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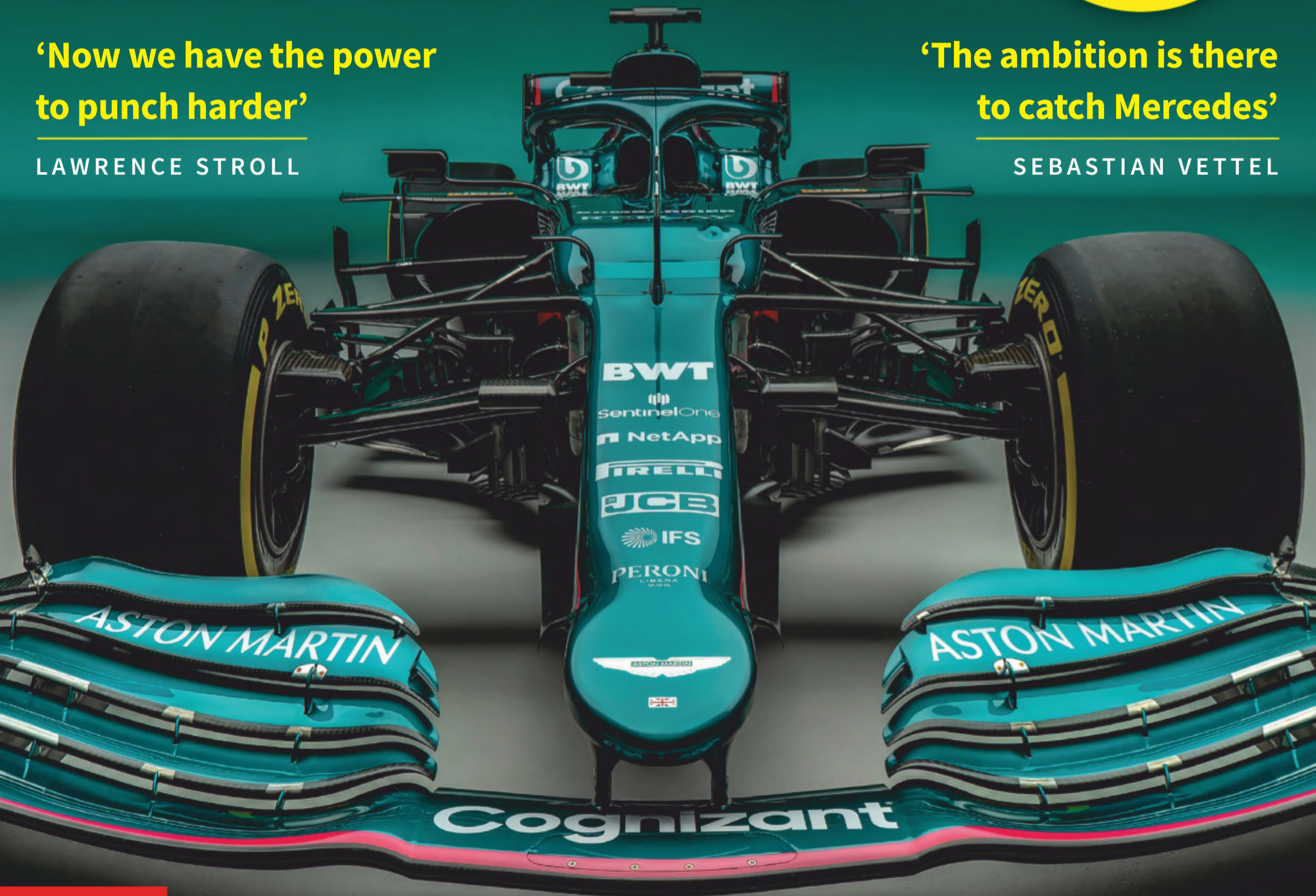
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Aston Martin begins its strongest push for Formula 1 success

Can Aston Martin really take on Formula 1's big teams? The squad, previously known as Racing Point (among many other monikers), has long had a reputation for punching above its weight. And, with Lawrence Stroll's financial clout behind it, that punch should soon have a lot more energy.

Whatever you think of Stroll's commitment to running son Lance in one car, and the move of the Aston Martin name away from its traditional home in endurance racing, it's hard not to think that a beefed-up version of the slick Force India/Racing Point squad will be pretty effective. This season is too early to challenge Mercedes and Red Bull – Aston will surely be in the fight with Ferrari, McLaren and Alpine for third spot in the constructors' championship – but the team is another eyeing the new 2022 regulations with relish.

What it can achieve this year will be heavily influenced by what its drivers can deliver. Sebastian Vettel has to revitalise his career after a dismal final campaign at Ferrari, while Stroll Jr needs to step up his game to justify his long-term place in F1. But, as several key members tell Luke Smith in our cover article on page 20, the team believes it can create the right environment for both to thrive.

We couldn't let Aston's fine GT programme with Prodrive pass into history without a proper farewell, so Gary Watkins takes a look back at what could be argued is its finest motorsport period (p32). So far...



Kevin Turner
Chief Editor

kevin.turner@autosport.com

**NEXT WEEK
18 MARCH**

Who won the testing war?
Our in-depth analysis of
Formula 1 testing
in Bahrain

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Aston Martin, Motorsport Images/Ehrhardt

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Empty grandstands, such as in 2020, cannot be countenanced by the ACO this time around

LE MANS POSTPONED TO ALLOW

LE MANS 24 HOURS

The hope that the Le Mans 24 Hours can welcome back spectators this year has resulted in the centrepiece round of the World Endurance Championship being pushed back to August. It will be only the third time in the history of the French enduro that the race has not taken place in May or June, after 1968 and last year.

The new date of the 89th running of Le Mans is 21-22 August, which replaces the original 12-13 June calendar slot. It follows last year's event being pushed back to September and held behind closed doors as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pierre Fillon, president of Le Mans organiser and WEC promoter the Automobile Club de l'Ouest, said: "Although it was a tough decision to make, it is the right one. Holding the 24 Hours behind closed doors for the second year running would be unthinkable. We are therefore doing all we can to avoid that happening and to give competitors a clear view of the whole season. We are working very hard to put on a safe event, with all the necessary health precautions in place."

The ACO will reveal the format of race week and information on tickets at the end of April. That will include whether or not there will be an official test day, which had been reinstated for this year one week, rather than two, ahead of the race.

No indication at this stage has been given by the ACO about how many spectators might be able to attend. Last year it planned to allow up to 50,000 – about a

sixth of the normal attendance – in 5000-strong bubbles around the track. That had to be abandoned in the run-up to the race, with Fillon citing "too many question marks regarding health and safety".

The new Le Mans date clashed with the Virginia International Raceway IMSA SportsCar Championship round for GT Le Mans and GT Daytona machinery, but the North American sanctioning body quickly announced an end-of-season calendar rejig. The move has cleared the way for Corvette Racing to make its return to Le Mans after a year's hiatus, which was confirmed on the publication of the Le Mans entry list on Tuesday.

The VIR race was pushed back to 9 October. That was the date for the Petit Le Mans 10-hour enduro at Road Atlanta, which will now be run on 13 November.

The Algarve WEC round set to kick off this year's schedule on 4 April was postponed the day after the Le Mans news. It will move to the weekend originally earmarked for the 24 Hours, with the eight-hour race taking place on 13 June. That means that the Spa 6 Hours on 1 May is now the opening round. Fillon said that the ACO needed to be "extremely flexible in our decision-making due to the ongoing pandemic situation". The rest of the six-race schedule remains unaltered.

The full 62-car entry for Le Mans was unveiled by the ACO on Tuesday afternoon. Corvette Racing's presence on the list with a pair of mid-engined C8.Rs and that of the Proton WeatherTech Racing Porsche 911 RSR has brought the GTE Pro field up to seven cars.



REVISED WEC CALENDAR		
ROUND	VENUE	DATE
1	6 Hours of Spa BEL	1 May
2	8 Hours of Portimao PRT	13 June
3	6 Hours of Monza ITA	18 July
4	24 Hours of Le Mans FRA	21-22 August
5	6 Hours of Fuji JPN	26 September
6	8 Hours of Bahrain BHR	20 November



Portuguese government gives the nod for 2021 GP

FORMULA 1

Formula 1 has finalised its 23-race calendar for 2021 by announcing that the Portuguese Grand Prix will be held on 2 May.

A rejig was forced by the postponement of the Australian GP, and the Chinese GP's removal from the calendar in January. F1 had therefore planned a return to the Algarve Circuit, which stepped in to host a 2020 Portuguese GP, for its third round of the season following the Bahrain and Imola events.

The race remained TBC until last week, when government approval was granted to ensure that F1 will return to Portugal.

"We are thrilled to announce that Formula 1 will be racing again in Portimao after the huge success of the race last year," said F1 CEO and president Stefano Domenicali. "We want to thank the promoter and the Portuguese government for their hard work and dedication in getting us to this point."

Last year's Portuguese GP, the first to be held since Estoril hosted the race from 1984-96, won praise from drivers and teams. A crowd of 27,000 attended the 2020 race, and a decision on whether or not to run the 2021 event behind closed doors will be taken by the local authorities "in the coming weeks".

Although Portugal is currently on the UK's 'red list', requiring 10 days of hotel quarantine upon returning from the country, the F1 paddock would likely avoid this given the event is just one week before the Spanish Grand Prix, allowing them to travel direct to Barcelona.

F1 previously said that it was hopeful of allowing spectators to attend the majority of races on the calendar in 2021, and updates arrived on two events last week.

The season-opening Bahrain GP on 28 March will be open to spectators, but only those who have received both COVID-19 vaccinations or can prove that they have fully recovered from the virus. They will be required to wear masks at all times and will be subject to a health screening on entry, as well as adhering to social distancing. All entertainment and fan experiences will be held outdoors.

Meanwhile, the Azerbaijan GP has become the first to announce that it will not be permitting a crowd at its 2021 race, so the Baku event will take place behind closed doors on 6 June. "While the global situation and pandemic response is continuing to improve, it has become clear that the race weekend has arrived too soon for Baku to safely host the event with fans present," a statement read.

LUKE SMITH

FANS' RETURN

The biggest class is LMP2 with 25 entries, including 11 in the pro-am sub-category that demands a bronze-rated driver in each car's line-up. Risi Competizione, a three-time class winner at Le Mans, will field a prototype at the big race for only the second time. Mazda IMSA driver Oliver Jarvis and European Le Mans Series regular Ryan Cullen have so far been nominated to drive its ORECA-Gibson 07. IMSA stalwart PR1 Mathiasen Motorsports will make its Le Mans debut in P2 together with Patrick Kelly. He was one of the two automatic invitees from the IMSA series.

United Autosports has taken up two of its guaranteed spots, which means it will field a total of three ORECA's including its full-season WEC car. Paul di Resta, who helped United to the 2019-20 P2 WEC title, will return to the team to drive one, while Nico Jamin, who is racing for the team in the ELMS, is listed in the other entry.

Three of the four GT teams that garnered automatic entries via last month's Asian Le Mans Series have firmed up Le Mans programmes in GTE Am. Optimum Motorsport will field a Ferrari 488 GTE Evo under the Inception Racing banner, while Herberth Motorsport and Rinaldi Racing will also run the Italian machinery.

The SRT41 squad run by Frederic Sausset, the quadruple amputee who raced at Le Mans in 2016, has gained an entry in the 'Garage 56' slot for a P2 ORECA to be driven by a team of disabled drivers. He was forced to withdraw last year on financial grounds.

GARY WATKINS



Quartararo leads the way for Yamaha in opening test

MOTOGP

New factory Yamaha recruit Fabio Quartararo set the pace in the first of two Qatar pre-season tests ahead of the 2021 MotoGP campaign.

The Frenchman, who has switched from the satellite Petronas SRT Yamaha squad, was “totally lost” readjusting to his YZR-M1 (above) on the opening day, but set the best time of the test late on the second day as he evaluated various new Yamaha bits.

Yamaha’s 2021 chassis is meant to be closer to the 2019 version that Quartararo preferred, but he admitted that it was hard to truly evaluate the new frame against the old one so soon.

Team-mate Maverick Vinales, who was seventh, opted to focus more on his riding style than work with the new chassis and was “surprised” by his pace. Meanwhile, Valentino Rossi got his first laps under his belt as a Petronas SRT rider but wasn’t hugely impressed by the new Yamaha either.

Aleix Espargaro demonstrated encouraging pace on the revamped Aprilia, one of only two marques, alongside KTM, allowed to start 2021 with a completely new bike. The Spaniard was third, but stressed cautious optimism. He trailed Jack Miller (below), who debuted a radical new Ducati aero package. Franco Morbidelli was fourth on his ‘A-spec’ Petronas SRT Yamaha, on which he found the updates ‘surprising’.

Pol Espargaro made his Honda debut and was 12th, although he admits that not yet knowing where the limit of the RC213V is “stressful”.

Reigning champion Suzuki debuted its 2022 prototype engine, with Alex Rins (10th) pleased with the evolution and head start on next year’s work. World champion Joan Mir was eighth and inconclusive on the 2021 chassis.

Miguel Oliveira was top KTM runner in 11th as he sought front-end gains on his factory RC16.

LEWIS DUNCAN



TOP 10 LOSAIL TIMES		
POS	RIDER (BIKE)	TIME
1	Fabio Quartararo (Yamaha)	1m53.940s
2	Jack Miller (Ducati)	1m54.017s
3	Aleix Espargaro (Aprilia)	1m54.152s
4	Franco Morbidelli (Yamaha)	1m54.153s
5	Stefan Bradl (Honda)	1m54.210s
6	Johann Zarco (Ducati)	1m54.356s
7	Maverick Vinales (Yamaha)	1m54.395s
8	Joan Mir (Suzuki)	1m54.515s
9	Francesco Bagnaia (Ducati)	1m54.651s
10	Alex Rins (Suzuki)	1m54.658s

Haas proteges join Kubica in P2

EUROPEAN LE MANS SERIES

“Not a Plan B.” That’s how Louis Deletraz, a veteran of four seasons in Formula 2 and a former Haas Formula 1 simulator driver, is billing his switch of codes in 2021. The Swiss will contest his first full season of sportscar racing with the WRT LMP2 squad in the European Le Mans Series.

Deletraz, who raced for the Rebellion LMP1 team at the 2020 Le Mans 24 Hours, was last week announced for WRT’s solo ELMS ORECA-Gibson 07 together with 2020 Euroformula Open and 2021 Asian Le Mans Series champion Yifei Ye. They will join Alfa Romeo F1 test and reserve Robert Kubica for the six-race series and Le Mans.

“I love endurance and I loved making my Le Mans debut last year,” said Deletraz. “This is something I really want to commit to. Looking at the future with Le Mans Hypercars and then LMDh coming to the World Endurance Championship in 2022-23, endurance is going to have a big next 10 years. I want to be part of that.”

He revealed that one of the reasons for choosing the ELMS over the WEC was because he had been considering another season in F2, which doesn’t have any date clashes with the ELMS. He also said that racing exclusively in Europe made more sense should other opportunities, perhaps in the GT ranks, come up.

Deletraz got his first taste of the ORECA P2 at Barcelona at the start of this week.

Two-time Haas grand prix starter Pietro Fittipaldi will also contest the ELMS alongside his reserve role with Haas and a four-race IndyCar oval programme with Dale Coyne Racing. He will drive one of the G-Drive Racing ORECA’s run by Algarve Pro Racing in the pro-am P2 class with Rui Andrade and John Falb, who both drove with the team in last month’s ALMS.

GARY WATKINS



Fittipaldi and Deletraz (r) are now ELMS rivals

Jota to run GT McLaren

GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE

Top LMP2 team Jota Sport will return to GT racing by fielding a McLaren 720S GT3 with an all-factory driver line-up in this year's GT World Challenge Europe.

The 2014 and 2017 Le Mans 24 Hours class-winning squad will enter the Sprint and Endurance series with Ben Barnicoat and Oliver Wilkinson, who achieves full factory status after a season as a 'McLaren Professional Driver' in British GT and GTWCE Endurance. The pair will be joined for the Endurance rounds by Rob Bell, who raced with Wilkinson at Optimum Motorsport in GTWCE last season.

McLaren Customer Racing director Ian Morgan said: "It's tremendously exciting for us to have Jota on board for 2021, with three McLaren factory drivers also involved in the programme. The team's vast experience and success in endurance racing and professionalism will, I'm confident, allow them to compete at the highest level throughout 2021 in the 720S GT3."

Jota last competed in international GT racing under its own banner when it ran an Aston Martin Vantage GTE in the 2011 Le Mans Series. It is unclear what the McLaren announcement means for Jota's involvement with the R-Motorsport Aston Martin squad



it jointly staffed with Arden until the team's withdrawal from GTWCE in 2020.

Jota co-owner David Clark, who was the director of McLaren Cars when it won Le Mans in 1995 and oversaw its title double in the BPR Global Endurance championship in 1995-96, told Autosport that "the collaboration between Jota and McLaren will be terrific. We believe in it and we're totally committed to it. The timing is right for both parties. My partner Sam Hignett and I have been waiting for a long time to find the right moment and I think this is it."

Clark added that former Nissan Australia Supercars technician Nathan McColl will head up the GT programme as chief engineer. "We're totally organised already with the personnel," he said.

The team will enter its two ORECA-Gibson LMP2 cars in the World Endurance Championship, with returning trio Antonio Felix da Costa, Anthony Davidson and Roberto Gonzalez joined in a second entry by Asian Le Mans Series runner-up Sean Gelael, Tom Blomqvist and Stoffel Vandoorne.

JAMES NEWBOLD



Kvyat stays in F1 as Alpine reserve

FORMULA 1

AlphaTauri exile Daniil Kvyat (left) will remain in the F1 paddock this year as Alpine's new reserve driver.

Kvyat's on-and-off saga with Red Bull's sister team came to an end when AlphaTauri opted against extending his contract into 2021, and the Russian's new role moves him into the slot previously occupied by compatriot Sergey Sirotkin.

"In a pandemic, it is

important for us to have a strong back-up, and Daniil has proven that he is a very quick and reliable driver in very difficult conditions," said Alpine CEO Laurent Rossi.

Mercedes also announced its reserve-driver plans for 2021 last week, revealing that 2019 F2 champion Nyck de Vries would be joining Formula E team-mate Stoffel Vandoorne in the role. Autosport also understands that Mercedes is in talks with Nico Hulkenberg about acting as

cover on the weekends where F1 clashes with Formula E.

Vandoorne was overlooked for last year's Sakhir Grand Prix when Mercedes opted to draft in junior George Russell to replace Lewis Hamilton.

Alongside his new GT racing commitments (see p8), Jack Aitken will again serve as Williams's reserve this year after making his F1 debut for the team when stepping in to replace Russell at the Sakhir GP.

LUKE SMITH

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Williams reserve Aitken to race GT Lamborghini



GT WORLD CHALLENGE EUROPE

A desire to broaden his racing experience explains why Jack Aitken will be driving a Lamborghini in the GT World Challenge Europe alongside his reserve role with the Williams Formula 1 team in 2021. The Briton is scheduled to contest both the Endurance Cup and Sprint Cup legs of the series with the Swiss Emil Frey squad.

“There’s a lot to be learned from doing something a bit different,” said Aitken. “This has a lot to do with broadening my skills and myself as a driver.

“I’ve done three seasons in Formula 2 and I didn’t see a huge amount of mileage

in going back, and that’s without touching on the budget required to do it. I wanted a race programme this year and GTWCE works well because there aren’t too many clashes. It’s in Europe, so it will not be too challenging if I have to jump between events. Williams has been really supportive about doing a GT programme.”

Aitken also said that the programme with Emil Frey will help widen his career options in the future. “The fact that it is going to introduce me to the world of endurance is not a bad thing,” he explained. “You have to be realistic about the opportunities to race in F1. It’s not a bad thing, but it is not the driving force.”

Aitken will share an Emil Frey Racing Lamborghini Huracan GT3 EVO, which he drove for the first time at Misano last month, in all 10 GTWCE events with Finnish Formula Regional graduate Konsta Lappalainen. Frenchman Arthur Rougier, an ex-Renault F1 junior who switched to GTs in 2019, joins them for the five endurance events, which include July’s Spa 24 Hours.

The Frey team has expanded its GTWCE assault to three cars for 2021. Lamborghini factory drivers Albert Costa and Giacomo Altoe, as well as team regulars Norbert Siedler and Alex Fontana, are part of its roster.

GARY WATKINS

Lloyd gets full season in Power Maxed Vauxhall



BTCC

British Touring Car Championship race winner Dan Lloyd will return to the series this season to partner Jason Plato at the Power Maxed Racing Vauxhall Astra squad.

The 29-year-old made his series debut back in 2010, but has contested only 15 events in total. These include a seven-round campaign in 2018 with a BTC Norlin

Honda, where he picked up his sole win at Croft (right).

“The main thing for me is I’ve never had a full programme in the BTCC, I’ve never really done any testing, and I’ve always been thrown in at the deep end,” Lloyd told Autosport.

“This is going to be my biggest full shot at it, and I’m extremely grateful to Adam Weaver [PMR principal] for the opportunity. I’m extremely

excited and hope we can build something this year to continue for next year.”

Lloyd, who has been a top contender in TCR Europe in 2019-20 in Honda machinery, is excited to team up with Plato. “I worked with Jason back in my KX Academy days when I did Porsche Carrera Cup,” he said. “I’ve always got on well with him.” He expects to test the Astra in the next few weeks.

MARCUS SIMMONS



‘Rocky’, Auer and... Paffett?

DTM

The 2020-21 off-season was already positive for the DTM as far as announcements of teams and cars were concerned as it heads into its first campaign with GT3 machinery. Now, over the past few days, some pretty serious meat has been added to the bone with confirmation of some top drivers.

Audi veteran Mike Rockenfeller, who won the 2013 title, will represent the Abt Sportsline-run Audi R8 LMS squad alongside one of the marque's top GT3 drivers: two-time ADAC GT Masters champion and one-time Nurburgring 24 Hours winner Kelvin van der Linde. For Rockenfeller (above), it represents a return to the team with which he contested the DTM in 2011, before switching to his long-time home at Team Phoenix. For van der Linde it is a debut season in the DTM, a series in which his younger brother Sheldon drove for BMW in 2019-20.

“Mike knows the DTM inside out after 14 years and Kelvin knows every little detail of the Audi R8 LMS,” said Abt chief Thomas Biermaier. “I believe that with this duo and our team, we will have a strong entry to compete with.”

Meanwhile, BMW refugee Lucas Auer returns to the Mercedes fold, where he will race an AMG GT3 for the HTP Winward Racing team. The nephew of DTM boss Gerhard Berger won four races in the series for Mercedes from 2016-18, and added another victory to his tally with BMW last year after racing in Japan in 2019.

Auer will be partnered by Munich-born Anglo-German Philip Ellis. He raced on the DTM undercard in a few underfunded F3 Euro Series rounds in 2012, but has recently forged a GT career and was part of Winward's GTD class-winning line-up at this year's Daytona 24 Hours. Incidentally, the HTP Winward team is run by ex-Formula Palmer Audi racer and 2010 GT3 European champion Christian Hohenadel.

So much for what has been confirmed, but the real intrigue now surrounds the fate of Gary Paffett. A two-time DTM champion with Mercedes, the Briton is tipped to spearhead an entry from Mücke Motorsport with the Mercedes-AMG GT3. Paffett's connections with DTM partner Schaeffler, which is working on the series' DTM Electric project and is developing a steer-by-wire system with Mücke, are understood to be key to the deal.

RACHIT THUKRAL & SVEN HAIDINGER

IN THE HEADLINES

WADA LOOKS INTO HAAS

The World Anti-Doping Agency has confirmed to Autosport that it is investigating whether the livery of the new Haas F1 car complies with a ban by the Court of Arbitration for Sport on Russian athletes competing under their national flag. The VF-21 paintjob features the red, white and blue colours of the Russian flag, reflecting the title sponsorship of Uralkali, among whose directors is Dmitry Mazepin, the father of F1 rookie Nikita. The FIA said: “The team has clarified the livery with the FIA – the CAS decision does not prohibit the use of the colours of the Russian flag.”

CHILTON AT CARLIN AGAIN

Ex-F1 competitor Max Chilton will remain with Carlin in this year's IndyCar Series. As usual, the Briton will contest the 13 road and street course races plus the Indy 500. The team is keen to retain Conor Daly for the other three oval races.

VERSCHOOR'S MP F2 TEST

Richard Verschoor, the 2019 Macau Grand Prix winner, has filled the final seat in the FIA Formula 2 field – but only for this week's Bahrain test. The Dutchman has remained with MP Motorsport for his step up for the three days of running, and hopes to convert it into a race deal. In FIA F3, Jenzer Motorsport has snapped up Romania's Italian F4 race winner Filip Ugran, while Charouz Racing System has recruited Formula Renault Eurocup graduate Reshad de Gerus, who hails from French-owned Reunion Island in the Indian Ocean.

WATSON'S WEC ASTON BERTH

Former Aston Martin junior driver Andrew Watson will race for the TF Sport-run D'Station Racing GTE Am squad in this year's World Endurance Championship. The 26-year-old, who drove for the Gulf Racing Porsche operation last year, will share the D'Station Vantage GTE with Satoshi Hoshino and Tomonobu Fujii.

