F1 All the action from dramatic Portuguese GP

AUTOSPORT

BRITAIN'S BEST MOTORSPORT WEEKLY

29 OCTOBER 2020

RECORD BREAKER!

How Hamilton overtook Schumacher at F1's newest track

PLUS

- Turkington strikes back
- Tandy stars in Spa 24Hrs
- Dixon takes sixth title



92

F1 wins for Lewis
2007 to 2020

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Cracking the code of how to win

When you've cracked it, you've cracked it. After last weekend, Lewis Hamilton is the new Formula 1 wins record holder, Scott Dixon is a six-time IndyCar champion and four-time British Touring Car title winner Colin Turkington is back atop the 2020 points race.

Each of those drivers has established a special relationship with their team over a long period of time, and are still reaping the rewards. All three could break the championship title records in their respective disciplines soon.

Hamilton's motivation to dig deep and overturn the advantage Valtteri Bottas appeared to have over him during F1's first grand prix at the Algarve Circuit is remarkable given how successful he has already been – reminiscent of Michael Schumacher. As Alex Kalinauckas shows in our report on page 18, the Portuguese track provided some unusual challenges, and Hamilton rose to the occasion once again.

Dixon did his points damage early on in the IndyCar season, but the Chip Ganassi Racing star had to withstand a charge from Penske's Josef Newgarden to seal the crown at the St Petersburg finale (p40).

Turkington's grip on the BTCC is far less certain, but the WSR BMW driver's ability to come through the rough and tumble at Snetterton was so good it seemed to irritate his rivals (p34).

Nick Tandy completed a different kind of achievement at Spa (p44). Always one for the big occasion, Tandy now has outright wins in the 24-hour classics at Le Mans, Spa and the Nurburgring, not to mention class successes at Daytona and Sebring. All with Porsche. Cracked it.





Kevin Turner
Editor
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NEXT WEEK
5 NOVEMBER
Emilia Romagna GP
Can Hamilton step closer to a seventh crown as F1 returns to Imola?



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Charles Coates/Motorsport Images
Taken in 2007 and 2020

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Schumacher would follow in footsteps of father Michael and uncle Ralf by racingin F1

SCHUMACHER TIPPED FOR ALL-

FORMULA 1

Formula 2 championship leader Mick Schumacher has been tipped to claim a Formula 1 seat with Haas in 2021 after the team announced last week a complete change of driver line-up for next year.

Current Haas drivers Kevin Magnussen and Romain Grosjean both confirmed last Thursday that they will be leaving the team at the end of the season, and could be replaced by an all-rookie pairing. Schumacher, a protege of Haas engine supplier Ferrari, is widely expected to get one of the seats. The son of seven-time world champion Michael Schumacher leads the F2 standings with four races remaining, and already has a superlicence required to race in F1.

Schumacher had looked on course to join Alfa Romeo for 2021, and was set to feature in practice for the Eifel Grand Prix with the team earlier this month before the session was cancelled due to poor weather. But it looks increasingly likely that fellow Ferrari junior Antonio Giovinazzi will remain with the team for a third season after an impressive run of recent form. Team-mate Kimi Raikkonen is also expected to stay put for next year.

It is anticipated that Schumacher would be partnered at Haas by Nikita Mazepin. The Russian sits sixth in the F2 points standings, and requires a top-seven finish to secure a superlicence for next year.

Mazepin would arrive with considerable backing through his father, Dmitry, who owns Russian fertiliser giant Uralkali. Mazepin Sr tried to buy Force India upon its collapse in 2018 prior to its takeover by Lawrence Stroll's Racing Point consortium. His son has tested F1 cars for Force India and Mercedes in the past, and is also understood to have completed an extensive private F1 test programme in old Mercedes cars as part of his preparation for a grand prix drive.

A timeline on an announcement from Haas remains unclear, with team principal Gunther Steiner saying that no final decision has yet been made.

Grosjean joined Haas for its debut season in 2016, and was joined by Magnussen one year later. The duo led the team to fifth place in the constructors' championship in 2018, but a slump towards the back of the field in 2019 has continued into this year.

"As much as we've had ups and downs in our relationships, in the end you don't stay with people for this long time, four and five years, if you don't like them," said Steiner. "So it's always difficult to do these things, but in the end I need to look after the team in general. And they both were very understanding.

"I mean, they were not happy. Who would be? But they had a good understanding, and they know that we gave them a good run at it as well."

But Grosjean said Steiner had told him when informing him of the decision that it was down to "financial reasons", pointing to the arrival of at least one driver bringing budget to the team for 2021. "I fully understand," said Grosjean. "I know it's been a tough year with COVID in a lot of industries or companies that suffer from it. The team is going a different path, and I wish them luck and the best for the future."

With few seats still available for 2021, it looks unlikely that either Grosjean or Magnussen will be on the F1 grid next year. Grosjean has been hinting



Schumacher leads Mazepin in Silverstone Formula 2 round

-NEW HAAS F1 LINE-UP

for some time that he was exploring options outside of F1 for the future, professing an interest in both Formula E and the World Endurance Championship, while Magnussen has his eyes set on IndyCar.

"IndyCar has been something that I've been interested in always," said Magnussen. "My dad was an IndyCar driver back in the 1990s, and I've been to IndyCar races with him as a small child. I just always thought it was super-cool, and I would love to have a go in that some time."

A Schumacher/Mazepin line-up would also close off another option for high-profile free agents Sergio Perez and Nico Hulkenberg for 2021, although both have been linked to seats elsewhere recently.

Red Bull F1 boss Christian Horner confirmed at last weekend's Portuguese Grand Prix that the team would look outside its own driver pool if it were to drop Alexander Albon for 2021, making Perez or Hulkenberg viable candidates to partner Max Verstappen next year.

Perez has also been linked with a move to Williams in place of Mercedes junior George Russell if new team owner Dorilton Capital opted to change the initial plan to run an unchanged line-up. Perez would bring considerable financial backing to the team alongside Nicholas Latifi, who also has a raft of sponsors.

But Russell said he has "no concerns" about next year, saying the speculation had been "fed from the Perez camp" and that he anticipated clarity from Williams about his future by the end of this week.

LUKE SMITH

P18 PORTUGUESE GP



Magnussen is keen to try IndyCar

S.BLOXHAM/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

FIA RELAXES SUPERLICENCE POINTS RULING

FORMULA 1

The FIA has introduced a new rule allowing it to grant a superlicence to race in Formula 1, even if a driver has just three quarters of the points required to qualify for one.

Since 2016, the FIA has granted a superlicence to drivers who accrue 40 points through a weighted system depending on their success in other categories.

But the governing body confirmed earlier this year that it was planning to review the system in light of the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which shortened a number of seasons and compromised a number of drivers' campaigns.

In the latest update to the FIA's International Sporting Code, drivers can now be granted a superlicence so long as they have scored 30 points in the championships, and are "judged at the sole determination of the FIA as unable to qualify" normally "due to circumstances outside their control or reasons of force majeure".

Any superlicence requests by drivers looking to meet this criteria will require approval from the FIA's World Motor Sport Council.

The revised regulations could theoretically benefit Nikita Mazepin (below), who is a leading candidate for a Haas F1 seat next season (see story, left). He currently sit on 33 points, and could qualify for a superlicence regardless of whether he takes the top-seven finish he needs in this year's Formula 2 standings to get him to the traditional mark of 40.

LUKE SMITH



SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES


SRO

Brexit blamed for no UK endurance fixtures in 2021

GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE

Britain has been left without an international endurance race in 2021, and Brexit is to blame. The traditional Silverstone GT World Challenge Europe round in May has disappeared from the calendar as a result of concerns over the effects of the UK's withdrawal from the European Union.

The fixture organised by the Stephane Ratel Organisation has gone the same way as Silverstone's round of the World Endurance Championship. The WEC race fell off the calendar this year as a result of a COVID-related reshuffle, like the GTWCE Endurance Cup event scheduled for May, and is not part of the scaled-back series in 2021.

Until the exceptional circumstances of this year, Silverstone has hosted at least one major international enduro every season since 1995. That run included rounds of multiple Ratel-run series, as well as the Le Mans Series and the WEC. Brands Hatch and Donington also staged major enduros in that time.

Silverstone had been in the frame for a May TBA on the first draft of the GTWCE calendar last month, but Barcelona has taken the fifth enduro, with an October date on the latest schedule revealed last week. Stephane Ratel explained that it was entirely down to the "Brexit effect".

He explained that the uncertainties over customs arrangements following the UK's full withdrawal from the EU trade zone at the the end of this year had resulted in resistance to the British event from teams competing on the Endurance Cup's support races, such as the Lamborghini Super Trofeo. Without those support series, he revealed, the event is not financially viable.

"None of our international support races wanted to come and we can't go to a circuit where we [the Endurance Cup] are alone," he said. "There are a lot of fears among the teams: they say we are hearing stories that we will need five days to cross the Channel."

Ratel made the distinction between its arrangements with Silverstone and Brands Hatch, which has returned to the GTWCE Sprint Cup calendar with a 2 May date. SRO hires Silverstone and puts on the whole show, whereas Brands owner MotorSport Vision provides the support bill for its fixture.

Silverstone boss Stuart Pringle described losing a fixture that has hosted a Ratel-run international enduro in all but two seasons in the years between 1995 and 2019 as "an enormous disappointment".

"It is dispiriting to lose it, hopefully for only one year, for something that is beyond our control," he said. "I sincerely hope we see the series back in 2022 when we have the hotel and luxury residences available, which will make Silverstone even more attractive for a lot of Stephane's drivers."

Pringle is also hopeful that the WEC fixture will return in the future: "The WEC wants to race at the best circuits in the world and, without being pigheaded, I'd like to think that Silverstone is among them."

GARY WATKINS

Hoggard shines on F1 prize test

FORMULA 1

Johnathan Hoggard impressed on his Formula 1 test with Red Bull at Silverstone last week, part of his prize for winning the 2019 Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year Award.

The 19-year-old drove one of Aston Martin Red Bull Racing's RB8s, the design that took both the drivers' and constructors' titles in 2012. It was a return for Hoggard to the Grand Prix layout, a year after his performances in MSV Formula 2, Ligier LMP3 and Aston Martin GT3 machinery won him the Award.

After an installation lap on wet tyres, Red Bull waited for the weather to improve so that Hoggard could have three runs in the dry on new slick rubber with the 750-800bhp V8 machine. He improved on each run and ended up with an unofficial best lap within 1.5 seconds of the fastest lap from the 2012 British GP, albeit on different Pirellis and without the RB8's KERS.

"It's a dream come true to drive an F1 car," said Hoggard. "The main thing was how much power it had, especially on full throttle, and the downforce with the blown diffuser. I was trying not to leave anything on the table — it could be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity so I'd have regretted it if I'd have stayed in my comfort zone."

Red Bull's Simon Rennie, who ran the test, was happy with Hoggard's progression. "From seeing how well he performed at the Award tests I expected him to do a good job," said Rennie. "He got straight on with it, there were no scary moments and any advice we gave he was acting on in the next run."

Hoggard has yet to confirm his 2021 plans, but is weighing up single-seater options.

KEVIN TURNER



MAUGER/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

P34 BTCC ACTION



BTCC The Infiniti Q50 has become a title winner in its first full British Touring Car Championshp season, thanks to Ash Sutton clinching the Independents' crown with a round to spare at Snetterton last weekend. It also means that Sutton has claimed a full-house of BTCC crowns, after winning the Jack Sears Trophy in 2016 and the overall honours in 2017. He is runner-up in the overall title chase heading into the Brands Hatch finale. **Photograph by JEP/MI**

Rosberg joins Hamilton in team owner battle

EXTREME E

Nico Rosberg has followed in the footsteps of fellow Mercedes-mounted Formula 1 world champion Lewis Hamilton by creating his own Extreme E squad.

Rosberg Xtreme Racing is the ninth entry set to contest the all-electric off-road SUV racing championship, which launches in spring next year, and will act as a development of Team Rosberg. Established by Rosberg's 1982 F1 championship-winning father Keke, Team Rosberg runs Audi RS5 drivers Rene Rast and Jamie Green in the DTM. But it faces an uncertain future with the manufacturer poised to exit the series at the end of the current campaign.

Since departing F1 as the reigning champion, Rosberg has been active in the field of sustainability and is an investor and stakeholder in Formula E, co-founded by XE chief executive Alejandro Agag.

Rosberg said: "The series represents an amazing opportunity to not only drive awareness but also inspire action in the fight against climate change – the single biggest threat to our planet today. Since retiring from F1 I have dedicated my career to sustainable technologies, so to be able to combine these endeavours with my passion for racing is incredibly fulfilling."

The announcement of RXR indirectly renews Rosberg's rivalry with former team-mate Lewis Hamilton, whose X44 XE squad will focus on creating opportunities for mechanics and engineers from minority ethnic backgrounds. It also means that the three most recent Silver Arrows drivers all have an association with XE, as Valtteri Bottas tested the 550bhp ODYSSEY 21 machine in France earlier this month.

Agag added: "We are ecstatic to finally announce that Rosberg Xtreme Racing will be joining our line-up for the first season of Extreme E. We have been talking about this project for many months and we are thrilled he has chosen Extreme E for his formal return to motorsport as founder and CEO of his own racing team. There is clearly a great synergy between Nico's endeavours in the sustainability field and the aims of Extreme E, so his team is a hugely welcomed addition to the series."

MATT KEW







Neal weighs up BTCC retirement at end of 2020

BTCC

Three-time British Touring Car champion Matt Neal could hang up his helmet at the end of the season, although he insists the decision is not taken yet.

Neal, the most experienced BTCC driver of all time, has driven for the family Team Dynamics squad for most of his time in the series. The team currently runs the official Honda effort, and Autosport understands that it is commercial issues for the Japanese manufacturer in the current financial climate that could hasten Neal's departure from the cockpit at the age of 53.

"We don't know yet, but if we do I've had a good run and I can't complain," Neal told Autosport. He added that Dynamics, which is in the midst of a 2020 challenge with Dan Cammish at the wheel of the sister Civic Type R to Neal's, will definitely continue, and he could be replaced by Gordon Shedden, who took three BTCC titles with Dynamics but has not raced in the series since 2017.

"Oh yeah," said Neal. "We'd try and run Dan and maybe a younger driver [than Neal]: it could be 'Flash' [Shedden]; it could be someone else." Neal's son Henry has taken part in official BTCC testing and has won this year's Touring Car Trophy in a Civic. Of his chances his father said: "Possibly, but it's got to stack up commercially."

Neal added that he would prefer to see out his career once crowds have been allowed back to venues. "Of course," he said. "I still get a good buzz off it. I've done the BTCC almost my whole adult life. If it is my last season, it's going to be a strange weekend in three weeks' time [at the Brands Hatch finale]. But there are still a lot of factors involved."

MARCUS SIMMONS

F4 ace Pulling for Renault debut at Imola GP



FORMULA RENAULT

British Formula 4 podium finisher Abbi Pulling will be "in at the deep end" for her Formula Renault Eurocup debut at this weekend's Emilia Romagna Grand Prix support event, says her coach and mentor, W Series race winner Alice Powell.

Pulling, 17, lies sixth in the F4 standings and has secured a drive with FA Racing, the team named after two-time F1 world champion Fernando Alonso and run by MP Motorsport, for the Imola double-header.

"She's never driven the car before and there will only be one free practice session because it's a grand prix weekend," Powell told Autosport. "But it's an opportunity that came up that she can't really turn down. It'll be a huge learning weekend for her, but she's always up for a challenge and she's been doing a good job in F4."

The FRenault chassis is the same Tatuus as used by Powell during her W Series campaign, albeit powered by a different engine to the Alfa Romeo used in the all-female series.

"It's quite a unique chassis, but 100% I'll be able to use my experience of it and hopefully help her," said Powell.

MARCUS SIMMONS



McLaughlin gets IndyCar season

INDYCAR SERIES

Scott McLaughlin became the first driver since Gonzalo Rodriguez at Detroit in 1999 to make his Indycar racing debut at the wheel of an official Team Penske entry when he started last weekend's IndyCar Series finale in St Petersburg.

On the Friday evening, the legendary team had announced it was pulling out of Australian Supercars after a hugely successful six seasons partnered with Dick Johnson Racing, and simultaneously confirmed the fairly open secret that reigning and three-time Supercars champion McLaughlin will be driving a fourth Penske Dallara-Chevrolet IndyCar full-time in 2021, alongside Will Power, Simon Pagenaud and Josef Newgarden.

McLaughlin, who finished a startling third fastest in IndyCar Spring Training at COTA this year, was due to make his IndyCar debut on the Indianapolis road course in May this year until the coronavirus-induced delays and shuffles of the IndyCar and Supercars schedules caused a clash with his commitments Down Under.

The 27-year-old New Zealander's St Pete debut was difficult (see panel, page 41) but he again showed huge promise.

Meanwhile, on Saturday morning Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing announced it had signed a new contract with Takuma Sato, who scored the squad's (and his own) second Indianapolis 500 victory in August. It will be his fourth consecutive and fifth overall season with RLLR, for which he has scored four wins already. In St Pete, ex-Formula 1 driver Sato sealed seventh in the championship – his highest position since switching to IndyCar in 2010.

The following day, Ed Carpenter Racing confirmed it had picked up its option on Rinus VeeKay's contract, mere hours before he clinched Rookie of the Year honours simply by starting the race. The Dutchman has shown great pace on most tracks – he was the only Chevrolet-powered driver to qualify in the Indy 500's Fast Nine, and took pole and his first podium on the Indy road course this month.

Team owner Ed Carpenter also confirmed that ECR will continue to run two full-time entries, and that he would remain the oval driver for the team's other car.

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

P15 McLAUGHLIN'S AUSSIE LEGACY

IN THE HEADLINES

PETROV'S FATHER DIES

The father of ex-Renault Formula 1 podium finisher Vitaly Petrov was murdered at his home last Saturday, according to reports in Russia, which said that prominent businessman Alexander Petrov was shot. Petrov Jr returned home immediately from the Portuguese Grand Prix, where he was acting as a driver steward, a role that had been condemned for his recent stance against F1's anti-racism drive.

F1 TEST FOR RENAULT YOUTH

Renault F1 juniors Christian Lundgaard, Guanyu Zhou and Oscar Piastri will all take part in a private test in Bahrain this week at the wheel of the 2018 RS18 F1 machine. Formula 2 race winners Lundgaard and Zhou have already accumulated F1 mileage, while it will be the first taste for newly crowned FIA Formula 3 champion Piastri.

THOMPSON MISSES SNETT

British Touring Car Championship racer Bobby Thompson was forced to miss last weekend's penultimate round at Snetterton due to concussion from his big crash at Croft in the previous round. His place in the Trade Price Cars Audi line-up was taken by Mini Challenge racer Ethan Hammerton, who contested two rounds of the BTCC in 2018. Thompson's absence dropped him from first to third in the Jack Sears Trophy for non-overall-podium finishers, with BTC Racing Honda man Michael Crees taking the lead.

PHILPOT IN FOR BRANDS

Nurburgring Nordschleife specialist Brad Philpot will occupy the seat of the Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra for the final BTCC round at Brands Hatch. The 34-year-old, who tested the car last October, has won two titles at the 'Ring in Peugeot machinery. W Series racer Jessica Hawkins drove the car at Snetterton last weekend. She finished all three races, with a best result of 20th.



SPA ORGANISERS TIGHTEN UP ON TRACK LIMITS

SPA 24 HOURS

The enforcement of track limits was relaxed ahead of last weekend's Spa 24 Hours, only to be tightened up on race day morning after the majority of the field quite simply took the mickey during practice and qualifying.

The sight of cars repeatedly running across 10 or so metres of asphalt runoff and right up to the barriers on the exit of the Bus Stop Chicane was enough for race director Alain Adam. He then effectively put in place the same rules that have been in force in previous editions of the GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup round.

The drivers had been told by Adam at the pre-race briefing that a reduced headcount in race control as a result of social distancing meant track limits would only be enforced at Eau Rouge. As series boss Stephane Ratel said, "he opened the door and everyone rushed through it".

Adam suggested that there had been "exaggerated abuse" of his original guidance when he issued a bulletin ahead of the race. He reimposed the four-wheels-off rule: the track was delineated by the white lines around its extremities and one wheel had to remain in contact with it at all times.

The exceptions were the left-hand apex at the top of Eau Rouge (Turn 3), No Name Corner (Turn 9), Blanchimont (Turn 17) and the exit of the Bus Stop (Turn 19) where the kerbs beyond the white line counted as part of the track.

GARY WATKINS

P44 SPA 24 HOURS



F1 brains behind electric series

ELECTRIC RACING

Fans of forced induction look away now: first Porsche had the temerity to call its top-spec all-electric Taycan road car a 'Turbo S', and now a new battery-powered race series for 660bhp compact crossovers has been announced under the name 'SuperCharge'.

It's the brainchild of ex-Stewart and Jaguar Formula 1 team commercial director Rob Armstrong (latterly the global head of motorsport for World Rallycross promotor IMG) and Max Welti, formerly of the Sauber F1 and Group C programmes.

SuperCharge is set to launch in 2022 and will feature eight teams of two cars, which will be powered by a 40kWh battery that can drive front and rear axles for a total output of 500kW. A 0-to-62mph sprint of 2.5 seconds is expected. Cars will run a standardised tubular-frame rolling chassis to contain costs, but teams can customise bodywork to resemble any associated manufacturers and develop the battery.

A proposed eight-round calendar – three events in Europe, three in the Asia-Pacific region, one in the US and one in the Middle East – will visit custom-made rallycross-style circuits in parks and industrial areas near to major cities. Each round will comprise 15 races on a mixed-surface 1km circuit, which will feature a 2.5-metre jump, a joker lap – dubbed a 'Superloop' – and a water gantry obstacle.

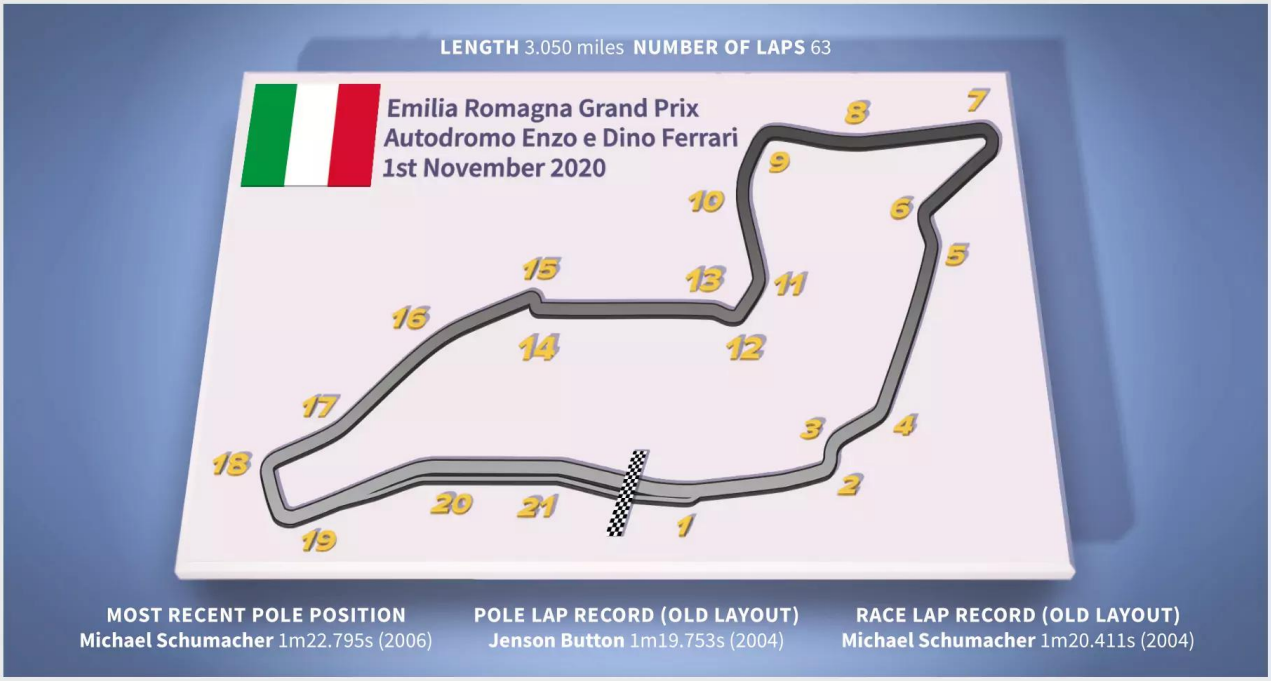
"With many countries and cities already announcing plans to ban internal combustion-engine cars in the coming years, the need for road car-based electric motorsport is becoming more and more compelling," said Armstrong. "We believe it is only a matter of time before there are more electric motorsport series. Given this rapidly increasing EV momentum, the timing and appeal of SuperCharge is ideal and we see a clear space for it."

The series has been in the planning for 18 months, with car manufacturers involved in the consultation period throughout, and organisers are expecting decent OEM uptake. SuperCharge will be organised in conjunction with national governing body Motorsport UK and the British Automobile Racing Club as it bids to gain FIA International Series status.

MATT KEW



F1 EMILIA ROMAGNA GRAND PRIX PREVIEW



UK START TIMES

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BBC RADIO 5 LIVE
SPORTS EXTRA

HIGHLIGHTS
CHANNEL 4 1830

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CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS

DRIVERS		
1	Hamilton	256
2	Bottas	179
3	Verstappen	162
4	Ricciardo	80
5	Leclerc	75

CONSTRUCTORS		
1	Mercedes	435
2	Red Bull	226
3	Racing Point	126
4	McLaren	124
5	Renault	120


Mercedes can clinch constructors' title in Italy

SUTTON

RACE STATS

PAST SAN MARINO GP WINNERS

2006	Michael Schumacher	Ferrari
2005	Fernando Alonso	Renault
2004	Michael Schumacher	Ferrari
2003	Michael Schumacher	Ferrari
2002	Michael Schumacher	Ferrari
2001	Ralf Schumacher	Williams
2000	Michael Schumacher	Ferrari
1999	Michael Schumacher	Ferrari
1998	David Coulthard	McLaren
1997	Heinz-Harald Frentzen	Williams


Patrese scored superb second for Arrows in 1981 San Marino GP

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

IMOLA MASTERS

Top 10 points scorers for grands prix at Imola. All races converted to current points system.

M Schumacher	270
A Prost	150
A Senna	114
D Coulthard	106
N Piquet	98
R Barrichello	95
G Berger	93
M Hakkinen	78
D Hill	73
R Patrese	72

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Hamilton's surprise weakness

The discomfort of cramp was an unexpected hurdle for Lewis Hamilton to overcome on his drive into history in Portugal. But like everything else, it wasn't about to beat him

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Lewis Hamilton has long been accustomed to making Formula 1 history. Even before his win in last Sunday's Portuguese Grand Prix he had, among others, the records for most pole positions, most podiums and most points. But with his triumph at the Algarve Circuit he now has the highest wins total.

That victory has also pulled him so far clear of team-mate and title rival Valtteri Bottas in the points that it seems inevitable (pandemic aberrations notwithstanding) that he will triumph in the 2020 championship. He could do so as soon as next month's Turkish GP, and his victory strike rate shows no sign of slowing.

He is undefeated in championship terms since his bitter loss to former team-mate Nico Rosberg in 2016 — after which it has been suggested he has worked to eliminate as many inadequacies from each weekend performance as possible. This is to brace against the unexpected: unreliability or accidents. Which is why it was rather surprising when he encountered a brief moment of weakness (in the physical sense) while on his way to winning in Portugal.

Heading into the race's final eight laps, Hamilton reported a vicious bout of cramp affecting his right calf. It had initially struck a few laps before, as he raced onto the track's main straight, forcing the world champion to briefly step off the gas before Turn 1.

When asked about the issue by Autosport, Hamilton explained: "I generally didn't drink a lot today and I remember getting into the car thinking, 'I'm probably going to be dehydrated.' I never drink in the race, never. Anyway, I started having small cramps. You never really get to rest [here].

> **"I got the feeling that it was about to pull. It popped and it hurt so much, I had to lift"**

"I was coming around Turn 15 onto the straight, and I got the feeling that it was about to pull — like pulling a muscle. It popped and it hurt so much, I had to lift and I didn't really know what to do because every time I applied it the pain was there. It's just mind over matter, so I just had to keep pushing."

Most understand how painful and awkward a cramp attack can be, as a muscle suddenly tightens and shortens. But few have gone through such an experience at the wheel of an F1 car, racing at high speed while trying to extend a gap over a championship rival, with a key win and moment of history on the line.

The issue did not really affect Hamilton. In the final 10 laps to the finish, he never completed a lap slower than Bottas, and set the race's fastest lap, which underlined Hamilton's superiority on race day. He had worked to balance his tyre management over both ends of his W11, ensuring he kept critical heat in his tyres. His decisiveness in traffic was also a key factor in bettering Bottas.

But Hamilton's admission that he suspected he'd encounter dehydration is slightly surprising, given his reputation for doing everything he can to eliminate potential pitfalls.

When it comes to hydration, the drivers try to get as prepared as possible, knowing they will need the liquid benefits when temperatures and pressures rise in the cockpit. This means consuming the right nutrients and electrolytes to keep them alert and functioning at their peak. The amount of fluid weight they will lose is calculated ahead of time to keep things stable, which is where pre-event hydration is key.

This is an ongoing process over the weekend, not a case of just necking gallons before stepping into the car, as the body can only take on so much without flushing out the excess.

At intensely hot and humid events such as the Singapore GP, their drinks bottle fluids will get incredibly hot, more akin to hot tea than thirst-quenching cool relief. This makes it hard to consume and is why so much preparation is required over a whole F1 event.

But the air temperatures near Portimao never got above 22C all weekend, which created the problem of generating tyre heat. So it's odd that Hamilton got into difficulty. Back in 2017, he was racing without a drinks bottle to save car weight. These days, he has it available, but just chooses not to use it.

This isn't to admonish him. It's merely a reminder of the lengths to which he has gone, and will continue to go, to grab every opportunity on offer. The idea is to be bulletproof, which he briefly was not last weekend.

In any case, the problem did not stop Hamilton winning and making history and, given his attitude to eliminating any such minor weakness — as well as his desire to beat determined younger rivals — it is unlikely to become a common theme.

Before the grand prix weekend in Portugal got under way, Hamilton's Mercedes future was again in the headlines — understandable given his new contract remains so far unsigned. But Hamilton hinted that he may yet have "a decent amount of time" left in F1.

If Hamilton's F1 career goes on for years to come, his focus on self-improvement and overcoming every little problem will surely lead him to take the wins record to well over 100 victories.

Now a record-breaker every time he wins, he's at a stage in his life when he only has himself to beat.

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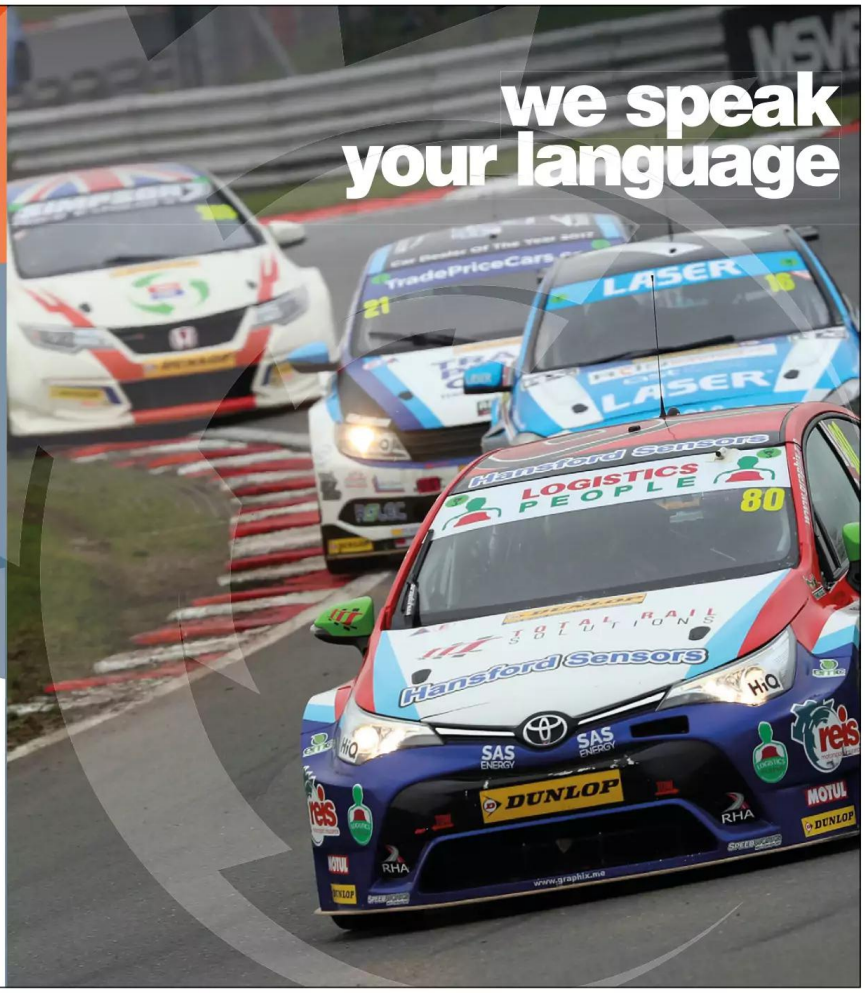
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Keeping that edge

IndyCar convert Scott McLaughlin became a divisive figure in the Supercars paddock. Now he's leaving, the Aussie series needs a new dose of driver tension

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN

Scott McLaughlin may be a lifelong Greg Murphy fan, bit his career trajectory is tracking much like that of Murph's most famous rival.

In the early-to-mid 2000s, Marcos Ambrose enjoyed a spell of dominance in Supercars in Australia before heading Stateside to live out his NASCAR dream. He was a hard racer, more interested in winning than making friends. His exit at the end of 2005 wasn't exactly met with universal disappointment from the drivers he left behind.

It's harsh, but the same can be said about McLaughlin as he bids farewell to Supercars and joins Team Penske's IndyCar line-up, as part of the US racing giant's exit from the Aussie scene. The Kiwi's relationship with the Supercars paddock has changed over the years. He was once a likeable kid constantly compared to Craig Lowndes thanks to his happy-go-lucky nature. You know, the guy who won hearts when he "gave it some jandal and f*** yeah" on TV after beating Jamie Whincup to second place in Adelaide.

But that's changed. Over time McLaughlin has become a polarising figure in the paddock. Without doubt there's been an element of tall-poppy syndrome. Jealousy has been a factor as some drivers have fallen out of love with McLaughlin. One of his fiercest rivals, David Reynolds, has admitted as much on more than one occasion. But there's more to it. The likes of Whincup and Lowndes have shown you can win plenty without it creating a rift with the rest of the drivers.

> **"In the new era of Ford versus Chevy, a little drama between the drivers could go a long way"**

The big change came in 2019. McLaughlin clearly felt all the talk about the Mustang's dominance undermined his own share of the credit for his winning streak, which ultimately turned his relationship with the paddock toxic. The Bathurst 1000 scandal didn't help either. McLaughlin's insistence that he'd won the race "fair and square", when he'd clearly profited from the 'debris' saga, understandably didn't sit well with the other drivers.

