F1 Vettel heads to Aston Martin

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17 SEPTEMBER 2020

Hamilton emerges from the F1 chaos at Mugello

New F1 circuit provides tough test, but Mercedes star takes 90th win



'It was like three races in one day, but the track is phenomenal'

LEWIS HAMILTON

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A fine circuit with one too many incidents in inaugural Tuscan GP

Mugello proved a hit with the Formula 1 drivers last weekend and it was certainly nice to see a new (European) track on the schedule. It was surprisingly quick too – Lewis Hamilton averaged just over 156mph on his pole lap, quite something when you take a look at all the corners on the track map (see page 24).

Everyone likes an unpredictable race – as the previous week's Italian GP showed – but things got a little bit too chaotic during the Tuscan Grand Prix. The use of gravel traps and lack of asphalt runoff meant that cars got stuck. That's fine in terms of drivers being punished for their mistakes, but it has two downsides for fans. The first is fewer cars to watch after an incident because cars can't get going again – Sunday would have been more entertaining had Max Verstappen made it beyond lap one, for example. And the second is the need for safety cars or red flags to clear up the resulting mess.

Several of the drivers blamed others for the startline accident at the first restart (p26), but leader Valtteri Bottas did nothing wrong and the incident was caused by drivers accelerating into gaps they'd left in *anticipation* that the race had started when it hadn't.

Fortunately, nobody was hurt – and, when the race did get going again, Hamilton again put one over Bottas (p20), who must be wondering what he has to do to erode that 55-point gap...



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NEXT WEEK
24 SEPTEMBER
All the news and action from the 88th running of the Le Mans 24 Hours



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Tee, Coates/Motorsport Images

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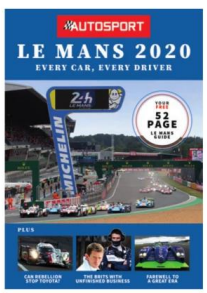
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LE MANS PREVIEW SUPPLEMENT



All the cars and drivers for this week's event, plus a fond farewell to the LMP1 category, feature in this year's free Le Mans guide.

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VETTEL JOINS ASTON MARTIN TO REPLACE PEREZ



ALL PICS: SUTTON
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FORMULA 1

Formula 1's worst-kept secret was made official last Thursday morning ahead of the Tuscan Grand Prix – Sebastian Vettel is joining Aston Martin for 2021. And it was an even worse-kept secret since Sergio Perez, the man Vettel will replace, had announced the previous evening that he will be leaving the team currently named Racing Point at the end of this season.

Vettel therefore moves from Ferrari, where he has become surplus to requirements since Charles Leclerc showed sensational form in his maiden season with the squad in 2019, to a team that feels it needs him and where he will partner Lance Stroll, the son of Racing Point/Aston F1 squad owner Lawrence Stroll.

"It's a new adventure for me with a truly legendary car company," Vettel said in the team's announcement. "I have been impressed with the results the team has achieved this year and I believe the future looks even brighter. The energy and commitment of Lawrence Stroll to the sport is inspiring and I believe we can build something very special together."

Beyond the PR-speak, committed Anglophile Vettel probably really does mean it. He is a sucker for car history, and the chance to be part of Aston Martin's future will have been hugely attractive. There is a real commitment from Stroll to build Aston Martin into a success story in F1, with the signing of a four-time world champion being the latest statement of intent.

The construction of a new factory at Silverstone and upgrade in facilities shows this is a team that will not be afraid to spend big and push to the limit of the upcoming budget cap. It may currently lack the resources of a Red Bull or a Ferrari, but the foundations are being laid to build something mighty.

When Vettel joined Ferrari in 2015, the aspiration was to get a team built around him in a similar fashion to Michael Schumacher in the early 2000s. But those plans never came to fruition, with attention finally shifting to Leclerc amid his 2019 emergence.

At Aston Martin, Vettel will be expected to lead the team from the very start, and help Stroll build upon his 2020 campaign. As experienced as the outgoing Perez is, he has not been embedded within operations capable of winning championships for the past 10 years.

At 33, Vettel is hardly near retirement age. Despite his suggestion that he could spend next year "on the couch" or even retire completely – something few would have begrudged him, given his young family – he has remained eager to keep racing and keep fighting for trophies. As difficult as his final year with Ferrari is proving to be, Vettel is showing no signs of throwing in the towel at Maranello. It's a strength of character that has won him praise from Lewis Hamilton.

There is also the short-term gain that is on offer to Vettel. Rather damning evidence of Ferrari's difficult 2020 campaign is that joining Aston Martin will actually be a step up in terms of pure performance, given Racing Point sits two places and 26 points further up the constructors' championship classification.

The 'pink Mercedes' may have been controversial, but there is no denying it is a quick car, with the carryover into 2021 meaning Vettel will get the chance to race the RP20 himself. As much as joining Aston Martin is about long-term thinking, with real success not possible until the new regulations come into force, the



Ferrari ran a special livery at Mugello to celebrate 1000 races, but Vettel will soon be in new colours



same would have been true had he remained at Ferrari.

Vettel has been friends with team principal Otmar Szafnauer for many years, and Stroll Sr's hands-on approach with the team means Vettel won't have an array of senior figures to answer to, as he does now at Ferrari.

It is also welcome news for F1 that one of its biggest names and most influential figures will remain on the grid. Vettel is a director of the Grand Prix Drivers' Association, and is one of the most active members of the field on important matters, as seen in the recent anti-racism demonstrations he was eager to continue.

But what of Perez? The Mexican is still in the first year of a three-year contract with the team he has raced with since 2014, initially as Force India. He even played a role in saving the team by triggering administration proceedings for Force India in 2018, which led to Stroll's takeover and the renaming as Racing Point.

His best hope of remaining in F1 appears to lie with a move to either Alfa Romeo or Haas, neither of which is tied down to its existing driver line-up for 2021. But McLaren boss Zak Brown has also stated that he would be keen to discuss expanding the Arrow McLaren SP IndyCar squad to three cars next season if Perez and his backers were interested in a move to the series.

"He'll probably end up in Formula 1, that is my guess, at either Haas or Alfa Romeo," said Brown. "But if he had an interest in IndyCar, I think he's a great race car driver, and we'd definitely be interested in talking to him. In between the backing that he's historically had, and the commercial activity that we've got going on, and the excitement someone like Sergio would create, we would certainly look to see if we could put it together."

LUKE SMITH

MERCEDES BACKER LINKED WITH BUY-IN

FORMULA 1

Mercedes Formula 1 backer Ineos has been linked with taking a shareholding in the team, but a full takeover is believed to be unlikely.

Former team owner Eddie Jordan fuelled the speculation in an interview with a Sunday newspaper in which he suggested that Ineos would launch a £700million buyout, with Mercedes retaining a 30% share but Toto Wolff standing down.

Mercedes has been clear in recent months that it is fully committed to remaining in F1 as a works team. But what cannot be ruled out is Ineos increasing its involvement by buying a shareholding on the back of it becoming a major sponsor and technical partner earlier this year.

Mercedes has yet to decide what will happen to the 10% of shares that were owned by Niki Lauda, and it could be that Ineos steps in and buys those to firm up its commitment. Furthermore, it is not impossible that Mercedes (which owns 60% of the team) or Wolff (30%) could also sell some of their equity. A Mercedes F1 spokesman said: "We ask for your understanding that we don't comment on rumour and speculation."

Wolff is expected to confirm soon that he is moving into a revised role, as he wishes to change the scope of his responsibilities as team principal. Last week he admitted that running the team for eight years had taken a lot out of him.

JONATHAN NOBLE





Alpine to step up to WEC top class with old Rebellion

WEC

The Renault-owned Alpine marque will return to its spiritual home at the top of the sportscar racing tree as well as competing in Formula 1 next year. The make that won the 1978 Le Mans 24 Hours will enter next year's World Endurance Championship with the ORECA-Gibson LMP1 design currently racing as the Rebellion R-13.

The French manufacturer and Signatech, its partner in LMP2 since 2013, will exploit what Alpine sales and competition director Regis Fricotte described as a "one-shot opportunity" to race the car next year. WEC rules will give existing P1 machinery a single year's grace to compete against the new breed of Le Mans Hypercars that come on stream in 2021.

No commitment has been made on continuing in the top division of the WEC beyond the end of next year, but Fricotte left the door open on the launch of the programme on Monday for a continued participation with an LMH or an LMP2-based LMDh car.

"LMH and LMDh will open a new environment, so we will look at it and make our decision in due time together with Signatech," he said. "We have an opportunity now and we are looking at what is going to happen with LMH and LMDh.

"For the future we will continue managing the way we have managed in the past: we entered the European Le Mans Series in 2013 and then we felt it was good to move to the WEC a couple of years later. We want to take it step by step."

The one-car entry will be made by Signatech, three times a Le Mans class winner in LMP2 with the make, under the Alpine Endurance Team banner. A type number has yet to be assigned to the ORECA, whose line of P2 cars have been rebadged by Signatech Alpine as A450, A460 and A470 (above).

Team boss Philippe Sinault revealed that the first test of the ORECA-Gibson, which will be a third so-far-unraced chassis, should take place before the end of this year. No drivers have yet been signed for the programme, but he said that he would be talking to the team's existing LMP2 crew about opportunities for next year.

● Rebellion Racing will not participate in the final round of the WEC in Bahrain in November if it is out of the championship hunt after this weekend's Le Mans 24 Hours. "If there is no chance to win the championship, then we are not going to Bahrain because it's an additional cost," said Rebellion CEO Calim Bouhadra. Rebellion drivers Bruno Senna, Gustavo Menezes and Norman Nato lie 38 points off the championship lead, with 51 up for grabs at this week's Le Mans 24 Hours and 39 in Bahrain. A Rebellion withdrawal would almost certainly leave just the two factory Toyotas to battle it out in Bahrain.

GARY WATKINS

New teams to fork out $200m

FORMULA 1

New Formula 1 entrants must pay rival teams a total of $200million as part of a prize-money 'dilution fund' if they want to join the grid from 2021.

As part of the arrangements that all teams have signed off with the new Concorde Agreement, special efforts have been made to ensure that the revenues of current entrants are protected. With a much fairer distribution of commercial rights income, there were concerns that new operations could end up diluting the revenues of more established teams by simply turning up and not contributing to the championship's success.

One of the consequences for the current teams would then be that the prize money fund could be split between 11 or 12 teams rather than the current 10. So in a bid to ensure that teams have a degree of income stability, it has been agreed that any potential newcomer must pay each of its rivals $20m.

McLaren CEO Zak Brown said the arrangement would not only ensure that any new entrants were serious, but that it also protects the value of the current teams, citing the recent sale of Williams to Dorilton Capital for around $180m.

Speaking at the Tuscan Grand Prix, Brown said: "What the $200m is intended to do is to protect the value of existing teams. If it is as reported on the Williams sale, that's less expensive [than $200m] and you get a lot more for your money than starting a new team.

"But I think if you believe in the franchise value, growth of Formula 1, you'll get that $200m back and then some at a future date. Also, the way the regulations are written, there is the ability for Liberty and the teams to agree to adjust that number."

JONATHAN NOBLE



MOTORSPORT IMAGES



Piastri gives Prema nine from 10

FORMULA 3

Renault F1 Junior Oscar Piastri plans to move up to Formula 2 for next season after clinching the FIA Formula 3 Championship title in a thrilling three-way final-round showdown at Mugello last weekend, in which he became Italian powerhouse Prema's ninth champion in the past 10 years of top-flight F3 competition.

Piastri (above), who struggled for pace on the Tuscan circuit and was carrying a grid penalty from the previous round at Monza, did just enough to edge out Prema team-mate Logan Sargeant and ART Grand Prix charger Theo Pourchaire. It was a rookie F3 crown for Australian Piastri, who came into the season as reigning Formula Renault Eurocup champion.

Piastri, whose mentor is ex-Formula 1 race winner Mark Webber, said: "Providing everything goes well in the off-season, I think a move to F2 is on the cards. Obviously I can't do F3 again [champions are banned from returning], and ideally I'll be doing F2.

"I don't know if I would say it's a priority [to stay with Prema], but obviously they're having a strong year in F2. They're leading the teams' championship [thanks to drivers' points leader Mick Schumacher and Robert Shwartzman], so obviously I'd love to go back to Prema and stay there for next year, but I have no idea where I'm going to end up next year so far."

The extraordinary Prema run of success in F3 started in 2011. The Italian team had just been through a big restructure and stabilisation of its technical team in response to its poor form in preceding seasons, and carried Roberto Merhi to the title in the old F3 Euro Series.

Under then-FIA Single Seater Commission president Gerhard Berger, the governing body revived its F3 European Championship for 2012. In that year it piggybacked the Euro Series plus two British F3 rounds, with Daniel Juncadella claiming both European crowns.

The F3 Euro Series was phased out for 2013, and over the next six years Prema drivers won FIA F3 European Championship titles in 2013 (Raffaele Marciello), 2014 (Esteban Ocon), 2015 (Felix Rosenqvist), 2016 (Lance Stroll) and 2018 (Schumacher), with only Carlin's Lando Norris breaking the sequence.

In 2019, the first year of the F1-supporting FIA F3 Championship, Shwartzman led a Prema 1-2-3.

MARCUS SIMMONS AND JOSH SUTTILL

PREMA'S TOP F3 WINNERS

Race wins in leading F3 championship from 2011-20

DRIVER	RACE WINS
Raffaele Marciello	21
Lance Stroll	15
Felix Rosenqvist	13
Roberto Merhi	11
Daniel Juncadella	9
Esteban Ocon	9
Maximilian Guenther	9
Mick Schumacher	8
Jake Dennis	6
Callum Ilott	6
Ralf Aron	5
Robert Shwartzman	5

IN THE HEADLINES

NEW WILLIAMS TEAM BOSS

Williams has appointed Simon Roberts as acting team principal following the departure of Claire Williams. Roberts joined the team earlier this year as managing director of F1 operations, having held a similar role in his previous job at McLaren. Meanwhile, outgoing Williams CEO Mike O'Driscoll has announced his decision to retire at the age of 64.

SORDO GETS ITALY RUN

Spanish veteran Dani Sordo gets his second outing of the World Rally Championship season with Hyundai on next month's Rally Italy. Sordo, who scored a surprise win on the event last year, joins Hyundai full-timers Ott Tanak and Thierry Neuville.

FRAGA MISSES F3 FINALE

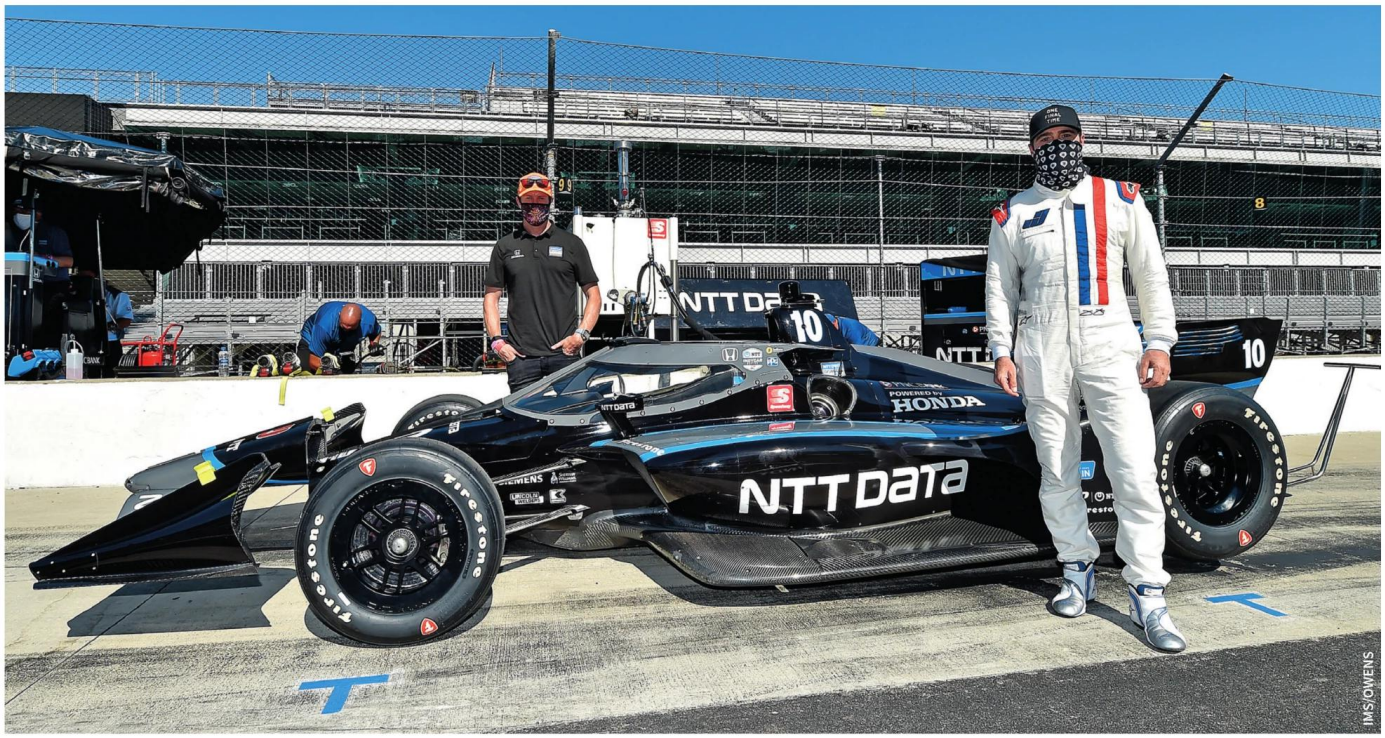
Red Bull Junior Igor Fraga missed the final round of the FIA Formula 3 Championship season at Mugello last weekend after getting caught up in an inter-team contracts row. The Brazilian, who has had a tough season with Charouz Racing System, was lined up for the vacant Hitech GP seat previously occupied by Max Fewtrell and in the interim by Pierre-Louis Chovet, who had a clashing Formula Regional commitment. Hitech hinted in its statement that it plans to run Fraga next year, saying it would focus on "integrating the new driver into the Hitech environment over the Mugello weekend ready for 2021".

WALLACE TO LEAVE PETTY

NASCAR Cup racer Darrell Wallace Jr will leave Richard Petty Motorsports at the end of this season, he stated last week. Wallace has had his best season to date in 2020, taking five top-10 finishes, and said: "I believe it's time for someone else to take over the reins of the #43." It is unclear where Wallace will race in 2021.

FERRARI JUNIOR ON FORM

Two race wins last weekend at the Red Bull Ring have extended Ferrari protege Gianluca Petecof's lead in the Formula Regional European points. The Brazilian led a Prema 1-2-3 from Arthur Leclerc and Oliver Rasmussen in the opener, before Danish racer Rasmussen beat Petecof and Leclerc in race two. Petecof emerged from a big fight at the start of the finale to beat Leclerc and Rasmussen. Jamie Chadwick took a best of fifth, after a spectacular shunt in race one.



NASCAR king Johnson plans IndyCar campaign

INDYCAR SERIES

Seven-time NASCAR Cup champion Jimmie Johnson is planning a move to IndyCar for 2021 and 2022 with Chip Ganassi Racing on the series' road and street circuits.

Johnson has signed an agreement with the team to "officially explore the possibility" of the programme. The 45-year-old grew up with fellow Californian and Indycar legend Rick Mears as his hero, and drove a McLaren Formula 1 car as part of a ride swap with Fernando Alonso at the end of 2018. Johnson was due to pilot an Arrow McLaren SP Dallara-Chevrolet IndyCar at Barber Motorsports Park in a test in April this year, before it was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A test was then scheduled with the Honda-powered Ganassi team, only for Johnson to test positive for coronavirus less than a week before the planned outing. It was rescheduled, and Johnson (above, with Scott Dixon) turned over 100 laps of the Indianapolis road course in late July.

In announcing the partnership with Ganassi and the quest for funding, Johnson stated: "When I tested Chip's IndyCar earlier in the year, it only lit the fire more. Scott [Dixon] was just incredible to work with and in a short time I found out very quickly why Chip and his teams have won 12 IndyCar championships. I wanted to publicly show the alignment with Chip Ganassi Racing to kick the sponsorship programme into high gear. The goal is to run the full road and street programme."

Ganassi added: "The goal right now is for us to run Jimmie in an IndyCar for at least the next couple of seasons, and we want to show people we're serious about the programme. We felt it was important to start putting the financial building blocks in place to make this a reality."

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

Cupra joins forces with Abt and Ekstrom

EXTREME E

The flurry of blue-chip companies signing up for the inaugural Extreme E season has been mighty impressive. Lewis Hamilton will field his own X44 squad and double Formula E teams' champion Techeetah will enter too. Not to be outdone, Abt has fought back into the headlines.

First in the DTM and then Formula E via Audi, German tuning company Abt has a long-term association with the Volkswagen Group. It's used that standing to introduce SEAT sub-marque Cupra as the first manufacturer into the all-electric SUV series.

While XE had been starved of inspiring driver announcements so far, Abt has revealed that its male driver for 2021 will be two-time DTM champion (with the Abt team) and 2016 World Rallycross title winner (in an Audi S1) Mattias Ekstrom.



"It feels a bit like coming home," said Ekstrom. "Twenty years ago, the DTM was a great challenge, which we mastered together. Now, it is high time for a new adventure – Extreme E. I think the concept is ingenious, and I am sure that we have a strong team with Cupra and Abt."

MATT KEW



Macau ditches F3 for F4 in 2020

MACAU GRAND PRIX

The Macau Grand Prix will not take place as we know it in 2020. Instead, it will most likely be contested by cars and teams from the Chinese Formula 4 Championship, bringing to an end an unbroken run of 37 years as the blue riband of Formula 3.

The 2020 running has become the latest victim of the COVID-19 crisis, and the Macanese government's very strict reaction that has resulted in just 46 cases of the virus, and none at all in recent months. A 14-day quarantine stipulation for anyone entering Macau has made it too difficult for teams from the new-for-2019 FIA Formula 3 Championship, or for Macau to revert to the old philosophy of F3 cars and run the race for the Dallara 320 machines currently competing in Euroformula Open and Japan's Super Formula Lights series.

Macau Grand Prix Organising Committee sporting coordinator Chong Coc Veng said at a press conference last week: "We are in close communications with a number of parties in organising races for the Formula Macau Grand Prix."

According to sources in Asia, Chong confirmed verbally after this statement that the event, which takes place from 19-22 November, would be for F4 machinery. China's F4 series is run for the same Mygale chassis as is used in the British equivalent, but with engines from Chinese manufacturer Geely.

The Macau GP ran for Formula Atlantic cars from the mid 1970s to 1982, before the late Barry Bland put a field drawn from the world's leading F3 championships together for 1983 (above), setting a template that would last until the FIA F3 Championship provided the entire grid in 2019.

The other flagship races of the event – the FIA GT World Cup and FIA World Touring Car Cup round (for the Macau Guia) – have also been replaced by races targeted at local and regional participants.

"The Macau GT Cup will feature two classes of race cars, the GT3 and GT4," said Chong. "Drivers will be selected from China GT Championship and Asia Pacific GT, as well as drivers from Macau.

"The Macau Guia race will be run in the TCR format featuring selected drivers from TCR Asia Series and Asia Pacific Touring Cars 2.0T races as well as local drivers."

MARCUS SIMMONS

RENAULT COULD SUPPORT NEW GP AT IMOLA

FORMULA RENAULT

The Formula Renault Eurocup could hold a round supporting the Emilia Romagna Grand Prix at Imola, but the fixture has not yet been finalised.

Reports swirled around last week that the event will happen, keeping up Renault Sport's run of having one F1 support per season, which in recent years has meant the Eurocup supporting the Monaco Grand Prix. But that event fell victim to the coronavirus crisis.

Autosport's enquiries to Renault Sport have indicated that the round at Imola, where the series has already raced this year, is just one potential solution as championship promoters around the world attempt to firm up calendars.

Meanwhile, the Eurocup had its second consecutive weekend of action last weekend, with a round at Magny-Cours.

Renault F1 Junior Caio Collet regained the series lead he had lost to Victor Martins the previous weekend at the Nurburgring by taking victory in the first race, but Martins hit back in the second to win and retake the points advantage.

Brazilian Collet, driving for R-ace GP, led throughout from pole in the opener, while ART Grand Prix driver Martins lost second on the opening lap to JD Motorsport-run David Vidales. Vidales then soaked up pressure from Martins to secure second.

Martins led all the way from pole the following day, from Collet and Vidales. Briton Alex Quinn continued his programme with Arden International and was fifth in both races.

MARCUS SIMMONS





Fewer rounds and separate calendars on cards for F2 and F3

FORMULA 2/3

The FIA Formula 2 and Formula 3 championships could be separated next season so that they no longer appear on the same grand prix weekends..

Autosport understands that a plan is being discussed to split the two series, with each category running triple-header events in place of double-headers to free up extra track time. Sources suggest that the move is under consideration as teams prepare for another season that will inevitably be impacted by COVID-19, with driver budgets potentially suffering.

One potential financial benefit of splitting the championships would be that teams with entries in both could pool resources between their F2 and F3 operations, and run them with fewer people. Nine of the 11 F2 teams also contest the F3 category.

The provisional plan is that F2 (above) will appear at eight race weekends instead of the current 12, with four in Europe and four flyaways, adding up to a total of 24 races — the same as in 2020.

F3 would run on seven race weekends, with five in Europe and two flyaways, which are likely to be at the end of the season. That adds up to 21 races, or three more than the total in 2020.

The proposed schedule appears to support F1 boss Chase Carey's recent assertion that the 2021 F1 calendar will be similar to the one originally planned for 2020, in that it suggests that there will be nine races in Europe.

Details of how the three-race format might work are yet to be finalised, but one option could be a split qualifying session, with the first half forming the grid for race one, and the second half creating the grid for race two. The third race of the weekend would then use the reversed-grid format currently in operation for the Sunday races in F2 and F3.

An F2/F3 spokesperson said: "We are currently assessing cost-cutting measures for 2021, but nothing has been decided yet. Should decisions be made, we will communicate them in due time."

ADAM COOPER

Ginetta pulls plug on Le Mans at last minute



LE MANS 24 HOURS

The stop-start saga of the Ginetta G60 may well have reached its conclusion after the factory team withdrew last Friday from this week's Le Mans 24 Hours.

The works Team LNT operation has scratched the Ginetta-AER G60-LT-P1 entered at Le Mans for Guy Smith, Chris Dyson and Mike Simpson, citing an increase in COVID-19 infections in France.

LNT Group chief executive Matt Lowe said: "New COVID cases in France are at their highest level since the start of the pandemic, and with the latest quarantine rules in place when returning, as a factory-based team, this will in effect mean a minimum four-week closure of the Ginetta manufacturing facility, with a knock-on effect on our core UK championships."

LNT boss Lawrence Tomlinson has already said that the team will not race in the final round of the 2019-20 WEC in November and that he will not continue to fund a works squad next season. That means the future of the G60 now hangs on another team coming forward to race the car in 2021.

The LNT statement from Lowe added that "the factory will instead focus on testing and refining the cars in preparation for 2021".

GARY WATKINS



Castroneves and Taylor have claimed three poles this year in Penske Acura

IMSA to award qualifying points

IMSA SPORTSCAR

Points will be awarded for qualifying in next year's IMSA SportsCar Championship as part of a major rejig of the series' scoring system.

The pole winner in each of the North American championship's classes will be awarded 35 points, with 32 for second place and 30 for third. The system mirrors IMSA's current scoring rules for the races, with points theoretically available down to 30th position in class.

An increase in race points by a factor of 10 for next season will go hand in hand with the new development. That means race winners will be awarded 350 points down to 10 points for 30th in class.

All drivers nominated for a car will gain the qualifying points. Each manufacturer's highest-qualifying car will earn points towards their championship.

IMSA boss John Doonan said: "The introduction of qualifying points will bring even more excitement to our weekends and the season championship. With points on the line, we expect teams will go all out in qualifying as well as the races to earn as many points as possible. Qualifying points also will reward a team's performance throughout an entire weekend."

There will also be a new qualifying procedure for LMP2, GT Daytona and LMP3, the last of which is being introduced into the main, WeatherTech-sponsored IMSA series for next season. The qualifying sessions for these, IMSA's pro-am categories, will be split into two and shared between a pair of drivers. The time set by the amateur driver will determine the qualifying position of the car, while the professionals will fight for the championship points on offer.

Qualifying in the Daytona Prototype international and GT Le Mans divisions will remain unchanged, with a single time determining grid position and points.

The class for LMP3 cars, which have raced in the IMSA Prototype Challenge support series since 2017, is being created for 2021 at a time when the championship faces a shortfall in entries as the COVID-19 crisis bites. Porsche has already announced that it will not compete in GTLM next year with a factory team of 911 RSRs.

LMP3s will be eligible for six races that form their championship, plus the season-opening Daytona 24 Hours in January on a non-points basis.

GARY WATKINS

IN THE HEADLINES

EASTWOOD WINS IN ASTON

Aston Martin works driver Charlie Eastwood combined with Salih Yoluc for their second International GT Open win of the season at the Red Bull Ring last weekend in their TF Sport Aston Martin. Eastwood lost out to the Teo Martin Motorsport McLaren of Henrique Chaves in the first stint, but Yoluc emerged from the pitstops in front to defeat the AF Corse Ferrari of Louis Prette and Vincent Abril.

BRITS ON ITALIAN PODIUM

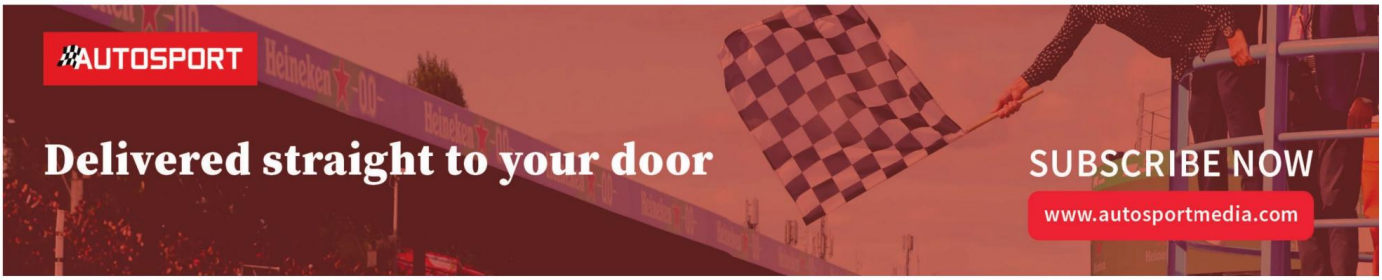
Fifteen-year-old Brit Ollie Bearman scored a breakthrough second place with US Racing in the Italian F4 round at the Red Bull Ring last weekend. Compatriot Jonny Edgar, a Red Bull Junior, took a best of third with Van Amersfoort Racing. Top of the 30-car field in each race were Joshua Durksen (Mucke Motorsport), Edgar's team-mate Jak Crawford, and Prema's Ferrari protege Gabriele Mini.

YE BEATS MALDONADO

China's Yifei Ye continued his Euroformula Open domination at the Red Bull Ring with two wins for the Motopark-affiliated CryptoTower team, leading team-mate Manuel Maldonado in each. Double R-run Brit Ayrton Simmons had a best result of sixth, while it was a disaster for Carlin's reigning British F4 champion Zane Maloney, who suffered a puncture in race one and engine problems later.

F3 RETURN AFTER 26 YEARS

Five-time Le Mans 24 Hours entrant Masami Kageyama is to return to F3 for the first time since 1994 at next week's Okayama round of the Super Formula Lights series. The 52-year-old, who raced in France in Toyota, Nissan and Panoz machinery, will turn out for the B-Max team, which has spare cockpits after the COVID-19 crisis put its plans to run foreign drivers on ice. In his youth, Kageyama was a race winner as a Toyota protege with TOM'S. He will carry the race number 52 to denote his age.



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Reasons for Ferrari to be cheerful

Despite the dire performance of its SF1000, Ferrari still has some aces up its sleeve. It just might be a while before it can play its full hand

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

For nine laps, it looked as though Ferrari might have something mighty to celebrate in the Tuscan Grand Prix – which it was celebrating as its 1000th world championship race.

Once the real race had finally got under way after the first-lap pile-up and safety-car-restart nonsense, Lewis Hamilton led Valtteri Bottas, with Charles Leclerc following in third. Leclerc, in the maligned Ferrari SF1000, in third on lap nine... He had hauled his car to stunning surprise podiums at the Red Bull Ring and Silverstone, but on both occasions he had needed something unexpected to get him onto the podium.

For those glorious laps, the burgundy-coloured car held off the advances of Lance Stroll's Racing Point, with Leclerc running behind the dominant Mercedes machines. If the narrow Mugello track could keep the SF1000 in front, if DRS offered Stroll nothing, if Ferrari could ace its tyre strategy, and if Leclerc could hang on for 50 pummelling laps, a stunning result would be on. For Leclerc, read Alberto Ascari – second behind the car of the season, the Alfa Romeo 158, which was victorious in the hands of Juan Manuel Fangio at the 1950 Monaco GP, Ferrari's first world championship F1 race.

But it wasn't to be. On lap 18 at Mugello, Stroll blasted past Leclerc on the outside line at San Donato, having used DRS and the might of his Mercedes engine. Then, car after car demoted the Monegasque driver until he pitted from seventh.

> **"Mick Schumacher is rumoured to be set for a 2021 F1 seat, even if he doesn't win the F2 title"**

It has long been known why the SF1000 is struggling in the midfield. It no longer has the power to push ahead of its rivals on the straights, and overcome the drag issues that come with downforce-chasing aerodynamic parts.

This problem will continue into 2021 thanks to the coronavirus cost-saving measures, which mean the current cars will be carried over into next season. Yes, there are small chances to add upgrades, and the cars will lose significant downforce with the floor changes. But the essence of each car will remain.

There are apparently new bits coming for the next race, the Russian GP, but this won't change Ferrari's fortunes, says Mattia Binotto: "On our side we need to review the projects, with the view of 2021. I think it will take some more time to do it."

It is interesting to hear Binotto mention 2021, given it surely does not offer much hope for the Scuderia. The delayed rules reset should provide Ferrari with a chance to finally produce a car that can carry one of its drivers to a first world title since 2007. But now, it looks like the immediate start of Ferrari's second millennium of F1 starts will be painful, even if there are reasons for it to look forward to a brighter future.

For a start, it is committed to F1 as per the new Concorde Agreement, where it has retained its rules veto and a yearly payment – believed to be around $40million – in recognition of its historical contribution to the championship. Plus, it goes into the new era with further riches in terms of driving talent.

Leclerc is already one of F1's megastars. For 2021 he will be joined by McLaren's Carlos Sainz Jr. Sainz may have had a less-than-stellar race at Mugello, but the previous week he was one of the two stars of the Italian GP and would surely have taken a superb result even without the race disruptions. Sainz will soon have to deal with the same troublesome car that has only allowed Leclerc to shine on occasion, but Monza showed what he can do on his day.

Aside from the F1 drivers on its books, Ferrari is blessed with talent coming through the ranks. In Formula 2 alone in 2020, it has title contenders Mick Schumacher, Callum Ilott and Robert Shwartzman (plus Marcus Armstrong and Giuliano Alesi). Rumours abound that Schumacher is set for a 2021 F1 seat, even if he doesn't win the F2 title. Ferrari surely has the chance to flood F1 with its drivers if it wishes.

At Alfa Romeo, where Ferrari can choose who has the seat currently occupied by Antonio Giovinazzi, it is not too hard to imagine total change for next year. Giovinazzi has not dazzled as Leclerc did previously, and even Kimi Raikkonen acknowledges he is closer to the end of his career than the start. So, it may make sense for Ferrari to place Schumacher there next season, with Alfa likely left with a choice of Raikkonen continuing, or taking one of the attractive candidates now on the market, including its former drivers (as Sauber) Sergio Perez or Nico Hulkenberg.

The other Ferrari customer squad, Haas, is also open to running two rookies if it moves on from Romain Grosjean and Kevin Magnussen. Could it take a Ferrari junior or two? One plus Perez – who'd bring backing to a squad that flirted with the exit before committing to the new Concorde – could be logical, especially if a deal could be agreed to lower the cost of the power units...

Of course, none of this may come to pass, but it serves to reinforce that, although Ferrari may be ending its first 1000-race F1 stint in some pain, there is plenty it will soon enjoy as it starts the journey of the next 1000.

P79 TOP FIVE F1 FERRARIS

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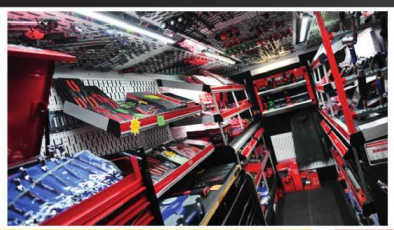


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Even heroes struggle sometimes

As opening up about mental health sheds its stigma, Formula 1 drivers are discovering that focusing on what some see as a weakness can make you stronger

LUKE SMITH

Formula 1 drivers are superheroes. They always have been, and always will be, pushing themselves and their cars to the limit week after week. But it is often forgotten that F1 drivers are also still human beings. They face emotions and challenges like the rest of us, yet do so amid the pressures of one of the most exclusive and competitive sporting series in the world.

As mental health has become more of a talking point for society as a whole in recent years, its place within racing is also coming more and more into the spotlight.

F1 has tended to operate where the requirements of competing at the pinnacle of motorsport mean that if you're not up to the job, you'll be replaced. The stigma surrounding mental health means that opening up can be seen as a sign of weakness, which for drivers is not something they are often willing to show, for fear of it being used to their rivals' advantage.

"Even if you have them, I would never say so," said Max Verstappen. "Why would you say your weakness, even if you have one? Why would you explain that? No, I would never say those kind of things."

But some of Verstappen's peers have been trying to change things. Daniel Ricciardo has been part of a mental health campaign within Renault, and explained the importance of having a close core group to be able to talk to, relieving some of the pressures of F1. "You sometimes might keep things close to you, you think it might be showing some weakness or whatever," Ricciardo said. "For me, trying to stay positive and all that stuff, it's really about the people I choose to have around me, close friends or family or whatever that you can bounce things off and talk openly.

> **"Imposter syndrome is something that is part and parcel of racing in Formula 1"**

"I put a lot of trust in people. I think it's quite easy for me to talk to someone and be open. I don't seem to bottle a whole lot up. But you need that outlet.

"Motorsport, for the most part, is a male-dominated sport. There's a lot of ego and pride, and not everyone always feels OK opening up and being a bit vulnerable."

Lando Norris has been particularly open in talking about his mental health battles upon arriving in F1, revealing during his rookie season that he had been working with a mind coach to help ease some anxiety and confidence struggles during his rise up the motorsport ladder. The pressures of his rookie season took their toll. "Last year it looked like I was really confident and not nervous, and it was more that I put on a brave face," Norris revealed. "Inside I was struggling a lot. I think I just covered it up quite well last year."

As Norris's confidence grew and his debut season went according to plan, he stopped working with his mind coach: "Doing it more on my own and taking my own responsibility for it was part of the growth that I needed."

He's found ways to properly manage his confidence battles, citing his video game streaming as a fun outlet that helps him switch off from the pressures of F1. And his on-track performances this year have been among the best on the grid. He is now in a stronger place.

Imposter syndrome is something that is part and parcel of racing in F1, given the comparisons between every driver on the grid in the competition for wins, podiums and even race seats. "It's something that I struggled a lot with, especially before going into Formula 1, and during last year," Norris said. "The belief of if I've got what it takes, and what do I think comparing to my team-mate or comparing to other drivers, obviously always comparing against other people – that's the thing that screws with your head sometimes. It's something that is very tough to deal with, self-belief and everything like that. There are a lot of things that I've struggled with over the past few years and growing up.

"Not everyone wants to talk about it all the time, but it's something that I've struggled with. I'm sure many other drivers have thought about and struggled with it over the past."

As Ricciardo mentioned, the ego-driven, often machismo-heavy nature of F1 means signs of vulnerability are taken as a weakness. It creates a toxicity that is hardly healthy for the paddock environment.

But things are changing. Not only are drivers now talking more openly about the mental pressures of racing in F1, but teams are also embarking on more programmes to support their workforce in a bid to get the very best out of them. McLaren also has a partnership with mental health charity Mind.

"You want the best performance out of everyone, how to put everyone in their best position and their most comfortable position to perform," added Norris. "More and more F1 teams, and we are as a team, McLaren, are taking more and more recognition to these kind of things, and raising awareness of it."

The 'new generation' of F1 drivers has been refreshing for so many reasons, but their willingness to open up more and talk about mental health is so important. It will hopefully create lasting change that can be felt throughout the paddock, and make the often cut-throat world of F1 become more understanding.

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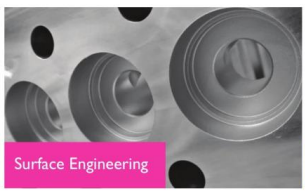
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YOUR SAY

The difference in lap times at Silverstone between an F1 car and a MotoGP bike is 30 seconds, yet which looks faster or appears to demand more skill?

DAVID McLAUGHLIN

Difference between speed and perception of speed

Kevin Turner's Opinion (10 September) about F1 rulemakers versus F1 speeds rather misses the point that most of what are now called 'fans' don't really care about the numbers, what they want to see are immensely skilled drivers doing the impossible on that high wire.

We want to experience drivers balancing everything on the limits of adhesion rather than just be told afterwards they had been. Silverstone Grand Prix circuit is a prime example with the difference in lap times between an F1 car and a MotoGP bike being 30 seconds, yet which looks faster or appears to demand more skill?

Modern F1 has become a magnificent technical exercise but, sadly, resembles a video game when seen on TV. Those of us who are old enough to have seen Jim Clark in a Lotus 49, Ronnie Peterson in his Lotus 72 or Keke Rosberg in his Williams-Honda with Lord knows how many horses under his foot, or even Lewis Hamilton winning by a minute in the wet in 2008, just knew we couldn't do that... But now with a few more hours on our home simulator learning to press all the right buttons we are not so sure!

David McLaughlin
Nassau

What's happened to the virtual safety car?

What has happened to the virtual safety car system? This maintained drivers in their positions, *and* the gaps they had already built. All cars would then be released at the same time, removing the temptation to gain an advantage on restart.

The Formula E 'full-course yellow' system is a similar idea. Are race organisers manipulating things just to provide a spectacle? As one of the drivers said, "Do they want to kill us?".

Stephen Lee
By email

Time for Grosjean to step aside?

Does it still say 'All forms of motorsport are dangerous' on the entry ticket? Because I think Gene Haas and Gunther Steiner's 2021 driver line-up decision got easier at Mugello.



Easier because Romain Grosjean was bleating about someone else being stupid and making his car crash and suggesting others are trying to 'kill us' on the radio.

I think he needs to hang up his helmet because he has a habit of not seeing what is happening and likes to blame others for his errors and ultimately is driving in fear. All factors that will prevent him from performing at his peak and stopping him taking a car to its maximum performance.

Justin Lyle
Glasgow

Alonso and Vettel have had their day in the sun

I read with dismay that Sebastian Vettel is to join Aston Martin next year. Like Fernando Alonso joining Renault, these aging multiple world champions are keeping young talented drivers out of F1. Apart from anything else, with the new cost-cutting regulations, and COVID-19 putting pressure on all the team finances, younger drivers will cost less.

Alonso and Vettel have had their day in the sun and should gracefully retire.

Rob Barnett
By email

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HONE

HOW BOTTAS 'WON' THEN TWICE LOST THE TUSCAN GP

If the race had run smoothly, and no one had hit each other, matters might have gone the Finn's way. But then Lewis Hamilton rose above the chaos

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES



Hamilton made up for his poor first start with this brave move later on

Formula 1 was only racing at Mugello because of the freak nature of 2020 and the disruption caused by the coronavirus pandemic. This MotoGP paradise had hosted testing back in 2012 and is owned by Ferrari, which secured the inaugural Tuscan Grand Prix when F1 was redrawing this year's calendar, and it opted to celebrate its 1000th world championship race (after massaging of entry definitions) at the track.

Mugello is tricky for the drivers and engineers, and it is vicious, ready to punish the slightest mistake with its close gravel traps and narrow, high-speed nature. Only Monza and Silverstone have faster average laps. Intrigue was high as to what kind of race this would produce. In the end, F1 got a freak event.

"It was like three races in one day," said Lewis Hamilton, after he had been defeated in one and victorious in the other two, as well as triumphant in the actual, single, grand prix.

Hamilton's Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas 'won' the opening race, which was interrupted twice and ultimately halted thanks to two contentious incidents. There then followed a sliver of normality but little in the way of strategy, before proceedings were halted again, restarted, and ultimately concluded.

Here is the story of how Bottas had a chance to win all three 'races', yet could only triumph in one of the whimsically-yet-wrongly styled 'race' chapters, and wasn't ahead when the real chequered flag fell.

'RACE ONE' BOTTAS'S SOLE TRIUMPH COMES TO NAUGHT

Bottas had suggested that a strong headwind into the first corner would give him a chance after he was edged out of pole position by Hamilton, who came on strongest right when it mattered in Q2 and the opening runs of Q3. In the end, although that headwind was indeed gusting at times on Sunday, he didn't need it when it came to the initial race start.

Autosport's vantage point in the Mugello media centre offered a fantastic view of pole position at the start (as well as Alfa Romeo's calamitous first pitstop with Kimi Raikkonen). And so we watched keenly as the lights went out.

It was just possible to discern the barest of twitches from Hamilton's car before the lights changed. He did not go forwards as such, and he clearly did not jump the start, but his car seemed to flinch, and then »



he made a poor getaway. It was very similar to Bottas's bad starts in Hungary and Spain (with another one the previous week at Monza), where he struggled with Mercedes' launch system and, particularly in the case of the Hungaroring, had to do it again after initially moving before the lights changed.

"Every situation is different, so I just went too deep and got wheelspin, [it] also wasn't a very good reaction so Valtteri beat us off there," Hamilton said afterwards. And yet, onboard replays confirm the twitch and Mercedes reported on the world champion's radio that he had been "on target". "Looks like a clutch issue," added engineer Peter Bonnington.

Whatever the cause, this was the latest bad Mercedes start in 2020, but it benefited Bottas for a change, as he ran clear into

"THE ROOT CAUSE OF THIS INCIDENT WAS THE INCONSISTENT APPLICATION OF THROTTLE AND BRAKE"

Turn 1, San Donato. As he and Hamilton shot ahead in the rest of Mugello's uphill first sector, the safety car was quickly called into action when the first major accident of many occurred.

Hamilton's start was so bad that Red Bull's Max Verstappen had begun to pull alongside well before they approached the slight rise on Mugello's meandering main straight. But all of a sudden Verstappen lost momentum, thwarted by an electrical problem, as he screamed "no power!". This meant Verstappen dropped quickly into the pack and was collected when Raikkonen, Pierre Gasly and Romain Grosjean came together approaching Turn 2, Luco.

The incident was initially triggered as Raikkonen slid to his right, with Gasly caught in a bind as they ran three-abreast. Under braking, Gasly smashed into the Alfa's right-front, sending Raikkonen into Verstappen and Gasly into Grosjean. The Haas driver escaped from the Luco gravel trap, but the Red Bull and the Italian GP winner's AlphaTauri were out on the spot. The clash was assessed to be a "first lap" racing incident by the stewards.

The race was scheduled to restart on lap seven, but that never really happened thanks to probably the most contentious moment of the event – and arguably the season so far.

Bottas led the pack to the control line, unusually located at the chequered flag post next to the starting light gantry. He weaved considerably but did not step on the gas until he'd travelled most of the way down the grid, at which point he dropped Hamilton and shot clear. But that was as good as things got for Bottas last Sunday.

In the pack behind, George Russell and Kevin Magnussen were among those who had let large gaps develop at the last corner, into which they charged. The trouble was, the head of the race had not started its own charge, and so Russell and Magnussen were forced to slow in turn as they reached the grid hatchings and havoc reigned behind.

Antonio Giovinazzi ploughed into the back of Magnussen, with Carlos Sainz Jr – who had been turned around just ahead of the Turn 2 shunt when he clashed with Lance Stroll, then got hit by Sebastian Vettel's Ferrari, unfortunate with nowhere to go – smashing into the back of the Alfa. Giovinazzi's momentum carried him into Nicholas Latifi (seconds after Latifi had avoided hitting Magnussen at the final corner, Bucine, as he initially made to start his charge) and all four were out. Cars sat destroyed underneath the lightly occupied main grandstand and the race was quickly halted.