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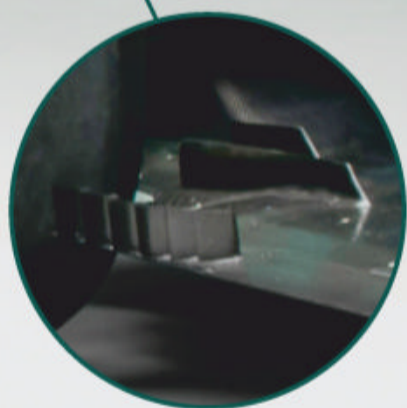
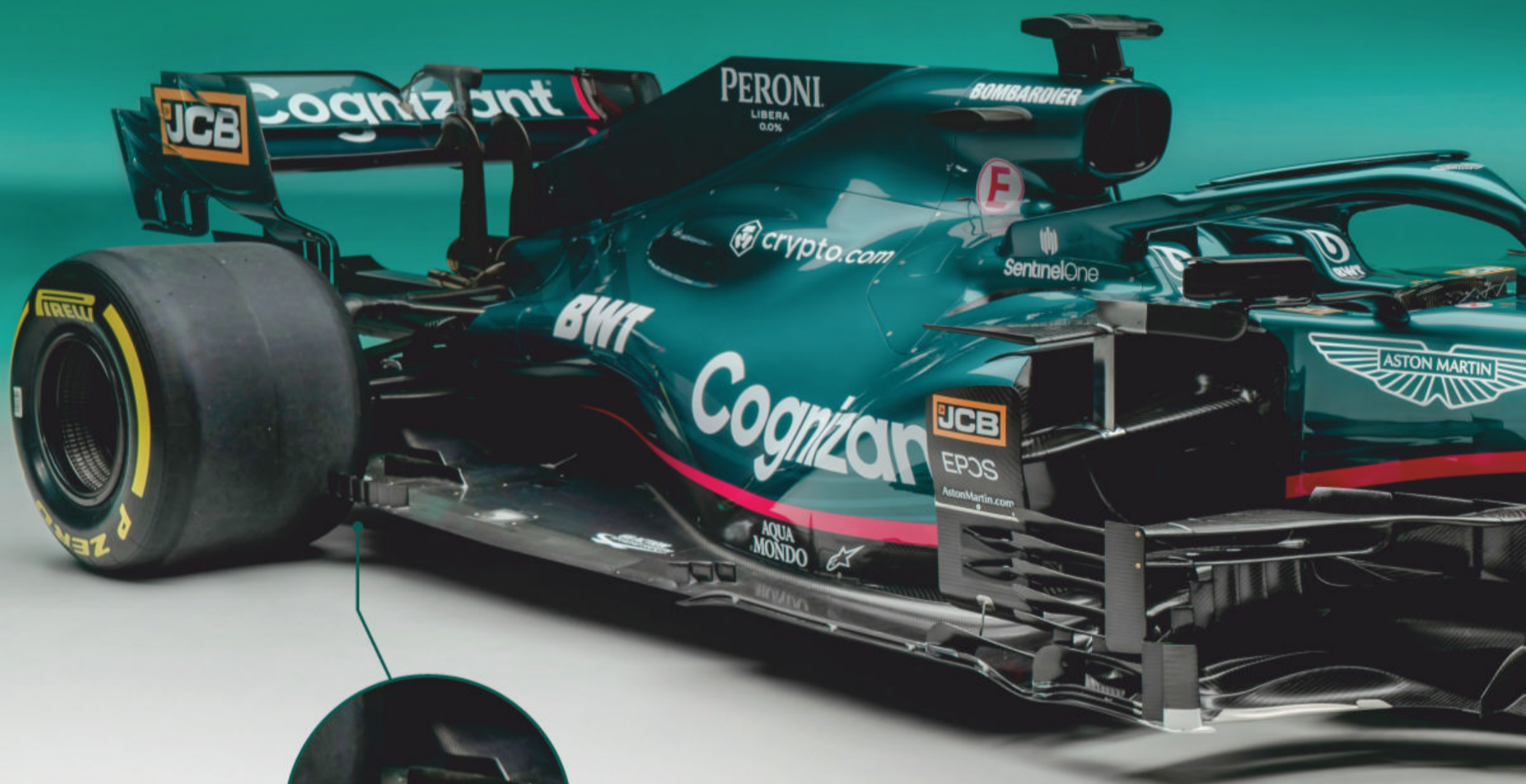
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ASTON MARTIN AMR21

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

The rebranded Racing Point team has a new look and big ambitions

PHOTOGRAPHY ASTON MARTIN



FLOOR

Not wishing to indulge in this year's 'hide the floor' competition, Aston Martin has given us our clearest indicator yet of the effect of 2021's revised rules. The front of the floor, which interacts with the bargeboard elements, has a lot of added furniture. It appears that the prevailing concept is to do the work that the eliminated floor slots were employed to do earlier, providing a barrier of defence for the floor's underside and diffuser. The floor squares off after the curled lip along the middle of its edge, perhaps to improve the expansion of airflow in this area and recoup some of the losses over the off-season. A trio of fins sit behind this to help turn the airflow outwards and, at the rear corner, a collection of small, upright fins has sprouted. This looks on first glance to be an aggressive attempt at shoving airflow outwards around the rear tyre.

BODYWORK

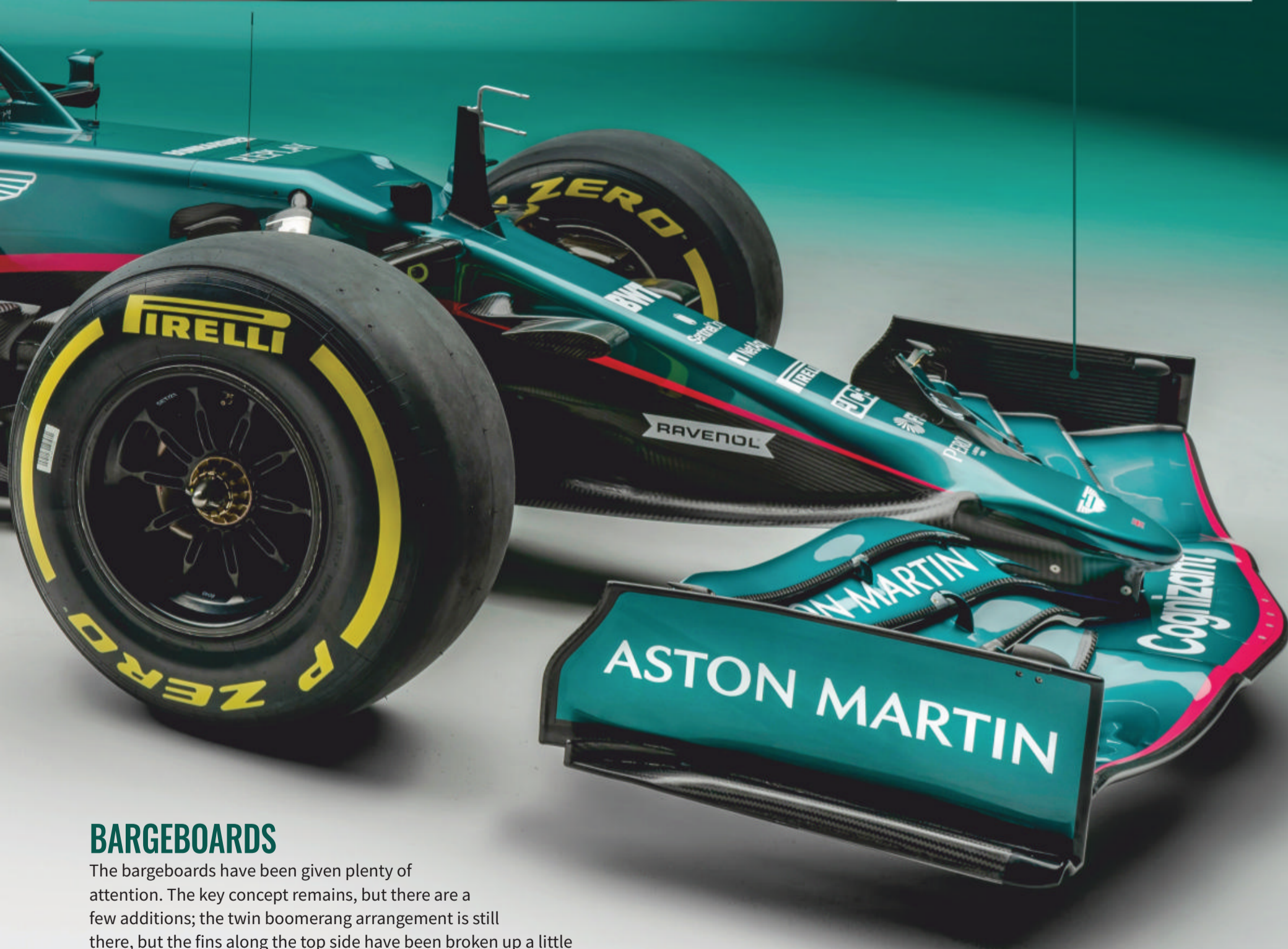
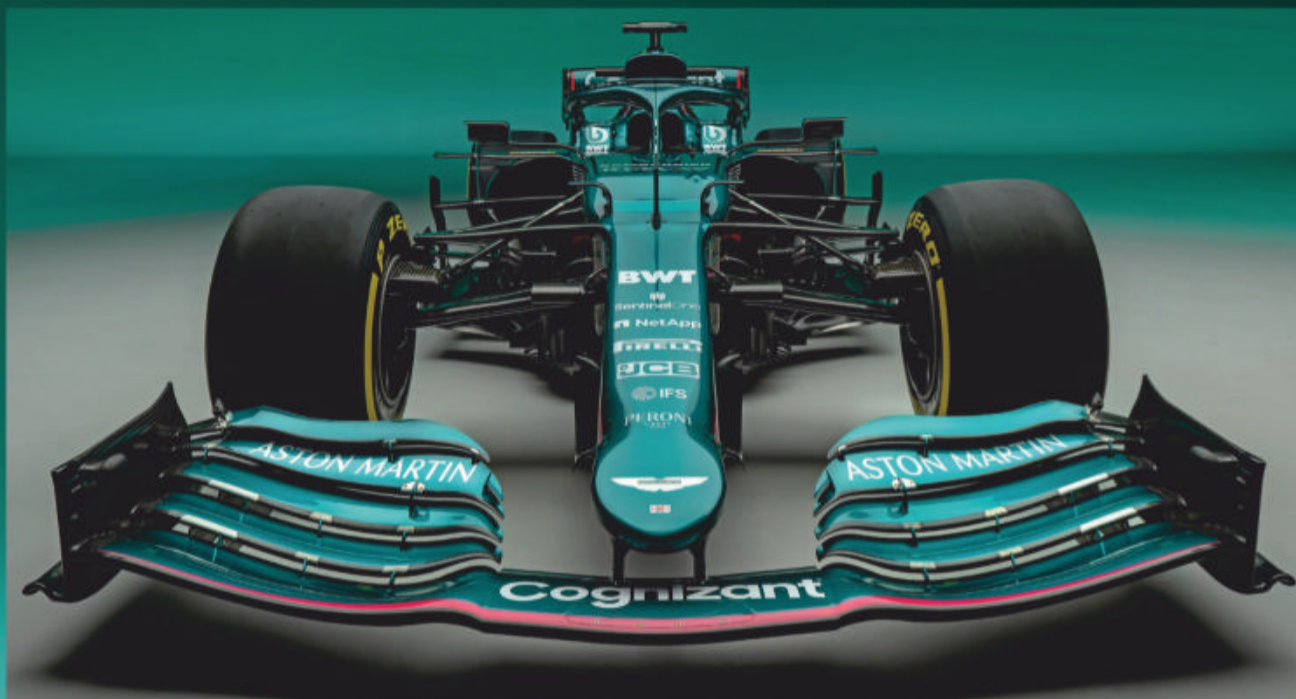
The team has ditched the more conventional sidepod inlets to fall in line with the rest of the field, raising them as the side-on crash structure has been lowered to accommodate this. Doing



so gives the air entering the radiators a cleaner line of fire, improving the cooling properties and allowing the inlet to be smaller as the mass-flow rate of air increases. Aston Martin's development tokens were spent on the front of the survival cell and its associated crash structures to make that change. Part way through 2020, Racing Point introduced new sidepods with a distinct ramp arrangement to send airflow downwards towards the floor. Now the ramp has been incorporated more neatly into the top surface of the sidepods, producing a much rounder shape in line with the designs Mercedes has employed over the past couple of seasons.

FRONT END

The front end is altogether familiar, with the AMR21 retaining many of the Racing Point RP20's key features in its similarity to the Mercedes nose concept. While it also continues the use of the spoon-shaped collection of wing flaps, it does also feature a scalloped upper element, a design the team introduced in the closing stages of the 2020 season. This should assist with the airflow around the front of the tyre and help find downforce at a more crucial zone. The front brake ducts also remain in much the same specification as last year, although it's hard to make out those at the rear at this time...



BARGEBOARDS

The bargeboards have been given plenty of attention. The key concept remains, but there are a few additions; the twin boomerang arrangement is still there, but the fins along the top side have been broken up a little more to help bring airflow downwards and around the lower reaches of the sidepod. The outboard element that the boomerangs clip onto has also been broken up, with two smaller vanes preceding the array of elements attached to the sidepod's crash structure. All of these have had to be modified to satisfy the new sidepod arrangement.

➔ P20 ASTON MARTIN SPECIAL

WILLIAMS FW43B

JAKE BOXALL-LEGGE

Can the 2021 Williams score some points for the team's new owners and continue the revival?

PHOTOGRAPHY WILLIAMS



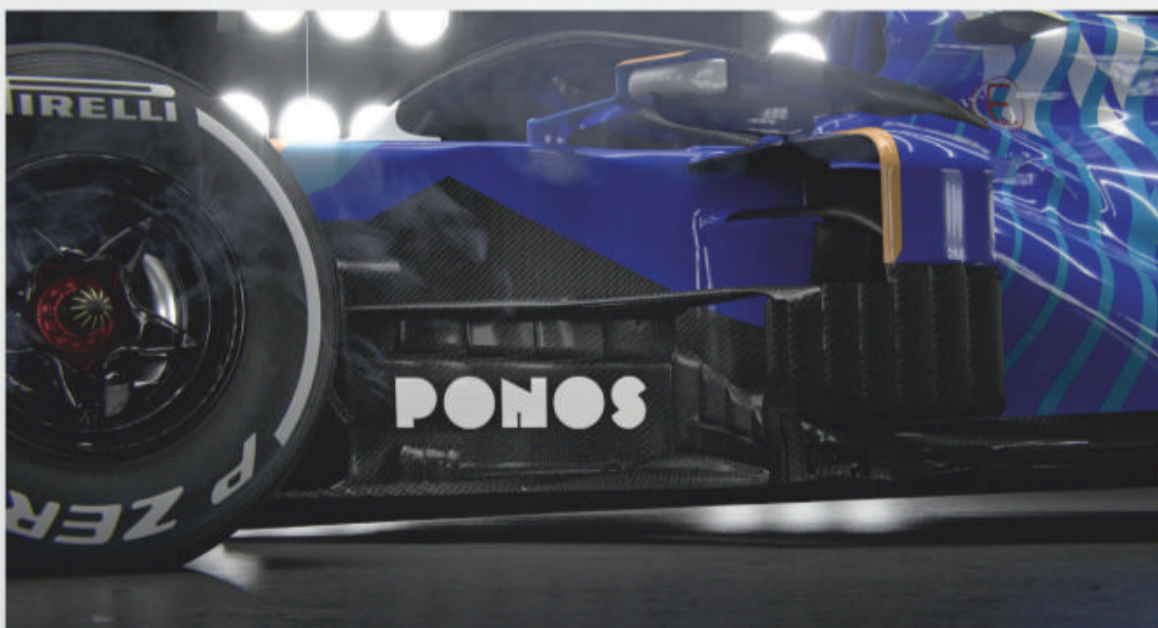
FRONT END

The FW43B features a new front wing, an area that seems to have undergone plenty of development over the off-season. Williams spent most of last season with a version of its end-of-2019 wing, after redesigning the upper flaps to feature two split ends on the third and fourth elements. Those are gone, as the tips have been drawn further downwards, and sit behind a newly reprofiled mainplane that features a greater degree of curvature than before. The wing sweeps upwards from the central mounting point, creating a spoon-shaped arrangement to the array of flaps. It does seem that Williams has put a lot of focus here, especially as it appears that the team has elected to retain the same nose structure used last season.



BARGEBOARDS

Williams seems to have shuffled the main body of the bargeboards backwards, something Mercedes did in 2020, to ensure that the floor is better protected from the turbulence produced by the front end of the car. Along the top edge, the point at which the bargeboards clip onto the monocoque is raised, and the redesigned slots along the top edge should play more nicely with the air directed downwards by the upper suspension wishbone. These slotted fins are larger in width compared to the FW43, and are more aggressively angled outwards to direct that airflow around a larger curve. Williams has so far retained the collection of vertical elements here, with the front three sweeping underneath the latter three, replicating the effect of the shutter-blind-style design that the other teams have gravitated towards.

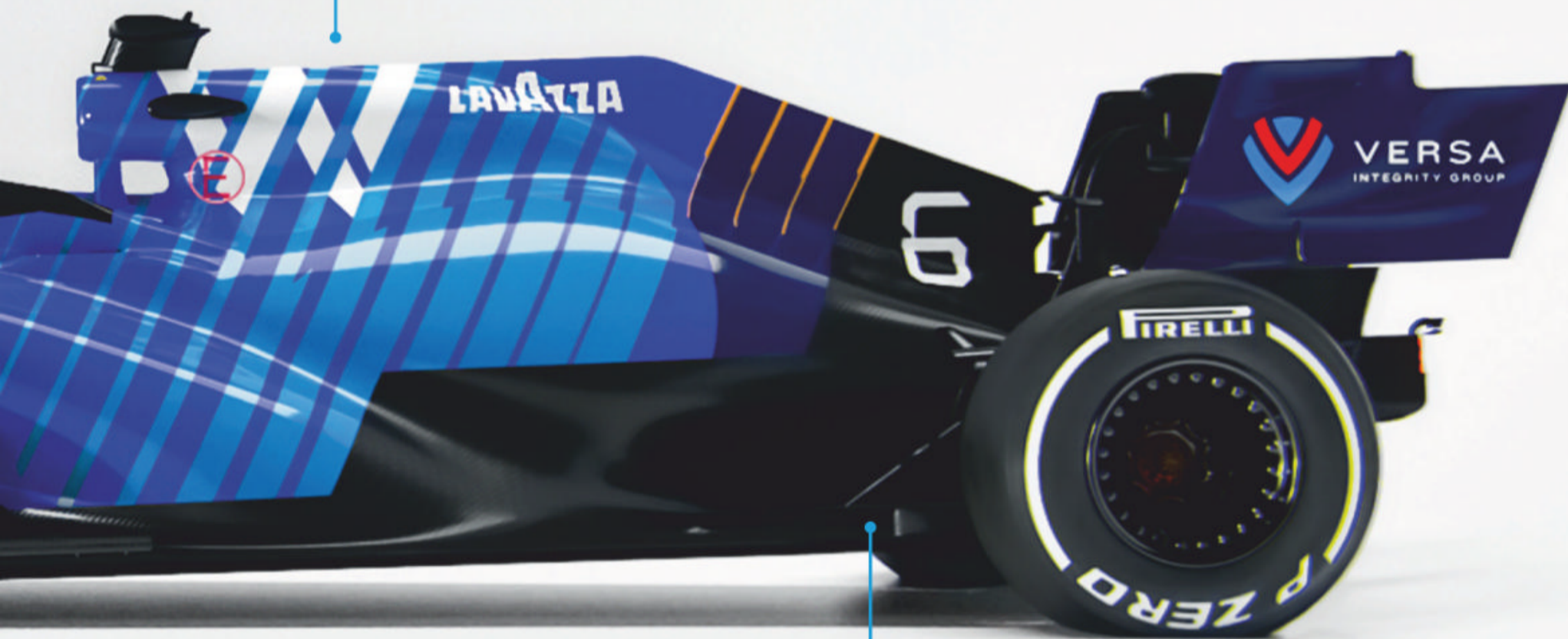




REAR WING

The rear-wing endplate does feature a nifty little innovation, although it figures largely in the same arrangement as the design used last year. By making the endplate thinner, there's scope to fit in little vortex generators to lift airflow upwards, as can be seen from the three fins at the rear. A fourth has now been added in front of those,

enabled by recessing the top of the endplate and perhaps seeking to help lift any vortices generated on the upper edge. Since the gill-like slots that usually featured in that part of the wing were banned in 2019, there have been few adaptations here until now, so it's good to see Williams finding something that the other teams haven't.



FLOOR

We've lauded Aston Martin for not playing 'hide the floor', and it seems Williams hasn't explicitly 'done a Mercedes' and decided not to show it. Even so, it's very difficult to make out the new toys on the car, especially as the high-resolution images are caked in filters that do just enough to coquettishly obscure the new parts. It does appear as though there's a fin or two sitting at the back corner, but it's very difficult to make out the angles or composition. Williams also admits it has split its token spend, with most of the one-token items relating to mechanical or electronic systems, so its bigger-ticket changes are under the skin.

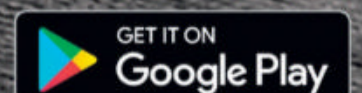
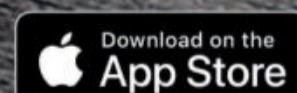
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What to look out for in F1 testing

Last year's car designs may have largely been carried over, but that doesn't mean there's any less intrigue over 2021's sole pre-season outing

ALEX KALINAUCKAS

Nearly 14 weeks after Formula 1 departed Bahrain, it is returning to the Gulf kingdom this week. The action-packed 2020 Sakhir Grand Prix will be followed by the track's first F1 pre-season testing in seven years, with this week's three-day Friday-to-Sunday event returning to the traditional layout that will be used for the 2021 season-opening Bahrain GP.

The effect of F1's coronavirus cost-saving measure has been seen throughout this year's launch season, with the car designs largely carried over. This approach has also meant a reduction in testing overall, and the knock-ons keep coming.

As there is only one 2021 pre-season test, many teams opted to hide various important elements of the cars during their launches, a subterfuge aimed at reducing the scope for rivals to copy neat solutions (particularly regarding the new rear floor requirements) in time for the first race in two weeks' time. Mercedes technical director James Allison stated that his squad has already spent its two allotted design development tokens, but said it "won't reveal how we used them just yet". Red Bull held a filming day at Silverstone after its 2021 launch, but only released images of its 2019 car running on track. So, what are F1's leading teams hiding?

The token restriction requirements suggest that a double diffuser-like gamechanger is unlikely but, as the changes to the floors are aimed at cutting downforce levels by 10%, any team

“Just like 2020, anyone following testing will want to keep a close eye on the speed trap figures”

that has found a clever solution to negate or overcome that impact stands to gain significantly. It's unlikely that any squad will admit to getting the mandated changes to the floor rules wrong once testing has been completed – Red Bull insisted that the succession of spins its drivers suffered in testing last year was about finding the limit – but it will be worth listening to the drivers describe the rear handling characteristics of their latest cars for clues.

Sergio Perez has joined Red Bull to replace Alex Albon, who could not match team-mate Max Verstappen's pace and results with the recalcitrant RB16. Now, with the RB16B, it will be worth paying close attention to Perez's fortunes over the test, as the limited scope for design changes suggests that the updated version will still be tough to tame, and he has already said that Red Bull's car concept is “quite different” to what he's previously experienced.

Just like last year, anyone following testing will want to keep a close eye on the speed trap figures too. These will provide an early indication of how successful Honda's ambition to leave F1 on a championship-winning high may be, while also stimulating/deflating hopes at several other squads, namely those running Ferrari engines. The marque's dramatic 2020 power deficit meant Alfa Romeo and Haas also took significant steps back last year, so there will be plenty hoping that Ferrari's cautious recent optimism about its redesigned engine translates into real-world gains.

Engine performance is also a theme to watch at Mercedes, particularly regarding the health of the W12's powerplants. Mercedes engine boss Hywel Thomas has said there have been “some issues with the power units”, although he then explained the steps taken to fix these – including changing the engine block alloy and tweaking the Energy Recovery System – when the W12 was launched. But, again, last year Mercedes made similar noises about its engine, which then encountered a series of reliability problems across the pre-season, and it took the time afforded by the initial pandemic lockdowns to address the issues.

While the changes under the various car skins will be naturally covered up, several teams have already stated their intention to introduce early aerodynamic updates this year. That's not unusual for the big squads but, with the 2022 reset looming large, many teams are intending to apply developments during the initial races, then quickly shift resources. Alfa Romeo is among the teams set to conduct early performance evaluations with an eye to switching focus early, with testing the first step in these trials, while Williams has “a range of parts that we'll get on the car” in testing, says team principal Simon Roberts, which could become a “first race upgrade”.

It's always vital to avoid unnecessary accidents, but this year, with pre-season track time reduced by 50%, it will be even more critical that drivers don't crash their new cars. Staying on the road will be particularly important for the rookies at AlphaTauri and Haas, as well as the drivers making new starts (Perez, Ferrari's Carlos Sainz Jr, Daniel Ricciardo at McLaren and Sebastian Vettel at Aston Martin, plus Fernando Alonso's return to what is now Alpine).

Alonso, who missed Alpine's team launch due to the current COVID travel restrictions for UK arrivals and has been recovering from his cycling accident last month, is never one to shy away from making his views known, so it'll be worth listening to his thoughts on the state of play at the former Renault squad. Additionally, expect the drivers to have gripes relating to the new tyres (because some things in F1 never change!), and be asked about the ongoing discussion on Saturday sprint races, where opinions are split.

The times will ultimately be meaningless this weekend, but pre-season testing means racing is just around the corner. After a long, hard winter for so many, that alone is reason to get excited. ❄️



'Flash' back in a BTCC Honda

The BTCC Lord taketh away Dan Cammish, then giveth Gordon Shedden. That means substituting what would have been a future champion with an all-time series great

MARCUS SIMMONS

Twelve months or so before the Chinese city of Wuhan gained notoriety as the source of COVID-19, its main recognition among UK motorsport fans was as the location of a breakthrough win in the World Touring Car Cup for Gordon Shedden. That was as good as it got for 'Flash' during his 2018-19 stint with Audi in the series. And, when the Ingolstadt manufacturer pulled its official backing of TCR competition, he was left high and dry last season.

Now Shedden, a three-time title winner in the British Touring Car Championship, is back where he belongs for 2021: at the wheel of a Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R. It's the same team, manufacturer and, indeed, car model with which he claimed all three of his crowns. OK, so the FK2-spec Civic with which he attained his success has been replaced by the FK8. But we can fully expect Shedden to take up where the unfortunate Dan Cammish – whose ousting from the team appears to be down to nothing more than commercial realities during the current bruising economic climate – left off and get straight into the fight for the title.

And that 'one-dimensional' success leaves some cynics suggesting that Shedden cannot be regarded as a true great of the BTCC in the same way as other multiple champions. Jason Plato has scored wins and titles with different manufacturers; so too did Alain Menu in the Super Touring era, and Andy Rouse in the olden

“Wuhan was a city nobody had heard of! And I'm still a race winner in World Touring Cars”

days of multi-class competition. Colin Turkington, too, has scored race victories on his rare forays away from West Surrey Racing-run BMWs. And Shedden never really cracked it at world level.

That's unfair. A year before the initial outbreak began escaping from Wuhan, Shedden took his WRT-run Audi RS3 LMS to his first WTCR podium in the Saturday race of the city's October 2018 fixture. The following day, he topped the qualifying shootout, then survived two contacts during the race – the first of which put his car absolutely sideways – to keep control and fend off the similar machine of established Audi TCR hotshot Frederic Verusch.

“It was a city nobody had ever heard of!” jokes Shedden. “And I'm still a race winner in World Touring Cars.” While that remained his sole win of a disappointing pair of seasons, he

acknowledges that “it was an opportunity that was something I couldn't not do. But it didn't come together. A lot of things went on that I couldn't change or influence there, but I certainly learned a lot from that experience. I also learned to value even more the level Team Dynamics is at.”

It's also worth assessing Flash's first taste of the Nurburgring Nordschleife. WRT brought in circuit specialist and all-round Audi superstar Rene Rast in a third car alongside the Scot and his regular team-mate, WTCR great Jean-Karl Vernay. Yet Shedden qualified within 0.8 seconds of the German on a nine-minute lap, 1.8s quicker than Vernay: “The team came in having never done touring cars before, and whenever there was an anomaly [such as an unusual circuit] I went OK. The Yokohama tyre was very strange – it was very soft and didn't suit the Audi. The team didn't know the tricks, and there were shocking things you had to do to make them work.”

