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F1 New rules delayed for teams to tackle COVID-19

AUTOSPORT

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26 MARCH 2020

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Sutton's new BTCC challenge



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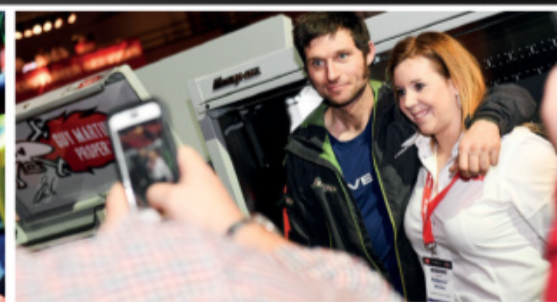
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Using the power of motorsport for the greater good

Bad news has not been hard to find in recent weeks, both within motorsport and the wider world. The coronavirus pandemic continues to dominate life and is likely to do so for some time, but already there are some positive messages to be found as people and businesses club together to find solutions to many new problems.

Motorsport is full of intelligent and skilled people, used to working at a pace most other industries struggle to imagine. That is why we have looked into the best ways our sport can help in this time of crisis (page 14). Not only can this give some of the many thousands of people employed in motorsport some work to focus on, it can also demonstrate the strengths of our community – and really make a positive contribution to society during a troubled time.

Beyond that, we know the next few weeks and months could be tough, but we also know that many people will want to find the occasional escape and still enjoy motorsport. Although we won't have any races to cover, Autosport will continue to talk to people within the sport to provide articles full of insight and opinion. This week we've spoken to some of the leading BTCC lights in our preview, which went to press before the season was pushed back even further.

We will of course bring you the latest coronavirus-related news, but we'll also be looking back at the sport's rich history, picking out some of the greatest races, stories and personalities motor racing has enjoyed over more than a century. This will include selecting some of the highlights from the archive as we mark our 70th birthday, and special issues, the first of which is set for next month.

In the meantime, we hope everyone stays safe, and look forward to a future when COVID-19 isn't at the forefront of all our minds.



Kevin Turner
Editor

kevin.turner@autosport.com

**NEXT WEEK
2 APRIL**

We interview Felipe Nasr
and look back at the 1982
F1 season with an
archive article



COVER IMAGES

Tee/Motorsport Images

JEP

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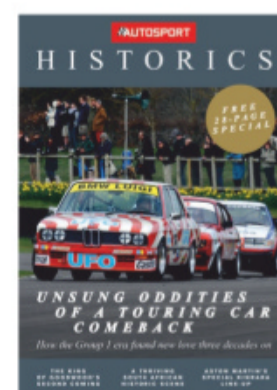
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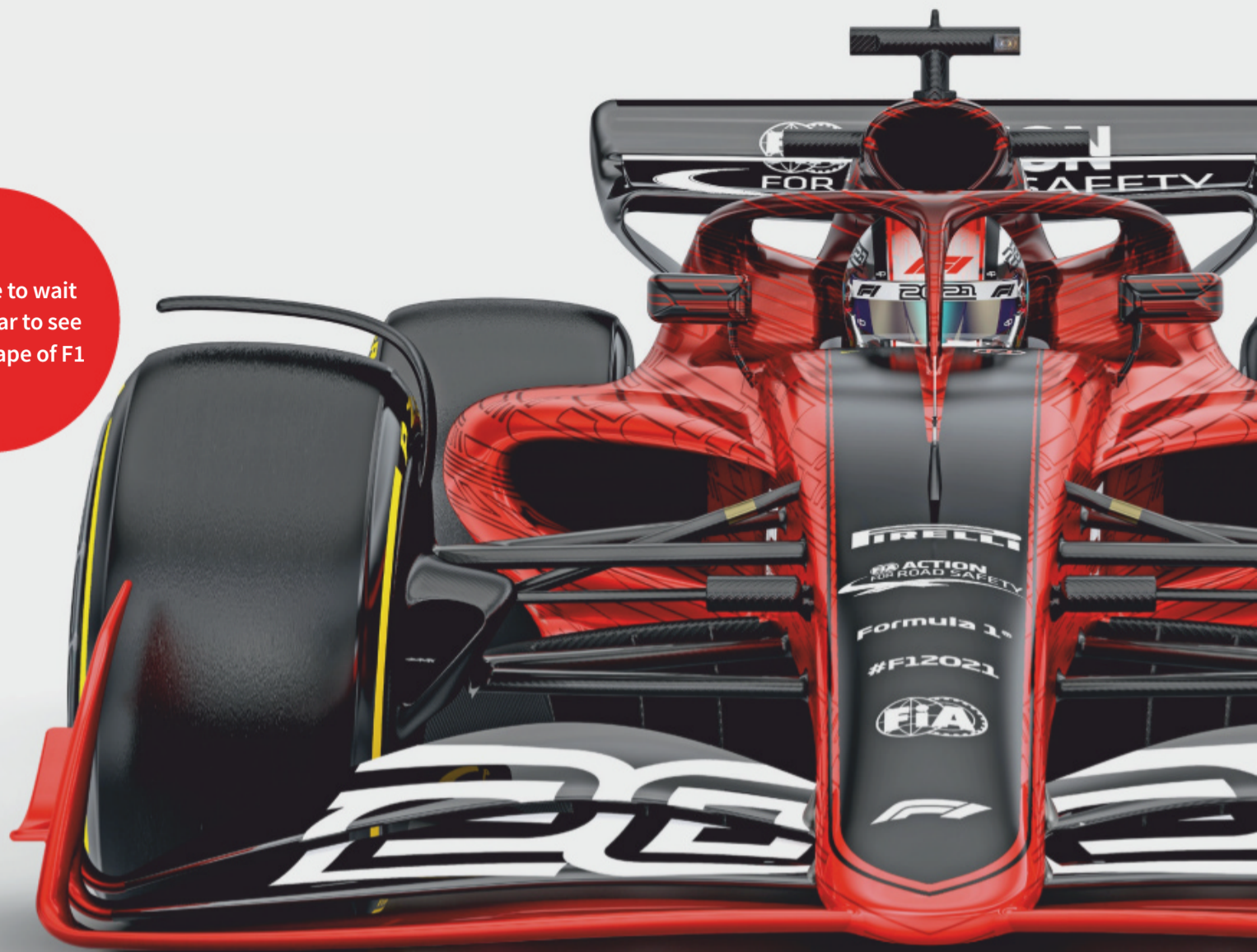
FREE INSIDE

HISTORICS SUPPLEMENT



Some unusual tin-tops, the racing career of Jaguar ace Gary Pearson and South African events feature in this week's special.

You'll have to wait another year to see the new shape of F1



PANDEMIC DELAYS NEW F1 RULES

FORMULA 1

Formula 1's new technical regulations planned for 2021 will be postponed until the 2022 season due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

All 10 team principals plus officials from the FIA and F1 – including Jean Todt, Chase Carey and Ross Brawn – decided unanimously to delay the new ruleset during a conference call last Thursday, as well as agreeing to retain the 2020-spec cars for next season. The decision was taken in a bid to ease the impact of COVID-19 on F1, which has already forced the postponement or cancellation this year of eight races, the hosting fees for which largely fund the prize money teams receive for racing in F1.

With the teams braced for reduced revenue through 2020 as a result of fewer races on the calendar, and with widespread global economic uncertainty set to impact all industries, the move will help reduce costs for next year, which were anticipated to be some of the highest in F1 history. While the development of the 2021 cars is already under way, the decision means teams will be able to spread the cost over a greater period, easing the burden the grid currently faces.

“Following unanimous agreement between the FIA, Formula 1 and all teams, the implementation of the Technical Regulations due to take effect from the 2021 season will be postponed until 2022,” a joint statement from the FIA and F1 read. “All parties further discussed the current situation of the 2020 championship and how the sport will react to the ongoing challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the currently volatile financial situation this has created, it has been agreed that teams will use their 2020

chassis for 2021, with the potential freezing of further components to be discussed in due course.

“The introduction and implementation of the Financial Regulations will go ahead as planned in 2021, and discussions remain ongoing between the FIA, Formula 1 and all teams regarding further ways to make significant cost savings. All teams expressed their support for the FIA and Formula 1 in their ongoing efforts to restructure the 2020 calendar as the global situation regarding COVID-19 develops.”

The postponement of the new regulations only achieved the required unanimous agreement shortly before the conference call after Ferrari changed its stance. The Italian team was initially unwilling to support the delay as it wanted more time to consider its options, only to then join the other nine teams in agreeing to the plan.

Ferrari chief Mattia Binotto told the official F1 website ahead of the call that the team was “ready to take responsibility for a choice that must be made in the ultimate interest of this sport. We must carefully evaluate every aspect and see if it is really the case to think about possibly postponing the introduction of the new 2021 technical rules. It is certainly not the time for selfishness and tactics.”

One consequence of agreeing to keep the \$175million cost cap in place for 2021 under the new financial regulations is that concerns about the bigger teams' high spending on the incoming cars should be allayed. The midfield teams had previously accepted that it would take a number of years for the field to converge and reduce the advantage of Mercedes, Ferrari and Red Bull, all of whom were set to spend big through 2020 in anticipation of the new rules. Aerodynamic development is set to continue as planned through

UNTIL 2022

2021 on the homologated cars to ensure there is still a performance differentiator, but this is naturally a time when those same midfield teams have greater concerns than the time gap to the front of the pack.

Williams deputy chief Claire Williams said in Australia that the team would look to “safeguard our business” from the impact of coronavirus limitations, with new UK government guidelines putting the country on effective lockdown since Monday.

“That comes in a variety of different ways to ensuring that we’ve got the capability for remote working, should we need to send our people home,” Williams explained. “I suppose the main consideration for any team is around manufacturing, because you can’t manufacture parts at home. So if we have to shut down our factory that can be incredibly difficult. Obviously, we’re having conversations about insurance, but it’s not an easy situation to manage. We’re in discussions at the moment.”

Despite the carryover of the 2020 cars into 2021, McLaren has confirmed that it will still go ahead with its switch to Mercedes power units next year. McLaren has worked with Renault as its engine partner since 2018, but announced last September that it had signed a new long-term deal with Mercedes to become its supplier.

The McLaren MCL35 is built around a Renault engine, but the team will be permitted to make some tweaks to the chassis to accommodate the Mercedes unit on safety grounds. This will include changing the rear suspension components given the Mercedes engine’s different pick-up points for the wishbones and trackrods, as well as possible aerodynamic changes to aid cooling.

LUKE SMITH

➔ P11 OPINION

FORMULA 1



Mercedes backs away from Ferrari 2019 action

FORMULA 1

Mercedes has backed away from its involvement with the group of teams complaining about the FIA’s secret agreement with Ferrari over its 2019 Formula 1 engine, Autosport has learned.

The seven teams not using Ferrari engines had expressed their anger in the wake of the governing body announcing that it had reached a private settlement with the Italian team over suspicions that its engine was being run illegally. Mercedes, Red Bull, AlphaTauri, McLaren, Renault, Williams and Racing Point collectively issued a joint statement criticising the FIA’s decision, and suggested that they could go as far as taking legal action to get the answers they wanted.

“We hereby state publicly our shared commitment to pursue full and proper disclosure in this matter, to ensure that our sport treats all competitors fairly and equally. We do so on behalf of the fans, the participants and the stakeholders of Formula One,” said a statement issued by the seven teams.

Later, they sent a strongly worded letter to FIA president Jean Todt asking a series of questions about the reasons for the decision to call off the investigation into Ferrari. The FIA’s stance was that

in reaching a deal it avoided the potential for an expensive and damaging court case with Ferrari over the matter, because it had no way of proving beyond all doubt that Ferrari had cheated.

With the FIA standing firm on the matter, and Todt expressing his own anger in a return letter at the outspoken remarks the teams had made, it was unclear how the situation was going to develop. But it is understood that a joint press conference of the seven teams had been initially planned for the season-opening Australian Grand Prix before being abandoned because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Now, however, high-level sources have revealed that Mercedes has elected to step away from the matter and will not remain a part of any action.

With Mercedes boss Toto Wolff having been one of the main driving forces behind pushing for action against the FIA, there has not yet been any official explanation for the change of heart. But sources suggest that Wolff told rival teams during the build-up to the cancelled Australian Grand Prix that the move had come on advice from parent company Daimler, which did not want to remain involved in a battle that could be damaging for both F1 and the team’s image.

JONATHAN NOBLE

Monaco GP cancelled due to coronavirus restrictions

CORONAVIRUS

The Monaco Grand Prix has been cancelled as a result of the coronavirus outbreak that has now impacted the first eight Formula 1 races scheduled for 2020.

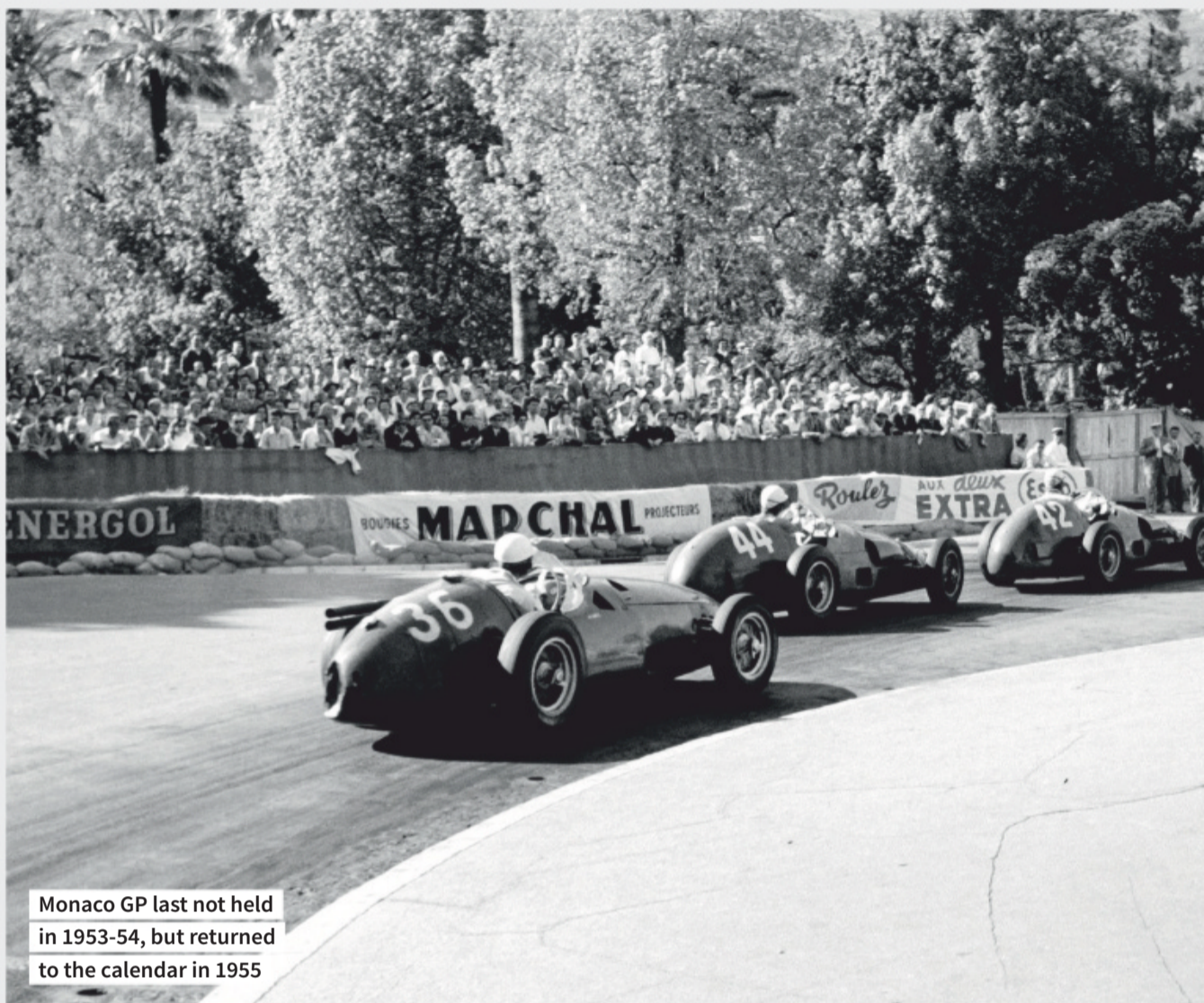
After F1 initially announced the postponement of the races in the Netherlands (3 May), Spain (10 May) and Monaco (24 May), the Automobile Club de Monaco followed this up by confirming that its grand prix had been called off.

The ACM's statement said the situation was "no longer tenable" amid uncertainty over the situation. The Historic Grand Prix planned for 10 May has also been cancelled. "To all the fans, spectators, partners and our members, the board of directors wishes to express its sincere regrets that these two events cannot be postponed and under no circumstances will it be possible to organise these events later this year," the ACM said.

It is the first time since 1954 that the Monaco Grand Prix will not take place, but its cancellation will not hurt F1's revenues as the promoters do not pay a hosting fee.

News of Monaco's cancellation was followed by an announcement from the Azerbaijan Grand Prix promoter that it would be postponing the race in Baku, set for 7 June. Baku had been identified as a potential starting point for the new season during talks between teams, but this has now been shelved.

F1 CEO Chase Carey issued a statement following Baku's announcement, saying he anticipated a 15-18 race calendar for 2020, now starting in the summer and extending beyond the planned end of the season on 29 November.



"It is not possible to provide a more specific calendar now due to the fluidity of the current situation, but we expect to gain clearer insights to the situation in each of our host countries, as well as the issues related to travel to these countries, in the coming month," said Carey.

LE MANS PUSHED TO SEPTEMBER

The Le Mans 24 Hours was postponed until September just two days after race organiser the Automobile Club de l'Ouest had revealed that it would announce a decision on whether to press ahead with its 13-14 June date on 15 April.

The announcement of the 15 April deadline on Monday of last week was followed hours later by the imposition of what was effectively a social lockdown in France by president Emmanuel Macron. That made a postponement all but

inevitable, and on Wednesday evening a new date of 19-20 September was announced for the World Endurance Championship finale.

The move is not unprecedented: Le Mans was pushed back to September in 1968 after a month of civil unrest and strikes in France during May.

The 88th running of Le Mans will now take place after the original start date for the 2020-21 WEC, which was due to kick off at Silverstone on 5 September. A wholesale rejig of next season's WEC calendar, or at least the first three or four races, will be required. An announcement, which will include the schedule for Le Mans week, is expected on 2 April.

ELSEWHERE IN MOTORSPORT

As in F1, the IndyCar Series has lost its blue-riband street race, and the Long Beach Grand Prix has dropped off the calendar for the first time since it was first held in 1975. The race was part of IndyCar's raft on April postponements, but a suitable date could not be found after negotiations with city authorities. That also means that the IMSA SportsCar Championship, which had already postponed its spring Mid-Ohio round, has also lost its prestige Long Beach date.

The Nurburgring 24 Hours, which was scheduled for 23-24 May, has now been postponed until 26-27 September – just one week after Le Mans. That means the





cancellation of the World Touring Car Cup's annual visit to the Nurburgring Nordschleife, as the series is on its Asian leg of races at that time.

Also in Germany, the ADAC has put back the season opener at Oschersleben for its package – headed by GT Masters – from late April to 24-25 October. The DTM is still advertising a kickoff at Zolder on 25-26 April, but that will surely be delayed.

GT Sport has delayed the opening of its Euroformula Open and International GT Open season, with its Paul Ricard date pushed back from late April to 22-23 August. Euroformula's prestige Pau Grand Prix has had its May date postponed.

The World Rallycross Championship has postponed its spring openers in Spain and Portugal, all NASCAR Cup races are on hold before an intended pick-up at Martinsville on 9 May, Super Formula has delayed its mid-April Fuji round, and Super GT has postponed its Okayama opener.

AUTOSPORT STAFF



Renault junior Zhou wins 'virtual' Bahrain Grand Prix

ESPORTS

With the postponement of the real-life season, the inaugural F1 Esports Virtual Grand Prix aimed to fill the void and keep fans entertained. Renault F1 junior Guanyu Zhou (above) was the unlikely winner of the frenetic 'Bahrain' race.

There were incidents aplenty on the opening lap, with Racing Point's Nico Hulkenberg getting caught up in a multi-car collision before he'd even reached Turn 1. Just moments later, Nicholas Latifi (Williams) veered into the wall with Esteban Gutierrez (Mercedes).

Three-time grand prix winner Johnny Herbert – representing Alfa Romeo – made the bizarre choice to cut Turn 1 and ascend from 15th to the race lead. He was penalised, but before he had a chance to serve his penalty he was overtaken by Red Bull's polesitting BMW DTM driver Philipp Eng.

Formula 2 racer Zhou was Eng's closest competition, and the Chinese executed the perfect undercut to wrestle the lead from Eng. Zhou extended his advantage and comfortably took the win, while Mercedes' Formula E driver Stoffel Vandoorne was able to barge his way past Eng with a forceful move for second place on the penultimate lap.

Popular streamer Jimmy Broadbent

(Racing Point) took fourth despite a last-lap crash with McLaren's Lando Norris, who entertained over 100,000 viewers on his Twitch stream of the race. Broadbent and Norris had charged from the back of the grid after missing qualifying due to technical issues.

Norris phoned Max Verstappen, team-mate Carlos Sainz, team boss Zak Brown and fellow 2019 F1 rookie George Russell among others for advice on how to rejoin the session, much to the amusement of fans. Ex-Olympian Chris Hoy (Red Bull) and One Direction's Liam Payne (Williams) were at the back.

The Virtual GP wasn't the only F1-based Esports event taking place, with Motorsport Games and Veloce Esports co-producing the #NotTheBahGP event boasting a line-up that included Real Madrid goalkeeper Thibaut Courtois as well as pro golfer Ian Poulter.

Alfa Romeo F1 Esports driver Daniel Bereznyay won the first race, while Toro Rosso's Cem Bolukbasi won the reversed-grid race from 17th on the grid after making up 16 positions in the first three laps. Latifi was the highest-placed 'non-sim' driver in the main race in fifth.

Both series are expected to announce further events as the cancellation of motorsport events increases.

JOSH SUTTILL

AUTOSPORT PLUS

Smart insight published daily

Le Mans giant Joest hands over Mazda programme



GALSTAD
motorsport
IMAGES

IMSA SPORTSCAR

Joest Racing's involvement in the IMSA SportsCar Championship with Mazda has come to an end. The running of the manufacturer's pair of Daytona Prototype internationals will now be fully taken over by the Multimatic Motorsports squad on the resumption of the North American series.

Canada-based Multimatic is replacing Joest, which was brought in to head up the Mazda programme for 2018, after stepping up its involvement last season. It was brought on board to oversee the engineering of the pair of RT24-P, which it developed, while Joest continued to

supply the crew that ran the cars.

A statement from Mazda in North America, which made no mention of multiple Le Mans 24 Hours winner Joest, read: "Beginning at the next round of the IMSA SportsCar Championship, the pair of Mazda RT24-Ps will be operated by Multimatic Motorsports. With its broad experience in racing operations and race car development, Multimatic has now been tasked by Mazda with the operation of its flagship racing programme."

Joest Racing managing director Ralf Juttner confirmed the split with Mazda. "Our relationship has officially ended," he said. "The contract finishes

at the end of this month."

Joest was effectively dropped last autumn, but a six-month notice period in its contract meant that it was still in place for the Daytona 24 Hours series opener in January and would have run the cars at this month's Sebring 12 Hours had the race not be postponed.

Juttner explained that German squad Joest is now looking for another project. "We are trying to find something, which wasn't easy before because of everything going on around the new LMDh rules," he said. "Now we have the coronavirus, it is going to be extremely difficult."

GARY WATKINS

Roger Cowman 1946-2020

OBITUARY

British motor racing has lost a true character with the death of Roger Cowman, aged 73.

Cowman won't be remembered for the breadth of his CV, but for the cheerful, never-give-up attitude with which he approached the sport. During the 1980s he ran cars in British FF2000, British F3 and FIA

Formula 3000, their immaculate presentation often belying the fact that he was often operating on little more than fresh air. Peak result in that period was Perry McCarthy's seventh in a wet F3000 race at Spa in 1989.

"We were always up against it financially," McCarthy says, "but it was all one big adventure – neither of us willing to roll over and accept defeat. It

was incredible how he was able to run me on virtually no money, but we managed to do some special things. He was an absolute racer."

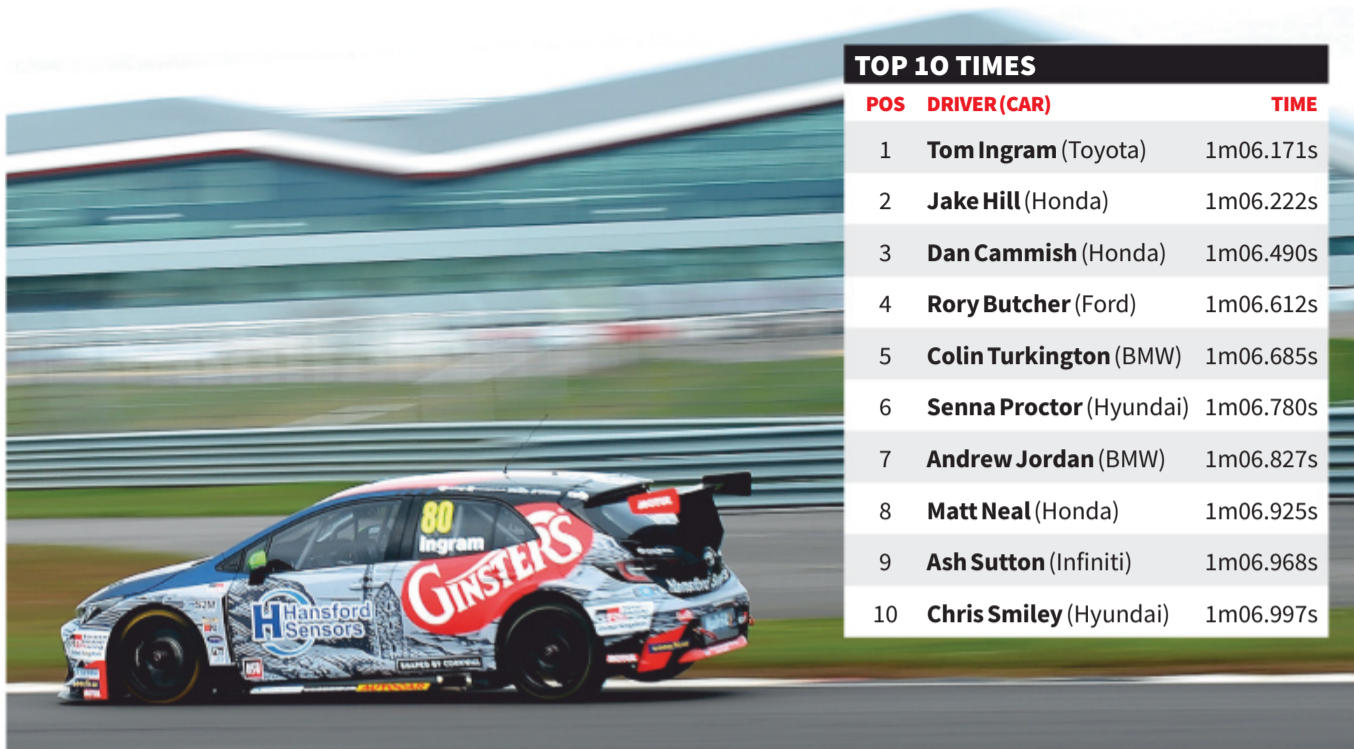
Cowman was later the founding father of the BOSS (Big Open Single Seater) Series that became EuroBOSS and continues today as BOSS GP.

He is survived by wife Jackie and two daughters, Sophie and Lindy.

SIMON ARRON



SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES



TOP 10 TIMES

POS	DRIVER (CAR)	TIME
1	Tom Ingram (Toyota)	1m06.171s
2	Jake Hill (Honda)	1m06.222s
3	Dan Cammish (Honda)	1m06.490s
4	Rory Butcher (Ford)	1m06.612s
5	Colin Turkington (BMW)	1m06.685s
6	Senna Proctor (Hyundai)	1m06.780s
7	Andrew Jordan (BMW)	1m06.827s
8	Matt Neal (Honda)	1m06.925s
9	Ash Sutton (Infiniti)	1m06.968s
10	Chris Smiley (Hyundai)	1m06.997s

BTCC Toyota's Tom Ingram topped last week's test at the British Touring Car Championship Launch Day on the new-to-the-series Silverstone International Circuit. Jake Hill was fastest in the morning session in his MB Motorsport Honda and improved in the afternoon, but fell 0.051 seconds short of Ingram's Speedworks-run Corolla. The International layout – using the F1 pits – is scheduled to take its BTCC race bow in late September. **Photograph by JEP**

Mike Anthony 1928-2020

OBITUARY

One of the original members of Team Lotus, Mike Anthony died last Wednesday. He was 91 years old.

A former Harlequins rugby player, Anthony began motorsport in a Jaguar SS90, before becoming one of Lotus founder Colin Chapman's first customers. Armed with his new Lotus MkVI, Anthony failed to finish his first race in the car: the 1954 British Empire Trophy at Oulton Park. But, with Chapman competing in the same race in his new MkVIII and Peter Gammons in his MkVI, they agreed upon the name of 'Team Lotus'.

Anthony moved on to a 'stretched' MkVIII – dubbed MkX – to house a two-litre Bristol engine, before acquiring an Eleven for 1956. Sticking with the Bristol motor against Chapman's advice, he suffered from reliability problems. For 1958 he raced an AC Ace-Bristol, winning a two-litre GT race at Spa in which Jim Clark was fifth in his first race outside the UK.



Armed with a Lister-Chevrolet, he struggled in 1959, although enjoyed current owner Julian Bronson's recent success in the car. He also showed good pace in the now-outclassed Ecurie Ecosse Jaguar D-type at the 1960 British GP meeting.

Some good showings in Formula Junior in 1961 presaged his decision to retire, although he remained a loyal British Racing Drivers' Club member.

IN THE HEADLINES

SETTE CAMARA IN JAPAN...

Red Bull Formula 1 reserve Sergio Sette Camara has replaced Pietro Fittipaldi in the Team B-Max with Motopark line-up for this season's Super Formula series in Japan. Sette Camara raced for Motopark in European Formula 3 in 2015 and 2016, and rejoined the team for the 2017 Macau Grand Prix, which he nearly won. Fittipaldi's exit has been ascribed to "conflicting sponsors' interests".

...AS CARS HIT THE TRACK

Super Formula broke the global coronavirus mould by holding a test at Fuji this week. Team Impul's Ryo Hirakawa lapped fastest on Monday's opening day in his Toyota-engined car.

