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Australia hints at the battle that could come

MERCEDES STILL HAS THE FASTEST CAR – IT WOULD BE wrong to claim otherwise. But the sight of Ferrari running first and second in the opening stint of the Australian Grand Prix suggests there's no reason to write off this season just yet. After all, the race would have panned out very differently had Ferrari not made a tyre call that baffled its rivals.

The disaster of qualifying overshadowed the fact that Hamilton's pole-position time was pretty rapid, and yet people continue to claim Formula 1 cars are slow. As last week's excellent speed-comparison feature (March 17) showed, F1 machinery is still just under six per cent faster than anything else on laptime. But contrary to what some might argue, laptime does not a great race make, and what made the Australian GP so watchable was Ferrari giving Mercedes something to think about.

It's remarkable how quickly things can turn around. The criticism on Saturday over qualifying, which peaked at the sight of a chequered flag waving at an empty track, was well deserved. It was a classic example of F1 shooting itself in the foot for a decision made on flimsy logic and without due diligence. But Sunday was a reminder that, at its heart, there's still a lot that's good about grand prix racing.

First up, we need Ferrari to build on this encouraging start. It's not as far off as qualifying suggests, but it also needs to avoid poor strategic decisions such as the one made on Sunday.





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Ferrari wastes its perfect start

By Ben Anderson, Grand Prix Editor @BenAndersonAuto

MAUGER/LAT



Rosberg pushed Hamilton wide as he wrestled the Ferraris

FORMULA 1 IS A CRUEL GAME, WHERE LUCK OFTEN PLAYS A PART IN WHETHER you succeed or fail. But you can also earn your own luck with smart thinking and hard labour, and you certainly cannot get away with poor decision-making and sloppy strategy. So Ferrari has every reason to be kicking itself after the Australian Grand Prix.

The 2016 F1 season began against a backdrop of handwringing over a failed experiment with the qualifying format, and the prospect of yet another one-two for Mercedes, yet within yards of the start Sebastian Vettel had thrust his SF16-H between the two silver cars and delivered what the decision makers were hoping for all along.

For the first 12 laps or so this looked like a steal for Ferrari. It came to Melbourne hoping to topple the Mercedes hegemony that has dominated F1 since 2014, and led to kneejerk reactions such as changing the qualifying format on the eve of the season.

It was difficult to know whether Ferrari had a real chance of victory coming into the Australian Grand Prix. Recent history suggested not, but the red cars looked strong in testing, neck-and-neck with the silver ones during soft-tyre qualifying simulations, and very close on average over longer runs on the medium rubber.

Vettel was close to splitting Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg in final practice in Melbourne, so perhaps he could at least throw his cat among their pigeons come qualifying, if not allow it to outright devour them. That didn't happen. Vettel and team-mate Kimi Raikkonen both qualified well adrift, hampered by using an extra set of new rubber in the early stages compared with their main rivals, leaving them unable to do two runs in Q3.

This meant Mercedes had another clear lockout of the front row of the grid, but it also meant Ferrari was probably closer on pace to Mercedes than it looked on Saturday afternoon's timesheet. It probably wasn't fast enough to win the race on merit, but that was also the case when Vettel won three races for Ferrari last season, so anything was possible.

Rather like in Hungary last year, Vettel launched into the lead with a "mega" start as both Hamilton and Rosberg made weaker getaways from the front row of the grid, though Rosberg's was slightly better than Hamilton's and allowed him to get the jump on his team-mate as they ran down to the first corner.

A fresh clampdown on radio communication from teams to drivers (though eased slightly before the race to allow for strategy calls) and new rules dictating single-paddle clutches be used on the cars this year put more emphasis on preparation, and theoretically made the start more difficult for the drivers.

"That certainly plays a role because in the past if you would have a bad start off the line for the formation lap you could see how much the slip was," explained Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff. "And if you can't adjust it, it makes a difference.

"Yesterday our practice starts weren't very good, and we weren't sure if this would cause a problem in the race. Lewis was a couple of metres worse up to 100 metres than Nico, but I'm not sure if it was a hardware problem or a software problem, a vibration or a slow reaction. We have to look into it."



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Hamilton initially ran sixth before overtaking Massa…

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…but then found himself stuck behind Verstappen's Toro Rosso

XPB IMAGES

To be fair, Hamilton refused to blame technical problems for the wheelspin that spoiled his start, while Rosberg was actually pretty pleased with his getaway from the dirty side of the grid. He tried to come back at Vettel, but locked up under braking for the right-hander of Turn 1. This failed retaliation meant Rosberg's Mercedes slid wide and inadvertently squeezed the sister W07 of Hamilton onto the outside kerb.

That allowed the second Ferrari of Raikkonen to sneak past both Mercedes into second place, and Hamilton was delayed enough to also allow Max Verstappen's Toro Rosso and Felipe Massa's Williams through, leaving him sixth.

"It was quite eventful," said Hamilton, who felt the race was "no different to any other" despite the new radio restrictions, clutch rules and extra choice of tyres. "After that I had to fight my way back, which was hard work, but I enjoyed it. It was really exciting."

One of Hamilton's biggest strengths as a racing driver is the way he is able to fight back decisively in difficult circumstances, and we saw that combative spirit on display here.

A puncture on the first lap put Kevin Magnussen's Renault out of position after he pitted for replacement rubber and, when Massa hesitated behind the matt-yellow car coming out of Turn 2, Hamilton used superior momentum to attack. Massa defended well, but Hamilton cut underneath the Williams on the exit of Turn 3, then swept emphatically past on the outside line through the left-hander at Turn 4. Already that put Hamilton back into fifth with only three laps run.

It took Hamilton a similar amount of time to catch Verstappen, but the Ferrari-powered Toro Rosso is not as easy to pass as its »



Renault-motivated predecessor, and before long Hamilton complained on the radio that he was "stuck behind this guy".

The race was beginning to slip away from the reigning world champion and he knew it, so Mercedes decided to roll the dice and go for a 'Plan B' strategy. That meant Hamilton stretching his first stint on old super-softs to lap 16, then hoping to recover the lost ground by running medium tyres to the end. It wouldn't win him the race, but such a tyre choice would prove crucial in deciding the fates of the other leading contenders.

Meanwhile, Ferrari held the destiny of this race in its hands. Vettel led Raikkonen by a handful of seconds, but the Ferraris simply weren't fast enough around what Vettel described as "one of our worst tracks" to drop Rosberg, who kept a watching brief just over a second further back.

"There was only one tyre choice – it was medium to go to the race's end"

That meant Rosberg stood every chance of jumping Raikkonen after stopping to switch to soft tyres on lap 12, especially when Rosberg rejoined the race *just* ahead of Nico Hulkenberg's Force India.

Ferrari reacted by bringing Vettel in next time around to ensure the leader didn't lose track position to the Mercedes. Vettel's stop was fractionally quicker than Rosberg's but he had to defend robustly to maintain his advantage on the run to Turn 3 while his cold Pirelli super-softs woke up.

New leader Raikkonen was not amused to be Ferrari's sacrificial lamb in this race with Mercedes, but that's the inevitable price of being second on the road in an inferior car.

Raikkonen eventually made his first stop on lap 16 and rejoined the race third – behind Vettel and Rosberg – moments before Fernando Alonso's McLaren-Honda vaulted the Haas of Esteban Gutierrez on the run to Turn 3. The violent collision recalled the accident between Jacques Villeneuve and Ralf Schumacher here in 2001, in which a marshal was killed by a stray wheel.

Alonso's spectacular barrel roll obliterated his MP4-31, but fortunately injured no one. What it did do was litter the circuit with debris, which prompted officials to red-flag the race while marshals cleared the wreckage.

It was at this point that Ferrari threw away its chance to win the grand prix. Rules allow teams to change tyres before the race resumes, and Mercedes took this opportunity to switch Rosberg onto the medium tyre, which meant he wouldn't need to stop again under racing conditions.

Most other teams followed suit, except for Red Bull, Toro Rosso, McLaren, Manor *and* Ferrari. Red Bull, Toro Rosso and Manor went for soft tyres. A gamble, certainly, but not unreasonable. After all, it was *possible* that they might get to the end without stopping again.

McLaren went for super-softs on Jenson Button's car. He was buried in the pack, so had nothing to lose.

The fact that Ferrari also decided to fit fresh super-softs to both its cars made absolutely no sense at all. Having yet to run either of the mandatory race compounds (soft and medium), all this did was ensure that Vettel and Raikkonen would definitely have to stop



BLOXHAM/LAT

Vettel led Raikkonen, but the Ferraris lost out to Mercedes



DUNBAR/LAT

Ferrari's decision to take the restart with Vettel on super-softs proved to be an error

again, which meant they would certainly concede precious track position, no matter what they might gain on the super-softs.

"There was only one tyre to go on honestly," explained Renault track operations chief Alan Permane, who reckoned the soft tyre also stood no chance. "It was medium to go to the end. That's what we did with both our cars.

"At the time it seemed really obvious, and of course it was the right thing to do. I was very surprised to see people mix it up and want to stop again because it's not an easy track to overtake on, and track position is king.

The race resumed with a single-file restart on lap 20 of 57 and it became immediately apparent that Ferrari was in serious trouble. Raikkonen's chances literally went up in smoke when his engine »

QUALIFYING



S BLOXHAM/LAT

COMMERCIAL CHIEF BERNIE ECCLESTONE CALLED IT "CRAP", Mercedes boss Toto Wolff declared it "rubbish", Niki Lauda said it was the biggest nonsense he'd ever seen in Formula 1.

Ultimately, F1's experiment with 'knockout' qualifying turned out to be a disaster. The drivers met with the FIA during pre-season testing to voice concerns, which is why Sebastian Vettel said he wasn't surprised to spend the supposedly unmissable denouement of Q3 getting changed out of his overalls instead of battling the Mercedes drivers for pole position on the circuit.

New rules for 2016 dictated drivers would be eliminated at 90-second intervals during the second half of each segment. This created a rush to do fast times early on, and left insufficient time for slower runners to react to the threat of elimination.

"This left insufficient time for slower cars to react to the threat"

The aim was to mix up the grid, but all the new format did was increase the likelihood of a Mercedes one-two. Perhaps that result was inevitable anyway, but arguably only Valtteri Bottas's Williams (11th), Daniil Kvyat's Red Bull (18th) and the two Haas-Ferraris (19th and 20th) actually qualified out of position.

Worse, the knock-on effect was to shift all the excitement to the beginning of the session while spoiling the climax. Instead of cars rushing out at the end to try to avoid the drop we got cars sitting in garages waiting for inevitable elimination – including the two Ferraris of Sebastian Vettel and Kimi Raikkonen, who needed an extra set of super-soft tyres to guarantee passage through Q2 and ran out of rubber in Q3. This meant there were no cars on track for the final three minutes, for by that point the two Mercedes drivers had finished their exclusive shootout for the top spot.

Lewis Hamilton ultimately beat Nico Rosberg by more than three tenths of a second to bag pole, the 50th of his career. Only Ayrton Senna and Michael Schumacher have more to their names than the reigning world champion. Hamilton led the way after the first runs and that time was already good enough for top spot before he improved on his second attempt, thanks to Rosberg falling narrowly short of Hamilton's earlier benchmark with his own final effort.

Hamilton later described his Q3 laps as "sexy", but there were few making such effusive remarks about the format. Some thought it put the drivers under more pressure, others felt it made little difference at all, a few felt it just needs a few extra tweaks to be worthwhile, but most agreed that it ruined the viewing experience.

This was a classic example of the wrongheaded decision-making that does so much damage to F1's reputation. Instead of a proper, logical, thorough solution for improving the show we got a half-baked measure that spoiled a perfectly fine spectacle.

At least sense prevailed in the paddock on Sunday, when the teams agreed to revert to the previous format for the next race in Bahrain. But really this was all unnecessary in the first place, the result of kneejerk reaction to yet more baseless and uninformed moral panic about F1's state of health.



"THE SPEED KVYAT CARRIED LOOKED IMPOSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN"





Turn 6, where Kvyat stood out in the wet conditions on Friday

S BLOXHAM/LAT

THERE ARE OCCASIONAL moments in Formula 1 that make you stop and look twice. Did that really happen? They are fleeting. Snapshots in time. But they stay with you.

I enjoyed one during first free practice for the Australian Grand Prix, which was almost worthless for reading the weekend's emerging form but was priceless for watching F1 drivers at their best.

During the last 15 minutes, when most drivers were attempting to get some precious dry running in, another of Friday's Melbourne downpours caught everyone out. The weather was tricky to read, but this created conditions that are most challenging for drivers: slick-tyre running on a changeable surface.

The calendar shift that brought the start of the season forwards by two weeks meant many teams were marginal on spare parts, and most drivers backed off. But some – notably Felipe Nasr, Jenson Button and the Red Bulls of Daniel Ricciardo and Daniil Kvyat – stayed out and kept trying.

This was impressive, since the track was treacherous, amplifying the difficulty of the approach to my vantage point at Turn 6, which snakes between the trees and where it's difficult to spot your braking point and apex. Button has displayed his mastery of such conditions before, but there was another who stood out through this section in FP1: Kvyat.

The speed he carried looked impossible to maintain without a lock-up, missed apex or even a crash, but he managed it without so much as a squeal of protest from his Pirelli tyres.

Lewis Hamilton ultimately topped the timesheet. The world champion looked impressively fast here too, but he almost went off twice and his W07 did not display the poise of Kvyat's RB12, which was second fastest.

Those few who braved the conditions couldn't seem to live with Kvyat through here. He looked a genuine superstar in that fleeting moment.

BEN ANDERSON



Raikkonen retired from third place with his car aflame

TEE/LAT



TEE/LAT

Rosberg took his fourth straight win and an early championship lead

caught fire as he retired to the pits on lap 22, while up front Vettel was not lapping quickly enough to give Rosberg's medium-shod Merc the slip and buy himself enough time for an extra stop.

Vettel was faster than Rosberg for the first six laps of the stint, but thereafter his pace dropped significantly, whereas the durability of the medium rubber allowed Rosberg to lap more consistently. On average he was just 0.048 seconds slower than Vettel across the balance of the stint, despite running on a tyre two steps harder.Ferrari called Vettel in at the end of lap 35 to fit soft tyres. The old front-left wheel was slow coming off and he rejoined the race fourth, more than 10 seconds behind Hamilton and more than 20 behind Rosberg.

"Luck was definitely with Mercedes, but it also made its own with smart calls"

Vettel's only chance to win now rested on whether the medium tyre would give out on the two Mercedes, and whether Daniel Ricciardo — running a superb second after a typically feisty drive — could get his soft boots to the flag.

Hamilton dispatched Ricciardo at Turn 1 on lap 42, after which the Australian dived for the pits for a set of super-softs, safe in the knowledge that fourth place was secure. Vettel set about using his fresher rubber to close the deficit to Hamilton.

It's clear that the medium tyre held up extraordinarily well in this race. At the end of lap 51 the Ferrari was within DRS range of the second Mercedes, but Vettel could make no further inroads and with two laps to go he locked up under braking for the tight penultimate corner and ran onto the grass. Game over.

Ferrari team boss Maurizio Arrivabene was pictured shouting in delighted frenzy when Vettel took the lead at the start and conceded he was confident Ferrari would win the race after that. Now, surely, he must be ruing a missed opportunity.

"Unfortunately the red flag came and we didn't win the race," he said."On the wall we were confident in all honesty. We were showing a very, very good pace, we were quite comfortable.

"I don't want to take any excuses . After the red flag we took a decision. Certain decisions can be right or wrong."

This one was certainly wrong, and as a consequence Ferrari turned a possible victory into a minor podium finish.

This will go down as the one that got away for Ferrari, but not for Rosberg, who drove an excellent race after getting beaten to pole position by Hamilton in Saturday's controversial session.

He admitted his car was"on the edge"in terms of managing both brakes and tyres. But the temperatures that began to climb when some rubber lodged in a brake duct mid-race — and almost prompted Mercedes to retire the car — eventually stabilised with brake-bias adjustments (with one degree celsius to spare), while the medium tyres held together despite having to do nearly 40 laps.

Luck was definitely with Mercedes, but it also made its own with smart calls. Ferrari clearly felt luck went against it in Melbourne, but in reality it paid the price for sloppy strategic thinking at the crucial moment.


HONE/LAT

RED BULL CLOSE TO FERRARI RACE PACE

RED BULL TEAM boss Christian Horner believes his squad had the third-fastest car in the Australian Grand Prix, after Daniel Ricciardo finished fourth in Melbourne.

Ricciardo qualified seventh, behind Felipe Massa's Williams and Max Verstappen's Toro Rosso, but rose as high as second through the opening part of the race.

He eventually finished fourth after being repassed by Lewis Hamilton and having to make a late pitstop for fresh tyres, trailing Sebastian Vettel's Ferrari home by 14.687 seconds.

Horner said Ricciardo's race pace was close to Ferrari's during phases of the Albert Park race, though it should be noted that Red Bull and Ferrari only ran identical compounds at similar times during the busy opening phase.

"When Ricciardo was in clear air on the same tyre he was doing the same times as Seb," Horner (above) said. "At this track we certainly had the third-fastest car, particularly in the race, and that's encouraging.

"Ferrari isn't a huge amount ahead, so if we can keep pushing then in the second half of the year we can be taking it to them."



Alonso escapes injury in Turn 3

FERNANDO ALONSO WALKED away from an enormous crash that destroyed his McLaren and brought the Australian Grand Prix to a halt.

The double world champion was attempting to overtake Esteban Gutierrez for 11th place on lap 17 when he clipped the left-rear wheel of the Haas at high speed as they reached the braking zone for Turn 3. Alonso originally looked to the inside before switching back and attempting a move on the outside. Such was the speed differential between the two cars that after riding over Gutierrez's wheel, Alonso's McLaren went into a series of rolls before hitting the wall hard at the edge of the gravel trap.

Alonso was able to climb from the wreckage unaided, while Gutierrez – whose own car spun off into the same gravel trap – ran over to see if he needed assistance. McLaren said that Alonso visited the medical centre and was given a clean bill of health by doctors.

"It was a big, big crash," said Alonso. "I tried to take the slipstream of Gutierrez into the braking point, and it was a combination of factors that ended up with a crash.

"I'm thankful for the safety of these cars and that I'm alive. This is the most important thing."



SBLOXHAM/LAT


GETTY IMAGES

accident

When asked who was to blame, Alonso said: "It's a racing incident. We both tried to fight and sometimes we forget that we are at 300km/h, and every little crash can be much bigger."

The stewards agreed with Alonso's assessment, opting to take no action. "It was a very scary moment," said Gutierrez. "The first thing I saw in the mirror, I was really worried. It was a really big relief that he was OK."

Alonso's crash explained

1. Alonso, on much fresher new tyres, gets the slipstream of the yet-to-pit Gutierrez on the run to Turn 3 on lap 17. The slipstream and DRS mean there is a high closing speed. After Gutierrez defends the inside line, Alonso goes to the outside as they approach the braking zone, but clips the left-rear of the Haas.
2. Alonso ricochets into the barrier, while Gutierrez – his left-rear damaged – is pitched out of control.
3. After impact with the barrier, Alonso continues to hurtle towards Turn 3.
4. The McLaren takes off sideways as it approaches the gravel trap before tumbling through a series of destructive rolls, while Gutierrez is spun into the gravel by the original contact.
5. Alonso comes to rest upside down in the barrier, and clambers out of the McLaren as quickly as possible.









Q&A

FERNANDO ALONSO
McLAREN-HONDA DRIVER

How do you feel after that accident?
I feel OK – obviously a little bit disappointed because we missed the opportunity to get points. I am thankful I'm alive and nothing happened, but the second thought immediately is the frustration of not finishing the race. We probably lost our power unit completely because the car is completely destroyed.

Can you describe your feelings during the accident?
Fom the inside you are not exactly aware where you are. You are just flying. When I stopped I saw a little space to get out of the car and I got out quickly to make sure people at home were not too worried. I didn't know where I was because I was so far from the track.

How did the crash happen?
I think it's a combination of things. I tried to take the slipstream as much as I could, tried to overtake him, and then in the last moment tried to go on the outside. Maybe it was a little bit too late for me because I missed the braking point. Maybe he didn't expect that move.

Did Gutierrez lift off too early?
I don't think so. If he did, it's because he tried to brake for his own racing line and I need to anticipate that as well. But you are so focused on the slipstream; you only see a rear wing. You don't have any more vision of the track and I was probably late [on the brakes]. There's no point to say anything more. We are both OK.



Verstappen "upset" by Australian GP outcome

MAX VERSTAPPEN FINISHED IN 10th place after several terse radio exchanges with his team and a minor collision with team-mate Carlos Sainz.

Verstappen was first frustrated by the team pitting Sainz before him, leading him to complain over the radio. Later he hit the back of Sainz and spun.

Verstappen said: "I think you could hear how upset I was. It's just a very disappointing race – a lost opportunity.

"If you see Grosjean and Haas finishing sixth in their first race, I think we could have done much better."

Sainz said he had no problem with the incident. "It can happen," he said.

Haas surpasses hopes with sixth-place finish

HAAS TEAM PRINCIPAL Gunther Steiner believes the Formula 1 newcomer surpassed expectations by scoring points on its debut in the Australian Grand Prix.

While Esteban Gutierrez was knocked out of the race in a frightening crash with Fernando Alonso, the subsequent red flag enabled the team to make a strategic call that enabled Romain Grosjean to finish sixth.

Grosjean (below) made his only tyre change of the race during the stoppage, before running from lap 20 to the end on a set of medium tyres after starting on softs.

Haas therefore became the first start-up team to claim points on its debut since Toyota in 2002.

Steiner said: "You aim high and you want points, but after qualifying [19th and 20th] we didn't expect to finish sixth. This was beyond our expectations."

"Being competitive with the other cars – that is more satisfying. We could do the same times as Force India, which isn't bad."

Grosjean thought a lower points finish was the best the Ferrari-powered Haas team could hope for in Australia, and Gutierrez's discounted Q1 qualifying lap suggested that the Haas was a match for McLaren-Honda at best.

"It feels like a win for all of us, said Grosjean. "We did 100 per cent of what we could do. The morale boost we will get from this result will help everyone."



S BLOXHAM/LAT

Williams relieved with points haul after tough opener

THE WILLIAMS FORMULA 1 team described its double points finish in the Australian Grand Prix as a "reasonable result" after a trying weekend.

Williams challenged Ferrari for the podium in Melbourne last season, but was battling Red Bull, Toro Rosso and Force India to be best of the rest this year.

Felipe Massa qualified sixth and finished fifth, owing to Kimi Raikkonen's mechanical retirement and Toro Rosso's strategic errors.

Team-mate Valtteri Bottas (below) bagged four points for eighth place, despite starting 16th thanks to a poor qualifying result and a five-place grid penalty for a gearbox change.

Williams was also reprimanded for failing to submit suspension set-up sheets for Bottas's car in time for qualifying, but still came away from Albert Park lying third in the constructors' championship, two points clear of Red Bull and one behind Ferrari.

"It was a tough race," said technical chief Pat Symonds. "We were really having to think. We had the [radio communication] TD [technical directive] in front of us and every time we had to say something, we were checking ourselves. It was really hard."



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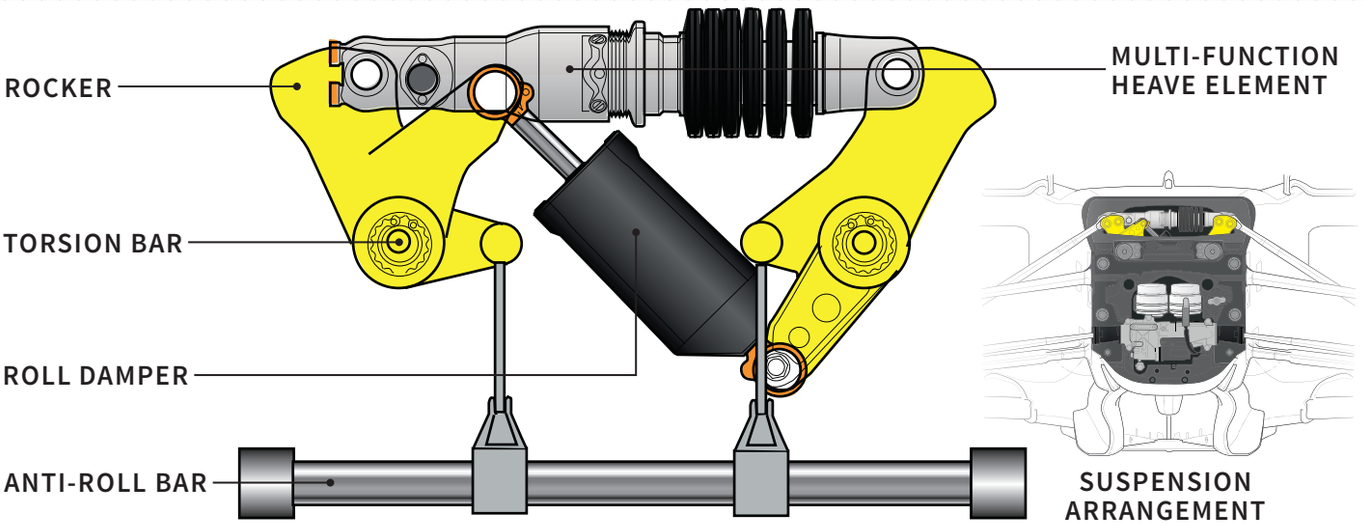
ZERO SCORE FOR RENAULT'S RETURN

RENAULT FAILED TO SCORE POINTS ON ITS RETURN to F1 as a works entrant, but at least managed to get both cars to the finish of the Australian Grand Prix.

Jolyon Palmer (above) finished 11th on his F1 debut, after a battle with the Toro Rossos, while team-mate Kevin Magnussen recovered to 12th after picking up a puncture on the first lap. Racing director Frederic Vasseur said the result was a solid start for his team, which is slowly building back to strength from the remnants of the former Lotus operation at Enstone.

"I can't be satisfied with the global result because we didn't score points, but it's positive to finish the race and be on the pace with Force India," Vasseur said. "We know we have a lot of work to do."



SUSPENSION

Red Bull has reorganised its suspension over the winter. The front wishbones have been raised, with the pushrod also needing to be raised by the same amount to maintain its installation angle.

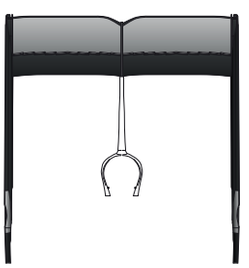
Like McLaren, Red Bull has chosen to pass the pushrod over the top of the monocoque, with a vertical rocker connecting it to the inboard suspension. Unlike McLaren, it has exposed the heave and roll elements, keeping them clear of the footwell area.

Hung between the rockers at the top is the heave – or third – element. This is a multi-functional part, as the telescopic unit contains the inerter, heave spring and hydraulic spring.

The mechanical springs are carbonfibre discs that are stacked to gain the correct spring rate. While the hydraulic union for the hydraulic element is visible on the left, these connect with the remote spring in the sidepod, which is used as the primary tuning aid for front heave stiffness.

Like last year, Red Bull runs a roll damper. This simple unit, mounted diagonally between the rockers, only works in roll. Other teams do not appear to run with this option on their suspension. It's possible that at some tracks the roll damper may mean individual wheel dampers aren't required.

The roll damper is aided by the anti-roll bar – a conventional set-up that uses a torsion that's extracted through a small aperture in the side of the monocoque.

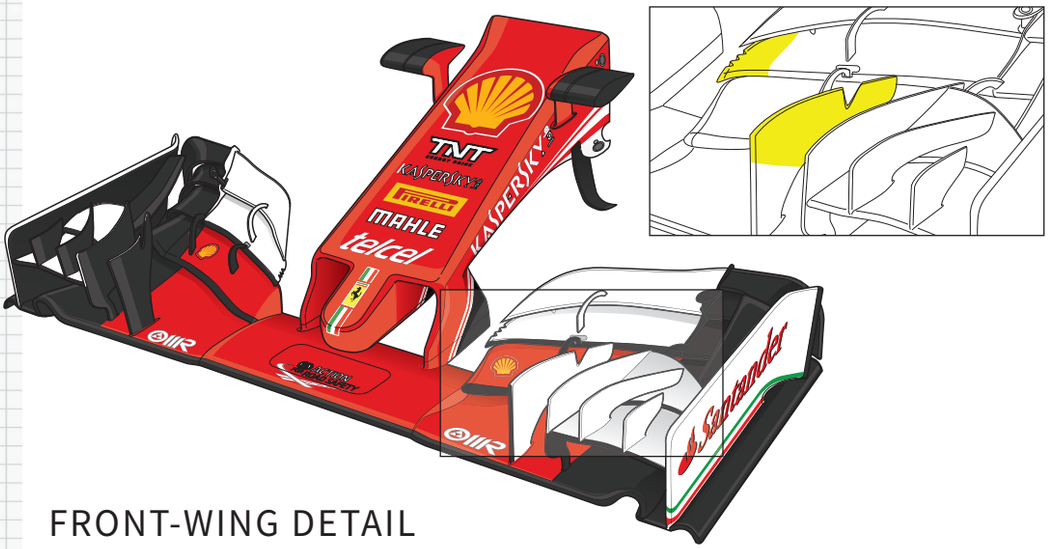


REAR WING

Seen briefly in testing, Mercedes ran a serrated rear-wing element. The main plane features 18 teeth to generate turbulence under the wing.

Normally, airflow under the wing goes from smooth laminar flow then converts into turbulent flow halfway up the rear face of the flap.

Mercedes appears to be inducing the transient flow earlier, which may help keep the airflow attached to the steep flap without stalling, and may also help to get the wing working faster after it's closed.