The cherry on top was his Bathurst pole-winning motor being deemed illegal after post-event checks, handing those who felt he should have been stripped of his win even more ammunition. News of the illegal engine went public on the same day McLaughlin sealed his second Supercars title at Sandown. When he faced the media in the evening, he was visibly fed up with the whole show. When asked how he'd celebrate the title, he said: "I'll just go with my friends, away from this toxic paddock."

On the eve of the 2019 season finale in Newcastle a couple of weeks later, the stand-off between McLaughlin and his rivals went viral. When McLaughlin told the press he was 'annoyed with his peers' after the Bathurst controversies, Scott Pye took to Instagram: "It will forever be tainted and that isn't because of the other drivers' mentalities, it's because of your team's doing." McLaughlin's response was to point out that the team had been scrutineered 325 times and only busted once. But Pye wasn't having it. "Lance Armstrong (most tested athlete) was caught once, but it ruined his whole career," he wrote. The exchange sent the paddock into a spin, Supercars forced to intervene with a letter to all drivers from CEO Sean Seamer warning them to use social media responsibly.

There's little doubt that things mellowed a bit in 2020. The pandemic has played its part, the problems of old now trivial compared to the challenges we've all faced this year. There's also a sense that McLaughlin has become more accepting of his role as the category's ruthless winner. He's had himself listed as a "human salt harvester" on his social media profiles for much of the season. And his helmet has carried the message "winners focus on winning, losers focus on winners" all season. Perhaps he also feels vindicated by a stunning title win this year, free of any aero claims or Great Race controversies.

This all may sound intensely negative, but it's not. McLaughlin did a great deal for the category. His stint at DJRTP gave the Ford versus Holden rivalry a bitter edge it had been missing for years. It also gave long-suffering Blue Oval fans something to cheer for, after Triple Eight Holdens had won six of the seven championships up to 2017. What's important now is that somebody fills those McLaughlin-sized racing boots. Supercars needs to cross its fingers and hope somebody in the blue corner is ready to step up.

Tickford's Cam Waters is perhaps most likely to do so based on his epic Bathurst speed. If he can find the consistency to match his pace, particularly over a race distance, he could become Ford's new poster boy. There's also hope that even without the Penske investment and the McLaughlin X-factor, Dick Johnson Racing will retain its powerhouse status. If the driver market plays out as expected, Will Davison is a proven commodity and Anton De Pasquale is regarded by many as the category's next big thing.

It's equally important that, whoever the McLaughlin successor is, they bring a similar edge to their off-track game too. As Supercars faces its transition from Ford vs Holden to Ford versus Chevrolet, a little drama between the drivers could go a long way.

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YOUR SAY

The use of "retard" by a public figure would be more than reprehensible enough, but the use of "mongol", in this context, without consequence is incomprehensible

ROB RYAN-SILVA

Why have Verstappen's insults gone unpunished?

I am a Formula 1 fan and an Autosport Plus subscriber. Each racing weekend I sit down to watch F1 with my son, who has Down syndrome. I was therefore beyond horrified over Max Verstappen's comments in FP2 of the Portuguese Grand Prix, when the most cutting insults he could think of to level at Lance Stroll after a clash were "retard" and "mongol".

I am having a hard time understanding why, given the current anti-discrimination push in F1, more attention is not being paid to this. I hope that Autosport would spend some editorial effort in putting more light on this issue.

The term "mongoloid", as used to refer to people with trisomy 21, originates from John Langdon Down, who first identified the condition as a syndrome distinct from other disabilities in a paper he wrote in 1866 called *Observations on an Ethnic Classification of Idiots*. In this short document, he noted that people with what we now know as Down syndrome had some physiological features that gave them an Asian appearance, and mused for this reason that their cognitive disabilities stemmed from them having somehow been born Asian in character – and therefore "degenerate" – despite their European heritage.

The use of "retard" by a public figure would be more than reprehensible enough, but the use of "mongol", in this context, without consequence is incomprehensible. I would appreciate any effort by Autosport to not let this incident pass as though it were inconsequential.

Rob Ryan-Silva
By email

We are in total agreement. Verstappen's choice of words have no place in any environment. Troublingly, they seem to have passed without remorse. Our technical editor Jake Boxall-Legge has addressed this in a column on the Autosport website, which is free for all to read. It also includes comment from the Mongol Identity that seeks to educate people on the meaning of John Langdon Down's original terminology – ed

Go to autosport.com/f1/news/153109



Time for a sequel to *Weekend of a Champion*

In Roman Polanski's film *Weekend of a Champion* about the 1971 Monaco Grand Prix, you knew Jackie Stewart was going to win – just like Lewis Hamilton in the Portuguese GP. It was another Lewis certainty.

Wouldn't it be good to have a similar film made on the 50th anniversary (2021) about Hamilton? Different eras and technology. I'm sure Lewis would be up for the challenge. You would see another champion confident in his own ability.

I'll dream on about Fantasy F1 films!

Stuart Balmer
By email

Hamilton is entitled to respond to criticism

It seems Paul Richards isn't a fan of Lewis Hamilton (Your Say, 22 October), calling him "immature, petulant and arrogant" and accusing him of giving a childish response to criticism from Jackie Stewart.

I thought you were entitled to respond to criticism, and Stewart is known for his strong opinions, but Paul's response seems to be clouded by his own personal opinion of Lewis. Perhaps Lewis's response was because he thought it was a personal insult rather than an indication of how "shallow and insecure he must be".

Neil Davey
Newport, South Wales

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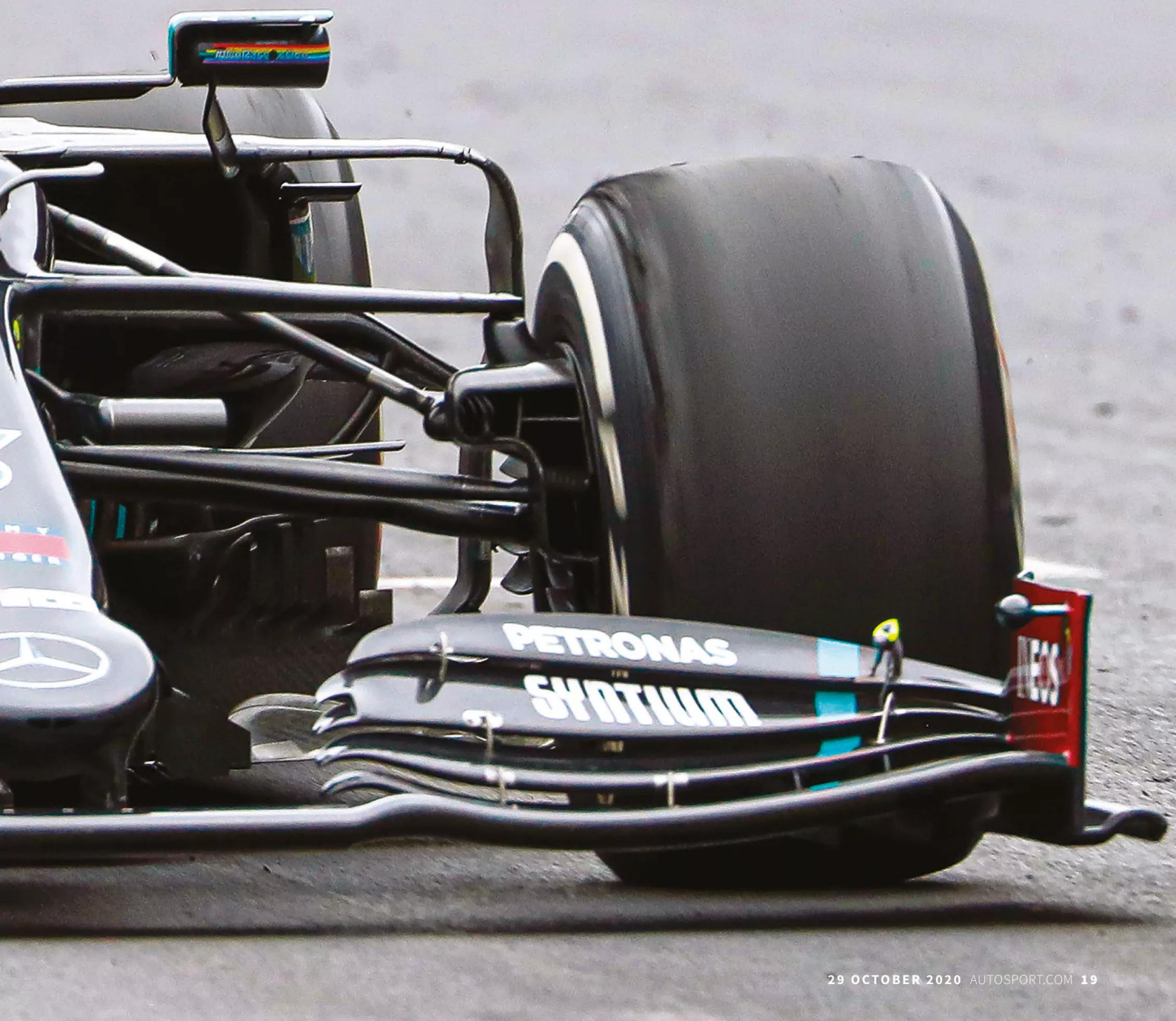
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HAMILTON'S FORESIGHT DEFEATS BOTTAS

Valtteri Bottas seemed to have the edge as F1 raced in Portugal for the first time since 1996, but his Mercedes team-mate again found an answer

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES





He didn't think twice when the time came. He'd homed in on his rival, ratcheted up the pressure, got into the perfect position.

As a result, Valtteri Bottas was powerless to resist Lewis Hamilton's attack, armed with DRS, down the Algarve International Circuit's main straight at the start of lap 20 of 66 in last Sunday's Portuguese Grand Prix. Bottas refused to cede the inside line, stealing onto the dusty asphalt very close to the pitwall, but it was never going to be enough. Hamilton was through, his record-clinching 92nd Formula 1 victory in sight.

Hamilton had clinically lined up that decisive move for the lead, but he'd actually struck the blow that did for Bottas ahead of qualifying. But, well before the events of what was ultimately the race-winning move played out, Mercedes had found itself in a position that took the team back 71 Hamilton wins — to an era of a different livery, driver line-up and team management: behind a McLaren on merit.

Hamilton had made a straightforward getaway from pole, but Bottas — starting on the less grippy right-hand side of the grid away from the racing line — was slow away. He fell behind Max Verstappen on the run to the fast, sweeping right of Turn 1, but recovered well at the next two turns, muscling the Red Bull off the track and back down to third.

As the Mercedes shot into what looked like very familiar territory at the head of the pack, Verstappen was about to have his second shunt of the weekend, following his collision with Lance Stroll in FP2. After being firmly manoeuvred off the track by Bottas at the exit of the tight left at Turn 3, Verstappen lost momentum and found himself under attack from Racing Point's Sergio Perez as they ran through the tricky uphill left of Turn 4. The pair collided as the Mexican moved ahead around the outside, which spun Perez around and off to the side of the track, dropping him to the back of the pack.

Really not very far up ahead, things were about to get unexpectedly tough for Hamilton. He had arrived at the Turn 5 hairpin, where several drivers had locked up on their recce laps to the grid, struggling in what were much cooler and blustery conditions compared to the rest of the weekend. Here, with light rain now falling, Hamilton snatched his right-front wheel, locking up and going deep, but staying ahead.

Then he was behind. He'd had to save a massive oversteer moment as he ran onto even damper asphalt through the left-hand kink of Turn 6 and, after gathering things up, he opted to take a careful approach to the technical Turns 7 and 8. The Mercedes braked so early it caught out the rapid-starting Carlos Sainz Jr, which let Bottas past and left Hamilton vulnerable to the McLaren's attack.

"We knew it was going to be tough on the mediums [at the start]," said Hamilton afterwards. "Actually, the engineers, they're very kind of chilled about it: 'Yeah, it will be tough but you'll be all right.' It was very tricky and obviously it started to spit, so when you're the first car into the corners at the start of a lap when it is spitting, you're the first one to hit those raindrops, the first one to hit those patches.

"Valtteri came by, I was overly cautious, I would say, through Turn 7 and kind of just generally let them by into Turn 8 — didn't even defend. He seemed to have more grip than me at that moment. I didn't understand why, but I was sure that at some stage I would get there and I knew that it's a long race. So, I just kept my cool and focused on trying to keep the car on the track."

As Hamilton was doing that, he wasn't staring at the rear of Sainz's car for long, for the Spaniard, who had benefited from putting "a lot of emphasis on the warm-up lap" to ensure his soft tyres were operating perfectly right from the off, charged after and past Bottas. He got



SUTTON

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As the Mercedes drivers battle with low grip, the McLarens move forward

ahead with better traction out of the Turn 5 hairpin on the second lap, and proceeded to pull away from the Mercedes pair, who were still struggling to get their medium tyres up to temperature.

"Obviously I was very happy with the start and the first laps in the rain and the mixed conditions," said Sainz of what was to be a cameo appearance at the front. "I knew as soon as the track dried that it was going to be impossible to maintain the lead."

And so it proved to be. By lap five, the Mercedes drivers had reached the low 1m23s (Hamilton actually did a 1m22.996s), and on lap six Bottas used DRS to get alongside and past Sainz on the outside run into the first corner. Hamilton was able to blast ahead one tour later, and Sainz, soon to be struggling with graining on his previously helpful soft rubber, slipped back behind Verstappen and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc. In the other McLaren, Lando Norris had also surged forwards at the start, rising to fourth ahead of Verstappen, but also subsequently fell back with graining softs. His race was ruined by a clash with Stroll, for which the Racing Point driver was penalised.

"I DIDN'T HAVE THE PACE. THERE WAS NOTHING I COULD DO. I WAS PUSHING HARD BUT I COULDN'T GO FASTER"

Bottas's lead over Hamilton at the end of lap seven was 1.689 seconds, but it grew only as large as 2.354s over the next 13 laps. The medium tyres were finally working – and ultimately worked so well that the rubber's longevity surprised Mercedes – but Hamilton was lurking menacingly. On lap 15, the world champion unleashed a 1m21.421s, at that stage the race's fastest lap. He closed in quickly on his team-mate, taking in a pair of 1m21.3s, then lined up the pass once he'd got within DRS range at the end of lap 18 and pulled it off next time down the main straight.

Bottas had been undone by his performance on the medium tyres, but he had no explanation for why he had lacked pace compared to his team-mate after appearing so strong earlier in the weekend.

"I was pretty pleased to get the lead," he said. "To be honest, after that I just didn't have the pace, and I don't understand why – no pace whatsoever. Of course, I tried to defend when Lewis came closer, but there was nothing I could do. I was pushing hard but I couldn't go faster."

This was the key difference that decided where the victory near Portimao would go. The lower temperatures, allied to the slippery and tricky new track surface, meant the key to doing well in the race was keeping up the temperature on every compound, particularly the »



Bottas led but his set-up choice did not use the Pirelli rubber as well as Hamilton's

medium and hard tyres. In qualifying, it had just been about reaching this critical point, but the race was about maintaining that heat in the rubber. And, it seems, Bottas just couldn't do it as well as Hamilton.

"The medium tyre is difficult to get to work but it seemed like some others had much better warm-up than we did," explained Mercedes trackside engineering director Andrew Shovlin. "Valtteri did really well to take the position back off Verstappen after losing it off the line. It was a nice move into Turn 3 and once he'd got some temperature in the tyres he was able to pass the McLaren and drove a well-managed first stint.

"He started to drop a bit of temperature in his tyres around 10 laps into the stint, which was making the car inconsistent. Lewis at that point had a bit of pace in hand and was able to make the pass."

Hamilton explained afterwards, having revealed that he'd debated internally during the race's closing laps how much of his secret to winning in Portugal he was going to give away, that he'd taken a key decision ahead of qualifying to make sure he could maintain tyre heat.

"It was all about temperatures today and that's something I was able to [do] with the set-up – I was able to pre-empt it," he said after climbing from his W11. "It was less about qualifying set-up, and more for the race set-up and I think today that enabled me to go one better [than Bottas]."

Shovlin also revealed a set-up tweak that went on both Mercedes cars meant using a different higher-downforce wing level, but said the key difference between the pair involved their overall approach to car balance. "[Hamilton] got the balance of the car to sort of use the tyres and not be too hard on either end," said Shovlin.

But the race wasn't quite over by this point. In fact, the Mercedes drivers were only halfway through what would turn out to be their first of two stints.

Mercedes had told Hamilton to keep "stretching" his time on the mediums, and he did so comfortably. Over the 20 tours from taking the lead to finally coming in at the end of lap 40, Hamilton pulled 9.577s clear of Bottas, going an average 0.495s per lap quicker.

The Briton took on hard tyres at his stop, with Bottas mirroring this at the end of the next lap. But that hadn't been the rubber he'd had in mind, reasoning that doing something different was his only chance.

When informed of Hamilton's switch to the hard tyres, Bottas asked "in that case, maybe we take the soft?" – "because I thought it would be, for me, the best thing to do". Mercedes, however, disagreed, putting him onto identical white-walled rubber to Hamilton, with what team boss Toto Wolff called "pretty robust" reasoning.

"We were pretty convinced that the hard was the better tyre," said Wolff. "All data that we've seen from cars out there tended towards the hard outperforming the medium and the soft. The soft didn't function at all – it was actually the weakest tyre at the end of the race."

Bottas knew he'd be getting the hard rubber when he came in, with Mercedes' chief strategist, James Vowles, coming on the radio to

"I WAS LEARNING, TRYING LOTS OF DIFFERENT LINES AND DISCOVERING NEW LINES THAT WORKED WELL"

explain that he'd also had to consider the vibrations Bottas had reported towards the end of the long opening stint, although this could also have been a coded explanation as to why the softs where not appropriate. Given how some others struggled on the soft rubber in the closing stages, Mercedes was probably correct.

"I didn't really have any big lock-ups so I think it was just that it's quite common that when a tyre starts to be at the end of its life, it starts vibrating," explained Bottas, seeming to accept the decision not to give him an alternative tyre strategy for the end. "It was really just the tyre wear and that forced us to stop at that point."

Still the race was not over. Both Mercedes drivers now faced another tyre temperature-related problem: how to get the hardest compound in Pirelli's range into the right window. Their out-laps, with the DAS


S.BLOXHAM


Sainz starred in the tricky conditions before the Mercs got going…
SUTTON


…while Sainz's future team-mate Leclerc was brilliant for Ferrari
S.BLOXHAM

systems at play, were 1m46.585s (Hamilton) and 1m47.899s (Bottas). For comparison, Verstappen had done a 1m45.057s on his, 17 laps before Hamilton stopped. Bottas also lost time having to navigate the tricky pitlane exit, which fed the cars back into the racing line for that version of the Algarve Circuit's first corner, as the lapped Antonio Giovinazzi and George Russell came flying past. That put him in traffic too.

Inevitably, Hamilton fired his hards up faster, and roared even further away from Bottas, ultimately finishing with a winning margin of 25.592s, completing the second stint at an average lap time of 1m20.044s. This was, on average, 0.563s better than Bottas could manage each time around, with Hamilton setting the race's fastest lap at 1m18.750s on the 63rd tour, entering a lap time bracket that Bottas was unable to reach all race.

"I felt through the race that I was learning, lap on lap, more about the circuit," said Hamilton, who had to manage the final tours with "excruciating" pain in his right calf from cramp caused by dehydration.

"I was trying lots of different lines and discovering new lines that worked well. The wind direction was very tricky – lots of crosswinds, headwinds and tailwinds – and there were some positions that you could utilise to your favour and others that kind of get in the way. I just felt like I was generally getting faster and faster throughout the race, but I had to keep up the pace for these tyres. That was really the key."

Behind the two Black Arrows came Verstappen, for the third time in 2020. He'd not been penalised for his part in the collision with Perez, saying the Mexican "took himself out while I was just driving on the normal line", as the stewards opted not to even investigate the incident. Had it happened later in the race, and not at the point where officials treat incidents more leniently, F1 race director Michael Masi said it was "highly likely" that things might have been viewed differently.

But as it was, Verstappen was free to chase after the Mercedes duo once he'd seen off the McLarens (and also after he'd defended robustly against the other first-lap star, Alfa Romeo's Kimi Raikkonen, with a very firm move on the exit of the hairpin on the second tour). But it was quickly clear his chase was in vain. »

QUALIFYING


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"It's very annoying." That was Valtteri Bottas's reaction to losing pole position for the Portuguese Grand Prix to Lewis Hamilton, who topped qualifying for the ninth time in 2020 as Mercedes extended its undefeated season record.

Bottas had topped all three practice sessions and was ahead after the opening runs in Q3 had been completed. But he was beaten, dealt a devastating blow by Hamilton at the last. And it all came down to one critical decision Mercedes had left up to its individual charges.

The track at the Algarve Circuit had been resurfaced ahead of its unexpected Formula 1 race weekend debut, with the final work on the new asphalt only completed last month. This left the drivers who had been looking forward to tackling the circuit in F1 machinery a tad irked. The new surface was "like an ice rink", according to Alex Albon.

This had a big impact on how the pack treated their tyres across the weekend. For qualifying, the challenge was getting the rubber up to perfect working temperature.

"That must be one of the highest quantities of laps we've ever seen in a dry qualifying session, with cars doing multiple laps, some cars doing prep laps, others fast-slow-fast," said Dave Robson, head of vehicle performance at Williams.

It was the final approach Robson mentions that got Hamilton pole. But there was another twist: he did so on the medium rubber.

"WRONG CALL FROM MY SIDE AND IT IS ANNOYING FOR SURE, BUT LEWIS DID A GOOD JOB"

Mercedes had already made it through Q2 on the yellow-walled tyres, giving it a handy, if nervous, advantage over the soft-shod Max Verstappen in the race's opening stint. But both of the Black Arrows drivers decided to take the medium for their final Q3 efforts because it "actually felt a tiny bit quicker than the soft", said Bottas.

But as Hamilton headed out with over four minutes of Q3 remaining, Bottas stayed in his garage. Hamilton had time to repeat his Q2 run of two timed laps. The world champion moved ahead with his opening effort, but was eclipsed by Bottas and Verstappen in the following moments. But he still had time. One more lap, one more pole – 97 in total.

"I was just hoping I could have one more lap but obviously didn't have the fuel," said Bottas, having felt that the benefit of running lighter outweighed the gains of having two gos on the mediums – the choice Mercedes had given its drivers. "Wrong call from my side and it is annoying for sure, but Lewis did a good job at the end."



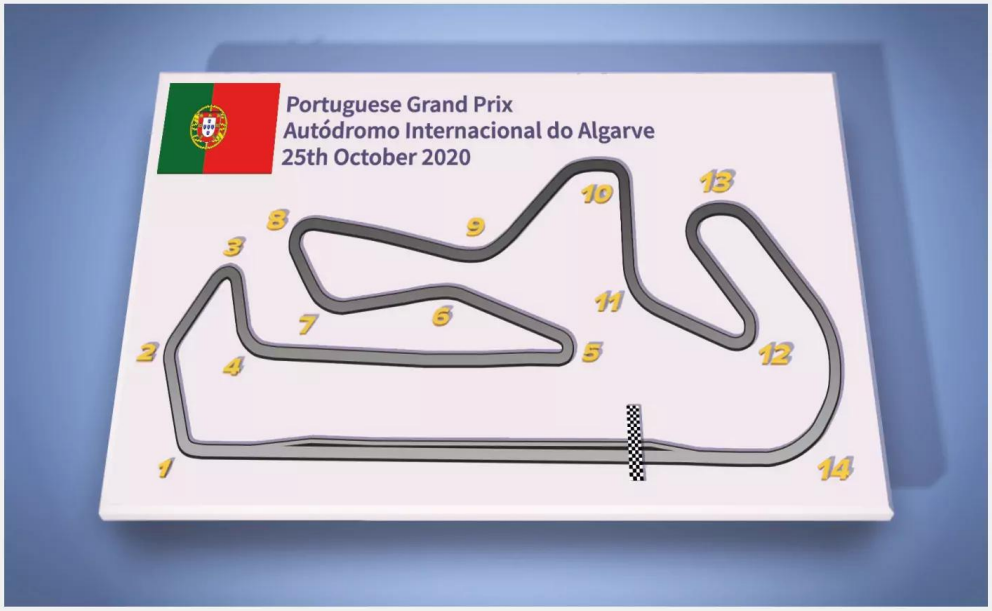
TRACKSIDE VIEW

As Formula 1 moved from the chilly Eifel mountains to the glorious autumn Portimao sun, there was no repeat of the Friday washout at the Nurburgring. The drivers took full advantage, with most heading out early in FP1 to sample a new race venue for the championship.

Autosport saunters over to a small grandstand, which we are pleased to find open given the COVID restrictions, overlooking the Turn 5 hairpin. Our vantage point provides a wide view of the cars running down the hill from the tricky preceding left into the left-hand hairpin, and then exiting back up the incline – gentle compared to the other elevation changes on the 2.891-mile track – towards the uphill kink of Turn 6, with a view of the mountains to the north. We turn right and enjoy seeing the cars silhouetted against the occasionally clouded sky as they start the third sector above us.

Everything looks very simple during the early laps. Kevin Magnussen reveals why the drivers are staying well away from the kerbs at Turn 5's apex, twitching his VF-20 away from the gigantic yellow inner kerb to avoid damaging his front wing. But apart from that, there's not a lot of fuss.

That changes once the drivers start to find the limit. In fact, no one comes through the sequence without locking up at some stage – even the Mercedes duo, who are among the few drivers not to take to the track immediately as the



"NO ONE COMES THROUGH THE SEQUENCE WITHOUT LOCKING UP"

90-minute session gets under way.

By this stage we're starting to see plenty of variation in line and approach for hooking up the hairpin. The drivers tend to either carry lots of speed in and not bother with the apex, or go in too tight and lose speed avoiding the inside kerb. It seems they're spending time learning to balance the two main ways to guarantee good speed on the exit, where Max Verstappen starts the session running wide out on the kerbs beyond before pulling his accelerating line in.

The exit's uphill nature helps with traction, so it looks simple – but not always. Daniel Ricciardo's Renault is regularly wobbling as he puts the power down, but this seems to improve as the session wears on. In the closing stages, Kimi Raikkonen demonstrates the vulnerability the low-speed turn exposes as he loops his Alfa Romeo around on an out-lap.

After the mid-session lull, car behaviour changes again as the drivers set their fastest times of the session – all avoiding the red-walled soft rubber. They're noticeably more attacking now, still making plenty of mistakes.

Things calm again towards the end, before a tailwind on entry picks up and leads to a plethora of deep moments – Lewis Hamilton among those caught out, but Romain Grosjean and Lance Stroll ending up deepest into the runoff.

It's clearly a challenge to drive this track, but sitting in the warm sunshine studying the drivers learning a new F1 venue is pure pleasure.

ALEX KALINAUCKAS



Drivers tried different approaches to Turn 5 and all made mistakes







SUTTON

Bottas and Verstappen flank record-breaker Hamilton after win 92

Verstappen got through Q2 on the soft tyres and started on them – a decision Red Bull team boss Christian Horner said the team would have reversed "if we could have done qualifying again" – while Mercedes and Ferrari went for the mediums, although only Leclerc made it out of Q2 for the Italian team. This makes it difficult to compare Verstappen's race with Hamilton and Bottas, but once he'd gone onto the mediums at the end of lap 23 – at this stage already 14.667s off the lead – he was "much happier on that tyre", according to Horner. "But of course," Horner added, "Mercedes were up the road by that point in time."

Verstappen completed his 43-lap second stint at an average of 1m20.947s, which compares to Hamilton's 1m21.633s on the same compound over his whole first stint – albeit over three laps fewer and on ever-lighter fuel tanks, with none of the slow, slippery opening tours (and Hamilton's mediums actually started the race two laps older thanks to his double run in Q2).

"Once I put on the mediums it was fine – I think the pace wasn't too bad," said Verstappen. "I took a few laps to settle in. Once the tyres were up to temperature the pace was good and I just pulled away from the cars behind and I could do my own race, but of course they were a bit too far away from that point onwards. But anyway, quite eventful in the beginning and of course I'm still happy to be [on the podium]."

At this point in the press conference, the delighted and relaxed record breaker turned interviewer. "Why didn't you use the medium?" asked Hamilton. "I had one set for quali and I said I wasn't going to risk it," came Verstappen's reply. "I didn't think the soft was going to be that much of a struggle."

Verstappen finished 34.508s behind, but 30.804s ahead of Leclerc, who had a generally unseen race for Ferrari. He mirrored the Mercedes pair in avoiding the softs, but without the pace to ever threaten the Red Bull as he fell back from being 9.313s behind Verstappen after swapping the mediums for the hards at the end of lap 34.

Leaving Portugal, Hamilton has a 77-point lead in the world championship. Once again at a venue F1 had not been expecting to visit in 2020, he had looked vulnerable at times but, again, as he had done at Mugello and the Nurburgring, Bottas failed to capitalise.

This time he was undone by a familiar weakness compared to his all-conquering team-mate: getting the Pirellis to do his bidding. But Bottas was magnanimous in defeat.

"I want to say massive congrats to Lewis for this amazing achievement and being part of motorsport history," he said. "Really, hat's off. Big respect."

"Thank you mate, appreciate it," came the reply.

"I WANT TO SAY MASSIVE CONGRATS TO LEWIS FOR THIS ACHIEVEMENT AND BEING PART OF HISTORY"


COATES

Verstappen's race wasn't his cleanest, but he was yet again best of the rest

NEXT F1 REPORT

EMILIA ROMAGNA GP
5 NOVEMBER ISSUE

Can Mercedes clinch its seventh consecutive constructors' crown as F1 heads back to Imola for the first time since the 2006 San Marino GP?

Leclerc maximises Ferrari potential

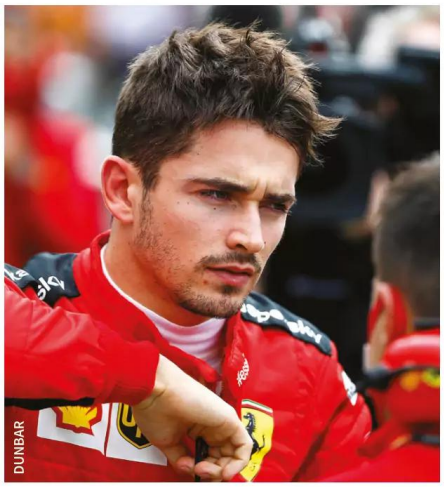
The Portuguese Grand Prix weekend was arguably Charles Leclerc's most consistent event of 2020 so far, as he managed to both qualify and, crucially, finish well.

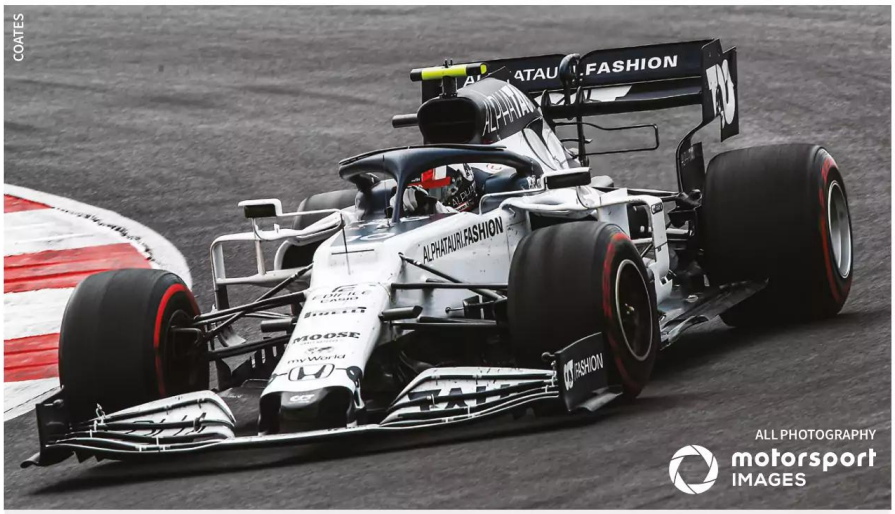
Ferrari has fielded criticism for being indecisive on strategy in 2020, but the team made the call to put both Leclerc and Sebastian Vettel on the medium-compound Pirelli tyre in Q2, giving them the best-balanced rubber to begin the race.

Leclerc was the only Ferrari driver to make it out of Q2 on the harder rubber, and lost ground in the chaotic start to the race and dropped as far back as eighth. But he rallied to make his way back up the order, dispatching the fast-starting Kimi Raikkonen and the two McLarens on his way to fourth.

Max Verstappen, in third place, had started on the soft tyre and had to pit at the end of lap 23, giving Leclerc a chance to pick up the pace and become a factor in the battle for the final podium position. But Verstappen found more speed on the mediums and kept the gap relatively static before extending it, meaning Leclerc had to settle for fourth after taking the hard tyre just after half distance.

Vettel had a somewhat poorer weekend. Although he rescued a point after starting 15th, he barely factored other than in a battle with Raikkonen for 10th. The German got onto Daniel Ricciardo's coat-tails late on, but could make no further ground.


DUNBAR


COATES

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

Gasly beats Perez after fierce fight

Pierre Gasly recorded his best result since his Italian Grand Prix victory with a charge to fifth place for AlphaTauri at Portimao, during which he won a controversial late battle against Sergio Perez's Racing Point.

After qualifying ninth, Gasly managed his soft tyres better than most through the opening stint to rise to fifth, putting passes on Alex Albon, Kimi Raikkonen, Daniel Ricciardo, Lando Norris and Carlos Sainz Jr in the opening 20 laps.

A switch to mediums dropped Gasly back into a fight with the undercutting Ricciardo, but he made a second pass on his Renault rival before bearing down on Perez in the closing stages as the Mexican's soft tyres faded.

Gasly's first attempt at an overtake at the inside of Turn 1 with three laps to go sparked an aggressive defensive swipe from Perez. Gasly had to back out at the last minute, narrowly avoiding a crash, and later Perez was given a reprimand by the stewards. Gasly made the pass with ease one lap later to secure fifth.

"It was a bit sketchy," said Gasly. "I was quite pissed off with him, so the next lap I really sent it round the outside, which was pretty good."

Perez had run last on the opening lap after contact with Max Verstappen when trying to pass for third. "I thought I gave enough space to Max but it was very difficult that first lap," Perez said. "You could see everybody was struggling a lot. We touched really late in the corner."

A two-stop strategy left Perez vulnerable late on, causing him to drop to seventh behind Gasly and Sainz. "It was looking great because at that point we were already P5, but I think we lacked some information on that soft tyre," he explained.

Perez's Racing Point team-mate Lance Stroll was the only retirement after a disastrous race where he received two penalties: one for causing a collision with Lando Norris that dropped Stroll to last, the second for repeated track-limits offences. He retired from the race with 15 laps to go with damage, running half a minute off 19th place.

BIG NUMBER

10

The number of positions Alfa Romeo's Kimi Raikkonen gained over the first two laps with his stunning start from 16th on the grid


S BLOXHAM

Mixed race for McLaren duo following Sainz cameo

Carlos Sainz Jr capitalised on the slippery track conditions to lead four laps early on at the Algarve Circuit in his McLaren before fading to sixth position.

An aggressive warm-up lap meant Sainz sailed past the frontrunners on the opening two laps, picking off both Mercedes drivers with ease. "It was pretty easy," Sainz acknowledged. "It was not a tough battle."

