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Hamilton seals third title after epic race

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POLE POSITION

Hamilton is a class act and a deserving champ

THIS ISN'T THE FIRST TIME LEWIS HAMILTON HAS BEEN honoured with AUTOSPORT's green masthead in tribute to significant British achievements in motorsport. But it is surely the most important. Being a three-time champion is remarkable.

Michael Schumacher, Juan Manuel Fangio, Alain Prost, Sebastian Vettel, Jack Brabham, Niki Lauda, Nelson Piquet, Jackie Stewart... and now Lewis Hamilton. That's about as exalted a list as you can get in motorsport and guarantees him legendary status.

There are those who seem to enjoy talking down achievement. Sure, Hamilton has had the best car for the past two seasons, but he has still had to get the best out of it. Yes, the driver is nothing without the car, but without the driver – the biological heart of the machine – the car is nothing. It's a symbiotic relationship and those who seek to pick apart Hamilton's achievements on that basis are missing the point.

Only 32 people have been world champion. Less than a third of those a triple world champion. You do not achieve that by chance, you do not conquer the world three times through luck.

You do it through brilliance, hard work and class.



EDD STRAW EDITOR
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 @eddstrawF1

COVER STORY



"I just can't believe it. Honestly, I really, really can't believe"

US GP report, p10

FIND US ON



Cover image: Coates/LAT

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 *packaging and postage must be paid
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This week in F1



DUNBAR/LAT

4 WILLIAMS AUTOSPORT FINALISTS REVEALED

Williams and AUTOSPORT are pleased to announce the names of the five finalists for the inaugural AUTOSPORT Williams Engineer of the Future Award in Formula 1.

The new prize will name an engineering student from a UK university as a rising star of F1 engineering and support them with an accelerated career programme at Williams. The winner will be announced at this year's AUTOSPORT Awards in London on December 6.

Five students have impressed in the first round and will take part in an assessment workshop at the Williams HQ in Grove on November 18-19.

They are Andrew Lightbody (University of Bath), Callum Frith (Imperial College London), Oisin Scolard (Oxford Brookes University), Elizabeth Thompson (University of Oxford), and James Nurse (Loughborough University).

In the workshop the finalists will complete a number of tasks designed

to test their engineering knowledge, teamwork, problem-solving skills and personality fit.

The students will be assessed by a panel of judges led by Williams F1 chief technical officer Pat Symonds. It will also feature Williams HR director Nicola Salter, AUTOSPORT magazine editor Edd Straw, and former Jaguar F1 team principal Tony Purnell, who is now the Royal Academy of Engineering visiting professor at the University of Cambridge.

"This exciting new initiative is designed to identify the UK's brightest and best engineering students and give them a head start towards a career in Formula 1," said Symonds.

"The calibre of applications we received at the initial essay stage was remarkable and we had a tough time getting our applications down to the final five.

"We have an exceedingly bright and motivated group who will be visiting Williams in the coming weeks."



XPI IMAGE

Palmer in 2016 Lotus race seat

Lotus has named 2014 GP2 champion Jolyon Palmer as its second driver for 2016 alongside Pastor Maldonado.

After serving as Lotus's reserve driver this year, Palmer takes the seat left

vacant by Romain Grosjean's move to F1 newcomer Haas.

Palmer said: "I'm delighted I'll be racing in Formula 1 next year. I can't wait for next season to get started."

CONFIRMED 2016 F1 LINE-UP SO FAR

Mercedes	Lewis Hamilton	Nico Rosberg
Ferrari	Sebastian Vettel	Kimi Raikkonen
Williams-Mercedes	Valtteri Bottas	Felipe Massa
Force India-Mercedes	Sergio Perez	Nico Hulkenberg
Lotus/Renault	Pastor Maldonado	Jolyon Palmer
Sauber-Ferrari	Felipe Nasr	Marcus Ericsson
McLaren-Honda	Fernando Alonso	Jenson Button
Manor-Mercedes	tba	tba
Haas-Ferrari	Romain Grosjean	tba

Red Bull/Toro Rosso futures subject to engine supply deals



XPI IMAGE

Honda ponders engine supply for Red Bull

Honda is considering the possibility of supplying Red Bull with engines next season, AUTOSPORT understands.

It is understood Honda has received interest from Red Bull, but has yet to make a decision.

For all the breaking news, visit AUTOSPORT.COM



STALE/LAT

FERRARI VETOED ENGINE COST CAP, REVEALS FIA

The FIA has revealed that Ferrari blocked plans to impose a maximum price on a power unit/gearbox package, leading to a push to introduce a budget engine from 2017.

Motorsport's governing body has been frustrated in its attempts to impose cost cuts, and now sees a cheaper engine as a viable alternative to run alongside the current 1.6-litre V6 turbocharged systems.

At present it is understood that customers of engine manufacturers Mercedes, Ferrari and Renault pay around €20 million per season for a power-unit supply.

It had been suggested the trio should charge less than half that, but Ferrari said no.

A FIA statement claimed "these measures were put to the vote and adopted with a large majority."

"However, Ferrari SpA decided to exercise the right of veto recognised under agreements governing F1."

"In the interest of the Formula 1 championship, the FIA will not legally challenge Ferrari's use of its veto."

The FIA will "initiate a consultation with all stakeholders regarding the introduction of a client engine, which will be available as of 2017".

We just need to have a calm approach, a firm approach of how we would like them to compete

Toto Wolff on ensuring Lewis Hamilton and Nico Rosberg's United States GP clash does not escalate.

FIA to test three cockpit safety ideas

The FIA is to test three cockpit protection solutions for F1 cars next month as part of its campaign to protect drivers from being hit by objects during accidents.

The first is an updated version of a rollcage on the nose of the car, with a trio of protruding blades designed for deflection.

The second is the Mercedes 'halo' concept, while the final one is a centerline rollhoop consisting of three bars that run from the midsection of the nose and connect with the air intake above the driver.



Renault update to run in Brazil

Renault will wait until the Brazilian Grand Prix to run its updated engine.

The French maker brought the unit to Austin for Red Bull, after Toro Rosso declined to run it for the remainder of the season, but decided to delay its use.

Renault used 11 of the 12 tokens it had available on the new engine.

It will now have two races to gather information ahead of its planned return as a works team in 2016, with its takeover of Lotus still in the pipeline.

F1 PREVIEW

MEXICAN GRAND PRIX

October 30-November 1



CIRCUIT INFORMATION

MEXICO CITY

LENGTH 2.674 miles NUMBER OF LAPS 71



2014 POLE POSITION

N/A

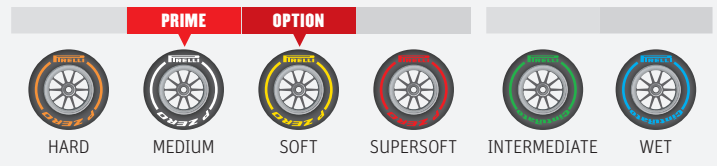
QUALIFYING LAP RECORD

To be established

RACE LAP RECORD

To be established

TYRE ALLOCATION



UK START TIMES

LIVE ON SKY SPORTS F1

FRIDAY

FP1 1600 FP2 2000

SATURDAY

FP3 1600 QUALIFYING 1900

SUNDAY

RACE 1900

BBC Radio 5 live and the BBC Sport website will offer live coverage of all sessions. BBC TV will also carry highlights of the race.

PREVIOUS WINNERS

1992	Nigel Mansell	Williams
1991	Riccardo Patrese	Williams
1990	Alain Prost	McLaren
1989	Ayrton Senna	McLaren
1988	Alain Prost	McLaren
1987	Nigel Mansell	Williams
1986	Gerhard Berger	Benetton
1970	Jacky Ickx	Ferrari
1969	Denny Hulme	McLaren
1968	Graham Hill	Lotus

THEMES TO WATCH



ROSBERG RESPONSE

With his title hopes over for another year, Nico Rosberg needs to show he's got the stomach for the fight in 2016.



PEREZ PODIUM

Sergio Perez will be keen to continue his recent run of good form when Formula 1 returns to his home country of Mexico.



ENGINES AT ALTITUDE

The Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez is more than 2000m above sea level, which will place a unique demand on the engines.



Ben Anderson

From the paddock

Now with a third world championship in the bag, Lewis Hamilton has the career momentum to make him one of Formula 1's all-time greats

For many years there remained serious doubt as to whether Lewis Hamilton would ever fully realise the enormous potential with which he exploded onto the Formula 1 scene back in 2007.

All drivers will inevitably look back on scores of missed opportunities and 'what ifs', but the fact that Hamilton finished the first chapter of his F1 career, at a team as mighty as McLaren, with only one world championship to his name seemed almost scandalous.

Hamilton arrived in F1 as a 22-year-old prodigy destined for great things, to not only break records but to shatter them, but his time at McLaren was filled with more opportunities missed than taken.

He could potentially have been champion four times during his spell in Woking, but he couldn't quite get over the line as a rookie in 2007 (the way a 17-point lead became a one-point defeat to Kimi Raikkonen will surely remain one of the unlikeliest title turnarounds in F1 history), was always a rank outsider in 2010, and was scuppered by poor reliability during the 2012 run-in.

But it's true that Hamilton also let himself down with a few unnecessary collisions and some mad moments during that time. His 2012 tweet of McLaren's telemetry after losing out to team-mate Jenson Button in qualifying at Spa is particularly memorable.

It seemed the unthinkable was becoming thinkable, that a driver this good was perhaps never going to attain the accolades that seemed a foregone conclusion when

who have managed to win the world championship three times or more, a list occupied by just nine others in the entire history of F1.

In becoming a triple world champion, Hamilton has finally matched the tally of his great hero Ayrton Senna, and now stands as the most successful British driver in the 65-year history of Formula 1, joining Jackie Stewart as the UK's only other three-time title winner.

Hamilton is now registering the levels of success that will make him an all-time great in the annals of F1. He has 43 grand prix wins and counting. Only Schumacher (91) and Prost (51) have more. He has 49 career pole positions. Only Schumacher (68) and Senna (65) have more. He has 84 podium appearances. Only Schumacher (155), Prost (106) and Fernando Alonso (97) have more.

If Mercedes maintains its current advantage at the front of the field, Hamilton has a realistic shot at eclipsing the last named in each of those categories by the end of next season, and adding a fourth title to his personal record.

His time is now, it seems. Hamilton has dominated this season in the way Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel used to mop the floor with his rivals during his glory days at Red Bull. Hamilton always seemed slightly miffed that Vettel, two years his junior, romped to four world titles in a row while he toiled through McLaren's peaks and troughs.

Now Hamilton has a car consistently worthy of his abilities, he is just one world championship away from

“Hamilton could potentially have been world champion four times during his spell at McLaren”

he first arrived on the scene.

But for that last-gasp pass on Timo Glock's Toyota in sight of the finish of the 2008 Brazilian Grand Prix, Hamilton would not have become world champion at all during his first six seasons in Formula 1.

That really would have been unthinkable...

His decision to 'leave home' and quit Ron Dennis's team, buying in to the "vision" of Mercedes sold to him by Ross Brawn and Niki Lauda in 2012, now looks an utter masterstroke as far as Hamilton is concerned.

During his six seasons at McLaren, he won 19 per cent of the races he started, took pole position for 24 per cent of them, and was on the podium 49 times in 110 starts.

In just 54 races for Mercedes, Hamilton has already exceeded the 21 grand prix victories he scored for McLaren, qualified on pole position for 43 per cent of the races he's started for the German manufacturer, and finished on the podium 35 times.

Hamilton now enters the rarefied company of those

matching Vettel's tally. The German has just one fewer grand prix victories, three fewer pole positions, and six fewer podium finishes to his name.

There is a counter argument that both Hamilton and Vettel have been fortunate to have faced relatively little threat from rivals thanks to the superiority of their machinery. But it should be noted that Ferrari won the constructors' title in 2008, the year of Hamilton's first world title, while Vettel took the 2012 crown, his third, in a year when eight different drivers won races...

These two have clearly emerged as the most successful F1 drivers of recent seasons, and have now established themselves as the two best drivers within the two strongest teams on the current grid.

With Vettel and Ferrari re-energised, and likely to be Mercedes' only realistic challenger in the near future, the battle between these great champions could become the defining rivalry of the current era of F1, a titanic struggle that will dominate the record books in years to come. ❧

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR 2015 CHAMPIONS

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FAIRBROTHER
& JAMES
GREENWAY**
GTB

ROB GAFFNEY
GTA
**FF CORSE
TEAM**

**PAUL
BAILEY &
ANDY
SCHULZ**
GTO



This week in motorsport

EBREY/LAT



Jordan move to Motorbase confirmed for 2016 season

Former British Touring Car champion Andrew Jordan will switch to the Motorbase Performance team next season

The 26-year-old, who raced for the Triple Eight-run MG squad this year, completed his deal with the team last week and will begin a testing programme with the

team's Ford Focus ST next month.

"I am looking at this as more than a one-year deal, and the title has simply got to be the target," said Jordan.

"Going in to a new team is going to take a bit of getting used to, but we will certainly be challenging for wins straight away and I am sure we will go to the final round with a chance

of winning the championship. So why couldn't we win it?"

The identity of Jordan's team-mate has yet to be revealed, and Bartrum said he had applied for a third TOCA BTCC Licence (TBL). Triple Eight is to reveal its plans for the 2016 season in the coming weeks.



EBREY/LAT

BTCC changes grid regulations

The British Touring Car Championship will revert to its race-two grid being decided by first-race finishing order from the start of next season

This year, fastest laps in race one decided the grid, but following the annual teams' meeting it has been decided to abandon this.

Brundle makes return in WEC

Alex Brundle will race for the first time since February in the Shanghai World Endurance Championship round next month, after overcoming health issues.

The Briton will race for the Pegasus team, which is making a one-off WEC appearance in China, and will share its Morgan-Nissan LMP2 with David Cheng and Ho-Pin Tung.

Brundle was forced to take a break by an abdominal muscular problem.

"It took time and physio to sort it out, and now it is rectified it shouldn't be a problem again," said Brundle.

8

BIG NUMBER

6

Number of drivers to have won the Macau GP twice. They are: Arsenio Laurel (1962, '63), John MacDonald ('65, '72, '73, '75), Vern Schuppan ('74, '76), Riccardo Patrese ('77, '78), Geoff Lees ('79, '80), and Edoardo Mortara (2009, '10). Mortara is the only driver to do it in F3.



EBREY/LAT

Juncadella in Macau return

Mercedes DTM driver Daniel Juncadella will return to Formula 3 over the coming weeks, looking to win a second Macau Grand Prix.

The former Force India F1 test driver won the race in 2011 with Prema Powerteam, the year before winning the Formula 3 European Championship.

Juncadella replaces Pietro Fittipaldi in Fortec's line-up, and will partner Andy Chang and Martin Cao.

"Fittipaldi didn't want to do it and we were inundated with enquiries," said Fortec team boss Richard Dutton.

"Dani made contact yesterday morning and the deal was done with Mercedes' blessing."

To qualify for F3's blue riband end-of-season race, Juncadella will contest the final round of the Euroformula Open season at Barcelona on October 31-November 1.



GT debut for Renault Sport R.S. 01

The Renault Sport R.S. 01, which populates the one-make Renault Sport Trophy, made its GT debut in the French series at Paul Ricard last weekend. Run by Boutsen Ginion Racing, the car retired from both races

For all the breaking news, visit AUTOSPORT.COM

Montoya date set for Porsche

Former grand prix driver Juan Pablo Montoya will test a Porsche LMP1 car in the World Endurance Championship rookie test in Bahrain next month.

The IndyCar series frontrunner will sample the Porsche 919 Hybrid alongside Mitch Evans, one of a trio of 'rookies' chosen by the WEC to try out for each of the three regular LMP1 manufacturers.

This has led to suggestions Montoya could race for Porsche at Le Mans in an attempt to become only the second driver after Graham Hill to win the triple crown of Le Mans, the Indy 500 and the Monaco Grand Prix. However, Porsche has never suggested this is on the cards.

"I don't think next year," said Montoya when asked about racing at Le Mans by *Sky Sports F1*. "Porsche has given me a great chance to test the car and we haven't talked about it."



Leclerc set for GP3 with ART

Formula 3 European Championship rookie title-winner Charles Leclerc has been tipped for a switch to the GP3 Series in 2016.

While sources have suggested that a move to ART Grand Prix to compete in GP3 is a formality, it is understood that there are still options for him to continue in F3 for a second season.

"For the moment there is nothing sure," said Leclerc.

"I think it will be between F3 and GP3, and it's more likely GP3, but I'm not yet sure which team. I haven't really spoken to anyone about next year."

F3.5 V8 TEST

1 Vaxiviere (Spirit of Race)	1m27.331s
2 Kanamaru (Pons)	1m27.631s
3 Isaakyan (Pons)	1m27.651s
4 Hughes (Strakka)	1m27.768s
5 Deletraz (Fortec)	1m27.965s
6 Kirchhofer (AVF)	1m28.029s



Vaxiviere tops 3.5 test times

The rechristened Formula 3.5 V8 Series concluded its first post-season test at Jerez last Wednesday.

The new Spirit of Race squad showed strongly with 2015 championship runner-up Matthieu Vaxiviere on driving duties.

Vaxiviere set the quickest time of the two-day test on Wednesday

morning, after finishing third in both sessions on Tuesday.

Pons Racing's Yu Kanamaru led the opening day of testing. The Japanese racer's morning time of 1m28.067s was over half-a-second clear of Formula Renault 2.0 Eurocup champion Jack Aitken, running with Strakka Racing.

RUSSELL MAKES 3.5 DEBUT

McLaren AUTOSPORT BRDC Award winner George Russell had his first test in Formula 3.5 V8 machinery at Jerez last week. The European F3 race winner ended the test 10th fastest driving for Tech 1 Racing



Abt steps down from Rebellion WEC line-up



Daniel Abt has stepped down from the Rebellion Racing line-up for the final two rounds of the World Endurance Championship and will be replaced by GP3 racer Matheo Tuscher.

The 22-year-old German has opted to concentrate on his Formula E campaign with the Abt Audi Sport team and will

miss both this weekend's Shanghai WEC round and the championship finale in Bahrain next month.

Tuscher, 18, has been brought in to drive the #13 Rebellion-AER R-One privateer LMP1 alongside regular drivers Alexandre Imperatori and Dominik Kraihamer.

In brief



PIGOT FOR INDYCAR

Indy Lights champion Spencer Pigot will contest three IndyCar races with Rahal Letterman Lanigan next year, including the Indianapolis 500. The team hopes to raise the funding for further appearances.

AL-ATTIYAH TO WTCC

Two-time Dakar Rally winner Nasser Al-Attiyah will make his World Touring Car Championship debut in his home event in Qatar next month. The World Rally Championship regular will race a Chevrolet Cruze for Campos Racing.

CELIS COMMITS TO 3.5

Mexican racer Alfonso Celis Jr will continue to drive for Adrian Valles' AVF team in the rebranded Formula 3.5 V8 series in 2016.

DANISH ASTON OUT

The Danish-driven Aston Martin Vantage GTE has been withdrawn from this weekend's penultimate round of the World Endurance Championship at Shanghai.

DAVISON MAKES MOVE

Will Davison will switch from the Erebus Mercedes squad to replace the Triple Eight-bound Shane van Gisbergen at Tekno Autosports in V8 Supercars next season. James Moffat is also moving to Volvo from Nissan.

F1 SKILLS AT E.DAMS

Four-time Formula 1 world champion Alain Prost has revealed Renault has integrated members of its F1 programme into the manufacturer's DAMS-run Formula E team. "Working in F1 means good experience with electrical systems," said Prost.



UNITED STATES GP

HAMILTON SEALS F1 TRIPLE CROWN

After rain, collisions, some classic racing and another battle with his team-mate, Lewis Hamilton sealed the world championship. **BEN ANDERSON** unravels the 2015 season's best race yet



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AP
RACING

First corner was more chaotic than usual



THE RACE 14:00, 25.10.2015



Compared with the nailbiting nature of his first two Formula 1 world championship victories, Lewis Hamilton has enjoyed a relative cruise to his third, but he had to really fight to seal this one in a United States Grand Prix that was breathless, fraught, full of unexpected twists and turns, and a real gloves-off battle from start to finish.

It highlighted everything that can be so brilliant about F1 in the right circumstances: unpredictable conditions and strategies, close racing all the way through the field, and drivers displaying their skills and pushing each other to the limits.

After a race this good, one wonders if F1 should just do away with Friday and Saturday and become a single-day event...

The atrocious weather that ruined Friday and Saturday, and therefore forced qualifying and the race to run on the same day, was key to creating arguably the best grand prix so far in 2015.

Since the shortened qualifying session took place in extreme wet conditions, and only a few hours before the start of the race itself, the teams faced enormous difficulty working out the correct approach to set-up and strategy.

Many people long for simpler times in F1 – less data, less analysis, less simulation. This will not be popular with engineers, but when F1 cannot be methodically planned and pre-calculated it becomes more challenging and more exciting.

Nature ultimately trumped science in the 2015 US Grand Prix, and it was beautiful to behold.

MERCEDES UNDER ATTACK

Arguably the most thrilling aspect of the race was seeing the two Mercedes drivers embroiled in a genuine contest at the front.

Sure they've been beaten occasionally over the past two seasons, but usually only when they've suffered reliability problems or made operational or strategic errors, so wheel-to-wheel action between their cars and rivals has been rare.

Here both Hamilton and team-mate Nico Rosberg were engaged in a proper race to begin with. Red Bull has complained vociferously about the disparity in engine performance across the grid since the V6 hybrid turbos were introduced, but the wet weather at the start of this race nullified the disadvantage of the Renault engine to an extent, while the RB11 also seemed able to work the intermediate tyres a bit better than the Wo6.

Once the two Mercedes came together at the first corner, and poleman Rosberg dropped to fourth after being forced wide, Daniil Kvyat and Daniel Ricciardo were able to close down early leader Hamilton, having swapped places when the Russian nipped ahead through the esses on lap one.

A virtual safety car deployed while marshals cleared debris from a chaotic first lap forced them to call off their charge momentarily, and Rosberg closed up to the two Red Bulls during the three laps spent under VSC conditions. He repassed both in one lap as the VSC period ended on lap eight, driving around the outside of Ricciardo at Turn 3 then using DRS to pass Kvyat into Turn 12. ▶



Hamilton mercilessly pushed Rosberg wide at Turn 1

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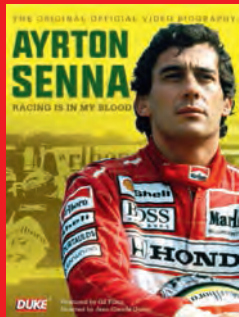
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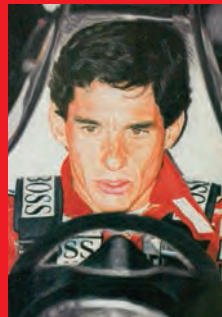
Others may have won more races or more titles, but no driver can claim more loyalty or devotion from fans of Formula 1 than Ayrton Senna da Silva.

This programme was the first to really try to delve behind the public persona and get to grips with Ayrton the man, rather than as the media portrayed him.

Remastered for DVD, Racing Is

In My Blood delves into the Brazilian's background to disentangle the various strands that combined to weave the remarkable talent behind the man often described as the "greatest racing driver ever."

Watching this classic 1992 programme it is hard not to feel that the world was robbed of a truly unique character at Imola in 1994.



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Ricciardo starred in
mixed conditions

XPB IMAGES

15

Ricciardo: "We were rapid, and I was hoping for more rain, because I thought we would still be quick enough"

► Ricciardo complained over team radio, unsure whether Rosberg had passed him illegally. "With the VSC, you should keep the gap, and Rosberg wasn't right up our arse," explained Ricciardo. "He was a few seconds behind, so when I saw him close on us under VSC, I was thinking, 'all right, surely he'll back off again', and then he passed me, and then it was green flag, apparently.

"I don't know what happened there. I think we're going to talk about the VSC in general, because it wasn't clear when it was green. Today it was more confusing than it has been in previous races. Normally we get a message and a 10-second warning. But there was no warning at all. I don't know if Rosberg just caught all of us out, but I was more confused how he was so close to us..."

No matter. Red Bull had enough pace at this stage to recover. Kvyat dived down the inside of Rosberg at the last corner on lap 12, but ran wide and fell back to fourth. Rosberg then immediately went wide at Turn 1, allowing Ricciardo through into second.

Ricciardo tore after Hamilton and took the lead with a beautifully committed drifting pass around



Bernd Maylander got plenty of track time

XPB IMAGES

the inside of the long, fast double right-hander of Turns 17 and 18, after getting a much better launch out of 16 than Hamilton.

This battling created a superb spectacle, and for the first 18 laps it looked as though Red Bull might be able to break its 2015 victory duck. But the track was drying out, and once the leading runners pitted for slick tyres (Hamilton first on lap 18, struggling for rear grip, the others a lap later) the game was effectively up.

GLOVES-OFF FIGHTING

The Mercedes seems much better at working dry tyres in cold conditions on 'green' circuits, and both Red Bulls were overhauled easily once the

slick-tyred phase of the race began. Rosberg took the lead back from Ricciardo on lap 22, and by lap 26 the Mercedes were one-two again.

"The longer the inters running went, the more I felt like I was quicker than the guys around me, and once I got Nico and Dany within a few corners, I was like, 'OK, I think I can get Lewis,'" said Ricciardo, whose seven-lap cameo in the lead was the first by a Red Bull this season. "We were rapid, and I was hoping for some rain to keep the track wet, because I thought we would still be quick enough, but then we were nowhere [in the dry].

"We struggled a lot with warm-up to get the [slick] tyres in, which didn't help the brakes come in, so we suffered a lot on braking. In the end that ►



Hulkenberg had a freak wing failure

► was our biggest problem, but as a result of struggling to get any heat into the tyres.”

Ricciardo reckoned Red Bull went for a “65-35” set-up compromise in favour of wet running, which probably hurt the RB11 significantly when the track dried out. But the bigger problem was tyre temperature, as is so often the case in the Pirelli era.

The lap after Hamilton passed Ricciardo for second, Marcus Ericsson’s Sauber broke down on the back straight following an electrical failure. Five laps spent rolling around behind the safety car undid both Red Bulls.

Following the restart on lap 33, Sebastian Vettel’s Ferrari, up from 13th on the grid, made short work of passing both Kvyat and Ricciardo, before Kvyat then lost fifth place to Max Verstappen’s Toro Rosso and sixth, thanks to a brief ‘off’ at Turn 12, to Nico Hulkenberg’s Force India. These difficulties with locking brakes and cold tyres plunged the Red Bulls into a ferocious pack fight that dominated much of the rest of the afternoon’s action.

We earlier saw Verstappen racing aggressively with the Ferraris of Kimi Raikkonen and Vettel, and the teenager irked Raikkonen by squeezing him right out over the outside kerb on the approach to Turn 12 as they raced side-by-side.

Raikkonen refused to criticise Verstappen later, pointing instead to a lack of consistency in the rules concerning wheel-to-wheel combat. Raikkonen conceded there was only the slightest amount of contact, so Verstappen’s judgement, however questionable ethically, was close to perfect.

At one stage Verstappen also pulled a pass on Vettel, then became embroiled in a scrap with the struggling Red Bulls and Hulkenberg’s Force India.

During this middle portion of the race cars were passing and repassing each other, and Hulkenberg and Ricciardo, aided by a wing failure on the Force India, collided as they battled. Later there was more wheel-to-wheel tango involving Carlos Sainz Jr’s Toro Rosso, fights between a Red Bull, McLaren, Force India and Toro Rosso, and cars locking brakes and being driven on the edge as drivers struggled to



Verstappen even passed Vettel



Hamilton deserved to win title number three

keep control on a still-slippery track. Raikkonen and Kvyat even crashed out.

It was breathless, and just what you want to see in F1. Out front the action was fairly tasty too and, even though the battle for victory ultimately boiled down to another all-Mercedes show, this one also had some real fire to it.

ROSBERG VERSUS HAMILTON

Rosberg has come in for criticism for being a ‘soft touch’ at times in his career, and has always come off second best when he and Hamilton have started going wheel-to-wheel for the title over the past two seasons. Rosberg has seemed to struggle more since he and Hamilton collided while disputing the lead of the Belgian Grand Prix last year, after which Mercedes reprimanded Rosberg for driving into his team-mate.

Hamilton has seemingly seized on the self-doubt this sort of situation can create in a rival. We got a glimpse of this in Japan, where Hamilton was able to snatch the lead from Rosberg at Turn 2 after the start, and ease his team-mate off the track in the process, almost daring his rival to risk a collision.

After making a superior getaway from second on the Austin grid, Hamilton sent his Mercedes up the inside of Rosberg’s at Turn 1 on the opening lap. Hamilton didn’t visibly lock his brakes, but he went very deep into the corner and the two silver cars banged wheels as Hamilton ran wide and again forced Rosberg off the circuit, dropping him temporarily down to fifth.

“He was trying to drive me off the track, but I wasn’t moving because I have the right to the track there,” explained Rosberg. “I was in front mid-corner, that’s the crucial thing. If I’m in front then I have a right to the track. So he drove into me, and that’s definitely one step too far.”

Hamilton saw things differently. “It wasn’t intentional,” he countered. “We both braked very deep and I understood he was on the outside, and in the wet that’s where the grip is. He was turning and I wasn’t, so we touched. I would never intentionally do something like that to my team-mate.”

Final word to team boss and chief mediator Toto Wolff: “It was a very hard incident. In fairness, one must say that it was wet and therefore the car was hard to control, but definitely it was too hard on Lewis’s side. The manoeuvre itself was not pleasant for the team.”

One wonders if that means Hamilton will have to answer for his actions at a later date, once the celebrations have died down, but regardless of the rights and wrongs it was good to see these two go at each other hard, racing instincts not dulled by responsibilities to corporate image. Proper racing!

To his enormous credit, Rosberg was not undone by this incident, and set about his recovery with zeal. He made a committed pass stick on Hamilton at Turn 13 for second place just before the first round of pitstops (the first time he has done this in two seasons), and seemingly pulled a masterstroke by pitting under the virtual safety car, deployed after Ricciardo and Hulkenberg collided.



QUALIFYING

Rosberg set pole in the pouring rain



Nico Rosberg scored his third consecutive pole position in Formula 1 at the United States Grand Prix, and it was arguably the most unconventional of his career so far.

Qualifying for the Austin race was delayed until Sunday morning after heavy rains washed out most of Friday and Saturday's planned track action, but worsening conditions through Sunday morning meant the session had to be suspended after Q2, so the grid was set using times from that segment. Rosberg was 0.105 seconds faster than Hamilton during this phase.

"It's been challenging out there but I felt comfortable in the car," enthused Rosberg afterwards. "I got a good lap together, and it was with a used set of tyres, which is even better. I was feeling really good."

For his part Hamilton didn't seem too concerned at being denied an opportunity to challenge for pole, but in fairness he trailed Rosberg throughout the parts of qualifying that did take place, so there's no guarantee he would have turned tables in Q3.

"With qualifying cut short I was unable to battle it out in the last few laps," said Hamilton, who used new wets to set his Q2 time. "But qualifying is just the beginning. You have to appreciate it's incredibly tricky. The conditions are varying from corner to corner, so you're basically on your tiptoes the whole time."

"You have to apply techniques you learned in the early days of driving, in terms of finding grip, in terms of being sharp and reacting to aquaplaning moments."

"It's about being very sensitive, but as smooth as you can be, and as cautious."

Not for third-placed Daniel Ricciardo, who was narrowly faster than both Mercedes in Q1, but slipped to third (1.145s shy of pole) in the worsening weather of Q2.

"In these conditions there is always a fine line, but you're better off being more on the side of risk, because if you don't drive with confidence then you don't get far," he explained. "It can bite you, but risks need to be taken because it can make or break you in these conditions."

This was a lesson learned the hard way for Carlos Sainz Jr, who crashed out heavily at Turn 3 in Q1. Several other drivers had huge moments as conditions deteriorated later on, including world champions Hamilton, Kimi Raikkonen, Sebastian Vettel and Jenson Button, who all lost control on standing water at the high-speed left-hander at Turn 10.

Unlike Sainz, they ultimately got away with the risks they took, but the line between success and disaster was thin, to say the least.

Hamilton: "Emotions were up and down through the race. I was in the lead but knew I didn't have it in the car"

Hamilton stayed out, and was rightly concerned this would leave him vulnerable if he couldn't make it to the end without stopping again. When Kvyat crashed his Red Bull exiting the penultimate corner on lap 42, the real safety car was called for and Hamilton dived for the pits. This dropped him back behind his team-mate, who now looked odds-on to win the race and delay Hamilton's coronation for at least one more round.

But it wasn't to be. Rosberg undid all his good work with a mistake exiting Turn 16 on lap 48 of 56. A vicious kick of oversteer carried him offline and then wide onto the damp run-off at Turn 17, which allowed Hamilton to sweep easily back into the lead.

"For now I'm assuming it was a mistake I made carrying too much wheelspin, but it's something I want to look into," explained Rosberg, who nevertheless had displayed the sort of fight he will need if he is to topple Hamilton in future.

"The tyres weren't up to temperature, but it felt very strange. It's never happened to me before. It was really, really tough to lose the lead like that."