FRONT-WING DETAIL

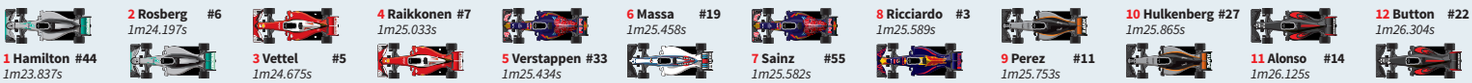
With a lot of new concepts on the 2016 Ferrari, to keep it simple some of the key aerodynamic devices are revised 2015 parts.

Key among these is the front wing, which is largely the same as the late-'15 wing but has gained some detail treatment to upgrade its performance.

As if to prove it's not only Mercedes that can make cuts into the bodywork of a 2016 F1 car, the changes for Ferrari are some sawtooth details on the flap and a notch in the flag vanes.

We can see that the inboard end of the first flap is cut, with three teeth formed in its surface. These help set up vortices, which work along the Y250 line (250mm from the car's centreline), making the airflow even more powerful.

The cut in the top edge of the flag vane is also to set off vortices, here aimed at the front tyres to reduce their turbulent effect downstream.



Race results / 57 LAPS - 187.822 MILES

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISH TIME	LED	TYRES	TIME IN PITS
1	**Nico Rosberg**	*Mercedes*	1h48m15.565s	23	○ ●	18m30.834s
2	**Lewis Hamilton**	*Mercedes*	+8.060s		○ ● ○	18m32.027s
3	**Sebastian Vettel**	*Ferrari*	+9.643s	31	○ ● ○ ●	18m55.199s
4	**Daniel Ricciardo**	*Red Bull-Renault*	+24.330s		○ ● ● ○	18m54.048s
5	**Felipe Massa**	*Williams-Mercedes*	+58.979s		○ ● ●	18m31.355s
6	**Romain Grosjean**	*Haas-Ferrari*	+1m12.081s		● ●	18m09.417s
7	**Nico Hulkenberg**	*Force India-Mercedes*	+1m14.199s		● ● ○	18m31.322s
8	**Valtteri Bottas**	*Williams-Mercedes*	+1m15.153s		● ● ○	18m30.365s
9	**Carlos Sainz**	*Toro Rosso-Ferrari*	+1m15.680s		○ ● ● ●	18m54.777s
10	**Max Verstappen**	*Toro Rosso-Ferrari*	+1m16.833s		○ ● ● ●	19m00.741s
11	**Jolyon Palmer**	*Renault*	+1m23.399s		● ● ●	18m31.580s
12	**Kevin Magnussen**	*Renault*	+1m25.606s		● ● ○	16m36.228s
13	**Sergio Perez**	*Force India-Mercedes*	+1m31.699s		● ● ○	18m32.030s
14	**Jenson Button**	*McLaren-Honda*	-1 lap		● ● ● ●	18m48.919s
15	**Felipe Nasr**	*Sauber-Ferrari*	-1 lap		● ● ●	18m25.038s
16	**Pascal Wehrlein**	*Manor-Mercedes*	-1 lap		● ● ● ●	18m52.241s
R	**Marcus Ericsson**	*Sauber-Ferrari*	38 laps-tyre		● ● ● ○	18m46.168s
R	**Kimi Raikkonen**	*Ferrari*	21 laps-fire	3	○ ● ○	18m31.873s
R	**Rio Haryanto**	*Manor-Mercedes*	17 laps-gearbox		● ●	23.224s
R	**Esteban Gutierrez**	*Haas-Ferrari*	16 laps-accident		●	-
R	**Fernando Alonso**	*McLaren-Honda*	16 laps-accident		● ●	21.796s
NS	**Daniil Kvyat**	*Red Bull-Renault*	electrical		●	-

WEATHER Dry, sunny; air: 24C, track: 38C ● New ○ Used ● Ultra Soft ● Super Soft ● Soft ● Medium ● Hard | ● Wets ● Intermediate

Fastest laps

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	**Ricciardo**	1m28.997s	-	49
2	**Vettel**	1m29.951s	+0.954s	23
3	**Rosberg**	1m30.557s	+1.560s	21
4	**Hamilton**	1m30.646s	+1.649s	48
5	**Raikkonen**	1m30.701s	+1.704s	21
6	**Verstappen**	1m31.516s	+2.519s	44
7	**Sainz**	1m31.671s	+2.674s	23
8	**Button**	1m31.684s	+2.687s	33
9	**Massa**	1m32.288s	+3.291s	39
10	**Magnussen**	1m32.452s	+3.455s	45
11	**Alonso**	1m32.553s	+3.556s	14
12	**Wehrlein**	1m32.673s	+3.676s	34
13	**Nasr**	1m32.711s	+3.714s	48
14	**Bottas**	1m32.725s	+3.728s	51
15	**Perez**	1m32.780s	+3.783s	39
16	**Hulkenberg**	1m32.833s	+3.836s	49
17	**Grosjean**	1m32.862s	+3.865s	48
18	**Palmer**	1m32.955s	+3.958s	14
19	**Gutierrez**	1m32.998s	+4.001s	4
20	**Haryanto**	1m33.847s	+4.850s	15
21	**Ericsson**	1m33.892s	+4.895s	15
22	**Kvyat**	no time	-	-

67
This was the 67th F1 world championship race to be red-flagged.

50
Lewis Hamilton's pole was his 50th in F1. He is only the third driver to hit that landmark.

15
Australia was Nico Rosberg's 15th win.

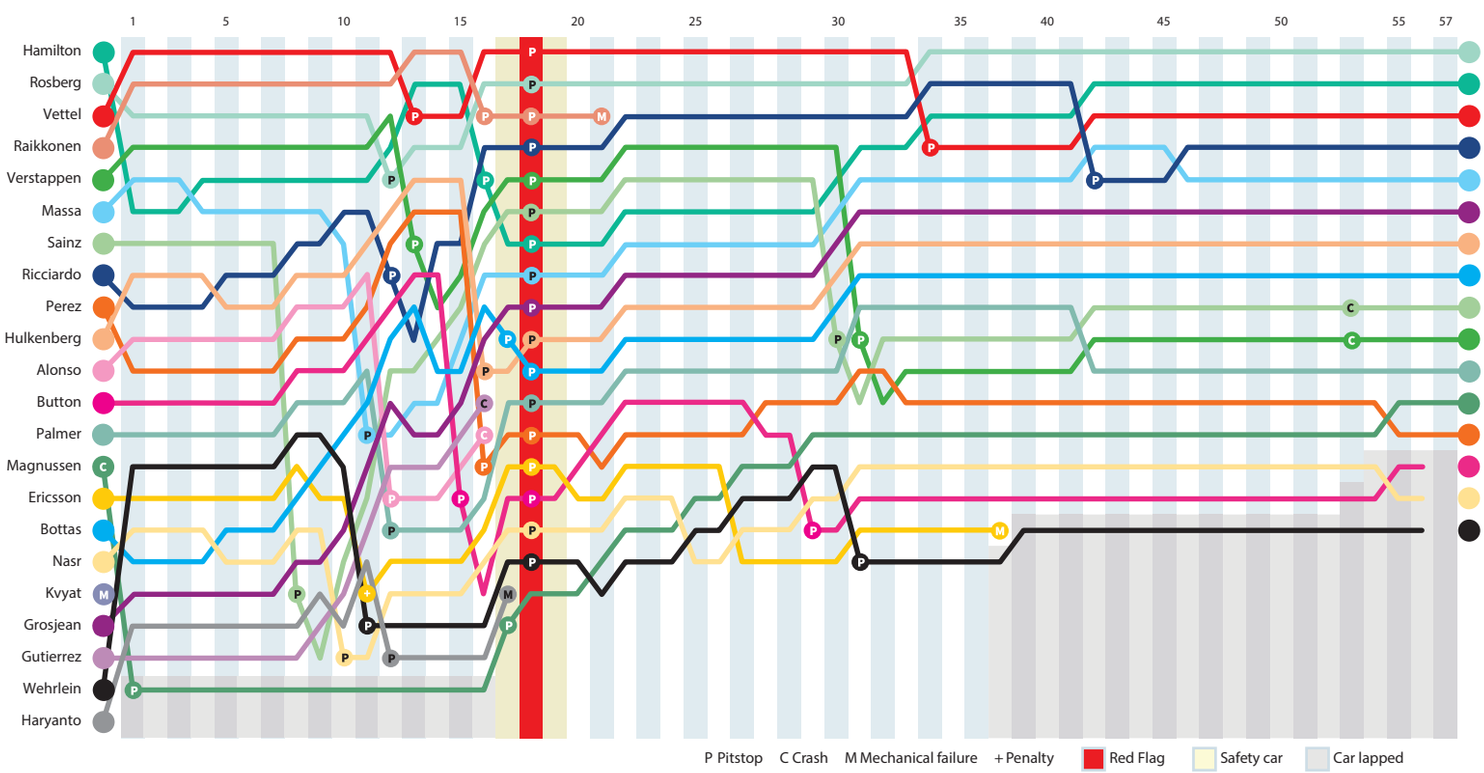
4th
Daniel Ricciardo's fourth place equals the record for best finish by a home driver in this event.

80
Sebastian Vettel took his 80th podium finish in 159 grand prix starts.

10,000
Nico Rosberg notched up his 10,000th lap raced in F1 on the 43rd lap of the race.

5th
Max Verstappen's qualifying performance was the best by the Verstappen family.

Lap chart / What happened, when




13 Palmer #30
1m27.601s


14 Magnussen #20
1m27.742s


15 Ericsson #9
1m27.435s


16 Bottas #77
1m25.961s


17 Nasr #12
1m27.958s


18 Kvyat #26
1m28.006s


19 Grosjean #8
1m28.322s


20 Gutierrez #21
1m29.606s


21 Wehrlein #94
1m29.642s


22 Haryanto #88
1m29.627s

Qualifying 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m25.351s
2	Massa	1m25.918s
3	Alonso	1m26.537s
4	Hulkenberg	1m26.550s
5	Raikkonen	1m26.579s
6	Perez	1m26.607s
7	Button	1m26.740s
8	Verstappen	1m26.934s
9	Rosberg	1m26.934s
10	Vettel	1m26.945s
11	Ricciardo	1m26.945s
12	Sainz	1m27.057s
13	Bottas	1m27.135s
14	Palmer	1m27.241s
15	Magnussen	1m27.297s
16	Ericsson	1m27.435s
17	Nasr	1m27.958s
18	Kvyat	1m28.006s
19	Grosjean	1m28.322s
20	Gutierrez	1m29.606s
21	Haryanto	1m29.627s
22	Wehrlein	1m29.642s

WEATHER Dry, overcast; air: 17C, track: 25C

Qualifying 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m24.605s
2	Rosberg	1m24.796s
3	Vettel	1m25.257s
4	Sainz	1m25.384s
5	Ricciardo	1m25.599s
6	Raikkonen	1m25.615s
7	Verstappen	1m25.615s
8	Massa	1m25.644s
9	Perez	1m25.753s
10	Hulkenberg	1m25.865s
11	Bottas	1m25.961s
12	Alonso	1m26.125s
13	Button	1m26.304s
14	Palmer	1m27.601s
15	Magnussen	1m27.742s

WEATHER Dry, overcast; air: 17C, track: 25C

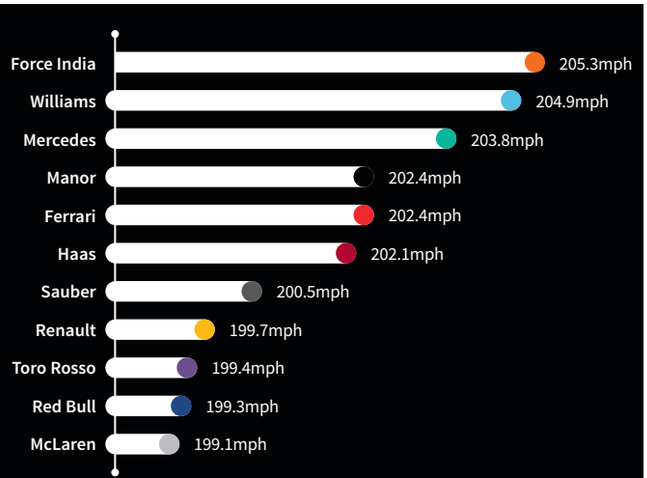
Qualifying 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m23.837s
2	Rosberg	1m24.197s
3	Vettel	1m24.675s
4	Raikkonen	1m25.033s
5	Verstappen	1m25.434s
6	Massa	1m25.458s
7	Sainz	1m25.582s
8	Ricciardo	1m25.589s

WEATHER Dry, overcast; air: 17C, track: 25C

Speed trap

Fastest for each constructor in qualifying



Race briefing

GRID PENALTIES

BOTTAS Five-place penalty for a gearbox change

HARYANTO Three-place penalty for leaving the garage and not paying attention to the approaching car in the fast lane

RACE PENALTIES

ERICSSON Drive-through penalty because team working on car within 15 seconds of restart

Free practice 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m29.725s
2	Kvyat	1m30.146s
3	Ricciardo	1m30.875s
4	Hulkenberg	1m31.325s
5	Verstappen	1m31.720s
6	Rosberg	1m31.814s
7	Alonso	1m33.060s
8	Button	1m33.129s
9	Perez	1m33.370s
10	Magnussen	1m34.060s
11	Bottas	1m34.550s
12	Massa	1m34.679s
13	Nasr	1m34.796s
14	Palmer	1m35.477s
15	Ericsson	1m37.956s
16	Wehrlein	1m40.401s
17	Raikkonen	1m40.754s
18	Gutierrez	1m41.780s
19	Haryanto	1m43.372s
20	Grosjean	1m43.443s
21	Vettel	no time
22	Sainz	no time

WEATHER Wet, windy; air: 17C, track: 19C

Free practice 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m38.841s
2	Hulkenberg	1m39.308s
3	Raikkonen	1m39.486s
4	Ricciardo	1m39.535s
5	Sainz	1m39.694s
6	Alonso	1m39.895s
7	Button	1m40.008s
8	Vettel	1m40.761s
9	Perez	1m41.256s
10	Kvyat	1m42.411s
11	Gutierrez	1m42.891s
12	Wehrlein	1m43.401s
13	Grosjean	1m43.731s
14	Haryanto	1m44.304s
15	Rosberg	1m47.356s
16	Magnussen	no time
17	Palmer	no time
18	Massa	no time
19	Bottas	no time
20		
21		
22		

WEATHER Wet, drying; air: 16C, track: 19C

Free practice 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m25.624s
2	Rosberg	1m25.800s
3	Vettel	1m25.852s
4	Sainz	1m26.257s
5	Raikkonen	1m26.435s
6	Verstappen	1m26.701s
7	Bottas	1m26.730s
8	Ricciardo	1m26.768s
9	Massa	1m27.151s
10	Perez	1m27.242s
11	Alonso	1m27.263s
12	Button	1m27.341s
13	Kvyat	1m27.430s
14	Ericsson	1m27.659s
15	Magnussen	1m27.871s
16	Hulkenberg	1m27.988s
17	Palmer	1m28.117s
18	Gutierrez	1m28.284s
19	Grosjean	1m28.292s
20	Nasr	1m28.293s
21	Wehrlein	1m29.046s
22	Haryanto	1m29.272s

WEATHER Dry, overcast; air: 20C, track: 29C

SEASON STATS

Drivers' championship

1	Rosberg	25
2	Hamilton	18
3	Vettel	15
4	Ricciardo	12
5	Massa	10
6	Grosjean	8
7	Hulkenberg	6
8	Bottas	4
9	Sainz	2
10	Verstappen	1
11	Palmer	0
12	Magnussen	0
13	Perez	0
14	Button	0
15	Nasr	0
16	Wehrlein	0
17	Ericsson	0
18	Raikkonen	0
19	Haryanto	0
20	Gutierrez	0
21	Alonso	0
22	Kvyat	0

Constructors' championship

1	Mercedes	43
2	Ferrari	15
3	Williams	14
4	Red Bull	12
5	Haas	8
6	Force India	6
7	Toro Rosso	3
8	Renault	0
9	McLaren	0
10	Sauber	0
11	Manor	0

Wins

Rosberg	1

Fastest laps

Ricciardo	1

Pole positions

Hamilton	1

Qualifying head-to-head

ROS	0	1	HAM
VET	1	0	RAI
MAS	1	0	BOT
RIC	1	0	KVY
PER	1	0	HUL
MAG	0	1	PAL
VES	1	0	SAI
ERI	1	0	NAS
ALO	1	0	BUT
HAR	1	0	WEH
GRO	1	0	GUT

NEXT RACE

Bahrain Grand Prix
April 3 2016, Sakhir

"Classic Vettel until stoppage"

Season opener summarised by each driver's effort and achievement, scored out of 10

By Ben Anderson, Grand Prix Editor

@BenAndersonAuto

MERCEDES



8 LEWIS HAMILTON

Hamilton ended Rosberg's six-race pole streak from last year with a dominant qualifying, proving he's back on his game after a poor end to 2015.

He loses marks for his bad race start, but was unlucky to concede so much ground at Turn 1. The champ never panics though, and gets credit for his recovery drive.

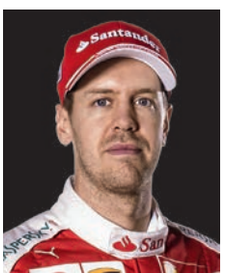


8 NICO ROSBERG

Rosberg has driven better than this and not won, but his victory here was well executed, albeit relying on Ferrari capitulation. That was less likely to occur though without Rosberg's pressure.

He gets marked up for his better race start, but loses some for crashing in practice and qualifying well adrift of Hamilton.

FERRARI



7 SEBASTIAN VETTEL

A rare case of one that got away from Vettel. Qualifying exaggerated the gap to Mercedes, but he made up for that immediately.

It was classic Vettel until the stoppage, but Ferrari's obsession with the super-soft undid his hard work. Should he have called it better? His off near the end chasing Hamilton loses points.



6 KIMI RAIKKONEN

Raikkonen had issues with tyre warm-up in qualifying and was more than three tenths off Vettel. Turn 1 of the race though, and he'd snuck up to second.

The Finn's pace in the first stint was fine, but he was sacrificed to protect Vettel's lead. He'd have probably been fourth without the race-ending engine failure.

WILLIAMS



6 VALTTERI BOTTAS

A reasonable result after a tricky weekend. Couldn't get the super-soft to work in qualifying and feels he would have been 11th regardless of the format.

He recovered decently from a gearbox penalty and a bad start, though ultimately he paid for not protecting his first set of tyres as well as Grosjean in the Haas.

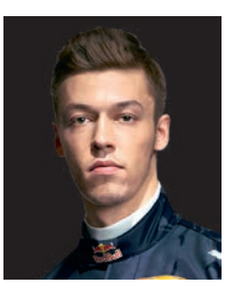


7 FELIPE MASSA

Massa wanted Williams battling Ferrari, but instead it was fighting Red Bull and Toro Rosso. He should have outqualified Verstappen, but at least was well clear of Bottas.

His race started well, but Hamilton and Ricciardo outfoxed him in the first stint. A poor Toro Rosso strategy and retirements left him fifth.

RED BULL



5 DANIIL KVYAT

Kvyat tried to say the new qualifying format caught out his side of the Red Bull garage, but he has to take a lion's share of the blame for not managing at least one good lap to get into Q2 in a car easily fast enough for the top 10. Hence the low mark.

An electrical failure meant he didn't even start the race.

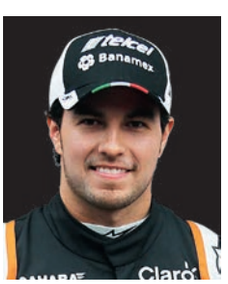


8 DANIEL RICCIARDO

Ricciardo felt the bottom of Q3 was about right for Red Bull, which lacks the engine power of Toro Rosso, Williams and Force India.

He dropped back at the start but made great moves on Hulkenberg and Massa in stint one. A better tyre choice after the red flag may have got him second; got as high as the car merited.

FORCE INDIA



5 SERGIO PEREZ

Force India ended 2015 superbly and Perez is enthusiastic about the new VJM09, but this race wasn't his best. He just outqualified Hulkenberg, but lost two places on the first lap, got stuck behind Alonso, was overtaken by Button and ran out of brakes towards the end. The strategy suited him, so a bit of a wasted chance.



7 NICO HULKENBERG

A pretty decent start to 2016 from Hulkenberg, who made an excellent start to jump his team-mate and Ricciardo on lap one.

Dropping behind the Red Bull was irrelevant; what mattered was pitting before Grosjean – and the stoppage. A planned one-stop became two, and left him behind the Haas.

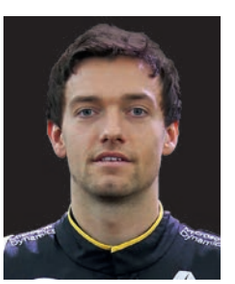
RENAULT



6 KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

Magnussen's first race in F1 for 12 months was a mixed bag. Outqualified by rookie team-mate Jolyon Palmer, and unlucky enough to pick up a puncture on lap one.

Racing decently in the second half, he was quicker than Palmer. Caught and passed Perez's brakeless Force India with three laps left.



8 JOLYON PALMER

One of the few to praise the new qualifying format, but Palmer was bound to feel buoyant, sneaking into Q2 at the death and beating Magnussen. A fine effort.

Lacked his team-mate's race pace on the medium tyre, but fended off the faster Toro Rossos for longer than expected. An accomplished debut.



A much more promising start for McLaren, although JB was slightly slower than Alonso all weekend

DUNBAR/LAT

TORO ROSSO



6 MAX VERSTAPPEN

Was superb in qualifying and started well, but his race unravelled after the restart. Poor strategy and frustration got the better of him. Pitting before the team was ready wasn't smart and arguably cost him fifth, given the way Ricciardo's race panned out. Contact with Sainz was careless. He needs to stay calm.



7 CARLOS SAINZ JR

Failing to match Q2 pace in Q3 meant Sainz lost out to Verstappen and Massa. He wasn't quite as fast as his team-mate in the race either and struggled with front-wheel locking after the restart, but should have stayed out. Verstappen's petulance allowed Sainz to gain position, which he rightly refused to concede.

SAUBER



5 FELIPE NASR

A frustrating weekend for Nasr, who had not used his own chassis in testing.

His struggles with brakes are nothing new, but this time it was their performance and balance rather than any overheating. He felt this explained the big gap to Ericsson in qualifying and it pretty much ruined his race too.



6 MARCUS ERICSSON

Was the best Sauber driver in qualifying, but endured a 'mess' of a race. He got stuck behind Wehrlein's super-soft-shod Manor after a delay on lap one, then had a drive-though for a tyre blanket getting stuck during the red flag.

An errant piece got lodged in the wheelrim, upsetting the driveshaft, leading to an early bath.

McLAREN



6 JENSON BUTTON

Button lapped close to Alonso all weekend, but always slightly behind. On the better of the team's split strategies at the start, but fitting super-softs at the stoppage proved to be a major error.

A better call then, plus better tyre management in the first stint, could have made him a lower points contender.



7 FERNANDO ALONSO

A competitive showing from McLaren, with Alonso third fastest in Q1, and with a qualifying time within three tenths of Hulkenberg. This was proper midfield form.

Alonso started really well, running in the top 10, but then misjudged his attempt to pass Gutierrez at Turn 3 with dramatic consequences.

MANOR



7 RIO HARYANTO

Well adrift of Wehrlein through the build-up, and his pitlane collision with Grosjean's Haas in practice was clumsy, but deserves huge credit for being best Manor man by 0.015s in qualifying.

A grid penalty put him behind, and a driveline problem ended his race. But that qualifying is something to build on.



7 PASCAL WEHRLEIN

The DTM champ looked rapid through practice, lapping within eight tenths of Nasr at one point. But he loses marks for getting outqualified by Haryanto, who lacks his level of F1 test experience.

Started the race well, running ahead of several faster cars before the car resumed its natural level.



Wehrlein impressed in his F1 debut, running nicely in the midfield

COATES/LAT

HAAS



8 ROMAIN GROSJEAN

Grosjean loses marks for not getting the most from the car in qualifying; a shame because his race was faultless.

He managed the soft tyre better than anyone early on, and took advantage of the red flag to capitalise on the perfect one-stop strategy, scoring a dream result on Haas's debut.



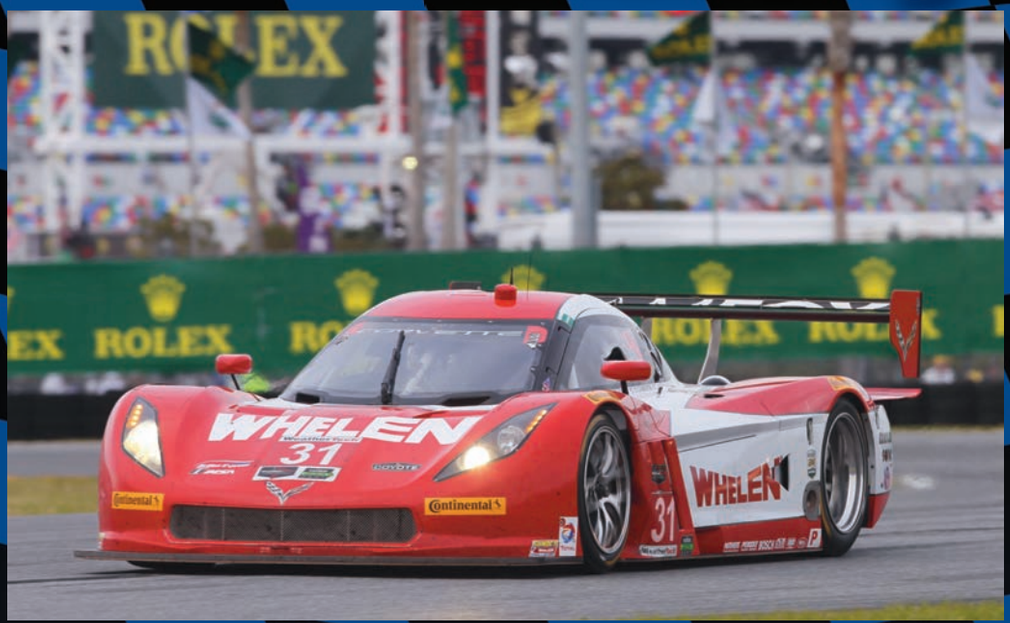
7 ESTEBAN GUTIERREZ

Gutierrez was seriously quick on his F1 return, but the Mexican just didn't get things together.

An apparent problem with engine settings cut him adrift of the pack for the first two laps of the race, but he recovered well until that frightening collision with Alonso (for which he was blameless) put him out.

SUNOCO WHELEN CHALLENGE

Could you be a Sunoco Challenge winner?







Sunoco Whelen Challenge

The Sunoco Whelen Challenge pits drivers across the eligible Sunoco fuelled championships against each other, with the final award presented to the highest-average-scoring driver. The prize is provided in partnership with Whelen Engineering in the USA, and Anglo American Oil Company Ltd in the UK (Sunoco race fuels).

After a bumper year of driving, and a British GT3 Championship win, Jonny Adam was crowned the 2016 Sunoco Whelen Challenge winner and impressed the Action Express team when he raced at the Rolex 24 At Daytona back in late January.

We are now in our eighth year of the Sunoco Whelen Challenge, and it continues to be arguably the most exciting motorsport prize available to European racers. Who will be crowned the 2017 Sunoco Whelen Challenge Champion?

Follow this year's Sunoco Challengers at www.sunocochallenge.com



Sunoco Whelen Challenge eligible series

British GT Championship

Radical European Masters

Radical CHALLENGE CHAMPIONSHIP

Sunoco 200 Challenge eligible series

British GT Championship

Britcar

ATOM CUP

MINI CHALLENGE

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The 2017 Sunoco Challenges are ready for yet another exciting year where Sunoco fuelled racers are pitted against each other in a season long battle to win prize drives at the Rolex 24 At Daytona weekend. But who can keep the pace, speed and position in the standings to prove they have what it takes to win these sought after prizes? Only time will tell... "Challengers, start your engines!"







Sunoco 200 Challenge

The Sunoco 200 Challenge runs alongside the Sunoco Whelen Challenge and is increasingly becoming a talking point throughout European paddocks. It provides the winner, from alternative Sunoco fuelled championships (those not eligible for the Sunoco Whelen Challenge), with the chance to compete in the Sunoco liveried GS class Mustang Boss 302R in the 200-mile endurance race on the Friday before the Rolex 24 At Daytona – providing yet another opportunity for an aspiring racing driver to compete at the world-famous venue.

After an incredible season in the Radical Sprint Championship, 2016 Sunoco 200 Challenge Champion Paddy McClughan went on to prove his worth at Daytona. Despite only being 19, and never having driven a V8 muscle car before, he really impressed the team out in the USA, remaining calm under pressure, improving and learning throughout the whole experience. Another impressive challenge Champion, and we can't wait to see who will thrive next January at the World famous circuit!



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The two Ferraris returned to the garage rather than attempt a second Q3 run

FORMULA 1

How did the qualifying

AS RED BULL TEAM PRINCIPAL CHRISTIAN Horner rightly noted, Formula 1 hardly covered itself in glory over what can only be described as a qualifying-rules blunder.

Horner's remarks are an understatement. Not for the first time F1 shot itself in the foot. But how did it get into this position? And if we are to invoke the old saying, 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it', why did those in charge of the sport opt to alter a qualifying format that had worked well, and without complaint, since 2006?

The desire for change came from F1 supremo Bernie Ecclestone, with support from the race promoters, seeking to spice up the show on a Saturday and shake up the grid.

Their belief was that an hour-long practice session and a 60-minute qualifying programme run over three segments had lost its appeal to the fans, thanks to Mercedes' front-row domination. It is understood that their preference was for some form of qualifying sprint race, although that was apparently deemed a bit too radical, while a reversed grid would only be demeaning for F1.

Ecclestone also suggested that the winner of the previous race be handed a minor time penalty – a few tenths of a second – to his qualifying run.

