



F1 Why Mercedes and Ferrari were left red-faced

FORMULA E
Briton Bird conquers Rome



AUTOSPORT

BRITAIN'S BEST MOTORSPORT WEEKLY

APRIL 19 2018

'How the hell did that happen?'

Ricciardo outguns Hamilton in China



'Their strategy wasn't on our radar'

TOTO WOLFF



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RTF

Specific Gravity	0.781
RON	102
MON	90
Reid Vapour Pressure, psi	7.11
Distillation, °C	
Initial Boiling Point	45
E70°C, % volume	16
E100°C, % volume	56
E150°C, % volume	100
Final Boiling Point	132
Unleaded	
Colour	Light Green
Oxygen, Wt. %	3.7



R 5SR

Specific Gravity	0.736
RON	101
MON	90
Reid Vapour Pressure, psi	9
Distillation, °C	
Initial Boiling Point	38
E70, % volume	40
E100, % volume	65
E150, % volume	95
Final Boiling Point	180
Lead, g/l	0.10
Colour	Light Blue
Oxygen, Wt. %	1.8



Sunoco FR

Specific Gravity	0.743
RON	102
MON	90
Reid Vapour Pressure, psi	9
Distillation, °C	
Initial boiling point	33
E70 °C, % volume	31
E100 °C, % volume	49
E150 °C, % volume	100
Final Boiling Point	124
Unleaded	
Colour	Clear
Oxygen, Wt. %	3.7

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DAN TEACHES MAX SOME VALUABLE RACING LESSONS

Daniel Ricciardo's victory in last weekend's Chinese Grand Prix was brilliantly taken and involved the sort of racing – with three teams involved – we've been waiting for. Yes, the safety car and Red Bull's smart strategy made it happen, but Ricciardo still had to get the job done, and his move on Valtteri Bottas for the lead was as close as it gets.

Max Verstappen also demonstrated how good Ricciardo's drive was. That the 20-year-old is a star in the making is no longer news, but he needs to learn from his mistakes – and the way Ricciardo picked his moments. Trying to overtake a top driver such as Lewis Hamilton around the outside of a high-speed corner is always likely to end in failure. And, in this particular instance, it wasn't necessary for Max either because the Mercedes was clearly vulnerable anyway.

What should be commended is Verstappen's apology to Sebastian Vettel after he hit the Ferrari driver. Verstappen has previously argued his case even when clearly in the wrong, so let's hope this move is continued. You can only address your mistakes if you admit to making them in the first place.

Someone whose title challenge is being undone apparently through no fault of his own is Felix Rosenqvist. A lost talent in Formula 1 terms, the Swede has quickly become a Formula E star and was leading again in Rome last weekend when drama intervened (see page 32). Briton Sam Bird had chased doggedly and was the main beneficiary, which means he is now best placed to stop ex-F1 racer Jean-Eric Vergne taking the crown.

That's the sort of fight Verstappen could get himself into in F1, if he can cut out the errors. And Ricciardo doesn't get there first.



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Sutton Images; Griffiths/LAT

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PIT+PADDOCK

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WHY F1'S CONTROVERSIAL

FORMULA 1

The concern over modern Formula 1 pitstops reached peak intensity last week as calls to reduce the complexity and speed of one of grand prix racing's most intricate processes grew.

McLaren's unsafe release of Stoffel Vandoorne during practice for the Chinese Grand Prix was the sixth pitstop incident across testing and the three GP weekends this year. It followed another McLaren problem in testing, both Haas drivers retiring from the opener in Australia, and two unsafe Kimi Raikkonen releases in Bahrain, where a pit crew member had his leg broken during the race.

Over the Chinese GP weekend F1 was urged to consider the unsafe releases by luminaries within the paddock and by FIA president Jean Todt, who called F1 pitstops "too complex" and "something we need to address".

HIGH PRESSURE, LOW TIMES

The onus has been put on teams either to refine their procedures or for F1 to simply slow pitstops down.

Since refuelling was banned for 2010, average pitstop times have dropped from more than four seconds to under 2.5s as tyre changes became the limiting time

factor. The added focus has reduced the spread in pitstop quality throughout the pitlane, although it has also increased the pressure on mechanics and arguably raised the probability of mistakes.

However, introducing a minimum pitstop time is an unpopular notion, largely because — apart from a brief ban for 2005 — tyre changes have become a traditional part of F1 competition.

Smaller margins mean that pitstops are not the race-defining variable they used to be, especially because the new-tyre effect in the Pirelli era is a more significant strategic factor. But they still have an important part to play in how races are won and lost.

Red Bull proved this in China by stopping Max Verstappen and Daniel Ricciardo just six seconds apart on two occasions, producing flawless stops under intense pressure, enabling Ricciardo to push on and win the race after his second tyre change.

**"A CONFUSED
SENSOR WAS TO
BLAME FOR KIMI'S
EARLY RELEASE"**



WRC set to discuss greener cars

WORLD RALLY

Despite the success of the new generation of World Rally Cars, their replacement is under discussion by rallying's powerbrokers this week.

The FIA was scheduled to host a meeting in Geneva on Tuesday (April 17), as Autosport went to press, to talk through the future for the category and the potential for using alternative energy. Rallying remains motorsport's most complicated question in terms of stepping away from internal combustion; a morning or afternoon loop of stages on WRC rounds can mean 100 miles, half of which is done flat-out.

FIA president Jean Todt (below) is aware of the challenge facing the series in which he competed, saying: "Today, there is no manufacturer supplying a car that can drive 200 kilometres [125 miles] on rally roads at rally speeds that can have a quick [electrical] recharge.

"At the moment it's completely excluded to think of having WRC with an electric car. It's clear we need to introduce more environmentally friendly technology in WRC."

Current technical regulations are expected to run until the end of 2021, but for some that doesn't preclude an interim solution to the question of making the series more sustainable.

One senior team member told Autosport: "There are things we can do quite quickly with the current regulations: cutting the number of cylinders used on liaison sections, that kind of thing."

FIA rally director Yves Matton added: "We are working very closely with the manufacturers about the evolution of the WRC car, both in the medium and long term. It is too early to discuss any outcomes, but it is important their future marketing objectives are taken into consideration."

DAVID EVANS



GRIFFITHS/LAT

LAT IMAGES

ART MUST BE PRESERVED

IS THE TECHNOLOGY TO BLAME?

Swivel jacks, retained wheelnuts, bespoke wheelguns and gym training for mechanics have all played a part in the competency and speed reaching new heights in the nine seasons that tyre changes have been the teams' main focal point in pitstops.

The most significant innovation predates the end of refuelling: Ferrari's pit light system, introduced in 2008, is a semi-automated process that has been adopted by every team in some way. These systems, which link to the release of the two jacks and now take inputs from wheelguns to help signal when the car is ready to leave, are at the heart of the current concerns.

A confused sensor was to blame for Ferrari's early release of Raikkonen during the Bahrain GP, but the overall error was a human and mechanical one. The problem removing the left-rear led to the mechanic taking off and re-engaging the gun, but the system registered this as the wheel being changed and so the light turned green.

However, Ferrari's release system is not completely automatic (which is against the rules) as some interpreted that to mean. The rear jack operator and pitstop controller could have overridden the system, but neither of them observed that the rear left had not been changed.

HOW TO SOLVE IT

The system performed appropriately within its parameters and this sort of grey area is what the FIA wants to address. Blending automation with human input has reduced the number of mistakes made during pitstops, but that is also why errors are brought more sharply into focus.

A compromise would be to standardise the entire system, which would leave pitstops competitive but with lower costs. It would bring 10 teams into the feedback process and eliminate scope for them to take a risk with the system to save time.

The FIA's preferred solution is to beef up the automated element so there are extra parameters to satisfy before the driver gets the green light. Part of this is likely to be a requirement for each team to employ two wheelgun sensors: one to ensure the right amount of torque has been applied to the nut, and one to check that it has not been cross-threaded.

This would mean the gun operator cannot press a button to declare the pitstop complete until those two sensors are satisfied.

In a sport that is meant to push human performance to the limit in multiple ways, that means a beautiful but controversial art can be preserved.

SCOTT MITCHELL



FIA and Rally GB on collision course over closed-road stage

WORLD RALLY

The streets of Llandudno were quieter than expected earlier this week. The World Rally Championship's planned visit to the north Welsh coast had been cancelled.

Instead of launching this year's Wales Rally GB to the sort of fanfare deserving of such a thoughtful and revolutionary route, the bunting was quietly taken down, press releases recycled and disappointed council members returned to the daily grind. All that remained in Llandudno on a misty Tuesday morning was the air of uncertainty.

Rally GB organisers had sought to break the WRC mould by offering five bonus points for a powerstage taking the crews on a five-miler around the headland-hugging, all-asphalt Great Orme before diving into Llandudno town centre for a dash through the streets and finishing on the seafront.

Such a move would have meant closed-road world championship-level competition in Britain for the first time. To achieve that aim, the event organisers applied to the FIA for a waiver to run an asphalt stage on a gravel event. The same waiver they successfully sought when the Great Orme (above) was last run in 2015.

Not this time. They were

stonewalled by the FIA, which is far from comfortable with Great Orme, even less so with its position as the powerstage.

The FIA's rally director Yves Matton and Rally GB chief Ben Taylor sang from the same hymn sheet, telling Autosport they were working together to find a solution for the Deeside-based event.

Digging deeper, there's genuine concern about the potential fall-out for Britain's round of the World Rally Championship. The Welsh Government has pulled out all the political stops to ensure road-closing legislation is in place for this and found further funding for the Great Orme test. The payback should have been stunning helicopter shots of World Rally Cars negotiating Wales' most beautiful coastline beamed live around the world.

The final Sunday of this year's event was to provide a springboard into negotiations for an extension to Wales' current agreement to keep Rally GB beyond the end of 2018...

The FIA hasn't ruled firm yet and one can only urge the viewing of a bigger picture painted with a backdrop of 30,000 fans watching for free. Alternatively, the governing body could take a swing and sky the ball high over an open goal.

DAVID EVANS

Rast joins tin-top Nordschleife field

WORLD TOURING CARS

DTM champion Rene Rast will switch tin-top categories for one weekend when he contests the World Touring Car Cup round in a wildcard slot alongside his drive in the Nurburgring 24 Hours next month.

The factory Audi driver will pilot an RS3 LMS during the three-race third round of the WTCR season that will take place on the first three days of the 24 Hours weekend. He will join team regulars Jean-Karl Vernay and Gordon Shedden at WRT.

In accordance with WTCR rules, Rast will carry an additional 20kg of ballast, which is assigned to all wildcard entrants, throughout the weekend.

His participation also means three reigning touring car champions will be on the grid for the Nurburgring Nordschleife event, as Rast will race alongside last year's respective TCR International Series and World Touring Car champions Vernay and Thed Bjork.

"Competing against the world's best drivers in a touring car now is fantastic," said Rast, who will also race for WRT in the 24 Hours. "It's a nice challenge. These are big names and I'm looking forward to being pitted against them on home soil."

The initial announcement of regulations for the new WTCR world cup that has succeeded the WTCC for 2018 stated a maximum of two wildcards would be permitted at each event, in addition to 26 full-season entries, but with 25 cars entered for 2018 it is understood this limit has now been upped to three where possible. However, it is understood that more cars could be added for the Nurburgring round as the length of the 16.1-mile Nordschleife circuit would cater for additional entries.

The 2018 event will be the first time the World Touring Car round at the Nurburgring has been run to TCR regulations, although the previous two years have indicated what lap times can be expected as the now defunct European Touring Car Cup – which was open for cars conforming to slightly modified TCR cars – was tagged on to the WTCC field. Petr Fulin's 9m16.316s was the best ETCC time, but that was bettered last weekend when a Hyundai i30 N recorded 9m05.905s in the 24 Hours qualifying race.

JACK COZENS



RACE OF CHAMPIONS



NASCAR CUP After a race across two days due to Bristol's notoriously hit-and-miss weather, Kyle Busch (18) defeated Kyle Larson in a bump-and-pass move with just six laps to go to score his second consecutive win. Busch had been concerned about his tyres in the final stint, but a late caution gave the Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota driver the break he needed to run at the front. Larson had been the overnight leader and the rain delays will reopen questions about NASCAR's rigid schedule after Kurt Busch had questioned why the series races at Bristol in April in an "unexciting" calendar. **Photograph by NKP/LAT Images**

Ticktum fires warning shot with test pace

EUROPEAN FORMULA 3

McLaren Autosport BRDC Award winner Dan Ticktum says "we're in a pretty good place" as he gears up for his Formula 3 European Championship season, after topping last week's two-day test at Misano.

Macau Grand Prix winner and Red Bull Junior Ticktum was the pacesetter on the second morning of the test, when all but one driver set their overall best time, while his Motopark team-mate Juri Vips headed two of the four sessions and was the quickest driver on day one. Hitech GP's Alex Palou was the other to top a session.

The Misano test followed sessions at the Hungaroring and Red Bull Ring. "At the first two official tests it was difficult to say 100% what the other teams were doing in terms of sandbagging and engine maps," said Ticktum. "But I think Carlin, the other main Volkswagen team, were at a similar level to us in terms of what we had in our pocket."

"At Misano, most of the teams were closer to what you'd be running in qualifying. But it's difficult to rely

100% on what people are doing in testing."

Ticktum said he is enjoying working with Motopark technical director Andy Kohler, who engineered Joel Eriksson to the 2017 runner-up position and is on Ticktum's car this season. "Andy works harder than anybody I know," he said. "He's constantly thinking of ways to improve. He's excellent."

Unlike Eriksson, who had two back-of-the-grid team-mates last year and shouldered all the development work himself, Ticktum says that all six Motopark drivers are contributing this season. Reigning German F4 champion Vips has starred in testing, while fellow F4 graduates Sebastian Fernandez and Fabio Scherer have looked strong.

"They're all good," said Ticktum. "They're all capable of being right up there. On outright pace, when he gets it right, Fabio is phenomenal. Even if I'm three tenths up the road, there'll always be corners where I can look at the data and improve. And we're all good enough for three of us to go one way on set-up and three the other way, and we know the data will be good."

MARCUS SIMMONS



F3 MISANO TEST

POS	DRIVER (TEAM)	TIME
1	Dan Ticktum (Motopark)	1m27.099s
2	Alex Palou (Hitech)	1m27.182s
3	Guan Yu Zhou (Prema)	1m27.195s
4	Ferdinand Habsburg (Carlin)	1m27.195s
5	Juri Vips (Motopark)	1m27.198s
6	Sacha Fenestraz (Carlin)	1m27.225s
7	Enaam Ahmed (Hitech)	1m27.232s
8	Mick Schumacher (Prema)	1m27.234s
9	Fabio Scherer (Motopark)	1m27.234s
10	Jehan Daruvala (Carlin)	1m27.240s

BMW eyes prototype return with hydrogen power

LE MANS 24 HOURS

BMW may be making its Le Mans 24 Hours return this year in GTE Pro, but it has hinted that it could one day again challenge for outright honours. Not with any ordinary prototype, but a zero-emissions racer powered by a hydrogen fuel cell.

The overall winner at Le Mans in 1999 believes that it is already possible to build an LMP prototype powered by a fuel cell. Developments in the automotive industry will make it an attractive route for manufacturers in the future, it claims.

“We have seen from a study point of view that it is feasible,” said BMW Motorsport boss Jens Marquardt. “It would be a technology to consider in endurance racing and it is something we could look at in the future from a prototype point of view.”

BMW evaluated making a return to the prototype ranks via the Garage 56 experimental entry slot at Le Mans with a hydrogen-powered car prior to its decision to enter the World Endurance Championship for the first time this season in GTE Pro.

The Automobile Club de l'Ouest, the race organiser at Le Mans, has reiterated its desire to see alternative power sources on the grid. ACO president Pierre Fillon believes that “from 2024 it should be possible to drive completely CO₂-neutral at Le Mans”.

GARY WATKINS



LAT IMAGES

TOP 3

LE MANS BMWs

The German firm only has one victory in the 24 Hours to its name, but has taken some special cars to the French endurance classic



#1 V12 LMR

BMW's outright Le Mans win came in one of the race's most competitive editions. Audi, Mercedes, Nissan and Toyota were also gunning for victory in 1999, but it was the six-litre V12 LMR of Yannick Dalmas, Pierluigi Martini and Joachim Winkelhock that came out on top. The open prototype was also a winner in the American Le Mans Series in '99 and 2000.



#2 CSL 'BATMOBILE'

More famous for its touring car exploits, the (usually) binged CSL also tasted success in endurance racing. As well as outright victories in the 1975 Sebring 12 Hours and '76 Daytona 24 Hours, it was a class winner at Le Mans. One finished a remarkable eighth overall as late as '77, four years after it had first won the touring car category at the Circuit de la Sarthe.



#3 328

A legend of the 1930s, the two-litre straight-six sports car helped put BMW on the motorsport map. Futuristic-looking and sophisticated for its day, the 328 racked up many wins after its debut in 1936. Its finest Le Mans moment came in '39, when a team of three (one closed and two open versions) finished fifth, seventh and ninth, dominating the two-litre class.



Sutton smashes record

BRITISH TOURING CARS

Reigning champion Ash Sutton topped the British Touring Car Championship test at Thruxton last week in his Team BMR Subaru Levorg, and his performance has hinted at record-breaking pace in Hampshire this year.

The 24-year-old clocked a 1m15.717s lap around the 2.356-mile circuit, which hosts its meeting on May 19-20.

Eight of the drivers were underneath the qualifying lap record of 1m16.040s, which was set by Matt Neal last season in his Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R.

Sutton said he was stunned by his lap. "I wasn't even going for a time," he said. "We were here to work through a programme and we did that, so to clock the fastest time is a real bonus."

Sutton, who is fifth in the championship after the opening three races at Brands Hatch earlier in the month, was using the older-specification Mountune engine in

his estate-shaped Levorg, but said that the team was aiming to switch to the new Swindon Racing Engines-tuned version from the second round of the championship at Donington Park on April 28-29.

"Everybody was very fast today, but I think that's down to the cooler temperatures. I think it was allowing the engines to breathe a bit better," said Sutton. "We showed some remarkable speed given that we haven't done any testing pre-season."

The second fastest time was set by Mike Bushell in the Team Hard VW CC. He was 0.026s adrift of Sutton, but said that he felt there had been even more pace in the car.

"I think there's more to come from me as well as from the car, so I'm delighted with the lap time we recorded," said the reigning Renault UK Clio Cup champion. "I also did a race-long run to assess the drop-off in the tyres, and they held up really well. I'm full of optimism about the rounds here."

Neal was third in the new-shaped Honda Civic Type R, but said he was still working on fine-tuning the set-up of the hatchback, and he caused two red flags during the morning's running with throttle problems. "The engine was working well," said Neal, "but this is still a journey for us and there is a lot to learn about the car yet."

MATT JAMES

BTCC THRUXTON TESTING

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Ashley Sutton	Team BMR / Subaru Levorg	1m15.717s
2	Mike Bushell	Team Hard / VW CC	1m15.743s
3	Matt Neal	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R	1m15.811s
4	Jack Goff	Eurotech Racing / Honda Civic Type R	1m15.860s
5	Sam Tordoff	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus RS	1m15.962s
6	Tom Chilton	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus RS	1m15.979s
7	Josh Cook	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra	1m15.981s
8	Dan Cammish	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R	1m15.997s
9	Aiden Moffat	Laser Tools Racing / Mercedes A-Class	1m16.043s
10	Senna Proctor	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra	1m16.109s

IN THE HEADLINES

JYS IN BRIT GP PARADE

Three-time Formula 1 world champion Sir Jackie Stewart will drive his 1969 British Grand Prix-winning Matra MS80 as part of a special parade at this year's British GP in July. The parade will celebrate Silverstone's 70th anniversary.

BMW TOPS TIGHT DTM TEST

BMW driver Bruno Spengler set the quickest time across four days of pre-season DTM testing at Hockenheim last week, edging out new Audi recruit Robin Frijns by 0.045s. Mercedes returnee Pascal Wehrlein made it three different marques in the top three.

VIETORIS TO BLANCPAIN

New Mercedes DTM reserve driver Christian Vietoris will contest the Blancpain GT Series Endurance Cup with the British Strakka Racing squad. The 29-year-old, who raced for the German manufacturer in the DTM in 2011-16, kicks off his campaign at Monza this weekend alongside Adrien Tambay and David Fumanelli.

ASTON ACES TO N24

Aston Martin Racing will make a bid for outright honours at the Nurburgring 24 Hours with its World Endurance drivers next month. AMR will field a V12 Vantage GT3 for Maxime Martin, Nicki Thiim, Marco Sorensen and Darren Turner.

INDY ENTRY HITS 35

JR Hildebrand and James Davison have become the 34th and 35th drivers to be announced for the 2018 Indianapolis 500. Hildebrand is the second Dreyer & Reinbold Racing entry, while Davison has signed a deal with AJ Foyt Racing.

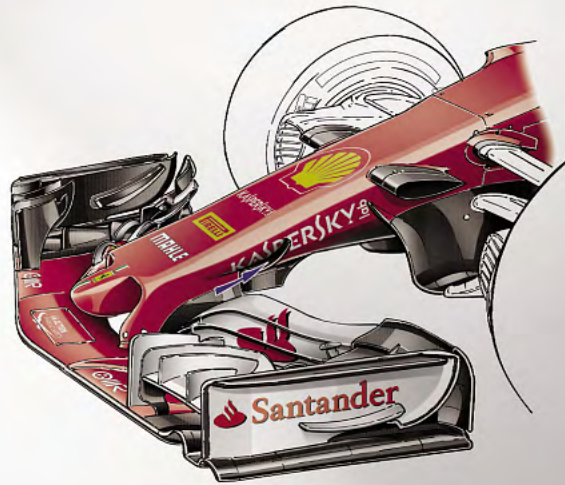
SUPER FORMULA SUBS

Ex-Formula Renault 3.5 champion Tom Dillmann has secured a stand-in role for two rounds of the Super Formula series in Japan this year. Dillmann will replace Pietro Fittipaldi, who has clashing IndyCar commitments, at Team Le Mans for the Autopolis and Sugo rounds in May. Another substitute driver for Autopolis is Honda-backed F3 ace Sena Sakaguchi. He replaces Nirei Fukuzumi, who is on Formula 2 duty at Barcelona, with Team Mugen.

BLOCK RETURNS TO WRC

Ken Block will make his first World Rally Championship appearance in four years when he contests this year's Rally Catalunya. The 50-year-old will tackle the Spanish event on October 25-28 at the wheel of an M-Sport Ford Fiesta entered under his Hoonigan Racing Division banner alongside regular co-driver Alex Gelsomino.

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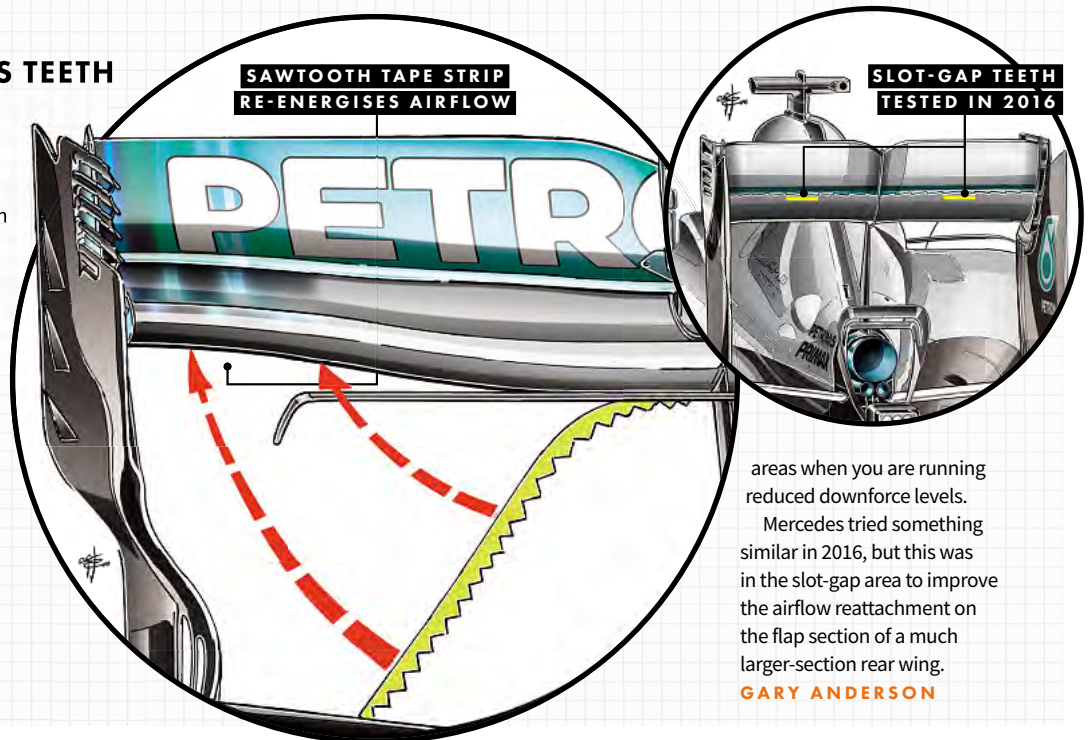
GIORGIO PIOLA

MERCEDES SHOWS TEETH

Mercedes tested a small vortex-inducing tape strip on the underside of its rear wing in China. This is believed to be in preparation for the next race in Baku.