Hamilton was therefore handed his 10th grand



There was a mixed mood on the podium

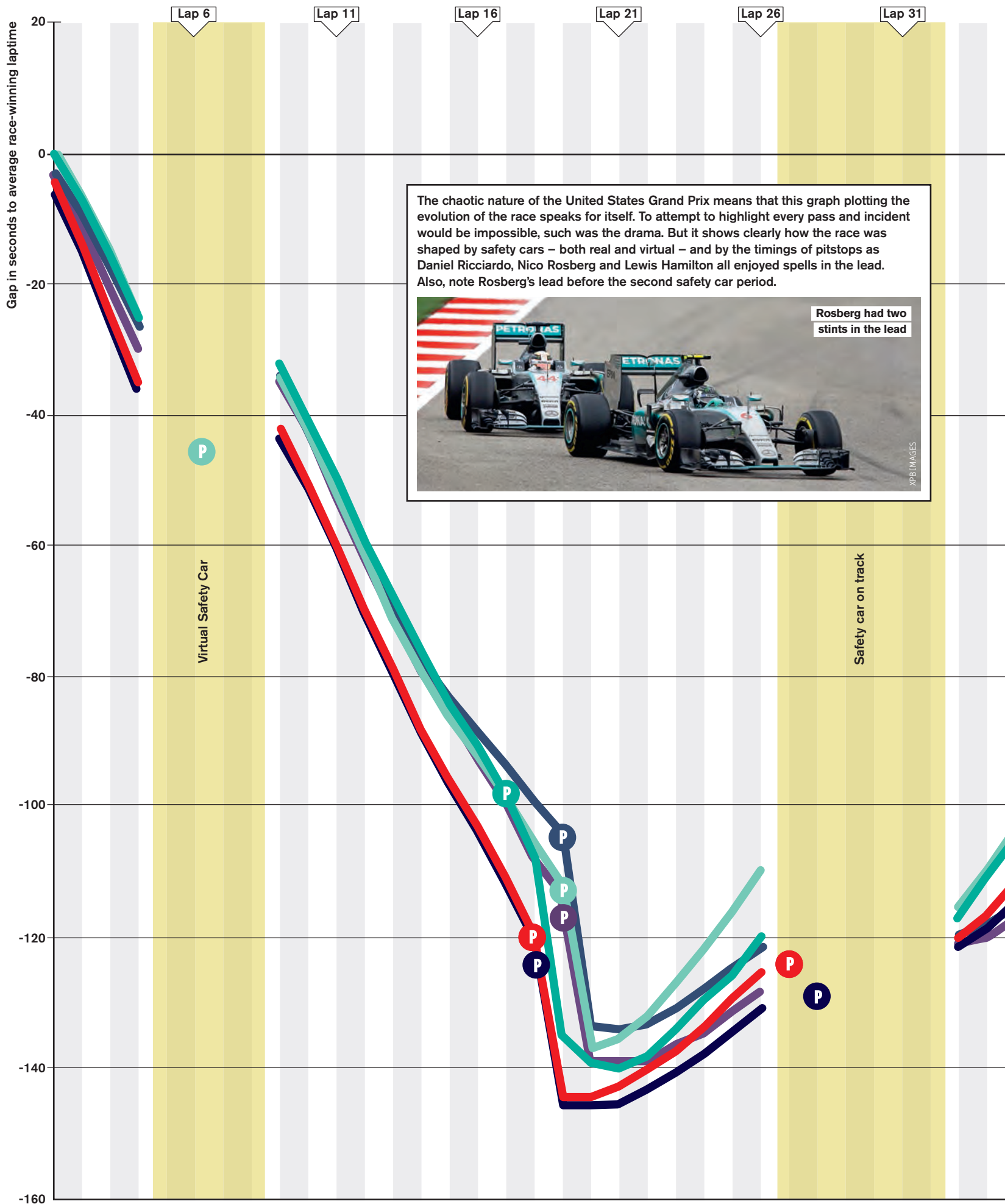
prix victory of the season, which allowed him to clinch the 2015 world championship. It was a relatively comfortable title triumph in the grand scheme of things, but achieved with a combative drive in a superb race.

"Emotions were up and down through the race, because at one point I was in the lead but knew I didn't have it in the car," explained Hamilton, who said he'd almost lost control at the same point on the track as Rosberg. "I was struggling and sliding all over the place."

"I just can't believe it. Honestly, I really, really can't believe. What an extraordinary race."

It really was. If only they could all be as good as this one... ❄️

HOW THE RACE WAS WON



The chaotic nature of the United States Grand Prix means that this graph plotting the evolution of the race speaks for itself. To attempt to highlight every pass and incident would be impossible, such was the drama. But it shows clearly how the race was shaped by safety cars – both real and virtual – and by the timings of pitstops as Daniel Ricciardo, Nico Rosberg and Lewis Hamilton all enjoyed spells in the lead. Also, note Rosberg's lead before the second safety car period.

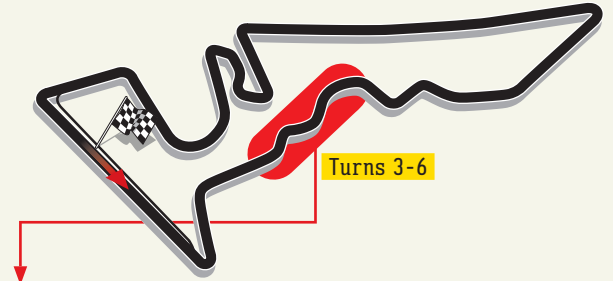
Rosberg had two stints in the lead

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TRACKSIDE VIEW

BEN ANDERSON
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As one of the biggest states in the good ol' US of A, Texas is home to arid scrublands and desert as well as fertile prairies, so you would usually expect Formula 1 to enjoy fine, dry weather at the Circuit of the Americas. But the first two days of the United States Grand Prix were spoiled by a deluge of rain, which worsened from Friday through Saturday.

Knowing the forecast was unfavourable I headed straight out to watch the cars in the first free practice session, which took place on a wet but drying track.

After installation laps on the extreme wet tyre, all cars did the bulk of their running on Pirelli's intermediate rubber.

I watched from the inside of the circuit at Turns 3, 4, 5 and 6. It's a high-speed section that looks tricky in the wet, and many drivers found it difficult to get through this sequence consistently.

The following day, in worsening wet weather, the drivers were fighting their machines even harder through this part of the lap. Nico Rosberg spun and glanced the barrier at Turn 3, while team-mate Lewis Hamilton (who set the fastest time of the session) survived a big moment.

"Rosberg spun and glanced the barrier, while Hamilton had a huge moment"

"It's a good track [in the wet] because you've got online and offline grip and it's a challenge to find," said Hamilton. "It's so tricky. In the esses the car was just drifting – aquaplane, drift, catch it, aquaplane, drift, catch it. It was like a rollercoaster ride."

"It's difficult to explain what it feels like. I'm imagining a rattlesnake. And trying to touch the rattlesnake or see how close you can get! And every time it stabs at you is like an oversteer moment for us."

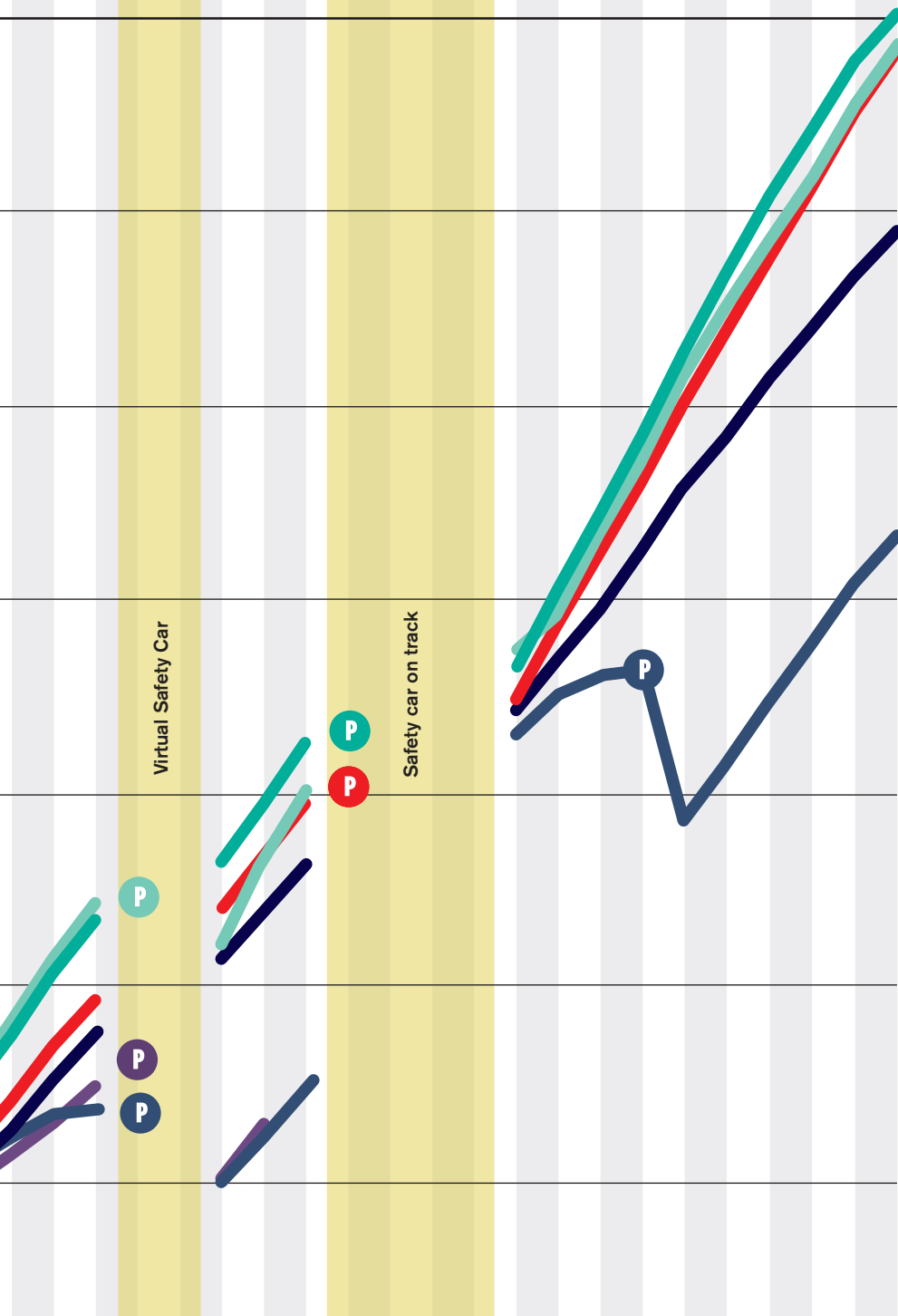
"You have your oversteer moment, you correct it, you're good, it doesn't get your hand, and the ones where you end up in the wall – the rattlesnake's got your hand!"

An appropriate metaphor for Texas, even if it was raining.



Wet track made for a wild ride

Lap 36 Lap 41 Lap 46 Lap 51 Lap 56



Virtual Safety Car

Safety car on track

HOW THE GRAPH WORKS

This graph plots the positions of the key players in the race, relative both to each other and the average race-winning pace (0 seconds). The race-winning pace is calculated by taking the winner's race time and dividing it by the number of laps (except first and SC laps).

- Lewis HAMILTON
- Nico ROSBERG
- Sebastian VETTEL
- Max VERSTAPPEN
- Daniel RICCIARDO
- Daniil KVIAT

STORIES OF THE RACE

Raikkonen crashes then questions rules

Kimi Raikkonen accepted the blame for the crash that ultimately forced him out of the United States Grand Prix, but also questioned the consistency of driving standards rules in Formula 1 following his close fight with Max Verstappen's Toro Rosso.

Raikkonen climbed rapidly into the top 10 after a penalty for an engine change dropped him to 18th on the grid. However, he slid off the road on lap 20 shortly after switching to slick tyres on a drying track, hitting the barrier and getting tangled up with an advertising hoarding.

He returned to the race after pitting to replace his front wing and damaged tyres, but his team then ordered him to retire when it became clear a damaged brake duct was creating a terminal problem.

"It was my mistake, unfortunately," said Raikkonen. "It was quite slippery and I didn't see that there was a little patch of water, and I got loose on the rear.

"The brake duct got damaged, so the front brake overheated when I went out."

Raikkonen also questioned the consistency of rulings on driving standards following a lively battle earlier in the race with Max Verstappen's Toro Rosso.

The 2007 world champion and the teenager fought aggressively, with Raikkonen becoming animated on the radio as Verstappen gave him little space on track.

Post-race, Raikkonen said he had no problem with Verstappen's tactics, as long as other drivers are allowed to race in the same way in future.

"I just wanted to ask if it's OK when you are next to another car, at some point are you allowed to push the other car up on the kerbs," explained Raikkonen. "Apparently it's fine. As long as everybody has the same rules that's OK.

"There are so many rules in F1 these days: you should not move under braking, you should leave a car's space when the other guy is next to you.

"When they defend the inside, you go to the outside, it's not leaving anybody space if you push the other guy wide.

"It's fine as long as it's fine the next time someone else does it in the same way. You can do a lot of things, and then the next time, whoever it is, some other guy gets penalised. That's not right.

"I don't complain about what he did – but it should be more clear for everybody so we know what we can do."



STALEY/LAT

RAIKKONEN'S 2015 RETIREMENTS

AUSTRALIA



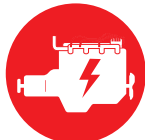
Loose wheel

AUSTRIA



Crash

HUNGARY



MGU-K failure

UNITED STATES



Brake duct damage



Vettel recovers to take third place

Sebastian Vettel came close to snatching second place from Nico Rosberg in the United States Grand Prix, having stormed through the field from 13th on the grid.

Vettel qualified fifth fastest, but took a 10-place grid penalty thanks to Ferrari's decision to fit a new engine. The new motor had no performance improvements but had tweaks to increase reliability.

The German rose to seventh on the first lap, and was on the back of the lead battle after the first round of pitstops. Ferrari gambled on fitting medium tyres to Vettel's car under the first safety car on lap 27, in a bid to get him to the end without a further stop.

Vettel rose to second, but was re-passed by Rosberg on lap 42 and decided to switch back to soft rubber when the safety car reappeared after Daniil Kvyat's crash.

Vettel dispatched Max Verstappen's Toro Rosso after the restart and homed in on Rosberg, finishing just 0.531s behind at the flag.

Wing failure caused Hulkenberg shunt

A front wing failure caused by damage earlier in the race was to blame for Nico Hulkenberg losing downforce and colliding with Daniel Ricciardo during the United States Grand Prix.

Force India's Hulkenberg tried a move down the inside of the Red Bull at Turn 12 on lap 36 of 56, but the German hit a bump, which dislodged part of his wing and caused him to hit Ricciardo.

The German retired with deranged front suspension while Ricciardo, who briefly led the race, continued and salvaged a point for 10th.

Hulkenberg said: "The move was on. There was a damp patch [on the inside line], but I didn't

know that at the time. Just before the braking zone there was a bump, I went over it and my front wing came partly off.

"I lost a lot of downforce and when I stamped on the [brake] pedal I thought, 'I'm not decelerating as much as I usually do'. Once we commit there's nothing we can do afterwards. It's very unfortunate and frustrating."

The incident was investigated by the stewards who deemed no action necessary as the Force India suffered a mechanical failure that affected "the stability of the car and the ability of the driver to effectively brake for the corner".



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Williams rues triple suspension failure

Problems with the rear suspension on the FW37 meant Williams failed to get either of its cars to the finish of the United States Grand Prix.

Valtteri Bottas suffered a rear damper failure in qualifying, so the team elected to change his gearbox (where the dampers are housed) before the race.

Bottas and team-mate Felipe Massa both got embroiled in contact at the first corner after the start, before later retiring with rear damper failures, Bottas on lap six and Massa on lap 24.

The double retirement was Williams' first since the 2012 Brazilian GP.

Williams performance chief Rob Smedley said the team had not previously had a problem with this part.

"We've done the past two seasons with pretty much the same design, so it was specific to this circuit," he said.

"The bumps here are quite severe and that has contributed. Obviously, it's particular to our car."

Engine costs Alonso 'miracle' result

Fernando Alonso felt he was on for a top-five finish in the United States Grand Prix, before an engine problem ruined his race.

Having recovered from a first-corner tangle with Felipe Massa that dropped him to the back of the field, a loss of engine power after the final restart caused Alonso to tumble back to 10th.

Changes to the mapping fixed the problem for the final few laps, but Alonso lost the final point to Daniel Ricciardo's Red Bull at Turn 12 on the final tour.

"We were one minute behind the penultimate car on lap two, then we were fifth 10 laps from the end, and the pace was really strong," said Alonso, who gave Honda's latest-specification engine its race debut. "It would have been a little miracle what nearly happened."

Team-mate Jenson Button finished sixth using Honda's previous-spec power unit, but was unhappy with his McLaren's performance, particularly once the track dried out mid-race.

Q&A ERIC BOULLIER McLAREN RACING DIRECTOR

Not a bad race, but should it have delivered more? Both cars should have been together in the points. We are not competitive to play with the big boys now, so any time there is race conditions a little bit complicated for the others, we need to be there and picking up everything we can. I think we've done that so far this season. The only difference today is that we could see some little sparkles on the performance side. It just means that finally we can see some small signs that we are getting more competitive relative to the others."

What were you able to learn about the performance of the 'phase four' Honda engine?

Both cars were running the same chassis configuration, so you can compare and look at the

data to understand if it's better. It's not obvious, because when you bring a new engine it's not [worth] one second, so you have to carefully analyse all the data. However, it is clearly a progression.

What happened with Fernando's engine in the race?

We need to investigate. We had a loss of power at some stage. It took us some time to work out what was wrong and how to play with the mapping to avoid the problem. He lost lots of positions, so it was too late. We need to understand what happened, and if there is no damage.



STORIES OF THE RACE

Sauber drivers at odds over collision

Tension has mounted at Sauber after drivers Marcus Ericsson and Felipe Nasr had differing views about who was to blame for their collision on the second lap.

Nasr and Ericsson clashed at the apex of Turn 1 and the impact broke Nasr's front wing, which forced him into the pits.

The Brazilian went a lap down after pitting again on lap three following a failed gamble to fit dry tyres at that first stop, but he recovered to finish ninth, scoring points for the sixth time this season.

Ericsson, who retired on lap 25 when his engine shut down, said: "He was right behind me going down the start-finish straight, but there were yellow flags at the first corner so I didn't think I had to defend.

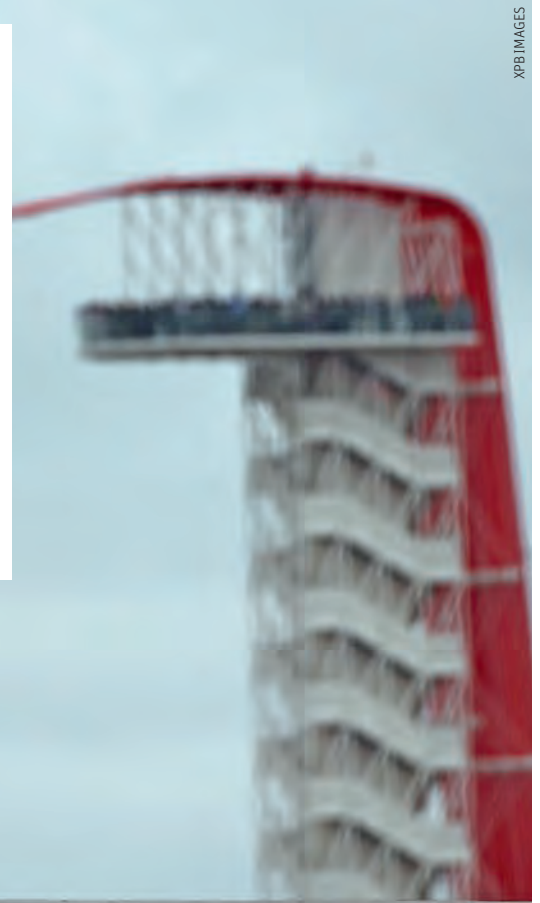
"He then tried to make the move and ran straight into the rear of my car."

Nasr countered: "When you're on inters, people take different lines. I didn't intend to overtake there, I just had the car on the inside for my line.

"I thought he'd seen me, but now I don't think he did. Anyway, I was the one who got the damage."

"We will definitely have a word with both of them. I'm upset. These mistakes shouldn't happen. We are much better than this

Sauber team principal Monisha Kaltenborn



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Storms disrupt practice and qualifying

Formula 1 organisers were forced to cancel Friday's second free practice session and postpone qualifying until Sunday morning, following extreme weather that disrupted the scheduling of the US GP weekend.

Lightning storms forced the cancellation of FP2 on Friday, because the medical helicopter unable to fly and the FIA feared marshals would be put in danger. FP3 took place on Saturday, but qualifying was repeatedly delayed by heavy rain before the session was postponed until Sunday.

Leading drivers backed the call to delay qualifying in case the weather improved, despite

paying fans being prevented from accessing the circuit while FP3 occurred, only to see no cars on track after they were eventually allowed in an hour before the scheduled start of qualifying.

"It was the right thing to do," said McLaren's Jenson Button. "In one respect, maybe if we decided three hours earlier it would have been better for the fans, but delaying it every half an hour was the way it had to be."

Qualifying took place in wet conditions at 9am on Sunday, but was stopped before Q3 could take place owing to worsening weather, which cleared sufficiently in time for the race.

'Over my limit' Kvyat rues loss of points

Daniil Kvyat admitted he was overdriving when he crashed near the end of the race, losing a point-scoring position in the process.

"I was driving a bit over my limit when I crashed," admitted the Russian. "I'm disappointed with myself."

Kvyat was involved in the early lead battle in the wet, but got sucked into the midfield as the track dried out.

Red Bull made a double pitstop under virtual safety car conditions on lap 38, after Daniel Ricciardo and Nico Hulkenberg collided. Ricciardo took soft tyres, while Kvyat's car was fitted with mediums.

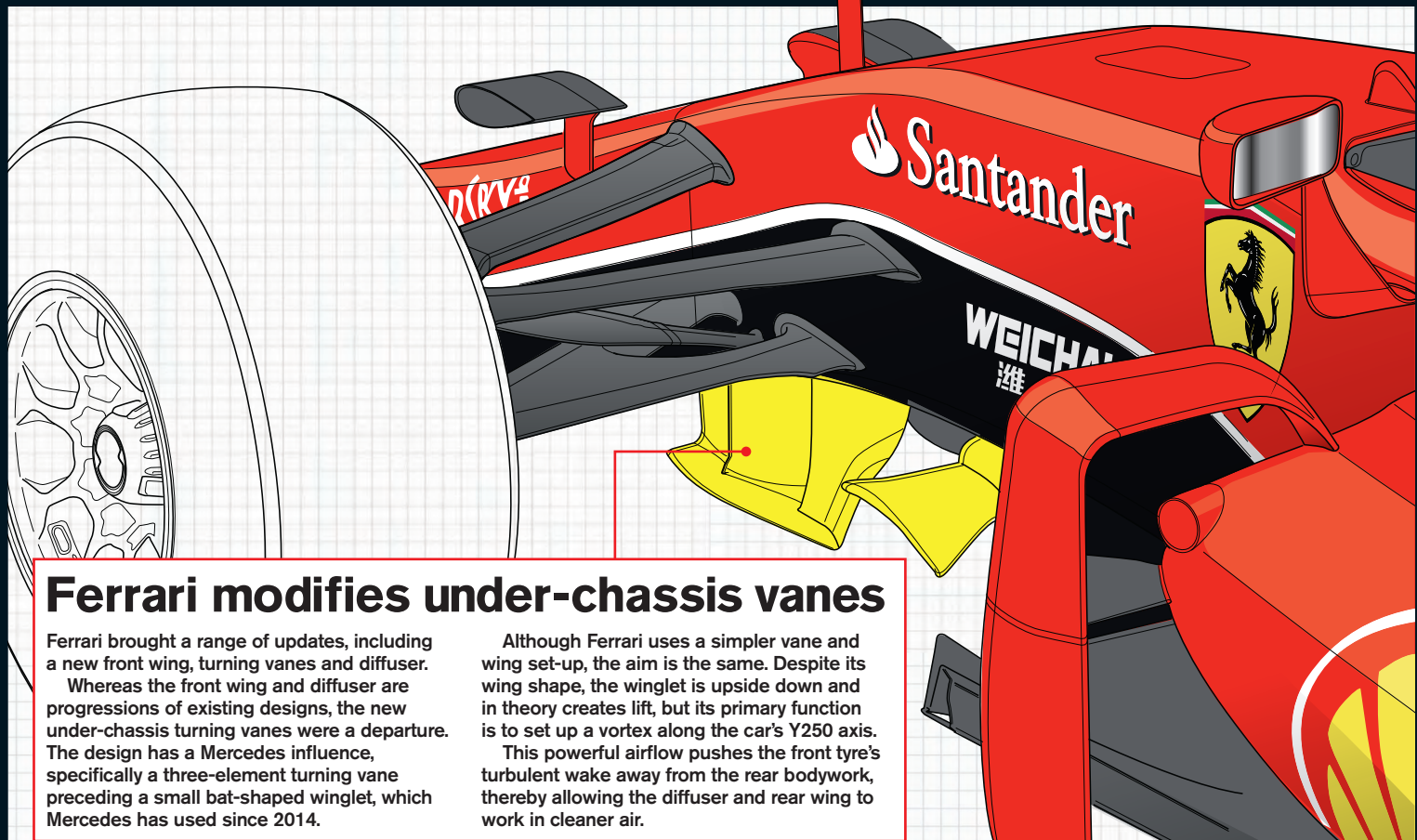
Kvyat was lying 10th when the caution period ended on lap 40, but crashed heavily two laps later after putting two wheels on the wet artificial grass on the exit of Turn 19, which fired him across the circuit and into the barrier.



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DRAWING BOARD

by Craig Scarborough



Ferrari modifies under-chassis vanes

Ferrari brought a range of updates, including a new front wing, turning vanes and diffuser.

Whereas the front wing and diffuser are progressions of existing designs, the new under-chassis turning vanes were a departure. The design has a Mercedes influence, specifically a three-element turning vane preceding a small bat-shaped winglet, which Mercedes has used since 2014.

Although Ferrari uses a simpler vane and wing set-up, the aim is the same. Despite its wing shape, the winglet is upside down and in theory creates lift, but its primary function is to set up a vortex along the car's Y250 axis.

This powerful airflow pushes the front tyre's turbulent wake away from the rear bodywork, thereby allowing the diffuser and rear wing to work in cleaner air.

Red Bull tries new front wing

Red Bull introduced a new front wing. One interesting change was the flap-adjuster mechanism. Most teams make do with a small teardrop-shaped pod to house the threaded adjuster. Red Bull, however, has mounted a larger pod high above the wing, supported tripod-style with two metal struts and the threaded adjuster. This keeps the pod clear from interfering with the wing's airflow, but makes it stiff enough to cope with the high loads the front wing is under.



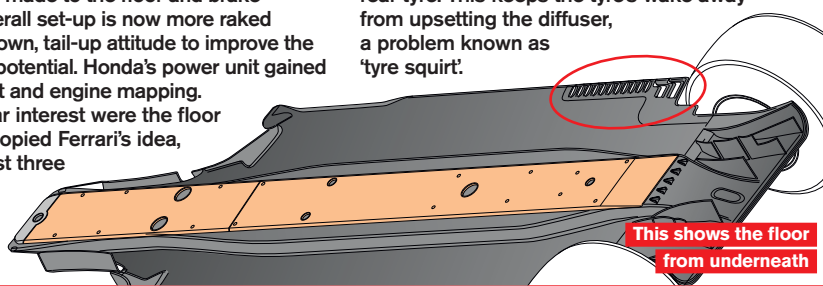
McLaren tries out multiple floor slots

There was yet another significant update to the McLaren, affecting aerodynamics, set-up and the power unit.

The car received a new front wing, while changes were made to the floor and brake ducts. The overall set-up is now more raked with a nose-down, tail-up attitude to improve the aerodynamic potential. Honda's power unit gained a new exhaust and engine mapping.

Of particular interest were the floor slots. These copied Ferrari's idea, introduced just three races ago. Whereas Ferrari fitted eight edge

slots and two corner slots, McLaren has gone as many as 11 edge slots and two corner slots, making 13 in total. These slots direct a stream of air under the floor, to align the flow with the rear tyre. This keeps the tyre's wake away from upsetting the diffuser, a problem known as 'tyre squirt'.




This shows the floor from underneath


DRIVER RATINGS

MERCEDES

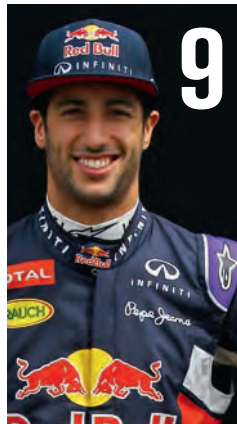



NICO ROSBERG 
Superficially, this looked like another opportunity blown. The race was Rosberg's to win and he lost it with a mistake on cold tyres, and with it his threadbare hopes of the title. But he was excellent again in qualifying, refused to yield to his team-mate in battle, and passed him decisively on track. Perhaps needs to forget the championship in future and just take more risks.




LEWIS HAMILTON 
The world champion and deservedly so. Was impressive in setting the fastest time in final practice, and qualifying a tenth behind Rosberg on new tyres was a fine effort given the difficulty of scrubbing the rubber in on a gripless surface. On the limit with his team-mate at Turn 1 after the start, and looked vulnerable early on, but eventually the race came to him.

RED BULL

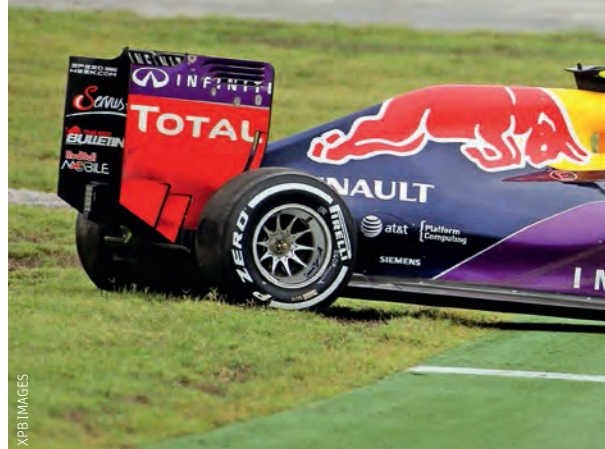


DANIEL RICCIARDO 
Beating the Mercs in Q1 was arguably the most impressive performance of all in qualifying. Couldn't repeat that in Q2, but was still faster than everyone else. Showed his usual blend of feisty racecraft and careful judgment in the race, which he might have won if it had stayed wet. Whacks from Hulkenberg and Sainz ruined any lingering hope of a decent result.



DANIIL KVIAT 
Kvyat's aggressive style works well in slippery conditions, but his driving was a little rough around the edges in qualifying, and he was almost half a second slower than Ricciardo in Q2. Drove quite well in the race initially, but struggled a bit more than Ricciardo after the first safety car period. Switch to the medium tyre didn't work out thanks to careless crash.

“KVIAT'S DRIVING WAS A LITTLE ROUGH AROUND THE EDGES...”




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McLAREN




FERNANDO ALONSO 
Used Honda's latest 'phase four' engine (apparently worth an extra 15-20bhp), and felt points were possible after producing McLaren's best qualifying result of the season. Got spun to the back by Massa's Williams at Turn 1 after the start, but recovered superbly. Top-five finish went begging to an engine problem that ruined his sprint to the finish.




JENSON BUTTON 
Still using the 'phase three' engine while Honda builds another updated unit. Was nearly a second slower than Alonso in qualifying, as he struggled for rear grip (the new engine is not worth a second per lap), but his race was excellent given the car's limitations. Battled hard, was close to Alonso's pace in the dry, and made the right calls to bag a top-six finish.

FORCE INDIA

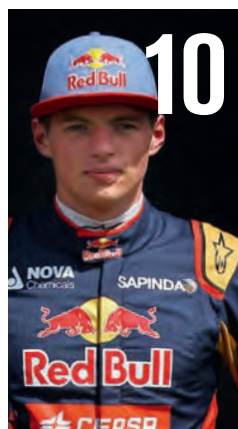



SERGIO PEREZ 
Excelled in beating his team-mate (an acknowledged F1 rainmaster) by a tenth of a second in qualifying, and showed strong pace in the wet early stages of the race. Loses marks for poor pace after switching to slicks. Felt happier on the medium compound, but warm-up struggles on the soft arguably cost him a genuine shot at beating Verstappen to fourth.




NICO HULKENBERG 
Wasn't far off Perez in qualifying here, but would have expected better given that he was second fastest of all in final practice. Wasn't spectacular early in the race, but came alive on slick tyres, and would likely have challenged Verstappen for fourth had his front wing not broken over a bump while he was trying to pass Ricciardo's Red Bull.

TORO ROSSO



MAX VERSTAPPEN 
Produced an outstanding effort to make the top 10 in qualifying, having lost practice time to an engine problem, and was the star of this race. Showed supreme racecraft and judgment throughout, raced hard with everyone he came across, pulled off multiple passing moves in a car that wasn't fast in a straightline, and finished higher than a Toro Rosso merited. Flawless.



CARLOS SAINZ JR 
Compromised his weekend with a costly crash, losing control over a wet kerb in Q1. Started from the back in rebuilt STR10 and drove a feisty but messy race. Was lucky to escape sanction for moving across on Ricciardo in the braking zone for Turn 12 late on, and lost a position thanks to a penalty for speeding in the pits. Decent result, but an erratic display.

BEN ANDERSON reviews and rates each driver's grand prix weekend performance out of 10



WILLIAMS



FELIPE MASSA

Was delighted to make the top 10 in qualifying, given the ongoing struggles of Williams in wet conditions, but the car looks better on the wet tyre than the intermediate. Endured a messy start, which included a clumsy collision with Alonso at Turn 1. Recovered, but the Brazilian made little progress until the team decided to retire the car after a rear damper failed.



VALTTERI BOTTAS

It looked a disappointing performance from Bottas to qualify outside the top 10 having been rapid in final practice, but broken rear suspension was the cause. Williams elected to change the gearbox in fixing the problem, incurring a five-place grid penalty. His race was notable only for tagging Ericsson's Sauber before retiring after five laps with another suspension failure.

FERRARI



SEBASTIAN VETTEL

Looked more comfortable in the wet than his team-mate, but was also lucky to get away with striking the barriers after a spin at Turn 10 in Q1. Penalty for engine change meant this was always going to be a tough race, but Vettel made light work of the task. He rose to seventh before the end of the first lap and was close to challenging Rosberg for second at the end.



KIMI RAIKKONEN

Loses marks for being a chunk slower than Vettel in wet qualifying. Like his team-mate, Raikkonen started the race strongly to climb into the top 10, but he got stuck battling with the Toro Rossos in the wet first stint, then crashed on his out-lap after pitting for slicks, so he loses more marks for that. Tried to carry on, but brake duct damage forced his retirement.

LOTUS



ROMAIN GROSJEAN

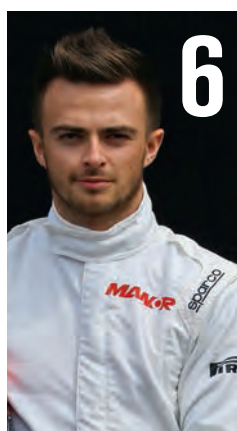
Expected to struggle in the wet, no doubt because the E23 lacks downforce compared with its usual rivals, so failure to make the top 10 was no great surprise, but was over a second faster than his team-mate in Q2, which was impressive. His race ended at the first corner in reality, thanks to a hit from behind. Floor and brake damage brought early retirement.



PASTOR MALDONADO

Struggled a bit more with the inconsistencies of the Lotus than Grosjean in qualifying and that carried through into the early part of the race, where his pace was disappointing. Chances weren't helped by a delay resulting from Massa and Alonso's first-corner collision. Couldn't explain his lack of pace in the race, but at least he kept out of trouble again and scored points.

