverstone will be a big challenge for us because we've packed the schedule and we have to make every minute count. We have the GT Cup on for a 45-minute race there to provide a mixture of race formats for viewers.

"By making all of our meetings double-headers we're able to pick and choose formats. We've stuck with short, sharp races, and now that we have the Sunday too we can offer drivers entering extra track time and the possibility of extra races."

DRAFT SCHEDULE

MotorsTV Live Race Days
Donington Park
March 22/23

Featured series:

- Kumho BMWs
- Max5 Racing Championship
- Caterham Graduates
- Classic Touring Cars
- MG Owners' Club Championship
- Keyline.com Classic Formula Ford 1600

Silverstone International
June 7/8

Featured series:

- Kumho BMWs
- Caterham Graduates
- Classic Touring Cars
- Superkarts 250
- GT Cup

Snetterton

August 30/31

Featured series:

- Protyre Formula Renault
- Renault Clio Cup
- Clubmans
- Historic V8s
- Max5 Racing Championship
- Ginetta Racing Drivers' Club

Scandinavians to bolster GT4 squad

Century Motorsport head Nathan Freke says the team is gearing up for its biggest ever attack on the British GT Championship's GT4 class, running at least two cars.

Century will field two Ginetta G55 machines in the full championship this term after signing Norwegian GT racer Aleksander Schjerpen and Swedish sportscar champion Morten Dons. The pair join Tom Oliphant and reigning British GT4 champion Rick Parfitt Jr.

Freke said: "This will undoubtedly be our biggest year of British GT and interest in the GT4 class is really picking up this season. To have drivers for two cars done and dusted so early is a huge boost because we can now get down to testing.

"Both Aleksander and Morten are quick and proven young drivers. They have great experience of the Ginetta so the G55 won't be a big step up. They'll have work to do to learn the tracks though. We have the title in our sights this year."

Schjerpen finished third in the GT4 division of the Swedish GT championship last term, while Dons dominated the Swedish Ginetta GT5 Challenge.

Warwickshire team Century also runs cars in the Ginetta GT Supercup.

Fittipaldi Jr to return to Protyre Renault

Pietro Fittipaldi, the grandson of double F1 world champion Emerson, will return to Protyre Formula Renault this year.

The Brazilian will be one of four drivers run by defending champion team Mark Godwin Racing.

MGR, which ran Chris Middlehurst to the British title last season, will field series returnees Fittipaldi and Matteo Ferrer alongside Radical convert Colin Noble Jr and 16-year-old Indian driver Tarun Reddy.

Fittipaldi finished eighth in the points last year during a split campaign in which he also won a race in the BRDC Formula Four Championship. He will focus solely on the Renault class and a European testing programme this term.

Ferrer was 14th in the points table last year, while Noble switches to the team having dominated the entry level Radical SR1 Cup last season. Reddy was a winner in the MRF single-seater class in India.

Team head Mark Godwin said: "We have four very strong young drivers and our aim is to win the title. People underestimated how tough Pietro's learning curve was last year, and he showed flashes of talent. He has a great chance of winning races this year."



AF Corse will run car for Thai racer

AF Corse to run second British GT Ferrari 458 Italia for super Thai guy

Ferrari works team AF Corse will run a second 458 GT3 in this year's British GT Championship for a young Thai racer.

The Italian squad had already sealed a return to Britain to run Aaron Scott and John Dhillon in a 458 Italia GT3. It will now field a second car for 20-year-old driver

Pasin Lathouras and an as-yet-unnamed teammate.

Lathouras won the Ferrari Challenge Asia Pacific championship last term in his second season in the class, taking nine wins from 14 races.

"It's been my dream to race in Europe, which is the best place for

me to take my career," said Lathouras. "It's going to be a big, big test but I think I'm ready for British GT. I'm comfortable with AF Corse having driven with them a few times last year. They push me on and have great engineers. I look forward to representing Thailand."

GT4 growth to result in big British GT grids

British GT manager Benjamin Franassovici is predicting sell-out grids for this year's championship after confirming that 28 entry fees have already been received.

With just over three months remaining until the opening round of the series at Oulton Park on Easter weekend, only five grid slots remain for the opening event.

The current entry includes 20 GT3 spec machines and eight entries into the GT4 category, which will feature its most diverse grid ever with five

different marques signed up.

"Interest for this season has been phenomenal, but we're going to keep working to sell out the grid," said Franassovici.

"The GT3 class is hugely strong as always but the largest growth we've seen has come from GT4. We've worked hard to promote the class and get it extra coverage and attention and we're now getting many more career-focused drivers coming in as it's a perfect class to learn the ropes of GT racing."

Feature: GT4 revamp, page 19



British GT: set for big grids

F3 winner to earn a Radical test outing

The winner of this year's F3 Cup contest will win a test in a works Radical SR8 RX worth more than £5000.

The MotorSport Vision Racing-led championship has partnered up with Radical Sportscars to offer the test in the 430bhp machine with the works team.

Radical head Phil Abbott said: "We've been impressed with the talent in the F3 Cup and with their experience of aerodynamic single-seaters the champion should have no problem getting to grips with a sportscar that offers the performance of an LMP2 car. "It will give the winner a real insight into the world of top-level sportscar racing."

Morris to Renault with Caterham help

Seb Morris believes that support from the Caterham Formula One Team can help him emulate Matt Parry and fight for the Formula Renault Northern European Cup this season.

Morris, 18, from Marford, was announced as the newest member of the Caterham F1 Driver Academy scheme last week. The deal means that Morris will run in his maiden year of the NEC with financial support and training from the F1 squad. His Fortec Motorsports-run car will race in the F1 team's livery.

Morris follows in the wheel tracks of Welshman and McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner Matt Parry, who dominated the NEC this year and will now graduate into the Formula Renault Eurocup. Morris said: "Joining Caterham is huge. Matt is somebody I look up to and now I'm following in his footsteps by being with Caterham and racing in the NEC. I'm looking to win the title just as Matt did. With the support and facilities that Caterham brings I have all I need to make it happen."

Festival winner joins virtual fund raiser

A host of Formula Ford Festival legends will take part in a virtual version of the event later this month to raise money to support former category star Neil Cunningham.

The Virtual Formula Ford Festival is being organised by The Race Hut in Slough and will take place on Sunday. Cunningham is battling motor neurone disease.

Dave Coyne [1990 winner], Jonny Kane [94 runner up] and Michael Vergers [89 runner up] will race. Others include Jason Plato, Johnny Mowlem, Darren Turner, James Calado, Ian Flux and Jamie Campbell-Walter.

For information on the event or to enter contact The Race Hut's David Goode via sales@theracehut.com.

MALVERN OPTS FOR SPORTSCAR SEAT

Photos: Jakob Ebrey and David Stallard

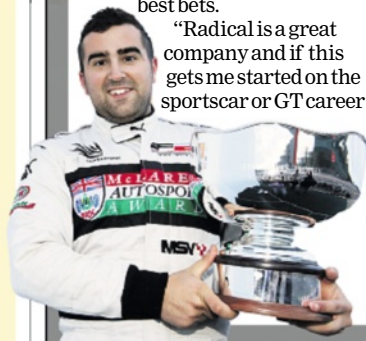
British single-seater star Scott Malvern will switch to sportscar racing this year in an effort to reignite his career after joining the Radical SR3 Challenge with the expanding Kevin Mills Racing team. Formula Ford and Formula Renault champion Malvern has signed to race a new SR3 alongside Castle Combe FF1600 graduate Nick Jones in the full British championship.

The deal marks Malvern's first full season-long campaign since he lifted the Formula Renault BARC title in 2012.

Malvern already has a strong relationship with the Kevin Mills team, having won last year's Walter Hayes Trophy contest in one of the Wiltshire squad's Spectrum 011Bs.

"I need to be competing on a regular basis after a very frustrating year last season, so I'm really thankful for KMR and Nick for throwing me this lifeline," said Malvern, 24, from Barkingside. "I came close to deals on the BTCC support package or moving to America but they never came together so I have to look at my options and sportscars is one of the best bets.

"Radical is a great company and if this gets me started on the sportscar or GT career



Malvern hopes Radical can be a career boost

ladder then it has to be a good thing. It gives me a chance to prove myself in something other than single-seaters."

Kevin Mills added: "We've been looking at diversifying for a while and when Nick came to me with the idea of running a Radical SR3, it made sense. Scott's a top driver and has proved that time and time again. It'll be great to get him out there."

Malvern will dovetail his Radical campaign with selected rounds of James Beckett's Champion of Brands FF1600 series. Malvern will enter in Kevin Mills' Spectrum 011B. "I can't imagine a time when I won't enjoy driving FF1600," he said. "I had a great time at the WHT last season so it will be good to do more rounds and I will defend the Walter Hayes Trophy in November."



Malvern took WHT in '13



Vauxhall will unveil its racing concept, the VXR Extreme, at the Geneva Motor Show next month. The Extreme will celebrate the tenth anniversary of the firm's tuning arm and the production-based racer is set for a limited build run. The car is an update of the Opel Astra Cup machines that ran in the VLN Endurance Series last year. It could feature a forced-induction two-litre engine capable of producing over 300bhp

Split grids to benefit Magnificent Sevens

Bosses of the Classic Sports Car Club will split this year's Magnificent Sevens grid to create closer competition within its classes after many meetings sold out last season.

More than 110 drivers registered for the series in 2013 and there were reserves and waiting lists for its meetings at Snetterton and Brands Hatch. The grids will be split so Caterham cars up to 1800cc and 185bhp will compete in one 40-minute race, and the higher-powered machines over 185bhp and bike-engined racers will compete on a separate grid. CSCC heads have also introduced a class for cars up to 125bhp.

"This is exciting," CSCC assistant club secretary David Smitheram said. "It doesn't guarantee full grids, it has given us the capacity to attract new drivers to the series. Some of the lower-powered Sevens drivers may have become frustrated with

the number of more powerful cars, such as Supersports, coming in. We didn't want them to feel like they were making up the numbers and leave the championship."

Smitheram said the new class will also increase the level of competition: "The difference of performance between the Sevens cars is too great. This split allows us the freedom to give drivers, such as those in Roadsports, the chance to claim a class win and stand on the podium."



Sevens grids are full up

ROUND THE BEND WITH...

LAWRENCE HOWLETT

Age: 30 From: Wellingborough, Northamptonshire
Fun Cup regular is switching back to sprint racing this year

He comes from a family of racers

"My dad has owned a car parts centre so I've been changing gearboxes and clutches since I was six years old. We had land nearby in a horse paddock where I would flash around in a Mini. My dad also took part in rallies in an Escort Mk1 and competed against Martin Brundle in his earlier years."

He kartered with future motor racing stars

"My first kart meeting was at Beccles circuit but the highlight of my nine years in the sport was being crowned the Cadet Super Club champion at Kimbolton in 1994 against future stars like Lewis Hamilton, Gary Paffett and Luke Hines. I took the title despite not winning a single race during the season. Consistency was key."

He took an extended break from the sport

"In 2000 I was growing like mad and was 12kgs over the weight limit. It lost me time and money ran out. So I focused on education and getting a career in web design for the following ten years."

He turned his hand to endurance racing

"I always wanted to get back into racing. I went to the Autosport Show in 2011 and joined the Fun Cup series. I was hooked once again. Endurance racing requires a different mind set to sprinting. My first venture to the Spa 25 Hours didn't go so well though. I was involved in a huge multi-car shunt at Pouhon and wrote the car off. The next year I returned to help take class victory and fifth overall."

He's switching to a Mazdas this year

"I'm moving back to sprint racing as a works team driver for Triple-R in the BRSCC Mazda MX-5 SuperCup. I enjoyed endurance racing and the Fun Cup has unrivalled track time. But I hated getting out of the car and passing it over to someone else. I wanted to prove I can do it on my own, and the SuperCup has a competitive grid."

He loves flying high

"I enjoy technical and logical hobbies, so along with half marathon running and cross-country mountain biking, I have a pilot's licence. It's about precision which is why I love the racing."



Howlett will tackle Mazdas

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HISTORICS

'Fittipaldi's F2 car
will be on display'
Race Retro delights, below

Photos: Paul Lawrence and Jakob Ebrej

DOWN THE PUB WITH

TOM COUGHTRIE

Age: 59 Lives: Ayr
Back in an Escort Mk2 after a 25-year gap

He started as a co-driver

"I rallied in the 1980s, co-driving for Jim Carty in BTRDA events in Escort Mk2. Then I did the Escort Turbo Challenge with Alastair McSkimming up against people like Mark Lovell. But I always wanted to drive and so I bought an Escort from David Sutton. It was a brand new car in 1978 that he hadn't used."

He has success in the Ford Escort

"That was in about 1981 and I did the Scottish Tarmac Championship with it to try and get used to driving it. It was originally built with a 1300cc Hoyle engine, which was undriveable unless you were Ari Vatanen. So we changed it for a two-litre and we were reasonably successful."

He then went for a four-wheel-drive car

"Then I moved into the forests and finished second in Division 2. In 1991, I bought a Mitsubishi Galant VR4 and we did the Scottish Championship and the best result was 11th overall on the Scottish Rally."

He took part in the British Championship

"It was a car that was easy to drive and it was misleading about how fast you were going. There was a Gp N Subaru Legacy for sale at Prodrive so I bought that and in 1993 or '94 we did the British Championship. We won Gp N on the Pirelli but it all fell apart with an off in Ulster."

He then took a long break

"With kids and a business, I quit rallying and sold the car. But I kept the Escort and it sat in the garage with a blown head-gasket. Back then, you couldn't give them away."

He returned in 2011

"I got in contact with David Sutton and it went into his museum. When the museum was disbanded, I could have sold it but decided to go back to rallying after a 16-year gap. I did the Wyedean in 2011 and had a big crash."

He's enjoying his rallying return

"One of the appeals of the R.A.C. is that it encompasses stages we did on the 1994 RAC. I enjoyed last year and the pace is coming along now I'm getting used to pacenotes."



Coughtrie: rallying return



Phil Squires will head to NZ as a 50th birthday treat

BRITON TO REALISE NEW ZEALAND DREAM

Ford man Squires plots an attack on the Silver Ford Rally in November

By Paul Lawrence

Phil Squires says contesting the Silver Fern Rally in New Zealand this November will be the biggest adventure in a rallying career spanning three decades.

Squires will tackle the sensational gravel rally as a 50th birthday present to himself and will ship his

familiar Ford Escort Mk2 to New Zealand for the event.

"This was the thing I most wanted to do," said the Stoke-on-Trent driver who is 50 tomorrow (February 13).

"Since I saw the coverage of the 2012 event on the TV, I couldn't think of anything else I'd rather do. I'll take it as a holiday and it will be my biggest ever trip."

The rally runs from November 8-15 and will cover over 700 classic gravel stage miles on South Island, starting at Picton and finishing at Queenstown. At least half a dozen other UK crews are expected to tackle the rally.

He will be looking for a local co-driver as his twin brother Mick, who usually co-drives, will stay in the UK to run their

rally spares business. "I've got a lot of organising to do and I'll need to find a local service crew," said Phil.

The twin brothers will contest the R.A.C. Championship and are aiming to rebuild their car. "I'll do another three or four gravel events this year and then start getting the car ready to be shipped in September. I'll be away for three weeks."

Lloyd plots an epic trip to Monte Carlo

Manhattan-based Brit Owain Lloyd will borrow the Sunbeam Alpine of Robin Eyre-Maunsell to tackle the CRA Winter Challenge to Monte Carlo, which starts from Race Retro on February 23.

He will team up with hugely experienced co-driver Peter Scott for the five-day rally, but they face a race against time to get to the start as they are attending the Paddy Hopkirk Gala in Belfast the night before the rally starts.

Ulsterman Scott said he just couldn't miss the Hopkirk event: "Owain will fly direct from New York to Belfast and we both fly from Belfast to East Midlands on Sunday, arriving at midday before we dash to Stoneleigh for the 1400hrs start."



The restored RS2000 will be shown and do demonstration runs

Well-known Escort to return to public arena

The Gp 1 Ford Escort RS2000 used by Peter Clarke in the 1978 RAC Castrol Autosport Rally Championship has just come out of a six-month rebuild for Clarke to use on demonstration events.

The car bears the famous registration 'PCA 42', which was used on a variety of works-assisted Fords from his

PCA Motorsport operation in the 1970s and 1980s. It will run in International Paint and Total Oil livery.

"The car is as good as new and will be used on selected demos and show events throughout the country," said Clarke.

The project has been completed by Ramsport UK in Denbighshire.

Carlisle hosts R.A.C. summer celebration

The DMACK Carlisle Stages on Saturday, June 21, will form the core of a summer party for the WWRSA.R.A.C. Championship.

The Friday morning before the rally will feature a shakedown stage, which will be open to championship contenders to give sponsors, service crews, family, guests and media a taste of forest rallying. After scrutineering on Friday there will be a barbecue for crew members.

"We wanted a mid-season social get together for the R.A.C. and the Carlisle Stages is the ideal event," said championship manager Colin Heppenstall.

Saturday's rally will cover 45 stage miles in the Kershope and Newcastleton forest complexes with a 1500hrs finish.

Formula Ford legend Dave Coyne keen on a Thruxton return

Dave Coyne, the Formula Ford star of the 1980s, says he would love the chance to race at Thruxton again when Historic Formula Ford features in the Easter Revival meeting.

"Thruxton is my favourite

track," said Coyne, who has raced in historic over recent seasons. "I'd love to jump into a car. I had the lap record there in FF1600 and FF2000."

Coyne scored eight major Ford victories at his local track

between 1984 and 1989, including in works Van Diemens. "I had a go in a Formula Ford at the Walter Hayes three years ago, but it was very last minute," said Coyne.

This year he will race a Ferrari 308GTB in Masters events.



Coyne's Walter Hayes run



IN BRIEF

Duez tackles Spa

The demonstration section of the Boucles de Spa will include Belgian ace Marc Duez in an MG Metro 6R4. Running ahead of the main field will be a dozen Group A and Group B cars of the 1980s and 1990s and Duez will drive the 6R4 now owned by Christian Kelders and Christophe Jacob. Other Group B cars in action will include a Peugeot 205 T16 and a pair of Audi quattros.

Tony Crook

Tony Crook, the former grand prix driver and owner of Bristol Cars, died recently aged 93. He contested the British GP at Silverstone in 1952 (Frazer Nash) and a year later (Cooper Bristol). He was among the first drivers to win a race after World War Two in his Frazer Nash BMW at Gransden Lodge in 1946. He retired from racing in 1955 and went on to run the Bristol Car Company until 2007.



Baker got an entry fee rebate

Baker's reward

Ford Escort Mk2 crew John Baker and Seyyan John won a 50 per cent refund of their entry fee for the Red Kite Historic Stages after their name came out of the hat in the draw for the Holton Homes award. On each round of the R.A.C. Championship, one crew gets half of the entry fee back as support for the clubmen competitors.

Watkins to return

Ford Escort guru Dave Watkins will resume his rallying programme on the Tour of Hamsterley at the end of April in his ex-Hannu Mikkola Ford Escort Mk1. The car and engine are being rebuilt for the new season and Watkins and co-driver Paul Train are aiming to join the R.A.C. Championship for the third round of the season.

Paddy leads off

Paddy Hopkirk will lead a cavalcade of Minis, as well as cars from his rally career, through Belfast on Saturday, February 22, as part of the 50th anniversary celebrations of his Monte Carlo Rally win. Starting from Stormont at 1030hrs, Hopkirk will drive a replica of his 1964 Mini Cooper and will lead 200 cars including cars driven by Jimmy McRae, Ari Vatanen and John Watson.

Challenge success

The new Kumho Clubmans Challenge within the R.A.C. Championship was a great success on the recent Red Kite Stages, with 23 out of 60 crews contesting this new challenge for crews using no more than six tyres during the event. The top overall finishers were Tim Freeman and Paul Wakely (Ford Escort Mk2) who finished a tremendous fifth overall.

Cars on display

The ex-Emerson Fittipaldi Lotus 69 F2 car will be one of the stars of the HSCC stand at Race Retro (February 21-23). Other cars on show include a Brabham BT41, Centaur 14X, Ford Anglia, Jaguar E-type and an MG Midget.

RALLY NEWS

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Meeke showed some strong pace in tricky conditions

Meeke is gaining snow mileage

CITROËN CHIEF PRAISES MEEKE'S SNOW FORM

Matton says Briton's snow rally debut was better than both Ogier and Loeb's

By David Evans

Citroën team principal Yves Matton has praised Kris Meeke's Rally Sweden top-ten debut last week.

The Northern Irish driver ran in sixth place for much of the event before a small mistake on the second stage on the final morning dropped him down the order to an eventual tenth place.

Matton said: "He did a very good job, in fact he did the perfect job if you look at his first result on this rally – he was better than Sébastien Ogier and Sébastien Loeb [on their first snow rallies]."

Minor error

Meeke's mistake on the Torntorp stage cost him seven minutes and blighted an otherwise perfect rally.

Explaining the moment, Meeke said: "It was unbelievable – the first time I've ever gone off on the inside of a corner. I came out of a corner, put the power on and that pulled the wheel in towards the inside. I couldn't take the handbrake – that would have flicked us nose into the ditch – so I kept the power on, pretty sure it would

pull the car through. Instead we just nosed our way off the road. It was ridiculous. The back wheels were still on the road, but we couldn't get out."

Meeke refused to be downhearted about the result, saying: "This was my first time in Sweden and I came here looking for experience and I guess if I didn't have that problem this time then I would have it at some stage – it's about the experience."

Despite last week's event being Meeke's debut on a winter rally, he said he felt confident Rally Sweden would be an event where he could go well in the future.

"I think we can challenge here," he said. "We will need more experience and we will need to come back and drive this rally as a real winter event with the full winter conditions, but the roads really suit me – they are nice and fast."

Østberg shines

Meeke's team-mate Mads Østberg collected third place, ensuring Citroën a place on the podium on the first two rounds of the championship.

Matton said: "Mads drove a very clever rally. He wasn't so happy with the set-up

of the car in the early part of the event, but once he got it running how he wanted, he was very, very good. These were very difficult conditions for him to drive the car for the first time on the loose."

Matton added that Østberg's result justified the French firm's decision to run with him. "This shows that we chose a good way with Mads," said Matton. "And we are in a good way to improve Mads' level, they are getting closer and closer to their first win with us."

Østberg won the powerstage and was quickest on two of the final three Rally Sweden stages. Prior to the event, Meeke worked closely with Østberg as he chased the right set-up for his Sweden debut and he'll be doing the same on round three as the series moves to Rally Mexico.

"I haven't done Sweden, Mexico or Portugal," said Meeke, "and those are three rallies where Mads has good experience, so I'll be in a similar position when we get out to Mexico. I'm happy with Sweden, though. OK, the result could have been better, but I think we showed some speed in the powerstage which was a good way to end the event for me."

Evans is still positive despite Sweden accident

M-Sport driver Elfyn Evans says he takes positives from Rally Sweden, despite rolling out of a top ten place on the final stage last week.

The Welshman dropped his Fiesta RS WRC on a long left-hander and rolled the car into retirement. Despite that he impressed M-Sport team principal Malcolm Wilson.