Sainz lost the lead on lap six before slipping back with graining soft tyres, but battled back into the points after pitting on a one-stop strategy, pulling a last-lap pass on Sergio Perez.

Lando Norris's hopes of points were dashed on lap 18 by contact with Lance Stroll's Racing Point – in a near-repeat of the Canadian's practice clash with Max Verstappen – that left the McLaren with front-wing damage and "just surviving" to finish 13th.

"He obviously didn't learn from Friday, but he doesn't seem to learn with anything he does," said a frustrated Norris.



SUTTON

Q&A

GEORGE RUSSELL
WILLIAMS DRIVER



How did you enjoy the race with the long first stint?
I really enjoyed it. It was probably the best race I've had in Formula 1 to date. It's just typical that when we have our best races, almost everybody finishes, and there's not a fortunate safety car at the right moment. If there was a VSC or safety car at that phase, then we'd have probably finished in the points. I was really pleased. As a whole this weekend was great. I'm getting more and more confident race by race with racing other drivers, other cars. I had good battles with Esteban Ocon at the start, and Alex Albon then Antonio Giovinazzi – plus Sebastian Vettel later in the race. All in all, it was positive.

Is the Williams no longer the slowest car in F1?
I'd say we are on par with Alfa Romeo, and Haas are slightly behind us at the moment. But I think our race team often gets it pretty nailed, and that's what is helping us be ahead of those guys.

How hard was the start?
The soft tyre was very beneficial. Massive respect to Kimi Raikkonen for what he did. We still managed to make a good start, even on the medium tyre, and I think I managed to overtake a number of cars, which was great, and a lot of fun really.

Frustrating the race wasn't more attritional?
Yeah, on another day we'd have probably been in the points. Had this race been the Nurburgring, when you've got five cars in the top 10 retiring, we'd have come home in P9 for example. So, I'm just pleased that the car was feeling great [on both days]. Overall, it's probably the most complete [weekend] – moving forward in the race, getting stuck in with cars that I shouldn't be battling, with Ocon for one who definitely did some questionable defensive driving. But nevertheless, the day will come for us. Perhaps we need to gamble more, to capitalise on some unique circumstances.



S BLOXHAM

Renault drops back but scores points

Renault arrived in Portugal as the form mid-pack team after Daniel Ricciardo's Nurburgring podium, but the Australian's off in Q2 and Esteban Ocon's inability to get out of that session meant it had to be realistic in the race.

Ricciardo managed to make up some ground at the start and rose to seventh, but stopped early on lap 14 for medium tyres and was shuffled to the rear of the field. From there, he ascended steadily through the order. The early stop helped Ricciardo undercut Pierre Gasly, and the clash between Lando Norris and Lance Stroll helped his cause too, looking set for a good points haul once the stops had shaken out. But Ricciardo's tyres slowly began to wane, and the later-stopping Gasly and Sainz got back past.

Ocon had run deep into the race on the mediums, waiting until lap 53 to pit and returning ahead of Ricciardo. On fresh soft tyres, Ocon expected to join the Gasly-Sainz duo hunting down Sergio Perez, but the soft rubber seemed ill-suited to the circuit and Ocon eventually ran out of momentum. Ricciardo finished within a second, and Ocon reckons he could have finished the race on that medium set.



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FOR THE WINNERS...

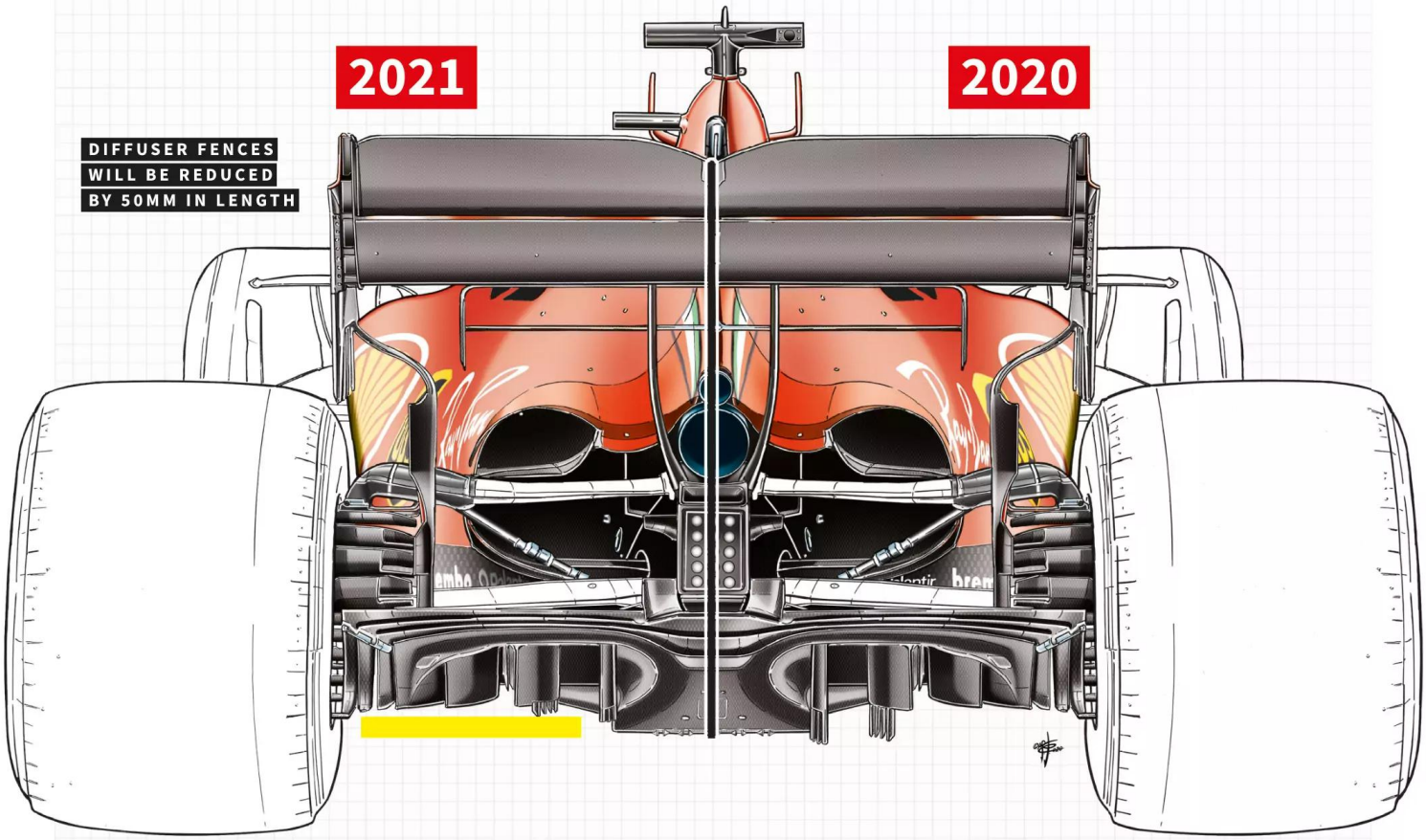
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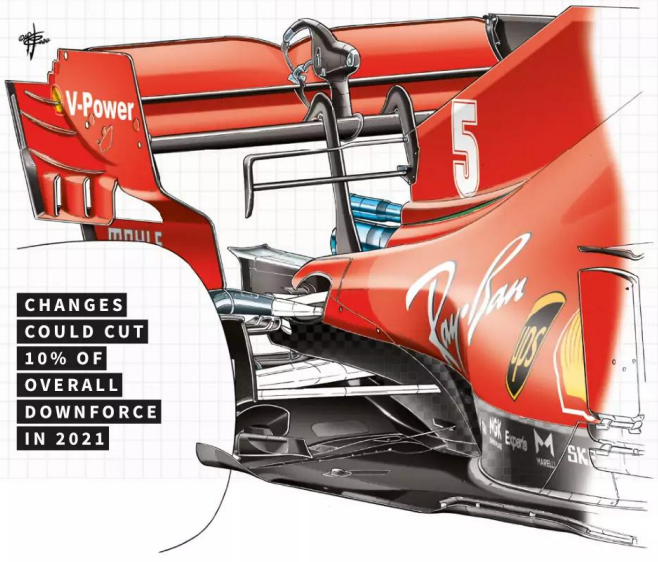
GIORGIO PIOLA



FERRARI SHARES 2021 VISION

Thanks to the financial consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the current fleet of Formula 1 cars will return for a second season next year. As the technical overhaul ushering in the return of ground-effect cars will have to wait until 2022, the introduction of Pirelli's 18-inch tyres will also be delayed, meaning that the tyres designed for 2020 will get yet another year of service.

There are a few aerodynamic changes to address for next year, including the removal of part of the floor and from the diffuser, estimated to bring a reduction in 10% of the overall downforce to ensure the Pirelli tyres work within the load window intended. Ferrari tried a new floor and diffuser in practice for the Portuguese Grand Prix in order to explore those changes, and provide F1's onlookers with their first chance to see what is possible within the rules.



The first involves the triangular cutout from the floor when looked at in the plan view of the car. This means that a multitude of the slots and cuts in the floor will either be eliminated due to the section of floor cut out, or due to new rules on "continuity" of bodywork. Ferrari has shown a representation of what the floors may look like next year, as it tapers inwards and does not cover as much of the rear tyre as it does currently. Removing those slots limits some of the protection that the diffuser has from the turbulence produced by those rear tyres, and so Ferrari has attempted to mitigate some of that by creating a curled-up trailing corner of the floor. This may be a bid to create some kind of tip vortex, which could theoretically roll inboard and protect the diffuser.

That's important, because the diffuser will also lose 50mm from the length of the inside fences, meaning that they are less protected from turbulence and aren't as well sealed as they currently are. Ferrari has trialled that too, taking that off the slotted fences within, which are broken up to coax the airflow into forming a larger expansion zone. Attempting to understand the effects of these changes now should help Ferrari overturn some of the issues with its SF1000 earlier with greater development time.

With Friday practice all about correlating windtunnel and CFD data with real-time on-track performance, expect others teams to use the time available to build and develop 2021-style parts to understand next year's effects. As one F1 designer described, it's a little bit like taking a hacksaw to the current cars – and the consequences of that hacksaw must not be underestimated.

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE



FREE PRACTICE 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m18.410s
2	Hamilton	1m18.749s
3	Verstappen	1m19.191s
4	Leclerc	1m19.309s
5	Albon	1m19.365s
6	Sainz	1m19.441s
7	Perez	1m19.907s
8	Raikkonen	1m19.954s
9	Ricciardo	1m20.058s
10	Gasly	1m20.124s
11	Vettel	1m20.200s
12	Norris	1m20.207s
13	Kvyat	1m20.278s
14	Magnussen	1m20.846s
15	Stroll	1m20.954s
16	Giovinazzi	1m21.009s
17	Grosjean	1m21.169s
18	Russell	1m21.374s
19	Ocon	1m21.673s
20	Latifi	1m22.054s

WEATHER Sunny air 18-21C track 24-34°C

FREE PRACTICE 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m17.940s
2	Verstappen	1m18.535s
3	Norris	1m18.743s
4	Leclerc	1m18.838s
5	Sainz	1m19.113s
6	Vettel	1m19.175s
7	Gasly	1m19.178s
8	Hamilton	1m19.308s
9	Ocon	1m19.496s
10	Albon	1m19.643s
11	Russell	1m19.821s
12	Perez	1m19.901s
13	Ricciardo	1m19.987s
14	Latifi	1m20.465s
15	Raikkonen	1m20.490s
16	Magnussen	1m20.680s
17	Kvyat	1m20.729s
18	Grosjean	1m20.867s
19	Stroll	1m20.983s
20	Giovinazzi	1m21.396s

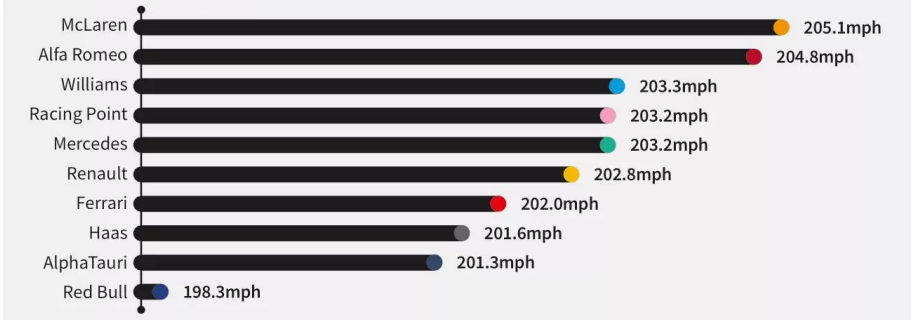
WEATHER Sunny air 20-22C track 30-37C

FREE PRACTICE 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m16.654s
2	Hamilton	1m16.680s
3	Verstappen	1m16.812s
4	Gasly	1m16.930s
5	Albon	1m17.117s
6	Leclerc	1m17.229s
7	Sainz	1m17.238s
8	Perez	1m17.297s
9	Norris	1m17.478s
10	Ocon	1m17.666s
11	Vettel	1m17.685s
12	Kvyat	1m17.720s
13	Raikkonen	1m17.922s
14	Ricciardo	1m17.935s
15	Russell	1m18.032s
16	Stroll	1m18.100s
17	Giovinazzi	1m18.201s
18	Magnussen	1m18.287s
19	Latifi	1m18.397s
20	Grosjean	1m18.454s

WEATHER Sunny air 18C track 22C

SPEED TRAP (QUALIFYING)



QUALIFYING 1

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m16.828s
2	Verstappen	1m16.879s
3	Bottas	1m16.945s
4	Gasly	1m17.209s
5	Perez	1m17.370s
6	Leclerc	1m17.421s
7	Albon	1m17.435s
8	Vettel	1m17.446s
9	Norris	1m17.547s
10	Ricciardo	1m17.621s
11	Sainz	1m17.627s
12	Stroll	1m17.667s
13	Ocon	1m17.775s
14	Kvyat	1m17.841s
15	Russell	1m17.931s
16	Raikkonen	1m18.201s
17	Giovinazzi	1m18.323s
18	Grosjean	1m18.364s
19	Magnussen	1m18.508s
20	Latifi	1m18.777s

QUALIFYING 2

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Bottas	1m16.466s
2	Hamilton	1m16.824s
3	Verstappen	1m17.038s
4	Perez	1m17.129s
5	Sainz	1m17.183s
6	Norris	1m17.321s
7	Gasly	1m17.367s
8	Leclerc	1m17.367s
9	Albon	1m17.411s
10	Ricciardo	1m17.481s
11	Ocon	1m17.614s
12	Stroll	1m17.626s
13	Kvyat	1m17.728s
14	Russell	1m17.788s
15	Vettel	1m17.919s

QUALIFYING 3

POS	DRIVER	TIME
1	Hamilton	1m16.652s
2	Bottas	1m16.754s
3	Verstappen	1m16.904s
4	Leclerc	1m17.090s
5	Perez	1m17.223s
6	Albon	1m17.437s
7	Sainz	1m17.520s
8	Norris	1m17.525s
9	Gasly	1m17.803s
10	Ricciardo	no time

WEATHER Sunny air 21-22C track 35-36C

NEXT RACE
1 NOVEMBER
EMILIA ROMAGNA GP
Imola

SEASON STATS

DRIVERS' CHAMPIONSHIP

		PTS	BEST FINISH	BEST QUAL
1	Hamilton	256	1	1
2	Bottas	179	1	1
3	Verstappen	162	1	2
4	Ricciardo	80	3	4
5	Leclerc	75	2	4
6	Perez	74	4	4
7	Norris	65	3	4
8	Albon	64	3	4
9	Gasly	63	1	7
10	Sainz	59	2	3
11	Stroll	57	3	3
12	Ocon	40	5	5
13	Vettel	18	6	5
14	Kvyat	14	7	11
15	Hulkenberg	10	7	3
16	Giovinazzi	3	9	14
17	Raikkonen	2	9	13
18	Grosjean	2	9	14
19	Magnussen	1	10	15
20	Latifi	0	11	15
21	Russell	0	11	12

CONSTRUCTORS' CHAMPIONSHIP

1	Mercedes	435
2	Red Bull	226
3	Racing Point	126
4	McLaren	124
5	Renault	120
6	Ferrari	93
7	AlphaTauri	77
8	Alfa Romeo	5
9	Haas	3
10	Williams	0

QUALIFYING BATTLE

Hamilton	**9**	3	Bottas
Vettel	2	**10**	**Leclerc**
Albon	0	**12**	**Verstappen**
Norris	5	**7**	**Sainz**
Ricciardo	**11**	1	Ocon
Gasly	**10**	2	Kvyat
Perez	**7**	2	Stroll
Perez	**1**	0	Hulkenberg
Stroll	**1**	**1**	**Hulkenberg**
Raikkonen	**6**	**6**	**Giovinazzi**
Grosjean	**6**	**6**	**Magnussen**
Latifi	0	**12**	**Russell**

Scores ignore sessions if a driver didn't participate in qualifying or had a serious technical problem

WINS

Hamilton	8
Bottas	2
Gasly	1
Verstappen	1

POLE POSITIONS

Hamilton	9
Bottas	3

FASTEST LAPS

Hamilton	5
Bottas	2
Verstappen	2
Norris	1
Ricciardo	1
Sainz	1

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STARTING GRID

10 Ricciardo #3 *No Q3 time*	**9** Gasly #10 *1m17.803s*	**8** Norris #4 *1m17.525s*	**7** Sainz #55 *1m17.520s*	**6** Albon #23 *1m17.437s*	**5** Perez #11 *1m17.223s*	**4** Leclerc #16 *1m17.090s*	**3** Verstappen #33 *1m16.904s*	**2** Bottas #77 *1m16.754s*	**1** Hamilton #44 *1m16.652s*

RACE RESULTS ROUND 12 (66 LAPS – 190.66 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM	FINISH TIME	LED	TYRES
1	**Lewis Hamilton** (GBR)	Mercedes	1h29m56.828s	46	Mu, Hn
2	**Valtteri Bottas** (FIN)	Mercedes	+25.592s	16	Mu, Hn
3	**Max Verstappen** (NLD)	Red Bull-Honda	+34.508s		Su, Mn
4	**Charles Leclerc** (MCO)	Ferrari	+1m05.312s		Mu, Hn
5	**Pierre Gasly** (FRA)	AlphaTauri-Honda	-1 lap		Su, Mn
6	**Carlos Sainz Jr** (ESP)	McLaren-Renault	-1 lap	4	Su, Mn
7	**Sergio Perez** (MEX)	Racing Point-Mercedes	-1 lap		Su, Mn, Su
8	**Esteban Ocon** (FRA)	Renault	-1 lap		Mn, Sn
9	**Daniel Ricciardo** (AUS)	Renault	-1 lap		Su, Mn
10	**Sebastian Vettel** (DEU)	Ferrari	-1 lap		Mu, Hn
11	**Kimi Raikkonen** (FIN)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap		Sn, Mn
12	**Alexander Albon** (THA)	Red Bull-Honda	-1 lap		Su, Mu, Su
13	**Lando Norris** (GBR)	McLaren-Renault	-1 lap		Su, Hn, Mn
14	**George Russell** (GBR)	Williams-Mercedes	-1 lap		Mn, Hn
15	**Antonio Giovinazzi** (ITA)	Alfa Romeo-Ferrari	-1 lap		Mn, Hn
16	**Kevin Magnussen** (DNK)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap		Hn, Mn
17	**Romain Grosjean** (FRA)	Haas-Ferrari	-1 lap		Mn, Hn
18	**Nicholas Latifi** (CAN)	Williams-Mercedes	-2 laps		Mn, Hn
19	**Daniil Kvyat** (RUS)	AlphaTauri-Honda	-2 laps		Mn, Hu, Sn
R	**Lance Stroll** (CAN)	Racing Point-Mercedes	51 laps-accident damage		Mn, Hn, Sn

WEATHER Overcast, light rain at times air 20-21C track 24-28C

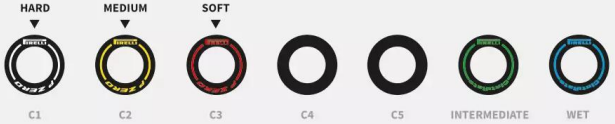
WINNER'S AVERAGE SPEED 127.18mph **FASTEST LAP AVERAGE SPEED** 132.18mph.

FASTEST LAPS

POS	DRIVER	TIME	GAP	LAP
1	**Hamilton**	1m18.750s	-	63
2	**Bottas**	1m19.345s	+0.595s	66
3	**Norris**	1m19.360s	+0.610s	65
4	**Verstappen**	1m19.854s	+1.104s	62
5	**Albon**	1m19.890s	+1.140s	61
6	**Sainz**	1m20.268s	+1.518s	65
7	**Leclerc**	1m20.408s	+1.658s	66
8	**Kvyat**	1m20.449s	+1.699s	59
9	**Gasly**	1m20.551s	+1.801s	65
10	**Vettel**	1m20.731s	+1.981s	62
11	**Perez**	1m20.802s	+2.052s	49
12	**Ocon**	1m20.859s	+2.109s	61
13	**Russell**	1m20.882s	+2.132s	62
14	**Ricciardo**	1m20.906s	+2.156s	61
15	**Raikkonen**	1m21.058s	+2.308s	60
16	**Magnussen**	1m21.460s	+2.710s	63
17	**Grosjean**	1m21.664s	+2.914s	59
18	**Stroll**	1m21.694s	+2.944s	45
19	**Latifi**	1m21.859s	+3.109s	53
20	**Giovinazzi**	1m21.893s	+3.143s	46

TYRES

KEY: **H - Hard** **M - Medium** **S - Soft** **I - Intermediate** **W - Wet** n - New set u - Used set



RACE BRIEFING

RACE PENALTIES

STROLL Five-second penalty and two licence points for causing a collision with Norris

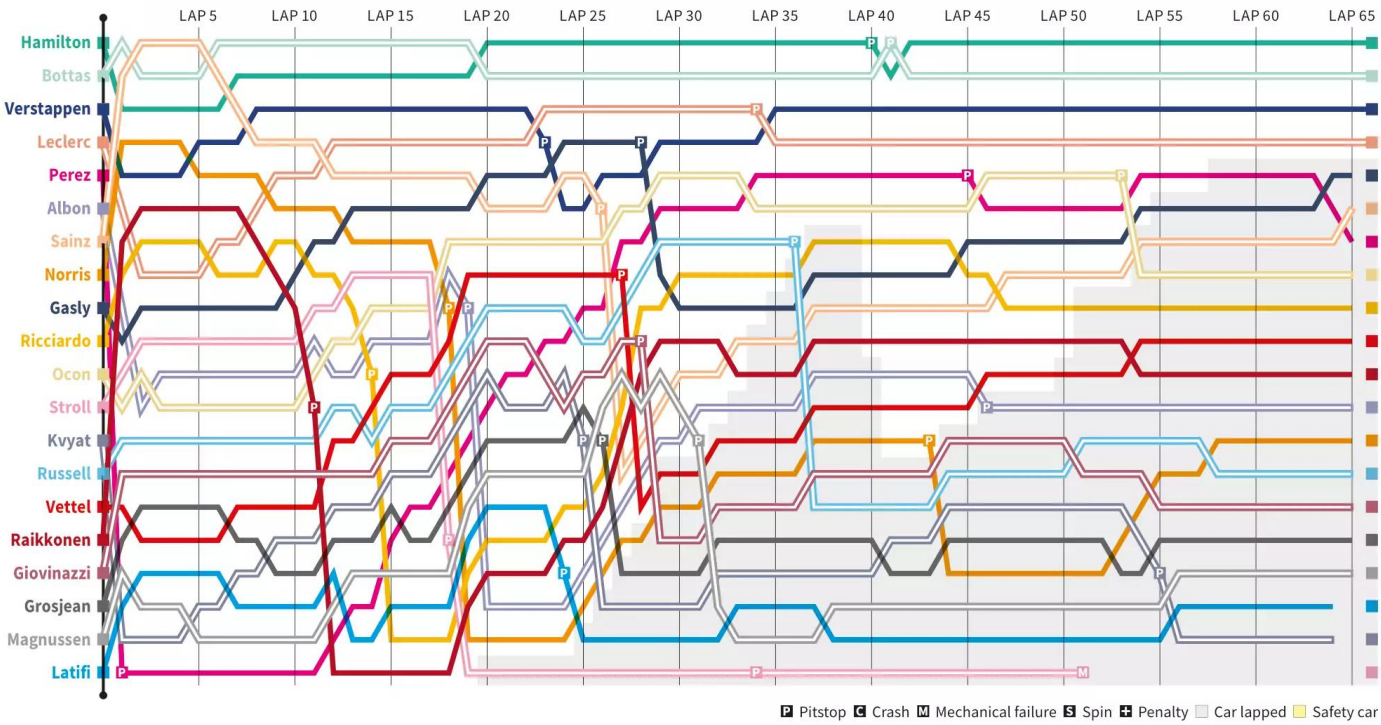
STROLL, **GROSJEAN** and **KVYAT** Five-second penalty and one licence point each for leaving the track multiple times without justifiable reason

STAT

180

Verstappen's third place was the 180th podium finish for Red Bull in F1

LAP CHART What happened, when



P Pitstop C Crash M Mechanical failure S Spin + Penalty Car lapped Safety car

LECLERC AND GASLY TAKE IT TO THE MAX

Record-breaker Lewis Hamilton was close to perfection, but the Ferrari and AlphaTauri aces squeezed every last drop out of Portimao

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

MERCEDES


LEWIS HAMILTON

9 A very strong performance, one he really turned on when he stunned Bottas at the end of Q3. He again showed his supremacy at working the Pirelli rubber best in the race to take his record-breaking win, but his slips and overly cautious driving on lap one just cost him a maximum score.

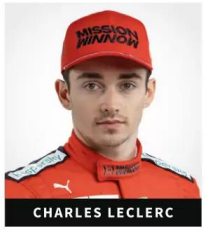

VALTTERI BOTTAS

6 It might seem harsh, but Bottas did exactly what our definition of a six requires and no more. In missing pole, when he had looked to be the favourite, and losing out with inferior tyre management to Hamilton – again – he just didn't get the most out of the car or nail things when they really mattered.

FERRARI

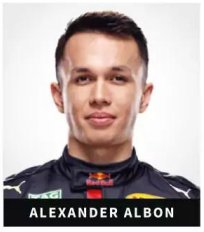

SEBASTIAN VETTEL

6 Like Bottas, Vettel did not get close to the maximum of his car and did not deliver when it mattered in qualifying. There, he languished in 15th, missing Q3 for a ninth time in 2020. He lost a position at the start to Raikkonen, survived a tap from Giovinazzi, but at least climbed into the points.


CHARLES LECLERC

10 Another excellent performance. He started fourth in what is only marginally the third fastest car with a great Q3 lap, after brilliantly getting through Q2 on the mediums, which were tough to switch on at the start. He ran a long first stint, but Verstappen was out of reach on the hards.

RED BULL

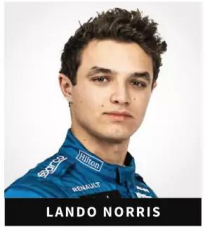

ALEXANDER ALBON

4 Albon's gap to Verstappen was again brutally exposed, this time when he got lapped by his team-mate. Took sixth on the grid, behind two slower cars, and had no grip at the start. Attempted "something different" on two stops, with a short stint on mediums. Struggled to pass in the DRS train.


MAX VERSTAPPEN

7 Loses a mark for the needless clash with Stroll in FP2, even if it didn't affect his result. Got outmuscled by Bottas at Turn 3, and was fortunate the stewards didn't view his tag on Perez more dimly, and that his car was unscathed. Raced relentlessly, but this was an unusually scrappy weekend.

McLAREN


LANDO NORRIS

8 Loses a point for qualifying behind Sainz, but was excellent at the start, rising from eighth to fourth as he too switched on the soft tyres perfectly. He also struggled with graining on that rubber, which he changed after his blameless clash with Stroll. Recovered to 13th on a two-stopper.


CARLOS SAINZ JR

9 Really showed his class in the opening laps with his stunning rise to seize the lead. Took a solid seventh in qualifying, and the key to his start was an aggressive warm-up lap. Inevitably fell behind the Mercedes, with graining softs. Recovered on the mediums to beat Perez at the end.

RENAULT

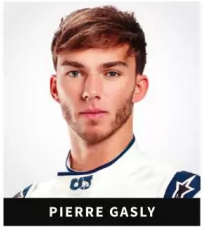

DANIEL RICCIARDO

7 Marked down for his costly Q2 off. He'd set a lap good enough to make Q3, but damage meant he played no part. Struggled for pace on the softs in the race, but in reverse to his team-mate – at the beginning. Renault struggled for grip at this track, and he felt he never got either tyre working well.


ESTEBAN OCON

8 A fine race drive after he'd fallen to an 11th defeat to Ricciardo in qualifying, which costs him a mark as he failed to reach Q3. Put in a mammoth stint on the mediums – 53 laps, the longest of the race – but couldn't replicate his form on the softs and failed to make inroads on the cars ahead at the end.

ALPHATAURI


PIERRE GASLY

10 FP2 ended in a battery blaze, but he made things happen, starting with taking ninth on the grid. In the race, he ran the longest of anyone starting on the softs, until lap 28 as he fought Ricciardo and the McLarens. Enjoyed his battles at the end, passing Perez after being badly baulked.


DANIIL KVYAT

4 A bad race made worse by Gasly's heroics. Fell from 13th to 19th on the slippery opening lap, badly exposed by a lack of warmth in his medium tyres. Failed to recover any ground, with a second stop dropping him behind Latifi. Pointedly, team boss Franz Tost did not mention him in post-race press release.



Sainz gets a nine, but Gasly beat him in the race and in our scores

RACING POINT



SERGIO PEREZ

9 Loses a mark for his blatant chop on Gasly, but his recovery from the first-lap clash with Verstappen was excellent. It's hard to see what he did wrong in the incident, and his 44 laps on the medium after stopping on lap one were superb. Switching to the fragile softs at the end of the race was costly.



LANCE STROLL

2 Stroll would have earned a three after the massive error in his attack on Norris. But we're docking him an extra mark for the needless shunt with Verstappen in FP2. Made good progress in the race's first third before misjudging his pass on Norris. Retired as a "precaution" with damage late on.

ALFA ROMEO



KIMI RAIKKONEN

9 Just misses a maximum score for elimination in Q1. But he was the undisputed king of the first lap as he climbed nine places, getting another at the start of lap two by powering past Leclerc. Survived Verstappen's firm defence at the hairpin and held 10th, but couldn't stop Vettel passing late on.



ANTONIO GIOVINAZZI

7 Gets a point back for racing minus his radio, and finished two places ahead of where he qualified. Started behind his team-mate, and made good progress on lap one, although it included a clumsy slow-speed tap on Vettel. Avoided the tricky soft tyre as Alfa Romeo split its strategy options.

HAAS



ROMAIN GROSJEAN

5 Qualified as the lead Haas in 18th, but loses a mark for a five-second penalty for track-limits violations, which dropped him behind Magnussen. Enjoyed his battles on the opening lap, but lacked the pace to progress once the race had settled down, something he seemed to expect.



KEVIN MAGNUSSEN

6 Qualified behind his team-mate, which costs him a mark, then optimistically started on the hards, thinking a VSC, safety car or race stoppage would play into his hands during his 31-lap opening stint. As none of those came, he couldn't make ground. Had to coast to the flag to save fuel.

WILLIAMS



NICHOLAS LATIFI

5 Started last after again being outclassed by his team-mate in qualifying, and in the race struggled in the gusty conditions in a way that Russell didn't seem to. He felt his pace was strong at the start, but didn't warm up his mediums as well as Russell. Was two laps down on the winner at the finish.

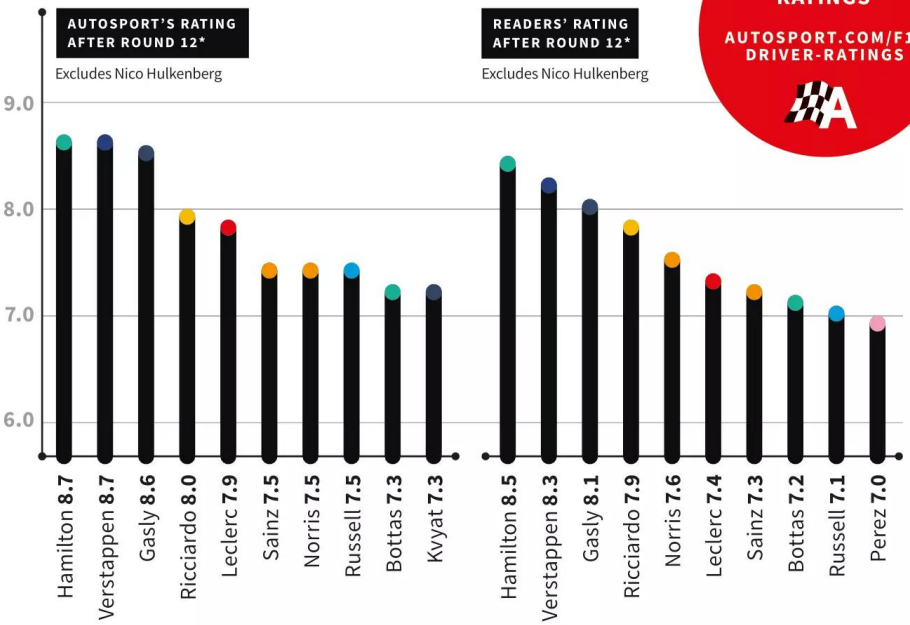


GEORGE RUSSELL

9 Brilliant effort to escape Q1 for the seventh time in 2020, and then outqualified Vettel in Q2. Enjoyed the slippery first laps, then settled into what he reckoned was his best F1 race performance so far. A long opening stint on the mediums, but was nearly half a minute behind 'Class C' winner Raikkonen.

TOP 10 AVERAGE RATINGS

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Allianz Assistance
cinch
ONE PLM
KwikFit
BMW FIRST
LASER

The waves part for Turkington and BMW

The four-time champion was at his brilliant best in qualifying and the first two races. Then his rivals were at their unbrilliant worst in the finale

MARCUS SIMMONS

PHOTOGRAPHY JEP motorsport IMAGES



"There are no gifts here... Well, maybe the last corner was!" Colin Turkington had to qualify one of his well-used pearls of British Touring Car Championship wisdom following a frankly barmy, moonlit race into the dusk at Snetterton. From third in the standings, he leapt to the top of the heap going into the final round at Brands Hatch, thanks largely to an absolutely exquisite weekend performance aboard his West Surrey Racing-run BMW 330i M Sport.

Turkington was supreme through the experimental two-stage qualifying format and then the first two races, which he led all the way and gained fastest lap for good measure. That was 45 points out of 45. But then he would have to start the reversed-grid finale from 10th on the grid, with 60kg of success ballast on his BMW, and so far this season that had not been ideal Turkington territory, perhaps the area in which this cultured, measured and methodical competitor falls a little short compared to the ferocious terrier-like qualities of main title rival Ash Sutton. But at Snetterton, 'cultured, measured and methodical' worked...

