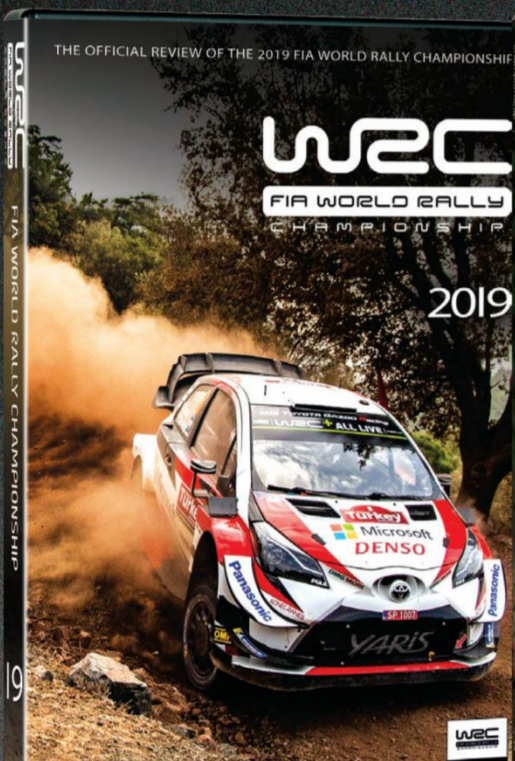


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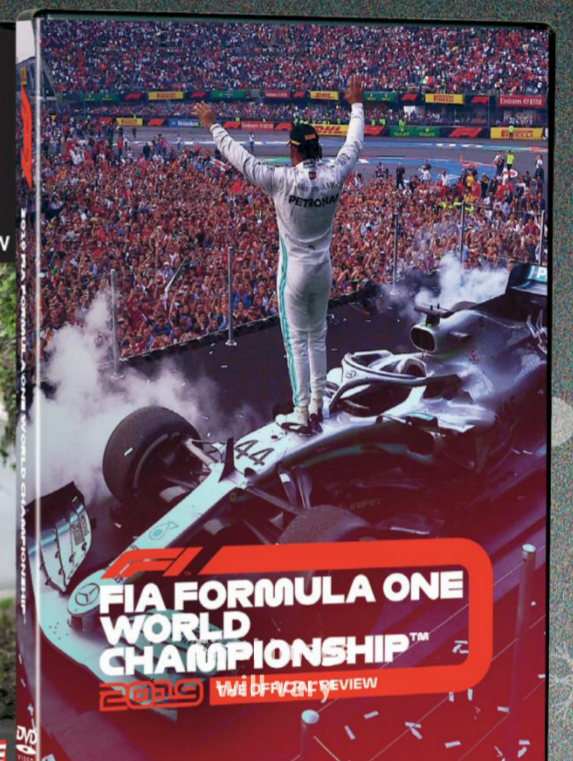
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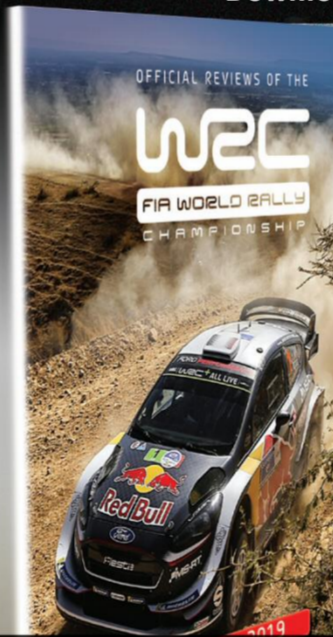
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MOTORSPORT NEWS

DECEMBER 18/25 2019 ■ DOUBLE ISSUE £3.90

43 NEW BRABHAM WINS ON DEBUT

When: November 9
Where: Brands Hatch
Motorport has seen very iconic names associated with it and one of those is Brabham. Therefore, it was understandable that when a significant amount of interest in a new team was shown, David Brabham wanted to be a sponsor.



42 MUKKELSEN BENCHED BY HYUNDAI FOR CORSICA

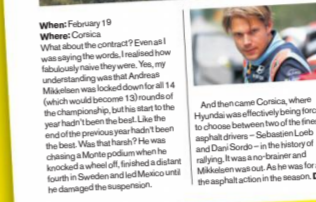
When: February 19
Where: Corsica
What about the concept of 'Evening' was playing the world's toughest rally stage? The understanding was that Andreu Mikkelsen was benched for 14 days.

41 SILVERSTONE EVENTS CANCELLED DUE TO RESURFACING

When: March 8
Where: Silverstone
There are few club-race events that are as well attended and popular as the MGTC, open day F10, Motor Club and MotorSport Vision.

40 SMITH JUNIOR FORCED TO QUIT BRISCA F1

When: June 10
Where: Short race
There are many benchmarks in an open-wheel race, but perhaps none so successful as ending in the modern era.



39 BRC ANNOUNCES GALEA'S REVAMP

When: February 19
Where: Corsica
What about the concept of 'Evening' was playing the world's toughest rally stage? The understanding was that Andreu Mikkelsen was benched for 14 days.

38 McALEER

When: March 8
Where: Silverstone
There are few club-race events that are as well attended and popular as the MGTC, open day F10, Motor Club and MotorSport Vision.

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THE BIG QUESTIONS: F1 2019 IN THE SPOTLIGHT

We look at the season just gone P48

WE DRIVE A TEAM DYNAMICS HONDA CIVIC

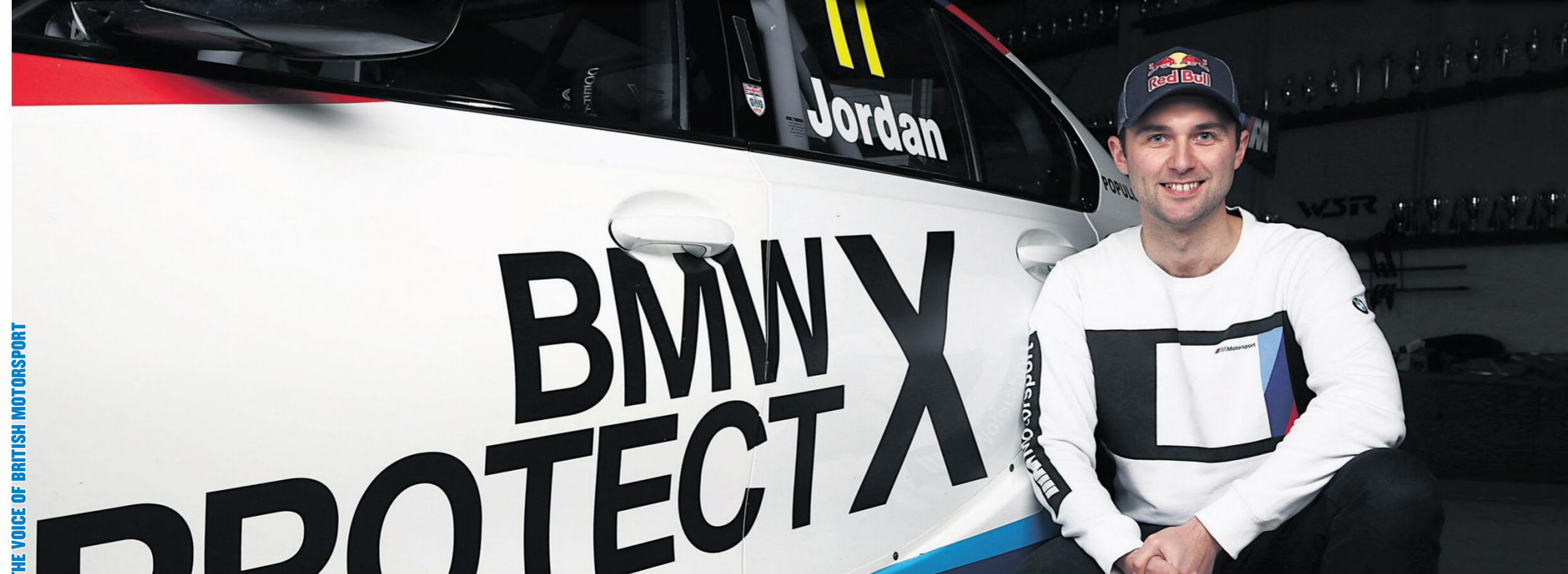
Behind the controls of a BTCC race winner P32

WORLD RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP REVIEW

MN picks out its top performers of the year P34

Champion set to return as part of three-car WSR attack in 2020

JORDAN RESCUED BY BMW BTCC DEAL



By Matt James

British Touring Car Championship star Andrew Jordan says he has been given the ultimate Christmas present by signing up to drive a Team BMW 330i M Sport in next year's competition.

Jordan, who won the title in 2013, looked like he would be on the sidelines after a backer withdrew, but he has now been recruited as a Team BMW driver to race the WSR-operated cars in the 2020 contest.

Jordan, who finished runner-up in the BTCC this year, will join reigning champion Colin Turkington and Tom Oliphant in the three-car attack.

Jordan said: "This has been months in the planning and it is the only seat I wanted. I am in the BTCC to win, and I can do that with this car. It is a perfect deal for me, and a really nice feeling for Christmas."

Full story, p2-3



THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

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HOW TANAK TOOK RALLYING'S ULTIMATE PRIZE



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THE BIGGEST TALKING POINTS FROM F1



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Andrew Jordan has signed up with Team BMW for 2020

By Matt James

Andrew Jordan has secured a dream deal to remain on the British Touring Car Championship grid as part of an expanded three-car Team BMW squad in 2020.

The 2013 title winner, who has won 26 BTCC races, parted ways with his long-term backer Pirtek at the end of the 2019 campaign and was left searching for a new deal to rescue his tin-top career.

However, BMW has stepped up and Jordan will remain with the WSR-run operation. He will again line up alongside reigning champion Colin Turkington and Tom Oliphant in the rear-wheel-drive machines.

Jordan was runner-up in the 2019 season despite effectively missing three of the 30 races due to injuries sustained in a lap-one crash at the second meeting of the year at Donington Park.

He bounced back and took six wins throughout the season to finish just two points behind Turkington in the hunt.

"This has been the best Christmas present I could ever have dreamt of," said Jordan. "There was a very real chance that I would have had to consider a programme doing something outside of the BTCC next year, which is not really what I wanted. But now all my plans are firmed up, I feel great about the season ahead."

Dream chance

Jordan, who first raced in the BTCC in 2008, said that the deal to remain with the Lower Sunbury-based squad was a dream come

true and that he has targeted a second crown in 2020.

The 30-year-old said: "Ever since Pirtek – who have been incredible supporters of mine for a decade – told me that motorsport no longer featured in their plans last summer, I've been trying desperately to piece together a deal to remain in the BTCC with WSR.

"I was only focused on coming back with BMW because I know how good the car is. Winning is what motivates me and that's what I go racing for, and I wouldn't have stayed in the BTCC at all costs and go to a team where I would struggle to win races. I knew the WSR BMW was the place I wanted to be, and I put all my eggs in one basket just hoping I could get a deal together to remain, and I have.

"After winning more races than anyone else and coming so close to winning my second BTCC title last year, the aim is to go one better and I absolutely have the best team around me I could possibly hope for to make that dream a reality. I can't wait."

Validation

Jordan said that the increased involvement from BMW, which will bring him into the fold as a fully-fledged works driver, has been crucial in putting the programme together.

"I have been in a very fortunate position for the last 10 years or so that I could go to a team with a bag of cash from sponsors, but that wasn't the case for 2020," he said. "As in most forms of motorsport, sometimes budget can outweigh talent, so you are never sure where you are going to stand. But BMW

has gone above and beyond what it needed to do, and there is a really good feeling about this whole deal because it shows that they wanted me in the car."

Jordan said he had explored options to race in the Porsche Carrera Cup GB should his BTCC plans be sidelined, and that his Jordan Racing Team would still look to run a car in that category. He also confirmed that he will dovetail his BTCC outings with appearances in historic racing in 2020.

Strongest line-up

Jordan has been tipped to shine next term by WSR team boss Dick Bennetts, who said that winter developments to the 330i M Sport should make it an even more competitive proposition in 2020.

Bennetts said: "I'm really pleased to be able to announce this news today. AJ is one of the finest BTCC drivers not just of the current crop, but of this whole generation, and he showed incredible determination and fighting spirit this year to turn what could have been a complete loss after the Donington incident into a final-round battle for the championship.

"With Colin, Tom and now AJ forming a three-pronged line-up and a BMW 330i M Sport that is undergoing a development programme during the winter, we have one of, if not the strongest line-ups in recent BTCC seasons and a car to challenge for more championships. Continuity is a key to success."

The 2020 British Touring Car Championship kicks off at Donington Park on March 28-29.

LEAVING IT LATE: TURKINGTON'S TEMPESTUOUS SEASON

HEADLINE NEWS

Photos: Jakob Ebrey



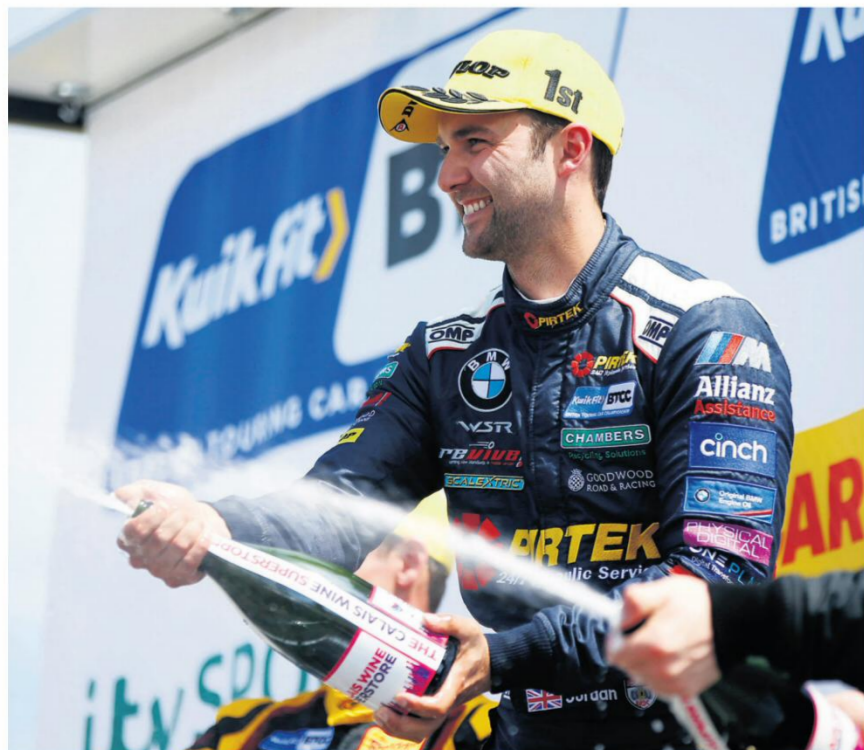
Jordan will once again do battle with Turkington

JORDAN JOINS EXPANDED BMW ATTACK IN BRITISH TOURING CARS

WSR confirms unchanged line-up for 2020 campaign in the tin-top series



Jordan's maiden title came in 2013 in the Honda Civic Type R



Despite missing three races, Jordan was runner-up in 2019

TIN-TOP TRAIL

Andrew Jordan in the BTCC



Motorbase was a tough year



First victory came in a Vectra

2019: Andrew Jordan hits the ground running with a win at the opening meeting at Brands Hatch, but misses the three races at Donington Park due to a lap-one crash that injures him. Rebounds with six wins but misses out on the crown by two points
2018: Having found his feet at WSR, Jordan only takes one win at Knockhill but his consistent season means he finishes fifth in the points table
2017: A swap to WSR and into a rear-wheel-drive BMW 125i M Sport brings three

wins and ninth in the points
2016: Moving to Motorbase Performance in a Ford Focus, Jordan has a struggle during the season. He wins twice, but has a fractious relationship with team-mate Mat Jackson. Lands up in eighth place in the table
2015: Jordan swaps to the works MG team, but has a tough year and is unable to return to the winner's circle. He does take four second place finishes though, and ends up fifth in the points
2014: Defending the title in the Honda Civic Type R,

Jordan takes four wins before the midpoint of the campaign but a shunt in practice at Snetterton leaves him with concussion. It knocks the stuffing out of his campaign, and he finishes fifth in the points
2013: A title-winning season in the Honda Civic Type R. Jordan takes six wins, including his first double success at a sodden Rockingham to push him to the crown. Survives contact in the penultimate round at Brands to take the title
2012: The team swaps to the

Team Dynamics-built Honda Civic Type R. There is one win at Snetterton but he finishes fourth in the points overall
2011: Another season with the Vauxhall, Jordan is a much more consistent threat with seven podiums on his way to sixth in the points, and third in the Independents Trophy
2010: A return to the family-run team in a Pirtek-supported Vauxhall Vectra and he becomes the first driver to win a BTCC race with the new TOCA BTCC bespoke engine when he prevails at Croft. He wins

again before the end of the season to place 10th in the table
2009: A switch to the works Vauxhall team in a third car alongside Fabrizio Giovanardi and Matt Neal. He takes four podiums including three second places on his way to 10th in the standings
2008: Jordan joins the BTCC in a two-car team running Honda Integra Rs alongside his father Mike. The younger driver takes two podium finishes on his way to 13th in the points standings



Jordan took a race win in 2018 at Knockhill



Honda again in 2014



The first season was in a Honda Integra in 2008

RACING NEWS

F1 ROUND-UP

Tyres unchanged

Formula 1 will stick with 2019-specification Pirelli rubber next year, after teams unanimously voted to reject the new tyres that were being prepared for 2020. The prototype 2020 spec – which was designed to reduce tyre degradation, provide a wider working range of temperature and lower overheating in dirty air – had made its race weekend debut during free practice in Austin, but earned largely negative reviews from the drivers who had sampled it. Pirelli hoped a two-day post-season test in Abu Dhabi would help resolve the concerns but it failed to do so.

McLaren's new sim

McLaren will aim to debut an all-new simulator in 2020 that will be a "massive departure" from its predecessor, according to tech chief James Key. Although McLaren finished fourth in the constructors' championship in 2019, it is still undergoing a continuous overhaul under the management of new team boss Andreas Seidl and Key, who joined from Toro Rosso. McLaren's F1 simulator was once state-of-the-art but Key says developing a new version was a must in light of technological advancements. Key said: "It's a massive departure to what we've been using."

No swapping seats

Christian Horner says he expects Max Verstappen to remain with Red Bull in 2021, and would not be surprised if other leading F1 drivers stayed with their outfits. The contracts of Verstappen, Lewis Hamilton, Valtteri Bottas and Sebastian Vettel expire at the end of next season, while Charles Leclerc is also potentially available. The topic of Verstappen's future has cropped up several times in 2019, most notably when his father Jos stated Red Bull must make changes in '20 to avoid a "wasted" year. Horner said: "It's down to us to give him a competitive car next year, but I think ultimately when the music stops I wouldn't be surprised for everybody to end up in the same seats."

Second-class teams

Formula 1 boss Chase Carey says new teams must not be forced to enter as "second-class citizens", which will be helped by certain financial restrictions being removed from 2021. At present, F1's system for distributing prize money includes an equal payment to all teams that finish in the top 10 in the constructors' championship for two of the previous three seasons. F1's payment system will be tweaked for 2021 and while the equally-distributed participation pot will remain, the rule that excluded new teams from this for three years will not. "If you come in, you should be part of the part of the sport, and not a second-class citizen," F1 CEO Carey said. "To come in as a second-class citizen, I think that's a deterrent."

"SIGNIFICANT" ENGINE CHANGES FOR FERRARI

Team plans tweaks to engine as well as adding more downforce to close gap to Mercedes

By Scott Mitchell

Ferrari is making "quite significant changes" to its Formula 1 engine as well as adding "a lot more downforce" to its car for 2020, in its bid to topple Mercedes.

Sebastian Vettel and Charles Leclerc won just three races between them in 2019 as Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes swept to another title double, Mercedes' sixth in a row.

F1's four engine manufacturers have converged in the V6 turbo-hybrid era's fifth season but despite aerodynamic and engine regulations remaining stable for 2020, Ferrari has opted for an overhaul because it believes there is more potential to exploit.

"We have changed, by quite a lot, our power unit, in terms of architecture, the cylinder," said team principal Mattia Binotto. "It's quite a big review just to show that here again, there is much that can be done."

"The change we are looking for next year is quite significant changes on the engine itself."

Though Ferrari established a heavily-scrutinised straightline speed advantage in 2019, it had a cornering deficiency that proved too costly at several races.

While its engine development will aim to keep, if not enhance,

the power advantage Ferrari has established, addressing its downforce weakness is another key area that has been targeted for 2020.

"Our car next year is aiming for a lot more downforce by having more downforce, certainly more drag," said Binotto.

"We are not expecting to be as far [ahead] on the straight as we have been. But you never know what the others are doing."

"The things that we learned, we recognise that we need to have certainly more downforce – as we saw at the end of the season, still there is a gap to close."

"So, our car is aiming for more downforce and by consequence, we are certainly working more on drag."

Ferrari is in the process of finalising the design of its 2020 chassis, with Binotto saying there are "still a few sessions" to set the car's specification for pre-season testing at Barcelona.

The team will launch its car on February 11, eight days before the first three-day test in Spain.

"We are going through all the homologations," said Binotto. "We go through a crash test for homologation, but we are still developing at the windtunnel. Certainly, the concept has been defined."



Italian team plots car changes for 2020



Hamilton linked to Ferrari

Ferrari CEO says Hamilton meeting has been blown out of proportion amid rumours

Ferrari CEO Louis Camilleri says Lewis Hamilton's meeting with chairman John Elkann has been blown out of proportion, but indicated the Formula 1 champion has some interest in a move.

During the season-ending Abu Dhabi Grand Prix weekend, it emerged Hamilton had met twice this year with Ferrari boss Elkann, triggering speculation the six-time

title winner may leave Mercedes when his contract expires next year.

Mercedes and Hamilton have both indicated strongly that extending their championship-dominating partnership is the most likely outcome, but Mercedes chief Toto Wolff said there was a "25%" chance his star driver could move to Ferrari.

Speaking at Maranello last

week, Camilleri said that while Hamilton's meeting with Elkann was public knowledge it was not a professional rendezvous.

"It was a social event, which has sort of been blown somewhat out of proportion," he said. "They have some common friends."

Commenting on the speculation linking Hamilton to the team, Camilleri said the Briton was

among the drivers interested in racing for Ferrari.

"The fact is we have a long-term agreement with one driver and with the other driver the agreement expires at the end of 2020," he said. "We clearly are very flattered that Lewis in particular, and other drivers, want to come and join us. But it would be premature to decide anything now for the future."

BOTTAS NEEDS TO UPGRADE TO VERSION '2.77' TO BATTLE HAMILTON IN 2020

Mercedes driver Valtteri Bottas says he will need to be version '2.77' of himself to win the Formula 1 title next year.

Having played second fiddle to team-mate Lewis Hamilton over the first two seasons of his Mercedes tenure – with the latter half of 2018 proving particularly difficult – Bottas took an

imperious win in this year's season opener in Melbourne.

The victory, paired with a seemingly different attitude and a perceived rise in confidence, triggered widespread references to 'Bottas 2.0' – and though he ultimately did not mount a sustained title challenge versus Hamilton, Bottas did manage to

finish a comfortable career-best second in the standings.

When answering a question about if he needed to move beyond 'Bottas 2.0' to dethrone Hamilton next year, Bottas jokingly made a reference to his #77 race number.

"The fact is, I think competition is only going to get tougher

between the top three teams," he said. "So, for sure beating Lewis is always hard, but it means also beating the other drivers."

"But I know I have the speed in me and the ability so I don't think I need to make any miracles. I need to fine-tune everything – so, let's say 'Bottas 2.77', maybe."



Finn admits he needs to step up

THE KEY TALKING POINTS OF THE FORMULA 1 SEASON



'Spa 24 Hours was the highlight'
David Addison's very busy season, p46



Crew of Conway, Kobayashi and Lopez took a crushing Bahrain WEC win

TOYOTA CRUISES AS RIVALS CRASH

Manufacturer is back on top in Bahrain after Rebellion/Ginetta clash

By Rachit Thukral

Toyota claimed a crushing victory in the World Endurance Championship round in Bahrain last weekend after capitalising on early woes for its LMP1 rivals Rebellion and Ginetta.

The #7 TS050 Hybrid of Mike Conway, Kamui Kobayashi and Jose Maria Lopez moved into the lead on the opening lap after Bruno Senna's Rebellion R-13 and the #5 Ginetta of Charlie Robertson collided at Turn 2.

From there on, the #7 trio enjoyed a trouble-free run, securing their second victory of the 2019-20 season following their triumph at the Silverstone season opener in September. The result propelled Conway, Kobayashi and Lopez into the lead of the championship, ahead of the #8 car of Sebastien Buemi, Kazuki Nakajima and Brendon Hartley that

finished a lap down in second.

Buemi was caught out in the first-lap melee and dropped to the lower regions of the pack, also requiring a change of front bodywork, but recovered sufficiently to seal a 1-2 finish for Toyota.

The polesitting Rebellion of Senna, Norman Nato and Gustavo Menezes completed the podium spots after receiving a double whammy in the opening half of the race.

Senna had recovered from the hit he received from Robertson to run second in hour two, but an unscheduled visit to the garage to fix a gear selection issue left the Rebellion three laps down.

Senna was furious with the contact from Robertson, saying: "The guy completely destroyed our race. I know he made a mistake, lost control of the car, but he completely took me out."

Both Ginettas retired from a race where

success handicap had made them the early favourites for victory. The #5 G60-LT-P1 of Robertson, Ben Hanley and Jordan King crawled to a halt in the fifth hour near Turn 9, while the sister car pulled into the pits in the penultimate hour.

United Autosports claimed its first victory in the LMP2 class after Paul di Resta, Phil Hanson and Filipe Albuquerque led throughout the eight hours in the #22 ORECA.

Aston Martin came out on top in a close scrap with Ferrari to take its second GTE Pro win of the season. The Ferrari of Miguel Molina and Davide Rigon had been leading the race prior to the final round of stops, but quicker pitwork by the Aston Martin crew catapulted Marco Sorensen and Nicki Thiim into the lead.

Porsche claimed GTE Am honours, via the Project 1 crew of Ben Keating, Larry ten Voorde and Jeroen Bleekemolen.

McLaren rules out joining World Endurance Championship's Hypercar class unless there is a tie-up with IMSA DPi rules

McLaren has ruled out entering the World Endurance Championship unless it can run one of the new breed of Daytona Prototype international IMSA contenders in the LM Hypercar class.

Zak Brown, chief executive of McLaren Racing, stated that he believes the LM Hypercar technical regulations for the

2020-21 WEC are out of reach financially for the British organisation.

He welcomed attempts by IMSA, WEC promoter the Automobile Club de l'Ouest and the FIA to align the DPi 2.0 rules due to come into force in 2022 with the LM Hypercar division, a move that would allow the two types of car to compete against

each other across both series.

"As the [LM Hypercar] rules exist today, I think we would struggle to get there economically," said Brown. "I have got to be really responsible [financially], especially with the Formula 1 team needing a few years to reduce its losses."

"I can't enter any new form of motor racing in the short term that would run at any kind

of meaningful loss."

Asked to confirm that the long-talked-about McLaren WEC entry depends on IMSA and WEC rules being aligned in some way, Brown replied: "Yes."

Brown revealed that McLaren's estimates put a top budget for an LM Hypercar programme at \$40million a season. He suggested that

McLaren believes a viable budget for the company is around half that figure.

Brown stressed that it will be important for McLaren to be able to incorporate its DNA into a car built to the DPi 2.0 rules, which like the current DPi formula will call for cars to be developed around an off-the-peg LMP2 chassis.

QUICK LAPS THE FASTEST NEWS ROUND-UP

Hyundai driver Norbert Michelisz sealed the World Touring Car Cup title in the final race of the season at Sepang after rival Esteban Guerrieri dropped back with overheating issues. Michelisz finished fourth, having eased off when Guerrieri slowed after his Honda Civic Type R ingested grass while he defended the lead. Michelisz's weekend had got off to a good start as he won the opening race, but Guerrieri then kept his title

hopes alive by taking victory in race two... A new award for the Formula 2 rookie of the year has been named the Anthoine Hubert Award, and has been given to Renault Formula 1 junior Guanyu Zhou. Zhou took five podiums and a surprise pole position at Silverstone, where he now holds the F2 lap record. The Chinese driver received the accolade at F2's awards ceremony in Monaco, presented by Hubert's brother Victor. ... **Two-time Le Mans 24 Hours winner Timo**

Bernhard made the decision to retire from the cockpit and become a Porsche ambassador in order to concentrate on team ownership. Bernhard, whose new role was announced at the Porsche Night of Champions prize-giving earlier this month, says that the "timing is right" to shift his focus to Team 75 Bernhard... British GT outfit Balfe Motorsport scored a 1-2 finish in the GT4 class of the Gulf 12 Hours in Abu Dhabi last weekend, as MotoGP

legend Valentino Rossi finished on the outright podium. The two McLaren 570S GT4s finished just 24 seconds apart at the finish, with 2004 SEAT Cupra Cup champion James Pickford joining Ollie Millroy, Nick Moss and Brendan Iribe in the winning car, which took the flag in 18th overall. British Touring Car Championship race winner Josh Cook teamed up with Euan Hankey, Mia Flewitt and Issam Charrouf to finish second in class. The Attempto Racing Audi R8 GT3 driven

by Christopher Mies, Dries Vanthoor and Rinat Salikhov took the outright victory, the first time an Audi has won the event after five straight successes for Ferrari. ... **WRT Audi has announced former IndyCar driver Ed Jones and ex-FIA Formula 3 driver Fabio Scherer for its 2020 DTM line-up, with no car for Haas Formula 1's Pietro Fittipaldi. Jones has been testing for Audi in the DTM young drivers' test at Jerez in a surprise addition to the line-up.**

TURKINGTON'S CHINESE CAMEO BLIGHTED BY ROLL AND PENALTY

British Touring Car champion Colin Turkington's cameo in the Chinese Touring Car Championship at Wuhan was ruined by a roll and a drivethrough penalty in the two races.

Turkington, who had travelled to the Far East with his regular WSR engineer John Waterman, had qualified his SAIC Volkswagen 333 Team Lamando machine fastest but pulled the reversed-grid number of eight out of

the hat.

That meant he started mid-pack in race one, and he was involved in a first-lap pile-up at a hairpin, which rolled his car onto its roof at slow speed.

The chaos also accounted for fellow visiting Briton Adam Morgan, whose BAIC Senova D50 was too badly damaged to continue.

The race was eventually won by Kia driver Alex Fontana.

"I was fine [physically], but I was a bit peeved," said Turkington. "I didn't much enjoy being upside down, but at least I was able to get out of the car OK."

Turkington was on pole for race two but was hit with a drivethrough penalty after he crept at the start.

Soon after the getaway, Turkington dropped back to allow his team-mate Rodolfo Avila ahead before he was forced to take his halt.

He rejoined in 13th and battled back to ninth spot at the flag, while Morgan finished third.

"The car crept when I first loaded it up on the clutch, then I stopped," said Turkington. "I was still behind my line."

"I let Rodolfo through to give him the lead, then a few laps later, they gave me the drivethrough."

BTCC ace competed at Wuhan track



Teenager took part in the WEC's rookie test in Bahrain

GT4 champion Canning has first test in Aston GTE

British GT4 champion Tom Canning had his first test in an Aston Martin Vantage GTE at the Bahrain International Circuit on Sunday, as part of his prize for winning the Aston Martin Racing Driver Academy.

The 17-year-old was one of several drivers to trial the car at the World Endurance Championship's rookie test, held in rain-affected conditions, along with AMR junior Andrew Watson, LMP2 regular Gabriel Aubry and Lasse Sorensen, the younger brother of factory ace Marco.

Canning completed 17 laps in the afternoon session and managed a best time of 2m00.720s, while Watson – who finished third in the GTE-Am class in a Gulf Racing Porsche in the eight-hour race on Saturday – finished as the best of the rookie contingent on a 1m57.139s.

European Le Mans Series LMP3 class regular Colin Noble also made his debut in an LMP2 car, completing 37 laps aboard the G-Drive Racing ORECA 07. The 23-year-old Scot clocked a best time of 1m48.680s.

RACING NEWS

Photos: Ollie Read, Jakob Ebrey, Steve Jones



Diverse Britcar grids will head to Spa

BRITCAR TO JOIN WEC FOR SPA EVENT

Club series gets chance to race at a world championship meeting next April

By Stephen Lickorish

Britcar will support the World Endurance Championship for the first time next season with a visit to Spa.

Two non-championship races will take place at the Spa WEC weekend on April 23-25 next year. Qualifying will be on the

Thursday, with a 50-minute race on both the Friday and Saturday.

The races will be open to any car that complies with regulations for class 1-7 of Britcar and a large entry is anticipated.

It will be the first time Britcar has run an overseas event since Claire Hedley took over the management of the

championship for 2016.

"We're over the moon," said Hedley. "It's a great opportunity for us and puts us on the world stage. It's amazing, we were approached by them [WEC organisers] because of our reputation – we put on a good show and have good grids." Hedley says interest has

been "phenomenal" after receiving a significant number of enquiries from prospective entries in the first 24 hours after the races were announced.

"I've had European teams approach me already – we've had some teams run with us in the past and they've said they're coming back," she added.

The Spa event will follow the first round of the main Britcar Endurance Championship, which is due to take place at Donington Park on April 10. The provisional calendar also features three visits to Silverstone – two of which will be on the Grand Prix circuit – alongside rounds at Snetterton and Brands Hatch.

Interest rises in Britcar Trophy

A number of drivers have already signed up to compete in Britcar's new Trophy category for 2020.

Britcar bosses decided to run additional races for production-based cars next year and separate these from the GT cars in its main Endurance Championship. Generally the Trophy races will take place on the same weekend as Endurance contests – the Endurance races will typically be on Saturdays followed by the 50-minute Trophy bouts on Sundays.

"Over the two championships, we've got 15 drivers signed up already and a lot of those are for the Trophy – people have seen it as a great opportunity," said Britcar boss Claire Hedley. "The Trophy was a gut feeling, we thought there was a market for production cars but when you amalgamate them with GT cars, they want to win races outright, so we had the idea of splitting them up and opening it up to smaller hot hatches."

Ginetta G40 Cup squad SVG Racing are among the entries – the team will run a Ginetta G40 for Peter Spano, while Alfa Romeo and Honda Civic racers Barry and Arthur McMahan have also signed up.

Burton graduates to Ginetta GT4 Supercup

Ginetta Junior podium finisher Gus Burton will graduate to the GT4 Supercup next season.

The 16-year-old, who finished seventh in this year's Junior standings, tested a G55 with Century Motorsport at Donington Park last month and impressed the team with his pace.

"He was super fast on the test we did at Donington Park and he fits in with the team very well," said Century boss Nathan Freke. "He clearly has a very strong natural ability and we are looking forward to helping him progress to the next level in his career."

Burton previously raced in the shortlived Renault UK Clio Cup Junior series and Fiesta Junior before joining the Ginetta category midway through 2018.



Steward won the inaugural UK Legends championship and will be in action at Autosport show

First Legends ace Steward back behind the wheel

Legends and National Hot Rod star Tick Steward will get back behind the wheel at next month's Autosport International show in the Live Action Arena.

Six Legends Cars will form part of the Live Action display and the inaugural UK champion Steward will be one of the drivers taking part.

"I've always kept in contact with Phil [Cooper, series owner], we've done so much together in Legends from the start right back to when we had guys like Stirling Moss and Jody Scheckter having a go," said Steward, who has not competed in Legends for almost two decades. "I did all of the original demos at Silverstone when Phil first brought the cars to the UK

and I was the first driver to do the Live Action shows, the first to buy a Legend as well.

"I've been involved from day one so it's fantastic to be back and doing the Live Action in January, I'd seen on Facebook about the Legends being back there so I got in touch with Phil and we got it all agreed. There are some great memories, winning the first British title, the first World Championship, so many highlights over the years and it's going to be fantastic to be back out there at the NEC."

Joining Steward as part of the performance will be 2019 champion Miles Rudman, runner-up Sean Smith, along with Nathan Anthony, James Hall-Morton and Connor Mills.