Now he's back in his natural habitat, at the Dynamics team of his great mate Matt Neal. Rewind a year, and it was Shedden who undertook testing work alongside Cammish as Neal recovered from injuries sustained when he cycled at high speed into a tree, and was on standby if his fellow three-time BTCC champion wasn't ready for the start of the season. The arrival of COVID-19 and Neal-friendly season delay put paid to that, but at least it allowed a taste of the newer FK8 Civic. “There are a lot of areas of small improvements [over the FK2],” he says. “It's just a nicer car to drive. It does everything you want it to, whereas the FK2 you had to hustle more. That only comes with evolution. And people understand these NGTC rules more now, which is why the field is so close.”

He's not the only member of what has to be regarded as the royal family of Scottish touring car racing to be on the BTCC grid, of course. Brother-in-law Rory Butcher has become a leading contender since Shedden, who is still the business development manager at Butcher's father Derek's Knockhill circuit, went on his round-the-world trip. “I don't really see much of Rory now, because he doesn't work at Knockhill anymore,” reports Shedden. “He follows his own path, and he's learned to stand on his own two feet.”

But Butcher – and the rest – will be up against tough opposition. Is Shedden a returning BTCC great? Definitely. Put it another way: does anyone diminish Jim Clark's accomplishments because he didn't leave Lotus and go to try to win an F1 title at BRM? Of course not. Put that to Shedden, and he chuckles: “Any racing driver, regardless of what formula he's in, wants the best equipment. What is the best front-wheel-drive touring car team in the country? It has to be Dynamics. Good drivers find themselves in good teams, don't they?” Quite so. ❄



Big push for Motorsport Games

Motorsport UK's CEO on why the 'Olympics of motorsport' matters and where it fits into our future

HUGH CHAMBERS

The second edition of the FIA Motorsport Games promises to be the greatest festival of motorsport competition between nations. The FIA will bring together 18 different motorsport disciplines at the Paul Ricard circuit in the south of France at the end of October. The inaugural event was held in 2019 in Rome, and unfortunately the 2020 event was cancelled due to the pandemic.

There have been previous attempts to run competitions based on national teams, such as A1 Grand Prix, and going back to the 1960s international karting was based on teams selected to represent their country. But never before has such an ambitious competition been created – all planned and executed against the backdrop of the global pandemic.

We are all very proud of the rich heritage of the UK in global motorsport, with Lewis Hamilton leading the pack, and dozens of other world champions across multiple disciplines. Combined with a motorsport engineering industry that includes seven Formula 1 teams and companies such as M-Sport and Prodrive, we have earned our status as one of the top motorsport nations in the world. So where does the Motorsport Games fit into our future?

Motorsport largely sits outside the framework of the broader sporting landscape, and that's for a variety of reasons, not least being its technical and infrastructure requirements. But with F1 at the top of our pyramid, we have enjoyed a showcase that has major

“The Games are a chance to shout about British talent excelling at all levels of the sport”

global impact. However, F1 is an atypical example of motorsport given that the vast majority of activity around the world is at a national and club level. The Motorsport Games are a chance to shout about British talent excelling at all levels of the sport.

It is this diversity that is one of the major strengths of motorsport, allowing such a wide variety of styles and executions to appeal to competitors and fans. In fact, this diversity has grown rather than shrunk in recent years with new formats such as drifting and digital motorsport. We welcome the opportunity to have a showcase for the real diversity of the sport.

The professional side of motorsport is well represented at the Games, with GT racing, touring cars and Formula 4 from circuit racing, and Rally 2 representing the FIA stairway to the World Rally Championship. These disciplines will all require investment by

professional teams and using their own equipment – but beyond the higher echelons drivers will compete with supplied equipment in a level playing field.

We welcome the introduction of grassroots disciplines to the Games including Auto Slalom (autotesting), Crosscar (autocross), and Karting Endurance. Auto Slalom is just one of the events that allows non-Motorsport UK licence holders to come forward and compete in the Games, and perhaps that will inspire their journey into other disciplines. In addition to Karting Endurance and the existing Karting Slalom, a further category – Karting Sprint – joins the programme. Together they will allow us to celebrate the best of British karting talent. In fact, the chance to represent the UK at the Games is open to British Kart Championship competitors only.

We are really pleased to include drifting as a new Motorsport UK discipline this year, and competitors in the new Drift Pro Championship are eligible to represent the UK at the Games. The championship begins in June and we look forward to showcasing this new discipline to our members. The 2021 Games also recognises historic motorsport, with the addition of the Historic Rally and Historic Regularity Rally events.

The inaugural 2019 competition saw Motorsport UK field a six-strong team in Rome, headed at Vallelunga by 2018 British GT champion Flick Haigh. Team UK competed in four of the six events, with British Touring Car Championship star Rory Butcher at the helm of the Union Jack-adorned MG6 XPower TCR in the Touring Car Cup. The Scot managed fourth in the final Touring Car Cup race of the Games, narrowly missing out on a medal. Although the team failed to make the podium in Italy, James Baldwin came agonisingly close to a bronze medal in the final of the Digital Cup.

The competition will intensify for the 2021 edition, with the number of countries and territories competing doubling to 100. This truly is a unique opportunity for drivers and teams to step up and represent the UK. I know from my own experiences with the British Olympic Association and London 2012 that there is something about competing for your country among athletes from around the globe, who may be performing a discipline that is a very long way from your own activity, that is unique and of huge value. Athletes who represent their country do so with pride and honour, with the shift in emphasis from the individual to the team.

Motorsport UK has ambitions to field a full team in the 2021 Games with representation in all 18 disciplines, but this will require commitments from professional drivers and teams to compete. Discussions are under way across the board and we welcome interested parties to get in touch. ✉

To register your interest or find out more about the FIA Motorsport Games, please visit motorsportuk.org/fiamotorsportgames

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"NOW WE HAVE THE POWER TO PUNCH HARDER. IT'S JUST THE BEGINNING"

Racing Point has become Aston Martin for 2021, but this is more than just a rebrand. Lawrence Stroll and his team have set some bold targets – and have the tools to deliver

LUKE SMITH

PHOTOGRAPHY ASTON MARTIN AND





Of all the Formula 1 launches that took place in the build-up to the 2021 season, arguably none was as hotly anticipated as Aston Martin's event last Wednesday. After more than 12 months of planning since its return was announced, and 61 years since one of its cars last entered a world championship grand prix, Aston Martin's F1 rebirth truly commenced with the unveiling of the AMR21.

Even through a star-studded event that played heavily on the brand's James Bond affiliation and also wheeled out NFL superstar Tom Brady, nothing could overshadow the significance at the core of the launch. Aston Martin is back in F1, and it means business.

Ever since Lawrence Stroll saved the Force India operation from collapse in the summer of 2018, rebranding it as Racing Point, the Silverstone-based squad has been bold, even brash, with its ambitions. It took time to get the puzzle pieces in place. First was the ousting of Esteban Ocon, who made room for Stroll's son, Lance, to take over the seat. Then came a hiring spree, plugging the gaps that began to emerge towards the end of the Force India era. Plans were formed to build a new factory at Silverstone, and push for closer technical ties with engine supplier Mercedes (something Stroll had wanted for Williams when it fielded his son).

Force India had always been regarded as one of the best pound-for-

pound teams, but that was precisely the problem: pounds. There weren't enough of them. No matter how good the personnel were, how efficient they may have been, the resources simply weren't plentiful enough to allow the team to take on F1's big guns.

Stroll's takeover changed that. The team now had the financial freedom to develop the car as desired, and even take a huge gamble in 2020 by trying to reverse-engineer Mercedes' 2019 title-winner. The 'pink Mercedes' sparked a huge political fight that ended in a points penalty and a rewriting of the rulebook to stop it happening again. But Racing Point ended last year fourth in the constructors' championship and with a race win (the first since its distant days as Jordan) at the Sakhir Grand Prix through Sergio Perez. The gamble had paid off handsomely.

Yet there was always a desire to make the team something far greater off track. Stroll was enamoured by the idea of reviving a famous F1 name, given 'Racing Point' was always meant to be a placeholder. Pursuits of bringing back names such as Brabham, March and Lola fell short, only for an even bigger name to emerge as an option in late 2019.

A low stock value was pounced upon by Stroll, who bought an initial stake in Aston Martin worth 16.7% in January 2020. In the same announcement of the deal, it was revealed that his Racing Point F1 team would be rebranding as Aston Martin – it was all part of the plan.

"My first dream was to own a Formula 1 team," Stroll said at the



Perez's win not enough to keep his seat, but showed team's progress

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ASTONMARTIN

"Our ambitions are limitless," states Lawrence Stroll

team launch. "My second dream was to acquire a majority shareholding in Aston Martin Lagonda. Today is all about the merging of those two dreams. The team has always punched above its weight. Now, as Aston Martin, it has the power with which to punch even harder. It's just the beginning."

The whole launch event was a far cry from the days when Force India would wheel out the car in the pitlane just minutes before the start of pre-season testing, and hand the first run-out to a pay driver not even in its main line-up. It was highly polished, befitting a brand carrying the weight of Aston Martin – another sign of how far the team has come.

"We're growing as a team, and for sure there are differences, but the

DNA of the team hasn't changed," says team principal Otmar Szafnauer, who played a key role in the transition from Force India to Racing Point. "We're still that bunch of racers that we've always been. We still are driven by efficiency and punching above our weight. We have more weight now, and in the future will have even more weight."

The 2020 campaign was the first in which the team really flexed its new-found financial muscle. The season was a success, even beyond Perez's Sakhir win. Stroll took a magnificent pole position in Turkey (and arguably should have won the race) as well as two podium finishes, while Perez was a regular fixture at the front of the midfield en route to fourth place in the drivers' standings. Had it not been for the points deduction over the brake-duct design, Racing Point would have been third in the constructors' championship.

"We're growing as a team, there are differences, but the DNA hasn't changed. We are still that bunch of racers we've always been"

The majority carryover of last year's cars under the development freeze gives Aston Martin a good foundation for this year. Technical director Andrew Green would not be drawn on where the team had spent its two development tokens, although Szafnauer revealed that they had been employed to change the chassis in order to improve the cooling of the car. The team has also upgraded to the rear end of the 2020 Mercedes thanks to a regulation loophole benefiting customer squads.

But Green feels that aerodynamics is still the main battleground heading into the new season. "The regulation change that came through late last year had a big effect on the aero performance," he explains, referring to the downforce cut centred on the floor designs. "We spent the winter trying to recover the losses from the changes in the regulations. That's been a big focus."

The development of the car also means that the first Aston Martin is hardly a copy of the 2019 Mercedes, even if there are some shared genes. "We've got no idea what Mercedes have done or been doing," Green says. "The concept on the car is 100% Aston Martin, and the initial direction, which was set almost two years ago now, seems a long way behind us."

"We've learned an incredible amount since then. Last year we also made a few mistakes, and we've looked to correct them for the 2021 car, which gives us a lot of optimism for the performance going forward. So I think all in all, we're happy with the decision we made two years ago." >>

INSIGHT ASTON MARTIN

One of the biggest decisions the team's bosses had to make ahead of the rebrand concerned the driver line-up. Although Perez had signed a new three-year deal with the team towards the end of 2019, his place came under scrutiny when four-time world champion Sebastian Vettel emerged on the market after Ferrari's early decision to part ways.

A protracted will-they-won't-they? saga followed. Vettel dodged questions about his favourite James Bond car (cleverly picking the BMW Z8 cut in half during *The World Is Not Enough*), and had to explain why he was seen getting into Szafernauer's car at Silverstone. (Szafernauer still insists it was just to give Vettel a lift to a petrol station.) But after months of back and forth, the deal was finally announced in September:

"He's a very, very likeable chap, but he's also incredibly knowledgeable and meticulous, and that's why we wanted him involved"

Vettel would be an Aston Martin driver in 2021.

It marked another major coup for Stroll Sr, even if it came at the expense of Perez, whose stunning 2020 season was enough to secure him a drive with Red Bull and raise questions over Aston Martin's decision.

But it was a statement, and further proof that the vision Stroll has for the future of the Aston Martin squad is enough to capture the imagination of an F1 great such as Vettel. "He's very committed and very enthusiastic, and working really hard," Vettel says of Stroll Sr. "He's not just supplying the needs to the team, but is very much engaged and pushing the team in the right direction. Obviously people are hungry to win. I think it's the first shot with similar money than anybody else on the grid. It won't be easy to catch up in a breath, but the ambition is definitely there to catch up, not just from Lawrence but the whole team."

Vettel arrives at Aston Martin crestfallen after a bruising final year with Ferrari, one that he labels a "challenge". His Turkish GP podium was the only bright spot of a miserable campaign during which he accrued just one-third of team-mate Charles Leclerc's points total, having been informed before the delayed start to the season that he would not be retained for 2021.

But Vettel says he is "at peace" with his Ferrari swansong, and isn't interested in the revisionism of his placing among F1's greats that followed. "I know that it hasn't been to my standards that I mostly hold myself to," he says. "I've never really cared what people think or say or - I'm sorry - write." (We'll sort you an Autosport subscription, Seb, just in case you change your mind.)



Pole position in Turkey showed what Stroll is capable of

Aston Martin's bosses also have no qualms over their star signing, and remain confident that the team can bring out the best in him. "At 33 years old, you don't forget how to drive a Formula 1 car fast," Szafernauer says. "So it's got to be other things. We will work tirelessly to make sure that we don't introduce those things, and actually alleviate them."

"An arm around the shoulder means that everybody's listening to his wants and his needs. We'll work hard to make sure the car is to his liking and the set-up is like he wants it."

Vettel has traditionally excelled with cars that have a stable rear end, the lack of which on the recent Ferraris was considered to be a reason for his frequent spins. Aston Martin said back in 2020 that it would look to give Vettel the car he needed to bring out the best in him, yet the German is dismissive of the theory.

"The whole rear-end thing has got a little bit out of hand," he says. "I don't think I'm more vulnerable than the others in this regard. If anything, I don't like when the car is really just understeery. By the sounds of it, [the Aston Martin] is very different. I hope it's coming my way."

Green has no concerns about Vettel's driving style, believing it to be even more forgiving than Perez's. "Seb's style is a lot less extreme," he says. "We have the tools and capability to tune the car to suit him for sure. We've already started working on that, and he seems very happy with the direction that we've taken."

Aston Martin bucked the low-key trend, harking back to glitzy F1 launches of old

LICENCE TO THRILL

Given the majority carryover in the designs from 2020 to 2021, teams faced a funny conundrum when it came to unveiling their 'new' cars for this year.

This season never seemed like the time for teams to try to jazz up their launches again, and hark back to the days when tobacco money ran freely and events were exuberant. Most have kept things low key, sending out pictures, setting up some interviews. In the current COVID world, you can't ask for much more.

But for Aston Martin's comeback, it had to go big – and it did exactly that with an event that brought some pizzazz back to F1 launches.

James Bond has long been a core part of Aston Martin's identity, and Lawrence Stroll has no plans to change that. The launch saw Stroll himself plug the upcoming Bond film, *No Time to Die*, before introducing Bond himself, Daniel Craig, to offer a message ahead of the new season.

"I just want to send a massive congratulations to all of Aston Martin for getting back onto the F1 grid for the first time since 1960," said Craig. "It is an incredible thrill for me, and I'm sure all F1 fans, to see Aston Martin racing again in their iconic British Racing Green."

The event was MC'd by Gemma Arterton, who appeared in the largely forgettable Bond film *Quantum of Solace*. She jokingly asked Vettel and Stroll which of them was Bond and who was Q, with the status of quartermaster fittingly being given to technical director Andrew Green.

Craig and Arterton weren't the only big names involved in the launch. Rapper Santan Dave was a big part of the initial unveiling, voicing over the introduction video. The team even enlisted NFL superstar Tom Brady, who is less than a month into his off-season after winning a record seventh Super Bowl, to offer a message of support as part of his role as an Aston Martin ambassador.

In an era when F1 launches have become low-key affairs, it was great to see Aston Martin hold such a stylish and entertaining event, marking a great note with which to start its new era.

ASTON MARTIN

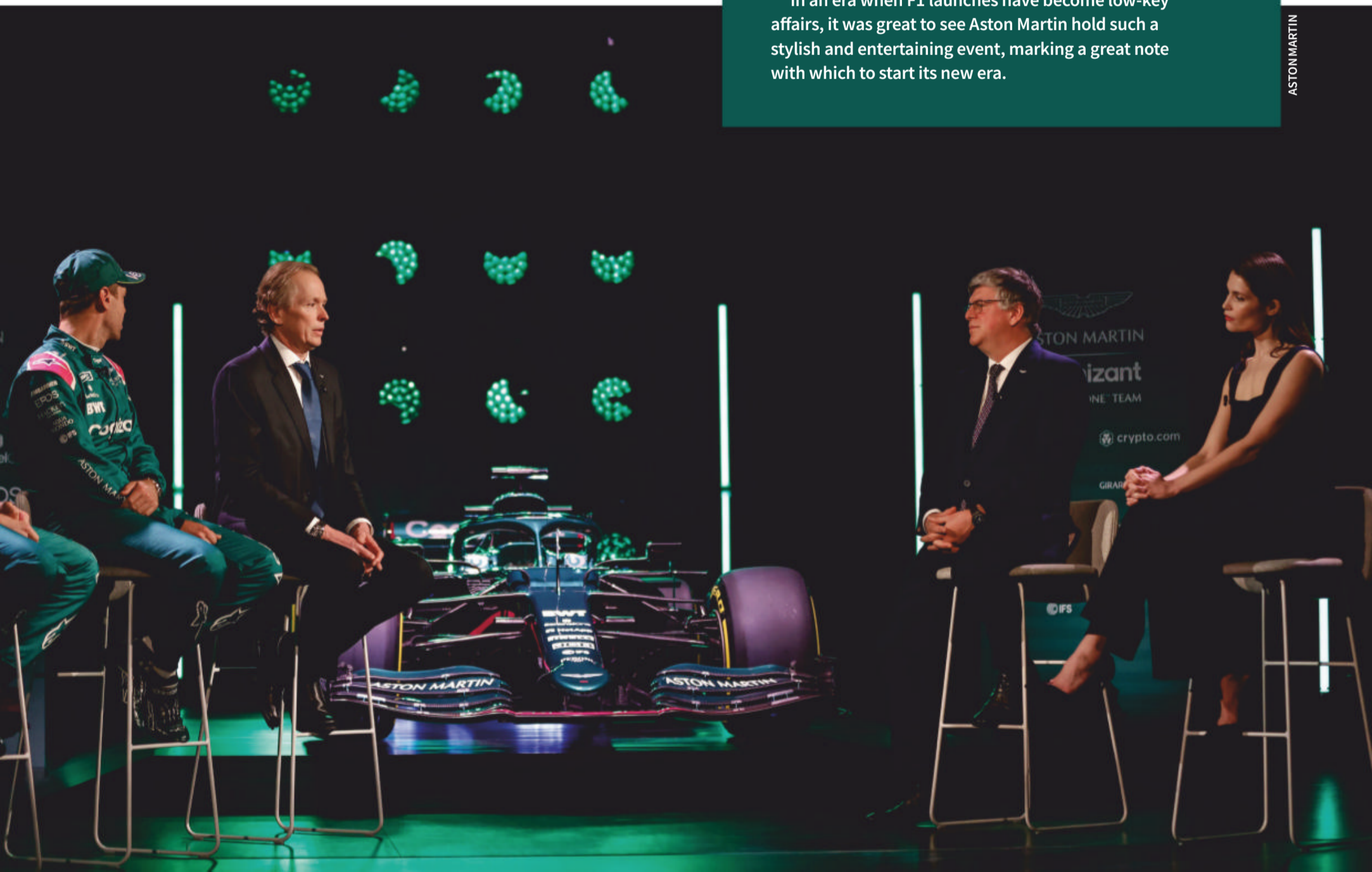
Stroll is eager to learn from four-time champion Vettel

MAUGER

Off track, Vettel is already adjusting well to life at Aston Martin. He is enjoying the surroundings of a raw racing team, seeming to fire a shot at Ferrari when he notes that his new environs are "not about the fancy looks or the fancy expensive chairs in the office".

His comfort has also happily been picked up by his bosses. "He's gelling with his crew and with the team," says Green. "He's obviously a very, very likeable chap, but he's also incredibly knowledgeable and meticulous about the way he works, and that's exactly why we wanted him involved. It's different to the way we worked before. But that's the reason why we got him in: to impart some of his knowledge and wisdom on us as a four-time world champion. That's exactly what we need."

It's that kind of experience that even a driver of Perez's standing could not offer Aston Martin, and is also something that could help across the garage. The criticism laid against Lance Stroll throughout his F1 career has hardly been subtle, and is perhaps unavoidable when your father owns the team you are racing for. Although he enjoyed his best >>



season yet in F1 last year, the fact that he only scored 60% of Perez's points total meant there was still significant room for improvement.

Stroll is under no illusions about that, though. He admits that he "underestimated" the impact COVID-19 had on him, contributing to a rough patch of form between a crash at Mugello in September and his pole in Turkey in November that left him "not in the best place mentally", but was glad to finish the year strongly with a second podium at Sakhir. It has spurred the young Canadian on to target a top-five finish in this year's drivers' championship.

He is also eager to learn from Vettel. "With all team-mates, you pick up on things," Stroll says. "He's extremely talented and very experienced, so I'm sure I'll learn a lot from him. I look forward to working alongside him."

The feeling is mutual. Vettel is excited to serve in more of a mentor role to Stroll than he did with Leclerc, and offer something he felt he lacked in his formative years. "I'm happy to help," he says. "I would have been happy the other way around when I was young, if somebody would have opened up and was just happy to share everything. I only see it as a win-win."

Szafnauer is also encouraged by the progress Stroll has displayed, hailing a "significant step" through 2020, and feels it went a long way to answering his critics. "Turkey for me just shows his innate ability," says Szafnauer. "You had seven-time and four-time world champions in faster cars out there, same conditions, and Lance beat them to pole."

The four-time world champion in question agrees. "Some of the stuff that he's been going through is not fair," Vettel says. "He has proven many times that he's very quick. If you just take the pole position in Turkey, those were probably one of the most difficult track conditions I ever faced in 15 years of F1. To not just stay on track, but also to nail the lap, and manage to get on pole – there needs to be a lot of talent to be able to do that."

Regardless, both Vettel and Stroll enter 2021 with a point to prove and reputations to embolden. The noises from Aston are certainly positive that they can give both drivers all the tools they need to succeed, but what will define success?

Clearly 2021 is not going to be a year where championships are on



Stroll and Vettel (right) shake down the new AMR21 at Silverstone

DUNBAR

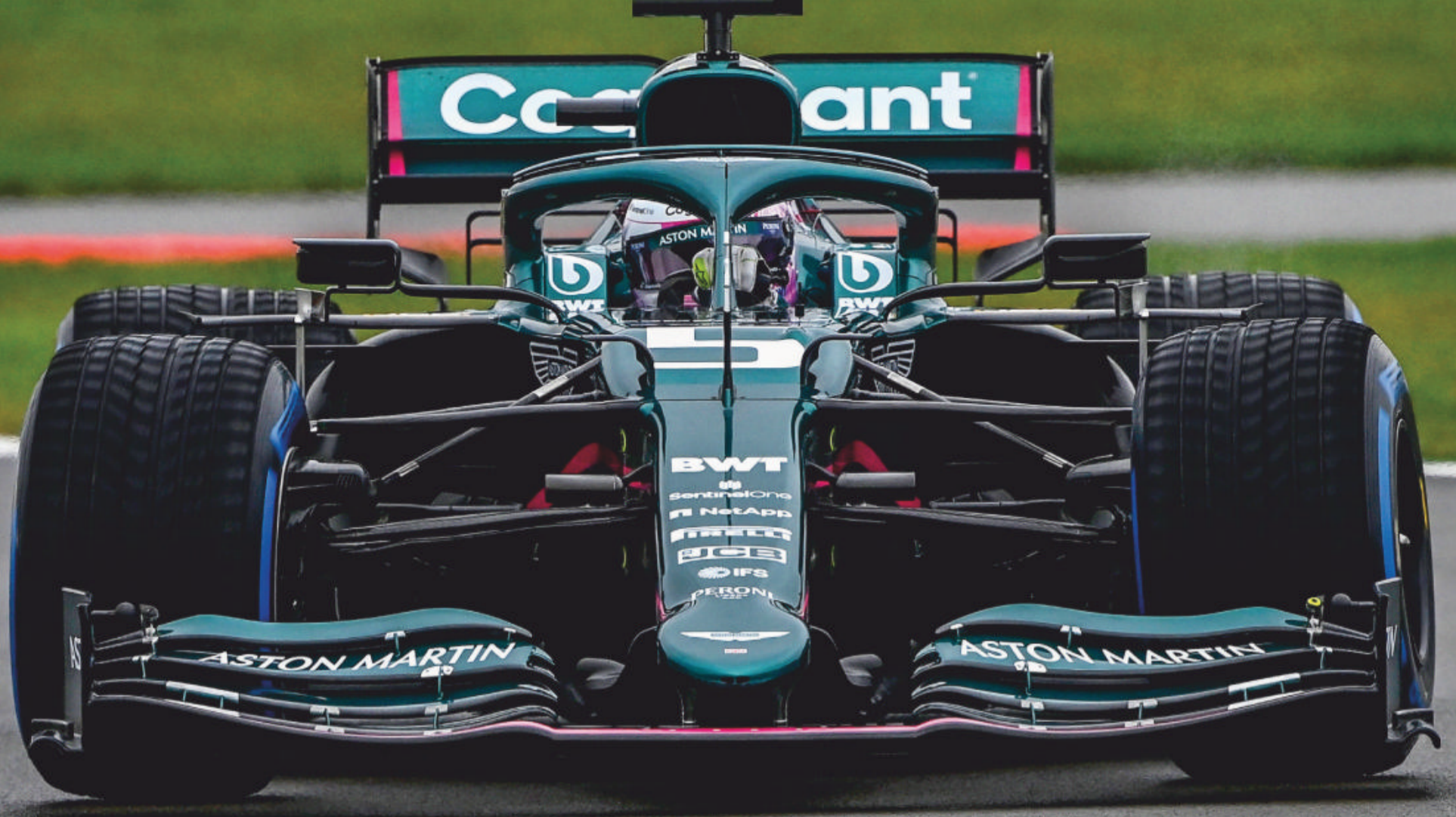
"You had seven-time and four-time world champions in faster cars out there, same conditions, and Lance beat them to pole"

offer, but there is an understanding of the long-term project that is being built. Szafnauer outlines a three-to-five-year period for the team to get all of the pieces in place to become a proper F1 heavyweight.

"It doesn't happen overnight," he says. "It's got to be meticulously planned and executed. For sure our plans are more ambitious than what we did last year, and what we're going to do this year. We have to plan and execute for the future. There are a lot of things happening in that regard, including a new factory and hiring like-minded people, and getting the infrastructure correct. Those plans are ongoing. Towards the end of 2022, we should be moving into a new factory. Within that factory, we're going to need state-of-the-art tools that will help us

SUTTON





design and develop a car that's worthy of contending for a world championship, so that's a few years away. If I have to look into the future, it'll be in the three-to-five-year time period."