This strip, with the saw-tooth facing rearwards, is placed just behind the throat of the wing where the airflow is starting to get a little lazy. The small vortices this sawtooth sets up will re-energise the airflow, making the main plane of the wing perform more consistently when the DRS is opened.

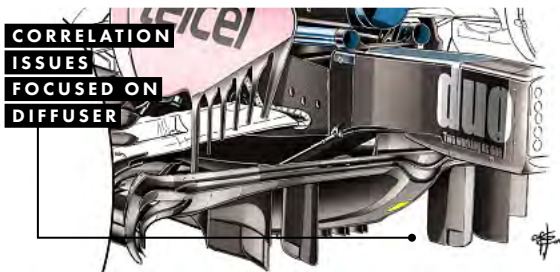
It will also help to get the airflow to reattach faster to the flap section when the DRS is closed. This is vitally important to get driver confidence in the braking



areas when you are running reduced downforce levels.

Mercedes tried something similar in 2016, but this was in the slot-gap area to improve the airflow reattachment on the flap section of a much larger-section rear wing.

GARY ANDERSON



FORCE INDIA'S MAJOR FLOOR

Force India has so far struggled to match its performance of the past two seasons. One of the problems it has admitted to is lack of correlation between the windtunnel/CFD and race track.

This is always difficult to achieve, as anything running near the ground will suffer from different airflow separation characteristics to what the research tools predict.

In Bahrain and China, Force India introduced variations on the diffuser, so I assume it believes this is the area of concern. Every team's diffuser will stall to some degree when the rear of the car is close to the ground, which reduces drag and allows higher top

speeds. But with that it reduces downforce, so it is vital this airflow reattaches the moment the rear of the car starts to rise, otherwise the braking area becomes a bit of a nightmare for the driver.

The upper rear wing and how the airflow reattaches when the DRS is closed will also affect the diffuser airflow reattachment, as will other aero components upstream. So, when you have a problem, it is not easy to identify what area is instigating that. And with any problem, it is vital to rectify it at source, otherwise it's just a bandage, with the issue still waiting to bite you.

GARY ANDERSON

THE HOLES IN FERRARI'S MAKE-UP

Before the 2017 aerodynamic regulation changes, the underfloor was not allowed to have any holes in it. The regulations suggested that the underfloor must have a periphery within which there could be no holes or cutouts.

This led to teams having hole details, but with a very small slot out to the outer edge to satisfy this rule. Pretty stupid really, but the design engineers will always find a way.

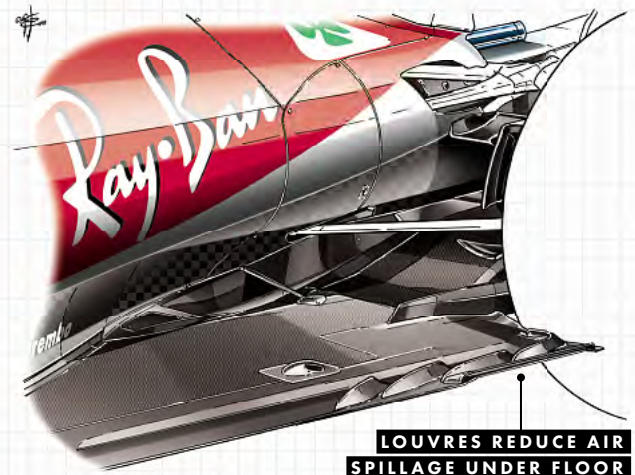
For 2017, the floor was made wider but this increase in width

was not compulsory, so it allowed the teams to get more adventurous with the detail design of the louvres that are now common in this area.

These louvres are there to reduce the amount of air spillage that goes under the floor. The more you can seal this area, the more effective the underfloor and diffuser will be.

Ferrari's floor has featured these holes all season, but this shows the detail of the change.

GARY ANDERSON





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MAG-NIFICENT KEVIN?

Settling in nicely to an apolitical team that's provided him with a driveable car, Kevin Magnussen is shrugging off a reputation as an also-ran

EDD STRAW

Kevin Magnussen has been one of the stars of Formula 1's hugely competitive 'Class B', along with Fernando Alonso and Nico Hulkenberg, this season. It's only a sample set of three races, but the most encouraging thing we've seen from Magnussen, whose peaks were always high, is consistency. So what has allowed a McLaren reject who had been only a bit-part player during the past two seasons to perform so strongly?

The easy answer is that the new Haas is a quick, consistent car so of course Magnussen is doing well. But there's more to it than that. Last year he didn't always deliver when the pressure was on in qualifying, and complained about how difficult it was to get a handle on a car that could be unpredictable. This year he's at one with it.

Another factor is that it gives him the characteristics he requires in a car, after spending last year with a chassis that was often better suited to team-mate Romain Grosjean. There's a clear clash of styles between the two, because Grosjean describes the Haas as understeery and claims that's something his team-mate loves. Magnussen, for his part, rails against the idea that the car understeers and

"BY F1 STANDARDS HAAS IS A SIMPLE, STRAIGHTFORWARD TEAM. THAT SUITS MAGNUSSEN"

revels in the level of grip at the rear that allows him to attack and carry speed into the apex.

That, plus the benefits of returning for a second season with the same team – the first time he's been able to do this in F1 – adds up to him being a very different driver in 2018.

Magnussen has an interesting style, combining the desire to carry that speed with a willingness to hustle it later in the corner. It's half a classical style, with a smooth entry but an eagerness to feel the car and get the power on quickly at the exit. Always a strong racer, he has managed to reduce the number of incidents he gets involved in while still being willing to tough it out when necessary.

Consider what Magnussen has gone through to get here since recording a sensational second place on his F1 debut for McLaren at Albert Park in 2014. He's been dropped from a race seat by one of F1's most famous teams, left largely on

the sidelines for a year before being axed by McLaren entirely, and was then only picked up by Renault at a relatively late stage because Pastor Maldonado's money dried up ahead of '16. Renault's desire for a paying driver then prompted his exit for Haas – is it any surprise he's been an erratic performer?

His McLaren season started with a bang and progress in the first half of the year was decent. What disappointed the team was that he didn't seem to kick on. Since McLaren was courting Fernando Alonso for 2015, and was highly unlikely to drop Jenson Button – not only a world champion, but also highly marketable – Magnussen was in an impossible situation.

There were all sorts of reasons that McLaren chose not to continue with a driver who less than a year earlier had been touted as its future, although Stoffel Vandoorne's rise to prominence certainly played a part in Magnussen being discarded after a season on the bench in 2015.

Commercial pressures meant Button was more appealing, and incoming engine partner Honda was keen on McLaren retaining a driver who had enjoyed success for it in the previous decade. Attempts to woo Danish companies into coming on board came to nothing and Magnussen ended up on the scrapheap. Given that he was, in his own words, "mentally screwed" by the situation, is it any wonder performances suffered? On the other side of the coin, there were concerns about whether Magnussen was willing to go to the extremes of learning required to master certain aspects of the F1 driver's art, such as tyre management, once achieving a certain level.

The year with Renault in 2016 offered some similar political problems, not to mention a car that was among the least competitive to have left Enstone's doors. That, and the team's attempts to recruit just about every other driver in the paddock, led to Magnussen turning down a one-year deal in favour of something longer term at Haas. By F1 standards it's a simple, straightforward team. The lack of politics suits him.

If this is a new phase of Magnussen's career, and if he can sustain this level, then at the very least he's set for a long career in F1 as a strong midfield performer.

For the first time, he seems like part of the fabric of the paddock, even if he's perhaps always going to be a little bit too much of a throwback to a simpler time for drivers.

Whether Magnussen can go further depends on him delivering consistently and proving beyond any doubt that he has the focus, determination and the all-round game to have a shot at a seat with a top team. But he has shown real fortitude to find his place.

Perhaps in Haas, he has the ideal team. And in Magnussen, Haas might just have the ideal driver. #



LESSONS TO LEARN

Max Verstappen's costly blunder in China was a pivotal moment in his development as a grand prix driver. He now needs to take responsibility for his mistakes

BEN ANDERSON

Max Verstappen has basically walked on water since he strode into Formula 1 as a 17-year old and began tearing up convention and rewriting the rulebook (sometimes literally) that governs what it means to be a top-class modern grand prix driver. Much of the adulation is thoroughly deserved. For the most part, his driving has been utterly outstanding.

There is a streak of almost arrogance in Verstappen's brilliance – an unshakeable self-belief that he is the best in the business, or at least a cast-iron inner-certainty that he one day will be. As a consequence, Verstappen carries with him an Ayrton Senna-esque sense of his own infallibility.

It's easy to see how we got here. Verstappen has earned this reputation because he is a driver who makes things happen. It is not without merit that Red Bull team boss Christian Horner calls Verstappen 'F1's most exciting driver', now on megabucks with one of the three best teams in the business, aged just 20.

But for all the wonderful moments, there is also a mounting stack of evidence to suggest an infuriating impatience to Verstappen's driving that borders on psychological flaw. He simply refuses to cede ground to other drivers.

"VERSTAPPEN HAS JUST SEEN HIS TEAM-MATE WIN A RACE HE HIMSELF SHOULD HAVE TAKEN"

Verstappen has seemed almost incapable of accepting defeat (a necessary part of any sport), or accepting he can get things wrong occasionally, or accepting he isn't always the most brilliant thing the grid has seen since sliced bread. But he has skirted so close to disaster on several occasions and gotten away with it that he can defiantly shrug his shoulders and say 'why should I change?'

To a large extent, Red Bull has enabled this behaviour by consistently defending Verstappen in the face of all criticism. In the early days, this was understandable. Verstappen was an interloper at the sharp end of the grid who naturally needed a certain amount of protection from the big beasts he was prone to provoking with his electric pace and forceful racecraft.

But at a certain point this necessary self-defence has strayed into ridiculous denial of blatant facts. In Australia, Verstappen was uncharacteristically mugged by Kevin Magnussen's Haas.

Instead of showing the requisite composure and biding his time, Verstappen overdrove trying to make an impossible instant recovery. He went off the circuit and damaged his car over a kerb. But instead of owning up to this misjudgement, he and the team blamed car damage for all ills.

In Bahrain, Verstappen careered into the barrier in Q1 after what he and Red Bull called a 150bhp "power surge" from the Renault engine that caught Verstappen out. Later, it transpired Verstappen lost control of the motion of his right foot when bouncing over a kerb, and hit the throttle too hard. In the race he unnecessarily ran Hamilton out of road on the second lap and picked up a puncture. Hamilton called Verstappen a "dickhead"; Verstappen refused to accept blame.

Why the reluctance to own up and admit responsibility? The initial explanations of the qualifying shunt indicated mechanical fault (which Renault later denied), or at the very least created enough ambiguity to suggest car rather than driver might be to blame. This maybe seems innocuous – a storm in a teacup, as the saying goes – but it has the corrosive effect of discouraging a driver who is still very young, and still developing, from properly acknowledging his mistakes.

But it seems this protective shield was finally penetrated in China. This race showcased the best and worst of Verstappen. After a brilliant opening lap, where he opportunistically passed both Hamilton and Kimi Raikkonen to run third, Verstappen was in prime position to win once Red Bull pulled off its brilliant strategic gambit under the safety car. But he threw that golden chance away with his own mistakes, as team-mate Ricciardo brilliantly stole the show.

This time there was nowhere for Verstappen to hide, and to be fair to Max he was the first to hold his hands up and apologise – a gesture for which Vettel made a point of showing his appreciation. For a driver so used to believing he is always in the right, this can't have been easy, but it was long overdue and much needed. As Vettel pointed out, Verstappen has experience now that belies his age.

Interestingly, Red Bull did not blithely back its own charge on this occasion. Helmut Marko publicly criticised his golden boy for "giving away" victory. Even Max's father Jos piled in, telling Dutch TV that his son "has to think more" in the heat of battle.

This could be a pivotal moment for Verstappen. He's just watched his team-mate brilliantly win a race that he himself should have taken but for a spectacular implosion. Ricciardo's obvious capacity to read a race, to stay calm in the face of adversity, to perfectly pick his moments with impeccable timing, are real lessons for such an impulsive driver as Verstappen – if, as Horner claims, he is willing to learn. ✨

YOUR SAY

It would be a crying shame if Red Bull loses Daniel Ricciardo to one of the more conservative teams

RICHARD NEWELL

Red Bull shows the right racing mentality

Wow! What a race from Red Bull. The application of a logical thought process and aggressive strategy displayed a true racing mentality. Other teams really should take note, as this is what the fans want – well, this fan at least.

Meanwhile, Mercedes instructed Valtteri Bottas to stay in the lead, which he did not, and failed to pit Lewis Hamilton at a crucial moment. Oh and Ferrari sacrificed Kimi Raikkonen, so Sebastian Vettel had a better shot at victory (they missed).

At the time of writing (Sunday morning), Red Bull was in ‘protracted talks’ re Daniel Ricciardo’s contract extension. As far as this fan is concerned, less talk, more action. OK, Red Bull has a plethora of young drivers on its books. However, Ricciardo has shown on multiple occasions that he is one of the best racers in the business, China being the most recent example. Admittedly on Sunday he had a tyre advantage, but Max Verstappen’s antics showed just how wrong that can go. It would be a crying shame if Red Bull loses Ricciardo to one of the more conservative teams.

Richard Newell

By email

Will China be the turning point of the season?

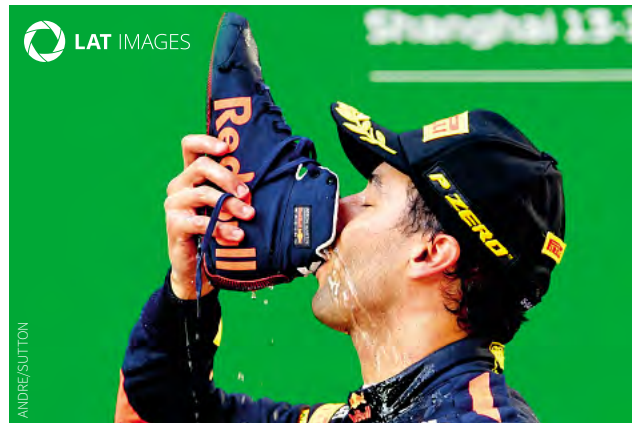
I really enjoyed the Chinese Grand Prix and hope there are many more like it this season. Several cars and drivers were in a position to compete for the win and leading positions, and were able to fight for their positions with good overtaking.

Clever use of strategy, such as that by Red Bull during the safety car period, was rewarded with victory for Ricciardo (above, right) and gains by Verstappen, and conversely those who did not make these decisions suffered.

It is right that there should be several teams and drivers fighting for positions at each race rather than the dominance of a single team and driver, which has been too prevalent in Formula 1 for many years. Let’s hope this is the beginning of a more exciting season.

Mark Gilbert

Portishead, North Somerset



US racing sets the standard for onboard footage

Surely it’s time for F1 to get rid of the halo-obsured onboard cameras and switch to the fantastic ‘visor cams’ used widely in IndyCar and now NASCAR.

Michael Martin

Southwater, West Sussex

The many uses of a Formula 1 halo...

While we are all relieved that the halo is there to protect drivers from the statistically high probability of a meteor strike, its other important benefits are being totally ignored!

Here are a few ideas on how halo could be more fully utilised:

- 1** Dangle wine corks from halo like an Australian outback hat to protect against bugs;
- 2** Fit flip-down sun flaps to guard against afternoon glare;
- 3** Install curtains to protect driver privacy and driver-to-crew communications while in the pits;
- 4** Take advantage of halo as a great clothes line to keep race suits in tip-top shape after a vigorous day of following each other around. Great ideas I believe for the smart men of F1 to studiously focus on and eagerly adopt; fans be damned!


Mark Rees

Toronto, Canada

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RICCIARDO TAKES HIS CHANCE

Red Bull's sheer speed of thought, and Daniel Ricciardo's ability to execute, embarrassed both Mercedes and Ferrari in China

EDD STRAW, GRAND PRIX EDITOR

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY
 LAT IMAGES/SUTTON IMAGES



DANIEL RICCIARDO HAS AN UNCANNY KNACK FOR IMPECCABLE TIMING. HIS CHINESE Grand Prix victory was a masterclass in judging the moment – make that moments – to perfection like no-one else. Give him a sniff of victory and he nails it with a ruthless efficiency. This was pure killer instinct.

The razor-sharp timing rubs off on those around him too. Whether it was nailing his overtaking moves as he surged from sixth to first in just nine laps, the decisive call to stop under the safety car, or even making it out of the pits in time in Q1 to avoid starting from the back of the grid after repairs following his turbo's messy demise in practice, Ricciardo and those around him were bang on the money. Six drivers could have won this race, but it was the Australian who went from the man least likely in the early stages to the one who stood on top of the podium.

Ricciardo did rely on a slice of luck with the timing of the safety car, deployed to tidy up after Pierre Gasly clobbered Toro Rosso team-mate Brendon Hartley at the hairpin as they attempted to swap positions, scattering debris on the track. But fortune favours the brave for a reason.

"I could tell that we had the advantage coming in at the safety car and having softs," said Ricciardo of a post-safety car scenario that put him in sixth place for what became a 20-lap sprint race. "Initially it

was, 'OK, maybe we can fight for the podium' and at the rate we were going through the field, I could feel the tyres were holding on well, then it was fully set on the win."

The charge that followed is what the race will be remembered for, but his rivals were left variously frustrated, angry and baffled after opportunities slipped through their fingers. There were three distinct phases of the Chinese Grand Prix, one controlled by each of F1's grandee teams, and it was Red Bull which grasped the baton in the final laps.

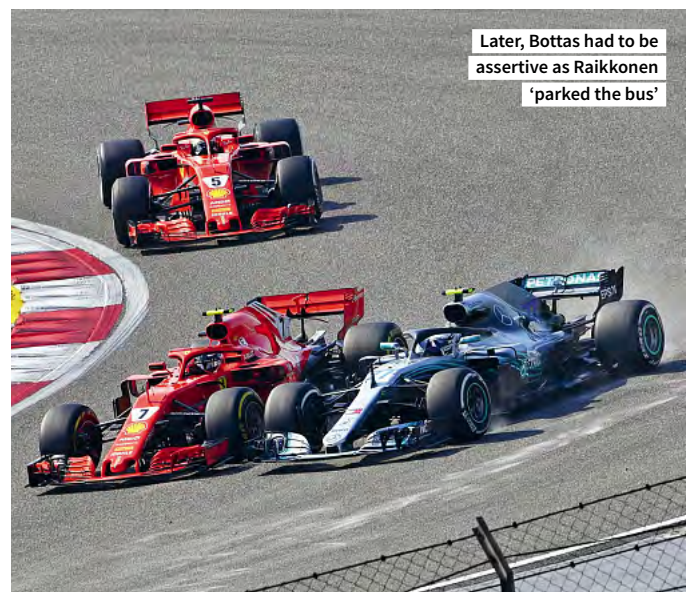
Such a scenario seemed unlikely at the start. Max Verstappen and Ricciardo started on the third row on ultrasofts, more a survival tyre than a race tyre, and it was Verstappen who made the biggest splash by passing Lewis Hamilton for fourth through Turn 1, then Kimi Raikkonen for third around the outside of the Turn 6 right-hander. But aside from this Red Bull cameo, the initial phase of the race was all about soft-shod Ferrari versus Mercedes up front.



Sebastian Vettel held the lead from pole position, although his fast-starting team-mate Kimi Raikkonen had a good enough launch to challenge him on the inside into Turn 1 before dutifully falling in behind. Unfortunately for him, this allowed Valtteri Bottas to go around the outside of him for second. After Raikkonen lost another place to Verstappen, but held off Hamilton's attack, the order was now set for the first part of the race: Vettel in the lead from Bottas, Verstappen, Raikkonen, Hamilton and Ricciardo.

The half-dozen quickly spaced themselves out, with nobody close enough to make a move in the first stint and Ricciardo over 16s behind by the time he and Verstappen were called in for a Red Bull double-stack pitstop. They had extended their ultrasoft stint to sufficient length to consider a one-stop race and were in a position to become a factor later, but were yet to join the lead battle.

In Bahrain last week, Bottas and Mercedes wanted to undercut Vettel at the first round of pitstops, only for Ferrari to cover off the move. This time, Bottas's undercut wasn't blocked and he dived into the pits at the end of lap 19 while 3.182s behind Vettel. A combination of a decent in-lap, the quickest pitstop of the race and a storming out-lap on which he set the fastest second and third sectors of the race so far allowed Bottas to take the lead when Vettel stopped a lap later. >>



“MERCEDES SHOULD HAVE APPLIED MORE OLD-FASHIONED NOUS”



“We knew that it was possible with this kind of gap if you get everything perfect,” said Bottas. “If you can switch on the tyres quickly, it’s possible. That’s why we stopped at this point. It was perfect timing.”

Both were now on the soft Pirellis, but Ferrari decided to throw a Kimi Raikkonen-shaped curveball at Mercedes by extending his first stint. This effectively sacrificed Raikkonen, but it briefly helped to back up Bottas into Vettel – albeit not by enough to justify compromising the second Ferrari driver’s race. Bottas dispatched Raikkonen by going around the outside into Turn 1 on lap 27, completing the move into the Turn 3 left-hander. Raikkonen dutifully made a nuisance of himself in a final attempt to distract the Mercedes driver on the following straight, before allowing Vettel past and heading straight for the pits for the inevitable slump to sixth.

The stage was seemingly set for a duel to the finish between Bottas and Vettel, while Verstappen, Hamilton and Ricciardo tried to cruise up to join the duo. But that race never happened thanks to the clash between

the two Toro Rossos. Hartley spun and rejoined, but because of debris on the track the safety car was deployed after a short delay.

Before the collision between its b-team drivers, Red Bull was thinking about splitting strategies, with Verstappen probably running to the end on mediums and Ricciardo potentially taking a more aggressive two-stop approach. When the safety car was deployed, Bottas and Vettel, split by a second, were already in the final corner and could not dive into the pits. Verstappen, Hamilton and Ricciardo were running in a group at the hairpin but only the Red Bull drivers were called in.

“It was a really late call, and also harder for Max to get into the pitlane because he was further up the road than Daniel,” said Red Bull team principal Christian Horner. “Both got in, we got them turned around and none of the other leading pack elected to do that. While we conceded a place to Hamilton with Verstappen and Raikkonen with Ricciardo, we were on a better tyre for the rest of the grand prix. At the restart, the guys were able to get into it pretty quickly.”

Verstappen and Ricciardo took the restart with 21 laps to go, running fourth and sixth respectively, but crucially with a tyre-life advantage. It seemed such an obvious move.

“We thought that track position would be more beneficial,” said Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff. “You could see in the first stint there was no overtaking. Lewis’ tyre was a medium at that stage [when the safety car was deployed], with barely 10 laps on. Our calculation predicted that a medium would last until the end, and putting on a new soft we thought wouldn’t give you such a performance advantage. [It was] much more than we expected. Looking back, it would have been the right strategy to do for the second soft, but nobody in the team, including myself, thought that it was the right thing to do.”

There certainly was no evidence from the race to that point to suggest that passing would be that easy with the offset between the fresh softs of the Red Bulls and the 13-lap older mediums Hamilton was on – because that situation hadn’t yet arisen. The difference between racing in a cat-and-mouse game in the first stint and later in the race is significant, and





Hamilton got by when Verstappen spun Vettel round

Mercedes should have applied a bit more old-fashioned racing nous to fill the holes in the data, especially with track temperatures much higher in the race than during practice, and increasing thermal degradation. Although for the same reason there were legitimate concerns about keeping the rear tyre temperatures under control on the softs Hamilton would have switched to.

"I stayed out and initially it was, 'OK, this is good, I'm right behind Seb and maybe I have a chance, maybe there's a little bit of a battle we can have to the end,'" said Hamilton of the situation. "And I look in my mirrors and the Red Bulls are behind me on brand new tyres. So it was, 'How the hell did that happen?'. I thought they would be further back with a stop, so I knew they were going to come."