"The drivers were all advised very clearly at the drivers' meeting on Friday night," said F1 race director Michael Masi. "There were two key parts to remind them.

"One was to ensure that they don't overtake the safety car before the safety car line at pit entry. The second part, which is unusual for this circuit, is that the control line where they can overtake is located close to the pitlane exit. So, it's not a surprise, and we've seen similar



Second half of the field was caught up in the chaos on lap one...



...leaving Verstappen (left) and Gasly in the gravel and out of the GP

HONE

matters in Baku, with such a long run to the control line, where the leader who has every right to dictate the pace has kept it quite slow to try and avoid a slipstream from the cars behind."

Nearly three hours after the race had finished, the stewards handed warnings to the four drivers who crashed, plus Daniil Kvyat, Alex Albon, Lance Stroll, Daniel Ricciardo, Sergio Perez, Lando Norris and Esteban Ocon. Their conclusion was that "the root cause of this incident was the inconsistent application of throttle and brake, from the final corner along the pitstraight, by the above drivers".

Bottas, who was sticking to the Mercedes restart plan as the team intended to minimise the headwind impact/tow effect, was determined to have "complied with the regulations" as he was within his rights to dictate the pace until the control line. He and Hamilton later suggested the late timing of the safety car lights turning off was a factor – they went off as the one-off red-coloured course car was entering Bucine. Masi dismissed that argument and also said suggestions that the FIA was putting the spectacle above safety at restarts was "actually quite offensive personally".

So, Bottas took clear a 'race win' at this point – it just wasn't one that counted. »

QUALIFYING



BATCHELOR

In the Italian Grand Prix, there was joy for Pierre Gasly and despair for Lewis Hamilton – relatively speaking in the world champion's case. But in the next Formula 1 session that mattered, qualifying for the Tuscan GP, their fortunes reversed.

In the case of Monza winner Gasly, he had finished FP3 in fifth place, just 0.696 seconds slower than Valtteri Bottas's session-topping time. But in Q1, his pace disappeared and he was dumped out in 16th – his worst qualifying result of 2020 so far. The AlphaTauri is capable of making Q3, as Gasly has proved time and again, but it's still a fight to do so. A Q1 exit, however, doesn't reflect the car's pace, with Daniil Kvyat taking 12th in the other AT01.

"Today we missed [Q2] for half a tenth and we lost over a tenth with the deployment, running out of SOC [battery state of charge] way too early before the line," Gasly said as he explained his early exit. "We also made a few [set-up] changes after FP3 which didn't go in the right direction, and we are still analysing why we basically went slower than FP3 [his Q1 lap was actually 0.101s faster]."

Up front in Q2, Hamilton moved ahead of Bottas for the first time in the weekend. In the final shootout he maintained his advantage, rocketing to pole with a new F1 Mugello track record of 1m15.144s. Just as at Spa, the onboard video of his lap was revealing – highlighting just how lightning fast the W11 could rotate on entry to Mugello's sweeping turns, and how long Hamilton spent at full throttle through the rapid Casanova, Savelli, Arrabbiata 1 and Arrabbiata 2 sequence.

"It's incredibly physical, this track, being that it's medium and high-speed," Hamilton said of his efforts. "It's not easy at all, particularly through that fast section. You're definitely not ending the lap with a low heart rate. I think I'm breathing heavier, for sure, particularly at the end of the lap, because there's so much focus.

"YOUR BODY IS COMPLETELY TENSE THE WHOLE LAP. YOU'RE FULLY ENGAGED IN EVERY MUSCLE"

"There's no room for error, you're completely tensed – your whole body is completely tense the whole lap. You're fully engaged in every muscle throughout the lap."

Bottas took second place on the grid for the sixth time in 2020, ruing missing the chance to improve on his second Q3 run thanks to Esteban Ocon's late off, as Hamilton failed to go faster when running ahead of the incident. Max Verstappen was back to third after Red Bull's Monza disappointment, with Alex Albon equalling his best qualifying result of the season so far with fourth.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

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Bottas had prime position behind safety car, before the restart led to more damage

'RACE TWO' HAMILTON DEFIES BRAKE FIRE TO STEAL BACK THE LEAD

The second 'race' wasn't just about the start or restarts, although the second grid getaway did play a massive role.

Hamilton arrived in his grid spot of second with his brakes smoking heavily, and they quickly caught fire as he and Bottas waited for the much-reduced pack to form up. Smoke billowed from Hamilton's car, and flames were clearly visible from his front-right brake.

"On the formation lap I had a separation of my front brake temperatures by nearly two hundred degrees," he explained. "So I was pushing them very hard to bring the one that was down equal. And I got them up to a thousand degrees and I tried to cool them through the last corner and all the way to the start.

"I got to the grid and there was a lot of smoke coming and I was definitely worried as I saw a flame at one stage, which is not good, because that burns all the interior of what's in the upright. Fortunately, the start got under way relatively quickly and I didn't have a problem from there on, but it was definitely on the limit."

Hamilton certainly didn't have a problem, despite the flames. He charged after Bottas, who made a decent getaway from 'pole'. But as they ran through the rise towards San Donato, Hamilton was all over Bottas, who seemed to lose a touch of momentum at this point. Hamilton stole to the outside, used the heavy camber at the right-hander to stay planted, and went around his rival to steal back the lead. He did not lose it again.

There followed a 34-lap relatively normal 'race', which was characterised by Bottas's classic problem compared to his team-mate: tyre-life management. The leaders changed tyres four times in total: twice during red flags, going from used softs to new mediums and then new mediums to used softs; once at the second safety car, to



Crucial moment as Hamilton sweeps around Bottas (above); Stroll's crash brought more red flags

switch from hards to mediums; and once under green-flag conditions. Between the second start after lap nine and when Bottas came into the pits for his sole green-flag stop of the race on lap 31, the gap generally held at around 1.5s-2.1s as the Mercedes drivers lapped in the high 1m22s or low 1m23s. But the interval had ballooned to 5.713s by lap 30 and continued to increase on Bottas's in-lap, as he suddenly struggled severely for grip on the medium tyres the Mercedes drivers had fitted at the first red flag. Lapping Grosjean and Raikkonen was also a factor.

Over this stint, Hamilton averaged 1m23.131s versus Bottas's 1m23.418s, which gave Hamilton his gap to the tune of an average of 0.287s per lap – although this was exacerbated by Bottas's struggles as the stint wore on.

"Valtteri ran the rubber down to zero, and therefore had vibrations, and we made the safety stop," Mercedes boss Toto Wolff explained.

Bottas took on new hards – after demanding he be given the "opposite" rubber to Hamilton, in the anticipation that he would be brought in second, as is Mercedes' typical strategy when safety is not a factor. Hamilton, who insisted he had tyre life remaining when he came in one tour later, also took the hards and was 7.028s clear at the end of his out-lap. Both were subsequently warned to stay off the kerbs as Mercedes was concerned about further tyre problems.

Bottas did press on here, going 0.135s per lap quicker than Hamilton until the start of lap 43, when he'd just got the gap down to 5.817s and the second race suspension occurred. Stroll, who was chasing Ricciardo after being demoted from third (which he in turn had taken from the powerless, gripless Charles Leclerc on lap 18, after Leclerc had risen in the chaos of the opening lap), crashed. Ricciardo had jumped the Racing Point with an undercut stop, and Albon was closing, when on the 43rd tour Stroll's race ended violently. A suspected puncture sent him off at high speed into the tyre barriers beyond the second Arrabbiata.

The red flags flew as it became clear that the barriers needed repairing, and Hamilton 'won' the middle 'race'. »

AUTOSPORT PLUS

WANT MORE THAN F1?

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TRACKSIDE VIEW

In what could well be Formula 1's only race visit to Mugello, the teams waste no time heading onto the 3.3-mile course in FP1. Even Mercedes and Red Bull abandon their normally relaxed approach to the opening practice, sending their drivers out for immediate sighting laps.

Autosport has wasted a little time with a quick visit to the pit building's roof to observe the installation laps, briefly confused about why a 2019-Haas-liveried-car is exiting the final corner, but which turns out to be a near-maroon-and-gold Ferrari. Then we head out to reach the famous Arrabbiata corners (Turns 8 and 9) early in the track's second sector.

The sequence does not disappoint. A bump in the middle of Arrabbiata 1 exposes the cars running very low to the ground, with the Red Bulls merrily sparking away through the rapid right-hander. The cars lean wide on the exit here as the cornering forces work the downforce massively, the drivers having to hang on to varying degrees. Haas's Romain Grosjean seems to be regularly running wider.

The cars nimbly jink from right to left on the approach to Arrabbiata 1, as they sweep down from Savelli, staying wider on the exit kerbs the harder they're pushing. Generally it looks stable, although Valtteri Bottas has a big wiggle exiting Savelli, but it doesn't appear to disrupt his progress. In the main the cars look planted across the sequence, but the challenge just to remain calm is clear.



It's possible that the wind, which gusts heavily at times throughout FP1, is a factor in Bottas's minor moment, and indeed as the wind increases in the closing stages it seems to push the cars wider through Arrabbiata 1 as the tailwind picks up.

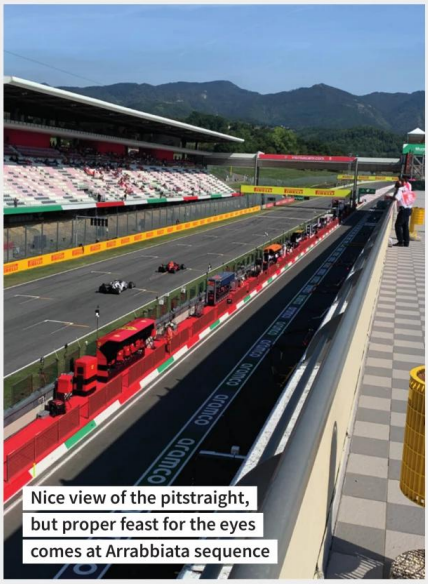
"MOST NOTABLE IS THE SPEED OF DIRECTION CHANGE. THE TURN-IN IS VISIBLY VIOLENT"

Looking up to Arrabbiata 2, which is a rather steep uphill right, the most notable thing is the speed of direction change. The turn-in for Arrabbiata 2 is just so fast on push laps – it's visibly violent.

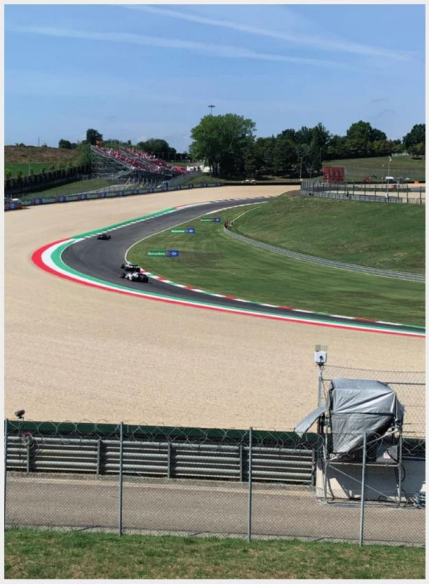
The moment that sums up the Arrabbiatas' challenge occurs just past the FP1 half-hour mark, as Lando Norris approaches. The McLaren driver steams in, carrying way more speed than any other driver throughout opening practice. It does not pay off. From the outside, Norris appears to be skirting perilously close to the edge of the track and the gigantic gravel trap beyond, although his onboard camera footage later indicates that he has slightly more margin than the naked eye suggests. Still, he shoots wide, has to back off massively heading into Arrabbiata 2, and then abandons the lap.

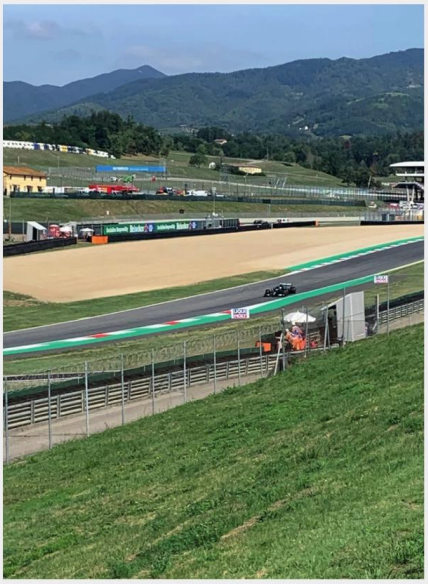
He, and the rest, simply have no room to get it wrong. The Mugello track is a dark-ribbon path – go too far to the outside edge and there's little chance of staying on it.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS



Nice view of the pitstraight, but proper feast for the eyes comes at Arrabbiata sequence





'RACE THREE' BOTTAS BLOWS HIS FINAL START CHANCE

After another long delay, the remaining 12 cars left the pitlane to again reform on the grid and take a third standing start of the day. This time, both Mercedes reacted perfectly well enough, but Bottas bogged down as he left the line and he was jumped by Ricciardo, who wisely took the outside line at San Donato to offer Bottas no chance of an immediate fightback.

Nevertheless, the Mercedes was back ahead at that spot on the following lap, with Ricciardo forced to brake earlier into the long right-hander and Bottas making full use of the W11's healthy downforce advantage to steam back into second around the outside.

The third chapter boiled down to a 13-lap dash to the flag, which Hamilton edged. He kept Bottas just over a second behind, out of DRS range, until unleashing the fastest lap on the penultimate tour to push the gap to 2s. Bottas then had a slow final lap, resulting in a winning margin of 4.880s.

The real action came from Albon behind, who finally made a brave around-the-outside-pass-with-a-podium-on-the-line move stick, as he thwarted Ricciardo's brilliant bid for his first Renault top-three finish on lap 51. Albon was urged to chase Bottas, but the Mercedes was basically toying with the Red Bull, as Bottas dropped back in an ultimately vain attempt to wrest the fastest lap from Hamilton.

WAS BOTTAS DESTINED TO LOSE?

If the race had run cleanly to the flag (a tall order given Mugello's fearsome bite and the likelihood of the gravel trapping cars) and the first safety car restart nonsense had not occurred, would Bottas have won?

As there was such little strategy in play last Sunday, we must assume that Bottas more than likely would still have been the loser given how much time he lost before his green-flag stop. Hamilton had so much pace in hand – he gained 3.115s over laps 29 and 30 – that a pass seems probable.

At the same time, we must give Bottas some benefit of the doubt because, as he pointed out: "When you are behind, you need to slide the car more and that uses up your tyre." But here we must also acknowledge that Hamilton has historically had superiority in terms of tyre management – it is a weakness that Bottas seems unable to solve. Bottas did edge back in the laps before Stroll's crash, but he wasn't exactly homing in on his team-mate. Plus, Hamilton had the edge on pure speed on race day.


SUTTON

Hamilton leads at the third start as Ricciardo briefly snatches second

Whatever the case, this was the second weekend in a row where Hamilton made a mistake and Bottas did not capitalise. "I don't really remember all the phases, but it seemed there were no opportunities once I lost position at the second start, but that's how it goes," said Bottas in parc ferme.

The last word must go to the victor, who, with 90 F1 wins, is just one behind Michael Schumacher's all-time record: "Valtteri was so quick all weekend so keeping him behind in the starts and stops we had, I wouldn't say it was easy to stay in the zone," Hamilton reflected in the post-race press conference.

"It just doesn't seem real [reaching 90 wins]. I never thought that I would be here, that's for sure."

NEXT F1 REPORT

RUSSIAN GRAND PRIX
1 OCTOBER ISSUE

Can Bottas start closing the gap to Hamilton at a circuit on which he usually excels? And will Red Bull solve its problems so that Verstappen can challenge the Mercedes duo?



SUTTON

The lanky Albon stood on an F1 podium for first time, with Bottas and Hamilton

Russell denied first points by final stoppage

George Russell spent most of the Tuscan Grand Prix nestled in the points, but was left disappointed with an 11th-place finish.

At the initial start, Russell was able to avoid the chaos on the first lap and picked his way through the order, climbing to 11th as the first safety car period started.

That was crucial on the restart, as Russell was ahead of the four-way collision on the straight and was able to hold his position as the first red flag put the race on ice. He was then promoted to 10th courtesy of Esteban Ocon's brake troubles, before gaining another place when the fast-fading Ferrari of Charles Leclerc pitted for fresh tyres. It all looked good for Williams to claim its first point since last year's German GP.

Then, with Russell still ninth, Lance Stroll's off at Arrabbiata 2 necessitated a second safety car. Russell felt he had ninth "in the bag" had the restart not happened. He had to defend his position off the line with two Ferraris starting behind him, but Russell failed to get the drive at the third getaway and was shuffled right to the back of the now-12-car field, and his pass on Romain Grosjean wasn't enough to bring him back into play.

"The race went wrong for us at the wrong time," said Russell (below), who is still waiting for his first F1 points.


DUNBAR



TEE

FIA defends restart procedure after smash

The restart crash that led to the first red flag was the most contentious issue of the race, with those at the rear of the field blaming the leaders, and the podium finishers saying the chaos came as a result of the safety car's lights going off too late.

Leader Valtteri Bottas was cleared of wrongdoing by the stewards. He had used the late location of the control line – at the start lights – to delay his getaway in a bid to reduce the effect of the tow to the cars behind as he proceeded towards San Donato. Further back in the pack, several drivers left big gaps that they accelerated into, and then had to brake when they realised the leaders were not yet racing. The resulting clashes removed four cars from the race: Carlos Sainz Jr's McLaren, the Alfa Romeo of Antonio Giovinazzi, Kevin Magnussen's Haas and the Williams of Nicholas Latifi.

The stewards opted to give warnings to 12 drivers, with only the leading trio of Bottas, Lewis Hamilton and Charles Leclerc, and the three at the very rear of the field – Romain Grosjean, Kimi Raikkonen and Sebastian Vettel – staying clear of censure. Three drivers were formally called to see the stewards: Magnussen, Daniil Kvyat and Latifi.

FIA race director Michael Masi gave the safety car lights theory short shrift after


ETHERINGTON

explaining that the teams were notified through the FIA's messaging system that the safety car was coming in as the initial part of the normal four-stage restart process, and that all the drivers had been warned about their responsibilities in their regular briefing.

"They can criticise all they want," said Masi. "If we have a look at the distance perspective, from where the lights were extinguished to the control line, [it's] probably not dissimilar, if not longer, than a number of other venues.

"So, at the end of the day, the safety car lights go out where they do, the safety car is [then in the] pitlane. We have the 20 best drivers in the world. And as we saw earlier [on Sunday] in the F3 race, those drivers in the junior category had a very similar restart to what was occurring in the F1 race and navigated it quite well, without incident."

STAT

2016 Brazilian GP

The last time an F1 race featured two red-flag stoppages



SUTTON

Stroll survives race-stopping crash

Lance Stroll's hopes of a second consecutive podium finish were ended in a big crash that sparked the second red flag with 15 laps remaining.

Stroll had been third ahead of the first round of pitstops, but was undercut by Daniel Ricciardo, and then remained less than two seconds behind the Renault entering the closing stages, just ahead of the looming Alex Albon. Stroll went off at the second Arrabbiata, slamming into the barrier at high speed to leave his Racing Point RP20 with significant damage.

"We're still investigating whether it was a puncture or suspension failure, or if something broke, as we are not sure yet," Stroll said. "We'll look into it and find out."

Team-mate Sergio Perez finished fifth despite a balance issue that prevented him from joining the podium fight, but he managed to beat Lando Norris.



Q&A

SEBASTIAN VETTEL
FERRARI DRIVER



Would you like to see Mugello back on the calendar in a normal season?
I think it's a great track, so it would be nice if we were to come back in the future. As a driver, you enjoy the up-and-down and the fast corners, but I don't think the race that we saw, with three starts and red flags, is a consequence of the track. I think we would all like to skip the first red flag, because it was quite shocking what happened. Also, despite everyone's fears, overtaking was actually possible around here. Maybe it would be nice to come back.

What is your view on the first restart after the safety car? Was it hard to see where the pack was moving when it went back to green?
I was [nearly] last at that point and behind Kimi [Raikkonen], so it happened a bit further down the road. I didn't see exactly what led to it, but already even for me [at the back] it was a bit erratic in terms of speeding up, slowing down, speeding up, and then finally speeding up – everyone was jumping on the brakes. There was a bit of a gap because Kimi was quite far behind the car in front, and probably it was better for the two of us.

F1 has had two chaotic races in a row. Could the issue have been having so many races in such a short timespan?
It's certainly tough, but I think the chances to have a red flag and various red flags in a race is generally quite low, so I don't think it's due to that. Obviously, it was absolutely right to call for the red flag after Charles [Leclerc] crashed last week, and again today, so there was no other choice – in both cases it was the right action. I think everybody is on the limit, performing on the limit, trying to do everything, but I don't think the crashes or the red flags are a consequence of the fact that we have triple-header, triple-header, triple-header.

Verstappen charge ended by early drama

Max Verstappen missed out on one of his best chances to take on the Mercedes duo after a troubled start.

Intrigue about Verstappen's potential at Mugello was high as he'd shown a strong turn of pace in qualifying. But, like in Hungary, there was a flurry of action around the Dutchman's Red Bull ahead of the start – a bid to fix his rear lights, due to a small software issue.

That was fixed but, after a good initial getaway brought Verstappen tantalisingly side by side with the slow-starting Lewis Hamilton, he soon had no power and fell down the order, bringing him into the cut-and-thrust of the midfield.

Then, as Pierre Gasly got sandwiched between Kimi Raikkonen and Romain Grosjean into Turn 2, Raikkonen ended up clattering into the back of Verstappen and sending him into the gravel and the Red Bull out of the race.

"I had a good launch and went round Lewis and a better launch than Valtteri [Bottas]," Verstappen explained. "But once I went flat out, the engine had a similar problem to what we had at Monza – we had no power there. You get into a situation where you are in the middle of the pack and it's easy to get involved in the middle of a crash. I don't even know what happened."



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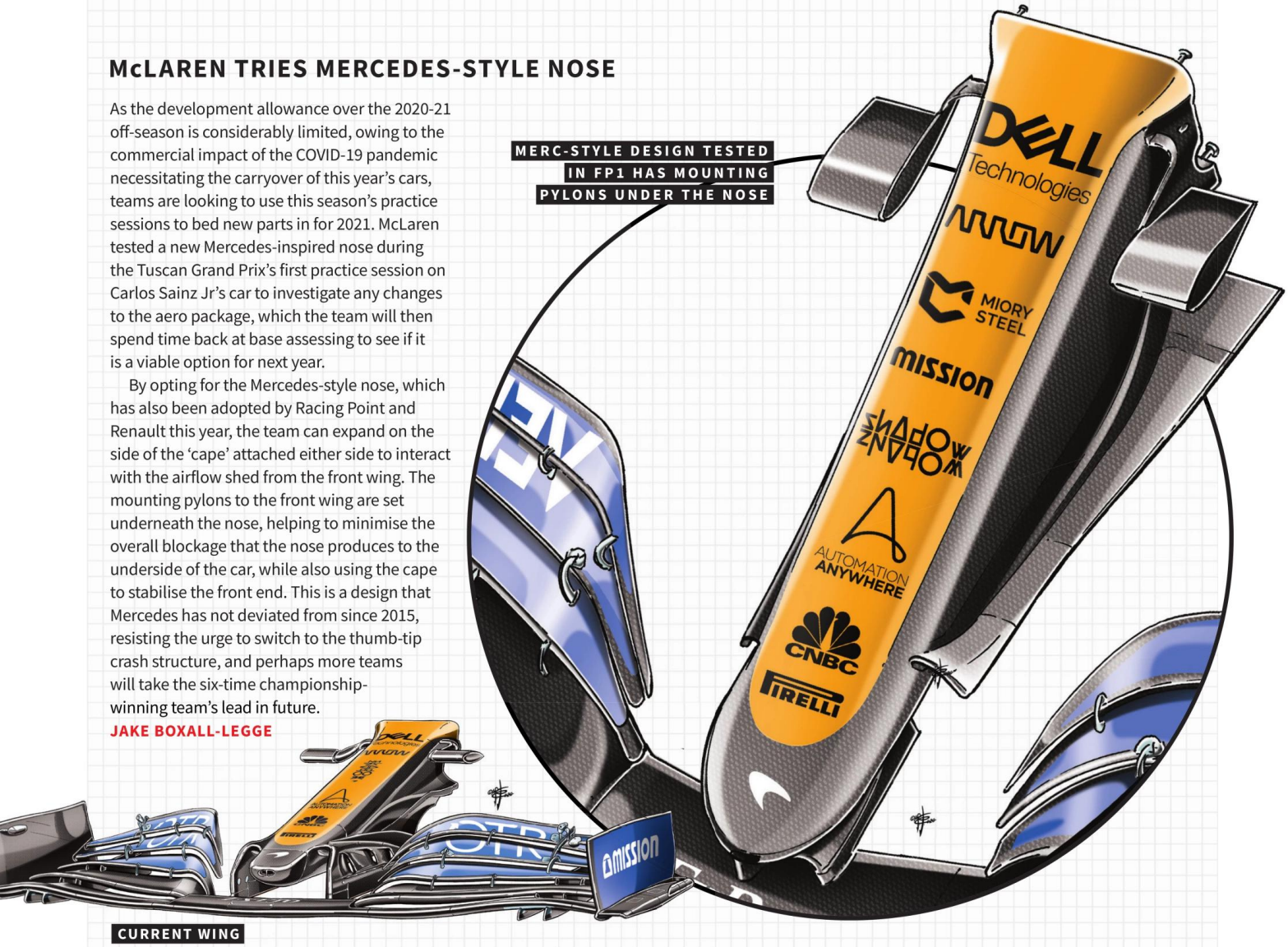
GIORGIO PIOLA

McLAREN TRIES MERCEDES-STYLE NOSE

As the development allowance over the 2020-21 off-season is considerably limited, owing to the commercial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic necessitating the carryover of this year's cars, teams are looking to use this season's practice sessions to bed new parts in for 2021. McLaren tested a new Mercedes-inspired nose during the Tuscan Grand Prix's first practice session on Carlos Sainz Jr's car to investigate any changes to the aero package, which the team will then spend time back at base assessing to see if it is a viable option for next year.

By opting for the Mercedes-style nose, which has also been adopted by Racing Point and Renault this year, the team can expand on the side of the 'cape' attached either side to interact with the airflow shed from the front wing. The mounting pylons to the front wing are set underneath the nose, helping to minimise the overall blockage that the nose produces to the underside of the car, while also using the cape to stabilise the front end. This is a design that Mercedes has not deviated from since 2015, resisting the urge to switch to the thumb-tip crash structure, and perhaps more teams will take the six-time championship-winning team's lead in future.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



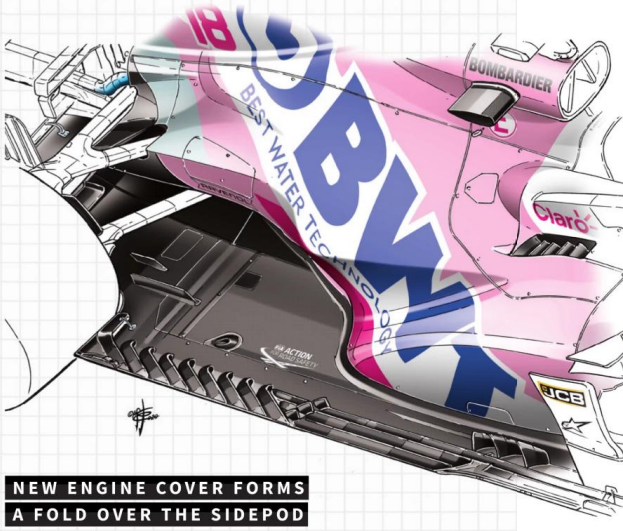
STROLL GETS RACING POINT UPDATES

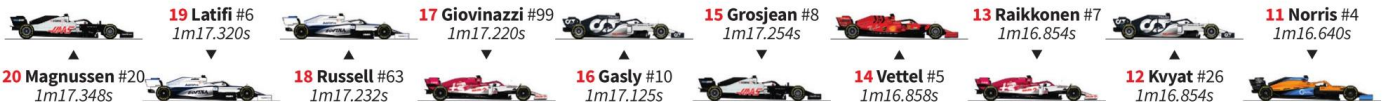
Racing Point's updates for Mugello didn't exactly come home in one piece, as Lance Stroll's lap 43 shunt at Arrabbiata 2 caused a quite considerable amount of damage to his RP20. With one new aero update for the Racing Point team for the Tuscan GP, the team handed it to Stroll in deference to his higher championship placing over team-mate Sergio Perez, and he made good use of it until his accident.

The changes included an all-new engine cover, which formed a fold over the sidepod and descended into a ramp section to bring airflow to the top of the floor. Presumably, the air passing around the sidepod can either be directed outwards by the fins and slots along the floor's edge, or get tucked in along the Coke bottle. The ramped trailing edge also helps to bring air along the bodyline and improve the flow to the diffuser.

Given that Mercedes and Williams have similar sidepod designs, this is something that the Mercedes powertrain arrangement allows, with the radiators slanting upwards towards the inlet. Funnily enough, Racing Point also made further Mercedes-inspired changes to its front brake ducts, ever so slightly playing with fire following the FIA's legal ruling over the ducts at the rear, along with further minor modifications to the rear-wing endplates to generate a little more downforce.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE





FREE PRACTICE 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m17.879s
2	Verstappen	1m17.927s
3	Leclerc	1m18.186s
4	Hamilton	1m18.409s
5	Gasly	1m18.676s
6	Ocon	1m18.805s
7	Kvyat	1m18.839s
8	Norris	1m18.981s
9	Albon	1m19.068s
10	Ricciardo	1m19.140s
11	Raikkonen	1m19.219s
12	Grosjean	1m19.224s
13	Vettel	1m19.267s
14	Giovinazzi	1m19.322s
15	Sainz	1m19.457s
16	Russell	1m19.478s
17	Magnussen	1m19.551s
18	Stroll	1m19.836s
19	Perez	1m19.840s
20	Latifi	1m20.034s

WEATHER Dry, air 27-30C track 35-43°C

FREE PRACTICE 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m16.989s
2	Hamilton	1m17.196s
3	Verstappen	1m17.235s
4	Albon	1m17.971s
5	Ricciardo	1m18.039s
6	Ocon	1m18.115s
7	Perez	1m18.198s
8	Gasly	1m18.244s
9	Raikkonen	1m18.385s
10	Leclerc	1m18.400s
11	Stroll	1m18.462s
12	Vettel	1m18.498s
13	Sainz	1m18.651s
14	Norris	1m18.658s
15	Kvyat	1m18.736s
16	Russell	1m18.843s
17	Giovinazzi	1m18.944s
18	Latifi	1m18.983s
19	Magnussen	1m19.113s
20	Grosjean	1m19.257s

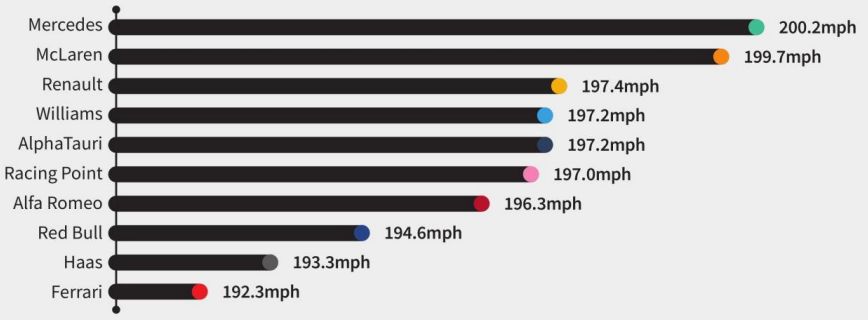
WEATHER Dry, air 29-30C track 40-45C

FREE PRACTICE 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m16.530s
2	Verstappen	1m16.547s
3	Hamilton	1m16.613s
4	Stroll	1m17.112s
5	Gasly	1m17.226s
6	Perez	1m17.341s
7	Leclerc	1m17.488s
8	Albon	1m17.538s
9	Kvyat	1m17.627s
10	Grosjean	1m17.635s
11	Ocon	1m17.746s
12	Sainz	1m17.768s
13	Giovinazzi	1m17.812s
14	Raikkonen	1m17.843s
15	Magnussen	1m18.039s
16	Latifi	1m18.072s
17	Ricciardo	1m18.142s
18	Vettel	1m18.186s
19	Norris	1m18.826s
20	Russell	no time

WEATHER Dry, air 27.7C track 40.5C

SPEED TRAP (QUALIFYING)



QUALIFYING 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m15.749s
2	Hamilton	1m15.778s
3	Verstappen	1m16.335s
4	Albon	1m16.527s
5	Perez	1m16.596s
6	Leclerc	1m16.698s
7	Stroll	1m16.701s
8	Ocon	1m16.825s
9	Norris	1m16.895s
10	Kvyat	1m16.928s
11	Ricciardo	1m16.981s
12	Sainz	1m16.993s
13	Raikkonen	1m17.059s
14	Grosjean	1m17.069s
15	Vettel	1m17.072s
16	Gasly	1m17.125s
17	Giovinazzi	1m17.220s
18	Russell	1m17.232s
19	Latifi	1m17.320s
20	Magnussen	1m17.348s

QUALIFYING 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m15.309s
2	Bottas	1m15.322s
3	Verstappen	1m15.471s
4	Albon	1m15.914s
5	Ricciardo	1m16.243s
6	Stroll	1m16.271s
7	Ocon	1m16.297s
8	Leclerc	1m16.324s
9	Perez	1m16.489s
10	Sainz	1m16.522s
11	Norris	1m16.640s
12	Kvyat	1m16.854s
13	Raikkonen	1m16.854s
14	Vettel	1m16.858s
15	Grosjean	1m17.254s

QUALIFYING 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m15.144s
2	Bottas	1m15.203s
3	Verstappen	1m15.509s
4	Albon	1m15.954s
5	Leclerc	1m16.270s
6	Perez	1m16.311s
7	Stroll	1m16.356s
8	Ricciardo	1m16.543s
9	Sainz	1m17.870s
10	Ocon	no time

WEATHER Dry, air 29-30C track 44-46C



SEASON STATS

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

		PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1	Hamilton	190	1	1
2	Bottas	135	1	1
3	Verstappen	110	1	2
4	Norris	65	3	4
5	Albon	63	3	4
6	Stroll	57	3	3
7	Ricciardo	53	4	4
8	Leclerc	49	2	4
9	Perez	44	5	4
10	Gasly	43	1	7
11	Sainz	41	2	3
12	Ocon	30	5	5
13	Vettel	17	6	5
14	Kvyat	10	7	11
15	Hulkenberg	6	7	3
16	Raikkonen	2	9	13
17	Giovinazzi	2	9	17
18	Magnussen	1	10	15
19	Latifi	0	11	15
20	Russell	0	11	12
21	Grosjean	0	12	14

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1	Mercedes	325
2	Red Bull	173
3	McLaren	106
4	Racing Point	92
5	Renault	83
6	Ferrari	66
7	AlphaTauri	53
8	Alfa Romeo	4
9	Haas	1
10	Williams	0

QUALIFYING BATTLE

Hamilton	**7**	2	Bottas
Vettel	2	**7**	**Leclerc**
Albon	0	**9**	**Verstappen**
Norris	4	**5**	**Sainz**
Ricciardo	**8**	1	Ocon
Gasly	**7**	2	Kvyat
Perez	**5**	2	Stroll
Stroll	**1**	**1**	**Hulkenberg**
Raikkonen	**5**	4	Giovinazzi
Grosjean	4	**5**	**Magnussen**
Latifi	0	**9**	**Russell**

Scores ignore sessions if a driver didn't participate in qualifying or had a serious technical problem

WINS

Hamilton	6
Bottas	1
Gasly	1
Verstappen	1

POLE POSITIONS

Hamilton	7
Bottas	2

FASTEST LAPS

Hamilton	4
Bottas	1
Norris	1
Ricciardo	1
Sainz	1
Verstappen	1

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STARTING GRID



RACE RESULTS ROUND 9 (59 LAPS – 192.32 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISH TIME	LED	TYRES
1	**Lewis Hamilton** (GBR)	Mercedes	2h19m35.060s	50	Su, Mn, Hn, Mn, Su
2	**Valtteri Bottas** (FIN)	Mercedes	+4.880s	9	Su, Mn, Hn, Mn, Su
3	**Alexander Albon** (THA)	Red Bull-Honda	+8.064s		Su, Su, Mn, Su, Su
4	**Daniel Ricciardo** (AUS)	Renault	+10.417s		Su, Su, Mn, Su, Su
5	**Sergio Perez** (MEX)	Racing Point-Mercedes	+15.650s		Su, Su, Mn, Su, Su
6	**Lando Norris** (GBR)	McLaren-Renault	+18.883s		Sn, Su, Mn, Su, Su
7	**Daniil Kvyat** (RUS)	AlphaTauri-Honda	+21.756s		Mn, Sn, Mu, Su, Su
8	**Charles Leclerc** (MCO)	Ferrari	+28.345s		Su, Su, Hn, Mn, Su
9	**Kimi Raikkonen** (FIN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	+29.770s		Mn, Mu, Mu, Hn, Sn, Su
10	**Sebastian Vettel** (DEU)	Ferrari	+29.983s		Sn, Mn, Su, Hn, Su, Su
11	**George Russell** (GBR)	Williams-Mercedes	+32.404s		Mn, Mn, Hn, Sn, Su
12	**Romain Grosjean** (FRA)	Haas-Ferrari	+42.036s		Mn, Sn, Hn, Su, Su
R	**Lance Stroll** (CAN)	Racing Point-Mercedes	42 laps-accident		Su, Su, Mn
R	**Esteban Ocon** (FRA)	Renault	7 laps-brakes		Su
R	**Nicholas Latifi** (CAN)	Williams-Mercedes	6 laps-accident		Mn
R	**Kevin Magnussen** (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	5 laps-accident		Sn
R	**Antonio Giovinazzi** (ITA)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	5 laps-accident		Sn
R	**Carlos Sainz Jr** (ESP)	McLaren-Renault	5 laps-accident		Su
R	**Max Verstappen** (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda	0 laps-accident		Su
R	**Pierre Gasly** (FRA)	AlphaTauri-Honda	0 laps-accident		Sn

FASTEST LAPS

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	**Hamilton**	1m18.833s	-	58
2	**Bottas**	1m19.432s	+0.599s	53
3	**Albon**	1m20.039s	+1.206s	51
4	**Ricciardo**	1m20.426s	+1.593s	57
5	**Perez**	1m20.632s	+1.799s	59
6	**Raikkonen**	1m21.164s	+2.331s	59
7	**Norris**	1m21.198s	+2.365s	59
8	**Vettel**	1m21.202s	+2.369s	59
9	**Leclerc**	1m21.229s	+2.396s	50
10	**Kvyat**	1m21.458s	+2.625s	51
11	**Russell**	1m21.645s	+2.812s	58
12	**Stroll**	1m22.068s	+3.235s	42
13	**Grosjean**	1m22.263s	+3.430s	59
14	**Latifi**	2m11.365s	+52.532s	6
15	**Ocon**	2m11.793s	+52.960s	6
16	**Giovinazzi**	2m13.809s	+54.976s	4
17	**Magnussen**	2m13.812s	+54.979s	4
18	**Sainz**	2m14.103s	+55.270s	5
19	**Verstappen**	no time	-	-
20	**Gasly**	no time	-	-

WEATHER Dry, air 30-31C track 39-46C

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 82.67mph **FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED** 148.84mph

TYRES

KEY: H - Hard M - Medium S - Soft I - Intermediate W - Wet n - New set u - Used set



RACE BRIEFING

GRID PENALTIES

PEREZ One-place penalty and one licence point for causing a collision with Raikkonen in FP2

RACE PENALTIES

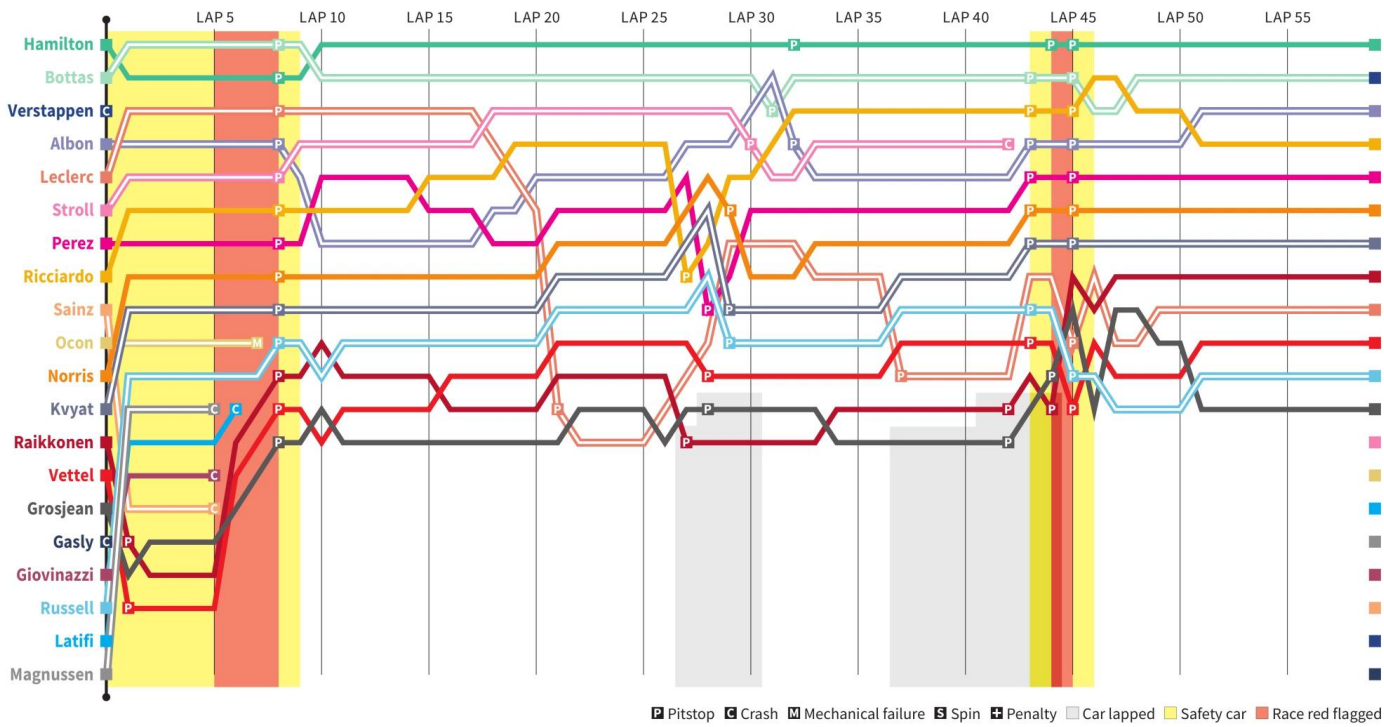
RAIKKONEN Five-second penalty and one licence point for failing to enter the pitlane to the right of the white line

STAT

222

Hamilton has finished in the points in 222 F1 races, one more than Michael Schumacher's record

LAP CHART What happened, when

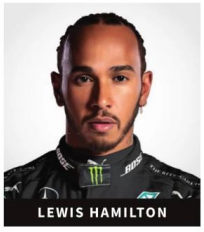


NOBODY'S PERFECT, ALTHOUGH RICCIARDO COMES CLOSEST

The Renault ace doesn't quite rate a double-figure score, while the chaos of the Tuscan Grand Prix means a slew of low scores for a lot of drivers

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

MERCEDES


LEWIS HAMILTON

8 Gains a mark back for stunning pass against Bottas at the second start. Initial start mistake must be considered a major error and so he can't score higher, and he was also fortunate that Ocon's Q3 off cost Bottas the chance to improve, something Hamilton couldn't do with a clear lap.

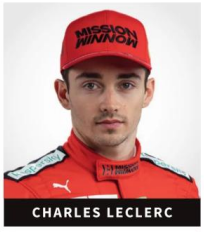

VALTTERI BOTTAS

7 'Inconsistent' probably sums up his weekend best once Hamilton had edged ahead on pace in Q2 after Bottas had flown in practice. Nailed the first start but was overcome at the second, and then he was poor on the third as tyre marbles apparently impeded his launch.

FERRARI

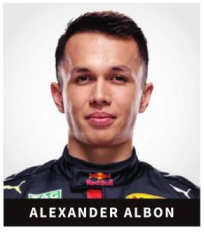

SEBASTIAN VETTEL

5 Scores low because of the combination of his qualifying result (nine places behind Leclerc) and the way Russell was able to keep him at bay during the 34-lap stint between the two red flags. Got ahead of the Williams at the final start and held on for a point he arguably didn't deserve.


CHARLES LECLERC

8 Gets his high score on the strength of his qualifying lap. Was another beneficiary of Ocon's off, but still nailed his chance, and this became third in the lap-one melee. Also drove well to hold off Stroll before his tyres went off and his lack of power was exposed.

RED BULL

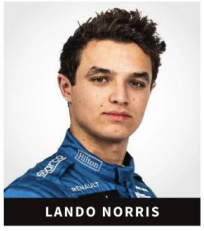

ALEXANDER ALBON

8 Earns eight because he got the Red Bull to where it should be in qualifying and the race. Lost positions at each start (staying fourth on lap one with his team-mate's exit), and did not seem as competitive on his second set of softs compared to the mediums. His pass on Ricciardo was brave.


MAX VERSTAPPEN

8 Earns his mark purely on the strength of his qualifying performance, which was the closest Red Bull has been to pole all season. Was in trouble before the start, then lost power, which put him back in the pack and vulnerable to the nonsense that caused his elimination.

McLAREN


LANDO NORRIS

6 Loses a mark because he was beaten by Sainz in qualifying, falling in Q2. Didn't think he could have done more in the race as he went from 11th to sixth, doing well to stay out of trouble, while not having the pace to do more than pick up from "other people's mistakes".


CARLOS SAINZ JR

5 Gets a mark back because he made it through to Q3 and his team-mate didn't, but was lucky to be ninth given he set the slowest lap of qualifying on his first run in the final segment. Was equally at fault with the others for restart crash, and must take the blame for his lap-one spin.

RENAULT

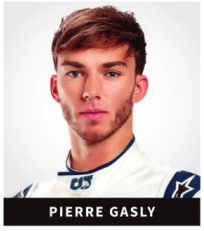

DANIEL RICCIARDO

9 Only just misses out on a maximum score, but does so because of his failure to replicate his Q2 pace on his first Q3 run. Had he managed it, he'd have started fifth. Drove brilliantly in the race, briefly running second, but was powerless to stop Albon coming back past.


ESTEBAN OCON

6 Ocon's score is down mainly because of his Q3 off, which not only cost him the chance to actually set a time, but it also meant several others – crucially including his team-mate – could not improve on their final runs. Had to retire after his brakes caught fire during the first safety car.

ALPHATAURI


PIERRE GASLY

5 Can be excused for the first-lap shunt because it was Raikkonen's tiny slide that made things just that fraction closer between the Alfa, Gasly and Grosjean – but perhaps Gasly should have backed out earlier. The reason why his mark is so low is mainly because of his Q1 exit.


DANIIL KVYAT

8 Doesn't earn a nine, purely because he didn't reach Q3, even as the fastest AlphaTauri driver this time. Drove well in the race from 12th, gaining nicely on lap one and then keeping things clean through all the incidents (despite being one of the 12 warned over the restart crash).



Ricciardo couldn't keep Albon at bay, but pips him in our points

RACING POINT



SERGIO PEREZ

6 Benefited from completing his sole Q3 run while everyone else was still to emerge for their second effort, and from Ocon's incident stopping lots of improvements. But he was still beaten by Leclerc in the slower Ferrari, and by Ricciardo in the slower Renault in the race.



LANCE STROLL

6 Several things combine to mean he can't score higher. He qualified behind his team-mate and Leclerc's Ferrari, then took far too long to get past the SF1000. Also got overhauled by Ricciardo in a slower car, but must be considered blameless in his crash given a puncture is suspected.

ALFA ROMEO



KIMI RAIKKONEN

7 Loses a mark for his penalty, earned because he crossed into the pitlane way too late. He shouldn't have decided alone to dive in after Stroll's crash triggered the safety car. Also had a slide that contributed to the first-lap shunt, but showed good pace despite a damaged car and slow first stop.



ANTONIO GIOVINAZZI

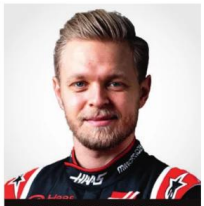
4 Can't score higher because his weekend didn't have any redeeming features, including his fault along with the others involved in the restart shunt. Started four spots adrift of his team-mate. Did make progress in the one corner he raced before he was caught behind the Luco crash.

