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DONE DEAL!

*World champion
Ogier agrees to
defend his title
with M-Sport*



AND BRITON EVANS WILL JOIN HIM > P2

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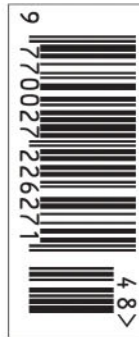


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Ogier with Malcolm Wilson (right)



Ogier secured title no.5 with M-Sport

By David Evans

Sebastien Ogier has ended months of speculation with the confirmation that he will defend his World Rally Championship title with M-Sport next season, and it's a deal that may bring additional support from Ford to the team.

The Frenchman's future was confirmed by the Cumbrian squad yesterday (Tuesday) and he will begin testing the 2018 Ford Fiesta WRC for the Monte Carlo Rally in the middle of next month.

The negotiations with M-Sport have taken longer than either party would have liked, but both sides are happy with the outcome

and the continuation of what's been the most successful partnership of the 2017 season.

M-Sport team principal Malcolm Wilson told *MN*: "This news is definitely worth waiting for. I'm over the moon that we've got Seb and Julien [Ingrassia, co-driver] with us again next year. The negotiations have taken a while, maybe even longer than last season, but we've put everything in order. I'll be honest, negotiating with Sebastien's a very straightforward process: he told us what he wanted and we had to find a way to get there."

Wilson also confirmed Elfyn Evans remains with M-Sport, driving a Michelin-shod Ford Fiesta WRC. The second part of the team's driver announcement will come next month or at the launch of the World Rally Championship at Autosport International in January.

"It's a real weight off our mind to get Seb and Elfyn all sorted," Wilson added, "because it means

we can now focus all of our attention to the car and the evolutions we've got planned for next season. When he came to us at the end of last year, we put those number ones on the doors of our car, but they weren't really ours - they belonged to Seb and Julien. This time we'll put the number ones on the door of our car safe in the knowledge that, together, we've genuinely earned them.

"We start testing for Monte Carlo next month and the whole company is incredibly motivated by the news that we retain much of our winning team. There's no doubt in my mind it's going to be hard to keep both of those titles [Drivers' and Manufacturers'], but that's absolutely the aim.

"Seb's a genuine class act and having him with us raises everybody's game - we saw that with Elfyn and Ott [Tanak] this year and I have no doubt we'll see it with Elfyn again next season."

Wilson added that he expected more success from Evans, who



Evans with M-Sport in 2015

World champion re-signs for 2018, and Ford may follow

OGIER READY FOR TITLE DEFENCE WITH M-SPORT



Ford could help with ongoing testing, development

took his maiden WRC win on Wales Rally GB last month.

"If I were you I'd consider a small wager on Elfyn for next year," said Wilson. "I genuinely think, the way he's progressed through this season, he could be in with a shout of next year's title."

"I still believe Sebastien will go into the season as favourite, but the competition is going to be closer than ever [in 2018]."

Ogier admitted his decision hadn't been an easy one with the potential for more time with his wife and young son playing on his mind on this occasion.

Ogier told *MN*: "I couldn't talk about this officially, but for some time now, it's been clear in my mind that I want to stay with this team for next year."

"It's good that it's now official, it means we can focus on next year to work for the future."

"I have to consider this option [of retirement] when I am thinking about the future. I have my family and it's really important to me to

spend the maximum amount of time with them. But it's too early for me to retire, I still have time to do good things in the sport."

"It also means I can share the next step with M-Sport. We made a great start this year and it was very special to win the title as the underdog, that really gave us all a special feeling to do it this way."

Ogier paid tribute to Wilson's efforts in keeping him, adding: "There was a lot talked about and a lot written about my decision and where I would go, I know some of this was about money, but I can tell you the choice was not made only on the money. I talked to the other teams and I had to be really convinced, not only on the money side; money can't buy a great boss and nobody has given me the sort of feeling that Malcolm has. I really feel that Malcolm fights so hard to keep me in the team, I enjoy working with him and the team so much – there's a lot of good feeling for this."

Ogier's agreement is a one-year

extension to his current contract and, *MN* understands, it was increased involvement from Ford that helped convince him of the Fiesta WRC's continued competitiveness through next season. Precise details of Ford's involvement in the programme remained sketchy when *MN* went to press, with no comment on whether this meant a full-scale return for the Blue Oval, which departed the world championship officially at the end of 2012.

Ford is understood to be upscaling its technical commitment and funding for ongoing testing and development. Those were Ogier's precise requirements for remaining with M-Sport next season.

Asked about the developments coming on the Fiesta in 2018, Wilson added: "We've got work planned across the car. We're kidding ourselves if we think we can make big gains in any one area, the way the regulations are written, that's just not possible

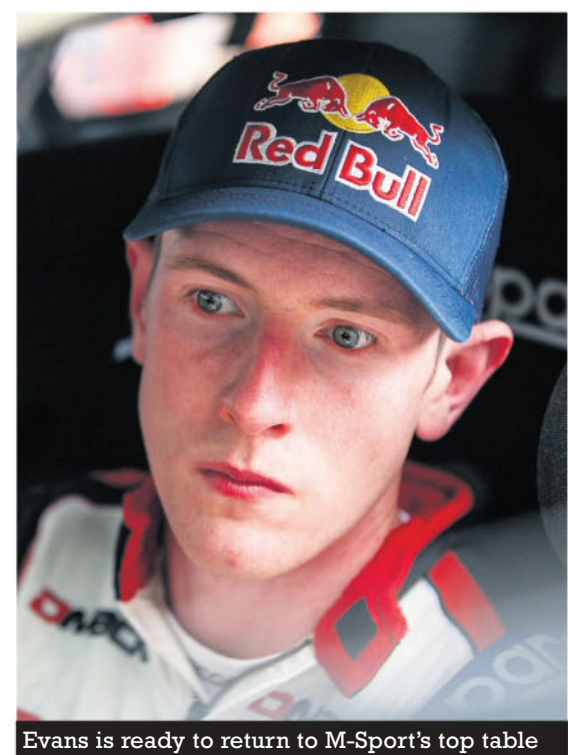
for any of the teams. But we will be using our homologation jokers and we will be evolving all aspects including the engine, aero package, suspension and weight distribution."

After running on DMACK tyres last year, the 2018 season will herald Evans' return to the main M-Sport team for the first time since 2015.

"As you can imagine, I'm really pleased," said Evans. "I can't speak highly enough of what the team has done in the last year and I definitely learned a lot from Seb, so I'm definitely looking forward to working with everyone again."

"I'm also ready to take the next step. We've got that first victory under our belts now and good experience of most of the events. I can't wait to get the season going!"

● Following his test in France next month, Ogier will host a fans' day in Gap, offering his supporters the opportunity to come and meet him and catch a glimpse of the car he used to win this year's title.



Evans is ready to return to M-Sport's top table

ABU DHABI GP REPORT



BY ANTHONY ROWLINSON

Bottas wins to cap his year as Mercedes dominates the finale

BOTTAS STRIKES BACK



Finn scored a big win heading into the winter



Hulk's charge earned Renault P6



Vettel's Ferrari was a distant third



The Yas Marina track layout didn't lend itself much to overtaking

A flaccid end to an often brilliant season was nevertheless a hugely important grand prix for winner Valtteri Bottas. His victory over Lewis Hamilton set him up perfectly for a stronger challenge in 2018.

Qualifying

Would it end, we wondered, with a whimper or a bang?

Half the answer to that question was delivered by Bottas's resounding pole lap. He posted a 1m36.231s, almost two-tenths faster than his team-mate, 2017 champion Hamilton.

Very few drivers ever gain that kind of advantage over Hamilton – F1's all-time pole position record holder (72 and counting) – so for Bottas, at least, this season was still far from over.

He'd been nip-and-tuck with Lewis throughout the session, going fastest early on, and looking smooth and consistent throughout. But were we watching Bottas excellence or Hamilton failing to reach to the bottom of his talent well, now that the title was settled and his position as Britain's most successful driver secured?

Lewis, for his part, reckoned he had no answer for Valtteri's speed: "I realised I was in a fight and it was on a knife-edge between us throughout," he said, "but Valtteri ultimately did a better job."

Hamilton blew his shot with a poor final sector on his last run: he was 0.4s slower than Bottas, running wide on the exit of the final corner (Turn 21), as he had earlier in the session. He also lost out at the T8/T9 left-right, carrying more speed in than Bottas, but exiting with less. "I was later on the brakes," he said, "but slower out of the corner."

Bottas, meantime, looked delighted in his characteristically understated way. The intercom "Yes!" as he learned he'd

secured his fourth F1 pole was probably the Finnish equivalent of a Sebastian Vettel "YEEEESSSSS-Yes-Yes-Yes-Yes. *Grazie Ragazzi!*"; a slight grin was also discernible during post-session interviews.

Two poles on the trot, then, for a driver whose speed relative to Hamilton has been called into question in the second half of this season.

"I was so gutted in Brazil after being on pole but missing the win," he said. "But I kept the same approach here. It was a really clean lap. I managed to find time run-by-run in different corners, as the car was feeling better than it has felt all weekend. That allowed me to work on the details."

Sebastian Vettel, as he has for so much of this year, led the resistance, winding his Ferrari up to third place, but he was still 0.3s adrift of Hamilton and therefore half-a-second off the absolute pace of Bottas.

He reckoned his SF70H would be stronger in race trim, where the power advantage enjoyed by Mercedes all year would be less apparent. Although, unlike in Brazil, where his front-row start allowed him to mug Bottas off the line and go on to win, here an all-silver front row – a 50th front-row lockout for Mercedes – would present a much sterner obstacle.

"I'm pretty happy with the car," he said, "particularly in sector two, but we're losing time on the straights. Overtaking is not impossible here, so it should be a fun race."

A Daniel Ricciardo – Kimi Raikkonen – Max Verstappen mixture from P4 to P6 offered no surprises other than an advantage of more than three-tenths for Daniel over Max, stemming the flow of Verstappen's recent performance advantage.

Not since the US GP has Ricciardo started ahead of his team-mate.

The Aussie reckoned hitting a sweet spot with tyre temperatures had been the key to his Ferrari-splitting success

and team boss Christian Horner rated Ricciardo's lap as "one of his best of the year". Verstappen's relatively lowly position, meanwhile, resulted from his failure to find a set-up sweet spot after experiments with 2018 suspension components during FP1.

"Sometimes you have to accept that you are not fast enough, learn from it, come back and try harder next time," was his chastened summary.

Nico Hulkenberg was another to lay down a 2018 marker against a hungry younger team-mate, pinning down P7 while Carlos Sainz failed to get out of Q2. Sainz seemed mystified with his lack of pace, even as Hulk looked ahead with cautious optimism to holding on to at least seventh and securing sufficient points to allow Renault to leapfrog Toro Rosso for sixth place in the Constructors' Championship chase.

Next up, the Force India duo, continuing their season-long squabble with Sergio Perez finding the scantest advantage over Esteban Ocon: just 23-hundredths of a second. Ocon believed his best run had been hampered by a pushy Bottas forcing his way past as they prepared for their final fliers and he had reason to be aggrieved: another tenth or so could have placed him P7.

"I'm just annoyed that I didn't show the true pace of the car," he said. Regardless, he continues to impress in his first full F1 season.

Felipe Massa – happily – closed out the Q3 runners and he clearly relished having shown the way to his much younger team-mate Lance Stroll throughout the weekend. As Stroll languished in P15, having just scraped through Q3, Massa could be satisfied with having shown himself still fleet and relevant even as he prepared to wave goodbye once again to Formula 1. "I'm so happy with what I achieved," he said. "I'm leaving with my head held high."

ROUND 20

Photos: LAT



Race

It comes to something when the highlight of an F1 race is the sight of David Coulthard conducting podium interviews in a deerstalker-style double baseball cap.

But so it was after the 2017 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, a race which, alas, had all the fizz of an expired firework.

Bottas' win, from pole, ahead of Hamilton, was impressive and confident; the warm glow of victory will doubtless keep him toasty during any return trips to Finland this winter.

His smooth efficiency did little, though, for the 'spirit of racing' F1's owners Liberty Media are so keen to promote. Hamilton, who tailed Bottas throughout, apart from some between-stops laps in the lead, nailed the problem with his analysis of the impossibility of one F1 car passing another of comparable performance anywhere in the too-noodly third sector of Yas Marina Circuit.

"They're really going to have to change the layout here," he said. "You need an advantage of something like 1.4s a lap to pass, so basically you're relying on the guy in front to make a big mistake if you're going to get past. And even then the run-offs here are so big, you can get back on track maybe without losing the advantage."

Hamilton's not the most outspoken soul, so his words as a four-time world champion carry more weight than they might from another driver. Yas Island's owners and Liberty should take heed, for after the excruciating tension of the race here last year, when Nico Rosberg secured his title only after being wrung through a Hamilton mangle, this one was... altogether less dramatic.

As Lewis noted, once both Mercedes had made clean starts and completed their single pitstops (from ultrasofts to supersofts) without drama, it would have taken a major Bottas error for the lead to change hands.

None came, apart from a brief lock-

up by Valtteri at Turn 5 on lap 49. Suddenly, Hamilton, who'd been around 1.5s behind Bottas, was on his tail and threatening through the T8/T9 section. Bottas didn't flinch, though, and with commendable *sisu* set the race's fastest lap just three tours later.

And that was that, as far as the victory squabble was concerned, although its importance to the Bottas psyche as a foundation upon which he can build a stronger 2018 should not be undervalued. He appeared suitably moved when he spoke of the emotional highs and lows of a season's racing as team-mate to F1's best – indication, perhaps, that even what might appear to be a straightforward and controlled victory is rarely any such thing.

"People say we Finns don't show emotion, but that doesn't mean we don't have any," he admitted. "I can't always show it too much, but I've certainly felt it. This has been an incredible season for me – incredible how much I have learned from Lewis and from working with this team. It's really important for me to end the year like this."

Inevitably there were suggestions that Hamilton hadn't reached far into his box of tricks in pursuit of victory, although to his credit he swatted away any suggestion that he had somehow allowed Bottas to win.

"I gave it everything today," he said, "big congratulations to Valtteri. He did a great job this weekend, as he has all year. He came into a new team, which means a new challenge, new people and new ways of working. He has done an exceptional job and to finish on a high like this is also exceptional."

Ferrari was once again left chasing

silver shadows under desert floodlights: Abu Dhabi confirmed that while the Scuderia made a huge off-season leap to challenge Mercedes and their onewayward W08 for much of the season, the Vettel-SF70H combo was ultimately second-best, at best.

"I hate to say it, but Lewis was the better man," Vettel said. "While we generally set out what we tried to achieve, we can't be happy because our package wasn't quick enough."

Half-a-second away from pole and a tenth off fastest lap were evidence of the "little details" that determined the difference in performance between red and silver this year. Vettel gave it his all, only to come up short. Again.

Raikkonen's fourth was a predictable result, as was Verstappen's P5, in the wake of his practice and qualifying troubles. Throughout he was given a wild ride through the just-about-flat Turns 2 and 3; a lesser driver would have handled the challenge less deftly. (Stroll was one such, finding himself simply unable to manage the balance of his FW40 through this tricky section and having to lift off as a consequence.)

Still, Max enjoyed better fortune than Ricciardo, who became the first of only two retirements on lap 20, when hydraulic failure curtailed a likely run to fourth place.

Among the happiest top-10 results was Hulkenberg's sixth. His points were enough to vault Renault above Toro Rosso in the constructors' table and send an additional eight million dollars into the team's accounts. Tidy – and welcome after the pitstop fumble for team-mate Sainz that left him without a secure front-left and condemned him to a DNF.

Perez and Ocon remained conjoined for seventh and eighth; Fernando Alonso was an entertaining ninth.

And exiting stage left with a point in his final GP – number 269 – Massa, still standing tall, in his own diminutive way, after 16 memorable F1 years.

RACE FACTS

Results © 2017 Formula One Administration Ltd

ABU DHABI GRAND PRIX

Circuit: Yas Marina **Laps:** 55
Race distance: 189.75 miles **Lap:** 3.50 miles
Lap record: 1m40.279s (Sebastian Vettel, 2009)
2016 winner: Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)

TYRE CHOICE

Option **SUPERSOFT**

Prime **SOFT**

Option **ULTRASOFT**

Date: Nov 26
Weather: Warm, dry

RESULTS

FIA Formula 1 World Championship, round 20/20

| POS | DRIVERS | NAT | CAR-ENGINE | TIME |
|-----|-------------------|-----|----------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Valtteri Bottas | FIN | Mercedes | 1h34m14.062s |
| 2 | Lewis Hamilton | GBR | Mercedes | +3.899s |
| 3 | Sebastian Vettel | GER | Ferrari | +19.330s |
| 4 | Kimi Raikkonen | FIN | Ferrari | +45.386s |
| 5 | Max Verstappen | NED | Red Bull-Renault | +46.269s |
| 6 | Nico Hulkenberg | GER | Renault | +1m25.713s |
| 7 | Sergio Perez | MEX | Force India-Mercedes | +1m32.062s |
| 8 | Esteban Ocon | FRA | Force India-Mercedes | +1m38.911s |
| 9 | Fernando Alonso | ESP | McLaren-Honda | -1 lap |
| 10 | Felipe Massa | BRA | Williams-Mercedes | -1 lap |
| 11 | Romain Grosjean | FRA | Haas-Ferrari | -1 lap |
| 12 | Stoffel Vandoorne | BEL | McLaren-Honda | -1 lap |
| 13 | Kevin Magnussen | DEN | Haas-Ferrari | -1 lap |
| 14 | Pascal Wehrlein | GER | Sauber-Ferrari | -1 lap |
| 15 | Brendon Hartley | NZL | Toro Rosso-Renault | -1 lap |
| 16 | Pierre Gasly | FRA | Toro Rosso-Renault | -1 lap |
| 17 | Marcus Ericsson | SWE | Sauber-Ferrari | -1 lap |
| 18 | Lance Stroll | CAN | Williams-Mercedes | -1 lap |
| R | Carlos Sainz | ESP | Renault | L31/wheel |
| R | Daniel Ricciardo | AUS | Red Bull-Renault | L20/hydraulics |

Winner's average speed: 120.808mph. Lap leaders: Bottas 1-21; Hamilton 22-24; Bottas 25-55.

FASTEST LAP | VALTTERI BOTTAS 1m40.650s ON LAP 52 (AVERAGE SPEED: 123.43mph)

QUALIFYING

| POS | DRIVER | TIME | POS | DRIVER | TIME |
|-----|------------|-----------|-----|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | Bottas | 1m36.231s | 11 | Alonso | 1m38.636s |
| 2 | Hamilton | 1m36.403s | 12 | Sainz | 1m38.725s |
| 3 | Vettel | 1m36.777s | 13 | Vandoorne | 1m38.808s |
| 4 | Ricciardo | 1m36.959s | 14 | Magnussen | 1m39.298s |
| 5 | Raikkonen | 1m36.985s | 15 | Stroll | 1m39.646s |
| 6 | Verstappen | 1m37.328s | 16 | Grosjean | 1m39.516s |
| 7 | Hulkenberg | 1m38.282s | 17 | Gasly | 1m39.724s |
| 8 | Perez | 1m38.374s | 18 | Wehrlein | 1m39.930s |
| 9 | Ocon | 1m38.397s | 19 | Ericsson | 1m39.994s |
| 10 | Massa | 1m38.550s | 20 | Hartley* | 1m40.471s |

* = 10-place penalty for extra power unit elements



CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

| DRIVERS | | | CONSTRUCTORS | | |
|---------|------------------|-----|--------------|----------------------|-----|
| POS | DRIVER | PTS | POS | CONSTRUCTOR | PTS |
| 1 | Lewis Hamilton | 363 | 1 | Mercedes | 668 |
| 2 | Sebastian Vettel | 317 | 2 | Ferrari | 522 |
| 3 | Valtteri Bottas | 305 | 3 | Red Bull-TAG Heuer | 368 |
| 4 | Kimi Raikkonen | 205 | 4 | Force India-Mercedes | 187 |
| 5 | Daniel Ricciardo | 200 | 5 | Williams-Mercedes | 83 |
| 6 | Max Verstappen | 168 | 6 | Renault | 57 |
| 7 | Sergio Perez | 100 | 7 | Toro Rosso-Renault | 53 |
| 8 | Esteban Ocon | 87 | 8 | Haas-Ferrari | 47 |
| 9 | Carlos Sainz | 54 | 9 | McLaren-Honda | 30 |
| 10 | Nico Hulkenberg | 43 | 10 | Sauber-Ferrari | 5 |

NEXT RACE: AUSTRALIA, MARCH 25, 2018

RACING NEWS

F1 ROUND-UP



Refreshed design from 2018

F1 gets a new look

F1 will introduce a new logo from next season, replacing its iconic branding that has been used for the last 23 years. The new design, which represents two cars racing towards a finish line, was shown for the first time on the Abu Dhabi podium after the race but has received a lukewarm reaction from fans. F1's commercial director Sean Bratches defended the new look, however: "A number of brands are trying to simplify their marks to enter the digital space. Look at Starbucks or Coca-Cola, which have taken the condensation off their logo to enter digital. We felt we had to go a little bit further." Bratches also promised a full "relaunch" of F1 in time for next year's Australian GP, with "new TV graphics, new production concept and a new web platform".