DELETRAZ IN GPX PORSCHE

Haas F1 simulator driver Louis Deletraz is set to return to the GT ranks this season in the GT World Challenge Europe with the Porsche-backed GPX Racing squad. The Swiss has been pencilled in to race one of the Dubai entrant's Porsche 911 GT3-Rs at the Paul Ricard 1000Km round on 30 May should it go ahead. Deletraz is due to share the car with Romain Dumas and Thomas Preining in place of Dennis Olsen, who is scheduled to be racing in the Detroit IMSA round.

IDE FROM COMA TO ERX

Enzo Ide, the 2016 Blancpain GT Sprint champion who spent five months in hospital last year after being placed in an artificial coma following an accident at home, will return to competition this year in the European Rallycross Championship. The 28-year-old Belgian will race an Audi run by JC Raceteknik.

VOLPE NEW NISSAN BOSS

Tommaso Volpe has replaced Michael Carcamo as Nissan's motorsport chief, overseeing Formula E and Super GT. Volpe has overseen Nissan brand Infiniti, where he continues his role, and where he is credited with building its reputation in F1.

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Better late than never

After its mishandling of the Australian GP, F1 has taken steps that should help safeguard the series in the short term – and perhaps make it better for the longer haul

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Formula 1's handling of the aborted 2020 Australian Grand Prix was naive at best and shambolic at worst. But in the near-fortnight since then, the championship's key stakeholders have taken a series of decisions that are clearly designed to protect various F1 elements during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The big three announcements are that F1's 2020 summer shutdown has been extended – from 14 to 21 days – and brought forward to March and April; the 2021 rules revolution has been postponed until 2022; and the Dutch, Spanish, Monaco and Azerbaijan races have been removed from their expected dates. Monaco has dropped off the calendar entirely for this year. These decisions represent the kind of leadership and decisiveness that seemed to be missing before, and for much of, the Melbourne week.

By moving the summer break to the spring, F1 opens up additional August weekends that would traditionally not feature races for a rejigged calendar. But this also has the effect of equalising the impact of the containment measures currently being implemented in Europe. These are currently quite widespread in terms of their application, with Italy (where Ferrari, AlphaTauri and Haas chassis builder Dallara are based) in particular, but also France (where Renault's engine division is housed) enacting major lockdowns. In the UK, where the majority of teams are based, an enforced shutdown for non-essential

“These decisions represent the kind of leadership that seemed missing before Melbourne”

workers has now been enacted. The move to postpone three more races makes complete sense given the increasing likelihood that disruption to daily life – let alone sporting events – will go on for several months rather than weeks.

It had seemed odd in Australia that the decision to cancel that event had not been taken until the F1 paddock had rocked up in Melbourne. But then things really did seem different to so many of us, and the possibility of racing that weekend was real. It seems that much of the world – and many in the media – had not quite grasped the seriousness of the situation.

Given the questions being asked of many western governments, F1 can be granted some understanding for the delay in abandoning the Australian race. But many other major sports leagues and organisations had called off events days and even weeks earlier...

The Monaco situation is unique – the event does not pay the enormous race-hosting fees other circuits and promoters must. By not needing to balance the books with major income from ticket sales, the Automobile Club de Monaco could call off the 2020 race without taking a major financial hit.

But the decision to postpone the 2021 rules reset is surely the most impressive. The regulation overhaul is set to be the first major impact Liberty Media has made on F1's sporting side. So the decision to postpone these changes for a year was a big one. But it makes complete sense, as does the call to use the cars that have been developed for the 2020 season in 2021. It's still unclear what, if any, racing will take place this year, but by taking away the need for the teams to develop the new challengers while focusing on their current cars, and grapple with the inevitable economic issues the coronavirus disruption will bring, F1 and its stakeholders have eased a big burden. It by no means completely safeguards the teams, but it's a very sensible move.

The teams are now set to develop their new cars during the 2021 season, which will be run under F1's new financial rules – including the cost cap. They could still choose to start design work for the 2022 cars if/when the factories resume full operations this year, but the financial stress of the coming months is likely to prevent this.

The coronavirus crisis is sure to cause F1 more problems before it's over – and probably even once things go back to normal. If the coming months result in economic catastrophe, this will have an impact on all teams, with manufacturers often flighty in such situations. All teams also rely on sponsorship money to keep their financial states healthy – something that has been a recent issue even without the feared coming squeeze. And there is the prize-fund allocation to consider, which will likely be reduced if races cannot be held, as F1 can't keep the hosting fees paid by race promoters, from which the teams get their shares.

While facing up to the harsh realities of the current situation, there are some positives to consider. First, if all the teams now develop their 2022 cars to the new rules under the cost cap, then that reduces the advantages held by the bigger teams, which in theory could spend much more before the cost cap comes into effect. There's every chance the racing will be better when normality returns. Then there's the work the teams are doing to help tackle the coronavirus crisis (see page 14) and the surge in official Esports series. Online racing is better than no racing at all.

These are, of course, minor developments in a rapidly changing world but, with the steps F1 has taken to try to avert the disaster the coronavirus situation has forced upon many industries, such steps are very much better than silence and buried heads. ❄️

➔ P14 F1'S CORONAVIRUS ACTION



The showman must go on

With the suspension of so many sports, including Formula 1, it's difficult to find some light relief – but Lando Norris's sense of fun is a light in the gloom

JONATHAN NOBLE

When Lando Norris spoke over the winter of needing to get more serious, and cut down a bit on his online banter, many in Formula 1 were not convinced that such a move would really come to pass.

After all, Norris's infectious sense of fun and his online presence through his sim racing commitments would mean he would never find it easy to switch off his followers and wipe away his cheerful spirit.

How thankful we are now that Norris found it so hard to really change because, at a time when F1's season has been put on hold, he's exactly the showman we all need.

The McLaren driver's presence in Sunday night's bumper F1 Esports double-header – with the #NotTheBahGP and the Virtual Grand Prix – was the perfect proof of this. Yes, he was always going to be the centre of attention. But, rather than it being for some sensational driving that allowed him to triumph against the professional sim racers, this time he grabbed the spotlight for being himself. Fun, cheeky, friendly and mischievous – and perfectly playing to his audience.

It all came about when, after a solid warm-up performance in Motorsport Network's/Veloce's #NotTheBahGP that hadn't been helped by getting caught up in a first-lap incident, he had hoped to nab a podium in F1's official Virtual Grand Prix. But his hopes were dashed before he had even turned a wheel in 'anger'

“With Formula 1's season put on hold, Lando Norris is exactly the showman we all need right now”

when a session disconnect removed him from the game server.

While some drivers, perhaps, would have indulged in a complete rage-quit and gone off to do something else, Norris decided instead to have some fun on his Twitch channel, which had grabbed an impressive audience of 100,000 viewers. Having been egged on by the chat on his channel, he dialled up his friend Max Verstappen to ask for some advice about starting so far down.

“I would turn off the computer and watch it,” joked Verstappen, who is not a big player of the F1 2019 game and thus elected not to enter the Virtual GP. “Is that a good tip?”

It didn't end there, though. Norris then phoned up McLaren team-mate Carlos Sainz, his strategist Randy Singh and performance engineer Andrew Jarvis. There was even time to speak to his boss Zak Brown.

He also teased George Russell by saying he wanted some advice from the man on the grid who had the most experience of starting last. With the laughs over, Norris thought he could knuckle down and put a charge on in the race, but he suffered the same fate on the formation lap when the game disconnected again.

Norris was forced to watch his AI-controlled car – which quickly got nicknamed Landobot – do battle for him and make an impressive charge up to second during the pitstop sequence.

Just past the halfway point in the 14-lap race, Norris managed to get back in the game and take over his own car, so pushed on as best as he could. He eventually got locked in a thrilling fight for fourth place with YouTuber Jimmy Broadbent, which culminated in contact on the final corner of the race as Broadbent's front right wheel tagged Norris's left rear wheel and pitched both men off the track. Broadbent recovered to take fourth, ahead of Norris in fifth.

After the chequered flag, his fans egging him on, Norris phoned up Alex Albon. His Red Bull rival was quick to get the first word in: “I watched you take out Jimmy at the last corner... the corner turned right and you turned left!”

“Yeah, Alex,” responded Norris quickly. “I don't like the way you turned in on Lewis Hamilton in Brazil, alright. But I didn't say that! OK, you don't need to go all aggressive on me!”

It marked the perfect end to a breakthrough performance from Norris, whose entertaining Twitch stream may have introduced his personality to those who hadn't witnessed it before. And right now, as F1 seeks to keep itself and its stars in the spotlight, Norris could well be the sport's perfect poster boy to help racing stay relevant and entertaining during the enforced shut down.

For, in a sport that sometimes struggles to get the personalities of its main characters across, the ability to have one of its bright hopes for the future broadcasting to the world and coming across so brilliantly is something that F1 needs to embrace and encourage.

The Norris show had all the rawness of the team radio during a grand prix, but there was more fun to it all. You cannot get much closer to the life of a driver than having him phone up his F1 mates after being egged on by the crowd.

Norris, like fellow eager gamer Verstappen, has a real opportunity to emerge from the suspended F1 season as a bigger star than when things got called off. Having hit a 100k viewers on his Twitch channel, and with the #NotTheBahGP and Virtual GPs having hit a cumulative viewership peak of 600k on Sunday, there is certainly enough interest behind what he's up to away from F1.

And while some of F1's big names will lay low and stay out of the spotlight until the grand prix circus can get back on the road – even if that turns out to be 2021 – let's hope Norris ignores his call to tone things down and keeps doing what he is brilliant at: being an entertainer on track and off it. ✨

YOUR SAY

I had already passed Ayrton by the time we reached the bottom of Paddock Hill Bend, but was punted off at Druids for the temerity of doing so

ANDY ACKERLEY

On the receiving end of Senna's 'qualities'

Among Ayrton Senna's many "qualities" as a driver displayed at Brands Hatch on 19 March 1981 was also one of an uncompromising driving style (Autosport, 19 March, page 74).

After Rick Morris had spun off in the final (by himself), I've always believed that I could, and should, have won that race.

I had already passed Ayrton by the time we reached the bottom of Paddock Hill Bend but, contrary to Jeremy Shaw's report, was punted off at Druids for the temerity of doing so.

As a postscript to my indignation, Ayrton appeared at Brands a couple of more times that year and crushed all opposition (me included). Oh, and for the rest of his life, he always said hello when we met.

Andy Ackerley
Tunbridge Wells, Kent

Hitting the right note on a profound issue

May I applaud the writer Alex Kalinauckas on a well-written article in last week's Autosport ('How a pandemic punctured F1 2020'). He was precise and to the point, and the questions raised need answering... and truthfully too.

Please pass on our thoughts and best wishes to the affected team members for a speedy recovery from this ghastly and indiscriminate virus, and hope that everybody follows the instructions given by the various health organisations and governments. Together we can quickly kick this horrible virus into touch, and we can return to some sort of normality.

Loyd Gerken
Stevenage, Herts

Superseason would make F1 season really super

With Baku now being the latest to postpone their race, it's beginning to look more like the 1950s, with maybe only five or six races, at this rate, in this season's calendar to determine the champion [don't think it's at quite that point yet! – ed].

If this becomes the case, maybe F1 should take a leaf out of the WEC, and because of the the unusual circumstances have a 2020-2021 Superseason. Imagine, a calendar with maybe 30 races or more in it. How tantalising and intriguing would that be!

MA Smith
By email




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INSIGHT

MOTORSPORT'S ROLE IN FIGHTING CORONAVIRUS • SEBRING 12 HOURS GREATEST RACES • BTCC SEASON PREVIEW

HOW MOTORSPORT CAN HELP COMBAT COVID-19

The extraordinary talents that are normally directed to success on track could have a significant impact in the fight against the pandemic

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Brains trust: the Mercedes F1 team's Brackley factory

The coronavirus crisis is testing modern society severely. On top of the serious impact the effects of COVID-19 can have on individuals, when it comes to treating vast numbers of people it threatens to overwhelm healthcare services.

In the UK last week, prime minister Boris Johnson called for engineering companies to help produce more than 20,000 ventilators – crucial to providing therapeutic relief to people suffering the acute respiratory distress and pneumonic symptoms caused by COVID-19.

More than 60 major businesses and organisations joined Johnson's conference call, which was aimed at engaging them to deploy their resources for the national good in a time of major crisis. Earlier in March, comments made by health secretary Matt Hancock suggested the National Health Service possessed 5000 ventilators.

"The prime minister made clear that responding to coronavirus and reducing the spread of the peak requires a national effort," read a statement released after Johnson's call. "He set the ambition for industry to manufacture as many new ventilators as possible, so we can all help the most vulnerable and our NHS, whose staff have been working round the clock."

The motorsport industry across the world is responding to the various calls for aid. The majority owner of the Envision Virgin Racing Formula E team – the Envision Group, a Chinese wind turbine and energy technology company – has set up a face-mask manufacturing operation and donated more than £5million to help with the coronavirus outbreak. The Ferrari-owning Agnelli family has donated €10million to Italian health authorities and provided 150 ventilators through the companies it controls, which also include Fiat Chrysler Automobiles and Juventus Football Club. Supercars team owner Ryan Walkinshaw has offered to help build ventilators in Australia.

It was also announced last week that a collective of UK-based F1 teams – Haas, McLaren, Mercedes, Racing Point, Red Bull, Renault and Williams – is evaluating how it can help with Johnson's request. This initiative is understood to have support from F1 itself, with Pat Symonds and his technical team also involved in discussions over the collective's full response – which, at the time of writing, is yet to be fully revealed.

The pandemic is, rightly, at the forefront of our collective consciousness. Considering that situation, and the pledges and action already taken by various motorsport organisations, it is worth considering how the overall industry can help in the crisis – while of course respecting the rules of the new lockdown measures where appropriate. This isn't about whimsy, or self-promotion from the parties involved, it is simply a positive step in a sometimes overwhelmingly negative situation.

There is, again totally correctly, much talk about how we must now pull together as individuals – from not stockpiling food and supplies,

to engaging in self-isolation and social-distancing measures, as well as complying with full lockdown procedures where these have been enacted in the world. Ultimately, this pandemic will not be overcome without teamwork. And, without wishing to sound too flippant, this is something motorsport does well. It is the collective work that ends with individual success – teams building and operating machines, and drivers aiming to take them to glory.

But a key point here, says former Ferrari and Red Bull race engineer >>



Ex-race engineer
Rodi Basso

Rodi Basso, is not that motorsport engineers can simply walk in and design and build healthcare equipment from scratch by themselves. In fact, they must work closely with existing experts and engineers from other industries.

“If you take the motorsport solution and a team of engineers and you try to apply it in another industry, that’s a complete failure,” says Basso, who also worked as motorsport business director at McLaren Applied Technologies between 2016 and 2019. “You need to go back. We have a lot of wonderful solutions in motorsport – let’s go back to either the core technology [designs] or the process in order to move from the technology [idea] to the final solution.

“The other thing is the approach. In motorsport, you give a challenge to the engineers and you say, ‘Listen, that’s the variable, the KPI [key performance indicator] that we need to improve’, and they will go there

“WHAT WE’RE GOOD AT IS MODELLING THE PRODUCTION PROCESS, MODELLING THE SOLUTION ITSELF”

as fast as possible through modelling, faster prototyping – faster experiments, testing, and then straight into a prototype. But first you need the interaction with people with a lot of domain knowledge.”

It is so often highlighted that motorsport teams must work together to succeed, whether that’s team-mates cooperating or just not clashing, or considering pitstops and car design. The best organisations know how to get people working at their best individually and as part of a wider team. In F1, says Basso, “there is an incredible turnover with the engineers in the teams and you have to be led by a top management that understands and fosters the team collaboration and team spirit. So if you get a few of them to team up with people with a domain knowledge [of ventilators], after a certain point they will speak the same language and they will go for it.”

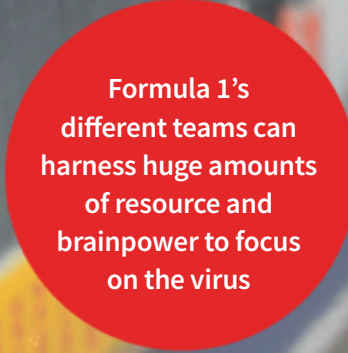
There are tangible ways motorsport squads can assist in the fight against COVID-19. Returning to the UK government’s call for aid as a specific case study, there are several ways teams and automotive companies can have an impact. The first, when it comes to F1 squads, stems from the intricate modelling systems the teams employ to produce their cars. This involves not just the design concepts of the cars, but the full process of getting them from mathematical theories in design offices to real parts in the factories and, eventually, putting these together in a sporting scenario. Everything is optimised.

“A motorsport engineer cannot design a ventilator,” Basso says of the case in point. “They *can* by a technical standpoint, but by the time they get fully aligned with the whole homologation process and all the [regulation] aspects that are very much related to the healthcare industry, it will take much longer than needed.

“So, this is when motorsport engineers can add a massive value, in the approach. Being a prototype industry – based on high speed, high quality, low volumes – I would get them in a production line of a ventilator of an existing company to work together with this company and model. What we’re good at is modelling the production process, modelling the solution itself. So, the product, the ventilator – it would be how can we translate this into a mathematical model in order to improve the efficiency of these things?”

From his time in F1, Basso cites teams employing 3D printing to produce tiny aerodynamic parts at tracks to trial in Friday practice sessions as an example of rapidly tackling an engineering problem.

“Testing is limited in motorsport,” he says. “And so the teams need to work a lot on their modeling and their simulation capabilities and using these tools in order to understand if a new part is working or not – that’s the exercise at home in the factory. Then you go to the track on Friday,



Formula 1’s different teams can harness huge amounts of resource and brainpower to focus on the virus





and you test the thing and you have the feedback from the driver, the feedback from the data that you try to correlate. But sometimes, especially for the small aerodynamic parts, they have 3D printing on site at the track, where they can do a modification and test straight away. So, by a structural standpoint, the part will stand a Formula 1 application, and it's built on a Friday."

Because of the tightly regulated specifications involved in producing ventilator parts, any new design suggested by a motorsport company would have to be strictly audited. Basso estimates this could be done in "a matter of a couple of weeks" and "it can be the same time [again] to fill the gap [in terms of a new specification adhering to the regulations]." He adds: "So let's say in a month's time that you can get the thing up and running."

But in terms of having the fastest positive impact in the crisis, motorsport teams with the right machinery could immediately begin to build ventilator parts (as explained on page 20), in addition to the detailed modelling to improve design and manufacturing processes we have mentioned. Basso reckons that so long as the proper homologation procedures required to build parts for the ventilators are respected, this is "low-hanging fruit" as "in the motorsport teams, in F1 teams, there is >>>

already a fast and efficient way of managing parts and producing parts”.

“By just acquiring the 3D model [specification] and getting into a pipeline, straight away motorsport can add volumes to the number of parts that a country can produce,” he adds.

As explained by engineering company AVL (see panel, right), there are many other ways in which the strengths of motorsport squads can be useful during this pandemic. One concerns logistics, as the art of getting complex machinery and people (in some cases many of them) to race tracks around the world takes a lot of careful planning.

“The logistics, when you think about a ventilator, it is not a ventilator itself [produced as a whole],” says Basso. “There is a supply chain that has to be improved. And actually, this is another point where motorsport can help massively – how to improve the efficiency of the supply chain.”

The positive impact motorsport companies can have in healthcare can already be seen in products produced by MAT and Williams Advanced Engineering. Among other innovations, the former has worked on improving the efficiency of ventilator masks using computational fluid dynamics, improving surgical simulations and outcomes monitoring, as well as clinical care and facilities optimisation using enhanced data-sharing, which was done in conjunction with the University of Oxford. It also worked on a study using a digital therapeutic approach to help prevent the onset of type 2 diabetes. WAE, which also operates the Jaguar FE team, has invested in an ultrasound technology company and used F1-inspired tech to create a system to protect babies during emergency transportation.

While fighting COVID-19 is of course the current focus of the world’s priorities, when it passes – which we all hope it will, as quickly and painlessly as it can – Basso reckons there could well be lessons learned from the crisis regarding more motorsport strengths that could be applied to other illnesses and health struggles. The processes behind in-race strategy calls are one such example here.

“The other thing that is incredibly important, and could be beneficial for other industries, is data-mining and data-analysis in general,” he explains. “I can see on the news that there is a lot of effort on, again, modelling the way this virus is spreading around and trying to predict [how it will behave]. So, predictive algorithms that are integrating – artificial intelligence, machine learning, specifically – in order to understand the dynamics of the virus.

“There are promises in this field, but it’s still an open point – it’s not completely clear. But I will say that this could be something that may save lives from now on. Maybe even the normal flu that we are used to every year, maybe we can do a much better job by increasing

“THE SUPPLY CHAIN HAS TO BE IMPROVED. THIS IS ALSO WHERE MOTORSPORT CAN HELP MASSIVELY”

awareness and how we handle this information.”

In the case of the UK’s call for increased ventilator production, motorsport has a chance to show the world just how useful it can be to a society. In a few weeks, simply by turning their machines to new tasks, teams can provide parts that are desperately needed in hospitals around the country. But this approach is not confined by borders or nationalism – the knowledge, skill and capacity in global motorsport has real value when it comes to combatting a critical healthcare crisis.

There are no points to be collected, no champagne to be sprayed. But there is something far, far more valuable on offer – providing real products to try to help end a pandemic. There is also hope and help at hand. The COVID-19 crisis is not going to disappear without action. Motorsport can play its part – and it is. ❄️



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OTHER WAYS MOTORSPORT CAN HELP COUNTER COVID-19 – IDEAS FROM ENGINEERING COMPANY AVL

■ Top-league motorsport teams are used to transferring huge amounts of sensitive data between the race track and the factory during every race weekend. They have extensive knowledge readily available about how to establish and operate technical solutions that allow quick, reliable and secure data transfer. This is what almost every company needs these days, as most of their employees are working from home.

■ Currently, global researchers need large amounts of computing power to support their activities to fight COVID-19. This could be an area where the motorsport teams can also lend support.

■ There is also a high capability in motorsport when it comes to predicting scenario outcomes based on available data, which is used for race strategies. Support to predict outcomes of different measures sent from different governments could be of great benefit.

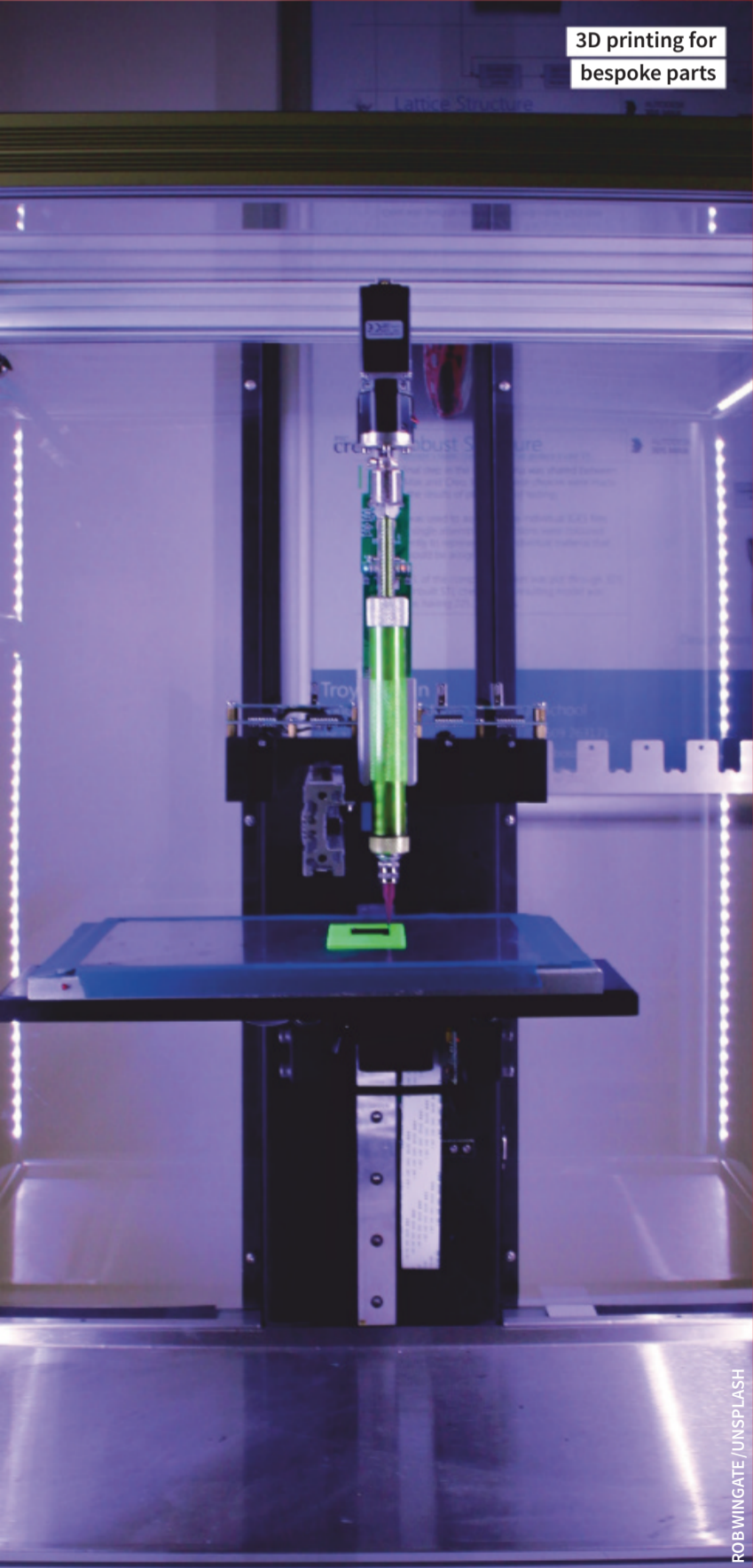
■ AVL’s High Precision Manufacturing Centre in Germany is offering manufacturing capacity for medical devices or other urgently needed components – as far as they fit into AVL’s portfolio and are feasible.

■ Content delivery to motivate people to stay at home is also required. AVL says it can provide insight from decades of automotive experience.



...could be switched
to meet new needs

DARREN HEATH



3D printing for
bespoke parts

ROB WINGATE / UNSPLASH

BRITISH INDUSTRY'S CALL TO ARMS

STEPHEN LICKORISH

It's not just Formula 1 teams based in the UK that are replying to the government's call to arms for manufacturers to assist in the production of vital healthcare equipment. The wider UK motorsport industry is also doing its bit.

UK motorsport trade body the Motorsport Industry Association is encouraging any company that believes it can help to complete a "very simple" online form, which can be accessed via MIA website the-mia.com or from the gov.uk site. The form includes listing the company's key capabilities, and the government will then reply accordingly.

"There are currently a couple of company-led and university-led initiatives," says MIA CEO Chris Aylett. "Then there's a group doing initial work led by F1 itself, their teams and engine suppliers. Right

"MOTORSPORT SPECIALISES IN VERY FAST RESPONSES. RIGHT NOW, THAT'S JUST WHAT'S NEEDED"

now, discussions are ongoing to establish exactly what specific products are required. I expect they may then reach out to their current supply chains, MIA members and others to help."

Aylett believes the ability to deliver high-quality results in a very short timescale makes the UK motorsport industry well placed to help the government.

"Motorsport-based manufacturers meet the demands of very tough customers who insist on very fast responses," he explains. "Right now, that's just what's needed. Companies that register with the government scheme should highlight rapid delivery as being one of their unique capabilities."

But Aylett also has a word of warning for companies. "It's great that motorsport companies are stepping forward to help in this time of national crisis, but they shouldn't think of this as a commercial rescue package," he adds.

As well as continuing to work with the government on how the motorsport industry can help at this challenging time, the MIA is also in talks about securing financial help for affected companies. "We answer all their questions and scour the government's daily bulletins to see what's relevant to our industry and update our website every day with the latest news," says Aylett.

It is obviously a worrying time for most companies involved in motorsport, and Aylett's main advice is to preserve cash and take full advantage of the financial support that is available from the government. "It's an unprecedented situation," he says. "Most in business will know the mantra that 'cash is king' – now that statement is crucial. When you've lost both supply and demand, all you can do is hunker down and save your cash wherever you can, so you are ready for the eventual upturn, which will come.

"The government are being generous as they want businesses to survive so take full advantage, check with both HMRC and local councils. There's money available as loans from the banks at attractive rates – but taking on extra debt right now, when the future is so unpredictable, is dangerous. The simple advice is look after your cash and collect as much government financial support as you can.

"I think businesses will be significantly affected for at least four or five months, but we will come through it – this nightmare will end."

THE MACHINES MOTORSPORT TEAMS CAN USE TO BUILD VENTILATORS

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE AND TIM WRIGHT

On the face of it, a fleet of racing car builders isn't necessarily equipped to deal with a health crisis, but the sheer quality of manufacturing and machinery on the factory floors of many motorsport teams would suggest otherwise. To cope with the demand for products now stemming from governments and health services, Formula 1 teams in particular shouldn't need to make wholesale changes.

Most teams have up-to-date CNC lathes and milling machines, rapid prototyping and 3D printers that could be reprogrammed – a modern-day equivalent to the transfer of manufacturing during the first half of the 20th century, where numerous manufacturers of all kinds of products were commandeered to help the war effort.

Some companies in other fields, such as Louis Vuitton, are changing their manufacturing to make hand sanitiser – so why would F1 teams not be able to contribute by turning their talents to new avenues? This is a great opportunity to show ingenuity, and apply the processes honed in a high-performance racing environment to a real-world situation that requires a rapid response.

In the light of the cancellations and alterations made to the 2020 F1 calendar so far, it has already been decided to push the introduction of the 2021 regulations back another year. There was unanimous support from the teams because it gives them even more time to prepare for the new regulations. But it also frees up resources over the coming months to assist with the battle against COVID-19.

The teams can react very quickly when it comes to producing new parts – as can be seen with updates



at nearly every grand prix during a normal racing year. They can produce moulds for carbon pieces using the CNC machines, they have laser-cutting facilities to produce patterns – all of this is computer-programmed and so they have several autoclaves that can run 24 hours per day. Rapid prototype machines can produce parts to be used on racing cars and make items very quickly. The teams have state-of-the-art electronic departments, computer-controlled inspection and ultrasonic cleaning facilities. Therefore, there is a real opportunity for them to provide assistance.

As the coronavirus crisis has become a pandemic, it is worth looking at the manufacturing possibilities that all the big companies in and outside F1 could participate in. You have McLaren and Williams already producing specialist batteries and electronics, and automotive giants Honda, Mercedes-Benz, Renault and Aston Martin all have the capabilities to do so too.

Let's take the ventilator call, for example. Those companies that

supply ventilators to the NHS could, in this instance, hand over the relevant CAD files, drawings and other instructions to a race team in order to build them. But, as it stands, the designers and engineers at certain companies are being commissioned to produce their own prototypes that use simplified parts, which are required to reduce manufacturing lead times. This is then intended to be released as an 'open source' product specification to allow other manufacturers to produce the ventilators. Currently, it is understood that McLaren Applied Technologies is heading up a consortium of motorsport organisations to do so.