"I could see there was a hefty battle [for third position] between Tom [Ingram] and Rory [Butcher]," he recounted. "I had excellent pace but I would have been happy with P5." Fifth was, indeed, the position to which Turkington had risen, thanks to unseemly panel-bashing warfare involving Sutton, Dan Cammish, Josh Cook and interloping reversed-grid polesitter Chris Smiley. Then Ingram saw a chink of light inside Butcher's Motorbase Performance Ford Focus as they entered the long right-hander at Coram, just a few hundred metres from the finish line.

The Speedworks Motorsport Toyota Corolla filled the gap, but Butcher moved across to give himself more of an arc for the final left-hander at Murrays. There was contact, and both cars squirmed before the Ford was spat across the wet grass, from where Butcher was powerless to prevent himself ploughing into the left-rear quarter of the Toyota as Ingram innocently accelerated out of the turn. It converted third and fourth for long-shot title contenders Butcher and Ingram to fifth and eighth. And, compounding this, it converted fifth and sixth for Turkington and Sutton to third and fourth.

In the BTCC, it's not necessarily the victories that secure you the championship; it's the races you *don't* win.

Turkington, winner of one out of 30 races on his way to the 2018 crown, knows this as well as anybody, and everything fell into place for him in that final race as he picked his way through a Norfolk battlefield to an unexpected podium. And he'd done the winning earlier in the day. This was a weekend where the four-time champion more than atoned for the uncharacteristic error previous time out at Croft that sent his race day into a spiral, dropped him to third in the points table, and led to one WSR wag to joke that »

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PERFORMANCE



he'd been beating himself up about it ever since.

Snetterton and the Brands finale were two events the BMW boys had been worried about ever since the amended BTCC calendar was published. Rear-wheel-drive competitors have trouble switching their tyres on in the best of conditions, and the cold weather would surely exacerbate this. As it transpired, track temperatures barely climbed into double figures all weekend, so even the front-driven machinery suffered – gratifyingly, Snetterton was a fiesta of front-wheel-drive oversteer, and qualifying times were over two seconds off the record set in 2019.

In the first stage of the new two-part qualifying format, the BMWs of Tom Oliphant and Turkington made it through to the top 10 shootout, sixth and seventh respectively. Then Turkington, after allowing Ingram and Jake Hill some glory at the top, unleashed an unbeatable effort on the final lap of the 10-minute coda to grab pole. "I was conscious to just do enough in Q1, and I got a pretty good opening run," he explained. "But I wasn't happy with the balance so I went for a second run, just to assess if we'd gone the right way [on mid-session set-up changes]. In Q2 the pressure was on – the majority of the time I spent getting tyre temperature, and the last lap I was fastest because that's where you get the most temperature."

Hill joined Turkington on the front row with the unballasted AmD-run MB Motorsport Honda Civic Type R. He felt there was perhaps a little bit of time lost in his tyre pressures, but acknowledged that "Colin put in a great lap". Ingram went from top to third in the closing stages, praising Speedworks engineer Spencer Aldridge's strategy "masterstroke" in fitting a new set of tyres for the end of Q1 so that his driver could get on it straight away in the shootout: if tyre life faded, at least temperatures would be coming up. But the temperatures on the Toyota, on 42kg of success ballast, didn't


Jackson celebrates his second BTCC win



Butcher was powerless to stop himself from harpooning Ingram

come up quite enough: "It was lock-ups, bouncing and oversteer."

This trio would be the story of the opening race. Heavy overnight rain meant that, even on an autumnal sunlit morning, the track only began to dry out in the preceding Carrera Cup race. It was still damp off line at the beginning, and Turkington had to defend from Ingram, who leapfrogged Hill at the start as the Honda was on the more slippery side of the track. Eventually Turkington pulled away, while Hill committed a mid-race hit-and-run on Ingram into the Wilson hairpin. Ingram controlled the slide beautifully, and the gentlemanly Hill gave the position back rather than wait to be punished.

That result moved Ingram onto 54kg of ballast, and after another early challenge on Turkington — the BMW now up to 60kg — he found himself fending off a train of challengers, as the leader scarpered into the distance over the second half of race two. Hill made a poor start, so it was Butcher hooked to the rear of Ingram, the Ford giving the Toyota the occasional love tap under braking.

The complexion of the race changed when Jack Goff, pushing on as hard as ever in his venerable Team Hard Volkswagen CC, lost it at Riches and hit the barriers hard. The safety car was called, setting up a one-lap dash to the finish. But Mr Perfect nailed the restart in his BMW — he was 1.057 seconds ahead of Ingram at the start-finish line, prompting the Speedworks crew to make fun of their driver for being "asleep". He woke up with a start when Butcher smacked into his rear at the hairpin, the impact sending both wide, and allowing an opportunistic Sutton to sneak his Laser Tools Racing Infiniti Q50 ahead of the Ford to take third. "This is a really difficult place to overtake," said Butcher. "It was a great race but I'm really disappointed with that final lap. I'm sorry to Tom — it was a misjudgement that cost me a position."

As happens so often, Sutton had endured a nervous Saturday with the Infiniti, carrying the maximum 60kg ballast. "We were suffering with a lock-up issue in Turn 2 [the hairpin] and had to come in and put another set of tyres on," he explained of a Q1 where he only secured a place in the top 10 late on. He went sixth in Q2, and that put him on the slippery side of the grid for the opening race. Laser Tools team-mate Aiden Moffat had qualified ninth, but a sticking throttle sent him into Oliphant at the first corner, and the BMW hit Sutton. While Sutton saved a massive wobble and went on to finish a wounded fifth after further contact with Butcher, Oliphant — whose BMW would be used as a midfield punchbag all day — and the Motorbase Ford of Ollie Jackson were the collateral damage, both rejoining off the slippery grass at the tail of the field.

Sutton's third place in the sequel was a good return, even if he was now behind Turkington in the points. "Today I've just controlled »

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NEW QUALIFYING FORMAT IS WORTH ANOTHER GO

The British Touring Car Championship is the most predictably unpredictable of contests, so it was ironic that a TCR Europe-style format change that could have shaken things up gave us the most unpredictably predictable of starting grids.

Instead of the normal half-hour qualifying session, the field was sent out for 25 minutes, from which the fastest 10 would compete in a 10-minute shootout for pole following a five-minute break. Adding to the strategy headaches, due to the waning daylight hours the field was given a single 50-minute session of practice in place of the pair of 40-minute periods.

And what did we end up with? The six main title contenders – Colin Turkington, Tom Oliphant, Ash Sutton, Rory Butcher, Dan Cammish and Tom Ingram – were all in the top seven on the grid along with, surprise surprise, the unballasted Honda of the rapid Jake Hill.

The cold track conditions meant that, with the exception of Cammish and Ollie Jackson, the top 10 went out and circulated session-long to get heat into their tyres. So it could have been different had, say, the experiment taken place on Snetterton's traditional mid-summer date. But, by and large, it was well received.

"I THINK IT WORKED WELL, BUT THERE'S A COUPLE OF MINOR THINGS I'D CHANGE"

"I enjoyed it – it's a bit more pressure than a normal qualifying," said Turkington. AmD/MB Motorsport team boss Shaun Hollamby added: "I think it would work better on a shorter circuit where people got two stabs at it [with time for a mid-session pitstop]. It's good that strategy comes into it with tyres." Josh Cook, who went off early in Q1 and didn't make the cut in his BTC Racing Honda, was less effusive: "There's something in it, but what I would love is for us to do a proper shootout, where everyone gets one lap." Hang on, we're into Super Touring-era One Shot Showdown territory here, and that was a bit… dull.

Series boss Alan Gow was satisfied with the format, and said that "we have our annual teams' meeting a couple of weeks after the last race, and we'll discuss whether we expand it for more rounds or all rounds. I think it worked well, but there's a couple of minor things I'd change operationally."

Such as? "When the 25-minute session finished, we probably needed to leave a bit more time, especially on a long lap for cars coming into the pitlane, to do their tyres. Other than that it went well, and generally the teams liked it. It gave you two excitements: 'shit, who's going to make the cut?'; and then 'who's going to go quickest?'"

MARCUS SIMMONS



Hill used new format to plant himself on front row



Sutton is still well in contention despite a tricky weekend

it a little bit," he said, before adding of Butcher: "Keeping up with that Ford in a straight line is a bit of a joke." Sutton spent much of the race pointing his finger forward to Butcher: "I felt like we were quicker than Ingram, but every time I got near him he defended and it was backing me into Cammish, but Rory wasn't listening to that."

For his part, Cammish was struggling on a weekend where the newer-spec FK8 Civic didn't seem to perform as we've come to expect. Second in the points pre-Snetterton, so carrying 54kg of ballast on Saturday and in race one, he was slow on the speed traps, but that wasn't all: "We don't seem to be great in corners either. We're just a bit steady. Today we're sixth for a reason." It had been a nervous qualifying too. Cammish lost his best Q1 time to track limits, so squeaked through in 10th, before going fifth in the shootout: "The lap was mega. It's telling that I was the only FK8 in it."

And that was how they all converged for the crazy race three. Cammish again: "It got absolutely scary out there. I'm just glad to come out of it in one piece." Key to the warfare was the driving of Smiley, who enraged Sutton with the contact resulting from their battle for fourth, and was eventually fired off by Cammish. The Yorkshireman had his licence endorsed for that, but defended himself with the blunt assessment that "he scares the shit out of me". Sutton fumed: "When a car's alongside you, you can't just drive them clean off the track. It was blindingly obvious what was going on, and I was on the receiving end."

Up front was Jackson. Remember he was forced off at the start of race one? From 21st on the grid, he forced his way up to eighth in race two in what was arguably his best BTCC drive to date. That gave him third on the reversed grid and, after launching ahead of the slow-starting Smiley, he passed Adam Morgan's Ciceley Motorsport Mercedes beautifully around the outside of Agostini. Morgan kept the pressure on, but the Mercedes was "a bit hairy" through Riches, preventing him from launching an attack into the hairpin. Jackson therefore scored an excellent second reversed-grid victory.

Behind was the rough stuff. Butcher had his licence endorsed for the incident with Ingram, the Sutton/Smiley stuff will be reviewed at Brands, ditto Matt Neal dumping Oliphant down the field, while Moffat was penalised out of the top 10 for a move on Senna Proctor. Cook dragged a disintegrating BTC Racing Honda to seventh place after a first-lap assault on the 'cousin' Dynamics car of Cammish.

Sutton's Infiniti, indeed, looked like something you see being trailered home from a short-oval slugfest, but he still dragged it to fourth position behind Turkington, who now leads Sutton by nine points. Cammish too is in contention, Ingram is a long shot, and Butcher has the tiniest of mathematical chances.

But how to stop Turkington? "Snetterton is where we've always gone well with the BMW – we've never been dominant here but we've always scored well," he summarised. "But this has been the best weather for us we could ever have imagined. We were fortunate that it played to our strengths. When it's going your way, it's going your way." And the distraught Ingram's take on it? "As normal, the waves part and Colin Turkington drives through like Moses."

RESULTS ROUND 8/9, SNETTERTON (GBR), 25 OCTOBER RACE 1 (12 LAPS – 35.627 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	**Colin Turkington** (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330i M Sport (48kg)	23m50.231s
2	**Tom Ingram** (GBR)	Speedworks Motorsport / Toyota Corolla (42kg)	+2.570s
3	**Jake Hill** (GBR)	MB Motorsport (AmD) / Honda Civic Type R	+3.949s
4	**Rory Butcher** (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST (36kg)	+5.135s
5	**Ash Sutton** (GBR)	Laser Tools Racing / Infiniti Q50 (60kg)	+7.125s
6	**Dan Cammish** (GBR)	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R (54kg)	+8.916s
7	**Adam Morgan** (GBR)	Ciceley Motorsport / Mercedes A-Class (12kg)	+9.415s
8	**Josh Cook** (GBR)	BTC Racing / Honda Civic Type R (6kg)	+14.668s
9	**Senna Proctor** (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	+21.105s
10	**Michael Crees** (GBR)	BTC Racing / Honda Civic Type R	+25.165s
11	**Chris Smiley** (GBR)	Excelr8 Motorsport / Hyundai i30 N	+26.205s
12	**Stephen Jelley** (GBR)	Team Parker Racing / BMW 125i M Sport	+26.968s
13	**Matt Neal** (GBR)	Team Dynamics / Honda Civic Type R (18kg)	+27.199s
14	**Tom Oliphant** (GBR)	West Surrey Racing / BMW 330i M Sport (30kg)	+29.603s
15	**Carl Boardley** (GBR)	Team Hard / BMW 125i M Sport	+30.274s
16	**Tom Chilton** (GBR)	BTC Racing / Honda Civic Type R (24kg)	+32.531s
17	**Sam Osborne** (GBR)	MB Motorsport (AmD) / Honda Civic Type R	+33.342s
18	**Jack Goff** (GBR)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	+33.532s
19	**Paul Rivett** (GBR)	Trade Price Cars Racing (AmD) / Audi S3 (45kg)	+37.581s
20	**Jack Butel** (GBR)	Ciceley Motorsport / Mercedes A-Class	+40.103s
21	**Ollie Jackson** (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	+46.232s
22	**Jessica Hawkins** (GBR)	Power Maxed Racing / Vauxhall Astra (45kg)	+51.869s
23	**Nicolas Hamilton** (GBR)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC	+55.861s
24	**Ethan Hammerton** (GBR)	Trade Price Cars Racing (AmD) / Audi S3 (45kg)	+1m08.252s
25	**Glynn Geddie** (GBR)	Team Hard / Volkswagen CC (45kg)	+1m21.761s
26	**Andy Neate** (GBR)	Motorbase Performance / Ford Focus ST	+1m49.522s
27	**Aiden Moffat** (GBR)	Laser Tools Racing / Infiniti Q50	-1 lap

Winner's average speed 89.67mph. **Fastest lap** **Turkington** 1m57.635s, 90.85mph.

QUALIFYING

Q2 **1 Turkington 1m56.858s**; 2 **Hill** 1m57.050s; 3 **Ingram** 1m57.068s; 4 **Butcher** 1m57.083s; 5 **Cammish** 1m57.194s; 6 **Sutton** 1m57.319s; 7 **Oliphant** 1m57.493s; 8 **Jackson** 1m57.546s; 9 **Moffat** 1m57.639s; 10 **Morgan** 2m03.740s.

Q1 **Butcher 1m57.247s**; **Morgan** 1m57.430s; **Sutton** 1m57.531s; **Ingram** 1m57.547s; **Moffat** 1m57.623s; **Oliphant** 1m57.641s; **Turkington** 1m57.648s; **Hill** 1m57.665s; **Jackson** 1m57.681s; **Cammish** 1m57.688s; 11 **Proctor** 1m57.856s; 12 **Cook** 1m58.059s; 13 **Smiley** 1m58.389s; 14 **Chilton** 1m58.421s; 15 **Jelley** 1m58.425s; 16 **Neal** 1m58.517s; 17 **Crees** 1m58.729s; 18 **Osborne** 1m58.790s; 19 **Goff** 1m58.860s; 20 **Rivett** 1m58.986s; 21 **Boardley** 1m59.404s; 22 **Hawkins** 1m59.465s; 23 **Neate** 1m59.501s; 24 **Geddie** 2m00.604s; 25 **Hammerton** 2m00.746s; 26 **Butel** 2m00.942s; 27 **Hamilton** no time.



Cook and Oliphant were both in the wars in Norfolk

NEXT REPORT

BRANDS HATCH
19 NOVEMBER ISSUE

It's showdown time. Turkington leads the way heading into the Indy Circuit finale, but Sutton and Cammish loom, and Ingram has a shot.



More trophies for Turkington's large collection

GRID RACE 2 Decided by result of Race 1.

RACE 2 (14 LAPS – 41.565 MILES)

1 Turkington (60kg) 30m02.296s; 2 **Ingram** (54kg) +1.763s; 3 **Sutton** (36kg) +1.914s; 4 **Butcher** (42kg) +3.547s; 5 **Hill** (48kg) +3.742s; 6 **Cammish** (30kg) +3.789s; 7 **Cook** (18kg) +4.714s; 8 **Jackson** +4.993s; 9 **Morgan** (24kg) +4.995s; 10 **Smiley** +5.355s; 11 **Oliphant** +5.989s; 12 **Neal** +6.712s; 13 **Proctor** (12kg) +7.578s; 14 **Crees** (6kg) +8.193s; 15 **Osborne** +9.060s; 16 **Chilton** +9.577s; 17 **Jelley** +10.747s; 18 **Geddie** +10.913s; 19 **Hammerton** +11.583s; 20 **Butel** +12.176s; 21 **Hawkins** +12.588s; 22 **Neate** +12.861s; 23 **Rivett** +29.398s; 24 **Boardley** +34.317s; R **Hamilton** 13 laps-accident; NC **Moffat** 11 laps; R **Goff** 10 laps-accident.

Winner's average speed 83.02mph.

Fastest lap **Turkington** 1m57.669s, 90.83mph.

GRID RACE 3 Decided by result of Race 2, with top 10 reversed.

RACE 3 (12 LAPS – 35.627 MILES)

1 Jackson (18kg) 23m54.642s; 2 **Morgan** (12kg) +0.217s; 3 **Turkington** (60kg) +4.872s; 4 **Sutton** (48kg) +6.312s; 5 **Butcher** (42kg) +8.195s; 6 **Cammish** (30kg) +9.194s; 7 **Cook** (24kg) +9.782s; 8 **Ingram** (54kg) +9.934s; 9 **Hill** (36kg) +13.758s; 10 **Proctor** +16.544s; 11 **Moffat** +17.167s; 12 **Oliphant** +17.561s; 13 **Neal** +20.891s; 14 **Crees** +21.443s; 15 **Geddie** +28.737s; 16 **Jelley** +29.716s; 17 **Chilton** +30.859s; 18 **Boardley** +34.649s; 19 **Goff** +35.046s; 20 **Hawkins** +40.032s; 21 **Rivett** +40.322s; 22 **Hammerton** +44.761s; 23 **Smiley** (6kg) +47.177s; 24 **Butel** +50.883s; R **Neate** 3 laps-accident damage; R **Osborne** 1 lap-accident damage; NS **Hamilton** accident damage.

Winner's average speed 89.39mph.

Fastest lap **Ingram** 1m57.668s, 90.83mph.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Turkington 309; 2 **Sutton** 300; 3 **Cammish** 284; 4 **Ingram** 275; 5 **Butcher** 246; 6 **Oliphant** 218; 7 **Morgan** 180; 8 **Hill** 178; 9 **Chilton** 174; 10 **Cook** 172.



Count 'em: Scott Dixon is a six-time IndyCar champion, one title behind AJ Foyt's record

Dixon takes sixth title despite Newgarden victory

Both title contenders knew what they had to do coming into the IndyCar season finale and, unfortunately for the race winner, they both delivered exactly what was required

DAVID MALSHER-LOPEZ

PHOTOGRAPHY motorsport IMAGES

Scott Dixon is now a six-time IndyCar champion and his status is well deserved. But had last weekend's race winner Josef Newgarden clinched the crown, an objective viewer would have found that, too, a satisfying result. While Chip Ganassi Racing star Dixon won the first three races of the year, his Team Penske rival – the two-time and reigning champion – was the most consistent frontrunner in the final six.

After round eight in this 14-race championship, Newgarden was 117 points adrift of Dixon. Yet by beating him in all of the remaining rounds, and winning three of them, Newgarden slashed that deficit to just 16 in the final standings.

In this season finale on the 1.8-mile streets-and-runway course of St Petersburg, both drivers did everything that was necessary and within their power to control. Newgarden needed to win and did so, but he also needed Dixon to finish outside the top nine, and this the Kiwi was disinclined to do. He grabbed third place and is now just one step away from matching AJ Foyt's all-time Indycar record of seven series titles.

Neither driver's results looked too predictable on Saturday following qualifying. Newgarden's Penske team-mate Will Power had racked up his fifth pole position of the season, and his ninth at St Pete, edging aside the resurgent Andretti Autosport Dallara-Hondas that lined up second, third and fourth in the hands of Alexander Rossi, Colton Herta and James Hinchcliffe. Jack Harvey in the Meyer Shank Racing entry (which has a technical partnership with Andretti) was fifth, Arrow McLaren SP's Patricio O'Ward was sixth, and AJ Foyt Racing's newest recruit Sebastien Bourdais was driving the #14 faster than it had been on a street course for many years.

Only then would you find Newgarden, on the fourth row, yet still further back, in 11th, was Dixon, who had grappled with rear brake issues throughout practice and qualifying, prompting the Ganassi crew to replace the entire system on Saturday night.

Yet these grid slots weren't a disaster, for drivers have won this race from almost every part of the grid thanks to clashes and



Newgarden held off O'Ward for his fourth win of the season



Alexander Rossi was one of a number to crash at Turn 3

subsequent caution periods shuffling the deck. St Pete's bumps try to bounce cars off the racing line at crucial points in several turns, and there they encounter rubber marbles caused by the rough track surface shaving off layers of Firestone. Scuffed sidewalls, scraped wheels, broken toe links and bent suspension arms are par for the course here, even when the cars aren't in direct competition. In race day conditions, with heavy braking zones allowing passing opportunities, cars tend to magnetise to one another, leading to yellow flags.

With the race reduced from 110 to 100 laps this year, the majority of frontrunners believed it would require two pitstops, so long as Firestone's red alternate (softer) tyres could withstand a stint of 30 laps. After qualifying most decided it was feasible and, of the main runners, Power, O'Ward and Dixon elected to start on the alternate compound.

Power led away from Rossi, Herta, Hinchcliffe, O'Ward and Harvey, with Newgarden and Dixon holding station in eighth and 11th. But on lap five, approaching the sharp left Turn 10, Power's gearbox briefly got stuck in fourth and, as he bogged down on exit, he lost his lead to Rossi. Herta also moved onto his tail and passed down the long front straight. When Power tried to retaliate by outbraking the youngster on the dirtier inside line, he slid wide again, which allowed Hinchcliffe through into third.

Contrary to his pre-race belief, Power's softer alternates were no match for an Andretti car on primaries, and so he and the similarly encumbered O'Ward lost huge chunks of time to the trio ahead. On lap 20, Rossi was leading by only 0.8 seconds from Herta, who had 3.7s on Hinchcliffe, but Power and O'Ward were over a dozen seconds further back.

Newgarden stopped on lap 28 to switch from primaries to alternates, while Dixon, shadowing his rival's every move, pulled in on the next lap to get off the reds and onto a new set of black tyres. Two laps later, Power did the same as Dixon, but on cold rubber he couldn't hold back the charging Newgarden on warm reds, and he accidentally squeezed his team-mate onto the kerb having not been made aware of his proximity. The loss of momentum as Power swerved into the marbles would also allow Harvey to emerge from his pitstop ahead of the Australian.

Two laps later, it was academic: the #12 Penske Dallara slid wide and into the wall at Turn 3 before limping to a halt in the Turn 4 escape road. The car's retrieval necessitated the first caution of the day.

On the lap 40 restart, Rossi continued to hold off Herta and Hinchcliffe, all three cars on reds, and their nearest pursuer was Ed Carpenter Racing's Rookie of the Year Rinus VeeKay, who was on a three-stop strategy and on primaries. Newgarden and Harvey muscled past the Dutchman before the yellows flew again for Santino Ferrucci hitting the Turn 2 wall. VeeKay chose the »

McLAUGHLIN HAPPY DESPITE TRICKY DEBUT



Ever since he finished mid-February Spring Training third fastest, (now) three-time Australian Supercars champion Scott McLaughlin had been expected to work miracles on his IndyCar debut with Team Penske. Following a Bathurst-Sydney-Los Angeles-Charlotte trip, he spent hours in the Penske simulator, caught up on some sleep, and then headed to St Petersburg.

The 90-minute practice session on Saturday saw him in the top 10 and, although he went off the road at the last turn on his final attempt at a flier, he had simply been overdriving on cold soft-compound Firestone reds, which he had never tried before as they're not available in testing. Finding the limit on unfamiliar tyres is not easy on a track mostly lined by concrete walls…

McLaughlin made a few errors in qualifying too, and was thus eliminated in Q1. But despite lining up near the back, his best effort in that Q1 Group 1 session was still within one second of pacesetter James Hinchcliffe.

"With a little more time, we will be OK," he said. "I'm disappointed with myself, but it is what it is. It's tough to learn the space around you on a road course. I'm used to knocking mirrors off on a wall, not necessarily my tyre."

Although he would spin out of the race on the lap 46 restart, he was pleased to accentuate the positive.

"It was awesome. Far out, best day of my life bar my wedding," McLaughlin told NBC. "The car was going well and then I just tried to make a move and just had half a rear-lock. Cold tyres caught me out. I'm pretty disappointed but I had a lot of fun today."





Kiwi McLaughlin ran well until he rubbed noses with VeeKay

subsequent caution to pit, but that meant he was in the wrong place at the wrong time on the next restart, when he was caught up in a mistake by Penske's IndyCar debutant Scott McLaughlin (see panel, p41). The New Zealander spun at Turn 1 after contact with Marco Andretti's Andretti Autosport car, and VeeKay was left with nowhere to go. Cue a third caution. As VeeKay was restarted and headed to the pits for a new nose wing, so too was he in company of his team-mate Conor Daly who, like Power, had struck the outside wall at Turn 3.

For the lap 52 restart, Rossi, Herta, Hinchcliffe, Newgarden, Harvey and Graham Rahal's Honda-powered Rahal Letterman Lanigan machine ran top six on reds, pursued by O'Ward, Dixon, Oliver Askew, Ryan Hunter-Reay, Takuma Sato and Simon Pagenaud on primaries. At the drop of the green, Dixon made fine progress and, despite some heartstopping moments through the turns at the back of the circuit, he managed to depose both Harvey and Rahal to move into sixth, behind O'Ward in fifth and Newgarden in fourth. Not too far behind him, meanwhile, was Andretti, whose opportunism had seen him soar from 12th to eighth in one lap, and then pass Rahal for seventh.

For his father's team, running 1-2-3, the race was about to turn to dust, however. On lap 63, Herta, running two seconds behind Rossi, outbraked himself into Turn 4, and the time lost spin-turning his way back onto the track allowed Hinchcliffe and Newgarden to slip past and demote him to fourth.

Rossi's crew, in response to Newgarden stopping on lap 65, pulled in the #27 Andretti Autosport car next time by and, upon emerging, Rossi escaped a knot of traffic to lay down a couple of fast laps. But on lap 70 Rossi lost the rear of the car exiting (you guessed it) Turn 3, ran out of steering lock to correct the slide and speared into the wall on the right.

The cars that had yet to stop were therefore doomed, as the pits were, as usual, closed under caution (although Alex Palou of Dale Coyne Racing stayed out, very off-sequence). Those who had made their last stop already were able to gather in line behind the frustrated few and, when these cars peeled off for service as the pitlane reopened, the early stoppers moved to the front. These were led by Herta, for in the six laps between his Turn 4 'moment' and his final stop, he had laid down some super-fast laps and had also nailed his in-lap, so that he emerged ahead of Hinchcliffe and Newgarden once more and led the field to the green for a lap 74 restart.

On that restart, Sato's front wing sliced open Andretti's right-rear tyre at Turn 4, sending the third-generation driver skidding into the Turn 5 tyre wall and retirement, and prompting the fifth caution of the day.

Under that caution, second-placed Hinchcliffe somehow lost control at 30mph at the hairpin that leads onto the front straight – a brief rain shower was probably partly to blame – and he spun slowly to the grass on the inside. The former St Pete winner then rejoined the racing surface, where he struck semi-team-mate Harvey, ripping off his own front wing and sending the Meyer Shank car to the pits with a broken right-rear tie rod. Hinchcliffe had also missed the pit entrance and so trailed around the track with the broken wing tucked under the nose of his car, before pitting for repairs, and then again to serve a drivethrough penalty for avoidable contact.

At the next restart, Herta was outdragged from the final turn by Palou's fuel-light Coyne car, and they both braked a tad too late at Turn 1, pushing out slightly wide.



Sebastien Bourdais delivered a fourth place finish for AJ Foyt

POWERED BY motorsport STATS





Series boss Roger Penske hands it to the six-time champ

Their lost momentum allowed Newgarden to pass both of them around the outside of Turn 2 to grab the lead, a beautifully judged manoeuvre. Herta managed to repass Palou for second but, almost immediately after that, a sixth full-course caution emerged when Sato sent Askew into the Turn 10 tyre barrier.

After the final restart on lap 84, Askew's team-mate O'Ward outbraked Dixon into Turn 1, and Herta into Turn 4, and two laps later Herta outbraked himself into Turn 4. With the field still tightly bunched from the previous caution period, he tumbled down to 13th, and could only claw back two positions by the chequered flag.

O'Ward, meanwhile, had charged onto the tail of Newgarden, but only while the outgoing champion had some marble pick-up on his tyres. Once his Firestones were clean, Newgarden stretched out his lead, lap after lap, setting personal bests. He scored his fourth win of the year 4s ahead of the impressive O'Ward, while Dixon held off his former Ford GT team-mate Bourdais to claim third.

Hunter-Reay came home fifth – having climbed from 19th on the grid – but it was hardly consolation for team boss Michael Andretti on a day when he woulda/coulda/shoulda seen his squad score its second 1-2-3 in four races.

"Credit to Josef and Penske, they drove the last part of the season flawlessly, and scored so many points," conceded Dixon. "It was awesome to race them again. We needed a smooth race, and that's what we did. We definitely had the speed when we needed to push.

"We know next year is going to be the same. Six is good, seven sounds better – that's obviously going to be the goal."

RESULTS ROUND 9/9, ST PETERSBURG (USA), 25 OCTOBER (100 LAPS – 180.000 MILES)

POS	DRIVER	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	**Josef Newgarden** (USA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	2h06m12.5948s
2	**Patricio O'Ward** (MEX)	Arrow McLaren SP / Dallara-Chevrolet	+4.1409s
3	**Scott Dixon** (NZL)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+6.1561s
4	**Sebastien Bourdais** (FRA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	+7.4132s
5	**Ryan Hunter-Reay** (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+9.7529s
6	**Simon Pagenaud** (FRA)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	+10.5773s
7	**Marcus Ericsson** (SWE)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	+11.0696s
8	**Charlie Kimball** (USA)	AJ Foyt Enterprises / Dallara-Chevrolet	+15.8580s
9	**Graham Rahal** (USA)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+16.3743s
10	**Takuma Sato** (JPN)	Rahal Letterman Lanigan Racing / Dallara-Honda	+16.7748s
11	**Colton Herta** (USA)	Andretti Harding Steinbrenner Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+24.2149s
12	**Max Chilton** (GBR)	Carlin / Dallara-Chevrolet	+30.4724s
13	**Alex Palou** (ESP)	Dale Coyne Racing with Team Goh / Dallara-Honda	+43.5791s
14	**James Hinchcliffe** (CAN)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	+1m04.0661s
15	**Rinus van Kalmthout** (NLD)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-2 laps
16	**Oliver Askew** (USA)	Arrow McLaren SP / Dallara-Chevrolet	-2 laps
17	**Conor Daly** (USA)	Ed Carpenter Racing / Dallara-Chevrolet	-2 laps
18	**Felix Rosenqvist** (SWE)	Chip Ganassi Racing / Dallara-Honda	-2 laps
19	**Jack Harvey** (GBR)	Meyer Shank Racing / Dallara-Honda	-3 laps
20	**Marco Andretti** (USA)	Andretti Herta Autosport / Dallara-Honda	74 laps-accident
21	**Alexander Rossi** (USA)	Andretti Autosport / Dallara-Honda	69 laps-accident
22	**Scott McLaughlin** (NZL)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	46 laps-accident
23	**Santino Ferrucci** (USA)	Dale Coyne Racing with Vasser Sullivan / Dallara-Honda	40 laps-accident
24	**Will Power** (AUS)	Team Penske / Dallara-Chevrolet	35 laps-accident

Winner's average speed 85.572mph. **Fastest lap** **Ericsson** 1m01.2384s, 105.816mph.

QUALIFYING

Q3 **1 Power 1m01.0369s**; 2 **Rossi** 1m01.1730s; 3 **Herta** 1m01.1815s; 4 **Hinchcliffe** 1m01.3626s; 5 **Harvey** 1m01.3675s; 6 **O'Ward** 1m01.7725s.

Q2 **Power 1m00.3324s**; **Herta** 1m00.3687s; **O'Ward** 1m00.6181s; **Harvey** 1m00.6264s; **Hinchcliffe** 1m00.7356s; **Rossi** 1m00.7629s; 7 **Bourdais** 1m00.8102s; 8 **Newgarden** 1m00.8676s; 9 **van Kalmthout** 1m00.8837s; 10 **Askew** 1m00.9772s; 11 **Dixon** 1m01.0283s; 12 **Pagenaud** 1m01.2298s.

Q1 – GROUP 1 **Herta 1m00.6614s**; **van Kalmthout** 1m00.7721s; **Power** 1m00.7730s; **Bourdais** 1m00.8805s; **O'Ward** 1m00.9412s; **Askew** 1m01.0185s; 14 **Daly** 1m01.1609s; 16 **Palou** 1m01.1630s; 18 **Ferrucci** 1m01.1797s; 20 **Kimball** 1m01.2425s; 22 **Rosenqvist** 1m01.5224s; 24 **Chilton** 1m21.7909s.

Q1 – GROUP 2 **Hinchcliffe 1m00.6526s**; **Harvey** 1m00.7312s; **Newgarden** 1m00.7431s; **Dixon** 1m00.8725s; **Pagenaud** 1m00.8749s; **Rossi** 1m00.8867s; 13 **Sato** 1m00.9423s; 15 **Ericsson** 1m00.9619s; 17 **Rahal** 1m01.1458s; 19 **Hunter-Reay** 1m01.1732s; 21 **McLaughlin** 1m01.6409s; 23 **Andretti** 1m01.6833s.

CHAMPIONSHIP

1 Dixon 537; 2 **Newgarden** 521; 3 **Herta** 421; 4 **O'Ward** 416; 5 **Power** 396; 6 **Rahal** 377; 7 **Sato** 348; 8 **Pagenaud** 339; 9 **Rossi** 317; 10 **Hunter-Reay** 315.



MAIN PIC: SRO

Tandy completes his set thanks to rain and oil

Porsche ace Nick Tandy added Spa success to his 24-hour wins at Le Mans and the Nurburgring, but needed a little luck

GARY WATKINS

Re-live this race at motorsport.tv

The momentum changed in the dying hours of the Spa 24 Hours. And, predictably for the Belgian venue, it was rain that resulted in the race swinging in the favour of a trio of drivers who'd been downbeat about their chances ahead of the event. Come the chequered flag, the Porsche triumvirate of Nick Tandy, Earl Bamber and Laurens Vanthoor were celebrating a victory that looked a long shot for much of the race.

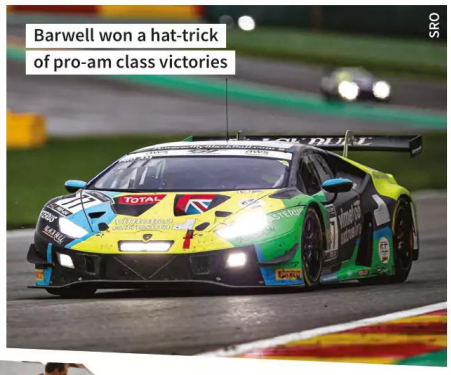
Their Rowe Racing Porsche 911 GT3-R came into its own when the rain finally arrived in a dose heavy enough to make everyone switch to wet-weather Pirellis. Tandy took over the car from Bamber with a little under three hours to go and began a charge that gave them another victory to go with their 2015 Le Mans 24 Hours triumph, and ensured local hero Vanthoor finally joined the roster of multiple winners at Spa.

