



WRC legend to head up campaign in World rallycross

GRONHOLM LINKED TO HYUNDAI WRX DEAL



By Hal Ridge

Rally legend Marcus Gronholm is nearing a deal to run a pair of Hyundai i20 machines in next year's World Rallycross Championship.

The two-time world beater has been in talks with top brass at the Korean firm and is close to a deal which will lead to him running two ex-WRC Hyundai i20s. One of the cars will be driven by his son Niclas, while a driver for the other has yet to be confirmed.

The cars will be run as a private venture initially. Hyundai's WRC boss Michel Nandan said: "We have spoken about rallycross and we have talked to Marcus Gronholm. We are looking at some ways to do something next season with him."

Full story p2-3

**TICKTUM SURVIVES
MACAU F3
DRAMA**

BRIT TRIUMPHS ON
THE STREETS **P19**

**DAVID BRABHAM'S
FAVOURITE
RACERS**

THE AUSSIE'S
PICK OF THE
BUNCH **P27**

MOTORSPORT NEWS ISSUE **MJ3105** NOVEMBER 22 2017

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IN THIS ISSUE


Hartley and Gasly stay on
P4
ALONSO MAKES LMP1 TEST DEBUT
P5

HYUNDAI: WIN IN OZ SHOWS TITLE POTENTIAL
P12

TICKTUM TAKES MACAU F3 WIN AFTER LAST-TURN MELEE
P19

RALLYING AND RUGBY
P26


SUBSCRIBE TO MOTORSPORT NEWS	10	Sporting Scene	29
Historic race and rally news	11	Photos/Comment/What's On	30
Rally reports	18	Classifieds	32
Macau F3 World Cup report	19	Wanted: Hire-kart-style rubber	
WRC report: Rally Australia	20	bumpers added to all GT cars in Macau.	
Reflections of the R.A.C.	25	Apply: All race insurers	
Interview: Scott Williams	26		
David Brabham's Great Cars	27		
Racing reports	28		

FOR MOTORSPORT NEWS STAFF CONTACT DETAILS PLEASE SEE P31


Cronholm has had discussions to create a World Rallycross team to field his son Niclas

By Hal Ridge

Double World Rally champion Marcus Gronholm is closing on a deal with Hyundai Motorsport to head up a two-car Hyundai i20 team in the World Rallycross Championship next season.

The Finn is planning to run a pair of former World Rally Championship-specification i20s in World RX for his son Niclas and a second driver.

The programme will initially be a private effort using 2016-based cars, run by Gronholm's GRX concern together with multiple European Rallycross champion SET Promotion, led by Jussi Pinomaki. However, the former works Peugeot and Ford WRC driver is in discussions with Hyundai about technical support

and is hoping to attract official backing in the future.

"We have discussed with them [Hyundai], but the final decision will be soon," Gronholm told *Motorsport News*. "I hope everything goes together, it's not yet there and time is running quickly because we are in late November already."

Asked of his motivation behind targeting the rally-based machine, Gronholm said: "We are hoping to get some support. We are working on that. It will not be a factory team at this point. A two-car team would be nice; we are working on that as well."

The former European Rallycross race winner has already been contacted by a number of drivers about the second seat in the squad, with only a few drives officially confirmed for World RX 2018 so far.

"There are people who have contacted us, quite a lot actually. Of course this is the time that people are running around looking for deals. I cannot say anything, we will see," he said.

Gronholm's GRX Management Team set-up currently has 2014 Global Rallycross champion Joni Wiman and rising rally star Jari Huttunen on its books,

alongside his son Niclas. Huttunen recently won Hyundai's young driver shootout and secured a WRC2 programme with the marque for 2018, strengthening links between the Finn and the Alzenau-based WRC team.

Gronholm says Wiman is not in the frame for a drive in World RX with his squad.

"Joni would be of course very interesting, but when we don't have the money we need a driver who comes in with some budget," he confirmed. "I would like to run Joni but I don't think that's possible. We have to see what we are going to do with him."

Hyundai Motorsport team principal Michel Nandan told *MN*: "We have spoken about rallycross and we have talked to Marcus. We are looking at some ways to do something next season with him."

Asked about speculation regarding Dani Sordo's switch from the World Rally Championship to World RX, Nandan added: "There is always a lot of talk and that's all this is."

Gronholm won his WRC titles in 2000 and 2002 driving a Peugeot 206 for the French marque, before switching to Ford in 2006. He just missed out on a third title,



Gronholm Jr: WRX future

HEADLINE NEWS

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase, FIA World Rallycross, Global Rallycross

Former WRC champion to build up rallycross team for his son

GRONHOLM TO TAKE HYUNDAI INTO WORLD RALLYCROSS



Gronholm Jr (r) has been a top-15 runner in World Rallycross



The 2016 Hyundais will be revamped for rallycross

finishing one point behind Sebastian Loeb in 2006.

Having retired from full-time WRC competition in 2007, Gronholm senior raced in three European Rallycross events with the OlsbergsMSE team in 2008, winning on his debut at Holjes.

He returned to the Swedish squad for an assault on the American-based Global Rallycross Championship in 2011 and finished second in the points, and won the opening two rounds of the 2012 season. However, his driving career was effectively ended by an injury sustained in a crash at X Games.

The Finn, who is a regular test driver for several manufacturers and teams in rallying, says his motivation for running his team in World RX is largely to help son Niclas's career.

"It's interesting and I'll do it to try and push Niclas and help him," he said. "But, I have to see also that he is capable of doing it, I don't want to spend time and money if the results are not there. Running around to find the budget is not so easy [though], it's big money you have to put together."

Driving for GRX, Gronholm Jr raced an ex-Ken Block M-Sport-

built Ford Fiesta Supercar in World RX this year. Despite only making the final on one occasion, at the penultimate round in Germany (with a career best result of fifth), Gronholm senior says increased testing helped to find pace in the latter part of the campaign.

"In the beginning of the year we were not testing enough. Niclas was in the army and we thought our car should be quite OK and it was just Niclas that is not driving so well yet," he explained. "At the end of the season we did a few tests and immediately you could see that the speed went up and the times were much better. Still there could be a job done with testing, we have not done so much on the differentials. Maybe it's not possible to win races [with the Fiesta], I think it's a top-five car."

While the M-Sport Fiesta was adapted by the Cumbrian firm for rallycross use (with the cooling package mounted in the rear), Petter Solberg's PSRX Volkswagen Sweden fielded a pair of Volkswagen Motorsport-prepared ex-WRC Polo GTis in World RX 2017, with the radiators remaining in the front of the car, and won both the drivers' and

teams' titles. Gronholm says, although interesting, he is unconvinced by leaving the cooling system in its conventional location, suggesting the Hyundais will be converted to a rear-mounted radiator, as is traditional for rallycross Supercars.

Gronholm Sr said: "I think Volkswagen has done a good job from modifying the rally car to rallycross. It's not such a big job. Of course, there is big changes from the rally car, engine and transmission, but otherwise the set-up is not that magic to do. It's interesting [the front cooling package], but I don't think they gain so much. I don't know, but maybe they took a risk because there was not time enough to do the work and change it into the rear. But, it seemed to work."

GRX's current Fiesta uses a Pipo Moteurs engine. Gronholm has confirmed that a similar unit will almost certainly be used in the adapted Hyundai, the 1600cc engine making way for a two-litre unit, and will utilise custom engine regulations. Introduced in 2015, the 'custom' rules allow for a block not from the original manufacturer of the chassis to be

used, opening options for different marques, like the Hyundai, to be entered in the series without the requirement of developing an engine from scratch. The latest evolution of Pipo's World RX engine is understood to fit within Custom regulations.

While his focus is on getting a two-car deal across the line with Hyundai, Gronholm's team could run just one i20 for Niclas next season, or remain with the Fiesta if the Hyundai plans fall through.

"I hope we go through with the Hyundai, but otherwise we could run this one [Fiesta] which is not a bad solution, but of course everybody is going up. There is still a step in the engine after this [current] one, which Timo Scheider and Kevin Eriksson [in the MJP Racing Team Austria squad] have used, but it's not far away."

Norwegian driver Frode Holte has previously raced a privately-built Hyundai i20 in World RX events, and was reportedly in talks about a possible manufacturer deal in 2014, when WRC ace Thierry Neuville was also linked to a one-off rallycross appearance in the car, but poor performance and reliability halted such talks.



Frode Holte drove an i20 in WRX back in 2014

RACING NEWS

F1 ROUND-UP

Russell is ready

Mercedes' George Russell believes he's ready to jump into a Formula 1 seat at short notice next season if the chance comes up. This year's GP3 Series champion recently drove in FP1 for Force India in Brazil. He'll get another chance in Abu Dhabi this weekend. "I feel ready for an F1 seat next year," said Russell. "I feel I've prepared well and done lots of stuff with Mercedes. But if you look at the facts [of where 2018 seats are available] it's only Williams or Sauber, but we'll see."

Pricey Ferrari

The Ferrari F2001 that Michael Schumacher used to win the fourth of his seven Formula 1 World Championships was auctioned off for a record \$7.5m (£6.4m) last week. Chassis #211 was sold at the Sotheby's Contemporary Art Evening Sale in Manhattan, and became the most expensive modern F1 item ever. Schumacher raced the car to victory in Monaco that year, and won in Hungary to seal his fourth world crown. A portion of the proceeds from the sale will be donated by the former owner to Schumacher's Keep Fighting Foundation.

Norris's early bath

Lando Norris missed out on driving McLaren's F1 car in Brazil last week after his Pirelli tyre test was cancelled at late notice, leaving the Briton to go to Brazil essentially just "for a bath". Pirelli and McLaren agreed mutually to can the test at Interlagos after a string of robbery attempts during the Brazilian GP race week. Norris flew out for a day, but was then immediately packed off to Macau's F3 Grand Prix event instead. "I'd just got into the hotel in Brazil and was having a nice bath when I got the call that it [the test] was cancelled. I just went back to having my bath. I literally went to Brazil just to have a bath!"

Rake it in

Mercedes is planning to copy Red Bull's high-rake suspension design for its next car. Mercedes has struggled with inconsistency at certain tracks this year. A lot of that was put down to the car having a longer wheelbase than many of its rivals this season. But the Silver Arrows might also now use more rake in its suspension settings to get the nose of the car closer to the floor and avoid the rear sparking off the ground as much as it did in Brazil – a system Red Bull regularly runs.

Hartley will stay on with Toro Rosso team



Photos: LAT

TORO ROSSO PICKS HARTLEY AND GASLY

Rookie pairing will lead team's new era with Honda power

By Rob Ladbrook

Toro Rosso head Franz Tost believes that retaining both Brendon Hartley and Pierre Gasly for 2018 can give the team the best possible platform to start its new relationship with Honda.

The Faenza-based squad announced last week that it will keep Red Bull junior Gasly and World Endurance Championship convert Hartley for the 2018 grand prix season.

To date, Gasly and Hartley have just seven grand prix starts between them.

Toro Rosso has had the most upheaval in terms of the driver market this year, having lost Carlos Sainz Jr to Renault after the Malaysian GP and dropping

Russian driver Daniil Kvyat mid-year.

Frenchman Gasly made his F1 debut in place of Kvyat in Malaysia, before skipping the United States race to try and win the Japanese Super Formula title, only for that event to be cancelled due to poor weather.

He returned for the Mexican GP and his recent 12th place in Brazil stands as the team's best result so far with its two new drivers.

Hartley was called up to drive for STR in America, and has become a constant fixture since.

The 28-year-old Kiwi was eyeing a move to IndyCar after Porsche's WEC LMP1 programme ends this year, but will now get a full shot at F1. He won the WEC title twice – in 2015 and this year, winning Le Mans back in June.

Hartley's appointment also marks his return to the Red Bull fold, seven years after he was dropped from its Junior Team programme in 2010.

Tost said: "We're really happy to have Pierre and Brendon confirmed so early by Red Bull as our drivers for 2018. During this last part of the year they've shown that they're ready for F1, getting to grips with the car quickly, showing good performances and always demonstrating to be prepared for the challenge."

"Therefore, we're looking forward to having a full year with them; one where we can hopefully provide them with a good package which, combined with driver consistency, can surely put them in the best possible situation to deliver."



Hartley (l) and Gasly have just seven starts



Button's deal won't be renewed

McLaren pays tribute to "brilliant" Button as he prepares to split with team

McLaren has paid tribute to British F1 hero Jenson Button, after confirming his contract with the Woking firm will come to an end this year.

Button has been part of the McLaren set-up since joining the team as reigning world champion in the winter of 2009. Since then he has contested 137 grands prix for the team, scoring eight wins.

Button sits second in McLaren's all-time appearances list, only beaten by

David Coulthard's nine-year stint with the squad from 1996-2004.

McLaren's Eric Boullier told Sky Sports: "Jenson has been a brilliant driver and ambassador for us, for Formula 1 and for England as well."

"His contract is ending at the end of this year, but he will always be part of the McLaren family and always have a special place with us."

"That's life and this is another step and another chapter, with Lando [Norris, European F3 champion]

stepping in to the third driver role."

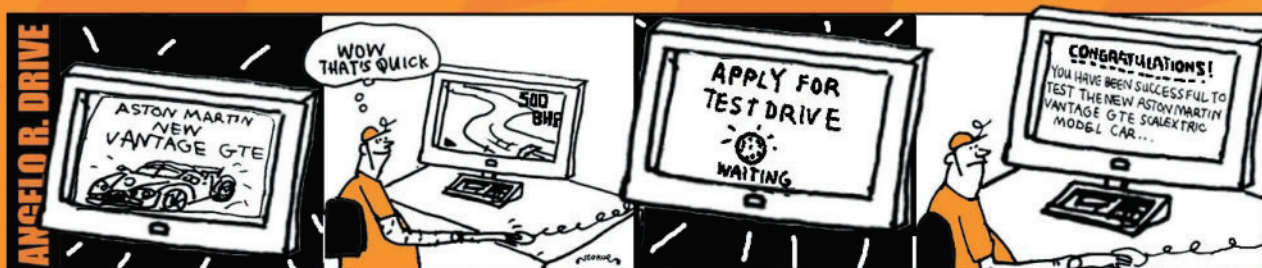
Button parts ways with McLaren as he plans to return to racing full-time next year. He has competed only twice this year – at Monaco with McLaren and the Suzuka 1000km Japanese Super GT round.

"Next year I will race something," said Button. "I don't know what yet, whether it will be in America, Europe or Japan."

"There are a few options but I want to do a full season."

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"Ticktum is the star in F3's blue riband event in Asia"
Macau Grand Prix report, p19

Photos: LAT



Alonso tested Toyota's WEC challenger

TOYOTA WON'T RULE OUT ALONSO REUNION



Sportscars could be the future for FA

Toyota bosses remain coy on the chances of Fernando Alonso driving for the team again after the Spaniard completed more than 100 laps on his LMP1 debut in Bahrain last weekend.

Alonso got behind the wheel of the TS050 Hybrid as part of the World Endurance Championship Rookie Test at Sakhir and completed a total of 113 laps across his day.

Despite Toyota claiming that Alonso did not conduct a low-fuel run or go for an outright lap time, his best lap of 1m43.013s compared well to regular racer Mike Conway's 1m42.381s benchmark.

Alonso has repeatedly spoken about

his desire to race in the Le Mans 24 Hours as part of his quest to win the Triple Crown of world motorsport – coupling Le Mans and the Indy 500 with his Monaco GP victory.

"I think a test in an LMP1 is always a nice thing for any racing driver," said Alonso. "These cars are amazing to drive and very consistent in stints. One day I would like to race in endurance. I don't know when, but endurance is one of our goals for me in the future after F1."

Toyota's technical director Pascal Vasselonn said: "We did not do any low-fuel runs and we did not do any quali runs – there was no trophy to win

for him here today. We've done a bit more work with Fernando. After getting more familiar with the car in the afternoon he did some tyre testing, complementing what Mike [Conway] was doing in the other car."

When asked if Alonso could join Toyota's next scheduled test in December, Vasselonn said: "At the moment, this was just a fantastic opportunity [to have Alonso test]. We have time now to think about the future."

New Formula V83.5 champion Pietro Fittipaldi tested with Porsche as part of his prize for winning the now-defunct single-seater championship.



No FE in London since '16

Mayor of London still "keen" on Formula E

The mayor of London is "keen" for the city to host Formula E again, despite the lack of progress over a mooted round on the streets of the English capital.

London hosted the inaugural season finale in Battersea Park, but its five-year deal ended after just the second event because of local criticism and it has not had a race since.

For its desired street track, FE requires permission to use The Mall, the stretch of road that runs between St James's Park and Green Park and leads up to Buckingham Palace.

A spokesperson for city mayor Sadiq Khan told *Motorsport News* Khan is "keen to see a London ePrix return to the capital" and confirmed "officers remain in discussion with the organisers of Formula E to identify suitable venues in London".

FE CEO Alejandro Agag told *Motorsport News* he has no deadline in mind to bring the race back and is "going to keep trying", before revealing there are "a couple" of alternative UK options.

London is a notable absentee for the 2017/18 FE calendar that includes races in Hong Kong, Rome, Paris, Berlin, Zurich, New York and Montreal.

Davidson, Nakajima and Buemi stop Porsche from taking a farewell WEC victory with Bahrain win

Porsche bowed out of the FIA World Endurance Championship with second place from a troubled finale in Bahrain, as Toyota swept to victory by a clear lap.

Sebastien Buemi, Kazuki Nakajima and Anthony Davidson took their fifth win of the year, and third in succession, by being the only LMP1 entry to enjoy a clear run. However, Davidson did manage to sustain a

broken toe after he caught a door when running to the car to change drivers at short notice during a full course yellow.

Porsche got both of its 919 Hybrids onto the podium, but both suffered varying delays. The championship-winning car of Brendon Hartley, Earl Bamber and Timo Bernhard was second after losing time early on when they were forced to pit after just seven

laps after a bollard became stuck under the front bodywork.

Nick Tandy then lost time in the sister 919 after a clash with a GTE Am car, with the slow tour back to the pits for repairs costing the car a lap and ensuring Tandy, Neel Jani and Andre Lotterer were third.

Julien Canal, Nico Prost and Bruno Senna won LMP2, with Senna and Canal taking the drivers' crown.

Ferrari sealed the GTE Pro Drivers' title after James Calado and Alessandro Pier Guidi finished second. Davide Rigon and Sam Bird took the class victory in their AF Corse-run sister car.

A fourth victory of the year for Pedro Lamy, Mathias Lauda and Paul Dalla Lana ensured Aston Martin the GTE AM title as a swansong for the current Vantage GTE model.



L-r: Davidson, Nakajima and Buemi won race

British F3 winner heads to IndyCar

Matheus Leist, the 2016 BRDC British Formula 3 champion, has signed for AJ Foyt Racing and will partner fellow Brazilian Tony Kanaan for the 2018 IndyCar Series season.

Leist will become the youngest driver in the series when he makes his debut at 20 years old, with Foyt having made the expected decision not to retain either Conor Daly or Carlos Munoz.

Foyt's new signing moved into Indy Lights this year following his British F3 title, taking his first win in the Freedom 100 at Indianapolis before adding a further two



Leist won British F3, now joins Kanaan in IndyCar

victories across the year.

Leist said that partnering 2013 Indy 500 winner Kanaan was a highlight of his IndyCar graduation.

"Having Tony as my teammate is incredible because he's been an idol for me since I was a child," he said. "Every day I keep telling

myself that I couldn't have made a better decision than to come to the USA at the end of 2016.

"America is where things happen and where the good drivers have a proper place." IndyCar is introducing new aero regulations in 2018, increasing downforce.

THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP



Martin Truex Jr capped off a dominant year for Toyota in the NASCAR Cup Series by taking his first drivers' championship title for Furniture Row Racing in the Homestead Miami finale. He headed fellow Camry driver Kyle Busch in the race and championship, who came close to usurping Truex in the closing

stages. Kevin Harvick sealed third in the championship, while it was Dale Earnhardt Jr, Kasey Kahne and Danica Patrick's last NASCAR races... William Byron won the Xfinity series, the championship below the NASCAR Cup, before he steps up to replace Kahne at Hendrick Motorsports in 2018. Christopher Bell won the Camping World Truck Series title, and steps up to the Xfinity series with Kyle Busch's eponymous squad next year... Mercedes DTM driver Edoardo Mortara won both Macau GT Cup races, the first – a qualifying race – featured a



The Macau GT Cup chaos was 12-cars deep

12-car pile-up. Daniel Juncadella hit the wall at the exit of the narrow Police bend and was collected by Laurens Vanthoor, blocking the track and causing the resulting crashes... The World Touring Car

Championship is believed to be close to a deal to adopt TCR regulations for 2018. Talks have progressed in recent months between respective WTCC and TCR promoters Eurosport Events and WSC Limited as well as the FIA...

RACING NEWS

Photos: Chris Schotanus/Essay Produkties



Just 10 cars took part in the Bahrain finale

FV8 3.5 WON'T CONTINUE AFTER LOW 2017 ENTRIES

Fortec and Charouz have already confirmed they'll switch to F2 instead

By Stephen Lickorish

The final races of World Series Formula V8 3.5 took place at Bahrain last weekend after organisers decided the category will not continue next year.