Space age aero shown

MN's sister title *Autosport* revealed F1 drivers were shown a range of concept car art in Abu Dhabi, which hinted at new aero rules for 2021. The images were presented during their Friday briefing. One driver described what he saw as "futuristic" with another adding the concepts looked "space age". It is understood that all images, which focused on the cockpit design, featured the halo device rather than the shield or aeroscreen concepts.

Empty threat

FIA president Jean Todt believes that Ferrari would only hurt itself if it carried out its threat to quit F1 if the 2021 engine rules aren't to its liking. Ferrari president Sergio Marchionne recently suggested the brand could quit the sport over the new engine rules. "I'm afraid to see Ferrari or Mercedes leave, but that is their choice," said Todt. "Ferrari is a brand that has been in every single F1 race since its creation. But I am not sure leaving would be a good thing for Ferrari because it is a unique brand – between racing and road car. It would be painful for Ferrari to not be in F1."

Hulkenberg penalty

Force India has slammed the manner in which Nico Hulkenberg was penalised in Abu Dhabi. The Renault driver went off the track to pass Sergio Perez on the opening lap, and was handed a five-second penalty to serve at his pitstop. However, Hulkenberg built a gap that was enough to be able to rejoin still ahead of the Mexican. "It makes a mockery of this sport to have it [penalties] so inconsistent," said Force India's Otmar Szafnauer.

KUBICA TESTS FOR FORMULA 1 FUTURE

Abu Dhabi runs could lead to a fairytale return from injury for Pole



Kubica is working on comeback

By Rob Ladbrook

Williams has batted away reports that it has already struck a deal with Robert Kubica for next season, but has admitted that this week's test in Abu Dhabi will be conducted to assess the Pole's readiness for an F1 return.

The British team is currently deciding between three candidates for its second F1 berth in 2018 with Kubica believed to be up against Paul di Resta and Toro Rosso refuge Daniil Kvyat for the seat alongside Lance Stroll.

Kubica has repeatedly been linked with a grand prix return after returning from life-threatening injuries sustained in a rally accident in early 2011. The 32-year-old has

already tested a 2014-spec car for Williams at Silverstone and the Hungaroring, as well as testing for Renault in Hungary in the summer.

He was due to run in a current-spec Williams for the first time yesterday (Tuesday) during the Pirelli tyre test at the Yas Marina Circuit in Abu Dhabi, but team technical head Paddy Lowe admitted there was more than just rubber to analyse.

"Robert is an impressive guy," said Lowe. "We all saw how he operated in F1 in the past – he's a great driver, very professional, very committed, enthusiastic, very intelligent. He's an exciting prospect, that's why we're looking at him."

"We're in a process with Robert, which is a matter of evaluating

whether his injuries will have an impact on his ability to drive in F1, it's as simple as that.

"So far it's been fine, that's all I'd say – we ran the 2014 car and there were no issues, so I think we just [need to] see how it goes this week, then we make our assessment. He will do a normal programme and in the process we can answer those questions."

Lowe added that any decision to sign Kubica must be made on merit alone, not on the potential emotion of his fairytale F1 return.

"A lot of people say how great it would be if

Robert was back in F1, but it's important to be objective in what we do. There are other drivers under consideration, but we know how they perform because they've been racing – we have lots of race data. We won't make a decision [on our driver line-up] this week and it won't be next week, so it'll be some time after that."

Williams will also test Renault reserve driver Sergey Sirotkin this week, but he is an outsider for a race seat with the team. Mercedes-backed Pascal Wehrlein has also been linked, but Silver Arrows boss Toto Wolff said his chance of being signed by Williams was only "tiny" last week.

Lowe rates Kubica as one of the greats



Abu Dhabi was processional

Drivers call for track changes after limited overtaking blights F1 finale

Formula 1 drivers have called for changes to be made to the Yas Marina circuit layout after a season finale labelled by many as "boring".

The Abu Dhabi Grand Prix featured little in the way of overtaking, leading some drivers to criticise the current track design.

Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton said: "They really need to look at changing it [the track]. You do get a bit of a tow down the straights but once you get to the last sector...

"It's a great, great track, but unfortunately it doesn't suit the cars very well. In the last sector you just can't follow [another car]."

"It's one of the worst tracks in the sense that you need to be 1.4-seconds quicker to pass the car in front and we [he and teammate Valtteri Bottas] have the same car and only a few tenths between us, so I was never going to overtake unless he made a big mistake. And even if he did the run-offs here are massive so you can still keep it on. Once you're within 1.2s the car just

stops and you start sliding around."

Bottas added: "It's a track where it's really difficult to follow once you get close [to another car] you feel how much [performance] you lose. It's not easy to overtake here."

Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen added that current fuel-saving rules didn't help: "I tried to be on the limit [of fuel] I could use, so it was kind of a boring race. But this is the rules. It's more like endurance racing. But as racers, nobody's happy because we want to race."

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'Rivett's Clio
Cup memories'
Top five moments, p23



Photos: LAT

Norris drove
Campos F2 car



NORRIS TO FORMULA 2 WITH CARLIN FOR 2018

McLaren Formula 1 reserve driver Lando Norris will remain with the Carlin team for 2018 as he graduates to Formula 2.

Norris, the 2017 Formula 3 European champion and 2016 McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner, has raced with Trevor Carlin's team since 2015 when he won the MSA Formula title.

The 18-year-old made his debut in F2 at Abu Dhabi with Campos Racing last weekend, retiring from the feature race with engine problems and finishing 13th in the sprint race.

He said: "2018 will be my

fourth year racing with Carlin. Trevor heads up a great operation at Carlin and I feel part of the family there.

"Next year will be a steep learning curve in terms of getting used to the increased power, the Pirelli tyres and mandatory pitstops but I feel I'm in the best environment possible to get to grips with all those elements."

Norris will be partnered next season by Spa F2 sprint race winner Sergio Sette Camara, who moves over from MP Motorsport.

Carlin competed in F1's

feeder series, previously called GP2, from 2011 but quit the championship last year before reclaiming a place on the grid for the series' switch to a new car next season.

"I'm delighted that we're able to announce a fantastic driver line-up on our return to the F1 support paddock," said team owner Carlin.

"With Lando and Sergio we have one of the most exciting young line-ups there is.

"We're extremely proud to be able to continue for the fourth consecutive season our relationship with Lando."

Rowland loses F2 feature race win

Renault Formula 1 development driver Oliver Rowland was stripped of his Formula 2 feature race win in Abu Dhabi due to a technical infringement.

The Brit's DAMS car failed post-event scrutineering after it was found it "finished the race with a skid block which was below the prescribed thickness in the technical regulations".

Rowland's disqualification meant Artem Markelov was handed victory for Russian Time, ahead of 2017 F2 champion Charles Leclerc, after his Prema Racing teammate, Antonio Fuoco, was also excluded for illegal front tyre pressures.

Leclerc went on to win the sprint race after a last-lap pass on Alexander Albon.



Rowland would lose win

F1 RACING EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

ANTHONY ROWLINSON

"F1 remains
greatest sporting
spectacle"



It never ceases to amaze how great a capacity Formula 1 has for talking itself down. 'Prophets of Doom' – or 'Paddock Cassandras' as they're occasionally termed – thrive in this sport, perhaps because casual negativity is so much less demanding than active celebration.

'The sport's a mess', the PoD's will say. Or: 'Liberty don't know what they're doing'. 'Ferrari will quit' is another tiresomely familiar trope for those who wish to appear acute, but who know no more than any other on this topic – and certainly far less than the three or four individuals who would effect any such momentous exit.

We're talking here about the difference between opinion and fact – two oft-mixed, but strictly separate, notions. Opinions are cheap, of course – so cheap and common that, as Martin Brundle once impressed upon me: "they're like arseholes – everyone's got one."

That's certainly true within F1 – whose paddock is full of, ahem, opinions – so enough about them; let's look back at a few facts from a season that was almost brilliant.

Fact: Lewis Hamilton became the most successful British driver ever. He finished the year a four-time world champion, after a season during which he emerged as the dominant force. He won nine races, took 11 poles (becoming an ever more numerically impregnable 'number one' on the all-time 'poles' chart, with 72 and counting) and has only Juan Manuel Fangio and Michael Schumacher ahead of him as multi-champs. One might opine that Schumi's all-time records are within reach. But let's stick to some facts.

Fact: Formula 1's new owners, Liberty Media, spent many millions of dollars promoting Formula 1 in unprecedented ways. At the Spanish GP, they gave us the Fanzone, zipwires 'n' all; there was the London Live extravaganza in July; while the US GP was granted a pre-race build up, courtesy of Michael Buffer, the like of which had never previously been seen. Recent speculation suggests £10m was spent on that promotion, although the facts of this particular matter are hard to ascertain.

Fact: cornering speeds this year were up significantly and often a whole 'g' higher than in 2016. The gains were found through increases in the cars' dimensions, a revised aerodynamic framework that allowed greater levels of downforce to be generated and wider, grippier, Pirelli tyres. The drivers revelled in the extra speed and the cars looked pretty damn hot, too. That last must be noted as a subjective observation, however.

Fact: F1 remains a hugely attractive draw for sponsors, countries, brands and fans. Let's take a quick look at brands and sponsors: Ferrari, Mercedes, Red Bull; Rolex, Tag Heuer, Oris; Puma, Hackett, Le Coq Sportif; Bose, Logitech, Casio... the list is long and largely blue-chip.

Meantime the world championship takes in 20 grands prix in 20 countries and the clamour for inclusion (France, Denmark, Vietnam) remains strong. Millions watch and read about F1, 24/365. All of which, in summary, emboldens me to assert one, conclusive opinion: Formula 1 remains the greatest sporting spectacle on the planet. And that's a fact.

THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP



Jamie Whincup claimed a seventh Australian Supercars title in dramatic fashion at Newcastle last weekend. He was 78 points behind Scott McLaughlin heading into the finale, but McLaughlin was hit with two penalties during the race and was then slapped with another post-race – for contact with Whincup's team-mate Craig Lowndes – which dropped him to 18th. He had crossed the line in 11th, which would have been enough for his maiden title... Niko Kari and Dorian Boccia claimed the final GP3 wins of the year at Yas Marina last weekend, while Macau GP victor Dan Ticktum claimed his maiden series podium in the second race...



Whincup won
title seven

Rebellion is the latest team to suggest it could join the LMP1 privateer ranks of the World Endurance Championship next season. The squad won the LMP2 drivers' and teams' titles after stepping down from LMP1 at the end of 2016... Next year's Le Mans 24 Hours will be worth one-and-a-half times the points of a regular World Endurance Championship round. The race had been worth double points... Williams Formula 1 driver Lance Stroll is set to join fellow F1 racer Fernando Alonso on

the Daytona 24 Hours grid next year, potentially in a Jota Sport-run Jackie Chan DC Racing LMP2 ORECA for the January contest... Honda World Touring Car driver Tiago Monteiro will miss Friday's title-deciding season finale. The former points leader had already missed the last three rounds as he recovers from a testing crash... Olympic legend Usain Bolt tested a Porsche Carrera Cup Australia car at Winton last week. The test came through fellow athlete John Steffensen, who will race in the series...

Brands or Donington could host DTM race

The DTM could return to the UK next year with Brands Hatch and Donington Park the leading contenders to host a round of the German touring car series.

An expanded 10-round calendar is expected to be announced for the series, which last visited Britain in 2013 when it raced on the Brands Hatch Indy Circuit.

The British round has provisionally been scheduled for April 21-22, which would make it the season opener.

Italy will also likely host a race for the first time since 2010, possibly at Misano, while Moscow Raceway is to be dropped from the calendar.

Lausitz, Hungaroring, Norisring, Zandvoort, Nurburgring and the Red Bull Ring will remain on the calendar, while Hockenheim will still host two rounds, including the season closer.

Upgrade for TCR Europe Trophy

The standalone TCR Europe Trophy will be upgraded to an international series next year, with plans for it to visit six venues across the continent.

Paul Ricard, Spa-Francorchamps, Hungaroring, Assen, Monza and Barcelona all feature on the schedule, with each meeting consisting of two 25-minute races.

Promoter Paulo Ferreira said: "We thought the time had come to launch a proper European series. It is a logical evolution for those teams that are already racing in the TCR national championships and aim for stepping up into



Only one race in 2017 season

international competition."

The TCR Europe Trophy was a one-off event this year at the Adria International Raceway.

● TCR International driver Gabriele Tarquini will drive a Hyundai i30 N at a TCR UK taster event due to be held at Brands Hatch today (Wednesday).



Former Williams Formula 1 reserve driver Alex Lynn will drive the new Aston Martin Vantage GTE in the World Endurance Championship next season. The new model was unveiled at a launch last week and replaces the current car, which dates back to 2008. Lynn, 24, will be among Aston Martin's roster of drivers to race the new machine in the 2018/19 WEC superseason and will dovetail that with his seat at DS Virgin in Formula E. AMR boss John Gaw described Lynn as "an obvious choice" for the team, adding that he is "clearly a star of the future".



AGREE/DISAGREE?
letters@motorsport-news.co.uk

RACING NEWS

IN BRIEF

British F3 calendar

The British GT and BRDC British Formula 3 championships will share the bill at seven events in 2018 including at Oulton Park, Rockingham, Snetterton, Silverstone GP, Spa-Francorchamps, Brands Hatch GP and Donington Park. The Silverstone GP layout will also be used for a second time by British F3 as the final round in October.

Van Buren reaches F1

Dutch karting champion Rudy van Buren has become McLaren's official simulator driver after winning the team's first World's Fastest Gamer eSports competition. The 25-year-old – who was a Dutch karting champion back in 2003 but now works as a sales manager in the Netherlands – beat his compatriot Freek Schothorst in the final round of the contest, a four-hour assessment on McLaren's F1 simulator.

Brit wins eSports title

British kitchen porter Brendon Leigh has become the first official Formula 1 eSports Series world champion after a dramatic finale around the Yas Marina track. The 18-year-old was one of four drivers who had a chance of winning the title but had to recover from being hit mid-race to secure the crown after a last-lap move. Leigh had never flown on a plane before heading to the finale in Abu Dhabi.

Davenport eyes GT4

Injured British Touring Car racer Luke Davenport had a run out in father Mark's Reflex Racing Ginetta G40 at Donington Park last week. "I have an option on the table to do British Touring Cars again, but I would like to get into GT4 really," he said. "I was going to do GTs in an Aston Martin last season, but Motorbase sold the car and offered me the BTCC drive." Davenport had his first test in a TCR car earlier this month as he recovers from serious injuries sustained in a huge qualifying crash at Croft earlier this year.

Photos: McLaren Automotive, Jakob Ebrey



L-R Fagg, Albert, Bell, Proctor, O'Brien

McLAREN REVEALS NEW YOUNG DRIVERS

Four new recruits set for factory British GT4 programme

By Rob Ladbrook

McLaren has revamped its Driver Development Programme, and has revealed the four drivers that will campaign a pair of factory-entered GT4 cars in next year's British GT Championship.

The Woking firm will field two 570S GT4 machines for the full British GT season, with the cars being crewed by the brand's four new recruits.

BRDC F4 graduate Jordan Albert gets another shot at

British GT after his deal with Beechdean AMR ended abruptly mid-way through 2016. Historic Formula Ford racer Michael O'Brien is a surprise inclusion. He will be joined by GT Cup frontrunner Lewis Proctor – who has been racing a 570S GT4 this year – and Charlie Fagg, who has competed in the European GT4 Series, been a race winner in British GT4 and made his GT3 debut with Nissan at this year's season finale at Donington Park.

All four young drivers will be mentored by sports car

veteran Rob Bell. The team which will run the cars has yet to be announced. Garage 59 ran a pair of 570S GT4s this year on behalf of the firm.

McLaren Automotive CEO Mike Flewitt said: "Our goal was to identify a group of very talented young drivers, help them progress, give them a motorsport education and give them an opportunity to compete at the highest level. By doing this we will create a talent pool for future McLaren drivers.

"Each of these drivers has the potential to be a GT champion

with McLaren. When selecting them we looked for a few key attributes: pure racing skill and talent was one, the ability to learn and improve, the intelligence of the equipment and the sport and the ability to work as part of a team."

Bell added: "All four guys are very enthusiastic and ready to go. I'll be around to impart my knowledge. Ultimately, I've been in their position and made errors along the way. My job is to guide them with my experiences and help them develop."

THE FINAL FOUR



Four will race the 570S

Jordan Albert

Age: 21 Experience: BRDC Formula 4, British GT4 part-season
He says: "It's been a hard year after my deal finished early in 2016, but I've kept myself busy and did one round in Dutch Supercars in a BMW M3. It's great to have a deal for 2018 done early. When I got the call from McLaren to join the team, it was the best call I've ever had."

Michael O'Brien

Age: 22 Experience: Historic FF1600, SsangYong Racing
He says: "It's a huge step up from what I've been doing. I'm the only driver with no GT racing background, so I'm playing catch-up a bit. I don't think that's a disadvantage, but I've got to learn extra things like pitstops, and the race durations. I can't wait to get started."

Charlie Fagg

Age: 18 Experience: Ginetta Junior, European and British GT4
He says: "This is massive for me. There's a lot of pressure being a young lad and coming into McLaren. But I'm mouldable and want to focus on improving with McLaren. The 570S GT4 has been rapid all year. It's a championship-winning car."

Lewis Proctor:

Age: 21 Experience: Ford Fiesta XR2s, GT Cup
He says: "I'm the only one to have raced a McLaren before and I've got experience of the GT4. It's a mind-blowing car and the other guys will love it. British GT is a big chance, and I'm determined to do the best I can."

New single-make GT4 series for McLaren

McLaren will run a single-make series for its 570S GT4 car for the first time next year as a development of its Pure McLaren track day scheme.

The new Pure McLaren-GT series is focused at McLaren customers and will race at a selection of circuits around Europe. The series is designed

to help existing McLaren owners get started in racing, with McLaren running a fleet of identical 570S GT4 cars centrally for customers to use on an arrive and drive basis.

A calendar has yet to be unveiled, but a McLaren representative confirmed that the opening round would likely be held at Silverstone next year.



McLaren customers can start racing the popular 570S GT4 cars



The new 720S will be the first GT3 racer made by McLaren Motorsport in Woking, and will be fully revealed in mid-2018

McLaren's new 720S GT3 challenger to be made in-house for first time, ready for 2019

McLaren will launch its new 720S GT3 challenger in time for the 2019 season, after announcing the new project had begun last week.