When the new designs are cemented, the teams can press their machinery into action. The CNC machines will build any moulds required, and rapid prototyping will service the production of the smaller parts. Rapid prototyping in particular is a manufacturing technique on the rise in motorsport that can quickly produce tiny parts in intricate detail. This is commonly referred to as 3D printing, where a laser merges layers of plastic or metallic powders to produce complex designs.

With the capabilities that a number of F1 teams – and in some cases their offshoot engineering companies – have in their design departments, they can combine to

produce a good quota of fully constructed ventilators for use in emergency hospitals – or just specific parts if required. The factory floors likely wouldn't require too much change to accommodate the new line of production with regards to machinery – simply reprogramming the CNC codes for new moulds and similar should suffice. But the emphasis would come off producing carbonfibre parts and would instead focus upon plastic components.

You would expect that the teams would have the capability to produce plastic components en masse, and processes such as injection moulding are time-tested and common procedures. The smaller parts can be, as mentioned, produced via rapid prototyping where greater precision is required.

Overall, that process can continue to other products that are currently in short supply, and any medical machinery that requires a team's prowess with regards to electronics can also benefit from the fast turnaround times of the motorsport industry.

And, as already discussed, it's not just physical components that teams could also produce, as the computing power that some possess could provide governments with simulations and data on the transmission of COVID-19. For example, using CFD simulations to mimic pedestrian footfall in public spaces would determine areas that are a risk. Of course, the official government line is to stay home, but at the time of writing there are too many distressing news reports of people defying that advice.

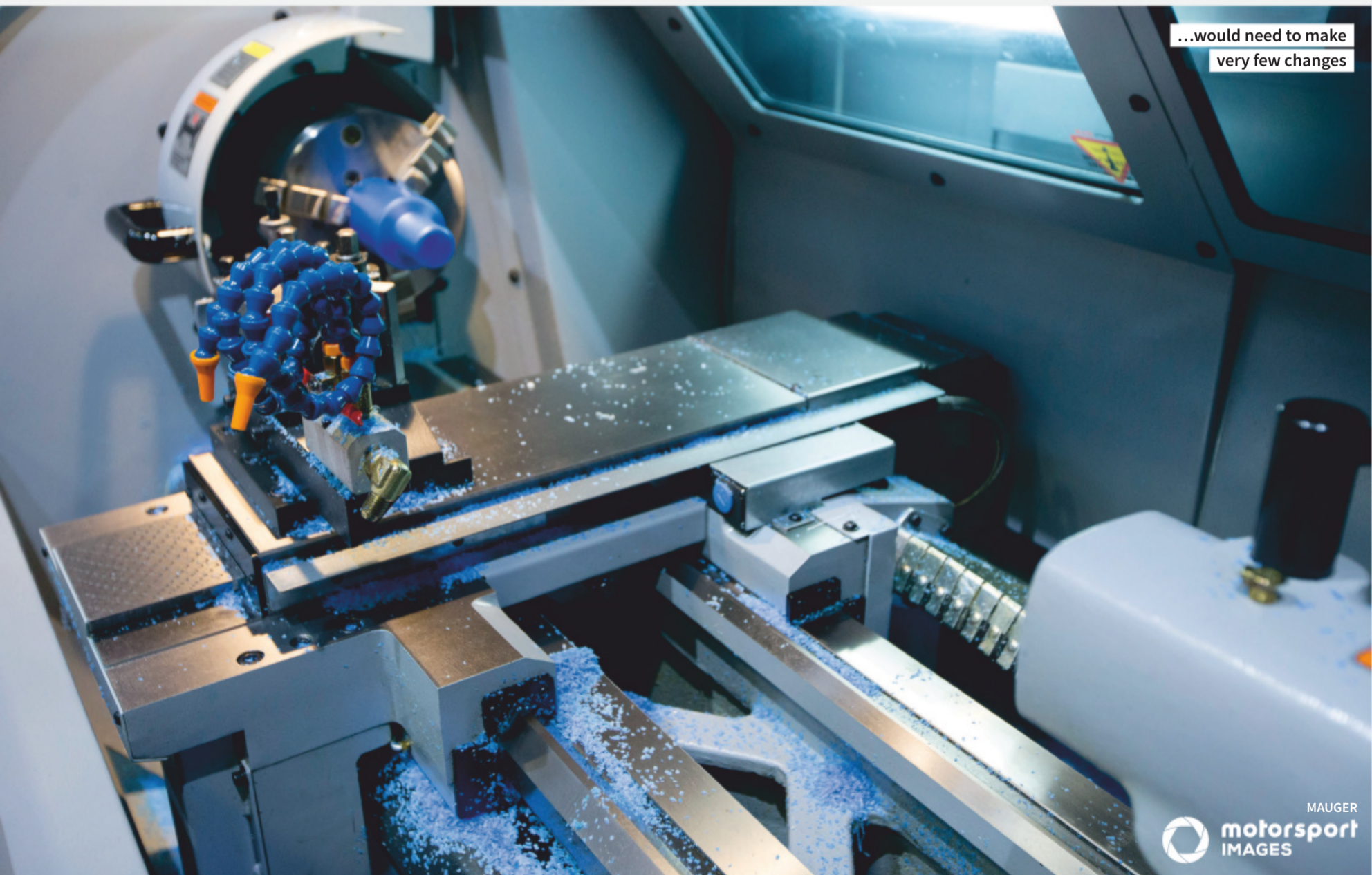
It's not just F1 that can play a part in the coronavirus fight. There are all sorts of companies involved in Formula E, sportscars and more general motorsport engineering operations that are all unable to go racing at this time. Rather than have capacity standing around idle, these could all get involved with producing the medical equipment that the health services need. ❁

“THIS IS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW INGENUITY, AND APPLY THE PROCESSES HONED IN RACING”



THOMAS BUTLER / RED BULL CONTENT POOL

Racing teams' factory floors...



...would need to make very few changes



TOP 12

SEBRING ENDUROS

The 2020 edition of the 12 Hours has been postponed until November. Luckily, there are 67 of them to look back upon to select the ones that excited the most

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport**
IMAGES

12

1975

BMW BRAIN BEATS PORSCHE POWER

BMW's Jochen Neerpasch reckoned that if the German team was going to beat the hordes of Porsche 911 Carrera RSRs with its 3.0 CSL 'Batmobiles' then it was going to have to break them over the bumps of the Sebring International Raceway. That explains why he sent off a hare at the start of the race.

Hans Stuck, who'd qualified on pole, and Sam Posey were given that role. The best of the Porsches took the bait hook, line and sinker: the Brumos entry driven by Peter Gregg and Hurley Haywood made contact with another car as its drivers strove to keep up; and the car fielded by Al Holbert Jr, in which he was partnered by Elliott Forbes-Robinson, was delayed by technical issues.

BMW opted to park the hare after it ran into oil-system issues and moved Stuck and Posey across to the car in which Brian Redman and Allan Moffat had driven the opening stints. The foursome went on to take a decisive victory, finishing three laps up on the Porsche of owner-driver George Dyer and his team-mate Jacques Bienvenue.

The best of the more-fancied Porsches, the Dave Helmick car in which he was joined by John O'Steen and John Graves, was a further four laps down, proving that BMW Motorsport boss Neerpasch had played a tactical masterstroke.

"Not only was Jochen a great boss, but he was an amazing tactician," recalls Stuck. "He thought that the way to win was to have one car pushing hard from the start, and it paid off."



BMW's Jochen Neerpasch played a deft tactical game in 1975 to beat the field of Porsches

11

1980

FITZPATRICK PROVES HIS WORTH

Sebring 1980 was the setting for one of the great drives by the unsung hero of British sportscar racing. John Fitzpatrick claimed victory together with his boss Dick Barbour in a race fought out by a flotilla of Porsche 935s.

A five-way battle boiled down

to a two-way fight between the Dick Barbour Racing Porsche 935K3 and Bruce Leven's factory-spec car shared with Peter Gregg and Hurley Haywood. Leven stepped down from the driving roster early in the race, so Fitz had the task of

making up lost seconds on Gregg and Haywood every time he took the car over from Barbour.

The battle was decided in favour of Fitzpatrick and Barbour when Haywood received a penalty for corner cutting and then the car's header tank

cracked, which dropped them to an eventual 10th place.

"I remember doing a massive amount of driving, probably two thirds of the race," recalls Fitzpatrick. "It was pretty much flat-out all of the time and definitely a win to remember."



Lloyd (left) and Moss started as outsiders but won by five laps

10

1954

MOSS'S DIMINUTIVE WINNER

An up-and-coming grand prix hope by the name of Stirling Moss only accepted Briggs Cunningham's invite to drive his little 1.5-litre OSCA MT4 because he wanted to see the United States for the first time and, he once said, "to buy some coloured nylons for my girlfriend". Yet he ended up spearheading a David-versus-Goliath victory with Bill Lloyd.

Moss crossed the Pond "without a hope in hell of winning", but Sebring turned into a

race of attrition – the cars competing in the top category, four Lancias and three Aston Martins among them, gradually fell by the wayside. Moss's renowned wet-weather skills came in handy, too, in a rain-affected event.

The quartet of Lancia D24s raced among themselves away from the start, but one by one they encountered problems. The cars driven by Juan Manuel Fangio/Eugenio Castellotti and Alberto Ascari/Luigi Villorresi both went out with

a combination of gearbox and brake problems. The leading Lancia shared by Piero Taruffi and Robert Manzon lasted until the penultimate hour when its engine failed.

Manzon was at the wheel at the time, but Taruffi ran out and pushed the car back to the pits, where it was retired. Moss overhauled the Lancia's lap total over the course of the final hour and ended up winning by five laps from the only one of the D24s to reach the finish.

9

1970 ANDRETTI'S BEST?

Mario Andretti claimed a dramatic win for Ferrari in one of the most famous Sebring finishes exactly 50 years ago. But the 1970 race would probably be even better known today if he hadn't. The reason is that he snatched the win from a car co-driven by Hollywood legend Steve McQueen.

The all-time great puts his performance with Ferrari that day up there among his finest. He'd taken pole and led much of the way with the 512S he shared with Arturo Merzario – they'd been 11 laps up at one point – before the ailing gearbox packed up in the closing

stages. Contrary to the Sebring legend, however, he wasn't itching to get back out there aboard the sister car entered for Nino Vaccarella and Ignazio Giunti in which he went on to seal victory ahead of the Porsche 908/2 that McQueen co-drove with Peter Revson.

Andretti actually wanted to go home. He had his private plane standing by and there was the little matter of a drive in a Sprint Car race in Pennsylvania the following day. It was Ferrari technical boss Mauro Forghieri who suggested he might be needed again.

But it was the words of the circuit commentator that resulted in Andretti taking over the Vaccarella/Giunti 512S with 55 minutes of the race remaining. He was 'bigging' up the efforts of McQueen in the Porsche entered by the movie star's Solar Productions company that was running in second place behind the leading JW Automotive Porsche 917K driven by Pedro Rodriguez, Leo Kinnunen and Jo Siffert. In fact, it was Revson at the wheel of the 908/2.

"Hearing that sort of fired me up," recalls Andretti. "Steve was taking all the credit, but he was actually sitting on the pit counter and Revson had done the lion's share of the driving because he was so much quicker. Giunti was standing there ready to take over from Vaccarella, so I said, 'Do you mind if I have a go?'"

Andretti was a lap behind when he took the wheel, but he hauled the car back on a par with the leaders and was up to second ahead of Revson when Siffert brought the 917K into the pits with its second front-hub failure of the race.

Andretti still had work to do, however. Fifty-five minutes was more than a 512S had managed on a tank of fuel, which explained why the Ferrari pit was signalling Andretti to stop. But it was only when the fuel warning light came on during the penultimate lap that he came in. "In those cars you couldn't cheat another lap," he says.

Andretti is adamant that he came out of the pits behind Revson and had to repass him to seal the victory on the final lap. That contradicts contemporary reports suggesting that the Porsche was just coming around the final corner as the Ferrari screamed back out.

Whatever, it was a stunning performance from Andretti. "I was like a man possessed once the factory car with Siffert stopped – it was the first time I ever did Turn 1 flat at Sebring," he says. "There was a tremendous satisfaction from that win, but I actually felt a bit sorry for 'Revvie' because he'd done so much work in that car."



Andretti had to pit on penultimate lap for fuel but still won



Revson (far left) and McQueen shared Porsche (right)

8

1997 DYSON MISSES ITS CHANCE

The Sebring 12 Hours was the only big prize in North American sportscar racing to elude the Dyson Racing team. The best of its Riley & Scotts lost out to the winning Scandia Racing Ferrari 333SP by less than a minute in 1997 in one of a number of near-misses.

There had been little to choose between the Italian car shared by Yannick Dalmas, Stefan Johansson, Fermin Velez and team boss Andy Evans and Dyson's Ford-powered

R&S MkIII driven by James Weaver, Andy Wallace and Butch Leitzinger. The race swung on a safety car in the closing stages.

Series organiser IMSA had changed its protocols over the course of the race after an error handed the Scandia car an advantage, though one that was quickly corrected by race control. It was then deemed that cars could pit the moment the yellows were thrown.

At the final caution, Dalmas was on the

back straight when the flags came out and was brought straight into the pits. Dyson didn't react so quickly and Wallace had to complete a slow lap behind the safety car.

Weaver made up much of the lost time, closing to within 16s of the Ferrari before diving into the pits at the end of the penultimate lap for a splash of fuel. That extended the Scandia car's advantage to 47s at the chequered flag. A golden opportunity had been lost.

7

2014

FRANCHITTI MAKES IMMEDIATE AMENDS

Chip Ganassi Racing didn't look like a race winner for much of the going in 2014, less so when Marino Franchitti looped the Riley-Ford EcoBoost DP he shared with Scott Pruett and Memo Rojas late in hour 10. But the Brit made amends, fighting a steadfast rearguard action over the final laps to seal a four-second victory.

Franchitti leapfrogged into the lead at the final safety car with 20 minutes left on the clock when the cars ahead of him pitted. The Ganassi driver made good use of the three cars between him and Extreme Speed Motorsports driver Ryan Dalziel in the queue when the greens flew, setting the Riley's fastest race lap along the way.

Dalziel, sharing ESM's HPD-Honda ARX-03b with Scott Sharp and David Brabham, closed to within three seconds in the final dash to the flag, but it wasn't enough.



Franchitti (top left) shared Riley with Rojas (centre) and Pruett

6

1966

HOME HERO DENIED



Gurney's MkII failed on last lap, resulting in legendary heroics

The very beginning and the very end of the 1966 edition of Sebring will be forever associated with the legend of Dan Gurney. The Shelby American Ford MkII he shared with Jerry Grant wouldn't fire at the beginning, putting the car to the back of the field. And on the very last lap with victory seemingly in the bag, the engine seized, forcing Gurney to push the car across the line.

The early delay turned out to be of little consequence. A wound-up Gurney charged through the field, overtaking 20-plus cars on the opening lap and getting into the lead

inside two hours. He and Grant would be key players in an early skirmish in the Ford-versus-Ferrari battle of that season, one that raged for much of the 12 Hours.

A race marred by the death of Ford GT40 driver Bob McLean turned into a three-way scrap between the Gurney/Grant Ford, the sister car shared by Ken Miles and Lloyd Ruby, and the factory Ferrari 330 P3 driven by Mike Parkes and Bob Bondurant. It became a Ford-versus-Ford battle around three quarters of the way through, but Gurney had eked out a lead

of a full lap by the final hour.

The versatile American had victory ripped away from him on the very last lap when the Ford's big seven-litre V8 seized going down the back straight. Gurney showed the strength of body and mind for which he was famous, pushing the car across the line in second place behind Miles and Ruby.

Gurney's herculean efforts were to no avail. Race officials deemed that pushing the car across the line was outside the regulations. There would be no place on the podium for the hero of Sebring 1966.

5

2009 UNFAVoured AUDI HAS ITS BEST DAY

The R15 is the forgotten Audi of the German manufacturer's 17-year involvement in the LMP1 division, but one night in Florida in 2009 it was good enough to snatch victory away from Peugeot in the Sebring 12 Hours. The French manufacturer's 908 HDi had the measure of its rival in the heat of the day but, when the temperatures dropped along with the sun, the tables were turned in favour of the car Allan McNish shared with Tom Kristensen and Dindo Capello.

But not by much. When McNish got in the car for the run to the flag he received a radio message saying that Sebastien Bourdais had just done a 1m43.5s in the leading Peugeot he shared with Franck Montagny and Stephane Sarrazin.

"OK, I had a heavy fuel load but there was no way I could drag a 43 out of the car at that stage," recalls McNish. "But the team worked with the tools we had, things like tyre pressures and the traction control, to maximise what we had."

What they ended up with was a car that McNish describes as "blinding" and the "best-balanced prototype I ever drove".

That enabled him to build enough of a buffer after he took over at the front when the Peugeot came into the pits for the final time. McNish posted a series of laps below the pole position time in the knowledge that he would have to make a late splash-and-dash fuel stop. Victory was Audi's by an almost comfortable 22s.



SUTTON



McNish posted series of pole times in Audi to win close race

4

1990 THE 'WRONG' NISSAN WINS

The NPTI Nissan team only intended for one of its two cars to run through the 12 Hours in 1990. But plans to park one of them had to be ripped up when both cars started to run hot early on. Fast forward to the end of the race, and both of the turbocharged beasts were involved in a thrilling race to the flag as the top three cars concertinaed in on each other.

The Nissan team's focus was on getting lead driver Geoff Brabham as many points as possible in the defence of his IMSA crown, so it switched him from the car he'd put on pole position to the sister entry initially driven by Derek Daly and Chip Robinson. But the plan went awry when Brabham brought the Nissan GTP-ZXT in with a holed radiator, with the loss of seven laps.

That meant it had to keep running its other car, into which Daly had moved to partner Bob Earl. That one wasn't in good shape, however. Daly, who drove for most of the second half of the race after his new team-mate fell ill, was struggling with overheating and a gearbox jumping out of fifth.

That allowed Jan Lammers in the best of the Jaguar XJR-12s to make inroads into the Nissan's advantage as the race entered its final hour. The delayed GTP-ZXT was making up ground in Robinson's hands before star driver Brabham took over for the run to the flag.

The Aussie preceded to lap at near qualifying pace in his efforts to catch up. He overhauled the Jaguar Lammers shared with Andy Wallace and Davy Jones, but couldn't

get on terms with Daly. The winning margin ended up at 87s in what was the first Sebring in which three cars finished on the same lap.

Daly doesn't recall much about the race, partly he reckons because he completed in excess of seven hours across two cars: "I was so worn out that I had gone onto autopilot at the end."

The strongest recollection of the weekend from a driver who is still the only man to finish first and second in the same race is interesting.

"It was the biggest win of my international career, but I knew when I was up there on the podium that it was the beginning of the end," recalls Daly, who would hang up his helmet after Sebring two years later. "The buzz wasn't quite as big as it should have been."

Dindo Capello
in race-winning
Joest Audi R8



SUTTON

3

2001 A GREAT DRIVE AND ONE BLUNDER FROM TK

Tom Kristensen is, as the Americans say, the ‘winningest’ driver in Sebring history with a tally of six overall victories. Yet perhaps his greatest drive on the circuit went unrewarded in 2001.

Kristensen took 20 seconds out of race leader Dindo Capello in the sister Joest-run Audi R8 during the penultimate stint. When he didn’t take on new tyres at the final round of stops, he leapfrogged into the lead aboard the car he co-drove with Emanuele Pirro and Frank Biela.

The problem was that Kristensen’s charge had

been a little too amazing. He failed to slow enough as he barrelled into the pit entry and was penalised for pitlane speeding. That cleared the way for Capello, Laurent Aiello and Michele Alboreto to take the win.

Kristensen has few regrets about the one that got away. Sebring that year would turn out to be Alboreto’s final race before his death in an accident in testing later that season.

For Capello, “Michele’s smiley face up on the podium is one of the best memories of my career”.



Capello celebrates
victory after penalty
demoted Kristensen

SUTTON



SUTTON

2 2005 KRISTENSEN VERSUS McNISH

Tom Kristensen and Allan McNish going at it in equal machinery over the final stages of the 2005 race was manna from heaven for sportscar fans. The duo put on the kind of show you would have expected in their respective Champion Racing Audi R8s, ending up just 6.365s apart in what was at the time the closest finish at Sebring.

Either might have won a closely contested race that hinged on a late gamble by the crew of the #1 car Kristensen shared with JJ Lehto and Marco Werner. It turned the race in their favour and against McNish, Emanuele Pirro

and Frank Biela in the #2 entry.

Kristensen held a narrow lead going into the final round of pitstops, but he needed new tyres and McNish didn't. That should have resulted in #2 taking the lead, if not in the pits then out on the circuit as the Dane got his Michelins up to temperature. But the #1 crew opted to short-fuel the car, which, combined with a delay for McNish while a camera crew was shunted out of the way, ensured that their man got out of the pits with a small but crucial advantage.

"I needed to get past him before he got his

tyres up to temperature," recalls McNish. "I was right on his rear wing through Turn 17 [the final corner], but by then it was too late.

"He had the advantage of the fresh tyres and was able to pull away. If I'd got ahead of him I would have been able to take the edge off his new-tyre run, which would have put us in a much better position."

Kristensen was able to use the advantage of new Michelins to build a gap. It was all but removed at the next stop, but the damage had been done to McNish's bid for victory.



SUTTON

SUTTON

McNish's #2 Audi (top) lost out to #1 car at last pitstops



Derani (left of this pic, right below) excelled on slicks on damp track

1

2016 DERANI DELIVERS FOR ESM

Pipo Derani had never so much as seen Sebring before pre-event testing ahead of the 12 Hours in 2016. Yet he left the famous bumpy airfield circuit in Florida as a hero after proving to be the decisive factor in the Extreme Speed Motorsports squad's victory.

The Brazilian, who was teamed with Scott Sharp, Johannes van Overbeek and Ed Brown in the ESM Ligier-Honda JSP2, arguably won the race twice over for the team. He shone on slick tyres on a damp track during the middle portion of the race to bring the car back into contention, and then came from fourth to take the lead in a frenetic 15-minute dash to the flag.

Derani took on the Continental slick tyre before anyone else after the race was restarted following a long stoppage. It proved crucial because, just as much of the opposition went to slicks, light drizzle returned.

"I told the guys on the radio, 'Hey, you said it was going to stop raining,'" recalls Derani. "But it actually worked for us, because it

wasn't bad enough to come in for wets. So we had the temperature in our tyres. It was a big moment in the race."

It kept ESM in contention for what turned out to be a grandstand finish through a quickfire sequence of three safety cars in the final hour. Derani was given fresh slicks during the middle stop, the Brazilian resuming fourth but 27th in the safety car queue. The final set of yellows shook up the pack and meant the top four were restarted in line-astern formation.

Derani went around the outside of Nicolas Lapierre in the third-placed DragonSpeed ORECA into Turn 1 at the restart, but he struggled to get on terms with the two Action Express Racing Coyote-Chevrolet Corvette DPs ahead of him.

"I was having difficulty getting temperature into the tyres," he recalls. "Those Continentals were difficult to warm up, but we'd decided to go into the final battle with our weapons sharp. All of a sudden the tyres came to life and I started to catch the Action cars. I thought,

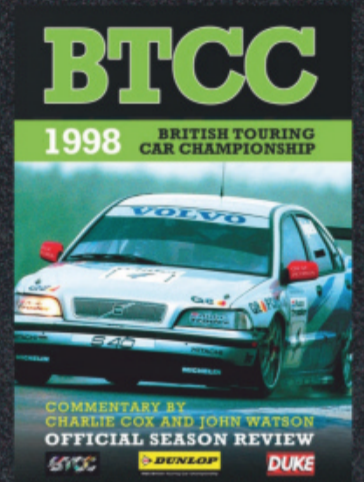
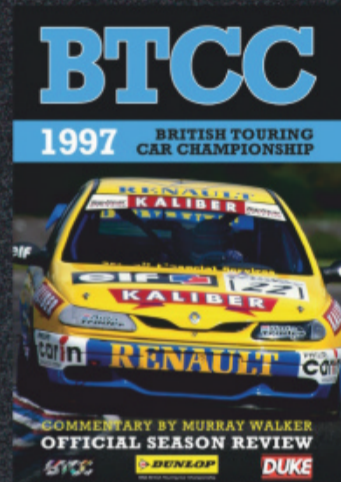
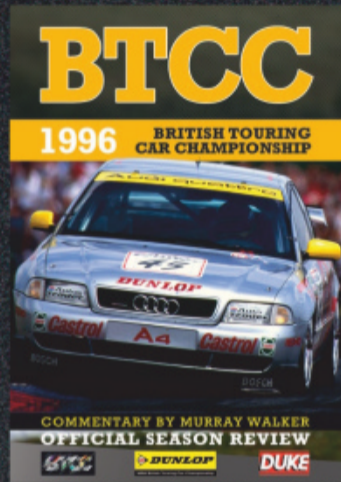
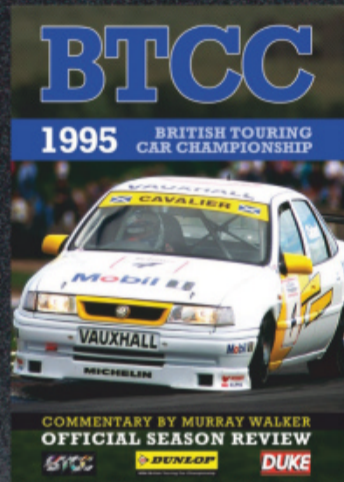
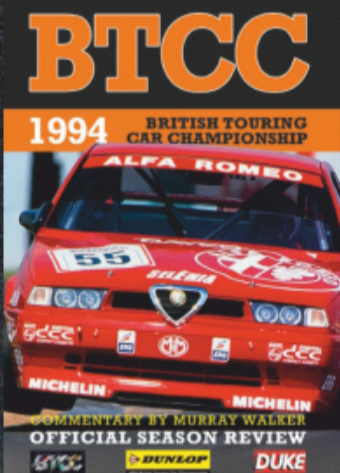


"Now is my chance – when am I going to have the opportunity to win Sebring?"

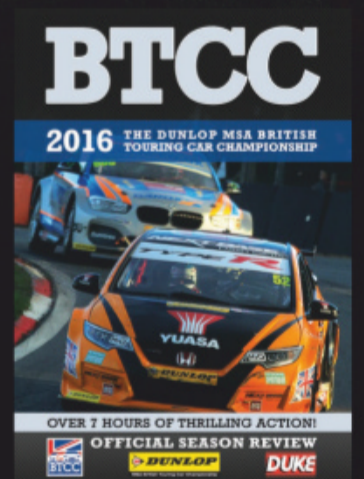
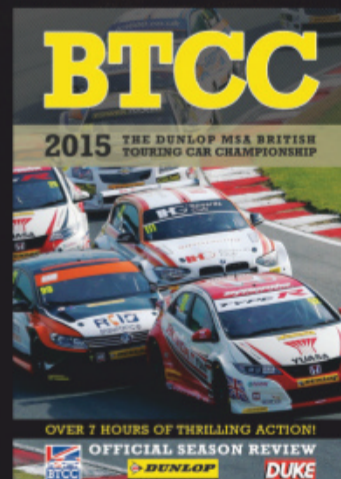
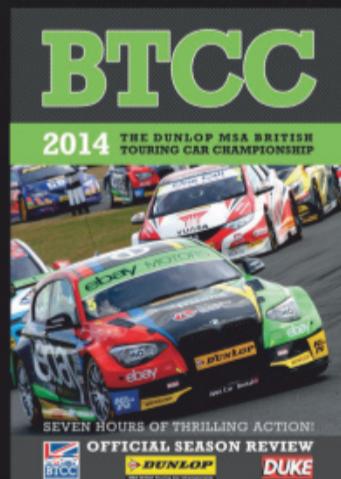
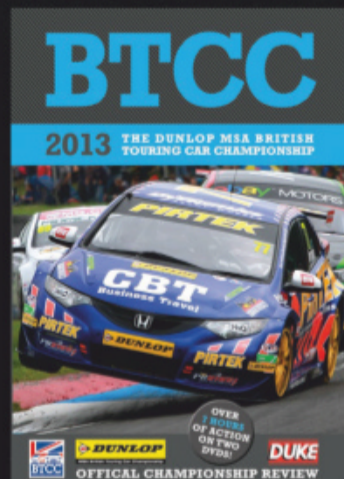
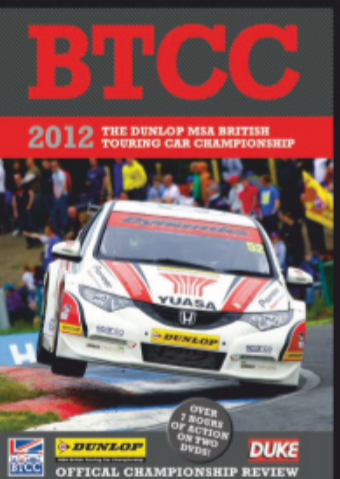
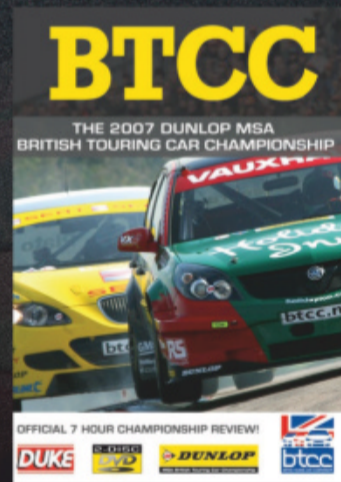
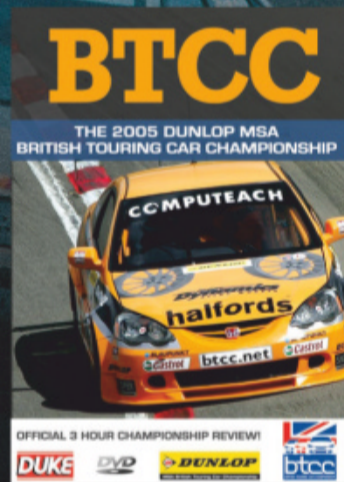
The ESM car went from third to first in the space of three laps as the race entered its final five minutes, passing first Filipe Albuquerque and then Dane Cameron at the Turn 7 hairpin.

"It was a life-changing race for me," says Derani. "I'd won the Daytona 24 Hours two months before, but I never really got the chance to show what I could do."