It began originally as World Series by Nissan in 1998, before gaining prominence when Renault started supporting it from 2005. Past champions include F1 stars Robert Kubica and Carlos Sainz Jr.

But since Renault decided to withdraw support at the end of 2015 grid numbers have dwindled, culminating in just 10

cars at the Bahrain finale. With many single-seater series struggling at the moment, and with major changes for 2019 when the new F3 category is introduced, organisers felt now is the time to end the series – although a future revival has not been ruled out.

A statement from the series said: “Neither World Series Formula V8 3.5 nor any other top single-seater series in the world have reached the ideal number of participating drivers in 2017.

“The continuous and alarming drop in the number of driver entries in the main European single-seater series has forced

Formula V8 3.5 to withdraw from the 2018 season racing calendar.”

Two of the current FV8 3.5 teams, Fortec and Charouz Racing, have already secured places on the Formula 2 grid for next season and Carlin, another ex-World Series team, will also return to the F1 support category. These will replace the Rapax and Russian Time outfits in F2 and an additional 12th team could be confirmed at a later date.

Next season will be the first time Fortec has competed in the category, but team boss Richard Dutton is saddened by the loss of FV8 3.5.

“We weren't sure if World Series would

or wouldn't continue so we made the move to be prepared [for it disappearing] with F2,” said Dutton. “It's a massive new challenge for us, and the World Series team will switch to F2. But it's really, really a shame about the World Series.

“For me it's a fabulous car and it's produced so many good drivers – more than F2. We had drivers like Stoffel Vandoorne, Robin Frijns and Oliver Rowland – there's been a lot of really good drivers in the last few years.”

Pietro Fittipaldi won the title last weekend, while Henrique Chaves and Rene Binder took the final race wins.



Cane will race for Fortec in FR2.0

Cane confirms Formula Renault Eurocup switch

BRDC British F3 Championship race winner Jordan Cane will move to Formula Renault Eurocup next year after signing with the Fortec team.

Cane missed the start of the F3 season as he wasn't 16 years old until the third round at Snetterton, but went on to take three race wins with Douglas Motorsport this term.

Cane has tested the Formula Renault at Barcelona, Nurburgring and Monza with reigning champions R-ace GP and Fortec, and believes that race wins are possible despite the series lending itself to second-year drivers.

“It's a really tough series, there's 36 drivers,” said Cane. “But with the pace that we've shown in the previous tests, we're certainly in a good place now.

“Every year you want to win. But it's a case of how quickly we can get ourselves in a position to win. Second-year drivers have an extra edge because of the testing ban [which starts in December].

“Mine and the team's aim is to get as many wins and podiums as possible. But at the minute Formula Renault is a two-year programme. There's a lot of potential in me and the car.”

Cane confirmed to *MN* that because of his strong showing in British F3, he won't be classed as a rookie in this year's campaign. Fellow Briton Max Fewtrell won the rookie championship in the series in 2017.



Hutchison (right) took Zandvoort honours after switching from McLaren 570S to Renault R.S.01

Hutchison wins Zandvoort 500 race during his debut in R.S.01

Scot Finlay Hutchison made a winning debut aboard a Renault R.S.01 at the Zandvoort 500 last weekend.

Hutchison, who has raced a McLaren 570S in the GT4 European Series this season made a late deal to drive the Equipe Verschuur-run car,

sharing the driving duties with Toyota rally driver Bernhard ten Brinke in the Winter Endurance Championship race. It featured an eclectic mix of sportscars with 24 entries.

After putting the car on the front row, the duo extended a lead of over a minute against a

Ligier JSP3 LMP3 car in changeable conditions.

“It's been a great weekend with a great team-mate and the perfect result, we couldn't have asked for any more,” Hutchison said. “Hopefully this performance can be a strong springboard for whatever I do in 2018.”

Shedden keen for more TCR races

Three-time British Touring Car champion Gordon Shedden would be keen to add more TCR races to his programme for 2018 after finishing second on his debut in the International competition in Dubai last weekend.

Shedden was drafted in to the Leopard Racing Team WRT to drive a VW Golf alongside championship hopeful Jean-Karl Vernay. The Scot secured a dramatic pole position on his only flying lap of the session, and then finished second behind Pepe Oriola in the opener.

He kept a watching brief on team-mate Vernay in third place and the result was enough for Vernay, who will attend TCR UK's taster day later this month, to secure the silverware.



Shedden qualified on pole for Dubai TCR International debut

Shedden was seventh in race two.

“It was a great experience,” said Shedden, who regularly drives the factory-backed Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R in the BTCC. “It was the first time I had done a start in one of those cars and I was a bit cautious. I was also having to look out for Vernay to make sure I was in a position to help him if I needed to. There was a lot going on, but

second was a great result.

“Obviously I am committed to Honda in the BTCC next year, but if the dates fit, then I will look at all kinds of options.”

● Australian Supercar racer Alex Rullo is due to test a Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra at Brands Hatch tomorrow as he evaluates options for 2018. The 17-year-old was 15th at Bathurst this year, alongside Alex Davison.



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'Smalley claims the Winter Series crown'
Brands Hatch report, p28



Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Gary Hawkins

NEW CAMARO GT4 COULD RACE IN BRITISH GT WITH V8 RACING

Dutch team V8 Racing will be the first squad in Europe to run the new Chevrolet Camaro GT4.R machines, and they could make selected appearances in British GT next year.

The V8 Racing team will take delivery of two of the 6.2-litre V8-powered machines at Christmas. The new cars are built by works Corvette constructor Pratt & Miller – the same faction that builds the firm's Le Mans 24 Hours challengers.

Two cars will run in the full GT4 European Series, with one driver pairing signed already. Next year will mark V8 Racing's return to competition after a devastating fire destroyed its HQ along with several of the team's race cars in 2016.

Team head Rick Abresch said: "We've already signed one extremely strong line-up and are closing on a competitive duo for the second car. As things go, we're looking at a strong comeback to racing."

"We have a long and successful history with Pratt & Miller and we couldn't be happier to be the first team in Europe to run the Camaros."

Team manager Francesco Pastorelli also added that he was keen to use the cars in a variety of championships, including British GT. V8 Racing is a regular guest entry into the series' flagship three-hour Silverstone 500 round.

"It would be good to take this car to as many different series as we can," added Pastorelli.



V8 Racing will run European programme



York had first run in F3 car at Donington

British F4 race winner York impresses in Fortec BRDC British F3 test

British Formula 4 race winner Oliver York has impressed in his first test in a BRDC British F3 car ahead of a possible move to the series next year.

The 16-year-old took two wins in F4 with Fortec this season on his way to sixth in the standings and tested one of the team's F3 machines at Donington Park at the end of last month, along with

Formula Masters Asia racer Arvin Esmaili.

Team boss Richard Dutton was very impressed with York's performance in the first test.

"He did a super job – we would like him to do that [F3] next year if we could," said Dutton. "He really did come on strong during this season and for a rookie with no winter testing he did really

well. I think he would do a good job in F3 and we are trying to get something together for that."

Fortec's other 2017 F4 drivers, Hampus Ericsson and Johnathan Hoggard, have both been testing the team's F4 cars at various circuits in recent weeks and have been joined by karter Josh Skelton – who finished eighth in the Super One Senior X30 class this year.

Total Control Racing plots big Ginetta Junior entry

Total Control Racing returned to Ginetta Juniors for the first time in 12 months at Brands Hatch last weekend, as the team contested the Winter Series ahead of a planned six-car entry in 2018.

The team last raced in the category in the Winter Series at Brands Hatch in November 2016, where it finished runner-up with Dave Wooder.

After sitting out the main series this year, the outfit returned running three cars at Brands last weekend with an eye to doubling that for 2018.

Team boss Lee Brookes said: "Because of all the changes to the engines from Ginetta for next year, we decided to come back."

"I only really left because I felt there was stuff going on out there I wasn't happy with, and I want to play fair. We have had a lot of interest so next year we are looking at running with six cars."



TCR made return in Winter Series



Ginetta squads support decision to give new engines in '18

Junior teams welcome engine changes

Ginetta Junior teams have welcomed the engine changes planned for next year, with bosses hoping it will usher in a "new era" for the category.

Three drivers from the leading JHR Developments team were initially excluded for alleged engine irregularities after the Thruxton round in May, before the team was suspended from competing in Ginetta categories while an investigation into its conduct took place.

In a bid to ensure the field was equal, the series announced earlier this month that all drivers would have to run a new engine from 2018, to be distributed to them on the media day.

"I think it's a new Ginetta Junior era," said Elite Motorsport team boss

Edward Ives. "It's good for the championship and good to see Ginetta acting on it – we have fully backed them this year with everything they have done."

"The main thing is for it to be fair for everyone."

Elite had questioned how much of an increase in costs a new engine will bring, although Ginetta confirmed the cost would be included in the entry fees for next year.

Paul McNeilly from Fox Motorsport said: "I think it's good – Ginetta needed to do something to make it fair on everyone else because there are a lot of things that can be done [to the cars]."

"We have heard stories of engines having 10 per cent more power than others, and in a one-make series that's not so good."

Clio Junior champion Young plans to return

Inaugural Renault UK Clio Cup Junior champion Jack Young is set to return to the series next year.

Young won the championship at the Brands Hatch finale last weekend, scoring two podiums to beat Max Marzorati.

He said: "I hope to do the Juniors again. I don't know where we will go from there but hopefully we have a

good season next year."

● Fiesta Junior champion Jack Davidson made his Clio Junior debut last weekend, scoring a fifth and a seventh. The 15-year-old raced with the Jamsport Racing squad with which he won the Fiesta title, but only contested the race as a one-off prize for winning the championship ahead of a move to senior Fiestas next year.



Young claimed the inaugural Clio crown with MRM team at Brands



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ROUND 3 OF THE MOTORSPORT NEWS CIRCUIT CHAMPIONSHIP

RACING NEWS



Byrne won a non-championship race

Byrne and Round-Garrido share Anglesey Fford wins

Jake Byrne and Matt Round-Garrido took a Formula Ford 1600 win apiece at the British Racing and Sports Car Club's meeting at Anglesey.

Race one victory in the winter series went to Byrne – who put his Ray GR13 on pole for both of the weekend's races – but Round-Garrido's Medina Sport JL17 dominated in race two.

Peter Drennan took a brace of wins in the Global GT Lights series, but retired in race three allowing James Thompson to take top spot.

Neil Harrison claimed both wins in the Tiedeman Trophy aboard his Dallara F302, as did Doug Carter (Radical PR6) in the Sports, Saloons and Caterham contests.



Citroen C1s are proving popular

Second C1 24 hour race at Rockingham

The Citroen C1 Challenge will feature two 24-hour races at Rockingham and provisionally a calendar of three other UK races for 2018.

The British Automobile Racing Club series, which was introduced this season, already has a full roster of 53 cars for both its endurance races, and there are also hopes of returning to Spa-Francorchamps for the 24-hour race. Circuits including Pembrey, Snetterton and Croft will also be visited next season.

Organisers had toyed with the idea of turning the popular series into a championship, but decided against the change for 2018.

"We were offered the opportunity to become a championship and looked very strongly at it," said series co-ordinator Philip Myatt.

"We got inundated with entries and now we're running the second 24-hour race and it's very much a split entry.

"We had to decide which one do we put in the championship and then realised that's not going to work.

"I think we will be a bit loathed to change it [series to championship] if it is clearly a winning formula."

ROB BOSTON RACING PLANS BIG EXPANSION

Team plots moves into Carrera Cup, TCR UK and MX-5 Supercup



Boston was impressed by new Porsche car

Boston raced sporadically in MX-5 Supercup in 2017

By Stephen Lickorish

Ginetta GT4 Supercup squad Rob Boston Racing is plotting a major expansion next season as it plans to branch into the Porsche Carrera Cup GB as well as the new TCR UK series.

The team has enjoyed success in the Ginetta category – with its driver Tom

Wrigley winning the title in 2016 – as well as in the Lotus Cup but is now looking to move further up the racing ladder.

"We've done very well with Ginettas over the past few years and we're speaking to quite a few drivers at the moment who are looking into it [for 2018]," said team boss Rob Boston.

"But with the new 2018 Carrera Cup car we are very much trying to field two

cars in the Porsches next year. I drove the new car at a Porsche taster day and it's the best-sorted car I've driven – it handles well. I aspired to do Carrera Cup back when I was racing, before I raced in the GT4 Supercup in 2013 I was trying to get on the Porsche grid."

As well as the move into the Carrera Cup, the team will also return to Mazda MX-5s – Boston himself won the title in

2010 – as the MX-5 Supercup joins the TCR UK support package.

"We're talking to a couple of manufacturers regarding the TCR car itself and will go to the taster day," added Boston. "So we're going to be supporting four championships as a team next year – it's going to be busy! We've done a lot of winning but we aspire to do the next thing now."



Photo: Jakob Ebrey

Historic racer Scott Mansell gave a rare Benetton B197/06 from 1997 a shakedown at Donington Park last week, prior to it being shipped to its new owner Phil Stratford in the United States. Stratford, a UK born but US domiciled-driver, has previously driven a Tyrrell 022 and a Dallara GP2. He raced a B197 in Europe this season and has now bought another to race in the US.



Wylie/Gamski won title amid controversy

Restarting red-flagged Britcar race was 'right decision'

Restarting a red-flagged Britcar Endurance race behind the safety car was 'the right decision at the time', according to the series' managing director – as the decision gave some teams a 'free' pitstop and affected the outcome of the championship.

The opening race at Brands Hatch last weekend was suspended mid-way through after Tom Barley crashed at Paddock Hill.

Several cars had yet to make their pitstops, while others were in the pits at the time the red flag was shown.

The decision was taken to restart behind the safety car, with cars in the order they were when the red flag was shown. That meant drivers who had already made a pitstop – but now at the back of the queue – had an advantage on those who hadn't pitted, as they had to make their stops

under race conditions. But Claire Hedley, boss of Britcar, believes that everything was done to ensure it was a fair contest.

"It was the clerk of the course's decision at the end of the day," she said. "For safety reasons the decision was to restart the race from the position it was stopped.

"All the teams were happy with the decisions made, they had the chance to appeal and none of them did. I'm not saying it was 100 per cent the right decision but it was the right decision at the time."

The pairing of Darron Lewis and Tom Knight were one of the cars to suffer from the red flag and finished second in class, losing valuable points in the hunt for the championship, which was decided in Ross Wylie/ Witt Gamski's favour following Sunday's second race.

Junior Saloon Car Championship plots first evening race at Rockingham next year

The Junior Saloon Car Championship is set to hold its first race in the dark next season.

The category will partner the Pickup Truck Racing Championship at a number of rounds next season – including when it races in the dark at Rockingham. The JSCC will have at

least one race held in what is likely to be dusk conditions before the Pickups.

Series organiser Dave Beecroft said: "We've been working with Sonny Howard of the Pickups a bit – we've got the great prize for the kids to have a run in one [JSCC champion Will Dyrddal has had the chance to test a

Pickup]. We will be doing a few events in the next year with them and we're trying to show the kids that there's lots of racing out there.

"I don't have a problem with the kids racing in the dark and it will be a fantastic experience for them. It's something that's a little bit different."



JSCC drivers set to race in the dark

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HISTORICS

DOWN THE PUB WITH

MARTY McCORMACK

Age: 32 **Lives:** Draperstown
Roger Albert Clark Rally winner

His Escort Mk2 was fresh

"It was the same 'shell' but it had a lot of work done and was completely refurbished. It had a fresh Alan Sherwood BDG engine. The R.A.C. Rally was the first time I'd driven the Escort since Rally Australia a year earlier and the last time I'd driven it in the UK forests was on the 2013 Red Kite."

He chased Pritchard

"It was all about getting a clear run. It was a long event and an absolutely brilliant rally. We had a few dramas on Saturday and we changed the gearbox on Saturday night at Carlisle. I was just trying to keep the pressure on Jason Pritchard and I was gutted when we saw him parked up in Twiglees because he had been driving very, very well."

The ice was a challenge

"It was really difficult in the ice on Sunday afternoon and the Castle O'er stage gave us a big scare. So we had to be a bit careful here and there and we knew we had another big day ahead of us on the final day. It was very tricky in the ice again on Monday morning. I just didn't want to go all out and go off the road."

It was a long, tough rally

"It doesn't really get any better than winning this event and it is absolutely fantastic. For four days, it is a massive event. From when we started at Shelsley Walsh on Friday morning to the finish in Kielder on Monday afternoon we did 30 stages and nearly 300 stage miles and I don't know how many road miles. I don't know how many bends we went round!"

It was a team effort

"My friend Barney Mitchell did an absolutely fantastic job on the notes. I'm really proud of him because he stepped up to a massive level to do this event. In fact the whole team was fantastic: John Moynihan built me a new car and Alan Sherwood did the engine and it all stuck together. It was up to me to keep it on the road, but the management crew kept me going. I had two clutches and two gearboxes and the team did a fantastic job."

Thank you organisers

"A big thank you to the organisers and marshals. It has been a massive event and Colin Heppenstall and his team did a fantastic job. The rally has been such a success."



McCormack won R.A.C.

CHAMPION HEADS UK ENTRY ON SAFARI RALLY

Yorkshireman heads to classic endurance test with Porsche

Safari Rally offers a big mixture of stages

By Paul Lawrence

Yorkshireman Ryan Champion is targeting a top five finish on the East African Safari Classic Rally, which starts from Mombasa tomorrow (Thursday).

Champion, who was runner-up in the 2006 British Rally Championship, has competed on the last two African events, in 2013 and 2015, but will do more

of the driving than on those occasions. He and car owner Richard Jackson are seeded seventh in their Tuthill-run Porsche 911.

"What you don't anticipate before going to rally in Africa is the variation in roads you will come across," said Champion. "We grew up watching images of the Safari and it looks soft and sandy, but we go into areas with proper flowing gravel

roads with hairpins up and down mountain-sides. They're proper drivers' stages. You get everything from tight and twisty stages to flat-out across the plains on gravel tracks."

Stig Blomqvist, winner of the last event in 2015, returns to reprise his role as favourite for the event, this time with 2016 Junior BRC frontrunner Mattias Adielsson as co-driver.

Other Brits in the 36-strong

entry list include Ian Freestone and Phil Squires, who are seeded 12th in Freestone's Ford Escort Mk1. Event regular Nick Mason is back with his Datsun 240Z and starts at 23, while Simon and John Connolly are 27th in another 911. Scott Armstrong is the final Brit on the list at 35 in a Datsun 160J.

The event runs in Tanzania and Kenya and finishes on December 1 after 2500 miles.



Briggs has McLaren M8E

Mustang man Briggs swaps to mighty Can-Am McLaren for 2018

Historic Ford Mustang racer Warren Briggs will step up to a Can-Am McLaren M8E next season and recently tested the car at Donington Park.

"I always wanted one of these and would like to race it on some of

the iconic US circuits from its past as well as in Europe," said the UK-based New Zealander.

The 8.8-litre Trojan-built car was originally raced in the US by Fred Parkhill, who used it until 1978. After passing through

Andrew Marler's hands it spent two decades in a Swiss Collection, before Briggs bought it from former racer Stephen Minoprio.

"I'm planning to race it wherever they allow the big engine," said Briggs.

Historic regular killed in accident

MN is sad to report that former prolific historic racer Bobby Bell died last week aged 72 in a tragic accident at his home in Surrey. Bell was fatally injured when the shotgun he was cleaning went off.

BRDC member Bell started racing in the early 1960s in a Lotus 7 and competed against Jim Clark in British GP support races later in the decade.

He subsequently migrated to historic and raced cars as diverse as a Maserati 250F and an ex-Grand Prix BRM P153.

Through racing he met fellow historic racer Martin Colvill and they opened the successful Bell and Colvill Lotus dealership back in 1970.

The HSCC firms up its nine-round calendar

The HSCC's 2018 race programme will be capped by major summer events on the Brands Hatch and Silverstone Grand Prix circuits.

The club's nine-event schedule starts in April with an extended two-day meeting at Donington Park. "Donington Park is a great way to start the season and we're delighted to have a two-day meeting there in April," said

the HSCC's Grahame White.

The provisional HSCC calendar is: Donington Park (April 7/8), Snetterton 200 (April 21), Cadwell Park (May 19/20), Silverstone GP (June 16/17), Brands Hatch GP (June 30/July 1), Croft (August 4/5), Oulton Park Gold Cup (August 25-27), Brands Hatch Indy (September 22/23), Silverstone National (October 13/14).

Rare Chevron F2 set for return, 37 years after Macau accident

The ex-Huub Rothengatter Chevron B42/48 Formula 2 car should return to competition next season after a long rebuild by Richard Ames.

Ames bought the car as a damaged project in 2009 and has spent the last eight years slowly restoring it to B42 non-ground

effect trim. Thirty-seven years after it was crashed at Macau by Andrew Miedecke, it will soon be ready to run again.

The Chevron started life as an Alan Docking entry in the 1979 European Formula 2 Championship for Dutchman Rothengatter. However, after

being crashed it lay untouched in Australia until former speed event champion Ames heard about it.

"I've been tinkering on it since 2009 and it's probably 95 per cent complete now," said Ames, who previously had a lot of success with a Chevron B40. "I hope to run it in some speed events."