The new car will be designed and developed in-house by McLaren Motorsport, bringing

an end to the marque's partnership with CRS, which developed the preceding 650S and MP4-12C GT3 and traded under the McLaren GT name.

The new car will feature a development of the firm's traditional four-litre twin-

turbocharged V8 engine, and will be unveiled next summer ahead of making its race debut at the end of next year. The car will then be made available to customers for 2019.

"A few years ago our GT3 programme was only talking

about Europe, but now it's growing around the world," said McLaren's Mike Flewitt. "We wanted more and more of the business under our control and we are now at a point where we can take development of the GT3 car under our management."



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*"Crashing hurts...
in more ways than one"*
MN's racer on his season, p25



Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Mick Walker, Gary Hawkins, LAT

Hingeley will drive
Jenzer GP3 car



ABU DHABI GP3 TEST FOR HINGELEY WITH JENZER

BRDC British F3 racer will conduct two-day run in the Middle East this week



Hingeley is planning step up

BRDC British Formula 3 frontrunner Ben Hingeley will conduct a two-day GP3 test in Abu Dhabi this week, with a possibility that the Brit could race in the category in 2018.

The 20-year-old, who took four wins on his way to third in the British F3 standings with Fortec Motorsports this season, will test on Friday and Saturday with the leading Jenzer Motorsport team from Switzerland.

"I'm doing the test with them and we'll just see how we get on," Hingeley said. "We're looking at it [GP3 for next year]

but there's a lot of things that have to come together, such as the right team and the right price.

"I've never driven the spec of GP3 car and never done Abu Dhabi. I'm expecting a big step up but so far the simulator work I've been doing has gone well."

The Jenzer team finished third in the standings in the 2017 GP3 campaign, taking a total of two race wins.

Hingeley, who won the Formula Jedi title in 2015 before graduating to British F3, also raced in Euroformula Open at

the final three rounds of this season, and could continue to race in the F3-based series next year.

"I'm still speaking with Fortec, there's still choices with them," he added.

"I'm 20-years-old and that's been a big thing, I've not been the youngest driver on the grid [in British F3]. The bigger the step the better [for next year because] I need to get on with it.

"We're looking at everything really [for next season], we're keeping our options open and there's a lot of questions that need to be answered."

John Miles Trophy awarded to MX-5 Cup racer Bray after first full season

MX-5 Cup racer Ali Bray has won the 750 Motor Club's John Miles Young Driver Award in his first full season of car racing.

Bray took his self-run Mazda to second overall behind Ben Short. The £1000 cash prize and subsidised race fees will allow Bray to battle Short for

the leading honours next season.

"This year I was on such a tight budget, I scrimped and saved, using second-hand tyres from some of my other customers that they'd handed me down," said Bray. "We'll start building the car again, making sure that we've got a race-winning car,

and that should make the difference.

"It was great to get out in the car and prove I'm not just a mechanic."

Bikesports champion Stefano Leaney, MR2 regular Lewis Ward and Civic Cup racer Lewis Rose were also shortlisted for the award in honour of racer-turned engineer Miles.



Bray (leading) finished behind Short in final standings

Mowlem/Grimes/Wells together

Johnny Mowlem, Bonamy Grimes and Tony Wells will team up for the 2017 Gulf 12 Hours race with United Autosports in a Ligier JSP3.

All three drivers have previously raced for the squad, with Wells completing a full season in the LMP3 Cup Championship, while Mowlem and Grimes joined for the final round of the British LMP3 series at Donington Park.

Richard Dean, team owner, said: "I'm really pleased Johnny, Bon and Tony will be racing with us at the Gulf 12 Hours. We know what Tony can do as he's proved he has the pace to win throughout the year in the LMP3 Cup Championship. Johnny and Bon have only done one race so far in the Ligier JSP3 but with the amount of track time available in Abu Dhabi I'm confident they will get up to speed again quickly."

The Gulf 12 Hours, which is split into two races, will take place on December 16.

Mazda SuperSeries unveiled for 2018

A new Mazda MX-5 SuperSeries will be launched next year to cater for drivers unable to compete on the new-for-2018 TCR UK bill.

The British Racing and Sports Car Club's Mazda MX-5 SuperCup Championship – which uses Mk3 cars – will join the TCR package next season.

But a number of drivers who raced in the SuperSeries in 2017 will be prevented from taking part due to likely grid capacity issues, prompting a SuperSeries to be created for the Mk3 class.

The decision gives Mk3 drivers more options in



Mk3 cars can enter either SuperSeries or SuperCup

deciding where they want to race and will keep costs down, as many teams who run Mk3 cars also manage Mk1 cars in the Mazda MX-5 Championship.

Mazda MX-5 co-ordinator, Mandy Andrew, said: "The reason we are running the SuperSeries is there is such a demand to race Mk3s that

the SuperCup on the TCR package can't accommodate them all. The SuperSeries will allow teams who run both Mk1s and Mk3s to continue doing so at the same meetings. The SuperSeries will also be a useful stepping stone for Mk1 drivers looking to move up to the SuperCup."

Morgan and Coates join forces for Dubai 24 Hours

British Touring Car racer Adam Morgan will team up with Renault UK Clio Cup driver Max Coates to tackle the Dubai 24 Hours with Ciceley Motorsport next year.

Morgan is team manager of Ciceley's Clio Cup squad, which Coates has been a part of for the last two seasons. The pair will drive one of two specially adapted Ciceley Clios in the January 11-13 event.

Morgan and Coates will race

They shook down the cars at Donington Park last week before they are shipped out to Dubai for the race.

"It should be good fun and it's great to work with Adam," said Coates, who was fourth in the Clio standings this year

after taking two victories. "It will be the first time I've done endurance car racing – I've done endurance karting which gives me a feel of what it might be like. I'm really looking forward to it and it's a good chance for me to experience endurance racing.

"We know we're not going to turn up and win overall but there's still a class to go and win and we will aim for that." Ciceley is still looking for drivers interested in taking part in the race with the team.



INTERVIEW WITH THE OWNER

JENS MOETEFINDT

“After I was finished with school, my father said, ‘I want to stop working when I am 50, will you make it longer for me?’ So I said, ‘Sure, I want to run it!’”

When Jens Moetefindt took over the eponymous trailer dynasty in 2004, he had an enormous challenge on his hands. Entrusted with protecting and building upon more than 20 years of history, started in his father Philipp’s garage in east Germany, Jens could have been forgiven for adopting a risk-averse approach while he learned the ropes, but that couldn’t have been further from reality.

Under his stewardship, Moetefindt has gone from strength to strength, from a company that exclusively traded in handmade products to become Europe’s leading manufacturer of high-quality trailers, renowned for providing solutions that optimise unrivalled precision engineering and are tailored to the specific requirements of individual users.

As a regular competitor in VLN Endurance events on the Nurburgring Nordschleife, Jens knows

“IT’S A BIT LIKE LEGO – YOU CAN MAKE IT BIGGER, SMALLER, LONGER, WIDER...”

from first-hand experience that his customers require practicality and ease-of-use in their trailers. This, combined with Jens’ innate understanding of the materials – their properties, and strengths and weaknesses – from his studies in applied metallurgy, ensures no stone is left unturned in Moetefindt’s pursuit of excellence.

Having invested in specialist tools and overseen the grand opening of a state-of-the-art manufacturing plant near Hamburg in 2015, Jens has streamlined

the production process by incorporating adaptable components that can be used across different product lines, from vehicle transporters to promotional vehicles.

“We developed special components that we can use from 750 or 1500 kilos up to 20 tons, for example the floor,” explains Jens.

“It’s a bit like Lego – you can make it bigger, smaller, longer, wider, harder, softer and so on.

“You have to work out what customer A needs and what customer B needs and go from there. If customer A wants this and customer B wants that, although they are far apart they will still have certain components in common, so I can use this to satisfy both of them.”

Just as the company grew by word of mouth in its early days as Philipp, a farmer by trade, began selling trailers to order, today the business continues to grow in much the same way, not least when Jens is at the race track.

“I have always enjoyed racing on the Nordschleife, it’s a lot of fun,” says Jens. “But it’s not always possible to focus 100% on the racing as I have drivers from other teams knock at the door and ask me to box 25 because they want to buy a trailer!”

Moetefindt will continue to push the boundaries of innovation to new levels in 2018 and has ambitious plans to showcase its ground-breaking automatic suspension technology by securing a Nordschleife lap record for a car towing a trailer, with a professional driver behind the wheel.

It’s a feat that has never been attempted before, but if history is anything to go by, Moetefindt isn’t one to shirk a challenge. Watch this space...



Moetefindt
Tailor-made trucks and trailers

RACING NEWS

Photos: Steve Jones, Oliver Read, Gary Hawkins



Smith won Northern title in 2017

Smith back in National FF1600 with Oldfield

British Racing and Sports Car Club National Formula Ford 1600 race winner Josh Smith will return to the category next year with the Oldfield Motorsport team, and may tackle the Scottish championship as well.

Ex-MSA Formula racer Smith won the Northern title last season after switching from a Firman chassis to an Oldfield Van Diemen, and went on to win the final race of the National season.

Smith will now extend that partnership into next year and launch a title bid.

"We set a fairly strong example of what our capabilities are and I hope to follow that up next year," he said. "I'm really looking forward to it and I'm a bit car sick already!"

"The biggest issue [before moving team] was mechanical failures – I didn't have any at Oldfield and that puts you in a much better position."

Smith is eyeing a possible campaign in the Scottish series too.

"It would give me a lot of track time and maximises my opportunity to win a place on the Mazda Road to Indy Shootout," he added.

Another driver on the verge of signing for Oldfield is karting graduate Hugo Bentley-Ellis – winner of the 2016 X30 Senior class at the IAME International Finals. He has been testing with the team at both Donington Park and Silverstone in recent weeks ahead of a possible deal to join Oldfield for next year.

NEW HERITAGE FORMULA FORD SERIES LAUNCHES

Formula Fords made before 1993 will be able to enter

By Stefan Mackley

A new series that will only be open to Formula Ford cars manufactured before 1993 has been launched for next year.

Heritage Formula Ford has been created by SuperSeries and Champion of Brands organiser, James Beckett, and will be run in association with Jonathan Palmer's MotorSport Vision Racing (MSVR).

A Pre '93 class was created for the Walter Hayes Trophy at Silverstone – which Beckett also organises – earlier this month as a "toe in the water" to find out if there was any interest in the idea.

"The time is right I believe and it's a bit of a gap in the market," said Beckett.

"There will be a small number of races in 2018 with a growing potential for 2019 and beyond.

"I'm pretty confident we might end up with some good grids and I don't see

why we can't have a really good series in two or three years.

"This is something I'm pretty excited about."

Four rounds are provisionally due to take place in 2018 – some of which might be double-headers – at tracks such as Brands Hatch, Donington Park and Oulton Park.

Beckett also confirmed that his SuperSeries and Champion of Brands races will continue next year.

He said: "We need to just rework the SuperSeries but there's no need to have a concern [that it won't take place]."

Brian Soule, of Souley Motorsport, plans to run cars in the Heritage series next year. He said: "This is a great concept and I am really looking forward to running cars in Heritage Formula Ford next season. Having been told of plans by James Beckett and MSVR, I instantly said yes to becoming involved and pledged to sign cars up to race."

Equipe GTS and Pre '63 trackday at Goodwood

A rare chance to drive on the Goodwood circuit will kick off the Equipe GTS and Pre '63 series ahead of an expanded race calendar in 2018.

Equipe GTS has achieved large grids this year so organisers of this and its new sister, Pre '63 series, have decided to add a Goodwood trackday on March 5 prior to the new season.

"It will cover GTS and Pre '63 and will be a nice warm-up for the season," said series co-organiser John Pearson. "We will limit numbers because if you get too many, you don't get much track time."

The racing will then begin on April 7 at Silverstone with each weekend having at least one GTS and one Pre '63 race.

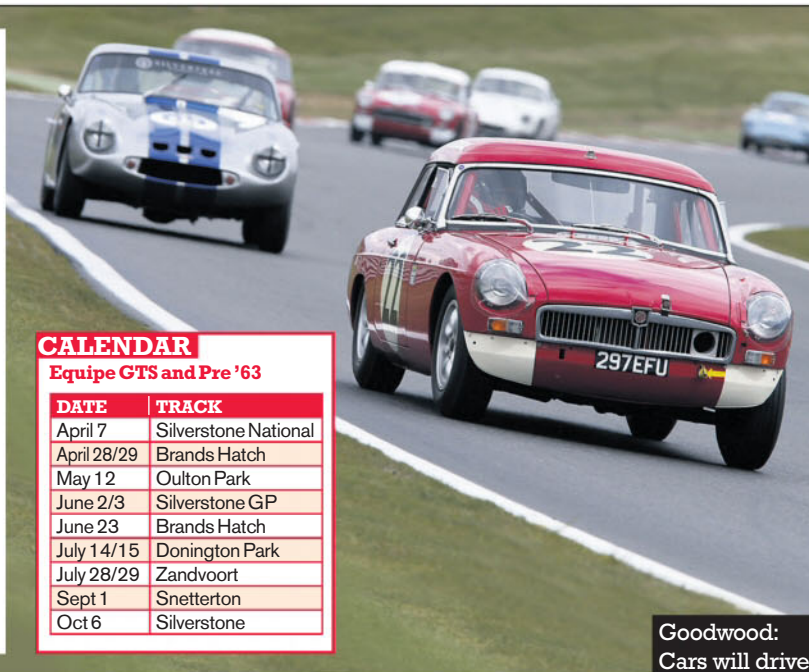
An additional ninth race weekend, a second visit to Brands Hatch, has also been added to the calendar.

"With the interest we've had for GTS

this year we thought we could carry an extra race meeting as well," added Pearson. "We have retained some of the really nice stuff like the Silverstone Grand Prix Circuit and a double-header at Brands Hatch. Zandvoort went down really well too so we will go back there."

The new-for-2017 Three Hour Relay race also features on the calendar, but will move venue from Silverstone to Donington Park.

"One of the big changes is we've announced the three-hours to be at Donington Park," said Pearson. "It's in the summer – last year we did it in late September – but the summer will be nicer because it's lighter in the evening. We thought if we could get 20 teams this year that would exceed our wildest dreams. But we ended up with 27 teams and everyone came away from it saying 'can we do it again?'"



Goodwood: Cars will drive

CALENDAR Equipe GTS and Pre '63

| DATE | TRACK |
|-------------|----------------------|
| April 7 | Silverstone National |
| April 28/29 | Brands Hatch |
| May 12 | Oulton Park |
| June 2/3 | Silverstone GP |
| June 23 | Brands Hatch |
| July 14/15 | Donington Park |
| July 28/29 | Zandvoort |
| Sept 1 | Snetterton |
| Oct 6 | Silverstone |



Maclennan (25) and Thorburn (50) both raced for Cliff Dempsey Racing in FF1600 series

Dempsey: "A lot of interest" in FF1600 from karters in Europe

Formula Ford 1600 team owner Cliff Dempsey believes more young karters are seeing the value of racing in the junior single-seater formula.

Dempsey's team, who finished second in the British Racing and Sports Car Club (BRSCC) National series with Neil Maclennan this year, tested karters Harrison Thomas and Nico Gruber earlier this month at Rockingham and Silverstone.

Both drivers could potentially join the team next year, and Dempsey believes it is a perfect proving ground for drivers who are new to cars.

"We have one deal complete with Jamie Thorburn, we're hoping to run four cars next year and we'd be very happy to have Harrison and Nico," said Dempsey.

"They have come from karting and they are learning. They have been getting used

to the H-pattern gearbox and with Nico we've been trying to get him over to left-foot braking.

"I've had a lot of interest from Europe and Italy as well as drivers from home [about racing next year]."

"People have realised instead of spending £250,000 [in other series] they can spend £55,000 and they are going to learn more anyway [in Formula Ford]."

Revised qualifying format to be introduced for 2018 Monoposto championship

The Monoposto championship will revise its qualifying format at double and triple-header rounds for next season, basing second and third race grids on fastest laps

in the previous race.

The series will continue to have a single qualifying session, and previously determined race two and three grids by the second and third fastest times set

by each driver.

"The problem we were finding was when someone had a bad qualifying and it's a double [or triple] header, it affects the whole weekend. We've tried to

counteract that," said series co-ordinator Rachel Lovett.

The same six venues from 2017 are expected to return next year, although in a reshuffled order.



New qualifying format for 2018

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HISTORICS

'McVicker took Cotswold win'
VSCC trial result, below



Photos: Paul Lawrence

DOWN THE PUB WITH

SLIM BORGUDD

Age: 71 Lives: Coventry
Former Formula 1 racer

He's UK-based
"I live in Coventry and I've spent more time in the UK than in Sweden. I started racing in 1968 in Formula Ford and then raced in Formula 3, touring cars, sports cars, trucks and Formula 3000, but not always in the best cars. But that's how it goes. In Formula 1 I did 15 races and drove for ATS and Tyrrell in 1981 and 1982. It should be the pinnacle of what you have done, but maybe not the best races I have had."

He scored an F1 point
"I'm proud of the world championship point I got at Silverstone in 1981. I started 21st and finished sixth in the ATS. For me, that was a big result given the equipment we were working with. I had a seventh in Rio with Tyrrell."

He was big in truck racing
"Truck racing was phenomenal. I don't think a lot of drivers understand how awesome they were to drive and how good the handling was. They were amazingly quick machines and there was fantastic competition and a really different format. You had a top speed limit of 100mph and so I probably learnt a lot about getting into and out of corners. That made it close racing. It was a fantastic era and we had 120,000 people at the Nurburgring."

Music was a big thing
"It's been a little bit of everything and I started playing drums in the 1960s with a group in Sweden and that continued. I set up a band and that turned into 'Made in Sweden' and then 'Solar Plexus'. We did a lot of sessions and among that work was ABBA. I knew Bjorn Ulvaeus pretty well and no one knew that those two guys and two girls were going to be so famous."

Now he prepares cars
"Now I have a team called Slim Racing and we prepare cars. I have now got involved in Formula Junior and historic racing as I used to drive a lot of the cars in the day and handling is my speciality. I try to get old cars to go faster! I'm working with Crispian Besley and his Cooper, which is a very nice car. I also run two 1983 Martini Formula 3 cars in Europe. I do all of the driver coaching and all the set-up work, trying to make the cars as efficient as possible."



Borgudd scored F1 point



FJunior's 2018 season will be a big one

FORMULA JUNIOR TO CELEBRATE 60 YEARS

Special display planned at the Autosport International Show

By Paul Lawrence

Formula Junior will celebrate its 60th birthday with a feature display of cars at Autosport International at the Birmingham NEC (January 11-14).

The HSCC will feature Formula Junior on its central historic racing display with six of the period single-seaters, one from each year of the category. Formula Junior was an

international race category for six seasons from 1958 to 1963 and the cars on display at the NEC will show how much race car design advanced in just that six-year period.

Formula Junior is the world's best-supported historic category with racing on five continents and over 300 active cars. It is for racing cars up to 1100cc, using production-based engines. Each and every car on the grid is original and an

amazing variety of chassis makes it an incredibly diverse category. The leading designs are from Lotus, Brabham and Lola, but up to 150 marques built Formula Juniors in period.

The 2018 season is a particularly special one for Formula Junior as the category's 60th year is also the final season of an unrivalled three-year Diamond Jubilee World Tour. The Tour will finally conclude at the

Silverstone Classic in July.

Duncan Rabagliati of the Formula Junior Historic Racing Association said: "2018 is also the 25th anniversary of the FJHRA and the race at Mallory Park in 1993 when FJHRA and HSCC first came together to save the Historic Formula Junior race series. It is truly fitting that we should both be celebrating the success of this great little Formula, 25 years later."



Lotus returned to Donington

Padmore handles Donington's special Lotus

Historic Formula One champion Nick Padmore tested a famous Lotus 77 at Donington Park last week, returning the car to a track with a special place in its history.