While the driver setting the fastest time in qualifying would be credited in the F1 record books with the kudos of earning pole position, the time penalty would mean they would not necessarily start at the front, forcing them to fight their way through the field.

But again this was determined to be too confusing for the fans, and so following a round of talks at Strategy Group level the elimination-style format was born.

The problem was that it was all done very hurriedly in a bid to get it passed by the F1



S BLOXHAM/LAT

rules go so disastrously wrong?

Commission and then the World Motor Sport Council before the start of the season.

But the idiom 'haste makes waste' could not be more apt in this instance because as soon as the idea was made public, so the flaws were identified – notably so by the drivers.

This prompted a late suggestion before the WMSC meeting that Q1 and Q2 would use the new knockout system, with Q3 retaining the old format, because a track with barely any cars on it as the clock ticked down would not make good viewing.

That was also dismissed, and so Melbourne's Albert Park provided the stage for what started out as relatively entertaining theatre with Q1, only to descend into a head-in-hands, what-have-we-done moment come the end of Q3.

"Kneejerk reaction came late on Saturday"

The sight of Sebastian Vettel and Kimi Raikkonen climbing out of their Ferraris with around seven minutes remaining, and no driver completing a hot lap in the final four, was utterly embarrassing.

In the space of a few weeks, F1 had effectively turned qualifying back-to-front, with all the action at the start and nothing towards the end, when that hour on a Saturday afternoon should build towards a climax.

"Pretty crap," was Ecclestone's assessment after he had viewed it on television. He was being polite. For one single regulatory change, the derision that followed from team principals, drivers and fans was arguably unprecedented in F1 history. And then came the kneejerk reaction when, late on Saturday, it was revealed there would be a meeting of team principals and managers the following day.

Williams suggested the earlier idea of retaining the new Q1 and Q2, with Q3 reverting to the old format. And it is understood that Force India proposed holding fire to see how the race played out before addressing the situation.

The decision was taken that from the Bahrain Grand Prix onwards, qualifying would revert to what had previously been in place for 10 seasons – subject to F1 Commission approval.

As Horner said: "I don't think we fully understood what the consequences were. The intention was there, for all the right reasons; it just didn't achieve what was intended."

There is scope for change for next year, and it can only be hoped that greater care, consideration and due diligence is taken before any implementation.

IAN PARKES

FORMULA 1'S RADIO BAN KICKS OFF IN AUSTRALIAN GP

FORMULA 1 ENTERED new territory last weekend in Melbourne as stricter rules on pit-car radio traffic came into force. FIA race director Charlie Whiting felt that the "coaching" many drivers receive from the pitwall had reached an "intolerable level".

In a bid to place the onus on drivers to shape their own strategies, or at least to prevent them from abdicating all responsibility for tactical calls to the pitwall, the FIA issued strict guidelines on the content of radio messages. It issued a technical directive listing permitted topics before the weekend, although it later relented and allowed calls relating to pitstop timing, and a driver's own strategy as well as his nearest rivals'.

Jenson Button suggested it would be impossible to police, given the number of messages. But the FIA insisted it had enough resource, having dedicated a team of personnel to monitor all the radio channels.

"We are listening to it in real time," said race director Charlie Whiting. "We have four people in race control who are listening to three drivers each. Then we have four or five software engineers listening to two or three each.

Driver reaction was mixed. Nico Rosberg was positive as "now it's more down to us on track". Lewis Hamilton agreed but said it did not "enhance the race".

The world champion said there were more pressing matters, namely working on the aero to enable cars to follow each other. "It's just so hard to get close and get in the slipstream," he said.

Sebastian Vettel was not impressed. "We're here to race as hard as possible, not to play some memory games," he said. He had software issues during the race but said "it was not very exciting for the crowd" that he couldn't be told how to fix it.

Williams technical chief Pat Symonds said the clampdown had no impact on the outcome of the race.

"I don't think it did anything other than to add to people's workload," he said. "We were really having to think. What we were so worried about was saying something that someone might think was a coded message."

Race winner Rosberg suffered an overheating brake caliper and a tyre problem, which Mercedes boss Toto Wolff said the team was unable to tell him about. The team considered retiring.

The ban is sure to be controversial as the season continues.

LAWRENCE BARRETTO



XPB IMAGES

Safety worries over winglets

Concerns over the potential of the front-mounted wings to injure MotoGP riders have led to criticism

BRITISH MOTOGP RIDER CAL CRUTCHLOW IS concerned about the safety of the rapid development of fairing winglets up and down the pitlane.

Ducati brought them back last year, followed late in the season by Yamaha, while Honda eventually followed during pre-season testing. As they filter down to satellite teams, Ducati even dabbled with a double-stack version during Friday practice for the season-opening Qatar Grand Prix (below).

A new rule for 2016 states that any winglet must have a rounded edge, at least 2.5mm in diameter, but LCR Honda's Crutchlow is still concerned.

"Half of me thinks to say nothing, because maybe we need them if they are working," he said. "But imagine that sliced someone's leg clean open. They all say they will break before [that happens], but how do they know it will break?"

Crutchlow added that following a bike fitted with the winglets was also more perilous, owing to the dirty air they create. "When you are right behind the Ducati, the turbulence off the things is unreal," he said. "At Phillip Island [last year], when I was behind Pedrosa and he was behind Iannone, I thought he was going to come off the bike."

"I'm not going against them, they are in the rules, they've done a good job. If I was riding a Ducati, I'd want them as well."

Pedrosa backed Crutchlow's version of events from Phillip Island – explaining that "the front is shaking. You do kind of a small 's' [zigzag]" – and while Valentino Rossi tried them again on his Yamaha in practice, he opted to race without them. "I don't like the wings in general, because they are quite ugly," said Rossi. "But especially because, for me, from the bike, I don't feel a difference. It's also true that sometimes, a lot of times, especially at high speed it creates a lot of turbulence."

Winglets have now been banned in Moto2 effective immediately, and they will be outlawed in Moto3 from the 2017 season.

In Moto2, the CarXpert Interwetten team introduced rear-facing wings on its Kalex bikes, designed to generate turbulence, during the final pre-season test at Qatar earlier this month. The Mahindra squad started the trend in Moto3, with front-fairing winglets on its Aspar.

MITCHELL ADAM





MOTOGP

Yamaha signs Rossi as silly season kicks off

THE MOTOGP SILLY SEASON WAS IN full swing even before the riders lined up for the first race of 2016 last Sunday in Qatar.

With all of the factory aces off-contract at the end of this year, there is scope for plenty of leading riders to have different homes in 2017, but the first news was of a rider — Valentino Rossi, no less — staying put.

Yamaha offered fresh, two-year extensions to Rossi and team-mate Jorge Lorenzo at the start of the Qatar Grand Prix week. Rossi had planned to wait before making a decision on his future but this prompted him to put pen to paper, committing him to stay in MotoGP until the end of 2018, when he says he is "90 per cent" sure to retire.

"I think in my mind to wait some races, I want to see if I am competitive," the 37-year old said. "Also because usually you decide around June.

"I spoke with Yamaha after the [pre-season] test and they said to me that they are very happy if I continue. I want to continue.

"The contract more or less was already ready. They said to me, 'why wait?' and I said, 'I agree', so we did it."

It puts the focus on Lorenzo, whose original preference to have a new contract sorted before the season opener prompted Yamaha's early offers. Ducati is known to be keen to lure Lorenzo for next season, and Yamaha believes the three-time world champion is waiting on an offer from the Italian manufacturer.

"From Yamaha's side, we have put our best efforts to put a very good contract on the table," Yamaha MotoGP boss Lin Jarvis said. "There will be other teams and constructors looking to attract his services."

When pressed on the topic, Lin bought into the Italian connection.

"My guess is Ducati, because Honda already has a top, leading rider," he said.

"Ducati has two very competitive riders but from what I understand they are looking to take a top gun, one of the top four, to take their programme to another level."

Rossi's move wasn't actually the first of the year. Before practice even started, Bradley Smith announced he had been told he would not be getting a new Tech3 Yamaha deal. This confused team boss Herve Poncharal, who insisted "nobody's out" during the grand prix weekend.

Smith's wheels were already in motion on a factory ride, and a KTM deal for its incoming programme in 2017 and '18 was announced on Sunday.

"It's a project that I believe is built for me, the fact that it's going to be taking a new project along and being part of the development," Smith said. "I'm keen to see what they've done. As a manufacturer, everything they've turned their hand to, they've been successful."

MITCHELL ADAM

IN THE HEADLINES


ETHERINGTON/LAT

FIA CONFIRMS HALO ON COURSE FOR '17

The halo cockpit-protection device is likely to be introduced for the 2017 Formula 1 season, the FIA has confirmed. Although Red Bull has developed its own canopy device, FIA race director Charlie Whiting feels the halo will almost certainly be on all 22 cars next year.

FERRARI TOPS ENGINE-TOKEN SPENDING

Ferrari has emerged as the biggest spender of power-unit development tokens over the winter ahead of the new Formula 1 season. Each manufacturer had 32 tokens to use to develop its 1.6-litre V6 turbocharged hybrid system and Ferrari now has nine remaining. Renault has the most, with 25, while Mercedes has 19 and Honda 18.

TAGLIANI TO RACE AT INDIANAPOLIS

Alex Tagliani will return to the IndyCar Series field with AJ Foyt Racing for the Indianapolis 500 and the venue's road-course race in May. He last appeared in IndyCar with a one-off for the same team at Indy in 2015.

POWER DID NOT SUFFER CONCUSSION

The concussion diagnosis that prevented Will Power from starting the season opener in St Petersburg was incorrect, IndyCar has announced. Tests suggest he was compromised by an inner-ear infection. He was due to return to the cockpit in testing as *Autosport* closed for press on Tuesday.

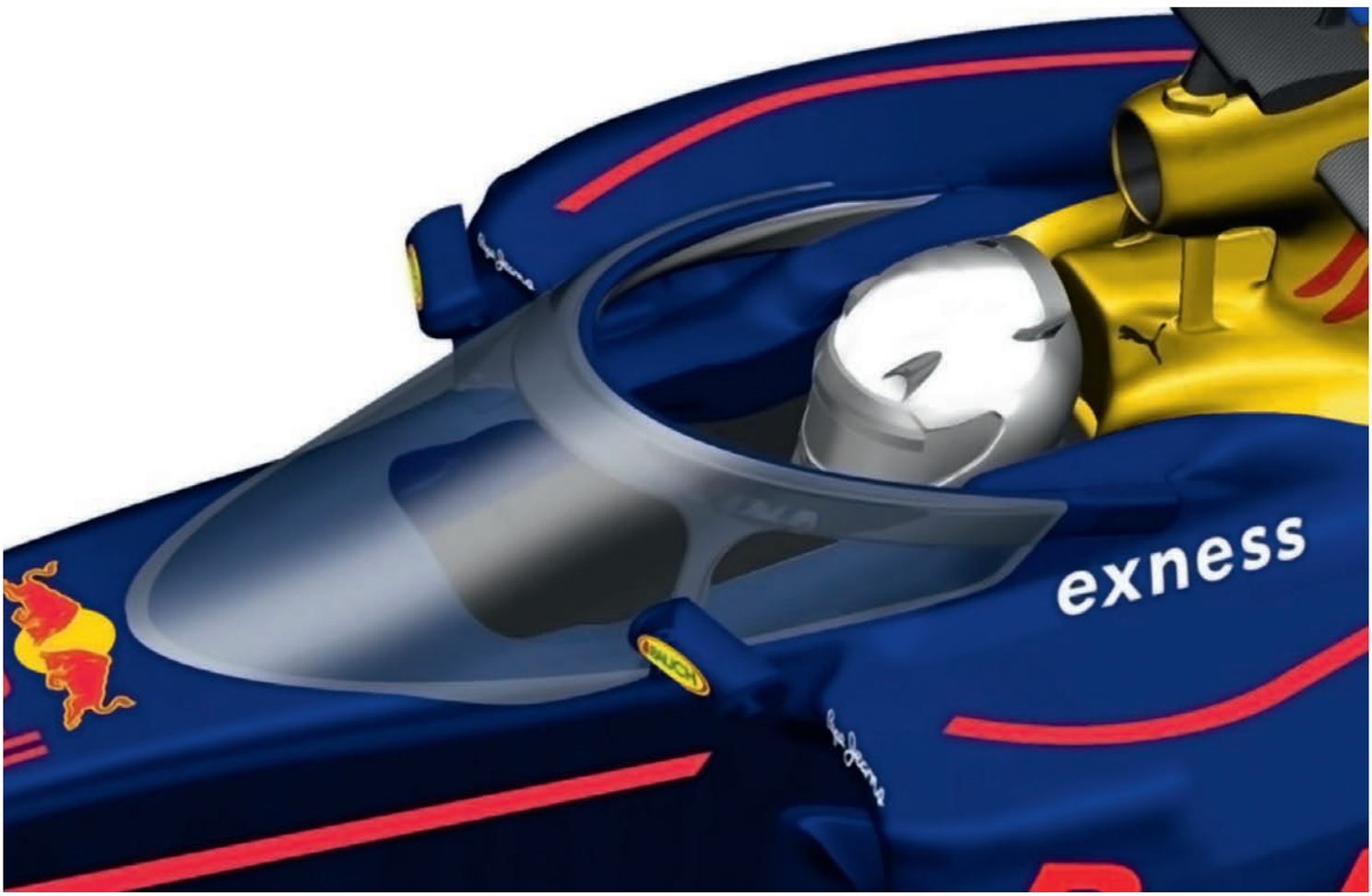
NEW BTCC TEAM TO RUN EX-BMR VW CARS

Aron Smith and Clio Cup graduate Mark Howard will be on the British Touring Car Championship grid this season with new squad Team BKR. The pair will race the VW CCs used in the category last term by Team BMR. *Emmerdale* actor Kelvin Fletcher, who has raced in the Carrera Cup GB, has also confirmed he will join the BTCC in a Power Maxed Racing Chevrolet.

SUBARU LEVORG MISSES OFFICIAL TEST

The new BTCC Subaru Levorg missed the series' official test day at Donington Park on Tuesday. The team opted not to run the car to take more time to ensure everything is ready following "a minor delay" with some parts, and was still scheduled to shake the car down this week. The car was on show at Donington (below).





RED BULL'S HALO RIVAL Red Bull has released images of its Formula 1 canopy head-protection device as an alternative to the favoured halo concept. The jet-fighter-style design wraps around the driver's helmet and has two side pillars, rather than a central support like the halo. "We're doing a lot of work on it as we believe it's a better solution," Red Bull team boss Christian Horner told *Autosport*. "We're aiming to test it on a demo car prior to the end of April. So long as it can satisfy the FIA criteria-wise, we believe it can be a better solution to what is currently being offered. We believe it can be achieved in the timeframe [needed for 2017], and then it's a choice for the FIA to make."

RALLY SAFETY

Barrier protection tested for rallying

INJURIES SUSTAINED IN THE KIND of crashes that killed British co-driver Gareth Roberts and almost cost Robert Kubica his life could be avoided in the future following recent research.

Working with the FIA Institute, the Global Institute for Motor Sport Safety carried out crash testing in Germany earlier this year. A rally-prepared car was fired into the end of an Armco barrier at 70mph to simulate the same kind of accident that Kubica and Roberts (who was co-driving Craig Breen at the time) suffered.

The open end of the barrier was protected by a steel cylinder, 70cm in diameter and filled with sand.

Global Institute for Motor Sport Safety research consultant Andy Mellor said: "There is a massive incompatibility between passenger cars and Armco ends that aren't protected. The focus of the study was engineering a mechanism to get the Armco to buckle early enough so that the exposed end didn't penetrate the car."

In an effort to make sure the cylinder is available at all levels of rallying, not just the World Rally Championship, Mellor worked to contain production costs. With minor evolution, the equipment will be used in rallies soon.

"We understood that cost and logistics were major factors," said Mellor, "and we set a target of €100 for the installed product. Any more expensive and it could become cost-prohibitive."

DAVID EVANS



Rally-prepped car was fired into the barrier at 70mph



MAUGER/LAT

FORMULA E

The cost-control war

FORMULA E HAS DONE A FINE JOB SO FAR to turn a blend of technological development and cost-capping into entertaining racing.

For season two, manufacturers of powertrain technology have gained the ability to develop their own motors, gearboxes and inverters. With that comes the ability to adjust the rear end, with teams getting freedom when it comes to dampers and springs. Renault has stolen a march, but it's not been to the series' detriment. But what happens when more manufacturers come?

Autosport revealed last week that BMW and Nissan are in talks to join the series, possibly as early as next season in a commercial tie-up capacity, before fully fledged entries in the future. They'd join Renault, Mahindra, DS, NEXTEV, Venturi, season-three addition Jaguar and Audi (which is linked to Abt).

Real credibility follows, as do technological advancements... and big budgets.

So far Formula E has kept things under control as much as it can by stringently sticking to cost caps. The chassis is €270,000; the battery is a similar cost (with an extra €100k for support); powertrains are €120k. A cost cap is planned for when battery competition opens up too.

The powertrain cost cap is a short-term measure limited in its use – yes, Team Aguri is poised to confirm it has used it to snare the performance-leading Renault ZE15 for a snip. But when the manufacturers come in, are they really going to want to put their name on someone else's technology? Nissan could, thanks to the company's alliance with Renault, and you can add two and two together to work out which team the Japanese marque could be partnering in season three.

The others? No. Formula E's appeal to manufacturers is the ability to be seen to be involved in something greener, to prove its worth and maybe even learn about electric-vehicle technology for road-car ranges.

A more prudent example of Formula E securing sustainability is eliminating open-chassis competition from its short-to-mid-term future. That keeps staff numbers down, and while R&D can't be capped (meaning manufacturers can push the boat out on batteries or powertrains if they see fit) it stops Formula E falling into a Formula 1-style trap of wind-tunnel use and aerodynamic development.

Another is to delay battery competition, which stops big marques ploughing big money into tech now and decimating their rivals in season five. Instead, a common battery will reappear for that campaign. Holding off competition for now, until all the manufacturers come in, means everyone competes on a relatively even (if expensive) footing and the best manufacturer wins.

Maybe Formula E's existence will be glorious but shortlived. Maybe it will have a prolonged period of relevance as an extreme EV testbed.

It's a fascinating time for Formula E and a risky one too. As the big guns emerge, the series needs to be wary of friendly fire.

SCOTT MITCHELL

IN THE HEADLINES

CHRISTODOULOU SIGNS FOR MERCEDES

Adam Christodoulou has been signed as an AMG Mercedes driver. He will contest the Nurburgring 24 Hours in May, the six-hour qualifying race in April and selected rounds of the VLN long-distance championship on the Nordschleife with the Black Falcon squad.

GREAVES WITHDRAWS ELMS GIBSON

Greaves Motorsport will not defend its European Le Mans Series crown with the Gibson that claimed last year's title – and has also withdrawn it from the Le Mans 24 Hours reserve list. It will run only its new Ligier JSP2 in ELMS.

TDS PULLS OUT OF LE MANS

The French TDS Racing squad has withdrawn its GTE Am-class Aston Martin from the Le Mans 24 Hours. The first reserve for Le Mans, the Algarve Pro Racing LMP2 squad, moves up to take a firm spot on the entry list.

BLEEKEMOLEN AND GOOSSENS TEAM UP

Benelux veterans Jeroen Bleekemolen and Marc Goossens will contest the Le Mans 24 Hours with the Murphy Prototypes LMP2 squad. They will drive the team's ORECA-Nissan 03R alongside American Ben Keating.

FORMULA E LAUNCHES eSPORTS SERIES

Formula E has launched an online eSports championship for fans that has a prize fund of €15,000. It has created the Race-Off Pro Series, which will be held alongside the real-world races, with at least four rounds in the build-up to events in Long Beach, Paris, Berlin and London.

HANLEY TO MAKE ELECTRIC DEBUT

Ben Hanley will replace Oliver Turvey at the NEXTEV TCR Formula E team for the series' Berlin round. Turvey will miss the May 21 race in the centre of the German capital due to a clashing Super GT race with Honda.

BREEN ENTERS CIRCUIT OF IRELAND

World Rally Championship driver Craig Breen will attempt to repeat his 2015 Circuit of Ireland win following a last-minute deal. Breen and co-driver Scott Martin will drive a David Greer Motorsport-run Citroen DS 3 R5.

KUBICA MAKES RACING RETURN

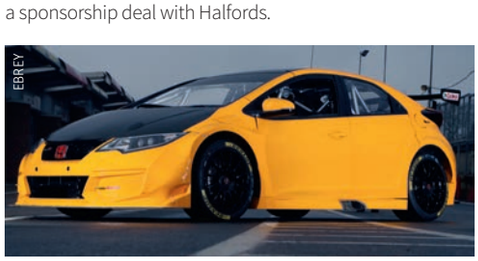
Robert Kubica ended up classified 44th in his first circuit race since the 2010 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix after an opening-lap incident. He contested the Mugello 12 Hours in a GT3 Mercedes. For full report, see page 58.

EPPS LANDS TEAM HARD BTCC SEAT

VW Cup graduate Michael Epps will make his debut in the British Touring Car Championship this season at the wheel of the third Team Hard Toyota Avensis.

HONDA BTCC CARS GO BACK TO ORANGE

The Honda British Touring Car Championship machines will switch to an orange livery this season after securing a sponsorship deal with Halfords.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FEEDBACK

Readers' verdict on MotoGP in Autosport



I just wanted to say bravo for deciding to include MotoGP coverage in the magazine, it is a great idea. Like most of your readers I am a fan of all forms of motorsport and have always been unable to understand why you had MotoGP on your website but not in the magazine.

I look forward to reading about Rossi, Lorenzo, Marquez and co this year.

Chris Peck
By email

Love it! F1 is a passion, however even with my blinkered view I have to admit it's got a bit contrived and boring.

I love the pure racing that is MotoGP and this addition has probably added the extra content to justify my continued subscription! Good to see the foresight and evolution of the publication.

Simon Orr
By email

At last, the bosses at *Autosport* have come to their senses! They have started to include the most exciting form of motorised racing in the world (bar World Rallycross) in MotoGP! Since first reading your magazine in the '70s, I'd always wondered why top-flight bike racing had been excluded.

Patrick Wickham
Buckingham

You've just made a great magazine even greater. I faithfully follow F1 and also enjoy rallying. MotoGP is another passion and I have felt let down since BT took over as I don't have it at home, so I have to go to my local pub to watch. Failing that I can now at least read about it in *Autosport*.

Arthur Wynne
North Wales

Glad to see MotoGP coverage added. Should have been added a long time ago in my opinion. I would like to think most readers enjoy all forms of motorsport. So I hope you don't see anyone complaining!

Mark Hillery
By email

Does MotoGP belong in *Autosport*? So far our inbox is split 62 per cent in favour and 38 against

I am afraid I am one of the 'what the hell is MotoGP doing in *Autosport*?' gang. It's simple, if I wanted to read about bikes I would buy a specialist magazine.

Bikes might be on your website, but I can choose to ignore them. However, if bikes are in *Autosport* I have to pay to not read about them.

I have been buying *Autosport* since 1970 and if you insist on going down the bike route then I will cease to buy it in the future.

Martin Haines
Stafford

We are *not* interested. The machines, the personalities – what there are of them – the puzzle that is the different categories and just about everything else makes it a completely different activity.

For those with a two-wheeled interest, there are publications that cater for their sport.

David Grant
By email

Since 1959 I've been reading *AUTOsport*. I thought the clue was in the name! – *AUTOsport*'s founder Gregor Grant I imagine will be turning in his grave!

Barry Hunter
By email

I've been to the newsagent and cancelled my order for *Autosport*. That should tell you what I think.

Colin Hathway
By email

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Qualified success

Rushing the new qualifying format to market exposed its flaws, but dropping it straight away might not yield an improvement

By Dieter Rencken, Special Contributor

@RacingLines

THE AUSTRALIAN GRAND PRIX QUALIFYING FARCE once again brought into sharp focus the sport's utterly flawed decision-taking procedures. Having had forced upon it a format that is at best a compromised solution to a question posed only by those obsessed with spicing up a show (rather than caring for world-class sporting spectacle) Formula 1 then reacted in the worst possible fashion once the true depth of the format's flaws became apparent.

Rather than rationalising the inherent issues, F1's bosses went into kneejerk mode in their haste to revert to the previous format. It was subsequently revealed that the elimination system that flopped in Australia was actually the fourth proposal to have been evaluated — after one-hour Saturday sprint races to determine grids, time penalties based on the results of previous races added to qualifying times, and the cheesy concept of reversed grids.

The desired outcome of adjusting the qualifying format was specific: to juggle grids in order to reduce predictability. And yet, rather than waiting for the outcome of the race before conducting a post mortem, team principals and managers met five hours *before* the start to vote on reverting to the previous format.

"To revert would be an admission that nothing had changed"

The reaction smacked of desperation to be seen to be doing something. Bernie Ecclestone was not even present in Melbourne to chair the meeting, or to suggest alternatives to what he told *Autosport* was a "pretty crap" qualifying. In the same interview he warned against reverting to the previous format because that would not solve the issue of predictability. Back to the fixation with the 'show'...

This was the man who had told the media that F1 "was the worst it's ever been" on the eve of the season, so to revert would be a damning admission that nothing had changed. Thus, although the Melbourne meeting agreed to a change for the next race, a senior team boss suggested, "Someone in Princes Gate [home to Formula One Management] could derail the process by voting against any change."

The fact of the matter is that Sunday's pre-race meeting was not empowered to take decisions. F1's regulatory process requires changes to regulations to be voted through at Strategy Group level (by a majority), then unanimously by the F1 Commission before being escalated to the FIA World Motor Sport Council for ratification, again by simple majority.

True, the process could be short-circuited via e-vote, and meetings could conceivably be called at short notice, but still the above procedure must be followed for regulation changes — bar those necessitated by safety issues — for the current season, or subsequent year if tabled after March 1. Failure to adhere to the process *could* result in litigation, a word this author has heard is increasingly bandied about.

The complexities of the issue are exacerbated by the fact that delegates at the Melbourne meeting voted for what they considered to be the best interests of F1, not their individual teams — and team owners could conceivably force their employees to resist change when push comes to shove at F1 Commission level. The debacle has, after all, handed independent teams a weapon to use in their ongoing quests for regulatory change and cost caps.

Also the 11 teams at the Melbourne meeting constitute just over 40 per cent of the 26-seat F1 Commission, with the balance of votes collectively held by representatives from FOM, the FIA, race promoters, technical partners and sponsors — any one of whom could derail the process for whatever end. Nor is it a matter of simply voting yes or no for reversion to the previous format, because further alternatives could well be tabled, or change delayed beyond the next race.

This suggests that the paddock's elation after Sunday's meeting was extremely premature, and smacked more of F1 wishing to be seen to be instituting change than actually amending a format that was not only flawed, but which had been proposed for the wrong reasons, then debated and accepted without being subjected to a due-diligence process befitting a global championship. Shamateurism springs to mind.

Isn't it incredible that a sporting activity that relies heavily on computer modelling — whether for aero development, engine design or race strategies — should only subject its qualifying format to simulations after a change had been approved? Remember how Ecclestone wished to delay introduction until the fifth race because FOM's timing and scoring software would not be ready? Then, who knows, the elimination format might have contributed to one of the most exciting races in recent times, possibly owing to faster cars being forced to use softer rubber in Q2.

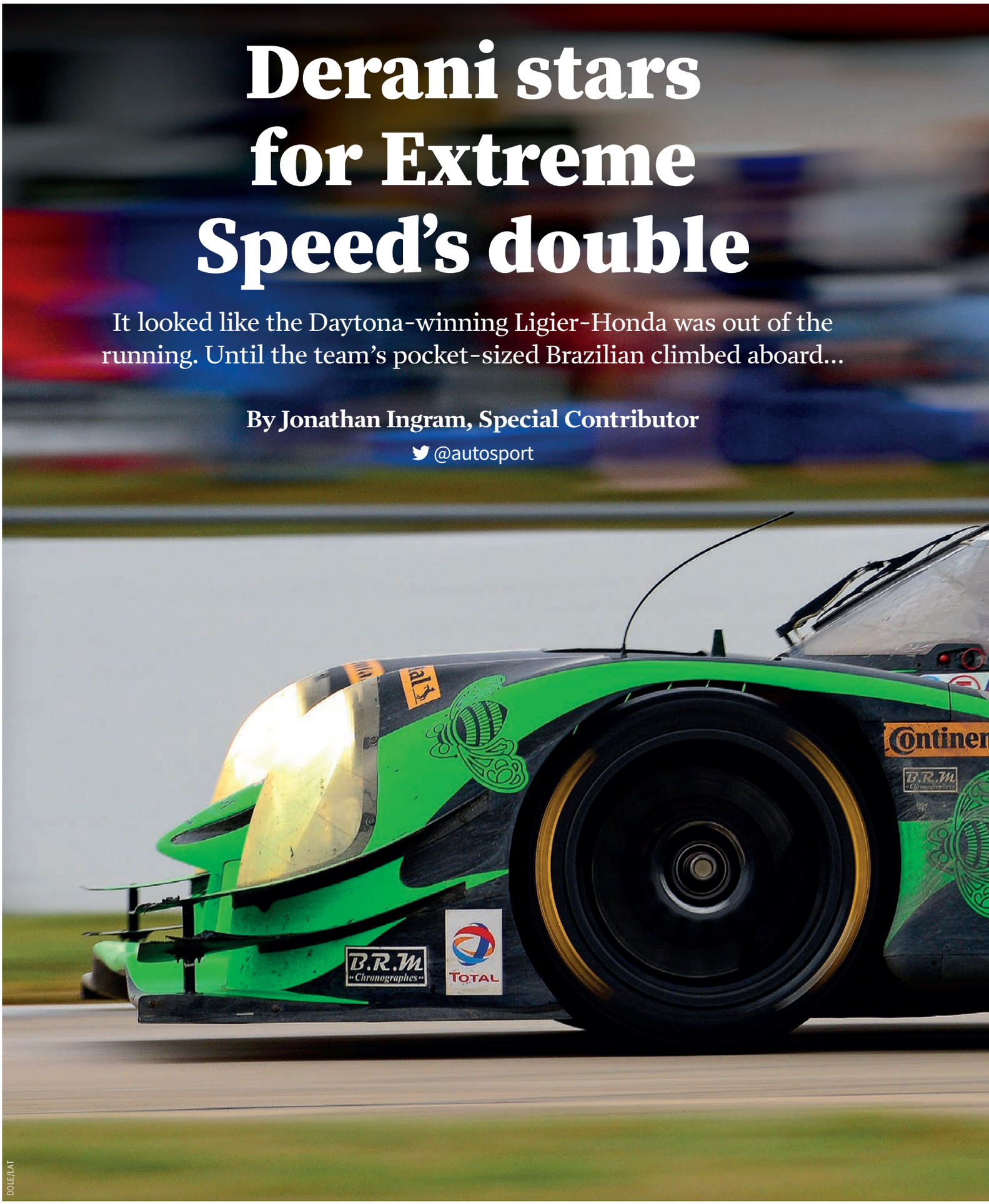
Change to whatever format may well be voted through, possibly before the Bahrain Grand Prix, but the latest debacle should serve as a lesson to those who propose change without considering the consequences. Kneejerk, populism-driven meetings are hardly the solution.