The Rowe Porsche was fifth when the race went green after a period of yellows under which it had pitted, with two Audis and two Ferraris ahead. By the time Tandy had got past the second of the Italian cars – the full-factory AF Corse 488 GT3 Evo with Alessandro Pier Guidi at the wheel – he was still 25 seconds down on the race-leading Attempto Audi R8 LMS with Patric Niederhauser at the wheel, and 14s in arrears of the Sainteloc Audi driven by Dorian Boccolacci.

The gap to the leader was down to 14s as Tandy pushed on. His comment afterwards that it was "all or nothing" was borne out by a massive moment in Eau Rouge. The rear-engined Porsche, always a good bet in wet conditions, was increasingly looking like the favourite.

Tandy moved into the lead during a yellow-flag period – a full course yellow that became a safety car, as is the practice at Spa – that began with just under an hour and 20 minutes to go. The Porsche was a couple of seconds up on Niederhauser when the race went green with almost exactly an hour remaining.

The race, also a round of the Intercontinental GT Challenge, was far from over, however. It was neutralised again a couple of laps later, Tandy edging away when the race got going for what turned out to be an


Barwell won a hat-trick of pro-am class victories

SRO


Masks can't hide the emotion as Rowe crew savour their victory

PORSCHE

uninterrupted run to the flag. The Porsche still had an advantage on a very wet track, moving into a 4s lead.

But the rain was easing and the balance changing. Niederhauser, who shared Attempto's factory entry with Frederic Vervisch and Mattia Drudi, started to come back at the Porsche. And then, with a lap and a half to go, something went awry in the Porsche's transmission. No wonder Tandy described himself as "emotionally wrecked" after the finish and admitted that he burst into tears in the cockpit – a first for him, he insisted – after crossing the line.

"There was big stress for me because I got into the car with three hours to go and I knew I had to do everything I could," he said. "Then, you start the last hour and there's three cars on your tail and you know you've got to be perfect. The stint started wet and we were gapping them a little bit, and then it began to dry out and they were pulling us in by half a second a lap. It was stressful."

Had not the promised rain belatedly arrived, then Tandy, Bamber and Vanthoor would probably not have added to Porsche's tally of wins in the Spa enduro. The 911 wasn't a match for the Audi or the Ferrari in the dry and their Rowe car was, said Tandy only half-joking, "probably the fifth-fastest Porsche".

The winning Porsche went backwards through practice and qualifying. It was fifth in opening practice and then ninth in the aggregate qualifying session on Thursday night that determined which 20 cars went through to the Super Pole session. But in the qualifying period that mattered, Vanthoor ended up dog last, more than three seconds off the pace.

The team was initially at a loss to explain the lack of performance, although an issue was found with the right-rear damper. The car started to make its mark in the race in light drizzle on Saturday evening. But when the track dried up, it was probably best described as there or thereabouts, in the mix but not among the favourites.

"Over the second half of a dry stint we were competitive," said Tandy. "But you only had to look at the fastest laps [the car being nearly a second off the best] to see that we didn't have the peak performance. That made us vulnerable at restarts on new tyres."

Crucially, however, Rowe's tactical nous kept it on the lead lap. It exploited new rules for this year's GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup allowing more strategic freedom, including the so-called 'short' pitstop that allowed for a 10s dump of fuel. "We said before the start it was all about staying on the lead lap," said Tandy. "The team made those short stops under FCY and it kept cycling us to the front. All of a sudden the conditions came to us. When it rained we had the quickest car, at least compared with the cars I was battling with."

The problem for Tandy was that it wasn't raining in the final minutes of the race. Niederhauser got the lead down to under two seconds before something broke in the Porsche's transmission. It might sound strange to say it, but the failure, believed to be a broken driveshaft CV joint, may have won the day for Rowe.

"Unfortunately for our competitors we coated the track in oil and this probably saved us," explained Tandy. "I had to drive the last lap and a half not going flat out and coasting in the corners. Luckily we could go faster like this than our competitors could driving on our oil." »

Vervisch conceded that the Porsche was simply the faster car when it mattered at the end. "In the full rain, the Porsches were on a different level: it would have been tough to beat them," said the Belgian, who explained that an electronic glitch that had robbed his Audi of the pitlane speed limiter got worse through the race. "A lot of lights were flashing on the steering wheel by the end."

The rain, however, did at one point look as though it would play into the hands of the German Attempto team, running with factory backing for the first time. It put Vervisch onto wets right at the end of the 20th hour, which was followed by a frenetic battle between the Belgian and Markus Winkelhock in the slick-shod Sainteloc Audi. They swapped positions four times over the course of eight laps as the weather couldn't make up its mind what it was going to do.

When it finally started to rain properly, Winkelhock and everyone else on the dry-weather Pirelli control tyre dived into the pits. Vervisch suddenly found himself with a lead of a minute and a half. The team's bad luck was that it opted bring him in for his next stop just before yet another FCY. The other frontrunners stopped under the yellows and that advantage turned into a 25s deficit to Boccolacci, who'd taken over the Sainteloc car.

The French team's chances of repeating its 2017 victory disappeared with a tactical call late in the penultimate hour. Whereas the rest of the frontrunning pack came in under the yellows, it left Boccolacci out until the clock hit 65 minutes (the maximum stint length allowed). The other frontrunners all stopped twice during the yellows, their second stops 'short' ones.

The safety car was out by the time the 22-year-old Frenchman, who was drafted into the factory line-up when Audi withdrew its DTM drivers from the event for COVID-related reasons, was able to pit. The time lost because the cars on track are going quicker behind the course vehicle than the 80km/h allowed during an FCY dropped him to fifth. That became sixth for the car Boccolacci and Winkelhock shared with Christopher Hasse by the finish. "It was a bet," said Sainteloc team manager Frederic Thalamay. "That was our decision and we stuck with it. In the end we cannot say it was the right call."

The Sainteloc factory entry hadn't looked like a contender for much of the race. A puncture and a gamble to go to wets in the early-evening drizzle left the car two laps down at one stage, but it was another to use the new tactical freedoms allowed at Spa to claw back time.

Ferrari's challenge waned in the wet conditions. The factory car Pier Guidi shared with James Calado and Nicklas Nielsen lost out to a pair of Porsches in the final hour. The car that had led the race at the 12-hour mark was third at the final restart. Then Matteo Cairoli took the Dinamic Motorsport Porsche he co-drove with Sven Muller and Christian Engelhart around Pier Guidi in a brave move into Eau Rouge. The best of the pair of 911 GT3-Rs run by 2019 Spa winner GPX Racing then made it past right at the death, with Patrick Pilet at the wheel.

Pilet had earlier tagged Sergey Sirotkin in the SMP Racing Ferrari run by AF at No Name Corner, putting the Ferrari the Russian shared with Davide Rigon and Miguel Molina into the barriers. The resulting delay left the Ferrari 19th at the finish.



56-car field takes the start of a dramatic race

Neither of the pre-race favourites — the two cars that blocked out the front row — made it to the finish of the race. Raffaele Marciello and Felipe Fraga led at six hours, the first cut-off at which points are awarded, in the Auto Sport Promotion Mercedes-AMG that the Italian had put on pole. The car was in the lead group into the 11th hour, but Fraga then lost time with contact with a slower car that knocked the front-left wheel out of kilter, before the brake disc on the same corner exploded. The Brazilian managed to make it back to the pits but, with an hour's worth of repairs likely, the team decided to call it a day before Timur Boguslavskiy could even drive.

The brush with the backmarker wasn't the cause of the brake failure. The French team's Silver Cup entry had already hit the same problem, the team suspecting that the brakes had cooled down too much under the safety car.



Polewinning Mercedes of Marciello and Fraga retired with damage



AF Corse Ferrari led at 12 hours, but lost out when the rain came



Kelvin van der Linde aboard the lead factory WRT Audi had ended up a couple of tenths down on the Merc in qualifying. The car co-driven by Christopher Mies and Dries Vanthoor was running second in van der Linde's hands when it took a drivethrough penalty for track-limits infringements early in the sixth hour. The car was out of the race before the quarter-way mark was hit with a driveline issue that neither the team nor Audi would specify.

The second factory Audi, into which WRT brought Ferdinand Habsburg, Matthieu Vaxiviere and Dennis Marschall at the start of the week, was never a factor on the way to 14th position. Team boss Vincent Vosse explained that the car had lost performance after its race gearbox and suspension were fitted ahead of Super Pole, and that the analysis as to exactly why had yet to be completed.

Lamborghini was most definitely a contender last weekend, at least for the first 16 or so hours. The FFF Racing Team Huracan GT3 Evo was leading the race by a couple of seconds in Dennis Lind's hands when he crashed at Eau Rouge. The car co-driven by Andrea Caldarelli and Marco Mapelli had led a large proportion of the first quarter of the race, and had been second at both the six and 12-hour cut-offs.

The Italian manufacturer did, however, salvage something from the weekend with victory in the pro-am class. The British Barwell Motorsport squad scored a third class victory in three years, with father-and-son Rob and Ricky Collard, Sandy Mitchell and Leo Machitski. The team was also leading the Silver Cup division with Alex MacDowall, Patrick Kujala and Frederik Schandorff in the 17th hour when the first named was blamelessly involved in a multi-car incident at Eau Rouge that put the car out of the race. The new Haupt Racing Team, created out of the old Black Falcon set-up, came through to take class honours with its Merc shared by team owner Hubert Haupt, Sergey Afanasiev, Michele Beretta and Gabriele Piana.

P49 FULL RESULTS



STRATEGIC RETURN MAKES SPA A CLASSIC ONCE MORE

The 2020 Spa 24 Hours will go down in history for its delayed autumn date and the absence of spectators as a result of the world health crisis. But I hope that in years to come people will remember the 72nd edition of the Belgian classic as the one where it became a proper endurance race again befitting its traditions and history.

The Spa 24 Hours had ended up as a dumbed-down affair devoid of the tactical calls that should be a part of any proper enduro. It had become effectively a series of 65-minute sprints between pitstops by a restrictive set of sporting rules. From 2016, pitstops were regulated with a pit-in-to-pit-out minimum time that swept away strategy and competition in the pits. Allowing tyre changes to take place at the same time as refuelling in 2018 only made matters worse.

There was some method to the seeming madness. The diversity that is the strength of GT3 means wild differences in the fuel consumption and therefore capacity of the cars. The restrictions were a neat and simple way of levelling out the playing field, but they came at a price.

From this year in the GT World Challenge Europe Endurance Cup, refuelling time is measured electronically, while tyre changes are back to taking place after the fuel has gone in. Something known as a 'short' pitstop has been introduced that allows for the car to be refuelled for 10s (effectively a quarter of a tank) rather than the mandatory 40s minimum of regular stops. Now teams can play the strategy game again. We saw it last weekend, and refreshing it was after four years of bland racing.

Take the Sainteloc Audi squad. The French team hauled its factory entry up from two laps down, something that wouldn't have been possible last year. Good strategy got it back to the front, and then another tactical call lost it any chance of victory.

It rolled the dice with just over an hour to go. It didn't work out for the French team, but Sainteloc knew it wasn't going to beat Porsche in the rain so it was worth a punt. If it had paid off, Markus Winkelhock, Mattia Drudi and Dorian Boccolacci would probably have won the race. Full credit to Sainteloc, I say, for giving it a go.

GARY WATKINS



Sainteloc Audi won and then lost on strategy

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RESULTS GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE ENDURANCE CUP ROUND 3/4, SPA 24 HOURS (BEL), 24-25 OCTOBER (527 LAPS – 2293.544 MILES)

POS	DRIVERS	TEAM / CAR	TIME
1	Earl **Bamber** (NZL) Laurens **Vanthoor** (BEL) Nick **Tandy** (GBR)	Rowe Racing / Porsche 911 GT3-R	24h00m38.727s
2	Mattia **Drudi** (ITA) Patric **Niederhauser** (CHE) Frederic **Vervisch** (BEL)	Attempto Racing / Audi R8 LMS GT3	+4.687s
3	Sven **Muller** (DEU) Christian **Engelhart** (DEU) Matteo **Cairoli** (ITA)	Dinamic Motorsport / Porsche 911 GT3-R	+28.750s
4	Mathieu **Jaminet** (FRA) Matt **Campbell** (AUS) Patrick **Pilet** (FRA)	GPX Racing / Porsche 911 GT3-R	+36.882s
5	Alessandro **Pier Guidi** (ITA) James **Calado** (GBR) Nicklas **Nielsen** (DNK)	AF Corse / Ferrari 488 GT3	+38.225s
6	Markus **Winkelhock** (DEU) Dorian **Boccolacci** (FRA) Christopher **Haase** (DEU)	Sainteloc Racing / Audi R8 LMS GT3	+38.481s
7	Maro **Engel** (DEU) Luca **Stolz** (DEU) Vincent **Abril** (FRA)	HRT / Mercedes-AMG GT3	+41.357s
8	Dennis **Olsen** (NOR) Jorg **Bergmeister** (DEU) Frederic **Makowiecki** (FRA)	Frikadelli Racing Team / Porsche 911 GT3-R	+1m39.997s
9	Dane **Cameron** (USA) Renger **van der Zande** (NDL) Mario **Farnbacher** (DEU)	JAS Motorsport / Honda NSX GT3	-1 lap
10	Jordan **Pepper** (ZAF) Jules **Gounon** (FRA) Maxime **Soulet** (BEL)	K-Pax Racing / Bentley Continental GT3	-2 laps
11	Romain **Dumas** (FRA) Louis **Deletraz** (CHE) Thomas **Preining** (AUT)	GPX Racing / Porsche 911 GT3-R	-2 laps
12	Andy **Soucek** (ESP) Alvaro **Parente** (PRT) Rodrigo **Baptista** (BRA)	K-Pax Racing / Bentley Continental GT3	-3 laps
13	Michael **Christensen** (DNK) Richard **Lietz** (AUT) Kevin **Estre** (FRA)	KCMG / Porsche 911 GT3-R	-5 laps
14	Matthieu **Vaxiviere** (FRA) Ferdinand **Habsburg** (AUT) Dennis **Marschall** (DEU)	WRT / Audi R8 LMS GT3	-5 laps
15	Rob **Collard** (GBR) Sandy **Mitchell** (GBR) Ricky **Collard** (GBR) Leo **Machitski** (RUS)	Barwell Motorsport / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo	-6 laps
16	Mikael **Grenier** (CAN) Norbert **Siedler** (AUT) Ricardo **Feller** (CHE)	Emil Frey Racing / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo	-7 laps
17	Giancarlo **Fisichella** (ITA) Eddie **Cheever** (ITA) Chris **Froggatt** (GBR) Jonathan **Hui** (CHN)	Tempesta Racing / Ferrari 488 GT3	-7 laps
18	Hubert **Haupt** (DEU) Gabriele **Piana** (ITA) Michele **Beretta** (ITA) Sergey **Afanasiev** (RUS)	HRT / Mercedes-AMG GT3	-7 laps
19	Miguel **Molina** (ESP) Sergey **Sirotkin** (RUS) Davide **Rigon** (ITA)	SMP Racing / Ferrari 488 GT3	519 laps-accident damage
20	Maxime **Martin** (BEL) Jonny **Adam** (GBR) Chris **Goodwin** (GBR) Alexander **West** (SWE)	Garage 59 / Aston Martin Vantage GT3	-8 laps
21	Philip **Ellis** (GBR) Indy **Dontje** (NDL) Russell **Ward** (USA)	HTP Motorsport / Mercedes-AMG GT3	-10 laps
22	Daniel **Keilwitz** (DEU) Pierre **Ehret** (DEU) Rino **Mastronardi** (ITA) David **Perel** (ZAF)	Rinaldi Racing / Ferrari 488 GT3	-11 laps
23	Kamui **Kobayashi** (JPN) Tom **Blomqvist** (GBR) Marcos **Gomes** (BRA)	HubAuto / Ferrari 488 GT3	515 laps-drivetrain
24	Baptiste **Moulin** (BEL) Hugo **Chevalier** (FRA) Florian **Latorre** (FRA) Taylor **Proto** (GBR)	FFF Racing Team / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo	-13 laps
25	Karim **Ojjeh** (SAU) Jens **Klingmann** (DEU) Benjamin **Lessennes** (BEL) Gilles **Vannelet** (FRA)	Boutsen Ginion Racing / BMW M6 GT3	-13 laps
26	Patrick **Assenheimer** (DEU) Juuso **Puhakka** (FIN) Ricardo **Sanchez** (MEX) Ezequiel **Perez Companc** (ARG)	Madpanda Motorsport / Mercedes-AMG GT3	-17 laps
27	Valentin **Pierburg** (DEU) Dominik **Baumann** (AUT) Colin **Braun** (USA) George **Kurtz** (USA)	SPS Automotive Performance / Mercedes-AMG GT3	-18 laps
28	Euan **McKay** (GBR) Nicolai **Kjaergaard** (DNK) Frank **Bird** (GBR)	Team Parker Racing / Bentley Continental GT3	-27 laps
29	Alex **Fontana** (CHE) Lucas **Legeret** (CHE) Benjamin **Hites** (CHL)	ASP / Mercedes-AMG GT3	-30 laps
30	Romano **Ricci** (FRA) Clement **Mateu** (FRA) Stephane **Tribaudini** (FRA) Stephane **Lemeret** (BEL)	CMR / Bentley Continental GT3	-30 laps
31	Franck **Perera** (FRA) Albert **Costa** (ESP) Giacomo **Altoe** (ITA)	Emil Frey Racing / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo	496 laps-hub
32	Dirk **Werner** (DEU) Klaus **Bachler** (AUT) Julien **Andlauer** (FRA)	Rowe Racing / Porsche 911 GT3-R	495 laps-accident damage
33	Nelson **Panciatici** (FRA) Pierre-Alexandre **Jean** (FRA) Seb **Morris** (GBR)	CMR / Bentley Continental GT3	-51 laps
34	Rik **Breukers** (NDL) Benjamin **Goethe** (DEU) Stuart **Hall** (GBR)	WRT / Audi R8 LMS GT3	453 laps-accident
35	Daniel **Serra** (BRA) Andrea **Bertolini** (ITA) Niek **Hommerson** (NDL) Louis **Machiels** (BEL)	AF Corse / Ferrari 488 GT3	380 laps-accident
36	Frederik **Schandorff** (DNK) Patrick **Kujala** (FIN) Alex **MacDowall** (GBR)	Barwell Motorsport / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo	377 laps-accident
37	Robert **Renauer** (DEU) Alfred **Renauer** (DEU) Ralf **Bohn** (DEU) Daniel **Allemann** (CHE)	Herberth Motorsport / Porsche 911 GT3-R	375 laps-accident
38	Dennis **Lind** (DNK) Marco **Mapelli** (ITA) Andrea **Caldarelli** (ITA)	FFF Racing Team / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo	371 laps-accident
R	Martin **Tomczyk** (DEU) David **Pittard** (GBR) Nick **Yelloly** (GBR)	Walkenhorst Motorsport / BMW M6 GT3	359 laps-accident
R	Stefano **Costantini** (ITA) Christoph **Lenz** (CHE) Michael **Petit** (FRA) Lucas **Mauron** (CHE)	Raton Racing / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo	318 laps-accident
R	Jim **Pla** (FRA) Jean-Luc **Beaubelique** (FRA) Fabien **Barthez** (FRA) Thomas **Drouet** (FRA)	ASP / Mercedes-AMG GT3	275 laps-accident damage
R	Raffaele **Marciello** (ITA) Felipe **Fraga** (BRA) Timur **Boguslavskiy** (RUS)	ASP / Mercedes-AMG GT3	263 laps-brake disc
NC	Alexandre **Imperatori** (CHE) Josh **Burdon** (AUS) Edoardo **Liberati** (ITA)	KCMG / Porsche 911 GT3-R	253 laps-running
R	Aurelien **Panis** (FRA) Thomas **Neubauer** (FRA) Timothe **Buret** (FRA)	Tech 1 Racing / Lexus RC F GT3	213 laps-mechanical
R	Valentin **Hasse-Clot** (FRA) Andrew **Watson** (GBR) James **Pull** (FRA) Roman **de Angelis** (CAN)	Garage 59 / Aston Martin Vantage GT3	201 laps-accident damage
R	Jurgen **Haring** (DEU) Marco **Seefried** (DEU) Michael **Joos** (DEU) Dimitrios **Konstantinou** (GRE)	Herberth Motorsport / Porsche 911 GT3-R	158 laps-accident damage
R	Rob **Bell** (GBR) Joe **Osborne** (GBR) Ollie **Wilkinson** (GBR)	Optimum Motorsport / McLaren 720S GT3	157 laps-withdrawn
R	Andrea **Rizzoli** (ITA) Adrien **de Leener** (BEL) Mikkel **Pedersen** (DNK) Cedric **Sbirrazzuoli** (MCO)	Dinamic Motorsport / Porsche 911 GT3-R	148 laps-accident
R	Christopher **Mies** (DEU) Dries **Vanthoor** (BEL) Kelvin **van der Linde** (ZAF)	WRT / Audi R8 LMS GT3	138 laps-driveline
R	Christian **Klien** (AUT) Mathias **Lauda** (AUT) Patryk **Krupinski** (POL) Jens **Liebhauser** (DEU)	JP Motorsport / Mercedes-AMG GT3	135 laps-accident
R	Christophe **Cresp** (FRA) Steven **Palette** (FRA) Gregory **Paisse** (BEL) Pierre Yves **Paque** (BEL)	Sainteloc Racing / Audi R8 LMS GT3	126 laps-accident
R	Tom **Onslow-Cole** (GBR) Callum **MacLeod** (GBR) Martin **Konrad** (AUS) Ramon **Vos** (NDL)	RAM Racing / Mercedes-AMG GT3	121 laps-accident damage
R	Augusto **Farfus** (BRA) Nicky **Catsburg** (NDL) Philipp **Eng** (AUT)	Walkenhorst Motorsport / BMW M6 GT3	107 laps-accident damage
R	Frank **Stippler** (DEU) Edoardo **Mortara** (ITA) Charles **Weerts** (BEL)	WRT / Audi R8 LMS GT3	70 laps-accident
R	Hiroshi **Hamaguchi** (JPN) Phil **Keen** (GBR) Luigi **Moccia** (ITA) Raffaele **Giammaria** (ITA)	FFF Racing Team / Lamborghini Huracan GT3 Evo	33 laps-accident damage
R	Finlay **Hutchison** (GBR) Nicolas **Scholl** (AUT) Simon **Gachet** (FRA) Alex **Aka** (DEU)	Attempto Racing / Audi R8 LMS GT3	9 laps-accident damage

In each car, first-named driver started the race. **Winners' average speed** 95.522mph. **Fastest lap** **Mapelli** 2m18.146s, 113.412mph.

SUPERPOLE **1 Marciello 2m32.166s**; 2 **van der Linde** 2m32.386s; 3 **Engel** 2m32.522s; 4 **Vervisch** 2m32.881s; 5 **Haase** 2m32.979s; 6 **Preining** 2m32.990s; 7 **Pier Guidi** 2m33.024s; 8 **Caldarelli** 2m33.294s; 9 **Costa** 2m33.400s; 10 **Estre** 2m33.404s; 11 **Pilet** 2m33.541s; 12 **Weerts** 2m33.568s; 13 **Andlauer** 2m33.768s; 14 **Makowiecki** 2m33.780s; 15 **Cairoli** 2m34.119s; 16 **Blomqvist** 2m34.170s; 17 **Vaxiviere** 2m34.280s; 18 **Rigon** 2m34.338s; 19 **Hites** 2m34.791s; 20 **L Vanthoor** 2m35.546s. **GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE ENDURANCE CUP** **1 Marciello/Fraga/Boguslavskiy 52**; 2 **Muller/Engelhart/Cairoli** 52; 3 **Nielsen/Calado/Pier Guidi** 46; 4 **Campbell/Jaminet/Pilet** 41; 5 **Bortolotti/van der Linde** 40; 6 **Tandy/Bamber/L Vanthoor** 33; 7 **Abril/Engel/Stolz** 31; 8 **Vaxiviere** 25; 9 **Vervisch/Drudi** 24; 10 **Weerts/D Vanthoor/Mies** 24. **OVERALL GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE** **1 Boguslavskiy 137**; 2 **Marciello** 127.5; 3 **Weerts/D Vanthoor** 113; 4 **van der Linde** 106; 5 **Engel/Stolz** 91; 6 **Haase** 74.5; 7 **Tomita** 66; 8 **Altoe/Costa** 62.5; 9 **Fraga** 61.5; 10 **Vervisch** 54.5.

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Nissan duo rise from shunt to Suzuka success

SUPER GT
SUZUKA (JPN)
25 OCTOBER
ROUND 6/8



Quintarelli leads on his way to second victory at Suzuka for NISMO squad

Nissan GT-R drivers Ronnie Quintarelli and Tsugio Matsuda scored an unlikely second victory of the Super GT season at Suzuka despite having to come through from last-in-class on the grid.

A crash for Matsuda at Dunlop corner in qualifying left the works NISMO machine starting at the back of the 15-car GT500 field, but a mid-race caution period fell at the perfect time for the GT-R to vault from outside the top 10 to the head of the field.

Quintarelli stopped on lap 22 of 52 — just before the safety car was scrambled — and, with the rest of the field slowed, Matsuda rejoined in the lead. After the restart, the veteran held off Impul Nissan racer Kazuki Hiramine to claim the flagship NISMO team's second Suzuka victory in a row.

Team Aguri Honda pair Tomoki Nojiri and Nirei Fukuzumi once again finished third having started on pole, with Nojiri leading the opening stint only to fall behind the second-placed car of Daiki Sasaki and Hiramine during the pitstop phase.

The top Toyota GR Supra, the Cerumo car of Hiroaki Ishiura and Yuji Tachikawa, ranked fifth behind the NDDP Racing with B-Max Nissan of Katsumasa Chiyo and Kohei Hirate.

Kazuya Oshima and Sho Tsuboi in the second Cerumo Supra failed to score in 12th place but maintain a one-point lead in the championship ahead of TOM'S Toyota duo Nick Cassidy and Ryo Hirakawa, who were eliminated after Cassidy hit the back of Tadasuke Makino's Kunimitsu Honda on the entrance to the pitlane.

JAMIE KLEIN

Quinn back among the winners with ardent wet-weather drive

FORMULA RENAULT EUROCUP
SPA (BEL)
23-24 OCTOBER
ROUND 7/10

Backed by the Racing Steps Foundation, young Brit Alex Quinn graduated from karts to car racing in 2016 and made his mark. Run by Fortec Motorsport, he scored three wins to rank seventh in the British Formula 4 standings. But when RSF wound up the following year, he had to contest the 2017 campaign on a shoestring budget with Arden, albeit still claiming four victories and ending up fourth in the points.

Since that triumph in the final race of the season at Brands Hatch, Quinn has had to wait three years — including a stint in the GT4 ranks of British GT — before taking to the top step of the podium once more. That was until a soggy second Formula Renault Eurocup encounter at Spa last weekend called time on the drought.


GUILLAUMOT/DPPI
Quinn celebrates his race-two success

Again competing for Arden, the 19-year-old endured a lousy start to the day when a broken front wing meant he'd line up 12th on the grid. However, having qualified and finished fourth in race one — won by Franco Colapinto for MP Motorsport — Quinn had the underlying pace to make amends.

Opting to stick with wet tyres on a damp track while others twisted for slicks, he climbed seven places on the opening tour and then dispatched polesitter and points leader Victor Martins, plus William Alatalo, for second.

As the race approached its midpoint, only his team-mate Ugo de Wilde lay ahead. Quinn duly passed and de Wilde was then saddled with a brake fault. Quinn returned to the winners circle in emphatic style, 11.9s to the good.

WEEKEND WINNERS

SUPER GT
SUZUKA (JPN)
Tsugio Matsuda/Ronnie Quintarelli
NISMO (Nissan GT-R)

FORMULA RENAULT EUROCUP
SPA (BEL)
Race 1 Franco Colapinto
MP Motorsport
Race 2 Alex Quinn
Arden

TCR EUROPE SERIES
SPA (BEL)
Races 1 & 2 Mikel Azcona
Volcano Motorsport (Cupra TCR)

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES
TEXAS (USA)
Harrison Burton
Joe Gibbs Racing (Toyota Supra)

NASCAR TRUCK SERIES
TEXAS (USA)
Sheldon Creed
GMS Racing (Chevrolet Silverado)

SUPER TC2000
ALTA GRACIA (ARG)
Franco Vivian
Toyota Gazoo Racing (Toyota Corolla)

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Morbidelli becomes a repeat winner in 2020 to set up Yamaha's title headache

MOTOGP
MOTORLAND ARAGON (ESP)
25 OCTOBER
ROUND 11/14

Only two riders have won multiple MotoGP races in 2020, and both come from the same Sepang Racing Team. Fabio Quartararo's July Jerez double in the opening two rounds of the season set him up for the title domination many thought was likely in the absence of the injured Marc Marquez.

Despite notching up a third triumph in Barcelona, the French rider's form went missing across the recent Aragon double-header. He was a lowly 18th in the first race earlier this month, and then last Sunday's struggle to eighth means he's now 14 points behind championship leader Joan Mir.

While Quartararo didn't ever look like a victory threat at the Motorland track, his factory Yamaha counterpart Maverick Vinales did, until tyre troubles on his M1 meant fourth and seventh were his return.

After dominating the Teruel race, Franco Morbidelli – although essentially riding the 2019 M1 for SRT – is just 25 points off the top and the spread among the Yamahas is only 11 points. Serious questions now need to be asked as to who the manufacturer's best hope for the title is.

Morbidelli was the best-placed Yamaha in qualifying in second, but no one was better than Takaaki Nakagami on the year-old LCR Honda across the weekend. Ending a 16-year wait for a Japanese polesitter in MotoGP, there were few on the grid who didn't believe he'd also bring the 16-year wait for a Japanese win to an end on Sunday.

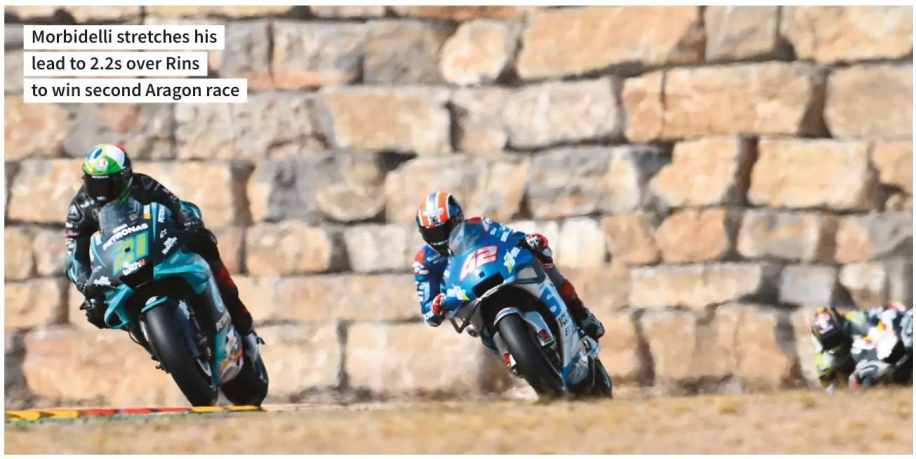
But this "incredible pressure" weighed heavily on Nakagami, and his first race from pole lasted just five corners. A "stupid mistake" on the brakes at Turn 5 on the opening lap proved a cruel end to an otherwise perfect weekend.

This released Morbidelli into the lead. Joking he'd eaten "dynamite for breakfast", the Italian fired in an incredible run of low-mid 1m48s laps. Having slipped back from fourth to sixth in the first Aragon race as his soft rear tyre faded, Morbidelli made a last-minute change to the medium rear last Sunday. This proved inspired as it allowed him to deploy the "all or nothing" tactic he knew he needed if he wanted to strengthen his championship hopes.

Aragon GP winner Alex Rins ran with Morbidelli in the early laps, the gap between the Suzuki rider and Morbidelli hovering around the half-second mark. But Rins' soft rubber began to fade and the "unstoppable" Morbidelli soon stretched his legs.

Opening his lead to over six tenths on lap 16, it was 1.074s after lap 18 and continued to climb to 2.2s as he eased to the flag.

Rins' podium in second edges him closer to team-mate Mir in the standings, with his gap a not insurmountable 32 points. Mir could only manage 12th in qualifying and paid for it. His ascension through the field wasn't as rapid as Rins' the week prior and, by the time he got up to third ahead of Johann Zarco, the top two were 2.6s up the road. Third was the maximum for Mir, but


Morbidelli stretches his lead to 2.2s over Rins to win second Aragon race


Nakagami ended 16-year wait for Japanese polesitter


Zarco (5) beats Oliveira to fifth by just 0.038s

it opened up his points lead.

Quartararo felt like he'd found something in the warm-up session, but "lost everything" from his tyres early on and was lucky to hold onto eighth. Vinales had similar tyre drop-off as well as chatter problems and ended up just 0.5s ahead in seventh, having felt like he could be "a great fighter" in the race after qualifying fourth.

Pol Espargaro on the KTM, Avintia's Zarco and Tech3's Miguel Oliveira all passed the pair to fill out the top six, while Tech3 rookie Iker Lecuona and Danilo Petrucci rounded out the top 10.

Petrucci recovered from 19th on the grid amid another dismal Aragon weekend for Ducati, with Andrea Dovizioso 17th on Saturday. A late mistake and chewed up Michelin rubber meant the Italian could only salvage 13th. Though still only 28 points from the championship lead, he admits he can't even think about the title with his current form.

Morbidelli says his mindset has been "full attack" during this double-header. Dismissing suggestions he was out of the hunt on Saturday, he's firmly "back in the game" with just three rounds to go.

Mir's ultra-consistency has rightfully earned him the favourite tag with most throughout the paddock. But, with good Yamaha tracks to end the season, Morbidelli's approach could quickly reverse those fortunes if he delivers more Teruel-type displays.