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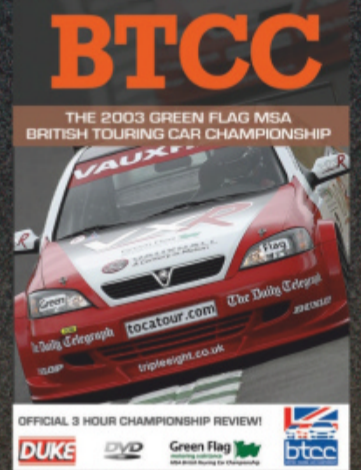
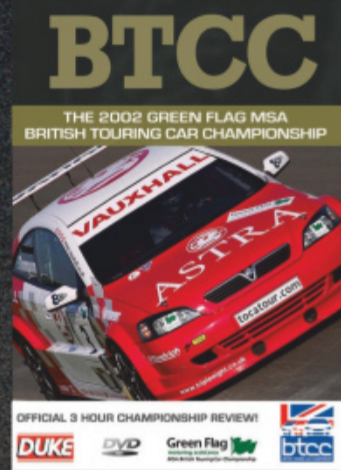
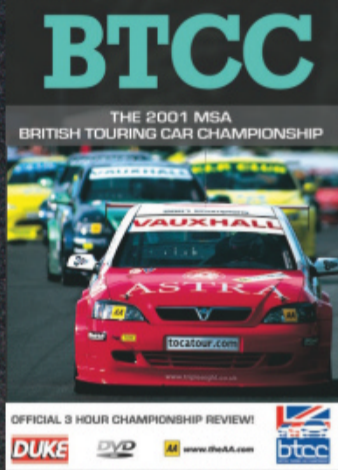
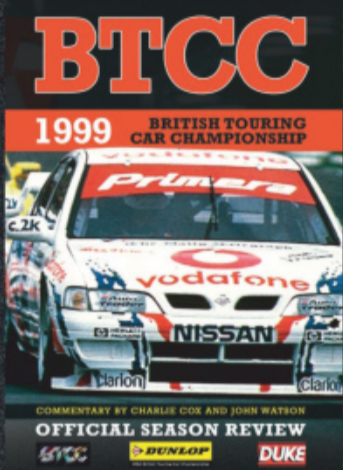
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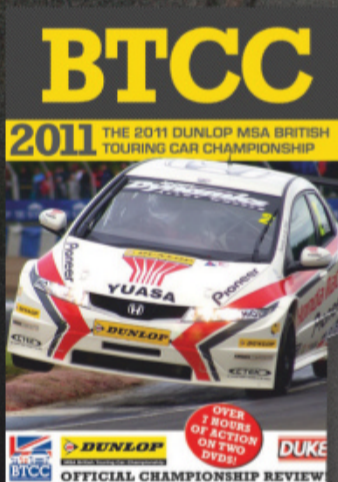
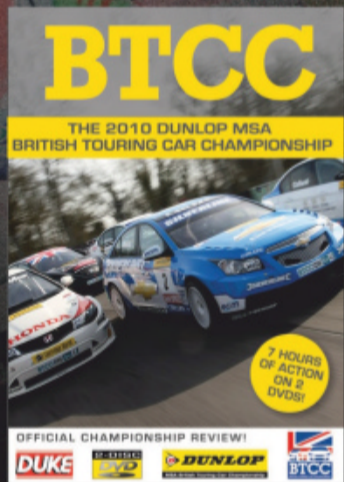
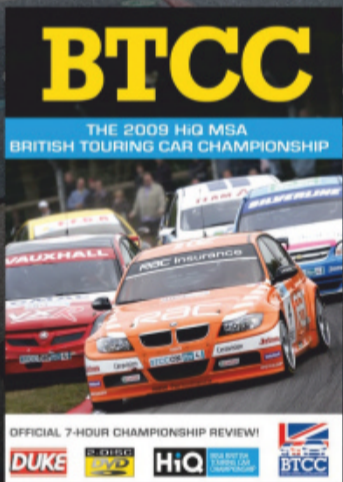
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Turkington is number one – the fourth time he has earned that accolade in his BTCC career



WEST SURREY RACING'S STRENGTH IN DEPTH

Team-mates Colin Turkington and Andrew Jordan have a formidable breadth of talent, experience and trophies amassed. Does either have the edge?

MATT KEW

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP



“Col...” was all race engineer Dan Millard could muster before his voice cracked. But it was enough to finally signal to Colin Turkington that he’d won the 2019 British Touring Car Championship. He had seen the West Surrey Racing crew go wild on the pitwall as he crossed the line in an exhilarating Brands Hatch season finale, he’d heard celebrations coming from the garage over team radio, but they could just as easily have been for team-mate Andrew Jordan.

“You never quite believe that you’ve got the job done,” Turkington recalls. “I couldn’t compute the maths when I was out there. I didn’t know I’d won.”

After Dan Cammish suffered a gut-wrenching brake failure on the penultimate lap of the season, Turkington clinched the title by just two points over Jordan in what will surely be remembered as one of the great BTCC races. In doing so, he joined Andy Rouse as the most successful driver in series history with four titles.

Jordan’s bid to add another crown to his 2013 triumph took a devastating early blow when he collided with Rob Collard at Donington Park’s second round. The subsequent smashes from unsighted duo Adam Morgan and Stephen Jelley left Jordan in

**“YOU NEVER QUITE BELIEVE
THAT YOU’VE GOT THE JOB DONE.
I COULDN’T COMPUTE THE MATHS”**

hospital in what would be a point-less weekend. His recovery to remain in championship contention was staggering.

Added to that pressure was Jordan’s uncertain future. Pirtek, which had sponsored him since his inaugural BTCC campaign in 2008, withdrew almost all of its backing at the end of last season and he was close to falling off the grid. Fortunately, there was a reprieve courtesy of a one-year deal with BMW to continue at WSR alongside Turkington and Tom Oliphant in the 330i M Sport.

Having come so close to the title, but ultimately missing out through circumstances largely out of his control, it’s little wonder that Jordan’s methods will remain the same in 2020. But, for now at least, usurping Turkington isn’t a fixed goal.

“I was actually really very happy with my approach last year,” he says. “I enjoyed it as much as you possibly can at this level. I certainly haven’t on purpose changed anything in my approach. >>

I'm just going to try to enjoy the opportunity. I'm in a fortunate position that I'm actually on the grid. People would kill for the seat I've got, so I want to enjoy it as much as possible.

"If I could win some races again... I'm really not putting emphasis on the championship. Last year I just missed out. Did my life change? No, it didn't. I'm just going to make the most out of the situation and see where we get to.

"Although a lot of hard work went in from us and BMW and my existing sponsors, I was really quite content in the sense that if staying in the BTCC didn't happen, then it didn't happen. I certainly wasn't desperate and I wasn't going to do something desperate to stay. I'm really proud that I'm still on the grid, and it's through merit and hard work."

That mentality of taking the season race by race is true of the other side of the garage. Beating Rouse's record to establish himself emphatically at the top of the BTCC tree isn't on Turkington's radar. That's unsurprising, given that last year's campaign was settled in his favour with barely a lap to spare.

"It's not in my thought process," Turkington says. "I'm still sort of celebrating the fact that I've got to four. That's an incredible achievement to get there in the modern era because of how competitive it is. I'm thankful that I've got to where I have. I'm not thinking too far beyond that.

"Every season you try to think about the process and each race rather than the end goal. That's too far away and there's too many bumps in the road. Everybody starts now from scratch. I'm just trying to enjoy the ride as I try to do every season. I don't feel like I've got a target on my back. All the other drivers fancy themselves – they believe they can win as much as I do."

Now that he is indeed a four-time BTCC champion, it's nigh on impossible to call Turkington underrated. But perhaps he's still underappreciated. He can lead the set-up direction, blitz qualifying, battle wheel to wheel cleanly and then keep his head to deliver at



Jordan stays in the BTCC on a one-year deal with BMW

the chequered flag. It's a fearsome skillset.

What also flies under the radar is his dedication to the BTCC. He's a keen runner, diligently observes a strict diet, and wife Louise and his two children are integral members of 'Team Turkington'. It's a family that devotes itself to the series, and that must be exhausting, especially with the media attention that followed his success last year. The winter break provided a crucial time to reset.

"I knew the importance of getting away over the Christmas break," says Turkington. "We went away for a couple of weeks just to forget about motorsport and forget about the BTCC. We have to come back with a fresh mentality and be energised and be as hungry and ready to fight as ever. I'm really looking forward to the season and I feel like I'm ready to go again. It's exciting times, especially when you see the new livery on the car.

"LAST YEAR I JUST MISSED OUT ON THE CHAMPIONSHIP. DID MY LIFE CHANGE? NO, IT DIDN'T"





Turkington isn't eyeing up eclipsing Rouse just yet

Testing reignites the fire because that's the bit we all enjoy. It's the driving and the racing. It's not the award ceremonies and the events."

Despite the similar approach to the year ahead, there are notable differences between the team-mates. For one, Jordan is undoubtedly the more outspoken of the two drivers. After he and Cammish bashed under the safety car in race two at Silverstone, Jordan didn't shy away from voicing his opinion: "I think what Cammish did was just losing his head. But he's set a precedent – if that's the sort of driver he is, then that's how I'll treat him." Turkington, on the other hand, steps away from the spotlight where possible.

In the car, there are further contrasts. Most notably, Jordan brakes with his left foot. Turkington tried this approach a few years ago, but reverted to being a right-footed stopper. He's also much more sensitive to the car's set-up, which is why during a red flag in a

rainy qualifying at the Brands finale he dived into the pits for a front-spring change. It was a dramatic call, and one that he hadn't attempted all season until that point, but he needed to find an affinity with the machine that had eluded him that weekend.

As WSR team boss Dick Bennetts explains: "Colin doesn't like understeer; he wants to get the car pointed exactly where he wants. He will spend more time dialling the car to his driving style.

This is in contrast to Jordan. "I reckon it's because he drives a lot more of a variation of cars with testing and his historics," says Bennetts. "He adapts quickly and puts up with a little bit of understeer, a little bit of oversteer.

"Colin is Mr Perfection. I joke with him that we could save a lot of money if he just engineered his own car because he's now experienced enough that he can come in and say, 'We want to try this, do that.' The notes he makes are incredible."

That's high praise from Bennetts – someone who retains the set-up sheets from when he engineered Jonathan Palmer to West Surrey's maiden British Formula 3 title in 1981.

And what of the big question: is there a rivalry between Turkington and Jordan? To a point, there has to be. Benchmark number one is whether you're beating your stablemate. But, by and large, it's a cordial affair. Bennetts doesn't feel the need to intervene with team orders when they meet on track. He trusts his drivers to keep it professional, clean and deliver the goods.

Jordan has improved each year since he switched to BMW machinery in 2017. Now he's there to push Turkington and push the development of the 3 Series. As Turkington says: "It's better having him on your side than against you. Hopefully we'll hunt in a pack."

Underlying the relationship is a mutual respect, but both know that to lift the 2020 crown it necessarily entails beating the other. That's why bad days like the one Jordan suffered at Donington prove so crucial, especially when – crashes aside – WSR has provided a car with a 100% reliability record so far. ❄

CONSOLIDATION IS KEY

The trio of BMW 330i M Sports enters the season with a new lick of black paint. Otherwise, it's the same machine as last year. There have been no magic bullets found over the winter – partly owing to the weather, which meant black ice while testing at Snetterton – and no changes to turbo boost or the centre of gravity.

A conservative approach is largely down to the pace the saloon offered out of the box in 2019. BMW went on to score a fourth constructors' title on the bounce, and West Surrey Racing team boss Dick Bennetts reckons: "I don't think anyone wants us to win again."

At the media day test on the Silverstone International Circuit last week, there were,

according to Andrew Jordan, "big changes" to set-up that "we wouldn't be brave enough to try at a race weekend". The hope was that a few wild settings might suddenly offer up some unexpected pace, but that didn't come to pass.

Bennetts adds: "We go

around in circles and come back with, 'Well, hang on, when we first drove out the baseline setting was pretty good.' You can change the characteristics, but the stopwatch comes back with the same answer."

The results from Silverstone were fifth for

Colin Turkington in the combined times, seventh for Jordan and 12th for Tom Oliphant. That comes with the caveat of each team running undisclosed boost and ballast levels plus varying tyre condition.

But splitting Turkington and Jordan in the times

was Senna Proctor, at the wheel of the new Hyundai i30N Fastback – developed by Kevin Berry, who was Turkington's race engineer between 2013 and 2018.

As Bennetts continues: "The problem with rules like the [Next Generation Touring Car] set is that the more mechanics and engineers move around from good teams, they take the data to an average team and can improve them."

The circumspect attitude from WSR is not surprising. It comes into 2020 with a massive target on its back, so it's sensible to play down expectations. But despite the cautious words and development path, is the 3 Series still the current benchmark? Absolutely.



Bennetts is playing down the team's prospects for 2020





BTCC
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PREVIEW

DYNAMITE WITH A LASER BEAM?

Ash Sutton has moved to Laser Tools Racing's resurrected Infiniti project in his bid for a second BTCC title, with plenty of his old BMR Subaru mates. Guaranteed to blow your mind?

MARCUS SIMMONS

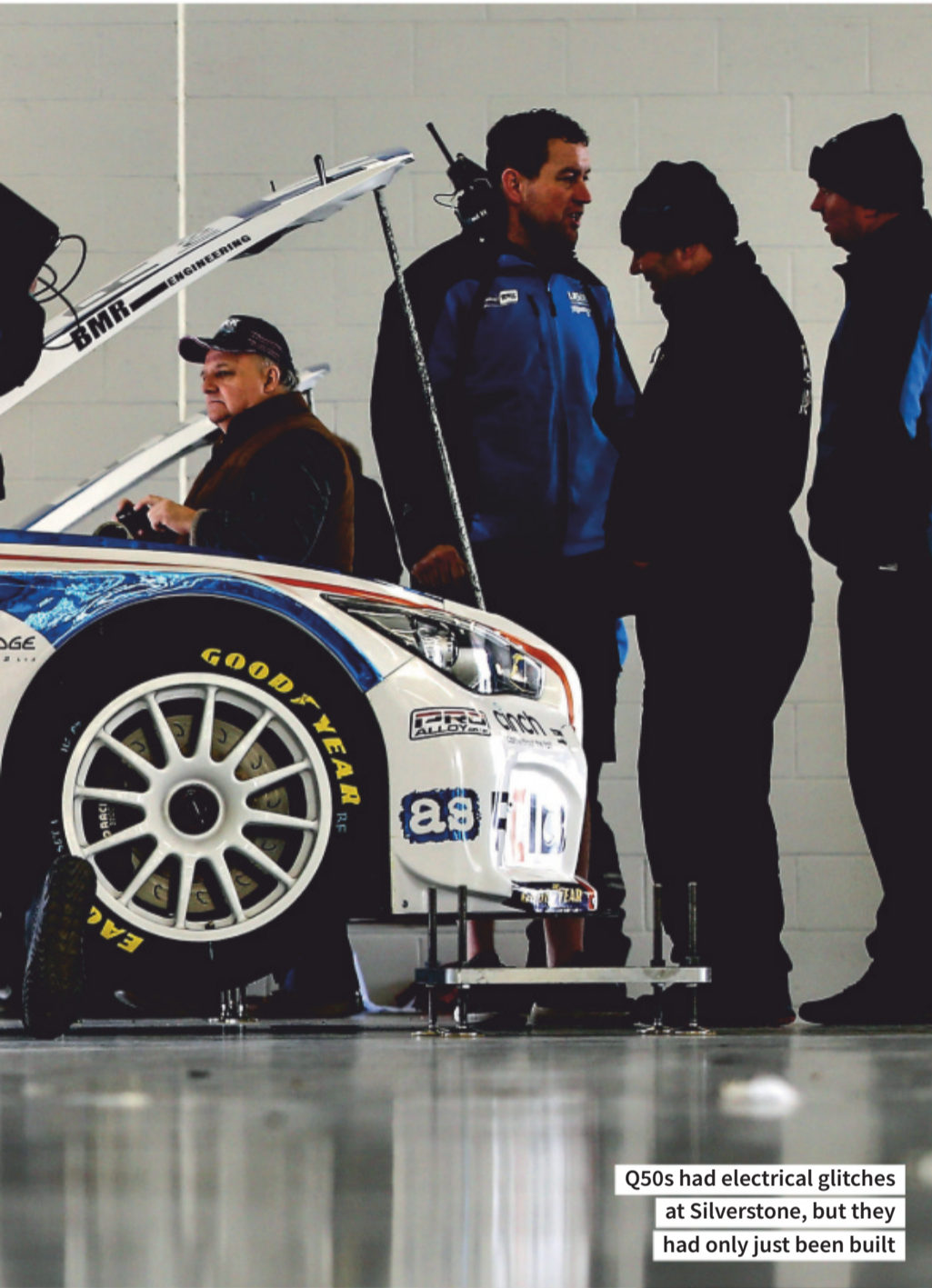
PHOTOGRAPHY JEP

A team that seemed to come out of nowhere to sign up two of the British Touring Car Championship's biggest guns, yet win the title with a young star in only his second year in the series; another team that operated on its own for the first time last season, but found itself hamstrung by an ageing car to which it had no IP rights; and a car that was so unsuccessful when it stumbled onto the track in 2015 that its best result was a mere 15th, yet was resurrected four years later because engineers believed it was the key to future BTCC success.

It has to be said that the merger of Team BMR and Laser Tools

Racing – under the latter's banner – and their adoption of the Infiniti Q50 is one of the stories to follow in the BTCC this season. And that's even before you factor in that leading the driving strength is none other than 2017 BTCC champion Ash Sutton, that very 'young star' we mentioned in the opening paragraph.

Like all good stories, it's important to pull the threads together. BMR initially entered the BTCC in 2013, with team owner Warren Scott driving a SEAT, before absorbing current Team Hard boss Tony Gilham's eponymous squad for 2014 and taking on his Volkswagen CCs and Vauxhall Insignias. For 2016, the ante was raised hugely as BMR entered a partnership with Subaru UK to



Q50s had electrical glitches at Silverstone, but they had only just been built



Rear-wheel-drive ace Sutton's knowledge has been tapped into

become the marque's official team, running the Levorg Sports Tourer, with those 'big guns' Colin Turkington and Jason Plato heading the line-up.

At that time, Sutton was a protege of Scott, whose mentorship had allowed the then-21-year-old to win the 2015 Renault Clio Cup title, before embarking upon a rookie season in the BTCC with the Triple Eight-run MG squad. Turkington then returned to the West Surrey Racing-run BMW operation in 2017, and was replaced by Sutton, who promptly lifted the title. Over 2018 and 2019, pickings were slimmer as attempts by BTCC organiser TOCA to equal performance of the cars led to the previously



Infiniti first appeared in 2015; it didn't set the world on fire

advantageous Levorg, with its unique boxer engine configuration, becoming increasingly breathless on the straights.

"The first year, in 2016, the Levorg was a big shock to the whole of the touring car community," says Sutton. "I got the best out of it in 2017, but from that point on it got harder and harder."

After four years together, the BMR/Subaru relationship came to an end at the conclusion of the 2019 season, albeit not before Sutton bowed out with his and the car's only win of the campaign in the final round at Brands Hatch. Scott, however, continues to manage Sutton and needed to find a competitive seat for his charge for the following season.

Meanwhile, Laser Tools Racing's Aiden Moffat had raced a Mercedes A-Class since the 2015 season under the umbrella of the Ciceley Motorsport squad, which built and developed the car primarily for Adam Morgan. Scotsman Moffat and dad Bob, the team boss, went it alone in 2019, taking with them engineer Federico Turrata, the COO of Italian engineering consultancy Hexathron Racing Systems.

"We took charge of the car ourselves," recalls four-time Scottish banger racing champion Moffat Sr, "and since then things were considerably better. We felt it went far superior, it was more reliable, and we did quite a good job. Federico is a good guy, who is very committed to Aiden and everything we do."

It was Turrata's study into the Infiniti Q50 that led to the surprise decision to resurrect that project in the middle of the 2019 season, with Moffat giving the car its 'second debut' at Snetterton in the round following the summer break. "I'd bought the two Infinitis from Derek Palmer [who had run the cars under the Support Our Paras banner in 2015] just to use them as trackday cars and as an advert for Aiden's body shop," explains Moffat Sr. "And then Federico said, 'Why are we mucking about with the Mercedes when we have a proper car here?'"

"After the first five rounds in 2019, Aiden wasn't enjoying himself with the Mercedes. Everyone else had moved on so much, and Ciceley had the rights to the car, so although I was prepared to spend money on development they seemed to want to go in their own direction. We wanted to have our own car – so we bought a new shell, a new bodykit, it's brand new."

Following Moffat's first two race outings in the Infiniti, Sutton – an acknowledged rear-wheel-drive maestro, whereas Moffat's career had been entirely in front-driven cars – tested the rear-driven Q50 at Snetterton last September. "Rear-wheel drive was new for Aiden, so when Bob moved over to the car he asked for a bit of guidance," says Sutton. "There was nothing to hinder anyone by me helping them, and if anything it gave me a little insight into what could be. I only got a couple of sessions, probably a maximum of 20 laps, but I was able to get a few impressions. I was quite impressed with the car overall, bearing in mind it's five or six years old."

The ball was rolling towards a collaboration between BMR and Laser Tools, with Moffat Sr saying he'd previously spoken >>

to Scott about getting his son into a Subaru. “I probably came along at the right time,” points out Moffat Sr. “I felt that the Subaru wasn’t going to get a fair chance [under the BTCC’s performance balancing], and Warren decided to drop that car and come to the Infiniti with us.”

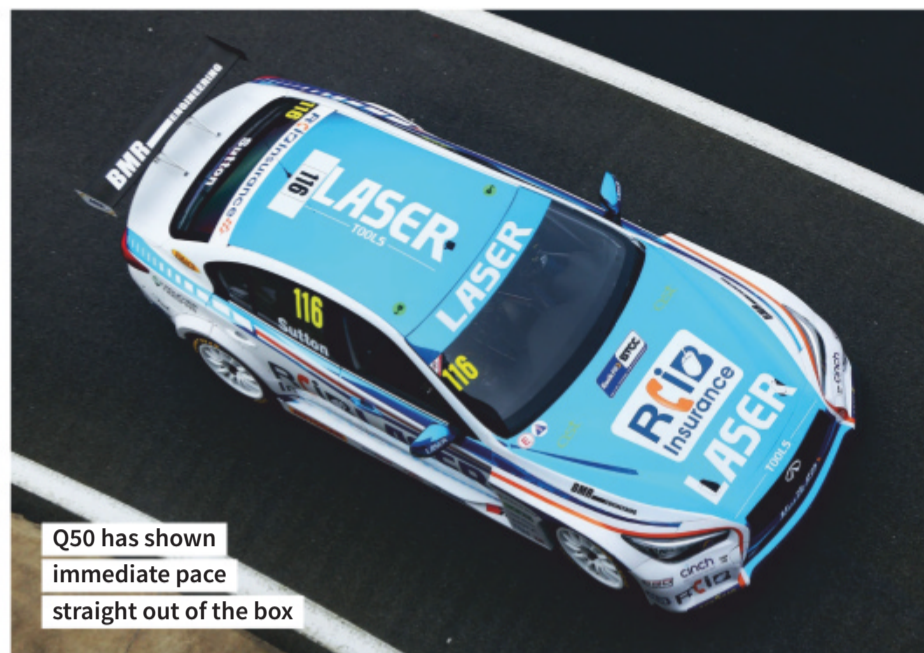
That, of course, was not only with Scott’s BMR team, but with the driver whose career he has taken care of over the years. “It was the end of 2014 [when he was finishing his single-seater career in Formula Ford] that I started having conversations with Warren,” says Sutton. “He pestered me for two or three months to drive his Clio! I went onto their academy programme, and without that I wouldn’t have got into touring cars. Warren has helped in every deal that we’ve succeeded in. As well as being the team owner, he’s played the role of manager and made sure I had a seat.”

The new tie-up has resulted in Scott’s BMR Engineering, under the guidance of chief engineer Antonio Carrozza, being responsible for the production of two brand-new Infinitis. “They’ve been 90-95% done by BMR,” says Sutton. When Sutton won the title in 2017, BMR’s chief engineer was Carl Faux and his race engineer was Dan Millard, but Faux went down under to work in Australian Supercars, and Millard has gone on to run Turkington to BTCC titles at WSR. Carrozza took over engineering Sutton’s car in 2018: “He was very new to the team then, and he technically replaced Carl at the top of the ladder. I would class him as a friend rather than a work colleague, but as a colleague he’s been trained by the best and I don’t doubt any decisions that he makes.”

At present, it is very much the existing Laser Tools crew led by Turrata running Moffat’s car, and the BMR boys under Carrozza looking after Sutton’s. “All the people working on my car are exactly the same as the past couple of years,” says Sutton.

Moffat Sr appreciates the strength of the BMR Engineering set-up – which, after all, was critical in getting this project to gather strength for 2020. “We’ve used some of their engineering staff for the build and development of the car,” he says. “After all, they did a good job with the Subaru. But all the Laser staff are still here [Moffat Sr says his squad numbers 35 in total, “and that includes the hospitality because they’re part of our team”]. We’re

“FROM WHEN I WON MY FIRST KARTING CHAMPIONSHIP AT AGE 13 I ALWAYS PRAYED THAT I’D DO BTCC”



quite happy to support BMR Engineering, and their members are working on Ash’s car, which is good because they’re good people.”

The Q50s were completed late, only arriving at Silverstone at 4am for the BTCC Launch Day on Tuesday of last week. Both cars had electrical problems, but Sutton got some quick running in during the afternoon to go ninth quickest in a car that was fresh out of its box. Turbo problems, which it is understood are not unique to the Infinitis, also hampered the effort, not only at Silverstone but when they moved on to Brands Hatch. “I’ll take it with a pinch of salt,” says Sutton in reference to his Silverstone lap time, “but it was good. We did six or seven fast laps, and it ticked a box for sure in terms of the pace we dragged out of it in such a short space of time.”

Sutton says he’s “pretty confident we can get straight into it and hit the ground running. My main aim is to be there at the end [in the hunt for the title].” But what then? He’s still only 26, he’s a rear-wheel-drive whizz, so how about eyeing DTM or Aussie Supercars, where he’s already had a test? “I’d like to have a shot at that, but when that happens I don’t know,” he says with the air of a man who’s happy where he is. “I’ve also been doing some TCR – the door is always open but the BTCC does seem like home. From when I won my first British karting championship at age 13 I always prayed that I’d do BTCC. When I got there, it was a massive life-goal achievement.”

If he turns a project that started life half a decade ago into a winner, you’d argue that such an achievement would be even greater. ❦



“I’M AIMING FOR CONSISTENCY AT THE SHARP END AND TO BE BARKING AT THE TOP END OF THE PODIUM”



MOFFAT’S BIG CHANCE

A part from being the permanent driver of the Laser Tools Racing BTCC effort, Aiden Moffat has a crucial job: he’s a team truckie. When the Infiniti Q50s were completed at 2am at LTR’s Cambridge base on the morning of the BTCC Launch Day at Silverstone last week, it was Moffat who drove them through the night, arriving at the venue two hours later.

But for 23-year-old Moffat, who qualified for his HGV licence at the age of 19, it’ll be his prowess on the track by which he’s judged this year. It’s been difficult to judge so far. At just 16 years of age he made his BTCC debut, and he’s spent most of that time running in a satellite team of Ciceley Motorsport, taking three race wins before LTR went it alone in 2019. This season he’s alongside the 2017 champion in the form of

Ash Sutton – and he’s still getting used to rear-wheel drive.

“It was definitely something new,” he says of his move into the Infiniti. “We wanted to go rear-wheel drive for this season, and [the second

half of 2019] was a chance for me to learn about it. Once we saw the potential in the car, we knew we had to work on that.”

It’s a big boost too to work with a driver of the calibre of Sutton, even though he’s been part of

the BTCC for less time than Moffat. “We’re speaking with each other and balancing ideas, and once we get going that will be massive,” he says. “Federico [Turrata] has been my engineer for two years now and we have a good

relationship, but having Toni [Carrozza], Ash’s engineer, brings a wealth of knowledge. We’re coming together as one big team.”

Unfortunately, early glitches have prevented much track running, but if anything the current coronavirus-enforced hiatus has played into LTR’s hands. “If no one from our team gets hit by the virus that will be useful,” propounds Moffat. “It’s given us a bit of time on our side, which we could do with, although obviously the circumstances are a shame.

“When we first brought the car out it wasn’t far away, so I’m aiming for consistency at the sharp end and to be barking at the top end of the podium. From the first test, you can feel the difference in the chassis. The design and development that have been put into it is fantastic.”



 **P40 JACKSON BACK IN BTCC**



BTCC
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PREVIEW

BTCC LAYS OUT THE WELCOME MAT

He's been out of the BTCC for two years, but now the most successful driver on wins never to win a title is back – and has a point to prove with Vauxhall

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP

There's a team in this season's British Touring Car Championship with a driver line-up that has taken nearly 130 wins in the series between them – far in excess of any other combination. But the team concerned has only seen its car flash past the chequered flag first on four occasions.

For ambitious official Vauxhall team Power Maxed Racing, its first season with all-time wins record holder Jason Plato (edging closer to a remarkable 100 wins) on board was a success of sorts. After a couple of poor years with the BMR Subaru squad, Plato put himself back on the top step of the podium in the PMR Astra in the finale at Brands Hatch, and claimed an equal-best-since-2015 seventh in the points. For the man who will join him in 2020, the coming campaign provides an even longer road back to the top, because he's hardly raced at all.

Mat Jackson, 31 times a winner in the BTCC, found himself out of a drive in 2018 and 2019. And, after so long on the sidelines, there's a fair amount of rust to shake off. "There's a massive learning curve I've got to go through to extract the best out of myself," admits the 38-year-old.

"But having Jason alongside me will definitely help."

Jackson had already been announced for his ninth consecutive season with Motorbase Performance in 2018, but there was a plum drive still going at the Team Dynamics-run Honda squad thanks to Gordon Shedden's move to the World Touring Car Cup. "There were two deals on the table, but I got locked in a dispute between the two teams and it left me high and dry," relates Jackson. By the time Motorbase cast him adrift, there were options available, but would they have not been at the right end of the grid? "That's probably the most politically correct way of putting it," he says.

"We looked at World Touring Cars, but it wouldn't be a full season because of the timeframe – there was the possibility of half a season, but we couldn't quite get it together."

Jackson was in discussion with BTC Norlin Racing to drive a Honda Civic Type R: "We had offers on the table for a part-season in 2018, which maybe in hindsight we should have gone for. Then for 2019 we were working on a deal [with BTC] and got pretty much to the end of the line before it fell over." Simultaneous with this, Power Maxed boss Adam Weaver was holding out for Jackson for 2019: "We'd been talking to Adam for a number of years. But we



Limited seat time in Astra meant no real chance to shine at Silverstone



Jackson knows he's on a learning curve after so long on the sidelines



New team-mates Plato and Jackson (this is 2009) "get on well"

Jackson (here in 2017) had driven a Focus in the BTCC for seven seasons

JEP motorsport IMAGES



2018 Silverstone Classic outing sharing a Rover Vitesse with Ken Clarke

went down the BTC route and Adam literally signed Rob Collard the week after [the BTC deal fell through]."