MANOR



WILL STEVENS

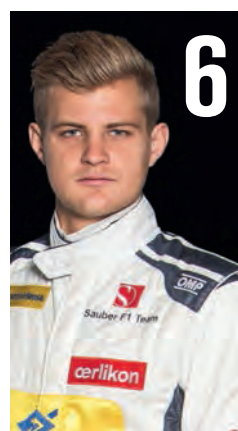
Lost out to team-mate Rossi in qualifying here (by 0.350s), not helped by a big spin at Turn 10, but many others were caught out on the standing water there. Unfortunately, his race was over after just one lap, thanks to being rear-ended by team-mate Rossi in the melee caused by the Massa/Alonso incident, so we never got to see how the two Manor drivers compared.



ALEXANDER ROSSI

Another solid showing for this year's GP2 bridesmaid, who became the first American driver to start a US GP since 2007. Beating Stevens in qualifying, having missed the previous race in Russia, was a good effort. For a long while was involved in a game of leapfrog with Felipe Nasr's pit-addicted Sauber, but in reality was in a race of his own at the back.

SAUBER



MARCUS ERICSSON

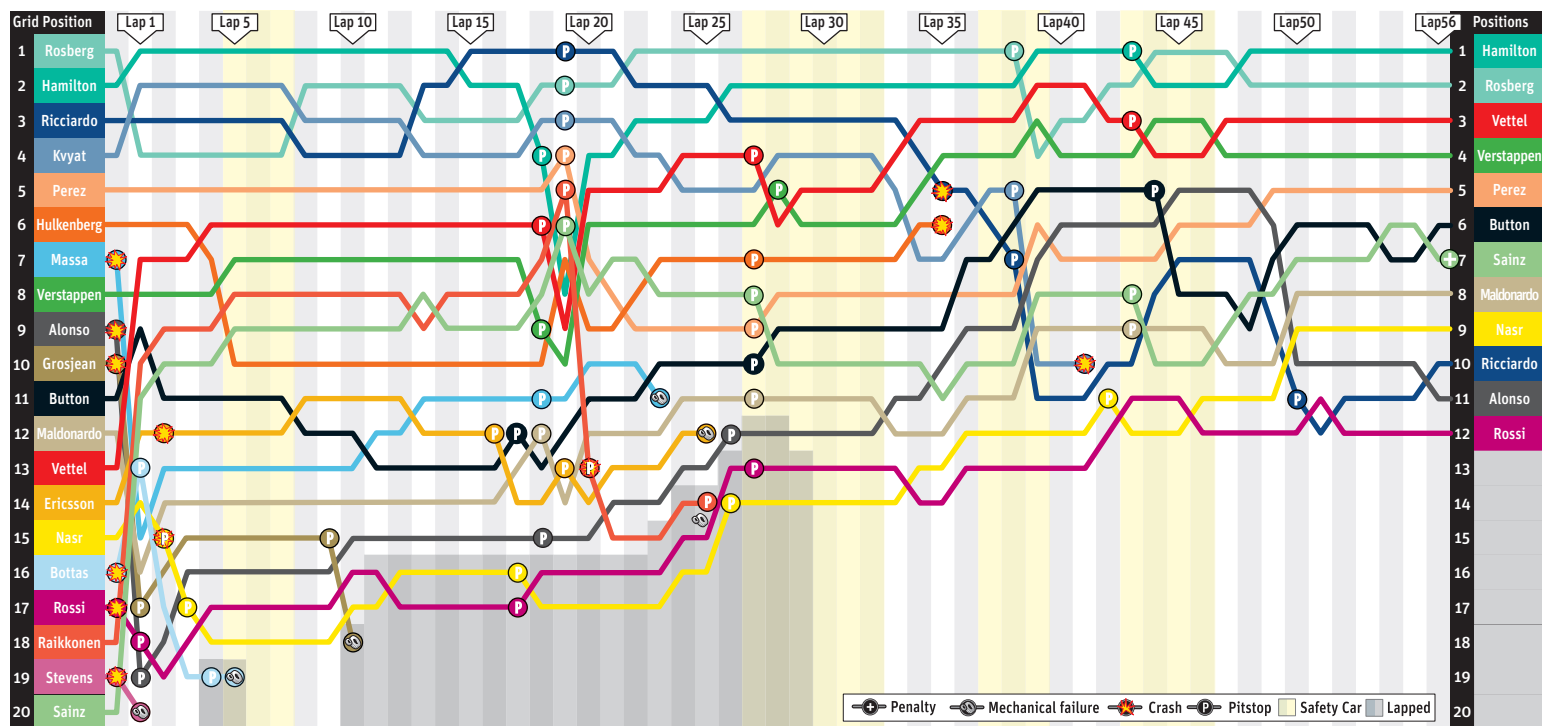
Tried hard to elevate the Sauber from Q1, but even in updated specification the C34 remains weak on traction and thus poor in the wet. Qualified almost a second clear of his team-mate, then survived contact with Bottas and Nasr early in the race. Looked decent in the wet phase, but struggled on slicks. Was all made academic by electrical failure at half-distance.



FELIPE NASR

Struggled badly in qualifying, ending up less than a second faster than Rossi's Manor and complaining of "zero rear grip". Some of that was down to setting his car up in anticipation of a dry race, though. Endured a crazy race: contact with his team-mate early on, five pitstops, then a late surge into the points thanks to problems for Ricciardo and Alonso.

RESULTS



PRACTICE 1: Friday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	ROSBERG	1m53.989s
2	KVYAT	1m55.224s
3	RICCIARDO	1m55.592s
4	SAINZ	1m55.667s
5	HAMILTON	1m55.693s
6	VETTEL	1m55.710s
7	VERSTAPPEN	1m55.969s
8	RAIKKONEN	1m56.326s
9	ALONSO	1m56.839s
10	BOTTAS	1m56.866s
11	MASSA	1m57.081s
12	PEREZ	1m57.139s
13	BUTTON	1m57.495s
14	HULKENBERG	1m57.518s
15	GROSJEAN	1m58.319s
16	MARCELLO	1m59.431s
17	ERICSSON	1m59.743s
18	ROSSI	2m01.154s
19	STEVENS	2m01.907s
20	MALDONADO	no time

PRACTICE 3: Saturday

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	HAMILTON	1m59.517s
2	VETTEL	2m00.380s
3	HULKENBERG	2m00.496s
4	BOTTAS	2m00.523s
5	SAINZ	2m00.687s
6	KVYAT	2m00.694s
7	RAIKKONEN	2m00.785s
8	RICCIARDO	2m01.008s
9	ROSBERG	2m01.474s
10	MASSA	2m02.199s
11	PEREZ	2m02.660s
12	GROSJEAN	2m02.825s
13	MALDONADO	2m02.921s
14	ALONSO	2m03.375s
15	ERICSSON	2m04.399s
16	BUTTON	2m05.283s
17	STEVENS	2m05.378s
18	ROSSI	2m05.607s
19	NASR	2m06.792s
20	VERSTAPPEN	2m09.994s

FRIDAY TESTERS

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	MARCELLO	1m59.431s

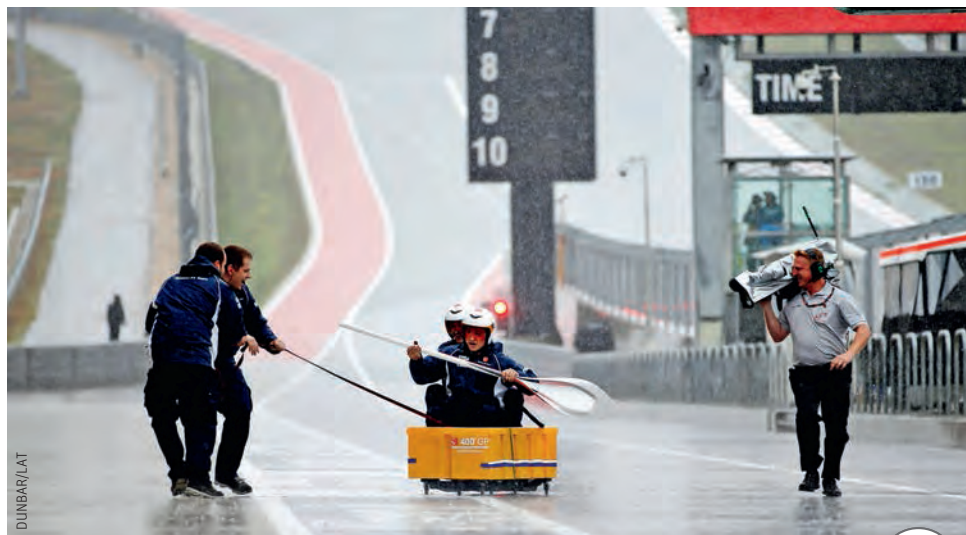


Weather: Cloudy; air 26C, track 26C

Weather: Raining; air 20C, track 21C

PRACTICE 2: Friday

Cancelled owing to adverse weather



QUALIFYING TIMES

POS	DRIVER	QUALIFYING 1	QUALIFYING 2	QUALIFYING 3
1	ROSBERG	1m56.671s (2)	1m56.824s	cancelled
2	HAMILTON	1m56.871s (3)	1m56.929s	-
3	RICCIARDO	1m56.495s (1)	1m57.969s	-
4	KVYAT	1m57.640s (4)	1m58.434s	-
5	VETTEL	2m00.950s (15)	1m58.596s	-
6	PEREZ	1m59.284s (8)	1m59.210s	-
7	HULKENBERG	1m58.325s (6)	1m59.333s	-
8	RAIKKONEN	1m58.198s (5)	1m59.703s	-
9	MASSA	2m00.902s (14)	1m59.999s	-
10	VERSTAPPEN	1m58.689s (7)	2m00.199s	-
11	ALONSO	1m59.704s (10)	2m00.265s	-
12	BOTTAS	1m59.569s (9)	2m00.334s	-
13	GROSJEAN	2m00.236s (11)	2m00.595s	-
14	BUTTON	2m00.261s (12)	2m01.193s	-
15	MALDONADO	2m00.844s (13)	2m01.604s	-
16	ERICSSON	2m02.212s	-	-
17	NASR	2m03.194s	-	-
18	ROSSI	2m04.176s	-	-
19	STEVENS	2m04.526s	-	-
DSQ	SAINZ	2m07.304s	-	-

Weather: Wet, raining; air 15C, track 16C

QUALIFYING STATISTICS

HEAD TO HEAD		
ROSBERG	4	12 HAMILTON
RICCIARDO	11	5 KVYAT
MASSA	8	8 BOTTAS
VETTEL	13	3 RAIKKONEN
ALONSO/MAGNUSSEN	8	7 BUTTON
PEREZ	6	9 HULKENBERG
SAINZ	9	7 VERSTAPPEN
GROSJEAN	15	1 MALDONADO
ERICSSON	8	8 NASR
STEVENS	10	4 MERHI/ROSSI



POLE POSITION TROPHY

HAMILTON										
AUS	MAL	PRC	BRN	MC	CDN	A	GB	H	B	
I	11									

ROSBERG			
E	J	RUS	USA
			4

VETTEL
SGP
1



RACE: 56 LAPS - 191.634 MILES

POS	DRIVER	DRIVER NUMBER	TEAM	LAPS	TOTAL TIME	FATEST LAP	PITSTOPS	TIME IN PITS	GRID
1	LEWIS HAMILTON	44	MERCEDES	56	1h50m52.703s	1m40.738s	2	48.442s	2
2	NICO ROSBERG	6	MERCEDES	56	+2.850s	1m40.666s	2	49.882s	1
3	SEBASTIAN VETTEL	5	FERRARI	56	+3.381s	1m41.330s	3	1m14.753s	13
4	MAX VERSTAPPEN	33	TORO ROSSO-RENAULT	56	+22.359s	1m43.172s	2	50.431s	8
5	SERGIO PEREZ	11	FORCE INDIA-MERCEDES	56	+24.413s	1m43.010s	2	51.188s	5
6	JENSON BUTTON	22	McLAREN-HONDA	56	+28.058s	1m43.026s	3	1m16.837s	11
7	CARLOS SAINZ	55	TORO ROSSO-RENAULT	56	+30.619s	1m42.660s	3	1m36.681s	20
8	PASTOR MALDONADO	13	LOTUS-MERCEDES	56	+32.273s	1m42.849s	3	1m18.351s	12
9	FELIPE NASR	12	SAUBER-FERRARI	56	+40.257s	1m44.407s	5	2m23.303s	15
10	DANIEL RICCIARDO	3	RED BULL-RENAULT	56	+53.371s	1m41.980s	3	1m16.746s	3
11	FERNANDO ALONSO	14	McLAREN-HONDA	56	+54.816s	1m44.323s	3	1m22.023s	9
12	ALEXANDER ROSSI	53	MARUSSIA-FERRARI	56	+1m15.277s	1m48.173s	3	1m30.080s	17
R	DANIIL KVYAT	26	RED BULL-RENAULT	41	spun off	1m43.728s	2	49.843s	4
R	NICO HULKENBERG	27	FORCE INDIA-MERCEDES	35	collision	1m45.095s	2	54.704s	6
R	MARCUS ERICSSON	9	SAUBER-FERRARI	25	electrical	1m47.381s	2	1m00.660s	14
R	KIMI RAIKKONEN	7	FERRARI	25	spun off	1m46.186s	2	59.281s	18
R	FELIPE MASSA	19	WILLIAMS-MERCEDES	23	suspension	1m48.231s	1	24.646s	7
R	ROMAIN GROSJEAN	8	LOTUS-MERCEDES	10	brakes	1m59.612s	2	55.351s	10
R	VALTTERI BOTTAS	77	WILLIAMS-MERCEDES	5	suspension	2m31.939s	2	1m06.872s	16
R	WILL STEVENS	28	MARUSSIA-FERRARI	1	collision	-	-	-	19

Weather: Damp, cloudy; air 17C, track 19C. Winner's average speed: 103.699mph. Fastest lap: Rosberg 1m40.666s (122.506mph) on lap 49. Lap leader: 1-14 Hamilton, 15-21 Ricciardo, 22-38 Rosberg, 39-43 Hamilton, 44-47 Rosberg, 48-56 Hamilton.

TYRE CHOICE

DRIVER	STINT 1	STINT 2	STINT 3	STINT 4	STINT 5	STINT 6
Hamilton	Inters N	Soft N	Soft N			
Rosberg	Inters N	Soft N	Soft N			
Vettel	Inters N	Soft N	Medium N	Soft N		
Verstappen	Inters N	Soft N	Soft N			
Perez	Inters N	Soft N	Medium N			
Button	Inters N	Soft N	Soft N	Soft N		
Sainz	Inters N	Soft N	Medium N	Soft N		
Maldonado	Inters N	Soft N	Soft N	Soft N		
Nasr	Inters N	Soft N	Inters N	Soft N	Soft N	Soft N
Ricciardo	Inters N	Soft N	Soft N	Soft N		
Alonso	Inters N	Inters N	Soft N	Soft N		
Rossi	Inters N	Inters N	Soft N	Medium N		
Kvyat	Inters N	Soft N	Medium N			
Hulkenberg	Inters N	Soft N	Medium N			
Ericsson	Inters N	Soft N	Soft N			
Raikkonen	Inters N	Soft N	Soft N			
Massa	Inters N	Soft N				
Grosjean	Inters N	Inters N	Soft N			
Bottas	Inters N	Soft N	Inters N			
Stevens	Inters N					

N - new; U - used

DRIVERS' STANDINGS

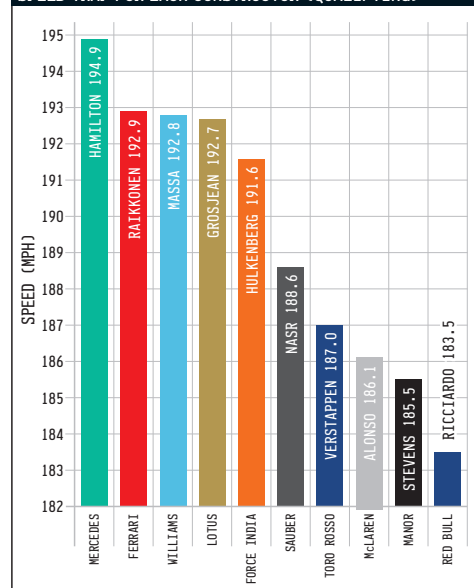
POS	DRIVER	PTS	AUS	MAL	PRC	BRN	E	MC	CDN	A	GB	H	B	I	SGP	J	RUS	USA	MEX	BR	UAE
1	HAMILTON	327	1st	2nd	1st	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	1st	6th	1st	1st	ret	1st	1st	1st	-	-	-
2	VETTEL	251	3rd	1st	3rd	5th	3rd	2nd	5th	4th	3rd	1st	12th	2nd	1st	3rd	2nd	3rd	-	-	-
3	ROSBERG	247	2nd	3rd	2nd	3rd	1st	1st	2nd	1st	2nd	8th	2nd	17th	4th	2nd	ret	2nd	-	-	-
4	RAIKKONEN	123	ret	4th	4th	2nd	5th	6th	4th	ret	8th	ret	7th	5th	3rd	4th	8th	ret	-	-	-
5	BOTTAS	111	DNS	5th	6th	4th	4th	14th	3rd	5th	5th	13th	9th	4th	5th	5th	12th	ret	-	-	-
6	MASSA	109	4th	6th	5th	10th	6th	15th	6th	3rd	4th	12th	6th	3rd	ret	17th	4th	ret	-	-	-
7	KVYAT	76	DNS	9th	ret	9th	10th	4th	9th	12th	6th	2nd	4th	10th	6th	13th	5th	ret	-	-	-
8	RICCIARDO	74	6th	10th	9th	6th	7th	5th	13th	10th	ret	3rd	ret	8th	2nd	15th	15th	10th	-	-	-
9	PEREZ	64	10th	13th	11th	8th	13th	7th	11th	9th	9th	ret	5th	6th	7th	12th	3rd	5th	-	-	-
10	VERSTAPPEN	45	ret	7th	17th	ret	11th	ret	15th	8th	ret	4th	8th	12th	8th	9th	10th	4th	-	-	-
11	GROSJEAN	44	ret	11th	7th	7th	8th	12th	10th	ret	ret	7th	3rd	ret	13th	7th	ret	ret	-	-	-
12	HULKENBERG	38	7th	14th	ret	13th	15th	11th	8th	6th	7th	ret	DNS	7th	ret	6th	ret	ret	-	-	-
13	NASR	27	5th	12th	8th	12th	12th	9th	16th	11th	DNS	11th	11th	13th	10th	20th	6th	9th	-	-	-
14	MALDONADO	26	ret	ret	ret	15th	ret	ret	7th	7th	ret	14th	ret	ret	12th	8th	7th	8th	-	-	-
15	SAINZ	18	9th	8th	13th	ret	9th	10th	12th	ret	ret	ret	ret	11th	9th	10th	ret	7th	-	-	-
16	BUTTON	16	11th	ret	14th	DNS	16th	8th	ret	ret	ret	9th	14th	14th	ret	16th	9th	6th	-	-	-
17	ALONSO	11	-	ret	12th	11th	ret	ret	ret	ret	10th	5th	13th	18th	ret	11th	11th	11th	-	-	-
18	ERICSSON	9	8th	ret	10th	14th	14th	13th	14th	13th	11th	10th	10th	9th	11th	14th	ret	ret	-	-	-
19	MERHI	0	DNQ	15th	16th	17th	18th	16th	ret	14th	12th	15th	15th	16th	-	-	13th	-	-	-	-
20	ROSSI	0	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14th	18th	-	12th	-	-	-
21	STEVENS	0	DNQ	DNS	15th	16th	17th	17th	17th	ret	13th	16th	16th	15th	15th	19th	14th	ret	-	-	-
22	MAGNUSSEN	0	DNS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-



CONSTRUCTORS' STANDINGS

POS	CONSTRUCTOR	PTS	AUS	MAL	PRC	BRN	E	MC	CDN	A	GB	H	B	I	SGP	J	RUS	USA	MEX	BR	UAE
1	MERCEDES	574	43	33	43	40	43	40	43	43	43	12	43	25	12	43	25	43	-	-	-
2	FERRARI	374	15	37	27	28	25	26	22	12	19	25	6	28	40	27	22	15	-	-	-
3	WILLIAMS	220	12	18	18	13	20	0	23	25	22	0	10	27	10	10	12	0	-	-	-
4	RED BULL	150	8	3	2	10	7	22	2	1	8	33	12	5	26	0	10	1	-	-	-
5	FORCE INDIA	102	7	0	0	4	0	6	4	10	8	0	10	14	6	8	15	10	-	-	-
6	LOTUS	70	0	0	6	6	4	0	7	6	0	6	15	0	0	10	6	4	-	-	-
7	TORO ROSSO	63	2	10	0	0	2	1	0	4	0	12	4	0	6	3	1	18	-	-	-
8	SAUBER	36	14	0	5	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	1	2	1	0	8	2	-	-	-
9	McLAREN	27	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	12	0	0	0	0	2	8	-	-	-
10	MARUSSIA	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	-	-	-

SPEED TRAP FOR EACH CONSTRUCTOR (QUALIFYING)



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LAT



WHAT DOES MEXICO MEAN TO FORMULA 1?

28

The first Mexican Grand Prix since 1992 will take place on Sunday. **LAWRENCE BARRETTO** explains the significance of the race to the sport in general and the host country in particular



Perez is big news at home in Mexico

Mexico's wait is finally over. Twenty-three years after Mexico City last hosted a Formula 1 race, it's back on the calendar. The Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez, nestled to the east of the sprawling capital, has had a makeover since Nigel Mansell won the 1992 race, and while it's perhaps not the challenge it once was – the trademark bumps have been ironed out, while the Peraltada corner is no more because of safety concerns – there is an air of confidence that it will be a fantastic occasion.

"Twenty-three years is far too long a wait for a country which has a lot of passion for motor racing and culture of the automobile," says former McLaren engineer Jo Ramirez. "But it's back, and for millions of Mexicans it's a dream come true."

So why has it taken so long for a country with such enthusiasm for F1 to get its grand prix back?

Big, poorly-controlled crowds cheered on Rodriguez in 1970



“THE PEOPLE NEED A LOCAL DRIVER. CHILDREN NEED SOMEONE TO ASPIRE TO”

JO RAMIREZ

When Mexico staged its 15th and, until Sunday, last grand prix in '92, there were 16 races on the calendar. This year there are 20, rising to 21 in 2016. The likes of Russia, Korea, China, Bahrain and, from next season, Azerbaijan have paid big money to host a race. The battle for slots has never been fiercer. Mexico bided its time, got the right people onboard, put the finances in place, and then made a bid.

Tavo Hellmund, who had a hand in bringing F1 back to the United States with the Circuit of the Americas, took the Mexico deal to CIE, the third-largest event and entertainment company in the world, which in turn signed up as a promoter. It agreed to share financing the project with the Mexican government, and the wheels were in motion.

“Like any other major project, you need a good foundation to sustain it, especially something with the magnitude and importance of a Formula 1 event,” says Rodrigo Sanchez, the Mexican GP’s director of marketing.

“That foundation has come from many places. We have had a huge amount of support from the federal and local government; this is essential to host a grand prix these days. Having the right promoter for the race is crucial. We’ve had incredible support from private entities and then there’s our great fanbase generated in part by national representation within the championship, meaning Mexican drivers who fans will cheer for.”

Billionaire Carlos Slim was a key player in bringing F1 back to Mexico. He set up the Escuderia Telmex driver programme in 2002 to help Mexicans get a foot on the racing ladder – Sergio Perez and Esteban Gutierrez have been beneficiaries – and put money into F1, first with Sauber and now with Force India and Ferrari.

That backing has allowed Perez to establish himself, while Gutierrez is on the brink of a race seat with the new Haas team, having already had two years as a Sauber race driver and another as a Ferrari reserve. With those two now on the scene, the fifth and sixth Mexicans to have raced

in F1, interest has been reignited. Prior to Perez’s 2011 debut, the last Mexican on a world championship grid was Hector Rebaque in ’81.

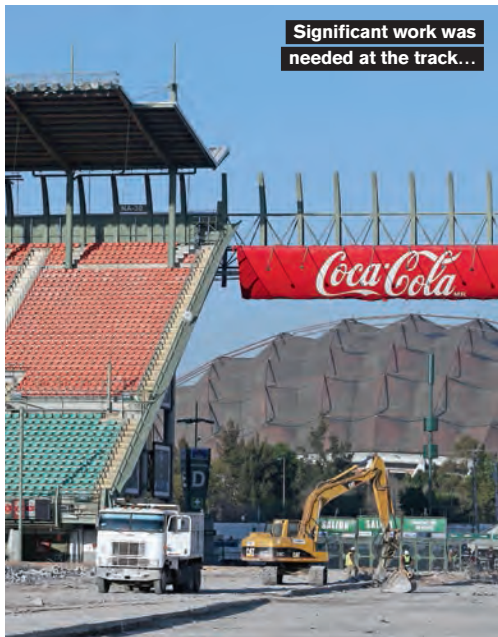
“You need a local driver,” says Ramirez. “The people need someone to support, children need someone to aspire to.”

Gutierrez says: “Having Mexican drivers in F1 has made a big push to have the grand prix back. We are at a certain level now, but if a Mexican driver is more successful in F1 it’s going to be huge. It’s on the right path, so that’s positive.”

The Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez is steeped in history, intertwined with the legend of Pedro and Ricardo Rodriguez, after whom the circuit was named. They drew legions of fans with their passionate approach to racing. The outpouring of emotion when their lives were taken by the sport they loved was testament to how much they meant to the Mexican people – and their legend has an influence even today.

“We have a lot of respect for them,” says Perez. “They were the two guys who stood up and did ▶

Significant work was needed at the track...



XPBIMAGES



TEE/LAT

“THE PEOPLE IN MEXICO HAVE MOTORSPORT KNOWLEDGE. THEY LOVE THEIR RACING”

JOHNNY HERBERT



XPBIMAGES

► something in motorsport. We don't have many drivers who have done something big for Mexico. They are the ones who are very special. They are legends. When I grew up, I was proud of what they achieved. They are the guys we admire.”

Gutierrez adds: “Their legend is big in Mexico. There are a lot of fans who have kept the Rodriguez story alive. It's the heritage that we have and for me it's quite special.”

It's that history that has proved crucial to maintaining the momentum to bring the race back. And now Perez's results in F1 are big news back home, with the Force India driver's shock podium in Russia causing a real stir.

When F1 returned to the US in 2012, there was much interest in Mexico, with thousands making the trip across the border to support Perez. This year's race at the Autodromo is a sell-out, with organisers even staging an additional release of tickets to cope with demand, bringing the total number sold to 110,000.

“After the grand prix, when everyone has the experience, they will feel much more connected to the sport,” says Gutierrez. “At the moment, they are following but following from a distance. The race will change all that.”

Mexico has a five-year deal, and the organisers are taking a sensible, measured approach. They didn't try to do too much for the opening race, instead focusing on ensuring the venue is ready in time and getting the basics right.

“The organisers need to ensure the event goes off without a hitch, that the facilities are up to standard and that it goes down well with FOM, the FIA, the media and the fans,” says Ramirez.

From next year, the plan is to increase the capacity and boost the support programme, currently historic F1 and the country's junior F4 category, to give fans better value for money.

When F1's return to Mexico was first mooted, there was concern about the ageing facilities at Mexico City's Autodromo, leading to speculation

that Cancun and Guadalajara could step in, but those projects never materialised.

“They've definitely got it right,” says Ramirez. “The only place it can be is Mexico City. There are so many people, it's easy to fill the Autodromo and it's where the Rodriguez brothers started. It has the history. We have to do it there. I'm so glad that's what happened.”

Mexico's return to the F1 calendar means the championship gain a race with true heritage. “The popularity of motorsport across the world is under a lot of stress because there are so many other sports out there,” says ex-Lotus and Benetton driver Johnny Herbert, who raced in Mexico in 1991 and 1992.

“For it to succeed, you need the right people who love motorsport. Mexico has that. The people have motorsport knowledge. Mexicans love their racing. They haven't seen an F1 race on their patch for a long time. And yet they were waiting for tickets to go on sale. You can't buy that interest.”

Many of the sport's new venues have impressive facilities, but lack atmosphere. Mexico will have no such problems. Nico Hulkenberg, who was in Mexico City for Force India's launch earlier this year, says: “It's going to be really awesome because of the Mexican flare, the attitude and the amazing people. I was really impressed by the city, the people and the vibe.”

Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez boasts a new pit complex



Gutierrez demoed Ferrari in Mexico City in August





...with part of it routed through a baseball stadium

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE MEXICAN GP

1963

A non-championship race was staged in 1962 and was won by Jim Clark and Trevor Taylor after the Scot took over his team-mate's car having been black-flagged for a push-start. The first world championship race around the original configuration of what was then the Magdalena Mixhuca track was held a year later, and also won by Clark.



LAT

1964

One of the defining last-race title deciders; John Surtees won the championship after being let past by Ferrari team-mate Lorenzo Bandini when Clark suffered a late engine failure. It was the first of three occasions where the world champion was crowned in Mexico, the others being Denny Hulme in '67 and Graham Hill in '68.



LAT

1970

Jacky Ickx won the last Mexican GP before it fell off the calendar for the first time. Difficulties in keeping the crowd under control were a major factor in it losing its slot, with Jackie Stewart famously retiring after hitting a dog during the race.



LAT

1986

After a long absence, with IndyCar holding two races there in the early '80s, the Mexican GP returned in 1986 on a slightly shorter, and much safer, track layout. Gerhard Berger took his and Benetton's first win at the now-renamed Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez.



LAT

1992

The seventh and final race of Mexico's second F1 stint was won by Nigel Mansell. Complaints about the bumpy track, poor safety standards and a lack of investment again led to the track being dropped from the calendar. The track subsequently held Champ Car, NASCAR and A1GP events.



LAT



Gutierrez (22) raced in Mexico in 2008

XPB IMAGES

The fans are really enthusiastic."

Herbert agrees: "My most vivid memory of the last one was that it was packed and that the fans loved it, they love their racing. It was like a Monza-type atmosphere. They went crazy for it, you saw it in their faces.

"There are places you go, such as Monaco, where it's gentleman-type faces in the crowd, and then you go to Monza and it's a completely different scenario. It's nice we have grabbed another one back, a race which has a lot of passion for the sport and the drivers."

While Gutierrez won't be in the car for his home race, he does have a pretty good idea of what it will be like for Perez. "I raced in Mexico City for the Formula BMW World Final in 2008. It was a small introduction to what it could be to have a race in my country. I remember sitting on the grid and having so much media interest, so

many photographers — it was all new to me. At that time I was just starting out, but there were a lot of people in the grandstands and there was so much enthusiasm.

"The noise was incredible. It was only a Formula BMW race and there were about 30,000 people. Not huge, I know, but for a Formula BMW race it was good. It sent tingles down my spine. It was a very special feeling and was something I've taken with me all the way through my career. Now we have the grand prix again. I can't wait."

Mexico has achieved its dream — F1 is back. And it clearly means a lot to the country. The challenge now will be to keep hold of the race. But if the passion remains, Perez and Gutierrez perform strongly in their careers and the promoter and government continues to give their backing, there's no reason why Mexico's third stint on the calendar can't be a long one. ❧

MEXICO TRACK GUIDE

With Williams development driver **ALEX LYNN**

My feeling of the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez track, having done around 50 laps of it in the simulator, is that I really like it. The track is quite wide in the first sector and that's where all the overtaking will happen. The second sector is what Formula 1 is all about, with high-speed sweeping corners and having the car right on the edge. The last sector is focused on that stadium section, which is slow but it'll be impressive for the spectators. Overall, I think it's really nice mix of corners that fit together well.

Lynn is the Williams simulator ace



S. BLOXHAM/LAT

CIRCUIT INFORMATION

AUTODROMO HERMANOS RODRIGUEZ

LENGTH 2.674 miles NUMBER OF LAPS 71 RACE DISTANCE 189.738miles

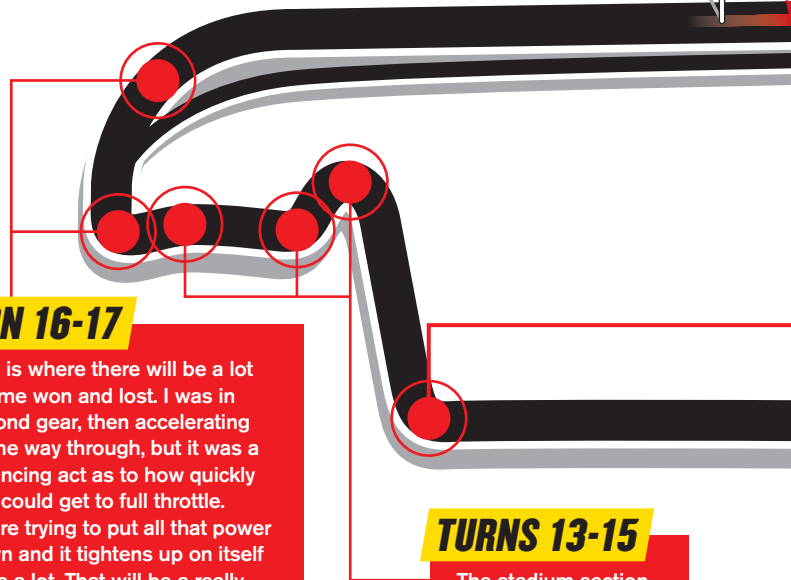


CORNER-BY-CORNER



Venerable track is much-modified

TEE/LAT



TURN 16-17

This is where there will be a lot of time won and lost. I was in second gear, then accelerating all the way through, but it was a balancing act as to how quickly you could get to full throttle. You're trying to put all that power down and it tightens up on itself quite a lot. That will be a really difficult one, especially in terms of tyre degradation, so it depends on how abrasive the track is.

URNS 13-15

The stadium section is very, very tight. I was dropping to first gear in the hairpin – it was that tight. Then there's a short shift to second, through the little right, then try not to overheat the rears too much because you've got the long Turn 16 coming up. It might be twisty and a bit fiddly, but if you have a packed final sector with fans going crazy, it'll make that section a whole lot more enjoyable.



Final turns run through stadium

TURN 6

The hairpin is quite traditional, you need to go in deep and cut back to get a nice exit. All the way through this opening section it will be important to keep the rear tyres as cool as possible because then you head into the fast sector two and you don't want overheating rears going through there.