Perhaps there was some nervousness on the pitwall after strategic advantages transformed into defeats in the first two races of the season? Whatever the reason, for the third race in a row, a strategic mistake had been made and Hamilton was dead in the water. The strategy tools used by Mercedes certainly failed to introduce the Ricciardo factor to its equations. The pace advantage of fresher rubber was significant, but with every lap the difference to older tyres reduces. In short, Ricciardo had to get on with it.

While Bottas pulled a gap of almost a second over Vettel at the restart, all eyes were on the Red Bulls. Ricciardo made a mediocre restart, but held position and started to reel Raikkonen in rapidly. On lap 37, he took the position with a move up the inside into the hairpin. Fifth.

Verstappen was the Red Bull driver closer to victory, but on lap 39 he attacked third-placed Hamilton and his attempt to go around the outside in the fast Turn 7 left-hander led to his car squirming on the wide line and being spat off the track. It was enough to let Ricciardo past, a race-losing mistake. Fourth.

Ricciardo made a much better job of passing Hamilton, diving inside the Mercedes at the hairpin a lap after Verstappen's off. It was a stunning move, one of those Ricciardo specials that seemed to come too late to have any chance of coming off. Third. >>

QUALIFYING



FERRARI'S SECOND CONSECUTIVE FRONT ROW LOCKOUT, with Sebastian Vettel on pole from Kimi Raikkonen by 0.087s, was no surprise. What wasn't expected was that Ferrari was effectively unopposed, since Mercedes was struggling for tyre temperature. The gap was over half a second to Valtteri Bottas and Lewis Hamilton on the second row.

"I'm surprised by the gap to Mercedes," admitted Vettel. "I don't think anybody, including ourselves, expected that."

This rendered the battle for pole an all-red affair, and it seemed destined to be won by Raikkonen after he set the pace both in Q2 and on the first runs in the Q3 top-10 shootout. In fact, it wasn't until the long drag to the hairpin up the back straight that things swung decisively in Vettel's favour; Raikkonen was ahead in the early stages of the straight before suffering

what appeared to be a de-rate that cost him ERS power and allowed Vettel to take the advantage.

Mercedes was all at sea. So far this season, managing the rear tyres on the ultrasoft and supersoft compounds for a qualifying lap has been difficult. During Saturday morning practice Hamilton had struggled for rear stability into the corners and traction out of them.

Low track temperatures in qualifying added the extra problem of making it difficult to build heat in the front tyres, making them prone to graining as they slid across the asphalt and the rubber rolled over the surface of the tyre. Mercedes was unable to get the fronts in without overworking the rears, so both cars shipped time in the first half of the lap – in particular through the long right-hander at Turns 1 and 2 that asks so much of the front left.

Pirelli motorsport boss Mario Isola said: "In qualifying, it was important to manage the out-lap in order to warm up the tyres properly – especially the front axle where it's in these conditions they struggle a bit more – but without killing the rear tyres because you can put too much traction, too much stress and overheat the rears. The out-lap was the key, it always is, but especially so on circuits where you have a big difference in using the front and the rear axle."

The third row went to Red Bull, with Max Verstappen ahead of Daniel Ricciardo. The team did a sensational job to get Ricciardo out at all during Q1 – which it did with seconds to spare – after his turbo obliterated itself during FP3.

"I'm surprised by the gap. Nobody expected that"
Sebastian Vettel

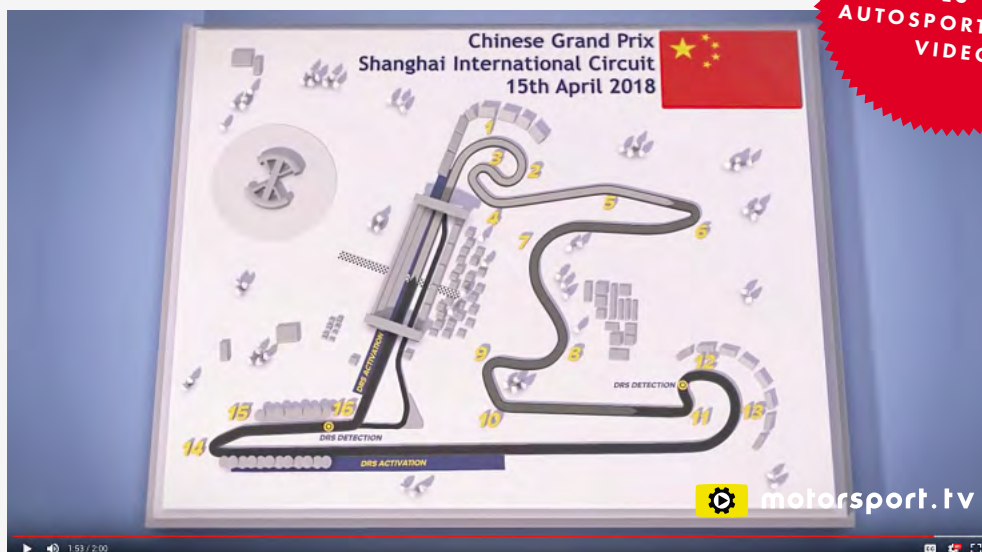


TRACKSIDE VIEW

AT THE REMOTEST CORNER OF THE Shanghai International Circuit sit a row of grandstands nobody ever goes in, and which are now covered with red mesh. It's unfortunate, because these monuments to China's thwarted ambition to draw a huge crowd offer a view of a critical part of the track few ever see with their own eyes.

Turns 11-13 catapult the cars onto the longest straight in Formula 1, the long drag down to the hairpin. So any loss of time here impacts exit speed, which costs you time all the way down the 1170-metre straight. The entry to this sequence is a slow left-hander, which quickly transforms into the entry to a long right-hander. The key to a quick lap time is to be able to attack Turn 11 enough not to lose time, without compromising the all-important entry to the right-hander.

As I watch during Saturday morning practice, it's clear Lewis Hamilton is not happy. Several times he turns in to the left-hander in his usual style, rotating the rear, and several times the rear continues to slide at the point where he needs to be putting on the right lock for the business end of this sequence. This compromises his entry into the long right significantly. He



doesn't look comfortable. Valtteri Bottas is a little better, but he's always been one of the best drivers in F1 when grip levels aren't ideal, which is why he so often looks so strong during the first runs in practice on a green track.

For Ferrari, things seem much better. But there is a difference in driving style. Watching at the entry to Turn 11, looking from the rear of the car, it's clear Raikkonen turns in fractionally earlier, using less lock and sometimes a touch more kerb

in carrying in more speed. Vettel uses more lock, more aggressively deployed, working the car harder.

Both make it work, and it emphasises just how user-friendly a car the Ferrari is to accommodate both styles. There's no sign of the corner-entry instability that was occasionally detectable during pre-season testing, and even the understeer seems to have been brought under control to make the car look well-balanced.

The surprise of the session is the

Force India, which after Friday practice the team admitted had a fundamental problem. Both Sergio Perez and Esteban Ocon are able to attack the corner and carry in good speed, emphasising that the difficulty is not the in slower-speed stuff. The transitions into the right-hander are smooth for both, drawing a stark contrast with the Williams, which looks vague and imprecise in the hands of both Sergey Sirotkin and Lance Stroll.

EDD STRAW

Turn 11 is crucial for a good run through the right-handers that follow





Red Bull mechanic Chris Gent gets to celebrate victory with his man Ricciardo

Two laps later, he blasted past Vettel on the back straight in the least spectacular of his four key passes. Second.

That left Bottas exposed, and on lap 45 Ricciardo mugged him with a thrilling dive up the inside into the Turn 6 hairpin. Bottas tried to defend, but couldn't cover it and Ricciardo somehow managed to get the car stopped in time to get around the corner. First.

"I had the pace over all the guys that I got ahead of, but you still don't want to sit behind for too long," said Ricciardo. "I saw Valtteri defend but I was kind of committed already from Turn 3 that I was going to try. It was close, but I would say fair, and it's cool when you go wheel-to-wheel. It makes it a bit sweeter than just cruising past on the straight."

Bottas perhaps could have defended more aggressively, but it was always inevitable that Ricciardo would get ahead, given that he had over a second per lap in hand. "He was closing lap after lap with pretty big gains, so there was not much to do," said Bottas. "I tried to defend but ultimately, with the better tyres, he could really brake quite a lot later."

The key to Ricciardo's victory was making these passes decisively and cleanly. The advantage of fresh rubber reduces as the stint lengthens, and by getting on with it Ricciardo maximised his advantage.

"VETTEL SLID TO EIGHTH, THE FINAL IGNOMINY COMING WHEN ALONSO MUSCLED HIM ASIDE"

Verstappen squandered his chance. Having passed Hamilton, he compounded his Turn 7 blunder by making a terrible attempt to pass Vettel for second at the hairpin. Vettel went deep, but Verstappen carried in too much speed and hit the right-rear of the Ferrari. The resulting damage meant Vettel slid to eighth by the finish, the final ignominy coming when Fernando Alonso muscled him aside late on.

Vettel was already unhappy by the timing of the safety car, but there are always winners and losers when races are neutralised. The assault by Verstappen was another matter, and the Dutchman's apologetic demeanour after the race shows just how obvious a blunder it was.

The clash rightly earned Verstappen a 10-second penalty, which was applied post-race, and after re-passing Hamilton (who knew Verstappen had a penalty) unopposed, the Red Bull driver dropped back to fifth after the chequered flag.

Verstappen's second moment of madness allowed Raikkonen to take third, the good fortune just reward for Ferrari compromising his strategy. He was close enough to Bottas to give the Mercedes driver something to think about, too, finishing within a second.

Both of the drivers who shared the podium with Ricciardo had good reason to rue their misfortune, as did those frontrunners who didn't even make it to the rostrum. But races like these always pay dividends to those who play their cards right with perfect timing. And Ricciardo is the right man for such circumstances.

As the man himself pointed out, while he doesn't win that many grands prix, when he does they tend to be thrillers. The time is right for Ricciardo to be in a title-winning car. ❧



LAT IMAGES

Vettel criticises safety car timing

Sebastian Vettel questioned the timing of the Chinese Grand Prix safety car, which denied him and race leader Valtteri Bottas the chance to stop for tyres without losing significant track position.

FIA race director Charlie Whiting called for the safety car to be deployed after a collision between Toro Rosso drivers Brendon Hartley and Pierre Gasly left debris on the track, deciding against a virtual safety car because it was necessary to create a gap in traffic to allow marshals onto the track.

The yellow flag period was confirmed just after Bottas and Vettel had passed the safety car line on lap 31, which meant that they could not duck into the pits.

When they reached the end of the pit straight the safety car was already waiting for them, so they could not complete another lap and pit before joining the safety car queue.

Conversely, Red Bull drivers Max Verstappen and Daniel Ricciardo were able to pit for fresh tyres – a decision that put

Ricciardo in a position to win the race, though it was a risky move to bring both cars in on the same lap, within seconds of one another.

“I need to understand why we had the safety car changing the race,” said Vettel, who also suggested Ferrari needed to analyse why it earlier lost track position to Bottas in the pits.

“In 2014 in Hungary we were in a similar situation, where the leaders were disadvantaged because the safety car came once they passed the pit entry, or it was called out after they passed the pit entry.

“I understand if something happens and you have to react straight away then you can’t always respect where cars are relative to each other.

“But we had two laps of the debris on the track, so why not call the safety car half a minute sooner and then everybody has the chance to decide whether they pit or not?”

“I don’t know the gaps but you have to give the marshals a one and a half or two-minute window to clean the track. In my point of view

it’s not right to send it when you actively change the race.”

Whiting insisted that safety was the priority, and that it wasn’t race control’s job to ensure nobody lost out in such situations.

“I don’t look to see who is going to be advantaged or disadvantaged,” he said.

“You remember a few years ago in Hungary, Nico [Rosberg] was leading, the first four cars were just past the pit entry, and they got disadvantaged. That’s fairly straightforward. It’s a little bit of a mystery to me why this has all come into sharp focus, because we’ve had the VSC since 2015, we’ve had the safety car for 20 years, and we know that in every intervention there will be winners and losers.

“If we have to sit there and work out who is going to be advantaged and work it so everyone has exactly the same chance, we don’t have time for that. It’s not our job to do that.”



Vettel praises Verstappen apology after accident

An on-track collision between one of the frontrunners and Max Verstappen is not unfamiliar territory. What was unexpected about the incident in which Verstappen nerfed Sebastian Vettel out of podium contention in the Chinese Grand Prix was that it ended with Vettel praising his rival post-race.

Verstappen caught Vettel's third-placed Ferrari 13 laps from the end of the Shanghai contest, owing to a strategy in which Verstappen took on fresh tyres during a safety car period.

Verstappen made a mistake at the Turn 14 hairpin while trying to pass the Ferrari, tipping Vettel into a spin, but unlike his minor war of words with Lewis Hamilton after their Bahrain clash, Verstappen immediately

said "of course it was my fault" and apologised to Vettel.

"He came up straight after, he realised that he made a mistake," explained Vettel. "He was quite composed.

"I appreciate the fact that he came to me straight away. I told him that was the way to solve it, face to face and not through the media or blowing something up."

The FIA stewards gave Verstappen a 10-second penalty that dropped him from fourth to fifth, and also added two points to his licence, taking his penalty tally to five.

Drivers receive an automatic one-race ban if they hit 12 points in a 12-month period, and Verstappen's penalty points tally will not decrease until after July's Hungarian Grand Prix.

Q & A CHRISTIAN HORNER Red Bull team principal

Red Bull's Christian Horner professed himself delighted with the team's first victory of the 2018 season, which was only its ninth of the V6 turbo hybrid era. But he also had to defend Max Verstappen's latest pair of incidents, which cost the Dutchman a chance at winning the race.



Lewis Hamilton that failed?

Max had a grip advantage, he got a better drive, he found himself on the outside there

and decided to hang it out with Lewis, who was never going to concede in that corner easily. Lewis was more generous with Daniel in the braking area, but Daniel picked his time differently.

This should have been a one-two, with Max Verstappen ahead, before his mistakes. Is this becoming a pattern with Max this year?

He's put his hand up, he apologised to Sebastian, he did that immediately as they got out of their cars. I spoke to Sebastian [Vettel] after the race and he appreciated that Max apologised to him. Yes, he's made some mistakes. I remember when we had Sebastian at a similar stage in his career, it wasn't uncommon that he also made some mistakes. I think Max will have learned a lot from today. He'll put that to good use in the future.

Was Max just too optimistic in the attempted pass on

Daniel Ricciardo was close to not running in qualifying after the turbo failure in practice. How important was the job the team did in getting him out?

I cannot express highly enough what they achieved on Saturday, getting that turned around and out of the garage 45s before the cut-off. And there was their work in the pitstops. Lewis Hamilton said he didn't think we were operating on the same level as Mercedes and Ferrari – I think we've demonstrated very clearly that this team is very capable of operating on that level. That was why I sent Chris Gent, the number one [mechanic] from Daniel's car, to go and collect the constructors' trophy.



Team orders confusion caused Toro shunt

When Pierre Gasly hit Toro Rosso team-mate Brendon Hartley at the hairpin, it looked like Gasly had made a big mistake while trying to take 18th place. But it turned out that the collision was the result of a botched attempt by the two Toro Rossos to swap places.

"They told me on the radio, 'Brendon is going to let you pass, at the end of the straight', so I

expected him to let me by, I went on the inside," said Gasly. "I expected him to leave me a bit of space to turn, and finally when he started to turn like normally and I was on the inside, [it] was too late and there was nothing I could do.

"I tried to brake and avoid him, but it was way too late, we made contact and basically that was it. On TV, it looks really bad for me."

Gasly was given a 10-second penalty and two points on his licence for the collision. Hartley claimed he planned to let him go at the exit.

"It was clearly a bit of miscommunication," said Hartley. "We switched positions in the first stint as well. I let him by on the exit of Turn 14 and the second time I was asked, I planned to do the same."



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LAT IMAGES

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Hulkenberg wins 'best of the rest' battle

Renault driver Nico Hulkenberg won Formula 1's 'best of the rest' battle behind the big three teams in both qualifying and the race in China.

He lined up seventh on the grid and held position in the first stint, committed to a two-stop strategy. The safety car timing allowed him to take the second stop for free, although

he did have to repass Kevin Magnussen's Haas after the restart to reclaim seventh place. He then capitalised on the damage sustained by Vettel to take sixth on lap 44.

Hulkenberg also fell just 0.616 seconds short of jumping Max Verstappen for fifth once the Red Bull driver's 10s penalty was applied after the chequered flag, thanks

to setting his fastest lap of the race on the final tour.

"There is this interesting statistic of him having started seventh in the past six races," said Renault Sport F1 boss Cyril Abiteboul. "He really is the best of the rest. A lot of people [refer] to that title of best of the rest, but the one who deserves that title is definitely Nico."

Alonso elbows past Vettel for seventh

Fernando Alonso maintained his 100% points-scoring record in the 2018 season with seventh place in China, forcing his way past the ailing Sebastian Vettel on the penultimate lap.

Vettel was struggling with damage after being hit by Max Verstappen, with Alonso attempting a move on the inside of Turn 1 before running wide at the exit and forcing Vettel to cut across the inside of Turn 2.

"He had damage on his car so was running very wide in the corners, so the first opportunity I saw the door open I went for it," said Alonso. "At one point, the track finished so he kept going until there was grass; you need to back off at one point."

Although McLaren's qualifying struggles continued, Alonso jumped from 13th on the grid to run 11th on the first lap.



He extended his first stint, stopping shortly before the safety car was deployed, which eliminated any tyre-life advantage against those he was racing with.

He restarted 10th, passing Romain Grosjean and Kevin Magnussen before making his move on Vettel.

McLaren Team-mate Stoffel Vandoorne had a disappointing race, dropping from 14th to 16th at the start and never getting back into points contention.

Safety car timing hampers Haas

The Haas team came away from the Chinese Grand Prix with just one point for Kevin Magnussen's 10th place thanks to the timing of the safety car.

Magnussen was waved passed team-mate Romain Grosjean as they ran ninth and 10th in the early stages, with both planning to make one pitstop. They took the restart running seventh and ninth, but as those making stops under the safety car did not lose time, both were vulnerable to attack.

Both struggled for tyre temperature and Grosjean quickly slipped back to 12th before stopping for a new set of tyres, while Magnussen hung on to 10th after being passed by Nico Hulkenberg, Fernando Alonso and Carlos Sainz.

"We were on the way to get seventh," said team principal Gunther Steiner. "The safety car came out at the wrong time, but it's racing. We were in the wrong place at the wrong time."



20 Ericsson #9 1m34.914s	18 Stroll #18 1m34.285s	16 Sirotkin #35 1m34.062s	14 Vandoorne #2 1m33.505s	12 Ocon #31 1m33.057s
19 Leclerc #16 1m34.454s	17 Gasly #10 1m34.101s	15 Hartley #28 1m33.795s	13 Alonso #14 1m33.232s	11 Magnussen #20 1m32.986s

FREE PRACTICE 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m33.999s
2	Raikkonen	1m34.358s
3	Bottas	1m34.457s
4	Ricciardo	1m34.537s
5	Verstappen	1m34.668s
6	Vettel	1m34.861s
7	Magnussen	1m35.178s
8	Sainz	1m35.616s
9	Grosjean	1m35.718s
10	Hulkenberg	1m35.800s
11	Gasly	1m36.037s
12	Alonso	1m36.044s
13	Perez	1m36.051s
14	Ocon	1m36.351s
15	Sirotkin	1m36.691s
16	Hartley	1m36.715s
17	Leclerc	1m36.723s
18	Vandoorne	1m36.756s
19	Ericsson	1m36.909s
20	Stroll	1m37.277s

WEATHER 18C, overcast

FREE PRACTICE 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m33.482s
2	Raikkonen	1m33.489s
3	Bottas	1m33.515s
4	Vettel	1m33.590s
5	Verstappen	1m33.823s
6	Hulkenberg	1m34.313s
7	Magnussen	1m34.458s
8	Sainz	1m34.473s
9	Ricciardo	1m34.557s
10	Alonso	1m34.632s
11	Perez	1m34.792s
12	Gasly	1m34.849s
13	Ocon	1m34.874s
14	Vandoorne	1m35.163s
15	Hartley	1m35.333s
16	Sirotkin	1m35.340s
17	Ericsson	1m35.624s
18	Leclerc	1m35.916s
19	Grosjean	1m36.471s
20	Stroll	1m37.147s

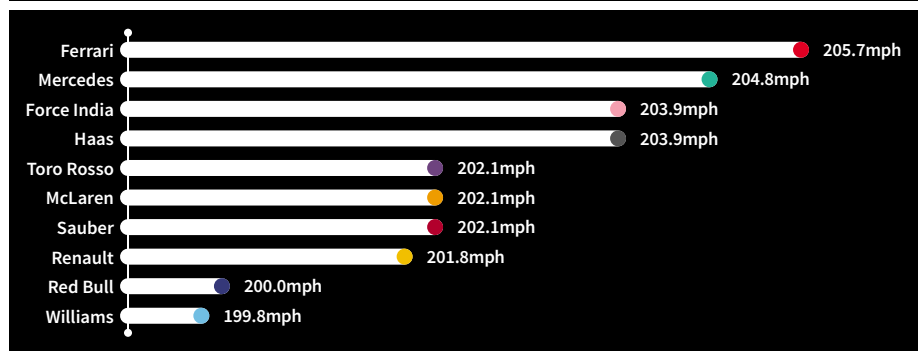
WEATHER 18C, overcast/late rain

FREE PRACTICE 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Vettel	1m33.018s
2	Raikkonen	1m33.469s
3	Bottas	1m33.761s
4	Verstappen	1m33.969s
5	Hamilton	1m34.057s
6	Magnussen	1m34.329s
7	Perez	1m34.445s
8	Ocon	1m34.456s
9	Sainz	1m34.582s
10	Sirotkin	1m34.741s
11	Hulkenberg	1m34.841s
12	Alonso	1m34.851s
13	Vandoorne	1m34.977s
14	Hartley	1m34.991s
15	Ricciardo	1m35.061s
16	Gasly	1m35.079s
17	Stroll	1m35.375s
18	Leclerc	1m35.497s
19	Ericsson	1m35.679s
20	Grosjean	1m35.756s

WEATHER 12C, overcast

SPEED TRAP



QUALIFYING 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Vettel	1m32.171s
2	Raikkonen	1m32.474s
3	Bottas	1m32.921s
4	Verstappen	1m32.932s
5	Grosjean	1m33.238s
6	Hamilton	1m33.283s
7	Sainz	1m33.315s
8	Magnussen	1m33.359s
9	Alonso	1m33.428s
10	Perez	1m33.464s
11	Hulkenberg	1m33.545s
12	Ocon	1m33.585s
13	Vandoorne	1m33.824s
14	Ricciardo	1m33.877s
15	Hartley	1m34.013s
16	Sirotkin	1m34.062s
17	Gasly	1m34.101s
18	Stroll	1m34.285s
19	Leclerc	1m34.454s
20	Ericsson	1m34.914s

QUALIFYING 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m31.914s
2	Bottas	1m32.063s
3	Raikkonen	1m32.286s
4	Vettel	1m32.385s
5	Hulkenberg	1m32.494s
6	Grosjean	1m32.524s
7	Ricciardo	1m32.688s
8	Verstappen	1m32.809s
9	Perez	1m32.931s
10	Sainz	1m32.970s
11	Magnussen	1m32.986s
12	Ocon	1m33.057s
13	Alonso	1m33.232s
14	Vandoorne	1m33.505s
15	Hartley	1m33.795s

QUALIFYING 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Vettel	1m31.095s
2	Raikkonen	1m31.182s
3	Bottas	1m31.625s
4	Hamilton	1m31.675s
5	Verstappen	1m31.796s
6	Ricciardo	1m31.948s
7	Hulkenberg	1m32.532s
8	Perez	1m32.758s
9	Sainz	1m32.819s
10	Grosjean	1m32.855s

WEATHER 13C, overcast

SEASON STATS

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1	Vettel	54
2	Hamilton	45
3	Bottas	40
4	Ricciardo	37
5	Raikkonen	30
6	Alonso	22
7	Hulkenberg	22
8	Verstappen	18
9	Gasly	12
10	Magnussen	11
11	Vandoorne	6
12	Sainz	3
13	Ericsson	2
14	Ocon	1
15	Perez	0
16	Leclerc	0
17	Hartley	0
18	Stroll	0
19	Grosjean	0
20	Sirotkin	0

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1	Mercedes	85
2	Ferrari	84
3	Red Bull	55
4	McLaren	28
5	Renault	25
6	Toro Rosso	12
7	Haas	11
8	Sauber	2
9	Force India	1
10	Williams	0