HAAS



ROMAIN GROSJEAN

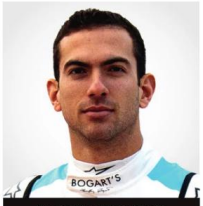
6 Nearly gained a mark back because he made it out of Q1, but the race was tough. Must take his share of responsibility for the Luco clash with Gasly, after which he had the car switched off before he spotted two wheels not in the gravel. Reckoned damage cost him two seconds per lap.



KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

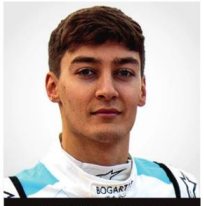
4 All drivers in the restart crash can be considered to have made a mistake at a key moment – not a massive error, because the stewards blamed them all equally. Doesn't get any marks back because he qualified last, after being put off by dust from Russell's Q1 off.

WILLIAMS



NICHOLAS LATIFI

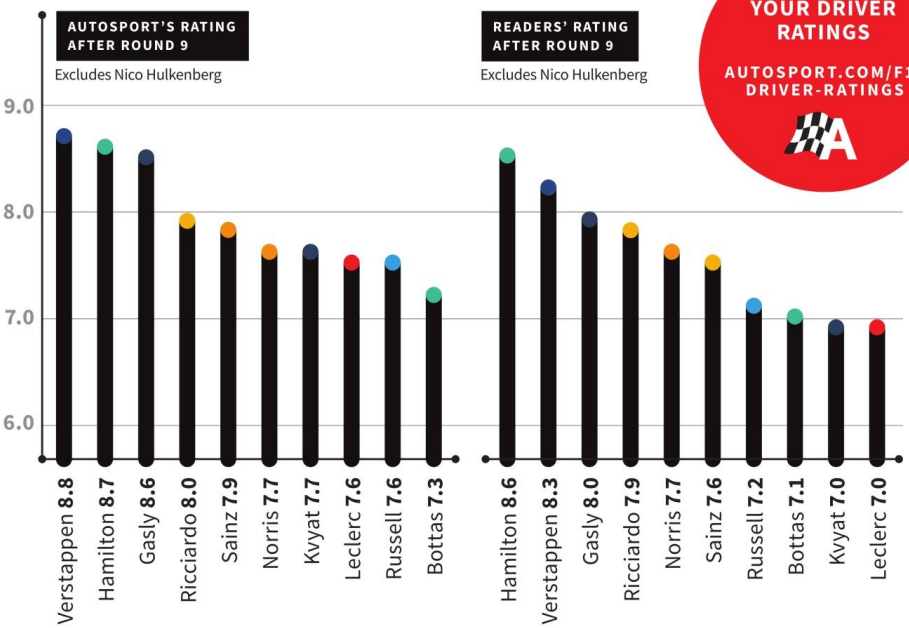
5 Looked the stronger Williams in qualifying until he failed to improve when his last Q1 run was thwarted by compromised tyre preparation and not enough front wing giving him understeer. Made a solid initial start to gain a spot, then moved up further thanks to the Luco crash.



GEORGE RUSSELL

6 Can't score higher because he did not nail things when they really mattered on Saturday and Sunday. Team reckoned his late Q1 off cost him a Q2 berth, and dropping two places off the line at the final start with wheelspin undid all his fine work as he had driven "like hell" ahead of Vettel.

TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS



GIVE YOUR DRIVER RATINGS

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Power leads Penske team-mate Newgarden

ABBOTT

Power struggle ends, before Herta blitzes it for Andretti

The Australian veteran finally broke his 2020 duck last Saturday to lead home a 1-2 for Penske, but no one could live with the Andretti Autosport machines on Sunday

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

Two well-established star names in IndyCar racing enjoyed redemption at Mid-Ohio last weekend. The first was Will Power, who scored his first win of a season that had hitherto been beset – almost as we've come to expect – by pitcrew errors, tactical miscues, misfortune regarding the timing of full-course cautions, and yes, a couple of his own mistakes too. On Saturday, Power scored the 60th pole position of his career – he's now just seven away from Mario Andretti's all-time record – and simply left his opposition behind to score his 38th victory. Perhaps most significantly, it was his first ever at Mid-Ohio, a place where he's now started from pole five times but where he had previously encountered various tales of woe.

In true Power boom-and-bust fashion, the #12 Team Penske Dallara-Chevrolet had a spin in Sunday's wet qualifying session, which brought out the red flag and consigned him to almost the back of the grid, thereby allowing Andretti Autosport to rise to prominence. For only the second time this season, Michael Andretti's squad looked like victory contenders. The previous occasion had been the Indianapolis 500, where most of that potential had been stymied by pitlane mishaps. This time there was no such issue. Alexander Rossi and Ryan Hunter-Reay finished third and fifth on Saturday, while on Sunday their 20-year-old team-mate Colton Herta took pole and led this same pair in a podium sweep, the Andretti team's first in 15 years.

Race one

After the second race of the season, the Grand Prix of Indianapolis, Power admitted to Autosport that he and race engineer Dave Faustino were coming to the conclusion that they should maybe stop trying to hedge their bets between different pitstop strategies and instead just go flat-out from the start of races. That would oblige most others to follow that lead so that, if a badly timed caution period fell, Power would be less likely to find himself stuck behind strong rivals on alternative strategies. With the Mid-Ohio races being reduced from 90 laps to 75 this year, on account of there being two of them,



Herta serene in the rolling Ohio scenery

this was the perfect opportunity for Power and Faustino to put their theory to the test, because one, it was going to be a clear two-stopping race for everyone, and two, Mid-Ohio has seen shockingly few full-course cautions in recent years.

From pole, Power burst into the lead when the green flag waved between Turn 2 and the Turn 3 kink, where Mid-Ohio IndyCar races start on account of the run down to Turn 4 being much longer than the pitstraight. Fellow front-row starter Hunter-Reay was jumped by second-row man Josef Newgarden, Penske's reigning champion eager to exploit the fact that runaway championship leader Scott Dixon had been puzzlingly slow in qualifying, and was starting 17th in his Honda-powered Chip Ganassi Racing car.

Hunter-Reay was also jumped by Conor Daly, one of the surprises of qualifying driving the Ed Carpenter Racing Chevy-engined machine, but by the end of lap four the yellow DHL car of Hunter-Reay was back ahead. Behind Daly ran Rossi, who had elected to start the race on the harder-compound 'black' Firestones, and who therefore had his hands full holding off the red-tyred Felix Rosenqvist (Ganassi).

Power inched away from Newgarden throughout that opening stint so that when they and other red-tyred runners stopped around the lap 20 mark, the 2014 champion had a near four-second margin over Newgarden. This reduced to 3s when Power got caught up with a battle between Santino Ferrucci and Rinus VeeKay, who were running fourth and fifth behind Rossi, Graham Rahal and Herta. All five were trying to exploit the extended life of the harder Firestones in their first stint, but by lap 27 they had all pitted.

At this point, Daly fell out of podium contention, so now Rossi emerged from the pits in fourth and with the grippier red tyres, while team-mate Hunter-Reay was on blacks. Right behind this pair a similar battle was under way, for Rosenqvist was on blacks and battling to hold off Rahal. Up front, Power looked relatively serene, with a 6s lead over Newgarden at half distance.

As soon as the second and final pit window opened on lap 45, Rossi pulled his car's nose out from under Hunter-Reay's gearbox and ducked into the pitlane for fuel and a set of fresh blacks. Overcoming the disadvantage of a full fuel load by use of his push-to-pass boost and applying aggressive steering inputs to get the harder compound up to temperature quickly, Rossi nailed his out-lap. Hunter-Reay stopped next time by but, although he emerged onto the track ahead of his team-mate, Rossi had the momentum and swooped past to claim what would eventually be the final podium spot. RHR's irritation increased still further when he realised that Rahal had gone the opposite way to Rossi in terms of strategy, going three laps longer in his Rahal Letterman Lanigan car and nailing his extra laps on a light fuel load to also emerge ahead.

Having at one point led by over 9s, Power eased off a little in the closing stages, while Newgarden did just enough to keep Rossi »

IT'S ALL IN THE GENES FOR THE HERTAS



Colton Herta was just five years old when Andretti Autosport – or Andretti Green Racing, as it was called then – last swept the podium. On that occasion, it was the 2005 Grand Prix of St Petersburg, with Dan Wheldon beating Tony Kanaan and Dario Franchitti. In fact, it was better than that, for AGR scored a 1-2-3-4 on that day, and the fourth-placed man was Herta's father Bryan (below), who had started from pole position.

Even though Herta Jr finished third and second in his Indy Lights years, whereas his dad clinched that title in spectacular fashion in 1993, it now seems certain that the younger Herta will eclipse his father's racing record. With 29 IndyCar races under his wheels, he has won three of them; Bryan made 179 starts across CART and Indy Racing League and won four.

There is one major difference, however: in only one season of CART did Herta Sr have the 'right' combination of chassis, engine and tyres. Then, after switching to the predominantly oval IRL in 2003, his silky smooth road-course skills went largely to waste, and he was way too smart to truly thrive in the foot-pinned-to-the-bulkhead/zero-imagination world of pack racing.

Herta Jr, by contrast, has arrived at the top of US open-wheel racing in an era when the cars are almost spec, the differentiation between them – beyond two engines of very similar horsepower and torque outputs – being primarily defined by the driver and the team.

With victory in Mid-Ohio and consistency elsewhere, Herta seems certain to finish the season as Andretti Autosport's highest-placed driver in the championship. Once the team is firing on all cylinders once more, there's no doubt that Herta will be a title contender.

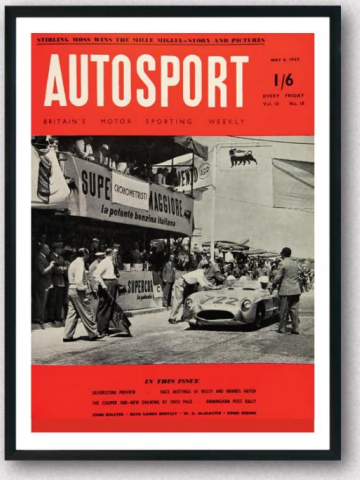


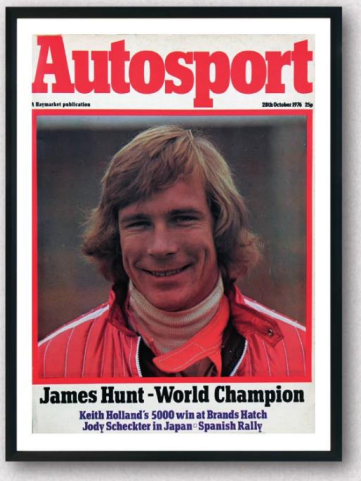
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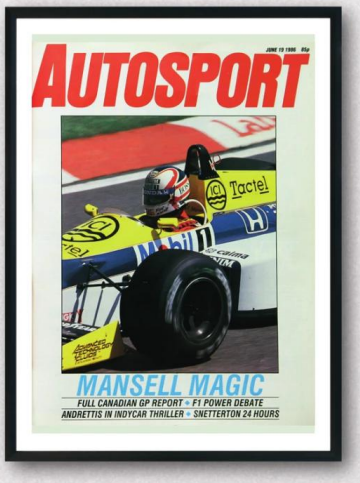
BRITAIN'S BEST MOTORSPORT WEEKLY CELEBRATIONS

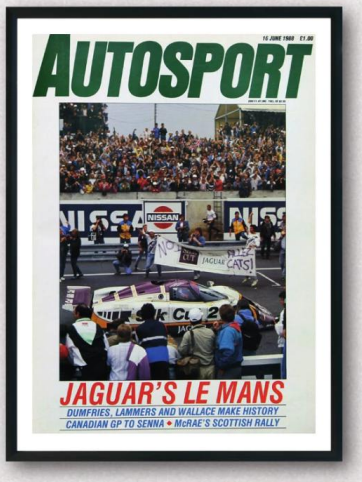
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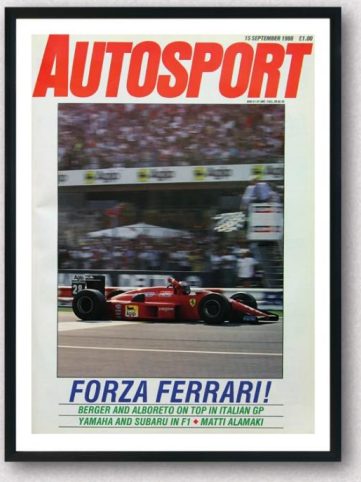
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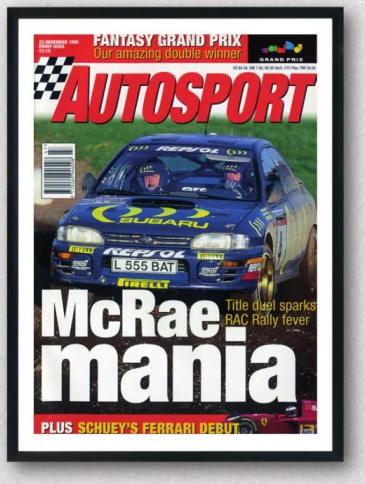














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LEVITT

Front-row starter Ferrucci decided to try to clamber back on track after this off…

at arm's length in the final stint. He held on to score his second podium of the season, ahead of Rahal, Hunter-Reay and Rosenqvist.

Meyer Shank Racing's Jack Harvey had started a fine fifth, lost ground at the start but had held on to run a lonely seventh, while VeeKay beat Herta to eighth.

Daly ran desperately low on fuel on the final lap, and slipped from 10th to 13th. Prime beneficiary was six-time Mid-Ohio winner Dixon, who moved into 10th, surviving a brush with Herta exiting Turn 2 when the Andretti driver mistakenly hit the pit speed limiter.

Race two

It was Ferrucci who had a brush with Herta at the first turn of the second race. Ferruci had been sensationally fast in his Dale Coyne Racing with Vasser Sullivan car on the wet and treacherous track during Sunday qualifying and had topped his group, thereby guaranteeing himself a front-row grid slot, by 3.24s from team-mate Alex Palou. The second group would have much drier conditions, and session topper Herta thus took pole ahead of the Ganassi cars of Dixon and Rosenqvist.

"Ferrucci did well to hold it, less well to rejoin the track in time to thump into his team-mate"

Along with Power, others who started way down after causing red flags were Zach Veach, Pato O'Ward and Harvey, who spun into the Turn 12 tyre wall, forcing the Meyer Shank team to rebuild the rear of his car in the 90 minutes before the grid formed.

Following the drop of the green flag, Herta arrived at Turn 4 with Ferrucci not quite fully alongside as they turned in, but the Andretti Harding Steinbrenner car needed almost all the road on exit, and Ferrucci found himself edged off into the wet grass. He did well to hold it, less well to rejoin the track in time to thump into team-mate Palou, who thus collided with Rosenqvist. The latter two sustained heavy enough damage to end their races, while Ferrucci was ordered to the back of the field for making avoidable contact.

At the restart, Herta held off Dixon, Hunter-Reay, Rossi, Simon Pagenaud and Rahal, although on lap eight Rahal would have to cede sixth place to the impressive Marcus Ericsson in the third Ganassi car, who had taken full advantage of the first-lap chaos to rise from 15th.

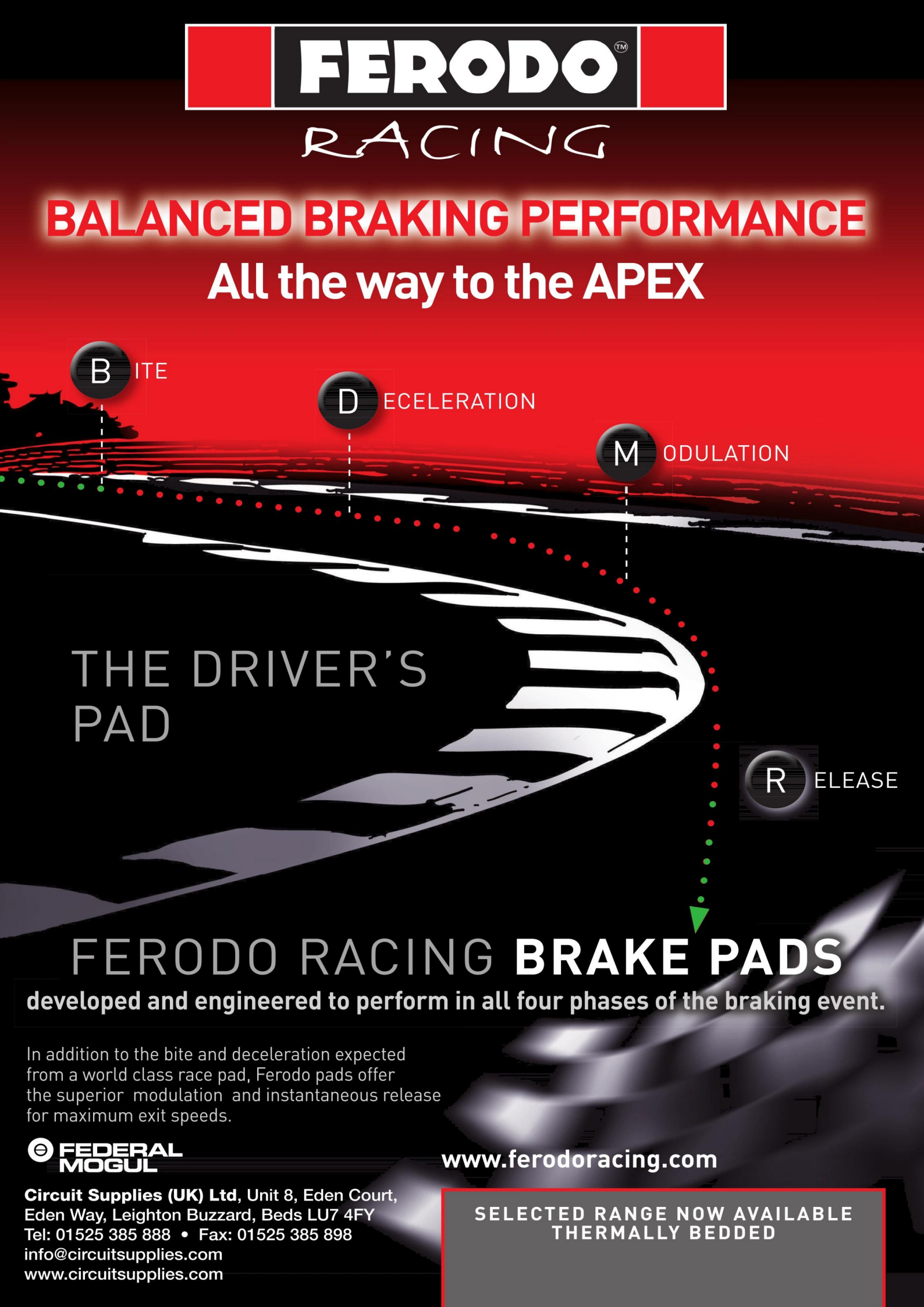
Then on lap 15, Dalton Kellett spun into the Turn 1 sandtrap, and IndyCar delayed throwing a yellow so as not to disadvantage anyone before closing the pits. All the frontrunners dived in, while Takuma Sato, enduring a dismal weekend, and Marco Andretti stayed out and moved up into first and second respectively.

Herta remained ahead of Dixon at the restart, but both had switched from reds to blacks for what would now have to be a long middle stint. Hunter-Reay and Rossi, by contrast, had taken on a second set of reds and wanted to take advantage of the fact that the softer compound warms quicker. Down to Turn 4 on lap 20, Hunter-Reay drew alongside Dixon on the outside but was knocked out to the edge of the track by the late-braking Kiwi, and they lost enough »



ABBOTT

…with predictably catastrophic consequences for Rosenqvist and Palou


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momentum to allow Rossi past both of them.

An angry Hunter-Reay must have regarded it as karma, therefore, when at Turn 1 Dixon's car squirmed as he applied the push-to-pass boost at the apex, ran wide onto the outside kerb at the exit and spun to the back of the pack before pitting for a set of Firestones without flatspots.

Rossi drew close to Herta, who took until lap 26 to pass the off-strategy Andretti for second. While Rossi was wondering how long it would be before he got a chance to do the same, Andretti slid out to the Turn 1 sandtrap. Herta, Rossi and Hunter-Reay moved into the top three spots once Sato finally stopped to give up his lead.

Sato's team-mate Rahal had taken full advantage of his red tyres in this middle

"An angry Hunter-Reay must have regarded it as karma when Dixon's car ran wide and spun"

stint to pass Newgarden (who'd beaten him out of the pits), Ericsson and then Pagenaud to become the biggest threat to Andretti Autosport.

Herta, on blacks, had kept out of reach of Rossi and Hunter-Reay, who were both running reds and, just as Rossi made his second and final stop, Herta had a 1.9s advantage. Herta and Hunter-Reay would stop a lap later and resume the status quo, Rossi between them.

That's how it played out to the end. Herta looked after his reds in masterful fashion, Rossi didn't quite have fuel enough to push-to-pass his way onto the #88 car's tail, and Hunter-Reay couldn't find his way around Rossi. Indeed, RHR was more preoccupied with retaining third as Rahal made a late charge to finish less than a second behind.

Ericsson fully deserved his fifth place, having staved off Pagenaud apparently with ease. Power beat Newgarden off the pitroad in the final stop, but had lost radio communication with his team so didn't know if he had fuel enough to challenge Pagenaud. He could only do mental maths based on Newgarden's progress behind him, so that whenever the #1 car drew within a second of him, Power would respond with a fast lap to pull away again.

Penske didn't maximise Newgarden's points gain over Dixon by asking Pagenaud and Power to move aside for the two-time champion, despite Dixon climbing to 10th with a pass on VeeKay on the final lap. Nonetheless, Newgarden cut his deficit to Dixon from 96 to 72 points at Mid-Ohio, with three races to go.

RESULTS ROUND 7/9, MID-OHIO (USA), 12-13 SEPTEMBER (75 LAPS – 169.350 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	**Will Power** (AUS)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	1h29m08.9095s
2	**Josef Newgarden** (USA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+7.4523s
3	**Alexander Rossi** (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+8.9922s
4	**Graham Rahal** (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+9.2323s
5	**Ryan Hunter-Reay** (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+13.2281s
6	**Felix Rosenqvist** (SWE)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+14.1171s
7	**Jack Harvey** (GBR)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	+18.2198s
8	**Rinus van Kalmthout** (NLD)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+19.2468s
9	**Colton Herta** (USA)	Andretti Harding Steinbrenner Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+26.0264s
10	**Scott Dixon** (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+32.7179s
11	**Pato O'Ward** (MEX)	Arrow McLaren SP / Dallara-Chevrolet	+33.6137s
12	**Alex Palou** (ESP)	Dale Coyne Racing with Team Goh / Dallara-Honda	+34.4767s
13	**Conor Daly** (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	+39.3069s
14	**Santino Ferrucci** (USA)	Dale Coyne Racing with Vasser Sullivan / Dallara-Honda	+42.9962s
15	**Marcus Ericsson** (SWE)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+43.6952s
16	**Max Chilton** (GBR)	Carlin / Dallara-Chevrolet	+44.4717s
17	**Takuma Sato** (JPN)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+45.8415s
18	**Simon Pagenaud** (FRA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+46.2387s
19	**Oliver Askew** (USA)	Arrow McLaren SP / Dallara-Chevrolet	+1m08.4106s
20	**Zach Veach** (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap
21	**Charlie Kimball** (USA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
22	**Dalton Kellett** (CAN)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
23	**Marco Andretti** (USA)	Andretti Herta Autosport / Dallara-Honda	-1 lap

Winner's average speed 113.978mph. **Fastest lap** **O'Ward** 1m08.3982s, 118.845mph.

QUALIFYING GROUP 1 **2 Hunter-Reay 1m06.7287s**; 4 **Daly** 1m06.8761s; 6 **Rossi** 1m07.1856s; 8 **Rahal** 1m07.2205s; 10 **Pagenaud** 1m07.2489s; 12 **Chilton** 1m07.4491s; 14 **Ferrucci** 1m07.5011s; 16 **Askew** 1m07.6211s; 18 **Sato** 1m07.8192s; 20 **Palou** 1m08.1548s; 22 **Kimball** 1m08.3783s; 23 **Kellett** 1m08.5442s. **GROUP 2** **1 Power 1m06.3343s**; 3 **Newgarden** 1m06.5508s; 5 **Harvey** 1m06.7690s; 7 **Rosenqvist** 1m06.7841s; 9 **van Kalmthout** 1m07.0110s; 11 **Andretti** 1m07.0162s; 13 **Herta** 1m07.0212s; 15 **O'Ward** 1m07.0354s; 17 **Dixon** 1m07.1406s; 19 **Veach** 1m07.2101s; 21 **Ericsson** 1m07.3890s.

RACE 2 (75 LAPS – 169.350 MILES)
1 Herta 1h34m17.3968s; 2 **Rossi** +1.3826s; 3 **Hunter-Reay** +2.4965s; 4 **Rahal** +3.0853s; 5 **Ericsson** +9.9175s; 6 **Pagenaud** +14.1918s; 7 **Power** +15.3292s; 8 **Newgarden** +17.2532s; 9 **O'Ward** +22.9474s; 10 **Dixon** +30.5093s; 11 **van Kalmthout** +31.7181s; 12 **Harvey** +36.7526s; 13 **Chilton** +37.6521s; 14 **Ferrucci** +46.5834s; 15 **Askew** +47.3665s; 16 **Daly** +1m00.7058s; 17 **Veach** +1m02.6716s; 18 **Sato** +1m05.2570s; 19 **Kimball** +1m06.2089s; 20 **Andretti** -1 lap; 21 **Kellett** -4 laps; 22 **Rosenqvist** 4 laps-accident damage; 23 **Palou** 2 laps-accident damage.
Winner's average speed 107.763mph. **Fastest lap** **Dixon** 1m08.3089s, 119.001mph.

QUALIFYING GROUP 1 **2 Ferrucci 1m27.4688s**; 4 **Palou** 1m30.7107s; 6 **Pagenaud** 1m31.7359s; 8 **Hunter-Reay** 1m31.9096s; 10 **Rossi** 1m32.7010s; 12 **Rahal** 1m33.1620s; 14 **Askew** 1m33.4681s; 16 **Daly** 1m34.3343s; 18 **Chilton** 1m35.0273s; 20 **Kellett** 1m35.0781s; 22 **Sato** 1m39.8092s; 23 **Kimball** no time. **GROUP 2** **1 Herta 1m26.2788s**; 3 **Dixon** 1m27.0991s; 5 **Rosenqvist** 1m27.1414s; 7 **Andretti** 1m27.4608s; 9 **Newgarden** 1m28.4174s; 11 **van Kalmthout** 1m29.0355s; 13 **Veach** 1m29.2354s; 15 **Ericsson** 1m30.2652s; 17 **Power** no time; 19 **Harvey** no time; 21 **O'Ward** no time.

CHAMPIONSHIP **1 Dixon 456**; 2 **Newgarden** 384; 3 **O'Ward** 338; 4 **Herta** 327; 5 **Power** 306; 6 **Rahal** 301; 7 **Sato** 300; 8 **Pagenaud** 277; 9 **Hunter-Reay** 260; 10 **Ferrucci** 249.



Hunter-Reay leads Rossi. They spent nearly the entire weekend battling

NEXT REPORT

INDIANAPOLIS
8 OCTOBER ISSUE

It's back to the Speedway's road course, for a double-header this time. Scott Dixon was victorious when they ran on this layout in July.



More Mugello chaos for juniors allows Mazepin to triumph

FIA FORMULA 2
MUGELLO (ITA)
12-13 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 9/12

The FIA Formula 2 feature race at Mugello offered the perfect preview of the chaos that would engulf the Tuscan Grand Prix the following day. Nikita Mazepin emerged victorious from 14th on the grid to take his second Saturday win of the season in a dramatic contest. But it was bad luck for Renault F1 junior Christian Lundgaard, who had earned his maiden pole and was set for a first feature race win until two late safety car periods ended his race-long advantage.

The first safety car was required to recover the HWA Racelab machine of Giuliano Alesi, and which took a painfully long time to recover. This pause gave a sizeable boost to those drivers who'd gone for the alternative strategy of saving their soft tyres for the end of the race, with Mazepin among them in eighth.

Mazepin dodged the colliding Yuki Tsunoda and Dan Ticktum at the Turn 1 right-hander and moved into third as further chaos unfolded. There was a three-way clash between points leader Mick Schumacher, Guanyu Zhou and Jack Aitken on the run to the Luco left-hander, with Aitken and Zhou eliminated on the spot and Schumacher miraculously emerging relatively unscathed. Schumacher's main title rival, Ferrari stablemate Callum Ilott, had to pit for repairs that would drop him to the back.

With cars and debris strewn across the track, the safety car was again required and this time Lundgaard was unable to hold off the oncoming tide of drivers on faster tyres as a final three-lap shoutout commenced. Mazepin seized his opportunity and followed his Hitech GP team-mate Luca Ghiotto past Lundgaard into Turn 1 before braving it around the outside of Ghiotto at Turn 2 to take the lead.

Mazepin led Ghiotto – on the same strategy as Lundgaard – home by over four seconds, marking a first 1-2 finish for F2 newcomer Hitech. "If I've learned one thing this year it's not to expect anything," Mazepin said. "I've had very good results taken away from me, I've had very bad results turn into good results, so I think the key point of being a Formula 2 driver is just focusing on doing your job, and after, analysing where you've ended up." This is a reference to the penalties that cost him third in the feature race at Barcelona and the win at Spa, which became second following a post-race penalty for his defence against Tsunoda.

Charouz-run Haas Formula 1 reserve Louis Deletraz passed MP Motorsport's Felipe Drugovich on the final lap of the race to secure his first feature race podium of the year. Schumacher's run of five consecutive podiums finally came to an end with a solid



Lundgaard leads from Markelov on way to sprint-race redemption


Mazepin celebrates unexpected victory

RESULTS ROUND 9/12, MUGELLO (ITA), 12-13 SEPTEMBER RACE 1 (33 LAPS – 107.576 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TIME
1	**Nikita Mazepin** (RUS)	Hitech Grand Prix	59m22.869s
2	**Luca Ghiotto** (ITA)	Hitech Grand Prix	+4.460s
3	**Louis Deletraz** (CHE)	Charouz Racing	+4.519s
4	**Felipe Drugovich** (BRA)	MP Motorsport	+4.860s
5	**Mick Schumacher** (DEU)	Prema Racing	+5.374s
6	**Christian Lundgaard** (DNK)	ART Grand Prix	+7.825s
7	**Juri Vips** (EST)	DAMS	+8.353s
8	**Artem Markelov** (RUS)	HWA Racelab	+10.172s
9	**Marcus Armstrong** (NZL)	ART Grand Prix	+10.434s
10	**Jehan Daruvala** (IND)	Carlin	+10.663s
11	**Nobuharu Matsushita** (JPN)	MP Motorsport	+11.100s
12	**Callum Ilott** (GBR)	Virtuosi Racing	+11.747s
13	**Pedro Piquet** (BRA)	Charouz Racing	+11.757s
14	**Marino Sato** (JPN)	Trident	+12.428s
15	**Roy Nissany** (ISR)	Trident	+13.588s
16	**Yuki Tsunoda** (JPN)	Carlin	+14.112s
17	**Dan Ticktum** (GBR)	DAMS	+15.959s
18	**Guilherme Samaia** (BRA)	Campos Racing	+52.196s
R	**Jack Aitken** (GBR)	Campos Racing	26 laps-accident
R	**Guanyu Zhou** (CHN)	Virtuosi Racing	26 laps-accident
R	**Giuliano Alesi** (FRA)	HWA Racelab	21 laps-technical
R	**Robert Shwartzman** (RUS)	Prema Racing	16 laps-gearbox

Winner's average speed 108.697mph. **Fastest lap** **Zhou** 1m33.732s, 125.173mph.



QUALIFYING

1 Lundgaard (above) 1m30.133s
2 **Ticktum** 1m30.138s
3 **Ilott** 1m30.204s
4 **Armstrong** 1m30.317s
5 **Drugovich** 1m30.339s
6 **Daruvala** 1m30.437s
7 **Ghiotto** 1m30.508s
8 **Shwartzman** 1m30.527s
9 **Aitken** 1m30.533s
10 **Vips** 1m30.486s*
11 **Tsunoda** 1m30.542s
12 **Deletraz** 1m30.552s
13 **Zhou** 1m30.586s
14 **Mazepin** 1m30.592s
15 **Schumacher** 1m30.924s
16 **Piquet** 1m30.974s
17 **Sato** 1m31.131s
18 **Nissany** 1m31.159s
19 **Markelov** 1m31.331s
20 **Alesi** 1m31.345s
21 **Matsushita** 1m31.961s
22 **Samaia** 1m32.359s
*3-place penalty for impeding another driver

fifth-place finish from 15th on the grid.

Lundgaard slipped to sixth, but the ART Grand Prix talent avenged the lost win with a dominant drive in the reversed-grid race on Sunday. He blitzed past polesitter Artem Markelov and Red Bull junior Juri Vips at the start and never looked back.

F2 veteran Markelov, who finished runner-up to Charles Leclerc in the 2017 standings but has just five points to his name this season, gradually slipped down the order before making contact with former team-mate Ghiotto. This broke Markelov's front wing and prevented any chance of points.

Ghiotto was then shunted out of the race while attempting to overtake team-mate Mazepin at Turn 1 with nine laps to go. The Russian driver locked his brakes and slammed Ghiotto into the gravel.

Ahead of his Le Mans 24 Hours debut this weekend, Deletraz capped his most successful outing in F2 with a double podium, having fended off late pressure from Vips to come home second. Third place represented a maiden F2 podium for Vips in only his third weekend deputising for the injured Sean Gelael at DAMS.

Schumacher — who later enjoyed a run in his father's championship-winning Ferrari F2004 — took fourth place in his Prema Racing car to extend his lead to eight points over Ilott. Schumacher's team-mate Robert Shwartzman failed to score a single point all weekend with myriad issues.

JOSH SUTTILL

RACE 2 (23 LAPS – 74.985 MILES)
GRID FOR RACE 2 Decided by result of Race 1, with top eight finishers reversed.
1 Lundgaard 37m51.980s; 2 **Deletraz** +14.321s; 3 **Vips** +14.870s; 4 **Schumacher** +18.018s; 5 **Zhou** +18.382s; 6 **Ilott** +24.421s; 7 **Daruvala** +26.264s; 8 **Sato** +26.301s; 9 **Shwartzman** +31.425s; 10 **Nissany** +32.942s; 11 **Armstrong** +34.902s; 12 **Piquet** +35.040s; 13 **Aitken** +35.254s; 14 **Matsushita** +36.983s; 15 **Drugovich** +39.072s; 16 **Samaia** +48.433s; 17 **Ticktum** +48.483s; 18 **Mazepin** +50.793s; 19 **Tsunoda** +1m09.649s; 20 **Markelov** +1m21.885s; R **Ghiotto** 14 laps-accident; R **Alesi** 14 laps-technical.
Winner's average speed 118.815mph. **Fastest lap** **Ticktum** 1m33.295s, 125.759mph.

CHAMPIONSHIP **1 Schumacher 161**; 2 **Ilott** 153; 3 **Lundgaard** 145; 4 **Shwartzman** 140; 5 **Mazepin** 127; 6 **Tsunoda** 123; 7 **Deletraz** 122; 8 **Zhou** 108; 9 **Ghiotto** 89; 10 **Drugovich** 79.


Schumacher holds eight-point lead with three rounds to go

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Piastri crowned in thrilling finale



Piastri's stellar racecraft was enough to overcome one-lap limitations

SUTTON motorsport IMAGES

FIA FORMULA 3
MUGELLO (ITA)
12-13 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 9/9

Six drivers entered the final round of the 2020 FIA Formula 3 season at Mugello with a mathematical chance of taking the championship, but it was Renault F1 junior Oscar Piastri who walked away with the title despite scoring just four points.

Piastri headed into the finale with an eight-point advantage over his Prema Racing team-mate Logan Sargeant, and 24 over ART Grand Prix's Theo Pourchaire. The outside title hopes of Pourchaire were boosted by the knowledge that both Piastri and Sargeant would have grid penalties.

Piastri's starting disadvantage was amplified on Friday when he could only manage 11th in qualifying – 16th on the grid – while Sargeant was second fastest, and fifth on the grid after his drop was applied.

Piastri traded blows with multiple drivers on the exit of Turn 1 during his rise to 11th in the opening race – the first time he's finished outside the points in FIA F3. Sargeant, who had labelled his machine as "undriveable" in qualifying, dropped one position to finish sixth and draw level with Piastri in the points. Pourchaire had the most impressive run of the three serious title contenders as he passed Sargeant twice en route to third from seventh on the grid.

It was the other Prema driver, Frederik Vesti, who continued his late-season charge with his second successive Saturday victory after overhauling the HWA Racelab car of Jake Hughes, who lacked straight-line speed and had no answer to the DRS-assisted Vesti on the run to Turn 1. Vesti had the move done before the braking zone but Hughes, competing in his final F3 weekend, was able to boldly drive around the outside of the Dane on the penultimate lap at the Turn 1 right-hander. Unfortunately for Hughes, he was once again powerless to defend from Vesti on the main straight on the last lap.

Vesti beat Hughes to the flag by 0.3 seconds, with Pourchaire pipping Lirim Zendeli for third, which allowed him to move within nine points of the leading Prema pair. With Zendeli claiming fastest lap, that dropped Vesti out of the picture for the title.

Pourchaire would quickly become Piastri's only obstacle to the FIA F3 title when Sargeant was wiped out on the opening



Third-starting Vesti leads on way to race-one win

SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

WEEKEND WINNERS

FIA FORMULA 3
MUGELLO (ITA)
Race 1 Frederik Vesti
Prema Racing
Race 2 Liam Lawson (below)
Hitech Grand Prix

GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE SPRINT CUP
MAGNY-COURS (FRA)
Race 1 Luca Stolz/Maro Engel
Haupt Racing Team (Mercedes-AMG GT3)
Race 2 Steven Palette/Simon Gachet
Sainteloc Junior Team (Audi R8 LMS GT3)

FORMULA RENAULT EUROCUP
MAGNY-COURS (FRA)
Race 1 Caio Collet
R-ace GP
Race 2 Victor Martins
ART Grand Prix



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lap of Sunday's reversed-grid race in a collision with Zendeli. Piastri and Pourchaire ran nose to tail in seventh and eighth when the safety car was called to recover the stricken cars. Pourchaire passed Piastri on the restart and began charging to the podium positions, while Piastri slipped back to 10th .

Pourchaire passed team-mate Sebastian Fernandez into Turn 1 with six laps to go, and for the briefest of moments the Frenchman was set to clinch the title on countback. But moments later Piastri passed Pourchaire's team-mate Alexander Smolyar at the same corner to move into ninth and the odds swung back in his favour.

Red Bull junior Liam Lawson was untouchable out front and David Beckmann – who like Lawson had dropped out of title contention the day before – was a safe second, with Pourchaire third. Meanwhile, Piastri improved to seventh, edging Fernandez to the line by just 0.043s.

A perfect blend of brilliant racecraft and resilience makes Piastri a worthy champion. He may have failed to qualify on the front row, but his supreme judgement and elbows-out style more than made up for his single-lap speed deficit.

JOSH SUTTILL

Stolz and Engel send sparks flying to gain on title rivals

GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE SPRINT CUP
MAGNY-COURS (FRA)
12-13 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 2/4



Gachet celebrates race-two recovery to win

HECO/SRO

Not since 2011 had the GT World Challenge Europe visited Magny-Cours in the series' former guise as the Blancpain Endurance Series. Therefore, there was a fair number of unknowns as the Sprint Cup resumed last weekend.

Nevertheless, the formbook seemed familiar as the Haupt Racing Team Mercedes combination of Luca Stolz and Maro Engel proved the best of the field across the weekend, taking a victory and third place to close in on the points lead.

The pair claimed pole position for Saturday's night affair and duly drove a perfect race on their way to a first win of the season. Stolz started and, although he was chased by the Emil Frey Racing Lamborghini of Mikael Grenier, the Merc was never seriously challenged over the course of the one-hour encounter.

Indeed, the Lambo was heroic in the defence of its second place by the end as Grenier's team-mate Norbert Siedler clung on wonderfully amid serious pressure from the WRT Audi of Dries Vanthoor.

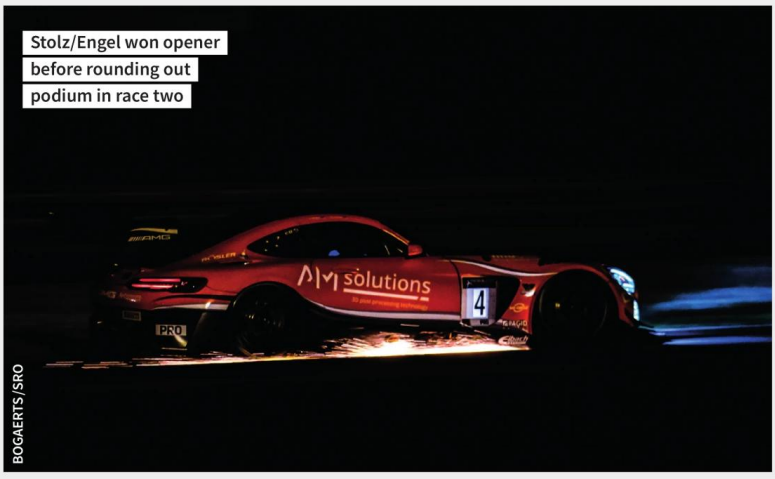
While the leading places remained unchanged, it had been a race full of close action, thanks in major part to Audi's ace attacker Kelvin van der Linde. The South African was far from nervous about brushing door panels, first with the Attempto R8 of Mattia Drudi and then the Sainteloc car of Christopher Haase, and seemed to revel in the late squabble.

Van der Linde passed Drudi for fifth but failed to overhaul Haase, who hung on admirably at the end before clocking a 20s penalty and dropping to ninth.

After failing to take the start in race one due to a puncture picked up on the formation lap, Sainteloc Audi pair Steven Palette and Simon Gachet were keen to make amends from pole in Sunday's second race. They did so, but only after an error from Timur Boguslavskiy while leading in the second half of the race.

Gachet led either side of an early safety car following Jules Gounon's spin at Grande Courbe, but lost out to the AKKA ASP Mercedes of Boguslavskiy and Raffaele Marciello at the stops. Boguslavskiy seemed to have the edge on Palette before understeering into the gravel, handing the French pair a home victory.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON



Stolz/Engel won opener before rounding out podium in race two

BOGAERTS/SRO



Polesitter Muller leads race one on his way to a near-16s victory

Muller and Frijns restore Audi supremacy

DTM
NURBURGRING (DEU)
12-13 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 5/9

Nico Muller showed exemplary form as the DTM returned to the Nurburgring Grand Prix circuit for the first time since 2004. The Abt Audi driver would have likely bagged a perfect score of 56 points had he not been robbed of victory in the second race by technical gremlins.

After setting the fastest lap in second practice on Friday afternoon, Muller lowered his own benchmark to take pole position for the first race on Saturday, comfortably outqualifying his title rivals Robin Frijns and Rene Rast. The Swiss driver then maintained his advantage in the 31-lap contest, pulling away cleanly and stopping for fresh tyres early on to rule out any chance of being undercut by his rivals. From there, the championship leader slowly but steadily extended his margin out front, taking the chequered flag with a winning cushion of more than 15 seconds – an impressive feat given the race leader cannot deploy either the push-to-pass or the DRS overtaking aid in the DTM.

The second race should have been more of the same for Muller, considering he was a class above. In fact, until the first round of pitstops, race two appeared to be a carbon copy from Muller's point of view. Once again, the 28-year-old led the field with a 1s margin after qualifying on pole. He stopped on lap 11 of 31 to avoid being jumped in the pits by Frijns in second.

But not long after the pitstops were settled, Muller's pace suddenly began to drop due to a technical issue that was costing him up to 70bhp, allowing Frijns to nullify the lead, which had grown to 3s, in a matter of two laps. When Frijns dived down the inside into the final chicane, Muller didn't even put up a fight against his team-mate, well aware that he would not be able to hold on to his position with the problem that was masking his true pace.

He continued to drop further down the order in the closing stages of the race, eventually crossing the line in fifth. This happened to be Muller's joint-worst result of the season, showing just how consistent last year's runner-up has been in the 2020 season so far.

The victory Frijns inherited after Muller's troubles would have gone some way towards making up for the disappointment on Saturday, when he ran over the kerbs at Turn 1 and spun while battling with Rast for second position. The incident dropped Frijns to fifth in the final order, while Rast ended the day as runner-up. But Sunday's win for Frijns ahead of a second-placed Rast meant he only conceded a single point to his rival in the standings over the weekend.

After BMW's shock win at Assen, the status quo resumed at the Nurburgring, with Audi comfortably quicker than its only manufacturer rival. Marco Wittmann was BMW's top representative in Germany, bagging his second podium of 2020 in the opener.

RACHIT THUKRAL



Frijns won race two after Muller suffered a power drop-off

Ehrlacher beats uncle Muller in Lynk & Co rout

WTCR
ZOLDER (BEL)
13 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 1/6

Yann Ehrlacher and his uncle Yvan Muller kept it in the family as the 2020 World Touring Car Cup finally kicked off at Zolder last Sunday. The pair were joined on the podium by new Cyan Racing team-mate and series rookie Santiago Urrutia in a Lynk & Co lock-out, in the second of two races at a meeting switched at short notice from the Salzburgring in Austria to the former Belgian Grand Prix venue because of pandemic restrictions.

Argentine Nestor Girolami won race one from reversed-grid pole position on Sunday morning ahead of Thed Bjork's Lynk & Co and the Honda of Attila Tassi. The downside for the German team was a double engine blow-up for Esteban Guerrieri and Tiago Monteiro, who started race two from the back with fresh power units.

At the sharp end, Nathanael Berthon started on pole for his first WTCR race since 2018. But his Comtoyou Audi began creeping before the red lights went out and fellow front-row starter Ehrlacher immediately knew the race was his to lose.

A first-lap collision between Bjork and Tassi at the chicane required a safety car interlude, as the Honda smacked a tyre stack and the Swede's Lynk & Co was left stranded on the circuit. Racing resumed on lap four as Berthon backed Ehrlacher into his Comtoyou team-mate Gilles Magnus, until he took his drivethrough penalty at the end of lap five. From that point, Ehrlacher was clear to build a gap on the new Goodyear tyres that have replaced long-time supplier Yokohama for this season.

"Everything happened at the start," said the 24-year-old. "I saw [Berthon] had jumped the start. Once he went to the box, I had my way free to work on my pace and save my tyres."



Ehrlacher heads Muller as WTCR finally returned

LE FLOCH/DPPI


Honda driver Girolami celebrates race-one win

LE FLOCH/DPPI

Local hero Magnus shone all weekend on his WTCR debut. The youngest winner of the Zolder 24 Hours used his circuit knowledge to qualify third and looked a sure bet for second place, until he lost power in the closing stages because of a fuel pump problem that had reared its head in the opener. That allowed Muller and Uruguayan Urrutia to pick him off.

"He was faster than me," said Muller of his nephew. "Second place is like a victory. We did the same in China last year where we were first and second and now we've done it in the opposite order. It's fantastic to share that in the same family; I am more than double his age and taught him everything I know since he was 17."

Magnus, 21, was relieved the race finished under caution, which allowed him to nurse his Audi home in fourth. Jack Young, the only British driver in the WTCR this year, had acquitted himself well on his debut at this level in Vukovic Motorsport's Renault Megane RS TCR. But the Northern Irishman and Renault Clio Cup graduate was punted into a gravel trap by a recovering Tassi, forcing the safety car to return.

Ehrlacher leads Girolami by seven points as the WTCR heads for the second of six rounds to be held in just nine weeks, all of which will be limited to Europe.

