

**FROM THE ARCHIVE**

The Ferrari 250 Testa Rossas driven by Phil Hill/Wolfgang von Trips (#9), Willy Mairesse/Richie Ginther (#10) and Ricardo Rodriguez/Andre Pilette (#17) leave the Lotus Elite of John Wagstaff/Tony Marsh in their wake during the 1960 Le Mans 24 Hours. The V12-powered trio had mixed fortunes as the race played out: Hill/von Trips ran out of fuel only 22 laps in (a fate suffered by the sister works car of Ludovico Scarfiotti/Pedro Rodriguez); Mairesse/Ginther were forced to retire when their works racer's gearbox packed up on Sunday morning; and Rodriguez/Pilette's North American Racing Team entry finished runner-up to Olivier Gendebien/Paul Frere's factory 250TR. The Lotus came home in 14th place.



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18 FEBRUARY 2021

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challenge of defeating
F1's dominant team

'Mercedes is a
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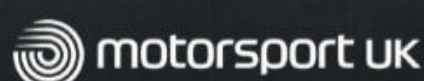
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McLaren reveals its new car as Red Bull gears up for a fresh challenge

McLaren has given us the first hint of what Formula 1 2021 will look like with the launch of the MCL35M this week (see page 4). As we discussed in the 4 February issue, it's a team on the up, and the switch to Mercedes power should allow McLaren to see exactly where it stands, even though installing the engine has provided challenges.

But even if McLaren has done a brilliant job over the winter, the main threat to Mercedes this year is likely to come from Red Bull. As team boss Christian Horner reminds us on page 18, the team has been able to fight for wins since the turbo-hybrid era began in 2014. It's won that contest 17 times, but hasn't done enough to snatch a title to add to those it scored during its heyday in 2010-13.

This week we look at the things Red Bull has to do to achieve that final step, from making the most of its second car to hoping Honda really pushes the boat out with its final engine before leaving F1.

The recently announced F1 engine freeze from 2022 is something of a double-edged sword. On the one hand, it helps keep costs under control and ensures Red Bull can take on its power needs in-house. On the other, with no balance of performance mechanism allowed, if anyone steals a march (Mercedes?) or misses the mark (Ferrari?), that deficit will be 'baked in' until new engine rules arrive in 2025.

Let's hope that the move helps create the parity we saw in the late 2000s, which created some of the closest fields in F1 history.



Kevin Turner

Kevin Turner
Chief Editor

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NEXT WEEK
25 FEBRUARY

Big questions of 2021
Karun Chandhok looks
at the key F1 issues
this season



COVER IMAGES

Klamar/Red Bull; McLaren

PIT & PADDOCK

- 4 McLaren MCL35M technical focus
- 6 F1 sprint race move on the cards
- 8 Mazda pulls out of IMSA
- 10 Kubica joins WRT for full ELMS
- 13 Opinion: Alex Kalinauckas
- 15 Opinion: Rodi Basso
- 17 Feedback: your letters

INSIGHT

- 18 What Red Bull needs to beat Mercedes
- 28 Jeff Allam on his tin-top career
- 34 Return of Marshall's Vauxhall Firenza
- 38 How Earnhardt's death changed NASCAR

RACE CENTRE

- 44 Chaos decides the Daytona 500
- 51 Top five longest NASCAR Cup waits
- 53 World of Sport: Asian Le Mans Series; Asian Formula 3

CLUB AUTOSPORT

- 60 Amputee Turner plots racing comeback
- 62 Adrian Reynard to race Rover SD1
- 64 New Audi TT Challenge launched
- 65 Opinion: Stefan Mackley
- 66 The Brit with NASCAR in his sights

FINISHING STRAIGHT

- 70 What's on this week
- 72 From the archive: 1960 Le Mans
- 74 In defence of: tight regulations

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

- 50 Special deals for Autosport

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THE RETURN OF McLAREN-MERCEDES

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

Here's how the team has developed the MCL35M – the first of the 2021 F1 challengers to be unveiled

PHOTOGRAPHY **McLAREN**

BODYWORK

As a result of the switch in engines, McLaren has had to fit the full suite of internals that go with the Mercedes components. One area the Mercedes-powered cars had in common last season was a variation of the sloping sidepods, where airflow passing over the top could drop down freely onto the floor. McLaren has drifted towards that here; it's perhaps not as

noticeable as on last year's Racing Point and Williams designs, but there is that drop-off to help feed the top of the floor with higher-pressure air to increase the pressure difference between that and the diffuser. This can make the marginally neutered diffuser, trimmed back over the off-season, work a little harder.



POWERTRAIN

The biggest change for McLaren is the move away from Renault engines to reunite with Mercedes. With the FIA mandating a limited token solution owing to the carryover of the 2020 car designs, McLaren has focused on the rear end to fit the new power unit. In order to install this into the back, some concessions have had to be made. The most obvious is the change to the air intake, which much more closely resembles that used by the works Mercedes team to cope with the engine's cooling requirements.

NEW 2021 RULES

Although there have been glimpses of 2021-style floors in late-2020 practice sessions, McLaren has finally provided a representation of one on its launch car. The lip towards the front of the floor remains, as the little expansion of airflow acts like a mini-diffuser, but

towards the rear McLaren has added a further small cut-out with an upright fin. Whether this is just a placeholder design is currently uncertain, but there's very little precedent with the new rules so far, so we'll have to wait and see what the others do to truly compare them.

FRONT END

McLaren has elected to stick rather than twist with its nose, after making a rather sizeable change in concept midway through 2020. This was part of a raft of changes to the original MCL35 that took time to bed in, but helped McLaren secure a lucrative third place in the constructors' championship. This nose, based on developments by the Mercedes squad, deletes the thumb-tip crash structure and instead moves the mounting pylons underneath. Shuffling everything further inboard creates more space for the cape to work. As the exposed tips on the front wing create a vortex, used to direct any turbulence from the wheels away from the floor, the cape can interact with that to help steer it into the places needed. The bigger the cape, the more control.



REAR WING

The endplates have received attention, and McLaren has opted for the curved-slot design adopted by Red Bull last season, which in turn was pioneered by Haas in 2019. This area is usually employed to help link the diffuser with the wing and find more rear-end downforce, so it stands to reason that the team has found something extra with the curved slots over the usual overhanging strakes.





When you think about it, last year's Italian GP also had a sprint race to set grid

Sprint races on cards for Canada, Italy, Brazil

FORMULA 1

Formula 1 looks set to introduce sprint races at select grands prix in 2021 after teams showed “broad support” for the plan at a meeting last week.

After new F1 CEO Stefano Domenicali had put an end to ideas of a reversed-grid format, the ex-Ferrari team principal pushed on with the idea of a sprint race to set the grid at three grands prix this year. Under the proposal, qualifying would take place on Friday to set the grid for the sprint race on Saturday afternoon. This would run over 100km – one-third of a regular grand prix distance – and the result would create the grid for the grand prix.

All 10 teams showed support for the plan in the F1 Commission meeting last Friday, but were eager for further details to be clarified in the coming weeks. This includes the awarding of points for the sprint race, any prize money, and what impact it would have on driver

contracts from a legal standpoint.

A working group has now been formed to flesh out the plans, with a view to getting approval before the start of the new season at the end of March.

Should the plan go ahead, sprint races would be used at Montreal, Monza and Interlagos this year. The race weekend format would remain unchanged at all of the other rounds.

“I do feel better at the thought of that than a reverse grid,” said Daniel Ricciardo. “If the best guys and the best teams are still coming out on top, and it’s not manipulated or artificial, then I’m less scared of it. Competition is obviously what I love most. I would love to do more races and less practice. But I think the biggest thing is I want an F1 win to still feel as big as what it should be. I don’t ever want an F1 win to feel diluted. If they do bring in another race on the weekend, as long as it kind of carries the same value then I guess I’m certainly more open-minded towards that.”

The teams also agreed unanimously on an engine development freeze from 2022-24, paving the way for Red Bull to continue using Honda’s power units beyond the end of this year.

Red Bull announced on Monday the formation of Red Bull Powertrains, with the new group set to supply the senior Red Bull squad and sister team AlphaTauri from 2022. Honda will assist Red Bull in the development of its new power unit for 2022 before quitting F1 at the end of the year. Red Bull Powertrains will operate out of the team’s existing Milton Keynes HQ, and will inherit the staff from Honda’s UK engine division.

The deal not only paves the way for Red Bull to become independent, but also creates the possibility of developing an all-new engine from 2025, when the next regulation cycle begins.

“We’ve got the independence to do it ourselves,” said Red Bull chief Christian Horner. “The investment into the facilities to gear up for this are quite significant. With this, Red Bull very much takes control of its own future and destiny, with the powertrain and establishment of that company and that commitment. It’s safeguarded the commitment of Red Bull to F1 for the foreseeable future.”

Red Bull will still receive assembly support from Honda through 2022, but is set to go on a hiring spree in the coming months, including an overall technical chief of its engine division. It is likely to work with AVL for the dynos and other required specialist equipment.

LUKE SMITH

➔ P18 RED BULL’S 2021 TASKS



Heats set F1 grid for 1967 Race of Champions. Dan Gurney's Eagle triumphed

Alonso breaks jaw in bike crash

FORMULA 1

Fernando Alonso underwent surgery for a fractured upper jaw last week after being hit by a car while out cycling in Switzerland.

Just six weeks before he makes his F1 comeback with Alpine, two-time world champion Alonso was involved in a collision outside a Lidl supermarket on the outskirts of Lugano. He was taken to hospital by ambulance after police officers and medics tended to the crash site.

Doctors completed a successful corrective operation, allowing the Spaniard

to be discharged from hospital on Monday.

“He will now have a short period of complete rest before progressively resuming training to undertake preparation for the start of the season,” said Alpine in a statement. While the incident led to some uncertainty over Alonso’s fitness ahead of the new campaign, Alpine said last week that it expects him to be “fully operational”.

Alonso tweeted that he was “OK and looking forward to getting 2021 under way”, with his first outing in the Alpine A521 due to come in the Bahrain pre-season test.

LUKE SMITH



SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

DS commits to Gen3 period

FORMULA E

DS Automobiles, which has partnered the Techeetah squad to win the two most recent Formula E teams’ titles, has become the second manufacturer to commit to the championship’s forthcoming Gen3 regulations.

A subsidiary of the new Stellantis automotive conglomerate, which combines the PSA Group and FIAT Chrysler Automobiles, DS joins Mahindra in signing up to the new rules package that comes into play for the 2022-23 season.

Gen3 is headlined by 470bhp cars that are 120kg lighter, and will run until the end of 2025-26.

Following Audi’s and BMW’s decisions to quit FE at the end of 2021, the FIA will continue to charge manufacturers the €300,000 registration and homologation fee per season until the end of the Gen3 cycle even if they decide to exit early.

FE chief executive officer Jamie Reigle said of DS: “It reaffirms Formula E’s position as a



GRIFFITHS/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

technological proving ground and marketing platform for leading automotive manufacturers.”

Autosport understands that Nissan and Porsche will imminently confirm their Gen3 participation, while Mercedes is set for a major logistical restructure to consolidate its FE operations in Brackley, so it is also expected to confirm its continued involvement.

MATT KEW

IN THE HEADLINES

CARROLL IS NIO RESERVE

Ex-A1GP superstar Adam Carroll will return to the Formula E fold this season as reserve driver for the NIO 333 team. The Northern Irishman, who raced for Jaguar in its maiden FE campaign in 2016-17, has undertaken simulator runs of the Diriyah circuit – where the first round will be held – at the team’s Oxfordshire base.

KIMBALL’S INDY 500 DEAL

One-time IndyCar race winner Charlie Kimball has secured an Indianapolis 500 deal for 2021 with AJ Foyt Racing. Kimball spent the 2020 season with Foyt, but has lost his full-time ride at the team, which this year is running Sebastien Bourdais and Dalton Kellett. Kimball will also contest the Indy GP road-course event.

EKSTROM, LAPPI IN ARCTIC

Former World Rallycross champion and double DTM title winner Mattias Ekstrom will return to the World Rally Championship for Arctic Rally Finland this month. Ekstrom will rally a Skoda Fabia R5 run by the EKS JC squad he co-owns. He is no stranger to rallying, and made his WRC debut way back in 1999. Esapekka Lappi, who has been left without a drive in the WRC’s headline category this year, will also compete on the event, at the wheel of a Volkswagen Polo R5.

CHAMPION RACING BACK

Champion Racing, winner of the 2005 Le Mans 24 Hours with Audi, will return to motorsport after an absence of 12 seasons at this year’s Pikes Peak hillclimb with course record holder Romain Dumas. The US operation will field a Porsche 911 GT2 RS Clubsport for Frenchman Dumas in the 12.42-mile hillclimb in Colorado on 27 June. It will be the first time that Champion has had an involvement in motorsport since the end of the factory Audi American Le Mans Series programme at the climax of the 2008 season, and the first without company founder Dave Maraj, who died in 2018, at the helm.

2 SEAS’ MERCEDES SWITCH

Bahraini-British team 2 Seas Motorsport has made a surprise switch from McLaren to Mercedes GT3 machinery. Its statement says only that it will run a pair of Mercs “across Europe”, and makes no mention of the DTM, which it had committed to with its McLarens.



No LMDh for Mazda as it pulls plug on prototypes

IMSA SPORTSCAR

Mazda has pulled the plug on its participation in the IMSA SportsCar Championship. The US arm of the Japanese manufacturer will end its Daytona Prototype international campaign at the end of this season and will not be entering the LMDh ranks when the new formula comes on stream in 2023.

The decision brings to an end a continuous involvement by Mazda in prototype sportscar racing in North America stretching back to 2005. It has opted instead to focus on grassroots racing, including the successful MX-5 one-make series.

A curt statement from Mazda Motorsports read: "After five years of participating in IMSA's DPi series, Mazda is opting to end its programme at the close of the 2021 season. This was determined after an internal assessment of the current DPi series and the future LMDh series, and concludes Mazda's participation in prototype racing."

Mazda North American Operations boss Masahiro Moro described last year's victory at the Sebring 12 Hours and the podium finishes at the Daytona 24 Hours in 2020 and 2021 as "significant accomplishments in the history of Mazda Motorsports".

Significant maybe, but also belated. It took the Mazda RT24-P DPi two and a half seasons to start winning.

The marque has mounted a disjointed campaign through the DPi era. It started out with the SpeedSource team in 2017, switched to Joest Racing for 2018, brought in the Multimatic organisation that

had developed the RT24-P to bolster the German team's efforts in 2019, and then got rid of Joest altogether early last year. For the 2021 season, it has slimmed the programme down from two cars to one.

The tale of underachievement stretches all the way back to Mazda's re-entry into the prototype ranks in North America in 2005 via a low-key LMP2 campaign with B-K Motorsport and a rotary engine. It did claim the ALMS title as an engine supplier with Dyson Racing in 2011, but its initial efforts with Mazda-badged machinery – actually old Lola B12/80s – are best described as laughable. It fielded the cars with a road-based turbodiesel unit in 2014-15 before switching to the AER-developed four-cylinder turbo engine that subsequently went into the back of the RT24-P.

The withdrawal comes at a time when the Mazda programme is on what driver Harry Tincknell has called an "upward trajectory". The first race victories for the RT24-P in 2019 were followed by a maiden win in one of the big enduros at Sebring last November. The solo Mazda, which Tincknell shared with full-season team-mate Oliver Jarvis and Jonathan Bomarito, looked odds-on for victory with an hour to go at Daytona last month until an issue with the rear wing.

The question is whether Mazda can bury the disappointments of the past and go out on a high. "We've shown at Sebring and Daytona that the reliability is now in the car," said Tincknell. "Given a fair Balance of Performance, we've got to think we have a fair chance of winning the championship."

GARY WATKINS

Dumbreck steps down

NURBURGRING 24 HOURS

One of the fixtures of the Nurburgring 24 Hours will disappear this year. Peter Dumbreck at the wheel of a Falken-livered GT car has become as much a part of the event as drunken fans and foul weather, but the Scot has decided to step down from driving duties in 2021.

Dumbreck has been part of the Falken Motorsports line-up at the enduro on the Nurburgring Nordschleife every year since 2007, driving a range of Nissan, Porsche and BMW machinery. His best result came with a third overall in 2015 at the wheel of a Porsche 911 GT3-R shared with Wolf Henzler, Martin Ragginger and Alexandre Imperatori.

Dumbreck, 47, will move into an ambassadorial and advisory role with the Falken tyre brand. He explained that he has made the decision in conjunction with the team to step back from driving duties for multiple reasons.

"Last year's race [rescheduled from May to September as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic] was a cold and rainy one: we couldn't get our tyres switched on in the conditions and it turned into a pretty dismal event for us," he said. "I've maybe lost my mojo for the race a little bit."

Age was also a factor, he explained: "I'm at least 15 years older than the next oldest driver in our car, and there are drivers in their early twenties coming into the race every year."

Dumbreck has stressed that he hasn't made the decision to retire from the cockpit. "I'm not ready to pull the plug entirely and stop driving altogether," he said. "We'll see what the future brings: I might end up racing again, I might not."

GARY WATKINS



Alpine quintet aim for peaks

FORMULA 2/3

Alpine has unveiled a slimmed-down and renamed Alpine Academy, from which five drivers will compete in the Formula 1-supporting FIA Formula 2 and F3 championships this season.

Former Renault F1 Juniors Guanyu Zhou and Christian Lundgaard will remain with Virtuosi and ART Grand Prix respectively as they tackle another season of F2, while reigning FIA F3 champion Oscar Piastri's graduation with Prema Racing to F2 had already been confirmed.

In F3, 2020 Formula Renault Eurocup champion Victor Martins returns to the Renault/Alpine fold after a year out, and is joined by the man he beat to last year's Renault title, Caio Collet. As predicted last week in Autosport, the duo will line up for Dutch team MP Motorsport.

Max Fewtrell, who abandoned his 2020 FIA F3 campaign mid-season, and Hadrien David, who raced in FRenault last year as the 2019 French F4 champion, are no longer part of the scheme. Fewtrell's plans for 2021 are still undecided.

Alpine Academy director Mia Sharizman said: "For Zhou it's his third year in the series and it's time for him to combine his experience and potential to win the title.



We also have high expectations for Christian who can challenge for the title this year, having shown us all glimpses of his potential last season."

The confirmations of highly rated Frenchman Martins and Nicolas Todt-managed Brazilian Collet are among a flood of recent FIA F3 announcements. Alongside them at MP will be yet another FRenault graduate, Dutchman Tijmen van der Helm.

Red Bull-backed Jack Doohan, son of bike legend Mick, switches to Trident after a poor rookie season in the series with HWA

Racelab. He will be joined at the Italian squad by Clement Novalak. The Frenchman switches from Carlin, where he won the 2019 British F3 title and scored two podiums in his maiden FIA F3 season.

Carlin, meanwhile, has its second driver on board to join Red Bull Junior and reigning German F4 champion Jonny Edgar. The British team will field Israeli Ido Cohen, who makes the step up after representing the team in Euroformula Open last year. That leaves just six of the FIA F3 seats to fill.

MARCUS SIMMONS AND TOM HOWARD



Jelley remoulds into WSR BMW seat

BTCC

British Touring Car Championship race winner Stephen Jelley will return to BMW team West Surrey Racing this season, after an 11-year absence from the squad.

Jelley was a two-time race winner with the team in 2009 (left), at the wheel of a Super 2000 320si, before a lack of budget forced him into the Porsche Carrera Cup GB. He returned to the BTCC with Team

Parker Racing, where he has taken one more win – in 2019 – with an ex-WSR 125i M Sport.

Jelley therefore gets his hands on a 330i M Sport at WSR, where he reunites with 2008-09 team-mate Colin Turkington, while Tom Oliphant remains on board in the other car.

"Personality-wise, he fits in very well with the whole team as well as Colin and Tom, so we're very pleased with the strength of our line-up heading into the new season," said

WSR boss Dick Bennetts.

Jelley also bring his race engineer from Team Parker Racing, ex-Stewart F1 man Andy Miller. This means that, for the first time, the two engineering gurus of 1990s British F3 will be working together. From 1990-98, Miller (six champions at Paul Stewart Racing) and Bennetts (two at WSR) had a hand in a combined total of eight of the 10 championship winners.

MARCUS SIMMONS

Kubica joins WRT on full-time deal to spearhead LMP2 effort



EUROPEAN LE MANS SERIES

Alfa Romeo Formula 1 test and reserve driver Robert Kubica is moving towards a Le Mans 24 Hours debut in the LMP2 prototype class this year. He has signed up for an assault on the six-round European Le Mans Series with the Belgian WRT squad, which has confirmed it will be putting in an entry for the French enduro with the car.

Kubica has joined WRT after revealing ahead of his P2 debut with the Danish High Class squad at last month's Daytona 24 Hours that he was targeting a move into the

category alongside his F1 role with Alfa Romeo. He will be part of an expanded LMP2 programme mounted by WRT, which is also fielding a solo car in the World Endurance Championship this year.

WRT boss Vincent Vosse explained that it "made perfect sense" to enter the ELMS alongside the WEC for the team's first full season in P2. It was, he said, "just a question of being able to do it the right way".

"This not the first time we have had discussions with Robert – we talked about the DTM in the past," he said. "To say that we are happy to welcome Robert

in the WRT family is an understatement.

"We all have a deep admiration for Robert as a driver and as a person: he is a true racer, a man driven by an unstoppable passion."

Kubica described the deal with WRT as marking "a new chapter" in his career.

"It will be my first full season in endurance racing, sharing the car with team-mates, something I discovered a few days ago at Daytona," he said. "I look forward to start working with the team."

WRT is still working to fill the seats alongside Kubica for the coming season.

GARY WATKINS

WRC Promoter becomes WRX promoter

WORLD RALLYCROSS

WRC Promoter, the logically named promoter of the World Rally Championship, has come to an agreement with the FIA to promote the governing body's World Rallycross Championship from this year.

A tender process was opened last October after previous commercial rights holder IMG confirmed its intention to pull out eight

years into a 10-year deal.

"We are pleased to be aligning with WRC Promoter as we build towards a ground-breaking electric future [for WRX]," said FIA secretary general for sport Peter Bayer.

This year, the new all-electric FIA RX2e series will be launched as WRX's undercard, before the top-flight RX1 cars (formerly known as Supercar) are switched to

electric power from 2022.

The 2021 WRX season is due to get under way in May at Spa. The round planned for the Belgian venue last year was scheduled to incorporate stages of the Ypres WRC event, but did not happen due to COVID. It can be expected that more WRX and WRC events will tie up in the future with WRC Promoter at the helm of both series.

HAL RIDGE



FIA WORLD RALLYCROSS



THE FUTURE... Lotus has revealed a design study for an electric endurance racer of the year 2030. The E-R9 has been designed by Lotus Engineering, the consultancy division of the company, to mark its 40th anniversary by showcasing innovations in aerodynamics and electric powertrains. The car, which incorporates active aerodynamics around a fighter jet-style cockpit canopy, attempts to “push the boundaries of where we are technically today and extrapolate into the future”, according to Lotus chief aerodynamicist Richard Hill.

Marquez in doubt for openers

MOTOGP

Six-time MotoGP world champion Marc Marquez remains doubtful for next month's start of the 2021 season as his broken arm continues to heal.

The Honda star sat out most of the 2020 campaign following a crash in the season-opening Spanish Grand Prix at Jerez. He aggravated the injury by attempting to take part in qualifying the following weekend, then broke the plate in his arm in a domestic patio-door-opening incident, which prompted a second operation. It is thought that he picked up a bone infection from this second surgery.

Marquez underwent a third operation in December, where he had bone grafted from his hip onto his arm, which is where the infection was found. It was thought that this surgery would rule him out for six months, but Honda last week announced that the arm had begun to show signs of healing. Its statement read: “The medical team assessed the radiographic signs of

bone consolidation and were satisfied with the progress. From now on, and during the next few weeks, Marquez will be able to progress steadily in the process of functional recovery of the operated arm.”