QUALIFYING BATTLE

Hamilton	1	2	Bottas
Vettel	2	1	Raikkonen
Ricciardo	1	2	Verstappen
Perez	2	1	Ocon
Stroll	1	2	Sirotkin
Hulkenberg	3	0	Sainz
Gasly	1	2	Hartley
Grosjean	1	2	Magnussen
Vandoorne	0	3	Alonso
Ericsson	2	1	Leclerc

WINS

Vettel	2
Ricciardo	1

FASTEST LAPS

Ricciardo	2
Bottas	1

POLE POSITIONS

Vettel	2
Hamilton	1

STARTING GRID



RACE RESULTS 56 laps - 189.57 miles

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISHTIME	LED	TYRES
1	Daniel Ricciardo (AUS)	Red Bull-Renault	1h35m36.380s	12	USu, Mn, Sn
2	Valtteri Bottas (FIN)	Mercedes	+8.894s	18	Su, Mn,
3	Kimi Raikkonen (FIN)	Ferrari	+9.637s	6	Su, Mn,
4	Lewis Hamilton (GB)	Mercedes	+16.985s		Su, Mn,
5	Max Verstappen (NL)	Red Bull-Renault	+20.436s		USu, Mn, Sn
6	Nico Hulkenberg (D)	Renault	+21.052s		USu, Mn, Sn
7	Fernando Alonso (E)	McLaren-Renault	+30.639s		Sn, Mn,
8	Sebastian Vettel (D)	Ferrari	+35.286s	20	Su, Mn,
9	Carlos Sainz (E)	Renault	+35.763s		USu, Mn, Sn
10	Kevin Magnussen (DK)	Haas-Ferrari	+39.594s		Su, Mn,
11	Esteban Ocon (F)	Force India-Mercedes	+44.050s		Sn, Sn, USn
12	Sergio Perez (MEX)	Force India-Mercedes	+44.725s		USu, Sn, Sn
13	Stoffel Vandoorne (B)	McLaren-Renault	+49.373s		Sn, Mn
14	Lance Stroll (CDN)	Williams-Mercedes	+55.490s		Sn, Mn
15	Sergey Sirotkin (RUS)	Williams-Mercedes	+58.241s		Sn, Mn, Su
16	Marcus Ericsson (S)	Sauber-Ferrari	+1m02.604s		Sn, Mn
17	Romain Grosjean (F)	Haas-Ferrari	+1m05.296s		USu, Mn, USu
18	Pierre Gasly (F)	Toro Rosso-Honda	+1m06.330s		Mn, Sn, USn
19	Charles Leclerc (MC)	Sauber-Ferrari	+1m22.575s		Sn, Mn
R	Brendon Hartley (NZ)	Toro Rosso-Honda	51 laps-gearbox		USn, Mn, Sn

FASTEST LAPS

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	Ricciardo	1m35.785s	-	55
2	Verstappen	1m36.206s	+0.421s	50
3	Raikkonen	1m36.456s	+0.671s	48
4	Hamilton	1m36.878s	+1.093s	20
5	Hulkenberg	1m36.881s	+1.096s	56
6	Bottas	1m36.987s	+1.202s	50
7	Alonso	1m37.234s	+1.449s	56
8	Grosjean	1m37.410s	+1.625s	51
9	Vettel	1m37.479s	+1.694s	24
10	Perez	1m37.673s	+1.888s	54
11	Sainz	1m37.754s	+1.969s	54
12	Ocon	1m37.985s	+2.200s	47
13	Vandoorne	1m38.137s	+2.352s	54
14	Magnussen	1m38.152s	+2.367s	54
15	Gasly	1m38.367s	+2.582s	54
16	Ericsson	1m38.386s	+2.601s	52
17	Stroll	1m38.500s	+2.715s	54
18	Sirotkin	1m38.624s	+2.839s	47
19	Leclerc	1m38.808s	+3.023s	23
20	Hartley	1m39.376s	+3.591s	50

WEATHER 20C, sunny

TYRES n - New set u - Used set Available | SH - Superhard H - Hard M - Medium S - Soft SS - Supersoft US - Ultrasoft HS - Hypersoft Int - Intermediate W - Wet

WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 118.968mph FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED 127.307mph

RACE BRIEFING

GRID PENALTIES

ERICSSON Five-place penalty and three penalty points for failing to slow for double waved yellow flags

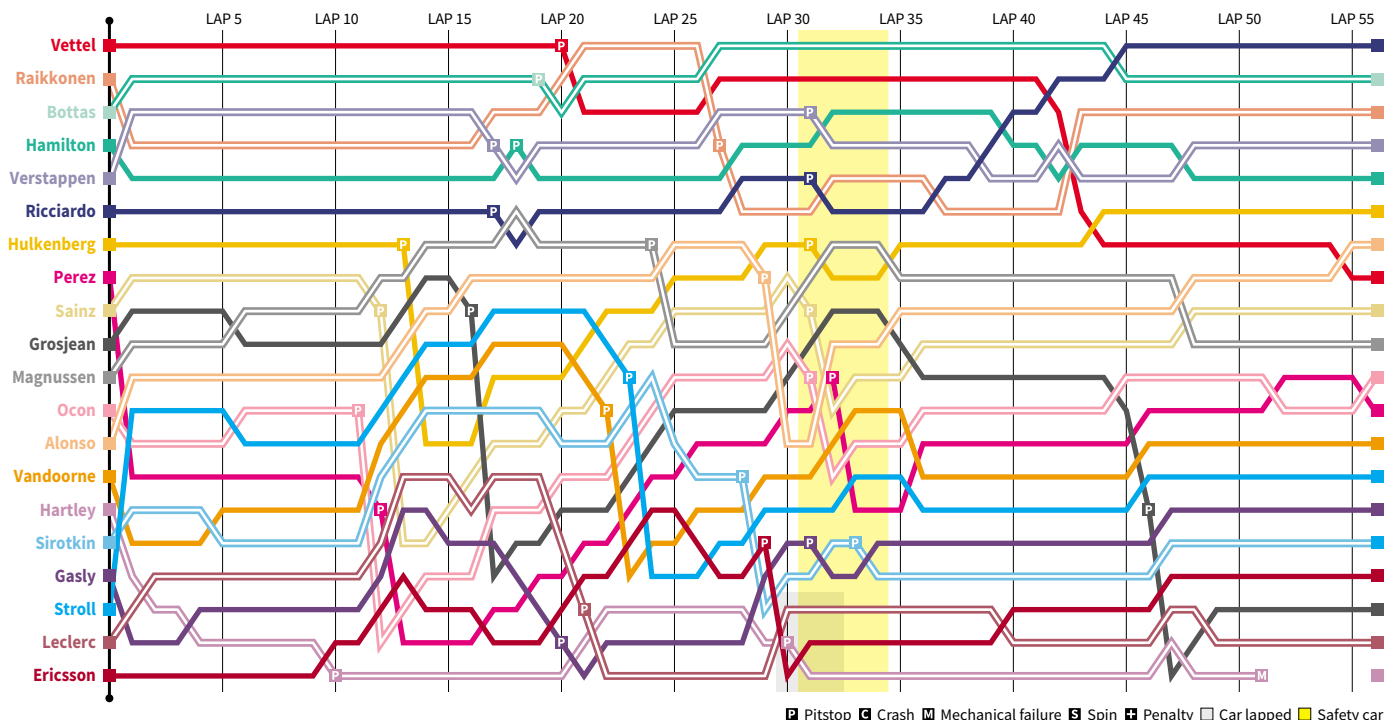
RACE PENALTIES

GASLY 10-second penalty and two penalty points for colliding with Hartley
VERSTAPPEN 10s penalty and two penalty points for colliding with Vettel

STAT
6
Daniel Ricciardo's success was his sixth world championship GP victory

NEXT RACE
APRIL 29
AZERBAIJAN GP
Baku, Azerbaijan

LAP CHART What happened, when



ROLLICKING RICCIARDO CRASHES MERCEDES' PARTY

Valtteri Bottas earns top marks for a performance that should have won him the race, but for an ill-timed safety car that let Daniel Ricciardo strut his stuff

EDD STRAW

MERCEDES



LEWIS HAMILTON

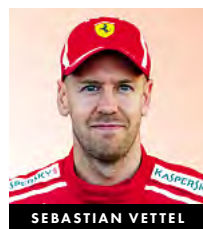


VALTTERI BOTTAS

7 This was a weekend when the usual Lewis Hamilton didn't turn up. He was decent, but lacked his usual spark and admitted the car seemed to turn upside down for him between Friday and Saturday. Qualifying was better than the race, but he still came away with a solid result on Sunday.

10 Bottas had the measure of Hamilton in qualifying and the race, and would have won had the textbook execution of an undercut pass not been cancelled out by the safety car. To be hyper-critical, maybe he could have defended more aggressively against Ricciardo.

FERRARI



SEBASTIAN VETTEL

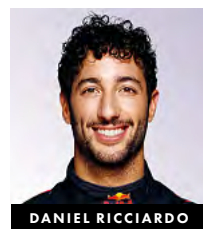


KIMI RAIKKONEN

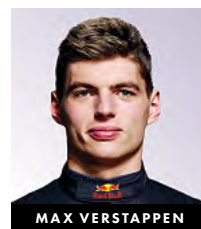
9 Vettel looked set to lose out to Raikkonen in qualifying, but then delivered the lap he needed for pole. Drove well in the first stint and, while he lost the lead to a Bottas undercut, his in-lap didn't compare too badly. The safety car timing and being hit by Verstappen ruined a good race drive.

8 Had the pace to be Ferrari's leading man before losing time on the back straight on his final run. Was a little timid in Turn 1 and lost a place, but wasn't to blame for a strategy that compromised his race to help Vettel. The safety car helped him regain ground, and third was a fair reward.

RED BULL



DANIEL RICCIARDO

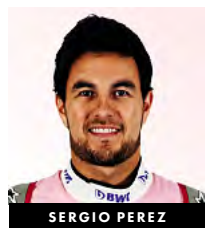


MAX VERSTAPPEN

10 This victory was classic Ricciardo, demanding he be decisive as he climbed from sixth to first in just nine laps. The only real criticism is that he fell 0.152s short of Verstappen in quali, so he needed his team-mate to throw away track position to win, but he can be forgiven for that.

6 Verstappen was certainly quick, but he threw away a chance at victory. Trying to go around Hamilton on the dirty line at Turn 7 was foolhardy and clattering Vettel was clumsy. It's all well and good being very quick, but he needs to complement it with Ricciardo-esque good racing judgement.

FORCE INDIA



SERGIO PEREZ



ESTEBAN OCON

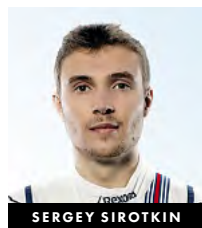
8 Perez's quali performance looked mighty in a Force India that apparently has a fundamental problem. He flirted with the points in the race and was let past Ocon to have a go at Magnussen before having to let his team-mate back past after failing to challenge the Haas.

7 Although Ocon was four places behind Perez in qualifying, this exaggerated a gap that was only 0.126s based on Q2 times. Ocon had a good run in the race, but time lost battling Grosjean cost him a little. Even so, the Force India wasn't a points car on merit, and he was 11th so it's hard to fault him.

WILLIAMS



LANCE STROLL

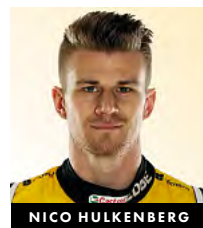


SERGEY SIROTKIN

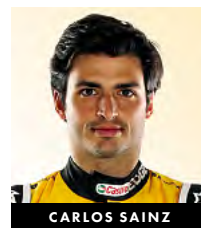
7 Looked very much the number two Williams driver after qualifying, but his weekend came alive when he put in a great first lap to rise from 18th to 12th. Although the car never looked like a points threat, without the safety car he could have been a couple of places better off.

7 A mighty first Q1 lap put him in Q2 contention, although a gust of wind at Turn 6 cost him the time needed to slip into Q2. But he still had 0.223s over Stroll and looked impressive. The race didn't go so well, and after a difficult first lap he later struggled on softs following a second stop.

RENAULT



NICO HULKENBERG



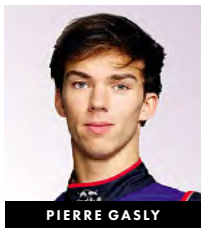
CARLOS SAINZ

10 Hulkenberg, was in a class of his own as best of the rest throughout the weekend and was rewarded with the best possible results in both qualifying and the race. The main pressure point was on a tricky first lap, but he was able to hold onto his position and drive faultlessly from there.

8 Sainz was 0.287s off Hulkenberg in qualifying, partly mitigated by the yellow flag that forced him to use a second set of ultrasofts in Q1 with the knock-on effect of restricting him to one Q3 run. Being pushed wide by Ricciardo at Turn 6 undid a good start, but he drove a decent race to bag points.



TORO ROSSO

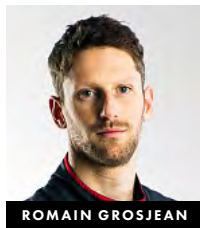


6 Following a gently promising Friday, Gasly struggled with set-up on Saturday. He lost the qualifying battle to Hartley, and in the race the car wasn't a points contender. Clattering his team-mate looked ham-fisted, but was the result of a mismanaged attempt to swap positions.



6 Hartley won the Toro Rosso qualifying battle, lapping 0.088s faster in Q1 to make Q2. He struggled with the ultrasoft in the first stint and had to let Gasly past. He was about to do so again thanks to lapping slower on the same tyres when he was thumped by his team-mate.

HAAS

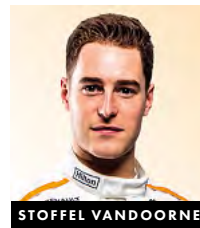


6 Bounced back from a difficult time in practice to make Q3. In the race, he was always battling tyre degradation; lost places at the restart, losing any chance of mitigating the damage done by the safety car. His team-mate showed the situation could have been redeemed.



8 Missed out on Q3 by 0.016s, and really should have been in the top 10. But it meant he didn't have to start on the ultrasofts. The safety car undermined his one-stop strategy and cost a better finish, but unlike team-mate Grosjean he did a great job to hang on and salvage a point on old rubber.

McLAREN



6 Lapped 0.273s off Alonso in qualifying, although that gap was exaggerated by both McLaren drivers only having one proper Q2 run each and Vandoorne having to do his run earlier in the session. After losing places at the start Vandoorne never got back into points contention.

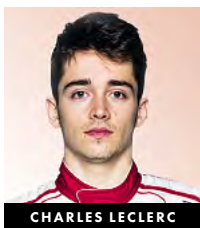


9 The McLaren didn't have the pace to make Q3, and Alonso had his usual gap to Vandoorne on Saturday afternoon. In the race he was his usual relentless self, showing good command of the race situation and capitalising on Vettel's damage to earn the best possible result.

SAUBER



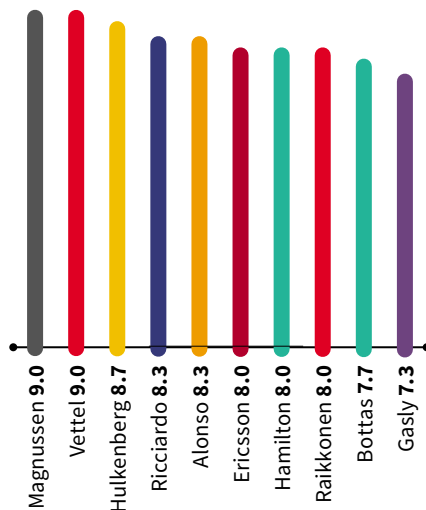
7 Even without the grid penalty for not respecting double-waved yellows when Leclerc spun, Ericsson would have been last after locking up at the hairpin and losing 0.5s on his final Q1 lap. He drove another tidy one-stop race, but never gained enough track position to be a points threat.



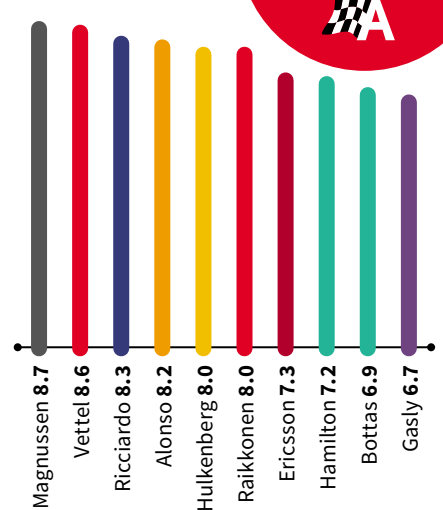
6 Despite the spin, Leclerc was much happier with his quali performance even though he was only ahead of Ericsson. He had a decent first stint, running ahead of Gasly and Ericsson before looping into the gravel after changing tyres. Damaged floor then stymied the rest of his race.

TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS

AUTOSPORT'S RATING AFTER ROUND 3



READERS' RATING AFTER ROUND 3



Bird tops Formula E's new pecking order in Rome

The Briton seized full advantage of his rivals' misfortunes to take victory in the Italian capital and move into second place in the chase to be the electric racing series' next champion

ALEX KALINAUCKAS



Bird chased Rosenqvist until the Swede retired from the lead

With three different title winners from its first three seasons, it's fair to say that Formula E certainly has that prized motorsport trait: success diversity.

And as the electric championship heads into the business end of its fourth season, it's looking increasingly likely that a fourth different champion will be crowned. While the first three FE title winners – Nelson Piquet Jr, Sebastien Buemi and Lucas di Grassi – have struggled to find success in the latest campaign for various reasons, three other drivers have been racking up the points and podium visits.

Heading to Rome for FE's first visit to the Eternal City – with a pre-event personal blessing from the Pope, naturally – Techeetah driver Jean-Eric Vergne enjoyed a 30-point lead over Mahindra Racing's

Felix Rosenqvist, while Sam Bird (Virgin Racing) sat a further three adrift in third.

On race day in Rome, each member of the trio had wildly contrasting fortunes. Rosenqvist, the winner of two races from this campaign's first three events, was undoubtedly the driver to beat around the Circuito Cittadino Dell'EUR – an all-new 1.76-mile track (the second longest on the current FE schedule after Marrakech) set in Rome's residential and business EUR district and surrounded by imposing fascist-era architecture.

The Swede set the fastest time across the two practice sessions – which were disrupted by two crashes for Virgin's Alex Lynn – and then claimed pole position with a mighty lap, flinging his car at the prominent kerbs and close barriers built into the tight and twisty final sector, his margin to fellow front-row starter Bird >>



STALEY/LAT

a massive 0.676 seconds.

When the race got underway on Saturday afternoon – with the startline set on the far side of the circuit near the obelisk in the Piazza Guglielmo Marconi – Rosenqvist looked like he would simply run away with it. For lap after lap he edged away from Bird, with the leading duo on the same strategy to run until lap 16 of the 33-tour race.

At one point Rosenqvist's advantage was up to 3.3s before Bird reeled him again as they approached their pitstops, which were yet again the subject of discussion ahead of the race after the FIA installed new cameras above each driver's second car to monitor their swaps (see page 36).

But nothing untoward hindered Rosenqvist or Bird as they switched to their second machines, and it seemed for a moment as if they would continue their escape/chase routine across the second half. Then all hell broke loose.

First the race had to be neutralised with a full-course yellow after Lynn spun off the road at Turn 10 and was unable to get going again due to an as-yet-unknown technical problem. And when it resumed, Bird was all over the rear of Rosenqvist's car. He mounted an attack heading into the uphill left-hander of Turn 9 – one of the track's most spectacular as it followed two major bumps that caused the cars to jump as they shot over the hill crest, with the drivers having to immediately hit the brakes on landing – but could not get by.

Then on lap 22 a horribly familiar feeling hit the Mahindra team as the TV coverage cut to Rosenqvist pulling over to the side of the road and stopping – just two races on from a similar scenario playing out in Mexico, when he led from pole and was stymied by a battery system issue.

But it was clear to see what had happened this time around as Rosenqvist's left-rear wheel sat at an odd angle, the result of a sudden suspension failure. In the immediate aftermath of the race he was at a loss to explain why this had occurred. A heavy kerb-strike at the Turn 18/19 penultimate chicane was thought to be the most likely cause, but the 26-year-old, who had been so spectacular at attacking the kerbs throughout the day, insisted he had not done anything differently on the lap in question.

"We have to find out what was wrong and if there is something wrong in the design, if we have to take less kerb or if I was driving too much over the kerb, I don't know," he said. "It was the one in Turn 18 [that I hit] – exiting the chicane. It's not really the one you hit a lot. I would say there are other kerbs on the track that have a bigger impact, so for me it was quite strange to have [it] happen there. I don't know exactly which part of the suspension [broke] – I lost drive as my driveshaft went out the gearbox and I couldn't continue. So, that's why I had to park it immediately."

Rosenqvist's loss was Bird's big gain,



as the Briton inherited the lead and a comfortable advantage over the chasing pack with 11 laps remaining. But there was more drama to come thanks to the variety of energy management strategies in use.

The most spectacular approach was arguably that of Dragon driver Jerome D'Ambrosio, who saved enough energy throughout the first stint (including by intentionally not hitting the power at the start and simply rolling off the line, even though that meant falling to last) to run two laps longer than anyone else. His reward: seventh place at the finish, a positive result given that his race had been compromised by a team time "miscalculation", meaning he did not cross the line to start a flying lap in qualifying. Antonio Felix da Costa went the other way

and pitted a lap earlier than the rest of the field following some attacking driving in the early stages from 20th on the grid as a result of his own qualifying woe (see page 36).

But the different approach taken by the rest of the frontrunners outside Rosenqvist, Bird and Buemi (who had run sixth in the first stint before rising to third thanks to the early-stop tactic), was to go one lap further and then attack in the second half of the race. This was the strategy of Jaguar's Mitch Evans, Techeetah driver Andre Lotterer and Audi pair di Grassi and Daniel Abt. One driver to fall out of the battle for third – having been right among it early on – was NIO's Oliver Turvey, who leaped up to fifth with a smart move around the outside of the first corner before suddenly falling down the order as he approached





Rosenqvist takes control at the start

S BLOWHAWK/LAT

his pitstop due to a sudden lack of energy, despite “everything [being] on target”.

Turvey’s problems meant he was very slow on his final lap in his first car and got caught up in a bizarre (and brief) pile-up at the hairpin. A tap from the inside-attacking Jose Maria Lopez knocked him into the outside-attacking Nick Heidfeld, trapping the NIO and Mahindra-run cars against the barrier, after which Luca Filippi and Edoardo Mortara clattered into the back of them before all were able to escape.

Armed with an energy advantage, Evans and di Grassi – who had fought his way past Lotterer and then Buemi with a pair of bold passes – were coming back at Rosenqvist and Bird when the former retired.

Rosenqvist’s exit helped Bird twice: with his car stricken metres beyond the finish line, a second FCY was needed to recover it. This allowed Bird to save energy, after which Evans was “completely destroyed”. “I had used a lot to catch up to him [Bird], then the second one completely saved him”, the New Zealander later explained.

Evans had “one opportunity to pass” Bird, which came at Turn 9, followed by the run to 10 on lap 29, but he could not pull it off and fell into the clutches of di Grassi – giving Bird what would become crucial breathing space.

“I used way too much energy on that lap and it was a downward spiral from there,” said Evans, as di Grassi seized second two laps later with a successful attack over the Turn 9 bumps.

“I turned just before the jump, went on the inside and then during the jump I was already on the inside when we landed,” said di Grassi. “They could not change their >>

FORMULA E RESPLENDENT IN ROME



LAT IMAGES

STALEY/LAT

Back in 2012 Rome was announced as the first European city to join Formula E’s preliminary calendar for its inaugural season in 2014/15 – alongside an appearance by the series’ initial show car at the Colosseum.

The race never happened for that campaign, but last weekend Rome became the 18th urban centre to host a race, with mayor Virginia Raggi and a host of stars – including actor Sienna Miller, up-and-coming cyclist Gianni Moscon, Flavio Briatore and Giancarlo Fisichella – in attendance. Felipe Massa also appeared to reiterate his desire to find an FE race seat.

“Rome was the first [European city where Formula E intended to race] and that’s a fact,” said FE CEO Alejandro Agag. “There were a lot of press there, we did a press conference five years ago, both presidents [the FIA’s Jean Todt and

the Automobile Club d’Italia’s Angelo Sticchi Damiani] were there and it was our first city that we dreamed to race at. Finally we made it a reality – so that is huge for us – finally [having] our race in Rome, our first love.”