DAMIEN SMITH

WEEKEND WINNERS

DTM
NURBURGRING (DEU)
Race 1 Nico Muller
Team Abt (Audi RS5 DTM)
Race 2 Robin Frijns
Team Abt (Audi RS5 DTM)

WTCR
ZOLDER (BEL)
Race 1 Nestor Girolami
Munnich Motorsport
(Honda Civic Type R TCR)
Race 2 Yann Ehrlacher
Cyan Racing (Lynk & Co 03 TCR)

FORMULA REGIONAL EUROPEAN
RED BULL RING (AUT)
Races 1 & 3 Gianluca Petecof
Prema Powerteam
Race 2 Oliver Rasmussen
Prema Powerteam

EUROFORMULA OPEN
RED BULL RING (AUT)
Races 1 & 2 Yifei Ye
CryptoTower (Dallara-Spiess)

BRAZILIAN STOCK CARS
LONDRINA (BRA)
Race 1 Rafael Suzuki
Full Time Bassani (Toyota Corolla)
Race 2 Ricardo Mauricio
Eurofarma RC (Chevrolet Cruze)

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Baguette sets up Tsukakoshi to earn crust

SUPER GT
MOTEGI (JPN)
13 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 4/8



Honda NSX duo scored second win in three races at Motegi

ISHIHARA motorsport IMAGES

Real Racing Honda drivers Bertrand Baguette and Koudai Tsukakoshi grabbed the Super GT championship lead at Motegi with their second win in the past three races. The duo overcame their 48kg weight handicap and survived two safety car restarts on their way to a victory that puts them two points clear of the opposition at the halfway point of the season.

Cerumo Toyota pair Yuji Tachikawa and Hiroaki Ishiura bagged pole position in the mixed conditions of qualifying but, come the race, Tachikawa couldn't shake off Baguette and fell victim to the Belgian on the eighth lap of 63 at the Turn 10 hairpin.

Baguette led until pitting on lap 25 and handing over his Honda to Tsukakoshi, who was never seriously threatened once Ishiura had taken over the Toyota from Tachikawa, despite having a 10s lead eradicated by the second safety car period.

Behind the top pair, Mugen Honda duo Hideki Mutoh and Ukyo Sasahara finished third, giving the team its first podium finish since it returned to Super GT in its own right in 2017 and tyre supplier Yokohama by far its best result of the year.

The perfect podium run of pre-race points leaders Sacha Fenestraz and Yuhi Sekiguchi came to an end as the TOM'S Toyota pair ended up in 11th, not helped by Sekiguchi coming to blows with stablemate Nick Cassidy in the sister GR Supra.

Cassidy attempted a move on Sekiguchi at the Turn 5 right-hander on lap 44 while the pair fought for sixth, but slight contact pitched Cassidy into a spin and left Sekiguchi's car missing part of its rear wing and a piece of right-rear bodywork.

Despite the incident, Cassidy was able to go on to claim sixth in the Toyota he shares with Ryo Hirakawa to end the race five points off the championship lead and just three behind Sekiguchi and Fenestraz.

Suzuka winners Ronnie Quintarelli and Tsugio Matsuda could only manage eighth in the NISMO Nissan, a place behind the NDDP/B-Max car that was the marque's highest finisher.

JAMIE KLEIN

Keselowski manages Mustang

NASCAR CUP
RICHMOND (USA)
12 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 28/36

Post-race burnouts are synonymous with winning in the NASCAR Cup, but there would be none from Brad Keselowski when he took the chequered flag after 400 laps at Richmond. The 2012 champion had his Team Penske-run Ford Mustang exactly as he wanted and didn't want to risk anything upsetting the package before this weekend's visit to Bristol Motor Speedway.



Keselowski ran like clockwork at Richmond

NKP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

It was a near-perfect race for Keselowski. He missed out on victory in the first stage – that went the way of Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota pilot Denny Hamlin – but came into his own in stage two. Austin Dillon, Joey Logano and Martin Truex Jr all attempted to take that lead from him, but it was Keselowski who ran to the top of the order when the chequered flag flew.

The only thing that could stop Keselowski taking the victory was a caution period or a pitstop mistake. The latter happened to Dillon, who missed the pit entry as he tried to make his final stop, costing valuable seconds.

Surprisingly, the race ran with no unscheduled cautions, and Keselowski had no pitroad issues so that he finished a comfortable 1.6s ahead of Truex.

BETHONIE WARING

WEEKEND WINNERS

SUPER GT
MOTEGI (JPN)
Race 1 Koudai Tsukakoshi/Bertrand Baguette
Real Racing (Honda NSX-GT)

NASCAR CUP
RICHMOND (USA)
Brad Keselowski
Team Penske (Ford Mustang)

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES
RICHMOND (USA)
Races 1 and 2 Justin Allgaier
JR Motorsports
(Chevrolet Camaro)

NASCAR TRUCK SERIES
RICHMOND (USA)
Grant Enfinger
ThorSport Racing (Ford F-150)

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Level-headed Morbidelli completes rise from obscurity to title contender

MOTOGP
MISANO (ITA)
13 SEPTEMBER
ROUND 6/14

Motorsport isn't exactly a famed breeding ground for cool-headed individuals – not least at world championship level. Franco Morbidelli bucks that trend, however, in that he's able to kick back off track, but is a force on it.

Morbidelli's career is something of a triumph-over-adversity story. Plucked from obscurity in the European Superstock 600 series – which used to support World Superbikes – at the end of 2013, he moved into Moto2 full-time in 2014. Valentino Rossi then took Morbidelli under his wing in his VR46 Academy.

Morbidelli became the first VR46-backed rider to win a world title when he bagged the 2017 Moto2 crown. In 2018, he was also the first to make it to MotoGP. A tough Honda bike in Marc VDS colours masked his talent, and a move to Petronas SRT last year led him to be overshadowed by rookie sensation Fabio Quartararo.

Having had his "butt kicked", the fact that Morbidelli dominated the 2020 San Marino Grand Prix while Quartararo crashed twice goes some way to showing just how much the former has upped his game this season.

Denied a podium in the Andalusian GP by engine issues, he made it onto the rostrum at Brno and threatened another visit in the first of two Misano weekends. Grabbing the holeshot off the line in Misano last weekend, Morbidelli "felt pressure" from his mentor Rossi hounding him. But then the SRT Yamaha rider began to build a gap. Standing at 1.1s at the end of lap 14, it continued to grow. The following tour, Morbidelli fired in a 1m32.748s – a lap some 0.5s quicker than what Rossi had managed.



Morbidelli leads as his SRT team-mate Quartararo crashes

This proved the turning point. Rossi had no response, and his attentions soon turned to another VR46 Academy star behind him.

Morbidelli's lead grew to over 3s but he backed it off in the last two of "the most important" final 10 laps of his life – during which time he could reflect on numerous things, not least the Italian championship race win at Misano seven years ago.

That underfunded rider in 2013, so far away from MotoGP, and who in January of that year had lost his father, was now a premier-class race winner – doing so on home soil, and on what is largely a 2019 M1.

A result like that would render most an emotional wreck, but Morbidelli's first thoughts off the bike were simply, "In my opinion, the race went just fine." Cool as ice.

His team-mate Quartararo, by contrast, got "too excited" when he dropped behind a struggling Maverick Vinales at the start into fifth. Desperate to chase down then-third-placed Jack Miller when clear of Vinales on lap eight, he crashed at Turn 4. A second crash later on ended a miserable but character-building day.

Francesco Bagnaia's charge through to the podium places was a remarkable feat considering he's still hobbling about on a crutch as he continues to recover from a


Rossi was fourth as his VR46 proteges shone


Dovizioso snared seventh – and the points lead

ALL PICS: GOLD AND GOOSE motorsport IMAGES

broken leg sustained at Brno. A brave pass on mentor Rossi at Turn 11 on lap 21 for second showed how unfazed he was to claim a maiden MotoGP podium.

With Ducati nearing a decision on promoting either Johann Zarco (who was 15th) or Bagnaia to its factory team for 2021, the latter made a pretty convincing case.

Rossi couldn't quite complete the VR46 podium clean-sweep, a hard-charging Joan Mir on the Suzuki firmly stripping him of third at Turn 10 on the last lap. Fourth for Rossi ended a banner day for his Academy.

Alex Rins battled late arm pump issues to finish fifth on his Suzuki ahead of Yamaha's Vinales, who went from a lap-record-setting pole time to "a cone on track" in the race as the "usual" mystifying issues of Sunday form desertion struck again. He ruled out his choice to run the hard rear tyre – the only rider to do so – for his slump.

Andrea Dovizioso dragged seventh out of the Ducati and leads the standings by six points courtesy of Quartararo's nightmare. Choosing the soft rear tyre made Miller's race an outing of survival in ninth – though a track limits penalty for LCR's Takaaki Nakagami promoted him a place. Pol Espargaro completed the top 10 in the first weekend of 2020 where KTM wasn't a threat.

Morbidelli isn't considering himself a title threat. He's "just a satellite guy", he claims. But just 19 points adrift of the championship lead, he's as much a contender as anyone else right now.

LEWIS DUNCAN

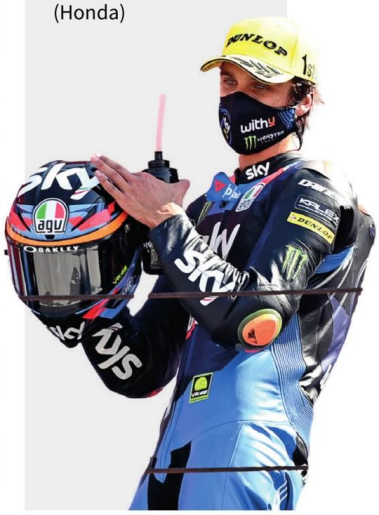
RESULTS ROUND 6/14, MISANO (ITA), 13 SEPTEMBER (27 LAPS – 70.900 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	**Franco Morbidelli** (ITA)	Petronas Yamaha	42m02.272s
2	**Francesco Bagnaia** (ITA)	Pramac Ducati	+2.217s
3	**Joan Mir** (ESP)	Suzuki	+2.290s
4	**Valentino Rossi** (ITA)	Yamaha	+2.643s
5	**Alex Rins** (ESP)	Suzuki	+4.044s
6	**Maverick Vinales** (ESP)	Yamaha	+5.383s
7	**Andrea Dovizioso** (ITA)	Ducati	+10.358s
8	**Jack Miller** (AUS)	Pramac Ducati	+11.155s
9	**Takaaki Nakagami** (JPN)	LCR Honda	+10.839s
10	**Pol Espargaro** (ESP)	KTM	+12.030s
11	**Miguel Oliveira** (PRT)	Tech3 KTM	+12.376s
12	**Brad Binder** (ZAF)	KTM	+12.405s
13	**Aleix Espargaro** (ESP)	Aprilia	+15.142s
14	**Iker Lecuona** (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	+19.914s
15	**Johann Zarco** (FRA)	Avintia Ducati	+20.152s
16	**Danilo Petrucci** (ITA)	Ducati	+22.094s
17	**Alex Marquez** (ESP)	Honda	+22.473s
18	**Stefan Bradl** (DEU)	Honda	+37.856s
19	**Bradley Smith** (GBR)	Aprilia	+1m18.831s
R	**Tito Rabat** (ESP)	Avintia Ducati	22 laps-accident
R	**Fabio Quartararo** (FRA)	Petronas Yamaha	18 laps-accident
W	**Cal Crutchlow** (GBR)	LCR Honda	Injury

WEEKEND WINNERS

MOTO2
MISANO (ITA)
Luca Marini (below)
Team VR46
(Kalex)

MOTO 3
MISANO (ITA)
John McPhee
Sprinta Racing
(Honda)



Winner's average speed 101.194mph. **Fastest lap** **Bagnaia** 1m32.706s, 101.970mph.

QUALIFYING 2 **1 Vinales 1m31.411s**; 2 **Morbidelli** 1m31.723s; 3 **Quartararo** 1m31.791s; 4 **Rossi** 1m31.877s; 5 **Miller** 1m32.052s; 6 **Bagnaia** 1m32.054s; 7 **Rins** 1m32.090s; 8 **Mir** 1m32.102s; 9 **Dovizioso** 1m32.184s; 10 **Zarco** 1m32.218s; 11 **P Espargaro** 1m32.266s; 12 **Oliveira** 1m32.323s.

QUALIFYING 1 **1 P Espargaro 1m32.064s**; 2 **Oliveira** 1m32.212s; 3 **A Espargaro** 1m32.295s; 4 **Nakagami** 1m32.382s; 5 **Petrucci** 1m32.418s; 6 **Binder** 1m32.534s; 7 **Rabat** 1m32.791s; 8 **Lecuona** 1m32.838s; 9 **Bradl** 1m32.915s; 10 **Smith** 1m33.166s; 11 **Marquez** 1m33.333s.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP **1 Dovizioso 76**; 2 **Quartararo** 70; 3 **Miller** 64; 4 **Mir** 60; 5 **Vinales** 58; 6 **Rossi** 58; 7 **Morbidelli** 57; 8 **Binder** 53; 9 **Nakagami** 53; 10 **Oliveira** 48; 11 **P Espargaro** 41; 12 **Rins** 40; 13 **Zarco** 31; 14 **Bagnaia** 29; 15 **Petrucci** 25; 16 **A Espargaro** 18; 17 **Marquez** 15; 18 **Lecuona** 15; 19 **Smith** 8; 20 **Rabat** 7; 21 **Crutchlow** 7; 22 **Michele Pirro** 4; 23 **Bradl** 0.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP **1 Yamaha 113**; 2 **Ducati** 107; 3 **KTM** 88; 4 **Suzuki** 73; 5 **Honda** 53; 6 **Aprilia** 23.



L-r: Bagnaia, Morbidelli and Mir on Misano podium

NEXT REPORT

EMILIA ROMAGNA GRAND PRIX 24 SEPTEMBER ISSUE

Will Morbidelli prove to be a genuine title contender as MotoGP returns to Misano, or can team-mate Quartararo bounce back to close on Dovizioso?

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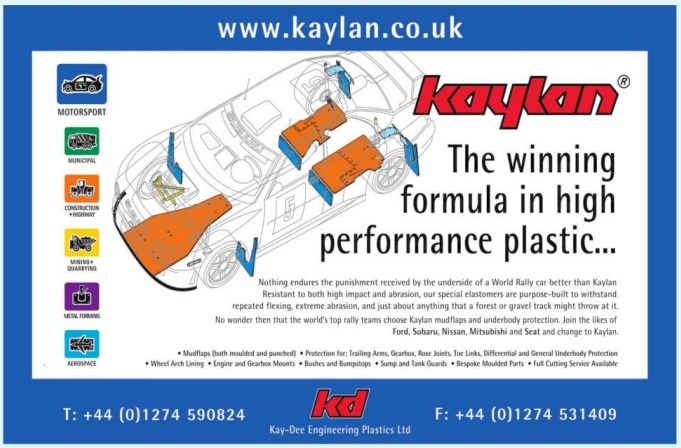
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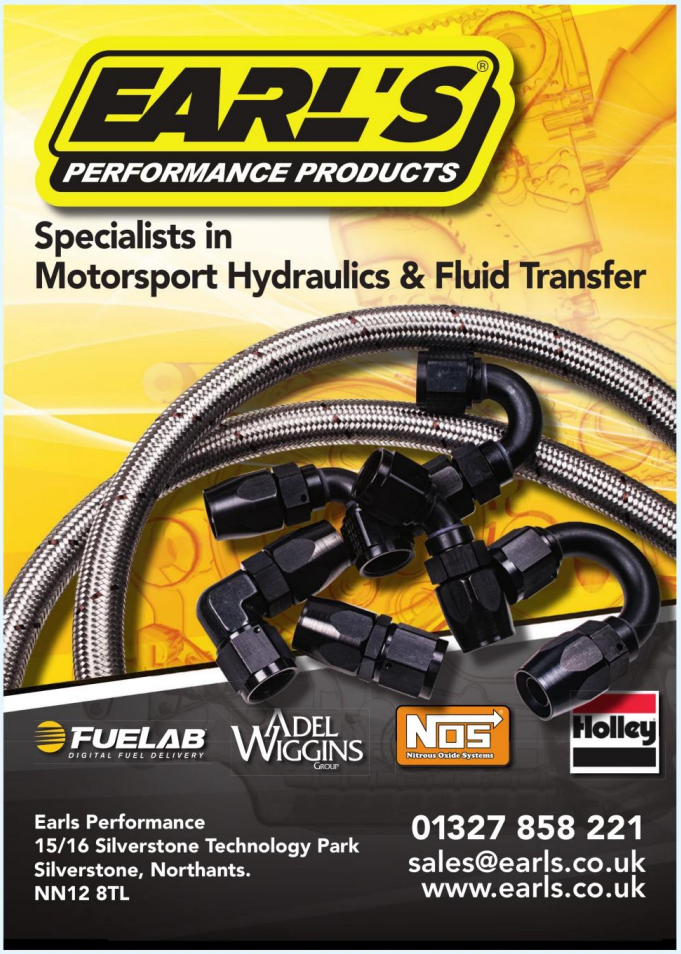


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Anglesey endurance contest features unique remembrance service mid-race

BOURNE

RACE OF REMEMBRANCE IS LATEST EVENT TO BE AXED

RACE OF REMEMBRANCE

The end-of-season Race of Remembrance at Anglesey has become the latest event to be cancelled in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

The popular fixture takes place on the Remembrance Sunday weekend and, as well as featuring an endurance race, a poignant memorial service also takes place.

The event was due to run on the 6-8 November weekend this year, but organiser Mission Motorsport – a charity that aims to aid the recovery and rehabilitation of service veterans through motorsport – has decided in light of rising coronavirus cases and uncertainty surrounding events in Wales that it is best to cancel this year's edition and instead focus on next year.

A statement from the organisers read: "With heavy hearts, Race of Remembrance will be postponed this year. The uncertainty that COVID brings can only be mitigated so far, and for an event primarily built on goodwill we hope that by making a decision early we will reduce the impact on competitors, officials, partners, friends and beneficiaries. We will bring the event back in 2021.

"For now, we are engaging with our beneficiaries and working on telling those stories that shine a light on Mission Motorsport and the veteran community. That's what Race of Remembrance is for, and we are determined to mark the event in another way."

The event's cancellation means there is now just one circuit-racing meeting left on Anglesey's 2020 schedule: the traditional winter race day at the end of November.

Anglesey's Andrew Crighton says he was surprised by the decision of the race's organisers, especially in the wake of a successful test event being held at the circuit earlier this month (see right).

"It's hugely disappointing that it's not going to go ahead," he added. "There's always a lot of interest in it and it's grown into a bit of an iconic race meeting, so for it to be pulled at this stage is sad.

"Mission Motorsport is a charitable organisation and they've got to keep a close eye on the books – I fully get they've got to be cautious."

Race of Remembrance has become the third circuit-race meeting at Anglesey to be axed due to COVID-19, after 750 Motor Club and British Racing & Sports Car Club fixtures at the circuit also had to be called off.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Welsh racing still uncertain despite trial

CORONAVIRUS

The increase in coronavirus cases has created more uncertainty for motorsport in Wales, despite a trial event at Anglesey earlier this month running successfully.

The circuit was given permission from the Welsh government to host one of three test events aimed at assessing whether strict restrictions on events in Wales could be eased. The 750 Motor Club ran a one-day meeting at the start of the month that was limited to just three categories and 100 drivers/mechanics.

Anglesey's Andrew Crighton says the event was very positive, but the rise in COVID-19 cases means that the next step remains unclear.

"Everybody involved just pulled together and it was really good – the competitors got the importance of it," he said. "We had officials from the Welsh government and county council in attendance and they were almost 99% happy with what was going on. For those officials, it was possibly the first time they had seen a proper race meeting so it opened their eyes a bit to what's going on. They've gone away and are feeding that back into the policy for moving forward.


Trial 750MC event was a success but future is unclear
JONES

"The indications we got were that the Welsh government would contemplate another test event with more people. That's what Welsh motorsport is waiting to see – how the Welsh government interpret the results of what we did.

"But now the overriding issue is the rise in the R [reproduction] number and how we deal with the situation, so we don't know where we stand at the moment."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

LYDDEN WINNER ALDERSLADE EYES JRT COBRA MOVE

HISTORICS

Two months after a nasty shunt at Brands Hatch, Roy Alderslade won both Jack Sears Trophy races at Lydden Hill last weekend and is now targeting outings in a Jordan Racing Team Cobra next year.

Alderslade's Mini Cooper S was wiped out in a shunt with Alex Taylor's crippled Ford Mustang on his historic racing debut at Brands, but the Ginetta racer drove superbly at Lydden, qualifying his Lotus Cortina on pole and beating JRT team-mates Andy and Mike Jordan home in both races.

"My confidence took a knock at Brands," said Alderslade, 60. "Afterwards I questioned what I had got myself into, but today couldn't have gone better. To win a couple of races was a major boost.

"I've always fancied racing a Cobra, so JRT is building me a Daytona Coupe [evocation] for next year. It will be exciting."

MARCUS PYE

CSCC swaps Le Mans for Combe

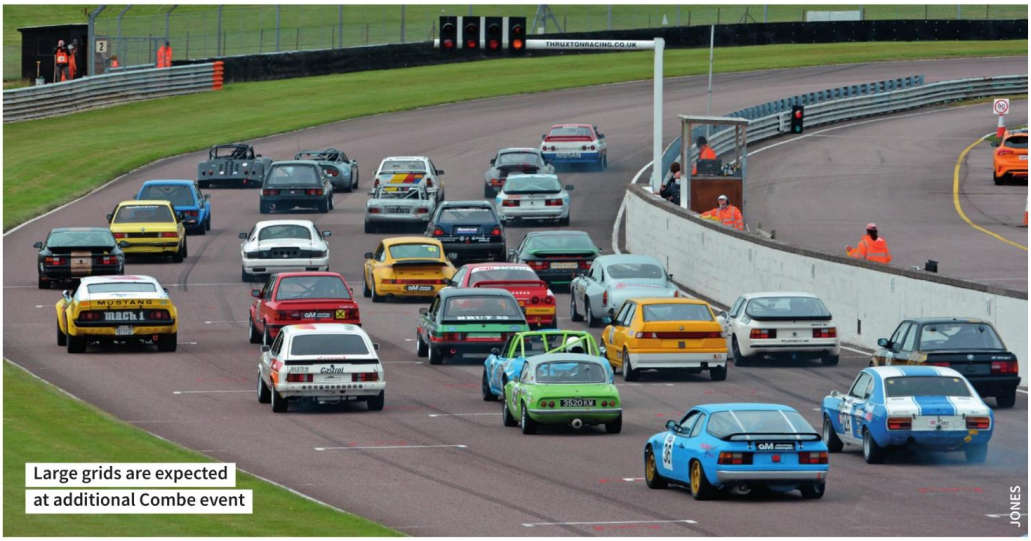
CLASSIC SPORTS CAR CLUB

The Classic Sports Car Club will return to Castle Combe for the first time since 2017 in October to replace the Le Mans Bugatti circuit races, which have been cancelled due to COVID-19.

An international event, in addition to an annual Spa visit, has been a mainstay of CSCC calendars in recent years, but both have been lost in 2020 to the pandemic.

The club approached Castle Combe sales and marketing director Tom Davis, and a one-day meeting on 24 October has been agreed.

Grids will run for the Swinging Sixties, Classic K, Tin Tops and Turbo Tin Tops, Magnificent Sevens, Future and Modern Classics plus Open Series and – subject to championship agreement – the Jaguar Saloon and GTs.


Large grids are expected at additional Combe event
JONES

CSCC director David Smitheram said: "Castle Combe is our local track and one that I have enjoyed racing at over the years. We get on well with their staff and volunteers and it's a well-loved circuit among our members, making Castle Combe the obvious choice to approach first when we needed an additional date.

"We are thankful they have been able to help us. With the recent cancellation of the Spa Six Hours adding to the already high numbers of classic enquiries and entries, we expect grids to be busy."

Another Le Mans date in 2022 has tentatively been agreed with French club HVM Racing – the original meeting was three years in the planning.

MATT KEW



Bilinski amassed 12 points after incidents with Pulling (49) but escaped three-month ban

Bilinski avoids racing ban again after incidents

BRITISH FORMULA 4

British Formula 4 driver Roman Bilinski has again escaped a racing ban, despite accruing 12 licence penalty points for the second time in two years.

The Arden racer picked up his 12th penalty point of the condensed 2020 season – in just the fourth event of the year – at Knockhill at the end of last month, when he speared Abbi Pulling out of the lead of the second race heading into Duffus Dip.

But for the second season in succession, he has escaped receiving an automatic three-month ban from Motorsport UK because the governing body only counts one set of penalty points per weekend towards the limit of 12.

Bilinski received four points for the race-two incident at Knockhill, and was also awarded two points the previous day for forcing Pulling off the track in the opener. Under the Motorsport UK system, only the four points from the race-two misdemeanour count towards the total, and Bilinski is therefore effectively on 10.

This means he has retained his licence and is able to race in the next F4 round at Thruxton this weekend.

In addition to the two Knockhill indiscretions, Bilinski had been awarded penalty points for incidents at Donington Park on the opening lap with James Hedley and at Oulton Park, when he clattered into Roberto Faria out of the chicane.

In Ginetta Junior last year, Bilinski was handed a total of 12 points across the first five events but did not receive a ban for the same reason. He went on to pick up two more licence points in the sixth event at Snetterton for another incident.

Bilinski's best result in his first year in single-seaters is third at Oulton and he sits ninth in the standings, although he would be higher were it not for the 21 points he has been deducted because of the penalties.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Hughes returns to GT4

BRITISH GT

Warren Hughes will return to British GT for the first time since 2014 at Donington Park this weekend when he partners Jan Klingelnberg in a Balfe Motorsport McLaren 570S GT4.

Hughes, the 2012 GT4 champion, has coached Swiss driver Klingelnberg in the Pure McLaren GT Series and partnered him in the recent GT Cup round at Silverstone.

Their McLaren will bolster the 10-car GT4 field for the three-hour race, joining the sister Balfe McLaren of Mia Flewitt and Euan Hankey, which is the only GT4 Pro-Am entry.

"It's great to be taking that next step into a known environment," said Hughes, who last raced in British GT in a Trackspeed-run Porsche before switching to a Triple Eight BMW Z4 for the final two rounds of 2014. "The appeal for Jan is the ability to measure himself against the competition.

"In the GT Cup, we were kind of in a class of our own. Now we'll have competitors in the same class and so it helps to work a bit harder and to dig a bit deeper for the competitive edge."

Among the other changes to the entry list, the Century Motorsport BMW M4 GT4, which Andrew Gordon-Colebrooke and Ben Green took to second at Brands Hatch, is absent, but the team's Tegiwa-branded M4 for Am/Am pair Luke Sedzikowski and David Whitmore returns for the first time since the opening round.



McLaren 570S GT4 will be driven by Hughes

In GT3, Lamborghini factory driver Marco Mapelli becomes the fourth different co-driver of Michael Igoe's WPI Motorsport Huracan, while an Aston Martin Vantage GT3 has been entered by Ultimate Speed for Matt Manderson and Michael Brown.

JAMES NEWBOLD

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LUCKY ESCAPE AFTER OULTON PARK SMASH Tony Ellis was fortunate to walk away from the wreckage of his Gemini Elva after this spectacular crash at Oulton Park last weekend. The dramatic incident occurred heading over Dentons crest and down into Cascades on the second lap of the CNC Heads Sports and Saloons Championship race. Ellis, who had qualified his Class B car in seventh for the opening race, was able to extract himself from the destroyed vehicle after the violent impact damaged the barrier and ripped the front suspension from the Elva. **Photography by Mick Walker**

Shelsley Walsh record in sight

HILLCLIMB

The outright hill record at Shelsley Walsh came under serious attack over the weekend as Sean Gould posted the second fastest time in the 115-year history of the Worcestershire hillclimb.

Driving his 700bhp Gould GR59, Gould set a stunning best of 22.73s, just 0.15s off the current record set by Martin Groves in August 2008. With Alex Summers ending the weekend with a best of 22.83s in his DJ Firestorm, there is every prospect of the famous record being broken when the British Hillclimb Championship returns in 2021.



Gould and Summers took advantage of perfect late-summer weather to join three other members of the sub-23s class at the historic 1000-yard rush up the side of the Teme Valley. Aside from Groves, only Scott Moran (22.83s) and Jos Goodyear (22.86s) had previously broken the 23s mark, and the record had appeared out of reach over the past five seasons. Groves's record is the longest-standing in the history of Shelsley Walsh.

Summers said: "We've gone from a V6 to a V8 engine and gained about 100bhp. I did some computer simulations and I thought a 22s was possible. All credit to Sean for what he has done. I think if you could glue together all the best sectors, you could be looking at the hill record."

PAUL LAWRENCE

IN THE HEADLINES

NEW COVID-19 GUIDELINES

Motorsport UK has released new guidelines due to the increasing threat of COVID-19. From this weekend, all race meetings will only be allowed a maximum of six marshals on each post, and all event participants will be required to wear a face mask in all areas of the venue at all times. It also adds that it has "removed the provision for individual personal exemptions from wearing a face mask", and these people will not now be allowed to attend events.

DOOLEY'S ALFAS IN ACTION

Three cars raced by Jon Dooley – who died earlier this month – raced in the Classic Alfa Challenge at the Historic Racing Drivers Club's Lydden Hill event on Sunday. Chris Snowdon drove Richard Melvin's Gp2 Napolina Alfetta GTV to second in race two, and Chris Whelan drove his '81 British Saloon Car class-winning Napolina Alfasud Ti. Gavin Watson's 1959 Giulietta Ti took a class-winning seventh on aggregate.

JESTY'S LYDDEN RETURN

Historic Mini Cooper S racer Nick Jesty's Jack Sears Trophy outing at Lydden marked his first visit to the Dover venue since 1974, when he was a rallycross ace. "As soon as I saw Lydden on the calendar I put my entry in," said the Dorset veteran, who returned to competition in the Historic Sports Car Club's Touring Car championship last season. Another ex-rallycrosser, Micky Bolton, hadn't driven there since 1979, but returned with an Alfetta GT.

HORTO STARS AT SANTA POD

Santa Pod Raceway held its NOT The European Finals last weekend – which, under normal circumstances, would have concluded this season's FIA/FIM European Drag Racing Championships. Finnish Top Fuel star Antti Horto (below) finished with a career-best 3.875s (298.95mph) blast to beat opponent Susanne Callin.



Delayed SMRC season finally begins with half-day event

SCOTTISH MOTOR RACING CLUB



Smith's Morgan and Kinmond's Rover took a win apiece as SMRC season began

The Scottish Motor Racing Club finally kicked off its 2020 season at Knockhill last weekend, with eight races taking place as part of the new half-day format.

Just three meetings will be held this season following the outbreak of COVID-19, but the racing on track easily made up for the lack of action over the past five months.

An impressive grid of 21 cars turned out for the Classic Sports and Saloons races, with victories being shared by Andrew Smith (Morgan +8) and John Kinmond's Rover 3500. Smith and Kinmond went toe-to-toe in the opener as the two Class E competitors proved far and above the quickest around the Fife circuit. Smith beat Kinmond to the line by nearly two seconds, while the latter cruised to race-two spoils by 17 seconds from Adam Bernard's Porsche 911.

Dave Colville was unbeatable in Ford Fiestas, securing pole and both wins. Colville headed Steven Gray in each encounter, with last season's ST Challenge champion Lorn Murray and Fiesta ST newcomer Andrew Elliott grabbing the final spot on the podium in races one and two respectively.

The Scottish C1 Cup enjoyed its largest ever grid with a total of 23 cars turning out. The wins were heartily disputed between Colin Main and Ross Dunn, with the former just edging the race-two victory by a mere three tenths of a second.

Inaugural champion Finlay Brunton got his title defence off to a modest start, with seventh in the first race followed by fourth in a rain-hit second contest, which also featured a spectacular barrel roll for Thomas Comber at McIntyre's.

Such has been the impact of COVID-19 that just 13 cars lined up for the combined Scottish Mini Cooper and Cooper S races. But that didn't mean the action was any less frenetic, as defending champion Robbie Dalgleish came out on top by little over a tenth in the first race. Dalgleish doubled up in race two as Jamie Blake took a pair of overall wins in his R53.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON

Knockhill set to host limited number of spectators

CORONAVIRUS



Scottish C1s attracted 23 cars for Knockhill event last weekend

Knockhill's director of events Stuart Gray says the Scottish venue is set to admit limited numbers of fans as racing has returned to the circuit.

The Scottish Motor Racing Club and the Knockhill Motor Sports Club held events last weekend, with the former bringing in 70 entries for the half-day meeting that kickstarted the club's season.

COVID-19 safety measures brought in by Motorsport UK were strictly adhered to by the venue, which went the extra mile to mitigate potential risk of infection. Gray said he was pleased with how these procedures were implemented as racing has returned in recent weeks.

"We've been really happy with how the circuit has approached the meetings," Gray told Autosport. "As far as COVID protocols have gone, it's Motorsport UK guidance but we have actually exceeded them to ensure we're able to return safely.

"The good news from next week onwards is we will be allowed to permit 200 spectators at each event. It's obviously good as a business to get fans back to the circuit but it's also good for them to get to watch live motorsport again."

The Scottish Legends and Formula Ford-based Scottish Renegades Cup were part of last Sunday's KMSC bill. Seb Melrose was a double winner in FF1600, while Legends spoils were shared between Jon Critchlow, Pino Palazzo and Stewart Black.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON





Standards are slipping again

F1 wasn't alone in featuring poor driving, as a host of UK categories have faced the same problem. And another failure to ban a driver sends completely the wrong message

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Driving standards are a hot topic in Formula 1 after the Tuscan Grand Prix. It is pretty rare to have a multi-car pile-up in the championship in recent times, so to have two in one race, along with two red flags and 12 drivers being given a warning for their involvement in one of the shunts, is virtually unprecedented. But it is not just at the highest level of the sport where standards have been called into question lately; the same has also been true in national motorsport in the past few weeks.

Take the 3 September issue of Autosport. In the club news pages, we ran two stories about poor driving and the national opinion piece discussed penalties for former BRDC British F3 points leader Kaylen Frederick and Piers Prior. Anecdotally, there also seem to have been reports of a significant number of cars rolling during races in recent weeks. All of which points to a growing problem in certain areas.

The most worrying of those news stories from a fortnight ago concerned the Junior Saloon Car Championship. This has enjoyed strong driver interest this year, but it also endured a significant number of red flags at Mallory Park at the end of last month. Far worse than F1's Tuscan tally, the JSCC featured four red flags across its 'two' races in Leicestershire. Standards were so poor that the drivers were gathered together before the third and final attempt at the second race and warned that the number and nature of the incidents was unacceptable. While the message appeared to hit home, an unfortunate and unavoidable red flag followed on the restart at the end of the day when a driver at the front of the grid stalled and was collected.

> **"The exact same driver escaped a ban in exactly the same circumstances last year"**

Category bosses are confident there will be no repeat when the series is due to resume at Silverstone next month and say there were a number of reasons for the Mallory nightmare. Interestingly, these included the lack of in-car coaching the teenagers received compared to normal amid the coronavirus restrictions and having less time on track in the lead-up to the delayed start of the season, along with a number of faster drivers being out of position on the grid. The high-speed and narrow nature of the Mallory circuit cannot have helped the situation either, as the layout does lend itself to incidents.

Higher up the racing ladder, there were also problems in British GT4 at Brands Hatch as Century Motorsport boss Nathan Freke told Autosport that driving standards were "appalling" and "it was almost like brains got disengaged for the last 20 minutes of the race". TF Sport team-mates Jamie Caroline and Patrick Kibble collided, while there were other smaller incidences of contact between drivers. And it was not just for collisions that Frederick was penalised in F3, as he was also reprimanded for an abusive gesture following his coming-together with Prior.

All three of those examples are concerning to different extents, but the most disturbing story comes this week. It concerns British Formula 4 racer Roman Bilinski, who has racked up 12 penalty points on his licence but has escaped the usual three-month ban. Getting a sense of deja vu? You could well be, because that exact same driver escaped a ban in exactly the same circumstances last year.

Back when he was in Ginetta Junior, Bilinski accrued 12 points after the first five events but did not get banned due to an obscure rule – that still is not included in the governing body's rules Year Book – whereby only the highest set of points awarded on a given weekend count towards a driver's total. This supposedly reflects rules on public roads where, for example, you may only get one set of points for being caught speeding twice in the same restricted zone on the same day as it is classed as the same incident.

But, at Knockhill last month, Bilinski received licence points for two separate incidents with Abbi Pulling in two separate races on two separate days (the second of which Bilinksi was disqualified for after clattering into the rear of leader Pulling, denying her a shot at a maiden win). Surely, there is no conceivable argument that these are the same incident and should not therefore count as separate misdemeanours and punished accordingly.

Last year I wrote: "What this system essentially means is that, once a driver has caused an incident, they can do what they like for the rest of the day as only one set of licence points will count. And that is a very bad message to be giving out."

That still applies – except it is much worse this time around as Bilinski clearly has not learned his lesson from 12 months ago. If he so much as lands a glancing blow on another competitor's car in the five scheduled events left in the season, expect a furious reaction.

It must be pointed out, just as with Ginetta last year, the lack of a ban has nothing to do with British F4 and is instead a Motorsport UK issue. Considering the spate of incidents, from F1 to Junior Saloons, a clear message should be sent out, warning that standards need to improve. While some of Bilinski's indiscretions have been relatively minor, banning him would have done just that.



O'Connell leads the Leinster Trophy field away but fellow Dallara F3 driver Carey (19) was a constant threat

Red flag hands O'Connell Leinster Trophy glory

MONDELLO PARK
LMC LEINSTER TROPHY
12-13 SEPTEMBER

Confusion reigned in the Mondello Park pitlane last weekend when the all-important Leinster Trophy race was red-flagged in the closing stages and subsequently declared a result.

Paul O'Connell had led away from pole in the race for BOSS Ireland machinery and kept fellow Dallara driver Cian Carey – a double F3 Cup champion – at bay for most of the contest. But a good run out of the final corner late on gave Carey the impetus he needed and he forced the leader to defend into Turn 1. This allowed Carey to draw alongside on the exit and, after running through the next pair of corners wheel to wheel, he had the lead.

O'Connell had no intention of giving up though, and had a few further attempts to wrest the lead away. But when Joe Courtney went off at Turn 2, the red flag and chequered flag were shown and Carey crossed the line arm aloft, believing he had taken the famous trophy for the second time. But officials counted back two laps, giving the result to a delighted O'Connell.

Carey had taken the earlier BOSS race, controlling the gap to the charging Lucca Allen – last year's South East Asian Formula 4 runner-up – in the closing stages with Barry Rabbitt in third. Typically, Rabbitt had charged through to take the lead in the opening laps before the F3 cars powered past his Formula Renault.

Se Og Martin took a strong win in the Ginetta Junior opener, fighting off a late-race challenge from Karl O'Brien. He was again victorious second time out, with race-one poleman Jack Byrne and Sean McGovern completing the podium.

Geoff Richardson took the Legends opener from Peter Barrable, with Barrable's brother Rob right with them on his class debut. Race two was a cracker as Richardson just edged Rob Barrable and Jamie Moylan in a drag race to the line. Richardson was again superb in race three, winning from the back, ahead of Peter and Rob Barrable.

Enda O'Connor took the first Formula Sheane race, but interest centred on Richie Kearney's charge up through the field having been sent skywards at the first corner and then somehow recovering from a 360-degree spin later in the lap. He eventually climbed to second with fastest lap. In race two, the fast-starting Paul McLoughlin took the win after Kearney and O'Connor tangled at the first corner, while Derek Roddy was a fine second.

Michael Cullen ran and hid from the Stryker opposition, not even gearbox problems slowing him enough to be caught. Early leader Vincent O'Rourke just held off poleman Dave Reynolds for second. In race two, Cullen retired from the lead when his battery failed, handing the win to Reynolds.

Fiesta Zetec graduate Collie Murray stalled on the front row of the HRCA race but charged through to take the win, despite the best efforts of Bernard Foley in his MGB GTV8. Race two had a similar outcome, with Murray's lightweight MG storming through from the back to easily outpace the Historic regulars.

Brian Sexton pipped Pat Masterson to the flag in Future Classics race one, but a penalty for breaking the time barrier cost him the win. In race two, Masterson's Toyota MR2 just took the win, after another fantastic race-long scrap with Sexton's Mazda MX-5.

Series leader Alex Denning took Fiesta ST pole and led away, but Graham McDonnell kept him honest until a red flag ended the race early. In race two, Kevin Doran took the win from Michael Cullen,



A late red flag denied Carey the spoils, handing O'Connell victory

ALL PICS: CHESTER

WEEKEND WINNERS

BOSS IRELAND
Race 1 Cian Carey (Dallara F317)
Leinster Trophy Paul O'Connell (Dallara F3)

GINETTA JUNIOR IRELAND
Races 1 & 2 Se Og Martin

IRISH LEGENDS
Races 1, 2 & 3 Geoff Richardson

FORMULA SHEANE
Race 1 Enda O'Connor
Race 2 Paul McLoughlin

IRISH STRYKERS
Race 1 Michael Cullen
Race 2 David Reynolds

HRCA
Races 1 & 2 Colin Murray (MG GT)

FUTURE CLASSICS
Races 1 & 2 Pat Masterson (Toyota MR2)

FIESTA STs
Race 1 Alex Denning
Race 2 Kevin Doran

FIESTA ZETECS
Race 1 Alastair Kellett
Race 2 Michael Barrable

SEAT SUPERCUP IRELAND & IRISH SUPERCARS
Races 1 & 2 Shane Murphy (SEAT)

FORMULA VEE
Race 1 Anthony Cross (Sheane)
Race 2 Jack Byrne (LOH Sheane)

For full results visit:
timing.ie

with Denning unable to climb higher than fourth, ending his unbeaten run in 2020.

Alastair Kellett took the Fiesta Zetec opener from pole, with Junior Rallycross graduate James Fleming an impressive second and reigning champion William Kellett in third. In race two, series leader Michael Barrable used all his guile to fend off William and Alastair Kellett, not even the combined efforts of son and father being enough to wrest the lead away in what was a highly entertaining race.

Shane Murphy did the double in SEAT Supercup, easily coming through in the reversed-grid second encounter. Similarly, Paul Parr took both wins in the concurrently run Irish Supercars class.

Novice Jordan Kelly seized a sensational Formula Vee pole, but reigning champion Anthony Cross took the win from the charging Mark Reade, with Kelly dropping to fifth. In race two, an inspired Jack Byrne snatched the lead from Cross around the outside of Turn 1 and eased away for the win.

LEO NULTY



BARRABLE'S STRONG RETURN Michael Barrable made an impressive return to Mondello Park in July after more than 20 years away, and a win gave him the early Fiesta Zetec points lead. He could only manage sixth in the first race last weekend, but drove superbly to hold father and son Alastair and William Kellett at bay for an impressive win in race two. "I have to thank my sons Peter and Robert for getting everything ready this weekend and helping me figure out the International layout," he said. "It was really nice to race with the Kelletts, they are good guys and I really enjoyed the battle."



ABOVE PARR PERFORMANCE Irish Supercars, formally RT2000, is a Mondello crowd favourite that was revived a number of years ago by Alan Kessie's ASK Racing operation. A move to Pirelli tyres has worked well, and the option of a Duratec engine appears to have helped reliability. Like many classes, numbers have dropped a little in current times but Paul Parr was on top form all weekend. His immaculately turned out and well-driven car took the win in both races, despite the best efforts of Philip Jones and Ian Newport.



BYRNE'S DELIGHT Jack Byrne followed his father Ger's path into Formula Vee of a number of years ago by becoming one of the first 16-year-olds in Ireland to race a single-seater after a change of rules. Since then he has progressed well and is never far from the front. Despite two nominations for the Motorsport Ireland Young Driver of The Year, the Wicklow man has never quite managed to win a Vee A race. He rectified this in the best possible manner on Sunday, snatching the lead from reigning champion Anthony Cross with a decisive move and easing away for a dominant victory.

Herbert shows why he's the MX-5 master

SILVERSTONE
BRSCC
12-13 SEPTEMBER



ALL PICS: ROBERTS

Triple champion Herbert picked up two more wins at Silverstone

Luke Herbert demonstrated why he's been crowned Mazda MX-5 Supercup champion for the past three years as he once again proved unbeatable at Silverstone.

From lights-out in race one, James Cossins and 2014 champion Abbie Eaton joined Herbert in a three-car break, but only a lap later it was one long train of cars, before Herbert and Eaton tried to escape again.

But, after the duel for third between Cossins and Samuel Smith broke up, Smith began to close on the lead duo and towed Patrick Fletcher along too. Suddenly all four were together and entered Brooklands as one on lap 10 of 13. Herbert and Eaton retained their places after red flags flew, while Smith finally got the better of Fletcher for third, as Colin Bysouth and Cossins rounded off the top six.

Herbert and Smith were then inseparable throughout race two, but it was the reigning champion who was just 0.021 seconds ahead when it mattered, as Eaton took third.

There was the usual terrific finale in the Fun Cup, despite the Axiametrics trio of Chris Dovell/Kristian Rose/Riley Phillips dominating the second half of the contest.

The Make Happen Racing Team had three cars in the top six going into the fourth and final hour, with the 2Rent Dominos Chris Hart/Henry Dawes car third behind PLR's Neil Plimmer and Ben Pitch, while Steve Walton/Greg Evans were fourth.

As Phillips took over the lead car and brought it home over a minute clear, Dawes and Evans entered into a final-stint duel for second that went right to the flag. Dawes just edged Evans by a tenth, but it was still a first podium for Evans/Walton, as PLR took fourth.

John Cooper and David Nye scored Fiesta championship wins on the road, but they were driving two of the four Invitation Class ST Turbos that weren't eligible for the overall victory. Effectively it was the duel for fifth that decided the winner, and in race one it was between 20Ten team-mates Samuel Watkins and Ethan Rogers.

Rogers led initially before Watkins took charge and eased clear, both finishing well clear of third-placed Ben Winrow.

Watkins was never headed in the second race, while Winrow managed to break from a huge scrap, before mechanical maladies put him out a lap from home, handing Dominic Bush second from Spencer Stevenson. William Heslop and Chris Grimes shared the concurrent ST-XR Challenge spoils.

There were only 13 cars entered for the combined Touring Car Trophy/TCR UK/VW Cup races. Dan Kirby's Cupra TCR led from the start but, after ousting the Hyundai TCR of Lewis Kent on the second lap, Darelle Wilson (Vauxhall Astra TCR) was looking for the lead at Brooklands, as Henry Neal (Honda Civic Type R), Kent and Max Hart's Cupra TCR disputed third.

Wilson grabbed the lead into Brooklands on lap six of 21, but both he and Kirby lost ground after contact. This allowed Neal to shoot ahead through Woodcote, his lead soon becoming decisive.

Wilson and Kirby continued their duel until they clashed again at Luffield on lap 13. Kirby continued but Wilson was out after hitting the tyre wall. This left Kent



Kent resisted pressure from Neal throughout second Touring Car Trophy/TCR UK race to take the win

WEEKEND WINNERS

MAZDA MX-5 SUPERCUP
Races 1 & 2 Luke Herbert

FUN CUP
Team Axiametrics
(Chris Dovell/Kristian Rose/Riley Phillips)

FIESTAS & ST-XR CHALLENGE
Races 1 & 2 Samuel Watkins (ST)

TOURING CAR TROPHY, TCR UK & VW CUP
Race 1 Henry Neal (Honda Civic Type R)
Race 2 Lewis Kent (Hyundai i30N TCR)

MAZDA MX-5 CHAMPIONSHIP
Race 1 Brian Trott
Race 2 Oliver Allwood
Race 3 Mike Comber

FIESTA JUNIORS
Races 1 & 2 Joseph Loake

CIVIC CUP
Races 1 & 2 Bruce Winfield

CLUBSPORT TROPHY/CITYCAR CUP
David Vincent (Honda Civic)

For full results visit:
tsl-timing.com

with second from Hart, Tim Docker's Golf TCR and the recovering Kirby.

Kent, Neal and Hart held station at the front throughout race two, despite Neal occasionally showing signs of closing the lead gap, which failed to reach fruition.

There was a frantic start to the first Mazda MX-5 Championship race, with Mike Comber and Brian Trott sharing the early lead, before Joe Wiggin joined them and headed a three-car break.

By lap six of 13, the top eight all ran line astern, before Wiggin broke the tow and eased home to victory, only to be excluded in post-race scrutineering. Trott therefore picked up the win from Comber, with Matt Pollard just holding onto third from a rapidly closing Steve Foden.

The second race was red-flagged after a three-car incident at Becketts. From the restart, Seb Fisher, Trott and Will Blackwell-Chambers had made a break on the exit of Copse, but on the next tour their advantage had been wiped out and Fisher was back in fifth behind Trott, Fraser Fenwick, Blackwell-Chambers and Oliver Allwood.