Derani stars for Extreme Speed's double

It looked like the Daytona-winning Ligier-Honda was out of the running. Until the team's pocket-sized Brazilian climbed aboard...

By Jonathan Ingram, Special Contributor

@autosport



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DOLE/LAT

When Extreme Speed Motorsports lost its advantage during an afternoon of rain and treacherous conditions on Sebring's bumpy concrete and asphalt, the team turned to a not-so-secret weapon. After a new generation of Continental treaded tyres left its Ligier-Honda out of the running, the team called on Pipo Derani. The 22-year-old kept the ESM car in the hunt by driving on slicks in tortuous conditions, the only strategy that could keep the leading Daytona Prototypes from disappearing into the spray.

That was merely a warm-up for the night-time finish in the dry. Derani — the only driver who led a lap for ESM — once again brought the team back from behind. He passed Filipe Albuquerque and then Dane Cameron by outbraking each one's Action Express Coyote Corvette into the Hairpin in the span of three laps to take the lead with five minutes remaining.

The race-winning pass was a coup de grace in a cops-and-robbers finish among five cars due to caution flags keeping the prototype leaders closely packed. Perhaps Derani was having a flashback to his days of cut-and-thrust in Formula 3 in Europe. For now, the diminutive Brazilian hero seems to have found his strong suit after transitioning to endurance prototypes and coming up big in each of America's season-opening blue-riband events.

Derani has become a veteran of swigging his team owner's Patron tequila in post-race ceremonies. It was Pipo who handled the chore of closing out the DPs in the Daytona 24 Hours before taking on those duties again in the final two hours at Sebring. ESM thus became the first team to sweep Daytona and Sebring in the same season since the Moretti/Doran Ferrari squad in 1998.

Derani (right) has a look up the inside of Pla at the start. He ended up shuffled back to third place

"It's kind of surreal [winning] those two races in the same year," said Derani. "I still can't believe we did it. Like after Daytona, in a couple of days I'm going to realise how much we achieved."

Derani has come the farthest in the shortest span among the winning driving crew comprising Scott Sharp, Johannes van Overbeek and Ed Brown. Until a two-day test earlier this year he had not seen Sebring — even in a video-game format. "I'm not a video guy," he said.

After a two-day test earlier this year and four practice sessions, Derani was ready enough to almost win the pole. But Olivier Pla was the man with the Ligier advantage in qualifying aboard the JSP2 of Michael Shank Racing, despite an overnight rebuild following a spin by John Pew and crash in night practice.



Powered by a new generation of 3.5-litre Honda V6 turbos, the Ligiers swept the front row in qualifying, with Pla edging Derani by 0.174 seconds for the pole. The closest DP was the Coyote of Cameron, who trailed by 0.726s. The outcome was not a surprise because Sebring is more of a high-speed cornering track, which plays to the lighter LMP2 car's better handling.

The strategy for the Ligier teams was to stay out front and avoid having to make too many passes for position in traffic, but the anticipated thunderstorms made for a long day. Continental brought a new generation of rain tyres to Sebring following the stunning loss of the overall victory to the Michelin-shod Porsche 911 RSR in the rain at Petit Le Mans last October. The tyre had yet to be tested in the wet… As it turned out, the Ligier chassis did not respond to the new rain rubber as well as the Daytona Prototypes, which was attributed to new belting and a slightly smaller radius on the front tyres.

The Shank and ESM teams would each run into trouble in the day-long rain due to cycling their gentlemen drivers through the rotation in cars that were misbehaving on the new rain tyres. With only three drivers, Shank's team would eventually fall a lap down in the wet and spent much of the last four hours trying to get its track position back. With four drivers, ESM elected to put Brown in during a caution, but soon switched to Sharp. But that short-pitting left Sharp mired deep in the field, and he also found it hard going on the treaded tyres.

This was a day when conditions were treacherous for everyone. A red flag appeared after Dirk Muller's Ford GT hydroplaned into the barriers shortly before the end of the third hour. Officials wanted to wait out the heaviest rain and to clear the course of standing water.

The line of Corvette DPs at the top



#25 BMW was hit by mid-race tech penalty

GAVIN CORVETTE ON TOP AGAIN

The #4 Corvette C7.R came on strong in the closing hours at Sebring, allowing Oliver Gavin plus co-drivers Tommy Milner and Marcel Fassler to complete an historic Daytona/Sebring double.

Not only that, but the win gave Gavin, Milner and the Pratt & Miller-run Corvette Racing squad (below) a treble of Le Mans, Daytona and Sebring in the same 12-month period. But when Fassler twice went off on slicks in mixed conditions in the afternoon, a victory hardly looked assured. "They finally decided to give me the rain tyres," deadpanned the Swiss, who is on loan from Audi for the season-opening enduros in America.

Milner's final stint proved decisive as he drove past Frederic Makowiecki's Porsche and the Ferrari of Giancarlo Fisichella in the ninth hour. His charge to the front was sealed when polewinner Bill Auberlen's BMW M6 GTLM was called to the pits for an overboost infringement. It was an historic first time that IMSA has issued a technical penalty mid-race as the result of telemetry data.

"They let us go and then they come back and surprised us," said Auberlen of the late Corvette charge after he finished second by 2.8 seconds. "They did the same thing to us at Daytona."

Milner said the Corvette Racing team had grown weary of starting races fast and then fading at the finish. He attributed the current staying power to not losing braking as the race wore on.

Porsche led in the rain as once again Nick Tandy charged to the front in the wet. But the #911 car was taken out in a spectacular crash after co-driver Kevin Estre's three-wide entry into Turn 1 put his car and the #3 Corvette of Jan Magnussen into the barriers. Estre apologised for the incident.

The Ford GT contingent lost one contender to hydroplaning, but Scott Dixon came back to lead in the car shared with Richard Westbrook and Ryan Briscoe after getting through the mixed conditions on slicks. At the finish, the #67 Ford was 14.5s behind the winning Corvette. "There are a lot of areas where we need to improve," said the reigning IndyCar champion.





of the leaderboard confirmed that the Chevy V8 and the Continental tyres were the best wet-weather combination. So ESM, in seventh place, began gambling. "We rolled some dice several times on the strategy," said Sharp. "A couple of times it worked and a couple of times it didn't. But we kept rolling."

After gambling by staying out when some teams pitted for fresh rain rubber following the end of the red flag, Sharp gained track position. But he began to leak away any advantage and lost nearly 20s in a short span. So they called on Derani to tackle the course in mixed conditions on slick tyres.

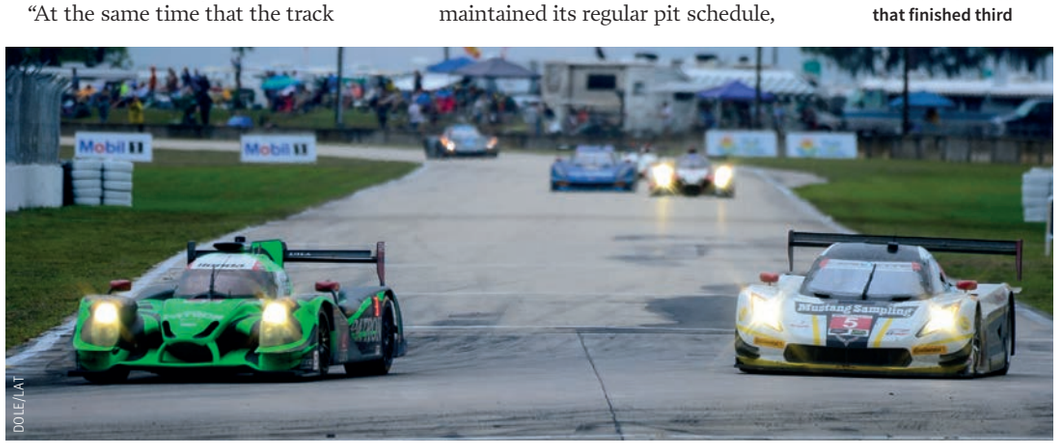
"At the same time that the track was drying, the rain was coming back really quick," said Derani. "Every lap was unpredictable to know what to do and where to brake."

Derani eventually came from 30s back to get within 10s of the leaders. He nearly passed the second-place Coyote of Scott Pruett at the high-speed entrance to Turn 17, diving inside before spinning after getting off the dry line. A lap later, Action Express was forced to call Pruett in for slicks as well to combat Derani.

It actually took two cars to keep Derani at bay. As long as the mixed conditions lasted, Action Express left the #5 Corvette out on its rain tyres and maintained its regular pit schedule, which helped keep Joao Barbosa, Christian Fittipaldi and Albuquerque in the lead for most of the seventh to the 10th hours. Eventually, a spin by Barbosa at the Hairpin elevated the #31 Action Express car into the lead.

Dragon Speed ORECA of Lapierre, Minassian and Hedman (leading group) was fourth

The winning Ligier (left) battles with the Action Express Chevrolet Corvette DP that finished third

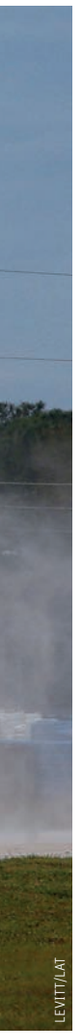


DOLE/LAT

The ESM strategy almost went for naught when Derani had contact with a GTD-class Lamborghini, which was judged avoidable. So a stint of more than two hours ended with a drive-through penalty, followed by a pitstop for a driver change to van Overbeek. That led to skipping a pitstop during a yellow to regain track position, which then led to an out-of-kilter tyre strategy. Derani got the lead with a fuel-only stop, but then had to take four tyres on the next stop under yellow, when the two Action Express Coyotes took just fuel.

With 30 minutes remaining, Derani was 27th in the line of traffic and fourth among the prototypes. "On the final stop we needed to take tyres and the rest of the guys didn't," said Sharp. "We cycled back down. As we sat there looking at each other, we thought, 'We're fourth. Probably third is the best were going to get here.' Pipo showed us that our car had a little more pace than we expected."

Another caution helped save the night for ESM. The 13th and final safety car led to a restart with four of the prototype


LEVITT/LAT


Heavy rain led to the race being stopped for two-and-a-quarter hours

LEVITT/LAT



L-R: Sharp, Brown, Derani and van Overbeek celebrate

DOLE/LAT

leaders – including an overachieving DragonSpeed team's ORECA-Nissan 05 – at the front of the field with 15 minutes to go. After eclipsing the ORECA shortly past the flag-stand, Derani caught the Action Express cars and made quick work of each in the span of three laps at the Hairpin under braking.

"I was trying to keep cars between me and the [ESM Ligier]," said Cameron. "I wasn't excited to see that the last [caution] was going to have the restart with all the prototypes together. They had pace on us all day and we tried to run and hide as best we could. They could do whatever they wanted to us. I tried to defend [at the Hairpin], but without hurting myself for the straight. As soon as I moved over to set up for the exit, he was there. He was better on the brakes. Pretty simple. I never saw him again."

The Hairpin also proved to be the undoing of victory hopes for the Spirit of Daytona-run VisitFlorida Coyote Corvette, which Marc Goossens, Ryan Dalziel and Ryan Hunter-Reay had kept near the top of the scoring until shortly before the 11th hour. Restarting as the prototype leader among a gaggle of GTLM cars, Goossens spun at the exit and ended up with a radiator full of sand and grass, which necessitated an unscheduled stop.

The DragonSpeed ORECA had to use an ACO-mandated restrictor for its Nissan V6, which was a penalty on the straights for Nicolas Minassian, Nicolas Lapierre and Henrik Hedman. Lapierre was another of those who managed slick tyres early on in the mixed conditions. Playing the yellow-flag periods eventually regained a lost lap for the team. "Fourth place was the best result we could possibly do," said Minassian.

The SpeedSource-run Mazda Motorsports team finished with one Lola on the lead lap and both cars running at the finish. The hard luck went to the DeltaWing and the Shank team. The former suffered broken steering that sent Andy Meyrick off the track in the final hour, after the team had maintained the lead lap despite the bumpy circuit not suiting its DWC13 chassis. "On a clear lap, we don't have the ultimate pace of the leaders," said Meyrick after his opening stint. "So the objective was to stay on the lead lap and go forward."

In the process of regaining the lead lap, the Shank Ligier had its diveplanes battered. But Pla was still in the hunt, just 7s off the lead with an hour to go. Alas, the car finished the race in the pitlane as a result of contact in the hectic finish that broke the rear suspension and Pla, Pew and Oswaldo Negri were classified a lap down in seventh place.

IN THE HEADLINES


DOLE/LAT

CORE GETS THE FRUIT

CORE Autosport driver Colin Braun – in the car he shared with Mark Wilkins and Jon Bennett (above) – won an almighty scrap for Prototype Challenge honours with the PR1/Mathiasen Motorsports entry spearheaded by Briton Tom Kimber-Smith. The pair finished just 1.282s apart having traded the lead throughout. Sebring was the first race where the new traction-control system was introduced to all LMPC cars. CORE had been used as a "blueprint mule" by MoTeC to build the new systems for the ORECA chassis.

RUBENS IN THE HUNT

Rubens Barrichello drove the opening stint for Wayne Taylor Racing in a Dallara Corvette DP. "It was an honour to be carrying Max Angelelli and the boys [Jordan and Ricky Taylor] in the first stint," said Barrichello. The car was a contender in the closing hours with Angelelli at the wheel, but developed electrical problems and wound up in the barriers.

PRUETT: NO MORE PROTOTYPES?

Scott Pruett said the Sebring 12 Hours may have been his last prototype race. The multiple champion will move to the new Lexus GT3 programme in the IMSA SportsCar Series later this year. "Never say never," said Pruett. "Getting the right opportunity to win a sixth Rolex 24 at Daytona would be great. In racing you never know. There's nothing on the horizon right now."

NIELSEN'S FIRST WIN 'AMAZING'

Christina Nielsen, Alessandro Balzan and Jeff Segal won GTD honours in Scuderia Corsa's new Ferrari 488 GT3 (below). Segal planted the car on pole, but a worrisome clutch problem in the race meant the team bided its time until the finish. Segal was in front briefly just after 10 hours, but it wasn't until nine minutes to go when Balzan took the lead for good from the Turner Motorsport BMW M6 GT3 of Jens Klingmann. This was the first IMSA class win for Nielsen, who said: "Sebring is a unique event, probably my favourite beside Petit Le Mans. Getting my first win here feels amazing."



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RESULTS SEBRING 12 HOURS, SEBRING (USA), IMSA SPORTSCAR ROUND 2/11, MARCH 19 (238 LAPS – 890.120 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	CAR	CLASS	RESULTS	GRID
1	Pipo Derani/Scott Sharp/Ed Brown/Johannes van Overbeek	*Extreme Speed Motorsports*	Ligier-Honda JSP2	P	12h00m59.881s	2
2	Dane Cameron/Eric Curran/Scott Pruett	*Action Express Racing*	Coyote-Chevrolet Corvette DP	P	+2.926s	3
3	Christian Fittipaldi/Joao Barbosa/Filipe Albuquerque	*Action Express Racing*	Coyote-Chevrolet Corvette DP	P	+3.940s	4
4	Nicolas Minassian/Henrik Hedman/Nicolas Lapierre	*DragonSpeed*	ORECA-Nissan 05	P	+4.339s	9
5	Marc Goossens/Ryan Dalziel/Ryan Hunter-Reay	*Spirit of Daytona*	Coyote-Chevrolet Corvette DP	P	+18.078s	6
6	Tristan Nunez/Jonathan Bomarito/Spencer Pigot	*SpeedSource*	Lola-Mazda B12/80	P	+29.735s	5
7	Olivier Pla/John Pew/Oswaldo Negri Jr	*Michael Shank Racing*	Ligier-Honda JSP2	P	237 laps-suspension	1
8	Tom Long/Joel Miller/Ben Devlin/Keiko Ihara	*SpeedSource*	Lola-Mazda B12/80	P	-1 lap	7
9	Colin Braun/Jon Bennett/Mark Wilkins	*CORE Autosport*	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	-2 laps	18
10	Tom Kimber-Smith/Jose Gutierrez/Robert Alon	*PR1/Mathiasen Motorsports*	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	-2 laps	12
11	Tommy Milner/Oliver Gavin/Marcel Fassler	*Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)*	Chevrolet Corvette C7.R	GTLM	-3 laps	25
12	Bill Auberlen/Dirk Werner/Bruno Spengler	*BMW Team RLL*	BMW M6 GTLM	GTLM	-3 laps	20
13	Frederic Makowiecki/Earl Bamber/Michael Christensen	*Porsche North America (CORE)*	Porsche 911 RSR	GTLM	-3 laps	29
14	Toni Vilander/Giancarlo Fisichella/Davide Rigon	*Risi Competizione*	Ferrari 488 GTE	GTLM	-3 laps	27
15	Richard Westbrook/Ryan Briscoe/Scott Dixon	*Ford Chip Ganassi Racing*	Ford GT	GTLM	-3 laps	23
16	John Edwards/Lucas Luhr/Kuno Wittmer	*BMW Team RLL*	BMW M6 GTLM	GTLM	-3 laps	21
17	Alex Popow/Renger van der Zande/David Heinemeier Hansson	*Starworks Motorsport*	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	-5 laps	14
18	Daniel Serra/Alessandro Pier Guidi/Andrea Bertolini	*Scuderia Corsa*	Ferrari 488 GTE	GTLM	-5 laps	22
19	Mikhail Goikhberg/Chris Miller/Stephen Simpson/Kenton Koch	*JDC-Miller Motorsports*	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	-6 laps	16
20	James French/Kyle Marcelli/Josh Norman	*Performance Tech Motorsports*	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	-7 laps	13
21	Andy Meyrick/Katherine Legge/Sean Rayhall	*Panoz DeltaWing Racing*	DeltaWing-Elan/Mazda DWC13	P	229 laps-steering	11
22	Jeff Segal/Christina Nielsen/Alessandro Balzan	*Scuderia Corsa*	Ferrari 488 GT3	GTD	-9 laps	30
23	Jens Klingmann/Bret Curtis/Ashley Freiberg	*Turner Motorsport*	BMW M6 GT3	GTD	-9 laps	32
24	John Potter/Andy Lally/Marco Seefried	*Magnus Racing*	Audi R8 LMS	GTD	-9 laps	43
25	Mario Farnbacher/Alex Riberas/Ian James	*Team Seattle/Alex Job Racing*	Porsche 911 GT3-R	GTD	-9 laps	33
26	Dirk Muller/Joey Hand/Sebastien Bourdais	*Ford Chip Ganassi Racing*	Ford GT	GTLM	-9 laps	28
27	Leh Keen/Cooper MacNeil/Gunnar Jeannette	*Alex Job Racing*	Porsche 911 GT3-R	GTD	-9 laps	34
28	Bryce Miller/Bryan Sellers/Madison Snow	*Paul Miller Racing*	Lamborghini Huracan GT3	GTD	-9 laps	42
29	Markus Palttala/Michael Marsal/Jesse Krohn	*Turner Motorsport*	BMW M6 GT3	GTD	-9 laps	38
30	Andrew Davis/Robin Liddell/Connor de Phillippi	*Stevenson Motorsports*	Audi R8 LMS	GTD	-9 laps	46
31	Raffaele Giammaria/Matteo Cressoni/Peter Mann	*Spirit of Race (AF)*	Ferrari 458 Italia GT3	GTD	-9 laps	36
32	Paul Dalla Lana/Pedro Lamy/Mathias Lauda/Richie Stanaway	*Aston Martin Racing*	Aston Martin V12 Vantage	GTD	-9 laps	41
33	Johnny Mowlem/Ryan Lewis/Marc Drumwright/Don Yount	*BAR1 Motorsports*	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	-10 laps	19
34	Spencer Pumpelly/Corey Lewis/Al Carter	*Change Racing*	Lamborghini Huracan GT3	GTD	-11 laps	37
35	Jeroen Bleekemolen/Ben Keating/Marc Miller	*Riley Motorsports*	Dodge Viper GT3-R	GTD	-11 laps	31
36	Tim Pappas/Nicky Catsburg/Patrick Long/Andy Pilgrim	*Black Swan Racing*	Porsche 911 GT3-R	GTD	-12 laps	44
37	Christopher Bruck/Terry Borcheller/Franz Konrad/Josh Webster	*Konrad Motorsport*	Lamborghini Huracan GT3	GTD	-12 laps	48
38	Tracy Krohn/Nic Jonsson/Pierre Kaffer	*Flying Lizard Motorsports*	Audi R8 LMS	GTD	-18 laps	45
39	Jim Pace/Byron Defoor/David Hinton/Dorsey Schroeder	*Highway to Help (Doran)*	Riley-Dinan/BMW DP	P	212 laps-accident	15
40	Sean Johnston/Maro Engel/Michael Lyons	*Starworks Motorsport*	ORECA-Chevrolet FLM09	PC	209 laps-accident	17
41	Antonio Garcia/Jan Magnussen/Mike Rockenfeller	*Corvette Racing (Pratt & Miller)*	Chevrolet Corvette C7.R	GTLM	-36 laps	24
42	Daniel Morad/Carlos de Quesada/Cameron Lawrence/Dominik Farnbacher	*Alegra Motorsports*	Riley-Dinan/BMW DP	P	-43 laps	10
43	Rubens Barrichello/Ricky Taylor/Jordan Taylor/Max Angelelli	*Wayne Taylor Racing*	Dallara-Chevrolet Corvette DP	P	169 laps-electrics	8
44	Lawson Aschenbach/Matt Bell/Dion von Moltke	*Stevenson Motorsports*	Audi R8 LMS	GTD	165 laps-fuel system	39
45	Patrick Lindsey/Jorg Bergmeister/Matt McMurry/Jan Heylen	*Park Place Motorsports*	Porsche 911 GT3-R	GTD	145 laps-driveline	35
46	Patrick Pilet/Nick Tandy/Kevin Estre	*Porsche North America (CORE)*	Porsche 911 RSR	GTLM	116 laps-accident	26
47	Townsend Bell/Bill Sweedler/Richard Antinucci	*Change Racing*	Lamborghini Huracan GT3	GTD	30 laps-accident	47
48	Fabio Babini/Paolo Ruberti/Cedric Sbirrazzuoli/Luca Persiani	*Dream Racing*	Lamborghini Huracan GT3	GTD	27 laps-gearbox	40
NS	Christopher Zochling/Pierre Ehret/Jurgen Krebs	*Konrad Motorsport*	Lamborghini Huracan GT3	GTD	0 laps-fire	49

Winners' average speed 74.074mph.
Fastest lap Pla, 1m52.397s, 119.790mph. **PC** Braun, 1m55.545s, 116.526mph. **GTLM** Auberlen, 1m59.182s, 112.970mph. **GTD** Balzan, 2m02.810s, 109.633mph.

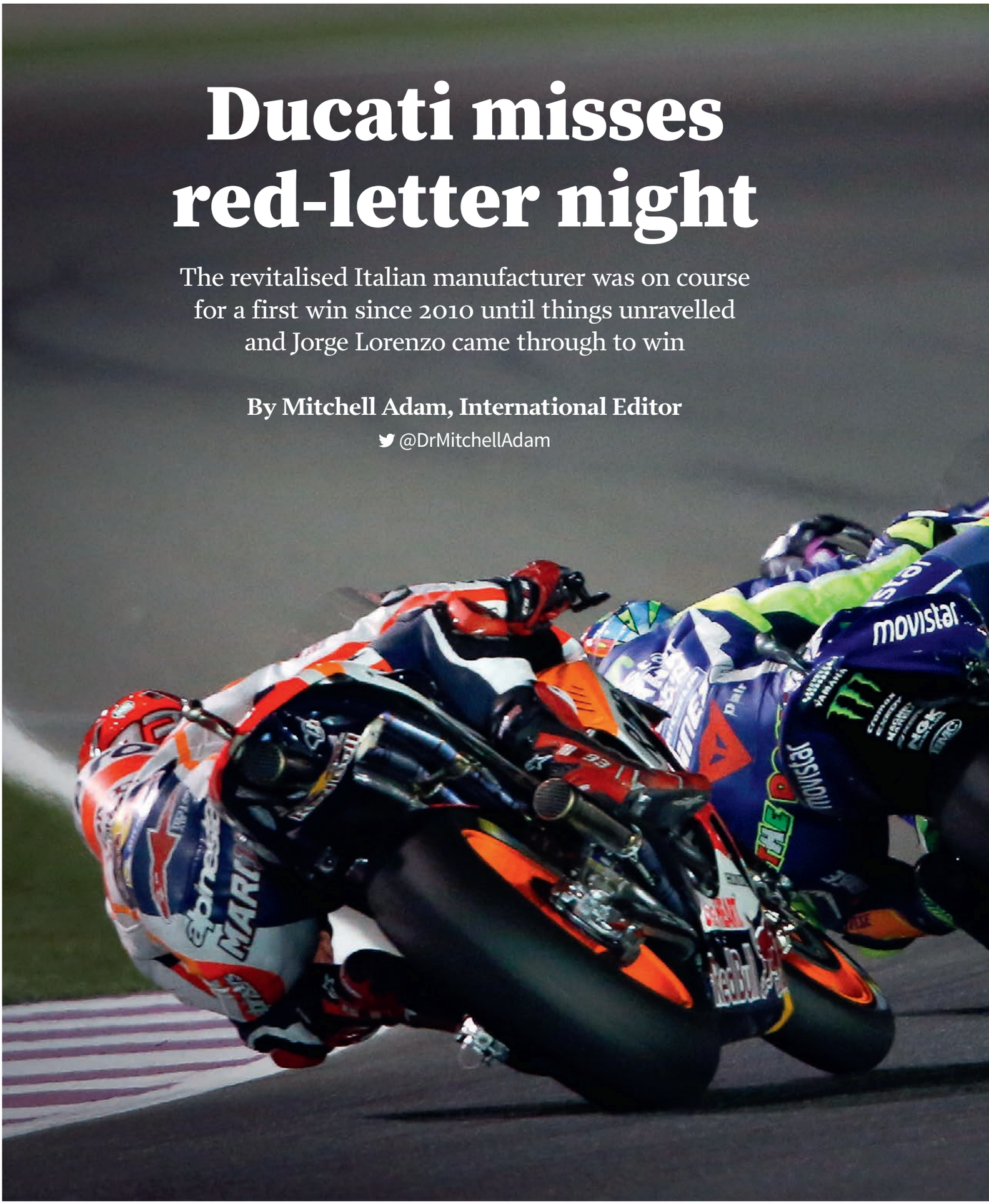
Championship P 1 Sharp/van Overbeek/Derani/Brown, 72; 2 Pruett, 62; 3 Barbosa/Fittipaldi/Albuquerque, 60; 4 Cameron/Curran, 59; 5 Dalziel/Goossens/Hunter-Reay, 58; 6 Taylor/Taylor/Angelelli/Barrichello, 53. **PC 1 Kimber-Smith/Gutierrez/Alon, 66**; 2 Simpson/Miller/Goikhberg/Koch, 65; 3 van der Zande/Popow, 60. **GTLM 1 Milner/Gavin/Fassler, 72**; 2 Bamber/Christensen/Makowiecki, 62; 3 Auberlen/Werner/Spengler, 60; 4 Garcia/Magnussen/Rockenfeller, 56; 5 Fisichella/Rigon/Vilander, 55; 6 Pier Guidi/Serra, 54. **GTD 1 Lally/Potter/Seefried, 67**; 2 Balzan/Nielsen/Segal, 62; 3 Farnbacher/Riberas/James, 53.

Ducati misses red-letter night

The revitalised Italian manufacturer was on course for a first win since 2010 until things unravelled and Jorge Lorenzo came through to win

By Mitchell Adam, International Editor

@DrMitchellAdam

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Ducati duo Iannone (left) and Dovizioso (right) battled for the lead before Iannone crashed out of the lead

Sometimes the same is different but, mostly, it's the same. MotoGP underwent its biggest off-season changes since the switch to 1000cc, four-stroke machinery just after the turn of the millennium, only for the reigning world champion to win the first race of the new era with a typically commanding ride.

But it could, maybe even should, have been a different story to Jorge Lorenzo taking his 41st career victory in Qatar.

The shift to Michelin tyres and a standard ECU posed questions all through the paddock during the winter. Will this suit our bike and rider? How can we make it suit our bike and rider? Who will it suit? How will it change races? Will it change the order? The pre-season tests provided some pointers, but hardly a bulletproof guide.