LEWIS DUNCAN

RESULTS ROUND 11/14, MOTORLAND ARAGON (ESP), 25 OCTOBER (23 LAPS – 72.558 MILES)

POS	RIDER	TEAM	TIME
1	**Franco Morbidelli** (ITA)	Petronas Yamaha	41m47.652s
2	**Alex Rins** (ESP)	Suzuki	+2.205s
3	**Joan Mir** (ESP)	Suzuki	+5.376s
4	**Pol Espargaro** (ESP)	KTM	+10.299s
5	**Johann Zarco** (FRA)	Avintia Ducati	+12.915s
6	**Miguel Oliveira** (PRT)	Tech3 KTM	+12.953s
7	**Maverick Vinales** (ESP)	Yamaha	+14.262s
8	**Fabio Quartararo** (FRA)	Petronas Yamaha	+14.720s
9	**Iker Lecuona** (ESP)	Tech3 KTM	+17.177s
10	**Danilo Petrucci** (ITA)	Ducati	+19.519s
11	**Cal Crutchlow** (GBR)	LCR Honda	+19.708s
12	**Stefan Bradl** (DEU)	Honda	+20.591s
13	**Andrea Dovizioso** (ITA)	Ducati	+22.222s
14	**Tito Rabat** (ESP)	Avintia Ducati	+26.496s
15	**Bradley Smith** (GBR)	Aprilia	+31.816s
R	**Aleix Espargaro** (ESP)	Aprilia	20 laps-engine
R	**Alex Marquez** (ESP)	Honda	13 laps-accident
R	**Francesco Bagnaia** (ITA)	Pramac Ducati	5 laps-accident
R	**Takaaki Nakagami** (JPN)	LCR Honda	0 laps-accident
R	**Jack Miller** (AUS)	Pramac Ducati	0 laps-accident
R	**Brad Binder** (ZAF)	KTM	0 laps-accident

WEEKEND WINNERS

MOTO2
ARAGON (ESP)
Sam Lowes (below)
Marc VDS
(Kalex)

MOTO 3
ARAGON (ESP)
Jaume Masia
Leopard Racing
(Honda)



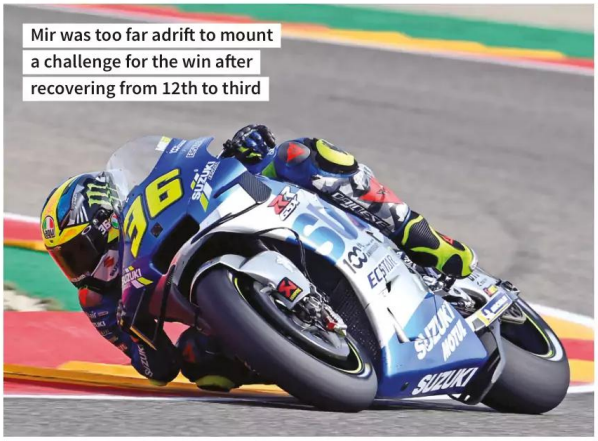
Winner's average speed 104.164mph. **Fastest lap** **Morbidelli** 1m48.089s, 105.070mph.

QUALIFYING 2 **1 Nakagami 1m46.882s**; 2 **Morbidelli** 1m46.945s; 3 **Rins** 1m47.155s; 4 **Vinales** 1m47.241s; 5 **Zarco** 1m47.297s; 6 **Quartararo** 1m47.326s; 7 **Crutchlow** 1m47.377s; 8 **Oliveira** 1m47.509s; 9 **P Espargaro** 1m47.519s; 10 **Marquez** 1m47.603s; 11 **Lecuona** 1m47.621s; 12 **Mir** 1m47.642s.

QUALIFYING 1 **1 P Espargaro 1m47.071s**; 2 **Zarco** 1m47.303s; 3 **A Espargaro** 1m47.372s; 4 **Miller** 1m47.394s; 5 **Binder** 1m47.478s; 6 **Bradl** 1m47.585s; 7 **Dovizioso** 1m47.747s; 8 **Bagnaia** 1m47.759s; 9 **Petrucci** 1m47.855s; 10 **Rabat** 1m48.114s; 11 **Smith** 1m48.402s.

RIDERS' CHAMPIONSHIP **1 Mir 137**; 2 **Quartararo** 123; 3 **Vinales** 118; 4 **Morbidelli** 112; 5 **Dovizioso** 109; 6 **Rins** 105; 7 **Nakagami** 92; 8 **P Espargaro** 90; 9 **Miller** 82; 10 **Oliveira** 79; 11 **Petrucci** 71; 12 **Binder** 67; 13 **Marquez** 67; 14 **Zarco** 64; 15 **Valentino Rossi** 58; 16 **Bagnaia** 42; 17 **Lecuona** 27; 18 **A Espargaro** 27; 19 **Crutchlow** 26; 20 **Bradl** 12; 21 **Smith** 12; 22 **Rabat** 10; 23 **Michele Pirro** 4.

MANUFACTURERS' CHAMPIONSHIP **1 Yamaha 208**; 2 **Ducati** 171; 3 **Suzuki** 163; 4 **KTM** 143; 5 **Honda** 117; 6 **Aprilia** 36.


Mir was too far adrift to mount a challenge for the win after recovering from 12th to third

NEXT REPORT

EUROPEAN GP
12 NOV ISSUE

Will any of the top three Yamaha riders assert themselves as the marque's best title hope and be able to slash the points gap down to Suzuki's Joan Mir in Valencia?

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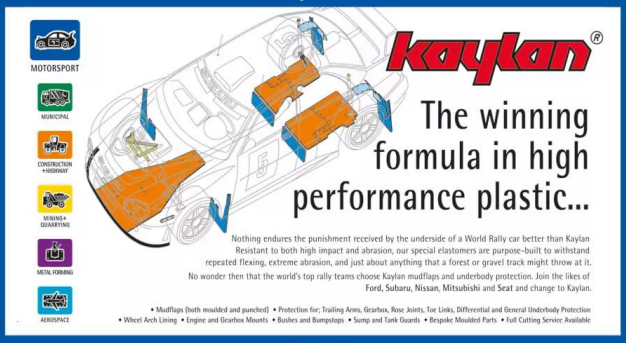
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Cam Jackson raced Van Diemen JL15 in Silverstone National event in preparation for Hayes

BOURNE

HISTORIC ACES IN MODERN FORMULA FORDS FOR HAYES

WALTER HAYES TROPHY

Multiple Historic Formula Ford champions Callum Grant and Cam Jackson are both set to contest the Walter Hayes Trophy this weekend in contemporary-class machinery with B-M Racing.

The Hayes will be Grant's only Formula Ford 1600 outing of the year, as he has been concentrating on Formula Ford 2000 and Formula Atlantic. It will also be his first outing in a modern Formula Ford, although he raced a 1991 Van Diemen at the same event in 2019.

Joining him in the main draw will be Jackson, who prepared for the event with a run in the National FF1600 championship at Silverstone earlier this month.

Grant and Jackson have competed extensively against each other, but have never been team-mates. "It'll be good to get back out against Cameron," said Grant, who will drive a Van Diemen RF99. "If I was ever going to do the Hayes, get back out there and see if I can beat them all again, it's this year."

Jackson says he found the National outing useful after taking a best result of 13th in the Van Diemen JL15 he will race this weekend. "The Silverstone race was a warm-up, fact-finding exercise, which I'm really glad I did," he said. "I learned a lot and about how sensitive the cars are to any set-up changes."

Jackson, who won the Formula Junior and Classic Formula Ford crowns this year, but failed in his quest to claim the Historic title in three different cars in three years, says beating Grant won't be his main focus.

"Me and Callum get on well and it will be interesting to see how he fares in it," said Jackson. "You can't drop the ball even slightly as there's really strong competition. It's a one-off race, a bit of a lottery, and I'm taking it very seriously. I don't really have any expectations and just want to be as quick as I can be. The B-M guys just won the Festival [with Rory Smith], so they know what they're doing!"

As well as the Historic champions, a bunch of Castle Combe frontrunners are on the entry list, many of whom have not raced in FF1600 yet this year. Michael Moyers will be seeking a third win with Kevin Mills Racing, while past Combe champions Roger Orgee, Josh Fisher, Adam Higgins and Rob Hall are all due to race.

A total of 92 entries had been received as Autosport closed for press, with more still arriving – a significant increase compared to the 50 at last weekend's Festival.

RACHEL HARRIS-GARDINER & STEPHEN LICKORISH

Tomlin makes winning return after RS500 fire

HISTORIC TOURING CARS



Tomlin suffered facial burns back in August
WALKER

David Tomlin made a sensational winning return at Silverstone last weekend, 10 weeks after a fuel-vapour flash fire in his Ford Sierra RS500 at Thruxton hospitalised him with facial burns.

Tomlin scored his first Motor Racing Legends Historic Touring Car Challenge victory in the Raceworks-prepared Thierry Boutsen Batibouw tribute-liveried car.

Looking remarkably well – "Fortunately I didn't need skin grafts but am using loads of shea butter [to soothe his skin]" – and now wearing a full-face helmet, last year's Magny-Cours Historic Formula 2 winner emerged on top after a cracking scrap with fellow RS500 racer Mark Wright.

Having outbraked Julian Thomas's ex-Guy Edwards/Andy Rouse Kaliber Sierra for the lead into Club on lap two of the one-hour race, Tomlin and Wright duelled after the mandatory pitstops.

"That was a proper race – I think we changed places five times on one lap," said Tomlin. "I was very careful with the brakes, a limiting factor in these cars, and had one eye on temperatures, but was only running my second turbo boost setting, so 500bhp rather than 575, and running out of revs on the Hangar Straight with a short diff!

"Winning was an unexpected bonus, but Mark – who has helped with the car's development – was equally happy. What a wonderful way to get me going for next year."

MARCUS PYE



WALKER

Cole stars on Lotus Eleven debut

HISTORICS

Former Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion Mark Cole claimed a podium on his Stirling Moss Trophy debut in his first outing in a 1956 Lotus Eleven at the Motor Racing Legends event at Silverstone last weekend.

Cole finished third overall behind Nigel Greensall and Andrew Smith in the '50s sportscar contest.

"It's a bit like a wider Formula Ford car," said Cole of the 1460cc Coventry-Climax FWB-motivated featherweight, previously raced by Costas Michael and now prepared by Richard Purves of JRP Racing. Dafyd Richards, who engineered Cole's Porsche to the 2002 title with Paul Mace's team, joined the crew.

Cole, who helped develop a rapid MGB a couple of years back, hopes to race the Lotus regularly in 2021. "The opportunity came following a change in its management," he said. "Sliding the car round in slippery conditions was great fun. We lucked into a podium, but Lotuses always had a reputation for beating bigger cars."

MARCUS PYE

IN THE HEADLINES

GEERAERTS SWAPS CLIOS

Britcar and Michelin Clio Cup driver Darren Geeraerts will race alongside his coach Anton Spires at Snetterton this weekend, while raising awareness for the Road Victims Trust charity. Geeraerts will race a fourth-generation Renault Clio for the first time in the Britcar Trophy. "Although this is a big step up [from a Road Series Clio], I am sure he is ready for the challenge," said Spires.

MORE DETAILS OF HERO EVENT

The Historic Endurance Rallying Organisation has released more details about its new Rally of the Tests and Le Jog replacement event. The one-day festive rally challenge, taking place on 19 December, will comprise 13 tests on private land, three regularities on public roads and a final regularity within the Bicester Heritage site. HERO-ERA chairman Tomas de Vargas Machuca said: "We will ensure we run this event as safely and successfully as the four previous rallies we have run since August."

TORDOFF DEBUTS FALCON

Inspired by opportunities to compete at Goodwood, former British Touring Car ace Sam Tordoff is increasing his historic racing involvement. The Yorkshireman debuted his family's ex-Mike Gardiner Ford Falcon at Silverstone on Sunday but did not get many laps in. A broken throttle cable in qualifying left Tordoff 39th on the grid, and he retired 10 laps into the three-hour RAC Tourist Trophy race.

ASHTON'S BUSY WEEKEND

Tom Ashton enjoyed a weekend of firsts at Silverstone. Having driven the final stint in a brand new Radical SR3 RXX to ensure the RAW Motorsport team's scratch victory in Saturday's 750 Motor Club Birkett Six Hour Relay, the Chinese GT Championship racer co-drove Shaun Balfe's U2TC-winning Lotus Cortina (below) in the Historic Touring Car Challenge on Sunday. Enthused, Ashton is keen to add more variety to his CV.



WALKER



BUTTON HITS THE TRACK Jenson Button had his first test in the McLaren 720S GT3 he will race in next weekend's British GT finale at Silverstone earlier this week. The 2009 Formula 1 world champion is due to share the car with long-time friend and Jenson Team Rocket RJN co-owner Chris Buncombe. Speaking before the test, Button said: "I've never driven with ABS so this is all a new experience, but an exciting one. Because it has ABS, you can really muller the pedal and brake pretty late. Low-speed mechanical grip is quite good with these cars, so I'm looking forward to seeing how it feels. I guess the biggest issue is limited running before the race and also we don't know what the weather is going to do, but we'll make the best of it." **Photograph by Jakob Ebrey**

All Ginetta series to feature on BTCC support bill

GINETTA

Ginetta has revealed the 2021 calendars for its five categories and all of them will make at least one appearance alongside the British Touring Car Championship next year.

As reported earlier this month by Autosport, the new Ginetta GT Academy category – that replaces the Ginetta Racing Drivers Club series as the manufacturer's entry level division, and features a G55 with reduced power on road tyres – will make one appearance at a BTCC meeting, at Silverstone in September.

The top-level GT4 Supercup will continue to run at eight of the 10 TOCA events, skipping the first Thruxton and Silverstone rounds, while Ginetta Junior will not feature at the June Croft meeting.

A combined grid for the GT5 Challenge and G40 Cup will instead race at Thruxton and Croft. All remaining rounds of the GT5 Challenge, G40 Cup and GT Academy will again be at British GT meetings.

Ginetta motorsport manager Ash Gallagher is pleased that the manufacturer's calendar has been organised so there are no clashes between BTCC and British GT events, making logistics easier for teams that compete across the range of series.



Junior racers are due to be at nine of the 10 BTCC events

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

He added that Ginetta Junior missing the Croft event is aimed at allowing the teenage racers to focus on school commitments.

"Although it doesn't fall exactly when exams are [as they've been pushed back for 2021, due to COVID-19], it makes sense to leave that gap," said Gallagher. "It still allows them to concentrate on school. It allows us the opportunity of having GT Academy on a TOCA weekend and, because GT5 and G40 Cup will share a grid, it means G40 Cup will have a first race with touring cars."

STEPHEN LICKORISH

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Test prize in Honda TCR car for Civic Cup class winners in 2021

CIVIC CUP

Maximum Motorsport's Civic Cup category will boast an enhanced prize to go with a newly revised class structure next year, when it will continue to run alongside the Touring Car Trophy and Volkswagen Cup.

A test in a Honda Civic TCR car will be on offer to the leading runners in both the Civic Cup class and a new Production Cup.

"The top three in each class are going to get a test in a Honda TCR car — we want to give them that opportunity," said Maximum Motorsport boss Stewart Lines.

The Production Cup will feature similar EP3 models to those that dominate the Civic Cup, but with engine power outputs around 15bhp less at 215bhp. It uses a lighter, bolt-in rollcage, standard ECU and other production-spec parts designed to lower costs.

"It's like a feeder class to the Cup class," said Jon Peerless, who has teamed up with Maximum Motorsport to introduce the category. "They're cheap cars. You can self-build for around £8-9000, probably half the price of a Cup Car."

The class made its debut as an invitational Trophy division at Donington Park earlier this month with six entries, including two-time Civic Cup champion Lee Deegan, who won both races and set lap times within three seconds of the Civic Cup frontrunners.

MARK PAULSON

Grant to help Brooklands Museum

BROOKLANDS

The Brooklands Museum, home to an important collection of period racing cars, has received £950,000 pounds in a lifeline grant from the Government's £1.57billion Culture Recovery Fund.

Brooklands Museum received the money to help face the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic. The museum is one of 1385 organisations across the UK to receive the funding.

Based on the site of the world's first purpose-built motor racing circuit, the museum recalls the heyday of pre-war motorsport and aviation, including cars, planes and historic buildings.

The museum continues to face financial challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the next six months will be difficult during winter and the uncertain lockdown restrictions. The funding has been awarded to cover projected losses until spring 2021 and to provide a cash reserve to cover up to eight weeks' running costs.

Director and CEO Tamalie Newbery said: "We are absolutely thrilled to receive this funding. Brooklands is an award-winning museum and now we will be able to remain open to visitors and carry on our work preserving the Brooklands site and collection.

"As an independent charity, income from visitors has always been our main source of funds, so the COVID epidemic has been very tough.

"However, we have been delighted by the public's response since we reopened in August and this grant means that throughout this winter and beyond, people will be able to continue coming here and discovering the inspiring stories of what people accomplished here."

PAUL LAWRENCE

IN THE HEADLINES

MORE BRITISH GT ENTRIES

Balfe Motorsport will run three McLaren 570S GT4 cars at the Silverstone British GT season finale next weekend. Warren Hughes and Pure McLaren graduate Jan Klingelnberg make a second appearance of the season, while Charlie Hollings will team up with category debutant Lars Dahmann. Two Ferrari 488 GTC cars will also join the field, with 2014 GT4 champion Ross Wylie partnering Lee Frost and Lucky Khera at Simon Green Motorsport, and Phil Quaife and John Dhillon driving a Scott Sport example.

CLARK EYES CAYMAN MOVE

Racing novice Charles Clark is targeting a seat in the Porsche Sprint Challenge GB next year after claiming his first class win in the Porsche Club Championship at Oulton Park earlier this month – only his seventh race start and his first wet race – at the wheel of an In2Racing Boxster S.

BENSLEY LOOKING AT RETURN

Former 750 Motor Club Stock Hatch champion Ryan Bensley is hoping to make a full-time return to motorsport in 2021, after sampling the C1 Cup, Civic Cup and 116 Trophy this year. He had a run in the Civic Cup Trophy Class at Donington Park earlier this month – taking a best result of second in class – and was out last weekend in the C1s at Thruxton, finishing 42nd alongside Ian Mitchell. "I want to commit to a championship next season if I can, but still not sure what," he confirmed.

C1 DEBUT FOR CLARKE

Former Eurocar champion and experienced endurance racer Kevin Clarke made his C1 Challenge debut at Thruxton last weekend, with short oval racer Max Bradburn and novice Michael Rudge. "We tested at Cadwell Park but otherwise we haven't driven it," said Clarke, who had also raced a BMW in the previous day's Birkett Six Hour Relay at Silverstone. The trio managed to bring their C1 (below) home in 37th place at Thruxton.







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Revolution F1 support races prove close

REVOLUTION TROPHY



Frey leads Dons, with Kapadia taking over #80 for race two

Michel Frey and Alex Kapadia shared a win apiece during the Revolution Trophy's two support races at the Portuguese Grand Prix, following Formula 1's return to the country last weekend.

The UK-based series, which this season is part of the Sports Prototype Cup, attracted a grid of 17 Revolution A-One machines for the two races at the Algarve Circuit.

Richard Wells initially got the jump on front-row starters Frey and Morten Dons in race one, but his lead was short-lived as a mistake part way around the lap caused incidents further behind and brought out the red flag.

At the restart, Frey led from start to finish and took the win by less than a second from Dons, while Jesse Menczer, in his first Revolution appearance, completed the podium.

There was another lights-to-flag performance in the second race from Kapadia, who took over Dons' Mike Smith Motorsport/Breakell Racing Revolution machine.

James Abbott challenged Kapadia into Turn 1 at the start, allowing Wells to move into second followed by Menczer, but Frey was left having to recover from a spin after contact with Wells on the opening lap.

Kapadia took victory by 1.8s – and with it confirmed himself as the top ranked Cup driver of 2020 – while Abbott got the better of Wells and Menczer as Frey recovered to seventh.

Pre-1966 sportscars get new Ecurie Classic series

ECURIE CLASSIC RACING


STYLES

New series will rival the existing Equipe GTS category

A new race series for pre-1966 sportscars has been launched for 2021 under the Ecurie Classic Racing title.

Organiser and racer John Andon will promote up to six races for smaller-engined cars running on Dunlop treaded tyres and to FIA Appendix K specification.

The new series will rival the existing Equipe GTS category managed by Equipe Classic Racing, but Andon believes there is enough competitor demand to support another series.

"We want to go back to basics in the style of pre-1966 club racing," said Andon. "We've already spoken to quite a number of drivers and we don't feel there are enough places to race these cars to FIA spec on Dunlop tyres."

The initial plan is for all six races to be in the UK in 2021, with an ambition to include European visits in 2022.

The series will be open to four-cylinder cars with engines up to 2700cc, notably MGBs, Triumph TR4s and TVR Granturas.

Races are likely to be 30 or 40 minutes in duration and Andon is canvassing drivers over preferred circuits. Silverstone Grand Prix, Brands Hatch GP and Donington Park are the priorities for 2021.

The series has forged an initial partnership with Richard Culverhouse's Classic and Modern Motorsport Club for next year.

PAUL LAWRENCE



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Bafflement and surprise

You can always rely on national motorsport to be unpredictable but some occurrences in recent weeks have been bewildering – and not in a good way

STEPHEN LICKORISH

There can be no doubting that every now and again some very baffling things happen in national motorsport. Shocks and surprises are what make it such a fascinating strand of motorsport, but then there are certain occurrences that just leave you shaking your head. Earlier this year we had British Formula 4 driver Roman Bilinski failing to be banned, despite reaching the cut-off of 12 licence penalty points (for the second year in a row), because some of these were accrued at the same event. And in the past couple of weeks there have been some more bewildering goings on.

Ever since motorsport resumed from its long coronavirus hibernation in July, the threat has remained that events could be cancelled at short notice. But abandoning an event after already completing the qualifying sessions seems a step too far. However, that is what Autosport's lead national story was last week as the Kirkistown season finale was called off after proceedings had already got under way, following even tougher guidance from the Northern Irish government overnight that filtered through to officials at the meeting after qualifying had begun.

This put organisers in an impossible position and their only real option was to call the meeting to a halt to avoid breaking the revised rules and facing any punishment. But, for rules to be changed at such ridiculously short notice was nothing short of bizarre. And for these to then be implemented when all the competitors, mechanics, marshals and officials were already on-site made it pointless – especially when this involved a relatively small number of people at a single-day meeting.

> **"For rules to be changed at such ridiculously short notice was nothing short of bizarre"**

The conflicting restrictions from the devolved national governments have played havoc with this condensed season, as we have already discussed on these pages, and ultimately affected livelihoods. That only one circuit racing meeting has taken place in Wales all year – and that was just a tiny trial event – is crazy when, across the border, it has been a very different story. Clubs are now finalising their 2021 schedules – which is a challenging enough task this year anyway. Organisers are already having to consider whether or not the COVID-19 situation will allow a full 'normal' schedule next year. And then whether or not the strong competitor interest generally seen this year will be sustained into 2021 to warrant the return to a traditional calendar. Factor in confusing restrictions from the devolved governments, brought in with little notice, and it is easy to see why clubs may want to consider an English-only calendar. Kirkistown may not traditionally draw many of the English clubs and series, but the two Welsh venues certainly do – they were due to host four different clubs this year, including the Historic Sports Car Club's rare foray to Pembrey, before the pandemic struck – and the differing rules help no-one.

Another occurrence that generally helps no-one are breakaway series. Despite all the uncertainty surrounding coronavirus, there is yet another example of this in national motorsport for 2021. The newly-unveiled Ecurie Classic Racing series will cater for pretty much exactly the same cars as the popular Equipe GTS division, dividing the competitor pool. It is baffling how often this happens, and very rarely does it end well.

While ex-Equipe GTS competitor John Andon has to be applauded for having the enthusiasm and confidence in the marketplace to introduce a new series at this time, it has to be questioned whether a copy of another series is the right approach to take.

"I raced with Equipe GTS from the start and, no disrespect to them, I just feel the fun has gone out of it," says Andon, who was left frustrated when the GTS grid was sometimes shared with more powerful machines from the new Equipe Libre division. As Andon points out, these smaller-engined pre-1966 Appendix K sportscars are enormously popular at the minute, but who is to say how long that will continue to be the case and whether there will be sufficient interest to support two rival series in the future? It remains to be seen.

Then, returning to the Bilinski issue, there was a far more dangerous move than any of his earlier indiscretions in British F4 at Snetterton last weekend, when Alex Connor veered across into Casper Stevenson on the Senna Straight while battling for third. Considering the speeds involved, it was baffling that he was only penalised by being demoted one place afterwards.

Another surprise last weekend was Rory Smith winning the Formula Ford Festival. It may not have featured the quality and packed entry list of years gone by, but Smith was still not the most obvious winner pre-event when up against the likes of National champions Neil Maclennan and Ross Martin, last year's surprise victor Jonathan Browne and regular frontrunners Matt Cowley and Chris Middlehurst.

And ultimately that unpredictability is one of the greatest features of national motorsport. There are always giant-killing stories and plenty of shocks and surprises. It is just a shame that some of those are rather more baffling, bewildering and frustrating than others.

Smith overcomes Browne and the weather to claim Festival honours



ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: HAWKINS

BRANDS HATCH
BRSCC
24-25 OCTOBER

Just like last year, a Formula Ford 1600 National Championship frontrunner who had gone a little under the radar heading into the biggest event of the season hit top form to claim success in the Formula Ford Festival.

For Jonathan Browne in 2019, read Rory Smith in 2020. Browne was the man who Smith had to overcome in the final but, unlike the Irishman last year, it wasn't a case of leading from the front all weekend.

Drawn in arguably the toughest heat, Smith qualified his B-M Racing Medina JL18 down in fourth. But, in sweeping rain, he made one place off the line, and then used the Medina's traction to take a much tighter line at Clearways than his rivals. He passed both Bryce Aron (Low Dempsey Racing Ray GR18) and Jordan Dempsey's Kevin Mills Racing Spectrum 011D there on his way to a comfortable win.

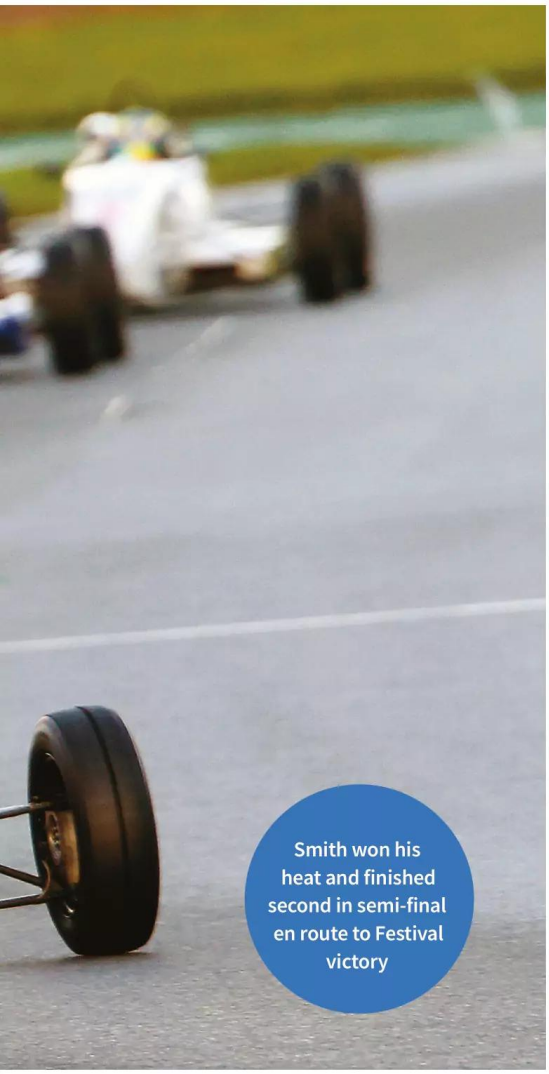
"I've done it before and I know that it can be quite effective, so I had that in my back pocket ready to go as soon as the rain came down," admitted the 21-year-old. On pole position for his less-wet semi-final, Smith could not resist a charging Neil Maclennan and had to settle for second, leaving him fourth on the grid for the final.



Festival winner: Smith had started fourth for the big event

Browne, meanwhile, had continued his extraordinary form from the 2019 Festival to extend his winning streak to five by claiming heat and semi-final victories in his LDR Ray. He had to come from behind for the first time in his semi, closing up to and passing Team Dolan man Ross Martin (Van Diemen RF99) as the pair contended with traffic.

Therefore it was Browne who started the final from pole, with Maclennan alongside, and Martin and Smith filling row two. Changeable weather was a feature of the weekend and made set-up decisions even more tricky than usual. The track was rarely – if ever – completely dry, but neither did it often stay fully wet throughout a race. Now with the sun out and a dry line starting to appear where its rays could reach, Browne got the jump and led away from Maclennan and Smith. But Smith dispatched



Smith won his heat and finished second in semi-final en route to Festival victory

Maclennan with his favoured move at Clearways on lap two and immediately set about challenging for the lead. Browne was having to defend for his life, repelling Smith's attacks lap after lap, which in turn gave Maclennan a sniff of second each time Smith was rebuffed. Browne was able to cover the inside line at Paddock Hill Bend, Druids, Surtees and, crucially, Clearways.

"Unfortunately, I think Jonathan cottoned on," said Smith. "Everyone else was just doing the wet line [on the outside] but he worked that out and was going tight. So I thought, 'This is the only place I'm getting by him so I'm going to have to make my car really narrow.'"

Just after half-distance, that's exactly what Smith did, cutting across the kerb to hug the inside and take the lead as Browne's defensive line left him running wider on the exit. That allowed Maclennan to get a run on Browne too and the Scot completed the move around the outside at Paddock. "Rory was just all over me and I was struggling to keep him behind," admitted Browne.

Smith opened a two-second gap over the next two laps but had his lead wiped out by a safety car. Both he and Maclennan locked their brakes entering Paddock, but »

BORN IN THE USA BUT RACING IN THE UK

It's 30 years since journalist Jeremy Shaw started the famed Team USA Scholarship, which has an illustrious list of alumni. While there have been spells in the interim where the destination has been races in Formula Opel, Formula Renault and Formula Palmer Audi machinery, the focus has predominantly been on the end-of-season FF1600 events.

This year's duo, Bryce Aron and Jackson Lee, were selected via an interview process, with the usual shootout in the US not possible due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While Aron has contested the full British Racing & Sports Car Club National FF1600 Championship with Low Dempsey Racing, placing fifth overall, Lee had to quarantine before he could join up with the squad for an outing at Silverstone earlier this month.

Seventeen-year-old Aron, competing in his second Festival, impressed by claiming fourth place in a tough heat and improving to third in his semi-final with a confident pass on Jordan Dempsey into Druids. Fifth on the grid for the final, Aron ran third after the safety car but was shuffled back by a robust move from Ross Martin, eventually finishing fifth in the constantly evolving conditions.

"It was really challenging," he said. "We were up there so I think overall I'm pretty happy with it."

Lee, 18, who races in US F1600, was 10th in the final having finished third in his heat and eighth in the semi. "I can see why Team USA sends their drivers over here to improve," he said. "It's another level. It's been quite an experience."

Although not part of the scholarship, fellow American Maxwell Esterson was also among the Low Dempsey Racing line-up and managed sixth overall, third in his heat being his first ever wet race.

There was no accompanying Canadian



Thirty years for Team USA Scholarship

scholarship this year, but Megan Gilkes may have been a recipient if there had been, following her run to second in Canadian F1600. The former W Series racer lined up for Kevin Mills Racing regardless, having tested with the squad earlier this year.

"They're really fun [cars] to drive," she said. "They're a lot different to the ones in Canada – a little bit less horsepower but they move around a bit more, which is really fun. Paddock Hill Bend is quite exciting!" After finishing fifth in her heat, a trip through the gravel spoilt her semi but she recovered to 12th, and then finished 20th in the final.

Now the quartet move on to Silverstone for this weekend's Walter Hayes Trophy, intent on following in the footsteps of their distinguished predecessors.

"Big names – Josef Newgarden, Spencer Pigot, Conor Daly, the names just go on and on, but I'm really honoured to be part of it," said Aron. "It's really great | to see the programme's still alive even through these times, and it's still helping young drivers like myself and Jackson."

MARK PAULSON



Aron just missed out on a podium and had to settle for fifth place

Maclennan's wheels touched the painted run-off area and sent him into the barriers.

"I couldn't let him get away," said Maclennan. "Once he got by Jonathan, I knew he was starting to break away so I just had to make a do-or-die move on Jonathan and try to keep onto Rory."

Reigning National champion Maclennan's weekend had started badly when he qualified fifth for his heat, with tyre pressures too high for the drying track. That also caused excessive wear and left him gripless for the race in which he trailed home sixth, nearly 30s behind dominant winner Martin. Choosing to use his new tyres in the semi-final aided Maclennan's fightback, but his bid for Festival victory would end in the gravel. "At the end of the day, you're there to win it," he said. "I'd probably be just as annoyed coming second as binning it."

Smith confidently dealt with the extra hurdle thrown at him, judging the restart to perfection and reeling off the remaining three laps to claim the Festival crown.

"I knew that if I got a good safety car restart, I had the pace," he said. "Luckily our set-up worked so well that I put my foot down and it just went. The Medina as a car, that's what its strength is. It's just got insane traction and it helps in situations like that."



The 2019 Festival winner Browne intially led final

It was the first Festival win for B-M Racing, but a second for the Medina chassis and team boss Andy Brickles, who engineered Wayne Boyd to his 2015 success.

Behind Browne in second, a strong run from Team USA scholar Aron looked set to be rewarded with third before Martin prised an opening for himself and Team Dolan team-mates Matt Cowley and Chris Middlehurst, whose chances were both hampered by failing to get off the line very quickly in their semi-final.

When Martin ran wide at Clearways, Cowley made the podium for the second year running from Middlehurst, Aron and Maxwell Esterson. Dempsey could only manage seventh after struggling all weekend to find the set-up sweet spot on his Spectrum in the changeable conditions.

Success for Smith more than made up finishing third in the National Championship for the second year running in a campaign that might have played out differently had he not lost a win in the opener at Oulton Park due to a red-flag countback.

"This year we've always been really fast but just not managed to get the results," he said. "So to do well at the big event is amazing. Brands Hatch isn't one of my strongest tracks but the boys got the set-up absolutely spot-on."

MARK PAULSON

PIRRO FOLLOWS IN HIS FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS

This year's Festival was missing some of its regular returning stars such as Niall Murray and Joey Foster, but one standout name on the entry list was Goffredo Pirro.

Son of five-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner Emanuele Pirro, the 24-year-old was making his UK racing debut and his first appearance in Formula Ford.

In fact, he has little racing experience to call upon at all, mostly sharing classic GTs and touring cars with his father.

"I'm trying to, in the least possible time, apply as much of my engineering knowledge to supplement the lack of driving," said Pirro Jr, an engineer for Italian Formula 4 title winner Prema Powerteam. "I think it helps you analyse what's going on [but] sometimes it's a little bit of a hindrance because it's hard to turn off all the engineering brain."



Pirro Sr was on hand to watch his son race

Pirro Sr competed in Italy's Formula Fiat Abarth in his junior career, but recognised "Formula Ford was a very good category since I started", and says "it's been sort of a family dream" for his son to compete in the category.

"We are really happy to be here with a very humble attitude," he said. "Thank God, a lot of fathers have taught me what not to do as a father! We are quite discreet and humble people. My theory in the education I tried to give to him and his brother was always show them with example, but then let them do their own mistakes because there is no better way to learn than by doing it your own way.



Pirro Jr's Festival debut involved a collision but still made final

"I feel from father to son there is a special empathy, and I feel almost like I'm racing myself."

Pirro Jr added: "It's a dream come true and it's such a cool event. When you see the list of winners, and people that have taken part, I almost feel bad being on the same list as some of those guys."

Run by 2018 winner Oldfield Motorsport, Pirro was eighth in his heat, but was collected by a spinner in his semi-final. From the back of the last-chance race, he carved through to fifth before finishing 22nd in the final.

MARK PAULSON

BRANDS HATCH WEEKEND WINNERS



FORMULA FORD FESTIVAL
Heat 1 Rory Smith (Medina JL18)
Heat 2 Jonathan Browne (Ray GR18)
Heat 3 Ross Martin (Van Diemen RF99)
Semi-Final 1 Jonathan Browne (Ray GR18)
Semi-Final 2 Neil Maclennan (Spectrum 011C)
Last Chance race Tom McArthur (Merlyn Mk20)
Final (20 laps) 1 Rory Smith (Medina JL18); 2 Jonathan Browne (Ray GR18) +0.566s; 3 Matt Cowley (Van Diemen JL15); 4 Chris Middlehurst (Van Diemen LA10); 5 Bryce Aron (Ray GR18); 6 Maxwell Esterson (Ray GR15). **Fastest lap** Smith 54.616s (79.62mph). **Pole** Browne. **Starters** 30.