In May 1977, when the circuit re-opened, then track owner Tom Wheatcroft completed a celebration lap sitting on the

sidepod alongside Gunnar Nilsson. The moment was recreated by Tom's son Kevin when the track returned to service in 2010.

Padmore ran the car on behalf of owner Max Smith-Hilliard. "We hadn't used this car since Zolder in April so it was due for a run," said Padmore.

VSCC heads back to Donington Park

To mark the 80th anniversary of its first standalone race meeting, held at Donington Park on April 23, 1938, the VSCC will return to running a race meeting at the Leicestershire track next season (Sunday, June 24).

After a four-year absence, the VSCC will organise a Donington meeting as part of its six-event Formula Vintage Season. The VSCC will run four of its six meetings at venues managed by MotorSport Vision and the Donington event will be badged as the Formula Vintage Historic Festival.

The other five VSCC dates are Silverstone, April 21/22; Oulton Park, May 19; Cadwell Park, July 22; Mallory Park, August 11 and Snetterton, September 23.



The Gerry Marshall Trophy will run again on the Saturday evening

Racing line-up announced for Members' Meeting

The hour-long Gerry Marshall Trophy race for Group 1 Saloon Cars will again take centre stage at the Goodwood Members' Meeting, running in the dusk of the Saturday evening.

A total of 12 races will run on March 17/18 at the 76th Members' Meeting including the Moss Trophy for closed-cockpit GT cars in the spirit of the RAC TT races of 1960-1962, which is back after a three-year gap. Opening the racing on Saturday

will be a new race for the Ronnie Hoare Trophy. Named after Ford Maranello Concessionaires boss Colonel Ronnie Hoare, the race is for road-going sports and GT cars of a type raced between 1963 and 1966. Entries will include Ferrari 275 GTB/Cs, Porsche 911 and 904 Carrera GTs and Alfa Romeo Giulia TZ1s.

Meanwhile, the Varzi Trophy for sports-racing cars up to 1939 takes on a new title as the Caracciola Sportwagenrennen.

OBITUARY

Terry Drury

MN is saddened to report the death of Terry Drury after a short illness. The former BTCC team owner had focused on historic racing this season by entering a Ford Falcon for his son, Jack.

Drury started racing in the 1960s when working as a development engineer at Ford and he later built the famous Supervan, a modified Ford Transit powered by a 5-litre V8 engine.

He was a special saloon pioneer with big-engined Anglias and Lotus Cortinas and his race team later entered Ford GT40s and mounted a BTCC campaign with Alfa Romeo.

After a break from the sport he recently returned to paddocks with his sons Steven and Jack, and built the race-winning Falcon for Jack to race in 2017.

IN BRIEF



Beast of Turin to run in show

Beast to catwalk

The mighty 'Beast of Turin' will star at the London Classic Car Show at ExCel from February 15-18 by being driven on the event's Grand Avenue. The 107-year-old 28.5-litre land speed record Fiat, restored by Duncan Pittaway, will be one of 60 specials appearing on the automotive catwalk.

VSCC trials winner

William McVicker wrapped up the VSCC trials season recently with overall victory on the Cotswold Trial. On ever-muddier sections, McVicker guided his 1927 Austin 7 Chummy to the top award on the Prescott-based contest. George Gosling (Austin 7 Sports) headed a 20-strong field of novices on the over-subscribed event.

AMOC shuffle

The 2018 AMOC calendar will include standalone races for 50s Sports Cars, Intermarque Championship and Aston Martin GT Challenge. The Pre-War Team Challenge and St John Horsfall Trophy will also feature, but the Innes Ireland Cup will be replaced by the new Equipe Pre '63 series. Dates are Oulton Park (May 12), Brands Hatch (June 23), Donington Park (July 29), Snetterton (September 1) and Silverstone (October 6).

Minshaw's Jag

Jon Minshaw gave his newly acquired Silk Cut Jaguar XJR9 Group C car a run out at Donington Park last week with regular GT co-driver Phil Keen, prior to the start of a winter rebuild. "It finished Le Mans in 1988 with Danny Sullivan, Davy Jones and Price Cobb and then came back to the UK, having previously raced in the US in Castrol livery," said Minshaw, who this year finished second in British GT aboard a Barwell Motorsport Lamborghini.

FIA F2 back to UK

The Historic Formula 2 FIA International Series will have a five-event, 10-round season in 2018, including dates at Brands Hatch (May 26/27) and Silverstone (June 16/17). The season will start at Hockenheim in April at the event that honours the memory of Jim Clark, close to the 50th anniversary of his death at the German track.

Super Touring 2018

The HSCC has confirmed the schedule for the Super Touring Car Challenge for 2018, covering 12 races at six high-profile events. The dates are: Donington Park, May 4-6; Thruxton, June 2/3; Brands Hatch GP, June 30/July 1; Silverstone Classic, July 20-22; Oulton Park, August 25-27 and Knockhill, September 15/16.



Super Touring dates are out

RALLY NEWS

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, mcklein-imagedatabase.com, Red Bull

MAHONEN CRITICISES RALLY GB FOR BEING TOO LONG

FIA rally chief wants a return to shorter sprint-like events



Road sections were too long on Rally GB, says Mahonen

By David Evans

FIA rally director Jarmo Mahonen has criticised Wales Rally GB and other events in the World Rally Championship for being too long and not in-keeping with what the governing body wants from modern events.

Mahonen, who retires from the FIA at the end of the year, said the time had come to return to a more formulaic, standardised format for WRC rounds. The Finn said those favouring a return to the endurance element of the sport should seek it from the FIA's World Cup for Cross Country Rallies.

Mahonen told *Motorsport News*: "I'm sorry to say this, but in the UK, how long shall we allow it that the events dictate the format? In Wales we had a day of 140km [87 miles] and a long time [with no service] and on the first day, no service at all. I fully understand the reason behind it, Wales is coming with the money, but at our end, what shall we do, do we just accept it?"

"We have given freedom to the

organisers to come with their strengths and do the rallies as they would like to have it, but I have to say that we have failed. In some cases it works, in some cases it doesn't, but we need standardisation for the rallies."

Rally GB's use of a remote tyre fitting zone on the opening day of the event concerned Mahonen, who feels the service park has to be visited more often.

"I'm not in favour of remote services," said Mahonen. "These guys, the manufacturers, we have to remember we are building this championship for the manufacturers and when you go to the service park, the manufacturers are investing millions in the hospitality, but you go out in the morning and come back late in the evening. What can you do with the guests? This is why Hyundai has built 'Terminal 5' there in the service park. If you want to destroy that, it can be easily done, this is my personal view."

"Today's rallies should be compact and they need a heart and that heart is the service park,

where entertainment is offered. We started this centralised service in Finland because we know the city people, they don't go to forests, so we build the service for them to enjoy the atmosphere for the rally."

Mahonen was also critical of the length of road sections on some routes, once again he singled Britain out for disapproval. This year's Rally GB comprised a 922-mile route, of which 20.6 per cent was competitive. That's not enough, according to Mahonen.

He added: "The stage mileage should be 25 per cent of the total route, we see some of the events which are getting under or close to 20 per cent in the UK and in Sweden and this is touring, it's not rallying any more."

Rally GB route co-ordinator Andrew Kellitt is well acquainted with the Mahonen argument. He told *MN*: "I can completely see Jarmo's point, but the issue we have is one of a lack of a big piece of flat, hard-standing in the right area [for a service park]. We've tried basing the event in Buih Wells, which is closer to the stages and gets us the

right ratio of competitive to road miles, but there's not a very big population base there and the teams didn't want to stay in the area."

The biggest change advocated by Mahonen is the loss of long stages, which he feels have little relevance. "My personal thoughts about this are that you have [more] 10km [six-mile] stages," he said. "Then you have lots of stages generating lots of news for social media. You remember we talked about the 80km [50-mile] stage in Mexico last year? What happened in that stage? Nothing and the people switched off because they were bored."

"There's the argument for and against [endurance and long stages]. There are still people who think we need 600 stage miles. I say rallying has come through evolution, we can't go back to the old times. Rallying how we used to know it, it doesn't exist anymore. This is racing on gravel. Here if you lose 10 seconds on the first stage, it's done. The days when you could think: 'I'm going to attack on the second day...' these days don't exist. And these cars are not made for endurance."



Outgoing Mahonen: doesn't like remote service



Sweden was also singled out for road miles criticism

RALLYING AT 80: BOB BEAN IS STILL QUICK ON THE HISTORIC SCENE

PAGE 22



The Strength of Experience

speedline



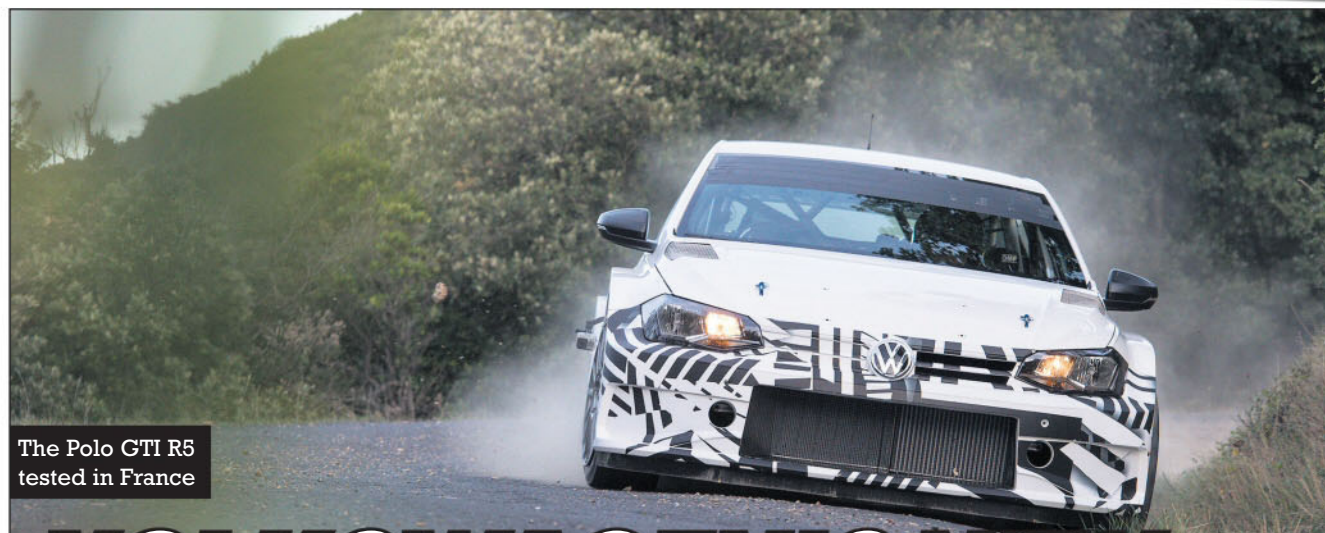
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"The R4 looked tidy and efficient"
 Prototype rally testing, p20



The Polo GTI R5 tested in France

VOLKSWAGEN'S NEW POLO R5 BREAKS COVER

Volkswagen's Polo GTI R5 has broken cover and started testing, completing three days of mixed-surface running in France earlier this month.

Volkswagen's test driver, Dieter Depping, and Skoda's WRC2 champion, Pontus Tidemand, drove the all-new Polo during the test, which reportedly ran without incident.

"A successful first test is a good sign and great motivation," said Volkswagen Motorsport director Sven Smeets. "After

the many hours and weeks spent working on our latest customer racing project on the computer, in the design process and in the workshop, the Polo GTI R5 can now finally show what it is capable of out on the road, and we can gain valuable data for the further development of the car."

Volkswagen took the Polo to the same test venue, in Fontjoncouse, it used for the roll-out test of its Polo R WRC in 2011. After a day on asphalt, the test switched to dirt.

In days two and three, Volkswagen put the Polo's suspension through its paces, monitoring the strain on the chassis and dampers on the rough gravel roads for which the region is well known.

"It is a special feeling to be back here, where the Polo embarked on its first gravel adventure roughly six years ago," said Volkswagen test driver Depping, who drove the Polo R WRC at its first test in 2011. "It is now about achieving the best possible

set-up for the new Polo GTI R5.

This first test was primarily about getting a lot of kilometres, in order to give the engineers as much data as possible. The R5 Polo is also very good, very quick and precise. I immediately felt right at home!"

The Polo GTI R5 will be available for the second half of next year's World Rally Championship, with VW offering the car to professional teams and drivers for domestic and international series.

World rally teams back the FIA's call to shuffle the calendar for 2018 and beyond

Team principals have echoed FIA rally director Jarmo Mahonen's calls for a change in the structure of the World Rally Championship calendar next season.

Mahonen was critical of the number of fans present at Rally

Australia earlier this month and said he wanted to see the season closing in Europe.

M-Sport team principal Malcolm Wilson agreed wholeheartedly, adding: "Jarmo's right, to be finishing the season in a completely

different time zone from where we've spent much of the year competing doesn't make sense.

"From a media and exposure perspective we need to be in central Europe for the final round. And don't get me wrong, I'm absolutely not saying this

because I want Rally GB to be the last round, it's not that at all – I don't mind which European event we finish with.

"And this is no slight on Rally Australia itself either. They run a very good rally, but it's just not the place to end the year."

Mikkelsen and Neuville to share an i20

Hyundai Motorsport will field a completely new team at this weekend's Monza Rally, where Andreas Mikkelsen will co-drive Thierry Neuville and Neuville will co-drive Mikkelsen.

The two drivers were both keen to start the Italian circuit event and when they couldn't decide who would drive, team principal Michel Nandan settled the argument by telling them they could share the single i20 WRC.

"It started as a bit of a joke," Nandan told MN. "I was telling them, maybe you have to go in the car together, but then they came back and said: 'Why not?' So I thought: 'Why not!' It will be a good thing, I'm sure it will be a lot of fun for them."

Neuville competed at Monza two years ago and admitted he was slightly concerned about half of

the route for the event, which runs from Friday to Sunday (December 3).

"It will be fine for the driving," he said, "but for the co-driving, I have never done this. I will call his pace notes and he mine, it's going to be interesting. I hope he doesn't make any mistakes!"

Mikkelsen's priority is to find out who will drive SS1.

"That's what we have to decide now," he told MN. "I don't know how we're going to do it. After that, we will drive a stage each – I'm looking forward to it. I think there will be a lot of laughing and some fun, it's a great way to end the season."

● British Rally Championship driver Rhys Yates will also drive a Ford Fiesta R5 at the event. Yates has, however, gone for a more conventional approach to the co-driver with WRC legend Denis Giraudet alongside.



Paddon won his local rally by more than nine minutes

Paddon crushes opposition on home turf

Hayden Paddon rounded out a tough season in style with a history-making win at last weekend's Rally New Zealand.

The Kiwi took the biggest ever victory on a round of his home championship, beating the best of the rest on the Tauranga event by more than nine minutes. On the way, he and co-driver, John Kennard, set stage records on six of the 12 North Island tests.

Driving his Hyundai AP4+ i20, run by his own Paddon Rallysport team, Paddon said: "It was great fun; a good, relaxed atmosphere

where everyone gets on with everyone. John and I enjoyed being back in the car together for this last event in New Zealand. It was an awesome weekend."

Paddon was joined at the rally by his Hyundai Motorsport colleagues, world championship co-driver Seb Marshall and WRC engineer Rui Soares.

"They couldn't help themselves," Paddon said. "Seb was busy valeting the car and helping with video and photos, and Rui was also supposed to be on holiday but wanted to help engineer the car."

GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

DAVID EVANS

"Jesus Christ Kris" doesn't tell you where to go!"



S stand up Kris Meeke. It's definitely an option. If the whole rallying thing falls through, stand up is definitely an option.

Meeke's Rally Mexico car park moment (he struggles with using the adjective 'magic' before it...) was – officially – the most memorable of the season. That was the word from the WRC Gala in Sydney last week.

Well, if that Derramadero diversion was the most memorable moment of the season, then the Northern Irishman's acceptance speech for the award was the most memorable of the WRC Gala.

Shane Jacobson was hosting the evening. He used to present Australian *Top Gear*, but is probably better known as Kenny from the film, Kenny.

Kenny's a film about a portable toilet rental company. And it's very funny. And so is he.

And so is Meeke.

Having just watched an onboard he could quite happily live without ever seeing again, Meeke took his place next to Jacobson and relaxed.

"It was a mistake rather than a magic moment," he said. "I still cringe every time I see that, but I think it's one that will live in the memory of the WRC for quite a while. Thanks to Paul for those wise words..."

Those wise words? I'll remind you, just as the C3 WRC dived through the hedge and into the car park, Nagle cut the notes and went route one.

"Jesus Christ Kris!"

Meeke continued: "He was a passenger just as much as me. None of us was in control and 'Jesus Christ Kris' doesn't tell you where to go! Anyway, sorry for the really long speech..."

"... I was just out to the toilets and I was standing next to a Finnish guy taking a pee and he said: 'That guy's really funny, but I can only understand 50 per cent of what he says.' I said: 'Don't worry, the other 50 per cent is pure sh*tte.'"

The place went mad and as Meeke exited the stage, Jacobson couldn't help but doff his hat.

"I'd like to thank my co-host..."

I'm a week late with this, but congratulations to WRC Promoter and Rally Australia for a great night out Down Under last week. Suited, booted and a glass of champagne in the shadow of Sydney Harbour Bridge felt a world away from the dirt, dust and tinnies of Coffs Harbour – but both sides of Australia's WRC round worked a treat.

And now, to the other matter for comment.

He's staying. Just as grateful as I am for the news that our champion will remain in place next season, I'm equally appreciative of an end to this drama. Two months ago, Ogier told me in no uncertain terms it wouldn't linger on until the end of the season. He'd had enough of that last year. No, this time, if a deal could be done, it would be done early.

In fairness, he beat last year's announcement by two whole weeks.

Regardless of the chronology, like I said, I'm delighted for Ogier and for M-Sport. There was a huge element of this year that was thrown together at the last minute.

The champ's preparations for the season ahead were well short of ideal, yet look what he and the team put together. Imagine what 2018 might hold with more solid foundations.

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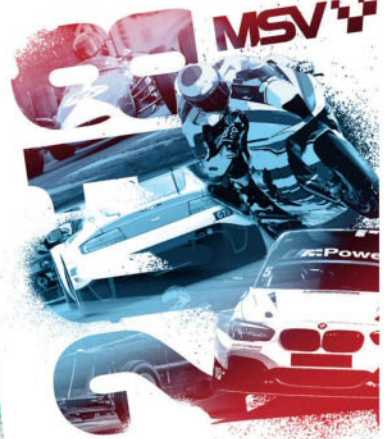


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RALLY NEWS

LOEB STARS ON RALLYE DU VAR IN CLASSIC PEUGEOT 306 MAXI

WRC legend and co-driver Daniel Elena return after 17-year break



Loeb came close to victory in 306 Maxi

By David Evans

Sebastien Loeb wound back the years at last weekend's Rallye du Var, pushing a 21-year-old Peugeot 306 Maxi to within an ace of victory in the south of France.

Loeb and co-driver Daniel Elena ultimately retired with an engine problem on the penultimate stage, but not before they turned in an astonishing performance in one of Peugeot's best-loved two-wheel-drive cars.

Third after Friday afternoon's loop

of three stages, the nine-time world champion moved to the front on Saturday's opener and stayed there for the next five stages. Loeb's hopes of a famous win on the Sainte-Maxime-based event went south when his 306 Maxi stopped in the 13th of 14 stages. He had just set his second scratch time on SS12 to close the gap to the leader to just 4.9 seconds.

"We managed to compete with the best in the Peugeot 306 Maxi," said Loeb. "It is a beautiful car, with good power and a lot of fun to drive. The feeling was very good, it was a great fight and Daniel and I were

very motivated to win the rally."