The prospect of building Aston Martin into a championship-worthy team and adding to his own haul is something that excites Vettel. "I'm not too old – there are now older drivers joining the grid, rather than younger drivers!" he jokes, referring to Fernando Alonso. "It is a longer-term project if you really want to win. I still have a long time in me."

He also rejects the idea that only works teams can win championships, saying such thinking is "old school. With somebody like Mercedes, I think we can trust that you get a very fair treatment. If you are faster then you are allowed to beat them."

Just as last year's car took inspiration from Mercedes, the Aston Martin project as a whole can do so too. Mercedes took

years to get all of the right pieces in place, before it eventually developed into the current juggernaut that is proving so difficult to wrestle championships away from.

Aston Martin is right at the start of that same journey, albeit against a different context thanks to the cost cap. The idea is that limiting budgets will place a greater focus on operational strength, which has always been a great quality of the Silverstone squad. With upgraded facilities, cash to spend and world champion input, the stars are aligning.

Lawrence Stroll has never been a man to do things by halves, with the launch being the epitome of that. His vision is that the rebirth of Aston Martin in F1 can mark not only a new era for the team, but for the manufacturer as a whole, making it champion material. "Our ambitions are limitless," he says. "We now have the pieces in place, the people and the partners, to make real progress." ❄

THE RETURN OF BRITISH RACING GREEN

The AMR21 not only represents the return of a British motorsport icon in the form of Aston Martin, but also the comeback of the famed British Racing Green colour scheme.

It has been the hallmark of so many great teams through Formula 1 history – including BRM, Cooper, Brabham and Lotus through the 1950s and 1960s – not to mention great marques prior to the Second World War. The Jordan 191 is another that holds a fond place in the F1 aesthete's heart, although it might be a stretch to call the 7Up livery true BRG!

Aston Martin, of course, also scored its biggest sportscar successes, including the 1959 Le Mans 1-2, with its own BRG.

The more recent efforts in British Racing Green have been far less successful. Jaguar enjoyed minimal success before selling up to Red Bull at the end of 2004. Not since 2012 – when the doomed Caterham team raced in the green-and-yellow colours of the Lotus brand it dearly wanted to encapsulate the spirit of –

has BRG been present on the F1 grid.

But Aston Martin made clear early on that it would be reviving the colour scheme for 2021, meaning a significant diversion from the bright pink Racing Point was known for courtesy of sponsor BWT.

Keen to get the scheme right, and ensure it would look great in the flesh as well as on TV and in photographs, Aston Martin's creative team spent over a year nailing down the final design. "We've spent 12 months developing a colour,"



says creative officer Marek Reichman. "We've gone through numerous iterations on the livery, and it went up to the 59th minute of the 11th hour with detail changes to get everything right. When you see the car, it's spectacular. That's all we can hope for. And it will be the most beautiful colour on the grid."

The British Racing Green matches well with some black elements, and has some pink flecks after Aston Martin struck a last-minute deal to keep BWT as a sponsor. The fan judgement was overwhelmingly positive, with most ranking the livery up there with Alpine's as the most beautiful on the 2021 grid.

"Only a few weeks ago, I was looking at the Jordan that came out of the same factory Aston Martin is in now, and that's a beautiful car," says Reichman. "For sure, you always wish things would be more aesthetically pleasing because I just think people stare when something is beautiful. They stare and they're in awe. That's always a hope."

THE UPS AND DOWNS OF 'TEAM SILVERSTONE'

Now in its sixth incarnation, the Formula 1 squad based at the home of British motorsport has built a reputation for punching above its weight

KEVIN TURNER

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES

During its three decades in Formula 1 – under the names Jordan, Midland, Spyker, Force India and Racing Point – the Silverstone-based team now known as Aston Martin has experienced pretty much everything. It fought for victories in the late 1990s but was propping up the grid by the middle of the following decade. More recently it has gained a reputation for making efficient use of its resources, making the possibilities of the new era intriguing.

This graph shows the team's performance over its three decades, based on supertimes data. Supertimes are based on the fastest single lap by each car at each race weekend, expressed as a percentage of the fastest single lap overall (100.000%) and averaged over the season.

The team's first car, the Jordan 191, made quite an impact in 1991. Although it was 3.313% off the frontrunning pace, that was good enough to be sixth fastest. Eddie Jordan's squad converted that to fifth in the constructors' table.

As is often the case, the second year proved tougher. The team tumbled to 14th in 1992, a whopping 5.525% off the pace, as it switched from Ford to Yamaha power, and scored one point. Jordan improved to 4.396% and ninth fastest in 1993 with Hart engines, but only scored three points. The banning for 1994 of many of the 'gizmos' pioneered by Williams closed up the field. The team jumped to fifth fastest, 1.897% off, and finished a strong fifth in the constructors' table.

The team gradually improved over the next few seasons with Peugeot engines. In relative terms, the 197 was the fastest Jordan to that point, underlining designer Gary Anderson's assertion that it was the team's best car not to win a race.

The Mugen-Honda-powered 198 – Jordan's answer to the new narrow-car/grooved-tyre regulations – suffered a troubled early life. But the reworked 198 became a regular top-six contender, and Jordan got its breakthrough win in a dramatic Belgian GP, Damon Hill leading a 1-2.

Heinz-Harald Frentzen made good use of the most competitive Jordan yet in 1999 – 1.004% off in third. As well as taking two wins, the German was thrust into title contention thanks to myriad dramas at McLaren and Ferrari.

Jordan celebrated its 10th F1 season with the EJ10, and it is still the team's most competitive car in terms of supertimes – 0.884% in third. But this time Jordan failed to capitalise on that pace and struggled with reliability, slipping from third to sixth in the constructors' table.

Factory Honda-supplied engines arrived for 2001, but things got worse. Jordan fell to fourth fastest and reliability remained a problem. The team was more than 2% off the pace in 2002 and 2003, as sponsorship became harder to find, taking sixth and ninth respectively in both the supertimes and constructors' championship. Across 2003-05 Jordan finished ahead of only Minardi in the points race as its financial woes grew, and by 2005 it had fallen to 3.904% behind.

By then the team had been bought by the Midland Group, leading to its first change of identity in 2006. The Midland name was in F1 for just one season, in which the team scored no points and was 3.081% off pacesetter Ferrari. Spyker Cars then bought the team, but it wasn't until it was sold to a consortium led by Vijay Mallya that things began to improve. Now known as Force India, the team again finished the season point-less in 2008, but the supertimes deficit to the front narrowed. The gap fell to 1.241% as new rules arrived in 2009. In 2020



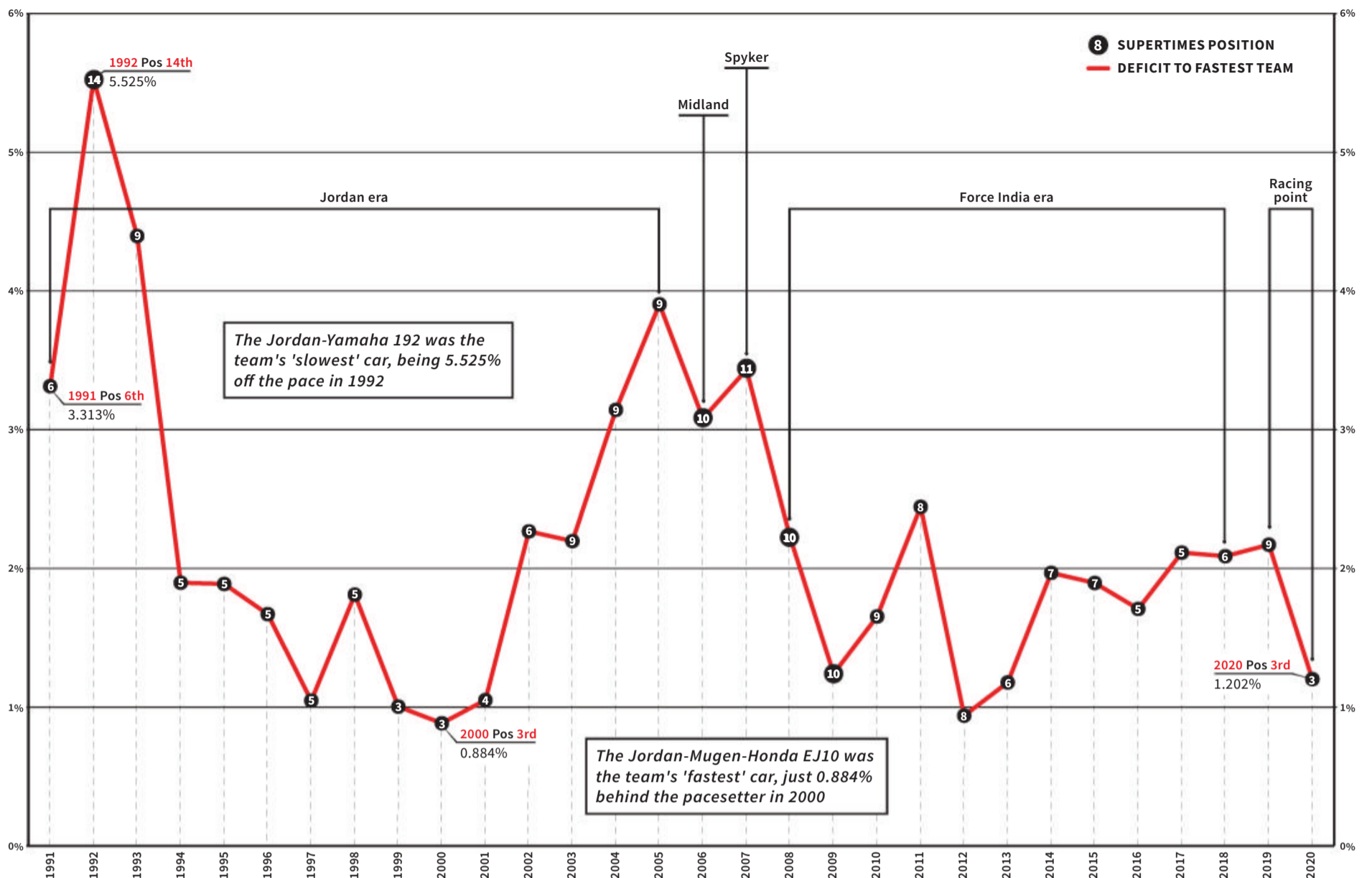
F1 debut, 1991 US GP: Eddie Jordan, Andrea de Cesaris and Gary Anderson in a confab

SUTTON



Fisichella starts on pole for the 2009 Belgian Grand Prix

KALISZ



that would have put the team only fractionally behind where Racing Point actually was, but 2009 was the closest season in world championship history in terms of the raw pace gap from front to back. That helps to explain why the ‘slowest’ car in the field – the VJM02 – actually took pole for the Belgian GP, Giancarlo Fisichella only being denied victory by the KERS-equipped Ferrari of Kimi Raikkonen.

Investment and a technical partnership with McLaren now helped establish Force India as a consistent points scorer. Though the gap to the front seesawed, the overall trend was a move up the field. At the end of the 2.4-litre V8 era in 2013, Force India was sixth fastest, 1.178% off the pace, and finished in that spot in the constructors’ table.

The team’s first turbo-hybrid car, the VJM07, fell to seventh and 1.968% away, but the quality line-up of Sergio Perez and Nico Hulkenberg helped the team to sixth in the championship, and they improved to fifth in 2015 despite Force India remaining seventh fastest. It’s not hard to see how the team gained its reputation for punching

“In the most competitive Jordan yet, Frentzen won twice and was thrust into title contention thanks to McLaren and Ferrari’s myriad dramas”

above its weight – Force India ‘overperformed’ again in 2016, finishing fourth with the fifth fastest car.

Although F1’s more aggressive regulations from 2017 helped close the gap at the front, it widened the gap behind, and Force India was 2.114% adrift of Mercedes despite still being fifth fastest and again taking fourth in the points table.

Financial difficulties delayed developments and resulted in a consortium led by Lawrence Stroll buying the team’s assets in the middle of 2018, and the squad remained about 2% behind through 2018-19. That meant it fell down the supertimes table as others improved, but the team’s savviness kept it in the game.



Perhaps one of the reasons behind Racing Point’s controversial RP20 can be found in its 2019 performance. The RP19 was only quicker than the beleaguered Williams squad’s FW42 and was 2.171% slower than Mercedes. The team managed to turn that into seventh in the constructors’ fight but, with those regulations originally set to finish at the end of 2020, it made sense to take a risk and change philosophy.

It was controversial, but that move worked. The RP20 was the third fastest car of last season and closed to 1.202% from the front. Despite the 15-point penalty it received for the RP20’s brake-duct design, Racing Point finished just seven points behind McLaren in the battle for third.

Question marks remain over the renamed Aston Martin team’s driver line-up for 2021, but the group’s history is largely that of making a lot out of a little. It has never quite reached the top but, with a sounder financial footing and the foundation of its most competitive car for two decades, the Silverstone squad has rarely been in better shape. 🏆

➔ P31 TOP 5 ‘TEAM SILVERSTONE’ F1 CARS

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'TEAM SILVERSTONE' F1 CARS

There have been some gems from the team known at various times as Jordan, Midland, Spyker, Force India, Racing Point and now Aston Martin. Here are the cars we think were the best

KEVIN TURNER



5 JORDAN 197 (1997)
 Designer Gary Anderson reckons the Peugeot-powered 197 was perhaps the best Jordan not to win a race. It's hard to disagree. Even with the inexperienced driver line-up of Giancarlo Fisichella and Ralf Schumacher – and a few clashes – the 197 was the fifth quickest car, fifth in the points table and chalked up three podium finishes. It also looked the part, arguably being the second-most-attractive car on this list...



4 JORDAN 191 (1991)
 The 197 was probably better, but the 191 was a remarkable car with which to enter F1. Forced to pre-qualify, Jordan soon shot to the front of the midfield with the Ford-powered machine and finished fifth in the constructors' standings, behind only McLaren, Williams, Ferrari and Benetton. The 191 was also one of the coolest-looking cars on the grid, with a superb livery and great curves for a modern single-seater.



3 RACING POINT RP20 (2020)
 Controversial though the 'pink Mercedes' was, there can be no doubting it launched the team back up the grid. The RP20 was more competitive than any car since the height of the Jordan era and brought the squad's fifth victory, with Sergio Perez at the Sakhir GP. Had it not been for the 15-point penalty and some inconsistent driver performances, Racing Point would have been third in the table.



2 JORDAN 198 (1998)
 A breakthrough car for Jordan. The 198 did not start well as F1 switched to narrower cars and grooved tyres for 1998. But a number of developments under Mike Gascoyne brought the Mugen-Honda-engined car into the mix. It became a consistent points threat and gave Jordan perhaps its greatest moment, taking a 1-2 in the dramatic Belgian GP courtesy of Damon Hill and Ralf Schumacher.



1 JORDAN 199 (1999)
 The team's only car to get into title contention has to top this list. A great season from Heinz-Harald Frentzen, which included two wins, and missteps from McLaren and Ferrari gave the German an outside chance of the crown. He eventually finished third, but even Hill's lacklustre final year was enough for Jordan to finish a clear third in the constructors' championship, having scored six podiums.





DUNBAR

ASTON MARTIN'S GREATEST RACING ERA?

The famous British marque won Le Mans and a world sportscar crown in 1959, but for longevity of success the recent Prodrive era takes some beating

GARY WATKINS

PHOTOGRAPHY  **motorsport
IMAGES**



GT1 DBR9 sparked the beginning of a new period of success for Aston Martin

One page of A4 paper. That's all the original deal between Aston Martin and Prodrive stretched to back in 2004. It hardly seemed the stuff of a successful and enduring partnership, but that's what it has turned out to be. Six class wins at the Le Mans 24 Hours and nine World Endurance Championship titles are among those successes, and that's not to mention the 323 racing Astons built over the past 17 and a bit years.

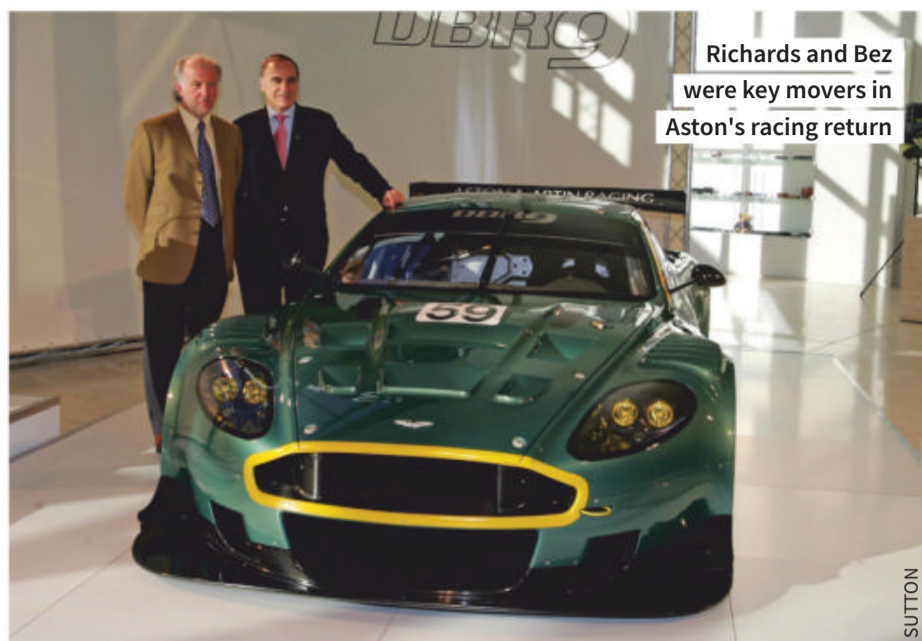
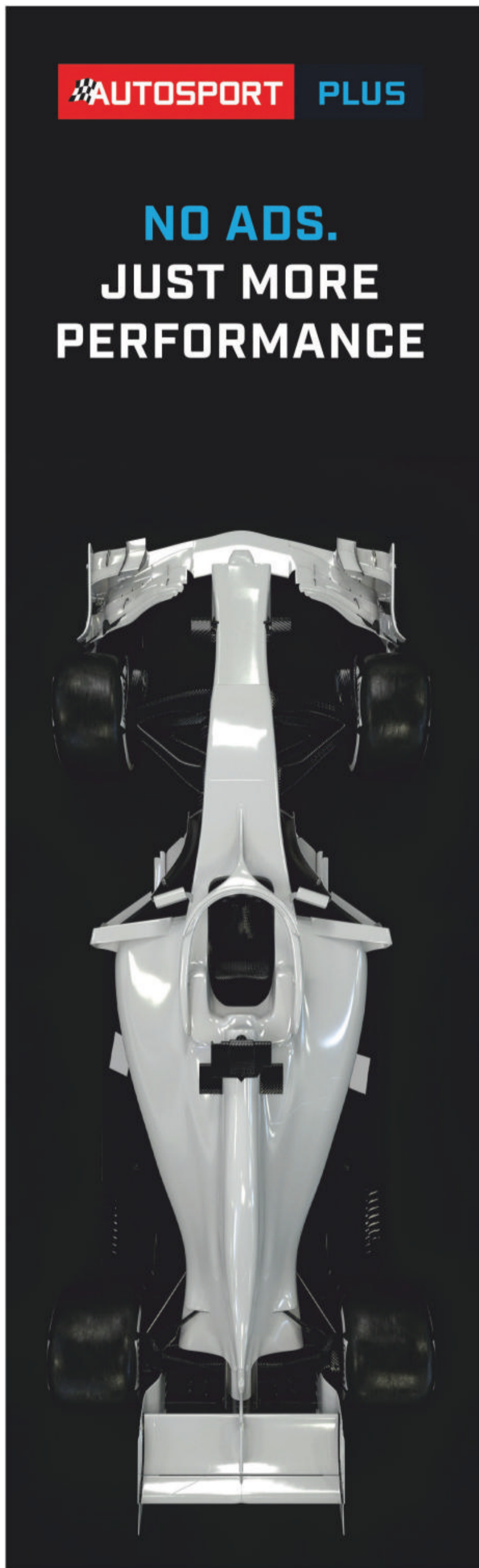
"That contract was written on a single sheet of paper between myself and Uli Bez [CEO at Aston at the time]," recalls Prodrive founder David Richards. "It said, 'We'll do this and you'll do that.' It was nothing more than that. That's how it all kicked off."

As simple as it may sound, the story behind Aston's return to motorsport for the first time since a single season with the Group C AMR1 in the World Sports-Prototype Championship in 1989 was a drawn-out affair. There had been more than one proclamation from

the company about its desire to mount a comeback during the 1990s, and Prodrive had been keen to lead it. It even built a racing DB7 GT concept racer, which was tested by Andy Wallace and none other than Sir Stirling Moss, in the mid-1990s in its efforts to lure the marque back. "I've had Astons for years and am an avid fan," says Richards. "I used to see them on an annual basis and say, 'Isn't it about time you went racing?'"

The turning point in the tale was the arrival of Bez as Aston CEO in the summer of 2000. He made his ambitions clear to take the marque back into motorsport to his new head of product development, Jeremy Main, when he moved over from the parent company in 2002.

"When I interviewed with Uli Bez, motorsport was part of the discussion," recalls Main. "He asked me if I wanted to be responsible for it. I thought it was an absolute natural for Aston Martin to be involved in motorsport. It was about connecting the new cars that were coming with motorsport and our racing heritage." >>



Bez had already brought in Graham Humphrys, lead designer on the 1999 Le Mans-winning BMW V12 LMR, as chief engineer of motorsport. The Brit actually schemed a couple of cars – a twin-turbo Vanquish for the GT class and a mid-engined supercar for the higher GTS category – before Main went searching for a partner who could not only design and build a racing DB9, but fund the development too.

Prodrive was only one of a number of organisations in the mix. Main had discussions with ORECA in France and Ray Mallock Limited. Prodrive, which had already proved its credentials with the Ferrari 550 Maranello GTS, got the nod for reasons that Main won't divulge.

There were a couple of other players in the story. One was wealthy Swiss race and rally driver Frederic Dor. He'd competed with the Prodrive Allstars rally team and bought a GT1 racing version of the Ferrari 550 developed by Italtcnica and dubbed the Millenio. He wasn't sure about the car, and took it to Prodrive to see if it could be improved. The message that came back was that it would be better off starting again.

That was the origin of the entirely private Ferrari project. Prodrive bought a 550 road car out of the small ads in a Sunday newspaper and turned it into what became known as the 550 GTS. Dor would go on to have a hand in the Aston project. He funded development and the initial race programme of the DBR9 fifty-fifty with Prodrive.

The final player was, bizarrely, Ferrari boss Luca di Montezemolo. A deal was in the mix for Prodrive's 550 to become a factory-sanctioned race car, but he vetoed the idea of a 'British Ferrari.' "He said, 'We're not going to have Ferraris built in Banbury thank you very much,'" recalls Richards. "That kind of threw us into the arms of Aston Martin."



ASTON 2 - 2 CHEVROLET

The Aston factory squad went up against Chevrolet four times at Le Mans in the renamed GT1 category from 2005. It ended up as a 2-2 score draw between the DBR9 and the Corvette C6.R, but George Howard-Chappell, team principal and engineering boss of the AMR squad, reckons it could have been different. Aston was in the mix to take class honours all four years.

The DBR9 had taken a debut victory at the Sebring 12 Hours in March 2005. Howard-Chappell insists that the new car was “fully competitive”, but the truth is that the two Chevys were ahead by a lap when they ran into trouble either side of the halfway mark. That left the way clear for Darren Turner, David Brabham and Stephane Ortelli to take the victory in fourth place overall for the British manufacturer.

Aston made it two in a row at Silverstone in May at the opening round of the FIA GT Championship, which fittingly was for the Royal Automobile Club’s historic and majestic Tourist Trophy. It was at the TT, then at Goodwood, that Aston had sealed World Sportscar Championship honours with the DBR1 in dramatic style against Ferrari and Porsche back in 1959.

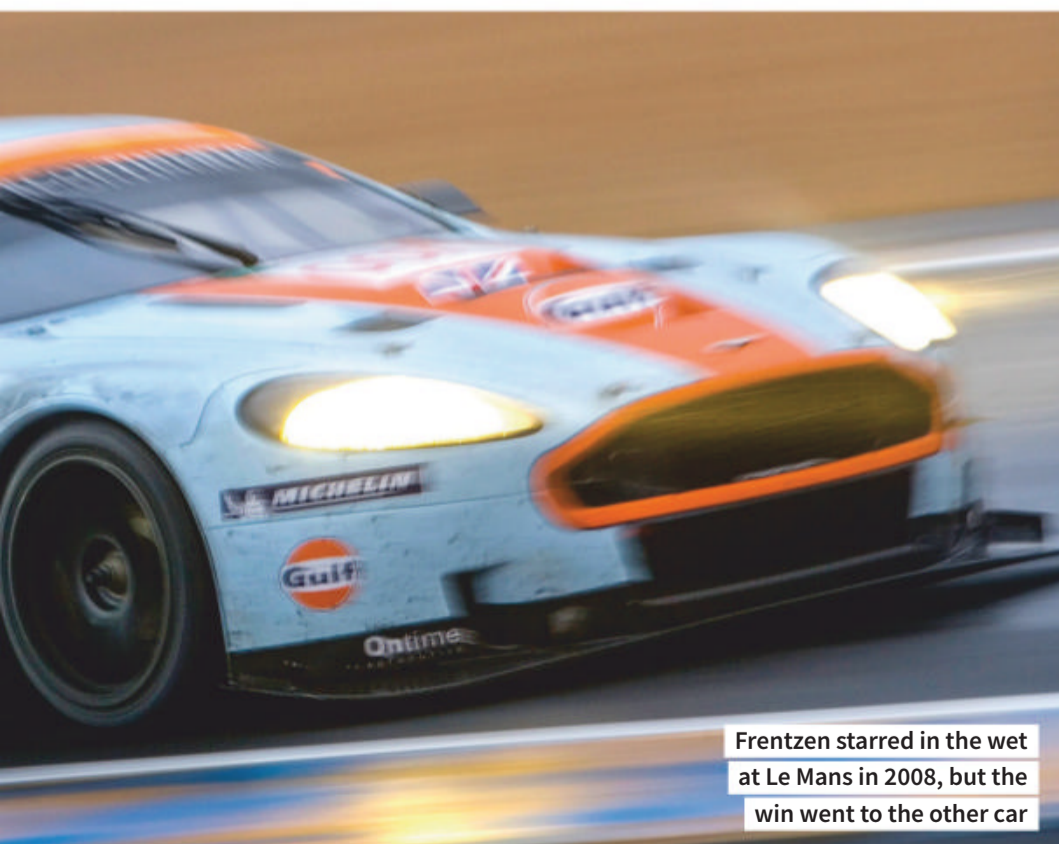
The DBR9 was a well-tested machine before reaching Le Mans. The class winner at Sebring had completed another 11 and a half hours at the Florida circuit immediately after the race before the clutch let go. AMR had also simulated Le Mans loadings on a course laid out at the Elvington airfield in Yorkshire. “We set up a course that wasn’t just up and down the runways – we used some of the taxiways as well – that replicated within a gnat’s whisker the speed profile of Le Mans,” remembers Howard-Chappell. “We ran for four days

“We ran for four solid days and spoiled it for everyone. Some stricter noise regulations were put in place afterwards”

solid, dusk 'til dawn, and spoiled it for everyone else. Some stricter noise regulations were put in place afterwards.”

