DAMON: ALL FIRED UP

HILL ON MICHAEL SCHUMACHER AND LIFE AT JORDAN

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AUTOSPORT

SPECIAL PREVIEW ISSUE

BRITISH GRAND PRIX

THE BIG FIGHT

FERRARI V McLAREN

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AUTOSPORT

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Ads production 0181- 943 5909 (fax: 5850)
Editorial, advertising and circulation: 38-42 Hampton Road, Teddington, Middlesex TW11 0JE
Customer Services: 01795 414817; **Back numbers**: 01235 534323; Publishing, trade and further subscription details on page 126
AUTOSPORT is published by Haymarket Specialist Motoring Ltd, a subsidiary of Haymarket Magazines Ltd, 38-42 Hampton Road, Teddington, Middx

Online: www.autosportmag.com **or for AOL:** keyword autosport
Printed by St Ives (Peterborough) plc & BR Hubbard Printers Ltd, Sheffield

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ISSN 0269 ± 946X

Main cover photo: LAT
Contents photos: Sutton Images McLein/LAT; LAT

Printed in England MEMBER OF THE AUDIT BUREAU OF CIRCULATIONS ABC

Coates/LAT

Three that got away... 1

Coulthard was elbowed out of the way by Ferrari's star driver in Argentina

Villeneuve warns McLaren: Shape up or lose title

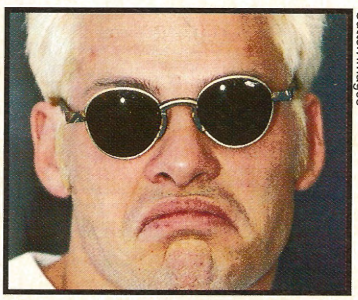
McLaren must up its game now to fend off Schumacher's threat, says the World Champion. By Andrew Benson

Jacques Villeneuve has warned McLaren that it risks losing the Formula 1 world title race to Michael Schumacher if it doesn't start to make the most of its superior machinery.

The Canadian made the claim after seeing the 29-year-old German reduce his 22-point deficit to Mika Hakkinen to just six points over the past two Grands Prix.

'Michael has a very good chance of winning the title,' said Villeneuve, during pre-race testing for this weekend's British Grand Prix. 'The McLaren package is a better one, but they seem to be not making the best out of it lately. McLaren had, and still have, the upper hand, but somehow they are managing to screw it up.'

Ferrari looks to have closed dramatically on McLaren in pace in the past few weeks, and has also had the upper hand in luck. Both McLarens retired from the Canadian Grand Prix on June 7, which Schumacher won. Then, after a controversial aborted start at the French Grand Prix two weeks ago (see AUTOSPORT, July 2), Schumacher and his team mate Eddie Irvine came first and second.



Sutton Images

Villeneuve: unimpressed by the McLarens

'Everything seems to be going well for Ferrari,' said Villeneuve, who recovered from a mid-season wobble to beat Schumacher last year. 'Even when there are a few glitches on the track, it seems to go their way. If they keep getting this help, then they might win it.'

The pressure could not be greater on McLaren going to Silverstone. Not only does it head into the event after two troubled races, but Ferrari is riding a wave of confidence. McLaren knows it must capitalise on a track which should accentuate the advantages its Mercedes-powered MP4-13 holds over the Italian marque's F300.

In the races to come, the aerodynamic superiority of the McLaren is not expected to be so crucial. This has led to a growing feeling in F1 that if it does not make the most of this weekend, it will find it very tough to hold off Schumacher.

Last week's major Silverstone test suggested that the two teams are closely matched. The McLarens seem to have an advantage of around 0.2s a lap in qualifying trim, but Schumacher is on a par on a race run.

Both teams will have developments on their cars for Silverstone. McLaren will use a new diffuser that was tried by Hakkinen on the last day of the test, and Ferrari should have a new front wing.

Schumacher was faster than the two McLaren drivers at the three-day test (see page 10), but the German was impressed by Hakkinen's best on the second day, which was a second quicker than his fastest Thursday lap. The Ferrari driver said: 'Qualifying will be tough – Hakkinen

Schumacher was as fast as the McLarens in the test at Silverstone last week

Sutton Images

2 Both silver cars failed to finish in Canada, gifting the German a victory

Allsport

3 Hakkinen spun in France, and David Coulthard was delayed by pit troubles

McLaren under pressure

did a very good lap – but it's looking good for the race. We seem to be really quick in those conditions and the tyres seem to be consistent as well.

'I said after Canada that France and Silverstone would show if we are with the music or not. If we are competitive at both those tracks, we should be competitive everywhere.'

Insiders feel that the two teams are so close that their tyres could be the deciding issue. Ferrari will benefit from another new development by its supplier, Goodyear, this weekend. The team feels that hot weather will show off its rubber to best effect.

Meanwhile, Irvine is building the pressure on McLaren. The 32-year-old Ulsterman said at Magny-Cours last month that he believed McLaren had blown its chances of the title. Recently, he added: 'They've got an advantage over us. Compare their race times (in France) to mine. I wasn't going flat out because it wasn't in my interests to, but I couldn't have got near the times the McLarens were doing. Michael did, but that's him. If you look at normal people, then you have to say that McLaren is a step ahead of us.

'Silverstone will be a difficult one because McLaren has been testing there all year. But I see it as being close everywhere from now on.'

However, championship leader Hakkinen claims he is not ruffled by Ferrari's onslaught. 'We had a good test,' he said at Silverstone. 'I'm very happy. We'll just have to wait and see. There is a lot of talk going on, but I don't feel under any increased pressure from Michael. When you are leading the championship, the pressure is bound to be greater because you are there to be shot at.

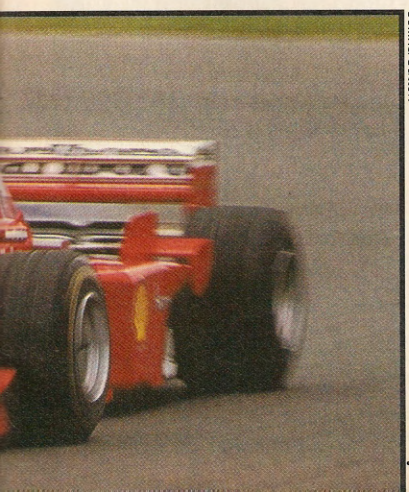
'I did not get carried away when everyone was saying we were so far ahead of the rest and I am not getting myself bothered now they think we are going to be caught.

'McLaren is leading the championship and is still very strong, but we have to concentrate and continue working hard to keep our edge,' said Hakkinen. 'There is half the season to go and so many things can happen, but I am still confident.

'I don't feel any pressure. I have been around too long to let this bother me. It would be foolish to allow myself to be distracted by anything people might have to say. It is good to be in front, but I am taking nothing for granted.'

● Additional reporting Tim Scott

> **"McLaren have the upper hand, but they're still managing to screw it up"**
> **JACQUES VILLENEUVE**



Collins/Sutton

Bouncing back

Coulthard believes he can still win the title, but time is running out

David Coulthard fervently hopes that the British Grand Prix will be where he finally puts this season's bad luck behind him.

The 27-year-old McLaren driver has scored just one point in the last three races following two retirements and a problem with his car's refuelling rig. He is 20 points behind Hakkinen and 14 behind Schumacher. He is in real danger of losing touch with the leading pair.

Coulthard said: 'It is going to be difficult to pull back 20 points, but it is still possible. I am not going to adopt a negative attitude. I will try to win the British Grand Prix and take the rest of the year from there.'

Some have suggested that McLaren, where Hakkinen and Coulthard officially share equal number one status, may start to put its weight behind the Finn to ensure that its two drivers do not lose out by taking points off each other.

However, McLaren's strict policy is that team orders do not come into play until one driver no longer has a mathematical chance of winning the championship title.

Hakkinen also still owes Coulthard a win after he was handed victory in the opening race of the season.

The Finn said: 'At this time of the season, it would be unreasonable to expect David to become a number two driver. He is still going flat out for the title himself and still has a chance, although he is 20 points behind me.

'He is a very quick driver who has been unlucky. He could come back into contention. The title is between the three of us, but as it stands, they both have to beat me.'

Lawrence/LAT

Sutton Images

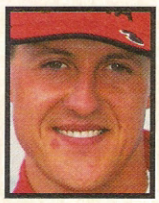
Coulthard has not had the rub of the green, but he is undeterred and still thinks he can fight back

Ferrari boss: Schuey to stay

Michael Schumacher will stay at Ferrari at least until the end of next year, Fiat boss Gianni Agnelli said last week in what amounts to an official confirmation that the German will not quit the Italian team for McLaren in 1999.

The 77-year-old, who has stepped down as Fiat president, but who remains as honorary president, said: 'We will hang on to Schumacher certainly.'

From some people the claim could have been taken with a pinch of salt, but Agnelli has a reputation as a very serious man. If he makes a public statement about Ferrari, he does so because it is true. In 1995, he declared that Schumacher had signed for Ferrari weeks before the deal was officially announced.



Schuey: staying

Ferrari is aware it would lose its ability to win races and challenge for World Championships if Schumacher was to leave. Thus, it is trying to persuade him to extend his contract, perhaps to the end of 2001. That is the same duration as the new contract signed by sporting director Jean Todt, who the German is believed to have lobbied the team to keep.

Agnelli said: 'At the moment, we have an agreement to 1999. Next year is okay, and we are trying to have Michael for the future.'

Schumacher's manager, Willi Weber, said last week that he 'can imagine Schumacher staying at Ferrari for another three years'.

Any new contract for Schumacher will include a pay rise from the US$30 million (£18.75 million) that he is thought to earn this year, and it is believed that Schumacher has also concluded an agreement to use Ferrari's Prancing Horse symbol in his personal merchandising.

The German is understood to have a clause in his contract that he can quit Ferrari at the end of this year if he does not win the championship. However, it seems that he prefers the freedom he has at Ferrari to mould the team the way he wants to. At McLaren, he would be in the best car, but would have to fit in with the team's wishes in many areas.

Many believe that Schumacher prefers the boost his image will receive if he becomes the first man to win the World Championship for Ferrari for 19 years than the probably larger number of race victories he could achieve at McLaren.

Ferrari, meanwhile, knows that it is held to ransom by Schumacher, but while he is winning races it does not mind.

Further evidence for the German staying at Ferrari is the feeling that Eddie Irvine, who Schumacher feels is his best-ever team mate, is on the verge of signing to stay on for his fourth season.

Irvine is making noises about looking elsewhere, but these have been interpreted in some circles as an attempt by the Irishman to boost his salary. He knows that if Schumacher stays, the German will want him as well. Schumacher trusts the Irishman's judgement and can leave him to test for him.

Irvine said: 'It's a matter of deciding: "Is this the best car available to me or is there a car nearly as good with a lot better opportunity that would give me more power and confidence?" It's not good for your psyche if you say something and it's ignored because Michael is all-powerful. I've got to sit down and really think what direction I want to go.'

A Ferrari spokesman said that the team is 'working to stay with Eddie. We don't need to change drivers. He is doing a fantastic job this year.'

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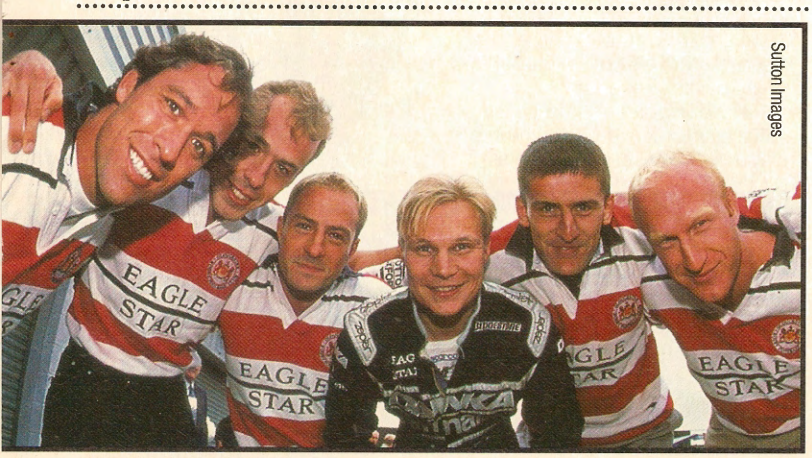


Sutton Images

MIKA SALO JOINED the union last week. Rugby Union, that is. The Arrows number one got to grips with the stars from another of Tom Walkinshaw's ventures, Gloucester Rugby Club, when they visited Silverstone's F1 tests. They agreed not to swap roles...

British deal fuels Audi F1 stories

Speculation that German car giant Audi is considering a Grand Prix assault was heightened last week when the company purchased a Formula 1 facility in Norfolk.

The company, which acquired engine expert Cosworth last month, has bought the TOM'S factory that was built at the beginning of the decade to house Toyota's abandoned F1 assault.

Sources close to Audi feel that F1 is not at the forefront of the company's plans just now. However, an assault on the World Championship could be considered at the start of the new millennium.

TOM'S is expected to be used as the British base for Audi's assault on the Le Mans sportscar race next year. Audi Sport boss Wolfgang Ullrich did little to dampen F1 talk when he said: 'If we've bought TOM'S and Cosworth, it's because we want to involve them in motor racing programmes. All we can say is we'll use them as producers or suppliers of race parts.'

Although Ullrich did not specify that the 'racing programmes' were necessarily Audi's, his remarks would appear to be bad news for Ford, which is understood to be hoping to buy back the racing division of Cosworth from Audi.

Cosworth has a contract with Ford to supply it with F1 engines until 2000.

Hill doubts Honda in '99

Damon Hill has misgivings about Honda's ability to race competitively on its expected return to Formula 1 next year.

Honda is tipped to build its own car to enter the sport in 1999 (see AUTOSPORT, June 11), despite the extreme difficulties it will have setting up a new team in the short time available.

Hill, whose Jordan 198 uses a customer Mugen Honda engine, said: 'I don't know the real situation there, but until they can prove they can build a competitive modern-day F1 engine, they shouldn't even consider building their own car.'

Hill criticised the Mugen engine. 'It's got a big hollow in the torque curve,' he said, 'it doesn't have a very good spread of power, and it doesn't have a lot of it where it does have it! Also, it keeps breaking. We've been trying to get the message through to them.'

However, he said he had no doubts that Honda has the ability to succeed. 'If they were really to do it properly, they would throw everything at it. I just wish we could get our hands on that resource.'

Honda is to start testing towards the end of this year with a chassis designed by Italian race car constructor Dallara. Champ Car star Alex Zanardi and Japanese F1 rookie Toranosuke Takagi are being tipped as drivers.

Gerhard Berger (back left) was announced as BMW's new director of motorsport on Monday in the presence of (clockwise) the German marque's marketing boss Karl-Heinz Kalbfell, BMW engine guru Paul Rosche and Frank Williams, whose team will use the firm's engines from 2000

Berger takes up BMW post

Former Grand Prix driver Gerhard Berger has retired from the cockpit and been appointed as motorsport director of German car giant BMW.

The 38-year-old has signed a five-year contract with BMW and will concentrate on the company's Formula 1 programme with Williams. The company's new V10 engine will be tested extensively next year prior to a debut in 2000.

Berger has strong contacts with BMW: he raced for it in the European Touring Car Championship in the '80s; it helped him make his F1 debut in 1984; and he won the company's last Grand Prix victory, with a Benetton-BMW in 1986.

He said: 'I have retired and I didn't want to waste my expertise in motor racing. BMW is a logical choice because of my very good relationship with the company. Since I knew that BMW was starting an F1 programme, I wanted to be a part of the team and work for them.'

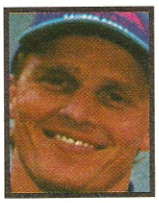
Berger, who will not be involved in test-driving the F1 car, said: 'This is a strong role, something I am going to take seriously, and I will work as much as necessary.'

BMW Motorsport boss Karl-Heinz Kalbfell said: 'We are returning to F1 as learners. Hardly anyone knows the structures and technical demands better than Berger – he will be our man on the scene.'

Herbert facing the axe at Sauber

Briton Johnny Herbert is said to be increasingly likely to leave Sauber at the end of this season.

He has already admitted that he is looking elsewhere for a drive next year.



Herbert: moving?

Although Herbert has outqualified team mate Jean Alesi five to three this season, team boss Peter Sauber is said by Swiss sources to feel that the 34-year-old is not performing as well as he might.

Sauber is thought to have put Jordan's Ralf Schumacher at the top of his list. That seems an odd preference, because he has had an erratic season so far, making several poor starts and having too many accidents. Sauber's list also includes former Sauber favourite Heinz-Harald Frentzen, Stewart's Rubens Barrichello and Sauber tester Jorg Muller.

Alesi, who has been linked to Honda's new team, is expected to be held to his contract, which runs until the end of 1999.

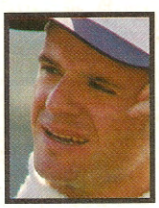
Herbert said he has had exploratory 'natters' with Williams, Prost and Jordan. 'I am happy with Sauber, although I would like the results to be better. But the potential is there,' he said.

Bridgestone's use of wider fronts to negate the grooves looks to have been curbed for '99

Latest Ford V10 fails to impress

Ford will introduce a modified engine at the British Grand Prix – but driver Rubens Barrichello is still not optimistic that the team can qualify in the top 10 this weekend.

The Brazilian tried the engine at the Silverstone test last week and found it 'a little better on the bottom end and more driveable. We thought it would be better at the top, but it wasn't.' But he added: 'It seems to have good potential.'



Barrichello: test

Nick Hayes, project leader at engine builder Cosworth, said he hoped the revisions provided an improvement throughout.

Stewart is expected to use the new engine at least in qualifying for the British GP.

The first Phase Five engine blew up after half a lap after a suspected bearing failure, but the second ran without problem. Barrichello had already suffered a failure in an earlier-spec engine.

The Brazilian split the Saubers with 14th quickest time, with team mate Jos Verstappen 18th. The team is having trouble getting the car to handle in the way the drivers want.

Barrichello thinks the new engine is an improvement but would like more top-end power

Extra groove plan nears reality

The sport's governing body has admitted to Formula 1 teams that it is considering adding an extra groove to front tyres next season.

Charlie Whiting, technical delegate of the sport's governing body, the FIA, broke the news, revealed in AUTOSPORT, July 2, to F1 designers at a meeting of the Technical Working Group talking shop. He made no mention of the lateral grooves that FIA sources talked of at the French Grand Prix.

The FIA is determined to cut cornering speeds again after the failure of this year's new rules to do more than peg speeds back to the same level as in 1997. However, with the idea still in its infancy, and discussions with tyre companies incomplete, it is believed that the suggestion of a lateral groove may have been made to frighten teams into agreeing to the imposition of a maximum width of front wheel.

This was agreed at the meeting, where Whiting is understood to have discussed only the possibility of a fourth circumferential groove.

The FIA wants to restrict the width of front tyres so that when it adds an extra groove the companies do not get round it by widening the tyres, as they have done this year. Bridgestone is testing a series of fronts even wider than this year's.

Mods give Villeneuve podium hope

Williams star Jacques Villeneuve is hoping that new aerodynamic parts on his team's FW20 car will enable him to battle for his first podium position of the year in this weekend's British Grand Prix.

The team tried new, shorter sidepods at last week's Silverstone test, and both Villeneuve and Heinz-Harald Frentzen felt that they improved the car's major handicap this year – rear-end instability.

Villeneuve said: 'This is a perfect track for aerodynamics because you are always at high-speed in the corners, so I'm looking forward to the race weekend here.

'It's difficult to quantify in lap time, but it did improve the car in the rear-end – it's a little bit more stable. We just have to work a little bit more with it.'

'Hopefully, we can fight with the Ferraris and, depending on the way the tyres are, maybe the McLarens. I hope I'm not mistaken.'

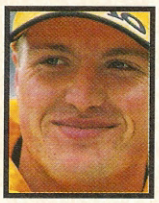
Frentzen said: 'It was a good test. The new parts definitely help the driveability of the car. I was quite happy with the long run I did, although I have not yet perfected the qualifying set-up.'

The German said that the test had confirmed his hopes that the new sidepods would be worth 0.3-0.4s a lap.

Damon cautious after Jordan tops test times

Damon Hill has warned that Jordan should not expect a miracle return to competitiveness at the British Grand Prix, despite team mate Ralf Schumacher setting the fastest time at last week's Silverstone test.

The 22-year-old German narrowly edged out brother Michael by a few thousandths of a second for the quickest lap of the three-day dress rehearsal for this weekend's event. But because he set his best time on a flat-out qualifying-style run on low tanks and new tyres, while Michael and the other top drivers and teams preferred to concentrate on race-trim testing, the younger Schumacher looks artificially competitive.



Schumacher: top

Nevertheless, new aerodynamic parts introduced at the test have given Jordan hope that it can challenge more consistently at the front of the grid.

Both Hill and Schumacher thought that the new, shorter sidepods, revised barge boards between the 'pods and the front wheels, and a revised exhaust system improved the car.

Hill said: 'We are not going to get in front of the Ferraris and McLarens, but we can battle with the likes of Williams and Benetton.

'I am very pleased with the new modifications. I feel that the work done in testing will have a positive effect not only at Silverstone, but also at other circuits.'

Adding to the feeling of optimism at Jordan, test driver Pedro de la Rosa put in a very strong showing, setting a time just 0.2s slower than Hill despite running with an older specification car and tyres.

McLaren and Ferrari emerged from the test as the two quickest teams, with Schumacher almost matching his younger brother on a race-simulation run, and the McLarens not far behind. Mika Hakkinen also tried a new diffuser that is expected to be seen at the race weekend. He said the test had been 'very positive.'

Jacques Villeneuve and Heinz-Harald Frentzen were pleased with modifications to the Williams FW20, but Sauber and Stewart did not have such a happy time.

British GP preview Page 30

Silverstone times

1 Ralf Schumacher (Jordan 198)	1m24.78s
2 Michael Schumacher (Ferrari F300)	1m24.78s
3 David Coulthard (McLaren MP4-13)	1m25.18s
4 Giancarlo Fisichella (Benetton B198)	1m25.22s
5 Alexander Wurz (Benetton B198)	1m25.32s
6 H-H Frentzen (Williams FW20)	1m25.38s
7 Jacques Villeneuve (Williams FW20)	1m25.38s
8 Mika Hakkinen (McLaren MP4-13)	1m25.40s
9 Damon Hill (Jordan 198)	1m25.87s
10 Pedro de la Rosa (Jordan 198)	1m26.16s
11 Eddie Irvine (Ferrari F300)	1m26.17s
12 Mika Salo (Arrows A19)	1m26.56s
13 Jean Alesi (Sauber C17)	1m26.64s
14 Rubens Barrichello (Stewart SF-2)	1m26.67s
15 Johnny Herbert (Sauber C17)	1m26.95s
16 Olivier Panis (Prost AP01)	1m27.07s
17 Jarno Trulli (Prost AP01)	1m27.14s
18 Jos Verstappen (Stewart SF-2)	1m27.14s
19 Pedro Diniz (Arrows A19)	1m27.53s
20 Toranosuke Takagi (Tyrrell 026)	1m27.53s
21 Shinji Nakano (Minardi M198)	1m28.62s
22 Esteban Tuero (Minardi M198)	1m28.84s

Sutton Images

Arrows lifted by new engine

The Arrows team is hopeful that a new version of its in-house engine will boost its performance at this weekend's British Grand Prix.

Drivers Mika Salo and Pedro Diniz were both impressed by the new V10 in the major Silverstone test last week, praising its power and especially its driveability.

Salo was 12th quickest at the test, splitting the Ferrari of Eddie Irvine and Sauber's Jean Alesi, despite only a brief run with the uprated engine.

The 30-year-old Finn said: 'It was very promising and it gave quite a big gain. It's not that big a leap in power, but it's very driveable, and it will help us get to the next stage with the car. We'd sort of ended up going round in circles, but now we've got a better engine we can look at taking a step forward with the set-up.'

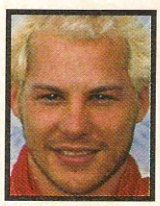
But Salo counselled against the team getting its hopes too high. 'It's still not enough for us,' he said. 'But then that's the same for everyone. Racing drivers can never have enough power.'

The team is planning to try a long-wheelbase version of its A19 car, in line with recent F1 fashion, in the coming weeks. Technical director John Barnard said: 'We're going to test some geometry variations and once we've done that it will give us information about which way to do the longer car.'

'No BAR deal', claims Villeneuve

Jacques Villeneuve last week denied he has decided to drive for the new British American Racing team next year.

Sources insist the World Champion will quit Williams for the outfit being set up by his manager, Craig Pollock, and top racing car constructor Reynard, with which he won the IndyCar World Series in 1995 (see AUTOSPORT, July 2).



Villeneuve: denial

Villeneuve claimed: 'Next year is a big question mark for now. I don't know what I'm doing yet, and there is no deadline.'

However, sources say Villeneuve will drive for BAR and that the reason all those concerned are denying it is that he is forbidden by his Williams contract to sign for another team until a certain, unknown, date.

That date is thought to be imminent, and it is expected that Villeneuve's links with BAR will be announced within the next month.

New teams always take a long time to come to terms with the demands of F1, but with Williams using the same Mecachrome engine as BAR next season, Villeneuve looks to have decided this is a risk worth taking.

FORMER GRAND PRIX TEAM owner Ken Tyrrell was presented with his second British Automobile Racing Club Gold Medal at Thruxton on Sunday by club president Lord March. The award is made for outstanding achievement in motor racing by a Briton

Bloxham

Korea 'not ready' for GP

The boss of the track South Korea hopes will host the country's first Grand Prix has admitted that it will not be ready to be added to the Formula 1 calendar until the turn of the century.

John Kim – the project manager of the Sepoong track that is being built on the North-East Asian country's west coast– said that although the track had been scheduled for completion in 1998, it will now not be finished until next year at the earliest.

He said the track , about 110 miles south of the capital Seoul, is 20% complete, and added that the crash of the region's economy had affected the chances of holding the race.

But he claimed this was not because there is a shortage of money to finish building, rather that the collapse of the country's currency would make it difficult for people to afford the admission prices needed to cover costs.

But while South Korea will have to wait for its F1 debut, insiders expect both China and Malaysia to be on the calendar next season (see AUTOSPORT, June 25).

Some say that Malaysia's race may have escaped the ravages of the Asian crash because the government is acting as a guarantor, using it to boost the country's prestige. Sepoong is funded entirely by private finance.

Lawrence/LAT

Schumacher topped the time sheets at Silverstone last week using the new Jordan which has shorter sidepods and revised barge boards (main pic, with Hill driving). The differences between the new car and the old (inset) are visible from the side

Lola gets thumbs up from Payton/Coyne

Floundering Champ Car constructor Lola received a boost late last month when its T98/00 chassis was found to be as quick as the standard-setting Reynard 98I.

Mexican Michel Jourdain Jr back-to-backed the Lola, which has only one representative in the CART Championship Series, against his regular Payton/Coyne Racing Reynard at the team's newly-completed Route 66 Raceway road course near Chicago.

Team co-owner Dale Coyne, who has no plans to switch from Reynard, said: 'The car definitely has potential and is good in low speed corners.'

PacWest signals return to form

Beleagured Champ Car team PacWest could be on the verge of recapturing its sparkling form of the end of last season going into this weekend's CART Championship Series round at Cleveland following an encouraging test on the Elkhart Lake road course.

Brazilian Mauricio Gugelmin lapped one of the team's Reynard-Mercedes 98Is under the pole position time he set last year and was quickest of the five drivers running at the Wisconsin track.

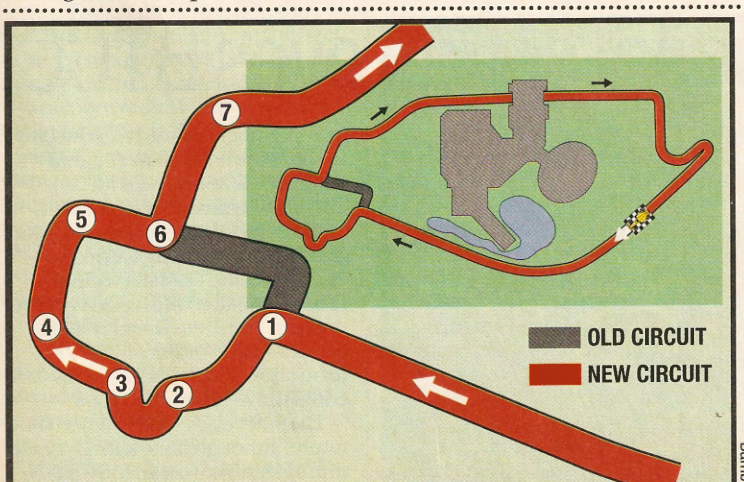
Gugelmin edged out Team Rahal's Bryan Herta, Patrick Racing teamsters Adrian Fernandez and Scott Pruett and his own team mate Mark Blundell, whose test was cut short by transmission problems.

'We seem to be making progress,' said Gugelmin. 'The car is handling well and we're on the right track.'

PacWest also had a good run on the superspeedway at Michigan, where Briton Blundell's quickest lap of 222mph was just 2mph off the time set recently by oval standard-setter Michael Andretti's Newman-Haas Swift.

'In the last few weeks we have made some great strides,' said Blundell. 'It's like driving a new car.'

The road to recovery Page 78



Bamber

City development at Long Beach has added over a quarter of a mile to the street circuit

Long Beach track revised for '99 race

The Long Beach street circuit, which will be used for the 25th time in 1999, has gained three corners for next April's Champ Car date.

The track now turns left off Shoreline Drive into a new series of corners, following redevelopment in that area of the Californian city. The changes, the fourth since the event was instigated for Formula 5000 cars in 1975, bring the lap length up from 1.586 to 1.85 miles.

Race promoter Chris Pook said: 'We had to work closely with many city entities to decide what the most challenging, exciting and safest course would be for all.'

News In Brief

FORMULA 1

The sport's governing body, the FIA, pledged to the teams last week that it will solve the software problem that caused the controversial aborted start at the French Grand Prix. A split-second delay in the activation of the system caused the orange abort lights to come on momentarily after the start signal was given.

McLaren spent a whole day at Silverstone practising starts last week. It also spent a morning fine-tuning its refuelling drill, following the problems at the French GP that saw both drivers beaten off the line, and David Coulthard's chances of second place wrecked by a problem with the refuelling rig.

Peter Monteverdi, who was briefly an F1 team owner in 1990 when he bought the struggling Onyx team, has died of cancer at home in Switzerland. He was 64. Monteverdi's team crashed out of F1 with financial problems a matter of months after he bought it.

Mecachrome will have a small development on its customer Renault engines for Williams and Benetton at this weekend's British GP, but team sources say that any improvement is barely noticeable.

David Coulthard, pictured with TV presenter Gaby Roslin, presented a

Collins/Sutton

cheque for £1447 to medical charity the Stoke Mandeville Burns & Reconstructive Surgery Research Trust at Silverstone last week. The money was raised by donations from spectators at the test.

Porsche boss Wendelin Wiedeking has reiterated his company's regular denials that it has no intention of entering F1. 'What would we gain by doing that? If we enter, people would want to see us win. But only one driver can be on top. Three to four years of F1 costs as much as developing a new (road car) model.' But he added: 'If somebody paid for it, we would design and build an F1 engine.'

Emerson Fittipaldi, the former Formula 1 and Indycar Champion, had said in an interview with German magazine *Auto Motor und Sport* that he is keen to set up his own Grand Prix team. The Brazilian, who drove for his now-defunct family team in the late '70s, said: 'I have a Fittipaldi F1 team in my head. To that effect, I have had long conversations with Jackie Stewart and (F1 boss) Bernie Ecclestone.'

News In Brief

FORMULA 1

Frank Williams has added credence to suggestions that tyre supplier Goodyear could stay in F1 next year (see AUTOSPORT, July 2). Williams said a U-turn on on the company's decision to quit F1 was down to its chief executive, Sam Gibara. 'I think his position is that if the people on Goodyear tyres want to race with him, then he will be happy to race with them,' said Williams. 'Second, and more important, he will carry on if he thinks he has a good chance of winning.'

Williams also admitted that he is worried about the possible effect that supplying three teams may have on the reliability of the customer Renault engine next season. Williams and new team British American Racing have agreements to use the French V10, while Benetton is expected to finalise its deal soon. The 56-year-old emphasised that Renault only stayed in the sport because of pressure from Williams. 'The rest were nowhere to be seen,' he said.

The Australian city of Melbourne announced this week that it has extended its contract to host the country's Grand Prix until 2006.

CART

Champ Car ace Alex Zanardi set the pace in testing at the Mid-Ohio road course last week with his Ganassi Reynard-Honda. The Italian headed last year's poleman Bryan Herta (Team Rahal Reynard-Ford) and team mate Jimmy Vasser as the CART field prepared for the August 9 race. Ganassi managing director Tom Anderson said: 'I expect it to be hotter when we race there – I wouldn't expect to run that quick.'

TOURING CARS

Sauber F1 test driver Jorg Muller tested a road-going Proton Perdana – fitted with a Sauber-built, Petronas-badged two-litre engine – at Malaysian circuit Johor last week, raising speculation that the Swiss team could be on the verge of entering a Proton effort in the British Touring Car Championship. However, a Sauber spokesman said: 'We've got no plans to come into touring cars.'

It is expected that at least two cars from the South East Asian Touring Car Championship will contest the Bathurst 1000 in Australia on October 4. Series leader Charles Kwan is a favourite to attend with his factory-blessed BMW 320i.

Vauxhall is due to test its modifications for the Bathurst 1000 at Welsh circuit Pembrey today (Thursday), with Derek Warwick assessing works team Triple Eight's Vectra in enduro trim. Peugeot is out at Pembrey too, with one 406 for Tim Harvey.

Alfa set for British return with Prodrive

Alfa Romeo is to return to the British Touring Car Championship with its sensational 156 next season after an absence of three years.

That was the belief in BTCC circles at the start of the week, after it was learned that Prodrive, which has built and run Honda Accords for the past two seasons, had rejected a scaled down offer to operate the Japanese make's race team.

It is thought that Prodrive already had another deal as good as sealed with Alfa Romeo, which it assisted to the BTCC title in 1994 with the 155. Ford is also believed to have held talks with Prodrive.

Richards: in talks

Prodrive boss David Richards said: 'They (Alfa) are very good and long-standing friends of ours and we maintain a good relationship.' He did not deny that a programme with the 156 was on the cards.

Fiat Corse sporting director Claudio Chierici said: 'We don't know what will happen, but I think we'll find out in the next few days.'

Favourite to lead the team would be Gabriele Tarquini, who won Alfa's BTCC title in '94 and who has enjoyed a good relationship with Prodrive while driving for Honda.

The breakdown between Prodrive and Honda started when Accord designer Keith Knott left the former company early this year to set up his own firm, Advanced Automotive Design, to work on the new model Accord for '99. Fosstech, the company which Prodrive subcontracts to build the Accord shells, was lined up by Honda to build the cars, with Prodrive expected to continue running the race team.

However, Prodrive marketing director Hugh Chambers said: 'We anticipate that we won't be working with Honda in 1999.' That has left Honda without a BTCC race team for next year, despite rumours suggesting that Fosstech may take over this role as well.

These stories have always been dismissed by Fosstech boss David Thompson, the father of Honda star James Thompson, who is thought almost certain to stay with the manufacturer next season.

Thompson Jr said: 'The last thing I want to do is drive for my father in touring cars. That's not because I think that he'd do a bad job, but because I got into works teams on my own terms.'

MVG

MVG

Peugeot's German series-winning team and top driver Laurent Aiello may contest the BTCC next year

Factory Peugeot squad eyes BTCC

Peugeot's German Super Touring Championship-winning team could be switching countries next season in a last-ditch effort to bring success to the make in the British Touring Car Championship.

The team, run from Peugeot Sport's headquarters in France, is thought to be only 50% likely to continue in the German series next season, and team boss Francois Sudan has indicated his 406s are 'ready to go to England'.

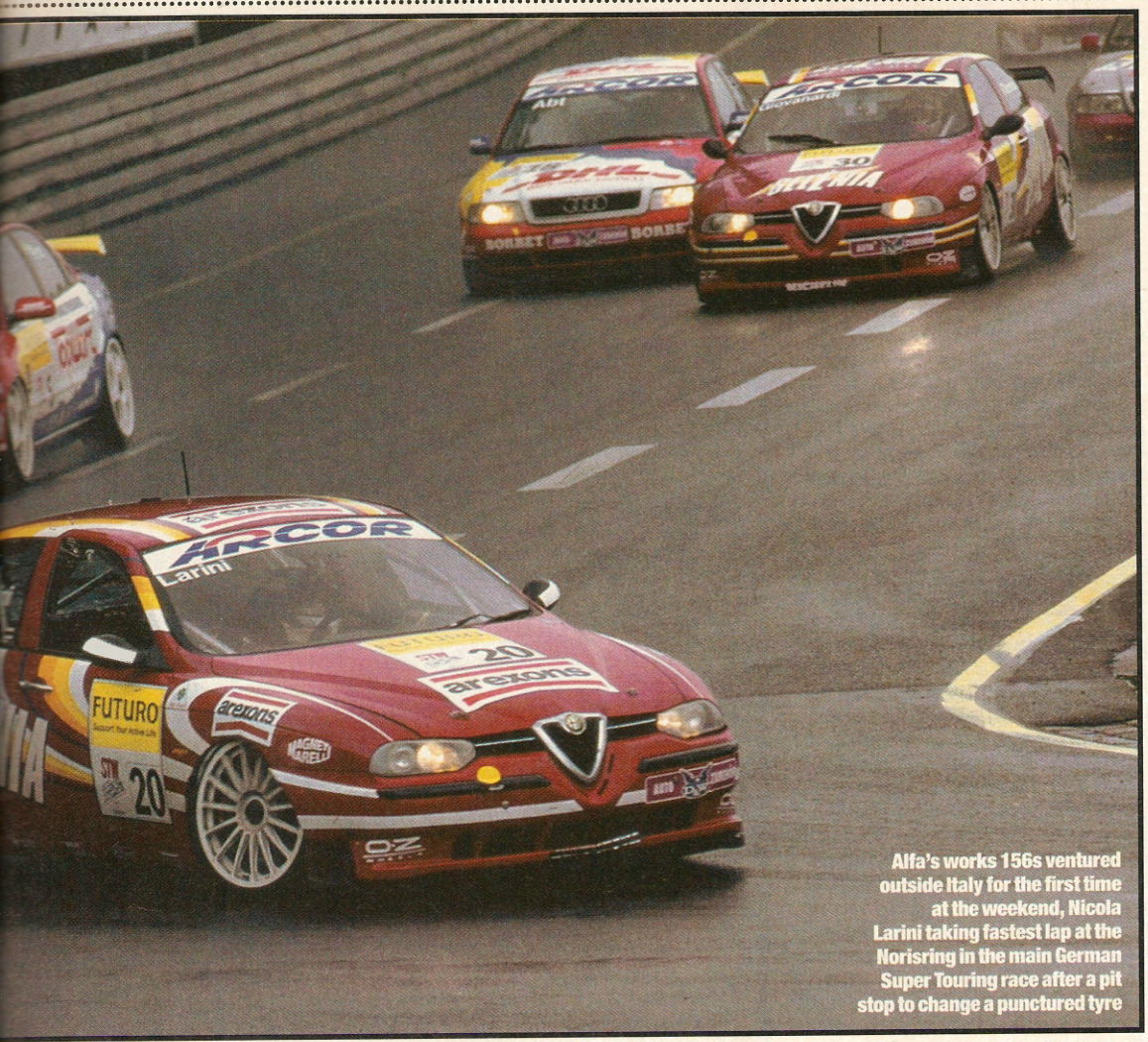
Aiello: in demand

Talks have been held in the past between Peugeot France and Peugeot UK, which has not won a BTCC race since entering the series in 1992. However, the French have been unwilling to help because they do not want to share their secrets with Motor Sport Developments, which took over the British programme from the factory at the end of 1996.

Now, with the possibility of there being no other Peugeot Super Touring programme in 1999, the French, who will make a decision on their German future in September, are said to be willing to share the costs with Peugeot UK. Peugeot UK sports boss Mick Linford was unable to comment.

Whether an Anglo-French link-up would bring reigning German champion and Le Mans winner Laurent Aiello to the BTCC is as yet unclear. The Frenchman is said to be in demand for Porsche's GT team after his sportscar success and could move on from tin-tops.

The story also clouds MSD's BTCC future, although links with Hyundai through rallying mean it would be favourite to run any Super Touring campaign the make launches.



Alfa's works 156s ventured outside Italy for the first time at the weekend, Nicola Larini taking fastest lap at the Norisring in the main German Super Touring race after a pit stop to change a punctured tyre

Tin-top chiefs hold summit

The bosses of the British and German touring car championships have taken the first step towards what could be a much closer relationship between the two series in the future.

British Touring Car Championship head Alan Gow made his first-ever visit to a German round at the Norisring on Sunday and met with Herman Tomczyk, sports president of the ADAC, the organising body for the German series, to discuss the way forward.

Among concerns are the technical regulations of the two series. The manufacturers in the German championship are thought to be in favour of small changes in the Super Touring rules for 1999, with a more radical shift towards a high-tech class in 2000.

However, the ADAC is said to want to stay loyal to the Super Touring rules used in the BTCC. Any fragmentation in regulations could see both series susceptible to attack from new movements such as the burgeoning Group N Plus category (see page 14).

The two men are also believed to have discussed their respective calendars, so that teams are free to contest selected races in each other's championships.

After the meeting, Gow said: 'We talked about lots of things, but nothing I can share with you.'

Leslie tops BTCC runners at Spa

Nissan ace David Leslie won the war of the British Touring Car Championship racers in the Spa 24 Hours at the weekend.

The 44-year-old Scot, sharing a Nissan Motorsports Europe Primera with local veteran Dirk Schoysman and rally star Gregoire de Mevius, finished seventh, one place ahead of BTCC refugees James Kaye and Simon Harrison, and GT racer Stephen Day.

Leslie, who hadn't driven the car before the race meeting, said: 'We lost time with a broken wire on an alternator and had a clutch problem early on, but on my last stint I was one of the quickest on the circuit.'

A sister Nissan, with Leslie's BTCC team mate, Anthony Reid, on the driving strength, went out with engine problems after four hours.

It went further than Honda stars James Thompson and Peter Kox, who were sharing an Integra Type R with Vauxhall Vectra Challenge leader Simon Graves. They retired after 40 minutes when the Dutchman fluffed a gear change and blew the engine.

Kaye, Harrison and Day were set for third place in their Mardi Gras Motorsport Integra before brake failure pitched the car off the road. Kaye may now race the Integra in some Belgian Procar sprint races.

Noels

Leslie, who came home seventh in the NME Primera, was top Brit at Spa

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News In Brief

TOURING CARS

Australian touring car legend Peter Brock has scotched bizarre suggestions that he could emerge from retirement to bid for a 10th Bathurst 1000 win alongside Nigel Mansell, and contest a couple of BTCC races as a warm-up. 'There have been all sorts of suggestions, but none I considered even for a moment,' he said.

Peugeot driver Paul Radisich joined the list of married men in the British series by tying the knot with Patricia Watson, formerly the Peugeot Sport press officer, last Friday. Series chief Alan Gow was best man.

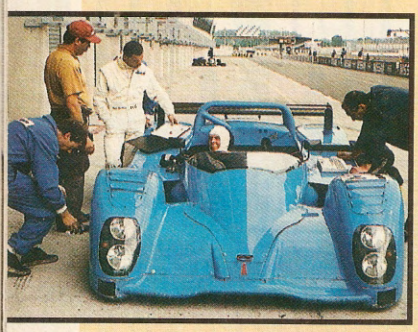
Former Lotus Formula 1 driver Michael Bartels is to return to the German Super Touring Championship at Zweibrucken on August 16. Bartels will drive a third Peugeot 406 in the last four rounds alongside champion Laurent Aiello and Jorg van Ommen.

Dieter Basche, formerly sports boss of BMW and Audi, has returned to the latter make to replace the late Norbert Weber as engineering chief. Weber was killed in a road accident in April.

Audi gave the latest developments to its A4 Super Touring race their debut at the Norisring on Sunday. Christian Abt took a fourth, Audi's best German result of '98, using the latest engine developments and a flatter rear wing.

SPORTSCARS

Plans for early-'70s Chevron sportscar racer John Burton to



drive a semi-works Courage C41 in last weekend's Misano round of the International Sports Racing Series were thwarted by problems with the Porsche-engined car's braking system in the run-up to the race. Burton, who successfully tested the car at Le Mans-Bugatti (above) recently, is expected to drive the car at the Donington Park ISRS round on July 19, sharing with ex-F1 driver Olivier Grouillard.

The privateer Chrysler-engined Bitter GT1, run by gentleman driver Rainer Bonnetsmuller's team, misses this weekend's Dijon round of the FIA GT Championship in the wake of the fire that prevented the car starting at Hockenheim late last month.

Low-tech tin-tops in 'Euro cup'

The fast-growing category for low-tech 'Group N Plus' saloon cars could have its own European championship next season.

Patrick Peter, the man responsible for the GTR Euroseries for gentlemen sportscar racers, has been charged by the FIA, the sport's governing body, with setting up the series, which will include seven race meetings in Belgium, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Italy and Portugal. The series will steer clear of Britain and Germany, the heartlands of the much faster Super Touring category.

Peter: discussions

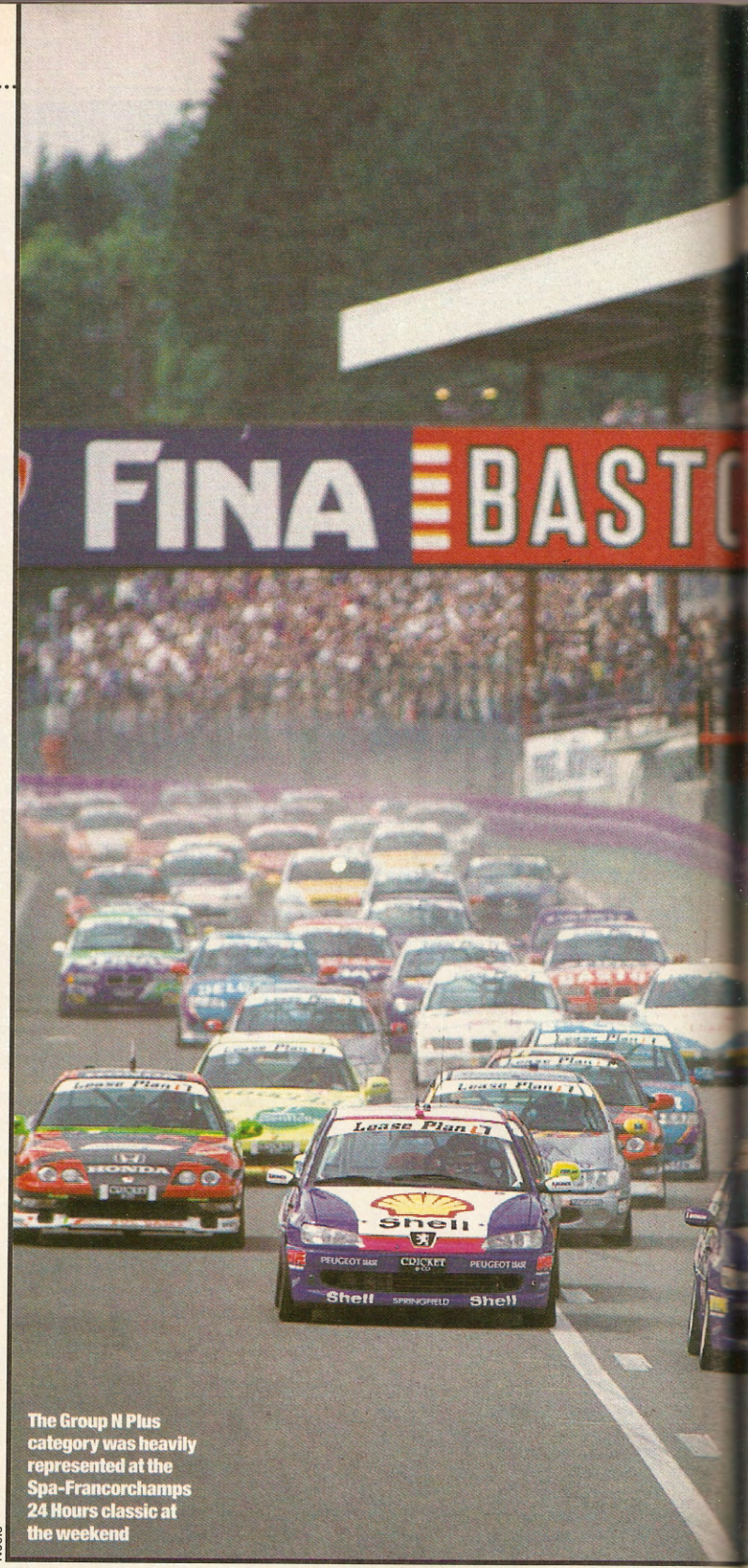
Even so, it is envisaged that 300bhp Super Tourers could be allowed into its events as a separate class to run alongside the Group N Plus machines, which push out about 220bhp.

A spokeswoman for Peter, whose organisation ran the French Super Touring series last year, said: 'Everything is under discussion at the moment, but the focus is on Group N Plus because it is the less expensive category.'

Manufacturers have been invited to Paris to meet with Peter and the FIA to discuss the series next week. Among those involved with national dealer teams in Europe are Honda, Renault, BMW and Peugeot, all of which were represented in the Group N Plus Spa 24 Hours at the weekend. However, it is unclear whether these makes' European sports bosses will give their blessing for a continental programme.

British Touring Car Championship boss Alan Gow sees no threat from the series or Group N Plus. 'It has no effect on us,' he said.

European satellite channel Eurosport, which televises the GTR Euroseries, is said to be interested in covering the races.



The Group N Plus category was heavily represented at the Spa-Francorchamps 24 Hours classic at the weekend

Noels

Noels

JACKY ICKX, BELGIUM'S GREATEST racing driver, made a one-off return to competition in the Spa 24 Hours last weekend, sharing a Renault Megane with daughter Vanina. They retired when Vanina went off the road after eight hours ● Full Spa report, page 82

Baird homes in on Bathurst 1000 seat

Ford British Touring Car Championship racer Craig Baird is closing in on a deal which should see him race in the Australian 1000 Classic at Bathurst on November 15.

The 27-year-old New Zealander is looking to team up with Dick Johnson Racing, Ford's top team in the 5-litre V8 Supercar category.

However, with four drivers already on board at DJR, Baird needs the team to sign a sixth driver to share its third Falcon with him.

'I've had talks with about three teams,' said Baird, 'but I want to be involved with Dick. They've just got to sort things out at their end.'

Panoz move fails to end US war

North America's sportscar civil war looks far from over, despite US motorsport mogul Don Panoz giving control of his new American Le Mans Series to one side in the conflict.

After Panoz announced on Monday that Professional SportsCar Racing would sanction his new series next year, the breakaway United States Road Racing Series vowed to continue with its own championships for open-top World Sports Cars and GT racers in 1999.

USRRC, which is organised by the long-standing Sports Car Club of America, denied its series would provide opposition to the Panoz initiative, an 11-race championship run to the same rules as Le Mans.

Panoz: decision

SCCA boss and USRRC board member Nick Craw claimed the two series were 'aimed at different products, different markets and a different entrant base'. He said: 'It's our intention to continue as a free-standing series. We have seven races this season and we will have seven next year.'

Craw also refused to rule out the possibility of the USRRC having an involvement in the Panoz series, which he described as 'a positive move for road racing in the US'.

Although Panoz had hoped SportsCar and the USRRC could come together to jointly run his series, he said that he had chosen the former because it was 'time to start working to get the American Le Mans Series on the road'.

Panoz said that he was disappointed by the USRRC's reaction to his attempt to bring the two sides together. 'All the phone calls have been one way,' he said.

'Eco' car gets thumbs down

The US Panoz marque's electro-hybrid GT racer has been barred from contesting rounds of this year's FIA GT Championship by rival manufacturers.

The suggestion that the Panoz Q9, which has a regenerative electric motor as well as a Ford V8, be allowed into the series, even though there was no class for such vehicles, was turned down by the Sportscar Commission, GT racing's executive, in May.

Stephane Ratel, joint organiser of the FIA series, explained that 'an unofficial request' foundered after manufacturer representatives on the Commission thrashed out a deal to allow Nissan and Toyota's Le Mans-spec GT racers into August's Suzuka 1000Km (which was not taken up by either marque).

'After such a tumultuous conversation, it was like proposing that the space shuttle be allowed in the series,' said Ratel.

The request came from David Price Racing, which ran the Q9 when it failed to pre-qualify for the Le Mans 24 Hours in May. Team boss Dave Price said the plan had been to contest a number of FIA rounds from August in the run-up to the October Petit Le Mans fixture at the Road Atlanta circuit owned by marque boss Don Panoz.

Private teams linked to Le Mans Toyotas

Toyota could be represented in the FIA GT Championship by privateers, if the series boss gets his way for next season.

Although joint organiser Stephane Ratel conceded that Toyota was unlikely to enter the championship as a factory, he said its GT-One, which came within 80 minutes of a Le Mans win last month, could be handled by private teams.

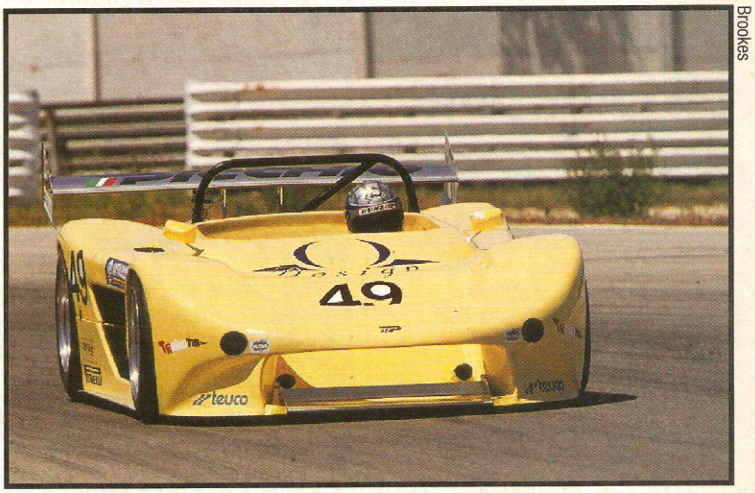
Ratel's suggestion that GT regular Thomas Bscher was in the market for a GT-One weren't denied by the German, who would only say: 'I will have a competitive car for next year and it's likely to be a GT car.'

Low-key debut for new Italian marque

A new Italian constructor, aiming to build a range of open-top sports racers as well as an all-new GT car, made its international competition debut at Misano last weekend.

Picchio, which is based in central Italy, made a low-key entry into the International Sports Racing Series in the third division CN class, but the marque claims that its A001 chassis has been designed with the top SR1 class in mind.

Former German touring car driver Stefano Buttiero and Italian tin-top regular Raffaele di Bari are expected to race the Alfa-powered car for the remainder of the year.



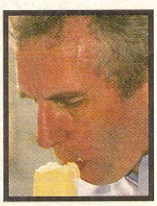
Brookes

Odd-ball Italian marque Picchio made its competition debut in Misano at the weekend

Rouse delays Corolla's debut

The Toyota Corolla Liftback built to contest this year's British Touring Car Championship has been declared legal to race, but its debut has been postponed.

Preparation expert and four-time BTCC Champion Andy Rouse, who missed the April 1 homologation date, succeeded in meeting the July 1 deadline for inducting the Toyota and its aerodynamic package into Super Touring.



Rouse: delays

The car, which will race in the AUTOSPORT Cup for independents, will not be at the next BTCC round at Snetterton on July 26. Instead, Rouse is hoping to make it to Brands Hatch on August 31.

'We're running out of test days, so we'll probably put the debut off,' he said.

Rouse, who is expected to run ex-Peugeot works driver Patrick Watts, tested the car at Snetterton last week, but stopped early with a mechanical problem.

Watts's presence at Brands will bring the BTCC independents' field to a season high of eight – Swedish Opel racers Thomas Johansson and Jan Brunstedt are scheduled to join the five regular runners.

GT Preview

Porsche comes on song for Dijon

Porsche should be back in the hunt in the FIA GT Championship at Dijon this weekend, after leaving arch-rival Mercedes trailing in its wake in testing last week.

The results of the one-day test at the Hungaroring, in which Le Mans 24 Hours winner Allan McNish was nearly a second faster than the best Mercedes driver on race rubber, bodes well for Porsche. The venue plays host to the FIA GT series on July 19, and the track shares some characteristics with Dijon.

The test provided a major boost for Porsche, whose 911 GT1-98 got a mauling from Mercedes's new CLK-LM in the Hockenheim FIA round late last month. 'It was very encouraging. We made a lot of progress over the bumps, where we were bad at Hockenheim,' said McNish, who lapped in the low 1m33s bracket on race tyres and managed a 1m31.3s on qualifiers.

The AMG Mercedes team had a lone CLK-LM at the test for GT rookies Ricardo Zonta and Mark Webber, the pair both lapping in 1m34s on race rubber.

ISRS offers 'custom' chassis to boost grid

Manufacturers wishing to build cars for next year's International Sports Racing Series will be able to purchase an off-the-peg chassis design from the organiser.

The series organiser is taking the unprecedented step of designing its own chassis around which entrants could build a car using their own suspension, engine and gearbox, to try to boost entries in the SR2 class for less powerful cars.

Series boss John Mangoletsi said: 'By building a tub to our design teams won't have to go through the costly procedure of crash-testing their car, which can only help grids.'