And many Romans loved FE back. The Circuito Cittadino Dell’EUR was packed with fans on race day, creating a brilliant atmosphere to complement the track that wrapped around the EUR district. Even if Felix Rosenqvist had waltzed to the win, such a fine performance would have honoured the specular circuit – comfortably one of FE’s finest thanks to its elevation changes, width variety, and bumps and jumps.

“Rome was fantastic, the crowd was delighted – and so I’m delighted for the championship, for Alejandro – because it’s a great achievement,” said Renault e.dams team principle Jean-Paul Driot.



LAT IMAGES

BAGNELL/LAT

IN THE HEADLINES



PIQUET OVERDOES IT

Nelson Piquet Jr (above) was given a suspended three-place grid penalty for completing more than the permitted six laps during shakedown. The ruling will come into effect if the Brazilian repeats the offence at any other race this season. After qualifying down in 13th due to a lock-up at the hairpin on his flying lap, Piquet retired from the race when he stopped in the pitlane moments after his car swap due to his seatbelts coming undone.

PITLANE DUST UP

Jose Maria Lopez and Antonio Felix da Costa were involved in a bizarre pitlane crash during qualifying that stopped them both from setting a time in that session. Lopez emerged from his garage a fraction before da Costa pulled away, and the latter speared into the side of the Dragon-run car, pinning it against the pitwall. Da Costa was handed a 10-place grid penalty as a result (he served a 10-second penalty during the race instead after starting last anyway), with his Andretti squad fined €10,000.

LOTTERER LEARNING

Andre Lotterer scored the second podium of his rookie Formula E season and felt he could have done even better had he not saved too much energy in the second stint. “[I’m] still learning a lot about how to race perfectly in Formula E,” he said.

THE FIA IS WATCHING

Governing body the FIA installed cameras above each driver’s second car to monitor their car-swap procedure. The move follows incidents at recent races after the removal of the minimum pitstop time, and a clarification of the rules in Punta del Este. Lucas di Grassi’s camera detected a possible issue with his swap, but the reigning champion and his Audi team were cleared of wrongdoing.



line in the air, and that was the strategy I used to overtake Mitch and Andre.”

Di Grassi chased after Bird but ended up 0.970s adrift as Bird took his seventh FE victory and moved into a clear second place on the all-time win list behind Buemi’s 12.

“I honestly didn’t think I’d be sitting here [with the win] today,” said Bird. “When I saw the pace of Felix I thought the best I could hope for was second place. I knew Lucas would be hunting on the last lap, so it was a case of putting my car in the right place at

the right time, and it worked out well.”

Evans’ result was poor reward for his shining performance – which included his best-ever qualifying position of third – in Rome. He forcefully rebuffed Lotterer’s attacks at Turns 9 and 10 on laps 31 and 32, but could not respond on the final tour and had to “creep” back to finish ninth at the line.

Lotterer headed Abt in fourth, with Buemi fading to sixth after having a “not normal” energy problem, according to Renault e.dams team boss Jean-Paul Driot.



Lotterer took second podium of rookie season



Bird thought the best he'd get was second, so was delighted to win



S. BLOX / LAT

Di Grassi chased hard but had to settle for second

LAT IMAGES

RESULTS ROUND 6/10, ROME (I), APRIL 14 (33 LAPS – 59.235 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM/CAR	TIME
1	Sam Bird (GB)	DS Virgin Racing / DS Virgin DSV-03	58m20.656s
2	Lucas di Grassi (BR)	Audi Sport Abt / Audie-tron FE04	+0.970s
3	Andre Lotterer (D)	Techeetah / Renault Z.E.17	+9.518s
4	Daniel Abt (D)	Audi Sport Abt / Audie-tron FE04	+10.167s
5	Jean-Eric Vergne (F)	Techeetah / Renault Z.E.17	+17.444s
6	Sebastien Buemi (CH)	Renault e.dams / Renault Z.E.17	+19.835s
7	Jerome d'Ambrosio (B)	Dragon Racing / Penske EV-2	+24.379s
8	Maro Engel (D)	Venturi / Venturi VM200-FE-03	+26.350s
9	Mitch Evans (NZ)	Jaguar / Jaguar I-type 2	+37.709s
10	Edoardo Mortara (I)	Venturi / Venturi VM200-FE-03	+40.739s
11	Antonio Felix da Costa (P)	Andretti / Andretti ATEC-03	+42.680s
12	Oliver Turvey (GB)	NIO / NextEV NIO 003	+48.833s
13	Luca Filippi (I)	NIO / NextEV NIO 003	+49.331s
14	Nicolas Prost (F)	Renault e.dams / Renault Z.E.17	+1m13.880s
15	Tom Blomqvist (GB)	Andretti / Andretti ATEC-03	+1m31.832s
16	Nick Heidfeld (D)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M4ELECTRO	+1m44.774s
17	Jose Maria Lopez (RA)	Dragon Racing / Penske EV-2	-4 laps
R	Felix Rosenqvist (S)	Mahindra Racing / Mahindra M4ELECTRO	22 laps-suspension
R	Nelson Piquet Jr (BR)	Jaguar / Jaguar I-type 2	18 laps-seatbelts
R	Alex Lynn (GB)	DS Virgin Racing / DS Virgin DSV-03	15 laps-technical

Winner's average speed 60.916mph. **Fastest lap** Abt 1m37.910s, 65.342mph.

SUPERPOLE 1 Rosenqvist 1m36.311s; **2** Bird 1m36.987s; **3** Evans 1m37.199s; **4** Lotterer 1m37.235s; **5** Buemi 1m37.817s.
QUALIFYING 1 Lotterer 1m36.593s; **2** Rosenqvist 1m36.683s; **3** Buemi 1m36.732s; **4** Bird 1m36.901s; **5** Evans 1m36.911s;
6 di Grassi 1m36.973s; **7** Turvey 1m37.045s; **8** Vergne 1m37.055s; **9** Abt 1m37.117s; **10** Heidfeld 1m37.365s;
11 Lynn 1m37.546s; **12** Blomqvist 1m37.561s; **13** Piquet 1m38.066s; **14** Engel 1m38.212s; **15** Prost 1m38.410s;
16 d'Ambrosio 1m42.003s; **17** Mortara 1m47.802s; **18** Filippi 2m09.829s; **19** Lopez no time; **20** da Costa no time.

CHAMPIONSHIP 1 Vergne 119; **2** Bird 101; **3** Rosenqvist 82; **4** Buemi 60; **5** Abt 50; **6** Piquet 45; **7** Evans 43; **8** di Grassi 39;
9 Lotterer 33; **10** Turvey 32

For Vergne, the Rome race was a subdued affair. After missing superpole, he started eighth and survived being hit hard up the rear by Lynn on the opening lap. Although he was more attacking in the second half of the race, he would have finished seventh had Rosenqvist and Evans not had their issues.

“I was very slow today,” he conceded. “I need to understand why and I need to work to maintain the car better for [the next round in] Paris.”

Vergne insisted that injured ligaments in his left hand – sustained during Friday car-swap practice – did not hold him back, while his team boss Mark Preston reckoned the disrupted practices that stopped the Frenchman from doing a 200kW-lap qualifying simulation cost him crucial momentum.

“[Later in the race he was] probably just being conservative and making sure he got home with points and realising who he was racing and just waiting for the right times that maybe didn’t occur,” Preston explained.

The result means that Vergne’s lead is now 18 points over Bird, with Rosenqvist down to third, 19 further back. The battle to be FE’s newest champion is finely poised heading into the final five races – and, as Rosenqvist’s failure proves, it’s pointless to predict who will come out on top at the end of the season. ❄



Rossi rises above the street fighters

Lots of action and star performers made the Long Beach IndyCar race a good one, but there was never any doubt about the eventual winner

DAVID MALSHER

There were tales of woe and what might have been up and down the paddock after last Sunday's 44th Grand Prix of Long Beach. But the truth is that they were all – the realists, anyway – ruining missed opportunities to finish second. The winner was never really in doubt. Only a shunt or an ill-timed caution period could have thrown Alexander Rossi off course. Had the race gone caution-free, he would have won by an even greater margin.

The Andretti Autosport-Honda driver led every session bar Friday morning's, and looked completely unruffled in the nine-lap shootout at the end when he came under attack from Team Penske-Chevrolet's Will Power. Having taken pole by 0.35 seconds,

Rossi wasn't going to let it all slip away in the deciding laps. While second-placed Power threw everything he had – including vast reserves of carefully stored push-to-pass boost – at the task, he could only match the leader. He was never close enough, even for a do-or-die attack at any point around the classic 1.968-mile track.

And if he had? "We had a bit in reserve, no doubt about it," said a modest but clearly elated Rossi. "I was happy with the gap to second. I knew where and how much push-to-pass Will was using. He definitely started those nine laps with more than we did, and I let him burn it out a bit. But yeah, we had enough pace in reserve if we absolutely had to use it."

If you can call it good fortune, the yellows

didn't go against Rossi, even if they did eliminate his lead at times. Also working in his favour was Honda power and driveability out of the final 35mph hairpin, Turn 11.

"Turn 11 is kind of the most important corner on the track because it leads on to the longest straight, so we put quite a bit of focus on that throughout the weekend, even for a qualifying lap to be able to get good drive out of there," said Rossi. "And the Honda engines have pretty amazing driveability, and that allowed me to do what we were doing today."

"But then you have to not only get a good drive out of the last corner, but you have to be quick on cold tyres and all those things, and in order to do that, you have to have a car that allows you to



And obviously I did all weekend..."

Aside from fifth-starting Graham Rahal punting third-place man Simon Pagenaud into the wall and retirement at Turn 1 on lap one, the racing at Long Beach was clean in the first half of the event – which is not to say it was devoid of action. While the 2018 aerokit has made the cars much more fuel-efficient and several teams were sure the 85-lap race would require only two stops, the smart ones split strategies, with some going for three stops.

Josef Newgarden, for example, started 'only' sixth having bashed a wall hard in the Firestone Fast Six final segment of qualifying, and would make three stops, while Penske team-mate Power was on a two-stopper. That meant Power was in fuel-save mode for much of the opening stint, ahead of Scott Dixon's Chip Ganassi Racing-Honda and Sebastien Bourdais, who had moved up from ninth on the grid using the primary tyres.

The Dale Coyne Racing driver wasn't the highest starter on the harder compound; that was Ryan Hunter-Reay, who would likely have joined Andretti Autosport team-mate Rossi on the front row had he not been penalised for a pit exit violation in Q2 on Saturday and relegated to seventh. However, the 2010 Long Beach winner's weekend got even worse when he left his front wing alongside Dixon's rear wheel into Turn 1, made contact and suffered damage, obliging him to pit under the yellow caused by Pagenaud's accident.

Hunter-Reay's demotion, along with >>

JONES AND VEACH GET A DAY IN THE SPOTLIGHT

IF YOU COULD TEAR YOUR EYES AWAY from the Alexander Rossi v Will Power duel at the front, or anticipating what fate might yet hurl at Sebastien Bourdais and Ryan Hunter-Reay, one of the most entertaining battles during the closing stages in Long Beach was that between Chip Ganassi Racing's IndyCar sophomore Ed Jones and the Andretti Autosport rookie Zach Veach.

Each had a fairly anonymous weekend in the St Petersburg opener in March. Jones ran in the top five at Phoenix in round two but then shunted, so both arrived at the third event needing confidence boosts.

"I've been happy with my race pace," said Veach, "but I'm giving myself too much work to do because of where we qualify. I'm getting my qualifying laps 80% right at the moment, but you can't afford to give up anything. We're starting too far back, so that's what I need to work on."

Since the final restart was within 15 laps of the end, the backmarkers were made to drive through the pitlane, so in theory third-placed Jones had a clear run at Power and leader Rossi. However, instead he had to watch his mirrors because Veach was filling them. At one point Veach had a run at him around the outside, but Jones fought fairly – as ever – and defended successfully. He brought himself his first top-three finish since his third place at last year's Indy 500 for Dale Coyne Racing.

"It's been an up-and-down start to the season for me with Chip Ganassi Racing," said Jones. "It's a big move for me after my rookie season. We struggled this weekend

early on, especially on Friday. We made some good jumps for Saturday, but we still qualified 13th, which wasn't good enough.

"But the guys played a great strategy [three stops] and did great pitstops, and we were a little bit lucky with the yellows as well, to be able to end up third."

Veach, meanwhile, admitted his two previous mediocre results had played a part in how he tackled Jones, although he was quite determined to hold off the charging Graham Rahal, who had used up his push-to-pass boost already.

"Fourth feels like a win, to be honest," said Veach. "The crew was pushing me pretty hard at the end to try to get on the podium but... after St Pete, after Phoenix, we've just been chipping away on it and we took a big swing at it today.

"I kind of made a mishap in qualifying to put us 16th. Today we had great strategy, great stops. They got me to where I could capitalise on it so this is more for them than me."

Ed Carpenter Racing's Jordan King had the opposite problem – greater pace, but less luck. His strategy had been working but his braking issue – as well as his self-induced penalty for punting Bourdais – served to relegate him from a potential podium finish to 18th.

"I'm obviously really gutted," said the British rookie. "You can see where we were racing, we were definitely on for a podium. We can't control a mechanical failure like we had, so it was out of our hands I suppose. It is just annoying that we could have been on the podium and got nothing from today."



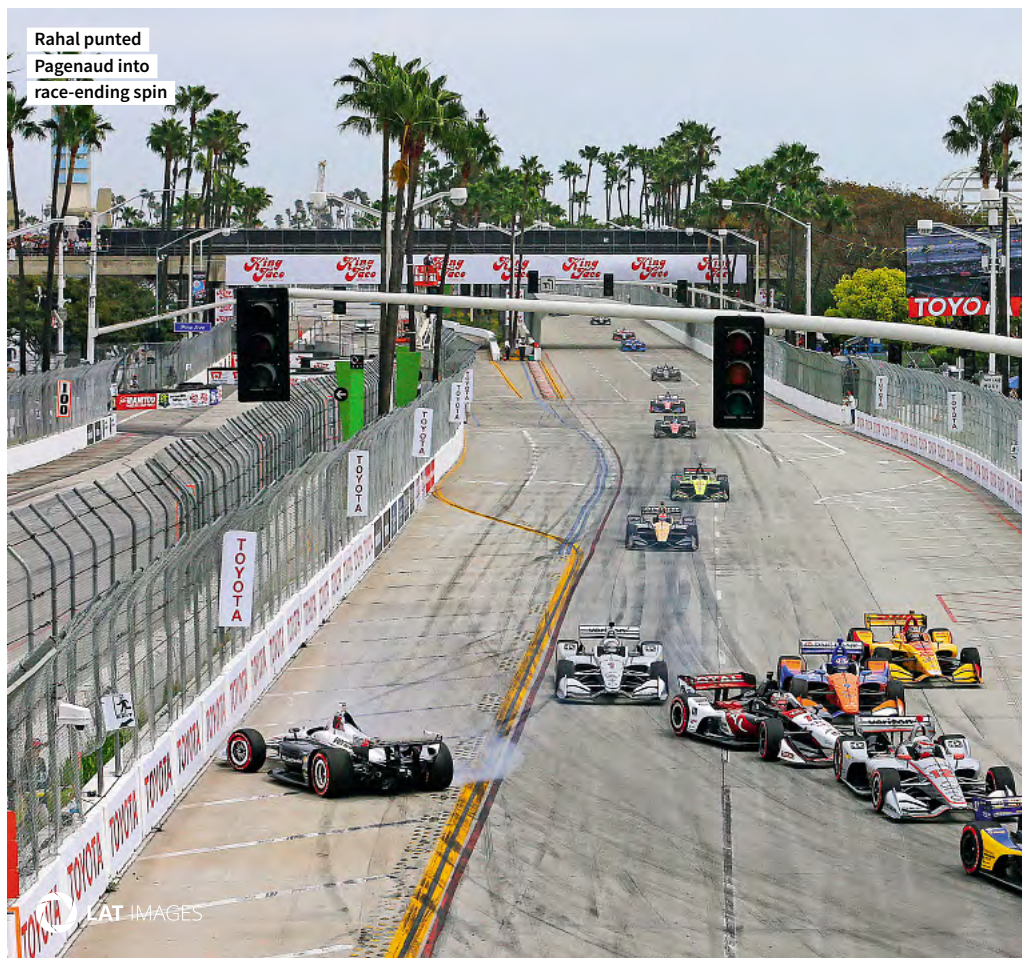
Pagenaud's retirement and Rahal's subsequent drivethrough penalty, elevated Bourdais to sixth, which became fifth when James Hinchcliffe made a mistake on lap 11, and fourth when Newgarden came in for his first of three stops.

Rossi was the first of the two-stoppers to pit, on lap 25, while holding a 3.5s margin over Power, who then went for it and pulled a margin of 2.5s over Dixon behind him by lap 28. However, Power then caught up with backmarkers, so that his edge over Dixon had sunk back to 1.5s when the pair pitted the next lap, along with Bourdais. Dixon narrowly got the jump over his fellow Antipodean as they left the pits, and on the out-lap Power also had to concede to team-mate Newgarden who had come rushing up behind them on warm tyres.

All three were now eight seconds behind Rossi, however, and all would fall victim to Bourdais. As Dixon, Newgarden and Power had switched from red tyres to black, so Bourdais had gone in the opposite direction and was in feisty mood. He surged past Power on lap 36, Newgarden on 38 – Josef made his second stop a lap later – and closed on Dixon.

Dixon closed in on Rossi in traffic, halving his deficit to around four seconds when, on lap 42, out came the second full-course caution of the day. Kyle Kaiser had stopped his Juncos Racing-Chevrolet in an escape road and needed a tow-in. None of the leading runners chose this moment to make a stop. Rossi had an easy restart on lap 47, since there were three backmarkers between himself and Dixon, and these were to prove Dixon's undoing. On the run down to Turn 1 on lap 48, he finally made a move on a lapped car, but by then Bourdais was already drawing alongside the pair of them and suddenly had to go three-wide. Not content with elevating himself to second, Bourdais then cut back across to the inside of the track to lap Matheus Leist in the AJ Foyt Racing car.

Unfortunately, his three-car pass incurred the wrath of the stewards for using the pitlane exit, so he had to give second back to Dixon – but then immediately he



Rahal punted Pagenaud into race-ending spin

repassed his fellow four-time champ. Bourdais was, however, now seven seconds behind Rossi, and on lap 56, Andretti Autosport team manager Rob Edwards called Rossi in for his second stop.

Three laps later, having again laid down some fast times at the end of his stint, Power was in once more... and just in time. The following lap, Bourdais' team-mate for the weekend, Zachary Claman DeMelo, struck a wall, causing a full course caution, and as usual the pits were closed. But Bourdais and Dixon were already committed to the pitlane. While Coyne ordered its driver to go around again, Ganassi did not

say the same to Dixon, and instead carried out a full service on the #9. He would thus receive a drivethrough penalty, dropping him out of contention.

Bourdais, meanwhile, 're-stopped' on lap 62 when the pits opened, as did Newgarden, and the pair fell to 11th and ninth respectively. And Bourdais' day would get worse still. In the course of trying to salvage something from a race in which he would surely once more have finished on the podium, the Coyne driver clashed with both Carlin Racing's Charlie Kimball (damaging his suspension) and Leist.

Worst of all was the incident on lap 71 when Ed Carpenter Racing's Jordan King – who had himself excelled and might have scored a podium finish until requiring a long pitstop to have his brake fluid reservoir topped up – dived down the inside of Hinchcliffe's Schmidt Peterson Motorsports-Honda at the Turn 11 hairpin. King's nose caught the rear of Bourdais' car and spun it broadside across the track.

This incident, which blocked the track and therefore brought out the full-course-yellows for a fourth time, also involved Robert Wickens, who'd made several stops to fix a faulty gearbox, and Hunter-Reay who was simply cursed on this occasion. Following his first-lap miscue, the 2012 champion had charged back up the field, but had then had a rear tyre slashed by



Bourdais had an action-packed but fruitless race



RESULTS ROUND 3/16, LONG BEACH (USA), APRIL 15 (85 LAPS – 167.28 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Alexander Rossi (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	1h53m15.2434s
2	Will Power (AUS)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+1.2413s
3	Ed Jones (GB)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+9.2906s
4	Zach Veach (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+10.1050s
5	Graham Rahal (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+10.7466s
6	Marco Andretti (USA)	Andretti Herta Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+11.5513s
7	Josef Newgarden (USA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+12.2175s
8	Tony Kanaan (BR)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	+16.1048s
9	James Hinchcliffe (CDN)	Schmidt Peterson Motorsports / Dallara-Honda	+16.4757s
10	Charlie Kimball (USA)	Carlin / Dallara-Chevrolet	+17.0119s
11	Scott Dixon (NZ)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+17.3301s
12	Jack Harvey (GB)	Michael Shank Racing with Schmidt Peterson / Dallara-Honda	+18.3469s
13	Sebastien Bourdais (F)	Dale Coyne Racing with Vasser-Sullivan / Dallara-Honda	+18.9443s
14	Matheus Leist (BR)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	+18.9466s
15	Spencer Pigot (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
16	Kyle Kaiser (USA)	Juncos Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
17	Max Chilton (GB)	Carlin / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
18	Jordan King (GB)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-1 lap
19	Gabby Chaves (CO)	Harding Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-2 laps
20	Ryan Hunter-Reay (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	-4 laps
21	Takuma Sato (J)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	-11 laps
22	Robert Wickens (CDN)	Schmidt Peterson Motorsports / Dallara-Honda	-12 laps
23	Zachary Claman DeMelo (CDN)	Dale Coyne Racing / Dallara-Honda	58 laps-accident
24	Simon Pagenaud (F)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	0 laps-accident

Takuma Sato following the mid-race restart. Now stationary behind the three-point-turning Bourdais, Hunter-Reay seemed to have spent the whole weekend being in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Up front for the restart with nine laps to go, Rossi immediately pulled away from Power, but Penske's 2014 champion had been saving copious amounts of push-to-pass boost from the original allocation of 200s each, and he got back to within seven tenths of the leader before Edwards gave Rossi the hurry-up. In short, Power using overboost could just about match Rossi, but no more than that. The pair crossed the line 1.24s apart.

The troubles of faster runners such as Dixon, Bourdais, Pagenaud, Rahal and Newgarden allowed Ed Jones to score his first podium for Chip Ganassi Racing and Zach Veach to grab fourth place in only his third race for Andretti Autosport. A late pass on Marco Andretti yielded fifth for Rahal, but Newgarden's day had been ruined by the way the caution flags worked with his three-stop policy, and he had to not only settle for seventh but also cede the championship lead to Rossi.

"I think [Rossi] is going to be tough to beat in the championship," said Power. "He's definitely what I'd call the standout of the field right now in every respect... Yeah, you'll have to beat him, I think." ❦

Winner's average speed 88.622mph.
Fastest lap Newgarden 1m07.5511s, 104.881mph.

- Q3** 1 Rossi 1m06.5528s;
- 2 Power 1m06.9054s;
- 3 Pagenaud 1m06.9107s;
- 4 Dixon 1m07.0483s;
- 5 Rahal 1m07.1275s;
- 6 Newgarden 1m07.1922s.

- Q2** Power 1m06.5709s;
- Rossi 1m06.8326s;
- Dixon 1m06.8341s;

- Newgarden 1m06.8833s;
- Pagenaud 1m06.9057s;
- Rahal 1m07.0903s;
- 7 Hunter-Reay 1m07.1415s;
- 8 Hinchcliffe 1m07.1899s;
- 9 Bourdais 1m07.1943s;
- 10 Wickens 1m07.2289s;
- 11 Kanaan 1m07.3478s;
- 12 King 1m07.6427s.