Despite rumours of Ducati outcast Andrea Dovizioso – who is taking a sabbatical in 2021 – potentially standing in during the opening races of 2021, Honda is likely to field HRC test rider Stefan Bradl again alongside new signing Pol Espargaro should Marquez not be fit to race.

LEWIS DUNCAN



IN THE HEADLINES

TRULLI SQUEAKS F4 TITLE

Enzo Trulli, the son of ex-Formula 1 race winner Jarno, had a safety car to thank for claiming the UAE Formula 4 title at last weekend's Dubai finale. Main rival Dilano van't Hoff had easily pulled out the distance to negate a five-second penalty for jumping the start in the second of the four races. Then a late caution closed up the field, and the Dutchman plummeted to seventh on corrected time. Trulli ended up prevailing by one point. Both will race in Spanish F4 this year.

PAYNE SMASHES IT IN NZ

Matthew Payne wrapped up New Zealand's Toyota Racing Series title at last weekend's Manfeild finale with wins in three of the four races. The only defeat came at the hands of M2 team-mate Billy Frazer – Payne had won that one on the road, but incurred two 5s penalties; one for a false start; the other for a safety car infringement. He fell just 0.313s short of making up the full 10s. Over the six races that made up the second and third rounds, Payne led every single racing lap and now moves to Australia to race in the Carrera Cup.

DUO STEPS UP WITH VAR

Leading Dutch single-seater team Van Amersfoort Racing has named two of its drivers for this year's Formula Regional European by Alpine series. Francesco Pizzi, who was runner-up in Italian F4 last season with VAR, makes the step up alongside Mallorcan Lorenzo Fluxa, who graduates from Spanish F4 and has been racing in Asian F3 in recent weeks.

PREMAT BACK AT BATHURST

Lewis Hamilton's old GP2 team-mate Alexandre Premat makes his Bathurst 1000 return this year, after securing an enduro co-driver seat with leading Ford squad Tickford Racing. Premat won the race with Scott McLaughlin in 2019. Ex-British F3 ace Tom Randle, back racing after chemotherapy, has taken another of the Tickford berths.

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Time for Ricciardo to shine again

The Aussie has joined McLaren as the squad is on the rise, and the mix of his popular, broad-grinned appeal, race-winning pedigree and fearless racing style is set to thrill

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

The clothes and colours were different; the smile was the same. Daniel Ricciardo made his first full public appearance for McLaren at the unveiling of the team's MCL35M challenger. The Formula 1 world is reading the opening sentences of the latest chapter in his story, the cuddly 'Honey Badger' on display again.

It was only two years ago that Ricciardo was settling into another F1 home, but this change will be a little different to the last, given the ongoing disruption of the pandemic. And Ricciardo's first challenge will be fitting in at his new squad, something he highlighted as particularly important. A good thing, then, that he is who he is, with his former squad Renault noting his ability to lift a room, such is his engaging character.

This is an intriguing moment for Ricciardo. He has now arrived at McLaren, a team that he suggested hadn't quite got its puzzle pieces fully arranged when he considered it as an option for his move from Red Bull in 2018. Now, he says it's got "really good stability in the team and the infrastructure" thanks to the ongoing work of Zak Brown, Andreas Seidl and James Key, and that he will be "basically just fitting into the puzzle, as opposed to trying to put it all together". Ricciardo will do this at 31, which puts him 10 years older than new team-mate Lando Norris.

Ricciardo is in his prime years – although age of course is no firm barrier to motorsport success – yet he is making another

“Ricciardo is ‘basically just fitting into the puzzle, rather than trying to put it all together’”

new start. These things generally take time to bed in, to optimise, to infuse – pick your cliché. But Ricciardo opted to make this change before turning a wheel for Renault in 2020, the Honey Badger's ruthless side on display.

He has now revealed that his McLaren deal will run for three years, which commits him to the team through F1's upcoming rules reset. Both team and driver will be eyeing that moment as a pivotal point in their shared futures. It offers the tantalising hope of world championship success for the squads that can nail the new regulations and prevail in what F1 observers hope will be a closed-up field.

During the virtual press conferences that preceded the MCL35M's launch, Ricciardo was asked about the 20th anniversary of Dale Earnhardt's death (today, see page 38).

As a child racing in karts, Ricciardo was a big fan of the NASCAR megastar's style, taking Earnhardt's #3 designation as his own in karting homage, and going back to that number when F1 drivers were allowed to pick their own from the start of 2014.

"I felt it was really my year to make a bit of a statement, to be the guy that was not afraid to put on a big move, to race hard," Ricciardo explains.

Joining Red Bull was Ricciardo's first real stab at starting afresh in a new F1 team (after making his debut in 2011 with a half-season for HRT before racing, as expected as a Red Bull junior, for Toro Rosso from 2012). So, it's worth revisiting that year as he embarks on his latest team change.

Ricciardo's stated approach to making a splash paid off. He won three times in a year when Mercedes utterly dominated at the start of the turbo-hybrid era, and essentially ended Sebastian Vettel's time as Red Bull's untouchable star. He finished third in the championship and was selected as Autosport's number one in our Top 50 Drivers of the Year ranking. He repeated that latter feat in 2016, maturing after shuffling down five spots in 2015 as he struggled to accept that, despite his skills at the top level, he lacked the machinery to be world champion and so overdrove.

In 2017, Max Verstappen's first full year as a Red Bull racer, he slid down our ranking, as for the first time since joining the senior squad he was outperformed by a team-mate (though still scored more points). In 2018 he couldn't overcome the reliability issues that plagued his final Red Bull year, and in 2019 both he and Renault had rather low-key campaigns, although Ricciardo earned praise for edging a driver of Nico Hulkenberg's calibre. In 2020, as Renault finally made good on its aim to get back to the podium, Ricciardo shone to a much greater extent.

Before F1 gets to its 2022 reset (assuming the competitive order is indeed shaken up), the 2021 midfield fight could be even more crowded than last year, with Ferrari hoping to surge back up. So, perhaps it's worth Ricciardo revisiting the approach that made him an F1 megastar in 2014. It's not because he lost that – he has remained one of the championship's best racers – but for the potential benefits it may bring. An impressive immediate display for McLaren would reinforce his quality and help both parties gather momentum going into the new era.

After all, Ricciardo is convinced that McLaren is now "a real contender". Linking all of that together with his potential (plus Norris's) raises expectations of McLaren doing something special. Its former charge, the highly rated Carlos Sainz Jr, knows this is hard to achieve in the crowded midfield, but his McLaren displays led to a Ferrari drive...

At the very least it will be entertaining. But that's where Ricciardo comes into his own. The captivating Honey Badger. ✨

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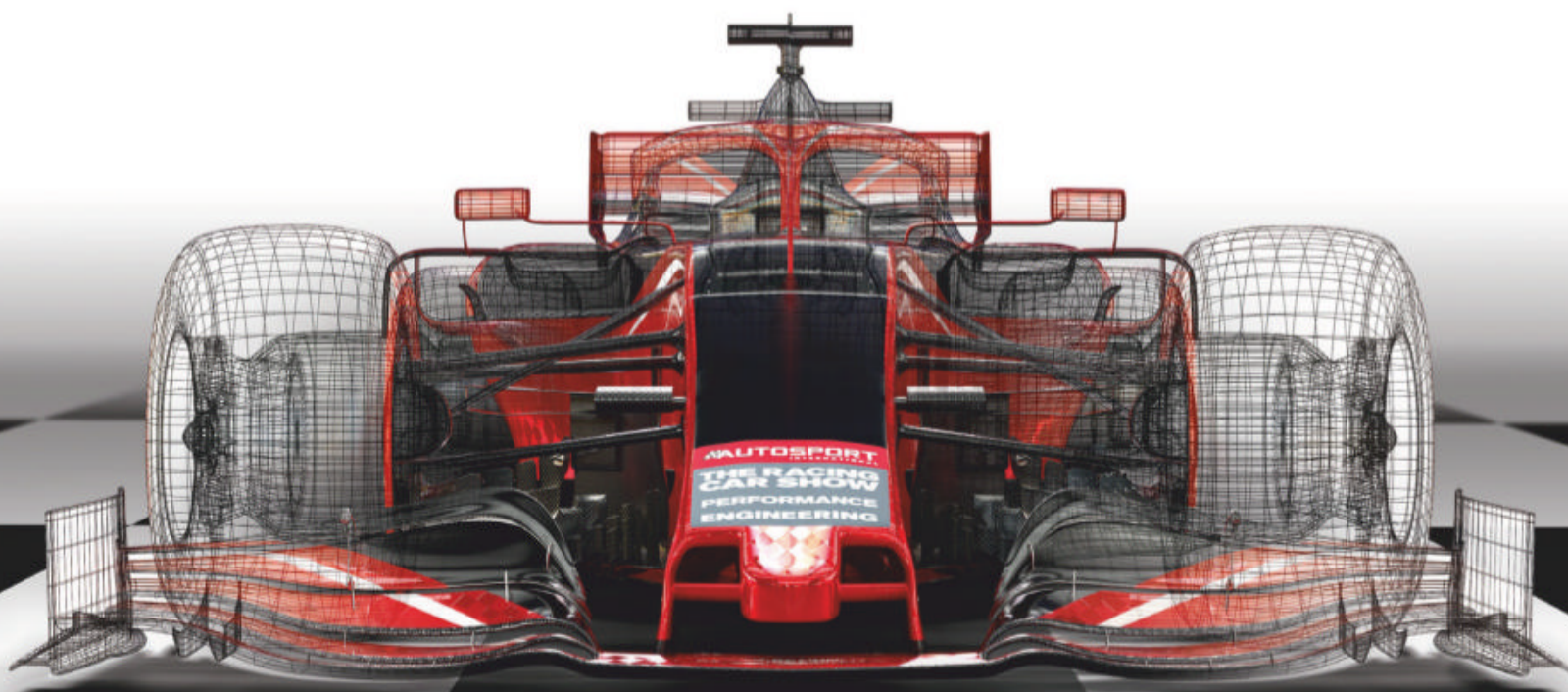
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Pros and cons of F1's rule changes

In the strategy for grand prix racing's future, 2021 represents a significant step towards the goal of closer racing and a more level playing field. That's the theory, at least...

RODI BASSO

This feels like the year when everybody seeks to turn the page and write a new chapter. This is how I imagine the atmosphere in the offices of the FIA and Liberty Media after having miraculously delivered last season in very difficult circumstances. These two main stakeholders in Formula 1 have also defined a new strategy to try to enhance the spectacle of the sport. And this year we will see the outcome of what was initially announced at the end of 2019.

The new vision is well-known: ensuring a closer, fairer and more exciting sport. At a very high level we will see significantly less downforce, heavier vehicles and (allegedly) slower tyres. Hence, in absolute value or, for the more technical enthusiasts, the dynamic of the centre of mass will certainly exhibit a higher lap time with all the competitors. The main areas the teams will have to manage to differentiate themselves are aerodynamics and finance. Let's analyse what this will imply.

Favouring close racing means allowing overtaking. The only way to reach this goal is to extend the braking areas and allow the cars to perform better when they are getting closer to a competitor than in 2020. To achieve that goal, the aero changes will reduce the downforce level and the impact of the wake outwash and turbulence management, which affect the aero field behind.

To lower the downforce level, the surface of the floor and the

“People are already exploring the boundaries of the rules”

efficiency of the diffuser will be reduced. The new construction and shape of the front tyre will also have an impact on downforce, especially on the front, but we can be sure this aspect has been already addressed by the teams, at least at CFD and windtunnel levels. For the aero field behind the vehicles, the components influencing the wake outwash are especially the front wing, brake duct, bargeboards and possibly some aero slots on the side of the floor. The impact of the new rules on the design is that engineers will have cleaner lines and surfaces to work with, and more predictable aero flows to simulate.

Another change that won't be negligible is the increase in sliding and wheelspin, especially at the start of the season. This will help the best suspension designers and drivers' style to make a difference.

Theoretically this is all correct, and the strategy proposed by the FIA and Liberty Media to save Formula 1 is definitely

addressing the vision. But, like all strategies, there are opportunities and threats. Let's try to explore them.

AERO COMPLEXITY

The changes will go towards a less complex and articulated aero configuration with the reduction of parts like fins and wings which, if not harmonised, can introduce a very unstable behaviour of the aero field around the car. Hence the car should be 'easier' to design from an aerodynamic standpoint.

For the sake of the spectacle, we need to hope that Mercedes' 2020 performance was heavily relying on the more complex aero parts that are now forbidden. But if this is not the case and the lap time change proves to be a pure offset from 2020, the cars' performance for everyone could go back to the level of 2019, when Mercedes was still on top, albeit by a smaller margin.

LIMIT ON CFD/WINDTUNNEL TIME

If a team finds the magic formula, there is only one aero update available during the season. Teams will have one bullet! And with the limitation in windtunnel and CFD hours depending on last year's classification, we might see the same lap time gaps frozen for the whole season.

Mercedes started working on the current season earlier than the other teams, and its simulation tools have proved to be very accurate and another distinctive point in the battle.

NO 'PINK MERCEDES' ANYMORE

The FIA will be stricter in not allowing similarities and reverse engineering exercises from one team to another. But if we think of the close racing side, Racing Point (now to be called Aston Martin) actually closed the gap last year and quite often added to the show. Is this a missed opportunity?

BUDGET CAP

Big teams will have to manage smaller budgets. It might be very challenging to keep a 'continuous-improvement' mindset with less than half the money. This might be the only real challenge for Mercedes and Red Bull compared to 2020. Just as with the aero testing restriction, this rule may introduce the risk of freezing the performance scenario that we see in the first few races.

The risk in this area is also related to how and whether the FIA will be able/capable of monitoring the books. I am even more intrigued by how the immense creativity of the motorsport world will try to find new ways and workarounds in this new area. And it looks like people have already started exploring the boundaries of the rules, with actions like the movement of personnel from one team to another but keeping the people on their books (or maybe not?), or the flourishing of 'Applied' or 'Technology' organisations today, as sister companies to the racing teams.

I like to dream of the day when motorsport ingenuity will unlock innovative approaches in the finance world as much as it has been doing on the technical side. Mr Warren Buffett beware! ❄️

GRAND PRIX GUIDE

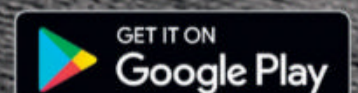
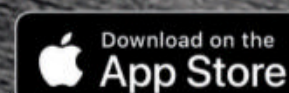


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YOUR SAY

There's almost an infinite number of questions and concerns that can be raised by the decision to go for the engine freeze

MAGNUS GORANSON

We need to talk about F1 engines

I would love to see a more critical approach towards the new engine regulations in F1 from 2025. They are supposed to be environmentally friendly, sustainable and attractive to new manufacturers. But it's literally impossible to do all of that without going fully electric.

Why on earth would any car manufacturer spend millions on R&D in F1 engine technology that's going to get banned in European road cars within a decade? Did the FIA sign both their own and F1's death sentence when they said Formula E was the only electric series for 30 years?

Is F1 planning to be purely entertainment and zero relevance for the auto industry from 2025? Even the auto industry is saying the internal combustion engine is dead and many manufacturers have stopped investing in further development. Are the boards in those manufacturers ready to spend money on ICE in F1 from 2025 onwards?

Is the unanimous decision about the engine freeze from 2022 a sign that the manufacturers have no more faith in the technology, or are they truly so afraid of losing Red Bull that they accept to stand technologically still for three years?

There's almost an infinite number of questions and concerns that can be raised by the decision to go for the engine freeze, and that they are talking about further developing ancient technologies from 2025 onwards. I hope some of this can be addressed by Autosport.

Magnus Goranson

By email

Look to Formula Ford for inspiration

This argument about whether the Formula 1 grand prix show can be improved has been going on for some time (Opinion, 4 February; Your Say, 11 February). What we have is a problem of a perceived 'boring' show, but the regulations preclude the running of qualifying races of any significant length because of the wear and tear that mechanical components would undergo, given that they are subject to limited availability.

I would suggest a weekend timetable of two practice



sessions on the Friday, then on the Saturday four five-car races to decide the grid order for the grand prix. The races would be five laps long, and which race an individual car was in and its grid position both drawn by lot. The grid for the grand prix would then be formed by using the times for the finishers in the qualifying races, with the fastest winner on pole, the next fastest winner on the next position, etc. The fastest second place would be in fifth position on the grid.

The 'finishing position/time' element works now with respect to the Formula Ford Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy, so why not for Formula 1 also?

Stephen Davies

Southport

Memories of Formula Classic

Yes, I remember Formula Classic (Your Say, 11 February). There was quite a lot of publicity surrounding the inaugural event at Donington Park in 1995, not least because it was the return to competition of Martin Donnelly following his career-ending Jerez F1 shunt in 1990.

What I don't remember are any subsequent races...


Stuart Groves

Birmingham


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What Red Bull must do to beat Mercedes

*The team is as hungry as ever for a fifth world championship.
There are key challenges it must overcome in 2021
to switch from challenger to conqueror*

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY RED BULL AND  motorsport
IMAGES





“WE HAVE BEEN THE MOST CONSISTENT CHALLENGER OVER THE PAST SEVEN YEARS. WE’VE MANAGED TO WIN RACES IN SIX OF THOSE YEARS. AND IT’S IMPORTANT FOR US TO KEEP TRYING TO BE BETTER IN EVERY AREA.”

CHRISTIAN HORNER knows his stats. In the years since Mercedes ascended to Formula 1 domination in 2014 and a two-tier championship was unofficially amalgamated, his squad has been able to take victories from the Silver/Black Arrows in every year bar 2015. In constructors’ championship placings, however, Ferrari has the second-best record, with four runner-up spots to Red Bull’s three. Then the Italian team’s hard fall from the front last year meant the teams vying for victories was down to two.

Off-season noises emerging from Ferrari suggest the team is confident of producing a new engine that will at least make up for some of its unexpected 2020 power deficiency. But, as that is far from guaranteed, F1 heads into 2021 with Red Bull again expected to be Mercedes’ biggest threat.

But it’s been here before. Last year, stable technical rules from 2019 were expected to close up the field, with Red Bull aiming to banish the slow start it made two years ago while grappling with the front-wing changes. Then, although the pandemic delayed the start of the 2020 season until the summer, the result was Mercedes’ W11 re-establishing the team’s gap over the pack to its largest extent since the early years of the turbo-hybrid era. Red Bull was ultimately undone by a car that had an inherent aerodynamic imbalance, which meant the RB16 was very tricky to drive. The team got to work in addressing its issues early in the delayed campaign, but only Max Verstappen was able to get among the Mercedes drivers, even as Red Bull eroded the gap to the front with several development steps.

This progress culminated in Verstappen’s victory from pole in the 2020 season finale. Although Mercedes clearly underperformed in Abu Dhabi, where it had been supreme since replacing Red Bull as F1’s leading team, the win raised hopes of a closer title fight in 2021. After all, the cost-saving measures enacted in response to the pandemic mean the cars that line up on the Bahrain Grand Prix grid next month will feature many parts carried over from the machinery that closed out 2020.

The question now is: can Red Bull finally go from challenger back to conqueror? >>



Glory days: Vettel's fourth world title was clinched back in 2013

DUNBAR



Horner must break the recent trend of Red Bull starting a new F1 season on the back foot

RED BULL MUST... NAVIGATE THE DESIGN RULE CHANGES BEST

If Red Bull is to have any hope of finally reversing seven years of defeat against Mercedes, it must make the most of the limited development allowed for this year. Plus, it must do a better job of adapting the RB16B around the changes mandated to cut downforce levels by 10%.

The teams knew heading into the delayed 2020 campaign that they were embarking on a two-year development project for their latest designs, albeit with a token-system limitation for upgrades. This meant they were free to take different paths in updating their 2020 cars throughout last season: regularly throughout, as Red Bull did; or shift resources to nailing the 2021 rule changes early, as Mercedes did.

While the design restrictions mean the annual unveiling of new cars will necessarily be different this year, the rule changes do add up. That is why Mercedes has gone out of its way to publicly highlight the dangers these tweaks represent.

The main area of concern comes down to clawing back the downforce lost by the triangle cut-out of aero parts at the rear of the floors, plus the reduced diffuser size. There is added importance for the Mercedes versus Red Bull fight here, because the two teams have different rear-aero approaches. Red Bull has long favoured the high-rake concept, while Mercedes runs much lower to the ground. It's thought that the changes to the floor rules for 2021 will cause additional challenges for one of these approaches, but it's not yet clear which one will be hampered most. So, there is both hope and danger for Red Bull's chances when it comes to adapting to the new floor regulations.

"It's been an intense winter, with the whole COVID situation as well," says Horner about Red Bull's preparation in this unique off-season for modern F1. "It's been busy. The team have done a great job working around the challenges that we've faced.

"We've been assisted by the fact that there's a large percentage of the regulations that are carried over, which is unusual. But generally, I think the team is in pretty good shape."

RED BULL MUST... START STRONGLY

Making a slow start has been Red Bull's second major weakness in recent years, but that should be less of a factor this time around. If that sentence seems familiar, that's because it comes from page 23 of the 12 March 2020 edition of Autosport. At that stage last year, hopes were high that Red Bull could finally close the gap to Mercedes (sounds familiar...) as it had been winter testing's dark horse. Mercedes clearly led the way, but Red Bull seemed confident, even with Verstappen and Alex Albon having wayward moments that were put down to 'finding the limit'.

In 2020, Red Bull was not facing the challenge of adapting to new front-wing regulations within an annually refreshed car, and so a repeat of the slow start it made in 2019 while dealing with exactly that problem was theoretically removed. As we now know, the team did start 2020 on the back foot and played catch-up to Mercedes all season. This firmly established the trend that has cost Red Bull considerably in recent years – it is very difficult to overcome a deficit in-season and, when it does, Mercedes is then too far ahead.

After the comprehensive defeats Red Bull suffered in the opening



“WE’VE WORKED HARD TO UNDERSTAND WHY WE STRUGGLED FOR CORRELATION AT THE BEGINNING OF LAST YEAR”



rounds of the last campaign, the team quickly set about establishing what had gone wrong. The official line changed from ‘finding the limit’ to “something misbehaving aerodynamically”, according to Horner at the Hungarian GP in July.

“We’ve worked very hard to understand why we struggled for correlation at the beginning of last year,” Horner now explains. “When [the season] eventually got going, compared with what our simulation tools were telling us, both windtunnel and other tools [something was amiss]. So, we learned a lot during 2020. And, of course, the challenge now is to apply that in 2021.