PIT STRAIGHT

You're getting up to Monza speeds down here, about 217mph with the DRS open, which is really motoring on. Depending on the length of the DRS zone, you could possibly see some drivers getting a pass done before Turn 1.

TURN 1

It's nice that Turn 1 isn't just a hairpin. There is a feeling that slow-speed corners promote more overtaking, but I think something slightly faster is better. This one is 90 degrees and the track opens up a lot on the way in, so it could lend itself to a motocross-style block pass, even from a distance back.

URNS 2-3

I'm looking forward to seeing what the kerbing is like here because the left-right is really nice, and if the kerbs are small enough, you will be able to really launch the cars over them. I'm a big fan of launching a car over kerbs so this section could be great.

URNS 11-12

You'll go flat through Turn 11 and flick through the gears before a second-gear big brake into a 90-degree right for 12. It's then a short stab of the throttle down to the tight hairpin.



Esses have more run-off than before

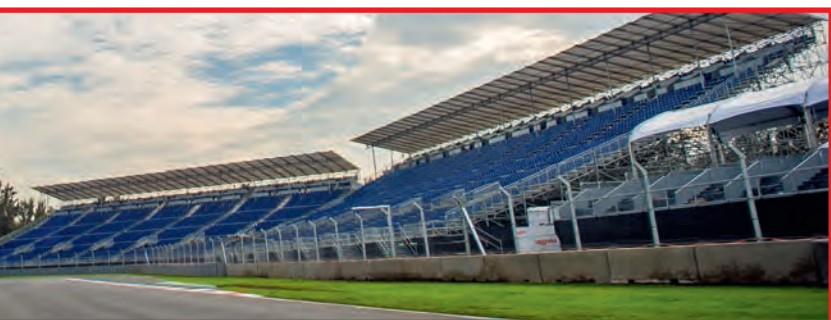
TEE/LAT

URNS 7-10

I really like the Esses, which have been switched around from the old configuration to allow for more run-off. It's a fast left leading into a right-left, and is all about keeping the car balanced and sacrificing speed in one corner to get the next one right. The left is in fourth gear, the right is flat and then the left needs a lift. Then you're down one for the right. This sequence could be a good opportunity for the braver drivers, and the cars with more downforce, to gain an advantage.

URNS 4-5

Turn 4 is quite deceitful because it's tighter than it looks. I don't think the exit speed of that corner and of Turn 5 will be so important because they go into a tight hairpin. The main thing will be carrying enough entry speed into that left and being disciplined to get car in the right place for a reasonable exit.



HONDA'S HISTORIC BREAKTHROUGH

The Japanese manufacturer won't be fighting at the front in Mexico this weekend. But 50 years ago, it took its first F1 victory there.

By ADAM COOPER

34

October 24 1965: Richie Ginther takes the chequered flag to give Honda its first grand prix win. That victory in Mexico City was a hugely impressive achievement, given that the Japanese manufacturer had made its debut barely 15 months earlier and had contested just 11 grands prix.

The marque first appeared on the scene at the 1964 German Grand Prix. Founder Soichiro Honda's original plan had been to supply Lotus with engines, and only when that deal fell through did the company build its own car, developing it in secret at its home track of Suzuka.

The virtually unknown American Ronnie Bucknum was hired to drive, in large part on the basis that no one would pay much attention if the V12-powered RA271 didn't perform. After retirements at the Nurburgring, Monza and Watkins Glen, the team returned to Japan armed with much useful knowledge. That winter huge effort went into creating the revised RA272 for 1965, with particular attention paid to weight

saving. Soichiro Honda also decided to expand to a second car, and he now had the confidence to hire a high-profile driver.

At 33 Richie Ginther had yet to win a grand prix, but across six seasons with Ferrari and BRM he had finished second eight times, and third on five other occasions. He'd also twice been team-mate to a world champion – his long-time buddy Phil Hill in 1961, and Graham Hill the following season. In '63 he'd finished second equal with Hill, beaten only by Jim Clark.

Most importantly for Honda, the Californian had a solid background in engineering and was regarded as perhaps the best car developer of the time. He was famous for his mechanical sympathy and an uncanny ability to sense well in advance when something was about to go awry deep in the engine.

"I got to know him because of Phil Hill," says Jackie Stewart, who replaced Ginther at BRM. "He was a

very nice man. I don't think he'll go down as one of the great drivers, but he was a player."

The '65 season got off to a poor start in Monaco, where Ginther and Bucknum struggled for pace and reliability. But there were signs of promise at Spa, where the team leader qualified fourth and scored Honda's first point with sixth. Then at Silverstone Ginther qualified third and led half the first lap until he was passed by Clark. By now people were beginning to pay attention.

"They were outsiders and they were a new culture to F1," says Stewart. "But by then they had become seriously big players in motorcycle racing, and that was where their fame was. Bob

"I COULDN'T SEE ANYONE BEHIND ME. LORD, I THOUGHT THEY ALL MUST HAVE SPUN OUT..."

RICHIE GINTHER



Ginther led the race from start to finish

McIntyre, who raced with Honda, was a good friend of mine. He really thought highly of Honda and Japanese technology."

Ginther started second in Holland, once again leading in the early stages, and then qualified third for the penultimate race at Watkins Glen. The pace was there, but Honda never seemed to enjoy a clean race, as niggling problems with the transmission, electrical system and fuel injection hampered both drivers. Ginther had just a pair of sixth places to his name.

The season finale was in Mexico City. Honda hadn't participated the previous year, so the team arrived early in an effort to acclimatise. Several days before the race Ginther and Bucknum were running around in private early-morning test sessions, dialling the cars in and adjusting the complex fuel injection for the venue's 2000m altitude. The RA272 was quick on the long pit

Ginther celebrates with chief mechanic Yoshio Nakamura



straight; Ginther qualified third, behind Clark and Dan Gurney, having preferred Bucknum's chassis.

At the start Ginther didn't get away cleanly initially, but he then picked up momentum and for the third time in '65 found himself in the lead.

"I put it down man, and I was gone," he said a couple of years later. "I was all by myself at the first corner. At the end of the first lap I looked in my mirror and I couldn't see anyone behind me. Lord, I thought they all must have spun out..."

This time it was the opposition who wilted in the Mexican heat. Jack Brabham struggled with an oil leak, Clark a sick engine and Stewart a slipping clutch. Others also hit trouble. Ginther, meanwhile, was using only 11,000rpm instead of the 12,000 that Honda permitted him to run.

Clark's Lotus team-mate Mike Spence led the pursuit initially, until he was overhauled by

Gurney, who set about closing the gap. A close finish appeared to be in prospect, but Ginther crossed the line 2.8s clear, having allowed himself another 500rpm in the closing stages. It was to be his only grand prix victory.

Honda had honed a truly competitive package, and at a press conference in Tokyo the founder stressed it was all about improving the breed. "Once we had established our goal, we decided to choose the most difficult path to get there," he said. "This is why we entered the grand prix series. We will therefore not be content with this victory alone. We will study why we won and aggressively apply those winning technologies to new cars."

But there was a catch. Mexico was the last race for the 1.5-litre regulations that had been in place since 1961, and the next season would feature three-litre rules and a "return to power". Honda

had no experience of bigger-capacity engines and would have to start from a clean sheet of paper.

In his AUTOSPORT column the week after Mexico, Bruce McLaren pointed out that the rule change was good news for rivals, given Honda's surge in form: "I think we're a little bit lucky that this 1.5-litre formula has ended, for the winds of change were blowing a gale in Mexico."

And with extraordinary prescience he also sounded a note of caution about the role of major manufacturers in F1. "Just how long can the valiant little groups, Brabham, Cooper and even Lotus and BRM, hold out against a research staff of 700 and a race organisation that reputedly spent £66,000 a week to put their machinery where it finished in Mexico?"

The numbers might have changed, but it's a question that resonates 50 years later. ❧



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Lord Montagu's life dedicated to the classic car movement will be honoured at Classic & Sports Car – The London Show. The founder of the National Motor Museum, Vintage Tyre Supplies and the Beaulieu autojumbles will be commemorated via a spectacular 'Blower' Bentley and Lord Montagu's own favourite, a 1909 Rolls-Royce Silver Ghost. The special display is the latest feature added to the event at Alexandra Palace from 30 October to 1 November, which already includes a wonderful tribute to Sir Stirling Moss with five of his most significant single-seaters. The exhibits range from the Cooper MkIV with which he dominated in Formula 3 to the Vanwall with which the boy wonder became the first British driver to win his home Grand Prix in a Brit-built car.

As well as more than 300 of the world's most desirable classic cars, other main features will include the 10 greatest British cars ever made (including the unveiling of the overall number one selected by a global poll) and the history of Aston Martin. There will be

loads of other attractions including a wonderful automotive art gallery and a live stage where Henry Hope-Frost will interview a host of names including Ross Brawn, Norman Dewis and more.

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See www.classicandsportscarshow.com



THE KNOWLEDGE

WHAT IS IT?

Masterminded by Classic & Sports Car magazine and Haymarket Exhibitions, the event will showcase some 300-plus of the world's finest classic cars. As well as a wealth of dealer displays, there will be three central features plus a plethora of other attractions for all the family.

WHEN IS IT?

Friday 30 October to Sunday 1 November.

WHERE DOES IT TAKE PLACE?

Alexandra Palace in London. The iconic building was chosen specifically because it was an attractive and appropriate setting for so many beautiful cars.

OPENING TIMES

Friday and Saturday: 10am to 6pm
Sunday: 10am to 5pm

GETTING THERE

Alexandra Palace is easily accessible by public transport and the venue encourages people to use it. The nearest stations are Alexandra Palace on the overground network and Wood Green underground. Visitors who arrive by bus or train will be able to get a lift up the hill to the palace in a classic double-decker Routemaster bus. Parking is limited to 1500 spaces and, once it is full, drivers will be directed to an overflow facility off-site at Wood Green.

For enthusiasts driving to the show in a classic, C&SC has secured car parking solely for classics. Spaces are limited and will be offered on a first-come-first-served basis. You will be contacted when you buy your tickets to reserve your spot.

TICKET PRICES

Advance tickets: £23 plus £2 booking fee (adult). On-the-door prices are £27 (adults). Children under 16 will be admitted free of charge if they are accompanied by an adult.

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A DIFFERENT KIND OF CHAMPIONSHIP BATTLE

Few BTCC seasons have started with so many question marks, but again it boiled down to an epic scrap between the tin-top top guns.

By **SCOTT MITCHELL**



Gordon Shedden and Jason Plato rarely went wheel to wheel during their fight for the British Touring Car Championship title. The one time they did, crossing the line separated by 93 thousandths of a second at Oulton Park, it perfectly encapsulated their season-long fight – except for the fact that while Plato won that battle, it was Shedden who won the war.

New rules and a shake-up at the front of the grid always meant the championship would be tough to call. But the 'usual-suspects' cliché rang true enough. Title fortunes waxed and waned, expected race winners fell by the wayside and a thrilling conclusion was delivered. Eventually.

For all the swings of the pendulum, and five drivers being trumpeted as title protagonists heading into the final triple-header, the BTCC had lacked any standout on-track moments between the championship chasers, except at Oulton.

Yes, it was very close and yes, it seemed harder than ever to thread together a

weekend. But where was the hang-it-out drive of a champion? Where was the flashpoint? Where was the controversy?

That was, it transpired, lying in wait in Kent. The final day at Brands Hatch delivered in spades. Everything that came before it had been building, building, building to an incredible climax that at times felt genuinely out of reach.

The new rules were the cause. Hiking the ballast levels and setting the race-two grid by the fastest laps in race one meant race-day dominance was a thing of the past. For the most part anyway – Plato, Team BMR team-mate Colin Turkington and ►

Plato's win tally (six) was highest of all



“THE TITLE FIGHT BECAME ABOUT WHO COULD ADAPT BEST TO THE NEW RULES”

► Motorbase's Mat Jackson did win two races in a day by the season's end.

The title fight quickly settled into a battle of who could adapt best. And though it took a while to manifest itself in points form, Plato and Shedden had the edge from the beginning.

Plato and his engineer, Carl Faux, had a better grasp on how to play the new regulations — over the first five rounds nobody scored more points in races one and two, with Plato winning four of the first 12 races. A damage-limitation weekend at Croft was born out of the first tactical ‘sacrifice’ of the season, when Plato started race one from the pitlane instead of 12th to give himself free air to ensure a good grid position for race two. Everything they did was with the bigger picture in mind.

Shedden had a different approach. As Honda developed its car on the fly — the Civic Type-R did not appear until two weeks before the start of the season — the Scot's method was more orthodox and built on consistent scoring.

Winning on the car's debut weekend wasn't in the script, but Shedden added to his race-two



Snetterton was “a disaster” for Shedden

Brands Hatch victory, which came after a last-lap puncture robbed Plato of a dominant win, by leading the way in the opening Thruxton encounter.

That was achieved with 57kg on board — the last time he'd carry that ‘little’ going into each weekend. Conversely, Plato would go a round longer, making the most of only having 48kg of ballast to take pole and win the first two races at Oulton Park.

Extra weight made life more difficult for Shedden, but he shone in the circumstances. Plato had the raw speed early on, but Shedden was doing what the new rules made immensely difficult: stringing together complete weekends.

“Colin said something last year with the BMW, that ballast almost settled the car down and it kind of did that for us as well,” says Shedden. “It gave us something sometimes, it helped the balance, it wasn't all negative.”

At Oulton he was fifth in qualifying and sixth in race one. At Croft, third and fourth. “The only one that was a disaster was Snetterton,” he says on reflection. There, Shedden qualified in the

midfield with 75kg of ballast. Unlike Plato at Croft, he started in the pack, made no progress in race one, started mid-pack again in race two and got caught in first-lap carnage, getting fired off by team-mate Matt Neal of all people. He left Norfolk with three points in his pocket.

That was a lesson learned. Thereafter, his qualifying performances only got better: “The second half of the year, qualifying was the critical thing. After Snetterton, the qualifying laps were four pretty mental laps.”

A return to 66kg for the next two rounds resulted in fifth at Knockhill and a lap at Rockingham that launched him from outside the top 10 to third (only to get demoted to seventh for a pitlane infringement). With 75kg, Plato managed 22nd at Knockhill, and was fifth at Rockingham before Shedden's penalty — and that was at a track where the VW was expected to be back on top.

While it was not surprising that Plato's VW didn't suit the twists of Knockhill, a slight engine problem was identified as the culprit for his issues at Rockingham. But the motor wasn't changed. So at Silverstone, Plato qualified poorly and had

RACE BY RACE



1 Brands Hatch Indy

RACE 1 Rob Collard
RACE 2 Gordon Shedden
RACE 3 Matt Neal

WSR's life without Colin Turkington started strongly after Andy Priaulx took pole and Rob Collard beat Aron Smith and Jason Plato in the opener. Plato dominated race two but a puncture handed the win to Gordon Shedden — and Matt Neal made it two for Team Dynamics with reversed-grid glory.



2 Donington Park

RACE 1 Jason Plato
RACE 2 Colin Turkington
RACE 3 Matt Neal

Team BMR made its presence felt by heading qualifying and winning the first two races. Plato got the jump on poleman Turkington to win the opener before his team-mate hit back in race two, both getting the better of Shedden. Neal took the reversed-grid win after Josh Cook's and Smith's fight ended with both off track.



3 Thruxton

RACE 1 Gordon Shedden
RACE 2 Jason Plato
RACE 3 Adam Morgan

Smith made it two poles on the bounce for BMR but dropped behind Shedden and Neal at the start, then suffered a puncture as the Hondas recorded a one-two. Plato won race two from pole before Adam Morgan's Mercedes took the finale with a classy performance ahead of MG's Andrew Jordan.



4 Oulton Park

RACE 1 Jason Plato
RACE 2 Jason Plato
RACE 3 Sam Tordoff

Plato produced a lesson in mastering the Cheshire track by controlling qualifying and easing to victory in race one. Shedden put him under heavy pressure in the sequel but, despite carrying 75kg of ballast, Plato clinched the first double of 2015 by 0.093s. Sam Tordoff claimed his first win for WSR in race three.



5 Croft

RACE 1 Andy Priaulx
RACE 2 Sam Tordoff
RACE 3 Rob Collard

WSR has always loved the trip to the north-east, but this was easily its strongest visit. Tordoff led the way in qualifying but a mistake early in race one handed Priaulx the first victory of his BTCC return. Tordoff made amends in race two, while Collard completed the clean sweep late on.

WHAT IF MOTORBASE HAD CONTESTED THE FULL SEASON?

This is a question asked with such regularity in the final weeks that it became more than irritating. Paddock whingeing over the potency of Motorbase's new-for-2015 Ford EcoBoost engine tended to dominate non-title talk.

Motorbase's inability to contest the full season makes this an unanswerable question. David Bartrum's team withdrew from the first five rounds due to funding issues, but reappeared later on with Mat Jackson and James Cole.

A series loophole (the era of the TOCA BTCC Licence meant teams doing half-seasons was never envisaged or catered for) allowed Motorbase to run without weight, but not before hauling 45kg on its anonymous return at Snetterton. When that was removed, Jackson flew.

He took a brace of podiums at Knockhill. Then he took poles at Rockingham, Silverstone and on the Brands Hatch Grand Prix circuit, winning the opening races at each and race two at Brands. The car had improved and the pace it showed across four very different venues is testament to a more-compliant chassis.

The EcoBoost has more torque than its Duratec predecessor, and instead of delivering power in



one hit sustains it throughout the power curve.

If Motorbase had contested the full season, it may not have won as many races as it did. Had Jackson been on the money from the start he'd have had ballast at subsequent rounds, which wasn't the case in the five events the team did contest. Yes, he won with 75kg and soft tyres in race two at Brands, but this is a case in isolation.

Also, TOCA performs tests that determine an engine's boost levels at the start of the season. These were reviewed at Thruxton in May. So if the Mountune powerplant did initially have more boost, it may well have been pegged back.

Next season, we will know more.



a disappointing race one that ended in another puncture. BMR fitted a reconditioned engine for race two (which was also used at the finale), but still Plato was marginally down in a straight line.

While Plato struggled, Shedden qualified second with maximum ballast, at a Silverstone track where the NGTC Honda had never qualified higher than ninth. One title challenge was unravelling, another was gaining momentum.

This made the difference. Plato's edge in the first half of the season came from getting points in big chunks in races one and two, when he was able to push home the VW's advantage to greater effect than Turkington. The 2014 champion wasn't slow to revert to a front-wheel-drive mentality after years in a BMW, but Plato was just quicker on the draw when the CC was the most dangerous weapon.

So when the Honda caught, then passed, the VW in terms of development in the second half of the season, suddenly Shedden's ability to bank good points over three races was more of a trump card compared to Plato grabbing them in big bursts (see results table). ▶



6 Snetterton

RACE 1 Colin Turkington
RACE 2 Colin Turkington
RACE 3 Jack Goff

Turkington's title charge found much-needed momentum in Norfolk when the 2014 champ turned pole into a double win on Sunday. Shedden qualified poorly and had a disastrous trio of races, scoring just three points, while MG's Jack Goff took a breakthrough victory in race three – the team's only triumph of the season.



7 Knockhill

RACE 1 Rob Collard
RACE 2 Gordon Shedden
RACE 3 Matt Neal

On his second weekend back in the championship with the returning Motorbase team, Mat Jackson just missed out on pole to Priaulx, but it was Collard who broke through to win the opener. Shedden was back on the top step in race two, while Neal beat Morgan for his third reversed-grid triumph of the season.



8 Rockingham

RACE 1 Mat Jackson
RACE 2 Gordon Shedden
RACE 3 Jason Plato

Motorbase's EcoBoost-powered Focus claimed its first BTCC pole in the hands of Jackson, and he converted that into a dominant race-one win. Shedden pounced in race two as Cook claimed his first BTCC podium, before Tom Ingram did the same in race three after a thrilling fight with eventual winner Plato.



9 Silverstone

RACE 1 Mat Jackson
RACE 2 Andy Priaulx
RACE 3 Colin Turkington

Jackson secured another pole, and another race-one win, but Priaulx nailed him to win race two. Victory in race three kept Turkington on the fringe of the title fight, but Plato's weekend started with an engine problem and ended with a best result of fourth to hand Shedden the title advantage.



10 Brands Hatch GP

RACE 1 Mat Jackson
RACE 2 Mat Jackson
RACE 3 Jason Plato

Plato beat Shedden in the opener, baulking him early on to stop him setting a laptime. The Scot thus started race two mid-pack, and non-scored after contact. The finale was won by Plato, but Shedden took the title with a feisty drive to fourth from 19th. It followed another pole and two wins for Jackson.

► “We’ve got a history at Dynamics of building cars that are late to debut – this one was incredibly late,” Shedden points out. “You try to use what you’ve learned on the previous cars – we worked so hard on the Tourer last year but it was different, and when we tried to use what we did on the estate it just wasn’t working.”

“There were some late nights and stressful times to try to decide where we were going with the car. Team and engineering-wise, we’ve been together for a long time and that is one of our strengths.”

Even with the mid-season arrival of the Motorbase Ford Focus, which with no weight and a punchy new EcoBoost engine allowed Mat Jackson to bag pole and victory at Rockingham, Silverstone and Brands Hatch, the Honda was the pick of the bunch by the season’s end.

Weight-corrected, some teams suspected Shedden was several tenths up the road at Rockingham and Silverstone. But he was putting everything on the table and reaping the rewards – OK, team-mate Neal was still mathematically in contention going into the final round, but a trio of reversed-grid wins didn’t stack up to Shedden’s constant frontrunning pace and results.

The bottom line is that as the Civic’s development curve reached its peak, so did Shedden’s driving. And while Plato was truly excellent in 2015, and will point to the opening-round Brands puncture and Aron Smith snubbing



Neal won at first two rounds, but not Thruxton

BMR team orders at the same track in October as title-defining moments, this was a championship Shedden won as much as the BMR man lost.

Arguably the most telling factor in the title battle is Plato winning four races in the first half of the year and just two in the second. Plato was, in a way, swimming upstream late on, but refused to detract from his rivals’ efforts.

“I’m not taking anything away from Gordon and Honda,” Plato, second in the points for a fifth time, insists. “They’ve performed brilliantly this year. His performance when he’s had maximum ballast has been very strong.”

“We’ve got some improvements to make. We could have beaten them this year – should have

beaten them. And we didn’t. But I’m pleased with the year; it’s been a great season.”

On reflection, part of Plato’s pride will undoubtedly be in how he eclipsed last year’s runaway champion Turkington in the same team. After the war of words throughout 2014, instigated by Plato, regarding the performance advantage the Northern Irishman was enjoying at the wheel of his WSR BMW, this was the sort of season Plato needed to back up his claims.

Turkington was by no means sluggish in the other CC, and won twice at Snetterton on merit (with victories at Donington and Silverstone at the beginning and end of the year too). While he seemed to be a bit behind Plato when the VW

JORDAN AT MG

The last time Andrew Jordan partnered Triple Eight, he was a promising-but-undercooked driver who, by his own admission, was not ready to deal with a works-team environment as a sophomore.

Six years on, now a champion, he was relishing the prospect of joining Ian Harrison’s squad again (this time in an MG rather than a Vauxhall).

Pre-season talk was positive, the partnership seemed buoyant, then chronically undelivered. A title challenge was probably going to be tough – at the top of his game, and with the MG the fastest front-wheel-drive car on the grid, Jason Plato was a distant second in the points in 2014.

With the MG changing little over the winter, compared to Honda introducing a new car and emerging powerhouse Team BMR revamping its Volkswagen CCs for Plato and Colin Turkington, a quick start for Jordan was vital. So seventh, fifth

and 19th at Brands Hatch was hardly encouraging.

The reversed-grid encounter at Donington Park yielded a first podium for MG, but Jordan would have to wait until the second race at Oulton Park for a rostrum finish earned in a ‘normal’ race. He’d score one more – Silverstone race one – all season, and rack up five in total. Jack Goff scored MG’s only win.

Jordan became more critical about the team’s inability to start a weekend strongly enough, and the seeds of discontent were sown before the season even reached halfway. The line would often be “we’ve finished where we should have started” on set-up, though as a title-winning driver it’s fair to argue that Jordan should shoulder some responsibility for not leading the team in the right direction.

Now Jordan is off to join Mat Jackson in the Motorbase Ford line-up, and both he and Triple Eight will look to restore their hurt reputations next year.



Jordan’s year failed to deliver on promise

DRIVERS’ STANDINGS



POS	DRIVER	TEAM & CAR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	Gordon Shedden (GB)	Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type-R	6th	1st	DNF	2nd	14th	3rd	1st	3rd	5th	6th	2nd	4th	4th
2	Jason Plato (GB)	Team BMR Volkswagen CC	3rd	DNF	16th	1st	5th	8th	4th	1st	7th	1st	1st	5th	27th
3	Matt Neal (GB)	Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type-R	8th	8th	1st	17th	2nd	1st	2nd	DNF	6th	2nd	4th	3rd	5th
4	Colin Turkington (GB)	Team BMR Volkswagen CC	5th	3rd	12th	3rd	1st	11th	7th	5th	4th	25th	8th	6th	7th
5	Andrew Jordan (GB)	Triple Eight Racing MG 6 GT	7th	5th	19th	4th	4th	2nd	6th	7th	2nd	4th	3rd	2nd	6th
6	Sam Tordoff (GB)	WSR BMW 125i M Sport	15th	7th	4th	5th	9th	DNF	11th	6th	3rd	9th	5th	1st	2nd
7	Adam Morgan (GB)	Ciceley Racing Mercedes A-Class	11th	4th	7th	9th	3rd	12th	3rd	8th	1st	11th	6th	17th	9th
8	Andy Priaulx (GB)	WSR BMW 125i M Sport	9th	2nd	8th	12th	10th	DNC	5th	DNC	13th	3rd	15th	DNF	1st
9	Jack Goff (GB)	Triple Eight Racing MG 6 GT	4th	9th	2nd	7th	8th	DNF	8th	4th	11th	7th	9th	8th	10th
10	Rob Collard (GB)	WSR BMW 125i M Sport	1st	16th	DNF	8th	6th	4th	13th	2nd	14th	13th	DNF	14th	3rd
11	Aron Smith (IRL)	Team BMR Volkswagen CC	2nd	12th	3rd	DNF	6th	21st	11th	8th	5th	7th	7th	12th	
12	Mat Jackson (GB)	Motorbase Ford Focus ST	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
13	Tom Ingram (GB)	Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Avensis	10th	6th	6th	16th	13th	10th	10th	DNF	10th	8th	11th	9th	8th
14	Rob Austin (GB)	Rob Austin Racing Audi A4	14th	10th	5th	10th	18th	DNF	14th	9th	17th	15th	13th	DNF	13th
15	Josh Cook (GB)	Power Maxed Chevrolet Cruze	13th	14th	DNF	13th	7th	7th	9th	18th	9th	12th	26th	13th	11th
16	Dave Newsham (GB)	Power Maxed Chevrolet Cruze	17th	15th	9th	6th	11th	DNF	DNF	12th	12th	10th	DNF	18th	15th
17	Aiden Moffat (GB)	Aiden Moffat Racing Mercedes A-Class	12th	13th	DNF	18th	16th	5th	15th	10th	16th	17th	12th	11th	17th
18	Martin Depper (GB)	Eurotech Honda Civic	16th	DNF	13th	15th	19th	9th	12th	13th	15th	14th	14th	DNF	14th
19	James Cole (GB)	Motorbase Ford Focus ST	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
20	Jeff Smith (GB)	Eurotech Honda Civic	19th	23rd	14th	14th	15th	13th	17th	20th	DNF	19th	10th	10th	26th



Priaulx starred in Silverstone race two

was at its strongest in the first half of the year, if not for retirements at Knockhill and Brands he would have outscored his teammate after the summer break.

He kept himself in title contention until the puncture in the penultimate race, which was significantly closer than the team he left managed. Rob Collard's impressive curtain-raising victory aside, WSR's BMWs struggled early on with a significant straightline speed deficit, but seemed to turn the corner after Thruxton, with three-time world champion Andy Priaulx hitting his stride and Sam Tordoff winning at Oulton Park and Croft.

Tordoff was an outside contender until Silverstone, but never a likely champion because the car was limited compared to its rivals. 'Priaulx in the BTCC title fight' had a nice ring to it pre-season, but his European Le Mans Series commitments meant he missed Rockingham and had no chance of the championship.

Had he completed the campaign, though, it would still have been a big ask to match the top two, for this was a season that belonged to Shedden and Plato. A campaign of unparalleled proximity among the title contenders belied the control both had over the opposition and their efforts set up a tense and thrilling finale. OK, it wasn't the *mano a mano* showdown some craved, with Plato dominating but Shedden claiming a second crown by four points after a battling drive up the order. But it was a fitting way to end a gripping season.

Yes, the 2015 British Touring Car Championship lacked a traditional straight shootout. But the unconventional battle it delivered was just as satisfying. 🏆

SUPERGRID

Based on average qualifying position, pre-grid penalties. Session in which drivers did not set a time disregarded. Only those who started six races or more included.

4.0	Jackson	4.9
5.5	Turkington	6.0
6.3	Priaulx	6.6
7.1	Plato	7.8
8.1	Jordan	8.5
9.6	Morgan	10.3
11.7	Collard	13.9
14.0	Newsham	14.6
15.0	Moffat	16.3
17.4	Cole	17.4
17.4	J Smith	18.2
18.6	Abbott	23.5
23.7	Belcher	25.1
25.8	Lines	25.8
25.8	Welch	26.0
		Hamilton

WINS

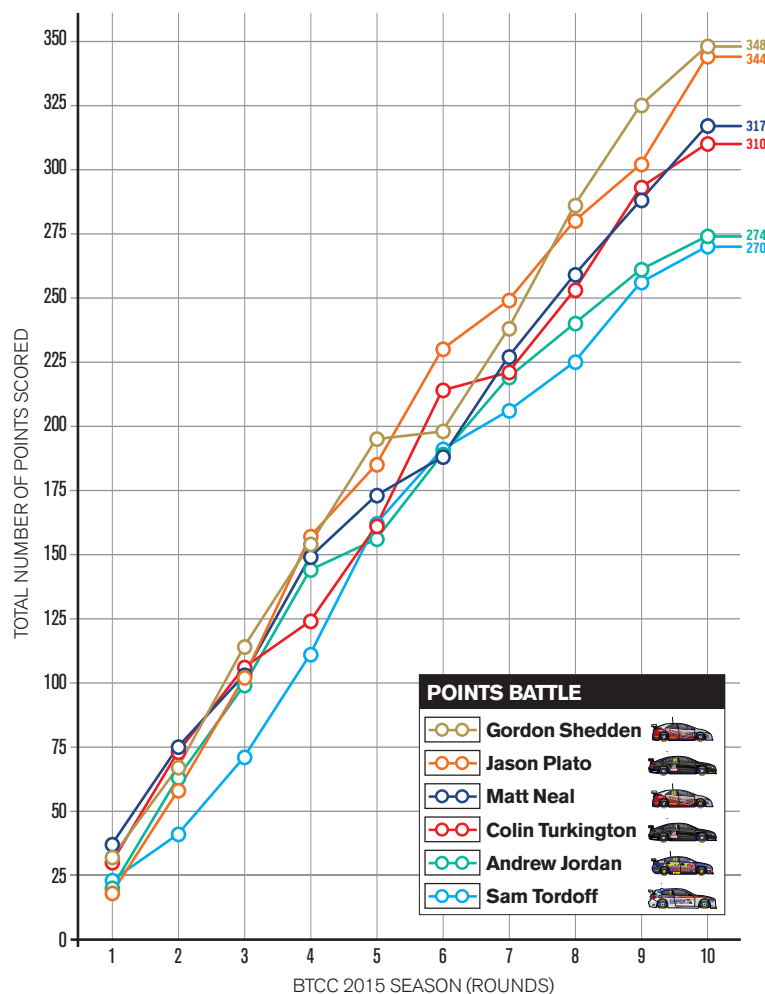


JASON PLATO	6
GORDON SHEDDEN	4
COLIN TURKINGTON	4
MAT JACKSON	4
ROB COLLARD	3
MATT NEAL	3
SAM TORDOFF	2
ANDY PRIAULX	2
ADAM MORGAN	1
JACK GOFF	1

POLES



MAT JACKSON	3
COLIN TURKINGTON	2
ANDY PRIAULX	2
ARON SMITH	1
JASON PLATO	1
SAM TORDOFF	1



14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	PTS
5th	3rd	14th	DNF	24th	5th	1st	8th	2nd	1st	8th	3rd	4th	5th	6th	19th	4th	348
2nd	5th	3rd	4th	2nd	23rd	7th	6th	27th	7th	1st	25th	7th	4th	5th	6th	1st	344
11th	9th	6th	DNF	11th	6th	8th	1st	8th	5th	4th	8th	5th	6th	7th	7th	5th	317
3rd	4th	1st	1st	7th	10th	DNF	15th	7th	8th	3rd	5th	8th	1st	4th	DNF	12th	310
14th	DNF	4th	7th	5th	8th	4th	7th	6th	12th	9th	2nd	19th	12th	19th	11th	8th	274
1st	6th	11th	5th	4th	4th	DNF	DNF	10th	14th	5th	10th	6th	3rd	11th	13th	11th	270
9th	23rd	7th	2nd	13th	9th	10th	2nd	9th	4th	18th	12th	11th	8th	3rd	3rd	6th	267
4th	2nd	5th	3rd	3rd	3rd	5th	4th	-	-	-	23rd	1st	21st	8th	9th	10th	247
10th	8th	9th	6th	1st	11th	14th	12th	4th	9th	19th	27th	2nd	DNF	20th	5th	3rd	233
6th	1st	DNF	DNF	10th	1st	2nd	DNF	18th	28th	DNF	7th	9th	2nd	10th	10th	7th	226
16th	12th	2nd	DNF	12th	25th	DNS	17th	3rd	11th	6th	6th	3rd	24th	2nd	8th	9th	209
-	-	12th	8th	6th	2nd	3rd	9th	1st	2nd	14th	1st	24th	7th	1st	1st	2nd	200
8th	7th	10th	DNF	9th	DNF	13th	16th	5th	10th	2nd	9th	12th	11th	25th	2nd	DNF	173
7th	DNF	25th	9th	8th	7th	6th	5th	19th	6th	7th	11th	DNF	17th	18th	DNF	DNF	120
DNF	15th	15th	17th	16th	16th	15th	13th	13th	3rd	10th	14th	14th	16th	9th	16th	15th	95
13th	11th	8th	DNF	14th	18th	12th	11th	12th	DNF	DNF	4th	DNF	DNS	26th	4th	DNF	95
18th	13th	W	-	-	22nd	9th	3rd	DNF	13th	DNF	20th	13th	10th	14th	24th	13th	77
DNF	17th	17th	DNF	15th	14th	11th	10th	14th	18th	11th	13th	15th	14th	15th	DNF	19th	53
-	-	21st	11th	DNF	17th	17th	20th	11th	17th	15th	17th	10th	9th	12th	12th	18th	32
24th	14th	26th	18th	18th	12th	DNF	14th	25th	15th	DNF	16th	16th	DNF	24th	14th	16th	31



21 Hunter Abbott (Rob Austin Racing Audi A4), 23; 22 Warren Scott (Team BMR Volkswagen CC), 23; 23 Mike Bushell (AmD Ford Focus ST), 19; 24 Nick Foster (WSR BMW 125i M Sport), 4; 25 Barry Horne (Team Parker Ford Focus ST), 3; 26 Robb Holland (Handy Motorsport Toyota Avensis), 2; 27 Alain Menu (Team BMR Volkswagen CC), 1; 28 Simon Belcher (Handy Motorsport Toyota Avensis), 1; 29 Daniel Welch (Welch Motorsport Proton Persona), 1; 30 Kieran Gallagher (Team Hard Toyota Avensis), 1; 31 Tony Gilham (Team Hard Toyota Avensis), 1; 32 Alex Martin (Team Parker Ford Focus ST), 0; 33 Andy Wilmot (Welch Motorsport Proton Persona), 0; 34 Max Coates (Infiniti Q50), 0; 35 Richard Hawken (Infiniti Q50), 0; 36 Martin Donnelly (Infiniti Q50), 0; 37 Stewart Lines (Houseman Racing Toyota Avensis), 0; 38 Derek Palmer Jr (Infiniti Q50), -2; - Nicolas Hamilton (AmD Audi S3 Saloon), 0; - Jake Hill (AmD Audi S3 Saloon), 0.