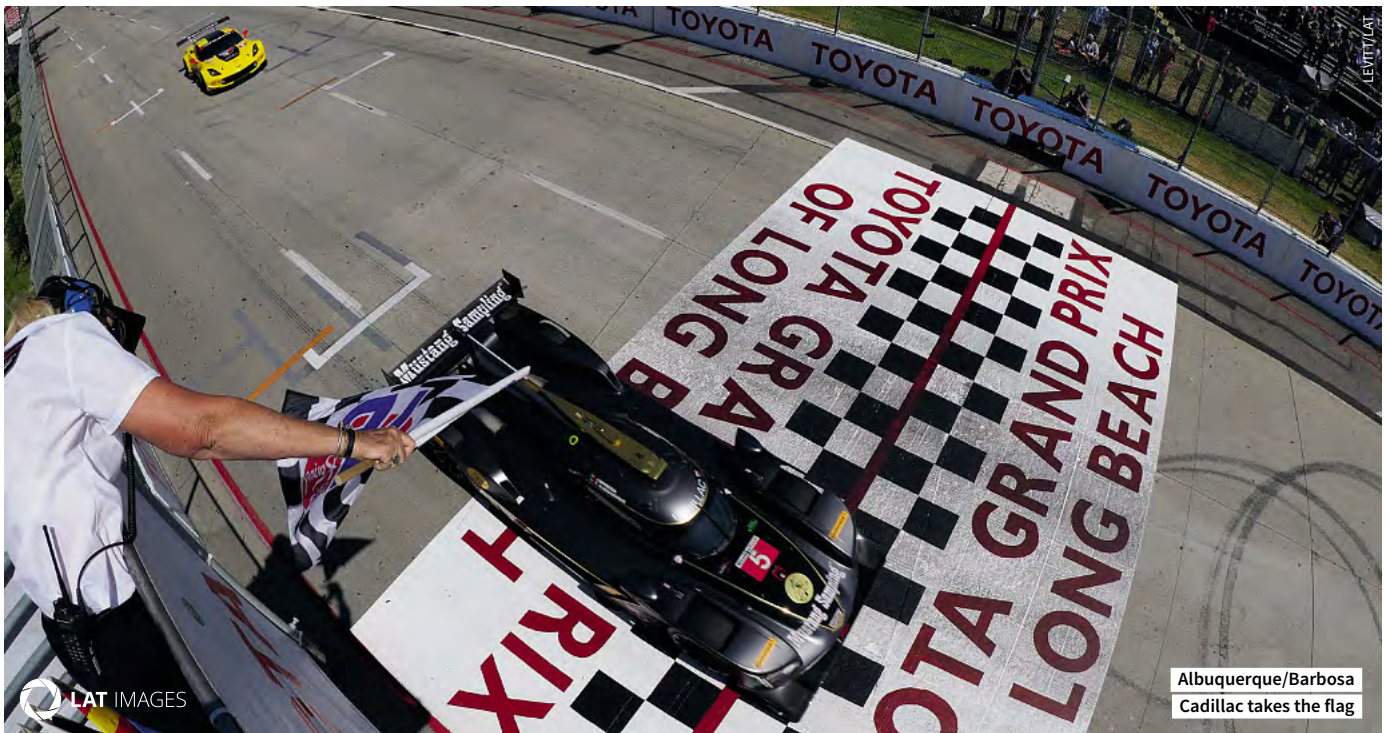
- Q1 - GROUP 1**
- Rossi 1m07.1718s;
- Pagenaud 1m07.5481s;
- Bourdais 1m07.5662s;
- Power 1m07.5874s;

- Hinchcliffe 1m07.6893s;
- Kanaan 1m07.8917s;
- 14 Leist 1m08.1622s;
- 16 Veach 1m08.1763s;
- 18 Pigot 1m08.2739s;
- 20 Andretti 1m08.5294s;
- 22 Sato 1m08.6340s;
- 24 Kaiser no time.

- Q1 - GROUP 2**
- Hunter-Reay 1m07.7058s;
- Dixon 1m07.7897s;
- Newgarden 1m07.8123s;
- Wickens 1m07.9894s;
- Rahal 1m08.0364s;

- King 1m08.2933s;
- 13 Jones 1m08.3844s;
- 15 Chilton 1m08.7167s;
- 17 Harvey 1m08.8207s;
- 19 Chaves 1m08.8623s;
- 21 Claman 1m09.1429s;
- 23 Kimball 1m09.7481s.

- CHAMPIONSHIP**
- 1 Rossi 126; 2 Newgarden 104; 3 Rahal 93; 4 Bourdais 88; 5 Hinchcliffe 83; 6 Dixon 79; 7 Hunter-Reay 73; 8 Power 72; 9 Jones 69; 10 Andretti 68.



Albuquerque/Barbosa
Cadillac takes the flag

Cadillac duo defeats the Penske Acuras

IMSA
LONG BEACH
APRIL 14
ROUND 3 / 12

Split strategies are the smart way to tackle the IMSA SportsCar Championship's shortest and most frantic race, and the Action Express team played the game to perfection to win at Long Beach with Felipe Albuquerque and Joao Barbosa. But you need a fast and consistent car too, and perhaps surprisingly, that is not (yet) a description which can be applied to the Acura Team Penske ARX-05s that had looked so strong in qualifying.

Juan Pablo Montoya took pole position and led away, chased by Action Express's other Cadillac, piloted by Felipe Nasr, while behind them Helio Castroneves jumped Harry Tincknell's Mazda to grab third in the second Acura. At this point, Barbosa bided his time in fifth.

But while Montoya and Nasr edged away from the pack, Nasr looked increasingly impatient to hit the front. On lap 21, along the back straight, he was in the perfect position for a brave pass. Montoya didn't move to block the inside at Turn 9, and the Cadillac moved smoothly into the lead.

A full-course-yellow flew almost immediately to retrieve the JDC-Miller entry stranded in the Turn 1 run-off, but neither of the front two broke for the pitlane; and that was their undoing, since the other potential winners did stop. Mazda Team Joest jumped Acura Team Penske to send out Jonathan Bomarito – in for Tincknell – in third ahead of Castroneves' co-driver, Ricky Taylor, although Taylor quickly rectified that. Albuquerque remained fifth having taken over from Barbosa in Cadillac #5, ahead of the Scott Sharp/Ryan Dalziel ESM Nissan and the Wayne Taylor Racing Cadillac of Jordan Taylor/Renger van der Zande.

On the restart Nasr pulled a 10s gap over Montoya, but with 45 minutes to go, they pitted and effectively fell out of contention. Albuquerque, having charged past Ricky Taylor, now had a decisive lead. On a late restart the #7 Acura also fell victim to a charging Dalziel, tumbling thereafter to sixth, ceding spots to WTR, the Mazda of Oliver Jarvis, and the sister Penske machine.

The GT Le Mans battle was no less enthralling after Porsche's Laurens Vanthoor grabbed the lead from polesitter Joey Hand's Ford GT. Jan Magnussen rose to third in the #3 Corvette Racing C7.R ahead of Patrick Pilet's Porsche – which left its front airdam under the diffuser of Hand's Ford after a first-lap rub. The second Corvette of Oliver Gavin, and Richard Westbrook's Ford, gave chase ahead of the two BMWs.

Hand remained tucked under the rear wing of Vanthoor throughout the early stages, but in what could have been a key move Connor de Phillippi pitted his BMW M8 to hand over to Alexander Sims with 70 minutes still to go. When the second yellow of the race flew, all the other cars stopped and the #25 BMW cycled to the front. However, Sims clouted the wall in Turn 9, while Tommy Milner, who'd taken over from Gavin, passed the second-placed Ford now driven by Dirk Muller. When Earl Bamber's right-front suspension collapsed in the leading Porsche, the #4 Corvette hit the front and remained there.

Behind, a great battle between the Fords of Muller and Ryan Briscoe ended with Briscoe ahead, while Antonio Garcia claimed fourth in the other Corvette.

DAVID MALSHER



Returnees engineer a masterpiece

ELMS
PAUL RICARD (F)
APRIL 15
ROUND 1 / 6

Formula 2 exile Racing Engineering made a winning return to the European Le Mans Series as Olivier Pla, Norman Nato and Paul Petit led home an ORECA sweep of the top seven at the Paul Ricard season-opener.

On its first outing in an ACO-sanctioned event since the 1000km of Estoril in 2001, the Spanish squad capitalised on drama for early leaders DragonSpeed to beat Matthieu Vaxiviere, Loic Duval and Francois Perrodo's guesting TDS Racing ORECA by 4.8 seconds.

Nato ran second behind DragonSpeed's Nicolas Lapierre in the first hour, before a puncture for Lapierre towards the end of his second stint promoted Racing Engineering to the lead. DragonSpeed then retired after Henrik Hedman tangled with Duncan Cameron's Ferrari 488 GTE, bringing out a safety car which allowed Andre Negroa's



Alpine-badged Signatech ORECA to close in on Petit's lead.

The positions were reversed for the final hour as Negroa's team-mate Pierre Thiriet jumped ahead of Pla in the driver changes, but the Ford factory driver rallied and made a decisive pass around the outside at Signes on lap 97 of 129.

Vaxiviere used a shorter final pitstop to clear the Duqueine Engineering ORECA of Nico Jamin, Pierre Ragues and Nelson Panciatici, which took a podium on the team's first appearance in LMP2, while

Thiriet tumbled to fifth at the finish behind the TDS-run G-Drive Racing ORECA of Roman Rusinov, Andrea Pizzitola and Alexandre Imperatori.

John Farano, Rob Garofall and Job van Uitert dominated in LMP3 to give RLR MSport its first win since Imola 2015, while Miguel Molina, Alex MacDowall and Liam Griffin (Ferrari) left it late to secure class honours for defending GTE champion JMW Motorsport. Molina passed Matteo Cairoli's Proton Competition Porsche 911 RSR on the final lap.

Fewtrell narrowly misses out on a Eurocup double

FORMULA RENAULT EURO CUP
PAUL RICARD (F)
APRIL 14-15
ROUND 1 / 10

Only a tardy start prevented former McLaren Autosport BRDC Award finalist Max Fewtrell taking a clean sweep of pole positions and wins in the series opener at Paul Ricard.

The 2016 British Formula 4 champion, who has switched to R-ace GP for his



second season in Formula Renault, earned both poles. But a sluggish start to Saturday's race gifted the lead to front-row partner and team-mate Logan Sargeant, and the American – third in British F4 last season – led to the flag. Fewtrell suspected a clutch issue owing to an aborted start, which required an extra formation lap.

Yifei Ye was third, while Lorenzo Colombo passed Christian Lundgaard on the second lap to take fourth.

There was no repeat of the dramas for Fewtrell in race two, and he led Ye's Josef Kaufmann Racing car from start to finish.

Sargeant was looking good for his second podium of the weekend, but his car got stuck in sixth gear during a safety car period, slowing up the confused pack before he retired. Lundgaard (MP Motorsport) and Victor Martins made it, with Fewtrell, three Renault Sport Academy drivers in the top four. The weekend's results leave Fewtrell in the championship lead.

WEEKEND WINNERS

IMSA

LONG BEACH

DPI **Filipe Albuquerque/Joao Barbosa**
 Action Express Racing
 Cadillac DPI-V.R

GTLM **Oliver Gavin/Tommy Milner**
 Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)
 Chevrolet Corvette C7.R

ELMS

PAUL RICARD

LMP2 **Norman Nato/Olivier Pla/Paul Petit**
 Racing Engineering
 ORECA-Gibson 07

LMP3 **John Farano/Job van Uitert/Rob Garofall**
 RLR MSport
 Ligier JSP3

GTE **Liam Griffin/Alex MacDowall/Miguel Molina**
 JMW Motorsport
 Ferrari 488 GTE

FORMULA RENAULT EURO CUP

PAUL RICARD

Race 1 **Logan Sargeant**
 R-ace GP

Race 2 **Max Fewtrell**
 R-ace GP



Ekstrom denied after clash

WORLD RALLYCROSS
BARCELONA (E)
APRIL 14-15
ROUND 1 / 12

After a controversial clash with Petter Solberg at the first corner in the final brought the attention of the stewards, Mattias Ekstrom was stripped of victory in the opening round of the World Rallycross Championship at the Circuit de Barcelona-Catalunya, handing the win to reigning champion Johan Kristoffersson.

Ekstrom was judged to have forced PSRX Volkswagen's Solberg off the track at Turn 1 (above) and was disqualified. That handed Kristoffersson his 10th career victory, and the points lead. Ekstrom kept his points earned for the qualifying races.

PSRX Polo driver Kristoffersson gained ground at the start after the Turn 1

collision, and pressured Ekstrom's EKS Audi throughout, moving into the lead when Ekstrom took his compulsory joker lap. Kristoffersson took his joker lap later than Ekstrom – on the final tour – and emerged behind him. Try as he might, he could not find a way by on the road.

World Rally legend Sebastien Loeb finished third on the road and was promoted to second. He only made the final when his team-mate Kevin Hansen withdrew to allow him to start, Loeb having failed to make the cut owing to damaged suspension on his Peugeot 208 during qualifying.

Andreas Bakkerud – in his first race with EKS Audi – took third, while Niclas Gronholm moved up to fourth on his father Marcus's GRX team's debut with its Hyundai i20 Supercar. Solberg recovered to complete the final fifth, enough to put him second in the drivers' standings.

WEEKEND WINNERS

WORLD RALLYCROSS
BARCELONA
Johan Kristoffersson (below)
 PSRX Volkswagen Sweden
 Volkswagen Polo R

NASCAR XFINITY
BRISTOL MOTOR SPEEDWAY
Ryan Preece
 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota Camry

EUROFORMULA OPEN
ESTORIL
Race 1 Felipe Drugovich
 RP Motorsport
Race 2 Marcos Siebert
 Campos Racing

INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN
ESTORIL
Race 1 Alessandro Pier Guidi/Mikkel Mac
 Luzich Racing Ferrari 488 GT3
Race 2 Alessandro Pier Guidi/Mikkel Mac
 Luzich Racing Ferrari 488 GT3

ADAC GT MASTERS
OSCHERSLEBEN
Race 1 Philip Ellis/Max Hofer
 Phoenix Racing Audi R8 LMS
Race 2 Mirko Bortolotti/Andrea Caldarelli
 Grasser Lamborghini Huracan GT3

ADAC F4
OSCHERSLEBEN
Race 1 Lirim Zendeli
 US Racing – CHRS
Race 2 Lirim Zendeli
 US Racing – CHRS
Race 3 Olli Caldwell
 Prema Theodore Racing



Drugovich stakes his title claim

EUROFORMULA OPEN
ESTORIL (P)
APRIL 14-15
ROUND 1 / 8

Felipe Drugovich marked himself out as the early Euroformula Open championship favourite with a dominant lights-to-flag victory in the opening race of the season, followed up by second place in race two.

The Brazilian teenager won the final race of last season in a cameo outing with RP

Motorsport and showed it was no fluke by converting pole position into a comfortable six-second victory over compatriot Matheus Iorio. Iorio's Carlin team-mate Cameron Das came through from sixth on the grid to complete the podium, narrowly fending off GP3 refugee Marcos Siebert.

Siebert had more joy in race two, profiting from a mistake by poleman Petru Florescu at the Turn 6 hairpin on lap seven of 19 to take a lead he



would hold to the finish.

Drugovich had qualified third – just 0.011s behind Florescu – but dropped behind Jannes Fittje at the start, before mounting a comeback. He passed Fittje at Turn 6,

then outbraked Florescu into Turn 1 and set about chasing after Siebert, but came up three tenths short as the Campos Racing driver secured a first win since his Italian F4 title campaign in July 2016.

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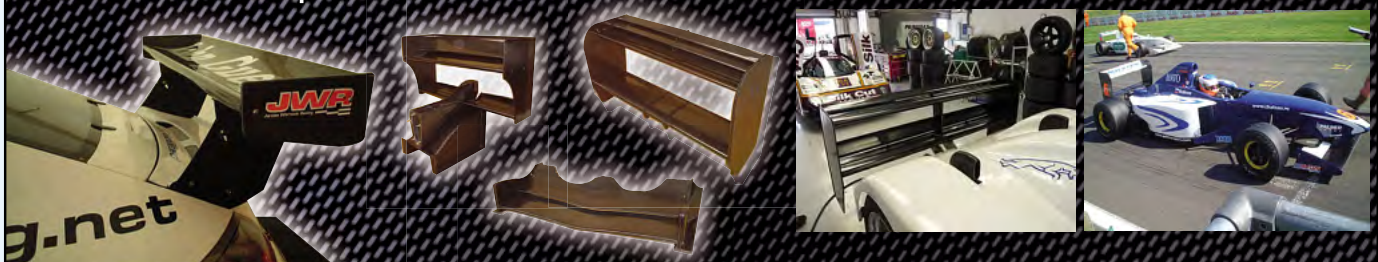
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- Practical experience of car ownership. This could mean anything from classic car ownership, car customisation or building a kit car through to regular attendance at automotive events. All these and others would indicate to us a kindred spirit who could be useful on our current projects. Tell us about your automotive interests!
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Cane struck a late deal to replace Alexandra Mohnhaupt for BRDC British F3 opener

CANE RETURNS TO BRITISH F3 AFTER EURO CUP SNUB

BRDC BRITISH F3

Jordan Cane will return for a full campaign in BRDC British Formula 3 this year with Douglas Motorsport after deciding not to compete in the Formula Renault Eurocup series.

The 16-year-old was scheduled to race with Fortec Motorsports in the series, which began last weekend at Paul Ricard, but has amicably parted company with the team.

“I won’t be doing Eurocup this year due to a lot of things,” he said.

“You want to be confident that you have got the gear to be competitive, and the reason I made the decision is because

we didn’t have an equal chance.

“Both sides left it on a good note, but it’s just unfortunate it’s cost us another season.

“I felt that I couldn’t show my ability as much in Eurocup as I could back in British Formula 3.”

Cane has confirmed that he will compete in the rest of the British F3 season. He took three wins last year with Douglas on his way to eighth in the standings, despite missing the first two rounds owing to being too young.

He raced in the opening 2018 round at Oulton Park last month, replacing Alexandra Mohnhaupt just days before the event, but suffered a hairline fracture and torn ligaments in his left hand after crashing at the first corner on the opening lap in race two.

“It [Oulton Park] was very rushed because the team had to buy another car from Chris Dittmann Racing [after Mohnhaupt’s car was destroyed in a testing crash at Spa],” explained Cane.

“I was testing on Thursday and Friday at Rockingham last week and the majority of it was wet, and it wasn’t too straining [on my hand]. In the dry session it did start to hurt, but you do more running in testing than at races.

“With Wayne Douglas I had a great relationship and a great year in 2017. This season is just about getting as many wins as possible and enjoying it.”

STEFAN MACKLEY

“THIS SEASON IS ABOUT GETTING AS MANY WINS AS POSSIBLE”



Cooper's grandson makes racing debut

MINI CHALLENGE

The grandson of motorsport legend John Cooper will contest the full Mini Challenge season this year and aims to move up to the top-flight JCW category within a few months.

Charlie Cooper (right) made his motorsport debut at last weekend's Cooper Pro class season opener at Donington Park, racing one of the naturally aspirated 1.6-litre machines with Excelr8 Motorsport.

He is the grandson of John Cooper, who founded the Mini Cooper performance variant of Alec Issigonis's original Mini design. The family's tuning legacy has continued under the

John Cooper Works moniker, which was founded in 2000 by John's son, Michael Cooper.

Charlie, 37, from London, will act as a brand ambassador for Mini through his maiden season, which is expected to culminate in an outing in the 255bhp JCW Championship finale at Donington Park in September.

"There's so much to learn, but it's so exciting to be involved in something that's pretty much a family legacy," said Cooper, who claimed two 14th-place finishes in the opener.

"When I was younger I did some karting but then pursued rugby for many years until a knee injury put me out. To get the chance to go racing is a bit



of a dream since it's something I never thought I'd do.

"I've done a few trackdays before but racing is a totally different experience. It's very full-on and I'm learning a lot. The goal is just to improve as

the year goes on and to be competitive, and then not to embarrass myself in the JCWs at the end of the year as they're a whole new league of performance."

ROB LADBROOK



Ahlers goes for a century

Ahlers has now celebrated 99 Morgan Challenge victories

CSCC

Keith Ahlers celebrated 25 years of Morgan +8 ownership with his 98th and 99th Morgan Challenge victories at the Classic Sports Car Club's season opener at Snetterton earlier this month – but it wasn't an easy run.

Cautious away from pole in race one, he blasted into the lead down the Bentley Straight only to spear off down the Esses Complex escape road. "I missed my braking point," he admitted later. Ahlers rejoined in fourth and pushed on, eventually overhauling Andrew Thompson for the win.

Local racer Ian Everett only briefly relinquished the lead of the Group 1 Swinging Sixties race during the pitstop phase before reclaiming the top spot in his BMW 1502. Daniel Williamson (Chevrolet Corvette) headed Group 2.

Alan Tice led the early Classic K laps but a tardy driver change with Chris Conoley dropped the pair behind the Turner of Luke Wos.

The Porsche 911 Turbo of Miles and Piers Masarati, which was down in 18th place after the stops, steadily fought back to win the Future Classics race.

The Tin Tops produced a thrilling finale in which Russell Hird (Honda Civic) looked to have secured victory, having just held off Tom Mensley's persistent challenge in his Renault Clio, but a track-limits penalty subsequently dropped Hird to fourth.

Edward Leigh had an easy run to the flag in Modern Classics, while Mark Smith and James Moulton-Smith's BMW M3 finished almost a lap ahead of Gary Hufford's example in the New Millennium event.

LEWIS BEALES

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Luke Wos (Turner Sports)

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MODERN CLASSICS

Edward Leigh (BMW M3 Evo E36)

MORGAN CHALLENGE

RACE 1 Keith Ahlers (+8)

RACE 2 Keith Ahlers (+8)

NEW MILLENNIUM

Mark Smith/James Moulton-Smith (BMW M3 Evo E36)

OPEN SERIES

Jonathan Mitchell (Caterham CSR)

SWINGING SIXTIES

GROUP 1 Ian Everett (BMW 1502)

GROUP 2 Daniel Williamson (Chevrolet Corvette)

TIN TOPS

Tom Mensley (Renault Clio, below)



Shortle to return with Se7ens after 25 years out



Former FF1600 ace will swap Kent engine for A-Series power



MINI SE7EN

A leading name from Formula Ford 1600 racing in the 1980s, Rick Shortle, is set to challenge for a championship again after a break of 25 years when he joins this year's Mini Se7en grid.

Shortle was a successful racer in the Kent-powered single-seaters, notably in the Champion of Brands series in the mid-1980s. He then raced a selection of saloon and sportscars, but stopped racing full-time after

appearances in the 1993 Honda CRX Cup.

The 69-year-old will now make a full return at the wheel of a Mini Se7en, running in the S Class. His car will be backed by Geoff Mason, the head of Fusion Events, and he will race to promote the Motor Sport for MS charity, which has been set up by Noel Wilson.

"I honestly can't wait to get back out there as it's been such a long time since I did a proper racing campaign," said Shortle. "I've had a few one-offs here and there, but nothing meaningful until now."

"I've known Geoff for a good while and I couldn't believe it when he offered me this chance. It took a while for him to pick me up off the floor when he told me I'd be going racing again."

"I did test a single-seater a few months ago, but in truth I had this feeling that it wasn't for me anymore. I'm no young gun, so saloons were the better way to go."

"I tested the Mini for the first time at Brands Hatch recently and loved it. By the end of the day I was setting competitive times and having a great time with it. The key is to take the thing by the scruff of the neck and drive it hard. I was surprised actually at how quickly I got back into the swing of things."

Mini Se7en organisers have attracted 31 registrations so far, with the S Class accounting for 10 of those.

ROB LADBROOK

Spec parts boost Mini Miglia grids

MINI MIGLIAS

The Mini Se7en Racing Club has credited the introduction of spec components for a surge in interest in its top-line Miglia Championship.

The more powerful 1293cc Minis had struggled for entries in recent seasons, with grids dipping as low as just 10 cars at Oulton Park in 2016.

In reaction, organisers mandated spec Ohlins

dampers and cones, an ATB differential and removed the rule allowing the use of a front rollbar. Grids stabilised to the mid-teens across last year, but so far 25 drivers have registered for the season opener at Pembrey this weekend.

"The Miglias had suffered badly in recent years, mainly because I think people started to perceive it as an uneven playing field," said M7RC commercial manager Colin

Peacock, who will race a new car built and run by Mini tuning legend Bill Sollis this year.

"Last year we saw things stabilise, but this year the entries have really grown and we're seeing the guys from the Se7ens step up as they've realised it's not as intimidating and expensive as they thought."

The Libre class for modified cars has received 11 registrations.

ROB LADBROOK



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Triple Eight set to return

TCR

The Triple Eight name will return to racing and could do so in a TCR championship, according to team owner Warren Scott.

Scott runs the Team BMR Subaru Levorg programme in the British Touring Car Championship, but took on the Triple Eight Racing name, which was running the two works MG cars in the tin-top series two seasons ago.

Since then MG has pulled out as a manufacturer and the cars have been sold. The MG6s are being run this season as private entries driven by Tom Boardman and Rory Butcher under the AmD Tuning banner.

Triple Eight Racing is the most successful touring car championship team in the UK, and won nine manufacturers' titles with Vauxhall and MG, six teams' titles and six drivers' crowns under the leadership of Ian Harrison.

Scott says he is keen for the team name to be rekindled. "We intend to be racing with the Triple Eight name, either in TCR or some kind of endurance racing," he said. "That is the plan for the time being, and I like to think that the name will be active for the start of next season.