Evans said: "We were on for a good result, so what happened is really disappointing. We didn't have the tightening part of the corner in the notes and once the rear of the car stepped out, there wasn't anything

we could do. We gained a lot of experience on this rally.

"It hasn't been like a regular winter rally. At times we've had good snow, but then we've been aquaplaning with a lot of water and slush in some of the really deep ruts. It's been difficult. The car's been phenomenal."

Wilson added: "Elfyn may not have finished, but I am pleased he completed the majority of the distance. It's what he needed to do to get the experience. It is just a shame we lost some valuable points."



Evans was set for a top ten place until he rolled out in Fiesta

KRIS MEEKE REFLECTS ON SWEDEN IN HIS EXCLUSIVE MN COLUMN

PAGE 22



The Strength of Experience

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'Latvala had found his fast form once again'
Flying Finn triumphs for VW, p22



Photos: mcklein

RALLY SWEDEN COULD MOVE TO FIND SNOW



WRC crews weren't happy with lack of wintry roads

Tough Rally Sweden conditions have brought renewed calls from the drivers for the WRC's winter round to move in search of more snow and ice.

Temperatures on the second round of the championship were largely above freezing, leading to what many labeled as the worst road conditions ever seen on the event.

Citroën star Mads Østberg was among those calling for the rally to head further north and away

from its long-time Karlstad base.

The third place finisher in Sweden said: "On the line on the road, it was 100 per cent gravel. I think the event should move it to Ostersund [further north in Sweden]. They have the facilities to run this event and they have the roads to do it. Karlstad is traditional though, so maybe it's difficult."

M-Sport's Mikko Hirvonen added: "You never really know how it is going to be here. Maybe

it's easier to find the solution for global warming than finding a new place for this rally..."

"It's not nice to drive on gravel and without the snowbanks and I have never seen such deep ruts as on this rally. For the first time I was worried that we were going to get a puncture from some of these really sharp stones from just driving on the line. And repairing the roads with ruts like this is really going to cost the organisers a lot."

Rally promoter Glen Olsson said: "The weather in Ostersund is the same – we have to go way north to the mountains and there aren't many hotels. I don't know if this weather is a real issue – we have conditions with the snow and last year we had a lot of ice on the road."

Olsson denied there would be a financial issue with the roads. "Where are the ruts?" he said. "There aren't any. This won't be a problem at all."

WRC teams and Promoter still in turmoil

The World Rally Championship manufacturers and the WRC Promoter remain at loggerheads over finances – and there now appears no end in sight over the current impasse.

The two parties are currently arguing over a reported request for further funding from the promoter. The manufacturers have upheld their decision not to allow the promoters' live TV cameras to be fitted in their service areas while there remains no contract in place.

Asked when he thought the current position might improve, Volkswagen team principal Jost Capito said: "I can't see it. There's not one major concern here, there's a lot of areas where we feel they don't understand

the manufacturers."

A source inside the WRC Promoter admitted there was significant frustration on both sides. "We want to get this thing sorted," said the source. "The manufacturers seem to have missed the point – and they've certainly missed the millions invested in this championship."

FIA rally director Jarmo Mahonen was present in Sweden, but he said this was between the two parties: "I can't go into details, it's totally a question of commercial things between the promoter and the manufacturers. For us, the promoter has followed the business plan they showed us. I'm very confident they are going to find a compromise."

Tänak happy with his pace on WRC return

Ott Tänak says his fifth place on Rally Sweden is far more than he expected on his World rally return.

The Estonian, who was dropped by M-Sport after a troubled 2012, rocketed back with a sensational run to fifth in a Fiesta RS WRC. The 26-year-old admitted he feared for his pace before the start.

"I am a lot closer to the leaders than I thought I would be," said Tänak. "I was quite worried before the start about where I would be [compared to the frontrunners], but I'm happy now."

Malcolm Wilson, the man who dropped Tänak, said: "He's a different driver now. He has been very, very good here. For me, one of the big differences is the co-driver –



Tänak flew to fifth in Sweden

the relationship is very strong between the two of them."

Tänak is now co-driven by Raigo Molder, a friend from Estonia who had only tackled one WRC round before Rally Sweden last week.

The pair will contest every remaining round of the series this season split between a Fiesta RS WRC and a DMACK-backed Fiesta R5.

Solberg is aiming for additional WRC outings

Henning Solberg is hoping his top ten finish on last week's Rally Sweden will open the door to more WRC outings this season.

The Norwegian completed the second round of the world championship in seventh place. Running on Pirelli tyres, he collected a single fastest time on what was his first WRC outing since the same event last year.

Solberg said: "I want to be back again, I have missed this. And I will be working very hard to make

sure I can get back this year. It's been a long 12 months since I was here the last time."

M-Sport team principal Malcolm Wilson said he would welcome Solberg back.

"I'm not sure we could cope with having Henning back," joked Wilson. "Seriously, it's good to have him, he's a real character. He's talking about doing more, but we'll have to wait and see."

Solberg has contested 111 rounds of the WRC to date.



Solberg finished in the top ten on first outing for a year

VIEW FROM THE WORLD STAGE

JERRY WILLIAMS

"Wouldn't snow be guaranteed further north?"



Hard packed snow is getting hard to find in WRC

I love the Swedish Rally. This year was my 18th or 20th; I can't quite remember which. But you've got to ask: How long can it continue in its present form?

I don't know how the organisers see things, but from the outside the problems are obvious. The rally's traditional base in Karlstad means that snow is becoming increasingly scarce within 100km.

But for some reason the event seems in denial of moving north. I know its organisers rely on contributions from Karlstad, the Värmland region and local areas. But to the outsider it looks increasingly like they're stuck in a rut.

The WRC must have a snow rally with all its spellbinding scenery. But back in 1990 the Swedish was cancelled for lack of white stuff: in 1997 it came close again; in 2008 gravel poked through everywhere and has done in other years.

Last weekend Mikko Hirvonen saw it like this: "On the second pass the roads were almost completely destroyed. Of course there has been some gravel in previous years but I have never seen such deep ruts like this."

Yet still we start and finish in Karlstad: still we go no further north than Torsby or north-west to Kirkener, in Norway.

Is there really nowhere else suitable in Sweden? What about Are, the big ski area way up north? Agreed you'd have to fly to Trondheim, in Norway but wouldn't snow be guaranteed?

Even moving a bit north-east to Borlänge and Falun – cities 20 km apart – would mean stages further north could be used. And I know the rally has been to Borlänge before because I remember going there!

The point is that the Swedish has to stay. But we don't want a rally where tyre management is the be all and end all; a rally with grass in the car parks and full Tarmac on all main roads.

I know good and bad years have been cyclical. But I believe the trend is more towards the bad, where hard-packed snow on a thick ice base is at a premium now.

I still have a mental picture of Colin McRae flying round a sweeping bend on an early stage in 1996, a glorious 25-yard rooster trail of snow dust hanging in the air behind him. The stage road was so slippery that 20 minutes earlier I'd fallen flat on my arse crossing it.

THAT'S what we want from a snow rally!

WRC boost on ITV

Incidentally, following last week's column, I see that ITV4's hour-long Rally Monte Carlo wrap drew 305,000 viewers, eighth in the station's top ten for the week – well behind the moronic *Storage Wars*, which took the top four places. But it's a start. Let's hope the curve goes upwards!



AGREE/DISAGREE?
mn.letters@haymarket.com

RALLY NEWS

Former kart star in 208 Tarmac push

Former Formula Ford Festival winner Richard Tannahill will ply his trade in the Dunlop National Rally Championship this season, starting with the Mayo Stages Rally at the beginning of March.

The 27-year-old will drive a Peugeot 208 R2 and plans to tackle some international rallies too, including the Jim Clark, Isle of Man, Killarney and Ulster events.

"Rallying is completely different to what I was doing before so the first half of this season is all about getting more miles under my belt," said the Coleraine driver. "If I can do that then my pace will gradually improve."

"The aim is to become more competitive and hopefully the National Championship will help me to achieve that. I know how important seat time is because when I'm out on the stages I'm learning."

"The Peugeot 208 R2 is a fantastic little car on Tarmac. I know it's capable of taking class wins."

Breen ready to jump into new Peugeot T16

Craig Breen will give Peugeot's 208 T16 its debut on next month's Acropolis Rally, and says his World Rally Car debut on Rally Sweden will help him.

Peugeot granted the Irishman permission to drive his own team's Fiesta RS WRC in Sweden, where he finished ninth overall, despite battling illness.

"Sweden will help me get ready for the 208," he said. "The function of the car's pretty similar and driving a turbo car is different to what I've been used to. It's been good to drive with the extra speed – there's no doubt the 208 T16 is going to be a quick rally car. I'm so excited about getting into it now."

Breen tested the car on gravel in Sardinia in December and will be back onboard both the 208 and Citroën's DS3 R5 (the PSA cars are being developed simultaneously) at Château Lastours in France at the end of the month.

Talking about his World Rally Car debut in Sweden, he added: "I showed some good speed on some of the stages. I'm angry that I got sick before the rally. I think this was partly because of the lack of sleep. I only managed 45 minutes on the night before the race in Sweden after travelling over from Rally Liepāja in Latvia. This was the only option to do the two rallies and I don't regret it."

Breen added that further WRC outings in his Fiesta might be possible, saying: "There's no harm in asking Peugeot, but I have to be very grateful for them letting me drive this time."



Breen: impressive in Sweden

KUBICA BUOYED BY SWEDEN RUN

Although he crashed three times Pole says rally was encouraging

By David Evans

Robert Kubica says the difficult conditions on last week's Rally Sweden offered him more valuable experience than if he'd competed on the perfect winter event.

Due to the warm weather the road surface was changing all the time last week and, while he crashed three times, the Pole insists his outing was positive.

"It is not harder than I thought it would be," said Kubica. "I knew it would be hard, of course it will be hard. For sure, it was more difficult than Monte Carlo. It was changing all of the time, but I have to learn to drive like this and having the condition change so much is very good experience. Normally I would need 20 days of testing to get such varied experience of driving like this."

Kubica's second-day crashes caused problems for some of the crews around him who were caught up behind the Pole.

Citroën's Mads Østberg said he lost time behind Kubica in SS12. "He was parked on the side of the road and then he just pulled out on me," said Østberg. "I had to slow down – he was going quite slowly."



Kubica had a tough time in Sweden, but stays positive

Asked if he thought Kubica could have known he was coming, Østberg said: "In my opinion, yes. When he was idling and waiting, they should be able to hear me coming. I got stuck behind him, not for too long, but we lost time and destroyed the windscreen."

Two stages later and Østberg was embroiled in Kubica's second off.

"There were a lot of people trying to help him and maybe they couldn't hear me

coming," said Østberg. "I came over a crest and I saw his car and the people in the road. I hoped they would move but they didn't. It was quite close, they were realising [I was there] when I was about one metre before them."

Kubica said: "He [Østberg] complained that I held him up. When you are behind [another car] then you are losing more, but as soon

as I find space – it was a very narrow place where we were – I pulled over. I found a space and let him pass me after about 300 or 400 metres."

M-Sport's Mikko Hirvonen arrived at Kubica's second shunt just as the Lotos-backed car was being extricated from the ditch. Hirvonen said: "It was strange – he came out to the road, but his co-driver was not in the car. For about 100 metres, his co-driver was running along behind him. His co-driver cannot run very fast."



Kubica is gaining WRC mileage

Tidemand's prize season in jeopardy

Junior WRC champion Pontus Tidemand's 2014 programme is at the centre of a row over who pays for his prize drive.

Tidemand's management feel the agreement was for a paid drive on six rounds of the WRC2 this year, but the FIA has pointed to the 2013 WRC regulations for clarification.

Tidemand's manager Erik Weiby said: "We discovered that the prize is not what we thought it was; we have a car from M-Sport, we have tyres from Hankook, but no budget to run it."

The FIA's rules mandate that terms and conditions apply for the prize. Those cover the use of the car, tyres, free entry to six WRC rounds and the series itself – but the FIA points out that no reference is made to funding for the car.

Tidemand is hoping to start his first event in the Fiesta R5 in Portugal.



Petter Solberg scored his second consecutive rally victory on the historic Rally Sweden last weekend. Driving his Escort Mk2, Solberg, who will tackle this year's World Rallycross Championship, was co-driven to an easy win by his wife Pernilla



i20s made it through Sweden

Hyundai boss tips i20 to shine on Portugal

Hyundai's i20 WRC won't show its true pace until Rally Portugal, but team principal Michel Nandan is impressed with the car so far.

Both factory cars completed the second round of the series in Sweden last week, but neither Thierry Neuville or Juho Hänninen made it through the entire route as both drivers went off the road on the second day.

Nandan was happier than he had been in Monte Carlo when both i20 WRCs retired from day one. Both Neuville and Hänninen showed impressive pace in Sweden, with the Belgian just 0.5s away from setting a maiden fastest time. Hänninen was 19th while Neuville was 28th.

Nandan said: "On the performance side, I don't think we are really far, but we have to wait until Portugal – that will be the proper test. The first three events are specific, they are not a good representation of the calendar; we cannot analyse properly what this means for the whole year."

"We have some tests to improve the suspension and 'diff' settings for Portugal," said Nandan. "We know there is work to do on the engine and the chassis. We have learned so much and there are a lot of positives. The basics are really impressive."

Vatänen and Cave up for Fiesta Trophy

Max Vatänen, son of 1981 World rally champion Ari, and Britain's Tom Cave are among the 12 drivers to have landed a slot on this year's Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy.

The organisers of what looks set to become the WRC's most successful single-make series ever have reduced a 24-strong short list to 12 drivers from 11 different countries.

British Rally Championship star Cave and Vatänen are two of the stronger contenders although Spaniards José Suárez and Yeray Lemes both have extensive knowledge of the Fiesta R2 having tackled the Junior WRC in the M-Sport-built car before.

The full other eight drivers are: Nicolas Amiouni (Lebanon), Ghislain De Mevius (Belgium), Quentin Gilbert (France), Szymon Kornicki (Poland), Sander Pärn (Estonia), Allan Popov (Russia), Nil Solans (Spain) and Leo Ulrich (Canada).

Cave said: "When this series was announced, it was clear; this was the prime option for us this year and I'm excited by the prospect of competing in the Drive DMACK Fiesta Cup."

The series, which rewards its winner with seven WRC2 rounds in a Fiesta R5, starts in Portugal in April.

'Mauger gave his new build Escort the perfect debut'

All the action from the South Downs, p29

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Writtle Photographic



Matthews (left) and Sykes



Ex-champ Matthews is back to take on his rival Sykes

MATTHEWS AND SYKES WILL BE BEST OF RIVALRY

Former NGK Sparkplugs BRC Challenge champion Neil Matthews says his rivalry with Richard Sykes has motivated him to return to the series.

West Midlander Matthews won the title in 2009 and this year will use the same Vauxhall Nova he drove on the final round of his title-winning campaign. Sykes triumphed in 2012 in his Citroën C2 R2.

"Richard is a good friend and

lives just four miles from me," explained Matthews, who has been a regular in the BTRDA.

"We've often said we should do the same events but we've always been in different championships. But now we're going to find out who's quickest. The last time we competed together was at Ditton Priors in 2010 but unfortunately Richard went off on stage one and I broke a driveshaft on SS1.

"He always says my car has loads of power but I remind him that his was tested and specified by Sébastien Loeb. I've half a chance on gravel but he should thrash me on Tarmac."

Matthews will be co-driven by Claire Williams and has had permission from the MSA British Rally Championship organisers to use his old car, which is out of homologation.

"The BRC gives us the chance

to compete against some very quick crews on both gravel and asphalt events," he said.

Matthews and Sykes will compete in the renamed BRC Challenge Trophy. For 2014 the class will be inter-seeded with the main BRC field. As in previous years, they will still compete on a shortened version of the overall route.

The BRC begins with Rally North Wales on April 5.

Silver Star drivers hopeful after upgrade

BTRDA Silver Star drivers Sean Edwards and Gavin Haycock hope to compete with the BTRDA Historic Cup pacesetters on this weekend's HJ Weir Engineering Wyedean Forest Rally.

The pair have competed in the Silver Star for five years but are switching categories for this term. They have upgraded their Ford Escort from a 1600cc to a 2000cc BDA.

"The throttle linkage snapped on last year's Somerset Stages and then the

engine revved to the max for about half a mile," said Haycock. "A kind spectator lent us her hair bobble and we managed to limp out of the stage with a makeshift throttle cable, then the engine wasn't right on the Plains.

"The damage was more than expected, after some thought we decided to go for a full BTRDA Historic Cup. We've really enjoyed the Wyedean over the years and have come away with some class wins, so hopefully we'll be quick."

Slight's warns of lack of UK rallying ladder

Double BTRDA Rally First champion Ash Slight's says more needs to be done to lower the cost of rallying for young drivers.

The 21-year-old won the Rally First title in 2010 and 2011 but has struggled to raise finance to further his career. He's now focusing on running his Ash Slight's Fabrications business but will tackle the Morris 1400 Championship this season.

"There was nothing to be gained by going into other championships," said Slight's, who will drive a Toyota Yaris. "There's no steps to the World Rally

Championship [in the UK] because we don't have the money. We're nowhere near what you need."

The York-based driver added that there are too few R-spec cars to provide a real measure of who is fast: "Maybe they would be better off in Escorts because you know who the quick drivers are. If a young driver starts beating them, you know you're watching someone good. There's no reference point."

Slight's added that he's building an Escort Mk2, which he may switch to later this year.

Walby returns to drive for operation funds

Former rally ace Martyn Walby will return to the cockpit for the first time in three years on this weekend's Weir Engineering Wyedean Forest Rally.

The Forest of Dean Motor Club vice-chairman will drive a Ford Escort RS1800 and will have his daughter Kirsty alongside him. It will be her first multi-venue rally.

"The main reason he's back is to raise money for Charlie Mitchell," explained

spokesman Paul Willetts.

"Charlie is five years old and suffers from spastic diplegia, which is a form of cerebral palsy that causes excruciating pain. He's been given the chance to have a private operation at Frenchay Hospital in Bristol in April, but the operation costs £25,000."

"It's great to do something to help little Charlie," said Walby.

Donations can be made at supportcharlie.org.

WEIR ENGINEERING WYEDEAN FOREST RALLY ESSENTIALS

Starts: Saturday February 15, 0801hrs, Chepstow Racecourse, Chepstow **Finishes:** Saturday February 15, 1440hrs, Chepstow Racecourse, Chepstow

Competitive distance: 45 Miles **Stages:** seven **Entries:** 150 **2013 winners:** Connor McCloskey/ Francis Regan (Subaru Impreza WRC)



Thorburn heads entry

WORLD RALLY CAR ENTRIES

| NO. | DRIVER | TEAM |
|-----|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Euan Thorburn/Paul Beaton | Ford Focus WRC |
| 2 | David Bogie/Kevin Rae | Ford Focus WRC |
| 3 | Stephen Petch/Ian Windress | Ford Focus WRC |
| 4 | Paul Bird/Aled Davies | Ford Focus WRC |
| 5 | Ollie Mellors/TBA | Proton Satria Neo |
| 6 | Luke Francis/John H Roberts | Mitsubishi Lancer E9 |
| 7 | Peter Elkins/Andrew Joll | Ford Focus WRC |
| 8 | Patrick Naylor/Ian Lawrence | Mitsubishi Lancer E9 |
| 9 | Tom Naughton/Andi Mort | Mitsubishi Lancer E9 |
| 10 | Rob Smith/Ross Weir | Subaru Impreza |

On TV: Friday, March 7, 2100hrs and 2230hrs, MotorsTV

A CO-DRIVER'S CONFESSIONS

HOWARD DAVIES

"Evans Jr has superb support from Wales"



The slush-covered stages of frozen Sweden with iced tramlines and furiously fast, flowing stages posed a tough second battle for Elfyn Evans last week.

Every round will be challenging this year. As I sat in Villebois-les-Pins on SS4 in Monte Carlo, doing my difficult job as weather crew for M-Sport, I was – for a while – the proudest Welshman on the col.

Elfyn Evans had never been to Monte Carlo before but had just posted fastest time on SS3, and was only pipped some five minutes later by 0.5s by French Tarmac specialist and previous Monte winner, Brian Bouffier, who was running a few cars behind.

My bubble was soon burst as Elfyn's family arrived, understandably excited. But they were treated with the usual French arrogant welcome as they tried to double-park their hire car. I tried to explain to the little official *gendarme* but he was having none of it. "You cannot park there, not possible," was his remark. I introduced the young policeman to the occupants of the car but his rally knowledge was less than his politeness. Undeterred the Evans family, mum and sister, along with friends, were ecstatic as Elfyn's turn of speed. It was a great achievement for the youngster who has shown great pace.

The Welshman's speed was attributed to clever tyre management and exceptional weather info (self praise) and that this silenced any doubt about his ability was confirmed on last weekend's Rally Sweden, where his strong pace continued.

Back on the Monte, the Evans' family and friends were vital in feeding me with information. They had an ingenious plan of getting stage times from Wales. They came via Elfyn's young lady in Dolgellau, Donna, and were fed to his sister Delyth in Monte via numerous methods. We were kept up to date almost live.

The support Elfyn has from his family and friends along with the support of thousands of Welsh rally enthusiasts was evident at the recent Welsh Association of Motor Clubs awards evening when he received a standing ovation while picking up an award. This was quite a sight to behold.

Let's not forget the performances of Northern Irishman Kris Meeke in the season's first two rallies. We have got a lot to shout about in the WRC all of a sudden.

So for all you aspiring WRC champions, the belief of M-Sport in Elfyn, and likewise Citroën in Kris, is a shot in the arm.

It proves that after many years in the wilderness it is possible to compete at the top level of our sport in a works team.

Many people moan in the UK that there is not a proper ladder of opportunity to the top of our sport but these two guys show that with determination, ability – possibly a bit of a silver tongue too – and true speed it is possible.

Now boys it's over to you, no pressure. Nobody said it was easy. *Pob lwc*, good luck from the big man and all of Wales.



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RALLY NEWS

Numbers ramping up in Cross Country

Britpart MSA British Cross Country Championship bosses say interest in the series is approaching an all-time high.

The 2014 season will include a manufacturer entry for the first time. Isuzu is entering its D-Max truck, which will be driven by former MSA British Rally Championship frontrunner Jason Sharpe.

Series organiser Selwyn Kendrick explained: "The quality of machines that we have is better than at any time in the past ten years. "With Isuzu, the new season looks good. We have the top end of the market now, which is where the British championship should be. We're getting to the crest of a wave. The series is strong in that it has a number of entry points for competitors. Another point is that we have such a variety of vehicles from different makes. Other championships are increasingly struggling to get a diverse entry."

The series includes a clubmans class, a Freelander Trophy class and the overall MSA championship.

Smith to take on overseas rounds

Rally driver Roy Smith says he's targeting a run on the Rally de Mallorca this year.

The Perth driver has run his Porsche 911 since 2012 and says he wants to take it further afield.

"I started with Ford Anglias, I've had Escorts and others. I thought I'd try something different with the Porsche," he said. "It's great fun but it's totally different from the Escorts. The idea this year is to do the Rally de Mallorca in March. I think four or five of us will go out there with Damsport. Then, later, we'll aim for the Sol Rally Barbados."