AUTOSPORT'S TOP 10 DRIVERS



1 GORDON SHEDDEN

Even Shedden's most hardened critic would do well to argue that he did not deserve to win the title, especially after scoring just three points at Snetterton across a disastrous weekend.

Given that he carried either 75kg or 66kg at the start of each weekend from round three on, what rams home Shedden's quality this year is that his average qualifying result and finishing position bests any other driver in title contention, despite never starting from pole.

Ended the season with four wins and more fastest laps (six) than any other driver. And when it mattered with his back against the wall, he produced a drive right out of the top drawer.



2 JASON PLATO

Switching to a new team with an untried car sounded insane, but Plato knew better than us. And the new partnership delivered in spades.

Extra ballast and new grid-setting rules for race two were designed to stop one driver dominating a weekend, and Plato was the man who managed to do that in the most convincing manner (at Oulton Park).

Nobody had a better grasp of the bigger picture, as exhibited by an excellent run of race-two grid positions (which were the result of clever strategy to make space in race one and set a good laptime).

Plato won more races than any other driver, and suffered some rotten luck. But over the season he was just shaded by Shedden.



3 COLIN TURKINGTON

Talk of the 2014 champion not being able to adjust immediately to the demands of the front-wheel-drive VW after so many years in BMW machinery was generated entirely by the man himself.

Pole second time out at Donington Park and victory in race two probably settled his nerves, but he struggled to perfect the balance and generally found it hard to match Plato over the opening rounds. In the second half of the season, as momentum shifted from the BMR camp to Honda, Turkington made use of his lighter CC to grind out results where Plato struggled, particularly in qualifying.

He doggedly took his title challenge to the penultimate race, in which a puncture ended a muted run in the midfield.

4 ANDREW JORDAN

Some claim that Jordan's not been the same driver since his Snetterton crash last year left him with concussion, and they'll use his poor results this year to back that up.

But in reality his driving has been perfectly fine this season. In a car that, at times, was fifth or sixth quickest, the fact that he remained in title contention until the final round is testimony to his cunning racecraft and dogged determination.

Was shocked not to be able to keep up with, let alone catch, Morgan in race three at Thruxton, which represented his best chance of victory.

Grabbed podiums when he could, and Silverstone race-two puncture wrecked arguably his most competitive weekend.



5 ANDY PRIAULX

Bagged pole on his BTCC return but inexperience on the soft Dunlops cost him victory. He was second in race two, then had difficult Donington and Thruxton racedays through no fault of his own.

Despite strong qualifying form, Priaulx had just one top-five finish in the seven races between his first two podiums, and his season's nadir was taking himself and team-mate Rob Collard out of race two at Oulton Park.

Victory in race one at Croft sparked a run of nine top-five finishes that turned him into a massive outsider for the title, but he missed Rockingham on ELMS duty and his return was a bit of an anti-climax, though he did win brilliantly in race two at Silverstone.

6 MATT NEAL

After a dismal winless 2014 campaign, Neal looked much sharper this season. He made it two wins out of three for the new car on its debut at Brands Hatch with victory in race three and added two more reversed-grid victories, at Donington Park (which helped him lead the points after the first two rounds) and at Knockhill.

Neal's title challenge faded, not helped by costly retirements at Thruxton and Snetterton (and both came in race two, therefore ruining his chances in race three). He used his experience to good effect to act as Shedden's reargunner late on, but wasn't on the podium again over the last nine races.



7 SAM TORDOFF

Judging Tordoff's first season with WSR is tricky, because he managed to remain in title contention until the penultimate round and won two races. That compares well to his three-time world champion team-mate, as does his points tally, and he was well clear of Rob Collard in the standings too.

He struggled in qualifying compared to Priaulx but his victories at Oulton Park and Croft were well-judged, though a mistake in race one in the north-east handed his team-mate his first win.

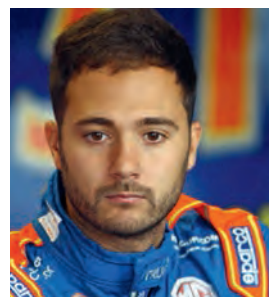
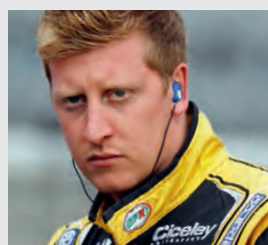
Beyond that there was very little faulting Tordoff's racecraft – his progress up the order was often a highlight across a race day.

8 ADAM MORGAN

Another race-winning campaign in his family team's Mercedes A-Class points to a job well done for Morgan. It was clearly a potent little car, as demonstrated by seven podiums across Donington Park, Thruxton (where he won), Snetterton, Knockhill and Brands Hatch GP.

The A-Class struggled in a straight line, making life hard at Rockingham and Silverstone. Over the season he comprehensively defeated new team-mate Aiden Moffat.

Loses points for a jumped start at Oulton that cost a shot at victory; wins back some for the sympathy most had after he hit an errant hoarding while leading and lost out to Neal late on.



9 JACK GOFF

Minimal fuss, a strong work ethic and the team's only victory of 2015 – it's difficult to see the youngster's first year with MG being viewed as anything other than impressive.

He finished 40 points shy of his team-mate, an ex-champion, but notched his first win in the BTCC under intense pressure from Plato, and was a regular top-10 contender in qualifying despite being in a car that at its best tracks was third quickest and at its worst would be fifth or sixth in the pecking order.

Goff had a big opportunity this season and he delivered in less-than-ideal circumstances.

10 MAT JACKSON

There was a lot said about the validity of Jackson's late-season success, but this is neither the time nor place to talk about that.

Jackson's driving at times, in particular in qualifying at Rockingham, was very impressive, as was getting a hat-trick of poles and four wins over the last three rounds.

The Ford Focus had more grunt than any other, but that's because Mountune did a fantastic job on the EcoBoost engine and the team's mid-season arrival meant its allocated boost setting was not re-evaluated.

Jackson still had a job to do and proved his class as team-mate James Cole toiled.



Courtney won after long injury lay-off



KALISZ/LAT

V8 SUPERCARS SURFERS PARADISE (AUS), OCTOBER 24-25 RD 11/14

Comeback Courtney steals the show

THERE WERE TWO DIFFERENT RACES on the streets of the Gold Coast but, with respect to Saturday winners Shane van Gisbergen and Jonathan Webb, James Courtney's Sunday win stole the headlines.

After missing three rounds recovering from rib and lung injuries suffered in a bizarre pitlane incident in Sydney, Courtney bagged an unexpected win in a bizarre race.

After pitting late in a safety-car period, Courtney seized the lead when other drivers stopped and held on to win, giving co-driver Jack Perkins his maiden victory.

Almost as unexpected was second place for Rick Kelly, who followed a similar fuel-saving strategy in his Nissan. Kelly's co-driver David Russell was nearly last in the field after making a bad start but smart driving got them on the podium.

Saturday was completely different. In a race that was all about speed, Webb bolted away from the field and handed Tekno Autosport's Holden over to van Gisbergen well in the lead, allowing him to win from Dean Canto/David Reynolds (Ford) and Steven Richards/Craig Lowndes (Holden).

It was not a great weekend for Mark Winterbottom. On Saturday, an unsafe release from his pitstop set him into the path of Tander, badly damaging his car and dropping him to 24th. On Sunday, he simply lacked pace and finished 11th.

The other contenders were the Volvo of Scott McLaughlin/Alex Premat, which was sixth on Sunday after starting from pole, while the Nick Percat/Oliver Gavin Holden lost a potential podium finish when Percat had to pit from the lead with four laps remaining.

● Phil Branagan

RESULTS

RACE 1 Shane van Gisbergen/Jonathan Webb (Holden Commodore), 102 laps in 2h08m14.3285s; 2 David Reynolds/Dean Canto (Ford Falcon), +1.6096s; 3 Craig Lowndes/Steven Richards (Holden); 4 Garth Tander/Warren Luff (Holden); 5 James Courtney/Jack Perkins (Holden); 6 Nick Percat/Oliver Gavin (Holden).

RACE 2 Courtney/Perkins, 102 laps in 2h14m20.4257s; 2 Rick Kelly/David Russell (Nissan Altima), +1.9930s; 3 Tander/Luff; 4 Lowndes/Richards; 5 van Gisbergen/Webb; 6 Scott McLaughlin/Alexandre Premat (Volvo S60).

POINTS 1 Winterbottom, 2599; 2 Lowndes, 2341; 3 Reynolds, 2281; 4 Tander, 2141; 5 Fabian Coulthard, 2096; 6 van Gisbergen, 2061

46

Logano (third) came through for victory



LA BOUNTY/LAT

NASCAR SPRINT CUP TALLADEGA (USA), OCTOBER 25 RD 32/36

Logano takes another win

JOEY LOGANO NETTED A HAT-TRICK in a controversial finish to the second phase of the Chase, denying Dale Earnhardt Jr a win that would have kept him in contention.

Logano was declared the winner after an attempt at a green-and-white-chequered finish ended with a pile-up triggered by Kevin Harvick.

A previous effort to get the race restarted for the last time had been waved off when Jimmie Johnson spun after contact, but this did not count as the one permitted attempt.

Earnhardt narrowly missed the win he required to join Logano as one of eight drivers moving through to the third leg of the Chase.

Another of the octet of drivers qualifying for the next stage of the Chase was Harvick, who was accused Harvick, who reported engine issues, of intentionally

tagging Trevor Bayne to force a caution and secure his place.

Denny Hamlin was taken out of contention by a loose roof flap, with Ryan Newman and Matt Kenseth also knocked out of the Chase.

RESULTS

1 Joey Logano (Ford Fusion), 196 laps in 3h06m58s; 2 Dale Earnhardt Jr (Chevrolet SS); 3 Jeff Gordon (Chevy); 4 Brad Keselowski (Ford); 5 Carl Edwards (Toyota Camry); 6 Paul Menard (Chevy); 7 Martin Truex Jr (Chevy); 8 Clint Bowyer (Toyota); 9 Ricky Stenhouse Jr (Ford); 10 Kurt Busch (Chevy).

CONTENDER ROUND 1 Logano, 3142: 2 Edwards, 3115; 3 Gordon, 3113; 4 Kurt Busch, 3112; 5 Keselowski, 3111; 6 Truex, 3107; 7 Kevin Harvick, 3101; 8 Kyle Busch, 3098; 9 Ryan Newman, 3095; 10 Denny Hamlin, 3090; 11 Earnhardt, 3083; 12 Matt Kenseth, 3054; 13 Jimmie Johnson, 2161; 14 Jamie McMurray, 2159; 15 Menard, 2148; 16 Bowyer, 2123.

UNDEFEATED





SUBARU
RALLY TEAM USA

David Higgins and co-driver Craig Drew have secured the 2015 Rally America National Championship with eight wins from eight starts to complete a dream campaign. It is the first time in 28 years that a team has claimed a clean sweep during the season and it marks David's seventh championship title in the United States. It is also his fifth title with the Subaru Rally Team USA in the number 75 Subaru WRX STI.



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SUBARU RALLY TEAM USA



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Oriola headed SEAT sweep in race one



TCR INTERNATIONAL BURIRAM (T), OCTOBER 25 RD 10/11

Comini, Oriola 'Thai' on wins

STEFANO COMINI TAKES A TWO-POINT lead over Pepe Oriola into the Macau finale after the duo shared the wins.

Oriola led a Craft-Bamboo SEAT 1-2-3 in the first race from Jordi Gene and Sergey Afanasiev after polesitter and early leader Gianni Morbidelli served a drive-through penalty for a jumped start. The Italian, giving the Step 2 version of the JAS built Honda Civic its debut, recovered to claim a point for 10th.

Comini was nursing a badly injured knee after a bizarre sofa-dropping incident and, despite needing a stick to help him walk, the Swiss wasn't unduly affected.

However, problems with the Target Competition SEAT meant he qualified ninth. With the gearbox, intercooler and turbo all changed, he finished fifth in the opener, behind Kevin Gleason's Step 1 Honda.

Comini's qualifying woes gave him reversed-grid pole once Hugo Valente's stalled Campos Opel was pushed away. He led all the way.

That was largely thanks to team-mate Loris Hezemans, the Dutchman belying his inexperience by defending second throughout. Oriola and Morbidelli traded places behind Hezemans before the Honda stopped with engine troubles.

A pair of local heroes, Munkong Sathienthirakul and Tin Sritrai (both in SEATs) shared TCR Asia honours.

RESULTS

RACE 1 1 Pepe Oriola (SEAT Leon Racer), 14 laps in 24m34.075s; 2 Jordi Gene (SEAT), +1.369s; 3 Sergei Afanasiev (SEAT); 4 Kevin Gleason (Honda Civic TCR); 5 Stefano Comini (SEAT); 6 Loris Hezemans (SEAT).

RACE 2 1 Comini, 14 laps in 24m40.174s; 2 Hezemans, +2.746s; 3 Oriola; 4 Gene; 5 Lorenzo Veglia (SEAT); 6 Tomas Engstrom (Volkswagen Golf R).

POINTS 1 Comini, 299; 2 Oriola, 297; 3 Gene, 265; 4 Gianni Morbidelli, 223; 5 Gleason, 216; 6 Andrea Belicchi, 164.

PORSCHE SUPERCUP
AUSTIN (USA), OCTOBER 25
RD 8/8

Eng crowned at wet Austin

PHILIPP ENG WENT INTO THE double-header Porsche Supercup season finale in a strong position, but you could forgive him for being nervous when rain wiped out both qualifying and the first race. While that eliminated three of his four title rivals, it also meant he had little margin for error in Sunday's race.

However, with Eng more interested in adding the Supercup title to the German Carrera Cup title he had already won, he let others steal the limelight in the race. His conservative run to eighth place in a wet race that started under safety car was more than enough to clinch the crown, especially with rival Christian Engelhart only 13th.



Eng clinched the title with eighth

Sven Muller, one of those eliminated from the title running by the rain, started on pole position in a wet race that started under the safety car thanks to setting the pace in free practice. But fellow front-row starter Alex Riberas stuck with him and soon scythed past, followed soon after by Michael Ammermuller.

RESULTS

1 Alex Riberas, 14 laps in 30m23.341s; 2 Michael Ammermuller, +3.345s; 3 Sven Muller; 4 Jeffrey Schmidt; 5 Connor de Phillippi; 6 Ben Barker; 7 Christopher Zochling; 8 Philipp Eng; 9 Robert Lukas; 10 Philipp Frommenwiler. **POINTS** 1 Eng, 145; 2 Muller, 126; 3 Ammermuller, 124; 4 Christian Engelhart, 124; 5 Riberas, 122; 6 Zochling, 93.

ASIAN GT

Darryl O'Young claimed the Asian GT championship title with victory at Buriram. The Craft-Bamboo Aston Martin Vantage GT3 driver closed out victory after team-mate Daniel Lloyd took the lead at the first corner after starting second.

FRENCH F4

Valentin Moineault clinched the title with victory in the first race of the season-ending triple-header at Paul Ricard. The 19-year-old also won race three, while China's Yifei Ye took victory in the second.

FRENCH GT

Raymond Narac, Olivier Pernaut and Sebastien Dumez sealed the French GT title at Paul Ricard. The IMSA Performance crew finished 11th and eighth in the two races, but after winning race one Ferrari trio Stephane Lemeret, Eric Cayrolle and Arno Santamato retired on the first lap of the second and ended up as runners-up. Sebastien Loeb Racing Audi trio David Hallyday, Philippe Gaillard and Mike Parisy won the final race.

FRENCH CARRERA CUP

Sebastien Loeb Racing's Maxim Jousse won the French Porsche Carrera Cup title with a seventh and a sixth place at Paul Ricard. Mathieu Jaminet won the second race, but was beaten by Jousse by two points. Steven Palette won race one.

AUSTRALIAN F4

Tom Randle dominated a meagre Formula 4 field on the Gold Coast. Jordan Lloyd and Jimmy Vernon chased him home in race one, while the second and third races saw Luis Leeds take second twice, both times ahead of Lloyd.

AUSSIE CARRERA CUP

Nick Foster was uncharacteristically conservative on the streets of the Gold Coast, but his approach allowed him to seal his first Carrera Cup Australia title. Youngster Matt Campbell won all three races ahead of David Russell and Foster.

BAJA PORTALEGRE

Toyota Hilux driver Ricardo Porem won all four stages of the final round of the FIA Cross Country World Cup. Miguel Barbosa was second in a Mitsubishi Racing Lancer ahead of Joao Ramos's Toyota.

NASCAR TRUCKS

Timothy Peters won at Talladega thanks to leading during the green-white-checked finished when the caution was thrown because of a clash between John Wes Townley and Spencer. Brandon Jones finished second while Erik Jones leads the standings after finishing fourth.





OGIER DRAMA GIFTS WIN TO MIKKELSEN

Sebastien Ogier was leading handsomely in Spain at the start of the last stage, but an uncharacteristic error left the way clear for team-mate Andreas Mikkelsen to take his first WRC victory. **DAVID EVANS** reports

Photography McKlein.de



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Mikkelsen decides winning tastes good

ANDREAS MIKKELSEN STARED. JUST STARED. NO.

No... Yes? Yes!

He had. He had won his first round of the World Rally Championship. Astonishing. Incredible and, let's be honest, completely unbelievable. Last Sunday lunchtime in Spain made no sense, which is absolutely no reflection on Mikkelsen.

A mile back up the T313 from where Mikkelsen sat, the unthinkable had happened. Sebastien Ogier had crashed.

After a trademark, inch-perfect rally, Ogier hit the barrier on the outside of a medium-speed left-hander. This being the powerstage, live footage was beamed back into a busy press office, which exploded into the kind of instant, million-miles-per-hour Spanish chatter usually reserved for a last-minute winner in a game of football between Barcelona and Real Madrid.

Undoubtedly, Ogier would have been pushing hard for another three-pointer. The Frenchman arrived at the start of the event's 23rd and final stage with 50.9 seconds in hand over Mikkelsen and absolutely no need to push – but that's not Ogier. Ogier is the most competitive of characters. A fighter. Every powerstage is a battle in itself and few can muster the hatred for losing he does.

Last Sunday he lost.

OGIER'S OFF

Just as thousands of times before, he tucked the Polo into the corner, but, as it came out, it unloaded on the crown of the road and mashed the barrier.

The car spun and sat in the middle of the road. Instinctively, he and co-driver Julien Ingrassia got on the radio to tell the team before getting out to check the damage and slow the next car down.

Rally Spain

World Rally Championship
Catalunya (E)

October 22-25

Round 12/13



Realisation set in. Ogier walked down the road and sat on the barrier. The same one that still had his Volkswagen's right-front wheel wedged in it.

Ingrassia occupied himself by kicking parts of the wrecked car into the gutter.

It was about that time Mikkelsen's ever-slightly vacant stare changed. Still sitting on the stop line. Second had become first; nearly man became a man of the World Rally Championship winners' circle.

For the second time in 60 seconds, fists were clenched and pumped, and the tears that had neared at beating his team-mate Jari-Matti Latvala, in a tense run to second, spilled over. You got the feeling they would take some stopping this time.

"I can't believe it," said the winner. "I don't know... I don't know how I feel. I can't feel. Unreal."

That was the next minute of Mikkelsen's life. A time when he was opening his mouth and words were coming out, but they really weren't making too much sense. He didn't care. Nobody cared.

Latvala was first in. Hugging, jumping, congratulating. The sportsmanship shown by the Finn was as genuine and as it was joyful.

SLOW STARTER

Having talked about this moment for so long, dreamed about it for longer and come so close in Sweden this year, the Norwegian had resigned himself to giving it a go in Wales next month. He wasn't nowhere, but a day on the Costa Daurada dirt hadn't served him well. He was sixth, more than half a minute behind Ogier on Friday night.

Just before we move on to the weekend and the asphalt, we have to give credit to what Ogier did on day one, running as roadsweeper on another leg on the loose.

Ogier's done with FIA-bashing. The regulations are what they are. These days, he gets on with it and lets his stage times provide the perfect two-fingered salute to officialdom. Which they did after Friday. He led by four seconds, brilliantly.

Latvala hadn't made the perfect start, but working on the car after the Friday morning opener had gone some way towards putting things right.

Mikkelsen was down. "I couldn't find the rhythm," he said glumly. "I wasn't committing completely in the morning, so the time just wasn't there. Another rally starts tomorrow."

And for that new rally, Mikkelsen had thrown comfort and caution to the wind. His Polo would be hunkered down, lower and stiffer than it ever had been before as he sought to get ahead of Mads Ostberg and secure third in the championship.

Two stages into Saturday and he was up to fourth. Three down and he was third and just 1.7s off Dani Sordo's second place.

Sordo's defence held out just one more stage before the Hyundai was dispensed with. First stage after lunch and Mikkelsen was second. Not a bad Saturday morning.

What about Latvala?

Catching Ogier on pace wasn't going to happen, which is why Mikkelsen was focusing on the Finnish-flagged Polo that had tumbled down the order first time through Poboleda.

LATVALA'S BRAKE DOWN

Latvala had been tempted into a cut leading on to a long straight. The risk and reward was certainly worth a thought. Not for Ogier.

"I saw this place," he said. "He [Latvala] took the cut last time and, for me, he was lucky to get away with it."

Not this time. The right-front was nicked by the sharp road edge. Puncture and 53.3s lost to Ogier.

That was only part of the story. Latvala had been battling with brake issues all morning. ▶



A rare sight: Ogier's shunted Polo WRC



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Switch from gravel spec stymied Latvala

► In converting his Polo R WRC from gravel to asphalt specification in 75 minutes on Friday night, air found its way into the brakes. As soon as the cars leave service and get onto a straight-ish stretch, the anchors are stamped on to make sure everything's working as it should.

The rock-solid middle pedal from which Latvala derives so much confidence wasn't there. In terms of travel, we're probably talking millimetres, but that's all it takes for Latvala to lose the faith. When it comes to having the car right, he's not quite as particular as Didier Auriol, but the ducks definitely weren't in line for a big charge when he headed south of Salou.

He worked on the brakes before stages 10 and 11, but he couldn't get it right.

"The brakes were not where they should be," said Latvala. "I know what Seb means about the cut and I would not normally cut there either. But I was under the stress, you know this brake thing had got into my mind and I wanted to attack. Finally, I got the brakes right before the start of SS12, but my mind was not clear enough and I did not think what I was doing. In my mind I was... OK, I say the word now: 'F***g hell! Now I'm going to attack!'"

Latvala doesn't swear. I don't mean he doesn't use the f-word very often, I mean he doesn't swear. He just doesn't. He's too polite.

The pause before his revelation merely served to underline the determination that followed his frustration. The upshot was second to fourth.

"Now I need to look at the podium," he added.

Back on track, he passed Mikkelsen for second



Hyundai camp was not a happy one

on Saturday's penultimate stage and took a 2.9s advantage into Sunday's final six stages.

Mikkelsen's mood was considerably brighter than it had been 24 hours earlier.

"It's looking better now," he said. "We passed Dani and now we're in a fight with Jari-Matti."

SWEDISH NIGHTMARE EXORCISED

An extra hour's sleep worked a treat for Mikkelsen.

"I woke up feeling very good," he said. "I woke up thinking about Wales and the chance to win."

For now, those sights were on second. He was quickest in the first two stages, narrowing the gap to four tenths after Pratedip. Latvala nicked half a second back on the next one, but a slow puncture on the first of the afternoon's stages cost him 10s. Mikkelsen was through and heading for the final two stages with 8.1s in hand over Latvala.

I cannot believe it. Can you please wake me up from this dream? It's just too fantastic

ANDREAS MIKKELSEN

Enough? Possibly. Mikkelsen dared to believe. Naturally, Latvala was promising a cruise to the finish. No point trying anything now.

More drama. Mikkelsen hurled the Polo at the first corner, only for it to spin on him. An almighty push for the rest of the penultimate stage protected 1.4s ahead of the final.

"So," smiled Mikkelsen, "it's game on again in the powerstage..."

Last time he'd said that, it was Sweden and he was fighting for the win, defending a three-second lead from Ogier. It didn't work out on Varmullsasen, you might remember. It was a heartbreaker for Mikkelsen when he visited a snowbank and ended the rally third.

It was hard to imagine a powerstage matching round two for drama; scintillating as it was, this scrap missed the real needle of a P1 battle. ►



Mikkelsen savours an unlikely triumph

► Latvala was through and quickly. Mikkelsen said: "I need the perfect stage." He delivered it.

On seeing the time at the finish, he sat and stared straight ahead. He'd been fired the first post-stage question, but he couldn't look. He needed to compose himself. This had been some fightback after Friday, and he'd finally nailed that final-stage misery from Sweden. Regardless of Ogier winning the war, this was a personal battle Mikkelsen had to conquer and he'd done it.

Mid-way through the final stage, Ogier was on it. Five tenths ahead, he was tearing through the second half of Duesaignes towards another three-points and the perfect, three-day 28-pointer.

And then that corner came.

And Mikkelsen's world went mad. The news came from co-driver Ola Floene, sitting alongside him. Of the two, Floene was even more emotional. Dropped at the end of 2012 in an attempt to find Mikkelsen an extra edge, he was brought back five rounds into last season.

Momentarily, it looked like it might all be a bit much. They needed a hug. And what better place than the roof?

The juxtaposition of two Norwegians dancing on one Polo and the live TV editor's cut to Ogier sitting at the side of the road, backdropped by the stricken sister car, was about as extreme as it gets.

THE REST...

With Volkswagen's clean sweep of the drivers' season-long podium complete, the rest of the service park has been left to squabble over second place in the makes' race.

Citroen heads to Wales with the upper hand – four points ahead of Hyundai. The Koreans were first non-Polo home with Sordo a late podium addition after Ogier's shunt. Neuville was very



Ogier walks away from wrecked Polo

"I was under the stress. This brake thing had got into my head and I wanted to attack"

JARI-MATTI LATVALA

fortunate to be able to contribute anything after a reported transmission failure punted him off the road in the penultimate stage. He had been embroiled in a battle with team-mate Paddon. Paddon was livid when he saw the sister i20 off the road, pointing out that Neuville had nothing to fight for as he knew he would have to let him through (Neuville scored manufacturer points for the main team). He later apologised, but last week did little to help the atmosphere in Hyundai.

The atmosphere between Ostberg and Meeke works well – which is why KM was quick to speak out after his team-mate's challenge for the lead went off the boil when he dropped 30s with a puncture on SS5. "That's such a shame," Meeke said. "Mads had been on fire this morning."

The DS3 WRCs made ultimately unremarkable progress to the finish, with Ostberg getting past Meeke after the latter spun on the final morning.

M-Sport endured the toughest week, with Ott Tanak and Corsica hero Elfyn Evans retiring from day two, one after the other. Robert Kubica's Fiesta once again starred, with the Pole setting a fastest time and leading the event in the gravel on Friday. His speed continued on the asphalt, but his wings were clipped by transmission and brake issues.

Now, however, the time had come for Mikkelsen and co-driver Ola Floene to drink some champagne and cut some hair. Mikkelsen's engineer Richard Browne had promised to chop his locks if and when the win came. He went to bed bald on Sunday.

Bald, a wee bit wobbly, but very, very happy.

But for the final word, let's go back to Mikkelsen, who asked AUTOSPORT for a favour on Sunday night. "Can you please wake me up from this dream? It's too fantastic." Our answer? No. You've earned the rest. And the dream.

DAVID EVANS
RALLIES EDITOR
@daviddevansrally



WOULD SEBASTIEN OGIER TAKE ANOTHER doughnut? Such was the routine brilliance of the Frenchman on the first 22 stages of last week's Rally of Spain that level of conversation had descended to this.

Of course he wouldn't. You might be able to tell, he's not really one for the doughnuts. Certainly not on the powerstage. The final act of last week's Salou-based event was a big drift around a roundabout before a squirt across the final asphalt flying finish of the season. And some reckoned Ogier would please the crowds with a second spin.

Not likely. There was a powerstage to be won. Such time-consuming public frivolity had no place in that final-stage race. In the end, we'll never know. He was a wheel down and in the Armco before he got there.

It's been a long time since a single shunt has stopped everything in its tracks so comprehensively. Typically on a Sunday afternoon, the media centre keeps half an eye on the big screens beaming out the powerstage, while the other eye and both hands write lots of words.

It took a good couple of minutes before the collective realisation dawned on what had just happened. Ogier had shunted and forced pretty much every WRC hack into an extensive rewrite. I didn't bother. I started from scratch.

I've kept the other version though, and labelled it 'Germany 2016.'

Up until lunchtime Sunday, Spain had been entirely predictable. What is it they say about being careful what you wish for?



Ogier shunt was a big one

BIG NUMBER

0

is the big small number. That's how many stages Rally of Spain winner Andreas Mikkelsen actually led for



FOR FULL RESULTS, PAGE 64



Ogier was airlifted to hospital

Ogier congratulates winners after hospital stop

WORLD RALLY CHAMPION

Sebastien Ogier walked out of hospital and congratulated Andreas Mikkelsen on his first win at last week's Rally of Spain.

The Frenchman was taken to hospital for a check-up following his heavy crash on the final stage of the Salou-based event. It was that shunt that opened the door for Mikkelsen to take his first win, but the Norwegian now wants to beat Ogier fair and square.

Talking about the crash, Ogier said: "I felt the exit of the corner was faster, but the

entrance was not faster. I was not out by much, maybe I was 10cm too wide. I leaned a bit on the barrier, but then the pole stopped us and removed the wheel. It was game over.

"This wasn't the most exciting rally, I was controlling the pace since Saturday midday and I wanted some fun in the final stage. It was a stupid mistake. I played and I lost, but Julien [Ingrassia, co-driver] is OK – we are both safe and we didn't cost the team too much. And I also have to say a big congratulations to Andreas and Ola [Floene]

– they really deserved their win today."

Mikkelsen added: "In one way this is fantastic to win the first rally, but at the same time I won it with others doing a mistake and that's not the same feeling for me. But I'm still so happy to get that first win and I really believe the next wins will come more easily now.

"I can feel that the pressure has gone from my shoulders – this has been a long time coming and I have been on a long, long ride through good times and bad to get here. Now I'm here."

Kubica set for DTM switch

ROBERT KUBICA LOOKS SET TO

turn his back on the World Rally Championship at the end of the season.

The Polish star is reluctant to walk away, but he says there's no obvious option to keep him in the series.

"I think it is time for a change," he told AUTOSPORT. "I said this to you before, I cannot carry on like this. Whether it's what I want or not, it's the way it is. Maybe it's possible to combine whatever I do with some selected rounds of the WRC next season, I don't know."

The Pole's most likely option for next year is understood to lie in the DTM.



Evans driving for his career on Rally GB

Ford pairing under pressure

M-SPORT DRIVERS ELFYN

Evans and Ott Tanak will be fighting to save their careers when they get to Wales Rally GB next month after they both made another mistake on last week's Rally of Spain.

Team principal Malcolm Wilson refused to give any direction on his driver line-up for next season and said he wouldn't be making any decisions until after Rally GB.

Wilson said: "I've told them both, we'll talk about their future in this

team after the next rally. There's potential for other drivers coming on to the market and it wouldn't make sense for me to sign anybody up before I have to. They're driving for their careers in Wales."

The Ford Fiesta RS WRC pair have had an indifferent season: Evans recovered from a dire Rally Australia to score his best result with second place in Corsica. Tanak conversely did well down under, but was nowhere in France.

AL-ATTIYAH TITLE WIN

Nasser Al-Attiyah achieved his dream of taking three FIA titles to add to his Dakar win at the start of the season. The Qatari took a third award in 16 days in Spain last week, adding the WRC2 title to his Cross Country World Cup and Middle East Rally Championship titles. Al-Attiyah is now setting his sights on a skeet shooting gold at next year's Olympic Games. He landed a bronze at London 2012.

WRC2 JOY FOR SKODA

It was a double celebration for Skoda in Spain (even if Al-Attiyah did use an M-Sport Ford for much of the season) as Pontus Tidemand took his first WRC2 win. The Swede was on sensational form, leading for all but one of the gravel stages and then holding off the Czech firm's asphalt ace Jan Kopecky. Tidemand departed Barcelona bound for China and the final APRC round of the season – he's already got that title in the bag.

AASEN FIESTA WIN

Norwegian Marius Aasen delivered a champion's drive to take this season's Drive DMACK Fiesta Trophy. The 23-year-old dominated last weekend's Ford Fiesta R2 series in Spain. Briton Gus Greensmith picked up the rookie award, while his countryman Tom Cave missed out on the DDFT for a second season after going off the road on SS19.

GILBERT TOPS CLASS

Quentin Gilbert took another step towards doing the Junior WRC and WRC3 double with a confident class win in his DS3 R3-Max. He and his fellow JWRC runners endured a pre-event scare, however, when they were all hit with an hour-long penalty on the Tour de Corse results. The water pump pulley on all cars was deemed illegal. Citroen said an 'administrative error' was to blame.