Fiesta champion Smith steps up to Mini Challenge JCW for 2020

Fiesta champion Isaac Smith will step up to the Mini Challenge JCW series next year, when the category joins the British Touring Car Championship bill.

The teenager took the Fiesta title this season in his first year out of junior racing, having finished fourth in Fiesta Junior in 2018.

He will now join the Mini category for next year, driving for the Excelr8 Motorsport squad.

"I'm really excited about

2020 and was attracted to the Mini Challenge JCW championship because it's the highest level I can go to before touring cars, so it's the perfect feeder series," said Smith.

"This year I added consistency to my racecraft and learned to never give up and the results came my way across the second half of the year. It was amazing to win the senior Fiesta title as at one stage I was 130 points behind!

"For next year I'll be going all-out for the Rookie Cup

title. That's the first aim, and if I can achieve that it should put me in the fight for the overall championship, which is definitely where I want to be."

● Another junior racing graduate to switch to driving a Mini next year will be Leonardo Panayiotou, who finished fifth in this year's Junior Saloon Car Championship. He will now graduate to the Cooper class of the Mini Challenge, racing for Excelr8 Motorsport.



Teenager Smith took the Fiesta crown in his first season of competing in the category this year

SPEEDWORKS EYES TOYOTA GT4 ENTRY

BTCC winner Ingram tests new Supra GT4 machine as squad considers British GT return

Photos: Toyota Gazoo Racing



Team tested car at Jarama last week

By Matt James

British Touring Car Championship team Speedworks Motorsport is eyeing a move into the British GT4 series next season with the new Toyota Supra.

Speedworks runs the factory-supported Team Toyota GB Corolla in the BTCC and it claimed four wins in Tom Ingram's hands in 2019.

Ingram and team boss Christian Dick went to Jarama in Spain last week to test the GT4 car and learn more about it.

Dick said that the squad was assessing its options ahead of the 2020 season.

"The car is such a nice bit of kit, and I was able to quiz all the engineers and get a really good look around it," he said. "It would be great to introduce the Toyota to the British GT

Championship and it would fit really nicely with the BTCC programme. It is certainly something we are a long way down the road to introducing."

Speedworks has previously run a Ginetta and a Chevrolet in the British GT Championship in 2010 and 2013.

Ingram said he was impressed with the six-cylinder, three-litre machine despite greasy conditions during his extended

run at the former grand prix circuit.

"It might as well have been Snetterton given the conditions we had," he said. "But the car was great. It had plenty of grunt in it, and it is pushing out around 430bhp. It has yet to have any balance of performance introduced, so it was very pokey and the build quality of the car was simply superb. It was a really great car to drive."



Ingram sampled Supra GT4



Duo finished second in the British GT4 Pro-Am standings

O'Brien and Johnson to remain with Balfe for another McLaren GT4 bid

Michael O'Brien and Graham Johnson will resume their partnership in British GT next season with a renewed GT4 Pro-Am attack in a Balfe Motorsport-run McLaren 570S GT4.

Johnson, the GT4 champion in 2016 with Mike Robinson, teamed up with O'Brien last season and finished second in the Pro-Am class behind

Martin Plowman and Kelvin Fletcher. They managed two class victories at Oulton Park and Spa, but were hindered by refuelling issues at Silverstone and Donington Park, and an engine issue at Brands Hatch, that prevented a closer contest.

O'Brien, who finished third in the 2018 GT4 standings with Tolman Motorsport as a member of McLaren's

Driver Development Programme, said: "I'm absolutely delighted to be continuing with Graham and Balfe Motorsport in 2020. Missing out by just two points in 2018 and then finishing second in Pro-Am this season means I definitely feel like there's unfinished business. I'm more motivated than ever to go one better in 2020."

Ginetta Junior star Martin to Carrera Cup

Ginetta Junior frontrunner Will Martin will switch to the Porsche Carrera Cup GB next season.

Martin, who took the most wins of any driver in 2019 with nine, will make the step up alongside his Junior team Richardson Racing, which will compete in the Porsche series for the first time.

"Getting the opportunity to race in such a prestigious championship so early in my career makes me so excited and I am extremely humble," said Martin. "It is a big step into the Carrera Cup GB for a new driver and new team to the series and we'll have a lot to learn, but I'm confident that we can all work together to improve even more and make our mark on the series across the upcoming campaign."



Martin will race for Richardson as it expands into the series

Team boss Gwyn Richardson added: "We know that the Porsche programme is going to provide us with a new challenge, but it is one that we are ready to embrace during the year ahead. We have worked hard in recent

years to put together a team that has the skills and expertise to fight at the front of the grid, and are confident that we will be able to build on the success we have enjoyed so far in this new venture."

British F4 race winner Horsten to drive for Lanan in BRDC F3 in 2020

BRDC British Formula 3 team Lanan Racing has signed Australian Bart Horsten to its roster for the 2020 season.

The 17-year-old Australian will move up from British F4 where he took a race win at Donington Park as well as nine additional podiums on his way to fifth in the standings this season. Horsten got his first taste of British F3's Tatuus-Cosworth at Donington in October as part of Lanan's evaluation day where F1 driver George Russell – who raced with Lanan on his way to the BRDC F4 title – was on hand.

"I'm very excited to be moving up to the BRDC British F3 Championship with Lanan Racing for 2020," said Horsten. "They have an excellent track record at this level, and I've

really enjoyed working with them since our day at Donington a couple of months ago.

"That day made a big impression on me, the car was amazing and it was great to meet George Russell too. Since

then I've got more familiar with the car and the team, and I'm very much looking forward to a competitive year with Graham Johnson [team boss] and the Lanan guys in 2020."



Australian (l) will drive for Johnson's team in British F3 next year

De Haan switches to GT3 RAM Merc

British GT runner-up Sam De Haan will switch from Barwell to RAM Racing as part of an expanded two-car Mercedes GT3 effort for the Silverstone squad next year.

Dan Shufflebottom's team will run two of the latest generation Mercedes-AMG GT3s with Mercedes factory driver Yelmer Buurman returning to the series alongside Ian Loggie, while De Haan will share with Finn Patrick Kujala in an all-Silver line-up.

De Haan was allowed to compete this season as a derogated Bronze because his entry for 2019 was accepted as a Bronze prior to the FIA upgrading his driver rating to Silver last year. But he has been unable to keep his Bronze grading for 2020 and thus continue his Pro-Am partnership with Gold-rated 2004 champion Jonny Cocker.

As an all-Silver pairing with sometime GP3 racer Kujala, who anchored Barwell's Am Cup-winning Spa 24 line-up in 2018, De Haan will have to carry extra weight in the car but believes the Mercedes will still be a competitive prospect.

"The Mercedes is nice on its tyres and I think the Lambo would struggle more with the extra weight across the stint," he said. "It's very Am-friendly and inspires confidence.

"Ian did a fair amount of testing before his first season in the car and he really got on well with it, so I'm hoping that I can follow suit and we'll be in the right ball-park."

Loggie had an interrupted year alongside Callum Macleod after he was injured in a cycling accident. Dutch ace Buurman last competed in British GT in 2018, winning at Rockingham with Lee Mowle in an ERC Sport entry.

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HISTORICS

'Dyas topped LeJog runners'
Volvo man's gold medal, below



DOWN THE PUB

BOB SEAGER

Roger Albert Clark contender
Age: 64 Lives: Poole



Seager: R.A.C. passion

Roger Clark was his rallying hero

"I was just a school kid when Roger Clark was competing on the RAC Rally and I navigated in the early days when he was still rallying. I'd always wanted to do the old RAC Rally. I did enter it in the 1990s but the entry was refused. So finally, it came round to the Roger Albert Clark Rally and I got there and I just can't believe it."

He went for an MG Midget

"I should have chosen a Ford Escort as it's easier to prepare. But I didn't think I'd be competitive against all the other Escorts, so I was looking for a class that was more at my level. I thought I'd be up against Minis and Imps, so I thought I'd do something a little bit different. In hindsight, it was probably not the brightest choice."

It has been a long project

"It is a 1967 car and I built it myself from a pile of scrap and it took me six years from 2002. We've had to develop the car and my first rally in it was the Sunseeker in 2013."

He is a fan of Category 1

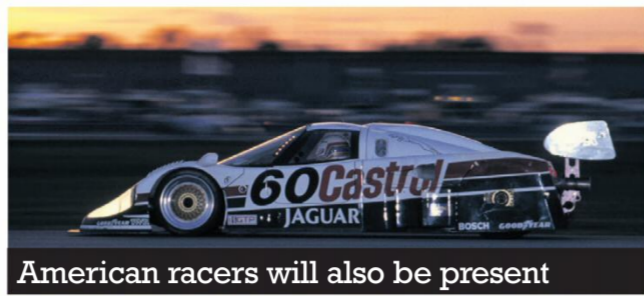
"It was watching the Robin Hood Stages 15 years ago that made me decide that I had to do it. Unfortunately, the Category 1 numbers have dwindled but I was over the moon to get to the Roger Albert Clark Rally. I couldn't believe it when Geraldine McBride agreed to be my co-driver. We'd met on rallies before. Whoever was co-driving had to be small to fit in the car and Geraldine has won more championships than I can remember."

They finished the event

"This was the ultimate! Just getting it round to the finish was unbelievable. I don't think it had ever been done in a MG Midget and I knew the organisers would do all they could to help us stay in the rally. Doing the equivalent of five or six rallies consecutively in a Midget was a huge challenge. The service crew was made up of some friends who had never been to a rally before and we took just every spare part we could find."

He is semi-retired

"I've been an engineer all over the world but now I'm semi-retired. I drive a minibus for special-needs children!"



American racers will also be present



The iconic Jags will be celebrated

Photos: LAT, Paul Lawrence

JAG SPORTSCARS FOR GOODWOOD

Famous long-distance cars will gather at the Members' Meeting

By Paul Lawrence

The Jaguar Le Mans victories in 1988 and 1990 will be celebrated at the Goodwood Members Meeting next March with high-speed demonstration sessions for up to 16 Group C and IMSA Jaguars.

In what is likely to be the biggest ever on-track gathering of Jaguar sports-prototypes from the 1980s and early 1990s,

the spectacular cars are due to run sessions at the West Sussex track on both days of the 78th Members' Meeting on March 28-29.

The cars, developed and built by Tom Walkinshaw Racing, will be represented by models ranging from the 1985 XJR-6 to the XJR-16 of 1993. The cars won Le Mans twice: in 1988, Jan Lammers, Andy Wallace and Johnny Dumfries won in the XJR-9 and two years later

Martin Brundle, Price Cobb and John Nielsen won in an XJR-12. The 1988 win was the first for Jaguar since the Ecurie Ecosse D-type win in 1957.

Across the era of the XJRs, Jaguar used V12, 3.5-litre V6 turbo and 3.5-litre V8 engines, so Goodwood visitors will be in for a magnificent sight and sound. It is hoped to bring some famous drivers back to their period cars, including Andy

Wallace who continues to work with Jaguar on its motorsport heritage.

"We won't give away the exact cars just yet, but expect to see some of the most iconic liveries, including Silk Cut, Bud Light and Castrol," said a Goodwood spokesman.

The TWR Jaguar demonstration sessions will sit alongside sessions for Lotus 72 Formula 1 cars and other F1 cars from the early 1970s.



Crown is a Holden man

Crown considers his options ahead of a rallying around the globe

Australian marathon rallying legend Gerry Crown, 87, has entered the ultimate circumnavigation challenge, the Round the World event from the Rally the Globe organisation. Split into three legs, the

Round the World starts from London on May 23 next year and finishes back at Greenwich on June 19 a year later after 80 days and 21,000 miles of endurance rallying through four continents. Crown is considering using his two

uniquely Australian cars on the event. "Both cars are well suited to the rough terrain that we can expect," he said. "The Rover V8 Leyland P76 is more powerful but, maybe, we'll use the 1964 Holden EH for the second leg across the USA."

Magson returns with Vauxhall Astra

Steve Magson has bought back the unique Safety Devices-built rear-wheel-drive Vauxhall Astra rally car and plans to restore it to its former glory.

First built for George Hill in 1981, the car registered 'SBU 220X' featured a 2.6-litre Vauxhall engine and was later owned and rallied by Yorkshireman Magson in the early 2000s.

"I sold it in 2006 because I thought the [governing body] MSA was going to outlaw it," said Magson. "I've been looking for it for the last two years and finally found it in Pembrokeshire. It's had six owners since me and now it needs a lot of work."

Magson hopes to use the car next season.



The Silverstone Classic will rumble to the sound of the Thundersports machines

HSCC EXPANDS CALENDAR FOR THUNDERSPORTS

The Historic Sports Car Club's Thundersports series will expand to a full six-event schedule in 2020 based on the success of this year's three-event pilot series.

With an average grid of 32 cars across the three events, the category hit the ground running and the series will

now add the Oulton Park Gold Cup, Dijon and a Donington Park date for 2020.

The high-profile Silverstone Classic 40-minute race will be repeated.

The series is open to cars of the type used in the World Championship, FIA GT Championship and FIA 2 Litre

Sports Car Championship up to 1981, Can-Am sports-racing cars and period Sports 2000s.

Andy Dee-Crowne of the HSCC said: "Thundersports has quickly established itself as a high-quality race series. There are dozens of eligible cars across the UK and Europe that can come and race with us."

IN BRIEF

Tony Maslen

Motorsport News is sad to report the death of Tony Maslen, one of the leading Ford Escort rally drivers of the 1970s. Maslen, aged 80, was best known for rallying successfully in Belgium and competed from the early 1960s through to the late '70s. He is survived by his son David who followed his father into rallying with similar success.

Celtic's route

Five pre-war Bentleys are among the early entries for the new Celtic Challenge from the Rally the Globe operation of Fred Gallagher. The five-day event will run from April 21 to 26 from a start in Chester through a route taking in England, Wales, Ireland and Scotland. It is open to all pre-'69 cars and later entries include former historic Aston Martin racer Roy Stephenson (Datsun 240Z).

RACMC ready to go

The Roger Albert Clark Rally Motor Club will take the wraps off its 2020 championship programme at Autosport International in January. The stand will feature details of the Motorsport UK British Historic Rally Championship and RACRC Historic Asphalt Championship and will be selling DVDs of the recent Roger Albert Clark Rally.

Dates for HSCC

The Historic Sports Car Club has unveiled a six-event, 12-race calendar for the Historic Formula 2 FIA International Series, taking in a return to Spa-Francorchamps for the final event of the season in October. The single-seaters will also feature at the Silverstone Classic and the Brands Hatch Masters event in late May, while a non-championship race at Pau in France in late May offers a chance to tackle the historic street circuit.

Stars on the Monte

Walter Rohrl (Porsche 911 SC), Rauno Aaltonen (Mini Cooper S), Bruno Saby (Renault 5 Alpine) and GT racer Daniele Perfetti (Lancia Stratos) are among the 300 entries for the 23rd Rallye Monte Carlo Historique which starts on January 29. Rohrl will be re-united with his period WRC co-driver Christian Geistdoerfer for the week-long event.

Sportscars endure

The 2020 dates for the GT and Sports Car Cup have been announced for the four-race mini-enduro series for pre-'66 GT cars. The season again starts at the Donington Historic Festival before taking in historic festivals at Thruxton (June) and Castle Combe (October) before finishing at Portimao in Portugal in late October.

Dyas's epic outing

Six crews achieved coveted gold medal status on the 25th edition of LeJog, the Land's End to John O'Groats Classic Reliability Trial, when it finished at the northern point of the Scottish mainland last week. By the end of the marathon event, former stage rally driver Paul Dyas and co-driver Martyn Taylor (Volvo Amazon) had delivered the best overall result. Stuart and Emily Anderson topped the pre-war cars to take gold in their Bentley Derby.

RALLY NEWS

Photos: Toyota Gazoo Racing



Toyota has been out testing already

EVANS: I WILL FOCUS ON MY OWN PACE AT TOYOTA

Welshman says he will start on a level playing field with team-mate Sebastien Ogier at his new squad

By David Evans

Toyota driver Elfyn Evans says it would be wrong to assume he'll automatically take the role as Sebastien Ogier's wingman when the new season gets underway in Monte Carlo next month.

The Welshman, who has joined Toyota after seven years with the M-Sport Ford World Rally Team, tested the Yaris WRC for the first time in the French Alps early in December and said he felt immediately comfortable with the car. Evans and Ogier are reunited by the Japanese marque, having driven together at the British team through 2017 and 2018.

There were occasions in the second of those campaigns where Evans helped Ogier improve his chances of a sixth world championship title. Neither driver wants a repeat of that scenario.

Previously, Ogier has told Motorsport News he's keen to source his own success and will seek no special privilege for what's to be his single season with Tommi Makinen's team.

Ogier said: "My approach at the start of the season is not about thinking how can my team-mate help me, my target is always to try to focus on myself and get the job done myself – that's the most important.

"And about the rest, you know I have never been asking at the start of the season to have any special status, we all deserve the same chance at the start of the season. Depending on what can happen through the year, the strategy can happen in the second half. But in the first half we need to focus on ourselves and bring the best to the team."

Asked what he thought, Evans replied: "I think pretty much exactly what Seb said! As far as I'm concerned we start the season on an equal footing and ultimately it's down to me to perform. We'll see what the second half of the season brings, but to be honest I'm only focusing on doing my best. Historically Toyota is a team which has focused on giving its drivers an equal opportunity and I'm confident that approach will remain.

"Basically, it's down to me. I need to

focus on what I'm doing and not think about the other stuff."

Evans insists that self-focus is his priority in the early part of the season.

He added: "I'm not thinking about the chances of winning this rally or that one, there are no target events specifically and it's the same with the championship. My approach for Monte is to go there and make the best of the opportunity – that's the approach for the rest of the year."

Evans drove the Yaris WRC for two days in France and was expected to get a first taste of a loose-surface set-up when he headed for Finland this week. The second test was dependent on sufficient snow falling on the roads around Jyväskylä.

Talking of his first days with the team, Evans said: "Everything was positive. The mood's good in the team and everybody was really helpful. I've no doubt there will be some adaptation – I was with M-Sport for a long time – but I was made to feel very much at home.

"The car felt good and I was able to get comfortable with it quite early on. The feedback from the car was good, I could



Welshman Evans (left) and his new team: Ogier, Makinen and Rovankari

feel what was going on underneath me in some fairly mixed conditions.

"We had a dry day and then from lunchtime on the second day more and more frost started arriving with every run – it was a bit strange to be honest, normally you expect the frost to come when it starts to get a bit darker. But it was good, it was a good chance to

drive the car in those conditions."

When they were running the Fiesta WRC, Evans and Ogier shared a similar set-up and the same can be expected aboard the Yaris.

"I haven't spoken to Seb yet," said Evans. "But, from what the team's saying, we're asking for the same things, we were never massively different on set-up."

MN PICKS ITS TOP 10 WRC DRIVERS OF 2019

PAGE 38



The Strength of Experience



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'How Tanak marched to the title'
World Rally Championship review, p34



WRC TO USE HYBRID POWER ON STAGES

FIA outlines how the electric boost will work throughout events

By David Evans

The FIA has confirmed 2022 World Rally Cars will utilise hybrid power to offer a boost on the stages as well as for use in towns, cities and service parks.

Original talks on hybrid were focused only on ensuring the rally cars drove in electric form through built up areas and in and around the service park. Now, however, the FIA has confirmed the proposed 100kW hybrid e-motor can be used – via the governing body's sanctioned software and hardware strategies – to boost the 380bhp internal combustion engine.

While the FIA will control the strategy, the teams and ultimately the driver will decide when and where to deploy the boost in the stages.

Despite hopes that World Motor Sport Council earlier this month would provide sign-off on rules for 2022, those final detailed regulations won't be

delivered until the first quarter of next year.

There's frustration among the teams who want to get on with their next-generation cars.

One senior source said: "We're doing what we can, looking at what we could fit in here and there, but we're talking very basic concept stuff. If you were asking me if we've been able to move forward since World Council, I'd say we haven't really. And we need to."

Toyota technical director Tom Fowler explained the delivery of power boost, saying: "What we can do with the car is controlled by the team, but the means of that control is provided by the FIA for the first three years. After that, there's the potential for the software to be opened up to be a set of regulations allowing the teams to define their own way of deciding when and how to run the boost."

FIA rally director Yves Matton said the combination of hybrid and allowing manufacturers to



The cars will use electric power when in the service park

enter prototype, tubular chassis scaled from a production car, will open the WRC up to 50% more car makers.

Matton said: "It's a change of philosophy that opens some doors for the future because it means 50% of the manufacturers that were not able to join the championship had we only kept the current regulation can now do so."

"One thing of critical importance is that we want to maintain the level of

performance of the current cars and the excitement that these cars give to the fans. We want the cars to have the same kind of sound and aesthetic appeal that we have now, but we need to keep the link to the road cars they are able to buy in the showrooms."

The FIA also confirmed 2022 World Rally Cars will include a standardised safety structure inside the cars, which is the result of ongoing accident investigation work by the governing body and the teams.

Eight rounds for rising Japanese star Katsuta in his maiden Toyota season

Toyota Gazoo Racing has confirmed Takamoto Katsuta's eight-round World Rally Championship effort for 2020 – and looks to be the first to sign up to returning WRC Team regulations.

The FIA has confirmed a one-car WRC Team can score points in the makes' race next season, but it has to commit to seven European WRC rounds as well as one overseas event.

Katsuta's deal confirmed



Katsuta and British co-driver Dan Barritt will do just that, starting Monte Carlo, Sweden, Portugal, Sardinia, Finland, Germany and Wales before they head east for Japan.

Katsuta's car, which will feature a different livery, will be run by Tommi Makinen Racing – as it was when he competed in Germany and Spain this year.

After spending most of the season in a Ford Fiesta R5, Katsuta feels ready to make the step up. "I have good experience of each

event from this year," he said, "but to be able to compete at the top level in a World Rally Car is a big step up."

"Although my first events in the Yaris WRC this year were very positive, I know I still need to improve my driving and my pacenotes to reach a higher level. I'm really motivated to do that and I'm looking forward to seeing how much progress I can make next year."

Toyota Gazoo Racing Rally Challenge Program supervisor Makinen added: "Takamoto has already gained some experience driving the Yaris WRC this year

and just this week he did the final day of our test to prepare for Monte Carlo, so he's becoming more knowledgeable about the car and gaining a better understanding of how a World Rally Car behaves, compared to what he's driven before."

"In Spain we had already seen him set some good stage times, especially on his second time through the stages. Now he just needs more experience, which will help him to improve his consistency. I'm very confident that he will show good things throughout his programme."

Skoda steps back to focus on customers

Skoda will sit out next year's World Rally Championship as a factory team, focusing its efforts on helping younger drivers – including Oliver Solberg – instead.

Solberg has confirmed a step up to the World Rally Championship is his intention for 2020, but precise details of those plans have yet to be finalised. The 18-year-old has entered the season-opener in Monte Carlo in his own Volkswagen Polo R5, but his plans beyond round one are unconfirmed.

Skoda, however, confirmed it will work on the development of the Fabia R5 through 2020. That decision was made more straightforward by the departure of Kalle Rovanperä, who will drive for Toyota Gazoo Racing next season. Skoda's other works driver Jan Kopecký will drive for the Czech national importer in his home series

with factory support.

While Skoda would not comment on a possible Solberg deal, sources have confirmed it is ready to work closely with the son of 2003 World Rally champion Petter Solberg through his rookie WRC season. Speaking after a season which included a harvest of 23 national and five FIA titles, team principal Michal Hrabánek said:

"The challenge for next year is different. We will not have the proper works team in the World Rally Championship, but we will support the customers. We have sold more than 300 cars and this number of cars brings a huge commitment and we wouldn't like to disappoint our customers."

"After one of our most successful years in the WRC, there is no reason to come back again and show the car is reliable and competitive again – we know the team is capable to win. Now



Skoda will not run a factory team in WRC 2 next season

it's the [private] teams' chance to win the championship with our support.

"But we are not stepping back, we stay in the championship and look for some improvements with Fabia R5 – they will be coming. Don't worry, Skoda is not leaving motorsport."

Asked about possible links to Skoda, Solberg said: "I don't know anything yet. I know there are some people talking

about some things and some things are certainly possible, but for now there are no plans after Monte Carlo."

Talking about his debut in the French Alps, he added: "Experience of that event is so, so important. Every year the Monte is different and the roads are changing from this minute to the next minute. I need to make this one sensible, really steady – to get to the finish."

GROUP RALLYING EDITOR

DAVID EVANS

"People are drawn to Ingram's natural speed"



Given that Europe seems to have been very much at the heart of our lives in the past week (week?), it seems like a good time to talk about the man who rules the European side of our lives.

Chris Ingram. He's our man in Europe.

What do we think of Ingram and his efforts in this year's European Rally Championship? Much has been made of the history and the mantle of the first Brit to succeed in Europe since Vic Elford in 1967.

As with any European campaign, this one's fraught with discussion, debate and discord. There are plenty who question the worthiness of the European title in the modern era and certainly the man who has dominated the ERC in recent years – Kajto Kajetanowicz – hasn't been able to display anything like that authority since his step up to the world stage.

And talking of authority, Ingram didn't exactly boss this year's ERC. In fact, he only won four stages and didn't lead or win any of the rounds he contested. And what of those rallies? Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Czech – worthy as they are, they're hardly cornerstones of everything that made rallying great on this continent.

Watching from afar, I'd pretty much made my mind up on Ingram's efforts this year.

Then I sat down with him at Skoda Motorsport's Prague conference last week and started to understand a bit more about the story behind the story. Anybody who knows anything about Chris Ingram knows two things about him. First, he's a very, very good human being. Second, he's skint. Very skint.

There's a third thing: he's a quality rally driver – and Britain's first champion of note to be recognised by the FIA since Richard Burns won the world title in 2001 (Kris Meeke's Intercontinental Rally Challenge success in 2009 wasn't an FIA-titled championship).

But how good is Ingram?

Ask him that question and he looks for a way around it. Back him into a corner and he's direct and honest.

"Since I started driving a four-wheel-drive car last year," he said, "I genuinely don't think I've had the chance to get in the car and just drive it as hard and as fast as I possibly can. Every time I start a rally, I absolutely know I've got to finish it. You hear this a lot, but so many times in the last couple of years, crashing out of an event would have, most likely, made it my last rally."

He says all of that without a trace of angst, self-pity or frustration. It's just a fact. And there's room for all of those character traits, especially after missing out on a £100,000 purse by just three tenths of a second on the Barum Rally in the summer.

There was no hint of the head dropping. Instead, he focused on finding some cash and having a crack at the next one.

People like Toksport team owner Serkan Duru are drawn to Ingram because they see some real, genuine speed. Now the Mancunian rules Europe, all he wants is the opportunity to show he's got pace to match that consistency.

Here's hoping. He's earned his shot and, as Ingram looks to capitalise on his crown next year, we'll see just how important Europe is to Britain.

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RALLY NEWS

RISING COST OF INSURANCE HITTING RALLYING FIRMS

Machines like Skodaru are not being covered by insurers

Photos: Kevin Money, Willam Neill

By Luke Barry

Rally insurance has become increasingly expensive, unattainable and “too much of a risk” for cars to be hired out, according to a number of leading UK rally preparation firms.

The price of insurance has risen over the last 12 months and, in some cases, it simply has not been available. That is an issue preparer TEG Sport experienced earlier this month.

John Marshall had been set to hire out one of the company's Skodarus – a Skoda Fabia R5 shell with Subaru Impreza transmission – for the Knockhill Stages Rally, but was unable to secure fire damage cover.

TEG Sport owner Stuart Newby told Motorsport News: “I was going to start lending the development Skodaru out to potential buyers, [but] the one thing I stated is that they can use it but only if it is insured for accident and fire [damage].”

“We phoned several insurance companies but they wouldn't cover any risk of fire, for example if a turbo or power steering pump caught fire. They



TEG Sport has put together Skodaru

would only offer cover for fire if it was caused by the car crashing first. So, on that note, it wasn't worth the risk of me lending a car without it being properly covered. The risks were too high.

“I think during the course of the year there's been some massive claims going in for all the R5 and WRC [cars] and insurers are running away from it.”

Melvyn Evans Motorsport has experienced similar problems in the last year and has had to turn away customers because

it cannot guarantee it can get insurance. This has led team owner Melvyn Evans to consider if he will hire cars out next year.

“It's become worse, I don't know why,” he said. “[Maybe] some people are claiming they've not made money, I don't know. But over the last year it's got a lot more difficult. Before I've had three or four hire cars here [and] we could reduce it back to maybe one or two and just see what happens but if I can't get insurance I'll sell them.”

Welsh Championship and

BTRDA competitor Dylan Davies, who regularly hires out Subaru Imprezas and Ford Escort Mk2s, said the spike in premiums of late is “near on making our job impossible” to hire cars out.

“Obviously customers want the cheapest insurance out there, which also has to match up to our needs,” he said. “One of this year's hires ended up with the insurance costs being the same as a full weekend's rallying. It's not good for rallying in general, not just us as a business.”

Bumper entry for Carlow Rallysprint

The Carlow Motor Club is expecting another bumper entry for the Carlow Rallysprint, which takes place at Mondello Park next week.

Last year's winner Daniel Barry is unlikely to return as the engine in his Citroen DS3 R5 is away in France being rebuilt but organisers are confident the event, which takes place on Friday December 27, will be another success.

“We started [with] 113 [crews] last year and we are expecting around the same this time around,” CMC spokesperson Brendan Harpur told Motorsport News.

“It's the time of the year that people just want to get out for a run and with the one-day licences it's a great opportunity for drivers to take their sponsors or a member of their service crew for a spin.

“We will have a minimum of three runs. We are hoping to get four or even five runs if all goes well.”

Another former winner, Pat O'Connell, will compete in his Mitsubishi Lancer E10 and is looking forward to the event.

“I broke down last year with a gearbox problem,” he said. “It is something to do over Christmas – I work six days a week and there are times you are mad for a day off but then you can get bored at home too.”

Meanwhile, there are indications that David Condell will have an outing in a Proton Iriz R5 while Jack Newman and James Coleman are also likely to compete in Ford Escort Mk2s.



McLaughlin took victory on the Dogleap Stages earlier this year in Ford Fiesta R5

Turkey Run victory in McLaughlin's sights this Christmas

Aaron McLaughlin says he is confident of becoming the first driver in over a decade to win Maiden City Motor Club's Dogleap Stages and Turkey Run rallies in the same season.

Three-time Northern Ireland Rally champion Kevin Lynch was the last person to manage the feat back in 2003 when he was driving a Subaru Impreza World Rally Car.

Earlier this summer, McLaughlin triumphed on the Dogleap and will contest the Turkey Run next Saturday (December 28), both of which

are held within the grounds of the former RAF base near Ballykelly.

McLaughlin is hoping to shakedown his Ford Fiesta R5 in the run up to the event, which will consist of five special stages totalling just over 30 miles.

“I've got to know the territory at Shackleton so I'm hoping my previous visits there can help me in my bid to take back-to-back wins there,” he said.

“I will definitely be trying hard and, as I will be with

my usual navigator Darren [Curran], it would be good to hand him his first win.

“I know how important it is to keep it neat and tidy. You have to do that to stand a chance. You can easily lose time at a chicane or lose your way because you do not have pacenotes.”

Competition for top spot will come from former Dogleap winner Barry Morris in his Darran T90 GTR+, Alan Carmichael in a Hyundai i20 R5 and Niall Henry, who will roll out an older Citroen DS3 R5.

MN SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LUKE BARRY

“It will come as a blow to competitors”



Cost: it's one of the single biggest problems affecting motorsport at the moment. The last thing any competitor or team needs is for the price of this already expensive sport to rise. But it has for rallying in 2019, and at such a rate that it has now become unjustifiable to some.

Not only that but some competitors willing to pay rising costs are unable to gain entry.

Have a read of the news story running alongside this column for a succinct breakdown of what's happened but, in a nutshell, hiring rally cars out to customers is rapidly becoming less and less feasible.

Why? Rising insurance costs. How come? That's the million-dollar question. Whether it's because insurers are now not making as much money from rallying, or that health and safety has reached such a point that the risks simply don't add up anymore remains to be seen.

But it will certainly come as a major blow to countless competitors up and down the country and to teams who generate business through hiring out cars.

The issue came to prominence earlier this month when TEG Sport couldn't secure full cover for one of its Skodarus should a fire occur. After picking up the phone to several other outfits it soon became apparent this is more than an isolated issue. It transpires that several entries have been pulled throughout the country because of eye-watering premiums.

There is little to suggest that a driver hiring out a car is inherently posing more of a risk than one competing in their own car. But firms hiring out cars are particularly under the cosh because these cars are insured for all eventualities, whereas a competitor's own car may not be.

Alex Waterman, team principal at EDSL Sport but also a driver, admits current premiums are off-putting to competitors.

“Companies like us have to be very careful when hiring cars out,” he says. “We invested £75,000 in the new [Ford Fiesta R2] cars and they need to be insured properly otherwise we lose the tools to our business. So we have a special trade insurance which has special clauses as we hire our cars out.”

“We've only ever had one instance where we couldn't insure someone and that was because of accident history. Accident insurance is getting very expensive and is definitely affecting hires. I'm sure we lose hires because of the price of insurance.”

The burning question then is what happens now? Will premiums settle in the next few months or continue to spiral out of control and affordability? The jury is still out on that one I'm afraid, but this news comes at a time when top-line UK rallying could really do without it, that's for sure.

RALLY NEWS

MCERLEAN BAGS IRELAND'S BILLY COLEMAN AWARD

Prestigious accolade goes to 20-year-old who is now eyeing up British Rally Championship campaign

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Peugeot Sport



Youngster used Hyundai i20 R5 on Wales Rally GB

By Jason Craig

Billy Coleman Award winner Josh McErlean has told Motorsport News he would like to head to the top division of the British Rally Championship with the support of Hyundai Motorsport.

At last week's Motorsport Ireland end-of-season dinner in Dublin he was named the 20th recipient of the annual award and a prize of €100,000.

He beat fellow finalists David Kelly and Derek Mackarel, who each received €15,000 and a place in Motorsport Ireland's Rally Academy (*see below*).

McErlean dominated the Junior British Rally Championship this season and clinched the title with a round to spare driving his family-run Peugeot 208 R2.

The engineering student from Kilrea also made his R5 debut on

Wales Rally GB back in October aboard a Hyundai i20 and joined forces with the manufacturer for the Monza Rally Show at the start of this month. Alongside Keaton Williams, he finished the Hyundai i20 R5 Trophy third overall.

The 20-year-old has described moving to the R5 class as "the logical step" but also acknowledges he could win silverware in an R2 car if the call is made to head in that direction.

"The Junior World Rally Championship isn't the way for us to go – it doesn't represent good value for money," he said.

"It would be difficult having driven a R5 on Wales Rally GB and the Monza Rally Show to go back to R2 for 2020, but if that's what it takes then we will do it.

"My hope is that I will be driving an R5 car. Anywhere is good but the British Rally Championship

has gravel and Tarmac rallies and you need that mix to help make you a good driver.

"It is the logical step. Certainly the R5 route is more attractive given what we have achieved in them."

McErlean explained that being able to fulfil his championship commitments, whichever series he ends up heading to next season, will be an equally important factor.

"Obviously we want to be going down the correct route," he said.

"We want to make sure that when we sign up for a championship that we are in a position to complete it. We won't be jumping in head first.

"This time last year we were trying to get the money together to buy a 208 R2 and go to the BRC," he added.

"The €100,000 we get from winning the Billy Coleman Award is a massive financial boost and it will make such a huge difference moving forward."

Billy Coleman Award runners-up Kelly and Mackarel both keen to move into Junior British Rally Championship next season

Runners-up in this year's Billy Coleman Young Rally Driver of the Year award – David Kelly and Derek Mackarel – intend to compete in the Junior British Rally Championship in 2020.

Both drivers received €15,000 and a spot on Motorsport Ireland's Rally Academy after

been beaten to the top prize by Josh McErlean. Mackarel, who was also runner-up in last year's Coleman award, is looking at options to hire a Ford Fiesta R2.

"It was a privilege to be nominated and to be considered to be amongst the top young

drivers in the country," he told Motorsport News.

"The €15,000 will make a massive difference in where I want to go, which is the Junior BRC.