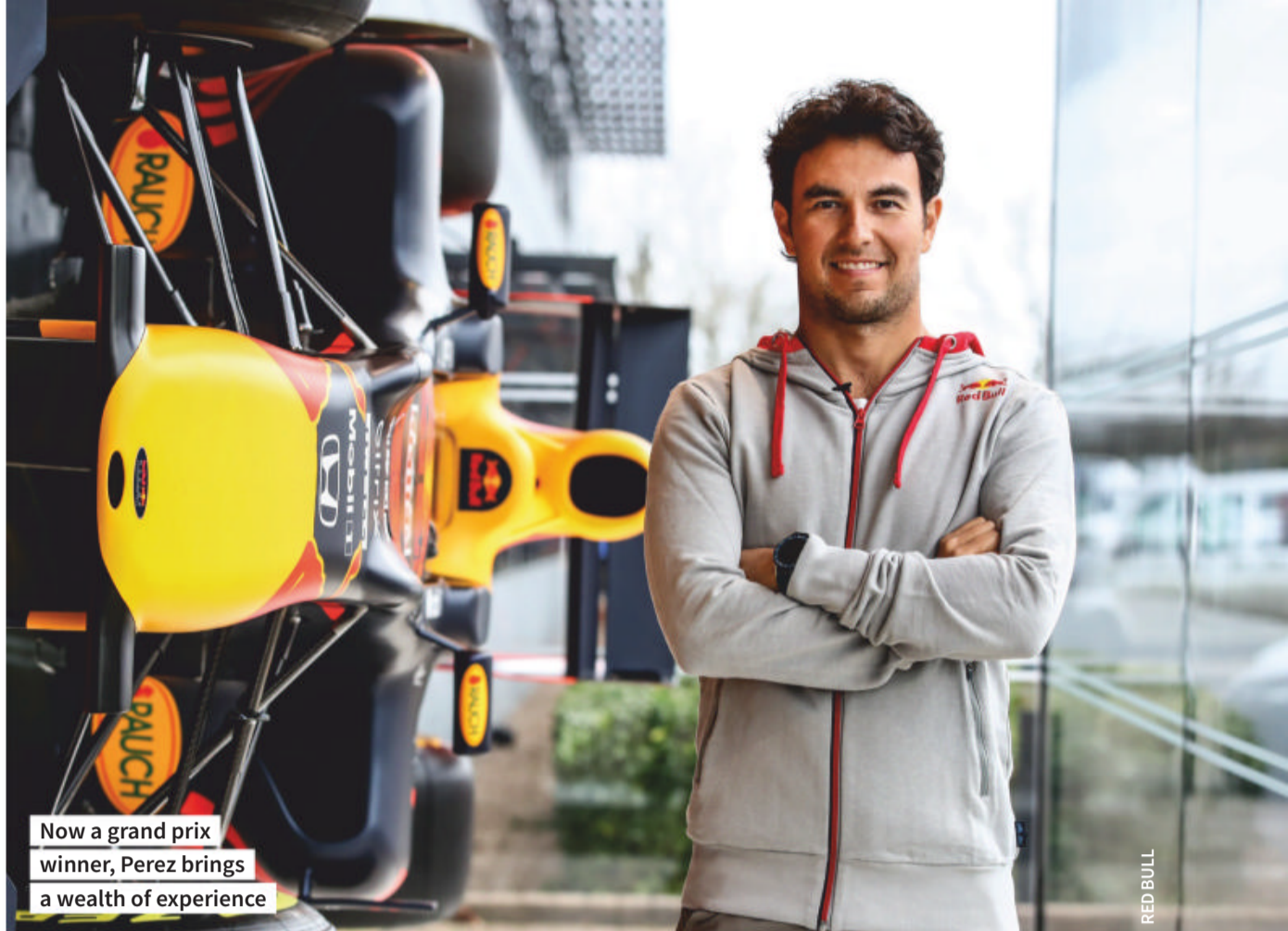
“We gained a lot of understanding through last year, and I think some of it was the complexities of our windtunnel, which has its limitations in some respects.”

This is the paradox Red Bull faces in 2021: the carryover requirement removes much of any excuse for starting poorly compared to where it finished last season, but the rule changes are complex enough that they could trip up any team.

RED BULL MUST... HOPE ITS 2020 DEVELOPMENT APPROACH WAS CORRECT

The teams knew that there were different paths they could take when it came to adapting their designs for 2021. Red Bull continued to work on the RB16 throughout the final stages of last season, and even at the last race it sported a single mount for its rear wing.

Mercedes, meanwhile, stopped updating the W11 after August’s Belgian GP. These differing approaches help to explain why the gap between F1’s leading squads closed considerably over the second half



Now a grand prix winner, Perez brings a wealth of experience

RED BULL

of the season, although Red Bull still only managed to add one more win (the Yas Marina success) to Verstappen’s 70th Anniversary GP triumph at Silverstone. This further highlights the scale of Red Bull’s challenge to topple Mercedes.

“Mercedes publicly said they stopped developing their 2020 car to focus on 2021,” says Horner. “So, we’ll see, obviously, in Bahrain, the step forward they’ve made. I think the regulation changes are bigger than were anticipated, on the aero side of things.”

There is danger for both teams on this point. Red Bull has the “lessons that we’ve learned” as Horner repeatedly reiterates, while Mercedes will have to wait for the reduced pre-season testing time to see if the W12’s updates and tweaks work as it hopes. The flipside is that it will have been able to focus its resources on ensuring these do work as intended, to take a further performance step from what was arguably its best car of the turbo-hybrid era (Horner agrees on this), which was so good it maintained its pace advantage even without updates for 10 races.

RED BULL MUST... HAVE BOTH DRIVERS TAKE POINTS FROM MERCEDES

F1’s leading two teams have had two very different experiences in terms of driver line-up stability in recent years.

Mercedes replaced the tense but successful Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg set-up with harmony between Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas. Over the same period since 2014, Red Bull has fielded six drivers, and will add a seventh, with Sergio Perez coming in to replace Albon for this season.

Red Bull’s driver line-up imbalance was the first weakness we referred to in our 2020 season preview piece on the team. It has a megastar in Verstappen, but since Daniel Ricciardo departed at the end of 2018 it simply hasn’t been able to get its second car into contention. Pierre Gasly couldn’t match Verstappen from the off in 2019, while Albon likewise couldn’t get on the Dutchman’s performance level, and had a harder time taming the unpredictable RB16.

This imbalance has cost Red Bull results. There was the infamous 2019 Hungarian GP, where Gasly’s absence from the lead fight meant Verstappen lost against Hamilton’s two-stop charge. Last year, had >>



DUNBAR

Verstappen’s car is recovered after he ‘found the limit’ during 2020 pre-season testing at Barcelona



Lack of a two-car challenge cost Verstappen dear in 2019 Hungarian GP

SBLOXHAM

Red Bull had its second car running close to Verstappen in the British GP, it might have instead pitted that RB16 to take the fastest lap point, which would have left Verstappen to clear up when the Mercedes drivers had their tyre failures. At Imola, Mercedes demonstrated how having two cars provides a tactical advantage, as Verstappen was able to overcome the Ferrari-bodywork-hobbled Bottas, but couldn't prevent Hamilton going from third to first on a contra-strategy. Then there were the Italian and Sakhir GP wins for AlphaTauri and Racing Point respectively. On days where Mercedes messes up, it reflects badly on Red Bull too if it cannot pick up the pieces.

This is a problem that hiring Perez, who drove for the Horner family's Arden GP2 team in 2009, is designed to cure. The Mexican is the first non-Red Bull junior to join the senior squad since Mark Webber in 2007, and it's his F1 experience and achievements that made him a desirable option for the team, which went into 2020 expecting Albon to prove that he deserved to keep the drive alongside Verstappen.

"It was a tremendously difficult decision, and one that we were fortunate to have time to be able to fully consider – the whole season in fact," says Horner. "And it's highly unusual for a driver of Sergio's quality and ability to be on the market.

"So, we just felt that we would be better placed putting in a more experienced driver alongside Max as we head into 2021, and that we continue to work with and develop Alex 'offline'. He still remains very much part of the team – he's driving the simulator today as we speak. It was a grown-up view that we took to go outside of the [junior] scheme and to give Sergio a chance."

Perez is unlikely to match Verstappen in terms of pure speed, but he comes into 2021 in fine form given his victory at the Sakhir GP and podium in Turkey. That should have been accompanied by two more top-three results from Imola and the Bahrain GP, but for a Racing Point safety-car strategy call going awry in Italy and an MGU-K failure causing his retirement at Sakhir.

This is Perez's second chance to race with a major F1 player (although his season with McLaren in 2013 was really the start of that squad falling back significantly). He's been through a lot of racing experience and success with the Force India/Racing Point/Aston Martin team that he helped save back in 2018. But delivering at the front in 2021 has the added complications of testing being just three days (so 1.5 days total for Perez to familiarise himself with his new mount), and Red Bull's previous design being tough to drive.

"WE JUST FELT THAT WE WOULD BE BETTER PLACED PUTTING IN A MORE EXPERIENCED DRIVER ALONGSIDE MAX"



Horner expects Perez to challenge team totem Verstappen



Verstappen has delivered in spades, squeezing the maximum from the car

"It'd be very difficult to get himself up to speed in just one test, straight away," Horner says of Perez's chances of matching Verstappen from the off in 2021. "But he has the benefit of a lot of experience and, of course, we are expecting him to be close to Max and challenging, in a way that we had with Daniel Ricciardo and Max for three seasons. So, hopefully, Sergio can play a really important role for the team in getting both cars, on a consistent basis, near to the Mercedes."

And this returns us to the key point of Red Bull abandoning its junior scheme hiring policy for the time being. While there is a legitimate argument that it promoted Daniil Kvyat, Gasly and Albon too soon into their respective F1 careers, it wasn't a problem with Verstappen. With a second driver at or around his level, Red Bull would be a much stronger threat overall.

RED BULL MUST... KEEP PRESSURE ON MERCEDES VIA STRATEGY CALLS

Although Red Bull didn't know how far off it was when the lights went out at the season-opening 2020 Austrian GP, the team had given Verstappen the same tyre strategy with which he had won on the 2019 visit to its home track. In theory, this was better than the plan Mercedes had given polesitter Bottas (softs at the start versus mediums for Verstappen), but he retired from contention.

But at the 70th Anniversary GP, Verstappen went into the race on the hard tyre compared to the mediums on the two Mercedes, and this gave him a decisive advantage. In the hot conditions, Verstappen pressured the Black Arrows into eating through their tyres early in the race, made a conclusive pass on Bottas, and controlled things to the finish.

Although contra-strategy calls remain a relatively uncommon choice for Red Bull to take (the main strategy is usually such for a reason), it has occasionally delivered results, while Mercedes can occasionally crack under pressure. So, unless a pace advantage means it can afford to be cautious, Red Bull will likely need further bold calls to gain a sporadic edge in 2021.

RED BULL MUST... IGNORE SPECULATION ABOUT VERSTAPPEN'S FUTURE

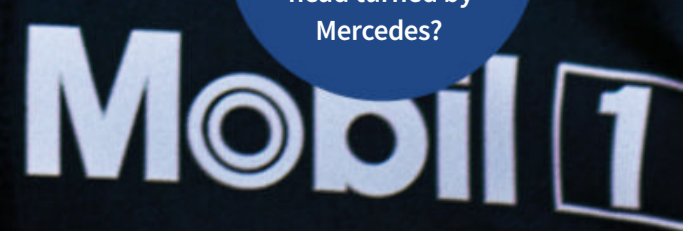
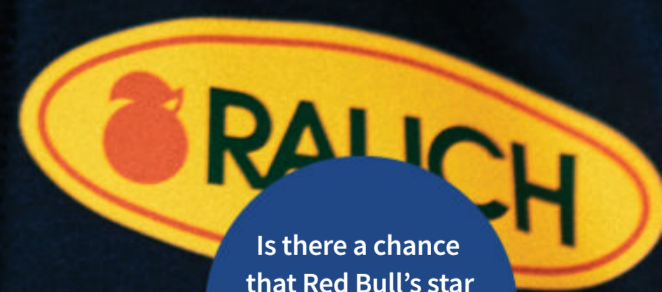
Mercedes and Hamilton agreeing a one-year deal for 2021 triggered additional speculation about its line-up for 2022, as both its seats are now potentially up for grabs. This remains an attractive proposition for Verstappen, who was courted by Mercedes when he raced in Formula 3 before opting to sign with Red Bull because it could offer quick advancement into F1.

He does have a contract at his current squad until the end of 2023, but if all parties agree then anything can happen. So, as much as there is potential for driver line-up uncertainty to finally destabilise Mercedes, the same could be true for Red Bull.

After all, Horner says what Verstappen has "extracted from the car in the last couple of years has been truly impressive". And this is the crux of the potential issue – Verstappen has held up his end of the bargain by racing at a phenomenally high level (with the odd mistake to sort out, >>



Mobil 1



Is there a chance that Red Bull's star driver will have his head turned by Mercedes?

REDBULL



INSIGHT RED BULL

such as his pre-race crash at the Hungarian GP, or spin in the wet in Turkey), but Red Bull is yet to deliver championship-winning machinery during his tenure.

Horner is unconcerned at this stage, saying: “I’ve been around too long to worry too much about what others are doing. It’s enormously important for ourselves, and obviously Max, to build on the potential that we’ve shown [last year].”

RED BULL MUST... HOPE HONDA STEPS UP BEFORE ITS F1 EXIT

Last week’s news that F1 teams have unanimously agreed to an engine freeze from the start of 2022 boosted Red Bull’s fortunes in an area that has long been a headache for a non-traditional works operation. Following the freeze agreement, Red Bull announced it would take over Honda’s F1 engine operation, creating a new division at its Milton Keynes base called Red Bull Powertrains Ltd. It can now either develop itself the technology for the new engine formula, which was brought forward to 2025 alongside the freeze agreement, or partner with another manufacturer.

But this is all tied into 2021 too. Honda has one final year in which to write a successful conclusion to its latest F1 saga. A title still eludes Honda and there are expectations – including from Mercedes boss Toto Wolff – that it will try to ensure it exits on a high.

“Honda are doing a good job,” says Horner. “They’re obviously keen to leave Formula 1 in a positive manner. They’ve put in a huge amount of effort, as have our fuel partners – Exxon Mobil have done a great job over the winter as well. The whole team, from top to bottom [has too].”

In 2020, Mercedes made a notable step forward with its engine, driven by its controversial defeats to Ferrari the previous summer. This pulled it further clear of Honda and the rest, but the Japanese



Honda is expected to pull out all the stops in its swansong season

manufacturer’s 2020 engine had an issue with battery deployment running out over a lap, which added to Red Bull’s race pace deficit. If it’s to leave F1 with the ultimate achievement, and Red Bull with reasons to finally put its power problems to bed, Honda must step up before it leaves the stage once again.

RED BULL MUST... BE BETTER EVERYWHERE

Red Bull had cause for optimism even before Verstappen gave it much welcomed momentum and motivation heading into the 2020-21 off-season with his Abu Dhabi walk-off win.

Verstappen had run Mercedes hard before his puncture put him out at Imola, and he was in contention to win the epic race in Turkey before spinning out with what looked like an impatient move on Perez. In the Bahrain GP, he was frustrated to come home just behind Hamilton, and Horner was adamant that Verstappen would have been a factor in the Sakhir GP had he not retired in the first-lap shunt triggered by Charles Leclerc tagging Perez.



Abu Dhabi pole and race win gave Red Bull great season-ending fillip

“HONDA ARE DOING A GOOD JOB. THEY’RE OBVIOUSLY KEEN TO LEAVE FORMULA 1 IN A POSITIVE MANNER”

But Red Bull is well aware that winning the final race of 2020 provides little genuine indication of the 2021 form book. After all, one of Mercedes’ oft-repeated mantras is that it learns most from its defeats. This returns us to Horner’s line from the beginning of this article – if Red Bull is to finally overcome Mercedes, then it simply must be better everywhere. It has the tools, the skills and the determination; now it needs to deliver on its promise.

“Mercedes are a very rounded team, and they’ve been solid for a long time now, and all credit to them for the records that they’ve broken with seven successive championships,” Horner concludes.

“Mercedes is quite a machine, but we’ve demonstrated that you can beat them – by working hard, by applying yourself to the task in hand. They will be tremendously motivated because of that last race in Abu Dhabi, and I expect that Toto has used that, and James Allison [too], to come up with an even more competitive car for this year. So, we don’t in any way underestimate the might of Mercedes. But we’ve always been a challenger.

“And our objective is to take the lessons that we learned in 2020 into 2021. And hopefully RB16B will be a good evolution. Mercedes are the clear favourites with seven consecutive titles, but we are excited about the challenge this season and won’t give up in our hunt for a fifth title.” ❄️

RED BULL'S PROMOTED PROTEGES

Between Mark Webber joining the senior Red Bull squad for 2007 and Sergio Perez being signed to partner Max Verstappen for this year, all six drivers that the team hired were promoted from its Toro Rosso/AlphaTauri junior operation.



SEBASTIAN VETTEL

RED BULL STATS	
Starts	113
Titles	4
Wins	38
Poles	44
Other podiums	27
Points	1577

In 2009, Vettel started the 12-year run of Red Bull recruiting only its junior proteges. He still boasts the team's best record in the tallies that matter most (titles and wins) by a substantial margin, as he helped the team reach F1's peak between 2010 and 2013.



DANIEL RICCIARDO

RED BULL STATS	
Starts	100
Titles	0 (Best: 3rd in 2014, 2016)
Wins	7
Poles	3
Other podiums	22
Points	956

Red Bull hasn't been able to adequately replace Ricciardo since his 2018 exit. He beat Jean-Eric Vergne to the seat when Webber left after 2013, and his 2014 success likely nudged Vettel's exit. In turn, Verstappen's rise was a probable factor in his own departure.



DANIIL KVYAT

RED BULL STATS	
Starts	21
Titles	0 (Best: 7th in 2015)
Wins	0
Poles	0
Podiums	2
Points	116

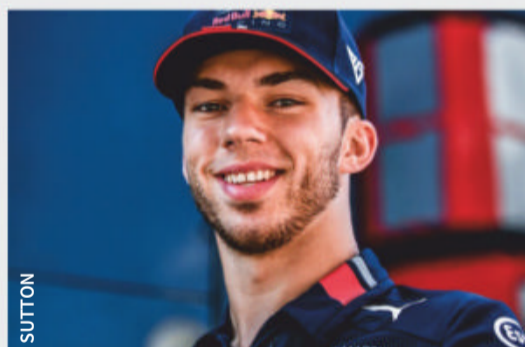
Kvyat's tenure started a trend of the team arguably promoting its juniors too early. A promising start in 2015 still featured several crashes, and a bumpy early 2016 seemed to give Red Bull its chance to quickly (and ruthlessly) replace him with Verstappen.



MAX VERSTAPPEN

RED BULL STATS	
Starts	96
Titles	0 (Best: 3rd in 2019, 2020)
Wins	10
Poles	3
Other podiums	32
Points	1100

Red Bull's big hope to recreate Vettel's success. Won on his debut at Barcelona in 2016 after a feisty 23 races at Toro Rosso with Carlos Sainz Jr. Has had to endure Red Bull's recent inadequacies, but has become Mercedes' only threat at the front.



PIERRE GASLY

RED BULL STATS	
Starts	12
Titles	0 (Best: 7th in 2019)
Wins	0
Poles	0
Podiums	0
Points	63

After putting in eye-catching displays for Toro Rosso in 2018, Gasly was announced as Ricciardo's replacement for 2019. But things started badly with a heavy pre-season shunt and he then could not get near Verstappen, culminating in a mid-season demotion.



ALEX ALBON

RED BULL STATS	
Starts	26
Titles	0 (Best: 7th in 2020)
Wins	0
Poles	0
Podiums	2
Points	181

Albon replaced Gasly halfway through his rookie F1 campaign and did enough to keep the ride. But he too failed to reach Verstappen's level and faced an uncertain future from early last season. Two podiums wasn't enough to save him for 2021.



The BTCC policeman hangs up his helmet

Jeff Allam had a long and successful touring car career, and was a highly regarded works driver for Rover and Vauxhall. Then he spent his weekends policing his successors...

Time to look back at a BTCC life spanning almost 45 years

TOM HOWARD

He's gone from being a protege of Gerry Marshall to a factory touring car driver in the glory years of the British Touring Car Championship, via success in Europe and Australia, and he's had a long spell as the BTCC's 'policeman'. It's fair to say that Jeff Allam has seen it all.

For Epsom-born Allam, the love of motorsport was kindled by his garage-owner father, and their many visits to Brands Hatch and Lydden Hill. From there he got involved in karting, but it was the friendship of his father with ex-McLaren mechanic Mike Barley that kickstarted his car racing career. "My dad had an old part-exchange Vauxhall Viva, and unbeknown to me he and Mike put together a racing car for me," he recalls. "It was a very crude saloon car in those days, and I had my first run in it at Brands Hatch. I'll never forget the day I dropped down Paddock Hill Bend, as it felt like a bit of a roller-coaster, but that was it."

It wasn't long before the fresh-faced Allam was racing against and beating Britain's best in Special Saloons and Group 1, forming

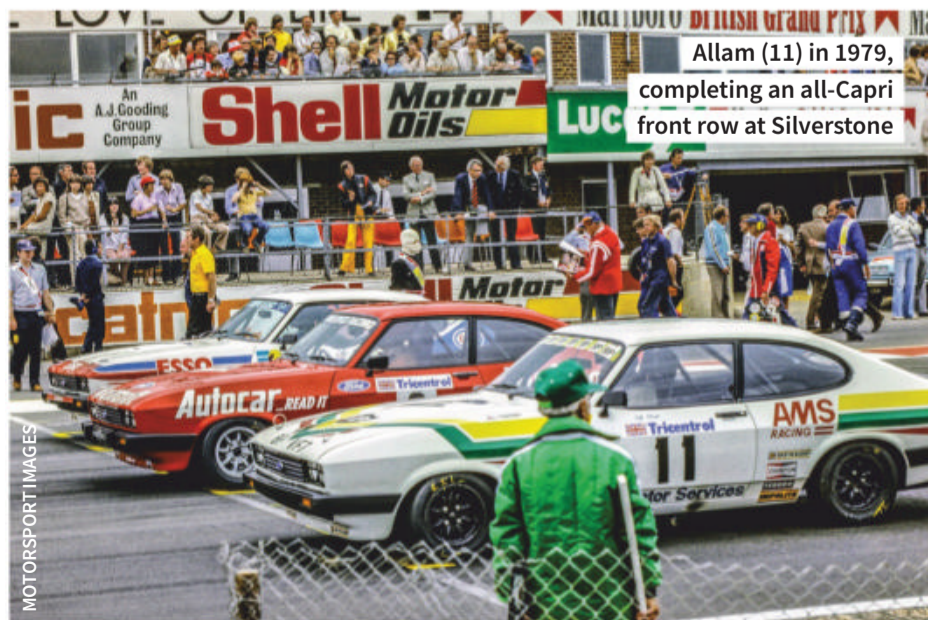
a friendship with flamboyant touring car superstar Marshall. This fast-tracked his route to becoming a professional. "I guess the first real taste of top-end performance cars was the [Vauxhall] Firenzas against Gerry [in the works DTV Vauxhall] and Tony Dron in the Dolomite Sprint," he says. "That's when it all started to happen, and it put me on the map really because I was as quick or quicker than Gerry. I was knocking up the odd win or finishing on the podium, and I started to get recognised."

"They were heroes of mine. Gerry taught me an awful lot about car racing, car control, how to perform and start to win races. He taught me the basics and I will never forget that. It wasn't like Jason Plato and Matt Neal beating each other up. The saloon car boys stuck together and helped each other out. The first time I beat Gerry, he was the first to come over to pat me on the back and say well done."

A host of victories followed, first in his own Allam Motor Services-run Vauxhall, and then overall wins in Mk2 and Mk3 Ford Capris in the British Saloon Car Championship (now known as the BTCC) from 1977-79. This was enough to land the dream of a factory paid drive with works the Rover squad run by Twickenham-based David Price Racing for 1980 at the age of 25.

Allam's first season as a works driver in the Rover 3500 S was highlighted by a win in the British Grand Prix support round at Brands Hatch, but much more was to follow once the Rover contract landed in the hands of determined Scot Tom Walkinshaw. "That stepping stone in 1980, to get a works drive and suddenly get paid and all the benefits that go with it, and to have the machinery to do the job, was the icing on the cake for me," he reflects. "It turned a bit sour, the link between Austin Rover and David Price Racing, and that's when Tom Walkinshaw came in the back door and basically nicked the deal off of Dave Price and took it in-house with TWR, and I didn't look back after that."