GRONHOLM TESTS

Marcus Gronholm has tested Volkswagen's 2017 mule Polo R WRC again. The Finn was in among the Monte Carlo Rally stages in the south of France.

LATVALA AT LAUSITZ

Jari-Matti Latvala will use this week's Lausitz Rally as his pre-event Wales Rally GB test. The Finn is driving his own Audi Quattro, but he says returning to gravel will be useful after two days on asphalt. "We're not testing with the Polo in Wales, so my pre-event for GB is in a Quattro!"



Buemi wins as Formula E's new era kicks off

Renault e.dams dominated the first open-competition round of Formula E, and Sebastien Buemi took full advantage of its supremacy. **SCOTT MITCHELL** reports

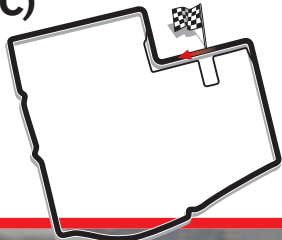


Formula E

Beijing (PRC)

October 24

Round 1/10



"WE ARE MAKING HISTORY TOMORROW," SAID Alejandro Agag in the build up to the Beijing ePrix. "There has never been a pure electrical competition before."

That may read oddly to season-one followers of Formula E, but the series CEO was referring to the open competition the new regulations have afforded teams for the second campaign of the all-electric championship. Last year, everyone had the same technology. This season there are eight different powertrains, and that means multiple electric-racing solutions pitted against one another in identical chassis.

One powertrain, and one team, proved Agag slightly wrong. From the first on-track session of the racing season, the additional 30-minute test on Friday, Renault e.dams made it clear there would be little competition in China.

Sebastien Buemi departed Beijing a worthy winner of the opening round of the 2015/16

campaign, setting the pace in official practice, dominating qualifying, and controlling the race from start to finish. But to say it was expected beforehand would be untrue – what little we could draw from the Donington Park pre-season tests suggested the French squad would be competitive, but record-breaking pace hinted at Abt Audi Sport sitting atop the pecking order.

"I wasn't sure where we would be as Donington is not really a good reference," admitted Buemi after the race. "It's a bit weird because I was not expecting to be ahead like that."

By "that" the Swiss driver is referring to a raw pace advantage of at least half a second. Abt's Lucas di Grassi was the only non-e.dams driver to top a session in Beijing, and that was in a truncated FP2 during which neither Renault Z.E.15 ran at 200kW. Di Grassi's time was around 0.3s off Buemi's FP1 best – but (minor) track evolution and growing track experience for team

and driver suggests the deficit would have been larger had either Nicolas Prost or Buemi had a fully lit laptime in second practice.

But for all the Renault package's potency, its drivers still had to deliver. And while Prost struck the first blow by topping Friday's test, it was Buemi who made the pace count on Saturday as his team-mate showed a fast car can't necessarily compensate for a scruffy race.

Quickest across the four qualifying mini-groups, Buemi recovered from a mistake in the second sector to beat Prost to pole by the better part of 0.3s. Buemi's only mistake, in his eyes, was a poor start to the race. But Prost's was worse, forcing him on the defensive into the first corner where a lock-up, combined with some German bravery, allowed Nick Heidfeld to move into second round the outside.

From there Buemi was free to drive his own race. Two full-course yellows, the system making



Buemi streaked clear of his rivals

“It’s a bit weird because after Donington I was not expecting to be ahead like that”

SEBASTIEN BUEMI

its debut this weekend, didn’t deter him. Even as he streaked clear to the tune of half a second a lap, his energy management was among the best in the race, and superior to those he was racing for the win until he put the hammer down. By the pitstops he had 14 seconds in hand and the same amount of energy as the rest of the lead quartet.

A slow pitstop halved his advantage, but it didn’t matter. Buemi was firmly in control, and setting the fastest lap of the race on the final tour was eerily reminiscent of the sort of comfortable dominance enjoyed by his former Red Bull Formula 1 stablemate Sebastian Vettel.

Prost’s fortunes unfolded less auspiciously. The second moment to define his messy race occurred not long after the first, when a mistake at Turn 3 on the second lap allowed di Grassi past. The Brazilian went on to jump Heidfeld in the pitlane when safety belt trouble delayed the Mahindra man, who also lost third to Prost. But Heidfeld then regained the place when Prost made yet another mistake, locking up and running wide at Turn 2 exiting the pitlane.

Di Grassi ran at a high pace after the stops and Buemi’s lead started to decrease, but di Grassi was only making minor gains. Abt identified second as the peak of its powers, and di Grassi delivered. “We are not unhappy, because we didn’t know where we were,” insisted team boss Hans-Jurgen Abt.

Di Grassi came under threat for a while after Prost passed Heidfeld following another full-course yellow, but fortunately for di Grassi the Z.E.15’s rear wing collapsed and Prost (eventually) pulled into the pits to retire.

The podium, though, was not set. The three-way fight for second meant di Grassi, Heidfeld and Prost were the first to dip below 30 per cent battery in the second stint. Conversely, excellent energy efficiency from the Dragon ▶



Strong drive had Heidfeld in P2 for first half of the race

S.BLOXHAM/LAT

S.BLOXHAM/LAT



Duval rued this early, excellent Vergne battle

► Racing driver Loic Duval and Jerome d'Ambrosio meant they were upping their pace, while the others had to back off.

Duval, playing catch-up having engaged in a ferocious fight with DS Virgin Racing's Jean-Eric Vergne early in the race, was the first to catch Heidfeld's M2ELECTRO. His inability to make a serious passing attempt allowed d'Ambrosio to join the fight, and a penultimate-lap lunge threatened disaster for Dragon – but spectacular car control from d'Ambrosio, with the anchors deployed and the Venturi VM-200 sideways, avoided a costly collision.

It gave Duval one last chance to attack, and on the final lap he half-heartedly dived to the inside at the first chicane, but “I didn’t want to go banzai”, so he backed out of it. Heidfeld retained third, though without Antonio Felix da Costa’s stricken car causing the second full-course yellow he may not have had the energy left to defend.

Fourth and fifth was a good return from eighth and 10th respectively for the Dragon duo, but Duval was not completely content. He had run the two Renault drivers closest in first practice but couldn’t replicate that one-lap pace in qualifying, and though he saw third as a missed opportunity, he also acknowledged it would have been the limit of his equipment’s potential.

“We saw Renault e.dams is far away in terms

of performance and Abt is ahead,” he admitted. “We are in that next pack of guys.”

Duval and d'Ambrosio were not the only drivers to show a knack for energy saving in China, nor were they the best at it or make the most progress because of it.

Oliver Turvey, a distant sixth behind the Venturi customer team, was not a serious points contender pre-race. NEXTEV TCR's qualifying for its home race had been nothing short of a disaster, with Turvey 15th and defending champion Nelson Piquet Jr 18th and last, having also crashed into the wall in the pitlane and had limited running in practice.

Turvey and Piquet were two of only three drivers to go the entire race distance with an above-average amount of energy remaining. Both drivers, sandwiched by fellow energy-saver Nathanael Berthon, launched up the order during the stops having done enough to run one lap more than their rivals.

Turvey had managed to stay close to the pack ahead and before the stops had already picked off the ailing Jacques Villeneuve and da Costa, who came to blows at Turn 2 when the latter erred and punted the 1997 F1 champion after exiting the pitlane. That sparked the aforementioned second full-course yellow, all of which was occurring just as Turvey made his car change in the pits. Lucky

or not, Turvey pointed out his strategy had “earned the advantage of staying out”.

While Turvey was more than happy to turn a dismal weekend into the best result of his fledgling Formula E career, he was also aware that unlike the Dragon drivers his efficiency was a necessity rather than an added bonus.

“We managed the race very well. The pace of the car is not as strong as some of the competition. I could see there were a lot of people fighting ahead so I started saving energy pretty much from Turn 1...”

Team-mate Piquet ran ninth after the stops but suffered an odd technical failure and briefly stopped on track. He finished a lapped last, summarising his weekend as “really frustrating”.

The phrase applies to the DS Virgin team's race as well. Vergne, having fought spectacularly at the front with the likes of Duval, lost ground towards the end of his first stint after briefly haemorrhaging energy compared with those around him, and he never recovered. Team-mate Sam Bird had been flying all weekend and was probably the most on-the-limit driver, but that led to a lock-up at Turn 3 early on just moments after a brilliant move had taken seventh from Duval. Having dropped to 11th he salvaged seventh with a late pass on Berthon.

Interestingly, Bird also struggled on energy in the first half of the race, but ended it with one of the highest energy allowances of anyone. That points to a battery issue of some description in the opening stanza, something the team – which was non-committal – will most likely prefer to be the case rather than an inherent efficiency issue for its twin-motor, single-gear system.

That brings us back to the beginning, and the dawning of a technological war between the teams. How one-sided that fight is will swiftly be defined by the progress Renault's rivals make within the confines of their homologated designs.

“I don’t expect this gap to come back in the next race,” Buemi admitted post-race. For the sake of competition, rival teams will hope he’s right.



Broken wing ended Prost's messy race

➔ FOR FULL RESULTS, PAGE 64

IN THE PADDOCK

SCOTT MITCHELL
FEATURES EDITOR

@ScottMitchell189



AFTER SIX DAYS OF OFFICIAL pre-season testing, a 30-minute Friday test and the first round of the season now completed, Trulli's Motomatica JT-01 has yet to post a timed lap. Failing to get through scrutineering amid a customs issue was the latest twist in an already troubled tale for Jarno Trulli's outfit.

I do not buy into the suggestion that Trulli travelled to China with no intention of running. The awning was a hive of activity on Thursday evening as the team worked through the night, only to give way to an eerie stillness on Friday morning. Some questioned whether the powertrains were really stuck at customs or not, but based on what I saw, something happened that sapped the morale from the team. And



S. BLOXHAM/LAT

the FIA awarded Trulli an extension for scrutineering, which it surely wouldn't have done unless it believed the cars were in a position to be presented should the outstanding parts arrive.

The cause is a red herring. The main issue is what happens next. I had hoped for some answers about Trulli in Beijing. Instead there are now more questions.

Does being struck from the official entry list constitute Trulli not participating in the event, and if so what sanctions does it face? With the powertrains in quarantine in customs, will they be freighted to Malaysia on time? And will the cars run if the powertrains make it to Putrajaya?

Speaking briefly to Salvador Duran on Thursday evening revealed what he called

a "blind faith" in the potential of the technology. But as Andretti Autosport found during its own difficult pre-season, identifying and curing a fault doesn't mean you're guaranteed smooth sailing.

Track time is the only thing that will help Trulli unleash what its package has to offer, and now the season has started that's very much in short supply.

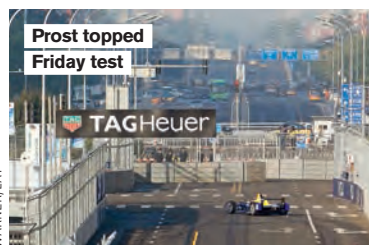
Friday session unlikely to stay

FORMULA E HELD A FRIDAY

practice session for the first time in its history last week, but it is unlikely to continue that at future events.

The 30-minute session, topped by Renault e.dams driver Nicolas Prost, was held at the request of the teams. The reasons included the long wait between the final test and the Beijing race, the long freight time and Williams being unable to complete the required battery upgrades before the end of testing.

Since Formula E has built itself around an all-in-one-day format, it is thought future races will be Saturday-only, with the exception of London's double-header.



Prost topped Friday test

WARNER/LAT

"I learned which drivers race clean and which are stupid and dirty. Frijns was just unnecessary"

Jacques Villeneuve



Frijns grabbed P10 after Abt penalty

Berthon, Frijns score on debut

DEBUTANTS NATHANAEL BERTHON and Robin Frijns scored points on their debut despite their season-one powertrains struggling in China.

Team Aguri driver Berthon finished eighth after vaulting from 17th to seventh thanks to going a lap longer in the first stint and benefiting from a fortunately timed full-course yellow. He lost out to DS Virgin's Sam Bird

on the final lap of the race.

Andretti's Frijns qualified P13 and raced well, before being promoted to 10th when Daniel Abt was pinged from ninth for an unsafe pit release.

The other series rookie Jacques Villeneuve, whose Venturi team-mate Stephane Sarrazin inherited ninth, was hit twice and had a battery problem as he finished a lapped 14th.

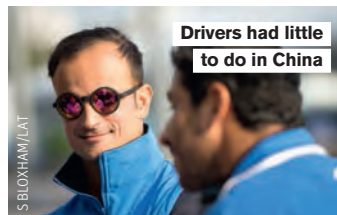
Trulli misses season opener

THE TRULLI TEAM BLAMED A customs issue for its failure to take part in the season opener, and is now facing a battle to be ready for Malaysia.

After a trouble pre-season, Trulli freighted its Motomatica JT-01 powertrains to China itself to allow more time to fix its problems. Trulli claimed the delivery arrived in the country on Monday, but the team was not able to collect it, meaning it did not present its cars for scrutineering despite a deadline extension.

"Now we focus on Putrajaya and to ensure that this incident will never happen again," said the team.

The second round takes place just two weeks after the opener, which



Drivers had little to do in China

already presents a tough logistical test for DHL Motorsport. Since Trulli is still waiting to complete its first timed lap with its own technology, it faces a nervous few days.

Formula E CEO Alejandro Agag had said before Trulli's withdrawal was confirmed: "They need to get it right here, and if they don't get it right here it will be very difficult for them for Malaysia, and then they have to wait for Punta [del Este, round three, in December]."

BATTERY ISSUES

Four of the nine competing teams were required to make a battery changes in the build-up to the Beijing race. At the suggestion of supplier Williams Advanced Engineering, battery swaps were made for Robin Frijns (Andretti Autosport), Nick Heidfeld (Mahindra Racing), Nelson Piquet Jr (NEXTEV TCR) and Jacques Villeneuve (Venturi). Since Williams had identified potential faults and mandated the change, these drivers retain their sole joker battery change for the season.

SENSORS TESTED

The nine competing teams trialled a new system which uses sensors to indicate when the driver's safety belts are properly tightened over the Beijing event. It was part of the continued evaluation of a plan to rid the championship of its minimum pitstop time, which exists to ensure that the mandatory mid-race car swap is conducted safely. Series CEO Alejandro Agag said he was targeting "the third or fourth race" for the change.

MEXICO NEWS SOON

The Mexican round of the 2015/16 Formula E season will be confirmed next month, possibly after the country's Formula 1 event. In his Beijing ePrix press conference series CEO Alejandro Agag gave the strongest hint yet the March 12 race will be at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez. He later told Autosport an additional race in Lugano was still on the cards: "I think Switzerland is still an option for this season, but it's a long shot because it may be a bit late."

RESULTS ROUND-UP



A room with a view for WRC's senior fans

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

ROUND 12/13, RALLY CATALUNYA (E), OCTOBER 22-25

- 1 **Andreas Mikkelsen (N)/Ola Floene (N)** Volkswagen Motorsport II Volkswagen Polo R WRC
- 2 **Jari-Matti Latvala (FIN)/Miikka Anttila (FIN)** Volkswagen Motorsport Volkswagen Polo R WRC
- 3 **Dani Sordo (E)/Marc Marti (E)** Hyundai Motorsport Hyundai i20 WRC
- 4 **Mads Ostberg (N)/Jonas Andersson (S)** Citroen Total Citroen DS3 WRC
- 5 **Kris Meeke (GB)/Paul Nagle (IRL)** Citroen Total Citroen DS3 WRC
- 6 **Hayden Paddon (NZ)/John Kennard (NZ)** Hyundai Motorsport Hyundai i20 WRC
- 7 **Martin Prokop (CZ)/Jan Tomanek (CZ)** Jipocar Czech National Team Ford Fiesta RS WRC
- 8 **Thierry Neuville (B)/Nicolas Gilsoul (B)** Hyundai Motorsport Hyundai i20 WRC
- 9 **Pontus Tidemand (S)/Emil Axelsson (S)** Skoda Motorsport Skoda Fabia R5
- 10 **Jan Kopecky (CZ)/Pavel Dresler (CZ)** Škoda Motorsport II Skoda Fabia R5
- 11 **Robert Kubica (PL)/Maciek Szczepaniak (PL)** RK World Rally Team Ford Fiesta RS WRC
- 15 **Khalid Al-Qassimi (UAE)/Chris Patterson (GB)** Citroen Total Citroen DS3 WRC
- 34 **Elfyn Evans (GB)/Daniel Barritt (GB)** M-Sport WRT Ford Fiesta RS WRC
- 41 **Ott Tanak (EST)/Raigo Molder (EST)** M-Sport WRT Ford Fiesta RS WRC
- 50 **Stephane Lefebvre (F)/Stephane Prevot (B)** PH Sport Citroen DS3 WRC
- R **Sebastien Ogier (F)/Julien Ingrassia (F)** Volkswagen Motorsport Volkswagen Polo R WRC
- R **Lorenzo Bertelli (I)/Lorenzo Granai (I)** FWRT Ford Fiesta RS WRC

3h21m04.8s

- +3.1s
 - +21.2s
 - +1m06.3s
 - +1m08.2s
 - +1m23.3s
 - +4m14.2s
 - +8m01.9s
 - +8m56.8s
 - +9m07.5s
 - +12m15.0s
 - +16m45.4s
 - +36m17.4s
 - +48m23.9s
 - +59m32.2s
- accident
accident

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

- 1 **Ogier 238**; 2 **Latvala 180**; 3 **Mikkelsen 154**; 4 **Ostberg 110**;
5 **Meeke 94**; 6 **Neuville 90**; 7 **Evans 81**; 8 **Sordo 77**;
9 **Paddon 74**; 10 **Tanak 64**.

STAGES

- SS1 Barcelona-Montjuic Mountain (1.99 miles)**
Fastest **Ogier 3m37.8s** Leader **Ogier Second Neuville +2.1s**
- SS2 Mora d'Ebre-Asco 1 (5.98 miles)**
F **Ostberg 5m55.6s** L **Ogier S Kubica +1.1s**
- SS3 Caseres 1 (7.77 miles)**
F **Kubica 7m25.9s** L **Kubica S Ostberg +3.6s**
- SS4 Bot 1 (4.04 miles)**
F **Tanak 4m11.5s** L **Kubica S Ostberg +3.2s**
- SS5 Terra Alta 1 (22.17 miles)**
F **Latvala 23m20.9s** L **Ogier S Latvala +0.8s**
- SS6 Mora d'Ebre - Asco 2 (5.98 miles)**
F **Tanak 5m48.4s** L **Latvala S Tanak +0.9s**
- SS7 Caseres 2 (7.77 miles)**
F **Ostberg 7m18.4s** L **Latvala S Tanak +1.6s**
- SS8 Bot 2 (4.04 miles)**
F **Tanak 4m04.4s** L **Latvala S Tanak +0.9s**
- SS9 Terra Alta 2 (22.17 miles)**
F **Ogier 22m49.4s** L **Ogier S Latvala +4.0s**
- SS10 Porrera (4.62 miles)**
F **Ogier 5m14.9s** L **Ogier S Latvala +6.4s**
- SS11 La Figuera 1 (16.32 miles)**
F **Ogier 14m32.4s** L **Ogier S Latvala +11.0s**
- SS12 Poboleda 1 (6.61 miles)**

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

- 1 **Volkswagen Motorsport 387**; 2 **Citroen Total 206**;
3 **Hyundai Motorsport 202**; 4 **M-Sport WRT 173**;
5 **Volkswagen Motorsport II 116**; 6 **Hyundai Motorsport 67**;

- F **Ogier 5m36.3s** L **Ogier S Sordo +51.6s**
SS13 Capafonts 1 (12.30 miles)
F **Latvala 10m47.2s** L **Ogier S Sordo +51.4s**
SS14 La Figuera 2 (16.32 miles)
F **Latvala 14m36.4s** L **Ogier S Mikkelsen +55.6s**
SS15 Poboleda 2 (6.61 miles)
F **Ogier 5m40.2s** L **Ogier S Mikkelsen +57.7s**
SS16 Capafonts 2 (12.30 miles)
F **Latvala 10m45.0s** L **Ogier S Latvala +53.2s**
SS17 Salou (1.39 miles)
F **Ogier 2m33.4s** L **Ogier S Latvala +54.0s**
SS18 Guiamets 1 (4.23 miles)
F **Mikkelsen 3m48.3s** L **Ogier S Latvala +53.8s**
SS19 Pratdip 1 (1.20 miles)
F **Mikkelsen 10m51.0s** L **Ogier S Latvala +49.9s**
SS20 Duesaigues 1 (7.52 miles)
F **Latvala 7m54.2s** L **Ogier S Latvala +49.0s**
SS21 Guiamets 2 (4.23 miles)
F **Mikkelsen 3m47.8s** L **Ogier S Mikkelsen +48.3s**
SS22 Pratdip 2 (11.99 miles)
F **Latvala 10m51.1s** L **Ogier S Mikkelsen +50.9s**
SS23 Duesaigues 2 (Power Stage) (7.52 miles)
F **Mikkelsen 7m51.9s** L **Mikkelsen S Latvala +3.1s**

FORMULA E

ROUND 1/10 BEIJING (PRC), OCTOBER 24 (26 LAPS - 55.559 MILES)

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1 Sebastien Buemi (CH) Renault e.dams Renault Z.E.15 | 50m08.835s |
| 2 Lucas di Grassi (BR) Abt Audi Sport Abt Schaeffler FE01 | +11.006s |
| 3 Nick Heidfeld (D) Mahindra Racing Mahindra M2 ELECTRO | +15.681s |
| 4 Loic Duval (F) Dragon Racing Venturi VM200-FE-01 | +16.009s |
| 5 Jerome D'Ambrosio (B) Dragon Racing Venturi VM200-FE-01 | +16.514s |
| 6 Oliver Turvey (GB) NEXTEV TCR NEXTEV TCR 001 | +39.466s |
| 7 Sam Bird (GB) DS Virgin Racing Virgin DSV-01 | +47.531s |
| 8 Nathanael Berthon (F) Team Aguri Spark SRT_01E | +58.620s |
| 9 Stephane Sarrazin (F) Venturi VM200-FE-01 | +1m07.814s |
| 10 Robin Frijns (NL) Andretti Autosport Spark SRT_01E | +1m09.260s |
| 11 Daniel Abt (D) Abt Audi Sport Abt Schaeffler FE01 | +1m13.351s |
| 12 Jean-Eric Vergne (F) DS Virgin Racing Virgin DSV-01 | +1m31.040s |
| 13 Bruno Senna (BR) Mahindra Racing M2 ELECTRO | +1m50.833s |
| 14 Jacques Villeneuve (CDN) Venturi VM200-FE-01 | -1 lap |
| 15 Nelson Piquet Jr (BR) NEXTEV TCR NEXTEV TCR 001 | -2 laps |
| R Nicolas Prost (F) Renault e.dams Renault Z.E.15 | 22 laps-rear wing |
| R Antonio Felix da Costa (P) Team Aguri Spark SRT_01E | 13 laps-accident |
| R Simona de Silvestro (CH) Andretti Autosport Spark SRT_01E | 2 laps-accident |
- Winner's average speed 66.475mph.
Fastest lap Buemi, 1m39.993s, 76.933mph.

SUPER POLE

- 1 **Buemi, 1m37.297s**; 2 **Prost, 1m37.581s**; 3 **Heidfeld, 1m38.339s**;
4 **Di Grassi, 1m39.539s**; 5 **Vergne, 2m21.284s**.

QUALIFYING

- 1 **Buemi, 1m37.488s**; 2 **Prost, 1m38.206s**; 3 **Heidfeld, 1m38.512s**; 4 **di Grassi, 1m38.519s**; 5 **Vergne, 1m38.028s**; 6 **Sarrazin, 1m38.645s**; 7 **Senna, 1m38.761s**;
8 **Duval, 1m38.859s**; 9 **Bird, 1m38.884s**; 10 **D'Ambrosio, 1m39.058s**; 11 **Abt, 1m39.220s**; 12 **Villeneuve, 1m39.665s**; 13 **Frijns, 1m39.672s**; 14 **Silvestro, 1m39.681s**; 15 **Turvey, 1m39.734s**; 16 **da Costa, 1m40.295s**; 17 **Berthon, 1m40.386s**; 18 **Piquet, 1m40.638s**.

CHAMPIONSHIP

- 1 **Buemi, 30**; 2 **di Grassi, 18**; 3 **Heidfeld, 15**; 4 **Duval, 12**; 5 **D'Ambrosio, 10**;
6 **Turvey, 8**; 7 **Bird, 6**; 8 **Berthon, 4**; 9 **Sarrazin, 2**; 10 **Frijns, 1**.



Penalty relegated Abt to 11th place

WARNER/LAT

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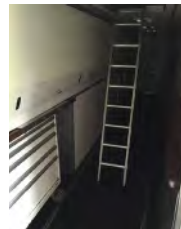
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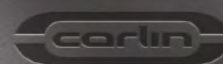
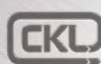
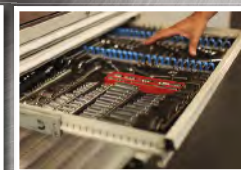
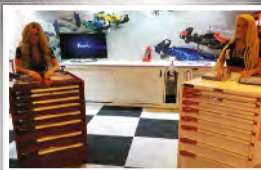


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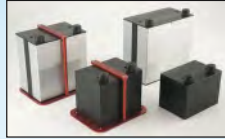


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BRDC F4 is set for first overseas round



BRDC Formula 4 gets Spa date for 2016

BRDC F4 will join British GT fixture at the iconic Belgian circuit for first event outside the UK

THE BRDC FORMULA 4 Championship will race at the Spa-Francorchamps circuit next season, after the series extended its deal with British GT promoter SRO.

BRDC F4 will support the British GT Championship at all seven of its fixtures next season, including its trip to the Belgian Grand Prix venue on July 8-9, which will be BRDC F4's first event outside of the UK.

Leading teams have welcomed the addition of the historic circuit to

the 2016 season calendar.

Charlie Kemp, whose HHC Motorsport team ran Will Palmer to this year's title, said: "I'm happy to go to Spa, because it gives an international flavour to the series and it's a very good circuit.

"As these drivers progress, it's circuits like Spa that they'll be racing at so it would be good for them to go there. It will affect budgets a bit but it shouldn't be a major problem."

Graham Johnson, head of Lanau Racing added: "A trip to Spa is a great result for the new championship with the new car. It's a real driver's track and a place that everybody looks forward to going to.

"We'll have to do some work on the gearing of the new car because at the moment it's a little bit shorter than you'd want for a long track such as Spa. But having two active Grand Prix circuits on the calendar is a real bonus."

The championship will begin with a standalone triple-header at Snetterton 300 on March 27-28 to make up its full 24-race schedule.

CARLIN'S THREE-CAR F4 ATTACK

Leading British single-seater team Carlin will field a three-car attack in the series next year.

Trevor Carlin's eponymous squad has bought three of the new Tatuus-Cosworth MSVF4-016 chassis, and it will run them for

Carlin will expand into BRDC F4



the full championship in 2016.

Carlin will collect the first two chassis this week, but has no plans to contest next month's BRDC F4 Autumn Trophy, which will mark the car's competitive debut.

The deal represents an expansion of Carlin's domestic programme. The team runs in the UK FIA F4 category MSA Formula and plans to use BRDC F4 to help prepare its drivers for a move into one of its many overseas categories: the European F3 Championship, GP3 and GP3, Formula 3.5 V8 and America-based Indy Lights series.

BRDC F4 AND BRITISH GT 2016 CALENDAR

DATE	VENUE	BRIT GT FORMAT
March 27-28	Snetterton	n/a
April 16-17	Brands Hatch	2 Hours
April 30-May 1	Rockingham	2 Hours
May 28-30	Oulton Park	2x 1 Hour
June 11-12	Silverstone GP	3 Hours
July 8-9	Spa-Francorchamps	2 Hours
Aug 6-7	Snetterton	2x 1 Hour
Sept 10-11	Donington Park GP	2 Hours

All BRDC F4 events are triple-headers



BRDC F4 will follow British GT to Spa

Brands Hatch to host 2016 British GT season opener

Brands Hatch will play host to next season's British GT Championship season-opener, taking the place of traditional curtain-raising circuit Oulton Park.

Britain's premier sportscar series has retained its seven-date schedule

for 2016, but has also shifted around some key dates.

Most notably, the traditional Easter weekend fixture at Oulton Park, which has opened the championship for the past 10 seasons, has been replaced with a two-hour race at Brands Hatch.

The Oulton Park fixture will now be held as rounds three and four of the 2016 season on May 28-30, the Bank Holiday weekend.

British GT Championship manager Benjamin Franassovici said: "We consulted with the teams and decided

that we wanted to try something different by opening the year with a two-hour race. Brands Hatch was able to accommodate that.

"The Oulton Park races are still very special to British GT so it is a simple calendar swap."



Firman's Van Diemens are legendary in FF1600

Formula Ford

Firman to design all-new FF1600 car

LEGENDARY FORMULA FORD 1600 constructor Ralph Firman has begun work on a fresh design for the 2016 National series, 17 years after he last created a car for the category. Firman sold the Van Diemen marque he co-founded to Panoz in 1999, but has since continued to build single-seaters under his own RFR badge, primarily for the American

market and also including the outgoing BRDC Formula 4 car. He has already taken orders for the new FF1600 car. "Kent FFord is my first passion, and I was surprised to see that the car that won the Festival [with Wayne Boyd] was an updated version of my old '98 Van Diemen," he said. "We're starting work on the new car immediately and it will be an all-new

design. We can carry over some parts from our last product, the RFR F1000, such as the running gear. But the chassis will be smaller with a flat bottom." The first order is from Luke Williams and his family team, who will field two cars in the National and Scottish series, plus selected Irish events. Williams, who has sold his current Ray chassis to Richard Taring, said: "I know

Ralph is going to build us a good car. Hopefully we can dominate." Castle Combe-based Swift Cooper is also building an all-new FF1600 - its first since 2010 - for 2016, and intends to run two in the National championship, with Luke Cooper in one car. It has already trialed many components for the new machine on its existing SC10 chassis.

Formula Ford

National FF1600 to add Zandvoort round in 2016

THE BRSCC NATIONAL FORMULA Ford 1600 Championship will add an overseas date in 2016 with a round on the bill of the Marcel Albers Memorial Trophy at Zandvoort on May 14-15. The event will feature double-headers for both the UK championship and the Benelux series, which will also act as heats for the non-points Albers trophy finale. Organisers are hoping for a 50-car field in total, with interest from French FF1600 racers, too. While adding Zandvoort, the National series is likely to drop its Knockhill round, and hopes to secure additional testing for competitors at Castle Combe before firming up the Wiltshire track's presence. The BRSCC is also hoping to augment the FFord Festival bill with the

season finales of the BARC-run Classic FF1600 and FF2000 series and the HSCC's Historic FF1600 championship next year, and could split the main Festival itself into parallel Pre-'90 and Post-'89 contests with separate heats and finals.



BRDC Formula 4

Lanan Racing to debut new BRDC F4 car at Silverstone

LANAN RACING WILL BE THE first team to run one of the new Tatuus-Cosworth BRDC Formula 4 cars in anger when it enters Neil Hunt into the allcomers race at this weekend's Walter Hayes Trophy. The team has entered one of its three new MSV-F4 016 chassis into the Open Wheel Scratch race that supports the Formula Ford knockout event at Silverstone. It will mark the first time one of the new 230bhp cars has raced competitively in the UK.



Lanan boss Graham Johnson said: "Neil raced for me in FFord years ago and now just does the odd run each season and rents whatever we have available, so it seemed the perfect chance to put some miles on the new Tatuus-Cosworth F4 car. "There are no expectations, it's just a chance to give the car a shakedown and garner some data on it in a nice, relaxed environment. We likely won't do the BRDC F4 Autumn Trophy as we'll spend the winter testing instead."

In brief Smith could do Minis

Eurotech boss Jeff Smith tested a Gen-3 Mini at Donington and is considering branching out into the Mini Challenge. "The car certainly wouldn't suffer from understeer as there is plenty of front-end weight," he said.

Hand tests Renault

Renault UK Clio Cup runner-up Ash Hand is considering a move to the Renault Sport Trophy next season after a successful test in an R.S.01 car last week. The 21-year-old tested with the Monlau Competition team at Jerez and finished fourth of the 12 drivers to complete the morning sessions.

FF racers eye team-up

James Raven and Patrick Dussault - runners-up in National FF1600 with Cliff Dempsey Racing in 2014 and '15 respectively - could team up in sportscars next season. Dussault is putting together a sponsorship package for a switch to endurance racing and wants 2014 FFord Festival winner Raven as his co-driver.

Pyro's Ginetta plans

Leading Renault UK Clio Cup outfit Team Pyro is planning on fielding "two to four" cars in its maiden year in Ginetta Juniors next season. "We've got to make sure everything works and need to be careful not to take too much on. Things are looking good," said team boss Mark Hunt.

Formula Ford

Dempsey aiming for record fourth Walter Hayes Trophy

PETER DEMPSEY WILL RETURN TO Formula Ford 1600 to chase a record fourth Walter Hayes Trophy this weekend.

Dempsey was involved in a controversial finale last season when he collided with both of the leading Kevin Mills Spectrums driven by poleman Michael Moyers and defending Walter Hayes Trophy champion Scott Malvern. All three drivers retired.



Dempsey in last year's WHT

"The Hayes has become my one blow-out event of the year where I can shake the cobwebs off and get back behind the wheel myself," said Dempsey, who works as an engineer for the Juncos team in the USA.

"Last year I made a mistake and it became a bit of a train wreck. I want to move on from that and I'm not anticipating any fallout from it this year as it is water under the bridge."

Dempsey will use the Cliff Dempsey Racing Ray fielded by his family team for Team Canada scholar Michael Adams at last weekend's Festival. CDR will add a fifth Ray at the WHT for Frenchman Timothe Buret, who finished fifth in Pro Mazda with Juncos this year.

"He's never driven a modern FF1600 before but is an incredibly brave driver so he'll adapt quickly," said Dempsey.

VAG Trophy

Smiley wins on comeback

FORMER MINI CHALLENGE

Champion Chris Smiley raced for the first time this season at Oulton Park last weekend, taking a double victory in the VAG Trophy.

The 2012 title winner raced a Team Hard Volkswagen Golf at the Cheshire track. He controlled the first race after grabbing the lead at the start and led throughout race two.

"Tony Gilham [Team Hard boss] rang me a few days before to offer me

the drive and it was great to be back on the track," said Smiley.

"I haven't raced at all this year as things didn't come together, after doing the VW Scirocco Cup in Germany last year."

Smiley is now considering his options for a full-time racing return next year.