There was much anticipation, as MotoGP entered the great unknown, that the changes would prompt a new era of competition at the top of the field. Not that MotoGP races were fundamentally broken, just that they could replicate the frenetic action and variety seen in the feeder Moto2 and Moto3 series.

Lorenzo was a safe bet, for early success anyway, having looked like he'd adapted best out of all the riders pre-season. The Yamaha star followed that up with a typically Lorenzo performance to start his quest for a fourth title.

Initially, at least, he didn't have it all his own way. This was a race that could have ushered in the hoped-for new era with something the series has not seen for more than five years: something other than a Yamaha or Honda winning a grand prix. This should probably should have been Ducati's night.

The Italian manufacturer has not won a race since October 2010, when Casey Stoner triumphed in front of his home crowd at Phillip Island. It has even been through rough patches when it has struggled to reach the podium, let alone mount a title challenge. It has been moving in the right direction in recent years, and might have broken that drought in Qatar 12 months ago, but for some late Valentino Rossi wizardry to deny Andrea Dovizioso on the final lap.

A year on, Dovizioso was second again, but it was a very different journey. If anything, Ducati flew under the radar during pre-season testing, letting its satellite squads set the eye-catching times with proven bikes as it got into the groove with its 2016 challenger. Dovizioso and Andrea Iannone peaked during the final week of running in Qatar, a fortnight before the opener. And, while they talked about not quite being able to get new-tyre gain out of the Michelins, they seemed more than quietly confident about their pace over long runs.

When the race weekend started, Ducati's speed spoke for itself. Iannone was third in Thursday's practice session, then led the way in both of Friday's sessions. While those margins were slender, one thing was obvious — the Desmosedici loved the one-kilometre main straight at Losail. Across those three sessions, the top speed reached by Iannone was an average 6.17mph faster than anyone else not riding a Ducati.

Iannone was disappointed not to claim pole, instead winding up on the second row of the grid after catching satellite rider Scott Redding at the final corner, as

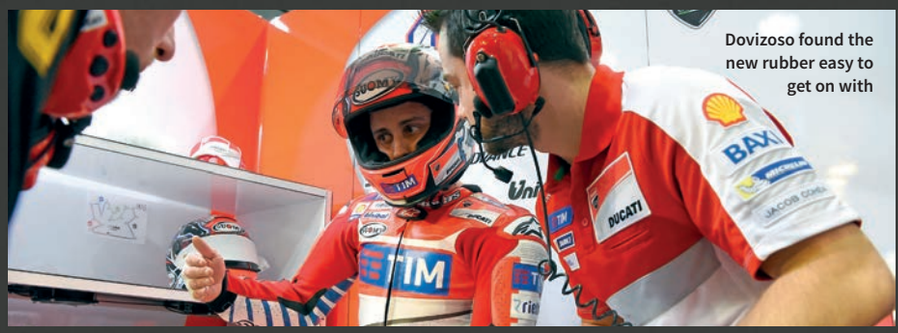


the chequered flag was flying. Still, there was only 0.150 seconds between him and polesitter Lorenzo, and he reckoned the delay had cost him three tenths. So all was not lost; there was still a 22-lap race to come, a bigger prize and the chance to put Ducati back on the podium's top step.

Iannone wasted little time rectifying his front-row absence in the race, bolting away from the line and up to second place, between Lorenzo and Dovizioso. The next time the Ducatis got to that long straight at the end of the first lap, they waltzed past the Yamaha.

At this moment, the ball was in Ducati's court. Sure, there were 21 laps to go and behind Lorenzo also loomed Marc Marquez and Rossi. And Lorenzo's longer runs during practice were impressive in their pace and consistency. But the Ducati, especially Iannone, was still 6mph faster along the front straight.

There was no way anyone was passing a Ducati there and, even if they did manage to sneak past on one of the 16 corners, they would have to be swift about building a buffer that Iannone or Dovizioso could not swallow back up at the end of the lap. »



Dovizoso found the new rubber easy to get on with

SPEC PARTS BUT FASTER TIMES

QUESTIONS TO THE TOP THREE QUALIFIERS about the pace they were expecting during MotoGP's first race with the new Michelin tyres and Magneti Marelli control electronics were met with answers that equated to "we don't know, we will see" on Saturday evening.

During the off-season, Jorge Lorenzo suggested that with the new electronics in particular, which lack most of the in-race automation of the manufacturer-developed units, race laptimes could be half a second slower early in the campaign.

But progress made by the teams with the new package led to a faster race than last year. Lorenzo's total time was seven seconds quicker than Valentino Rossi's to win the 2015 Qatar GP, and his fastest lap was also three tenths up on the corresponding benchmark, and a new Losail race lap record. Having run in the lead pack all race, Rossi admitted this year's pace was not what he had envisaged.

"It was a very fast race, faster than last year, which nobody expected," Rossi (below) said.

"Essentially the pace was a surprise, because it was a great pace. Michelin did a very good job, and also the electronics are good. We expected more difference, to struggle more.

"But already with three [pre-season] tests, all of the manufacturers improved a lot."

Michelin also attracted almost universal praise for its tyres after the race. Late last year it took some initial criticism for its front tyre, and the lack of confidence it offered riders, but worked to develop and introduce a new profile, which has proven far more popular.

"I think they did a really good job," second-place finisher Andrea Dovizioso said.

"Compared to last year the front tyre is better and this is important to every rider, and I think it's just about how you manage the tyre. Both are really good, just completely different."

For its part, Michelin says it will continue to develop its range during its first year back in MotoGP since 2008. It will also work on ways to make the sidewall markings denoting its different compounds more prominent.



Lorenzo hung with the pair as Iannone and Dovizioso built a lead in increments, only to the tune of about a tenth per lap, but it was growing nonetheless, so that the world champion was 0.512s behind as Iannone finished his fifth and ultimately last lap of the night.

Dovizioso had a run on his team-mate and lunged down the inside at Turn 1. Iannone responded with a switchback and made it to the apex first, and Dovizioso had to check up to avoid contact between the pair, no doubt much to Lorenzo's delight. Dovizioso got ahead several corners later, then Iannone went down at Turn 13.

"I touched the white line and crashed," he said post-race. "This is really strange. I checked on the data and everything is the same, but you look at the image on television and it's clear I touched the white line. Usually the white line has grip, but this time it's very, very slippery."

Rossi, who never really threatened from his position at the back of the lead pack – five riders before Iannone's fall, four thereafter – opined that the order would probably not have changed had his fellow Italian stayed upright. "I think if Iannone doesn't crash, they stay there until the end," he surmised.

That outcome would have been Ducati's first win in five years, only its third one-two in MotoGP, and a maiden victory for Iannone.

As it was, his fall paved the way for another Lorenzo masterclass. Without his team-mate, Dovizioso was more exposed, and Lorenzo, smelling blood, set his fastest lap the very next time around. Two laps later he was past and, even with an overtaking move around the outside of the Ducati, his laptime was just 0.110s slower than that benchmark.

It gave him just enough breathing space to stay ahead of Dovizioso on the main straight, and he settled into a block of laps in the mid-to-low-1m55s bracket, including resetting the fastest race lap four times between laps 11 and 20.

Realistically, by the time he set the first-ever MotoGP race lap beneath the 1m55 barrier – a 1m54.927s – with three to go, his job was done. That coincided with Marquez sneaking past Dovizioso and into second, but Lorenzo had seen off any hopes of a grandstand finish.



Lorenzo celebrates his 43rd MotoGP victory

He ranked the win as "one of my three best races in my career", based on a late gamble to switch to Michelin's soft rear tyre, rather than the medium on which he rode to the grid.

"Michelin told me the soft tyre will move more than the hard one but the performance will give more or less the same," he explained.

"The fact that I was quite slow in the warm-up made me take this risk because I saw some riders in the warm-up using the soft one, and they were faster than me; so I said something is not right with my bike with this hard on the rear so we must choose the other option.

"When Iannone and 'Dovi' were leading the race, the pace was not very high. [Dovizioso] looks like in some corners he was dropping a little bit the pace so I recovered some metres in these corners.

"I decided to pass him in the middle of the track and open the gap in the last sector to avoid his overtaking on the straight. This was the key. When I was leading and making the pace higher he was following me. I was keeping strong and believing I could be even faster, and I think my trust made me win this race."



Lorenzo passed Dovizioso for the lead and then edged clear

Dovizioso sneaked back past Marquez with two laps to go and then withstood a final-corner challenge to keep second. For Honda, Marquez's third place would have been considered a dream given its tough pre-season, adapting to the new ECU, with which it still has work to do.

"We had a difficult winter, and if on Wednesday you told me, 'You will finish on the podium', I would say, 'Where do I need to sign?'" Marquez admitted.

"We worked really hard all weekend trying to find the best package. We were losing a lot at the final corner, even in the race, so for that reason it was really difficult to overtake 'Dovi'."

Rossi nearly pinched third from Marquez but settled for fourth, well clear of the next pack of Dani Pedrosa and Maverick Vinales, who had quiet races. Pedrosa is still chasing feeling from the new package, while Vinales might have expected more given his flying form in practice. Having qualified on the front row of the grid, though, a slow start meant he got stuck behind Pedrosa, and he then struggled for grip under braking in the second half of the race.

Still, it's a world away from how Suzuki fared on its MotoGP return (and Vinales's debut) 12 months ago. After a big winter, there is more to come from Suzuki, and Ducati too.

Both manufacturers are looking for that next step, as is the recovering Honda. Any progress they make will shape the battle at the front, even before you throw the evergreen Rossi into the equation. Lorenzo has started like nothing has changed, but he will have harder assignments than this one.



Pedrosa hasn't got a feel for the new package yet

RESULTS ROUND 1/18, LOSAIL (Q), MARCH 20 (22 LAPS – 73.500 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	TIME
1	Jorge Lorenzo (E)	*Yamaha*	42m28.452s
2	Andrea Dovizioso (I)	*Ducati*	+2.019s
3	Marc Marquez (E)	*Honda*	+2.287s
4	Valentino Rossi (I)	*Yamaha*	+2.387s
5	Daniel Pedrosa (E)	*Honda*	+14.083s
6	Maverick Vinales (E)	*Suzuki*	+15.423s
7	Pol Espargaro (E)	*Tech3 Yamaha*	+18.629s
8	Bradley Smith (GB)	*Tech3 Yamaha*	+18.652s
9	Hector Barbera (E)	*Avintia Ducati*	+21.160s
10	Scott Redding (GB)	*Pramac Ducati*	+24.435s
11	Aleix Espargaro (E)	*Suzuki*	+35.847s
12	Eugene Laverty (GB)	*Aspar Ducati*	+41.756s
13	Alvaro Bautista (E)	*Aprilia*	+41.932s
14	Jack Miller (AUS)	*Marc VDS Honda*	+41.982s
15	Tito Rabat (E)	*Marc VDS Honda*	+54.953s
R	Stefan Bradl (D)	*Aprilia*	11 laps-accident
R	Loris Baz (F)	*Avintia Ducati*	8 laps-accident
R	Cal Crutchlow (GB)	*LCR Honda*	6 laps-accident
R	Andrea Iannone (I)	*Ducati*	5 laps-accident
R	Yonny Hernandez (CO)	*Aspar Ducati*	1 lap-sensor
NS	Danilo Petrucci (I)	*Pramac Ducati*	0 laps-broken hand

Winner's average speed 103.891mph. **Fastest lap** Lorenzo, 1m54.927s, 104.716mph.

Qualifying 2 **1 Lorenzo, 1m54.543s**; **2** Marquez, 1m54.634s; **3** Vinales, 1m54.638s; **4** Iannone, 1m54.693s; **5** Rossi, 1m54.815s; **6** Dovizioso, 1m54.963s; **7** Pedrosa, 1m55.078s; **8** Barbera, 1m55.165s; **9** P Espargaro, 1m55.302s; **10** Crutchlow, 1m55.352s; **11** Smith, 1m55.414s; **12** Redding, 1m55.508s.

Qualifying 1 **1 Crutchlow, 1m55.291s**; **2** Smith, 1m55.490s; **3** Hernandez, 1m56.157s; **4** Laverty, 1m56.186s; **5** A Espargaro, 1m56.238s; **6** Baz, 1m56.375s; **7** Bautista, 1m56.595s; **8** Miller, 1m56.620s; **9** Rabat, 1m57.108s; **10** Bradl, 1m57.216s.

Riders' Championship **1 Lorenzo, 25**; **2** Dovizioso, 20; **3** Marquez, 16; **4** Rossi, 13; **5** Pedrosa, 11; **6** Vinales, 10; **7** P Espargaro, 9; **8** Smith, 8; **9** Barbera, 7; **10** Redding, 6; **11** A Espargaro, 5; **12** Laverty, 4; **13** Bautista, 3; **14** Miller, 2; **15** Rabat, 1.

Manufacturers' Championship **1 Yamaha, 25**; **2** Ducati, 20; **3** Honda, 16; **4** Suzuki, 10; **5** Aprilia, 3.

IN THE HEADLINES



CRUTCHLOW GETS LOST

Cal Crutchlow's LCR Honda was plagued by a major electronics problem, wreaking havoc with engine braking. He was riding around it – and an additional electronics issue – in the race to be the top satellite rider in seventh before crashing. "The bike didn't have a clue where we were," he said. "It seemed to be reading the wrong sectors, so in the last sector it thought I was in the first sector and so on. This was why I crashed."

ESPARGARO HOLDS OUT

Satellite honours went to Tech3's Pol Espargaro, who withstood team-mate Bradley Smith's challenge at the final corner to finish seventh.

HAND OFF FOR PETRUCCI

Pramac Ducati rider Danilo Petrucci was ruled out for at least the next two races after reinjuring the right hand he broke during testing at Phillip Island. He completed the Thursday and Friday practice sessions in pain, before x-rays revealed additional damage requiring more surgery.

FATAL ACCIDENT IN LOSAIL CUP

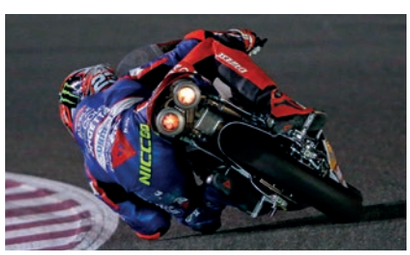
A 49-year-old rider from Tunisia died following an accident in the Losail 600 Cup support race. Taoufik Gattouchi was involved in the multi-rider crash at Turn 3 on Friday.

JUMPED STARTS IN MOTO2

Penalties for jumped starts marred the Moto2 race. Six riders got ride-through penalties – a group led by Sam Lowes, Alex Rins and Johan Zarco, who started second, third and fourth. It took until the dying stages for stewards to award Franco Morbidelli (who started fifth) and Sandro Cortese (sixth) 20-second time penalties. At the time, Morbidelli was leading, but he was passed by Thomas Luthi, who came from 10th to win.

ANTONELLI WINS MOTO3

Honda's Niccolo Antonelli (below) won a dramatic Moto3 season opener by seven thousandths of a second. Just seven tenths of a second separated the first seven riders across the line.



GT40s take centre stage at Goodwood

The third Members' Meeting since it restarted in 2014 provided great racing and great cars, but a few alarming spills to go with the thrills

By Marcus Pye, Special Contributor

@autosport



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The unforgettable spectacle of 25 Ford GT40s racing into the dusk at the track where Roy Salvadori developed a prototype in 1965 was among many delights at last weekend's Goodwood's 74th Members' Meeting. The third of the modern era kicked off on the 56th anniversary of Jim Clark's maiden single-seater victory — over four-wheel debutant John Surtees — in a Formula Junior race at the 39th BARC MM.

Unfortunately, Sunday's programme was coloured by three big accidents (see p73). Miraculously nobody was seriously injured, but they reminded the world that racing was more hazardous in Goodwood's 1948-66 epoch, and that high-speed airfield circuits still demand the highest respect and skill.

Commemorating the life of legendary Ford entrant Alan Mann, the GT40 race lost two cars to mechanical problems in official practice, in which the top three — headed by Christian Glasel/Kenny Brack — qualified in the 1m22s bracket and the fastest 15 were separated by 2.5s.

From sixth, Rob Huff (in Richard Meins's car) grabbed the lead from Glasel second time round and stormed away, opening a secure lead over Tony Wood (from ninth), David Hart and Craig Davies. Huffy was soon without front brakes, though, which forced retirement as the pit window opened. First-lap leader Glasel parked at St Mary's on lap four, while in his mirrors Hart snicked the wrong gear, locked up and spun, narrowly missing Mike Jordan.

Rob Hall thus went top in American Scott Walker's ex-Noel Edmonds car (P/1014), but it fell to eighth with its owner aboard. Andrew Jordan had by this time supplanted father Mike but, when Jordan Jr suffered rear-wheelbearing failure, third qualifier Steve Soper went to the front. After a dice with Phil Keen, who pulled Oliver Bryant's car off with flagging oil pressure, Soper cemented a superbly judged victory in the car started by owner David Cuff — runner-up to Dario Franchitti in the 1991 Formula Vauxhall Junior championship.

Despite spinning to avoid another car, Martin Stretton brought the overjoyed Wood's car in second, ahead of the first of several original cars, Joaquin Folch's 1968 Montjuich Six Hours-winning P/1019, finished with customary aplomb by Simon Hadfield.

Onlookers lined the fences slack-jawed in amazement as the inaugural SF Edge Trophy Edwardian showcase unleashed all manner of wacky racers, from pioneering technical tours de force to throbbing aero-engined hybrids. The lead battle raged throughout as the crowd urged the fearless Duncan Pittaway on in his Curtiss-powered GN, which »



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Michael Epps has confirmed a shock last-minute switch to race in the 2016 British Touring Car Championship, taking the final seat in the RCIB Insurance Racing line-up alongside new team-mates Jake Hill and Chris Smiley.

With wins in USF2000 over in America in 2014 and having won five VW Racing Cup rounds last year with the team, Epps is looking to make a firm impression in his debut BTCC season.

"It's still kind of sinking into the system here that I'm actually going to be on the BTCC grid. I could only dream of this at one point, but when an opportunity presented itself we decided to work at it to make it happen. Now, here we are!"

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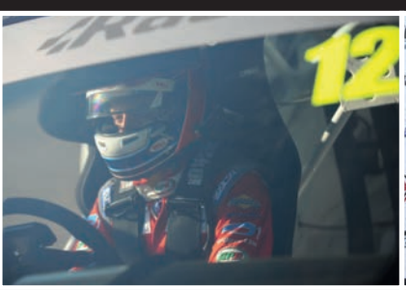


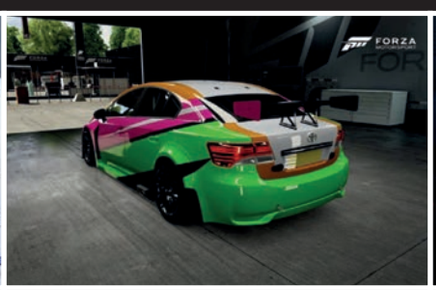



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Pittaway starred in his Curtiss-propelled GN in the SF Edge Trophy

was regularly gobbled up by Mathias Sielecki's mighty V12 Delage of 1923 and Julian Majzub's 1916 Sunbeam Indianapolis, with its straight-six twin-cam powerplant.

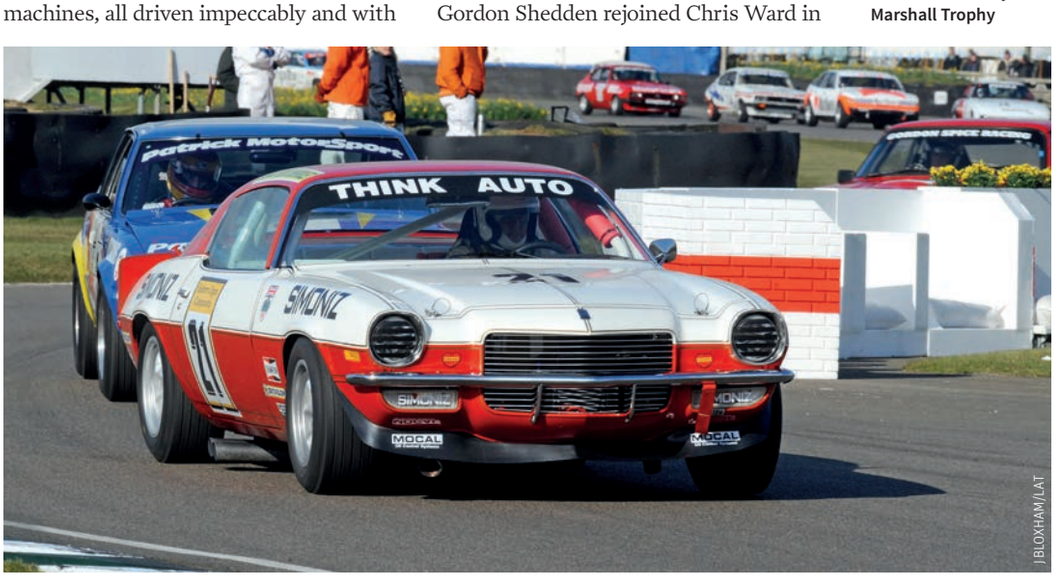
Each played to his steed's strengths, averaging more than 75mph as they slugged it out to the chequer, where Pittaway's courage won the day by 0.230s. "I was pedalling as fast as I could in the corners," he enthused, "but that massive thing came past at twice my speed on the straights."

Spectators were shocked to discover that the Delage was handled brilliantly not by an old hand, but by a slight 23-year-old Argentinian.

Fourth, in a field of wondrous machines, all driven impeccably and with total respect for the high-speed circuit, was Mark Walker's 25.4-litre Darracq 200hp, chased by Hughie Walker in the GN Thunderbug. Only two of the 26 cars retired, one of them Annie Scaldwell's GN-JAP, which ran sixth initially.

A record 30-car field contested the Gerry Marshall Trophy Group 1 Touring Car race, with another snarling Chevrolet Camaro joining the fray. Olly Bryant annexed pole in father Grahame's newly-completed homage to the late Richard Lloyd's Simoniz car. His 1m26.443s lap was 0.73s better than triple BTCC champion Matt Neal posted in David Clark's later-shaped 2015-winning Bastos car, before it broke.

Tin-top champions peppered the fray: Gordon Shedden rejoined Chris Ward in JD Classics' Rover SD1, with Tim Harvey in Andrew Bruce's sister car, Stuart Graham back aboard Nigel Garrett's tribute to his own Faberge Brut Camaro, and Jochen Mass, Steve Soper, Rob Huff and Frank Stippler in howling Ford Capri V6s. Robb Gravett was in a Triumph Dolomite Sprint and Andrew Jordan co-drove Nick Swift's Jon Mowatt-liveried Mini 1275GT. With Patrick Watts in a rasping rotary Mazda RX7 and F1 veterans Gerhard Berger and Emanuele Pirro in the candy-striped BMW 530i, fans were in for a treat.



J BLOXHAM/LAT

The Chevy Camaro of Bryants Jr and Sr leads the Hall/Shedden Rover in the Gerry Marshall Trophy

Ward claimed pole for Sunday's enduro by commanding Saturday's 'owners' heat, from Soper's partner John Young and the Chevvies of Garrett, Clark and Bryant Sr, who finished second on the road but was docked 10 seconds for brushing the chicane wall. Kerry Michael finished a fine sixth in his humble Escort RS2000, mirrors filled with Pirro's UFO Jeans BMW and Mike Whitaker's Capri.

Endeavouring to hand Shedden a useful cushion, Ward shot clear in the final, building a 10-second advantage. It was wiped out, however, by a safety car period triggered by Mark Fowler's Capri rebounding off the wall on the entry to St Mary's, having skated off on droppings from Tiff Needell's Rover. Grahame Bryant was among several others to be caught out, but threaded his Camaro between the stricken Triplex Capri and the tyres. Swift joined the car park there when his Mini expired.

Responding to his team's 'IN' board, Ward aborted when he noticed the 'pit closed' sign as he peeled off, jinking »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back onto a clear track. As the Porsche-controlled queue formed, Young, Harvey, Watts and the astonishing Michael were behind the blue Rover, with Bryant, Ric Wood's colourful Gitanes Capri, Clark and Garrett in line astern.

As the pitstop stagger unwound, Olly Bryant closed relentlessly on Shedden, passing him at Woodcote five laps from home for an emotional family victory. "We've been coming to Goodwood since the start [of the Revival] and have had a few seconds, and a lot of bad luck, but this is our first win," said Bryant Sr. "To have done it together is special."

Neal carved the Luigi Racing Camaro back to third before pitting to replace a punctured right-rear tyre. That left Sanders third in Michael's Escort, although Soper grunted past for bronze. The West Countrymen merited their gallant fourth, clear of Adam Morgan in Wood's Capri and the ubiquitous Nigel Greensall in Adam Brindle's Rover.

Concluded under a full-course yellow for the retrieval of Karsten Le Blanc's AC Cobra — fired into the bank after Fordwater by a jammed throttle — the Graham Hill Trophy GT feature boiled down to a straight fight between James Cottingham and Andrew Smith in »



Cottingham prevailed over Smith in the Graham Hill Trophy

HIGH-SPEED SUPPORT



Jim Clark aficionado Dario Franchitti was thrilled by his Lotus experience

BETWEEN THE RACES, high-speed demos of Group 5 sportscars of the late 1960s, ground-effect Formula 1 cars of the late '70s and early '80s and Super Tourers of the '90s gave enthusiasts a remarkable window on almost 100 years of motorsport.

Period Goodwood racers Richard Attwood and Derek Bell headed the Porsche 917 cast, reunited with their stripy 1970 Porsche Salzburg Le Mans winner and JW Automotive Gulf 917K respectively. Marvellously thuggish Lola T70 Mk3Bs – the period sprint-race cars of choice – and a McLaren M6 GT provided a V8 undertone to the soundtrack.

The quantum leap in three-litre F1 performance was perhaps best illustrated by Classic Team Lotus, which brought a set of cars ranging from a pair of 78s (one driven most capably by period mechanic Chris Dinnage), Chris Locke's ex-Mario Andretti 79 and the twin-chassis 88B in which three-time Indy 500 winner (and Jim Clark nut) Dario Franchitti loved his first taste of Cosworth DFV power on Sunday.

While Clive Chapman, son of marque founder Colin, explained the JPS Lotus set on the grid, Brabham designer Gordon Murray added some wonderful background detail to Nelson Piquet's 1981 championship-winning BT49 story from the commentary box as Joaquin Folch howled round in his well-raced example. A V12 Matra-engined Ligier JS17, flat-12 Ferrari 312T5 and V12 Alfa Romeos made enthralling music too.

Led by Emanuele Pirro, reunited with his Audi A4, the Super Touring brigade – with BTCC veterans John Cleland and Patrick Watts – got stuck into a multi-marque 'battle'. Their Vauxhall Vectra and Peugeot 406 locked horns with Nissan Primeras, Honda Accords, a Renault Laguna, an Alfa Romeo 155, a Vauxhall Cavalier and Jason Minshaw's ex-Rickard Rydell Volvo S40.


HAWKINS

their late-built Cobra Daytona Coupes, split in practice by 2007 British GT champion Bradley Ellis, driving Chris Scragg's Jaguar E-type like the wind.

Ellis was squeezed wide into Madgwick at the start, in the company of Rob Hall (Cobra), while Jon Minshaw (E-type) lost out to David Hart (Cobra) at St Mary's. These dramas enabled the brutal V8 beasts to escape, as Cottingham dipped into the 1m23s in his green machine to prevail over Smith. Hall and Hart, Gary Pearson (E-type) and the recovering Ellis led the pursuit, from Minshaw and Mike Whitaker's impressive wire-wheeled TVR Griffith.

Interrupted by the incident on the start straight from which Stephen Bond escaped with a broken collar bone, the Brooks Trophy race, illustrating the transitional period between front and rear-engined Grand Prix cars of the late 1950s and early-'60s, was appropriately won by Barry Cannell in his BRP Cooper T51, which Tony Brooks raced in '60.

Group C2 sportscar ace Nick Adams gunned Stuart Rolt's four-wheel-drive Ferguson into the early lead but finished in the victor's slipstream. Gregor Fisken clipped the kerb at Woodcote in his Ferrari and pirouetted gracefully onto the infield, promoting the Lotus 18s of John Chisholm and Paul Smeeth — both owed a Goodwood result for persistence — to third and fourth.

Sonorous Cooper-Bristols ruled the two-litre Grand Prix car (F2) roost in the Parnell Trophy set, filling five of the top six places. Will Nuthall overpowered Eddie McGuire's less-sophisticated T20 chassis to land an accomplished victory in Steve Russell's T23. Marc Valvekens's beautifully svelte Gordini broke the monopoly in third. Down the field, Rob Newall's Maserati 8CM held off the ERAs of Terry Crabb and Ben Fidler.

Unlike last year's nailbiter, resolved when James King ambushed Simon Armer on the line, the Derek Bell Cup 1000cc F3 encounter was a consummate flag-to-flag victory for poleman Andrew Hibberd on his debut in father Michael's ex-Chris Irwin Chequered Flag Brabham BT18. Its Ford MAE screamer engine now breathes through a downdraught Weber carburettor in place of its previous early-era side-draught set-up.

After a busy start, in which Steve Smith's Chevron B15 tagged Paul Kite's BT21, Ian Bankhurst (Alexis Mk8) and Michael Scott (BT28) tangled on lap one, while the engine in King's Chevron blew on the Lavant Straight next time round, necessitating long clean-ups under a safety car. Hibberd refound his rhythm at the green, dropping the duelling Peter Thompson and Jim Blockley.

Nick Padmore's late call-up to drive Phil Hall's Team Surtees Lola T70 Spyder sharpened Bruce McLaren Trophy rivals' focus, more so when the FIA Masters Pre-'78 Historic F1 champion coolly lapped more than a second inside his outright lap record to annex pole. His 1m17.079s was nine tenths better than Phil Keen's stout effort in Jon Minshaw's ex-Sid Taylor/Denny Hulme example.