Smith added that he's getting to grips with the Porsche's handling: "We built it with help from others and run it on selected events. I'm learning how to drive it correctly. Carl Williamson was my co-driver for the Ulster Rally last year and I learnt a lot from him."

The Rally de Mallorca runs on March 13-15 and last year's event attracted a bumper entry of more than 80 cars.



The Millington Satria will be used for an Asphalt attack

PROTON TO RUN ON ASPHALT SERIES

Former Darrian man in car swap for MSA championship campaign

By James Bolton

Darrian driver Alan Oldfield has switched to a Proton Satria Neo Millington for the coming season.

The York-based driver will compete on the REIS MSA Asphalt Rally Championship, and has only been driving in rallies for 18 months.

"I'm putting all my eggs in one

basket because I'm going to sell my 2.4-litre Escort, which has a Duratec engine, and my 2.5-litre Darrian too," said Oldfield, 49. "My first rally was the 2012 Jim Clark. This year is more practice for me. The first asphalt event is at Epynt and I've never been there before but fortunately my co-driver Ken Bills has done about 900 rallies so he's a big help. I've

never driven a four-wheel-drive car before either. Damian Cole and Steve Simpson have shown that driving two-wheel-drive cars is a good way to learn a 4WD car on Tarmac. My aim is to be up with them in the next few years."

Oldfield won the Promenade Stages in his Darrian T90 GTR last year and suggests that his need to buy a 4WD car shows

the growing quality of the Asphalt championship. "Ollie Mellors and I both did Pendragon and I couldn't keep up with Ollie's Proton Millington," said Oldfield. "That made me want to give it a go. The car isn't a WRC, but it is one that I can afford."

The Asphalt series begins with the Tour of Epynt event on March 10.

Llewellyn Jr impresses despite big accident

Rally co-driver Aled Davies has praised the ability of Ben Llewellyn, son of rallying legend David, despite him crashing out of the recent Red Kite Stages.

The duo were setting competitive times before a final-stage shunt ended their day on the Carmathenshire event.

"That boy's got a lot of talent," said Davies. "I'd not sat with him before and I could see he's a natural. You get a feel for the drivers. I think he's only driven four rallies. He can keep the speed up through the corners, that's the impressive part."

Davies said the shunt was down to luck rather than being

out of control. "We went over a crest and the car got a bit light," he explained. "It was loose gravel after that and so we couldn't get any traction and we went wide. There was a rock face on the outside and we clipped a bit that stuck out about six inches. That put us sideways and we barrel rolled."

Llewellyn is a successful shooter and has won the Olympic British Junior Skeet title. His father Dai was second in the 1986 International Welsh Rally when he rolled his Metro 6R4 on the Trawscoed stage, which is about 20 miles from where Ben crashed.



Ben Llewellyn's Red Kite Stages ended in a dramatic fashion

Belfast Stages takes a year's sabbatical

The Belfast Stages Rally will return next year; organisers have said.

The event won't run this year as it has been rotated out of the Northern Irish Stage Rally Championship. "It's dropped out for one year," said event spokesman Charlie Deering. "In light of it being a non-championship round, we opted to run a Targa rally in its place. It's a voluntary thing and we're giving the rally a year's rest."

"It's the proximity of other events that was the main problem. Competitors said they wanted something like this so we're going to run something different. The entries are coming in well so far."

The Targa rally will run on February 15 at Loughgall Country Park in County Armagh.

Rally North Wales tempts newcomers

Organisers of the Rally North Wales will offer a 100-mile mini rally that will run alongside the main MSA BRC season opener on Saturday April 5.

The mini rally will include 22 miles of gravel roads and there will be no service halt.

"The event is aimed at introducing relative newcomers to gravel road special stages," said spokesman John Horton. "But the age or experience of either crew member is immaterial, anyone can enter. The rally is open to any non-turbo, two-wheel-drive vehicle up to 1600cc. The entry fee will be £275 and that's the equivalent of just £12.50 per stage mile."

Alan Healy Memorial to open entries up

Organisers of the TJS Self Drive Alan Healy Memorial Cadwell Park Rally have increased the event's capacity for this year.

The rally was extremely popular last year and so 90 cars will be accepted for the April 6 running.

"We had space for 70 cars last year," said spokesman Roy Bell. "It's an event that competitors like to do and so we've made provisions to include more of them this time. We've already received 25 entries in the first few days of entries opening."

This will be the third time the event has run at Cadwell Park in Lincolnshire. The rally is a part of two regional championships and regulations are available at bordermotorclub.co.uk.

BREATHING NEW LIFE IN TO THE ICONIC METRO 6R4

PAGE 26

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SPOTLIGHT: SAM BRABHAM

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

THE WEIGHT OF EXPECTATION

How Sam Brabham aims to emerge from his family legacy

BY RUSSELL HAYES
JUNIOR REPORTER



For the child of a successful motor racing driver, the pressure to follow in their parent's wheel tracks can be difficult to manage. But when you are the third generation of an illustrious name in racing history, the pressure and spotlight becomes more intense.

For Sam Brabham, the grandson of triple Formula One world champion Sir Jack Brabham and son of sports car ace David – not to mention nephew of Geoff and Gary – that expectation and spotlight is beginning to gradually intensify.

After graduating from karting, the 19-year-old made his car racing debut last season in the MSA British Formula Ford Championship. But the hopeful, who combines his racing with university studies, has not been forced into continuing the family history. Brabham Jr was a relatively late starter in karting at the age of 13 and, after a maiden single-seater season in which he missed the first three rounds at Brands Hatch, he finished the year an impressive fourth place in the points.

"The pressure for me to start my motorsport career was more on my dad, because that pressure came from me," Brabham Jr explains. "I pestered him for months to begin karting and when I beat a group of friends at a birthday event, he could see that I had elements of talent. At the age of 13, dad took me to Buckmore Park to one of its arrive-and-drive days. The circuit is a great place to start with its undulating surface. I finished third in my first junior club championship but we went about our own business and still didn't feel the pressure. In fact, I still don't feel much now. I put more pressure on myself because there is a great drive to win."

Joining successful title-winning team JTR with the vastly experienced senior driver Dan Cammish enabled Brabham to make the transition into cars as comfortable as possible. His fourth place in the standings included six podium finishes.

"It was a huge learning curve for me," he says. "Coming out of karting and into single-seater racing for the first time, and being thrown into a major national series, was a big deal."

"The decision to begin the season at Donington Park was deliberate as we organised finance quite late. Dad and [JTR boss] Nick Tandy know each other and agreed a deal while they were out at Sebring in Florida. We received the car at the opening rounds at Brands Hatch but I'd never driven a race car before."

"I was fortunate to be joining a team in JTR, which had won the title the previous season and went on to dominate the year with Cammish. Dan's knowledge enabled the rest of the team's drivers to share his data and set-up tips. His experience of racing in a number of different chassis and

championships helped. The other teams could see how quick Dan was, but we were able to see exactly how he went quicker through the corners. Despite us having differing driving styles, he would help advise on technique as we watched the onboard footage alongside dad. There was nothing special to how he dominated – he was just more experienced."

Brabham's last-minute deal to enter the series hindered him during

the year, with limited practice time at circuits such as Oulton Park. "For race one at Oulton I had 30 minutes to learn the track beforehand," he says. "It was daunting and I learnt how to defend in that opening race. My defining moment of the year was at Silverstone. I was disappointed to make mistakes in race one but two podiums in the following two

aces showed how much progress I'd made throughout the year."

Throughout the majority of the season, Brabham Sr accompanied his son to each round of the championship. Brabham Jr says the pair's working relationship improved as the season went on.

"In the early rounds, dad would occasionally be angry when I returned to the team awning because he knew I'd not raced to my full potential, and that would start arguments. But, towards the end of the year, he took a step back. He knew that I was finding my feet. We worked well together. I took his advice on board as I know he's got such a vast amount of experience."

During the past winter months, Brabham headed out to Asia to take part in the MRF Challenge – a mainly Indian-based series using a Dallara chassis powered by a two-litre Renault engine. He was one of a handful of Brits to take on the series, joined by drivers such as Rupert Svendsen-Cook, Ryan Cullen, Laura Tillett and Harry Tincknell.

Brabham said the experience of racing in the sub-continent was desperately needed for him to progress after his first year in car racing. He explains that despite his impressive Formula Ford debut last year, he contested the season without using left-foot braking.

"Over the winter I needed to improve my racecraft and the MRF Challenge was certainly the ideal



David Brabham (l) keeps watch over his son Sam's race career



JTR's man leads at Silverstone



Brabham tried the MRF series

way of going about that. It's made me such an improved driver. The series has more experienced racers, many of who are very aggressive. There were a number of occasions when I was pushed close to the wall but it enabled me to learn a great deal, particularly with my braking. The practice sessions were short, particularly at the support event to the F1 race on the same weekend, so my previous technique wasn't right to help me compete. For that reason – and due to the increased aerodynamic grip of the car compared to other machines like the Formula Ford – it was the first time that I was forced to learn how to left-foot brake. Throughout last season I wasn't able to challenge for wins because my braking was letting me down.

"The MRF Challenge also taught me how aero actually works. Formula Ford is known for its mechanical grip with the new front and rear wings providing only a small amount of aero.

In the Dallara, I learnt just how late and hard I can actually brake."

Recently, Brabham was accepted on to the BRDC Rising Stars programme, joining the same club as both his father and grandfather: "I'm honoured and proud to be part of such a club," he says. "It's an incredible award to be given after only my first year in cars. I now need to work to get the full BRDC membership alongside dad and granddad. It'll take many more years of hard work to achieve the BRDC Gold Star awarded to granddad though."

Brabham intends to take the experience of his first year of single-seater racing into another season in Formula Ford competition, although he has yet to agree a deal with a team despite testing with three top squads including the JTR outfit.

"For this season I'm determined to combine the experience of last year along with the time spent in the MRF series and aim for the title. But I need to make sure that I am with one of the three leading teams," he says.

"I believe that I showed enough talent to compete for race wins in 2013 without the ideal braking method. With the increased experience gained during the winter I believe I can get the job done and have a title shot before heading into Europe in 2015." ■



Brabham Jr is planning to return to Formula Ford

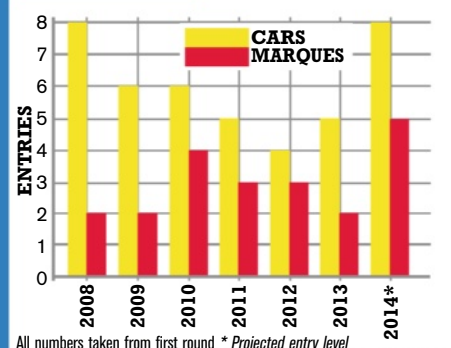
INSIGHT: BRITISH GT4

Photos: Jakob Ebrely



The European GT4 Cup is diverse

ENTRY LEVELS



Ginetta is a force in GT4 but others are catching up

THE REBIRTH OF GT4

British GT's feeder class has struggled, but it's on the up in 2014

BY ROBLADBROOK
RACING EDITOR



Looking at the early entry indications for this year's British GT Championship, it's hard to believe that the lower-tier GT4 division has previously been a difficult sell.

The production-based class is set for its biggest year ever this season. With more than two months to go until the lights go out at Oulton Park to start another championship season, GT4 has already garnered eight entries – the most since the class was introduced back in 2008 – and will feature a wider range of marques than ever before.

So far offerings from Aston Martin, Ginetta, Lotus, BMW and Toyota have signed up, and there's rumblings of a Porsche entering too.

This comes in stark contrast to the dark days of the category just a few years ago. GT4 has always been an area of British motorsport that never delivered on its promise. The idea of an affordable stepping stone towards the burgeoning GT3 category using genuine GT cars based closely on their road-going counterparts sounded great. But it attracted little support. That's set to change this year.

"We've worked hard to push GT4. Many people told us to give up on it and make British GT solely a GT3 series, but we always believed that step was needed, and now we're being

proven right," explains British GT manager Benjamin Franassovici. "It's been a bit baffling as to why it hasn't taken off before, but things are changing very quickly now."

Baffling is a good description. In Europe GT4 is thriving. The lower running costs and availability of models has helped to make both SRO's northern European-based GT4 Cup and the Dutch GT4 class a hit.

With little in the way of costly GT3 racing, GT4 gets top billing. Dutch GT4 enjoys standalone grids and regularly features a multitude of marques that just aren't seen in British GT. BMWs, Corvettes, Mustangs, Camaros and Porsches are commonplace.

In Britain some messy early rulings held the category back and led to it garnering an unsavoury reputation.

When GT4 was first introduced to broaden the appeal of British GT in 2008, it attracted eight cars for the season opener. As the year went on the gentleman drivers, who largely made up the entry, dropped out as they became fed up of dodging the faster GT3 machines and being the 'poor relation' as some termed it. Drivers weren't inclined to part with £100,000 for a car just to be lapped in it.

For that first season only the Ginetta G50 and Aston Martin Vantage were available in Britain. The Vantage soon struggled against the lighter G50, which wasn't based on a production road car and was considered more 'racey' than the Aston. That resulted in GT4 becoming almost a one-make class for the Leeds-built machine.

Cars that complied with the superlight regulations were admitted

into GT4 for 2010 to boost numbers. Track specials like the KTMX-Bow and Lotus 2-Elven were wiping the floor with the Ginettas and Astons. It almost led to the death of the category.

"GT4 has gone through a lot of changes," adds Franassovici, "we had to listen to what the teams and drivers wanted in order to stop it going under. There were messy rules, like the superlight one, and people didn't want to race in an expensive single-make Ginetta class. Ginetta had its own championships for that.

"We've made big strides with the Balance of Performance testing [which equalises car pace through engine and aero restrictions based on marque and ultimate laptime] in recent years and we now enjoy much better parity. The cars have also moved forwards a lot.

"Cars like the Aston Martin are now just as fast as the race-bred Ginetta because extra development has gone into them as manufacturers have woken up to the GT4 market. We're seeing that variety creep in now and because the class is very market-led we're seeing the numbers coming back. When makes like Aston Martin or BMW launch a new GT4 car it becomes desirable. The makes like it because GT4 cars are economical to produce due to their production roots and the drivers like it

because they get modern GT cars at much less cost than GT3."

Perhaps the biggest swing has been in the driver market, with the rising cost of single-seaters prompting youngsters to look to sportscars.

"We're getting more interest than ever from young domestic drivers

looking to move into British GT, which they see as a platform to grow and use to progress into European racing," says Franassovici. "They can come from single-seaters or saloons and learn all about GT for less than half of the cost. You can run a GT4 competitively for under £100,000 split between two drivers. That's under half a top GT3 budget."



Franassovici (top) and racer Osborne



Team head Nathan Freke

GT4 is also attracting more teams. Century Motorsport will run two Ginetta G55s this year. Team head Nathan Freke said: "GT4 has taken a big step up in professionalism in recent years, it's not two guys and a trailer anymore.

"Running a GT4 car is great for smaller teams. There are less specific parameters with set-up so there are less grey areas to get lost in. Things like the suspension and engine maps are only adjustable within a fine window. Running any GT car is still a technical challenge. We employ three engineers per car as well as a chief engineer and data engineer, so it's a big operation but we learn an awful lot from the amount of data. I'm confident we could easily

run a competitive GT3 car with the experience we've gained. When you have top teams drivers tend to follow."

Joe Osborne used GT4 as a springboard into GT3 competition. Having started his career in Formula BMW he joined GT4 in 2008 and went on to win the European GT4 Cup in 2009 before signing for Trackspeed's GT3 team. He now races factory backed BMW Z4s and Aston Martin Vantages at British and European level.

"If it wasn't for GT4 I wouldn't be where I am," he says. "When I joined the grid in 2008 the numbers were quite low and it wasn't that competitive, but I was 18 and running on a fully fledged GT grid and sharing a paddock with the right people. In terms of exposure for a young driver that's huge.

"The cars are superb learning tools. They are actually harder to drive than a GT3. You have less power and less grip so to find those vital extra few tenths you have to be close to the limit and mistakes are punished more severely.

"The biggest thing I learned from the class was race management. It's the first real step you encounter in sportscars and it teaches you about management. When I first started I'd go flat-out all the time and kill my tyres and struggle at the end of races. It's about tempering yourself. It also gets you used to the driving experience of a GT car, with lots of weight, limited vision and longer stints. I believe it should have its own grid, then it can really thrive. Hopefully we'll see more drivers coming into it and one day we can create a British GT career ladder. It could be the key to taking the whole championship to the next level." ■



GT3 is a racer in road car shell

Appearances can be deceiving: little in common between GT3 and GT4 Astons

Aston Martin Racing parent firm Prodrive is one of the UK's leading GT manufacturers.

The Vantage GT3 and GT4 are built side-by-side at the team's Banbury base. Prodrive chief engineer Dan Sayers says: "The only similarity in creating the GT4 and the GT3 is the bodyshell. We use the production bodyshells from the factory as the base but the rate and depth of development between GT4 and GT3 is very different.

"For GT4 we use around 80-85 per cent road car parts. The suspension, wishbones and uprights are all stock, as is the paddle-shift transmission. We breathe on the V8 engine to add reliability with things like race bearings and con rods, but that's it. The interior is all custom and we fit the FIA fuel cell and roll cage. It retains most standard electrics and the ABS and traction control systems. It's a road car for the track basically.

"The GT3 is another world. We use only around 40-50 per cent road car parts and everything else is specialist. We have the challenge of fabricating the wider body and the full aero kit. GT4 just runs a small rear wing.

"The GT3 engine is a stock block V12 with standard head and cam but other than that it's race-bred and tuned. The price difference reflects the depth of research and engineering that has gone into each car."



GT4: like a souped up road car

PREVIEW: BTRDA RALLY SERIES

BY JAMES BOLTON
NATIONAL RALLYING EDITOR



There are two ingredients that make sport sensational to watch – unpredictability and skilled competitors. The REIS BTRDA Rally Series has both by the bucket load.

The 61st running of the championship begins with this weekend's Weir Engineering Wyedean Forest Rally, which is based in Chepstow in south Wales. It then runs over a further eight events and concludes with the Cambrian Rally in October.

It is split into a number of categories that cater for different cars and budgets. The headline competition is the Gold Star and last year's season was a thriller. Scotsman Euan Thorburn tied with Northern Irishman Connor McCloskey after the nine rallies. Ford Focus driver Thorburn took the title because he had more wins than his Subaru Impreza-mounted rival. Four drivers had gone into the Cambrian Rally season finale with a shot at winning the coveted Gold Star.

The Silver Star is awarded to the highest scoring contender in a two-wheel-drive car and there are also the Rally First competitions, split into 1.0-litre, 1.4-litre and 1.6-litre classes. There is an MG ZR Challenge and a BTRDA Historic Cup. The competitions exist because the BTRDA prides itself on offering what the competitor wants.

If you want close competition, the place to look is the Morris 1400 Championship. And there is plenty of interest in the small two-wheel-drive machines heading into Saturday's Wyedean Rally.

The series has been dominated by Vauxhall Nova driver Julian Wilkes and his co-driver Will Rutherford-Child over the past two seasons. But they are taking a year out to work on a new car. There are five or six drivers that could fill the void.

Among the favourites is Mat Smith. The Ford Ka driver put in some impressive performances in 2013 and finished second in the standings. He routinely gave Wilkes a push, notably on the opening test of the season. Through the Sallowallets stage on last year's Wyedean Rally he and co-driver Giles Dykes were eight seconds clear of Wilkes and Rutherford-Child.

The latter's blue Nova was actually third, with Dave Bennett and Alistair McNeil putting their Vauxhall Corsa in between the two crews. Bennett agrees that Smith will be a contender this year: "He's the man to watch, partly because he gets finishes. The key to a title push is to not crash, and find reliability. Consistency will be important but I'm sure the championship will go down to the wire."

Bennett is tipped by many of the other drivers. He's spent the winter sorting his Corsa.

"We've made some modifications to the brakes and the suspension," he explains. "The car's not finished yet but we'll be in Chepstow this weekend. We'll be going in a bit cold but we'll see where we get. The championship is certainly the ambition. We're going to push for it. We had some pace at the end of last year."

The York-based driver adds that the competition isn't weaker despite Wilkes not being around: "There's some quick guys this year so although we don't have Julian there is lots of competition. The 1400 championship is great and it's a great way to go rallying. It encompasses the spirit of the sport."

Another driver that is tipped to shine in this most competitive of classes is Justin Lawson. He and Wilkes had some stirring battles in their similarly liveried Vauxhall Novas in 2012. But then a heavy shunt on the Woodpecker Rally, while he was trying to close a 35s gap to Wilkes, put Lawson out of the remainder of that year and 2013 too.

"You don't ever budget for an accident so I wiped out every bit of my finance for 2013," he says. "Fixing the car cost thousands of pounds and all it takes is one big crash. The idea is to not go off."

"There's always someone up there challenging. I've been in this championship for eight years and I've never found a lack of competition."

Lawson has just completed rebuilding his car and hasn't driven it at all since his Woodpecker shunt. That was 18 months ago, but he knows the car is quick. "I'll have to do a few events to allow myself to get back into it," he says. "I know the car's capable of being up there."

Lawson will spend some of his time focusing on the development of his Nova's new Rega

CALENDAR

REIS BTRDA Rally Series 2014

| RND | RALLY | DATE |
|-----|----------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Wyedean Forest Rally | February 15 |
| 2 | Malcolm Wilson Rally | March 15 |
| 3 | Somerset Stages | April 12 |
| 4 | Plains Rally | May 17 |
| 5 | Dukeries Rally | June 7 |
| 6 | Nicky Grist Stages | July 12 |
| 7 | Woodpecker Stages | August 30 |
| 8 | Trackrod Stages | September 27 |
| 9 | Cambrian Rally | October 18 |

Crews count their best six scores from the first eight events they enter

suspension. The set up hasn't been used on a Nova in a forest before. "That will take some of our focus," says Lawson. "We're going to have to get used to it and how it handles."

His recipe to win the championship sounds relatively straightforward, but is difficult to achieve: "To compete you need a budget, reliability and you need to keep finishing in the top five throughout the season."

The regulations in the 1400 class are relatively tight, which helps to limit cost and to keep the competition close. But the drivers are still competitive animals and seek to develop their cars as much as possible. Dan Evans impressed with his speed last year and the 22-year-old says he's reached the limit of his Nova's potential. "We've made some modifications to it to improve the reliability," he says. "But we're building a Corsa now. We hoped to have it out on the Wyedean, but with work commitments we've not been able to finish it in time. The main reason we're changing cars is because Novas are hard to find. There are one or two bodyshells around but there are a lot more Corsas about. We'll test and develop the Corsa before we run it in a rally. We want to be on the pace as soon as we get on events. We want to be up the front and in contention for the championship this year."

The Hereford driver acknowledges that it won't be easy and he reels of the long list of rivals that he'll be eyeing on the Chepstow start line this weekend: "Smith and Bennett will be the men to beat. Ash Slights can be quick on his day and he could go well now he's got on top of the engine problems. He was very quick in Rally First a couple of years ago. I expect Justin Lawson to be there too."

Slights, the 2010 and 2011 Rally First champion, struggled last year to get his Toyota Yaris on to the pace. Development work on the engine has benefitted the car but he's unsure how competitive we will be this year.