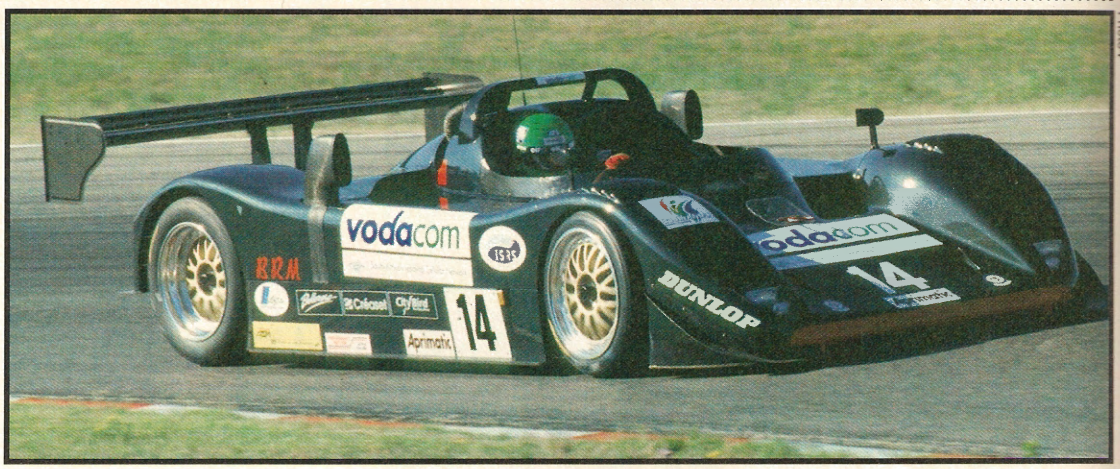


Photo4

SPORTSCAR LEGEND Henri Pescarolo raced a BRM for the first time in nearly a quarter of a century when he received a late call up to race the revived marque's open-top P301 at Misano at the weekend. The Frenchman, who drove for BRM's F1 team in 1974, failed to finish

Audi to buy TOM'S base

Audi looks certain to build its 1999 Le Mans 24 Hours challenger in Britain after announcing that it is in the throes of buying the Anglo-Japanese TOM'S GB team.

In the wake of speculation in AUTOSPORT last week, Audi has confirmed that it has signed a letter of intent to purchase TOM'S GB and its large Norfolk workshops from its Japanese owners. And with Audi having announced that it is building a 'racing sportscar' for next year, it seems a foregone conclusion the car – probably an open-top sports racer rather than a GT1 – would be built in or even run from the UK.

The purchase of TOM'S would give the German marque composite and computer-aided design facilities not available at Audi Sport's Ingolstadt base, making it the ideal location to build its definitive 1999 sportscar.

Audi, however, was at pains to play down the significance of the possible purchase. Sports boss Dr Wolfgang Ullrich's only comment was: 'All we can say is that it will be used as a producer of race parts.'

The Audi board member for technical development, Dr Werner Mischke, said: 'This will give Audi a tremendous boost to its future motorsport activities.'

TOM'S GB managing director Hiroshi Fushida said Audi's offer, believed to be about £2 million, was 'too good to refuse'.

TOM'S GB is owned by TOM'S in Japan, a supplier of tuning parts as well as a race team, and by ART, an import company owned by the father of the late Takashi Yokoyama, who drove for the team in Formula 3.

The deal is expected to be finalised by the end of the month.

Prodrive courts Nissan GT deal

Race and rally specialist Prodrive is still in the running to take over Japanese car giant Nissan's Le Mans project for next season.

Prodrive, which last week parted company with British Touring Car Championship partner Honda (see page 12), refused to play down strengthening rumours that it is still bidding to design and build Nissan's 1999 sportscar for Le Mans.

Prodrive marketing director Hugh Chambers said: 'Prodrive is always looking at lots of different options. GT racing is a logical extension of what we've been doing in Super Touring. We'd very much like to be involved in the FIA GT Championship and Le Mans.'

Speculation was strengthened this week by the presence of Nissan Le Mans project leader Kunihiko Kakimoto in the UK.

In Japan, meanwhile, a Nissan spokeswoman said that no decision had been made on the build of any new car but that the running of the team would likely be handed over to the marque's in-house motorsport arm, NISMO.

Although Nissan announced late last month its split from sportscar specialist TWR, which built the R390 GT1 for the Japanese company, it looks certain that the marque will continue at Le Mans. One source said it was 'as good as 100% certain'.

'Green' rows hit Enna date

The Sicilian Enna-Pergusa circuit has been forced to postpone its round of the Formula 3000 International Championship, scheduled to take place in 10 days' time.

The track has been virtually unused since the last F3000 race one year ago, and its future has been threatened by local environmentalists who oppose racing because the track is situated close to an area of natural interest. Two years ago, thousands of baby frogs were killed when they swarmed onto the track during an F3000 practice session.

Circuit officials say that they have now resolved the environmental dispute, but that this was achieved too late in the day to enable them to be ready for the race. Enna has been given a new date of September 20, just one week before the season finale at Germany's Nurburgring.

A spokeswoman for the series organiser, the FIA, said: 'Their application does not guarantee that the race will go ahead. The request will be considered, but all teams will have to agree to the change.'

If Enna does not succeed in having the race reinstated it will be the first time in F3000's history that it has not raced at the venue. Along with the Pau street circuit in France, Enna is the only track to have been on the F3000 calendar every year since it started in 1985.

Reuters/Popperfoto

Daytona acknowledges the effort made by staff and officials to fight Florida's fires

Blazes force Daytona to postpone

Daytona International Speedway lost its battle against the wildfires that have struck northern Florida when it was forced to postpone last Saturday night's Pepsi 400 NASCAR Winston Cup race until October 17.

The race, which has taken place on the July 4 public holiday for the past 39 years, should have been held under the new floodlights at the 2.5-mile superspeedway, but the venue's other facilities were called into play to help the local area fight the natural disaster.

Daytona committed four firetrucks and 30 employees to the disaster effort, many of whom were providing food for the emergency services. Other firefighting personnel who arrived at the track for the race were re-directed to help control the blazes.

Speedway president John Graham said: 'The wildfires plaguing Daytona Beach make postponing the race the right thing to do. Our manpower, facilities and resources will remain completely devoted to our community until this crisis is over.'

The fires came within a mile of the track but did not directly affect the facility, although road closures and demands on public officials would have made the race impossible to organise.

Waltrip cedes seat to returning Park

NASCAR veteran Darrell Waltrip will return to his regular car for Indianapolis on August 1 when he makes way for returning Winston Cup rookie Steve Park.

Park, who suffered a multitude of injuries in a crash at Atlanta in March, is on schedule to make his comeback with the team owned by seven-time champion Dale Earnhardt, and tests next week.

Ty Norris, motorsports director at Dale Earnhardt Inc, said: 'We can't run two cars – it's asking too much of a first year team.'

Waltrip will drive for the Tyler team, which he formerly owned.

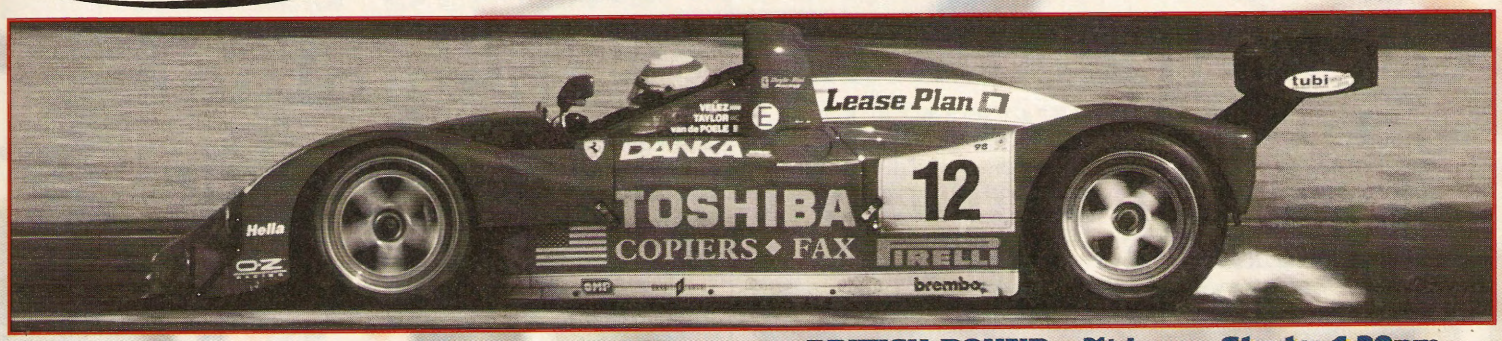
Donington Park

RAC TOURIST TROPHY

SUNDAY JULY 19

GRAND PRIX CIRCUIT

SANCTIONED EVENT



BRITISH ROUND - 2½ hours Starts: 1.30pm

INTERNATIONAL SPORTS RACING SERIES ISRS

FERRARI
PORSCHE
BMW
COURAGE
RILEY & SCOTT

SATURDAY JULY 18 - OFFICIAL PRACTICE: 0900 -1500

1520 -1545	International Sports Racing Series Pole Position Shoot-Out	
1600	European BOSS Formula Series	12 laps
1640	European Ferrari F355 Challenge	15 laps
1720	International Supersports Cup	10 laps
1755	Flemings Thoroughbred Sportscar Championship	10 laps
1830	BRSCC Porsche 924 Championship	10 laps

SUNDAY JULY 19

0900 - 0915	International Sports Racing Series untimed warm-up	
0925	Dutch Renault Megane Trophy	12 laps
1005	Euroseries Formula Opel	12 laps
1045	Kumho Tyres Ferrari Porsche Challenge	15 laps
1130	Renault Sport Spider Elf Trophy	15 laps
1210	European Ferrari F355 Challenge	15 laps
1330	RAC TOURIST TROPHY INTERNATIONAL SPORTS RACING SERIES	2½ hours
1615	Euroseries Formula Opel	12 laps
1655	International Supersports Cup	15 laps
1740	Pirelli Porsche Cup	12 laps

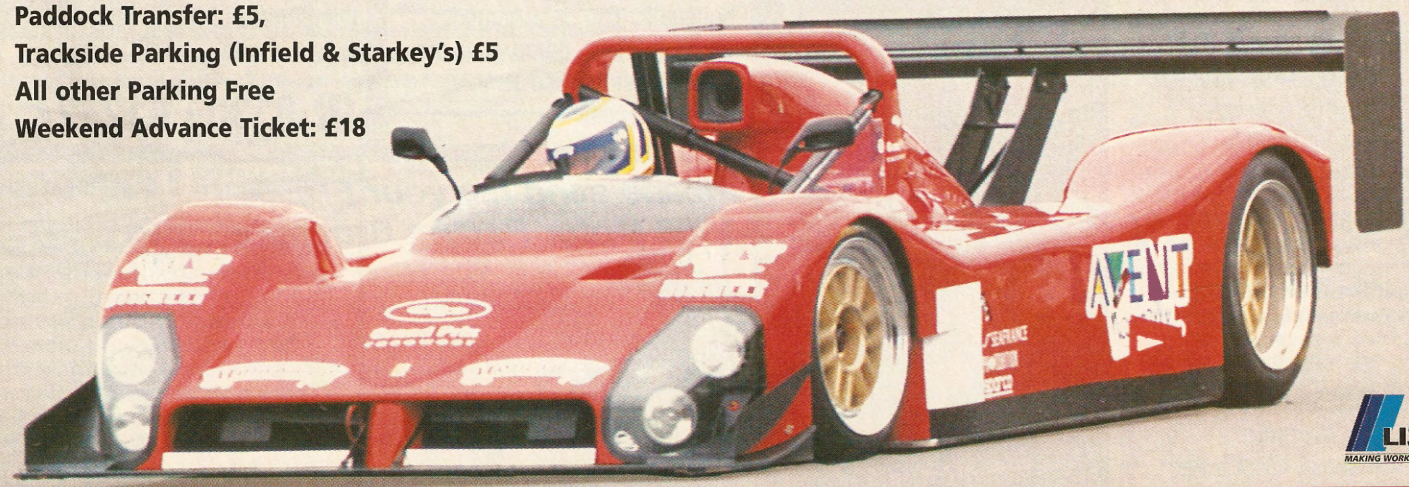
ADMISSION: SATURDAY: Adults £6, Children FREE - SUNDAY: Adults £16 (£14 in Advance) Accompanied Children FREE

Paddock Transfer: £5,

Trackside Parking (Infield & Starkey's) £5

All other Parking Free

Weekend Advance Ticket: £18



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Future uncertain for O'Connell

Martin O'Connell, the leading Briton in the AUTOSPORT British Formula 3 Championship, may be forced out of the series following the acquisition of the Anglo-Japanese TOM'S GB team by Audi last week.

Although sources close to TOM'S report that work is carrying on as normal in preparation for this weekend's prestigious British Grand Prix support race, they also admit that the German manufacturer's plans have not yet been made clear. Links with parent company TOM'S Japan and Toyota, with whom the company has a strong relationship, have already been severed.

TOM'S GB boss Hiroshi Fushida stressed on Monday that the takeover need not spell the end for the F3 team. 'It's down to the drivers, so we have to have a meeting,' he said. 'The drivers pay money and if they are happy it could carry on.'

Following five second places O'Connell currently lies third in the championship, but his manager Ray Rowan admitted that he is uncertain about the future. 'In the short term it'll carry on,' he said. 'But when Audi really takes over things might change. We'll just have to get past the Grand Prix and see what happens then, but it's difficult to see F3 figuring in Audi's plans long-term.'

O'Connell: threat

The team's other driver, Adam Wilcox, admitted that there had been a briefing at TOM'S but stressed that he was not thinking beyond this weekend. 'They've spoken to my father and my manager,' he said, 'but I'm keeping out of it until Monday.'

Tsuboi

FORMER FORMULA 3000 RACE winner Marc Goossens scored his first podium finish in the Japanese equivalent series for Formula Nippon at Suzuka on Sunday. The Belgian recovered from a poor start in his Reynard-Mugen to finish second ● Report, page 83

Masters moves to Nations' Cup

The showcase Marlboro Masters of Formula 3 race at Zandvoort on August 9 will feature a Nations' Cup element for the first time.

The event at the Dutch seaside circuit, now the undisputed leading F3 clash in Europe following the demise of the Monaco Grand Prix support, has grown from a single race last year to two heats and a final this season due to the massive entry.

And now Barry Bland, boss of race organiser Motor Race Consultants, believes that the latest move, similar to the annual Formula Opel Nations' Cup, will further enhance the race's importance.

'It's worked before,' he said. 'Back when I was working for the British Automobile Racing Club we introduced a Nations' Cup for Formula Super Vee and did the same years later with an F3 race at Thruxton. We're just trying to jazz the show up a little.'

The two highest-placed drivers from each country represented will be nominated automatically after qualifying. Points will then be scored by the top three finishers in the heats on a five-three-one basis. The final will receive a more significant points loading with the top 10 scoring points from 20 for the winner down to one for 10th.

'It is still possible for a country with only one driver entered to win overall,' said Bland.

Henzler to miss Zandvoort classic

German Formula 3 Championship front runner Wolf Henzler has been forced out of the Marlboro Masters of F3 at Zandvoort following a massive shunt at the Norisring.

The throttle on Henzler's Josef Kaufmann Racing Martini-Opel stuck open on the long pit straight and he ploughed off the road at the hairpin, destroying everything but the monocoque.

The 23-year-old was knocked unconscious when tyres from the barrier fell on him, but he emerged unscathed. The shunt has left him short of finance, forcing him to concentrate on the German series.

MVG

Wolf Henzler's Martini-Opel is lifted clear of the Norisring track after its pit straight shunt

News In Brief

SPORTSCARS

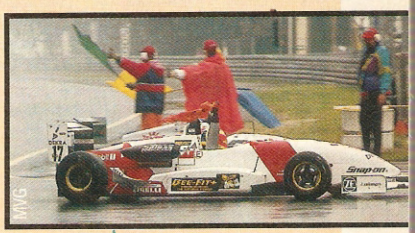
Swede Carl Rosenblad will share the Larbre Competition Porsche 911 GT1 Evo with Bob Wollek and Patrice Goueslard in this weekend's FIA GT round at Dijon.

The International Sports Racing Series grid should top 25 cars for the first time at Donington Park on July 19. With 24 cars starting at Misano, series boss John Mangoletsi is predicting that the continued growth of the series could mean an entry of nearly 30 cars for the first British round of the year. Additions include Joest, with its double Le Mans-winning Porsche, Courage, Sturtz and a Nissan-engined Matrix, similar to the car that failed to pre-qualify for Le Mans last year.

Retired tennis star Henri Leconte will drive one of the AUTOSPORT-backed guest cars in the Porsche Supercup race supporting the British Grand Prix at Silverstone this weekend. Leconte is a regular in the Andros Trophy ice racing series.

FORMULA 3

Indian Narain Karthikeyan will miss the British F3 round at the British GP meeting at Silverstone on Saturday after failing to come up with the money to drive Carlin Motorsport's Dallara-Mugen.



MVG

Benelux Formula Ford Champion Christijan Albers scored his first and second F3 victories in the German series at the Norisring last weekend (above). The 18-year-old Van Amersfoort Racing driver, who is only in his second full season of racing, had been linked to several British teams over the winter.

IRL

Reigning Indy Racing League Champion Tony Stewart bettered the fastest ever qualifying lap under current rules in a floodlit test at Atlanta. Stewart's Team Menard Dallara lapped at 226.406mph.

IRL ace Billy Boat has been released from hospital following surgery on the leg injuries he sustained after crashing heavily in the race at New Hampshire. Boat is now walking with the aid of crutches.

STOP PRESS

British Grand Prix tickets are still available on the gate for Thursday, Friday and Saturday priced £15, £25 and £40 (adult admission) respectively. The Jordan Party referred to in last week's GP supplement has now been cancelled due to the World Cup Final.

BRC round for Silverstone?

A Silverstone-based one-day rally is currently under consideration for inclusion in the 1999 Mobil 1 British Rally Championship.

Championship co-ordinator John Horton said an event had been discussed at a manufacturers' group meeting. It would include the Silverstone's rallysprint course plus the longer stage used on the RAC Rally and a handful of other easily-accessible stages. Silverstone's Rally Consultant, John Taylor, said 'nothing has been agreed, but the format was successful on the RAC in giving rallying a convenient theatre for the public. That helps promotion and marketing, which is of benefit to drivers and manufacturers'. The RACMSA's Malcolm Neill refused to comment

A definitive 1999 BRC calendar is due in August. There is a firm desire to expand the championship from its five events (some running as double headers). The Jim Clark Rally and the Bournemouth Winter Rally are known to be under consideration, and the Silverstone event joins those candidates.

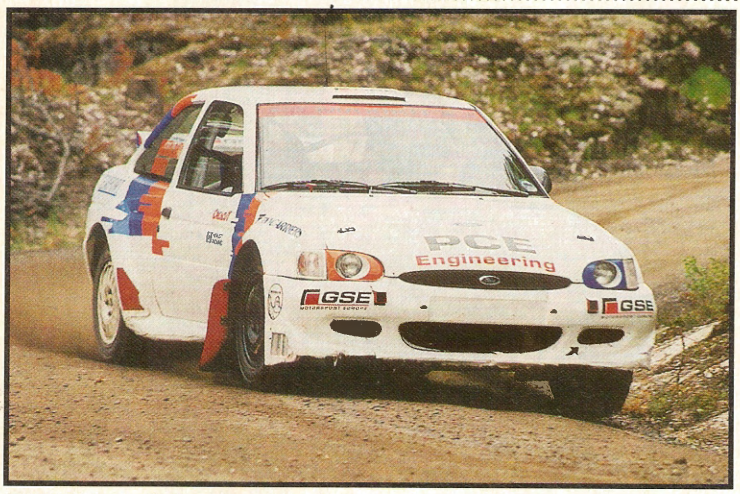
Silverstone's chief executive, Denys Rohan, was unaware of the plan, but said: 'We would definitely look at it in an open-minded way.'

Manufacturers and drivers are almost unanimous in their desire for more events, and they also see other merits in the proposed Silverstone event. 'The more the merrier, from our point of view,' said SEAT's Jon Zammett. 'And if this is part of a move to a more modern and aggressive series, we'd be happy.'

Vauxhall motorsport chief Mike Nicholson added: 'It sounds like a good idea. It's in the right part of the country, because it will give people from the south-east a chance to come and see the championship.'

This year's series began with a Silverstone Rallysprint, which counted only for manufacturers' championship points. Its winner, Gwyndaf Evans, is another to express a positive reaction. 'I would welcome any more rounds and feel that there should be seven or eight. Yes, it may be a bit Mickey Mouse, but it should draw the crowds and bring the series much closer to the public. You would still have to be disciplined and it would offer a challenge – it wouldn't be that bad at all. Okay, there's nothing like a proper tarmac or gravel rally, but if that's what it takes to bring the number of rounds up, I'm in favour of the whole idea.'

Renault's Megane squares up to SEAT's Ibiza on Silverstone's Rallysprint circuit during last year's RAC Rally. If plans to base a British Championship event round Silverstone go ahead, this could become a familiar sight.



Olli Harkki tests the Ford Escort Maxi kit car he will use to contest the Rally Finland

Harkki and Escort Maxi return

Finn Olli Harkki has switched to Formula 2 and Gordon Spooner Engineering's Ford Escort Maxi kit car for his return to rallying this weekend in Finland.

The 1996 British Group N Production Cup champion has not rallied since the 1997 RAC Rally, from which he retired on the final day, while leading Group N.

He is contesting this weekend's Channel 4 Rally in Finland as part of a build-up to an F2 challenge on the Neste Rally Finland and hopefully November's Network Q RAC Rally.

'Formula 2 is going up and up,' said the 27-year-old, 'I think the Ford is a very competitive car and we can get some good results in it.'

GSE has modified the gravel-specification Escort Maxi considerably since its last appearance in Toni Gardemeister's hands on the Vauxhall Rally of Wales. Suspension, differential and engine spec are all improved and Harkki has already set some impressive times during around 150km of testing.

Harkki has not rallied a front-wheel drive car before, but feels that, after two warm-up rallies, he will be all set for a good run on his homeland's World Championship event and that should put him in line for an RAC deal.

New Golf waits for the Manx

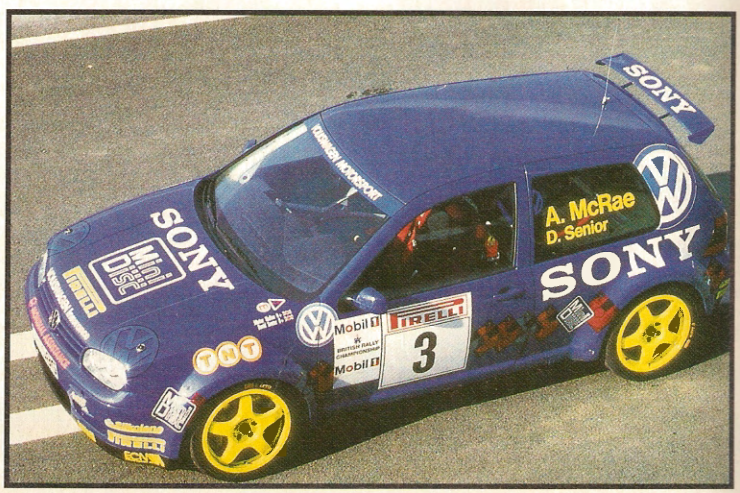
Volkswagen's new Mark IV Golf will make its debut on the Manx Rally from September 9-12, as exclusively predicted in AUTOSPORT last week.

The car was due to appear for the Ulster Rally at the end of this month, but component supply problems in Germany have delayed the car's debut.

'Volkswagen Motorsport has been dogged by parts supply problems, said Steve Bagnall, boss of SBG Sport, which runs Alister McRae's Golf in the British Championship. 'Although it was our fervent hope that the new car would make its debut in Ulster, we have had to face the reality that sufficient back-up components will not be made available on time'.

McRae drove the new car at the Oschersleben circuit in Germany two weeks ago. He said: 'It was a short test and we can't draw any meaningful conclusions from it, but first reactions are certainly positive.'

Doubts remain, however, about how competitive the old car will be on the bumpy Irish tarmac. 'The new car can't come a moment too soon' said McRae after last month's Scottish Rally. McRae will also be mindful of his last British foray on to tarmac with the Mark III Golf, when he rolled violently.



Alister McRae has tried the new Golf, but it won't be ready for the Ulster Rally

Snyers beats locals to take Lurgan win

Belgian star Patrick Snyers took his Ford Escort WRC to victory on the SEAT Cars Lurgan Park Rally, despite strong local opposition.

A 10,000-strong crowd saw Snyers fend off challenges from James Cullen's Ford Escort and Denis Biggerstaff's Metro 6R4.

Last year's winner, Gwyndaf Evans, brought his two-wheel drive SEAT Ibiza kit car home a fine fifth, in among the 4WD turbocars. He was three places ahead of Ari Vatanen in a 1993 Subaru Legacy, similar to those he drove when they were state-of the art machines.

Proton ditches engine builder

Proton has decided to change engine builders after a series of problems on the engines of its Compacts. The cars compete in the Super 1600 class of the British Rally Championship.

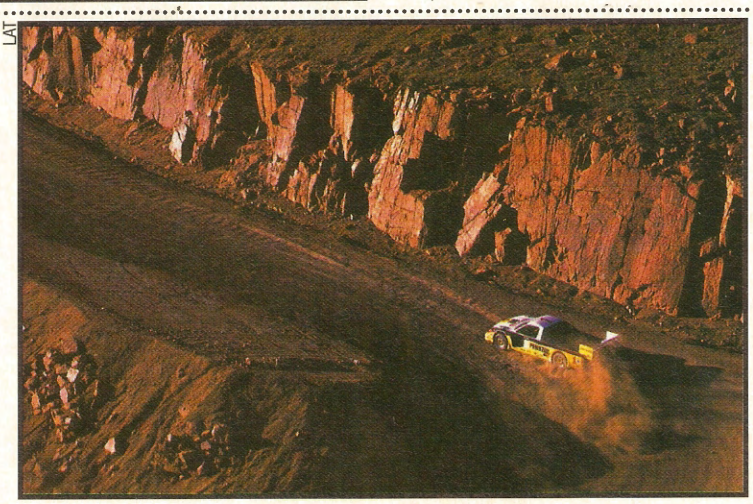
Devon-based RRE has been swapped in favour of Telemachus, based in Broseley, near Shrewsbury. The new company is headed by John Beatty, who is well known for building Hart hillclimb engines. Harry Hockly, who runs the Protons, said 'We'd blown six engines and decided enough was enough. It's cost a lot of money and a lot of development time. Hopefully, we can make amends in Ulster.'

Win but no record for Millen at Pikes Peak

Rod Millen took his new Toyota Tacoma Truck to a dominant win on the annual Pikes Peak Hillclimb, but rain on the lower reaches of the awesome 12.42-mile climb put paid to his ambition to break the 10-minute barrier for the ascent.

'We've only scratched the surface on what the Tacoma can do,' said Millen of the 2.1-litre, turbocharged, four-wheel-drive , Group C-lookalike truck. It pumps out a massive 1000bhp at sea level (at the top of the climb, at 14110 ft, that's reduced by around 20%).

'We expect to do much better next Fourth of July,' enthused Millen.



LAT

Rod Millen's Toyota Tacoma heads for victory in the annual 'Race to the Clouds'

Jim Clark nears national status

Last weekend's Jim Clark Memorial Rally drew plaudits as it faced the scrutiny of British Championship inspectors assessing its suitability for inclusion in the 1999 series.

'I think it would be a welcome addition' said works Peugeot driver Justin Dale, who retired with a broken driveshaft. 'The stages are very good, with a high stage mileage per day. It's obviously important to have another round and we need it to be an extra tarmac event, to make a more even balance with the forest rallies.'

A few reservations were expressed by more than one team about the ability of Duns, Jim Clark's home town, to accommodate the British Championship circus, but there were few complaints about safety or spectator facilities.

'Servicing space was a bit tight' said Dale 'but you get that everywhere'.

Two RACMSA delegates were in attendance to scrutinise the event. One was Malcolm Neill, organiser of the Network Q RAC Rally.

'We were monitoring the Jim Clark Rally using the same criteria that the FIA uses for assessing World Championship Rallies' said spokesman Colin Wilson. 'By the end of next month we should be in a position to decide on next year's calendar, using the information we have acquired.'

Iain Edwards, the Jim Clark Rally's event director, said: 'We're very pleased with the way the rally has gone, although whatever you do, there are always areas for improvement. If we do get offered the chance to host a British Championship round, we then have to decide if it's the best thing to do. It's very important for us not to change the name or the character of the rally, and to have full local support. So whatever we do, we need to have our eyes fully open'.

News in Brief

A measure of tradition is returning to the Monte Carlo Rally. Plans for the 1998 route include fewer longer stages, including several classic sections not used for several years. There will also be a prize ceremony in front of the Prince's Palace and a 257km concentration leg, reminiscent of the longer concentration runs of old. The new format also fits in much more closely with the modern World Championship model.

Colin McRae says that he is down to the fine detail in his negotiations with Ford and Subaru over his destiny in 1999, with Peugeot showing some interest as well: 'I don't know when it will all be sorted out,' he admitted. 'It could take a week or a month.'

Mitsubishi's Tommi Makinen is testing in Finland this week in preparation for next month's Neste Rally Finland. The team's regular test driver, Lasse Lampi, is sharing the workload, with Richard Burns due to fine-tune his car shortly before the event's recce.

Karamjit Singh took a comfortable win in the fourth round of the Malaysian Rally Championship. The Proton Wira driver beat his Japanese team mate, Katsuhiko Taguchi, who had won the previous two rounds of the series.

Tarmac expert Liam O'Callaghan will replace Lars-Goran Andersson as one of Ford's nominated points scorers, alongside Stephanie Simmonite, for the Ulster Rally.

Doubts surround Ford's 1999 British programme. 'We have not yet decided our plans for 1999' said Ford's Alex Cattermole. 'A lot will depend on the sort of exposure we can get throughout the year, particularly on television. All we can definitely say for the moment is that we will be continuing with the Ka series, which has proved very popular. At the same time, we would like to do something with the Puma. We'll have a better idea by October.'

Volkswagen has nominated Scot Neil Simpson and Austrian Raimund Baumschlager to score British Rally championship points, but it is not clear whether either will drive in the last two rounds of the British championship.Running a second car would provide an extra opportunity to take points off the leaders SEAT.

Tapio Laukkanen is at home in Finland this week conducting a three-day test of his Renault Maxi Megane in preparation for the Neste Rally Finland.

Peugeot's Justin Dale was the only British Championship regular to use last weekend's Jim Clark Rally to test for Ulster. 'The changes made during the event have really helped,' said the works 106 pilot.

AUTOSPORT

SCOT OFFERS HOPE TO THOSE ON THE ROCKS

Football might not be coming home, but our footballers already have. Tiger Tim's Wimbledon ended in glorious defeat. In rugby, the home nations consider it a moral victory if southern hemisphere rivals fail to notch up a cricket score. That, sadly, is a feat all too often beyond our cricket team!

Amid the gloom which has settled over our sporting greats, you could be forgiven for believing that there is only one discipline in which Britain excels: producing heroic sporting failures.

Defeat at this weekend's British Grand Prix could see David Coulthard branded with the same tag, for it would all but signal the end of his championship chances. But, win or lose, drives like the ones he delivered in Melbourne and Imola, and threatened to produce in Canada before his retirement, have already demonstrated that, with the right equipment, he can live with the best.

Which is just as well, for at Silverstone he will have to be on top form to triumph in a three-way shoot-out with Mika Hakkinen and Michael Schumacher. Their cars are level, but Coulthard has a mountain to climb. Twenty points adrift of Hakkinen in the title race, he must capitalise on home advantage if he and countryman Colin McRae - currently leading the World Rally Championship - are to achieve a historic double.

Ferrari's renaissance could, ironically, be a blessing in disguise for Coulthard. While Schumacher can deprive the Scot of points, there is also a danger that he could rain on Hakkinen's parade. Nor, for as long as the German snaps at the McLaren drivers' heels, can Coulthard be asked to ride shotgun for his team-mate.

So fling that tennis racket back into the cupboard for another 12 months, and dust down the Union Jack. (Bad losers may wish to replace the word 'Hill' with 'Coulthard'!) Whatever the outcome on Sunday, the promise of a three-way battle for honours in the remaining races offers a timely antidote to those World Cup blues.

MARK SKEWIS
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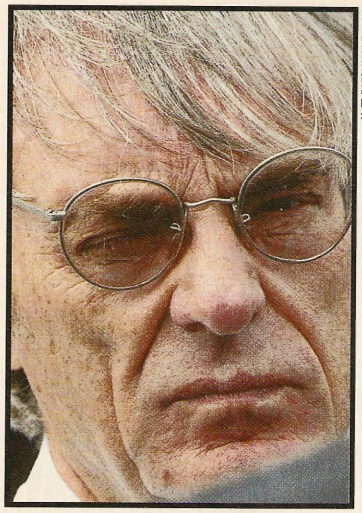


Jeff Bloxham/LAT

Ecclestone has defended Schumacher

The great motivator

Those who condemn Michael Schumacher's driving should retaliate on the track rather than off it. I'm sure nobody would go as far as Eddie Irvine in terms of unrestrained sycophancy, but Bernie Ecclestone has two good points: yes, we are all sick to death about hearing that Michael Schumacher is the devil incarnate and yes, we are lucky to have him in Formula 1 at all.

There will always be a dominant car in F1 each season, but Schumacher is always the only person who is able to consistently challenge the championship leader. This year Ferrari is finally realising its potential, but money has been no object for the Scuderia for years. It has taken one man to motivate and turn around an under-performing team single-handedly.

F1 without Schumacher? Boring. Some of Schumacher's tactics may be questionable, but he is a true racer who would stop at nothing to win. You don't get to the top of F1 in the modern era by compromising.

Hugh Vickers
London

Realism will pay dividends

Love him or loathe him, you cannot deny that in an age of sterilised, public relations-minded drivers, Eddie Irvine's straight forward approach is a breath of fresh air.

His bended knee approach to his Ferrari team mate Michael Schumacher belies his determination and will to win – perhaps people misread his harsh realism for sycophancy.

His approach to Formula 1 has been pragmatic from the outset. Eddie Jordan had to persuade him to even join motorsport's elite, as it meant giving up his lucrative Japanese Formula 3000 drive.

He's played his cards right though, and has now made enough money with Ferrari to be set for life when he hangs up his helmet. But the money issue aside, I think people forget that Irvine also has a burning desire to succeed – and he now has a real chance to score his first win at the British Grand Prix.

Irvine can push Schumacher harder than any other team mate has, but probably can't beat him, although it's rarely a fair fight as the German is the unquestioned number one at Ferrari. But in France the Irishman's tigering drive showed that, given the chance, he can stay ahead of the McLarens.

If that situation occurs again, but Schumacher retires, then Eddie is the man to pick up the pieces.

He may not win the title, but don't underestimate Irvine's role if Schumacher does. In the meantime, we're guaranteed some controversial comments to liven things up.

Robin Upton
Brighton

Behaviour fit for a champion

Contrary to Abbie Goddard's opinion (AUTOSPORT letters, July 2), I believe Mika Hakkinen did no wrong when he criticised the stewards about the aborted first start of the French Grand Prix.

During his 'outburst' Mika merely noted that 'it was unnecessary to stop the race'. What else could he have said? The Finn's behaviour has been impeccable compared to the political bleating Michael Schumacher and Eddie Irvine specialise in. Just ask Damon Hill.

With the possible exception of Damon's 1996 challenge, I can't think of any modern world champion elect who has taken to the task with more focus and application.

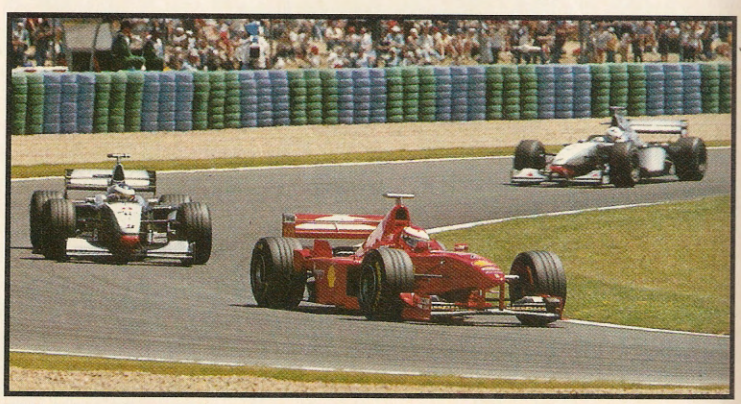
Andrew Gallie
Cumbria

Taking a racing line

It is increasingly difficult to believe that the FIA is primarily motivated by safety when deciding rule changes for next year.

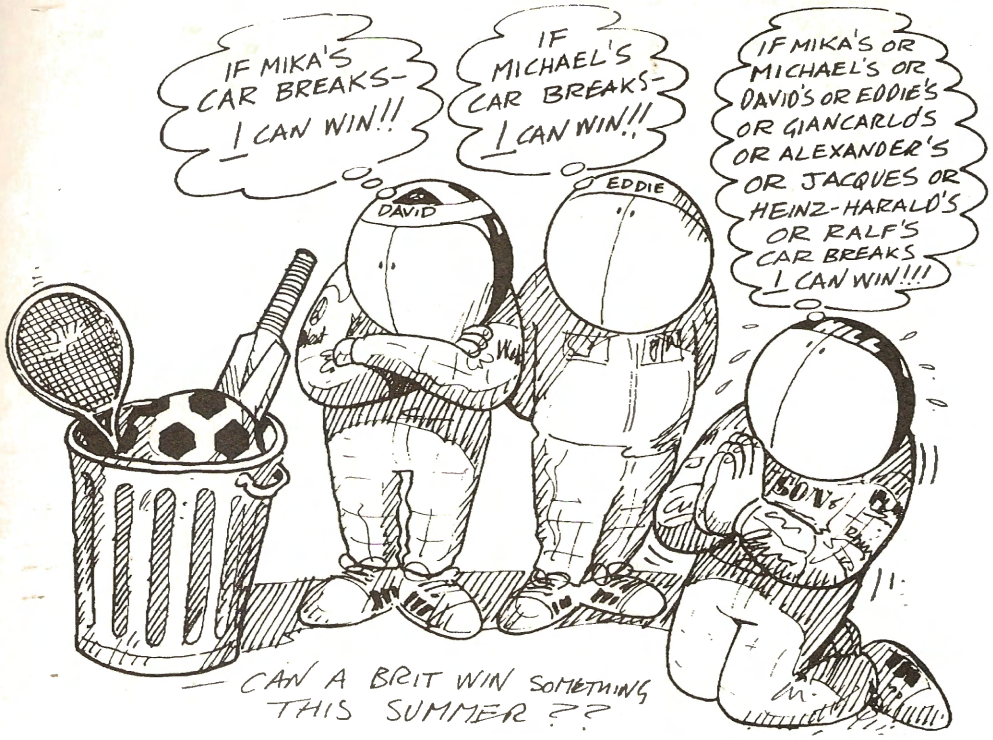
The idea to slow the cars down is an excellent one, but by reducing mechanical grip yet further, by adding lateral grooves to the tyres, can only mean that yet more drivers end up in the gravel trap.

It is also strange how the FIA has



Martyn Elford/LAT

Eddie Irvine showed in France he can beat the McLarens – a first GP win can't be far away



commissioned think-tanks of various sorts to investigate the problems with overtaking, but it seems to ignore the views of the majority of its own drivers, surely the ones in the know, who say that the problem of a lack of overtaking arises through an excessive reliance on aerodynamic grip.

What is required is a bit of honesty. It's time for the FIA to swallow its pride and admit that this year's cars are ugly, difficult to overtake with, and constantly on the limit. Although regression is difficult, smaller wings, bigger ride-heights and fat rear tyres would seem to be the way to go.

The new regulations mean that the cars withstand impacts better, but they are also more likely to crash in the first place.

This would be acceptable if the cars were significantly slower, but in Magny-Cours David Coulthard's fastest race lap was 0.387s faster than it was in 1997!

A total re-think is clearly called for, but this time the drivers' views should be taken into account.

Henri Weitzel
London

Giving British talent a chance

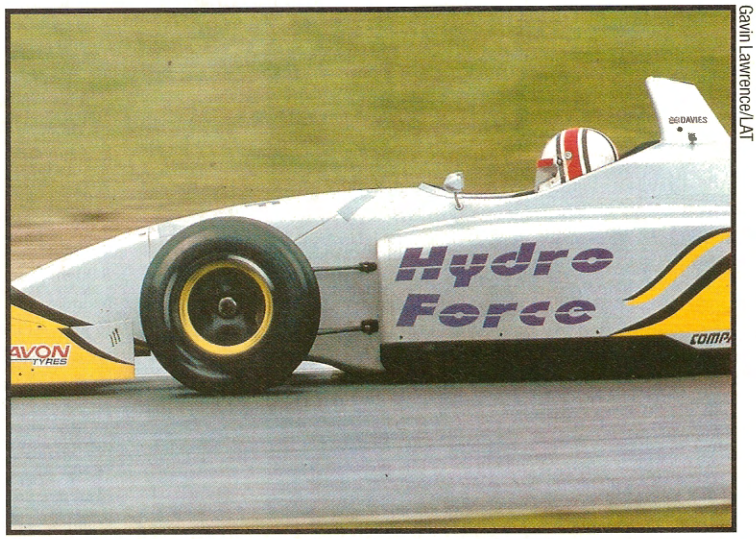
I find the latest banging of the Juan Pablo Montoya drum, who looks set for a Williams F1 race seat next year, very disappointing as far as the next generation of British Grand Prix drivers is concerned.

Jamie Davies is one of a number of McLAREN AUTOSPORT BRDC Young Drivers whose careers have not entirely taken off, despite their undoubted abilities. He has proved that, on his day, he is more than capable of beating Montoya in F3000, yet has been overlooked.

British-based Grand Prix teams such as British American Racing, TWR Arrows and Williams ought to promote British driving talent.

If they don't, we'll be facing the reality in a few years time of there being no British drivers on the F1 starting grid.

Roger Phillips
Somerset



Gavin Lawrence/LAT

Jamie Davies, Britain's most successful runner in F3000, is being overlooked by the F1 teams

Britain's first division

Any idea to keep Formula 3000's new-found momentum running sky-high has to be a good thing, and a relegation system in the football style sounds a great idea to keep the quality of entries strong.

The only worry with this scheme is that it relies on national F3000 championships for the overflow. And as we have seen in Britain, F3000 has struggled to survive below the International series.

So once again, plans are underway to build a British national series, and maybe it will work this time. But going on past evidence, it's not something I'll be holding my breath for.

Robert Jones
Llanelli

Vive le Francorchamps

We have just returned from the 24-hour Procar Race at Spa-Francorchamps in Belgium, and would like to promote the event to other British race fans!

This was the third year we have gone and it was great to see the likes of James Thompson, Anthony Reid, David Leslie and Derek Bell at such close quarters. Along with the magnificent circuit, brilliant atmosphere and surprise concert by Tony Hadley (ex Spandau Ballet), it really made for an excellent couple of days. It's 'Le Mans without the crowds'.

One request for the organisers though – could we please have the hourly updates in English as well as the local languages. It would make things just a little easier!

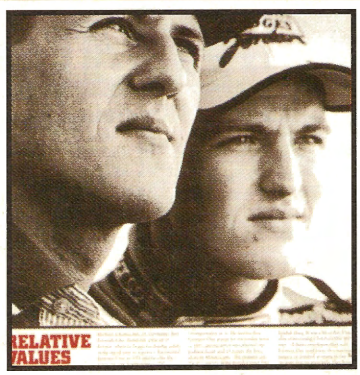
Alyson Read & Ian Coles
Surrey

You can write to us at AUTOSPORT letters, 38-42 Hampton Road, Teddington, Middlesex, TW11 0JE; fax us on 0181 943 5922 or e-mail us at either autosport@aol.com or Compuserve on 100634,1072

What the papers say with Anthony Peacock

'Ralf was very sweet. He had long blonde hair and looked like a girl'. Even more worrying, it's his brother saying it.

Contrary to popular belief, domestic life chez Schumacher is as peaceful as a Minardi motorhome at siesta time, or at least that's what Ralf and Michael told The *Sunday Times Magazine*. 'Michael has always tried to help me, and I never listened' said Ralf ' But now when there's a chance for us to be together, we'll take it. We're the only two drivers who spend any amount of time together. I'm not interested in seeing the other drivers socially....None of the drivers are interested in being together, you're adversaries on track. So it's best to stay apart from it'. Even brotherly love has its limits though. 'Once I told Michael to eat a pudding and he got really angry' said a contrite Ralf. At least he didn't suggest port and cigars as well...



'There are so many people who have forgotten to be human beings' says Jacques Villeneuve in The *Mail on Sunday*, referring to no-one in particular. Yet he agrees that, 'Michael has a very good chance of winning the title. McLaren had, and still has the upper hand, but somehow they are managing to screw it up'.

It's not often that Villeneuve and Eddie Irvine agree with each other, but the Irishman was also busy knocking nails into McLaren's metaphorical coffin. 'If Michael puts the pressure on them they are history. Simple as that' he states in *Sport First*.

Yet not everybody makes a virtue of being the archetypal number two. A reader wanted to know recently if it were true that Irvine was in hospital to have his tongue surgically removed from Michael's...well, guess the rest.

But Jonathan Noble's article in The *Daily Telegraph* gives an impression of a man more sensitive than a mere laconic prankster. 'When Michael gets all the new bits on the car and I get whatever's left it can get a bit demotivating...in Monaco I finished on the podium but it didn't matter because the team were disappointed that Michael didn't win'. Never mind Eddie; at least Liz Hurley fancies you.

Back home again

NIGEL ROEBUCK

When the shape and contours of Silverstone were fundamentally changed, prior to the 1991 British Grand Prix, Alain Prost was one of many drivers to express regret. 'The new track is good,' Alain said, 'and I have no problem with it – except that it's *Silverstone*. I wish they could have built this circuit somewhere else, and left the old Silverstone as it was. I *loved* it.

'It wasn't like anywhere else. Whenever I was at Silverstone, I used to think we were a little bit crazy guys to drive there. But if you got a corner like Stowe really right, it was so satisfying.'

So dramatic, too. For me, one of the half-dozen most memorable sights in 30-odd years of watching Formula 1 was that of Keke Rosberg going for the pole with his Williams-Honda right at the end of qualifying in 1985. At the time, the Honda engineers said that their dynos read only up to 1000bhp; that being so, they added, it was quite some time since they had known how much horsepower their turbocharged V6 was giving…

Anyway, here was Keke doing his thing, with the boost off the clock, and qualifying tyres starting to go away long before the end of a banzai lap. On a track still damp in places from a mid-session shower, the white, yellow and blue car screamed round in 1m 05.591s, at an average of 160.90mph. Thus, Rosberg took the pole, by seven-tenths of a second, and at a record speed which will probably endure for eternity.

If you were watching, it was a lap to make you shiver. But it seemed not to have that effect on Keke, whose hand was quite steady as it held a lighter to a post-qualifying cigarette. Through Woodcote, the car had felt a bit twitchy, he said; probably it was simply that the qualifiers were giving up. A few minutes later, though, one of them had completely deflated: Rosberg had done at least part of the run with a slow puncture.

Silverstone was never so quick again. By the time of the next British Grand Prix there, in 1987, the right-left-right flick at Woodcote had become a proper chicane, and that, together with a new limit on turbo boost, which lopped about 100bhp, added around a second and a half to qualifying times.

To the end, the circuit was impressively fast, but if they were sad to see it disappear, most agreed that in the post-turbo era overtaking had become a near-impossibility; the hope was that the resculpted 1991 Silverstone would address that problem.

When first they got loose on it, the drivers had mixed opinions. On the one hand, they loved the ultra-quick complex at Becketts, and raved about Bridge, a swooping right-hander with a flat-out approach, which the very brave took without so much as a 'confidence lift.' They were less impressed, though, with tight and fiddly new sections at Vale and Luffield – the vocabulary of Silverstone, too, was changing.

In 1994 the track was altered once more, and emphatically for the worse. In the months after the calamitous Imola weekend, which claimed the lives of Roland Ratzenberger and Ayrton Senna, circuit modifications were introduced left, right and centre, and the Silverstone management decided to bring forward changes already planned for 1995. Copse, Stowe and Priory were extensively reprofiled, and at Abbey – the curve before Bridge – a new chicane was inserted.

Perhaps understandably, many drivers had over-reacted in the aftermath of Imola, insisting on circuit changes which in time they came to loathe. 'I remember that, at the time, Keke (Rosberg) said to me it was time to be calm, not to over-react,' said Mika Hakkinen, 'but that's exactly what happened: suddenly all the circuits were full of chicanes. Silverstone became unbelievably bad. OK, it was still the home of British motor racing, and all that, but from a driver's point of view it became the worst circuit of all, and before I had loved it. A driver could do nothing there: it was just arrive at a corner, brake, turn in, power down. Terrible.'

> **"In testing recently, I tried to take Copse flat. It didn't work – I went off"**
> JACQUES VILLENEUVE

Happily, for 1997 yet more changes came along, these aimed at restoring the 'flow' of the circuit. The previously messy section around Priory, Brooklands and Luffield was considerably tidied up, and Copse was much quicker than before.

'Copse? You don't brake there now,' said Jacques Villeneuve. 'It's just a small lift…' Was he serious? 'Absolutely. In testing recently I tried to take it flat.' And? 'Mmmm, it didn't work – I went off!

'The thing is, it's not speed down the straight that's interesting – it's the high-speed turns, like Copse, like 130R at Suzuka. Places where you're thinking, "OK, this time I do it flat," and somehow your foot comes off the throttle, anyway! But it's turns like that where you really feel something special.'

It was at Silverstone, three years ago, that Villeneuve first tested an F1 car, and at the time he liked the track, 'Apart from that awful slow section at the end, which is useless.' In its latest guise, the circuit finds favour with him, but still he believes it could be further improved.

'I would like to see Vale disappear,' he said. 'To me there's no logic to it, no rhythm in it – and it ruins Club. In fact, now I think about it, I wouldn't mind seeing Abbey disappear, either, or at least that chicane before it. Overtaking is possibly on there, but the trouble is that at Club, the corner before, even when you're running by yourself, the car's a little bit light at the exit, and when you're following someone you lose downforce, so you can't get on the throttle early – which in turn means you're never close enough to get the tow to outbrake someone into Abbey, where the braking is very short, anyway.

'Perhaps you could think about passing into Vale, but you don't really brake hard enough. Pity about Vale being so slow: if you had a high-speed kink there instead, maybe overtaking would then be possible into Abbey.

'As for the rest of the track, there's not really any braking – not *hard* braking, anyway, which is why Silverstone is one of the worst circuits for overtaking. For actual racing, it's one of the most difficult of all, I would say.

'However, as a track to drive on, Silverstone is fantastic now, because the corners are very demanding – you really have to push yourself, your heartbeat goes pretty high, so that's great. I think we need tracks like this, where you really have to push your own personal limits.

'At Suzuka last year,' Villeneuve mused, 'I did take 130R flat in qualifying. Maybe, with the new tyres we have from Goodyear, I'll try Copse flat again…'

Jacques's British Grand Prix score to date is two races, two wins. Even though he expects the Williams to be quite a competitive proposition at Silverstone, he is unlikely, given the state of play, to make it a hat trick, but undoubtedly he'll be thereabouts. And in light of what he says about the problems of overtaking, the rush to the first corner should be quite something: Hakkinen and Coulthard cannot afford a repeat of Magny-Cours. ■

LAT

Keke Rosberg's 1985 Silverstone lap record is unlikely to be beaten. The Finn averaged over 160mph in his Williams

What's on...

...the track

Sat Jul 11
British Formula 3 Championship (GB)
Silverstone (GB), round 10 of 16
Sun Jul 12
FIA Formula 1 World Championship
Silverstone (GB), round nine of 16
CART Champ Car Series
Cleveland (USA), round 10 of 19
FIA GT Championship
Dijon (F), round four of 10
Indy Lights Championship
Cleveland (USA), round eight of 13
Toyota Atlantic Championship
Cleveland (USA), round six of 12
Formula Opel Euroseries
Silverstone (GB), rounds nine and 10 of 18
British GT Championship
Silverstone (GB), round five of nine
NASCAR Winston Cup
New Hampshire (USA), round 18 of 33
Japanese Touring Car Championship
Motegi (J), round four of eight

...the box

BBC 1
Sat Jul 11 1130-1200 BTCC highlights from Croft
BBC2
Mon Jul 13 1455-1525 *Top Gear Motorsport*
ITV
Sat Jul 11 1225-1420 British Grand Prix qualifying, LIVE
1630-1700 Grand Prix Special
Sun Jul 12 1250-1615 British Grand Prix, LIVE
2230-2330 British Grand Prix highlights
CHANNEL 5
Sun Jul 12 2355-0125 Champ Car action from Cleveland (USA)
Tue Jul 14 0215-0345 Champ Car highlights from Cleveland (USA)
EUROSPORT
Thu Jul 9 1700-1800 Tractor Pulling
0000-0030 *Speedworld* magazine
Fri Jul 10 0800-0900 STW Cup highlights from the Norisring (D)
2300-2330 *Four Wheel Drive*
Sat Jul 11 1400-1500 FIA GT qualifying from Dijon (F), LIVE
2330-0000 Champ Car qualifying
Sun Jul 12 1200-1400 FIA GT race
1730-1930 Champ Car race from Cleveland (USA), LIVE
1930-2030 FIA GT highlights
Mon Jul 13 1800-1900 GT highlights
Wed Jul 15 1615-1800 *Speedworld*
2300-0030 *Speedworld* (repeat)
SKY SPORTS 1
Thu Jul 9 2300-2330 Formula 3
Sat Jul 11 1930-2000 Formula 3
Sun Jul 12 1430-1500 Drag Racing
Wed Jul 15 1930-2000 *Full Throttle*
SKY SPORTS 2
Fri Jul 10 2300-2330 *V-Max*
Sat Jul 11 1430-1800 *World Motorsport*
Mon Jul 13 2230-0200 *World Motorsport*
CEEFAX
See page 360 for motorsport news
INTERNET
www.autosportmag.com
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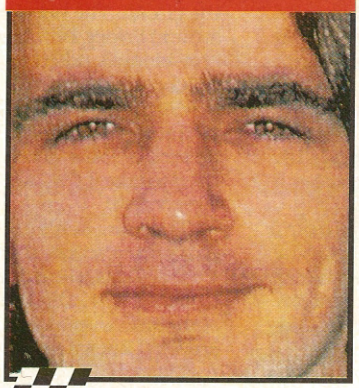
Keyword AUTOSPORT

It may not be too long before Irvine finally shakes off the bridesmaid tag and wins his first Grand Prix

Irvine is much better than he gets credit for

Inside line



ADAM COOPER
GRAND PRIX EDITOR AT LARGE

When Eddie Irvine crossed the line in second place at Magny-Cours, he guaranteed himself a rather unusual place in the history books; his 12th visit to the podium put him equal with Stefan Johansson in the list of drivers who've finished in the top three, yet failed to win a race. If you're wondering, their closest pursuers in the hard luck stakes are Chris Amon on 11 podiums (he can't even win this competition!), and Martin Brundle and Eddie Cheever with nine apiece.

I suppose Stefan should really be ahead of Irvine on a tie-break, as his dozen included four seconds and eight thirds, while Eddie has only twice finished second. But I'm sure it won't take long for the Ferrari man to claim the record for himself with a 13th podium. Or will his next visit be to the top step and make such calculations academic?

It can't be too far away. One day this season there will come a race where Michael Schumacher either cocks it up or retires, and Eddie is free to uphold Ferrari honour. Of course he'd have to beat the McLarens, and problems for them would do no harm. However, in Magny-Cours he outran the MP4/13s fair and square, and McLaren should remember that there are a few other tracks coming up which are known for upsetting the formbook.

A GP victory for Eddie might force a few people to think again. It doesn't seem to matter how many times he brings the car safely home and earns a sackful of points for a grateful Ferrari, there are still many in the paddock who don't rate him, and regard him as some sort of wild man. They've failed to notice Eddie developing into one of the smartest drivers in the field; few do a better job of being in the right place at the chequered flag. His contribution to the rapid development of the F300 is also unheralded outside the team.

The problem is he's up against M Schumacher every time he sits in the car, so he always loses out in that barometer of competitiveness; how you fare against your team mate. But then who *could* beat the awesome Michael of 1998 in a team which totally revolves around him? As Eddie says, 'people still don't realise just how good the guy is.'

Such praise doesn't come easily from the Ulsterman's lips, but he gets castigated for praising his team mate. The same people, including fellow drivers, criticise him for so readily accepting the supporting role at Ferrari, where he's contractually bound to work in Michael's shadow. What kind of racing driver is that, they ask?

Others might not understand, but it's a challenge Eddie agreed to take on, and for which he is well-rewarded. It's not been easy. The Italian media has been on his back for three years, and even when Ferrari is winning there's always some faction stirring things up. And sometimes even the resilient Irvine has been gobsmacked by the pro-Schumacher bias. But he's having the last laugh. Would he now be fourth in the World Championship if he was team leader at Williams, Jordan, Prost et al? In his first year the Ferrari was a disaster, and even last season if things didn't go well in qualifying he'd be back in 15th or 17th. On a bad day in 1998 he starts sixth or seventh, even when Bridgestone has the advantage. His regular starting spot is fourth.

Eddie's going better because he's finally got a decent car, one more suited to his style. He's getting back that confident, cocky edge he had when outqualifying Rubens Barrichello at Jordan, and it's serving him well. He's closer to Michael, although outrunning him is another matter. But deep down he's convinced he can do it.

'You either lie down and get ******, or you get stuck in and keep working at it,' he said after France. 'I want to beat him, so for me second place is no big deal...' ■

Armchair enthusiast

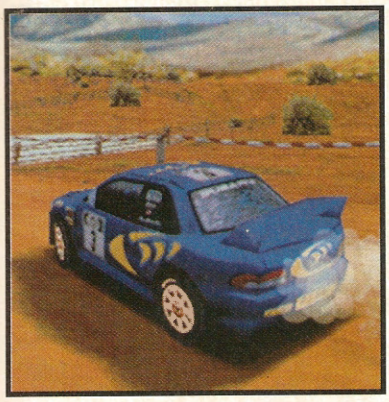
Colin McRae Rally for PlayStation and CD-ROM, by Codemasters, **price £44.99 (PlayStation)/£34.99 (PC CD-ROM)**

I was in Corsica this morning. It wasn't actually the Corsica Rally; I was just practising in one of SEAT's Ibiza kit cars (the Evo II to be precise). I had been quicker than Juha Kankkunen's record, but in a fit of overexuberance I clipped a barrier three miles from the end of the stage, launching my car into a violent series of somersaults. When it came to rest, I exhaled slowly, took my hands off the steering wheel, made myself a cup of tea and drove into work.