Keen was quicker away, but Padmore tracked him through Fordwater and blasted inside through the kink. Olly Bryant went with them, with Portugal's Pedro Macedo Silva in another Lola tucked in behind, ahead of the tubeframe cars of Chris Jolly (Cooper T61) and Chris


J BLOXHAM/LAT

HWM driver Woolmer charged from 24th on the grid to third in the Peter Collins Trophy



Nick Adams (Ferguson P99) heads Barry Cannell (Cooper T51) in the Brooks Trophy



HAWKINS

Young leads Whitmore Cup gaggle as Wood gets sideways



J BLOXHAM/LAT

Hibberd on his way to victory in the Derek Bell Cup

Drake (McLaren M1B), with Tony Sinclair threatening in Grant Reid's T70 when Michiel Smits's Lola speared off the track approaching Woodcote.

Despite a massive impact he did not have to be cut from the mangled monocoque, and he was subsequently airlifted to hospital where body scans revealed a broken vertebra and rib. The result was declared at two laps, and subsequent races shortened, to allow for repairs to the tyre barrier.

Whitmore Trophy poleman Richard Meaden relished a Lotus Cortina fight with his hero Steve Soper, whose retirement on lap one left Meaden clear. Mark Sumpter kept him in sight, but John Young completed a Cortina clean sweep in a classic battle with Andrew Banks's Alfa GTA, Tony Wood's BMW and lion-hearted Mini Cooper S trio Nick Swift, Rob Huff and Jason Stanley.

As the sun set on a challenging day, Sam Hancock thundered to victory in the Peter Collins Trophy finale aboard Ben Shuckburgh's Cunningham C4R. Steve Boultbee Brooks bounded his Aston Martin DB3S to second, having calmly repelled Conrad Ulrich's Maserati 300S, the Jaguar C-types of Fred Wakeman and Nigel Webb, and Martin Hunt's Frazer Nash Le Mans Rep, only for Richard Woolmer to appear on his tail in Matthew Collings's HWM-Cadillac.

Suppressed to 24th by a misfire in qualifying, young Woolmer launched it like a dragster, then made the save of the event after clipping the grass at the kink before St Mary's. Undeterred, with headlights ablaze, he finished half a second shy of Boultbee Brooks. "I'm speechless," beamed Woolmer.

RESULTS

ALAN MANN TROPHY FOR FORD GT40s (39 LAPS) 1 David Cuff/Steve Soper 55m43.593s (99.94mph); 2 Tony Wood/Martin Stretton +22.505s; 3 Joaquin Folch-Rusinol/Simon Hadfield; 4 Roger Wills/Tim Harvey; 5 Michael Gans/Andy Wolfe; 6 Craig Davies/Henry Mann. **Fastest lap** Frank Stipplier 1m21.607s (104.99mph). **Pole position** Kenny Brack. **Starters** 25.

GERRY MARSHALL TROPHY PART 1 (10 LAPS) 1 Chris Ward (Rover SD1) 15m06.407s (94.52mph); 2 John Young (Ford Capri) +9.683s; 3 Nigel Garrett (Chevrolet Camaro); 4 David Clark (Chevrolet Camaro); 5 Grahame Bryant (Chevrolet Camaro); 6 Kerry Michael (Ford Escort RS2000). **FL** Ward 1m28.698s (96.59mph). **P** Oliver Bryant (Camaro). **S** 25.

PART 2 (28 LAPS) 1 G Bryant/O Bryant 46m04.966s (86.76mph); 2 Ward/Gordon Shedden +8.928s; 3 Young/Steve Soper; 4 Michael/Chris Sanders; 5 Ric Wood/Adam Morgan (Ford Capri); 6 Adam Brindle/Nigel Greensall (Rover SD1); 7 Garrett/Stuart Graham; 8 Tim Harvey/Andrew Bruce (Rover SD1); 9 Timothy Morley/Anthony Reid (Triumph Dolomite Sprint); 10 Patrick Watts/Ian Cowley (Mazda RX7). **FL** Matt Neal (Chevrolet Camaro) 1m26.464s (99.09mph). **P** Ward. **S** 27.

BROOKS TROPHY (10 LAPS) 1 Barry Cannell (Cooper-Climax T51) 18m06.124s (78.88mph); 2 Nick Adams (Ferguson-Climax P99) +0.466s; 3 John Chisholm (Lotus-Climax 18); 4 Paul Smeeth (Lotus-Climax 18); 5 Tony Smith (Ferrari 246 Dino); 6 Barrie Baxter (BRM P25). **FL** Gregor Fisken (Ferrari 246 Dino) 1m27.953s (97.41mph). **P** Cannell. **S** 28.

DEREK BELL CUP (11 LAPS) 1 Andrew Hibberd (Brabham BT18) 26m26.953s (59.39mph); 2 Peter Thompson (Brabham BT21) +5.456s; 3 Jim Blockley (Chevron B17); 4 Simon Armer (March 703); 5 Marcus Mussa (Tecno); 6, Christoph Widmer (Brabham BT18A). **FL** Hibberd 1m25.572s (100.12mph). **P** Hibberd. **S** 26.

SF EDGE TROPHY (8 LAPS) 1 Duncan Pittaway (GN Curtiss) 15m10.150s (75.31mph); 2 Mathias Sielecki (Delage V12) +0.230s; 3 Julian Majzub (Sunbeam Indianapolis); 4 Mark Walker (Darracq); 5 Hughie Walker (GN Thunderbug); 6 John Polson (Hudson Super Six). **FL** Pittaway 1m50.392s (77.61mph). **P** Majzub. **S** 26.

GRAHAM HILL TROPHY (14 LAPS) 1 James Cottingham (Shelby Daytona Cobra) 24m41.341s (80.97mph); 2 Andrew Smith (Shelby Daytona Cobra) +0.504s; 3 Rob Hall (AC Cobra); 4 David Hart (AC Cobra); 5 Gary Pearson (Jaguar E-type); 6 Bradley Ellis (Jaguar E-type). **FL** Cottingham 1m23.981s (102.02mph). **P** Cottingham. **S** 28.

PARNELL CUP (7 LAPS) 1 Will Nuthall (Cooper-Bristol T23) 11m01.223s (90.70mph); 2 Eddie McGuire (Cooper-Bristol T20) +6.016s; 3 Mark Valvekens (Gordini Type 16); 4 David Wenman (Cooper-Bristol T20); 5 Chris Phillips (Cooper-Bristol T23); 6 Barry Wood (Cooper-Bristol T20). **FL** Nuthall 1m32.059s (93.07mph). **P** Nuthall. **S** 20.

WHITMORE CUP (7 LAPS) 1 Richard Meaden (Lotus Cortina) 10m53.594s (91.76mph); 2 Mark Sumpter (Lotus Cortina) +4.182s; 3 John Young (Lotus Cortina); 4 Andrew Banks (Alfa Romeo GTA); 5 Nick Swift (Mini Cooper S); 6 Tony Wood (BMW 1800). **FL** Meaden 1m32.452s (92.67mph). **P** Meaden. **S** 29.

BRUCE McLAREN TROPHY (2 LAPS) 1 Nick Padmore (Lola-Chevrolet T70 Spyder) 2m57.616s (96.48mph); 2 Phil Keen (Lola-Chevy T70 Spyder) +1.216s; 3 Oliver Bryant (Lola-Chevy T70 Spyder); 4 Pedro Macedo Silva (Lola-Chevy T70 Spyder); 5 Chris Drake (McLaren-Chevy M1B); 6 Chris Jolly (Cooper-Chevy T61). **FL** Padmore 1m23.130s (103.06mph). **P** Padmore. **S** 25.

PETER COLLINS TROPHY (7 LAPS) 1 Sam Hancock (Cunningham C4R) 10m59.216s (90.98mph); 2 Steve Boultbee Brooks (Aston Martin DB3S) +26.089s; 3 Richard Woolmer (HWM-Cadillac); 4 Conrad Ulrich (Maserati 300S); 5 Fred Wakeman (Jaguar C-type); 6 Nigel Webb (Jaguar C-type). **FL** Hancock 1m32.839s (92.29mph). **P** Hancock. **S** 24.

The man who bought and sold Renault F1

Gerard Lopez swooped when Renault wanted out of F1 team ownership, then passed it back when the going got tough. But why stay on there?

By Ian Parkes, Chief F1 Correspondent

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He is the businessman who bought a Formula 1 team and sold it six years later, firstly taking up the reins from, and then ultimately handing them back to, the French car manufacturing giant Renault. For Gerard Lopez, were they both simply hard-headed business deals, or was there any underlying emotion to the transactions, given the passion that often resides in individuals when it comes to F1?

The 44-year-old from Luxembourg is no ordinary businessman, not when you consider what he has achieved over the years after graduating from the University of Miami. With a bachelor's degree in management information systems and operational management, majoring in mathematics and statistics, Lopez has started up, run and then sold numerous companies. He knows what he's doing.

F1 proved a tougher nut to crack. Lopez was already heavily involved with the Gravity Sport Management programme – among whose drivers was Romain Grosjean – when he acquired a 75 per cent stake in Renault F1 in December 2009. The entrepreneur in Lopez took full advantage of an F1 that was in a state of flux, given the crippling global credit crisis that led to the exits of BMW, Toyota and Honda over just 11 months. Renault was also still recovering from the damaging effects of the 2008 Singapore Grand Prix crash controversy, which, when it was revealed a year later, led to the team being given a two-year disqualification from F1, suspended for two years, by the FIA. Lopez saw an opportunity and he went for it, citing F1 as an "excellent business-to-business platform".

At the time, he claimed "the business opportunities in F1 lie very rarely in making money out of your team; they should lie in making money out of the business platform that you have."

Here was Lopez taking an alternative, modern-day approach to F1. He believed with his business acumen and connections that he could use the team as a platform to take his companies into emerging markets such as the Middle East and Asia.

"I have always understood there are three sides to Formula 1 – entertainment, sport and business," says Lopez. "Very few public events, forget even sports, combine so efficiently those three aspects. So buying into Renault was never like a normal business deal. We knew we were not investing in an equity deal, but in a platform. We had been looking at platforms to promote not a brand, but a sense of relationships."

Via his investment management company Genii Capital, there were initial talks with Sauber about taking a stake in the Swiss team prior to being approached by Renault.

"We ended up buying a team that was the best possible you could buy at the time because just a few years before they had been world champions. That was still in their DNA," he says. "And I'm not just saying this, but being a genuine motorsport enthusiast it was obviously an emotional deal too."

Lopez is adamant he was never "misty eyed or naive" about what he was getting into, but it became apparent towards the end of 2010, his first season of involvement, that F1 was costing more than anticipated as he was forced to increase the spend. Despite speculation that Lopez was looking to exit F1, he ended up acquiring the remaining 25 per cent stake from Renault in December 2010 as the manufacturer focused on its engine programme.

"My first miniature race car was a Fittipaldi Lotus. My biggest hero was Senna"

In 2011, what was once Renault F1 Team became Lotus Renault GP. That brought a somewhat tawdry political battle over the Lotus name.

"I was surprised it all became complex," says Lopez, "as there was an agreed deal on the table beforehand, but such is the world of F1. In any case, it was a fantastic adventure. My very first miniature race car was a Fittipaldi Lotus, and my first, and to this day biggest, hero was Ayrton Senna in a Lotus-Renault." »



XPB IMAGES

What also caught Lopez unawares was how his planned business model failed to attain the footing he had hoped for from the outset. The global credit crisis, and the disappearance of the three manufacturers was, in fact, the beginning of a general global decline in motorsport from a business perspective.

"What happened was the economic reality caught up with the sport, including us," says Lopez. "What looked like a business plan that would not be easy, but manageable over time, turned out to be a challenge. We thought we would get people interested because F1 is one of the greatest spectacles in the world.

"It turned out that either people were slowly moving away from motorsport, or just their budgets weren't what they used to be. I wouldn't call it a reality check, a surprise, but it essentially meant we had to make a number of decisions, and some of them were good, others bad."

Lopez is rightly proud of the fact that he managed to introduce key, household-name sponsors into F1 such as Microsoft, Unilever and Coca-Cola, the last via its Burn energy drink. On track, through the first four seasons of Lopez's ownership, the Enstone-based team performed respectably enough, with fifth in the constructors' championship in 2010 and '11, before improving to fourth in '12 and '13.

Convincing Kimi Raikkonen to return to F1 in 2012, following his two-year hiatus, was a coup, resulting in 15 podiums, with wins in Abu Dhabi '12 and Australia at the start of '13. Lopez's 2012, though, was also severely hampered by a serious illness only those closest to him were aware of at the time, meaning his eye was not entirely on the ball.

Behind the scenes, there lurked financial issues, with Raikkonen embroiled in a salary dispute with Lotus through 2013 that played a part in his decision to quit with two races remaining to undergo back surgery. There was also a problem-plagued investment deal with a company known as Quantum Motorsports that ultimately failed to materialise.

All the while, lurking in the background as 2014 loomed, was the introduction of the current power-unit formula that has effectively become a financial black hole for independent teams. It was at this stage that Lopez's enthusiasm started to wane.

"At a time when people were saying we had to reduce costs, to do this, that and the other, suddenly a new engine comes in," adds a frustrated Lopez. "You can criticise it or not, and I don't because of what it does from a technology perspective. At the end of the day I'm a technologist so I appreciate innovation, and therefore the new engine. But to do that without having thought about the cost was just suicidal.

"This was happening at the same time as people were struggling. Suddenly, in comes this engine that costs — with everything in, the packaging, and so on — $50 million. That was a big shock. How that happened, without putting a lid on it, I don't know. If you see what is being done now, it should have been done back then, in terms of saying, 'It's too expensive, we have to do something about it.'"

"For F1 to do a new engine without having thought about cost was suicidal"

It resulted in a lot of campaigning from Lopez, along with Sauber team principal Monisha Kaltenborn and Force India deputy team boss Bob Fernley, for a fairer distribution of F1's revenues from commercial rights holders Bernie Ecclestone and CVC Capital Partners. The request was ultimately denied, resulting in Sauber and Force India taking their complaint to the EU Competitions Commission.

What he considers to be F1's blinkered approach to its financial woes has left Lopez shaking his head. "The resistance of F1 as a whole to recognise there are issues with funding the sport, and just not doing anything about it, that's been the biggest shock for me," he says. "That is also essentially what brought us to do the deal with Renault. We ended up strongly believing that at this stage F1 is a manufacturer sport, that you are better off being a manufacturer.

"There are so many divergent interests because of the financial competition; it is a sport that is dominated by brains. I



understand somebody protects what they have, and doesn't want anyone else to want it. But some of the internal battles, how every team looks after itself rather than the sport, I don't understand."

No longer prepared to bang his head against a brick wall, to cut costs and staff further as the financial implications of the power unit hit hard, Lopez re-entered negotiations with Renault. This time, though, it was as a seller, and not a buyer, with the protracted deal taking longer than anticipated.

That had implications as Lotus was taken to the High Court by numerous creditors seeking payments, not least Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs. Certain bills went unpaid, such as for the hospitality unit at Suzuka, resulting in the staff being locked out and forced to forage from friends and rivals up and down the pitlane. The car also went undeveloped as Lopez was unwilling to prop up a team he was looking to sell, while Renault had no intention of throwing money into something it had not yet bought. Finally, come late last year, a deal was struck, with Renault taking up a 65 per cent stake and Lopez understood to have held on to a minority shareholding.

It means Lopez still has a role to play in F1, but with more power to his elbow, courtesy of Renault's involvement, rather than being an independent small fish swimming in a shark-infested pool. But this was no head-versus-heart battle for Lopez as he wanted to do the right thing for all the staff at Enstone.

"The choice was to do one of two things," says Lopez. "We either became a much smaller private team, got rid of 200 people, competed from time to time to be in the top 10 and Q3, but with that no longer being an expectation, or sell up to someone that would see the team become big again.

"Cutting the workforce by 40 per cent would have cut all the technical output, all the parts, which means you are not only cutting the staff but everything else with it. It brings down the budget to something you cover with your revenues, but I have to say it's not in our culture to just show up. It wasn't what we wanted to do. Financially speaking, it made all the sense in the world, but it was difficult to stomach thinking about just showing up and being there. It was not so easy to accept that. Instead, we kept the people and fought for them, and it is the main reason why Renault picked Enstone.

"We provided a significant basis on which to build what they wanted to have — a championship-winning squad. Renault is the perfect partner, given its history with the place."



XPB IMAGES

Raikkonen took a first F1 win for Lopez at the 2012 Abu Dhabi Grand Prix



DUNBAR/LAT

Why F1 is still viable

GERARD LOPEZ IS determined to prove to the business world at large that Formula 1 remains an important medium for brand promotion and sponsorship. For the most part, Lopez succeeded in using F1 as a business-to-business platform, even though he wasn't able to find a title sponsor to financially support his team.

In his new role, after retaining a minority shareholding in the Renault team, Lopez will focus "on strategic discussions, commercial deals, but also participating in the management side of things".

With a major manufacturer behind the team, Lopez feels that "obviously opens very different avenues" and it is his responsibility to explore those.

"We tried to invest to have a competitive team, thinking the market would respond to that, would bring in a title sponsor," says Lopez. "Unfortunately Formula 1 hasn't seen a big title sponsor for quite a while now, but I'm sure it will come back.

"It's a question of aligning the sport in terms of what the company wants, and if you do that then it is still an amazing platform. And one of the things Renault is going to be working on, and I'm going to be working on with Renault, is passing the message that this platform is very up to date. But you need to pass the message. People don't know about it if you don't show or say it, which is very important."

Lopez claims that Renault chairman and CEO Carlos Ghosn wanted to get this right from the off before entering F1.

"Carlos was quite adamant Renault came in the right way," says Lopez. "He was willing to invest, but he also wanted the respect that comes with Renault being the largest manufacturer in F1.

"He was convinced by the idea of doing it, but he wanted to be convinced by the way of doing it, not just from his perspective, but from Renault's perspective.

"It was never a 'one day I know, the next I don't', it was more a case of 'I want to do this'."



Renault RS01 was fast and reliable

V8 on Kubica's return

24 HOUR SERIES
MUGELLO 12 HOURS (I)
MARCH 18-19
ROUND 2/7

WHILE THE RETURN TO RACING OF ROBERT Kubica had F1 followers typing 24 Hour series organiser 'Creventic' into an internet search, funnily enough it was his old grand prix marque Renault that earned a surprise win in the Mugello 12 Hours with V8 Racing's RS01.

The Dutch V8 squad, a leading contender in the Renault Sport Trophy and International GT Open, was one of five teams properly in contention when the opening four-hour blast finished on Friday evening. Versatile Italo-Dutchman Nicky Pastorelli, sharing with Max and Luc Braams as well as ace Portuguese amateur Miguel Ramos, was almost empty of fuel when the eight-hour 'meat' of the race kicked off on Saturday so stopped almost immediately from the lead, which meant the Scuderia Cameron Glickenhaus SCG was fighting it out with Optimum Motorsport's Audi.

Gearbox problems dropped the quasi-prototype SCG, driven by 1999 Marlboro Masters F3 poleman Thomas Mutsch, Andreas Simonsen and Jeff Westphal, out of the race, and now Optimum – with Joe Osborne leading the driver line-up – looked in the box seat. That was until Flick Haigh coasted the R8 LMS into the pits with no gears. After a fix, Ryan Ratcliffe rejoined the race still in second place, but not long after he had a repeat of the problem. The Welshman stopped on the track, and perhaps predictably was cannoned into by an unsighted Porsche that was in an emormous clump of traffic, putting both cars out.

In the meantime, the steady Hofor Racing Mercedes, led by Christiaan Frankenhout and Kenneth Heyer, had been delayed with brake and wheel issues, consigning the old warhorse to second place, four laps behind the Renault. The other Saturday contender, the Danish-crewed Massive Motorsport Aston Martin, lost time early on with a blowout.

That promoted the Grasser Lamborghini to third. Christian Engelhart had planted the Huracan on pole and Rolf Ineichen led early on Friday under pressure from Rory Butcher in the MJC Ferrari, while Robert Renauer in Herberth Motorsport's Porsche took third from Kubica, who sustained suspension damage to the MP Sports Mercedes and shortly afterwards lost over an hour in the pits having it repaired. The Merc, owned and driven by WRC ace Martin Prokop, retired on Saturday with gearbox problems but not before Kubica lapped extremely quickly.

Contact between Ineichen and Butcher allowed Renauer into the lead, only for drivetrain failure to put the Porsche out. The Ferrari retired with engine dramas, while the Lambo lost time with a pit fire and penalty.


MP Mercedes didn't last for Kubica

RESULTS

1 Nicky Pastorelli/Max Braams/Luc Braams/Miguel Ramos (Renault RS01 FGT3), 345 laps; 2 Kenneth Heyer/Christiaan Frankenhout/Michael Kroll/Chantal Kroll/Roland Eggimann (Mercedes SLS AMG GT3), -4 laps; 3 Christian Engelhart/Rolf Ineichen/Marc Ineichen/Adrian Amstutz (Lamborghini Huracan GT3); 4 Patrice Lafargue/Paul Lafargue/Gabriel Abergel/Sacha Bottemanne (Mercedes); 5 Mike Verschuur/Harrie Kolen/Erik van Loon (Renault); 6 Casper Elgaard/Kristian Poulsen/Roland Poulsen/Nicolai Sylvest (Aston Martin Vantage GT3).



It was a Red Bull bluewash in Albert Park (in V8s, anyway)

S BLOXHAM/LAT

Van Gisbergen takes a triple

V8 SUPERCARS
MELBOURNE (AUS)
MARCH 18-20

NO ONE HAD ANY ANSWER TO Triple Eight's Holdens in the Albert Park V8 Supercar support races.

The Red Bull Commodores of Shane van Gisbergen and Jamie Whincup shared the victories, van Gisbergen taking his first wins since joining the team at the start of the season. To add fuel to the fire, the 'third' T8 Holden of Craig Lowndes shared in the spoils, giving the team two rare 1-2-3 podium sweeps. In mixed conditions, no other driver looked able to consistently challenge the trio, the opposition's only consolation being that the races do not count for championship points.

The only true challenge looked likely to come from Mark Winterbottom. The current V8 Supercar Champion went within 0.02s of pushing Whincup off pole, but his hopes of continuing his 2015 win streak ended at the first corner of the first race, after contact with fellow Ford driver Fabian Coulthard. Chaz Mostert took advantage to take third in that race, and it took Coulthard until the final, Sunday race to put a non-T8 entry onto the podium. His cause was somewhat aided when Whincup had a propshaft break when well-placed.

Garth Tander took fourth overall for the Holden Racing Team, ahead of Mostert and HRT's James Courtney. Michael Caruso was the best of the Nissan drivers in eighth overall, while Scott Pye showed that DJR Team Penske's resurgence is not restricted to Coulthard with some strong results.

PHIL BRANAGAN

RESULTS

Race 1 1 Shane van Gisbergen (Holden Commodore), 11 laps in 26m24.0911s; 2 Jamie Whincup (Holden), +0.5208s; 3 Chaz Mostert (Ford Falcon); 4 Fabian Coulthard (Holden); 5 Scott Pye (Ford); 6 Garth Tander (Holden). **Race 2 1 van Gisbergen**, 12 laps in 23m48.6448s; 2 Craig Lowndes (Holden), +3.7758s; 3 Whincup; 4 Coulthard; 5 Mostert; 6 Tander. **Race 3 1 Whincup**, 12 laps in 23m47.6194s; 2 van Gisbergen, +6.6025s; 3 Lowndes; 4 Tander; 5 Coulthard; 6 Mostert. **Race 4 1 van Gisbergen**, 12 laps in 23m53.8276s; 2 Coulthard, +1.2666s; 3 Lowndes; 4 James Courtney (Holden); 5 Michael Caruso (Nissan Altima); 6 Tander.

Johnson denies Harvick at finish

NASCAR SPRINT CUP
FONTANA (USA)
MARCH 20
ROUND 5/36

JIMMIE JOHNSON AGAIN underlined what makes him a special driver by snatching a victory that should have belonged to Kevin Harvick in California.

Harvick, who won the previous race at Phoenix, had the superior car throughout the race and had looked destined to win for the 33rd time. But he will look back in anger, pain and frustration as Kyle Busch's crash with two laps left sent the race into overtime and the result into doubt.

A week earlier, Harvick was in a similar situation but had survived. It looked like the same this would happen this time, even though he made the opposite strategy call by electing to pit for fresh tyres ahead of overtime and fell behind Denny Hamlin in the pitlane.

At the restart, Harvick's Stewart Haas Chevrolet regained the lead and victory was back in sight. But Johnson had other ideas. He may not have had the pace of Harvick during the race, but here was his chance and, like the predator he is, he took it with aplomb by diving up the inside in his Hendrick Chevy.

The win was the 77th of his career, his sixth at Fontana and his second of the season so far.

Hamlin finished third behind Harvick, and ahead of Joey Logano and Ricky Stenhouse Jr, while Busch and Martin Truex Jr will rue missed chances.

Johnson might have rued too. But he didn't miss.

RESULTS

1 Jimmie Johnson (Chevrolet SS), 205 laps in 2h59m17s; 2 Kevin Harvick (Chevy), +0.772s; 3 Denny Hamlin (Toyota Camry); 4 Joey Logano (Ford Fusion); 5 Ricky Stenhouse Jr (Ford); 6 Chase Elliott (Chevy); 7 Carl Edwards (Toyota); 8 AJ Allmendinger (Chevy); 9 Brad Keselowski (Ford); 10 Jamie McMurray (Chevy).
Chase grid 1 Johnson, 2 wins/184 points; 2 Harvick, 1/195; 3 Hamlin, 1/170; 4 Keselowski, 1/142; 5 Edwards, 0/171; 6 Kyle Busch, 0/170; 7 Logano, 0/165; 8 Kurt Busch, 0/148; 9 Dale Earnhardt Jr, 0/145; 10 Austin Dillon, 0/139; 11 Martin Truex Jr, 0/127; 12 McMurray, 0/125; 13 Aric Almirola, 0/120; 14 Stenhouse, 0/119; 15 Matt Kenseth, 0/113; 16 Elliott, 0/110.



Johnson got to stand with a large bell

KINRADE/LAT

IN BRIEF

AUSTRALIAN GT

Craig Baird (Mercedes), Nathan Morcom (McLaren) and James Koundouris (Audi) all inherited victories at Albert Park after the on-the-road winners were given post-race seeding time penalties. One of those to lose a win was Matt Solomon (Mercedes) although he picked up the other victory when Tony Quinn was excluded for triggering a multi-car crash. Frequent safety-car interventions affected much of the racing.

AUSSIE CARRERA CUP

Youngster Matt Campbell won the opening Carrera Cup race at Albert Park but Alex Davison dominated after that, the former champion taking his first wins in the category since 2012. Nick McBride took second overall from Steven Richards, while Campbell dropped back after an off-track moment in a slippery race two.

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES

Austin Dillon claimed victory at Fontana in a race that had overtones of the 1982 Monaco Grand Prix. Kyle Busch led onto the final lap, only to run low on fuel, allowing Joe Gibbs Racing team-mate Daniel Suarez in front. Suarez in turn ran dry, so Busch – now with a puncture – moved back in front. Finally Dillon surged his Richard Childress Chevrolet around the outside of Busch at the final turn, although Busch tried to put him in the wall. Busch finished second from Darrell Wallace Jr and series leader Suarez.

SUPER TC2000

Argentina's leading tin-top series kicked off in Patagonia at Trelew (founded by Welsh settlers in 1886), where Renault's Emiliano Spataro (below) claimed pole aboard his Fluence and led throughout. Norberto Fontana (Chevrolet Cruze) nibbled at the lead at the beginning but ended up clinging on to second place, as Gabriel Werner (Peugeot 408) tried to wrest the spot from the former Sauber F1 driver until Werner retired towards the end. That led to up-and-coming Javier Merlo securing third in his Fiat Linea.



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Accidents taint Goodwood meeting

TWO SERIOUS ACCIDENTS MARRED the 74th Members' Meeting at Goodwood last Sunday.

In the day's opening race, the Brooks Trophy for grand prix cars of the 1954-60 era, Stephen Bond's Lotus 18 was tipped into a series of cartwheels after contact with Richard Wilson's sliding Cooper. The Lotus ended up dropping down into the pedestrian tunnel opposite the pits.

No one in the tunnel was harmed, and a spectator assisted Bond from the car.

Bond is believed to have suffered a broken collarbone, but otherwise escaped serious injury.

Later in the day, Dutch racer Michiel Smits was airlifted to hospital after his Lola T70 Spyder plunged off the track at the high-speed Woodcote Corner during the Bruce McLaren Trophy for Can-Am and Group 7 prototypes raced up to 1966.

It is thought that debris either hit Smits or forced him to take avoiding action, resulting in the car leaving the track. The front of the T70 was crushed and Smits was airlifted to hospital after marshals worked to extract him from it. A family statement said Smits suffered two broken vertebrae and a broken rib.

A Goodwood statement said: "Michiel Smits was taken to the nearest trauma centre, where his condition was stabilised. He spent the night in hospital with family members."

The accidents have brought the circuit's safety into focus. Can-Am cars are now capable of lapping at over 110mph, faster than the F1 lap record before racing went on hiatus in 1966.

The two delays understandably affected the event timetable and the final three races were reduced to 10-minute sprints. The last one, the Parnell Cup, ended in rapidly failing light.

Another Goodwood statement, issued on Monday, said: "Goodwood reviews all procedures after every event including health and safety. In conjunction with the relevant motor sport bodies, we will be reviewing the issues raised at the 74th Members' Meeting to ensure Goodwood continues to hold safe events."