"It's certainly better," he says. "There's a lot of quick drivers and they're all close. It's the rules that help to keep the competition close and the cars' performances similar. Hopefully we'll get there with the Yaris, our times were good on the Somerset Stages last year. Also, people like to see modern cars on the rallies."

When it comes to trying to win the 1400 title, Cheltenham driver Darren Pinchin can offer a few words of advice. In 2008 and 2011 he lifted the crown but this year he'll be running a part campaign as he spends time helping his son with his kart racing career. "You need to be consistent and stay on the road," he says. "Being quick in the morning paid off for me. It paid off for Julian too. He tended to go away quickly and then the others had to try to catch up."

That method works because with some rallies, the roads can rut up with repeated stage use. The 1400 cars run ahead of the four-wheel-drive Group N and WRC machines and so on a second loop can struggle. But that's not the case this weekend as the Wyedean has no repetition of the tests.

"The rallies are more of an endurance trial for the 1400 cars," agrees Pinchin. "The 1400 cars are unbelievable for what they are. You want to see how far you can climb up the leaderboard. You can get near the top ten and that's satisfying."

Evans concurs: "Everyone underestimates the 1400 cars. They are quick. And it's competitive. It's a good laugh and it's friendly too."

But when it comes to what will happen this weekend, nobody has an answer.

The 1400 class is open and the nature of the rally enhances the unpredictability. "There's often snow and ice on the Wyedean Rally," says Bennett. "It's a lottery. We'll just be looking for a finish. We'll set the car up and aim for points and then on the Malcolm Wilson [round two] the season will really get going." ■



Smith has the tag of 1400 favorite

LITTLE

BIG

The 1400 runners will engage in a fierce Silver Star battle



Slights says his Toyota Yaris is fully sorted for new attack



Evans will swap to a Corsa this year



Bennett was a 1400 class round winner last season

CARS

FOCUS



The rapid Lawson will make a return after a big '12 shunt

Four-wheel-drive adds an unpredictable edge

Predicting a winner of the REIS BTRDA Gold Star Championship is always a difficult business.

In 2012, the final round shoot-out for the title was between Roger Chilman, Hugh Hunter and Shaun Gardener. Last year it was Euan Thorburn, Connor McCloskey, Charlie Payne and Stephen Petch battling it out.

That illustrates the closeness of the championship, but also the changing cast of characters due to the difficulty in getting a season together. A couple of early retirements are enough to stop a driver competing in later events because their title chances are over.

By contrast, get some good early scores and a driver can go on a roll. Thorburn didn't intend to contest the Gold Star last year, but some strong early results meant he was sucked into the title fight. It was the ultimate 'take it as it comes' approach. This year, the Scot says his main focus is on the ARR Craib MSA Scottish Rally Championship, but he will line up for the Wydean on Saturday. Intriguingly, he'll be joined by his great Scottish rival David Bogie. Both Ford Focus WRC drivers are out for mileage ahead of the Snowman Rally, but both will be pushing each other.

McCloskey, who won the Wydean last year, won't be in Chepstow. But Petch will be, and the Focus WRC man could be a contender for the crown if he strings together some decent early scores.

The need for consistency means that World Rally Car drivers don't always win the season-long battle. So two dark horses for the crown include Ollie Mellors in the rapid Proton-Millington and 2013 BTRDA Production Cup winner Luke Francis, who is stepping up to a Class B13-spec Mitsubishi Lancer.

Making the ends meet to put up a title challenge for the 1400 championship

Like all motorsport, rallying isn't cheap. The Morris 1400 Championship is relatively high-profile and that status brings a slightly higher cost for the competitor than in other series.

Justin Lawson is returning to the championship this weekend, having fixed his car after a heavy crash in 2012.

"My co-driver Paul Hargreaves and I got together recently to work out the budget for the year," he says. "You need a big one. Entry fees seem to have gone up in recent years. Petrol is expensive

and you have accommodation and tyres. It can add up to £1100 or £1200 per event."

That's a lot to shell out for a nine-round championship, although only a crew's first eight events count towards the final standings. But with the close competition, not to mention the fact each rally covers 45 miles, there is real value for money to be had.

"But that brings a problem because sponsorship is harder to find and you want to stay competitive," says Lawson. "You have to miss one event, so we have

to work out which will be the best events to do. The older cars in the 1400 series are petrol-guzzling cars. They take rich fuels and do limited miles per gallon. You're looking at £450 for tyres and £450 for the entry. Then £200 or £300 for accommodation and petrol."

Does Lawson think that anything can be done to reduce the cost? "The entry fee doesn't go away. You can look at how you run the tyre budget but the fuel is needed. Having said that, the costs seem relatively stable in the 1400 series."



Thorburn took last year's Gold Star title

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NATIONAL RALLY CALENDAR 2014

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MOTORSPORT NEWS

CHAMPIONSHIP INDEX

| NO. | CHAMPIONSHIP |
|-----|--|
| 1 | MSA British Rally Championship |
| 2 | MSA English Rally Championship |
| 3 | ARR Craib MSA Scottish Rally Championship |
| 4 | Pirelli MSA Welsh National Rally Championship |
| 5 | MSA Northern Ireland Rally Championship |
| 6 | REIS MSA Asphalt Rally Championship |
| 7 | REIS BTRDA Rally Series |
| 8 | Mintex MSA British Historic Rally Championship |
| 9 | West Wales Rally Spares R.A.C. Rally Championship |
| 10 | NGK Spark Plugs BRC Challenge |
| 11 | BRC Rally Two Championship |
| 12 | Citraen Racing Trophy UK |
| 13 | Fiesta Sport Trophy |
| 14 | Twingo Renaultsport R1 and R2 Trophy UK |
| 15 | Morris Lubricants BTRDA 1400 Championship |
| 16 | BTRDA Rally First |
| 17 | MG ZR Rally Challenge |
| 18 | BTRDA Historic Cup |
| 19 | ANCC Forest Challenge |
| 20 | ANCC Tarmacadam Challenge |
| 21 | ANCC Multi-Use Challenge |
| 22 | In Car Services Welsh Clubmans Rally Championship |
| 23 | Steve Harkness Competition Tyres Welsh Tarmacadam Championship |
| 24 | King of Egypt |
| 25 | S G Petch Association of North East and Cumbria Car Clubs Stage Rally Championship |

| NO. | CHAMPIONSHIP |
|-----|---|
| 26 | AWMMC Kingsway Insurance Heart of England Rally Championship |
| 27 | AS Performance North of England Tarmacadam Rally Championship |
| 28 | BP Motor Body Builders Cotswold Motor Sport Group Rally Championship |
| 29 | Hamilton Classics Associations of Central Southern Motor Clubs Rally Championship |
| 30 | Ward Construction Association of Eastern Motor Clubs Stage Rally Championship |
| 31 | Eurocars Motorsport Manx Rally Championship |
| 32 | East Midland Association of Motor Clubs Multi-Venue Championship |
| 33 | Rainworth Skoda East Midland Association of Motor Clubs Multi-Use Championship |
| 34 | Association of North East Midlands Motor Clubs Forest Rally Championship |
| 35 | Association of North East Midlands Motor Clubs Sealed Surface Rally Championship |
| 36 | Association of North East Midlands Motor Clubs Mixed Surface Rally Championship |
| 37 | Association of North Western Car Clubs Stage Rally Championship |
| 38 | Association of North Western Car Clubs Forest Rally Championship |
| 39 | Association of North Western Car Clubs Anglesey Rally Challenge |
| 40 | Association of North Western Car Clubs Historic Rally Championship |
| 41 | Association of South Western Motor Clubs Sealed Stage Rally Championship |
| 42 | Association of South Western Motor Clubs Loose Stage Rally Championship |
| 43 | FMP Rally Challenge |
| 44 | 6R4.com Three Sisters Rally Challenge |

| NO. | CHAMPIONSHIP |
|-----|---|
| 45 | Britpart MSA British Cross Country Championship |
| 46 | Ecosse Challenge |
| 47 | Junior 1000 Ecosse Challenge |
| 48 | BLUE Scottish Tarmac Rally Championship |
| 49 | Scottish Borders Championship (subject to MSA approval) |
| 50 | Five of Clubs Rally Championship |
| 51 | Brian Dennis Motorsport Welsh Historic Championship |
| 52 | Motoscope Northern Historic Rally Championship |
| 53 | Gwynne Speed Rally Challenge |
| 54 | Clonakilty Blackpudding Irish Tarmac Rally Championship |
| 55 | Irish Historic Tarmac Stage Rally Championship |
| 56 | Dunlop Irish National Stage Rally Championship |
| 57 | Valvoline Motorsport Ireland Forest Rally Championship |
| 58 | Top Part West Coast Rally Championship |
| 59 | Southern 4 Rally Championship |
| 60 | Midlands East Rally Championship |
| 61 | Sligo Pallets Border Rally Championship |
| 62 | Triton Showers South East Stages Championship |
| 63 | Formula 1000 Forest Championship |
| 64 | Super 1000 Rally Championship |
| 65 | Formula 1000 Stage Rally Championship |
| 66 | Junior 1000 Rally Championship |

EVENT CALENDAR

| FEBRUARY | | |
|----------|-----------------------------------|---|
| DATE | EVENT | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| 15 | Wyedean Forest Rally | 2, 4, 7, 15, 16, 17, 18, 42, 51, 63, 64 |
| 22 | Arnold Clark Snowman Rally | 3 |
| 22 | Jack Neal Memorial Rally (Blyton) | 35, 37 |
| 22 | Fivemiletown Spring Rally | (NI) |
| 23 | Birr Stages Rally (IRL) | 58, 60 |

| MARCH | | |
|-------|--|--|
| DATE | EVENT | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| 1 | Bovington Stages | 29, 41 |
| 2 | Mid Wales Stages | 4, 8, 9, 22, 38, 40, 43, 51 |
| 2 | Roskirk Stages (Three Sisters) | 37, 44, 65, 66 |
| 2 | William Loughman Forestry Rally (IRL) | 57, 62 |
| 8 | Malcolm Wilson Rally | 2, 7, 15, 16, 17, 18, 25, 38, 40, 63, 64 |
| 8 | 4Hire Jurby Stages | 31 |
| 9 | Tour of Epynt | 6, 23, 24, 37 |
| 9 | Mayo Stages Rally (IRL) | 56, 61 |
| 15 | Bishopscourt Stages | (NI) 5 |
| 15/16 | West Cork Rally (IRL) | 59 |
| 16 | Flying Fortress Stages (Grafton Underwood) | 30, 33, 36 |
| 16 | Lee Holland Memorial (Anglesey) | 20, 37, 39, 65, 66 |
| 22 | Border Counties Rally | 3, 25, 46, 49, 52 |
| 23 | AGBO Stages (Weston Park) | 26 |
| 23 | Tour of Caerwent | 23, 28, 53 |
| 23 | SMC Stages (Weeton) | 21, 37 |
| 30 | Boyndie Rally (Barfif) | 47 |
| 30 | Midland Moto Stages (IRL) | 60 |
| 30 | PHoggart Rally Time Trial | |

| APRIL | | |
|-------|---|----------------------------------|
| DATE | EVENT | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| 5 | Rally North Wales | 1, 4, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 38, 51 |
| 5 | Get It Sideways Stages (Down Ampney) | 28 |
| 5 | DCC Stages (Inglston) | 27, 48, 49 |
| 6 | Alan Healey Memorial Rally (Cadwell Park) | 20, 35 |
| 6 | Lookout Stages (Melbourne) | 33, 37 |
| 6 | Circuit of Kerry (IRL) | 56, 58 |
| 12 | Somerset Stages | 2, 7, 15, 16, 17, 18, 42, 63, 64 |
| 12/13 | Pike's Peak 4x4 | 45 |
| 13 | Talbenny Stages | 23, 4 |
| 13 | Munster Moonraker Forest Rally (IRL) | 57, 62 |
| 18/19 | Circuit of Ireland Rally (NI) | ERC, 5, 54, 55 |
| 20 | Kames Rally | 47 |
| 26 | Tour of Hamsterley | 9, 19, 25, 32, 38 |
| 26 | Coltlet Granite City Rally | 3, 46 |
| 26 | Honba D'Isis Rally (MIRA) | 26, 33, 37 |
| 27 | Monaghan Stages Rally (IRL) | 61 |

| MAY | | |
|-------|--|--|
| DATE | EVENT | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| 3/4 | Toyota Harlech Stages (Llanbedr) | 23, 37 |
| 3/4 | Pirelli Richard Burns Foundation Rally | 1, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 25, 49, 50, 52 |
| 3/4 | Rally of the Lakes (IRL) | 54, 55, 59 |
| 4 | Corinium Stages (Down Ampney) | 28, 29, 41, 53 |
| 4 | Hallamshire Stages (Barkston Heath) | 35, 65, 66 |
| 9/10 | Manx National Rally | 6, 31, 37 |
| 10 | Tour of the Sperrins (NI) | 5 |
| 10/11 | Sydney-London Marathon (UK leg) | |
| 10/11 | Sennybridge 4x4 | 45 |
| 11 | John Overend Stages (Melbourne) | 21, 33, 36 |
| 11 | Middlewick Stages (Woodbridge) 30 | |
| 11 | Carlow Stages (IRL) | 56, 62 |
| 17 | Plains Rally | 4, 7, 15, 16, 17, 18, 22, 38, 40, 43, 63, 64 |
| 17 | Cetus Stages (Three Sisters) | 37, 44 |
| 17 | ALMC Social Dublin Forest Rally | 57, 62 |
| 17/18 | TSH Stages (Portreath) | 29, 41 |
| 24 | Red Dragon IT Stages (Down Ampney) | 26, 28 |
| 24 | Loughall Stages Rally (NI) | |
| 25 | Lawrence Landfill Stages (Dale) | 23, 43, 51, 65, 66 |
| 25 | Twyford Wood Stages | 21, 33, 36, 37 |
| 25 | Cavan Stages Rally (IRL) | 61 |
| 30/31 | Jim Clark Rally | 1, 6, 11, 12, 13, 14, 27, 52 |
| 31 | Severn Valley Stages | 4, 9, 51 |

| JUNE | |
|-------|-----------------------------------|
| DATE | EVENT |
| 1 | Jim Clark Reivers Rally |
| 1 | Mini Epynt Stage |
| 1 | Circuit of Munster (IRL) |
| 7 | Dukeries Rally |
| 7 | Mourne Rally (NI) |
| 7/8 | Forrest Lodge 4 Stages |
| 8 | Abingdon Carni Stages |
| 8 | Keith Frecker Stages (Weeton) |
| 8 | Laois Heartland Rally (IRL) |
| 14 | Crail Summer Stages |
| 15 | Coracle Stages (Sweet Lamb) |
| 20/21 | Rally of the Midland |
| 20-22 | Donegal International Rally (IRL) |
| 21 | DMACK Carlis Stages |
| 22 | Midsummer Caerwent Stage |
| 22 | Wolds Rally (Ludlow) |
| 22 | Three Counties Stages (Smeathar) |
| 28 | Scottish Rally |
| 28 | Lurgan Park Rally |
| 29 | Enville Stages (Anglesey) |
| 29 | Ravens Rock Rally (IRL) |

| JULY | |
|-------|-------------------------------------|
| DATE | EVENT |
| 5/6 | Machrinhanish Stages |
| 6 | ALMC Stages (IRL) |
| 6 | Lough Neagh Stage |
| 12 | Nicky Grist Stage |
| 12 | Fat Albert Stage (Keevil) |
| 13 | Greystoke Stage |
| 13 | Albar Kames Trophy Rally |
| 13 | Brawdy Stages |
| 13 | Connacht Sligo Stages (IRL) |
| 19 | Dave Corris Aut Forest Stages |
| 26 | Imokilly Single Stage Rally (IRL) |
| 26/27 | Radnor 4x4 |
| 27 | Harry Flatters Rally |
| 27 | Bocconoc Motorsport Carnival Stages |

INTERNATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS

| FIA World Rally Championship | | Rallye Deutschland | | March 28-30 Acropolis Rally (GRE) | |
|------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| DATE | EVENT | DATE | EVENT | DATE | EVENT |
| Jan 16-18 | Rallye Monte Carlo | Sept 12-14 | Rallye Australia | April 17-19 | Circuit of Ireland |
| Feb 5-8 | Rally Sweden | Oct 3-5 | Rallye de France-Alsace | May 15-17 | Rally Açores (POR) |
| March 6-9 | Rally México | Oct 24-26 | Rallye Catalunya | June 19-21 | Ypres Rally (BEL) |
| April 3-6 | Rally Portugal | Nov 14-16 | Wales Rally GB | July 17-19 | Rally Estonia (EST) |
| May 8-11 | Rally Argentina | | | Aug 29-31 | Rally Zlin (CZE) |
| June 6-8 | Rally d'Italia Sardegna | | | Sept 19-21 | Cyprus Rally (CYP) |
| June 27-29 | Rally Poland | | | Oct 23-25 | Rallye du Valais (SUI) |
| Aug 1-3 | Rally Finland | | | Nov 6-8 | Tour de Corse (FRA) |
| | | | | TBC | Sibi Rally Romania (ROM) |

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| CHAMPIONSHIP |
|--|
| 3, 25, 48, 49 |
| 24 |
| 56, 58 |
| 2, 7, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 32, 34, 63, 64 |
| 5 |
| 45 |
| 28, 29, 30, 41, 53 |
| 37 |
| 60 |
| 47, 48 |
| 22, 38, 42, 43 |
| 20, 26 |
| 54, 55 |
| 9 |
| 23, 65, 66 |
| 29 |
| 1, 3, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 46, 49, 50, 52 |
| 37, 39 |
| 59, 62 |

| CHAMPIONSHIP |
|--|
| 48 |
| 6, 60 |
| (NI) |
| 4, 7, 15, 16, 17, 18, 38, 40, 43, 51, 63, 64 |
| 26, 28, 29, 41 |
| 19, 25, 38, 50, 52 |
| 47 |
| 65, 66 |
| 61 |
| 31, 38 |
| 59 |
| 45 |
| 8, 23, 24, 43, 51 |

| AUGUST | | |
|--------|--------------------------------------|---|
| DATE | EVENT | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| 2 | Speyside Stages | 3, 46 |
| 2 | Dogleap Stages (NI) | |
| 3 | Tyneside Stages | 6, 25, 27, 48 |
| 3 | Phoenix Stages (Fulbeck) | 21, 33, 36 |
| 9 | Neath Valley Stages | 9, 22, 43, 53 |
| 10 | Solway Coast Rally | 27, 47, 48, 49, 50, 65, 66 |
| 9 | Carfax Stages (Benson) | 28, 29, 41 |
| 10 | Gareth Hall Stages (Trawsfynydd) | 37 |
| 10 | Tipperary Stonethrowers Stages (IRL) | 56, 62 |
| 15/16 | Ulster Rally | 1, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 54, 55 |
| 17 | Centenary Stages (Barkston Heath) | 21, 26, 33, 35, 37 |
| 24 | Mewla Rally (Epynt) | 6, 23, 24, 37 |
| 24 | Jim Walsh Cork Forest Rally (IRL) | 57 |
| 24 | West Meath Rally Sprint (IRL) | 60 |
| 30 | Woodpecker Stages | 2, 4, 7, 15, 16, 17, 18, 38, 40, 42, 51, 63, 64 |
| 31 | Galway Summer Stages (IRL) | 56, 58 |

| SEPTEMBER | | |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|---|
| DATE | EVENT | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| 6 | Merrick Forest Stages | 3, 46, 50 |
| 6 | Promenade Stages (New Brighton) | 37 |
| 6 | Lakeland Stages (NI) | 5 |
| 7 | Pendragon Stages | 20, 25, 27, 48 |
| 7 | Vale of York Stages (Melbourne) | 33, 36 |
| 7 | Prima Motorsport Stages (Smeatharpe) | 41, 53 |
| 11-13 | Rally Isle of Man | 1, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 31, 55 |
| 13/14 | Wexford Stages Rally (IRL) | 6, 62 |
| 13/14 | Ceri 4x4 | 45 |
| 20 | Woodbridge Stages | 29, 30 |
| 20 | Red Dragon Stages | 22, 38, 42 |
| 21 | Thor Hammer Stages (Driffild) | |
| 21 | Knockhill Rally 47 | |
| 21 | Clare Stages (IRL) | 56, 58 |
| 26/27 | Trackrod Rally Yorkshire | 2, 7, 9, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 32, 34, 38, 40, 52, 63, 64 |
| 27 | Ormagh Bushwhacker Rally (NI) | 57 |
| 28 | Patriot Stages (Caerwent) | 26, 28, 41, 43 |
| 28 | Pendle Heroes Stages (Weeton) | 37 |

| OCTOBER | | |
|---------|-----------------------------------|--|
| DATE | EVENT | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| 4 | Colin McRae Stages | 3, 46 |
| 4/5 | Cork 20 International Rally (IRL) | 54, 55, 59 |
| 5 | Harold Palin Stages (Fulbeck) | 33, 36 |
| 5 | Sweet Lamb Time Trial | 53 |
| 10/11 | Paperclix Jersey Rally | |
| 10-12 | Mull Rally | 37, 48 |
| 11 | Donegal Harvest Rally (IRL) | 56, 61 |
| 11 | Regency Stages (Shepton Mallet) | 28, 29, 41 |
| 12 | Peter Lloyd Stages (Pembrey) | 23, 65, 66 |
| 12 | Adgespeed Stages (Three Sisters) | 21, 37, 44 |
| 18 | Cambrian Rally | 4, 7, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 38, 40, 51, 63, 64 |
| 18 | Rallye Sunseeker | 1, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 42 |
| 18 | Down Rally (NI) | 5 |
| 19 | ABR Roofing Kames Junior Rally | 47 |
| 19 | GSMC Stages Rally (IRL) | 60 |
| 25/26 | Walters Arena 4x4 | 45 |
| 26 | Galloway Hills Rally | 49, 50 |
| 26 | Lynn Stages (Sculthorpe) | 30, 33, 35 |
| 26 | Fastnet Stages Rally (IRL) | 59 |

| NOVEMBER | | |
|----------|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| DATE | EVENT | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| 1 | Kingdom Stages (Cral) | 48 |
| 1 | Gullion Stages (NI) | |
| 1/2 | Glyn Memorial Stages (Anglesey) | 23, 37, 39, 47, 65, 66 |
| 2 | MEM Malton Stages | 19, 25, 32, 34, 52 |
| 7/8 | Poker Stars Rally | 31, 37 |
| 8 | Tempest Rally | 2, 42 |
| 8 | Neil Howard Stages (Melbourne) | 37, 65, 66 |
| 8 | Glens of Antrim (NI) | |
| 9 | Cheviot Keith Knox Stages | 6, 20, 25, 27, 49 |
| 9 | Kerry Banna Mini Stages (IRL) | 58 |
| 14-17 | Wales Rally GB | WRC |
| 16 | NHMC Cadwell Park Stages | 33, 35 |
| 22 | Hall Trophy Stages (Blyton) | 21, 37 |
| 23 | Premier Stages | 32, 34 |
| 23 | Bolero Time Trial (Arncott) | |
| 28/29 | Killarney Historic Rally (IRL) | |
| 28-30 | Roger Albert Clark Rally | |

| DECEMBER | | |
|----------|--|--------------|
| DATE | EVENT | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| 6 | Coppermines Grizedale Stages | 19, 25 |
| 6/7 | Rockingham Stages | 30, 53 |
| 27 | Christmas Stages (Croft) | 25 |
| 28 | West Wales Rally Spares Stages (Pembrey) | |
| 28 | Longmoor Loco Stages | |