Elena amusingly added on social media: "We have no regrets, we gave it everything – even our pistons!"

Loeb has a special relationship with the Rallye du Var. He first competed there in 1999, retiring an FFSA-backed Citroen Saxo kit car with a blown engine. Twelve months on and he was back to take his first major win at the wheel of a factory Citroen Xsara kit car. In 2003, he shared a C2 S1600 for course car duties with his wife Severine co-driving. Five years on and they returned in the same car and finished

an astonishing third overall. The pair won Var in 2009 (C4 WRC) and 2014 (DS 3 WRC) and last weekend was Loeb and Elena's first attempt at the rally in 17 years.

Fellow French rally stars Gilles Panizzi and Francois Delecour also competed. Seven-time world rally winner Panizzi drove a Peugeot 208 T16 R5 on the all-asphalt event, but retired on Saturday morning with mechanical drama. Delecour wheeled an Aston Martin V8 Vantage GT4 with mixed fortunes, finishing second behind Romain Dumas' Porsche 911 GT3 in the GT class.

PLANET RALLY

FLAT-OUT WORLD NEWS

Son of Prada owner Lorenzo Bertelli returned to a rally car for the first time since Rally Argentina in April to guide his Ford Fiesta RS WRC to victory at the final Tour European Rally event of the season, the

Montalcino-based Tuscan Rewind. Giandomenico Basso had already taken the TER title on the previous round... Victory on his home event, the Rally of India, was enough for Gaurav Gill to seal his third Asia Pacific Rally Championship title for the MRF Skoda team last weekend. Gill was followed home by team-mate Ole Christian Veiby, who takes second place in his first season in the FIA regional series... **Gustavo Saba clinched the FIA CODASUR title at the Rally del Atlantico in Uruguay last weekend. The**

Paraguayan started the event one point ahead of Marcos Ligato in what would be a winner-takes-all battle. Saba led initially before hitting trouble, leaving his Argentine team-mate in the box seat for the title, only for Ligato to suffer mechanical problems on the second day. He slipped out of the points and left Saba the title... Triple European Rally champion Kajto Kajetanowicz will swap his Ford Fiesta R5 for a Ford Fiesta WRC for the first time at this weekend's Rally Barborka, based in the Polish capital of Warsaw.



Triple ERC champion Kajetanowicz will run a Fiesta WRC

Mini enters two cars for the Dakar

Mini has confirmed a two-pronged Dakar attack with the John Cooper Works Buggy being wheeled out alongside the conventional John Cooper Works Rally.

The Buggy is a rear-wheel-drive car which has been under development by the German X-raid team for the past couple of seasons. This new car will set Mini head-to-head with Peugeot's rear-drive 3008 DKR.

The French manufacturer has won the last two Dakar events, with Mini successful in South America for the four years prior to that.

Mini senior vice-president Sebastian Mackensen underlined the German manufacturers' commitment to Dakar, saying: "With these two cars we have the most powerful Mini family that ever raced at the Dakar."

Sven Quandt admitted his X-raid firm had been pushed to make two cars so different for the world's toughest rally: "This has been the biggest project in our company's history so far and we have worked extremely hard at it."

The Buggy is powered by the same three-litre diesel engine as the four-wheel-drive JCW Rally, generating 340bhp and 800Nm of torque. The Buggy's tubular steel frame is clothed in carbonfibre-reinforced plastic and Kevlar. The Buggy has been tested in Hungary and Morocco in recent months.

"During this time the Buggy never had to stop once due to a technical problem, which is really quite remarkable," said Quandt. "Despite all the euphoria, we must definitely not forget the Mini John Cooper Works Rally. There are tracks and types of terrain where an all-wheel drive has advantages. What is more, our car is extremely reliable."

The Rally features a new chassis construction including greater suspension travel and weight reductions. Mini will field seven cars for Dakar, with three Buggies driven by Mikko Hirvonen, Bryce Menzies and Yazeed Al-Rajhi. Four Mini John Cooper Works Rally cars will be used by Orlando Terranova, Jakub Przygonski, Nani Roma and Boris Garafulic.

The Dakar starts on January 6 in Lima, Peru.



ORECA's Toyota Etios R4 (above) was an interesting addition to the Sainte-Maxime event, with Stephane Sarrazin driving the all-new car as a second course car. Citroen's C3 R5 (above, right) ran in public for the first time at last weekend's Rallye du Var. Yoann Bonato drove the all-new C3 which ran as zero car without any problems.

Pirelli back to WRC with Junior deal

Pirelli's return to the World Rally Championship has been confirmed – with the Italian firm supporting the Junior WRC – for Ford Fiesta R2Ts – as well as selected drivers.

Pirelli has a long history of supporting junior drivers, which includes the Pirelli Star Driver scheme that gave Ott Tanak and Hayden Paddon their breaks, as well as the 2011/12 WRC Academy, which helped launch Craig Breen's career.

Pirelli's Terenzio Testoni said: "We're delighted to renew our association with the Junior World Rally

Championship, where previous winners on Pirelli tyres have included the current world champion, Sebastien Ogier.

"With identical cars and tyres, the Junior World Rally Championship is the ideal platform to put the spotlight purely on driving talent."

Next year's Junior WRC runs in Sweden, Corsica, Portugal, Finland and Turkey, with the crews competing for a top prize of a Ford Fiesta R5 car.

Pirelli is expected to back Kalle Rovanpera as well as other privateer drivers in WRC2.

RALLY NEWS

Photos: Jakob Ebrej

IN BRIEF

MN at Knockhill

Reigning champion Ian Woodhouse and Paul Rowland will be the first crew to start the Knockhill Stages Rally, a round of the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship for the first time this weekend (December 3). The only surprise in the top 10 is Chris West who starts sixth, despite leading this year's MN championship, and he's finished ahead of drivers seeded in front of him on both of the opening rounds of the championship at Oulton Park and Cadwell Park so far this year. The event has 46 entries.

Clio Williams

Sara Williams concluded her debut season in the Renault Clio Trophy France last weekend on the famous Rallye du Var, scoring an impressive class top 10 in her first full season of asphalt rallying abroad. Williams hasn't finished outside the top 10 on any event. She also sealed the ladies' class on the Saint-Maxime-based rally. The Clio Trophy France was won outright by Cedric Robert, who also won his class on the event.

Darrian return

Paul Culverwell gave his rebuilt Darrian T9 its first run since a huge accident on the Mini Epynt earlier this year, when he took 10th overall and a class win on the Hall Trophy at Blyton Park. "We hadn't even driven it down the road until we got to the venue," he said. Apart from a rear disc rubbing on a caliper on one stage, he had a trouble-free run.

Unlucky Birdie

Paul Bird retired from the lead on his first event in the Caribbean since 2015. After winning the precursor Rally Sprint Event, a watersplash led to clutch problems for the Ford Focus WRC driver from near Penrith. Jamaican Jeffrey Pantan (Focus WRC) went on to win the Barbados Winter Rally Festival. Robert Swann, who finished second on Rally Barbados earlier this year, also took second on this event in his Subaru Impreza S12B WRC.

MotoX rallying

Former motocross rider Bradley Howlett made his rallying debut on the Hall Trophy at Blyton, taking his Citroen C2 to a class win. "Although I had been in motocross for 20 years, I have always fancied having a go at rallying having followed my Dad's events, so I decided now was the time and really enjoyed it," he said. His father, Ben, and uncle, Simon, regularly rally Peugeot in Belgium.

FAI SPECIAL

Jim Clark Rally is hoping to return

RALLYING REACTS TO THE FATAL ACCIDENT INQUIRY

Where does the sport stand after key investigation?

By Jack Benyon

The rallying community has responded positively to the findings of Sheriff Maciver and his Fatal Accident Inquiry into the deaths on the 2013 Snowman Rally and the Jim Clark Rally in 2014.

The results of the inquiry are contained in a document of more than 100 pages, which has resulted in the rallies in question and those affected requesting time to digest the content before commenting at length.

Most of the Sheriff's findings and proposals have, or are, in the process of being addressed by the governing body, the Motor Sports Association, after it agreed to implement the 28 recommendations of the Scottish Government's Motorsport Event Safety Review in 2015.

The Sheriff's calls from the FAI include educating and preparing spectators better pre-event to understand the dangers of spectating on rallies, the need for prohibited area set-up plans, better recording of incidents on rallies and that spectator and event safety officers should receive training from the MSA, among others (see above right).

Robert Reid, who co-drove Richard Burns to the 2001 World Rally Championship, was on the MESR panel and attended the

FAI hearings as a member of the public, taking a keen interest into its findings.

"Something that I think people forgot during the FAI is that it wasn't there to apportion blame, it's there to understand what happened and help to put things in place so it doesn't happen again," said Reid. "From a rallying point of view, it has been picked to bits by lots of experts and I think it's come out of it well. The MSA has done pretty well with the work they've been doing on Rally Future [a safety campaign], and that's been well received. Generally I think it's very positive. The interesting thing now is to see how the sport deals with it and moves on."

The MSA has yet to issue a full response to the FAI but is expected to do so soon.

"We acknowledge the Sheriff's analysis of the circumstances leading up to each accident, in both cases arising in the context of events that were organised by what were stated to be experienced volunteers demonstrating the highest levels of dedication and responsibility," said an MSA spokesperson.

"At this stage, we require more time to fully consider the Sheriff's recommendations and we will offer our response as soon as we are able to do so. In the meantime, we wish to reiterate

our sincere sympathies to the victims' families."

With all investigations into the fatalities now complete, rallying has a chance to reset. With a number of inquiries into rally deaths in recent years, the sport has been reactionary in its need to change its rules to become safer. Now it has a chance to become precautionary as it aims to improve safety standards and work to avoid similar incidents occurring in the future.

"We should always aspire to be that one step ahead," said Neil Cross, the respected and pragmatic clerk of the course from the Nicky Grist Stages. "It's very encouraging. It's good it picked up on the fact that we already have started to get our house in order. We've now moved forward."

A major question arising from

the inquiry concerns the future of the Jim Clark and the Mull rallies.

While Mull wasn't investigated, it has been affected by the FAI, which took place during the same period that legislation in England was approved to transfer the power to grant a closed-road event a permit from the government to the MSA and local council. That has yet to happen in Scotland but, if it does, then the Mull and Jim Clark rallies should be able to run again providing they meet the MSA's criteria, and have the approval of local authorities.

Two acts of parliament already exist in Scotland for the Jim Clark Rally and Mull Rally to run on closed public roads. However, that wasn't sufficient for Mull to take place this year as the event was unable to obtain the requisite level of insurance cover.

The Jim Clark Rally organisers haven't given up hope of running an event on closed roads in 2018.

"We're looking forward," said Jim Clark Rally clerk of the course Russel Blood. "We're going to try and find a way to resolve the [current] insurance issue. The reason for wanting to run an event next year is because it's 50 years since Jim's death, so we'd like to do something."

"There's not time for the new act to be put through, we will be discussing it with the MSA and the Scottish Government. It's all

FAI CONCLUSIONS

- Spectators should be directed to safe areas via pre-event publicity
- Properly prepared plans for stage set-up should be made and given to marshals responsible for prohibited areas and safety car drivers
- At least one safety car should be assigned to check the prohibited areas are properly laid-out
- Yellow flag system should be reviewed
- Marshals should be clearly identifiable from the public
- The MSA considers training marshals for what to do when spectators end up on a rally stage
- The MSA safety delegate is an important role and the MSA should train these people accordingly
- Rally organisers must appoint spectator and event safety officers, who should be trained by the MSA

"Generally I think it's positive"

Robert Reid



'Bell and Radford
win in Lincolnshire'
Rally reports, p27



Photo: Chicane Media, chasingthecars.com

NEW PRIZE STRUCTURE FOR MSA ASPHALT CHAMPIONSHIP



Cheviot Stages has a date change

The returning MSA Asphalt Championship has outlined its prize structure for the 2018 season.

After taking a sabbatical in 2017, the championship is back next year with trips to Ireland, Belgium and the Isle of Man, as well as Otterburn and Epynt.

For drivers purchasing tyres from Protyre, the overall highest MSA Asphalt finisher will win four free tyres, while second and third place finishers will win two

tyres respectively. For the Historic class, the winner will receive two tyres and second place, one. The 1400 class offers four free tyres to the winner and two for second place.

Also in the 1400cc class, former World Rally Championship co-driver Nicky Grist will offer the winning co-driver and driver a £100 voucher each, but probably of more value will be his and a yet-to-be decided "top-level" driver

to give tuition before one of this year's rounds.

While the schedule does feature three rounds where travel by ferry is required, the championship has secured discounts with various ferry companies and added prizes for those using certain ferry firms to travel.

Jane Evans, Protyre MSA Asphalt Rally Championship co-ordinator, said: "We are humbled by the number of top

motorsport companies who have come forward to offer incentives and rewards to the revamped championship, and we'd like to extend our sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed to these generous overall and class awards."

● The Cheviot Stages over the Otterburn Military Training Area in Northumberland has moved one week later than its original intended 2018 date, now set for October 26/27.

Grizedale gets epic R2 battle and strong entry up front

This weekend's 30th anniversary Grizedale Stages Rally will feature a huge battle in the R2 class, with Tommi Meadows and Finlay Retson joining the fray.

Meadows, who is a finalist of the John Easson and MSA Young Driver of the Year Award, will enter having been given the chance by Swift Caravans boss Peter Smith. Smith supports Matt Edwards in the BRC and Meadows will drive Edwards' for-hire Ford Fiesta R2.

"I was expecting to go to watch after everything that happened this year," said Meadows, whose Ford Ka is

being rebuilt. "He [Smith] wants to help out young English drivers and I have to thank him. It's just a one-off then we'll see. The problem is when I drive it I'll want to go and get one..."

Meadows joins 2016 Junior 1000 Ecosse Challenge winner Retson, who has impressed in the BTRDA ST Trophy this year.

"We're doing Grizedale and we're hoping to do a few SRC rounds. It will be nice to get back out in the car," said Retson, who tested the car last month. "It took some getting used to but I think I adapted to it fairly quickly."

Retson and Meadows join Charlie Barlow (MN, November 22) and Peter Bennett (MN, November 15) in the class.

The front of the field is one of the most competitive the event has ever had, with BTRDA Gold Star champion Stephen Petch leading the way. He's followed by Paul Bird, the new Proton Iriz R5 of Ollie Mellors and Rally GB National winner Tom Preston. Connor McCloskey and Alan Carmichael are travelling from Northern Ireland to compete.

The Lake District event takes place on December 2.



Barlow is one of the Fiesta R2 drivers

Hill gambles on Fiesta R5 for Rockingham

William Hill will step up to an R5 car on this weekend's Rockingham Stages Rally.

Hill finished third in the B10 class in the BTRDA and won his category in the British Rally Championship on the Nicky Grist Stages in his first full year of gravel rallying in his Ford Fiesta R2.

Now Hill – joined by co-driver Richard Crozier – will drive the Ford Fiesta used by Elfyn



Pryce has driven Hill's car

Evans, Tom Cave and Osian Pryce in the BRC on the December 2/3 event.

"It's a bit of an interesting way to end the year and very exciting for ourselves," said Hill. "It'll be the first time competing in an R5 car and we have a short test before it to get used to it."

Of his plans for 2018, Hill added: "There's nothing confirmed. We're hoping for a year in the Junior BRC we're looking to see if we can make it feasible.

"A few longer events and recesses would be nice. It would be nice to have a couple of seasons at it. We're just trying to get everything together."

The Rockingham Stages has attracted a strong entry, despite not forming a round of the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship for the first time.



Photo: Jakob Ebrey

Junior British Rally Championship runners-up William Creighton (l) and Liam Regan (r) were given a special prize for sportsmanship at the BRC awards dinner last weekend in Manchester. At Rally GB, Creighton was giving a prize winner a passenger ride on the shakedown stage when an FIA scrutineer noticed the passenger didn't have FIA-homologated underwear and boots. Regan stripped off and gave his to the passenger. The BRC Awards Dinner was well attended and featured interviews with Ari Vatanen, Malcolm Wilson (c) and Nicky Grist among others.

GROUP NATIONAL EDITOR

JACK BENYON

"The mood is largely positive moving forward"



Positivity and the Fatal Accident Inquiry, certainly haven't gone hand-in-hand since the inquest has been ongoing. At best, rallying was getting a slap on the wrist. At worst it would be deemed too dangerous to continue.

Luckily it was the former, and on first reading, it looks like rallying can finally put this dark chapter to bed. Lives have been lost and that must never be forgotten. But, as is always the case when lives are lost in such a tragic fashion, the events must become a lesson on how it must never happen again. That's what the FAI was there for. Not to apportion blame. To find out how the deaths happened and if the loss of life could have been prevented.

I had two major thoughts after the release of the FAI. At a time when rallying is often misunderstood by the masses, or the people in the 'general' media who bring it to them, it was very refreshing to read the words of Sheriff Maciver, who has clearly immersed himself in rallying totally. It's clear from reading his recommendations that he understands the facets of a rally; how they are run, and how each one can differ through alternative organisational formats. Rallying is lucky someone so understanding – or at least willing to educate himself on the topic – was assigned to this FAI. The same can't be said of the general media reaction to the findings of the FAI, which were poor and often one-sided to the negative, in general, to say the least.

The other major thought is a broader rallying worry, despite the overriding mood from the FAI being positive for the sport moving forward.

The fact that things are being implemented to improve safety is fantastic and something we should all want to see. My worry is who is looking out for the organisers?

A 45-mile stage rally can take a year to organise, and the people doing it – in general at least – are volunteers who have day jobs. Piling on the paper work and adding more and more to an organiser's plate simply isn't going to work, especially at a time when the sport is facing a volunteer organiser and marshalling crisis.

If the best rally to spectate on in the UK – the R.A.C. Rally – has trouble with marshals, what's the hope for the rest?

Trust in organising rallies also needs to return. Many may fear helping on events because of the high-profile nature of the investigations into the Snowman and Jim Clark events, and that members of the organising team were called into courts because of it.

It's time for volunteers and organisers to come forward and suggest what can be done to help them speak up. We need more volunteers. Doubling their workload in the past two-three years isn't helping with that.

While striving for safety is a necessity, so is organising events, or there will be no one left to run the new super-safe events. Take heed.

Something needs to be done.

Perhaps MN and I can do something to help... Stay tuned.

AGREE/DISAGREE?
letters@motorsport-news.co.uk

INSIGHT: THE PLAN BEHIND R4

Remember talk about the new R4 formula... No? Well, **David Evans** has seen one first-hand

DEVELOPING RALLYING'S FOR



The Etios has p...
in testing, but w

Read this and you'll be able to sleep once more. Your worries will be over, your knowledge complete. I am, you see, about to explain R4.

Remember that? Thought not. Rallying's lost category has finally come to life.

Everybody knows about the other Rs: one, two, three and, of course, the World Rally Championship's second division formula: R5.

But R4? It looked to have been lost to the FIA's darkest recesses. There's a vague recollection of it being talked about, but did anything ever happen?

It did. And now things are really starting to happen with French preparation expert ORECA having built and started running the kit.

One of FIA president Jean Todt's objectives from the moment he arrived in the job has been to create a family of rallying. A global, sideways community, if you like. And for the last few years FIA rally director Jarmo Mahonen has been trying to fathom how one size can possibly fit all. How Asian priorities can work in Africa or whether the deserts of the Middle East can find the same page as Europe.

The foundation of bringing these disparate series together has to be a workable common car. It was hoped R5 could be that category, but the rising cost and geographical challenge presented by the FIA's further-flung regional rally championships have created an imbalance; Europe has no shortage of Ford Fiesta or Skoda Fabia R5s, but head south, east or west and it's a different story. Servicing such a car outside of Europe is complicated.

The answer, it seemed, lay in R4 regulations penned in the summer of 2015. The plan was a simple one: a single kit of parts that would – within reason – fit cars across the earth's four corners. Such a kit-fitted car would put the world, at the FIA's sub-WRC level, on a level playing field and give a common set of technical regulations.