"I am due to test one [Fiesta R2] with EDSL Sport near Birmingham. I am also talking to

some Irish teams that will run a Fiesta as well. I hope to have everything in place by Christmas."

Meanwhile, Kelly has already acquired his Fiesta R2 from M-Sport.

"I will get it converted to gravel and test it

over Christmas," he said. "I am hoping to do select rounds of the dual championship [Tarmac and gravel] in order to get seat time and then in June I will re-evaluate the situation, but I want to see out the JBRC and also go hard after the Billy Coleman award in 2020."

Co-driver's seat up for grabs at Brands Hatch

Rallying stalwart James Slaughter is once again auctioning off his co-driver's seat for next month's Brands Hatch Stages to raise money for charity.

The Ford Escort Mk2 driver is raising funds for the Heart of Kent Hospice which offers end-of-life care in the Maidstone area.

Last year's winner, Sarah Flynn, helped Slaughter to finish 10th overall and take victory in Class C. Next year's event will take place on January 17-18 at the Kent venue.

The prize also includes the appropriate training and safety equipment as well as three tickets for friends and family to the MN Circuit Rally Championship event.

Each entry costs a minimum of £50, is open to anyone aged 18 or over and in good health, with the draw taking place on December 24.

For more details visit justgiving.com/fundraising/james-slaughter7

BELL AND BILHAM GET TO GRIPS WITH PEUGEOT'S NEWEST RALLY CHALLENGER

Peugeot Rally Cup Iberica round winner Ruairi Bell and BTRDA frontrunner Sam Bilham both got a taste of the new Peugeot 208 Rally 4 last week.

Peugeot Sport hosted the invitational test near Fafe in Portugal, with ERC3 Junior champion Efren Llarena on hand to offer advice on the car which is a successor to the Peugeot 208 R2.

Both Bell and Bilham were invited by the PT Racing team. Bell competed with the squad in 2019, and both were impressed with the new machine, which is intended to rival M-Sport's Ford Fiesta R2.

"It was really, really enjoyable to drive," Bell told MN. "I think they have done very well. I was really comfortable immediately getting in.

"The car is very well designed and accessible to all ranges of abilities.

Llarena took us out in the second car and that was absolutely mega. It was quite important for me as there were just a couple of things that I noticed I've been missing this year [with my driving], so I think I learned from it [sitting next to Llarena]."

Bilham, meanwhile, was surprised at the car's performance, with pre-orders set to open in January.

"It was very planted," he said. "I expected the back end to be [more] loose but it just sat there and went where you wanted it to go.

"The power it had from such a small engine was quite surprising, more so the torque; it just picked up instantly.

"In that respect with it being a turbo car it was similar to the R5 in the way it picked up, obviously not as vicious if you like, but I was surprised in a way."



Peugeot 208 Rally 4 will cost €66,000 (plus VAT) and will rival M-Sport's Ford Fiesta R2

THE BEST SHOTS FROM RACING AND RALLYING IN 2019

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Photos: Kevin Money, Jakob Ebrey



Event will take place in February

CAMBRIAN RALLY GETS COMPACT 2020 ROUTE

Entries now open for British Rally Championship and BTRDA Rally Series encounter

By Stefan Mackley

Entries for the Cambrian Rally – the opening round of the 2020 British Rally Championship and BTRDA Rally Series – have now opened, with next year's event set to feature the most compact route yet.

The rally will take place on February 8 and will incorporate Wales Rally GB

stages, with approximately 45 stage miles and road mileage significantly reduced from last year to around 100 miles.

Competitors who entered in 2019 will also receive a £30 refund following last-minute changes to the route and a reduction in stage miles on this year's event.

Clerk of the course Alyn Edwards said: "Our aim is to provide an event which competitors and spectators alike find

enjoyable, and provides a fitting start to both the British Rally Championship and the BTRDA seasons, and we feel the format for the 2020 event will provide that.

"We are fortunate to have been able to incorporate some great stages, and the event will be the most compact ever, being centred on the Conwy Valley around the Betws y Coed area with limited road mileage to and from the start-finish and

service area in Llandudno town centre, where, after last year's trial of the facilities, lessons have been learned.

"Rally4Wales have done a great job regrading the stages since Wales Rally GB and we feel we are able to offer competitors an opportunity to show their skills to the maximum while giving great value for money."

Six gravel stages will be used including

Crafnant, Gwydir where it will follow a previously unused route, a 14-mile test at Penmachno, Elsi and Great Orme.

BTRDA competitors will compete over seven stages, while those battling for BRC honours will battle over nine stages. Reverse seeding will also be used on the event with 1400cc cars at the head of the field.

For further information, visit cambrianrally.co.uk

Bird ends 2019 soaring high with Croft victory

Christmas Stages

By Larry Carter

Organiser: Northallerton Automobile Club **When:** December 15
Where: Croft Circuit, N Yorks. **Championships:** North of England Tarmac Rally Championship **Stages:** 8 **Starters:** 81

Seventeen years after his father Paul took victory on the same event, Frank Bird added his name to the Christmas Stages winners' trophy after a resounding performance at Croft.

Driving the Ford Focus WRC07 and fresh from winning the Knockhill Stages the previous weekend, the 20-year-old Cambrian, along with co-driver Jack Morton, held off the challenge of eight-time winner Kevin Procter and co-driver Patrick Walsh (Ford Fiesta S2000) with Gordon Morrison and Ed Kelly third (Fiesta R5).

It wasn't all plain sailing for Bird, though, as he was one of a number of crews hit with a 10-second penalty for a chicane infringement on the icy opening stage.

But, from SS2 onwards and aided by a spin from Procter, he was never headed, winning all the remaining stages with ease. Local hero Procter valiantly chased but had no answer in the tricky conditions.

After two stages, Bird led Procter by

eight seconds and by half distance his lead was 21s. The single-seater racer continued to stamp his authority into the afternoon and by SS6 his advantage was at 39s. But rather than ease off, he pressed home his superiority as darkness fell to cross the finish ramp 52s ahead of a magnanimous Procter, who in turn held off Morrison – third for a second successive year – by almost another minute.

Only after the finish did Bird admit he'd been keeping an eye on the oil pressure for the final couple of stages, and the team had turned the power down as a precaution. It mattered little as he concluded his first year in rallying in style with another emphatic victory.

The top six was completed by Tony Bardy/Reg Smith (Ford Focus WRC00), Paul/Jessica Swift (Ford Escort Mk2) and comeback driver David Henderson with co-driver Ian Forgan (Escort Mk2).

Former Motorsport News Circuit Rally champions Ian Woodhouse/Paul Rowland (Escort Mk2) took seventh ahead of Martin Hodgson/Tony Jones (Escort Mk2) while another young prodigy, Daniel Hiorns, and co-driver Daniel May took ninth in their Subaru Impreza. John Griffiths/Nigel Wetton



Bird and co-driver Morton were unstoppable in Ford Focus WRC07

rounded out the top 10 in a similar Impreza.

With a near-capacity entry, the classes were hard fought, with Andy Fawcett/Chris Purvis (Vauxhall Nova) clinching the 1400cc win and Des Campbell/Craig Forsyth (Peugeot 206) doing likewise in the 1600cc class. The two-litre class went the way of Martyn Tinker/Iain Peterson (Lotus Exige) with Classes 4 and 5 being won by Swift and Bardy respectively.

Results

1 Frank Bird/Jack Morton (Ford Focus WRC07) 54m06s;
2 Kevin Procter/Patrick Walsh (Ford Fiesta S2000) +52s;
3 Gordon Morrison/Ed Kelly (Fiesta R5); 4 Tony Bardy/Reg Smith (Ford Focus WRC00); 5 Paul/Jessica Swift (Ford Escort Mk2); 6 David Henderson/Ian Forgan (Escort Mk2); 7 Ian Woodhouse/Paul Rowland (Escort Mk2); 8 Martin Hodgson/Tony Jones (Escort Mk2); 9 Daniel Hiorns/Daniel May (Subaru Impreza); 10 John Griffiths/Nigel Wetton (Impreza).
Class winners: Andy Fawcett/Chris Purvis (Vauxhall Nova); Des Campbell/Craig Forsyth (Peugeot 206); Martyn Tinker/Iain Peterson (Lotus Exige); Swift/Swift; Bardy/Smith.

IN BRIEF

Tribute to Cooper

All cars carried tribute decals to Alan 'Swift' Cooper, of long-time event sponsor Swift Signs and Shirts, who died suddenly in October.

Bird's frantic flight

Frank Bird returned to Croft to win the Christmas Stages after testing an M-Sport-built Bentley Continental GT3 with Team Parker Racing in Portimao in Portugal last Friday. He was one of eight drivers hoping to be selected for the Bentley Motorsport Academy, which comes with a drive in the GT World Challenge Europe next year.

Bellerby family outing

Multiple British Rallycross champion Dave Bellerby took to the wheel of a rally car for the first time since he contested Rally Barbados in 2007. He competed at Croft with daughter Drew – who won this year's BMW Mini Rallycross Championship – but the pair suffered some technical problems with their Mini Cooper S which relegated them to 62nd of the 66 finishers.

Top six for Henderson

Original Christmas Stages (at Croft) winner from 2001, David Henderson, returned to rallying after a number of years circuit racing to claim a superb top-six place in his recently-acquired Ford Escort Mk2.

SPORTING SCENE

CLOUD HANGS OVER THE FUTURE OF BIRMINGHAM

Council set to repossess track which would leave racers with no circuit to use



Photos: Trevor Coulson, mkpics.net

National Hot Rods race at Birmingham Wheels

By Matt James

Birmingham Wheels Raceway is under threat of closure as the city council has taken steps to repossess the site that it owns, which would put a stop to racing at the venue.

The National Hot Rod and BriSCA F1 venue is due to return to the council's

hands on January 31, 2020. The council has been tasked with finding an alternative venue to host the activities that currently take place on the site, but has failed to do so. Motorsport bosses at the venue have been unable to arrange a meeting with the council.

The venue has split usage. As well as the short oval, there is a drifting venue, an off-road karting section, an experience day

and driver training area. Some of the site would be reworked for the proposed HS2 railway development.

The tenant of the site is the Birmingham Wheels Company, which is a charitable division of the council. However, the council took that charity to court over underpayment of rent and the council prevailed, and it is demanding back-payment of rent that totals nearly

£800,000. The operators of motorsport at the track have not been affected as they are up to date with payments to the venue.

Spedworth organises a number of meetings at the track. The firm's Billy Wood, who is also a racer in National Hot Rods, said: "This has been on the cards for a while, but it seems one arm of the council has been in dispute with the other, and it has caused a mess."



The BTRDA BimmaCup racers will aim to win a free drive in Barbados

BARBADOS PRIZE FOR BMWs

The BTRDA Clubmans Rallycross Championship will introduce a new BimmaCup class within its Classic category next season and the champion will win a flight to Barbados and a free drive in the Barbados Rally and Rallycross festival.

The successful driver will race in the final round of the BimmaCup Caribbean series next November.

The series will run within six rounds of the Clubmans season in 2020, at Lydden Hill, Pembrey, Blyton Park and Knockhill.

Technical regulations for the BMW E36 318Ti Compact class focus on limiting modifications and keeping costs low. The eligible engine will be BMW's M44 motor, mated to a standard

five-speed gearbox and OEM limited-slip differentials.

Suspension modifications will be limited to using BimmaCup UK Bilstein dampers, or GAZ units. A control tyre, a Nankang NS-2R, will also be adopted.

Former European Championship Supercar racer and now Retro Rallycross competitor John Cross is involved in the creation of the UK series, having built a car to race at the Barbados Rallycross Carnival last month, the final round of the 2019 Caribbean series.

A new Clubmans Rallycross BimmaCup car will be on display at the Autosport International Show at the NEC in January as part of an eight-car BTRDA Rallycross stand on Saturday and Sunday.

Drivers get to grips with Projekt E machine in Austria

Austrian firm STARD ran a pair of test days for potential 2020 drivers to sample the first all-electric Projekt E rallycross car last week at former European Rallycross Championship venue, Melk in Austria.

Among the rallycross regulars, including double European Championship Super1600 champion

and 2019 World RX racer Krisztian Szabo, former European Rally Junior title winner and WRC 2 competitor Marijan Griebel got his first taste of rallycross in the electric machine. He said: "It was my first ever experience in rallycross and I think this is maybe the best car you can drive to experience all that."



Potential entrants sampled the electric STARD machine on the Melk circuit

OBITUARY

Tomasz Marciniak

January 7, 1969 – December 10, 2019

Tomasz Marciniak, aged 50, passed away last week following complications after heart surgery.

Having been successful in amateur rallies in his youth, Marciniak was an early participant in drifting when the discipline arrived in Poland. He moved to the UK in 2010, where he began competing in Targa rallies and autosolos with success, before meeting some of the Polish contingent competing in UK rallycross events. They persuaded him to sample the dual-surface discipline.

Making his debut at Pembrey, Marciniak won on his first start at the Welsh circuit in the Hot Hatch category, and continued to race in selected events but never had the time to contest a full campaign. Motorsport News extends its sympathies to wife Anna, daughter Agata and his family and friends.



Tomasz Marciniak's Citroen

Keeler and Team Hard eye progress

Clubmans Production rallycross racer Lee Keeler is planning to step up to the Super Modified category in the series next year and could also compete in British Rallycross Championship events in the Super National category.

Having raced a Citroen Saxo in the Production series, Keeler has acquired a Volkswagen Golf Mk5, which multi-discipline outfit Team Hard will develop into a two-wheel-drive rallycross machine.

"The plan is we're going to build up the Golf for rallycross," said Keeler of the car that is currently a bare bodyshell. "The guys at Team Hard will get it built up very quickly once we've got the components. It's an exciting new project."

"It's going to be a massive learning curve for us, not only building the car but for me as a driver, going from something with 140bhp to 340bhp. We're determined that, with Team Hard's knowledge and our determination, we will get out on track next year."

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MN does not always agree with opinions expressed in letters

MN SAYS...

Jordan gets his perfect BTCC present

WSR and BMW deal means that the 2013 champion can remain on track

Make no mistake, there was a very real chance that Andrew Jordan would not be part of the British Touring Car Championship entry list in 2020. When Pirtek announced earlier in the year that it was quitting motorsport, it looked like Jordan would be a major casualty.

Thankfully, BMW has stepped up its involvement and he has had his prayers answered. Jordan was the driver who won more races than anyone else during the 2019 season and, if it hadn't been for a costly and painful crash at Donington Park, could rightly have claimed the title in the brand new BMW 330i M Sport.

The BTCC needs its star drivers. The impact of losing Gordon Shedden to the World TCR competition was keenly felt, and it would have been a very different landscape without Jordan too. Thankfully, sense has prevailed.

Enjoy this special bumper edition of Motorsport News, and hopefully it will give you plenty to enjoy over the next two weeks. The next issue of Motorsport News will be on sale just before the new year on December 31. Happy Christmas to you all.

Matt James, Editor (Twitter: @MattJMNews)



YOUR PICS

LETTERS@MOTORSPORT-NEWS.CO.UK

Photographs must be of a good quality and please send no more than three images



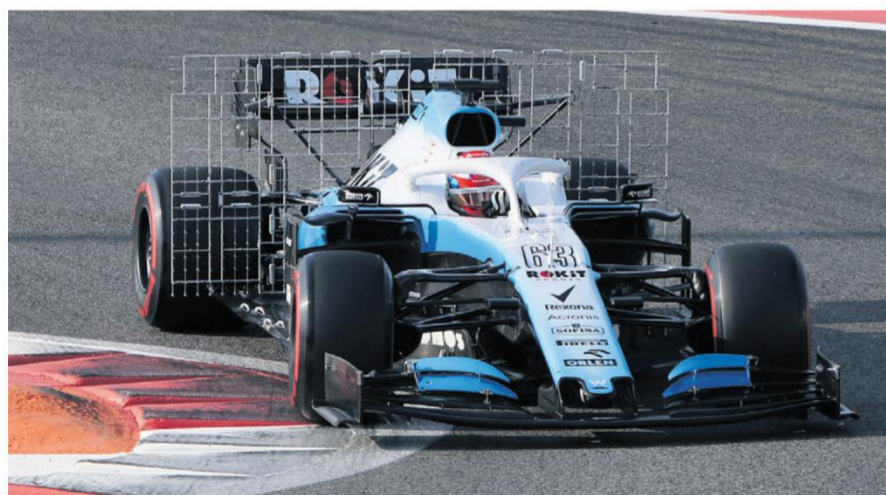
Rich Cranston braved the wet weather to take this photograph of a Plymouth Barracuda testing at Donington Park recently



Chris Noble's photograph from the recent LeJog show-down



Garrick Collier's snap from the recent Knockhill Stages event



Dean Chilvers captured a Williams testing run in Abu Dhabi



Seb Perez pushing on the Grizedale Stages, from Reece Tarren



More action from the Grizedale Stages, this from Stuart Taunton



Richard Salisbury's pic of R.A.C. winner Marty McCormack



Another from Dean Chilvers: Sebastian Vettel testing in Abu Dhabi



Muddy fun on the LeJog Rally event, taken by Mike Griffin

GOT AN OPINION?

LET US KNOW: LETTERS@MOTORSPORT-NEWS.CO.UK

WHAT'S ON

LISTINGS

RACING
BOXING DAY
Mallory Park, Leics
■ BRSCC meeting: Sports Cars, Open Saloons, motorbikes **Starts** racing from 1120hrs (qualifying from 1000hrs) **Admission** adult £13, under 13 free **Web** malloryparkcircuit.com **Contact** 01455 502214

RALLY
DECEMBER 27
■ Mondello Park, Co. Kildare
Carlow Rallysprint
Starts 1000hrs
Admission TBA
Web carlowcarclub.ie

DECEMBER 28
■ Shackleton, Ballykelly
Turkey Run Rally
Starts 0945hrs
Admission TBA
Web maidencitymotorclub.com

DECEMBER 29
■ Pembrey Circuit, Llanelli
West Wales Rally Spares
Jaffa Stages
Starts 0930hrs
Admission adult £5, under 14 free
Web carmarthenmotorclub.co.uk

Details correct at time of press but please check before travelling

TV GUIDE BY MIKE STOKOE

Time to over indulge again, to binge, but do not overdose on sprouts. We have to look after this dear old planet, climate change is happening and so think before you fart, or blame it on the dog. Remember a dog is for Christmas and not for life... in the whole 'fart blame game' world. So on to the black rectangle on the wall, turn it on, turn zombie mode on and tune into the following.

It's Christmas Eve and **Murder on the Orient Express** (1140-1345hrs, BBC Two). One person you can rule out, who categorically did not commit the murder, was at a birthday party at Pizza Express in Woking on that particular day...

Planes, Trains and Automobiles (December 24, 2100-2300hrs, Sky One). Boris Johnson says we are going to be carbon neutral by 2050, I'm hoping we will be fantasy bullsh*t neutral by 2020. Steve Martin plays a shower curtain ring salesman, a dream career back in 1987, and still got to be up there with astronaut, and, errr, Formula 1 driver surely.

The big day has arrived, Christmas Day. Family driving you up the wall? Presents disappointing? Then skip Her Majesty's recorded Christmas

message, tune into ITV3 and binge watch 12 hours of Carry on films... **Carry on Abroad** begins at 1025hrs followed by **Matron, Camping, Up the Khyber, Doctor and Girls** as Sid James brings a colourful perspective of a time gone by.

Now get back in the real world with an hour of reality in **24 Hours in A&E** (2310hrs, More4). The packed waiting rooms and lack of available beds will have you thinking of tuning back into Barbara Windsor's naughty antics. If you're still not feeling very festive/panicking/feeling more depressed about life then the perfect tonic is here. **Home Alone 2: Lost In New York** (1655-1910hrs, Channel 4). To remind you of the true meaning of Christmas. Or it can remind one that staying in New York for a short period of time was a big mistake even if you still don't regret it. But with the benefit of all the hindsight that one can have it was definitely the wrong thing to do. But at the time I felt it was the honourable and right thing to do...!

Boxing Day can mean only one thing, yes apart from turkey sandwiches and small talk with Uncle Roger... it's football and Premier League action! Amazon Prime has nine live

games, which at times might feel like they're frozen in time while VAR examines the 'if the shadow of a rogue armpit hair is slightly offside'. One game stands out as being the jewel in the crown when **Liverpool take on Leicester** at the King Power stadium (2000hrs). People are already talking about this game deciding the title... well I am anyway!

Now I understand you're not all football fans, so if you're up for a laugh then watch **One Foot in the Algarve** (December 26, 2100hrs, BBC Four). This feature-length feast of disasters will have you crying with laughter as Victor does not believe in such things as a plague of mice, rising damp and a troublesome boxer... all while trying to enjoy a holiday in Portugal. The photographer Martin Trout is played by the late comic genius Peter Cook.

Top Gear Nepal Special, (December 29, 2100hrs, BBC Two). The gang head up the Himalayas in a Renault 4, then break down. Normally this would be a nightmare, but it's an entertaining road trip, and things would go wrong with the show if nothing went wrong with the cars. The original guys are also back on boats in **The Grand Tour Presents:**

Seamen (available on Amazon Prime now). Cock ups assured as the seamen go flat out across the Mekong Delta.

It's New Year's Eve and **Jurassic Park** (December 31, 1825hrs, ITV2) is on. Imagine being trapped on an island populated by a load of CGI-generated (sorry, genetically recreated) dinosaurs. Luckily, Jeff Goldblum keeps everyone calm and relaxed: I think he knows they're not real.

With only hours left of 2019 watch the end of it (2325hrs BBC1). As it's the turning of not just a year, but also a fresh new decade, expect the firework display outside Big Ben to extend to possibly a dozen Catherine wheels and maybe nine Roman candles... this will all be live on BBC1 with Craig David singing his little heart out before the silence of Big Ben, as it's currently not working and dismantled! Bongs will be replaced with old bongs from a hidden tape recorder and a very large subwoofer speaker.

New Year's Day. It's the year 2020, now let's get Brexit done... similar to **Mission Impossible - Fallout** (2100hrs, Channel 4). Now into the fourth year of Brexit negotiations, Tom Cruise would've been assassinated long ago if he was running the UK.

CHRISTMAS GUIDE TO VIDEO GAMES

It's been a pretty good year for motorsport racing games, with Codemasters (three) and Bigben Games (two) producing new titles. And now for the really good bit: all titles listed are available on Xbox One, PS4 and PC. Hurrah!

DIRT 2.0, the successor to Codemasters' 2016 hit, features an impressive 55 cars and makes good use of its official World Rallycross licence with cars and circuits from the 2018 season. Fans will be well-accustomed to the studio's Formula 1 franchise by now, but it continues to roll out new features.

F1 2019 allows AI drivers to switch teams for the first time and includes 2018 Formula 2 hopefuls – just the news all Ralph Boschung fans have been waiting for. Don't bother forking out extra for the Senna vs Prost mode, though.

Codemasters' **GRID** reboot also features a head-to-head dimension with Fernando Alonso, but has plenty to satisfy fans of the arcade genre. Punchy AI and a return of the fictional San Francisco circuit from the 2008 original are a hit, but it could do with a few more locations.

The official **FIA European Truck Racing Championship** game is a niche addition from the French Bigben studio, but worth a punt on its own merits. If you're expecting F1 levels of performance and don't want to learn the technique for cooling your brakes, it's not the game for you. **WRC 8** is a huge improvement on recent efforts, and is a poignant last hurrah for Citroen. A revamped career mode and several bonus classic cars – including four Lancias – broaden its appeal.

1 DIRT RALLY 2.0
 RRP £55
 Website dirt rally2.com



3 GRID
 RRP £55
 Website gridgame.com



5 WRC8
 RRP £50
 Website wrcthegame.com



2 F1 2019
 RRP £55
 Website formula1game.com



4 FIA EUROPEAN TRUCK RACING CHAMPIONSHIP
 RRP £40
 Website microsoft.com



NEXT ISSUE

THE BEST HISTORIC ACTION FROM 2019



PLUS: ALL THE USUAL NEWS, VIEWS AND REPORTS

OUT TUESDAY, DECEMBER 31



SHORT OVAL HITS OF THE YEAR

THE VOICE OF BRITISH MOTORSPORT

MOTORSPORT NEWS

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motorsport
 NETWORK

MOMENTS THAT MADE 2019 SPECIAL

We look back at the defining stories that map out the last 12 months

MOTORSPORT NEWS



By Matt James

The festive period is a great time to reflect on the year that has just been put in the book, and the motorsport fan has plenty to mull over while downing the mullered wine.

There were landmark performances in every area of motor racing, and Motorsport News has shone a light over the notable drives and memorable moments that mark 2019 as one of the stand-out years.

From a brand-new World Rally champion in Ott Tänak to a six-time Formula 1 title winner in Lewis Hamilton, there were highlights in every branch of motorsport.

MN is a broad church, and we have included the show-stopping showing from all corners of racing and rallying.

So, sit back with a mince pie and reflect. We hope you enjoy it as much as we did.

Our guides to the highlights of the last 12 months are David Evans, Matt James, Paul Lawrence, Stephen Lickorish, Stefan Mackley, James Newbold and Hal Ridge.



DEFINING MOMENTS

50 THORBURN'S RALLYING DOMINANCE



When: All year
Where: Across the UK
To say Euan Thorburn had a dominant season in the Scottish Rally Championship and BTRDA Gold Star Series would be something of an understatement. At the wheel of his Ford Focus WRC05 and with co-driver Paul Beaton alongside, Thorburn won nine of the 10 rallies that he competed in during 2019. Victories on the Cambrian, Malcom Wilson, Rallynuts and Plains rallies as well as the

Nicky Grist Stages gave him a perfect score in the BTRDA series as he secured his second title in the category.

It was almost the same story in his native homeland, with success on the Border Counties, Speyside, Argyll and Grampian events.

The only blight on his CV was the Scottish Rally, as he finished runner-up to David Bogie's Skoda Fabia R5 by just six seconds.

Nevertheless, he still did more than enough to claim a third Scottish crown. **SM**

49 TIMMY HANSEN WINS WORLD RALLYCROSS TITLE

When: November 10
Where: South Africa
If the conclusion of the World Rallycross Championship was a movie script, it would be considered far-fetched. Timmy Hansen entered the final round in South Africa just a point ahead of Andreas Bakkerud, and eight in front of brother and team-mate Kevin.

In a tense weekend, Timmy Hansen qualified on pole for the final, with Bakkerud alongside, by now two points behind in the standings. Bakkerud made the best start and led into Turn 1 but he ran wide in the long loose-surface right-hander at Turn 6, and Hansen needed no second invitation to make a move for track position. The pair touched, Bakkerud slid into the wall and when his car bounced back, it rotated Timmy Hansen's Peugeot.

Niclas Gronholm went on to win with Bakkerud second but Hansen recovered to fourth, finishing level on points and taking the crown on wins countback. **HR**



48 HARRIS CROWNED BRISCA F1 WORLD CHAMPION



When: September 14

Where: King's Lynn Raceway
The format of short oval racing means that the World Final, the showpiece event of the campaign, is the be-all and end-of-a whole season's work. Points titles are fine, but getting the name on the big silverware is what matters.

Tom Harris knew that he had to get his work done early on. From the front row, the 2013 World Final

winner powered away into the lead but he knew that there would be one man out to get him: rival Frankie Wainman Jr. Wainman tried hard and he lunged for his rival at the opening turn but overdid it. He chucked his car sideways to stop hitting the wall, and was then collected by Paul Hines.

That left Harris clear to race away to an unchallenged victory, and he led home Ryan Harrison and Craig Finnikin. **MJ**

47 WILLIAMS'S 2019 F1 WOES



When: All season
Where: All over the world
The writing was on the wall before the new Williams FW42 Formula 1 machine had even turned a wheel. Given how limited pre-season F1 testing is, it is vital teams maximise every second. But it was not until midway through day three of eight that the FW42 finally left the pitlane.

Clearly, something had gone very, very wrong. Not only was the car incredibly late arriving, it was also

hideously slow. Rumours began circulating about technical chief Paddy Lowe's future and sure enough, on the eve of the season, it was revealed he was taking some time away. By June he was officially gone.

A solitary point from a chaotic German Grand Prix was all Williams had to show from 2019. Amid shortages of parts and further struggles, it was no wonder

F1 returnee Robert Kubica departed after a lacklustre year. **SL**



46 BLUNDELL JOINS THE BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP



When: April 7

Where: Brands Hatch
Anyone who can wrestle a Group C car around Le Mans and conquer the fearsome high-speed ovals in America doesn't lack anything in bravery or ability. But even so, when Mark Blundell announced that he was joining the BTCC for 2019, there were some raised eyebrows.

He lined up with the Trade Price Cars Racing Audi S3 – his first proper foray into a front-wheel-drive competition – and he joined the UK's highest profile category.

He walked away from the contest with only two points-paying drives, which were during wet races on the Brands Hatch Indy and Silverstone tracks.

He struggled with the brakes and the technique of handling the weighty (and limited aero) tin-top and was left frustrated by his own lack of pace, particularly as teammate Jake Hill joined the winner's circle at Knockhill.

He has yet to decide whether to return: given his character, he is likely to leave no stone unturned until he has cracked it. **MJ**

45 ASTON MARTIN JOINS AUTOSPORT BRDC AWARD AS HOGGARD WINS



When: March 5-December 8

Where: Grosvenor House, London
Aston Martin filled the void left by McLaren to become the new partner of the prestigious Autosport BRDC Young Driver of the Year award.

Created in 1989, the award has helped young British talent further their motorsport careers with previous alumni including Jenson Button, George Russell and Lando Norris.

BRDC British Formula 3 runner-up Johnathan Hoggard was crowned this year's winner at the Autosport Awards, beating fellow British F3

competitor Ayrton Simmons, inaugural W Series champion Jamie Chadwick and Japanese F3 frontrunner, Enaam Ahmed.

All four finalists performed fitness and simulator tests at Red Bull and two days at Silverstone in MotorSport Vision Formula 2, Ligier LMP3 and Garage 59-run Aston Martin Vantage GT3 machinery on the Grand Prix circuit.

Hoggard's prize includes tests in a Red Bull F1 car and an Aston Martin Vantage GTE World Endurance Championship challenger, as well as a cheque for £200,000. **SM**

44 LYDDEN HILL WINS RIGHTS TO OPERATE BRITISH RX



When: October 30

Where: Lydden Hill
In October, Motorsport UK revealed Lydden Hill Race Circuit had won the tender to run the British Rallycross Championship for at least the next three years, taking over from the collaboration between the British Automobile Racing Club and Lydden Hill Motor Club.

LHMC will continue to operate events, with the club set to be renamed, while the British series will be called the Five Nations Motorsport UK British Rallycross

Championship from next year, referencing the number of countries it will visit within six rounds for the headline Supercar drivers.

Two rounds will take place at Lydden Hill (England), with single events at Pembrey (Wales), Knockhill (Scotland), Valkenswaard (Holland) and Mondello Park (Ireland). Supercars will race in two-day events to the same format as World RX, while the existing range of support classes, and new initiatives like Truck Rallycross, will take part in select events. **HR**

43 NEW BRABHAM WINS ON DEBUT

When: November 9

Where: Brands Hatch

Motorsport has some very iconic names associated with it and one of those is Brabham. Therefore, it was understandable there was a significant amount of interest when David Brabham revealed plans to revive the name and build a new sportscar.

While the aim is a World Endurance Championship attack, the Brabham BT62 began its racing life in less illustrious surroundings with its

debut coming in the Britcar finale at Brands Hatch.

Even detuned to comply with series regulations, the car was still expected to challenge and duly won its maiden race with drivers David Brabham himself and Will Powell – it was the first race for a Brabham in a Brabham at the circuit since Jack Brabham ran out of fuel on the final lap of the 1970 British Grand Prix.

Alternator woes prevented the BT62 from completing a double but a legend has been reborn. **SL**



42 MIKKELSEN BENCHED BY HYUNDAI FOR CORSICA



When: February 19

Where: Corsica

What about the contract? Even as I was saying the words, I realised how fabulously naive they were. Yes, my understanding was that Andreas Mikkelsen was locked down for all 14 (which would become 13) rounds of the championship, but his start to the year hadn't been the best. Like the end of the previous year hadn't been the best. Was that harsh? He was chasing a Monte podium when he knocked a wheel off, finished a distant fourth in Sweden and led Mexico until he damaged the suspension.



And then came Corsica, where Hyundai was effectively being forced to choose between two of the finest asphalt drivers – Sebastien Loeb and Dani Sordo – in the history of rallying. It was a no-brainer and Mikkelsen was out. As he was for all the asphalt action in the season. **DE**

41 SILVERSTONE EVENTS CANCELLED DUE TO RESURFACING

When: March 8

Where: Silverstone

There are few club race meetings that are as well-attended and diverse as MG Live.

So, it was a massive blow for the MG Car Club when Silverstone had to cancel the event scheduled for June 15-16 due to essential resurfacing work at the Northamptonshire venue. An alternative date or location could not be found so the club's flagship

event did not happen this year.

The resurfacing work did not just affect the MGCC; two-day 750 Motor Club and MotorSport Vision Racing fixtures were also axed.

Silverstone managing director Stuart Pringle said the work had to occur during that June period so it was completed before the British Grand Prix and avoided the Blancpain GT Series and British GT events. But it still had a major impact on the club racing scene. **SL**



40 SMITH JUNIOR FORCED TO QUIT BRISCA F1

When: June 10

Where: Short ovals

There are many benchmarks in short oval racing, but perhaps none so successful or enduring in the modern era than Stu Smith.

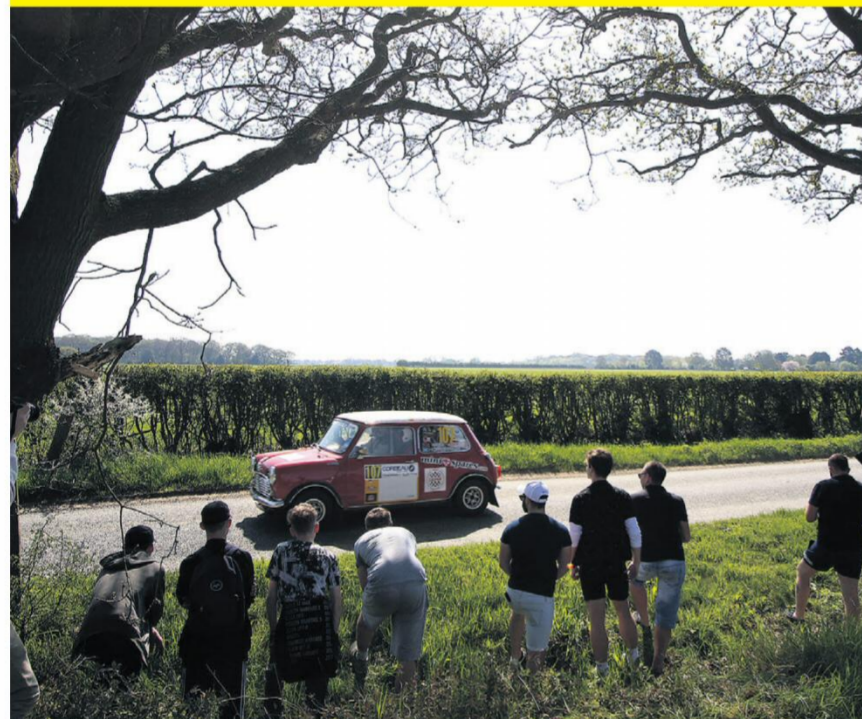
With 49 final wins, 182 race victories and two World Final wins to his name, his 18-year BriSCA F1 career came to an end in the latter part of the 2018 season when he ruptured his spleen, broke his neck and punctured his lungs in a violent accident. He recovered but, in June, announced that he was walking away from competition after taking doctors' advice.

Smith, the youngest son of BriSCA F1 dominator of the 1970s and 1980s Stu Smith Sr, had claimed two national points titles, two British titles and the UK Open in 2014.

"I only race if I can do it at 100%," said Smith Jr. "Sadly, that means I have to hang up my helmet." **MJ**



39 BRC ANNOUNCES CALENDAR REVAMP



When: September 4

Where: Throughout the British Isles
Six rounds in six different countries was how the British Rally Championship 2020 calendar was billed when it was announced.