Season will start at Donington



IN BRIEF



Stokes and McNally: winners

Welsh winners

Andrew Stokes and Adrian McNally have won the Welsh Historic Rally Championship following the final round on the Wyedean Stages. Having taken over the Ford Escort Mk1 formerly rallied by his late brother David, Stokes took four maximum scores from the five events he started to fend off Escort Mk2 driver Jason Gardner.

Note-less wonders

Dave Hemingway and Simon Ashton won the award for crews using maps rather than route notes on the Roger Albert Clark Rally. Despite losing time in a Shepherdshield ditch, the Ford Escort Mk2 crew finished ahead of the Saab 96 of Stephen Higgins and Sam Spencer, and the Toyota Corolla of Andy Madge and Mike Smith.

Padmore's Shadow

Former Historic Formula One champion Nick Padmore has been busy testing Max Smith-Hilliard's recently acquired Shadow DN9. The ex-Clay Regazzoni chassis from 1978 had its first test in new hands at Donington Park last week. "It will hopefully be our entry for Monaco next year: it was previously John Grant's and was raced by Rob Garofall," said Padmore.

Hope on way to F1

Classic saloon and GT racer Richard Hope is joining Historic F1 next season in the ex-Geoff Lees Shadow DN11. Hope has previously raced a Reynard in ARP F3 and a Cooper T51. "The Shadow hasn't run since 1980, but we are hoping to do the first Historic Formula One race next season and Monaco if we get in, then just see how it goes from there," he said.

Rallye des Legendes

Some of the most beautiful and valuable cars ever built for sports car racing will take part in a new event in France on September 11-14. Rallye des Legendes Richard Mille is a non-competitive event designed to give owners the chance to drive their cars on French roads with a three-day cloverleaf route. Entries will be limited to 50 cars produced between 1925 and 1975.

Vintage Goodwood

A new race for pre- and post-war vintage specials will be added to the Goodwood Members' meeting next spring and will honour the memory of renowned journalist John Bolster. The March 18 race will feature a glorious array of one-off specials and will remember Bolster, who was famed for his 'Bloody Mary' specials in the 1930s.



Goodwood goes pre-war

RALLY NEWS

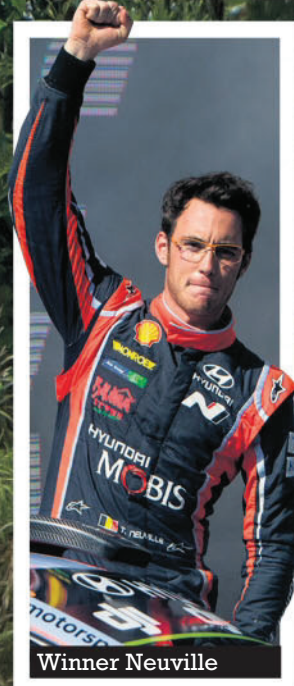
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HYUNDAI BUOYED FOR 2018 TITLE PUSH

Firm says Australia form can spark a chase for the crown



Neuville says Australian win can be the start of win streak



Winner Neuville



Nandan: Encouraged

By David Evans

Hyundai fired a warning shot across the bows of its World Rally Championship rivals with a dominant performance at last week's Rally Australia.

The Korean squad was never headed in New South Wales with first Andreas Mikkelsen and then Thierry Neuville leading the final round of this year's championship. The combination of those two drivers will, the team



Mikkelsen: Puncture hell

feels, be enough to push it to the front of the 2018 title race.

Mikkelsen started Rally Australia chasing back-to-back wins down under, but his day-one advantage was undone when he was forced out after suffering two punctures in the Newry stage on Saturday morning. Going into that test, Neuville was 15 seconds behind his team-mate and in the perfect place to pick up the lead when the Norwegian's i20 Coupe WRC faltered.

Hyundai team principal Michel Nandan said the Coffs Harbour performance demonstrated the intentions for next season.

"The decision to bring Andreas is, from what we have seen already, the right one," said Nandan. "In the end we are here to be world champion. We missed it this year and, for sure, we don't intend to miss it next year so we have to try our best."

Mikkelsen's arrival in the team has cost Hayden Paddon and Dani Sordo their full-time seats, but team manager Alain Penasse said the team had to put its competitive

intentions ahead of anything else.

"We are the complete team now," Penasse told MN. "We said at the start of the year that we thought we had the [driver] line-up that was the right choice, but during the year it proved to be too weak and that's why we had to make this change. It doesn't please Dani or Hayden, but we're not here to please them, we're here to do the job."

"There is pressure to be world champion and the manufacturer has the desire to achieve that; there is no phone call from Korea, no pointing the finger to us, but there is the passive pressure. We are aware we have to deliver."

Mikkelsen was disappointed to have missed out on the victory, but added that he could feel the confidence in the team after just three rallies in an i20.

He said: "There is good confidence for next year. I feel honoured to be hired into the team and to be seen by the team as one of the main drivers fighting for the championship alongside Thierry next year. I think this

can be a very strong team."

Nandan said Hyundai took further confidence from the speed Neuville showed running in the 2018 specification i20.

"We made the homologation in October so he could use this car in Wales," Nandan explained to MN. "At that point there was still the chance for him in the championship – that's why we gave this car to Thierry. We couldn't make three of these [2018] cars for the last rallies."

"We had some issues with the car, but we focused the development on the reliability for the next season car and this is done – with this car we can go to next year's championship with good confidence."

Manufacturers' champion team principal from this year, Malcolm Wilson, admitted Hyundai's threat would be greater in 2018. "The driver line-up they've got for next season has more experience, so I'm sure it's going to be tougher," he said. "But it's not just Hyundai, I think the championship generally will be closer next time."

Sordo and Paddon to share fourth car

Dani Sordo will take Hyundai's third i20 Coupe WRC for the opening round of next year's World Rally Championship in Monte Carlo before handing it over to Hayden Paddon for the second round in Sweden.

Their respective programmes will then be decided as the season progresses, with Paddon likely to get the nod in Mexico and Sordo sure to be in the car in Corsica. Each driver is scheduled to tackle seven rallies, with both of them competing in Germany, the event based closest to the team's Frankfurt base.

"I would like to do more rallies with four cars," said team principal Michel Nandan. "It's



Sordo: Limited outings

possible we could do more, but knowing the way things are at the moment, money is not going to fall from the sky. Maybe we will have the opportunity to do some more rallies with four cars, but at the moment we don't know how many – if we can save a bit of money here and there then we can do more."

WEST GOES FORTH IN MN CIRCUIT RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

PAGE 18



The Strength of Experience



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'Meeke paid a heavy price for mistakes'
Driver ratings for Oz, p23



Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com, Red Bull

Nine-time World Rally champion Sébastien Loeb will not return to Citroën for next year's Monte Carlo Rally – but he could be back with the French team later in the season.

Loeb had been widely tipped to make his competitive debut in a C3 WRC on his favourite round of the championship, but there will be no dream return for the superstar Frenchman on a rally he's won seven times.

Citroën team principal Yves Matton told *MN*: "We are in discussions with him [Loeb] for next year. The only thing we know – and we decided this together – is that he won't be in Monte Carlo. It's too difficult with the Dakar Rally, but it doesn't mean he will not appear [in a Citroën] next year – we are in discussions. We have to finalise this looking to a global view on what will be our drivers next year."

Loeb will contest Peugeot's final

Loeb: drive offer

Dakar in the 3008 DKR in January and his commitment to the South American event meant he would have landed back in Europe just hours before the start of the recce for the season opener in 2018.

Matton continued: "Sébastien's priority for next year will be the World Rallycross programme."

Matton declined to confirm his driver line-up for next season would be Kris Meeke and Craig Breen, with Khalid Al-Qassimi contesting a handful of events in a third C3 WRC and Stéphane Lefebvre focusing his efforts on a C3 R5 development project.

"It's still too early to talk about the line-up," said Matton. "We will confirm this in the next weeks. It's not finalised and it's not possible for me to announce drivers."

Asked if there would be any surprises in the announcement, Matton added: "I don't know what you would consider a surprise."

NO MONTE OUTING FOR LOEB IN 2018



Loeb tested for Citroën earlier this season

Latvala relishes new driver's arrival

Jari-Matti Latvala is determined not to let Ott Tänak's arrival in the Toyota team derail his intentions of challenging for a maiden World Rally Championship next season.

Latvala arrived late at the Toyota squad last season, but has worked hard to bring the team around him – something he wants to maintain even when the Estonian arrives.

"I have worked to make the Yaris my car," he said. "Now [Ott] Tänak will have to adapt to a new car. It will be quite a good fight in the team, but I think we have a strong team for next year. I know that I want to be world champion and to be world champion I have to be quicker than everybody and that includes him."

Latvala has warned Tänak



Latvala says switching teams can change a driver's form

not to expect his move from M-Sport to Toyota to be trouble-free. He added: "When I came from being with Ford, I was there for many years and it was difficult to jump in the VW. But this change to Toyota was easy because I had the experience of moving. For Tänak the move from M-Sport to Toyota will be his first change and it can be a little difficult to adapt when you have been in one team for so long. "When I went to VW I went

with a little feeling that it was Sébastien Ogier's team. If you are quicker [than your teammate] then it's OK, but if not then you can stay a little bit in the shadows."

Tänak admitted next year would be a step into the unknown for him. "I need to get used to new people and a new team," he said. "It will be a big job. As for how difficult it will be to move for the first time, I have no idea – I haven't moved yet!"

Makinen: Tänak has potential to develop

Toyota head Tommi Makinen has revealed the reason he passed over Sébastien Ogier.

Makinen told *MN* Estonian Ott Tänak was a better long-term prospect than the five-time champion. "I know that Ott doesn't have the massive victories," he said. "This keeps him more hungry into the future – that is why Toyota is supporting a lot to bring new and younger drivers."

"[Sébastien] Ogier is still there and he could keep driving for some years. We know his experience and what he has done is far more than Ott and we know that Sébastien could be the safest choice, but we have to listen to the way Japan is seeing the world. I am happy with the driver line-up in 2018."

Ogier not ready to reveal his 2018 plan

Sébastien Ogier's future should be known before the end of this month – but one thing is certain: he won't be returning to Citroën.

The Frenchman admitted his two options for 2018 were either retirement or to remain with the M-Sport World Rally Team. The Cumbrian squad remains locked in negotiations to find the necessary funding to keep the world champion in the Ford Fiesta WRC.

Ogier said: "I am 99 per cent decided, but what I can say is the decision is to stop or to stay with my current team."

Citroën's Yves Matton said talks with Ogier had ceased earlier this month. "We were not able to follow the offers he received," said Matton. "We made an offer, but it was not at the right level."

Despite Ogier's decision, Matton admitted he wanted the Gap driver to stay with M-Sport next season, adding: "For the WRC it's a good value to have him."

Fans needed to save Australia's future

Rally Australia is under pressure to shift away from its Coffs Harbour base and from its position as the final round on the calendar.

Despite improved spectator numbers for the New South Wales event, the teams and WRC Promoter have called for a new venue to be found for 2019.

Hyundai's Alain Penasse told *MN*: "We have seen more people coming into the service park, but still it's a long way away [from the numbers needed]. Twenty years ago Rally Australia was the best event. Garry Connelly [then rally director] brought us the first ever superspecial and so many innovations in Perth. Why can't we go back to Perth, it's closer to Europe and it's a city with 1.5 million people?"

Rally Australia's Ben Rainsford said Perth would be difficult, with the stages now judged to be too far away from the city area. "We would like to retain WRC in



Some of the lesser spotted fans in Rally Australia last weekend

Australia, so I'd like to look at options," said Rainsford. "We have a deal on the table for here next year, but a lot of what happens in the future depends on New South Wales government [funding]."

WRC Promoter's Oliver Ciesla has nothing against Coffs Harbour and its population of 70,000, but he wants to see more people. He said: "Australia is important to the WRC and, of course, they bring another continent to the championship."

FIA rally director Jarmo Mahonen was blunt in his assessment of Coffs Harbour, saying: "The good thing about this event is that it's very safe – because there are no spectators! I have been against this rally being the final round of the championship. Rally Australia does a marvellous job with social media, but it's not enough – let's be honest we are a European-based sport and we need to finish the season in that time zone."

GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

DAVID EVANS

"This soap opera has yet to reach a conclusion"



The car park of the 1,000-seater Coffs Harbour International Stadium on an unseasonably damp Sunday morning. The temptation to reach for Eliot and The Hollow Men is impossible to ignore.

"This is the way the world ends."

Sébastien Ogier, conqueror of our world for the last five years, is sixth overall, two minutes off the lead.

"Not with a bang, but a whimper."

Ogier and M-Sport team principal Malcolm Wilson stand, each carefully avoiding the puddles which now litter the service park. There's not much more to be said. But, at the same time, there's a world of talking still to do.

In his own words, Ogier's mind is: "99 per cent made." Whatever that means.

The one sure thing is that he doesn't have anything further to add. Actually, that's one of two sure things, the other being that he won't be back with Citroën.

Astonishingly, the French manufacturer has let a national hero slip once again. What, one wonders, does this say about Citroën's commitment to its future in the World Rally Championship? An Ogier-led Red Army could well have marched on former glories once more in 2018. But no. The handful of millions that would have turned a Parisian marketing dream to reality couldn't be found.

So, it's Ford Fiesta time again; Fiesta or maybe a prolonged siesta.

Either way, in the world of *Neighbours* and *Home and Away*, the Ogier storyline is beginning to look a little like a soap opera. Certainly, it's one that kept the WRC's media totally tuned. Angles were sought, lines chased, but nothing. There was nowhere to go. Two endings to this one have been filmed. The one that will be aired will be the precursor to Ogier at M-Sport season two, starting in January.

I simply can't see that he's going anywhere. He wants to go; he wants to take time with his family and he wants to live his life. But he's a 33-year-old man at the height of his power and totally on top of his game.

Forget that scrappy affair in Australia, that wouldn't be a fitting exit event for him and nor will it be. If Ogier was going to retire, I'm sure he would have retired at the end of Wales and he wouldn't be letting Wilson run himself ragged trying to piece together the budget to keep him in the seat next season. There's no need for a bang or a whimper, there was no end of the world in Coffs Harbour last weekend.

There will, however, be an end for Coffs Harbour in the WRC next season. It's looking increasingly likely that Australia's round will switch its base after seven years on the Bananacoast. Must admit, there are things I'd miss about Coffs, the stunning roads and outlandish, outback vistas are at the top of that list. But the lack of a population base will begin to really tell as pressure grows on every round of the championship to justify its slot on the calendar.

Wherever we go in Oz, however, two things will remain: the ability to organise a superb round of the WRC and the outstanding hospitality.



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

RALLY NEWS



Photos:Toyota, mcklein-imagedatabase.com

Al-Attiyah will drive one of the Toyotas

TOYOTA'S FRESH PUSH FOR DAKAR

Revamped Hilux to bid for glory in South American desert marathon

By Dieter Rencken

Toyota has launched a completely revised Hilux in a bid to win its first Dakar next January.

Toyota has been a frontrunner in South America since 2012, with Nasser Al-Attiyah leading this year's event until he ripped a wheel off the car on the third stage. Next year will be the Japanese manufacturer's biggest ever effort to win the world's most famous marathon event.

Success for the Hilux would also mean a first petrol-engined victory since the last Mitsubishi Pajero win in 2007.

Toyota Gazoo Racing South Africa team principal Glyn Hall said: "We have been

given a clear objective [from Japan] to compete to win and we're going to do our best to fulfil that. The car is completely new for this year: we've moved the engine, changed the geometry significantly and all the transmission layout is different to give the car a better balance. There's no other car out there like ours."

Hall added that recent regulation changes would help as the FIA sought to equalise the balance of power between diesel and petrol-engined cars and four-wheel-drive and Peugeot's buggy-style rear-drive cars.

"That is an ongoing process," said Hall, "and while neither camp will probably ever be entirely happy with the rules, we

are confident the latest changes will give us a better shot at Dakar 2018."

Those regulatory changes mean 12 per cent more suspension travel, lower minimum weight and a larger, 38mm air intake restrictor for the engine. "We've always preferred to stick with the cleaner petrol engine rather than going to diesel," said Hall. "In the future, the FIA's looking at turbocharged petrol, which could be interesting, but we're getting 600Nm of torque out of our engine, so we're happy with that."

Former Dakar winners Al-Attiyah and Giniel de Villiers spearhead Toyota's effort to halt Peugeot's two-year domination of the event.

Al-Attiyah said: "The Toyota Hilux has a reputation for reliability and durability. This new version is sure to take all the best characteristics of the previous model and deliver new levels of handling and balance thanks to its innovative design."

The Hilux is four-wheel-drive, a layout which is expected to work better as the event progresses out of the Peruvian sand dunes and into Bolivia and Argentina. The opposite is true of Peugeot's 3008 DKR, which will be faster in the sand and more compromised on the South American WRC-style stages.

The 40th Dakar starts from Lima on January 6, 2018.

Junior Evans looks to future in France

Prestone Motorsport News Junior British Rally Championship frontrunner Meirion Evans tested a Renault Clio R3T last week ahead of a potential switch to competing abroad next year.

The Welsh driver, who finished third in the Junior BRC this year, is evaluating a potential move into the Clio R3T Trophy France, or into the Peugeot 208 Cup [also French based, for the marque's R2]. Evans has driven a 208 R2 this year.

"I want to move out and do something in Europe next year so it was good to see what I made of the car," he said after testing for 40 miles in Barcelona. "The car felt really nice. It's more like the R3 Citroen [DS 3], but the Renault has more torque lower down. I adapted quickly to it. It's definitely an option."

The championship offers €7000 [£6200] for the winner on each round, and €1000 [£890] to the top Junior and female drivers.

The team Evans tested with, ASM, runs fellow Welsh national Sara Williams in the series. Williams will finish her Clio R3T Trophy France season on the Rallye du Var this weekend. Williams has been competing in France for the first time this year and is 14th in the standings.



Evans tested Renault Clio

Citroen's C3 R5 will make its public debut at the Rallye du Var this weekend. French champion Yoann Bonato will drive the Citroen as zero car on the November 24-26 event. Officially, no times will be available, but this will give the first indication of how much of a threat the C3 will likely be to the established R5 order.



Rovanpera, pictured in Australia, has been tipped for Pirelli deal

Rovanpera linked with Pirelli return to WRC

Pirelli is expected to return to the World Rally Championship next season – most likely supporting Kalle Rovanpera's programme.

The Italian giant will not supply any current World Rally Cars, but will instead fit cars in the feeder series. Michelin and DMACK confirmed their intentions to supply the WRC last Friday with Pirelli expected to follow.

Rovanpera is tipped for a drive with the Skoda factory team, which runs Michelin tyres, prompting speculation that he could drive a

privately run factory-spec Fabia R5 with Pirelli tyres. Rovanpera will drive a five or six-round programme starting in Mexico.

Pirelli's head of car racing Mario Isola told MN: "Pirelli has a long tradition of competition in the WRC so of course it would be fantastic to come back, especially with a driver of the calibre of Kalle, who we have been proud to support. At the moment we are still finalising our plans for next year regarding rally, and we are hopeful that those plans should be in place very shortly."

BRC and Escorts for Rallyday party

The British Rally Championship and the Ford Escort Mk1 will form the centre of the Castle Combe Rallyday event in 2018.

The Wiltshire event will run on September 22 next year, a week-and-a-half ahead of the start of next year's BRC finale, Wales Rally GB.

Rallyday organiser Tom Davis said: "The British Rally Championship is, without a doubt, the national series with the biggest reputation around the world."

"Celebrating 60 years of the BRC is a fantastic opportunity to mark the series' incredible history. And it's the same with the Mk1 Escort, 50 years on from its arrival in the world of rallying. We've got plenty of cars and drivers already joining us for another year of celebration at an event that starts 10 months today."

Tickets are already on sale for Rallyday 2018, priced at £15 per adult with under-17s getting in for free when accompanied by an adult.



The iconic Ford Escort Mk1 will be celebrated

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, pedalsandpistonsphotography.co.uk, SMJ Photography

BILLY COLEMAN AWARD TRIO REVEALED



The identity of the finalists of the Billy Coleman Award have been revealed, with Kevin Eves (l), Callum Devine (centre) and Jonny Treanor (r) the selected final three. Seven candidates were interviewed on November 14, from which the trio were chosen. Devine won the Prestone Motorsport News Junior British Rally Championship, Eves sealed the Irish Tarmac Modified Rally Championship and Treanor came second in the ITRC Junior Championship and the junior section of the Border Rally Championship. The winner will succeed Josh Moffett, who used the 2016 prize to contest European Rally Championship events in the 2017 season. The winner receives €50,000 (£44,519) towards rallying for the 2018 season. The successful driver will be informed at the Irish motorsport award ceremony in Dublin on December 5. Previous winners include 2017 British Rally champion Keith Cronin and current Citroen works World Rally Championship driver Craig Breen.

GB winner Preston to Rally Barbados

Wales Rally GB National Rally winner Tom Preston will compete on Rally Barbados in 2018.

Preston's victory on GB National was his first overall triumph. He will return to the Caribbean for the second time after competing in 2003 in a Subaru Impreza. This time he will use a Skoda Fabia R5.

Preston will be the first R5 entry on the event since Elfyn Evans took part in '16.

Preston said: "We said confidently that we'd be back the next year after we had done it for the first time, but it will have taken us 15 years to make that happen."