On top of the regions, there's the desire to go one step further down the pyramid, with R4 aimed as a realistic platform for domestic series. This is up to the local governing bodies, but Spain has already sanctioned an R4 kit-fitted car. And South America – an area that already has experience of homologation specials in the shape of the 'Maxi' car, which takes an engine and running gear from one

car and fits it to something else. The key to the job is making sure the kit is slotted into the donor car in the right fashion, which is why the local governing body has the final scrutineering and homologating sign-off.

On FIA-headed paper all of that made complete sense. Now, with an ORECA-baked pudding ready, the proof will come in the eating.

The FIA made ORECA the single supplier of R4 kits at the start of the season and since then the firm has been working on its kit for the masses. Through the autumn, ex-Subaru World Rally Team driver and Toyota endurance star Stephane Sarrazin has tested the car on both gravel and asphalt.

Arriving at the test north of Gap, in the heart of Monte country, my first sight of R4 comes between the trees heading up a valley with Sarrazin hard on the throttle in third, fourth and fifth. Out of sight, only the noise remains. Back into view; down the 'box, flick of the handbrake and it's on its way back from where it came. As a snapshot, it looked efficient and predictable.

"It is a great car," says Sarrazin. "It's very reactive and it is efficient on gravel and asphalt."

Pulling the FIA's plan together

has been the job of Matthieu Bassou, formerly Craig Breen's engineer at Citroen. Bassou is a man of thoroughly cheerful disposition, but you get the impression that his patience has been tested through the development process. Making one car is stressful enough. But making one that fits, well, what does it fit?

"The kit is designed for anything from a Fiat 500 to a Subaru," Bassou says. "The parts are all common."

Now, I'm not the most technically minded of hacks, but even I know a Subaru of any flavour is usually longer than a Fiat 500.

Bassou knows where I'm going. "We have four different lengths of propshaft," he says, "but everything else is common."

Everything else being the Peugeot-sourced 1600cc turbocharged engine, transmission (differential and driveshafts are commonly sized); suspension cradles and triangles; hub carriers; steering rack; brake discs and calipers, fuel tank and suspension mountings.

That, and a load of guides on fitting that kit into whatever you fancy, is what you get for €108,000 [£95,800].

Once you've created your car, you then get your local governing body to homologate it for you and you're good to go.

"The very first goal of the FIA," says Bassou, "was to have more cars out of Europe in the regional championship. If you go to Argentina and Mexico, you see there's only 25 cars in their WRC rounds and that's not so nice. The FIA wanted to give local drivers the opportunity to build the car locally while following FIA guidelines. For example, the safety in these cars will be the same as in World Rally Cars."

"We have tried to build our test car through the eyes of the tuners who will be selling them to the customers. We have tried to find any difficulties, to understand any problems before they have them. We want to hold the hand of the tuners who buy the kits, we have to make sure we get the first cars right. There are areas of the cars which are free, for example the tuners decide on their own suspension supplier and they have to decide on the interior of the car and the roll cage. But, like I said, we want to work with the people

building these cars

The concept seen straightforward and something would be made by outfits such as CAI – the primary problem is a bewildering array of parts available to you; the road-going machine between the extremes of a Fiat 500.

The key to getting ground now is making providing a precedent sure the cars get to can't sell direct to you does it want to. The professional teams build and sell the cars. Find a team buying and Bassou reckon of scale argument cost of a complete car around €160,000 [£130,000].

The other opening is for local importers. "If Volvo wanted



"We must get the cars right"

Matthieu

GOTTEN CONCEPT



Stephane Sarrazin (below, left) has done much of the development on the new R4 formula car

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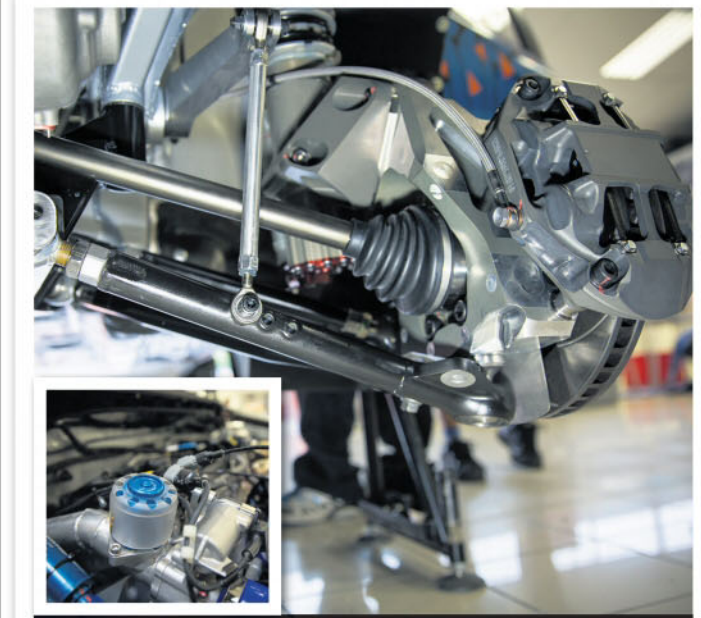
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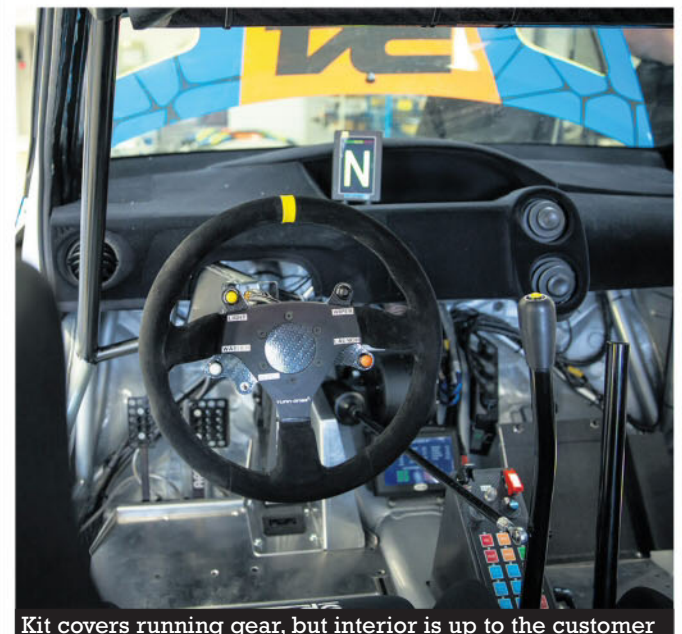
would be complicated,” he says, “but now it’s very much more straightforward. They can buy this kit, fit it to one of their cars and they have their own rally team.”
I’ll admit, I’m still a little confused – partly by the concept of Volvo sanctioning a Peugeot-engined rally car. And a bit more by what exactly Sarrazin’s been testing. It’s a debadged, ORECA-liveried mystery. “It’s an Etios,” says Bassou. Ah... He fills in the gaps. “It’s a Toyota that’s sold in India and South America. But that’s the point, it doesn’t matter what it is. It’s really a generic car.”
I’m also slightly confused why you would spend more on a car that’s half-a-second slower per kilometre than a second-hand R5 car?
“We’re not competing against R5,” he says. “We know R5 is quicker, but this is the perfect step from R2 or R3. The engine in our car is €10,000 [£8,900] compared with €40,000 [£35,500] for an R5 engine. The running cost is roughly half for our car at around €35 [£31] per kilometre, it uses 98-octane unleaded pump fuel and it will run for 5000 kilometres without a re-prep.”
As I type those words, I do so in full knowledge that it will prompt a flood of calls from R5 teams willing to

question those numbers...
So far, the ORECA test car has run for around half that number and it still looks and sounds factory fresh. Reliability and longevity of the sort Bassou is talking, at the cost he is quoting would make R4 an entirely viable proposition in the Middle East, Asia-Pacific, Africa and the Americas also.
You won’t see them in the WRC in Europe though. The FIA has sanctioned their world championship use in Mexico, Argentina and Australia.
In Britain, Bassou confirms discussions have taken place with British Rally Championship officials, but there’s still no decision on whether R4 will get a UK green light. Understandably, folk are keen to stand back and watch for a while.
Bassou says: “We already have two orders, one is from Argentina and the other’s come from Spain, where the governing body has already sanctioned and signed off on R4. I can’t really see the car being used on European WRC rounds before 2020, but for now the focus is outside of Europe. But when the cars are ready [for WRC] then why not make this the car for the Junior World Rally Championship?”
“The cars aren’t as quick as R5,

they will be simple and straightforward to set-up and, of course, they will give good four-wheel-drive experience. As well as that, we will have stability from one season to the next.
“We are the only ones who make it [the kit], so we know what it’s like and it will stay like this for all the years – there won’t be any performance jokers, which makes it even better for privateers: the car will stay the same in terms of performance and cost.”
ORECA’s targeting sales of 15 kits for the next four years, so it’s not about to take over the world.
Sensing that I may still not be fully convinced, Bassou reaches for the Group N argument.
“Look,” he says, “at countries like Estonia where the Group N Subaru and Mitsubishi cars were so popular. These cars are getting too old now, and what replaces them? There’s a lot of these young guys who want to build their own car, but they can’t.”
Or they couldn’t.
“And now they can. The R4 car is the only option for these drivers and it’s just those sort of young drivers that we want to bring into this category. As we’ve shown, these cars will be cheaper than R5 cars and they will offer the chance



Brakes are part of R4 kit, as is the Peugeot engine (inset)



Kit covers running gear, but interior is up to the customer

of bridging the gap from a two-wheel-drive R2 or R3 rally car.”
What the FIA and ORECA needs now is teams around the world to step forward, embrace the initiative and bring their national governing body along with them.
There’s definitely a market for a sub-R5 four-wheel-drive Group N replacement. I’m just not sure it’s a car costing upwards of £140,000, regardless of the reduced running costs and pump fuel.
This is not an argument that’s new to Bassou.
“The FIA set the pricing structure for the parts,” he says quietly.
I understand the concept. I understand the FIA’s need to be able to take the kit around the world and make sure it works just as well in an Indian Toyota Etios as it would in a British Renault Clio.
The FIA’s concept is laudable and has legs for certain markets, but it’s going to take a reasonable leap of faith, not to mention a common interpretation of FIA regulations from scrutineers from Delhi to Daventry, to get it off the ground.
Mahonen’s struggling to see what’s not to like about R4.
He says: “We have R1 which costs €25,000 [£22,200] and [the] safety [features] is 40 per cent of that cost.

R2 – who the hell wants to drive those cars? And then it’s R3, which is €100,000 [£88,700] for a two-wheel-drive Tarmac car! R4 makes sense for the cost.”
Mahonen has already come up against some resistance from current manufacturers.
“They are against R4 because they don’t want you and I to take their car and start to compete against them,” he says. Indeed, the idea of buying an i20 and fitting it with an R4 kit might come across as a bit odd.
“We have to take the manufacturers out of this,” says Mahonen. “It’s not for them. When you buy a car from your local dealer and look at the receipt, it doesn’t say you can’t use your car for motorsport. I’m hopeful that it works, but let’s see. The demand is quite good from the governing bodies to look into this.”
ORECA’s Etios R4 ran as zero car at Rallye du Var last weekend, so it’s up and running in public already. Now we just need folk to grasp the concept of running pretty much whatever they fancy, and national governing bodies to play ball.
Once we get there, I’m sure I’m not the only one who’s taken by the prospect of a four-wheel-drive, 270bhp Fiat 500... ■

INTERVIEW: BOB BEAN

Photos: Paul Lawrence



Bean is an ace in a Lotus Cortina

HISTORIC RALLYING'S ELDER STATESMAN

In the close-knit fraternity of historic rallying, Bob Bean is a figurehead. By Paul Lawrence

In equal part a proper gentleman and a fierce competitor, he's been rallying for over 55 years and will mark his 80th birthday next March. But the Yorkshireman is not for slowing down or stopping any time soon. It all started in 1960. "I'd been messing about in cars for a while and there was a rally called the Yorkshire Rally running and I thought 'I'd love to do something like that,'" he says. "So I got an entry and we started in Ilkley market place. It was a road rally with people like Peter Procter and Pat Moss and it snowed like hell. It went all through Friday night and finished on Saturday afternoon and three of us were in a Hillman Minx. I think we finished 29th overall. I'd not got a clue but I was hooked from that point."

Bean was soon competing regularly on road rallies, usually in Fords, and gradually migrated across to special stage rallies into the 1970s. He took

eight overall wins on *Motoring News* road rallies and another eight podiums at the height of the road rally boom.

In the early 1970s he did the hugely competitive Escort Mexico Challenge: "I believe I was the first person to win a round of the Mexico championship, the Mini Miglia Road Rally, which was also an MN round. I won it three times in a row in all."

However, by then he'd already been successful on special stages as well. "I did the RAC Rally many times, probably more than 30 times," he says. "My best finish was in 1968 in my Cortina GT when we did 92 stages, with 17 stages in Yorkshire and I was fastest on 12 of them."

On stage times he finished third overall, but a late change of engine prompted an issue when log books were checked at documentation and clouded the result.

"I did the World Cup Rally in 1974 with Eric Jackson in a Mk1 Escort," he adds. "That was a hell of an adventure and the toughest rally I'd



Bob Bean has rallied for 55 years

ever done as we crossed the Sahara Desert twice. Shekhar Mehta saw that we'd done well and asked if I'd like to share a works Datsun with him and we finished third in Morocco."

For a Yorkshire painter and decorator it was a huge achievement. However, back home the Gulf London Rally of the late 1960s was

one of the hardest events. "It just kept going and going with no sleep and no food," he says. "We finished ninth overall and first private entrant. I do like the longer events."

Although Bob has rallied something in every one of his 58 years in the sport, it nearly all came to an end in the late 1970s.

"I had a bad road accident in France while on holiday when I was stood in front of the car when a mobile crane ran into it," he says. "There's a lot of steel in one of my legs!"

He was fortunate not to lose the leg, such was the severity of the injury. "It was a slow recovery. I didn't do much for three years, but I rallied an automatic Granada and came second on the Mini Miglia."

In 1977, co-driven by Nigel Raeburn, he won the Tour of Mull. Sadly, almost 40 years later to the day, he was at Raeburn's funeral for a poignant reminder of the passing of four decades. "That was a fantastic rally to win and Nigel did a great job."

For the last 20 years Bob has been

active in historics and usually in a Lotus Cortina, where he has found a place as a Category 1 pacesetter and a hugely popular member of the historic rallying community. The car was re-shelled this summer in time for the recent Roger Albert Clark Rally when he took Category 1 victory in an impressive 23rd place overall. Now classing himself as semi-retired from the building trade, Bob still renovates period properties and also does a bit of farming by breeding highland cattle from his base near Cleckheaton, Yorkshire, supported as ever by his wife, Jenny.

As his 80th birthday approaches, there is absolutely no talk of stopping. After all, the fresh Lotus Cortina is but one rally old and the plan is that it will be used regularly in 2018. "I've done hundreds and hundreds of rallies," admits Bob, although he has never bothered to stop and count. "I love the competition and I don't just go for the ride. I hope I can keep going and I've no plans to stop!" ■

WHAT OTHER PEOPLE THINK

Steve Magson (fellow Yorkshire rally driver)

"Bob is a gentleman and an inspiration to all who compete against him: always cheerful and happy to see you. Bob is still quick and it seems he has not lost any of his enthusiasm."

Simon Wallis (Lotus Cortina rival)

"He's an amazing competitor to rally against. He's a total gentleman with unbelievable pace. Long may he continue!"

Malcolm Smithson (regular co-driver)

"We've been rallying together

since 2006. He's an absolute gentleman and he never has a bad word to say about anyone. Every rally is an adventure and we do have fun in the car. He's still on it and knows exactly what he's doing in the car. Rallying is in his bones. It all happens with thanks to John Gregson from King Street Motors and Mark Boulton, along with lots of support from friends and volunteers."

Graham Wild (co-driver)

"I've known Bob since I first started in motorsport as a teenager and what can you say about him: the man is an icon!"

Of the few rallies that I've done with Bob, one particular event stands out in my memory.

"I was lucky enough to navigate for Bob in 1999 on the Network Q. I well remember a dark and foggy Resolven stage: the organiser-issued Bjorn Waldegard notes and they were far too detailed for our Group N Skoda Felicia, and most of the bends didn't really exist to us. It quickly became obvious that the notes were pretty useless to us as I could neither feel nor see the faster bends in the fog. So Bob told me to just call anything rated over a six!

"I spent the rest of the 29-mile

stage flicking the pages for anything bad and watching him catch and pass numerous cars: I think about five if memory serves, and all in virtually zero vision. He put the fear of God into a French crew we passed, who couldn't believe that anyone could drive so fast in those conditions. The car was never in a straight line, even on the straights! Bob had the car constantly dancing and twitching to find the track edges and mostly flat in fifth!

"I'd always known Bob's reputation in fog, but that day I had a real lesson in car control that I'll never forget."



Bean also competes in a Mk1 Ford Escort, alongside Smithson

CLIO MEMORIES: PAUL RIVETT

Photos: LAT, Jakob Ebrej

Paul Rivett celebrated 200 Clio races this year. Here are his most memorable ones. By **Stephen Lickorish**

MR CLIO CUP'S BEST RACES



Forty-seven wins, 113 podiums and three championships. Paul Rivett has certainly achieved a lot in his time in the Renault UK Clio Cup. At Silverstone this year he celebrated 200 races in the category after making his debut way back in 2001.

And, despite spending such a long time in the series, he is enjoying it as much as ever.

"I'm 40 next year and I wasn't expecting to still be here – I thought I would've moved up through the ranks or retired," Rivett says. "But I'm still here and I've no plans of quitting any time soon. "It's a championship that's such good value for money and there's nothing better at the top of UK motorsport. As well as value, it's such close racing and a friendly environment." So here are Rivett's best – and worst – races from his Clio Cup career so far.



Rivett (1) won crucial Brands Hatch finale

A vital win in an exciting title showdown: Brands Hatch 2011

Rivett won the title in 2002 and 2004 but on both of those occasions he had secured the crown before the final race of the year. That was not the case when he won his third championship crown, however, back in 2011.

But Rivett proved he could handle the pressure and secured a vital win to seal

his hat-trick of title glories.

"I think it could've gone three ways and the main person I was up against was Aron Smith [now in British Touring Cars]," says Rivett. "Not only did I win the race but I set the fastest lap and a new lap record."

"It was one of those races where anything could've happened. Something nearly

always happens in the last race of the season and I avoided all the chaos and came through.

"I was just so focused and everyone else was getting quite nervous before the race start except for me. I was cool and calm and said 'don't worry we are going to win it.'"

He did just that, beating Smith by eight points.

A landmark victory: Silverstone 2017

Silverstone was always going to be a special weekend for Rivett this year as race two in Northamptonshire marked his 200th race in Clios. He was determined to celebrate that occasion in style, but was aware it wouldn't be easy.

"We knew that Mike [Bushell, 2017 champion] had been in great form this year," says Rivett. "He was up at the front and pulled away. But I managed to track him down – it's so hard to pull away because of the long straights at Silverstone and we just got in the tow."

Not only did Rivett close in on Bushell, he managed to pass his



Rivett won in his 200th Clio Cup race at Silverstone this year

rival at Brooklands to grab the lead and – more importantly – stay there for a fairytale victory.

"It was the only race I won this year and for it to be the 200th

couldn't have been better – you couldn't make it up," he says. "To be given a race suit by Renault and a cake was special too."



Rivett marked himself as a future Clio champion with victory in his first race

A very impressive first race: Brands Hatch GP 2001

Right from the very start of his Clio Cup career, it was clear that Rivett was a natural when it came to driving the French hatchbacks. He arrived in the series in 2001 after a spell racing in America and already looked like a veteran, winning his very first race, at Brands Hatch.