"The calendar shows our commitment to providing the best all round package for events for our competitors and spectators," said BRC championship manager Iain Campbell. The biggest surprise to the calendar was the addition of Rally Tending and Clacton, which in 2018 became the first event to be held

using new closed-road regulations and has grown in popularity.

The 2020 BRC includes the Cambrian Rally (Wales, Feb 8), West Cork Rally (Republic of Ireland, Mar 14-15), Tending and Clacton (England, Apr 25-26), Ypres Rally (Belgium, Jun 25-27), Ulster Rally (Northern Ireland, Aug 21-22) and Galloway Hills Rally (Scotland, Sep 19).

A notable omission is the Pirelli International, after the Italian tyre manufacturer decided to pull its support from the event. **SM**

38 McCORMACK WINS ROGER ALBERT CLARK RALLY



When: November 25

Where: Kielder Forest

After more than four days of rallying, the stop line of the final stage of the Roger Albert Clark Rally can be a place of tension and drama. But in persistent drizzle by Kielder Water, Marty McCormack and Barney Mitchell confirmed a mighty victory on the stop line of Bewshaugh 2.

For 31 special stages and 300 stage miles, they had fought tooth and nail with the similar Ford Escort Mk2 of Jason Pritchard and Phil

Clarke as they dropped the rest of the field.

Pritchard suffered a puncture in Greskine 2 on Sunday and dropped 40s and McCormack took 1m22s into the final 17 miles in Bewshaugh. Pritchard clawed back half a minute but the McCormack reception, headed by his family and team, was not to be disappointed.

It was starting to go dark on a wintry afternoon, but McCormack's faultless drive to a record-breaking third Roger Albert Clark victory shone through the gloom. **PL**

37 RALLY AUSTRALIA AXED AFTER FIRES



When: November 12

Where: Coffs Harbour, Australia

Sometimes sport has to take a back seat. This was very much one of those occasions.

On a practical level, running on most of the roads was impossible due to the fact they were on fire.

But even those that weren't under a direct threat from the bushfires brought a moral dilemma. How could the Rally Australia organisers consider trying to take the emergency services away from where they were truly needed to

park them at the side of the road, just in case something happened? Simple, they couldn't.

There was a slightly surreal moment when a revised itinerary was put together, turning this year's WRC finale into a three-day single venue, but commonsense prevailed and the whole thing was canned. There was huge disappointment at the news, but you didn't have to look too far to see genuine tragedy unfolding up and down the New South Wales coast. **DE**

DEFINING MOMENTS

36 WEST DOUBLES UP IN MN CIRCUIT RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP



When: March 17

Where: Anglesey Circuit

Securing back-to-back titles is never an easy feat in any form of motorsport, especially not in the Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship. That is because it often attracts strong competition across all its classes.

No-one told Chris West this however, as he guided his two-wheel-drive Peugeot 306 Maxi to the 2018-19 title in emphatic style.

Such was his dominance that he secured the crown with a round to spare on the Lee Holland Memorial

Stages at the Anglesey Circuit.

Prior to that he had romped to a clean-sweep of class wins, which included overall wins on the Knockhill Stages, Brands Hatch Winter Stages and Snetterton Stages.

Despite having secured the title with one round remaining any thoughts that he might back off were misplaced.

He ended his campaign in style with another overall win on the Alan Healy Memorial at Cadwell Park, ensuring co-driver Keith Hounslow became the season's co-driver champion. **SM**

35 ROB McDONALD WINS THE WORLD HOT ROD FINAL



When: July 7

Where: Foxhall Heath, Ipswich
Even surviving a restart, Rob McDonald look unstoppable on his way to a maiden National Hot Rod World Final at Foxhall Heath in Ipswich.

The Scotsman in his Vauxhall Tigra still had a lot of work to do. The 75-lap showdown, which encapsulates a whole season's work into one 20-minute blast, usually has a sting in the tail and the 2019 edition was no different.

English points champion Chris Haird was embroiled in a battle for

second place with Irish visitor David Casey and it took him a number of laps to make a decisive move. He did, but McDonald was up the road.

Haird didn't give up and McDonald clashed with a backmarker, which dented his advantage. Then, with a handful of laps to go, McDonald got stuck behind the cars of Billy Wood and Shane Bland, which were battling for sixth.

Haird had a chance, but just didn't have the legs to unseat McDonald, the first Scotsman to claim the World Final trophy. **MJ**

34 TOM INGRAM'S FACTORY BTCC TOYOTA CHANCE



When: March 6 (first test)

Where: All over the UK
Speedworks Motorsport and Tom Ingram had bruised knuckles at the end of the 2018 British Touring Car Championship.

The pair of them had been knocking on the door of the BTCC's biggest players for two seasons and had made a real impact.

Toyota finally opened the door at the end of the year and agreed to back the 2019 campaign in a brand new Corolla – the first machine built entirely by the

Cheshire team. It marked an emotional return of the legendary Team Toyota GB name to the grid.

The hard work was done in the first part of the season, and then it clicked. Ingram added three victories to an early-season reversed-grid success and he remained in the title hunt right up until the final rounds at Brands Hatch.

The groundwork has been done and the potential has been unlocked. Next year is time to reap the proper rewards. **MJ**

33 ADAM WINS BRITISH GT - AGAIN!



When: September 15

Where: Donington Park

With four minutes to go, they were champions. At the finish they weren't, but one hour later, they were again.

The rollercoaster of emotions surrounding British GT's Donington Park finale was a fitting conclusion to a topsy-turvy season that ended with Jonny Adam claiming a fourth title alongside Graham Davidson in the new Aston Martin Vantage GT3.

That outcome had seemed improbable – verging on impossible – after Adam's prang at Silverstone

left them 54 points behind. Three wins from the first four races had given Barwell Motorsport control, and the TF Sport Aston's failure to capitalise on a Barwell off-day at Silverstone looked ominous.

But two wins from the final four races for Adam/Davidson and two DNFs for Phil Keen/Adam Balon put the Aston crew in the pound seat, and swift justice from the stewards to punish Dennis Lind for contact confirmed them as champions, denying Jonny Cocker/Sam De Haan by 2.5 points. **JN**

32 GREENSMITH GETS A WRC CALL UP



When: July 16

Where: Finland

Rich Millener. That was the name flashing up on Gus Greensmith's mobile at 2200hrs Tuesday, two weeks before Rally Finland. There had been a change of plan. Greensmith's first outing in the Ford Fiesta R5 Mk2 would have to wait. He'd been upgraded. He was taking Elfyn Evans's place in the Fiesta WRC.

"I knew nothing about Elfyn's injury," said Greensmith. "It was a complete shock."

He didn't need asking twice. Greensmith had impressed with his speed on his Fiesta WRC debut in Portugal earlier in the season and was the obvious last-minute replacement for Evans. Ultimately, the results showed another DNF after the 22-year-old dropped it in Ruuhimäki, but there were plenty of positives to come from a week where he was never a million miles away from teammate Teemu Suninen. One round on and it was even better, when he delivered ninth in Germany. **DE**

31 INGRAM CONQUERS EUROPE IN DRAMATIC FASHION



When: November 10

Where: Hungary

Chris Ingram's path to European Rally Championship glory was a rollercoaster of emotion to say the least.

The 25-year-old set out to become the first Brit to win the crown since Vic Elford in 1967, but throughout the season was forced to fight away from the stages to find the necessary funding to continue his campaign. He lost out on ERC1 Junior honours by just 0.3 seconds in the Czech Republic, but still went into the season-ending Rally Hungary leading the overall points standings.

With third place enough heading into the final run, all hope of the title seemed to vanish as the front-right tyre on his Skoda Fabia R5 punctured.

Tears of despair soon turned into tears of joy though, as title rival and reigning ERC champion Alexey Lukyanuk also suffered a puncture, allowing Ingram and co-driver Ross Whittock to win the title by nine points. **SM**

30 FORMULA E TO RETURN TO LONDON



When: March 5
Where: ExCeL Arena, London
Formula E likes to do things differently – whether it is the championship's attack mode or fanboost initiatives or its focus on street circuit venues. So, when it was announced that the series would make a return to the UK, it was perhaps

not a surprise that this event would have a unique angle too. The 2019-20 season finale will feature a return to London, but this is not any old route through the capital's streets or parks. The double-header will this time include a segment of the track being indoors, inside London's

ExCeL Arena. The startline will be in the building before the track then winds along the waterfront of the Royal Docks. The event will mark four years since the series last raced in London, when residents' complaints forced a move away from Battersea Park. **SL**

29 VERGNE WINS FE DESPITE DODGY RADIO MESSAGE



When: July 14
Where: New York, USA
It may have been the same result but Jean-Eric Vergne claimed his second Formula E title in a different style to his first. Twelve months before, he took the spoils with a fifth place after a charging drive in the first New York race, having

been disqualified from qualifying. This time it was a bit more complicated. The first race of the finale was not Vergne's greatest hour. Not only was he involved in incidents and finished 15th, he also gave a controversial radio message. His Techeetah team-mate Andre Lotterer had damage after one

of the clashes and Vergne told his team to instruct Lotterer to stop and bring out the safety car, aiding his own recovery. Lotterer did not and Vergne was hauled before the stewards, being handed a community service penalty. That meant he still claimed the title the following day with seventh. **SL**

28 HAMILTON'S LAUDA TRIBUTE IN MONACO

When: May 26
Where: Monaco
The word legend is overused in sport but if anyone from the world of motorsport deserves to be described in such a way, then it would be Niki Lauda. His passing in the run-up to the Monaco Grand Prix was felt throughout the Formula 1 paddock but especially so by Lewis Hamilton – after all, it was Lauda who helped persuade Hamilton to depart McLaren and begin a successful spell at Mercedes.

Hamilton wore a special helmet featuring Lauda's classic red-and-white design for the race and it was a gutsy Lauda-esque drive from the Briton as he defied Max Verstappen, despite struggling on worn tyres.

"I really wanted to deliver on the word of Niki, and imagining him taking the hat off in support," said Hamilton. "When I was driving I was like, 'what would Niki do?' so I just kept going." **SL**



27 SILVERSTONE DROPPED FROM WORLD RX SCHEDULE



When: November 13
Where: Silverstone
The second World Rallycross Speedmachine Festival took place at Silverstone in May, where it was Team Hansen MJP driver Timmy Hansen that claimed victory ahead of Andreas Bakkerud in the final, while Sean Paul headlined the main stage in the Formula 1 Wing building paddock. However, for the foreseeable future, that will be the last World RX event held at Silverstone, after just two years at the Northamptonshire venue. With a British date absent from the 2020 World RX calendar when it was released on October 30, the World RX promoter then confirmed to Motorsport News that the Speedmachine event wasn't financially viable to continue. So, for the first time since 2008, a top-flight FIA rallycross event won't be held in the UK next year. **HR**

26 FORMULA 1'S 2021 RULES REVEALED

When: October 31
Where: United States of America
After months of waiting and debating, the FIA's World Motor Sport Council finally signed off on a major new rules package for Formula 1 that will be introduced in 2021.

Announced ahead of the United States Grand Prix, FIA president Jean Todt, F1 CEO Chase Carey, and F1 motorsport managing director Ross Brawn were all on hand to discuss the radical new changes.

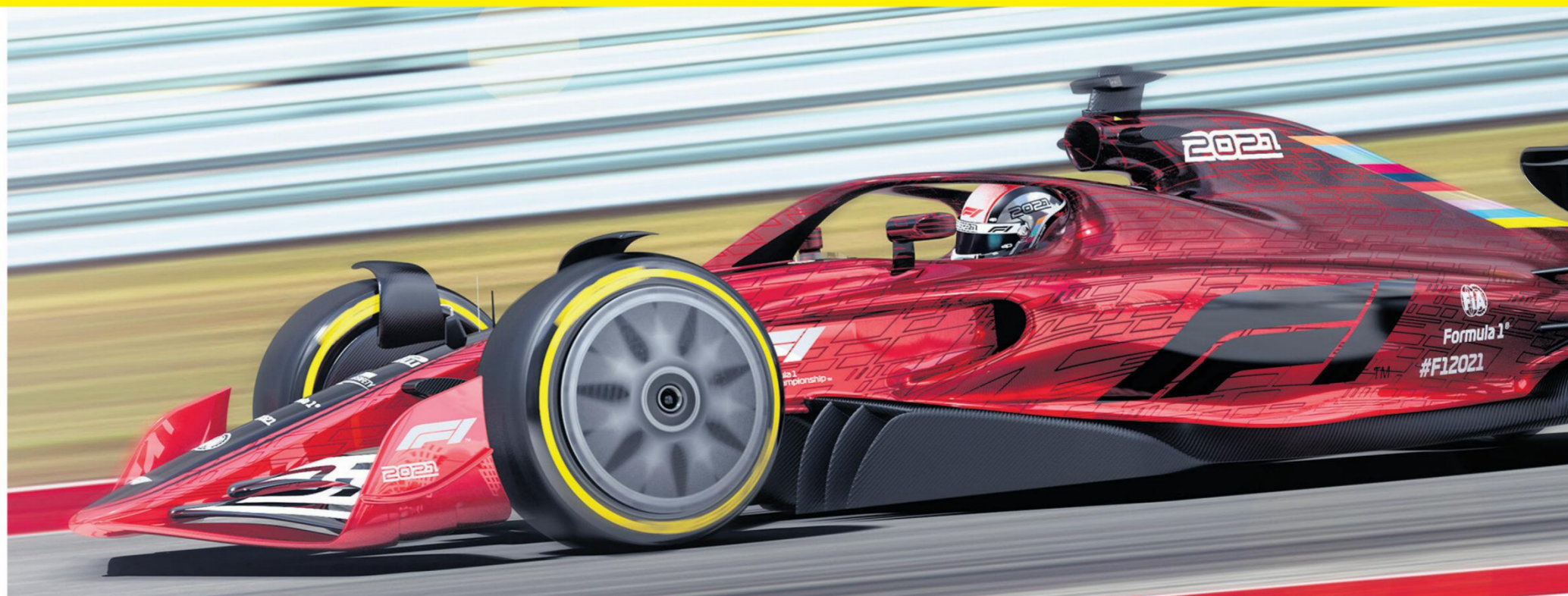
Following extensive research, it is hoped the new generation of cars

will aid overtaking, with machines able to retain more downforce when following.

There are also further changes to the sporting regulations that involve the technical side, including more tightly-regulated CFD and windtunnel running.

The dyno testing allowance for power units will also be reduced to minimise costs.

Another major change includes a cost-cap of \$175million, but will exclude "driver costs" and "three highest-paid person costs" among other areas of expenditure. **SM**



DEFINING MOMENTS

25 BIRD GETS EIGHT-YEAR COMPETITION BAN

When: January 30

Where: UK Anti-Doping Panel
Drug violations of any kind are heavily punished by the appropriate governing bodies and Paul Bird was no exception.

The BTRDA frontrunner was handed an eight-year ban after being found guilty of evading a drugs test by the UK Anti-Doping Panel. Bird had been fighting for the BTRDA Gold Star in his Ford Focus WRC07 alongside eventual winner Matt Edwards in 2018, before he stopped competing after winning the Carlisle Stages Rally. He had already received a two-year

ban in 2015 for testing positive for a metabolite of cocaine and diuretics following his win on the Nicky Grist Stages in July that year. Bird then returned after his ban in 2017.

However, Bird was charged by the National Anti-Doping Panel Tribunal with "evading, refusing or failing to submit to sample collection" with the incident relating to the Rallynats Stages on April 14, 2018.

His eight-year ban from competition sanctioned by the UK governing body, Motorsport UK, started from July 11, 2018. **SM**



24 TANAK GAINS REDEMPTION ON RALLY GB

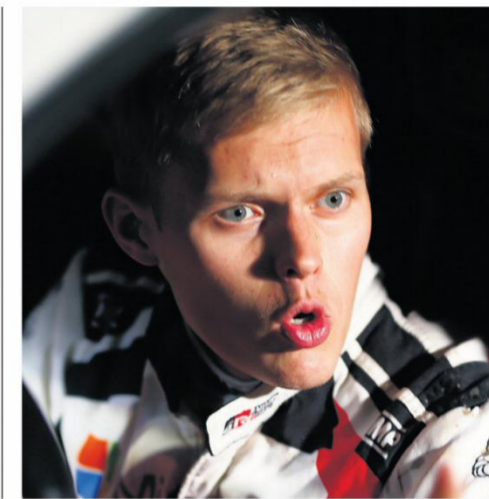
When: October 6

Where: Wales

When Ott Tanak stepped from his stricken Toyota Yaris WRC on the hill up and out of Sweet Lamb's famous bowl in 2018 and lay on the ground further up the road, it was impossible not to feel for the Estonian. Tanak's not the sort of guy to make emotional gestures: they're just not what he's about. Tanak had humbled his opposition through the first half and was ready to steady his pace and take a maiden British win. Then the sumpguard met the

radiator in forceful fashion and that was the end of that.

October delivered redemption as Tanak finished the job he started with an accomplished victory. The margin of 10.9 seconds over Thierry Neuville might not have been quite as comfortable as he would have liked, but you never got the feeling Tanak was going to lose this time. Easing his way past team-mate Kris Meeke for the lead in Aberhymant on Friday afternoon, Tanak wouldn't be headed for the remainder of the rally. **DE**



23 OULTON PARK ADDED TO RALLY GB ROUTE



When: May 22

Where: Cheshire and Wales

Billed as a fairly fancy re-engineering of the route for Rally GB, what Britain's round of the World Rally Championship got was a start in England and a return to a race track. For the remainder of the event, there was a bit of fiddling here and there to move the woods around and re-order some of the stages, but this was very much evolution over revolution.

That's not to decry the ceremonial start in Liverpool; on paper taking the WRC to a city steeped in sporting heritage and history was a very big deal.

In practice, it was poorly executed and mistimed in the middle of the afternoon. An autograph session outside the city's iconic Royal Liver building should have been jumping and a real atmosphere builder. It wasn't. After a brief flurry of excitement at Petter Solberg's arrival, folk drifted away and joined the traffic jam leaving the city. In the rain.

Oulton Park, on the other hand, was a sensation. Great atmosphere, great action and a very big turnout. **DE**

22 EDWARDS WINS BACK-TO-BACK BRC TITLES



When: September 14

Where: Scotland

If Matt Edwards's 2018 British Rally Championship campaign and subsequent title had been considered easy, no one could say that about this year.

The Welshman and co-driver Patrick Walsh were made to work until the final round of the championship as they were pushed all the way by Tom Cave.

The season had begun in perfect fashion with a win on the Cambrian Rally followed by a runner-up finish on the West Cork Rally.

But things started to go wrong for the reigning champion on the Pirelli International, where he was excluded from the event after driving a road section with a flat tyre.

It certainly put him on the back foot, as Cave had secured back-to-back

wins and led the championship.

Up against it, the experienced Ford Fiesta R5 driver took wins on the Ypres and Ulster rallies to assert himself at the head of the championship after Cave retired on the latter event.

With a solid result enough for the crown, Edwards cruised to third place on the Galloway Hills to secure back-to-back titles. **SM**

21 FRANCHITTI RETURNS TO RACING AT GOODWOOD



When: September 15

Where: Goodwood

Six years after a horrific crash ended his top-flight American single-seater career, Dario Franchitti returned to the driving seat at the Goodwood Revival. The three-time Indianapolis 500 winner and four-time IndyCar Series champion was forced to hang up his helmet in 2013 following a final-lap crash with Takuma Sato and Ernesto

Jose Viso at Houston, which sent Franchitti's Ganassi-run car airborne and into the catch fencing.

He suffered a spinal fracture and concussion and, with injuries previously sustained, the risk of permanent paralysis owing to any further crashes meant Franchitti retired from competitive motorsport.

A supporter of historic racing, Franchitti returned to compete in

the Kinrara Trophy for pre-1964 GT cars and the RAC TT Celebration.

Practice problems with the Ferrari 250 GT SWB/C he shared with John Hugenoltz meant Franchitti started on row nine of the 26-car field. But he fought his way into the top 10 before handing over to Hugenoltz, who finished eighth. Franchitti and Gregor Fisken then finished sixth in their AC Cobra in the RAC TT. **SM**

20 WORLD RALLYCROSS STRUGGLES TO ELECTRIFY



When: April 2
Where: n/a

It has been a tough 18 months for World Rallycross. Last year, its manufacturers announced they were deserting the series, then at the end of March this year it was revealed that plans to switch to electric cars for 2021 had failed, with not enough manufacturers signing up to the concept by the March 31 deadline.

Just days later, World RX promoter IMG announced a new electric initiative called Projekt E. Details were sparse, but through the season it transpired that Projekt E will run as a support series from 2020, with three-motor, four-wheel-drive electric kits, developed by Manfred Stohl's STARD concern, retro-fitted to Supercar-style bodyshells. The first Projekt E prototype was launched at the Latvian round of the series in September, while June's FIA World Motor Sport Council meeting revealed reignited plans for World RX to include electric cars at the highest level from 2021, competing directly against the current internal combustion machines. Using a similar concept to Projekt E, the kits for the 2021 WRX transition will be developed by another Austrian firm, Kreisel. **HR**

19 SOLBERG JR SECURES SUBARU DEAL



When: February 14
Where: All over the USA
Some names just sit with some cars: Sebastien Loeb and Citroen, Markku Alen and Lancia, Ayrton Senna and the McLaren MP4/4.

And Solberg and Subaru is an association right up there with the best of them. So, when a 17-year-old Oliver Solberg announced he would be competing in a Subaru

WRX STI this season, the rally world went a bit bananas. Sure, the American Rally Association series is some distance from a full-bore World Rally campaign, but the blue and yellow was all there and, with 370bhp to play with, this second coming of the Solberg-Subaru alliance was clearly worth watching, right in the wheeltracks of dad Petter. Second on his first Stateside

outing and Solberg Jr was genuinely over the moon. But when he won America's most famous rally, the Olympus, next time out, there was proper emotion from rallying's first family and the Japanese manufacturer. Two further wins came from a limited programme later in the season and America – and the world – took this second coming of Solberg in a Subaru to heart. **DE**

18 ALONSO ENJOYS MORE SUCCESS

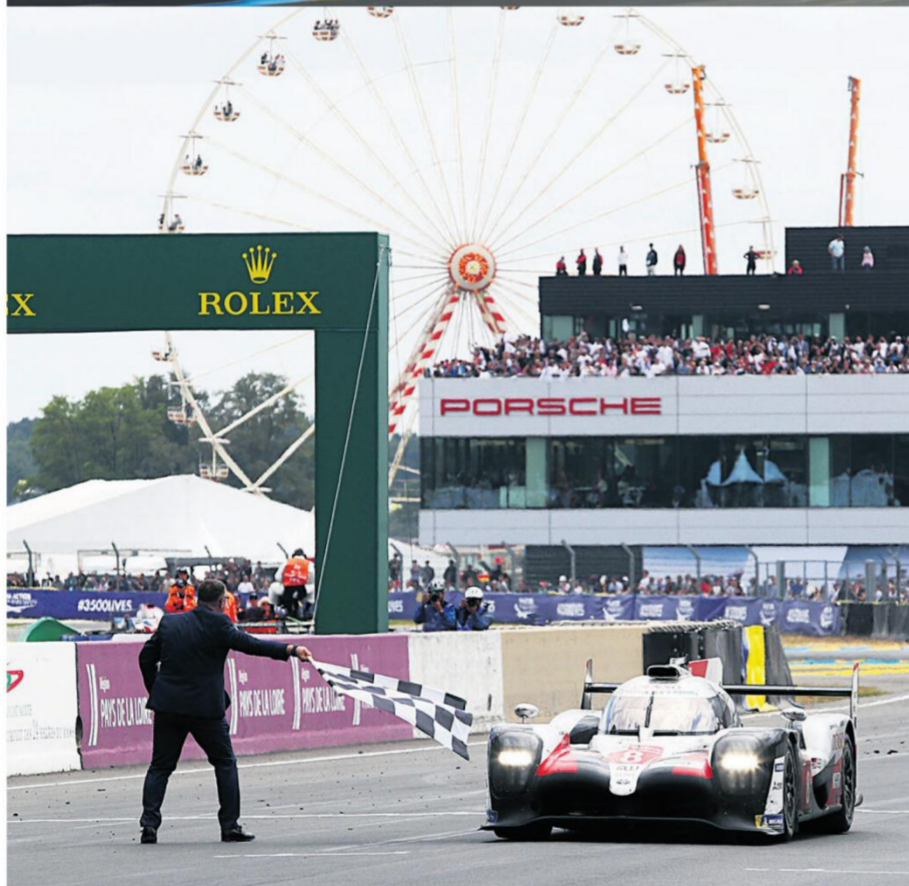
When: All season (except Indy 500)

Where: All over the world
It has not been quite the marathon 26-event schedule of 2018 when Fernando Alonso combined a full Formula 1 season with a World Endurance Championship campaign, but it has still been a busy racing year for the two-time F1 champion.

F1 competition may not have featured for the first time since 2002 but Alonso still notched up the victories in a variety of disciplines.

Most notable was a second Le Mans 24 Hours triumph, only secured after a sensor failure led to the incorrect wheel being changed on the sister Toyota following a late puncture. The result ensured Alonso, Sebastien Buemi and Kazuki Nakajima secured the WEC title too.

It was not Alonso's only 24-hour victory in 2019 as he also won the Daytona 24 Hours earlier in the year at the wheel of a WTR Cadillac he shared with Kamui Kobayashi, Renger van der Zande and Jordan Taylor. Alonso has spent the latter part of the year preparing for a 2020 Dakar bid in a Toyota Hilux. **SL**



17 HYPERCAR RULES LAUNCHED FOR WEC



When: June 14
Where: Le Mans, France
Six laps. That was the difference between the Toyotas and their nearest opposition in this year's Le Mans 24 Hours result. With just one manufacturer up against three privateers, it was the perfect demonstration of the LMP1 rules for the top class of the World Endurance Championship having run their course.

Just as well there was reason to be optimistic for a brighter future, then. New hypercar regulations had long been talked about but it was at Le Mans that details for the 2020-21 WEC season were unveiled.

The class is open to specialised prototype designs or machines derived from road-going hypercars and is intended to be a more even playing field between squads with differing budgets.

The concept had an instant seal of approval when Toyota confirmed later that day it would commit. The number of manufacturers soon doubled with Aston Martin joining. More recently, Peugeot announced a 2022 entry and organisers hope this will open the floodgates. A true multi-marque battle for Le Mans is on the cards once more. **SL**

16 MEEKE OUT OF A DRIVE



When: November 27
Where: Puuopola, Finland
Did he deserve a second chance? Hard to say. It's not like he hasn't had a few of them... There was huge frustration with Kris Meeke this year; this one was such a golden opportunity.

Early in the season he talked about keeping his nose clean, gathering points, keeping the team on side and playing himself into a strong position for next season. Just imagine if he'd kept his head and placed the Yaris WRC on the podium in Portugal, then made another top three, rather than

finishing in the trees in Finland (a roll in Chile was silly and there's little point discussing Spain's shunt – the ship had sailed by then).

Things could have looked so different for him going into 2020. The Dungannon driver remains one of the fastest around but, with such a squeeze on seats, speed's simply not enough anymore.

Once again, Meeke came along and gave the ball a kick, but the lack of accuracy in hitting the target looks like it will bring the curtain down on a career that promised so much. **DE**





Northampton Motorsport would like to congratulate Pete Goulding on finishing 2nd in The British Sprint Championship, narrowly missing out on 1st.



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DEFINING MOMENTS

15 McLAREN CONFIRMS FULL-TIME INDYCAR ENTRY

When: August 9

Where: Woking

Given the abject failure of its Indy 500 attempt with Fernando Alonso (see moment number six), you would perhaps have thought McLaren would steer clear of the American series for a while. Not a bit of it. The Formula 1 outfit instead decided to throw itself into the category full-time for 2020.

Crucially, this time it would be teaming up with established squad Arrow Schmidt Peterson Motorsports, rather than trying to run alone as it did for the Indy 500 – save for logistical assistance from Carlin.

Ever since Alonso's interest in the triple crown surfaced, there have long been rumours about the team plotting a full IndyCar campaign. And now its F1 team's fortunes are seemingly on the up again with an impressive fourth place in this year's constructors' standings, McLaren has decided now is the right time.

When the programme was announced, Alonso was immediately linked to a drive but McLaren has opted to go for two



promising youngsters rather than established talents, leading to the brutal dismissal of long-term (and contracted) SPM driver James Hinchcliffe.

Instead, Indy Lights champion and 2016 Walter Hayes Trophy runner-up Oliver Askew will be joined by former Red Bull junior Patricio O'Ward in McLaren's line-up. **SL**

14 ROVANPERA LANDS WORKS TOYOTA DEAL

When: June 26

Where: Sardinia

Middle of June in a scorching Sardinia. The end of the season's some distance away and beyond the future for Ott Tanak, nobody else is really talking too much about who might go where next year.

Until MN chucks a big stick in the spokes with news that Kalle Rovnanpera's deal with Toyota Gazoo Racing is done. It was a big call. Every now and then this job calls for a punt to be taken. This wasn't that punt. This was a dead-cert. Ever since Tommi Makinen invited Kalle Rovnanpera to drive Toyota's test Yaris WRC as a 16-year-old, the writing was on the wall. And, provided the young Finn's pace didn't fall off a cliff for a couple of years in the World Rally Championship's support series, he'd be joining Finland's home team sooner rather than later.

And in June, it became clear, the deal was done. The answers to the questions which had been asked of the relevant parties remained the same, but the tone



had changed and there was, if you looked hard enough, a glint in the odd eye.

Rovanpera's had something of an up and down season, but he's

come out as a world champion and the World Rally Championship's youngest ever full-time top-flight factory driver.

Never in doubt... **DE**

13 COLIN TURKINGTON TAKES A RECORD-EQUALING FOURTH BRITISH TOURING CAR CHAMPIONSHIP CROWN

When: October 13

Where: Brands Hatch Grand Prix
Bringing a brand new car to the British Touring Car Championship is hard enough, but when the machine is introduced less than two weeks before the start of the fresh campaign, then the task could almost be vertical.

Colin Turkington brushed off that inconvenience, and the new factory-backed BMW 330i M Sport, built by WSR, was immediately the benchmark car. That, in itself, was a huge tribute to the Lower Sunbury-based crew.

Turkington, working with new engineer Dan Millard, took a while to hit his stride in the rear-wheel-drive car but, from the second meeting of the year, he was a winner.

He took five wins over the course of the year. While that wasn't the most of all, he went into each meeting saddled with more success ballast than his rivals and simply shrugged off that handicap. Even a rule tweak at the midpoint of the 30-race schedule, which robbed the saloon-shaped car of some of its prowess, failed to derail him.

Despite his fine season, he was pushed all the way by team-mate Andrew Jordan and Honda's Dan Cammish, but held his nerve in a tense final round to claim the title by two points. **MJ**



12 RED BULL DITCHES GASLY



When: August 12

Where: Milton Keynes

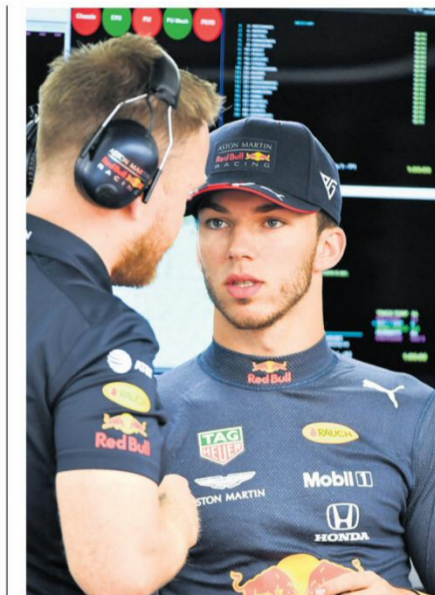
While Max Verstappen was busy taking Red Bull's first victory of the season in Austria, his team-mate Pierre Gasly was languishing a lap down in seventh. It was one of the most obvious illustrations of just how much Gasly was struggling in the first half of this season after being promoted to the senior team.

Gasly was filling very large boots following Daniel Ricciardo's departure for Renault and, given his level of experience, he was never expected to be matching Verstappen. But two heavy pre-season testing shunts and regularly qualifying just under or over

a second slower than Verstappen was certainly never part of the plan.

Red Bull is not an organisation that tolerates mediocrity and, as brutal as Gasly's mid-season swap with Alex Albon was, it perhaps was not a surprise. Gasly had looked to have turned a corner at Silverstone with fourth but then was back to being abysmal in Germany and Hungary.

When he rejoined Toro Rosso, two things could have happened. The downward spiral of misery could have intensified or he could have treated it as a new start. The latter proved true and a remarkable turnaround was crowned with his shock second place in Brazil. **SL**



11 CHARLIE WHITING DIES



When: March 14

Where: Melbourne, Australia

In the lead-up to the Australian Grand Prix, the Formula 1 paddock suffered a huge blow with the death of race director Charlie Whiting.

Whiting, who had been in F1 since 1977 when he joined the Hesketh F1 operation, was so much more than just a race director to the teams and drivers who have been through the grand prix ranks. He was a shoulder to cry on, a confidante and someone who would always have safety in the top tier as his number one priority. After Hesketh, he joined Brabham

and helped Brazilian Nelson Piquet to two world championship titles in 1981 and 1983 until the team was sold by owner Bernie Ecclestone at the end of the 1980s.

Whiting was then, in 1997, granted the role of FIA safety director. One of his most recent campaigns was the introduction of the halo safety device, which has already been proven to have saved drivers' lives.

The entire F1 paddock was collected in its grief as it paid tribute to the Englishman ahead of the opening round of the season in Melbourne. **MJ**

10 CHADWICK BECOMES INAUGURAL W SERIES CHAMPION

When: August 11

Where: Brands Hatch

The announcement that a single-seater series was to be created solely for female racing drivers was met with a mixed reaction last season.

There were those who believed that it was bad; women should compete in the same championships as men and a separate category would devalue their abilities.

Others believed the creation of the series was good; it would help boost a female driver's career and profile, especially when a prize fund of \$1.5million was on offer.

Regardless of public opinion, W Series went ahead in 2019 after 18 drivers, plus two reserves, were picked during an intense selection process with a judging panel consisting of ex-Formula 1 drivers David Coulthard and Alex Wurz.

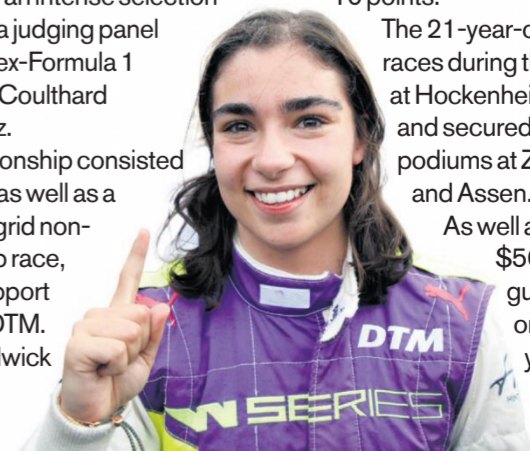
The championship consisted of six rounds, as well as a full-reversed grid non-championship race, and was a support series to the DTM.

Jamie Chadwick became the

inaugural champion at her home round at Brands Hatch, beating Beitske Visser to the title by 10 points.

The 21-year-old Brit won two races during the campaign, at Hockenheim and Misano, and secured a further three podiums at Zolder, Norisring and Assen.

As well as taking home \$500,000 she has guaranteed a spot on the grid next year to defend her title. **SM**



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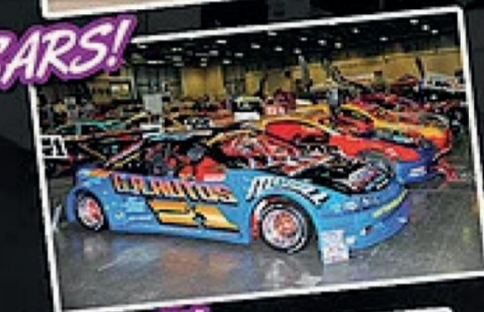
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DEFINING MOMENTS

9 CITROEN QUILTS THE WRC

When: November 20

Where: Versailles

Hybrid. It's got to be hybrid. Or electric. Electric or hybrid. Has to be. That was the message from PSA and Citroen about prolonging the latter's participation in the World Rally Championship. Cue much appreciation and plenty of encouraging noises about 2022 once the FIA delivered news of the WRC's hybrid generation.