For Jackson therefore, after seven seasons of driving Ford Focuses for Motorbase, it was a case of two years of selling them – among other models produced by the Blue Oval – at the family Jacksons Ford dealership in Warwickshire. But now he's back in the saddle at the PMR squad under Weaver and race director Martin Broadhurst, who was formerly at Triple Eight. For a driver who's spent 11 seasons in the top level of the BTCC – and finished all but one of those in the top eight in the standings – you'd expect Jackson to have at least worked with some of the PMR technical staff in the past. Not so, he says. "Although the guys aren't new to the BTCC, it's a whole new environment for me, other than JP [Plato] who I drove alongside in 2009 [with the RML-run Chevrolet team]. The chance of joining up with Jase again was appealing. We can drive the whole thing forward together and hopefully take it to the next level."

While Plato himself is a self-confessed 'Marmitey' character (you love him or hate him), Jackson says "we get on well. I just want to go racing and get the results and together I think we can do that. There are no egos – certainly not from my side,

and I think Jason's mellowed a lot."

With the BTCC on its coronavirus-enforced hiatus, that's interrupted Jackson's attempts to acclimatise himself to the Astra and get used to working with Collard's old engineer Mick Cook, whose pedigree includes the all-conquering Super Nova Formula 3000 team of the 1990s, where he ran the car of Juan Pablo Montoya. Before last week's Launch Day at Silverstone "we only had very limited testing – a general day at Donington". How was the Astra? "Different, as you'd expect with every car. It seems like a very well-built car, and we just didn't get to show that at Silverstone [where Jackson ended up 24th quickest]. But the chassis is good, Jason was right there last year. It's just a matter of time really."

"Everything moves on, and I'm under no illusions that it's going to be tough after two years away. You're not going to walk back into this level of competition and show them around. Obviously we're in it for the championship – that's the aim, as it is for probably 18 others on the grid. I'm fully aware that we've got ground to make up, but I'll give it my best shot." ❄

➔ P42 WHAT ELSE IS NEW IN THE BTCC

THE STORIES TO WATCH IN THE BTCC

There's been plenty going on in the 2019-20 winter. What a shame that the off-season is still on, because many can't wait to get started again

MARCUS SIMMONS AND MATT KEW

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP



CORONAVIRUS PUTS THE START OF THE SEASON ON HOLD

This season's British Touring Car Championship was due to start this weekend at Donington Park. It is now (as Autosport went to press) scheduled to begin at Thruxton (above) on 16-17 May, but, in the ever-changing landscape amid the coronavirus pandemic, there is every chance that it could be later still.

For now, the opening three rounds at Donington, Brands Hatch and Silverstone have been postponed, but series boss Alan Gow is

committed to making every attempt to shoehorn in rearranged dates, once the green light is given for sport to recommence in the UK, to make up a full 10-round, 30-race calendar.

This mean there will have to be a thorough look with the circuits at available dates and discussions with ITV. Live coverage of BTCC Sundays on ITV4, including the support championships, is a key part of the commercial success of the series.

"It's way too early to do

that [think about potential slots for rearranged races] because we don't know on what date we're going to be able to restart," said Gow. "The dates we race on are largely dictated by our TV. We have a list from ITV of available dates which we can populate, but until we know when we can resume racing there's no point putting together a calendar that would probably be changing again a couple of weeks later.

"The whole world doesn't know what it's doing - we're

just in a little corner of that world, and unfortunately we're all passengers in this."

The announcement of the cancellation of the first three races came during the BTCC's official Launch Day and test at Silverstone on Tuesday of last week, and already one car had changed its driver due to coronavirus concerns. Series regular Stephen Jelley had been taken ill with what transpired to be tonsillitis, so his Team Parker Racing BMW 125i M Sport was filled by the squad's Porsche Carrera Cup

GB ace Josh Webster.

"I was absolutely hanging," said Jelley. "On the Friday night I came down with a temperature of 39 degrees, and it quickly became evident that I probably had tonsillitis, but the doctor was very robust about putting me in isolation immediately. I still had a temperature on Monday and thought, 'If I have got this thing, I don't want to put everyone else at risk, and it's only a test day at the end of the day'"

BUTCHER GETS ANOTHER PRIME CUT IN MOTORBASE FORD

Rory Butcher was one of the breakout stars of last season. Following an impressive 2018, he went on to snare his maiden series win and then added another two. He goes into the new year with the Independent drivers' crown to defend, but his sights are set even higher this time.

"Don't count me out," he reckons. "We're definitely aiming to be challenging for the [overall] drivers' title."

That intent follows a move back to Motorbase, the team with which he made his BTCC debut in a part-time 2017 campaign, as it brings a trio of new Ford Focus STs into play. A switch to rear-wheel-drive had been suggested last year, but extending the team's enduring relationship with Ford tuner and BTCC engine builder Mountune was seen as the most logical path.

The new road car provides the basis for a stiffer chassis, a lower centre of gravity and better aerodynamic

efficiency than its predecessor. Motorbase – in converting it to race specification – is blessed with far more experience and needs to bounce back from a 2019 fall from grace.

"It's so different," Butcher says of the new Focus. "The

previous chassis, fundamentally was first built for 2012. Those cars were designed to the regulations almost 10 years ago. The team now has a completely different understanding of how to maximise the regulations."

Rather than mute expectations in anticipation of early-season teething problems, testing has given the whole squad a shot in the arm and big points are expected from the off. Butcher will carry the weight of that ambition, as he leads

team-mates Ollie Jackson and the returning Andy Neate.

Motorbase team manager Oly Collins adds: "We decided that if we were going to try and take on the likes of BMW, Toyota and Honda, then we needed to do it with new machinery."



Butcher joins Jackson and Neate behind wheel of Motorbase's new Focus ST



BLUNDELL'S TEAM FIRED UP WITH HILL

The team that won last year's Independents' titles in the British Touring Car Championship has a new figurehead, a new name, and a new driver about which it is very excited.

AmD Tuning has become MB Motorsport in deference to Mark Blundell, who competed in the BTCC last year with sister team Trade Price Cars Racing, becoming a partner with AmD chief Shaun Hollamby. And while Rory Butcher has headed off to Motorbase, Jake Hill (left) shuffles over from the TPCR Audi line-up to join former Excelr8 MG pedaller Sam Osborne in MBM's older-spec Honda Civic Type Rs.

"He's been quick everywhere," said Hollamby of Hill, who he has supported since he was

in Ginetta Junior a decade ago. "Jake has also got a good personality. He's buzzy, and he's quite feisty on track. It's nice to see the good young guys coming through."

The tie-up with management company chief Blundell, says Hollamby, can only benefit his team. "We worked together last year, and I could see pretty early on that his company was switched on commercially, so I floated the idea of some sort of involvement.

"It really is a business-led decision. The BTCC has huge potential, but it's a very difficult step to employ a marketing team to sell it – the bill would be 100 grand. That's why we did it; Mark is well known inside and outside of motorsport."

INGRAM LEADS THE 'LITTLE' WORKS TEAM

The Toyota Corolla, like the G20 BMW 3 Series, enters its second season in the BTCC. But the Speedworks team, unlike West Surrey Racing, is only a one-car concern. That means it must make the same rate of progress as WSR but with only a third of the data.

But that's rarely been an issue for the factory-supported squad, as Tom Ingram (right) took the Avensis to second in the 2018 standings as well as wrapping up the Independents' crown.

For this year, the Corolla's skittish back end has received most of the treatment. The car proved

itself to be quick in 2019, but had a narrow operating window before the rear axle would begin to hop and slide. Ingram reckons it's now on a leash.

"We've done a lot of work but, at the minute, it's not a lot that you can see," he says. "Mostly, it has been worked on under the skin. There's still a load to extract from it yet, which is really exciting."

"We benefit from being in the second year of development – you've already got a baseline, which is what we didn't have for the first six months of the [2019] season. I think we're actually in a really, really strong place."



CAN ENGINEERING WHIZZ ACCELERATE EXCELR8 HYUNDAI?

Hyundai will be represented in the BTCC for the first time in the marque's history courtesy of ExceLR8 Motorsport. The team brings in the all-new i30 N Fastback (above) to replace the MG6 GT, which has made its series bow after eight years of service.

Building two fresh cars in its sophomore year is no small task for ExceLR8, but it's a necessary step to push on from being a perennial backmarker.

The outfit also features a totally new line-up as, alongside ex-Team BMR

and West Surrey Racing engineer Kevin Berry, one-time race winners Senna Proctor and Chris Smiley have joined to hone the new wheels.

Proctor switches back to front-wheel-drive machinery after a year in the Subaru Levorg estate and – in only his fourth season – must develop a box-fresh NGTC car for the second time in his career.

"We were poking the cow with the stick to see how it responds," Proctor says after finishing sixth fastest in the Silverstone

media day test. "We were [running the car] up to the legal weight limit so it was a good, honest time on medium tyres. I was really happy. The times were coming to us, so there was nothing else I could have wanted from the first run in the car."

"To have Kevin on board is absolutely great. Having an ace engineer to work with makes my life a lot easier. He's already thought of the next thing before I've even told him what the last problem was."

BTC HONDA RECIPE ADDS CHILTON TO COOK

Now Tom Chilton (below) has signed for BTC Racing, the team enter the new campaign with possibly the second strongest lead driver pairing, with West Surrey Racing many people's top pick.

Ex-World Touring Car driver Chilton joins five-time BTCC race winner Josh Cook and fan-favourite Michael Crees in the grey and pink FK8 Honda Civic Type Rs bought from Team Dynamics.

Chilton and Cook boast speed and consistency, something they'll get to

deploy in one of the grid's most potent cars for a team that is operationally sound.

Chilton, who made his series debut aged only 17, finished a personal best of third in the 2018 standings but endured the Motorbase slump last year to drop to 10th. He'll be chomping at the bit to make amends.

"Tom's signing is another part of our plan to push forward and challenge for the BTCC title in 2020," reckons joint team principal Bert Taylor.





BROKEN BONES STILL HAMPERING NEAL

The fitness of three-time British Touring Car champion Matt Neal has been the ‘Will he, won’t he?’ story of the series’ off-season, with fellow triple title winner Gordon Shedden on standby to replace him in the Team Dynamics squad.

Neal sustained a broken clavicle and shoulder in a mountain-biking accident in January, and Shedden joined Dan Cammish in the Dynamics team for testing in February. Neal returned to the cockpit at Brands Hatch two weeks ago, and took part in last week’s Launch Day test at Silverstone, but is still far from race-fit.

“I wouldn’t want to do a race distance, if I’m honest – I’m still pretty uncomfortable,” said Neal. “I went to see the consultant last Wednesday, and callus has formed around

the bone, but, inside, the bone still hasn’t healed, and if the season was starting now he’d have recommended I’d sit it out. You only need one impact and it’s going to snap. Selfishly, it [the coronavirus delay] is helping, but I’d rather we were starting the season.”

As things stand, Neal isn’t 100% sure that he would be fit for a season opener at Thruxton in mid-May. “The consultant says it’s going to take 12 months to be fit again,” said Neal, “but there’s a degree you go to up to that point.

“Jason [Plato] put out a tweet that he’d like to be an ambulance driver – and I’d be up for that too, if it would help alleviate things with coronavirus. I think we’d have to be in a different borough though!”

ENTRY LIST

NO	DRIVER	TEAM (CAR)
1	Colin Turkington	West Surrey Racing (BMW 330i M Sport)
15	Tom Oliphant	West Surrey Racing (BMW 330i M Sport)
77	Andrew Jordan	West Surrey Racing (BMW 330i M Sport)
3	Tom Chilton	BTC Racing (Honda Civic Type R)
66	Josh Cook	BTC Racing (Honda Civic Type R)
777	Michael Crees	BTC Racing (Honda Civic Type R)
4	Sam Osborne	MB Motorsport (Honda Civic Type R)
24	Jake Hill	MB Motorsport (Honda Civic Type R)
6	Rory Butcher	Motorbase Performance (Ford Focus ST)
44	Andy Neate	Motorbase Performance (Ford Focus ST)
48	Ollie Jackson	Motorbase Performance (Ford Focus ST)
7	Mat Jackson	Power Maxed Racing (Vauxhall Astra)
11	Jason Plato	Power Maxed Racing (Vauxhall Astra)
12	Stephen Jelley	Team Parker Racing (BMW 125i M Sport)
16	Aiden Moffat	Laser Tools Racing (Infiniti Q50)
116	Ash Sutton	Laser Tools Racing (Infiniti Q50)
18	Senna Proctor	Excelr8 Motorsport (Hyundai i30N)
22	Chris Smiley	Excelr8 Motorsport (Hyundai i30N)
19	Bobby Thompson	Trade Price Cars Racing (Audi S3)
180	James Gornall	Trade Price Cars Racing (Audi S3)
25	Matt Neal	Team Dynamics (Honda Civic Type R)
27	Dan Cammish	Team Dynamics (Honda Civic Type R)
28	Nicolas Hamilton	Team Hard (Volkswagen CC)
31	Jack Goff	Team Hard (Volkswagen CC)
41	Carl Boardley	Team Hard (BMW 125i M Sport)
65	Howard Fuller	Team Hard (Volkswagen CC)
32	Daniel Rowbottom	Ciceley Motorsport (Mercedes A-Class)
33	Adam Morgan	Ciceley Motorsport (Mercedes A-Class)
80	Tom Ingram	Speedworks Motorsport (Toyota Corolla)



WINGING IT ON A NEW SILVERSTONE CIRCUIT LAYOUT

It’s 17 years since a new circuit was added to the BTCC calendar (unless you count the arrival of the Snetterton 300 layout in 2011). That was Rockingham back in 2003, a venue that

has since closed its doors.

For 2020, the Silverstone International configuration joins the roster, the previous incarnation of which was last used by the series in 2004.

BTCC circuits tend to

favour either rear- or front-wheel-drive cars. But Silverstone International falls somewhere in-between.

Where the track breaks off from the Grand Prix circuit before rejoining at Chapel,

there’s a right-handed downhill compression. A front-driven car, trying to lay down both power and grip through one axle, is going to shred the tyres. That will hurt race pace, but the front-

peddlers are expected to perform well in qualifying.

As Rory Butcher says: “I think we can probably go around at the same lap time, but for FWD that front-left tyre will take a pounding.”

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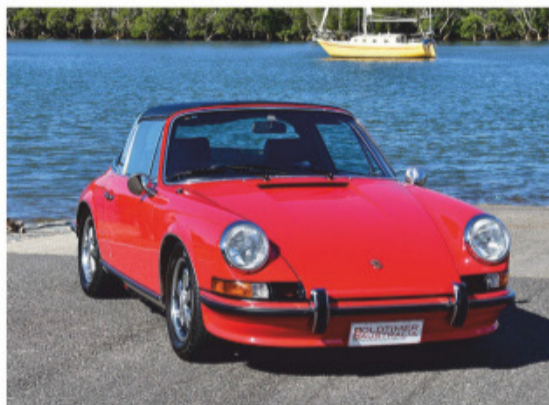
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Motorsport UK has shut the door on any racing until at least the start of July

MOTORSPORT UK EXTENDS ITS

CORONAVIRUS

No Motorsport UK-sanctioned events will now take place until at least the start of July after the governing body extended its suspension period due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The club circuit racing season was due to begin last weekend, but the governing body announced last week that it had suspended all events for March and April due to the spread of COVID-19. Then following more stringent measures taken by the UK government on Monday in an attempt to contain the outbreak, which include only going outside for exercise and to gather food and medical supplies, the suspension of Motorsport UK-sanctioned events will now run until at least 30 June.

Motorsport UK chairman David Richards said: “Motorsport UK has a vital role to play with its community in reinforcing that, at this time of national emergency, we must all stay at home to play our part in protecting the NHS and ultimately saving lives.

“The government has required that we effectively lock down for a period of three weeks, however given that the most vulnerable in our society are required to isolate for three months, it is evident that the most responsible course of action was to propose a longer suspension of our sport.

“When we reflect back on this time, it will be a brief, but vital, hiatus from our everyday motorsport life and we must put this in perspective.

“This is a time of national unity and we need to come together with the broader public community to do all

we can to support this battle and ultimately save lives.”

Motorsport Ireland had earlier announced on Friday that its suspension of event permits was also being extended, stating no meetings would take place until at least the start of June.

TESTING NOW AXED AT MOST VENUES

Despite Motorsport UK’s decision to put a stop to all race events, testing continued to take place at many of the country’s circuits last week.

But after the government essentially put the country into lockdown, the majority of venues have now confirmed that all track activity will be suspended.

Leading circuit operator MotorSport Vision said in a statement: “MSV confirms that, in line with latest guidance from the government, all circuit activity at its six venues (Brands Hatch, Donington Park, Oulton Park, Snetterton, Cadwell Park and Bedford Autodrome) will cease from close of 23 March, until 30 April inclusive. We will keep that date under review over the coming weeks as the guidance from government evolves.”

The British Automobile Racing Club has implemented similar measures, with its Thruxton, Croft and Pembrey venues closed until the end of April. Mallory Park and Castle Combe have also confirmed they will shut until the start of May.

Knockhill was among the first to halt testing on Sunday. All track action, including experience days and private testing, has been postponed and all 39 staff members have been told to stay at home during the temporary closure. The circuit said in a statement that it will restart activity “as soon as is practically possible”.



GAMBLE AND PEREZ SET TO RACE GT4 ASTON

EUROPEAN GT4 SERIES

Porsche Carrera Cup GB drivers George Gamble and Seb Perez will team up to race an Aston Martin in the European GT4 Series this year as R-Motorsport moves into the category.

The duo were team-mates at Redline Racing in the Carrera Cup last year and Gamble (below) finished third in the points, taking four wins. Perez won the Pro-Am title in 2018 before taking fifth in the overall standings last season.

They will now head to Europe as part of R-Motorsport's first GT4 foray. The team has enjoyed a successful tie-up with Aston Martin, running cars in Blancpain GT and also fielding Astons in the DTM last season.

"It's going to be a good challenge as it's certainly a competitive grid," said Perez. "It's a really good progression into Europe and GT4 is a good way of learning the tracks, learning about strategy and learning to do pitstops."

"We've got a good relationship – it's perfect to share a car with George because we both know how each other works."

Gamble added: "We're both Silver drivers so we're looking to fight for overall podiums and wins and think we'll be a really competitive pairing. We're looking to get battling at the front and there's no reason why we can't."

Also racing in the series will be former British Touring Car driver Aron Taylor-Smith. He drove a Ford Mustang in British GT last year but will now join 2016 British GT4 champion Mike Robinson in racing an HHC McLaren in European GT4.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



EVENT BAN UNTIL JULY

NEW LE MANS DATE CREATES BRITISH GT HEADACHE

The British GT championship says it is still "too early" to reschedule its championship finale at Donington Park on 19-20 September, following the postponement of the Le Mans 24 Hours to the same weekend.

British GT's opening four events have been postponed and, in a statement, championship manager Lauren Granville said its "primary focus" is on securing new dates for these events, with "creative solutions with circuits in the UK and abroad" being considered to maintain its seven-round calendar.

However, the new date for the final round of the World Endurance Championship could pose difficulties for several parties participating in both series, including British GT3 and GT4 championship-winning team TF Sport, four-time series champion Jonny Adam and fellow Aston Martin factory driver Ross Gunn.

TF boss Tom Ferrier told Autosport the clash would be "a complete nightmare" because his entire WEC team would need to be on site at Donington. But Granville said British GT could not commit moving Donington to avoid the clash until the pandemic's ramifications for international motorsport become clearer.

"Many more of our teams and drivers compete in GT World Challenge Europe, which we must also consider," she said. "Equally, Le Mans is unlikely to be the last major motorsport event to be rescheduled."

"Moving Donington to avoid Le Mans will more than likely create clashes elsewhere once everyone's new calendars are confirmed, so it's still too early to say what we'll do at the moment."

STEFAN MACKLEY, STEPHEN LICKORISH, STEPHEN BRUNSDON AND JAMES NEWBOLD





touring car experience will definitely help.”

Going added that he was impressed with Hammerton when he first drove for the team and has followed his progress since. Hammerton’s signing is part of a tie-up between Jamsport and BTCC squad Team Hard for this season.

Going explained that Jamsport would still look after the cars on-track, while Tony Gilham’s Hard squad will provide off-track support. “Me and Tony have got on really well and he’s sent drivers to me previously, like Chris Smiley when he came out of touring cars in 2016 and did Clios with us, so we’ve always worked quite closely,” said Going. “Now he’s going to have some involvement in sponsoring the team and generating a bit more brand awareness.”

Jamsport’s line-up this year will be spearheaded by Ant Whorton-Eales, who won the 2018 title with the squad and will help to coach some of the other drivers.

Also among the line-up will be long-time Jamsport racer Harry Gooding, who has won senior and junior Fiesta titles with the team. He moved to the Mini Challenge last year and was 10th in the standings.

The team’s current roster is completed by Mini regulars Tom Rawlings (who was ninth last year), James Griffith, Stuart Gibbs and 2018 Cooper S class champion Will Fairclough. Going added that he is also in talks with an eighth driver.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

MINI CHALLENGE JCW

Mini Challenge squad Jamsport plans to run up to eight cars in the JCW category this season, with Renault UK Clio Cup race winner Ethan Hammerton its latest recruit.

Hammerton finished sixth in his rookie Clio season last year driving for Team Hard, but he has previously raced for the Jamsport squad, when he finished runner-up in the

Clio Junior points in 2017.

Jamsport boss Jamie Going believes Hammerton’s two outings with Team Hard in the British Touring Car Championship at the end of 2018 will stand him in good stead as he gets to grips with the JCW Mini.

“The good thing is he’s had the experience in a touring car and the Mini is very similar to how a touring car works,” said Going. “It’s quite a difficult car so his

New challenges for Junior aces Smalley and Taylor

GINETTAS

Past Ginetta Junior champions Adam Smalley and James Taylor will both progress to new Ginetta categories this year with Elite Motorsport.

Smalley won the Junior title in 2018 with Elite and was a frontrunner in the GT5 Challenge last season. He will now move across to the GT4 Supercup.

“I’m really excited about having Adam in the GT4 Supercup,” said Elite team

boss Eddie Ives. “He impressed us over a year ago when he first tested the car and he was extremely quick, so he’s been on the list to get into Supercup this year.”

Meanwhile, Taylor – who won last year’s Winter Series crown with Elite – will now graduate to the GT5 Challenge. He topped the timesheets at the category’s launch last week and Ives expects him to mount a title challenge.

“He only joined us for the last few rounds last

year but we got on really well and we had a fair bit of success in that time, so we knew we wanted to do something with him this year,” said Ives. That [launch day] was his second day in the car and he should be a strong contender in GT5.”

Taylor will be joined by John Bennett in Elite’s GT5 line-up. The son of Caterham racer Tony Bennett, he will be making his car racing debut this year.

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IN THE HEADLINES

DE SADELEER'S LATEST BID

Radical Challenge runner-up Jerome de Sadeleer is targeting another title bid in the series this season, as part of a five-car 360 Racing effort. "I'm not here to mess about; it's maximum effort to win this season," he said. "Last year was exciting and I came so close to the title, it just makes me hungrier for this year." De Sadeleer is joined in the team's line-up by fellow frontrunner Mark Richards and Jason Rishover, Peter Tyler and Martin Verity.

JOCK SIMPSON 1947-2020

Tributes have been paid to motorsport journalist and PR man Jock Simpson, who passed away earlier this month after a period of ill health. He played an active role in helping Bute Motorsport set up the popular GT Cup category and also worked with a number of other championships, including British GT and in one-make Porsche racing.

CIRCUIT RALLYING TO RACING

Rally driver Richard Wells is planning to start circuit racing this season, having recently bought a Radical SR3 to contest the Bikesports series. Wells clinched the runner-up spot in the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship with his Ford Fiesta R5+ earlier this month and says he was impressed with the Radical. "I tried one at a track test day and it was the first time I really felt downforce and aero, so decided to buy one and give it a go," he explained.

OPTIMUM TESTS McLAREN

Optimum Motorsport ran its brand-new McLaren 720S GT3 at Donington Park for the first time last week (below), with Nick Foster and fellow Australian Martin Berry sharing the driving. Asian Le Mans Series frontrunner Foster admitted "it's hard to prepare for something when you don't know when it's going to happen now", after the postponement of the start of the British GT season due to the coronavirus pandemic.



SCHERER

New 'double-halo' is not mandatory for drivers



Revolution develops unique 'double-halo' protection device

SPORTS PROTOTYPE CUP

Revolution has developed a 'double-halo' cockpit-protection device for its A-One prototype machine.

The structure has been designed to bolt onto the car's carbon-fibre monocoque chassis and is extended to protect two people in situations where there is a driver coach sitting alongside someone in testing.

Revolution managing director Phil Abbott said: "We designed the A-One to give more elbow room than other

prototype racing cars, making it easy to operate both solo and with a passenger aboard. By introducing the 'double-halo' we are giving drivers and their instructors or corporate guests the same level of safety they would expect in a world championship-type race car."

It is believed that Revolution's 'double-halo' is one of the first to be developed for a two-seater car.

The device is not mandatory for the Revolutions running as part of the Sports Prototype Cup category this year.

Compact Cup racer gets Aston drive

BRITCAR ENDURANCE

Compact Cup driver Aaron Morgan is set to share Team BRIT's GT4 Aston Martin with 116 Trophy race winner Bobby Trundle for at least two Britcar Endurance rounds this year.

Morgan, who has been a wheelchair user since a motocross crash as a teenager, will step up to GT4 machinery after conducting a number of days testing.

"Racing the Aston is an absolute dream come true for me," said Morgan. "The step up from the Compact Cup is a huge



MARKWICK

jump – I've had a couple of tests and I find it's like driving my car on steroids. The power is 10 times greater, but the brakes are 10 times greater and there's 10 times more grip."

Morgan has secured the budget to do two races in the Aston and the rest in a BMW 1

Series, but he aims to raise the funding to complete the full campaign in the Aston.

Morgan and the other Team BRIT drivers will benefit from coaching from former Renault UK Clio Cup title contender Max Coates this year.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Lyons drives a variety of historic cars, including this Chevron B29

HSCC chairman handed licence ban after ‘abusive’ online comments

HISTORICS

Historic Sports Car Club chairman Frank Lyons has had his licence suspended for a year after the National Court ruled he made what it described as “abusive, derogatory and homophobic” comments online.

The case concerned a number of comments Lyons made on Facebook in October last year, which were directed at “persons who have an official capacity on the Historic Commission of the FIA”.

The National Court heard evidence

about the background of the comments, but chair of the panel Steve Stringwell said in his report it was concluded “the comments themselves undoubtedly caused distress to the persons referred to in the Facebook thread and to others who read them”.

Stringwell’s report continued: “Having heard evidence from Mr Lyons about the posting of the comments, the panel concludes that they were clearly made in anger. Mr Lyons had asserted that the comments were not intended to be homophobic, abusive, or derogatory but the

panel is less concerned with his motivation than the effect of the publication on others.”

Lyons was therefore handed a two-year licence ban, with the second year suspended, while he was ordered to pay a £5000 fine and £2000 in costs.

Following the hearing earlier this month, Lyons announced he was stepping down as HSCC chairman with immediate effect. But, after receiving what he describes as “tremendous support”, he has decided to stand for re-election and let members decide if he should continue in the post.

Waberski takes podium on car racing debut

SOUTH AFRICA F1600

Fourteen-year-old Jarrod Waberski marked himself out as a driver to watch when he finished fourth overall across South Africa’s Formula 1600 triple-header championship opener at Pretoria’s Zwartkops Raceway earlier this month.

Having completed his licensing requirement on the Thursday prior to the event, South African kart champion Waberski – son of former British F3 racer Garth – qualified his DAW Racing Mygale well in the strong



Ford Duratec-powered slicks-and-wings field.

Sixth in the opening stanza, Waberski slipped to ninth in race two, but battled back to claim a hard-fought third in the new-for-2020 reversed-grid finale, in

which he fended off Nicholas Van Weely (Van Diemen) and Tiago Rebelo (Mygale).

“I am beyond ecstatic with these results,” said Waberski, whose father won the SA Junior kart title aged 12 in 1986. “Although I’ve been

putting in long hours of practice, I must admit I never thought a podium on my debut was a possibility.”

Van Weely, top qualifier Andrew Rackstraw (Mygale) and promoter Ian Schofield (Mygale) won a race apiece. For British-born Schofield, the oldest competitor in the pack, it was his first victory in 28 years.

The next stop in the title race is scheduled to be Killarney on 18 April, albeit the coronavirus pandemic inevitably puts it under threat.

MARCUS PYE



Positive thinking

There's no avoiding the fact that these are difficult times for British motorsport, but there are glimmers of hope in how many are reacting to the COVID-19 crisis

STEPHEN LICKORISH

This column was supposed to have been about the start of the British Touring Car Championship's support series at Donington Park this weekend. It was supposed to be one of positivity, looking at the impressive quality of entries these categories had attracted. And this issue of Autosport was supposed to include reports from the first two events of a busy UK circuit racing season.

But instead of that positivity, sadly things are much darker. The TOCA support series will not begin their campaigns this weekend; the club racing season did not start last weekend. The worsening coronavirus pandemic has meant motorsport has very much had to take a back seat at a time when there are more important considerations to make. Not just more important, but the most important, with people's lives at stake as the virus continues to take hold.

There was an inevitability about governing body Motorsport UK's statement last Tuesday afternoon, announcing that no UK motorsport would take place until at least the start of May, as ever more restrictions are placed on our everyday lives in a bid to try to control the spread of the virus. In reality, given the government talked about reviewing its decision to force the closure of all pubs, restaurants, gyms and leisure centres on a monthly basis, it was not in the slightest bit surprising that Motorsport UK has now extended the suspension of event permits until the end of June.

“Despite the health crisis, there were statements by organisers who still do not seem to ‘get it’”

Even if club racing is able to get under way on the first weekend of July, that still means 84 scheduled meetings and 150 days' worth of racing have not been able to take place. And that just applies to circuit racing, let alone the plethora of other disciplines that make up this country's diverse motorsport landscape.

Every single UK circuit racing championship will be impacted. Among the worst affected is the BTCC and its supporting acts, as they were scheduled to have five events before the start of July – although it is worth remembering that, at 10 rounds, it has far more meetings than most categories.

Following Motorsport UK's announcement last week, scores of clubs and championships put out their own statements, talking about the need to stay safe and follow government advice, along with practical information for competitors about what happens

with already-paid entry fees. Many also talked about the intention to reschedule the called-off fixtures and said they were already in discussions about alternative dates. But, given how congested the calendar already is, and that there is a minimum of 150 days of racing that need to be rescheduled, this simply is not going to happen. Most events have full timetables, leaving no available track time for additional races to be accommodated.