Aston took the fight to Corvette Racing on the DBR9’s Le Mans debut, and was leading with five hours to go when GT1 pole winner Tomas Enge brought the car he shared with Pedro Lamy and Peter Kox into the pits for splitter repairs. Only in the penultimate hour, when the two Astons hit problems within minutes of each other, did the AMR challenge finally fade.

A year later, and Enge was on pole again, though the challenge of the DBR9 he shared with Darren Turner and Andrea Piccini was over almost before it had begun. Turner got a late call to come into the pits in the >>



Frentzen starred in the wet at Le Mans in 2008, but the win went to the other car

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opening hour and clattered over the kerbs. A broken oil line cost the car six laps. But the sister entry of Lamy, Stephane Ortelli and Stephane Sarrazin was leading with three hours to go when the clutch failed.

“We really felt that we could have won either of those years – or both,” recalls Howard-Chappell. “That first year we’d won Sebring, won the TT and were nearly 20 hours into Le Mans and were leading again. We were thinking, ‘Bloody hell, this is going to some kind of dream debut season.’ Then it all went wrong.”

It all went right for AMR in 2007-08. In the first of those years, the two factory DBR9s dominated on a rare off weekend for Corvette Racing at Le Mans. Turner, Brabham and Rickard Rydell claimed class honours, but the accolades could easily have gone to the sister car shared by Enge, Kox and Johnny Herbert. The two cars were looking evenly matched – though out of synch on pitstops – on Sunday morning when Herbert lost concentration and tripped through the gravel in the Porsche Curves, damaging the splitter.

AMR came out on top again in 2008, this time with its cars liveried in Gulf Oil’s famous blue and orange. It was a closer run thing, however. Turner, Brabham and Antonio Garcia prevailed by less than a lap from the best of the Chevys. Again either of the Astons could have won. The sister car ended five laps down in fourth position in class with Heinz-Harald Frentzen, Karl Wendlinger and Piccini, after losing time with what turned out to be an unnecessary alternator change after the last-named had spun in the Dunlop Curve.

Howard-Chappell describes Frentzen’s pace in the wet that year as one of the highlights of the Aston GT1 years: “His ability in the rain was unbelievable, simply staggering. He told us that he thought he could do better than the traction control, so he turned it off. He was probably a few tenths off our regular drivers in the dry, but he completely murdered them in the wet. That car probably should have won in 2008.”

MOVE TO THE BIG TIME

The two AMR-Ones managed six racing laps between them at Le Mans in 2011, and the best of them had been 20 seconds off the pace in qualifying. AMR’s foray into the prototype arena will probably be judged by history on the disastrous and short-lived career of a car designed and built in-house at Prodrive. That’s probably unfair.

There were happier and more successful times for AMR over the course of the LMP1 programme. It won the Le Mans Series in 2009 with one of the Gulf-liveried Aston-engined Lolas clothed in its own svelte bodywork, champions Tomas Enge, Stefan Mucke and Jan Charouz never finishing off the podium across the five races. It claimed fourth at Le Mans the same year as the first petrol-powered car across the line. And one of the Lola-Astons was running as high as third during the night.

Perhaps that was the problem. The Lola-Aston, or Aston Martin DBR1/2 as AMR liked to call the car with a nod to its 1959 Le Mans winner, punched above its weight. A new car and engine were required for the next generation of rules coming into force for 2011, and Prodrive, buoyed by its successes, decided to do both itself. Not only that, but it went super-aggressive, coming up with a radical

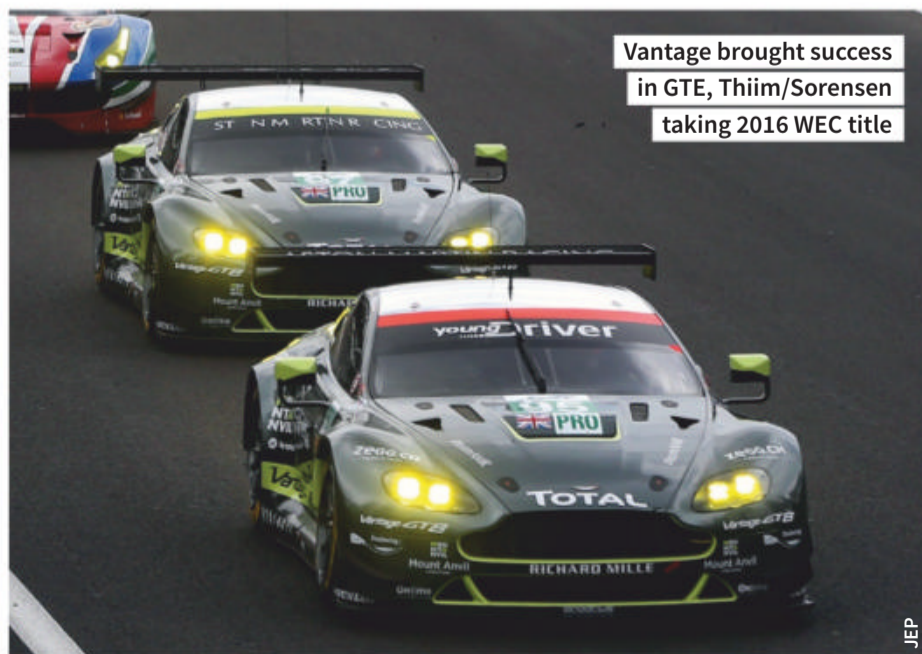


aero concept that required a powerplant at the diametric opposite of the DBR9’s monster V12. “Ego took over,” reckons Richards. Howard-Chappell doesn’t quite go that far. He suggests that the team was “maybe overly ambitious, overly confident”.

Time and money, or rather a lack of those two precious ingredients, did for the AMR-One, reckons Howard-Chappell: “When we decided to do our own chassis and engine we had a decent amount of time. But don’t forget the project wasn’t confirmed until September [2010] and we’d gone further and further down that road. On the engine particularly, we asked ourselves, ‘Do we go out and source something else or do we carry on with what we are late on?’ We stupidly carried on with an engine that was behind schedule.”

The open-top AMR-One incorporated giant through-ducts in the name of drag reduction, which called for a tiny in-line turbo engine. Prodrive’s engine department opted for a straight-six direct injection, its first-ever ground-up design. “The engine we ended up with was a Swiss watch, a beautiful little thing, but we needed it to work immediately – and it didn’t,” recalls Howard-Chappell. “We didn’t have the money to get it right in the time we had.”

AMR-One never even came close to making the Sebring 12 Hours in March, did some very public testing at the Le Mans Series opener at





STATS
 123 races
 312 starts
 58 wins
 76 podiums

Lola-Aston proved capable
 but encouraged Prodrive
 to overreach in LMP1

Paul Ricard with a solo car, and then managed just 15 laps at the Le Mans test day in April. Things didn't get much better in race week.

The team knew the engines wouldn't last deep into the race, so it opted to re-engineer one of the engine pulleys, switching from aluminium to steel. The new components were made in Banbury and flown to Le Mans, only making it onto the cars after the morning warm-up. "We could see the thing was cracking and was going to fail after eight or nine hours," says Howard-Chappell. "The problem was what we came up with completely screwed the torsional vibration behaviour of the engine and broke the cam chain."

The AMR-One didn't race again, or at least not as an Aston Martin. The car's monocoque ended up as the basis of the Nissan DeltaWing experimental racer and the short-lived Pescarolo 03 LMP1. But AMR returned to the ALMS, where a customer car in the hands of the Muscle Milk CytoSport team was already racing. The DBR1-2 ended up with five wins in North America in 2011.

The shame is that those and the LMS victories have been largely forgotten against the failures of AMR-One.

A NEW FOCUS ON GT RACING

AMR's top brass looked up at the screens after qualifying. The Vantage GTEs were nailed to bottom of the GTE Pro times, and by some margin. The two Astons were 10s off the pace in the cold and damp conditions – snowy even – at the Silverstone WEC series opener in 2016. There were suddenly doubts about the decision to swap from Michelin to Dunlop tyres for the new campaign.

"I was there in the pits with DR to my left and John Gaw to my right and asking, 'Have we made the right decision?'" recalls Dan Sayers, AMR's technical director from 2014 until the end of 2019. "It was a big one, something we had made collectively, but you had to question it when you were so far off."

AMR ended up winning the grandly named World Endurance Cup for GT Drivers with Nicki Thiim and Marco Sorensen that year ahead of factory opposition from Ferrari and Ford, as well as Porsche with works-supported machinery. It was followed by a first GTE Pro Le Mans victory the following season. The decision to switch tyre manufacturer undoubtedly paid off.

AMR had refocused on GT racing after the AMR-One debacle in the reborn WEC, and more specifically what was now known as GTE. GT1 had died a death by that time. It gave the Vantage GT2, which

had been racing on and off since 2008, a quick makeover for 2012 prior to the development of a new GTE contender around the same base vehicle for the following season.

The new car was a winner from the get-go, and might have taken the GTE Pro title in 2013. Turner and Mucke just led the points going into the Bahrain finale, while Aston did the same in the manufacturers' standings. The AMR stalwarts probably wouldn't have taken the drivers' crown, but the silverware for marques was within reach when sand ingress resulted in both Vantages retiring. There were also near-misses at Le Mans, including 2013, the year that Allan Simonsen tragically lost his life in his GTE Am-class Aston early in the race.

AMR made the move away from Michelin to breathe new life into the ageing Vantage, which had undergone an aero refresh to bring it in line with the new rules introduced for 2016. It was looking for what Gaw called "a differentiator".

"It was fairly clear in our minds that at least at conventional tracks we were going to struggle against the new breed of cars," says Sayers. "We wanted something that would set us apart from everyone else on the Michelin. With Dunlop we got a dedicated partner who could focus all their attention on us."

"The championship in 2016 was massive, partly because of how close we'd come in 2013 and also because of where we started"

Aston's championship bid came good in the summer as the development programme with Dunlop bore fruit. A mid-season run of podiums, climaxing with victory at Austin followed by a second win of the season at the Bahrain finale, gave the Danes the title.

"The championship in 2016 was massive, partly because of how close we'd come in 2013 and also because of where we started that year," recalls Sayers. "Dunlop did some good work over the season. To win it in Bahrain was special after what had happened three years before. Le Mans was similar because we'd been knocking on the door for so long, but a bit more dramatic."

That's a reference to Jonny Adam taking the lead from one of the Chevrolet Corvette C7.Rs at the Ford Chicane at the end of the >>

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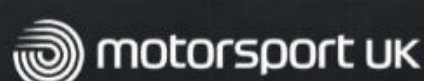
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ASTON MARTIN-PRODRIVE GT HIGHLIGHTS

LE MANS CLASS WINS

- 2007 GT1** (David Brabham/Rickard Rydell/Darren Turner)
- 2008 GT1** (David Brabham/Antonio Garcia/Darren Turner)
- 2014 GTE Am** (David Heinemeier Hansson/Kristian Poulsen/Nicki Thiim)
- 2017 GTE Pro** (Jonny Adam/Daniel Serra/Darren Turner)
- 2020 GTE Pro** (Alex Lynn/Maxime Martin/Harry Tincknell)
- 2020 GTE Am** (Jonny Adam/Charlie Eastwood/Salih Yoluc)

WORLD ENDURANCE TITLES

- 2013 GTE Am Drivers** (Jamie Campbell-Walter/Stuart Hall)
- 2014 GTE Am Drivers** (David Heinemeier Hansson/Kristian Poulsen) and Teams
- 2016 GT Drivers** (Marco Sorensen/Nicki Thiim) and Teams
- 2017 GTE Am Drivers** (Pedro Lamy/Mathias Lauda/Paul Dalla Lana) and Teams
- 2019-20 GT Drivers** (Marco Sorensen/Nicki Thiim) and Manufacturers



penultimate lap in the 2017 edition of the 24 Hours.

The ageing first-generation Vantage was superseded by a new car for the 2018-19 WEC superseason that straddled two calendar years. After a late switch back to Michelins, the gen2 Vantage won twice, but only in the rain. The following season, after some proper tyre development, the car was a competitive proposition in all conditions. Thiim and Sorensen reprised their 2016 title win, Aston took the marque's crown, and Maxime Martin, Alex Lynn and Harry Tincknell claimed GTE Pro honours at Le Mans, while TF Sport won GTE Am with its Vantage.

THE TWO THAT GOT AWAY

Aston Martin has been successful in GT3 and GT4 in recent years too – Adam has taken a record four British GT titles in Aston machinery, for example – but there are a couple of holes in its bulging CV since 2005. It has failed to win either of the 24-hour classics at Spa or the Nurburgring. There have, however, been a few near-misses along the way. Most notable was the one at Spa in 2006.

The customer Phoenix Racing DBR9 driven by Piccini, Marcel Fassler, Jean-Denis Deletraz and Stephane Lemeret dominated the race. There was a delay in the night with a seatbelt issue and an engine glitch that increased fuel consumption, but it still looked odds on to triumph ahead of the best of the Vitaphone Maserati MC12s until the closing stages.

Eric van de Poele closed down Piccini in light drizzle, buzzed past and then pulled away. The Aston driver had nothing for him.

“He was like three or four seconds a lap faster, and at the time I thought it was me,” recalls Piccini. “Years later, I understood why. He was on Pirellis and I was on Michelins, and four years later at the Spa 1000Km I was on Pirellis [driving a Racing Box LMP2 Lola] in the same kind of conditions and I was passing LMP1 Audis. I thought, ‘Bloody hell, know I know why I lost victory in the 24 Hours.’”

Aston Martin took its best ever finish at the Nurburgring 24 Hours in 2018 with fourth position for the V12 Vantage GT3 shared by Turner, Martin, Thiim and Sorensen. It might have been different but for a late-race stoppage just as AMR's fuel strategy was about to come good, and some splitter damage.

“That was our best chance at the 'Ring,” says Sayers, who had overseen the design of the V12 Vantage ahead of its release in 2012. “It was difficult to say how it was going to turn out, and it certainly didn't help that we were running wounded at the end.”

The AMR endurance story is far from over, the withdrawal of the factory-run squad from the GTE Pro ranks of the WEC or not. There is a renewed focus on Aston's customers, and the 100th new-shape Vantage is currently in build. There's also a promise that the factory team will be back, perhaps not with a full WEC programme, but possibly in those two big races that are still missing from the Aston Martin Racing CV. ❦

Can Dick Johnson Racing still be a Supercars powerhouse without Penske?

Roger Penske's famous operation helped lift the Ford team to the top of Australian tin-tops. Will it be able to stay there without The Captain?

ANDREW VAN LEEUWEN

PHOTOGRAPHY  motorsport
IMAGES

Roger Penske's whirlwind Australian Supercars sojourn is over. After six seasons, three drivers' titles, three teams' championships and a Bathurst 1000 crown, The Captain has sold his controlling stake in Dick Johnson Racing back to the squad and walked away from the category.

Given that his input helped DJR reclaim its powerhouse status, it's natural that Penske's departure has cast doubt over the immediate future of a team we've become so used to seeing at the front of the field. The question is: will DJR still be a Supercars heavyweight in its first post-Penske season?

To properly gauge what the Penske exit means for Dick Johnson Racing, you need to look at what Team Penske brought to it in the first place.

When Penske took a 51% stake in DJR ahead of the 2015 season, the team was in a bad way. The glory days had mostly been left in the 1980s and 1990s, and even James Courtney's impressive 2010 title had become a distant memory. The team's roster between 2012 and 2014 included the likes of Dean Fiore, Jonny Reid, Tim Blanchard and David Wall – all fine drivers, but none of them the credentialed winners that you'd expect to see driving the famous DJR Falcons. Apart from an unexpected win at Queensland Raceway for loanee Chaz Mostert in 2013, it was a lean old run for the once mighty DJR.

Then along came Penske. With his controlling share he was able to set the transformation in motion. It was no silver bullet, particularly with the early progress slowed by the failed experiment of bringing 2003-04 champion Marcos Ambrose back from NASCAR. But that setback highlighted the need to a) re-expand to two cars, and b) hire the best of the best if DJR Team Penske was going to run down Roland Dane's formidable

Triple Eight Race Engineering squad.

The investment was there to make it all happen. During the 2015 season, a second Racing Entitlements Contract was obtained and a now-flush DJR set the driver market pace. It was an open secret that the team's primary target, at Ambrose's recommendation, was Scott McLaughlin. When it became clear that he'd stay at Garry Rogers Motorsport and see out his contract, race winner Fabian Coulthard – the man of the silly season hour as he'd come off contract at Brad Jones Racing – was signed to partner Scott Pye for 2016.

A year later DJRTP finally got its man, Volvo's exit from Supercars helping pry McLaughlin out of his happy home at GRM. Those deep Penske pockets were given another workout during preparations for the 2017 season when the team successfully went after Triple Eight technical guru Ludo Lacroix. The dream team was finally assembled, and the wins and titles flowed over the four seasons that followed.

Hiring those two race-winning drivers and the man that was widely regarded as Triple Eight's secret sauce – who didn't come cheap – showed the Penske investment at work. It was the direct result of there being no pressure for the DJRTP venture to make money. That's not to say it was all outgoings though. Penske opened a lot of commercial doors, while DJRTP managing director Ryan Story is no slouch in the business world himself.

Between that, and fuelled by the team's on-track momentum, a good commercial package was put together led by the title backing from local Shell licensee Viva Energy. But as good as the commercial package was – and still is – it was always widely thought to be worth less than what the team spent each season. The sponsorship was a kind of damage limitation for Penske, but the true name of the game was helping Penske expand his non-motorsport business footprint down under. As long as there was profit to be made elsewhere, the race operation didn't need to turn one.

What's harder to directly quantify is how much technical input came out of Mooresville over the six years Team Penske was involved. It's something that, thanks to the strict Supercars regulations, has been shrouded in secrecy and prompted flare-ups of controversy.

The first blow-up was before Penske even bought into DJR. When negotiations turned serious, Penske asked the team to send a car Stateside so his men could take a closer look. As per Supercars rules, the car was stripped of a number of control components and approval was given for the car to leave Australian soil. At least until other teams caught wind of the plan midway through 2014 and argued that, while it was within the letter of the law, it wasn't within the spirit of the rules. The furore ended in threats that if the car left Australia, the Supercars Board might not approve the sale of the DJR's RECs to Penske. >>



McLaughlin led DJR Team Penske to three consecutive Supercars titles





Scott Pye was part of the driver line-up for first assault in 2016

KALISZ

The nasty stand-off left the Captain to seriously reconsider getting involved at all. The saga set the tone for a tension between Penske and Supercars over those strict regulations that simmered throughout his tenure in the category. It wasn't until mid-2019 that a deregistered, stripped back DJRTP Supercar finally made it to the US to act as a moving show car for Ford Performance and Penske. More cars have recently followed as part of the DJR/Penske divorce.

Penske's access to things like shaker rigs and windtunnels, both banned in Supercars, were a six-year source of anxiety for DJRTP's rivals. Not that there was ever any hard evidence that the rules were flouted and those high-powered tools were employed to help either develop the FG-X Falcon or design the Mustang.

Anyway, as hard as it is to quantify, the likelihood is that Penske's technical muscle played a very real, very significant role in the development of the cars across the seasons it was involved.

Along with resources both financial and technical, the Penske tie-up also helped facilitate Ford's return to Supercars. Penske himself made it clear when he came into the category that talking Ford into reopening its wallet was a priority. Ford did return, and DJRTP nabbed the homologation team role off Tickford Racing in the process. That led to the undoubtedly successful collaboration to design and develop the controversial Mustang.



Coulthard scored first win for the DJR-Penske alliance at Symmons Plains in 2017

So where does Penske's recent departure leave DJR? In terms of investment this isn't a hard reset. There's little doubt that the team is much better placed commercially than it was pre-DJRTP era, even without the Penske money tap. An astute businessman such as Story wouldn't have kept the team alive if he didn't see the potential for profit.

But the difference isn't always made at an operating budget level; it's the ability to do what it takes. That's not a short-term problem – the cars won't fall off a cliff in terms of speed – but could become an issue as the 2021 season wears on. The exact same thing goes for whatever technical leg-up was coming out of Mooresville. The highly developed DJR Mustang won't necessarily suffer in the short term, but if things get tight and an arms race breaks out...

A dulling of both the technical and financial firepower may not be seen as a huge disadvantage in what is the final year of a ruleset.



DJRTEAMPENSKE



Will Triple Eight
now be able to
repass DJR?

“Ford did not follow Penske out of the door. It is poised to have a hand in the Gen3 Mustang”

With Gen3 coming in 2022, it's easy to assume that development will slow to a crawl as the current Mustangs and Commodores hurtle towards the end of their lifecycles.

But things don't always work like that in professional sport. Perhaps Triple Eight will see the Penske exit as a weakness it can exploit. A levelling of the resources playing field, or perhaps even the scales tipping back in T8's favour.

It's not all bad news, though. Had the Penske exit sparked an exodus of local staff, the alarm bells might be ringing. But Story will still be running the show. Ben Croke is still leading the operational line, in what's now the team principal role. McLaughlin has gone to IndyCar and yes, that creates some uncertainty, but it would seem that the team is well placed in terms of drivers (see below). And the biggest staffing win is that Lacroix is still there to both lead the engineering unit and help develop the Gen3-spec Mustang.

It's important to note that Ford didn't follow Penske out of the door either. Ford Performance is poised to have a hand in that Gen3 Mustang development over the coming year. That doesn't just broaden the technical expertise involved in the project, but lightens the load on DJR as a race team. Triple Eight, meanwhile, will be doing the heavy lifting for the Camaro project directly alongside its 2021 race programme. In that respect, DJR may be better placed.

In the same way that Penske buying into the team wasn't a silver bullet, Penske's exit won't immediately burst the bubble of momentum. DJR is still well financed, well staffed and well placed to begin the season right in the mix.

Will it be the unstoppable force it was through the McLaughlin era? Perhaps not. Will it still be a powerhouse alongside Triple Eight? In the short term, at the very least, there's absolutely no reason why not. 🌩

AND IT'S ALL CHANGE ON THE DRIVER FRONT

Complicating the pre and post-Penske exit comparisons is the absence of Scott McLaughlin.

In brutally honest terms, McLaughlin made Fabian Coulthard, a proven race winner, look average as he romped to three straight titles.

There's an argument to be made that McLaughlin's cause was helped by his clear team-leader status. The squad often denied there was a number one or two and, strictly speaking, that may be true. The cars may well have been identical the whole time, and perhaps that was the problem. Was Coulthard really getting the help he needed to make the car work for him?

There's a well-worn theory that Coulthard, who thrives when his car has plenty of rear grip, never got along with McLaughlin's 'front end at all costs' set-up. But it's hard to build a case for wholesale changes to the car when your team-mate is on pole by three tenths...

The other theory is that McLaughlin is just better than Coulthard. And not by a little bit; by a

whole lot. That he alone was the 'X factor' for the Dick Johnson Racing Team Penske dominance.

The truth probably lies somewhere in between, but it would be better for DJR if it's closer to theory one than theory two. If it really was all McLaughlin making the difference, then Coulthard is the 'corrected' indication of DJR's car speed – and he finished the past three seasons ninth, fourth and sixth in the points.

A clean slate with drivers may provide a clearer picture, and the team has, once again, performed well on the driver market. Anton De Pasquale is similarly placed to where McLaughlin was when he came to DJR. He's seen as the next big thing and this is his big break. The only question mark over De Pasquale is that, given the close ties between his manager Paul Morris and Roland Dane, why didn't Triple Eight ever make a play for him?

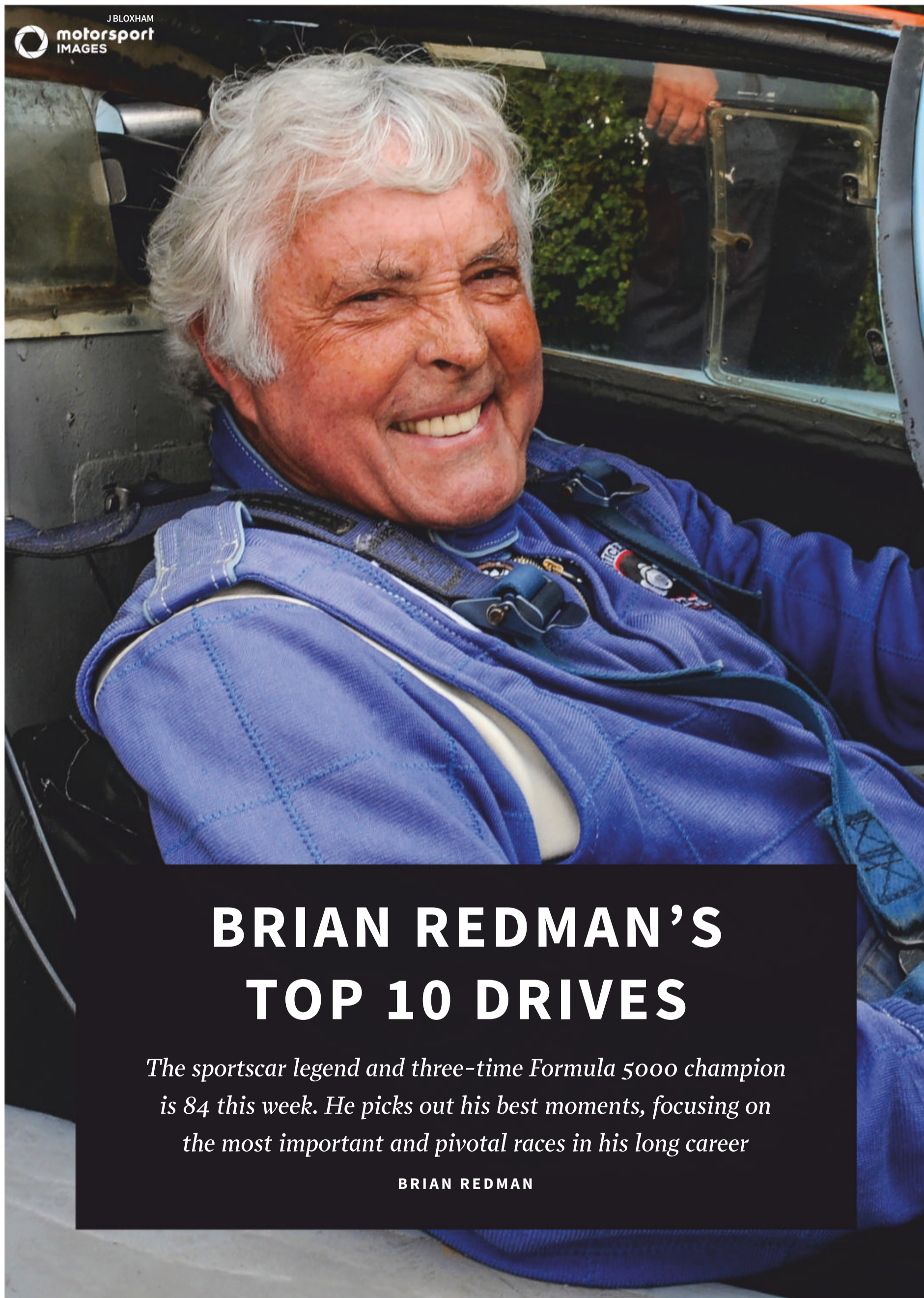
Will Davison, meanwhile, is a safe pair of hands who's won races and challenged for titles. Sure, he's closer to the end of his career than to the

Davison took podium in
2021 opener at Bathurst



start of it, but he should provide a more than fair benchmark for De Pasquale.