And through all the technical working groups, the right questions came from Versailles. But at Goodwood's Festival of Speed, the wrong answer came from CEO Linda Jackson. When I asked her about a commitment to 2022, she preferred to talk more about the

focus on the current campaign.

What? Where did all that hybrid fervour go? By then, of course, Peugeot's WEC deal was done and Citroen's illustrious history in the WRC was, well it was just that... history.

But it took Sebastien Ogier's decision to fill Ott Tanak's boots at Toyota to fast-forward the French firm's departure from the end of 2020. Citroen wasted no time in blaming the six-time champion but, in all honesty,

the real issue reared its head at Rally Germany, where a seventh-placed Ogier declared his Citroen "undriveable". Ouch. It was that Sunday night in Bostalsee where Ogier began to prepare his exit strategy. **DE**



7 BONKERS GERMAN GRAND PRIX



When: July 28

Where: Hockenheim, Germany

When was the last time that the frontrunners dropped the ball so comprehensively as they did at the German Grand Prix in late July?

Valtteri Bottas's Merc was smashed at Turn 1, Charles Leclerc's Ferrari had smote the tyre wall at the ice-rink-line penultimate turn and even Lewis Hamilton darted to the pits too late and earned a five-second penalty and then later skittered over the gravel and could only manage ninth.

Rain, so often the inspiration behind some of Formula 1's most crazy races, had played a crucial part and it was Red Bull's Max Verstappen who won. He led home the Ferrari of Sebastian Vettel and the Toro Rosso of Daniil Kvyat.

Leclerc's heartbreak at losing that win was part of his rollercoaster year, which was epitomised by his fractious relationship with team-mate Vettel. Team orders had reared their head on a number of occasions, and the young charger was not backward in letting the world know when he felt he had been had over: the Chinese and Singapore Grands Prix being prime examples. The most damaging moment came in the last race of the year in Brazil, when the pair committed the ultimate sin and took each other out.

Leclerc did break his duck at the Belgian GP, a victory he dedicated to F2 racer Anthoine Hubert, who was killed in an accident on the previous day. It was one of two wins for Leclerc during his breakthrough year. **MJ**

8 EVANS AND OGIER JOIN TOYOTA

When: November 27

Where: Puuppola, Finland

Helsinki airport in October, you can just about get away with. But taking the ATR turbo-prop north of there to Jyvaskyla, well that's an autumnal plane ride that's bound to get the tongues wagging.

And wag they did. Within days of Ott Tanak's switch from Toyota to Hyundai being confirmed, Elfyn Evans was spotted on the road from the airport to Toyota Gazoo Racing's base in Puuppola. The deal was pretty much done there and then. For Sebastien Ogier, the agreement was effectively drawn up over the telephone.

From the catastrophe of losing his world champion, Tommi Makinen had pulled together what will almost



certainly be one of the most talked about teams in recent WRC history.

For Ogier, this is the chance to win a world title with a third different manufacturer, while for the Welshman, it's an opportunity to build some solid success on the excellent foundations he's put down with M-Sport in the past

seven years. Evans's role in 2020 will revolve around supporting the Frenchman, but when Ogier's out of the door in 12 months' time, there's a lead-driver seat to be had. There are already those putting money on Thierry Neuville making that same clandestine trip north in October... **DE**

6 ALONSO FAILS TO QUALIFY FOR INDY 500

When: May 19

Where: Indianapolis

This was meant to be *the* year. It was supposed to be when Fernando Alonso became the first driver since Graham Hill 47 years ago to have completed the so-called triple crown of motorsport: Monaco Grand Prix victory, Le Mans 24 Hours triumph and Indy 500 glory.

A lot was stacked in favour of the Spaniard for his second crack at Indy. He had all the experience and learning from his very competitive first attempt under his belt and was not trying to fit it in around a Formula 1 campaign.

But this story did not end with one of the motorsport greats achieving one of the great motorsport milestones. Instead it ended with a whimper as Alonso failed to even qualify. This time around McLaren did not partner up with an established squad but ran on its own with logistical support from Carlin – a top single-seater operation but not one of the IndyCar big boys. And it showed.



Alonso was quick in practice but electrical problems and a crash severely restricted his track time and ultimately he was unable to qualify.

The race itself was won by Penske's Simon Pagenaud after a fierce fight with Alexander Rossi in the closing stages. **SL**

5 SOLBERG ANNOUNCES HIS TOP-FLIGHT RETIREMENT

When: April 10

Where: Several 2019 events

The Farewell Tour. It might have sounded a touch trite, but Petter Solberg delivered his final year as a professional driver with real class. And real performance.

Solberg's a showman, we all know that. Not for nothing has the 'Hollywood' moniker stuck fast for so long. But this season, the encore really brought the fans to their feet. And the triple world champion's British fanbase did better than most, scoring two of the highest-profile outings on the 2019 bill. Solberg returned to Goodwood's Festival of Speed and stole the show. Or he would have done had it not been for his son Oliver's eye-watering commitment in the final day shootout. Just 17, Oliver threw his DS3 SuperCar's 600 horses at corner after corner and made them stick around the Flint Wall in breathtaking fashion. Much to his father's chagrin, folk soon forgot it was Pappa Solberg who was the quicker of the two!

But it was Wales Rally GB where Solberg Sr really took his bow. Returning to woods he hadn't seen for seven years, the 2003 World Rally champion electrified Britain's WRC round and produced a fairytale finish with a WRC 2 win aboard his Volkswagen Polo R5. **DE**



4 CLOSED-ROAD RALLYING'S POPULARITY SURGE



When: All year

Where: Across the UK

When Scottish parliament approved new closed-road legislation earlier this year it opened the door for the return of the popular Mull and Jim Clark rallies.

The former had been cancelled in 2017 due to insurance issues while the latter was halted indefinitely following the death of three people on the 2014 edition. Rallying in Scotland waited for the results of

an inquiry before it could press ahead.

But with the new legislation, local authorities in Scotland – like Northern Ireland, England and Wales – were granted the power to close public roads for motorsport. As a result, these events made a welcome return in 2019. The Mull Rally was held in October and won by Paul MacKinnon, his third win on the event.

Meanwhile Josh Moffett won the Jim Clark, which was held in November but will return to its traditional May

date as part of the Scottish Rally Championship in 2020.

It wasn't just in Scotland where closed-road rallying was embraced as the first one to be held in Wales, Rali Bae Ceredigion, took place this year and was won by Osian Pryce.

Trending and Clacton – the first rally to use the new legislation in the UK – has been added to the British Rally Championship's 2020 calendar, signifying the future is bright for closed-road events. **SM**

DEFINING MOMENTS

3 LIBERTY CONFIRMS SILVERSTONE'S FORMULA 1 EXTENSION



BRDC's John Grant (l) agreed deal with Liberty's Chase Carey to keep the GP

When: July 10

Where: Silverstone

The saga of the British Grand Prix at Silverstone has been ongoing for more than 15 years. And, make no mistake, when the race's promoters and the circuit owners, the British Racing Drivers' Club, announced in 2017 that its contract's break clause had been activated, there was a very real threat to Britain's jewel in the motorsport crown.

The spectre of Bernie Ecclestone's downbeat opinion of the track and its owners, which started the major rift in the relationship more nearly three decades earlier, had permeated, and this was another kick in the guts for one of the hardest-working F1 promoters.

F1's new owner, Liberty Media, was in a tough position. It wanted to keep the British Grand Prix on the schedule, but knew that if it bent over and accepted a reduced deal for Silverstone and the BRDC, then it would have every other race knocking on its door wanting a similar deal.

But the BRDC held firm and, after protracted talks, a restructured deal was thrashed out and bosses confirmed that the race would continue at the Northamptonshire venue through until 2024. It was news that put the icing on the cake of the British Grand Prix weekend, which was one of the circuit's most successful yet with 340,000 visitors.

Drivers rallied around to back the deal to keep what is regarded as one of the traditional races on the calendar, and it staved off the threat from myriad new grands prix that are in the pipeline on the revamped schedule. **MJ**

2 LEWIS HAMILTON CLAIMS A SIXTH WORLD TITLE AND BECOMES THE KING OF SILVERSTONE

When: All season

Where: All over the globe

It is easy to overlook the achievements of Lewis Hamilton this season. He is the best driver on the grid, and he is in the best car, so victory is a foregone conclusion, right?

Well wrong, it isn't, and his sixth world championship should not be dismissed. Sure, Ferrari didn't step up to the plate as it should have done and Hamilton's intra-team battle with the sister machine of Valtteri Bottas started to come apart by early May, but there was still hard work to be done.

There was a new Hamilton this season, a small change which cemented the foundations of his title charge that has not been seen before: he came out of the blocks flying. In some of the previous title wins, he has started slowly only to go on a crushing run of victories across the summer to nail down the crown. This year, he had a 29-point buffer by the time the circus rolled out of Canada in the second week of June. One month later, he was breaking records at Silverstone to become the British Grand Prix's most successful driver.

Still, he won 11 races – more than half of those on the schedule – and his fighting spirit was never more evident than in Mexico, where he clearly didn't have the fastest car but his determination behind the wheel and a cute strategy from the pitwall pushed him to glory and to within touching distance of the crown, which he lifted in America seven days later.

He has predicted a tougher fight next year with Ferrari hopefully unlocking its pace and Red Bull finally capitalising on the potential of Honda. It is a battle he says he is relishing, but any foe will have to operate at their highest level to depose the king.

Was this merely a staging post to the Briton doing the unthinkable and equaling Michael Schumacher's record of seven championships? Probably yes, but each title deserves the same merit, so his stunning year will sit proudly with the others. **MJ**



A sixth F1 title for Hamilton never really looked in doubt

Briton celebrates with doughnuts after winning Abu Dhabi finale

Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com, LAT

1 TANAK TAKES WRC TITLE - AND SIGNS FOR HYUNDAI



Tanak sprays the champagne with new team boss Adamo



Toyota driver flew to this year's WRC crown

When: October 27

Where: Salou, Spain

In the end, it was something of a masterclass in how to play the press. Before Rally Turkey, a possible Hyundai deal was dead. Totally dead. Talking to Ott Tanak ahead of the trip to Marmaris, he was quite clear on his relations with the Korean firm's WRC chief Andrea Adamo: "I don't think we're such good friends anymore."

Lines like that make for fine copy and the story was duly trotted out that Tanak's future lay back with Toyota – with an outside chance of M-Sport managing director Malcolm Wilson being able to pull off another miracle to bring him back on a long-term deal.

It would be Toyota. In Turkey, Tanak and Adamo played the game, shooting evils at each other. And when Adamo slapped Tanak on the back, was it just a touch harder than one might have expected? Possibly.

The only thing that didn't add up was the hesitancy from Tommi Makinen on Toyota's line-up for next season. More digging in Wales and by Spain it was clear – we'd been done.

Tanak was bound for Hyundai all along. Breaking the story in the



Neuville will have to contend with Tanak in the same equipment

middle of the opening day on a round where the Estonian could be crowned world champion certainly caught the attention of the watching world. Less than a week later and the deal was done. Tanak would be wearing blue and orange next season.

For team-mate Thierry Neuville, there was a moment's pause as he prepared to find the right words of positivity to welcome a driver he's spent the last few years fighting. He found them. Now he'll have to live by them.

And that world title thing? Yeah,

that was a slam-dunk courtesy of Tanak driving the stage of the season as he pummeled the best of the rest in the powerstage. And a world title is no less than Tanak deserves. He's been the class of the field for the best part of two years now, the only thing which threatened to derail his title charge was the odd mechanical misdemeanour along the way. But this time Tanak kept his head, his speed and his lead at the top of the table.

Sunday in Salou was a special one for Estonia this time around. And rightly so. **DE**

BTCC TRACK TEST



MN took the controls of the race winner

GETTING TO THE VERY CENTRE

MN's rallycross man **Hal Ridge** trades places with BTCC star Matt Neal for a Silverstone test session

Coming down" calls Team Dynamics technician Craig Smith moments before the air jacks are depressed and the Honda FK8 Civic Type R drops onto the Silverstone pitlane.

As if a reminder as to what I'm about to undertake is required, dropping to the ground in such a fever-filled way with a Dynamics logo staring at me from the steering wheel could leave me in no doubt.

I'm about to get a taste of what it's like to drive a car fresh from competing in arguably the world's greatest tin-top series. This is the actual car that British Touring Car Championship legend Matt Neal raced this year and took to ninth in the points table.

For the first time in 2020, the BTCC will race on the International layout at Silverstone, run out of the Formula 1 Wing building pit garages. So, not only is it a rare and special experience to get a go in a current BTCC race-winner, but I'm also about to get a taste of the track where the series' biggest names will do battle next September.

While Silverstone is renowned for having its own micro-climate, teams and fans can expect the ambient temperature to be pleasant, even if it does rain next September. It's unlikely that ice will need scraping from car windows in order to drive to the circuit. That is very much unlike today, at the end of November.

I didn't mind the ice though: at least it would thaw and it wasn't the torrential rain of the previous day, plus the winter sun's out.

That positivity is short-lived, however. To say Silverstone's Tarmac is greasy is a significant understatement. So much so that, despite the circuit having no standing water, Neal's team-mate Dan Cammish (who, until the very final laps of the 2019 title-decider at Brands Hatch, had the title prize within touching



Hal and his new dream car: the FK8

distance until a rare technical failure put him into a barrier) completed just one installation lap in the Civic before returning to the pitlane and requesting Dunlop's wet rubber.

Courtesy of Honda UK, before climbing aboard the BTCC machine I'd already got my first experience of the International route in a road going Civic Type R, then the latest hybrid NSX, having first watched an onboard on YouTube to work out where the circuit went.

While I'd discovered that both cars were huge amounts of fun and quite at home being thrown around the home of British motor racing, I'd also ascertained that the Tarmac could be described in technical lingo as grip-limited. Or, in layman's terms, bloody slippery.

Now the car is on the ground and having been talked through the controls by Neal, I press the ignition button on the dash, then the start button and wait for the Honda K20C two-litre turbocharged engine to fire into life. One more press of the pump button to activate the power steering and I'm ready to go.

Thankfully, although Neal's figure is

significantly more slight than my own, he is one of the tallest drivers in motor racing at six foot and six inches tall. While the belts need adjusting, the seating position is very comfortable, almost on the car's floor to keep the all-important centre of gravity as low as possible.

The view between the top of the dashboard and the bottom of the sun strip is noticeably shallow: no wonder BTCC drivers sometimes occasionally bump into each other...

I'm given the thumbs up that the pitlane is clear and I'm pleasantly surprised with how much feel there is through the clutch pedal. Critically I don't stall, saving myself embarrassment, and I quickly pull the sequential gear lever back towards me with a firm tug to select second. Then I start riding the brake pedal slightly with my left foot in a vain attempt to build some brake temperature since the car has been sitting in the pitlane for some time.

As the pitlane's gradient increases and turns to the right to head onto the circuit, with not a huge amount of throttle application, the Civic's front wheels light



Cammish (l) and teacher Neal (r)

up, scrabbling for grip. I shift to third gear, then fourth, the car picking up speed but still happily spinning the wheels if the throttle is pressed hard enough as I head towards the first real corner of this adventure, the right-hander at Village. Then I cut through The Loop and turn sharp right onto Hangar Straight.

The first tour around the 1.851-mile lap is about finding my feet as much as possible. Coming from a rallycross background, that distance is almost half a race.

This is the first top-level circuit car I've driven, and two things immediately strike me. The chassis feels very taut; there's barely any body roll and, compared to ultra-soft rallycross tyres that are designed to work from cold, how relatively little grip these 18-inch Dunlops offer straight out of the pits.

I'm aware that I ought to try to get as much temperature into the tyres and AP Racing brakes as I can to get the most from the car. I've watched enough BTCC safety car periods on ITV4 to know that but, at the same time, running here is limited, and I need to get on with it.

Learning even a little about a car in such a short period is always a challenge, but finding braking points in these slippery conditions I find even more difficult.

A couple of times in the opening laps, leaning on the middle pedal with my left foot as hard as I dare, I lock up even at slow speed. That is briefly accompanied by tell-tale differential chatter before I quickly release the brakes again, but almost every time I make it to somewhere in the region of the apex, several times with a small amount of opposite-lock required to keep the car heading forwards.

This International layout is diverse: the first two corners of Abbey and Farm are fast, before heavy braking into Village. Through the left kink of The Loop, the low sun is directly in my eyes and I don't tempt fate by aiming for the sausage kerb on the inside of the left when vision is compromised, before keeping left then turning hard right onto Hangar Straight.

Prior to the run, Neal had told me to make use of the low kerbs and I'm impressed with how, even though the chassis is stiff and the Penske dampers have so little travel compared to what



Photos: Jakob Ebrey

Slippery conditions made the runs tricky

The Honda shows some battle scars

OF THE BTCC CIVIC



Wheelspin was a habit early on



Back in one piece: Hal returns the Civic

I'm used to, the Civic absorbs up the kerbs with a satisfying rumble beneath.

While the chassis feels very agile and the power delivery from the turbocharged engine is so linear it's almost like a naturally aspirated motor, and feels like it has more than its 350bhp-plus when trying to avoid wheelspin while getting the power down on corner exit, I'm not stunned by the power output down the straight.

But, with well-perfected gearing, down Hangar Straight I've pulled all six cogs with the flat-shift system that allows you to change up the 'box while on full throttle, and I'm flat in top with one eye on the shift lights heading towards their maximum at the 7000rpm limiter. As I approach Stowe, a legendary and somewhat fearsome corner, it feels like I'm really travelling.

I find Stowe to be one of the biggest challenges, working out just how much speed to scrub off under braking before turning in and being back on the throttle.

The Civic benefits from a clever rear-steer system as part of the rear suspension geometry perfected by the

Dynamics squad, but I'm acutely aware that I'm probably not keeping anywhere near as much heat in the rear tyres as is optimum and don't want to lean on the car too hard. Stowe's exit is wide though and I run almost out to the kerb on the left before heading down into the final complex at Club.

This is a formidable sequence of corners too, and I never really get on top of where to brake before the left hander, before turning hard right for the double-apex final corners, taking Neal's advice and short-shifting between the two right-handers to help the car maintain grip.

For the first few laps, I'm wary of the kerb on the outside of the final turn, where the best line would be found, hesitant of grip availability.

I grow in confidence with each lap and I'm pushing harder, but in the few brief tours, find it difficult to extract a lot of the braking areas and corner entries, the lack of grip doing little to put me at ease.

"It's difficult because the conditions aren't the easiest," Neal reassures me afterwards. "If it was dry, you can be a lot more aggressive with your inputs,

you can really gorilla the steering, throw it into the corner and the car will grip. And you can be a lot more aggressive with the throttle, treat it more like a switch, and the brake pressure you can use double. In the damp conditions we've got here now, it's all about being progressive and smoothness, really. I liken these cars to a Formula 3 car where you've got to carry momentum through the corners. It's all about balance."

On the penultimate lap, as I change down the box and weight transfers forward under braking for right-hander at Village I snatch the front axle even at low speed and immediately I know I'm not going to make the apex.

The minor moment almost happens in slow motion and, while I know by turning in hard and getting hard into the throttle I will probably yet still make where I planned to be, I'm also aware that in these conditions, that could result in creating a bigger moment too.

Instead, knowing that there is ample Tarmac run-off, I come back out of the brakes, open up the steering so the wheels are straight and let the car run

out wide, just clipping the metre-wide grass on the outside of the corner that separates the circuit from the run-off.

In a rallycross car, at the moment I was unsure about making the apex I would have given the hydraulic handbrake a slight tug which would have locked the rear wheels in an instance and helped get the nose in.

BTCC snapper Jakob Ebrey, who's shooting this test, remarks on how long it is since he's seen anyone drive a BTCC machine in an open-face rally-style helmet. I'd be happy to trade wearing a full-face lid for the implementation of a handbrake. Frankly, I think in wet conditions like those that hit the Silverstone BTCC round earlier this year, drivers of front-wheel-drive machines would love them...

My moment is survived without any drama and I complete the run. Heading down the pit entry, I push the gear lever forward three times, then pull the smaller lever behind and give the gearstick a further shove to get neutral.

Then it's time for another fever moment, as I free-wheel into the pit box,

TECH SPEC

Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R FK8

Chassis: Honda FK8 Civic Type R Bodyshell with homologated safety rollcage built to NGTC regulations with a range of standardised components

Engine: Two-litre turbocharged K20C direct injection Neil Brown Engines-tuned motor with fly-by-wire throttle control, 16 valves (four per cylinder), in-line four cylinder twin overhead camshaft

Transmission: Front-wheel drive; Xtrac six-speed sequential-shift gearbox and differential

Electronics: Cosworth Electronics specified package incorporating electronic control unit, dash, data-logging

Power: 350+bhp

Top speed: 160mph

Max RPM: 7000rpm

Weight: 1280kg (without that pesky success ballast)

Wheelbase: 2699mm

Fuel tank: ATL 80-litre Kevlar cell

Front suspension: RML-designed full front sub-frame incorporating suspension, brakes, transmission and engine location that attaches to specified rollcage locations. Multi-adjustable double wishbone suspension with Penske damper with Eibach springs

Brakes: AP Racing specified package: twin four-piston, two-pad callipers on 362mm disc (front) and 304mm disc (rear)

Clutch: AP Racing carbon

Wheels: Team Dynamics supplied 18-inch centre-lock wheel

Tyres: Dunlop: 265/660 R18 available in soft, medium and hard compounds



Honda has stopping power



Electronic dash is a feature

I turn the map dial on the steering wheel to '2', blip the throttle and the engine starts to metronomically rev itself in cool down mode. Before switch off, it needs a 10-degree difference between oil and water temperatures.

After a quick brief with Neal, and another couple of laps, all too soon the runs are over and I'm climbing back out of the NGTC-spec weapon.

The overriding feeling is of how responsive and positive the chassis, engine and transmission are to every input. The experience is only slightly marred by the conditions. I would love a go in one of these fantastic machines in the dry to get a better feeling for what they're capable of.

The success of TOCA's current rule set needs little justification within these pages and from what I can see, Silverstone's International circuit will be an interesting challenge for the BTCC fraternity next September.

Neal will use this same chassis again next term. Should he net a win here, at least I can bask in having helped show his Civic which way the corners go. ■

WRC SEASON REVIEW

TANAK BLENDS IT FINALLY USURP THE

Toyota man combined all his abilities to beat all his rivals co



Rally Chile was one of the high points for Ott Tanak

ROUND-BY-ROUND

1 Monte Carlo Rally

JANUARY 24-27

Sebastien Ogier makes the perfect return to Citroen with a debut win aboard the C3 WRC. That's six straight wins on the rally that means most to the reigning champion – and with three different manufacturers. Thierry Neuville is a very close second, ruing a Friday overshoot that costs him 15 seconds. Ott Tanak leads early on but loses time with a puncture and finishes third, one place ahead of former Monte Carlo master Sebastien Loeb, who hits the ground running with fourth on his debut at his new WRC home, Hyundai.

- 1 Sebastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Citroen)
- 2 Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai)
- 3 Ott Tanak/Martin Jarveoja (Toyota)



2 Rally Sweden

FEBRUARY 14-17

Teemu Suninen leads a World Rally Championship round overnight for the first time in his career, but Ott Tanak's Toyota is only two seconds behind M-Sport's Finn heading into Saturday. The pressure gets to Suninen and he falls victim to a Hagfors snowbank, leaving Tanak to manage a gap at the front of the field. There's a huge battle for the podium places, with Andreas Mikkelsen running second before he fades to fourth. Mikkelsen's Hyundai team-mate Thierry Neuville hassles Esapekka Lappi for the runner-up spot, but loses out to the Finn on the final stage.

- 1 Ott Tanak/Martin Jarveoja (Toyota)
- 2 Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (Citroen)
- 3 Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai)



3 Rally Mexico

MARCH 7-10

Sebastien Ogier makes it two out of three for 2019 and five Mexico wins in seven years. The Citroen driver enjoys a clean run on the first hot event of the season. Elfyn Evans returns to the scene of his big shunt 12 months ago and is immediately on the pace for M-Sport – he runs second for much of the event before losing that place to Ott Tanak (who recovers from sweeping the gravel clear on Friday) on the final day. Thierry Neuville can find no confidence in the i20 but makes fourth, while Benito Guerra is given a hero's welcome at home, finishing sixth and top R5 in his Skoda.

- 1 Sebastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Citroen)
- 2 Ott Tanak/Martin Jarveoja (Toyota)
- 3 Elfyn Evans/Scott Martin (Ford)



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ALL TOGETHER TO THE FRENCH REIGN

could throw at him. By **David Evans**



The Toyota man took six wins throughout 2019



Thierry Neuville's year came up just short



Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com

Sebastien Ogier was ahead on Rally Turkey

The FIA's engraver had better be ready for this. After starting his World Rally Championship work with

'Sebastien' for the past 15 years, finally he gets to do his work with his eyes open. Instead of Loeb or Ogier, Ott Tanak is the new hero, the new ruler of rallying.

Rarely has a driver been so deserving of a title. And in all honesty, it probably should have come last year. From late April's Rally Argentina onwards, Tanak found a groove with his Toyota in 2018, and he has been in it ever since.

The speed he showed in South America last year was a step on from what others were achieving with this generation of very fast rally cars.

He hasn't been able to maintain that shocking pace universally, but when he's really needed it, and when he's reached for it, he's found it again.

Back to South America in 2019, and across to the Andes' Pacific side, and it was there for all to see in Chile. The Concepcion-based event was one of Tanak's most impressive rallies ever. Not only did he show that speed, but

he matched it with commitment, common sense and sheer bravery. Those three days of rallying through the Chilean woods showed precisely why Tanak's time had come.

New rallies level the playing field every time, but Chile was more level than ever. On any new event, the most important aspect of rally week is the recce. Get the notes right early on and you take confidence. From confidence comes commitment, and from commitment comes speed. That's unless it's foggy, when anything can happen. When the mist comes down, it's so easy to get disorientated and misjudge things. A 100-metre straight can be 100 metres before one corner, then 80 or 120 the next time. A big-speed six-right this time could be a five or five minus when you're struggling to see the end of the recce car's bonnet – unless you're in that place where everything is working, where the combination of self-confidence and self-belief focuses the mind, casts aside the minutiae, takes note after consistent note from a driver's mouth and places it perfectly in his co-driver's book.

That's exactly where Tanak and co-driver Martin Jarveoja were in Chile. The road surface, grip levels, weather, tyre choices, suspension and

transmission settings... nothing was simple about the WRC's first visit to this beautiful country, but Tanak made it look like he'd been born, brought up and taught to drive on the roads that flashed up and down the valleys above the Biobio river.

Whatever was thrown in his path, he dealt with it, and when he crossed the finish line of the powerstage – fastest, naturally – he permitted himself a small fist-pump. Ordinarily, he doesn't go in for that sort of thing. Before the stage starts he'll wiggle his wrists around, but thumping himself on the legs or slapping his chest to get the blood up? Nah, that's not really him. He just brakes a bit later than everybody else.

Not only did that event highlight how complete Tanak is as a driver, but it also played him very much back into the championship fight. An electrical issue on the other side of the mountains 10 days earlier in Argentina had left him 28 points behind championship leader Thierry Neuville. His perfect 30 in Chile (allied to an unfortunate and enormous, rally-ending shunt for Neuville's Hyundai) meant Tanak flew back to Europe just 10 off new leader Sebastien Ogier.

continued on page 36



Elfyn Evans took two podiums in his M-Sport Fiesta

Tour of Corsica MARCH 28-31

After the pain of losing second place on the previous round, Elfyn Evans feels real agony when he loses a win on the French island. The WRC driver is 11s up on Thierry Neuville going into the final stage, but drops to third with a powerstage puncture. Neuville's first victory of the season moves him to the top of the points table, with Sebastien Ogier's second place keeping him close behind. That second comes despite frustration for the Frenchman, who feels the C3 WRC is lacking asphalt pace. That's nothing compared with Ott Tanak's frustration – he leads early on but slips to sixth with a puncture. **1 Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai)**
2 Sebastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Citroen)
3 Elfyn Evans/Scott Martin (Ford)



5 Rally Argentina APRIL 25-28

Thierry Neuville extends his championship lead with back-to-back wins. He's quick to praise the Hyundai team after much-needed speed and stability is found from the car. He's also aware that he might have dodged a couple of Ott Tanak-shaped bullets after the Toyota man stops with an electrical problem on the second day. Andreas Mikkelsen happily grabs second place – just what he needed after being benched for the previous round. Sebastien Ogier steals third spot from Kris Meeke on the powerstage after the Northern Irishman suffers a puncture four miles from the end. **1 Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai)**
2 Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jaeger (Hyundai)
3 Sebastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Citroen)



6 Rally Chile MAY 9-12

An opening-stage stall aside, this is pretty much the perfect way for Ott Tanak to play himself back into the title fight – he leads from SS2 until the finish. Championship leader Thierry Neuville slips to third after a big crash on Saturday's second test. The battle for second is an all-French affair between Sebastien Ogier and Loeb. The champion holds his former team-mate off and moves back to the top of the table courtesy of his runner-up spot. Loeb is satisfied with his first podium for his new employer. M-Sporters Elfyn Evans and Teemu Suninen round out the top five. **1 Ott Tanak/Martin Jarveoja (Toyota)**
2 Sebastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Citroen)
3 Sebastien Loeb/Daniel Elena (Hyundai)



WRC SEASON REVIEW



Sebastien Ogier was increasingly frustrated with his Citroen's pace

Continued from page 35

Victory in Portugal three weeks on meant he narrowed the gap to two points off Ogier, and a less-disastrous weekend than his rivals meant he moved into the lead on a particularly baking week on the Italian island of Sardinia. First into the powerstage, Tanak would be fifth when he came out. Power-steering problems almost sent him off the road and nearly derailed his title tilt once more. Those issues weren't the only ones he suffered through the season. The Toyota was also hit by electrical gremlins with the ECU and the alternator, and then there was the batch of weak wheelrims that arguably cost him a puncture in Monte Carlo and Corsica – he was leading both before stopping to change a wheel.

Adding up, in conservative fashion, what might have been if he'd enjoyed a trouble-free season is a startling task. Giving him second place instead of third on the Monte, second rather than sixth in Corsica, wins in Argentina and Sardinia, and eight more points in Turkey is not unreasonable. Totting those up gives him an extra 62 points and would have put him out of sight well before the finish line of Rally Spain at the end of October.

With that in mind, it becomes a little easier to understand why he parted ways with Toyota at the end of the season. Few who saw the thunderous look across Tanak's face as he came into the service park in Sardinia would question the strength of feeling about the 20 points he'd dropped an hour earlier on the road to the sea. Worse still, that was the precursor to the WRC's summer break. From the middle of June until early August's Rally Finland, Tanak would be stewing on squandered opportunity.

It was in the radio silence that followed that Andrea Adamo spotted a window of opportunity. The Hyundai Motorsport director got in there and orchestrated the greatest heist since Charlie Croker left Turin with a Mini-load of gold. But regardless of what's coming in 2020, this year Tanak was the worthiest of champions, something the outgoing champ was quick to recognise.

Ogier and Tanak are good buddies and, sore as the Frenchman was at missing out on going seven up, if he had to defer to anybody, he'd rather it was somebody as deserving as his former team-mate. Not only did he lose to Tanak, but Ogier could only take his Citroen to third in

the final standings behind Neuville.

Up the road out of Hafren on the Saturday afternoon of October's Rally GB, Ogier pulled over to work on tyre pressures and to fiddle with the C3's suspension ahead of a second dash through Dyfi. Neuville had just elbowed his way past into second place, and Ogier seemed in a resigned mood. "I can't do more," he offered, looking up from working on the car's left-rear. "Really, I am on the limit."

Right then came the realisation that this thing was really over. French rule was finished, and Ogier really wasn't going to win the championship. A year earlier, Wales had been the place where he'd turned everything around again with another flash of his other-worldly talent. But this time he wound everything up, took a shot and found there was nothing left to give. A month later, he was giving Motorsport News the exclusive on why he'd walked out of Citroen.

Ogier defied significant odds to win three times this season and dug deep to display the sort of fighting spirit the world's finest sportsmen command to keep himself in a game he knew was slipping away. But with Toyota



Despite contesting 10 rounds, Andreas Mikkelsen was fourth in the points



Kris Meeke was bang on the pace in Germany and took a second position

he'll be back, recharged and ready for one more season and one more title next year.

Citroen, on the other hand, won't be. Despite readying a racier-looking C3 for 2020, the Parisians felt they were lost without their team leader and threw in the towel. In doing so, they lessened the WRC manufacturer count by a quarter and slapped Ogier's team-mate Esapekka Lappi firmly in the face. The Finn, like the Versailles workforce, deserved far more.

It's probably a little harsh to prioritise Ogier above Neuville when the i20 driver finished ahead in the final standings, but the title has, for the past five years, been Ogier's to lose and how that happened was a significant part of the story. How close was Neuville to winning? Being brutal, not particularly. There's no denying that Hyundai was a much more potent force under the eye of Adamo, but the Belgian's undoing was threefold: a dramatic, panel-bending no-score in Chile when he was building momentum and chasing a hat-trick of wins was followed by a miserable pair of outings in Finland and Germany. The news from Jyväskylä and Bostalsee was pretty standard fare for Neuville. He lacked confidence and pace on the

former, and fell foul of Panzerplatte on the latter. Topping off a wall in Turkey just about finished the job and seriously tested Adamo's patience.

For the past three years, Neuville has been the very epicentre of this team and he's failed to deliver gold. He affected change in the team ahead of this season – Adamo in for Michel Nandan – and benefited from the associated improvements, but still finished second. Next year he'll have a world champion alongside him morning, noon and night. Failure to establish some sort of authority over Tanak from the off could be the bespectacled one's undoing.

Following the loss of Rally Australia to rampaging bushfires, Neuville takes some bragging rights as he heads into the winter as winner of the last round of the 2019 series in Spain. And Hyundai certainly has plenty to brag about. The Frankfurt-based team appeared to relish its part as the service park's pantomime villain, with Adamo dropping Andreas Mikkelsen three times, rotating drivers to manipulate the running-order regulations, and working a Sunday classification to its own end when and where it fancied.

ROUND-BY-ROUND

7 Rally of Portugal MAY 30-JUNE 2

One of the toughest events of the season as temperatures rocket, but Ott Tanak and the Toyota are, once again, able to control proceedings.

A broken damper on the second Amarante test is a small concern, but such is Tanak's confidence that he takes a tactical decision to slow just before the end of the powerstage to ensure Ogier remains at the top of the table and opens the road in Sardinia. Kris Meeke loses second to Thierry Neuville with a spin in the penultimate test and then retires, elevating Sebastien Ogier to third on the final stage.

- 1 Ott Tanak/Martin Jarveoja (Toyota)
- 2 Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai)
- 3 Sebastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Citroen)



8 Rally of Italy JUNE 13-16

Ott Tanak is robbed of a third win on the bounce after his Yaris suffers final-stage power-steering failure. He finishes a furious fifth. The upside to that dramatic news is Dani Sordo's elevation to P1. The Spaniard scores a hugely popular second career win – his first on gravel – on the Italian island. Suninen's second is equally as well received, especially by new co-driver Jarmo Lehtinen. Andreas Mikkelsen makes it an unlikely double podium for Hyundai – Thierry Neuville finishes sixth after a pacenote 'misunderstanding' costs him time on Friday. Seven points now covers the top three.

- 1 Dani Sordo/Carlos del Barrio (Hyundai)
- 2 Teemu Suninen/Jarmo Lehtinen (Ford)
- 3 Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jaeger (Hyundai)



9 Rally Finland AUGUST 1-4

A Toyota podium lock-out is on the cards for much of the event, but ultimately the team from up the road in Puuopola misses out. Kris Meeke crashes twice and Jari-Matti Latvala is pipped to second by 7.6s, losing the spot to countryman Esapekka Lappi. Out front, Ott Tanak is again peerless. This is a typically close Rally Finland, with Tanak running fourth at the end of Friday, 2.6s off the lead, but by Sunday he's back in front. Andreas Mikkelsen holds off an ill Sebastien Ogier to take fourth place by 2.7s.