MAZDA MX-5 SUPERCUP
Races 1 & 3 Samuel Smith
Race 2 Colin Bysouth

MAZDA MX-5 CHAMPIONSHIP
Race 1 Oliver Allwood
Races 2 & 3 Matt Luff

HISTORIC FF1600
Races 1 & 2 Cameron Jackson (March 709, above)

CLASSIC FF1600
Race 1 Henry Chart (Van Diemen RF81)
Race 2 Cameron Jackson (Van Diemen RF80)

FESTIVAL HISTORIC FINAL
Peter Daly (Van Diemen RF88, below)

CMMC SUPER SALOONS/TIN TOPS & INTERMARQUE
Races 1 & 2 Rod Birley (Ford Escort WRC)



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Another Smith, Samuel, enjoyed success at Brands in MX-5s

THRILLS AND SPILLS IN SUPPORT RACES

Six races for two Mazda MX-5 championships gave a new look to this year's Festival support programme. It produced a title for Samuel Smith in the Supercup series for Mk3 models, and a likely one for Oliver Allwood among the older Mk1 versions, although this could change at a judicial hearing.

Supercup points leader Luke Herbert's title hopes took a terminal hit when he spun at Paddock Hill Bend in the first of three races. His stranded car was clouted by Richard Amos and, although both drivers quickly exited their cars, Herbert needed precautionary medical attention. Both were out for the weekend.

Smith won a shortened re-run to take over the championship lead, and became uncatchable for the title by finishing fourth later in the day as Colin Bysouth won the race.

A chunk of the third race was run behind the safety car after John Langridge crashed on lap one but, after some predictably hectic action, the result was a comfortable win for Smith.

Conditions were at their worst for the first MX-5 Championship race for Mk1s, where Allwood and Mike Comber were in the title battle and Joe Wiggin was a possible contender, subject to an appeal against sanctions applied at a previous meeting. A caution period reduced the contest to a single-lap shootout under green flags, which ended with Allwood in front.

Matt Luff, Brian Trott and Wiggin led the way in race two, but the championship reached an unsatisfactory end when Luff tapped team-mate Allwood into a spin in race three, triggering a multiple incident at Druids. Allwood finished last after a stop to remove damaged bodywork as Luff was first and kept the win, despite initially being disqualified for his part in the collision. Comber was classified third, not enough to top the table.

Reigning Historic FF1600 champion Cameron Jackson won the weekend's first race in his March 709, as second finisher Pierre Livingston (Merlyn Mk20A) retained his points lead. Jackson won again on Sunday morning, but Livingston only needed a podium finish to clinch the title and that's exactly what he achieved, behind Jackson and Linton Stutely.

Jackson's unbeaten record in Classic Formula Ford was ended on Saturday by Henry Chart, who brought home the Van Diemen RF81 that Tim Harvey steered to victory a year ago. Jackson's slightly older Van Diemen RF80 repeatedly nosed ahead at Clearways, but had no answer to Chart's better grip on an outside line. Despite this rare defeat, Jackson was confirmed as 2020 Classic FF1600 champion and, with the title secure, he beat Chart on Sunday, with outgoing champion Rick Morris third.

Older Formula Fords taking part in the Festival had a Historic finale to themselves. BRSCC chairman Peter Daly (Van Diemen RF88) was the eventual winner after a three-way fight with Ryan Campbell (Reynard 89FF) and Tom McArthur's Merlyn Mk20 – the oldest car in the field. The trio were covered by just 0.397 seconds at the flag.

First time out following an engine blow-up, Rod Birley's Ford Escort WRC raced with a misfire in the first Classic and Modern Motorsport Club contest but, with the benefit of four-wheel-drive on a damp track, he had plenty in hand over the battling BMWs of Paul Watson and John Deveraux. Birley was untroubled in race two, beating Watson again and Mike Chittenden in the car he shares with fellow veteran Deveraux.

BRIAN PHILLIPS



Conditions proved tricky for drivers

TOCA SUPPORTS SNETTERTON 24-25 OCTOBER



Lebbon (l) and Voisin were inseparable for most of the weekend, but it was Lebbon who won all three races

Treble delight for Lebbon as he triumphs in Norfolk thrillers

GINETTA JUNIOR

Title rivals Bailey Voisin and Tom Lebbon have not had much chance to battle on track in the past few Ginetta Junior events. Lebbon's misery at Silverstone, getting caught up in multiple incidents, while Voisin being excluded from qualifying at Croft have limited their recent battles. But the races at Snetterton more than made up for it.

The duo were inseparable for the majority of the three contests – but each time it was Lebbon who eventually emerged on top.

Voisin lost the lead at the start of the opener as Lebbon powered ahead at Riches, although he only stayed there until mid-distance when Voisin fought back at Agostini. They spent most of the next two laps side-by-side but it was Lebbon who was 1.3 seconds ahead at the flag.

Lebbon made hard work of the second contest as a poor getaway dropped him to fifth by the end of the first lap and Voisin had the initial lead. Unsurprisingly, it did not stay that way for long. By Williams on lap three, Lebbon was back ahead and the pair were again glued together for the remainder. "It was tough at the start – I didn't get the best of starts but made my way back up with a few risky moves," he admitted.

Lebbon stayed in the lead until the penultimate lap when Voisin edged in front at Nelson, only to run slightly wide and allow Lebbon back through. But Voisin again drew ahead out of Murrays before Lebbon sealed the win at the Wilson hairpin on the final tour.

"It was quite a stressful race [having to attack and defend] but it was a good result in the end," said Voisin. "At this point in the season, every point counts so it was good to get fastest lap!

"I think both of us try and be careful because we know a slight bit of contact could ruin the race, so we try and race fair and hard."

And there was more of the same in the finale – although Lebbon emerged with a 7.4s win. Voisin and Tommy Pintos both had spells in front but, as they battled with each other and Josh Rattican and Seb Hopkins, Lebbon worked his way to the front and broke the tow, while Pintos suffered with a loose bonnet catch.

All of that means Lebbon is now just three points behind Voisin in the title race, while Rattican is still in touching distance despite being taken out by Joel Pearson in the opener.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

F4 scores are level after O'Sullivan's double win

BRITISH FORMULA 4

Zak O'Sullivan took the chequered flag first in all three Snetterton races last weekend, got one victory taken away, but still levelled the score with long-time leader Luke Browning.

The controversy came in the opening race, as O'Sullivan took the lead from Browning on the second lap. Fortec Motorsport racer Browning felt Carlin-run O'Sullivan had opened his steering, leading to contact and forcing him wide as they headed onto the back straight. That dumped Browning to fifth, before James Hedley made contact with Alex Connor at the Esses as he wrested second, sending Connor to the back.

With Browning repassing Christian Mansell and taking third on the road, he inherited the win when O'Sullivan and Hedley were both penalised for their moves.

O'Sullivan was classified second, putting him fifth on the reversed grid for race two, but within four laps he was in front after passing early leader Casper Stevenson, who kept him under pressure for the rest of the race. Roman Bilinski was third, as Browning held off Abbi Pulling for fourth.


Carlin driver O'Sullivan kept the pack at bay in finale


Browning inherited race-one win but lost his points advantage

O'Sullivan resisted Browning in the finale, before Browning ran wide at Riches and settled for second, but the talking point was Connor's disgusting swerve on Stevenson as they battled up to Riches at 120mph. Stevenson's quick reflexes as wheel met wheel got him off the grass at the cost of only one place to Hedley, who then passed Connor for third. Connor was penalised one place, but such a dangerous action warranted further sanction.

MARCUS SIMMONS

No title just yet for unlucky Burns

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

An accidental whack from his Rob Boston Racing team-mate Joe Marshall-Birks in race three denied Will Burns the chance of taking the provisional Ginetta GT4 Supercup crown at Snetterton.

Marshall-Birks had gone off at Oggies and, as he rejoined the track, lost control of his car again, sending him into the path of Burns – who was spun off. He rejoined last and set about working his way through the field to an eventual fifth but it was not enough for him to seal the title in Norfolk.

Burns was in a position to secure the championship a round early after main rival Gus Burton had a disaster in race one. His Century Motorsport team-mate Jamie Falvey had dived down the inside of Adam Smalley on the run to Riches, but there was not enough room for the trio to run three abreast and Falvey sent Smalley into the path of Burton, who was spun out. Burns was therefore able to win from Falvey.

Elite Motorsport's Smalley again impressed in wet conditions in race two, grabbing the lead from Burns through the Bomb Hole as Burton fought back to third.

Tom Hibbert surged into the lead of the finale before losing out to Burton at Murrays late on, as Falvey also snuck ahead.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Burns just needs to finish a race at Brands to secure crown



Burton bounced back from DNF to win the finale

Harrison and Smith share wins

MINI CHALLENGE

Nathan Harrison claimed the Mini Challenge points lead as he took his third win of the season, while main rival Ant Whorton-Eales had a weekend to forget.

Harrison qualified on pole and led throughout the opener to seize the initiative in the title fight. Dan Zelos did put him under pressure for a spell before Harrison extended his advantage again.

"We had a monster start – probably the best start of my career and that helped," said Harrison, who admitted it "felt like the longest race of my life" as he fought to keep Zelos at bay.

"We got pole, and six points for that, the race win and fastest lap. That was the plan – to try and maximise everything."

That 62-point haul was particularly significant as Whorton-Eales only qualified 10th and progressed to sixth by the flag. But worse was to come for Whorton-Eales in race two as the slightest of touches while battling Max Coates left him out of the race with damaged suspension.

It was not much better for Harrison as a post-race penalty for gaining an unfair advantage left him 14th, but he still banked points after setting fastest lap.

Up front, Isaac Smith held off Coates to claim his first win after Jack Davidson had a moment at Riches following the first of two safety car periods.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Harrison kept Zelos at bay to win opener and take points lead

WEEKEND WINNERS

GINETTA JUNIOR

Race 1 (7 laps) 1 Tom Lebbon; 2 Bailey Voisin +1.278s; 3 Georgi Dimitrov; 4 Tommy Pintos; 5 Seb Hopkins; 6 Will Jenkins. **Fastest lap** Voisin 2m20.773s (75.92mph). **Pole** Voisin. **Starters** 21.
Race 2 (9 laps) 1 Lebbon; 2 Voisin +0.175s; 3 Pintos; 4 Josh Rattican; 5 Hopkins; 6 William Aspin. **FL** Voisin 2m20.885s (75.86mph). **P** Voisin. **S** 21.
Race 3 (9 laps) 1 Lebbon; 2 Rattican +7.388s; 3 Voisin; 4 Joel Pearson; 5 Pintos; 6 Hopkins. **FL** Pearson 2m20.446s (76.10mph). **P** Lebbon. **S** 21.
Points 1 Voisin 479; 2 Lebbon 476; 3 Rattican 464; 4 Dimitrov 352; 5 Hopkins 275; 6 Tom Edgar 275.

BRITISH FORMULA 4

Race 1 (all 11 laps) 1 Luke Browning; 2 Zak O'Sullivan +0.179s; 3 Christian Mansell; 4 Abbi Pulling; 5 Casper Stevenson; 6 Roman Bilinski. **FL** Alex Connor 1m54.328s (93.48mph). **P** Browning. **S** 12.
Race 2 1 O'Sullivan; 2 Stevenson +0.322s; 3 Bilinski; 4 Browning; 5 Pulling; 6 Connor. **FL** Bilinski 1m55.605s (92.45mph). **P** Bilinski. **S** 12.
Race 3 1 O'Sullivan; 2 Browning +3.642s; 3 James Hedley; 4 Stevenson; 5 Connor; 6 Pulling. **FL** Browning 1m53.737s (93.97mph). **P** O'Sullivan. **S** 12.
Points 1 O'Sullivan 369; 2 Browning 369; 3 Stevenson 321; 4 Hedley 243; 5 Connor 228; 6 Pulling 166.

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

Race 1 (7 laps) 1 Will Burns; 2 Jamie Falvey +0.875s; 3 Adam Smalley; 4 Tom Hibbert; 5 Joe Marshall-Birks; 6 Luke Reade. **FL** Smalley 1m57.519s (90.94mph). **P** Burns. **S** 16.
Race 2 (12 laps) 1 Smalley; 2 Burns +0.723s; 3 Gus Burton; 4 Hibbert; 5 Marshall-Birks; 6 Dan Morris. **FL** Burns 2m10.936s (81.62mph). **P** Burns. **S** 16.
Race 3 (13 laps) 1 Burton; 2 Falvey +2.512s; 3 Hibbert; 4 Smalley; 5 Burns; 6 Reade. **FL** Burton 1m57.779s (90.74mph). **P** Reade. **S** 16.
Points 1 Burns 496; 2 Hibbert 440; 3 Burton 435; 4 Smalley 413; 5 Falvey 382; 6 Marshall-Birks 304.

MINI CHALLENGE

Race 1 (12 laps) 1 Nathan Harrison; 2 Dan Zelos +3.111s; 3 Lewis Brown; 4 Jason Lockwood; 5 Tom Rawlings; 6 Ant Whorton-Eales. **FL** Harrison 2m04.496s (85.85mph). **P** Harrison. **S** 28.
Race 2 (11 laps) 1 Isaac Smith; 2 Max Coates +0.144s; 3 Rawlings; 4 Jack Davidson; 5 Zelos; 6 Oliver Barker. **FL** Harrison 2m04.722s (85.69mph). **P** Brad Hutchison. **S** 28.
Points 1 Harrison 387; 2 Zelos 373; 3 Whorton-Eales 360; 4 Coates 337; 5 Rawlings 335; 6 Max Bird 330.

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

Race 1 (13 laps) 1 Harry King; 2 Josh Webster +11.273s; 3 Matthew Graham; 4 Will Martin; 5 Lorcan Hanafin; 6 Sam MacLeod. **FL** King 2m05.595s (85.09mph). **P** King. **S** 17.
Race 2 (14 laps) 1 King; 2 Webster +3.834s; 3 Graham; 4 Hanafin; 5 Scott McKenna; 6 Martin. **FL** King 1m53.584s (94.09mph). **P** Martin. **S** 17.
Points 1 King 144; 2 Webster 108; 3 Graham 75; 4 Hanafin 69; 5 McKenna 55; 6 Martin 53.

TOCA SUPPORTS SNETTERTON 24-25 OCTOBER



It was another Porsche masterclass from King as he sealed the crown with a double at Snetterton

King celebrates Carrera Cup coronation a round early

PORSCHE CARRERA CUP GB

It was classic Harry King. The reigning Ginetta GT4 Supercup champion did not want to seal a thoroughly deserved Porsche Carrera Cup GB title with a cautious drive to fourth. Instead he wanted to take his customary place on the top step of the podium. And that is exactly what he did.

To be in a position to take the crown with two races to spare in the second Snetterton contest, King had already triumphed in the opener. He grabbed his seventh pole of the season in qualifying – but it was not straightforward at the start, especially as overnight rain meant the track was still wet.

Matthew Graham got a brilliant getaway to surge into the lead but ran slightly wide at Riches. That allowed King to pounce, taking advantage of a wetter line and his wet-weather rubber to reclaim the lead. And from there he was off. King's Team Parker Racing team-mate Josh Webster also passed Graham around the outside at Hamilton but had no answer to the pace of King.

"I didn't make a great start and was kicking myself for that, but it gave me the advantage into Turn 2," said the victor. He built a commanding 11-second lead, even setting the fastest lap on the final tour when it was clear just how much he was pushing. That gave him an extra point – not that he needed it.

Further back, Graham remained in third while Thruxton winner Will Martin was another driver on the move as he stormed up to fourth.

King's perfect weekend continued after the race as he drew out ball four for the reversed grid, the smallest number of places that could be switched.

It was instantly clear just how much King wanted to be provisionally crowned with a win. Moments after Webster passed Graham, King was immediately ahead of the Redline car too with a move at Turn 3. He then made a bold attempt to pass Webster at Williams before sealing the place at the Wilson hairpin on lap two. Two corners later and he was into the lead after a simply brilliant charge down the inside of Martin at Agostini. And he was off again, storming to a 10th win of 2020 – and the crown.

Webster had to make do with second again, while Graham capped off one of his most impressive weekends in the series with another third, beating Lorcan Hanafin by just two tenths of a second. But the Snetterton event was all about one driver – a King who celebrated his coronation in double-quick time.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

HOW PORSCHE PICKED THE RIGHT JUNIOR ONCE AGAIN

It is not yet a year since Porsche agonised over who would become the manufacturer's next GB Junior. After Josh Webster, Charlie Eastwood and Dan Harper had all taken the crown it was a tough decision over who would be following in their footsteps. Seven poles, 10 wins, 12 fastest laps, 144 points and dozens of impressive overtakes later, it is pretty clear the correct choice was made in Harry King.

What Harper achieved in his dominant campaign last season was impressive but King has taken that to a whole new level. It normally takes rookies a while – sometimes a year – to truly master the tricky Type 991 Porsche 911 GT3 Cup machine but King had clearly got to grips with the car by the first round.

That he did not win the opening race at Donington Park – when he clouted a Recticel barrier – still irks King a little even now he is champion as it is the only race he has finished and not won. Few would have predicted that sort of domination ahead of the season, particularly when up against a past champion and quick racer in Josh Webster.

"He's surpassed all expectations," said Porsche GB motorsport manager James MacNaughton. "We expect the first year of the Junior programme to be a learning year but Harry just came in and has done a fantastic job."

The fact he has been unbeaten in qualifying shows King's pedigree, as does the manner in which he has taken races by the scruff of the neck – including that title-deciding Snetterton contest.

"Not a chance," said King, when asked if he wanted to settle for points in race two in Norfolk. "I want to go for wins!"

King's achievement was even more impressive considering he had three DNFs over the course of the season – two punctures at Thruxton and a coolant leak at Knockhill.

"It's a pretty insane feeling – following in the footsteps of Dan Harper was always going to be tough," King added. "It's shown the hard work the team put in has paid off – the team has been incredible."



The rest of the field has been left in King's shadow this year

MacNaughton concluded: "To win the championship with a weekend to go with three DNFs shows he's destined for great things."

Quite what remains to be seen as he is due to complete the second season of his two-year Junior programme in the Carrera Cup – not that he needs to after domination like that.

STEPHEN LICKORISH



Lotus Elan of Tooms defeated some mighty opposition in the Classic K contest

JONES

Tooms shines in the wet at Combe

CASTLE COMBE
CSCC
24 OCTOBER

Castle Combe proved a popular replacement for the Classic Sports Car Club's postponed Le Mans event, with over 200 entries packed into the last day of summertime and, as heavy rain was forecast later, it was a race against the clock.

Classic K endured a damp qualifying, which produced a front row of V8s, with the second row taken by a brace of Minis, but it was from the third row that Paul Tooms (Lotus Elan) took an early lead in the wet race. He was under pressure throughout, with Jamie Boot's TVR Griffith very close late on. Tooms took the win by 2.8 seconds, a great result having survived a 360-degree spin at Avon Rise in qualifying that earned a marshals' round of applause.

Two non-championship rounds for the Jaguar Enthusiasts' Club Jaguars and Open Series brought together the usual eclectic mix, with the Jaguars starting first on the lights and the Open cars following at the drop of a flag. Alex Taylor's Mazda RX-7 won the opener, while the second race, held in worsening conditions, featured a lengthy safety car period.

Once racing resumed, the Open result was an all-local affair, with Jamie Sturges (SEAT Leon TCR), ahead of Kevin Bird (BMW M3 GT4), followed by Dominic Malone (World Touring Car M3), while Tom Robinson (XJR) took a double Jaguar win.

A combined Future (1970s and 1980s) and Modern Classics (1990s) encounter featured Taylor's RX-7 and Tony and Aston Blakes' TVR Tuscan exchanging fastest laps throughout qualifying, only for the crowd at Quarry to be denied the conclusion in the race when Taylor's car developed a diff issue.

At the start of the wet race, eyes were on Mark Chilton (Nissan R32 Skyline GT-R), but the four-wheel-drive Godzilla bogged down, causing a chain reaction further down the pack. Despite a change from their rapid Porsche 911, the Blakes showed they could win Modern Classics in their TVR Tuscan. The Future Classics honours were taken by Castle Combe stalwart Perry Waddams in another Tuscan.

The Magnificent Sevens race was cut short after a harmless-looking oversteer accident at Tower for Tim Bishop (Caterham 7) resulted in a red flag. Time ran out for barrier repairs, with Tim Davis (C400) taking the overall win, once pitlane infringements had shuffled the order.

Nigel and Oliver Reuben (TVR Griffith) put in consistently fast laps to break away and win the Swinging Sixties contest, unhampered by the thick spray that enveloped the vast chasing pack. The Joshua Brooks/Matthew Howell Mini picked up a time penalty for a short stop but, despite this, the pair had enough of a cushion to remain second, while Jamie Keevil's Elan was third after fighting his way back from a disappointing 19th in qualifying.

In what was almost a night race, the full Tin Tops/Turbo Tin Tops grid was spectacular. There was drama as darkness descended and the chequered flag fell as Tom Mensley's Renault Clio 172 took the win by just 0.7 seconds, despite a 30s penalty for short-stopping by just six tenths of a second, over Eric Boulton (Honda Civic Type R). A first Turbo Tin Top win went to Robert Hosier (Leon), as he chased down eventual second-placed man Carl Chambers (Peugeot 208 GTI) in the closing stages.

DAVID SMITHERAM



The Blakes swapped their Porsche for TVR Tuscan and achieved another victory

JONES

WEEKEND WINNERS

CLASSIC K
Paul Tooms (Lotus Elan)

JAGUAR SALOONS & OPEN SERIES
Race 1 Alex Taylor (Mazda RX-7)
Race 2 Jamie Sturges (SEAT Leon TCR)

MODERN & FUTURE CLASSICS
Tony & Aston Blake (TVR Tuscan)

MAGNIFICENT SEVENS
Tim Davis (Caterham C400)

SWINGING SIXTIES
Nigel & Oliver Reuben (TVR Griffith)

TIN TOPS & TURBO TIN TOPS
Tom Mensley (Renault Clio 172, below)



JONES

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com



Carlin driver Frederick took two wins to help get his F3 title challenge back on track

Frederick reclaims points lead as Carlin dominates

DONINGTON PARK
MSVR
24-25 OCTOBER

Kaylen Frederick stole the initiative in the BRDC British F3 Championship hunt with a dominant double at Donington Park.

The American sealed a brace of wins from pole position, with only team-mate Nazim Azman breaking the trend on a weekend of Carlin dominance, to hand Frederick a 13-point lead over a recovering Kush Maini.

The Indian was almost derailed by the unpredictable weather conditions that forced Saturday's opener to be delayed to the following day when a deluge arrived. While the majority started on wet-weather tyres, Maini and Hitech team-mate Reece Ushijima were among three to gamble on slicks in drying, greasy conditions.

Although times tumbled, it came too late as the trio were the last three finishers in positions nine to 11. Maini was therefore forced to recover ground in race two, and he kept his title chase on target by charging to an impressive fourth from 13th on the grid, after the 103% rule meant he failed to benefit from the reversal of positions as his race one fastest lap was too slow.

"We had a bad weekend and made the best of it, so roll on Silverstone," said Maini after the latest twists in a season of mixed fortunes for the title contenders. "The same could happen to them."

Frederick's only serious challenger in race one was in-form Douglas Motorsport driver Ulysse de Pauw. "I knew that we are usually strong in these conditions," said de Pauw. "It was tricky in between wet and slicks, so we're happy to get through and keep our head down to see where we end up. We had a tough beginning of the season and since Brands Hatch [in late August] we've been consistent."

The Belgian shone in testing and fought his way through from fourth to latch on to the tail of his Carlin rival in the closing laps of the opener, coming up just short by 1.3 seconds. He then added a 10th podium of the season in race two with a daring double overtake at Redgate that delayed Frederick, dropping the new points leader to seventh. Azman continued his theme of making rapid reversed-grid getaways as he shot past Max Marzorati at the start, beating Ben Pedersen for his second win of the season.

A final-race moment on the opening lap left de Pauw also playing catch-up in a costly race for Frederick's rivals. The American was untouchable up front, consistently lapping quicker than the chasers, while de Pauw climbed to eighth and Maini grabbed his only podium of the weekend, albeit after Oliver Clarke's unfortunate penultimate-lap retirement with a damaged tyre and rear suspension while in a safe second place. Clarke's Hillspeed team-mate Sasakorn Chaimongkol grabbed a best finish of the season with second.

The biggest loser of the weekend was Louis Foster. The Double R Racing man was twice the unlucky party in first-corner incidents, and slipped to 67 points adrift, despite salvaging fourth place in the final outing. He remains one of five drivers still mathematically in title contention.

The increasingly heavy rain from midday played havoc with Saturday's schedule, with the result that all the day's categories had races shortened or abandoned. The single Radical SR1 Cup event was won convincingly by James Pinkerton, which secured the 2018 champion his second title, while Will Hunt, Ross Elliott, rookie Frazer McFadden and Dean Warriner had



Foster had a weekend to forget and is now 67 points behind leader Frederick

DONINGTON PARK WEEKEND WINNERS

BRDC BRITISH F3
Race 1 (15 laps) 1 Kaylen Frederick; 2 Ulysse de Pauw +1.266s; 3 Oliver Clarke; 4 Sasakorn Chaimongkol; 5 Roberto Faria; 6 Benjamin Pedersen. **Fastest lap** de Pauw 1m09.459s (102.57mph). **Pole** Frederick. **Starters** 16.
Race 2 (18 laps) 1 Nazim Azman; 2 Pedersen +2.655s; 3 de Pauw; 4 Kush Maini; 5 Chaimongkol; 6 Josh Skelton. **FL** de Pauw 1m03.283s (112.58mph). **P** Max Marzorati. **S** 16.
Race 3 (18 laps) 1 Frederick; 2 Chaimongkol +15.103s; 3 Maini; 4 Louis Foster; 5 Pedersen; 6 Azman. **FL** Frederick 1m02.677s (113.67mph). **P** Frederick. **S** 16.
Points 1 Frederick 420; 2 Maini 407; 3 de Pauw 378; 4 Foster 353; 5 Azman 331; 6 Skelton 283.

RADICAL SR1 CUP
Race 1 James Pinkerton
Race 2 Abandoned

MONOPOSTO TIEDEMAN TROPHY
Races 1 & 2 Dan Clowes (Jedi-Suzuki Mk6)

F3 CUP
Races 1 & 3 Alex Fores (Dallara-Mercedes F311)
Race 2 Stefano Leaney (Dallara-Mercedes F315)

GT CUP
Race 1 Grahame Tilley (Nissan GT-R)
Races 2 & 4 John Seale/Marcus Clutton (Lamborghini Huracan)
Race 3 Seale

TRACK ATTACK RACE CLUB
Race 1 Stephen Sawley (Honda Civic Type R)
Race 2 Shaun Goverd (Peugeot 106 GTI)

For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

fun sorting themselves out into this order. Although the cars were brought to the grid for the second race, they were ushered away again as the track became impossibly wet.

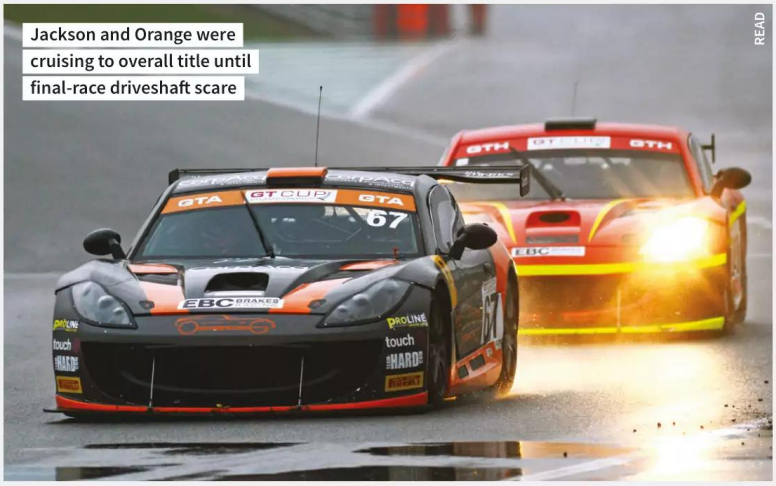
The large Monoposto Tiedeman Trophy contingent fared slightly better in that both their races started over a reduced duration, but then suffered safety car interventions because of the conditions. Dan Clowes won both in his Jedi Mk6, but admitted that he doubted whether his little car could have kept at bay the F3 machinery, with its greater downforce, for much longer.

In the first race, Clowes held off the fast-closing Dallara F304 of Tony Bishop by 0.7 seconds. In race two, his winning margin was 0.8s, this time just ahead of the two-litre Formula Ford Van Diemen RF99 of the impressive Mat Jordan.

Sunday's three F3 Cup races were shared between Stefano Leaney and Alex Fores, a spin while leading the second encounter depriving Fores of a hat-trick and helping to ensure that Leaney took the title. But most unfortunate of all were the Clubmans Sports Prototype drivers, both of whose races were on Saturday and called off.

DAN MASON AND IAN TITCHMARSH

DRIVESHAFT DRAMA ADDS TO GT CUP EXCITEMENT



Jackson and Orange were cruising to overall title until final-race driveshaft scare

READ

Team Hard mechanics replaced a driveshaft in less than 10 minutes to ensure Joshua Jackson and Simon Orange could secure the GT Cup championship.

The Ginetta G55 racers took a hat-trick of podiums in the GTA class to set up what should have been a relatively relaxed coronation drive in Sunday's final endurance race. But just 10 minutes into the final 50-minute encounter, Jackson pulled over at pit exit with a loss of drive. Pushed back up the pitlane by the Team Hard squad, Jackson was out with a new driveshaft 10 minutes later to ensure they didn't end the season in retirement.

After the race, Jackson was relieved the issue only cropped up after the overall – and GTA class – title was already realistically in their hands. "It's a shame the driveshaft went but it's better that it did it when it didn't matter as much, rather than yesterday when it did," he said. "The team did a great job to get it replaced. We've had a great season – a bit of good luck, a bit of bad luck. We got the wins when we needed them and sealed the title, which was our objective for the year."

The pair's nearest competition for the title came from the other side of the garage as Porsche 997 GT3 Cup racers Ben Clayden and Sam Randon came into the final round with, as Randon described, "a mathematical but not so much realistic" chance.



Seale took three wins, two alongside Clutton

READ

Despite four GTB wins, under sunshine and amid a torrential downpour that hampered the early stages of Saturday's endurance race, the reduction in points because of the smaller class entry meant they missed out on the overall title, although they secured the class crown.

"What is so sweet for us is taking second in the overall championship," Randon said. "Someone was looking down on us, as not only did we secure the GTB championship, the car we were battling for P2 overall [the McLaren of John Whitehouse and Steve Ruston] didn't make it to the grid, which then secured the runner-up spot overall."

The races themselves were dominated by JMH Automotive. A win in Saturday's endurance race for Marcus Clutton and John Seale – despite a Seale spin early on – was added to with a victory in Sunday's sprint for Seale, with the pair combining again to lap the field in the final 50-minute encounter in a Lamborghini Huracan that was swapped from the GT3 to the GTO class overnight on Saturday after having restrictors removed.

They were denied a clean sweep by Grahame Tilley's Nissan GT-R in race one, after contact between Seale and John Dhillon's Ferrari, before a gearbox fault ended Tilley's weekend early.

Also leaving the weekend with a hat-trick of successes was Fun Cup racer Henry Dawes. After collecting his Ginetta G55 on Friday, he took three GTA class wins but was denied a fourth by fellow G55 driver Chris Hart.

JOE HUDSON

Smith does enough for Se7ens title

THRUXTON
BARC
24-25 OCTOBER



Smith took the crown and victory in the third and final race

Former British Touring Car Championship racer Jeff Smith was crowned Mini Se7en champion for a second time after three terrific races in wet conditions at Thruxton.

Spencer Wanstall had the early lead in race one, as Smith and Andrew Deviny diced for second. But by lap five of 13, Deviny was seeking the lead as Smith was holding off Lee Roberts. Wanstall then headed for the pits a lap later with alternator problems, ending his race and his title hopes. Deviny therefore took the win with Smith second, while Roberts lost out to Leon Oli Window.

The second race was a battle throughout between Joe Thompson, Wanstall and Smith. There was at least one change of lead practically every lap and, at one point, they were three abreast through Church, with Wanstall ahead at the chicane, only for his sideways exit to hand Smith the lead. It was almost a repeat on the final lap: Wanstall tapped Thompson, who was sent over the grass but held on to win, with Wanstall second from Smith.

Smith finally joined the weekend winners with victory in the last race after another duel with Thompson. With Wanstall out of the running following a spin at the chicane on lap one, Deviny was their nearest threat but, as the rain came down again, Smith consolidated his lead. Thompson was still well clear of Deviny by the flag.

Sam Summerhayes had led the first Mini Miglia race – which shared a grid with the Se7ens – from the chicane on the second lap but, with continuing pressure from Kane Astin and Aaron Smith, he slid off at Noble three laps from the end. Then, as his rivals battled for the lead, Summerhayes joined them again and it was three abreast up Woodham Hill for the final time. Summerhayes managed to get back in front, with Astin just holding off Smith for second as the trio were covered by 0.552s.

Rupert Deeth was in charge from the opening lap of a restarted race two, while Nick Padmore overcame the fast-starting Summerhayes to secure second.

Padmore had managed to open a gap over Deeth in the finale, but his lead was wiped out by a safety car intervention and Deeth doubled up, while Colin Peacock got the better of Summerhayes for third.

Ian Slark was a comfortable winner in the opening Mighty Minis contest, despite David Kirkpatrick briefly threatening. Mark Ditchburn took second on lap seven of 12, with Kirkpatrick just holding onto third from Benjamin Butler.

Kirkpatrick led race two until the rain got heavier and Ditchburn went by up Woodham Hill on lap seven. But on the last lap the lead duo were as one into the chicane, and Kirkpatrick won the drag to the flag with only 0.013s to spare, as Adam Bath was a solitary third.

There was a four-car break from the start of the C1 Challenge race, with LB Racing's Alex Sedgwick, Amigo's Christian England, Mad Rabbit's Alex Day and Hybrid Tune's Stephen James all taking turns to lead. England then fell back with a power issue as his rivals continued their fight, until Sedgwick was the first to pit.

Day led after the first of three hours, from James and Quattro Formaggio's Alistair May but, as the race strategies unfolded, the Hybrid car – now driven by



A total of 45 cars took part in the three-hour Citroen C1 Challenge race

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: JONES

THRUXTON WEEKEND WINNERS

MINI SE7ENS
Race 1 Andrew Deviny
Race 2 Joe Thompson
Race 3 Jeff Smith

MINI MIGLIA
Race 1 Sam Summerhayes
Races 2 & 3 Rupert Deeth

MIGHTY MINIS
Race 1 Ian Slark
Race 2 David Kirkpatrick

C1 CHALLENGE
Hybrid Tune
(Stephen James/Ben Simonds/David Meenan)

KUMHO BMWs
Race 1 Brad Sheehan (M3 E46)
Race 2 Michael Pensavalle (M3 E46)

BARC OPEN SPORTS & SALOONS
Races 1 & 2 Jamie Sturges
(SEAT Leon TCR, below)



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com

Ben Simonds – was a lap up at two hours, from Old Hat's Callum Hutchings/Daniel Bruce, with Quattro Formaggio third in Chris Parkes's hands.