'Colin McRae Rally' takes virtual reality to a new extreme. Put simply, it is the best rally game you can buy by a long way.

You have the choice of 12 rally cars, both front- and rear-wheel drive, whose individual handling characteristics are faithfully reproduced. You can then drive a total of 48 stages in eight world locations, all of them heart-stoppingly authentic.

A measure of its sophistication is the fact that the game is endorsed by 1995 World Champion McRae himself. The realism is awesome. Your car gets muddier and muddier as the stage goes on and you have to be careful not to damage it too much, as you can only do so many repairs during the service breaks between stages.



The amount of research Codemasters – the company responsible for 'TOCA Touring Cars' – has invested is just astonishing and the game will have you glued to your joystick for hours. If you love rallying, you must buy it. It's released on July 15 – from all good suppliers.

● Anthony Peacock & Simon Strang

Anniversaries

Trulli: 28

Jul 9: Nicola Foulston (born 1967), Dudley Wood (b 1946)
Jul 10: Carlo Abate (b 1932), Jacques Heuclin (b 1946), Jean-Pierre Jarier (b 1946), Uwe Schafer, Gunther Schmidt (b 1943), Alessandro de Tomaso (b 1928)
Jul 11: Antonio Albacete (b 1965), Giorgio Pianta (b 1935), Pedro Rodriguez (died 1971), Jamie Spence (b 1973), Rolf Stommelen (b 1943, d April 24 1983), Guy Williams (b 1962)
Jul 12: Guy Ligier (b 1930), Benny Parsons (b 1941)
Jul 13: Davey Allison (d 1993), Alberto Ascari (b 1918, d May 26 1955), Thierry Boutsen (b 1957), Oriol Servia (b 1974), Leslie Thorne (b 1933), Jarno Trulli (b 1970)
Jul 14: Jeff Krosnoff (d 1996), Wayne Taylor (b 1960)
Jul 15: John Cleland (b 1952), Truman Flock (d 1972), Hermann Roth (b 1957), Brian Taulborg (b 1971)

Cleland: 46

Then as now

■ 10 YEARS AGO

Conditions were diabolical for the British Grand Prix, providing Ayrton Senna with the perfect opportunity to take a crushing win (AUTOSPORT, July 14, 1988). His chief rival, Alain Prost, lost fifth gear and voluntarily retired. 'Why risk a big accident for 12th place?' he said. Gerhard Berger had taken pole, the first non-McLaren driver to do so that year, but his Ferrari was hunted down by an on-form Nigel Mansell, who stole Berger's second place with 15 laps to go, setting fastest lap in the process. Sandro Nannini was third, and Mauricio Gugelmin's March fourth.

Senna proved master of Silverstone

■ 20 YEARS AGO

Yet another lights to flag victory for Bruno Giacomelli in the European Formula 2 race at Nogaro, followed home by his March-BMW team mate, Marc Surer (AUTOSPORT, July 13, 1978). Brian Henton's March-Hart was the only car which came even vaguely close, but clutch problems ended his challenge. Geoff Lees starred in the new Hi-Line Chevron-Hart, finishing sixth on the car's debut.

Humility is not a major feature of most racing drivers, but Nelson Piquet claimed 'it's not me, it's the car' after winning the British Formula 3 round at Silverstone. Piquet's Ralt took pole, fastest lap and victory, trailed by Chico Serra and Derek Warwick. Andrea de Cesaris had held second for most of the race, but falling oil pressure relegated him to fourth, inches behind Warwick.

Honda revealed its Formula 1 challenger

■ 30 YEARS AGO

David Piper comfortably won the Nuremburg 200 miles at the Norisring, driving the classic Ferrari P4 (AUTOSPORT, July 5, 1968). Dieter Quester was second in a Group 7 BMW 2-litre, but the anticipated challenge from Lola and Ford failed to materialise.

The new Honda RA 032 Formula 1 car was flown into Britain from Tokyo. It was an all-new design, with a 120-degree, air-cooled engine. John Surtees was due to test the car at Silverstone before its first race, the French Grand Prix at Rouen.

Stateside, the US Automobile Club declared turbine Indycars illegal.

■ 40 YEARS AGO

Mike Hawthorn took an emotional victory for Ferrari at the French Grand Prix in Reims (AUTOSPORT, July 11, 1958), after his team mate, Luigi Musso, had lost his life in an accident just past the pits. Poignantly, it was the Prancing Horse's first Formula 1 victory since 1956 at the Nurburgring. The Italian marque had won the World Sportscar title , and now Hawthorn's win brought him level with Stirling Moss for the F1 championship lead. After a long battle with Jean Behra, Juan Manuel Fangio finished fourth. It was to be the great Argentinian's last race before hanging up his helmet for good. Stirling Moss finished second in a Vanwall, with Behra third in a new Porsche.

Another debutant, Lotus, wheeled out a low-slung racer for Cliff Allison. However, a startline shunt damaged the oil tank and Allison pitted a few laps later. The hole was plugged with a champagne cork, but the officials refused to let the Lotus rejoin.

From the LAT archives...

James Hunt's McLaren lands heavily after a first-lap tangle at Brands in 1976. The race was re-started and Hunt went on to win

GP PREVIEW

Silverstone should favour the McLarens, but history gives Schumacher an edge, says Andrew Benson

It isn't even halfway through the season yet, and Mika Hakkinen and Michael Schumacher are locked in a 200mph duel at the head of the World Championship. Who would have bet on that after McLaren humiliated the opposition at the start of the year?

The events of the last month have proved that nothing can be taken for granted in Formula 1. The McLaren may still be F1's superior car, but throw in some unreliability, and some eye-catching gains from Ferrari and suddenly there is a real battle.

The McLaren drivers must be wondering what on earth has gone wrong. At least Hakkinen still has the championship lead, though. He simply has to ensure that he stays calm in the face of what will inevitably be a take-no-prisoners charge from Schumacher.

Although the Ferrari appeared to have the beating of the McLaren at the French Grand Prix, that ought not to be the case at Silverstone this weekend.

The fast, sweeping bends that make up the first half of Britain's Grand Prix track should play into the hands of McLaren's superb aerodynamics and the power of the Mercedes engine. This ought to be Hakkinen's chance to re-extend his lead. It will also give the luckless Coulthard an opportunity to strengthen what is merely a finger-tip's grip on his title chances.

Schumacher, though, believes Silverstone will not be an ideal circuit for the Ferrari F300, but that his performance in France shows he ought to be there or thereabouts.

History bears him out, and to such an extent that a comparison of this year and last reveals an uncannily similar set of circumstances.

Last year, too, Schumacher won in Canada, trounced the team with the best car (then Williams) in Magny-Cours and arrived at Silverstone relatively confident of a good showing. Sure enough, Schumacher trailed Jacques Villeneuve in the early laps, and took a comfortable lead when the Canadian's front wheel jammed in a pit stop. Only a wheel-bearing failure denied him victory. No one would be surprised to see him make amends this weekend.

Coulthard needs the win more than anyone. Mathematically, he is right to say he still has a chance to win the title. If he does not start to close the gap soon, it is all over for him. Even now, with nine races still to go, the chances of him making up a 20-point gap on a man in the same car must be considered almost non-existent.

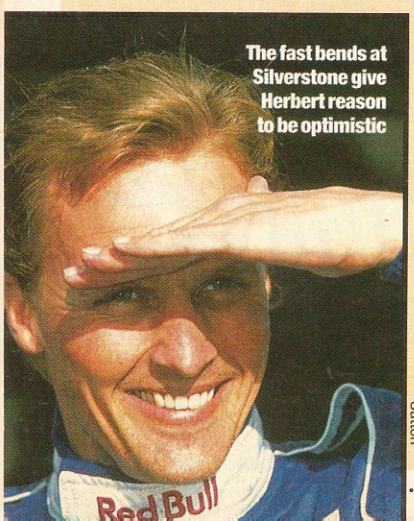
There will be no other contenders for victory in Silverstone, but interest will be provided by the battle to be best of the rest. This will be between Williams, which has more improvements to come on its troublesome FW20, and Benetton. Jordan will also be hoping that revised aerodynamics can turn around its dreadful season. ■

Coulthard still has an outside chance of stealing the title but he must make it count at Silverstone

Sutton Images

> **"The events of the last month have proved that nothing can be taken for granted in Formula 1"**

Behind the wheel with Johnny Herbert



The fast bends at Silverstone give Herbert reason to be optimistic

Sutton

We were hoping for better things at our recent test, but I still think there's a good deal in Sauber's favour at Silverstone, mainly because there are a lot of high-speed corners. Our car should be strong in Becketts and Stowe, for example.

Our biggest problem has always been the slow-speed stuff, but with the suspension changes we've had, that will be improved, so we should be a lot better off everywhere. I think Goodyear will be very strong once again, so I'm still quite optimistic.

Straightline speed is my main concern. It's strange – at the Magny-Cours test we were in the top 10 past the pits, but on race weekend we were way out. It completely swapped around for no real reason. We checked everything on the car and couldn't find out what was wrong. Hopefully we can sort that out.

I think Ferrari will be competitive again this weekend. Magny-Cours was quite favourable for them, and there's no reason why they shouldn't have a good one at Silverstone. Michael Schumacher is always on top of it, and I'm sure Eddie Irvine will be keen to do well at home.

The next two races are important for McLaren, and David Coulthard really has to beat Mika Hakkinen at Silverstone to keep his chances alive. It's all closing up at the top!

As far as the track is concerned, the whole Becketts section is important to get right, as obviously you have to keep your speed up for the Hangar Straight. However, because you're in it for a short time you don't actually lose so much over a lap if you're flat or not quite flat.

However, Priory and the last couple of corners, Brooklands and Luffield, are very important. Because they're so slow, that's where you can lose a lot of time if you don't get them right. Silverstone is not particularly hard on tyres, but in qualifying the last part of the lap is normally where you're scrabbling for grip. You can lose a helluva lot in that section.

BRITAIN

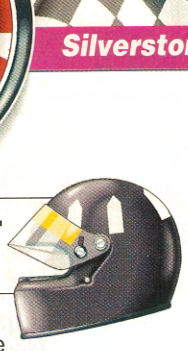
Round 9

FORMULA 1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

July 12, 1998

ROUND 9

Silverstone



On the right lines...
Damon Hill's 'key corner' at Silverstone

Becketts is still the best sequence of corners in the whole F1 calendar, let alone the Silverstone circuit itself! This high-speed combination really gets your heart racing.

The entry and the first section is very fast and then you have to fight your way through, soaking up lots of G-force. There are also a number of different lines that you can take through here, which means you can experiment to get the best out of the car. It's important to get through smoothly because you can then really fly out of *Chapel* on to *Hangar* Straight – the fastest part of the lap

Circuit length: **3.194 miles**
Race distance: **60 laps**

Car set-up: Medium downforce. Smooth surface surface, grip is fairly high – a big 'plus' on a circuit with a good combination of corners and very fast straights. Car must be well-balanced to fully exploit this

Woodcote 155 5 1.9
T3
PIT LANE
180 6
145 5 3.5
Copse
Brooklands
100 3 2.5
70 2 2.3
55 2 2.0
100 3 2.4
Luffield
155 5 3.8
95 3
Priory
-1.8
T2
Bridge
150 5
Farm
65 2 2.4
175 6
Abbey
-2.6
180 6 2.0
Maggotts
165 5 2.4
125 4 3.0
Becketts
115 4 3.0
125 4 2.2
Club
-2.5
170 5
55 2 2.0
Vale
105 4 3.1
190 6
-3.0
Stowe
Hangar Straight
T1
Chapel
145 5 2.4

Graphic: © Russell Lewis

Flashback...

'97 Pole position:
Jacques **Villeneuve**
1:21.598

*Q = Qualifying position

Race results	Q*
1 Jacques **Villeneuve**	1
2 Jean **Alesi**	11
3 Alexander **Wurz**	8
4 David **Coulthard**	6
5 Ralf **Schumacher**	5
6 Damon **Hill**	12

Key
Timing sector T1
MPH 000
Gear 0
Lateral G-force 0.0
Frontal G-force 0.0

Best sector times (Qualifying)		Fastest at end of sector (Race)	
Sector 1: J. Villeneuve	26.613 secs	**Sector 1:** M. Hakkinen	190.6 mph
Sector 2: M. Hakkinen	34.112 secs	**Sector 2:** E. Irvine	157.1 mph
Sector 3: J. Alesi	20.471 secs	**Sector 3:** R. Schumacher	179.0 mph

Fastest race lap:
M. Schumacher
1:24.475
(136.109 mph)
– lap 34

Lap data by BENSON & HEDGES Jordan

NB Lap data based on telemetry from Ralf Schumacher's Jordan 197 (Chassis#6) Silverstone, July 12,1997

FERRARI v McLAREN

What the experts think

MARTIN BRUNDLE
ITV Commentator

David Coulthard's got to win the British Grand Prix – and he's going to have to beat Michael Schumacher to do it.

Against the odds, we now have a level playing field where both McLaren drivers and Schumacher stand a chance of winning. From now until the end of the year it will, with the exception of special tracks like Hockenheim and Monza, come down to who has the best tyres.

I've never seen a comeback in Formula 1 like Ferrari's. I saw it in sports cars, in 1991, when our Jaguar was five seconds clear of the field at the first race but then Peugeot reeled us in and beat us. Ironically, it was Ross Brawn's Jaguar against Jean Todt's Peugeot. Mercedes was also miles off the pace but recovered to win the last race with a certain Mr Schumacher at the wheel. Now all three are re-enacting that scenario for the one team on a bigger stage.

NIGEL ROEBUCK
Grand Prix Editor

Silverstone should – should – be the race of the season thus far. Jacques Villeneuve, who has yet to lose there, has said that he expects his revised Williams to be more in its element through the fast corners in which the track abounds, and Benetton should also figure prominently.

That said, most anticipate that the main protagonists, as usual, will be McLaren-Mercedes and Ferrari. On paper, Hakkinen and Coulthard have the best car for the job at this, a very quick circuit, and the MP4-13's strengths should be seen to their greatest advantage.

That said, where Schumacher is concerned, anything is possible, and Irvine, too, is a genuine force this year. I think – reliability permitting – that McLaren will win here, of all places, but the start will be crucial: overtaking ain't easy at Silverstone...

MARK SKEWIS
AUTOSPORT Editor

Mika Hakkinen was out of this world at Silverstone last year, and David Coulthard could be out of the title race if he can't get the better of the Finn this time around. But I'm backing Michael Schumacher to win. Or at least I would be if I had any money left after the World Cup sweepstakes!

It's always a dangerous sign when Schumacher stops complaining that he has no chance and concedes that he *might* be able to match his rivals. I think the McLaren drivers will have to outqualify the Ferrari if they are to prevent Michael performing another of those conjuring tricks.

If the race is vital for Coulthard – one more defeat and we'll be trotting out the 'last roll of the dice' cliches – it's no less important for Damon Hill. My guess is he'll follow the script and score Jordan's first point of the season.

KEN TYRRELL
Former team owner

The championship has opened up after Magny-Cours, but I think McLaren will win at Silverstone. I also hope so, as I like to see a British team doing well. Obviously Michael Schumacher is always a threat, and he is clearly the best driver in the world at the moment. Eddie Irvine won't be far behind – he's had a tremendous season so far. Realistically, both Ferraris and McLarens would have to break before anybody else gets a chance of winning. McLaren does a lot of testing at Silverstone, which will help; and of the two I think Hakkinen will have the edge.

Tyres will be critical, and Goodyear has done so much work recently it will be interesting to see if they can keep it up. Benetton is a Bridgestone runner, but the team was positively outdone by Goodyear in France.

I think Jacques Villeneuve is looking forward to next year, so I'm going for a McLaren one-two, with Schumacher third.

ADAM COOPER
Grand Prix Editor-at-large

Can Michael Schumacher make it three in a row at Silverstone? I think the possibility is there, but somehow it's hard to imagine that luck will go his way once again.

I'm sure that McLaren will hit back hard this weekend in a race which effectively represents the first anniversary of the team's return to form. Remember Mika Hakkinen's storming performance in the race last year? After the disappointments of the last two races, I expect Hakkinen and David Coulthard to be in better shape. Having said that, the pressure is clearly on now, and the issue is confused by the fact that they are competing with each other, and not just against Schumacher.

Ferrari has been threatening a good showing in Britain for some time, and the indications from last week's testing are that Goodyear is again on top. It's easy to forget just how strong Schumacher was at Silverstone last year, and Eddie Irvine also had a good race here.

Williams looked pretty good in testing, and I think Jacques Villeneuve in particular will come back strongly. He has won the last two British Grands Prix and, though a repeat may be a little unlikely, I think we'll see some real signs that the team has made progress.

Victory for Schumacher at Silverstone would give him three wins in a row

Coates/LAT

JONATHAN LEGYARD
Radio 5 Live commentator

On paper, Silverstone suits the McLarens, but that's also what everybody said about Canada. David Coulthard must be wondering what exactly he's done wrong. He's had problems in Monaco, Montreal and Magny-Cours. He must be dreading Monza! If France was a crucial race for David, then Britain will be even more so; put simply, he has to do it this time. The 20-point gap to Hakkinen is a big one, and if they get much further apart, Coulthard could find himself reluctantly following team orders as McLaren throws its weight behind Hakkinen.

However, David has the advantage of a home crowd and a circuit he knows well, so he should be OK.

Of course, you can't discount Michael Schumacher as he's the best driver out there at the moment. Eddie Irvine is also getting better and better, but Ferrari has benefited a lot from its rival's misfortunes, and the tide might just turn in Britain.

MURRAY WALKER
ITV commentator

As you all know, I love to stick my neck out and make a prediction, but for the first time this year I find that I really can't. Ferrari has truly caught up with McLaren, just as Goodyear has caught up with Bridgestone. It's going to be an absolutely fascinating battle, and I hope that the best man wins. Look out for Irvine, he's just equalled his career best result, with second at Magny-Cours, and he's been on the podium five times in the last six races – a tremendous achievement. He will be a force to be reckoned with, but so will his team mate! McLaren has the advantage of testing a lot at Silverstone, but Ferrari is so professional that it'll be up to speed from the word go. It will be a close and exciting race, but who knows who'll be on the top step of the podium?

British Grand Prix Statistics

Name	1998 team	Britain Starts	Grid/Result 1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	Total points	Average points	Career GPs	Points 1998
Alesi	Sauber	7	6/DNF	8/DNF	12/9	4/2	6/2	5/DNF	11/2	18	2.57	143	3
Barrichello	Stewart	5	.	.	15/10	6/4	9/11	6/4	21/DNF	6	1.2	89	4
Coulthard	McLaren	4	.	.	.	7/5	3/3	9/5	6/4	11	2.75	66	30
Diniz	Arrows	3	.	.	.	.	20/DNF	17/DNF	16/DNF	0	0	58	1
Fisichella	Benetton	2	.	.	.	.	.	18/11	10/7	0	0	33	13
Frentzen	Williams	4	.	.	.	13/7	12/6	11/8	2/DNF	1	0.25	103	8
Hakkinen	McLaren	6	25/12	9/6	.	5/3	8/DNF	4/3	3/DNF	9	1.5	104	50
Herbert	Sauber	7	24/14	7/DNF	7/4	21/11	5/1	13/9	9/DNF	13	1.85	121	1
Hill	Jordan	6	.	26/16	2/DNF	1/1	1/DNF	1/DNF	12/6	11	1.83	92	0
Irvine	Ferrari	4	.	.	.	12/DNF	7/DNF	10/DNF	7/DNF	0	0	73	25
Nakano	Minardi	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	14/11	0	0	25	0
Panis	Prost	3	.	.	.	15/12	13/4	16/DNF	.	3	1	67	0
Rosset	Tyrrell	1	.	.	.	.	.	20/DNF	.	0	0	23	0
Salo	Arrows	3	.	.	.	.	23/8	14/7	17/DNF	0	0	60	3
Schumacher M	Ferrari	6	.	4/4	3/2	2/DSQ	2/DNF	3/DNF	4/DNF	9	1.5	110	44
Schumacher R	Jordan	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	5/5	2	2	25	0
Takagi	Tyrrell	0	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0	0	8	0
Trulli	Prost	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	13/8	0	0	23	0
Tuero	Minardi	0	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	0	0	8	0
Verstappen	Stewart	3	.	.	.	10/8	.	15/10	19/DNF	0	0	49	0
Villeneuve	Williams	2	.	.	.	.	.	2/1	1/1	20	10	41	11
Wurz	Benetton	1	.	.	.	.	.	.	8/3	4	4	11	14

★ Who's hot &
☆ Who's not

Teams at a glance

WILLIAMS
The beleaguered World Champions had a positive test at Silverstone last week, even if the times do not show it. New parts on the car have improved the handling significantly, and Jacques Villeneuve and Heinz-Harald Frentzen are optimistic of moving a step closer to the Ferraris, although they think the McLarens are still well out of reach.
Rating: ★★★★☆

FERRARI
Optimism runs high at the Italian team after a promising outing at Silverstone last week. The team expects to trail the McLarens in qualifying, but come the race Michael Schumacher considers victory a real possibility. If he can beat the McLarens in Britain to take his third win on the trot, he will be a thorn in the British team's side for the rest of the season, and a strong bet for the World Championship.
Rating: ★★★★★

BENETTON
Another unobtrusive but competitive test leaves the Anglo-Italian team and its drivers in a confident frame of mind for the Grand Prix. It's hopeful of reversing the events of the French GP, where Williams supplanted it as the first team behind the top two, but is aware, as are the rest of the grid, that the performance of the two tyre companies will be crucial.
Rating: ★★★★☆

McLAREN
Optimistic but wary after a strong Ferrari showing in France. A new diffuser tried out during the Silverstone test last week worked well, according to Mika Hakkinen, and while McLaren is confident that its MP4-13 will be better-suited to the fast sweeps of the Northamptonshire track than the Ferrari F300, there is an unmistakable sense of nervousness about Michael Schumacher's competitiveness.
Rating: ★★★★★

JORDAN
New, shorter sidepods proved to be a step forward at the Silverstone test, but no miracle is expected, despite Ralf Schumacher's mega-fast quickest lap at the end. That was a qualifying-type, low-tank run, and the team itself is under no illusions that it will be in with a chance of victory. Scoring its first points of the year is about as much as Jordan can expect.
Rating: ★★★☆☆

PROST
Jarno Trulli is relatively happy with the handling of the car, having made progress with the stiffer rear suspension parts that were first used at the French Grand Prix. Gearbox reliability also seems to be better, while Olivier Panis, who was very unhappy with the car in France, was also more optimistic at the test. But still the team expects no better than a place around 12th on the grid.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆

SAUBER
A troubled test, with little progress made and three engine failures for Jean Alesi compounding the problems. 'I'm not very happy,' said Johnny Herbert, who expects to qualify just outside the top 10. 'We didn't really learn anything and we got stuck in a bit of a rut.'
Rating: ★★☆☆☆

ARROWS
Both Mika Salo and Pedro Diniz said they were pleased with the boost in performance from the new engine specification they tried at the test and should be able to use in qualifying this weekend. But while top-end power and driveability improved, reliability remains in question, and it would be a surprise if either did much better than the top 15.
Rating: ★☆☆☆☆

STEWART
A new engine from Ford proved a step forward, but a lack of running meant little progress on the set-up of the car. 'We're struggling to get the thing handling correctly,' admitted a team member. Stewart expects a top 12 position from Rubens Barrichello, but maybe not from Jos Verstappen, who is still getting used to the car.
Rating: ★★☆☆☆

TYRRELL
Tough times at Tyrrell. The car lacks grip and neither Toranosuke Takagi, who somehow did not damage his car badly in a spin at Bridge, or Ricardo Rosset looked anywhere near competitive. Rosset, in fact, was a second behind his Japanese team mate. The team will struggle to be higher than 18th or so.
Rating: ★☆☆☆☆

MINARDI
A familiar story for the little Italian team, at the tail end of the time sheets, with only Ricardo Rosset's Tyrrell for company. 'This is as much as we can do,' said an insider. Engine reliability remains a problem, too. The team suffered a crankshaft failure on the final day of the test.
Rating: ★☆☆☆☆

Jordan has an improved car, but Damon Hill can't hope for much more than a point or two

Lawrence/LAT

Race odds

DRIVERS	
M Hakkinen	11/8
M Schumacher	7/4
D Coulthard	11/4
E Irvine	12/1
G Fisichella	33/1
A Wurz	33/1
J Villeneuve	40/1
H-H Frentzen	50/1
D Hill	66/1
J Alesi	80/1
R Schumacher	100/1
J Herbert	100/1
R Barrichello	100/1
J Verstappen	200/1
O Panis	200/1
J Trulli	200/1
M Salo	500/1
P Diniz	500/1

(Odds supplied by Ladbrokes and correct at time of going to press)

One year ago

● Jacques Villeneuve was certainly not expecting to secure Williams' 100th Grand Prix win. He took pole and led until his first problematic pit stop, which looked like handing Michael Schumacher a third consecutive victory. When the German retired with wheel bearing failure on lap 38, Mika Hakkinen was on course for his first win. The Finn's Mercedes V10 blew with six laps to go, however, gifting Villeneuve the lead. The Benettons of Jean Alesi and Alex Wurz were second and third, the latter claiming his first podium.

● Damon Hill had an eventful weekend, having been publicly lambasted by his Arrows team boss, Tom Walkinshaw, over an alleged lack of motivation. Hill answered in the best possible way, with 12th place in qualifying and sixth in the race – Arrows' first point of the season.

● 'Nightmare' would be the only word to describe Heinz-Harald Frentzen's British Grand Prix. Things started well, when he qualified second. He stalled on the grid, however, causing a restart and relegating himself to the very back. At the restart, he clashed with Jos Verstappen's Tyrrell, and it was all over for the German before the end of lap one.

Title chase

DRIVERS		
1	Mika Hakkinen	50
2	Michael Schumacher	44
3	David Coulthard	30
4	Eddie Irvine	25
5	Alexander Wurz	14
6	Giancarlo Fisichella	13
7	Jacques Villeneuve	11
8	Heinz-Harald Frentzen	8
9	Rubens Barrichello	4
10	Jean Alesi/Mika Salo	3
11	Herbert/Diniz/Magnussen	1

CONSTRUCTORS		
1	McLaren-Mercedes	80
2	Ferrari	69
3	Benetton-Playlife	27
4	Williams-Mecachrome	19

Tale of two teams' home turf

To Ron Dennis, boss of the McLaren-Mercedes team, Britain is just another race on the calendar...

McLaren scored its first victory under the Ron Dennis regime at Silverstone back in 1981, when John Watson took the revolutionary carbon fibre-chassised MP4 to its maiden win. Since then, the team has scored five more wins on home soil, the last with Alain Prost way back in 1989.

It's a surprisingly average record for a team which has enjoyed far more consistent success abroad. So what does the race mean to Dennis?

'It means a logistical nightmare!' he smiles. 'It's the second largest promotional programme for us, the biggest being Germany, so handling all the guests who come is difficult for our marketing organisation, because it runs to about 600 people.

'From a car point of view it's a circuit that will play to its strengths. Other than that, it's just another Grand Prix that we'll attempt to win.'

Just another GP? But surely winning in Britain means something on a personal level?

'Emotionally? No. If you think about it, you make it more important in your mind, because more people you know are watching it. But I think if you go to any GP and you feel you've raised your game, then you have to ask yourself why don't I make that much effort at every race?

'That's the approach you have to take. You can't single out any one race. It's important to leave a GP, especially if you've failed, and be able to reflect that you've given it 100% and it wasn't through lack of effort. Therefore, Silverstone is just another race,' says Dennis.

> **"You can't single out any one race. Therefore, it is just another"**
> **RON DENNIS**

Last year, Mika Hakkinen came close to scoring his first victory at Silverstone, but Dennis denies that there's any sense of unfinished business about this weekend.

'There's always something in every race that you tend to remember, and of course that one was a failure that we suffered so close to the end of the race.

Apart from the performance of the car, I think the whole team is now better, more focused, more determined. We don't want to find ourselves reflecting on the World Championship at the end of the year thinking, "My goodness, we got overly comfortable with the situation and then blew it."

Every race you go to you've got to be determined to do your best. What happened the previous year is almost immaterial.'

Northamptonshire has not been kind to McLaren, despite Mika Hakkinen and Ron Dennis's best efforts

LAT

...but for Jordan owner, Eddie Jordan, a maiden victory here would be a momentous occasion indeed

Silverstone has been a second home for Eddie Jordan since he started his career

Heath/LAT

Eddie Jordan has been based at or near Silverstone since his Formula 3 days, and his Formula 1 factory is right opposite the main gate. He has always regarded the place as his second home, but Jordan has rarely had much luck in the British Grand Prix. It has never even had so much as a podium finish.

On the face of it, the chances of one coming this year are slim after such a terrible start to the season; halfway through and Jordan has yet to score a single point. With Damon Hill on the driving strength, there could be no better time to get a good result. Whatever happens, will Eddie enjoy his weekend?

'Silverstone is very special,' he admits, 'I'd be happy to win a race anywhere, but I'd be particularly happy to win one at Silverstone! I did all my racing career there. I started out there when I came to the UK. I was based there as a young professional and when I started my team, so it is like a home from home in many respects. I've probably lived longer around Silverstone than I have in Ireland!

'It's a strange race because the demands there are massively high. So many people come over from Ireland, particularly as July is the traditional time for holidays there. A lot of people want tickets – I seem to grow in vast numbers the people I went to school with or I knew or lived beside. Anyway, that's all part of the game.'

> **"It's a very special place. It is like a home from home in many respects"**
> **EDDIE JORDAN**

Eddie admits that the 1998 season has not been an easy one.

'Monaco was the real downside, everything that could go wrong seemed to go wrong. It seems to be a good bit better now. We'll have to wait and see what Silverstone's like, and if we can turn it around.'

This time, there's the added pressure of having Hill on board. Last year, we saw the first signs of promise at Arrows when Hill finished sixth, so another climb into the points would be the perfect result.

'It's important that Damon gets a good chance to go well. He is incredibly popular there, but Jordan is very popular also.'

Benetton's wheel of fortune

Since the 'paddle' gear-shift mechanism first appeared on the steering wheel of a sceptical Nigel Mansell's Ferrari in Brazil, 1989, an inestimable amount of time and money has been invested in turning one of the car's most basic components into a major nerve-centre.
Today's drivers have both hands firmly fixed to a technological masterpiece that is worth rather more than its weight in gold!

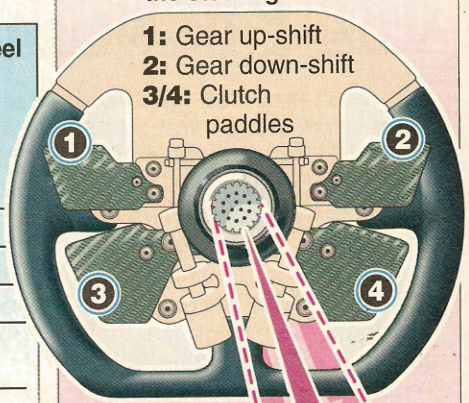
So what are all those flashing lights and buttons about? Read on as all is revealed...

Traffic signals: lights set in top of steering wheel give a constant guide to car's running status

'SL' (Gear shift): sequential lights pre-set to specific 'rev' bands – determined by individual circuit characteristics and conditions – tell drivers when to change gear

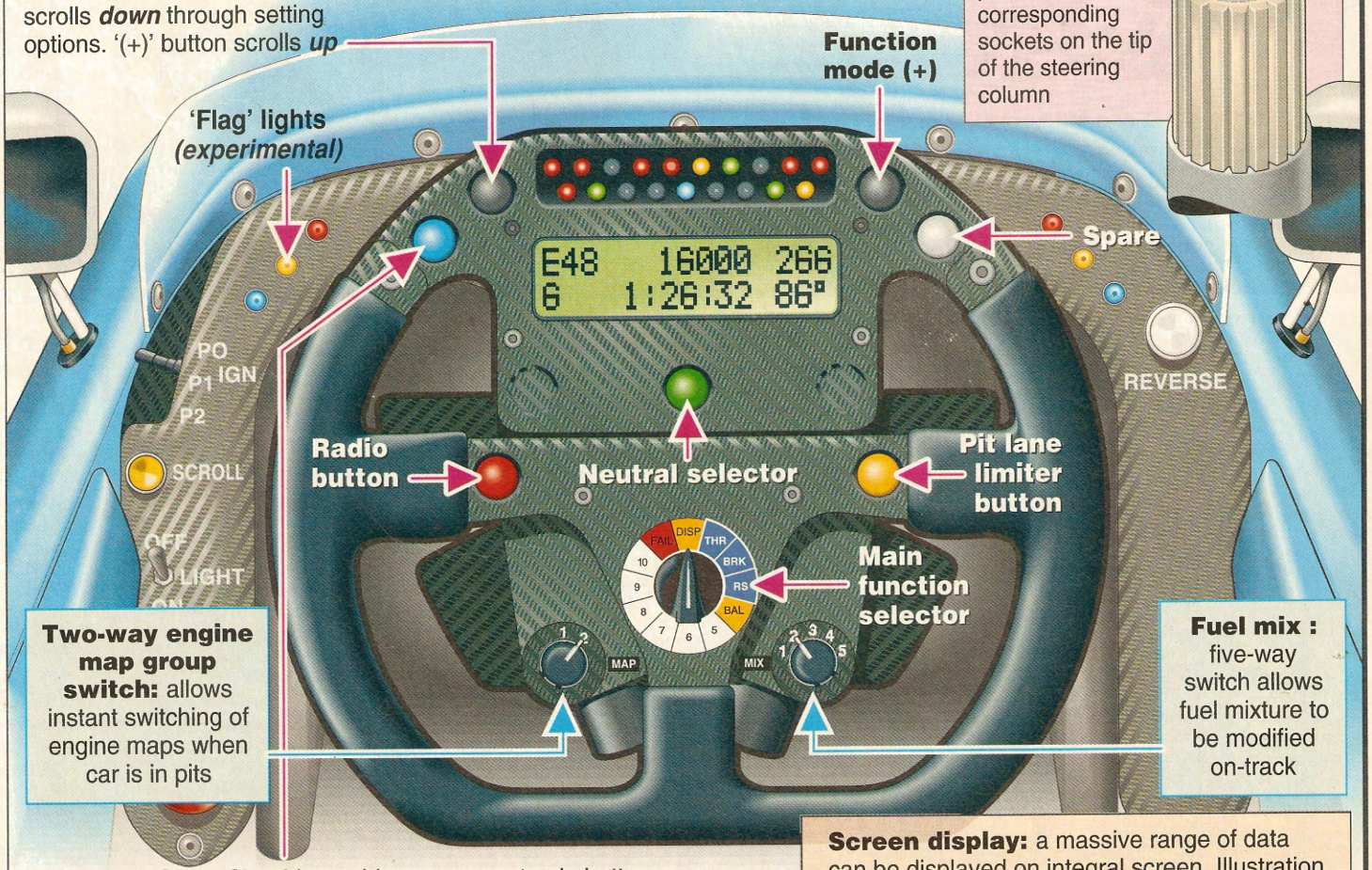
A/D:	Spare
B/C:	**Pit lane speed limiter on**
E:	Radio indicator
F/H:	**Clutch (separate left and right paddle indicators)**
G:	Throttle. Pre-sets allow indication of optimum throttle level for start
J:	**Second pit limiter indicator**

Reverse gear: on the back of the steering wheel...



The right connections: wheel 'plugs in' to the car via a set of pins that lock into corresponding sockets on the tip of the steering column

Function mode (–): works in conjuction with main function selector switch, button scrolls ***down*** through setting options. '(+)' button scrolls ***up***

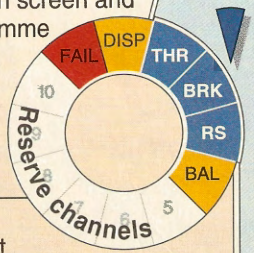


Two-way engine map group switch: allows instant switching of engine maps when car is in pits

Fuel mix : five-way switch allows fuel mixture to be modified on-track

Logger switch: Should a problem occur on-track, button can 'mark' telemetry read-out for later analysis by engineers

Main function switch: determines which data is displayed on screen and activates selected programme



DISP: scrolls display of pressure data on various circuits such as compressed air and brakes

FAIL: simulates selected component failure – used for testing only!

BAL: sets front-to-rear brake balance (15 settings)

Engine data and settings

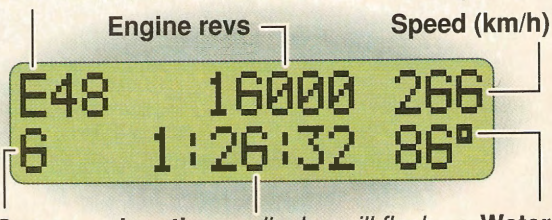
THR: controls throttle function to Mecachrome specifications (5 settings)

BRK: controls engine braking effect to preserve rear brakes (5 settings)

RS: spare channel for Mechachrome settings

Screen display: a massive range of data can be displayed on integral screen. Illustration below represents a 'typical' on-track display

Error ID: if a fault develops on-track, driver can radio number to engineers. Using this code, the team can indentify the problem and tell the driver if it is safe to continue or if he must pit



GRAPHIC: © Russell Lewis

Silverstone timetable

THURSDAY, JULY 9 (Gates open 0730)

1000	Silverstone Radio live on air (87.7FM)
1000-1100	Pit Road Walkabout
1140-1200	RAC Event Opening Lap
1215	Westland Sea King Mk5 Flypast
1230-1300	British F3 Championship – first qualifying practice
1320-1350	British GT Championship – first qualifying practice
1510-1540	Euroseries Formula Opel – first qualifying practice
1600-1630	MGF Cup – qualifying practice
1650-1720	National Saloon Cup – qualifying practice

Friday, July 10 (Gates open 0600)

0600	Silverstone Radio live on air (87.7FM)
0730-0830	Pit Road Walkabout
0830	Silverstone TV live on air (channel 34)
0830-0850	Track displays – RAC and Silverstone Driving Centre
0900-0940	Porsche Supercup – Free practice
0950-1035	Pit Road Walkabout
1030	Circuit Inspection Lap
1100-1200	**Formula 1 – first practice**
1210	Cougar On–track Show
1220	RAC Track Display
1230	Circuit Inspection Lap
1235-1245	Harrier GR7 Solo Aerobatic Display
1250	Westland Sea King Mk5 Flypast
1300-1400	**Formula 1 – second practice**
1430-1500	Porsche Supercup – first qualifying practice
1520-1550	Euroseries Formula Opel – second qualifying practice
1610-1640	Formula 3 – second qualifying practice
1700-1730	British GT Championship – second qualifying practice

SATURDAY, JULY 11 (Gates open 0600)

0600	Silverstone Radio live on air (87.7FM)
0645-0800	Public coach rides around GP circuit
0715-0815	Pit Road Walkabout
0800	Silverstone TV live on air (channel 34)
0800-0820	Track displays – RAC and Silverstone Driving Centre
0830	Circuit Inspection Lap
0900-0945	**Formula 1 – third practice**
1015-1100	**Formula 1 – fourth practice**
1110	Cougar On–track Show
1120-1130	Mercedes Silver Arrows – Track Display
1115-1200	Pit Road Walkabout
1130-1145	RAC Track Display
1145-1245	Grand Prix air display featuring: the RAF Falcons Parachute Team & Hercules Display, Westland Sea King Mk5 Flypast, Blue Eagles Army Helicopter Team, Harrier GR7 Solo Aerobatic Display,
1230	Circuit Inspection Lap
1300-1400	**Formula 1 qualifying**
1430	Euroseries Formula Opel race 1 (12 laps)
1530	Formula 3 race (15 laps)
1700	MGF Cup race (10 laps)
1750	National Saloon Cup race (10 laps)

SUNDAY, JULY 12 (Gates open 0500)

0500	Silverstone Radio live on air (87.7FM)
0615–0845	Public coach rides around GP circuit
0700	Silverstone TV live on air (channel 34)
0830-0850	Track Displays with the RAC and Silverstone Driving Centre
0900	Circuit Inspection Lap
0930-1000	**Formula 1 – warm up**
1015	Porsche Supercup race (15 laps)
1050-1135	Pit Road Walkabout
1050	Official Car – Inspection Laps
1110-1130	Formula 1 Drivers' Parade
1145	Euroseries Formula Opel race 2 (12 laps)
1215	Cougar On–track Show
1225-1240	RAC Track Display
1240-1250	Mercedes Silver Arrows – Track Display
1250-1400	Formula 1 startline ceremony featuring: the Red Devils Parachute Display Team, Circuit Inspection Lap (1300), Parade of Flags, Band of the Scots Guards, RAF Red Arrows (1312), Blue Eagles Army Helicopter Display Team, Combined Forces Helicopter Salute, National Anthem
1400	**British Grand Prix (60 laps)**
1615	British GT race (50 mins)

(all information subject to change 11/6/98)

Supporting cast

FORMULA 3

The AUTOSPORT British Formula 3 Championship will keep the Saturday crowds entertained with its cast of young hopefuls only two steps from their goal of a place on the Formula 1 grid. Any one of 11 drivers could emerge victorious on the day, with four Brazilians, six Brits and a Dane up for glory. The Renault UK-backed Promatecme team has led the way so far this season with Brazilian Enrique Bernoldi, but the top British charger is Darren Manning, who won last time out.

EUROSERIES FORMULA OPEL

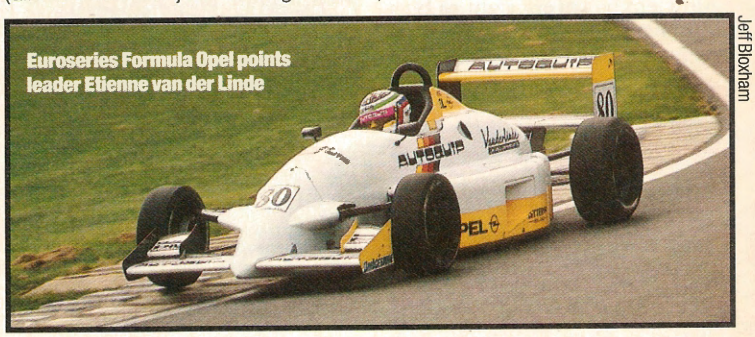
Grand Prix stars of the future is the name of the game in Euroseries Formula Opel, which has two races this weekend. The Silverstone contests mark the halfway point in the pan-European series for the 180bhp Opel-engined single-seaters, and the championship is still tight. Andrew Kirkaldy, the current McLAREN AUTOSPORT BRDC Young Driver, is leading the British attack, but needs some good results this weekend to close on points leader Etienne van der Linde from South Africa.

NATIONAL GT CHAMPIONSHIP

With four winners from four rounds, the Privilege Insurance GT series is wide open. John Greasley and Magnus Wallinder hope to repeat their first round victory, but Snetterton winners Julian Bailey and Tiff Needell are hot favourites in the Lister Storm GTL. A second McLaren will be at Silverstone, Gregor Fisken and Peter Hardman joining Tim Sugden and Steve O'Rourke, while the British Touring Car Championship's David Leslie and Matt Neal will be in a Team Dynamics-run Porsche 911 GT1.

Darren Manning is the most likely Brit to impress in the British F3 race

Sutton Images



Euroseries Formula Opel points leader Etienne van der Linde

Jeff Bloxham

PORSCHE SUPERCUP

Johnny Mowlem will be hoping to impress on home soil this weekend, as the Supercup comes to Britain for the only time this year. However, he will face stiff opposition from reigning champion and series leader Patrick Huisman and guest driver Oliver Gavin, Formula 1's safety car pilot. Also look out for French tennis hero Henri Laconte, and former Grand Prix stars like Jacques Laffite and Jean-Pierre Jarier.

MGF CUP

One-make racing is always about close, frenetic action, and the inaugural MGF Cup has proved to be no exception. The man on form is racing returnee James Rhodes, who is leading the championship with three wins so far this season. He is having to fend off the experienced Alastair Lyall, but watch also for Matt Kelly and Suzi Hart-Banks.

NATIONAL SALOON CUP

This burgeoning series is for cars one performance level down from Super Touring machines, and is proving a cost-effective alternative. Leading the way is Nissan stalwart Andy Middlehurst, but he has to hold at bay an armada of Honda Integras led by Lester Stacey, Ian Griswold and flying Finn Toni Ruokonen. Bolstering the field this weekend will be visitors from the equivalent Dutch series, and they could spring a surprise.

On the air

ITV

Saturday July 11
1225-1420 Grand Prix qualifying, LIVE from Silverstone
1630-1700 Grand Prix Special

Sunday July 12
1250-1615 British Grand Prix, LIVE
2245-2345 Grand Prix highlights

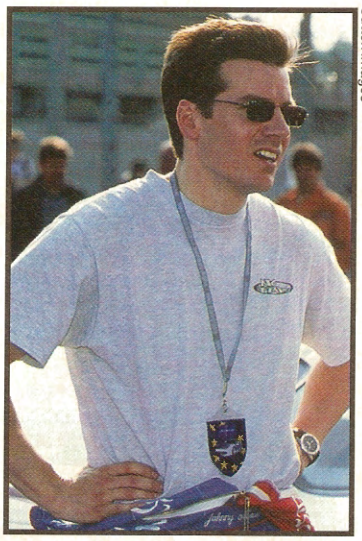
ROAD TO CUP GLORY

First the Porsche Supercup, then the world. At least, that's what Johnny Mowlem plans. By Damien Smith

Life's a total blur for Johnny Mowlem at the moment. This time last year he was racing at British club circuits like Castle Combe and Knockhill; now he is reflecting on his first experiences of two of the most famous tracks in the world – Imola and Monaco.

The leap from Britain's Pirelli Porsche Cup to the Grand Prix supporting Supercup is big, and to take in all the changes to his life cannot be easy for the former single-seater racer. In the past 12 months, he has gone from being a driver with what seemed a limited future in the sport to one who may have an international career opening up in front of him.

Mowlem has every right to be a happy man, but to suddenly find that your racing dreams are coming true after years of hard graft, must be almost bewildering.



Sutton Images

Enjoying life as an international racer

> **"The lights came on one by one, like F1. I thought, 'This is really cool'!"**
> **JOHNNY MOWLEM**

'All my friends have started calling me Johnny Jetset because my life sounds glamorous now,' he says. 'I've been flying off to test at Mugello, the Hungaroring and the Nurburgring, then racing at Imola and Monaco. When you're in the middle of it, though, you feel the dream of getting there is almost better than the reality.'

It's rare to find someone who can sit back and be happy to have achieved what they've always wanted, and Mowlem is no different.

Sutton Images

On the limit at Ste Devote in Monaco. Mowlem finished the race seventh

First time for everything

Mowlem or Oliver Gavin will make history if they win the Supercup race

Should Johnny Mowlem or Oliver Gavin take victory in the Porsche Supercup race this weekend, they will become the first British drivers to win the annual Silverstone support event.

Japanese touring car racer Kelvin Burt is the only one who has really come close, when, in 1994, he finished second to Uwe Alzen, now a works Porsche GT driver. That race was the most successful for British guests in the Supercup, as Tim Harvey finished right behind him.

John Cleland starred in 1995, the year he won his second British Touring Car Championship crown. However, after a hectic race when the Scot was involved in the thick of the action (surprise, surprise), he could only finish eighth as Emmanuel Collard won.

GT driver Collard was the dominant force in the Supercup for a couple of years and he won again in 1996. That was the year Allan McNish made his one and only Supercup appearance. The Scot spun out while lying 10th.

Last year, there were no British guests in the race, as Vincenzo Sospiri and Thierry Boutsen took the available seats.

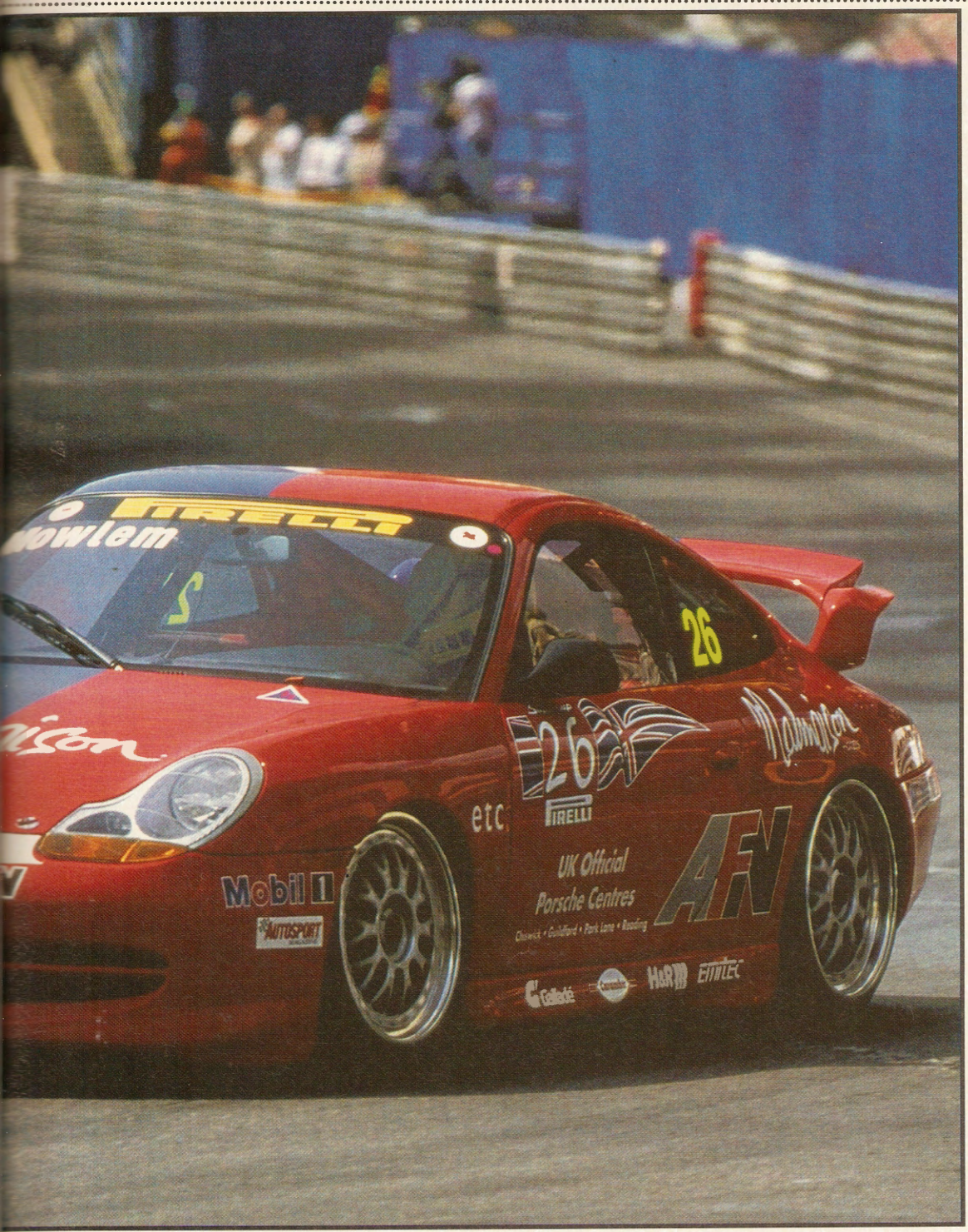
So now, in 1998, Mowlem and Gavin have a chance to make a little bit of history and get the Grand Prix crowd in the mood for a home win in the main event.

Sutton Images

The young Brit at the start of his first Supercup race at Imola, battling with Patrick Simon

Having reached a new plateau in his racing life, he has now set himself higher goals of establishing himself in sportscars: 'I'm sure Michael Schumacher doesn't sit back and think, "Yeah, I've made it". All he's thinking at the moment is "I've got to win the World Championship for Ferrari". In any walk of life, you think you'll be happy to get what you want, but when you make it, you are still essentially the same person. It means that despite everything that has happened, I haven't changed – it's just my lifestyle that is different.'

Mowlem might be taking it all in



Home boys

Mowlem won't be the only Brit driving a Porsche at Silverstone

Johnny Mowlem is coming home. From the exotic locations in Europe, the only British driver regularly racing in the Supercup is returning to his own soil this weekend at Silverstone.

As a veteran of two Supercup races supporting Grands Prix, Mowlem will be getting used to competing on the same bill as the Formula 1 boys. Now, after two strong showings, he will be hoping to use his home advantage. You never know, if everything goes his way, he might even notch up his first win at this level.

After the enthusiasm of the Italian fans in Italy, Mowlem will be looking for some cheering from the Brits at Silverstone.

However, there is one driver who is planning to steal some of his thunder. For this race ex-Formula 3000 ace Oliver Gavin is guesting in the celebrity car. Gavin, a former British Formula 3 champion, drives the F1 pace car these days and has not secured a full-time drive this season.

Allan McNish competed in the Silverstone Supercup race two years ago in what was the Scot's first Porsche drive. It was the first step he took on a trail which would eventually lead to his victory in the Le Mans 24 Hours this year.

With this in mind, Gavin will seize his chance to race again, especially on such a prestigious occasion. With Mowlem and Gavin giving it their all, could we still be in for an English win on World Cup Final day?

Timetable

Friday, July 10
0900-0940 Free practice
1430-1500 Qualifying
Sunday, July 12
1015 Race

his stride, but he is also determined to enjoy himself. The excitement of what he is doing has not been lost amidst the hard work.

'The time it really dawned on me sounds really stupid,' he says, 'but when I was sitting on the grid at Imola for my first Supercup race, the red lights came on one by one like the Formula 1 procedure, and I just remember thinking "this is really cool"!'

The reaction he is getting from the public has amazed him, too. Mowlem could not have gone through more drama in that Imola race, as he ran eighth for much of the race, despite severe braking problems which held up a train of cars behind him. At the final corner, Altfrid Heger and Dominique Dupuy punted him off within sight of the flag, so his race finished in disappointment. But he still remembers it as a high moment of his career. 'In Italy, the crowd goes mad for any red car (in deference to Ferrari, of course). Now, one side of my car is red and the other is blue, but they seemed to associate with the red in my case. When I got out of the car following the shunt, I was really pissed off

and I had my back to them. Suddenly, I heard this massive roar behind me and thousands of people were yelling "Bravo! Bravo!". It wasn't until later that I realised what a cool moment it had been.'

Racing at Monaco is a dream for most drivers and Mowlem's first taste of the principality is something he'll never forget. Again, at the time it was difficult for him to appreciate what exactly was happening and it is only now, on reflection, that he can enjoy that weekend.

'I tried to distance myself from it and look at the weekend through the eyes of someone else. But it went by in a blur because I was so busy with sponsors and attending functions. Driving the track itself was fantastic, but there were so many people absolutely everywhere – it was just so hectic,' enthuses Mowlem.

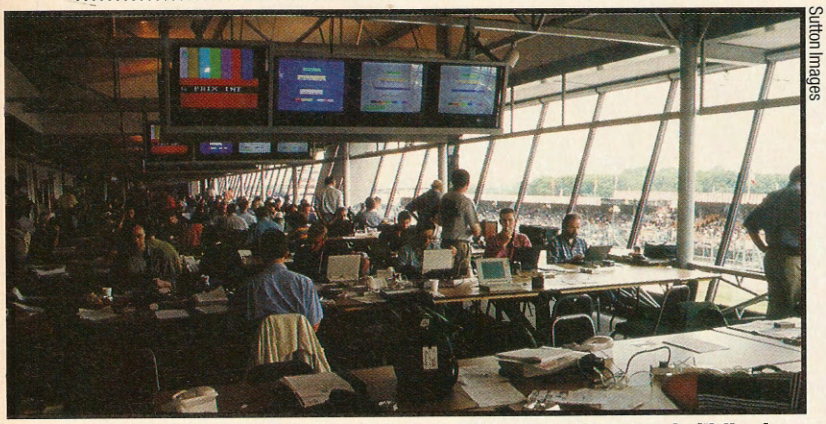
His seventh place at Monaco showed great potential and he takes pride in battling with the likes of former Alfa Romeo Grand Prix star Bruno Giacomelli and Porsche GT1 racer Jorg Muller. His progress in just two races in what is a highly competitive series has not gone unnoticed, and his aim of building a career in sportscars could be coming closer to reality. Already a Porsche GT2 team has shown an interest in running him.

Mowlem is, in his own words, on the 'bottom rung of the sportscar ladder'. After many disappointments, he now has stability in his career, plus the added joy of learning about fatherhood with his seven-month-old son, Reece.

Mowlem's persistence with racing is paying off and with a bit of luck, his happy life could be on the verge of getting even better. ■

In the barriers after being punted off at Imola

Elford/LAT



Sutton Images

The media centre, home to the 300-plus journalists who regularly travel with the show

BERNIE'S

The drivers may be the stars, but they are only a small part of today's GP 'circus'. By Adam Cooper

We often refer to the 'Grand Prix Circus', with Bernie Ecclestone as its ringmaster. It's a bit of a cliche, but there is no better description of how Formula 1 works. The trucks roll into town and unload their gear, the punters come to see the show and, at the end of the weekend, everything is packed up and attention turns to the next stop on the schedule.

The 22 GP drivers and their cars are the stars, the dazzling acrobats everyone wants to see (I won't extend the analogy by likening some paddock regulars to clowns). But just how busy is it behind the scenes? How much effort is required to carry everything around, and ensure that the show always goes out on time?

Well, to give you an idea, over 2000 people and 150 diesel-guzzling vehicles are involved in this travelling global village.

First, let's look at the highest-profile members of the circus – the teams. For the European races the race cars and everything else required for the weekend are stacked into immaculate transporters for the journey across the continent. When they get to the circuit, the truckies know exactly where to park. The teams line up in the pits in the order they finished last year's constructors' series. The whole thing is co-ordinated by Pasquale Lattuneddu, Bernie Ecclestone's right-hand man and the 'paddock policeman'.

It used to be that the top teams were allowed to have more parking space than the minnows, but with the entry list now stabilised at 11, and most paddocks built to accept far more, everyone is allowed three transporters apiece.