Allwood led into Becketts on lap four, but Fenwick and Trott both then had spells in the lead before Allwood took it back from Trott on the final tour. Fisher, Michael Knibbs and Blackwell-Chambers followed after a penultimate-lap shake-up, as Fenwick dropped to sixth.

Comber won the third race after demoting Jack Brewer in a two-lap sprint after a safety car period, followed by Wiggin and Fisher.

PETER SCHERER

FIESTA JUNIOR ON THE RISE AS ENTRIES TREBLE



Fifteen drivers tackled second 2020 Fiesta Junior event at Silverstone

There are three junior racing series in the UK at the moment, and not even the British Racing & Sports Car Club would dispute that its Fiesta Championship had the poorest entries last season, averaging just five cars. But it's a much-improved picture for the 2020 campaign.

"This is my second season as coordinator, but before that I was a helper," said coordinator Laura Payne. "It was obvious that with only three starters at our final round last season, something had to be done."

The BRSCC recognised this and, rather than give up on the category altogether, invested in it. Taster days were organised last year and two new drivers came directly from these, along with a lot more interest. And all of this culminated in an impressive 15-car grid at Silverstone, triple last year's average.

"The whole club is now supporting our championship, as it needs to grow for our future," added Payne. "We have arranged special talks from marshals, officials, media and others, trying to get everyone involved.

"We had 11 drivers for our first round at Cadwell Park, but Mitch Marie, Jake Weston, Alex Ley and Alex Sprange were all new this weekend."

Last season's runner-up Joseph Loake is unbeaten so far, taking his second double win at Silverstone last weekend. He led both races from the start, while in the first it was William Orton and Jake Weston going clear with him. Orton started to close by the end of the third lap, but Weston found pressure building on him too as Jake Triggs closed.



Loake has been the driver to beat so far this year

Heading down the Wellington Straight for the sixth time, Triggs was looking for the inside at Brooklands, although Weston held him off. But Triggs's challenge had allowed Joseph Knight to close in too. Into Becketts for the ninth time they swapped places, and suddenly the pressure on Weston's third position was relieved. Up front, Loake took the flag just over a second clear of Orton, with Weston retaining third.

Loake was clear again from the start of the second race, but Orton and Weston headed down the Wellington Straight side by side in the battle for second.

Orton was on the left and started to lose the tail as he took a tight line through Brooklands, allowing Weston to surge ahead around the outside, giving him the inside at Luffield and second place.

For a few laps the gap between the lead trio had been fairly constant, with Dylan Hotchin clear of Orton and Knight in third. Loake was already looking home and dry, but Weston's hold on second had started to reduce and, by lap seven of 13, Hotchin was poised to make his challenge.

Heading into Becketts for the penultimate time, Hotchin took a dive down the inside as Weston turned in. There was contact and both were delayed, as Orton went through into second.

Weston recovered to take third again, just ahead of Knight, but Hotchin was out with broken steering.

PETER SCHERER



Clutton was rarely headed in Radical Challenge races

ALL PICS: READ

Clutton enjoys fruitful weekend of racing

DONINGTON PARK
MSVR
12-13 SEPTEMBER

Marcus Clutton's domination of the Radical Challenge continued at Donington Park as he claimed a clean sweep of victories across the weekend's three races.

Clutton lost the lead at the start of the first race to Shane Stoney, but swiftly reclaimed the position before an early safety-car period after second-row starter John Macleod lost out in a three-wide battle at Hollywood, ending up in the barriers. Clutton built a six-second advantage following the restart and controlled the gap until the finish. Stoney dropped three places to fifth following his mandatory pitstop before recovering to third, one second behind Jason Rishover.

Stoney took second in race two, keeping Clutton honest for most of the encounter before a late red flag, and Stoney again provided the closest competition to Clutton early in race three. But, after dropping to third, Stoney suffered a puncture after a collision at the Fogarty Esses that necessitated a safety-car period, and eventually he retired in the closing stages.

Clutton dropped down the order after serving a 20s success penalty during his mandatory stop, but he came out on top in a three-way lead fight before cruising to victory by 5s. Chris Short came from the back of the grid to take second, as Rishover finished third after a spin.

"The car was faultless," Clutton enthused. "We got a bit lucky with the safety car in the third race but we still had five or six cars to pass, and it's not the easiest in Radicals to overtake."

Further success for Clutton came in the GT Cup, where he took race-two victory alongside John Seale in a Lamborghini Huracan GT3. Richard Neary won Saturday's sprint race in his Mercedes-AMG GT3 after resisting early pressure from Matt Manderson, who



Leaney and Fores came together in F3 Cup



Both Nearys won in Mercedes-AMG GT3


Set-up tweak was key to Jenkins's better Sunday


BTCC star Ingram made a return to the GT Cup in Supra


Four GT Cup races were held across the weekend

DONINGTON PARK WEEKEND WINNERS

RADICAL CHALLENGE
Races 1, 2 & 3 Marcus Clutton

GT CUP
Race 1 Richard Neary (Mercedes-AMG GT3)
Race 2 John Seale/Marcus Clutton (Lamborghini Huracan GT3)
Race 3 Sam Neary (Mercedes-AMG GT3)
Race 4 Shamus Jennings/Greg Caton (Porsche 911 GT3 R)

7 RACE SERIES
Races 1 & 2 Alexander Koeberle (Caterham 420R)
Race 3 Phil Jenkins (Caterham 420R)
Race 4 Mark Stansfield (Caterham 420R)
Race 5 Justin Heap (Caterham 1600)

F3 CUP
Races 1 & 2 Stefano Leaney (Dallara F315)
Race 3 George Line (Dallara F310, below)

MSVR ALLCOMERS
Races 1 & 2 Richard Webb (Caterham S3)



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

finished 5.6s behind in an Aston Martin GT3, while Seale was third, despite a spin.

A poor start dropped Neary behind Manderson in the early stages of the day's endurance race, but he regained the lead at Melbourne Hairpin, despite contact that resulted in Manderson being spun around.

Neary handed the car over to his son Sam during the mandatory pitstop, but the Mercedes was denied its second victory of the day following a late charge by Clutton, who had taken over from Seale in the Lamborghini. Clutton eradicated a 15s gap to catch the leader with 10 minutes remaining. Neary resisted pressure until the penultimate lap, when Clutton performed a switchback out of Redgate to snatch the lead and take victory by 0.5s.

Neary Jr repeated his father's success from the previous day by taking a crushing win in Sunday's sprint race, over a minute clear of the field. Seale ran eighth early on after making a bad start, but retired from the race after a collision with Sam Randon's Porsche 997 while trying to fight his way back up the order. Shamus Jennings finished second in a Porsche 911 GT3R, resisting pressure from a pair of Huracans driven by James Webb and Jim Geddie.

The younger Neary was again untouchable in the early stages of the endurance race, building a huge lead over Greg Caton, who was sharing driving duties with Jennings. Neary Sr took over the leading Mercedes at the mandatory stops, emerging with a 40s advantage before Jennings reduced the gap to 18s by the chequered flag. Subsequently he and Caton inherited victory after the Neary car was disqualified for overtaking under yellows.

Clutton was the fastest man on track in the second half of the race after taking over the Huracan from Seale, but the deficit proved too big to repeat Saturday's victory as he finished 12s behind Jennings. "We've had a bit of contact with another car, the tracking was out a bit," said Clutton. "We did the best we could with what we had – we weren't fast enough to catch up. Five races, four wins [across Radicals and GT Cup] – not a bad weekend!"

British Touring Car Championship racer Tom Ingram made a one-off return to the GT Cup, having competed in the series in 2015. Ingram shared driving duties in the endurance races with Ron Johnson in the all-new Toyota Supra GT4 car, being run by Speedworks Motorsport. The pair took a best result of second in class on Saturday.

Typically, the Caterhams provided the most closely contested racing of the weekend in the 7 Race Series. Alexander Koeberle was the driver to beat on Saturday, winning the first race after a close battle with Rob Watts, Mark Stansfield and Anthony Barnes. Koeberle won again in the second race, beating off competition from Stansfield and Russ Olivant to win by 0.2s.

Phil Jenkins failed to score in the first two races after a collision in race one, but the championship leader bounced back to win race three on Sunday from seventh on the grid. He held on over a one-lap shootout to the finish following a late safety car. Barnes, who led the early stages, snatched second from Watts on the last lap following a race-long battle between the pair.

Stansfield dominated the fourth race, while several cars battled for second place. Jenkins stormed from 15th on the grid to pip Koeberle to the runner-up spot, with Watts, Barnes and Olivant behind.

Jenkins said a set-up change helped transform his fortunes across the weekend. "I didn't test on Friday, so couldn't get the car where I wanted it and overdrove it," he said. "We looked at the data overnight, made a few changes to the car and really enjoyed it [in the third and fourth races]."

Stefano Leaney beat Alex Fores to victory in the first two races of the F3 Cup, but the pair collided at Old Hairpin on the opening lap of the third race while contesting the lead, with George Line capitalising to claim victory. Leaney finished second, despite front-wing damage, while Fores – who suffered a puncture from the incident – fought back to fourth.

STEVE WHITFIELD



Cooke took the lead in the MR2 points standings from Traynor

Cooke and Hinson come out on top in MR2 battles

SNETTERTON
750MC
13 SEPTEMBER

It may have been a late replacement for this month's cancelled Anglesey meeting, but the 750 Motor Club's visit to the Snetterton 300 circuit was big on entries and high on action.

The Toyota MR2 Championship provided a major portion of the excitement, with more lead changes in two 15-minute races than certain international series manage all season. Aaron Cooke was the winner of the first race, seeing off a fast-starting Nick Williamson, who had qualified fourth. Williamson remained in the top three for four laps, but he tangled with Paul Cook when both went wide at Turn 3. While Cook held on for second, Williamson dropped to fifth behind Paul Hinson and Ben Rowe.

Cooke would also have got the win in the second race had Hinson had not appealed a penalty. Hinson finished first on the road, just 0.06 seconds ahead of Cooke, but Hinson was judged to have benefited from contact with Alastair Topley on the last lap. The contact was eventually ruled to be accidental and series returnee Hinson kept his first race win of his comeback.

Championship leader Shaun Traynor was third after an indifferent weekend, and slipped behind Cooke in the points. Topley was fourth, having led the race twice and been part of the leading pack throughout.

The Sport Specials and Ma7da races had a snakes-and-ladders feel to them. Andy Hiley won both in his Chronos HR1S, fending off Paul Collingwood's Eclipse. Collingwood got great starts both times but was not able to keep up with Hiley, even when Hiley spun on the first lap of race two at Turn 3 — within two laps, he was in the lead again.



Three into one in Formula Vee: (l-r) Hands, Harridge and Buxton

This was despite a cracked suspension component on his car. Ma7da spoils were shared by Tom Coller and Ben Powney.

James Harridge continued his clean sweep of the Formula Vee Championship with two wins in his Maverick, as Daniel Hands finished second both times. Ian Buxton was third in the first race after he challenged for the lead at the first corner in a three-wide moment but spun onto the grass. He managed to methodically push back through the field and onto the podium.

Buxton's start for the second race was more measured and he was running second behind Harridge, but his car started smoking and he had to retire. Third-placed Hands was therefore promoted to the runner-up spot and Colin Gregory picked up his first podium, having overhauled Peter Studer after a lengthy battle.

Graham Seager won both Alfa Romeo Championship races from a somewhat depleted field; his GTV was the only car in the Modified class. Seager had trouble in qualifying, which left the door open for multiple class champion Tom Hill, who posted a qualifying time three seconds quicker than anyone else's. Class lap records fell during both races, although when Seager's car was running properly, Hill's GT was no match for it. Dave Messenger was twice third in a 156, while the Twin-Spark class was won by Andrew Bourke both times, with record pace.

The 116 Trophy enduro was a sedate and tactical affair by comparison as Anthony Seddon and Alan Corfield won from Rob and Ian Carvell.

RACHEL HARRIS-GARDINER


After taking the lead at the start, Praga R1T was never headed

WALKER

Fabby and Townsend take Britcar victory

OULTON PARK
BARC
12 SEPTEMBER

After double-headers at Croft and Brands Hatch, the Britcar Endurance Championship came to Oulton Park with 18 cars for a one-day, single-race event.

After qualifying on a track that was still damp in places, the Praga-Renault R1T of Danny Harrison/Jem Hepworth secured pole position with the SB Race Engineering Ferrari 488 Challenge of Paul Bailey/Andy Schulz alongside for the rolling start. But it was young Jack Fabby in the other VR Motorsport Praga R1T who burst through from the second row as the cars raced towards Old Hall for the first time, immediately opening a significant lead for a couple of laps until the safety car was called to enable the Taranis-Chevrolet to be extricated from the gravel.

Fabby carried on where he left off once racing resumed so that by the time he made his compulsory pitstop well into the window – and handed over to Garry Townsend – he was half a minute or so ahead of the nearest opposition, the Radical RXC Coupe of Steve Burgess.

This was more than enough to enable Townsend's slightly slower pace to ensure that they took their first overall win of the season and bring themselves very much into contention for the championship. Behind, Ben Dimmack, in for Burgess in the Radical, was at real risk of being overhauled by a spectacular Schulz, who admitted never to have driven round Oulton so quickly before in the Ferrari. But a quick spin dropped the Italian car too far back to make up for lost time, although Schulz never gave up and was just four seconds behind at the flag.

In the Trophy race, Rob Smith's Peugeot RCZ was equally dominant to begin with, but his large lead melted away after the pitstops, with Charlie Campbell not on the same pace. It meant that the combination of 76-year-old Nigel Ainge and Danny Cassar in a Honda Integra DC5 ran out comfortable winners from Barry McMahon, whose tasty Alfa Romeo 156 was given a very hard time by Britcar newcomer Kester Cook's smart Ford Fiesta, which earned Cook the Driver of the Day award.

Three very well-stocked Caterham Graduates races produced two lights-to-flag battles between Sigmax drivers Harry Senior and Steve Clark, Senior prevailing in both side-by-side finishes. Without the Sigmaxes, Andrew Whitton won the third encounter in his Sigma 150 by an un-Caterham-like margin of nine seconds, having previously shown his pace in race two by finishing third overall.

The CNC Heads Sports/Saloons races attracted large and varied grids, Paul Woolfitt winning both in his very rapid Lotus Exige, but chased all the way by Luke Armiger's Vauxhall Tigra Silhouette. Danny Bird's Spire GTR and David Harvey (Stuart Taylor Locosaki) squabbled over Class C honours not so far behind.

The Kumho BMW Championship races also had the same winner in the form of Mike Pensavalle and his E46 M3, but it was not for want of trying by Brad Sheehan and, in race one, Lucky Khera. Khera had a spectacular rise from the back of the grid to challenge for the lead, but was thwarted when he clobbered the kerb too hard at Hislops minutes from the end.

IAN TITCHMARSH


Senior had the beating of Clark in Caterhams

WALKER

WEEKEND WINNERS


STYLES

SNETTERTON
TOYOTA MR2s
Race 1 Aaron Cooke (Mk2)
Race 2 Paul Hinson (Mk2)

SPORT SPECIALS/MA7DA SERIES
Races 1 & 2 Andy Hiley (Chronos HR1S)

FORMULA VEE
Races 1 & 2 James Harridge (Maverick)

ALFA ROMEOS
Races 1 & 2 Graham Seager (GTV, above)

116 TROPHY
Anthony Seddon/Alan Corfield

For full results visit: 750mc.co.uk

OULTON PARK
BRITCAR ENDURANCE
Jack Fabby/Garry Townsend
(Praga-Renault R1T)

BRITCAR TROPHY
Nigel Ainge/Danny Cassar
(Honda Integra DC5)

CATERHAM GRADUATES
Races 1 & 2 Harry Senior (Sigmax)
Race 3 Andrew Whitton (Sigma 150)

CNC HEADS SPORTS/SALOONS
Races 1 & 2 Paul Woolfitt (Lotus Exige)

KUMHO BMWs
Races 1 & 2 Mike Pensavalle (E46 M3)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com


WALKER

Woolfitt won CNC Heads Sports/Saloons races

Alderslade proves to be king of the hill

LYDDEN HILL
HRDC
13 SEPTEMBER



Mike and Andrew Jordan gave chase to Alderslade in both Jack Sears Trophy races

When the Historic Racing Drivers Club returned to Lydden Hill on Sunday for the annual Historics On The Hill meeting, there was much to celebrate. Particularly among the Jordan Racing Team, with two wins for Roy Alderslade and multiple podium places for Mike and Andrew Jordan.

The squad's success story started with the Jack Sears Trophy event. Of course, both father and son know the circuit well; Mike raced Eurocars at Lydden a few years ago, and Andrew served his apprenticeship in Junior Minicross en route to rallycross supercars, a World Rallycross podium and eventually the British Touring Car title.

During qualifying they took turns to slipstream each other down the short straights. "Well, at least we tried to," said Jordan Jr with a grin. Nevertheless, they were pipped to pole position by Alderslade's twin-cam Lotus Cortina, which was more than a match for the Jordans' Austin A40s.

Alderslade led away from the start, chased by Jordan Jr, Jordan Sr and Ding Boston, who was driving the Oxford University Motorsport Foundation's venerable Riley 1.5.

Jordan Jr was clearly out to enjoy himself as he threw the A40 sideways through the corners, but couldn't pull away from his dad. Meanwhile, Alderslade raced on to victory from the Jordans as Boston finished a fine fourth ahead of the Colburn family – Richard, James and Ben nose to tail as they crossed the line.

It was a similar story in race two where the first four finished in the same order, but this time Andrew Sharp (Triumph 2000) and Joe Allenby-Byrne (Ford Cortina GT) chased them home.

Alderslade was in contention to win both Allstars races too, but his Lotus Cortina was pipped to pole by Ben Colburn's nimble Lenham GT Sprite, which seized the lead from the start. Alderslade put his head down and reduced the deficit, but he began to lock his wheels under braking and eventually he ran wide at Chesson's Drift, leaving Colburn home and dry. Boston finished third behind Alderslade and only just ahead of Neil McArthur's Wolseley Hornet.

Tony Butt made a spectacular exit from the race when his Turner lost a rear wheel. The car slithered down the top straight amid a shower of sparks while the wheel and brake drum flew across the rallycross

Browne doubles up in Champion of Brands

BRANDS HATCH
MSVR
12 SEPTEMBER

Jonathan Browne continued his impressive recent form at Brands Hatch with two further Champion of Brands victories to follow up his success from the British GT support round and maintain his unbeaten run in the series in 2020.



Austin was a double winner in Mini Challenge Cooper S class

Last year's Formula Ford Festival winner was never headed in either race in his Ray GR18 but, in typical Formula Ford style, he was never given time to relax in a double-header event that boasted a healthy grid of over 20 starters.

Rory Smith provided Browne with his toughest opposition throughout the weekend in his Medina Sport JL18, but was unable to make a decisive pass. Behind the top two, Browne's Low Dempsey team-mate Bryce Aron (Ray GR18) came out on top in two close battles with Jamie Sharp's Medina Sport JL17 to claim a pair of thirds.

Three races were held for the combined Racing Saloons/Production BMW encounters in order to accommodate the large entry. Chris Adams claimed victory in the opener in his VW Golf GTi after early leader Yusuf Osman spun his BMW 320is into the Paddock Hill Bend gravel. Osman recovered to finish sixth, while the excursion enabled Perry Darling to claim second in his SEAT Ibiza ahead of the BMW E30 M3 of John Willcocks.

Nigel Innes proved uncatchable in races two and three in his BMW M3, but the entertainment of both contests was provided by Alex Kite in his VW Vento. In the second event, Kite stormed through from row 11 to claim third behind Dan Rose's Golf GTI. Not content with that performance, Kite threatened to go one better in the third event as he powered his way through to second by lap 11 of 16,


Merrell leads from pole in Classic Alfa Challenge

DUNLOP

track into the tyre wall – fortunately away from any spectators.

Colburn repeated his success over Alderslade in the second race. Andrew and Mike Jordan finished third and fourth, although they started from the back having missed the first race.

During qualifying for the Classic Alfa Challenge, Richard Merrell (Giulia GT Junior) claimed pole position with a time more than a second clear of his closest rival, Chris Snowdon, so it was no surprise when he kept the lead and began to pull away at the start.

Snowdon clung on grimly in second place until half-distance when his Alfetta GTV headed for the infield and retirement. Alex Jupe (Alfetta GTV) thus inherited second place and held it to the finish, just ahead of James Wright (Alfa 75) and Jonny Horsfield (Alfetta GTV).

Merrell once again made the best start in race two and thereafter led all the way. Horsfield held second place initially until Snowdon sliced past with a neat manoeuvre down the inside at the Devil's Elbow. Wright completed the podium as Horsfield was fourth.

KERRY DUNLOP

WEEKEND WINNERS

LYDDEN HILL

HRDC JACK SEARS TROPHY
Races 1 & 2 Roy Alderslade (Ford Lotus Cortina Mk1)

HRDC ALLSTARS
Races 1 & 2 Ben Colburn (Lenham GT Sprite)

HRDC CLASSIC ALFA CHALLENGE
Races 1 & 2 Richard Merrell (Alfa Romeo Giulia GT Junior)

BRANDS HATCH

CHAMPION OF BRANDS
Races 1 & 2 Jonathan Browne (Ray GR18)

RACING SALOONS & PRODUCTION BMWs
Race 1 Chris Adams (VW Golf GTI)
Races 2 & 3 Nigel Innes (BMW M3)

ELISE TROPHY
John Lamaster (Elise 135R)

MINI CHALLENGE TROPHY
Races 1 & 2 Rob Austin

MSVT SUPERCUP
Colin Tester/Hugh Gurney (BMW M3, below)

TRACK ATTACK
Races 1 & 2 Rod Birley (Honda Integra)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com


HAWKINS


HAWKINS

Browne leads Smith, Sharp and Aron

after starting 27th. A backmarker slowed his momentum on the final tour, though, and enabled Cliff Pellin to snatch the runner-up spot on the sprint to the flag in his Ford Fiesta ST180.

John Lamaster took full advantage of an early retirement for Craig Denman to score a convincing win in the 45-minute Elise Trophy encounter. Mark Richardson's decision to make his mandatory pitstop early helped him take second, but Jon Packer's last-ditch pass on Mike Hughes for third proved in vain when he received a time penalty for exceeding track limits.

Rob Austin withstood Dan Butcher-Lord's race-long pressure to win the opening Mini Challenge Trophy contest. Sami Bowler recovered from a poor start to claim third after passing Keir McConomy at Druids on lap five of 17.

Austin blasted into the lead from fifth at the start of race two by diving through on the inside at Paddock, but Butcher-Lord's attempt to make similar progress on the outside led to his car being beached in the gravel after a tangle with front-row starter James Goodall. Austin was left untroubled to seal the double thereafter, while Bowler forced her way past poleman Steve Webb at Graham Hill Bend to take second.

A blistering opening stint from Colin Tester helped him and Hugh Gurney claim a dominant MSVT SuperCup win in their BMW M3, despite the duo receiving a post-race time penalty for an illegal start. The same punishment was also handed to reigning champion Darren Goes in his SEAT, but his 10-second penalty proved more costly.

Goes had initially come out on top in a fierce tussle for second with Ollie Pidgley's SEAT Supercopa Gen 2 (sharing with Nicholas Jackson), but the punishment relegated him to fourth.

MARK LIBBETER



Dave Sims pushes the Hesketh 308 of James Hunt in Monaco

SKY'S STELLAR CELEBRATION



TV SERIES REVIEW
RACE TO PERFECTION

Sky Sports F1 has often faced trial by social media. Whether it be Johnny Herbert joining Sergey Sirotkin in a Russian banya for a natter, a segment constantly replayed whenever the channel needs some filler, or opting to show delayed support series coverage, the commentariat are always close behind. But the channel's latest offering might just force the mob to abate and instead absorb a new seven-part docuseries reflecting upon the "high-octane drama" provided since the world championship's inception.

Race to Perfection, produced in-house at Osterley, breaks F1 down into what talking head Peter Windsor describes as "the moments that make us feel why we love the sport called Formula 1", ranging from championship deciders to controversial moments.

One strong decision taken by Sky has been to buck the recent trend of dumping an entire new series in one go and leaving viewers to it. Rather, the weekly release of new episodes keeps the conversation going longer.

Episode one, *Living The Dream*, is a 90-minute microcosm of the series itself. Key themes are planted here, including great cars such as the Brabham BT46B (complete with the observations of Gordon Murray and Bernie Ecclestone in fresh interviews), rivalries in the shape of the disagreement between Ayrton Senna and Alain Prost, and Michael Schumacher's ruthless aborted qualifying lap at the 2006 Monaco Grand Prix.

Drips and drops of such topics left Autosport wanting a little more detail, but the length of time on each subject is just about enough to whet the appetite and ensure you come back next time. Juan Manuel Fangio's championship-winning charge at the Nurburgring in 1957 – complete with footage of the Maserati's battle against the Ferraris of Mike Hawthorn and Peter Collins – is a solid base with which to start. But episode one is at its strongest when the journey of the Hesketh team in the mid-1970s is explored.

Lord Hesketh, team manager Anthony 'Bubbles' Horsley and chief mechanic Dave 'Beaky' Sims detail how they went about running a team as it separated on and off-track antics to the extreme with driver James Hunt. "We spent our time going into a state of terminal depression if we were on the fourth row of the grid," says Hesketh.

Despite many good anecdotes in this episode, in places it is a little jumbled. For example, Emerson Fittipaldi and Felipe Massa are describing the Brazilian Grand Prix before it jumps to the Hesketh segment, returning to two-time champion Fittipaldi once again, with some Jody Scheckter thrown in.

It can make the episode hard to follow, which is not a problem in the second offering, focusing on final-race title showdowns. It is admirable that Sky opted for some older options with its selections: Japan 1976, Portugal 1984, Australia 1986, as well as Brazil 2008.

Patrick Head and Ron Dennis are among those who offer their reflections, with Dennis suggesting that Lewis Hamilton's 2008 title win was not down to luck, but a "calculated risk to be in a good position on tyres at the end of the race..."

The obvious comparison for *Race to Perfection* is *Drive to Survive* on Netflix. Based on the first two episodes of which Autosport was granted a pre-release viewing, the differences are stark. It does not seek to sensationalise F1, or dumb it down to try to attract new fans. Rather, as the world championship celebrates its 70th anniversary, the series is faithful to history, and offers something to both the long-term fan or the newbie stumbling across it while channel-hopping.

JAKE NICHOL

YouTube youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom



Criticism of Ferrari's Formula 1 season has rightly been widespread. But for 2021 and drivers Charles Leclerc and Carlos Sainz, what should be expected of the Maranello team to turn around their fortunes? Autosport has its say. **Go to bit.ly/FixF1Ferrari**

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Next up in our 70th birthday podcast series celebrating the best motorsport machines from the past seven decades, the Autosport team decide on which is the best rally car of all time. The criteria: was it successful, was it innovative and, crucially, was it cool?

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Le Mans 24 Hours
World Endurance Championship
Round 7/8
Le Mans, France
19-20 September
TV **Live** Eurosport 1, Sat 1315

Road to Le Mans
Le Mans Cup
Round 3/6
Le Mans, France
18-19 September
Livestream on Motorsport.tv Sat 1000

DTM
Round 6/9
Nurburgring, Germany
19-20 September

NASCAR Cup
Round 29/36
Bristol, USA
19 September
TV **Live** Premier Sports 2, Sun 0000

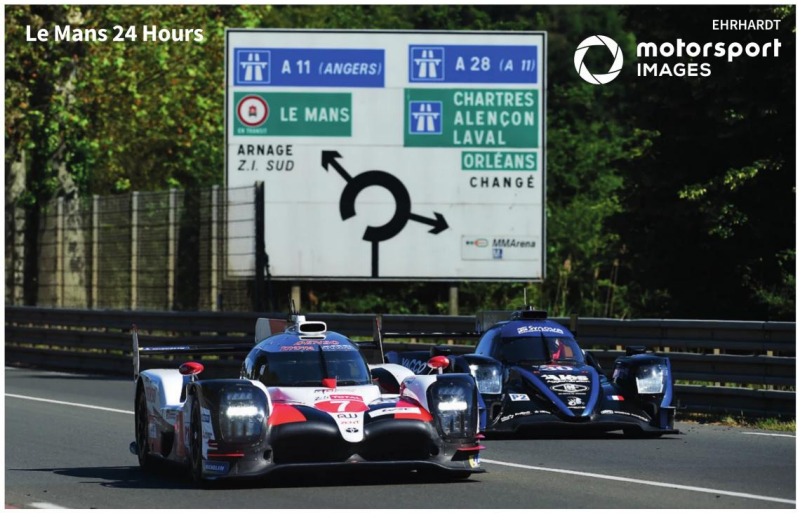
NASCAR Truck Series
Round 16/22
Bristol, USA
17 September
TV **Live** Premier Sports 1, Fri 0000

Australian Supercars
Round 9/11
The Bend, Australia
19-20 September
TV **Live** BT Sport 2, Sat 0630, Sun 0315

Rally Turkey
World Rally Championship
Round 5/7
Marmaris, Turkey
18-20 September
TV **Live** BT Sport 1, Fri 1500, BT Sport 3, Sat 0800, Sun 0700, Red Bull TV, Sat 1400
TV **Highlights** BT Sport 2, Fri 2330, Sat 2245, Sun 2215, Red Bull TV Sat 2000, Sun 2000, Mon 1800
Live coverage on wrc.com.
All live service via WRC+

World Rallycross
Round 3/7
Riga, Latvia
19-20 September

MotoGP
Round 7/14
Misano, Italy
20 September
TV **Live** BT Sport 2, Sun 1230
TV **Highlights** BT Sport 3, Sun 2045



UK MOTORSPORT

Thruxton BARC*
19-20 September
BTCC, British F4, Ginetta Junior, Ginetta GT4 Supercup, Mini Challenge, Porsche Carrera Cup
TV **Live** ITV2, Sunday 1120

Donington Park BRSCC
19-20 September
British GT, BRDC British F3, GT5 Challenge, Ginetta G40 Cup, GRDC, Porsche Sprint Challenge

Castle Combe CCRC/750MC
19-20 September
FF1600, Saloons, GTs, Hot Hatch, Mazdas, BMWCC, Locost

Brands Hatch MSVR
19-20 September
Focus Cup, Monoposto, Clubmans, Sports 2000, EnduroKa, Modified Fords, FF1600

Silverstone MSVR*
19-20 September
Ferrari Challenge, Ferrari Classic

Cadwell Park HSCC
19-20 September
Historic Road Sports, '70s Road Sports, Historic Touring Cars, Historic FF1600, Classic FF1600, Historic FF2000, Classic FF2000, Classic Clubmans, Geoff Lees Trophy, '80s Production Car Challenge

Snetterton BARC
19-20 September
Trucks, Legends, Sports Prototypes, Mini Sevens, Mini Miglias, CTC Pre-'66 & Pre-'83, CTC Thunder & BOSS, MGOC

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YEAH BABY!



TOP FIVE



FORMULA 1 FERRARIS

Ferrari celebrated its 1000th world championship race in the Tuscan Grand Prix last weekend. Time to pick out the famous team's greatest F1 designs from the past 70 years

KEVIN TURNER

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

5 156 'SHARKNOSE'

Ferrari was well prepared for the switch from 2.5-litre to 1.5-litre F1 engines in 1961. While the British teams moaned and even attempted to set up their own rival series, Ferrari and Porsche had honed their designs in F2. Power was the V6 car's trump card, as demonstrated by a 1-2-3-4 result at the high-speed Spa. Only two great Stirling Moss drives defeated the 156 during the campaign, with Phil Hill becoming champion.



4 F1-2000

There have been better Ferraris and cooler ones (see left), but the F1-2000 has a significant place in Ferrari folklore as the machine that finally ended its longest wait. The team hadn't won the F1 drivers' crown since Jody Scheckter in 1979 when the F1-2000 was launched. Nine wins for Michael Schumacher, including the race of his life in Japan, brought the title, and Ferrari topped the constructors' table.



3 F2002

Schumacher's title successes of 2000 and 2001 established Ferrari as the team to beat in the early years of the millennium, but the 2002 season moved things on to another level. The F2002, the work of the same Ross Brawn-led team that had already taken three constructors' and two drivers' titles, made its debut in the 2002 Brazilian GP, round three. It then won 14 from 15 races, and added another victory early on in 2003.



2 312T/312T2

We've counted the 312T and 312T2 together because they were similar, with some minor changes – such as to the air intakes – brought in due to rule tweaks. The transverse-mounted gearbox aided chassis balance and Niki Lauda dominated 1975 with the flat-12 machine. He would surely have done so again in 1976 without his German GP crash, and did take another crown in the revised 312T2 in 1977.



1 F2004

It doesn't have the longevity of the 312T series, but that's more due to the changing nature of F1 than anything else. The F2004 was the culmination of the remarkable Ross Brawn/Rory Byrne/Michael Schumacher Ferrari era. The V10-engined machine was so fast in pre-season testing that the team thought it had made an error, won 15 races in 2004, and set many lap records that took years to be surpassed.





FROM THE ARCHIVE

Reigning World Rally champion Richard Burns kicks up a cloud of dust and stones in his Peugeot 206 WRC during shakedown ahead of the 2002 Rally of Cyprus. Burns took a while to find his feet on the Mediterranean island, initially running in the outer reaches of the top 10, but battled back to finish in second place, almost a minute behind team-mate Marcus Gronholm. Autosport debates the greatest rally car of all time as part of our special series of podcasts to celebrate our 70th birthday. Go to bit.ly/GreatestRallyCar

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Herbert wins another crazy Italian GP

14 September 1995

It wasn't quite as surprising as Pierre Gasly's recent Italian Grand Prix victory, but there was plenty of drama at Monza 25 years ago this week.

Poleman David Coulthard kicked things off by throwing his Williams off the road on the warm-up lap of the 1995 Italian GP. The Scot got a second chance when a multi-car accident at Ascari on the opening lap brought out the red flags, and he led the race when it finally got under way again.

Coulthard looked confident up front until wheelbearing failure put him out, allowing Gerhard Berger's Ferrari into the lead. The home team got another boost when Damon Hill's Williams hit the back of Michael Schumacher's Benetton as they battled over second, allowing Jean Alesi's Ferrari into second.

Somewhat dramatically, F1 boss Bernie Ecclestone said: "If these guys want to carry on like this, it is OK by me. But I warn them that they must be prepared for the consequences, which are that they may get hurt, killed, or find themselves in trouble."

Alesi jumped Berger in the pitstops and Ferrari looked set for a 1-2 until more chaos struck. First, Alesi's onboard camera came adrift and smashed Berger's suspension. Then, just eight laps from victory, Alesi suffered a wheelbearing failure, leaving Johnny Herbert to take his second win of the season for Benetton.

Elsewhere, Vauxhall's John Cleland clinched the British Touring Car crown with two podium finishes at Oulton Park, while Jacques Villeneuve secured the Indycar title at Laguna Seca.

Undoubtedly the saddest news of the week was the death of tin-top ace Kieth O'dor following a crash during the German Super Tourenwagen round at Avus. Having won the first race, the Nissan driver lost control in the second and was T-boned by Frank Biela's Audi, O'dor succumbing to his injuries the following Monday.



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23/24	JAN	AUTODROMO PORTIMÃO /P
25/26	JAN	AUTODROMO PORTIMÃO /P
30/31	JAN	ASCARI /E
02/03	FEB	CIRCUITO IBERIA 9KM /E
13/14	FEB	ASCARI /E
16/17	FEB	AUTODROMO PORTIMÃO /P
27/28	FEB	ASCARI /E
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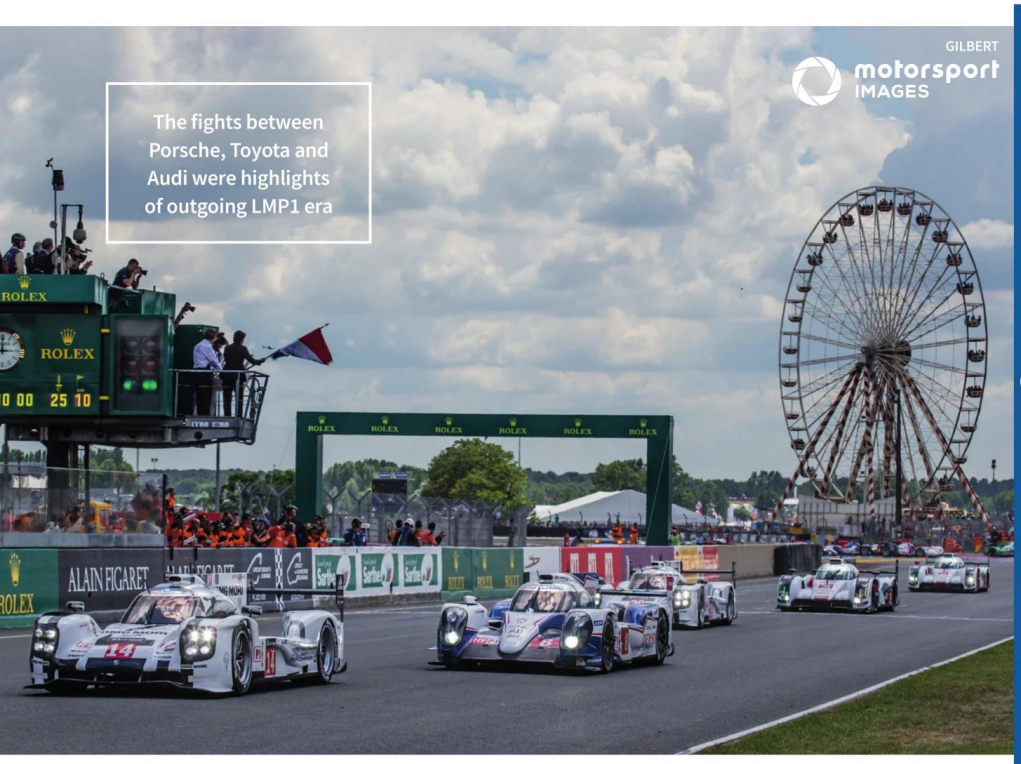
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The fights between Porsche, Toyota and Audi were highlights of outgoing LMP1 era

WORTH THE WAIT TO SEE THE END OF A GREAT ERA

Le Mans fans have had a long time to wait. It seems an age since Fernando Alonso, Sebastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima took their second consecutive win in the 24 Hours, and there's been plenty of doubt about the race following the COVID-19 outbreak.

Sadly, the 88th running of the greatest endurance race in the world will take place with no fans, but at least (fingers crossed) it will be taking place. Toyota will inevitably start as favourite but, as Gary Watkins shows on page 4 of this free guide, top privateer Rebellion has a chance — if it can pull off a perfect run.

LMP1 will be replaced as the top class of sportscar racing in 2021, so we have taken the opportunity to look back on the greatest races, cars and drivers from a memorable period of endurance competition (p30). Privateers were a key part of that story and one of the best — Rollcentre's Martin Short — takes one of his famous Dallaras out for a spin on p36.

Le Mans is not just about the top category, of course, and there is a good chance that the best battle this weekend will take place in LMP2. Among the leading contenders are ex-Formula 1 racers Paul di Resta and Anthony Davidson, both of whom have not had the best of luck around the Circuit de la Sarthe (p12).

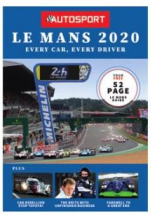
Like them, Aston Martin also has a good chance to taste success, as its fine recent World Endurance Championship run in GTE Pro has shown (p16).

This isn't the first time Le Mans has run in September - and we hope this edition provides as many great stories as the 1968 event (p42). Enjoy!





KEVIN TURNER
EDITOR



COVER IMAGES
Motorsport Images; JEP

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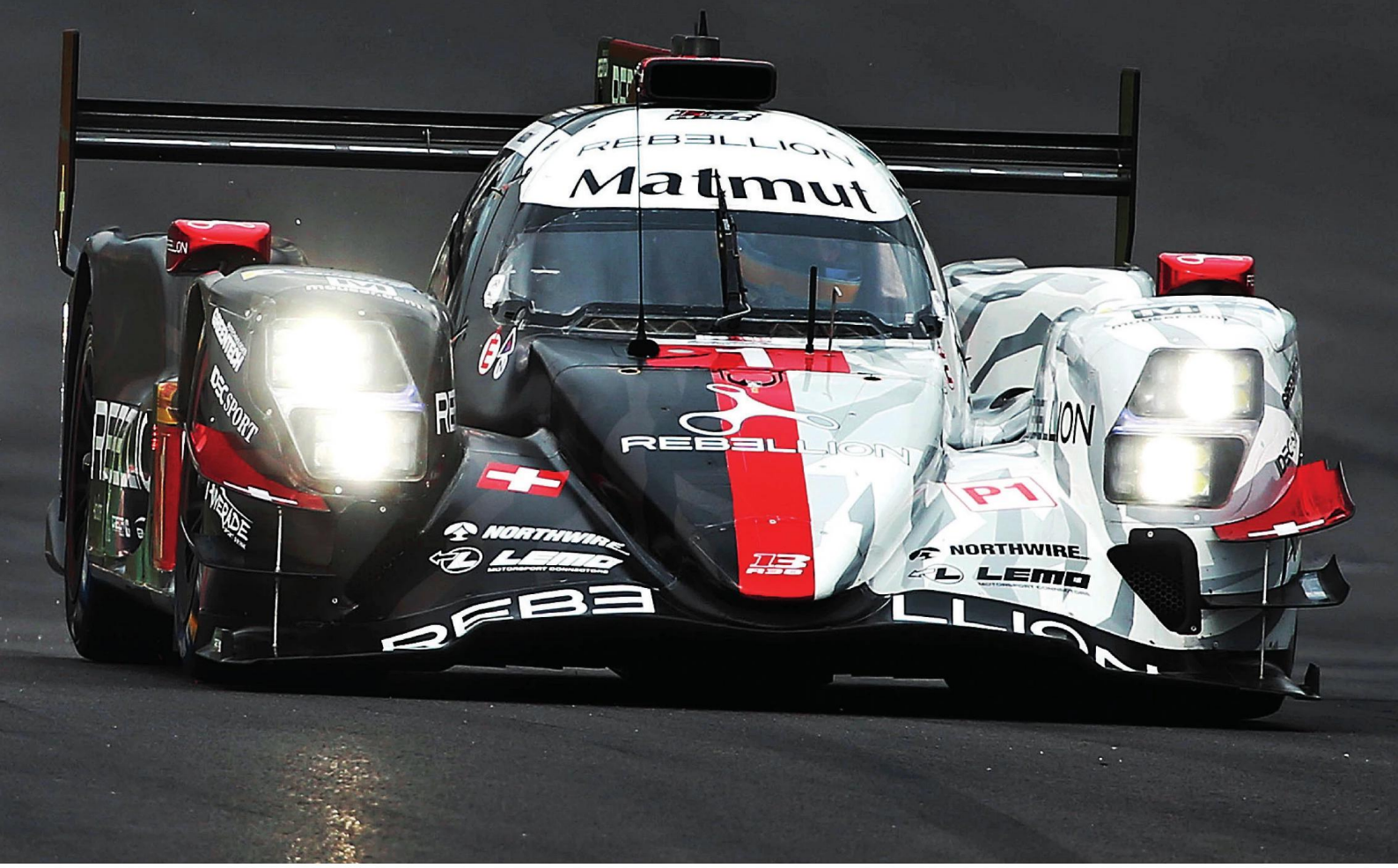
LMP1 LMP2 GTE PRO GTE AM

CAN REBELLION BEAT TOYOTA?

The privateer team was closer to defeating LMP1's only manufacturer squad than it looked last year – and several new factors could help it further this weekend

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES



"We must do the perfect job: no driver mistakes, no team mistakes – we must not beat ourselves." That's familiar rhetoric from ORECA boss Hugues de Chaunac ahead of the Le Mans 24 Hours. He almost certainly uttered something similar in the days when his team was fielding Chrysler Vipers in the 1990s or Judd-engined Dallaras in the 2000s. But it also hints at what might have been at the French enduro last year for the Rebellion Racing squad run by his organisation.

Rebellion could have won the last edition of the 24 Hours 15 months ago. And the 'could' here means 'had the pace' to win, and it had nothing to do with the system of success handicaps that played a big role in allowing the team to vanquish the Toyotas at Shanghai and Austin during the 2019-20 World Endurance Championship. The #3 Rebellion-Gibson R-13 shared by Gustavo Menezes, Thomas Laurent and Nathanael Berthon was right in among the Japanese cars on average lap times at Le Mans last year.

The 15 laps that the car finished in arrears down in fifth place was largely the result of two off-track incidents. That goes a long way to explaining de Chaunac's words.

"We have to be 100% in all respects in case Toyota has problems," he says. "I am very humble when talking about our chances because as a privateer we are not at the same level as Toyota in terms of preparation. Our only chance to do something is to avoid mistakes."

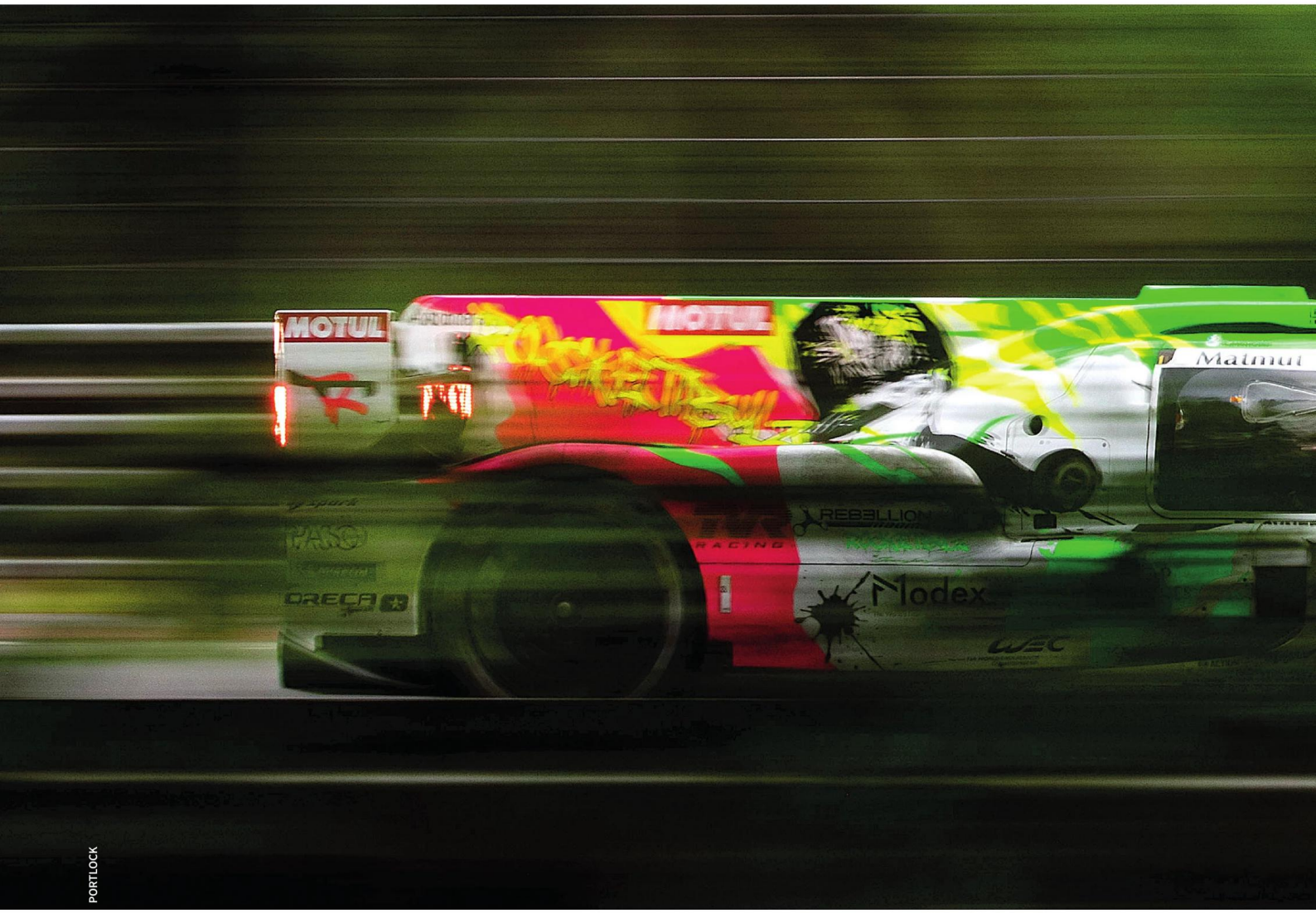
History wouldn't be on de Chaunac's side if he proclaimed that Rebellion is going to win Le Mans. Privateers only claim the biggest prize in sportscar racing very occasionally. But the Swiss entrant, the top indie in the LMP1 division over the past decade, did have a genuine chance in 2019.