Between a rising star looking to make his mark, and a proven veteran eyeing what may be his final chance in a frontrunning Supercars machine, DJR is about as well placed as it could be in terms of drivers.



J BLOXHAM
motorsport
IMAGES

BRIAN REDMAN'S TOP 10 DRIVES

The sportscar legend and three-time Formula 5000 champion is 84 this week. He picks out his best moments, focusing on the most important and pivotal races in his long career

BRIAN REDMAN

FIRST DRIVE IN E-TYPE '4 WPD'

OULTON PARK
JAGUAR E-TYPE

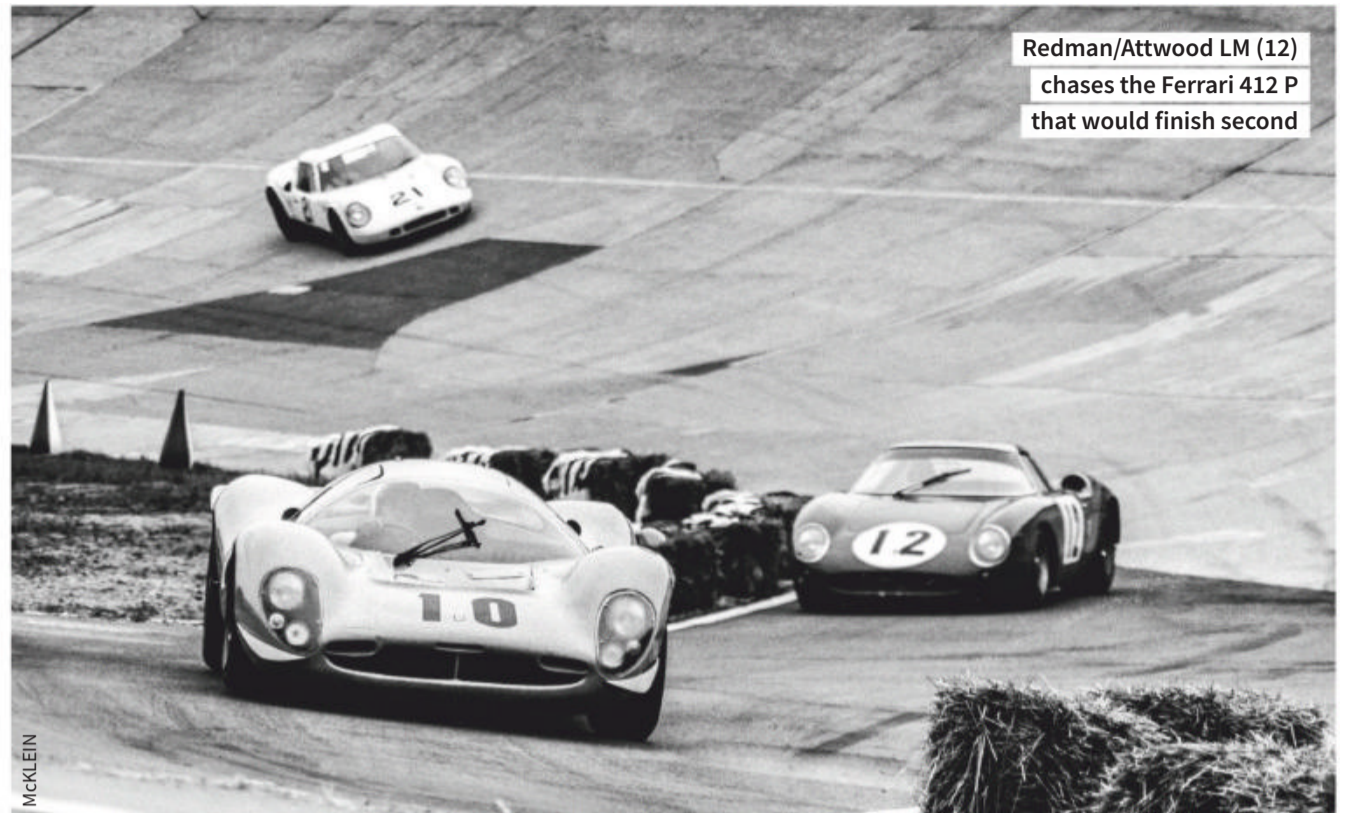
10

Gordon Brown was a huge Jaguar enthusiast, and in 1965 asked if I'd like to try his ex-Stirling Moss XK120 at a

Woodvale sprint. I managed fastest time of the day, and Gordon said he'd get me a drive in the ex-John Coombs/Graham Hill lightweight E-type '4 WPD', recently bought by Charles Bridges's Red Rose Motors.

I met Charles and the E-type on a beautiful Thursday morning in late April at Oulton Park, along with mechanic Terry Wells, who'd essentially come with the car. I'd never driven an E-type before but knew the track well. This was a great opportunity and I drove as if my life depended on it. I managed to lap three seconds faster than Charles, and under Jackie Stewart's GT record set in the Ecurie Ecosse Tojeiro.

Charles and I went on to have a great season with the E-type, beaten only once, by Ron Fry's Ferrari 250 LM at Silverstone. In 1966 we continued with a Lola T70 Mk2 in club and international events, and that led to even more opportunities. At the end of the year I was given third place in the Grovewood Awards behind Chris Lambert and Jackie Oliver. I was on my way...



1967 PARIS 1000KM

MONTLHERY **FERRARI 250 LM** (6th)

9

In 1967 I turned professional when Charles Bridges's younger brother David offered me a guaranteed £30 a week with a competitive car and a mechanic to race in Formula 2. But no one important had ever heard of me, so Brabham declined to sell us one of their new BT23 chassis, and Cosworth declined to sell David one of their latest engines.

So, I was thrown into F2 at the deep end, competing against top teams and international stars in David's two-year-old BT16. I learned a lot, scored a few promising results, did Spa and

Le Mans in GT40s, and then David Piper asked if I'd like to drive his Ferrari 250 LM with Richard Attwood in the Paris 1000Km at Montlhery.

It poured with rain, and we managed sixth overall and first in the Sport class. After the race a tall, distinguished-looking gentleman introduced himself. It was David Yorke, team manager for JW Automotive Engineering, and he wondered if I'd like to co-drive with Jacky Ickx in the upcoming Kyalami 9 Hours race.

Jacky and I wound up winning that race, and afterwards I was presented a contract to drive for JWA for the 1968 season. And soon after that, a call came from John Cooper asking if I'd like to join his F1 team.



1975 LONG BEACH GRAND PRIX

LOLA T332 (1st)

8

While my star never managed to ascend as I might have wished in F1, I did better driving F5000 in North America for Jim Hall and Carl Haas in the works Lola T332. We managed to win three championships on the trot (1974-76), and the competition was occasionally fearsome.

I particularly recall the inaugural Long Beach Grand Prix, in 1975, even though our result was more due to perseverance, sensitivity, luck and attrition than brilliance. It attracted an enormous entry – 44 cars – including established stars

Mario Andretti, Chris Amon, Jody Scheckter, Tony Brise, George Follmer, Jackie Oliver, David Hobbs, Brett Lunger, Graham McRae, Vern Schuppan, Tom Pryce, Danny Ongais, Al Unser Sr and Gordon Johncock.

The new track was very rough in spots and had many second- and third-gear corners, and when I cracked the throttle open coming out of one during qualifying, the car unexpectedly jumped sideways. I talked with Jim Hall about it, and he said he hated to open the gearbox the night before the race. But he agreed they'd take a look. Sure enough, the Weismann limited-slip differential had broken, and was replaced.

In the early going, Andretti and rising star Brise scrapped for the lead, with Unser in third and me in fourth, watching the action ahead. Then the limited-slip broke again coming out of Turn 1, so all I could do was back off over the rough pavement sections while doing my best to maintain speed.

Then Unser dropped out with broken suspension and Andretti stopped with a broken gearbox. And then, just one lap later, Brise was out with a broken half-shaft! It turned into a very lucky win for us and clinched our second straight F5000 championship. I put this in because of the troubles we had with the diff and because of the quality of the entry.

1971 IMOLA 500KM

BRM P167 (1st)

7

I retired from motorsport in 1970 as I'd become increasingly concerned for my family and about the dangers and career uncertainty involved, and attempted a short and ultimately foolish emigration to South Africa and a job in a car dealership. It quickly became apparent that I was both an Englishman and still a racer at heart, and returned to the UK in 1971 with no drive lined up. The only offer on tap was a drive in Sid Taylor's F5000 McLaren M18, which proved itself obsolete compared to

the likes of Frank Gardner's lightweight, F2-based Lola T300.

In late August Sid rang to ask if I'd like to do the Imola 500km in a Tony Southgate-designed BRM P167 Group 7 car on loan from BRM. It turned out to be a fine car and, on 12 September, I had a great race in pouring rain, lapping a field that included Peter Gethin in a McLaren M8E, Leo Kinnunen in a Porsche 917 Spyder and Clay Regazzoni in a works Ferrari 312 PB.

After the race, Ferrari team principal Mauro Forghieri came up and asked: "Brian, what are you doing next year?" And that led to two great years with Ferrari.



BRM success helped Redman secure a place at Ferrari for 1972. Ronnie Peterson was a team-mate

SCHLEGELMILCH/MOTORSPORTIMAGES

1978 SEBRING 12 HOURS

PORSCHE 935 (1st)

6

After our success in F5000, the Sports Car Club of America changed the rules for 1977. Although the races were exciting, spectator turnout for F5000 hadn't been as good as for Can-Am cars, which had been legislated out of existence in 1974. So, for promotional purposes, we were asked to put all-enveloping bodywork on our F5000 single-seaters and rechristen them once again as 'Can-Am' cars.

I arrived at St Jovite in June for the first race. I hadn't even seen the new car before, but knew that, prepared by Jim Hall's crack Chaparral crew, it would be good. After 10 laps or so of practice, I came in and requested that they lower the front wing by a quarter of an inch.

On the next lap, at roughly 160mph, the Lola simply took off. It climbed a more-than-respectable 30 feet into the air, did half a somersault and returned to earth upside down, but still going at an impressive rate of knots. I recall the rollbar collapsing and feeling my helmet scraping and skittering along the pavement, and I was lucky that the Lola rolled off the road towards the end, turned over and landed on its wheels. That afforded the heart-specialist track doctor access to practise his trade and get me up and running again.

Then the ambulance blew a tyre on its way to the hospital! When my wife Marion arrived from England the next day, the headline in the Montreal newspaper read 'Redman Est Mort'. That was a bit of

an exaggeration, thank goodness, but I did have a broken neck (C1), broken shoulder, broken sternum and broken ribs, plus bruising of the brain.

By November I was able to start running slowly and thinking about what to do and if I could, or even wanted to, drive again. I called Porsche/Audi/VW of America competition manager Joe Hoppen and asked if he could find me a decent ride for Sebring the following March. He put me in touch with noted privateer Porsche entrant Dick Barbour, who ran cars for himself and some topline professionals, plus a second car rented out and sometimes co-driven by Bob Garretson, owner of Garretson Enterprises, which prepared the Barbour Porsches.

In 1978, the Sebring 12 Hours was going through one of its periodic business difficulties, and the event was taken over by Charles Mendez, a Tampa businessman with great enthusiasm for motorsport but limited racing experience. He and Garretson became my co-drivers in Porsche 935 #9, while Dick Barbour shared car #6 with Porsche factory drivers Rolf Stommelen and Manfred Schurti.

As always, Sebring provided shocks and surprises as the top runners suffered myriad problems. Perhaps most surprising of all, we won the race, beating the fast-closing 935 of Hurley Haywood and Bob Hagestad by a mere 90 seconds after 12 hours of racing. Afterwards, Dick Barbour asked if I'd like to do more races with him, and this led to part-time racing employment for two years.

1975 LABATT'S BLUE 5000

MOSPORT LOLA T332 (2nd)

5

When the United States Automobile Club joined the SCCA in promoting the F5000 series, it was a game-changer. Into the series came drivers such as Mario Andretti and Al Unser Sr, both driving for the team of California Ford dealer 'Vel' Miletich and racing legend and Firestone tyre dealer Rufus 'Parnelli' Jones. They lured away my chief mechanic from the previous year, Jim Chapman, for a serious attack on the F5000 series. Indy greats Bobby Unser, Gordon Johncock and Johnny Rutherford joined the series as well.

The race that stands out in my mind was Mosport in 1975 in the Lola T332. Mosport is a challenging track with few overtaking opportunities and, just before the race, I mentioned to Jim Hall that Mario had dropped his rear wing for more speed up the long, uphill straight. Jim asked if I'd like to do the same, but I thought we should leave it. The end result was that, lap after lap, Mario would draw away six lengths or so on that straight, and I'd be back all over him by the end of the last corner. But I couldn't get past.

I set the fastest lap, but Mario beat me to the flag by a scant half-second, and we lapped the entire field in the process. That was a great race, even if I came home second.



Redman, here at Mid-Ohio, was a star in US F5000

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1981 IMSA LAGUNA SECA 100 MILES

LOLA T600 (1st)

4

I closed out 1979 with no promising drives on the horizon, no prospect of gainful work in the Yorkshire Dales, and still recovering from my accident at St Jovite. Marion helped me make the life-changing decision to move from Gargrave to Highland Park, Illinois, to work for American Lola and Hewland gearbox importer/distributor Carl Haas.

Almost as soon as I started work at Carl's office, a letter arrived from John Bishop's IMSA organisation, announcing a brand-new Grand Touring Prototype category for 1981. I suggested to Carl that, given its Can-Am, F5000 and endurance-racing experience, Lola could surely build a car to these new regulations. Carl agreed and I went to England to meet with Eric Broadley at Lola.

He saw the opportunity and felt that, while it was tempting to simply update his T70 Mk3 to the new regulations, there had been significant advances in aerodynamics, and it would be better to build a new car with ground-effects. After testing at Sears Point and Riverside went well, we decided

to enter the new Lola T600 for the fifth IMSA race of the season at Laguna Seca. We chose to run this short, 100-mile race as we knew nothing about the new VRG Hewland gearbox, or indeed how the Chaparral-built 5.7-litre Chevrolet engine would perform.

At the race were Broadley, Haas, team owners Ralph Kent-Cooke and Roy J Woods Jr, and my best 'good luck' charm of all, Marion. We qualified fifth, but I wasn't unduly worried as the turbocharged Porsche 935s could turn their boost up for short periods, giving 800bhp to our 600, but couldn't keep it there for very long if they wanted to finish the race. On Saturday evening, Carl said: "Brian, if this car doesn't win tomorrow, Lola Cars are going to go bankrupt..." No pressure at all!

Early in the race, coming into the fast, top-gear, left-hand Turn 1, the T600 gave an unpleasant little twitch at the back. Almost certainly a loose wheel or a puncture. But there's no time to pit during a 100-mile sprint race. I began to worry about all the horrendous things that might happen if a tyre blew.

Lap after lap I thought, 'I must pit', but carried on. Then, suddenly (and now down in 10th), all miraculously felt good again.



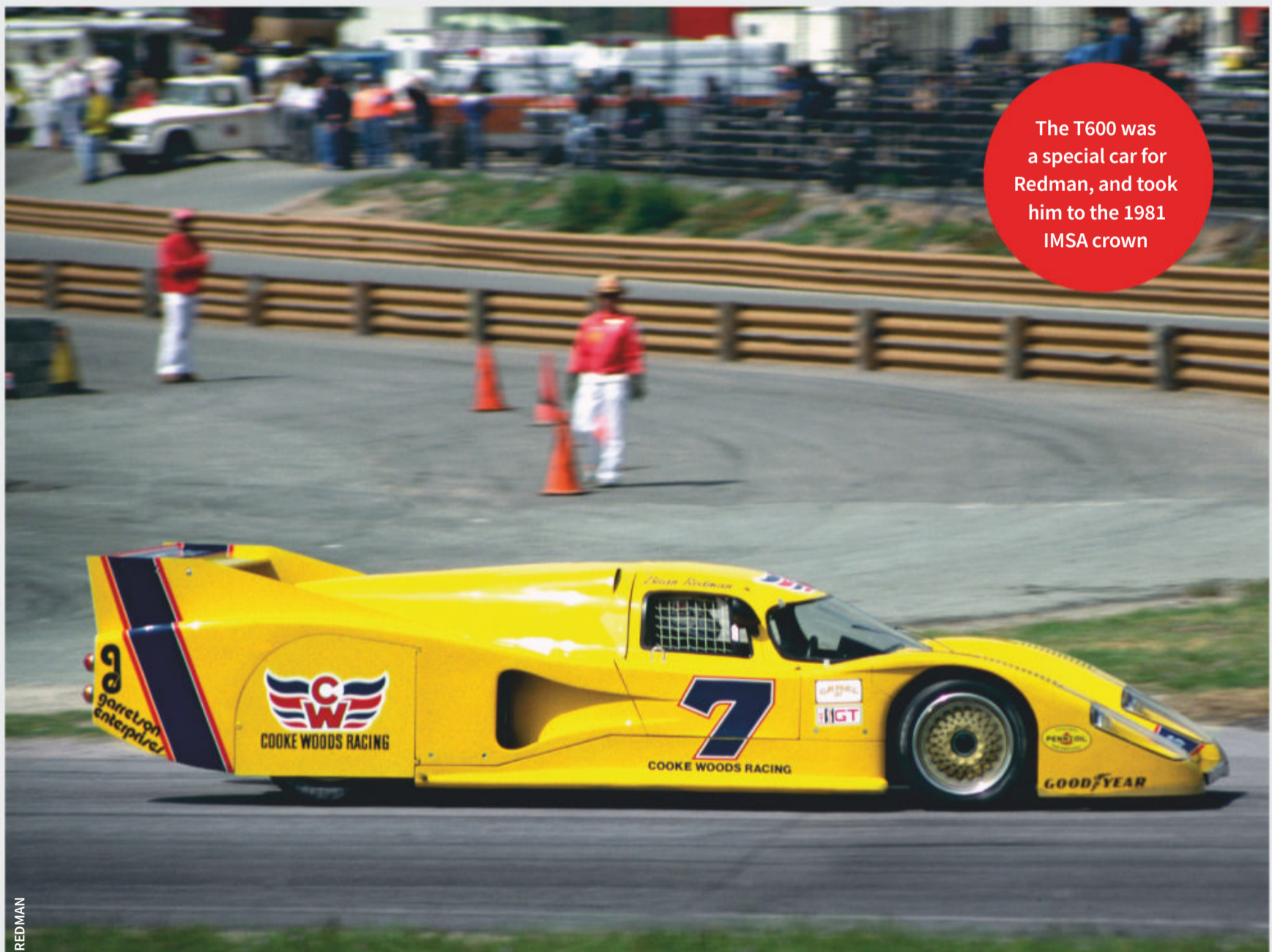
Brian still has the miracle wheelnut

I put my foot in it, climbed back up through the field, and damn if we didn't win.

The next morning Eric and I were looking at the T600 with the rear wheel covers off. I remember Eric bent down, stared at that left-rear wheel, then stood up and took his glasses off: "Brian, that's exactly what's supposed to happen, but I've never seen it actually work before."

The left-rear wheel hub nut had worked itself loose, wound itself off, broken the spring-steel safety clip... then wound itself back on again!

I went on to score five wins and five seconds in the T600 to win the championship and save Lola from receivership. And it was especially rewarding since the car had been my idea.



The T600 was a special car for Redman, and took him to the 1981 IMSA crown

REDMAN



Siffert flies in the 'old' 908 as he and Redman prove a point

1969 NURBURGRING 1000KM

PORSCHE 908/2 (1st)

SCHLEGELMILCH
motorsport
IMAGES

3

After recovering from a compound fracture of the right forearm sustained when my F1 Cooper's front suspension broke at the Belgian Grand Prix, I signed a sportscar

contract with Porsche for the 1969 season. Head of Porsche motorsport Ferdinand Piech – a grandson of Ferdinand Porsche – was a man of inexhaustible energy and ambition. The team manager was multi-lingual racer/journalist Rico

Steinemann, and the two of them put together a formidable squad for 1969.

Jo Siffert and I won at Brands Hatch and Monza and, when we arrived at the Nurburgring, there were three newly modified 908/2 'Flounders', with smoother bodywork to try to increase top speed. In practice, Siffert crashed one and Vic Elford the other. So Siffert and I were given a spare Porsche Salzburg (Piech's mother's 'privateer' team) 908/2... and we won.

Up to this point, the six German drivers on

the factory had been complaining that 'Siffert and Redman get the best car'. After this win there were no more such comments.

Using journalist Anthony Pritchard's words: "When Redman took over from Siffert and Pedro Rodriguez relieved Chris Amon in Maranello's 312 P, it seemed likely that the Ferrari would be able to catch the Porsche. Instead, however, Redman increased the 908's lead."

At the prizegiving, I received one of the prized Nurburgring rings, which I wear to this day.

1970 SPA 1000KM

PORSCHE 917K (1st)

2

Spa was the fastest and most dangerous road-racing circuit in the world. It frightened me the first time I went there with Peter Sutcliffe's Ford

GT40 in 1966, and it continued to worry me whenever I raced there. But you had to come to terms with it if you were going to be a professional racing driver.

It was familiar to me by 1970, and I knew we had a top car and that I had a great co-driver when I went there with John Wyr's Porsche-backed team. Our 917K was an awesome machine, but it was new and radical in concept and ventured, structurally, mechanically and aerodynamically 'to where no one had gone before'.

On Friday morning, Jo Siffert went out for first practice but didn't come back. Team-mate Pedro Rodriguez stopped at the pits and told



SCHLEGELMILCH/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

us that our 917K was stopped by the side of the road at the fastest part of the circuit, the Masta Straight, with a flat front tyre.

The crew went out, the tyre was changed, and Seppi returned to the pits gesticulating wildly and shouting Swabian expressions of anger and disgust. Which, fortunately, I do not understand.

All four wheels were changed and he went out again. And once more failed to return. So the crew rescued him again. Back in the pits, all four wheels were changed again and now it was my turn.

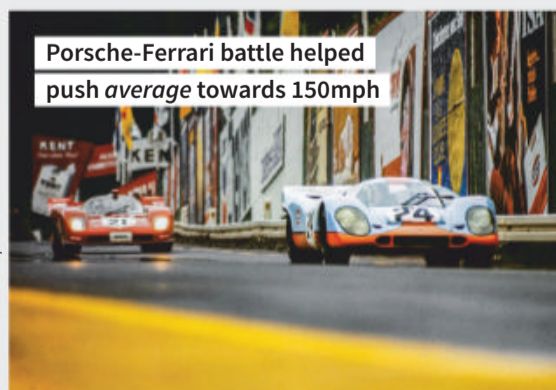
I was gently building speed and confidence when, at the end of the slightly uphill back straight where you turned into the 180mph right-hander called La Carriere, the left-rear tyre came completely off the rim. The 917K

went sideways, then back the other way, and I experienced that sickening, hollow feeling you get when you lose the sense of where the front wheels are pointing in relation to the angle of the slide. But I'd read some place that if you let go of the steering wheel, the Ackermann effect in the steering will straighten it all out for you. And it worked!

Overnight the wheel rims were removed and sandblasted in an attempt to stop the sheer centrifugal force from pulling the tyres away from the rims, and fortunately it worked. Seppi and I went on to score a great win over the Ferrari 512S of Jacky Ickx/John Surtees, and our average speed of 149.4mph – including pitstops – made it the fastest road race ever run up to that time. We had survived another foray into the unknown.

Porsche-Ferrari battle helped push average towards 150mph

SCHLEGELMILCH/MOTORSPORT IMAGES





1968 F2 ADAC EIFELRENNEN

NURBURGRING SUDSCHLEIFE **FERRARI DINO 166** (4th)

1 Out of the blue, in early April of 1968, I received a summons from on high when Ferrari team manager/racing engineer Mauro Forghieri called to ask if I'd like to test the Ferrari Dino F2 car at Modena. That was quite an honour, not to mention an opportunity.

I must have done all right, because I found myself at the Nurburgring Sudschleife a week later, readying myself to practice and qualify as a Ferrari driver for the F2 ADAC Eifelrennen. My team-mate was Jacky Ickx. The Sudschleife was a 4.8-mile appendage to the famous Nordschleife and shared the start/finish area and pits.

On Saturday afternoon, I went out to qualify, did what I thought was a respectable job, and came in a full 10 minutes from the end of qualifying. "Why do you stop?" Forghieri asked. "Because I've gone as fast as I can," I replied. He shook his head: "Brian, you are in 10th place. Go out and try harder!" So I did. And managed 0.1s faster than I'd gone before. And then discovered that I'd been in fourth all along.

At the start, the first four cars were all tied together: Ickx, Piers Courage, Kurt Ahrens and me. On the fourth lap, Ahrens put a wheel on the verge just past the pits. I was showered with stones, one of which went right through the lens of my goggles and hit what felt like my left eye. Flinging my arm up, I stopped and threw the goggles off, then carried on the three miles or so back to the pits. Forghieri said my eye looked OK and asked where my spare goggles might be. I didn't have any. So they gave me Ickx's spare pair, which were dark-green

sun goggles; not good at all in the dark under the trees.

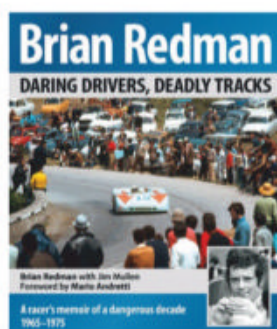
But I wanted – needed – to make good, and so I drove with no thought, acting only on instinct and reaction. I was gaining two seconds per lap on the leaders and finished up fourth, setting fastest lap in the process.

Arriving back in my small, somewhat dingy room at the Sport Hotel, I sat on the bed, head in hands, thinking about the race and what it would mean and what might happen if I drove for Ferrari. I knew that to do the job properly, I'd have to move to Maranello, leaving Marion, my son James (aged three) and baby daughter Charlotte at home in Colne, Lancashire.

At dinner that evening, Forghieri left the table and when he returned told me, in tones laden with import: "Brian, I speak with Signor Ferrari, for the rest of the year you drive for us F2, and in September at Monza, F1!"