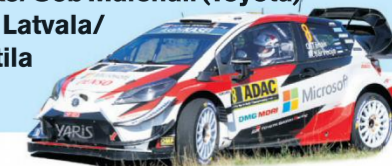
- 1 Ott Tanak/Martin Jarveoja (Toyota)
- 2 Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (Citroen)
- 3 Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila (Toyota)



10 Rally Germany AUGUST 22-25

The result Toyota threatened in Finland is duly delivered on the season's final all-asphalt rally. Thierry Neuville keeps Ott Tanak honest and has high hopes of spoiling the Yaris-based party until he punctures in Panzerplatte. Second and 5.6s off the lead becomes seventh and miles away. Kris Meeke secures his first podium of the season with second place. Jari-Matti Latvala follows him home with third. A Hyundai reshuffle after the final stage eases Neuville's pain and moves him up to fourth, but Sebastien Ogier's malady is worse – he's a distant seventh.

- 1 Ott Tanak/Martin Jarveoja (Toyota)
- 2 Kris Meeke/Seb Marshall (Toyota)
- 3 Jari-Matti Latvala/Miikka Anttila (Toyota)



Photos: mcklein-imagedatabase.com



Making a splash: Dani Sordo's points helped Hyundai to the makes crown



The highlight for Sebastien Loeb was third place on the new Rally Chile

Adamo's response was simple – and defiant. Break any rules? He didn't even bend them; he *played* them. Adamo masterminded this year's manufacturers' title beautifully. He didn't have the fastest car, but he focused on the man-management of Neuville, Mikkelsen, Dani Sordo and Sebastien Loeb to deliver the South Korean manufacturer's first WRC title.

Hyundai's chief title rival Toyota simply didn't have the consistency to challenge. Too often the Yaris drivers appeared to focus on their own ends instead of tuning into team boss Tommi Makinen's bigger picture. Kris Meeke and Jari-Matti Latvala both have a devastating turn of speed, but this year was about bringing the car home sixth or higher time after time. Makinen wanted them to become his equivalent of Sordo. That they failed in that resulted in a very different looking Toyota team for next season.

The whole service park will be looking very different next season following Citroen's departure. The WRC's response will be fascinating. The cost of these cars prohibits the sort of privateer response we've seen in the past; there will be no

army of M-Sport Fords packing out the space formerly run by the reds.

Talking of the Cumbrian-based team, Ogier's absence from M-Sport was painfully felt. That said, Elfyn Evans stepped up and led the team superbly. He deserved a Corsican win and returned from a back injury for a strong showing at home in Wales. But M-Sport Ford didn't start every round knowing it was chasing victory. There's a psychological side to that and, while team principal Richard Millener and Malcolm Wilson did all they could to offset it, the edge and application of a six-time champion was missing.

The door to Dovenby Hall is currently being knocked down by a long line of star drivers looking for a ride alongside Teemu Suninen next season. There's title-tilting potential in that queue, so if Wilson can work his magic with the numbers through 2020, M-Sport could top a podium or two sometime soon.

OK, there's nothing to suggest that there will be any interlopers among the big three – Tanak, Neuville and Ogier – for the title, but the potential subplot of civil wars around the service park can only serve to spice up the current WRC cars' penultimate season. ■



Brit Gus Greensmith ran strongly on Rally Germany

FINAL POINTS

World Rally Championship, 2019

POS	DRIVER	CAR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	TOTAL
1	Ott Tanak	Toyota Yaris WRC	17	30	18	12	5	30	28	10	30	25	5	30	23	263
2	Thierry Neuville	Hyundai i20	21	19	15	27	28	0	22	11	12	17	8	19	28	227
3	Sebastien Ogier	Citroen C3 WRC	29	2	30	19	20	22	20	4	12	7	28	19	5	217
4	Andreas Mikkelsen	Hyundai i20	0	12	0	-	18	6	-	20	15	8	15	8	-	102
5	Elfyn Evans	Ford Fiesta WRC	0	13	15	15	0	12	10	13	-	-	-	12	12	102
6	Kris Meeke	Toyota Yaris WRC	13	8	14	7	12	2	0	4	0	20	6	12	0	98
7	Jari-Matti Latvala	Toyota Yaris WRC	10	0	4	1	14	3	6	2	16	18	10	0	10	94
8	Dani Sordo	Hyundai i20	-	-	4	12	10	-	1	25	-	10	10	-	17	89
9	Teemu Suninen	Ford Fiesta WRC	1	0	0	13	6	10	14	18	4	4	13	0	6	89
10	Esapekka Lappi	Citroen C3 WRC	0	19	1	6	0	8	0	6	18	4	18	3	0	83

11 Sebastien Loeb (Hyundai i20) 51; 12 Kalle Rovanpera (Skoda Fabia R5) 18; 13 Pontus Tidemand (Ford Fiesta WRC) 12; 14 Craig Breen (Hyundai i20) 10; 15 Gus Greensmith (Ford Fiesta WRC/Ford Fiesta R5) 9; 16 Benito Guerra (Skoda Fabia R5) 8; 17 Marco Bulacia Wilkinson (Skoda Fabia R5) 6; 18 Mads Ostberg (Citroen C3 R5) 6; 19 Jan Kopecky (Skoda Fabia R5) 5; 20 Yoann Bonato (Citroen C3 R5) 4; 21 Pierre-Louis Loubet (Skoda Fabia R5) 2; 22 Ole-Christian Veiby (VW Polo GTI R5) 2; 23 Stephane Sarrazin (Hyundai i20 R5) 2; 24 Nikolay Gryazin (Skoda Fabia R5) 1; 25 Takamoto Katsuta (Ford Fiesta R5/Toyota Yaris WRC) 1; 26 Eric Camilli (VW Polo GTI R5/Ford Fiesta R5/Citroen C3 R5) 1; 27 Emil Bergkvist (Ford Fiesta R5) 1; 28 Adrien Fourmaux (Ford Fiesta R5) 1; 29 Pedro Heller (Ford Fiesta R5) 1; 30 Janne Tuohino (Ford Fiesta WRC) 1; 31 Petter Solberg (VW Polo GTI R5) 1; 32 Ricardo Trivino (Skoda Fabia R5) 1. Bold results = wins.

11 Rally of Turkey SEPTEMBER 12-15

Three weeks after Citroen's low point of the season comes a 1-2 on the roughest and toughest round of the year. Esapekka Lappi leads through the opening day, but has no answer to Sebastien Ogier's pace and ability in finding the right tyres for the conditions. The Frenchman's title hopes are given a significant boost with problems for Thierry Neuville, who slips off the road and ends the event eighth. Championship leader Ott Tanak retires on Saturday morning with an ECU problem. He comes back to win the powerstage.

- 1 Sebastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Citroen)
- 2 Esapekka Lappi/Janne Ferm (Citroen)
- 3 Andreas Mikkelsen/Anders Jaeger (Hyundai)



12 Rally GB OCTOBER 3-6

Ott Tanak takes a Welsh classic from Thierry Neuville. The gap between the pair is rarely more than a second or two, but the Toyota driver finishes the job he started on Rally GB 12 months ago. Sebastien Ogier is third, but can see his title chances slipping away as Tanak leaves Llandudno 28 points ahead. Kris Meeke is fourth, but Elfyn Evans is the real home hero, returning to the series after a back injury ruled him out for the previous three rounds to take fifth – suspension damage in Penmachno costs him a possible podium. Kalle Rovanpera seals the WRC 2 Pro title with another win.

- 1 Ott Tanak/Martin Jarveoja (Toyota)
- 2 Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai)
- 3 Sebastien Ogier/Julien Ingrassia (Citroen)



13 Rally Spain OCTOBER 24-27

Emotional scenes greet Ott Tanak at the end of the final stage as second place and a towering powerstage victory are enough for him to seal his maiden world title. All Thierry Neuville can do to keep his dwindling hopes alive is win, and the Hyundai driver duly delivers a pretty perfect result from that perspective. Sebastien Ogier's season is shot when he suffers power-steering problems while leading on Friday morning. Spaniard Dani Sordo boosts Hyundai's manufacturer title hopes with third on his home round. Hyundai's success is confirmed when Rally Australia is cancelled due to serious fires.

- 1 Thierry Neuville/Nicolas Gilsoul (Hyundai)
- 2 Ott Tanak/Martin Jarveoja (Toyota)
- 3 Dani Sordo/Carlos del Barrio (Hyundai)



WRC DRIVERS

PICKING OUT THOSE WHO GAVE THE STAGES A FRIGHT IN 2019

Our man **Colin Clark** selects the drivers who lit up the timing screens over the course of the 13-event campaign



1 OTT TANAK

Car: Toyota Yaris WRC
Championship position: 1st
Wins: 6 **Podiums:** 9

Ott Tänak was the class act of 2019, without any question. Had it not been for some high-profile technical issues, in Sardinia and Turkey in particular, he'd have wrapped up the drivers' title well before the penultimate event on Wales Rally GB. He hardly put a wheel wrong all season and his confidence and self-belief was such that he started every event knowing that he should win it. Tänak's speed and consistency throughout the year reached new levels, and that forced the chasing pack to take risks that ultimately proved costly to them. There was a bombshell defection to Hyundai at the completion of the campaign, which only serves to reinforce his personal belief that it doesn't matter what car he's in – he's the fastest and best driver out there. There are very few right now who could justifiably argue with that.



2 SEBASTIEN OGIER

Car: Citroën C3 WRC
Championship position: 3rd
Wins: 3 **Podiums:** 8

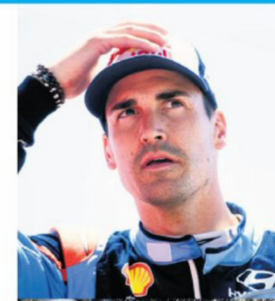
What should have been a triumphant return to the very Citroën team that gave Sebastien Ogier his big break in the World Rally Championship turned into anything but. Early-season victories proved to be a bit of a false dawn in terms of the Frenchman's quest to take drivers' title number seven. The C3 WRC just wasn't up to the task. Ogier, however, was and used every bit of his experience, guile, craft and intelligence to keep the pressure on Ott Tänak throughout the season. Ogier faced a very different challenge this year and ultimately fell short. He did, however, show that he still has the hunger and the speed to win titles. He will use the experience gained in 2019 to his advantage in 2020 and, behind the wheel of the ultra-quick Toyota, will once again be a real contender.



3 DANI SORDO

Car: Hyundai i20
Championship position: 8th **Wins:** 1 **Podiums:** 2

Once again convincingly proving his worth as a valuable team player throughout the season, Dani Sordo seems to revel in his part-time role at Hyundai and is arguably driving better than at any other point in his career. Has there been a more popular win than Sordo's in Sardinia over the past few seasons in the WRC? I really don't think so. Sordo earned his WRC reputation as a Tarmac specialist in the early part of his career with Citroën. He has, however, developed into a very accomplished all-rounder who, due to his part-time role, can make the most of advantageous starting positions to consistently become a podium contender on all surfaces. Delivered exactly what the team needed in 2019. The fact that a 2020 deal for Sordo was never in any doubt is testament to just how highly rated the Spaniard is by his Hyundai bosses.



4 THIERRY NEUVILLE

Car: Hyundai i20 **Championship**

position: 2nd **Wins:** 3 **Podiums:** 7

How much longer will Thierry Neuville have to wait to claim a WRC drivers' title? Incredibly, he finished as the bridesmaid for the fifth time in his career. For the past few seasons, Neuville's Achilles heel has been the second half of the season and, once again, this proved to be the case in 2019. A poor run of results from Sardinia through to Turkey meant the Belgian driver found himself chasing an uncatchable Tanak. He did, however, ably demonstrate that he is still very capable of winning rallies and when a driver is winning rallies, he is always in with a chance of winning titles. Neuville was undoubtedly the main man in terms of Hyundai's 2019 manufacturer title push and you have to wonder how much extra pressure that put on him and how much it curbed his risk taking and ultimately his points scoring ability. It'll be interesting to see how he responds to having Ott Tanak as his team-mate in 2020.



5 ELFYN EVANS

Car: Ford Fiesta WRC **Championship**

position: 5th **Wins:** 0 **Podiums:** 2

A memorable season for so many different reasons for Elfyn Evans. A potentially career-ending back injury sustained during a demonstration event in Estonia could have had devastating consequences. How difficult must it have been to sit out three events and watch as others staked their claims for 2020 seats? Patience and perseverance is so often the way forward in the rally world and Evans showed bucketloads of both on and off the stages in 2019. Evans' on-stage form was far from spectacular but he was steady and he was very much in control. Not every season is about moving forward – some are about consolidation. Incredibly, Evans managed to consolidate on the stage and move forward off the stages. A dream move to Toyota for 2020 shows just how well regarded he is around the service park and is just rewards for all his hard work. Working again with Sebastien Ogier in 2020 in the WRC's fastest machine is a massive opportunity.



6 ANDREAS MIKKELSEN

Car: Hyundai i20 **Championship**

position: 4th **Wins:** 0 **Podiums:** 3

This one might surprise a few but I was enormously impressed by how Andreas Mikkelsen responded to the pressure, expectation and scrutiny that he came under in the second half of the season. Benched to make way for Sebastien Loeb after a disappointing Rally Chile, many expected the always likeable Norwegian to disappear off into the fjords never to be seen again. But he returned with a new focus and a resolve that sadly we haven't seen enough of in a career that promised so much. He knew what he had to do in the second half of the season and he delivered. Hyundai's manufacturer title is, in no small part, due to the points that Mikkelsen steadfastly went about accumulating for the team. He has proved himself to be a valuable team player, but has he done enough to warrant a return in 2020?



7 ESAPEKKA LAPPI

Car: Citroen C3 WRC **Championship**

position: 10th **Wins:** 0 **Podiums:** 3

What should have been a dream move to Citroen as team-mate to Sebastien Ogier proved to be anything but. What impressed me most about Esapekka Lappi, however, was his attitude. Yes, he moaned a little more than I would have liked to have seen, but he did it all in a very self-deprecating and almost charming way. Self-belief is such an important factor in rallying and the minute you lose that, you lose the ability to go fast. Lappi did question it on the odd occasion but, underpinning all the car problems he had to contend with, there was the knowledge that he is supremely talented and supremely quick. I've always felt there is something very special about this boy and, on reflection, 2019 gave me no cause to question this. He still has a massive amount to offer the WRC and I'm sure Citroen's sad demise will not signal the demise of one of the WRC's most precocious talents.



8 GUS GREENSMITH

Car: Ford Fiesta WRC/Ford Fiesta R5 **Championship**

position: 15th **Wins:** 0 **Podiums:** 0

A breakthrough year for the young Englishman in the World Rally Championship. He made his debut in a WRC car and showed enough potential to get watchers genuinely excited about what the future might hold. Yes, he made mistakes but the most important thing was his pace. We've seen how difficult these current generation World Rally Cars are to master for up and coming talent but Greensmith seemed to genuinely rise to the challenge. The first morning in Finland is all the evidence needed to prove his credentials. Stage times within three tenths of a second-per-kilometre off fastest were remarkable. There are a few rough edges that need to be knocked off the self-confident youngster, but the essential elements were very much on display in 2019. I expect an expanded programme for 2020 and rapid progress. Oh, and maybe a few more crashes.



9 KALLE ROVANPERA

Car: Skoda Fabia R5/Skoda Fabia R5 evo

Championship position: 12th **Wins:** 0

Podiums: 0

Much like 2018, Kalle Rovanpera took a little while to get into the 2019 season. Is this the beginning of a worrying trend? I really don't think so, because when he did get up to speed he was once again devastatingly sensational in the R5 class. Referred to by many, in the nicest possible way, as the Finnish Freak, Rovanpera proved once again that all the hype that has surrounded this young man in his short career seems to be well placed. He can do things in a rally car that just shouldn't be possible. And, he just positively oozes self-belief and confidence. I don't think we'll be waiting too long to see the Rovanpera name once again at the top of the WRC timesheets. There will be massive pressure and even bigger expectation on the WRC 2 Pro champion in 2020.



10 SEBASTIEN LOEB

Car: Hyundai i20 **Championship**

position: 11th **Wins:** 0

Podiums: 1

Expectations were high after that remarkable victory on Rally Spain in 2018, but this year was never going to be about wins for Sebastien Loeb. It was all about the team and the mercurial Frenchman showed that, as a team player, he's right up there with the very best. It was unrealistic to expect Loeb to be challenging for wins – but he could have won. His performance in Chile was as good as we saw from anyone during the season. The notoriously difficult-to-set-up Hyundai took a little while to master on the Chilean gravel, but having given away 45 seconds on the first loop of stages, he blitzed the field for the remainder of the event to claim a remarkable podium and remind us of the genius that we were fortunate enough to be watching. Loeb will once again grace us with his presence in 2020. We will enjoy every mile of every stage.





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WRC REVIEW



Evans (l) and Martin took two podiums

THE SEASON THAT FAILED TO DELIVER FOR THE BRITONS

Elfyn Evans, Kris Meeke and Gus Greensmith had tough and diverse seasons. By **David Evans**

This was a season which promised much for British rally fans, with Elfyn Evans leading the M-Sport Ford World Rally Team and Kris Meeke back after his French... hiccup last year. And both talked a good game ahead of Monte Carlo.

Evans would spearhead the British team's effort following Sebastien Ogier's departure after two super-successful campaigns.

One thing was clear from the 2019 get-go: Evans's attitude and maturity had changed markedly. He was a driver who had benefited from his time alongside Ogier. Albeit hesitantly, and at times rather reluctantly, Evans had talked the talk of a team leader earlier in his career, but this year he really did walk the walk.

He finished joint fourth in the championship, but should have had that place to himself. If the right-front wheel of his Ford Fiesta WRC hadn't found that pothole on the Corsican powerstage, Evans would have bagged more points and, crucially, a second world championship win.

Losing out was tough to take, but that one was one of the key factors in the development of him as a driver. Of course he didn't shrug it off, but there were no histrionics (Elfyn doesn't really do those...), just a determination to put that result right as soon as possible.

Unfortunately for him, a heavy landing at Rally Estonia damaged his back and he would be forced to sit out three crucial events: Finland, Germany and Turkey.

Not that those rallies were perfect shop windows for him to display the speed he and the Fiesta WRC could muster on three diverse events. Indeed, Evans has finished second in Finland before and always starts Germany with high hopes. Missing them was a blow, but again the focus was on the next step. He'd be back in Wales. Focus on coming home.

The pace on the stages where he had celebrated his maiden WRC win two years earlier was impressive again, and Spain offered a consistent conclusion to the season. By then Ott Tanak had made his move and Evans was flying to Finland for an unexpected second trip to Jyväskylä of the season. This time he was off to visit Tommi Makinen to talk through a deal for next year. The next two years, in fact.



Kris Meeke tempered his pace with consistency, but not often enough

Saying goodbye to M-Sport won't be easy for Evans, but he's earned himself a gilt-edged opportunity with the world's biggest car maker.

Moving in the other direction is Meeke. Evans will take one of the seats vacated by Toyota factory men Tanak, Meeke and Jari-Matti Latvala. Had it not been for the loss of his windscreen in Chile (when I say 'loss', it didn't exactly lose itself... it was hoofed out after it unexpectedly went the wrong way up), a couple of moments in Portugal and Finland (and one in Spain), it's possible Meeke could have remained in place for a second term at Toyota. Early

doors, he looked strong. Points were being bagged and results stacked up. Granted, he wasn't troubling the podium every time, but he was showing the sort of consistency plenty felt was beyond him.

Could this be the moment? Had Meeke found a way to blend his massive speed with seeing the finish on Sunday afternoon on a regular basis? It was an improvement, but still there were too many flashes of him getting the sniff of a win and forgetting the team's bigger picture. Ultimately, that's what cost him.

What the future holds for Meeke now is debatable. There's talk of more Toyota



Greensmith was a surprise call-up

testing, but that's looking unlikely following his 'ciao for now' social media message to the WRC. Meeke and his swashbuckling style will be missed, as will his forthright views.

Gus Greensmith stepped up to a factory Ford Fiesta WRC and gave British fans hope for the future. His speed on all three rallies he completed (Portugal, Finland and Germany) at the top level was genuinely encouraging.

Fundamentally, he looks to have bridged the gap from R5 to a World Rally Car and that, in itself, has been beyond a number of others. ■



Rovanpera underlined potential

Rovanpera overcomes a tough start to shine in WRC 2 Pro while Solans lifts JWRC

This year was going to be a walk in the park for Kalle Rovanpera. Yes, he was only 18 at the start of the year, and yes, there was a bit of pressure, but he had a factory Skoda and, well... he's Kalle Rovanpera – the WRC's wunderkind to end all wunderkinds.

He would, the storyline went, have the all-new WRC 2 Pro title all sorted by the end of the Finnish summer. Some even went so far as to suggest that he could be swapping a Fabia R5 for a Toyota Yaris WRC before the end of the year. Then he crashed on the Monte. And in Sweden. And in Corsica. Oh...

That pressure got real in Chile, his fourth start of the season. We were about to find out what 2001 Swedish Rally winner Harri's boy

had really learned since he started tearing up frozen lakes a decade ago. What happened? He won four on the bounce and rocketed himself back into contention. A couple more rallies on, and a world title was delivered for the only-just-19-year-old on Rally GB. Rovanpera made mistakes this year, but he's the real deal and he's ready for the step up to the big time that awaits him in 2020.

What of the rest of the WRC 2 Pro field? M-Sport's Gus Greensmith scored a superb seventh overall to start his season in sensational fashion on the Monte. The rest of the year didn't quite live up to that billing, save for an incredible Rally Turkey victory – the first WRC success for the Fiesta R5 MkII,

which came despite rolling after the penultimate stage.

Greensmith narrowly missed out on second place in WRC 2 Pro, which was taken by Citroen driver Mads Ostberg. But, quite frankly, who was winning that class was pretty much anybody's guess for much of the year. All too often the supposedly amateur end of the R5 offering – WRC 2 – was besting WRC 2 Pro in the overall classification, leaving onlookers bemused at best and thoroughly confused at worst. Fortunately, the FIA is working to deliver a marginally more elegant solution for 2020.

Back-to-back wins in Portugal and Sardinia laid the foundations for Pierre-Louis

Loubet to lift the WRC 2 title in his Skoda.

The Solans household celebrated a second JWRC title (the class is a one-make series for Ford Fiesta R2s) in three years, as Jan followed in the footsteps of older brother Nil to drive away the prize – a brand-new Fiesta R5 – at the end of the season. Spanish star Solans Jr and Swede Tom Kristensson were the class of the field and shared two wins apiece in the five-round series.

A double-points finale meant practically everybody stood a mathematical chance of clinching the Junior title in Wales, but ultimately it was Solans who delivered the precision and pace required.

PICS OF THE YEAR

After 12 months of racing, rallying and everything in between it's that time of year again where we take a look back at the best pictures.

Our dedicated team of contributors have gone above and beyond as ever to capture the best moments from 2019 and out of thousands of pictures, we've selected the very best images, as well as our own personal moments.

Photos by Rachel Bourne, Roy Dempster, Jakob Ebrey, Conor Edwards, Gary Hawkins, Paul Lawrence, Chicane Media, mkpics.net Steve Jones, Ollie Read, Richard Styles and Mick Walker. ■

MATT JAMES
EDITOR



The British Touring Car Championship regulations are, more-or-less, designed to make sure that the competition goes to a final-day shootout. So, it was predictable that the pressure was on during finals day at Brands Hatch on the Grand Prix layout, and there were three drivers in with a realistic shot at the crown.

But it wasn't that Colin Turkington grabbed the major trophy on that day which is the overriding memory. Instead, it is the sight of Dan Cammish's Team Dynamics Honda Civic Type R spinning wildly into the tyre wall at Hawthorns with just over a lap remaining of the 30-race campaign.

That final lap, the one in which BMW's Turkington cemented his record-equalling fourth title, was the only racing lap of the season that Cammish was not to complete, and it was the most vital of all.

The way the Civic man showed his dignity afterwards was superb. He held his head high and complimented his rival's charge to the spoils.

The kick in the teeth for Cammish was that Andrew Jordan's fourth place in his BMW 330i M Sport was enough for him to tie for second spot on points but claim the position on a countback of wins.

Cammish, who was in his first BTCC showdown, has admitted that the pain was very real.

Given the rollercoaster ride of the BTCC, the pressure will be even greater next term, and he is desperate to show that his performances in 2019 were just the start of his tin-top journey.



Cammish came close to title



Go, go, go: Silverstone hosted a round of the BMW Compact Cup



The orange army came out in their droves once again during the course of the year



The Goodwood Revival attracted a large entry for its TT Celebration race



There was a blast from the past at Oulton Park with a pair of McLarens



John Newell went off-roading at Donington Park in the British Truck Racing series



Damian Toner was flying high this year

STEFAN MACKLEY
REPORTER



When the offer to go to the 77th Goodwood Members' Meeting presented itself I didn't hesitate. It's something I've wanted to experience for a number of years having seen it on TV and spoken to colleagues, and this year I finally got the chance.

Anyone who watched the Betty Richmond Trophy, which was held to celebrate 60 years of the Mini, is unlikely to see a better race all year. Changes for the lead happened almost every lap, often twice, and it took until the final corner for Nick Swift to beat Nick Padmore.

In fact, nearly all the races throughout the weekend had close battles for the lead. Even the SF Edge Trophy for Edwardian cars, which before it started I had dismissed in my head as not much of a race.

But standing at the end of the Lavant Straight it was fascinating to see these machines, many more than 100 years old and of completely unique design, come hurtling past me.

It also happened to produce the closest finish to a race all weekend, with Julian Majzub in his Sunbeam Indianapolis winning by just 0.018 seconds! A truly unique experience.

STEPHEN LICKORISH
DEPUTY EDITOR



Reporting on the British Touring Car Championship's support series is very rarely dull.

Once again, it was the Renault UK Clio Cup that provided the most entertaining title battle this season as Max Coates and Jack Young fought relentlessly to secure the final crown to be awarded before the series heads to the British GT package next year.

But none of the five regular support categories provided my highlight of the year. Instead it was one of the guest series that really starred.

Thruxton very often produces great slipstreaming racing, especially in single-seaters. But it is also the perfect venue for classic Mini competition too – as the first of the BTCC's two visits to the Hampshire circuit proved.

Back in May, the Mini Miglias and Mini Se7ens joined the BTCC support bill for a guest appearance. And they stole the show.

Lap after lap, there were ferocious fights heading into the final Club chicane in both series. Sometimes the Minis were running four or five abreast up Woodham Hill and into the final corner.

It was quite simply brilliant – and great that, in the 60th birthday year of the Mini, two club championships had the chance to shine on the big stage.



(L-r) Three into one doesn't go at the Walter Hayes between Moyers, Foster and Smith



Making a splash: Chris Everill finds out just how wet it was at Silverstone



Martin Verity went up against a polystyrene board in his Radical at Donington



The crowded National Hot Rod pack battle for positions at Aldershot's short oval

PICS OF THE YEAR

DAVID EVANS RALLIES EDITOR



The rain came, but nobody cared. Certainly not me. Nothing and nobody could spoil a Friday night we'd been waiting three years for.

Standing waiting at the end of stage one of the first Mull Rally since 2016 was a special moment – not least because the sanctuary of the Bellachroy Inn and a pint of Jarl were never out of my line of sight.

Was that the moment of the year? Quite possibly. Or was it the following evening? Watching the cars depart Salen under the brightest of autumn night skies, shooting stars and smokey log fires adding to the October west coast ambience. Highly likely.

But actually not. It's got to be Ott.

Tanak's first title was an unbelievable achievement for Estonia, a great moment for Markko Martin and something very, very special for the man himself. I've always been an Ott Tanak fan.

Yes, he crashed a bit to start with and, yes, he can be a truculent and miserable sod from time to time... but he can't half drive.

Catching him directly after the finish in Spain was as amazing as it was emotional. The weight of the world had been lifted from his shoulders and he talked. And talked. And made my moment of the year.



Spectacular views from the Kirkistown Circuit



Flying in formation: Dominik Jackson (4) and Jac Constable (11) lead the Radical Challenge field ahead of a start



Perry Gardener had this moment on the Nicky Grist Stages in his Ford Fiesta



Matteo Ferrer's superb ex-Jacques Laffite Ligier JS11/15 took to the track



There were plenty of thrills and spills at the start of one of the Classic Stock Hatch races at Brands Hatch



Drivers had to contend with appalling weather at Britcar's Into the Night race



Kris Wright (r) and Pavan Ravishankar found that going for the same piece of track doesn't work in BRDC British F3



Niall Murray was pushing the limits of his Van Diemen BD20 at this year's Formula Ford Festival at Brands Hatch



Nearly 100 Citroen C1s took part in the 24-hour race on the Silverstone Grand Prix layout

PAUL LAWRENCE
HISTORICS EDITOR



I was a young marshal when Tom Pryce was killed at Kyalami in March 1977. His violent death when a young marshal, barely two years older than me at the time, crossed the track carrying a fire extinguisher was a shocking way for a glittering career to end.

It was an incident that stayed in my memory as I'd been fortunate enough to watch the gifted Welshman race from the early days of his career.

Later, researching the book on Royale Racing Cars prompted me to re-visit Tom's rise to fame with Alan Cornock, a key figure in the story.

Fast-forward 42 years to a sunny afternoon at Anglesey and I was one of several hundred people gathered on the grid at the sensational North Wales track (see right). It was a truly special moment as we stood in silence to honour the memory of this unassuming hero.

It was the crowning point of a very special race weekend. Sunshine, scenery, a warm welcome, excellent historic racing and a wonderful atmosphere made this a real highlight of the season.



The memory of Tom Pryce was honoured

HAL RIDGE
RX CORRESPONDENT



Located deep in the Varmland region's forests, outside the village of Holjes that is usually home to fewer than 200 people, the Swedish round of the World Rallycross Championship is always a highlight of the season.

More than 40,000 fans descend on the remote location to visit one of the oldest venues on the calendar.

The undulating, challenging circuit is a highlight in itself but this year the result made it even better.

While rallycross has attracted some huge motorsport names in recent years, it has also continued to produce its own talent, and none more so than those that finished on the podium in Sweden this year.

A fairytale victory was claimed by Swede Sebastian Eriksson in a wildcard outing with the Olsbergs MSE team at the circuit where he so nearly won in a one-off entry in 2014, until slowed by suspension failure.

This time, despite engine problems, he took victory and is a talent that richly deserves a regular seat.

Second went the way of Kevin Hansen, the youngest son of 14-time European champ Kenneth, and a driver who has competed since he was just 14 years old.

In a real rallycross drivers' podium, third went to former Super1600 champion and World RX race winner Latvian Reinis Nitiss in a wildcard outing with the GRX squad.

FEATURE



Addison has talked around the globe



This failed scrutineering for Indian Touring Cars

TALKING THROUGH A YEAR OF MOTORSPORT'S BIGGEST HITS

Commentator **David Addison** enjoyed a variety pack of action. He guides us through his busy season.

Long-haul flights, troublesome airports, delays and deadly local traffic can characterise the lifestyle of a global traveller – but for motorsport talker David Addison, it is all part of the fabric of his sporting season.

The Cheshire commentator embarked on yet another epic season of collecting air miles alongside watching some of the greatest motorsport on the planet. Here, he runs us through some of his season's highlights. As you can see, there is hardly a motorsport stone he had left unturned.

1 AN INDIAN ADVENTURE

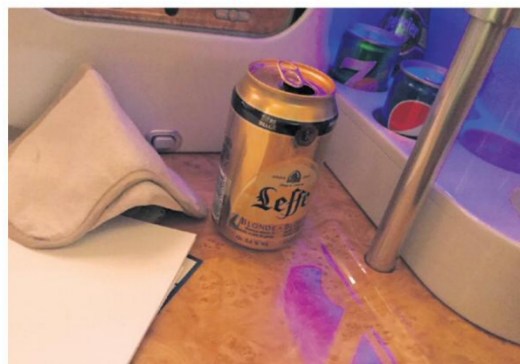
When: February 8-9
Where: Chennai, India
Series: MRF

The early-season cobwebs were well and truly blown away by this one. The MRF Challenge entry was good, if not as strong as previous years, and the Indian Touring Car Championship is always a highlight with a few cars that resemble Bangers from the UK's short ovals.

The road traffic was terrifying and the local taxi to the airport post-event was utterly sphincter-tightening. Going 'up' the 'down' lane onto a motorway equivalent was bad enough but in the dark with no lights on? Thank God I am insured...

The circuit has moved on from 1999, when I first went there, although it remains the only place at which I have shared a toilet with a frog. I did the customary track run too to suss out any alterations.

Jamie Chadwick took the MRF title from Max Defourny, which was interesting, as Defourny had looked



Fancy a beer? There's none Leffe-d

pretty handy when he arrived in Formula Renault but he never got hooked up all weekend. And the hotel served Belgian beer, so bonus points there...

2 KEEPING IT REAL

When: March 23
Where: Oulton Park
Series: British Automobile Racing Club meeting

This was my second visit of the year after the Oulton Park 10km run in February, and a rare day at my local track with Ian Titchmarsh for a circuit commentary.

My first visit to Oulton Park was in 1977 and it looked better than ever, although it was fascinating to see how club racing has changed. There was not a single-seater race in sight...

The BARC had its usual miscellany of saloon cars, with the multitude of Classic Touring Car Racing Club entries offering great variety.

David Margalies' Alfa Romeo GTV6 in mock Andy Rouse-ICS colours was a highlight, as was Ford Escort aficionado Steve Yates in his Brooklyn-liveried XR3i.

Junior Saloons offered good racing but got royally stuffed by hapless safety-car procedure, which meant race one was largely a waste of time. BARC (NW) Sports/Saloons was another mucked up by inept safety-car handling, but there was some good old-fashioned club racing to enjoy.

Ric Wood stole the show with his Holden Commodore, although he missed the second race. And, I was home in 20 minutes for Belgian beer. A fine day.

3 OVAL OFFICERS

When: April 19
Where: Skegness Raceway
Series: National Hot Rods

Easter weekend started with my first visit in 10 years to this place, largely thanks to an offer from friends and Skegness track staff Richard and Helen Kaleta.

Helen is clerk of the course and rules with a rod of iron and track presenter Richard was in fine voice.

There have been endless journeys on boring roads when I get to commentate on BriSCA F2 and National Hot Rods, which made the overdue return to Skeg-vegas even more special.

There was a sizeable crowd but, sadly, most of the BriSCA F1 fans seemed



Rally GB fans enjoy Slate Mountain

unmoved by the National Hot Rods, which to my eyes make a great sight. There was no contact and these weren't the heroes that the fans had come to see.

While Carl Waller-Barrett shone in the Hot Rod final, it was Harry Steward impudently retaking the BriSCA F1 lead on the dash to the flag, denying a last-bend lunge from Frankie Wainman Junior, about which the fans went home talking.

New promoter Rob Speak has done a mighty job at the track, and the place looks a real credit to him. Note to self: must go back. Second note to self: must take own Belgian beer.

4 AN UPHILL TRIUMPH

When: July 5-7
Where: Goodwood
Event: Festival of Speed

These are long days, but enjoyable ones with a wealth of variety on display. Highlights kept on coming and included seeing Rene Arnoux on his step-ladder watching the cars go up the hill through to Kenny Habul's ex-Peter Brock Holden Commodore and Duncan Pittaway driving (or being driven by) the Beast of Turin.

But it was the Porsche 917 feature that sneaked it as the highlight as the cars looked – and sounded – magnificent.

The Romain Dumas-Volkswagen I.D. R run in the Shoot-out was blistering but, on a damp-and-drying road, wasn't as fast as it was in qualifying the day before, although I couldn't help but be impressed by this new-fangled, silent technology.

Oliver Solberg was a star as he hurtled up the hill but, just when you got to a point



Steve Yates's Ford Escort turned heads in the Oulton Park paddock

where you think you are hardened to motorsport and the people, bam: Jack Nicholls and I looked at each other and swallowed hard as Jackie Stewart stopped mid-way up the hill and presented his wife, Helen, with a rose. The reaction to Jackie and his two sons in convoy all weekend was one thing, but this was quite another. Only at Goodwood...

Frustratingly, no Belgian beer to be found at the hotel.