Minardi and Tyrrell are actually better off than some of the bigger teams, since they can use all three spots for their own vehicles. McLaren, Jordan, Prost and Stewart have to give one of their allocated slots to their respective engine suppliers (there is no special truck servicing the Ford customers).

Since they're responsible for their own engines, Ferrari, Sauber and Arrows also get three of their own team vehicles in. An anomaly in the 'three spaces' rule applies to Williams and Benetton; they get three apiece for their own use. Mecachrome, as a supplier to two major teams, gets a slot to itself. That brings the paddock's team/engine travelling truck total to 34.

It doesn't always go to plan. At Magny-Cours, Benetton lost one of its parking spots when it was given over to a walkway from pit lane to paddock; the third transporter had to be left outside and its contents ferried in. That's not without precedent, as teams often have to park a fourth vehicle outside. It's usually either one which came early with all the pit and garage equipment, or arrived late with an extra T-car or spare engines.

> **"Over 2000 people and 150 diesel-guzzling vehicles are in this travelling global village"**

LAT

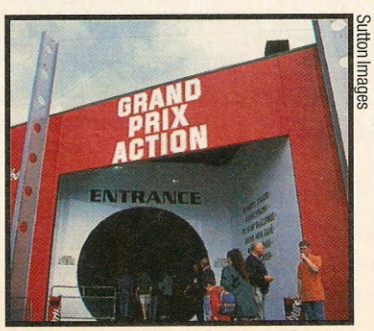
The transporters line up in the order in which their teams finished in the previous year's constructors' points

Sutton Images

The ringmaster (right) and Paddy McNally

Team motorhomes are the other most visible part of the circus. In contrast to the trucks, it's not a level playing field; the bigger you are, the more kit you can bring. McLaren, Ferrari and Williams have the biggest hospitality presence, with three motorhomes apiece. McLaren's are divided into team, West and Mercedes; Ferrari's are team, Italian press and Marlboro; and the Williams set-up is team, Winfield and Mecachrome. Everyone else has two motorhomes, except for Tyrrell. There are strict rules about how much space the vehicles and their awnings can cover. The biggest tent in the paddock belongs to catering company MSS, which feeds the mechanics of several teams.

It's almost impossible to calculate how many team members go to each race, because different outfits have their own definitions of how many people are directly involved. You can add or subtract marketing and catering staff, physios, driver managers and sponsors' representatives. In some cases, the engine guys are included in the mix, in others they are a separate entity (ie Jordan and Mugen, Williams and Mecachrome).



Sutton Images

The sideshows have their part to play, too

As a guide, Ferrari and Arrows – two teams with in-house engine staff – travel with 90 and 70 people respectively. Since everyone at McLaren and Mercedes wears the same team kit, there's no real division, and team co-ordinator Jo Ramirez reckons he usually has to allow for 80 hotel beds. If you take the Arrows figure as a rough average and multiply it by 11, then the

SECRET ARMY

The Paddock Club: home to the privileged

approximate total of team and engine staff travelling from race to race is pushing 800.

Tyre suppliers Bridgestone and Goodyear have around 20-25 employees apiece at each race, plus a motorhome and four transporters.

There are probably another 50 folk who are related to the teams, such as the brake and spark plug men, fuel guys, helmet technicians and F1 travel agents. There are also people from MSAS, a freight company which does much donkey work for the teams, and is also responsible for carrying fuel, usually in appropriately-liveried trucks. Uniquely among F1's service businesses, MSAS gets a motorhome in the paddock.

GP racing manages with a remarkably compact staff of officials. Including Ecclestone, Professor Sid Watkins, safety car driver Oliver Gavin, and the scrutineering and media guys, the FIA's squad numbers less than 20. They account for two vehicles in the paddock; Bernie's famous grey bus and a support transporter which acts as a base for race director Charlie Whiting and his fuel analysis equipment.

However, there are another 230 people who come under Bernie's Formula 1 administration banner. The majority are involved with the digital TV service, but the figure also includes those responsible for the TAG/Siemens timing system – they're so closely integrated into the TV package that they are not considered separately. There are 30 cameramen, and 60 people in logistics, while the remaining 140 are on the technical and operational side.

Most of these work in the TV village, known as 'Bakersville', after its boss, Eddie Baker. The equipment involved weighs 250 tonnes, and it requires 25 HGVs to ferry it. One support transporter lines up in the paddock, ▶

There are 30 cameramen covering the race from every conceivable angle for Formula 1's digital TV service

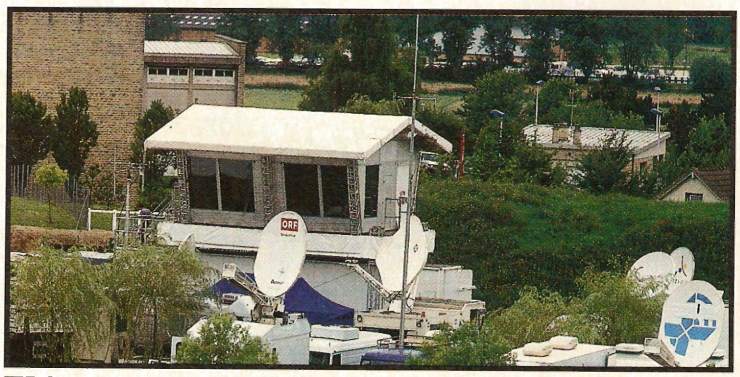
LAT

The 'Bakersville' TV village, which is broken down into containers to be freighted to and from each Grand Prix

◀ while the empty trucks are parked outside – often in order of registration numbers! When 'Bakersville' goes outside Europe, two and a half jumbo jets are required.

The TV operation is matched in its complexity by the activities of Allsport, the Swiss-based organisation run by former AUTOSPORT journalist Paddy McNally. Its main responsibilities are the Paddock Club – F1's VIP hospitality service – and the on-circuit advertising which captures so much screen time on TV.

Incredibly, it takes more than 40 trucks to carry 777 tonnes of Paddock Club equipment (tents, carpets, tables, chairs, etc). You won't see these vehicles parked in some dark corner of Silverstone, because they deliver the stuff in the two weeks before the race, and then come back on the Monday and Tuesday to take it away. Most equipment will go on to Hockenheim, because Austria will already be set up and ready. Around 800 people are involved in running the Paddock Club over a race weekend, and it will cater for 3000 guests at Silverstone.



LAT

ITV's impressive travelling studio from where Jim Rosenthal et al pontificate on events

Sutton Images

Silverstone has its own in-house TV studio

On the advertising side, Allsport sends four trucks and 20 people around Europe with all the billboards. The company is also responsible for five transporters which carry 21 vehicles loaned to the FIA by Mercedes. That includes the safety car, Sid Watkins's medical vehicle and minibuses used to get the media to and from the car park.

Then there's mainstream TV, an area which is almost as hard to quantify as the teams. ITV's incredible portable studio is the most impressive vehicle on show, but other countries also have technical support trucks. ITV has a travelling staff of 27, including commentators, producers and interview cameramen, and the German, French and Italian channels won't be far off that. Other countries have to make do with smaller crews, but add the USA, Japan, Austria, Finland, Ireland, Holland and so on, and it's not long before you get to 200-plus. And that's just the TV guys who go to each race. The host broadcaster will have 300-400 extra people on hand.

Sutton Images

Pit wall timing monitors: essential GP kit

Many sponsors send show cars and other exhibits to races. The dealers who sell T-shirts and models behind the grandstands at Silverstone will also take in many of the overseas events.

Finally, let's not forget the hardest-workers in F1; the press! There are around 280 photographers and journalists with permanent passes who travel to each GP, and to that can be added around 30 radio reporters. On average, another 300 temporary media passes are issued at each event, either to local journalists or to those who don't cover every race.

TV audiences may see 22 guys driving round for an hour and a half, but a lot of people make it happen (and we haven't even considered the 65-75% of team employees who don't go to races). In the course of a year, many thousands of man hours are spent sitting in traffic jams outside circuits, or waiting for delayed planes. Would we want to do anything else? I don't think so... ■

Is anybody out there? The TV operation beams the whole race live to an audience of millions worldwide

Circus schedule

Preparations get underway weeks before the GP weekend

Thursday 2 June:
FOCA TV operation arrives at the circuit and 25 trucks are unloaded. Work begins on construction of 'Bakersville' TV village (it travels in containers which are specially built for aircraft holds). This operation will take the whole weekend to complete.

Monday 6 June:
Transporters leave team bases to begin journey to circuit. Speed limits must be observed at all times, as Formula 1 trucks are prime targets for traffic cops.

At the circuit, the two-day marathon to lay miles of cable is begun and the track is rigged for the huge digital TV operation.

Tuesday 7 June:
One small 'spares' truck from each team will generally arrive at the circuit to begin painting of the garage floor and setting up of the garage. Motorhomes arrive at the circuit and are readied for full operation on Wednesday.

Wednesday 8 June:
TV staff begin to arrive. All team, engine and tyre transporters arrive at circuit and set up.

Thursday 9 June:
Team personnel arrive and begin preparing for the forthcoming race. TV network assembly is now complete and final tests begin.

Friday 10 June:
The serious business begins when the cars take to the circuit for first practice at 11 am.

Silverstone stats

The figures that go to make up a GP are simply mind-boggling

- 1200 marshalls, including 325 on fire/course duties, 108 flaggers, 57 observers, 30 incident officers, 11 tender crews and six rescue vehicle crews.
- 5000 contractors are employed.
- 1800 temporary staff for circuit catering company.
- 1300 spectator stewards.
- 150 medical staff.
- 50 doctors.
- 24 ambulances.
- 225,000 people will attend over the weekend.
- After the race, it will take 55 cleaners seven days to clean up.
- 700 'phone lines will be installed.
- There will be 3900 helicopter movements on race day.
- There are 35,000 car parking spaces.
- 53,000 grandstand seats.
- 90,000 race day programmes will be printed.
- 200,000 hamburgers will be sold.

MIX AND MATCH

Silverstone – a familiar ribbon of tarmac. Not so. It looks very different depending on the car you're in

A lap of Silverstone is a lap of Silverstone, right? Wrong! Getting round the 3.194 miles of Northamptonshire tarmac poses a diverse set of problems and demands on the drivers who will be racing on the British Grand Prix programme this weekend.

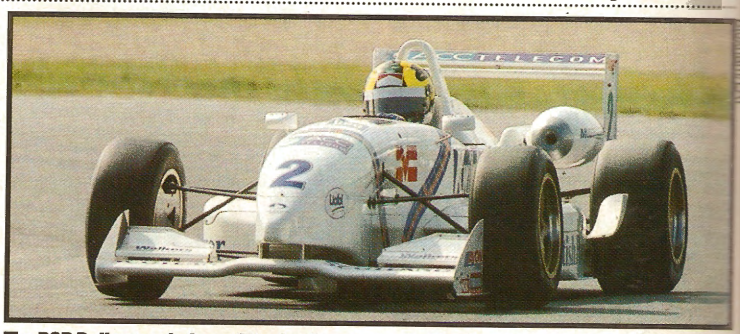
To illustrate, we matched four of the cars from the support races to the Formula 1 car that of the team who took victory in the British GP last year. The results make startling reading.

On pole for this slightly odd race stood the World Championship-entered Williams FW20. Alongside it was the GTC Motorsport team's McLaren F1 GTR, which is being raced in the Privilege GT encounter by Tim Sugden and Steve O'Rourke. Crack Formula 3 squad Paul Stewart Racing's Dallara-Mugen Honda F397/8 was next up with Formula Opel new boy Kid Jensen Racing and MGF Cup front runner James Rhodes' little MGF roadster bringing up the rear.

There won't be too many surprises in the data, but what might cause a double take is the similarity over a lap between the GT McLaren and the F3 Dallara. At any given point on the circuit their performances are vastly different, but over the whole lap it all balances out.

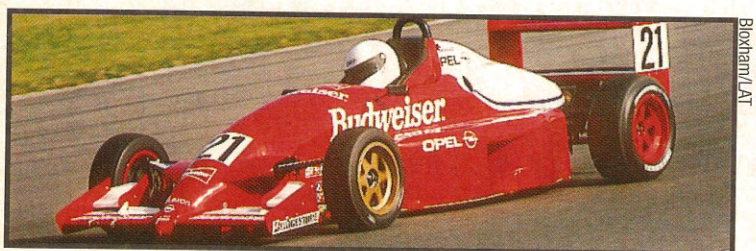
Perhaps the most noticeable thing is the acceleration. In the time it takes the MGF to reach 100mph, the F3 car has hit 145mph and the F1 car is flying at 180mph (hitting 100mph in just 4.2 seconds).

Many of the differences that the spectator will see between the cars depend on where you watch from. If you're standing on the entry to Stowe you'll see the McLaren F1 GTR thundering in at 175mph, only just slower than the Williams, wiping off 95mph to get round and then using the 600bhp to zoom back up to 140 by Vale. The Formula Opel, on the other hand, enters at 135mph. In the middle of the corner though, the single-seater is actually faster, clocking 85mph, thanks to the wings that give it more grip in the corners. It could only accelerate back up to 115 by Vale. ▶



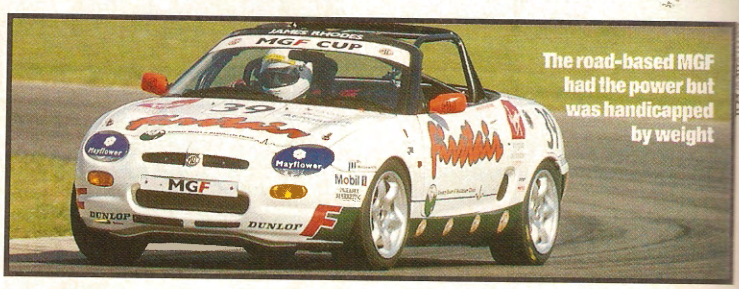
The PSR Dallara ended up with a lap time virtually identical to the McLaren F1 GTR's

The F1 car romps away from anything else... almost everywhere

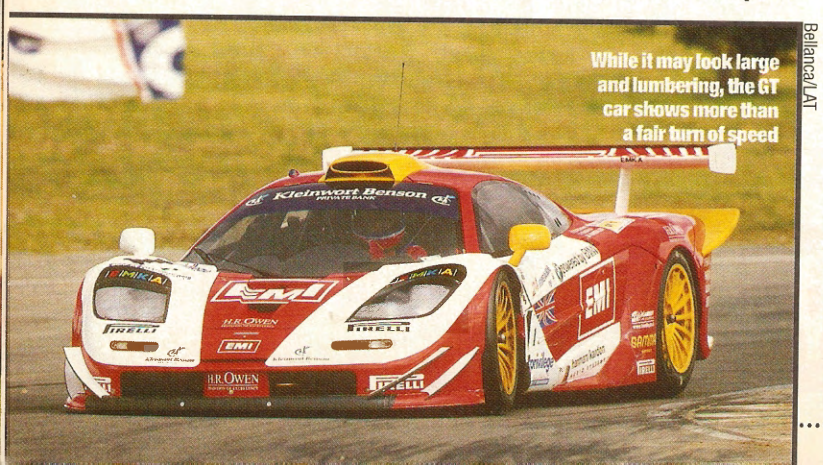


Bloxham/LAT

The FOpel car is almost as quick as most things in the twisty bits, but loses out on power



The road-based MGF had the power but was handicapped by weight



Bellanca/LAT

While it may look large and lumbering, the GT car shows more than a fair turn of speed

Size does count

	F1	F3	GT	FOpel	MGF
Engine (cc)	2999	2000	6000	2000	1796
Power (bhp)	740	222	600	175	190
Maximum rpm	16,000	6500	7300	7000	8000
Max speed (mph)	215	145	200	145	130
Weight (kg)	600*	530*	950	493	970
Length (mm)	4150	2610	4124	4050	3910
Width (mm)	1800	1510	1920	1493	1630
Height (mm)	1000	1000	1120	960	1200

*including driver

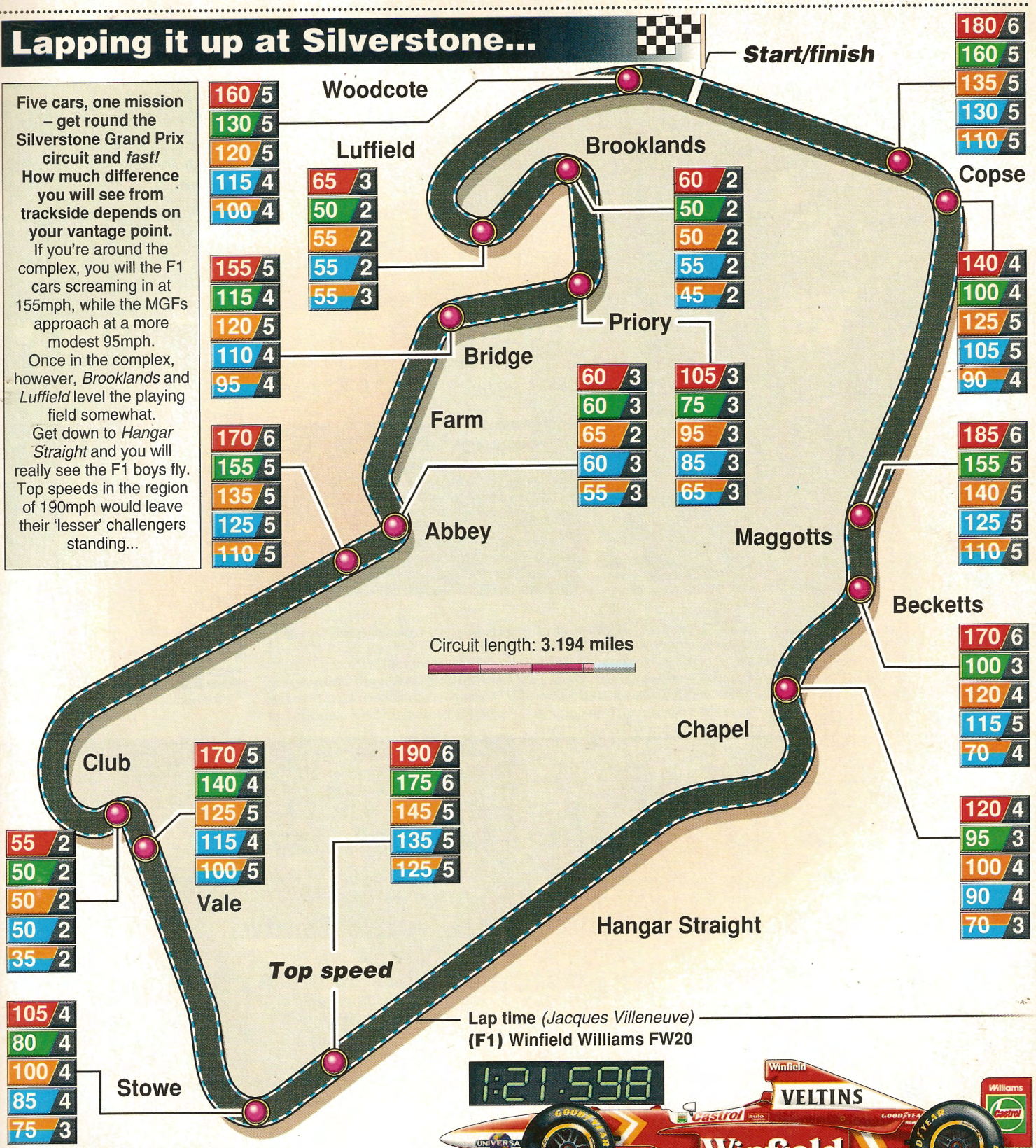
Lapping it up at Silverstone...

Five cars, one mission – get round the Silverstone Grand Prix circuit and *fast!* How much difference you will see from trackside depends on your vantage point.

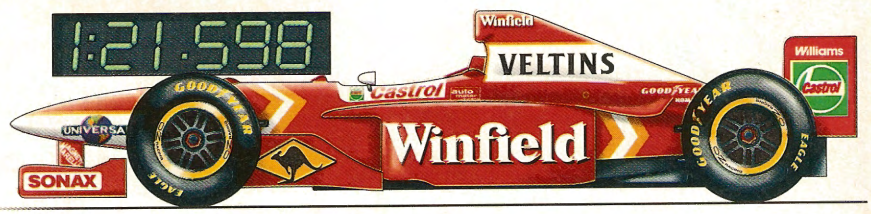
If you're around the complex, you will the F1 cars screaming in at 155mph, while the MGFs approach at a more modest 95mph.

Once in the complex, however, *Brooklands* and *Luffield* level the playing field somewhat.

Get down to *Hangar Straight* and you will really see the F1 boys fly. Top speeds in the region of 190mph would leave their 'lesser' challengers standing...



Lap time *(Jacques Villeneuve)*
(F1) Winfield Williams FW20



What's the difference between?...

Key... mph / Gear

Formula 1	000 0
GT	000 0
Formula 3	000 0
Formula Opel	000 0
MGF	000 0

* *gap = time difference against F1 qualifying lap*

(F3) *Paul Stewart Racing*

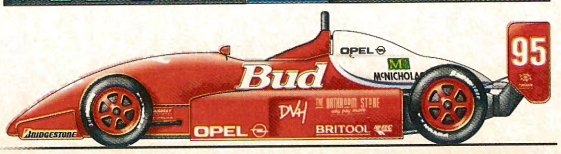
Lap time	Gap*
1:44.229	:22.631

(GT) *McLaren GTR*

Lap time	Gap
1:44.944	:22.348

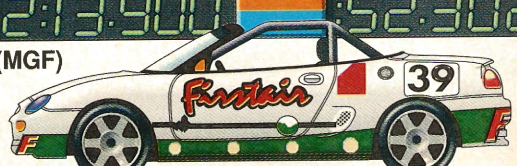
(Formula Opel) *Budweiser Kid Jensen Racing*

1:52.210	:30.612



2:13.900	:52.302

(MGF)



GRAPHIC: © Russell Lewis for Autosport

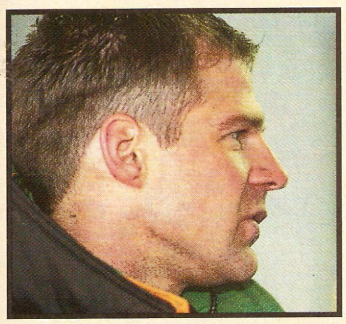
Just how fast is fast?

The ability of the Formula 1 car to transform completely its pace – by accelerating or braking – in split-seconds, combined with its phenomenal cornering talents, translates into lap times that seem to come from another world, where the natural laws of physics no longer apply.

The faster the corner, the more divorced from the mundane world of everyday motoring the high-tech reality of an F1 car becomes. But, ironically, it is the laws of physics themselves that help make it all possible. With higher speeds comes greater downforce, which enhances tyre grip still further, which permits higher speeds, which … well, you get the point.

When it comes to stopping, an F1 machine is even more amazing. It generates 4g of braking; that's 2.5g more than the best road car. Because the aerodynamic wings create enormous drag, the moment a driver lifts off the throttle the car slows with a force of 1g. When he then hits the brake pedal he can stop from 70mph in two seconds.

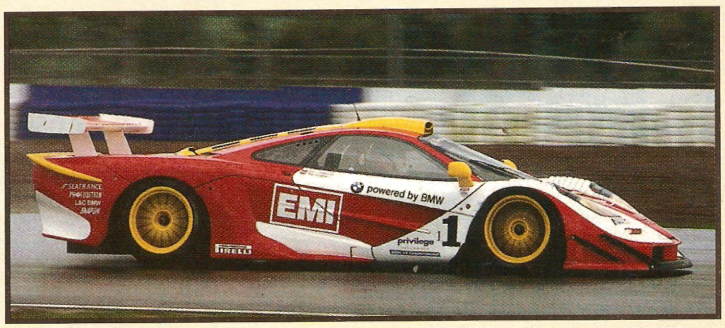
An F1 car sometimes seems to defy physics


Sugden longs for the old, faster circuit

Tim Sugden (McLaren F1 GTR)
Of the circuits the Privilege Insurance GT Championship goes to, the Silverstone Grand Prix track is the closest we get to reaching the speeds of Le Mans.

The McLaren F1 GTR is at home on fast circuits. Becketts is the most exciting part of the track. You need to be brave at that point, as you have to be at Bridge corner too.

I would love to have driven the car on the old flat-out Silverstone, but it's still a great circuit.



A Le Mans veteran, the McLaren GT car is at home on fast circuits such as Silverstone

Mario Haberfeld (F3 Dallara F398)
It's very important to carry speed through Copse. If you lose 0.1s on the exit you'll lose 0.2s on the straight. The same can be said for Club and Luffield.

Becketts is probably the most important corner on the track and it's my favourite. It's very easy to be quick in and slow out. The problem is that you have to brake very late, but enough. Overdrive and you lose a lot, go in too quick and you're in the same position. But you have to come out quickly to carry the speed down Hangar Straight.

Club is difficult because you are braking and turning left. It's very hard to keep flat through the right hander, in fact I don't know anyone who can.

Bridge is easy flat out in an F3 car but then you're in the slow corners. It's so easy to fall into the trap of thinking that you've done your job in the quick stuff, lose your focus and make a mistake there.

Brooklands is tricky because you have to keep the wheelspin at a minimum on the exit and also stay on a tight line for Luffield.

An F3 car's light weight means you have to stay clear of kerbs

Haberfeld reckons Becketts holds the key

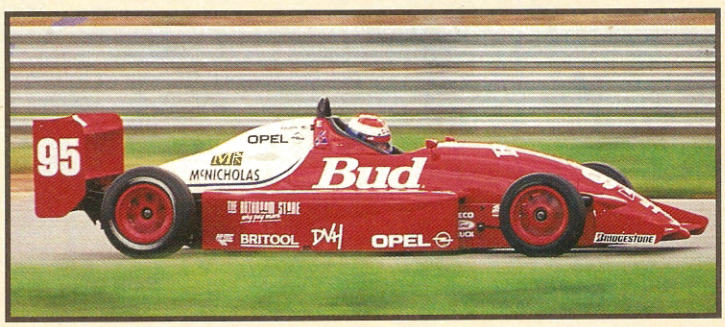
The other thing to remember with F3 is that you have to stay off the kerbs, because you can easily get spun out if you ride one too heavily.

Moseley knows Silverstone well

Stuart Moseley (Formula Opel)
Last year I finished fourth in the Grand Prix-supporting Euroseries Formula Opel race so I'm hoping to go even better this time.

With my knowledge of Silverstone, I should go well. Racing on home turf supporting the GP is quite special, so my team Kid Jensen Racing needs a decent result.

My only problem is I haven't tested there this year, so qualifying will be my first opportunity to drive the circuit for my new team.



Home team Kid Jensen Racing will be especially keen to get a good result at Silverstone

Slow on the straight, but the MGF feels at home

James Rhodes (MGF)
Like any one-make car, it's a little underpowered – you can get your sarnies out at the start of Hangar Straight. The car suits the track well, though. It doesn't like bumps, but Silverstone's lovely and smooth.

'In these things, a tow is quite effective and at Silverstone you have to be careful on the first couple of laps. Even if you're on pole, people can be all over you at the end of the straight. Somehow or other you've got to break the tow.

It's crucial to break the tow, says Rhodes

THE GREAT DEBATE

Former champion Damon Hill, Williams technical director Patrick Head, Benetton boss David Richards and AUTOSPORT's Grand Prix editor Nigel Roebuck discuss the health of F1 today. Mark Skewis and Andrew Benson ask the questions

All table photos: Eiford & Tee/LAT; all others: LAT

The difficulty of overtaking has been the issue of the year, how big a problem is it?

RICHARDS: Surely the determining factor is do people continue to come and watch, do they turn on the TV on a Sunday afternoon? The fact of the matter today is yes. The motorsport journalist is too pure in his perception of what the sport is about. We've moved what was a minority sport into a wider arena, and that's not bad.

HEAD: We should have half the downforce we have now, and enormous rubber on the tyres. If we had half the downforce, we'd have less drag, so we'd be far too quick down the straights, but you can hold that back by forcing people to run enormous tyres. Then at least you can throw the cars around. But then these tyres have quite low slip angles. The problem is how do you deliberately force the tyre companies to produce old-style tyres?

HILL: But it doesn't matter if it's low-tech. Their name is still on the side and it's still a Formula 1 tyre.

RICHARDS: This is a major dilemma for F1. It is an activity that is projected as very high technology, but to get any closeness of racing and spectacle, you're going to have to drive it more and more into a control situation, and that is a completely conflicting issue..

HILL: I believe that everyone would benefit if the racing was closer and more people had a chance of winning. If Honda come in and spend five years without a chance of winning because McLaren-Mercedes have dominated, that's no good to them. If McLaren are still up the front, but it changes and other people have the opportunity of winning from time to time, then they've got more credibility.

RICHARDS: But aren't you more likely to achieve that, as they have done in the British Touring Car Championship, by altering the structure of the races and the way that qualifying is conducted, rather than by changing the cars? They've added an element of uncertainty.

Would the BTCC showbiz approach work?

HEAD: Those changes actually work quite well this year, even if some of it is a bit artificial.

So should F1 try things like one-shot qualifying or reversing the grids?

RICHARDS: Can you imagine the furore there would be among the▶

purists around this paddock? I doubt it would make the championship finish any differently, but would the spectacle be greater in between? And do you address issues at a time when a sport is in strength or in decline?

HEAD: Do you think that what's going on in touring cars is forcibly artificial or has it improved it?

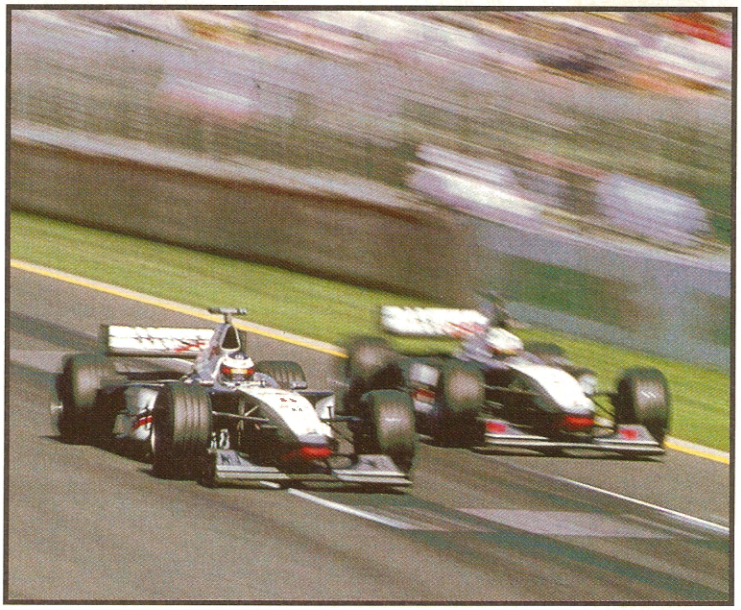
ROEBUCK: I don't think it matters at that level. Look at NASCAR. It seems to me that the problem F1 has is that it clings to this image: we're the best, we're pure.

HEAD: I don't think there is a great deal of purity about these narrow-track cars with grooved tyres.

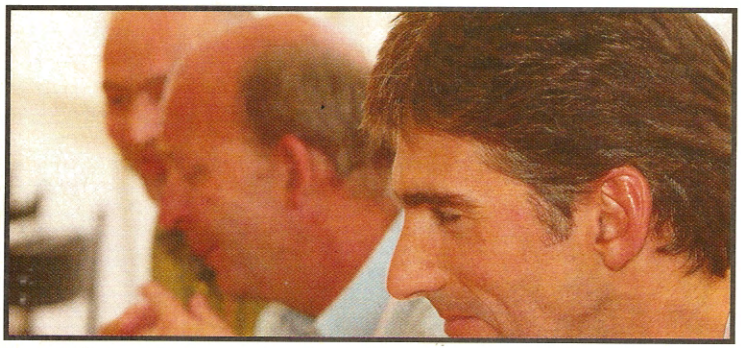
ROEBUCK: I don't think that it would matter as much if we had a boring race if the cars were spectacular to watch.

HILL: That's where motorcycles have the edge – just watching them riding a bike is awe-inspiring, you can see them twitching and trying to put the power down. You can see them working. The cars are difficult to drive, but a lot of people don't understand what we do, because the cars look like they are on rails.

HEAD: And the better a car is the more it looks like it's on rails.



Should Coulthard have let Hakkinen through in Australia? Opinions on it still differ



Damon Hill chews the fat with AUTOSPORT's Nigel Roebuck and Andrew Benson (behind)

HILL: It would be easier if you had a bit of degradation in the car's performance. When there were turbos, it was possible for someone to be gaining at the end of the race because they'd saved fuel.

HEAD: Yes, and everyone said: 'How boring, fuel consumption racing'!

ROEBUCK: But that is Alain Prost's argument – if the cars degrade, there is a variation in performance, so you get overtaking. Now you build a sprint car to go between stops. Refuelling was a scam to disguise the fact that there was no overtaking.

HEAD: Prost was amazing in those races in '84-'85. In the beginning, he would be 15-20 seconds behind and you'd think: 'He's out of it.' But as the race went on, you'd suddenly feel him coming on like a rash. About halfway through, he'd be nibbling your heels, and by that time our brakes were usually giving up. We had Keke Rosberg, and he would go off like a scalded cat, so the rear tyres had given up halfway through.

Do we all agree that the spectacle is a big problem?

RICHARDS: No.

HEAD: A lot of people thought that Montreal was a great race, and while the spectacle of cars in the '50s was great, coming out of corners in great slides, I don't think there was any more genuine overtaking. A lot of races have always been intensely boring, with three or four exciting ones a year.

RICHARDS: We got a fax through from (F1 boss) Bernie (Ecclestone) the other day with a clipping from AUTOSPORT saying: 'Stirling Moss led the race from start to finish.' He underlined it and wrote: 'Nothing's changed.'

I always use my gardener as the barometer of whether it's right or not, and every Monday morning he says: 'Oh, fantastic, incredible.' And he gets more enthusiastic every week. We should listen more to the people who sit in the grandstands.

HEAD: But you're operating from an assumed premise that the whole purpose of the sport is to entertain Joe Public, and therefore get him to switch on and watch.

RICHARDS: Yes, what is the alternative view?

HEAD: That it's a sport.

RICHARDS: But Bernie threw that idea out a long time ago.

HEAD: Is the assumption that, the more money that there is within the sport, it automatically must be better?

HILL: You've got to differentiate between what is big and what is good. A large section of Hollywood is devoted to making these same-format blockbuster movies, with explosions and car chases, not much plot, and supposedly giving people what they want. But it's like certain newspapers sell more than others. It doesn't make them better. And you've got to be careful you don't just sell out to whatever is going to give you the biggest audience.

HEAD: Is F1 better the more it pursues its biggest audience and the more money churns around in it?

ROEBUCK: Not for me it isn't.

HEAD: Yes, but David's saying you're a purist.

ROEBUCK: True, but then I also see this shifting audience as an audience that can shift away from it.

RICHARDS: That's a very good point.

HEAD: Yeah, but then should F1 chase that fanaticism and try to prostitute itself in order to attract the fleeting attention of the audience?

ROEBUCK: I would say not, but Bernie would say yes. For him there will always be a new lot turning on.

RICHARDS: You have to be careful, it's like being on the edge of high fashion, you need to be just below it.

What about the effect on the casual viewer of seeing the result of the first race decided by team tactics?

RICHARDS: I don't have a problem with it because clearly you have priorities for a team. You don't have 300 people working to one goal without maximising the opportunity to achieve it.

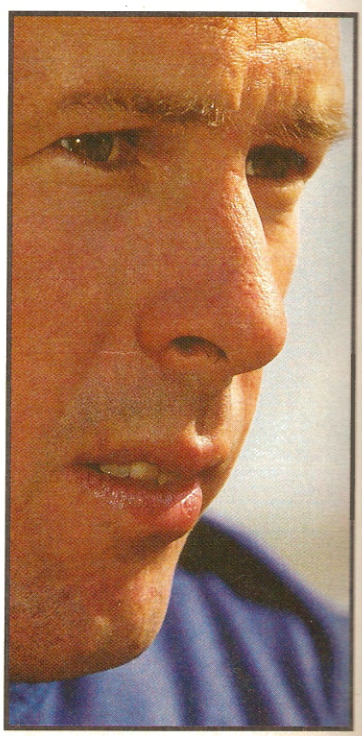
HILL: They hyped up the new rules and then the first race came around and it was a walkover and it was fixed. There are times when it makes sense, if one is going for the championship, at a certain stage of the championship – people would understand that. But I don't think it bears analysis at the start of the season.

I can remember in Monza in '93, I was told I would have to come second for whatever reason. I got into a collision with Ayrton (Senna) and I came through the field and I was having a great time. Then I saw Alain up there, and I got on the radio and said, 'Tell him I will race', because I was so pumped up. They came back on and they'd misheard it. They said, 'Okay, we'll tell him you're not going to race.' And I said, 'No that's not what I said.' But by this time I was starting to have second thoughts. Then his engine blew up, so it took care of itself.

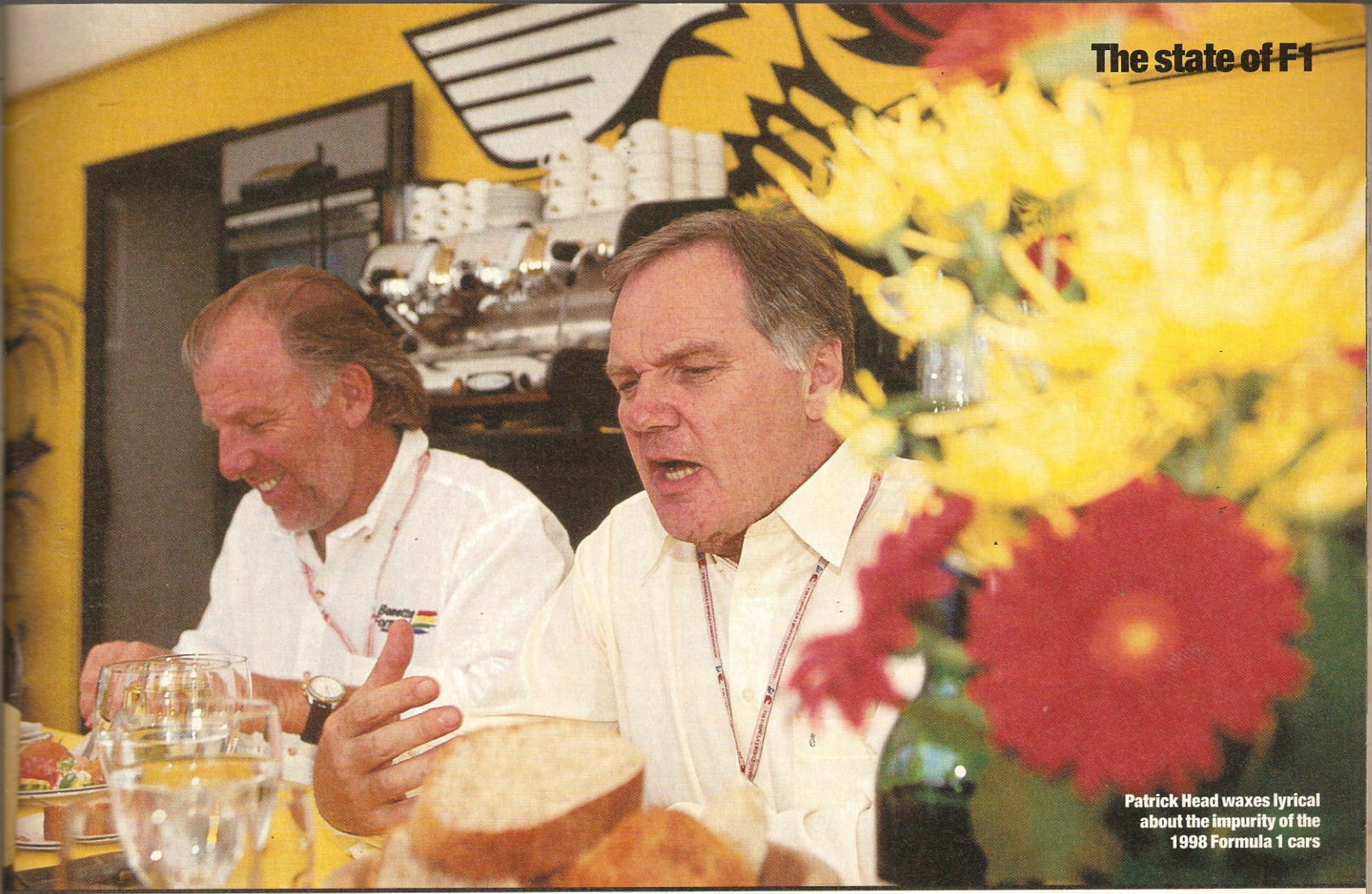
HEAD: I like to see a driver with some fire, and I always respect one who says: 'Bugger it, I'm going for it, I don't care.' If you've made a deal, go with it, but don't make a deal.

ROEBUCK: Part of the problem that racing has at the moment is that it is not perceived as fair. If you look at the last few years and you look at the number of times the championship has gone to the last race, people

> **"Motorcycles have the edge. You can see them trying to put the power down"**
> **DAMON HILL**



Colin McRae: always says what he thinks



Patrick Head waxes lyrical about the impurity of the 1998 Formula 1 cars

think it's geared to a final TV event.

HILL: It's been sullied a bit by the whole period last year from Jerez onwards. Although it created a lot of interest, and F1 was in the media continuously, it actually did more harm than good.

RICHARDS: But how do you gauge that view?

HILL: Because I talk to people and I get the reaction that Nigel is talking about – that they are not sure what they are watching.

RICHARDS: Like boxing or wrestling. The worrying thing is where has wrestling gone? It used to be dominant on Saturday afternoons.

One of the criticisms of F1 is that there are no characters. Is that true, or are they just too frightened to express themselves?

HILL: You do have to watch what you say.

ROEBUCK: For example, if David Coulthard is asked at a press conference about his car, he will say I'm not going to answer any technical questions.

RICHARDS: I think that is pathetic, we need characters. You need to allow the drivers (to speak out) and, quite honestly, you have to have broad enough shoulders to accept the marginal flak that you will get as a result of that.

HEAD: I would agree with that. You must have had Colin McRae say things. He is such an intensely competitive person that if things are going well he grunts, but if things are going badly you know straight away. You've obviously not gone along to him and said: 'Colin, you're not to say anything to the press.'

RICHARDS: I don't think it's reasonable to say that to anybody. Any team member has got to feel confident that we don't gag people because we listen and we respect people's opinions. If they respect the interests of the team as a whole, I've got no problem at all.

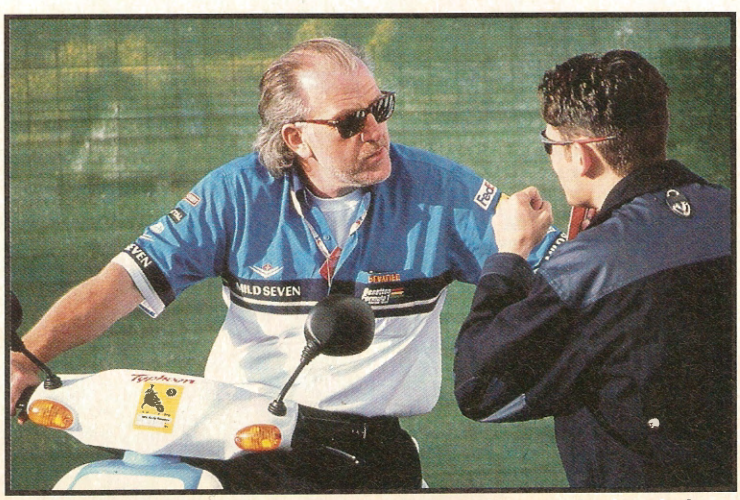
Do you think that F1 lives by a code of secrecy?

RICHARDS: The thing I noticed more than anything else when I went to Benetton was the closed door syndrome. Every meeting I went to in our factory, the door was closed behind me. There are certain elements of this business where secrecy is essential – technical ideas. But it does pervade into ridiculous levels. For that reason I have moved my office. It has a glass wall, although I'm sure people think I'm barmy.

HEAD: I agree quite a bit. However, there are some business aspects surrounding F1 which are so extraordinary and so extreme that you couldn't actually have the embarrassment of having people know what goes on. It's not that they are illegal, you simply could not have the embarrassment.

RICHARDS: That is an Achilles heel and it has to change. This business has to become more visible, more open, more respectful of external interrogation.

HILL: I don't worry as much as I used to that I might say something damaging to the team. I have a real resistance to this necessity to be a marketing, corporate driver. I know that when I go places, if I start trotting out some spiel about how wonderful the car or cigarettes are, people just roll their eyes. They are there to see me because I'm a racing driver. I do something different.



Richards employs the friendly approach. He says he could never rule a team by fear

HEAD: You sometimes get things that are not really embarrassing, but cause some problems within the team. Say the team is not going very well, and the microphone goes into the driver's face when he's been lapped twice and he says: 'I'm really pissed off, I don't think the team's working hard enough.'

But then you know that back at the factory they have been working seven days a week, 14 hours a day and the guys are absolutely knackered. The driver has just come back from a holiday in the Bahamas or something and says the team isn't working hard enough, you have to think to yourself, 'I have to have a word with this guy, and say, if you think that way, please come and tell us that, don't say it publicly.'

HILL: But that is at odds with part of the attraction of this sport, which is that it is about that spontaneous outburst and the raw emotions, and we sanitise that down.

ROEBUCK: The Senna-Prost press conferences were like being present at a bit of theatre. The atmosphere was crackling.

HILL: At Donington in '93, after the wet race, Senna was humiliating▶

AUTOSPORT editor Mark Skewis cracks a joke – rarer than an England penalty shoot-out win

◀Alain. It was very embarrassing. I was sitting there like a lemon in the middle. You wanted the ground to open up and for Alain to disappear.

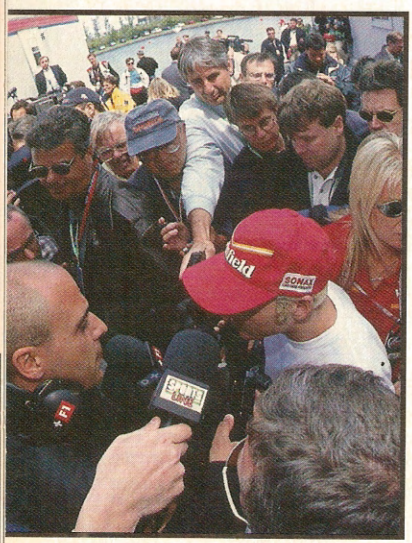
Is the problem that all positions of authority batter it into you that you cannot rock the boat?

HILL: For fear of retaliation.

RICHARDS: I would not wish to run a team that had that fear over it, and I think that's wrong.

HILL: But it does go on. If you are leading the championship and you start saying things against the FIA (F1's governing body), you can suddenly find yourself having a difficult time.

HEAD: Look at what happened to Jacques (Villeneuve). He was in Canada last year, his home country, and five days before the race he gets summoned to get on a plane to arrive at the FIA to be told that his words were not helpful. He was in there 10 minutes, and then had to get on a plane and fly back to Canada.



Is Schumacher really worth his salary?

Are driver salaries just reward for putting your neck on the line, or are they too high?

HEAD: Willi Weber (Michael Schumacher's manager) has said that Michael Schumacher Inc will make £78 million. Okay, so he gets US$30 million from Ferrari, but he said from endorsements, clothing, round the world that he will make that much. It's almost impossible to believe.

HILL: I know for a fact that he got landed with about $1 million worth of T-shirts that he couldn't flog at the end of last year because they said Michael Schumacher World Champion 1997.

HEAD: Michael's got a wonderful, self-deserved reputation for being so much better than any other driver out there.

HILL: There is this disparity, which is another thing that is so dissatisfying, that he gets so much more money than anyone else. How does it make you feel as a driver that you are rated as a fifth of Michael Schumacher?

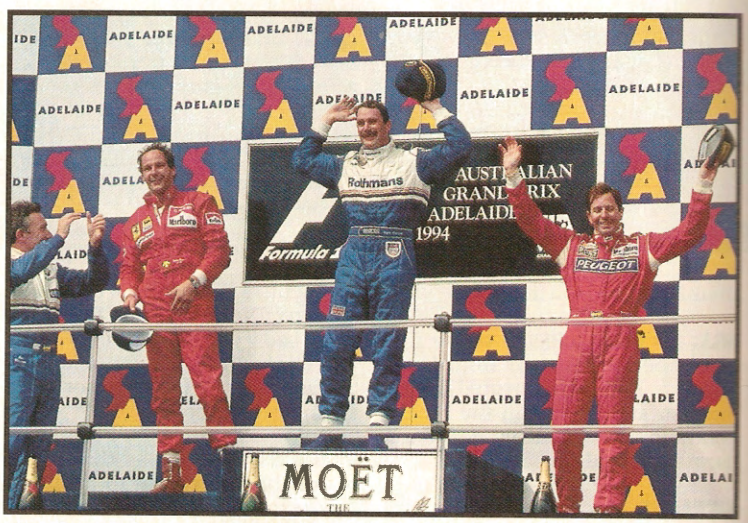
HEAD: The driver's salary doesn't particularly worry me, unless it's at a level that damages the capability of the team to do its job. But if marketing their image using the driver is valuable to a major sponsor, and they find money that wouldn't be available otherwise to the team, I don't have any problem with that.

RICHARDS: But how many times in the last 10 years has the team created the World Champion as opposed to the World Champion creating the team? Put an F1 driver in the right place at the right time and they become World Champion. Where's the balance?

HEAD: Leadership from the cockpit is very important. I was very sceptical about Nigel Mansell coming back to Williams – I wasn't anti, but I was sceptical. We had been with Thierry Boutsen and Riccardo Patrese for a couple of years, and the direction in which the car had been developed was totally stale. The car was set up rock hard. Nigel came back to join us, and we softened the set-up dramatically, and I think he was something like 4.7s quicker than we had qualified, in the same car with the same aerodynamics, at the French Grand Prix. I went away from that test saying: 'What a load of bollocks, we've just wasted the whole of 1990.'

> **"This business has to be more open, respectful of external interrogation"**
> **DAVID RICHARDS**

Nigel was one of those people, who, if things were going well, or he had a perception that they were, he was very positive. But, equally, if things were struggling, he would help it on the way down.



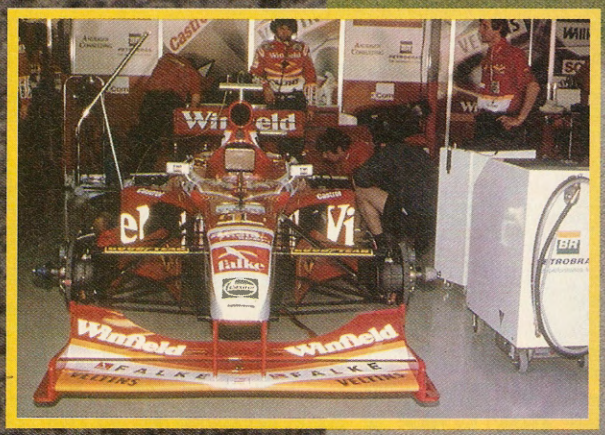
Nigel Mansell always motivated Williams, like at Adelaide '94, his last GP for the team

Schumacher is portrayed as worth a second a lap. But is Adrian Newey worth his £2 million as McLaren technical director?

HEAD: Oh yeah. There's a free market economy. (McLaren boss) Ron (Dennis) can decide to pay as much as he wants. I don't want to take anything away from Adrian, because he's definitely a plus to McLaren, but if they'd had engine reliability last year, they would have won four races or so. Adrian is quite clever at going to teams on the way up. When he came to Williams (in 1990), we already had active-ride suspension, semi-automatic gearbox. That is to take nothing away from him, because he is very astute.

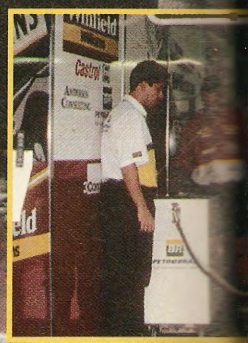
HILL: In that case, he's also clever at picking when teams are going to start declining... ■

The Benetton boss has some clear ideas about how F1 should progress



New Brazilian link for

This is the sharp end of Petrobras and Williams' partnership



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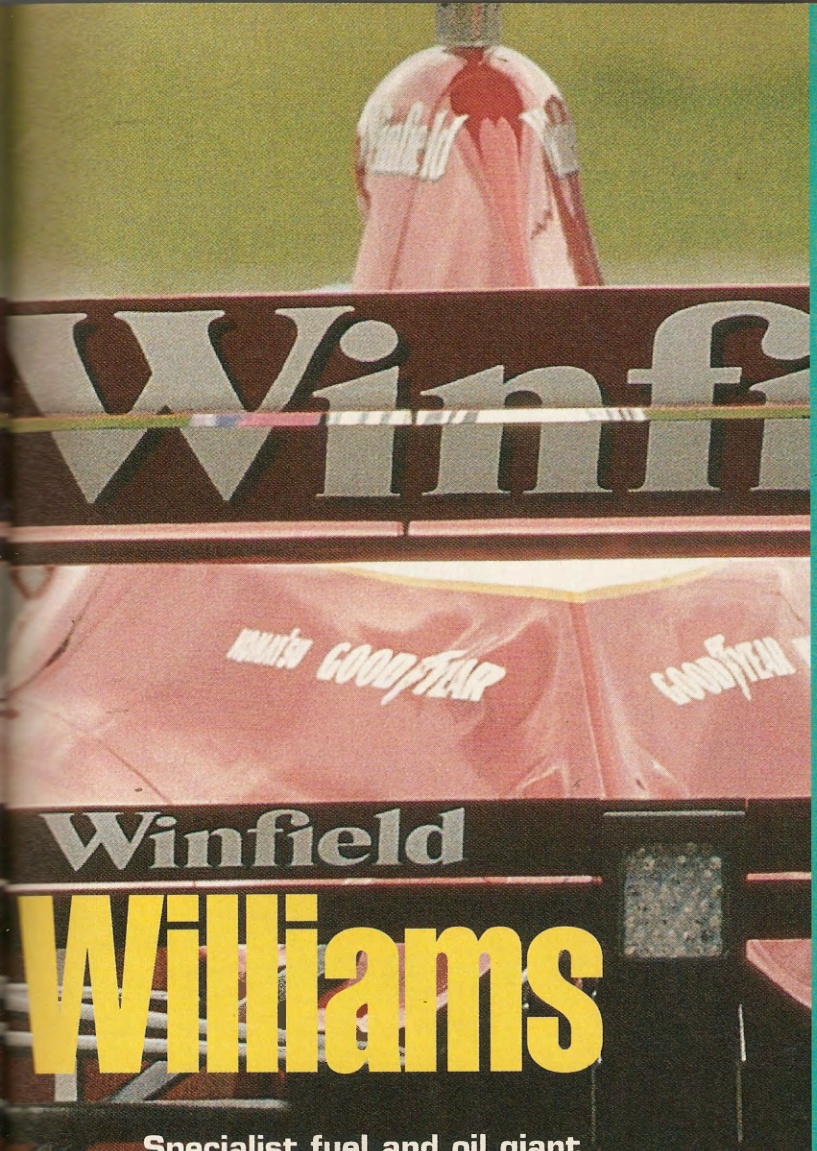
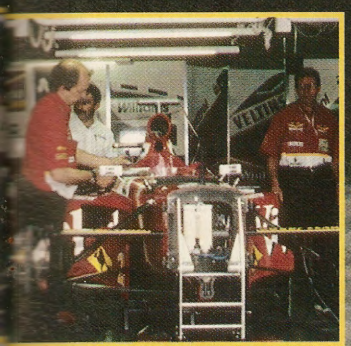


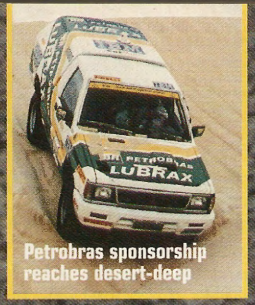
Williams

Specialist fuel and oil giant Petrobras, the largest company in Brazil, has signed a two-year deal as official fuel supplier to Williams, nine-times winner of the Formula 1 Constructors' championship. A major step in Petrobras' history of pioneering sponsorship in motorsport, the contract places the company among the top suppliers in the world capable of excelling in the challenging field of F1, where technical excellence is taken for granted.



The formulation of fuel for the Williams team will be carried out at Petrobras' state-of-the-art Research Centre in Rio de Janeiro. It was here, and through its pursuit of advanced deep-water exploration for oil, that Frank Williams saw the potential for the fruitful working relationship that is required for Formula 1 success, and decided to establish a new technical partnership with the Brazilian company.

"The history of Williams is full of such examples," says Williams. "I like to put faith in young companies that invest heavily in research, and which develop their own technology."



Petrobras sponsorship reaches desert-deep

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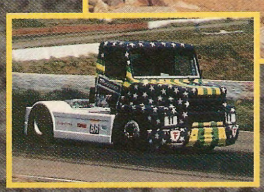
It started here...

Brazil and motorsport. Inextricably linked. Ever since Emerson Fittipaldi set the trend almost 30 years ago, the Brazilian nation has followed the track action with a fervour to rival their love of football. Between them, national heroes Fittipaldi, Piquet and Senna took eight Formula 1 world championships home to Brazil.

Petrobras began its involvement in motorsport as long ago as 1956 when, as a sponsor of the first 1000-mile race in Brazil, it established its name as a driving force. One of the drivers was one 'Baron' Fittipaldi, father of the to-be-great Emerson. That day, Petrobras vowed to support motorsport at all levels to encourage young drivers in specialist formulae.



Petrobras is involved throughout motorsport

As a result, the Petrobras Motor Sports Commission was formed in 1993, and today the oil giant's support extends to more than 20 Brazilian drivers, including Williams test driver Max Wilson and 1997 South American Formula 3 Champion Bruno Junqueira, who is starting his European racing career in the Draco F3000 team.

Bruno Junqueira has graduated to F3000 with Petrobras' help

DAMON'S DESIRE UNDIMMED

Hill's career has been quiet of late. Nigel Roebuck asks him if his will to win still burns as strong as ever

Get into conversation in cabs, pubs or wherever, I said to Damon Hill, and as soon as people know you're involved with Formula 1, out comes the question: 'What's the matter with old Damon these days?'