Rebellion beat the Toyotas in Shanghai

It is impossible, of course, to declare with any certainty that Rebellion would have won Le Mans last year had Laurent and Menezes avoided their mistakes. The Frenchman lost it under braking in light rain for the second chicane on the Mulsanne Straight in hour seven, while Menezes beached the car in the gravel at the Porsche Curves in the 18th hour as he strived to catch the BRE Engineering entry ahead of him in third place.

But it is there in black and white that the best of the Rebellions was with the Toyotas on pace. Menezes, Laurent and Berthon were,



PORTLOCK


TRIENITZ

'Wrong' Toyota won Le Mans last year

in fact, slap bang in the middle of the two Toyota TS050 HYBRIDs on most laptime metrics. The car was a shade slower than the #7 Toyota driven by Kamui Kobayashi, Mike Conway and Jose Maria Lopez that should have won, and a touch quicker than the car shared by Fernando Alonso, Sebastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima that prevailed after the race threw up one final twist.

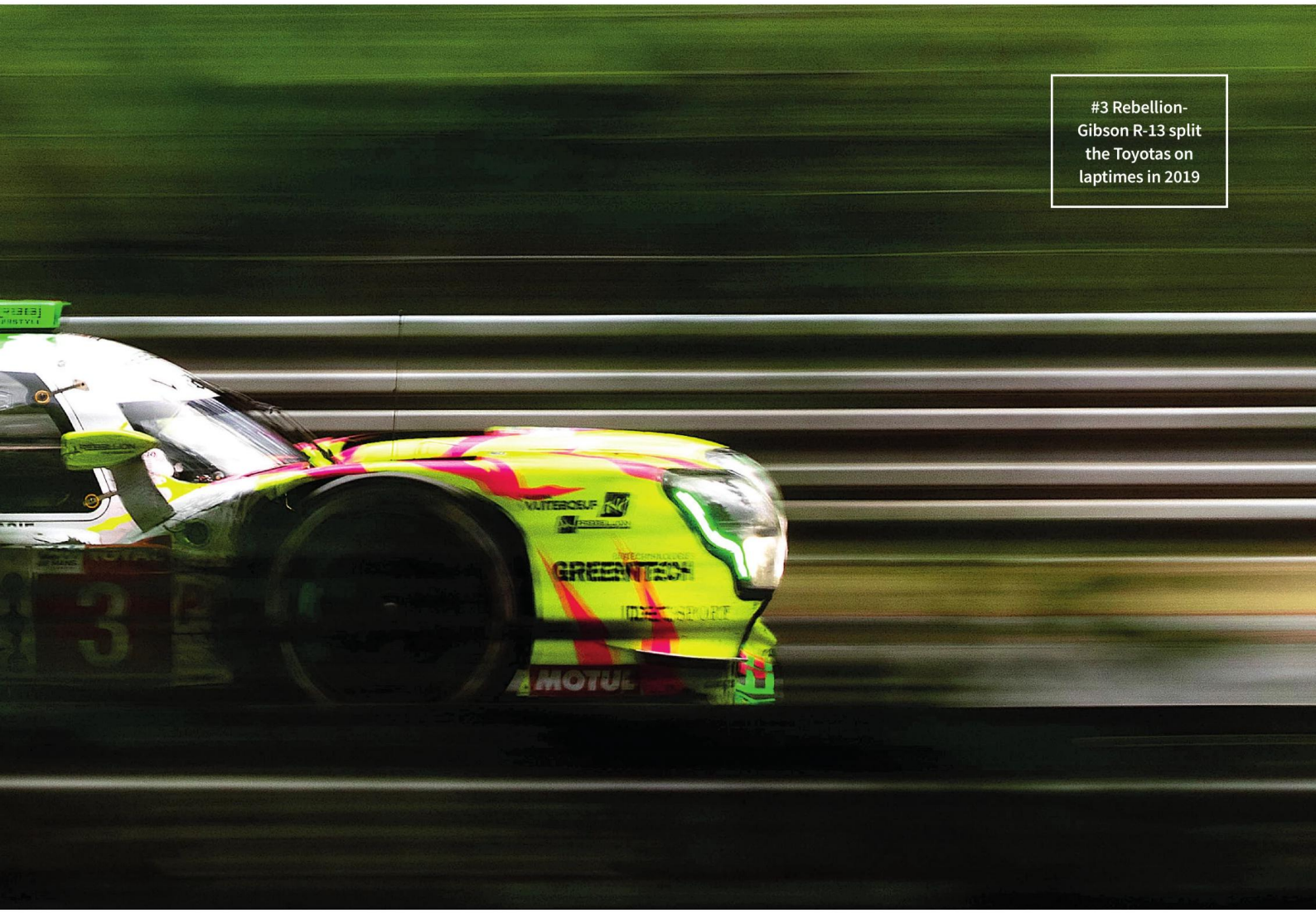
The 100-lap average for the #3 car was a tad over three tenths in arrears of that for the #7 Toyota and a similar margin ahead of the #8 entry. Menezes, meanwhile, was less than two tenths behind Conway at the top of the driver averages calculated from the fastest 50 laps. That explains why Toyota Gazoo Racing Europe technical director Pascal Vasselon suggests that Rebellion, which is back up to two cars for the race, will be a contender in what will be its swansong Le Mans campaign.

"We have to be 100% in all respects in case Toyota has problems. Our only chance is to avoid mistakes"

"It was not one or two laps that #3 was faster than our #8 car," says Vasselon. "It was faster under the two key performance criteria used by the organisers: the fastest 100 laps and the fastest 20% of race laps. The Rebellion also overtook #8 three times in the race and pulled away."

Vasselon reckons that the Equivalence of Technology, the means used to equate the performance of the hybrid factory car and the non-hybrid privateers, was pretty much spot-on at Le Mans in 2019. "When you have one of the non-hybrids exactly between our two hybrids, then you cannot have a better EoT than that," he says. "The #3 car was a little bit behind #7 and a little bit ahead of #8."

Vasselon has described last year's EoT as "perfect", though the rulemakers – the FIA, and WEC promoter and Le Mans organiser the Automobile Club de l'Ouest – haven't quite agreed with him. For 2020, there's been a 7kg increase in the minimum weight of ▶



#3 Rebellion-Gibson R-13 split the Toyotas on laptimes in 2019

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the TS050s, which still means they are running 37kg lighter than they have over the first six races of the current WEC campaign.

The pace of the Rebellion last year was, however, one of the reasons why the system of success handicaps was never on the agenda for Le Mans. It was always the plan for the slate to be wiped clean for the 24 Hours, which was originally scheduled as the final round of the 2019-20 WEC.

But Rebellion isn't so sure that the EoT was quite as perfect as Vasselon believes. Menezes thinks that he and his team-mates had to drive nearer to the limit than the Toyota drivers to achieve comparable lap times. "The fact was that we had to push harder than they did," he says. "I would definitely say I was ragging it out there. I was always closer to the limit of where I felt comfortable than I wanted to be."

"I would definitely say I was ragging it out there. I was always closer to the limit than I wanted to be"

Bruno Senna has replaced Berthon in the full-season R-13 after sharing last year with Andre Lotterer and Neel Jani, while the Frenchman has moved over to the extra entry for Le Mans to drive alongside two-time race winner Romain Dumas and Louis Deletraz. Senna believes that the advantages provided by the TS050's hybrid system are almost impossible to overcome for Rebellion. "The hybrid boost gives them such a huge advantage in traffic," he explains. "It as good as destroys the competition between us and Toyota. It would have been better if the EoT had removed some of their boost and maybe given them a bit more conventional engine power. That way they could have created a real race between us."



De Chaunac is "very humble" talking about his squad's chances

The EoT has, however, addressed two factors that went against Rebellion last year. From the start of the current season, the advantages Toyota enjoyed in the length of stint between pitstops and the time its cars spent refuelling have been removed. The privateers should now be able to complete the same 11-lap stints around the 8.47-mile Circuit de la Sarthe on a tank of gas as the TS050.

That is not the only change to the LMP1 landscape since Le Mans last year. Toyota has undertaken the biggest update to the TS050 since the introduction of what was the first turbocharged car in its line of WEC contenders stretching back to 2012. ▶



Rebellion really struggles in the wet. If it rains it'll be "game over"

"THE TRACK IS MY CANVAS, THE CAR IS MY BRUSH"

GRAHAM HILL



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TOYOTA VERSUS TOYOTA

If it's hard to make accurate predictions about Rebellion Racing's chances this weekend, there is pretty much one certainty based on the evidence on the past two Le Mans 24 Hours — the two Toyotas are going to be scrapping it out for the duration.

That was the case in both editions of the French enduro encompassed by the 2018-19 World Endurance Championship superseason, and all the races in between. That hasn't been the case this season courtesy of the system of success handicaps designed to close up the championship battle between the Toyotas and the privateers.

The prospect of a proper fight between the pair of TS050s is something the drivers of the two Japanese cars are relishing after a season in which, according to Sebastien Buemi (right), "it feels sometimes that we've been racing on our own".

The system of penalties calculated on the gaps between cars in the points has meant the two TS050s have gone into a race with equal handicaps only once since the Silverstone opener in September. That was at Shanghai in November last year, when they were pegged back to such an extent that they had no chance to battle with the Rebellion.

"I understand why the system was introduced, but it is too extreme," reckons Buemi. "If you are slowed by three seconds and the sister car by 2.8s, then there's no battle. That's why I'm looking forward to having a good fight with the sister car at Le Mans. The level of competition we had in 2018 and 2019 was amazing. It was good to be part of that, even if fighting against your team-mates is different – a bit more tricky, I would say – than racing with Porsche and Audi."



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Mike Conway feels a similar way: "I'm looking forward to it because if you go in there equal, there are no excuses. It's down to the drivers and the car crew to do the best job they can. That's what you always want. May the best man win."



JEP

What the new high-nose aerodynamics will give the marque at the 24 Hours isn't clear. The only outing for the revised machine in low-downforce Le Mans trim was at Spa last month in mostly wet conditions and with the success handicaps in place.

Wet weather at Le Mans, not quite the statistical certainty you might imagine for an autumn race, could also change the balance at the front of the field. The R-13 has never been strong in the rain, never more so than last time out at Spa.

Rebellion has admitted that at least part of the problem was that its weather forecast predicted only showers, whereas the track was wet for the first half of the six-hour race. "We followed our forecast and went for a full-dry set-up," explains de Chaunac. "We were also very conservative in those conditions, because we knew we couldn't do anything to improve the car during the race. But it is also true that we have never had a good test session with the car in the rain, so wet conditions are a handicap for us."

Senna is more damning of the R-13's lack of wet-weather prowess. "The car just doesn't work in the wet and we don't really have any answers," he says. "Maybe it's something to do with the suspension kinematics, but that's just speculation on my part. All I know is that if it rains, it will be game over for us — we'll lose a lap in an hour and a half."

Senna isn't dismissing Rebellion's chances out of hand, but he reckons it will be a tall order for the team to beat Toyota: "It is going to be tough, but we believe we are more on top of some of the reliability issues we've had than we have ever been. The only way we can fight is if we have no mechanicals. Can we win? It's possible. You know Le Mans chooses its winners."

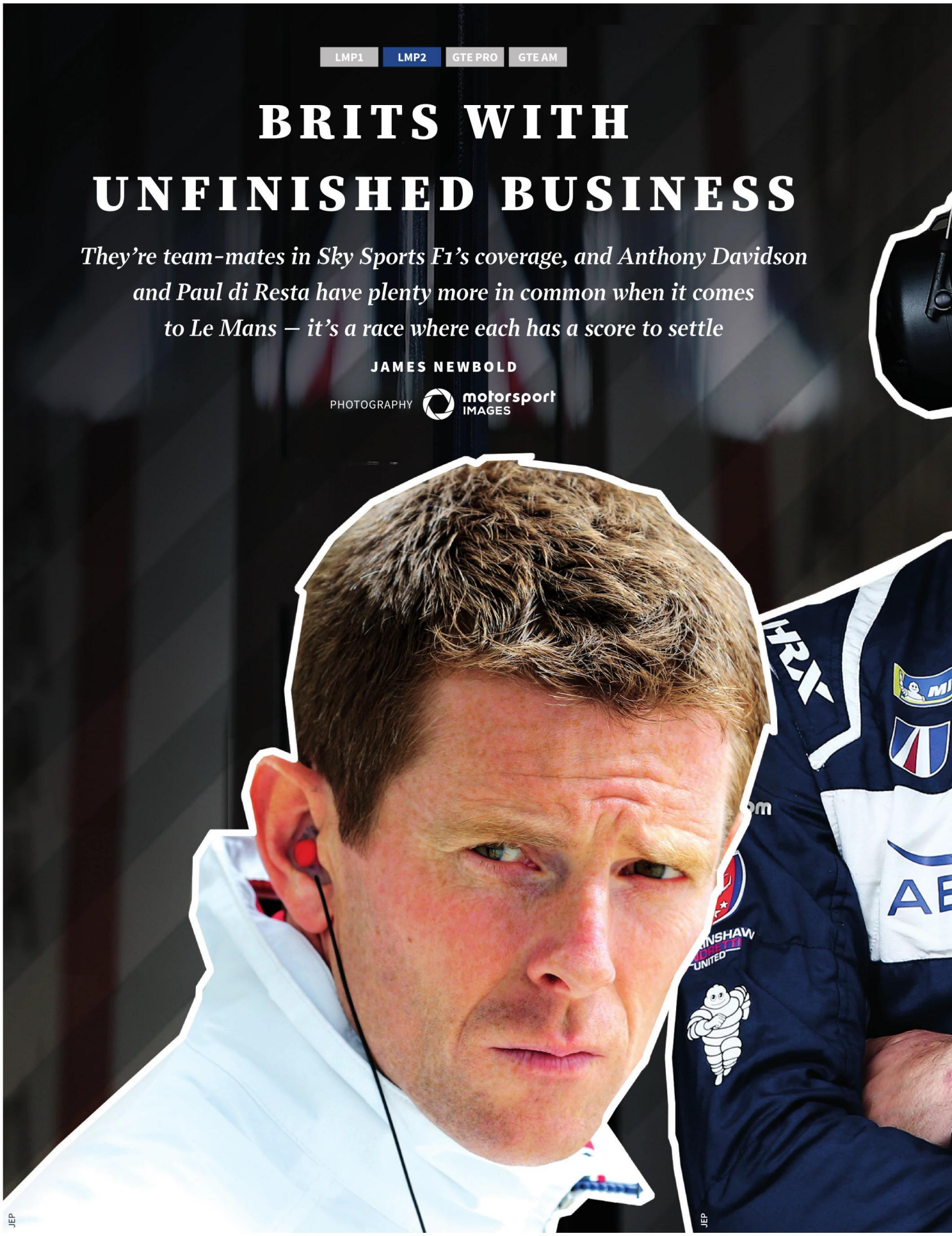
LMP1 | LMP2 | GTE PRO | GTE AM

BRITS WITH UNFINISHED BUSINESS

They're team-mates in Sky Sports F1's coverage, and Anthony Davidson and Paul di Resta have plenty more in common when it comes to Le Mans – it's a race where each has a score to settle

JAMES NEWBOLD

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES



JEP

JEP



For all the talk about LMP2 being one of the most closely fought classes in the World Endurance Championship, one team has been doing all the winning so far in 2020: United Autosports. But what about the European Le Mans Series? Erm, same there.

ORECAs fielded by the team co-owned by Zak Brown and Richard Dean have won all five races held under ACO-sanctioned rules this year across the two series, a run that goes back to the Bahrain WEC round in December last year at tracks including Austin, Paul Ricard (twice) and Spa (twice).

No wonder then that Paul di Resta, who has won the past three WEC rounds alongside championship leaders Filipe Albuquerque and Phil Hanson (who have also taken two of United's wins in the ELMS) is looking forward to this weekend's Le Mans 24 Hours rather more so than in the past two years. On both previous occasions United was hampered by a Ligier that wasn't quite on the level of the numerically dominant ORECA and required drivers and team to be "so much more on-edge". For the Scot, who missed the Fuji WEC round to fulfil his DTM commitments with the doomed R-Motorsport Aston squad, 2020 marks the first time he comes to Le Mans with any form of parity.

"There's no question that we were up against it at every race, especially at Le Mans," says di Resta. "Over 24 hours, it was hard to pull any of that back. That's where the team grew and excelled from, and I think that's probably where you're seeing the difference happening at the moment.

"There's a lot of things that can happen in that 24-hour period that dictate where you are, but given the run that we're on, we're going to do what we can to try to maximise that."

And he isn't the only Brit at Le Mans with unfinished business. Di Resta's Sky F1 colleague Anthony Davidson has significantly more experience there and has had a competitive car underneath him plenty of times, famously coming within touching distance of victory with Toyota in 2016 before his dreams were dashed in the cruellest possible fashion with just over a lap to go.

After 11 starts, he's twice been blameless in accidents that required medical attention (wheelbearing failure on his debut in 2003 in a Prodrive Ferrari, and somersaulting after contact from a GTE car on his first start for Toyota in 2012) and suffered several mishaps that prevented him gracing the top step of the podium. It's little surprise therefore when he says that Le Mans "has been particularly cruel to me. I don't know what I've ever done to deserve such back luck at that one race".

Last year was a case in point. On his first appearance in LMP2

"Le Mans has been particularly cruel to me. I don't know what I've done to deserve such bad luck at that one race"

with DragonSpeed, Davidson was running third when, coming into the pits, he found the sister LMP1 entry in his bay. The resulting delay in servicing the ORECA he shared with Roberto Gonzalez and Pastor Maldonado dropped it to the back of the field and set them on a recovery drive that would likely have yielded "at least a podium finish" had Maldonado not crashed at sunrise at Tertre Rouge.

"That goes to show how even small things at Le Mans can end up snowballing and take their toll later in the race," says Davidson. "That dropped us way down the order and put us on the back foot for the rest of the race. Although it was a small moment, it was pretty big in terms of forcing us to claw back lost time, which is never the way to win Le Mans. I've had a few Le Mans where you're trying to claw back time and it rarely goes your way."

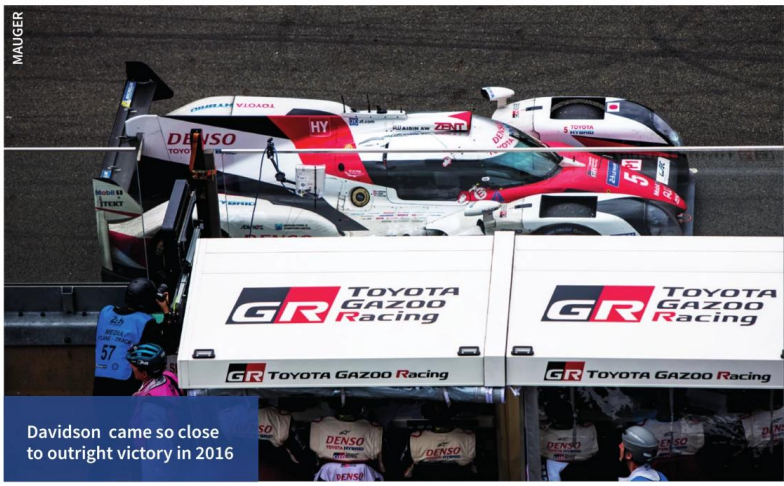
For the 2019-20 WEC season, Davidson has switched to Jota Sport – the team that won the LMP2 class at Le Mans in 2014 ▶

and 2017 – with Gonzalez and recently crowned Formula E champion Antonio Felix da Costa. The campaign didn't get off to the best of starts, with Davidson ruled out at Silverstone by a rib injury, and a hard-earned second at Fuji was lost to disqualification when scrutineers found that the ORECA's outside neutral switch was unable to disconnect the transmission. They bounced back with victory at Shanghai, but since then it has been one-way traffic, with United Autosports building a commanding 22-point lead in the standings over its nearest opposition.

"Honestly, I don't know why we haven't won another race since Shanghai, but there has been some bad luck," Davidson says. "Look at Spa with the changing weather and missing out on safety-car periods where others pitted and we didn't. It's a shame we couldn't get to see how Spa unfolded with our new tyre in the dry. Hopefully we can take that to Le Mans and carry on that kind of speed and balance we have in the car. If the weather is right and we can get the tyre in the right window, hopefully we can be setting the pace."

In such a bitty season, Le Mans offers another chance for a reboot and, as one of the leading Goodyear-shod cars – Davidson's #38 ORECA will be one of only five of the 24 LMP2 entries not using Michelins – there will be plenty of opportunity for the recent competitive order to be reset.

"There's no reason why we shouldn't be quick," continues Davidson, who points out that da Costa is "flying high" on confidence at the moment. "But as we know, being quick isn't the be-all and end-all at Le Mans. It's about survival and being there at the end with minimal problems.


MAUGER

Davidson came so close to outright victory in 2016

"In all the races I've done at Le Mans, there's only been one – 2013 – where nothing went wrong. It was the perfect race, there was no more we could have done on our car and we finished second. Every other one I've done, something has always gone wrong. People get fixated on qualifying performance or the fastest stint performance during the race, but it's not about that at all."

Di Resta reckons "the main competition will be on Michelins" but points out that the unknown conditions and how teams can react to them could play just as decisive a part.

"It's a very different Le Mans in September versus June," he says. "How much of the race is going to be in the dark? When is the


JEP

Bahrain 2019 kicked off di Resta's run of WEC wins

PORTLOCK

Di Resta says the Ligier "just didn't have the speed" at Le Mans last year



Davidson reckons bad luck cost him at Spa this year

temperature variation going to come in? We've got less track time, we've missed the pre-test, which then gives you two or three weeks to react and then come back to the race and properly get into it.

"At the moment it's just a full day on Thursday to get yourself into how the tyres work, how the car behaves, rideheights, downforce levels for quali and the race. If it's mixed weather that throws another thing into it, but we just have to go there with the best intentions.

"I feel that we've got as good a chance as anybody going into it, but it's no given and you can't underestimate what other people do and other people have got."

Di Resta concedes that prior to Mercedes announcing its exit from the DTM, "Le Mans wasn't something that was on my radar", but acknowledges a victory in "what I think is probably the hardest class at Le Mans to win" would be a boon to his chances of landing a drive in a factory programme capable of challenging for outright honours in years to come.

"I'll take it with both hands, it will be a massive step given what we've gone through [with the Ligier] the past couple of years," he says. "We've narrowly missed out on a podium a few times, once [in 2018] was my mistake from pushing too hard, and last year we just genuinely didn't have the speed to make it and nobody slipped up."

As for Davidson, there's no questioning that his desire to win the race is as strong as ever. "I look forward to Le Mans every time, no matter what it throws at me," he says. "I don't give up with this race because I love it, I keep coming back and I'm determined to win it.

"I'd like to win it outright one day of course, but at least in LMP2 would be a nice moment to win that race."

THE LAST-MINUTE DARK HORSE

"It's not often that you'll ever be able to put a deal together this late for Le Mans," says Oliver Jarvis. And he's not wrong. The former Audi LMP1 driver, now a staple of Mazda's IMSA line-up, returns to the prototype ranks at Le Mans for the first time since he won LMP2 in 2017 as part of a car crew that must be counted as a dark horse for class honours, despite the paperwork only being signed around three weeks before the race.

"It's certainly been a last-minute thing to come together," says Jarvis, who will share an Algarve Pro Racing-run G-Drive ORECA with 2015 outright winner Nick Tandy and 2019 Daytona 24 Hours LMP2 class winner Ryan Cullen.

"For Nick the results speak for themselves, he's a winner at Le Mans and he's won pretty much everything in a GT car, and Ryan is exceptionally fast."

Without the title pressures facing United Autosports – a team Jarvis knows well after standing in for Paul di Resta at Fuji – Jarvis says his squad can head to Le Mans free from the weight of expectation that's on the shoulders of 2020's pre-eminent LMP2 squad.

"They're definitely the favourites heading into the week," Jarvis says of United Autosports. "Everybody is going to be gunning for them so they're probably the ones with the most pressure on them, whereas for us it's a different mentality.

"We're certainly going there with the aim to win, but we're last-minute, definitely the underdogs in that respect, so we can go out and push without having to worry about the championship in the back of our minds."

Jarvis is hopeful that the car crew's experience of what is required for success in 24-hour races – "Winning teaches you just to stay calm and let the race come to you" – will count in its favour, even considering its limited preparation and experience of working together. For in a field featuring 20 ORECAs, three Ligiers and one Dallara, any slip-up will prove costly.

As Jarvis adds: "You're not going to luck into a podium in LMP2 this year."



LEVITT



GILBERT



LMP1 LMP2 GTE PRO GTE AM

ASTON MARTIN READY TO END ITS GT WAIT

The past two editions of the 24 Hours have disappointed, but now an altogether more competitive operation is primed to win again

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

That dramatic from-behind victory at the Le Mans 24 Hours in 2017 seems a long time ago now. Aston Martin notched up its most recent class victory in the French enduro more than three years ago when Jonny Adam overhauled Jordan Taylor's Chevrolet on the final lap to seal the GTE Pro win together with Darren Turner and Daniel Serra. There's been a lot of water under the bridge since.

Aston Martin Racing has produced an all-new car, the World Endurance Championship was temporarily reshaped with the one-off superseason that encompassed the 2018 and 2019 editions of Le Mans, and this year's race was pushed back into the early autumn. Now, after two disappointing showings at Le Mans, the Prodrive-run AMR squad arrives back at the Circuit de la Sarthe at the head of the points in both the World Endurance GTE Pro Drivers' and Manufacturers' Championships, and looking more than ready to try to add to its tally of class wins at the centrepiece round of the WEC.

"Just to be so competitive is a great feeling after the frustrations we've encountered at Le Mans in recent years," says Nicki Thiim, who sits as the head of the GTE Pro points together with Marco Sorensen. "It feels like our time to fight for it."

Aston wasn't able to fight for the win in the first two Le Mans appearances of the second-generation Vantage GTE that came on stream at the start of the superseason. Le Mans 2018 was only the second race for the successor to the original Vantage GTE that had its roots in a car raced for the first time back in 2008. Twelve months on, the new car had a couple of GTE Pro victories in the WEC to its name, but still wasn't ready to take the big one.

The first win for the latest car came in wet conditions at Shanghai and Spa, Thiim and Sorensen winning in China in



JEP

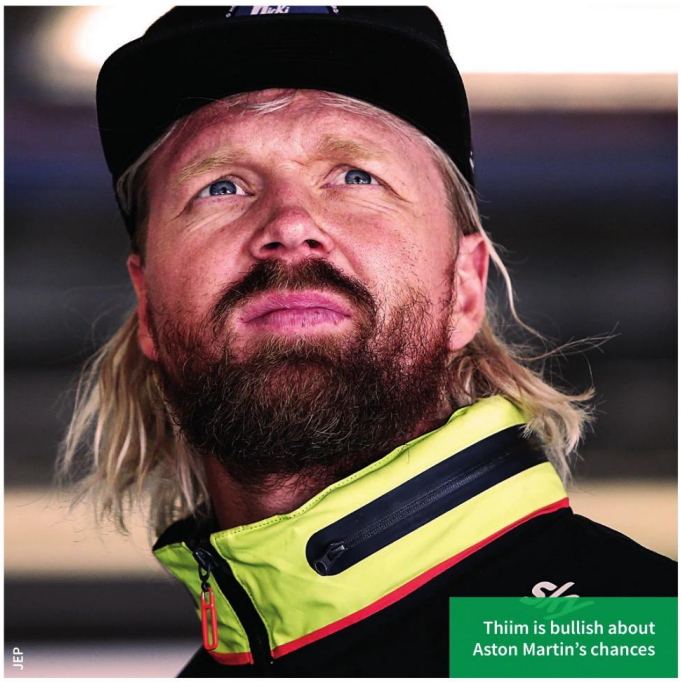
"Just to be so competitive is a great feeling after the frustrations we've encountered in recent years"

November 2018, and Alex Lynn and Maxime Martin in Belgium in May 2019. The car's next best results over the course of the superseason, when there were five manufacturers present in GTE Pro, were a couple of fourths. The reason was that the new Vantage wasn't a competitive proposition in the dry.

The arrival of the new Vantage coincided with strict new tyre limitations in GTE Pro. Double-stinting became a necessity and Aston struggled to make its tyres last.

Aston had swapped from Michelin to Dunlop tyres for the 2016 season. It was looking for what AMR boss John Gaw refers to as a "differentiator" as it strove to keep the ageing mark one Vantage competitive. It worked: Thiim and Sorensen claimed what was then known as the World Endurance Cup for GT Drivers in 2016.

Two years later, it opted to go back to Michelin, the same tyres on which all the opposition ran. The reason for going to Dunlops ▶



JEP

Thiim is bullish about Aston Martin's chances

had effectively been removed with the arrival of the new car. But the decision came late in the development programme, and it had long-lasting ramifications.

The return to Michelin was announced on the launch of the new car in November 2017 and the first test on the French rubber wasn't until the following month. That left only five months before the start of the superseason.

"We started testing in August 2017 and did the first three months on Dunlops," explains AMR head of performance Gus Beteli, who replaced Dan Sayers as the technical leader across all the GT programmes at the start of this year. "The first test on the Michelins was in Abu Dhabi in December, which left us with a very narrow window for development."

WEC rules allow for only three specifications of slick tyre across a season, leaving little scope for improvement for a period of 18 months. "You have to declare your tyres quite early, so it really was a challenge," continues Beteli. "We were starting from zero compared with our rivals and we were still in the early stages of development when you are changing the car for performance and reliability.

"It was never going to happen for us at Le Mans last year because we didn't have the tyre we needed"



Pole at Le Mans last year was followed by a "painful" race

"We basically ran out of time and our bad luck was that we were heading into the superseason. Our tyres were fixed for 18 months, so that meant we struggled through the first season with the car."

That struggle continued right up until Le Mans last year. Sorensen proved the one-lap pace of the new Vantage by claiming its second pole position of the season, but the car was nowhere in the race. A Balance of Performance change on the Friday evening robbed the Astons of horsepower, but Beteli concedes that a third victory of the season wasn't really on the cards.

"It was painful, because we were really just driving around," says Beteli. "But it was never going to happen for us at Le Mans last year because we didn't have the tyre we needed."

Thiim reckons he "still has nightmares" about Le Mans 2019. "The tyres died on me," says the Dane, who played a part in bringing in Richard Westbrook to share the #95 'Dane Train' at Le Mans (they drove an Audi together in the 2014 Nurburgring 24 Hours). "We wouldn't have been competitive even if we hadn't been done over on the BoP. We knew after one hour of the race that we weren't going anywhere last year."

Things changed for the 2019-20 WEC campaign, the first season – and as it has turned out, the last – run to a winter-series format beginning in the autumn of one year and (in theory) finishing with Le Mans the following summer. This time, Aston was able to put in place the kind of development programme with Michelin it needed to ensure the Vantage fulfilled its potential.

AMR began tyre testing for this season's campaign straight after Le Mans 2018. The result is revised-construction tyres that have allowed the Vantages to race with Porsche and Ferrari right through a double stint. "The tyre lasts through a double, which is what you have to do with the tyre restrictions," says Thiim. "Everything has come together for the second season with the car."



Top-notch strategy and pit work has been crucial to success this season



TRIENITZ

The new Aston notched up its first dry-weather podium with Lynn and Martin at the Silverstone series opener in September, before Thiim and Sorensen recorded a maiden dry-weather —albeit with a quick shower — victory at Fuji the following month. They followed that up with two more victories in the bone dry at Bahrain and Austin in December and February respectively. And they should have won at Shanghai too.

The Vantage has been there on pace and the AMR crew has been at the top of its game all season. It has played some clever strategic cards in a GTE Pro battle that remains ultra-competitive despite the disappearance of Ford and BMW from the series.

Shanghai was a case in point. Thiim was running second to Kevin Estre's Porsche 911 RSR when he was brought in five laps early as his pace started to drop on the tyres on which he and Sorensen had qualified. He subsequently flew on fresh rubber and established the car in the lead, only for Sorensen to lose the race in a sequence of events set in motion by a puncture.

The sister car, in which another refugee of the Ford programme in the form of Harry Tincknell joins Lynn and Martin, has so far been the loser in AMR's tactical play. But as Beteli points out that's an almost inevitable consequence of splitting your strategies: "One of the calls is going to pay off and one isn't, so Alex and Max have been a bit unlucky in that respect."

Beteli reckons AMR's work on the pitwall and in the pits has been crucial this season. "We've won races where we haven't necessarily been the fastest car on the averages," he says. "There has been a lot of good work on strategy and in the pits — we've been the fastest team in the pits all season. Nicki and Marco have been brilliant: they drive every lap to the limit and leave the strategy to us."

Thiim believes everything is in place for AMR to return to the winners' circle. He's expecting a close fight across an admittedly reduced field missing the new Chevrolet Corvette C8.Rs and the two additional Porsches usually fielded by the CORE Autosport IMSA SportsCar Championship squad.

"It's been super-close so far this season, all the cars separated by a couple of tenths," says Thiim, "but I'm pretty positive that the team has done all its homework and gathered all the information from this season to be able to manage the tyres and be in the game all the way. I'm confident we can be right there and bring it to Porsche and Ferrari.

"If it's not this year, I don't know when it is going to be. I don't think there's much more we could have done to make sure we're ready to win."

ASTON MARTIN RACING
LE MANS CLASS VICTORIES

2007



WOOD

Aston Martin was third in the old GT1 class in 2005 with the DBR9 that brought the marque back to the Le Mans 24 Hours that season. A year later it was second, and then in 2007 notched up a first victory in dominant style with David Brabham, Darren Turner and Rickard Rydell. The British Racing Green machines were on top throughout in a race where one of the rival Chevrolet Corvettes went out early and the other was off the pace. The eventual winners – who finished fifth overall – came out top when two offs on Sunday morning for the car shared by Johnny Herbert, Tomas Enge and Peter Kox dropped it back.


DOLE

2008

The Prodrive-run AMR squad, now with its cars liveried in Gulf Oil colours, hadn't raced since Le Mans the previous year, but prevailed in a battle with Corvette Racing. It was nip and tuck between the DBR9 and the C6.R: the Aston was slightly faster, but the Chevy was going a lap further on a tank of fuel. Brabham and Turner, this time partnered with Antonio Garcia, triumphed by less than a lap from the 'Vette shared by Jan Magnussen, Johnny O'Connell and Ron Fellows.

2014


GILBERT

The Danish line-up of Nicki Thiim, David Heinemeier Hansson and Kristian Poulsen ended Aston's victory drought at Le Mans aboard their factory-run Vantage GTE. They triumphed by two laps in GTE Am after taking over at the front of the field when the sister car shared by Pedro Lamy, Paul Dalla Lana and Christoffer Nygaard hit power-steering problems.



EHRHARDT

2017

The GTE Pro-winning Vantage shared by Darren Turner, Jonny Adam and Daniel Serra lost a minute to the leading group on Sunday morning. With an hour to go Adam left the pits right on the tail of race leader Jordan Taylor's Corvette. The battle came to a head with three laps to go: Adam made an unsuccessful move at Indianapolis before Taylor went straight at the second Mulsanne chicane a lap later. At the final corner of the penultimate lap, the Aston nipped past as the Chevy's front-left tyre started to delaminate.

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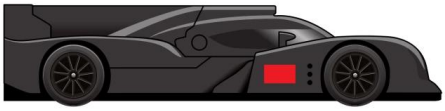
CLASS OF 2020 AT A GLANCE

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP motorsport IMAGES

LMP1

Pure-bred prototypes with mandatory energy-retrieval systems (if run by a manufacturer) are the fastest cars at Le Mans. Power outputs of around 500bhp from their conventional engines are boosted by their hybrid systems. The non-hybrid P1s run by the privateer teams are given a series of performance breaks.



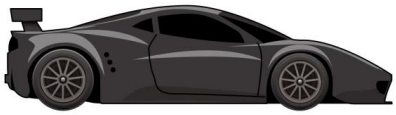
LMP2

A faster breed of machine came on stream for 2017 in the secondary prototype division, which is aimed at the privateer. All cars are powered by the one-make Gibson V8 engine pushing out around 600bhp and each entry must have a silver-rated driver – a kind of amateur – among its line-up.



GTE PRO GTE AM

The class for road-based GT machinery is split into two: GTE Pro is the domain of factory or works-supported teams with all-professional driver line-ups; GTE Am is fought out by pro-am crews that can only include one platinum or gold-ranked professional driver and must have one bronze or true amateur.



LMP1 | LMP2 | GTE PRO | GTE AM

REBELLION RACING Rebellion-Gibson R-13

1
BRUNO **SENNA**
NORMAN **NATO**
GUSTAVO **MENEZES**

2
ROMAIN **DUMAS**
NATHANAEL **BERTHON**
LOUIS **DELETRAZ**

The top LMP1 privateer for more than a decade has one final shot of making it onto the overall podium – and perhaps better – with its Gibson-powered R-13 designed, built and run by ORECA. The team expands back to two cars for its Le Mans swansong, two-time winner Dumas coming in to lead the line-up in the additional entry.

AUTOSPORT SAYS If the conditions are good, it has the pace to put the pressure on Toyota.



BYKOLLES RACING TEAM ENSO CLM-Gibson P1/01

4
TOM **DILLMANN**
BRUNO **SPENGLER**
OLIVER **WEBB**

Stalwart WEC team is back for a last hurrah with the long-serving P1/01 dating back to 2014, before switching to a Hypercar in 2021. The car has been updated since Le Mans last year, with revised aero and latest-spec Gibson V8. Team regulars Dillmann and Webb are joined by race debutant Spengler.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Question marks remain on whether an improvement in pace has been matched in reliability.



TOYOTA GAZOO RACING Toyota TS050 HYBRID

7
MIKE **CONWAY**
KAMUI **KOBAYASHI**
JOSE MARIA **LOPEZ**

8
SEBASTIEN **BUEMI**
KAZUKI **NAKAJIMA**
BRENDON **HARTLEY**

The biggest revision to the TS050 in its five-year history shows that Toyota isn't resting on its laurels as it bids for a Le Mans hat-trick. Former Porsche man Hartley is the replacement for Fernando Alonso in an otherwise unchanged driver line-up alongside Buemi and Nakajima.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Expect another frantic Toyota duel now the cars are unshackled by success handicaps.



LMP1 | LMP2 | GTE PRO | GTE AM

EUROINTERNATIONAL Ligier-Gibson JSP217

11 ADRIEN **TAMBAY**
ERIK **MARIS**
CHRISTOPHE **D'ANSEMBOURG**

The team formerly known as Euromotorsport makes a return to the 24 Hours for the first time since fielding a Ferrari 333SP in 1995, thanks to an automatic entry for winning LMP3 in the ELMS last year (right). Former DTM racer Tambay is joined in one of only three Ligiers by two bronze drivers.
AUTOSPORT SAY A reprise of the team's mid-1990s IMSA successes with the 333SP isn't on the cards.



G-DRIVE RACING (TDS) ORECA-Gibson 07

16 OLIVER **JARVIS**
NICK **TANDY**
RYAN **CULLEN**

26 JEAN-ERIC **VERGNE**
ROMAN **RUSINOV**
MIKKEL **JENSEN**

Successful Russian entrant fields two cars as it bids for a first P2 victory at Le Mans, or at least one that sticks – it lost the win in the scrutineering bay in 2018. Vergne leads the line in the Aurus-badged car run by TDS, while former LMP1 sparring partners Tandy and Jarvis come together in the Algarve-tended entry.
AUTOSPORT SAYS Two strong driver line-ups put G-Drive right up among the favourites.



IDEC SPORT ORECA-Gibson 07

17 JONATHAN **KENNARD**
KYLE **TILLEY**
DWIGHT **MERRIMAN**

28 PAUL-LOUP **CHATIN**
RICHARD **BRADLEY**
PAUL **LAFARGUE**

The 2018 class polesitter at Le Mans is back with a pair of ORECAs. Bradley, whose five P2 WEC class victories include a Le Mans win in 2015, and Chatin team up in the lead car. Brit Kennard makes a return to the 24 Hours after an absence of 10 years in the second-string IDEC ORECA.
AUTOSPORT SAYS IDEC's number 28 car has the ingredients to be in the mix.



DRAGONSPEED ORECA-Gibson 07

21 JUAN PABLO **MONTOYA**
MEMO **ROJAS**
TIMOTHE **BURET**

27 BEN **HANLEY**
RENGER **VAN DER ZANDE**
HENRIK **HEDMAN**

The US squad returns to Le Mans with a driver roster boasting Montoya, Rojas, van der Zande (all multiple Daytona 24 Hours winners) and Hanley (a class winner in the same race). Travel restrictions have resulted in a tie-up with the Spanish Racing Engineering squad.
AUTOSPORT SAYS #21 should be among the frontrunners, ditto #27 when Hanley and van der Zande are driving.



UNITED AUTOSPORTS ORECA-Gibson 07

22 FILIPE **ALBUQUERQUE**
PAUL **DI RESTA**
PHIL **HANSON**

32 ALEX **BRUNDLE**
WILL **OWEN**
JOB **VAN UITERT**

British team is back at Le Mans for a fourth time looking for a first win after an amazing sequence in the WEC and ELMS – it's unbeaten in the past six races. Two line-ups boasting di Resta, Albuquerque and Brundle are bolstered by 'super silvers' van Uitert, Hanson and Owen.
AUTOSPORT SAYS United has momentum on its side and must start as favourite in P2.



LMP1 | LMP2 | GTE PRO | GTE AM

NIELSEN RACING ORECA-Gibson 07

24 GARETT **GRIST**
ALEX **KAPADIA**
ANTHONY **WELLS**

The British Nielsen team from Corby with the Scandinavian-sounding name makes its Le Mans debut with an ORECA leased from Algarve after winning LMP3 in last winter's Asian Le Mans Series. The driver roster of two silvers and a bronze is actually better than it might look.
AUTOSPORT SAYS Nielsen isn't going to challenge the class frontrunners and should be shooting for a finish.



ALGARVE PRO RACING ORECA-Gibson 07

25 SIMON **TRUMMER**
MATT **McMURRY**
JOHN **FALB**

The Portugal-based team run by Brits, which claimed last winter's Asian Le Mans Series title together with G-Drive, makes an entry under its own name for what will be its fifth participation in the 24 Hours. McMurry, the youngest driver ever to take part, returns to the big race for the third time alongside ELMS regulars Trummer and Falb.
AUTOSPORT SAYS Bettering 10th in class last year should be the team's aim.



RACING TEAM NEDERLAND (TDS) ORECA-Gibson 07

29 GIEDO **VAN DER GARDE**
NYCK **DE VRIES**
FRITS **VAN EERD**

The Dutch entrant fields an ORECA after its switch from Dallara for its second full-season WEC campaign, this time in partnership with the French TDS operation. A class winner this season, RTN is normally at the sharp end of the pack on outright pace with van der Garde and de Vries, if not at the end of the race.
AUTOSPORT SAYS RTN's chances hinge on how amateur driver van Eerd performs.



DUQUEINE TEAM ORECA-Gibson 07

30 TRISTAN **GOMMENDY**
JONATHAN **HIRSCHI**
KONSTANTIN **TERESCHENKO**

The French Duqueine team, which also builds LMP3 machinery and turned out the odd F3 car back in the 1980s, makes its second Le Mans start with its regular ELMS driving crew. Experienced hands Gommendy and Hirschi, who have 17 starts in the 24 Hours between them, are joined by sometime GP3 driver Tereschenko.
AUTOSPORT SAYS Expect Gommendy to star as part of a decent rather than stellar driving squad.



PANIS RACING (Tech 1) ORECA-Gibson 07

31 NICO **JAMIN**
MATTHIEU **VAXIVIERE**
JULIEN **CANAL**

The operation run by 1996 Monaco Grand Prix winner Olivier Panis and Tech 1 Racing has switched from the Ligier to the ORECA chassis for this season. Vaxiviere comes in to replace Will Stevens in a line-up that has been on the podium in the ELMS this year.
AUTOSPORT SAYS A dark horse with everything it needs to challenge the class frontrunners.



LMP1 | LMP2 | GTE PRO | GTE AM

HIGH CLASS RACING ORECA-Gibson 07

33 KENTA **YAMASHITA** ●
ANDERS **FJORDBACH**
MARK **PATTERSON**

The Danish team that first raced under its own flag at Le Mans last year – after sneaking in when the field was expanded – is contesting a full programme in the 2019-20 WEC. Yamashita is part of the Toyota set-up, while Patterson is on course for his seventh participation in the 24 Hours, three months short of his 69th birthday.
AUTOSPORT SAYS Yamashita has shown form, but this is not a frontrunning line-up.



INTER EUROPOL COMPETITION Ligier-Gibson JSP217

34 MATEVOS **ISAAKYAN**
JAKUB **SMIECHOWSKI**
RENE **BINDER**

A Polish entry run from the Netherlands by the Keese Motorsport operation makes Le Mans start number two with a Ligier, with which it is also contesting the ELMS. Isaakyan, who was part of the SMP Racing LMP1 squad in the WEC superseason, has joined Smiechowski and Binder for a programme that includes a full ELMS assault.
AUTOSPORT SAYS ELMS form with the unfashionable Ligier suggests it will struggle.



EURASIA MOTORSPORT Ligier-Gibson JSP217

35 ROBERTO **MERHI**
NICK **FOSTER**
NOBUYA **YAMANAKA** ●

The Philippines-based team run by Brit Mark Goddard returns to Le Mans after a year away with a Ligier in New Zealand national sporting colours. Plans for Shane van Gisbergen and then Nick Cassidy to drive the car fell foul of the COVID-19 crisis. Merhi, who raced for the team in last year's Asian series, has come in as a replacement.
AUTOSPORT SAYS Driver line-up lacks the strength in depth necessary for a good result.



SIGNATECH ALPINE ELF ORECA-Gibson 07

36 ANDRE **NEGRAO**
THOMAS **LAURENT**
PIERRE **RAGUES**

Reigning WEC P2 champion Signatech – the winner of the class at Le Mans for the past two years – returns without star driver Nicolas Lapierre after his move to Cool Racing. Laurent has stepped into the Alpine-badged ORECA as his replacement, while Ragues is the new silver. A disappointing WEC campaign has yielded a single podium so far.
AUTOSPORT SAYS Last time out at Spa, the team returned to form only for Laurent to crash.



JACKIE CHAN DC RACING (JOTA) ORECA-Gibson 07

37 WILL **STEVENS**
HO-PIN **TUNG**
GABRIEL **AUBRY**

The Jota-run squad has slimmed down to a solo car for this season's WEC, with Stevens coming in alongside Tung and Aubry. Has has been on the podium four times without winning as the team seeks to improve on its runner-up spot in the championship in 2017 and 2018-19.
AUTOSPORT SAYS Expect the Chan DC car to be right in the mix as usual.



JOTA SPORT ORECA-Gibson 07

38 ANTHONY **DAVIDSON** 🇬🇧
ANTONIO FELIX **DA COSTA** 🇵🇹
ROBERTO **GONZALEZ** 🇲🇽

Jota fields a car under its own name alongside the Chan DC car in the WEC. Davidson and Gonzalez have moved over from DragonSpeed for the current season, with da Costa joining as the second pro. Victory at Shanghai combined with two more podiums has given them a shout of the title.

AUTOSPORT SAYS A lot will depend on the form of Gonzalez, who struggled at Le Mans last year.



SO24-HAS BY GRAFF ORECA-Gibson 07

39 JAMES **ALLEN** 🇦🇺
VINCENT **CAPILLAIRE** 🇫🇷
CHARLES **MILESI** 🇫🇷

Graff, a team that under former ownership first competed at Le Mans in the 1980s, continues its relationship with the SO24 organisation set up to help local drivers compete in the 24 Hours. Allen, who is racing for the team in the ELMS, is joined by Le Mans regular Capillaire and Milesi, a race winner in Formula Renault Eurocup.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Will be hard for this crew to improve on the team's second position in 2018.