Indeed, Allam would go on to become one of Walkinshaw's favourites, triggering a lucrative touring car career during which he raced in Britain, Europe, and as far afield as Australia and New Zealand. "Tom was a big player, and fortunately for me I did a good job," Allam explains. "We >>



Allam on his way to 1982 BTCC Class A title. This is the British GP support round



had Peter Lovett and myself. The first three races of the season with the Rovers, Tom just wanted the cars to finish – they were capable of beating the Capris. The cars were so fast, but he didn't want us bashing into each other trying to win. He wanted to keep his deal sweet with British Leyland. They were great times.

"I just fitted in with Tom's outlook and what he wanted from his drivers, and I became one of the inner-sanctum drivers of his saloon car team. Wherever we went racing I was always part of the team and I was proud of that. A lot of people have criticised Tom, but he produced fantastic touring cars and he never let me down."

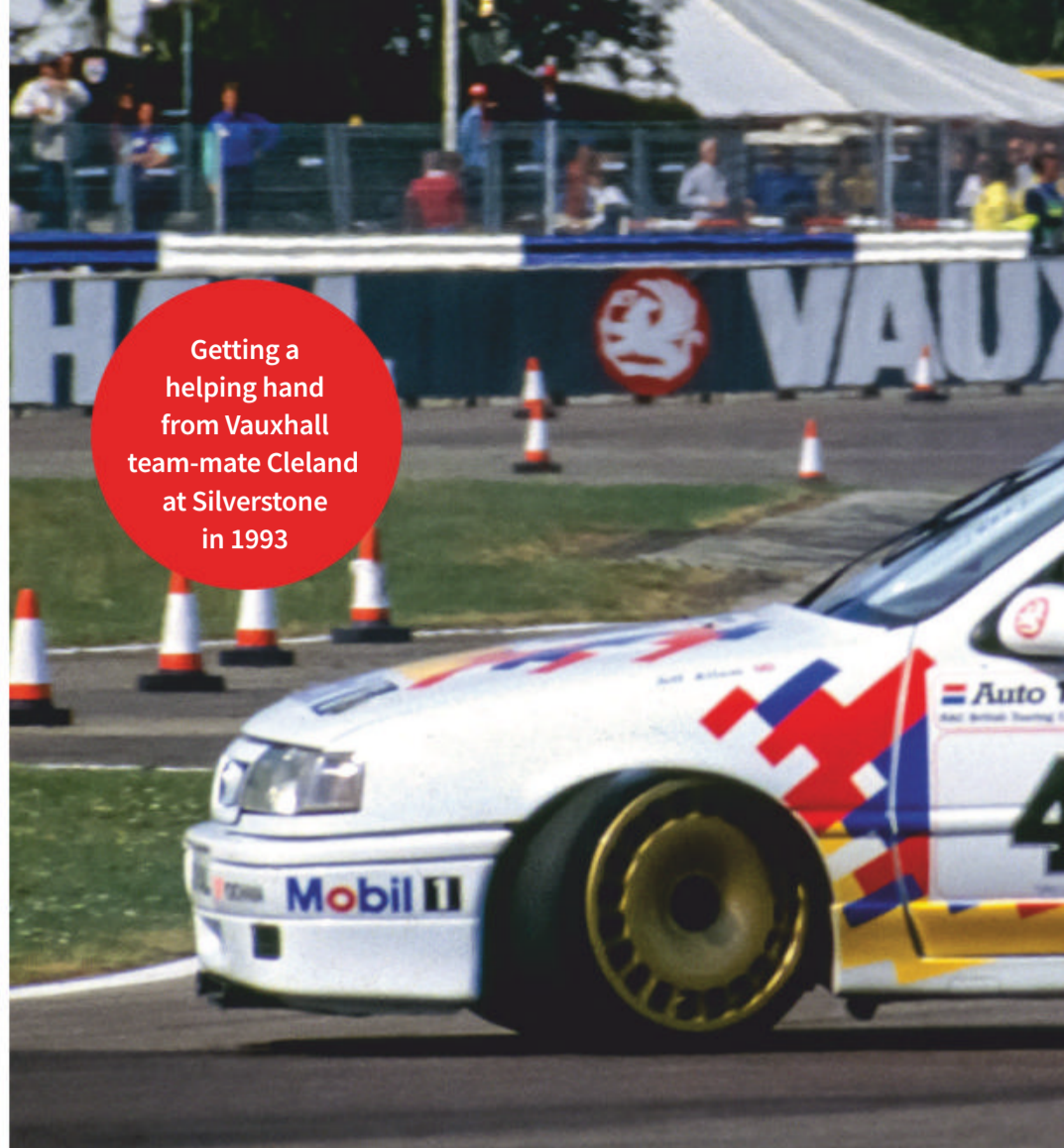
In 1982, Allam pipped Capri ace Vince Woodman to claim the British Saloon Car Championship Class A title with four outright victories, but a maximum score for Toyota Corolla GT racer Win Percy in the 1600cc class win meant no one else was going to get a look-in for the overall crown. "There's nothing better than winning a race, but to win your class you had to be on the podium and win races," says Allam. "It felt

"To get to the finish of Le Mans is quite difficult – it was a bastard of a car to drive"

like winning a championship in a way."

The following season would prove a turning point as Allam discovered his true calling – as an endurance driver. TWR continued to race in the British Saloon Car Championship with the impressive new Rover Vitesse as the series welcomed Group A regulations in place of the old Group 1. The Rovers conquered the opposition, with Allam finishing fourth behind new team-mate and provisional champion Steve Soper and runner-up Lovett. But all three entries were disqualified from the championship six months later, due to illegal body modifications and non-compliant engine components.

That aside, 1983 was the year when Allam enjoyed success in two of the world's most famous endurance races: the 24-hour events at Le Mans and Spa. The French classic provided an all-new challenge as Walkinshaw called upon Allam to drive one of two TWR-run factory Mazda 717Cs in the Group C Junior class. It was the Japanese



Getting a helping hand from Vauxhall team-mate Cleland at Silverstone in 1993

marque's first prototype sportscar to tackle Le Mans.

It proved successful, with Allam, Soper and James Weaver finishing second in class behind the the sister Mazda of Takashi Yorino, Yojiro Terada and Yoshimi Katayama. "To get to the finish of Le Mans is quite difficult – it was a bastard of a car to drive, it was not easy," he recalls. Just a month later, Allam combined with Soper and Lovett to guide a factory Rover Vitesse to third in the twice-round-the-clock epic at Spa at his third attempt.

Allam became a mainstay of the TWR Rover European Touring Car Championship squad from 1984-86. He was a consistent podium finisher in 1985, predominantly with Armin Hahne, but arguably his greatest achievement came with victory in the 1986 Silverstone round for the coveted Tourist Trophy. Paired with 1967 Formula 1 world champion Denny Hulme, the duo took their semi-factory Vitesse to honours in the 500km race, with what would turn out to be a rather



Seat skulduggery for Allam and Radisich in 1990 Bathurst 1000



JEP

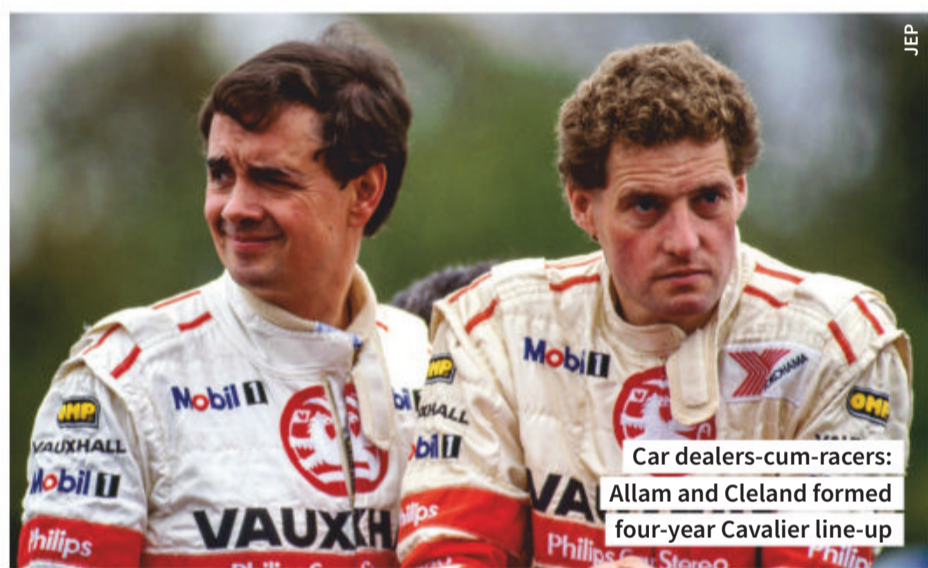
good development engine. The triumph would spark a perhaps unlikely link-up and friendship with Hulme.

“The story behind that was there was a development engine that Tom [Walkinshaw] didn’t want to run, and I said, ‘Can I take the engine and run it?’” says Allam. “At the time I didn’t want to be in that car – I wanted to be in the factory car. Tom said he didn’t know how reliable it was, but it was a quick motor and we won the race. Denny was one of the most laid-back characters you could ever come across. We became great friends, and he used to stay round my house. When we weren’t racing, he would just emerge in my garage at the showroom and come to my office.

“The nicest thing about the Tourist Trophy win was as we went into the press conference the announcer said, ‘Denny Hulme and Jeff Allam won the TT’. And Denny interrupted and said, ‘No, Jeff Allam and Denny Hulme won the TT’. That was how nice he was. He said, ‘I only had to bring it home, Jeff did all the hard work’. To say you’ve won a race with a Formula 1 world champion does mean something.”

Allam’s relationship with Walkinshaw continued until 1988. TWR was now in sportscars with Jaguar, before eventually moving into Formula 1, and it left the Surrey motor trader looking for drives and back in the shop window. But it was Walkinshaw who introduced Allam to Australia’s Great Race, the Bathurst 1000, which would provide opportunities to further his career.

After three attempts as part of Walkinshaw’s operation, in Rover (he scored a class win with Hahne), Jaguar XJS and Holden Commodore, Allam had proved himself enough to receive a call-up from Australian touring car legend Dick Johnson. The Queenslander elected to place him in one of his famous Shell-backed Ford Sierra RS500s for the 1989 and 1990 editions. After finishing eighth alongside fellow BTCC ace Robb



JEP

Car dealers-cum-racers:
Allam and Cleland formed
four-year Cavalier line-up

Gravett in 1989, Allam was teamed with the talented but then-little-known Kiwi Paul Radisich for 1990, and it would prove to be one of the most controversial races of his career.

The much-fancied pairing of Johnson and John Bowe retired the sister car due to a turbo failure with 67 laps remaining, and Allam takes up the story: “We were going well. We were obviously not allowed to run the boost that Dick and John were allowed to use in their car. We were actually leading, but there was some commotion in the pits. We had made a bit of a wrong tyre call where we put it on intermediates/wets when we should have stuck with dries. Two-thirds into the race I was told over the radio, ‘Can you put the seat back as Dick is going to get in’. I was thinking Paul and me had done all the hard work, we were on course to finish on the podium, and at that moment we were winning.

“The cars in those days had sliding seats with a little adjustable notch that you pulled to move it backwards and forwards. I was thinking, ‘How can I not let Dick in the car?’ I bent the bar down so the seat wouldn’t adjust, so when I came into the pits the seat was well forward for Paul and me and it wouldn’t move. In the end we lost about 30 seconds in the pits, which would have won us the race, but in the end Paul got back in. When I returned to the paddock after the race I pulled the lever back up and it worked perfectly. If you get on the podium at Bathurst you’ve done a good job. I was disappointed not to win it as we threw the chances away with the seat and the tyre call. We would have won it; we definitely had the fastest car.”

Allam’s second place was the best he achieved at the famed Mount Panorama, where he made one more appearance, in 1994. In the meantime, he won the all-new TVR Tuscan Challenge in 1989 and returned to his BTCC roots in 1990, driving a converted Bigazzi >>



Allam raced VLM BMW
in first year of Super
Touring, in 1990

PSP IMAGES



Motorsport BMW M3 for Vic Lee Motorsport. It was perfect timing, because this was the inaugural season of what would become known as Super Touring...

The racing became a huge hit with fans and attracted countless manufacturers, which in turn made the drivers superstars – and not short on salaries. The lure of a Vauxhall factory deal for 1991 was too hard to ignore, and Allam, already a dealer for the manufacturer, would team up with 1989 champion John Cleland for four seasons in the marque's Cavaliers.

"There was always a question of, 'Should I have stuck with Vic and maybe win the championship in 1991, which Will Hoy did in what was my car, or go to a works deal with Vauxhall?' I didn't think twice really. Getting paid to do what I wanted to do – there wasn't a choice. We absolutely felt like superstars [as the BTCC became more popular]. John Cleland and myself got on really well and we are still best of friends, we talk every week. A lot of money was being washed around and there were great drivers in it. We had great 20,000-plus crowds, a bit like today. In those days it felt as big as it is now."

Allam also played a role in the moment that arguably put the BTCC on the map: the storied 1992 title showdown at Silverstone. A run of seven podiums in 10 races, including two wins, had put him in among the title contenders, but ultimately it would be decided between team-mate Cleland, Toyota star Hoy and the late-season form man: Tim Harvey in his Vic Lee-run BMW.

Harvey had Soper, who had missed some races due to his DTM

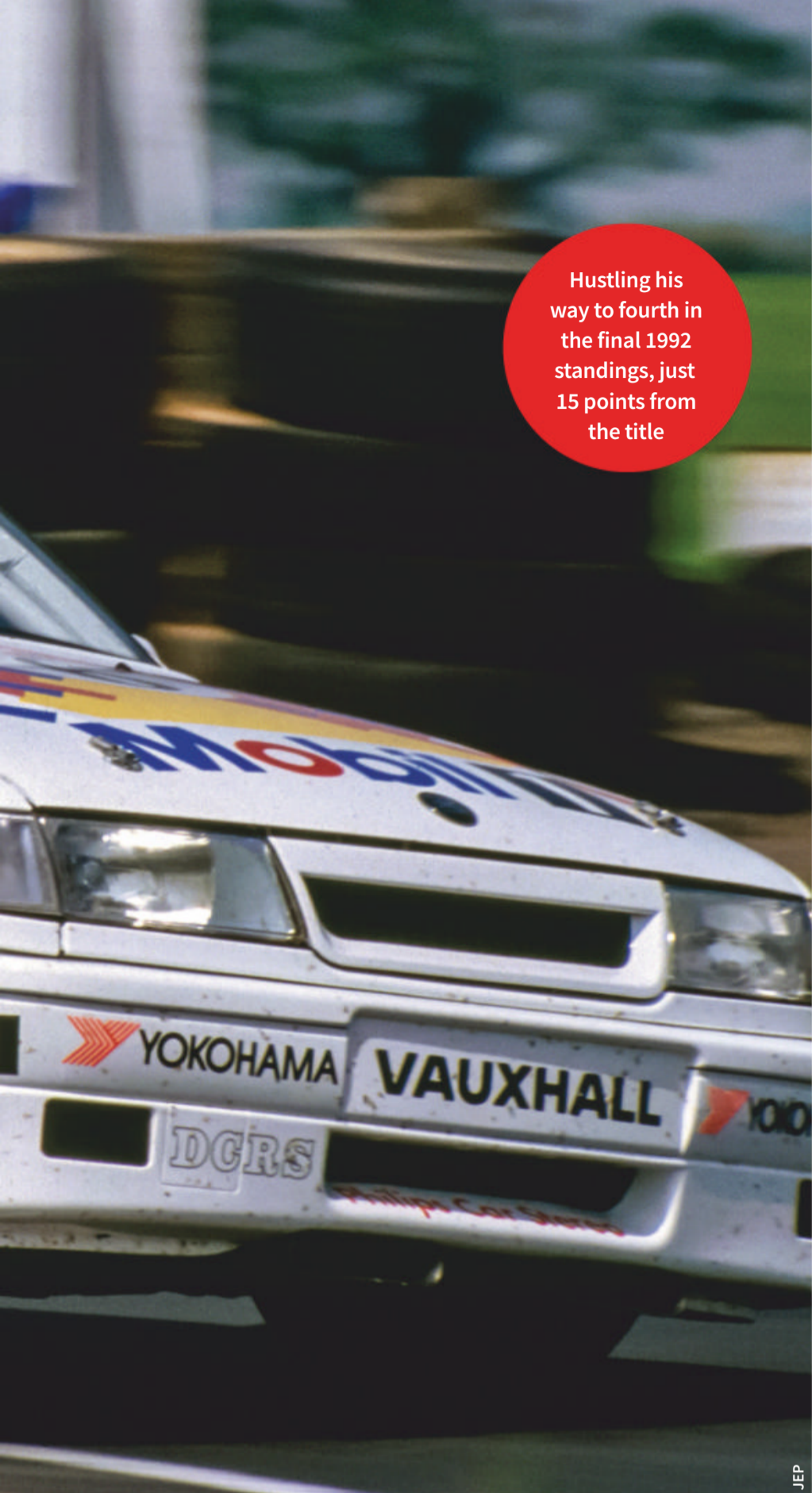
commitments with BMW, as a 'wingman'. And, while Allam went on to finish second to Andy Rouse in that finale, and claim fourth in the standings, he saw it all kick off in his mirrors. "I could see it going on behind me," he says. "I knew if you start racing against yourself and not other guys you will slow down, and I can remember being out there with David Leslie, and Andy Rouse was ahead of us."

"Nobody seems to have picked up on it, but how do you crash a car like Steve did [in the early stages], with it all distorted, and then come back and race John Cleland for the title? Read into that what you want. I was glad to be out of it. The only disappointing thing was I didn't win the race, as it was such a historic race. It put BTCC on the map. John obviously took a long time to get over it, Steve got over it quite quickly and Tim went on to be champion."

The 1992 season was Allam's Super Touring highlight and, while happy to have played a part in some of the BTCC's glory years, he found himself calling it a day after 1994, when he was replaced by the fiery young James Thompson. He had a substitute outing for the injured Thompson at Knockhill in 1995, but his final campaign was a showing in the 1995 Australian Super Touring Championship in a Ford Mondeo.

"I was a really good long-distance driver, having done ETCC, Le Mans and Bathurst," Allam reflects. "To come back and be in the cut-throat crash-and-bash no-quarters-given touring cars was a little bit more hard work for me. I was quite a natural driver, but those sprint races didn't suit me. I used to come into the pits and my brake pads weren't worn out, whereas John's were. He was more aggressive with the machinery."

Hustling his way to fourth in the final 1992 standings, just 15 points from the title



JEP

"I wouldn't have changed anything, because as a touring car driver I wanted to be part of the BTCC. My BTCC career was curtailed because of my age really [he was almost 40 by the end of the 1994 season], but it stopped for me too early. I could have done a couple more years in it."

After a sustained period in the motorsport wilderness, focusing on his Vauxhall dealership, Allam's career turned full circle when he was asked to return to the BTCC twice as its Driving Standards Advisor to arrest the 'crashing and bashing' that had afflicted the series. It was the result of a rekindling of an old relationship with series boss Alan Gow that saw Allam originally installed as the BTCC's new policeman in the mid-to-late 1990s, before returning for a second 10-year spell in 2011.

The return was a mercy call from the teams and the series to restore order after a turbulent period of slipping standards both on and off the track, and was triggered after Jason Plato's famous roll in the Chevrolet Cruze at Donington Park. That year also featured the infamous pitlane clash between arch rivals Plato and Matt Neal at Rockingham, where punches were thrown and team members had to separate the pair after an incident in qualifying.

"Things needed changing as there was too much crashing and bashing and I took that job on with relish, I enjoyed it," says Allam. "I'd stopped for a bit, and then they didn't have a driving standards advisor for a couple of years and it got worse. There were loads of accidents going on, and a lot going on between team managers and drivers. There was a lot of aggression out there. Fortunately that [Plato/Neal Rockingham clash] was on a Saturday, and my job was only on the Sunday!"



The face assorted BTCC miscreants got used to in the TOCA bus sin bin

JEP

"Things needed changing as there was too much crashing and bashing"

"The rivalry and hatred between Plato's team and Matt Neal's team was pretty intense. They would use anything in the book they could to make the other one guilty. We had to calm all that down as it had got out of hand. They had to listen to the governing body, and at the end of the day they got punished and the punishments were quite tough."

Allam was able to clamp down on some of the antics thanks to improved technology and the use of more advanced in-car and judicial cameras capturing every driver's move, although he still feels there is work to be done on strengthening punishments for indiscretions. "I think in the last couple of years we've made a big difference," he says. "I think the drivers have respected me. We have cut out a lot of the crashing and bashing that went on. I think the last two years have been quite clean, especially last year. In some races we had virtually nothing to do. But I still think now the punishments or the fines are not harsh enough."

This year the policeman's baton will be passed to former BTCC racer James Cole: "I said to myself that if I was getting bored then I should stop. I think James is going to do a good job. I think I have stopped [racing]. I haven't had a racing licence for a couple of years, and I don't think it whets my appetite to go back and drive some of these historic cars. It's going to be a busy Sunday afternoon on the television with F1, MotoGP and BTCC on!"

So he's out, settling down with his slippers on to watch everything on the telly. "It was a paid hobby," he smiles. "I would have driven all those cars for nothing because I loved what I was doing." ❄

THIRD GENERATION MARSHALL

Gregor Marshall has racing in his blood. His grandfather started the ball rolling, then his dad became a legend. His ambitions are more modest, though a Goodwood return beckons

MARCUS PYE

PHOTOGRAPHY HAWKINS AND MAWP+SPORT

It takes a special person to follow in the footsteps of a parent who achieved eminence, particularly in the same field. Expectational or aspirational, this apparent gravitational pull is for some irresistible. Not least in motorsport, which is less dangerous than it was but far more difficult to break into. Losing world champion fathers as children did not deter Stuart Graham from taking up motorcycle racing, or Damon Hill (whose Formula 1, Indianapolis 500 and Le Mans-winning dad Graham couldn't stay away, even after grave injuries) jumping

from two wheels to four to chase the same dream, then make history as F1's first second-generation title-winner.

Faced with such a dilemma, other offspring have dabbled at racing then walked away, ploughed their furrows successfully in different directions, or competed for the hell of it at a sustainable level. Although there was no shortage of driving ambition, Gregor Marshall was told by his dad that if he wanted to race it would be without his help.

Gregor's father Gerry Marshall, who died in April 2005, is





Gregor's first race was at Castle Combe in 2007



A young Gregor with father Gerry and grandfather Albert – all racers

a legend. The greatest British showman, 'Big Gerry' was one of the few drivers followed by legions of fans from circuit to circuit. A promoter's dream, which increased burger, beer and ice cream sales, his swashbuckling throttle-heavy style defied conventional logic that sideways isn't fast. Over 40 years he racked up more than 620 race wins from 1445 starts, most against quality opposition, in an extraordinary range of cars.

Named after Autosport's charismatic hard-drinking Scottish founder Gregor Grant, Marshall's son was born in November 1977,

after his father – with Hertfordshire-based Dutch tuning wizard Bill Blydenstein – had put General Motors' Vauxhall marque on the racing map. He'd raced Fords, and would again, but Gerry's brilliance in Viva GT, Firenza and Magnum models did much for sales to brand fans created by his on-track prowess.

In the mid-1970s, Marshall was almost unbeatable in the ultimate Formula 5000 Holden Repco V8-engined 'Baby Bertha' SuperSaloon, a caricature Firenza which succeeded the massive and less wieldy Ventora 'Big Bertha', destroyed following brake failure at Silverstone in 1974. He subsequently cheated death when his Triplex Triumph Dolomite Sprint was tripped into a series of aerobatic rolls at Silverstone's British Grand Prix meeting in 1979.

Best known as a tin-top sorcerer, Gerry also raced Historic sportscars from Lister-Jaguar to Can-Am Lola T222 and (unfathomably given his weight and girth) single-seaters, including a Lotus 61 Formula Ford! "I remember the Marsh Plant Lister living in a double-glazed, centrally heated carpeted 'garage' at his home, when the house didn't have heating," says Gregor.