"We started a new business, then the family

came along. We are looking forward to coming back."

Preston has competed in a selection of BTRDA and British Rally Championship events in 2017.

He will be co-driven in Barbados by Carl Williamson, 2016 BTRDA co-drivers title winner.

● This weekend, two-time Rally Barbados winner Paul Bird will return to the island to compete in the Historic Rally Barbados Carnival aboard his Ford Focus WRC07, co-driven by Stuart Loudon. Rally Barbados runner-up Rob Swann will also compete aboard his Subaru Impreza S12B WRC on the November 24-26 event.



Rally GB National winner Preston

New Rally Graduate prize scheme

A new prize scheme could offer one rally driver the chance to win four events in a 200bhp Peugeot 205 next season.

The Rally Graduate scheme is offering at least four rounds in the 10-round Association of North East and Cumbria Car Club Championship next season, with the only cost an initial £100 to take part in a shootout at a karting circuit.

The prize winner will be expected to provide their own equipment and licence but won't have to contribute to the drive.

Alun Pearson is the man behind the scheme. He has



Alun Pearson has driven 205, now it's a prize drive car

purchased a Mitsubishi Lancer E9 for his own rallying and didn't want to sell the 205 at a loss. Instead he is hoping to

hand the car over to a budding young driver. To register interest in the scheme visit rallygraduate.co.uk.

Epic opening stage hands Payton the spoils in Dorset

Challenger Stages

By Ian Harden

Organiser: Bournemouth and District MC When: November 19 Where: Bovington camp, Dorset Championships: ASWMC Sealed Surface Stages: 6 Starters: 60.

Taking a chance and pushing hard on a slippery opening stage paid early dividends for Josh Payton and Marcus Mizen (Ford Escort Mk2) as they opened a 25-second lead that proved unassailable.

They went on to set consistent top five times on a drying track to win by 52s from Mark Welch/Mark Norris (Subaru Impreza).

Welch held runner-up spot all day, but admitted to "being slow out of the box" on SS1. Changing to intermediate tyres mid-rally allowed him to hold off Simon Mansell/Gareth Wilcox's V6-powered Escort Mk2.

Mansell ran strongly throughout but retired on the final test with engine woes. That handed third to Mark Jasper/Don Whyatt (Escort Mk2). Jasper lost time early on after getting stuck behind a slower runner, but fought back to set fastest time on SS3.

In their first rally in a Darrian GTR, Tony

Rees/Lloyd Morgan set a storming pace – including going fastest on SS4 – to overhaul Richard Seal/Ralph Higson (Escort Mk2) for fourth spot in the closing miles.

Results

1 Josh Payton/Marcus Mizen (Ford Escort Mk2) 48m08s; 2 Mark Welch/Mark Norris (Subaru Impreza) +52s; 3 Mark Jasper/Don Whyatt (Escort Mk2); 4 Tony Rees/Lloyd Morgan (Darrian GTR); 5 Richard Seal/Ralph Higson (Escort Mk2); 6 Andrew Phillips/Stephen Moors (Peugeot 205); 7 Danny Gibson/Alf Chanter (Darrian T90); 8 Barry Warman/Sophie Buckland (Escort Mk2); 9 Jay Wyatt/Sally Wyatt (Escort Mk2); 10 Sam Perring/Amy Fergus (BMW E36 Coupe). Class winners Barry Pavey/Alan Spencer (Escort Mk2), Darren Pool/Chris Beer (Vauxhall Corsa Maxi), Phillips/Moors, Rees/Morgan, Dave Bennett/James Wyatt (Subaru Impreza).

Davey targets MN Circuit title charge

Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship frontrunner Josh Davey is set to contest the rest of the championship, after moving up to second in the standings following the Cadwell Park round last weekend.

Davey has previously driven an MG ZR, and made the significant step up to a Darrian T90 with a Honda S2000 engine for 2017 and the MN series.

In the opening round of the series at Oulton Park, Davey was seeded on anticipated performance at car 45 and finished sixth. After starting 17th last Sunday at Cadwell Park he came home in fourth spot.

"We're going to try and do this championship," said Davey, who



Davey and sister Tamsyn have started MN series in top form

faces a 1000-mile round-trip to the next round at Knockhill from his native Cornwall. "We've gone into it just seeing how it goes but the performance over the previous weekends has been encouraging so we're probably going to be a bit more serious."

"I'd only done one rally before

Oulton Park, before that I'd done 30 miles in the car. We didn't really know what to expect."

Davey is second in the MN championship behind Peugeot 306 Maxi driver Chris West and one place ahead of last year's champion Ian Woodhouse in his Ford Escort Mk2.

CONGRATULATIONS

to Marty McCormack and
Barney Mitchell on taking a
fantastic win at the RAC rally

Marty would also like to thank the following sponsors for making the success possible; MTEC Graphics, John McKillop Motorsport, Ears.ie, Tiger Risk Partners, IMF fabrications, Kumho Motorsport, Millers Oils, P McCormack & Sons Ltd, John Moynihan Rallying and Ryan Loughran



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RALLY NEWS

Photos: Martin Walsh, Jakob Ebrey, Writtle Photographic, Chasing the Cars

DUGGAN TO DEFEND KILLARNEY VICTORY

Junior British champion back in an Escort Mk2 in Kerry

By Jack Benyon

Last year's winner Rob Duggan will return to defend his 2016 Killarney Historic Rally victory next month after securing a Ford Escort Mk2 with a 2.5-litre Millington engine.

Duggan – the 2016 Junior British Rally champion – hasn't competed since the Imokilly Mini Stages Rally in July. He'll use the same car – owned by Colin Byrne – that he used on that event.

Duggan, then partnered by regular navigator Ger Conway, won the modern section of the 2016 event, beating stern competition on his debut in a 2.5-litre car, having won the Junior BRC in a Vauxhall Adam R2.

"We have to try and defend our win from last year. We were the underdogs then but I suppose this year will be different," said Duggan. "It won't be easy. There will be a lot of quick boys coming who've had a lot of time in their cars. It'll be tough but I'm looking forward to the challenge and I hope the weather holds out."

Duggan will be co-driven by sister Tara, her debut in a top-spec Escort.

For the modified class on the event, which includes Duggan's Escort Mk2, the winner will receive the Paddy Kiernan Cup.

To be eligible for this award the driver must be resident in Westmeath, Meath, Longford, Monaghan, Cavan, Galway, Sligo, Mayo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Fermanagh, Tyrone and Donegal areas.



Duggan: Millington Mk2-power



Duggan used the car in Imokilly

IN BRIEF

Award for Tindall

English and Scottish Junior Formula 1000 champion Ewan Tindall won the Young Rally Driver of the Year Award at the Professional Motorsport World Expo 2017 last week. The Scot will step up to senior rallying in 2018.

Glyn finale

The Junior Formula 1000 Championship comes to an end on the Glyn Stages Rally at Anglesey, where the fight for second in the points table is still up for grabs. The event starts at 1130hrs on Saturday and runs over two days. All class winners will get a half-price entry in 2018.

Hall Trophy

The absence of last year's winner Tom Morris hasn't stopped the Hall Trophy Rally garnering a full 75-car entry ahead of this weekend's event at Blyton Park. Three Group 4 Ferrari 308 Michelottos headed by Kevin Jones feature in a strong entry. The event is in need of marshals, contact Matt Broadbent on marshals@halltrophy.co.uk or phone 07342215686.

Irish Algarve

Four British and Irish crews took on the FIA European Rally Trophy finale in the Algarve last weekend. William Mavitt/Andrew Browne (Mitsubishi Lancer E9) fared best, finishing third in the ERT2 category and 14th overall. John Mullholand took 16th aboard his Skoda Fabia R5 with Jeff Case on the notes. Joe Connolly/Sean Mullally rounded out the top 20 in their Ford Fiesta R5. In a similar car Pauric Duffy/Andy Hayes ran in the top 10 on the two-day event, but lost 13 minutes on the final stage after an excursion. They finished 22nd.

Correction

Paul Mackinnon has won the Mull Rally twice, which was stated incorrectly in last week's *Motorsport News*. Mackinnon told *MN* that the R5 is the car of choice for the event, which didn't run in 2017 due to insurance issues. Instead, many Mull regulars headed to the Pokerstars Rally where Mackinnon finished second in a Ford Fiesta R5.



Rallying returns to Resolven in 2018

Welsh Championship reveals 2018 calendar, backs Red Kite's move south

The Welsh Rally Championship has unveiled its calendar for 2018.

The biggest change affects the Red Kite Stages, which moves down to south Wales and takes in stages like Resolven, not used in a competitive rally since Wales Rally GB in 2012. Heavy logging in the area has meant the forests haven't been available for rallying.

The Mid Wales Stages also returns. It didn't run last year for financial reasons. It was scheduled to be the opening round of the British Rally

Championship as well as the second round of the Welsh series in '17.

Championship organiser David Evison said: "I know that all our championship contenders will be delighted to see the Mid Wales Stages back in, while the revamped Red Kite will give them the chance to tackle a great new set of stages."

"Competing in the championship will take crews to many of the finest forest stages in the UK."

The Cambrian Rally also returns for 2018. It was halted after one stage in

2017 due to extreme ice and snow.

After the Cambrian and Mid Wales Stages is the Rallynuts Stages, previously the Severn Valley, which keeps its place despite moving from June to April. The Plains, Red Kite, Nicky Grist Stages and the Woodpecker follow – all of which remain from last year.

The Wydean Stages, which was contested on November 12 this year and crowned Callum Black the 2017 champion, will once again be the season-closer.

Irish Tarmac stays at six rounds

The Irish Tarmac Rally Championship is set to run six rounds with five scores counting for the second year in a row.

Series bosses elected not to replace the Galway International Rally, which was cancelled earlier this month.

The Galway event is the usual curtain-raiser in February, but won't run in 2018 as organisers cited a "lack of finances" as the major issue.

Events in Ireland are struggling due to high insurance premiums for events, which is passed down to

competitors in the form of a levy on entries, raising costs.

MN understands that the Wexford Stages and an event in Belgium contacted the ITRC about replacing Galway, while Rally Isle of Man had already been floated to competitors but has now been ruled out. The championship has elected to stick with six rounds and five scores counting.

The championship is set to visit West Cork, the Easter Stages, Killarney Rally of the Lakes, Donegal, Ulster and the Cork '20'.

Fatal Accident Inquiry due this week

Sheriff Kenneth Maciver is set to reveal his findings of the Fatal Accident Inquiry into deaths on the 2013 Snowman Rally and 2014 Jim Clark Rally this week.

The Sheriff finished hearing witnesses and key figures relating to both incidents in September, and was expected to publicise his report this week as *MN* went to press.

A spokesperson for the Motor Sports Association, responsible for governing the sport in the United Kingdom, said: "We welcome the publication of Sheriff Maciver QC's determination regarding the Fatal Accident

Inquiry (FAI) into the tragic events of the 2013 Snowman Rally and 2014 Jim Clark Rally.

"In particular, we acknowledge his thoroughness during the FAI and are grateful for the fact that he has delivered his report within just two months from the conclusion of evidence.

"At this stage, our immediate task will be to fully consider the Sheriff's recommendations and we will offer our response as soon as we are able. In the meantime, we wish to reiterate our sincere sympathies to the victims' families."

Barlow targets BTRDA R2 wins

Junior Formula 1000 champion Charlie Barlow will contest the new-for-2018 Rallye R2 Cup in the BTRDA Rally Series next year.

Barlow won the 2015 Junior championship, and has competed on BTRDA events for most of 2016 and 2017 in his Nissan Micra, before renting a Ford Fiesta R2 for the final two rounds of the 2017 BTRDA season.

He now has a similar Fiesta, which he'll use on all BTRDA rounds next year.

"It will be good to get out in our own R2," said Barlow. "When we've got some testing under our belt I think we'll go well."



Junior 1000 champion Barlow debuts in Grizedale

"The R2 feels like it's meant to be rallying with the gearbox, the brakes and the weight transfer. The Micra sometimes felt skippy on gravel. It's still a fun car and we'll do some Tarmac rallies in that."

Barlow is also looking at events outside of the UK as he ups his seat-time over the coming year in the new car.

"We're looking at doing GB, probably the National, and we'll look at doing some Tarmac rallies in Belgium," added Barlow. "Over here it's hard to get Tarmac miles."

Barlow drove his father Brian's ex-Juha Kankkunen Hyundai Coupe WRC at Rallyday in September. He has also driven an ex-Justin Dale Peugeot 106 Super 1600.

MN CIRCUIT RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Photos: Kevin Money

CLASS ROUND-UP



Mighty McMullan wins Class A

David McMullan and Marc Melhuish (Vauxhall Nova) were denied the chance to continue an exciting scrap with Aaron Rix in MN **Class A** after the latter crashed. The two were rarely separated by more than a second, until Rix clipped a hay bale and rolled his Ford Ka on SS4. He was unhurt but unable to continue.

Andrew Chandler was 10 places below McMullan overall, but took second in the event's Class 2 behind McMullan. Chandler was reunited with former co-driver Linda Ashman and the Ford Escort. Patrick Homan/Dane Chapman's Ford Puma was third in class, just five seconds behind Chandler.

Dale and Andrew Lawson were fourth in their MG ZR, which was enough to give them points for second in Class A in the MN Championship as neither Chandler or Homan were registered. Rounding out the top five in Class 2 – and third in MN Class A – were Craig Aston/Nick Baker (Toyota).

Class B had a smaller field, but still plenty of drama. Paul Sheard, driving his Mazda MX-5 used by British Touring Car race winner Paul O'Neill at Oulton Park for the opening round of the series, only just filed his championship registration in time for his class victory to count. He had built up a sizeable lead when he crashed on SS7, crunching both front wings. The damage was visible but mainly cosmetic. Sheard and co-driver Bruce Lindsay's final class lead was still 57 seconds to Ken Sturdy's Suzuki Swift.

Sturdy was hoping for his first full-length outing in the car, having crashed on the first stage at Oulton Park and damaged the car extensively. He made it to the end this time, thanks to a loan of a welder, which was used to repair a broken engine mount between stages six and seven.

Below Sturdy, Tony Read dropped two overall and class places on the last stage of the event, but it didn't affect his MN Class B bid as he still took top three points.

Joshua Davey claimed MN **Class C** honours after finishing just outside the top three overall, despite a broken windscreen (see main report).

Ryan Connolly looked set to challenge for second, but a weakened steering arm left over from a crash at Oulton Park snapped on SS4.

It was Yorkshireman Dane Walker who took the spot. He was disappointed not to have made the top 10 overall, but was impressive nevertheless, as he had sat out the past two seasons then damaged his Ford Escort's front wing on his comeback at Oulton. He was just in front of Benjamin Smith's Renault Clio. Smith had been quick on the frosty opening stages, as befits a competitive downhill skier.

Tom Rawlings/Alan Gilbert were never headed in Saturday's **Cadwell Park Junior Rally**, the penultimate round of the Junior Formula 1000 Rally Championship.

Their Citroen C1 was quickest on six of the eight stages to head home James Hall/Simon Bradley's similar car by 31 seconds.

Robert Wilson/Martin Haggett's Peugeot 107 was third throughout, despite hitting a chicane. Steven Jones/Christopher Brierley's Nissan Micra completed the top four after Elliot Payne/Simon John Rogers blew their Citroen C1's engine. Eddie Lewis/Sam Billam broke the steering and a driveshaft on stage four after hitting a chicane.

Rachel Bichener and Peter Scherer

TINN ON TOP AS WEST LEADS MN SERIES

Cadwell win for Tinn, West faces a fight for MN glory. By Peter Scherer



David and Alice repeated 2015 win

David and Alice Tinn had elected to start the Cadwell Park Stages Rally on a set of old tyres, a decision which was soon rectified as they struggled for pace in their Proton Satria S2500 Millington.

With new tyres all-round, their fightback began, taking the lead with one stage to go and sealing victory by only two seconds over Chris West/Keith Hounslow's Peugeot 306 Maxi.

It was Peter Stephenson/Patrick Walsh who set the early pace, one second up on Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship leader West on the opener, before doubling the lead on stage two.

"We put new front tyres on for stage two, having started on wets, but had a big lock-up on the first lap when they were cold," said West.

Tinn had shared third-best time on stage one with Joshua and Tamsyn Davey's Darrian T90 but, although he consolidated third place on stage two, there was a dramatic conclusion for Davey. "We had gone through the finish and hit a fence, but a post pierced the screen and landed on my hand on the steering wheel," he explained.

Tinn had also fallen behind defending MN champion and winner of this event in 2016, Ian Woodhouse, but a change of compound, and a new tyre rather than an old set, would benefit Tinn in the long run.

Although Stephenson had gone into stage three with a two-second lead, he lost out in traffic and dropped to joint second with Davey, after West took a one-second lead. Davey had clipped a chicane but there was no penalty and he still pulled out a further three-second gap on Woodhouse, while Tinn and John Stone/Jack Morton's Fiesta continued to complete the early top six.

West continued to push to the limit and had a lurid moment on stage four, while increasing his lead to six seconds over Stephenson and Davey.

"A bit too much handbrake with cold

tyres again, I was probably giving it 120 per cent," admitted West.

Tinn started to close in on the lead on the next stage, moving into third place, two seconds off second-placed man Davey. The gap came down still further on stage six, leaving West with only a two-second cushion as darkness began to fall.

A misfire on the penultimate stage not only lost West his lead, but brought second place under threat too as Woodhouse had moved up, despite hitting a pheasant at Barn Corner, which took out one of his spotlights.

"We found moisture around the throttle sensor and it just lost power, so it was a real problem on those long straights," West explained.

So Tinn went into the final stage with a four-second cushion, but West wasn't finished yet and made a determined effort to recover his lost lead.

"I had to work really hard for that, I just tried to keep it neat and tidy," said Tinn after his margin was reduced to only two seconds. West added: "We did our best but just didn't have enough."

Davey's hold on third had disappeared on stage seven too.

"The gear linkage broke and I couldn't change down," he said. "We made it to the stage finish and repaired it by bolting a small spanner to it, I couldn't get neutral but at least it changed up and down and we could go for the class win."

Woodhouse therefore completed the podium, but Davey was still fourth after last-stage dramas for Stephenson: "I spun off, rejoined and went off again on the other side. Then the steering wasn't right so we spun again and then lost a cylinder near the end." He dropped to seventh.

Mark Kelly/Andy Baker's Escort had been seventh overall after every stage until the last, when he vaulted ahead of Stone and Stephenson to take fifth place.

"I was cautious on stage one after last year's crash, but the car was a bit too tail-happy as our rear tyres were too soft," said Kelly of his morning run. "We changed them



West was beaten by a misfire but leads the points

RESULTS

Cadwell Stages, MN Circuit Rally Championship, round 2/7, Nov 19

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	David Tinn/Alice Tinn	Proton Satria Millington	40m28s
2	Chris West/Keith Hounslow	Peugeot 306 Maxi Kit Car	+2s
3	Ian Woodhouse/Jason Leaf	Ford Escort Mk2	+6s
4	Joshua Davey/Tamsyn Davey	Darrian T90	+36s
5	Mark Kelly/Andy Baker	Ford Escort Mk2	+48s
6	John Stone/Jack Morton	Ford Fiesta S2500	+52s
7	Peter Stephenson/Patrick Walsh	Subaru Impreza WRC	+1m06s
8	Graeme Bell/Russ Radford	Proton Satria Millington	+1m07s
9	John Griffiths/Nigel Wetton	Subaru Impreza	+1m38s
10	Stephen Beck/Gary Whittington	Ford Escort Mk2	+1m47s

Class winners Tinn/Tinn; West/Hounslow; Davey/Davey; Paul Sheard/Bruce Lindsay (Mazda MX-5); David McMullan/Marc Melhuish (Vauxhall Nova); Alex Tentori/Mark Tentori (Nissan Micra). **Points:** 1 West 108pts; 2 Davey 103; 3 Stone 96; 4 Kelly and Woodhouse 95; 6 Griffiths 89. **Protyre Challenge:** Davey/Davey. **Michelin Cup:** Tinn/Tinn.

for stage five and it was much better."

Stone's sixth place was enough to secure Class D2 honours in the MN series, and the lead in the class championship too.

Graeme Bell/Russ Radford's Proton Millington, was eighth from stage four after John Griffiths/Nigel Wetton's Subaru Impreza spun.

Griffiths managed to reclaim ninth place from Stephen Beck/Gary Whittington's Escort, but was still 21

seconds shy of retaking eighth from Bell at the finish.

Beck was delighted to retain his place in the top 10 however, on his first visit to Cadwell Park in a car.

After the second round of the MN Circuit Rally Championship, West leads by five points over shock second-place driver Davey, in his Class C Darrian. The championship heads to Knockhill for its next round, held on December 3.

REPORT: MACAU F3 WORLD CUP

Photos: LAT

Lando Norris was the pre-event favourite for the Macau Grand Prix, and Callum Iltott then took over that mantle by winning the qualification race on Saturday. But it was a third Briton – Dan Ticktum – who triumphed in what will go down as arguably the most thrilling race in the event’s 64-year history.

Red Bull junior Ticktum steered his way through the wreckage at the very last corner – after long-time leader Sergio Sette Camara and second-placed Ferdinand Habsburg crashed simultaneously – to take a brilliant victory from eighth on the grid in his Motopark Dallara-Volkswagen.