COOL RACING ORECA-Gibson 07

42 NICOLAS **LAPIERRE** 🇫🇷
ANTONIN **BORGA** 🇨🇭
ALEXANDRE **COIGNY** 🇨🇭

The Swiss squad makes its Le Mans debut as part of a full WEC campaign. Lapierre, who raced for Cool in the 2019 ELMS, has been lured away from long-time employer Signatech for the WEC and now has a stake in the team. He and Borga won the Silverstone opener after amateur Coigny was ruled out through injury.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Lapierre isn't going to notch up a fifth P2 victory this year.



CETILAR RACING (AF Corse) Dallara-Gibson P217

47 ANDREA **BELICCHI** 🇮🇹
GIORGIO **SERNAGIOTTO** 🇮🇹
ROBERTO **LACORTE** 🇮🇹

The Italian entrant fields the only Dallara on the grid in conjunction with AF Corse, making a rare foray into the prototype ranks, after switching teams from Villorba Corse. Belicchi, a long-time member of the Rebellion P1 squad with 10 Le Mans starts to his name, is again teamed with silver-rated Sernagiotto and bronze Lacorte.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Will provide variety with its Dallara but not competition for the frontrunners.



RICHARD MILLE RACING (Signatech) ORECA-Gibson 07

50 TATIANA **CALDERON** 🇨🇴
SOPHIA **FLORSCH** 🇩🇪
BEITSKE **VISSER** 🇳🇱

The first all-female crew to race a prototype at Le Mans since 1991 has been put together by watchmaker and FIA Endurance Committee president Richard Mille. Alfa Romeo F1 tester Calderon and Formula 3 driver Florsch are joined by W Series runner-up Visser.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Lack of sportscar and Le Mans experience will count against this trio.



LMP1 | LMP2 | GTE PRO | GTE AM

AF CORSE FERRARI 488 GTE EVO

51 ALESSANDRO **PIER GUIDI**
JAMES **CALADO**
DANIEL **SERRA**

71 DAVIDE **RIGON**
MIGUEL **MOLINA**
SAM **BIRD**

Ferrari and the factory AF squad are back to defend their class crown with the Evo version of the 488 GTE. Bird returns to the squad after losing his full-season WEC drive because there were too many clashes with Formula E on the original calendars. The team has endured a mixed WEC campaign to date with only one victory.
AUTOSPORT SAYS With the same BoP as 2019, it looks well placed to get its season back on track.



WEATHERTECH (Scuderia Corsa) Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

63 TONI **VILANDER**
JEFF **SEGAL**
COOPER **MACNEIL**

A team that won the GTE Am class in 2016 made a late decision to step up to the Pro ranks with its Ferrari this year. Factory driver Vilander and MacNeil, of the WeatherTech-owning family, race together in GT Daytona in the IMSA ranks and are joined by Segal, who was part of the Scuderia Corsa Am winning crew four years ago.
AUTOSPORT SAYS Long shot is the best way to describe its chance of getting among factory cars.



RISI COMPETIZIONE Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

82 OLIVIER **PLA**
SEBASTIEN **BOURDAIS**
JULES **GOUNON**

The US team, a class winner at Le Mans in 1998, 2008 and 2009, is back for a second consecutive attempt on the big one after a season in which it has only competed at the Daytona 24 Hours. It has assembled a pretty impressive – and all-French – roster of drivers in Ford refugees Bourdais and Pla, and rising GT star Gounon.
AUTOSPORT SAYS Risi's credentials are not in doubt: remember it pushing Ford close in 2016?

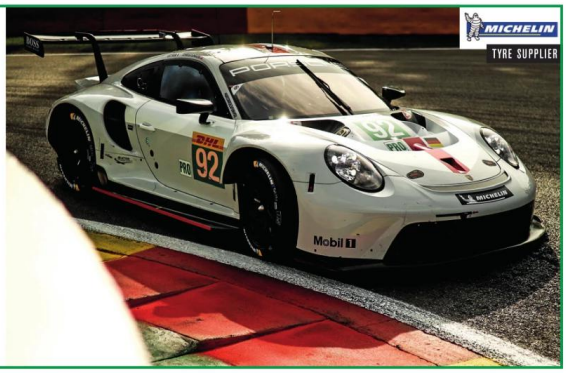


PORSCHE GT TEAM (Manthey) Porsche 911 RSR

91 GIANMARIA **BRUNI**
RICHARD **LIETZ**
FREDERIC **MAKOWIECKI**

92 MICHAEL **CHRISTENSEN**
KEVIN **ESTRE**
LAURENS **VANTHOOR**

It's not quite business as usual at Porsche even though the driver line-up is unchanged from last year. The team regulars are, in fact, racing a new car that came on stream at the start of the 2019-20 WEC campaign. The mid-engined 911 GTE racer has been redesigned for what's known as the RSR-19.
AUTOSPORT SAYS The effects of more weight and less power under the BoP are unknown at the moment.

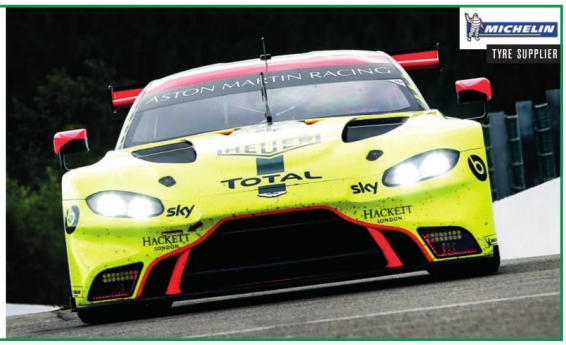


ASTON MARTIN (Prodrive) Aston Martin Vantage GTE

95 NICKI **THIIM**
MARCO **SORENSEN**
RICHARD **WESTBROOK**

97 MAXIME **MARTIN**
ALEX **LYNN**
HARRY **TINCKNELL**

Brits Westbrook and Tincknell have been brought in as third drivers alongside the WEC regulars. The biggest change since last year, however, is new Michelin tyres, resulting from a proper development programme. Three wins for Thiim and Sorensen so far this season have followed.
AUTOSPORT SAYS Aston has a competitive car in all conditions now – and momentum.



AF CORSE Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

52 CHRISTOPH **ULRICH**
STEFFEN **GORIG**
ALEXANDER **WEST**

54 GIANCARLO **FISICHELLA**
FRANCESCO **CASTELLACCI**
THOMAS **FLOHR**

83 EMMANUEL **COLLARD**
NICKLAS **NIELSEN**
FRANCOIS **PERRODO**

The flotilla fielded by AF alongside its two factory entries includes three Ferraris in GTE Am run under its own name. There are two full-season WEC entries with a factory driver apiece, and one all-bronze line-up from the ELMS. Ferrari veteran Fisichella and new signing Nielsen lead the WEC crews, while former Porsche, Toyota and Cadillac driver Collard returns in the WEC points-leading GTE Am car to make his 24th start in the big race.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Two WEC wins and good consistency suggest Nielsen, Collard and Perrodo will be in the fight



SPIRIT OF RACE (AF) Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

55 MATT **GRIFFIN**
AARON **SCOTT**
DUNCAN **CAMERON**

The sister team to AF Corse runs a solo Ferrari for a trio of drivers from the British Isles. Griffin, Scott and Cameron are again contesting the ELMS – for the sixth consecutive season as a trio – and are already race winners this year after triumphing at the second Paul Ricard round last month. Scott and Cameron also have a second in class to their name at Le Mans, notched up with Marco Cioci in an AF/Spirit car in 2017.

AUTOSPORT SAYS The right combination of speed and experience must give this line-up a chance.



TEAM PROJECT 1 Porsche 911 RSR

56 MATTEO **CAIROLI**
LARRY **TEN VOORDE**
EGIDIO **PERFETTI**

57 JEROEN **BLEEKEMOLEN**
FELIPE **FRAGA**
BEN **KEATING**

89 'STEVE BROOKS'
BRUNO **FRETIN**
BENOIT **FRETIN**

Last year's GTE Am champion team, and Le Mans class winner after the disqualification of the Riley-run Keating Ford GT, fields three first-generation mid-engined Porsche 911 RSRs: its two WEC entries and an additional car. The Keating 911 won in the WEC in Bahrain, but reigning champion Perfetti has finished no better than third with Cairoli and a rotating roster of third drivers. Ten Voorde, who claimed the Bahrain victory with Keating and Bleekemolen, drives the Perfetti car at Le Mans.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Two strong line-ups mean the WEC cars will be up there.



IRON LYNX Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

60 PAOLO **RUBERTI**
SERGIO **PIANEZZOLA**
CLAUDIO **SCHIAVONI**

75 ANDREA **PICCINI**
MATTEO **CRESSONI**
RINO **MASTRONARDI**

85 RAHEL **FREY**
MICHELLE **GATTING**
MANUELA **GOSTNER**

A new Italian team run by former Aston Martin driver Piccini, who finished second in GT1 at Le Mans in 2006, and younger brother Giacomo makes its first entry for the big race with a three-car fleet of Ferraris. It fields the second all-female line-up in the race – a first since 1977 – for Frey, Gostner and Gatting. Piccini races one of the cars with Cressoni and Mastronardi in what looks like its best line-up.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Numbers are on Iron Lynx's side, lack of Le Mans experience is against it.



LMP1 | LMP2 | GTE PRO | GTE AM

LUZICH RACING Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

61 COME **LEDOGAR**
OSWALDO **NEGRI**
FRANCESCO **PIOVANETTI**

This Swiss-American team makes its Le Mans debut after securing an automatic entry for claiming GTE honours in last year's ELMS. It was a winner in the GT3 ranks in GT Open the year before too. Former McLaren factory driver Ledogar leads a line-up that includes ex-British Formula 3 racer Negri, now a bronze at 56 years of age.

AUTOSPORT SAYS A winning pedigree suggests Luzich might bely its lack of Le Mans experience.



RED RIVER SPORT (AF) Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

62 JOHNNY **MOWLEM**
CHARLIE **HOLLINGS**
BONAMY **GRIMES**

Another entrant with a Ferrari run out of the giant AF Corse enclave, Red River Sport is the mentoring and management company run by sportscar stalwart Mowlem. He has taken Grimes from his first trackday to a spot on the grid for the world's biggest sportscar race in the space of five years as part of a full WEC assault.

AUTOSPORT SAYS WEC form suggests Red River isn't going to trouble the class frontrunners.



JMW MOTORSPORT Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

66 JAN **MAGNUSSEN**
RICHARD **HEISTAND**
MAXWELL **ROOT**

This British team, winner in GTE Am in 2017, makes its 11th start in the big race this year. Americans Heistand and Root are new to the French enduro, which is why Magnussen was brought in. The four-time Le Mans class winner's role on his 21st participation will be to lead his inexperienced charges through the challenge of the race.

AUTOSPORT SAYS The success of 2017 is likely to end up a distant memory after this year's race.

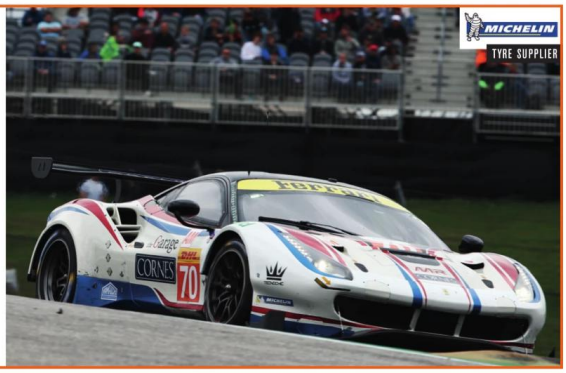


MR RACING (AF) Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

70 VINCENT **ABRIL**
KEI **COZZOLINO**
TAKESHI **KIMURA**

An entrant that takes its name from the first initials of team boss Motoaki Ishikawa and his wife Ren, MR Racing is contesting the WEC with an AF Corse Ferrari. The team skipped the Spa round and is without its boss for Le Mans. Former Bentley factory driver Abril is part of a revised line-up that still includes Japanese-Italian Cozzolino.

AUTOSPORT SAYS This is the best line-up MR has had in three attempts at Le Mans.



HUBAUTO RACING Ferrari 488 GTE Evo

72 TOM **BLOMQVIST**
MARCOS **GOMES**
MORRIS **CHEN**

HubAuto becomes the first Taiwanese team to race at Le Mans as a result of taking GT honours in last winter's Asian Le Mans Series. Former BMW factory driver Blomqvist, team regular Gomes (a winner in Brazilian stock cars) and HubAuto boss Chen drive.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Taiwanese squad could spring a surprise on its Le Mans debut.



DEMPSEY-PROTON RACING Porsche 911 RSR

77 MATT **CAMPBELL**
RICCARDO **PERA**
CHRISTIAN **RIED**

88 THOMAS **PREINING**
ADRIEN **DE LEENER**
DOMINIQUE **BASTIEN**

99 LUCAS **LEGERET**
HUGO **DE SADELEER**
VUTTHIKORN **INTHRAPHUVASAK**

Stalwart Porsche team fields a trio of original-spec 911 RSRs, two of which are full-season WEC cars, the other an automatic entry for the team's second place in GTE in last year's ELMS. The driving roster includes factory contractee Campbell and Porsche junior Preining, and, of course, team boss Ried.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Don't count it out even if it hasn't had the results in the 2019-20 WEC.



PROTON COMPETITION Porsche 911 RSR

78 MICHELE **BERETTA**
HORST **FELBERMAYR JR**
MAX **VAN SPLUNTEREN**

The German Proton squad, like last year (right), also fields a car under its own name because teams of more than three cars are not permitted. Austrian Felbermayr Jr, whose family used to be part of the Proton set-up, is making a return to Le Mans after an absence of nine seasons in the year that his father passed away.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Beretta has shown form with Dempsey-Proton in the ELMS.



GULF RACING UK Porsche 911 RSR

86 BEN **BARKER**
ANDREW **WATSON**
MICHAEL **WAINWRIGHT**

The British team that carries the emotive name of Gulf Oil but no longer races in its colours makes Le Mans start number five. Team owner Wainwright and long-time partner Barker have been joined for this season by Aston Martin factory driver Watson for a continued campaign in the full WEC.

AUTOSPORT SAYS WEC form suggests that Gulf isn't going to be a factor.



TF SPORT Aston Martin Vantage GTE

90 JONNY **ADAM**
CHARLIE **EASTWOOD**
SALIH **YOLUC**

The British squad run by former touring car driver Tom Ferrier heads to Le Mans for its third start showing the kind of form that has taken it to titles in British GT, the Blancpain GT Series and the Michelin Le Mans Cup. Factory stalwart Adam is this season full-time alongside Eastwood, now also with a works contract, and Yoluc.

AUTOSPORT SAYS Three WEC wins this term suggest TF is going to be right at the sharp end.



ASTON MARTIN RACING (Prodrive) Aston Vantage GTE

98 AUGUSTO **FARFUS**
ROSS **GUNN**
PAUL **DALLA LANA**

Dalla Lana is still seeking a first class win at Le Mans in what will be his eighth attempt with AMR. New drivers have been brought in for this season's WEC campaign, Gunn and Darren Turner joining him in place of Pedro Lamy and Mathias Lauda. Farfus has replaced Turner for Spa and Le Mans.

AUTOSPORT SAYS A regular WEC frontrunner should be there or thereabouts.



LMP1 FAREWELL



TOP 10 LMP1 RACES

Ahead of the current LMP1 racers' last hurrah at Le Mans, we pick out the best contests from a category that has helped define endurance racing this century

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

10 2004 MONZA 1000KM

Le Mans Endurance Series

A stunning opportunist manoeuvre decided an amazing race between the two Veloqx Audis in the inaugural Le Mans Endurance Series race at Monza in May 2004. The difference between the two factory-backed R8s over the course of the four-hour race was Johnny Herbert's overtaking move on the grass on the exit of the Ascari Chicane.

Herbert, who co-drove his R8 with Jamie Davies, was chasing Pierre Kaffer, in the car started by Allan McNish, through the third hour. The Brit knew he was quicker, but was concerned about finding an opportunity to make it past an identical car (the evenly matched Audis were rarely separated by much more than 20 seconds). He saw that chance coming when he spied a Ferrari GT1 car 200 or so metres up the road as they exited the second Lesmo.



"I knew Pierre was going to catch the Ferrari on the exit of the chicane and I needed to keep my momentum so I could get a run down to the Parabolica," recalls Herbert. "It was more or less planned and I thought I might have to put a couple of wheels on the grass as I went around the Ferrari."

Herbert had to go much wider than he anticipated: "I knew the grass was flat and there was no drop from the kerb, so I changed up early to avoid spinning the wheels and just kept my foot in and put all four wheels off track. The grass, as I expected, was like a bowling green and my momentum allowed me to pass."

The race was far from over, however. A late rain storm allowed McNish to come back at Herbert. He caught the leader, despite two offs at the first chicane, and ended up just six tenths behind at the finish.



9 2000 GRAND PRIX OF MOSPORT

American Le Mans Series

Joest Audi drivers Allan McNish and Dindo Capello pretty much dominated the rain-affected Mosport round of the American Le Mans Series in the summer of 2000. That was until the track surface of the majestic former home of the Canadian Grand Prix started to dry up.

Jorg Muller, aboard the Schnitzer BMW V12 LMR he shared with JJ Lehto, had ducked into the pits with 20 minutes of the race to go to take on slick tyres. Audi reacted by bringing in the delayed second car, shared by Emanuele Pirro and Frank Biela, for dries two laps later, but chose to leave the race leader out on wet-weather Michelins.

As the clock ticked down at the end of a race lasting two hours and 45 minutes, Muller started to take giant chunks of time out of the Audi R8 at the head of the field. The BMW gained seven seconds on the penultimate lap, leaving him just four behind with one lap to go. The odds were now firmly in favour of the previous year's Le Mans-winning machine.

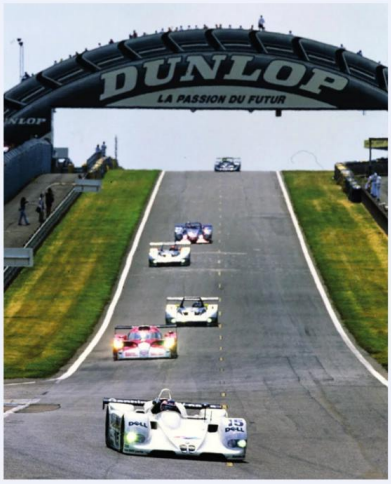
Muller caught Capello through Turn 8 at the end of the long back straight, but the Audi driver somehow kept his nose in front through the final two corners to hang on to take victory by 0.148s. It was generally reckoned to be the closest competitive finish in the history of top-line international sportscar racing up to that time.

"I thought I had no chance because the car was all over the place," says Capello. "I drove those last two corners as though I was on slicks."

McNish reckoned it was question of bottle at the end. "Dindo proved his nerve," he says. "It was about who wanted it the most."



8 1999 LE MANS 24 HOURS



It was arguably the high-water mark in manufacturer participation at the sharp end of the grid in the history of Le Mans. BMW, Audi, Nissan and Panoz with LMP machinery went up against Toyota, Mercedes and Audi (again) with GTP coupes. An open-top prototype prevailed, but only just.

BMW claimed the win over Toyota in a dramatic final encounter. It was far from clear who was going to come out in top in the battle between the Schnitzer BMW V12 LMR shared by Pierluigi Martini, Yannick Dalmas and Joachim Winkelhock and the Toyota GT-One with the all-Japanese crew of Ukyo Katayama, Toshio Suzuki and Keiichi Tsuchiya as the race entered the last hour.

Katayama was going hell for leather in the Japanese car built and run from the same Cologne factory where today's Toyota LMP1 programme is run. His pursuit of the BMW came to an end when he was forced across the kerb at the first chicane on the Mulsanne Straight by a year-old privateer BMW driven by Thomas Bscher. The puncture that followed ripped another chance of Le Mans victory from Toyota's grasp.

As exciting as it was, the 'wrong' Toyota was battling with the 'wrong' BMW as the race drew to a conclusion. The event was shaping up into an all-out war between the GT-One of Thierry Boutsen, Ralf Kelleners and Allan McNish and the V12 LMR shared by Tom Kristensen, JJ Lehto and Jorg Muller.

Both crews will tell you they had the pace to win, but they never got to prove it. Neither finished the race. Boutsen was punted off by a GT2 car at the Dunlop Chicane. Kristensen and co nearly looked home and dry on Sunday morning until a freak series of failures put Lehto in the wall at the Porsche Curves.

7 2002 GRAND PRIX OF WASHINGTON

American Le Mans Series

The tiny Panoz team really had no business beating the megabuck Audi squad in the American Le Mans Series in the early 2000s. Yet five times from 2000-02 its quirky front-engined prototypes overcame the Audi R8 in the rough and tumble of what was at the time the world's top sportscar series. The best of those victories – and the last – came at the Washington DC city circuit in 2002.

The track suited the torquey Roush-Yates motor mounted ahead of Jan Magnussen and David Brabham in what had become known as the Panoz LMP-01 Evo after a winter makeover. There was little to choose between the two Joest-run factory Audis and the best of the Panoz entries on a 1.66-mile track laid out in a car park in the shadow of a sports stadium. All three cars spent time in the lead over the course of a topsy-turvy race lasting two hours and 45 minutes.

Audi looked to have gained the upper hand at the final round of pitstops under a safety car when Tom Kristensen and Emanuele Pirro stayed aboard the two Audis and didn't take tyres. Magnussen took over from Brabham and got a new set of Michelins.

That left Magnussen nine seconds back for the run to the flag. Yet on fresh rubber the Dane stormed into the lead in the space of just five laps. And he managed to stay there, despite the close attentions of Kristensen over the closing stages.

"There was a ton of pick-up on that track and the other guys had problems cleaning off their tyres after the final safety car," explains Magnussen. "That gave me a huge advantage for five or six laps. The stop-start circuit suited us, but I was pretty determined. We didn't have a championship to worry about, so it was win or wreck."



6 2009 SEBRING 12 HOURS

American Le Mans Series

This was another classic Audi-versus-Peugeot confrontation (see #1, 2, 3 and 4), and no apologies for picking another one in which Audi came out on top. The French manufacturer's 908 HDi FAP looked to have the measure of the new Audi R15 TDI for the majority of the 2009 Sebring 12 Hours, but when push came to shove in the deep of the Florida night it was the German make that triumphed in yet another thriller.

Peugeot had the upper hand in the heat of the day: the 908 was the quicker car, and it could do two stints on a set of Michelins to the R15's one. But when the sun went down and the track surface cooled off, Audi came back into the game on the soft-compound Michelin with the lead car shared by Allan McNish, Tom Kristensen and Dindo Capello.

The tables started to turn in its battle with the Peugeot driven by Sebastien Bourdais, Franck Montagny and Stephane Sarrazin. Albeit slowly.

"I got in for my final stint and 'H' [engineer Howden Haynes] came on the radio and said, 'Allan, Bourdais has just done a 43.5,'" recalls McNish. "Until that point the best I'd done was a 45.2s or something.

"The team worked with things like tyre pressures and the traction control, to maximise what we had," says McNish. "I ended up with the best-balanced sportscar I had in my career."

McNish moved into the lead when Bourdais made his final stop, but the 36s advantage he found himself with wasn't going to be enough to get into and out of the pits for his own last stop. A series of laps below the pole time allowed him to build enough of a gap to get in and out in front after the late splash-and-dash.



LEVITT

5 2015 SILVERSTONE 6 HOURS

World Endurance Championship

Audi had the fastest car at Silverstone for the opening round of the 2015 World Endurance Championship in its heavily revised R18 e-tron quattro. Porsche, however, had one key advantage that made life very difficult for its rival: the 919 Hybrid had more grunt out of the corners.

Porsche had moved up to the eight-megajoule hybrid class with the second-generation 919, while Audi was running in the 4MJ class. It made for an intriguing and exciting race.

The battle between the two German manufacturers came to a head leading up to the halfway point. Audi driver Marcel Fassler had latched onto the tail of race leader Neel Jani's Porsche. He passed him on multiple occasions, but could never make it stick. Each time he was repassed by the Porsche rocketship down the Wellington Straight.

Andre Lotterer then came up against Romain Dumas after the round of pitstops that followed. He caught the Porsche on its second lap out of the pits and hung him out wide at the Village right-hander. His rival had to come off the gas and that gave the Audi driver the chance he needed.



JEP

Lotterer was ahead by the time he got to Brooklands and, at Copse and through Becketts, he was able to exploit the higher levels of downforce that the Audi was running.

"It was a little bit cheeky, but I had to make him lose momentum," remembers Lotterer. "I knew that if I was still in front by the time we got to Copse and then Becketts, I would be away."

The battle between Lotterer and Jani was actually for third place. The two Toyotas, which hadn't changed tyres at the previous pitstop, were ahead at this point. Lotterer was quickly into the lead, and even a late stop/go for Fassler failed to prevent an Audi victory.


DOLE

4 2005 SEBRING 12 HOURS

American Le Mans Series

A battle between the two best sportscar drivers of their generation driving equal machinery produced one of the best ever editions of the Sebring 12 Hours. Tom Kristensen and Allan McNish battled right to the end aboard their respective Champion Racing Audi R8s in a race that could have gone either way.

Kristensen, JJ Lehto and Marco Werner ended up winning that year's American Le Mans Series opener courtesy of a tactical coup from the men on their pitstand – engineer Brad Kettler and Champion team manager Mike Peters – at the penultimate round of stops.

Kristensen was on course to lose the lead to McNish, who shared with Emanuele Pirro and Frank Biela, because he would need fresh Michelin rubber and McNish wouldn't. The crew of the #1 Audi opted to short-fuel their man, and combined with a split-second delay for McNish leaving the pits when he was blocked by an inattentive cameraman, the time gained allowed the leader to just hang on in front.

The Dane pushed like hell on cold rubber – there were no tyre warmers in the ALMS – and was still ahead when the two Audis got to the final corner on his out-lap. McNish was right with him, but not quite close enough to try to pass. With his Michelins now up to temperature, Kristensen pulled enough of a gap to see him through the final pitstop and on to a six-second victory.

McNish still believes that the events at the second-to-last round of stops cost him and his team-mates the race. "If I'd got ahead I would have been able to take the edge off his new-tyre run," he says today. "Short-fuelling Tom was crucial. Without that I'm 99.9% sure I would have done him."


DOLE

3 2011 LE MANS 24 HOURS

Intercontinental Le Mans Cup



JBLOXHAM

Audi had lucked into a ninth Le Mans victory in 2010 courtesy of a series of Peugeot engine failures. Twelve months later it made it a nice round 10 entirely on merit in the second closest competitive finish in the history of the French enduro.

There was little to choose between the new Audi R18 TDI and the second LMP1 machine to carry the Peugeot 908 type number. But the German car looked after its tyres better and had the slightest of edges on outright performance, though the French machines were crucially going a lap further on a tank of diesel.

There was another problem for Audi: two of its three cars had crashed out before the race was even eight hours old. Everything rested on the shoulders of Andre Lotterer, Benoit Treluyer and Marcel Fassler aboard the marque's surviving entry. The pressure was on for more than two thirds of the race.

"It was flat-out all the way," recalls Lotterer. "I think we changed the lead more than 40 times [there were 41 changes to be exact]. It was a thriller."

Audi ended up prevailing over the Peugeot driven by Sebastien Bourdais, Simon Pagenaud and Pedro Lamy by just 13.9s. But it could so easily have gone the other way.

Lotterer sustained a puncture soon after his penultimate pitstop. Had the Joest Audi team brought him in straight away, the race would have been lost. "We noticed a slow puncture and coming in that lap would have meant an extra stop and losing the race," recalls Joest boss Ralf Juttner. "Normally when you have a puncture, you tell your driver to bring it carefully back to the pits, but we had to leave Andre out there and tell him to go quickly. We didn't have a choice.

"We had a very good TPMS [tyre pressure management system] by that stage and we saw the pressure going down and then suddenly stabilise. I think he did another two laps so that we could bring the car into the pit window. That meant we didn't have to do an extra stop."

Lotterer came into the pits on the same lap that the chasing Pagenaud was due in. Joest opted to change all four tyres and still got its man out ahead by six seconds. The Peugeot didn't get new Michelins, so on fresh rubber Lotterer had the weapons to make sure of another victory for Audi.

2 2008 PETIT LE MANS

American Le Mans Series

Allan McNish doesn't know whether to laugh or cry when he thinks back to Petit Le Mans at Road Atlanta in 2008. The 1000-mile round of the American Le Mans Series was the scene of one of his greatest performances, but also one of his biggest gaffes.

McNish claimed a thrilling victory aboard the factory Champion Audi R10 TDI he shared with Dindo Capello and Emanuele Pirro. Yet part of the reason it was quite so dramatic was that he started the race two laps behind after spinning into the wall on the way to the grid.

"It's one I still smile about, but also one I still cringe at," says McNish. "It was a very embarrassing mistake, but it all came down to duking it out in the dark at the end."

Two crews' worth of Champion mechanics descended on the Audi after its driver had managed to haul the damaged car back to the pits. Despite the loss of two laps, the repaired car was back on the lead lap in the space of two hours and 20 minutes.



LEVITT

That was the first comeback by the winning entry in the 11th edition of Petit. A series of problems mid race delayed the car and dropped it a lap back again: there was an issue with Capello's seat insert, then a tyre glitch rectified by an additional stop, and finally an overheating problem solved by air-hosing the radiators.

It didn't look like McNish had the pace to get back on terms with the leading Peugeot 908 HDi driven by Nicolas Minassian, Stephane Sarrazin and Christian Klien, but Champion managed to haul the car onto the lead lap once more by stopping twice under the same safety car, once for fuel and once for tyres.

McNish was given new soft rubber with 36 laps left. He stormed past one of the LMP2 Penske Porsches, then the sister Audi, and finally caught Klien in the Peugeot. An aggressive move at Turn 6 got the Audi into the lead, and then some defensive driving down the back straight kept it ahead before he could get out of range of a car that enjoyed a straightline speed advantage.

McNish eked out some breathing space, but this thriller of a race still had one final twist. One last safety car, the 11th of the proceedings, meant he had to fight a rearguard action to the flag.

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1 2008 LE MANS 24 HOURS



Dindo Capello summed up his triumph together with Tom Kristensen and Allan McNish at Le Mans in 2008 with the words "when the men beat the machines". Audi's R10 TDI was no match for the Peugeot 908 HDi around the Circuit de la Sarthe, yet three ultra-determined drivers pulled off an against-the-odds victory that stands in the minds of many as the greatest ever in the long history of the French enduro.

Stephane Sarrazin whirled the pole-winning 908 around the 8.47-mile track more than five seconds faster than the best of the German cars. But Audi knew that its ageing R10, outgunned on the straights as it was, still had a chance. But that chance would only come if it rained: the R10 had been more than a match for its French rivals when the track was wet at the Le Mans Test Day two weeks previously.

Rain was forecast, which gave Kristensen, McNish and Capello both hope and a simple task: to stay in the hunt until the weather deteriorated. That's exactly what they did courtesy of a herculean effort on the part of everyone involved.

"We were on the limit in every way to try to hang onto the Peugeots," recalls McNish. "We drove every lap like a qualifying lap. We were going to the safety car map from the end of the Porsche Curves to try to stretch the fuel and make sure we went a lap longer than we should have done. I remember coming down the pitlane at the end of my first stint right on the limit of the fuel. It was the only way if we were going to hang on in there.

"We had to keep them under pressure, or rather somehow stay in the game – that's the more appropriate term. We knew our car was competitive in the wet and theirs wasn't."

The rain came as predicted shortly after half-distance. The Audi was nearly a lap back at this point, yet an hour and a half later Kristensen was in the lead. On 18 hours, Capello put the car one lap up on the Peugeot shared by Jacques Villeneuve, Nicolas Minassian and Marc Gene. The Audi now had the edge as the cars changed back and forth from wet-weather tyres to intermediates as conditions changed.

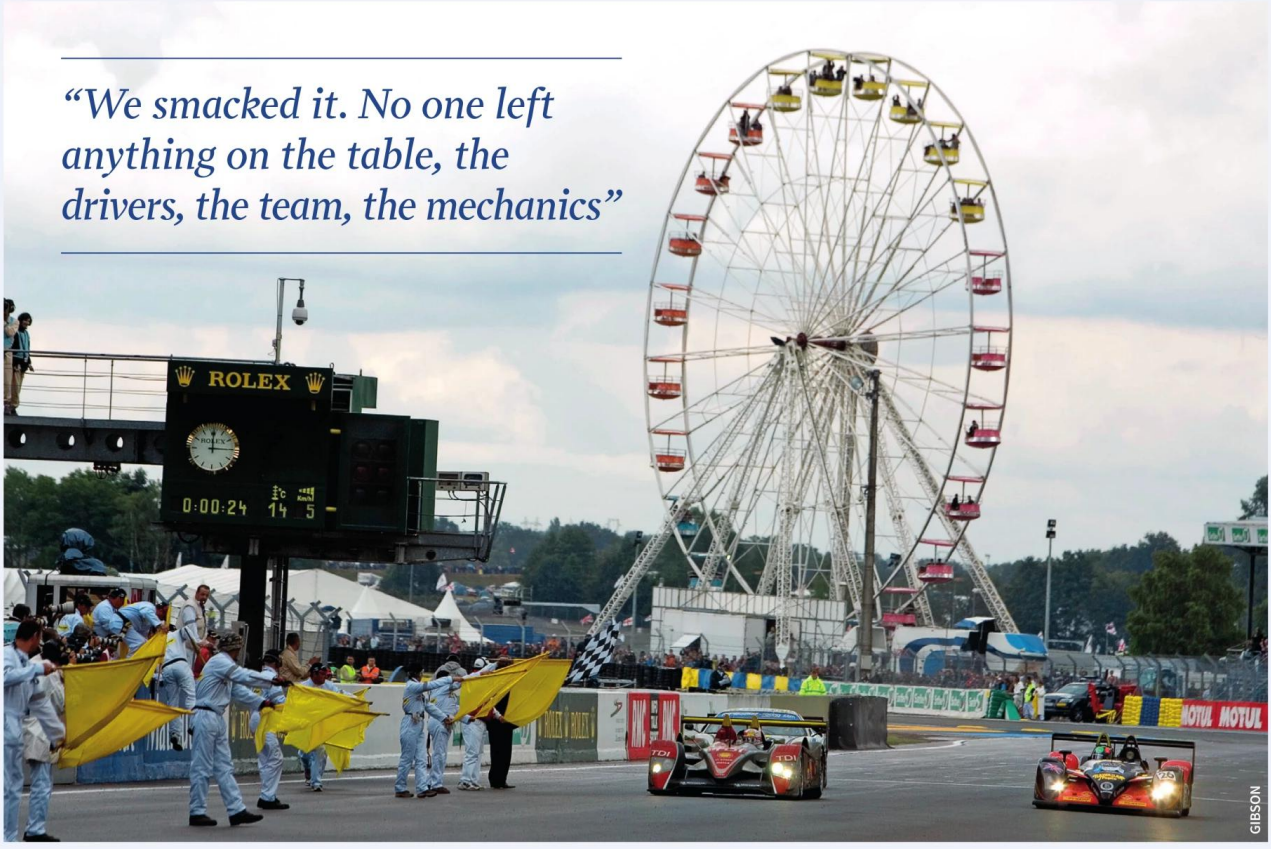
Audi's cause was aided by a cooling problem for Peugeot. Its radiators were being clogged by a mixture of soggy track debris that the team likened to paté. There looked no way back for the chasing 908.

Only the race wasn't quite over. Kristensen was tagged into a spin by an LMP2 car at the Dunlop Chicane with two hours to go and then the rain returned in the final hour. Peugeot gambled, as it had to do, on leaving Minassian on slicks whereas Kristensen was given intermediates.

Kristensen brought the Audi home to the good by the better part of a full lap. One of the biggest heists in sportscar racing history was complete.

"We smacked it," says Kristensen. "No one left anything on the table, the drivers, the team, the mechanics. We took risks all the time, because it was the only way we were going to beat Peugeot. On paper we should never have won it."

"We smacked it. No one left anything on the table, the drivers, the team, the mechanics"



LMP1
FAREWELL

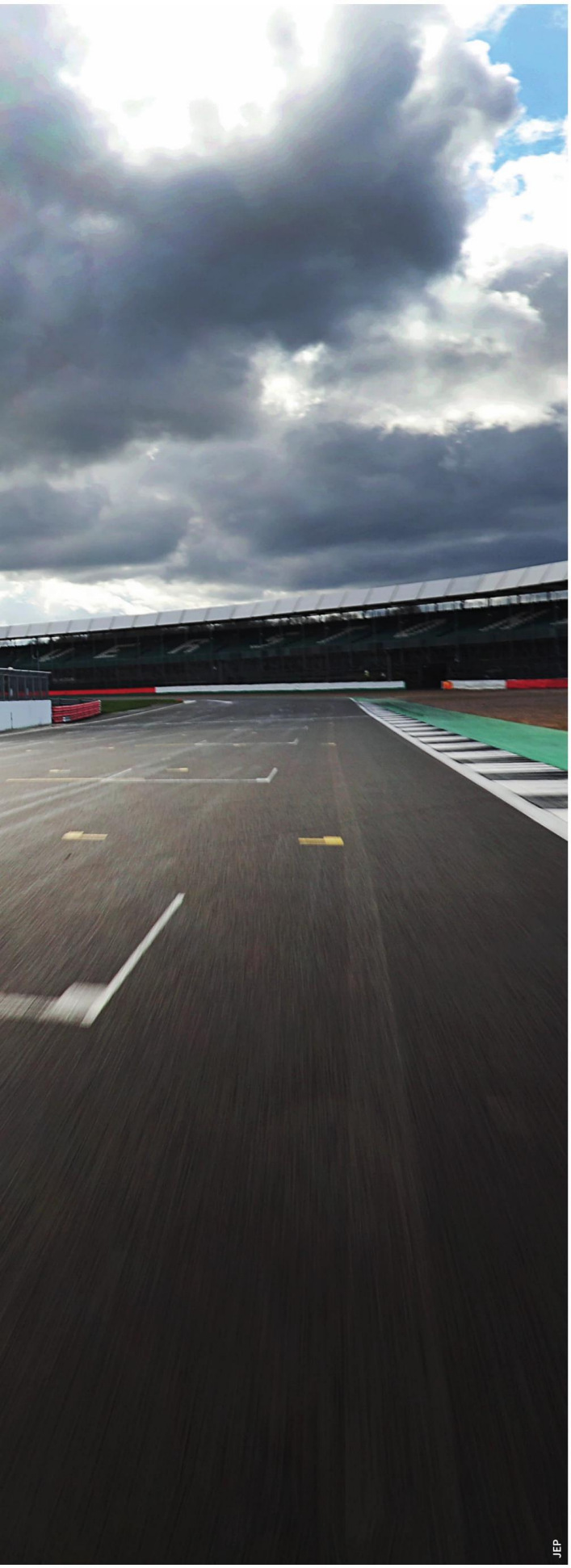


LMP1 LMP2 GTE PRO GTE AM

THE MOUSE THAT ROARED

Fifteen years ago, a privateer with little international pedigree led Le Mans in this Dallara. Time to dust it down and blow off the cobwebs at Silverstone

DAMIEN SMITH



JEP

"As I came into the final chicane, the helicopter was up in front of me and I thought we must be close to the leader," remembers Martin Short of his greatest moment in a racing car – although he didn't realise it at the time. "On the Mulsanne, I could see an Audi chomping at the bit in my mirrors, so I made it easy for him. Into the second chicane I let Stephane Ortelli through, but little did I know I'd been in the lead of the Le Mans 24 Hours. The ORECA Audi had pitted and was on its out-lap. Either the radio didn't work or the guys didn't tell me in case I did something stupid, but I had no idea. At the end of my stint I came into the pitlane and all I could see was a whole phalanx of cameras and film crews. What's going on? You've only just bloody led Le Mans! It was just phenomenal."

Not bad for a bloke who started racing in a Martlet kit car at the age of 27.

Short, now 61, spent many (mostly) happy years working his way through the club racing ranks, including five years in TVR Tuscans and on to the British GT Championship, which his Rollcentre Racing team conquered in 2003 with Mosler – all with a distant dream to stand on the podium at Le Mans. Technically, he actually achieved that early on in a Rover GTi on the Bugatti circuit, but that's not quite the same thing. A podium at the 24 Hours? He never quite made it, although fourth in a Pescarolo in 2007 got him close. But it's the car you see here, in which he actually led the race in 2005, that means the most to him. That's why he still owns it: ORECA Dallara-Judd SP1 chassis 006. The LMP1 car in which an ambitious, committed amateur – albeit a damn good one – kissed the sky.

To mark LMP1's final hurrah at Le Mans as endurance racing's top class, Short pulled out the Dallara for a celebratory blast at a mid-week British Racing Drivers' Club test day back in February, before you-know-what ground our world to a halt. At lunchtime, he was let loose on the Grand Prix Circuit. Short gunned the four-litre Judd V10 – and all hell broke loose. Forget lunch, every face in the pitlane hung over the pitwall as the Dallara wailed down the old start/finish straight. On the other side of the track students piled out onto the balcony at the National College for Motorsport to get a glimpse of what was making that wonderful din. Modern race engines don't make this sound. It's why we're already missing the golden days of LMP1, the class that could turn club racers into bona fide Le Mans heroes.

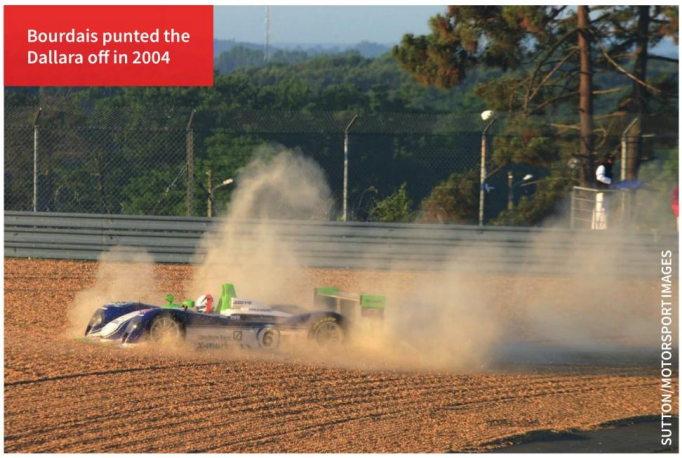
The money came first, of course. "I got a phone call from a guy who I met at a trackday," he says of the moments that changed his life – again without knowing it at the time. "At Bedford ▶

"Either the radio didn't work or the guys didn't tell me in case I did something stupid" **MARTIN SHORT**



'Old man' Short has kept Deutsche Bank visor strip

JEP


Bourdais punted the Dallara off in 2004

SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES


Rollcentre led the race on 2005 running

SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES


Left to right: Barbosa, Ickx and Short in 2005

SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES


Fantastic fourth with Pescarolo in 2007

JBLOXHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

Autodrome, I was stood in a Portacabin next to a guy wearing a bobble hat and anorak. He said, 'You're Martin Short. I tried to get you some sponsorship. I work for Deutsche Bank.' I ran outside, borrowed a TVR Cerbera, sat this guy in the passenger seat and gave him three laps. 'Wow, that was amazing.' I didn't get his name, didn't think anything more of it. The next year, Chris East got back in touch, saying, 'You may not remember me, would you like some sponsorship?' We started with a little bit and ended up with quite a bit more over time."

At the end of 2003, East made a suggestion: "'Why don't we do Le Mans?' I said Porsche or Ferrari? 'No. Top class.' What? 'You worry about the cars, I'll find the money. Go find a car.'"

After a nudge from Bob Berridge, Short went to see Hugues de Chaunac at ORECA. "I flew down to Paul Ricard to see two beautiful cars that were doing nothing, with acres of spares. So I rang Chris and he said, 'It's a deal.'" So I shook hands with Hugues."



JEP

"The ACO guys strolled down the paddock, grabbed my hand and gave me a Gallic nod. I was in for Le Mans"

Next stop was a Le Mans entry. "Chris and I went to see the ACO," Short smiles. "They took us to a little bar and said, 'So you've got an LMP900 [as LMP1 was then known]. What have you raced before?' Class 2 in British GT in a TVR. 'You know these cars are very dangerous...' I suggested we do Sebring to prove ourselves."

Pitted among the Audi R8s, unknown Rollcentre Racing stunned the American Le Mans Series at the 12 Hours, chassis 004 only slipping from third to fifth in the last hour with throttle cable trouble, Short sharing driving duties with British GT team-mate Rob Barff and Mosler factory driver Joao Barbosa. "After the race the guys from the ACO strolled down the paddock," says Martin. "They reached over, grabbed my hand and gave me a Gallic nod. I was in for Le Mans."

Short remembers his 2004 outing at the Circuit de la Sarthe as "an amazing experience", until a bespectacled Frenchman ruined the morning. "At 6.30am I was in the car and we were lying fourth overall," says Martin. "Sebastien Bourdais was coming up behind me at a rate of knots in his Pescarolo and hit me in the left-rear wheel, just after the Dunlop Bridge, sending me off into the gravel. I got back to the pits, and the lads did a visual check of the car. We were still in fourth place and we couldn't find anything, so off I went. At the Porsche Curves, a bolt had partially cracked in the impact and the left-rear wheel toed out under load. The car just turned right and went straight into the concrete. It was like an aircraft crash. When it stopped, the first thing I did was try and start it, as you do. The marshals were waving to stop. So I got out and realised a ▶

TOP 5 LMP1 DRIVERS

GARY WATKINS



5 LUCAS LUHR

Luhr is a driver who somehow missed out on overall victories in the sportscar blue ribands. He was, however, a multiple race winner over a prolonged period of P1's history aboard a variety of machinery. That explains his place here. The straight-talking German was at his best in the ALMS with Audi and then the Muscle Milk/Pickett Racing squad with first a Lola-Aston Martin and then an HPD. He ended up as a three-time champion – once with the Audi factory and twice with Muscle Milk – and took no fewer than 24 overall victories.

4 NICOLAS MINASSIAN

The British-based Frenchman was the fastest driver on Peugeot's books for much of its five-year LMP1 adventure. That's not, however, counting a single qualifying lap at Le Mans when three-time polesitter Stephane Sarrazin was king. Minassian won races in the Le Mans Series and the Intercontinental Le Mans Cup, but what he didn't get was a win or two in any of the big enduros: Le Mans, Sebring or Petit. He also deserves credit for his plucky performances with the little Creation Autosportif squad. A giant-killing run to pole at Petit in 2006 was Minassian at his best.





3 TIMO BERNHARD

Two Le Mans victories, a pair of world titles and 12 wins in three WEC seasons: Bernhard did it all over a long career with Porsche that included a loan spell at Audi. His nine outright American Le Mans Series victories should arguably be taken into account given that the LMP2 RS Spyder was conceived to take on the P1 cars. Perhaps his greatest contribution to the history of LMP1 was the key role he played in the Porsche 919 Hybrid programme. He was a kingpin in the development of the car, helped nurture both Mark Webber and Brendon Hartley as sportscar drivers, and was the most consistent performer across its four seasons.

2 ALLAN MCNISH

There can be no apologies for putting a second member of the winning Audi crew from Le Mans 2008 in the top two spots. McNish, like Kristensen, was at or near the top for the majority of the LMP1 era, even if he did race against LMP cars aboard GT1/GTP machinery in his early years. Other performances to put up there with Le Mans 2008 are his from-behind triumph at Sebring just eight months later and then the from-even-further-behind victory in between at Petit Le Mans after he'd hit the wall on the way to the grid.





1 TOM KRISTENSEN

The bulging Kristensen CV means there's no contest when it comes to naming the best driver of the LMP1 era, even if one of his nine Le Mans successes did come aboard the GTP-class Bentley. The long-time Audi driver also won the Sebring 12 Hours a record six times and belatedly became a world champion. But it's not just *what* Kristensen won, it's *how* he won. Le Mans 2008 was his greatest victory, but the triumphs at the French enduro in 1997 and 2004 run it close. And that's not to forget some stunning Sebring performances, 1999, 2001 and 2005 included.

GIBSON, BOYD,SUTTON, JEP, WOOD, GIBSON, J BLOXHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES; MELANIE ALLGOOD HYGEMA

wishbone had stuck in my right ankle. Not as bad as it sounds."

Rollcentre headed back to Le Mans the following year with 004 now fitted with a three-litre Nissan V6. The NISMO deal was a good little earner, even if the engine proved uncompetitive. But for Short and Barbosa, now joined by Vanina Ickx in 006 with the Judd, optimism remained high and they qualified a decent ninth. "Vanina was tough and impressive," says Short. "She was fast and an interesting character as the daughter of Jacky Ickx. She had it harder than anybody to be there. The name wasn't necessarily a passport. I have a huge amount of respect for her. Joao was quiet, laid back, but *so* fast... He's won the Rolex Daytona 24 three times outright now. I have watch as well as speed envy!"