5 A HOMEGROWN HIGHLIGHT

When: July 13-14
Where: Silverstone
Series: Formula 1

There was a real buzz about the place on this weekend. For one thing, a home win was on the cards and for another, a five-year deal was in place.

There was a brilliant battle between the two Mercedes at the start of the grand prix which was sensational, all on the back of the home crowd getting behind F2 winner Jack Aitken earlier in the day.

The big race turned into the Lewis Show again as he romped home to win in style. He was the person most people had come to see so the crowd was happy. Traffic was good getting out, so more happiness was showered around. The dark days of waiting for a Bernie Ecclestone-inspired bombshell to drop seemed to be a thing of the past and, apart from the Red Arrows commentary being usurped by someone on the big screen helpfully showing you what the red carpet in the F1 paddock looks like, not much was missed.

Mrs Addison spent her day drinking Pimm's with her friends and sitting in

the BRDC Grandstand at Abbey in front of my commentary box, offering critical assessment of the coverage. Thanks, love. Have you brought any Belgian beer?

6 GOING AROUND THE CLOCK

When: July 27-28
Where: Spa, Belgium
Event: 24 Hours

This was the highlight of the year. I ran the track on Wednesday and was totally flat through Eau Rouge. Promise.

I collected my suitcase from Team Parker Racing, last seen boarding a transporter at the British Touring Car Championship's visit to Oulton Park in June. I was pleased to find my underwear survived without team boss Stuart Parker infesting it with itching powder.

The new Porsche 935 made its race debut, which was great to see.

The GT grid was huge and there was a cracking race in prospect. Weather was set to rain. Oh, and how. Porsche took the big plaudits.

7 GETTING A BIT DIRTY

When: August 24-25
Where: Kouvola, Finland
Series: Nordic RX

I knew that Scandi-wegians liked rallycross but this was insane. It was packed.

Mind you, there isn't a lot else to do in this area, save for bothering elk.

The journey from Helsinki in a hybrid Toyota was the dullest two hours I have ever endured, and I've watched the film *Rush*...

Anyway, rallycross on a purpose-built



Rene Arnoux gets a better view...



Kouvola is the perfect rallycross venue



The TV control truck captured all of the 2019 British Touring Car action



Hamilton delighted the home town fans

Photos: LAT, David Addison CQE Snaps

DAVID ADDISON'S WHIRLWIND YEAR

DATE	EVENT	VENUE
February 7-10	MRF Challenge	Chennai, India*
March 16	BRSCC Caterhams	Silverstone
March 23	BARC Club meeting	Oulton Park
March 24	British Rallycross	Silverstone
April 6-7	British Touring Cars	Brands Hatch*
April 12-14	Blancpain GT	Monza, Italy*
April 19	National Hot Rods	Skegness
April 22	British GT	Oulton Park*
April 27-28	British Touring Cars	Donington Park*
May 4-5	Blancpain GT	Brands Hatch*
May 11-12	Blancpain GT	Silverstone*
May 18-19	British Touring Cars	Thruxton*
May 25-26	World Rallycross	Silverstone
May 31-Jun 2	Blancpain GT	Paul Ricard, France*
June 8-9	British GT	Silverstone*
June 15-16	British Touring Cars	Croft*
June 20-23	24 Hours	Nurburgring, Germany*
June 29-30	British Touring Cars	Oulton Park*
July 4-7	Festival of Speed	Goodwood*
July 11-14	British Grand Prix	Silverstone
July 19-21	Truck Grand Prix	Nurburgring, Germany*
July 24-28	Blancpain GT 24 Hours	Spa, Belgium*
August 3-4	British Touring Cars	Snetterton*
August 17-18	British Touring Cars	Thruxton*
August 24-25	Nordic Rallycross	Kouvola, Finland*
Aug 30-Sep 1	Blancpain GT	Nurburgring, Germany*
September 6-8	Blancpain GT	Hungaroring, Hungary*
September 14-15	British Touring Cars	Knockhill*
September 21-22	Ferrari Challenge	Silverstone
September 28-29	British Touring Cars	Silverstone*
October 3-6	Wales Rally GB	Oulton Park/Wales
October 12-13	British Touring Cars	Brands Hatch*
October 19-20	Blancpain GT	Las Vegas, America
October 24-27	Lamborghini World Finals	Jerez, Spain*
November 1-3	FIA Motorsport Games	Vallelunga, Italy*
November 22-24	Intercontinental GT 9 Hour	Kyalami, South Africa*

* = TV commentary, others are public address



Mrs Addison liked Formula 1 – and Pimm's

circuit was mega. It was a short track, blasted into a forest with lots of undulation, and the Supercars – and there are plenty of them – looked stunning.

Looking at the teams in this series, you appreciated that it was like a WRX meeting on a smaller scale. It was impressive and the atmosphere reminded me how motorsport should be.

There were no marshals with whistles being a nuisance or offensive security people and, if you wanted to sit on the bank away from the fencing over the top of the track, good on you.

Everyone was happy and in vocal mood. I ran the track too but, at one kilometre, that isn't too impressive.

The hotel served Belgian beer but, at €12 a Leffe, it was an indulgence. At least Dick Turpin wore a mask. Probably from an elk.

8 RETHINKING A CLASSIC

When: October 3-6
Where: England-Wales
Event: Wales Rally GB

Oulton Park in the dark on a Thursday night was a new experience. My headlight-spotting abilities were improving as [co-commentator and former co-driver] Mike Broad and I try to identify cars on the big screens.

Next stop, Slate Mountain. Yes, it was a fiddly stage but there were thousands of fans who rocked up in the afternoon to see the WRC cars and they were certainly worth seeing: it was fascinating to have an annual dip into a different discipline of motorsport.

Less exciting was driving around

Wales. It was slow with nidgery-nadgery lanes, but at least co-driver Broad was in his element on the maps. I suggested that we used SatNav, which was the biggest insult possible it seems...

Sweet Lamb was a thrill as ever, as you can see the cars really being worked and two runs through the stage lets you see who is getting to grips with it by being quicker second time through.

Randomly, a gang of British Touring Car Championship fans were in the same hotel in vowel-lacking-Welsh-town and want to talk about Colin Turkington rather than Ott Tanak. No Leffe. Is there a Welsh village called Lleffe?

9 DOWN TO THE WIRE

When: October 12-13
Where: Brands Hatch Grand Prix
Series: British Touring Car Championship

This was "mind-blowing. Amazing. Unbelievable. Outstanding." Yes, ITV pundit and former racer Paul O'Neill used a sentence without split infinitives or the word "mint".

In other news, it was a day of spreadsheets trying to plot who needed to do what to win the BTCC.

The abiding image was of Dan Cammish spearing off the circuit. Suddenly the championship, the day and everything changed and Colin Turkington was crowned for the fourth time.

The weekend was full of gossip, as people wanted to know what you have heard about different drivers for next year and who might be going where.

There was a real end-of-term feel as ever and dinner on Saturday was both

blighted by woeful service (does triple cooked chips mean they take three times longer to arrive...?) and enlivened by more Steve Rider anecdotes.

There was a long journey home and it allowed time to ponder the season, which has flown by, but I can't get that image of the Honda out of my mind. Must have a beer.

10 SIGN OFF IN STYLE

When: November 22-24
Where: Kyalami, South Africa
Series: Intercontinental GT

Forget the old Kyalami, this was the new place and it was brilliant. Two laps around the circuit in the safety car at full pelt with Anthony Comas gave a proper idea of how much effort the drivers would put into the circuit.

Actually, I could have done with Comas as chauffeur on the way to the hotel as lots of junctions warned of smash'n'grab hotspots. It was such a shame as you have such a beautiful country with the spectre of violence and crime looming over it. There was a proper feel-good nature to the event, until the weather turned and when the rain came, it was torrential.

John Watson and I did a 10-hour broadcast with only two pee-breaks and there was enough going on to make time fly by. Just like the old days, there was a prize-giving barbecue on the Sunday before everyone headed for home and the general view was that the event had been a success. Springbok and ostrich were on the menu on the plane home... but no Belgian beer. ■



Skegness fans were impressed with the ground-shaking BriSCAF1 cars



There was a nail-biting finale to the British Touring Car Championship

REVIEW: F1 SEASON

HAMILTON HEADS THE HIGH DRAMA AT MOTORSPORT'S TOP TABLE

Motorsport News gathers together its experts to look back on a sensational F1 season

On the face of it, Lewis Hamilton's march to a sixth world championship seemed like a walk in the park but, as ever, there were a host of subplots which made the 2019 Formula 1 season one to remember.

There was the tinderbox situation at Ferrari. It had only just recovered from repeatedly shooting itself in the foot when its two drivers, Sebastian Vettel and Charles Leclerc, metaphorically and sometimes literally took aim at each other.

There was the emergence of the Red Bull-Honda partnership, which was looking increasingly competitive as the season progressed, plus the rebirth of the McLaren team and the performance of young Briton Lando Norris to boot.

Hamilton might be relentlessly closing in on equalling Michael Schumacher's record of titles, but there was plenty to keep the casual fan interested in the last 12 months. We have gathered together some of the Motorsport Network's top F1 brains to run the rule over the year just gone.

Matt James



1 WHO WAS 2019'S MOST UNDERRATED DRIVER? SERGIO PEREZ



The Racing Point driver made the most of his car

There were many drivers who could have won this award, but most of them have been addressed as being underrated in the media and therefore are not really underrated! So Motorsport News has gone with Sergio Perez for a slow-

burning but brilliant season in F1's midfield for the Mexican driver.

He was in the top 10 for eight of the last nine races of the season, and the one missing was Singapore where an oil leak robbed him while running – you guessed it – 10th. While Racing Point spent the first half of the year struggling following its protracted buy-out saga

from mid-late 2018, which delayed the development of its new challenger, 'Checo' still starred.

Sixth place in Baku and eighth in China towards the start of the year prove he has come away from his inconsistent stint at McLaren.

He rounded out the season with a large portion of the Abu Dhabi race sat on

Lando Norris's gearbox, but mugged the impressive young Brit for seventh on the final lap. He may be coming to the latter part of his F1 career, but the Mexican has become one of the stars of F1's midfield.

Could the solid showing lead to a plunge from one of the big teams, giving him a final chance? **Jack Benyon**

ROUND-BY-ROUND



1 AUSTRALIAN GP, MELBOURNE MARCH 17

The pundits reckoned Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel and Charles Leclerc would have a 0.5-second-per-lap advantage. No one told the Mercedes drivers. Lewis Hamilton was beaten away from pole by his Silver Arrows team-mate Valtteri Bottas, who stuck two fingers up to the doubters to claim a handsome win. Hamilton was second ahead of the cute-pitstopping Red Bull of Max Verstappen.

- 1 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes)
- 2 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)
- 3 Max Verstappen (Red Bull)



2 BAHRAIN GP, SAKHIR MARCH 31

Ferrari bounced back here, but there was a sting in the tail: Charles Leclerc used the SF90's prodigious pace on longer runs to tuck up the Mercedes drivers, but a cruel cylinder problem over the closing stages cost the young gun his maiden win as Lewis Hamilton swept by. The Brit had seen off Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel in a tense duel, the German thwarted when he spun.

- 1 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)
- 2 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes)
- 3 Charles Leclerc (Ferrari)



3 CHINESE GP, SHANGHAI APRIL 14

In Formula 1's 1000th grand prix, Lewis Hamilton dominated from pole position after team-mate Valtteri Bottas got too much wheelspin away from the line. His delay caused a roadblock behind, where Ferrari's Charles Leclerc leapfrogged team-mate Sebastian Vettel for third. Amid controversy, the Ferrari pitwall ordered the cars to change place. Leclerc eventually dropped to fourth position.

- 1 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)
- 2 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes)
- 3 Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari)



4 AZERBAIJAN GP, BAKU APRIL 28

Ferrari's race unravelled on Saturday, when the Prancing Horse put Sebastian Vettel out on the less-favourable harder rubber in Q2, locking him to a struggle during the race, and Charles Leclerc smashed his red machine into the wall during the timed sessions. That left the way clear for Valtteri Bottas to claim his second win of the year, chased home hard by Lewis Hamilton.

- 1 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes)
- 2 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)
- 3 Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari)



5 SPANISH GP, BARCELONA MAY 12

Despite Valtteri Bottas taking pole position, it was his team-mate Lewis Hamilton that led home another Mercedes 1-2, but Ferrari dropped the ball again. Sebastian Vettel and Charles Leclerc were twice ordered to swap positions on circuit but the pitwall had reacted too late. That allowed Max Verstappen's Red Bull-Honda to jump into third place.

- 1 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)
- 2 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes)
- 3 Max Verstappen (Red Bull)

Photos: LAT

The eminently combustible mix of ambitious young go-getter and emotionally brittle four-time champion

was bound to end in tears, tantrums and sundry scattered piles of carbonfibre shards, and so it came to pass.

The inevitable contretemps between Ferrari's Charles Leclerc and Sebastian Vettel was a long time coming, but it was spectacularly explosive.

Throughout the season, Leclerc's disgruntlement at being forced to play dutiful number two has been palpable. Sure enough, the mutterings became rumblings.

An elaborate prologue to the Brazilian Grand Prix collision played out over the preceding races: in Monza Leclerc reneged on a plan to give Vettel a 'tow' in final qualifying; in Singapore Vettel got a better race strategy and beat his polesitting team-mate into second place; and in Russia Vettel mugged Leclerc for the lead on the first lap, tearing up a pre-race agreement and ignoring further team orders.

The gnashing of teeth subsided briefly, but it was a phoney silence. At Interlagos engine penalties consigned Leclerc to 14th on the grid, but an alternate strategy and a safety car brought him onto the tail of his fourth-placed team-mate. On lap 66 Leclerc pounced at the Senna 'S' and got the position, but Vettel got a decent exit and put his nose ahead on the following straight. Then, inexplicably, he jinked left and took them both out of the race, leaving team boss Mattia Binotto with yet another fire to fight.

Stuart Codling

2 FLASHPOINT OF THE YEAR VETTEL AND LECLERC COME TO BLOWS IN BRAZIL



Family disharmony: Ferraris came to blows in Brazil

3 TEAM MANAGEMENT OF THE SEASON TOTO WOLFF AND MERCEDES – MEXICO

Aright, Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes is hardly a shock. But Mexico was about as close to an upset as the six-time teams' champions could pull as a tactical masterstroke delivered it a breakthrough win.

It didn't come in as favourite for two reasons. It hadn't won the event for two years as Red Bull and Max Verstappen dominated, but also in the context of 2019, Ferrari was on a roll with five

consecutive poles before Mexico turned into six when Verstappen's pole lap was deleted on account of ignoring yellow flags.

Furthermore, in the race, Hamilton took avoiding action from Sebastian Vettel at the start and had to take to the grass at Turn 2 after contact with Verstappen, and it looked like a win was out of the question.

While Charles Leclerc (Ferrari) and Alex Albon (Red Bull) went for two-stops, Vettel and Hamilton elected to take just one tyre change.

Hamilton pitted much earlier than Vettel in order to ensure track position, but Vettel should have had better tyres at the end to mount a charge on the lead.

However, the hard tyre lasted longer than most expected and a combination of tactical nous and Hamilton's caressing of the Pirellis kept the gap at two seconds or more for the whole race.

It was an all-around tactical masterclass from F1's best team and driver.

Jack Benyon



Mexico was a high point for Mercedes



6 MONACO GP, MONTE CARLO MAY 26

Lewis Hamilton was constantly on the pit-car radio asking how the team expected him to complete a 38-lap stint on his tyres, but it worked – only just. He fended off the Red Bull of Max Verstappen to the flag after the other Merc of Valtteri Bottas had been caught off-guard by a mid-race safety car. Bottas would eventually finish third after an unsafe pit release penalty thwarted Verstappen.

- 1 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)
- 2 Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari)
- 3 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes)



7 CANADIAN GP, MONTREAL JUNE 9

Did he do it on purpose? Did the leading Ferrari of Sebastian Vettel jink across the track to stop the closely following Lewis Hamilton's Mercedes from pouncing after the red car had skittered across the grass at the first chicane? Vettel won on the road but was demoted to second and felt very aggrieved. He switched the position boards in parc ferme to show his anger, but it was pointless.

- 1 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)
- 2 Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari)
- 3 Charles Leclerc (Ferrari)



8 FRENCH GP, PAUL RICARD JUNE 23

A broken seat and blistered Pirelli tyres might seem like some insurmountable problems, but Lewis Hamilton put that behind him as he powered to a dominant victory in France. No one could get near the Briton. A late-race safety car offered some excitement, but the order in the top three remained unchanged to the flag. A forgettable race.

- 1 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)
- 2 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes)
- 3 Charles Leclerc (Ferrari)



9 AUSTRIAN GP, SPIELBERG JUNE 30

This was gloves off between F1's two most exciting young talents. Charles Leclerc's Ferrari took pole position, but it was fellow front-row starter Max Verstappen who won despite a disastrous start, which lost him six spots. A better tyre strategy helped the Red Bull man to pounce at the end. High temperatures meant that the Mercedes cars were also-rans.

- 1 Max Verstappen (Red Bull)
- 2 Charles Leclerc (Ferrari)
- 3 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes)



10 BRITISH GP, SILVERSTONE JULY 14

Lewis Hamilton was chasing a record-breaking sixth British GP win but it looked like his pole-winning team-mate Valtteri Bottas would trump him. He led until the pitstop phase. A caution period threw the race back into Hamilton's favour, and he powered clear to a superb home triumph. Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel and Red Bull's Max Verstappen tripped over each other at Vale too.

- 1 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)
- 2 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes)
- 3 Charles Leclerc (Ferrari)

REVIEW: F1 SEASON

4 SHUNT OF THE YEAR

VERSTAPPEN AND VETTEL AT THE BRITISH GRAND PRIX



Lap 39: Vettel clumsily clatters into the Red Bull

It was not so much about the ferocity of the impact, but the collision between Red Bull's Max Verstappen and Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel at the British Grand Prix at Silverstone was a marker of both of their seasons.

For Verstappen, who continued to make it home in fifth place, it was a question of what might have been. Although the Dutchman was not on the same plane as the Mercedes drivers Lewis Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas around the former airfield, he was on target for a podium and ultimately came up short. That happened on too many occasions at the beginning of the campaign.

For Vettel, it was another nadir in a season where he was already being put in the shade by his up-and-coming team-mate Charles Leclerc.

Verstappen had just passed the red machine in the battle for third place on lap 37 of the race when the following German seemed to just miss his braking point in a rookie mistake.

It added to Vettel's catalogue of 2019 errors and handed him a 10-place grid penalty as a result.

Vettel did apologise to Verstappen afterwards and the Dutchman was magnanimous in accepting it. But the damage was done and both had shed points to the Merc steamroller.

Matt James

5 WHAT WAS 2019'S BIGGEST CONTROVERSY?

CANADIAN GRAND PRIX PENALTY

Sebastian Vettel crossed the finish line first in the 2019 Canadian Grand Prix and still didn't win the race, but in his own head he was, and remains, its moral victor.

That Vettel's psychology doesn't match reality in this instance is rooted in F1's biggest controversy of 2019, one that sparked a flurry of debate over track limits, driving standards and heavy-handed stewarding.

To the letter of the law, F1's policemen did the correct thing – they punished a driver for rejoining the circuit unsafely into the path of a rival.

On a conventional circuit – one not bordered so closely by walls – Merc's Lewis Hamilton would ordinarily maintain trajectory around Vettel's outside and win the race regardless.

But Montreal is not conventional



This move from Vettel sparked long arguments

circuit, so officials slapped Vettel with a penalty and gave the race to Hamilton.

This also created F1 2019's most memorable piece of pantomime theatre, as Vettel melodramatically made his way to the podium while protesting the perceived injustice.

The hand-wringing then began

in earnest. Whether you thought Vettel got what he deserved or not, officials adopted a more flexible approach in the aftermath.

Vettel didn't win the battle, but he most definitely won the war against F1's 'fun police'.

Ben Anderson

6 BIGGEST DISAPPOINTMENT

FERRARI'S LACK OF PACE

Things were looking so good after pre-season testing in Spain. Ferrari was fast and even Mercedes' internal analysis put the Scuderia in front.

Then the capitulation began. Ferrari swung wildly from dominant force to also-ran over the first four races, while also failing to capitalise when it held the advantage in Bahrain and Baku.

Once Mercedes upgraded for May's Spanish Grand Prix, no one else got a look in (apart from Vettel, briefly, in Canada) until the W10 overheated in Austria. That was race nine of 21...



Ferrari took ages to hit the front

And even then, it still wasn't Ferrari doing the winning. Charles Leclerc had a magnificent first season at the team, but he didn't win until Spa (round 13), and the car didn't truly come together again for Vettel until Singapore, race 15.

Ferrari won three of the final nine, and should have won once (possibly twice) more, but it was all just far too little too late. Then there were the own goals: Leclerc not getting out of Q1 in Monaco; the drivers tripping over one another (and team orders) in Russia and Brazil; Leclerc's errors in Azerbaijan and Germany; Vettel throwing away Canada and pole in Japan.

The Mercedes team is good enough already, without this kind of needless extra help.

Ben Anderson

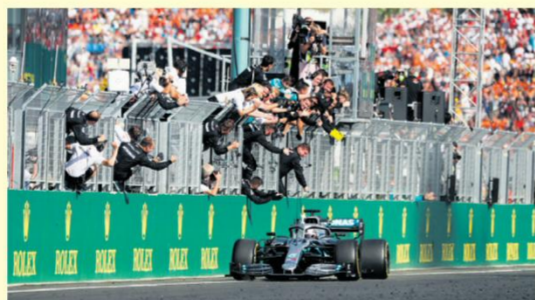
ROUND-BY-ROUND (CONTINUED)



11 GERMAN GP, HOCKENHEIM JULY 28

A bonkers race, as is so often the case when the weather plays its part. A flu-stricken (and penalty-earning) Lewis Hamilton, who eventually finished ninth in his Mercedes, described the race as "snakes and ladders" and admitted that Merc hit the snakes with its strategy. Ferrari's Charles Leclerc threw away his chances, while Max Verstappen (Red Bull) kept his head to win.

1 Max Verstappen (Red Bull)
2 Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari)
3 Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso)



12 HUNGARIAN GP, HUNGARORING AUGUST 4

Max Verstappen took his career-first pole position and his Red Bull was locked in a fierce duel with Lewis Hamilton's Mercedes throughout. There was some smart thinking on the pitwall from Merc, who stopped Hamilton late to see if he could reel in the Honda-powered car ahead. He managed it and claimed a memorable victory with four laps to go as Verstappen's Pirellis wilted.

1 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)
2 Max Verstappen (Red Bull)
3 Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari)



13 BELGIAN GP, SPA SEPTEMBER 1

The pace of the Ferraris was strong in Belgium and Charles Leclerc went from pole position to claim his maiden Formula 1 win. The race was significant as the Italian team threw its weight behind the Monegasque ace after Sebastian Vettel's scrappy weekend. The German was forced to play tail-gunner, and it worked a treat. Mercedes man Lewis Hamilton closed in, but was thwarted by traffic.

1 Charles Leclerc (Ferrari)
2 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)
3 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes)



14 ITALIAN GP, MONZA SEPTEMBER 8

This was the race where Ferrari's Charles Leclerc cemented his place in the heart of the tifosi, with a dramatic home win under threat from Mercedes man Lewis Hamilton. The 21-year-old fended off the champion (although Hamilton eventually dropped to third), while his Ferrari team-mate Sebastian Vettel had a nightmare: a lap-13 spin and an unsafe rejoin cost him a 10-second penalty.

1 Charles Leclerc (Ferrari)
2 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes)
3 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)



15 SINGAPORE GP, MARINA BAY SEPTEMBER 22

After a nightmare in Italy, Sebastian Vettel bounced back in the best fashion under the floodlights with a superb win – although there was some controversy along the way. His Ferrari team-mate Charles Leclerc held track position, but the Scuderia pitwall decided to stop Vettel first, allowing him to undercut the sister car. Mercedes was struggling with bad strategy calls, which left Lewis Hamilton fourth.

1 Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari)
2 Charles Leclerc (Ferrari)
3 Max Verstappen (Red Bull)



Verstappen left Leclerc with nowhere to go in Austria

7 OVERTAKING MOVE OF THE YEAR MAX VERSTAPPEN ON CHARLES LECLERC FOR THE LEAD, AUSTRIAN GP

It was a move that redefined racing in 2019. After Sebastian Vettel had been stripped of his win in the Canadian Grand Prix, the victor of the Austrian race was also decided in the stewards' room. Max Verstappen's overtake of Charles Leclerc two laps from

the end of the race at the Red Bull Ring was both thrilling and controversial in equal measure. After qualifying on the front row of the grid, Verstappen fluffed his start, dropping to seventh at the opening corner. Cheered on by his army of fans, the Dutchman hauled himself back into contention, hunting

down the lead Ferrari in the closing stages of the race. He made a ballsy attempt to take the lead at Turn 3, on lap 68, but Leclerc repelled his attack on the subsequent straight. On the next lap, Verstappen made the move stick, easing Leclerc off the road as he did so. The Ferrari man cried foul,

but Verstappen described the overtake as "hard racing". The FIA decided it was time to re-introduce the black and white driving standards flag, to help encourage racing and reduce the amount of penalties dished out in the stewards' room after any dubious on-track move.

James Roberts

8 RACE OF THE YEAR GERMAN GRAND PRIX

This race was meant to be a celebration for Mercedes. Thanks to its sponsorship, the German GP was given a reprieve for the team to commemorate both its 200th grand prix and 125 years of involvement in motorsport. The whole squad was dressed in period costume, but the party soon turned into a nightmare. Steady rain on Sunday morning meant the race started on a wet track. After an early position of authority – with Lewis Hamilton leading Valtteri Bottas – it soon came undone for the silver cars. With further rain, shunts and safety cars, the field turned on its head. When an unwell Hamilton emerged from the pits on lap 48 in 12th position



Kvyat scored third place

he asked his team: "How has it gone this bad?" Nine laps later it got worse for the Mercedes team boss, Toto Wolff, who was sitting in the garage dressed in a black tie and Fedora hat. Bottas crashed out at Turn 1, to put a dent in his title aspirations. After an incredible, topsy-turvy race, the top three at the flag were: Max Verstappen (who also had a 360 spin), second Sebastian Vettel (who started last with an engine penalty) from Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso). Celebrations for all except Mercedes....

James Roberts

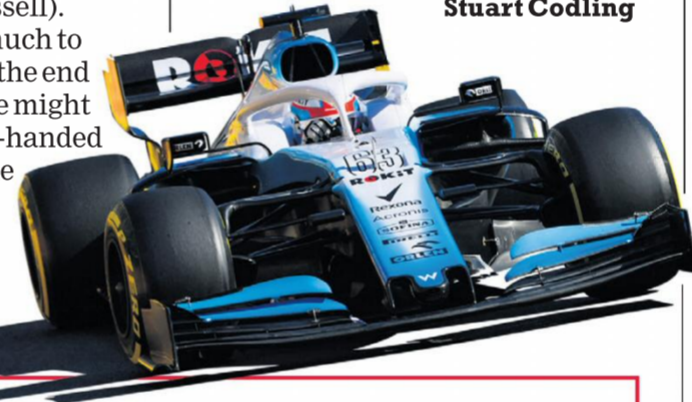
9 BEST NEW TALENT GEORGE RUSSELL

Picking the best of this year's rookie crop was always going to be a tricky one. We had the previously unfancied one coming good enough to earn a mid-season swap to a top-three team (Alex Albon) and the Formula 2 runner-up who nailed a Q3 slot in a midfield car first time out in Australia (Lando Norris). And then we had the F2 champion who scored fewer points than his team-mate in the worst car in the field (George Russell). Each candidate has much to commend them, but in the end Russell gets our nod. He might have come away empty-handed in terms of points but he annihilated his team-

mate in qualifying – and Robert Kubica, though not the driver he once was, is no mug. Race in, race out, Russell accessed performance levels Kubica couldn't reach, even threatening Q2 on occasion in the miserable FW42. As well as squeezing the maximum from his machinery, he galvanised and led a demoralised team through some of its darkest hours. In the coming years he'll reap the positive dividends of 2019's pain.

Stuart Codling

Russell (right) was a stand out rookie



10 WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR IN 2020 ESTEBAN OCON IS BACK

The big change in terms of Formula 1 regulations is coming in 2021, and teams and technicians are already beavering away to try to unlock any performance advantage from a set of regulations which are virtually designed to eliminate any major steps forward. So that means F1 will be in a state of limbo next year, but there are some interesting moves that have already been confirmed. There will be a first trip to Hanoi for the Vietnamese Grand Prix, but there are other driver switches that will be intriguing. While Williams' decision to call time on Robert Kubica's race career was not entirely

unexpected as Nicholas Latifi joins, Renault's move to replace Nico Hulkenberg with Estaban Ocon was more of a surprise. Hulkenberg is universally liked and his ability is well known, but he was never able to scale the heights that he should have been able to. Ocon, on the other hand, is someone whose F1 journey needs to flourish and it was only an anomaly in the Formula 1 teams' young driver programmes that meant he was parked on the sidelines in the first place. Don't forget, he has two and a half seasons of experience already and, if the Renault can perform, then so will he.

Matt James

FINAL POINTS

FORMULA 1 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP POINTS, 2019

POS	DRIVER	CAR-ENGINE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	TOTAL
1	Lewis Hamilton	Mercedes	18	25	25	18	26	25	25	25	10	26	2	25	18	16	12	26	16	25	18	6	26	413
2	Valtteri Bottas	Mercedes	26	18	18	25	18	15	13	18	15	18	-	4	15	18	19	18	25	15	25	-	12	326
3	Max Verstappen	Red Bull-Honda	15	12	12	12	15	12	10	12	26	10	26	19	-	4	15	12	-	8	15	25	18	278
4	Charles Leclerc	Ferrari	10	16	10	11	10	-	15	15	18	15	-	12	25	25	18	15	8	13	13	-	15	264
5	Sebastian Vettel	Ferrari	12	10	15	15	12	18	18	11	12	-	18	15	13	-	25	-	18	18	-	-	10	240
6	Carlos Sainz	McLaren-Renault	-	-	-	6	4	8	-	8	4	8	10	10	-	-	-	8	10	-	4	15	1	96
7	Pierre Gasly	Toro Rosso-Honda/Red Bull-Honda	-	4	9	-	8	11	4	1	6	12	-	8	2	-	4	-	6	2	-	18	-	95
8	Alex Albon	Toro Rosso-Honda/Red Bull-Honda	-	2	1	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	8	1	10	8	8	10	12	10	10	-	8	92
9	Daniel Ricciardo	Renault	-	-	6	-	-	2	8	-	-	6	-	-	-	12	-	-	-	4	8	8	-	54
10	Sergio Perez	Racing Point-Mercedes	-	1	4	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	6	-	6	4	6	1	2	6	52

11 Lando Norris (McLaren-Renault) 49; 12 Kimi Raikkonen (Alfa Romeo-Ferrari) 43; 13 Daniil Kvyat (Toro Rosso-Honda) 37; 14 Nico Hulkenberg (Renault) 37; 15 Lance Stroll (Racing Point-Mercedes) 21; 16 Kevin Magnussen (Haas-Ferrari) 20; 17 Antonio Giovinazzi (Alfa Romeo-Ferrari) 14; 18 Romain Grosjean (Haas-Ferrari) 8; 19 Robert Kubica (Williams-Mercedes) 1; 20 George Russell (Williams-Mercedes) 0. Bold = race win.



Ocon will be in the seat of a Renault



**16 RUSSIAN GP, SOCHI
SEPTEMBER 29**
The Prancing Horse shot itself in the foot to allow Mercedes ace Lewis Hamilton to grab an unlikely victory. Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel towed ahead of team-mate Charles Leclerc on the first lap in a pre-planned move to thwart Hamilton. It backfired when Vettel's car broke on lap 26, forcing a virtual safety car and allowing Hamilton an advantageous pitstop. It was all he needed.
1 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)
2 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes)
3 Charles Leclerc (Ferrari)



**17 JAPANESE GP, SUZUKA
OCTOBER 13**
Sebastian Vettel ruined his Ferrari's pole start when he crept and had to get on the anchors. That allowed Valtteri Bottas into a lead in his Merc that he would only briefly relinquish during the pitstops. Hamilton was bottled up behind Vettel and could only finish in third position. They fared better than Red Bull's Max Verstappen and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc, who collided at Turn 2.
1 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes)
2 Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari)
3 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)



**18 MEXICAN GP,
MEXICO CITY
OCTOBER 27**
Mercedes's Lewis Hamilton was almost pushed off the road by Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel away from the start. Hamilton's team pulled him in for an early stop, which consigned him to a mammoth second stint, but the Briton pulled it off in spectacular fashion. It was enough for him to claim the victory, with Vettel just under two seconds behind.
1 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)
2 Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari)
3 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes)



**19 UNITED STATES GP,
CIRCUIT OF THE AMERICAS
NOVEMBER 3**
Mercedes had wanted to try a one-stop strategy, but when Max Verstappen's Red Bull stopped early, leader Valtteri Bottas was forced to cover off his rival to maintain his pace and track position. Merc stuck to the one-stop plan with Hamilton, and his tyres wilted late on to allow his team-mate to regain first. Second was enough for Hamilton to seal the title.
1 Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes)
2 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)
3 Max Verstappen (Red Bull)



**20 BRAZILIAN GP,
INTERLAGOS
NOVEMBER 17**
Lewis Hamilton and Mercedes were off the money in Brazil, but the new world title holder made it to first place when leader Max Verstappen's Red Bull was held up during its opening pitstop. But the pace of the Honda-powered car swiftly regained the lead and pulled away. A late-race safety car bunched the field up and Hamilton tripped over the Red Bull of Alex Albon, which earned him a penalty.
1 Max Verstappen (Red Bull)
2 Pierre Gasly (Toro Rosso)
3 Carlos Sainz (McLaren)



**21 ABU DHABI GP, YAS MARINA
DECEMBER 1**
In one of his most masterful and dominant race performances of the year, Merc's Lewis Hamilton blasted from pole, set fastest lap and claimed a perfect win in the final round of the year. He had been helped when team-mate Valtteri Bottas was forced to start from the back due to penalties. Max Verstappen's Red Bull might have put up more of a stern test had it not been for a throttle problem, which dented his pace.
1 Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes)
2 Max Verstappen (Red Bull)
3 Charles Leclerc (Ferrari)

STRATTON NETWORKS EYE BTCC GROWTH WITH MOTORSPORT VENTURE

PROMOTIONAL FEATURE



Expanding across further teams in the British Touring Car Championship and other top-flight UK series is the aim of Stratton Networks after a successful maiden season in the motorsport industry.

The Hertfordshire-based company has more than 20 years of experience providing IT and technical solutions, primarily to the media and TV industry, having worked with companies such as Warner Brothers and the Endemol Shine Group.

An opportunity at the start of 2019 means motorsport has now become a new venture, having provided satellite solutions for Excelr8 Motorsport in the BTCC.



The team now has its own dedicated satellite internet service at race meetings after previously relying on the crowded 4G network that was used by other teams and the thousands of fans at each event.

Jason Panayiotou, director at Stratton Networks, said: "I think there is a need for it, at the end of the day a lot of people in the vicinity are using their phones or iPads and it's all done via 4G.

"With the smaller series like a lot of the clubman racing you turn up to a race track and it's not mega busy so they're not going to have a problem.

"But when you start dealing on a higher level like the BTCC you're talking about huge crowds and those people create a strain on the general 4G network.

"What happens now is they get their own fast, dedicated and secure internet bandwidth to deal with all their data, their analytics, weather reports, social media and reporting directly back to their workshop."

The equipment can either be bought or hired from Stratton Networks with training provided on how to use the system.

Being at the cutting-edge of the latest technology and providing a reliable and competitive service means the company is in the perfect position to expand its portfolio throughout motorsport.

"I'm looking at it as a perfect opportunity to provide a great solution to all the teams and a dedicated service to them, it's quite important; this is the BTCC," added Panayiotou.

A statement from Excelr8 Motorsport, which will use Hyundai i30 N Performance Fastbacks next year, pictured above, said: "We contacted Stratton Networks because we needed a stable and reliable data connection for race track days.

"Nick Allett, their technical consultant, advised throughout the whole process and we couldn't be happier with this exceptional and consistent service."