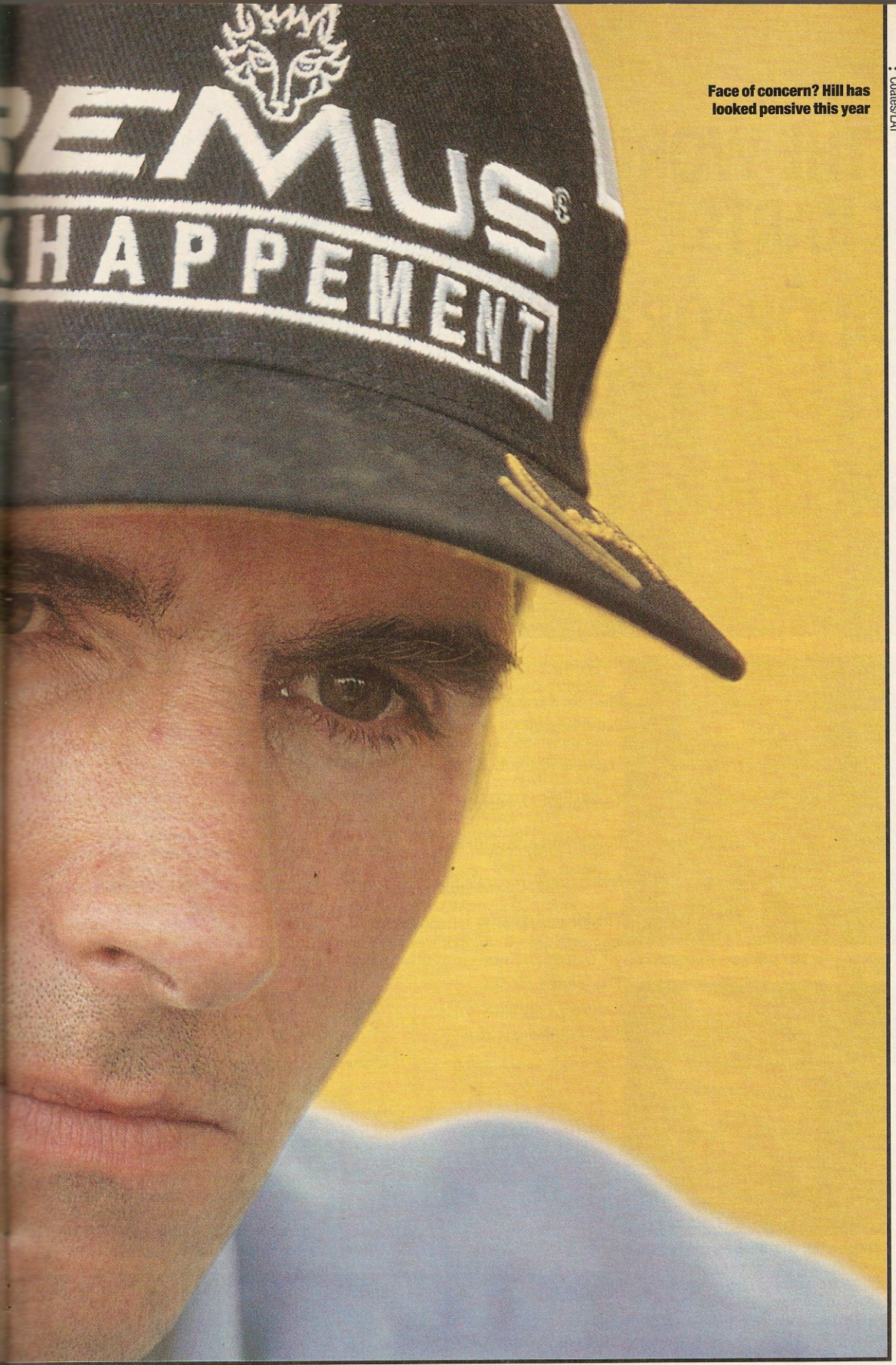
He smiled. 'I know. The understanding of what goes on is pretty minimal. A lot of people genuinely think that your speed on a straight is just down to how much you dare accelerate. It's true! They really think you haven't the bottle to go any faster. And the only answer, of course, is, "Well, you're right, I'm just not brave enough to use full throttle..."'

After winning the World Championship with Williams-Renault in 1996, Hill scored only seven points in the Arrows-Yamaha last year, and this season – with Jordan-Mugen Honda – he has yet to put his first on the board. At the first few races, indeed, he looked almost suicidal.

'Well, I'm lucky, in the sense that I've won 21 races, won the

LAT

Damon took the Brabham-Judd to 16th place, four laps down, in the 1992 British GP...



Face of concern? Hill has looked pensive this year

Coates/LAT

The Englishman and Jordan get on well

championship. I look at some of the guys I'm racing against, and think, "What hope have they got?" To be successful in F1, you need a lucky break – get into the right team at the right time, or whatever. These guys bust a gut, week in, week out, and they jump up and down if they get a point – that's their victory, because they can only do as well as the car allows them to do.'

With Silverstone looming, Hill remembered his early Grands Prix there. In 1992, while Nigel Mansell dominated, Damon, making his debut in the lamentable Brabham-Judd, qualified on the back row, and finished 16th, four laps behind. One year on, now in the Williams-Renault vacated by Mansell, he qualified on the front row, and led the race comprehensively until the engine let go.

'I really think you have – somehow – to reduce the disparity between the most and least competitive cars,' Damon said, 'but I don't know how you do that, short of making the winning car available to everyone at the end of the season. Last year, we had a tighter grid, mainly because the regulations had been stable for a long time.

'F1 really has to decide which way it wants to go. It gets an enormous amount of TV revenue now, so we can't indefinitely have a situation where people are saying that it's boring. Somehow it always seems to scrape through – you get a race like Montreal, or a championship that is, somehow or other, close at the end of the season – but there's more scrutiny now, more questions asked, because more people are watching. And they want to believe.'

I mentioned a recent conversation with Alex Zanardi, in which he suggested that the requirement that every team build its own car was F1's greatest strength, in terms of technology, but also its greatest weakness, in that it militated against close racing.

'I think he right,' said Damon. 'If you're a racing driver, you cannot put a price on the feeling, every time you get on a plane, that you can win. And I think that's been overlooked recently: a great deal of emphasis is put on manufacturers, teams and sponsors – but what turns people on is seeing the drivers.

'It's always been like that. With the exception of Ferrari, F1 is not a team sport in the way that football is. You don't go to support Williams or McLaren, but to support your favourite driver – to see a race between men. And if you haven't got the machinery, you don't figure. The driver's role is becoming diminished, because he's so limited in terms of where he can go to show his ability.'▶

Coates/LAT

This season has been one of retirements

LAT

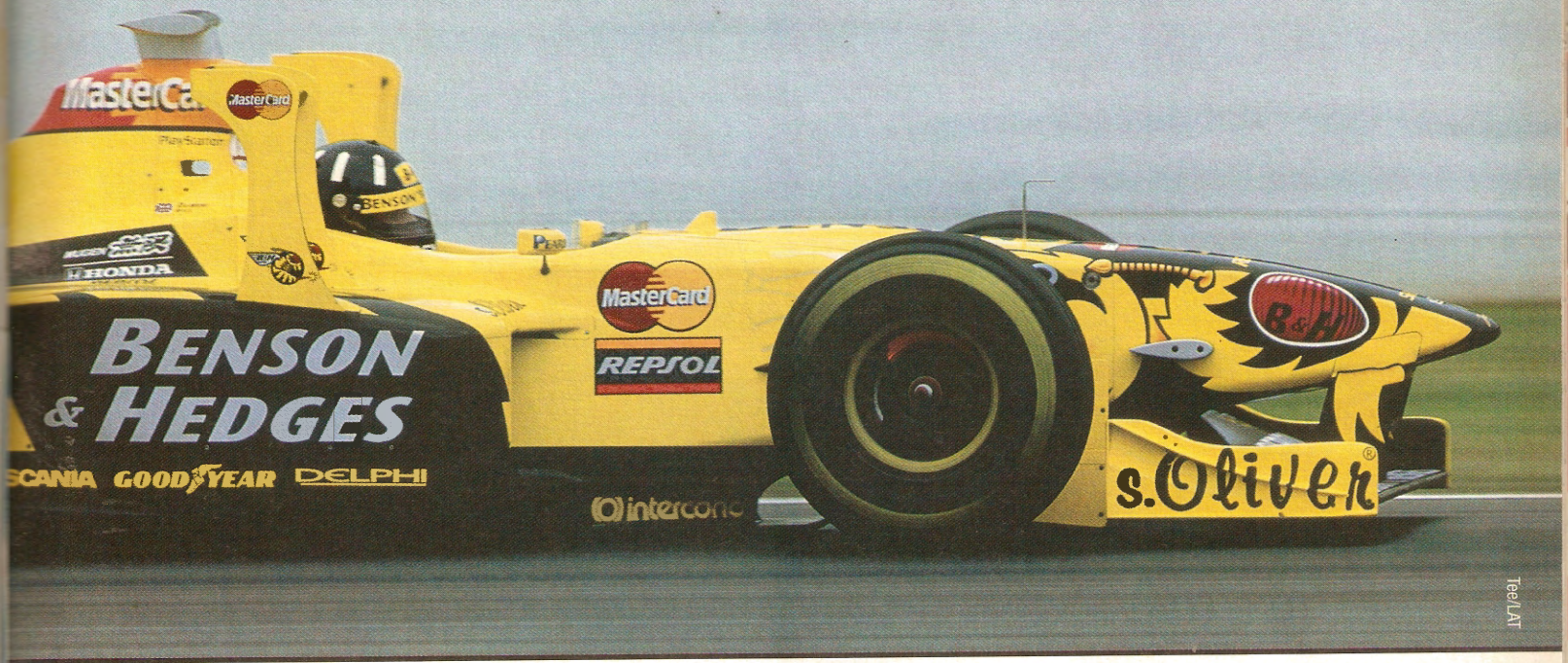
...but Silverstone '93 was a different story

"A driver's role is diminished. There are few places he can show his skill"

DAMON HILL

Damon Hill

X-wings didn't help the Hill/Jordan cause



Tee/LAT

◀ Jordan had a fine year in 1997, suggesting that the gulf between competitor and contender had at last been bridged; thus, Hill had a great sense of optimism when he signed with EJ. How soon did he suspect that 1998 was going to be a disappointment?

'The first time I drove the car,' he said. 'I mean, you know, don't you? In a way, it was different this year, because it was the first time I'd driven with grooved tyres on a narrow-track car. But you can tell roughly where you are from the first time or two you run against the competition, and you knew *for sure* when the McLaren rolled out. The problem is, unless there's something obviously wrong with a car, that it's difficult to alter its basic characteristics.'

In a less-than-fully-competitive car, I suggested, it must be more difficult – at 37 – to do 'the lap'. Hill said yes, perhaps, but there was another dimension, too. 'As far as motivation's concerned, it's a matter of being where you think you should be, and when you get there, making sure you *stay* there. When you've two minutes to get on pole, or whatever, there's a fire that gets lit inside you, and you can do things you'd never previously thought possible.

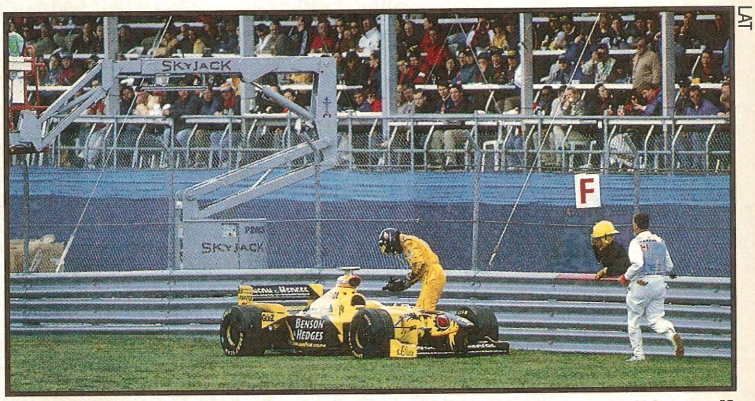
'By the same token, it's difficult to pretend there's much excitement when you're halfway through a race, you're 10th – and you're thinking, "I need four cars to fall out if I'm going to get in the points..."

'Still,' Damon added, 'in F1 things can change. Look at Benetton: they made themselves into a front-running team from an also-ran.'

And can that happen at Jordan?

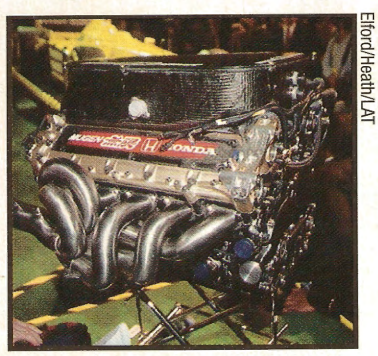
'I think it can – if the desire, the real commitment, is there. And I think it has to come from Honda, too.

> **"When you've got two minutes to get the pole, there's a fire gets lit inside you"**
> **DAMON HILL**



LAT

It's been one disappointment after another, but will changes to the car turn '98 around?



Elford/Heath/LAT

Is Mugen-Honda pulling its full weight?

Currently, I don't know the real situation there, but my view is that until they can prove they can build a competitive modern-day F1 engine, they shouldn't even consider building their own car.'

I wondered where lay the shortcomings of the Mugen-Honda V10. For a start, by contemporary standards, it is a heavy engine. 'Yes, it is,' Hill nodded. 'Installation isn't brilliant; it's got a big hollow in the torque curve; it doesn't have a very good spread of power – and it doesn't have a lot of it where it does have it! And it keeps breaking. We've been trying to get the message through to them.

'Having said that,' he continued, 'I would love to work with Honda, in the real sense, because they have a racing passion that perhaps other manufacturers do not have. And if they were really to do it properly, they would throw everything at it. I just wish we could get our hands on that resource.'

The car's most competitive outing came in Montreal, where Hill briefly ran as high as second before retiring. True, attrition helped, and pit stop strategies played their part, but still the fact remained that the team was able to contemplate its first podium – first *points* – of the year. What made the papers, though, was only the brief scrap between Hill and his long-time nemesis, one M Schumacher.

Michael's calm goes out of the window as soon as Damon's name is mentioned. Undeniably, the Jordan weaved several times down the long straight, but anyone who has known Hill a while knows also that this is not fundamentally his way. You know that he has accepted, reluctantly, he must play by the contemporary rules, as exemplified by Schumacher himself. At Spa in 1995, after all, Michael weaved to block Damon. For an entire lap.

Racing drivers are unequalled in their ability to see only their own point of view. At the Montreal press conference, Schumacher – having first played innocent in response to questions about ▶

Coates/LAT

If things don't shape up relatively soon, the sun could be setting on another F1 career

Old wounds were opened in Canada

◀ ushering Heinz-Harald Frentzen off the road – tore into Hill, accusing him of... dangerous driving!

'Actually, Canada was a good example of what we were saying earlier, about motivation,' Damon said. 'In a situation like that, where a podium was on the cards, I was thinking, "Right, I'm bloody having this!" I was fired up, and I could have been 37 or 21, it didn't make any difference.

'I don't know why Michael's got such a problem with me, except that I raced closely with him for a while, so we have a history, I suppose. But now we're not racing against each other, to be honest, are we? That's the only time it's happened this year, and I was trying to cling on to my second place, for the team, the sponsors and myself. And if it had been anyone else, I would have done the same thing.

'I don't go out of my way to antagonise him, but he's doled out his fair share of mud-slinging in the past, and there comes a point where you say, "Well, watch out, mate, because I'm going to sling some back." I will not accept being accused of something at a press conference, and not defend myself against it.

'Most people's reaction was that it was one of the most exciting moments in what was an exciting race altogether. When all is said and done, I could have been in a position to cause an accident – and I didn't. There have been times when he's... chosen the other route, let's say.'

For all the *froideur* in their relationship over the years, Hill's admiration for Schumacher's talent is immense. 'He got past me, and it was brilliant the way he did it. He braked *really* late, on the dirty part of the track, and he got through; he's got that ability.

"I won't accept being accused of something and then not defend myself"
DAMON HILL

'No one else out there performs consistently to the level that he does. I mean, Fisichella should have won in Montreal: he made one stop, to Schumacher's three, and that's an example of why – until you wake up to the fact of Michael – you can't compete against him, because you'll get taken by surprise. Who knows the number of times I've got out of a car, and wondered how the hell I came second! And I've seen it happen to other drivers, too.

'I don't hate Schumacher, you know, whatever people think, but I don't like his sideways swipes all the time. And also he knows no boundaries – and gets away with it. So as long as that's the situation, there's really no way to stop him.'

'Actually, I thought that what happened at Jerez with Villeneuve was the worst case. I personally called Max Mosley, and said, "Look, I really think you need to be seen to be *doing* something, because people are outraged." He said, "Yes, I agree," but what they did was nothing. Zip. It was of no consequence whatever to Michael. The rules are hopeless if they're not consistently applied.'

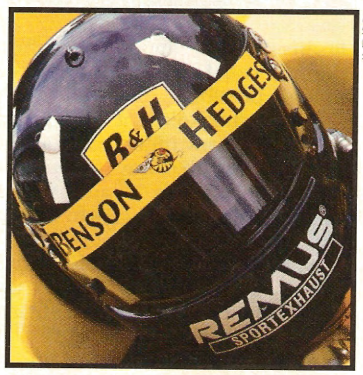
Like most of his colleagues, Hill believes that there would be fewer controversial incidents in F1 if overtaking were not so absurdly difficult, and to that end he would like to see fundamental changes in the technical regulations.

'I think you have to slash into the aerodynamics. The only snag is that you'd have huge velocities at the end of the straights – unless you made the tyres enormous, of course. But the great thing about wider tyres is that a bigger slip angle is possible, so you can come out of a corner sideways, and that looks great to the spectators.'

Interviewing Hill is always a pleasure, because he is intrinsically an honest man, and – like Jacques Villeneuve – will always try to give a question a straight answer. The results may not be coming at the moment, but he was in fine humour throughout our conversation, and clearly his love of racing is intact.

For all that, though, Damon has seen F1 from the top of the mountain, and is not at present where he believes he still belongs. 'In these circumstances,' he said, 'what you do is set yourself a whole new target, which is to get back to that position.'

And if no sign of it is forthcoming? 'Hmmm, well, I'm reaching a stage where I can't say I'll stick at it for another five years. If you're Ralf Schumacher, 23 years old, you've got seven years before you're where I was when I first got into an F1 car! As for me, I need something to happen – fairly drastically, and fairly soon – to make it worthwhile...' ■

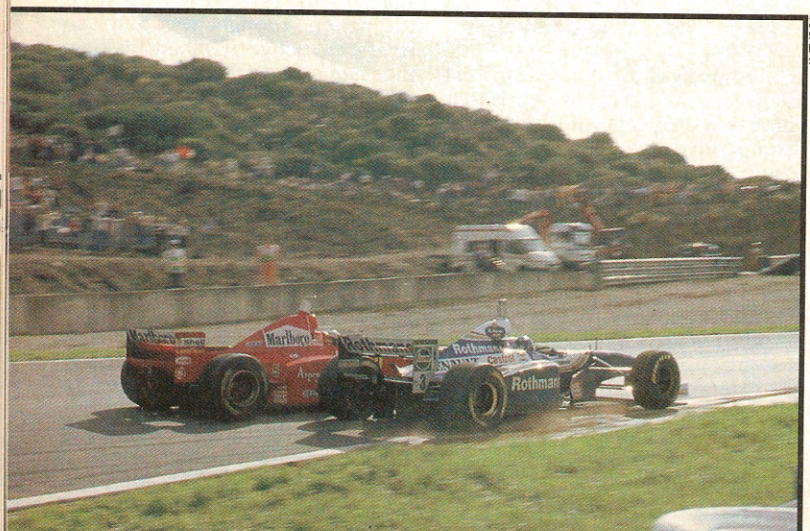


Tee/LAT

That helmet is known all over the world

Tee/LAT

The 198 has hardly been a blur this year



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Hill believes Schumacher should have been punished for his move on Villeneuve at Jerez

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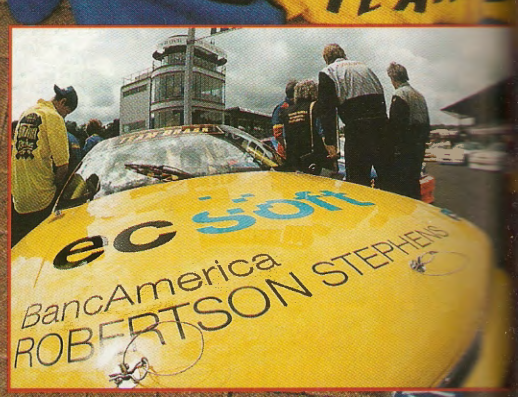

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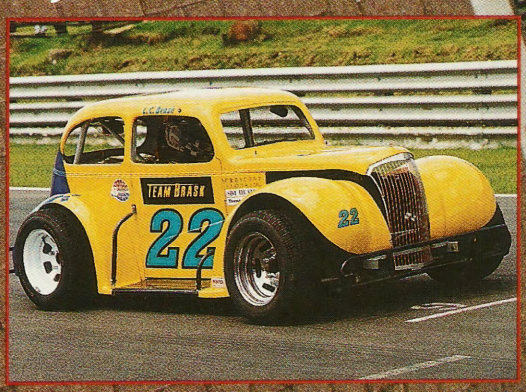


Jacky Ickx got the chance he never thought he would have when he teamed up with his daughter Vanina to race a Renault Megane at the Francorchamps 24 Hours last weekend

I'm so proud of my daughter

It's unbelievable to have your daughter bring the car back in first place at the first pit stop of the Francorchamps 24 Hours! What a great story. However, it was very embarrassing, because when I gave it back to her, it was only in third position…

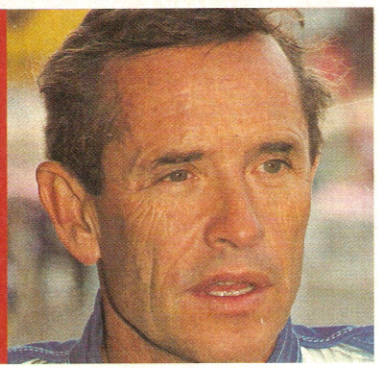
Vanina wanted me to join her for this race, and having the opportunity to do something in sport within the family is quite exceptional. I was supposed to do Paris-Dakar with her three years ago, but unfortunately I was ill so I could not do it. I never thought we would find another opportunity. Now she's running for Renault in Belgium in the Procar series, and the 24 Hours is included.

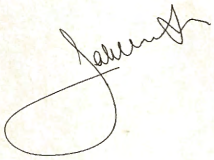
I think it was more her idea. She wanted me to do it and I felt I could, although we chose the hard way because we had just two drivers rather than three. She's a fast girl, she's faster than me, no doubts! I'm just extremely happy to see that she's doing well now, and knowing that she's faster than I am makes me very happy.

As far as I'm concerned, it's a one-shot race, and you can't beat fit young people. I was nowhere because I had to relearn a lot of things, and these cars are unknown to me. It's like skiing or cycling; the basics are fairly easy. The difficulty is to go fast, and that's something I can't do anymore, because I have no wish to go very fast. I know what I can and can't do. I'm not looking to return to motor racing.

I think the whole weekend was a wonderful experience. Although we retired after Vanina went off the road, I was delighted by the way she was driving, and the way she was performing, and I was extremely pleased to be her partner. I know that, in motor racing, going off the road just happens, and that's it. When you're quick, it can happen even more often.

"My daughter is a fast girl. Knowing that she's faster than me makes me very happy"
JACKY ICKX





JACKY ICKX
SIX-TIME LE MANS WINNER

We had problems with wearing the front pads too fast. I don't know why, but we had to change them at every pit stop. I think we could have done well. It was an enjoyable weekend, but something is sure – it's my last appearance in an international competition. I was glad to do it with her, but, after having tasted it again, I'm not planning to come back next year!

My last appearance with the works Porsche in the Group C series was in 1985, and that's a long, long time ago. I did a little bit in rally-raids, but that ended in 1992. In any case, that experience was nothing like racing cars.

I have no regrets about my career or stopping when I did, because I think my life in the sport has been a very happy one, and I received so much more than I was expecting at the start. Also I survived – I have to appreciate that.

Honestly, I'm not nervous when Vanina is driving, because I think racing today is so much safer. Okay, the risk is there, but it's much safer than it was 30 years ago. I have to remind myself that it was under the pressure of Jackie Stewart that cars and race courses changed. At the time, we were not thinking about it, but racing was very dangerous… there are not so many people who have survived from our time.

The nicest thing in the sport today is that historic races have become more important. A few years ago, people had collectors cars, but didn't use them. Now they compete with them seriously. I think the ambience at historic races is like a return to the past. Spectators, and drivers and owners of cars share the passion, and they can see each other and talk to each other. That's not modern racing.

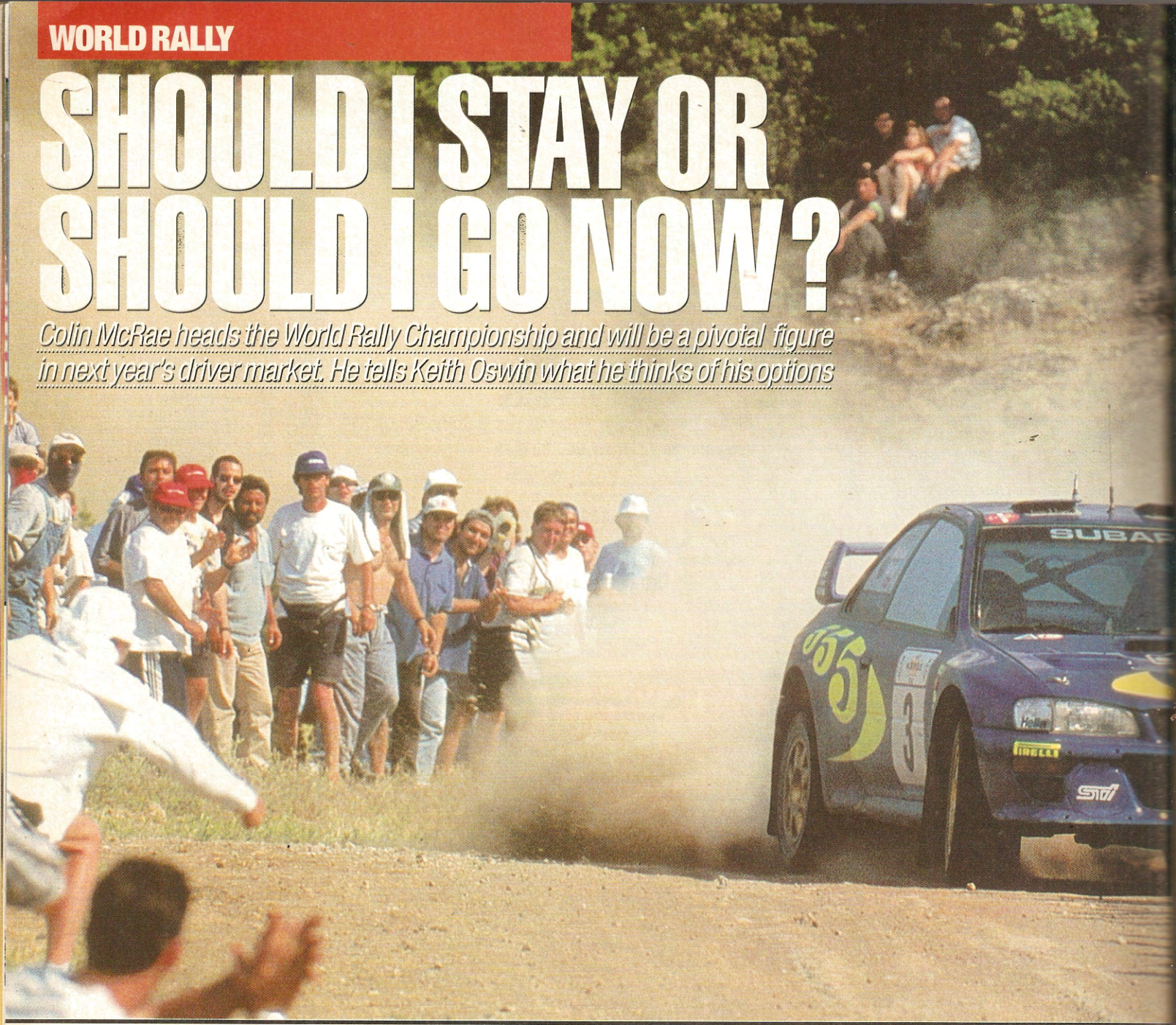
About six weeks ago, I drove a Ferrari 312PB in a historic race at Francorchamps. It was fantastic! I'd driven the car a few times on the new circuit at the Nurburgring, but driving at Francorchamps in a proper race was fascinating. The car is still very easy to drive. Of course it's old, but the driver is even older!

It filled me with a lot of emotions, because I did a lot of races with that car. Apparently, it was even more interesting for the people watching, because it was a chance to go back in time; the same feeling, the same noise, the same vibration. The fans were sensitive to that, because it was like 25 or 26 years ago. The picture of these races just pops into their mind, as it did for me.

I've been invited to Goodwood several times, and never been able to go. However, I do hope to be able to drive that car again at the end of July round Silverstone (the Coy's Festival). I'm told it's a very big meeting in England, and I'd be delighted to go there. It's very nice when you do this sort of thing occasionally, but if it becomes a habit, I think I will lose the interest in it or the pleasure of doing it! When it happens two or three times a year, it's great. ■

SHOULD I STAY OR SHOULD I GO NOW?

Colin McRae heads the World Rally Championship and will be a pivotal figure in next year's driver market. He tells Keith Oswin what he thinks of his options



Colin McRae stands on the brink of a momentous decision. Does he nail his colours to Subaru's mast once more or does he wave goodbye to the team for which he has driven throughout his professional career? We'll know the answer soon, for both Subaru and Ford, his likely new employer, want a resolution before the World Championship reconvenes in New Zealand.

There have been approaches from several teams for McRae's services next year and his eventual decision is crucial to the driver market. Peugeot is among the shoppers, but McRae is reluctant to commit himself to a reduced workload quite yet. 'Peugeot's is a very limited programme at the moment and that's not something I want to do just yet. Maybe two years down the line I'd be delighted to have a limited programme, but not just yet.'

If McRae opts out of Subaru for 1999, he will almost certainly be taking on a new and untested car. 'It's quite a challenge and you have to take it on as that, not expect to win in the first year. If you take that attitude, you'll only be disappointed, but if you go with a realistic frame of mind, then you should be quite happy.

'There's a psychological thing about new cars. Subaru won't have a new one until 2001, although the mechanical parts are updated and improved each year. It's still going to be a good car, but it's always nicer to think you've got a new one.'

From that you might reasonably conclude that a move is certain, McRae eager for a fresh challenge over and above regaining his title. However, loyalty to Subaru is also clearly a major factor and while his relationship with the team hasn't always been a bed of roses, leaving would clearly be a wrench. Even if he stays, he says he will only sign a one-year deal. The arrival of Peugeot and SEAT might prove tempting in a year's time. Should he leave, however, he wants a two-year deal to establish himself, especially if a new car needs to be developed.

'If I stay with Subaru, I could quite easily be tied into it for the rest of my career. That's not necessarily a bad thing. At least I know the team has been built around me, I know everyone and get on well with the Japanese, so it can only get better. On the other hand, maybe you just have to bite the bullet and go for it, join up with a new team and accept the challenge.'

> **"Sometimes you just have to bite the bullet and accept a new challenge"**
> **COLIN MCRAE**

Alison McRae gives hubby Colin some encouragement

McKlein/LAT

For the moment, however, McRae is focused on regaining the World Championship title he lost to Tommi Makinen two seasons ago and which, if the Finn's recent loss of form and fortune is any guideline, is up for grabs once again.

'Normally at this stage of the season I'm lagging behind,' admits the Scot. 'So it's nice to be in the driving

McKlein/LAT

Fans around the world love McRae's spectacular style, and with just cause

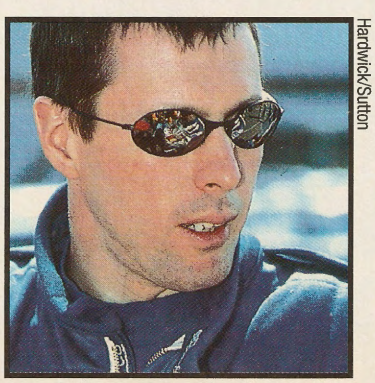
seat for once. It's a lot better than usual and hopefully it will stay that way. The rallies are so close these days that it's hard to predict anything. You can end up with a bad overall position without being very far off the pace. It's good for the sport, but it makes it much harder to win at the moment.'

With the loss of Indonesia, McRae has only five events to defend his five-point lead over Carlos Sainz, but he doesn't let the reduced season bother him. 'It doesn't matter if there are five or 25 events left, it'll be just as hard. Indonesia was an event where we've always been quick, but it hasn't been kind to me. I've not yet finished it, although I was leading both times until I had problems.

'There's only one event in the second half of the year where I'm going to be at a disadvantage and that's Finland. I can't win that one unless the Finns have problems. It's all down to experience on that event and I've been there just three times. I've only finished the rally once, although we were a close third when the engine went last year.

'I think the event's reputation might be falsely tough, but you have to remember that Tommi and Juha live there and drive on those undulating roads all the time. No amount of testing can overcome that and even if the organisers put together a completely new set of stages the Finns would always be quickest.'

Despite his poor form of late, McRae still rates Makinen as one of his major threats, along with old adversary Sainz. 'Tommi'll catch up for sure in the next few events and Carlos will always be a threat. Juha is probably driving better now than for several years and so he'll be there▶



Hardwick/Sutton

Cool shades on rallying's hottest property

Eight down...

So far, the 1998 rally championship has been the closest in memory

Monte Carlo Rally, January 19-21
Carlos Sainz stunned everyone by winning first time out in the Toyota, while Juha Kankkunen and Colin McRae trailed him over the line. Richard Burns took fifth, but was looking good for third until inexperience got the better of him and the pack got past. Tommi Makinen crashed out of the lead at half distance. His Mitsubishi landed well down a ravine.

Swedish Rally, February 6-8
Makinen's first win of the year notched up the first 100 for the Finns. Behind him, Sainz edged out Kankkunen for second a couple of stages from home. Thomas Radstrom stuffed his Toyota out of a commanding lead and engine failure put paid to McRae's chances. Burns finished 15th after a lengthy visit to a ditch on the second stage, but bagged a run of fastest times.

Safari Rally, February 28-March 2
Burns finally got the win he'd threatened with a determined and controlled drive in Kenya. This reaped rewards after Makinen's engine blew. Engine failures also put out both Subarus on the same stage as each other. Ford took second and third, but it took team orders to promote Kankkunen to second ahead of Ari Vatanen, substituting for the injured Bruno Thiry.

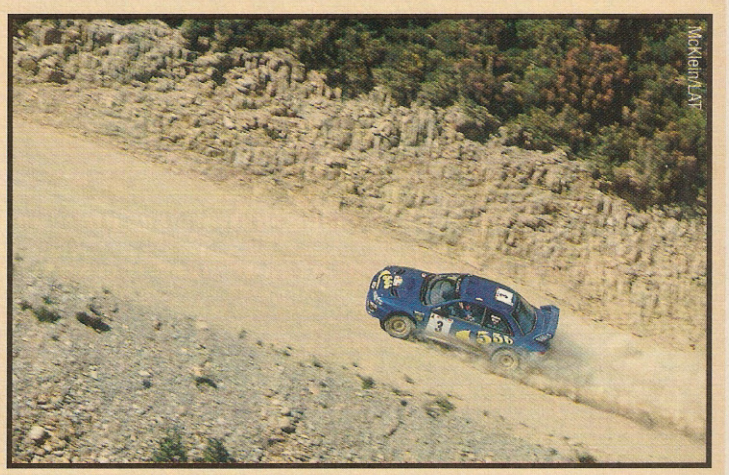
TAP Portugal Rally, March 22-25
McRae grabbed his first win of the year, despite nursing an engine that developed a huge thirst for oil. Sainz tried in vain to reel him in on the final few stages, but first had to rely on a damaged gearbox slowing Freddy Loix, who had started the final leg in a strong second place. Burns narrowly missed fourth, but his team mate Makinen again planted his car off the road.

Movistar Rallye Catalunya, April 20-22
Having been tipped for the scrap heap, Didier Auriol bounced back in emphatic style to win his first event in three years. Loix was a distant second ahead of Makinen in the new Mitsubishi. Burns took fourth and Sainz again found life too tough on his home event, finishing just outside the points. The Subarus struggled for grip and in the end neither McRae nor Liatti stayed the course.

Corsica Rally, May 4-6
McRae was at his best. However, he had to answer to the stewards on charges of excessive tyre wear before being freed to win the event. Francois Delecour and Gilles Panizzi renewed their F2 battle to take second and fourth respectively, while Piero Liatti underlined Pirelli's advantage for the first time this year. Thiry was back to take fifth ahead of Auriol, but Kankkunen was never at the races and Makinen spluttered to a halt when leading.

YPF Rally Argentina, May 20-23
Makinen claimed a hat trick of South American wins, although McRae won more stages, losing out after smashing his rear suspension and being lucky to finish fifth. Behind the Finn, Sainz and Kankkunen fought one of their classic battles, Sainz getting the nod by just 0.7s, 20 metres in real money! Burns took fourth to stay in the hunt with just eight points covering the top five. Engine failures put out both Auriol and Thiry.

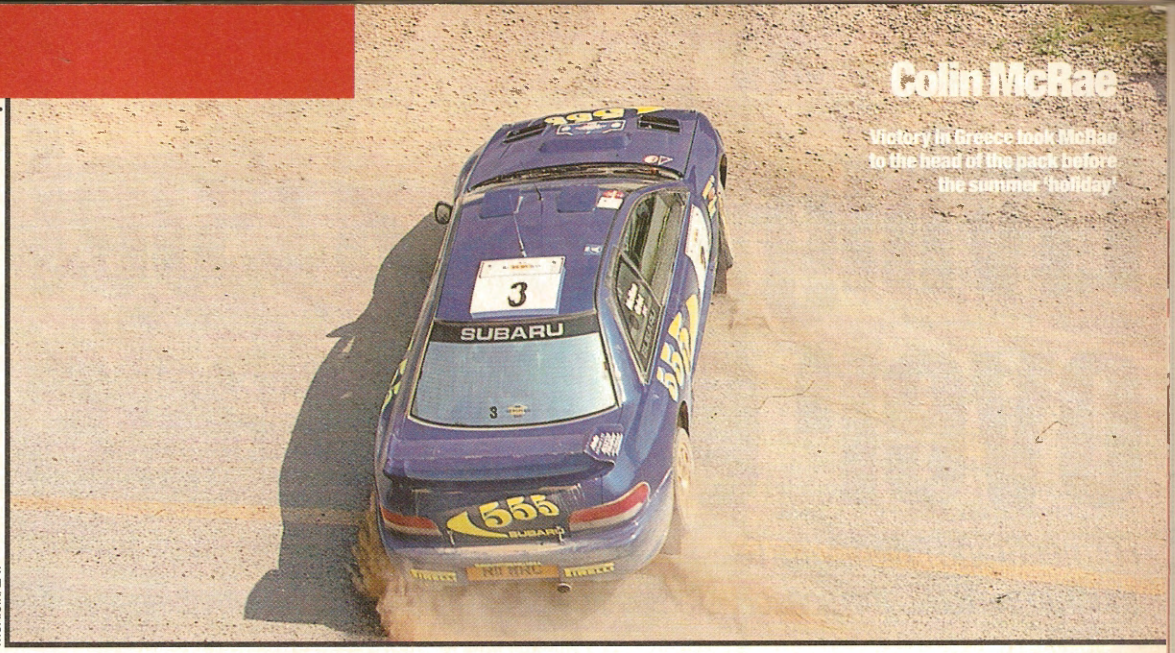
Acropolis Rally, June 6-9
Punctures, suspension damage and fuel pump failure all combined to hand McRae an unexpected win, but one which put him back at the head of the table. Auriol looked set to win until his fuel pump let him down. He finished second ahead of Kankkunen, he of the shredded tyres. Burns should have taken fourth but a rock wrecked his suspension and he retired on the spot, leaving Sainz to claim the place and stay second in the points. Electrical failure halted Makinen and Thiry's Ford had its second engine blow up in as many events.



McKlein/LAT

McRae took a while to get into his stride, but now he's right among the title favourites

Championship points: 1, McRae, 36; **2,** Sainz, 31; **3=,** Kankkunen & Makinen, 24; **5=,** Auriol & Burns, 21; **7,** Loix, 12; **8,** Liatti, 10; **10=,** Vatanen & Delecour; etc.



McKlein/LAT

Colin McRae

Victory in Greece took McRae to the head of the pack before the summer 'holiday'

◀or thereabouts, but he might not win the title.

'Tommi has lost a couple of good results in Corsica and Greece through mechanical failure and, without those, I've no doubt he'd be right up there with the rest of us.'

Of his own performance, McRae rates it as good as last year. Then, he won more events than anyone else, yet missed the title by just one point on the Network Q RAC Rally.

He subscribes to the view of his fellow competitors that 14 events is too many, although he concedes it hasn't been as bad as was initially feared going into last season. Like Sainz before him, he warns that sticking to the current full calendar will seriously affect the number of events drivers are prepared to tackle in future years.

Hardwick/Sutton

It's all getting a bit too close for Kankkunen

'I would rather see 12 short events rather than eight long ones,' he says. 'Twelve rallies would be enough, with three days' recce, one day off and then three days for the rally itself. That would fit in quite well.

'I will have to give serious consideration to what's happening in a year or two's time. I'm married and there's a baby on the way and so I've got to start thinking about the family.' So will he be slowing down? 'No way!' he counters in a flash…

One time McRae would have liked to have slowed down a bit was after winning the Acropolis Rally and regaining the series lead. While his rivals headed for the beach, the summer house or wherever rally aces relax, McRae climbed aboard a flight to Beijing and set about tackling the 555 China Rally.

'I wasn't happy about going,' he admits. 'However, once I was there, I could actually relax and enjoy the driving. It's a well-run event and could certainly be one of the best in the World Championship, the stages are good and the route compact. The only problem really is that the event is stuck in the middle of nowhere and so there's not a lot to do other than the rally itself.'

Given the power to choose, McRae would immediately ditch any event that didn't match up to safety standards. 'It's a major factor these days. Portugal was terrible for spectator safety so it shouldn't be in the series. It's hard enough to improve spectator safety wherever you are, but when you've got spectators who don't listen, as you get in Portugal, it's impossible. Perhaps dropping an event like Portugal from the championship would make everyone else sit up and take notice that we mean business on safety. It's changing for the better each year and sometimes you don't notice the small changes. But if you look back over three years or so, you'll notice a big difference.

'Greece was bad as well and what happened there was crazy. The 12th stage should have been cancelled because there were too many spectators in dangerous places. Richard (Burns) was quite right to get upset about it and there is no way that he should have been reprimanded for saying so. It's not nice driving into a stage like that when you're first on the road. You try to shut the possible consequences out of your mind, but it affects the concentration which makes it even more dangerous.'

Hardwick/Sutton

McRae still fears the threat from Sainz

McRae is well aware he's leading the World Championship at a time when rallying is enjoying a golden era. Shortening events and standardising many aspects may rob some events of their character, but McRae doesn't mind. 'The whole championship package is getting better and better. More manufacturers are coming in, which has to be good for drivers like Mark Higgins and my wee brother, Alister. There are great opportunities opening up.'

However, while new talent comes knocking on the door to find a seat for 1999, McRae is assured of one. The question is, with which team? ■

… and five to go

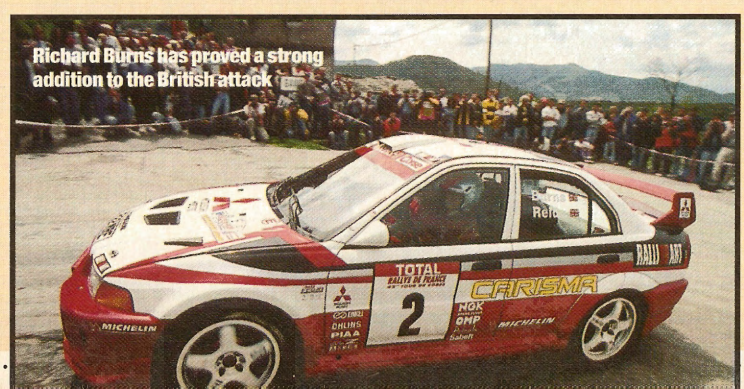
McRae has to hang on for five more events to claim the World Rally Championship crown for a second time. This is the challenge that awaits him

New Zealand Rally, July 25-27
Between 1993 and 1995 McRae couldn't be beaten on this event and so will go to Auckland full of confidence. Even last year he was leading comfortably until his engine let go. Team mate Kenneth Eriksson went on to win. Richard Burns might be the biggest threat, having won in 1996 and Tommi Makinen usually goes well before his accident! It's a fast, flowing event on stages which suit British drivers and which give co-drivers plenty to do. It's a long way to go, but the rewards can be great.
1997 winner: Kenneth Eriksson (Subaru)

Neste Finland Rally, August 21-23
If you ain't a Finn or a Toyota driver, then this one's probably not for you! Aside from the home team, the only non-Scandinavians to win this event are the Toyota twins, Carlos Sainz and Didier Auriol. Makinen is on a record five victories in a row and, despite his recent slump in form, must still start as favourite. Juha Kankkunen and Ari Vatanen are set to give him the hardest time. Toyota led last year on its series debut, while McRae and Burns will settle for solid points on an event they don't know well. The new SEAT makes its debut.
1997 winner: Tommi Makinen (Mitsubishi)

San Remo Rally, October 11-14
On the face of it, this one should be a romp for McRae, but things are never as simple as that. Sainz and Auriol are no slouches on asphalt and nor is the Mitsubishi if Makinen and Burns get their act together. Peugeot and Citroen will also have their parts to play in the overall outcome, especially if the weather stays dry. The end of the season will be in sight, so some clever manipulation of the positions may take place behind the scenes to get the right drivers home in the right order. Naughty, but they'll do it all the same…
1997 winner: Colin McRae (Subaru)

API Rally Australia, November 5-8
This could be the title decider, or it could be the event that sets up a dash to the line in Cheltenham. Just about everyone will fancy their chances of winning Down Under as each of the top crews has good memories of the Perth event. Strangely, Sainz is the one title favourite who hasn't yet bagged a win here. A victory for the Spaniard is long overdue, so don't count him out. Kankkunen, by contrast, has four wins to his credit. It's a tricky rally, one where the ball-bearing road surface makes running order a crucial factor.
1997 winner: Colin McRae (Subaru)



McKlein/LAT

Richard Burns has proved a strong addition to the British attack

Network Q RAC Rally, November 22-24
Imagine the fun if the title race is now down to a head-to-head between Burns and McRae! Don't knock it. Add another driver and you can bet your last dime that they won't relish the fight overmuch. Taking on the Brits on home soil isn't a prospect to cheer the heart. Last year, McRae's win wasn't enough and 10th for Makinen saw the Finn snare his second title. Burns lost his chance of victory on the final morning, leaving Kankkunen and Sainz to trail McRae home. The typical RAC weather makes this event as much of a lottery as the Safari.
1997 winner: Colin McRae (Subaru)

Living with a roof over our heads

Former Grand Prix drivers Gianni Morbidelli and Derek Warwick are finding life tough in the BTCC this season. Marcus Simmons asks if they can turn things round

A few years ago, the second Sunday in July would have been a time for Gianni Morbidelli and Derek Warwick to look forward to lining up on the grid for the British Grand Prix. These days, however, they're enjoying a mid-season break from the British Touring Car Championship.

A much-needed break, too. Morbidelli and Warwick, who drive for Volvo and Vauxhall respectively, lie only 10th and 11th in the championship. By contrast, their team mates, Rickard Rydell and John Cleland, are first and fifth.

Far from being a knacker's yard for racing careers in their death throes, the *Auto Trader* is a hotly-contested series, which has its own, very quirky brand of competition and etiquette. And weather.

For 30-year-old Morbidelli in particular, undergoing his first season in Britain, this dismal English summer has been a source of continuing frustration, as he tries to get to grips with his front-wheel-drive TWR Volvo S40 and the circuits.

> **"For some odd reason I can't find the ultimate pace. I can't put my finger on it"**
> **DEREK WARWICK**

'Sometimes,' the Italian ponders, 'the weather changes so fast it's incredible. For a guy like me to come from a place where summer is summer and winter is winter it can be difficult to understand. In five minutes the track can change three times and you're going crazy; you're going mad.'

Morbidelli is sitting on the pit wall at Croft, where he has just posted his best performance of the season to qualify third on a damp, but drying track. 'Imagine,' he gestures. 'I was in fourth place two laps from the end of the session, and they put my pit board out saying I was fourth. So I say to myself, "Fourth place – that's good. I'll drive one slow lap, then try another fast one and try to improve". Well, as I pass the pits again, I see I'm 11th. In one minute I have lost seven positions! Incredible. You know, it takes a lot of time to get used to this.'

He admits that he's still adjusting to front-wheel drive, for which there is a fine art required to get the best out of the machinery. 'This car is strange,' he acknowledges. 'I don't want to say it's bad, because we know that it's good, but I haven't got a feeling with it yet. I thought from my experience with BMW (and the rear-wheel-drive 320i) in Italian touring cars that I would be competitive, but now I can say that it's much easier to drive a touring car with rear-wheel drive.

'I have probably been too aggressive on the power and the throttle, and I've probably used it in the wrong way, too. On some occasions there have also been little problems.'

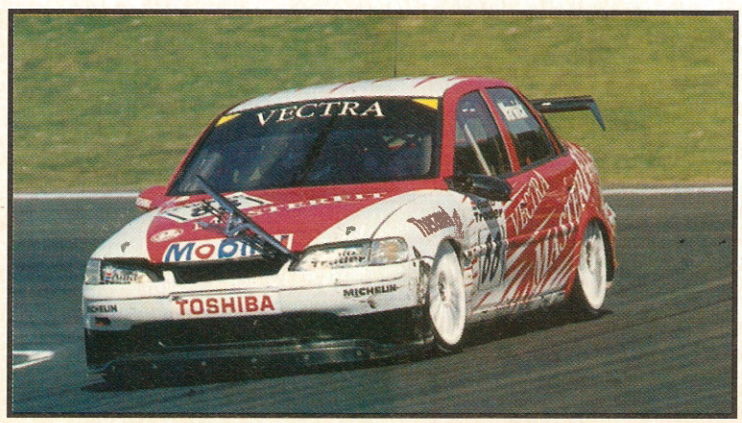
True enough. The S40 wasn't exactly as reliable as a Swiss clock in pre-season testing. It has been a dependable machine since the racing started, though. That, however, was a little late for Morbidelli.

'A small problem for a guy with experience is nothing,' he says. 'A small problem for a guy who doesn't have experience becomes very big. The cost to me is much higher.'

So, as Rydell has taken four wins, Morbidelli has struggled to dent the top six. Is it a problem for drivers coming straight from single-seaters to push 100% in a touring car?

TWR Volvo team director Roger Silman says: 'There certainly seems to be a pattern there. We were optimistic that Gianni was going to be the exception and he performed quite well in the pre-season testing. But, unfortunately, that hasn't proved to be the case.

Griffiths/LAT



Fox/LAT

It's a jungle out there. Derek Warwick (left) raced on at Brands Hatch in a Vauxhall Vectra which finished the live TV double-header looking like it had been in a banger race

Morbidelli discusses his race with team director Roger Silman (right) and team manager Ken Page. The trophy is Rydell's latest

The tin-top struggle

'I think these cars are so incredibly competitive, and there's such a fine line between what's right and what's wrong. The slightest little thing that isn't right causes you to fall off the pace, and time after time that's what's happened to Gianni.

'It's clearly been a bit of a disappointment. I would have liked to think that Gianni could have got good results to stop our principal competitors from scoring the number of points they have, but he's been unable to do that. I've been to so many races and thought, "This is the time it's going to come right for him", and it hasn't. His performances have improved slowly, but obviously not to the level he wants.'

It's a rut which Warwick finds himself in, too. Last year, he matched up pretty well against his team mate, 1995 BTCC Champion John Cleland, in the Triple Eight Vauxhall Vectras, at least in qualifying. However, this time around the Scot has been ahead of the 43-year-old Englishman in all disciplines.

'This year, it hasn't been so easy for

Jennings/Sutton

Lawrence/LAT

Rydell has blitzed his Italian team mate

me,' Warwick affirms. 'For some unknown reason I haven't been able to find the ultimate pace and I can't put my finger on it. John's got a lot of confidence and he's driving ever so well. Am I happy with my season so far? Absolutely not. I've made a couple of mistakes, I don't feel I've been driving particularly well, so I've got a big step to make.'

Cleland often says that last year's awful Vectra suited Warwick better, simply because the Scot's own approach to corners – braking relatively early and then putting the power on – gave the ex-Formula 1 man, who entered corners faster, the advantage. That's because the car was so terrible that it was always slow on corner exits, however you approached them. Does that mean, therefore, that a superior touring car like this year's Vectra suits the tin-top specialist? Warwick thinks not.

'If it's a good touring car, it will suit the ex-Grand Prix driver just as well,' he asserts. 'Although having said that, Gianni is struggling this year behind Rickard. It's just a different technique, and the longer you drive one the better you get.'

Warwick goes on to dispel the notion that F1 refugees are necessarily going to have a hard time of it in touring cars. 'I've had a run of bad results and circumstances haven't helped,' he says. 'But Gabriele Tarquini and Emanuele Pirro have shown what Grand Prix drivers can do in touring cars – they've become champions and won a lot of races. ▶

The tin-top struggle

Morbidelli explores the gravel trap at Silverstone, although he has generally made the finish of his races

Lawrence/LAT

◀ Me and Gianni are just two isolated cases from many successful ones.'

Morbidelli adds that adjusting to the intensity of the racing in the BTCC can take time. 'I am still learning,' he says. 'Because the championship is so tough, it's not my fault if I have accidents in the beginning. I have finished all the races except one, so I can say that, although I have made mistakes, I haven't made a lot. I've had only one accident, at Donington Park with Peter Kox and Tommy Rustad, but I'm 100% sure that was not my fault.

'Touring car racing is a particularly specialised formula. It's probably only 10% as physically demanding as a Grand Prix car, but it's got completely different disciplines. You apply the power differently; you steer differently. And the drivers out there in the BTCC – they're the best drivers in the world in the Super Touring formula.

'I'm still learning, every time I get in the car. I even learn from watching Michael Schumacher in F1. I never stop learning, and the day that I do is the day I stop living.' ■

"Everything is a bit open between the drivers. It can seem like a war, not a battle"
GIANNI MORBIDELLI

Fox/LAT

Vauxhall's ex-F1 man reckons his season has been the pits so far

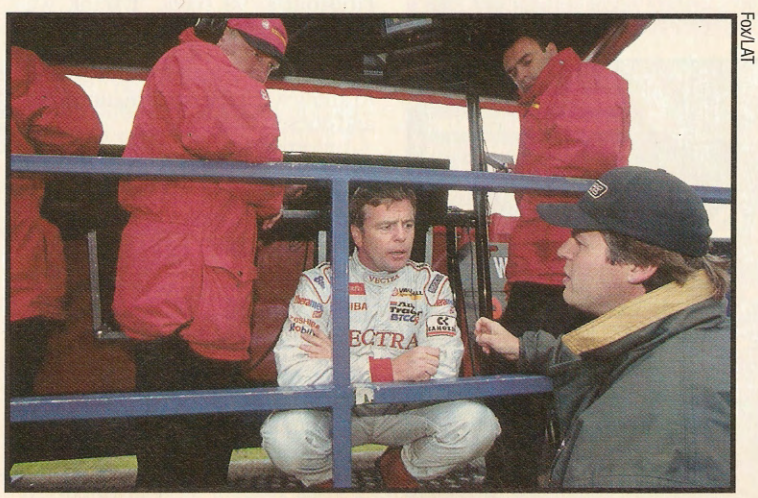
Lawrence/LAT

Fighting with privateers was not part of the plan for Volvo's No 2

I was there at the wrong moment and they crashed into my car.

'Sometimes it's a bit much. Everything is a bit open between the drivers and it can sometimes seem like a war, not a battle.'

Both Morbidelli and Warwick believe they are on the verge of a breakthrough. While the Italian speaks of 'turning the page and being further towards the front', and hoping that the BTCC moves to a sunnier country like Italy 'or South Africa', the Englishman firmly reckons that the intra-Vauxhall balance between himself and Cleland can turn around sharply. 'One-thousand per cent,' he says confidently. 'That's what motor racing is. Just when you think you're on top of it, it bites you in the arse.



Fox/LAT

'At least I'm doing better than you, Tim.' Warwick talks with Peugeot man Tim Harvey

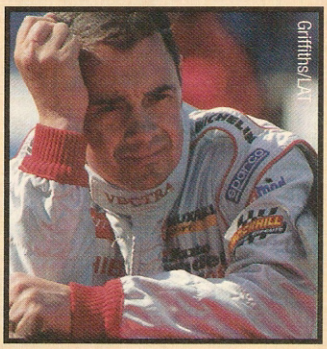
The single life

Can single-seater pilots adapt to BTCC pace immediately?

Strange to think, but the one thing the tin-top specialists and ex-Grand Prix drivers are agreed upon is that things happen too slowly in a touring car for those used to the speed of Formula 1.

John Cleland, Derek Warwick's team mate at Vauxhall, says: 'I've been doing it for so long that, if you asked me where I brake for Paddock Hill Bend (at Brands Hatch) I couldn't tell you. I brake when I know that I should brake, not because there's a change in the tarmac or there's an advertising hoarding. It comes from something that I've done for years.

'Your F1 guy is approaching a corner at 100mph less than he was in a single-seater, so it must be very difficult for him to find the braking point he can use in a saloon car. It's the same story for Morbidelli, Warwick and Tarquini – except Tarquini, because a touring car is probably quicker than the single-seaters he drove!'