It was an incredible offer for any young driver. But I'd thought it over: "Thank you, but no thank you. If I drive for Ferrari, I'll be dead by the end of the year."

Yes, I probably walked away from a career-making opportunity. But I'm also still here to write about it...



For more of Brian Redman's remarkable career, take a look at his book *Brian Redman: Daring Drivers, Deadly Tracks*, published by Evro.

evropublishing.com/products/daring-drivers-deadly-tracks

HONOURABLE MENTIONS



While thinking about so many races, others that come to mind include winning the 1969 Nurburgring 500Km two-litre sportscar race in the new, and difficult-handling, Chevron B16 (above).

It was a hot September day, no ventilation and, with about 100km to go, I was feeling tired and drowsy. I quickly woke up when I hit the back of an Austin-Healey Sprite going down the Fox Run. Fortunately, not much damage was done and it woke me up.

Just over 12 months later at the Spa 500Km two-litre finale, Jo Bonnier, the Lola agent for Europe driving a T210, and I in the works Chevron B16/Spyder swapped places throughout the race. On the penultimate lap I couldn't get first gear at La Source hairpin and dropped back 50 yards, but with a bit of effort caught and passed Jo on the last lap, setting the fastest lap – over three seconds faster than my Spa 1000Km best in 1969 driving the three-litre Porsche 908L.

As we went up the back straight, Jo slipstreamed me, pulled out and went past. We went side by side approaching La Source, with Jo on the inside, flat-out at 160mph.

We braked too late and I went up the escape road, expecting to see Jo taking the chequered flag. Instead, there he was stopped sideways across the track. Chevron (below) won the European championship by one point over Lola.



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Hendrick's own sponsors paved the way for Larson to make victorious return



Sacked Larson repays Hendrick's cash and faith with return win

NASCAR CUP
LAS VEGAS (USA)
7 MARCH
ROUND 4/36

Eleven months ago, Kyle Larson was fired by Chip Ganassi Racing for using a racial slur during an Esports competition. But since being given a NASCAR Cup reprieve for 2021 by rival team owner Rick Hendrick, it didn't take long for Larson to parlay his second chance into a victory.

On just his fourth start with a Hendrick Motorsports Chevrolet Camaro, Larson grabbed control of the race at Las Vegas Motor Speedway and never let go, holding off Brad Keselowski by 3.2 seconds to earn his first Cup win since Dover in 2019.

Larson led a race-high 103 of 267 laps, including the final 30 tours. His only hiccup came on his final green-flag pitstop when he missed the pitlane entrance the first time around. Fortunately, he never lost any serious ground to Ford Mustang runner Keselowski.

"I guess I didn't know if I'd ever have an opportunity to win a NASCAR race again," Larson said. "To get this awesome opportunity with Hendrick Motorsports and Mr Hendrick taking a massive chance on me, then going out there and being strong all year, it's been great.

"Today we put it all together, had a dominating race car to go along with it. It made my job behind the wheel a lot easier."

During his NASCAR suspension, Larson returned to his open-wheel and dirt-track roots, winning 42 races in 83 starts. But the premier Cup series is where Larson still wanted to compete, and it was Hendrick who offered him the opportunity, the boss essentially using his own companies to sponsor Larson's #5 ride.

"I didn't really expect for it to come this quick because I just thought it would take more time to gel," added Hendrick. "But our cars are fast. He's a champion really. I'm so lucky to have him.

"To win in the fourth race, especially when you don't have any practice, you just show up and race, it's really been awesome. If you show up and you run well... that's half

WEEKEND WINNERS

NASCAR CUP
LAS VEGAS
 Kyle Larson
 Hendrick Motorsports
 (Chevrolet Camaro ZL1 1LE)

NASCAR XFINITY SERIES
LAS VEGAS (USA)
 AJ Allmendinger
 Kaulig Racing (Chevrolet Camaro)

NASCAR TRUCK SERIES
LAS VEGAS (USA)
 John Hunter Nemechek
 Kyle Busch Motorsports (Toyota Tundra)



For full results visit motorsportstats.com



Larson savours seventh win at Cup level

the battle. Nobody doubts Kyle's ability."

With a victory now in hand, Larson is all but assured of participating in the Cup playoffs and having a chance to contend for the overall title. He has never finished higher than sixth in the standings from his six full-time seasons in the Cup class.

"I just want to go out there and win a lot, win at a high rate... then win a championship," Larson said.

The next best Camaro ended up finishing down in eighth, courtesy of Homestead victor William Byron. Behind Keselowski, Kyle Busch beat fellow Toyota Camry runner Denny Hamlin to third. Ryan Blaney was fifth, with reigning champion Martin Truex Jr sixth.

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The formation of Red Bull Powertrains Ltd marks an exciting step in Red Bull's Formula One journey. The company has a clear directive – to supply competitive power units to Red Bull Racing and Scuderia AlphaTauri in order to challenge for Formula One World Championships.

We are now looking for dynamic leaders to join the Team and work at the heart of our Red Bull Technology Campus in Milton Keynes, alongside Red Bull Racing and Red Bull Advanced Technologies.

With passion, commitment and a desire to win at the centre of everything we do, we are now looking for the best people in the business to join this exciting new venture in key leadership roles.

If you thrive in a fast-paced environment, have a passion for engineering excellence in this area and would like to join this incredible project then we would love to hear from you.

We are currently looking for strong, high-calibre leaders with experience in the following areas:

DESIGN

/ Supporting the existing Power Unit and looking toward designing future Power Units.

ICE ASSEMBLY

/ Building the whole engine and all its ancillary components.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

/ Testing all aspects of the Power Unit on a range of rigs and dynos.

ERS ASSEMBLY

/ Building the Energy store and other aspects of the ERS.

ENERGY RECOVERY SYSTEMS

/ Encompassing all aspects of the engineering of the ERS, from the Energy Store through to the Motor Generator Units.

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

/ Planning the activities of all aspects of the business, organising purchasing and management of parts and tackling the logistical challenge of racing in 20+ different countries.

SOFTWARE AND CONTROL SYSTEMS

/ Writing and maintaining the code controlling the Power Unit and configuring it for track use.

QUALITY

/ Making sure everything sourced for the Power Unit is fit for purpose resulting in reliable and competitive Power Units.

SIMULATION

/ Encompassing a diverse range of topics from CFD to Energy Management.

TRACK OPERATIONS

/ Working with the Power Units at the track.

The successful applicants in each of the above areas will be provided with support to shape and lead their own team. We therefore require significant experience working in and leading high performing teams, as well as the relevant technical experience.

Our people are our best asset. While we expect the highest possible standards from all personnel, in return we offer competitive salaries and a substantial benefit and bonus scheme package including private health care, life assurance scheme, workplace nursery, company contributed pension scheme, on site gym and fitness classes, free workplace food and a cycle to work scheme.

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CLOSING DATE: 31ST MARCH 2021



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The candidate's responsibilities include contributing to the future of related championships by developing ambitious and pragmatic technical solutions to fulfil the strategic and sporting vision of the FIA for these categories.

- Manage the FIA Sport Cars and Touring Cars categories technical team, be the reference point on all technical issues, coordinate the team during and outside of race weekends, monitor operational objectives, carry out annual performance reviews, etc.;
- Be the reference point for teams and other main parties or suppliers regarding current and future Technical Regulations and their implementation. This will include any clarification requests of a technical nature arising during and/or outside of race weekends;
- In order to fulfil the above responsibilities, the candidate will be required to attend all World Endurance Championship events as Technical Delegate, and selected events of other Championships and Cups of the categories.

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Senior Aerodynamicist

We are looking to find the right individuals to join us as Senior Aerodynamicists. Experience in a similar role in Teams that have finished in the Top 3 of the Formula One Constructors World Championship in recent years will be a distinct advantage.

- Work within an Aero Development Group to personally and collectively deliver performance from aerodynamic development projects.
- Use state-of-the-art wind tunnel, CFD, CAD and other relevant methodologies to productively design and evaluate new aerodynamic concepts and their optimisation.
- Help communicate conclusions and proposals both within and outside your Aero Development Group.
- Help foster a positive and supportive yet self-effacing culture so we can work efficiently, constructively and productively with each other; learn fast from our valuable mistakes and thereby quickly turn ideas into reality.
- Help mentor Aerodynamicists in your team and help guide the advancement of our tools and processes.
- 2:1 or above in Aeronautical Engineering. If in another field then strong aerodynamic content needs to be evident. PhD/Masters an advantage.

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Simulation Engineer

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Key functions and responsibilities of the role:

- Race and Test Event preparation and support
- Simulation tool maintenance and development
- Various tool and model validation and correlation tasks
- Contribute to the improvement of methodologies and processes within the group
- System and sub-system modelling when required
- Support and participation in driver in the loop activities
- Support future car concept development using the appropriate simulation tools.

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Senior Executive, Esports

The purpose of this role is to take responsibility for the day to day operational fulfilment of our esports platforms, the Logitech McLaren G Challenge (LMGC) and the McLaren Shadow esports team. A key part of the role will be managing and growing McLaren's esports social media channels and community.

Role Dimensions:

- Reports to Senior Specialist, Esports.
- Flexibility in working hours required and the ability to travel on occasion.
- Assist and support the Senior Specialist Esports in carrying out their duties.

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Drivers will be able to arrive and drive one of 15 Audi TTs in the new GPR Trophy

FF CORSE FOUNDER FORMS NEW ENTRY-LEVEL SERIES

GPR TROPHY

A new arrive-and-drive series featuring Audi TTs will be launched in the UK this year.

The GPR Trophy, which has been created by FF Corse and Grand Prix Racewear owner Anthony Cheshire and will be run by MotorSport Vision Racing, is scheduled to have three rounds across its inaugural season. Trips are planned to Snetterton on 6 June, Oulton Park on 3 July and Donington Park on 19 September.

The one-day format will include a 20-minute qualifying session and two 20-minute races, with drivers randomly given one of 15 identical TT 225 Quattros (produced from 2000-06) to race. The cars have been custom built and produce 225bhp.

Drivers will be required to hold a Race Club Motorsport UK licence and can enter the full season for £10,000+VAT or a single round for £3500+VAT. There will also be the option to test on Friday ahead of each round for an additional fee.

Cheshire said that the idea of creating a series based around the concept of arrive-and-drive racing was to allow trackday drivers the opportunity to compete.

“Whilst running our high-end motorsport operation with FF Corse, we noticed a problem with customers who have trackday experience but no experience in racing,” he said. “Unable to find a suitable series to gain necessary experience and licence signatures, we saw a gap in the market for drivers to experience racing and put fun back into low-cost motorsport, creating a perfect opportunity for the GPR Trophy series.

“The GPR Trophy will give all drivers the chance to be run as part of a professionally run event, not at the back of a paddock out of a van and trailer.

“The three rounds have been purposely placed on rounds of the GT Cup so drivers can also experience what the next level of GT racing is like at every event.”

OPINION



While not new, the arrive-and-drive concept in national racing is certainly not a widespread initiative. Across the whole spectrum of UK motorsport, options are limited to jump into a pre-prepared car and compete against equal machinery, especially at an affordable price.

The Focus Cup is one such series, while Track Attack offers arrive-and-drive options, but not all cars are centrally run. As Anthony Cheshire says, there is a gap in the market when it comes to offering trackday enthusiasts the help and means of making the jump into competitive racing. It's even an area that Motorsport UK itself has been looking at to help increase its influx of registered competitors.

A full season in the GPR Trophy at £10,000+ is still a fair bit of money, but motorsport will always be expensive and this sum will be affordable for a lot of people who perhaps don't want to go to the lengths of running their own car.

Speaking of cars, the Audi TT 225 Quattro promises to be an ideal step into club motorsport, with Track Attack also launching its TT Challenge this year around the same model.

Getting any new series or championship off the ground and making it a success is always a struggle at the best of times, let alone during the COVID-19 pandemic. But Cheshire is no stranger to successful ventures – he has grown FF Corse since it was set up in 2009 as a track-driving academy and race team operation for Ferrari GT and Challenge car owners and drivers.

For would-be drivers, the process of jumping into club motorsport can seem daunting, but the GPR Trophy could well be the perfect toe-in-the-water series for them.

STEFAN MACKLEY

GT3 McLaren to run in Britcar

BRITCAR

Motus One Racing will become the first team to run a McLaren 650S GT3 car full-time in the Britcar Endurance Championship this season.

Will Powell, driver and managing director of Motus One, will be joined by Dave Scaramanga after the pair contested the championship last season in a Ginetta G55 GT4.

The team performed a shakedown of the car, which is no longer the latest generation of GT3 McLaren machinery, earlier this week at Silverstone ahead of the first round at the Northamptonshire venue on 24-25 April.

“We’re delighted to be back in the top class of Britcar and introduce our McLaren 650S GT3,” said Powell. “While a 650S GT3 did a couple of races in 2019, this year marks the first time one has contested a full season, and our aim is to make history by achieving Britcar title success with the McLaren.”

“After a year of learning GT racing for my co-driver Dave Scaramanga in 2020, where we missed a few rounds due to COVID-19, we’re in good shape for what looks like one of Britcar’s most competitive ever seasons.”

“We’re going to be racing harder than ever in the quest of winning the Endurance Championship title.”



Powell and Scaramanga will race McLaren 650S

ROBERTS MOVES INTO GINETTAS WITH BOSTON

GINETTA GT4 SUPERCUP

Two-time Compact Cup champion Steve Roberts will compete in the Ginetta GT4 Supercup this season with the title-winning Rob Boston Racing squad.

Ex-Formula Ford racer Roberts has most recently been driving in the Mazda MX-5 Supercup – also for Boston’s squad – but wanted to make the step up to the British Touring Car-supporting Ginetta series.

“It’s been 15 years or so since I was last on the national motorsport stage competing in UK Formula Ford, and I’m super-excited to be back and competing in a championship of the Ginetta GT4 Supercup’s calibre,” said Roberts.

“The G55 is such an immense car to drive and, after having had a chance to test with RBR after our time together in Mazdas, I simply knew I had to try and put a budget together to compete in the championship.”

“I’m not getting any younger, in fact I’ve just turned 40, so I suppose you can see it as very self-indulgent present to myself! I believe we can compete at the sharp end of the grid, so that’s the aim.”

Fellow ex-Mazda MX-5 racer Joe Marshall (below) will also be on the GT4 Supercup grid again this year, moving across from Rob Boston Racing to Team Hard. He made his debut in the category in 2020 and finished sixth in the standings.



JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

F1 Portuguese GP support return

REVOLUTION

Revolutions will again form part of the Portuguese Grand Prix support bill this season after the Algarve Circuit was added to the Formula 1 calendar for a second year in succession.

Last October, the Revolution sports-prototypes had a standalone race at the F1 event but, for this year’s grand prix – over 30 April-2 May – the A-Ones will appear as a class within the Portuguese GT races.

There will be two 20-minute races and one 45-minute contest across the weekend, meaning both solo and two-driver entries are accepted. Organisers say there is a limited number of places, and one of those already signed up is Olympic cycling legend Sir Chris Hoy, who also took part in last year’s Portuguese visit.



Revolutions will this time appear in Portuguese GT series

REVOLUTION

“I can’t wait to go racing again,” said Hoy. “The cars are brilliant to drive and competing during a Formula 1 weekend is always a very special experience.”

The wins in Portugal last year were shared between Michel Frey and Alex Kapadia.



Junior Saloon aces in bumper Mini Challenge Cooper entry

MINI CHALLENGE

The top two in last year's Junior Saloon Car standings as well as 2020 Mazda MX-5 champion Joe Wiggin are among the new drivers set to battle established Mini Challenge Cooper class frontrunners as part of the category's full 2021 grid.

The series, which is due to feature at three British Touring Car events as well as

at MotorSport Vision Racing club meetings, has enjoyed a surge in popularity since joining the BTCC bill for the first time last season. It has received 36 entries for 2021.

Last year's champion Harry Nunn will bid to repeat his crown and runner-up Dominic Wheatley is also back, along with race winner Leonardo Panayiotou.

Among the influx of new drivers are two-time JSCC champion Lewis Saunders

and Alex Solley, who finished second in the Citroen Saxo-based series last year. Other Mini rookies include former Clio Cup racer Tyler Lidsey and British Rallycross Junior Swift class champion Tom Ovenden.

Championship promoter Antony Williams believes the introduction of a budget version of the Cooper machine and then the securing of appearances at BTCC events has been key to the class progressing from single-car entries to full grids.

"When Ant Whorton-Eales won the Cooper class [in 2011], we only had five or six cars," he said. "To grow that grid in 10 years from five cars to 36 is pretty amazing.

"The main thing is we introduced a budget version of the car in 2017 – it wasn't much different but could take out some of the control parts. That created a bit of extra interest for lower-spec cars. Most people then upgraded them to Cooper Pro cars – that took us from a grid of 14 cars to twentysomething. The second key was having two rounds on the TOCA package, and then having a third added, which we have retained moving forward."

The Cooper class is set to appear at both Thruxton BTCC events this year as well as at Silverstone. It was initially scheduled to run at two TOCA events in 2020 before the pandemic struck and the calendar for the top JCW division was reduced, with Coopers filling the breach at one round.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

Clubmans enjoys registrations boost for 2021

CLUBMANS

The Clubmans Sports Prototype category has achieved 55 registrations so far for the 2021 season, and organisers believe it is reaping the benefits of joining MotorSport Vision Racing's stable.

The Clubmans Register decided for 2020 that it would promote the series itself with the support of MSVR, having previously run with the British Automobile Racing Club.

The move proved popular with members as grids averaged 21 cars last year, up from the previous season.

Now, Clubmans Register vice-chairman Peter Richings feels entries could climb further this season after attracting eight former competitors back to the championship and another five brand-new drivers.

"Even with the pandemic, we saw a 10 per cent increase in numbers compared to the previous year, and that told us we

were on the right approach," he said. "We've got new people coming in and new cars being built too, which is very exciting. We've got a brand-new Mallock and a brand-new Phantom.

"MSVR seem pretty happy with the way it's going. You get the big grids if you go to the circuits that competitors want to go to and they're spaced out so they can prepare the car in between, and that's an important factor."

STEPHEN LICKORISH



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IN THE HEADLINES

GRAY JOINS FORTEC FOR F4

Multiple karting champion Oliver Gray has become the latest driver to sign up to race in British Formula 4 this year, with Fortec Motorsport. “After a successful karting career, I recognise I’ve a lot to learn in single-seaters but I’m confident I can learn quickly and together we can go for the championship,” he said.

NELSON’S NEW 750MC ROLE

The 750 Motor Club has appointed former club director Ian Nelson as an honorary vice-president after Michael Ware recently stepped down from the role. Nelson, who has been a club member for over 50 years, has also served as treasurer and company secretary while, in more recent years, he has organised the 750MC’s National Austin Seven Rally at Beaulieu.

ASHTON’S HOT HATCH MOVE

Double MG Metro Cup champion Jack Ashton will change his focus to the 750 Motor Club’s Hot Hatch Championship this year. He will campaign his 1.8-litre Metro in Class A of the restructured category, for cars of up to 200bhp per tonne. Ashton won the Metro Cup in both 2018 and 2019 before upgrading to a larger engine and switching to the MG Cup last year. He won four of the six races, but poor reliability thwarted a championship challenge.

FROM BATHURST TO BRITCAR

The Nissan GT-R Nismo GT3 (below) that won the 2015 Bathurst 12 Hours will race in Britcar this year. The car, which was driven at the Australian classic by Katsumasa Chiyo and GT Academy winners Florian Strauss and Wolfgang Reip, will be raced by its new owner Richard Wheeler and 2020 champion Danny Harrison under the Fox Transport banner. Nissan enthusiast Wheeler has previously raced with the Classic Sports Car Club, while Harrison won last year’s Britcar title driving a Praga R1T.



TAYLOR



King will defend his title with Team Parker

JEP/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

King and O’Sullivan among the new BRDC SuperStars intake

BRDC SUPERSTARS

Porsche Carrera Cup GB dominator Harry King and British Formula 4 runner-up Zak O’Sullivan are among the drivers selected to join the BRDC’s SuperStars programme.

The scheme helps to support some of the most talented upcoming British racers, and recent graduates include current F1 drivers Lando Norris and George Russell.

Alongside King and O’Sullivan, reigning German F4 champion Jonny Edgar and DTM Trophy frontrunner Ben Tuck – who will respectively progress to FIA F3 and the Nurburgring Endurance Series this

year – also join the SuperStars line-up.

As well as securing his SuperStars place, King has confirmed that he will remain with the Team Parker Racing squad this year to bid for successive Carrera Cup crowns in his second season as Porsche GB’s Junior driver.

King said: “My goal is to get the maximum we can from every race – which wasn’t always possible last year with three retirements for reasons that were out of our control – and I am fully focused on securing a second championship in 2021.”



WENDY MARKEY-AMEY 1945-2021

OBITUARY

British Women Racing Drivers Club stalwart Wendy Markey, who has died having contracted COVID-19 while being treated in hospital for a stomach complaint, was a charismatic saloon racer of works BMW, Mazda and Lada cars.

Her first husband John Markey had been immersed in sportscar racing since the 1960s, as competitor and engineer, and was running Production Saloon BMWs when Wendy decided she fancied a go.

“Bill Sydenham lent a Honda N600 for her first race in 1972, which she enjoyed, so I arranged a 2002Tii for 1973,” said John. Wendy and Jenny Dell finished 19th in the Avon Tour of Britain in 1973,

winning the Ladies award.

Wendy subsequently raced raucous Mazda RX-3s in prod-saloons and the British Saloon Car Championship, and an RX-2 – sharing once with Australian Brian Muir at the Nurburgring – and a Mini 1275GT in the European series.

“Her best season was 1975, when she finished third in class in the Britax championship in an RX-3,” recalled son Steve Markey. She also finished third in the ShellSport Escort Mexico series.

In 1988, when married to Nick Amey, Wendy joined him on track, competing in a Chevron-BMW B8, which Steve also raced. To him, sister Joanna, and Robert Amey, Autosport offers condolences.

MARCUS PYE

Three leading clubs delay events due to stayover fears

CORONAVIRUS

Three major organising clubs have cancelled or postponed planned early-April meetings they were due to run before overnight leisure stays are legally allowed.

As part of the government's roadmap out of lockdown in England, outdoor sport can restart from 29 March, and Motorsport UK will issue single-day event permits from that date. But the fact that overnight stays cannot happen until at least 12 April led to uncertainty over when seasons could begin.

As predicted by Autosport, some clubs have changed their plans, with the British Racing & Sports Car Club deciding to rearrange its Snetterton and Cadwell Park events due to be held on 10-11 April.

BRSCC chairman Peter Daly said the club "couldn't justify" running them. "We had consultations with the championships and found their competitor feedback was not overwhelmingly positive," he said. "One of



our championships said to us, 'What would happen if a driver was going in a motorhome, driving from North London to Cadwell Park? What would go through the mind of a policeman who stopped them?'"

Daly said the club "wasn't comfortable" with running events under those conditions and is instead seeking new dates. It has already moved the National Formula Ford round planned for Snetterton to a Scottish Motor Racing Club event in June.

The British Automobile Racing Club, meanwhile, has cancelled its Croft event on 10 April, with the affected series being accommodated at other existing meetings, and has moved its Brands Hatch Trucks fixture to early June.

"Technically, Croft was a one-day meeting but, with Friday testing, there's never really such a thing as a one-day meeting, particularly with the location of Croft," said group CEO Ben Taylor.

"We can't ask competitors to get up at 2am to drive up to the North East, race all day and then drive home, particularly as it was C1s and endurance racing on the bill. Brands Hatch is a different consideration because the trucks pull a good crowd, and it's important for MSV [circuit operator] to get the spectators in for that."

The 750 Motor Club has now also postponed its Silverstone event from 3-4 April to 24-25 April.

STEPHEN LICKORISH

750MC launches new carbon reduction schemes

750 MOTOR CLUB

Two new carbon reduction initiatives through the 750 Motor Club have been launched in an attempt to ensure that club motorsport remains sustainable.

Philip Waters, organiser of the CALM All Porsche Trophy, and Eco Trailer

founder Simon Walker-Hansell have joined forces to create RaceZero.

The scheme will allow any UK competitor to buy tokens to offset the carbon output of their race entry by taking into account the distance travelled and amount of fuel consumed on track. The offset is achieved

by ensuring that, for every tonne of carbon dioxide emitted during racing, there is one tonne fewer in the atmosphere elsewhere.

While the 750MC will support the initiative, it has also pledged to pay the carbon output offset of all competitors' cars at all 750MC meetings in 2021,

creating the UK's first carbon neutral on-track club action.

Club competitions manager Giles Groombridge said: "It is vital that our competition becomes sustainable, while also being mindful of the fact that motorsport could all too easily be seen as an easy target."

ANGELO R. DRIVE

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AH HA - SPEEDdiagnostiX. USED OIL ANALYSIS CAN GIVE MY ENGINE A THOROUGH HEALTH CHECK!

3 DAYS LATER...

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RESULTS BACK AND IT'S GOOD NEWS!

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Helping talent despite COVID-19

The director of the British Racing Drivers' Club's SuperStars programme on the challenges of last year and the season ahead

ANDY MEYRICK

This is my third year as programme director of the British Racing Drivers' Club's SuperStars programme, and I'm really pleased with the drivers we've selected. It's always a pleasure to see new talent achieve success and to welcome them onto the programme. Harry King, Jonny Edgar, Ben Tuck, and Zak O'Sullivan all did exceptionally well last year and will benefit from the kind of personal attention and guidance they'll receive as BRDC SuperStars.

I'm also happy to continue working with our nine returning SuperStars. Ash Sutton, Sandy Mitchell, Phil Hanson and Tom Gamble all won titles in 2020, and Dan Ticktum and Callum Ilott are both on the cusp of Formula 1. Jake Hill, Dan Harper and 2019 Aston Martin Autosport BRDC Award winner Johnathan Hoggard are also back, and I'm really keen to see how they get on this season – you never stop learning and we hope to continue their development in 2021.

We are still under the restrictions of COVID-19, and this has meant we've had to adapt our way of doing things to ensure the programme continues to offer the help and support our SuperStars need. Everyone had to change a lot last year and learn how to live with the pandemic, and it was no different for the SuperStars. We started off well with a fantastic launch day at Silverstone, where we unveiled that year's drivers, introduced them to the media, and got

“Mental health has really come into focus, and drivers need to keep themselves motivated”

them out on track giving hot laps where they could begin to build relationships with journalists that cover their activities, which went down really well with everyone involved.

Sadly, just a few days after the launch, the true nature of COVID-19 became apparent and we found ourselves under lockdown, with all planned events for the season cancelled. We were, for example, planning to go to some centre of excellence training facilities so the drivers could see how athletes in other sports prepare and train.

There was no racing whatsoever for some time and, even when it picked back up, I was unable to go to circuits to support our SuperStars, but we used it as an opportunity for the programme to look at how we could adapt and support the drivers in other ways.