Contact Stratton Networks

www.strattonnetworks.co.uk

Hertfordshire Office:
01992 240 030

London Office:
020 3327 0789



INTERVIEW

TURKINGTON THE HUNTED BEATS THE PRESSURE

How the four-time BTCC title winner held his nerve in 2019. By **Matt James**



Turkington was overjoyed with his fourth BTCC title



Heading the pack: Colin Turkington won five times



The penultimate round at Brands Hatch was a nightmare for the BMW man

There was a feeling that the 2018 British Touring Car Championship season was one to simply get through for eventual title-winner Colin Turkington.

The Northern Irishman was not having a year to relish, as the tight regulations meant that he was having squeeze every last ounce out of the WSR-run BMW 125i M Sport, and he went through the 30-race roster claiming only one victory.

As well as that, there were some tumultuous times in his personal life with the loss of his mother. Sure, 2018 gave him his third crown, but it was a year that he wanted to see the back of.

Fast forward 12 months, and the feeling is entirely different. Armed with WSR's latest BMW 330i M Sport, there were new challenges to relish. He embraced it with gusto but, as is always the case in the BTCC, it came down to a nail-biting conclusion.

In all of Turkington's title triumphs, he has been ahead in the standings going into the final race and has had a lead to protect, but not in 2019. He was eight points adrift of the Honda of Dan Cammish as the cars lined up at Brands Hatch and prepared for the final 15 laps of the year.

Turkington rose from 25th on the grid to an eventual sixth place, which was enough to seal the job once Cammish's Team Dynamics car had speared into the gravel following brake failure with a lap and a half to go.

There was some serious emotion from Turkington on the cooling down lap. He screamed so loudly inside the car that he lost his voice, and was struggling to make himself heard when he spoke to ITV4's Louise Goodman at the end of the race.

He knew he had been through the mill. "It was the toughest championship to win because the series gets more competitive every year," says Turkington. "The margins between the teams and drivers is much less than five or 10 years ago, so you have to maximise every department."

"That last race at Brands Hatch had to be the race of my life to win [the title] and it was. I knew I had to make up a lot of ground in the opening laps to have any chance, but also I needed the car still in one piece. I couldn't just go gung ho. I was just prepared to give it my best shot and go down fighting. The shackles were off for once because I had nothing to lose. I was eight points behind Dan and starting 25th, so there was less pressure than the other showdowns. Once I was back inside the top 15 after the first lap, I knew it was game on."

It was game on, and it brought him his fourth crown to tie with Andy Rouse as the most successful driver in terms of crowns collected. It also marked a milestone for

Turkington's team, WSR. It had been facing a race against time to prepare three of the new 330i M Sports for the beginning of the season having only got the sign-off on the new cars late on in 2018. There was a very real threat that it wouldn't have three cars ready for Brands Hatch's opener in April, but it managed. Just.

The combination of Turkington and WSR has been perfect. All of his success has come with the team, and it is a blend that has consistently been the benchmark in the category since the pair first worked together in 2002.

Turkington did have a sojourn at Vauxhall and a two-year stint at BMR Racing in a VW and then a Subaru, but the big trophies have come with the Dick Bennetts-run team. It is a blend of success that he has been unable to find elsewhere.

"I enjoy my racing at WSR and they are consistently able to get the best out of me," admits Turkington. "The whole team is working in the same direction and what I like most is the positive and friendly atmosphere, where everybody works extremely hard, but also know how to have a laugh."

"The people are what make WSR such a special place for me. A lot of the staff have been there a long time, so we are much more friends than colleagues. I enjoy giving my best for them because I know everyone gives it 100% back at base at Lower Sunbury. There is a big emphasis on always pushing to be better or faster and never being satisfied and I like that approach."

"To win the championship everything needs to be perfect, the team, the driver and the car and I'm fortunate the stars have aligned for me four times with WSR. I came close to winning the championship in my second season at BMR too, but it was a year too early for the car."

Developing a new car this year was a new journey for Turkington, who first raced the 125i M Sport when it was introduced into the BTCC in 2013. That, in itself, was a new chapter for Turkington, but on that it took him a while to get to grips with.

While his team-mate Andrew Jordan won the second race of the season at Brands Hatch's opening meeting, Turkington had to be content with only one fifth place as he took a while to get on top of the handling of the new machine. He was also working with a new engineer, Dan Millard, for the first time.

Turkington explains: "The [330i M Sport] is, in fact, very similar to the 1 Series in terms of balance and has a lot of the same characteristics handling-wise, but the main difference for me is the longer wheelbase."

Continued on page 55

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INTERVIEW

Continued from page 53

"I had a few tools on the 1 Series to help with my driving style that hadn't made it across to the 3 Series initially, but once we got these back on the car it was immediately fast for me and I was confident again.

"We only had one test day before the first race, so our pace was unknown, but it became apparent to me quickly at Brands that I needed more time to tune and find the sweet spot. We had a test at Thruxton before the next round at Donington Park and I came away from this knowing I was on the right path."

The fact he took five wins was a real turnaround from 2018, when he only took one victory in a hugely competitive season. He said, at the end of the year, that it had not been a satisfactory season. He was going into each round with 75kg of ballast as the points leader.

That was a handicap too far and left him with a real struggle right from the get-go of each meeting. Even the rulemakers knew that, and dropped the level of success ballast from 75kg to 54kg.

"I much preferred the ballast rules this year because with maximum weight you are still in the race, even with 54kg," adds Turkington. "Previously with 75kg on board you were just trying to survive and get to the end. Getting involved in a battle meant you killed the tyres, so it was not a nice way to race, just getting to the end. I had double wins this year at Donington and Oulton, which would have been impossible in 2018.

"I much prefer being able to race at the front even with the ballast. It's a big challenge to find a quick set-up with maximum ballast but, if you do, it reaps big rewards. Five wins this year compared to one in 2018 shows how difficult it was with 75kg."

Even so, the rulemakers in the BTCC have a desire to keep the competition close, and the prowess of the 330i M Sport was giving it a serious leg-up in the points. A mid-year turbo boost tweak and an alteration in the centre of gravity equalisation rules made life tougher for the WSR men, and Turkington only took one win in the second half of the season.

"The pack completely tightened up from Snetterton onwards," says Turkington. "Combining the championship adjustments with the fact that I started every weekend on maximum ballast for leading, meant that consistency was key in the second half.

"The second Thruxton meeting highlighted it: we just had no pace against the others. The chassis set-up was pretty much the same as our first visit, but we were nowhere all weekend, even with a car that was working well. I just kept reminding myself that it's supposed to be difficult and nobody gets it easy and sometimes it's better to just put



Being nerfed out in race two at Knockhill was a drama

your head down and work harder rather than complaining."

The hard work at WSR has been tougher over the last three seasons with 2013 champion Jordan alongside him at the WSR squad. Jordan himself said he had joined WSR to measure himself against Turkington, the acknowledged rear-wheel-drive master.

Jordan pushed Turkington very hard this year, and the bubble between the two almost burst at Silverstone with some very robust racing, which was on the verge of overstepping the mark. The team-mates were battling in the lower part of the top 10 but every point mattered.

"Andrew has improved every year at WSR and he has some very good people working on his car," says Turkington. "He is always driving or racing something and I think this translates into really good speed. In the end there was only two points between us, so for sure he had a great season. He was already a champion before he came to WSR, so his level was already very high.

"Andy came out of the blocks really quick with the 3 Series and, after two seasons with rear-wheel drive and consistency with the team, he was firing on all cylinders. His level definitely went up again this year, but that was good for us all. I had to find another level to go with him. Some things he does really well, like the starts and I have been able to improve my technique because of this.

"I think his approach at Silverstone was the same as any other driver fighting for the championship would have been. Because we are in the same team the situation becomes a bit more delicate, but I was never annoyed about it or there was no bad blood, it was just hard racing."

At the beginning of 2018, Turkington finally acceded to the line that the media, MN included, wanted to hear. He says he was teasing when he doffed his cap to Andy Rouse's four BTCC titles, but he had admitted that the record was on the radar.

Turkington, who can stand alone as the most successful driver in terms of titles should he collect another crown in 2020, says: "I mentioned Andy's record in jest and with a smile, but honestly not really targeting it specifically.

"Of course a huge part of me would love that record, but my focus is and has always been about trying to win each year. I am a competitive person and I want to win anything I sign up to. For me it's not about the records or number of titles. It's the satisfaction of standing on the champions podium knowing that all your hard work has paid off and that you are number one, that's what keeps me motivated and wanting more. I feel that now is my time to shine given I'm with the best team and have a strong car, so I will continue to work hard."

Given the groundwork he has put in and the record of success he has already put in the book, that journey is set to continue its upward trajectory. ■



Oulton Park victory was another landmark for the Northern Irishman

COLIN TURKINGTON'S 2019 WINS

1 Donington Park, race one APRIL 28

Going into the meeting with no success ballast after a tough opening weekend was a golden opportunity for Colin Turkington and he grabbed it with both hands. From pole position on the grid, the Northern Irishman blasted into an immediate lead which he was not to lose. He kept the rear-wheel-drive Subaru Levorg of Ash Sutton at arm's length throughout and crossed the line with a 2.3-second advantage.



2 Donington Park, race two APRIL 28

This was going to be more of a trial for the champion: although he would once again start from pole position, this time he would be laden with the maximum level of success ballast of 54kg for the first time of the campaign. Turkington made no mistake with a peerless drive to scamper away from the battling pack behind. Eventually, Matt Neal's Honda made it to second place, but the winning BMW 330i M Sport was more than two seconds clear again.



3 Oulton Park, race one JUNE 30

Colin Turkington was comfortably top of the points table going to Oulton Park, which meant that he was carrying the mandated 54kg of ballast into the swooping Cheshire venue. A stunning lap in qualifying landed him pole, and that then set up his weekend. He leapt ahead at the start and then was forced to watch his mirrors as Dan Cammish chased in his Honda. He eventually won by just over two seconds.



4 Oulton Park, race two JUNE 30

From pole position in the second clash, but again with the full level of success ballast, Turkington hooked up his start once more and made it to Old Hall corner first. But this time he had his team-mate Andrew Jordan following in his wheeltracks and with less weight – but, with both drivers on the medium compound tyre, there was little to choose between them. Turkington lead the Pirtek-backed car home, with Dan Cammish's Honda in third.



5 Snetterton, race two AUGUST 4

Starting on the third row for race one led to a subdued fourth-placed finish for the car with the 54kg of success ballast, which gave Colin Turkington a good chance at race two. He shot into second place away from the line. He tracked the leading Toyota Corolla of Tom Ingram and then pounced when the hatchback ahead had a throttle problem at the Wilson Hairpin to take a lead he was not going to give up.



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XMAS QUIZ

Photos: LAT, Jakob Ebrey

WORLD OF MOTORSPORT QUIZ

ROUND 1: GENERAL KNOWLEDGE

- 1** Charles Leclerc secured the most pole positions of any driver during the Formula 1 season, but how many did he achieve?
- 2** Rookie F1 driver George Russell took his best result of the season at which circuit?
- 3** Nyck de Vries won the Formula 2 Championship with which team?
- 4** Jean-Eric Vergne secured back-to-back Formula E titles, but who finished runner-up to him in the 2018/19 season?
- 5** Which round of the World Rally Championship did Dani Sordo win for Hyundai?
- 6** Colton Herta became the youngest IndyCar winner at Austin, but who was the previous youngest victor?
- 7** Toyota took a one-two at the 2019 Le Mans 24 Hour, but what team joined them on the overall podium?
- 8** Which driver took the most wins in the British Touring Car Championship this season?
- 9** Which former McLaren Autosport BRDC Award finalist won the Birkett Six Hour Relay this year?
- 10** Who won this year's Formula Ford Festival?



Leclerc claimed most F1 poles



Sordo took a WRC win this year

ROUND 2: MULTIPLE CHOICE

- 1** How many laps did Lewis Hamilton lead this year in Formula 1?
A) 499
B) 511
C) 666
- 2** Robert Kubica returned to F1 after a seven-year absence, but who holds the record for the longest gap between race starts?
A) Paul di Resta
B) Luca Badoer
C) Jan Lammers
- 3** Mick Schumacher claimed his maiden Formula 2 win at which circuit?
A) Barcelona-Catalunya
B) Paul Ricard
C) Hungaroring
- 4** Which two manufacturers joined the Formula E grid for the 2019/20 season?
A) Porsche and Mercedes
B) Mercedes and Nissan
C) Nissan and Audi
- 5** Hyundai secured its first World Rally Championship manufacturers' title. How many points did the team finish the season with?
A) 380
B) 390
C) 400
- 6** What was Fernando Alonso's fastest four-lap average speed in his failed final attempt to qualify for the Indianapolis 500?
A) 225.455mph
B) 226.798mph
C) 227.353mph
- 7** Which manufacturer has confirmed it will return to the World Endurance Championship when hypercars are introduced for 2022?
A) Audi
B) Peugeot
C) Mercedes
- 8** Who tapped Colin Turkington into a spin at Brands Hatch on the opening lap of the penultimate round of the BTCC?
A) Jason Plato
B) Rob Collard
C) Matt Neal
- 9** Which former Le Mans 24 Hours winner took victory in the EnduroKa Brands Hatch Indy Ka 500?
A) Allan McNish
B) Nick Tandy
C) Darren Turner
- 10** Jordan Dempsey won the Walter Hayes Trophy for Kevin Mills Racing. How many victories does the team now have at the event?
A) 3
B) 4
C) 5

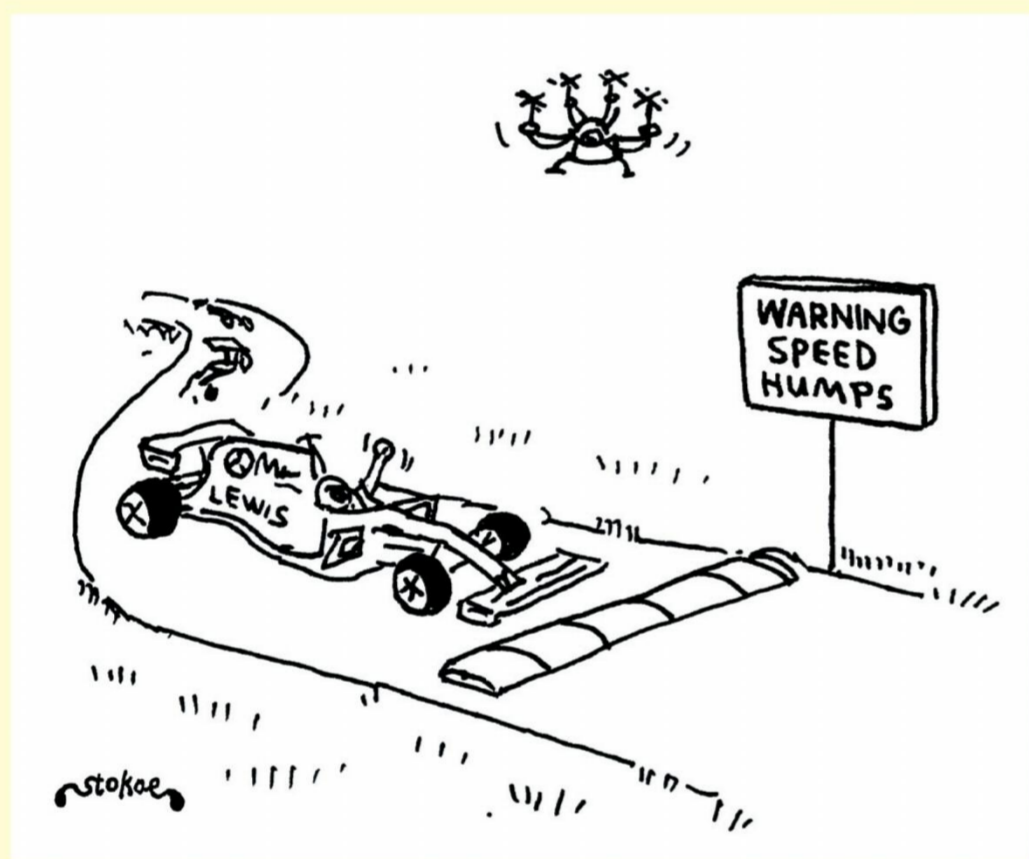


Kubica returned to F1



Dempsey won the WHT

CARTOON CAPTION COMPETITION



Email your captions to mike.stokoe@motorsport-news.co.uk and the best ones will be published in our January 8 issue. Mike Stokoe's favourite will also receive the cartoon with their own caption in a frame as a prize.

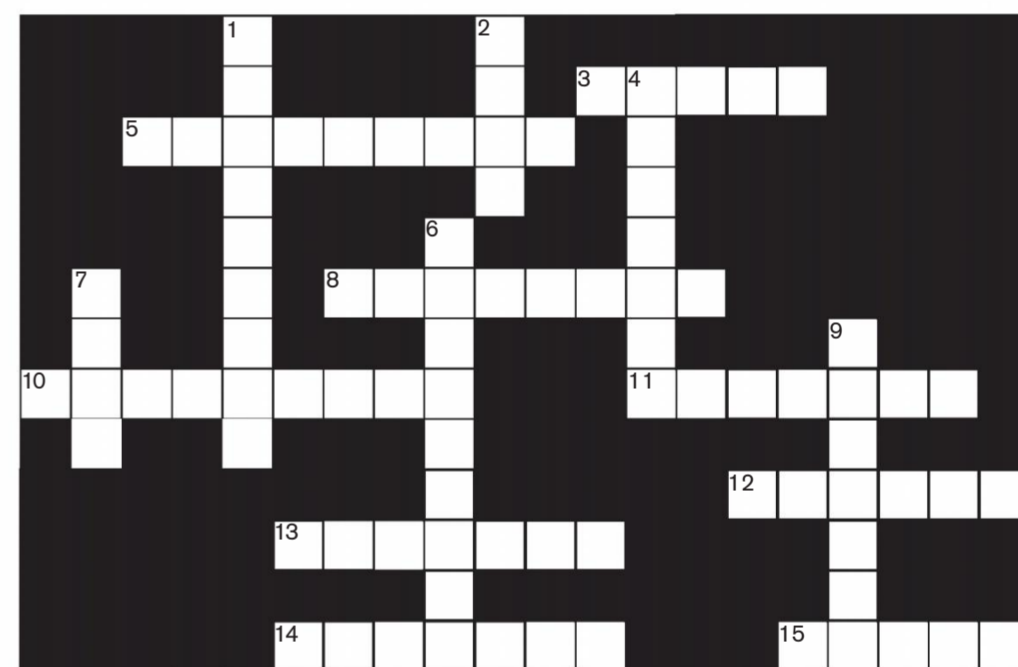
BIG CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD

Down

- 1** The venue that will return to the Formula 1 calendar next season (9)
- 2** Winner of the opening round of the 2019-20 Formula E season (4)
- 4** The last non-Sebastien to win the World Rally Championship title before Ott Tanak (7)
- 6** The driver who finished fourth in this year's World Rally Championship standings (9)
- 7** The club that organised a special Le Mans-style start at one of its 2019 race meetings (4)
- 9** The most represented nationality among this year's Formula 1 drivers (7)

Across

- 3** Walter Hayes Trophy runner-up who will drive for McLaren in IndyCar next year (5)
- 5** The only Formula 1 race Sebastian Vettel won this year (9)
- 8** The number of different British Touring Car Championship race winners in 2019 (8)
- 10** Winner of this year's Roger Albert Clark Rally (9)
- 11** The driver who reclaimed the British Rallycross Championship crown this season (7)
- 12** Current Formula 1 driver who also took



- part in rallies during 2019 (6)
- 13** The only driver who failed to score a Formula 1 point in 2019 (7)
- 14** New brand to be represented in the British Touring Car Championship next year (7)
- 15** Number of World Rally Championship rounds Sebastien Ogier won this season (5)

Answers to the quiz and crossword will be found in the December 31 issue of *Motorsport News*

PICTURE CAPTION FUN



Just for fun. The best answers will be printed in January 8. Captions to letters@motorsport-news.co.uk

ALMANAC



Fetch the engine: workers in action



A new racing line at Kirkistown



Prepping cars can be flat out work



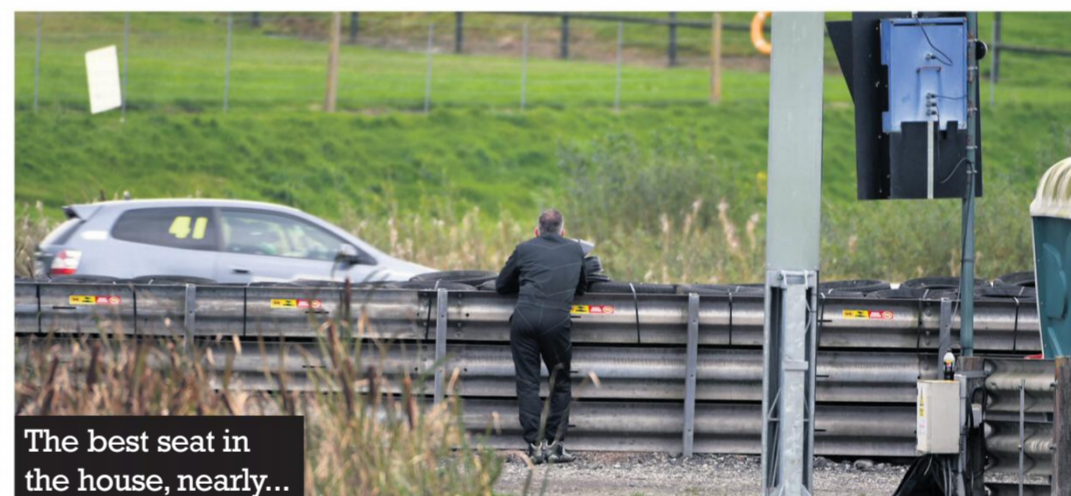
It's behind you: focus on the action

MAKING SURE MOTORSPORT NEWS HAS A PROPER 2020 VISION

Chris Tylball runs the rule over what is likely to happen in the season ahead. Remember, this is just a prediction...



Push-me, pull-you motor racing



The best seat in the house, nearly...

JANUARY

Fernando Alonso tackles the Dakar Rally but gets lost during the event, and accidentally ends up in the Sahara Desert, where he discovers a surprised Mark Thatcher. The Toyota of Alonso is unclassified in the event.

Ott Tanak makes a remarkable debut in the World Rally Championship for Hyundai by claiming victory on the Monte Carlo Rally in his first event in the i20. "My work here is done, I have nothing left to prove," says the Estonian. He quits the team and signs for M-Sport.

FEBRUARY

In a last-minute deal, Spaniard Alonso signs up to contest the Daytona 500 in a McLaren-run Chevrolet. Sadly the car is set up with the stagger on the wrong side, meaning he can only turn right. Alonso fails to qualify.



You should be looking forwards...

Tanak dominates Rally Sweden in the M-Sport Ford Fiesta. He wins by three minutes, before announcing his departure from the squad. "There is nothing else to do at this team," says the reigning world champion.

After Speedworks Motorsport successfully introduced Ginsters as a sponsor into the British Touring Car Championship in 2019, other teams take note. The Team Dynamics Hondas will carry an allegiance to Greggs. The media room, and particularly former champion and ITV commentator Tim Harvey, approves.

After failing to match his team-mate Lewis Hamilton in pre-season testing, Mercedes decides to part ways with Valtteri Bottas and signs Prince Philip to handle the new W11 chassis.

MARCH

Lewis Hamilton wins the opening grand prix in Australia at a canter. His path to glory is helped by a tactical mix-up on the Ferrari pitwall. Charles Leclerc qualifies on pole by a clear two seconds, but the boffins in the garage go for an unfathomable 16-stop strategy and finish two laps down. Prince Philip crashes on his out-lap to the grid.

Bosses at Silverstone reveal that the early-season club meetings will be cancelled as it needs to repaint the toilets at the venue.

Rally Mexico victory falls to Tanak, who has healed his rifts with Toyota and threads his Yaris WRC to victory by three minutes. "Now I realise why I quit this team," he says, before walking away again.

Following Honda and Toyota's lead, British Touring Car Championship squad Power Maxed Racing signs a deal with the Handmade Scotch Egg company for the 2020 season. The media room, orchestrated by Tim Harvey, is delighted.

APRIL

WSR is forced to start the British Touring Car Championship season running on two space-saver tyres per car to help rein in the car's dominance. Andrew Jordan nevertheless leads home a 1-2-3 for the BMW 330i M Sport at the first round at Donington Park. Dan Cammish finishes fourth for Honda.

Hamilton dominates the fourth round of the Formula 1 World Championship in China, and has yet to be beaten during the season. He was initially running behind the Ferrari of Leclerc, but the Monaco-born driver is told, via a pits-to-car radio message, to slow down and drop behind his team-mate Sebastian Vettel, who is running 11th. Vettel salvages a point. Prince Philip crashes his Mercedes trying to pull out of the pit garage.

The win on Rally Argentina falls to new Kronos-run Citroen driver Ott

Tanak. He persuades the team to dust down a Xsara from 2006 and uses it to crush the opposition by four minutes. "I am not happy with this performance: I want more," says Tanak, before walking away from the squad.

BTC Racing's British Touring Car campaign is bolstered by the news that Mr Kipling is backing the squad with a selection of fancy cakes. The media room, led by Tim Harvey, applauds.

MAY

Silverstone has yet to be used for a club meeting this year, as the man mowing the grass on the run-offs needs another two weeks to finish his duties.

Mercedes remains unbeaten in F1 as Hamilton storms around the streets of Monaco to claim his seventh straight victory. Ferrari looked to have this one in the bag before a call from the pitwall asking Leclerc and Vettel to drop behind the Ferrari-powered Alfa Romeos to help promote the sister brand, which has had a tough start to the year. Prince Philip makes it as far as Casino Square in FP1 before stopping at the Hotel de Paris for champagne and caviar.

At Thruxton, WSR BMWs once again lead the field, despite running the space-saver tyres and being forced to complete the rounds with the handbrake on. The three rear-wheel-drive machines lock out the podium,

while Honda's Cammish is fourth.

Alonso's attempt to win the Indy 500 is thwarted again as his McLaren-run machine is filled with regular leaded petrol rather than the ethanol mix that the rest of the cars in the series use. He is disqualified.

On Rally Portugal, Tanak wins again, this time by five minutes. It is a real throwback, though, as he has persuaded Prodrive to enter one of its Subaru Imprezas and he carries the blue and yellow machine to glory. "This is simply not good enough," he exclaims before quitting the team.

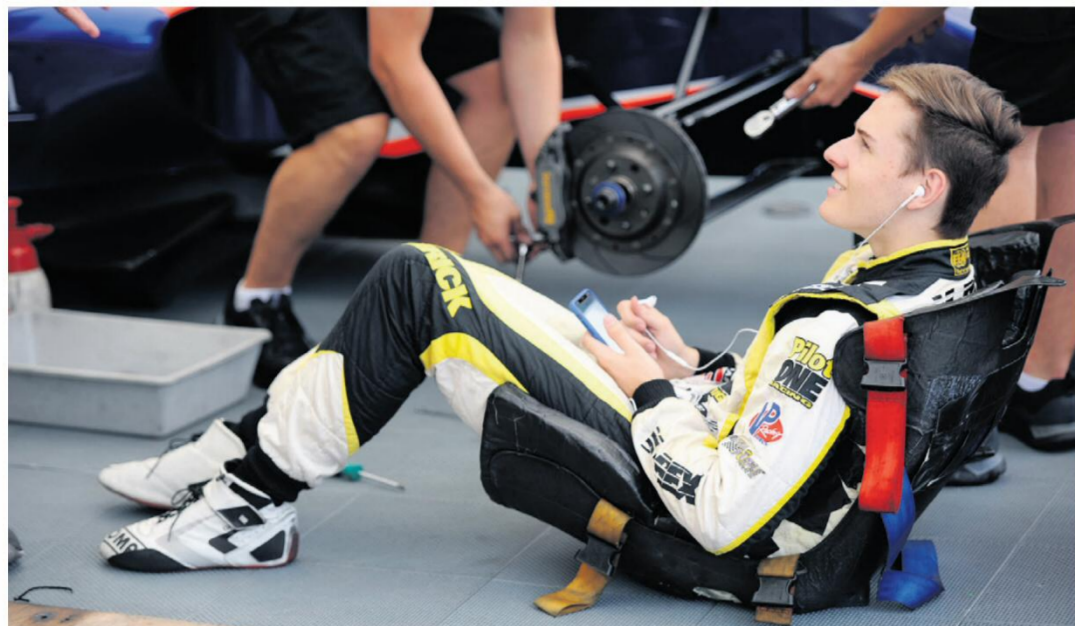
There is controversy in the opening round of the 2020 W Series as the top three finishers are Valentina Bottas, Nicola Hulkenberg and Stephanie Vandoorne. Post-race scrutineering takes place in a gender reassignment clinic.

JUNE

All meetings at Silverstone are on hold as circuit bosses need to make sure all of the track's toilets have the appropriate paper.

Alonso is drafted in to the Spanish football team for the 2020 European tournament. He plays on the wing, but the team's new international manager, Andreas Seidl, fails to get the side out of the group stages.

There is universal approval from Tim Harvey as Laser Tools Racing



There is something missing here, something with four wheels and an engine



Mass appeal: fun at Goodwood



Trying something new: a fresh approach

does a deal for its BTCC team to be backed by Walkers Crisps.

On Rally Italy, Tanak is unstoppable in his Mitsubishi Galant VR-4. He wins by three minutes. "I have not found a rhythm with this car, so I am leaving," says the disgruntled victor.

At the French Grand Prix, Hamilton maintains his unbeaten streak and takes his 10th win of the campaign for Mercedes. Ferrari had locked out the front row but its challenge was derailed when Vettel collides with Leclerc, who was pulling off the track to let the sister car through into first spot. Prince Philip crashes his Mercedes S-Class into the circuit's entrance gates and misses the round.

JULY

Silverstone reopens for business, just in time for Formula 1's visit.

Hamilton claims the British Grand Prix victory as the dominant Ferraris are thwarted when Leclerc is ordered to drive out of the circuit and go to the BP in Brackley to pick up some shopping. Vettel gets a similar order to nip to the McDonald's drivethrough on the outskirts of Towcester. Prince Philip fails to take the start as he ran over a corgi on his way to the circuit.

At the end of the Tour de France, the wheels literally come off Alonso's challenge when the spokes on the front of his McLaren-operated bicycle come

apart and he fails to make the finish.

At Snetterton, the WSR BMWs in the BTCC turn up with tow bars fitted, as each is required to pull a caravan to help reduce its pace. Nevertheless, Jordan leads home a clean sweep for the German cars, complete with their handbrakes fully on and the space-saver tyres. Honda's Cammish finishes fourth.

Silverstone cancels all future meetings. The approach road leading to the turnstiles needs relaying.

On the reborn Safari Rally, Tanak is unopposed as he claims the win by three minutes in his Peugeot 205 T16. He is not satisfied though. "I think I can find a more competitive car elsewhere," he says, before parting ways with the operation.

AUGUST

Alonso's bid to win an Olympic gold in Taekwondo fails when one of the sleeves on his McLaren-designed fighting suit falls off. He is disqualified from the competition.

On Rally Finland, Tanak takes a four-minute win in his Audi Sport quattro A2. He is unimpressed by the efficiency of the German team. "That's enough for me, I will look for new pastures," he declares.

SEPTEMBER

Ferrari loses a certain 1-2 at Monza

when team bosses instruct Leclerc and Vettel to perform a sequence of laps including the old banking section, which it says doffing its cap to the tradition of the venue. Hamilton prevails, as Prince Philip's car is crashed as the mechanics wheel it out of the race truck.

Ciceley Motorsport's British Touring Car Championship campaign gains a new backer in McVitie's Jaffa Cakes. Tim Harvey approves, as does the rest of the media room.

At the series' first visit to Silverstone International, WSR has been forced to perform major surgery to its three BMW 330i M Sports. It has been ordered to change the placement of the drivers' seat so that Tom Oliphant, Colin Turkington and Andrew Jordan are looking out of the rear windscreen. It fails to halt their progress, with another podium lock-out. Dan Cammish is fourth.

There have still been no meetings at Silverstone. The breakdown trucks and rescue vehicles are away for an MOT.

At the opening hole of the Ryder Cup in Wisconsin, the challenge of the European team is dented when Alonso's club falls apart on the opening tee when the head of the McLaren-designed driver flies off into the crowd. Alonso is disqualified.

On Rally Turkey, Tanak wows the fans with a supreme performance in his Ferrari-engined Lancia Stratos to

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Gary Hawkins, Steve Jones, Colin Casserley, mkpics.net

Racing can be a tiring experience



Dragons enjoy GT racing too, you know

claim a six-minute win. Despite the car sounding glorious, which it always did, he is unhappy with the machine. "I need more from the engine," he says, before leaving the team.

Delight for Tim Harvey, as British Touring Car Championship operation Team Parker Racing reveals a new deal with Tunnock's Tea Cakes for the remainder of the campaign. He is a very happy man.

OCTOBER

At the Japanese GP, Hamilton wins the 18th F1 race in a row. Ferrari was nailed on for a win until the drivers were instructed to dive into the pits for wet tyres even though the track was bone dry. The Italian team's tactical bosses had spotted a cloud hovering over the nearby town of Yokkaichi and panicked. Prince Philip sits out the round as the pheasant shooting season has just begun and he is in the Scottish highlands.

Andrew Jordan wins the British Touring Car Championship at Brands Hatch, a remarkable achievement given that all the WSR BMW 330i M Sport drivers are forced to enter the event with one hand literally tied behind their backs.

In other tin-top news, ITV's David Addison is forced to commentate alone at the final BTCC round of the year at Brands Hatch. Tim Harvey is

unable to fit in the commentary box after overindulging in all the free produce on offer at BTCC rounds.

NOVEMBER

Silverstone reopens! The Walter Hayes Trophy takes place, but then it shuts again straight away because the kitchen in the paddock cafe needs a refit.

Hamilton is crowned World champion in Abu Dhabi, having won every race of the year. Prince Philip crashes his boat as he is parking it in the harbour and is unable to take part in the race. Ferrari finishes the year without a point as Leclerc and Vettel are ordered, by the boffins on the pitwall, to coast and save fuel as its budget is running low.

At the finish line of Wales Rally GB, Tanak beams as he has sealed the WRC title. He has also won a place in the heart of all the fans by securing the win in a Ford Escort Mk2. "Now, finally," he says, "I have car I can work with."

DECEMBER

Alonso's bid to win the European Cross Country running competition in Ireland fails when the heels fall off his McLaren-branded trainers. He is forced to pull out of the contest.

Leclerc and Vettel fail to turn up for the FIA prize-giving as bosses at the Scuderia have put out team orders asking them to go out and get secret Santa presents for all the staff. ■

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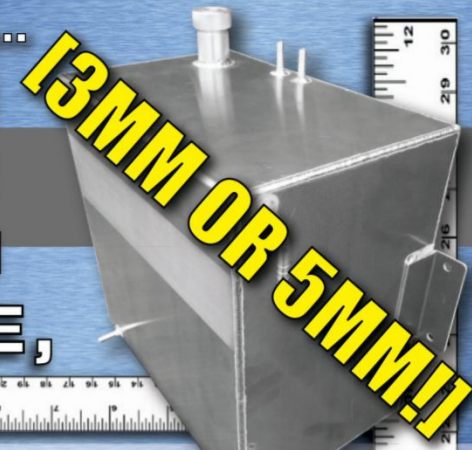
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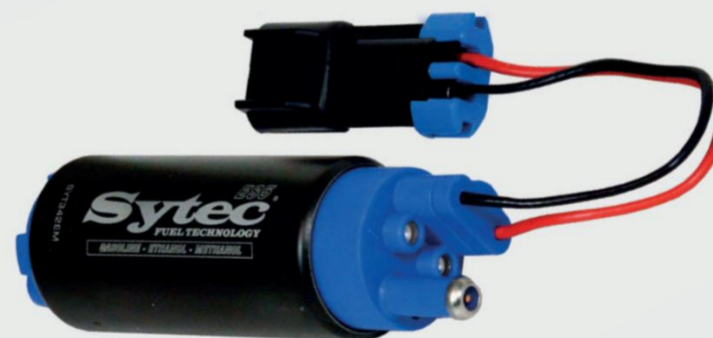
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