"Tim Mullen was on pole

and Tim and I had a great race," recalls Rivett.

"I passed him about a third of the way into the race and didn't look back from there.

"It was amazing, I didn't realise quite what that meant at the time. I remember the week afterwards getting a tyre fitted on my car and giving

my name and they said 'are you the guy that won the Clio race at the weekend?'

"Only a handful of people have won their first Clio race and that makes it very special. We raced for the championship [in 2001] but I had a few DNFs that dropped us down to third or fourth."

A great recovery: Silverstone 2002

Rivett has a reputation for being able to fight through the Clio field when something goes wrong.

He gets stuck in and very often claws his way back up to the front. But the second race at Silverstone in 2002 has to be one of his greatest recovery drives.

"I got involved in an incident on the first lap in the Maggots/Becketts complex and ended up going all the way back to 18th place," Rivett remembers. "I saw a great line of cars in front of me and thought 'I've got some work to do'. I got my head down and got on with it. I passed car after



Rivett (1) passed Kirkaldy on the final lap to take the win

car and on the last lap I came across Andrew Kirkaldy and he made a mistake and I passed him to take the win. He saw I was coming and had a lock-up on the brakes. "I've had some great drives

through the pack but that was something very special. I think I was leading the championship at the time and I went on to win it. That race showed how hungry and determined I was."



Rivett's car didn't stay like this for long

And one definitely worth forgetting: Donington Park 2008

When you have experienced 200 races in a category, there are always going to be some that are best forgotten. And the first race at Donington Park in 2008 was certainly one of those for Rivett.

"I had been involved in an incident at the start of the race and I dropped back down the order to eighth,"

he recalls. Rivett set about reclaiming some of his lost ground when he experienced an "almighty whack" on the back straight.

"I spun 270 degrees and hit the barriers by the Dunlop bridge," he says. "It completely totalled the car. There was a door lying on the floor and it cracked the engine block in

eight places. It was an unbelievably massive shunt."

Rivett didn't suffer any serious injuries – "I had a badly bruised foot and I was just sore all over" – but what did suffer was his title bid. Unable to contest the second race, it put him on the back foot and ultimately he just lost out to Ben Winrow.

CONGRATULATIONS

TO DAN CLARK ON WINNING THE 2017 SUPER KART CHAMPIONSHIP

Dan had amazing support this year and wanted to thank the following people:

I want to thank my family and team for supporting me, especially my mam and dad and my girlfriend Elby, as well as my mechanic and best mate Chris Lapit, and John Riley – who is team manager and builds our engines. I would also like to thank my sponsors Borewell (Andrew Bell), S. Connor Contractors (Steve Connor), S F Racewear for the leathers, China Drum (Adam Lee), Playskool Motorsport (Luke Algar), Harvey Dyno (Dave Harvey) and Wiwa (Manfred Whitten Borne).



FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE MY CLARK MOTORSPORT FACEBOOK PAGE

CONGRATULATIONS

TO EWAN TINDALL ON A DOMINANT SEASON

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A RISING STAR OF RALLYING



EWAN WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING PEOPLE: CO-DRIVER - PAUL HUDSON, TEAM BOSS - MAX TINDALL
NO1 MECHANIC - SIMON HEWITT AND HIS MUM AND DAD FOR THEIR CONTINUED SUPPORT

INSIGHT: A YEAR IN RACING

Photos: Gary Hawkins, Jakob Ebrey, Richard Styles, Mick Walker, Kayleigh Wood

How tough is the first year of club racing? Our man **Rob Ladbroke** shares all

5 THINGS YOU LEARN FROM A YEAR OF CLUB RACING

How time flies when you're having fun... Or stress... Or generally blundering about in a

clueless fashion.

This year has been a bit of a blur, and my biggest ever. After a decade of writing about this sport I finally plucked up the courage, and

finances, to have a crack myself. I've contested six Ford Puma Cup rounds this year, which run with the Classic Sports Car Club, and I've finished the year in much different shape to the way I started it.

I'd done some sporadic racing before, but nothing since 2011, so was essentially a novice again at the first Puma round at Snetterton. Plus this was the

first time I've been involved in the planning, purchase and execution of a race programme, which is just as complex as it sounds.

After doing a one-off in Ford Racing UK's Puma at Donington Park last year alongside my friend, and driver coach, Hamish Brandon, we decided to buy our own car for this year from series frontrunner Luke Johnson.

'Penny', as she was christened by me almost before we even loaded her into the truck, was run all year by Rob Sims Racing and bedecked in Brandon's PandaRacing.com business livery.

It's been quite an adventure, on many different levels.

So, for those of you wondering what a first racing season is actually like, here's the five biggest lessons I've learned from mine.

Podium at Brands was a big reward

1: PLANS GO WRONG, QUITE A LOT

The winter is exciting. It's when you do all your planning and map the entire season out. You work out every logistic, expense and technical aspect. Then you may as well just throw that plan away.

Going with the flow is part of club racing. For example: round one at Snetterton. We'd bought our car, but also recruited former Mini racer Jon Attard to race a

second, which Rob Sims and chief engineer Darren Crocker built from scratch in just over a week.

We get two cars to Norfolk, when Attard's engine expires terminally after just three laps of testing. A spare is sourced from eBay, but Brandon and I give up some of our testing so Attard can also get a feel for the Puma. My plan was to get at least 90

minutes of testing before the first race... I got about 35. Three laps into the year, and already the plan was changed.

Or take Castle Combe in August. I was due to test, but an impending *MN* print deadline meant I couldn't. That led to me replacing the physical test with a simulator one and heading to a track on race day essentially

blind to what it was like in real life.

Regardless, Brandon put the car on pole, just before a clutch problem developed and damaged the crankshaft too. Engine gone, and we spent the race sat on the spectator bank at Camp Corner cheering Attard on.

No matter how solid your plan is, motorsport has a funny way of keeping you on your toes...



Two fresh cars at Snetterton quickly became one, shared

2: ACTUALLY LOOK WHERE YOU'RE GOING



Eye-tracking at iZone led to a mentality breakthrough

The biggest thing I took from this year was that previously I was using my eyes all wrong.

For the first two rounds I lagged behind Brandon, mostly as I was staring too hard at braking points and the apex of corners.

A trip to iZone Driver Performance was a breakthrough. Coach Neil Riddiford hooked me up to their

digital eye-tracking system, giving me a physical demonstration of where I should be looking when racing, opposed to what I was doing.

Looking as far ahead as possible transformed my driving, and my mentality. For the rest of the year I was within a second or so of Brandon, and that gap came down to a few tenths in the Brands Hatch

finale. To the point when he even called me "a totally different driver to last year".

Obviously, seat time helps, but I hadn't exactly been spoiled with that either. We tested before each race, but as I was sharing a car I only ever got half the track time my team-mate Attard did, and was often playing catch-up each time I got in the car.

However, remembering the simple rules of driving with your eyes in the right place meant I got up to speed much faster. Sims' tip of 'driving with your fingertips' – where you only hold the wheel very lightly instead of white-knuckle squeezing it – also helped me feel the chassis a lot more and made me more comfortable with the car moving around at speed.

3: LISTEN TO EVERYTHING

Don't ever think you know it all, or even that you know nothing at all...

By working with Brandon and comparing Racelogic data with multiple winner Attard, I could fill in the gaps with my driving and erase a lot of silly mistakes I made early on.

Extra trips to iZone also helped me better understand about finding the line of least resistance through corners – especially crucial to

carrying speed in the world of low-powered, front-wheel-drive cars.

I was rather coddled on set-up this year. Years of FWD experience meant Sims and Crocker knew what they were doing, even if the Pumas were new to them.

The cars have limited adjustability, but small suspension tweaks can make a world of difference. The sound of the tyres screeching or the

slightest bumps may seem white noise, but for engineers they're key signals for possible changes.

I caught a faint knocking sound from the rear at one point through Clearways at Brands and figured I'd mention it. It caught a failed rear wheel bearing before it could do any additional damage.

Your ears can be very useful tools in a race car.

5: LEARN TO TRUST YOURSELF AND YOUR ABILITY

Let's tackle a tricky issue here – anxiety is a b**ch!

I know a lot of drivers that suffer from pre-race nerves, and each reacts differently. As a journo, you know who to leave alone before a race – they're usually the one with the windows rolled up tight or hidden away in the back of a truck.

It's not a sign of weakness, just a natural reaction to putting yourself into a potentially dangerous situation, which motorsport can be.

For me, anxiety was a big battle at times. Once in the car, I'm fine and raring to go. But it can be a mental battle to just get in it.

After my Donington crash in 2016 my nerves went into overdrive there this year – constant pacing, unease and a horrible tickle in your throat that makes you feel like heaving – I had to put up with the lot.

I learned to control all of this through a few tricks.

Golfing legend Jack Nicklaus once said that "concentration is a fine antidote to anxiety", and he was entirely right.

Doing visualisation laps in the collecting area passed the time, calmed the nerves and acted as



Working with a great team helps the nerves... a bit

a mental warm-up. Controlled breathing helped, as did some high-tempo music to get some adrenaline going. Plus, more than the odd Polo mint here and there as a distraction...

The key is having confidence in yourself. Learning to trust what you can do in the car and let your subconscious muscle memory do a lot of the harder bits for you.

Being part of a great team also helps as it's important to relax with a bit of banter. Stress brings with it a tendency to over-drive the car.

I also learned to trust my instincts

with the rules. When Brands was red-flagged I knew the rule was to stop on the grid. However, every car in front of me headed back to the pits, and I naively followed them.

The handful of cars that did head to the grid got an advantage at the restart as the cars in the pits were held before rejoining to a green flag. That last round podium could have been more had I been a bit more trusting of my rules knowledge.

I'll put it down to a rookie error, but there will be no more excuses should I get the privilege of a second season next year. ■

4: CRASHING HURTS, IN MORE WAYS THAN ONE

Even the slightest shunt can have big ramifications for the club driver. Turns out I don't like Donington Park. Well, I do... actually, I love it, but I don't seem to have much luck there.

After my accident last year, I was running second when contact in a group of cars on lap two left Penny and I pretty bashed up and in the Redgate gravel. I might finish a race at Donington by 2035...

The impact caused front and rear damage. We had to jig the chassis legs straight and buy another Puma – again from the Johnson family – for spares.

Sims and Crocker did the repair brilliantly, but after the next-day aches of the impact wear off, you're still left searching for plan B.

My racing was done on a shoestring with no financial sponsorship, but the cost of the repairs to the engine after Combe, now coupled to this heftier bill,

looked to have ended my year.

Fortunately, a little help from Nick Bailey at Elan PR helped me get back out for the finale, and produce probably my best drive of the year – going from seventh on the grid to third during my opening stint before the race was red-flagged and Brandon took over shortly after the restart.

We finished the season with a hard-earned podium, which was unquestionably the sweetest of the year after the uphill battle to even get out in what was the biggest Puma entry of the season.



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CONGRATULATIONS

to Graeme Bell & Russ Radford for taking a fantastic win at the Hall Trophy Rally 2017! We would also like to pass on our congratulations to all competitors who completed the rally and made the event such a success!

Plastics 4 Performance would also like to extend our congratulations to all those in the HRCR Mini entrants.

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RALLY REPORTS

ROUND-UP

Having led for most of the event, Dyfrig James/Emyr Jones secured their maiden win on the legendary **Rali Cilwenedeg** on Saturday night.

A three-way battle for victory took place but John Davies/Eurig Evans ended more than 20 seconds down in second place, while Kevin Davies/Max Freeman retired after water contaminated their fuel at the halfway halt.

Derek Arnold, a leading runner in the *Motoring News* championship era, took part and was dumbfounded by the pace of the leading crews; he and Aled Richards finished in 32nd place.

Ian Lloyd/Cyrl Jones won the **Farrington Trophy** for the second time after surviving icy conditions throughout the night. The Arctic weather led to the cancellation of one section on the roads in the northern part of Cloccaeneog Forest; the way became impassable after only a few cars had been through. Jon Bossen/Rob Bryn Jones spent 10 minutes in a ditch but still did enough to clinch the ANWCC championship spoils.

Results

Rali Cilwenedeg

Organiser: Teifi Valley Motor Club **When:** November 25/26
Where: West Wales **Championships:** WAMC & ANWCC
Route: 120 miles **Starters:** 90.

1 Dyfrig James/Emyr Jones (Ford Escort) 2m02s; 2 John Davies/Eurig Evans (Vauxhall Astra) +27s; 3 Mike Roberts/Dafydd Sion Lloyd (Escort); 4 Llyr Williams/Ceri Davies (Peugeot 206); 5 Stefan Davies/Michael Gilbey (Escort); 6 Simon Summers/Dilwyn John (Escort); 7 Rhys McLoughlin/Jason Davies (Peugeot 205); 8 Kevin Jones/Alan James (Toyota Corolla); 9 Mark 'GT' Roberts/Dylan Jenkins (VW Golf GTI); 10 Richard James/Gerwyn Barry (MG ZR). **Class winners:** Martin Curzon/Rob Thomas (Escort); Rheinhalt George/Rhodri Evans (Ford Fiesta).

Farrington Trophy

Organiser: Clynvd Vale Motor Club **When:** November 25/26
Where: North-East Wales **Championships:** ANWCC
Route: 140 miles **Starters:** 41.

1 Ian Lloyd/Cyrl Jones (Ford Escort) 9m51s; 2 Martin Lloyd/Peredur Davies (BMW Compact) +1m22s; 3 Elgan Morris/Aled Wyn Jones (Vauxhall Nova); 4 Kevin Parry/Rhodri Jones (BMW Compact); 5 Chris Farrell/Dan Middle (BMW 318); 6 Brynli Thomas/Dave Andrew (Peugeot 306 Rallye); 7 John Jones/Tom Jones (Vauxhall Nova); 8 Brynmor Pierce/Dave Aincham (Subaru Impreza); 9 Justin Sharples/Steve Griffith (Ford Puma); 10 Dave Jones/Gareth Price (Proton Satria). **Class winners:** Semi-Experts: Pierce/Aincham; Ash Furlong/Nick Meredith (BMW 318Ti).



Photo: Kevin Money

Millington-power guided Bell to win

BELL MASTERS BLYTON

Hall Trophy Rally

By Peter Scherer

Organiser: Clitheroe & District MC
When: November 25 **Where:** Blyton Park, Lincolnshire
Championships: ANWCC, ANEMMC, SD34 & RAFMSA **Starters:** 72 **Stages:** 12.

Graeme Bell and Russ Radford's Proton came out on top of a day-long duel with John Griffiths and Carl Ogden's Subaru Impreza at a bitterly-cold Blyton Park.

Griffiths led the first two stages, before Bell turned a two-second deficit into a two-second lead. Both made mistakes on stage five and after the sixth they were tied for the lead. But Bell had the upper hand over the final four runs to take the win by 13 seconds.

It was also a close battle for third with Lee Jones/Thomas Grogan's Ferrari 308 Michelotto battling

with Craig Pennington/Wayne Priest's VW Polo.

Both were caught by Mark Roberts/Stephen Landen, however, the pair recovering after an off on stage two before holding the place from stage seven in their Ford Escort Cosworth.

Jones held on to fourth by a solitary second from Pennington, while Mike Bayliss/Sam Bailey's BMW Compact completed the top six and took a comfortable Class 4 victory.

Despite brake troubles, Paul Culverwell/Terry Martin's Darrian secured the honours in Class 3 and rounded out the top 10 overall.

Patrick Homan/Tom Homan (Ford Puma) were never headed in Class 1, while on the driver's debut, Bradley and Ben Howlett's Citroen C2 took the win in Class 2.

Chris Phillips/Sarah Hughes took second in in Class 2 their Peugeot 106 despite an extra lap on one stage.

Jones' Ferrari dominated the Historic class, but father Kevin retired his similar car stuck in fourth gear, handing second place to John Faulkner/Peter Foy's Escort.

Jim Brindle topped the HRCR Mini entries.

Results

1 Graeme Bell/Russ Radford (Proton Satria S2500 Millington) 38m55s; 2 John Griffiths/Carl Ogden (Subaru Impreza) +13s; 3 Mark Roberts/Stephen Landen (Ford Escort Cosworth); 4 Lee Jones/Thomas Grogan (Ferrari 308); 5 Craig Pennington/Wayne Priest (VW Polo); 6 Mike Bayliss/Sam Bailey (BMW Compact); 7 Ross Daniels/Paul Mankin (Impreza); 8 Martin Farrar/Andy Ward (Impreza); 9 Chris Marshall/Graham Wild (Mitsubishi Lancer ES); 10 Paul Culverwell/Terry Martin (Darrian T9). **Class winners:** Patrick Homan/Tom Homan (Ford Puma); Bradley Howlett/Ben Howlett (Citroen C2); Culverwell/Martin; Bayliss/Bailey; Jones/Grogan.

Last year's winner Owen on top in Escort domination at Anglesey

Glyn Memorial Rally

By Dave VThomas

Organiser: Caernarvonshire & Anglesey MC **When:** November 25/26 **Where:** Ty Croes, Anglesey **Championships:** ANWCC, WAMC, North Wales Stage Rally Challenge **Starters:** 58 **Stages:** 15.

Fastest on the first stage and never headed throughout the two-day Glyn Memorial Stages was last year's winner Wil Owen, this time partnered by Paul Maund.

He powered his Ford Escort Mk2 to victory ahead of Roger Moran/Ashley Trimble in a similar 2.5-litre engined-car.

Third, and taking the ANWCC Stage Rally Championship on the very last stage of the year, was local driver Eric Roberts, with Merfyn Williams, making it an Escort Mk21-2-3.

Chris Simmons/Andy Moss took fourth in their Darrian, just ahead of a close Class B battle, settled in favour of Chris Stanfield/Sarah Edwards (Peugeot 106) by just three seconds from Emyr Owen/Eilir Williams (106), this result securing the ANWCC co-drivers' title for Edwards.

Gethin Jones/Tomos Williams won Class A and sneaked into the top 10 overall, Jones losing the ANWCC championship to Roberts but secured the North Wales Stage Challenge.

Stephen Ellison/Mark Carter (Escort Mk2) won the Historic class and Lee James/Alan Hinton took the Road Rally class. Robert Kennedy/Catrin Jones (Nissan Micra) topped the 1000cc cars.

In the last round of the Junior Formula 1000 and Ecosse Challenge, Scottish crew Jude MacDonald and Michael Cruickshank (Skoda Citigo) clinched victory by just nine seconds from Elliot Payne/Dominic Adams (Citroen C1).

Results

1 Wil Owen/Paul Maund (Ford Escort Mk2) 59m 59s; 2 Roger Moran/Ashley Trimble (Escort Mk2) +59s; 3 Eric Roberts/Merfyn Williams (Escort Mk2); 4 Chris Simmons/Andy Moss (Darrian T9 GTR); 5 Chris Stanfield/Sarah Edwards (Peugeot 106 Maxi); 6 Emyr Owen/Eilir Williams (106 Rallye); 7 Terry Clarke/Ronald Roughead (Escort Mk2); 8 Mark Smith/Tim Nunn (Escort Mk2); 9 Ryan Fagan/Jordan Joines (Escort Mk2); 10 Gethin Jones/Tomos Williams (Vauxhall Nova). **Class winners:** Jones/Williams; Stanfield/Edwards; Roberts/Williams/Owen/Maund; Lee James/Alan Hinton (Escort Mk2); Robert Kennedy/Catrin Jones (Nissan Micra); Stephen Ellison/Mark Carter (Escort Mk2); Jude MacDonald/Michael Cruickshank (Skoda Citigo).

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The *Motorsport News* website is here and is going from strength to strength, but we still need YOUR help to make sure the site is as good as it can be and that it fits with what you expect from Britain's only weekly motorsport newspaper.

Launched in late May, the website has already had significant development and is the latest investment into the brand from our parent company, the Motorsport Network and Autosport Media UK Ltd.