Above: Smits spent the night in hospital after crashing his Lola T70 heavily at Woodcote

Right: Contact from Wilson's Cooper sent Bond flying in Lotus 18 before landing in tunnel







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BRITISH GT

McLaren picks young Scots

SCOTTISH SINGLE-SEATER ACES CIARAN HAGGERTY and Sandy Mitchell will graduate into the British GT Championship this season to spearhead development of McLaren's new 570S GT4 challenger.

BRDC F4 graduate Haggerty and MSA Formula race winner Mitchell will join the factory-blessed Black Bull Ecurie Ecosse team to race the new 570S GT4, which was unveiled during the British GT media day last week.

The new car runs a 3.8-litre twin-turbo V8 engine and will be the first homologated GT4 car to run with a carbon fibre tub, which is carried over from the baby McLaren's road-going version. The McLaren factory has developed the car in partnership with CRS GT.

Ecurie Ecosse will field the GT4 entry for the full season, helping McLaren in development of the car before its general release later this year.

Nineteen-year-old Haggerty, the 2014 Scottish Formula Ford 1600 champion, was fifth in BRDC F4 last year while Mitchell was seventh in the MSA Formula points with two race wins in his maiden car-racing campaign. Both are on the Ecurie Ecosse Young Driver scheme. Mitchell will become the youngest driver ever to race in British GT, having turned 16 this month.

"This is a huge break for both my career and Sandy's," Haggerty said. "It's been a hard winter putting a GT deal together but to get a chance to run with a manufacturer like McLaren with a new programme is a dream.

"I've not tested the GT4 yet, but I did do eight laps in the 650S GT3 last year. It's a very different driving style to single-seaters, getting used to the braking and the extra dive and roll of the car due to the weight difference, and also using systems like ABS and traction control.

"Sandy's a top driver and between us we'll make one of the strongest pairings in GT4. McLaren wants this season to be all about development, so there's not huge pressure, but we both want to perform to our best and fight for wins."

McLaren has also launched the 570S Sprint, which is aimed mainly at the track-day market.

BRITISH GT

Delays leave teams without Porsches for opener

SIMPSON MOTORSPORT AND Lanan Racing will start the British GT season at Brands Hatch on April 16-17 with Ginettas after delays in receiving their new Porsche Cayman GT4 Clubsport cars.

Autosport understands that delays in production of the new Cayman, which is being built by Porsche AG and prepared for homologation by Manthey Racing, has led to delivery times being pushed back from their original March date. Teams have now been told to expect their cars by late April, which falls just before British GT's second round at Rockingham.

Lanan has entered a single Cayman for Joey Foster and Alex Reed, but has rented the former Fox Motorsport Ginetta G55 GT4 for the first round. Simpson has rented a G55 from the Ginetta factory for Nick Jones and Scott Malvern to race.

Porsche AG was unavailable for comment.

BRITISH GT

GT3 SAFE DESPITE GROWING GT4 FIELD

BRITISH GT BOSS Stephane Ratel insists that the series will never become a GT4-only category, despite the class's entries outweighing GT3 for the first time this season.

Championship bosses released a 33-car entry list last week, including works-backed entries from Ginetta, Lotus, Aston Martin, Toyota and McLaren in the GT4 class.

Ratel said he was pleased with domestic GT4 growth, but added that GT3 would always have a future in Britain.

"It's satisfying that GT4 has grown and I think we just reached a critical number with it," he said. "When you have 12 cars suddenly a class becomes appealing and interest grows, especially when people see new manufacturers coming in with nice cars.

"But British GT will always have GT3. We are a market-driven form of racing as we are customer racing. Customers race what they want and what they can afford.

"Perhaps GT3 is becoming more international with Blancpain and big races like the Nurburgring 24 Hours, Dubai and Abu Dhabi. GT3 is the only place now where young drivers can get manufacturer deals, and GT4 is a perfect feeder as it lets drivers learn at a lower budget."



RADICAL CHALLENGE

Superbiker Guintoli goes Radical

2014 WORLD SUPERBIKE CHAMPION Sylvain Guintoli will make his four-wheeled racing debut in the Radical Challenge at Snetterton last weekend.

The Frenchman expressed an interest in car racing last year and tested the Radical RS1 at Bedford Autodrome, but clashing Superbike commitments meant Guintoli has had to wait for his chance.

He will share the Radical Works Team-entered SR3 RSX with development driver James Abbott in a 32-car field, and tested the car at Brands Hatch last Tuesday.

"For some years I have been a bit of a petrolhead and the growing attraction of experiencing racing on four wheels is finally materialising," said Guintoli. "This is the perfect way for me to discover a new world."

Guintoli, who competed in MotoGP in 2007 and '08, also contested a part-season in the British Superbike championship in '09 but has never raced at Snetterton before.


READ

BRITCAR

Silverstone grid could exceed 25 cars

THE BIGGEST BRITCAR ENTRY for several years is expected for the opening round of its Endurance Championship at Silverstone this weekend.

So far 23 entries have been lodged but this could rise further for the first round since James Tucker sold Britcar.

"I'm very excited," said Britcar boss Claire Hedley. "We have got 23 confirmed entries but I think it should be 25 or 26 by the weekend, which is absolutely amazing. It's been hard work but we believe Britcar is back.

"People wanted good tracks and one-day meetings and that's what we've done – I feel that listening to what they wanted made the difference and we've got lots of old customers coming back. People have seen the growth and wanted to be involved."

Hedley added that the variety of cars on the grid is strong. A Ferrari 458, McLaren MP4-12C, Lamborghini Huracan and BMW Z4 are among the GT3 cars that will take part.



WALKER

MINI CHALLENGE

Brother of BTCC champ to Minis

JAMES TURKINGTON WILL ENTER THE Mini Challenge this season for his first full season of mainland racing.

Turkington, the younger brother of two-time British Touring Car champion Colin, has signed to race a new Gen 3 F56 Challenge car with the EXcelR8 team and tested the car at Donington Park last week.

The 22-year-old has previous tin-top experience in Ireland in the Fiesta Zetec and SEAT Supercopa series but has only raced on English soil once, at Brands Hatch in 2013.

IN BRIEF



RIVETT EYES TITLE TILT WITH CLIO DEAL

Three-time Renault UK Clio Cup champion Paul Rivett will again compete in the series this year with WDE Motorsport. The 37-year-old, who enters his 12th year in the BTCC support series, finished fourth in the points in 2015 but is determined to add another title this season.

ADAM'S APRIL WEEKEND RUNAROUND

British GT champion Jonny Adam has declared that he will contest the opening round of the British GT Championship at Brands Hatch on April 16/17, despite his World Endurance and European Le Mans Series campaigns kicking off at Silverstone on the same weekend. Adam leads the TF Sport Aston Martin team.

SIBLING RIVALRY IN GT5 CHALLENGE

Brothers Ryan and Jonny Hadfield will race against each other in the Ginetta GT5 Challenge this year with their R&J Motorsport team. Ryan finished 13th in the category in 2015 while Jonny steps up from Ginetta Juniors.

FLORESCU STAYS PUT AT CARLIN

Romanian driver Petru Florescu will remain at Carlin for a second season in MSA Formula this year. He finished 11th in the standings in 2015 and completes Carlin's four-car line-up alongside James Pull, Devlin DeFrancesco and Max Fewtrell.

WEBSTER KEEN ON FULL MAX5 SEASON

Former British GT4 race winner Chris Webster returned to the Max5 Championship at Oulton Park last weekend and is planning to contest the whole season. He took two third places at Oulton.

HOLLYWOOD GOES TO FRANCORCHAMPS

The Beechdean Motorsport team will expand to run a second Aston Martin Vantage in the GT4 class for the final three rounds of this season's British GT Championship. Great British Bake Off star Paul Hollywood will join reigning class champion Jamie Chadwick in the car, starting with the Spa round.



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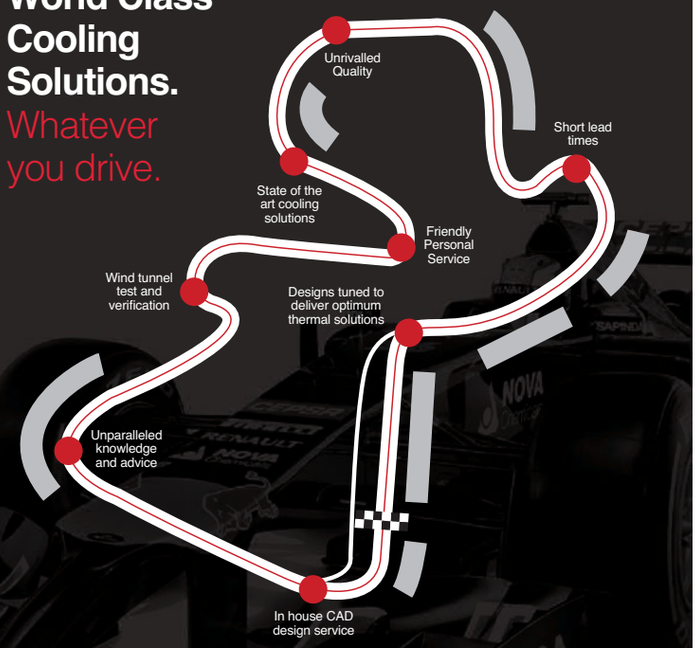

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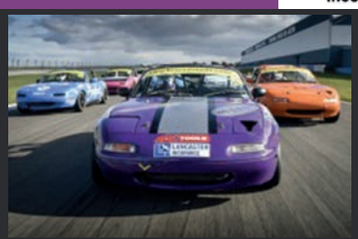







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Drama and delights at Goodwood

By Marcus Pye, the voice of club racing

@Autosport

DID ANYBODY ELSE ATTEND THE PHILLIP ISLAND Classic and Goodwood's 74th Members' Meeting? I love both, but am relieved that the latter trip was less arduous logistically, being just 65 miles (an hour and a half by car, not 22 hours in a plane, then a 90-mile road trip) from home. Probably just as well I don't live in Australia, with the unmissable Festival of Speed and Revival Meetings on the horizon.

Last weekend proved an emotional rollercoaster for me as lead commentator in the box atop Goodwood's pits. Presenting sensational action, calling races as they evolve, is a relentless challenge, a great privilege and massive buzz, but 'occupational hazards' riddle the territory. Ask the venerable Murray Walker, who has seen it all since the 1930s. Nothing silences the speaker like a shocking accident. Particularly when it unfolds in full view, with a plethora of potential outcomes, rather than on screen. The mercifully rare sight of a 1960s Grand Prix car cartwheeling — even before I realised that somebody I knew was aboard — sent me very quiet.

I met Stephen Bond through the HGPCA and, being familiar with his ex-Stirling Moss '61 Monaco GP-winning Lotus 18 in Rob Walker Racing's dark-blue livery, have to confess that I did not immediately associate him with the ex-UDT Laystall 18/21 in which he competed this time. Having seen the pale-green car tripped by a spinner, barrel-roll, vault, cartwheel than disappear from view, I feared for more than Stephen's safety. It was with profound relief, therefore, that we learned of his great escape.

Later in the day, Dutch Lola T70 debutant Michiel Smits's shunt at Woodcote was a very different type of accident, albeit with an equally fortuitous outcome. Whether the Shelby Mustang graduate was hit by the detached front-cover panel from the ex-Hugh Dibley T70 of Marc Devis — from whom, ironically, he had bought his car — or went off dodging it I've been unable to ascertain. Considering the impact, evidenced by the damage it inflicted to the hefty chassis, Smits can thank its strength. Both escapees should buy lottery tickets this week.

Now is not the time for kneejerk reactions, but as is routine following major incidents — even if Bond's was unprecedented, thus extremely unlikely to be repeated — the MSA will be investigating the circumstances and reviewing its risk assessments. While enthusiasts will not welcome changes at Goodwood, some will inevitably be demanded around the pedestrian tunnel and adjacent disabled viewing gallery.

Racing car design has progressed a very long way over the past 50 years. Indeed, 20 on from the tubular steel-framed Lotus and 15 from the steel-bulkheaded alloy-monocoque Lola sportscar, Formula 1 designers were constantly pushing the boundaries as the ground-effect phenomenon ramped up performance and loadings, dictating ever-stiffer chassis and components to a hitherto unimaginable level.

As the cars were assembling on the grid for Sunday's F1 demo, my brother Bill spotted Brabham (and McLaren F1 GTR) designer Gordon Murray mingling with enthusiasts on the pit balcony, and he graciously accepted the invitation to join us in the box. Our fascinating chat on air revealed that his iconic BT49 chassis — the ultimate in Cosworth DFV packaging? — was not only reinforced with carbonfibre some time before rivals used that material, but was also the first Brabham he'd penned in which he didn't fit. Without the necessity to accommodate Carlos Reutemann and John Watson (or Alfa Romeo engines), he could shrink-wrap the cockpit around jockey-sized Nelson Piquet. Before the arrival of Brazil's future world champion Gordon had driven them all.



LAT

STUCK'S SHELSLEY AUTO-REUNION

Eighty years after European hillclimb king Hans Stuck wowed the crowds at a very wet Shelsley Walsh in a shrieking supercharged 5.3-litre V16 Auto Union C-type, his son, 1970s F1 driver Hans-Joachim, is to drive the silver arrow at the venue's Classic Nostalgia event on July 16-17.

Stuck, 65, will pilot the 550bhp monster as centrepiece of a major Audi presence. The Sport Quattro in which 1983 World Rally Champion Hannu Mikkola covered the 1000-yard course in 29.51s in '86 is also returning.



J BLOXHAM/LAT

ABECASSIS RACES HWM-JAGUAR

Two great names were reunited at Goodwood on Sunday when Jonathan Abecassis raced the potent and agile HWM-Jaguar sportscar 'HWM 1' built by his grandfather George – who constructed the first HWMs with business partner John Heath – and debuted there in April 1956.

Abecassis finished 11th in the Peter Collins Trophy race. Evocatively, the Aston Martin DB3 in which Collins and Pat Griffith won the inaugural Goodwood 9 Hours in '52 finished 18th in the hands of Martin Melling.



EBREY

BRDC F4's big hitter

Lando Norris is unlikely to win the F4 title, but the spotlight will be on him at Snetterton this Sunday and Monday

By Stephen Lickorish, F4 Correspondent

@SDLickorish

There's one driver everyone in BRDC Formula 4 wants to beat this year. And that driver is not even a contender for the championship.

Much of the focus will be on Lando Norris, the reigning MSA Formula and Toyota Racing Series champion who heads into the season with Carlin as the benchmark.

But BRDC F4 is not the 16-year-old's main campaign in 2016. He will also compete in Formula Renault Eurocup with Josef Kaufmann Racing, and clashing dates mean he will be forced to miss two F4 rounds (that's six of the 24 races).

Norris feels it was a logical decision to compete in the British category's new Tatuus-Cosworth car alongside his European commitments. "It gives me more seat time," he says. "And it's a step up from Formula Renault — it's between F3 and Formula Renault — so it's a bit of a stepping stone to prepare for next year.

"The reason I'm doing it is because of the car. The aim is to see how I do this year and then I might do European F3 next year."

"It's exciting to work with Lando. He does everything he can to win"

It makes perfect sense that everything he does is to help him climb the single-seater ladder. BRDC F4's new car is equipped with a two-litre, 230bhp Cosworth motor, which puts it closer to F3 performance (hence the talks for the category to be rebadged British F3, but that's another story). It's therefore an ideal platform to prepare him for a switch to F3, a step that would have come too soon this season for the physically diminutive Norris.

Very few up-and-coming drivers have the luxury of competing in two unrelated series simultaneously. But Norris benefits from substantial financial support from his father. Type his name into Google and the first suggestion that appears is 'Lando Norris dad'.

"I'm lucky to have a dad like mine," acknowledges Norris. "It makes it slightly easier, but it doesn't mean I don't have to work as hard as the others — I work just as hard or harder.

"Some people view it in a bad way. There are always rumours about me and my dad hiring lots of tracks, but to be honest I haven't done that. We did a little bit last year, but this year I've only gone where the team has gone. It bothers me a bit because they think we can do what we want, but there are plenty of other people who do the same and we don't spend as much as others. I'm still focused on what I'm doing rather than caring what the others do."

It was certainly a widely heard argument last year that he should've won the MSA Formula title simply because of the amount of time he spent behind the wheel. Alongside his British campaign, he completed three race weekends each in the Italian and German Formula 4 championships, albeit in a completely different car.

But Norris is quick to point out that he didn't test at the majority of those European tracks beforehand and yet still registered a win and six other podiums. "At Spa I was slightly on the back foot, but I still managed to go fastest in practice even though it was my first time there and others had tested there previously," he says.

Norris is unable to quantify exactly how many days he spent testing last year. Alongside F4 machinery, he also completed mileage in Formula Renault and F3 cars. Regardless of the amount of mileage he did, he insists you still have to deliver in the races.

"I think my results show how good I am," he says, referring also to a plethora of karting titles, including the CIK-FIA World Championship in 2014. "In the whole of the MSA Formula season I never qualified outside of the top two, so I'm happy with that. I put pressure on myself to make sure I'm doing everything the best I can. That's all I'm trying to work for and you can't do any better than winning."

One person who has seen that determination to win first-hand is his Carlin engineer Stefan de Groot, a Formula Ford and F3 ace in his own right in the early 2000s. The Dutchman helped guide Norris to his MSA Formula success last year and will be assisting him again in BRDC F4.

"Lando is a winner, and he does everything he can to win," says de Groot. "In any game he plays he wants to win, and when he is in a car that motivation is even stronger. It's exciting and a pleasure to work with Lando. His driving skills are good and still improving, and he is increasingly aware of what happened in different laps and where laptime can be found.

"As a team we're always trying to make the car go faster, and Lando has an equal drive to find laptime. Working through the season, with all the racing and testing we do, »

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DUNLOP
MSA British Touring Car Championship

BrandsHatch


Norris operates at a level that belies his 16 years

EBREY

that drive makes all the difference. Lando is the youngest driver I've worked with, and if you compare him to drivers of similar age in similar cars he is at a very high level."

Despite his clear talent, the path to title glory last year wasn't always smooth for Norris – there were setbacks along the way. But de Groot says he didn't let them get him down. "Last year we had some very disappointing results," he says, "for example being crashed out of the lead in the last corner of the last lap [when Daniel Ticktum controversially punted him off at the hairpin at Croft].

"I could see the anger in his eyes, but he remained very cool and composed. He has learned to accept that because you race against other people, the results are not fully in your own hands."

That stands Norris in good stead, and more winning is certainly on his agenda in 2016 in what will be another hectic season. The dual campaigns mean he will spend a lot of time in the cockpit, but he's confident he can deal with the physical and mental demands this will bring.

"This year will be a busy year, but it's something I enjoy doing," he says. "After doing five weekends in the car in a row I do feel tired, but I'm not constantly flat-out and I still relax before the races. We make sure I don't do too many days in the car and make sure I'm ready for the next race."

De Groot says that process is helped by the meticulous preparation that Norris completes with his ADD Motorsports management team.

"ADD gives Lando the highest level of trackside support I have ever come across," he says. "They work together with the team and study things like the driving strategy for different corners, the physical and mental effort it takes Lando to drive the car, his fitness level, the way he warms up, what he eats... Everything is studied critically and improvements are made continuously."

With that level of preparation you can be sure Norris will be well placed for more good results in the opener at Snetterton this weekend. It's just they're unlikely to mark the start of an F4 title challenge – there's a bigger picture for his career.



New BRDC F4 season kicks off at Snetterton this weekend

EBREY


Norris beat Collard (right) to last year's MSA Formula title

EBREY/LAT

A rivalry resumed

LANDO NORRIS WILL be renewing his rivalry with MSA Formula runner-up Ricky Collard in BRDC F4 this year. But this time the pair will be team-mates.

Unsurprisingly, each one says he wants to beat the other, but it's clear that they get on well away from the track.

"I've got Ricky as a team-mate so I need to try to make sure I'm beating him as much as possible," says Norris. "I'm sure we'll be working well together. He wants to beat me and I want to beat him, but it's not like Hamilton and Rosberg! We are still friends and do our battling on the track."

Collard adds: "It's going to be interesting. We joke and we text each other all the time. I've got a lot of respect for him, but we're still going to be battling

"We joke and we text each other, but we're still going to fight hard"

hard. I don't expect him to help me out and I'm sure he wouldn't expect me to help him."

With Norris only doing a part-season, Collard appears to start as title favourite, which is a complete contrast to what he experienced last season.

"It's something [being favourite] a lot of people have said, and adds a bit of pressure," he reflects. "Last year I went in as an underdog – people didn't expect me to do as well as I did."

The duo will be challenged by fellow MSA Formula race winners Matheus Leist (Double R) and Enaam Ahmed (Douglas), but both are unsure who else they need to watch out for.

"We haven't done an official test so I'm not sure how fast the other drivers will be," says Norris. Collard simply says: "Lando is the only person I want to beat – he's my opposition."


EBREY/LAT



DONINGTON PARK
750MC MARCH 19

Demetriou and Evans open Enduro Series with victory

THE 750 MOTOR CLUB KICKED OFF its season with a busy and diverse schedule at Donington Park.

The meeting brought old favourites and new starts. Although it developed into a race of attrition for most competitors, the new Club Enduro series made an encouraging debut as Ben Demetriou/Jonathan Evans took the win in a Porsche 968 ahead of Andy Marston/Brett Evans (BMW) and Leighton Norris (Toyota). Class C was won by Liam Crilly/Jonny MacGregor in a Mazda RX-8 while Paul Aram/Rui Ferreira topped Class I in a Caterham 7.

Ian Allee won the first of the two Locost races on Saturday, taking the lead from Jack Coveney in the closing stages. In the second race, a five-car pile-up at Redgate caused a red flag. After the restart Danny Andrew, Tim Neat, Allee and Coveney fought to the end, and it was Andrew who took the spoils.

The Classic Stock Hatch race was suspended almost as quickly as it started when contact between Stuart Place and Ryan Clarke at Redgate brought out the red flag.

Matt Rozier (Peugeot 205) made a crucial move on the restart on the inside of Lee Scott's Ford Fiesta into Redgate, and he gradually stretched the gap between them until the finish.

The second race featured a reverse of that order, after Scott managed to take the lead on the opening lap. Matthew Stubington also had a good run from the sixth row of the grid, making it up to fourth in his Peugeot 205 before successfully challenging Andrew Thorpe (Citroen AX) for third on the final lap. But Stubington was later penalised 10 seconds for a jumped start and dropped to sixth.

Adam Shepherd took double victories in the M3 Cup. He won the first by overtaking Brian Chandler into Redgate and controlling the pace throughout. In the second encounter, Shepherd passed both Mark Anderson and Kevin Dengate at the start to claim his second win.

Luke Sedzikowski also made good progress in the second race, getting into third after Dengate ran wide into the first corner. The next lap Sedzikowski went for second, making use of Anderson's poor run out of Redgate to make the move stick into Hollywood.

Will Sharpe won the Super Cooper Cup class ahead of Stephen Rose and Caroline Gilbert. In the second race it was again Rose from Gilbert, with Martin Hathaway taking the final podium position.

James Bark won the first Clio 182 race, after a late challenge from George Williams going through Old Hairpin and McLeans. Bark was able to hold on, though, and Williams dropped back after an opportunist move from Philip Wright at the final chicane.

In the second race Bark was on a comeback drive after losing positions early on. He managed to salvage second place behind winner Patrick Fletcher and ahead of Don de Graaff.

Paul Smith claimed two Formula Vee wins in his AHS Dominator, finishing ahead of Graham Gant (WEV FV01) and Craig Pollard (Bears GAC) in the first stanza after controlling the pace from pole while Pollard battled with Gant. Smith was similarly comfortable in the

22 entries started the first ever Club Enduro Series race



Gearing heads Pither and Cowley in 750F

ALL PICS: JONES



second as John Hughes (Scarab Mk5) and James Harridge (Maverick Vee) completed the podium.

Matthew Howarth (Vauxhall Astra) beat Neil Stringfellow (Peugeot 206) by 8.9 seconds in the first Hot Hatch race but the second was a much closer affair, as race-one polesitter Tom Bell charged through the field in his Ford Fiesta to win by two seconds from Alistair Camp's similar car.

Citroen Saxos won both Stock Hatch encounters as Paul Jarvis and Ryan Polley claimed the honours. The pair engaged in a thoroughly entertaining dice throughout the second race before Polley came out on top.

Jason Williams (BMW M3) prevailed over Darren Howe (VW Golf) after making use of track position during the pitstop phase of the Armed Forces Challenge, as eventual third-place finisher Ed McKean lost the lead.

The Toyota MR2 grid was so large the entry had to split into three groups, each fighting out two races. In the first race Kristian White won ahead of Jim Davies. In the second Davies prevailed over Alex Knight and Cam Walton, while the finale was topped by White ahead of Ben Rowe.

RORY MITCHELL

Pither doubles up at Donington

ED PITHER TOOK A DOMINANT DOUBLE VICTORY in the opening 750 Formula races of the season at Donington, beating Robin Gearing in what was a thrilling duel throughout the first race.

While Gearing's Darvi led in the opening stages, the PRS of Pither soon challenged him for the lead and made a move stick into the final chicane. He then stretched the gap to 13.9 seconds at the flag.

Bill Cowley was also onto the back of Gearing at this stage, sizing him up into Redgate and through Hollywood. But his power disadvantage on the straights meant he was unable to pass.

In the second race, Gearing and Pither managed to get ahead of Cowley in the opening stages, but their battling cost them time and brought Cowley back into play. After Cowley bump-drafted Gearing down the Wheatcroft Straight, he made his move for second on the next lap, where he was able to slingshot past Gearing into the chicane.

Cowley defended the position with all his might, making his rather narrow Cowley MkIV as wide as he could. Gearing came close at the Old Hairpin on the final lap but it wasn't enough, which allowed Cowley to hold on to second.

There was worse to come for Gearing, since post-race scrutineering adjudged his rear wing to be too high. His subsequent disqualification promoted Peter Bove to third place.

Martin Depper won the 750 Trophy race ahead of Trefor Slatter and Tim Grigsby. Grigsby and Chris Hopkins traded third throughout the final five laps until Grigsby prevailed.

RESULTS

CLUB ENDURO SERIES (85 LAPS) 1 Ben Demetriou/ Jonathan Evans (Porsche 968) 2h00m39.54s (82.42mph); 2 Andy Marston/Brett Evans (BMW E46 M3) +57.70s; 3 Leighton Norris (Toyota Super GT); 4 Neville Anderson/ Allan Gibson (Toyota Super GT); 5 Steve Hewson/Neal Martin (Peugeot 106 GTi/VW Caddy); 6 Liam Crilly/Jonny MacGregor (Mazda RX-8). **Class winners** Anderson/Gibson; Crilly/ MacGregor; Paul Aram/Rui Ferreira (Caterham 7). **Fastest lap** Anderson/Gibson 1m19.66s (88.12mph). **Pole** Marston/Evans. **Starters** 22.

LOCOST CHAMPIONSHIP (10 LAPS) 1 Ian Allee 14m51.88s (78.71mph); 2 Danny Andrew +1.91s; 3 Richard Bradley; 4 Garry Brandon; 5 Steve Paddock; 6 Jack Coveney. **FL** Andrew 1m27.30s (80.41mph). **P** Coveney. **S** 35. **RACE 2 (7 LAPS) 1 Andrew 10m34.77s (77.41mph)**; 2 Tim Neat +0.45s; 3 Allee; 4 Coveney; 5 Lee Emm; 6 Ben Powney. **FL** Andrew 1m28.21s (79.58mph). **P** Emm. **S** 30.

CLASSIC STOCK HATCH CHAMPIONSHIP (8 LAPS) 1 Matt Rozier (Peugeot 205GTi) 11m44.16s (79.75mph); 2 Lee Scott (Ford Fiesta XR2i) +1.98s; 3 Edward Cooper (Vauxhall Nova GSi); 4 Matthew Stubington (Peugeot 205GTi); 5 Benjamin Leach (Ford Fiesta XR2i); 6 Paul Thorpe (Ford Fiesta XR2). **FL** Rozier 1m26.47s (81.18mph). **P** Scott. **S** 23. **RACE 2 (10 LAPS) 1 Scott 14m29.79s (79.79mph)**; 2 Rozier +0.16s; 3 Andrew Thorpe (Citroen AX GTi); 4 P Thorpe; 5 Cooper; 6 Stubington. **FL** Rozier 1m26.75s (80.92mph). **P** Scott. **S** 23.

M3 CUP/SUPER COOPER CUP (15 LAPS) 1 Adam Shepherd 19m42.54s (89.05mph); 2 Brian Chandler +3.09s; 3 Mark Anderson; 4 Gary Hufford; 5 Mathew Wallis; 6 Kevin Dengate. **CW** Will Sharpe (Mini Cooper S). **FL** Shepherd 1m17.68s (90.37mph). **P** Shepherd. **S** 16. **RACE 2 (10 LAPS) 1 Shepherd 13m09.62s (88.90mph)**; 2 Luke Sedzikowski +11.34s; 3 Anderson; 4 Dengate; 5 Hufford; 6 Peter Isherwood. **CW** Sharpe. **FL** Shepherd 1m17.95s (90.06mph). **P** Shepherd. **S** 15.

CLIO 182 CHAMPIONSHIP (BOTH 11 LAPS) 1 James Bark 15m28.52s (83.16mph); 2 Philip Wright +3.12s; 3 Patrick Fletcher; 4 George Williams; 5 Don de Graaff; 6 Trevor Gregory. **FL** Fletcher 1m23.42s (84.15mph). **P** Bark. **S** 21. **RACE 2 1 Fletcher 15m34.55s (82.63mph)**; 2 Bark +0.74s; 3 de Graaff; 4 Wright; 5 Williams; 6 Martin Ward. **FL** Bark 1m23.69s (83.88mph). **P** Bark. **S** 21.