Details correct at time of press

CHAMPIONSHIPS AT A GLANCE

| MSA British Rally Championship | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| DATE | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| April 5/6 | Rally North Wales |
| May 3/4 | Pirelli Carlisle Richard Burns Foundation Rally |
| May 30/31 | Jim Clark Rally |
| June 27/28 | RSAC Scottish Rally |
| Aug 15/16 | Todds Leap Rally NI |
| Sept 11-13 | Rally Isle of Man* |
| Oct 17/18 | Rallye Sunseeker International |

* double-header

| Clonakilty Blackpudding Irish Tarmac Rally Championship | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| DATE | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| Feb 8/9 | Galway International Rally |
| April 18/19 | Circuit of Ireland |
| May 3/4 | International Rally of the Lakes |
| June 20-22 | Donegal International Rally |
| Aug 15/16 | Ulster Rally |
| Oct 4/5 | Cork '20' International Rally |

| Mintex MSA British Historic Rally Championship | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| DATE | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| March 2 | Mid-Wales Stages |
| April 5 | Rally North Wales |
| May 3 | Pirelli Historic Rally |
| June 28 | RSAC Scottish Rally |
| July 27 | Harry Flatters Rally |
| Aug 15/16 | Ulster Historic Rally |
| Sept 11-13 | Rallee Classicagh (Isle of Man) |
| Oct 17/18 | Rallye Sunseeker Historique |

| REIS MSA Asphalt Rally Championship | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| DATE | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| March 9 | Tour of Epynt |
| May 9/10 | Manx National Rally |
| May 30/31 | Jim Clark National |
| July 6 | ALMC Stages |
| Aug 3 | Tyneside Stages |
| Aug 24 | Mewla Rally |
| Sept 13/14 | Wexford Stages |
| Nov 9 | Cheviot Keith Knox Stages |

| REIS BTRDA Rally Series | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| DATE | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| Feb 15 | Weir Engineering Wydean Rally |
| March 8 | Malcolm Wilson Rally |
| April 12 | Somerset Stages |
| May 17 | Plains Rally |
| July 7 | Dukeries Rally |
| July 12 | Nicky Grist Stages |
| Aug 30 | Woodpecker Stages |
| Sept 27 | Trackrod Stages |
| Oct 18 | Cambrian Rally |

| WWRs R.A.C. Rally Championship | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| DATE | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| Feb 2 | Red Kite Stages |
| March 2 | Mid-Wales Stages |
| April 26 | Tour of Hamsterley |
| May 31 | Severn Valley Stages |
| June 21 | Carlisle Stages |
| Aug 9 | Neath Valley Stages |
| Sept 26/27 | Trackrod Historic Cup |

| ARR Craib MSA Scottish Rally Championship | |
|---|--|
| DATE | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| Feb 22 | Arnold Clark Thistle Snowman Rally |
| March 22 | Brick and Steel Construction Border Counties Rally |
| April 26 | Coltel Granite City Rally |
| June 1 | Jim Clark Reivers Rally |
| June 28 | RSAC Scottish Rally |
| Aug 2 | Speyside Stages |
| Sept 6 | Merrick Stages |
| Oct 4 | Colin McRae Forest Stages |

| Pirelli MSA Welsh Forest Rally Championship | |
|---|----------------------|
| DATE | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| Feb 15 | Wydean Rally |
| March 2 | Mid-Wales Stages |
| April 5 | Rally North Wales |
| May 17 | Plains Rally |
| May 31 | Severn Valley Stages |
| July 12 | Nicky Grist Stages |
| Aug 30 | Woodpecker Stages |
| Oct 18 | Cambrian Rally |

| MSA English Rally Championship | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| DATE | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| Feb 15 | Wydean Rally |
| March 8 | Malcolm Wilson Rally |
| April 12 | Somerset Stages |
| June 7 | Dukeries Rally |
| Aug 30 | Woodpecker Stages |
| Sept 27 | Trackrod Stages |
| Nov 8 | Tempest 2 Rally |

| MSA Northern Irish Rally Championship | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------|
| DATE | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| March 15 | Bishopscourt Stages |
| April 18 | Circuit of Ireland |
| May 10 | Tour of the Sperrins |
| June 7 | Mourne Rally |
| Aug 15 | Ulster Rally |
| Sept 6 | Lakeland Stages |
| Oct 18 | Down Rally |

| Dunlop Irish National Rally Championship | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| DATE | CHAMPIONSHIP |
| March 9 | Mayo Stages |
| April 6 | Circuit of Kerry |
| May 11 | Carlow Stages |
| June 1 | Circuit of Munster |
| Aug 10 | Tipperary Stone Throwers Stages |
| Aug 31 | Galway Summer Stages |
| Sept 21 | Clare Stages |
| Oct 11 | Galway Harvest Stages |

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WRC ROUND TWO: SWEDEN

As one VW falters, there are two more following in its wheel tracks... By David Evans

The Polo R's engine note was totally drowned out. It was simply impossible to hear above the cheering and then the banging of hands on the bonnet. Jari-Matti Latvala's second win for Volkswagen was his third in Sweden. And this one really meant a lot. He'd found his fast form again and, for a Finn, that's everything. The German team dominated last week's winter round of the championship and, had it not been Latvala winning, it could have been Sébastien Ogier – were it not for a second day visit to a snowbank – or even Andreas Mikkelsen, as the Norwegian showed his best pace to date in a Polo to take second.

Leg one

Distance: 39.71 miles Weather: miserable grey day Ambient temperature range on stages: minus 2 to minus 3 Celsius

Volkswagen's steamroller moved up a gear on the opening day of Rally Sweden, with the top three positions dominated by Polo R WRCs on all but three of the seven opening leg stages. Ogier led at the end of the day, but his narrow advantage of 5.8s over Andreas Mikkelsen reflected a tough day at the front of the field for the champion as much as an inspired day for a local hero, who revelled in the roads on the right side (for him) of the Norwegian-Swedish border.

Ahead of the start, Ogier had been worried at the potential for heavy snowfall before he led the crews into the woods. He needn't have worried. Winter had left the lightest of touches on the region with a thin coating of ice covered by a thinner layer of snow. The Monte winner wouldn't be ploughing the stages.

Mikkelsen led after the Wednesday night superspecial, but Ogier hit the front in SS2 and stayed there until a cracking run through Finnskogen 2 put Mikkelsen back to the front.

"I didn't have split times in there for the final section," said Ogier at the end of the stage, "I think he will take time, it was not so nice being first in this one."

Mikkelsen stormed through what has to be one of the most rewarding stages on the route, fastest. But it hadn't been plain sailing. "I thought I had a puncture," he said. "The car felt strange, but the grip came back."

Leading the rally – the rally proper, not a superspecial – for the first time, he headed away to the final day one stage with a smile.

Ogier had the last laugh, however, as he moved back to the front taking six seconds out of Mikkelsen on the second run at Torsby, courtesy of the leader's decision to stick with worn tyres to save

his fresh boots for Friday morning. While there was plenty of smiles in the VW's running one-two, the Latvala car on the bottom step of the provisional podium wasn't quite such a happy place. The Finn had struggled with a gear shift problem, which slowed the second-to-third change slightly – a problem in twisty sections of Kirkener. Without a fastest time all day, Latvala admitted he had to be happy to be just 12.2s off Ogier, but he knew he needed to step it up when the event arrived back in Sweden.

As much as he was trying to cling to his colleagues' coat tails, he spent much of the day fending off a returning Ott Tänak. The Estonian was brilliant on his first day back in a Fiesta RS WRC. He set a fastest time, ran third for three stages and ended day one just 2.6s off Latvala in fourth. Mads Østberg was top Citroën in fifth and feeling much happier when gravel started showing through the icy roads in the afternoon, better replicating the conditions on which he'd tested.

Mikko Hirvonen ended the day tied with Østberg, the man with whom he had switched seats over the winter. Hirvonen's start had been steady, he pointed out that he was keen to get further into the event than he had last year, where he crashed on the second stage. "We're in touch with the leaders," he said. "We have been at 99.5 per cent this afternoon. Going at 100 per cent means taking risks and maybe the time is here for some risks."

Thierry Neuville and Juho Hänninen brought their Hyundai i20 WRCs home seventh and eighth respectively and respectfully. The only issue for the Korean team was a broken jack aboard the Belgian's car, which meant Neuville couldn't swap fronts for rears in the afternoon. Pontus Tidemand and Kris Meeke rounded out the top ten.

Standings after day one:

1 Ogier/Ingrassia 39m 56.6s; 2 Mikkelsen/Markkula +5.8s; 3 Latvala/Anttila +12.2s; 4 Tänak/Molder +14.8s; 5 Østberg/Andersson +22.5s; 6 Hirvonen/Lehtinen +22.5s.

Leg two

Distance: 72.98 miles Weather: rain Ambient temperature range on stages: 0 to minus 3 Celsius

Thursday night's end of day press conference had a very Volkswagen feel to it. For the first time since the German team's arrival at the top of the WRC, they totally dominated the day's post-competition formalities. Team principal Jost Capito insisted the trio would be allowed to fight, but Mikkelsen still sought assistance... "Write that," he said. "If you write it then we can definitely push!"

It was Latvala who pushed hardest on Friday morning's opener, leaving his team-mates trailing as he ripped into the road running around the Dalkarlssjön lake. He pulled time out of everybody as Lesjöfors progressed, but drama was awaiting a Polo R WRC near the finish.

It was Ogier who blinked first in this three-way scrap. He planted his VW in a snowbank and waited more than four minutes while his new-found friends dug him out.

"It was my fault," he said at the finish. "I was stupid. I did the hard work yesterday, driving first on the road, and then this..."

A momentary lapse in concentration on turn in had meant he clipped a snowbank which spun the rear of the car into the opposing bank. In typical Swedish style that spun the front around and speared him into the snow.



RALLY SWEDEN ESSENTIALS

Date: February 5-8
Base: Karlstad
Weather: Overcast, rain and some snow. Not exactly ideal winter rally conditions, all things considered...
Distance: 201.02 miles competitive, 782.79 miles liaison

KARLSTAD

"I was not the first to do this mistake this morning," he said. "I saw a few holes in the snowbanks, but I am the only one to get stuck."

Having started the stage third and looking at second, Latvala ended a great run second and on the verge of the lead. Mikkelsen immediately hit back on Fredriksberg, opening his advantage back to 3.3s.

"He has a young spirit," said Latvala philosophically after hearing his rival's time. "He's driving an amazing rally."

Mikkelsen's amazing rally almost came to an end one stage later when the number nine Polo was ditched in fifth gear. "We were lucky to get out of that," he said.

But not lucky enough to keep the lead as Latvala moved 1.8s ahead. For the rest of the day, Latvala would beat Mikkelsen through the forest stages, but, having used his tyres between the trees, he was left with little grip in the short spectator-pleasing sprint stage on the outskirts of Hagfors. Second time through, Mikkelsen attacked hard and slashed a ten-second lead to

four before taking another 1.2s at the Karlstad finale.

"I'm pushing hard, but not like *this*..." said Mikkelsen raising his fingers to his head in the shape of a gun. "I will keep the pressure tomorrow, but not crazy. Well, maybe a little crazy!"

Latvala was a subdued leader. "I am disappointed with myself for this sprint stage," he said. "I couldn't get the car out of the corners."

Tänak's hopes of staying in the podium fight were knocked when he suffered a spin on the opening stage of the day and then his co-driver struggled with the delivery of pacenotes for the rest of the morning.

Østberg passed Tänak in SS8, but the lead Citroën driver lost time to the VWs throughout day two, his cause not helped when he came across a stricken Kubica in SS12 and SS14 in the afternoon. Hirvonen remained in touching distance of the DS3, with the Finn doing his best to get Østberg's eye off the ball by betting him some beer that he'd beat him.

"I think my money is safe," smiled

Mads while predicting a cheaper than expected Saturday night.

Tänak was just six seconds down on Hirvonen, with Meeke a minute down in sixth and embroiled in a battle with Tidemand and the Junior WRC champion's step-father Henning Solberg, who was making up time after a day one puncture. Elfyn Evans and Craig Breen closed the top ten. Out of the top ten for good were both Hyundais, with Neuville and Hänninen putting their i20 WRCs off the road. They would be back for the final day.

Standings:

1 Latvala/Anttila 1h 48m 47.6s; 2 Mikkelsen/Markkula +3.6s; 3 Østberg/Andersson +43.0s; 4 Hirvonen/Lehtinen +1m 02.7s; 5 Tänak/Molder +1m 08.7s; 6 Meeke/Nagle +2m 31.2s.

Leg three

Distance: 88.33 miles Weather: overcast Ambient temperature range on stages: 0 to 3 Celsius

Just when we thought winter was turning to spring on Rally Sweden, the snow came back – and it poured down for much of Friday evening. Saturday's



Tänak was a star on his WRC return

'Still brilliant, and still quite bonkers'
Henning Solberg's return, p25



ETS ACK



Latvala (r) and Anttila beat team-mate for second VW win



Latvala was back in the groove on Rally Sweden

early stages were nicely covered. With temperatures staying stubbornly above freezing, it was hardly beautiful, light powder, but heavy wet snow was better than gravel.

Leaving Hagfors service in the dark, VW team principal Jost Capito stood and waved his cars away.

"Now we see..." he said with a smile. The German virtually skipping to mission control to watch this one play out.

The accepted theory was, like yesterday, with the full compliment of 1456 studs beneath his Polo, Latvala would ease his way clear. Then Mikkelsen, who admitted he had woken four or five times the night before thinking about the day ahead, took 0.9s out of him in the first four miles of Hara. Yikes.

Latvala saw the split and hit the gas. He blitzed the remainder of the stage taking 3.9s out of his team-mate and rival. "That was...stressful," said Latvala, taking off his balaclava and wiping his brow.

continued on page 24



Ogier lost time and the chance of a win by slewing into a snow bank

STAGE TIMES

SS1 Karlstad 1 (1.18 miles)
Fastest: Mikkelsen 1m 33.4s
Leader: Mikkelsen

SS2 Torsby 1 (4.36 miles)
Fastest: Ogier 4m 38.1s
Leader: Ogier

SS3 Kirkener 1 (4.44 miles)
Fastest: Ogier 5m 38.4s
Leader: Ogier

SS4 Finnskogen 1 (10.45 miles)
Fastest: Mikkelsen 8m 58.9s
Leader: Ogier

SS5 Kirkener 2 (4.44 miles)
Fastest: Tänak 5m 36.1s
Leader: Ogier

SS6 Finnskogen 2 (10.45 miles)
Fastest: Mikkelsen 8m 45.9s
Leader: Mikkelsen

SS7 Torsby 2 (4.36 miles)
Fastest: Ogier 4m 34.1s
Leader: Ogier

SS8 Lesjöfors 1 (9.32 miles)
Fastest: Latvala 9m 19.9s
Leader: Mikkelsen

SS9 Fredriksberg 1 (11.27 miles)
Fastest: Ogier 10m 25.2s
Leader: Mikkelsen

SS10 Rämmen 1 (14.14 miles)
Fastest: Ogier 11m 55.0s
Leader: Latvala

SS11 Hagfors Sprint 1 (1.16 miles)
Fastest: Solberg 2m 00.8s
Leader: Latvala

SS12 Lesjöfors 2 (9.32 miles)
Fastest: Ogier 8m 55.2s
Leader: Latvala

SS13 Fredriksberg 2 (11.27 miles)
Fastest: Ogier 10m 04.9s
Leader: Latvala

SS14 Rämmen 2 (14.14 miles)
Fastest: Ogier 11m 36.2s
Leader: Latvala

SS15 Hagfors Sprint 2 (1.16 miles)
Fastest: Ogier 2m 02.9s
Leader: Latvala

SS16 Karlstad 2 (1.18 miles)
Fastest: Mikkelsen 1m 36.7s
Leader: Latvala

SS17 Hara 1 (7.03 miles)
Fastest: Latvala 6m 33.6s
Leader: Latvala

SS18 Torntorp 1 (11.96 miles)
Fastest: Latvala 10m 34.8s
Leader: Latvala

SS19 Vargåsen 1 (15.30 miles)
Fastest: Latvala 13m 50.1s
Leader: Latvala

SS20 Värmullsåsen 1 (9.86 miles)
Fastest: Latvala 8m 47.2s
Leader: Latvala

SS21 Hara 2 (7.03 miles)
Cancelled - conditions

SS22 Torntorp 2 (11.96 miles)
Fastest: Ostberg 10m 02.9s
Leader: Latvala

SS23 Vargåsen 2 (15.30 miles)
Fastest: Ogier 13m 13.3s
Leader: Latvala

SS24 Värmullsåsen 2 (9.86 miles)
Fastest: Ostberg 8m 36.8s
Leader: Latvala

DAVID EVANS

"Rally Sweden needs to look to the northern region"



Twelve years ago Colin McRae sat in his Ford Focus, a picture of abject dejection at the end of this rally. He'd spun in the final stage and lost fifth place by 2.3 seconds to his brother Alister.

Much as it hurt being beaten by his Mitsubishi-driving sibling, McRae's real gripe was much more straightforward.

"They've got to move this bloody event," he said. "You've got to write that, write that it's got to go north, we've had enough of this sh*te."

Colin had a deliciously succinct way of expressing his feelings.

The problem was the weather. The 2002 event started with good wintry conditions, but constantly warming temperatures meant Rämmen being cancelled on the final day as the snow was stripped away to expose the Swedish stages.

"In the right conditions, this is the best in the world," said McRae, "but when it's like this, you can take no pleasure in driving."

He was right. The spectacle had been pretty much shot. Pushing hard and pressing on was pretty much off the agenda and if a driver saw any kind of a snowbank then they weren't go anywhere near it for fear of falling straight through it.

And last week was just the same. Fortunately for the organisers of Rally Sweden, a healthy dump of snow a week or so before the event began gave the place a wintry look – but the reality was quite different and as temperatures rose again, so the winter simply melted away to once again expose this rally's shocking dependence on the right weather.

Were the organisers unlucky? Maybe. Last year wasn't bad, the year before was pretty good. But next year who knows?

Surely the time has come for a look north. I'm looking at this in its simplest form without taking into consideration the economic impact of moving what is a fiscally borderline event out of a long-term base and away from a supportive local council. But we have to be brave. The WRC needs a winter rally. How many times do we hear marketing types trot out the line about going from Scandinavia's frozen north to the baking heat of la, la, la... Well, not this time, please. There was nothing freezing about Karlstad last week.

There have to be options further north and if there's not, then we have to say goodbye to Sweden. If we're brave enough to bin the Acropolis then we have to front up and go to Russia, Canada, America or anywhere where it really is properly cold.

WRC ROUND TWO: SWEDEN

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

KRIS MEEKE

CITROEN TOTAL ABU DHABI WRT STAR



Looks like I'll have to go back to Sweden next year to get my first proper taste of a winter round of the World Rally Championship then... winter was missing from the second round last week.

The Finnskogen stage in Norway was fantastic and exactly what I'd thought driving on this kind of an event would be like. The car was progressive and a lot of fun, it was incredible. I had a big smile on my face all the way through both runs at that stage. The only regret was that I couldn't put on my race face and go back and have an attack through there.

But that wasn't what Sweden was about for me. I was out there for experience and I certainly got plenty of that. The warmer weather meant there was plenty of gravel coming through the surface on most of the other stages. There was pretty good grip in these sections, but all the time you knew if you came out of the two tramlines and got onto the really slushy stuff, you'd be off the road in an instant.

The first two days went completely to plan for us. We weren't looking at the times, Paul [Nagle] and I were just driving our rally and getting as much experience as possible. Bearing that in mind, to be running sixth was pretty good – there aren't many who have gone to Sweden for the first time and done that.

But then we were caught out on the final morning. As I accelerated out of a slow corner on the second Saturday stage, the inside front wheel got onto the snowbank and just gradually sucked me in. I got 20 or 30 metres out of the corner before I could get the wheel out of the bank, but when I lifted off it spun me on the road and I was left with the front wheels hanging in the ditch.

If there had been five or six spectators on that corner, we'd have dropped 20 seconds. There wasn't anybody around and our sixth became tenth at the end of the day.

I'm pleased with the experience we took and that brief taste of real winter conditions has left me looking forward to coming back for some more next year.



Østberg banked a solid podium with third place



Neuville struck a snowbank

Continued from page 23

The gap moved up to 7.5s, but with more than 80 miles still to come anything could happen.

And it did. On the very next stage, Mikkelsen's car crossed the finish line in plumes of steam and smoke. Driver and co-driver were straight out of the car and hauling handfuls of snow out of the radiator and air intake. Mikkelsen had dropped 25s, the result of trying to slice an inch too much out of a third-gear right-handed corner.

"I caught the snowbank on the inside," said the two-time IRC champion, "and it spun me around and filled the front of the car with snow. The engine temperature went

up and we had to go into road mode. Now we think about the podium..."

Half a minute now separated the top two, but Latvala was in no mood to relax. "Still," he insisted, "anything can happen."

Fortunately for him, this long last leg – shortened by the cancellation of Hara 2 – passed without incident. The win was his. Crossing the final finish line, he was out of the car and on the bonnet, pausing only for a big hug from his father:

"This one means a lot," he said, not needing to say more.

Mikkelsen came for a podium and got second. Any disappointment at missing the win was soon forgotten. It was the same story for Østberg,

who admitted he'd dreamed of a victory, but was delighted with third – a powerstage win meant more points.

Hirvonen and Tänak were fourth and fifth with Ogier completing his exceptional recovery drive in sixth – helped a little when Meeke went off the road for seven minutes in SS18. Meeke dropped to 11th, but finished tenth at the cost of fellow Brit Evans who rolled out of that place on the final stage.

So, the snow might not have been perfect, but the pace and the competition was more than a match for the way-too-warm weather. It was a classic, a muddy classic, but a classic nonetheless. Latvala wins usually are. ■

Last-gasp sensational win for Kruuda

"Did I win? Did I win?"

Estonian Karl Kruuda was desperate to know if his final stage charge had been enough.

It had. He'd won.

"I won. I won," he said, quietly, his voice filling with emotion. It had been an incredible rally for the 21-year-old. Transmission failure had left his Fiesta S2000 with front-wheel drive only for the final two stages of the opening day. He dropped almost two minutes to the leader. His hopes of a win were shattered. Gone.

Up front, last year's WRC2 winner in Sweden, Yazeed Al Rajhi, was pulling away and looking like a good bet for back-to-back success in the snow. He'd been forced to give best to Jari Ketomaa through the first loop, but the Finn's DMACK-shod Fiesta R5 struggled to keep its studs when the gravel came through on the second loop of stages, leaving him powerless to stop Al Rajhi coming by. Power

steering woe on Thursday's second loop meant that was a physical as well as metaphorical problem.