Ticktum, on his first race outing in a Formula 3 car this year, looked fast all weekend. He completed a Motopark 1-2-3 in first free practice behind Sette Camara and Joel Eriksson, but qualified a disappointed sixth due to being scuppered by red flags on three occasions when he was close to completing very fast laps. Eriksson pipped McLaren F1 reserve Norris to pole, with Iltott also close in third.

In Saturday’s qualification race, Eriksson got a good start, while Norris bogged down with clutch problems and was forced out of the slipstream on the long, flat-out run to the Lisboa right-hander. That left him down in ninth place. Eriksson’s rear tyres began to fade and Iltott attacked, the Prema Powerteam-run Ferrari protege taking the lead at Lisboa with four laps to run.

Iltott sprinted clear, as Eriksson concentrated on keeping Sette Camara – up from ninth on the grid after two separate crashes at Fishermen’s Bend during qualifying – at bay. Such was Eriksson’s oversteering pace that Maximilian Gunther, Habsburg and Pedro Piquet joined this group at the finish. Norris did get up to fifth, but he was running a similar low-downforce set-up to Eriksson and, as his rear tyres wore, he dropped to seventh. Ticktum also struggled as the race wore on, bemoaning an aggressive set-up – after setting fastest lap, he faded to eighth.

A good start from BMW junior Eriksson to Sunday’s final helped him into the lead as early as the Reservoir kink, with Iltott slotting into second place and Sette Camara third. The full-course yellow was called on lap two due to an opening-lap prang and, when the race went green on the third lap, the leaders were on the long straight down to Lisboa. Iltott instantly launched an attack on Eriksson, and thought he was past when he moved over to claim the inside line. He wasn’t, and his right-rear wheel hit Eriksson’s left-front wing. As Iltott bounced into the escape road, Eriksson’s wing folded into the suspension and he couldn’t steer, so he hit the wall and parked a little further around the track. This precipitated a full safety car, during which Iltott pitted to replace his punctured tyre.

Sette Camara was now leading from the Prema car of Mercedes DTM junior Gunther. When the race went green, there were nine laps left. After the first of those, Gunther dived out of Sette Camara’s slipstream, but had to abort his bid as yellow flags were flying.

That was as close as Gunther got, because he began to suffer enormous rear-tyre drop-off. With five tours to go,

TICKTUM DODGES THE DRAMA

Briton wins it at the last corner. By Marcus Simmons



Ticktum took win after sort-out



Leaders crash as Ticktum slips by

RESULTS				
Macau F3 World Cup, November 18/19				
15 laps – 57.042 miles				
P	DRIVER	TEAM	TIME	
1	Dan Ticktum (GBR)	Motopark with VEB Dallara-Volkswagen F317	39m56.648s	
2	Lando Norris (GBR)	Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen F317	+0.568s	
3	Ralf Aron (EST)	Van Amersfoort Racing Dallara-Mercedes F317	+1.763s	
4	Ferdinand Habsburg (AUT)	Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen F316	+1.953s	
5	Maximilian Gunther (GER)	SJM Theodore Racing by Prema Dallara-Mercedes F316	+4.463s	
6	Pedro Piquet (BRA)	Van Amersfoort Racing Dallara-Mercedes F316	+5.141s	
7	Sacha Fenestraz (FRA)	Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen F312	+5.386s	
8	Guan Yu Zhou (CHN)	SJM Theodore Racing by Prema Dallara-Mercedes F315	+6.483s	
9	Tadasuke Makino (JPN)	Motopark with VEB Dallara-Volkswagen F316	+7.626s	
10	Jehan Daruvala (IND)	Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen F315	+10.455s	
11 Alex Palou (ESP) (ThreeBond Racing with Drago Corse Dallara-Threebond F314) +27.160s; 12 Ritomo Miyata (JPN) (TOM'S Dallara-Toyota F314) +43.746s; 13 Sergio Sette Camara (BRA) (Motopark with VEB Dallara-Volkswagen F315) 14 laps – not running; 14 Sho Tsuboi (JPN) (TOM'S Dallara-Toyota F317) – 1 lap; 15 Callum Iltott (GBR) (SJM Theodore Racing by Prema Dallara-Mercedes F314) 13 laps – not running; 16 Mick Schumacher (GER) (SJM Theodore Racing by Prema Dallara-Mercedes F317) – 2 laps; R Devlin DeFrancesco (CAN) (Carlin Dallara-Volkswagen F312) 10 laps; R Yuki Sekiguchi (JPN) (B-MAX Racing Team Dallara-Volkswagen F312) 6 laps; R Kenta Yamashita (JPN) (B-MAX Racing Team Dallara-Volkswagen F314) 6 laps; R Joel Eriksson (SWE) (Motopark with VEB Dallara-Volkswagen F315) 2 laps; R Marino Sato (JPN) (Motopark with VEB Dallara-Volkswagen) F314 0 laps; Withdrawn Ryuji Kumita (JPN) (B-MAX Racing Team Dallara-Volkswagen F315) DNS. Winner's average speed 85.682mph Fastest lap Schumacher 2m12.651s (103.203mph).				
Qualification race (10 laps – 38.028 miles)				
1 Iltott 22m18.077s; 2 Eriksson +7.957s; 3 Sette Camara +8.643s; 4 Gunther +9.798s; 5 Habsburg +10.391s; 6 Piquet +10.821s; 7 Norris +11.966s; 8 Ticktum +12.657s; 9 Sekiguchi +13.418s; 10 Zhou +14.715s; 11 Yamashita +15.505s; 12 Fenestraz +17.608s; 13 Aron +19.371s; 14 Sato +25.456s; 15 Tsuboi +26.614s; 16 Daruvala +30.412s; 17 Makino +32.173s; 18 Palou +32.606s; 19 Miyata +37.061s; 20 Schumacher +37.634s; 21 DeFrancesco +51.177s. Winner's average speed 102.311mph Fastest lap Ticktum 2m12.281s (103.492mph).				
Qualifying				
1 Eriksson 2m10.720s; 2 Norris 2m10.744s; 3 Iltott 2m10.810s; 4 Gunther 2m11.156s; 5 Habsburg 2m11.245s; 6 Ticktum 2m11.437s; 7 Schumacher 2m11.483s; 8 Sekiguchi 2m11.559s; 9 Sette Camara 2m11.569s; 10 Zhou 2m11.781s; 11 Fenestraz 2m11.880s; 12 Makino 2m11.929s; 13 Piquet 2m12.050s; 14 DeFrancesco 2m12.349s; 15 Sato 2m12.558s; 16 Yamashita 2m12.563s; 17 Aron 2m12.644s; 18 Tsuboi 2m13.604s; 19 Daruvala 2m13.710s; 20 Miyata 2m13.721s; 21 Palou 2m13.863s.				

the Carlin machine of Habsburg sailed past him, and within two more laps he was under attack from Norris.

Carlin-run European F3 champion Norris made his bid with two laps to go as they sped down to Lisboa, but Ticktum got a double tow from both of them, and Ralf Aron joined in too as they briefly went four-abreast. Ticktum completed an outstanding manoeuvre on both Norris and Gunther in one go, moving from fifth to third as he just got it turned in for Lisboa.

He set about chasing Habsburg, but with one lap to go Ticktum was still five seconds adrift of the Austrian, who was right in Sette Camara’s slipstream. The Brazilian was suffering hugely with his rear tyres, and Habsburg bravely went around the outside at the Mandarin kink as they raced wheel-to-wheel towards Lisboa. Sette Camara grabbed

the inside line, but such was his loss of pace that Ticktum and Norris were slashing the deficit to the leading duo.

All around the mountain Habsburg jinked left and right, trying to unsettle Sette Camara. As they raced back onto the seafloor, Sette Camara defended at Fishermen’s Bend, allowing Habsburg momentum to attack at the final R Bend. He went around the outside and understeered into the barrier, as Sette Camara in turn spun into the wall.

Ticktum and Norris flashed past, and Habsburg, his two left corners severely damaged, was also pipped by Van Amersfoort Racing driver Aron as he reached the finish line. Gunther and Piquet were just behind.

“It was incredible,” said Ticktum. “I’d had a pretty unlucky weekend up to the final, so I was due a bit of luck. There’s just no words to describe what it was like coming over the finish line.”

Huff shines through the gloom to land big win

Without a World Touring Car Championship win in 595 days, Rob Huff headed to Macau for the first time in some years with legitimate competition for the favourite tag at the Guia race.

But something just clicks for Huff around Macau, and he marked a return to form with pole for the main race on Friday and a new qualifying lap record of the Guia street circuit in his Citroen C-Elysee. Seventh in the reverse-grid race was a solid foundation for Huff’s weekend, but he secured the main prize a day later by becoming a nine-time winner in the Chinese Special Administrative District.

He was made to work for it at the start by Honda driver and title hopeful Norbert Michelisz – who a day earlier had brought the first race to a premature end after crashing at Police bend – but once Huff had broken the nippy Civic’s tow there was only going to be one victor and he eventually won by 8.142 seconds in the wet, becoming the most decorated Macau winner in the process.

Behind Michelisz, Tom Chilton nabbed third on the final lap after repassing Esteban Guerrieri – a result Chilton felt was “karma” for being held up by the Argentinian, who was protecting Honda team-mate Michelisz.

Chilton’s Sebastien Loeb Racing team-mate Mehdi



Huff is a master of Macau track

Bennani won the opening race, after securing reverse-grid pole despite failing to set a time in the second part of qualifying. The race was a far happier affair for Bennani, who led throughout and beat the Chevrolet Cruze of Tom Coronel to victory, with the result counted back due to Michelisz’s crash.

Jack Cozens

Results	
Opening race (5 laps)	
1	Mehdi Bennani (Sebastien Loeb Racing Citroen C-Elysee);
2	Tom Coronel (ROAL Motorsport Chevrolet Cruze) +1.892s;
3	Ryo Michigami (Honda Civic); 4 Thed Bjork (Volvo S60);
5	Norbert Michelisz (Honda Civic); 6 Esteban Guerrieri (Honda Civic); 7 Rob Huff (Munnich Motorsport Citroen C-Elysee);
8	Tom Chilton (Sebastien Loeb Racing Citroen C-Elysee);
9	Nicky Catsburg (Volvo S60); 10 Kevin Gleason (RC Motorsport Lada Vesta). Fastest lap Huff 2m26.469s (93.46mph). Pole Bennani. Starters 18.
Main race (13 laps)	
1	Huff; 2 Michelisz +8.142s; 3 Chilton; 4 Guerrieri; 5 Bjork;
6	Coronel; 7 Bennani; 8 Gleason; 9 Nestor Girolami (Volvo S60); 10 Zsolt David Szabo (Zengo Motorsport Honda Civic). FL Ma Qing Hua (Sebastien Loeb Racing Citroen C-Elysee) 2m47.045s (81.95mph). P Huff. S 17.



Norris salvaged second place



Brit Iltott won qualifying race

RALLY AUSTRALIA



BY DAVID EVANS

Belgian ends the year on a high as Hyundai lays down a marker

Hyundai had been here before. Regularly, and all too often this season. The i20 Coupe WRC was leading, leading well and looking good for another World Rally Championship win. Then it wasn't. Another odds-on 25-pointer down the swanny. This time, however, halfway up the creek, a paddle was found.

Where Andreas Mikkelsen left off, Thierry Neuville picked up and the Korean team's dominance of Rally Australia was complete. The Belgian's fourth win of the year sealed a seasonal silver for him. Not that he cared much about that.

This season's lost. He's already moved onto a bigger picture with 2018 increasingly big in the frame.

Hyundai turned a page in New South Wales last week and, for the first time since it returned to the World Rally Championship in 2014, looked like a genuine force to be reckoned with.

It's impossible to praise Mikkelsen highly enough for what he did in Australia and for what he's achieved in recent months. He won this rally 12 months ago, but arrived at final service with another sticker on the front of his Volkswagen Polo R WRC. Remember it? It was a hand-written livery addition that read: "For hire." Granted, the reference could have been man or machine. Either way, a year ago the Norwegian faced nothing but uncertainty.

Ultimately, he lost out on a Toyota seat that had his name on and was faced with a bit-part with Skoda and Citroen before a Hyundai deal was sealed for the final three rallies of this year and beyond.

Leading two of those final three 2017 rallies, Mikkelsen has signaled his intentions for next year. And, in doing so, he's raised expectation of Hyundai higher than ever.

Mikkelsen surrendered a 15-second lead when he suffered two punctures while carrying just one spare on Saturday morning. Sitting on a tree stump on Rock Road, Bowraville, he was hurting.

"I wanted this one," he said. "It would have just taken the pressure off to get the first win in before the start of next year..."

A couple of hours later, with the onboard footage loaded into his phone, he shared the evidence of the fourth-gear right over crest that had undone his plan.

"That was it," he said showing me. Can't be.

"I know," he said. "But it was. Ninety-nine times in 100 you get away with those."

Ninety-nine times out of 100 drivers say they were unlucky. Mikkelsen really was.

Neuville empathised. A bit.

"I gave him some pressure," he said.

"We took some time out of his lead in the stage before..."

Neuville's self-confidence rarely dips beneath stratospheric and he's going to need that next season. For the first time across the spread of a season, he's going to face significant competition from his mate around the corner in Monaco.

The passing of time eased Mikkelsen's pain. Yes, back-to-back wins would have been nice, but 12 months on, he was in full-time employment and standing on the edge of a first genuinely serious title tilt.

"It's true," he said, "this isn't life and death. It's been a lot worse this year. Poland was quite frustrating for me. Everybody was thinking I had lost it when I did that rally with Citroen."

Having manhandled a recalcitrant C3 WRC between the trees to a miserable ninth place in Mikolajki, Mikkelsen headed home from Poland in a sombre mood.

"It was nice that I got the chance with Citroen," he said, "but I was helping to develop the car for them. I was bringing experience from the Polo. But in Poland I got the feeling that some people looked and said: 'Look how slow he is...' That was quite frustrating."

"When I got to the next rally in Germany I said: 'OK, now I will focus on myself'. I knew the car would be better on asphalt and this was a chance for me to do something. With second place, I felt I got my name back a little bit."

And the last three rallies have turned the lights on his name. And in Australia those lights turned on Hyundai and its double podium.

The searching beam of the spotlight of success revealed a team divided: the haves and have-nots. The have-nots being, of course, Hayden Paddon and Dani Sordo. The drivers who have not got a full programme in 2018.

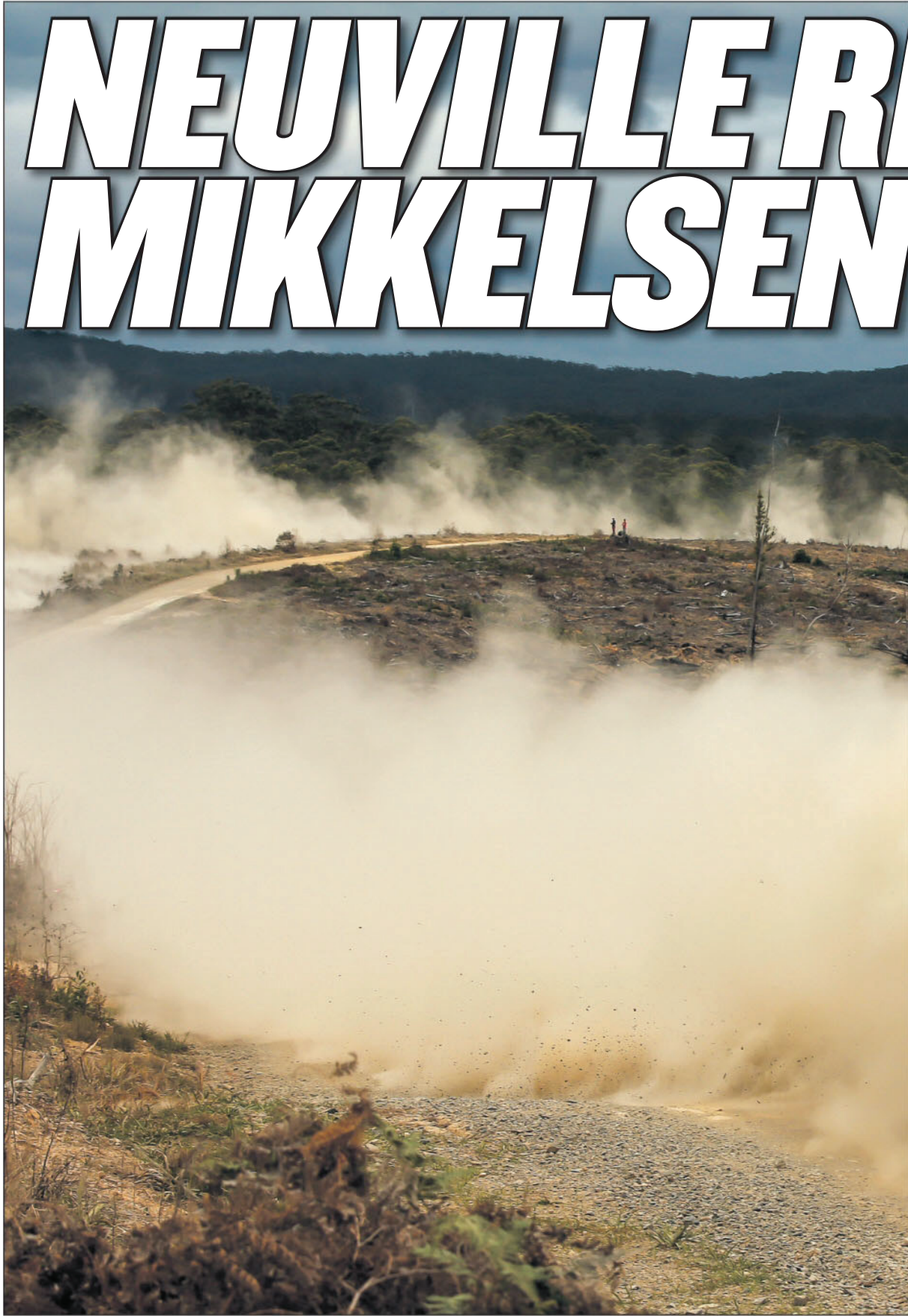
As Neuville himself would testify, Hyundai's team manager Alain Penasse is a man who says what he thinks. A couple of years ago, the Belgian was accused of prioritising the quality of his hotel ahead of his performance on the road, shortly before he was dropped to Hyundai's B team. In late 2015, Paddon was going in the opposite direction: he was moving on up.

The juxtaposition at the final service last Sunday was incredible. Neuville arrived into the arms of his team with a powerslide, a flourish and a bootful of revs, drowning out Paddon's interview as he sought to explain the finale to a torrid season.

Penasse said: "We are quite aware that his [Paddon's] head is a big part of the problem. We have been talking with his management a lot over the last two months. In New Zealand it was always Hayden's story, so we started to talk to them in GB and here to find more information. We have to work together to get him out of this situation."

"It's best for him and us to get out of what's going on right now, but it's very difficult to read Hayden. With others, it's quite simple, but Hayden's quite closed."

"We know that Hayden has the objective to be world champion in 2018. After [his victory] in Argentina last year, I would say that was a sensible objective. Now I don't think so. After Argentina [last year] he had the car fire in Portugal, then he crashed in Sardinia and everything started to go downhill and he started to doubt about it. At the start of this



year he missed most of Monte Carlo, Sweden was not fantastic and then there was a problem in Mexico and he got a bad road position. He starts thinking and worrying and he doesn't come out of it any more. You know, if we have s**t in life, you have to put it aside and walk away from it. You cannot keep going back on it."

"I have been quite clear that he should review his objective for 2018. He didn't understand why we wanted to give priority to Andreas, but for us it's simple: we don't think he will match his objective in 2018. He was angry."

Until last week, Paddon had steadfastly refused to be drawn into a public debate of what he

considered a private matter with his employer. But against what one team member described as a 'poisonous' atmosphere, Paddon spoke out.

"I feel like an outsider," he said. "At this level everything has to come naturally and one of the most important things is to feel comfortable in the environment. I feel like I'm forcing everything and I feel like I'm looking in on this team from the outside. Right now, nothing feels natural."

"Look, I know I've made mistakes and we've had some problems, but I haven't thrown the toys out of the cot. I've stayed patient and calm and not pointed fingers. I don't really feel like the same can be said in reverse."

Paddon suffered a nightmare start to the season when he was involved in a fatal accident with a spectator on the Monte Carlo, and since then things have spiralled downwards.

He has suffered the brunt of Hyundai's mechanical frailties, but of more concern than that is the fact that he simply hasn't been allowed to dial himself into the i20 Coupe WRC. He hasn't been comfortable with a 2017 car, which is at odds with his aggressive, steer-with-the-rear style.