The lockdown did give us time, as the drivers who were normally racing all over the world were all at home, so we were able to sit

down and work on their strengths and weaknesses through bespoke, online training programmes. Each driver could log in to courses and keep improving themselves, and I think that was important from both fitness and general sharpness points of view.

The SuperStars used the time to learn new skills, so some learned more about data, how to use a simulator and communicate with engineers and improve their driving. Some went on media training and PR courses, some on sponsorship acquisition courses; these sorts of things help improve their skillsets.

The way that we would normally run the programme is that we hold team events throughout the year that enable all the drivers to get together. It's something we'll reintroduce when the time is right this year as I think that's important to build camaraderie between the drivers. We have drivers on the programme from very different aspects of the sport, from touring cars to sportscars and single-seaters, as well as being different ages, so it's good for them to get together and benefit from cross-developmental learning. By working together, they can improve one another and learn things from each other.

These elite drivers are the top 13 in the country so they are all obviously good, hence why they are on the programme, but what's interesting to me is that they can all still develop and learn. However, there are certain things that one driver might need that another doesn't, and those individual needs are very, very important to consider, so a big part of the programme is that I take on a mentoring and performance management role where I'm in constant communication with drivers. We analyse how they're getting on, what areas they can improve in, and then we bring in coaches to help them in the areas that can be improved.

Some drivers will go on Rob Wilson-style courses, some of them have gone on courses to understand vehicle dynamics, some of them have gone on media training courses, and some of them are on nutrition courses. I really think it's a big part of their education, and it's important that it is done individually and not just adopting a one-size-fits-all approach. I think it's got to be a mixture between team events and that individual bespoke learning.

We can carry forward a lot from how we adapted to last year's restrictions into this season. We'll ensure that drivers continue to work to stay sharp. The delayed start to the 2021 season is no reason to let their foot off the loud pedal. The mental health side of things has really come into focus recently, and drivers need to keep themselves motivated to make sure that they are mentally and physically prepared for when the season starts.

I'm confident that we will be able to return to normal by the end of the year, but until then we'll continue to find the best ways possible to support our 13 SuperStars to ensure they achieve maximum success for the club, as well as themselves. ❁



WALKER

THE BOURNE SUPREMACY

Two championships and two class titles in four seasons mark historic ace Benn Tilley as a special talent. Here's how the Lincolnshire man progressed from Junior Saloons to become Autosport's top club driver of 2020

MARCUS PYE

Tilley landed a fourth title last season, this time in Classic Formula 3



“LANDO’S MOTORHOME ARRIVED. THEN WE PITCHED UP AFTER SCHOOL WITH A FORD TRANSIT AND TRAILER”

Racing, as a hobby, is a fickle and difficult pastime as the costs of entering events continue to spiral. Instructing preparers, settling big bills and turning up to test is a luxury open to few. For the Tilleys, who hold down full-time jobs, then work on loaned cars during evenings and weekends, it’s out of the question. But the rewards, not least the respect of their peers, are priceless.

“We compete to win, but also to have fun,” says Stuart, Pre-’74 Formula Ford champion in 1992 with a Dulon MP15. Benn – named after Tilley Sr’s late racing buddy Paul Simms’s son, who has a combined seven Historic FF1600, FF2000 and CF3 titles to his name – was born in 1999 and grew up around the circuits, proudly watching his dad.

Benn was different from most kids his age. Polite, quiet and extraordinarily observant, he missed nothing in the pit garages, paddock or on the spectator banks with mum Ann when Stuart was racing. Wide-eyed, he just absorbed every detail like a sponge, storing his knowledge away for such time as it would be important. “Nothing has changed, other than I’m taller now,” quips Benn, who couldn’t wait to race.

A ninth birthday surprise visit to a Peterborough indoor karting facility finally put him behind the wheel. This led (belatedly, since rivals routinely advanced their ages to start ‘early’) to club-level Cadet and MiniMax racing, mainly locally at Fulbeck, PFI and Kimbolton. Tilley’s positive and personable demeanour is infectious. This quality, plus determination, strong work ethic and encyclopaedic recall for racing history, have underpinned subsequent accomplishments and heightened his hunger for more.

“I enjoyed my karting, but chasing the Super 1 championships would have been ridiculously expensive, far beyond what we could afford,” he says. “Being on the grid with [current McLaren F1 driver] Lando Norris at Kimbolton in 2012 was memorable, though. His motorhome arrived on the Thursday, then a truck with chassis, engines and tyres to test. We pitched up on Friday night, after work and school, with a Ford Transit and trailer.”

When he switched to cars just after his 14th birthday, Tilley was in at the deep end with a Citroen Saxo, as his October birthday meant he was up against drivers with at least a year’s experience. “His birthday was on the Wednesday and he raced on the Saturday,” recalls Stuart. A full season in Junior Saloons then followed in 2014. “I competed against James Dorlin, now a GT rising star, and Ben Colburn,” says Benn. “Wherever I’ve raced there have been really good drivers at the front.”

Wheels within wheels often shape the motorsport fraternity. Former ATS and Merzario F1 mechanic Hadfield has facilitated the >>



Perhaps there’s something in the water, for the market town of Bourne in Lincolnshire has produced motorsport champions for almost 90 years. Raymond Mays’s English Racing Automobiles debuted in the 1930s, ERAs built at his family home conquering circuits as far afield as Australia and South Africa. After the Second World War, Mays formed British Racing Motors, winner of 17 Formula 1 grands prix from 1959-72 and the 1962 world championship with Graham Hill. Former BRM designer Mike Pilbeam’s eponymous creations subsequently dominated speed hillclimbing (a Mays speciality), customers winning 17 British titles.

At 21, Benn Tilley continues Bourne’s proud tradition, following in father Stuart’s wheeltracks. They are experts at winning championships on glider-fuel budgets. With support from loyal friends Simon and Mandie Hadfield, the duo added another to their impressive CV last season; Tilley’s Classic Formula 3 title also led to him being crowned Autosport Club Driver of the Year.

amateur careers of both Tilleys. "We were together on the grid for a Pre-'74 FFord race at Mallory Park and Simon introduced himself," says Stuart. "We hit it off and he's been a saviour. When my Reynard SF79 FF2000's engine blew up and caught fire in 1999, my racing was finished. Benn arrived that year, but Ann and I were amazed when Simon invited us over. He'd bought [for wife Mandie] a Merlyn Mk20, which had been crashed at Spa. He said, "Take it, the chassis and everything else is in boxes, rebuild it and race it!"

Thus Team Tilley found itself with a sister car to the one that Stuart had started competing with in 1986, having switched from Ford Pinto-powered Hot Rod Escorts on the East of England's ovals. That led to the loan of other cars, then the return of the faithful Merlyn when Benn – after a year out – was yearning to race a single-seater in 2016.

He surprised rivals from day one, qualifying fourth among the Classic FF1600 opener's 27-car field and finishing third on Silverstone's GP circuit. More podiums followed in the Historic Sports Car Club's Historic championship, including at the club's 50th Anniversary celebration at Castle Combe. Having finished fourth overall, Tilley was back in 2017, attracting welcome support from Silverstone Auctions. Undeterred by a roll at Oulton Park as he and namesake Simms battled into Hislops, they were quickly back out, but momentum was lost.

Concentrating on Classic FF1600 for 2018 was a good move. Everything gelled and Tilley won nine of the 14 rounds to clinch his first championship. "The racing was fantastically tight," he recalls. "I beat Rick Morris by 0.047s at Snetterton, then Scott Mansell by 0.016s and 0.022s at the Formula Ford Festival, which finished the season on a high.

"I love Formula Ford, it's so pure. Competing wheel to wheel with Rick Morris, I learned rather a lot about racecraft!"

Tilley relishes challenges. When local racer Paul Smeeth scaled back in 2017, Benn jumped at the offer of borrowing his 1962 Formula Junior Lotus 22. With more power from a high-revving 1100cc Ford Anglia engine than the FFord and less grippy Dunlop control tyres, it demanded a different approach. "It's more about powering through the corners and keeping the engine singing," Tilley explains. "It'll go to 10,000rpm but I stuck to 9500rpm for safety. Unfortunately, the block split while I was leading first time out at Donington. Paul paid for the rebuild, but we lost the overall championship to Peter de la Roche."



Tilley describes testing the Lotus 91 as "amazing"

Eighth in Ian Robinson's pretty Lola Mk5 at Donington in 2018 proved the importance of a top engine, but things were brewing elsewhere. Equipe Hadfield arranged the loan of Euni Valentine's Lotus 23B sports car – originally Ken Delingpole's, of Dellow fame, then raced by David Prophet – for the HSCC's Guards Trophy sports racing and GT series in 2019. "The 1600cc Lotus twin-cam engine was another step up in power, pushing 190bhp, and great fun," says Tilley. "It's quite interesting; the Chevron B8s [with two-litre BMW M10 engines, but 100kg heavier at 575kg] aren't much quicker in a straight line. Winning at Croft was my highlight, beating locals Jon Waggitt and Peter Needham in their Lenham. The class championship was a bonus."

But the wow factor of 2019 was racing Smeeth's F1 Lotus 18 at Brands Hatch and the Silverstone Classic. "Chassis 373 was raced by John Surtees, Jim Clark and Innes Ireland, so it was a privilege to be trusted with it," says Tilley. "I met John Surtees at Goodwood's Revival in 2014 when he was driving the 18 in cavalcades and dad was looking after it. He was an incredible gentleman. I [at almost 15] spent as much time as I could asking questions about the car and his career. He made time for everybody, chatting and signing autographs at the circuit where he'd started his first four-wheeled race from pole in Ken Tyrrell's FJunior Cooper in 1960.



Moving to Guards Trophy for 2019 led to another class title for Tilley

JONES



Tilley relished the chance to race a Lotus 18 in 2019

"I never dreamed that I'd get to race the Lotus, let alone before I was 20! The 2.5-litre Climax [FPF] engine was the most powerful I'd experienced, making around 250bhp. The positive-stop gearbox took a little bit of getting used to, but Sam Wilson [who had raced John Chisholm's sister car] told me not to hurry the change, which was good advice." Benn certainly left a good impression with Historic Grand Prix Cars Association members, besting at sixth on the Brands GP circuit and eighth in a huge Silverstone field.

Then came 2020, foreshortened for all by the dreaded COVID-19 pandemic. Hadfield had pulled another rabbit from his crash hat, dusting down the March-Toyota 743 with which Brian Henton and Rupert Keegan had won F3 championships in the UK in 1974 and 1976 respectively. "I remember Simon's words when I first sat in it: 'Don't floor it under 4700rpm because you will detonate the engine,'" recalls Tilley. "That's because of the 24mm air intake restrictor, which limits it to around 160bhp, with a very narrow power band. Quite a responsibility, and my first taste of slicks and wings.

"That car is absolutely awesome. We only got four races in, and winning both legs [on home soil] at Cadwell Park – my favourite circuit, where the British F3 Championship last visited in 1983, Ayrton Senna's year – was very special." His Saturday win was particularly memorable. After a mighty scrap with Matt Wrigley (Chevron B38), Tilley dived ahead audaciously approaching the Hall Bends. Mum Ann, watching from the restaurant's terrace, "had kittens" according to her husband. "It wasn't that scary from where I was sitting," explains Benn. "Matt had a clutch problem and lost momentum over The Mountain so I had to go for the gap!" Tilley duly sealed the Classic F3 Championship.

One last surprise lay in store: an appointment to visit Classic Team Lotus's new HQ at Hethel, just before Benn's 21st birthday. "I said take your kit in case you are offered a run in something on the factory test track," says Stuart. "Benn knew nothing about it, but through my old friend Dan Collins – he raced a Lotus 61 and 69 in Pre-'74 when I did it – we'd arranged a session in his stunning F1 Lotus 91 through [period mechanic] Chris Dinnage. The boy was gobsmacked."

"I was strapped in, heart pounding, trying to take it all in," says Benn. "Surrounded by black carbonfibre, I couldn't stop thinking Nigel Mansell sat here in 1982. Now here I am with a Cosworth DFV developing over 500bhp in a 580kg ground-effect car – that's more than 1000bhp/ton! Chris has completed thousands of laps on the airfield [where Team Lotus's world champions Jim Clark, Graham Hill and Emerson Fittipaldi tested] so talked me round it. It was amazing. I'll never forget that day."

Like most of his contemporaries, Tilley is active on social media, albeit more energised by the stellar achievements of his heroes Clark and Surtees than innumerable streams of inconsequential tittle-tattle. Despite 'reality TV stars' or personalities transitioning from other activities being more likely than talented racers to have big-buck opportunities fall at their feet, there's no jealousy with

BENN TILLEY'S RACING TIMELINE

2020

March 743 Classic F3 champion (car owner: Simon Hadfield)

2019

Lotus 23B Guards Trophy class champion (Euni Park-Valentine) & Lotus 18 F1 two events (Paul Smeeth)

2018

Merlyn Mk20 Classic FF1600 champion (Mandie Hadfield) & Lola Mk5 FJunior two events (Ian Robinson)



2017

Merlyn Mk20 Historic FF1600 (Mandie Hadfield) & Lotus 22 FJunior (above) FJHRA class champion (Paul Smeeth)



2016

Merlyn Mk20 Historic FF1600 (Mandie Hadfield)

2015

season out

2014

Citroen Saxo VTR (above) – Junior Saloon Cars, 4th in points

2013

Citroen Saxo VTR – SaxMax, end of season

2009-2014

Cadet & MiniMax karting (below)



Benn. Funding the dream has long been a family affair. It's as well he's an only child.

"The generosity and faith of Simon and Mandie Hadfield, without whom most of my racing would not have been possible, other car owners, friends [including former Imp racer Ian Toon] and my parents' hard work has brought two championships and two class titles, way more than I dared to dream of as a kid," says Benn, who will be out in the F3 March again this season. "Somehow, I don't think I'd enjoy racing modern cars but, if we found a pot of gold or won the lottery, I'd love to try Historic F2. Then maybe Historic F1. That run in the Lotus opened my eyes!" ❄️



MEMOIRS OF THE NINE-TIME MULSANNE MAESTRO



BOOK REVIEW
MR LE MANS:
TOM KRISTENSEN
RRP £40

Tom Kristensen is synonymous with Le Mans. It's therefore only fitting that the recently released memoir celebrating the nine-time winner of the 24 Hours race is titled *Mr Le Mans*. Although,

co-author Dan Philipsen reveals in the preface that Kristensen was “uncomfortable” about the book title as it “would undermine the event and its own stature and position in the sport he loves so much”. That is the first of many revelations that provide a well-rounded insight into the pre-eminent sportscar racer of the past 20-or-so years, whose weight of achievement across multiple disciplines more than made up for the lack of any grand prix starts on his CV.

Originally published in Danish, the 432-page hardback book has been updated and rereleased in English, with contributing chapters from Danish journalist Nils Finderup (also Kristensen's press manager for 13 years), Motorsport.com editor Charles Bradley and long-time Autosport sportscar correspondent Gary Watkins. These break up the main narrative, which swaps between Kristensen and Philipsen, and follows the former's rise from *gaijin* Formula 3 racer in Japan to Le Mans king. This comes via stints in Formula 3000, British Touring Cars (including perhaps the book's best line on Jason Plato: “I wouldn't even trust him to keep a mouse for me”), plus myriad Formula 1 tests and the DTM.

The result is a curious mix of biography and autobiography, with the guesting writers given free rein to describe their interactions with Kristensen. As such, some elements of his career are repeated, but it doesn't really detract from the reader's experience.

“The idea was for me to write about my personal reminiscences of Tom, his career and some of his many race victories,” says Watkins. “I was very conscious that it couldn't just be a blow-by-blow account of his sportscar career – I must have covered over 100 of his races – so I just tried to come up with some key moments that almost blended my career with his.”

Each of the contributing writers conveys interesting insights into Kristensen as a racing driver, but unsurprisingly it's his own words that are the real highlight. Where Philipsen tends to fill in the background of contract negotiations, sponsor deals, family situations, it's Kristensen who mostly adds the meat to the racing stories.

Thankfully, the Le Mans near-misses of 1999, 2007 and 2012 are not glossed over, and we get fascinating behind-the-scenes nuggets. These include the time he threw a water bottle at Pau race director Marcel Martin in 1996, when his BMW V12 LMR lifted over a crest in 1999, and his guilt at blocking Gary Paffett on team orders at the Norisring in 2005.

But he also gives readers a tangible sense of Kristensen the person. Highlights include wrestling with determination to race at Le Mans in 2007 – despite the displeasure of his family – after the Hockenheim DTM shunt that even today means his head “really hurts if I'm exposed to loud, rattling sounds”. There's also the personal mandate he calls ‘the big nine’ that “became a kind of reference for



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Aston Martin has finally revealed its 2021 Formula 1 challenger with a proud launch that featured Super Bowl great Tom Brady and super-spy actor Daniel Craig. Autosport takes a look at the new parts on the car, which will be driven by Sebastian Vettel and Lance Stroll, to analyse how the ARM21 is more than just a 'Green Mercedes'. [Go to bit.ly/F1Aston](https://bit.ly/F1Aston)



bit.ly/JonesF1

How an unlikely F1 outsider gained acceptance

Channel 4's decision to pick Steve Jones as presenter of its Formula 1 coverage in 2016 raised eyebrows. But, says Ben Edwards, Jones has developed into a presenter ripe for the direction of modern F1.

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14 March

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Round 5/33

Phoenix, Arizona, USA

13 March

Australian S5000

Round 2/5

Phillip Island, Australia

14 March

Livestream on Motorsport.tv, Sat 0000, 0230, Sun 0230



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Kristensen and Paffett square off at Norisring in 2005 DTM battle

SUTTON/MOTORSPORT IMAGES

me on how to achieve and maintain my success". Kristensen comes across as a cerebral driver who used the hard knocks of his early career to become the ultimate name in endurance racing.

And it's to his great credit that he doesn't shy away from sharing intimate details either, giving readers further understanding of the layers to his character. Kristensen reveals how the loss of his parents and cousin to cancer within a few short years made him more "thin-skinned" – "I cry more easily and there are things I no longer take for granted" – and the impact of his long-term separation from his family, who moved back to Denmark while Kristensen stayed on in Monaco.

Anybody reading the book will likely know the broad brushstrokes of his long career, and the high points from which the book takes its name. But thankfully this memoir offers so, so much more.

JAMES NEWBOLD



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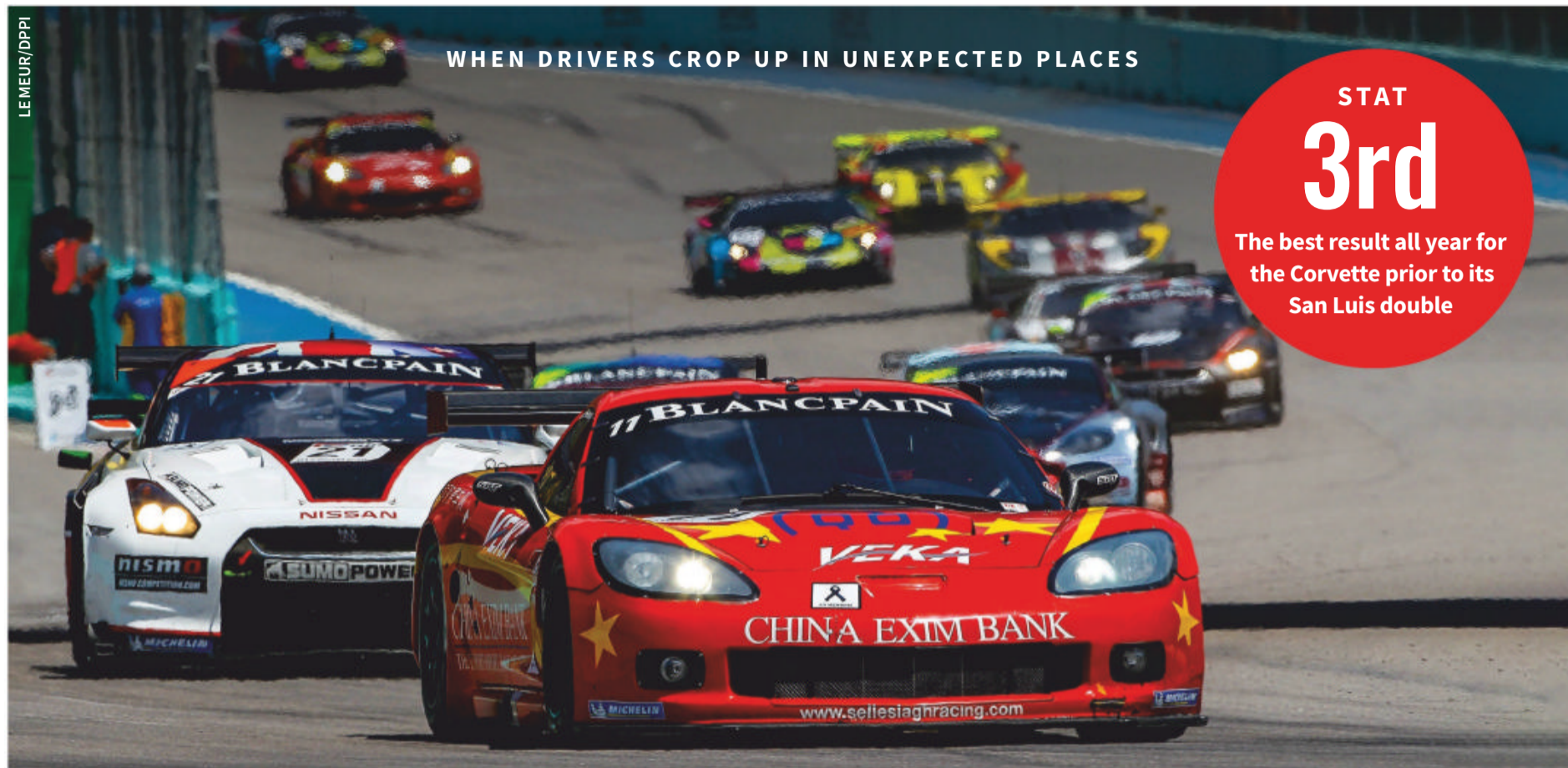


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DUKE[®]
V I D E O

HAVE-A-GO HERO



YELMER BUURMAN

When a winning FIA GT1 cameo spurred a GT career

JAMES NEWBOLD

The 2011 FIA GT1 World Championship finale in Argentina was the end of an era, but also the dawn of a new one. As the last hurrah for the expensive and long-in-the-tooth GT1 class that would be phased out for 2012, it was also the dawn of Yelmer Buurman's successful GT career, which now counts the 2018 Blancpain GT Endurance title, the 2020 British GT Pro-Am crown and two Dubai 24 Hours wins.

The Dutchman had carved out a niche in the football-themed Superleague Formula single-seater series and won races in all four seasons prior to its 2011 collapse. As he weighed up his options, Buurman was racing Radicals when enthusiast Rick Abresch offered him a drive in Selleslagh's Corvette C6.R in Argentina. Abresch had bought the car and wanted Buurman to

partner Francesco Pastorelli, then working as a mechanic at his Dutch Supercars team.

"He told me that the team had some issues with the drivers and that he was happy to pay if I wanted to do it with Francesco," Buurman recalls. "We had very low expectations because we didn't have any testing. I never drove the car before."

Both drivers were also new to the majestic Potrero de los Funes circuit that weaves around a reservoir and, according to Buurman, "had a bit of everything".

"It was a fantastic track," he says. "It's a shame that they are not organising big international races there anymore because it was really an awesome location."

Neither got to sample new tyres until qualifying, but Buurman would still start the qualifying race from second. At the green light, he decisively took a lead they wouldn't lose, the GT new boy drawing on his experience in V12-powered Superleague cars to get quickly on the pace. "The car was actually fairly easy to drive if you're used to big, heavy Superleague," he says.

They sealed the double in the deciding championship race after a multi-car crash that neutralised the first half-hour. A slow tyre change brought Buurman out fourth, behind two drivers (Tomas Enge and Peter Dumbreck) whose co-drivers had overtaken under yellows at the start and were due to serve penalties, plus the Hexis Aston of Stef Dusseldorp. After Enge peeled in, Buurman



"I FIRED IT THROUGH THE CHICANE AND OUTBRAKED HIM. IT WAS A COOL MOVE, A VERY SPECIAL MOMENT"

pulled a crucial move on Dusseldorp to give him the net lead when Dumbreck was also penalised. "There was one place where I had a bit of overspeed compared to Stef so I knew I had to do it there," says Buurman. "I fired it through the chicane, just made it to his side and outbraked him. It was a cool move, a very special moment."

Buurman netted a full-time drive in GTs in 2012 with Vita4one that almost yielded the FIA GT1 crown. Ever since, he's been a paid-up professional. 🏆



Pastorelli and Buurman (right) had no time for testing

FINISHING STRAIGHT



FROM THE ARCHIVE

Mika Hakkinen (McLaren-Mercedes MP4-16) finds the limit during the 2001 French Grand Prix weekend at Magny-Cours. The Finn qualified fourth, but

wasn't even able to start the formation lap – after his car was recovered to the pitlane, the fault was eventually traced to an incorrectly assembled gearbox part. He'd already had a pretty miserable

season, retiring from four of the previous nine races and reaching the podium just once. Although he won next time out at Silverstone, and later in the US, he finished down in fifth in the points.

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IN DEFENCE OF...

AERODYNAMICS

Does anyone who isn't an aerodynamicist love aerodynamics? When it comes to motorsport, 'aero' is vilified as the source of nearly all modern evils. Dull racing, too many single-make categories, dominance, driving looking easy to spectators. You name it, the fault can usually be traced back to the knock-on effects of aero.

Take off the wings, make cars simpler to build and operate, so the racing will be better, more spectacular to watch, and the competition between drivers will be closer and more exciting. What's not to like in this Utopia? Stick the best drivers in a grid of Caterham Sevens on a dirt track and you'd pretty much be there.

We are not there, of course, and the reason is that motorsport has always tended towards technological enterprise. It is about pushing through boundaries. And whether you're an aerodynamicist, designer, driver, engineer, mechanic or team owner, it is fundamentally about trying to go quicker. If you can go faster than everyone else, barring any upsets, you should win. Going faster is what

motivates everyone who competes – from the ambitious amateur to the best in the world, no matter what your job role. And it's simply the case that aerodynamics has for many decades been the pre-eminent and most efficient way to add performance to a racing car.

OK, some might fairly argue that it goes against the spirit of progress that such science is no longer allowed to progress unfettered, mainly for safety reasons. But recovering what modern rulebooks take away, and then trying to forge past those limitations, is still a recipe for ingenuity. And still cars get faster.

This should be celebrated. Fast cars are what motorsport is all about. And the challenge of driving them – the bravery, control, physical strength, mental aptitude and reactions needed to master machines that generate performance in this way – is underestimated by almost everyone who hasn't had the good fortune to try for themselves. Motorsport is speed. Speed is grip. Grip is aerodynamics. Get over it.

BEN ANDERSON



IN NEXT WEEK'S ISSUE

Formula 1 test war

WHO WILL COME OUT OF THE TRAPS QUICKEST?



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