"I still have the team name and its equipment, and we are just assessing the best way forward, but Triple Eight will return."

MATT JAMES

SMRC Compacts' demise

SCOTTISH BMW

Scottish Motor Racing Club competitions director Steve Burns believes there is still a future for BMW Compact cars in the club, despite the championship being forced to share grids with the new Hot Hatch series for 2018.

The Scottish BMW championship suffered a mass exodus over the off-season due to uncertainty over grid numbers. Several drivers have moved to other SMRC series, such as regular title contender David McNaughton, who made the switch to the Mini Cooper Cup.

"A few seasons back we had about

30 cars and last year we had 12 or 13," said McNaughton. "Over the winter, watching social media, a lot of people were selling their cars so I decided to move into a busier championship.

"Numbers dropped over the years and the club didn't do enough to keep it going."

Burns accepted a rejuvenation of the BMW series is unlikely, but believes Hot Hatch can accommodate the Compact cars.

"Currently Hot Hatch is for front-wheel-drive cars," said Burns, "but there's no reason why we can't change the regulations to allow rear-wheel drives for next year."

STEPHEN BRUNSDON

IN THE HEADLINES

GEOFF BREAKELL 1935-2018

BRDC life member Geoff Breakell, who died last week following a heart attack, was a versatile Lancastrian racer who achieved his best results in sportscars, although he also proved adept in a Formula Junior Lotus 20 in 1961-62. Breakell raced a Lotus 11 and 15 from the late '50s, then graduated to a 23B in which he finished third behind Jim Clark and Jack Sears in the '64 Oulton Park Spring Cup event. He switched to an ex-Denny Hulme Brabham BT8 in '66, winning a race at Inghilton the following season. Breakell subsequently raced an Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint GTA in the British and European Saloon Car Championships, and a Chevron-BMW B8.

FISH BACK IN A RENAULT

Thirty-five years after he made his race debut at Oulton Park in a Renault 5TS (he won the title at his third attempt in 1985), marque specialist Mark Fish's Clio 182 carried the same number 20 to eighth and 10th places at the Cheshire circuit last Saturday.

PETERS JOINS BIKESPORTS

Multiple MGCC Cockshoot Cup champion Sean Peters enjoyed his pukka sports racing debut at Oulton Park, hiring Breakell Racing's Radical SR3 RSX for the 750MC Bikesports opener. The Midget stalwart finished 12th in race one and improved his lap times by 3.4 seconds through the day.

TOP GEAR-HIT BMW REBUILT

Third place in the second Armed Forces Challenge race at Oulton Park rewarded Matty Taylor following a winter spent rebuilding his BMW M3-powered Compact, damaged by the *Top Gear* team in October's Birkett Relay. The winged machine, which arrived untested, is heavily raked. "I've got the front to dig in and let the rear do its own thing," said Taylor.

LEANEY/PRIMROSE VICTORY

Stefano Leaney and Neil Primrose began their Dutch Supercar Challenge assault with a victory at Spa aboard their Norma M20FC. Reigning 750 Motor Club Bikesports champion Leaney and Travis drummer Primrose won the 24-lap race by just 0.082s. The pair recovered to seventh in race two as they had started from the pits because the Tim Gray Motorsport pair were late to the grid.

CALDWELL WINS IN ADAC F4

Brit Olli Caldwell took his maiden ADAC F4 win at Oschersleben last weekend after starting from pole in the partially reversed-grid race three. The 15-year-old former British F4 driver had finished 10th in the opening race and eighth in the second race.



Saunders' TVR to return

GT CUP

Mike Saunders will return to the GT Cup this season aboard his TVR Cerbera GT, which was last raced in 2013.

The 1996-built car suffered an engine failure in its last outing, but has been repaired and serviced ahead of the opening GT Cup round this weekend at Donington Park.

Saunders was a regular in GT Cup and took an outright victory with the car in 2011 at Spa-Francorchamps.

"The GT Cup – the best I can describe it is it's a challenge, hard racing but with a friendly atmosphere," said the 31-year-old, who will run the car alongside his father Tony.

"I think sometimes other series are

maybe not quite as competitive in my experience, and I do like the competitive side, I like the challenge.

"The DNA of the road car is still there – it's the same chassis, same suspension mountings and same H-pattern gearbox as the road car."

Joining Saunders on the GT Cup grid this weekend will be former British Touring Car squad Welch Motorsport. The team is expanding into endurance racing this year, with Matt Telling competing in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB car he raced last year alongside Pete Parsons.

● GT Cup runner-up Dominic Paul has moved to the LMP3 Cup. The GTA class champion will partner Jack Butel in a Speedworks Motorsport Ligier JSP3.

STEFAN MACKLEY

Clark Revival event to begin F2 season

HISTORIC F2

The Historic Formula 2 International Series opens at this weekend's Jim Clark Revival event at Hockenheim, where Historic Sports Car Club chief Grahame White will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Scottish driver's death.

Three Ralt RT1s head the field for the double-header, the BMW-engined examples of Switzerland's Hans Peter and Briton Steve Seaman (ex-Eddie Cheever machine) joined by Scottish-based Steve Futter in the ex-Manfred Winkelhock car used last season with a Cosworth BDG engine by the late John Lord.

Swede Torgny Johansson (March 782) and British Chevron racers Chris Willie (B29), Mike Bletsoe-Brown and Martyn Donn (B27s, the latter set to debut his ex-Harald Ertl chassis) are among the opposition.

Alsacian Robert Simac is gunning for his sixth successive title from the 1600cc division, competing against fellow March 712 driver Paul Bason, Luciano Arnold (Brabham BT36) and Roger Bevan (ex-Emerson Fittipaldi Lotus 69).

Historic FF1600 racer James Buckton (Lola T240) debuts in the FAtlantic class.

MARCUS PYE



Torrie targets title bid

BIKESPORTS

Bikesports rookie Lee Torrie is targeting a title challenge in the 750 Motor Club category after an impressive debut at Oulton Park last weekend.

The 40-year-old broke the series' lap record on the International circuit in his PureMotion Motorsport-run Radical SR3 RSX, as well as qualifying on pole for the opener. He finished second and third.

The second-generation Formula 1 technician started car racing only last year after a long layoff from karting,

contesting four OSS rounds in the Suzuki Hayabusa-powered car, and he plans selected OSS outings again this season.

"It's the first time I've been to Oulton and I found it a very entertaining circuit to drive. It suited my style," said Torrie, who joined the Benetton F1 team in 1995 and stayed until 2006 when it was Renault-owned.

Torrie's father Bob worked for the March F2 and Lotus F1 teams when he was recruited by Frank Williams and Patrick Head in the late-1970s.

MARCUS PYE





JUNIORS IN TROUBLE

Two championships with grid numbers in single figures suggests a struggling junior racing scene. And it's clear the series aren't getting help from those above

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Any championship that can muster only four cars for the second round of its season is clearly in big trouble. And that's the position the Renault UK Clio Cup Junior series found itself in at Rockingham last weekend.

But it's not alone among the four junior car racing categories (championships permitted by the Motor Sports Association for drivers aged 14-17) in suffering a small entry. Fiesta Junior attracted only eight cars for its season opener at Brands Hatch last month, while the Junior Saloon Car Championship was at a healthier – but still not as big as it has been – 16 at Rockingham. Only Ginetta Junior has not suffered a decrease, remaining at around 20 drivers, like it has for some years now.

Clearly all is not well on the junior racing scene. And one possible reason for that could be market saturation. When the MSA granted a permit for Clio Junior in 2016, it was the first time the governing body had approved four junior championships to run at the same time. That, combined with British Formula 4 allowing drivers as young as 15 to race a single-seater (and more than half of this year's grid is either 15 or 16 years old), gives teenagers graduating out of karts plenty of options.

“DOES THE UK REALLY NEED FOUR DEDICATED JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS?”

Does the UK really need four dedicated junior championships? Probably not, given that none of the series has ever got close to full capacity. And especially not when you consider how similar the series are. Despite being of varying ages, the Fiestas, Clios and the JSCC's Citroen Saxos are fundamentally a similar type of car.

It has been suggested that more differentiation is needed – one idea put to me was having three junior series: one single-seater (in effect, British F4), one sportscar (Ginetta Junior) and one saloon car. And it's difficult to argue against that logic.

But the number of junior series in the UK does not explain why entries have decreased for this year in particular. True, Fiesta Junior has been hampered by an unpopular switch from Dunlop to MRF tyres, but there are other general factors too. When asked why Clio Junior has struggled this season, championship manager Will Fewkes describes “a very challenging set of regulatory circumstances” affecting

the series and “numerous changes to junior formula requirements at short notice”. It doesn't take a genius to work out which organisation he is blaming here. And it's a similar story for most of the other championships too.

One of the key issues has been a change in the rules regarding the driver's door protection, with FIA regulations being adopted that mandate that a certain amount of foam is included within the door, along with other safety-related alterations. Now, don't get me wrong, efforts to improve safety should be commended – particularly considering how old some of the machinery used in the junior categories is. But the crux of the issue comes with the detail and the timing.

I first heard in October last year that changes were on the cards – a perfectly reasonable timescale for adjustments to be made. However, at least one of the junior series did not hear until early February the precise details of what needed to be done. Finding that out just a few weeks before the start of the season is far from ideal and has affected the way categories have been promoted.

But that wasn't the end of it. With it being an FIA-based rule, some of the materials required needed to be imported from Europe – not necessarily a straightforward process, especially when stocks of said materials are running low. Alternatives had to be sought and then approved, and some teams were left developing their own innovative solutions. With organisers having to deal with all of that, it's no wonder entry numbers have suffered.

But surely they shouldn't have had to. Any rule changes should be clearly communicated, in full detail, months in advance and not at the last minute.

It is an incredible mess – and no-one has emerged from it looking good, be that the series themselves, the organising clubs or the MSA. The governing body has yet to give its side of the story, but the worrying danger is the precedent this is setting. Organisers will be left fearing what's coming next, knowing they have no choice but to comply otherwise series risk losing MSA championship status.

It's exactly what incoming MSA chairman David Richards told Autosport that grassroots motorsport didn't need (March 22, p61).

He said: “It should not be bureaucratic, burdened with lots of regulation, it should be cheap and accessible.” Importing parts from Europe at the last minute because of a late regulation directive doesn't meet his criteria.

There are some good initiatives on the junior scene, like the JSCC and Ginetta Junior scholarships, and some great prizes too (for example, Clio Junior offers the winner free entry to the senior series). But the danger is that, without regulatory stability, no-one will be able to take advantage of those prizes. ❧

Kirkpatrick (11) and Kendall (8) took a win apiece in the Mini encounters



Kendall extends Mighty title-winning form

**ROCKINGHAM
BARC
APRIL 14-15**

Reigning Super Mighty Minis champion Scott Kendall continued his solid start to the new season with a commanding race one win last Saturday at Rockingham. Neven Kirkpatrick narrowly denied Jo Polley the victory spoils in a thrilling second encounter on Sunday.

Despite being beaten off the line by the fast-starting Dave Rees, Kendall was able to snatch the lead around the outside of Tarzan on the opening lap, romping clear to a comfortable victory. "On a circuit like Rockingham, it's easier to win if you are lucky enough to break the tow," Kendall said.



Both Kirkpatrick and Connor O'Brien passed Rees to take the remaining podium positions, while Silverstone winner Polley recovered from a sluggish start to fifth.

Polley made no such error in race two, heading the chasing pack into Deene at the start. A fabulous six-car battle for the lead ensued as Polley stood fast superbly against challenges from Kendall and Kirkpatrick to hold her advantage heading into the final lap. Kirkpatrick would not be denied, though. When Polley lost some rhythm in traffic, he seized his opportunity – diving inside at Deene to take a lead he would not relinquish. Polley held on to second ahead of O'Brien and Kendall.

In the Mighty Minis class, Stuart Coombs emerged victorious in a three-way tussle with Damien Harrington and Silverstone double winner Lee Poolman to win race one. Harrington was able to turn the tide in his favour with success in the second event.

In the opening two-hour Britcar Endurance race of the year, Luke Williams and Andreas Demetriou secured a memorable win in their Ginetta G55 GT4, but it was far from straightforward. Reigning Formula Ford 1600 champion Williams built up a sizeable lead during his stint, but Demetriou then had to survive a

collision with Ashley Woodman's SEAT at Tarzan, and fend off the closing KTM X-Bow of Sean Cooper, to claim the spoils. Cooper, co-driving with Mike McCollum, closed a lap deficit to just 3.5 seconds at the flag. Simon Rudd and Tom Barley took third place in their Ginetta G55, aided by the similar car of Jayde Kruger and Chris Papageorgiou suffering an engine fire.

Reigning Endurance class champion Ross Wylie and David Mason led the initial stages of the opening 50-minute Sprint race in their Ferrari 458 GT3. But Richard Neary was able to overhaul them post-pitstops to claim the win in his Mercedes-AMG GT3. Neary also won the second Sprint contest, run in tandem with the two-hour Endurance event, despite having to make two unscheduled pitstops owing to penalties. John Seale steered his Ferrari 488 to second in class ahead of Wylie and Mason.

Ben Palmer's push for a second successive Renault Clio Cup Series title showed no sign of fading as he maintained his unbeaten start to the season with two wins. Ronan Pearson claimed second in race one ahead of Ben Colburn, who got the better of Simon Freeman with a fine outraking move at Tarzan on lap two.

Colburn made a lightning getaway to

ROCKINGHAM WEEKEND WINNERS

BARC SALOONS & VTEC CHALLENGE

Race 1 Rob Burkinshaw (Honda Integra)
Race 2 Rob Burkinshaw (Honda Integra)

BRITCAR

Sprint Race Richard Neary (Mercedes-AMG GT GT3)
Endurance Race Luke Williams/Andreas Demetriou (Ginetta G55 GT4)

CLASSIC VW CUP

Race 1 Daniel Rose (Golf TFSI Mk5)
Race 2 Daniel Rose (Golf TFSI Mk5)

JUNIOR SALOON CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 Joel Wren
Race 2 Joel Wren

MG OWNERS' CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 Lee Sullivan (ZR 160)
Race 2 Lee Sullivan (ZR 160)

MICHELIN CLIO CUP SERIES

Race 1 Ben Palmer
Race 2 Ben Palmer

SUPER MIGHTY MINIS AND MIGHTY MINIS

Race 1 Scott Kendall (Super Mighty Mini)
Race 2 Neven Kirkpatrick (Super Mighty Mini)

RENAULT UK CLIO CUP JUNIOR

Race 1 Gus Burton
Race 2 Gus Burton

For full results visit:
tsl-timing.com

briefly lead the second event before being usurped by Palmer. This left Colburn to successfully fend off the attentions of Freeman, Pearson and Tyler Lidsey.

Daniel Rose also enjoyed double success, steering his Golf TFSI Mk5 to glory in both Classic VW Cup encounters. Veteran Ken Lark in his trusty Corrado ran him close – the margin of victory in race two was just 0.1s. Mark Shepherd's Golf shook off the challenge of Alex Kite's Vento VR6 to take third in the opener. Brad Kaylor claimed the final podium spot in race two in his SEAT Leon Supercopa.

Contrasting weather conditions greeted the drivers in both VTEC Challenge/BARC Saloons races, but it did little to stop Rob Burkinshaw cantering to victory in his Honda Integra. Phil Wright finished second in his Accord in the dry of race one, brought to a premature end when Richard Chipchase's Civic got beached on the edge of Gracelands. In a damp race two, Wright overhauled Andrew Mizzi to claim second.

The Clio Cup Junior double-header was hindered by a poor entry list; only four cars took the start of each race. Gus Burton won both events, with Louis Doyle and Lorcan Hanafin taking a second apiece.

MARK LIBBETER

Wren claims a double as Kasperczack is excluded

ROCKINGHAM JUNIOR SALOONS APRIL 14-15

Joel Wren took advantage of a tardy start by series pacesetter Ben Kasperczack to win in the opening Junior Saloon Car Championship contest. Kasperczack then claimed a stylish win on the road in race two, but he was later excluded for a technical infringement.

Kasperczack's poor getaway from pole relegated him to fourth at the start of the first race. Wren led initially with Scott McIntyre and Steven Chandler heading the chase.

At Deene a lap later, though, both Chandler and Kasperczack powered ahead of McIntyre and led the pursuit of Wren.

Kasperczack and Chandler swapped positions at Turn 1 soon after, enabling Kasperczack to home in on the leader. He closed the gap to less than a second as the race neared its conclusion, but Wren kept his composure to record



his first win of the season.

Kasperczack made no mistake with his start in the second race, powering into an unrelenting lead from pole ahead of Wren, McIntyre and Chandler. As the race progressed and the top two eased clear, the battle for third between McIntyre and Chandler became the main focus, with McIntyre eventually pulling clear.

However, there was more drama to come as Kasperczack, McIntyre and Chandler's cars all failed post-race scrutineering and were removed from the results, gifting Wren a double.

MARK LIBBETER

MG brace for Sullivan

ROCKINGHAM MG OWNERS' CLUB APRIL 14-15

Lee Sullivan twice overcame fellow ZR driver David Mellor to record a double victory in the MG Owners' Club Championship.

The MGs of Stuart Plotnek and current champion Simon Kendrick appeared to get the jump on race one front-row men Sullivan and Mellor. But Sullivan grabbed the advantage by Deene, and Mellor moved into second by the end of the first lap.

The top two then broke away from the chasing pack as Mellor tried to hound Sullivan into an error. But Sullivan stood firm to win.

Behind the leading duo the battle for third proved just as close as Kendrick and Plotnek were pushed by fellow MGF runner Martin Wills.

Having passed Plotnek, Wills got ahead of Kendrick to take third,



and Plotnek inherited fourth when Kendrick retired from the race.

Mellor led Sullivan in race two as track conditions deteriorated in the drizzle, but Sullivan would not be denied his double success. After several attempts, he made a decisive move by Mellor at Turn 1 late in the race to claim his second triumph.

Kendrick enjoyed better luck in race two, coming out on top of another close battle with Wills and Steve Darbey's ZR to seal the final podium spot.

MARK LIBBETER



Bruton leads the way during one-make Stryker opener

CHESTER

Strykers provide pick of Mondello action

**MONDELLO PARK
IMRC
APRIL 14-15**

Polesitter Des Bruton dominated the opening Irish Stryker race in difficult conditions, but interest centred on Nicole Drought's determined charge from 14th on the grid to cross the line in fourth.

In race two Bruton led early on but was deposed by the charging Andy Dalton. Greg Kelly also eased by in the closing laps, and in their wake Bill Griffin came out on top of a cracking battle with Stephen Ross and Roger Welaratne to take fourth.

Mark Johnston took his first Ford Fiesta Zetec victory in the opener, winning from Owen Purcell. William Kellett came home



Johnston (21) translated pole into first Zetec win

CHESTER

third, though his engine was down on power. Purcell completed the Fiesta double on Sunday, working his way from sixth in a thrilling third race of the weekend and taking a hard-earned series lead.

Seasoned saloon exponent Michael Cullen won the first Fiesta ST race, just pipping 2017 champion Dave Maguire to the line. John Denning came home third, making it a Murray Motorsport podium lockout.

Denning held off continuous pressure from Cullen to take race two, with early leader Kellett beating Barry-John McHenry for third. Impressive debutant Paul Swords, crossing over from Superbike racing, came home fifth. In the third race, poleman Maguire was never headed. A delighted McHenry took second despite the best efforts of Kellett, with Cullen next up.

Jack Byrne took the Formula Vee B/C race, but only just from Gavin Buckley and with Shane McBride in close attendance.

In the A race, leaders Lee Newsome and reigning series champion Colm Blackburn tangled at Turn 1. The officials judged Blackburn to be at fault, awarding Newsome the win, with Anthony Cross and Byrne completing the podium.

Jackie Cochrane's rumbling V8 Sunbeam Tiger returned to the Historic Racing Car

Association grids after a sabbatical and predictably took two wins, despite a typically spectacular performance from the evergreen Stephen Griffin in his Modsport MG Midget.

Gary Corcoran took an early lead in the opening Supercar race in damp conditions. An inspired move by series debutant Cameron Fenton around the outside into the Esses took him ahead, and he eased away for an impressive win. In race two Corcoran again led while Fenton was in the wars behind, shuffling back to fourth.

But the Ginetta Junior graduate regrouped and charged to second, closed the gap to Corcoran with a series of fastest laps, and crossed the line right with the leader.

In the concurrently run Irish Touring Car Championship races, Martin Duffy took the opener in his BMW M3, holding off the VW Golf of Philip Burdock. In race two Gareth Jennings got the jump on everyone off the line and hung on for his first ITCC win. Pa Hudson was a distant second in a similar Honda Integra, but Duffy failed to finish. Burdock crossed the line fourth after a succession of dramas.

Megan Campbell took a popular debut Ginetta Junior win in race one from Rob Parks and Chris Grimes. Series leader

MONDELLO PARK WEEKEND WINNERS

BOSS IRELAND

Race 1 Sylvie Mullins (Formula Renault)
Race 2 Sylvie Mullins (Formula Renault)

FIESTA ST

Race 1 Michael Cullen
Race 2 John Denning
Race 3 Dave Maguire

FIESTA ZETEC

Race 1 Mark Johnston
Race 2 Owen Purcell
Race 3 Owen Purcell

FORMULA VEE

B/C Race Jack Byrne (Sheane)
A Race Lee Newsome (Sheane)

FUTURE CLASSICS

Timothy Duggan (SEAT Ibiza)

GINETTA JUNIOR IRELAND

Race 1 Megan Campbell (G20)
Race 2 Rob Parks (G20)

HISTORIC RACING CAR ASSOCIATION

Race 1 Jackie Cochrane (Sunbeam Tiger)
Race 2 Jackie Cochrane (Sunbeam Tiger)

IRISH STRYKERS

Race 1 Des Bruton
Race 2 Andy Dalton

IRISH SUPERCARS

Race 1 Cameron Fenton
Race 2 Gary Corcoran

For full results visit:
timing.ie

Parks returned to the top step in race two, from Seog Martin and Grimes.

Peter Dwyer beat BOSS Ireland poleman Fergus Faherty off the line in the opening race, and Faherty subsequently came under attack from hillclimb expert Paul O'Connell, both driving Dallara F3 machines. When the two made contact, Sylvie Mullins snatched second in his Formula Renault and began to close down the leading Lola-Nissan of Dwyer. As he was about to challenge, though, the leader headed towards the pits, leaving Mullins a clear road ahead.

In race two, no doubt buoyed by his earlier success, Mullins outbraked the F3 pair into Turn 1 and grabbed the lead. Faherty closed him down but spun on the greasy track as he lined up to overtake. He recovered strongly and closed the gap, but Mullins held on for a surprise double – against some far more potent opposition.

Timmy Duggan's defence of his lead in the Future Classics opener could best be described as robust. He continually came under attack from Brian Sexton and Adrian Dunne as the chasing pack watched the action from close quarters. Duggan held on for the win, while Dunne fended off Sexton for second at the flag.

LEO NULTY



CHESTER

THROUGH THE FIATS AND FORDS In his younger days, Barry-John McHenry used to watch Gordon Kellett and Michael Cullen racing on TV. A few years later he began racing in Fiat Unos and progressed to win the Punto Abarth title. This weekend he took on his heroes – and beat them, taking an impressive runner-up spot in the third Fiesta ST race of the weekend.



CHESTER

CHANGING DISCIPLINES Hillclimb champion Paul O'Connell has just a few circuit races under his belt. Having sold his Norma sportscar, he arrived at the BOSS opener with a Formula 3 Dallara and stunned with his pace and commitment. A clash while challenging for second dropped him back in race one and a non-finish in race two ended his event prematurely, but he had made his point.



CHESTER

ONE-MAKE EXCITEMENT Irish Touring Car Championship winner Nicole Drought had a truncated season in 2017 because of her studies but returned to the circuits last weekend with a new car for the Stryker series. Zero testing and a shower of rain left her in 14th place on the grid. In the first race, she put in an inspired charge to finish fourth.

Colclough steers TCR thoroughbred to Enduro win



Club Enduro attracted 43 cars across three classes at Oulton Park

JONES

OULTON PARK 750MC APRIL 14

Six bewinged BMW E46 M3s in the top 10 in qualifying for the wonderfully diverse 43-car Club Enduro on nearby Aintree's Grand National day would have got punters long odds on rivals for the postponed 750 Motor Club season-opener at Oulton Park.

But the BMWs were beaten in an extraordinary two-hour International

Circuit race, however, leaving Guy Colclough a deserving winner in his SEAT Leon TCR.