Griffiths/LAT

Cleland says specialists will prevail

Warwick concurs: 'If you look at a touring car, it's very difficult to mentally adapt yourself to the slower speeds. Let's use Silverstone as an example. Every time I go into Copse Corner, it's down one gear and flat in anything I've ever driven there except a touring car. But the touring car is down one gear, and then slide and push and shove and understeer and oversteer and come out the other side.'

Cleland believes that, as the BTCC has become more and more competitive in the 1990s, so it has become harder for a single-seater man to make the grade.

'There's a myth about this whole thing,' he declares. 'Everyone goes on about these single-seater drivers who will come in and do this and do that, but that's not really been the case. I still think somebody with touring car experience is always going to triumph over someone who's been in single-seaters.

'You can't just blame F1 guys for not adapting instantly. For anyone who comes into these cars, when you watch their racecraft, it's sometimes a bit suspect and they stick their noses in where they're not going to be accepted.'

GONE WEST

This season has been a disaster for PacWest so far. Gordon Kirby found out what the team is doing about it

This year was going to be a good one for CART team PacWest and its drivers, Mark Blundell and Mauricio Gugelmin. It hasn't been. However, after a miserable start to the season, the team believes it may be turning things around, and there is more optimism in the whole camp.

PacWest won four races last year and was picked by many observers to be a championship contender this year. In 1998, its challenge has completely failed to materialise. Both drivers have failed to figure in any race, and have usually qualified on the ninth or 10th rows. Neither has finished better than seventh and, at mid-season, they are tied for a very distant 17th in the points table.

However, the team goes to Cleveland this weekend confident of being more competitive in the next run of races following a series of successful tests. Realistically, dreams of winning races or contending for the championship have been replaced by hopes of merely making the podium. On present performance, even that seems some way off.

Blundell disagrees. 'I'm going into all the races open-minded and confident that we're going to turn our season around. At Portland, we were stronger than we've been for a very long time. You know, it's close and competitive out there and we're just starting to move, but the other teams have been moving ahead of us all season long. If we catch up and get to a point where we're right up there with them, I'll be over the moon.'

The die was cast for PacWest's poor season so far when engine development and electronic problems delayed the team's winter testing programme. The outfit was last in line for the new, lightweight Mercedes 108E engine and its Magneti-Marelli electronic system, behind Penske and Forsythe. It then took longer than hoped to get everything running reliably. Thus, PacWest owner Bruce McCaw was forced into starting the season with '97 chassis and engines.

'I think, based on all the information we had at the time we made the right decision,' McCaw insists. 'You can always second-guess, but I believe we made the right decision at the time, although some of the fallout from it has not helped us.'

Ralph Hardwick

> **"The more we went into the doo-doo, the more circumstances went against us"**
> **JOHN ANDERSON (TEAM MANAGER)**

Team manager John Anderson says he agreed with McCaw's pre-season strategy from other points of view. 'We looked at last year and we had a good second half to the season, but we didn't do well in the first half. We wanted those early points. The pros of going with the '97 package outweighed the cons of the '98.'

Anderson says more problems developed when it became apparent that last year's Reynard reacted very differently from this year's on Firestone's '98 tyres. 'I think we underestimated the differences it took in getting to know our chassis, tyres and aerodynamics, and getting to know what the combination likes and doesn't like.'

Unfortunately, the team's decision to use the '97 cars meant there were times when it couldn't test for Firestone. This didn't help matters.

The team finally switched over to '98 equipment for round four, at Nazareth. Both drivers promptly crashed heavily in the race.

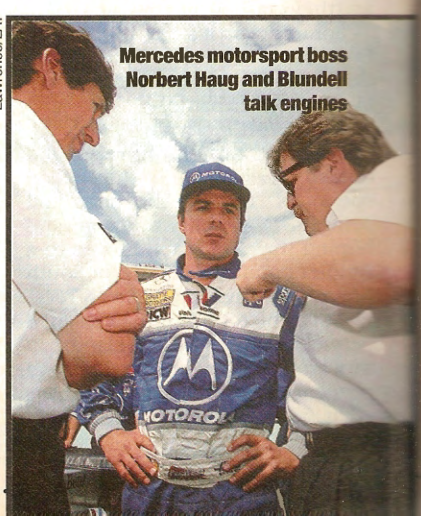
Anderson recalls, 'When we lost two machines at Nazareth, that put us even further behind in getting to know the new cars. We were rushing to get them repaired and missed testing opportunities. You look at it, and you think, how many more excuses can you come up with? It just meant the further we went into the doo-doo, the more circumstances conspired against us.

'You make your own luck, but we really missed those early test sessions with the '98. There were subtleties missing from our set-up.'

Blundell essentially agrees with the assessments made by McCaw and Anderson. 'We didn't really test very much with the '98 car,' he says. 'I certainly didn't. I did more testing where I had to run with the '97 car and from that point, looking back on it, I can be a professor like everybody

Webb

After some good tests, Gugelmin believes the team is on the way back

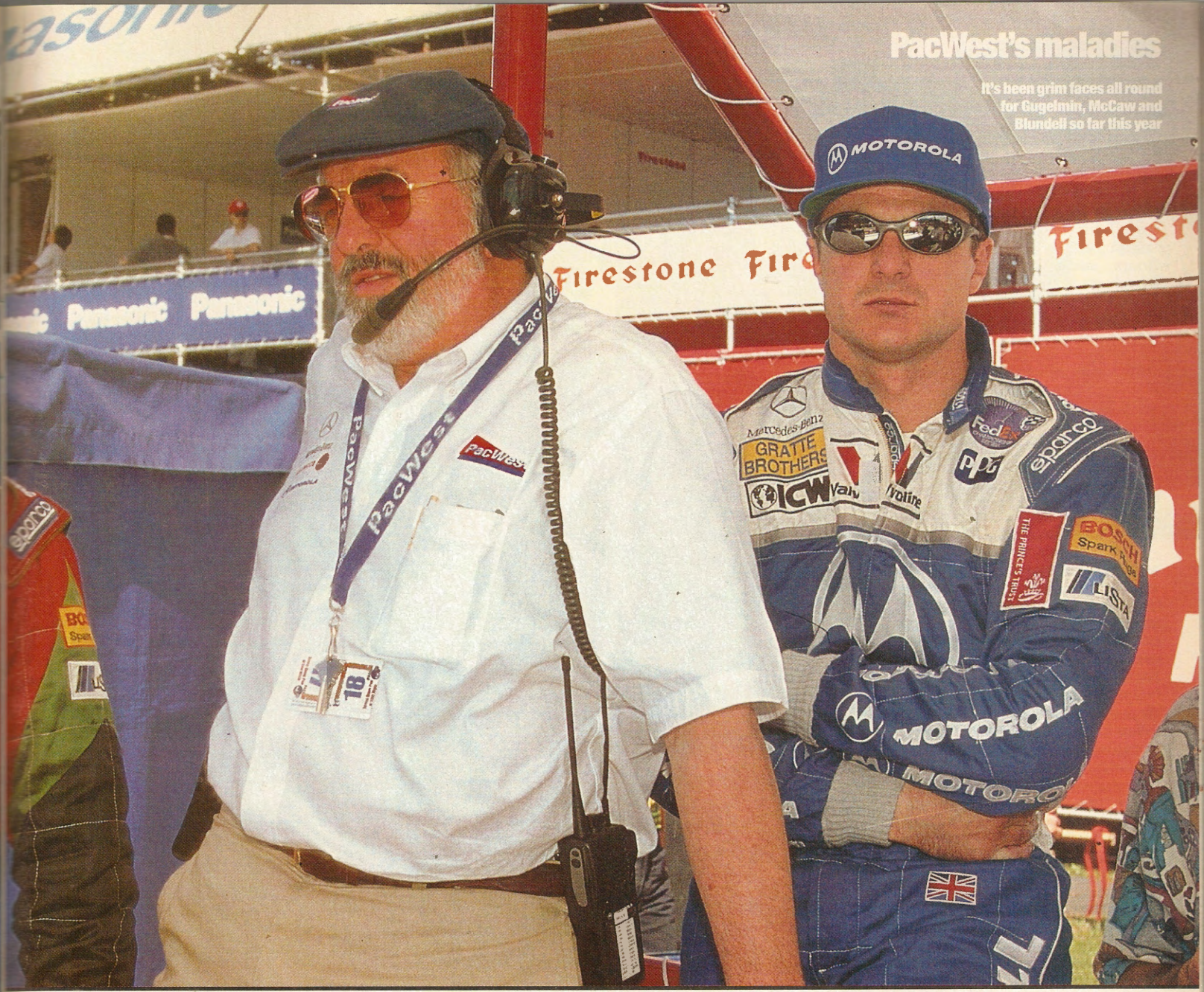


Lawrence/LAT

Mercedes motorsport boss Norbert Haug and Blundell talk engines

PacWest's maladies

It's been grim faces all round for Gugelmin, McCaw and Blundell so far this year



Lawrence/LAT

Every bit of information is found and used

else and say this wasn't the best move, but at the time there did seem to be merit for it.

'The concerns that some of us had have probably come back to haunt us a bit. At the end of it all, though, the only thing we can do is say we are a big team, we have resources, and we've got good people. We know how to win races because we did it last year. We're now going to have to play catch-up as quickly as we can.'

Team mate Gugelmin believes PacWest started to get on-track with a three-day test at Sebring last month. He ran over 500 miles in 100F temperatures. It was the team's first test with Ohlins dampers after trying to build its own over the winter.

Gugelmin says: 'We had three days actually running, and we didn't have a problem throughout. Now we have something that when you come in, you know what the thing is doing, rather than on one outing it's doing one thing and on another outing it's doing another.'

Blundell says: 'We're trying to learn a great deal in a short amount of time. It's hard on everyone. The time frame has run away from us. It's frustrating, it's disappointing, but that's where we're at, and we've just got to get it back.'

Team owner McCaw is confident that will happen. 'We have a great bunch of people who I really believe in,' he says. 'I've got a lot of confidence in everybody and I think we have a great package. We've got two terrific drivers who do a great job, and we have two very fine crews and a very competent engineering staff. We have the right ingredients, but we weren't using it effectively. We just haven't been coming up with the right answers.'

The next three races are on successive weekends. They will be run on an airport circuit in Cleveland, the streets in Toronto, and the high-banked Michigan superspeedway. Only then will we know if PacWest has found the right answers. ■

Tee/LAT

Blundell fights Tony Kanaan at Long Beach for seventh, his best result of the season

Supply lines

McCaw's belief in his suppliers hasn't wavered, despite the hitches

Bruce McCaw says his team's problems have had no effect at all on his confidence in Mercedes-Benz and Ilmor. In fact, he's an enthusiastic fan of theirs.

'I think you have to realise they came here this year with a revolutionary engine, and I think, by-and-large, it's worked very well. They've got a bit to go, but there's room for a lot of growth in the programme. A new engine is like starting over again and we've seen people really struggle when running them, but I have to think they've really come out of the box quite well.'

McCaw maintains similar faith in Magneti-Marelli. 'The electronics question was about getting going early enough. It was never a quality issue. One of the problems was there was a shortage in terms of the number of components available. When all the cars were running that took a bite out of that system.'

He maintains delaying the debut of his '98 cars and engines helped Ilmor and Magneti-Marelli get supply lines under control. 'One of the things we thought we'd accomplish at the end of the day was taking pressure off the development of the engine from a supply standpoint. We wanted to see that programme go forward as quickly as possible, and we've got a good package as a result.'

It's hard to imagine a Formula 1 World Champion picking up the telephone to raise sponsorship for a comeback in another branch of the sport. Yet that's exactly 1987 World Motorcycle Champion Wayne Gardner was forced to do. As a result, he recently landed his first serious drive in Europe, last months Le Mans 24 Hours, since swapping to four wheels six years ago. What's more, he isn't afraid to admit it.

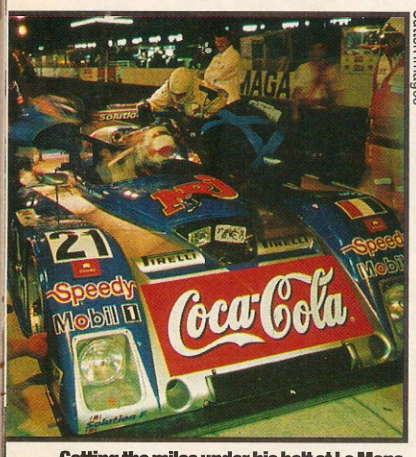
'I make no bones about it, I had to buy that drive,' concedes Gardner of his debut in an open-top Riley & Scott sports racer. 'I couldn't get a works drive and that seat was all my sponsorship would stretch to.'

Also, this refreshingly honest Australian was all too aware that the combination of an ageing R&S chassis design and Solution-F, a team new to circuit racing, wasn't exactly going to allow him the chance to set the world on fire.

That, however, wasn't the point of what represented his first serious venture on to four wheels in Europe. (Only anoraks will remember one-off races in the DTM German touring car series back in 1992 and the guest car in the Porsche Supercup a year later.) It was planned as the springboard – at the age of 38 – for the next stage of Gardner's car racing career, following a move back to Europe from his homeland over the winter.

'Basically, at Le Mans, I was doing my homework by getting some miles under my belt,' explains the Australian, who tapped long-time sponsor Coca-Cola for the budget to contest the event. 'Every time I talked to the big teams about Le Mans, they'd ask if I'd got any experience of the place. When I said "No", I was straight out of the door.

'I also wanted to compare my abilities with the best of the European drivers, and I believe I showed I was as quick as my team mates, or just a little bit quicker,' explains Gardner, who drove with Frenchman Philippe Gache and old 500cc sparring partner Didier de Radigues. 'And I was still getting faster when the car retired, which shows that I was still learning the track.'



Sutton Images

Getting the miles under his belt at Le Mans

Although he says he'd 'consider anything', the Australian is concentrating his efforts on landing a sportscar drive. 'I enjoy big cars – I'm looking at GT racing and the International Sports Racing Series. I've been talking to a few teams, but it doesn't look like I'll be able to tie anything down for this season.'

Gardner realises that his famous name isn't going to magically open doors for him. He says he knows that from bitter experience in Australia, where he began his four-wheel career after hanging up his leathers at the end of 1992.

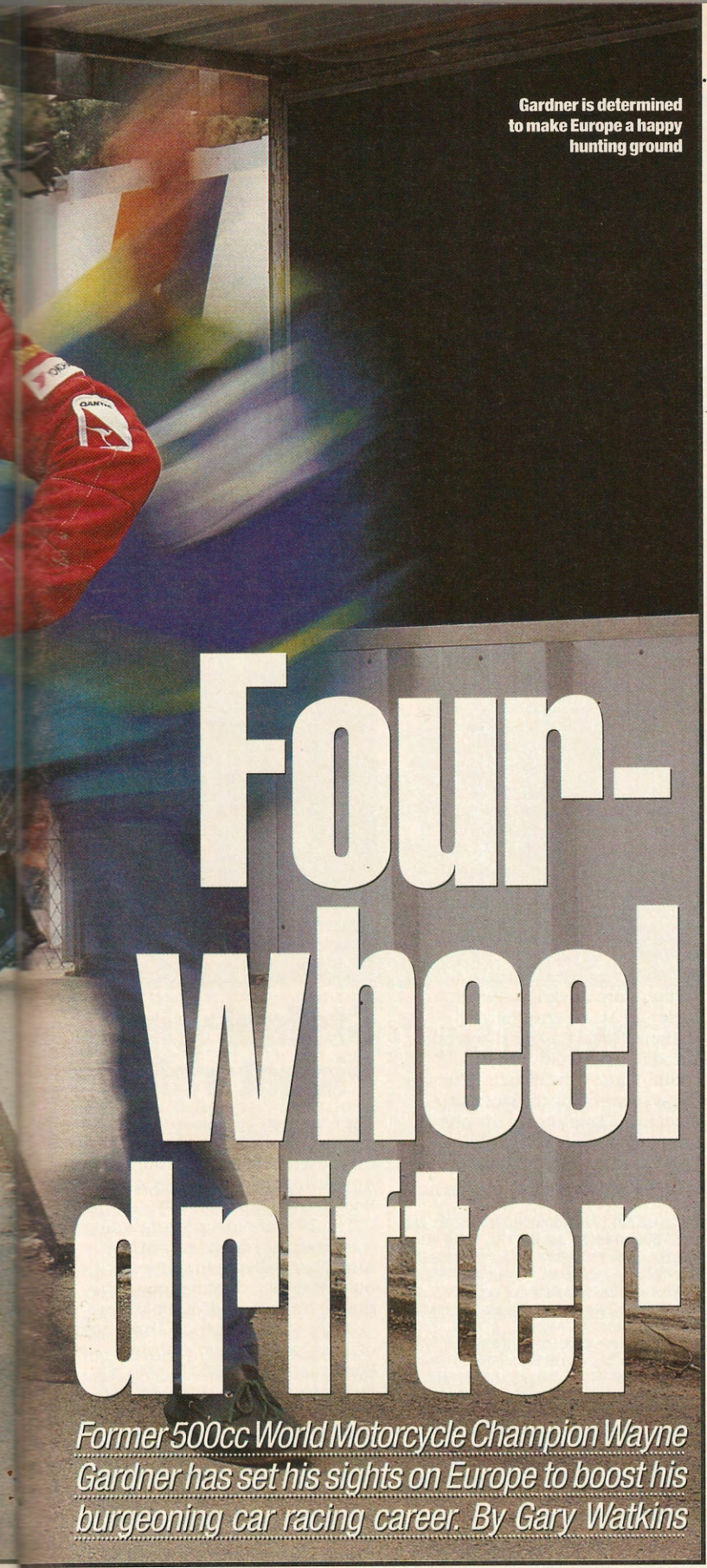
'I would actually say that my name has hindered me,' he explains. 'Because of my reputation from bikes, people expected me to win straight away. But Rome wasn't built in a day.'

LAT

A baptism of fire in Australian touring cars

Gardner started out in the five-litre Australian Touring Car Championship 'to learn how a racing car works' and ended up running his own team. That came after a well-publicised split with the Holden Racing Team, part of the TWR motorsport empire. It was the result of a rookie season that produced few concrete results, save for a third place with Brad Jones in the Bathurst 1000 blue-riband.

'I ended up with my own team entirely by accident. I never planned it, but I learned a lot,' he says.



Gardner is determined to make Europe a happy hunting ground

Four-wheel drifter

Former 500cc World Motorcycle Champion Wayne Gardner has set his sights on Europe to boost his burgeoning car racing career. By Gary Watkins

Can the Australian repeat his two-wheel success on four?

Allsport

it was for an almost magnetic ability to find himself at the epicentre of the traditional five-litre mayhem that he more regularly hit the headlines. So much so that in some sections of the Aussie motorsport press his motorcycle moniker of 'Captain Cool' was cruelly changed to 'Captain Chaos'.

The Australian was already looking beyond his homeland, though, dovetailing his five-litre programme with a full season in the All-Japan GT Championship with the SARD Toyota team in 1996.

'I went to Australia to learn, so after a while I figured it was time to move on, and then Japan came up,' says Gardner, who returned there last season to replace former Grand Prix driver Bertrand Gachot at the FET Powercraft Toyota team.

This year, Gardner has been invited back to drive a full season in FET's Supra alongside Minoru Tanaka, a sometime British Formula 3 contender, but his main target is a full year in a European-based series.

'My priority for next year is Europe. That's where I want to follow my career, although I know I've got the Japanese drive to fall back on,' he explains.

Gardner reckons he's got 10 years' racing left in him. 'I want to notch up a few more victories before I hang up my helmet and have some more fun.'

What's his ultimate ambition on four wheels? 'I'd like to win a World Championship. Why not?' ■

> **"I want to notch up a few more victories before I hang up my helmet"**
> **WAYNE GARDNER**

Not that he's considering reconstituting Wayne Gardner Racing in Europe. 'You really need factory backing to win races,' explains Gardner. 'In Australia, we never had the money to run against the HRT. To do that you'd need AUS$4 million (£1.8 million).'

Five seasons of racing Holden Commodores in his homeland wasn't entirely successful for Gardner. In his own words, he had 'a few sprinklings of success' – one overall victory at Calder last season and a couple of heat wins. However,

Awesome experience

Le Mans worked its magic on the former Australian motorcycle ace

For a man who found fame and fortune hanging off 500cc Grand Prix motorcycles at speeds of up to 200mph, one might expect Wayne Gardner to take the challenge of the Circuit de la Sarthe in his stride.

Not a bit of it. After his first experience of what is regarded by many as one of the world's great race tracks, the Australian was coming out with words like 'frightening' and 'scary', interlaced, not surprisingly, with the odd swear word.

It didn't help that his first taste of the circuit came under the cover of darkness, that he had never driven the Solution-F team's Riley & Scott before first qualifying for this year's Le Mans, or that the car's lights weren't properly adjusted.

'I couldn't see when the chicanes were coming,' said a wide-eyed Aussie after getting out of the car for the first time. 'It was like driving with no lights. Coming back the other way after Mulsanne Corner through the flat section, that is scary. I think it's a bit too much to expect me to learn the car and the track in the dark.'

Come second qualifying and his first experience of track and car in daylight, Gardner was a happier man. 'I really enjoyed it in the light. The circuit really grabbed me. The magic is inside me.'

Sutton Images

Solution-F's Riley & Scott was completely new to Gardner when he arrived at Le Mans

Cudini uses stealth for first Spa 24 Hours win

Outright speed was not the key to success, as BMW showed at the Belgian classic enduro. By Dick Suter

Although not the fastest on the circuit, BMW again proved the marque to beat in the Spa 24 Hours. What made this 50th running of the annual enduro different was the very real competition mounted by Honda, Nissan, Peugeot and Renault now that the race is run to Group N+ regulations.

Spa also attracted stars of the past, such as national heroes Jacky Ickx and Thierry Boutsen, plus Jacques Laffite and Derek Bell.

Vincent Radermecker claimed pole in his regular Peugeot 306 GTi ahead of team mate Sebastien Ugeux. Next up were the Honda Integras of Stephane de Groodt, Pierre-Alain Thibaut and Thierry Tassin, these marginally quicker than Franck Lagorce who was fastest of the Renault Meganes. Vincent Vosse was the best-placed Nissan driver in ninth, with BMW's top qualifier being Duncan Huisman, who lined up 12th. However, the BMW teams felt it was more important to reach the finish.

Honda, Peugeot and Renault mixed it during the first four hours, with Tassin and Briton Grant Elliott taking turns leading in their Hondas. However, two of the Hondas were in trouble, with de Groodt suffering a broken driveshaft before the first hour was out. He then had another break almost exactly an hour later, after which the car was driven hard to flagfall without major problems.

The other Honda was the Fosstech-built Integra shared by James Thompson, Peter Kox and Simon Graves. This was out after 1h17m when Kox, running second, changed from fifth to second into Eau Rouge.

Tassin and partner Philippe Favre led for most of the first nine hours before a bolt in the gear selecting fork dislodged and damaged the clutch which caused the engine to over-rev. The gearbox was changed and Tassin made up much of the lost time, but then the same gremlin struck again at breakfast time.

Elliott was frustrated when his Asquith Autosport co-driver, Christophe Baillien, clipped another car and had to pit for repairs. Gearbox problems followed and it was later necessary to change the exhaust. At 10.30 on Sunday, the clutch exploded.

The Mardi Gras Integra driven by James Kaye, Simon Harrison and Stephen Day ran a more conservative pace and held down third until, with four hours to go, a stone broke a brake pipe. By the time the car was running again it was down in eighth, where it finished.

Jacky Ickx and daughter Vanina worked their Renault Megane up to the front, Vanina even leading for a few laps. She slid off at Raidillon at around midnight, however, damaging the rear bodywork and breaking the front axle. The sister Megane of Pierre-Yves Corthals, Kurt Mollekens and Franck Lagorce was seldom out of the top six en route to third as it was slowed by fuel feed and other problems.

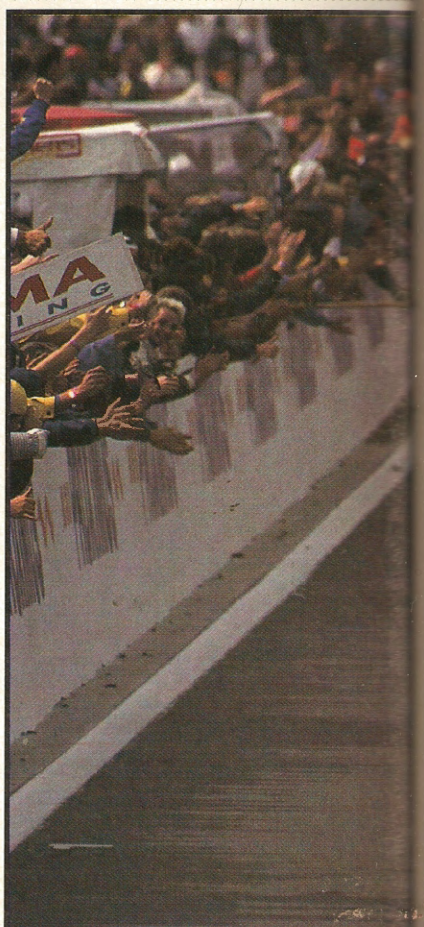
All three Peugeot 306 GTis were slowed by punctures, especially in daytime running when temperatures were higher and there was a general criticism about the control Dunlops, as used in the Belgian Procar sprint races. Ugeux's car in particular lost time, but it kept going to finish second. While Radermecker had electrical problems and then was disqualified when co-driver Fred Bouvy entered the pits by the wrong route.

The Nissan Vosse shared with Anders Olofsson/Anthony Nissan went well until its engine blew, and the David Leslie/Gregoire de Mevius/Dirk Schoysman sister car came through to finish seventh.

Bell's outing ended at 23.00 when the Paduwa Cannonball Alfa 156 broke a driveshaft.

However, it was the BMWs, first of Patrick Slaus and the Huisman brothers, and then the BMW Belgium pair driven by Alain Cudini/Marc Duez/Eric van de Poele and Alain Ferte/Pierre Fermine/David Saelens that worked through to the front. The Cudini/Duez/van de Poele 320i was helped to a win by the fact that it spent just 22 minutes in the pits compared to the second-placed car's 34, while its sister fell to an eventual fourth.

SPA 24 HOURS, SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS (B), 480 LAPS - 2088.0 MILES, JUL 4/5 1 Alain Cudini/Marc Duez/Eric van de Poele (BMW 320i), 24h00m09.87s, 86.65mph; 2 Sebastien Ugeux/Jean-Philippe Vandewauwer/Max Weisenburger (Peugeot 306), 478 laps; 3 Pierre-Yves Corthals/Franck Lagorce/Kurt Mollekens (Renault Megane), 474; 4 Pierre Fermine/Alain Ferte/David Saelens (BMW 320i), 473; 5 Eric Bachelart/Stephane de Groodt/Didier Defourny (Honda Integra), 473; 6 Jacques Laffite/Pierre van Vliet/Pascal Witmeur (Peugeot 306), 473; 7 Gregoire de Mevius/David Leslie/Dirk Schoysman (Nissan Primera), 471; 8 Stephen Day/Simon Harrison/James Kaye (Honda Integra), 470; 9 Harald Bermes/Willy Savelsburgh/ Peter Wyss (Opel Astra), 462; 10 Steeve Hiesse/Sebastien Philippe/ David Terrien (Peugeot 306), 460; etc. **Fastest lap** Thierry Tassin (Honda Integra), 2m47.24s, 93.21mph.



David Noels

The winning BMW crosses the line to rich applause. Measured driving and slick pitwork helped it to a two-lap advantage over rivals

Unsung heroes

It's not just drivers who deserve recognition in a 24-hour race

Although some of today's top car designers and engineers are as well known as the drivers who compete in their own creations, mechanics generally work ceaselessly in the grubby side of racing, untouched by the glamour. So it was refreshing to see that two teams competing in the Spa 24 Hours made certain that their loyal, under-the-car staff were treated to something different.

David Thompson's Fosstech company, which builds shells for the Honda Accord Super Tourer and the Honda Integra Group N+ car, supplies other teams with parts for their racers, but his lads don't normally go to events. However, as he'd built an Integra for son James to share with Peter Kox and Simon Graves, he decided to bring his backroom boys over to Belgium for the weekend to be race mechanics through the 24 hours.

And they loved it.

Another neat idea was that of Patrick Henderickx, who runs the Cannonball fuel additive company and who got winner Derek Bell to pedal his Alfa 156. The car was put together in less than six weeks. So, to recognise the achievement of his four mechanics, he painted their names on the car.

● Dick Suter

David Noels

Corthals offers some late advice to team mate Mollekens. The team came third for Renault

Stefani wins, Piquet trails

The seasoned Tom Stefani returned to the winner's circle after leading the most recent round of the South American Formula 3 series at Brasilia from start to finish.

The 29-year-old made a lightning start from the second row in his Amir Nasr Dallara and shot past polesitter Ricardo Pamplona, who fluffed his start, and Martin Basso.

While Stefani escaped, Basso held off Rodrigo Sperafico, Gabriel Furlan and Jaime Melo Jr, with Furlan soon moving up to second. Behind them, Valdeno Brito clashed twice with the recovering Pamplona and earned a stop-go penalty, elevating three-time World Champion Nelson Piquet to eighth. However, he fell back to 10th by the flag as Leonardo Nienkotter and the recovering Brito got past him.

● Tony Watson

SUDAM F3 CHAMPIONSHIP, ROUND 6 OF 12, BRASILIA (BR), 25 LAPS - 85.05 MILES, JUL 5 1 Tom Stefani (Dallara-Mugen F394), 46m27.78s, 109.83mph; 2 Gabriel Furlan (Dallara-Mitsubishi F394), 46m30.00s; 3 Martin Basso (Dallara-Mitsubishi F394), 46m44.57s; 4 Ricardo Pamplona (Dallara-Opel F394), 46m45.51s; 5 Rodrigo Sperafico (Dallara-Mugen F394), 46m46.81s; 6 Ricardo Sperafico (Dallara-Mugen F394), 46m49.78s; 7 Jaime Melo Jr (Dallara-Mugen F394), 46m54.01s; 8 Leonardo Nienkotter (Dallara-Opel F394), 47m09.09s; 9 Valdeno Brito (Dallara-Mugen F394), 47m17.48s; 10 Nelson Piquet (Dallara-Mugen F394), 47m37.53s. **Fastest lap** Furlan, 1m51.54s, 109.80mph. **Championship positions** 1 Furlan, 100pts; 2 Stefani, 66; 3 Pamplona, 51; 4 Rod Sperafico, 50. **Next round** Posadas, Aug 2.

Three for Larrauri

Oscar Larrauri claimed his third win of the South American Super Touring Championship when he guided his ProAs BMW 320i home first in the fourth round of the series at the Posadas circuit in northern Argentina.

Front-wheel driven front-row starters Carlos Bueno and Osvaldo Lopez found themselves running in Larrauri's wake by the first corner as he pushed his 320i around the outside of Bueno's Peugeot 406 going into the uphill right-hander.

Bueno had done well to claim his fourth successive pole after injuring his leg in a domestic accident, but he found it harder in the race and Larrauri pulled away over the first 10 laps, with Lopez holding second ahead of Bueno. However, Lopez had damaged his Alfa 155's engine in the warm-up and held up those behind, with Bueno's team mate holding third ahead of Bueno and Larrauri's team mate, Ingo Hoffman.

Only when Fangio and Bueno were able to edge past Lopez did they start closing in slightly on Larrauri, who had a moment and lost time nine laps from the finish when he had a misunderstanding with a backmarker. However, after that, his only worry was rising water temperature caused by a plastic bag getting stuck in front of his radiator. He nevertheless held on to win from Fangio and Bueno.

After being passed by the two Peugeots, Lopez's day finally ended when he made contact with Miguel Angel Guerra's Chevrolet Vectra and he was subsequently collected by the unlucky Ernesto Bessone's Chrysler.

Fernando Croceri claimed fourth in his ex-Larrauri BMW, finishing just 0.5s ahead of Oscar Fineschi's Toyota, with Ricardo Risatti's Ford Mondeo some way adrift in sixth.

● Tony Watson

Sutton Images

Larrauri holds off Lopez early in the race

SUDAM SUPER TOURING CHAMPIONSHIP, ROUND 4 OF 12, POSADAS (RA), 40 LAPS - 61.44 MILES, JUL 5 1 Oscar Larrauri (BMW 320i), 45m18.35s, 81.37mph; 2 Juan Manuel Fangio II (Peugeot 406), 45m20.65s; 3 Carlos Bueno (Peugeot 406), 45m24.90s; 4 Fernando Croceri (BMW 320i), 45m53.21s; 5 Oscar Fineschi (Toyota Corona), 45m53.66s; 6 Ricardo Risatti (Ford Mondeo), 45m59.09s; 7 Anibal Zaniratto (Alfa 155), 46m07.08s; 8 Miguel Angel Guerra (Chevrolet Vectra), 46m08.05s; 9 Pablo Peon (Chrysler Stratus), 46m08.53s; 10 Daniel Marocchi (Honda Accord), 39 laps; etc. **Fastest lap** Larrauri, 1m06.71s, 82.88mph. **Championship positions** 1 Larrauri, 60pts; 2 Bueno, 55; 3 Bessone & Lopez, 27; 5 Hoffman, 23; 6 Croceri & Fangio, 21; etc. **Next round** Mar de Ajo, Jul 26.

Kageyama maintains his winning ways at Suzuka

Masahiko Kageyama, winner of the opening Formula Nippon round, won again when the series returned to Suzuka.

His victory helped him close to within six points of series leader Satoshi Motoyama.

The older of the Kageyama brothers, Masahiko had a perfect weekend as he also topped the time sheets in qualifying. 'I made a good start and after that I did not look in my mirrors,' he said. 'I just saw the gap to the second runner on my pit board and didn't want to ask on my radio who was running second.' At the chequered flag, the Japanese driver was almost 14s clear of the second-placed finisher, Marc Goossens.

This was the Goossens's first Formula Nippon podium finish, but the Belgian made it hard for himself by falling from fourth on the grid to eighth on the opening lap. He then ran seventh until one-third distance.

'I got angry at myself that I lost several places at the start,' he said. 'And, in the very hot conditions, that angry feeling helped me to keep fighting. But I think my car was handling better than the others in my group.'

As a result, Goossens moved up to sixth when Motoyama dropped out with a broken clutch when in second. He overtook Juichi Wakisaka and Masami Kageyama on laps 15 and 18. Then, when he was running in fourth place, Hideki Noda spun out of third on lap 22. With a podium position secured, he was presented with second as Norberto Fontana's clutch failed with a lap to go and the little Argentinian had to pit.

Masami Kageyama finished third, which was a good result as he'd started 10th. After jumping to sixth on the first lap, he passed Wakisaka on the next lap, but then was overtaken by Goossens and followed him to the podium.

Ralph Firman had a hard time again. Before Suzuka, the Nova Engineering team had two days of testing at Sugo, but suffered many small problems with the G-Force. Then, in the race, a broken undertray forced the Briton out.

Tsugio Matsuda, a rookie driver from Formula 3, subbed for Koji Yamanishi and qualified seventh before racing to sixth place.

● Jiro Takahashi

Ichiro Tsuboi

Masahiko Kageyama was in a class of his own at Suzuka, scoring his second win there

FORMULA NIPPON CHAMPIONSHIP, ROUND 5, SUZUKA (J), 35 LAPS - 127.54 MILES, JUL 5 1 Masahiko Kageyama (Lola-Mugen T96-52), 1h04m46.24s, 118.15mph; 2 Marc Goossens (Reynard-Mugen 97D), 1h05m00.19s; 3 Masami Kageyama (Lola-Mugen T97-51), 1h05m02.44s; 4 Juichi Wakisaka (Lola-Mugen T97-51), 1h05m03.82s; 5 Tom Coronel (Reynard-Mugen 97D), 1h05m22.71s; 6 Tsugio Matsuda (Reynard-Mugen 97D), 1h05m48.90s; 7 Masahiko Kondo (Reynard-Mugen 97D), 1h05m51.31s; 8 Norberto Fontana (Reynard-Mugen 97D), 34 laps; 9 Akira Ishikawa (Reynard-Mugen 94D), 34; no other finishers. **Fastest lap** Wakisaka 1m48.83s, 120.54mph. **Championship positions** 1 Motoyama, 26pts; 2 Masahiko Kageyama, 20; 3 Wakisaka, 19; 4 Masami Kageyama, 14; 5 Kaneishi, 11; 6 Goossens, 10; etc. **Next round** Sugo, Aug 2.

Scottish hotshot

Dumbreck wins again in Japan

Peter Dumbreck was again victorious in the Japanese Formula 3 Championship, this time scoring his fourth win from six starts at Suzuka after starting from third on the grid.

'I had to concentrate hard to make a gap from the second runner just after the start,' said the Scot. His team mate, Shingo Tachi, followed him off into the distance for a TOM'S one-two that lasted to the chequered flag.

The only drivers who stayed in touch were Toshihiro Kaneishi and Daisuke Ito. Polestarter Ito had fluffed the start and dropped to third. Kaneishi caught and passed him on the straight on lap 10.

Dumbreck's chief rival, Hiroki Kato, had an unhappy weekend and finished fifth. Sebastian Martino subbed for Risto Virtanen and came seventh, while compatriot Ruben Derfler finished 13th.

● Jiro Takahashi

ALL-JAPAN F3 CHAMPIONSHIP, ROUND 6 OF 10, SUZUKA (J), 18 LAPS - 65.59 MILES, JUL 5 1 Peter Dumbreck (Dallara-TOM'S F398), 35m20.955s, 111.33mph; 2 Shingo Tachi (Dallara-TOM'S F398), 35m22.29s; 3 Toshihiro Kaneishi (Dallara-Mugen F398), 35m24.90s; 4 Daisuke Ito (Dallara-Mugen F397), 35m25.70s; 5 Hiroki Kato (Dallara-Mugen F398), 35m35.07s; 6 Haruki Kurosawa (Dallara-Mugen F397), 35m36.06s; etc. **Fastest lap** Ito, 2m04.02s, 105.78mph. **Championship positions** 1 Dumbreck, 46pts; 2 Kato, 30; 3 Tachi, 22; etc. **Next round** Sugo, Aug 2.

Wired by MVG Photographic

Laurent Aiello leads Joachim Winkelhock, Eric Helary (partly hidden) and Jorg van Ommen towards the first corner in the wet first race

Peugeot starts winning

A pair of wins puts Peugeot back on the right track in Germany. Rene de Boer reports

The Norisring street circuit hosted the fourth round of the German Super Touring Championship and it produced a pair of wins for the Peugeot team, with a win apiece for Jorg van Ommen and Laurent Aiello.

French racer Eric Helary took his first German Super Touring pole in his SMS Opel Vectra, pipping fellow countryman Aiello with van Ommen third, ahead of Uwe Alzen's Opel. Roland Asch lined up fifth for the sprint race in his Nissan with Manuel Reuter next up in his Opel ahead of Jo Winkelhock's BMW. Nicola Larini qualified eighth fastest in his Nordauto Alfa 156, with Fabrizio Giovanardi also being entered by the Italian team. Honda's Gabriele Tarquini and Tom Kristensen shared the fifth row, with Audi's Christian Abt 11th.

Tyre choice for the 22-lap sprint became something of a lottery as although it had stopped raining the track was soaking. While some chose intermediates, the BMW men opted for wets and Winkelhock rocketed into the lead at the start, heading Aiello, Alzen and van Ommen into the hairpin. Unusually, all 25 cars made it through this tight, first-gear corner, with Helary the biggest loser as he dropped to fifth.

Aiello and Alzen swapped places on lap 3, and the Opel driver made a bid for the lead two laps later. He succeeded and as the track became ever drier, so Aiello and Helary demoted Winkelhock too.

A collision with Reuter then slowed Winkelhock even more and he fell to an eventual 10th as Reuter retired with broken suspension.

Aiello was also in trouble, losing second place when he spun down to 14th on lap 13. He did well, however, to fight his way back to sixth.

Two laps before the end, van Ommen, who had already made his way past Winkelhock, Helary and Reuter, successfully outbraked race leader Alzen and then motored on to score his first win for Peugeot.

Van Ommen was both surprised and delighted: 'Ten laps before the finish, I would never have believed that I could have won this race.'

Alzen, Asch, Abt and Tarquini completed the top five.

Van Ommen was not so lucky in the main race, as he stalled at the start of the green flag lap and had to be towed away. This left it clear for Alzen to lead from Abt and Tarquini. A lap later, Abt was back in fourth, passed by Tarquini and Helary. But Aiello took third on lap 8. Then Tarquini dropped back and Alzen, Helary and Aiello held first, second and third until lap 29 when the French duo passed Alzen. Helary hung on for 10 laps until Aiello went by for the first win of his title defence.

GERMAN SUPER TOURING CHAMPIONSHIP, ROUND 4 OF 10, NORISRING (D), 22 & 44 LAPS - 31.44 & 62.88 MILES, JUL 4/5, Race 1 1 Jorg van Ommen (Peugeot 406), 22m23.20s, 89.07mph; 2 Uwe Alzen (Opel Vectra), 22m25.86s; 3 Roland Asch (Nissan Primera), 22m27.30s; 4 Christian Abt (Audi A4), 22m33.92s; 5 Gabriele Tarquini (Honda Accord), 22m41.81s; 6 Laurent Aiello (Peugeot 406), 22m43.31s; 7 Eric Helary (Opel Vectra), 22m44.90s; 8 Johnny Cecotto (BMW 320i), 22m46.74s; 9 Peter Mamerow (Audi A4), 22m47.99s; 10 Joachim Winkelhock (BMW 320i), 22m49.09s; etc. **Fastest lap** Aiello, 56.54s, 91.01mph. **Race 2** 1 Aiello, 40m36.67s, 93.16mph; 2 Helary, 40m37.59s; 3 Alzen, 40m41.29s; 4 Cecotto, 40m49.86s; 5 Winkelhock, 40m54.10s; 6 Asch, 40m56.86s; 7 Tarquini, 40m58.21s; 8 Tom Kristensen (Honda Accord), 40m59.13s; 9 Abt, 41m01.84s; 10 Manuel Reuter (Opel Vectra), 41m02.39s; etc. **Fastest lap** Nicola Larini (Alfa 156), 54.48s, 94.44mph. **Championship positions** 1 Cecotto, 256pts; 2 Aiello, 249; 3 Winkelhock, 205; 4 Helary, 188; 5 Asch, 182; 6 Reuter, 175; etc. **Next round** Lahr, Jul 19.

Albers breaks his duck in German Formula 3

Nineteen-year-old Dutch driver Christijan Albers scored the first Formula 3 win of his career in only his seventh start and followed this up with his second win in his eighth when the German F3 Championship visited the Norisring.

Starting from fourth on the grid, he pipped polesitter Pierre Kaffer, Austrian Robert Lechner and his van Amersfoort Racing team mate, Bas Leinders, to take the lead before the first corner. He then led all the way, with Leinders passing Kaffer for second after 20 laps. Three laps later, Lechner demoted Kaffer to fourth for his best F3 finish.

The second race was held in appalling conditions, and Albers led away again in the wet. Leinders spun out of second on lap 8, falling to sixth. This left Albers clear for his second win ahead of Kaffer, Lechner and Tim Bergmeister. Wolf Henzler was not so fortunate, and concussed himself when he crashed at the hairpin.

● Rene de Boer

Wired by MVG Photographic

Christijan Albers was in a class of his own at the Norisring, winning in the wet and the dry

GERMAN F3 CHAMPIONSHIP, ROUND 4 OF 10, NORISRING (D), 35 & 33 LAPS - 50.02 & 47.16 MILES, JUL 4/5, Race 1 1 Christijan Albers (Dallara-Opel F398), 29m50.48s, 101.97mph; 2 Bas Leinders (Dallara-Opel F397), 29m52.86s; 3 Robert Lechner (Dallara-Opel F397), 29m54.12s; 4 Pierre Kaffer (Martini-Opel MK73), 30m03.07s; 5 Tim Bergmeister (Dallara-Opel F397), 30m12.21s; 6 Timo Scheider (Martini-Opel MK73), 30m14.36s; 7 Norman Simon (Dallara-Opel F397), 30m16.34s; 8 Steffen Widmann (Dallara-Opel F397), 30m17.32s; 9 Lucas Luhr (Dallara-Opel F397), 30m18.19s; 10 Thomas Mutsch (Dallara-Opel F397), 30m23.79s; etc. **Fastest lap** Yves Olivier (Dallara-Opel F398), 50.45s, 102.00mph. **Race 2** 1 Albers, 37m31.07s, 85.27mph; 2 Kaffer, 37m41.30s; 3 Lechner, 37m41.75s; 4 Bergmeister, 37m41.96s; 5 Widmann, 37m42.36s; 6 Leinders, 37m43.24s; 7 Luhr, 37m44.77s; 8 Johan Stureson (Dallara-Opel F397), 37m47.90s; 9 Jeffrey van Hooydonk (Dallara-Opel F398), 37m48.64s; 10 Simon, 37m50.81s; etc. **Fastest lap** Lechner, 1m00.11s, 85.59mph. **Championship positions** 1 Leinders, 105pts; 2 van Hooydonk, 66; 3 Henzler, 65; 4 Albers, 60; 5 Lechner & Olivier, 45. **Next round** Lahr, Jul 19.

Flying Dutchman

Christijan Albers could be Holland's next Jos Verstappen

In his first full season of motor racing, Christijan Albers clinched the Dutch and Benelux Formula Ford titles last year, which was all the more surprising as he stepped up to Formula Ford after only one year of karting and a fine performance in the British Formula Ford winter series.

At the same time as he was fulfilling his Formula Ford duties with the family-run Force Racing outfit, Christijan also took the 1997 Dutch Intercontinental A 100cc karting title. Then, with backing from Marlboro, he graduated this year to German F3 with the Dutch van Amersfoort Racing team.

Although he is still only 19 years old, Christijan's talent is highly rated by team boss Frits van Amersfoort, who has run the likes of Jos Verstappen, Tom Coronel, Manuel Giao and the late Marcel Albers, to whom Christijan is not related in any way.

With Bas Leinders and Christijan, van Amersfoort probably has the strongest pairing he has ever had.

'I like this winning feeling,' enthused Christijan after his first win. 'I think I will do it again.'

And so he did, scoring his second win the very next day.

● Rene de Boer

Ferrari gets hat trick

The Italian marque makes it three wins in a row at Misano ISRS round

John Brooks

Vincenzo Sospiri stormed from eighth place on the grid to lead and then handed over to Emmanuel Collard who raced on to victory

When the Team JB Giesse Ferrari of Emmanuel Collard and Vincenzo Sospiri hit trouble in qualifying for the third ISRS round at Misano, it looked as though the winners of the previous round were in trouble. However, this was not to be the case as they bounced back to score their second win on the trot.

Collard had qualified fastest, but then the engine spluttered with an injector problem in the qualifying shoot-out and this left the way clear for Riley & Scotts to fill the first three positions. Didier de Radigues claimed pole ahead of Team BMW Rafanelli team mate Hans Stuck and Philippe Gache's Solution F example, with Enzo Calderari's Auto Sport Racing Ferrari several seconds slower in fourth. Tim Sugden's BRM P301 was fifth fastest, a further two seconds behind, after Fredy Lienhard's Horag Lista Ferrari also pulled out.

Sospiri started the night race in eighth place, but was flying and forced his way through into the lead after four laps. Sospiri said: 'I got a great start, took the lead and pushed for 10 to 15 laps to open up a gap. After that, I tried to stay consistent.'

However, his run was not without incident, as the Italian clipped a backmarker shortly before coming in for his fuel stop. Fortunately, the damage was light and Collard was able to ease away to win by just over a lap from the Solution F Riley & Scott, with Antony Beltoise having run second in the first half of the race before handing over to Gache.

BMW Team Rafanelli had a terrible time as Stuck and Soper's car suffered battery problems before the start and then further mechanical failure left it on the sidelines after 11 laps. The de Radigues/Bill Auberlen sister car lasted just six laps longer before it pulled up with engine failure. But both outlasted the BRM, with Sugden retiring after four laps with drivetrain problems.

Lienhard had a scare when he spun on oil. Thereafter, he opted for a cautious approach until he handed over to Didier Theys who promptly passed Calderari and claimed third.

INTERNATIONAL SPORTS RACING SERIES, ROUND 3 OF 8, MISANO (I), 99 LAPS - 249.77 MILES, JUL 5 1 Emmanuel Collard/Vincenzo Sospiri (Ferrari 333SP), 2h30m42.32s, 99.44mph; 2 Antony Beltoise/Philippe Gache (R&S-Ford MkIII), 98 laps; 3 Fredy Lienhard/Didier Theys (Ferrari 333SP), 97; 4 Lilian Bryner/Enzo Calderari/Angelo Zadra (Ferrari 333SP), 94; 5 Felice Tedeschi/Gianluca Giraudi (Tampolli RTA), 91; 6 Finoochiaro/Massimo Perazza (Lucchini SP96), 89; 7 Luca Maddalena/P Peroni (Lucchini P1-98), 88; 8 F Poggetti/Marco Zadra (Lucchini SP), 88; 9 Rocky Agusta/Almo Coppelli (Kremer Porsche K8), 88; 10 Alfonso d'Orleans/Tomas Saldana (Kremer Porsche K8), 86; etc. **Next round** Donington Park, Jul 19.

Walsh triumphs in Malaysia

Young Thai driver Nattaphong Horthongkum was on pole for both Asian Formula 2000 races at the Pasir Gudang circuit in Johor. However, he was to win neither.

Local hero Ng Wai Leong made a great start to take the lead on the blast down to the first corner. But Horthongkum and Australian Ben Walsh demoted him at the end of the downhill back straight. Walsh then spun Horthongkum out. Two laps later, Leong took the lead from Walsh and stayed there to the finish.

Horthongkum was out again in the second race and led until two laps out when Walsh went by to win. ● Russ Swinnerton

ASIAN FORMULA 2000 CHAMPIONSHIP, ROUND 3 OF 6, PASIR GUDANG (MAL), 2 x 12 LAPS - 2 x 28.78 MILES, JUL 5, Race 1 1 Ng Wai Leong, 19m13.59s, 89.87mph; 2 Ben Walsh, 19m17.03s; 3 Nurmad Jusat, 19m18.32s; 4 Mark Goddard, 19m48.39s; 5 Alex Li, 19m57.54s; etc. **Race 2** 1 Walsh, 19m16.00s, 89.68mph; 2 Nattaphong Horthongkum, 19m16.97s; 3 Leong, 19m17.39s; 4 Jusat, 19m25.10s; 5 Goddard, 19m38.94s; etc. **Championship positions** 1 Leong, 94pts; 2 Nattaphong & Walsh, 79. **Next round** Zhuhai, Sep 6.

Russ Swinnerton

Ng Wai Leong took round one in Johor

Reports in Brief

Charles Kwan collected a pair of wins when the Southeast Asian Touring Car series visited Pasir Gudang. He propelled his BMW past Suphot Kasikam's Nissan to win the first race ahead of C Nattavude's Toyota, with Kasikam second in the following race

Matthew Davies continues to lead the Formula Renault Eurocup despite finishing only sixth at Monza in a race won by 'Babalus' ahead of fellow Tatuus drivers Giuliano Losacco and Bruno Besson.

Claudio Burlotti won the Renault Spider Eurocup race at the Norisring, powering up from 12th on the grid as Julian Westwood was disqualified, Guillaume Greuet and Ralf Druckenmuller finished second and third.

Dirk Werner won both German Formula Junior races at the Norisring, while David Lindner and Stefan Mucke took a race each in the Formula ADAC category.

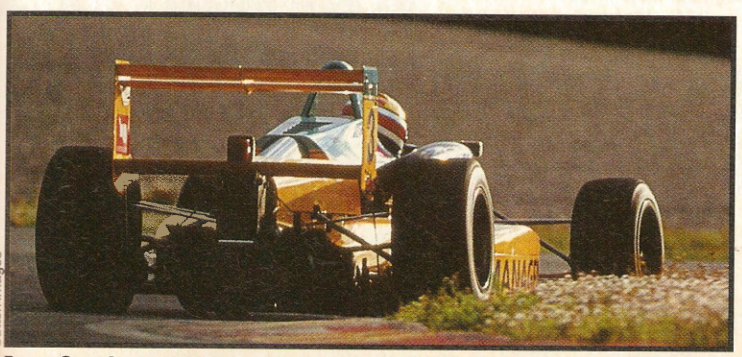
Matthias Kahle won the Rallye Deutschland, a co-efficient 20 round of the FIA European Rally Championship, by just 4s after first-day leader Uwe Nittel put his Mitsubishi Carisma off the road and lost half a minute. Nittel fought back on the second day, but Kahle kept his Toyota Corolla WRC in front.

Crevels races through for maiden F3 victory

Dutch driver Donny Crevels scored the best result of his career when he won the Italian Formula 3 series race at Imola and propelled himself to within six points of series leader Michele Gasparini.

Crevels lined up third on the grid, his PreMa Power Dallara-Opel behind Niki Cadei's RC Motorsport example and Gabriele Lancieri's Tokmakidis version. But Cadei made the most of pole to lead away, with Crevels slotting into second place as Lancieri fell back to seventh behind Ananda Mikola, Gasparini, Paolo Montin and Massimiliano Busnelli. Cadei looked set to score his second win in three races, but on lap 15 he hit mechanical troubles and was forced to drop out.

This left Crevels in the lead and he duly controlled the remaining 10 laps to win by 12s ahead of RC Motorsport's Indonesian driver Mikola, who became the first Southeast Asian driver to stand on the podium of a European F3 event after resisting everything that Gasparini could throw at him.



Sutton Images

Donny Crevels was running in second when Niki Cadei retired and gifted him the win

ITALIAN F3 CHAMPIONSHIP, ROUND 5 OF 11, IMOLA (I), 25 LAPS - 76.59 MILES, JUL 5 1 Donny Crevels (Dallara-Opel F397), 45m09.01s, 101.78mph; 2 Ananda Mikola (Dallara-Opel F397), 45m21.51s; 3 Michele Gasparini (Dallara-Fiat F397), 45m25.79s; 4 Paolo Montin (Dallara-Fiat F398), 45m32.04s; 5 Massimiliano Busnelli (Dallara-Fiat F396), 45m32.81s; 6 Gabriele Lancieri (Dallara-Opel F397), 45m33.73s; 7 Maurizio Mediani (Dallara-Alfa Romeo F396), 45m35.85s; 8 Davide Uboldi (Dallara-Fiat F396), 45m42.37s; 9 Peter Sundberg (Dallara-Fiat F396), 45m42.65s; 10 Alberto Pedemonte (Dallara-Renault F398), 45m43.06s. **Fastest lap** Lancieri, 1m47.31s, 102.77mph. **Championship positions** 1 Gasparini, 67pts; 2 Crevels, 61; 3 Mediani, 58; 4 Montin, 48; 5 Cadei, 45; 6 Mikola, 41. **Next round** Misano, Jul 19.

CLUB AUTOSPORT

ALL THE NATIONAL RACE, RALLY & HISTORIC NEWS PLUS FULL RESULTS ROUND-UP

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Malcolm Griffiths

Peter Cook's Ferrari F40 burns following his crash at Castle Combe's now infamous Camp Corner

Combe under fire after huge shunts

Team boss Mike Jordan has attacked the safety of Castle Combe following a spate of huge shunts at Camp Corner last weekend.

Jordan, who is the chief of leading Pirelli Porsche Cup outfit Team Eurotech, was left fuming after two of his Carrera 993s, driven by Godfrey Jones and Peter Chambers, were wrecked during the race after colliding at the circuit's final corner. While Chambers's car hit Combe's earth banking backwards, Jones's went in head-on, flipping through the air and landing in the paddock entrance.

Along with the Porsche crash, Peter Cook's Ferrari F40 was burnt out after a challenge on Stuart Bowler ended in disaster. The heavy impact with the banking split the fuel tank which ignited the fire, as Cook scrambled clear.

Also Rod Gretton and Steve Hyde clashed at Camp in the first TVR Tuscan race, then Matt Doman and Alex Garner went off in the second.

In all, two cars were destroyed, five were seriously damaged and four drivers were take to hospital because of the shunts at Camp.

Jordan: angry

Jordan said: 'These accidents were so unnecessary, as just 25m of gravel would have stopped the cars going into the bank. I'm not being dramatic when I say that Jones could have died in that crash. I don't know what has to happen before they introduce gravel traps and it leaves me pulling my hair out. Castle Combe's a great circuit which attracts big crowds, but something must be done.'

However, the circuit's boss, Howard Strawford, said: 'These were brain-fade accidents and had nothing to do with the circuit. The earth bank did its job and stopped the cars and, as for gravel traps, the reason we don't have them is that they don't work. Cars just dig in and roll over. In the longer term, we are looking at slowing the circuit down, but I'm loathe to do it.'

The RAC MSA's Colin Wilson backed Strawford, saying the complaints were an 'overreaction.'

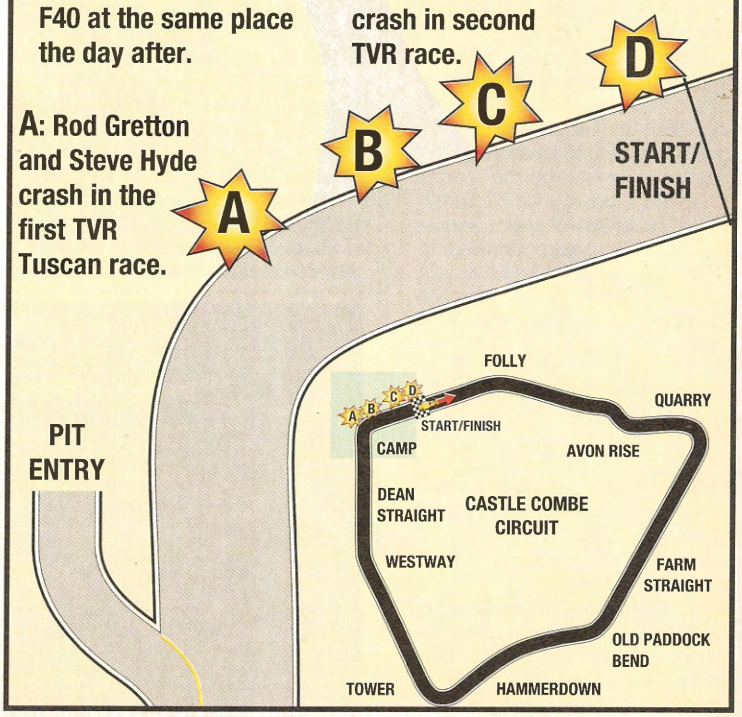
Combe carnage – what happened?