Into the final 20 minutes, James was in the lead Hybrid car, with over a minute in hand over Amigo's Rhys Lloyd, while May was third and Baycon's Oscar Proietti a lap down in fourth.

Lloyd and May made their final stops just before the safety car came out with 10 minutes on the clock, meaning James and Proietti led at the green flag with just six minutes left. And that was how it finished, with the Hybrid trio of James, Simonds and David Meenan taking victory from Oscar/Sandro Proietti, but a late stop/go penalty cost Old Hat third. Mad Rabbit's Day/Rob Austin therefore completed the podium from Old Hat, with Amigo's Lloyd/Mathew Dawson and Quattro Formaggio rounding out the top six.

Brad Sheehan led the opening Kumho BMW race from the third lap, after trailing Darren Morgan-Owen initially. Michael Pensavalle won the second race after an earlier battle with Sheehan, with the decisive move on the exit of the chicane just before his rival ground to a halt, which handed Morgan-Owen second.

PETER SCHERER

PADMORE NOT SLOWING DOWN



Nick Padmore shared a Mini with his dad, Keith, at Thruxton

Nick Padmore's name recently hit the headlines when he lapped way under his own outright circuit record at Goodwood in an Arrows A11 Formula 1 car as part of the Sussex venue's SpeedWeek event. But he was out in something slightly slower at Thruxton last weekend, as he shared a car with father Keith in the Mini Miglia contests.

Padmore has competed in a whole variety of machinery over the years, after graduating from karts to cars in 1994. "I did the Formula First Winter Series a couple of times, before a full season in 1997 when I finished runner-up to Robbie Kerr," he says.

He was then struck down with meningitis and had to learn to walk again, before spending a year in Eurocar V6s and the Kent County Formula Ford Championship, plus a one-off drive in British GT in 1999.

"I did two years in the Ford Fiestas too when they supported the touring cars, before becoming a Radical factory driver, doing the championship with Austin Reynolds and driving all of the chassis they built at the time," he says.

After six years with Radical, Padmore spent the next five racing a Norma in Europe in the VdeV Championship, finishing third in the Proto class in 2011.

It was when he started to make a name in historic racing that his career really began to take off.

"My first historic drive was in Grant Tromans's Osella," Padmore recalls. "That gave me a big break and then I shared Phil Hall's Lola T212."

During his time at Radical he had also worked with Max Smith-Hilliard, who then moved into historic racing himself: "I drove Max's March 783 in 2014, then that led to the Wolf-Williams FW05, my first grand prix car in 2015, before I won the Historic F1 title in the Lotus 77 and then again with the Williams FW07 in both 2016 and '18."

He raced at the Monaco Historique with the FW05 in 2015, had two second places in 2018 with a Lotus 16 and Shadow DN9, and became a Williams Heritage driver.

"I never dreamed I would ever race any cars like these, so count myself as very lucky," he adds. "But I have also raced with Jean-Luc Rihon recently in a BMW 635, Chevron B21 and Porsche GT3 RSR as well as sharing the Mini with my Dad."

At Goodwood earlier this month he raced and demonstrated a Mini, BMW 530i, MGB, Euro NASCAR, AC Cobra, a 700bhp Porsche 935 and the record-breaking Arrows A11.

"Since going into the F1 cars it's all become a blur," he says. "I kept winning to make sure I did the next race. The FW07 is probably my favourite of all – winning in that was unbelievable. I have also driven two of the Williams FW19 Renaults, but never raced them."

Padmore's passionate about his cars and racing, whether it's his ex-grand prix machines or his Mini Miglia. And just to add to his and father Keith's interest, they have also bought a Citroen C1, which they hope to share in next year's C1 Challenge.

PETER SCHERER



Padmore set a new lap record at Goodwood

The 3 Amigos double up in the Birkett

SILVERSTONE
750MC BIRKETT RELAY
24 OCTOBER



Winners in 2019, the trio took the title again

In a feat unprecedented in the 70-year history of the 750 Motor Club's Birkett Six-Hour Team Relay race, BMW Compact drivers Paul Hinson, David Drinkwater and Adam Read won the handicap title for a second year running.

Nineteenth after the first hour around Silverstone's Grand Prix circuit on Saturday, during which Read's engine failed, The 3 Amigos roared back as a rain shower intensified to lead at the two-thirds mark. They hung on to defeat a trio of jostling VW Fun Cup equipes, which completed a lap more, but received two fewer credit laps.

The wetter the weather became, the more the endurance specialists in their tubeframe silhouette Beetles imposed themselves among the 69-car field.

Despite opener James Little's front wheelarch being savaged by a Radical, which crabbed back to the pits with broken suspension, Team 7 WASPP — with Mark Blundell's 1987 Formula 3000 race engineer Martin Angeloni on spanners — earned second overall, edging arch-rivals Premature Acceleration and JPR Fun Cup Boys with debutant Kristian Rose.

Debutantes Sarah Hobson and Kelly Brabin teamed up with Lee Mabbett and Dave Traviss in Toyota Celicas under the Se7en Motorsports banner to grab a strong fifth, pipping Area Motorsport's zippy Honda Civic Type Rs and William Beech in a VW Golf ahead of Kevin Dengate's Red Rascals. Fourth piloting BMW M3s in last year's monsoon, they slipped to seventh in Mazda MX-5s this year.

Rally convert Sacha Kakad and his 2017 Dubai 24 Hours class-winning Audi RS3 LMS put Simpson Motorsport on top after an hour, but the mixed squad, including a substitute Citroen C1, were swallowed by the pack and finished 23rd. RAF Team Hurrican claimed armed-services glory after David Russell's BMW M3 slid into the gravel at Club, disadvantaging the feisty fliers' sister outfit RAF Team Spitfire.

The fight for Scratch honours — greatest distance covered — quickly distilled into a two-horse Radical SR3 race between the quicker of RJ Motorsport's teams, for which EuroBOSS ace Scott Mansell set the race's best lap, and RAW Motorsport.

The latter's tactics had to change when start driver Shane Stoney pitted his car with a sticky throttle following a post-practice cable change. As the their routine stops

Greensall and Milner star at Historic Tourist Trophy

SILVERSTONE
MRL/MSVR
25 OCTOBER

Nigel Greensall converted Lister-Chevrolet owner Chris Milner's brave start into a sensational Stirling Moss Trophy victory, which set the tone for Motor Racing Legends' new RAC Historic Tourist Trophy event on Silverstone's Grand Prix circuit.

Organised in five weeks — the logistics of getting to Portugal for its regular Algarve Classic Festival finale under COVID-19 conditions made the trip unviable — the meeting attracted a superlative entry and Royal Automobile Club patronage.



Tomlin came out on top in HTCC outing

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: WALKER

Greensall and Andrew Smith (Lister-Jaguar) locked out the front row for the one-hour SMT/RAC Woodcote Trophy race, but the owners started. Smith's co-driver Mark Donnor did a brilliant job, shaking off hard-charging Rudi Friedrichs's Jaguar C-type, 2002 Porsche Carrera Cup GB champion Mark Cole (debuting a 1500cc Lotus 11) and John Spiers (Lister-Jaguar Knobbly). Despite pressure from Spiers, it was soloist Cole who chased Donnor into the pits after nine laps.

Friedrichs stopped from the lead next time round and Milner — running behind Justin Maeers (Cooper Monaco), Spiers and Fred Wakeman (Cooper-Jaguar T38) — relayed Greensall, who hared after Smith. The Scot had a half-spin at Club, then ran wide exiting Becketts on lap 19 of 22, where Greensall struck.

"I had wheelspin in top gear down the Hangar Straight," he said after taking the chequered flag by just 0.214 seconds. Cole was third, clear of Patrick Blakeney-Edwards, in Wakeman's Cooper.

Ford Sierra Cosworth turbo cars finished 1-2-3 in the Historic Touring Car Challenge event, David Tomlin having outbraked Julian Thomas to lead into Club, where his rival's brake-troubled machine subsequently visited the gravel trap. Post-stops, Tomlin repassed Mark Wright twice in short order and survived a bash from James Hanson (Group 1 Capri) at Luffield. As Wright's brakes wilted, he kept second as handling issues slowed Calum Lockie in Thomas's car.

In glorious sunshine, 58 starters made an unforgettable sight in the Historic TT feature, before dark clouds gathered. As showers made the going treacherous, the contrasting Shelby Cobras of Thomas and Andrew Jordan (in Adrian Willmott's) slugged it out. AJ pulled alongside the Daytona coupe a couple of times, rounding



Radicals to the fore in 69-car field at the start

were now out of kilter, the lead changed several times, but RAW's Tom Ashton and John MacLeod kept circulating like clockwork while Stoney's machine was fixed and returned. With RJM's Mansell closing by as much as 12 seconds per lap in the slippery final stages, the steadier MacLeod handed back to Ashton to make sure.

The second RJM team finished third, nine laps adrift, anchored by stalwart Charles Graham, who had transferred from Breakell's Heroes when last year's winners committed to Revolution's Portuguese Grand Prix support race. Historic Formula 1 and F5000 racer Neil Glover was an addition to the line-up.

Behind the sports-racers, RNR Performance Cars' Ferrari quartet – headed by Nigel Jenkins's stunning yellow 458 Challenge – hounded down Carl Swift's Area Motorsport SEAT Leon Eurocup to snatch fourth on the line.

More remarkable, though, were the three 7 Race Series Caterham 420R regional teams, which finished sixth, seventh and eighth having fought every inch of the way.

The Midlands quartet repassed the Northern Monkeys in the gloom to win a mighty private battle by a lap, with the Southern crew a second adrift at the flag.

MARCUS PYE



Stirling Moss Trophy winners: Greensall and Milner

Stowe abreast, but there was no way past.

On Dunlop M-section tyres, while the opposition were on Ls, the Cobras exploited superior grip, but Thomas's pit call under a convoluted safety car hiatus gifted Lockie a handsome one-minute lead. A devastating series of fastest laps extended it as the track dried and, when Thomas clambered back in after the second mandatory five-minute stop, he was still way clear of Richard Kent (Jaguar E-type), whose partner Chris Ward had demoted Willmott. Jordan chased Kent to regain second on the penultimate lap.

Grahame and Olly Bryant's four-stopping AC Cobra (two of them for pit infringement penalties) was still fourth, ahead of Jon Minshaw and son Jack (E-type).

Best sports-racer was the ex-Bruce McLaren Lotus 15 of Roger Wills/David Clark in seventh, after James Cottingham's Tojeiro-Jaguar threw a rod when lying fourth.

MARCUS PYE

SILVERSTONE WEEKEND WINNERS

BIRKETT SIX-HOUR RELAY

HANDICAP - 1 The 3 Amigos 3.0: Paul Hinson, David Drinkwater, Adam Read (BMW Compacts) 159 laps (126+33 credit); 2 Team 7 WASPP: James Little, Edward Worthington, Jay Shepherd (VW Fun Cups) 158 (127+31); 3 Premature Acceleration: Morgan Tillbrook, Mark Holme, Colin Kingsnorth (VW Fun Cup Evo 1s) 158 (127+31); 4 JPR Fun Cup Boys: Chris Dovell, Andy Bicknell, Kristian Rose (VW Fun Cups) 158 (127+31); 5 Se7en Motorsports: Lee Mabbett, Sarah Hobson, Kelly Brabin, Dave Traviss (Toyota Celicas) 157 (129+28); 6 Area Motorsport 2: Chris Freeman, Andy Baylie, Jonathan Munday (Honda Civic Type Rs), William Beech (VW Golf GTI) 157 (135+22). **Class winners** Team7 WASPP; Area Motorsport 2; Simpson Motorsport: Sacha Kakad, Hugo Cook (Audi RS3 LMS), Georgia Speed, Chris White (Honda Civic), James Poulton (Citroen C1) 155 (128+27).

SCRATCH - 1 RAW Motorsport: Shane Stoney, John MacLeod (Radical SR3 RSXs), Tom Ashton (Radical SR3 RXX) 152 laps; 2 RJ Motorsport v2.0: Scott Mansell, Mathew Jones, Joe Crook (Radical SR3 RSX), Ash Hicklin, Joe Lock (Radical SR3 RS) +18.44s 152; 3 RJ Motorsport v1.0: Charles Graham (Radical SR3 RS), Alastair Smart (Radical PR6), Neil Glover, Jason Green (Radical SR3 RSXs) 143; 4 RNR Performance Cars: Chris Compton Goddard, Vance Kearney, Richard Dougal (Ferrari 430 Challenges), Nigel Jenkins (Ferrari 458 Challenge) 141; 5 Area Motorsport 1: Rob Baker, Carl Swift (SEAT Leon Eurocup), Luke Handley (VW Golf GTI), David Vincent (Honda Civic Type R) 141; 6 7 Race Series – Midlands: Andrew McMillan, Paul Begley, Matthew Reeve, Matthew Drew (Caterham 420Rs) 139. **CW** Area Motorsport 1; 7 Race Series – Midlands; Team7 WASPP. **Fastest lap** Mansell 2m07.45s (103.66mph). **Pole** RJ Motorsport v2.0. **Starters** 69.

For full results visit: theresultslive.co.uk

MOTOR RACING LEGENDS

STIRLING MOSS TROPHY & RAC WOODCOTE TROPHY
Chris Milner/Nigel Greensall (Lister-Chevrolet Costin)

HISTORIC TOURING CAR CHALLENGE
David Tomlin (Ford Sierra Cosworth RS500)

RAC HISTORIC TOURIST TROPHY
Julian Thomas/Calum Lockie (Shelby Cobra Daytona Coupe, below)



For full results visit: tsl-timing.com



Lombardi (March 751) leads Bob Evans in pursuit of sixth in 1975 Spanish GP

THE LEGACY OF LOMBARDI



FILM REVIEW
BEYOND DRIVEN

"Her name has been undervalued, in a way, because the silence from 1992 up to today is very embarrassing," says Patrizia Lombardi of the legacy left by her auntie and ex-Formula 1 racer Lella – so far the only woman to score a world championship (half) point – at the start of *Beyond Driven*.

Since Giovanni Amati failed to qualify for the 1992 Brazilian Grand Prix aboard her Brabham BT60B, female driver representation in the topflight has been limited to fleeting test and practice session appearances.

As well as the absence of a definitive succession of female F1 driver role models, Lombardi's glass ceiling-smashing achievement has also been masked to a degree by the other events surrounding her rise aboard a March 751 from 24th to sixth in the 1975 Spanish GP. Namely, the threat of a boycott – with reigning champion Emerson Fittipaldi electing to miss the Montjuic race – owing to the poor installation of the barriers, and the failure of Rolf Stommelen's rear wing on his Hill GH1, which resulted in his crashing and the death of five spectators.

These factors are the inspiration behind the 75-minute documentary *Beyond Driven*. At the time of its production – the tail end of 2019 – there had been 774 F1 drivers, only five of which were female.

Using interviews with Amati, Alice Powell, Tatiana Calderon, Beitske Visser, Carmen Jorda, Vicky Piria and the Al Qubaisi sisters, *Beyond Driven* seeks to both tell the career of Lombardi and assess the hurdles to greater female participation in motorsport.

By extension, it's aimed at a general audience and not diehard motorsport fans – who might find the hand-holding throughout a touch excessive.

Even with that excused, it's far from a flawless presentation. The account of Lombardi's career retold via exaggerated cartoons spliced liberally between choppy jumps from the present day back to the 1970s won't be to everyone's taste. Nor will the frustrating sound editing – those engine notes and gearshifts don't match what's on screen!

This is, of course, to miss the point of *Beyond Driven*. It brings together in complete fashion the trials and tribulations of an often-unbalanced media presentation – Amati says she enjoyed her junior career far more than her time in F1 for this reason – the battle to chase sponsors and funding, plus the withering attitudes of many male competitors.

The split identity of *Beyond Driven* means it would benefit from a longer running time. There are staggering snippets from Lombardi's life, including the village priest telling her to effectively come to her senses and chase stereotypical female hobbies instead. But the hasty pace of the documentary gives a sense that the audience is missing out on a load more detail about this fascinating character, as it changes tack to contemporary onboard footage.

After a quick wrap-up of Lombardi's later sportscar success, including winning both six-hour races at Pergusa and Vallelunga in 1979, and her death at the age of 50 owing to breast cancer, *Beyond Driven* also touches upon the founding of W Series.

Here is where it all comes together best, and frames the debate perfectly. The creation of the female-only championship is not about segregation or positive discrimination. It's about providing opportunity.

As a motorsport documentary, there's more to be desired. But as a political narrative, its chief aim, *Beyond Driven* is an important watch and its existence should be celebrated.

MATT KEW

YouTube youtube.com/AUTOSPORTdotcom



With the news that Haas won't be retaining the services of either Romain Grosjean or Kevin Magnussen next season, Autosport looks at the knock-on effects this might have on the potential 2021 Formula 1 driver line-ups. **Go to bit.ly/2021grid**

autosport.com/podcast



The Autosport Formula 1 team analyses last weekend's race at the Algarve Circuit in which Lewis Hamilton broke Michael Schumacher's wins record by scoring his 92nd victory and Alexander Albon's anonymous run to 12th made his Red Bull future all the more precarious.

WHAT'S ON

INTERNATIONAL MOTORSPORT

Emilia Romagna GP
F1 World Championship
Round 13/17
Imola, Italy
1 November
TV **Live** Sky Sports F1, Sunday 1205
TV **Highlights** Sky Sports F1, Sun 1700, Channel 4, Sun 1830

Formula Renault Eurocup
Round 8/10
Imola, Italy
31 October-1 November

Formula Regional European
Round 6/8
Barcelona, Spain
31 October-1 November
Livestream on Motorsport.tv, Saturday 1000, 1555, Sun 0920

Euroformula Open
Round 7/8
Barcelona, Spain
31 October-1 November

International GT Open
Round 6/6
Barcelona, Spain
31 October-1 November

European Le Mans Series
Round 5/5
Algarve, Portugal
1 November
Livestream on Motorsport.tv, Sat 1335, Sun 1040

IMSA SportsCar
Round 10/11
Laguna Seca, USA
1 November

World Touring Car Cup
Round 5/6
Motorland Aragon, Spain
1 November
TV **Live** Eurosport 2, Sun 0800, 1100, 1300



Emilia Romagna GP

NASCAR Cup
Round 35/36
Martinsville, USA
1 November
TV **Live** Free Sports, Sun 1830

NASCAR Xfinity Series
Round 32/33
Martinsville, USA
31 October
TV **Live** Premier Sports 2, Sun 0000

NASCAR Truck Series
Round 22/23
Martinsville, USA
20 October
TV **Live** Premier Sports 2, Fri 2330

Super TC2000
Round 4
Cordoba, Argentina
1 November

UK MOTORSPORT

Knockhill SMRC
31 October
Citroen C1s, Minis, Hot Hatch, Legends, Classic Sports and Saloons

Croft BRSCC
31 October
Fiestas, CityCar Cup, Fiesta Juniors, Clubsport Trophy

Oulton Park BARC
31 October
Junior Saloons, CNC Heads Sports/Saloons, Hyundai Cup, Superkarts

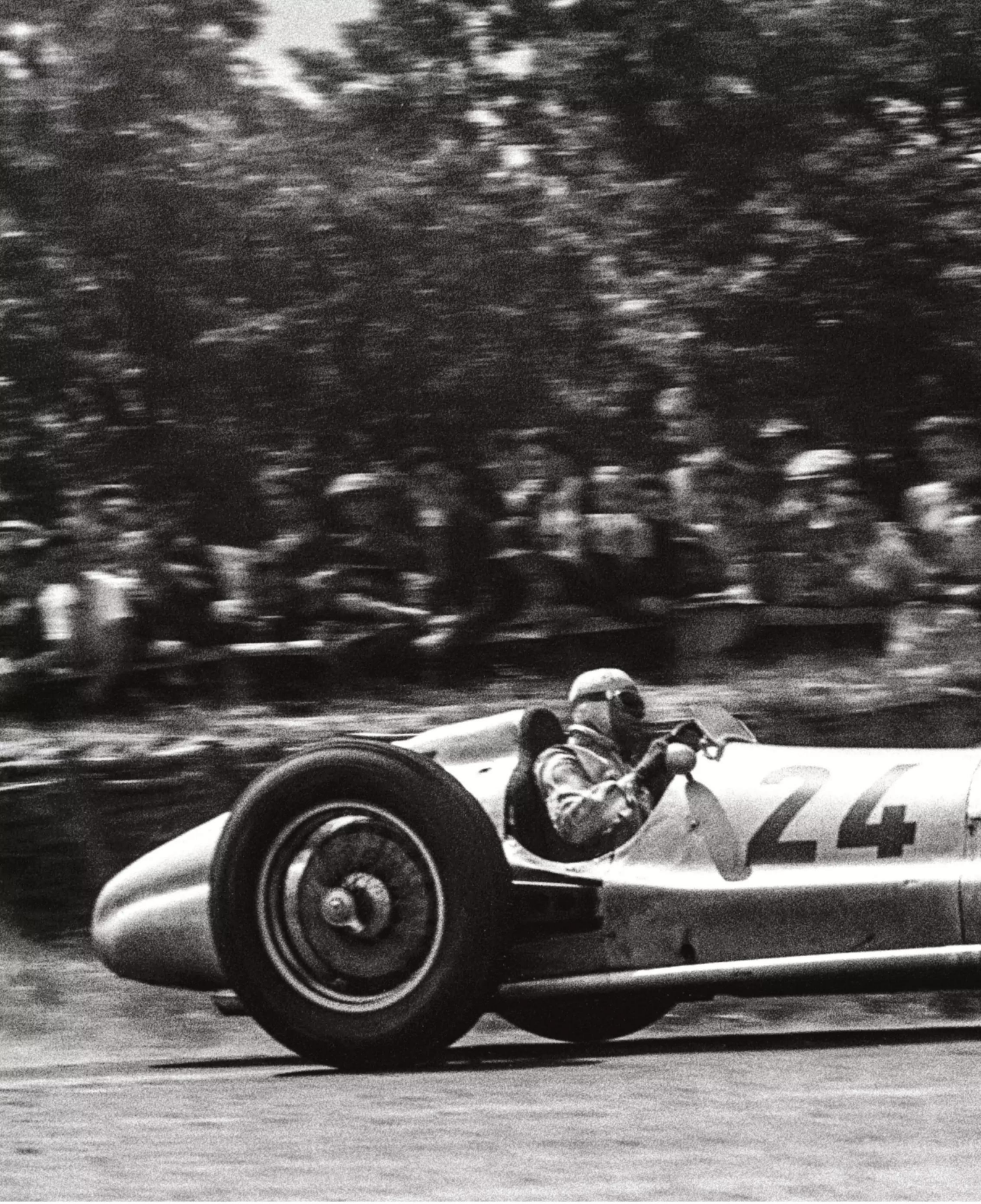
Silverstone HSCC*
31 October-1 November
Walter Hayes Trophy, Allcomers

Snetterton BRSCC
31 October-1 November
Britcar, Caterham Roadsports, Caterham 270Rs, Caterham 310Rs, Caterham Sevens

Thruxton BARC
31 October-1 November
Trucks, Classic Touring Cars, Tiedman Trophy, Open Sports and Saloons

Brands Hatch MSVR
31 October-1 November
EnduroKa, Trackday Trophy, Trackday Championship, MSV Supercup

Mallory Park CSCC
1 November
Swinging 60s, Tin Tops, Future Classics, Magnificent Sevens, Special Saloons, Modern Classics, New Millennium, Open Series, Turbo Tin Tops
***Behind closed doors**

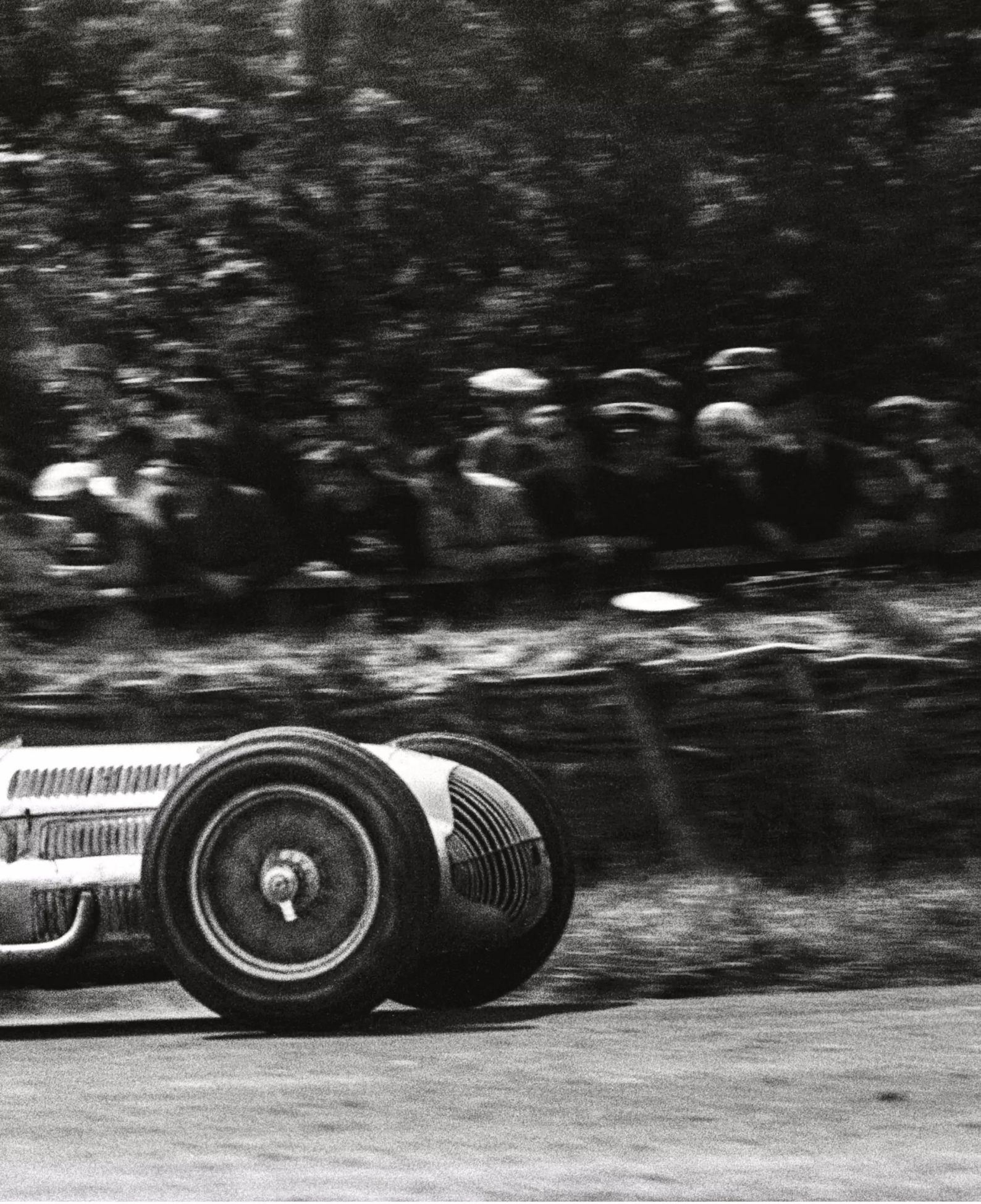


FROM THE ARCHIVE

Rudolf Caracciola presses on in his Mercedes-Benz W154 in the French Grand Prix at Reims on 3 July 1938. Mercedes claimed a dominant 1-2-3 against a thin field featuring two Talbots, Jean-Pierre Wimille's Bugatti and a pair of Auto Unions driven by Christian Kautz and Rudolf Hasse – both of whom crashed out on the first lap. Still, the Mercedes trio put on a show for the French crowd and set a fast pace, as Manfred von Brauchitsch beat Caracciola at an average speed of just over 101mph, with Hermann Lang finishing third

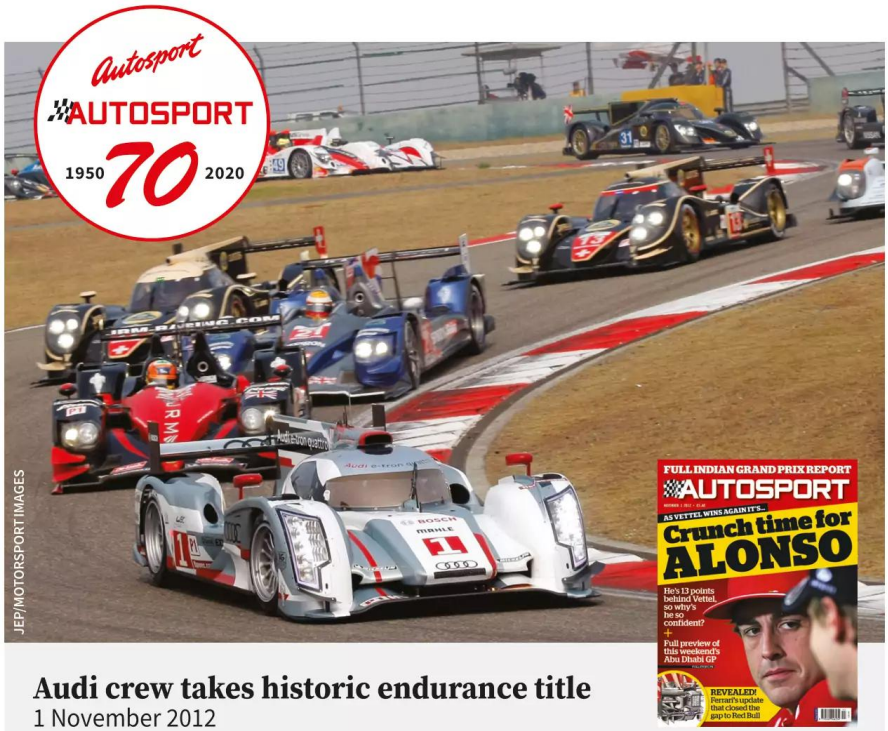
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Audi crew takes historic endurance title

1 November 2012

Audi trio Andre Lotterer, Benoit Treluyer and Marcel Fassler became the first world sportscar champions for two decades this week in 2012.

That year's Le Mans winners travelled to the World Endurance Championship finale at Shanghai with a 16.5-point advantage over team-mates Allan McNish and Tom Kristensen. The championship leaders survived a clash with a slower car to come home third, one spot behind the other R18 e-tron quattro, to take the crown. It was the first time a world sportscar title had been awarded since Peugeot drivers Derek Warwick and Yannick Dalmas had triumphed in 1992.

The biggest interest in the race itself came from the pace of the Toyota TS030 HYBRID, which had joined the series at Le Mans four months earlier. A combination of more downforce and better punch out of the corners in traffic gave Alexander Wurz and Nicolas Lapierre an edge over the Audis. They duly took their third win of the season by nearly a minute.

Audi Sport boss Wolfgang Ullrich knew the German manufacturer would need to react if it was to retain its titles in 2013. "We know we have some points where we can improve," he said. "We will react and we start tomorrow." Audi would succeed, winning all the major WEC prizes the following year, including Le Mans.

Elsewhere in the 1 November issue of the magazine, we reviewed the British Touring Car Championship and Formula Renault 3.5 seasons. Gordon Shedden had taken the first of his three BTCC titles that year and pipped Jason Plato to first in our driver rankings, while FR3.5 champion Robin Frijns also topped the season review top 10. Future Formula E champion Antonio Felix da Costa was second, ahead of series runner-up Jules Bianchi.



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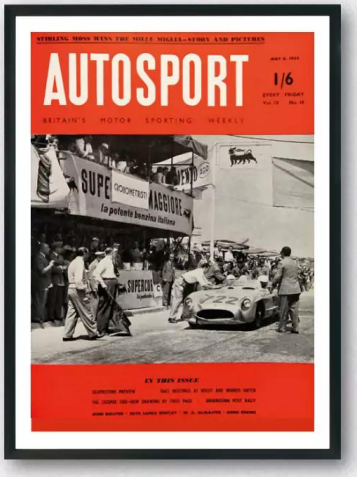
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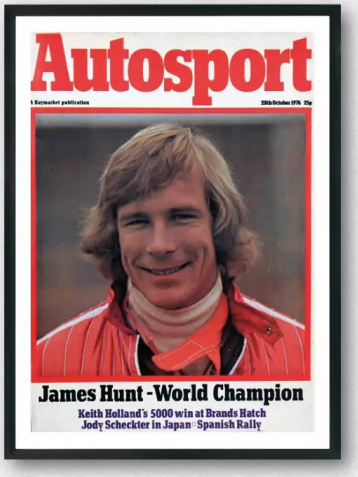
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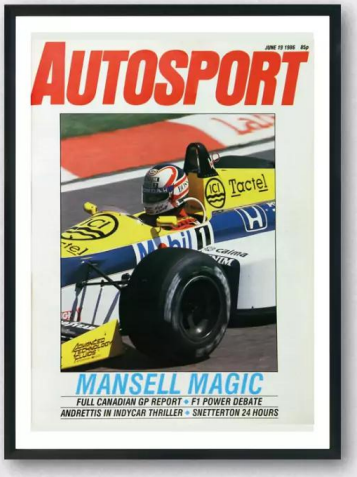
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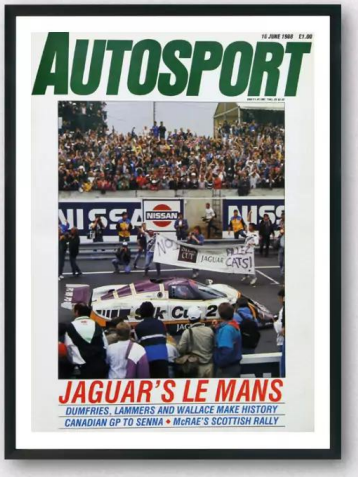
BRITAIN'S BEST MOTORSPORT WEEKLY CELEBRATIONS

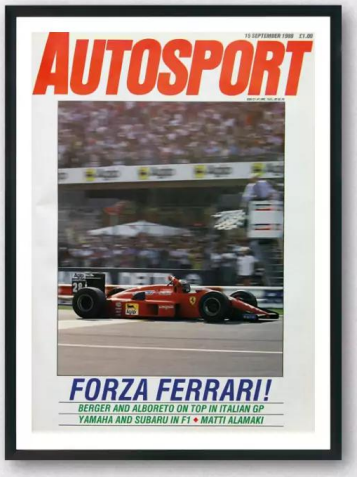
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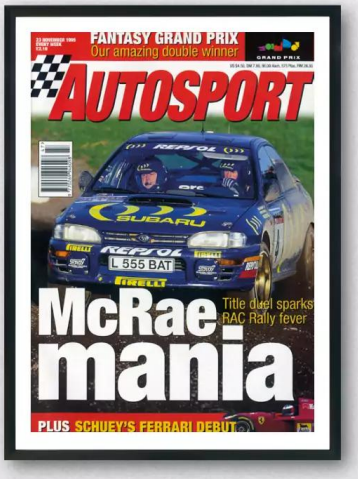














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