The Saudi Arabian had built a solid minute and a half advantage ahead of the final day and looked to have his first win of the season in the bag. That was until the second run at Vargåsen.

"I came over Colin's crest," he said, "and then we slide, slide, slide and have a small roll."

He made it out of the stage to finish fourth and remained philosophical. "We are here and we are OK at the finish," he said, "and that's more important than the win."

Suddenly Ketomaa was out front with just ten miles remaining. But Kruuda had raced his way back into contention and was now just 18s down on the leader. Could he do it?

Split times revealed Kruuda needed to pull ten seconds back in the final three miles. Ketomaa was



Kruuda overcame transmission problems to battle back for glory

first to finish. "I don't think it was enough," he said. "We had no studs all the way on the downhill section, I had to go so slowly."

Then, the wait.

And the agony.

And the ecstasy. Kruuda had done it, by 2.3s.

Beyond "I've won", he was pretty

much speechless for a while. Given a moment, he came up with: "I never gave up. This is the first time I have ever won anything, anything at all. This is so special."

Behind Ketomaa, Fredrik Ahlin was a very impressive third on his debut in the second DMACK car, with Al Rajhi fourth.

'Declan Boyle held on for a tight win'
Galway Rally drama, p27



DRIVER ANALYSIS

BY DAVID EVANS



SEBASTIEN OGIER

VOLKSWAGEN

Brilliant, stupid, better than brilliant was the way Ogier's event went. Biffing a snowbank in Lesjöfors ruined what would have been a second win this season and in Sweden. Awesome fightback though. And stupid was his own description.



JARI-MATTI LATVALA

VOLKSWAGEN

Struggled to find his rhythm on the opening day, he was awesome on the first Friday stage and that laid the foundations for a relatively straightforward win. Stud retention was the only issue on his third Rally Sweden win. Championship leader for the first time.



KRIS MEEKE

CITROËN

Almost the perfect rally. Came and did what he said he was going to do. His only problem came when he dropped a wheel in a ditch on the final morning, which cost him what would have been sixth. After pulling his Citroën out, he bagged a load of experience and tenth overall.



MADS ØSTBERG

CITROËN

Never looked at home at home in Norway on Friday and once he'd given the VW fellas a start, he was always playing catch up. Massive moment avoiding Kubica and spectators in SS14, but a worthy third and fourth successive Sweden podium.



MIKKO HIRVONEN

M-SPORT

Spent much of the event looking pretty cheesed off and that mood only worsened when he looked at the timesheets and felt powerless to stop the flow of fastest times in VW's direction. Good but not great, great event from Hirvonen.



ELFYN EVANS

M-SPORT

Like Meeke, the perfect rally apart from one tiny mistake. Elfyn's was a slightly bigger mistake – when he became the second member of his family to roll a factory Ford rally car in this part of the world. Dad Gwyndaf did it in 1991 and Evans Jr followed 23 years later.



THIERRY NEUVILLE

HYUNDAI

Another rally and another shunt. Admittedly this one was a silly one that he might easily have got away with, but the record shows a SuperRally Saturday. That's not what Hyundai needs as it chases development miles in the new car.



JUHO HANNINEN

HYUNDAI

As left. Both Hänninen and Neuville set good times – the Belgian came within an ace of a scratch time – but they've both been told they must drive every mile of the route. Not doing that when the team is working hard to bring the car up to speed is not good enough.



VOLKSWAGEN

ANDREAS MIKKELSEN

9/30

Brilliant from Mikkelsen, just when people were starting to question his position in the dream team. Could have won, but probably wouldn't have been able to overcome Latvala even if he hadn't filled the front of the car with snow. Second was a mega result.



Tidemand had plenty of late pace

M-SPORT

ROBERT KUBICA

6/10

Sensible opening day, but struggled when the conditions got ropery on Friday and went off on SS12. And repeated that two stages later. Fortunately for him, spectators hauled him out of the snow both times, which allowed him to do it all again on Sunday...

M-SPORT

CRAIG BREEN

7/10

Late-night dash from Rally Liepāja meant 45 minutes sleep before the start of the recce. Then he contracted fever. Had to adjust his driving to a turbo car after a long time in S2000, but once he was there his times were solid for a WR Car debut.

M-SPORT

PONTUS TIDEMAND

5/10

Not quite the same great run as last time out. Slowed by a puncture on the opening day, the Junior WRC champ never lit the blue touch paper. A diff change on the final day transformed the car. It left him ruing his decision not to listen to M-Sport earlier...

M-SPORT

HENNING SOLBERG

8/10

We need this boy back full-time in the World Rally Championship. Still brilliant and still quite bonkers. Top form in and out of the car for Solberg, whose only drama was a day one puncture as he sought to do battle with stepson Pontus.

RESULTS

FIA World Rally Championship, round two of 13, Rally Sweden, February 5-8

| POS | DRIVER / CO-DRIVER | CAR | TIME |
|-----|--|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1 | Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN)/Miikka Anttila (FIN) | Volkswagen Polo R WRC | 3h 00m 31.1s |
| 2 | Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR)/Mikko Markkula (FIN) | Volkswagen Polo R WRC | +53.6s |
| 3 | Mads Østberg (NOR)/Jonas Andersson (SWE) | Citroën DS3 WRC | +59.5s |
| 4 | Mikko Hirvonen (FIN)/Jarmo Lehtinen (FIN) | Ford Fiesta RS WRC | +2m 26.9s |
| 5 | Ott Tänak (EST)/Raigo Molder (EST) | Ford Fiesta RS WRC | +3m 00.5s |
| 6 | Sébastien Ogier (FRA)/Julien Ingrassia (FRA) | Volkswagen Polo R WRC | +4m 29.9s |
| 7 | Henning Solberg (NOR)/Ilka Minor (AUT) | Ford Fiesta RS WRC | +4m 47.5s |
| 8 | Pontus Tidemand (SWE)/Ola Floene (NOR) | Ford Fiesta RS WRC | +5m 38.2s |
| 9 | Craig Breen (IRL)/Scott Martin (GBR) | Ford Fiesta RS WRC | +8m 55.4s |
| 10 | Kris Meeke (GBR)/Paul Nagle (IRL) | Citroën DS3 WRC | +11m 18.0s |
| 11 | Karl Kruuda (EST)/Martin Järveoja (EST) | Ford Fiesta S2000 | +14m 09.1s |
| 12 | Jari Ketomaa (FIN)/Kaj Lindström (FIN) | Ford Fiesta R5 | +14m 11.4s |
| 13 | Fredrik Ahlen (SWE)/Morten Erik Abrahamson (NOR) | Ford Fiesta R5 | +15m 27.2s |
| 14 | Yazeed Al Rajhi (SAU)/Michael Orr (GBR) | Ford Fiesta RRC | +16m 26.5s |
| 15 | Yuriy Protasov (UKR)/Pavlo Cherepin (UKR) | Ford Fiesta R5 | +17m 29.2s |

Other notable finishers: 19 Juho Hänninen (FIN)/Tomi Tuominen (FIN), Hyundai i20 WRC, +26m 41.0s; 24 Robert Kubica (POL)/Maciej Szczepaniak (POL), Ford Fiesta RS WRC, +36m 12.4s; 25 Eamonn Boland (IRL)/MJ Morrissey (IRL), Subaru Impreza R4, +39m 07.9s; 28 Thierry Neuville (BEL)/Nicolas Gilsoul (BEL), Hyundai i20 WRC, +49m 28.8s. **Leading retirements:** Elfyn Evans (GBR)/Daniel Barritt (GBR), Ford Fiesta RS WRC, SS24/accident. **WRC2:** 1 Kruuda/Järveoja; 2 Ketomaa/Lindström +2.3s; 3 Ahlin/Abrahamson; 4 Al Rajhi/Orr; 5 Protasov/Cherepin; 6 Luca Bertelli (ITA)/Mita Dotta (ITA), Ford Fiesta R5. **WRC2 standings:** 1 Protasov 35pts; 2 Bertelli 26; 3 Kruuda 25; 4 Ketomaa 18; 5= Robert Barrille and Ahlin 15. **WRC3:** no starters.

RALLY BY NUMBERS

39

STARTERS

6

STAGE WINNERS

5

STAGE WINS BY LATVALA

1

WRC RUNNER ON PIRELLI TYRES (SOLBERG)

30

FINISHERS

10

STAGE WINS BY OGIER

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

| POS | DRIVERS | PTS |
|-----|--------------------|-----|
| 1 | Jari-Matti Latvala | 40 |
| 2 | Sébastien Ogier | 35 |
| 3 | Mads Østberg | 30 |
| 4 | Andreas Mikkelsen | 24 |
| 5 | Bryan Bouffier | 18 |
| 6 | Kris Meeke | 17 |
| 7 | Mikko Hirvonen | 13 |
| 8 | Ott Tänak | 10 |
| 9 | Elfyn Evans | 8 |
| 10 | Henning Solberg | 6 |



Mikkelsen was on a charge but missed his maiden win

MANUFACTURERS

| POS | TEAMS | PTS |
|-----|-----------------------------|-----|
| 1 | Volkswagen Motorsport | 72 |
| 2 | Citroën Total Abu Dhabi WRT | 56 |
| 3 | Volkswagen Motorsport 2 | 26 |
| 4 | M-Sport WRT | 22 |
| 5 | Hyundai Shell WRT | 8 |
| 6 | RKM-Sport WRT | 4 |
| 7 | Jipocar Czech National Team | 0 |

STAGE WINS IN 2014

| POS | DRIVERS | WINS |
|-----|--------------------|------|
| 1 | Sébastien Ogier | 17 |
| 2 | Jari-Matti Latvala | 8 |
| 3 | Andreas Mikkelsen | 4 |
| 4 | Bryan Bouffier | 2 |
| = | Robert Kubica | 2 |
| = | Mads Østberg | 2 |
| 7 | Ott Tänak | 1 |
| = | Henning Solberg | 1 |



Hirvonen had a subdued drive in Sweden



Norwegians try a Mexican wave

NEXT RALLY

Can Citroën or M-Sport break VW's stranglehold on the WRC's top trophies?

RALLY MEXICO
MARCH 6-9

INSIGHT: MILLINGTON 6R4

Photos: Mark Sims and Jakob Ebrej

6R4 REVIVAL

How Dennis Marshall has helped to extend the life of a rallying legend



The Metro is still a real star turn on the national stages

BY JAMES BOLTON
NATIONAL RALLYING
EDITOR



The MG Metro 6R4 is a classic rally car. It has a rich history and, like many Group B machines, it looks fierce.

It made its debut in 1984 and started winning rallies in 1985. But the end of the Group B era cut short the car's works rally career, although the Clubman version of the car soon became a staple of British Tarmac rallies.

More than 25 years have passed and, in that time, an ever-greater effort has been required to keep existing examples running. Parts are scarce and fewer engineers have a knowledge of the cars.

Rally car preparation expert Dennis Marshall recognised this problem and decided to put his 40 years of motorsport experience to use. He wanted to update the cars to make them easier to own.

"It's more than just that," he explains. "I own a couple of mid-engined rally cars that competed successfully in 2005 and '06 and I could see a good mid-engined car was a way forward in national rallying. When I looked at a 6R4 in the flesh I knew immediately that it could be a genuine winning machine if it was re-engineered. The centrepiece was putting in a Millington engine and I saw that the 6R4 could take one. If we could get this engine into those cars then we'd have a pretty potent weapon

that would also be useable and would keep Metro 6R4s on the stages. Drivers love to drive them and spectators love to see them."

The later cars had 3.0-litre V6 engines that had an output of 400bhp. That propelled the 6R4 (the name is an amalgamation of V6, rally and four-wheel-drive) from zero mph to 60mph in 3.2 seconds. The Millington engine gets close to those figures, and extra refinements that Marshall has made have further boosted performance.

"This has been a difficult project," says Marshall, whose career has taken him across the pond to the USA and back. "My interest in the 6R4 started in 1989 when I built an Ultima kit car. I got to know [Ultima founder] Lee Noble well and with his help I built my first two-wheel-drive 6R4 using running gear from a Renault 25 Turbo. That was followed by a second car that ran with the same drivetrain, only this time the engine was a turbo Cosworth. The cars had to stop rallying in 2011 due to rule changes but they won several Tarmac rallies and had many top three places and regional championship titles."

The knowledge was well used in this latest Millington-6R4 project: "The hard part was creating a rear differential bracket that would leave the differential in its original position. That's key because moving it would have changed the handling of the car. It's a steel fabricated part and I designed it myself. It's a work of art and it takes 40 hours to make. We took the V6 out and put the Millington in with my bracket and everything fell into the exact same

position as in the V6 engine car. The Millington has more than 300bhp but it's more the torque that's impressive. Because it's got four cylinders, it's light and more driveable. The consequence is that everything is nice and tidy. The installation is approved by Millington and making the bracket work was essential because it helps use lots of the original drivetrain parts which are well tried and tested."

Designing and developing components for any car brings challenges. Each component is attached to another so by putting something as significant as a new engine into the car has a dramatic knock-on effect. Marshall admits that sometimes this is a painful process: "The project is at least one year behind schedule due to gearbox suppliers failing to meet basic expectations. The first unit we used only had five speeds and was beset with poor shift problems from day one. Other manufacturers declined our request to provide a complete assembly to our specification. Eventually we located one that will set the standard."

Other developments complement existing components and boost the overall level of performance. "The wide-track suspension suits the car," continues Marshall. "And the brakes are phenomenal. The quality is fantastic. The car has been re-engineered so we're underweight. That means we can move the weight around a little and having extra weight on the front end is useful from a handling perspective. It's the ultimate lightweight car. It has 15 inch wheels and it's very nimble. I've driven it for probably 50 miles, but that was enough to show that this thing is mega, especially with the flat shift."

The first of three cars was completed last year and Tarmac specialist Simon Mauger used it to win on its debut on the Rally Mini Midlands at MIRA in Nuneaton. Ford Escort Mk2 expert Mauger explains: "I'd never driven a Metro and I always fancied having a go, but of course this was an interesting venture to be a part of as well. It's easy to jump in and be reasonably on the pace but I had to work hard to find that last



The reworked Metro 6R4 racer features a 2.5-litre powerplant

tenth. It's a nice, forgiving car to drive. It's much heavier than the Escort I'm used to and the four-wheel drive pulls the steering wheel about, which makes it harder. But the brakes were phenomenal, as was the traction.

"The engine is a lot lighter than the six-cylinder engines. That's the main point, because it helps the handling and the brakes."

Mauger is also aware of the status the car enjoys as a rallying icon: "This project is good for the fans too. They like Metros and it's a shame that some people who own them don't like to use them because they're worried about the rebuilds. The original engines are harder to keep going and some are running on borrowed time."

Now that it has the stamp of approval from one of rallying's Tarmac specialists, the next step for Marshall's project is to build up the remaining bodysells he has. Marshall has almost completed the third 6R4 and is ready to put the cars up for hire. "We believe the project can eventually reach its potential in that we'll have cars that can take on the World Rally Cars in the national Tarmac championships," says Marshall. "It's been a hell of a project."

TECH DETAILS

The Dennis Marshall MG Metro 6R4 differs from the standard machine in a variety of ways.

The most obvious is the specially-produced 2.5-litre Millington engine. This works with a new ECU that allows the six-speed sequential MaKTrak gearbox to operate with flatshift.

The centre differential splits the torque 46-54 per cent front-to-rear and the propshaft is shortened. There is also a single oil cooler in place of the original two. The track is wider by 70mm front and rear and the wheels are 15 inches, with an option to run 17-inch wheels.

The steering rack uses a Vauxhall Corsa-based column and there are now more efficient twin headlights.

A brand new car and a Tarmac-specification 6R4 are in build. The cars can be hired at compactorsforfree.com with arrive and drive prices starting at £12,000.

"It is a very forgiving car to drive"

Simon Mauger



Marshall and his pride and joy

ITRC: GALWAY

'Gallagher took win by more than two minutes'
Galway National Rally, below



Photos: Roy Dempster

Following a hot and heavy battle over two days, Donegal crew Declan and Brian Boyle took their Subaru Impreza WRC to an impressive win on the Colm Quinn BMW Galway Rally.

Tarmac champion Garry Jennings, with Rory Kennedy co-driving in his Subaru, finished second, 25 seconds in arrears. Donagh Kelly/Kevin Flanagan had a clear run in their Ford Focus WRC to take third place.

Boyle, the Dunlop Irish National champion, had no luck on any of the two-day rallies in 2013, but has set his heart on winning the Clonakilty Blackpudding Tarmac Championship this year. On this showing he must be in with a big chance of fulfilling his aim.

The first day's stages were affected by extensive flooding. Clerk of the course Kieran Donoghue and his Galway MC team did a sterling job revamping the route in the days leading up to the rally. This entailed the stages being severely curtailed and new road books being issued. The most important thing was that we had a rally.

Multiple Tarmac champion Derek McGarrity didn't make the start, as his newly acquired Mini JCW WRC didn't make it to Ireland on time. Daragh O'Riordan, the winner of past Cork '20' and Killarney Lakes rallies, also didn't make the start.

Sam Moffett made the best possible debut of his new Ford Fiesta WRC by setting fastest time on the opening stage, Ballybuck. It was only a short stage, and the weather was awful so the other top drivers were being a bit careful. But it was still a great start for Moffett. The next stage was even shorter than the opening one, a "pipsqueak" of a stage was how Group N pacesetter Colm Murphy described it. However it was long enough for Boyle to surge ahead in his Impreza WRC.

Jennings, who was suffering from an extremely sore back, slotted into second. What he didn't realise was that his Impreza tyres were inflated to twice their recommended pressure on that opening loop. Kelly was pleased with the Pirellis fitted to his Focus WRC over those first two stages and was in a comfortable third. Sam Moffett had slipped to fourth, his inexperience with his Fiesta WRC's launch control doing him no favours.

Eugene Donnelly was down in fifth place as he settled into driving a Mini WRC again. The five-time Irish Tarmac champion was playing his cards close to his chest as he explored the very high cornering and braking parameters of this latest edition of the McGeehan Motorsport Mini JCW WRC. Steve Simpson, settling into his Subaru Impreza WRC, had a pre-start faulty throttle body problem issue, but the car seemed to settle down for the stages.

BOYLE BATTLES TO TAKE GALWAY GLORY

Impreza WRC man held off charging Garry Jennings for victory. By **Brian Patterson**



Boyle took impressive win after a big fight in Galway

The stage mileage was reduced on the first day as the cars circumnavigated the floods, but it was an interesting tussle nonetheless. Boyle held his lead to day's end, but only with a struggle. The coolant pressure on his Impreza soared, and the car clicked into safe mode, albeit briefly, on a couple of the stages. Jennings scored several fastest times, and was a close second when the cars returned to Galway City and the Clayton Hotel for the overnight halt.

Donnelly had settled into the groove with his Mini WRC to hold a close third. Kelly was disappointed to be fourth, feeling that both himself and his Focus WRC were going well, but his stage times weren't pleasing him.

Sam Moffett clipped a rear wheel on his new Fiesta and had also fluffed a launch control start. The two incidents had cost him a few seconds. Sam was fifth at the overnight halt, and almost 40s clear of sixth placed Steve Simpson.

The Sunday morning restart heralded some slightly better weather;

but the roads were still wet and slippery. Jennings had intercom problems on the opening stage, Black Road, but was still able to take three seconds off Boyle. The latter reported that his engine coolant system had settled somewhat and he had needed to bleed it once after the stage.

Unfortunately that opening Black Road test wasn't so good to Donnelly. He put his Mini WRC into a ditch and out of the rally. Following the next stage, the famous Lough Cutra, Jennings closed to within 0.2s of leader Boyle. Jennings emphasised that he was driving well within himself.

However that statement came back to haunt him when his Impreza aquaplaned over a wall on the next stage. The reigning champion bulldozed his cosmetically impaired Impreza back on to the road, but facing the wrong way. He lost 40s in the melee. On the next stage Jennings made a huge charge to record a stage time 13s better than Boyle, who was having

more coolant troubles. Boyle was able to bleed the coolant pressure off again and drove extremely well through the final stages, keeping his concentration entirely on the road rather than the computer read out, to win by 25s.

Simpson's Impreza stopped before the final service, so he didn't get to do the last three stages. Kelly and Moffett swapped seconds throughout the Sunday leg. It was only on the final stage, the third running of Lough Cutra that Moffett made a small mistake, clipping a rear wheel on his Fiesta WRC, to allow Kelly to take the final podium place.

In the **Historic** section, Ray Cunningham in his Mini Cooper S claimed a start to finish win. The only work he did on the car was to replace the thermostat gasket. Ross Forde was second in an Escort and he admitted that he was often on the wrong tyres. John Reid in another Escort was third. The highest placed Porsche was Brendan McAree. ■

Starlet man stars in Galway National Rally

Declan Gallagher took a clear win on the **National** section of the rally after rival Peadar Hurson dropped out near the end of day one.

Ford Escort WRC man Hurson held an early lead. The former National champion had to pull out all the stops to stay in front of the flying Gallagher in his Starlet RWD.

On the penultimate Saturday stage, Hurson ground to a halt at the finish due to a broken coil pack. This left Gallagher half a minute ahead of Wesley Patterson (Escort), with Pat Kelly third in his Impreza.

The top three in the National section remained the same through the Sunday stages. Gallagher won by more than two minutes. Patterson admitted a wrong call on tyre choice.

When is a **Group N** car not a Group N car? That was quite a debate on this rally. Colm Murphy (Impreza) and young Josh Moffett (Lancer) had a great battle for the category through the Saturday stages.

However, Moffett's Lancer E9 had been transferred from Class 4 to Class 5, for R4-spec cars, before the start. Under Irish Tarmac rules it was not eligible for a Gp N award because he'd fitted plastic windows.

Colm Murphy eventually retired his Impreza following an incident with a damaged wishbone, a puncture and then an electrical failure in stage ten. Moffett had a great run throughout to finish fifth and stewards later ruled that Moffett had indeed won the overall Group N award ahead of 23-year-old Cavan man Stephen McCann.