A: Rod Gretton and Steve Hyde crash in the first TVR Tuscan race.

B: Godfrey Jones and Peter Chambers crash in the Porsche race on Saturday. Peter Cook destroys his Ferrari F40 at the same place the day after.

C: Matt Doman and Alex Garner crash in second TVR race.

D: Barry Swan crashes in the special GT race.



Graphic by Jim Bamber

Edwards in Swift return P110 Croix-en-Ternois P113 National Reports P116 Kid Jensen P124

Humble Pye

Getting a race on the Grand Prix bill is now beyond the privateer

MARCUS PYE

This weekend is the big one for British racing fans, with the BRDC and Silverstone under the spotlight as hosts of the RAC British Grand Prix, our round of the FIA Formula 1 World Championship.

It's 31 years since I sat at the old Stowe Corner, legs hooked over the single scaffolding rail spectator barrier, watching Jim Clark win the Grand Prix in his Lotus 49. But I remember equally well the Sports GT and Saloon supporting events, or the thrilling one-litre Formula 3 slipstreamer, which fired my enthusiasm for all types of racing.

There was never a dull race on the programme then, their selection a cross between tradition and merit in the days before overt commercialism effectively restricted Grand Prix slots to megabuck manufacturer-led initiatives, however naff.

Indeed, the weekend warrior could still play an active part into the mid-1970s, when amateurs could take on the best in the world at Formula 3 or Formula Atlantic. And the genuine clubman even had a shot in the Tricentrol Supersaloon Championship in 1975.

'Superloons' were in their heyday, and the Silverstone field was the best ever, with all the most ingenious and bizarre silhouette bodies clothing serious racing hardware. I'll not forget the Skoda-Chevrolet or the sound of Colin Hawker's Toleman Delivery Service DFVW – a Lola-based, Cosworth DFV-engined VW 1600TL coupe – pristine again, following a huge prang at Brands. Five years later, Toleman was winning in F2, en route to Grands Prix.

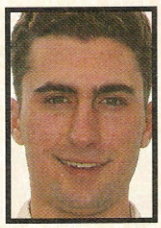
This year, as has become the norm, we have Dallara-monopolised F3, and a hardcore of other one-make series – Euroseries Formula Opel, the opulent Porsche Supercup and the promising MGF Cup. There is also the Privilege GT series, thankfully evolved from last year's GP farce to the best in the world. Gone is the BTCC, replaced by the National Saloon Cup. Fun to contest perhaps, but as a spectacle it hardly compares with the Wiggins Teape Paperchase of 1973, with Frank Gardner and Brian Muir slugging it out in muscle cars.

Edwards quick in one-off Swift return

American single-seater ace Paul Edwards returned to Formula Ford at Knockhill last week, and was bang on the pace for his old team, the factory Swift marque.

The 20-year-old, who stepped up to Formula Renault Sport this year only to lose his drive with Martello Racing, replaced Swift's regular driver Tommy Field for the two-day test. Field is attending to his wife who is expecting a baby.

Swift's James Linton said: 'This was a one-off for Paul. We knew he is quick at Knockhill and so we took the opportunity to use his experience. We did a four poster rig test before going to the track and found a few things, so we changed the settings and its transformed the car.'



Edwards: one-off

Edwards, who has returned to America to hunt for sponsorship and still hopes to drive Haywood Racing's Mygale FRS chassis, ended up third in the test, with Craig Murray and Jenson Button topping the times.

Mick Gardner Racing's Murray set his best lap of 54.10s on new tyres right at the end of the final day, after the second Swift SC98Z of Robert Collard had shunted. Team boss Mike Gardner was encouraged by Murray's pace: 'The Van Diemen RF98 is superb with the new wide track suspension. Button and (Derek) Hayes will find it hard to dominate from now on.'

The factory Van Diemen team was also pleased with progress, and chief engineer Mike Galter feels confident that the RF98s are a match for the Mygale SJ98s: 'I wasn't surprised at Swift's pace as they go well at Knockhill, especially with Paul driving. But I don't expect the Mygales to have an advantage over us anymore – we can cause them trouble from now on.'

But Haywood Racing team boss Jim Warren said: 'We are in the same position we have been in all season. We lost at Croft because we just had a bad race.' The day after the official Knockhill test, Warren timed Hayes at 53.6s, half a second quicker than Murray's official best lap.

Testing times

1 Craig Murray (Van Diemen RF98)	54.10s
2 Jenson Button (Mygale SJ98)	54.13s
3 Paul Edwards (Swift SC98Z)	54.18s
4 Marcos Ambrose (Van Diemen RF98)	54.31s
5 Robert Collard (Swift SC98Z)	54.37s
6 Barry Horne (Van Diemen RF98)	54.46s

Preview

Ruokonen ready for Dutch threat

Finland's Toni Ruokonen heads for this weekend's British Grand Prix-supporting National Saloon Cup race at Silverstone on a high after topping the pre-race test last week.

The Honda Integra R driver will have to fend off not just the regular Hondas of Lester Stacey and Ian Griswold and Andy Middlehurst's Nissan Primera, but also visitors from the Dutch Touring Car Championship.

Leading the tourists will be Sandor van Es in his BMW 320i, while Donald Molenaar's Renault Megane should also go well.

The Privilege Insurance GT Championship will also enjoy a bumper field in its race, with 10 top-line GT1 cars vying for the overall win, while the Oftedahl Chrysler Viper will have to fend off a hoard of Porsche 911s in the GT2 class.

Scot Andrew Kirkaldy will be looking for a home win in the two Euroseries Formula Opel races as he tries to close the gap on points-leader Etienne van der Linde.

MGF Cup pacesetter James Rhodes will be going for win number four.

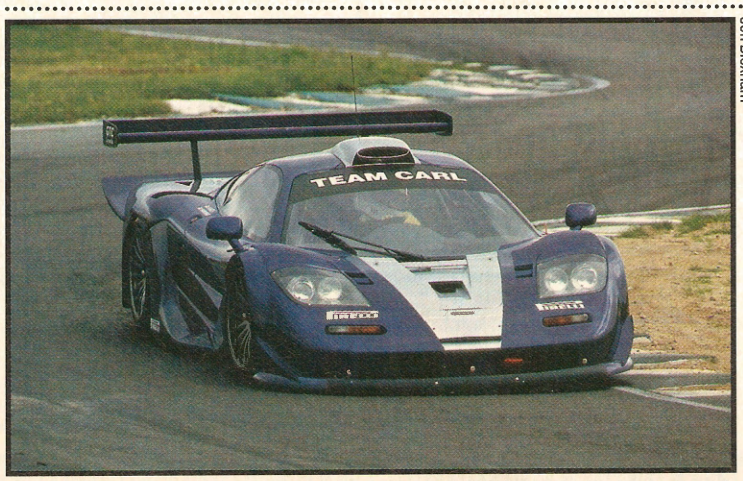
Donington debut for electric Panoz

The electro-hybrid Panoz, which failed to pre-qualify for Le Mans in May, is on course to make its race debut in the Privilege Insurance GT Championship in August.

If testing this month goes to plan, the Panoz Q9, which has a regenerative electric powerplant to supplement its six-litre Ford V8, will take part in the sixth round of the series at Donington on August 2.

Dave Price, whose team runs the car, said a Panoz regular such as Andy Wallace or David Brabham was likely to race at Donington.

A second race outing is planned for Silverstone on August 23.



Jeff Bloxham

Peter Hardman shook down Gregor Fisken's McLaren F1-GTR at Snetterton last week

McLaren ready for GP race after test

Gregor Fisken and co-pilot Peter Hardman were delighted with their first taste of the McLaren F1-GTR they will give a national GT debut in the British Grand Prix-support race at Silverstone this weekend.

For historic racer Fisken, 33, the GTC Competition-run 600bhp GT1 contender was a revelation. 'It's the greatest car I've ever driven,' he said after the shake down at Snetterton. 'It was much friendlier to drive than I'd been anticipating.'

GT regular Hardman lapped 0.6 seconds off Julian Bailey's Lister and said: 'There's a lot more time to come.'

Jeff Bloxham

Bill Hall's Leyton House F1 car comes to rest after shunting on Thruxton's pit straight last Sunday

BOSS racer hurt in high speed smash

BOSS Formula racer Bill Hall was lucky to escape a 130mph shunt at Thruxton last Sunday in his Leyton House Formula 1 car.

Hall, father of Team Meritus Euroseries Formula Opel racer Charles, turned right and into the pitwall during the second race of the BOSS Formula's double header. The driver suffered injuries to his right leg, with his shin being pinned and his heel being plated at Winchester Hospital where he is recovering.

It took an hour to cut Hall from the wrecked Leyton House, which suffered massive front end damage. All three pedals sheared off in the impact. Hall will remain in Winchester Hospital for two weeks before being moved close to his Sheffield home.

The BOSS Formula cars lapped Britain's fastest circuit at incredible speeds during the meeting. A top speed of 190mph was recorded by regular BOSS racer Ron Cumming in his Footwork. The Scot, whose telemetry also recorded 177mph on the exit of Church corner, set the times when running virtually no wing during the first untimed practice session.

BOSS Formula report Page 121

News in Brief

Haywood Racing's Derek Hayes spent the day with Jackie Stewart at Silverstone's Formula 1 test last week, as part of his prize for leading the Formula Ford series at the half-way stage.

Hawkins Racing tested new suspension geometry on its Ray 98Z chassis at Snetterton last week. The team's driver, Didier Stoessel, lapped 0.5s quicker than his previous best with the new settings, but then collided with a Formula 3 car at the Bomb Hole.

Martin Donnelly Racing's Vitor Meira topped the times in a Formula Renault Sport test at Knockhill last week, the Brazilian beating the best lap from Manor Motorsport's Aluizio Coelho in his Van Diemen RF98 late in the final session.

Championship leader Antonio Pizzonia topped all four days of Formula Vauxhall Junior testing at Knockhill last week. Not all the FVJ teams stayed for the duration, but Team JLR's pairing of Richard Lyons and Robert Bell, Johan Fourie, Tomas Scheckter and Pizzonia's Lewis Motorsport team mate James Hanson all got within 0.1secs of the Brazilian.

The Formula Palmer Audi test at Magny-Cours, scheduled for July 16-18, has been postponed until an as yet undecided date later in the summer.

GT racer and TV presenter Tiff Needell will join the Formula Palmer Audi grid for the Silverstone race on August 23 in a one-off appearance for BBC TV's *Top Gear Motorsport* programme.

The Privilege Insurance GT Championship leading Oftedahl Motorsport Chrysler Viper GTR-S, driven by Richard Dean and Kurt Luby, will carry a '98-spec aerokit for this weekend's British Grand Prix-supporting race at Silverstone.

TVR Tuscan racer Martin Short will race a Cerbera against an RAF Tornado this weekend! The drag race has been arranged at RAF Brugen in Germany, where Short was based during his RAF career, and the Tornado will have to stay on the ground along the main runway during the airfield's open day.

Former F3 racer Mike Brain returned to racing for the first time in five years to drive Kate Bryant's Swift ERC97 in the Castle Combe BARC Formula Renault race. Brain hopes to get 16-year old Andrew Delahunty out in a second Renault later this season.

Leading MGF Cup outfit Team Firstair is entering the Mondello Park 2CV race. The team's boss Ian Barnwell and the drivers James Rhodes and Ian Gibbons will be joined by former Firstair driver Richard Dean in the event.

Neal and Leslie get the nod for GT drive

David Leslie and Matt Neal will make their Privilege Insurance GT Championship debuts at Silverstone this weekend, as exclusively revealed in AUTOSPORT last week.

The Nissan British Touring Car Championship stars will drive the ex-Millennium Motorsport Porsche 911 GT1, which will now be run by Neal's Team Dynamics outfit.

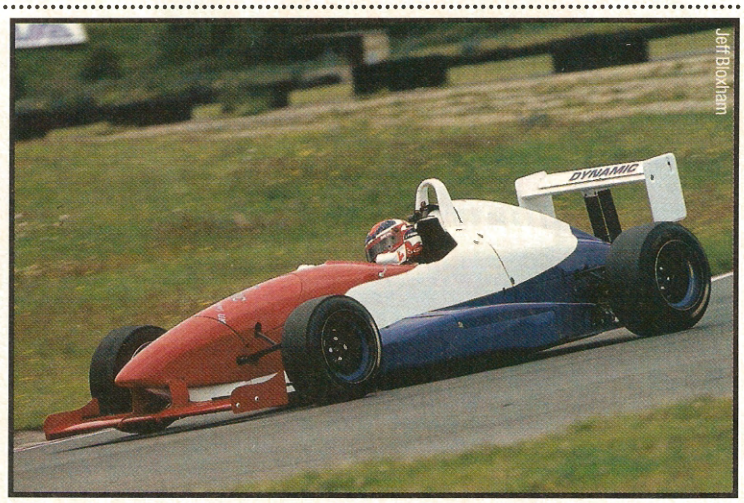
Neal, who managed 20 laps during a test at Snetterton last week, said: 'It's phenomenal. It's the first time I've driven anything with carbon brakes and ABS. I had a spin exiting Sear but I've got a new excuse – the crop sprayer sprayed water over the track!'

Davies keeps lead after Monza woes

Britain's continental Formula Renault racer Matt Davies held onto his Eurocup lead at Monza at the weekend, despite struggling for pace at the Italian circuit.

The factory Mygale driver finished seventh in his FR98, one place behind team mate and series rival Julien Beltoise. The pair missed out on pre-event testing, and with qualifying run in the wet, they struggled in the dry race. The works Tatuus of 'Babalus' won the race.

'I have an eight-week break before the next race, so I'm happy to keep my lead,' said Davies.



Jeff Bloxham

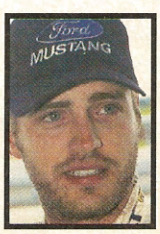
Jason Priestley did a good job for Dynamics Suspensions in his first single-seater test

Hollywood star in FRenault test

Hollywood movie star Jason Priestley made his single-seater debut at Snetterton last week, testing a Tatuus RC97 Formula Renault.

The American, who was linked to a Cirtek Ford Mustang drive earlier this year, completed 150 laps in the Dynamics Suspension-run car which is used to develop the firm's products.

Priestley worked his way down to respectable times in the 1m12s bracket, around three seconds off the top Formula Renault Sport drivers.

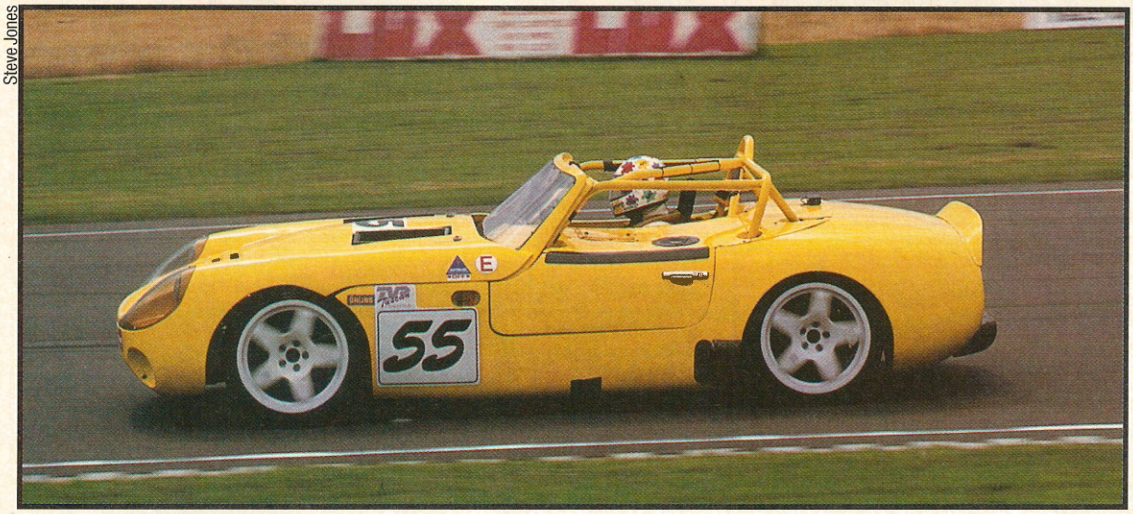


Priestley: test

The team's engineer Darren George said: 'He came over to test just to get some experience. As his times show, he has a little way to go but he did well. He didn't spin or put a wheel on the grass and was very consistent. He's also a nice guy and he mucked in with everyone.'

The star, who races a Ford Mustang for Dynamics Supsensions USA in his homeland, has not ruled out racing in Britain, but there are no plans for him to do so at the moment.

Steve Jones



REIGNING FORD FIESTA champion Graham Jennings made his TVR Tuscan debut at Castle Combe, driving a car tended by former touring car ace Dennis Leech. 'It's a very different experience but I'm getting quicker,' said Jennings, who had only raced a Fiesta before

Double victors star at Croix

A number of double victories marked the BRSCC's annual trip to Croix-en-Ternois, as the club's leading national championships travelled to the French circuit.

Nick Kaye took the double in the Ripspeed Road Saloon races. His Sunbeam Lotus inherited the first win after Doug Anderson stuck his Peugeot 205 in the gravel.

The Porsche 924 races were packed with plenty of panel-bashing as usual, and Tony Brown came through to win both races, while Alan Marshall won the two Alfa Romeo rounds.

In the absence of Mark Langfield, Matt Wood's Swift did the double in the Kent County Formula Ford 1600 races, while Peter Alexander emerged on top in the Zetec races. He managed to win the first race despite main rival Neal Blunden hitting him, which brought out the red flags.

The Super Coupe Cup series split its races at Croix, with the Rover GTis taking on the Honda CRXs. Richard Banston emerged on top in the Rovers after two enthralling races, while Dennis Bunning and James Thorpe stood out from the crowd in the CRXs.

Paul Rose won both Class B Road Saloon races, but not every category provided double winners. Geoff Bland dominated the first Class A Blue Coral Road Saloon race, beating Paul Connell with ease. He was not so fortunate in the second race, and retired to leave Connell and Simon Turner out front.

In the other Super Coupe races, where the VW Polos took on the Renault 5s, Peter Studer won the first race. However, his Polo was knocked down the order in the second, leaving Tim Munday to win.

Smith leads TGP field to Nurburgring crowd

Tony Smith is the new leader of the FIA Thoroughbred Grand Prix Championship as it heads for the Nurburgring this weekend. The organiser, ADAC, has sold 276,000 tickets in advance for the Truck Superprix meeting.

Defending champion Bob Berridge is looking for a hat trick in Germany, but Class C leader Steve Hitchins's Lotus 91 will be fitted with a more powerful short-stroke engine for the first time.

Joaquin Folch's Lotus 87B, Paul Ingram's Shadow and Steve Pontin-Warltier's Arrows A5 should all be well in the hunt for a maiden win.

Park escapes bisected Marcos

Simon Park miraculously escaped injury at Brands Hatch on Sunday in an HSCC Classic Sportscar accident which cut his plywood-chassised Marcos-Volvo in two.

'I was following a group into Clearways when a Shelby Mustang spun,' said Park. 'The pair in front went one side, but I had to go the other way. The Mustang came back across the track and hit me. I was doing over 100mph, and it sliced the back off the car, so I was very lucky.'

Shelby driver Grahame Bull was also unhurt, although his car's rear suspension and body were damaged.

Alexander flies on Diva return

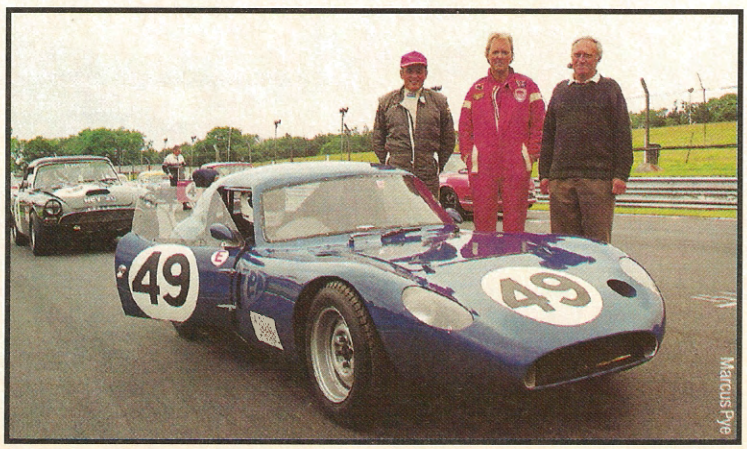
Ian Alexander raced a Diva 10F for the first time in 30 years at Brands Hatch on Saturday, and said the driving technique which earned him 35 class and overall wins between 1966 and 1968 came back to him immediately.

Alexander, now a successful sheep farmer in Perth, Western Australia, owned chassis 24 as a young man, and still annually returns to England in the summer to race his MGB.

He jumped at the invitation to drive Peter Aylett's version in the Three-Hour endurance race at the HSCC's Superprix, set the qualifying time and drove an excellent first stint, before handing over to British-based New Zealander Ian Jones in eighth place.

Jones, a partner in Racing Fabrications which built the Diva's 1100cc Ford pushrod engine, and Devon-domiciled Aylett, kept the momentum going to bring the car home in the same position, a strong second in the 1300cc class.

The team's achievement was made even more special by the enthusiastic attendance of Diva constructor Don Sim. In the company's heyday it built 63 of the 10F coupes and subsequently six rear-engined sportscars, many of which are still raced today.



Marcus Pye

Ian Jones (standing, left), Peter Aylett and marque founder Don Sim pose by the Diva 10F as Ian Alexander prepares himself for the start of the HSCC three-hour endurance race

News In Brief

A business meeting with the Brazilian president forced Joaquin Folch to scratch his Classic Team Lotus 87 entry from last weekend's FIA Thoroughbred Grand Prix race at Brands Hatch at the 11th hour.

Japanese competitor Junro Nishida made his TGP debut at Brands, in the ex-Mario Andretti Lotus 77-1. Classic Team Lotus personnel donned white headbands in Nishida's honour.

Roger Earl crashed the ex-Patrick Depailler Monaco GP-winning Tyrrell 008-3 when he missed a gear at Paddock in TGP qualifying at Brands. Damage to the wing and a rear corner precluded him from racing. Chris Perkins was the other non-starter, following engine failure in his Surtees TS19-2.

Terry Sayles has bought Paul Smith's Ensign N177, and intends to run it in August's TGP round at the Nurburgring's Oldtimer Grand Prix. Until then, the vehicle hire specialist will continue to race Steve Hartley's Theodore-liveried Ensign N179. Smith's BMTR firm runs the series's Avon tyre service.

John Fenning and Mike Littlewood are contesting this weekend's F1 reunion event at Watkins Glen, New York, and the following week's big Historic Festival at Elkhart Lake, Wisconsin. They will drive the Willans Harness team's Wolf WR1.

Richard Finney has turned his back on the Porsche Cup and has decided to race for fun again. With this in mind, his 944T was at Mallory Park to contest both the Intermarque and Porsche Open races, on both occasions losing out to the straightline speed of David Lees 911 RS.

Win Percy took to the wheel of Larry Kinch's ex-Italian GT Jaguar XJ220 at Mallory Park, for his first race of the year. The Martini-liveried former Gianni Giudici car, which Kinch had raced the previous week at Donington, struggled in qualifying with turbo problems. Percy, who quit the Harrier GT team before the season began, came from 17th on the grid to fifth at the finish.

Due to a lack of communication between the Jaguar Car Club and their timekeepers, it went unnoticed that former Grand Prix motorcyclist and TV commentator Roger Burnett drove Joe Henderson's car to third place in the Donington TR register race two weeks ago, rather than a second member of the Tomkins family.

Television comedian Rowan Atkinson raced his ex-Le Mans 24 Hours Aston Martin DB2 at Mallory Park, taking third in class in the Post-War Aston Martins and second in class and sixth overall in the Feltham Astons.

Graeme Brown

Dom Buckley powers his Subaru Impreza through a water splash at night, demonstrating the press-on style which gave him a win

Buckley blasts the Jim Clark

Dom Buckley's ex-works Subaru Impreza took a commanding victory of over eight minutes on the Jim Clark Memorial Rally last weekend. Buckley and co-driver Neil Ewing set fastest time on 23 of the 26 stages, despite some brake problems en route and a broken roll bar mounting.

John Price and Caroline Broad were second in their Metro 6R4, consolidating their lead in the Safety Devices Macadam series. Tony Davies was never too far adrift until a big accident on slicks in the rain on Stage 13 ended his chances.

Jimmy Paterson scored maximum Scottish Championship points by finishing third, after recovering from a spin on the opening stage, followed by a blown turbo. Next was Terry Rooke who suffered a 'moment' beyond the yump on Stage 13.

Chris Griffiths had been holding fourth for much of the event until a lurid slide grounded him in a barley field, and Steve Hendy retired from sixth place with an under-bonnet fire. Earlier retirements had included Andrew Wood, Steve Scott, John Brodie, and Justin Dale who had driven the works 1600cc Peugeot to within reach of the top 10 when a driveshaft broke. 'It's a pity really' said the Hampshire man. 'I think we could have been fifth or sixth – the car was working very well, even with a bit of a compromised set-up.'

Julian Porter's Mitsubishi Lancer won Group N, while Keith Robathan was top two-wheel drive in his Mark II Escort. Works Proton Driver Jenny Davies finished 16th overall in her class-winning Peugeot 306, and Jeff McNeil won the Clubmans event.

Green is mean in Skoda showdown

Tim Green took his second successive Skoda Trophy win of the season at the Jim Clark Rally. He also claimed a Group N1 class win and moved into the lead of the title race.

Green battled throughout with Dave West, who entered the final stage with a two second advantage. However, West missed a braking point which cost him 20 seconds and a win, although he had the consolation of setting the greatest number of fastest stage times.

Steve Head, who recently won the Silverstone Star of Tomorrow Trophy, was third, despite a number of mechanical setbacks.

SEAT Series heads for Irish tarmac

The SEAT Super Six Series resumes after a 10-week break at Ireland's Sligo Stages on Sunday, July 12.

The event is the sole tarmac rally in the six-round series. It will be a new experience for most of the contenders, including title leader Mike Brown, facing his second asphalt run. 'We will try to be neat and tidy and keep in the middle of the road' said the 26-year old.

He will be challenged closely by Wayne Sisson, who last year won his class on the Ulster Rally. 'Another good run like that will do our title aspirations no harm at all,' said Sisson.

Kilty proves too good for Eyles

Reigning champion Roger Kilty took his fourth win on the trot to close in on points leader John Garnett, as the Farndon Engineering RAC British Sprint Championship returned to Knockhill for a rain-afflicted event last weekend.

Kilty needed just one run with his Pilbeam-DFR to guarantee himself the laurels, but in the end he was pushed very hard by sprinting's find of the year, Tony Eyles.

Eyles, driving the ex-John Garnett Lola-Judd, came within just 0.12s of taking victory. Garnett found himself losing more points to Kilty when his Reynard-DFR was kept out of the top three by Eyles' brother, Rodney, making it a good day for his family. Garnett's slender lead is now just three points.

Tony Marsh and the Gould Ralt-DFR qualified well. Marsh finished fifth, a couple of seconds clear of Steve Liptrott, who continued his impressive first year of single-seater sprinting by completing the top six.

A storming drive from Graham Oates ensured that the Lotus Europa driver extended his lead at the top of the RACMSA Sprint Leaders table.

Peter Kukainis's Westfield-Cosworth continues to lead the new BMSA Sprint and Hillclimb Championship despite losing out this time to co-driver Paul Parker.

Mike Dooley

Around the twists of Knockhill Roger Kilty's Pilbeam took a fourth British Sprint win in a row

News In Brief

Works Proton driver Jenny Davies reverted to her old Peugeot 306 in Peugeot Challenge spec after Proton withdrew her original entry, due to a shortage of engines (see *Special Stage*). 'We wanted to do the event anyway, and it will be a useful recce if the Jim Clark is added to next year's British Championship,' said Davies' co-driver, Claire Mole.

Peter Busby was given the 'Spirit of the Rally' award at the Skoda Trophy event. He damaged the majority of the panels on his Felicia in a heavy roll on the first evening. He repaired what he could and finished 13th.

SEAT has entered a seventh Ibiza on the Sligo Super Six event for Series Manager Trevor Agnew, who is better known as Neil Wearden's co-driver on the British rally Championship. Agnew is making his driving debut. He has prepared his own pace notes, which will be read by Angus Young.

Stephanie Simmonite demonstrated her Formula 2 Escort at Harewood's British Hillclimb round last weekend. 'I competed here in the RAC Rally in a Peugeot a few years ago,' said the British Ladies Rally Champion, 'but this is the first time I've driven on the full hillclimb course.' Stephanie's two runs in the 67s bracket ran inside Harewood series Leader Bobby Fryers' 2-litre record for road modified saloons.

Sprinter Neville Moon will give the Tommy Kaira ZZ its UK competition debut at the Brighton Speed Trials on September 12th. The Nissan 2-litre 16v alloy monocoque sports car, produced by Tomita Auto UK Ltd at Hingham, Norfolk, has been launched on to the UK market as part of a Japanese export drive.

The final round of the Compomotive Wheels Rallycross Championship has been moved back two weeks and will now run on Sunday October 18. The move has been forced as Croft Circuit, where the final round takes place, has secured an end of season Superbike invitation race which will take place on October 4.

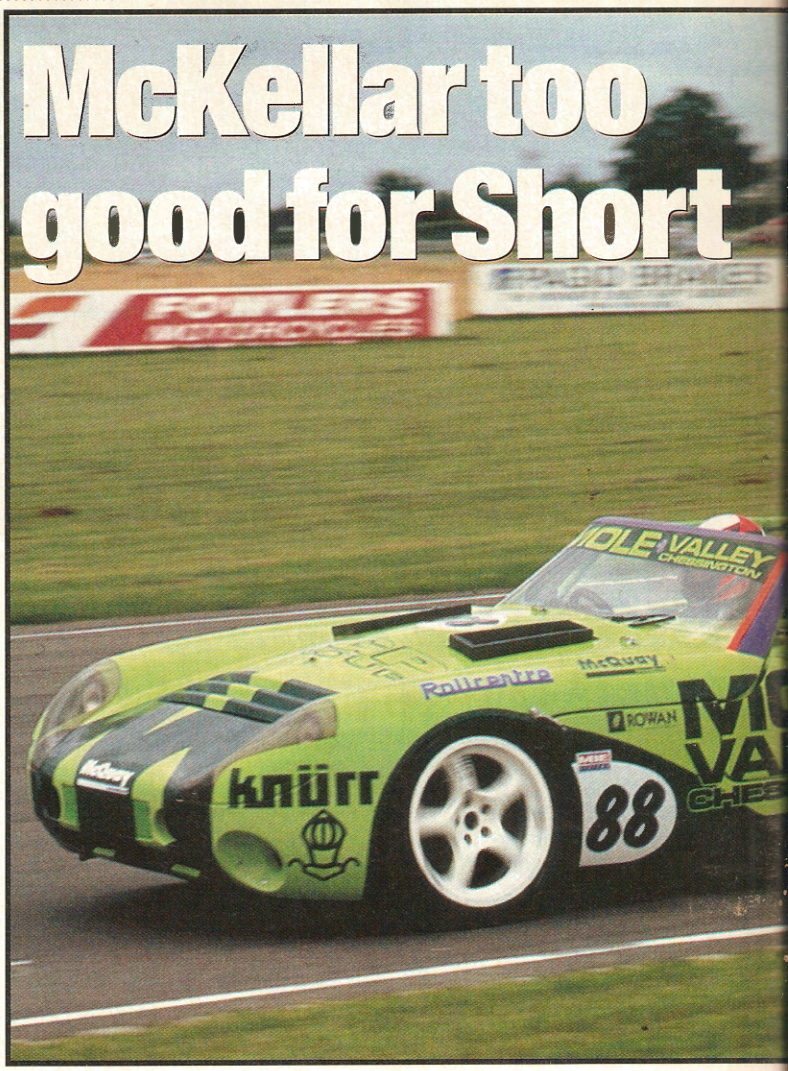
The British Rallycross Drivers Association will finalise plans to permit Supercars to use spaceframe chassis by the year's end. The ideas were positively received at a recent meeting of the RACMSA's Rallycross Sub-Committee. The new rules will provide an additional and cheaper method of constructing a Supercar and will not prevent the continued use of any cars currently competing.

The organisers of Ireland's Phoenix Park race meeting on August 15/16 are planning to run a Vintage car race. For more information contact Eddie Fitzgerald, 16 Templeroan Grove, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16.

CASTLE COMBE July 4/5

McKellar too good for Short

Ian McKellar was in stunning form and notched up a TVR Tuscan double victory. Paul Lawrence reports



Ian McKellar could not have asked for more from his weekend. His pair of Tuscan wins were won the hard way, with unrelenting pressure from Bobby Verdon-Roe and Martin Short. But 'Junior' McKellar was more than up to the task.

Verdon-Roe was the man with the pace in qualifying. 'Job done. No point in pounding round and round,' he said mid-way through his qualifying session having slammed in a blistering 58.45s lap early on. The fastest-ever Tuscan lap was enough for pole and BV-R was secure, knowing that Short's 58.79s had topped the opening session.

The whole Tuscan field ran in both races and a large number of them passed Short at the start of the opening race, when he stalled on the line and was engulfed.

Up front, Verdon-Roe led until McKellar charged by under braking for Camp at the end of the first tour. They traded the lead early on, but BV-R was not taking chances in the low points-scoring qualifying race.

McKellar stuck to his task and a yellow flag at Camp on the final lap denied Verdon-Roe any last corner attack. The rest fell away, but Michael Caine drove a cracker for third, although Short was large in his mirrors by the finish.

Short, suitably chastened by his start, had set out to make amends with a great drive. He passed cars at every opportunity on his way back up to fourth, grabbing places from Steve Sutcliffe and Gavin Cooper in the closing stages. Phil Hindley had run with Caine before a misfire dropped him to seventh.

McKellar did it again in the second race but this time had both Short and Verdon-Roe as fearsome rivals. Whatever they tried though, Junior had it covered and soaked up the pressure for 14 laps on his way to a mighty victory. Short gave it his best shot and broke the lap record in the process. 'Ian was braking so late. It was a superb drive,' said Short. BV-R chased them home as Hindley powered through to fourth.

In a weekend of tremendous racing, Camp Corner claimed a gaggle of victims and none more dramatically than Peter Cook, whose Ferrari F40 was destroyed against the barriers. In the first of two Ferrari races, Cook and Stuart Bowler rejoined their F40 battle until Bowler spun at Old Paddock when challenging. He recovered for second in front of the battling Christopher brothers.

On Sunday, Bowler was determined to level the score. He drove hard to recover from a bad start and hunted Cook down before easing ahead with three laps to run. Cook challenged into Camp for the last time but the F40 got away from him and slammed into the earth bank before landing in a ball of flames. Cook scrambled clear.

A pair of 30-minute Caterham Superlight races produced some incredible dicing, with as many as a dozen cars slip-streaming around. For much of the restarted race, Ben McLoughlin, Rob Barff and Edward Horner made the running.

Barff was delayed when he got launched over McLoughlin, then on the penultimate lap Horner attacked McLoughlin at Old Paddock. That slowed both as Shaun Balfe spun out in avoidance. This let Mark Humphrey nip though to win from Nigel Taylor and Paul Stephens.

McLoughlin got his reward on Sunday after a late break as Horner and Balfe battled over second.

The Caterham Roadsports were not to be outdone as Dave Clark fended off allcomers, beating Gerry Taylor and Ross Bygrave to the line. Other sportscar wins went to John Griffiths in the Ginettas, Nigel James in LM3000, with Mike Millard taking the GT race.

Justin Boyce came out of retirement to romp to Tomcat/Vento spoils in Jon Duff's Rover and Gary Fletcher scooped his first Proton Coupe win. In the Pagid Saloons, Brian Cox fended off Russ Humphrey. In the local FF1600 thrash, Richard Carter held off John Hutchinson to win. Finally, James Pickford kept up his 100 per cent record in Formula 600, and Stuart Wood won the Formula Renaults.

TOMCAT/VENTO CHALLENGE (10 LAPS) 1 Justin Boyce (Tomcat Turbo) 11m44.23s (94.06mph); 2 Andy Thompson (Tomcat Turbo) 11m44.50s; 3 Adrian Churchill (Tomcat Turbo); 4 David Pierce (Tomcat Turbo). **Class winners** Boyce; Clinton Ogbourne

PIRELLI PORSCHE CUP In association with AUTOSPORT

Sargent's major success

The combination of Malcolm Sargent and his 928GTS proved too much for the rest of the Pirelli Porsche Cup field as the GWR-prepared car stormed to a brace of deserved victories.

Despite two poor starts, Sargent was able to pick his way back into the lead as Chris Heeley offered most opposition in his 944 Turbo. 'You just have to concentrate and stay calm. It was great stuff,' said a jubilant Sargent.

Sargent set the qualifying pace but then drew fourth slot in the draw for the top four grid places. It then got even worse. 'It bogged down off the line,' he said after Peter Chambers and Godfrey Jones swept ahead. Heeley had also been slow away in the turbo, but would shadow Sargent through to the front of the field.

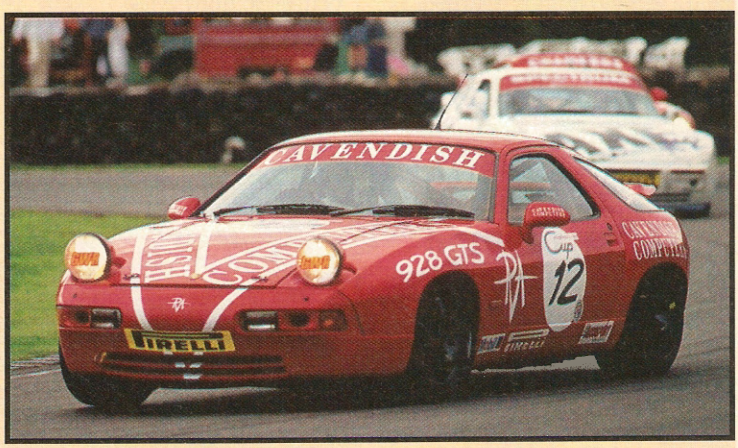
With two laps to run, Heeley was still giving chase when Chambers and Jones crashed out with sickening force at Camp. A touch under braking sent the cars into the earth bank at barely diminished speed and the race was stopped as emergency teams attended. Mercifully, neither driver was injured and the results were taken at lap 12, leaving Jones third.

Marcus Fothergill claimed a stylish class two win over Paul Doran and Piers Masarati while Andrew Sweetenham pulled off a surprise by heading Adrian Grieves in class three.

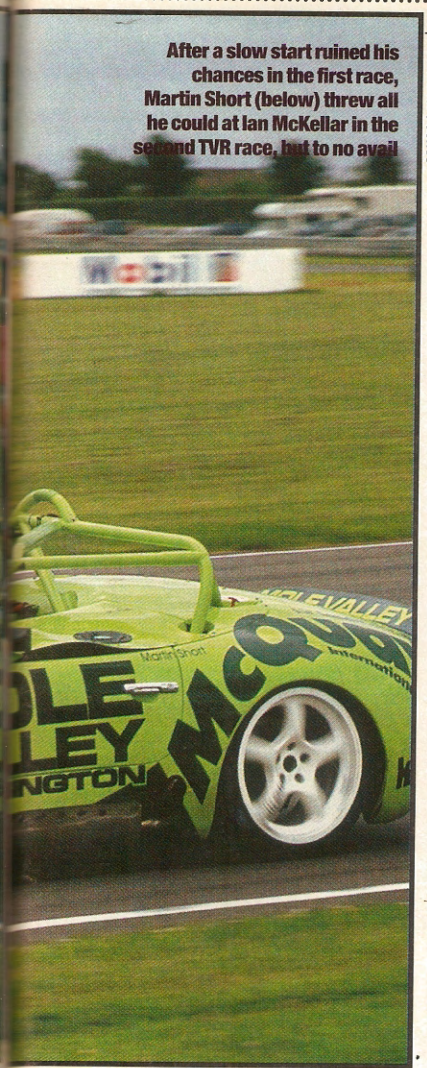
'Another dreadful start,' said Sargent on Sunday, but once again he was able to stretch the legs of the 928GTS and power back into the lead. This time, Heeley lost his chance of chasing. 'It was more bad luck. The boost control unit shut down,' explained Heeley, who limped home sixth. The charging Robert Babikan moved into second from Mark Sumpter as Adrian Slater fended off Richard True for fourth.

'It's great to get a double,' said class two victor Fothergill who had Masarati as a constant threat until Tom Segrue's class one car split them. In class three, Grieves regained winning form as Sweetenham spun at Tower when mounting an attack.

● Paul Lawrence



Malcolm Sargent used the sheer power of his 928 to be unbeatable in both Porsche races



After a slow start ruined his chances in the first race, Martin Short (below) threw all he could at Ian McKellar in the second TVR race, but to no avail

All photos: Steve Jones

(Vento VR6) 12m00.24s (91.96mph). **Fastest laps** Pierce 1m09.77s (94.94mph); Ogbourne 1m10.77s (93.59mph).

FORMULA 600 (10 LAPS) 1 James Pickford 10m45.40s (102.63mph); 2 Nick Farley 10m50.65s; 3 Anthony Nicklin; 4 Dillon Battistini. **Fastest lap** Nicklin 1m03.65s (104.06mph) **record**.

BARC FORMULA RENAULT (12 LAPS) 1 Stuart Wood (Tatuus RC96) 12m39.79s (104.61mph); 2 Nick Dudfield (Tatuus RC96) 12m43.35s; 3 Elliot Lewis (Mygale FRS97); 4 Mike Brain (Swift ERC97). **Class winners** Wood; Jason Timms (Orion FR93) 13m07.86s (100.89mph). **Fastest laps** Wood 1m02.16s (106.56mph); Timms 1m04.11s (103.32mph) **both establish records**.

PROTON COUPE SERIES (10 LAPS) 1 Gary Fletcher 12m33.74s (87.88mph); 2 David Porter 12m33.90s; 3 Paul Forster; 4 Robert Ross. **Fastest lap** Forster 1m12.82s (90.96mph) **record**.

MARANELLO FERRARI CHALLENGE – RACE ONE (15 LAPS) 1 Peter Cook (F40) 16m38.08s (99.55mph); 2 Stuart Bowler (F40) 16m54.65s; 3 Andrew Christopher (308GTB); 4 George Christopher (308GT4). **Class winners** Cook; Graham Reeder (F355) 14 laps (91.19mph). **Fastest laps** Bowler 1m04.01s (103.48mph) **record**; Reeder 1m10.45s (94.02mph). **RACE TWO (15 LAPS)** 1 Bowler 16m29.83s (100.38mph); 2 Andrew Christopher 17m12.85s; 3 George Christopher; 4 Paul Ciardiello (308GTB). **Class winners** Bowler; Reeder 14 laps (90.55mph). **Fastest laps** Bowler 1m04.44s (102.79mph); Reeder 1m10.99s (93.30mph).

CATERHAM SUPERLIGHT Rs – RACE ONE (26 LAPS) 1 Mark Humphrey 28m09.95s (101.91mph); 2 Nigel Taylor 28m11.57s; 3 Paul Stephens; 4 Michael Woodcock. **Class winners** Humphrey; Rupert Douglas-Pennant 28m55.95s (99.21mph). **Fastest laps** Humphrey 1m03.15s (104.89mph) **establishes record**; Douglas-Pennant 1m05.42s (101.25mph). **RACE TWO (29 LAPS)** 1 Ben McLoughlin 31m40.96s (101.05mph); 2 Edward Horner 31m41.41s; 3 Shaun Balfe; 4 Taylor. **Class winners** McLoughlin; Douglas-Pennant 28 laps (97.21mph). **Fastest laps** Horner 1m04.36s (102.92mph); Douglas-Pennant 1m05.79s (100.68mph).

PIRELLI PORSCHE CUP – RACE ONE (12 LAPS) 1 Malcolm Sargent (928GTS) 13m48.26s (95.96mph); 2 Chris Heeley (944 Turbo) 13m49.15s; 3 Godfrey Jones (Carrera 993); 4 Robert Babikan (Carrera 2). **Class winners** Sargent; Marcus Fothergill (944S2) 14m23.00s (92.10mph); Andrew Sweetenham (924S) 11 laps (87.06mph). **Fastest laps** Sargent 1m07.58s (98.01mph); Fothergill 1m10.27s (94.26mph); Adrian Grieves (944) 1m13.23s (90.45mph) **record**. **RACE TWO (15 LAPS)** 1 Sargent 17m11.44s (96.33mph); 2 Babikan 17m17.06s; 3 Mark Sumpter (Carrera 996); 4 Adrian Slater (Carrera 2). **Class winners** Sargent; Fothergill 17m56.98s (92.25mph); Grieves 14 laps (86.44mph). **Fastest laps** Sargent 1m07.82s (97.67mph); Diane Osborne (968CS) 1m10.50s (93.95mph); Grieves 1m14.87s (88.47mph).

TVR TUSCANS - RACE ONE (14 LAPS) 1 Ian McKellar 14m10.67s (109.01mph); 2 Bobby Verdon-Roe 14m11.17s; 3 Michael Caine; 4 Martin Short; 5 Steve Sutcliffe; 6 Gavin Cooper. **Fastest lap** Short 59.66s (111.02mph) **record**. **RACE TWO (14 LAPS)** 1 McKellar 14m11.40s (108.92mph); 2 Short 14m11.77s; 3 Verdon-Roe; 4 Phil Hindley; 5 Sutcliffe; 6 Caine. **Fastest lap** Short 59.64s (111.06mph) **record**.

PTP CATERHAM ROADSPORTS (10 LAPS) 1 David Clark 11m45.39s (93.90mph); 2 Gerry Taylor 11m45.86s; 3 Ross Bygrave; 4 Jonathan Elvin. **Class winners** Clark; Chris Wood 12m28.68s (88.47mph). **Fastest laps** Bygrave and Howard Redhouse 1m09.08s (95.88mph) **establishes record**; Richard Blue 1m12.82s (90.96mph).

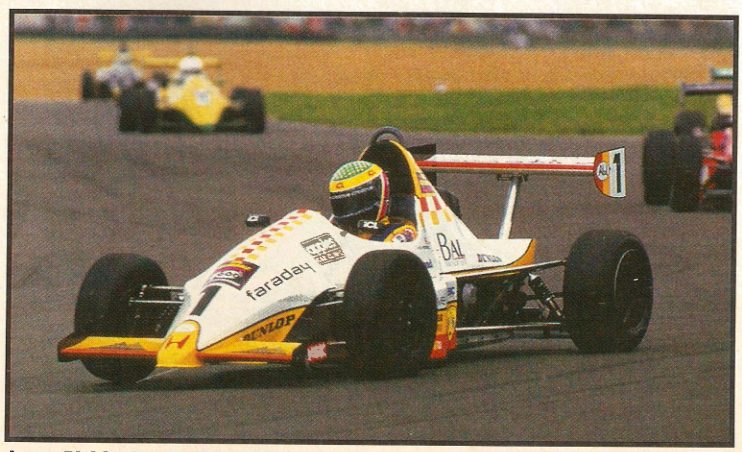
CASTLE COMBE SALOONS (10 LAPS) 1 Brian Cox (Peugeot 205GTi) 12m04.14s (91.47mph); 2 Russell Humphrey (Vauxhall Astra GTE) 12m04.81s; 3 Duncan Rickards (Vauxhall Astra GSi); 4 Tony Dolley (Vauxhall Corsa). **Class winners** Cox; Dolley 12m11.08s (90.60mph); Paul Gardner (Suzuki Swift GTi) 12m34.32s (87.81mph). **Fastest laps** Cox 1m10.51s (93.94mph); Dolley 1m11.33s (92.86mph) **record**; Gardner 1m13.22s (90.46mph).

SPORTSCAR LM3000 (15 LAPS) 1 Nigel James 16m52.33s (111.23mph); 2 Dave Brunsdon 16m52.93s; 3 Phill Armour; 4 Howard Spooner. **Fastest lap** Michael Millard 58.76s (112.72mph).

GINETTA G27s (12 LAPS) 1 John Griffiths 14m46.23s (89.69mph); 2 Mike Gardiner 14m46.91s; 3 Nigel Woolcott; 4 Angus Brown. **Fastest lap** Griffiths 1m12.61s (91.22mph) **record**.

HEAT CASTLE COMBE FF1600 (10 LAPS) 1 Richard Carter (Van Diemen RF92) 11m04.68s (99.65mph); 2 John Hutchinson (Van Diemen RF90) 11m04.90s; 3 Robin Parsons (Swift SC92F); 4 Simon Ashley (Swift SC92F). **Class winners** Carter; Julian Heap (Reynard FF89) 11m24.05s (96.83mph). **Fastest laps** Parsons 1m04.78s (102.25mph); Heap 1m06.86s (99.07mph).

SPECIAL GTs (10 LAPS) 1 Michael Millard (LM3000) 10m10.13s (108.56mph); 2 John Robinson (Mallock MK28) 10m15.80s; 3 Geoff Thorne (Lola T86/90); 4 Chris Lord (LM3000). **Class winners** Millard; Robinson (107.56mph); Richard Borthwick (Shrike P16) 10m58.28s (100.62mph). **Fastest laps** Millard 58.75s (112.74mph); Robinson 59.96s (110.47mph); Borthwick 1m03.41s (104.46mph).



James Pickford kept up his unbeaten run this season with yet another Formula 600 win

SNETTERTON July 4/5

Richard Styles

Despite a smoky finish, Geoff Maidment's Escort Cosworth took the Ford Saloon laurels

Robinson squashes the opposition

It looked as if everything was finally clicking for Nick Adams after qualifying saw him secure his first class one Classic Porsche pole position.

However, it was not to be, as Adams found himself rotating in the pack after John Williams' great start put him in position to chop across the former's nose at Riches.

Barry Robinson showed why he's the series leader by rising to second after a third row start, before sweeping into the lead on lap three. Williams soon fell prey to sustained pressure from Keith Norman and Adam Richardson before Norman suffered from mechanical troubles.

This allowed a determined Paul Tillieard to harry Richardson for second before retirement. So Richardson was able to harry Robinson, but the leader remained rock solid to take victory.

The class two and three rounds went the way of the championship leaders too, with class wins for Steve Jaques and Richard Stringer.

A delighted Daron Bland swept all before him in the ARP F3 round with his first pole and win in addition to a new fastest lap. 'There was nothing I could do about him,' admitted runner up Jeff Gresswell.

A superlative start helped Mark Upton secure his maiden XR2 win and left pole man Wayne Stockton embroiled in the battle for second, taken eventually by Michael Blackburn. Graeme Whitehead and Nick Beaumont took untroubled XR3 and Ford Si wins respectively over John Stant and David Willoughby, who fought hard for the runner-up spots.

Geoff Maidment's smokey Escort Cosworth hung on to take the Ford Saloon win over David Bartrum's similar example. Graeme Adams was the MG Midget victor, while Paul Clarence took an easier win in the Anglia Phoenix race.

John Carding held the Global Lights lead briefly before Bruce Robinson found a way through, while Amanda Whitaker wasted no time in edging out Jim Blockley to dominate the Monoposto race.

● Julian Carter

HALFORDS MG MIDGET CHALLENGE (12 LAPS) 1 Graeme Adams (Midget) 16m04.23s (87.45mph); 2 Richard Connell (Healey Sprite) 16m09.63s; 3 Richard Wildman (Midget); 4 Edward Reeve (Midget). **Class winners** Adams; David Ecob (Midget); Bill Lancashire (Midget). **Fastest laps** Adams 1m19.05s (88.89mph); Richard Perry (Sprite) 1m23.43s (84.22mph); Tim Hutchinson (Midget) & Lancashire 1m30.74s (77.44mph).

MONOPOSTOS (12 LAPS) 1 Amanda Whitaker (Vauxhall Lotus) 14m14m56s (98.67mph); 2 David Cox (Ralt RT3/Vauxhall) 14m27.70s; 3 Francis Phillips (Ralt RT3/Ford); 4 Andrew Delahunty (Vauxhall Lotus). **Class winners** Whitaker; Paul Shipp (OMS Monoposto/ Kawasaki); Kian Raees-Danai (Reynard SF79). **Fastest laps** Whitaker 1m10.02s (100.35 mph); Shipp 1m13.60s (95.47mph); Ian Hughes (Van Dieman RF88) 1m18.30s (89.74mph) **all records**.

ANGLIA PHOENIX MGs (12 LAPS) 1 Paul Clarence (Midget) 17m19.95s (81.08mph); 2 Chris Roche (MG RV8) 17m34.08s; 3 John Spencer (Midget); 4 Tony Howe (Metro Turbo). **Class winners** Clarence; Roche; Dave Kimber(MGB Roadster); Howe. **Fastest laps** Clarence 1m24.90s (82.77mph) **record**; Roche 1m26.36s (81.37mph) **record**; Howe 1m28.36s (79.52mph); Kimber 1m29.27s (78.71mph) **record**.

GLOBAL LIGHTS (12 LAPS) 1 Bruce Robinson 15m51.55s (88.62mph); 2 John Carding 15m53.65s; 3 Bob Brooks; 4 Bill Pritchard. **Fastest lap** Robinson 1m17.52s (90.65mph) **record**.

FORD SALOONS (12 LAPS) 1 Geoff Maidment (Escort Cosworth) 16m03.43s (87.52mph); 2 David Bartrum (Escort Cosworth) 16m04.26s; 3 Dimitro Nicolic (Escort Cosworth); 4 Jonathan Edwards (Escort RS2000 Mk2). **Class winners** Maidment; Edwards; Andy Coombs (Escort); Rob Alman (Fiesta XR2). **Fastest laps** Bartrum 1m18.94s (89.01mph); Edwards 1m21.86s (85.84mph); Coombs 1m24.47s (83.19mph); Alman 1m34.04s (74.72mph) **establishes record**.

PORSCHE CLASSICS – CLASS 1 (15 LAPS) 1 Barry Robinson (911 SC) 20m58.33s (83.76mph); 2 Adam Richardson (Carrera RS) 20m58.48s; 3 John Williams (911 SC); 4 David Barnard (911 RS). **Fastest Lap** Williams 1m22.32s (85.26mph).

BRSCC FORD XR2 CHALLENGE (12 LAPS) 1 Mark Upton 17m47.59s (78.98mph); 2 Michael Blackburn 17m53.69s; 3 Jon Minshaw; 4 Peter Wilkinson. **Fastest lap** Stockton 1m27.61s (80.21mph) **establishes record**.

PORSCHE CLASSICS – CLASSES 2 & 3 (15 LAPS) 1 Steve Jaques (911 SC) 21m24.35s (82.07mph); 2 Robi Bernberg (911 SC) 21m42.91s; 3 Stuart Jefcoate (911 SC); 4 Chris Berry (911E). **Class winners** Jaques; Richard Stringer (924). **Fastest laps** Jaques 1m24.76s (82.90mph) **record**; Stringer 1m29.89s (78.17mph).

FORD XR3 CHALLENGE (12 LAPS) 1 Graeme Whitehead 18m18.08s (76.79mph); 2 John Stant 18m21.96s; 3 Keith Riley; 4 Peter Felix. **Fastest lap** Whitehead 1m29.85s (78.21mph) **establishes record**.

ARP F3 (15 LAPS) 1 Daron Bland (Reynard 863/VW) 17m33.48s (100.05mph); 2 Jeff Gresswell (Dallara 388) 17m42.02s; 3 Nino Singh Judge (Reynard 903B/VW) 15 laps; 4 Dave Karaskas (Ralt RT31/VW). **Class winners** Bland; Gresswell. **Fastest laps** Bland 1m09.13s (101.65mph) **record**; Gresswell 1m09.32s (101.37mph) **record**.

FORD SIs (12 LAPS) 1 Nick Beaumont 17m22.68s (80.87mph); 2 David Willoughby 17m32.18s; 3 Brian Taylor; 4 Robert Sims 12. **Fastest lap** Beaumont 1m25.97s (81.74mph) **record**.

Berridge gallops to victory

BRANDS HATCH July 4/5

Brands echoed to the sounds of yesteryear as the F1 cars of the past paid a visit. Marcus Pye was there

Bob Berridge won an FIA Thoroughbred Grand Prix Championship round that will long be remembered for the quality of racing from the 25-car field, as it topped a tremendous HSCC Superprix.

Series returnee John Wilson snatched pole at 1m19.19s in his Williams FW08C. Points leader Steve Hitchins's Lotus 91 was next up, and Berridge's FW08B was under the 1m20s barrier in the warm-up, so a thrilling race was in prospect. It did not disappoint.

Wilson got wheelspin at the green, and Hitchins snaked past him but Berridge hooked up sweetly and hurtled into the lead before Paddock. Back in the pack, Helen Bashford's fast-starting Shadow clipped Class B leader Mike Whatley's stalled Ensign, and was launched into the barriers.

Hitchins, short of power by comparison, could not live with Berridge for more than a couple of laps, while Wilson slipped back to Paul Ingram's Shadow and Geoff Farmer's Tyrrell 012. 'It was a different car today, yesterday's grip was gone,' said Wilson.

Farmer, wrestling with a deflating rear tyre, was soon the target for the brilliantly-driven Ferrari T5 of Mike Littlewood. 'I could see it going down,' said Mike, who wailed past to worry Wilson. Steve Pontin-Warltier, who lost sparring partner Ian Giles's clutch-troubled Brabham BT49, duly powered his Arrows A5 on to Farmer's tail.

A superb battle between Dave Mercer's RAM and Steve Hartley's Arrows A6 embroiled the March 761 of Class B leader Dave Abbott initially, but Tony Smith took his Williams FW06 through them after a tardy getaway to take the class, and the championship lead.