The Kiwi's biggest problem now is that Mikkelsen's set-up is very similar to that of Neuville, offering little incentive for Hyundai to invest time and money in developing a car in the direction of a driver who will only be

running

With S week, Pa stood in called ho blossom Neuville

The bo Neuville a wave ready to comes al

"We ar said Pen year tha occasio second T

"Unfor didn't fu



Tanak had a solid run to a podium

"This could have been his last Citroen chance"
Lefebvre's final hurrah? p23



ROUND

18

ELIGNS ON 'SPARADE

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Neuville (r) secured second in the standings



Neuville was sublime on his way to victory

a part programme in 2018. Odo absent in Australia last addon cut a lonely figure as he the corner of a team he once come, looking across at the ing bonhomie between e and Mikkelsen ttom line is, however, that ends this year on the crest of with Mikkelsen paddling away hop on the next roller that long. Hyundai is ready. e the complete team now," asse. "It's clear during the t we saw on so many as that we were missing a Thierry. rtunately Dani and Hayden ifil the role of the second

Thierry, but with Andreas, it's clear that after three rallies he is here." There's no doubting Neuville's return this season and his form on last week's event was imperious. When the rain came on Sunday, he danced between the puddles and walked on water. Getting to the finish of a washed-out Wedding Bells stage, Neuville's eyes were on stalks. "That was really tricky," he said. "A hell of a ride, but I kept it on the road." Crucially, he reversed a trend which had him dropping time to Jari-Matti Latvala's Toyota and allowing the Yaris to close to 9.9s with three stages remaining.

Continued on page 22



Disaster for Mikkelsen, who led

STAGE TIMES



Ford's Ogier struggled

- **SS1 Pilbara I (6.03 miles)**
Fastest Mikkelsen 5m17.2s
Leader Mikkelsen
Second Meeke +1.3s
- **SS2 Eastbank I (11.76 miles)**
Fastest Mikkelsen 9m56.3s
Leader Mikkelsen
Second Meeke +3.0s
- **SS3 Sherwood I (16.52 miles)**
Fastest Mikkelsen 12m51.1s
Leader Mikkelsen
Second Meeke +16.6s
- **SS4 Pilbara II (6.03 miles)**
Fastest Mikkelsen 5m14.0s
Leader Mikkelsen
Second Meeke +17.9s
- **SS5 Eastbank II (11.76 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 9m48.8s
Leader Mikkelsen
Second Meeke +18.7s
- **SS6 Sherwood II (16.52 miles)**
Fastest Mikkelsen 12m38.1s
Leader Mikkelsen
Second Meeke +20.9s
- **SS7 SSS Destination NSW I (0.79 miles)**
Fastest Tanak 1m02.4s
Leader Mikkelsen
Second Meeke +21.0s
- **SS8 SSS Destination NSW II (0.79 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 1m00.9s
Leader Mikkelsen
Second Neuville +20.1s
- **SS9 Nambucca 17 (30.38 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 26m53.6s
Leader Mikkelsen
Second Neuville +15.6s
- **SS10 Newry 17 I (12.96 miles)**
Fastest Latvala 12m10.7s
Leader Neuville
Second Latvala +5.7s
- **SS11 SSS Raceway (0.85 miles)**
Fastest Tanak 1m15.3s
Leader Neuville
Second Latvala +6.3s
- **SS12 Welshs Creek (20.81 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 17m44.8s
Leader Neuville
Second Latvala +16.2s
- **SS13 Argents Hill (7.66 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 6m42.4s
Leader Neuville
Second Latvala +19.0s
- **SS14 Newry 17 II (12.96 miles)**
Stage cancelled
- **SS15 SSS Destination NSW III (0.79 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 1m02.3s
Leader Neuville
Second Latvala +19.6s
- **SS16 SSS Destination NSW IV (0.79 miles)**
Fastest Tanak 1m01.8s
Leader Neuville
Second Latvala +20.1s
- **SS17 Pilbara Reverse I (6.23 miles)**
Fastest Evans 5m23.1s
Leader Neuville
Second Latvala +19.0s
- **SS18 Bucca 16 (19.82 miles)**
Fastest Paddon 16m57.4s
Leader Neuville
Second Latvala +9.9s
- **SS19 Wedding Bells 16 I (4.00 miles)**
Fastest Neuville 3m55.5s
Leader Neuville
Second Latvala +14.7s
- **SS20 Pilbara Reverse II (6.23 miles)**
Stage cancelled
- **SS21 Wedding Bells 16 II [Power Stage] (4.00 miles)**
Fastest Ogier 3m32.6s
Leader Neuville
Second Tanak +22.5s

COLIN CLARK

"Australia was a different story for hero Evans"



Two years ago Elfyn Evans went home from Australia pretty much a broken man.

Let's face it, in 2015, our Welsh hero was terrible Down Under. Last week, on the same roads, he was unrecognisable from the troubled soul who departed Coffs Harbour with a ninth place tucked under his arm. And only two seventh-fastest stage times to brag about.

I'll be honest, for me, Evans was finished after that 2015 event. The real concern was that he couldn't understand what had gone wrong. He'd had absolutely no confidence in the Ford Fiesta RS WRC beneath him. On roads where you thread the thing between the trees on ball-bearings at 100mph, you need total faith.

Evans bounced back with a stunning second in Corsica at the next round, but even that looked to not have truly rescued him from despair.

Malcolm Wilson dropped him and put him on the British Rally Championship naughty step.

It worked. Evans would probably argue that he would have made the improvement anyway, but I'm not so sure. Absence certainly made Elfyn's heart grow fonder for the WRC.

We've seen him and Dan [Barritt] drive some superb rallies this season, not least at home where they bossed Rally GB. But Australia was always going to be a real test for the British pair.

Last week was only their third start in Coffs, but it was a real and genuine test of their resolve. They missed the recce as well as the rally last season, so they had to put new notes together for plenty of stages – but it was the psychological blow this one dealt them last time out that would make for the biggest hurdle. They cleared it. By miles.

Not that you'd know it from the stage times. Once again, there wasn't a hint of a scratch in the sunshine, but it was nothing to do with Elfyn this time. The DMACKs which had done him so proud in Wales, were found wanting in New South Wales. The hard was too hard and the soft too soft. But we knew that was going to happen.

The impressive part about the operation was the way Evans dealt with it. He wasn't phased, he was as relaxed deflecting the inevitable questions about the tyres as he was with the situation in general.

He stayed calm and then, out of nowhere, an opportunity presented itself on Sunday morning when the rain came. And Evans was in like a shot. Quickest on the opener and third fastest through Bucca.

Brilliant. Evans came back to Australia and faced down these roads which came close to costing him his career two years ago. As far as I can see, that completes the rebuild and reboot of the Welshman. He goes into the off season on the back of a win and a fifth place on his bogey event. It's going to be a good Christmas in Dolgellau. And potentially an even better new year.

NOW TURN OVER TO READ MN'S DRIVER RATINGS

RALLY AUSTRALIA

BY DAVID EVANS

RALLY ESSENTIALS

Day one: 70.47 miles; 8 stages

Weather: sunny 20-26 celsius

■ Ninth on the road, Andreas Mikkelsen is making the best use of a cleaner, grippier road and moves into the lead, fastest on five of the day's six gravel stages.

■ Citroen's Kris Meeke is leading the pursuit of the Norwegian Hyundai for much of the day, but the Briton's hopes of usurping Mikkelsen are hindered when he slid wide and "brushed" a gum tree in Sherwood. Meeke has lost the overnight runners-up spot (albeit by 0.7s) to Thierry Neuville on the second run around the Coffs Harbour spectator stage.

■ Latvala and Breen are separated by less than a second in fourth and fifth. The Finn is slowed by a broken front splitter and an intercom problem in the first loop. Irishman Breen, on the other hand, couldn't be happier on his debut down under.

■ The opening day is far from perfect for recently crowned world champion squad M-Sport. Ott Tanak is the lead Ford Fiesta WRC in sixth, having struggled for speed and consistency. His team-mate Sebastien Ogier has recurring gearshift problems aboard his Fiesta, while winner of the last round in Wales, Elfyn Evans, struggles on wilting DMACKs.

End of day one: 1 Mikkelsen/Jaeger 57m51.9s; 2 Neuville/Gilsoul +20.1s; 3 Meeke/Nagle +20.8s; 4 Latvala/Anttila +29.9s; 5 Breen/Martin +30.8s; 6 Tanak/Jarveoja +33.0s

Day two: 87.16 miles; 8 stages

Weather: sunny/overcast 18-25 celsius

■ The first 10 of Nambucca's 30 miles are wet following overnight rain, playing into the hands of the drivers running soft covers. Neuville eats into his team-mate's lead; Mikkelsen takes a 15.6s lead into SS10, but this is where his P1 status will end: caught out by a right-over-crest the Hyundai hits a bank and punctures both tyres on the left. Neuville has built a 20s lead by the end of Saturday.

■ Latvala is progressing up the leaderboard, into third in SS9 and second one stage later. That position is further secured when Meeke clips a bridge, damaging a suspension arm on the right-rear of the C3. The Northern Irishman is sure he can make it through the next stage, but the team instructs him to stop. The frustration is doubled when the ensuing test is cancelled and Meeke could have made service.

■ Tanak is more comfortable through Saturday and follows Latvala up the leaderboard to a provisional podium spot. One place behind, Breen is looking comfortable – his only problem being the arrival of a butterfly in Argents Hill ("actually, I think it's some sort of moth, probably a killer moth in this part of the world!").

■ Paddon and Ogier are enduring mixed fortunes in fifth and sixth. The Kiwi feels like he might finally be making progress with the set-up of his i20, while the champ's event looks to be going from bad to worse with more gear shift trouble and a spin, which demolishes the front of the car in Welshs Creek.

End of day two: 1 Neuville/Gilsoul 2h05m11.6s; 2 Latvala/Anttila +20.1s; 3 Tanak/Jarveoja +40.6s; 4 Breen/Martin +1m05.2s; 5 Paddon/Marshall +1m21.1s; 6 Ogier/Ingrassia +1m48.2s

Day three: 40.16 miles; 5 stages

Weather: rain/sunny 16-24 celsius

■ The storm which has threatened for the last two days finally delivers this morning. The roads north of Coffs Harbour are turned into a mudbath. Latvala spies an opportunity and is slashing into Neuville's lead in the first two stages. The Belgian contains the time loss and the matter is settled when Latvala crashes off the road on the powerstage.

■ Tanak and Paddon are the chief beneficiaries of Latvala's late misfortune, and the runners-up spot beckons for Estonia while the New Zealander is pleasantly surprised by the bottom step of the podium.

■ Stephane Lefebvre crashes out on the first stage of Sunday with his team-mate Breen rolling one stage later to compile the agony of the French squad.



Evans struggled for grip this time

Continued from page 21

"When you see Jari-Matti doing his push-ups in the morning, you know it's going to be a big attack," said Neuville. "And it was. When I went to sleep last night, I was comfortable but when I saw the rain this morning then I had some pressure on my shoulders. But it was OK. This is a good way to finish the season."



Craig Breen was en route to third

Nandan agreed. But quickly added that there was a better way.

"We didn't give this championship away, we lost it," he said. "Now we must go away and come back stronger next time."

There's no doubt Hyundai will start next season stronger and more capable, but will it be united? Walls need to be broken down and rebuilt, papering over the cracks only brings more grief further down the line. And judging by the number of Paddon's Pack supporters club members crowding into the service park, there would be no shortage of volunteers to help break down those walls.

That building work might not be needed, however, if Hyundai's rivals continue to flounder in the way they did last week. A mixture of misfortune and misdemeanours hit M-Sport, Toyota and Citroen, ensuring they would struggle to put

together three trouble-free days to battle with the Korean cars.

The terrain didn't help, with this year's WRC finale proving to be a typically tough Aussie affair. The heat of the southern hemisphere summer ensured tyre choices were constantly compromised, while a Sunday morning monsoon sent the teams scurrying for anything left in a remotely soft compound.

The combination of forest and shire roads (think flowing, double-width country lanes covered in ball bearing-small loose gravel) worked perfectly once again; that this event provides some of the best stages in the world is beyond doubt. And running them through the backdrop of banana plantations, rainforests, koalas and kangaroos once again had those behind a camera in raptures. But, post-2018, this event faces a serious dilemma. WRC Promoter and the FIA

want out of Coffs Harbour, but they want to remain in Australia. The challenge for the organisers of the event is to find a fourth home for this event in little over a decade.

By definition a world championship needs something this far south and I'll resist the temptation to point them in the direction of the Tasman's far side to the land of the long white cloud; the New Zealand drum has been beaten into submission. For now.

One man who cares little for the location of future Antipodean WRC adventures is Neuville. With a little help from his friend, he rocked and ruled down under last week. And, just before stepping on an equator-bound plane, he delivered the line.

"We were not the world champion this year," he said. "But we drove like world champions and I am proud of that."

Boom.

Quinn owes a debt to his girlfriend after dramatic domestic title finale

There was a degree of concern at the finish. Where was Nathan Quinn? The guy had just landed the biggest moment of his life, winning the Australian Rally Championship title with a stunning drive on the final round.

No worries. Quinn had popped to the boozier on the way back from the final stage. Coffs Harbour is his town and he spied an opportunity to share his success with his mates before completing the formalities of the rally itself. Ahead of the ARC season finale, only Quinn's Mitsubishi and Molly Taylor's Subaru stood a chance of taking the title. For Taylor, success would mean back-to-back titles. For Quinn, it would mean the world. Taylor needed second; Quinn the win.

They were both doing their bit, with the Lancer leading the WRX, and just when Quinn admitted he needed a miracle, Taylor's engine lost power, fell sick and stopped.

The title was his. A AUS\$1500 (£850) loan from his girlfriend had got him through. "We had people through the year reaching into their own pockets helping pay for it. We definitely bit off more than we could chew, and it all worked out for us. I said: 'If we don't win it this year, we won't ever win it'."

"I'd always had it planned out, but I didn't think it would work out. I guess you could say this is a fairytale."

And a nightmare for Taylor. She said: "It's heartbreaking, there's no way around that. Everything was going to plan but it's motorsport and it always picks the worst time to break your heart. I thought we might be able to creep through and hold position, but it went from bad to worse. It wasn't going any further."

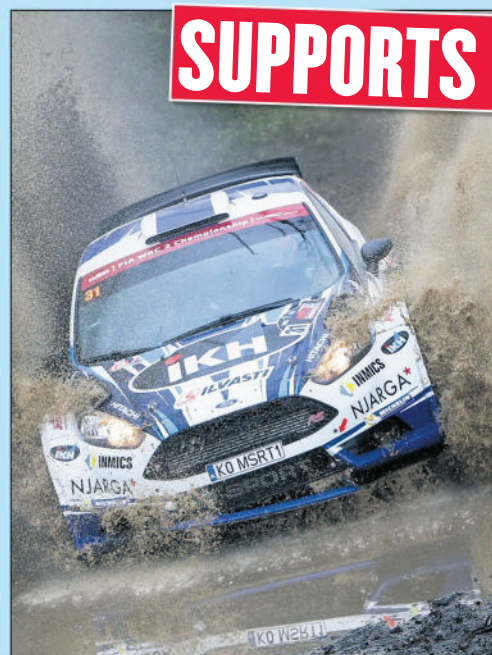
The Australian Rally Championship title race provided an entertaining support story on the season's worst

supported WRC round, with only one WRC2 entry for Kalle Rovanperä. Predictably, the 17-year-old Finn scored his maiden class success despite a double puncture on Saturday.

"I have learned a lot from this rally," he said. "It wasn't quite as difficult as Wales, the grip was a bit more consistent here, but I had made some changes to the pacenotes and I was pleased that they were working well by the end. We had a small sensor problem with the car, but nothing too bad and the speed was where I wanted it to be – we were at the same gap to the leaders as the fastest [R5] cars on other rounds of the championship. That's good."

"Winning is nice and I'm now the youngest driver to score FIA points [in the WRC2]. I don't think that will be beaten for a while!"

At just 17 years, one month and 19 days old, it's hard to disagree with that assessment.



Rovanperä won WRC2. But he was the only entry

SUPPORTS

ROUND 13

DRIVER ANALYSIS BY DAVID EVANS

SEBASTIEN OGIER M-SPORT FORD FIESTA

Running first on the road on Friday, Ogier was always up against it on this one. Then there were gearshift problems and wiping the front of his car off on SS12 didn't help. He looked like his mind might be elsewhere from time to time last weekend. It was. It was on his future...



5/10

OTT TANAK M-SPORT FORD FIESTA

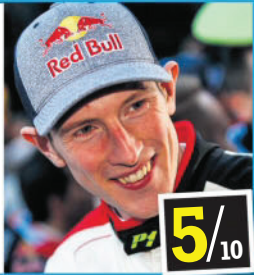
The Estonian's reward for a podium place? A rewired washer bottle squirting water at his crotch every time he put the M-Sport Ford Fiesta in third gear on the way to the podium. It was a fond Cumbrian farewell for the Toyota-bound star.



5/10

ELFYN EVANS M-SPORT FORD FIESTA

The flip-side of his sensational Wales Rally GB victory was tyres that simply couldn't cope with the conditions. Evans drove superbly to the grip he had available, at least erasing the memory of his last disastrous trip down under two years ago.



5/10

THIERRY NEUVILLE HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT HYUNDAI i20

He couldn't match his team-mate's pace on day one, admittedly from a worse place on the road, but once Andreas Mikkelsen's sister i20 was out of the way, the Belgian had the event under his complete control. A top drive.



9/10

ANDREAS MIKKELSEN HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT HYUNDAI i20

Genuinely unlucky to collect two punctures after running just a touch wide on the Newry stage. Looked a good bet for back-to-back Australian wins before that – amazing to think this was only his third event in the car.



7/10

HAYDEN PADDON HYUNDAI MOTORSPORT HYUNDAI i20

He had zero confidence and even less faith in the car beneath him made for a trying Friday, but things improved over the weekend, with the Kiwi ultimately turning in a solid podium finishing position on the back of some Sunday morning chaos.



4/10

KRIS MEEKE TOTAL ABU DHABI CITROEN C3 WRC

Meeke paid a heavy price for a pair of pretty innocuous mistakes. The C3 struggled in the search for grip across the smoother surface of Nambucca, but on day one at least, Meeke had looked the man most likely to challenge Mikkelsen at the front.



6/10

STEPHANE LEFEBVRE TOTAL ABU DHABI CITROEN C3 WRC

Looks like this could be the end of the road for the Frenchman in a C3 WRC. Given that he'd been to this particular event before, he needed to be ahead of Breen consistently. He wasn't. Then he crashed.



4/10



Lappi was on a learning mission

TOYOTA YARIS WRC JARI-MATTI LATVALA

Messy Friday turned into a sharp-looking weekend and, when the rain came, he was right back at the races. Unfortunately for the Finn, he cut a powerstage left-hander too deep and bounced the Yaris into the trees on the next corner.

TOYOTA YARIS WRC ESAPEKKA LAPPI

The loss of powersteering on the opening day ruled him out of any kind of a result and left him with the weekend to learn about Australia's inconsistent grip levels. There were moments aplenty for him.

5/10

5/10

TOTAL ABU DHABI CITROEN C3 WRC CRAIG BREEN

Belied his lack of experience on roads which really command some sort of previous knowledge to hold fourth going into the final day. Fourth position would have been third if he hadn't rolled in the Bucca stage.

FORD FIESTA KALLE ROVANPERA

Second-ever WRC start and first WRC2 win was made easier by the fact that he was the only starter in the class. Double puncture on Saturday ruled him out of what would have been eighth overall.

5/10

7/10

MOTORSPORT NEWS STAR DRIVER



NATHAN QUINN

A decade-old Mitsubishi Lancer built and run out of Quinn's Coffs Harbour tyre dealership was something of a surprise visitor to the top-10 of a WRC round. That he collected his maiden Australian Rally Championship made the story even better.

MOTORSPORT NEWS WOODEN SPOON



MENTAL SPECTATOR

Forget the wooden spoon, this bloke's lucky he's not taking his solids through tubes after a simply insane decision about where to lie to watch Kris Meeke come through. There weren't many spectators out in Australia, but this guy was, by some distance, the most stupid.

RESULTS

FIA World Rally Championship, Round 13/13, Kennards Hire Rally Australia, Nov 16-19

POS	DRIVER/CO-DRIVER	CAR	TIME
1	Thierry Neuville (BEL)/Nicolas Gilsoul (BEL)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	2h35m44.8s
2	Ott Tanak (EST)/Martin Jarveoja (EST)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+22.5s
3	Hayden Paddon (NZL)/Sebastian Marshall (GBR)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+59.1s
4	Sebastien Ogier (FRA)/Julien Ingrassia (FRA)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+2m27.7s
5	Elfyn Evans (GBR)/Daniel Barritt (GBR)	Ford Fiesta WRC	+3m05.6s
6	Esapekka Lappi (FIN)/Janne Ferm (FIN)	Toyota Yaris WRC	+3m49.5s
7	Kris Meeke (GBR)/Paul Nagle (IRL)	Citroen C3 WRC	+22m58.4s
8	Richie Dalton (AUS)/John Allen (AUS)	Skoda Fabia R5	+24m39.6s
9	Nathan Quinn (AUS)/Benjamin Searcy (AUS)	Mitsubishi Lancer E9	+25m03.4s
10	Dean Herridge (AUS)/Sam Hill (AUS)	Subaru Impreza WRX STI	+29m52.3s
11	Jourdan Serderidis (GRE)/Frederic Miclotte (BEL)	Citroen DS3 WRC	+32m25.4s
12	Kalle Rovanpera (FIN)/Jonne Halttunen (FIN)	Ford Fiesta R5 WRC	+33m16.3s
13	Andreas Mikkelsen (NOR)/Anders Jager (NOR)	Hyundai i20 Coupe WRC	+37m39.7s
R	Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN)/Miikka Anttila (FIN)	Toyota Yaris WRC	SS21/crash
R	Stephane Lefebvre (FRA)/Gabin Moreau (FRA)	Citroen C3 WRC	SS18/crash
R	Craig Breen (IRL)/Scott Martin (GBR)	Citroen C3 WRC	SS17/crash

CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS

DRIVERS

POS	DRIVERS	PTS
1	Sebastien Ogier	232
2	Thierry Neuville	208
3	Ott Tanak	191
4	Jari-Matti Latvala	136
5	Elfyn Evans	128
6	Dani Sordo	95
7	Kris Meeke	77
8	Hayden Paddon	74
9	Juho Hanninen	71
10	Craig Breen	64

MANUFACTURERS

POS	TEAMS	PTS
1	M-Sport WRT	428
2	Hyundai Motorsport	345
3	Toyota Gazoo Racing WRC	251
4	Citroen Total	218

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NEXT RALLY

Will Ogier be in the line-up for his title defence next year?