RESULTS

Colm Quinn BMW Galway International Rally, Galway City, February 7-9

| POS | DRIVER/CO-DRIVER | CAR | TIME |
|-----|-------------------------------|--------------------|------------|
| 1 | Declan Boyle/Brian Boyle | Subaru Impreza WRC | 1hr 10m 0s |
| 2 | Garry Jennings/Rory Kennedy | Subaru Impreza WRC | +25.5s |
| 3 | Donagh Kelly/Kevin Flanagan | Ford Focus WRC | +1m 28.6s |
| 4 | Sam Moffett/James O'Reilly | Ford Fiesta WRC | +1m 32.4s |
| 5 | Josh Moffett/John Rowan | Mitsubishi Lancer | +5m 44.7s |
| 6 | Stephen McCann/Lisa O'Dowd | Mitsubishi Lancer | +6m 4.0s |
| 7 | Eugene Meegan/Sarah Whelan | Mitsubishi Lancer | +6m 11.5s |
| 8 | Martin Doherty/Conor Foley | Mitsubishi Lancer | +6m 40.4s |
| 9 | Brendan Cumiskey/Ronan O'Kane | Mitsubishi Lancer | +7m 30.7s |
| 10 | Pat Kirk/John McElhinney | Mitsubishi Lancer | +7m 39.6s |

Class Winners: 2: Ian Chadwick/Johnny Bould (Skoda Fabia); 4: McCann/O'Dowd; 5: Moffett/Rowan; 6: Boyle/Boyle; 9: Pat Sheehan/Martin O'Riordan (Honda Civic); 10: Victor Beamish/Susan Beamish (Vauxhall Nova); 11: Richard Whelan/James Whelan (Honda Civic); 11R: Kevin Eves/Chris Melly (Toyota Corolla TC); 12: Damien Boyle/Sean Boyle (Ford Escort); 13: Declan Gallagher/Ryan Moore (Toyota Starlet RWD); 14: Wesley Patterson/Johnny Baird (Ford Escort); 15: Martin Donnelly/Brian Doherty (Toyota Corolla WRC); 16: Pat Kelly/Jonathan Kelly (Subaru Impreza); 20: Mark Nangle/Nollaig Breen (Subaru Impreza); K: Ross Forde/Paul Horan (Ford Escort); B2: Ray Cunningham/Adrian Cusack (Mini Cooper S); C2: Niall Keane/Conor Keane (Toyota Avenger); C3: James Power/Declan Kelly (Ford Escort); D1: David Dee/Rita Dee (Mini Cooper); D4: John Spiers/Susanne Niedrum (Porsche 911); D5: John Reid/Enda Shiels (Ford Escort); J1: Mark Finnegan/Brian McLoughlin (Suzuki Swift); J2: Paul Creamer/Danny McCloskey (Honda Civic).



Jennings was pushing for the event win until aquaplaning into a wall

RALLY REPORTS



Photo: pro-rally.co.uk

BIRD FLIES TO BIG LEGEND FIRES WIN



Paul Bird dominated the North West Stages in his Ford

Legend Fires North West Stages

By Phil James

Organiser: Motorsport (North West) Ltd Where: Blackpool When: February 7/8 Championships: ANCC; NETRC; ANWCC; SD34 Starters: 108 Stages: 26

Paul Bird and Aled Davies completely dominated the event from start to finish in their Ford Focus WRC. They completed the 26 stage schedule with a winning margin of over five minutes.

The crew recorded 18 fastest stage times, including all five on Friday evening, and were second fastest on a further seven. They were still fastest through the penultimate stage despite losing time with a spin.

With Bird and Davies disappearing into the distance en-route for a second successive North West Stages victory, the real intrigue surrounded who would finish second.

Friday's five stage itinerary produced four different challengers. The first was Kevin Procter and Dave Bellerby, but their challenge wasn't to last as they retired their Subaru Impreza WRC at the end of SS2 with turbo failure. John Stone and Carl Williamson held second spot after the two Clifton stages but stalls at the double hairpin on both the Blackpool Promenade tests dropped the Skoda Fabia WRC pairing to fifth. Alex Taylor and Mark Swallow briefly held second spot after SS4 in their

Subaru Forester before Tony Bardy and Neil Colman edged ahead of them in their Nissan Sunny GTi-R. Darren Doherty and Andrew Falconer's Subaru Impreza was fourth in the overnight standings.

Bardy maintained his position as Bird's closest challenger throughout Saturday morning but an altercation with a wall on the mid-day Fleetwood stage ended his rally. Stone then took up the challenge and was on target to secure the runner-up spot before electing to withdraw with just four tests remaining after a mysterious drop in engine power. They had been in a close contest with Simon Bowen and Richard Robinson, but they too retired with a broken hub on their Impreza WRC. That meant Neil Simpson, back in the sport after a 12-year absence, and co-driver Claire Mole, inherited second place in the Skoda Fabia S2000 ahead of Doherty and Falconer's Impreza.

Bob Grant and daughter Vicky's Impreza suffered gearbox problems during Friday's leg but they survived to collect Class D awards after finishing fourth ahead of Damian Cole and Elliott Edmondson in the Class E-winning Escort Mk2.

Alan and Lawrence Kirby headed an Impreza trio finishing sixth ahead of Chris Ford and Steve Hartley, who edged ahead of Howard Chopping and Jonathon Turnbull's 555 version

on the final stage. Dave and Steve Benson finished ninth overall and won Class B despite their Honda Civic having to run most of the event sporting a broken strut. Class rivals Mathew Roberts and Richard Bestwick finished tenth in their Citroën Saxo after being penalised by a disputed stage maximum after an incident at Fleetwood.

Class C winners Gavin Edwards and Rob Hopewell finished 15th in their Escort Mk2 ahead of Mark and Andrew Constantine who, having suffered five previous retirements here, were rewarded for their perseverance with Class A spoils in their Corsa.

Among the 47 retirees were Alex Taylor/Mark Swallow (Forester) and Mark Holmes/Tony Lindsay (MG Metro 6R4) both with gearbox problems while Darren Atkinson/Dave Riley crashed their Mitsubishi Lancer E6 at Weeton whilst sixth.

Results

1 Paul Bird/Aled Davies (Ford Focus WRC) 1hr 37m 48s; 2 Neil Simpson/Claire Mole (Skoda Fabia S2000) +5m 08s; 3 Darren Doherty/Andrew Falconer (Subaru Impreza) +6m 44s; 4 Bob Grant/Vicky Grant (Subaru Impreza) +8m 52s; 5 Damian Cole/Elliott Edmondson (Ford Escort Mk2) +10m 20s; 6 Alan Kirby/Lawrence Kirby (Subaru Impreza) +10m 30s; 7 Chris Ford/Steve Hartley (Subaru Impreza) +10m 49s; 8 Howard Chopping/Jonathon Turnbull (Subaru Impreza 555) +11m 51s; 9 David Benson/Steven Benson (Honda Civic) +11m 31s; 10 Mathew Roberts/Richard Bestwick (Citroën Saxo VTS) +12m 24s. Classes: A: Mark Constantine/Andrew Constantine (Vauxhall Corsa); B: Benson/Benson; C: Gavin Edwards/Rob Hopewell (Ford Escort); D: Grant/Grant; E: Cole/Edmondson; F: Pat Masters/Lewis Jackson (Nissan Micra); L: Alan Paramore/Colin Fisher (Land Rover Wolf XD); H/R: Stephen Hudson/James Chaplin (Peugeot 205 GTI).

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RALLY REPORTS



Photos: M&H Photography and Kevin Money



Mauger and Holmes took victory with their new Ford

DREAM ESCORT DEBUT FOR MAUGER ON DOWNS

South Downs Stages

By Ian Harden

Organiser: Southsea Motor Club/Bognor Regis Motor Club **Where:** Goodwood Motor Circuit, Sussex **When:** February 9 **Championships:** Hamilton Classic ACSM, Corbeau Seats UKASEMC **Starters:** 50 **Stages:** ten

Simon Mauger and co-driver Melanie Holmes gave their newly built 'ultimate' Ford Escort Mk2 the best possible debut by taking a hard-fought win on the South Downs Stages.

In testing weather conditions that varied between bright sunshine and hailstorms, Mauger/Holmes overhauled long-time leaders Johnnie Ellis/David Green's Subaru

Impreza. They then held off a late charge from Paul King/Gary Whittington's Escort Mk2 to take victory by three seconds.

Early morning rain at the Goodwood track played straight into Ellis's hands. He used his Impreza's four-wheel-drive grip to the full and edged out a four-second lead from Dean Thomas/Richard Knowlton's Davrian Dav-Tec on the opening test. Due to the conditions these two crews opened a gap of 20 seconds over Roger Moran/Joy Hoyle's Escort Mk2 with King, Mauger and Stuart Cogger/Lee Bezuidenhout's two-litre class Escort all close behind.

Ellis continued to head the

field through the morning. Even as the leading rear-wheel-drive contenders started to get to grips with the conditions he held off all challengers with a consistently high pace. Thomas also ran strongly, consolidating second place. He set fastest time on stage two in his 1600cc machine and seemed to have overcome the mechanical problems that plagued him throughout last season. By contrast Mauger had teething problems. An electrical glitch and a collision with a chicane slowed his progress.

A hailstorm greeted the crews as they lined up for stage seven, but it failed to faze King and

Mauger, who continued to up their pace and close the gap to Ellis. The lead finally changed hands on stage eight when Mauger went quickest by seven seconds. Thomas's good run also came to an end on this stage due to overheating.

The final two stages ran in complete darkness and, despite driving with only headlights when he left his spotlights in his garage, Mauger fended off the hard-charging King to win by three seconds. King held Ellis at bay, with Moran fourth, the former British hillclimb champion having slackened his pace in the afternoon. Paul Diamond/Steve Cox (Escort)

finished fifth, having moved up the order from tenth after stage three. Stephen Beck/Paul Brown also improved, overhauling Cogger in the closing miles to take sixth and win the two-litre class.

Results:

1 Simon Mauger/Melanie Holmes (Ford Escort Mk2) 37m 55s; 2 Paul King/Gary Whittington (Escort Mk2) +3s; 3 Johnnie Ellis/Dave Green (Subaru Impreza); 4 Roger Moran/Joy Hoyle (Escort); 5 Paul Diamond/Steve Cox (Escort); 6 Stephen Beck/Paul Brown (Escort Mk2); 7 Stuart Cogger/Lee Bezuidenhout (Escort); 8 Mark Wiltshire/Adam Dunn (Escort) 9 Russell Davies/Andy Tomlinson (Vauxhall Astra); 10 Steve Rockingham/Fiona Scarrett (Impreza WRC). **Classes:** A: Oliver Howard/Simon Howard (Nissan Micra); B: Chris Gravestock/Mark Harmer (Citroen C2R2); C: Beck/Brown; D: King/Whittington; E: Ellis/Green; F: Hugh Myers/Debby Myers (Saab 96 V4).

Late drama nets Stephenson Riponian win

Riponian Stages

By Peter Scherer

Organiser: Ripon MSC **Where:** North Yorkshire **When:** February 9 **Championships:** ANCC Stage; SG Petch ANECC Stage; Road Runner Phoenix Awards ANEMMC Stage; ANWCC Forest Stage; EMAMC Multi-Venue; Motoscope Northern Historic; Yorkshire Winter Rally Challenge **Starters:** 55 **Stages:** ten

Peter Stephenson and Ian Windress secured a late victory in their Ford Focus WRC after early leaders Ollie Mellors and Ian Joel both crashed out.

The first three stages through Boltby, Roppa and Riccal Dale, gave crews an immediate insight into the slippery conditions. Mellors/Alex Lee built an early 10s lead in their Proton, despite a brief excursion on stage three. Joel and Graeme Wood's Escort WRC and Stephenson/Windress' Focus edged ahead of the fast starting Matthew Robinson/Sam Collis' historic spec Escort to head the chase. There was a sizeable gap back to the Miles

Johnston/Ian Bevan Mitsubishi Lancer E8 in fifth place.

By service Mellors' lead had grown to 12 seconds over Joel, while third place Stephenson had closed his deficit to 10s. Robinson remained in fourth, Mat and Darren Smith moved up to sixth after Johnston crashed out on stage five, Wass. "I left my braking too late, tried to slow down through a ditch, but got airborne on the bank, spun in the air and hit a tree," he explained.

The afternoon started with a repeat run through Boltby and in the first 100 yards the leader was out. "I came off the throttle then back on, slid and went over the edge downhill into a tree at about 60mph," said Mellors. Joel became the new leader with 12s in-hand over Stephenson, but Robinson was still too close to be discounted in third.

While Smith had established himself in fourth, the battle for fifth was down to just one second



Stephenson tackled tough conditions to grab victory

between Chris Haigh/Sally Peacock and Alex Lund/Nick Kitching's Escorts.

The lead changed again on stage eight when Joel stopped after an undertray came loose. He dropped to third behind Stephenson and Robinson.

Apart from turning the boost up, Stephenson cruised through the remaining stages to win by 33 secs over Robinson. There was

then three minutes to the second Historic crew of Tom Hewick/Mick Johnson, after they picked up an early time penalty in their Escort. They were still fourth overall behind Smith's Ka, a dominant Class A victor. Joel had started the penultimate stage third, but was left on the edge of a drop in Waterloo after sliding off.

Results

1 Peter Stephenson/Ian Windress (Ford Focus WRC)

40m 37s; 2 Matthew Robinson/Sam Collis (Ford Escort Mk2) +33s; 3 Mat Smith/Darren Smith (Ford Ka) +3m 06s; 4 Tom Hewick/Mick Johnson (Ford Escort Mk2) +3m 36s; 5 Chris Haigh/Sally Peacock (Ford Escort Mk1) +3m 54s; 6 Alex Lund/Nick Kitching (Ford Escort Mk1) +3m 56s; 7 Steve Magson/Rachel Magson (Ford Escort Mk1) +4m 19s; 8 Robert Harkness/Michael Curry (BMW 316i) +4m 30s; 9 Peter Smith/Graham Wild (MG Metro 6R4) +4m 39s; 10 Marcus Noble/Helen Hall (Ford Escort Mk2) +4m 42s. **Class winners:** A: Smith/Smith; B: Ben Cree/Richard Shores (Peugeot 205 GTi); C: Haigh/Peacock; D: Harkness/Curry; H1: Richard Holdsworth/Yvette Hughes (Ford Cortina GT); H2: Magson/Magson; H3: Robinson/Collis.

Fowden's knowledge brings Welsh success

Rali Cwm Gwendraeth

By Ian Harden

Organiser: Gwendraeth Valley Motor Club **Where:** Welsh Motor Sports Centre, Pembrey **When:** February 9 **Championships:** WAMC Tarmacadam, FMP Rally Challenge **Starters:** 62 **Stages:** six

Subaru Impreza driver Bob Fowden got his Welsh Tarmacadam Championship title defence off to a solid start, battling through six rain-soaked stages at Pembrey to win the Rali Cwm Gwendraeth by 37 seconds.

Co-driven by Mark Ellis, Fowden made his experience of the Pembrey roads count as he picked his way around the traditional trouble spots. He led from stage two onwards, setting a consistent series of fastest times to pull away and take his third victory in four years. In second was last year's championship runners-up, Richard Merriman/Kath Curzon (Darrion T90).

With 2013 rally winner Bryan Davies unable to contest the event, Fowden – seeded first on the road – had to carve a path through patches of mud and water on the stage surface. Consequently he lost several seconds and settled into third behind Geoff Kitney/Ken Gibbard's Mitsubishi Lancer E6 and Sean Crowley/Emma Jones's Peugeot 205 after the opening test. However, his knowledge of the Welsh Motor Sports Centre's roads soon paid dividends. While many other crews suffered spins and got bogged down in trackside mud, Fowden/Ellis drove consistently to take and then stretch the lead.

The conditions claimed several potential winners, the most notable being fourth seeds Ian Godney/Justin Davies. The pairing suffered a variety of mechanical woes on each stage before retiring their newly acquired Impreza WRC after stage three. Third seeds Robert and James Tout lost over two minutes on the fifth stage when their Mitsubishi Lancer E9 slid off the track.

After a cautious start, eventual second-placed Merriman upped his pace in the afternoon, battling hard with Kitney, Crowley and Phil Turner/Simon Anthony (Impreza). The protagonists fought hard before Kitney lost 30s on the penultimate stage and dropped to fourth. Crowley used his Peugeot 205's nimble handling to take third, with Kitney going fastest on the final stage to fend off Turner for fourth place. Ian Kenvin/Ian Meakin rounded out the top six in their Escort Mk1 to win Class Five.

Results:

1 Bob Fowden/Mark Ellis (Subaru Impreza) 44m 31s; 2 Richard Merriman/Kath Curzon (Darrion T90) +37s; 3 Sean Crowley/Emma Jones (Peugeot 205); 4 Geoff Kitney/Ken Gibbard (Mitsubishi Lancer E6); 5 Phil Turner/Simon Anthony (Impreza); 6 Ian Kenvin/Ian Meakin (Escort Mk1); 7 Meirion Evans/Jonathon Jackson (Impreza); 8 Huw Jeffries/Liam Jeffries (Impreza); 9 Simon Kemp/Derrick Walters (Ford Escort Mk2); 10 Roger Hicks/Terry Martin (Escort Mk2). **Classes:** 1: Kevin Jones/Nathan Jones (Vauxhall Nova) 2: Ben Godney/Ceri Simpson (Peugeot 205 Rallye) 3: Merriman/Curzon 4: Crowley/Jones 5: Kenvin/Meakin 6: Kitney/Gibbard 7: Chris Jones/Sean Jones (Ford Escort Mk2) 8: Evans/Jackson.

KARTING ROUND-UP

"I am aiming for strong results from the outset"
Josh Price joins ART GP, below



IN BRIEF

Buckmore champs

The second of three rounds of the BPKC Winter Championship takes place on Sunday. All ABkC non-gearbox classes are welcome including Bambino and Subaru (subject to minimum entry levels). Practice is available on Friday and Saturday between 1000hrs and 1600hrs. The race meeting and the practice will give Easykart and Super One competitors extra experience at the venue before their rounds visit Buckmore in the spring. For details, contact chris@buckmore.co.uk or call 01634 661604.

Klaassen Trophy

Rissington Kart Club will hold a special event to begin its 2014 season with the second running of the Klaassen Cup Trophy on March 2. The event will run in memory of former committee members and president, Marge and Piet Klaassen, who passed away last year. All Cadet novices will be eligible for the trophy, including non-members, and perpetual trophies will also be awarded. Each driver will also receive a trophy for taking part. All engine types will compete together. Bookings are available at risskartclub.com and should be made by February 24.

CIK entry fees

The CIK-FIA has confirmed its entry fees for this year's World KF and KF Junior Championships at Essay in France in September will be set at 760 euros per driver for applications sent before August 13. The new Dunlop tyres for this year's World KF Championship will cost 185 euros per set of slick and wet rubber.



Boss says Jupp will shine

Holland predicts a big year for Jupp

Senior Rotax racer Connor Jupp has the maturity to compete for honours in Super One and European Rotax meetings this season, according to team boss Dan Holland.

The 16-year-old finished 16th in last season's European Rotax points and took a third place at the third round at PF International. Holland reckons last year's experience and winter preparations have enabled Jupp to launch a title assault this season.

"Connor has always had lots of speed," Holland said. "After a spell in KF2 he returned to Rotax last year in a series which is the most competitive in the world. His drive and hunger have increased as he has matured, particularly over this past winter."

Jupp will also compete in the Belgian BNL series, in which the DHR squad claimed the title last season. "Connor's realised how to win and now understands how to play out a race weekend," Holland added. "He can push on to regularly take wins and titles this year."

BRAND EXPANDS HIS '14 BID TO INTERNATIONAL KZ

Fourth Briton set to line up on the grid for World Championship-level campaign

Photos: kartpix.net



Brand will make a twin attack



Brand will tackle KZ class alongside Rotax campaign

By Russell Hayes

Intrepid Driver Program factory racer Ed Brand will become the fourth Brit to line up on the international KZ gearbox racing grid this season.

The 19-year-old will launch a joint campaign as he also chases the Rotax Euro Challenge title after finishing fifth in last year's points.

He is planning on competing in

European and World Championship KZ racing too and will join fellow Brits Jordon Lennox-Lamb, Ben Hanley and Oliver Norris on this year's KZ grid.

"Racing in KZ will be a completely new challenge," Brand said. "It's something I'm really looking forward to and will be very different to the Rotax competition."

"There seem to be a few other Brits in the category, including Jordon who, like me, will also be combining Rotax and

KZ, so it will be great for us all to have a tussle."

Brand impressed at the opening round of the Florida Winter Tour at Homestead in Miami last month, finishing second in the standings. But he will not take part in this weekend's second round in Ocala, instead focusing his efforts on the Rotax Winter Cup at Campillos in Spain.

"The Winter Cup has more of a benefit to the Intrepid brand," he said. "It's in

the best interests of Intrepid for me to be in Spain. It was nice to go back to Florida. It was a last-minute decision as I was on holiday there at the time and got a call from the factory."

Brand said the team will focus on victory in Spain this weekend after a developing the Rotax chassis. "Last year was the first time out for the kart," he added. "It had just been finished so it took time to get to grips with it. We should be ready to push for race wins."



Brit Price will tackle international Rotax with top European team

Price eager to begin new challenge with ART

Briton Josh Price reckons he can successfully challenge for honours in international Rotax competition this season after being chosen to be part of the ART GP squad's maiden campaign in the class.

The 15-year-old finished fourth in last season's junior class of the Rotax Euro Challenge points with Chris Rogers Motorsport. He also took the Kartmasters British GP title in the class. He competed at the Rotax Grand Finals with Piers Sexton Racing. Price will step up to Senior Rotax this year and will also contest Super One Senior Max with the Zip Kart outfit.

"I tested on a KF chassis with ART GP at Sarno last year," Price said. "We've kept in touch and they've followed my results. I tested on the new Rotax chassis at Garda and the kart felt good."

Price has no doubts that despite it being the squad's first year in the category, he can consistently challenge for honours. "I'm aiming for good results from the outset and a top three finish in the points," he added. "I'm confident the kart will be good to go quickly. The team is very professional and is always challenging in KF and KZ, so I've no doubt we'll do the same in Rotax."

Strakka to link up with Chiesa Corse

World KF champion squad Chiesa Corse has formed a partnership with British circuit racing squad Strakka Racing.

As part of a restructuring at the Italian outfit, boss Dino Chiesa will step down from managing the team's general operations to take up a scouting and technical consultancy position. The Chiesa Corse outfit will no longer be directly involved in the management of the factory team, with Italsport running the outfit instead under the new Zanardi Strakka Racing banner.

A Chiesa Corse statement read: "The company director Rickard Kaell, a unique figure in the karting world, has produced immediate signs of change with the news that Italsport will collaborate with Strakka Racing."

"The goal of the partnership is to create a direct line of development from karts, with the Zanardi and Strakka Racing Team, all the way through to the highest levels of international motorsport."

Verstappen Sr keen to remain on kart scene

Former Formula One racer Jos Verstappen has admitted he may remain involved in karting despite his son and World champion Max graduating to single-seater racing this season.

The 41-year-old played a crucial role in Verstappen Jr's success throughout the 2013 season and tuned the engines which took his son to the World and European KZ titles. The Dutchman competed in F1 between 1994 and 2003. "At the beginning of a driver's career, it

is important that they are shown the right direction," Verstappen Sr said. "I am occupied a lot with karting. For race strategy selection and advice, I have always participated in the development of Max's equipment."

"I will keep an eye on Max's career, but it is now up to him. I may stay in karting to take care of a driver, provided there is a good talent to develop. Aiming for wins is all that interests me."

Carter prepared for Super One graduation

Trent Valley Kart Club IAME Cadet champion Albert Carter says the experience of taking the title last season will help him to challenge at the front of the Super One and Little Green Man series this year.

The ten-year-old took three consecutive victories in the final three rounds to claim the 2013 club championship by 40 points from Ross Woodford. He will now focus on a dual national IAME campaign.

"It was always my goal to win a top level club championship first," Carter said. "Now that is done I can focus 100 per cent on the MSA British and LGM



Carter will drive in IAME

Championships. I would like to say thanks to everyone at TVKC for the support, advice and encouragement that I have received while racing at that great club. It is going to help me going forward."