Poleman Richard Evans did not expect an easy Acemai F2 race, indeed when closest rival Nick Crossley's Chevron B40 punctured on the opening lap, Fredy Kumschick's Lotus 69, the Martini of Jacques Colibet, Bob Juggins's Lola T240 and Ludovic Caron's March 742 all locked their sights on the red Chevron. Caron fought his way to second, setting fastest lap, while Juggins earned 1600cc Euro Trophy honours as Kumschick fell back towards Philippe Harper's oil-spraying Ralt RT1.

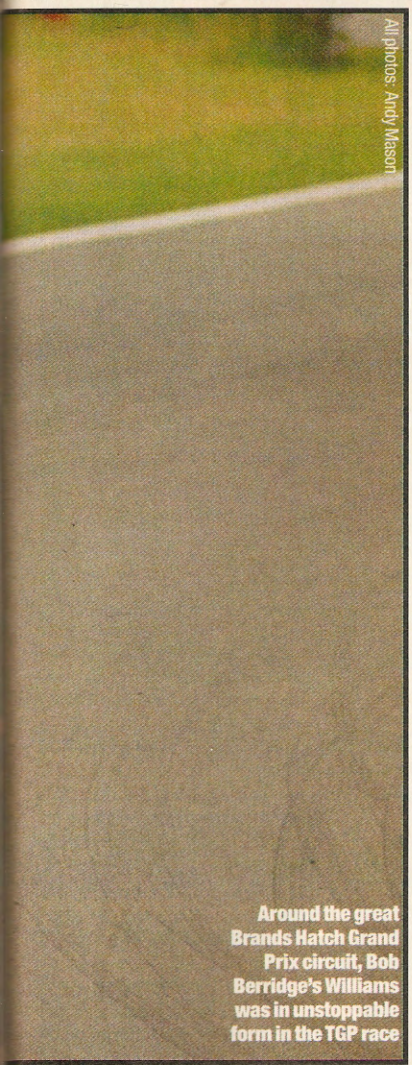
Simon Hadfield raced the ex-Hiroshi Kazato March 722 for the first time with a stylish victory in the restarted Derek Bell Trophy/Classic F3 round. Rob Moores's ex-Derek Daly Chevron B38 took F3 honours equally comfortably, from the clutchless Steve Nichols, whose B38 pipped the Marches of Simon Ford and Paul Tickner after Vince Horsley crashed his rapid 763.

Benn Simms scored again in a frenetic Historic FF1600 thrash, rounding Kevin Stanzl on lap two and keeping his cool. John Beasley was the real hero. He scythed his way from 12th on the 38-car grid to demote Simon Perkins's Crossle on the line and complete a Merlyn one-two-three. Beasley's best lap was 0.43s quicker than the rest!

Jeff Wilson's Osella was staying with Mike Wilds's Chevron B31/36 in the RJB Thundersports round when Wilds's engine blew on Cooper straight. Andy Wolfe, who had moved his Lola T212 past Bruce van der Merwe's B19 a lap earlier, thus claimed second from the South African and Mike Simpson's March 74S, which fought off Michael Schryver's Chevron B6. David Beckett and Dave Hudson also drove the wheels off their Nerus and Sturdgess respectively.

David Gathercole recovered from a first-lap spin at Druids to win the Classic Sports from Gerry Wainwright and Stephen Minoprio. The Elan driver's task was eased when leader David Methley pitted his Marcos-Volvo with a suspected dropped valve. A clever line out of Surtees saw John Rees outfox fellow Lotus 7 driver Roger Barton in the Roadsports race. Laurence Bailey's TVR could live with them,

Geoff Farmer's ailing Tyrrell only just managed to stave off Steve Pontin-Warltier's Arrows



All photos: Andy Mason

Around the great Brands Hatch Grand Prix circuit, Bob Berridge's Williams was in unstoppable form in the TGP race

but he had to turn his attentions to fending off Chris Overton's 7.

West Team Jovis's Alan Baillie outpsyched polesitter Ian Jones in the Classic Single-Seater finale, moving ahead when the Kiwi spun his Lotus 59 at Stirlings. Jones closed in again, but the race was stopped to clear a tangle at Surtees. Simms beat Steve Parrott for the FF1600 pot.

Saturday's sprint races opened with a cracking Dutch Trofeo Alfa Romeo event. Nick Humphrey's 33 made a blinding start from row two to snatch the lead from poleman Tim Lewis and Graham Presley, but the latter's potent ex-ITCC 75 Turbo whistled past second time round.

Sismey took up the cudgels in his 33 and lunged past Presley into Dingle Dell, as Humphrey fell away with a repetition of his practice wheel bearing failure. Lewis's Sud Sprint pitted with a blown tyre, leaving Humphrey ahead of a fine scrap in which visitors Huib Onderstal, Harmen van Putten and Christian Foederer 'ganged up' on Jonathan Walker's Sud.

Once ahead of Alan Charlton's Triumph TR6, Roy McCarthy mastered the British Sportscar Challenge in his MGB. Brian Lambert and Peter Hiley chased from a distance.

Peter Goring's Kar Kraft Mustang always had the answer to Peter Wray's smoky Lotus Cortina in the HRSR round, despite a shredded right front tyre. Behind Peter Sugden's Alfa, Jaguar man Graeme Dodd thwarted a last gasp charge by Ronnie Fielding by squeezing the BMW towards the pit wall. Lou Bracey resolutely shook off Glen Maskell's Superspeed 105E to win the Anglia battle.

FIA THOROUGHBRED GRAND PRIX CAR CHAMPIONSHIP (18 LAPS) 1 Bob Berridge (Williams FW08B-5) 24m19.04s (115.48mph); 2 Steve Hitchins (Lotus 91-10) 24m42.85s; 3 Paul Ingram (Shadow DN9-2B); 4 John Wilson (Williams FW08C-9); 5 Mike Littlewood (Ferrari 312T5-048); 6 Geoff Farmer (Tyrrell 012-5). **Class winners** Berridge; Tony Smith (Williams FW06-4) (108.30mph); Ean Pugh (Brabham BT34-1) (90.51mph). **Fastest laps** Berridge 1m19.70s (117.44mph); Smith 1m24.29s (111.05mph); Michael Schryver (Lotus 72-3) 1m35.84s (97.67mph).

RJB THUNDERSPORTS (10 LAPS) 1 Jeff Wilson (Osella PA7), 14m38.46s (106.55mph); 2 Andy Wolfe (Lola T212) 14m55.10s; 3 Bruce van der Merwe (Chevron B19); 4 Mike Simpson (March 74S). **Class winners** Wilson; Wolfe, 104.57mph; David Beckett (Nerus Silhouette) (97.06mph); David Hudson (Sturdgess) (95.69mph); Anthony Taylor (McLaren M1C) (85.30mph); David Childs (Mallock Mk14E) (95.55mph). **Fastest lap** Wilson 1m25.54s (109.43mph).

HSCC DEREK BELL/ACEMAI TROPHY F2 (10 LAPS) 1 Richard Evans (Chevron B34D) 14m30.47s (107.53mph); 2 Ludovic Caron (March 742) 14m33.35s; 3 Bob Juggins (Lola T240) and Jacques Colibet (Martini MK19). **Class winners** Evans, Juggins (106.88mph); John Pearson (March 712) (102.75mph). **Fastest laps** Caron 1m25.39s (109.62mph); Juggins 1m25.86s (109.02mph); Pearson 1m28.92s.

HSCC CLASSIC F3 & DEREK BELL TROPHY (6 LAPS) 1 Simon Hadfield (March 722-8) 8m58.21s (104.35mph); 2 Rob Moores (Chevron B38) 9m10.39s; 3 Steve Nichols (Chevron B38); 4 Simon Ford (March 793). **Class winners** Hadfield; Moores (102.04mph); Nicholas Owen (Delta T78/79) (94.24mph); Winston Bunn (Ensign LNF3) (91.99mph). **Fastest lap** Hadfield 1m27.32s (107.20mph).

C.A.R.S. HISTORIC FF1600 (8 LAPS) 1 Benn Simms (Merlyn Mk20) 13m29.58s (92.49mph); 2 Kevin Stanzl (Merlyn Mk20) 13m29.76s; 3 John Beasley (Merlyn Mk20); 4 Simon Perkins (Crossle 16F). **Novices** James Murray (Merlyn Mk20) (86.58mph). **Fastest laps** Beasley 1m38.99s (94.56mph); Murray 1m45.11s (89.05mph).

HSCC CLASSIC SINGLE-SEATERS (6 LAPS) 1 Alan Baillie (Jovis) 8m16.61s (94.24mph); Ian Jones (Lotus 59) 8m22.11s; 3 Simms; 4 Parrott. **Class winners** Baillie, Simms, Willy Markwalder (Merlyn Mk14) (88.13mph); David Cooke (Cooper T43) (77.93mph); David Pratley (Lola Mk2) (76.19mph). **Fastest lap** Jones 1m36.91s (96.59mph).

HSCC HISTORIC/'70S ROAD SPORTS (8 LAPS) 1 John Rees (Lotus 7 S3) 14m55.17s (83.65mph); 2 Roger Barton (Lotus 7 S3) 14m58.84s; 3 Laurence Bailey (TVR 3000M); 4 Chris Overton (Lotus 7 S4). **Class winners** Rees; Bailey (82.98mph); Mike Eagles (Turner Mk1) (78.50mph); Dave Edwards (Lancia Fulvia) (78.01mph). **Fastest lap** Rees 1m50.11s (85.01mph).

CLASSIC SPORTS (8 LAPS) 1 David Gathercole (Lotus Elan); 2 Gerry Wainwright (Lotus Elan); 3 Stephen Minoprio (Marcos GT); 4 Bruce Stapleton (Morgan +8). **Class winners** Gathercole, Stapleton, Robin Stainer (AC Cobra); Peter Aylett (Diva 10F); Richard Tovey (MGB); Chris Holland (Lotus Europa); Sid Marler (Lotus Elan S3). **Fastest lap** Gathercole, 1m43.00s.

2nd HSCC 3-HOUR ENDURANCE RACE 1 Joe Ward/Chris Conoley (TVR Griffith) 96 laps (82.97mph); 2 Ian Montgomery/Bruce Montgomery (Jaguar E), 96 laps; 3 Gerry Wainwright/Gary Smelt (Lotus Elan); 4 Peter Hiley/John Palmer/Anthony Binnington (MGB). **Class winners** Conoley/ Ward; Wainwright/Smelt; Hiley/Binnington; Norman Grimshaw/ Barrie Williams (Mini Cooper S); Graf von Wedel/zu Ortenburg (Austin-Healey 3000). **Fastest laps** Bruce Montgomery 1m44.93s (89.20mph); Wainwright 1m46.16s (88.17mph); Johannes Offergeld (Alfa Romeo GTA) 1m50.51s (84.70mph); Marco Ricotto (Alpine-Renault) 1m48.32s (86.41mph); John Day (Austin-Healey 3000) 1m51.49s (83.96mph).

DUTCH TROFEO ALFA ROMEO CHALLENGE (8 LAPS) 1 Nick Sismey (33) 13m37.97s (91.55mph); 2 Graham Presley (75 V6 Turbo) 13m44.46s; 3 Nick Humphrey (33); 4 Huib Onderstal (75TS). **Fastest lap** Sismey 1m39.55s (94.03mph) **record**.

BRITISH SPORTSCAR CHALLENGE (8 LAPS) 1 Roy McCarthy (MGB) 14m18.66s (87.21mph); 2 Alan Charlton (Triumph TR6) 14m21.46s; 3 Brian Lambert (MGB); 4 Peter Hiley (MGB). **Fastest lap** McCarthy 1m45.68s (88.57mph) **record**.

HISTORIC RACING SALOONS (8 LAPS) 1 Peter Goring (Ford Mustang) 15m01.32s (83.08mph); 2 Peter Wray (Lotus Cortina) 15m03.54s; 3 Peter Sugden (Alfa Romeo Giulia); 4 Graeme Dodd (Jaguar Mk2). **Class winners** Goring; Sugden (82.82mph); Louis Bracey (Ford Anglia) (80.38mph); Adrian Oliver (Imp) (77.05mph). **Fastest lap** Goring 1m50.64s (84.60mph).

HSCC Three-hour race

Barrie Williams and Norman Grimshaw put in a giant-killing performance in the Mini

Ward does it again with TVR

The second HSCC three-hour endurance race drew 46 Appendix K starters and was won, as last year, by the Cambridge Motorsport TVR Griffith of Joe Ward. This time Ward shared with rapid Triumph TR4 racer Chris Conoley to notch up another victory.

Front row-starter Nick Faure was the victim of a flash fire in the engine bay of Jeremy Agace's Bizzarini on the grid. But Marcus Menden stepped up to challenge the leading TVR until his Chevrolet Corvette's gearbox failed. His team performed heroics to chang it, and Marcus was able to return for the final hour.

Gerry Wainwright had been the early star, for he had carved Ian Fair's Lotus Elan from the back of the grid – following halfshaft failure before qualifying – to second place in just 17 laps. Shades of *deja vu* for Gerry, (he did the same in Gerard MacQuillan's 26R last year), but a two-stop strategy, because the car wouldn't go 90 minutes on a tank of fuel, and a slower first time co-driver, left him playing catch-up.

After one hour, Ward had 34 seconds over Wainwright, with Ian Montgomery's gorgeous Jaguar E-Type, Charles Allison's Marcos, Mike Freeman's Aston Martin DB4 and Roger Mac, in Peter Ecury's Porsche 911, all a lap down.

Besson's game 1300cc Alpine-Renault – sadly soon to succumb to gearbox trouble – and the Diva of Ian Alexander were next up, pursued by Peter Hiley in Rod Longton's MGB.

A safety car period for the recovery of a beached Cortina played into the TVR's hands, enabling the completion of a full lap's advantage over its rivals, despite the team changing a flat-spotted front tyre as Conoley clambered in during its pit-stop. Nifty pit work also enabled the class-leading Norman Grimshaw/ Barrie Williams Austin Cooper S to make a lap on the Diva. 'Whizzo' Williams needed a 'splash and dash' in the last half hour to complete the tyre-squealing job.

Once Bruce Montgomery took over his father's Jag, he set about whittling the TVR's lead by as much as three seconds per lap. Conoley had a rooted left rear tyre.

When Montgomery was just 32 seconds adrift, Conoley put in a couple of quicker laps to shake his confidence. The TVR kept the gap to the chequer, by which time the E-Type was running on fuel vapour. Wainwright, back in the Elan, fought back to third, a lap down, ahead of the clockwork Hiley/John Palmer MGB, and the giant-killing Cooper S.

Mark Ashworth's MGB wound up sixth, ahead of the Eric Van der Vyver/Gerard Larrousse 911 – the quicker Ecury car having shed a wheel – and the 1100cc Diva.

● Marcus Pye

Simon Hadfield took home the Derek Bell Trophy after a dominant run in his March 722

THRUXTON July 5

Top Klaas BOSS encounter

Nigel Greensall and Klaas Zwart shared BOSS honours. Dud Candler reports

Before the racing, Ken Tyrrell was presented with a BARC gold medal as part of Thruxton's 30th anniversary celebrations. The former Formula 1 boss then watched one of his old 023 chassis, driven by Nigel Greensall, win the first part of the BOSS Formula event. Klaas Zwart made it one apiece with the Footwork in the second race, but a horrible accident involving Bill Hall was on most people's lips as they left the circuit.

As soon as practice got under way it was clear that the outright circuit lap record was in no danger. Bumpy and slippery was the general verdict on the prevailing conditions, and Greensall's pole time, some 3.4s away from the benchmark, confirmed it.

Greensall fired the European Aviation Tyrrell into the lead of race one, with Zwart and Tony Worswick's Jordan heading the vain chase at very respectful distances. Returnee Chris Hill was a lonely fourth, one lap down, after Eddie McLurg's Footwork's dashboard caught fire and Rob Gray crashed, having been nudged by Zwart during lappery.

Hall's accident halted part two after four laps, the unfortunate driver being trapped by his ankles after his Leyton House turned right into the pit wall at around 130mph. Greensall was just heading Zwart at the time, but drama struck before the re-run.

In a carbon copy of his earlier Silverstone problems, Greensall lost air pressure to his gearchange. He started late from the pit lane, but spun into retirement on the first lap. Zwart ran away to win from Ron Cumming who bettered Worswick's ill-handling Jordan for second on aggregate times. Hill was again fourth.

Jeff Bloxham

Nigel Greensall's Tyrrell takes a lead it was never to relinquish in the first BOSS race

Such was the close nature of the Mini-Seven competition that 1.02s covered the top eight finishers! At one stage, they were running five abreast up Woodham Hill. Eventually, Matthew Hayman got the verdict over Dave Percival and James Hayman, but only after a dramatic last-ditch kerbathon at the chicane.

The Miglia Minis did their utmost to match their smaller cousins, with the leading trio running a close-fought race. Richard Wager's first-lap straightlining of the chicane had, amazingly, escaped a penalty, but when the action got a bit too close on the last lap, he went spinabout on Woodham Hill. Ian Curley led, but on the dash to the flag Peter Baldwin came out best by 0.04s. A diplomatic Wager, who recovered for third, merely said afterwards, 'Let's just say things got a bit close out there.'

A cracking Flemings Thoroughbred Sports round saw Joe Ward keep a fast-closing Edd Sharpe at bay to end Howard Brearley's winning streak. Brearley had to content himself with a lonely third. However, the drive of the race came from Ian Montgomery. He came back from an opening-lap spin to snatch Class C from son Bruce on the last lap.

Bruce had earlier made it four wins out of five rounds in the R&D Motorsport Austin Healey race, the Burton-on-Trent man taking it by a massive 37.1s. Steve Bicknell was only about a car's length down when he spun off at Church on the last lap, having clipped a backmarker. That left Jeremy Welch to claim second.

Roly Nix and Dennis Clark claimed a Chevy Camaro one-two in a tense Classic Touring Car round. Chris Conoley only managed third in his polesitting Ford Falcon. A delighted George Bryan scooped the Driver of the Day award, holding on for fourth place and a Class C victory when triple champion Simon Crompton attempted to repass him at impossible speed into the chicane and spun on the last lap.

AUSTIN HEALEYS (10 LAPS) 1 Bruce Montgomery (3000) 16m19.15s (86.62mph); 2 Jeremy Welch (100/4) 16m56.56s; David Smithies (Sprite); 4 Paul Campfield (3000). **Class winners** Montgomery, Welch, Charles Marriott (Frogeye Sprite), David Parry (Sprite). **Fastest laps** Stephen Bicknell (3000) 1m35.79s (88.54mph) **record**; Welch 1m39.17s (85.52mph); Mark Lister (Sprite) 1m41.73s (83.37mph) **record**; Nigel Adams (Sprite) 1m42.60s (82.66mph).

MINI SE7EN CHALLENGE (10 LAPS) 1 Matthew Hayman 17m01.11s (83.06mph); 2 Dave Percival 17m01.29s; 3 James Hayman; 4 Steve Bell; 5 Dave Braggins; 6 Tim Sims. **Fastest lap** Bell 1m39.62s (85.13mph).

MINI MIGLIA CHALLENGE (10 LAPS) 1 Peter Baldwin 15m28.65s (91.33mph); 2 Ian Curley 15m28.69s; 3 Richard Wager; 4 Jonathan Lloyd; 5 Julian Sole; 6 Endaf Owens. **Fastest lap** Curley 1m31.09s (93.11mph).

BOSS FORMULA (15 LAPS) 1 Nigel Greensall (Tyrrell 023) 17m04.60s (124.16mph); 2 Klaas Zwart (Footwork FA13B) 17m19.68s; 3 Tony Worswick (Jordan 194); 4 Chris Hill (Reynard). **Class winners** Greensall, Colin Stone (RAM), Dave Shelton (Reynard). **Fastest laps** Greensall 1m06.19s (128.14mph) **record**; Stone 1m13.44s (115.49mph) **record**; Shelton 1m14.56s (113.75mph) **record**. **RACE TWO (10 LAPS)** 1 Zwart 11m31.45s (122.66mph); 2 Ron Cumming (Footwork FA13) 11m57.96s; 3 Worswick; 4 Hill. **Class winners** Zwart, Shelton. **Fastest laps** Zwart 1m07.15s (126.30mph); Shelton 1m13.39s (115.56mph) **record**; John Henderson (Lola-Buick V6) 1m14.50s (113.84mph).

THOROUGHBRED SPORTS CARS (10 LAPS) 1 Joe Ward (TVR Griffith) 15m32.45s (90.96mph); 2 Edd Sharpe (Aston Martin DB4) 15m33.17s; 3 Howard Brearley (TVR Tuscan); 4 David Heynes (Aston Martin DB4). **Class winners** Ward, Martin Shaw (MGA), Ian Montgomery (Jaguar E Type), Ian Moss (Aston Martin DB4). **Fastest laps** Ward 1m31.88s (92.31mph); Shaw 1m34.51s (89.74mph) **record**; Montgomery 1m35.43s (88.87mph); Moss 1m36.83s (87.59mph) **record**.

CLASSIC TOURING CARS (10 LAPS) 1 Roly Nix (Chevrolet Camaro) 15m23.53s (91.83mph); 2 Dennis Clark (Chevrolet Camaro) 15m25.05s; 3 Chris Conoley (Ford Falcon Sprint); 4 George Bryan (Lotus Cortina). **Class winners** Nix, Bryan, Rick Tanton (Lotus Cortina), Graham Churchill (Mini Cooper S). **Fastest laps** Nix 1m30.23s (93.99mph); Simon Crompton (BMW 1600) 1m31.67s (92.52mph); Tanton 1m32.30s (91.89mph); Churchill 1m34.57s (89.68mph).

JURBY July 4/5

Isle of Man catches party mood

Mainland competition made a welcome return to the Isle of Man for the BARC Motorsport Party weekend.

The event started on Friday with a hillclimb near Port Erin. A varied entry of 22 cars competed, but after practice Bill Tully in his 2-litre Westfield posted the fastest time of 42.20s. For entertainment value, Julie Daniels in a 1924 Vauxhall 30/98 was well worth watching.

Westfield driver Ian Stinton took provisional FTD with a 41.20s, Tully second with 41.49s and local driver Allen Lloyd third in 41.90s in a Jaguar E Type. There was no improvement in the top 10 run-off after Stinton's car broke, spreading oil on the circuit and causing a premature end to the event.

The circuit racing kicked off with race one for BMWs, Jonathon Rowland won convincingly from Don Grice, both driving M3s. Local driver Geoff Evans, in a CSL, beat off the rest for third.

Race one for Westfields saw the continued dominance of Northern Ireland's Lloyd Fowler. The MG event put Robb Addison on the podium once again, having fought closely with Colin Simpson. First in class A was Peter St Barbe, two seconds ahead of Phil Walker.

There were only six finishers in the first combined race for Saloons. Allen Lloyd dominated, winning by 53s in his Jaguar E Type from Ralph Underwood in a Rover Vitesse.

Addison took a second race win in race two for the MGOCs. Walker lifted the trophy for Class A after a non-appearance from St Barbe.

Race two for Westfields also saw a second win for Fowler, with Jamie Bridgewater the Class A winner.

Rowland completed the hat trick of double winners with victory in the BMW Challenge. Lloyd topped a much-depleted six-car field in the Sports/Saloons race.

An all-comers handicap race for the first six-placed finishers in each of the four championship races rounded off proceedings. After a start spanning four minutes and 20 seconds, all 14 finishers crossed the line within 61 seconds, with Edwin Faulkner taking the honours in his magnificent Maserati 450 replica.

● Dale Wells

BMWs - RACE ONE (15 LAPS) 1 Jonathan Rowland (M3) 15m22.98s (84.60mph); 2 Don Grice (M3) 15m25.13s; 3 Geoff Evans (CSL); 4 Peter Seldon (325); 5 Mark Williams (M3); 6 Robert Kinnear (M535i). **Class winners** Rowland; Philip Sutcliffe (M3); Peter Seldon (325); Stuart Laws (323). **Fastest laps** Evans 1m00.27s (84.81mph); Seldon 1m02.22s (82.16mph); Laws 1m03.68s (80.27mph); Sutcliffe 1m04.84s (78.84mph). **RACE TWO (20 LAPS)** 1 Rowland 20m28.22s (84.73mph); 2 Grice 20m28.71s; 3 Evans; 4 Trevor Ford (M6); 5 Seldon; 6 Kinnear. **Class winners** Rowland; Seldon; Euelyne Buanic (325i); Stuart Laws (323). **Fastest laps** Evans 59.77s (85.52mph); Seldon 1m02.14s (82.26mph); Buanic 1m03.41s (80.61mph); Laws (79.88mph).

WESTFIELDS - RACE ONE (15 LAPS) 1 Lloyd Fowler 14m27.42s (91.22mph); 2 Keith Scarfe 14m57.79s; 3 Richard Hardy-Bishop; 4 Michael Edmonds; 5 Stuart King; 6 Jamie Bridgewater. **Class winners** Bridgewater; Fowler. **Fastest lap** Fowler 56.04s (91.22mph); James Bickley 1m02.38s (81.94mph).

RACE TWO (20 LAPS) 1 Fowler 19m17.37s (91.62mph); 2 Bill Tully 19m44.88s; 3 Ian Stinton; 4 Hardy-Bishop; 5 Bridgewater; 6 Edmonds. **Class winners** Fowler, Bridgewater. **Fastest laps** Fowler 55.79s (91.62mph); Edmonds 1m01.93s (91.62mph).

MGs - RACE ONE (15 LAPS) 1 Robb Addison (MG Maestro) 17m24.07s (74.58mph); 2 Colin Simpson (MG Maestro) 17m24.28; 3 Andy Campbell (MG Maestro); 4 John Lane (MG Maestro); 5 Nick Evans (MG Maestro); 6 Peter St Barbe (MG Midget). **Class winners** St Barbe; Addison. **Fastest laps** Simpson 1m08.42s (74.71mph); Simon Stanyer (MG Midget). **RACE TWO (20 LAPS)** 1 Addison 23m06.83s (74.96mph); 2 Simpson 23m20.03s; 3 Lane; 4 Nick Golhar (MG Maestro); 5 Phil Walker (MGB GT); 6 Ian Johnson (Austin Healey Sprite). **Class winners** Addison, Walker. **Fastest laps** Andy Campbell (MG Maestro) 1m07.96s (75.22mph); Walker 1m10.02s (73.00mph).

SALOONS - RACE ONE (15 LAPS) 1 Allen Lloyd (Jaguar E Type) 16m10.58s (81.33mph); 2 Ralph Underwood (Rover Vitesse) 17m03.11s (77.52mph); 3 Nick Cussons (Triumph TR4); 4 Edwin Faulkner (Maserati 450 Special); 5 Steve Graves (Daihatsu Charade); 6 Anthony Wilson-Spratt (Austin Healey Sprite). **Class winners** Lloyd, Underwood. **Fastest laps** Lloyd, 1m02.85 (81.33mph), Adrian Vickers (Ford Capri 3.0) 1m05.41s (78.15mph); Anthony Wilson-Spratt (Austin Healey Sprite) 1m13.24s.

RACE TWO (20 LAPS) 1 Lloyd 22m23.88s (79.58mph); 2 Nick Cussons 22m56.26s; 3 Faulkner; 4 Underwood; 5 Steve Graves (Daihatsu Charade); 6 Anthony Wilson-Spratt (Austin Healey Sprite). **Class winners** Lloyd; Underwood. **Fastest laps** Lloyd 1m04.23s (79.58mph); Underwood, 1m07.22s (76.04mph).

HANDICAP (20 LAPS) 1 Faulkner 23m20.48s (77.68mph); 2 Johnson 23m42.77s; 3 Lorraine Clark (MG Midget); 4 Scarfe; 5 Tully; 6 Edmonds. **Class winners** Johnson; Scarfe; Mark McLennan (BMW 2002); Faulkner. **Fastest laps** Scarfe 57.29s (89.38mph); Lloyd 59.21s (86.33mph); Ford 1m01.24s (83.61mph); Johnson 1m09.52s (73.42mph).

ALL-COMERS HILLCLIMB Class winners Grice 44.05s; Lloyd 41.4s; Sean Valentine (MGB GT) 50.9s; Stinton 40.0s.

MALLORY PARK July 5

Academic for Hamilton

A fifth Inter-Marque victory went to the Jaguar E-Type man. Peter Scherer reports

Malcolm Hamilton won the Inter-Marque race, his fifth this year, following a restart.

Gerry Marshall's Aston Martin V8 led, but only until the second lap. David Lees Porsche 911 RS just held on to third from Richard Finney's Porsche 944T. Win Percy (Jaguar XJ220) and John Edwards (Porsche Carrera RSR) completed the top six.

The Cox & Buckles TR Register race was led by John Churchill for the first five laps, until Colin Pendle's TR7V8 took over, leaving Churchill second. Alan Price's TR7V8 was a lonely third and Mike Hughes's TR5 settled the battle for fourth after Andy Baker spun off.

Race-long pressure from Peter Collis could not stop Tom Stewart heading the Moss International MGBCV8 race throughout. Collis was only 0.41s down at the flag. Dave Tilley was a comfortable third, and Peter Hall pipped Mark Leverett for fourth on the last lap.

The Post-War Aston Martin spoils were evenly matched between the DB4s of Bill Goodall and Pete Foster. For the first five laps Goodall held sway, but, once ahead, Foster did just enough to hold on.

Paul Dudley's Lotus 22 slipped ahead of Neil Daws' Lotus 18 on the second lap of the AMOC Historic Car encounter. While Dudley went on to an clear victory, Daws slipped to fourth with a misfire, promoting Tony Steele's Lola Mk2 and Fred Boothby's Lotus 20.

Harvey Cooke in a Jaguar E-Type became the first man to take two Anglo-American Challenge wins this season, while the Porsche Open and Welsh Sports Saloons saw a rematch between the Porsches of David Lees and Richard Finney. Lees gained the verdict again.

Other race wins went to Adam Crowton's Lotus Elite and George Douglas' Ginetta G12.

AMOC INTER-MARQUE (12 LAPS) 1 Malcolm Hamilton (Jaguar E-Type) 9m51.98s (98.51mph); 2 Gerry Marshall (Aston Martin V8) 9m53.85s; 3 David Lees (Porsche 911 RS). **Class winners** Julian Rehor (Porsche 944T); Andy Shepherd (AC Cobra); Hamilton. **Fastest laps** Rehor 53.55s (90.75mph); David MacMillan (AC Cobra) 51.62s (94.14mph); Hamilton 47.54s (102.22mph) **record**.

COX & BUCKLES TR REGISTER (10 LAPS) 1 Colin Pendle (7V8) 9m06.20s (88.97mph); 2 John Churchill (6) 9m07.32s; 3 Alan Price (7V8). **Class winners** Tony Blake (6); Charles Gillett (3); Hughes; Churchill; Pendle; Steve Crane (Spitfire). **Fastest laps** Mike Hazlewood (4) 56.55s (85.94mph) **record**; Dave Bailey (4) 57.14s (85.05mph); Hughes 54.79s (88.70mph); Churchill 53.35s (91.09mph) **record**; Pendle 53.51s (90.82mph); Martyn Adams (Spitfire) 57.31s (84.80mph) **record**.

MOSS INTERNATIONAL MGBCV8 (10 LAPS) 1 Tom Stewart (GT V8) 8m37.81s (93.85mph); 2 Peter Collis (GT V8) 8m38.22s; 3 David Tilley (B V8). **Class winners** Andy Holmes (B Roadster); Roy McCarthy (B Roadster); Hall; Stewart. **Fastest laps** Spencer McCarthy (B Roadster) 1m00.13s (80.82mph); Roy McCarthy 54.28s (89.53mph); Mark Leverett (B Roadster) 52.37s (92.80mph); Stewart 50.48s (96.27mph).

POST-WAR ASTON MARTINS (12 LAPS) 1 Peter Foster (DB4) 11m07.55s (87.36mph); 2 Bill Goodall (DB4) 11m09.11s; 3 Brian Cowan (DBS V8). **Class winners** Cowan; Michael Jones (DB4); Whight; Foster; Andy Hodge (DB3); Don Salvage (DB4 GT). **Fastest laps** Cowan 54.98s (88.39mph); Jones 58.72s (82.76mph); Whight 56.46s (86.07mph); Foster 54.44s (89.27mph); Hodge 59.51s (81.66mph); Salvage 57.30s (84.81mph).

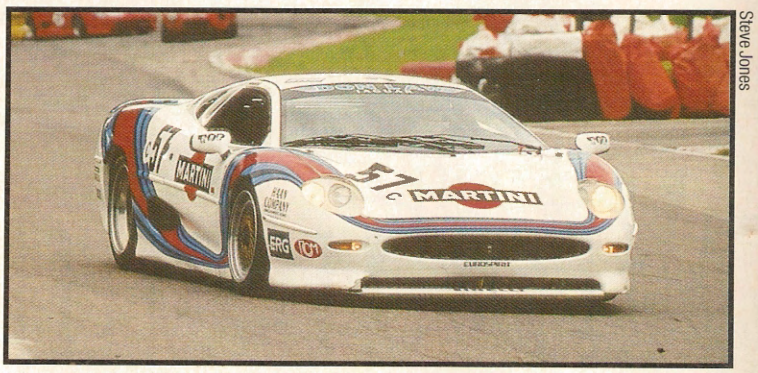
AMOC HISTORIC CARS, CLASSES C1 TO C4 (12 LAPS) 1 Paul Dudley (Lotus 22) 11m23.79s (85.28mph); 2 Tony Steele (Lola Mk2) 11m35.77s; 3 Fred Boothby (Lotus 20). **Class winners** Steele; Daws; Dudley; Rodney Delves (Kieft). **Fastest laps** Steele 55.69s (87.26mph); Daws 55.29s (87.90mph); Dudley 55.12s (88.17mph); Delves 1m01.12s (79.51mph).

PRE-WAR SPORTS CARS, FELTHAM ASTON MARTINS, MG T TYPES & AMOC HISTORIC CARS, CLASSES A&B (12 LAPS) 1 Adam Crowton (Lotus Elite) 11m52.19s (81.88mph); 2 Robin Longdon (Lotus Elite) 11m53.57s; 3 Andy Hodge (Aston Martin DB3). **Class winners** Simon Baldwin (Aston Martin Le Mans); Edward Bradley (Austin 7); Hodge; Crowton; Clewley. **Fastest laps** Baldwin 1m03.01s (77.13mph); Bradley 1m05.30s (74.42mph); Hodge 58.98s (82.40mph); Longdon 58.03s (83.74mph); Clewley 58.65s (82.86mph).

AMOC ANGLO-AMERICAN CHALLENGE (12 LAPS) 1 Harvey Cooke (Jaguar E-Type) 11m00.21s (88.33mph); 2 Alec Hammond (Chevrolet Camaro) 11m02.80s; 3 Bill Withey (Chevrolet Camaro). **Class winners** Mike Ryan (Lotus Elan 26R); Tommy Entwhistle (TVR GT); Cooke. **Fastest laps** Ryan 56.55s (85.94mph); Entwhistle 56.69s (85.72mph); Cooke 54.01s (89.98mph).

PORSCHE OPEN & P&P SUPPLIES WELSH SPORTS/SALOONS (12 LAPS) 1 David Lees (Porsche 911 RS) 10m09.82s (95.63mph); 2 Richard Finney (Porsche 944T) 10m11.19s; 3 Mike Shaw (Darrian T90). **Class winners** Martin Davies (Ford Sapphire Cosworth); Nigel Bowen (Porsche 911 RS); Mark Chandler (Mini); Shaw; Lees. **Fastest laps** Keith Butcher (Ford Sierra RS500) 51.12s (95.07mph); Jeremy Pope (Ford Sapphire Cosworth) 54.30s (89.50mph); Chandler 53.52s (90.80mph); Shaw 51.52s (94.33mph); Finney 49.29s (98.60mph).

BRIDGESTONE JAGUAR XK CHALLENGE, WITH CLASSIC SPORTS vs SALOON CHALLENGE (12 LAPS) 1 George Douglas (Ginetta G12) 10m51.95s (89.45mph); 2 Graham Miller (Triumph TR7 V8) 10m54.58s; 3 Bill Goodall (Aston Martin DB4). **Class winners** Grant Williams (Jaguar MKII); David Woodgate (Jaguar S-Type); Douglas; Churchill; Miller. **Fastest laps** Williams 58.58s (82.96mph); Graham Warwick (Jaguar MKI) 1m02.56s (77.68mph); Douglas 52.27s (92.97mph); Churchill 53.86s (90.23mph); Miller 53.23s (91.30mph).



Steve Jones

Win Percy's Martini-liveried Jaguar XJ220 sports racer was a definite crowd-pleaser

HAREWOOD July 4/5

Moran rekindles series defence

A missed gearchange and six hundredths of a second were all that stood between David Grace and a sixth Auto Windscreens British Hillclimb victory after Roger Moran had set the early pace.

With the title defence beginning to slip from his grasp, Moran had qualified the MP72-Judd inside Andy Priaulx's three-year-old class record. After Grace's challenge had faded, a fighting run-off opener remained enough to take the much-needed win that brought him back into contention, just a point behind his archrival.

Moran's win tally now stands at three to Grace's five, but the back to back rounds at Jersey and Guernsey are next on the agenda. 'That could even it up,' ventured a cautiously optimistic Moran, who has been unbeaten in the Channel Islands for the last two years.

Former Harewood champion Tim Mason regained his form in Yorkshire. Third place ahead of Roy Lane extended his series advantage over the venue's most prolific winner. Their battle overshadowed Simon Durling, who found himself pushed down the order after an early top three placing.

Too late on the brakes into Quarry, Rob Turnbull was another victim of Harewood's deceptive final bend. He ended up sixth ahead of Bill Bristow, who hurled the Ralt-Hart into a sideways seventh, his best finish of the year. Two-litre class winner Simon Frost punched the QED MP62 up to eighth ahead of fellow Scot Graeme Wight Jr, who had again dug deep to qualify the Pilbeam-BDA. After a fraught day with the Pilbeam-Judd, Deryk Young fought back only to beach the car in the Orchard gravel and end up 10th.

Another former Harewood champ, Dennis Crompton, forced his BMW Touring under Colin Stewart's non-kit car ModProd record only for Stewart's svelte Elan to deny him his 50th birthday present on the very next run.

Challenging hard for this year's local hill title, Jonathan Mounsey and current series leader Bobby Fryers fought out a merged road modified class with Mounsey taking the win, but Fryers maintained his series lead with another record in the Clio Williams.

A relieved Tom New snatched the 2-litre ModProd class, ahead of battling Newtons, David and Peter, to maintain his second spot on the Leaders table. After replacing a driveshaft on the lusty MGB V8, Alastair Crawford lifted Haydn Spedding's big ModProd record from challenger Claude Spencer.

A record breaker on each of his visits to Harewood, Supersports supremo Martin Groves's third in a row consolidated his Leaders series advantage. Paul Haimes's Mallock-Millington set the sports libre pace, but he succumbed in a hectic class as regular pacemakers Tim Elmer and finally Roger Thomas snatched the lead.

After Dean Kidsley and Mark Lawrence had taken their customary wins in the early single-seater classes, top Harewood FTD series contender Peter Griffiths was hard on the tail of the Frost/Le Gallais two-litre scrap as rival Jamie Hylton's Malan-BDA pressed Wight Jr hard for 1600 racing honours.

● Jerry Sturman

Jerry Sturman

A missed gear cost David Grace his chance of victory, to the benefit of Roger Moran

RAC BRITISH HILLCLIMB CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND 9

BTD: Roger Kilty (4.0 Pilbeam-Judd/J&F MP72-3), 52.10s **Top 12 Run-Off**: 1 Moran, 52.10s; 2 David Grace (3.5 Gould Ralt-DFR/LPE GR37), 52.15s; 3 Tim Mason (3.5 Pilbeam-Judd/Connaught CV MP50M), 53.49s; 4 Roy Lane (4.0 Pilbeam-Judd/J&F EV MP58-9), 53.68s; 5 Simon Durling (4.0 Pilbeam-DFL/J&F MP58-8), 53.90s; 6 Rob Turnbull (3.5 Gould-DFR/LPE GR37), 54.92s; 7 Bill Bristow (2.5 Ralt-Hart/Beattie RT36), 55.24s; 8 Simon Frost (2.0 Pilbeam-Vauxhall/QED MP62-5), 55.31s; 9 Graeme Wight Jr (1.6 Pilbeam-BDA/Richardson MP62-10), 55.48s; 10 Deryk Young (3.5 Pilbeam-Judd/Merlin EV MP58-1), 55.52s; 11 Christian Mineeff (3.5 SPA-Judd/Beattie CV), 56.08s; John Moulds (2.8 Pilbeam-Hart MP62-12), DNS. **Class winners** Nick Taylor (3.6 Porsche 911), 66.01s; Geraint Evans (3.0 Porsche 911 Carrera), 68.37s; Geoffrey Goodwin (1.3 MG Midget), 72.14s; Matthew Pinder (1.4 MG Metro), 63.86s; Colin Stewart (1.6 Lotus Elan S3), 63.37s **record**; Tim Wilson (1.6 Caterham 7), 66.36s **record**; Jonathan Mounsey (2.0 Ford Sapphire RS Cosworth), 65.93s; Alastair Crawford (5.0 MGB V8), 62.40s **record**; Malcolm Dungworth (2.0t Dax Rush 4x4), 66.09s **record**; Tom New (2.0 Caterham Super 7), 59.38s; Martin Groves (1.7 Mallock Mk20B), 56.44s **record**; Roger Thomas (2.0 Vision V91), 57.61s; Mineeff, 56.24s; Peter Wright (0.5 Cooper Mk8), 70.41s; Dean Kidsley (0.5 Jedi 4/95), 61.77s; Mark Lawrence (1.1 OMS), 57.22s; David Sturdy (1.6 Van Diemen RF86), 62.22s; Wight Jr, 55.77s; Frost, 55.95s; Moran, 52.41s **record**. **Auto Windscreens RAC British Championship:** 1 Grace, 74pts; 2 Moran, 73; 3 Mason, 58; 4 Lane, 56; 5 Turnbull, 41; 6 Durling, 36; etc. **RACMSA Hillclimb Leaders Championship:** 1 Groves, 81pts; 2 New, 78; 3 Wight Jr, 75; 4 Moran, 63; 5 Peter Herbert, 60; 6 Lawrence, 59; etc. Next rounds: Bouley Bay (Jersey), July 16 and Le Val des Terres (Guernsey), July 18.

Budding stars: An unsettled driver line-up dogged KJR through the early part of this season, but now the team is building on a consistent base

Not kidding anymore

Kid Jensen Racing had a shaky start in Euroseries FOpel but, as Tim Scott found, now it's serious about success

It was one of the highest profile launches of a new junior formulae team in recent years. But since that day of fanfare in mid-February when Budweiser Kid Jensen Racing revealed its plans to the world, it's found life in Euroseries Formula Opel to be tough.

It isn't that there haven't been good moments along the way. Experienced American driver Elton Julian was challenging for third place at one stage in the first Austrian race at the A1-Ring. New driver Stuart Moseley was running a strong sixth a fortnight ago at Hockenheim. But somehow, as the series heads for a prestigious double-header supporting the British Grand Prix at Silverstone this weekend, the results have just not materialised.

Apportioning blame isn't appropriate when a brand new team is running in a formula as competitive as this year's Euroseries. You have to point to the fact, however, that KJR has had five different drivers in as many months. In a formula that places great emphasis on the driver's input, this can't have helped.

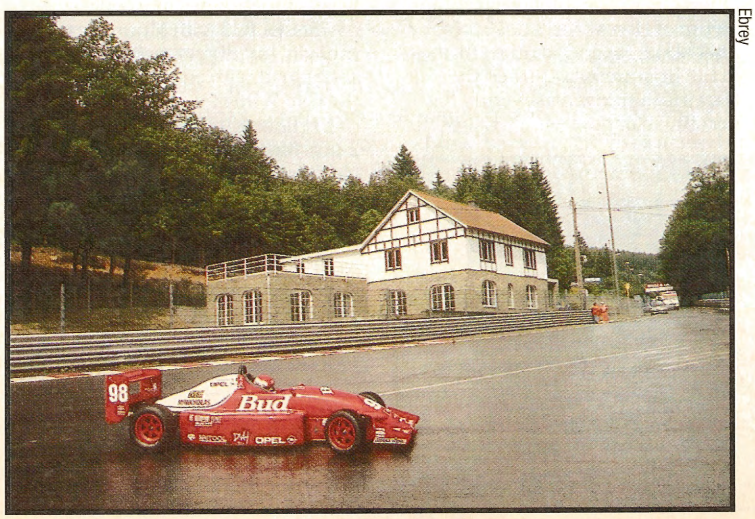
'The lack of continuity with the drivers has been our biggest problem,' admits KJR's chief engineer, Simon Barker. 'We underestimated the trouble we'd have. We haven't been able to work with a driver concertedly to get those final tweaks on the car right.'

KJR's pre-season star signing, Darren Malkin, had looked like the man to do that job. But he left the team somewhat acrimoniously in March before the Euroseries began after disagreements between his father and the team.

> **"We've got the infrastructure and we're as good as any other team out there"**
> **SIMON BARKER, CHIEF ENGINEER**

Elton Julian showed promise but jumped ship

Ebrey



A lack of track time has seen KJR struggle in the wet, as Tom Guinchard showed at Spa

Ebrey

Malkin's place was taken by Julian, a former British Formula 3 race winner, but he jumped ship last month with money problems, compounded by frustration at the lack of results. Already the other original driver, Matt Bettley, had withdrawn after the launch because of lack of finance, being replaced by Formula Ford racer Tom Guinchard.

The new man to fill the breach and join Guinchard is Moseley, who last year finished seventh in the British Formula Vauxhall championship (the UK's version of FOpel), having become only the second man to win a race overall in a class B car the year before. He could prove to be a big plus for the team.

'We've had bad luck with our drivers, but it's lucky in the fact that the musical chairs we've endured have

Ebrey

Bloxham

Chief engineer Barker sees a way forward

led us to Stuart,' says team patron and Heart FM disc-jockey David 'Kid' Jensen. 'Firstly, he's a personable, articulate and very quick racer, but he's also an experienced driver with this formula.'

Maybe Moseley will be the antidote to the problems KJR has had setting up the cars – so crucial in a series that's always tight, and against teams which have years of experience, such as championship leaders AR Motorsport.

Barker points out that of the four double-header meetings so far this season, all at tracks new to the team, the two that have gone best were where they had dry running all weekend. Otherwise its lack of data drops it behind the others.

'I admit our results have been extremely disappointing,' Barker says. 'But as soon as it rains we do get a bit stuck because of the lack of track time. This happened at Zolder and Spa, where we struggled. But when it's been dry, as at the A1-Ring and Hockenheim, we've been right on the pace. It's all coming together slowly, although the results aren't there. But it's only marginal – we're not a million miles away.'

There are reasons why this could be a watershed now for KJR, as it heads into four British races, at the Grand Prix and then a week later at Donington Park. This is not only because it now has a settled driver line-up. Moseley's fourth place at the GP meeting last year bodes well, and the team will now be on tracks at which it has tested. The last couple of weeks have also seen the final touches of setting up the team.

The brains behind the team were Barker, formerly Ukyo Katayama's engineer at the Tyrrell Formula 1 team, and Tyrrell marketing man Vincent Franceschini. They linked up with their friend Jensen, and all three have been working flat out over the past six months to get everything in place.

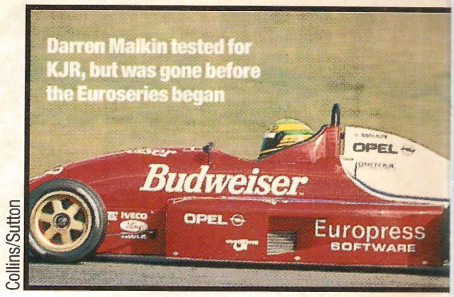
'On 1 January we had nothing but a brochure,' explains Barker. 'Most people think that FOpel means just buying two cars and going out to race, but there's a hell of a lot more to it than that. We've spent six months setting up, and Vincent and I have started a company, Protech, to actually run the team. From zero, we've now got industrial premises, a truck, the cars, employees, and we've also got the marketing side set up. The team – everyone, in fact – has been working absolutely flat out.'

This hard work has been noticed from several areas – most crucially by that all-important title-sponsor. 'The best thing about Budweiser is that we've not had any pressure to deliver the goods on the podium yet, which is great,' says Jensen.

The high-profile sponsorship from the beer giant may have wrongly given the impression that KJR had bottomless pockets. Far from it, but any inter-paddock jealousy has been overcome, and KJR has now earned the respect and friendship of the other Euroseries teams. 'In the beginning people thought "who the hell do you think you are?",' says Barker. 'But now we are part of the scene, and they realise that we're normal people working hard to do a good job on what is actually quite a small budget.'

It's taken a while to get to where they are today, but the team can now look forward to the rest of the year, starting with this weekend. And if that elusive first win doesn't come, at least KJR has achieved one goal. It set out to show it was serious, as it's looking to moving to F3000 next year (see panel). It's certainly done that, and the building blocks are now in place for us to move to real success.

'I think from now on we're looking to be in the top five,' says Barker. 'We're established, we've got the infrastructure, the atmosphere will be more relaxed for the drivers, and we're as good as any other team out there.' If it doesn't work out, it won't be for want of trying. ■



Collins/Sutton

Darren Malkin tested for KJR, but was gone before the Euroseries began

Ebrey

Jensen maintains his participation in motorsport is a serious, long-term affair, and he hopes to make it to F1 one day

Lawrence/LAT

Stuart Moseley ran well at Hockenheim, and showed that the team does have potential

Jockeying for position

KJR needs to come good if it wants to make the jump to F3000

Starting a team under the name of a celebrity can be a double-edged sword. On the one side it guarantees a high profile, helping it attract an impressive sponsor such as Budweiser, itself a brand synonymous with motorsport in North America. It always means, though, that the team has to prove itself more than other new outfits to be a serious, professional effort – especially so for KJR, as it intends to graduate to Formula 3000 next year.

For Jensen, Barker and Franchescini, the founders of KJR, showing the world that this is more than simply a flirtation with motorsport is one of the most vital parts of the year's programme. 'We were never going to be just three friends racing for a season to have some fun and see what happens,' states Jensen. 'We're here as a proper team.'

Being in Euroseries Formula Opel means that KJR already amounts to this, but moving to F3000 would certainly drive the point home. It could be like jumping from the frying pan into the fire, though. F3000 is booming at the moment and is massively competitive. But Jensen feels its a logical step for his team to take: 'Hopefully, one day we'll be in a position where we can race in Formula 1, but I think that F3000 is an achieveable goal for us at the moment. It's something we think and talk about a lot.'

There is a strong argument that a team should excel in a junior formulae before attempting to race in F3000. But for KJR it amounts to something of a now-or-never situation. It feels it has to continue the momentum gathered in its first year, while the new chassis being introduced to both the Euroseries and F3000 makes this an obvious time to leap. All F3000 teams will be starting with a clean slate with the new Lola chassis, while some of the lessons gained this year in Formula Opel will be lost to a new car.

F3000 is also closer to Barker's field of expertise as an engineer after all his F1 experience with Tyrrell. As for proving its worth as a team, Jensen remains pragmatic. 'People will only find out the true answer to that in a few years when we're still around in F3000. That will be the test, but we're going to persevere – we're determined and we're driven.'

Why Schuey will stay

JAMES ALLEN
ITV PIT LANE REPORTER

'Ferrari has become great again,' according to Gianni Agnelli . The head of the Italian marque's parent, Fiat, last week announced that it will be holding on to Michael Schumacher. He omitted to say that the deal is not yet done, but the German will drive for the Prancing Horse for the foreseeable future because Agnelli, one of the most powerful men in Italy, wants him to. He's not the only one.

Flamboyant Ferrari president Luca di Montezemolo needs Schumacher like he needs silk ties. He has said that without him it would be 'a World Championship of taxi drivers' and added that 'he is the undisputed champion who gives Ferrari the chance to win the world title. We will do everything to keep him'.

Bernie Ecclestone, who controls Formula 1, needs Schuey at Maranello for a number of reasons. First because, believe it or not, he is a sentimentalist who loves to see the red cars win. He greatly admired Enzo Ferrari and I've always imagined he got the tinted glasses idea from the patriarch, who wore them, he said, 'so people cannot read in my eyes what I am thinking'.

Sentimental or not, Ecclestone also knows that having the Italian manufacturer in form is good for F1's box office appeal. Not just in Europe, but anywhere in the world you might find car freaks with soul – like the Far East or the USA – a market F1 desperately needs to break back into. Ferrari is probably the only current F1 brand name the Hollywood moguls bankrolling Sly Stallone's racing movie have ever heard of. 'The sport needs him,' Bernie said recently, 'and it's a pity there aren't more like him.'

The fans need Schuey in a red car because it gives them something to get excited about every other weekend. Notwithstanding McLaren's recent wobbles in Canada and France, it would be foolish to think that the Newey-McLaren-Mercedes-Bridgestone axis will be anything other than formidable for at least the next three or four years. So who's going race them? Fortunes go in cycles and the other top teams are undergoing a transitional phase – Williams looks set for a few years of rebuilding with BMW and new drivers, while Benetton might come up with the cherries, but it'll be a while before they're all in a line.

Like this season, the next few years will be about McLaren versus Ferrari and I would predict that their rivalry will reach new heights of paranoia and craziness, with dark murmurings of playing fields not being level, industrial espionage and traction control. The British team copying the Italian by sticking a huge wok lid on the roof of its truck to send data back to the factory will be just the start.

However, Ferrari seems to be the only outfit which can take the fight to McLaren and whatever your view on Schuey's road manners, it's always great to see a real ace winning against superior cars. If he's doing it in a blood red piece of machinery… well perhaps it's just a guy thing.

> **"Schumacher is the undisputed champion. We will do everything to keep him"**
> **LUCA DI MONTEZEMOLO**

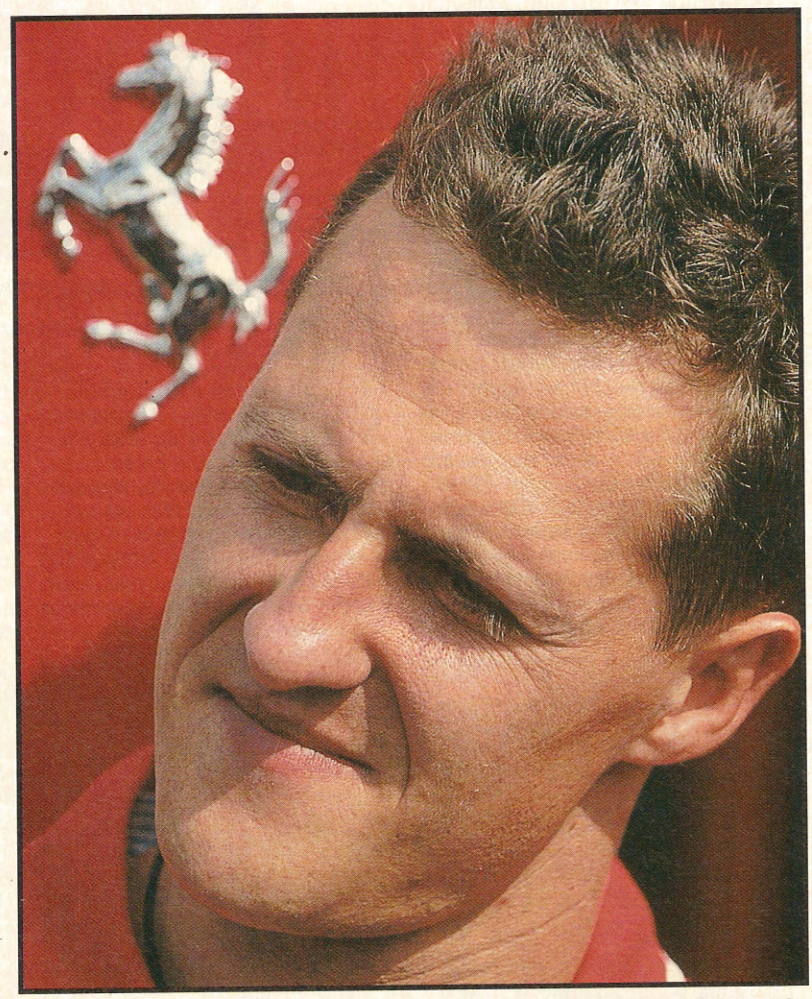
Someone else, though, has the most need to see Schumacher in a Ferrari – the German himself. No other team could look after him the way it does. It pays him what he wants, and part of the deal gives him the right to use its logo in his own merchandising, which must be worth a fortune in itself. Association with the Prancing Horse bestows a level of international recognition way beyond any other team, as Nigel Mansell found when he went there. This, of course, does no harm when it comes to selling the odd baseball cap.

The team gives Schumacher a degree of freedom and control which arch manipulators like Senna and Prost could only dream of. No other outfit at this level would give him the keys to the factory. He is the undisputed number one and all of the 400-plus employees are working for him. On top of that, he was able to bring in his mates, like Ross Brawn and Rory Byrne, which not only bolstered his position but also nobbled a dangerous rival, Benetton, for a while. 'This is the best team in F1,' Schumacher said after Magny-Cours, and it's easy to see why he feels that way.

Ferrari has also given him something very special – the chance to find redemption. After driving into Jacques Villeneuve at Jerez last year, Schumacher's stock was low. Everybody went for him, including the normally partisan German and Italian public. Things looked pretty bleak. However, once he started winning again – not just ordinary wins, but *tour de force* displays like Argentina and Canada, beating the Silver Arrows – things began to turn around and the outcast was once again the hero of Ferrari-loving romantics the world over. There is still a scratch on his image, but the Italian and German media now seem to have forgotten Spain, again referring to him as 'Ferrari's champion'.

What are his chances this weekend? The Italian marque hasn't won Silverstone since 1990 and it's one of the few Grands Prix the German has never won, either.

Testing last week suggests that McLaren has a few tenths advantage in race trim and Ron Dennis had his boys practising refuelling drill – publicly – for a whole morning at Silverstone last week. The message is clear: McLaren means to regain the initiative. It is a class outfit and has spent too long in the wilderness – six years – to let this opportunity slip away. It's showtime, folks. ■



Schumacher and Ferrari seem set to stay together, because he needs them as much as they him

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