The winners of the Roger Albert Clark Open Rally would like to thank . . .



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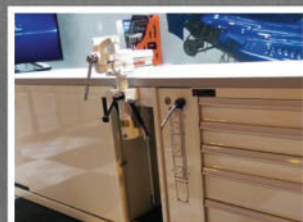


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REFLECTIONS: R.A.C. RALLY

Photos: Paul Lawrence

Paul Lawrence talks to those at the heart of the R.A.C. Rally

BRINGING THE MOJO BACK TO RALLYING



Alan Walker finished fourth on the event



Marty McCormack topped the reborn R.A.C.



Shelsley Walsh stage was one of the highlights for competitors

Two years ago, Roger Albert Clark Rally manager Colin Heppenstall had cancelled the 2015 event as a low entry made it financially unworkable. Many organisers would have given up and walked away, but Heppenstall is not a quitter. In equal measure determined, stubborn and full of energy, he worked away for 18 months to rebuild the event. It came back two weeks ago as a bigger, tougher and longer rally and it was a massive success.

For the first time, it went to Wales and that was a canny decision. It brought entries and interest from a region that had never seen the rally before and Heppenstall broke new ground by running a transport section on Friday night as the whole rally relocated from Leominster to Carlisle. It worked well.

Although the final start list was down to 91, still close to a record for the rally, it was important that over 140 crews initially lodged deposits. It was clear that four days, three countries, 280 stage miles and 30 special stages had grabbed the attention of crews more used to under 45 miles in little more than half a day. This was nearly seven BTRDA rallies in four days.

However, this was not just a rally about the crews. Spectators, marshals and organisers were all part of an adventure that took everyone completely away from their normal life for four days. Instead of unrelenting coverage of Donald Trump, Isis and Brexit, it was a blur of forests, service areas, lights across the night sky, Ford Escorts sideways, two-stroke Saabs ring-a-dinging, time controls, the noise of the Lancia Stratos, stunning scenery, wonderful humour and camaraderie, with the occasional visit to bed when time allowed. Everyone had a ball.

It is camaraderie that came up time and time again when talking to competitors. Everyone wanted to finish and see everyone else finish. Parts, tyres and fuel were all readily loaned out and service crews often worked on other people's cars as well as their own. When Kim Baker's crew were working overnight at Carlisle to rebuild her engine, the Den Motorsport team provided their awning, lights and fuel for the generator.

Ford Escort Mk1 driver Chris Browne says that camaraderie is a big factor for him: "The rally was amazing as always; the camaraderie is incredible. You don't get that anywhere else."

"Exactly like the RAC Rallies of old," said Roger Chilman Sr as he watched his son take a podium finish.

"The cars, the sounds, the night stages and the fantastic camaraderie; glad I was there."

While BDG-powered Ford Escort Mk2s provided an incredible sound track to the rally, less expensive cars were still giving their crews the experience of a lifetime. James Nicholls and David Allman finished second in the Open Rally in their Peugeot 205GTi, which is probably a £10,000 car. "We'd never done an event of this scale before and it was a massive challenge," said Nicholls. "It was the best rally I've ever done, without a doubt. We had a warm reception for the 205, which started off as an accident-damaged project."

At the other end of the scale in experience terms was Jimmy McRae, who contested the former RAC Rally 17 times and was on his fifth Roger Albert Clark. "What an event! We'll be back in 2019," he said after hearing Heppenstall confirm that the 13th edition would be in two years' time.

For Escort Mk2 driver Alan Walker, it was his first rally as a driver since blowing the engine up comprehensively on the 2014 rally. With John Connor on the notes, he finished a superb fourth overall on what he said was the best rally he'd ever done: "They were fantastic stages and to do 20-mile stages was amazing. Stages like Twiggles and Castle O'er were brilliant."

Hitting 9400rpm in top in Falstone

added another chapter in Walker's rallying memories.

Paul Griffiths, an event regular, was seventh in his Escort Mk2: "The stages were so good and what a day Monday in Kielder was: one stage after the other and in top condition. I cannot wait until I can do the rally again in 2019."

This was an event that made memories that will last for years. Tony Graham was, as ever, co-driving for his brother Steve in their gorgeous Lancia Fulvia. He said: "The organisers are responsible for enabling all competitors, marshals, officials and spectators to create and share those memories and hey, what is life about if we cannot leave a legacy of memories for those we share life with. Well done to everyone involved in the best Roger Albert Clark so far."

Spectators were more involved than on one-day sprints. For sure, they were more knowledgeable and responsible than on any other rally. John Pettit and a group of mates did all four days. "Fantastic event: what organisation that took! We watched eight stages starting in Wales on Friday and finishing in Kielder on Monday," he said. "Well done all the crews who entered."

Marshals turned out in good numbers to be part of the event and many did more than one day. "I had a great weekend and much respect

to the very knowledgeable spectators out on this fabulous event," said Chris Mallows. Brian Credland added: "What a great weekend; it was a privilege to marshal on an event this good."

From the organising team, Peter Baker from RalliTrak summed up some common views: "Simply to be a part of the experience that is the Roger Albert Clark is without doubt unrivalled. This throwback is nothing short of magic. To work with a team who, to a man, woman and child simply got on with anything and everything that was thrown at them was inspiring."

"To achieve something of this magnitude takes a very special person, in this case a very special couple, and the team who support them. I am proud to call myself one of them. I have a feeling the R.A.C. will remain the gift to rallying that simply keeps on giving. I predict the next event will be bigger and better."

The final word must go to the only man in British rallying who would even consider taking on such an event, Colin Heppenstall. "It was 18 months of hard work followed by four perfect days of rallying," he said. "The response proved that the decision to rest the event and run it every two years is right. My sincere thanks are due to all the people who helped to make it happen, including all the marshals." ■



Steve Perez's Lancia Stratos was a musical treat for spectators



R.A.C. fans were hardy



Sideways was the stereotype style on the Roger Albert

INSIGHT: SCOTT WILLIAMS

Photos: Jakob Ebrey

PLAYING AT THE CENTRE OF NATIONAL RALLYING



Grist (r) credited Williams



Williams' Escort is well turned out

Welsh rugby star Scott Williams is the unlikely owner of a new preparation firm. By Jack Benyon

It's a cracking spot on Route 60. The cars come into a tricky square right with a drop the other side on the tricky Epynt asphalt.

Walk up and you've got a number of jumps, one after the other, and a professional Welsh rugby player, George North, the other side. He's not hidden by the crests. He is well beyond six feet tall.

What's he doing here? Apart from his frame providing the ridiculous juxtaposition of holding two tiny dogs, he's here to watch his international rugby team-mate Scott Williams, who is the zero car on the Nicky Grist Stages Rally. It's July.

"Ooooffffff. Fair play!" says North as Williams fires over the second bump. There's a lift on the first, but he's a big rugby player so we won't hold that one against him.

Williams, yes, sorry. What's he doing here?

It's fair to say the Carmarthen-born man has a thirst for speed. "I've always loved motorsport and anything to do with an engine," he says with a grin, transporting him back to his childhood.

Back in a dark period of his rugby career, where he picked up an injury

in the World Cup in 2015, he needed something to take his mind off it. And that came in the form of setting up his own rally car preparation business.

His brother-in-law is none other than Barry Jones. If you don't know Jones, he's the current Irish Tarmac Historic Rally champion, and a wizard when it comes to building Ford Escort Mk2s. Whether it's with a BDA in historic-spec, or with a Millington engine in missile-spec, Jones can build it.

"Here we are a year later and we've finished our first full build, the Escort Mk2," says Williams just before the start of the July event. "It's modern-spec, I'm really happy with how it's turned out and we've had a lot of good feedback from it."

It's a stunning piece of machinery. As you would imagine, *MN* gets to see a fair few Mk2s but this one is of particular beauty. White, black and gold isn't quite the red and black of Cossack and Roger Clark, but it's a beautiful piece of kit. Its lines and curves are perfectly formed (that is an achievement for some Escorts...) and it's clear not a penny has been spared in making this the best car it could possibly be.

"I've been there the whole time – not much of the fabricating part –



The rugby star was zero driver

but running the business and some of the finishing touches I've had a say on," says Williams. "The boys have done a fantastic job. The idea was to build one for myself and use that to show off what we can do.

"Hopefully we can get some work from the car."

That last line is interesting. Williams has had to go back to the proper day job recently as the Autumn Internationals hit full swing and Wales needs its centre, but the business isn't slowing.

"There's 11 or 12 in-build cars

here," adds Jones. "There's two of us." Bit busy then Barry? "Oh God yeah, we are!"

Jones' title-winning car was built by Scott Williams Motorsport, and has already been sold back to Ireland, where SWM will run it next year.

Back to the event and the sponsor, and a man who has competed on a few rallies himself, Nicky Grist, is full of praise for the job Williams has done. And not for fear of being hurt by two big rugby players, as it turns out Scott, and George for that matter, are a couple of the most down to earth and nicest blokes you could bump into on a rally stage, and that's saying something.

"I chatted to Scott about it [bringing the Escort and being the zero car driver on the event] because his car was new and he thought it was a great idea," says Grist.

"It's not an easy job being the course car. It's a lot of responsibility, from a safety point of view as well. You can't just go gung-ho. You're running not too far in front of the leading competitors in the British Rally Championship. That's a pressurised situation.

"But from Scott's point of view he's used to being under pressure and he took that and dealt with it

extremely well. It's the sign of a professional sportsman and he took it in his stride."

After talking about arches on various Escorts for a bit too long, which is surreal in itself for someone who is a properly famous sportsman, we get down to the nitty gritty. Is he not nervous of crashing and hampering his rugby career?

"You never really think about that," he says matter-of-factly. "I was speaking to an insurance company about insuring the rally car and they said there's more chance of getting injured on the rugby field than in the rally car!"

After a bit more talk about arches, it's clear this isn't a fad for Williams to do a bit more competition. He can do that without a business of his own. As well as liking rallying, he wants to make the business successful. "We have one guy full-time and one guy part-time," he says. "It's small, it's ideal for what we have at the moment, but we have a few jobs lined up so we're hoping it will continue to grow. There's plenty of work."

There's a good chance Williams and Jones will be out competing next year. Williams certainly didn't hang around in the zero car. ■

WHAT IS A ZERO CAR?

The zero car is a rally-prepared vehicle, which must have been through event scrutineering, that runs as the final car through the rally special stage before the competing cars.

The primary function of the zero car is to make sure the stage is clear, safe, and compliant with the event's safety plans. While travelling at speed, without pacenotes,

the car must be prepared to stop if the stage is deemed unsafe, and the zero car can request that stages are delayed if issues arise.

The car should be in constant contact with the rally HQ and clerk of the course in order to update them on any issues. The zero car has a time card and fills them in as any competition car would.



The zero: making sure stage is clear and safe



Irish Tarmac Historic Rally champion Barry Jones builds the cars

GREAT CARS: DAVID BRABHAM

Photos: LAT

The Le Mans winner and sportscar legend picks his favourite racers. By **Kevin Turner**

DAVID BRABHAM'S DREAM MACHINES



Brabham: lucky driver



1 JAGUAR XJR-14

Brabham's first WSC taster was in the Jag

In a 30-year career, David Brabham scored successes in Formula 3, touring cars, GT racing and sportscar events on both sides of the Atlantic, and reached F1. He's driven some great cars, and some poor ones too. Here are the ones he rates as the very best.

"It was quicker than my Formula 1 Brabham," is pretty much all the explanation needed for David's first choice, the Ross Brawn-penned Jaguar XJR-14.

After a year in the F1 BT59 in 1990, Brabham's first sportscar gig came with Tom Walkinshaw Racing in the remarkable high-downforce Jaguar that dominated

the early stages of the 1991 World Sportscar Championship against Mercedes and Peugeot.

TWR used three drivers across its two cars. Initially, Martin Brundle joined Teo Fabi and Derek Warwick, but from the Nurburgring in August Brabham played the 'third man' role. That meant helping both Warwick and Fabi's title bids.

"It taught me so much about sharing in sportscars – Teo and Derek's driving styles were very different," recalls the 52-year-old.

Although Peugeot and Mercedes caught up with the relatively underfunded Jaguar operation in the second half of the year, rookie Brabham's results were impressive. He finished first (with Warwick) and

second (with Fabi) in Germany, was third (Fabi) and fifth (Warwick) at Magny-Cours, helped Warwick to sixth in Mexico City, and partnered Fabi to third in the Autopolis finale, enough to secure the drivers' crown for the Italian.

It was a fine way to start what would turn out to be an illustrious endurance racing career.

2 BENTLEY SPEED 8



Second for Bentley at Le Mans in 2003

The Bentley LMGTP project, which began in 2001, reached its climax in 2003. Brabham moved from Panoz to Bentley and, sharing with Johnny Herbert and Mark Blundell, took third on the Speed 8's debut in the Sebring 12 Hours.

Le Mans was the main focus and, with no factory Audi opposition, the two Bentleys dominated. In a close contest, minor issues meant Brabham/Blundell/Herbert finished second to the sister car of Rinaldo Capello, Tom Kristensen and Guy Smith.

"We had a couple of issues – the battery went dead and we had to change it, and then

the light came on for the next one and we changed that too, though there was nothing wrong with it," recalls Brabham, who went on to win Le Mans for Peugeot in 2009. "One of the cars was going to win. It was Bentley's year and the other car had a perfect race."

He nevertheless has fond memories of the Peter Ellery-designed Racing Technology Norfolk machine: "The Bentley was a really nice car to drive. The engine, which was from the Audi R8, was a dream. It had great torque and driveability – the perfect Le Mans engine – and the chassis was well-balanced."

We allowed Brabham to cheat a bit with his final choice, because he wanted to talk about two cars...

The Zytek 04S, which the Australian shared with Andy Wallace and Hayanari Shimoda at Le Mans in 2004, was an LMP675-spec machine that took on the Audi R8s in the new LMP1 division.

"I nearly got overall pole," recalls Brabham of the 3.4-litre V8 car. "We put a new set of tyres on and I did the time. Audi then threw several new tyres trying to beat it and did."

The Zytek lacked straight-line speed in the race, suffered a puncture and eventually retired with engine failure caused by damage from a tyre blowout. It did, however, underline its pace the

Zytek (right) was a "pleasure"

following season (after Brabham had moved on), taking Le Mans Endurance Series victories at Spa and the Nurburgring, and the American Le Mans Series finale at Laguna Seca. It was still winning races in Japan as late as 2007.

"The Zytek was strong in terms of balance, predictability and stability under braking," says Brabham. "It didn't have a lot of power, but that car's success has been incredible since."

Arguably even more epic were the LMP2 cars from Porsche and Acura (nee Honda) that battled it out in the

ALMS in 2008. Both proved capable of taking on the LMP1 Audi R10s for overall honours. Brabham's best result came alongside Scott Sharp at Lime Rock, their 3.4-litre Highcroft Acura leading the two Penske RS Spyders home to make it an all-LMP2 overall podium.

"There was a development war going on against Porsche and Penske," says Brabham, who finished behind Penske duo Timo Bernhard and Romain Dumas in the final LMP2 standings. "The cars were going faster and faster, it was great fun. If things were right you could go through the first corner at Sebring flat in sixth, which was incredible."

"The Zytek and Acura were pretty similar, they just gave you confidence." ■

3 ZYTEK 04S AND ACURA ARX-01B



Acura was in a battle with Porsche LMP2 car



RACING REPORTS

BRANDS HATCH: BARC BY JASON NOBLE AND GRAHAM KEILLOH

NOVEMBER 18/19

Photos: Gary Hawkins

SMALLEY EDGES WINTER BATTLE WITH JEWISS



Smalley (left) won title after Jewiss spun

Two wins and two pole positions – the start of the Ginetta Junior Winter Series at Brands Hatch on Saturday couldn't have gone much better for Kiern Jewiss.

But, as befitting a series in which the unexpected usually happens, the 2017 Ginetta Junior rookie champion's title bid came undone with just one mistake, allowing Adam Smalley to claim the prize.

The title favourite's weekend started well with masterful defending of the inside lines at Druids and Surtees to hold off Smalley.

A second win from pole in race two was harder than it sounded thanks to the greasy conditions from constant rain meaning his start was "the longest burnout ever", dropping him to third behind Greg Johnson and Smalley.

The wet kerbs punished wide moments, shuffling Johnson to third, before Smalley found grip at Surtees to pass a loose Jewiss.

The two continued to trade mistakes into the rapidly fading light, but as Smalley rued afterwards "we both made a couple of mistakes, but unfortunately I made the last one," – a wide moment at Paddock to settle the win for Douglas Motorsports' Jewiss.

Smalley began race three on pole but suffered a horrendous start on the wet pole slot from Saturday's showers. Jewiss looked good for a third win from three, but Elite Motorsport's Smalley caught Jewiss napping with a superb move on the outside at Graham Hill Bend to take his first Junior victory.

Race four was where it all came undone. Jewiss needed second place while Smalley needed at least a win, but Jewiss had a catastrophic spin on oil at Surtees dropping him from third to 14th. His excellent recovery to sixth, despite damaged steering, couldn't prevent Smalley's win from securing the title.

"It's amazing, I'm speechless," the

2016 scholarship winner said. "Pole, two wins and the championship in a day isn't bad. Hopefully I can start next year how I ended this one."

Jewiss added: "At the end of the day it is what it is, so I will move on from it." Ross Wylie and Witt Gamski took the 2017 **Britcar Endurance Championship** in their Ferrari 458 GTE, with a class win and second place at Brands Hatch.

Wylie and Gamski in Class 1 entered the final weekend one point ahead of Class 3 pair Simon Rudd and Tom Barley, and three ahead of Class 3 duo Darron Lewis and Tom Knight – both pairs in Ginettas for Team Hard.

The Rudd/Barley challenge ended in the sprint race – at night in wet conditions – when Barley was nudged into the barriers mid-race at Paddock Hill Bend.

Lewis and Knight lost ground to Wylie and Gamski by finishing second in class to Mike Moss and Kevin Clarke's BMW, amid controversy over a stoppage that followed Barley's crash.

Lewis and Knight then had a frustrating into-the-night endurance race. At three-quarters' distance they were cut across at Druids by the Matt Le Breton/Rob Young McLaren, which dropped them from contention after the resultant extra pitstop.

Gamski and Wylie's class win and second sealed them the title.

"We're over the moon," said Wylie. "It's been a really difficult season. They threw everything at us but we still came out on top."

The endurance race was won by Stefano Leaney and Rob Wheldon in their Radical RXC GT3 Coupe, their first Britcar win.

"We've definitely had the pace every meeting we've been to," said Wheldon. "It's about time that we managed to covert it; chuffed to bits that we have!"

The opening race was won by Johnny Mowlem and Bonamy Grimes in their



Birley back after crash two weeks ago

Class 2 Ferrari 458 Challenge, while David Mason and Calum Lockie in another Ferrari 458 won the Sprint race.

The British Touring Car Championship may have been decided at Brands over a month earlier, but the title fight continued between Ashley Sutton and Colin Turkington – this time through their **Renault UK Clio Cup Junior** proteges.

Jack Young (supported by Turkington) headed into the weekend with the most points, but the Sutton-mentored Max Marzorati held the title lead after two dropped scores.

Both made poor starts dropping them down to seventh and sixth respectively in the opening race but, just three laps in, an understeery moment for Young left him tagging Marzorati at the hairpin.

Team Pyro's Marzorati ended up in the Clearways wall but managed to continue, albeit with front-end damage.

Young maintained his second position (while his rival finished down in eighth place) but he was deemed at fault, and

was given a two-place grid penalty for race two.

Marzorati squeezed Young to lead the finale, but was visibly hairy on the corners, saving some big slides on multiple occasions.

On the last tour he couldn't hold a spin at McLaren, dropping him to fourth behind Young.

"I'm over the moon," said Young, who became the first series champion. "It's a massive confidence boost for me, especially when it's my first year in cars. There are no words to describe it."

Lorcan Hanafin claimed the spoils to win both encounters.

Mini debutant Lee Deegan scorched his way to two victories in the **Sevens and Miglias**, while noted historic racer Nick Padmore also triumphed.