He also recalls travelling with his dad when he was racing one of the Aston Martin DBR4 GP cars. "I called it the Green Tank, which may have been a little unkind," he says of the bulbous front-engined machine, contemporary of the 1959 Le Mans 24 Hours and world sportscar championship-winning DBR1s, yet rendered obsolete by Cooper and Lotus rear-engined F1 chassis.

"After my parents split up, Mum, my two sisters and I lived in a top floor council flat in St Albans," adds Gregor. "I like to think that grounded me. I was privately educated, but the only kid in a Catholic boys' school with divorced parents. Mum dropped me off in a beaten-up Mazda estate. Dad had a beautiful house with a pool, and as a motor trader drove whatever flash cars he had in stock. The only time he took me to school we were late,

“THE LISTER LIVED IN A CENTRALLY HEATED CARPETED ‘GARAGE’, WHEN THE HOUSE DIDN'T HAVE HEATING”

so my friends didn't see me arrive in one of the first Moonstone Blue Ford Sierra Cosworths, which was annoying.

"Buying an old Mini shell from Andy Hack, one of Dad's mates, with the intention of turning it into a Mini Se7en racer at 17, didn't change his mind so that was forgotten," says Marshall. Eventually, though, he achieved his driving ambition, making his debut in the current Vauxhall Firenza at Castle Combe on 28 May 2007. At the age of 29 he thus became a third-generation racer.

Grandfather Albert Moses – who changed the family's name in the 1950s – had competed in trials in a Dellow, then raced an ex-Tulip Rally MG Magnette, his road car. He competed against Blydenstein (driving a tweaked Borgward Isabella), but hung up his helmet after rolling the MG at Snetterton. The car was still driveable, but Gerry and his younger brothers John and Martin rode home with a rope holding the rear doors closed! >>



After much toil, Gregor Marshall and the Firenza made it to Goodwood last year

MAWP+SPORT



Gerry scored many successes in 'Old Nail'; Gregor wishes he'd kept it

GOODWOOD POLE A FAMILY FIRST

Starting last October's Goodwood SpeedWeek Gerry Marshall Trophy Sunday sprint race from pole, with his father's autograph scripted on his Vauxhall Firenza's bonnet, was a 'gulp' moment for Gregor Marshall. It was not preordained – the reversed grid was ordered by Friday evening's double-driver contest – but its poignance was not lost on historians.

Marshall Sr raced there once in the circuit's contemporary era, on 19 March 1966. The 24-year-old salesman started employer Martin Lilley's Barnet Motor Company Lotus Elan third in the 68th Members' Meeting's GT race. It wilted after five laps. Thirty-three years later Gerry notched his only Goodwood victory, driving a Lotus Cortina in the 1999



MAWP+SPORT

Revival's St Mary's Trophy. "Despite a fluid leak and a transponder malfunction when I was out, practice was encouraging," says Gregor. "Matt [Neal] hadn't tested but qualified 28th. His feedback was clear: 'It needs more power, better brakes and was too soft'.

I started Friday's race on new rear tyres but was given a black-and-orange flag for leaking fuel. We'd overfilled the tank. After a check, Matt jumped in and we finished 20th – last of the classified runners who had covered 95% distance. "Before Sunday's race

the engine wouldn't start. Flat battery. After a push I caught up and tried to compose myself. I was swamped as the flag fell when I changed from first to fourth gear, was scraped at Madgwick, then understeered off into St Mary's, where Stirling Moss

crashed in 1962. Probably a combination of cold tyres and oil, but after 50 anxious metres on the grass I regained the track to see a Mini [Jason Brooks's] spinning on its roof. I went off to avoid it, but red flags brought a second chance. "Having a TV camera and microphone thrust through the window on the grid during the clear-up brought greater pressure. I hope the interview came over OK... The restart was much better, but the quicker cars were always coming through. My goal was a top-25 finish, so 18th – lapping 0.8s away from Matt's Friday best of 1m38.573s – exceeded expectations. "Hopefully I'll be better prepared for this year's GMT, with lower ride height and stiffer springs."

The trials and tribulations of getting his Firenza up and running reliably would have broken most people. Not Marshall, now 43 and an after-sales consultant in the motor industry. Myriad problems, including a four-year engine build on a limited budget, followed by two blow-ups have almost inured him against disappointment, yet heightened the appreciation of better times.

“I was asked to present the Droop Snoot Group’s annual trophies in 2006 and said I was looking for Capri 3.0 or Magnum 2300 to start racing,” says Gregor. “The Lindsay twins [Edmund and Mario] went into overdrive with other members and found a basket-case – one of the cars prepared for the introductory race at Thruxton in 1974 – in Leamington. It was too far gone to be saved as a road car but that enabled me to strip it to a bare shell and build a racer.”

After seven races in 2007 it looked as if the dream was over: “Lack of funds, hard-to-find items and redundancy put paid to any racing in 2008.” Little did he know he wouldn’t race the car again until 2020! “A race engine I had in build in 2014 took four years to complete, then blew on a rolling road in 2018.” Vauxhall expert Neville Powell of NHP Motorsport has subsequently been his saviour.

A call from Goodwood focused the return. “Although Vauxhall didn’t homologate the Droop Snoot nose, we were invited to compete in the Members’ Meeting’s Gerry Marshall Trophy race,” explains Marshall. “We repainted the car in Dad’s 1972 DTV Firenza livery. Then COVID, lockdown and no racing! As restrictions were relaxed, a systems check at Brands Hatch on 13-year-old tyres in June ended abruptly when the engine let go due to a faulty oil pump that wrecked the crank.”

“Goodwood announced SpeedWeek in August, including the GMT ‘Group 1’ race with a reduced entry, from 60 cars to 30. We had two months to solve the mechanical issues, including rebuilding my Mark 1 Viva GT gearbox. Sourcing a limited slip differential for my 052 axle was a problem. With quotes ranging from £3000 to £8500, Paul Conboy kindly agreed to loan me his.

“In September we tested there with the correct tyres but disaster struck again. This time it was a blown head gasket: in the long fast corners, the alternator moved and its small metal fan cut the bottom radiator hose. Neville was confident it was just the gasket, so with engine repaired, we got on with the list of jobs that needed finishing prior to the event. Without Neville, Andy Birch and Mario Lindsay, for helping me get the Firenza ready, and Graeme Law and Jim Morris [of Lifeline Fire & Safety] for donating sought-after items I needed, it would not have happened.

“Just studying the entry list with four Chevrolet Camaros, two Ford Mustangs, two Rover SD1s and seven three-litre Capris, and the calibre of drivers, was quite daunting. I knew my co-driver [three-time British Touring Car champion Matt Neal] and I were going to be severely outgunned. Matt, whose father Steve Dad knew from the 1960s, was up for it though and I could not miss the opportunity.”

Considering Marshall’s lack of mileage and currency, he performed creditably: “Matt was great, and 20th and 18th finishes were brilliant. Yes, there were retirements, but that’s motor racing.”

Marshall’s CV totals 10 meetings, including a start in Jon Ellison’s



Pressing on – and revealing the need for some stiffer springs!

“JUST STUDYING THE ENTRY LIST WAS DAUNTING. MY CO-DRIVER MATT NEAL AND I WERE GOING TO BE OUTGUNNED”

Triumph TR4 at Donington Park and two previous GMT races at Goodwood. In 2014 he saddled a clone of his dad’s 1969 Vauxhall Viva GT, and in 2019 finished 16th in Stuart Caie’s “fantastic” replica of Gerry’s 1978 Triplex Capri 3.0S. Despite his relative inexperience he’s impressing people. At six feet three and 115kg, he’s taller than his father was, and an altogether more equable character, quietly spoken and urbane.

But there’s no mistaking the determination and talent in those Marshall genes. Regrets? Gregor rues the family selling his Dad’s favourite car, the faithful Firenza ‘Old Nail’ in which Gerry won 63 races. Guyana’s General Motors guru Philip de Freitas and American Mervyn Dornford subsequently raced it. Paul Chase-Gardener, who bought it at Bonhams’ Goodwood sale in 2010, had it restored and invited Gregor to drive it at the 2012 Festival of Speed. The old warhorse is for sale again, with the ex-Dave Millington Brookhire club racer of the 1970s in the package! In bygone days a philanthropic patron would have wanted Marshall Jr in the hotseat. Any ardent Vauxhall fans fancy making new history? 🏁



Firenza was near the back of the field, but Marshall already has plans to improve the set-up



HOW EARNHARDT'S DEATH CHANGED AMERICAN MOTORSPORT

*It's 20 years since the NASCAR legend died at the Daytona 500,
but the legacy of his crash continues today*

CHARLES BRADLEY

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES

February 18, 2001. Seven-time NASCAR Cup champion Dale Earnhardt, the fearless 'Intimidator', was in his element at Daytona International Speedway. While his own DEI team's cars ran 1-2 towards the finish line, and Daytona 500 glory, his famed #3 Richard Childress Racing Chevrolet was playing rear-gunner to block any late runs from the chasing pack. As the cars tore through Turns 3 and 4 on that fateful final lap, Earnhardt maintained the strongarm tactics that encapsulated his persona... but his actions in those moments proved to be his last.

As he threw his final block, Earnhardt's left-rear corner tagged Sterling Marlin's right-front fender, getting the RCR Chevy loose.

Earnhardt battled for control, his car clipping the apron, unsettling it yet further, and it began to spin clockwise, moving up the track and across the bows of the closely following Rusty Wallace and Ken Schrader. His right-rear corner was struck by Schrader's left-front, which crucially accentuated the angle of Earnhardt's car (between 53 and 55 degrees in relation to the wall) before it nosed hard into the unprotected concrete.

Although it appeared to be a 'regular' NASCAR crash, the impact at this angle was devastating for the occupant: Earnhardt's car was travelling at 157-160mph, but its total velocity change – as it pivoted to the left after the wall impact – was calculated at about

STAT

76

Top-tier NASCAR wins for Earnhardt, still eighth on the all-time list

Earnhardt held the exceptional position of personifying his sport

44mph. That's equivalent to dropping the car from 61 feet into the ground. The crash-pulse duration was about 80 milliseconds, resulting in a g-force spike of somewhere between 50 and 100.

As his and Schrader's cars spun down the track in unison, Earnhardt's right-rear wheel parted company – an indicator of the violence that had shaken through the vehicle. Schrader, whose Pontiac hit the wall adjacent to Earnhardt at much the same speed but at a far shallower angle, was completely unhurt and hopped out to check on his rival. What Schrader saw that day “will always stay with me”. Medical crews were on the scene moments later and, despite their best efforts, there was little to be done but transfer Earnhardt to the ambulance and directly to the nearby Halifax Medical Center, where he was pronounced dead at 1716 local time.

Twenty years since his violent death, Earnhardt's legacy lives on as one of NASCAR's most famous names and fiercest competitors.

“Dale Earnhardt was, and still is, NASCAR,” says the organisation's executive vice-president Steve O'Donnell.

“He was a driver who people admired, who people wanted to be, but also a driver who could be really tough one minute and could be really charitable the next.

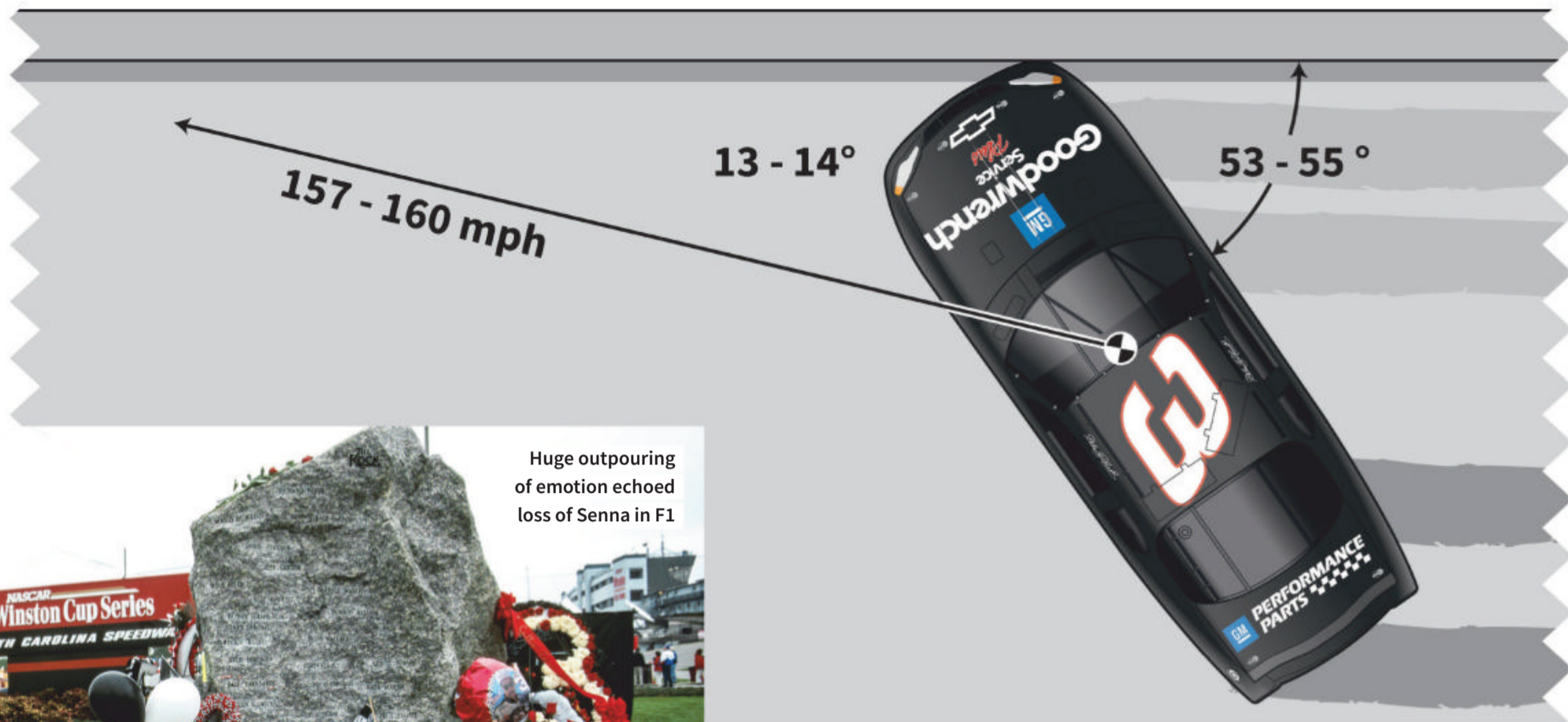
“When he finally won the Daytona 500 [in 1998], it produced one of the most iconic moments in our sport. I think he was everything you'd want someone to be in this sport, someone who we keep up

there as someone you need to aim for to be successful in NASCAR.”

If you were in any doubt over Earnhardt's standing at the time, President George W Bush called to offer Dale's wife Teresa his personal condolences. While NASCAR (and the United States) grieved the loss of its greatest driver, it also sparked a safety crusade that lasts until this day.

“We were given a directive by our industry after Earnhardt's death to work on this every day,” says NASCAR senior director of safety engineering John Patalak. “In other sports, safety engineers have a harder time, because equipment and making changes costs money. We're not blind to that, but our industry expects safety – it demands it. From my point of view, I'm very fortunate that NASCAR, drivers, teams, manufacturers all push in the same direction. Racing is always going to be a dangerous sport, but that's why we're here and pushing the needle forward. Nobody here argues against safety.”

O'Donnell remembers those dark days that followed Earnhardt's death, as the NASCAR community came to terms with the loss of its biggest star and worked out how best to react. “It was extremely tough,” he says. “He was a friend to many as well. And, honestly, it was a point where we all thought, ‘How does this sport go on?’ You felt like he was the sport and, without him, how would we go to the next race at Rockingham? >>



“Dale Earnhardt’s death was most likely caused by a blow to the back of the head not from one single cause but from a combination of unusual factors. These included the uncommon severity and trajectory of the car’s impact with the wall, an immediately prior collision with [Schrader’s] car that put him out of position and a separation of the left lap belt under load that allowed greater motion within the car.”

“For all of us in the industry, we felt personal loss, even the younger employees, and then it was that question of how we continue and progress this sport in a good way. But we also knew he was someone who would have said, ‘Hey, press on and make sure you continue to deliver.’ It was a moment that gave us the ability to change the culture around safety. He helped spur that conversation.”

Looking back today, O’Donnell believes the post-Earnhardt response was similar to that in Formula 1 following the deaths of Roland Ratzenberger (who suffered a similar skull fracture) and Ayrton Senna at Imola in 1994. Poignant too, when you consider that Earnhardt won at Talladega on the day of Senna’s death, and paid his own tribute in Victory Lane: “[Senna] was a great racer and it was a shame to see him go like he did, it’s tough.”

Earnhardt – like fellow NASCAR racers Adam Petty, Kenny Irwin and Tony Roper before him – had died from a basilar skull fracture. Four drivers dead in an eight-month period, all killed by a similar injury.

O’Donnell explains: “The R&D Center was spawned by what happened, it was founded in 2002, and I felt like safety was something that people *did* talk about, but they didn’t *like* to talk about at the time. The drivers were going out to race, they didn’t want to talk about safety. I think Senna’s death in F1, and Earnhardt’s death, they spurred a culture where it was OK to talk about this and make changes.

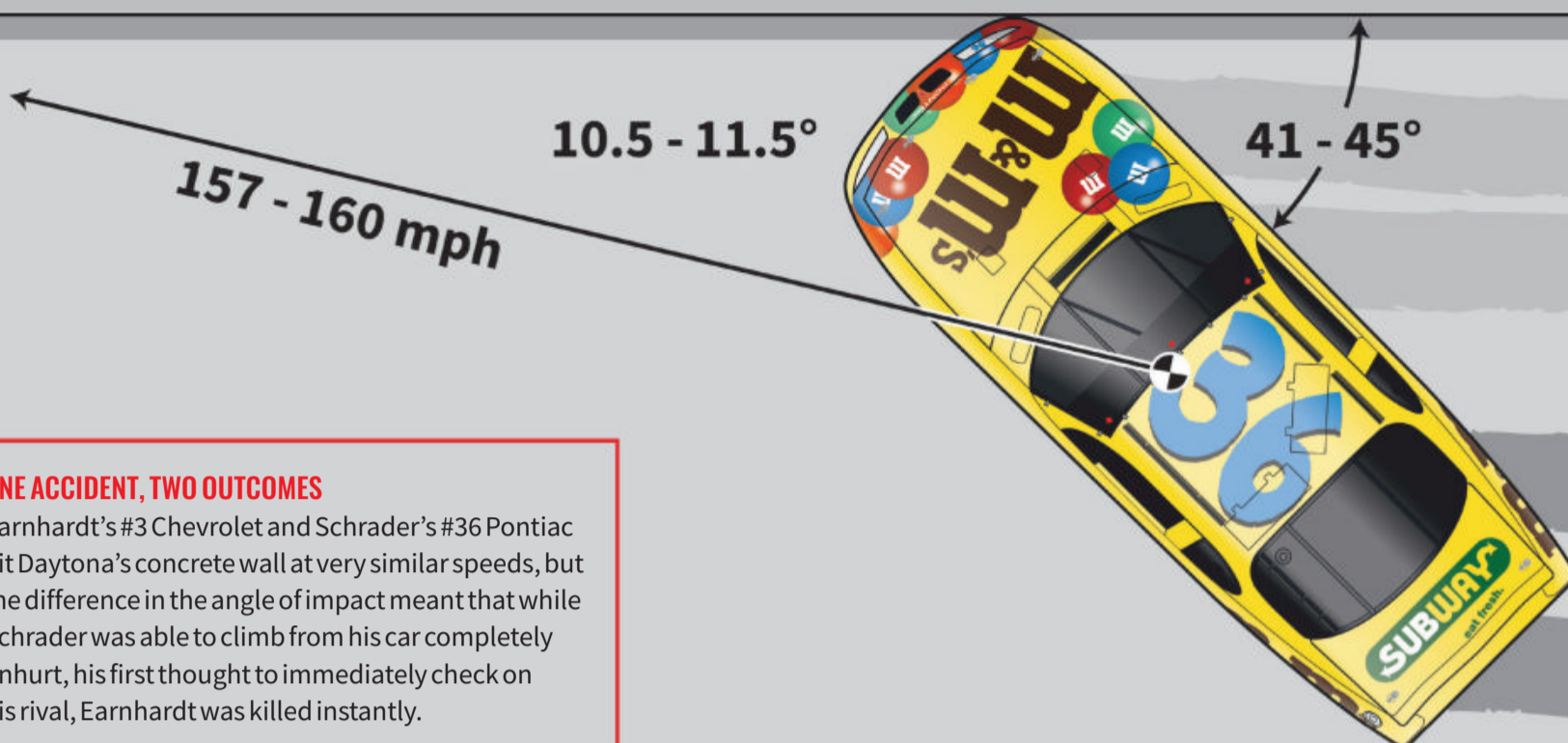
Another major strand to the story was Earnhardt’s left-side lap belt that had separated in the impact, allowing his body to twist forward and to the right inside the car. His autopsy revealed that the underside of his chin had impacted the steering wheel – although the fatal blow was likely to the back of his head – as he rebounded from the impact back into his seat, which displayed severe scuff marks on the head-surround area. Earnhardt’s open-faced helmet (he preferred to ‘feel’ the air) had rotated forwards when he hit the wall, exposing the back of his head. He shunned any head and neck safety restraint, unlike half a dozen of the drivers that day.

“For NASCAR, we went all-in across the industry, we knew we needed to work together to ensure it didn’t happen again, while knowing it’s an inherently dangerous sport, and knowing it could happen. So, what do we do to put ourselves in the best position? We had those conversations about safety, and if you didn’t take part in those, you were asked why not.”

NASCAR’s crash report, published in August 2001, stated:

The work that’s gone on at NASCAR’s R&D Center in Concord,





ILLUSTRATIONS: CAMILLE DEBASTIANI

ONE ACCIDENT, TWO OUTCOMES

Earnhardt's #3 Chevrolet and Schrader's #36 Pontiac hit Daytona's concrete wall at very similar speeds, but the difference in the angle of impact meant that while Schrader was able to climb from his car completely unhurt, his first thought to immediately check on his rival, Earnhardt was killed instantly.

North Carolina has been in tandem with the adoption of head and neck restraints (such as the HANS device) and the SAFER barrier, which was developed in conjunction with IndyCar and the University of Nebraska. From 2002, head and neck restraints were mandated; by 2005 the SAFER wall was installed at all NASCAR Cup ovals (full-face helmets were compulsory by then too). Seatbelt harnesses became six-point in 2007 and today are seven or nine-point, along with an 'All Belts to Seats' system that was mandated in 2015.

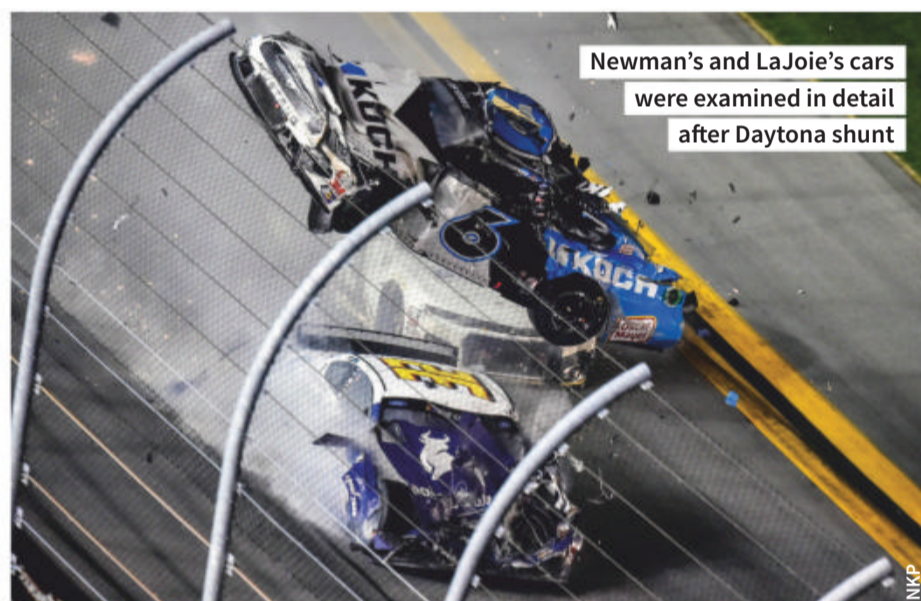
"IT WAS A MOMENT THAT GAVE US THE ABILITY TO CHANGE THE CULTURE AROUND SAFETY"

"It's impossible to put a number on how many lives head and neck restraints have saved," says Patalak. "Nobody knows the outcome without them in the crashes we've had since – we're just very fortunate in that we don't have to justify it, or find that data, to answer that question.