It is therefore already clear that this club motorsport season, if and when it begins, is going to be unlike many others. But despite the severity of the health crisis engulfing the planet, there were a few worrying statements put out by organisers who still do not seem to 'get it'. One category's website talked about its season opener being postponed by stating: "This is a situation that has been forced upon us by Motorsport UK's response to the current global COVID-19 concern, and totally outside of our control." There is an undertone here that suggests Motorsport UK did not have to take the course of action it did last week.

Such attitudes need to be changed immediately. The possibility of embattled emergency workers expending vital resources and time dealing with drivers injured in the course of a weekend's racing at a period like this is not something anyone should contemplate. And to suggest otherwise is foolish, no matter how frustrating it is that we cannot go racing.

The UK has been in a situation a little like this before, as rallying has been particularly affected by various instances of foot-and-mouth disease, including in 1967 and 2001. Motorsport UK chairman David Richards recalls that foot-and-mouth outbreaks in the 1960s and 1970s were overcome by the introduction of table-top rallies, where competitors were given route cards and had to use maps to work out the intended route to a destination as quickly as possible.

"This was well before computer games, and these table-top rallies went out to clubs around the country," remembers Richards. "We all used to compete and they used to send films around and we all used to sit and watch old motorsport films, so it [behaviours] changed.

"All these things will have a positive side. Maybe we will see a plethora of gaming events crop up now. And maybe younger people get enthused about participating in those events and maybe move on to real-life participation."

Other positive outcomes include the way in which the motorsport industry has pulled together to help manufacture medical equipment that is so desperately needed (see the Motorsport Industry Association's response to the crisis on p19).

It may not quite be the positivity that should have surrounded the start of what would have been an exciting season but, even in these difficult times, there are still some glimmers of hope. ✨

SEASON
PREVIEW

THE SUPPORT ACTS WAITING FOR THE CHANCE TO SHINE

The BTCC's support categories always provide plenty of excitement and, prior to the coronavirus-related delay, this season was set to be no different

STEPHEN LICKORISH

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP



motorsport
IMAGES



BRITISH FORMULA 4

Not since British Formula 4's inaugural season in 2015 – when future McLaren F1 driver Lando Norris, IndyCar race winner Colton Herta and two-time Macau Grand Prix victor Dan Ticktum were on the grid – has its line-up looked so strong.

There's last year's runaway Ginetta Junior champion James Hedley. There's Zak O'Sullivan, who was an impressive runner-up to Hedley, despite it being his first season of car racing. There's scholarship winner Casper Stevenson and Roman Bilinski, who both showed flashes of speed in Ginetta Junior last season. There's Jacques Villeneuve's FEED Racing School winner Marijn Kremers.

Then there are the drivers who are continuing for another year in the category, including two-time F4 race winner Luke Browning, who has swapped Richardson Racing for Fortec Motorsports. There are other second-year drivers such as Alex Connor and Roberto Faria, who will have both taken strides forward in the off-season. And so the list goes on. The cast is genuinely impressive and there's a host of promising karters, W Series aspirant Abbi Pulling and

French/Danish F4 race winner Mikkel Grundtvig to consider too.

It's also impressive that a total of 16 drivers have so far signed up, an increase on the past two seasons despite it potentially being the final year of the current car-and-engine combination.

Picking a winner from the talented bunch is not an easy task. But Hedley says that will make it all the more satisfying for the eventual champion. "It's looking like one of the biggest grids in a couple of years and it's going to be a bit more competitive, so it will be even better if you come out on top because it shows how hard it is to win," says 16-year-old Dorset driver Hedley, who will race with JHR Developments.

And, with a number of his old Ginetta rivals on the entry list, Hedley is confident he can triumph again. "It's a different ball game to Ginetta Junior, but it still gives me confidence that I beat them last year, and why does that mean I can't beat them again this year?" he adds.

Whoever does emerge victorious could very well find themselves emulating the success the class of 2015 has since enjoyed.



Hedley will be seeking to stay at the front



Ginetta Junior champ Hedley will drive for JHR



Jamsport's Whorton-Eales leads the pack back in 2018

MINI CHALLENGE

One of the most popular features of last year's TOCA season was the guest appearance of the Mini Se7en and Mini Miglia categories at Thruxton. This year, once the season gets under way, there will be a lot more Mini action as more-modern versions of the hatchback will appear at every round.

The Renault UK Clio Cup's departure from the TOCA package after a decades-long association is undoubtedly one of the most significant changes for this year. But while the Clios are off to pastures new alongside British GT, the Minis are set to provide plenty of excitement in their place.

Series chiefs have boasted of full entries – at the time of writing, 25 drivers have been officially confirmed, but the impact of the coronavirus pandemic could affect this number – and these plentiful grids will provide no shortage of close racing.

On paper, there is a clear favourite for the crown: 2018 champion Ant Whorton-Eales. Back then he took 10 wins and finished off the podium just three times in a dominant display. He will be back with the Jamsport squad again this year and is aiming for a repeat. "We don't do anything just to join in, we want to dominate," says team boss Jamie Going. And that is very ominous for the rest.

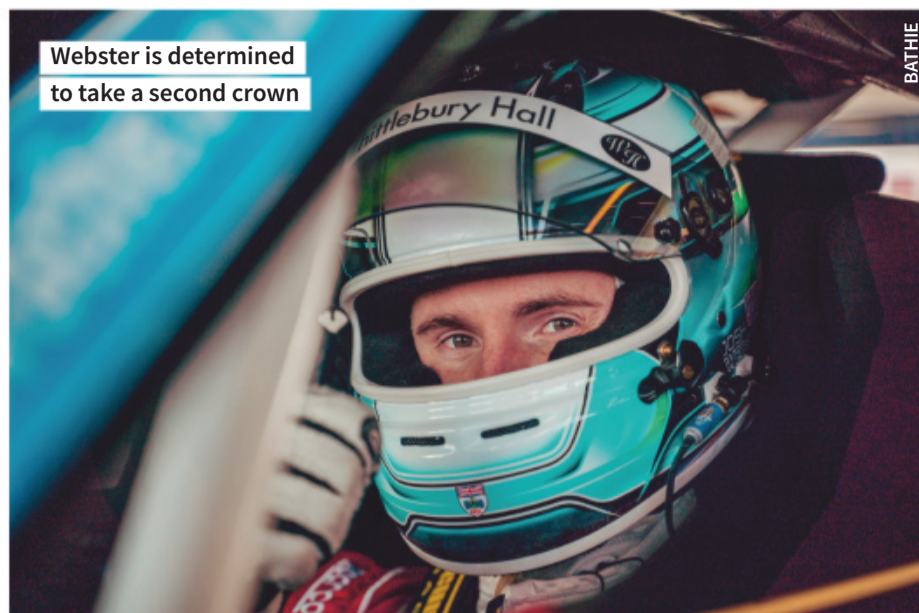
But Whorton-Eales is still set to face some tough competition this year. Making his debut is Max Coates who, after two near-misses in the Clio Cup, will be desperate for some Mini success with Elite Motorsport. Although the team is new to the series, it features bags of past Mini experience among its engineering crew.

Coates is not the only threat Whorton-Eales will face, however. Going also picks out last year's runner-up Nathan Harrison – who finished just two points behind new BTCC racer James Gornall – and Dan Zelos, who was third in 2019, as others to watch. "You've got to think Nathan will be a rival and Dan Zelos has really put the time in so I wouldn't rule him out either," says Going.

Others who could be in the mix include the past two Sunoco 240 Challenge winners – Kyle Reid and Robbie Dalglish – and Fiesta frontrunner Isaac Smith.



Whorton-Eales is among the Mini favourites



Webster is determined to take a second crown

BATHIE

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

Last year, there were just seven drivers in the top Pro class who completed the majority of the Porsche Carrera Cup GB campaign. This season that is set to almost double to 13. And that reflects a general increase in numbers across the board as there are 25 currently confirmed racers for the series.

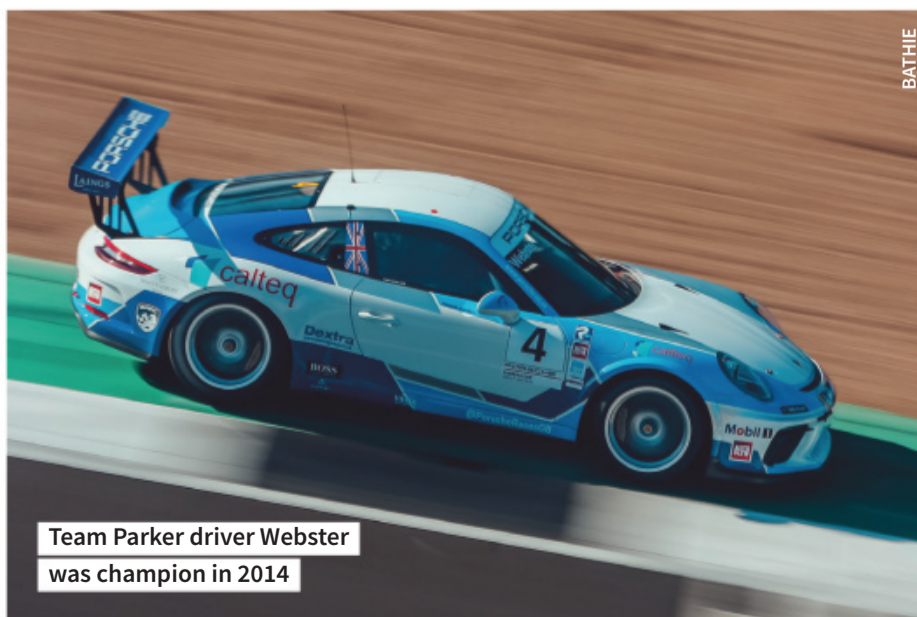
Out of those 13 Pro drivers, there is one in particular who enters the season as one of the clear favourites. Josh Webster won the Carrera Cup title in his first season out of single-seaters back in 2014 and has since raced in a variety of series, including the Porsche Supercup. But last year he returned to the GB category and finished runner-up despite joining the grid after the season opener. Now he is back for a full attack and is targeting a second crown.

"I've got a really good relationship with Team Parker Racing and I've been driving these cars since 2014 and, having the opportunity to begin the championship from the start, it makes sense to try and win it," says Webster. "I've got a new engineer this year who has come from Porsche Supercup and we've made some good inroads."

Despite acknowledging that he is a favourite, Webster says there will be no margin for error given the strength in depth of the entry. "There's 13 Pros, so a lot of people who could be quick," he continues. "If you weren't quite on top form last year you could be third or fourth, but this year you might find yourself eighth or ninth, which is brilliant and makes it a great challenge. It's such a shame what's happened with the virus but, if we only have an eight-round championship, then you really can't make any mistakes."

Among the drivers aiming to capitalise on any errors will be Webster's Team Parker Racing team-mate Harry King. The reigning Ginetta GT4 Supercup champion was selected as the new Porsche Junior after impressing in last November's shootout.

King is not the only 2019 Ginetta champion on the grid as GT5 title winner Scott McKenna will also graduate to the series, along with Ginetta Junior ace Will Martin, GT racer Matty Graham and King's fellow Junior finalist Lorcan Hanafin – all talented drivers Webster will have to beat if he wants that second title. >>



Team Parker driver Webster was champion in 2014

BATHIE

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Elite has changed its colour scheme for its rookies this year

GINETTA JUNIOR

It's always one of the most unpredictable championships in the country. But predicting the Ginetta Junior champion this season is even trickier than usual due to the lack of experienced second-year drivers on the grid. There are due to be just six drivers who have previously contested even half a season's racing on the 2020 entry list, meaning the title fight is likely to be wide open after James Hedley's non-stereotypical dominance last season.

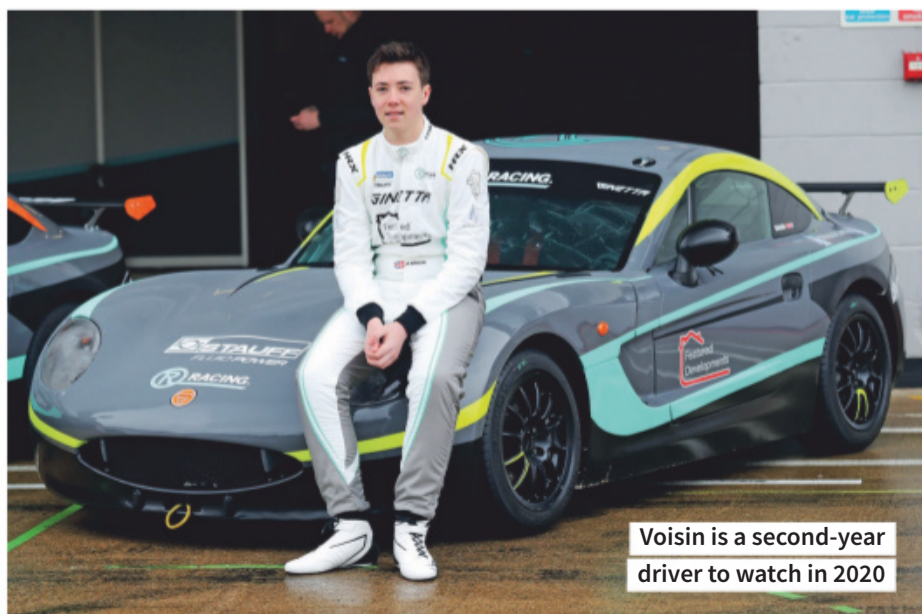
With so many of last year's frontrunners, along with some a little further down the grid, heading off to either British Formula 4 or the Porsche Carrera Cup GB, there are not many drivers remaining. In fact, there is not a single driver taking part this year who has previously achieved a podium in the series.

Most of those continuing for another year form part of R Racing's line-up, and Joel Pearson, Aston Millar and Bailey Voisin – who topped all four sessions during the championship's recent launch day at Silverstone – are sure to be in the mix at the end of the year.

Elite Motorsport, whose drivers have won the title for the past two seasons, has an all-rookie line-up for this campaign with Tom Lebbon, Josh Miller, William Vincent, William Aspin, Seb Hopkins and Tommy Pintos. But team boss Eddie Ives still believes his racers can challenge, despite their lack of experience.

"We are on the back foot a little bit with them all being in their first year – having a year's worth of experience is very hard to go against," says Ives. "But we're not far behind. Once they get into their rhythm and have a bit of experience behind them, they will be fine. All of them are more naturally talented than any second-year drivers they're up against, so I'm confident it will come good."

The progression of the rookies compared to those with a bit more experience under their belts is sure to be one of the recurring themes this year, once the season does finally get under way. But given Elite's recent track record of success in Ginetta categories, you would not bet against one of Ives's rookies making history by taking the crown at their first attempt.



Voisin is a second-year driver to watch in 2020



Burns has twice narrowly missed out

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

In 2016, he missed out by just three points. In 2019, it was 13 points. Now Will Burns is hoping it will be third time lucky and he can finally land the Ginetta GT4 Supercup crown.

Burns has displayed a consistent approach in both of his two previous championship challenges but has ultimately fallen short at the very last round. Both times he clawed back large deficits to pull himself right into the title picture come the end of the season. This time around, Burns is aiming to be leading from the off as he is back for another attempt with the Rob Boston Racing squad. "I'm going to give it everything this year," states Burns. "I just thought this year I'd stick with the same team, have a bit of consistency, and hopefully that might be the thing I've been missing."

But Burns realises that he is unlikely to have things all his own way this year as a number of young drivers have been attracted into the series for 2020. Burns believes Ginetta's offer of a place in a shootout to land a factory contract for the top three in the points has tempted a number of new names to join. Among his likely rivals are 2018 Ginetta Junior champion Adam Smalley, last year's GT5 Challenge runner-up Geri Nicosia and Burns's team-mate: 2013 British GT4 runner-up Declan Jones.

"I think it's going to be a very competitive year this year," says Burns. "I know there's lots of young guns like Adam Smalley and Geri Nicosia and they will be strong but hopefully, as I've got a bit of experience, I can hit the ground running."

There are also set to be a number of club racing champions making the move into the series this year, including Caterham ace Jamie Falvey and M3 Cup title winner Adam Shepherd. One more can be found in the newly introduced intermediate Pro-Am class: G40 Cup ace Chris Salkeld.

Add in regulars Tom Hibbert and Reece Somerfield, along with 2019 podium finisher Carlito Miracco, and it's clear that Burns has his work cut out to finally seal that number one spot. ❄



Burns has stuck with Rob Boston Racing for this year

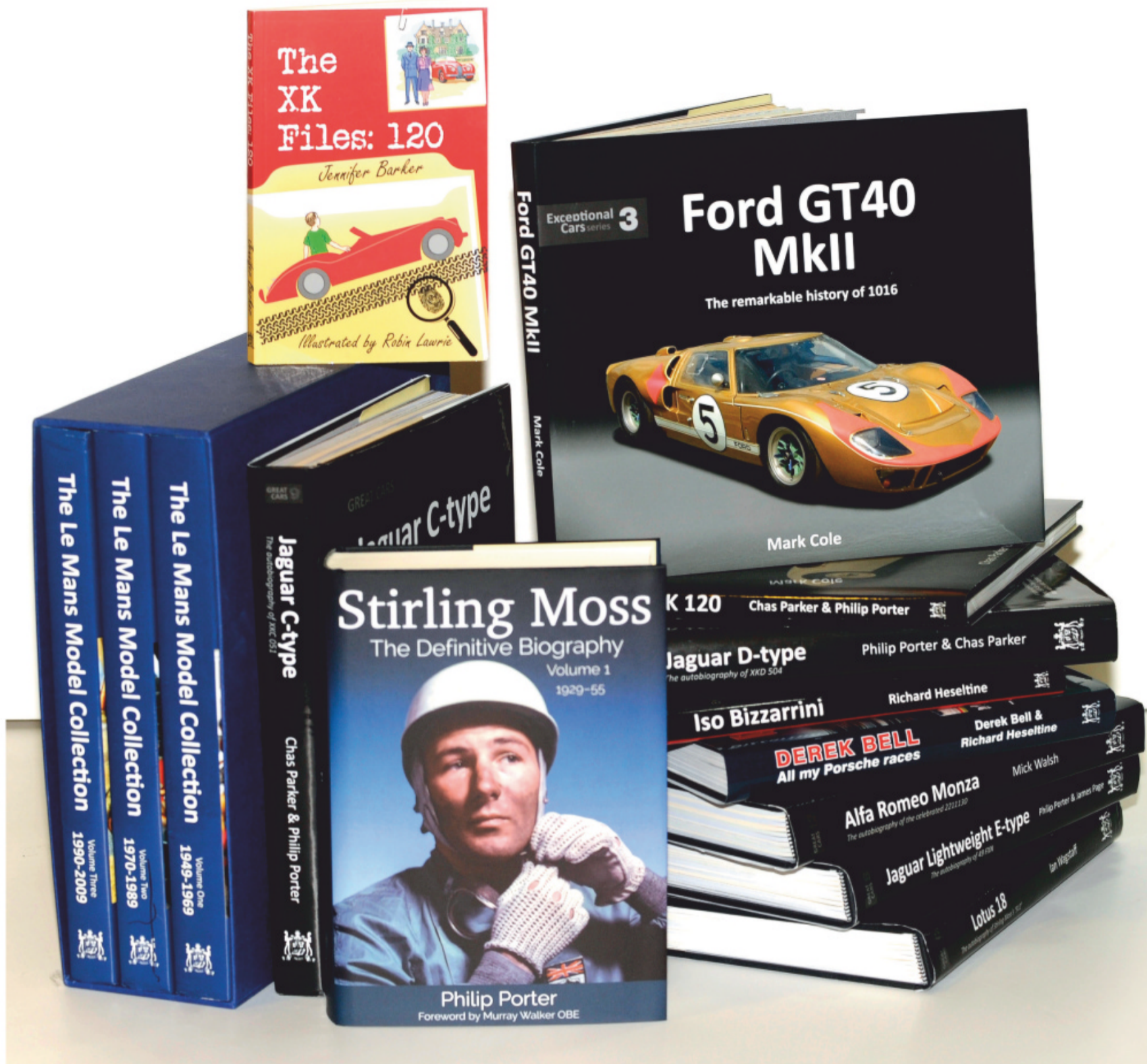
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CHARITY BOOK COLLECTION HELPS



THE CHARITY COLLECTION PORTER PRESS

As the cover feature in this issue of Autosport explains, the motorsport world can and should play its own role in helping to combat the spread of

the novel coronavirus. With so many resources at its disposal and the race calendar on hold, this is the time for that wealth of technology to be deployed in a far more meaningful manner. Some Formula 1 and Formula E teams have begun their efforts, and so too has artisan motor racing book publisher Porter Press.

It has announced a new charity collection, and with each sale there will be a donation made to the COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund.

There are 20 titles selected for collection, many of which have been reviewed in this magazine previously. The books featured include a range of studies of particular 1950s and 1960s racing car chassis, the

well-received Stirling Moss biography and the three-volume *Le Mans Model Car Collection 1949-2009* set.

The announcement from Porter Press reads: “Due to the unprecedented situation throughout the world, many small businesses will be struggling. Whilst we are open for business as usual, we know that sadly many independent bookshops will face problems. Equally, many people will be confined to their homes and have time on their hands.

“Hence the Porter Press Charity Collection – a means of both supporting the World Health Organisation’s COVID-19 Solidarity Response Fund, and encouraging people to pick up a good book.”

Prices for each title start at £30 and go up to £200, and with each sale 25% of the full retail price will be sent to the Response Fund and buyers also receive 25% off – stock permitting.

The Response fund was created by the United Nations Foundation and the Swiss Philanthropy Foundation to support the World Health Organisation’s efforts in tackling COVID-19 and help countries prevent, detect and manage cases of the virus.

Money raised will go towards sending protective

THE CHARITY COLLECTION

Alfa Romeo Monza – The autobiography of the celebrated 2211130

Aston Martin Ulster – The remarkable history of CMC 614

Barry Cryer Comedy Scrapbook

Derek Bell – All my Porsche races

Ford GT40 Mark II – The remarkable history of 1016

Iso Bizzarrini – The remarkable history of A3/C 0222

Jaguar C-type – The autobiography of XKC 051

Jaguar D-type – The autobiography of XKD 504

Jaguar Design – A Story of Style

Jaguar Lightweight E-type – The autobiography of 4 WPD

Jaguar Lightweight E-type – The autobiography of 49 FXN

Jaguar XK 120 – The remarkable history of JWK 651

Jaguar XK DIY Restoration & Maintenance

Lotus 18 – The autobiography of Stirling Moss's '912'

Maserati 250F – The autobiography of 2528

Stage Whispers – Douglas Wilmer, The Memoirs

Stirling Moss – The Definitive Biography, Volume 1

Stirling Moss Scrapbook 1929-1954

Stirling Moss Scrapbook 1955

The Le Mans Model Collection 1949-2009

COVID-19 FUND

equipment to frontline health workers, and boosting training and the availability of laboratory equipment. The donations will also aid efforts to identify and research possible vaccines and treatments.

Although targets are always moving, the Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan has identified the need to raise “at least” £583million by the end of April alone.

Philip Porter, founder of the publishing house, says: “In the past four years, our team has raised £250,000 for Prostate Cancer UK. We are now keen to do what we can to support the World Health Organisation at this most challenging time. One of the few benefits of this dreadful virus might be that people rediscover the pleasure of curling up with a good book.”

The first 500 people to order from the Porter Press charity collection will also receive a free copy of the children's book *The XK Files:120*.

To view the collection, go to porterpress.co.uk/collections/charity-collection. You can also donate straight to the Response Fund by visiting covid19responsefund.org.



autosport.com/podcast



Formula 1 key players have agreed to postpone the introduction of the planned 2021 technical regulations until 2022, amid the continuing uncertainty caused by the coronavirus pandemic. In this instalment of the Autosport podcast we discuss the implications of this decision.



youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom



The start of the 2020 Formula 1 season may be delayed, but we were able to get a good look at each of the team's cars and drivers back at Barcelona testing. Here's how the Autosport team expects the competitive order to shake out. **Go to bit.ly/F1midfield2020**

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The “completely mad” nose job that transformed F1 design

When Ferrari expats Harvey Postlethwaite and Jean-Claude Migeot landed at Tyrrell in 1989, they devised a stepped nose that would become commonplace in F1 for the next three decades.

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golden victory chance**

By Ben Anderson
Read preview

The 'unsexy' way to win a title

By James Newbold

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TOP FIVE



NETFLIX DOCUMENTARIES

Given the unprecedented circumstances at present, we need to all heed the advice to stay at home and stop the spread. To while away some of that time, here are our top Netflix racing documentary picks

MATT KEW



5 DIRTY MONEY, PAYDAY
The Netflix original series on corporate corruption is fascinating, and there are 12 stand-alone episodes. We're interested in the second, which focuses on Scott Tucker. The sometime sportscar driver and team owner sits in his house as his prized race cars are repossessed, following his illegal payday loan operations, for which he was initially fined a record \$1.266billion. Plenty of on-track footage feeds in to the narrative.



4 THE 24 HOUR WAR
Ford's battle to topple Ferrari at Le Mans was the subject of a major Hollywood blockbuster last year, but this title dispenses with poetic licence. It was made by motorsport fans for motorsport fans; and it's no vanity project, so it remains faithful and immersive. Interviews with Dan Gurney and Mario Andretti are highlights. While this is the best effort, it's yet another take on a story that's nigh on been done to death.



3 UPPITY
To get hung up on the choppy editing in this title – which has European circuits masquerading as US venues – is to miss the point. The story of Willy T Ribbs's rise to race in the Indianapolis 500 and to test the Brabham BT54 (below) despite the barriers of racism is terrific. That said, given Ribbs's often divisive demeanour, *Uppity* would benefit from featuring more of his critics to present a more-rounded assessment.



2 SHELBY AMERICAN
When directors Nate Adams and Adam Carolla were editing *The 24 Hour War*, they decided that Carroll Shelby was worthy of his own standalone documentary. We reckon it eclipses the main project. Stunning archive footage, little-known stories and the voice of the main protagonist are all relayed alongside interviews from some of the great endurance racers. It's utterly enthralling, but a one-off release.



1 DRIVE TO SURVIVE
To date, there are 20 episodes of Netflix's original series on Formula 1. For the second season, all 10 teams are featured. The 2019 German Grand Prix provides a particular standout instalment as it follows Mercedes from anniversary celebrations to a crushing double non-score. The trick here is that the show appeals both hardline racing fans and more neutral audiences. For that, it takes top spot.





FROM THE ARCHIVE

The field assembles on the dummy grid before proceeding to the grid proper on the start/finish straight at the 1972 Monaco Grand Prix. On the front row

are fastest qualifier Emerson Fittipaldi (Lotus-Ford 72D) and Jacky Ickx (Ferrari 312B2), followed by Ickx's team-mate Clay Regazzoni and Jean-Pierre Beltoise (BRM P160B). Beltoise made a storming

start and took a lead that he was never to relinquish, setting fastest lap en route to his sole grand prix victory and the last for BRM. Ickx finished almost 40 seconds behind, with the rest of the field lapped.

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FROM THE ARCHIVE

Mechanics work on the Siffert ATE Racing long-tailed Porsche 908 driven by Reinhold Joest, Michel Weber and Mario Casoni in the 1972 24 Hours of Le Mans.

The rain-affected race was won by the Matra MS670 of Graham Hill and Henri Pescarolo, 11 laps ahead of the second-placed Matra of Francois Cevert and Howden Ganley. It was the first Le Mans

victory by a French car since the Rosiers' Talbot-Lago in 1950, and Hill was the first to claim the elusive triple crown of the Monaco GP, Indy 500 and Le Mans. The Joest/Weber/Casoni 908 finished third.



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Autosport has a taste of Formula 1 machinery

30 March 1956

Autosport's technical editor John Bolster took part in "the first pre-race test of a modern F1 car ever conducted by a journalist" when he drove the straight-eight Gordini Type 32 at the fearsome Montlhéry road circuit.

The car arrived being driven, without bodywork, by a mechanic. Once it was prepared and shaken down, Bolster took to the bumpy circuit with its famous banking.

How the car handled the bumps, even at 100mph, was praised, as Bolster adopted the "authentic grand prix [seating] position" as displayed by the stars of that period.

The supercharged machine revved up to 7500rpm, but Bolster restrained himself to 6500rpm as he was there primarily to test the suspension. Criticisms were few – the front wheels bouncing on bumpy slower corners being the main one.

Bolster described it as "the least temperamental racing car I have ever driven". Once the test was over, a happy mechanic hopped in and returned the car back to Paris.

The feature concludes wishing Amedee Gordini's team well and the best of luck. Unfortunately, the car was unsuccessful, failing to break the Italian stranglehold on GP racing and Gordini was gone from F1 by the following season.

Elsewhere, a record crowd descended onto Goodwood for the 21st Members' Meeting; the Lyon-Charbonnières Rally (which fewer than half the starters finished) was won by Alexandre Gacon in a Porsche 356; and Los Angeles announced a new \$12million race circuit capable of running grand prix and sportscar events.

CRAIG WOOLLARD



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Autosport, ISSN number 0269946X, is published weekly by Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG, United Kingdom. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named Air Business Ltd, c/o Worldnet Shipping Inc., 156-15, 146th Avenue, 2nd Floor, Jamaica, NY 11434, USA. Periodicals postage paid at Jamaica NY 11431. Subscription records are maintained at Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG. Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent.



CIRCULATION TRADE ENQUIRIES

Seymour Distribution Ltd, 2 East Poultry Avenue, London, EC1A 9PT.
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7429 4000.
 Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd, 28 Planetary Road, Willenhall, Wolverhampton WV13 3XT.
 ISSN 0269-946X. Autosport is published weekly by Autosport Media UK Ltd, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, TW9 1AG.

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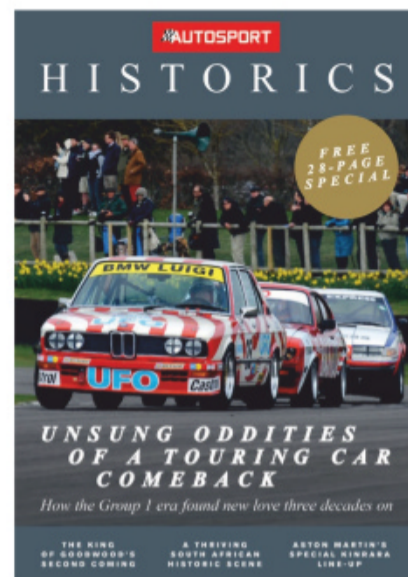


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COVER IMAGE
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Celebrating those who drive something different

As you might expect with the timing of this edition of Autosport Historics, the supplement was intended to precede the 78th Goodwood Members' Meeting. Originally the event was scheduled for this weekend, but it's one of many to be postponed due to the spread of COVID-19.

Motorsport, naturally, pales compared to a global pandemic. But it's still worth remembering the countless mechanics, engineers and driver coaches who will lose precious business as a consequence.

While we wait to see the lie of the land, and as the Duke of Richmond and his team work to find an alternative date, please enjoy the features enclosed in this issue.