Padmore won the drizzly opener after Deegan spun on cold tyres following a mid-race safety car, eventually recovering from seventh to second.

In the wet second race Deegan again lost his lead to Padmore with a slide at Graham Hill Bend, but retook the place two laps later when they went either side of a backmarker at Surtees.

A fine outside-to-inside move at Clearways completed at Paddock sealed the third race for Deegan.

The **South Eastern Centre Sports and Saloons** races featured entries from the Modified Saloons and Tin Tops series for a non-championship combined weekend.

A spin for Caroline Agate at Druids brought a safety car out to help Jon Bevan and Rod Birley's Honda Integra to victory in the pitstop race.

Colin Tester (Ford Sierra) led much of race two, slowing with a problem on lap 16 to gift Paul Watson the win in his BMW E36.

Watson dived with Martyn Scott (BMW E30) in the weekend's finale, which ended rather prematurely with a red flag for Bevan's off at Druids in favour of Scott.



Young claimed inaugural Clio Junior crown after Marzorati's late mistake

RESULTS

Ginetta Junior Winter Series (16 laps)

1 Kiern Jewiss; 2 Adam Smalley +0.386s; 3 Fin Green; 4 James Hedley; 5 Greg Johnson; 6 Louis Foster. Fastest lap Green 57.002s (76.28mph). Pole Jewiss. Starters 16. **Race 2 (14 laps)** 1 Jewiss; 2 Smalley +1.055s; 3 Tom Canning; 4 Foster; 5 Ruben Del Sarte; 6 Hedley. FL Jewiss 1m06.469s (65.42mph). P Jewiss. S 16. **Race 3 (15 laps)** 1 Smalley; 2 Jewiss +0.277s; 3 Del Sarte; 4 Johnson; 5 Canning; 6 Gordon Mutch. FL Johnson 57.730s (75.32mph). P Smalley. S 16. **Race 4 (21 laps)** 1 Smalley; 2 Johnson +0.826s; 3 Canning; 4 Del Sarte; 5 Foster; 6 Jewiss. FL Johnson 57.078s (76.18mph). P Jewiss. S 16.

Britcar Endurance Championship (26 laps)

1 Bonamy Grimes/Johnny Mowlem (Ferrari 458 Challenge); 2 Witt Gamski/Ross Wylie (Ferrari 458 GTE) +5.639s; 3 Mike Moss/Kevin Clarke (BMW 1M E82); 4 Rob Wheldon/Stefano Leaney (Radical RXC GT3 Coupe); 5 Tom Howard/Adam Hayes (BMW M3); 6 Darron Lewis/Tommy Knight (Ginetta G55 GT4). Class winners Gamski/Wylie; Moss/Clarke; Howard/Hayes; Alyn James/Martin Byford (Honda Civic Type R); Neil Garnham/Matt Le Breton/Rob Young (Ferrari 458 Challenge); Oly Taylor/Stewart Lines (SEAT Leon Cup TCR); Jake Rattenbury/Mike Sellar (Porsche 911 Cup); Ben Wallace/Jesse Chamberlain (Toyota Avenis BTCC); Sam Allpass/Clint Bardwell (BMW M3 GTR); Marcus Fothergill/Dave Benett (Porsche 997 Cup); Garnham/Le Breton/Young (McLaren 570S GT4); David Mason/Calum Lockie (Ferrari 458 GT3). FL Gamski/Wylie 54.095s (80.38mph). P Wheldon/Leaney. S 27. **Endurance Race (142 laps)** 1 Wheldon/Leaney; 2 Gamski/Wylie +2 laps; 3 Manuel Cintrano/Javier Morcillo (Mosler MT900); 4 Grimes/Mowlem; 5 Andy Demetriou/Jayde Kruger (Ginetta G55 GT4); 6 Moss/Clarke. CW Grimes/Mowlem; Demetriou/Kruger; Moss/Clarke; Taylor/Lines; Rattenbury/Sellar; Allpass/Bardwell. FL Gamski/Wylie 46.126s (94.27mph). P Grimes/Mowlem. S 16. **Sprint Race (53 laps)** 1 Mason/Lockie; 2 Edward Moore/Marmaduke Hall (Ginetta G50) +24.882s; 3 Lucas Nannetti/Jake Jackson (Ginetta G40); 4 Ben Wallace/Jesse Chamberlain (Toyota Avenis BTCC); 5 James/Byford; 6 Sean Cooper/Brad Nevison (Porsche Cayman GT4 CS). CW Moore/Hall; Nannetti/Jackson; James/Byford; Cooper/Nevison. FL Mason/Lockie 47.068s (92.38mph). P Grimes/Mowlem. S 12.

Renault UK Clio Cup Junior (21 laps)

1 Lorcan Hanafin; 2 Jack Young +4.387s; 3 Harry Gooding; 4 Ethan Hammerton; 5 Jack Davidson; 6 Louis Doyle. FL Hanafin 57.953s (75.03mph). P Hanafin. S 9. **Race 2 (21 laps)** 1 Hanafin; 2 Hammerton +3.496s; 3 Young; 4 Max Marzorati; 5 Gooding; 6 Doyle. FL Young 56.911s (76.41mph). P Hanafin. S 9.

Mini Se7en & Mini Miglia (16 laps)

1 Nick Padmore (Miglia); 2 Lee Deegan (Miglia) +8.963s; 3 Alfie Brown (Miglia); 4 James Cuthbertson (Miglia); 5 Mark Sims (Miglia); 6 Robert Howard (Miglia). CW Ian Fraser (Rover Mini Libre); Lee Roberts (Se7en). FL Deegan 1m04.791s (67.11mph). P Padmore. S 16. **Race 2 (17 laps)** 1 Deegan; 2 Padmore +1.316s; 3 Brown; 4 Cuthbertson; 5 Fraser; 6 Leon Window (Se7en). CW Fraser/Window. FL Deegan 1m02.017s (70.11mph). P Deegan. S 15. **Race 3 (19 laps)** 1 Deegan; 2 Padmore +0.433s; 3 Brown; 4 Cuthbertson; 5 Sims; 6 Window. CW Window. FL Padmore 57.884s (75.12mph). P Deegan. S 13.

Sports & Saloons (24 laps)

1 Jon Bevan/Rod Birley (Honda Integra); 2 Vic Hope (Honda Civic Type R) +0.436s; 3 Jamie Falvey (VW Fun Cup); 4 Terry Waller (Ford Fiesta); 5 Ashley Hall/James Russell (VW Fun Cup); 6 Martyn Scott/Paul Watson (BMW E30). CW Falvey; Scott/Watson. FL Hope 1m06.667s (65.22mph). P Paul Restall/Colin Tester (Ford Sierra RS Cosworth). S 12. **Race 2 (17 laps)** 1 Watson (BMW E36 M3); 2 Birley +0.694s; 3 Scott; 4 Ken Angell (BMW 328i E36); 5 Mark Cripps (BMW E30 325); 6 Warren McKinlay (VW Fun Cup). CW Birley; Scott; Angell; McKinlay. FL Tester 54.613s (79.62mph). P Hope. S 11. **Race 3 (13 laps)** 1 Scott; 2 Watson +0.711s; 3 Angell; 4 Cripps; 5 Restall; 6 Falvey. CW Watson; Angell; Restall; Falvey. FL Restall 53.782s (80.85mph). P Watson. S 10.



Deegan (r) and Padmore battle



Wheldon and Leaney's Radical RXC triumphed in the main Britcar night race

SPORTING SCENE

Photos: Colin Casserley, FIA World Rallycross

CENTURY BOSS AIMS FOR TOYOTA QUARTER-MILE RECORD IN 2018

Racer Nathan Freke has benchmark plans

By Rob Ladbrook

British GT Championship ace Nathan Freke is aiming to build the fastest Toyota MR2 in the world, capable of completing a quarter-mile run in under nine-seconds.

Freke, the 2006 British Formula Ford champion, previously held the record for the fastest run in an MR2, set at 9.72 seconds with a top speed of 148.2mph set at Shakespeare County Raceway in 2009.

That car was terminally damaged when the trailer that was carrying it broke away from the tow vehicle shortly after the record was set. Freke and his Century Motorsport team then switched focus to racing Ginettas in British GT.

But recently Freke has resumed working on MR2s, with his latest 1000bhp creation nearing completion. The new car is based on an MR2 challenge race car, but with

extensive performance modifications to the original S3GTE Toyota engine, which now features turbocharging, and an SQS Racing sequential gearbox.

Freke is aiming to complete his run at either Santa Pod or Shakespeare Raceway early next year and wants to crack the current world record of 8.9s.

"I grew up modifying Toyotas, and the MR2 was just sat in the

workshop so I started toying with it and it gradually just grew and grew into this project," said Freke.

"We've specced the engine with parts from all over the world and it's been designed to break the world record and act as a showcase for our tuning ability. I want to get down to the 8.5-second mark eventually. As soon as the tracks open next year we'll be out having a crack."



The Toyota MR2's base engine has been heavily tuned



Aim is for a sub-nine-second run

Scheider admits talks with BMW over a rallycross project

Double DTM champion Timo Scheider has confirmed that he is in talks with BMW about a Rallycross entry.

Scheider raced full-time in World RX in 2017 for the MJP Racing Team Austria squad, following selected appearances in 2015 and 2016. He finished on the podium at the opening round in Barcelona this year.

Scheider told MN: "There are dreams and hopes and there is something positive behind that. I can't say anything more but I can tell you that we're in deep talks [with BMW]."

The German driver expects

to remain in World RX next season, but is yet to confirm who he will drive for. "Let's see," he said. "I try to make it happen for next year, it looks good for 2018 but I will also do some races with BMW somewhere else so it will be a double programme. That's the target we have."

Following his retirement from DTM at the end of 2016, which ended a 10-year relationship with Audi, the German driver signed for BMW and raced in the Nurburgring 24 hours alongside his World RX campaign this year.

Scheider finished the

World RX season as the highest-placed non-works-backed driver, in 10th, and acknowledged the lure to manufacturers of a potential electric rallycross category, that could be introduced to World RX as soon as 2020.

He added: "The future looks bright with electric rallycross. So far it sounds quite interesting what the manufacturers are talking about. When you look at how much manufacturers are involved in Formula E for example, then for sure the future of rallycross with electric cars can be a good future."



Scheider: 2018 plan



BMW could be lured to rallycross

BriSCA



Fairhurst overtook Wass for victory

BriSCA F1

By Colin Casserley

Organiser: Incarace **When:** November 18 **Where:** Birmingham **Wheels Starters:** 73.

The BriSCA F1 under 25s championship is the highlight of the season-ending Gala meeting at Birmingham Wheels. The event, now in its 12th year, was the brainchild of former BriSCA F2racer Dave Leonard, who passed away just over a year ago.

Austin Moore grabbed the early lead, which he held until Alex Wass barged to the front on lap three. Further back, Lee Fairhurst and Michael Stewart engaged in a fierce battle until Fairhurst broke free and began to close in on the leader. As the race entered the closing stages Fairhurst eased his way past Wass to claim his second Under 25s title. The first one came in 2013.

"It's a race I really wanted to win. Dave Leonard was a great friend of my family," said Fairhurst. "It's my last time in this event [due to his age] so I wanted to mark it with a win. The car felt good from the

start, but I was helped by a yellow flag early in the race that bunched up the field. After the restart, I just tried to keep it smooth and constant but Wass was hard to catch, he drove a great race."

Wass said he was disappointed, although satisfied to finish on the podium after a tough season. He said: "It was a hard race. I saw Fairhurst closing in on me, I tried to hold him off but he had just a bit too much for me."

Ashley England completed the podium places driving a car borrowed from Frankie Wainman Jr.

Defending champion Ant Whorton-Eales brought his car home in fourth, despite an early-race incident. "I got pushed into a parked car, but I just floored it and got through it," said the British Touring Car Championship regular. "It bent the front bumper a bit. I have learned that the slower you drive these cars the quicker you seem to go."

Result

1 Lee Fairhurst; 2 Alex Wass; 3 Ashley England; 4 Ant Whorton-Eales; 5 Danny Wainman; 6 Michael Stewart; 7 Frankie Wainman Junior Jr; 8 Kyle Gray; 9 Will Hunter; 10 Josh Smith.

ROUND-UP

Simon and Matt Kingsley won the **Loughborough Sporting Trial** on Sunday to maintain their title chances and third win of the season.

Reigning BTRDA Gold Star champion Josh Veale was second overall, winning the red live-axle class. John Fack drove the wrong way through a seven post on the first round but salvaged the final step of the podium.

In addition to Kingsley, Richard Sharp finished fourth to maintain second in the MSA points, while Roland Uglov's fifth improved his score taking him to the brink of a third British title with one round to run next weekend.

Paul Price, Jerome Fack, Ian Veale, Boyd Webster and Roger Bricknell completed the top 10 overall covered by just three points. Martin Grimwood won the Blue independent class and Ian Fullwood won the blue live-axle class. Sandy Veale won the Rookie class with Jeff Armistead sealing the clubman division.

Uglov also retained the recent **Roy Fedden Sporting Trial** trophy, one of the oldest in the sport which dates back to the mid-1930s.

Uglov took the early lead on the challenging slippery sections that he never relinquished, winning for the third successive year. John Fack, the winner of the previous two events, battled back to finish second just ahead of Peter Fensom.

Peter McKinney managed fourth ahead of Julian Fack and Simon Kingsley, who made a costly error in the last round of nine hills. Arthur Carroll surprised many to finish best live-axle in eighth and he also won the blue live-axle class. He finished behind his mentor, Ian Wright. Josh Veale was the best red-live in 12th.

Grimwood won the blue independent class from Pat Henson. In the new Rookie class, former Gold Star-winning passengers Kiel Wright and Sandy Veale both battled. Wright prevailed in the end.

Duncan Stephens

Results

Loughborough Sporting Trial
Organiser: Loughborough Car Club
When: November 19 **Where:** Loughborough **Starters:** 25
1 Simon Kingsley/Matt Kingsley (Crossle) 5 marks; 2 Josh Veale/James Washer (Sherpa) 8 marks; 3 John Fack/Claire Smyth (MSR); 4 Richard Sharp/Joe Sharp (Cartwright); 5 Roland Uglov/Beth Carroll (Crossle); 6 Paul Price/Kate Kirk (CAP); 7 Jerome Fack/Jess Fack (MSR); 8 Ian Veale/Tristan Veale (Sherpa); 9 Boyd Webster/Andrew Cairns (Crossle); 10 Roger Bricknell/Julia Bricknell (Facksmile).

Roy Fedden Sporting Trial

Organiser: Bristol Motor Club **When:** November 12 **Where:** Thornbury, Avon **Starters:** 29.
1 Uglov/Carroll 57 marks; 2 John Fack/Andy Gowen (MSR) 65 marks; 3 Peter Fensom/Liz Fensom (Hamilton); 4 Peter McKinney/Claire Smyth (Crossle); 5 Julian Fack/Callum Pritchett (Crossle); 6 Kingsley/Kingsley; 7 Ian Wright/Andy Moody (Sherpa Indy); 8 Arthur Carroll/Nick Vangas (Sherpa); 9 Richard Sharp/Joe Sharp (Cartwright); 10 Jerome Fack/Jess Fack (MSR).

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MN SAYS...

Ticktum's win sets him on the path

A last-gasp victory in the Far East could have significant repercussions for Brit

This will be a huge couple of weeks for young British racer Daniel Ticktum. In just under two week's time, he will be waiting nervously at the Autosport Awards ceremony at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London, eager to see whether he has been selected as the McLaren Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year.

Even before that, there were more challenges to overcome, and last weekend's Macau F3 Grand Prix was quite a sizeable one. F3 wasn't a formula that the Londoner – the rehabilitated bad boy of British motorsport – had the most experience of. Allied to that, he was on the toughest circuit in the world up against the cream of the crop among the world's rising stars: it was quite a challenge.

Admittedly, he was fortunate to be in the right place at the right time when the two leaders managed to crash at the last corner, but he still had to be in prime position to capitalise. That he did, and he led McLaren's new test and reserve driver Lando Norris over the line for a British 1-2. Callum Iott had won the qualification race too. All in all, it was a weekend that highlighted the strength of the next wave of British talent that will be writing the next decade of headlines. Given the evidence of Macau, the future is in some pretty safe hands.

Matt James, Editor (Twitter: @MattJMNews)



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

ART EDITOR MIKE STOKOE'S
FAVOURITE OF
THE WEEK!



Jason Austin captured this mighty Triumph on the R.A.C



Chris Collier enjoyed the truck meeting at Brands Hatch



R.A.C. Rally Saab pushing, snapped by James Lomax



Steve Bannister on the R.A.C. Rally, by James Dewar



Brian Gower's picture from the Race of Remembrance



Crail Stages Ford Escort action, taken by James Dewar



Graham Lomax got this atmosphere shot from the R.A.C.



Peter Atkins went to the Classic Car Show at the NEC

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TV GUIDE

There's plenty of season finales to catch-up with during the week, beginning with **TCR International** from Dubai (Thursday, 1755-1925hrs, Motorsport.tv), as Jean-Karl Vernay looks to seal the title.

If you missed the **Giorgio Piola, Illustrating Speed** documentary fear not as you can watch it again (Thursday, 2100-2130hrs, Motorsport.tv) and go behind-the-scenes to get

an insight into how one of the sport's greatest technical journalists works.

Relive the drama of the Formula 1 championship-decider from Abu Dhabi in 2010 with **Classic F1** (Thursday, 2145-0015hrs, Sky Sports F1), where four drivers including Sebastian Vettel, Mark Webber, Fernando Alonso and Lewis Hamilton had a chance of taking the crown. The final round of the

World Endurance Championship ends with the Six Hours of Bahrain as champion Porsche looks to finish its final race in the top-class of the series with a win (Friday, 0700-1040hrs, Motorsport.tv).

And there's a look ahead to season four of **Formula E** with a preview programme (Friday, 1545-1645hrs, BT Sport 3) on how the teams and drivers are preparing for the new campaign.



Vettel won 2010 title

LIVE TV

Formula 2: Abu Dhabi

■ **Race one:** Saturday, 1440-1545hrs, Sky Sports F1
■ **Race two:** Sunday, 1010-1130hrs, Sky Sports F1

GP3: Abu



Dhabi

■ **Race one:** Saturday, 0820-0915hrs, Sky Sports F1
■ **Race two:** Sunday, 0915-1010hrs, Sky Sports F1



AUSTRALIAN SUPERCARS: NEWCASTLE 500

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■ **Drivers' press conference:** Thursday, 1100-1200hrs
■ **FP1:** Friday, 0845-1100hrs
■ **FP2:** Friday, 1245-1500hrs
■ **Team principals' press conference:** Friday, 1615-1715hrs
■ **The F1 Show:** Friday, 1745-1815hrs
■ **FP3:** Saturday, 0945-1115hrs ■ **Qualifying:** Saturday, 1200-1440hrs
■ **Race:** Sunday, 1130-1615hrs ■ **Highlights:** Sunday, 1900-2000hrs

Abu Dhabi Grand Prix Channel 4 HD

■ **FP1:** Friday, 0855-1035hrs
■ **FP2:** Friday, 1255-1500hrs
■ **FP3:** Saturday, 0955-1125hrs ■ **Qualifying:** Saturday, 1155-1445hrs
■ **Race:** Sunday, 1200-1510hrs

LISTINGS

RALLYING SATURDAY

■ **Blyton Park, Lincolnshire Hall Trophy Rally Starts** 0930hrs
Admission TBC
Web clitheroedmc.co.uk

SATURDAY/SUNDAY

■ **Trac Mon, Anglesey Pentraeth Automotive Group Glyn Stages Starts** 1130hrs
Admission TBC
Web camconline.co.uk

Details correct at time of press



Farewell to Felipe...

NEXT WEEK

OUT WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29



RACE REPORT AND NEWS FROM SEASON-ENDING GRAND PRIX



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Over the last few months our tech team has been toiling to construct this new site from scratch, and to finally give MN the dedicated digital presence the title deserves. It is the latest investment made in the title under its ownership of the Motorsport Network. Please have a poke around, take in the stories and columns, and also check out what events are coming up near you in our regularly

updated What's On section. Going forward we aim to provide series-specific sub-menus, giving you direct links to everything from the British Touring Car Championship and British GT, through to World Rallying, Rallycross and club-level competition. This website is a key development in the future of Motorsport News, but we also won't be forgetting our heritage. This is not a replacement for the weekly newspaper, more a complement to it. The paper copy of MN will continue unaltered, with the website simply providing a new outlet for us to create

fresh content, try new things and bring you the biggest national motorsport stories as and when they happen. The site is still in its development span, meaning we need your feedback on your experiences of using it in order to make further improvements to it for the future. Your feedback will help to ensure that we give you the best final product we can. To give us your views, contact us on Twitter (@MNMotorsport), via Facebook or via email letters@motorsport-news.co.uk.



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Production Abbey Gunner

PUBLISHING

Group Publishing Manager Sunita Davies

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Printed by Sheffield Web

Distributed by Seymour, 2 Poultry Avenue, London, EC1A 9PT
Published every Wednesday by Autosport Media UK Limited, 1 Eton Street, Richmond, Surrey, TW9 1AG, UK

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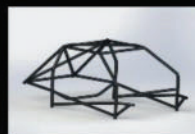
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