"I have got plans for next season to be finalised and it could be abroad again," he added.



Smiley claimed two wins on his return

MN Saloons

Ross to race dad's Escort

FORD FIESTA CHAMPION JJ ROSS

will make a guest appearance in MN Saloons next month, driving his father's Ford Escort-Cosworth WRC.

He has never raced the car before but will drive in the season-ending rounds at Brands Hatch on November 7-8.

"He has driven really well this year and I thought I'd give him a go in the Escort as a little reward," said Bob Ross. "It's just a bit of fun, but it will be interesting to see how he gets on."

Ross is part of a capacity field for the season-finale, which also includes Mini Challenge racer Luke Reade and Clio Cup Race Series driver Brett Lidsey.

Ross won the Fiesta championship at the Kent track last weekend, and is eyeing a move to the Renault UK Clio Cup for 2016.



Ross won Fiesta title last week

HUMBLE PYE

The voice of club racing



Rain made an exciting circuit super-difficult

"MARATHON STINT BY MARSHALS KEEPS FESTIVAL AFLOAT"

Persistent rainfall and several oil-downs at the Autodromo Internacional Algarve tested Portuguese marshals' resilience as the popular Classic Festival closed the European historic racing season.

Following a qualifying day that showcased the venue at its picturesque best, the climate in the hills above Portimao turned on Saturday. An hour behind schedule by mid-morning, with not a minute of slack in the timetable and no curfew, there was no question of stopping. On posts from 7.30am until 10.30pm, the enthusiasts then sat down over a hot meal at the track restaurant and returned for more on Sunday.

Nobody complained that Motor Racing Legends' two-hour '50s Sports car race, programmed to start at 6pm on Saturday, didn't start until after it was due to finish. Teams simply reorganised dinner bookings with accommodating restaurants and went racing.

Fortunately retirements were few (the field was down on 2014's) and everybody who reached the finish enjoyed every second. Several at the prizegiving described it as their "best race ever" and implored Duncan Wiltshire's MRL team to offer more night racing.

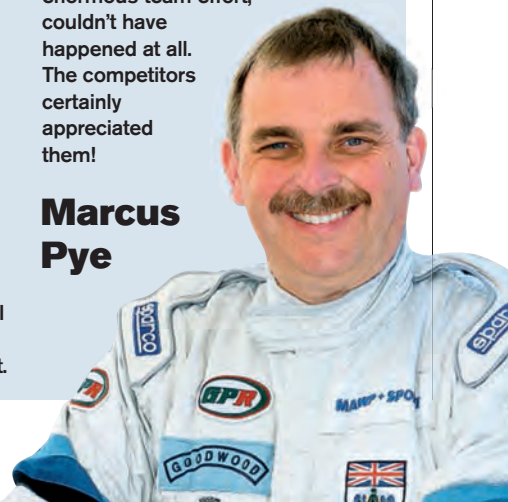
It helps that the circuit is one of the finest anywhere, topped by an awesome, plunging, cambered final turn, into a compression, before it climbs onto the start/finish straight.

Exciting in the dry, it's incredibly difficult when wet, underlining the ability of the likes of Martin O'Connell, Phil Keen, Jon Minshaw (winners all) and Martin Stretton, who anchored Philip Champion's Lotus 11 streamliner to second in the nocturnal endurance.

Competitors in promoter Diogo Ferrao's Iberian Historic Endurance races drew the short straw. Unlike last year when the breadth of the event's largest field was fully appreciated, both were run under cover of darkness. From Ford GT40s, one with pro driver Frank Stippler up, to a Hillman Imp, the field was eclectic. Rui Macedo Silva and son Pedro proudly winning Saturday's stanza after the latter's brilliant finishing stint in their open GT40.

Two races fewer would benefit everybody next year, not least those marshals without whose stoicism the event, the culmination of an enormous team effort, couldn't have happened at all. The competitors certainly appreciated them!

Marcus Pye



Boyd and Daly, with a damaged nose, battled hard



FORMULA FORD FESTIVAL BRANDS HATCH OCTOBER 24-25 BRSCC

Boyd bests the regulars for Festival win

80

BETWEEN THEM, WAYNE BOYD, Robert Barrable and Stuart Gough had contested precisely two Formula Ford 1600 events in 2015 prior to the Formula Ford Festival. Yet they were the trio filling the Brands Hatch podium at sunset last Sunday, while this year's regular FF1600 frontrunners watched on from down the order or behind the barriers.

At a time when FF1600 is regaining traction as a viable junior racing category, a man who'd used it as a stepping stone to first a FFord Duratec title then a race-winning British Formula 3 campaign in his teens was a fitting Festival winner. Nowadays Boyd, who turned 25 on Festival Sunday, saves budget to pop out for the Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy with Medina Sport just to remind the motorsport world

what he can do. For a second straight year he was the benchmark on pure pace all weekend, albeit narrowly because this was a delectably high quality field. A year ago a broken damper mounting pin put him out, but this time fortune was kind.

Boyd shook off some rust in testing, rattled out the personal benchmark 50.2-second laps that he's done since first turning up in 2007, then won his heat (fairly easily in the wet) and his semi (after a tough fight with Joey Foster and Barrable on a mostly-dry track).

He wasn't the only man to reach the final unbeaten. Stephen Daly's heat two drive was the weekend's most dominant performance – his lead reaching six seconds before a safety car. Leinster Trophy winner Daly, Northern Irish champion Jake

Byrne and Champion of Brands ace Luke Williams had all elevated their status from 'promising outside bet' to 'likely Festival winner' through their strong 2015 campaigns and early-weekend form. Daly won again in semi two after a tough fight with Williams, while Byrne was third in his heat and then a very, very close second to Niall Murray in a gloriously tense third semi that finished with first to fifth covered by 0.9s. That all set up a Boyd, Daly, Murray, Foster, Williams, Byrne final grid top six, a sextet very hard to separate on speed.

The first flashpoint came within seconds of the start – the nose of Daly's Ray shooting off into the Kent sky as he clipped the rear of Boyd's Van Diemen on Hailwood Hill. The car's mangled front end inevitably had a "parachute" effect on its straightline speed, but that didn't stop Daly not only holding second in the face of relentless pressure from a pack of eight cars going wheel-to-wheel everywhere on his tail, but regaining it several times under braking. And it was a sight that was getting ever smaller in Boyd's mirrors, as he scampered off into a four-second lead.

Then as half-distance approached, Murray's engine let go through Surtees, causing an immediate oil slick that sent Foster spinning into the gravel and out, scattered several



Boyd atoned for 2014 race

other cars and prompted a red flag for a proper clean-up. There was no escape for Boyd, who now had an unpredictable track surface to deal with too, at the restart.

But another present awaited four laps into the 10-lap second leg, as his biggest remaining rivals Daly, Byrne and Williams went side by side up Hailwood Hill and only Daly reached Druids intact (ish), now with a bent steering arm and tattered sidepod to add to his front-end damage. The "hugely devastated" Byrne and furious Williams were out. "Jake was caught in a sandwich and I was collected," was Daly's summary as he salvaged a sixth, while the following Gough – who was looking forward to watching his onboard video of the incident – suggested that "don't go three-wide into Druids" was generally good advice for anyone trying to win the Festival.

That's still one thing Gough



Another irregular, Barrable, did well

ALL PICS: HAWKINS



Last year's winner
Raven spun...

Last year's frontrunners make the wrong impact

A year ago, James Raven stormed to the front in the Festival final and left all the ragged racing behind him, while Jonny McMullan took a hard-fought runner-up spot at the end of a season in which he'd barely raced.

This time they had the sort of Festival dramas they'd done so well to avoid in 2014. It was particularly painful for McMullan, whose success 12 months earlier had launched him into a Motorsport Ireland-backed drive with Bernard Dolan and this year's National FF1600 title.

That made him a Festival favourite, but a down-on-power engine hampered him all weekend. Saturday's rain helped him to come from sixth to second in his heat, before a slip at Paddock in the semi dropped him down the order and into the last chance race. He won that then tumbled from 25th to 10th in the final but a solution to the engine glitch remained elusive.

Raven was rapid but whereas last year an off in qualifying

didn't stop him coming back to win, this time the incidents were too numerous to overcome. He spun when leading his heat, charged from eighth to second in his semi before crashing, then made it from the back to the crucial sixth spot in the last chance race only for a broken trackrod to pitch him off again.

The heroes of 2014 were far from the only 'what if?' tales. Scottish champion Adam Mackay spun out of his heat and was on a comeback mission thereafter, one that paid off with eighth in the final ahead of post-injury returnee Chris Middlehurst.

Team Canada scholar Michael Adams was outstanding in his heat, using the traffic to keep opposition as good as McMullan, Kevin O'Hara and Oliver White at bay. Crashing with White on lap one of his semi was a huge blow to Adams, whose UK programme was for the Festival only. O'Hara rued the decision to go with an all-dry set-up in his semi, which gave him too much work to do in the Final.



... and McMullan also struggled



Dickerson did well for Team USA

himself hasn't done, but a third podium in four years, achieved in the only 20th century car in the top 15, was a typically gutsy effort for the man in the Oldfield Van Diemen RF92. Gough finished right on runner-up Barrable's tail and with the star of another feelgood story on his rear end in Melroy Heemskerk. Six years ago, the Dutchman was sensational in the Duratec Festival until a mistake. Now only rarely racing, he was given a chance in Geva's spare Mygale and got ever quicker throughout the weekend.

Team USA pair Dakota Dickerson and Michai Stephens were also right in the podium fight, having been frontrunners in the heats and semis – Stephens took second in heat one and third in semi three. Raw speed wasn't a problem for either, but having the necessary confidence and aggression at the right time was the missing piece. There was no shame in fifth and seventh in a field this

strong, but their post-race reflections on how much they'd learned were tempered by a niggling feeling that more was possible. They are determined to make amends at Silverstone next week. That's what Boyd did last year. This time he heads for the Walter Hayes chasing not recompense, but a double.

● Matt Beer

RESULTS

HEAT 1 (12 LAPS) 1 Wayne Boyd (Van Diemen MS13K) **12m26.961s (69.86mph)**; 2 Michai Stephens (Ray GR13/14) +4.732s; 3 Luke Williams (Ray GR13); 4 Robert Barrable (Ray GR10); 5 Niall Murray (Van Diemen RF99); 6 Abdul Ahmed (Ray GRK09). **Class winners** Conor Murphy (Van Diemen RF83); Xavier Michel (Van Diemen RF81). **Fastest lap** Boyd 1m00.938s (71.36mph). **Pole** Boyd. **Starters** 21. **HEAT 2 (12 LAPS) 1** Stephen Daly (Ray GR11) **14m03.944s (61.83mph)**; 2 Joey Foster (Ray GR08) +2.548s; 3 Jake Byrne (Ray GR13); 4 Dakota Dickerson (Ray GR15); 5 Stuart Gough (Van Diemen RF92); 6 Melroy Heemskerk (Mygale GV15-K). **CW** Matthew Cowley (Reynard 88FF); Gislain Genecand (Crossle 25F). **FL** Daly 59.801s (72.71mph). **P** Foster. **S 24. HEAT 3 (12 LAPS) 1** Michael Adams (Ray

GR08/09) **12m22.699s (70.26mph)**; 2 Jonny McMullan (Van Diemen LA10) +0.826s; 3 Kevin O'Hara (Van Diemen RF01); 4 Oliver White (Van Diemen JL015K); 5 Geoff Richardson (Van Diemen RF03); 6 Neil MacLennan (Ray GR10). **CW** David Nicholl (Reynard 89FF); Bernard Richard (Crossle 30F). **FL** McMullan 1m00.224s (72.20mph). **P** O'Hara. **S 20. SEMI-FINAL 1 (15 LAPS) 1** Boyd **13m24.913s (81.03mph)**; 2 Foster +1.876s; 3 Barrable; 4 Gough; 5 Chris Middlehurst (Mygale GR15K); 6 O'Hara. **CW** Murphy; Michel. **FL** MacLennan 51.433s (84.54mph). **P** Boyd. **S 21. SEMI-FINAL 2 (15 LAPS) 1** Daly **15m41.610s (69.27mph)**; Williams +0.877s; 3 Dickerson; 4 Andy Charsley (I); 5 Geoff Richardson (Van Diemen RF03); 6 Ahmed. **CW** Cowley; Alain Giradet (Lola T200); Genecand. **P** Daly. **FL** Williams 50.620s

(85.90mph) **S 22. SEMI-FINAL 3 (13 LAPS) 1** Murray **11m13.870s (83.89mph)**; 2 Byrne +0.089s; 3 Stephens; Heemskerk; 5 Noel Robinson (Van Diemen JL012K); 6 Sam McKenzie (Ray GR08). **CW** Ben Tinkler (Reynard 89FF); Stuart Kestenbaum (Van Diemen RF79). **FL** Byrne 50.502s (86.10mph). **P** Adams. **S 23. LAST CHANCE RACE (8 LAPS) 1** McMullan **6m56.225s (83.58mph)**; 2 MacLennan; 3 Cowley; 4 Kestenbaum; 5 Ryan Campbell (Mondiale M89); 6 White. **CW** Cowley; Kestenbaum; Giraudet. **FL** White 50.550s (86.02mph). **P** MacLennan. **S 29. FINAL (10 LAPS) 1** Boyd **8m36.989s (83.78mph)**; 2 Barrable +4.287s; 3 Gough; 4 Heemskerk; 5 Dickerson; 6 Daly. **CW** Cowley; Kestenbaum. **FL** McMullan 50.574s (85.98mph). **P** Boyd. **S 30.**

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FF FESTIVAL SUPPORT RACES
BRANDS HATCH OCTOBER 24-25

McCullough triumphs in FF Masters

THE 40TH RUNNING OF THE Formula Ford Festival at Brands inspired plans for a **Masters** race for past competitors. Ivor McCullough, Kent Festival winner in 2011 and 2012 triumphed again, beating Andy Charsley who has been enjoying a return to FF1600 this season. Past masters Jay Bridger, Bob Higgins and Martin Donnelly were next after some hectic racing. The early leader was Richard Tarling, who was racing with a jump-start penalty, until he spun down the order following an accidental touch with Donnelly. Tiff Needell, in the AUTOSPORT prize Lotus 69 he raced in one of the original Snetterton festivals, was a class-winning 13th.

More old-timers (the cars this time, not the drivers) contested a **Historic Festival Final**, made up of entries from the main event. It produced a terrific three-way tussle between Ryan Campbell (1989 Mondiale), Matthew Cowley (1988 Reynard) and Conor Murphy (1983 Van Diemen). Murphy lost second by running wide at the final corner while Ben Tinkler was fourth with Stuart Kestenbaum next, already into his fifth race of the weekend with two more to run.



McCullough added Masters win to '11 and '12 triumphs

Classic Formula Ford produced a good race in damp and dusky conditions on Saturday between poleman Richard Tarling and fifth qualifier Gislain Genecand. Tarling was in front for much of the race, but the visitor gave him a hard time. Mike Gardner fell back in third after a couple of excursions, briefly raising Stuart Kestenbaum's hopes of grabbing third.

James Ross secured the **Fiesta ST** championship in the weekend's first Jam-Sport race having established an advantage over Simon Horrobin and Scott Robertson. David Ellesley retired on Saturday with a puncture after

a clash, but dominated race two on a drying track, unusually using wets on the back of his car and slicks on the front. Dry-shod Samuel Priest pounced on Lee Dendy-Sadler on the final lap to take second.

The first **Zetec and Si** race took place in almost complete darkness and intermittent rain, but Alastair Kellett, David Nye and David Abbott put on a fine battle for the lead despite the gloomy conditions. They finished in that order, the reverse of their pre-event point standings. Kellett, Nye and Abbott headed the order again on Sunday, with Abbott announcing his retirement on the podium.

Aaron Thompson reinforced his **Fiesta Junior** points lead on Saturday, winning on a damp track against the biggest field seen in the championship. First he had to pass rival Michael Higgs, who was left to fend off Carlito Miracco. He knew third in Sunday's finale would be enough to ensure Thompson's title, and that's where he finished, behind Higgs and Miracco.

Some wild driving within half-a-lap of the start of Saturday's race eliminated more than a third of the visiting **Irish Fiestas**. David Yamamoto overcame the rapid Adrian Finnegan, with Hugh Grennan third. A dry track and a more sensible approach by the drivers to Sunday's race brought victory for Brendan Fitzgerald over Yamamoto and Finnegan.

The weekend's longest race for the fastest cars had a sting in the tail. Having led the **Sports 2000 Duratecs** for much of the event, Michael Gibbins was tripped up by a backmarker with just a lap to go, allowing Patrick Sherrington to snatch the win. With Cameron Davies and Paul Martin third and fourth, MCR cars enjoyed a clean sweep.

Chris Snowdon won a race-long duel with Peter Needham to take **Sports 2000 Pinto** honours. Clive Steeper was well beaten in third.

● Brian Phillips



Thompson leads Higgs and Miracco

RESULTS

FORMULA FORD FESTIVAL MASTERS (16 LAPS)
1 Ivor McCullough (Van Diemen RFOO) 13m00.514s (83.57mph); 2 Andy Charsley (Ray GR15) +1.399s; 3 Jay Bridger (Mygale SJ2001); 4 Bob Higgins (Van Diemen RF90); 5 Martin Donnelly (Mygale SJ2000); 6 Miles Johnston (Mygale SJ01). **Class winners** Stuart Kestenbaum (Van Diemen RF79); Tiff Needell (Lotus 69F); Ivor Mairs (Mondiale 84S). **Fastest lap** Charsley 51.032s (85.21mph). **Pole** McCullough. **Starters** 21.
HISTORIC FESTIVAL FINAL (15 LAPS) 1 Ryan Campbell (Mondiale 89MS) 15m46.752s (68.89mph); 2 Matthew Cowley (Reynard FF88) +0.226s; 3 Conor Murphy (Van Diemen RF83); 4 Ben Tinkler (Reynard FF89); 5 Stuart Kestenbaum (Van Diemen RF79); 6 Gislain Genecand (Crossele 25F). **CW** Kestenbaum; Alain Giradet (Lola T200). **FL** Murphy 51.472s (84.48mph). **P** Murphy. **S** 20.

CLASSIC FORMULA FORD TROPHY (15 LAPS) 1 Richard Tarling (Van Diemen RF80) 15m34.543s (69.79mph); 2 Gislain Genecand (Crossele 25F) +1.922s; 3 Mike Gardner (Crossele 32F); 4 Stuart Kestenbaum (Van Diemen RF79); 5 Alain Giradet (Lola T200); 6 John Village (Crossele 25F). **CW** Giradet. **FL** Tarling 1m01.005s (71.28mph). **P** Tarling. **S** 17.
JAM-SPORT FIESTA CHAMPIONSHIP, CLASS C (20 LAPS)
1 James Ross 20m52.860s (69.41mph); 2 Simon Horrobin +3.322s; 3 Scott Robertson; 4 Samuel Priest; 5 Jamie Going; 6 Mark Godfrey. **FL** Ross 1m01.593s (70.60mph). **P** David Ellesley. **S** 15. **RACE TWO (20 LAPS)** 1 Ellesley 20m32.078s (70.58mph); 2 2 Priest +16.866s; 3 Lee Dendy-Sadler; 4 Horrobin; 5 Nicholas Pope; 6 Richard Kemp. **FL** Priest 58.820s (73.93mph). **P** Ellesley. **S** 15.
JAM-SPORT FIESTA CHAMPIONSHIP, CLASSES A, B, D (12 LAPS) 1 Alastair Kellett 13m04.564s (66.51mph); 2 David Nye +0.123s; 3 David Abbott; 4 Steve Ryan; 5 Jordan Annells; 6 Mike Hooper. **CW** Peter Lloyd; Peter Dendy-Sadler.

FL Abbott 1m04.116s (67.82mph). **P** Kellett. **S** 16.
RACE TWO (21 LAPS) 1 Kellett 20m24.590s (74.57mph); 2 Nye +1.978s; 3 Abbott; 4 Ryan; 5 Hooper; 6 Al Daly. **CW** James Styles; John Cooper. **FL** Abbott 57.318s (75.86mph). **P** Kellett. **S** 16.
FIESTA JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP (19 LAPS) 1 Aaron Thompson 20m00.604s (68.81mph); 2 Michael Higgs +3.384s; 3 Carlito Miracco; 4 Ronan Quinn; 5 Nathan Edwards; 6 Elliot Wilson. **FL** Miracco 1m02.301s (69.79mph). **P** Edwards. **S** 15. **RACE TWO (19 LAPS)** 1 Higgs 20m15.836s (67.95mph); 2 Miracco +0.956s; 3 Thompson; 4 Edwards; 5 Richard Crisp; 6 Quinn. **FL** Thompson 57.565s (75.54mph). **P** Thompson. **S** 15.
IRISH FIESTAS (12 LAPS) 1 David Yamamoto 15m33.851s (55.87mph); 2 Adrian Finnegan +0.656s; 3 Hugh Grennan; 4 Trevor Farrar; 5 Alan Watkins; 6 Michael Tumulty. **FL** Yamamoto 1m10.982s (61.26mph). **P** Brendan Fitzgerald (absent). **S** 12. **RACE TWO (15 LAPS)** 1 Brendan Fitzgerald

15m49.173s (68.72mph); 2 Yamamoto +2.354s; 3 Finnegan; 4 Philip Lawless; 5 Grennan; 6 Watkins. **FL** Tumulty 1m01.804s (70.36mph). **P** Tumulty. **S** 18.
SPORTS 2000 (38 LAPS) 1 Patrick Sherrington (MCR) 30m34.967s (90.05mph); 2 Michael Gibbins (MCR) +1.055s; 3 Cameron Davies (MCR); 4 Paul Martin (MCR); 5 Paul Traythurn (Gunn TS11); 6 David Houghton (Van Diemen RFSC02). **CW** Martin; Peter Williams (MCR). **FL** Sherrington 47.420s (91.70mph). **P** Sherrington. **S** 14.
SPORTS 2000 PINTO CHAMPIONSHIP (30 LAPS) 1 Chris Snowdon (Tiga SC80) 25m40.705s (84.67mph); 2 Peter Needham (Tiga SDC80) +0.943s; 3 Clive Steeper (Tiga SC80); 4 Mark Powell (Tiga SC84); 5 Damien Griffin (Lola T598); 6 Colin Feyerabend (Lola T90/90). **CW** Powell; Feyerabend. **FL** Needham 50.433s (86.22mph). **P** Snowdon. **S** 14.

ALGARVE CLASSIC FESTIVAL OCTOBER 24

Keen and able in soggy Algarve Festival

JON MINSHAW AND PHIL KEEN WON

both two-hour historic races at a miserably wet Algarve Classic Festival, in Demon Tweeks Lister Jaguar and E-type respectively, but it was Keen's prodigious speed in Hans Hubner's Porsche 934/5 in the CER2 plateau that rocked the establishment in the seventh edition of the Portuguese season-closer.

Patrick Peter split his Classic Endurance Racing sets this year. Dominique Guenat qualified his Cosworth DFV-powered Lola T286 quickest in Friday's dry Pre-'79 session, but allcomers were humbled by Keen, who relished Sunday's slippery conditions, whooshing from eighth to hand the car's German owner a 40-second lead.

The two-litre Group 6 cars had a field day as the track improved. Champion Patrice Lafargue, who led before Keen blasted the turbocar past, screamed his glorious long-tailed Lola-BMW T298 to another accomplished victory. Briton Russell Busst (Chevron-BDG B36) pursued the Frenchman mightily, despite

losing second gear.

The battle for third raged throughout, with Yves Scemama's Warsteiner Toj-DFV and Guenat unable to shake off the tenacious Tony Sinclair (in Scot Grant Reid's ex-Chris Craft '73 European championship-winning Lola T292) and Doug Hart (March 75S), up from 19th, until they retired.

Hubner did not squander Keen's efforts, winning the GT2 division in 10th overall, but the extraordinary early battle for second embroiling Christian Bouriez (Ferrari 512 BBLM), David Ferrer (Lancia Beta Monte Carlo turbo) and Christian Traber (BMW M1 Procar) got cameras clicking.

Defending champion Martin O'Connell dominated the CER1 race in Sandy Watson's Chevron B19. "It was ace out there," he grinned after an hour of reflex-testing powerslides. Once in Mark Piercy's Lola T210, polesetter Martin Stretton's attempts to overhaul second-placed Richard Meaden (soloing in Grant Tromans' Lola T70 Mk3B) were thwarted when



Keen also won in Minshaw's E-type

it conked out, promoting David Tomlin's sister car to third.

American Jim Farley climbed impressively from 15th to fourth in his T212, ahead of the contrasting T70s of Belgian Eric Mestdagh (Mk3B) and veteran Toni Seiler's ex-Ulf Norinder Mk3. GT honours were well earned by Afschin Fatemi and Wolfgang Kaufmann (Porsche Carrera).

Saturday evening's MRL '50s Sportscar race started in pitch darkness at 8.20pm, 20 minutes after it was scheduled to end, but once early leader Richard Kent had retired his Lister-Jaguar Costin, Minshaw and Keen's Knobbly were unassailable. Philip Champion/Martin Stretton (Lotus 11 Le Mans) nailed a brilliant second, ahead of Charles Gillett/Steve Smith whose priority in the befinned Willment-Climax was beating VSCC pals Justin Maers/Tom Walker (Cooper Monaco). They achieved it with Rudi Friedrichs/Philipp Buhofer (Jaguar C-type) between them.

Minshaw's GTSCC quest was almost derailed when he picked up a puncture while duelling with O'Connell's E-type. "Fortunately the pit window had just opened, so I was able to stop, send Phil out and lengthen my second stint [to fulfil

the series' requirement]."

O'Connell, saddled with a minute's penalty at both stops to drive the lion's share in Sandy Watson's car, finished fractionally under 2m03s shy after the Scot's stout shot, his first race in two years!

Carlos Monteverde/Gary Pearson (AC Cobra) broke the Jaguar monopoly in third, ahead of the rejuvenated Lister-Jag of Tony Wood/Will Nuthall, which boiled on the grid thus non-started Saturday's enduro. Jeremy Welch/Mark Pangborn (Austin-Healey 3000) snatched GT3 honours from Simon Orebi Gann/Calum Lockie (Morgan SLR) after a thrilling chase.

Peter Horsman (Lotus 18/21) defied appalling conditions to win both HGPCA races, Sunday's with dusk descending on a gruesomely wet track. Rod Jolley (Cooper T45/51) and brave Spaniard Guillermo Fierro (Maserati 250F) both led, as did Julian Bronson — who took over Barry Cannell's BRP T51 — but a second huge spin on the last lap let Horsman back in.

Starting on new Dunlops, Tony Wood led the U2TC race splendidly until his BMW's diff failed. "It was like steering an egg round a chip pan," smiled pursuer Richard Shaw, who handed his sister car to Hubner.



O'Connell proved imperious in Chevron

Keen starred in Porsche 934/5



FIA LURANI TROPHY HISTORIC FORMULA JUNIOR

Weibel gets title despite breakdown

An incredible sequence of events decided the crucial aggregate result of the Lurani Trophy Historic Formula Junior championship finale and the title's destiny. While mental arithmetic computed a beaming Richard Smeeton's round victory in his Italian Wainer, nobody could have predicted that the crown would be won, against the odds, by 0.469s!

Bruno Weibel led into Portugal, but his ex-Jo Siffert Lotus 20's gearbox input shaft snapped while leading Saturday's wet race, sidelining it on Sunday. Weibel could only watch as the advantage was thrown to Italy's Daniele Salodini (Taraschi-Fiat), chasing the combined front-engined classes' points.

The spanner in Salodini's works was (series promoter) Duncan Rabagliati, whose Alexis-BMC 'Cenoura Voadoura' outran him, remaining unlapped, as frontrunners spun left, right and centre on day one. Poleman James Claridge and Joao Paulo



Smeeton's Wainer won on aggregate

Campos Costa dropped their ex-Picko Troberg Lolas as Christian Traber won from fellow Lotus racer Mark Pangborn, from the back having missed qualifying.

Reverting to the original grid, Claridge won on Sunday, with Pangborn set for outright honours until his engine went sick on the final lap. As he coasted to the pits, still third, Smeeton was promoted to second, winning on aggregate.

Unable to match double winner Robin Lackford (Elva-BMC 100) meanwhile, Salodini finished second of the 'pullers', a lap ahead of Rabagliati. With both now on 20 laps, overall race times decided the points. Rabagliati therefore took the runner-up's allocation by under half a second – thus the astonished Weibel was 2015 champion!

RESULTS

FIA LURANI TROPHY HISTORIC FORMULA JUNIOR (10+12 LAPS)

1 Richard Smeeton (Wainer 63) 53m45.245s (71.59mph); 2 James Claridge (Lola Mk5A) +41.884s; 3 Mark Pangborn (Lotus 20B); 4 Joao Paulo Campos Costa (Lola Mk5); 5 Peter Waeffler (Lotus 20/22); 6 Jeremy Deeley (Cooper T52). **CW** John Lord (Lotus 18); Robin Lackford (Elva 100); James Hicks (Caravelle MkIII). **INV** Deeley. **F3** Philippe Bonny (Tecno). **FL** Claridge 2m06.797s (82.08mph). **P** Claridge. **S** 25.
RACE 1 (10 LAPS) 1 Christian Traber (Lotus 22) 27m18.099s (63.53m3225.245ph); 2 Pangborn +12.041s; 3 Chris Drake (Elva 300); 4 Philipp Buhofner (Lola Mk5); 5 Smeeton; 6 Waeffler. **CW** Drake; Lord; Lackford; Simon Durling (Lotus 18). **FL** Traber 2m39.837s (65.73mph). **P** Claridge. **S** 25.
RACE 2 (12 LAPS) 1 Claridge 25m38.634s (81.16mph); 2 Smeeton +14.012s; 3 Campos Costa; 4 Waeffler; 5 Pangborn; 6 Colin Nursey (Lotus 18). **CW** Nursey; Luc Deneve (Lotus 18); Lackford; Simon Durling (Lotus 18). **P** Claridge. **FL** Claridge 2m06.797s (82.08mph). **S** 22.



Dance leads in his Ford Capri

The Banks brothers' Alfa Romeo GTA tore ahead of Steve Jones in the surviving Mini Cooper S, but a penalty dropped Jones to fourth, behind David Tomlin/Richard Meaden (Lotus Cortina) and Hubner.

Frazer 'Nashers' Charles Gillett and Patrick Blakeney-Edwards won Sunday's MRL Pre-War Sportscar race after Saturday winner Robert Spencer (Bugatti T35) survived a monster twizzle on the cambered T15, clonked the pit entrance barrier and continued! The locally-infused Historic Touring Car Challenge races both fell to Steve Dance's Weslake-engined Ford Capri.

Both of event promoter Diogo Ferrao's Iberian Historic Endurance races were run in darkness. Portugal's national anthem rang out on Saturday when father and son Rui and Pedro Macedo Silva scored a first win together in their open Ford GT40, Junior having negated a 40s deficit in four laps!

James Hanson lapped all bar the green GT40 in Paul Pochciol's UFO Jeans tribute Capri before relaying the owner on Sunday. Only Frank Stippler in Georg Nolte's GT40 lapped quicker than Hanson – by 0.008s – although the British car's tyres did not meet series regs.

● Marcus Pyle

RESULTS

CLASSIC ENDURANCE RACING 2, PRE-79 (30 LAPS)

1 Patrice Lafargue (Lola-BMW T298) 1h00m40.051s (85.78mph); 2 Russell Busst (Chevron-BDG B31) +13.871s; 3 Tony Sinclair (Lola-BDG T294); 4 Doug Hart (March-BDG 75S); 5 Frederic da Rocha (Lola-BMW T298); 6 Carlos Barbot (Lola-DFV T280). **CW** Phil Keen/Hans Hubner (Porsche 934/5). **FL** Lafargue 1m51.110s (93.67mph). **P** Dominique Guenat (Lola-DFV T286). **S** 20.

CLASSIC ENDURANCE RACING 1, PRE-71 (25 LAPS)

1 Martin O'Connell (Chevron-FVC B19) 1h00m06.612s (72.14mph); 2 Richard Meaden (Lola-Chevrolet T70 Mk3B) +37.688s; 3 David Tomlin (Lola-FVC T210); 4 Jim Farley (Lola-FVC T212); 5 Eric Mestdagh (Lola-Chevrolet T70 Mk3B); 6 Toni Seiler (Lola-Chevrolet T70 Mk3). **Class winners** Afschin Fatemi/Wolfgang Kaufmann (Porsche 911 Carrera RSR). **Fastest lap** O'Connell 1m58.414s (88.63mph). **Pole** Martin Stretton (Lola-FVC T210). **Starters** 26.

MRL '50s SPORTSCARS (49 LAPS)

1 Jon Minshaw/Phil Keen (Lister-Jaguar Knobbly) 2h01m47.210s (69.79mph); 2 Philip Champion/Martin Stretton (Lotus 11 Le Mans) +1 lap; 3 Charles Gillett/Steve Smith (Willmet-Climax); 4 Rudiger Friedrichs/Philipp Buhofner (Jaguar C-type); 5 Justin Maeers/Tom Walker (Cooper T49 Monaco); 6 Ralf Emmerling/Phil Hooper (Elva Mk5); 7 Hans Hubner/Richard Shaw (Lister-Jaguar Knobbly); 8 Tim Reid/Alex Montgomery (Lola-Climax Mk1 BR-7); 9 Stephan Rettenmaier/Ingo Grimm (Porsche RSK 718 Spyder); 10 Roger Whiteside (Cooper T49 Monaco).

CW Champion; Stretton; Gillett/Smith; Friedrichs/Buhofner; Emmerling/Hooper. (Cooper Monaco). **FL** Minshaw 2m15.122s (77.02mph). **P** Minshaw/Keen. **S** 17.

GT & SPORTS CAR CUP (47 LAPS)

1 Jon Minshaw/Phil Keen (Jaguar E-type) 2h01m54.167s (66.87mph); 2 Martin O'Connell/Sandy Watson (Jaguar E-type) +2m02.872s; 3 Carlos Monteverde/Gary Pearson (AC Cobra); 4 Tony Wood/Will Nuthall (Lister-Jaguar Knobbly); 5 Gregor Fischen/Bobby Verdon-Roe (Jaguar E-type FHC); 6 Rob Hall/Andy Willis (AC Cobra); 7 Pierre-Alain & Erwin France (AC Cobra); 8 Rui Macedo Silva/Joaquim Jorge (AC Cobra); 9 Christian Dumolin/

Christophe van Riet (Shelby Cobra); 10 Jeremy Welch/Mark Pangborn (Austin-Healey 3000). **P** Minshaw/Keen. **CW** Welch/Pangborn; Joe Ward/Richard Bull/Neil Howe (TVR Grantura MkIII); Robert Mills/Ian Montgomery (Austin-Healey 100M). **FL** O'Connell 2m25.914s (71.33mph). **P** Minshaw/Keen. **S** 37.