A signature at the Members' Meeting is the brace of Gerry Marshall Trophy races. It's the spring equivalent of the Tourist Trophy race for the star names it attracts.

But in recent years the grid has tended to converge around Ford Capris, Chevrolet Camaros and Rover SD1s. On page 6, Paul Lawrence explains how the Group 1 touring car era bounced back, plus he's spoken to the owners and racers of five machines that cut rather different shapes on the grid.

In the past two editions of Autosport Historics, Kevin Turner has visited the workshops of Simon Hadfield and Martin Stretton. They count for two of the three model historic racers and preparers. Now, we've completed the hat-trick. On p12, classic-Jaguar ace Gary Pearson explains how he's engineered himself to an unmatched 15 wins at Goodwood since the Motor Circuit reopened.

And from one Turner to another, as Kevin joined the pitwall for last year's Kinrara Trophy race to see how Aston Martin works driver Darren fared when he joined Hadfield behind the wheel of Wolfgang Friedrichs's DB4 GT '1 GRE' (p22).



MATT KEW

Historics editor

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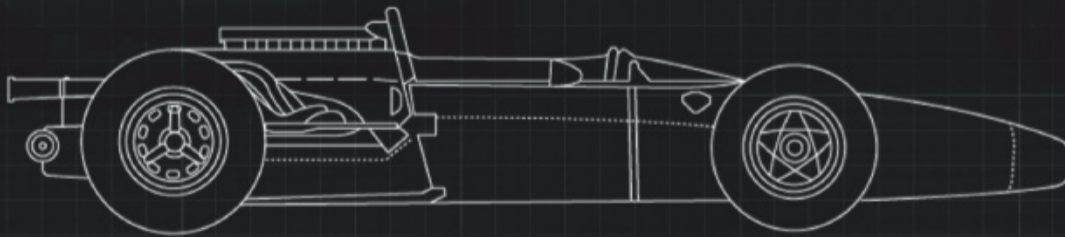
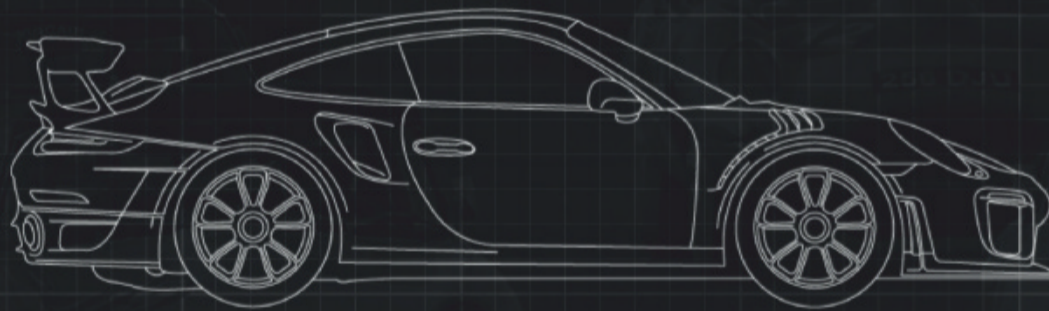
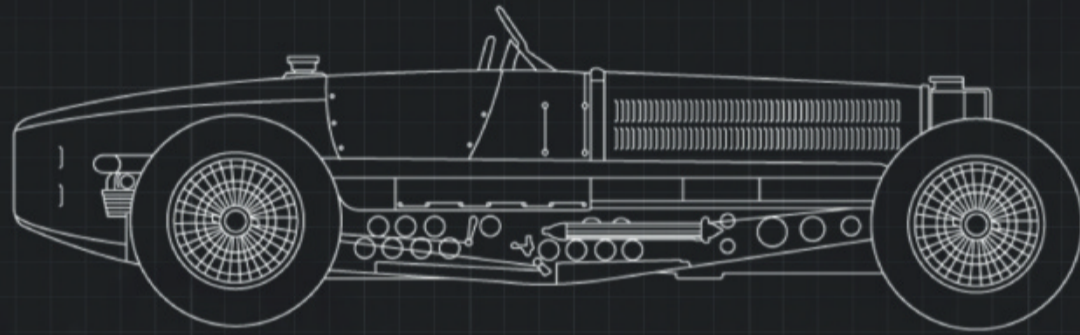
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EQUIPE

CLASSIC RACING



Why the jump can be so tough

High-profile cameos at top events are increasingly common. ELMS champion and historic ace Sam Hancock explains why they shouldn't be taken for granted

I've ended up so immersed in the historic racing scene that I now earn pretty much 100% of my living in this world. It goes back to 2003 when I was in the middle of having a couple of disastrous and forgettable appearances in Formula 3000. My dad has always loved classic cars and he had a little bit of a foothold. He had a share in the ownership of a Lotus 11, which was prepared by the brilliant Twyman brothers.

They very kindly gave me a seat in the car at the Goodwood Revival in 2003. It was one of the very first times I'd ever driven a historic car. I remember having a serious wake-up call in practice coming down the back straight towards Woodcote. I hit the brakes hard for the first time and just spun 360 degrees on the spot at speed. Fortunately, I was able to carry on.

My foot was accustomed to the brake pressure that I applied in an F3000 car, which I'd literally been testing the day before. I simply hit the brake pedal way too hard, put all the weight on the nose and it just went around like a spinning top.

There was a very severe mental adjustment required for getting out of a modern car with slicks, wings and power into a lightweight historic car with tiny contact patches. You need to be quite delicate with the controls. Those transitions from one car into another is something that I now consider a part of my job.

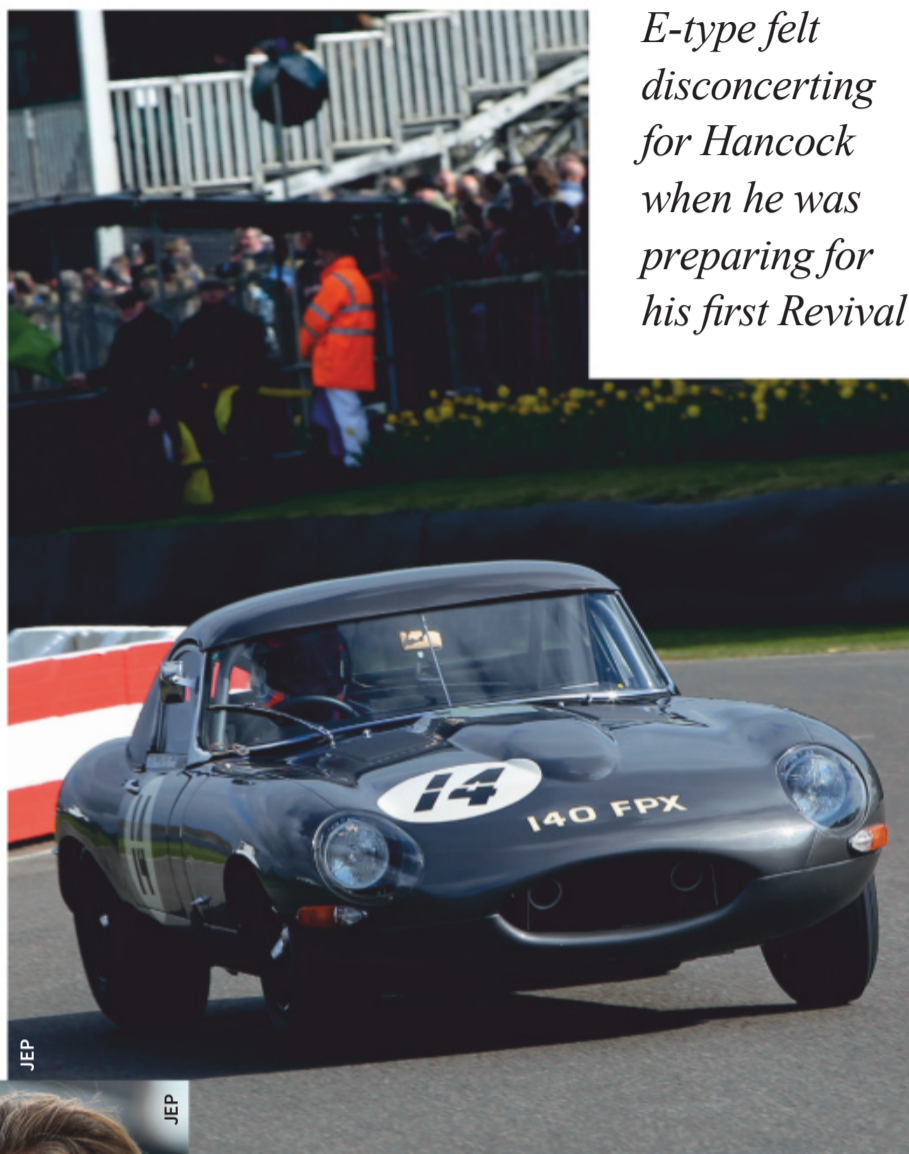
At the Revival or Le Mans Classic or any event, you can be in two or three wildly different cars that herald from different eras and each has contrasting characteristics. These days, it's not a problem as I feel I have developed a sense of knowing what to expect. I consciously try to anticipate before I start the engine and drive onto the circuit.

I would say this is the reason why some professional drivers can find it quite difficult jumping into an old car. Not always, but sometimes. If all you know are modern single-seaters and prototypes, a historic car can genuinely feel like it's got a puncture or somebody hasn't tightened up the wheelnuts properly.

I certainly struggled with that in the beginning. The first time I ever raced a Jaguar E-type was at the Revival with Gregor Fisker in 2004, the year I won the European Le Mans Series title for Courage. Gregor kindly invited me to be his co-driver. Before practice, the guys running the car said, 'Take the car up the road and along the country lanes and just dial yourself into it. It's got numberplates, go for it.'

I literally did about a mile or two up the road from the circuit and I nearly quit on the spot. I just felt like the car was desperate to throw me into a tree. I had no idea what to do with it.

But then you push through that and within five or 10 laps



E-type felt disconcerting for Hancock when he was preparing for his first Revival



of practice it all starts to make sense. Your backside adjusts to the comparatively massive amount of movement in the car – not just the drifting in the corners, but actually even when you upshift on the straight it can feel like the whole car has a wobble.

Now, I barely even notice it and most historic racers wouldn't – it's just what you know as normal. But if you're used to modern stuff, that's a massive wake-up call and quite a hard thing to wrap your head around.

It's why these days when I see guys like Andre Lotterer arrive at the Revival and just smash it like they've been doing it all their lives, I don't know if people really appreciate just how much it marks those drivers out as being absolute superstars. I can tell you from first-hand experience, making that transition into something big, heavy, wobbly and powerful with no brakes like an AC Cobra or an E-type as a one-off is bloody difficult.

When some of these stars show up and just spank it – it's genuinely amazing. People, I think, in the grandstands or watching on TV just assume that they're the world's top drivers and that's what we expect of them.

But let me tell you, there are plenty of modern racing pros who give it a go and they really struggle and they never come back. They just don't click with it.

Seeing that skill is one of the reasons why I love this world. I love the people, the cars, the races. I find it really rewarding that I am going racing, often in amazing cars, but just for fun. When I started it was the first time I had ever experienced racing without trying to be professional and serious and make a career progression out of it.

Then it turned into this great opportunity. It isn't always easy, particularly in the wake of coronavirus, with all your days being cancelled, but it's just been a fantastic evolution from eight years ago when I didn't know how I was going to make a living or keep my career going. I couldn't be happier. ■

The indie rockers' **RENAISSANCE**

Camaros, Capris and SD1s have hogged the stage as Group 1 touring cars returned to popularity. But what are the alternative ways to race?

BY PAUL LAWRENCE





A

fter many years of neglect as a racing category, the Group 1 touring car era is now a booming element of historic competition.

These are the cars of the 1970s and early 1980s, an era when the Chevrolet Camaro, Ford Capri and Rover SD1 set the pace in the British Saloon Car Championship. It was in 1974 that the BSCC dropped the increasingly expensive Group 2 formula for a switch to more production-based Group 1 regulations, adopting a set of rules that would be evolved over the following eight seasons.

By 1976, the American V8s were outlawed by capping the top-class engine size at 3000cc. The multi-class format usually delivered champions from the smaller-engined classes where competition was not always as fierce. No over-two-litre car won the overall crown in the Group 1 era, even though Capris and Rovers fought tooth and nail at the front of the races to the delight of the fans.

Capris and Rovers fought tooth and nail at the front to the delight of the fans

In 1984, the BSCC moved to Group A rules that would lead to the reign of the E30 BMW M3 and Ford Sierra RS500. From then on, the Group 1 cars were largely tucked away under dust sheets. By the mid-1980s, they were out of date, uncompetitive and undesirable. For the better part of three decades these cars remained overlooked until the creation of the early season Members' Meeting at Goodwood in 2014 put the Group 1 generation firmly back into the spotlight.

Such has been the take up for the cars of the 1970s that close to 60 were due at Goodwood for the postponed 78th Members' Meeting, and it was an entry rich in diversity and colour.

Alongside the squadrons of Capris and Rover were Ford Mustangs, Alfa Romeos, BMWs, Minis, Triumph Dolomite Sprints and Vauxhalls. Memory-jerking liveries from Triplex, Hermetite, Datapost, Autocar, Bastos and Belga add to the fabulous spectacle. It is the diversity that really makes the Group 1 field stand out and drivers are clearly once more having a ball in all sorts of cars. ►

**NICK PADMORE
1977 BMW 530i**

As one of the most accomplished and versatile drivers in historic racing, Nick Padmore can extract the maximum from any race car. He's raced a BMW 530i regularly and, though the car is not a competitive package, he reckons it's hugely entertaining.

"It's quite a heavy car but it is so much fun. It moves around and it hops, and when it does a big hop it almost takes your breath away. It's brilliant! We worked out that it's about 100kg overweight but that doesn't matter because it's cool and it's different."

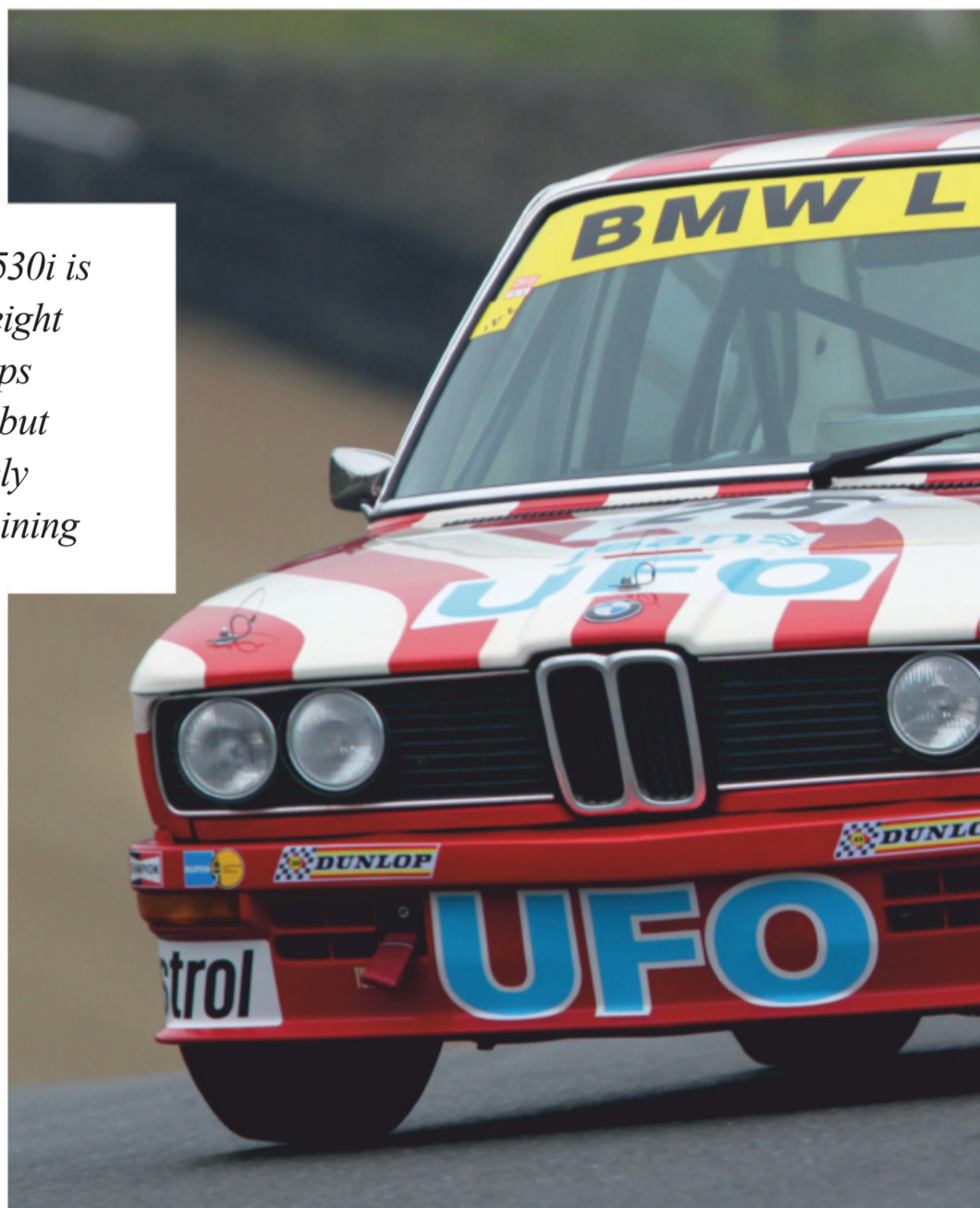
Padmore is a guest racer in the UFO Jeans-liveried 530i. "It's owned by the Sadler family and they just use it at Goodwood and for some trackdays," he adds. "It's not a period race car but has been converted from a road car at some point. It has a blue leather interior and mahogany inserts in the doors!"

"It was always a dream of theirs to have a car racing at Goodwood and the BMW came up for sale. I think if he had a bit more time, Jay Sadler would race the 530i, but at the moment he's happy for me to drive it, which is a right result for me!"

Padmore reckons the package has the potential to run at the front, but it would take a lot of work to make it a pacesetter. "If we had a load more power and got rid of the weight, I think we could be there with the Capris and the Rovers," he adds. "But it's a question of how far you want to go with it, and the family just wants to enjoy the weekend – the whole family turns up to make it a really nice event."

"I'm very lucky to be able to drive it and it just does the Members' Meeting. The Sadler family is based in Chichester, so Goodwood is really local. I share it with Darren Turner and we're pretty even. He just turns up and drives it and we have some fun. I love the diversity on the grid and the different colour schemes."

BMW 530i is overweight and hops about, but is hugely entertaining



**PHIL PERRYMAN
1981 VOLVO 242**

The Bastos-liveried Volvo 242 of Phil Perryman is unusual in that it was built and raced in France in period. At the time, French Group 1 regulations were considered slightly more liberal than the UK rules and therein lies the key issue with the car.

"We've been refused HTP papers by the FIA," says Perryman. "It did run at Goodwood the first year we got it running, but not very successfully. However, we've now been told that they don't want to let in cars that raced in France in period."

"In the view of the FIA, the French cars were a bit more developed than those that ran in the UK to our Group 1 regulations. It ran in the French championship in 1982, which was for cars known as Group 1 Plus. They were allowed to run front and rear spoilers and things like that."

Perryman, who tends a number of race cars, took the Volvo on as a project. "It was in a terrible state as it had not been run for years," he says. "We took it back to a bare shell for a repaint and rebuild and we updated the roll cage. It's been a big challenge to get the thing working properly. We've done lots of race cars, but this one caused me untold trouble."

"It's not too hard to drive but initially it was a handful. Even the handling has been a challenge and it had some funny old suspension angles and set-up on it, which we've now got to the bottom of. I think it could be very competitive against the Rovers and the Capris if it was running right."

Power delivery is a challenge. Perryman adds: "With the turbo, the power all comes in with a big rush and it wants to spin the wheels. We reckon it has over 300bhp and that's enough, especially given the way the power is delivered."

Volvo's waywardness has been reined in, but power delivery is a challenge



LAWRENCE



JEP

FILLING THE VOID

For a long time, touring car racing in the historic arena came to a juddering halt after 1966. Masters Historic Touring Cars and Carol Spagg's Under 2-Litre Touring Cars (U2TC) were the big shows in town, while the Historic Sports Car Club's Historic Touring Car Championship has been set at 1966 for three decades.

Even the forerunner to all period touring car categories, the Classic Saloon Car Club's original Pre-1957 category – established back in 1975 – migrated to a 1966 cut-off as the club morphed into the Classic Touring Car Racing Club. Indeed, for many years the CTCRC offered the only place to run 1970s cars, but it was always relatively low key and enjoyed mixed support.

That all changed in 2014 when someone at Goodwood had the smart idea of running a race for Group 1 cars at the first Members' Meeting of the modern era. Suddenly, cars came out of hibernation and 28 entries gathered in Sussex in March, with many of them resurrected after a long dormant period. The race was fittingly named in memory of the great Gerry Marshall and the inaugural winners were Chris Ward and Andrew Smith in the Patrick Motors Group Rover SD1.

By now, Motor Racing Legends had established its Historic Touring Car Challenge for the Group A touring cars of the 1980s and added a sub-set for the earlier cars under the Tony Dron Trophy tag. Racer and journalist Dron was a star of the Group 1 era and the HTCC is the place for the Group 1 cars once the Goodwood season-opener is done.

CHRIS SNOWDON 1981 ALFA ROMEO GTV6

The Alfa Romeo GTV6 of seasoned racer and preparer Chris Snowdon gave him his 15 minutes of fame back in 2014.

"There was a big photo in the front of Autosport from the first Members' Meeting in 2014, when I demolished a load of polystyrene at the chicane and the Alfa went up on two wheels. It was my claim to fame. That weekend was the first grand prix and the first British Touring Car meeting of the season and there's some club racer on page six!"

As a local to Goodwood, Snowdon was keen to get an entry for the first Members' Meeting. He says: "When they announced the first Group 1 race, I thought no one was going to do an Alfa, and if I did one in this period Alpilatte livery, I might get an entry – and I did. It was basically that simple, as I had a car in the workshop

as a rolling shell, which I built up to period specification.

"We've just put a fresh gearbox in it and freshened the engine up. It's the 2.5-litre V6. Unfortunately, it can't be the lovely three-litre unit as that didn't run in period. I saw pictures of Lella Lombardi at the Silverstone Tourist Trophy in this green and white Alfa and thought it would be a nice colour scheme to do."

Since that initial race, the GTV6 has been steadily developed. "Initially it was pretty standard in terms of brakes and stuff and now we've done it to FIA specification, so it's state-of-the-art for the period. It's now owned by Paul Clayson but I still look after it. I used it for a couple of years and then decided to sell it.

"It's beautiful to drive now we've spent some time on it. For the first Goodwood it was a bit of rush using stuff I'd got in the workshop. We've tamed the exhaust note down ever so slightly and it sounds so much nicer." ▶



LAWRENCE

Alfa's two-wheeled antics (right) featured in 2014 Members' Meeting issue



J BLOXHAM

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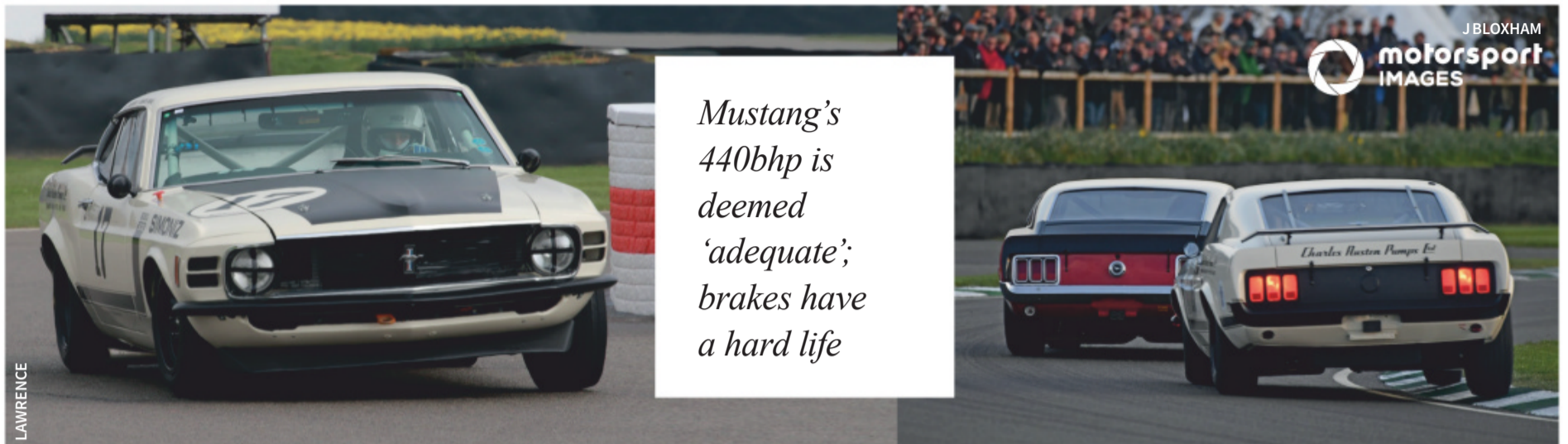


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BILL SHEPHERD
1969 FORD MUSTANG BOSS 302

At the fore of the V8 muscle pack is the sensational BOSS Mustang, which actually dates from the very end of the 1960s. Despite being one of the oldest cars on the grid, it is clearly a match for the best Capris and Rovers.

Bill Shepherd is renowned for racing American V8s. “We brought it in from the States where it was a race car back in the 1970s,” he says. “We prepared it to Goodwood regulations. Unfortunately, I’ve got a fetish for American Fords and I’ve got several others, but this one seemed the appropriate vehicle for the job.

“It fitted in for the Gerry Marshall race and the BOSS cars are absolutely fantastic. I remember seeing them race in period so it wasn’t hard to convince me to get one. It runs a 302 cubic inch engine, which is five litres and about 440bhp. It’s adequate!

Despite the power, Shepherd reckons it makes a good package.

“It’s a very nice car to drive and I like it a lot. It’s had a hard life but it’s been well looked after and we didn’t have to do a hell of a lot to it. We stiffened it up quite a lot as the guy who had it before ran it very soft. It feels good and has plenty of horsepower. I don’t think anyone could not like it.

“It handles pretty well and is fairly neutral, but with the horsepower you’ve got the chance to make a complete mess of it. The Mustang is tough on its brakes. Romain Dumas was in it with me at Goodwood last year and he got the brakes glowing bright red. I’ve never seen anything quite so hot. He likes to stick it in on its nose and he worked the brakes very hard. I’m kinder on the brakes than he is.

“We’ll use it a bit more now and we can run with Motor Racing Legends. It’s a question of priorities as there are lots of opportunities to do things with cars. We’ll probably do the Silverstone Classic as we were going to go last year but lost an engine, so it all went horribly wrong. It needs the faster circuits.”

JIM MORRIS
1979 VW GOLF GTI Mk1

The Mk1 Volkswagen Golf GTI that Jim Morris races to such good effect is a family heirloom – 40 years ago his father John was a BSCC frontrunner in the same car.

“There is a huge legacy with the Golf, with it being my dad’s car originally back in 1981 and 1982,” says Jim. “Prior to that it was the Akai car of Richard Lloyd and after dad it was Alan Minshaw’s car.

Morris later bought it back after a chance opportunity. “It disappeared off to Spain and two brothers ran it up to 1991 and then parked it under a tarpaulin. A friend of mine, Mike Horsburgh, who is a Volkswagen nut, told me about an advert for a car in Spain. During the whole negotiation to buy the car, I managed to keep from the owner the fact that it was my dad’s car. Once the car was on the trailer and I went for lunch with him, I showed him the photographs.

“I knew it was his car as there were one or two telltale things that even I remembered as a kid, including the roll cage top mounts that John Maguire had made. Dad wouldn’t believe it until he saw the car.

“I restored it with Graham Johnson at Lanan and they did a beautiful job. Then the Members’ Meeting came about and we ran it for the first one with the engine that came back from



Nimble Golf punched above its weight in period and continues to do so now

Spain. I’d bought it because it was my dad’s car, but now we had somewhere to race it. The Golf had been a big part of my childhood and so I wanted to get it back.”

Just as four decades ago, the nimble Golf punches well above its weight: “Tom Shepherd has shared it with me as he was involved and raced it with dad in the day. We’ve worked really hard to get it up towards the front of the field, and it did do some giant killing in the day. Nothing really fundamental has changed on the car: the engine machining is probably a bit better and the dampers are probably a bit better, but it’s the same car it was in 1981.” ■



Historic racing's
JAGUAR KING

An ace preparer, Gary Pearson is also one of the world's leading drivers of some of the greatest sports-racers – and leads the way at Goodwood

BY KEVIN TURNER

N

ot many people make their car racing debut in a Jaguar D-type, but it seems entirely appropriate for Gary Pearson. He has been one of historic racing's leading exponents for more than a quarter of a century, driving a wide variety of cars, yet is most readily associated with the machines from Coventry.

His father, John Pearson, knew long-time Jaguar Cars boss Lofty England and formed Pearsons Engineering, which is still known for its work restoring and preparing Big Cats.

"It was unavoidable really," says Gary of his life in the sport. "My dad was mechanicking in the early 1960s so I was born into it. He was looking after Peter Sutcliffe's Jaguar E-type and then his Ford GT40s, and Tom Fletcher's Lotus Cortina. The old man also got quite matey with the Team Lotus guys, particularly Bob Dance."

That meant Pearson got to meet some of the sport's heroes when he was still a kid, which made his path even more likely. "There was a pub in Whittlebury, next to Silverstone," adds the 60-year-old. "We used to live there and the old man used to run the cars from the workshops, and the Team Lotus guys used to do bed and breakfast for the British Grand Prix or anything like that. One year, when I was about five or six, there was a fuss and I was brought downstairs, and Jimmy Clark was in the bar."

John Pearson was in growing demand and, after working for others including Aston Martin, he focused on the family business, which Gary joined. There was also some spanning for David Piper, the privateer racer extraordinaire who was one of the prime movers of early historic racing. 'Pipes' was running Ferraris among assorted exotica in the International Supersports races he promoted with Mike Knight of Winfield Racing Drivers' School fame.