"The SAFER barrier has also been a tremendous improvement. It reduces peak accelerations by deformation and, in combination with the driver's restraint systems, it actually means those have to work less hard because the SAFER barrier is doing the work on the outside of the car. It reduces the input the driver has to deal with."

Patalak has a neat way of isolating the three areas that go into safety: "I put them in three buckets: what the car hits – so that's race track design and SAFER barrier. Another bucket is the driver's restraint system, so after the car hits something, how the drivers interact with that – seats, seatbelts, head and neck restraints, rollbar padding, window nets, steering wheels. The third bucket is the car itself, the chassis and the rollcage – so how that performs structurally to protect the driver. All those three buckets are absolutely critical to work together."

This was proved in last year's Daytona 500, when Ryan Newman and Corey LaJoie survived a brutal crash in their race to the finish line. As Newman's Ford Mustang was tossed into the air it was stuck by LaJoie's Ford car while inverted, causing it to fly skywards again. Both vehicles were subsequently transported to the R&D Center for a full investigation.



Patalak says: "With the 6 car [Newman] and the 32 car [LaJoie] last year at Daytona, there were a handful of things in place already that benefited both drivers – people's focus was on the 6, but we also spent a lot of time looking at the 32 car in accident reconstruction as well. We learned a lot from that.

"It was a very severe impact. The laminated windshield and improved window net mounting – we'd redone the complete hardware on that system a few years ago – and two new rollbars in the roof all played their part. Those were all proactive safety improvements, including the enhanced chassis, plating on the doorbars and increased thickness of the floors. We take this all into future car design."

NASCAR's latest step is its Next Gen car (aka Gen-7), which is scheduled for introduction in 2022, and O'Donnell says each chassis iteration raises the bar on safety: "Each new generation of car learns something from the last, so we've moved the driver over 1.6 inches towards the centre, the driver doorbars have moved out a little more again, and the bumpers on the cars – our guys do a lot of beatin' and bangin'! – so we have some extra energy absorption built in. We feel our current car is quite safe, so it's a case of beefing that up and improving the energy absorption of what it can take."

Twenty years on from Earnhardt's demise, his legacy in improving NASCAR safety is clear to see. The safety systems are as tough and resilient as he was as a racer, and it's fair to assume that he'd have really liked that. ✨

Join MAX'S ORANGE ARMY

DUTCH GRAND PRIX ZANDVOORT CIRCUIT

3rd-5th September 2021

As Dutch motorsport fans finally get a home Grand Prix, here are our top 5 things to check out in Amsterdam on race weekend.

Max Verstappen's devoted Orange Army have been a regular sight in recent Formula 1 seasons. The Dutch fans are easy to spot in the grandstands: they're usually behind a wall of orange smoke, bouncing to the sound of Eurobeat loud enough to register on the Richter scale.

This coming season, they'll be rewarded for following their hero and touring the continent with the first Dutch Grand Prix in over 35 years. And they'll be hoping to celebrate the first home win for a Dutchman in Formula 1 history.

The race returns to Circuit Zandvoort, an undulating circuit on the sandy dunes of the Dutch coast. A classic track from previous eras, Zandvoort is characterised by its steep banked final turn – a feature rarely seen in modern Formula 1. It will prove a unique test for the drivers, and a real spectacle for the fans.

But those fans have more than just the race to enjoy. Zandvoort is less than half-an-hour by train from one of Europe's top city destinations: Amsterdam. And the Dutch capital itself is only an hour's flight from London, making it one of the most accessible races on the calendar for UK racing fans.

With a selection of ticket and Amsterdam hotel packages on offer for the race weekend, we're getting you prepared with five things you'll need to check out between catching the action on track.



Brouwerij 't IJ

2



Amsterdam is home to one of the world's most famous beers, and the Heineken Experience is probably one of the city's most Instagrammed attractions. You'll learn the history on a tour of the high-tech museum and, sure, you'll learn how to pull the perfect pint, but there'll be plenty of Heineken to drink at the circuit on race day.

For an authentic Dutch beer experience, we recommend heading to Brouwerij 't IJ. Set up in 1985 beside the iconic De Gooyer windmill, the brewery specialises in experimental beers. There's a self-service tap room on the site of their original brewery, and for the beer geeks among us, they offer whistle-stop 20-minute tours of the brewery on weekends, too.

Food Hallen

3



Delicious Dutch delicacies include Poffertjes (small baked pancakes), pickled herring and Bitterballen (deep-fried meatballs). And you'll find them all at De Hallen; a hipster-savvy street food market with 20+ vendors serving up meals late into the night.

You'll do well to resist some of the dishes from around the world, though. With Asian-Mexican fusion, DimSum, Sushi, and Vietmanese among some of the cuisines on offer, our challenge to you is to find dishes from as many 2021 Grand Prix hosts as possible...



Johan Cruiff Arena

1

Renamed in honour of the Dutch great in 2018, the Johan Cruiff Arena is an essential visit for any sport's fan. The home of European football greats Ajax, the stadium hosted the Champions League final in 1998, and more recently was the venue for Chelsea's 2013 Europa League victory.

A tour of the stadium includes a walk through the players' tunnel onto the pitch, a photo op in the locker room, and a virtual reality experience, placing you in the boots of a player on matchday.

5 EXTRA THINGS TO DO IN AMSTERDAM



Canal Cruise

0

If you choose to spend all three days at the circuit, you may not have all the time in the world to see the sights. Taking to the city's historic canal ring is a smart solution.

There's an experience for all racing fans. The 100 Highlights Cruise takes you through a number of the canals, taking in the city's beauty spots and elegant old centre. Dinner cruises are popular for those who want dinner with a view, but we reckon racing fans might prefer the Pizza Cruise for a relaxed meal and beers after a day at the circuit.

Van Gogh Museum

4



Two million visitors annually flock to see the work of the Netherlands' most famous personality: artist Vincent Van Gogh. If you need a more leisurely excursion during the race weekend, you could stroll around this collection of 600 original works from the painter.

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- South side of Amsterdam, including breakfast each morning
- **FOR AN EXTRA £243** upgrade to Hairpin 2 Grandstand (Turn 10) race tickets

2 FULL WEEKEND RACE PACKAGE RRP £1,727

- 3 day Eastside 2A Grandstand (Turn 11) race tickets
- 4 nights Ibis Amsterdam Centre - 3-star Hotel (arriving Thurs)
- Central Amsterdam location, including breakfast each morning

3 PREMIER RACE PACKAGE RRP £2,227

- 2 day Pit Grandstand race tickets (Sat & Sun)
- 3 nights - Kimpton de Witt 4-star Boutique Hotel (arriving Thursday)
- Central Amsterdam location, including breakfast each morning

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DAYTONA 500 • WORLD OF SPORT



McDowell escapes the fireworks for victory

A last-lap 'big one' led to an emotional win for the little guys, and led to wild celebrations for the Front Row Motorsports Ford team

CHARLES BRADLEY

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES



HARRELSON

Michael McDowell was the unlikely winner of the 63rd Daytona 500 – his first NASCAR Cup Series victory in 358 attempts – as The Great American Race culminated once again in a scary last-lap crash.

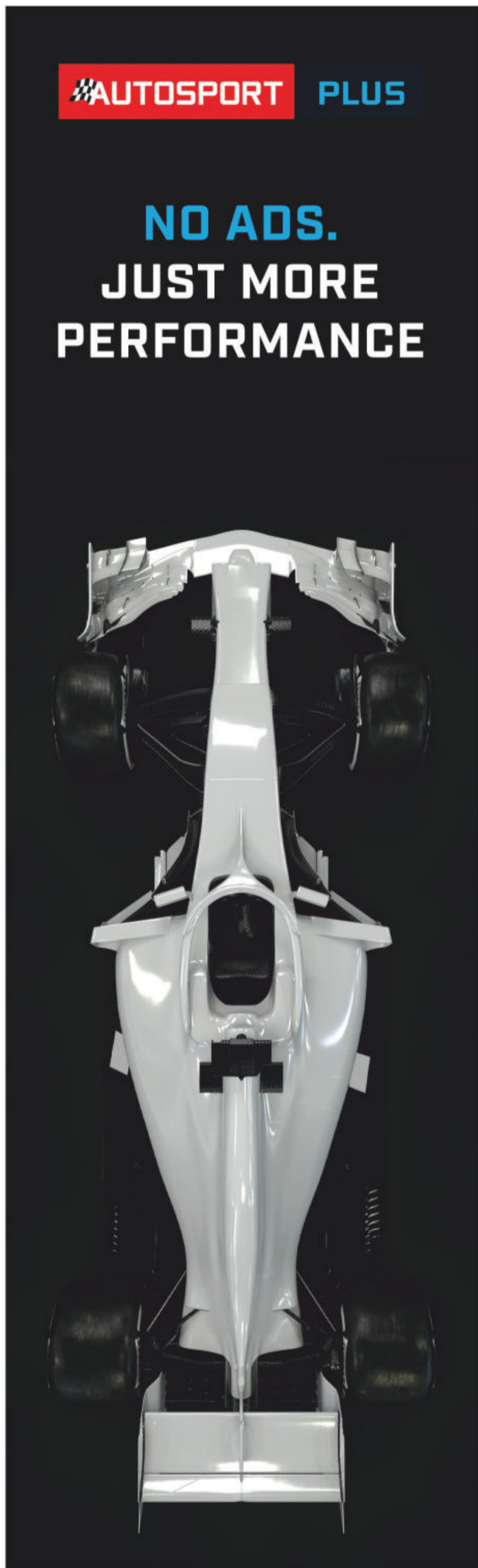
McDowell has long been renowned as an excellent superspeedway racer, often hauling his Front Row Motorsports Ford Mustang to finishes seemingly well beyond the team's means. This time he needed all his fine decision-making skills and a fair slice of fortune – McDowell was in the right place at the right time to escape an insanely violent crash at Turn 3 on the final lap that sealed his victory. "I just can't believe it," McDowell exclaimed as fireworks exploded overhead. "So many years, grinding it out, hoping for an opportunity like this. Getting my first win here at Daytona... Are you kidding me? We're the Daytona 500 champions!"

NASCAR threw the yellow flag almost immediately for the huge last-lap crash, and that froze the field with McDowell clearly ahead of Chevrolet duo Chase Elliott and Austin Dillon. Kevin Harvick finished fourth for Ford, ahead of Toyota's Denny Hamlin.

The race was led initially by poleman Alex Bowman as fellow front-row qualifier William Byron was forced to start at the rear of the field after going to his back-up car following a crash in Thursday's Duel race (see page 49). The first caution didn't take long to happen, as 1990 Daytona 500 winner Derrike Cope, still racing at the age of 62, pounded the Turn 3 wall on lap three. Cope had suffered a puncture after making contact with the recovering Byron, and also suffering damage was Bubba Wallace, whose Toyota had twice failed pre-race technical inspection and was also sent to the back of the grid.

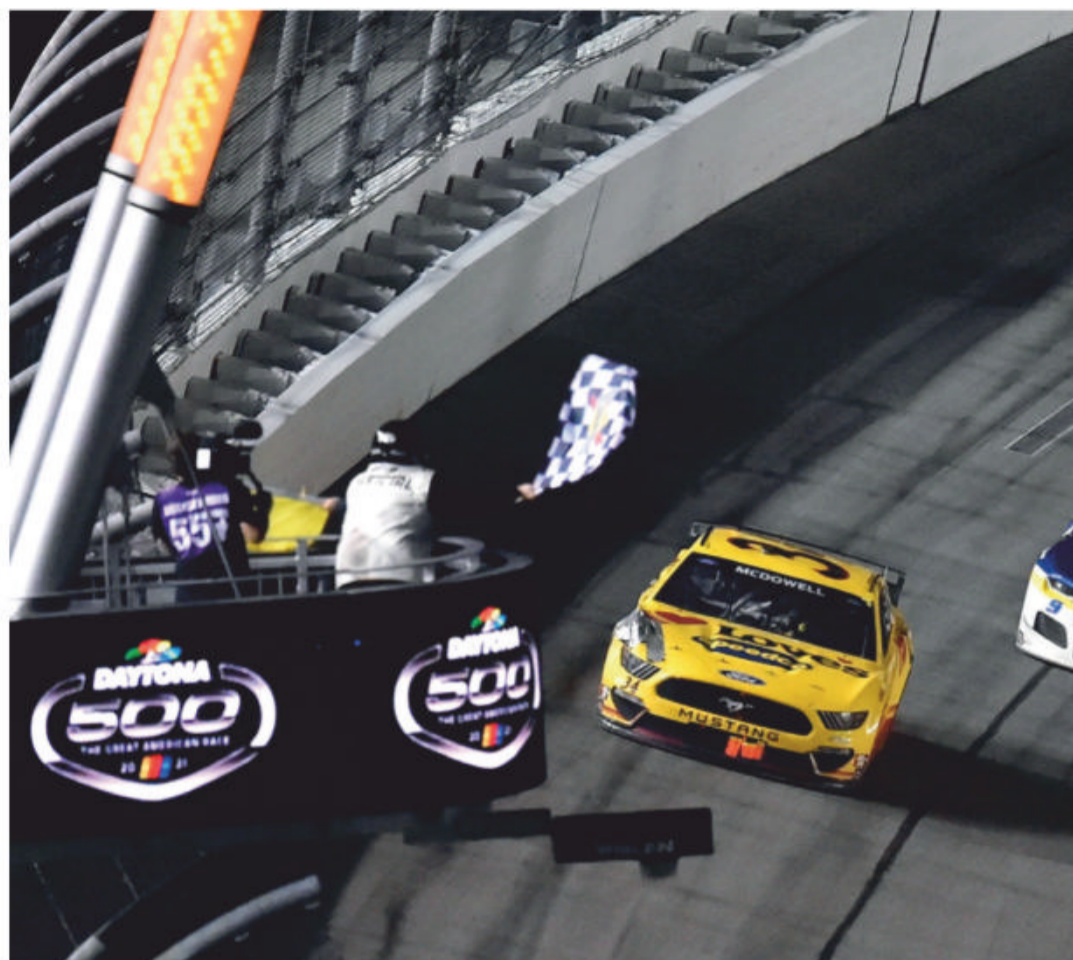
The second caution was for a genuine 'Big One' as a plethora of serious contenders for victory were eliminated. Kyle Busch bump-drafted his Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota team-mate Christopher Bell into Aric Almirola on the backstretch. Almirola couldn't accept the multiple pushes he received to his rear bumper and veered right into Bowman approaching Turn 3 on lap 14. This created 190mph havoc behind them, as cars pinballed around on the high line and then Daniel Suarez and Kurt Busch, trying to avoid that crash, clipped Ryan Newman into a spin on the inside, now effectively forming a wall of cars across the track that those following couldn't avoid piling into. Byron's Chevy went up on its side as it clipped the rotating Newman.

"I had the wreck missed but got hit from some place behind and that was the end of our day," said Newman. "Unbelievable," sighed Almirola from the cockpit of his steaming wreck, summing up the feelings of another 15 drivers in a crash that took over 16 seconds from start to finish. "We were in a fine position, just sitting there riding around in the top two, three," added Almirola. "[Bell] just >>



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came with a big run and hit me really hard in a bad spot.”

Soon after that, lightning strikes from a nearby thunderstorm put the race under a red flag. The heavens then truly opened, causing a lengthy delay as a series of storm cells repeatedly soaked the venue. The 16 cars that sustained damage were those of Almirola, Kurt Busch, Newman, Tyler Reddick, Ryan Blaney, Chris Buescher, Martin Truex, Bell, Matt DiBenedetto, Byron, David Ragan, Anthony Alfredo, Erik Jones, Bowman, Jamie McMurray and Suarez. Ten were wrecked beyond immediate repair, while others would rejoin as rolling wrecks after some serious attention from angle grinders and sledgehammers.

While it hadn't worked out for them, Hamlin, going for his fourth 500 win – and third on the trot – had opted for a safety-first approach and wisely dropped to the rear of the field early on. “Predictable, I guess,” said Hamlin of the huge wreck. “Essentially you're asking for trouble at that point.”

After a delay of almost six hours, the race restarted with reigning champion Elliott leading. Hamlin reversed his cautious strategy, hitting the front just as the race settled into some placid single-file running. Chase Briscoe – who'd used the rain delay to pop out for a Chinese takeaway – and Quin Houff caused the race's next yellow. Debris from Byron's disintegrating car caused both to suffer blowouts and spin.

Hamlin held on for the stage one victory ahead of an impressive Ryan Preece (who isn't even sure to run a full season with JTG Daugherty Racing), Austin Dillon, Kyle Larson and Xfinity champion Austin Cindric, who was running a one-off with Penske Racing.



...and is heralded after an unlikely victory



“Despite it repeatedly catching fire, the car was sent out of the pits... only to catch fire again”

Toyota held sway in the early stages of the second stage too, with Bell leading Kyle Busch and Hamlin as the race quickly settled down into a pattern. Dillon led Chevrolet's challenge, ahead of top Ford contender Cindric. The first green-flag pitstops of the evening were kicked off by the Fords, which pitted just after half-distance to take fuel only. Toyota's lack of numbers compared to its manufacturer opposition should have been a handicap at this point, and its small fleet pitted second (all four cars taking right-side tyres), with Chevrolet running the longest and taking fuel only.

As the sequence shook out, two Chevys – Larson and Elliott – briefly escaped up front, and for a few moments it got quite messy as the Toyotas converged with the Fords and Chevys. The two fresh tyres helped boost Hamlin to the lead once more, aided by a big push from Wallace to surge ahead of Harvick, Logano and Cindric, while the Chevys fell backwards having failed to get themselves organised efficiently.

Bell, who had earlier led 32 laps, had a left-rear tyre go flat as he ran through Turn 1, collecting Ricky Stenhouse and Larson before he spun exiting Turn 2. Jamie McMurray, the 2010 Daytona 500 winner running a one-off for Spire Motorsports, spun in sympathy behind them. That caused the race's fifth caution. Further drama transpired when Kaz Grala's right-rear corner caught fire and, despite it repeatedly catching fire, the team sent him out of the pits... only to catch fire again – and this time he also lost his brakes completely. While Grala (who had lucked into leading for 10 laps under caution after the red flag) literally blazed his way around the track, the race restarted with Hamlin, Harvick and Logano duking it out up front.

Crucially, Hamlin was able to hook up with Wallace, driving for the new 23XI team that's co-owned by Hamlin and basketball great Michael Jordan. Wallace dived to the inside on the final lap of stage two, not to attack his team boss but to foil a big run that had formed behind them. Hamlin held his nerve and his lead until the end of the stage, finishing ahead of Harvick, Wallace, Elliott and Dillon.

With the preamble over, the serious stuff began as the green flag flew on the final stage. Hamlin started that as he meant to go on, >>



blowing past Dillon (who only took two tyres in the stage break) at the restart. Hamlin then had a scare when Harvick gave him some super-aggressive pushes on the backstretch that twice got him loose.

True to form, the Fords pitted first for the final planned fuel stops under green with 30 laps remaining. The Chevys came one lap later, with the Toyotas going one further. The Ford strategy worked out perfectly, its strong pack surging ahead of the armada of Chevys, while the thin Toyota entry rejoined with too much separation between them to draft effectively, allowing the hooked-up Fords to chase them down and blast past with a huge speed advantage.

This disastrous turn of events dropped Hamlin from first to 13th – “I got off pitroad too good and I was too far ahead of the pack,” he admitted – with Logano now leading from Harvick, Cole Custer, Keselowski and McDowell in an all-Ford top-five. Ross Chastain led the Chevys, ahead of Dillon and Elliott, with Busch now the top Toyota in ninth. Wallace dropped out of contention at this point with a loose wheel necessitating an extra pitstop.

The intensity level ramped up with 11 laps to go, as a failed Chevy effort to pass the Fords allowed Hamlin to sneak some spots back. Custer had to sacrifice his track position to fend off the threat, Dillon taking advantage to grab fifth.

Logano clung on to his lead of the single-file pack as the final laps ticked down, ahead of Harvick, Keselowski and McDowell. Keselowski made the first truly significant move when he took second off Harvick, who dropped down the order as he lost the draft. “Kind of a weird race – how it was all single-file and then just all scattered there,” rued Harvick later.

Dillon then tried a move off Turn 2 but, even with Elliott’s help from behind, it didn’t work out. “The top [lane] was just so fast, it didn’t seem to matter how many would go low, you just couldn’t get past them,” said Elliott. Dillon added: “I pulled out to see if the bottom would work, it was close but I just didn’t get enough of a run. I had a rocketship of a car.”

Instead, the outside lane got huge energy on the backstretch on the final lap, which culminated in McDowell shoving Keselowski forwards into Logano, who moved down the track to try to block his Penske team-mate’s run... but it was way too late to avoid contact.

Logano spun to the inside, as Keselowski speared to the outside. Keselowski was T-boned at full speed by Busch, before Cindric and then Wallace piled into a crazy fireball of a wreck. Keselowski’s car briefly got up into the debris fencing, chewing off its rear section, but mercifully it came back to earth and he climbed out unhurt.

“I had a big run down the backstretch and it ended up real bad,”



“I don’t feel I made a mistake, but I can’t drive everybody else’s car. So frustrating”

said Keselowski. “I don’t feel like I made a mistake, but I can’t drive everybody else’s car. So frustrating. I had a run, I made a move, it just didn’t work out.” Logano’s view was: “Pandemonium, chaos struck. It was a really big run coming at me and we all just collided in one spot. I hate that we didn’t win, we had a great shot where we were, leading on the last lap.”

Busch was slow to climb from his car. He’d been winded as he piled into Keselowski’s prone car. “It’s to be expected, just a matter of time before it all breaks loose,” he said. “All of a sudden I had the #2 car [Keselowski] on my hood. I was just trying to get around the outside of them. I took a few clobbers there, just fortunate that I’m all good.”

As unlikely hero McDowell celebrated his great success with burnouts, pre-race favourite Hamlin, who had led a race-high 98 laps and won both stages, was left to look on and admit: “All I could get was a top-five finish with a dominant car.” ❄



Hamlin, leading Kyle Busch, won first two stages but Toyota didn’t have enough

THE DUELS BEFORE THE JEWEL



Daytona's 60-lap twin Duel races not only form the grid for the 500, but set the temperature for how the cars and drivers will race. As usual, one race was relatively mild, the other absolutely wild.

Aric Almirola and Austin Dillon (above) hogged the limelight with the race wins, but perhaps the most significant occurrences were the misfortunes that struck 500 front-row qualifiers Alex Bowman and William Byron, who hit engine trouble and the wall respectively.

Almirola led the first and last lap of Duel 1, initially trading the lead with poleman Bowman, who fell back reporting an engine problem at one-third distance. Almirola saw off a last-corner attack from Joey Logano by side-drafting him in the sprint to the finish line, which stalled out his run. Christopher Bell placed second, ahead of a strong-finishing Ryan Newman.