HOT HATCH/STOCK HATCH SERIES (7 LAPS) 1 Matthew Howarth (Vauxhall Astra GSi) 10m04.90s (81.24mph); 2 Neil Stringfellow (Peugeot 206 GTi) +8.97s; 3 Paul Jarvis (Citroen Saxo VTR); 4 Ryan Polley (Citroen Saxo VTR); 5 Phil Law (Citroen Saxo VTR); 6 William Hunt (Citroen Saxo VTR). **CW** Stringfellow; Jarvis; Adam Read (BMW Compact). **FL** Howarth 1m23.64s (83.93mph). **P** Tom Bell (Ford Fiesta ST). **S** 17. **RACE 2 (11 LAPS) 1 Bell 15m09.09s (84.94mph)**; 2 Alistair Camp (Ford Fiesta ST) +2.20s; 3 Howarth; 4 David Allen (Ford Fiesta ST); 5 Polley; 6 Jarvis. **CW** Allen; Polley; Mac McCarthy (Ford Fiesta ST). **FL** Bell 1m19.33s (88.49mph). **P** Howarth. **S** 17.

FORMULA VEE CHAMPIONSHIP (BOTH 11 LAPS) 1 Paul Smith (AHS Dominator) 14m54.28s (86.35mph); 2 Graham Gant (WEV FV01) +8.28s; 3 Craig Pollard (Bears GAC); 4 Paul Taylor (Bears GAC); 5 James Harridge (Maverick Vee); 6 Ian Buxton (GAC Daghorn). **CW** Harridge. **FL** Buxton 1m19.97s (87.78mph). **P** Smith. **S** 23. **RACE 2 1 Smith 15m04.53s (83.54mph)**; 2 John Hughes (Scarab Mk5) +9.38s; 3 Harridge; 4 Harry Webb (AHS Dominator); 5 Jack Wilkinson (Sheane Mk3); 6 Gant. **CW** Harridge. **FL** Buxton 1m19.57s (88.22mph). **P** Smith. **S** 22.

ARMED FORCES CHALLENGE (26 LAPS) 1 Jason Williams (BMW M3) 40m42.71s (74.72mph); 2 Darren Howe (VW Golf) +48.79s; 3 Ed McKean (BMW 325i); 4 Chris Wood (BMW 325i); 5 Grant Hatfield (Mini Cooper S); 6 Dan Tedstone (Honda Civic Type-R). **CW** Howe; Chris Slator (Peugeot 306 GTi). **FL** Williams 1m21.93s (85.68mph). **P** McKean. **S** 25.

TOYOTA MR2 CHAMPIONSHIP (ALL 10 LAPS) 1 Kristian White 14m15.87s (82.02mph); 2 Jim Davies +0.73s; 3 Michael Wells; 4 Cam Walton; 5 Timothy Heron; 6 Paul Cook. **CW** Wells; Paul Callaway. **FL** Davies 1m24.18s (83.39mph). **P** Davies. **S** 32. **RACE 2 1 Davies 14m22.72s (81.37mph)**; 2 Alex Knight +0.34s; 3 Walton; 4 Ben Rowe; 5 Mick Nicholls; 6 Nigel Ralphson. **CW** Nicholls. **FL** Walton 1m24.73s (82.85mph). **P** Knight. **S** 27. **RACE 3 1 White 14m23.12s (81.33mph)**; 2 Rowe +4.10s; 3 Nicholls; 4 Ralphson; 5 Heron; 6 Wayne Lewis. **CW** Nicholls; Callaway. **FL** Knight 1m24.84s (82.74mph). **P** Knight. **S** 30.

750 FORMULA CHAMPIONSHIP (10 LAPS) 1 Ed Pither (PRS 1b) 13m13.67s (88.45mph); 2 Robin Gearing (Darvi P88) +13.94s; 3 Bill Cowley (Cowley MkIV); 4 Peter Bove (Darvi Mk4/5); 5 Chris Gough (CGR2 Evo); 6 Bob Simpson (SS/F 750F). **FL** Pither 1m16.75s (91.47mph). **P** Pither. **S** 14. **RACE 2 (11 LAPS) 1 Pither 14m40.32s (87.72mph)**; 2 Cowley +16.12s; 3 Bove; 4 Gough; 5 Mark Glover (Racekits Falcon); 6 Simpson. **FL** Pither 1m17.72s (90.32mph). **P** Cowley. **S** 11.

750 TROPHY SERIES (9 LAPS) 1 Martin Depper (Centaur Mk4) 15m22.36s (68.50mph); 2 Trefor Slatter (Centaur Mk11) +14.04s; 3 Tim Grigsby (Merlin); 4 Chris Hopkins (HCS Trophy); 5 John Skeavington (Austin Ulster); 6 Ian Grant (Austin 7 Pigsty Special). **CW** Skeavington. **FL** Slatter 1m38.14s (71.53mph). **P** Hopkins. **S** 10.



OULTON PARK
BARC MARCH 19

WALKER

Sutton and Zanetti share Oulton glory

GEORGE SUTTON AND MATTEO Zanetti split the victory spoils in two action-packed Junior Saloons races.

Polesitter Edward Moore led race one initially, but Sutton had gained the upper hand by the end of the first lap. Although Moore went back ahead into Knickerbrook, the pressure told as they arrived at Island for the third time. "Once I was ahead I just put my head down and got away," said Sutton as he eased to a 2.8-second victory.

Moore was soon under pressure for second too, as Zanetti closed in, and their duel brought Oliver Willmott into contention. Moore ran wide again at Island on lap seven, but it was Willmott who took advantage after passing Zanetti.

Zanetti came back to snatch third as they started the penultimate lap, leaving Moore to take fourth from Adam Batty and Ethan Hammerton.

Moore again led from pole in race two, but by the end of lap three it had become a four-car lead train as Sutton hit the front from Moore, Zanetti and Batty.

Having seen off Moore a couple of laps later, Zanetti took the lead into Old Hall as they started lap six, leaving the rest to fight for second. Moore regained the place and just held on despite Sutton's continuous presence, while Batty, Charlie Kennedy and Willmott completed the top six.

James Dorlin annihilated the opposition to take two lights-to-flag victories in the Michelin Clio Cup. In the first race, Brett Lidsey soon dropped back but retained second throughout, despite challenges from Samuel Randon.

Daniel Kirby and Luke Pinder had a good duel for fourth until Kirby got sideways at Cascades and Pinder picked up a track-limits penalty, which handed the place to Tom Barley.

Lidsey was a solitary second again in race two once Dorlin was over the horizon, while Pinder completed the podium after Kirby ran wide on lap four.

Nick Dunn managed to consolidate his lead in the first Max 5 race after sneaking ahead of Richard Breland on the second lap. The lead quartet had paired off early on, which left Chris Webster defending third from Russell Tamplin, after they had exchanged places on lap two.

Dunn managed to consolidate his lead, while Breland, Webster and Tamplin all held station, leaving Steve Dolman to gain the upper hand over Geoff Gouriet for fifth with a lap to go.

Breland led again at the start of the second race, but kept the door firmly closed as Dunn looked for the gap again. They were able to ease clear as Webster, again in third, had Dolman and Tamplin inches behind. But Breland's reward for his race-one defeat was complete. "His pace was relentless, once he had beat me into the first corner," said Dunn.

Tamplin took fourth at Cascades on lap six and threatened Webster again, before Dolman briefly split them on lap nine. Webster just held on for third, from Tamplin, Dolman and Gouriet.

2CV legend Pete Sparrow emerged from a four-car battle to claim another victory. Matthew Hollis had his share of the lead, but had to settle for second, surviving late pressure from Thomas Perry after Steven Walford had gone off at Knickerbrook on the last lap.

Moore (right) took pole for both races, but had to give best to Sutton (left) in R1

Kris Tovey led for most of race two and was declared the winner when a shunt at Druids brought an early end. Lien Davies and Mick Storey completed the podium.

Although Adrian Wray was a double winner in the MG Owners Club, his victories differed greatly. In race one he led from pole and spent most of the race with Andrew Rogerson inches from his ZR's tailgate. Their positions remained unchanged, but Adam Jackson was allowed to close periodically in third, leaving David Mellor to fend off Simon Kendrick's and Mark Baker's Fs for fourth.

Rogerson headed Wray from the start of race two, but a track-limit penalty left Rogerson down in seventh, despite his ZR leading when the race was red-flagged after a multiple shunt at Cascades.

Jackson's and Martin Wills's Fs were in the mix too, with Wills just gaining second place, only to lose it on countback at the red flag.

It was plain sailing for reigning champion Joe Spencer as his Stuart Taylor Locosaki took a lights-to-flag win in the opening CNC Heads North West Sports/Saloons round. Roddie Paterson's Caterham had overheating problems and surrendered second to Dave Harvey's Locosaki on lap four, but he soon recovered as both he and Nick Cresswell (Caterham) demoted Harvey to fourth.

Paterson was forced to retire on lap nine, leaving Cresswell to consolidate his advantage over Harvey for second.

PETER SCHERER

RESULTS

JUNIOR SALOONS (BOTH 9 LAPS, ALL CITROEN SAXO VTR 1600) 1 George Sutton 16m38.520s (72.22mph); 2 Oliver Willmott +2.809s; 3 Matteo Zanetti; 4 Edward Moore; 5 Adam Batty; 6 Ethan Hammerton. **Fastest lap** Zanetti 1m49.014s (73.50mph). **Pole** Moore. **Starters** 23. **RACE 2 1 Zanetti 16m33.113s (72.62mph)**; 2 Moore +2.376s; 3 Sutton; 4 Batty; 5 Charlie Kennedy; 6 Willmott. **FL** Zanetti 1m48.861s (73.61mph). **P** Moore. **S** 22.
CLIO CUP (BOTH 12 LAPS) 1 James Dorlin 19m29.675s (82.21mph); 2 Brett Lidsey +10.765s; 3 Samuel Randon; 4 Tom Barley; 5 Luke Pinder; 6 Daniel Kirby. **Class winner** Sarah Franklin. **FL** Dorlin 1m35.891s (83.56mph). **P** Dorlin. **S** 12. **RACE 2 1 Dorlin 19m28.188s (82.31mph)**; 2 Lidsey +9.232s; 3 Pinder; 4 Kirby; 5 Barley; 6 Ben Palmer. **CW** Franklin. **FL** Dorlin 1m35.778s (83.66mph). **P** Dorlin. **S** 11.
MAX 5 (BOTH 12 LAPS) 1 Nick Dunn 20m58.290s (76.42mph); 2 Richard Breland +5.948s; 3 Chris Webster; 4 Russell Tamplin; 5 Steve Dolman; 6 Geoff Gouriet. **CW** Ben Hancy. **FL** Breland 1m42.856s (77.91mph). **P** Dunn. **S** 27. **RACE 2 1 Breland 20m48.987s (76.99mph)**; 2 Dunn +0.993s; 3 Webster; 4 Tamplin; 5 Dolman; 6 Gouriet. **CW** Guy Carter. **FL** Dunn 1m42.734s (78.00mph). **P** Dunn. **S** 26.
2CV PARTS.COM CLASSIC (10 LAPS) 1 Peter Sparrow 21m38.951s (61.69mph); 2 Matthew Hollis +0.173s; 3 Thomas Perry; 4 Nick Crispin; 5 Peter Rundle; 6 Sandro Proietti. **FL** Proietti 2m06.823s (63.18mph). **P** Sparrow. **S** 17. **RACE 2 (8 LAPS) 1 Kris Tovey 17m56.481s (59.55mph)**; 2 Lien Davies +0.709s; 3 Mick Storey; 4 Paul Taylor; 5 Simon Crook; 6 Jim Henshaw. **FL** Davies 2m07.396s (62.90mph). **P** Davies. **S** 17.
MG OWNERS CLUB (12 LAPS) 1 Adrian Wray (ZR) 20m46.748s (77.13mph); 2 Andrew Rogerson (ZR) +7.350s; 3 Adam Jackson (ZR); 4 David Mellor (ZR); 5 Simon Kendrick (F); 6 Mark Baker (F). **CW** Kendrick; Jim Baynam (B). **FL** Wray 1m42.688s (78.03mph). **P** Wray. **S** 23. **RACE 2 (7 LAPS) 1 Wray 12m32.105s (74.58mph)**; 2 Jackson +0.158s; 3 Martin Wills (F); 4 Kendrick; 5 Baker; 6 Mellor. **CW** Wills; Baynam. **FL** Wills 1m44.574s (76.63mph). **P** Wray. **S** 21.
CNC HEADS NORTH WEST SPORTS/SALOONS (15 LAPS) 1 Joe Spencer (Stuart Taylor Locosaki) 22m23.356s (89.48mph); 2 Nick Cresswell (Caterham Seven) +23.500s; 3 David Harvey (Stuart Taylor Locosaki); 4 Paul Dobson (Mazda RX7); 5 Peter Davies (Spire GTR); 6 Ilsa Cox (SEAT Leon Cupra). **CW** Cresswell; Dobson; Garry Wardle (Ginetta G50); Piers Grange (Ford Escort Mk2); David Bird (Honda Civic). **FL** Roddie Paterson (Caterham R400) 1m27.671s (91.40mph). **P** Spencer. **S** 27.


James Dorlin won both races in the Clio Cup

WALKER


STYLES

SNETTERTON
MSVR MARCH 19

Mackay (64) took two wins on his first MSVR appearance

Mackay stars as MSVR celebrates 10-year anniversary at Snetterton

THE COMBINED LOTUS CUP AND ELISE categories provided their usual high-quality entertainment, with series newcomer Adam Mackay taking a pair of dominant victories on MSVR's 10th-anniversary meeting.

"I knew I had to beat Jason Baker to the first corner as he was faster through the Bomb Hole and Coram," said Mackay, who just managed to get his nose in front at the opening turn.

The Ecurie Ecosse Young Driver then controlled the race to run out a delighted victor. He was helped when Baker was given a drive-through penalty for a non-working transponder, which dropped him into a tight battle for sixth place with Andrew Wright, who managed to hold his place with some spirited defensive driving.

On the final corner Freddie Hetherington was unseated from the lead in the Elise Trophy class when Stuart Ratcliff's chase paid dividends. "I'm annoyed with myself for leaving a gap," admitted Hetherington.

A reversed grid plus 45kg of success ballast didn't hinder Mackay in the least as the Scot easily made it a double in race two. His only real problem came at the opening corner. "It was mayhem," said the winner on the podium. "I went onto the grass to avoid the melee and somehow ended up in fourth."

This left David McInulty at the head of the field, but he was soon squeezed down the order, with Adam Knight holding off Ryan Savage and Mackay looking rampant on their tails. On lap nine Mackay took the lead, with Savage also sneaking past Knight for second.

As Mackay serenely motored to victory, Knight briefly reasserted himself over Savage, only to lose the position again in the closing stages. "Stupidly I outbraked myself into Montreal," explained Knight.

In the Elise Trophy, Ratcliff was able to make an early break to secure an easy second victory.

Despite a flat-sounding engine, Alan Hogg romped to a comfortable opening Allcomers victory in his Spire GT3 while 17-year-old Jack Manchester (Radical) gave valiant chase. Mike Roberts carved through the field to lock out the podium for the sportscars while the Vauxhall Tigra of Luke Armiger was knocked out of fourth by an errant backmarker. That allowed Kevin Williams to take the position after an earlier mishap.

Hogg ran off into the distance once more in race two, but mid-race was pulled into the pits for excessive noise. This allowed the recovering Manchester, after rotating at Montreal, to weave by the late-starting Lotus of McInulty and the two Caterhams of Anthony Bennett and Williams, whose battle lasted throughout the race.

The opening Monoposto 200 challenge race fell to Ben Cater whose Dallara led from lights to flag while David Gillett closed in towards the end when the leader backed off to save his tyres. James Williams looked comfortable in third until he rolled to a halt, allowing Chris Levy to take the position after recovering from a mid-race spin.

Race two produced the same result, with winner Cater again slowing mid-race to bring his tyres back in before another late push.

Gillett and Levy completed the podium, while Henry Chart's excursion at the opening corner stopped him from challenging Kevin Couling for fourth place.

LEWIS BEALES

LOTUS CUP & ELISE TROPHY (23 LAPS) 1 Adam Mackay (Exige V6 Cup) 30m39.806s (89.29mph); 2 Ryan Savage (2-Eleven) +9.966s; 3 Adam Gore (Exige V6 Cup); 4 Adam Knight (Exige V6 Cup); 5 Adam Balon (Exige V6 Cup); 6 Andrew Wright (Exige S1 Honda). **Class winners** Savage; Stuart Ratcliff (Elise Cup R). **Fastest lap** Mackay 1m16.541s (93.31mph). **Pole** Jason Baker (Elise S2 Honda). **Starters** 28. **RACE 2 (24 LAPS) 1 Mackay 31m14.694s (91.43mph)**; 2 Savage +9.585s; 3 Knight; 4 Balon; 5 Wright; 6 Steven Train (2-Eleven). **CW** Savage, Ratcliff. **FL** Mackay 1m16.587s (93.26mph). **P** Rob Myers (Exige). **S** 27.
MSVR ALLCOMERS (16 LAPS) 1 Alan Hogg (Spire GT3) 20m08.137s (94.59mph); 2 Jack Manchester (Radical SR3) +22.261s; 3 Mike Roberts (ADR); 4 Kevin Williams (Caterham CSR); 5 David McInulty (Lotus Exige V6 Cup); 6 Ian Conibear (Caterham CSR). **FL** Hogg 1m12.877s (98.00mph). **P** Hogg. **S** 17. **RACE 2 (15 LAPS) 1 Manchester 20m18.235s (87.94mph)**; 2 Williams +13.641s; 3 Anthony Bennett (Caterham R300); 4 McInulty; 5 Jamie Goddard (Mazda MX5 Mk3); 6 Colin Halls (Toyota MR2). **FL** Hogg 1m13.414s (97.29mph). **P** Hogg. **S** 13.
MONOPOSTO 200 (BOTH 17 LAPS) 1 Ben Cater (Dallara) 20m54.422s (96.79mph); 2 David Gillett (Dallara F302) +2.205s; 3 Chris Levy (Van Diemen RF83); 4 Henry Chart (Van Diemen RF02); no other finishers. **FL** Cater 1m10.109s (101.87mph). **P** Cater. **S** 7. **RACE 2 1 Cater 20m48.654s (97.24mph)**; 2 Gillett +12.063s; 3 Levy; 4 Kevin Couling (Renault Tatuus); 5 Chart; no other finishers. **FL** Cater 1m10.473s (101.35mph). **P** Cater. **S** 6.

WHAT'S ON



Channel 4's debut hits the right notes

FORMULA 1'S ONLINE FANBASE IS notoriously reluctant to accept change, and few things cause more anguish than the championship's ongoing flight from free-to-air TV coverage.

The vitriol that greeted the BBC's decision to share its broadcast deal with Sky back in 2011 was explosive. This weekend, thanks to the Beeb's decision to back out of its contract with FOM three years early, Channel 4 found itself in the comment section's crosshairs.

So how did things go during the Melbourne weekend? Well, the iconic bass from Fleetwood Mac's *The Chain* suitably soothed incredulity at the trailer depicting Jenson Button climbing into a soon-to-be-airborne McLaren without a HANS device — you can forgive a bit of playful artistic licence.

A new channel meant a new lead presenter, which in this instance is former *T4* and *X Factor USA* host Steve Jones. The Welshman seemed to have been judged by the internet way before the cameras began rolling in 2016, but his style and humour were entertaining. There are still some rough edges, but Jones's approach felt energised and just nicely different — F1's often po-faced paddock personalities contrast starkly with this kind of edgier presenting style.

On Sunday, just five minutes into an enjoyable chat between Jones, Mark Webber and David Coulthard, whose Whisper Films production company makes the show, a dreaded ad break appeared. But, as Jones pointed out, C4 will keep the 10 races it is showing live free from ads, so from that perspective regular interruptions throughout the highlights shows are an acceptable price to pay, and C4 deserves credit for that.

Webber, a part of Channel 4's much-hyped "wider presenting team", brought his straight-talking style effortlessly into punditry throughout the weekend, although he needs to stop staring straight down the barrel of the camera lens as soon as possible.

New faces Mark Webber and Steve Jones meshed well with David Coulthard

The things that worked on the BBC were carried over — Ben Edwards's smooth and knowledgeable lead commentary, Lee MacKenzie's confident and calm interviews, and the well-practised grid interviews were cut together nicely. Coulthard's silkily blue sense of humour regarding Sebastian Vettel's nuts has probably found an even more natural home at Channel 4, given its history of edgy comedy.

Karun Chandhok stepped up to the pitlane reporter role well and took good live direction from Coulthard to hunt down Pirelli's Paul Hembery to confirm "the obvious" consequences of Ferrari's

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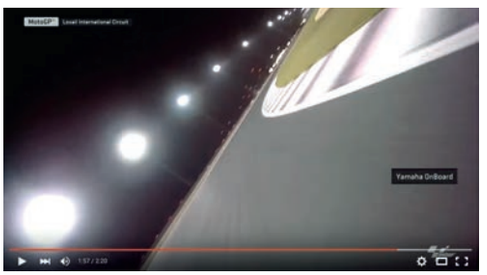


HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YouTube A NEW SLANT IN AUTOSPORT

Search for: #QatarGP: Yamaha OnBoard

Onboard footage like this gives a white-knuckle insight into the extraordinary acrobatics involved in conducting a MotoGP machine briskly around a circuit. It's not revealed who's on the bike at Losail (and opinion is divided – *quelle surprise!* – below the line), but it really doesn't matter.



strategy calamity. He avoided many of the potential pitfalls of the role, such as presenting guesswork as nailed-on fact.

The use of graphics was good, although the 'Coming up: qualifying' caption in a qualifying highlights show was rather superfluous. When it came to the weekend's big topic, Jones and Coulthard dealt with the fallout of the elimination qualifying nicely, and they captured a great interview with Lewis Hamilton, who spoke with the frankness and gravitas of a champion.

All things considered, Channel 4 should be proud of its first F1 shows, but considering it hired a number of the BBC's production team that shouldn't come as a huge surprise. The next big test for Jones and the ever-expanding gang comes with the channel's first live race in Bahrain, just two weeks away.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

TV PICK OF THE WEEK



2003 BRAZILIAN GRAND PRIX

SKY SPORTS F1

Sunday 0930

There's little international motorsport to get your teeth into this weekend, so why not revisit one of the biggest shock victories in the history of Formula 1. Giancarlo Fisichella's win for Jordan in the 2003 Brazilian Grand Prix, not confirmed until several days after the race, was the culmination of one of the most incident-packed races F1 has produced.

UK MOTORSPORT

Silverstone, BARC
March 26-27
Classic FF1600, Caterham Graduates, Britcar Endurance, Clubmans, Kumho BMW, Karts

Brands Hatch BTRC
March 26-28
Mini Trophy, Pickups, Legends, Quaife/MN Saloons, Intermarque, Tin Tops, Trucks

Snetterton, MSVR
March 27-28
Formula 4, FF1600, Radical Challenge, Track Day Trophy, Team Trophy, Production BMW, Racing Saloons, 206 GTi Production Cup, Coupe Trophy, Deutsche Marques Cup, Toyota MR2, Nippon Challenge, Tricolore Trophy, V Racing Series

Castle Combe CCRC
March 28
FF1600, GT, Sports-Racing, Mini Miglia, Mini Seven, Saloons, BCV8

Oulton Park MSVR
March 28
Monoposto, Ford XR, VAG Trophy, Northern Sports/Saloons


CASTLE COMBE



THE ARCHIVE

Rene Metge's Porsche 959 is all alone in the desert during the 1985 Paris-Dakar Rally. The car did not make the finish, but Metge and co-driver Dominique Lemoyne returned in '86 to win

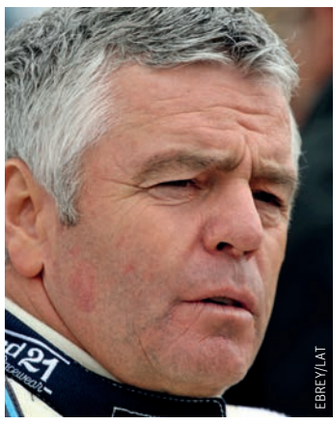
McKlein.de



HAVE-A-GO HERO

WHEN DRIVERS CROP UP IN UNEXPECTED PLACES

DEREK WARWICK


EBREY/LAT

Warwick thought the Porsche Supercup would be a doddle, but was confounded by the quirks of the single-make championship

APART FROM BEING ONE OF THE BEST Formula 1 drivers never to win a grand prix, Derek Warwick was also a fine sportscar driver. He twice finished second in the World Sportscar Championship before winning the 1992 title — and that year's Le Mans 24 Hours — with Peugeot.

He could be forgiven for thinking, then, that his one-off drive in the Porsche Supercup in the VIP guest car at Silverstone in 2007 should have gone better. Certainly his initial test in the car seemed to bode well.

"I flew to Germany and did a test at their track at Weissach," recalls the British Racing Drivers' Club president. "It was special to go there and see the history of Porsche, and we broke what they said was the lap record for the car. I went to Silverstone thinking it would be a piece of piss..."

Warwick still did his homework, speaking to people like title contender (and eventual champion) Richard Westbrook, but wasn't given a vital piece of information.

"What they didn't tell me was that qualifying was right after F1 practice and you have a lap and a half to use the rubber they've put down — you get a massive amount of grip," says Warwick. "I went out on older tyres at first because I thought it was the sensible thing to do. By the time I got the new tyres the grip had gone.

"I came around and it said P26 or P28 and I thought I was reading the wrong board. I was hanging it out. I came in devastated. Then, driving back to the paddock a mechanic jumped in with me and I was disqualified. That was the best bit of news I had all weekend because no one knew where I'd qualified!"

Starting 31st and last, Warwick overtook a few cars, but still finished down in 27th. "The sooner I got out the better," he says. "When you do these one-make championships you can't easily compete with the guys who are doing it all the time. The regulars know all the tweaks to go quick.

"The car itself also frustrated me. I like power and downforce and it didn't have them. It had a lively rear-end and you had to build up to it — 911s are quite unusual. They've since asked me to go back, but I've given them a jokey response — 'not in this world!'"

KEVIN TURNER

AUTOSPORT

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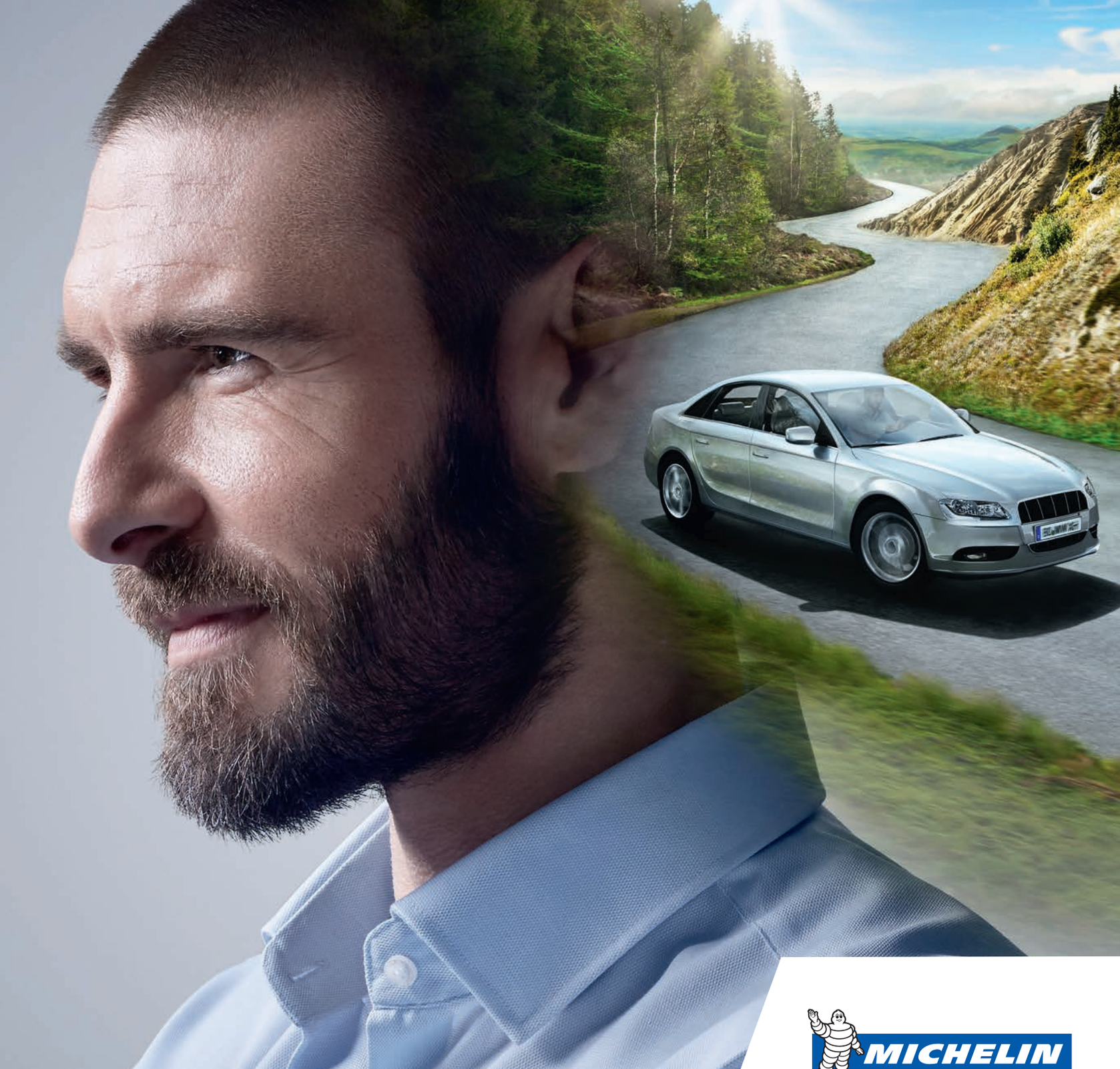

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