Short himself was out of sorts. "I couldn't match Barbosa and had to remind myself I was driving the truck, running the team, building rollcages, running Mosler Europe and finding the money," he says. "And I'd had a son. Over the hump where cars had flipped in the past, every single time I thought, 'Am I going to see my son again?' Something had happened within me. Dealing with an aero car, I just recognised I wasn't as good as I should have been."

The magic moment in the lead occurred early on Saturday night, but the dream didn't last. "When we were building the car up in the workshop, I remember one of my guys was rebuilding the steering rack," says Short. "He said he couldn't find the seals for the end of the rack, but he had some others that he said would be just as good. 'OK, I trust what you are saying.' But during the race we started getting a power-steering leak from those bloody seals. The biggest mistake I ever made was we should have stopped the car then, put the other rack on and lost 20 minutes. Instead we laboured on, but rather than doing 11 laps we could only do five or six before the fluid started pissing out. So we slipped down the order. We finished 16th overall. That was Le Mans with the Dallara."

Rollcentre moved on, first with an LMP2 Radical and then on to the Pescarolo with which it would score that fourth place in 2007. But what to do with the Dallaras? "At the end of the season someone made me an offer for both cars and all the kit, which was a shock, so I decided to hang on to them, and wait," says Short. "We

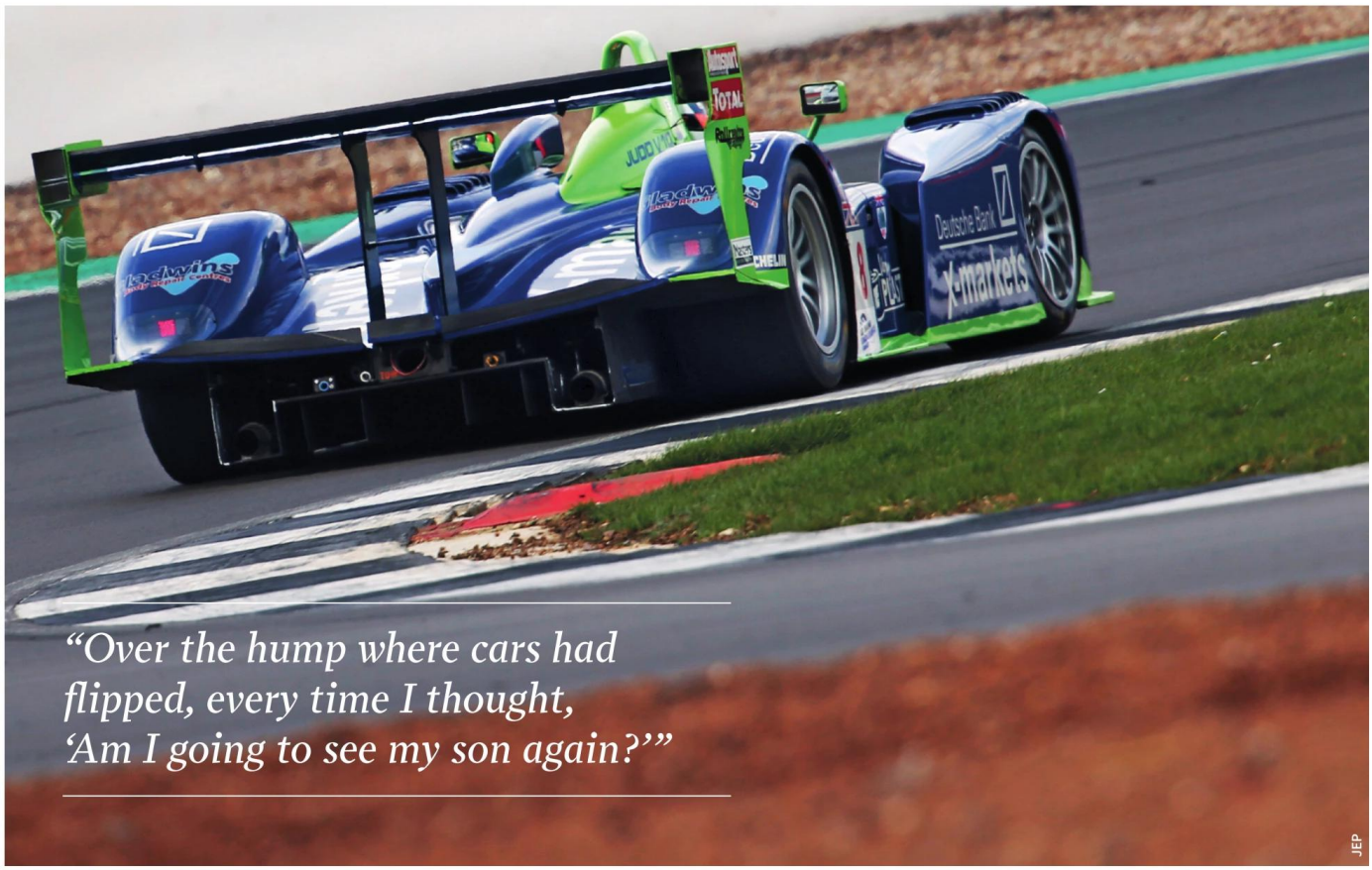


JEP

eventually sold 004 to a guy in America, then it went to auction and James Cottingham and Max Girardo bought it, and it's come back to us. We've put it back in ORECA's original PlayStation colours, which was a mission in itself. We were just doing it from photographs."

As for 006, "I wanted to hang onto the car in which I led Le Mans," says Short. Le Mans Classic this year was supposed to be his shot at that Le Mans podium – of a sort – but that will have to wait a little longer thanks to the pandemic. But at least on our day at Silverstone he is able to revel once again in a car that means so much to him. "I hope I can hang onto it long enough to let my sons Morgan and Marcus [named after British sportscars, naturally] to experience it for themselves.

"To sit in that thing and hurtle down the straights is bloody phenomenal," he grins. "And the sound that comes out of those pipes... Everybody in a five-mile radius of Silverstone was hearing what they thought was a Formula 1 car. That's all part of it. And it doesn't matter that some old bloke was driving it."



JEP

"Over the hump where cars had flipped, every time I thought, 'Am I going to see my son again?'"

TOP 5 LMP1 CARS

GARY WATKINS

What is the greatest sportscar of all time? Autosport sticks its neck out to celebrate its 70th birthday. Go to bit.ly/Greatestsportscar

5 PORSCHE WSC95

The story of the Porsche WSC95 takes some believing. It started life as a Jaguar XJR-14 Group C chassis minus its roof, got canned before it could race and was then dusted down at the suggestion of that wily old fox Reinhold Joest for Le Mans. He then won the 24 Hours with the car – and there were only two – that was built up around one of the Silk Cut Jags. Joest got to keep the winning car as part of his agreement with Porsche, took it back to the Circuit de la Sarthe in defiance of the factory, and won again.





4 PEUGEOT 908

Had Peugeot won Le Mans more than the once over the life of the 908 programme, it would be viewed very differently in history. The French manufacturer more often than not got the better of arch-rival Audi, with the exception of the one race that really mattered. The first version of the 908, the V12-engined HDi FAP that flew the Tricolore in 2007-10, won a third of the races it started in the hands of the factory. There should have been at least two more: Peugeot had a faster car than Audi at Le Mans in both 2008 and 2010.

3 AUDI R8

A tally of five Le Mans victories puts the R8 on the coat tails of the Porsche 956/962 at the race that matters. A hat-trick of wins with the factory Joest car in 2000-02 was followed by two more for the car in the hands of customer teams Goh and Champion, both with works backing. The R8, in fact, never stopped winning. It triumphed on its debut at Sebring in 2000 and clocked up the last of its American Le Mans Series victories on its swansong more than six years later at Lime Rock in 2006 to end its career with 62 victories.





2 PORSCHE 919 HYBRID

Porsche finally made its return to the pinnacle of sportscar racing with the first iteration of the 919 Hybrid in 2014. The car of the same name that followed after a down-to-the-tub redesign for 2015 swept all before it – and WEC incumbents Toyota and Audi out of the way. The second-generation 919 took a hat-trick of hat-tricks in the WEC – Le Mans win, drivers' title and manufacturers' crown – over its three-season career. What's more, it won 16 of its 26 races to reinforce the Porsche motorsporting legend. Job done, the German manufacturer probably didn't need to hang around in the top flight of endurance racing.

1 AUDI R10 TDI

Audi's R10 TDI turbodiesel was a watershed machine that heralded the start of what might be described as the high-tech era. It re-established sportscar racing and Le Mans in particular as a proving ground for automotive technologies and paved the way for a new breed of hybrid rocketships. Not only that, but it was a super-successful racing car. The R10 was unbeaten in the hands of the factory Joest Racing team at Le Mans and, almost as if to secure its place in history, it played a starring role in the greatest Le Mans of them all.



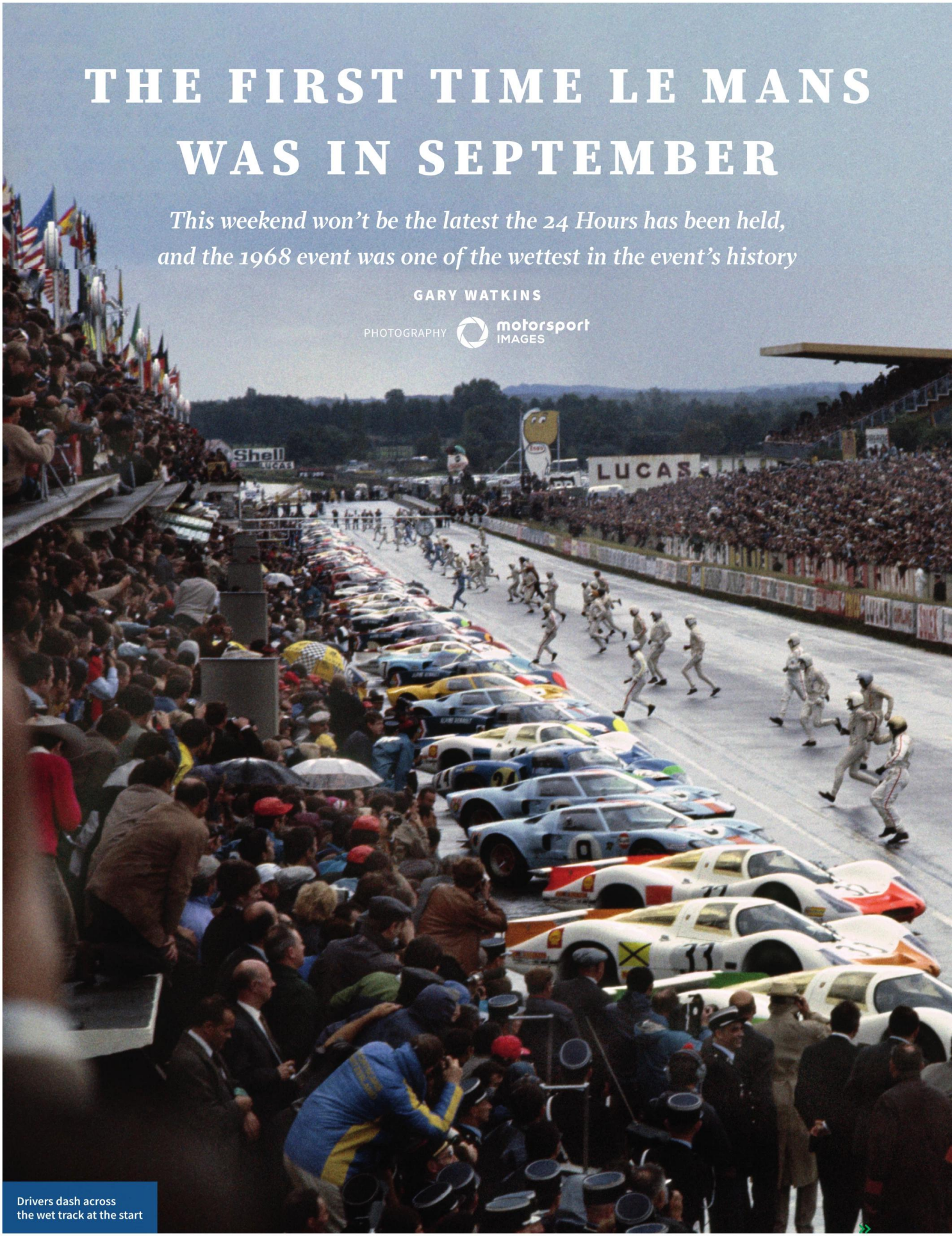
SUTTON, J BLOXHAM, S BLOXHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

THE FIRST TIME LE MANS WAS IN SEPTEMBER

This weekend won't be the latest the 24 Hours has been held, and the 1968 event was one of the wettest in the event's history

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES



Drivers dash across the wet track at the start



The tear gas hanging over the streets of Paris at the back end of May 1968 was a foretaste of what was to come at the Le Mans 24 Hours that year. Rain, mist and fog swirled around the Circuit de la Sarthe for much of a race that was pushed back to September as a result of civil unrest in France at the beginning of the summer.

An autumn date for the French enduro, the first and only until this year, resulted in one of the wettest editions of the race on record. It began raining shortly before the 3pm start – an hour earlier the traditional 4pm kick-off – and didn't stop until some time after dawn. And sunrise on the last Sunday of September was only shortly before 8am.

So bad were the conditions over the weekend of 28-29 September that some drivers really didn't want to go out on track, and at least one got out of his car and walked away. The rain was hard at times and just plain persistent at others, before it finally started to dry up with two thirds of the race already run.

Porsche factory driver Jochen Neerpasch remembers some atrocious conditions. "It was the final race of my career and also the most challenging," recalls Neerpasch, who was in the process of setting up a new competitions department for Ford Germany. "The rain was terrible. It was unbelievable. It was so heavy that on the Mulsanne Straight the smaller-capacity cars were passing us because they were cutting through the water on their narrower tyres. There was so much aquaplaning, you couldn't go flat."

It didn't help that the latest *langheck* bodywork on the 908 was conceived for maximum straightline speed down the Mulsanne. Downforce wasn't so much as an afterthought. Even in the dry, a car that could hit nearly 190mph down the long chute needed all the road to get through the Kink at full throttle. "If you ended up at the wrong point of the road as you approached the Kink, it wasn't flat," he explains. "The car was moving around a lot all the time; it was very difficult to drive even in the dry."

Just to compound the problems for Neerpasch and team-mate Rolf Stommelen, an alternator problem afflicted all four of the 908LH Group 6 prototypes. It robbed them of the use of windscreen wipers and headlights. "We had to drive the whole race on parking lights and without wipers because we had to use as little charge from the battery as possible," he says. "It was terrible. Today we'd say such conditions are too dangerous, but it was what it was back then."

Problems with the windscreen wipers also hit the solo Formula 1-engined Matra MS630. They needed attention almost right away, Johnny Servoz-Gavin ducking into the pits at the end

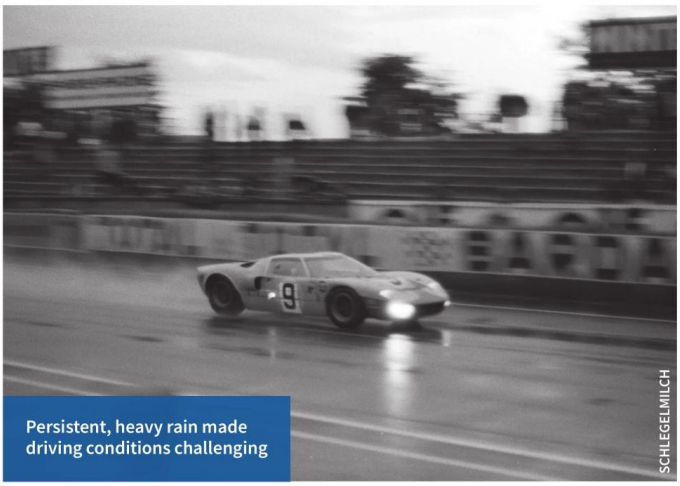
"We had to drive the whole race on parking lights and without wipers. It was terrible, but it was what it was"

of the opening lap. When they packed up altogether in the night, he decided he'd had enough and refused to drive. That required the team to haul his team-mate, a young Henri Pescarolo, from his bed to take over. The Le Mans rookie began a comeback that hauled the delayed car as high as second, wipers or no.

Looking back, Pescarolo is perplexed by how he managed to propel the hampered prototype up the order. Drafted in late to drive the latest Matra, he admits that he was frightened during practice and qualifying, the only time he ever felt fear at the wheel of a racing car. "I have no idea how I managed to do what I did," he recalls. "It was almost as if something became free in my mind. I thought that even if I have a big crash, Matra will thank me for trying. Every time I passed the pits, I was thinking, 'This is my last lap, I am going to crash.' I was overtaking cars all the time in the spray and I had to decide whether to overtake on the ▶


Neerpasch/Stommelen Porsche "should have won"

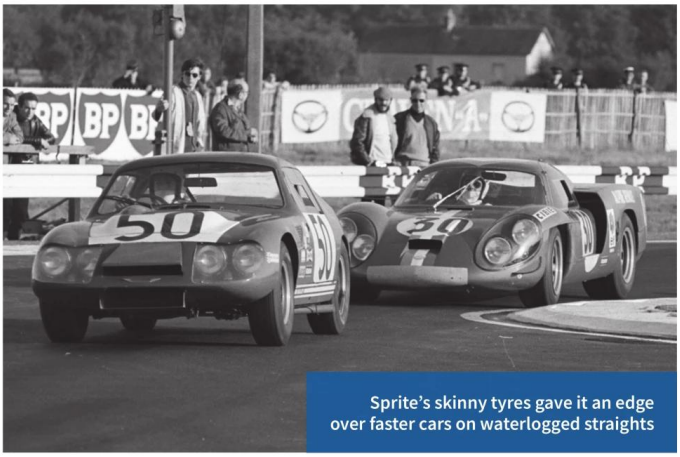
SCHLEGELMILCH


Persistent, heavy rain made driving conditions challenging

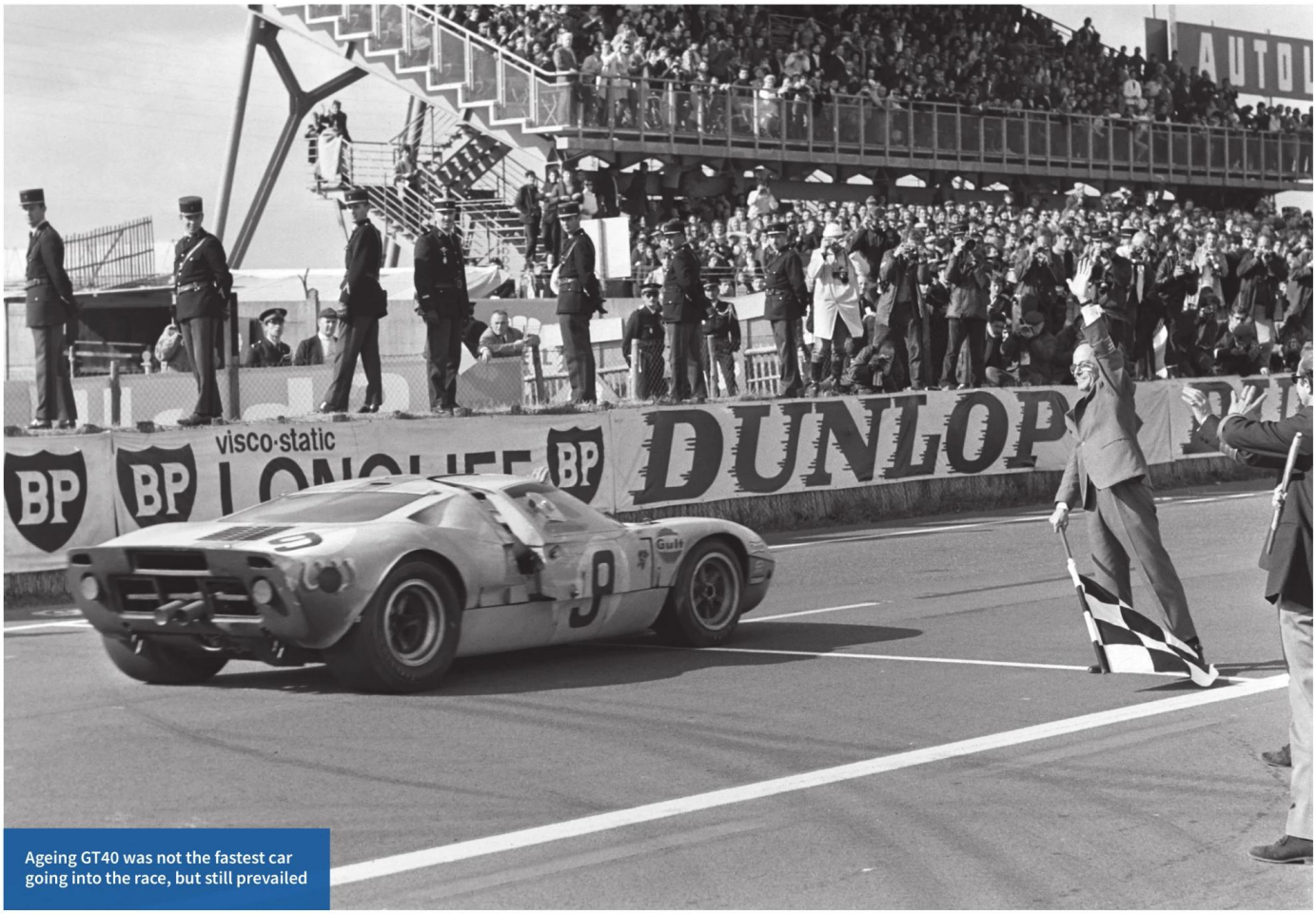
SCHLEGELMILCH



Attwood needed persuading to get into Piper's Ferrari



Sprite's skinny tyres gave it an edge over faster cars on waterlogged straights



Ageing GT40 was not the fastest car going into the race, but still prevailed

left or the right. Through that night, I always chose the correct side. It was a miracle."

Richard Attwood also needed some persuading to get into the Ferrari 250LM he was sharing with car owner David Piper. He admits that he'd lost interest in the race courtesy of the conditions and an early delay.

Attwood was staying in a billet provided by personal sponsor Shell in the paddock and wasn't minded to get out of bed when Piper's right-hand man and chief mechanic, Fairfax Dunn, woke him shortly before it was time to take over from the car owner. "We'd had some kind of problem, though neither David nor I can remember what it was, and the weather was atrocious," remembers Attwood. "I was in a foul mood, because I didn't think we were going to get anywhere, so I didn't see the point of getting back in the car.

"David was doing what I remember as a triple stint and about 15 minutes before he was due in Fax tried to get me out of bed. I must have told him that I really wasn't interested anymore. The next knock on the door was David: he'd got out of the car and left it on the pitroad to come and get me. After some haggling, he persuaded me to do the honourable thing."

Piper went back to the car to do another couple of laps while Attwood readied himself for a task he wasn't savouring. "We did the swap and to be honest I still wasn't very interested," he continues. "It was still pouring with rain and unbeknown to me there was a giant puddle at the end of the pitlane.

"Racing cars back then leaked like sieves and all this water went straight over me. It was probably a good job, because to be honest I was still half asleep. It shocked me into readiness."

British tin-top racer Alec Poole was driving one of the cars from the minor classes that had the potential to splash past the bigger-engined machinery when the rain was at its worst. The Irishman recalls becoming slightly irritated by the 'faster' machines outgunning his little works Austin-Healey Sprite Le Mans out of the slowest corners only to then hold him up.

"We were able to at the very least keep up with some of the bigger cars," recalls Poole, who shared the up-to-1300cc class Sprite with Roger Enever. "The problem was they would outdrag us out of Mulsanne Corner and then hold us up. I reverted to some pretty blatant blocking to keep them behind until I was up to speed."

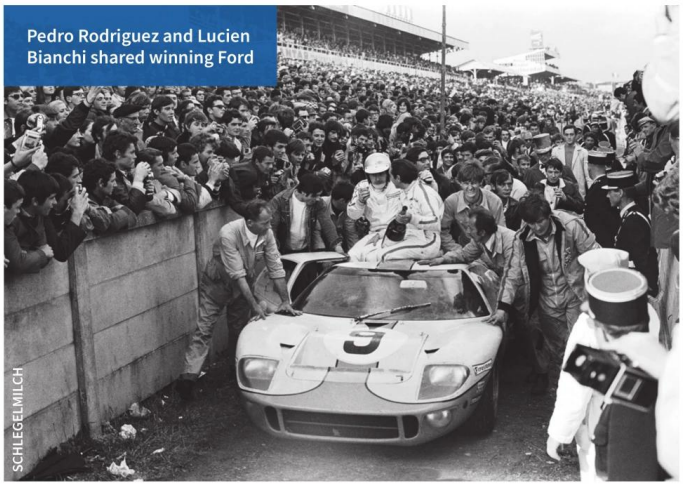
Poole and Enever had problems of their own into the slow corners, Mulsanne in particular: "There was about four inches of water sitting in the floor. The car wasn't watertight by any means; I remember there was sometimes as much water running down

"He walked out onto the track with the gearbox held on his shoulder with one arm, pointing at it with the other"

the inside of the screen as the outside. When you jumped on the brakes, a tidal wave of water came gushing over your feet."

It hadn't been the tsunami of public discontent that resulted in Le Mans being pushed back into the clutches of autumn. It was president Charles de Gaulle's efforts to regain control of France. The catalyst for the unrest was a series of student protests that began at the end of the previous year. Police repression of the demonstration that followed precipitated a national strike.

It was de Gaulle's 'back-me-or-sack-me' referendum that did for the traditional mid-June date of the 24 Hours. The national plebiscite was set for 15 June, the Saturday of the race, and the call the vote made on police resources meant the race couldn't go ahead as scheduled. There was talk of it being delayed by a couple of weekends, though that would have pushed it back to just a week before the French Grand Prix at Rouen. There was also speculation


Pedro Rodriguez and Lucien Bianchi shared winning Ford

SCHLEGELMILCH

of a rescheduling to Bastille Weekend on 13-14 July. That, however, was the date of the Watkins Glen 6 Hours, like Le Mans a round of the World Championship for Makes.

Two weeks after the initial decision for a delay, race organiser Automobile Club de l'Ouest and the FFSA, the French sporting authority, settled for a date beyond the end of the holiday season. The 24 Hours would be the final round of the world championship right at the end of September.

Porsche and Ford took a win apiece in the two races between the old and the new dates to set up a-winner-takes-all finale between the new 908 and the ageing GT40 run by the Gulf-sponsored JW Automotive squad. The three-litre 908 was coming on strong and was the faster car by Le Mans. Neerpasch reckons that Porsche lost the race — and the championship — rather than Ford winning it.

A vibration resulted in the alternator issue, which was compounded by an ACO rule that didn't allow for the generator's replacement. It was also the catalyst for a cooling-fan failure on the Neerpasch/Stommelen entry that cost the car nearly an hour.

Stommelen's recovery drive that year helped put him on the map. "Rolf was unbelievable; he did a fantastic job," says Neerpasch. "He made up so much time in the night when the conditions were really bad."

It wasn't enough, however, for the only surviving 908 to make up the lost ground. The car finished third and was still six laps down on the winning JWA Ford shared by Pedro Rodriguez and Lucien Bianchi, and one down on the Scuderia Tartaruga 2.2-litre Porsche 907 driven by Rico Steinemann and Dieter Spoerry. "We lost that race," reckons Neerpasch. "In normal conditions we would have won."

Pescarolo didn't see the finish, despite his heroics. A puncture with just under three hours to go took out the electrics and sparked a brief fire. Attwood and Piper made it home in a creditable seventh after what the former reckons was "almost certainly my best ever drive" at Le Mans. "The thing was going incredibly well, absolutely flying," he says.

His pace upset Piper, however. "David was convinced there was an issue with the gearbox, but I could tell in the car that there was nothing wrong with it," recalls Attwood. "The team was telling me to slow down, and I was starting to go faster. Fax was a bull of a guy, and the team had a spare LM gearbox. He walked out onto the track — there was no pitwall back then — with the thing held on his shoulder by one arm and pointed to it with the other."

Poole and Enever, meanwhile, finished 15th overall and third in class, which won them The Motor Trophy for the first British car home. What he and Enever didn't know at the time was *just* how far from new was the set of tyres that they completed the race on.

"I asked why we weren't starting the race on new tyres given how wet it was, and Geoff Healey said something about the previous year," recalls Poole. "It was only a week later sitting in a pub in Dublin that I realised what he'd said. That the tyres had also done the previous year's race."



FROM THE ARCHIVE

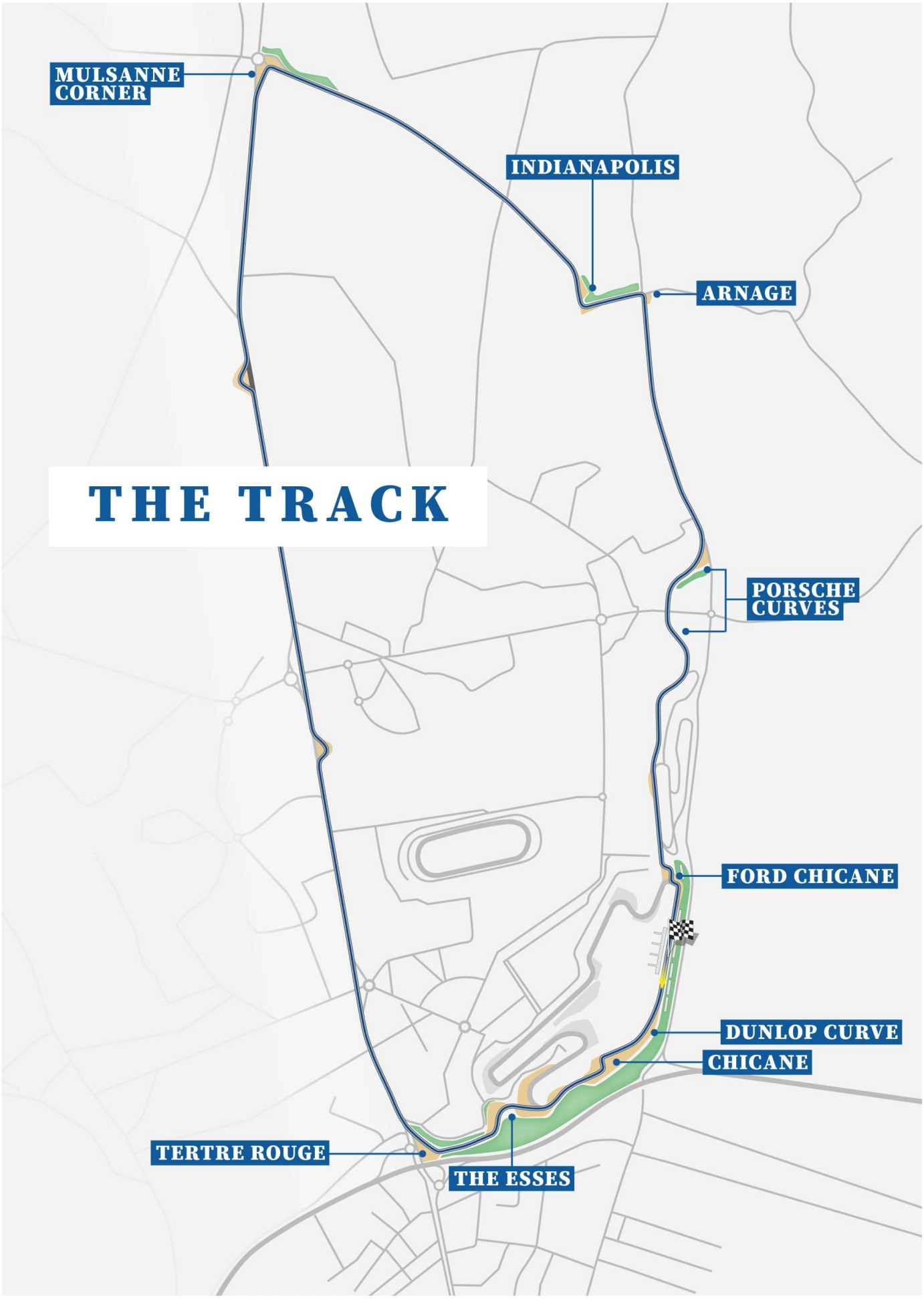
Gijs van Lennep and the Porsche 936 he shared with Jacky Ickx receive essential fluids during the notoriously hot 1976 Le Mans 24 Hours. The first 10 laps were led by the Renault Alpine A442 of Jean-Pierre Jabouille/Patrick Tambay/Jose Dolhem, but once it fell back van Lennep and Ickx were untouchable, taking the flag with an 11-lap lead over the Mirage M8 of Jean-Louis Lafosse/Francois Migault. Autosport debates the greatest sports-racing car of all time in our special series of podcasts to celebrate our 70th birthday. Go to bit.ly/Greatestsportscar

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THE ESSES

RECORDS AND TRIVIA

Some essential info – and some stuff to get you winning the pub quiz

MOST WINS

MANUFACTURERS

1	**Porsche**	**19**
2	**Audi**	13
3	**Ferrari**	9
4	**Jaguar**	7
5	**Bentley (pictured, right)**	6

DRIVERS

1	**Tom Kristensen**	**9**
2	**Jacky Ickx**	6
3=	**Derek Bell**	
3=	**Frank Biela**	5
3=	**Emanuele Pirro**	

Five drivers have won Le Mans and a world title in F1. Before Fernando Alonso in 2018 and 2019 with Toyota, Le Mans was won by Mike Hawthorn (Jaguar, 1955), Phil Hill (Ferrari, 1958, 1961, 1962), Jochen Rindt (Ferrari, 1965) and Graham Hill (Matra, 1972). Only Phil Hill won both in the same year.

The *fastest* lap time ever recorded on the Circuit de la Sarthe was by Kamui Kobayashi in claiming pole for the 2017 race. The Japanese set an average speed of 156.51mph in his Toyota TS050 HYBRID.

This is the 50th anniversary of Porsche's first overall Le Mans victory. Richard Attwood and Hans Herrmann drove the winning 917K. Only seven cars were classified as finishers, and five of them were Porsches!

It's also the 70th anniversary of the only occasion on which a driver finished Le Mans having driven single-handed. Eddie Hall brought his Bentley home to eighth, 20 laps behind the winning Talbot-Lago.

FOLLOW THE ACTION

Practice, qualifying, warm-up
TV **Live** Eurosport 2, Thurs 1300, 1600, 1900, Fri 0900, Eurosport 1, Sat 0930

Hyperpole qualifying
TV **Live** Eurosport 2, Fri 1030

Road to Le Mans
TV **Live** Eurosport 1, Sat 1000, **Livestream** on motorsport.tv Sat 1000

Le Mans 24 Hours: the race
TV **Live** Eurosport 1, Sat 1230, 1315

Le Mans Esports Series Super Final
Livestream on motorsport.tv Thurs 1500, Fri 1500

Follow the event on **Autosport.com**



The fastest Le Mans 24 Hours was held in 2010, when Timo Bernhard, Romain Dumas and Mike Rockenfeller took their Audi R15-plus TDI to victory. They completed 397 laps – 3362 miles – and averaged an impressive 139.95mph.

The last Le Mans to be held in September was a wet one (see p42). Pedro Rodriguez and Lucien Bianchi completed only 331 laps in their winning Ford GT40, compared to 388 for the victors in 1967 and 372 in 1969.

Ferrari is king of the GTE Pro class since it was introduced in 2011. Cars from Maranello have won the category three times, with Corvette and Porsche on two apiece and Ford and Aston Martin on one.

LMP2 stars Paul di Resta and Anthony Davidson may both be aiming to take victory, but they wouldn't be the first members of the Sky Sports F1 crew to top the Le Mans podium. Martin Brundle won overall in 1990, Johnny Herbert in 1991.

2019-20 WEC STANDINGS

LMP DRIVERS

1	**Jose Maria Lopez/Kamui Kobayashi/Mike Conway**	**137**
2	**Brendon Hartley/Kazuki Nakajima/Sebastien Buemi**	125
3	**Bruno Senna/Gustavo Menezes/Norman Nato**	109
4	**Filipe Albuquerque/Phil Hanson**	54
5	**Paul di Resta**	46
6	**Ho-Pin Tung/Will Stevens**	46

LMP1 MANUFACTURERS

1	**Toyota Gazoo Racing**	**151**
2	**Rebellion Racing**	109
3	**Team LNT**	29

LMP2 DRIVERS

1	**Filipe Albuquerque/Phil Hanson**	**120**
2	**Paul di Resta**	105
3	**Ho-Pin Tung/Will Stevens**	98
4	**Giedo van der Garde/Frits van Eerd**	91
5	**Gabriel Aubry**	90
6	**Antonio Felix da Costa/Roberto Gonzalez**	89

GTE DRIVERS

1	**Marco Sorensen/Nicki Thiim**	**127**
2	**Kevin Estre/Michael Christensen**	108
3	**Alessandro Pier Guidi/James Calado**	95
4	**Alex Lynn/Maxime Martin**	92
5	**Gianmaria Bruni/Richard Lietz**	79
6	**Davide Rigon/Miguel Molina**	63

GTE MANUFACTURERS

1	**Aston Martin**	**219**
2	**Porsche**	190
3	**Ferrari**	166

GTE AM DRIVERS

1	**Emmanuel Collard/Nicklas Nielsen/Francois Perrodo**	**110**
2	**Charlie Eastwood/Jonny Adam/Salih Yoluc**	98
3	**Jeroen Bleekemolen/Ben Keating**	81.5
4	**Ross Gunn/Paul Dalla Lana**	80.5
5	**Darren Turner**	78.5
6	**Matt Campbell/Riccardo Pera/Christian Ried**	61.5

NO	DRIVERS	TEAM	CAR
LMP1			
1	Bruno **Senna** (BRA) Norman **Nato** (FRA) Gustavo **Menezes** (USA)	Rebellion Racing	Rebellion-Gibson R-13
2	Romain **Dumas** (FRA) Nathanael **Berthon** (FRA) Louis **Deletraz** (CHE)	Rebellion Racing	Rebellion-Gibson R-13
4	Tom **Dillmann** (FRA) Bruno **Spengler** (CAN) Oliver **Webb** (GBR)	ByKolles Racing Team	ENSO CLM-Gibson P1/01
7	Mike **Conway** (GBR) Kamui **Kobayashi** (JPN) Jose Maria **Lopez** (ARG)	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota TS050 HYBRID
8	Sebastien **Buemi** (CHE) Kazuki **Nakajima** (JPN) Brendon **Hartley** (NZL)	Toyota Gazoo Racing	Toyota TS050 HYBRID
LMP2			
11	Adrien **Tambay** (FRA) Erik **Maris** (FRA) Christophe **d'Ansembourg** (BEL)	Eurointernational	Ligier-Gibson JSP217
16	Oliver **Jarvis** (GBR) Nick **Tandy** (GBR) Ryan **Cullen** (GBR)	G-Drive Racing by Algarve	ORECA-Gibson 07
17	Jonathan **Kennard** (GBR) Kyle **Tilley** (GBR) Dwight **Merriman** (USA)	IDEC Sport	ORECA-Gibson 07
21	Juan Pablo **Montoya** (COL) Memo **Rojas** (MEX) Timothe **Buret** (FRA)	DragonSpeed USA	ORECA-Gibson 07
22	Filipe **Albuquerque** (PRT) Paul di **Resta** (GBR) Phil **Hanson** (GBR)	United Autosports	ORECA-Gibson 07
24	Garett **Grist** (CAN) Alex **Kapadia** (GBR) Anthony **Wells** (GBR)	Nielsen Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07
25	Simon **Trummer** (CHE) Matt **McMurry** (USA) John **Falb** (USA)	Algarve Pro Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07
26	Jean-Eric **Vergne** (FRA) Roman **Rusinov** (RUS) Mikkel **Jensen** (DNK)	G-Drive Racing (TDS)	ORECA-Gibson 07
27	Ben **Hanley** (GBR) Renger **van der Zande** (NLD) Henrik **Hedman** (SWE)	DragonSpeed USA	ORECA-Gibson 07
28	Paul-Loup **Chatin** (FRA) Richard **Bradley** (GBR) Paul **Lafargue** (FRA)	IDEC Sport	ORECA-Gibson 07
29	Giedo **van der Garde** (NLD) Nyck **de Vries** (NLD) Frits **van Eerd** (NLD)	Racing Team Nederland (TDS)	ORECA-Gibson 07
30	Tristan **Gommendy** (FRA) Jonathan **Hirschi** (CHE) Konstantin **Tereschenko** (RUS)	Duqueine Team	ORECA-Gibson 07
31	Nico **Jamin** (FRA) Matthieu **Vaxiviere** (FRA) Julien **Canal** (FRA)	Panis Racing (Tech 1)	ORECA-Gibson 07
32	Alex **Brundle** (GBR) Will **Owen** (USA) Job **van Uitert** (NLD)	United Autosports	ORECA-Gibson 07
33	Kenta **Yamashita** (JPN) Anders **Fjordbach** (DNK) Mark **Patterson** (USA)	High Class Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07
34	Matevos **Isaakyan** (RUS) Jakub **Smiechowski** (POL) Rene **Binder** (AUT)	Inter Europol Competition	Ligier-Gibson JSP217
35	Roberto **Merhi** (ESP) Nick **Foster** (AUS) Nobuya **Yamanaka** (JPN)	Eurasia Motorsport	Ligier-Gibson JSP217
36	Andre **Negrao** (BRA) Thomas **Laurent** (FRA) Pierre **Ragues** (FRA)	Signatech Alpine Elf	ORECA-Gibson 07
37	Will **Stevens** (GBR) Ho-Pin **Tung** (NLD) Gabriel **Aubry** (FRA)	Jackie Chan DC Racing (Jota)	ORECA-Gibson 07
38	Anthony **Davidson** (GBR) Antonio Felix **da Costa** (PRT) Roberto **Gonzalez** (MEX)	Jota Sport	ORECA-Gibson 07
39	James **Allen** (AUS) Vincent **Capillaire** (FRA) Charles **Milesi** (FRA)	SO24-HAS by Graff	ORECA-Gibson 07
42	Nicolas **Lapierre** (FRA) Antonin **Borga** (CHE) Alexandre **Coigny** (CHE)	Cool Racing	ORECA-Gibson 07
47	Andrea **Belicchi** (ITA) Giorgio **Sernagiotto** (ITA) Roberto **Lacorte** (ITA)	Cetilar Racing (AF Corse)	Dallara-Gibson P217
50	Tatiana **Calderon** (COL) Sophia **Florsch** (DEU) Beitske **Visser** (NLD)	Richard Mille Racing Team (Signatech)	ORECA-Gibson 07
GTE PRO			
51	Alessandro **Pier Guidi** (ITA) James **Calado** (GBR) Daniel **Serra** (BRA)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
63	Toni **Vilander** (FIN) Jeff **Segal** (USA) Cooper **MacNeil** (USA)	WeatherTech Racing (Scuderia Corsa)	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
71	Davide **Rigon** (ITA) Miguel **Molina** (ESP) Sam **Bird** (GBR)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
82	Olivier **Pla** (FRA) Sebastien **Bourdais** (FRA) Jules **Gounon** (FRA)	Risi Competizione	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
91	Gianmaria **Bruni** (ITA) Richard **Lietz** (AUT) Frederic **Makowiecki** (FRA)	Porsche GT Team (Manthey)	Porsche 911 RSR
92	Michael **Christensen** (DNK) Kevin **Estre** (FRA) Laurens **Vanthoor** (BEL)	Porsche GT Team (Manthey)	Porsche 911 RSR
95	Nicki **Thiim** (DNK) Marco **Sorensen** (DNK) Richard **Westbrook** (GBR)	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE
97	Maxime **Martin** (BEL) Alex **Lynn** (GBR) Harry **Tincknell** (GBR)	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE
GTE AM			
52	Christoph **Ulrich** (CHE) Steffen **Gorig** (DEU) Alexander **West** (SWE)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
54	Giancarlo **Fisichella** (ITA) Francesco **Castellacci** (ITA) Thomas **Flohr** (CHE)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
55	Matt **Griffin** (IRL) Aaron **Scott** (GBR) Duncan **Cameron** (GBR)	Spirit of Race (AF)	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
56	Matteo **Cairoli** (ITA) Larry **ten Voorde** (NLD) Egidio **Perfetti** (NOR)	Team Project 1	Porsche 911 RSR
57	Jeroen **Bleekemolen** (NLD) Felipe **Fraga** (BRA) Ben **Keating** (USA)	Team Project 1	Porsche 911 RSR
60	Paolo **Ruberti** (ITA) Sergio **Pianezzola** (ITA) Claudio **Schiavoni** (ITA)	Iron Lynx	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
61	Come **Ledogar** (FRA) Oswaldo **Negri** (BRA) Francesco **Piovanetti** (USA)	Luzich Racing	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
62	Johnny **Mowlem** (GBR) Charlie **Hollings** (GBR) Bonamy **Grimes** (GBR)	Red River Sport (AF)	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
66	Jan **Magnussen** (DNK) Richard **Heistand** (USA) Maxwell **Root** (USA)	JMW Motorsport	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
70	Vincent **Abril** (FRA) Kei **Cozzolino** (JPN) Takeshi **Kimura** (JPN)	MR Racing (AF)	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
72	Tom **Blomqvist** (GBR) Marcos **Gomes** (BRA) Morris **Chen** (TWN)	HubAuto Racing	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
75	Andrea **Piccini** (ITA) Matteo **Cressoni** (ITA) Rino **Mastronardi** (ITA)	Iron Lynx	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
77	Matt **Campbell** (AUS) Riccardo **Pera** (ITA) Christian **Ried** (DEU)	Dempsey-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR
78	Michele **Beretta** (ITA) Horst **Felbermayr** Jr (AUT) Max **van Splunteren** (NLD)	Proton Competition	Porsche 911 RSR
83	Emmanuel **Collard** (FRA) Nicklas **Nielsen** (DNK) Francois **Perrodo** (FRA)	AF Corse	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
85	Rahel **Frey** (CHE) Michelle **Gatting** (DNK) Manuela **Gostner** (ITA)	Iron Lynx	Ferrari 488 GTE Evo
86	Ben **Barker** (GBR) Andrew **Watson** (GBR) Michael **Wainwright** (GBR)	Gulf Racing UK	Porsche 911 RSR
88	Thomas **Preining** (AUT) Adrien **de Leener** (BEL) Dominique **Bastien** (USA)	Dempsey-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR
89	'Steve Brooks' (FRA) Bruno **Fretin** (FRA) Benoit **Fretin** (FRA)	Team Project 1	Porsche 911 RSR
90	Jonny **Adam** (GBR) Charlie **Eastwood** (GBR) Salih **Yoluc** (TUR)	TF Sport	Aston Martin Vantage GTE
98	Augusto **Farfus** (BRA) Ross **Gunn** (GBR) Paul **Dalla Lana** (CAN)	Aston Martin Racing (Prodrive)	Aston Martin Vantage GTE
99	Lucas **Legeret** (CHE) Hugo **de Sadeleer** (CHE) Vutthikorn **Inthraphuvasak** (THA)	Dempsey-Proton Racing	Porsche 911 RSR

TIMETABLE

THURSDAY 17 SEPTEMBER

0830-0930
Road to Le Mans
Free Practice 1

1000-1300
Le Mans 24 Hours
Free Practice 1

1400-1700
Le Mans 24 Hours
Free Practice 2

1715-1800
Le Mans 24 Hours
Qualifying

1830-1930
Road to Le Mans
Free Practice 2

2000-0000
Le Mans 24 Hours
Free Practice 3

FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER

0830-0850
Road to Le Mans Qualifying 1

0910-0930
Road to Le Mans Qualifying 2

1000-1100
Le Mans 24 Hours
Free Practice 4

1130-1200
Le Mans 24 Hours
Hyperpole

1300-1345
Porsche Carrera Cup
Free Practice 1

1415-1510
Road to Le Mans Race 1

1545-1630
Porsche Carrera Cup
Free Practice 2

1730-1830
Porsche Carrera Cup
Qualifying

SATURDAY 19 SEPTEMBER

0915-1000
Porsche Carrera Cup Race

1030-1045
Le Mans 24 Hours Warm-up

1115-1210
Road to Le Mans Race 2

1430
Le Mans 24 Hours Start

SUNDAY 20 SEPTEMBER

1430
Le Mans 24 Hours Finish



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