After a protracted rain delay, the feistier Duel 2 featured plenty of side-by-side action. A five-car crash off Turn 3, sparked by Cup rookie Chase Briscoe spinning, interrupted the fun. After another 15 laps of great racing, Garrett Smithley – a part-timer desperate to make the transfer spot into the 500 proper – went for a gap that vanished, tagging Brad Keselowski into Noah Gragson, with Byron crucially being taken out in the multi-car melee that followed. That meant Byron needed to switch to his back-up car for the 500 – a painful start from the rear of the field rather than the front row.

This race was settled in overtime. Three Toyotas ran out front at the start of the final lap, but Dillon had other ideas. Aided by a huge push from Kevin Harvick, the famed #3 Richard Childress Racing Chevy sliced past Wallace in the final yards, giving him a rude door-slam for good measure. A gutted Wallace finished second – “I made a lot of mistakes,” he rued – ahead of Harvick and Kyle Busch.

RESULTS ROUND 1/36, DAYTONA 500 (USA), 14 FEBRUARY, 200 LAPS – 500 MILES

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TIME	GRID
1	Michael McDowell	Front Row Motorsports Ford	3h27m44s	17
2	Chase Elliott	Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet		12
3	Austin Dillon	Richard Childress Racing Chevrolet		4
4	Kevin Harvick	Stewart-Haas Racing Ford		8
5	Denny Hamlin	Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota		25
6	Ryan Preece	JTG Daugherty Racing Chevrolet		11
7	Ross Chastain	Chip Ganassi Racing Chevrolet		34
8	Jamie McMurray	Spire Motorsports Chevrolet		19
9	Corey LaJoie	Spire Motorsports Chevrolet		16
10	Kyle Larson	Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet		13
11	Cole Custer	Stewart-Haas Racing Ford		27
12	Joey Logano	Team Penske Ford	199 laps-accident	9
13	Brad Keselowski	Team Penske Ford	199 laps-accident	24
14	Kyle Busch	Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota	199 laps-accident	10
15	Austin Cindric	Team Penske Ford	199 laps-accident	39
16	Christopher Bell	Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota	-1 lap	5
17	Darrell Wallace Jr	23XI Racing Toyota	198 laps-accident	6
18	Ricky Stenhouse Jr	JTG Daugherty Racing Chevrolet	-2 laps	21
19	Chase Briscoe	Stewart-Haas Racing Ford	-3 laps	30
20	Joey Gase	Rick Ware Racing Ford	-4 laps	28
21	Cody Ware	Petty Ware Racing Chevrolet	-4 laps	35
22	Kurt Busch	Chip Ganassi Racing Chevrolet	-5 laps	20
23	BJ McLeod	Live Fast Motorsports Ford	-5 laps	38
24	Josh Bilicki	Rick Ware Racing Ford	-6 laps	37
25	Martin Truex Jr	Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota	-7 laps	26
26	William Byron	Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet	-9 laps	2
27	Tyler Reddick	Richard Childress Racing Chevrolet	-12 laps	29
28	Kaz Grala	Kaulig Racing Chevrolet	115 laps-right-rear brake fire	40
29	Quin Houff	StarCom Racing Chevrolet	37 laps-accident	33
30	Ryan Blaney	Team Penske Ford	14 laps-accident damage	14
31	Chris Buescher	Roush Fenway Racing Ford	14 laps-accident damage	22
32	Anthony Alfredo	Front Row Motorsports Ford	14 laps-accident damage	36
33	Matt DiBenedetto	Wood Brothers Racing Ford	14 laps-accident damage	23
34	Aric Almirola	Stewart-Haas Racing Ford	13 laps-accident	3
35	Alex Bowman	Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet	13 laps-accident	1
36	Daniel Suarez	TrackHouse Racing Chevrolet	13 laps-accident	15
37	David Ragan	Front Row Motorsports Ford	13 laps-accident	18
38	Ryan Newman	Roush Fenway Racing Chevrolet	13 laps-accident	7
39	Erik Jones	Richard Petty Motorsports Chevrolet	13 laps-accident	31
40	Derrike Cope	Rick Ware Racing Chevrolet	3 laps-accident	32

Winner's average speed 144.416mph.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Dillon 58; 2 Hamlin 52; 3 Harvick 50; 4 Elliott 48; 5 McDowell 46; 6 Preece 46; 7 Larson 41; 8 Wallace 41; 9 Logano 40; 10 Bell 35.

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LONGEST WAITS FOR A CUP WIN

At the 358th attempt, Michael McDowell finally scored his first NASCAR Cup victory on the biggest stage of them all, the Daytona 500. Here's how the Front Row driver's long wait stacks up

JAMES NEWBOLD



5 JOHNNY BENSON JR (226)
 Mark Martin is one of the most respected names in NASCAR, so MBV Pontiac driver Benson Jr's first Cup Series win at Rockingham (North Carolina, not Corby) in 2002 was made all the more special for fending off the veteran, leading only the last 28 of 393 laps. The champion of the second-tier Busch Series in 1995 never managed another Cup victory, but achieved more success in the Truck Series, winning the 2008 title.



4 DAVE MARCIS (227)
 The fourth-most experienced driver in Cup history with 883 starts, the indie stalwart had technically claimed his first victory five years prior to his first officially recognised win at Martinsville in 1975. After making his Cup debut at the 1968 Daytona 500 – his first of 33 in all – Marcis had won by two laps at Bristol in 1970 after relieving Bobby Allison. He scored five Cup wins before finally retiring, aged 61, in 2002.



3 STERLING MARLIN (279)
 The analogy of waiting all day for a bus only for two to arrive at once is familiar to Marlin, the 1994 Daytona 500 winner repeating his success the following year. Although he made his debut in 1976, Marlin didn't become a Cup regular until the following decade, earning the first of nine runner-up finishes at Daytona's Firecracker 400 in 1986. His first of 10 Cup wins finally arrived on his Morgan-McClure Motorsports debut in 1994.



2 MICHAEL McDOWELL (358)
 A talented road-course racer who won a Grand-Am sportcar race in Mexico City in 2005, McDowell was an in-demand Xfinity ringer in the last decade, but has struggled to establish himself in largely mid-pack teams in Cup. His best showings have been on superspeedways and the 36-year-old was, arguably, still best-known for his scary 2008 qualifying crash in Texas until the final-lap Daytona shunt cleared his path to victory.



1 MICHAEL WALTRIP (463)
 What should have been one of the best days of Waltrip's life, as he at last broke his duck in the 2001 Daytona 500, was totally overshadowed by the fatal crash of his car-owner Dale Earnhardt. The younger brother of three-time champion Darrell prevailed in a 20-lap sprint on his DEI debut following a red flag and led Dale Earnhardt Jr to the flag, unaware of the unfolding tragedy behind him until he reached Victory Lane.



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Brace propels G-Drive towards Le Mans entry

**ASIAN LE MANS SERIES
DUBAI AUTODROME (UAE)
13-14 FEBRUARY
ROUND 1/2**

A guaranteed entry into the LMP2 class of this year's Le Mans 24 Hours is already within the grasp of the #26 G-Drive Racing crew after it claimed a pair of comfortable Asian Le Mans Series race victories at the Dubai Autodrome.

The trio of Yifei Ye, Ferdinand Habsburg and Rene Binder crossed the line a full lap clear in the opener and then 45 seconds to the good in the second encounter, despite a stop/go penalty for track limits abuse.

Their sister-car team-mate, 17-year-old Argentinian hotshot Franco Colapinto, making his sportscar debut, slotted one of the team's Aurus Gibson-01s on pole for the first race. As the two G-Drive machines squabbled with Sean Gelael in the Jota car, it allowed Simon Trummer to take the advantage for Phoenix Racing. Gelael broke free to give chase, but the pair collided in their dice for the lead. That put Binder in control before he handed over the car to



Victorious G-Drive crew (l-r): Binder, Ye and Habsburg

Ye and Habsburg, both running largely without fault to wrap up the spoils.

Binder again put his extensive prototype experience to good use in race two, battling past the sister G-Drive car for a clean run to the flag, despite then drawing the attention of the stewards.

In the record-breaking 19-car GT class, recent Dubai 24 Hours winner GPX Racing was back on the top step at its home venue in the second race. The Porsche 911 crew made up for a costly spin the first event, which handed the category triumph to the similar car of Herberth Motorsport.

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WEEKEND WINNERS

**ASIAN LE MANS SERIES
DUBAI AUTODROME (UAE)**

Races 1 and 2

Yifei Ye/Ferdinand Habsburg/Rene Binder
G-Drive Racing (Aurus-Gibson 01)

**F3 ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIP
DUBAI AUTODROME (UAE)**

Races 1 and 3

Pierre-Louis Chovet, Pinnacle Motorsport
Race 2 Patrik Pasma, Evans GP

**TOYOTA RACING SERIES
MANFEILD (NZL)**

Races 1, 2 and 4

Matthew Payne, M2 Competition
Race 3 Billy Frazer, M2 Competition

**NASCAR XFINITY SERIES
DAYTONA (USA)**

Austin Cindric (below)
Team Penske (Ford Mustang)

**NASCAR TRUCK SERIES
DAYTONA (USA)**

Ben Rhodes
ThorSport Racing (Toyota Tundra)

SUPER TC2000

BUENOS AIRES (ARG)

Agustin Canapino
Chevrolet YPF (Chevrolet Cruze)



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Chovet closes in on the title

**F3 ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIP
DUBAI AUTODROME (UAE)
12-14 FEBRUARY
ROUND 4/5**

Two more wins for Pierre-Louis Chovet extended the French racer's series lead heading into this week's final round.

Chovet got the jump on polesitter Guanyu Zhou in the opening race. Although the Chinese fought back over the opening few turns, Chovet stamped his authority and soaked up the pressure in his Pinnacle Motorsport car. Patrik



Chovet is 32 points ahead going into Abu Dhabi finale

F3 ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIP

Pasma, in turn, shadowed Zhou in third. He'd jumped from seventh on the grid, but was penalised one position for passing off track, promoting Ayumu Iwasa.

Kush Maini suffered early gearbox problems. He had new tyres fitted while this was sorted, and rejoined to set fastest lap, earning him pole for race two. Maini fended off Pasma until the Finn made a neat move. Fast-starting Roy Nissany attempted to emulate this, but instead blundered into Maini, putting both out. Zhou and Chovet therefore moved up to second and third.

Front-row men Zhou and Iwasa both bogged down at the start of the finale, allowing Chovet into a lead he would never lose. David Vidales, who has replaced Dino Beganovic alongside Zhou in the Abu Dhabi by Prema line-up, took a fine second from Evans GP ace Pasma. Zhou stormed through to a fine fourth.

Jehan Daruvala completed a disastrous event when he was hit, causing a red flag.

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Turner had both legs amputated after Hayes crash but is now planning a racing return



INJURED FF1600 DRIVER TURNER PLOTS COMEBACK

FORMULA FORD 1600

Injured Scottish Formula Ford 1600 driver Colin Turner is targeting a return to racing after undergoing a second leg-amputation surgery following a crash in last year's Walter Hayes Trophy.

Turner suffered life-changing injuries in the crash during the Last Chance race at the Silverstone event, when he collected the spun car of Dean Forward on the pit straight.

The 70-year-old former RAF pilot was initially treated at a hospital in Coventry, where surgeons amputated both of his legs above the ankle, before being transferred to Dumfries. Turner, who is a keen cyclist and fitness enthusiast, then underwent a second amputation, which he feels should help him return to his normal physical activity.

"After the accident, they couldn't fit a prosthesis to my left leg at all," Turner told Autosport. "Then, for the right leg, they could have fitted a prosthesis there but there was no guarantee that I'd be able to go back to where I was before. So, to get the mobility level I was after, they amputated both legs further up and fitted new prostheses."

Since his second operation, Turner has been fitted with a prosthesis at the knee, meaning that he has been

able to move from crutches to walking sticks, leaving him feeling "confident" as the weeks have gone by.

Turner added: "I've had my new legs about two weeks now, and I've progressed from getting them on and thinking, 'Oh my goodness, how am I going to walk in these?' to walking with crutches, being quite confident with them and now moving onto walking sticks."

Turner says he is hopeful of being discharged from hospital this week and is already plotting a way back to driving. "The one thing I would 100% want to do is go back to the Walter Hayes – that's the only thing I really set my heart on," Turner said. "Anything else I can fit in before that, perfect. I'll take what I can get."

"I've got a new chassis, through a friend I've got my gearbox refurbished, which Neil [Broome, fellow Scottish FF1600 racer] kindly took down to Silverstone when he took his own down. And then there's the engine, which was brand new, but needed to be checked due to the severity of the accident."

"But in the next couple of months, I should have a car there waiting for me, so it's just a case of when I'm ready now."

Turner also extended his thanks to the racing community for their support through a JustGiving page, to which over £46,000 has already been donated.

STEPHEN BRUNSDON

Fitz-Simon in Historic title bid in Merlyn

HISTORIC FORMULA FORD

California-raised Englishman Horatio Fitz-Simon will lead Classic Team Merlyn's attack on this year's Historic Formula Ford Championship.

The 21-year-old aims to emulate reigning champion Pierre Livingston, who had a superb season with Mike O'Brien's Silverstone-based squad.

Fitz-Simon's post-US-karting experience spans an outstanding debut with CTM at the 2019 Walter Hayes Trophy, where he finished third in the Historic Final in his first car racing event, and fifths in father Ian's similar Merlyn Mk20A, run by Andrew Tart, at Oulton Park and Silverstone last term. He then ambitiously contested the Festival in a Kevin Mills Racing Spectrum.

"This is the drive I've wanted," said Fitz-Simon. "We've seen how Mike's team works at first hand, and was impressed by



Fitz-Simon starred on his debut in 2019 WHT

JEP

what he did for Pierre last year. I'm aiming to hit the ground running and be competing for victory from the word go."

O'Brien added: "We really like Horatio. He has shown a lot of potential so far in his racing career and I believe he can emulate Pierre Livingston and be a serious contender for the championship. He is eager to learn and we can provide him with the platform to succeed."

Over-50s class drivers Alan Schmidt and Mark Carter complete the CTM line-up in sister Mk20As. Schmidt made his racing debut with the squad last year, while Caterham Classic graduate Carter joined the equipe for the WHT.

MARCUS PYE



Gilkes contested the Festival and Hayes last year with KMR

JEP

Ford action for W Series racer

FORMULA FORD 1600

W Series non-championship race winner Megan Gilkes will contest this year's National Formula Ford 1600 Championship at the wheel of a Kevin Mills Racing Spectrum.

Gilkes, who won W Series' reversed-grid race at Assen in 2019, tested with the team last year before focusing on Formula 1600 in her native Canada amid the global pandemic, but returned for the FF Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy.

"You don't really get that close level of racing once you get the slicks and wings, so it's great for working on your racecraft and running with people," said Gilkes.

Kevin Mills praised Gilkes's approach, saying: "She's got a real quiet determination — she just goes away and thinks about it, and gives it a go."

Karting graduate Lucas Romanek, who has been part of KMR's young driver development programme, will join Gilkes in National FF1600, with Mills declaring himself "really impressed" with his testing performance. KMR will continue to run Matt Hallam and Class B champion Nathan Ward in Castle Combe's FF1600 series.

Another name confirmed for a National campaign is Maxwell Esterson. The American teenager remains at Low Dempsey Racing, with which he finished sixth in the Festival last year.

MARK PAULSON

IN THE HEADLINES

ELITE COMPLETES F3 LINE-UP

Elite Motorsport has completed its 2021 BRDC British F3 line-up with Mexican Jose Garfias. He competed in the 2019-20 Mexico-based NACAM Formula 4 Championship, finishing fourth in the standings with three wins. "I am very excited for 2021 because racing in Europe, and F3, will be something completely new for me," he said. Garfias partners Ginetta Junior champion Tom Lebbon and Javier Sagrera Pont for the team's maiden season in single-seaters.

REES JOINS BRITISH F4 FIELD

Karting graduate Matthew Rees has become the latest driver to be announced as racing in British Formula 4 this year. The Welsh teenager will drive for the JHR Developments squad, and has spent time over the past year testing with the team and using its simulator. "It's very different from karting with the tyres and aero, but I think it's been going well and it's a style of driving that I'm getting used to," said Rees.

TINKLER'S NORTHERN MOVE

Classic Formula Ford frontrunner Ben Tinkler will compete in this year's Northern Formula Ford Championship. Tinkler will be run by Don Hardman Racing for the regional series, the Formula Ford Festival and the Walter Hayes Trophy. He will be driving the Ray GR08 that took Joey Foster to a Festival win in 2017, also run by Hardman.

FROM ESPORTS TO PRAGA R1

Esports and YouTube star Jimmy Broadbent (below) will make the move into real-world racing by driving the latest-generation Praga R1 in the Britcar Endurance series this year. Broadbent has taken part in various Esports series, including representing McLaren in Formula 1's Virtual Grand Prix category. He will now be one of a number of guest racers in the new Praga class within the Britcar championship.





Reynard plots Members' Meeting outing in new SD1

GERRY MARSHALL TROPHY

Reynard marque founder Adrian Reynard is targeting the Gerry Marshall Trophy race at May's 78th Goodwood Members' Meeting for the debut of a new Rover SD1, which he was inspired to build after an outing in a friend's similar machine at the 2016 event.

Reynard, 69, who won the 1979 EFDA Formula Ford 2000 Euroseries in a car of his own design and construction, also plans to continue competing in Historic FF2000 and Classic FF1600 in Reynard chassis.

The Rover's debut will be just the third saloon car race start in the career of the

mastermind behind championship-winning chassis in single-seater categories from Formula Ford to CART.

"I didn't get much of a run in Riorden Welby's SD1 [in Sanyo tribute livery] at Goodwood in 2016," said Reynard. "I was behind Tiff Needell when his engine blew to smithereens and my stint was behind a safety car. Mine is a replica of Jeff Allam's 1981 TWR *Daily Express* car [in which he won the last three British championship rounds]. We found a new shell, which Steve Gray of the Brooklands Motor Company is preparing.

"I'm currently stuck in Spain but consulting on suspension and exhausts

and have a proper engine being built. It should be ready for the Members' Meeting, but I'm hoping there will be time for testing beforehand. I will do Historic Sports Car Club Historic FF2000 rounds, starting in my Reynard 79SF [the last built], but I found team-mate Jeremy Rossiter's Spax 78SF – in which I scored my first win in '78 – and am having it rebuilt."

Reynard also owns his original FF1600 Reynard 73FF, which he reacquired and raced for the first time post-period in New Zealand a couple of winters back, and is restoring a Lotus 7 S2 for some more fun.

MARCUS PYE



ROBINSON

Eddie Walder 1953-2021

OBITUARY

The death last week of Eddie Walder will be keenly felt throughout the speed event community he served, not least as Autosport's omnipresent British Hillclimb Championship correspondent since 2006.

Walder was entrenched in his work, primarily at his beloved Shelsley Walsh, at which he had commentated for many years.

His encyclopaedic knowledge of cars and drivers, built on painstaking research,

enabled him to deliver insight to engage first-time spectators while satisfying seasoned aficionados, and hold court in the paddock.

With fellow Midlander and hillclimb nut Al Rayner he co-founded the website uphillracers.com, which has disseminated specialist information on the sport.

Apprenticed as a mechanic with Moreton's Transport (later BRS), Coventry-born Walder was a motor industry professional until his health declined, forcing his retirement from Jaguar

Land Rover in 2017.

"Eddie was a total anorak for anything motoring or motorised and an authority on Coventry Speedway, of which he was a life-long devotee," said Rayner. "Utterly irascible, he also legendarily hated spending money."

He was enamoured with Guernsey, from visits to the Val des Terres hillclimb, but sadly he would not realise his ambition to move there. Autosport sends its condolences to his family and friends.

MARCUS PYE

Speedworks ran new
Supra in British GT



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

F3 ace Carey targets sportscar move after testing GT4 Toyota

BRITISH GT

Multiple F3 Cup champion Cian Carey is eyeing a move into sportscar racing after testing a Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Supra GT4 at Oulton Park last week.

The Irishman, who is managed by Ferrari GT ace Matt Griffin, is weighing up British GT and European LMP3 competition.

Carey told Autosport that he found the first experience of running with a roof over his head “daunting”, but grew in confidence during the day and lapped close to the times of team regular James Kell.

“When you come from a Dallara F3 to a GT4 car, you’re not expecting a whole lot in terms of performance, but I was really surprised by how good the car actually

was,” he said. “It’s definitely an option. I really liked how the team operated. It felt like a family-run team similar to what I was with at Chris Dittmann Racing [F3 team], so it’s something that I very much have my eye on.

“We’ve not come to the decision yet of what we’re going to do, whether that will be the GT route with a manufacturer or the prototype route. British GT is a huge championship now, so if I can get in there and impress it could do a lot for my career.”

Carey won the BOSS Ireland championship for a second time last year as travel restrictions resulting from the pandemic hampered his efforts to win a third straight F3 Cup title.

JAMES NEWBOLD

Giddings back to BGT with Ciceley

BRITISH GT

Ciceley Motorsport has recruited 2014 champion Jake Giddings to complete the line-up for its maiden season in the GT4 class of the British GT Championship.

After a toe-in-the-water exercise at Donington Park in 2018, the British Touring Car Championship race-winning squad has entered a Mercedes-AMG GT4 with which Giddings will return for a first full season since 2016,

alongside David Whitmore.

Giddings, who won his title in a Beechdean-run Aston Martin Vantage alongside Ross Wylie before spending two seasons with the JW Bird team, raced with Ciceley in the Dubai 24 Hours in 2018 and 2020 and recently tested at Oulton Park.

“It’s great to be back on the British GT grid this year and I’m really looking forward to the challenge again,” he said.

“I know the team and the car really well. The car is not only fast, but also meticulously

prepared, so I’m sure we will be competitive from the off.”

Ciceley commercial director Norman Burgess added that the team’s BTCC driver Adam Morgan will be on hand to assist the British GT crew with coaching.

“The core of the team gives us a great starting point with Nick Hancox as team engineer and Dave Hudson number one mechanic,” he said. “We have a proven track record and will carry this into British GT.”

JAMES NEWBOLD

IN THE HEADLINES

ARMSTRONG TO PARKER

The first driver for Team Parker Racing’s 2021 Porsche Sprint Challenge GB line-up has been revealed. Matt Armstrong, the son of the team’s Carrera Cup racer Justin, will be making the move from karts and, longer term, plans to share a car in endurance races with his father. “I’m going to do some Caterham races before the first round of the Sprint Challenge, and maybe a race in the Cayman too,” said Armstrong Jr.

BRYAN HARRIS 1939-2021

One-time World Rally Championship podium-finishing co-driver Bryan Harris passed away last month. He was best known for being Tony Fowkes’s co-driver, and the pair took third on the 1975 RAC Rally together. Harris went on to co-drive for a number of other drivers, including several events in 1979 with Henri Toivonen. He was also a successful businessman, running a spring manufacturing company.

DOROTHY CALDWELL

Dorothy Caldwell, the world’s oldest rally co-driver, has died at the age of 103. She did not begin her rallying career until she was in her nineties, competing alongside her son Alastair, McLaren’s Formula 1 team manager in the 1970s, in a 1963 Rolls-Royce Silver Cloud 111. Her first event was the 2012 Trans America Challenge Rally, a 6000-mile contest across North America, and her final event was the 2016 Haka Classic in New Zealand, when she was aged 98.

SVG’S GINETTA GT5 LINE-UP

SVG Motorsport has revealed its three-car line-up for the Ginetta GT5 Challenge this year. Owen Hizzey, a regular frontrunner and one-time race winner in the G40 Cup (below) in 2020, will make the step up to GT5 and will be joined by Rory McKean, who will contest a second season with the squad. Alistair Barclay, a G40 Cup race winner in recent years, will also move to the GT5 Challenge, after sitting out the 2020 season.