Pearson Jr started competing in motocross before turning to car racing. "I was quite a late starter, mainly because I couldn't afford to race," he says. "I'd done the odd bit of testing and running stuff in. I always wanted to road-race bikes but wasn't allowed to. ▶



J BLOXHAM

Pearson topped the D-type-only Lavant Cup at the 2014 Goodwood Revival

GARY'S GOODWOOD WINS Stats compiled by Marcus Pye

1998	
Freddie March Memorial Trophy	Jaguar C-type
1999	
Freddie March Memorial Trophy	Jaguar C-type
Sussex Trophy	Lister-Jaguar 'Knobbly'
2001	
Freddie March Memorial Trophy	Cooper-Jaguar T33
2005	
Sussex Trophy	Lister-Jaguar 'Knobbly'
2006	
Sussex Trophy	Lister-Jaguar 'Knobbly'
Richmond & Gordon Trophies	BRM Type 25
2010	
Richmond & Gordon Trophies	BRM Type 25
2011	
Richmond & Gordon Trophies	BRM Type 25
2012	
Whitsun Trophy	Lola-Chevrolet T70 Spyder
2013	
Richmond & Gordon Trophies	BRM Type 25
2014	
Brabham Trophy (at Members' Meeting)	BRM Type 25
Lavant Cup	Jaguar D-type
2019	
Kinrara Trophy	Ferrari 250 GTO
Freddie March Memorial Trophy	Jaguar D-type

Pearson has not won the RAC Tourist Trophy Celebration but has finished: 1x second, 1x third, 2x fourths, 2x fifths and 1x sixth

"My first race was in a Jaguar D-type at Oulton Park. I went up there with my mate Dave Morris. The old man had entered for the race, but a friend of his had to go to a different event."

So suddenly the 24-year-old Pearson found himself heading to a Vintage Sports-Car Club event at Oulton, one of Britain's more challenging circuits, to make his debut in a 1950s sports-racer with more than 250bhp. "I qualified quite well and was surprised, but I was scared to death at the start!" he admits. "I drove cautiously and had a nice run with John Beasley's HWM-Jaguar.

"John had a problem with the car at the end of the race and had driven it to the circuit. So we decided to put John's car on the trailer behind our truck and drive the D-type across to John's house... That started a

Like many, Pearson learned his craft in FF1600, in his case a Hawke



friendship with John that really got me going in historic racing."

Almost immediately, Pearson decided to commit to more competition and bought a Formula Ford Hawke DL11. "A wreck – no engine, gearbox; a derelict old thing," he remembers. "I couldn't afford to do anything else with it, but once I'd made the commitment the old man and John Harper helped me out."

Pearson spent several seasons in the Pre-1974 Formula Ford series honing his skills – "it was really good fun and competitive, and we used to get half-decent prize money" – during which time he started winning, and sometimes raced his father's Lister-Jaguar.

Then there was a Formula Junior Lola Mk5, which Beasley hadn't got on with. Pearson had a go, loved it and was told to "treat it as his own", so more slipstreaming, wheel-to-wheel action followed. "That got me into mainstream historic racing on a regular basis," he says. Pearson, who was still restoring and preparing Jaguars, also renovated a Lotus 22 – previously used for the filming of John Frankenheimer's *Grand Prix* – which he sold.

A step up in performance came when Pearson entered the Historic F2 fray with a Tecno, again owned by Beasley but which he eventually bought. "It was just a bit of fun while we were restoring and preparing people's cars," he says. "The Tecno wasn't a winning car – well, I couldn't win with it! It was a heavy car compared to the Brabhams, but I loved it."

The 1990s was a key period. Pearson increasingly took over the business, which also moved premises, and he found himself racing more of his customers' cars in two-driver competitions, which were more of a novelty back then. Expanding outside of Jaguars he raced a Maserati 250F, and shared a Lister with 1970 Le Mans 24 Hours winner Richard Attwood: "It was a good lesson in driving as quickly as you could without wearing the car out – the last thing I wanted to do was hand him a knackered car!

"I've always had my own stuff too and been lucky that the old man had cars, so there have always been family cars to drive."

That experience has served Pearson well. He rarely makes



F2 Tecno gave Pearson a step up in pace, but success was hard to come by

mistakes and his successes in longer races, such as the Royal Automobile Club Woodcote Trophy 1950s sportscar events (sometimes with brother John), show he looks after the machinery too.

He's also become one of the most trusted and well-respected figures in historic racing, both on and off the track. "Gary's not a pushover – he's tough, but always fair," says fellow ace and preparer Martin Stretton, a friend for three decades. "He's someone I'm very happy to race wheel to wheel with and I look forward to the next time I get to race against him. If Gary has a good car he uses it well.

"Gary always seems to be in a good mood! He would lend you anything and he's a real asset to historic racing."

Pearson's experience continued to broaden in the 2000s, including a successful spell in Group C/GTP (see right), but his speciality has remained the cars of the 1950s and 1960s. "That's partly because that's the era I love and is what I was brought up with, and partly because they were the cars that we had around," explains Pearson.

That also means he is right in the zone for events at Goodwood, which usually cater for cars campaigned before 1966. Winning at the Revival, which began in 1998, is one of the big targets of most historic racers and Pearson is king. He has 14 wins, well clear of anyone else, plus another at the Members' Meeting in 2014. He's won at dozens of venues, including nearly 30 victories at the Silverstone Classic, but heading the Goodwood list stands out.

His first victory at the West Sussex circuit came at the inaugural Revival, where he drove the 1953 Le Mans-winning Jaguar C-type and took the Freddie March Memorial Trophy, and he scored two successes at last September's event (see above left). There have also been five Goodwood wins in the only remaining genuine BRM P25, the ex-Jo Bonnier 1959 Dutch GP winner. ►

Working for the enemy

For someone so associated with Jaguar, it seems strange that Gary Pearson's main contemporary racing experience came while working against the marque in the Group C days of the world sportscar championship.

Pearson worked for top Porsche 962 privateer team Richard Lloyd Racing at races, and sometimes in the workshop, until 1988. "I learned quite a lot then," he says. "It was funny – being a Jag man, I was the enemy."

The team's finest hour probably came with victory at the Norisring in June 1987, Jonathan Palmer sharing with Mauro Baldi (below). That was one of only two occasions during the championship campaign that the Tom Walkinshaw Racing Jaguar XJR-8s were beaten, and came despite having to build a new car following a fire at Le Mans just two weeks before.

"Richard had a knack of pulling together a really good group of people," reckons Pearson. "He got Nigel Stroud to redesign the front end, and they did the honeycomb monocoque. It was a really good car, better than the factory 962s, and we started getting development bits from the factory."

"It was a good car, better than the factory 962s, and we started getting developments"

All the experimental bits meant lots of engine changes. That was just as well at the Nurburgring in August 1987. "When we fired it up for morning warm-up there was water coming out of the engine," recalls Pearson. "We called the Porsche guys over and they said change the engine. We had to do it in 45 minutes and we did, just. Normally it was about three hours."

Pearson has subsequently tested Group C Porsches, but never raced them. He was, however, a regular in historic Group C/GTP races from the moment the movement began in 1999, usually with the turbocharged Jaguar XJR-11. "The only way you can run those reliably is you can't run a lot of boost," he says. "There was a reason they called it the 'external combustion engine'..."

"I loved the first 10 years of [historic] Group C. It's a massive highlight. Having worked in it and watched the cars, you never imagined that one day you'd get the chance to drive them."

And to underline that Pearson really is still a Jaguar man, his "pride and joy" is his XJR-12. It's the chassis that Martin Brundle used to win the 1988 world sportscar championship, then in XJR-9 form, and finished second at Le Mans in 1991.





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CARS STILL ON THE BUCKETLIST

“The biggest box I’ve ticked was Carlos Monteverde’s Porsche 917 [above],” reckons Gary Pearson of his favourite racing experience. “That’s the icon car of my childhood.

“After we bought it from David Piper we took it to Barcelona for the Masters meeting because there was some testing there. It was nice, but it was a bit soft, the gear change wasn’t that nice and it wasn’t very comfortable to sit in. With a bit of sorting, including taking the seat from the 1970 Le Mans winner, it was magic. Then it was everything you imagined it should be.”

So which unticked box is the one he’d most like to address? “I love the Shadow DN5 [below], particularly a Tom Pryce car,” says Pearson with little hesitation. “I’d like to do something in a 1970s Formula 1 car.

“I have driven a couple Formula 5000s. John Beasley had a Lola T300 and out of the blue one day asked me to drive it at Silverstone. The quickest thing I’d driven up to then was a Formula Junior so that was an experience, but I’ve never done the 1970s F1 thing.”



Five of his Goodwood victories have come in the Dutch GP-winning BRM

“I love the circuit and I’ve been lucky enough to have had some competitive cars there,” says Pearson. “The BRM is great there; it’s a good-handling car.”

One race that has eluded him, however, is the blue-riband RAC Tourist Trophy Celebration. He’s invariably in the mix but the cards have never quite fallen for Pearson in the two-driver contest.

And yet one of his best memories is from the TT. In 2003 he finished second sharing Carlos Monteverde’s Jaguar E-type with Juan Manuel Fangio II. “He got boxed in and pipped by Mark Hales near the end, but he was such a quiet, pleasant, understated bloke,” recalls Pearson. “That’s the closest I’ve come to winning the TT. It’s such a competitive race now.”

It’s easy to get the impression that, despite his success, Pearson isn’t too worried about racking up the wins. He just loves driving the cars on some of the world’s best circuits.

More serious is running Pearsons Engineering, which now employs 15 people. As historic racing has expanded and become professional, the clientele has changed and Pearson has to cater for some very wealthy customers who are quite different from those his father used to prepare cars for.

“The type of owners are constantly changing,” he says. “The old man used to buy and sell these cars when they were worth nothing, out of pure enthusiasm. His knowledge is unbelievable and he’s found some important cars. He had the contacts. Now it’s successful businessmen rather than his enthusiastic mates.

“It is a tough business. You’ve got to want to go racing every weekend, and every weekend is an immovable deadline. The calendar is relentless. At a big event, like the Silverstone Classic, we can have 17 cars.”

Don’t read that as a complaint. He’s merely stating the facts. Pearson is very aware of the privileged position in which he finds himself, and smiles a lot when he talks about many of the cars he has driven: “I’m the luckiest bloke I know.” ■

SOUTH AFRICA

Where historics are flourishing

Kyalami and Jody Scheckter stand proud as South Africa's most prominent motorsport assets but, thanks to a healthy historic scene and some challenging circuits, that barely scratches the surface

BY MARCUS PYE

PHOTOGRAPHY MAWP+SPORT

The HGPA competitors put on a trio of spectacular races at the Killarney track



Historic racing is alive and well in South Africa – or at least it was before the coronavirus pandemic began to radiate around the globe – as I discovered on my second sporting trip to the continent. Mirroring the rest of the world’s four-wheeled activity, the scene has grown since I visited Kyalami with the FIA Thoroughbred Grand Prix circus in the late 1990s.

After a six-year hiatus, Peter du Toit opened the remodelled Zwartkops Raceway in 2001, hewn into the hills overlooking Pretoria. The popular annual Passion for Speed events there and at Cape Town’s venerable Killarney circuit have brought welcome international focus to the country, which spawned 1979 Formula 1 world champion Jody Scheckter and Desire Wilson – the only woman to have won a world sportscar championship round and an F1 race.

Originated in 1961 on a longer, faster layout, Zwartkops is a contemporary multi-faceted venue, and attracts strong support from competitors and spectators. Its compact campus packs in a Brands Hatch-inspired 1.491-mile eight-turn track boasting impressive elevation change, a kart track licensed for international events, and a skid pan. The venue is packed with interesting cars from the du Toit family’s collection, which, like film-set extras, lend atmosphere beyond the racing. All runners, they also keep the local workforce employed.

British V8-engined cars animated onlookers the most as they watched from their ‘bakkies’ (pick-ups) or portable stands – as I remember at Silverstone in the 1960s – on the amphitheatre section’s grassy banks. American saloons of the pre-1966 era – Ford Fairlanes, Galaxies and Mustangs, Chevrolet Novas and Plymouth Barracudas – were certainly compelling, as were the Chevy Can-Am (Firenza V8s) and raucous rotary-engine Mazda RX-2s, which mixed it with European kit of the 1970s.

Sportscars also have a pull. While most of the 1960s and 1970s kit – AC Cobras, Daytona Coupes, Ford GT40s, Lola T70s and Porsche 917s – are openly replicas (unlike the increasing number in Europe that were covert for years), some fine earlier cars still

compete. The most famous of these is the fabulous Elva-Porsche raced in the early 1960s by Dr Davie Gous (say ‘Darvi House’) now cherished by Clive Winterstein, whose nephew Shannon is a proud member of the

Ford Galaxies were among the fleet of 1960s V8 Americana



enthusiastic Historic Single Seater Association South Africa Formula Ford brigade. Also evoking memories of the past was Colin Ellison’s Chevron ‘B19’, dressed as Dave Charlton and John Hine’s 1971 Welkom 3 Hours winner, which I recall Ron Hand hillclimbing in Britain, albeit not with an inexpensive detuned Honda S2000 engine making towards 300bhp – the same power as a Cosworth BDG.

In a challenging political and economic climate, an inclusive policy prevails over purity because it has to. The opportunity to see a variety of cars, which would otherwise be dormant, and those that represent a golden era at a fraction of the purchase price and running/repair costs, is widely appreciated.

For those basking in the past, the Historic Grand Prix Cars Association members’ fields embraced several machines that populated the South African drivers’ championships of the 1500cc F1 era, including Alfa Romeo-engined Cooper, LDS and Lotus chassis raced in period by Trevor Blokdyk, Ernest Pieterse, Doug Serrurier and Syd van der Vyver. They were reunited off track with the newly restored Alfa Special (above), in which constructor Peter de Klerk finished a remarkable third behind the works Ferraris of John Surtees and Lorenzo Bandini in the 1963 Rand Grand Prix at Kyalami.

The HGPCA brigade came into its own at Killarney, the Western Province’s outpost on the fringes of Cape Town. Sea level restored their engines – asthmatic at Zwartkops’s 6000-foot elevation – to full power.

Some superb races reminded older spectators of the days when Team Lotus’s Jim Clark and Trevor Taylor were to the fore in Springbok events. Classic Team Lotus driver Andrew Beaumont’s hard-fought victory in the finale aboard his 2.5-litre Climax-powered UDT/Laystall 18 thwarted fellow Briton Will Nuthall’s hopes of a clean sweep of SA wins in Giorgio Marchi’s Cooper T53. A relatively small number of national competitors made the 870-mile pilgrimage to the Cape this year – a sign of the times, it was said – but a posse of local competitors who, for similar reasons, had ruled out the trip to Zwartkops joined the fray as sunshine continued to make racing a pleasurable experience for the privileged.

Cars at Killarney ranged from Roger Lewis’s monoposto ▶



MG Special – which bolstered the HSSA set – to a current Ginetta LMP, with action for much in between. A decent spectator turnout, despite a shortfall of promotion (lack of budget-enforced, I suspect) enjoyed the sport, particularly the HGPCA grid walkabout.

Migrating down south

To maximise the breadth of my South African motorsport experience, expat Briton and HSSA lynchpin Ian Hebblethwaite masterminded a superb itinerary of cultural and social events for a road trip south from Zwartkops to Killarney. More a ‘Grand Tour’ in the old European tradition, we started out close to home in Kyalami, with visits to two fabled engineering emporia at the opposite ends of the spectrum.

Andrew Thompson is regarded as one of the country’s top race engineers and fabricators, skills handed down to his son Stuart. Having worked with David Lazenby at Hawke on a sojourn to the UK in the early 1970s, Andrew returned to race a Brabham in Fford specification. Having prepared Team Gunston’s F1 cars – and raced one of its Chevron B25s – later in the decade, he went on to run the Rembrandt tobacco group Marches for SA Fford champion Bobby Scott and later Ian Scheckter (under the Lexington brand) before demand for his superb work grew in the historic racing world. Many years later, restoring an F1 Brabham-Repco BT24 with Sam Tingle showcased his abilities at the 2006 Goodwood Festival of Speed.

Moving upscale to current motorsport, we visited former Rootes Group apprentice Glyn Hall’s state-of-the-art factory, global hub of Toyota Gazoo Racing’s Dakar Rally programme. The extraordinary engineering capability of the company, which makes many of the parts for the leviathans in which Nasser Al-Attiyah, Giniel de Villiers and double F1 champion and Le Mans 24 Hours winner Fernando Alonso compete on the most gruelling terrain, was awesome to behold. That the TGR machines are numerically dominant in the marketplace was evidenced by chassis #69 in-build in its Red Bull livery.

An internal flight over land-locked Lesotho took us next to East London, birthplace of the Scheckter brothers and home to Mercedes-Benz’s SA operation. The coastal town on the Indian Ocean first played host to grands prix in the 1930s on the long Prince George road course, where the mighty German Silver Arrows (Auto Union and Merc) competed in 1937. The 2.43-mile post-war circuit, abutting the Indian Ocean, was opened in 1959 and hosted F1 World Championship races in 1962, 1963 and 1965. Jim Clark was its king, but famously a breakdown while leading cost him the title in the first of those years as BRM rival Graham Hill swept past the stricken Lotus to glory.

Charmingly primitive with its abrasive surface, East London remains an incredible place to race on the national calendar with its daunting Potter’s Pass Curve right-hander – flat-out for the very brave, or those with little imagination and wearing blinkers – hooking competitors right off the long main straight towards the kink at Rifle Bend and the run towards the sea



The fast run up Simola route to a golf course has boosted the popularity of hillclimbing

at Cocobana Corner.

Potter’s Pass was hairy enough in an underpowered hire car, being careful to time the traverse to avoid the occasional jalopy coming the other way, but it must be fun in an Fford or Formula Junior. I can’t quite get my head around John Love lapping at 106mph in his DFV-

engined Lotus 49 in 1969, but the HGPCA guys should have a go while it’s still available!

The Scribante construction family’s Port Elizabeth circuit, smoothly resurfaced and replete with exciting sweepers, is

perhaps ideally set amid a massive trading estate. It’s open not only for two and four-wheeled racing, but also for ‘spinning’, a derivative of drifting that engages the local ‘hoons’ in whatever they bring.

It’s another venue with a long history; we were shown round by ‘Sparky’ Bright, whose family has long been involved with its operation and runs a prep-shop from the pits. It’s also home to the magnificent Woolavington Cup, presented by Lord Woolavington of Petworth (UK) for the SA Tourist Trophy motorcycle race in 1924.

With temperatures soaring to 41C, we headed next to the HQ of Hi-Tech Automotive, where the Superformance range of cars – represented in the UK by my old friend Nigel Hulme’s Le Mans





Franschhoek exhibits include Ian Scheckter's March 782 and brother Jody's Tyrrell 007

Coupes Ltd – from which the Cobra and GT40 hardware for the smash hit *Le Mans '66* movie were made.

Founder Jimmy Price gave us a tour of this massive 25,000-square-metre enterprise, throughout which the pride of the diverse workforce in every detail of their stunning creations was palpable as the urbane boss switched seamlessly from Afrikaans to English. Star turns were the limited edition GT40 #1075 models – toolroom copies of the 1969 Le Mans winner. Fifty of them are being made for the discerning with deep enough pockets.

Speed hillclimbing has become popular in South Africa through the Simola Hillclimb, centrepiece of a classic motoring festival promoted by racer Ian Shrosbree in the picturesque coastal town of Knysna since 2009. The high-speed ascent to the eponymous golf estate high above the ocean's inlet has grown in importance year on year.

Andre Bezuidenhout (Gould GR55), Franco Scribante (Chevron B19 and Nissan GT-R R35 Evo) and Reghard Roets (R35) are the current champions. Ron Hollis (Jaguar E-type) holds the Classic Car Friday crown. Alas, May's event has been postponed in response to COVID-19.

Our final major destination was the stunning Franschhoek Motor Museum, idyllically situated amid the Rupert family's vineyard in a mountainous horseshoe – an easy hour's drive from Cape Town. Franschhoek itself is a French-styled step back in time – take away modern cars and you could turn the clocks back a century or more – thus a favourite holiday retreat.

But no visit would be complete without half a day at the museum. Curator Wayne Harley showed us round the racing section, which featured a March 782 in six-time national champion Ian Scheckter's Lexington warpaint, Jody's Tyrrell 007, a Gunston Chevron B25 and Serrurier's last LDS. ■

THE MAGIC OF A MERLYN

Formula Ford was big in South Africa in the 1970s. Its Kent-engined pre-1982 cars still enjoy a strong following through the focus and camaraderie of the country's Historic Single Seater Association. It's here that the late Howard Robinson and Brian Tyler were prime movers, along with Sheffield-born Ian Hebblethwaite, who relocated to work in the mining industry in the 1980s. Dedicated to saving old FF1600s, Hebblethwaite is recognised as the country's historical authority and leading specialist archaeologist.

While the Scheckter brothers – Ian and the younger Jody – cut their racing teeth in the category driving Merlyns imported by father Max, Titan Mk4 pilot Richard Sterne (say 'Sterney') won the country's inaugural title in 1971 and then doubled up the year after. Sterne's chassis is still raced there by British-born Richard Baker, as is the yellow Merlyn Mk25 of Patrick Dunseith, in which Bobby Scott and Desire Wilson won the 1975 and 1976 crowns.

Lotuses are in vogue, too. Ron Liddiard's superb 51 and loaned-out 61, plus Alan Grant's 61 were out at Zwartkops alongside Mike Ward's Royale RP21. A trio of Maxperenco Products-built Dulons were also out, driven by Des Hillary, Paul Richardson (another expat Brit) and Shannon Winterstein.

'Ecurie Hebble' fielded two cars, albeit for guest drivers. Esteban Guerrieri's former Ultimate Motorsport Formula 3 crew chief Mat Nash turned spanners and raced the ex-George Angelopoulos Van Diemen RF81-476 and proved unbeatable. Having rekindled my race licence through Motor Racing Medics and Motorsport UK at Autosport International for a possible test run, I found myself breaking a 10-year sabbatical in the ex-Wally Parsons Merlyn Mk20, chassis 307, 12 numbers earlier than my ex-Rob Cooper sister car raced by Ben Mitchell in 2018.

I was surprised as to how quickly the adrenalin kicked in and the old feeling came back. Battling with Nash and Ward in Zwartkops's opener sharpened my appetite. At Killarney, where I was blown away by the majestic sight of Table Mountain on the exit of Turn 1 on my out-lap, I was straight into the groove. Slipstreaming Nash to the chequer, I even bagged fastest FF lap in race one. Merlyn 'magic' had cast its spell...





ALL PICS: HAWKINS

Taking on the K I N R A R A in an A S T O N M A R T I N

*What to do if you are outgunned at one of the big historic events?
Turn to a current professional factory driver of course...*

BY KEVIN TURNER

W

inning at many of the big historic meetings, such as the Silverstone Classic and Goodwood Revival, is now extremely tough, and the increasingly professional driver combinations mean that true pro-am line-ups can find it difficult to compete. Historic racing ace and preparer Simon Hadfield and gentleman car owner Wolfgang Friedrichs have managed to score some major wins together, but for last year's Goodwood Revival the Aston Martin team took things up a gear.

Friedrichs stepped down to allow Aston Martin World Endurance Championship factory driver Darren Turner to share his DB4 GT '1 GRE' with Hadfield in the Friday evening Kinrara Trophy for GT cars built up to 1963. The contest was introduced in 2016 and has been dominated by Ferraris and Jaguars.

Hadfield is used to being the obvious lead driver in his customers' cars, and Turner's historic outings have rarely come alongside another ace. It's a new dynamic for both.

Turner arrives on Thursday to have his kit scrutineered and to sign on. On the Friday morning he visits the teams of all four of the cars he is set to drive – the Aston, a Lotus-Oldsmobile in the Whitsun Trophy, the AC Cobra he's sharing with another historic ace, Oliver Bryant, in the RAC TT, and Nick Maton's MG Magnette – before coming back for his first session in the DB4.

Hadfield doesn't have time to give much advice, but does have a few pointers as to the strength of the Aston compared to the Ferrari, Jaguar and AC Cobra opposition: "You're not as quick as some of the Ferraris in a straight line and you can't carry the speed through the corners, but it has good brakes."

Turner heads out but isn't on track for very long. "The first thing to do was to get some laps under my belt," he says after being forced to climb out prematurely. "I'd just got free of traffic



Hadfield (left) and Turner made for a strong line-up in high-profile Revival enduro

and done one reasonable lap, then I got a puncture.”

Hadfield gets a cleaner run once a new tyre is fitted and qualifies the Aston third. But there’s no debrief, not yet anyway. By the time Hadfield gets out of the car, Turner has already had to head off to practice driver-changing in the AC Cobra with Bryant. Then he has to qualify for the St Mary’s Trophy, though suffers overheating in the MG. It’s a busy schedule and he hasn’t had the smoothest of starts.

By contrast, unlike at most meetings where Hadfield is running (and often driving) a wide variety of cars, he ‘only’ has one other machine to race at Goodwood – sharing Friedrichs’s Aston Martin Project 212 (a car Turner once tested for Autosport) in the RAC TT. He spends his time between runs looking at some of the other attractions and watching other practice sessions.

As ever, he relishes the chance to share the circuit with some of the sport’s best: “You’re always learning. During practice I saw Tom Kristensen take a slightly wider line at Fordwater [a high-speed right-hander] and it just unsettles the car a little less.”

Contact with Turner has been brief but Hadfield, who has tested with the three-time Le Mans class winner, is already impressed. The DB4 GT has no synchro so Turner finds the four-speed gearbox a little tricky but, other than that, he’s quickly on top of things.

“He’s smart,” says Hadfield. “He figured out what happened with the puncture and brought it back accordingly. Darren is so cool. He’s experienced, doesn’t break things and gets it. He’s lovely to work with. Darren understands what he is driving and what it represents.”

The car has race history stretching back to the 1960s and is an original DB4 GT, though it was not one of the original works cars in contemporary GT competition. After competing

in Aston Martin Owners Club events, the car was bought by Friedrichs. Aston Engineering then undid the developments to turn it into a historic racer about a decade ago. “We’ve changed it a lot,” says the Aston enthusiast. “I changed the colour too – there are so many green ones and I love the blue.”

The development of cars in historic racing is a constant source of debate, but Hadfield is always clear where he stands on the matter. And Friedrichs’s DB4 GT sits noticeably higher off the ground than some of its Goodwood rivals. “It’s probably the best-built DB4 for some years,” reckons Hadfield. “But all the time you’re limited to what was homologated and the shape of the body.”

Set-up adjustment is basically restricted to changing the springs, bar, camber and tyre pressures. Not too much for Turner to worry about. The 3.8-litre straight-six engine sounds glorious, but is a little down on the best of the three-litre Ferrari V12s.

Before Turner returns, Hadfield also outlines the plans for the race to Autosport: “He’ll start because he’s got a HANS device and full-face helmet and has to have the seat forward. We can’t really do anything other than he starts and I go second. We’ll just push the seat all the way back. It’s not like the World Endurance Championship, where the pitstops are choreographed. It’s open the door and get in! Darren’s doing so much this weekend so he wants to do the 20 minutes, get into the pit window, and get out. If there’s a safety car hopefully we can be at the front of the queue.

“This is unusual. Normally I have to make up ground but I suspect my job will be to maintain it this time.”

There’s not much time for Turner to get to know Hadfield or the rest of the team better in the afternoon either, thanks to a parade lap in an Aston Martin DBR1, practice in the Cobra and ▶



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Turner took second from the start, but the leading GTO was just too quick

Whitsun Trophy qualifying. Then it's already time for the Kinrara, which kicks off the Revival racing.

Fortunately, the team tactics aren't too complicated, and Hadfield and Friedrichs have a good record of making the right calls. Two of their three RAC Tourist Trophy wins in the Silverstone Classic have come in '1 GRE', helped by the 'Safety Car App', as Hadfield calls it – they've had success when full-course yellows have negated the ground Friedrichs has lost just before a pitstop, allowing Hadfield to charge to the front.

"It's quite a simple strategy," agrees Turner, who arrives having all but matched Bryant's times in the Cobra. "You go and if there's a safety car you pit. It's simple – the way I like it. This event is nothing like WEC. It's more relaxed. In the MG I've got a cushion out of the back of a caravan to get me closer to the steering wheel!"

Tyre wear is a consideration – "our race is a sprint race with a little bit of care", reckons Hadfield – but otherwise the task will be to see if Turner can take the fight to the experienced Gary Pearson in the polesitting Ferrari 250 GTO.

Despite no experience of getting the car off the line, Turner is able to sweep around the outside of the Madgwick right-hander into second place, behind the silver Ferrari. He keeps the GTO in sight during the early stages, lapping in the 1m29s bracket, faster than the car's practice best.

The duo pulls clear of the field and Pearson stretches the Ferrari's legs just before the stops, opening the lead from around three seconds to just under 8s. Turner is then slowed by traffic on the way into

Winning GTO heads crowded pitlane as Hadfield runs to take over the Aston Martin



the crowded pits, forcing him to stop short of where Hadfield is waiting (there are no modern-style pit boxes), so Simon has to run over to the car. That pushes the lead to 12s, and Andrew Smith's pace in the GTO is too much as he inexorably pulls away.

"I'd never done a start in the car so I was surprised to be second into the first corner," says Turner after climbing out and catching his breath. "I didn't expect to stay there, but we pulled away. I was really pleased with that."

"The car was quite consistent and the brakes were really good. The big challenge for me was the gearbox but I'm happy with my pace. It's a lovely old girl. The DB2 [with which Turner won the Fordwater Trophy at the 2018 Revival] was gentle to drive – this has got a little more go."

As the pitstop strategies unwind, Hadfield is well clear of the Ferrari of Remo Lips, who has taken over from David Franklin near the end of the pit window, and the flying Kristensen, the only man who can match the GTO's times, in the 250 GT Berlinetta 'SWB/C' started from the back by Joe Macari.

Hadfield is more than half a minute clear of Lips when a safety car – so often his saviour in previous races – is called after Jack Young crashes his E-type at Woodcote. There is trouble retrieving the car, so the race goes green again (with yellows covering the Jag) for a three-lap sprint to the flag.

There are eight cars between Smith and Hadfield and the GTO immediately pumps in a 1m29.0s at the restart, so a win is out of the question. Some members of the team are concerned about the chasing Ferraris, but Hadfield has enough in hand and brings the Aston home to a well-deserved second, 17.2s behind the winner and 6.6s clear of Lips, who just holds on to complete the podium.

For Friedrichs, this is the first time he has watched Hadfield share the car with someone else. He's looked stressed during the safety car period, but is very pleased with the result. "Before the safety car I was quite OK, but then I was angry!" he says. "I know Darren from testing Project 212 and he's a safe pair of hands. I could not cope with that level of driving."

The combination of current pro and leading historic racer hasn't been quite enough to take a first Kinrara win for Aston Martin, or prevent a third Ferrari success in the enduro, but it certainly maximised the machinery. In period, the DB4 GTs struggled against the GTO's predecessor – the 250 GT Berlinetta – never mind the later car, so second is probably the best result they could have expected. Theirs is also the only Aston Martin in a top 10 filled with Ferraris, Jaguars and a sole Cobra.

"I love it when a plan comes together!" concludes Hadfield. "Darren is class. He listens and when he talks I listen! He gave me a big gap and didn't kill the car. I'd left some life in the tyres for if and when the safety car came. It was perfect." ■



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