Andy Marston and Luke Sedzikowski led at the start with Colclough (on solo duty, with team-mate Tony Rodgers unwell) chasing the M3s. All pitted together during a safety car interlude – during which Rob Meredith's M3 was tugged out of the Knickerbrook gravel bed – whereupon Porsche pair Steve Cheetham (Boxster) and Matt Faizey (968) took up the cudgels.

Essex ace Adam Shepherd tore past in

Sedzikowski's new Tegiwa M3 and seemed set for gold when its engine misfired, then died. Shepherd parked it disconsolately at Knickerbrook beside the Louis Wall/Matt Cherrington Z3, which had caught fire. Colclough sailed past to victory over disbelieving Class B winner Faizey and Andy Baylie/Luke Schlewitz's M3, who salvaged some BMW honour after the Chris Hoey/Paul Ivens VW Scirocco pitted a lap from the chequer, ceding third.

Drive of the race came from second-

Winstanley starts 420R title defence with victory

SNETTERTON BRSCC APRIL 14-15

Caterham 420R champion Danny Winstanley began his title defence with a win from ninth on the grid at Snetterton.

He quickly overcame the lowly start slot – blamed on poor tactics – carving his way into the lead by the fourth lap.

Winstanley then traded places with Jack Brown, winning by only 0.05 seconds as Brown ducked out of his slipstream. Third in the opener, Sean Byrne won the second race, but Winstanley could count himself unfortunate. The champion had drafted by Byrne on the final lap, only for red flags – caused by a roll for fellow frontrunner John Byrne

following contact with William Smith at Nelson – to necessitate a countback.

Christian Szaruta was similarly denied a double in the Caterham 310Rs after two race-long battles with Gordon Sawyer. Szaruta claimed his first win in three years with a decisive outside move at Brundle on race one's final lap. He appeared to be planning a similar attack in race two, having rested his tyres mid-race, but red flags intervened. Chris Hutchinson and Chris Rankin completed the podiums.

Jay McCormack avenged a narrow defeat at the same venue last year as he held off Pete Walters to win the opening Caterham 270R race by 0.024s. Walters had to settle for second again in race two, this time 0.079s behind Jamie Falvey, while Gary Smith claimed third from 12th on the grid after contact in the first race.



Oliver Allwood scooped a hat-trick of wins in the Mazda MX-5 Championship. Opening-round treble winner Will Blackwell-Chambers was second in race one, finding himself unable to keep Allwood behind on the long straights. Blackwell-Chambers might have repeated that in race two, but when Brian Trott – third in the opener – missed a gear on the final run out of Murray's, Blackwell-Chambers was boxed in, allowing Mike Comber and Jason Greatrex to slip past.

Greatrex almost outdragged Allwood on the run to the line in race three, missing out by just 0.003s in a photo finish. Trott was again third after earlier

starting Martin James, who lost two laps in the pits, then hurtled his Honda Civic back to fifth ahead of Phil Dryburgh/John Brown's M3.

Renault Clio 182 title hat-trick aspirant Patrick Fletcher started strongly, beating Ryan Polley and Jack Kingsbury in a tight first race after which Mark Balmer was flicked from second to fourth for contact. In race two Kingsbury staved off Fletcher and Tibbs for a memorable first win despite "a bit of an issue with the clutch sticking down". When Tibbs was excluded for tagging Balmer, Matt Digby was elevated to third having pipped Polley.

Impressive Bikesports debutant Lee Torrie, in a Radical SR3 RSX, snared pole and led the programme opener until local PR6 driver Phil Cooper breached his defences. Cooper outbraked himself at Hislop's in the sequel, whereupon teenager Joe Stables, who had gone second when Torrie snaked onto the grass mid-chicane there, pounced for victory in his SR3.

RAF pilot Darren Berris won both Armed Forces Challenge races in his flame-spitting Westfield V8. Second qualifier Will Ashmore somehow kept his Honda Civic out of the Old Hall barriers at the start, then screamed back to fourth behind Mark Inman's Vauxhall VX220 and Mike Nash's SEAT Supercopa who duelled throughout. Ashmore chased – indeed gained on – Berris before retiring from race two, promoting Inman. Matty Taylor was overjoyed with third in his hairy M3-engined BMW Compact.

The sonorous E46s of the BMW M3 Cup



championship and 330i Challenge series ran concurrently with an even split. Circuit neighbour Sam Carrington-Yates ruled the roost, narrowly beating David Whitmore and Tom Coller in the respective races. Whitmore spun off at Dentons while trying to pass fast-starter Nick Williamson in the finale, forcing a stoppage. David Drinkwater twice bested Matt Maxted among the 330is as Lewis Carter struggled with his engine limping.

MARCUS PYE



contact with Blackwell-Chambers dropped the champion down the order.

F1000 champion Michael Watton continued his fine form by comfortably winning the first race, despite a poor start. But his engine dumped its coolant and lost oil in the reversed-grid race, ending his weekend. Dan Clowes took the win from returnee Rob Sayell, while Elliot Mitchell secured a maiden podium – it would have been a win but for a 10s penalty for moving at the start. Sayell went one place better in the curtain-closer, winning from Clowes and Alok Iyengar.

A maiden victory for Matt Parkes denied champion Steven Dailly a BMW

Compact Cup double; a slight mistake from Dailly mid-race allowed Parkes to slip inside at Agostini. Ian Jones and Owen Hunter also pounced, but Dailly recovered to second at the flag. Dailly won race two, benefiting from an improved rear-end set-up, passing Parkes at Agostini on the penultimate lap, with Jones following through.

In the Mazda MX-5 Super Series there was a hat-trick for Josh Jackson. His closest challenger was Jake Bailey, who threw away the lead of race two by outbraking himself and running very wide at Agostini.

MARK PAULSON

WEEKEND WINNERS

OULTON PARK

ARMED FORCES CHALLENGE

Race 1 Darren Berris (Westfield V8)

Race 2 Darren Berris (Westfield V8)

BIKESPORTS

Race 1 Phil Cooper (Radical PR6)

Race 2 Joe Stables (Radical SR3)

BMW M3 CUP/330i CHALLENGE

Race 1 Sam Carrington-Yates (E46 M3)

Race 2 Sam Carrington-Yates (E46 M3)

CLIO 182 CUP

Race 1 Patrick Fletcher

Race 2 Jack Kingsbury

CLUB ENDURO

Guy Colclough (SEAT Leon TCR)

For full results visit: 750mc.co.uk

SNETTERTON

BMW COMPACT CUP

Race 1 Matt Parkes

Race 2 Steven Dailly

CATERHAM ROADSPORT

Race 1 James Murphy

Race 2 James Murphy

CATERHAM SEVEN 270R

Race 1 Jay McCormack

Race 2 Jamie Falvey

CATERHAM SEVEN 310R

Race 1 Christian Szaruta

Race 2 Gordon Sawyer

CATERHAM SEVEN 420R

Race 1 Danny Winstanley

Race 2 Sean Byrne

F1000

Race 1 Michael Watton

Race 2 Dan Clowes

Race 3 Rob Sayell

MAZDA MX-5 CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1A Oliver Allwood

Race 2A Oliver Allwood

Race 3A Oliver Allwood

Race 1B Sam Gendy

Race 2B Sam Smith

Race 3B John Langridge

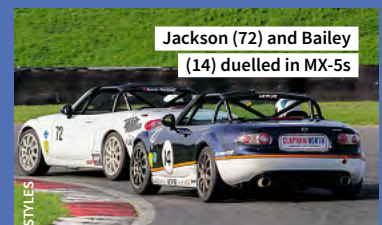
MAZDA MX-5 SUPER SERIES

Race 1 Josh Jackson

Race 2 Josh Jackson

Race 3 Josh Jackson

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com



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DONINGTON PARK WEEKEND WINNERS

LOTUS CUP AND ELISE TROPHY

Race 1 Craig Denman (Elise)
Race 2 Craig Denman (Elise)
Race 3 Craig Denman (Elise)

MINI CHALLENGE COOPER PRO/AM

Race 1 Kyle Reid
Race 2 Kyle Reid

MINI CHALLENGE COOPER S

Race 1 Will Fairclough
Race 2 Rob Austin

MONOPOSTO F3/2000/FR2000/MOTO 1400

Race 1 Ben Cater (Dallara F306)
Race 2 Ben Cater (Dallara F306)
Race 3 Ben Cater (Dallara F306)

MONOPOSTO MOTO 1000/CLASSIC/1800/1600

Race 1 Dean Warren (Speads RM04A)
Race 2 Mark Reade (Leystone 1000)
Race 3 Nigel Davers (Jedi Mk6)

RACING SALOONS

Race 1 Stephen Pearson (BMW E36 M3)
Race 2 Nigel Innes (BMW E36 M3)

PRODUCTION BMW

Race 1 William Davison
Race 2 William Davison

PORSCHE CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 Craig Wilkins (996)
Race 2 Mark Sumpter (996)

TRACKDAY TROPHY

Robin Welsh/Paul McErlean (BMW 330 Clubsport)

TRACKDAY CHAMPIONSHIP

Race 1 Robin Welsh/Paul McErlean
(BMW 330 Clubsport)
Race 2 James Britton (BMW E36 M3)

For full results visit:
tsl-timing.com



Denman took
two lights-to-flag
Lotus Cup wins

Denman scores back-to-back hat-tricks in Lotus Cup

DONINGTON PARK
MSVR
APRIL 14-15

The Lotus Cup built up to a thrilling climax at Donington Park as Craig Denman continued his fine form by completing a dominant second consecutive hat-trick.

Starting 10th in race three after two faultless lights-to-flag efforts, Denman made steady progress and passed Joe Taylor's Exige as rain fell. Taylor had climbed six spots from eighth with a lightning getaway, but could only add a second to his brace of third-place finishes.

Kyle Reid's winning streak stretched to five with two Mini Challenge Pro victories.

Having taken a clean sweep in the Scottish championship's Knockhill visit a week earlier, he grabbed pole in race one and romped to victory. "I feel awesome," said Reid, who is unable to partake in a full season owing to work commitments.

Reid's opening victory was relatively routine, as he led home a chasing Simon

Walton and Ethan Pitt. More impressive was his race two charge from fifth to first in just two laps. "I was at full lock overtaking," was how he described his move on Pitt. Privateer Alex Nevill grabbed both Am wins.

Engine failure denied Jono Davies Cooper S honours in favour of rookie Will Fairclough. Rob Austin fought from eighth to third behind Stuart Lane, and made no mistakes for race two success.

Ben Cater's Monoposto Championship stranglehold began with a treble victory. Fuel pump scares in race two forced the Dallara driver to do it the hard way, squeezing inside Tony Bishop at the exit of Coppice. In the final contest he fended off Jason Timms. "Fuel pressure was low, so I tried the second fuel pump switch and suddenly it came back to life," he said.

Timms recovered from a sluggish first race for a double podium. Bishop's weekend ended in the gravel, having retired from second in race one. Subbing for son Alex during A-levels, Richard Fores fought to second from the pits on his debut after a shunt in qualifying. A startline crash ended Fores's final race ignominiously.

Confusion at the start also cost Dean Warren in Moto 1000. Distracted by a green flag during the race-two start light sequence, the 10-second jump-start penalty gifted a hard-chasing Mark Reade victory. Nigel Davers clinched a wet third race. Gearbox gremlins removed Tom Rawlings from the weekend after costing him race one to Warren by 0.4s.



Graves's (33) brake issues
helped Davison (17) to win

Stephen Pearson and Nigel Innes shared Racing Saloons spoils, while poor starts hobbled Karl Cattliff on his series return.

Roger Kneebone inherited the race-one lead after Innes made a mistake, and he defended from Cattliff until oil dropped at the chicane left both slithering wide. Sliding through to victory came Pearson's BMW E36 M3, carrying a modified cereal box aiding front-end airflow. Innes trailed, but avenged himself later by slotting inside Pearson at Redgate to win another four-strong BMW squabble from Cattliff.

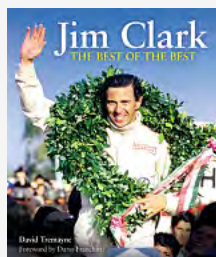
Trust prevailed in a tense Production BMW battle between David Graves and double winner William Davison. Brake issues blunted poleman Graves's opening race attack and Davison pounced at McLeans, leaving Graves unable to overturn his rival in second.

A sluggish start frustrated Mark Sumpter in the opening Porsche Club Championship race, but he swiftly made amends to share wins with fellow 996 driver Craig Wilkins. Pete Morris twice took to the podium finisher in his new 997.

DAN MASON



JIM CLARK REMEMBERED



BOOK JIM CLARK: THE BEST OF THE BEST

In any discussion of who is the greatest racing driver of all time, Jim Clark invariably

features. Both Jackie Stewart and Ayrton Senna conquered all others on the way to becoming triple champions and yet both revered Clark. That in itself speaks volumes.

Clark died 50 years ago this month, during the opening round of the 1968 European Formula 2 Championship, but his legacy lives on. Evro Publishing's *Jim Clark: The Best of the Best* captures the Scot's life through his formative years and racing success to his untimely death. Written by renowned journalist David Tremayne, author of over 50 books including *Donald Campbell: The Man behind the Mask*, it's an unexpectedly personal biography.

At first this sits somewhat uncomfortably on the page, as Tremayne's interactions with fellow plane passengers or a stewardess read more like an account of his experiences of writing the book than being a biography

of Clark. But that's soon flipped on its head. With the passage of time, the number of those who knew Clark personally diminishes. So the need to convey why they found him so warming becomes integral to what Tremayne tries to achieve.

The book opens strongly, with a foreword written by four-time IndyCar champion and triple Indianapolis 500 winner Dario Franchitti. For him Clark is number one, though Franchitti is quick to acknowledge that the 25-time grand prix winner died five years before he was born. But, as Franchitti says, that only adds to the mysticism surrounding him.

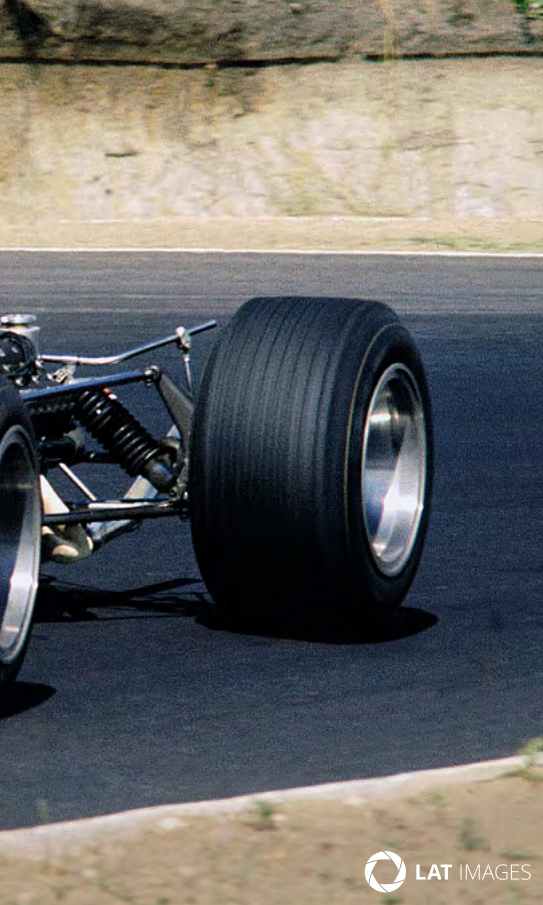
From there you're into that weekend at Hockenheim with five-time Le Mans winner Derek Bell recalling his interactions with Clark, where he struggles to comprehend the humility and approachability of a driver with the world at his feet.

The remaining 500 pages celebrate Clark's life and the soaring heights of his remarkable career. Much like the film *Senna*, the fateful ending doesn't permeate every chapter and that enables you to become fully absorbed.

It's most definitely a coffee table book – a quality product that's well presented and interspersed with a choice and diversity of



Levin race didn't count towards '67 Tasman series but Clark won anyway



LAT IMAGES

archive images which perfectly complement the text. That being said, £80 still feels steep, even for a book that'll be picked up time and time again.

While he remains best known for his two Formula 1 titles, Clark's achievements are remarkable for their sheer diversity. He won the 1964 British Saloon Car Championship, the Indy 500 the following year and then entered the RAC Rally as reigning F1 champion in '66. It's here where Tremayne's work is most successful. He captures the immense scope of Clark's career, from club racing to world-beating glory, with remarkable detail along the way.

It may jump from discipline to discipline in successive paragraphs, but all the while it's clear what race is being recounted. That allows the reader to enjoy the sort of detail that simply isn't readily available on the internet. High-speed motorway exploits in a Jaguar D-type for the sake of 'clearing an engine' and annihilating the field in an F2 race at Pau are particular highlights.

When the book does tackle the unresolved and disputed events of Clark's fatal crash, the abiding sentiment is just how numb people were to learn of his death – that it could happen to him – and it makes for a chilling few pages.

After the final chapters, which offer a meditation about what made him so respected on-track and liked off it, the lasting impression is that *Jim Clark: The Best of the Best* reads like an unashamed love letter to the driver.

For those who perhaps place Stirling Moss, Gilles Villeneuve and so on as number one, Tremayne offers an utterly captivating case for placing Clark as the very best to have graced motorsport.

MATT KEW

HIGHLIGHT OF THE WEEK

MOTORSPORT SHOW – CHINESE GP REVIEW

In the second full-length Motorsport Show produced in Motorsport.tv's new studio in Richmond, Surrey (the post-Bahrain analysis kicked off this series), Peter Windsor and the expert team offer their insights following last weekend's dramatic Chinese Grand Prix. Go to <http://bit.ly/motorsportshow>

THIS WEEKEND'S EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

IndyCar Series

Rd 4/16
Barber Motorsports Park, Alabama, USA
April 22
TV Live BT Sport ESPN, Sunday 2000

DON'T MISS

Indy Lights

Rd 2/10
Barber Motorsports Park, Alabama, USA
April 21-22

Blancpain Endurance Cup

Rd 1/5
Monza, Italy
April 22
TV Live Motorsport.tv, Sunday 1345. Eurosport 1, Sunday 1615

Formula Renault Eurocup

Rd 2/10
Monza, Italy
April 21-22
TV Live BT Sport ESPN, Saturday 1245. BT Sport 2, Sunday 1215

Super Formula

Rd 1/7
Suzuka, Japan
April 22

Japanese Formula 3

Rd 1/8
Suzuka, Japan
April 21-22

Australian Supercars

Rd 4/16
Phillip Island, Victoria, Australia
April 21-22

NASCAR Cup

Rd 9/36
Richmond, Virginia, USA
April 21
TV Live Premier Sports, Saturday 2300

24 Hour Series

Rd 3/8
Navarra 12 Hours, Spain
April 22

V8 Stock Cars

Rd 3/10
Velopark, Brazil
April 22

MotoGP

Rd 3/19
Austin, Texas, USA
April 22
TV Live Sport 2, Sunday 1930

UK MOTORSPORT

Snetterton HSCC

April 21
Guards Trophy, '70s Road Sports, Historic Road Sports, Historic Touring Cars, Classic Clubmans

Kirkistown 500MRCI

April 21
Road Sports, Ford Fiesta Zetec, FF1600, Ireland Saloon/GT, Formula Sheane, Legends, Superkarts

Silverstone VSCC

April 21-22
Vintage and Pre-War races, HGPCA, Morgans, FISCAR

Brands Hatch 750MC

April 21-22
Formula Vee, Locost, Toyota MR2, RGB Sports 1000,

Roadsports, 750 Formula, Historic 750 Formula, Sport Specials, Classic Stock Hatch, Hot Hatch, MX-5 Cup

Pembrey BARC April 21-22

Trucks, Track Attack, Mini Se7en, Mini Miglia, Hyundai Coupe, MaX5, Welsh Sports/Saloons

Donington Park MSVR

April 21-22
LMP3 Cup, F3 Cup, GT Cup, Heritage Formula Ford, Radical Challenge, 7 Race Series, Sports 2000 Enduro

Croft BARC

April 21-22
Legends, Pickups, Northern Sports/Saloons, Pre-'66 Touring Cars, Pre-'83 Group 1 Touring Cars, Pre-'03 Touring Cars, Pre-'05 Touring Cars, Blue Oval Saloons, Classic and Historic Thunder Saloons



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MY FIRST MOTORSPORT MEMORY

LE MANS 1998

In at the deep end at the Circuit de la Sarthe

STUART CODLING



LAT IMAGES



LAT IMAGES

Codling was put to work in Chamberlain Viper pit crew



“THE EDITOR PUSHED INTO MY HANDS THE KEYS TO A MOTORBIKE, A MOBILE PHONE AND A FERRY TICKET”

Since good magazine craft dictates that pictures must accompany (and match) words, regrettably we must spool forwards 20 years from my actual first motorsport memory, a grasstrack event somewhere in what was then known as North Humberside (I was five years old at a push, and my father now has no recollection of taking me). That’s what fired my passion for motor racing – although, what with one thing and another, it would be the aforementioned two decades before circumstances enabled me to attend a race *in person*.

And what an introduction it was. The now-defunct car/motorbike/lifestyle magazine I worked for was ‘sponsoring’ Hugh Chamberlain’s team in the FIA GT Championship – we had logos on the wing mirrors – and the publishing director decided that Le Mans would be a great publicity opportunity (translation: a great opportunity for him to blag some tickets and have a few days out of the office). Accordingly, he laid plans to travel there with a bevy of glamour models – hey, it was the 1990s – and our logo-laden Dodge Ram truck, which did all of 14mpg.

Separately and at the last minute, someone had a lightbulb moment that involved doing something for the readers. That’s why, at 9.30am on the Monday before the race, the editor pressed into

my hands the keys to a Suzuki GSX600F motorbike (the only vehicle we had on loan at the time), a mobile phone (“Don’t use this, especially in France”), a ferry ticket and a piece of paper with some vague instructions.

“You’re going to be part of the team,” he said. “Don’t fuck it up. The ferry’s at 6pm – be on it.”

With that terse injunction still ringing in my ear, and following a sleepless night on the floor of the overnight ferry from Southampton to Caen, I arrived at Le Mans wide-bloodshot-eyed with excitement, established contact with the team (disobeying the directive not to use the phone, thereby squandering a portion of the budget roughly equal to the Ram travelling a mile and a half), and made my way inside a motor racing circuit for the first time. It was everything I’d expected and more: noisy, crowded and charged with atmosphere.

Finally I’d reached a place I’d dreamed of visiting while reading Autosport in my parents’ newspaper shop. Hugh Chamberlain gave me a guided tour of the paddock before putting me to work in the pit crew. That was the hard bit.

The late Eoin Young titled his chronicle of a life in motorsport journalism ‘It Beats Working’. He never had to toil around the clock to bring a car home 19th at Le Mans, though... ❄





FROM THE ARCHIVE

Count Louis Zborowski in full flight in his Grand Prix Aston Martin on the way to third place in the Light Car class at the Midland Automobile Club Hillclimb at Shelsley Walsh on July 29 1922. Zborowski was killed two years later, aged 29, when his Mercedes hit a tree during the Italian Grand Prix at Monza, although his legacy extends well beyond his contribution to motorsport's early history: his exploits inspired Ian Fleming to write the children's book *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*, and his enthusiasm for trains helped lead to the building of the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway in Kent.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

QUIZ

WHO, WHAT, WHERE, WHEN?



WHO IS THIS?

This versatile Teuton swapped the slopes for the stages and ended up on top of the world. He found a four-star home from home in the Principality, but initial success was handbuilt by robots over the border.

He was a pure gem when it was two against four, but his picky ways didn't always endear him to his bosses and he could have had at least one more crown if only he'd changed his ways.

He was top of his class when he took a long day's journey into night and back again, while after a grand tour he went back to his roots. He blitzed his way through some spikey dust in record time and was a dab hand on the sealed stuff too.

He could run rings around almost anyone as he found a new calling late on as the fastest chauffeur in the world.

ON THIS DAY

1 Sebastian Vettel won from pole on this day for Red Bull's first F1 victory, but how many of its 56 wins have come from pole?

2 Jackie Stewart claimed March's first GP win on this day in 1970. By how much?

3 Today is Al Unser Jr's birthday. Where did he score the last of his 31 CART wins?

4 Which driver, born on this day in 1975, was the first American to score an International F3000 podium?

5 Which 500cc motorcycle world champ took his first top-class podium on this day in 1992?

NAME THE HELMET



LAST WEEK'S ANSWERS

Who, what, where, when Sebastien Loeb, testing a GP2 car at Jerez, October 8 2009. **Who is this?** Bobby Rahal.

On this day 1) 3. 2) 6th. 3) 16. 4) Renault. 5) Hockenheim, 1992. **Name the helmet** Johnny Herbert.



WHAT'S GONE WRONG AT MERCEDES?



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