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

New Audi TT Challenge series planned for 2022

TRACK ATTACK RACE CLUB

The Track Attack Race Club plans to launch a new, low-cost Audi TT Challenge in 2022 for near-standard cars.

The series will cater for 225bhp versions of the TT that were built between 1998 and 2006. Initially, cars will form a class within the club's Deutsche Marques division this year, before the series is properly launched the following season.

Club boss Steve Vince says he wanted to add a new series to Track Attack's offering – which includes the Nippon Challenge and Tricolore Trophy – and feels the TT is a good car on which to base it.

"It's something that has been in the back of my mind for a number of years," he said. "The series we're running have been going for quite a few years and, over time, people drift away, and I thought we needed a new project to reinvigorate the club.

"I started chatting to people, asking if



they'd had a TT, what's it run like and had they had any problems, and the answer came back no issues. It seemed obvious to go with the 225bhp version, which you can pick up as a donor car for £1000-£1500."

Vince has been in contact with organisations that regularly build cars for Track Attack series, and they say the car can be built for £5000. People can either buy a donor car and convert it themselves, or buy a car that's ready to race.

"The thing I like about it is, because

they still make the model, it's got built-in longevity," Vince added. "A couple of years down the road, we could bring in the younger model. We've got three cars in build [already]. If I get six to eight cars out, bearing in mind there's a lot of people out of work and with no money, I would be happy."

Track Attack has entered a closer partnership with the British Racing & Sports Car Club for this year and is due to appear at four of the club's 2021 events.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Podium finisher Miracco back in GT4 Supercup

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

Ginetta GT4 Supercup podium finisher Carlito Miracco will return to the series this year after being forced onto the sidelines in 2020 as a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

Miracco scored five podiums in 2019 as a

privateer, having previously raced in the GT5 Challenge, and had been due to switch to the Preptech UK squad last year, but those plans had to be put on hold. Now he has the chance to make a comeback and improve on the fifth place he scored in the 2019 standings.

"Current circumstances

affected us more than we could have imagined, but the chance to get out there again this year is one that I know I'm lucky to have," he said. "I have the best people around me – the team and my family – to help me achieve, and I really hope to make everyone proud this year. I'm excited to get out there."

Former Renault UK Clio Cup racer Luke Warr has also announced he will be racing in the GT4 Supercup this year. He will drive for the Race Car Consultants team, which is stepping up to the GT4 Supercup, and will be using the G55 that carried Jamie Falvey to two victories last season.

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Stronger together

One of the more positive side effects of the COVID-19 pandemic is that many UK organising clubs have started to cooperate more closely, and that brings wide-ranging benefits

STEFAN MACKLEY

If you're not first you're last." While this quote – from the film *Talladega Nights*, and in keeping with this issue's NASCAR theme – is perhaps a little on the flat-out side, there's no doubt that by its very ethos motorsport is competitive both on and off the track. While drivers and teams strive to finish first, national racing clubs are arguably no different when it comes to running a successful business.

Every year there is a push by clubs to increase membership. After all, more registered competitors means more income and larger grids, allowing for greater scope to hold bigger race meetings. This in turn generates more exposure for sponsors and – yep, you guessed it – more income.

The past 12 months have been anything but normal and, this season, preparations are being made under the shadow and uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic. But the usual formalities of attracting more members, launching new series and championships and scheduling a full calendar of races have still taken place. Clubs are continuing to push ahead with their racing plans and, as it stands, the first events are scheduled to begin towards the end of March. But, perhaps, more than any other time in recent memory, something pleasing is happening.

“It's payday racing – you can't expect the average driver to race more than once on a paypacket”

Clubs are working together much more.

In any competitive industry, looking out for your own self-interest is always a top priority (“if you're not first you're last”, remember), but last season's racing calendar's ravaging at the hands of the coronavirus pandemic has meant that clubs are now having to communicate more closely in order to guarantee their survival.

“I think the big messages that a lot of us are taking away at the moment is that clubs are working much more closely with each other and communicating a lot more because we've all faced so many challenges, and if we all want to survive on the other end of this then working together is the way to go,” says Tania Brown, club secretary of the Vintage Sports-Car Club. “It's very different to where it was five or 10 years ago, where we were all competing against each other and not talking to each other. We all have

open dialogues and that's been a really nice, refreshing change that I think will be good for the sport in the long term.”

The true impact of this terrible pandemic is going to be felt for decades, but quite how badly things will be hit remains to be seen. Certainly, club motorsport is not exempt from this, making it imperative that clubs are all now working from the same page.

While bigger clubs may have a better chance of riding out the adverse effects, smaller organisations such as the VSCC, which only had one race meeting last year because of the pandemic and has four planned this term, are the most at risk. Peter Daly, chairman of the British Racing & Sports Car Club, believes it is vital for bigger clubs to offer support for their smaller counterparts – for example, the BRSCC has agreed a new partnership to help run the Aston Martin Owners Club's events.

“It's working together – we're not a threat to these organisations, we're an asset to them,” says Daly. “Our role as a racing club is to provide racing for our members and to facilitate racing for smaller independent clubs.

“We've spent a lot of time with various clubs, sharing track time where applicable. We've got two or three race meetings with the British Automobile Racing Club, and those will allow us to build a calendar of dates so our customers are able to plan their diaries with racing that's evenly spaced out.”

The National section of Autosport has long argued that there have been too many series and championships all trying to fulfil the same role, crowding the marketplace. This often dilutes the racing and spreads entries too thinly. Empty grids are not what anyone wants to see, and will only serve to disillusion drivers who are spending their hard-earned money on their hobby.

The full impact of COVID is unknown, but one thing that is very likely is that money will be much tighter for the majority of people, and hobbies such as club motorsport will begin to feel the brunt of that. The more that clubs can work together and offer competitive packages for customers, the greater chance there is of more organisers still being around in five or even 10 years.

As Daly adds: “It's producing a calendar of dates that all fit the budgets of most drivers. It's payday racing – you can't expect your average racing driver to race more than once on a paypacket. We're appearing at BARC meetings and MSVR meetings. To get the right calendar and right venues, we're collaborating with other clubs and I think that will work.”

Not much good has come out of this pandemic, but one bright spark might be that it has forced clubs to work together more often, which may not only ensure their survival but that of UK national racing as a whole. ❄

Sedgwick realised the first part of his dream by contesting ARCA West finale



THE AMERICAN DREAM NEARS REALITY

There has never been a full-time British driver in the NASCAR Cup. But Alex Sedgwick, who is rising the stock car ladder, wants that to change

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Take a look at the results from last weekend's NASCAR Cup season-opening Daytona 500, and you'll find just one non-American on the list. Only three drivers from outside the US have ever won NASCAR Cup races – and even then, they were either from North or South America. And there has never been a full-time British racer in the series. It's therefore clear that Alex Sedgwick's ambition to race in the category is pretty unusual for a European, let alone British, driver. But, as he closes in on a part-season deal in the second-tier Xfinity Series, it's also clear that he's determined to make that ambition a reality.

Ever since his karting days, Sedgwick has aspired to sample NASCAR machinery in the States, and he finally ticked that box last year when he made his debut in the ARCA West (the equivalent on the stock car ladder of what Formula 4 is to F1) series finale at Phoenix. But getting to that point has been far from straightforward, and Sedgwick admits he has enjoyed some good fortune.

"The two big things I've always wanted to do are endurance racing and NASCAR," he says. "The reason I got into racing was from going to Le Mans as a kid, and that's what made me want to start karting. For whatever reason, it's hard to follow NASCAR over here – I just fell across it through watching TV, on YouTube and reading Autosport. My interest grew and I always thought it was cool racing.

"Even young, naive Alex in karting would send emails to NASCAR teams saying, 'I want to be a driver with you!'," he adds. "The hardest thing is finding the entry point. It's not like you can go and race Late Models at Snetterton!"

And that is why Sedgwick's racing career began on a more conventional path. He was able to make the switch from karting to car competition after winning the Ginetta Junior scholarship for the 2014 season. At that point, what had just been a fun weekend pastime for Sedgwick became something far more significant.

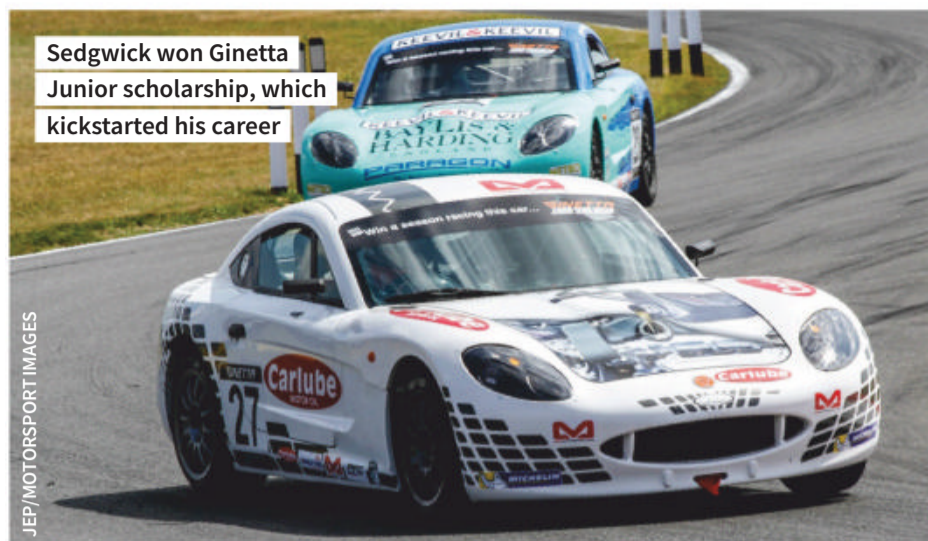
"All the way through karting, it was never, 'I'm going to be a racing driver', it wasn't a massive plan, it was just what we did as a family," he recalls. "Winning the scholarship meant it was like, 'This is a bit more serious now!'. It was a huge moment and a turning point – it went from a hobby to, 'Maybe we could make something out of this'.

"No matter what your plan is, going from karts to cars is a huge shift, not only in actual driving but just in how you approach things. There's a lot more to worry about! With us, all through karting, even if we were racing with a team, me and Dad would build the kart throughout the week, we'd transport ourselves, and then all of a sudden you're in a world of dealing with sponsors and hospitality and making sure they have a return on them going racing and figuring out a car you've never driven anything like before. You're nearly starting from scratch again."

Nevertheless, Sedgwick feels Ginetta Junior was the perfect place to carry out that learning. Driving for the JHR Developments >>



DAYLON BARR PHOTOGRAPHY



Sedgwick won Ginetta Junior scholarship, which kickstarted his career

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

squad, he took a best result of fourth and was 10th in the standings.

“It was the best place I could’ve learned in terms of being able to learn really quickly and get the basics,” he says. “It’s an intense year but, being on the TOCA package, you do get quite a lot of track time. As a place to learn and develop, it’s such a brilliant series, and it proves that with all the people who have gone on and done other stuff from it.”

Sedgwick then had a brief foray into French Formula 4 in 2015, but was primarily focused on his GCSE exams before securing a Renault UK Clio Cup drive with Cooksport later in the year, when he became the youngest driver on the grid, aged 16. Endurance racing then beckoned and he got to drive a Clio in the Dubai 24 Hours in 2016 with Preptech – he was the second youngest in the field – and further opportunities then followed with Cooksport.

All the while, the NASCAR dream remained, and Sedgwick made the next step towards that when he entered the Euro NASCAR driver recruitment programme and secured funding from the series to make his debut in 2018.

“They selected a couple of drivers from 120 applicants and they put some funding in,” he says. “Similar to the Ginetta Junior scholarship, I was in the right place at the right time. That was the big turning point, because I was able to get to race a NASCAR and get that box ticked but, because of having the support of Euro Series, you could put it all together to go racing and pay for it.

“The Euro Series is such a great starting point. The car’s comparable to the US cars but Euro Series is a lot more tame, a lot more approachable and beginner-friendly. You can figure out a stock car in a familiar environment of driving on road courses. But you’re not going to jump in and be top five straight away. The best thing for me was we jumped into the [top] Elite 1 category and I threw myself in at the deep end. It was a good way to learn and test myself on track with Bobby Labonte and Jacques Villeneuve.”



After Ginettas, he progressed to Clio Cup

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



“I WAS THAT GUY, I ALWAYS WANTED TO RACE IN NASCAR BUT HAD NO IDEA WHERE TO START”

Sedgwick spent much of that first season at the Braxx Racing squad, alongside Marc Goossens. He took a best result

of fifth and admits it was surreal racing alongside drivers he had grown up watching. “Marc raced at Le Mans 13 times and I’m calling him before races asking what to do!” Sedgwick continues. “I was racing against people who are already big names rather than people who are going on to be big names.

“The Euro Series was the foot in the door, the first step of something much bigger. I could stop and say I’ve raced a NASCAR, but I’m one of those people who always wants more. From when I started racing in the Euro Series, I was finding out where we could



Sedgwick spent two years in Euro NASCAR, learning the ropes

HAWKINS

ANOTHER BRIT WITH NASCAR ASPIRATIONS

Alex Sedgwick is not the only British driver attempting to climb the ladder towards the NASCAR Cup. Keenan Tully is also targeting a drive in the ARCA series later this year and is trying to assemble the budget.

The 21-year-old has raced on UK short ovals since the age of 12 and was spotted by NASCAR Trucks racer Jesse Iwuji, who helped Tully make an appearance in the NASCAR Super Late Models series in 2017.

“Most drivers in the UK normally go down the karting route, but my family are from California so I’ve always had an interest in NASCAR and racing in the States,” he says. “I started racing in the UK when I was 12 in stock cars and hot rods on short ovals.

“When I was 17, I got spotted by a NASCAR driver [Iwuji] and he offered me the chance to go over there and race with a team. I started fifth and I came fifth in my first race [below]. Going from something that was front-wheel drive and 130bhp to something that was 650bhp and rear-wheel drive was difficult!”

Since then, Tully has been working on making a return to the States and is planning to move over there later this year to help him fulfil his dream. He wants to replicate what Sedgwick has achieved, and says: “How cool will it be to have two Brits running in NASCAR?

“I think it’s incredible what he’s doing representing the UK, and showing people that it doesn’t matter what country you are from or what your background is.”



DAYLON BARR PHOTOGRAPHY

go and what we could do. I made the effort to embed myself with NASCAR – with representatives at races and I let them use me for anything they could. From being in that environment and generating the right connections, and doing a good enough job on track, opportunities on the commercial side and on the race team side have come about.”

And, having enjoyed further strong Euro NASCAR results in 2019, that all led to the ARCA West drive with Bill McAnally Racing. It was a massive opportunity for the 21-year-old, particularly as he was racing at the same event where NASCAR legend Jimmie Johnson was making his final appearance.

“I was straight in at the deep end, with it being the last round of the championship,” says Sedgwick. “Cup drivers and Xfinity drivers were turning up to get more track time and, with COVID, there was no practice and I had never driven the car before – it was pretty intense. It took a bit of time to get my head around everything.

“You can prepare as much as you like – Joey Logano’s spotter TJ Majors was coaching me with iRacing before the race – but there’s only so much you can do in practice. From the halfway point of the race, it all started to click and from there we were the fastest car in my team and one of my team-mates won the championship – and we caught and passed and cleared off from him.”

In the end, Sedgwick finished 13th and believes it was a “pretty successful” debut. The target now is to build up his experience and get approval to race on all types of track. He intends to contest the majority of the Xfinity road course events and as many ARCA rounds as he can and, last month, he headed back out to the US to take part in the ARCA pre-season test at Daytona.

Sedgwick feels now is the perfect time for him to be competing in the US series, as the number of road course events is increasing, meaning he’s at less of a disadvantage compared to the experienced American oval racers. But he also realises the importance of being strong on the multitude of different venue types on the schedules.

“You have to be so adaptable – there’s ovals and road courses, and superspeedways and intermediates,” Sedgwick says. “Every track is different, every time you jump in the car it can be different. The aim is to bank as much knowledge and experience as I can.

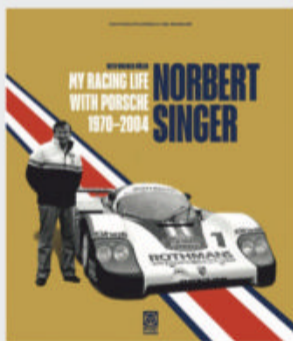
“To get to the starting point from, ‘I want to go and race in the US’ to that first race in Phoenix it was five or six years, and now everything seems to be happening so quick. Next year, I’m hoping to do as many Xfinity races as I can, if not a full calendar.”

While he is very much concentrating on his own career, Sedgwick is also aware that he is something of a trailblazer and showing other British youngsters what’s possible. “It’s cool that even since I started in the Euro Series, I don’t think I’m a role model, but people have messaged me to say, ‘I didn’t think NASCAR was an option and you’ve shown it can be done,’” he says. “I was that guy. I always wanted to race in NASCAR but had no idea what to do or where to start. NASCAR is so cool and I’m a huge fan, just to watch it, let alone being a part of that. I think it’s underappreciated over here but, in reality, there’s so much going on that no one knows about.”

NASCAR is never going to be every British motorsport fan’s cup of tea. But having a British name among the Daytona 500 results could certainly spark further interest in the series on these shores, and perhaps the idea of UK racers targeting it as a career path will not seem quite so unusual in years to come. ❄️



SINGER'S STORY EARNS A STANDING OVATION



BOOK REVIEW
NORBERT SINGER:
MY RACING LIFE WITH
PORSCHE 1970-2004
 RRP €75

When vocalist Rob Dickinson set up shop in California to exquisitely reimagine Porsche 911s, he named his company Singer. In part, it tipped the hat to his music career, but it was also a clear nod to the mastermind behind so much of Porsche's motorsport success: Norbert Singer.

The great engineer teamed up with rally reporter-turned-author Wilfried Muller to write *My Racing Life with Porsche 1970-2004*, which came out last year. And thanks to the translation by Autosport's own Australian racing guru and former Mainz resident Andrew van Leeuwen, there's an English-language version of this exquisite book now available.

As the cover art of Singer standing proudly over a 956/962 reminds the reader, he's best celebrated for his work honing the ground-effect Group C great. Singer has already lent his hand to a couple of titles that study the (Dauer form included) seven-time Le Mans 24 Hours race-winning machine, so we'll set aside any anecdotes of that car for this review. But the good news is that from his near 35-year career, there's so much more rich detail to be found.

First thing to note is that the presentation of this book is beautifully done. The thick, glossy pages of this hardback are loaded with stunning images – unpainted test cars are often the pick

of the bunch – and each caption is worth a read for another titbit of information. There's not masses of writing across the 360 pages, neither is there a back section dedicated to vital statistics and race results. So, although it sits very nicely on the coffee table, it's also something that can be read in just one or two sittings.

Whether or not you take your time, choosing to savour the forewords by Jacky Ickx and Jochen Mass, and no matter how well-versed you are with elite sportscar racing, there's a great deal to be learned. One such lesser-known anecdote is that of Nigel Mansell testing the 911 GT1 at Barcelona in the late 1990s to see if endurance racing tickled his fancy, before the Ceram coating broke off the clutch after 49 laps.

Another reminiscence that piques Autosport's interest comes from when Singer and his team were developing the 917/10 for its imperious turn at Can-Am. They trialled the car with a V16 engine, with management insisting it broke a lap record, only for the project to be canned in favour of a boosted V12. That, too, offers a highlight, with Singer recalling when the car was briefly tested on 22-inch wheels to maximise mechanical grip. But to make the thick tyres fit, two front wheels had to be welded together. The end result, as photographed, looks not unlike a dual-axle Ford Transit van.

Standing proud, among the many noteworthy sections, is the chapter devoted to the "fascinating project, frustrating politics" of the Indycar Type 2708. In another case of a famous private tester,



Singer recalls how Mario Andretti – then contracted to Newman-Haas – flew over to Weissach for a 78-lap session. He ran 3.5 seconds quicker than any other driver and offered insider knowledge on how to qualify for the Indianapolis 500, only to decide he was too old to wait out the two-year development cycle that was required to make the car a consistent winner.

Singer outlines his frustration – “deeply disappointed” and “I couldn’t believe what I’d just heard” – at how his chassis was binned off in favour of a tie-up with March Engineering, and then when the project was canned altogether.

That this review can pick out sections at will and readers can still buy the book in confidence knowing there’s so many more fascinating stories to be consumed is testament to Singer and Muller’s work.

The prose is eloquent, and Singer’s detail in recalling retirement reasons shows it’s a work of real passion and pride. When the cost is converted, *Norbert Singer: my racing life with Porsche 1970-2004* is more than worth the £71 price of admission.

MATT KEW



youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom



Autosport remembers Ferrari’s tepid 1992 challenger: the F92A, otherwise known as the Double Floor car. Its innovation was highly disputed and the machine provided one of the team’s worst seasons in 70 years of Formula 1. We review the car’s design, its failings and how it grandfathered modern sidepods, in a weird way. **Go to bit.ly/FerrariFailure**

AUTOSPORT PLUS

bit.ly/FrederikVesti

Why Mercedes’ new junior doesn’t see himself as the next Russell

The Mercedes junior programme has a stellar conversion rate when it comes to graduates reaching F1. New signing Frederik Vesti has the skills for success, but doesn’t want to be compared to his predecessors.

WHAT’S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

F3 Asian Championship

Round 5/5

Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi

19-20 February

Livestream on Motorsport.tv,

Fri 1100, Sat 0600, 1100, 1315

Asian Le Mans Series

Round 2/2

Yas Marina, Abu Dhabi

19-20 February

Livestream on Motorsport.tv,

Fri 0555, 1135, Sat 1215

NASCAR Cup

Round 2/36

Daytona, Florida, USA

21 February

Live Premier Sports 2, Sun 1930

NASCAR Xfinity Series

Round 2/33

Daytona, Florida, USA

20 February

NASCAR Truck Series

Round 2/22

Daytona, Florida, USA

19 February



IN DEFENCE OF...

TIGHT REGULATIONS

“They should free up the regulations.”
 “The only rule should be that the cars have to fit into a box of certain dimensions.”
 “Modern racing cars look too similar.”

These are all common comments about motorsport, particularly Formula 1. Most enthusiasts love the idea of no-holds-barred Can-Am-style competition and the sort of variety exemplified by the Ligier JS5 being on the same grid as the McLaren M23 and Tyrrell P34. But restrictive regulations are needed.

Without them, costs would increase and the racing would almost certainly get worse. Can you imagine a six-wheeled, ground-effects machine with free-for-all aero and gizmos such as active suspension and stability control? It would be a technical marvel, but how expensive would it be? And cornering speeds would surely be so high as to make overtaking almost impossible and most circuits unsafe. Drivers would become less important too.

Perhaps the biggest problem with the ‘minimal rules’ mantra though is that it wouldn’t create much diversity, not

for long anyway. A shark and a whale look similar, despite one evolving from a land animal, because that’s the ‘design’ that works in the sea environment. Similarly, we know that racing cars are better with monocoque chassis and the engine behind the driver. Knowledge can’t be unlearned.

Ex-McLaren designer Mark Williams believes this is one factor that makes F1 cars look similar. Even a radical approach – the only rules being an 80kg fuel allowance and that ‘box’ idea – would soon lead to similar solutions: “You’d have 10 to 11 different concepts and then they’d all coalesce because everyone would look at the best ideas and have them on the car.”

The evolution of F1 machines is very fast. If your idea doesn’t work, you need to change it, quickly. And, as Racing Point showed with the RP20, following the path of the pacesetter can be the way to go.

There are plenty of reasons why modern racing cars look similar. Tight regulations is just one of them – and it’s one that protects motorsport from other evils.

KEVIN TURNER



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