SPORTING SCENE ROUND-UP

ROUND-UP

Steven Ferguson's eighth **Hewison Autotest** win of the 11-round season clinched his fourth title in a row. Peter Falvey led the County Laois event for eight of the 12 tests, but two late penalties dropped him to fourth place at the finish, behind Guy Foster and Eamonn Byrne. Ferguson has also won the Northern Ireland Championship for the last four years, plus the MSA series in 2011 and 2012, and the BTRDA Gold Star crown in 2012.

Continued bad weather has again forced the postponement of the **Jenkins Cup** Sporting Trial. Originally listed for February 1, it was rescheduled for last Saturday, but further rain forced its cancellation. It may be held in April.

The **Cannon Trophy** Historic Sporting Trial that was due to take place last weekend was cancelled due to the venue being waterlogged.

Rain isn't so much of an issue in France, but the St Dié round of the **Andros Trophy** was axed last weekend due to a lack of ice. It was to be the final event of the annual ice racing championship. Jean Philippe Dayraut had already won his fifth title in his Saintéloc Racing Mini. "I would say it was almost the easiest championship because we won five races from six before Christmas," he said.

RESULTS

Autotest: Rosenallis, County Laois
1 Steven Ferguson (Mini Special) 566.4s; 2 Guy Foster (Mini Special) 575.8s; 3 Eamonn Byrne (Mini) 576.2s; 4 Peter Falvey (Mini Special) 577.0s; 5 Daniel Byrne (Mini) 591.2s; 6 David Thompson (Nova) 604.0s; 7 Mark King (Nova) 613.0s; 8 Ian White (Mini) 616.8s; 9 Timmy Lynch (Westfield) 617.1s; 10 Chris Grimes (Mini) 623.5s; 11 Paddy Power (Mini Special) 634.4s; 12 Darren Quille (Westfield) 636.8s. **Class winners:** Byrne; Foster; Thompson; Paul Cullen (Micra) 1072.2s.

Photos: Hal Ridge, LAT and Rallycross RX



Jordan will race at Lydden Hill in May



Jordan has testing miles in a modern rallycross supercar

GOLLOP: JORDAN CAN BE STAR MAN

British rallycross icon backs touring car man to stun the regulars

By Hal Ridge

Rallycross legend Will Gollop has backed British touring car champion Andrew Jordan to star when he takes part in his home round of the new FIA World Rallycross Championship at Lydden Hill in May.

Gollop is the most recent British driver to win the FIA European Rallycross Championship, a feat he achieved in 1992. "It's fantastic for the sport that Andrew is going to be competing at Lydden Hill," said Gollop. "I think he can do well. He's a

very sensible driver with terrific car control and he's very consistent with it, as he showed last season picking up points all the time to win the BTCC. He just got better and better."

Gollop's G-Tech team ran Jordan in a Ford Focus Rallycross Supercar in 2006-'07 and they claimed the British Supercar championship in 2007. They just missed out on the overall British title. "We would have won the British championship had it not been for transmission problems. Andrew was always fantastic to work with. The last time we raced at Lydden was

probably his best race with us. He overtook Pat Doran fair and square to win," said Gollop. "I never won a European event at Lydden myself, we never had much luck there, but the atmosphere was brilliant and it felt really good as a British driver."

The Group B rallycross star travelled to Lohéac, France to watch RallycrossRX last season and was impressed by what he saw. "France was brilliant," he said. "Rallycross is a fantastic sport, and we've always thought it should be better promoted. I think the new format with semi-finals is good to, and it's great for TV."

Godfrey to revamp car for '14 campaign

Multiple British rallycross champion Julian Godfrey says he's working on improvements to his Ford Fiesta Mk6 Supercar.

The ace engine tuner has won the British title for the last three years.

"We're developing the suspension and looking at the weight to get a better centre of gravity," said Godfrey. "We're moving the engine down and back by about 10mm. We're only changing components that can carry forward onto the new Fiesta Mk8 when it comes out."

The championship begins at Lydden Hill on March 29/30.

Horton returns to rallycross top flight

British rallycross Supercar driver Simon Horton will return to the category this season having spent a year racing a SuperNational MG ZR while he developed his new Subaru Impreza.

The Lancasterian believes he has made big performance gains with the machine. He will contest both the British Championship and the new BTRDA Supercar category.

"I'm planning to do all the events I can," said Horton. "I'd really like to try and win the BTRDA Supercar class, and in the British championship I want to be in the top five. Last time I did the full year in 2012 I finished joint fourth so I don't want to go backwards. The car has lost 70kgs of weight, it's right on the weight limit now, and we have gone through everything with a fine tooth comb."

Horton said he was keen to get going. "We have made the Subaru's suspension adjustable. There is more we could get wrong but also a lot we can improve. I'm looking forward to testing in March."



Beetle Supercar has 560bhp

Monster RX Beetles for Speed and Foust

Double Global Rallycross champion Tanner Foust will compete in a Volkswagen Beetle Supercar in the series this year.

Foust and ex-Formula One driver Scott Speed will race a pair of Beetles run by IndyCar Series squad Andretti Autosport in the US-based rallycross series.

The Volkswagen Andretti Rallycross Team will start the season in VW Polos, which will be loosely based on VW's World Rally Cars, before switching to the 560bhp Beetle mid-season. The team is hoping to use the Beetles in the X Games event on June 5-8.

Meanwhile, three time European Rallycross champion Sverre Isachsen will continue to drive a Subaru WRX STi in the Global Rallycross Championship this year. Isachsen joined Subaru for the 2012 season and will compete alongside Bucky Lasek.

SPORTING TRIAL REPORT

Bell shines to take Jigger's Jug glory and maintain winning run

Jigger's Jug Sporting Trial: Cumbria

By Duncan Stephens

Organisers: Northern Phoenix Car Club **When:** February 9 **Where:** Colston's Farm, Penrith, Cumbria **Championships:** BTRDA and NPTCC **Starters:** 18

Ian Bell won the opening round of the BTRDA Sporting Trials championship in Cumbria at the weekend.

Bell took the Jigger's Jug trial ahead of Peter McKinney and Mark Milne. Following the championship finale last month, Bell had to rebuild his engine to solve a reoccurring head gasket problem. In extremely slippery conditions on the steep wooded venue he continued his winning streak of BTRDA trials.

McKinney won the intermediate class, having been reclassified from last year. It was his best result

since moving from Northern Ireland. Local driver Milne debuted his ex-Dave Martin and Mark Vaughan Crosslé and relished in the extra power it produces to complete the podium. Milne was a little apprehensive during the first round of seven hills in his new car but soon settled into the different style needed from his old live axle Sherpa.

Julian Fack had a misfire on his Crosslé which he has been unable to cure in the last month, so travelled with his multiple championship winning X-Factor, with its steering wheel on the left, to finish a fine fourth. George Watson took fifth ahead of Bryan Walker, who was the intermediate class runner up.

Boyd Webster finished in seventh overall, and top live axle in his veteran Kincraft. He was just a point ahead of Martin Grimwood (Crosslé).

Autotester Stuart Perren travelled up from Staffordshire to finish in a brilliant ninth overall, his best result in his Facksimile. He was the second live axle home and won the Novice class. Irving Armstrong completed the top ten. The day was shortened due to a marshal slipping, but competitors had all been suitably challenged on the 21 long and demanding sections.

The next round of the BTRDA Sporting Trial series is this weekend's Geoff Taylor Sporting Trial, which takes place at Brow Farm, Ratlinghope in Shropshire. It is also an MSA Sporting Trial Championship round.

Results
1 Ian Bell (Hamilton) 64 points; 2 Peter McKinney (Crosslé) 78; 3 Mark Milne (Crosslé) 81; 4 Julian Fack (X-Factor) 93; 5 George Watson (Hamilton) 101; 6 Bryan Walker (Jedi) 111; 7 Boyd Webster (Kincraft) 123; 8 Martin Grimwood (Crosslé) 124; 9 Stuart Perren (Facksimile) 130; 10 Irving Armstrong (SRB Copy) 133.

Mills thinks Solberg can claim world title

World Rally Championship winning co-driver Phil Mills has backed former team-mate Petter Solberg to shine in this season's FIA World Rallycross Championship.

Solberg returned to the sport last season but his efforts were blighted by mechanical troubles, and he finished eighth in the championship.

"Petter's roots are in rallycross – that's where he came from – so it's no surprise he was on the button straight away," said Mills. "It was obvious he would be there or thereabouts. He's just had some bad luck. Once that's sorted, he has a very good chance."

"I think when things are equal it's between two or three drivers really and that's it."

Mills says that rallycross is a cost-effective alternative to the WRC and that it's not a surprise to see Peugeot and Ford becoming officially involved, with Hansen Motorsport and OMSE respectively. "It's interesting that manufacturers are looking at rallycross. When you sit back and think about it, you don't need as many TV cameras compared to most other motor sports and you can cover the whole weekend's sport at a fair cost. Teams only need one service truck that can park in a central point for three days. There's no recce. It ticks all the boxes. The WRC needs to look at costs. Rallycross is a little more controlled, you can see why it's attractive for people and teams."

Mills backs Solberg bid



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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

STAR LETTER

Nose frustrations

The thing that most frustrates me about the ugly noses on this year's Formula One cars is that everyone seemed to see it coming, and yet nobody did anything about it.

There were mutterings from F1 teams for months that the new nose rules for 2014 would lead to all these ugly noses. Yet nobody seemed bothered about fixing the problem. Madness.

Matt James's feature on ugly F1 cars (MN, February 5) did include some terrible-looking creations – but in most cases that was because the teams had tried something different to gain an edge. I can forgive an ugly car when it is the byproduct of an attempt at some innovation, but when a car is ugly because it has to fit some badly thought-out rule, you really have to question what the sport is doing.

Let's hope all these smart F1 people can find a solution for 2015.

Simon Jones
Via email

MN SAYS...

The VW battle is on

Latvala's Rally Sweden win has put pressure on Ogier

I know it's not nice to celebrate the misfortune of a competitor, but Sébastien Ogier's off on Rally Sweden last week was just what the World Rally Championship needed.

By the time Sweden was done last year, Ogier already had a big points lead over his title rivals, and his consistency meant that he could cruise to the title. The minor error that left his Polo R WRC implanted in a snowbank for more than four minutes has opened up the title race. We now get to see how Ogier fares pushing to make up ground in the points race – and how his team-mate Jari-Matti Latvala will cope with the pressure of leading the standings. That will be interesting to watch.

● We hope you enjoy your free glossy National Rally Calendar in association with MORIS that is included in this week's issue. Don't miss our Karting Calendar in our February 26 issue, and the National Racing Calendar that will be included in the March 5 issue.

James Attwood, Editor (Twitter: @AttersMNNews)



LETTERS

Seven up

It's great that Fabrizio Giovanardi will make it seven British Touring Car champions on the grid in 2014 (MN, February 5). There have been too many years recently where the only 'names' in the BTCC have been Matt Neal and Jason Plato.

Now, having the likes of Giovanardi and Alain Menu, and young chargers such as Gordon Shedden and Andrew Jordan, is making it more exciting. I'll be tuning in with interest.

Patrick Saunders
Via email



MN, Feb 5 : Gio's UK return

Kubica's a star

Interesting comments by Marcus Grönholm on Robert Kubica (MN, February 5). It's clear that Kubica has great natural talent for rallying, and Grönholm has nothing to gain by talking him up.

Once Kubica is comfortable in that Ford Fiesta WRC and on a surface that suits him, I think the WRC field will need to watch out. I reckon he'll win this year.

Tom Richards
Via email

Ugly comments

Might I complain about the appallingly written feature by Matt James in last week's issue (MN, February 5). His selection of ugly F1 cars overlooks some of the hideous 1980s creations.

May I propose the AGS JH22, as

driven by Pascal Fabre in San Marino 1987. It's unsightly airbox was horrendous! And, while we are at it, what about the Toleman TG183, which debuted at Las Vegas in the last round of 1982?

Brian Broad
Broadstairs

Don't blame Vettel

How can Bernie blame Sebastian Vettel for lower TV audiences and the sport being boring because he and Red Bull are too good? Shouldn't he be chivvying up the other teams to do better?

My idea to transform F1 into a watchable sport is to make F1 a spectacle no matter how many cars are on track, show the drivers' skills visually, reduce aerodynamics and rely on

mechanical grip more, make each lap seem a balancing act of man and machine teetering on the edge of control.

I can never forget watching F1 cars hounding down the start/finish straight at Silverstone and tip toeing through Copse with minute corrections as the car tried to get to Towcester on its own. I don't remember who won on those occasions, but I went home with battered senses and admiration for my heroes, and knew the winner won on merit! Please let that awe return for each enthusiast in each country the circus visits!

John Austin
Via email

Nightmare noses

Well done Matt James on his piece on ugly noses on the modern F1 cars.

It is unbelievable that the FIA and good taste has allowed the cars to get so ugly. They have been getting worse and worse over the last few years and the so-called 'designers' should be sacked.

I went to see a Grand Prix in the Seventies and never bothered again.

GT, sportscars and saloons are much, much better with good looking cars and great racing.

Mike Mace
Isle of Skye

MN says: Could be a bit harsh to sack the designers – after all, they're only designing car noses that fit within the rules as they stand for the 2014 season...

Seven up

Great job by Jari-Matti Latvala on Rally Sweden to take the victory. But I think Sébastien Ogier's off might actually boost his title chances.

Ogier recovered to get a great finish, and because he's second in the points will run behind Latvala on day one of Rally Mexico. That should give him a huge help in building a big lead and a commanding win. Then it will be back to business as usual, I'm afraid!

Andrew Thurston
Via email

YOUR PICS



MN.LETTERS@HAYMARKET.COM

Photographs must be of a good quality and please send no more than three images



Darren Bowen snapped Owen Murphy on the Red Kite Stages in his Talbot Sunbeam



Riponian Stages Escort by Ian Wilson



NW Stages action by Graham Lomax



Simon Briggs positioned himself next to the watersplash on the Riponian Stages



Matty J forgot to include this AGS JH22 in his list of ugly F1 cars

GET MN ON THE GO

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WHAT'S ON

LISTINGS

SATURDAY

■ **Chepstow Racecourse, Monmouthshire**
Rally: Weir Engineering Wyedean Forest Rally **Starts:** 0801hrs
Admission: £5 to charity per car park
Web: wyedeanrally.com

■ **Moneytown, Ashford, County Wicklow**
Sporting Trial: Leinster MC
Starts: 1130hrs **Admission:** free
Contact: 00353 8616 75724
Web: motorsportireland.com

SATURDAY/SUNDAY

■ **Rockgrove, Coachford, County Cork**
4x4 Trial: Cork Motor Club
Starts: 1100hrs **Admission:** free
Contact: 00353 8683 08250
Web: motorsportireland.com

SUNDAY

■ **Mondello Park, Naas, County Kildare**
Rallycross: Irish National Championship **Starts:** 1015hrs
Admission: 10 euros, under 16s free
Contact: 00383 8761 87305
Web: motorsportireland.com

■ **Primo International, Horton, Northampton**
Oval Racing: bangers
Starts: 1330hrs **Admission:** adult £15, child £7 **Web:** spedeworth.co.uk
Contact: 01252 322920

■ **Wimbledon Stadium, Plough Lane, London**
Oval Racing: superstox, bangers, classic hot rods
Starts: 1730hrs **Admission:** adult £14, child £6 **Web:** spedeworth.co.uk
Contact: 01252 322920

■ **Brow Farm, Ratlinghope, Shrewsbury, Shropshire**
Sporting Trial: Geoff Taylor
Admission: free
Starts: 1000hrs **Contact:** 01527 878192

■ **M65 Motorway Services, Junction 4, Blackburn**
Autosolo: Under 17 MC
Starts: 1000hrs **Admission:** free
Contact: 07718 051 882

■ **Wright's Quarry, Swans Cross, County Monaghan**
Autotest: County Monaghan MC
Starts: 1130hrs **Admission:** free
Contact: 00353 8636 27000
Web: motorsportireland.com

Details correct at time of press but please check with event organisers before travelling to meetings

REVIEW

Unless you have been under a motor racing rock for the last 40 years, you will have heard of Barry Lee.

If you are a spectator, the chances are that you will have seen him race something or other. And, there is no doubt, you won't have forgotten it.

Lee's new book, **The Other Side of Winning**, isn't just about the man and his racing achievements.

Granted, you can't get away from the story line of Barry's career as the book unfolds, but it is much more about the way he went about his sport and the dedication and drive that goes in to consistently performing at the top level.

In this book, Lee is open

and honest about some of the difficult times that he has been through and that makes it an intriguing tale and a real page-turner. It's tough enough to shut Barry up in real life, and it is difficult to rein in his romp here too...

As a enjoyable walk through some of Barry's legendary stories, it is on the mark and that will please his followers. But, much more than that, it also serves as a useful guide to those who are looking at forging a career in the sport.

The price is a bit steep at £24.95 but, once you've picked it up, you will find it hard to put down. To order copies of the book visit barrylee.co.uk.

Matt James



TV GUIDE



The Sprint Unlimited format will be decided by a fan vote

The build-up to the Daytona 500 starts this week, with the **NASCAR Sprint Unlimited** race at the Daytona International Speedway (see *live timings*, highlights Monday, 2045hrs-2145hrs, ESPN HD).

It's an unusual race, serving as an appetiser for the season ahead. The field is comprised of the polesitters from the 2013 season and previous event winners. Unusually, the finer details of the event will be decided by fan vote, including how the grid will be determined and the order the cars will line up in for the final segment. It will be a bit odd, but worth a watch.

For a complete contrast, the other live action you can watch this week is some glorious historic rallying on the **Boucles de Spa**. There won't be fan voting gimmicks here: just a talented field of drivers battling in some stunning machinery.

For more retro fun, the latest episode of the documentary series **Touring Car Legends** will be worth

LIVE TV

Legend Boucles de Spa

■ **Bilstein Stage:** Saturday, 1425-1620, MotorsTV

NASCAR: Daytona International Speedway

■ **Sprint Unlimited:** Sunday, 0100-0500, Premier Sports

watching (Wednesday, 2000-2100, ITV4HD). There's also **Special Stage Extra** action (Saturday, 1720-1825, MotorsTV).

Other top picks this week include the **Toyota Racing Series** from Hampton Downs (Saturday, 1855-2000, MotorsTV) and the **Lucas Oil Off Road Racing Series** from San Bernardino (Sunday, 1720-1925, MotorsTV).

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ADVERTISING

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Advertising deadline Monday 12 noon

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 Registered as a Newspaper with Consignia

Printed by Sheffield Web

Distributed by Frontline Ltd, Park House,
 117 Park Road, Peterborough, PE1 2TS, UK
 Published every Wednesday by Haymarket
 Motoring, Teddington Studios, Broom Road,
 Teddington, Middlesex TW11 9BE

Editorial Director Mark Payton

Design Director Paul Harpin

Publishing Director Patrick Fuller

Managing Director David Prasher

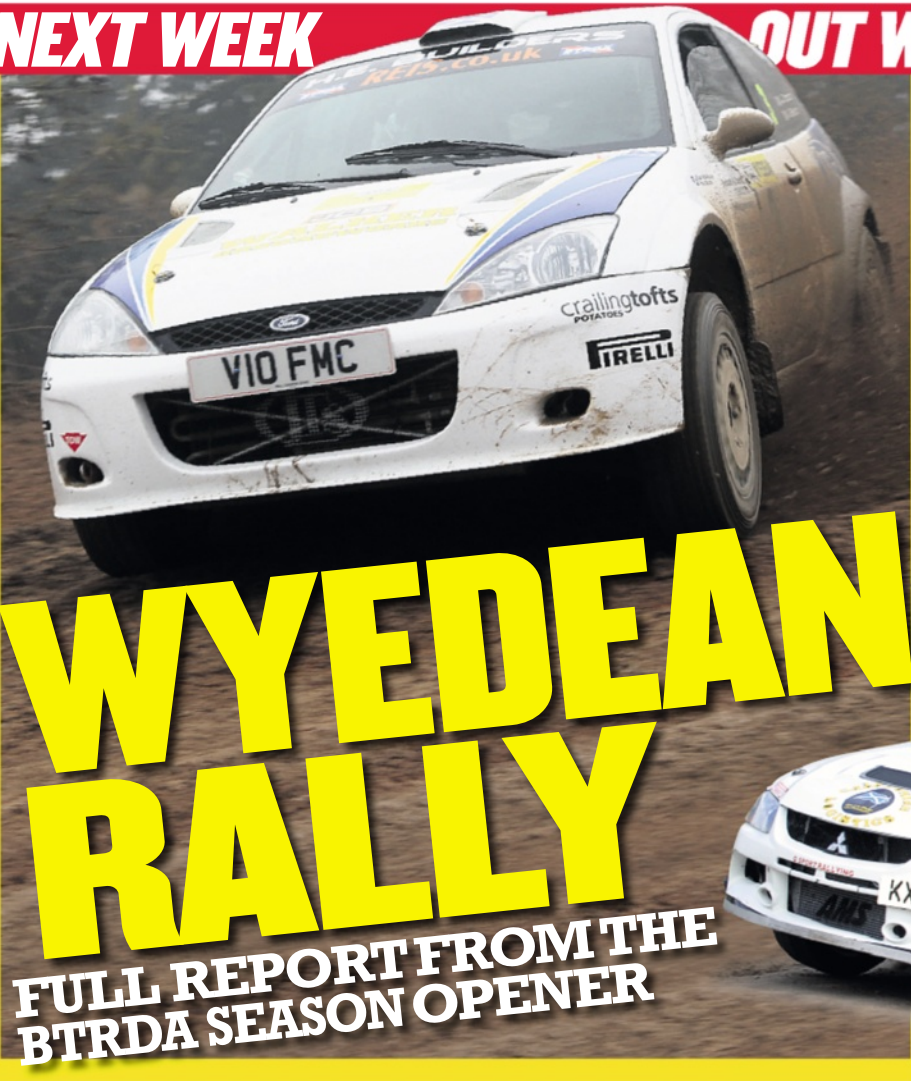
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FULL REPORT FROM THE BTRDA SEASON OPENER

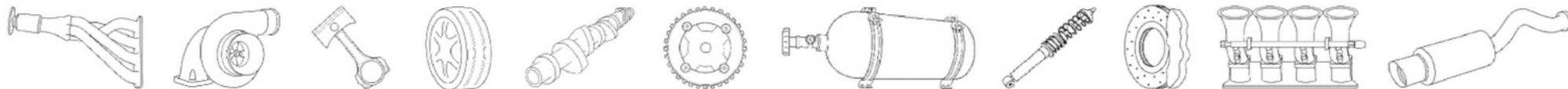
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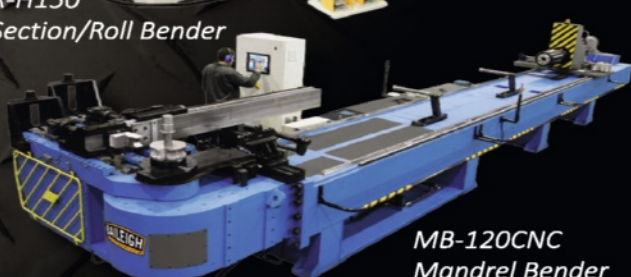
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