Please have a look around, take in the stories and columns, and also check out any events near you during the season in our rolling What's On section.

Going forward we aim to provide series-specific sub-menus, giving you direct links to everything from the British Touring Car Championship and British GT, through to World Rallying, Rallycross and club-level competition.

This website is a key development in the future of *Motorsport News*, but we also won't be forgetting our heritage. This is not a replacement for the weekly newspaper, more a complement to it.

The paper copy of *MN* will continue unaltered, with the website simply providing a new outlet for us to create fresh content, try new things and bring you the biggest national motorsport stories as and when they happen.

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INTERVIEW: TOM LLEWELLIN

Photos: Hal Ridge, Sarah Watson

Tom Llewellyn has made a big impact in rallycross in a short time. By Hal Ridge

A REAL RISING STAR



Llewellyn has starred in Junior RX in 2017

Rising star is a term arguably overused in motorsport, but every so often a young driver comes along who is more than worthy of the phrase.

Since his rallycross career began in May 2016 at Pembrey, where he claimed a debut victory in MSA Junior Rallycross, 16-year-old Tom Llewellyn has only once not stood on the top step of the podium.

His 13 starts have returned 12 winner's trophies.

Youngest son of double-British rally champion Dai, Llewellyn has impressed at each stage of his short career so far, stunning regulars with his debut performance and winning every one of the selected events he contested in 2016.

The Welsh youngster returned to the Junior RX series, which uses 1300cc Suzuki Swifts, full-time for 2017, driving a Peter Gwynne Motorsport-prepared car in the strongest line-up for some time. But, despite the competition, he dominated, winning every round bar one. He wrapped up the title with an event to spare and, with an eye in 2018, Llewellyn competed in the Swift Sport Rallycross Championship (for cars with 1600cc and more modifications, such as a limited-slip differential) in the season finale at Croft last month.

By the semi-finals, he was

challenging champion-elect Simon Ovenden for race victory, and a demon start in the final meant he led home the seasoned racers in the competitive single-make category to chalk up another event win.

If Llewellyn's Junior performance hadn't caught onlookers' imagination, then his Croft display certainly did.

"It's been amazing this year. To win seven of the eight rounds we did in Juniors, I never would have dreamt that," explains Llewellyn. "This year was much tougher than when I first started. Last year I was winning by half a lap, but this year it's been three or four seconds, it's been close.

"The boys have been pushing me hard and I've enjoyed it a lot more to have to fight for it. Croft was a good opportunity to see what the Swifts would be like. I know how competitive the class is so I just really wanted my lap times to get quicker and quicker and to try and get into the final. When I was trying to overtake Simon in the semi-finals I was thinking, 'I might have a chance here'. In the final I had an amazing start and just left them all off the line. I just couldn't believe it. It was higher than any of my expectations."

One of Llewellyn's greatest attributes, aside from his abundant natural talent, is his polite demeanour and modesty. Asked why he thinks he has been so dominant in his career so far, he muses: "There's a bit of luck involved, and the car has been very reliable. But, it's also the driver as well and I drove as fast as I could."



Teenager's rapid rise

Following in Dai's footsteps, just weeks after his 14th birthday, Llewellyn began rallying in 2015, competing in the Junior 1000 Rally Championship in a Peugeot 107 run from the family farm, but it was eight years earlier when he learned to drive.

"When I was four or five I was sitting on dad's lap in the tractors steering, then I actually started driving a car around the fields at six or seven," he says. "When I was about 12, I decided I really wanted to go rallying and it was a long two years until I could. I did the McRae Stages [at Knockhill] two or three weeks after my [14th] birthday. Obviously there's loads of photos and trophies around the house and all the stories that dad used to tell me, then I started watching [older brother] Ben, that's what gave me a real buzz to want to do the same."

Despite the successful family heritage, Llewellyn says having a famous motorsport name hasn't added any pressure. "Dad always says 'we're here to enjoy ourselves, just have fun and show what you can do.' He's never said 'you have to win

this one.' That's definitely helped me. There is an expectation [because of my surname], but you've got to forget about it and just do what you can do."

Having been competing in the Junior 1000 series, Llewellyn's rallycross debut was on the same weekend as his father and older brother took part in the RX150 Buggy Championship. But while it was a one-off appearance for Dai and Ben, Tom has remained in the sport, still competing for fun and keeping his feet firmly attached to the ground, the young driver has his sights set on making it to the sport's highest level. With genuine careers now possible in rallying and rallycross, Llewellyn will compete in both disciplines next year. He'll drive exactly the same PGM-run car in the Swift Shining Stars Rally Series and Swift Sport Rallycross Championship.

"I want to be at world level at some point in my career, but it's just the path you take," he says. "How to get there is quite difficult in motorsport, so we're still going for a bit of fun, but if I can be successful then all the better."

"We're keeping our feet in both doors and if an opportunity arises in either then we'll take it with both hands; we're just doubling our chances of making it to the top. Peter [Gwynne] and Sarah [Watson] have an amazing team to be part of and I'm really looking forward to next year, and using the same car for both will be really good. It won't be slightly different; it'll be exactly the same."

Opting to focus on rallycross as his major programme in 2017, due to the MSA title and television exposure attached to the Junior rallycross series, Llewellyn missed some Junior 1000 events but still finished second in the series, scoring a brace of wins towards the end of the campaign.

Next year, he's looking ahead to competing in the forests, and also has high hopes for his rallycross campaign too: "I'm really looking forward to the Welsh forests, racing on pace notes and having to listen properly. I think I'll have to miss the first rounds in the rallying because I won't be old enough, so I'm not sure if we can fight for the championship there. In rallycross, after [his performance at] Croft we're looking to go for the championship, which of course everyone will be, but we'll see what we can do."

If previous form is a measure for future performance, which is the case more often than not, Llewellyn will be a title contender in both his rallycross and rallying programmes in 2018, and has a bright future ahead of him. ■



Llewellyn's great victory on his senior Swift debut turned heads



He landed this year's Junior title

SPORTING SCENE

ALBATEC TO REJOIN BRITISH RX AFTER STUDENT LINK-UP

New partnership with National Centre for Motorsport Engineering established

By Hal Ridge

Supercar squad Albatec Racing is set to return to the British Rallycross Championship next season after forming a partnership with the National Centre for Motorsport Engineering at Bolton University.

The team will field a Peugeot 208 Supercar in 2018, with the car being developed and run from the NCME, instead of Albatec's Dumfries base.

The partnership has been formed to "provide career development opportunities for the next generation of motorsport engineers".

Students will use the British RX programme to apply academic learning in the development, assembly, and preparation of a 208 Supercar, both in the workshop and by supporting Albatec on-event.

A driver is yet to be signed for the programme. Albatec skipped the 2017

British RX series, but ran a full campaign for team owner Andy Scott in 2015 and also for James Grint in 2016.

"We're incredibly excited to be collaborating with the NCME and see this as a long-term investment for both parties," said Scott. "The UK has produced some of the finest technical minds in the business and we're eager to ensure that this continues. While partnerships with universities in motorsport

aren't unique, I believe this will be the first collaboration with a successful UK team at national level, with one of the highest-ranking universities for motorsport engineering.

"One of the major factors in our driver selection process is to ensure that they are a potential frontrunner, and also understand the importance of working with students, our next generation of engineers, and appreciate the culture of learning and development

which is so essential to every member of a successful motorsport operation."

The programme was launched at NCME's new £13million base. "The strong synergy with the infrastructure, data, and hardware from Albatec and the significant number of brilliant students we have on our specific Motorsport Engineering course within NCME gives us unprecedented advantages and value to the project," said NCME director Dr Mark Busfield.

Bakkerud could take a break from World Rallycross to develop his driving in rallying

World Rallycross race winner Andreas Bakkerud is considering taking a year out of the sport in 2018 to develop his skills with rallying one option if he cannot secure a top drive in World RX.

Bakkerud has been left seeking a new seat following the withdrawal of Ken Block's Ford Performance-backed Hoonigan Racing Division squad from World RX, for which Bakkerud has driven since the start of

2016. The Norwegian says that while his focus remains on becoming World Rallycross champion, the additional seat time available in rallying could tempt him next year.

"I've spoken with almost every team, and not many of them know what they are doing next year yet," Bakkerud told *Motorsport News*. "We're still in November, the [2018] season doesn't start until April, so it's still a little early to get anything

signed or ready, but we are definitely working on it.

"I'm looking at everything, and looking at myself and what I can improve. Fighting against [Sebastien] Loeb, Petter [Solberg] and Mattias [Ekstrom] in World RX: they are not only great drivers but they are very good at setting up cars.

"I've considered calling Malcolm Wilson to speak about doing a full season of WRC2 next year and wait for the right

time for me in rallycross. I'm considering everything."

Bakkerud sampled a Ford Fiesta R5 for the first time at Castle Combe's Rallyday in September. "Rallying would be good because of the seat time, to help me get better on my weaker sides," he said. "But staying in rallycross is my main aim; I need to find a winning team that has the same goals and targets as me, and also be looking to electric rallycross too."



Bakkerud could go rallying in '18

Photos: Duncan Stephens

NORTH'S LITTLE MINI'S BIG WIN

Duncan Stephens finds out how an iconic car is still top of the Trials pack



North has run his Mini for years

When Alec Issigonis penned the small, economical family BMC Mini in 1959, motorsport was far from its agenda. It took five years for competitors to realise that the compact pocket rocket could more than hold its own against much mightier opposition.

Beyond the Monte Carlo Rally successes and touring car titles, the Mini has been at the forefront of all kinds of motorsporting disciplines. And now, some 58 years after the car was introduced, it is still celebrating glory.

Bradford's Rupert North, 42, won the MSA British Car Trial championship for the first time this year driving his bright yellow Rover Mini, which he has campaigned for nearly 20 years.

The British championship operates a class-based scoring system with a bonus point for overall wins over the 11 rounds, of which competitors counted eight scores. The British (Production) Car Trials championship was last won by a Mini back in the mid-1970s, when North was born, by Geoff Spencer.

North originally started competing in a 1000cc Mini, but switched to the 1275cc version in 1997. North loves the Mini, proudly sporting a yellow Mini T-shirt at events.

Last season the car was transformed by a switch to 13-inch wheels, which meant he

had a much larger choice of tyres to use on events.

North competes in local autotest events as well as his national campaign, and even missed one of the rounds in the middle of the season to take up his role as chief marshal on his home Airedale and Pennine Motor Club's Yorkshire Dale classic trial event.

After winning at round two, which was North's first outing of the season, the championship hopeful offered fellow competitor Shawn Franklin a double drive of the Mini after Franklin's gearbox failed on the way to the event. It started a trend, as later in the season in North Wales, North once again offered his car to former double British champion Mark Hoppe, who had engine issues with his regular Dutton.

This left just the Gaby Mohr trial near Wolverhampton with Franklin leading by two points from North. Having campaigned the Mini since 1998, North elected to borrow a Citroen Saxo from fellow Airedale and Pennine Motor Club member Dave Toft and go head-to-head with Franklin and other leading lights in the new-car class.

Despite a couple of local events to get his hand in, North didn't believe he could beat the gaggle of Citroen Saxos in the modified front-wheel-drive class and take the category win he needed. North excelled and surprised many to feel at one with a different car and, with two brilliant climbs during the fourth run, took the class lead from Trevor Moffatt.

Moffatt battled back but North matched him on the tricky last hill



Change of wheels helped

(where he could have lost the championship as second in class wasn't enough) to take the class triumph, his third overall of the campaign, netting the British championship on the last hill. Ironically, the rival Saxo had a brake wheel cylinder fail the following morning.

Having only managed third overall in the championship previously in his 15 years of support for the sport and his Mini, North said: "It has taken over a third of my adult life to become British champion.

"It's great to win in a Mini, it would have been really nice to have 100 per cent of the championship in the Mini but it's nice to be able to make a nearly-60-year-old design win against the more modern cars.

"It's a decade since I won the trial on Anglesey and that was the first time a Mini had won a National B trials event in over 20 years, so to win the championship in one is brilliant. It's nice to give the Mini one last day in the sun before it fades to the pages of history. If I am honest, it's not the best car in the field, but I have achieved a huge ambition this season." ■

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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

MN SAYS...

Who says motorsport stops for winter?

Government enquiries, Formula 1 fairytales, and giant-killers. It's all go in November

It's a big week in world motorsport. Despite the season essentially now being in shut-down mode and cars being covered with blankets for the winter, there's a heck of a lot still going on.

Firstly, we have the results of the Fatal Accident Inquiry, which the rallying community has been nervously awaiting for months. Well, finally it seems we can breathe a sigh of relief. Sure, a findings document in excess of 100 pages is no light reading, but its key points are good news for the sport. Rallying is cleared to continue. Yes, there will undoubtedly be changes, but overall it seems a benefit for the sport and we should thank ourselves lucky that Sherrif Maciver clearly understood the many facets of what can be considered as a niche activity to the wider world. There will no doubt be even more work head to ensure such tragedies never occur again.

The F1 fraternity will have all eyes on Williams this week as Robert Kubica looks to finally seal a fairytale grand prix return. A good performance with no complications during Abu Dhabi testing and the Pole could well be back where he craves to be.

Then there's M-Sport. Retaining Sebastien Ogier is just the start for Malcolm Wilson's team to try and follow-up on its immense 2017 campaign. World rallying rarely slows down. Now the hard work begins to make sure the best driver of his generation gets the best car in the field in the shape of the Fiesta WRC.

Rob Ladbrook, Managing Editor (Twitter: @LaddersMN)



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Photographs must be of a good quality and please send no more than three images

ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S FAVOURITE OF THE WEEK!



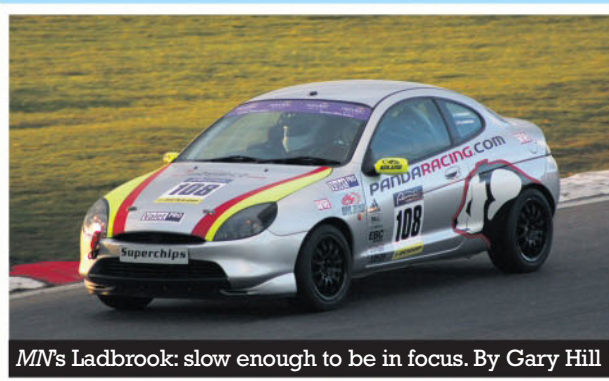
Dan Willan – aka 'Piggy Dan Dan' – took in the Rally of the Tests



Brian Gower snapped these Global GT Lights at Anglesey



Tim Hall sent us in this rather soggy Bathurst picture



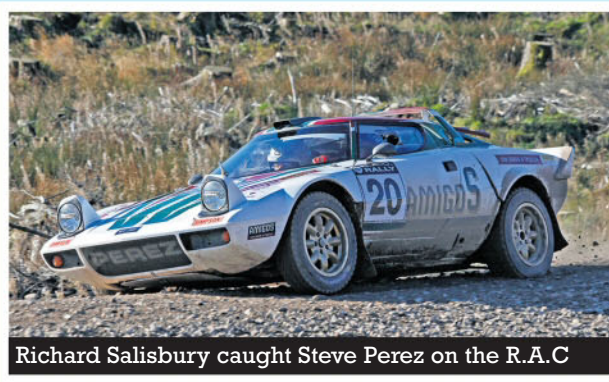
MN's Ladbrook: slow enough to be in focus. By Gary Hill



Callum Grant, age 13, caught a Metro in action at Cadwell



From Down Under, Paul Webster's shot of Kris Meeke



Richard Salisbury caught Steve Perez on the R.A.C



Howard Alexander got this moment on the Cadwell Stages

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TV GUIDE



Watch highlights from the famous Formula Ford Festival at Brands Hatch



Relive the drama and breathtaking racing from the **Formula Ford Festival** at Brands Hatch as the category celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2017 (Thursday, 1210-1310hrs), with past winners of the renowned event including Mark Webber, Jenson Button and Anthony Davidson.

Jamie Whincup and Scott McLaughlin were the two leading contenders looking to take the **Australian Supercar** title at the Newcastle finale last weekend, with highlights on Friday (0915-1210hrs).

There's a season review of the **British Porsche Club Championship**, with all the best action, thrills and spills from across the UK's best circuits (Saturday, 1445-1550hrs).

And finally, take an in-depth look behind the scenes at the history of the world-famous **LAT photographic agency**, created way back in 1950 by Michael Tee, home to the most impressive archives in motorsport photography and *MN's* main supplier of images (Saturday, 2000-2030hrs).

STAR SHOW



Sit back and enjoy one of the all-time **Classic F1** encounters between two giants of the sport – Alain Prost and Ayrton Senna – as they battle it out for the 1989 title in Suzuka, Japan (Saturday, 1600-1645hrs, Sky Sports F1).

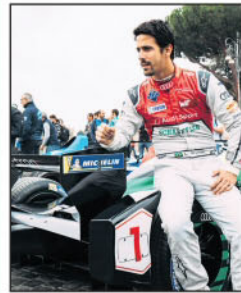
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■ **Race one:** Friday, 1815-1915hrs, Eurosport 2
 ■ **Race two:** Friday, 1915-2015hrs, Eurosport 2

Formula E: Hong Kong

■ **Race one:** Saturday, 0645-0800hrs, Eurosport 1/0900-1045hrs, Channel 5 (delayed)
 ■ **Race two:** Sunday, 0645-0800, Eurosport 1/0855-1040hrs, Channel 5 (delayed)



Number one: Di Grassi

LISTINGS

Photos: Gary Hawkins, LAT, Jakob Ebrey, mcklein-imagedatabase



Tom Preston will be a frontrunner in Grizedale

SATURDAY

■ **Killarney, County Kerry Killarney Historic Rally** Starts 0800hrs
Admission free
Web killarneyanddistrictmotorclub.ie

■ **Grizedale Forest, Yorkshire Hippo Motor Group Grizedale Stages** Starts 0900hrs

Admission free
Web grizedalestages.co.uk

SUNDAY

■ **Knockhill Circuit, Fife Beatson's Building Supplies Knockhill Stages** Starts 0900hrs
Admission £13 (in advance)
Web dunfermlinecarclub.co.uk

Listings correct at time of press, but please check

GAME REVIEW: GT SPORT, PS4

Strap yourselves in for the high-octane thrill that is Gran Turismo Sport. The GT franchise is known as one of the best in the business for creating authentic 'real-life' driving games and its newest instalment – available on PlayStation 4 – is no different.

With more than 160 cars – from manufacturers such as Alfa Romeo, BMW, Ferrari,

Jaguar and Mercedes – to choose from there's plenty of range, and 17 locations including Brands Hatch, Nurburgring and Suzuka to race them around.

Online gameplay is without doubt the focus of the game, with the FIA-sanctioned Nations Cup and Manufacturer Fan Cup tournaments forming its centrepiece.

However, those wishing to spend most of their time offline will likely be disappointed with the lack of a single-player campaign, which mostly consists of an in-depth tutorial and arcade mode.

Graphics are once again stunning, right down to the minute details and the menu interface has been improved, providing a more refined game

than its predecessors.

The handling of the cars is improved from previous instalments, as you would expect, and there's more of a challenge for those gamers wanting to test themselves, with the AI more aggressive.

GT Sport will put you in the fast lane, whether you're a casual gamer or wannabe racer.



GT Sport improves on past games from the franchise

NEXT WEEK

OUT WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6

BTCC DRIVERS PREPARE FOR TOUGHER DRIVING STANDARDS



HOW NEW RULES WILL IMPROVE RACING



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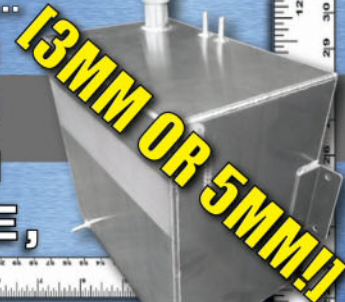
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