HGPCA PRE-'66 (11 LAPS)

1 Peter Horsman (Lotus 18/21 P1) 27m06.587s (70.32mph); 2 Rod Jolley (Cooper T45/51) +17.368s; 3 Guillermo Fierro (Maserati 250F); 4 Sid Hoole (Cooper T66); 5 Barry Cannell (Cooper T51); 6 James Willis (Cooper T45). **CW** Jolley; Fierro; Hoole; Willis; Ian Nuthall (Alta F2); Eddy Perk (Heron-Alfa Romeo); John Bussey (Cooper T43). **FL** Horsman 2m24.476s (71.54mph). **P** Horsman. **S** 21.

RACE 2 (11 LAPS)

1 Horsman 20m01.208s (60.65mph); 2 Jolley +7.782s; 3 Julian Bronson (Cooper T51); 4 Hoole; 5 Fierro; 6 Nuthall. **CW** Jolley; Hoole; Fierro; Nuthall; Perk; Bussey. **FL** Fierro 2m43.737s (63.56mph). **P** Horsman. **S** 20.

LUZTC (22 LAPS)

1 Andrew & Maxim Banks (Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint GTA) 1h00m06.437s (63.49mph); 2 David Tomlin/Richard Meaden (Ford Lotus Cortina) +27.968s;

3 Richard Shaw/Hans Hubner (BMW 1800TISA); 4 Steve Jones (Morris Cooper S); 5 Richard Dutton (Ford Lotus Cortina);

6 Christian Bouriez/Christophe van Riet (Alfa Romeo Giulia Sprint GTA). **CW** Shaw; Jones. **FL** Tony Wood (BMW 1800 TISA) 2m32.438s (66.18mph). **P** Banks/Banks. **S** 10.

MRL PRE-WAR SPORTSCARS (11 LAPS)

1 Robert Spencer (Bugatti T35B) 31m44.111s (60.12mph); 2 Charles Gillett/Patrick Blakeney-Edwards (Frazer Nash Super Sports) +40.932s; 3 Richard Pilkington (Talbot Lago T26 SS);

4 Rudiger Friedrichs (Alvis Speed 20 SA); 5 Peter Mulder (BMW 328); 6 Duncan Wiltshire/James Morley (Bentley 3-litre). **CW** Gillett/Blakeney-Edwards; Pilkington; Mulder;

Alex Bell (Bentley 3/4/2). **FL** Spencer 2m45.657s (62.82mph). **P** Gillett/Blakeney-Edwards. **S** 14. **RACE 2 (11 LAPS)**

1 Gillett/Blakeney-Edwards 32m34.454s (58.57mph); 2 Friedrichs +45.323s; 3 Pilkington; 4 Mulder; 5 Chris Lunn (Talbot AV105); 6 Wiltshire/Morley. **CW** Friedrichs; Mulder; Bell. **FL** Spencer 2m50.988s (60.86mph). **P** Spencer. **S** 12.

HISTORIC TOURING CAR CHALLENGE (12 LAPS)

1 Steve Dance (Ford Capri RS) 31m35.927s (65.87mph); 2 Ric Wood (Ford Capri) +1m04.845s; 3 James Hanson/Paul

Pochciol (Ford Capri); 4 Rui Macedo Silva (Porsche 911 Carrera RSR); 5 Peter Mullen/Patrick Blakeney-Edwards (BMW 3.0 CSL); 6 Robert Spencer (MGB GT). **CW** Jonathan White/John Bussell (Rover Vitesse); Goncalo Jordao (Ford Escort RS2000). **FL** Dance 2m20.281s (74.19mph). **P** Joaquim Jorge (Ford Escort RS1600). **S** 19.

RACE 2 (13 LAPS)

1 Dance 30m22.656s (74.23mph); 2 Spencer +16.438s; 3 Hanson/Pochciol; 4 Jorge; 5 Macedo Silva; 6 Joao Paulo Sousa (BMW 316i). **CW** Dominique Guenat (BMW 635). **FL** Dance 2m06.135s (82.51mph). **P** Dance. **S** 18.

IBERIAN HISTORIC ENDURANCE (19 LAPS)

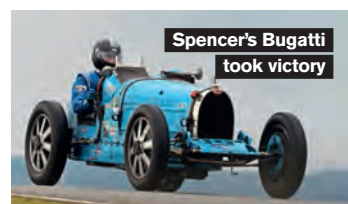
1 Rui & Pedro Macedo Silva (Ford GT40) 51m17.252s (64.26mph); 2 Michiel & Frits Campagne (Chevrolet Corvette Grand Sport) +5.750s; 3 Luis Lopez/Alvaro

Rodriguez (Porsche 911 3.0RS); 4 Pedro Bastos Rezende/Miguel Pais do Amaral (Porsche 911 3.0RS); 5 Allen Tice/Chris Conoley (Marcos 1800GT); 6 Harmen van Putten/Jeroen van den Heuvel (Ford Mustang). **FL** M Campagne 2m15.804s (77.28mph). **CW** Lopez/Rodriguez; Antonio Gutierrez/Jesus Fuster (Porsche 911R); Carlos Alberto Oliveira/Antonio Jose Silva. **P** Frank Stippler (Ford GT40). **S** 49.

RACE 2 (20 LAPS)

1 James Hanson/Paul Pochciol (Ford Capri) 52m08.020s (66.54mph); 2 R & P Macedo Silva +2m12.748s; 3 Bastos Rezende/Pais do Amaral; 4 Peter Mulder/Patrick Simon (Porsche 911 2.5S/T); 5 Georg Nolte/Frank Stippler (Ford GT40);

6 Lopez/Rodriguez. **CW** R & P Macedo Silva; Mulder/Simon; Oliveira/Silva. **FL** Stippler 2m25.516s (71.52mph). **P** R Macedo Silva. **S** 36.



Spencer's Bugatti took victory

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Owens' early progress proved vital for win



SILVERSTONE OCTOBER 24 750MC

Team Owens take top Relay honours

FOR THE SECOND TIME IN THREE years the **Holly Birkett Six-Hour Relay** was won by a team of intrepid one-make hatchback racers. Team Owens, headed by 2011 Mini Miglia champion Endaf Owens, stole the win in the final hour with their fleet of Honda Civic Type Rs.

The entire race was wet to some degree. Heavy rain made conditions treacherous at times, which played into the hands of front-wheel-drive tin-tops. The Civic squad, masterminded by Mark Chandler, made an immediate impression, with Owens propelling the crew to 11th on scratch by the end of the first hour. "It got so steamed up I couldn't see the pit board, so I came in," he said after passing the baton to Steve Laidlaw. Running faultlessly, and with Historic ace Will Schryver also aboard, Team Owens hovered around sixth from the two-hour mark. Civic Cup runner-up Carl Swift's remarkable final stint was



Gray snatched late scratch race win

key in the handicap element though. Using his short oval and autograss experience, Swift charged to fifth on the road as the sun set over Woodcote.

For the preceding five hours there had been only one team name atop the handicap standings – Carbon8 Coupe Cup B. Jon Winter, Alex Cursley and Matthew Plumb belied their place in the second string of twin Hyundai squads with just the kind of consistent performance the Birkett calls for. "The cars are pretty close to stock so it works in our favour," said Winter of his team's Korean machinery, the performance

of which barely dropped off in the wet conditions.

The Coupe A team also made the podium, finishing third behind their brethren on 138 gross laps. Simon Dawson, Vaughn Winter and Gary Miller relayed to Dan Blake to bring them home.

The first of several all-BMW squads was Routec Racing's Compact Flyers. Compact Cup runner-up James Gornall's near two-hour stint mid-race was key, but the strong efforts of Simon Roche, Ben Pearson and Paul Hinson cannot be underestimated. The top multi-model crew was

Rogue's Troopers, headed by Patrick Mortell who reported that his new Toyota GT86 was "faultless throughout". Malcolm Edeson (MR2 Roadster), photographer Jakob Ebrey (Porsche 924S) and Leighton Norris (MR2 Super GT) completed the team.

The all-MG ZS Cockshoot Cup team came home sixth, propelled from 10th in the handicap rankings in the final hour by Chris Warburton's remarkable last stint. Simon Green Motorsport's Civic/Clio/BMW/Camaro combo topped Class D.

After three years of trying, Paul Nightingale's Inspires squad won on scratch after a dogfight with last year's winners The Winning Radicals, ironically rebadged for 2015 as Third Time Lucky. Having persuaded the handicapper to lift the 41-lap limit on Tim Gray, the Spire crew went all out for glory. Gray closed on Brian Murphy's SR3, taking the lead with 20 minutes to go. Both teams had offs but Aaron Bailey's first-hour spin for the Radical outfit proved most costly as John Cutmore, Richard Wise and Al Boulton joined Gray on the top step.

Clubmans bragging rights went to The Defibrillators (Chris Pickering, Alex Champkin, Michelle Hayward and Graeme Smith) with third on the road and a handicap class win.

● Ian Sowman

RESULTS

HOLLY BIRKETT SIX-HOUR HANDICAP RELAY RACE (139 LAPS) 1 1 Team Owens – Will Schryver/ Steve Laidlaw/Carl Swift/Endaf Owens (Honda Civic Type R) 6h02m03.78s (83.84mph); 2 Carbon8 Coupe Cup B – Matthew Plumb/Jon Winter/Alex Cursley (Hyundai Coupe) +1 lap; 3 Carbon8 Coupe Cup A – Dan Blake/Simon Dawson/Vaughn Winter/Gary Miller (Hyundai Coupe); 4 Routec Racing Compact Flyers – Simon Roche/Ben Pearson/James Gornall/Paul Hinson (BMW Compact); 5 Rogue's Troopers – Patrick Mortell

(Toyota GT86)/Malcolm Edeson (Toyota MR2 Roadster); Leighton Norris (Toyota MR2 Super GT); Jakob Ebrey (Porsche 924S); 6 The Cockshoot Cup Team – Howard Hunt/Jason Simm/Chris Warburton/Peter Burchill/Jon Warburton/David Smith (MG ZS). **Class winners** Rogue's Troopers; Simon Green Motorsport – Ross Craig (Honda Civic Type R)/Tom Barley/Oliver Coles (Renault Clio)/Alex Harris (BMW 325i)/Simon Lane (Chevrolet Camaro); The Defibrillators – Chris Pickering (Vision)/Alex Champkin (Phantom)/Michelle Hayward (Mallock Mk27)/Graeme Smith (Mallock Mk26). **SCRATCH RACE (128 LAPS) 1 Inspires – Tim Gray/John**

Cutmore/Richard Wise/Al Boulton (Spire GT3) 6h02m28.20s (77.11mph); 2 Third Time Lucky – Aaron Bailey/Brian Murphy/John Macleod/Lee Bailey (Radical SR3)/Doug Carter (Radical PR6) +1 lap; 3 The Defibrillators; 4 Autocraft/Classic Acoustic – Rob Williams (Honda Integra)/Matthew Fielding/Colin Wells/Darren Fielding (BMW M3); 5 Team Owens; 6 The Hart Attacks – Barry Webb (Mallock Mk16)/Peter Richings (Mallock Mk27)/Howard Payne (Mallock Mk21)/Clive Wood (Mallock Mk20). **FL** Gray 2m23.04s (91.60mph). **P** Third Time Lucky. **S** 68.

OULTON PARK OCTOBER 24 MSVR

Smiley wins twice on VAG comeback

FORMER SCIROCCO CUP RACER

Chris Smiley took a winning double on his return to racing, and the **VAG Trophy** came to a dramatic end with a red-flagged finale.

Didge Dziurzynski qualified his Scirocco on pole, but was challenged by the Golfs of Smiley and Sam Edwards, and they ran three abreast into Old Hall on a wet opening lap. Smiley emerged in the lead with Edwards third.

As the lead trio began to split up, Darelle Wilson (Scirocco) started to push Dziurzynski's brother Alex, also driving a Scirocco, for fourth. Wilson went ahead, only to retire when his transmission failed.

Smiley eased away to take victory by 2.46 seconds from Edwards, who relieved Didge Dziurzynski of second place mid-race after they had run side-by-side up Clay Hill. Guesting BTCC driver Martin Depper finished third in a Scirocco after picking off both Dziurzynski brothers in the final minutes.

"He [Didge] went wide at Knickerbrook so I reeled him at Druids and passed him into Lodge," said Depper. Paul Taylor, driving a rented Team Hard Golf, just held off title rival Lee Christopher (Scirocco) for sixth.

It had partially dried out for the second race, which Smiley led from the start with Edwards and Depper slotted in behind. Depper slipped back on the opening lap, but was able to pass Didge Dziurzynski and Edwards to run second on lap three. This effort came to nothing since the race was then red-flagged when Kenan Dole's Golf and Mark Smith's Scirocco touched on the Avenue, sending Smith careering into the barriers.

The race was restarted but red-flagged again on the opening lap because of a multi-car incident. Damani Marcano in his Golf made contact with Cameron Thompson's Scirocco exiting Old Hall, Thompson spun, and as Amy



Smiley ran clear in wet opener

Dziurzynski and Simon Tomlinson locked together going off in avoidance, James Stevens' Golf was launched into a huge roll.

The result was declared after the original two laps, with Smiley ahead of Edwards, Didge Dziurzynski and Depper.

Teenage debutant Jordan Sanders won all three **Allcomers** races in his Juno CN. In the wet opener he kept Richard Neary's BMW M3 at a safe distance throughout, with the SEATs of Michael Smith and Andy Thompson completing the top four. Glen Broster beat Nick Starkey's Caterham Superlight to take fifth.

Neary led the way in race two until Sanders surged ahead into



Ainscough claimed pair of TT victories

Lodge at half-distance for win number two. Smith held a race-long third place but was threatened by Thompson in the closing laps, while Fabio Randaccio in the Lotus Europa and Starkey completed the top six.

Neary did not start the third race, enabling Sanders to win by 1m22s. Thompson took Starkey for second at Old Hall, with Smith a distant fourth, from Paul Browes in a Caterham and Andy Walters (BMW Compact).

Richard Ainscough comfortably won both **Trackday Trophy** races in his Caterham. Mark Penny in the Vauxhall VX220 claimed a late second in race one from Simon Clark in his Mini Cooper S. In race two Chrissy Palmer/Paul Sheard's Mazda MX5 followed Ainscough, with Penny rounding out the podium finishers.

● Peter Scherer



Debutant Sanders dominated Allcomers

RESULTS

VAG TROPHY (10 LAPS) 1 Chris Smiley (Golf) 20m55.855s (77.16mph); 2 Sam Edwards (Golf) +2.460s; 3 Martin Depper (Scirocco); 4 Didge Dziurzynski (Scirocco); 5 Alex Dziurzynski (Scirocco); 6 Paul Taylor (Golf). **Class winners** Chris Mohan (Golf). **Fastest lap** Depper 2m02.826s (78.89mph). **Pole** D Dziurzynski. **Starters** 28.

RACE TWO (2 LAPS) 1 Smiley 4m12.722s (76.88mph); 2 Edwards +3.820s; 4 Depper; 5 Taylor; 6 A. Dziurzynski. **CW** Mohan. **FL** Smiley 2m03.145s (78.69mph). **S** 27.

MSVR ALLCOMERS (10 LAPS) 1 Jordan Sanders (Juno CN2012) 20m31.635s (78.67mph); 2 Richard Neary (BMW M3) +10.153s; 3 Michael Smith (SEAT Leon Supercopa); 4 Andy Thompson (SEAT Toledo); 5 Glen Broster (Ginetta G40); 6 Nick Starkey (Caterham Superlight). **FL** Sanders 1m58.373s (81.86mph). **P** Sanders. **S** 21.

RACE TWO (11 LAPS) 1 Sanders 21m20.743s (83.22mph); 2 Neary +15.243s; 3 Smith; 4 Thompson; 5 Fabio Randaccio (Lotus Europa); 6 Starkey. **FL** Sanders 1m51.532s (86.88mph). **P** Sanders. **S** 21.

RACE THREE (8 LAPS) 1 Sanders 15m07.033s (85.46mph); 2 Thompson +1m22.323s; 3 Starkey; 4 Smith; 5 Paul Browes (Caterham R300); 6 Andy Walters (BMW Compact). **FL** Sanders 1m49.666s (88.36mph). **P** Sanders. **S** 18.

MSVT TRACKDAY TROPHY & TEAM TROPHY (19 LAPS) 1 Richard Ainscough (Caterham SV) 45m10.329s (67.93mph); 2 Mark Penny (Vauxhall VX220) +12.953s; 3 Simon Clark (Mini Cooper S); 4 Ben Abbitt/Dan Abbitt (Peugeot 306 Rallye); 5 Andrew Montgomery (Mini); 6 Chris Howes-Roberts/John Langridge (Ford Fiesta). **CW** Penny; Clark; Chrissy Palmer/Paul Sheard (Mazda MX5); Colin Tester (Ford Sapphire); Jason Francis (Ford Puma); Chris Mills/Trevor Pickard (Porsche Boxster S). **FL** Ainscough 2m11m.211s (73.85mph). **P** Ainscough. **S** 27.

RACE TWO (13 LAPS) 1 Ainscough 30m11.774s (69.53mph); 2 Palmer/Sheard +47.361s; 3 Penny; 4 Mills/Pickard; 5 Richard Hughes/Andrew Ball (Porsche 968); 6 Clark. **CW** Palmer/Sheard; Penny; Mills/Pickard; Clark; Tester; Francis. **FL** Ainscough 2m05.342s (77.31mph). **P** Martin Amery/Keith Gibbs (Mini Cooper S). **S** 21.



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THIS WEEK

LETTERS • ON TRACK • TV PICKS • FROM THE WEB • AUTOSPORT.COM

What you think of the motorsport news of the past week



Rosberg was not happy post-US GP

Should Nico have forced a smile?

Congratulations to Lewis Hamilton on winning (and retaining) the Formula 1 World Championship. No doubt Nico Rosberg was hurting at the end of the US GP, but would it have hurt him any more to put on a professional face on the podium instead of acting like a spoiled brat?

Over the past few weeks we've seen bitter rivals on the rugby pitch shake hands and walk off together in the true spirit of sportsmanship. Maybe Rosberg needs to watch and learn. If not then the soundtrack to his career will only be more boos from the crowd...

Keith Oswin, Brentford

Hamilton has proved to be better than Rosberg for most of this season and as such deserves the drivers' title more, but Lewis hitting Nico at Turn 1 on the opening lap and running him off the track without any subsequent penalty sets a dangerous precedent, particularly for single-seater racing.

No wonder Rosberg was understandably so miffed with his team-mate after the race.

Graham Read
By email

In 1976 aged 13 I remember buying AUTOSPORT celebrating James Hunt's world championship after the rain of Japan.

I've bought and kept all the green-top editions, including Nigel, Damon, Lewis

and Nick Tandy this summer.

Today (Thursday) is special because we all know Lewis adores Ayrton Senna, and if the great man was still with us he would want one thing: for Lewis to beat Prost's record of four championships!

John Fallon
Ashford, Middlesex

What form of race should F1 feature? Should it be a 300km sprint, or should it be a mini-endurance race where a team has to strategise around restrictions on tyres and fuel including mandatory pitstops?

It seems that a lot of fans are clamouring for the former while we have had the latter for some time now. Faster, more powerful cars sound fantastic, but if the teams must continue to manage them to maximise their

results, will there be any real change?

Nelson Kopustas
Ottawa, Canada

Unfortunately the McLaren team has been a bit naive dreaming of the good old times with Honda. Looking with rose-tinted specs at the past does not mean you will be winning again.

Did they not do their homework? Did nobody notice that when Ross Brawn took over the Honda team, which despite all its hard work could not push a dent in a soft packet of butter, all he needed to do was insert a Mercedes engine in the back and Jenson Button clinched the world title. The car was perfect, shame about the engine.

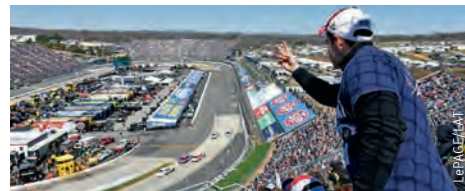
Cor Sanders
By email

MILESTONE

4TH The best finish by a home driver in the Mexican GP was Pedro Rodriguez's fourth place for BRM in 1968

BIG NUMBER

0.526 The length, in miles, of the Martinsville NASCAR track – the shortest on the Sprint Cup calendar



WHAT'S ON TRACK IN THE UK

SNETTERTON MSVR

October 31-November 1

The Elise Trophy and the long-distance Lotus Cup UK headline on Saturday only, with the Mini Challenge staging two races on each of Saturday and Sunday. On Sunday only you also get the Track Attack Autumn Trophy and a Lotus-based sprint.

EVENT OF THE WEEK



BRANDS HATCH CSCC

October 31-November 1

The Classic Sports Car Club's package guarantees some great racing. Swinging Sixties, Classic K, Future Classics, Jaguar Saloons and GT, Tin Tops, Modern Classics and Magnificent Sevens will be racing on the Indy circuit.

SILVERSTONE WALTER HAYES TROPHY

October 31-November 1

For two weekends every winter, Formula Ford 1600 dominates national motorsport once more with its blue-riband double-header of the FFord Festival and Walter Hayes Trophy.

WHT creator James Beckett's extraordinary efforts, the attractive entry fee, a format

offering more track time for most, Silverstone's location and a bit more space to race without damage (in theory...) means the event brings out even greater numbers than the Festival.

It's not just the top names from the UK and Ireland's 2015 FF1600 championships that

will be surging four-abreast down the National Straight – the WHT lures pretty much anyone with FFord in their blood back out to play.

So expect an entry well into three figures, epic drama such as Wayne Boyd's victory last year despite spinning to the

back on lap one of his semi, and a pulsating atmosphere in the Brooklands grandstand as fans, family and eliminated competitors gather for the final on Sunday afternoon.

Pack an umbrella, as a completely rainless WHT would be unthinkable.

WHAT'S ON TRACK AROUND THE WORLD



FORMULA 1

TEE/LAT

MEXICAN GP

F1 World Championship
Rd 17/19
Mexico City, Mexico
November 1
f1.com

WEC



EBREY/LAT

EUROPEAN RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd 10/10
Valais Rally
Martigny, Switzerland
October 29-31
fiaerc.com



SUPER GT

ISHIHARA/LAT

NASCAR SPRINT CUP

Rd 33/36
Martinsville, Virginia, USA
November 1
nascar.com

INTERNATIONAL GT OPEN

Rd 7/7
Barcelona, Spain
October 31-November 1
gtopen.net

WORLD ENDURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Rd 7/8
Shanghai, China
November 1
fiawec.com

WORLD TOURING CARS

Rd 11/12
Buriram, Thailand
November 1
fiawtcc.com

SUPER GT

Rd 7/8
Autopolis, Japan
November 1
supergt.net

EUROFORMULA OPEN

Rd 8/8
Barcelona, Spain
October 31-November 1
euroformulaopen.net



GT OPEN

FROM THE SOFA

WHAT'S ON TELEVISION



Ricciardo the star on BBC's QoS

MOST HAVE PROBABLY WANTED

to throw something at England-cricketer-turned-pundit-turned-TV-celebrity Phil Tufnell at one time or another. As a tail-end batsman of some repute (not for the right reasons), Tufnell will be familiar with the feeling of an Australian flinging dangerous objects at him, but he wasn't expecting Daniel Ricciardo to hurl a pencil at him during *A Question of Sport*.

That was the most dynamic moment of the Red Bull driver's appearance on last week's edition of the long-running sports-based quiz show. However, after a slow start, Ricciardo warmed up and diversified his repertoire from grinning and being able to recognise Interlagos and Sergio Perez to an ever-widening range of fist-pumping, arm-waving celebrations whenever he and team-mates Matt Dawson and Amy Williams got a question right.

His finest moment, aside from the aforementioned pencil-propelling incident caused by Tufnell failing to include Ricciardo in a list of Australians to have won grands prix, came with a question about a sport he professed not to know well: football. The question was the three clubs beginning with the letter 's' to have won 100 or more games in the Premier League. Sunderland and Southampton were easy, the third was trickier.

"Sheffield Wednesday... they were good weren't they back in the day," said Ricciardo. "I don't know football well but that's the one."

Cue another Ricciardo celebration, this time with two fists in the air. Less impressive was during the charades-inspired round (talking was allowed) in which Dawson attempted to indicate 'qualifying lap' by stating it happened before the race. Ricciardo got a little too in-depth and suggested 'track walk' before Williams chipped in with the correct answer. Despite that, he was the star player in Dawson's victorious team.

Racing drivers have a long tradition on the show, with John Surtees the first to appear during the first series back in 1970. Mark Webber is the F1 driver who has appeared most on the show, nine times in total, but has a guess which driver has the most 'caps'. No, not Nigel Mansell (just the one appearance), but former rallycrosser Barry McGuigan.



"Ricciardo's top moment was in a question about football"

OK, that's a bit unfair. How about European Le Mans Series champion Chris Hoy? He's next up. Again, probably fair to say his future racing exploits were not quite as significant as those on two wheels. So we go to the next one, Richard Dunwoody. You might think that he was on there for his horse-based antics – he's a three-times national hunt jockey – but here at AUTOSPORT we like to think that his appearances were based on his ability to barrel roll a Formula First car at Pembrey in 1997.

Needless to say, Derek Warwick, Damon Hill, David Coulthard, Johnny Herbert, Mark Blundell and Martin Brundle have all turned up on the show. But it might come as a surprise to learn that a certain Thierry Boutsen cropped up in 1990. And who would have thought that Elio de Angelis also appeared?

Few will have had the impact Ricciardo will have done. It's just a shame that his appearance was followed by a United States GP that promised so much for him, but delivered so little.

Edd Straw

TV pick of

Edited by Matt Beer



MEXICAN GP - LIVE

Sky Sports F1 Sun 1730-2030

BBC1 Highlights Sun 2230-0000

The championship's settled, but Austin showed how much Formula 1 2015 can still entertain. This weekend there's a new circuit and the threat of more unpredictable weather to keep things spicy. It will be one of the most eagerly-awaited Friday practice broadcasts of the year, as all those with fond memories of Mexico City's previous incarnation tune in with crossed fingers hoping 'modernised' doesn't mean 'bastardised'. For live coverage, Sky Sports F1 is your sole port of call.



SKY CLASSIC F1

Sky Sports F1
Wednesday 2100-2130

Sky Sports F1 is doing the proper legendary classics for its retro picks this week. There's the Gilles Villeneuve/Didier Pironi fallout at Imola in 1982 that preceded a tragedy, and the sodden Monaco GP of '84 in which Ayrton Senna and Stefan Bellof grabbed the world's attention. But our preference is one that sits slightly further down the pantheon of significant classics but still a 'must-see': Keke Rosberg gambling on slicks in the damp to upstage the turbo cars with Williams in Monaco in 1983. One of the great wins in F1 history.

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ONLINE

Top stories on AUTOSPORT.com in the past week

BUTTON HOPES ALONSO ANNIHILATES HIM

Speaking in the build-up to the United States Grand Prix weekend, McLaren driver Jenson Button wanted his team-mate to dominate him with the new-specification Honda engine.

ENGINE COST ALONSO 'MIRACLE' RESULT

Late problems with new Honda unit dropped Alonso out of the points after comeback drive as he was knocked out of the top 10 on the last lap.

HAMILTON REJECTS ROSBERG CLAIMS

Newly crowned world champion Lewis Hamilton hits back at his team-mate's claims he went 'too far' in Turn 1 battle as things get acrimonious at Mercedes.

MCLAREN LOOKS INTO ALONSO'S NEW ENGINE

Following the late-race problems at Austin, McLaren is evaluating the state of Honda's new engine to ensure it is the correct move to give a version to Button in Mexico.

HONDA CONSIDERING SUPPLYING RED BULL

Red Bull's troubled quest for an engine continues, but it later emerged McLaren is against Honda supplying a second team in 2016 – especially one as potentially strong as this one.

AUTOSPORT+

THE 10 MOMENTS THAT DECIDED THE TITLE

Following Hamilton's third world title, Ben Anderson highlights the decisive moments of 2015.

the week



WEC SHANGHAI - LIVE

Motors TV

Sunday 0230-0930

Porsche trio Mark Webber, Brendon Hartley and Timo Bernhard slipped into a narrow World Endurance Championship lead – with a bit of help from team orders – at Fuji, and this weekend's Shanghai round is one of just two chances for Audi to regain the initiative. Is its car fast enough, though? Keep a close eye on LMP2 after the violent fireworks between the G-Drive and KCMG cars in Japan. Both Motors TV and Eurosport are showing the full Shanghai race, plus highlights mid-morning on Sunday, too.



NASCAR - LIVE

Motors TV

Sunday 1800-2230

Dale Earnhardt Jr. out. Jimmie Johnson: out. The ultra-rapid Joe Gibbs Toyotas of Matt Kenseth and Denny Hamlin: out. But champion Kevin Harvick is still in, and Joey Logano has become his main rival after winning every single round of the last three-race section of the Chase. Also still hanging in there is retiring legend Jeff Gordon, yet to win in 2015 but last man standing in the Hendrick camp. There are just eight drivers in the hunt as the field moves on to Martinsville.



WTCC BURIRAM - LIVE

Eurosport

Sunday 0915-1115

There are a few novelties for the Thai round of the World Touring Car Championship. Buriram will be a new circuit to most, the schedule means qualifying happens on race day morning and the second race will start at dusk under floodlights. It'll be a nice warm-up for the after-dark finale in Qatar later in the month. Less novel is the prospect of a Jose Maria Lopez title coronation. The reigning champion has put the crown pretty much out of Citroen team-mate Yvan Muller's reach and should seal it this weekend with a round to spare.



RALLY DU VALAIS - LIVE

Eurosport

Saturday 2335-0000

Craig Breen's hopes of becoming European Rally champion have gone awry for the second straight year, but he has a chance to at least sign off from the series on a high in the finale in Switzerland this weekend. Recently crowned champion Kajetan Kajetanowicz has decided to sit out this round, so Breen's main rival for the win will be Frenchman Bryan Bouffier. The field is light on well-known names outside the top few, but the scenery and Eurosport camera work will be typically gorgeous.

HOT ON THE WEB THIS WEEK

YouTube FORMULA E'S SECOND SEASON KICKS OFF IN BEIJING



SEARCH FOR: Frantic Start To Season 2's Beijing ePrix
 Pole-sitter Sebastien Buemi immediately stamps his authority at the start of Formula E's season two in China, while it all goes a bit awry for his Renault e.dams team-mate Nicolas Prost from second. See full report on page 60.

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Mexican racers

On the eve of the Mexican GP, **MARCUS SIMMONS** considers those who won the nation's hearts

Formula 1 returns to the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez this weekend for the first time in 24 years. So, as PR people get set for cheesy photo-

shoots with sombrero-clad drivers, this got us thinking about how good were the brothers honoured in the name of the circuit, and then got us mulling over who are the best

Mexican drivers of all time.

As usual with lists such as this it's tough to work out who to leave out, so apologies to modern-era racers Salvador Duran, Memo Rojas

and Luis Diaz – as well as NASCAR up-and-comer Daniel Suarez – but here are the names that most make us hanker after an enchilada washed down with Corona.



1



2



3



4



5

1 Pedro Rodriguez
Moved out of the shadow of gifted – yet tragic – younger brother Ricardo to become an elite driver himself. Two-time grand prix winner but legendary in sportscars, particularly the Porsche 917, and also won Le Mans in 1968 with a Ford GT40. Killed at Norisring in '71.

2 Ricardo Rodriguez
Blazed into the sport like a comet, qualifying second for his world championship F1 debut with Ferrari at the 1961 Italian GP and winning the '62 Targa Florio with the Prancing Horse. Crashed fatally when practising for the '62 Mexican GP. He was just 20 years old.

3 Sergio Perez
Forget the letdown season at McLaren: five podiums (to date) with unfancied teams make Perez a very worthy member of the F1 elite. Telmex backing allowed him to shine in the F3 and GP2 ranks, but he is now firmly established on the grand prix grids with Force India.

4 Adrian Fernandez
His winning exploits during a competitive era of the CART World Series, briefly followed by IndyCar, have played a large role in inspiring the legions of Mexican drivers to have headed north of the Rio Grande in search of open-wheel fame. Later raced successfully in sportscars.

5 Esteban Gutierrez
He's on the F1 sidelines at the moment, but anyone who can beat Marco Wittmann to the Formula BMW title (as he did in 2008) and Robert Wickens to the GP3 crown (ditto, 2010) must be good. He doesn't deserve to be defined by his two seasons with struggling Sauber.



6



7



8



9



10

6 Michel Jourdain Jr
From a racing family – father Michel Sr and rapid uncle Bernard were both Indycar competitors – Jourdain was a leading contender for some years in the early 2000s, scoring two wins in 2003 and finishing third in the Champ Car points. Don't mention his WTCC season with SEAT...

7 Moises Solana
A local hero in the 1960s, Solana made eight world championship grand prix starts (six in Mexico; two in the US). He wasn't on a par with the Rodriguez brothers, but was good enough to qualify three times in the top 10 with Lotus before he was killed in a hillclimb in '69.

8 Hector Rebaque
He looked OK in Formula 2 before buying his way onto the F1 grid in 1977 and then driving for his own team in a year-old Lotus in '78. Scored points with Brabham in the early '80s (albeit team-mate Nelson Piquet won the title), before winning Road America CART round in '82.

9 Alfonso Toledano
Van Diemen boss and all-round Formula Ford 1600 godfather Ralph Firman Sr said that 'Alfie' was a great driver with one big problem: his 1981 team-mate was Ayrton Senna da Silva... Ran out of funds in British F3, but has stayed in the sport at home as a series promoter.

10 Josele Garza
Blazed the trail for Mexicans to come by taking on the grizzled veterans of early-era CART, initially in 1981, when the (unknown-to-the-organisers) underaged rookie caused a sensation by qualifying sixth for the Indy 500. Also took second in the '86 Michigan 500.

NEXT WEEK F1 BACK IN MEXICO
Plus: WEC Shanghai; F3 & Blancpain reviews

Formula One ● Le Mans 24hr ● MotoGP ● Superbikes ● Historic

2015 End of Season

F1 Abu Dhabi GP
Escorted Tour
F1 Drivers Party

Historic Motorsport Escorted Tours

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- Le Mans Classic
- Goodwood Festival of Speed
- Goodwood Revival
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